

Township of West Orange - 2010 Master Plan Update Stakeholder Interview Summaries

The Township of West Orange Planning Board has commissioned the preparation of a Master Plan Reexamination, updates to certain existing Master Plan elements and preparation of a new Sustainability Plan. As part of the process of preparing these documents, in-person and telephone interviews were held in December 2009 with dozens of representatives of Township of West Orange and Essex County departments and other stakeholders. Representing the Township of West Orange were Susan Borg, Director of Planning and Development; Elizabeth Kulinich, Planning Board Secretary; and Paul Grygiel of Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, master plan consultant.

A number of ideas and concerns were raised by interviewees. These are listed below, organized by topic area. Some items are included under multiple headings when appropriate. It should be emphasized that the items listed below represent suggestions and input from stakeholders, and will not necessarily be included as recommendations in the actual plan.

Land Use/Zoning

- Private **golf courses** a big issue – concerns about potential redevelopment for other uses, as well as potential tax appeals if rezoned
- A comprehensive review of the **Zoning Ordinance** should be undertaken
- A thorough revision of the ordinance has not been completed in over 30 years – there have only been a series of “Rube Goldberg”-like additions in recent years
- At very least, revisions need to be made to reflect Master Plan recommendations
- If funding an issue, what about having a volunteer committee undertake along with Township staff?
- Sign ordinance also should be overhauled
- Tree ordinance also has some issues
- Revise ordinance to make it clear that when an application is made that affects a previously approved project, all aspects of development are subject to a new review?
- Need to find a way to rein in “**McMansions**” – incorporate best practices from elsewhere
- What about requiring a variance to build largest the possible house permissible by zoning?
- Rezone residential areas for **lower density**
- Should not be any more **cluster development**
- Should be **consistency** between the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance as to what uses should be permitted as principal and conditional uses in each zone district
- Master Plan should recommend zoning amendments that reflect Board of Adjustment’s **interpretations** in recent years (if consultant agrees with the interpretations)
- Need to add standards for many **conditional uses**
- Particular uses identified as in need of **additional regulations**: assisted living residences, adult businesses, bars and nightclubs, self-storage facilities, vehicle storage
- Also, create a cabaret license to better regulate **bars and nightclubs**?

- Issue with **large garages** on some lots (multiple tenants in commercial and residential zones)
- Need improved enforcement of appearance of some **auto repair** shops on Main Street and elsewhere
- Residential **deck applications** should continue to go before the Board of Adjustment to be reviewed
- Consider revising zoning to allow for some **minor variances** for single-family residences to be approved administratively?
- Need standards for **environmental impact statements**: in what instances should they be required? What does applicant need to provide to the board? Whose burden is it to raise environmental issues?

Economic Development

- West Orange is a township of neighborhoods, but still considered a “bedroom community” by some – many residents going elsewhere for shopping or entertainment
- Should continue to fight this perception
- Provide additional shopping and services for residents in West Orange, help **balance land use mix**
- Need to make people want to shop in West Orange
- Create an **economic development office**?
- Need more **commercial uses** that contributes to tax base – possible ones to encourage:
 - Medical business district
 - Retail
 - Restaurants
 - Car washes (none today west of Main Street)
 - Indoor recreation facilities
- Enhance **Essex Green** Shopping Center and vicinity
- New hotel coming to rear of Marriott at Essex Green – good use
- Promote appropriate development on **Northfield Avenue** in the vicinity of Turtleback Zoo
- Synergy with zoo as well as events and sports practices at Codey Arena
- Sports bar coming soon across from the Arena a step in the right direction – other complementary uses could include kid-friendly restaurants and retail

Sustainability/Environmental

- **Energy Commission** created in 2007 – came out of Township’s “Energy Diet” program
- There was light bulb parade followed by art of recycling
- **Education** very important – for entire population, children as well as adults
- Work through schools
- Energy Commission has guest speakers and quarterly events
- Utilize **Sustainable Jersey** checklist in preparing Sustainability Plan
- **Solar**: encourage on residential properties
- Can solar grids be put on public property/parks?

- Encourage on flat roof buildings (but need to check load of roof to accommodate panels)
- Need to find funding
- **Wind turbines** should be encouraged where feasible
- **Streetlights:** PSEG replacing mercury vapor with induction lights (LED)
- All **municipal buildings** should be green – however, can be difficult due to age of some existing buildings
- **Trash/recycling:** garbage is down as of this year, as there has been more recycling
- Township currently has dual stream recycling, could be more cost effective to have single-stream
- Goal for whole municipality to reach 90% recycling rate (schools went from nothing to 50% in one year)
- Recycling center is becoming a more active educational center – have had groups visit already
- Vegetative composting, plus wood products and all recycling done at facility – plus Township receives rent payments from these service providers
- **Municipal vehicles** (and school district) are an area that could be improved
- Some vehicles already use biodiesel fuel – encourage additional use
- Could replace non-emergency Fire Department vehicles with hybrids
- Placing extreme power units in police cars – like emergency generator, shut down engine, but still be able to use car functions
- Improve enforcement of Township's **idling ordinance**
- Township incorporating **green purchasing** measures
- New Jersey American Water Company working with Energy Commission for **water conservation** and reduction
- Will do rain barrels at municipal sites
- Consider a **joint sustainability plan** with adjacent municipalities?
- Golf courses: environmental issues (pesticides)
- **Deer management** an issue
- Hunt has been held in South Mountain Reservation for three straight years
- Has shifted attention to overpopulation of deer on private property, such as large vacant tracts and golf courses

Open Space/Recreation

- Good relationship between Township Recreation Department and school district – very cooperative, “unprecedented” in this area
- Two major issues with regard to **facility deficiencies**
- First is desire for a Township indoor **recreation center**
- Possible sites could include JT's on Pleasant Valley Way, the Armory, Essex Green and Crystal Lake
- Second is for a 25-meter **indoor pool** – only one in Township is at West Essex JCC and serves broader area
- A possible method for creating one or both facilities is a public/private partnership:

- For example, land could be provided to a developer of a recreation facility to reduce its cost
- In exchange, a privately operated facility would be created which would be fee-supported and have a reduced rate for West Orange residents
- Need for more athletic fields alleviated due to installation of three artificial turf fields
- **Crystal Lake** is a great resource, yet is underutilized
- Improvements are necessary
- What about including the adjacent bowling alley property in any future plans? park visitors park there already
- Could use walking path around lake there, as well as at Lake Vincent
- **Parking near schools** a problem
- Create a fund to buy nearby land for parking?
- Essex County open space and recreation facilities cover large portion of West Orange
- **South Mountain Reservation:**
 - Includes picnic sites and trails
 - Essex County indicated a lot of the Reservation is not accessible for recreational usage, and it would like to open up other parts of the park for increased usage
 - Includes Mayapple Hill area, which was recently expanded
 - There is a need to connect the Lenape Trail to the expanded park area – may require an easement through adjacent development
 - **Orange Reservoir** owned by City of Orange, but South Mountain Reservation surrounds it and Essex County has some frontage on the reservoir
 - County has plans to utilize its land adjacent to reservoir
 - Current plans for mini golf, restaurant, boathouse, walking trails and parking area
 - Main entrance anticipated at Northfield and Cherry Lane
 - Generally positive reactions to proposal, although concern raised about aesthetic impacts from adjacent streets
 - No plans for expansion at **Turtleback Zoo** for now, just small upgrades
 - Possible future addition of “water apparatus”
 - Cherry Lane currently closed through reservation up to South Orange Avenue on Sunday mornings – how about closing it off further north up to Northfield Avenue?
- **Eagle Rock Reservation:**
 - It is currently strictly a passive recreation area, and there are no plans to change that
 - There will be a planting plan undertaken to create enclosures to preserve forest
 - One issue is litter along Prospect Avenue – heavy landscaping or a fence may be required to help reduce it
- Also **Byrne Golf Course**, which was recently upgraded – it gets pretty active use that has increased since the renovation
- There has been increased pressure on County parks due to increased use of municipal recreation facilities throughout the County
- The County has been using open space **trust fund for maintenance** – something the Township may want to consider doing if possible
- **Private golf courses** are valuable resources in terms of open space, but endangered due to increasing land values and decreasing interest in golf in this section of the country

- More **pocket parks** should be considered
- One possible location: vacant lot at corner of Tremont and South Valley, although it may be too small or be better used for other purposes
- Also site next to Walter Bauman
- One note of caution: small parks in tight settings may be useful, but they can also lead to complaints about people hanging out in them
- Consideration needs to be given where they are located – should be planned to be consistent with neighborhood needs
- Similar ideas include community gardens or even orchards
- How about a park on the Biddleman site on Central Avenue?
- What about a West Orange **trail network** that utilizes County trails, Lenape trail and new connections?
- Would be logical to create north-south trails due to topography
- Perhaps add bike lanes along Pleasant Valley Way and/or Gregory Avenue?
- How about creating a **skate park**? Would need to have security

Circulation

- There are traffic safety issues at **major intersections**
- Pleasant Valley Way/Mount Pleasant Avenue – there have been complaints due to recent “improvements”
- Also Prospect Avenue/Eagle Rock Avenue and Pleasant Valley Way/Eagle Rock Avenue
- Washington/Main intersection: would adding turn arrow help?
- Traffic signal retiming could help in some instances
- What about four-way cycles for more traffic lights (like at Mount Pleasant Avenue/Prospect Avenue intersection)?
- One issue is that nearly all of the main roads in West Orange are **Essex County roads** and thus Township does not have ability to make changes to them
- No county plans for road improvements in West Orange, other than for Prospect Avenue/Eagle Rock Avenue intersection improvements
- Another problem is vehicles speeding and following too closely
- **Speed tables** have been added on some streets
- While it is not clear how effective they are for reducing accidents, there are complaints about them from emergency services as they slow down response times
- One solution could be to design speed table to have openings that match the wheelbase of a fire truck
- **Traffic congestion** is also an issue
- **Main Street** area has been cited in particular, with ideas for addressing it including removing some on-street parking and making it one-way
- However, need to balance with visibility for merchants in area and continued business district viability
- Slowing traffic can have positive side effects, such as improved pedestrian safety and reducing crime (making it harder to get in and out Township, shopping centers, etc.)

- **Parking** is a major issue throughout the entire downtown area, including both Main Street and the Valley
- South Valley Road needs more short-term parking for stores
- Providing more parking for apartments – tighten zoning for overdeveloped lots
- What about reducing on-street parking in some areas and tightening enforcement of off-street parking to reduce overcrowding?
- One-way streets in could help:
 - In Watchung Heights, has been suggested that Kling Street become one way eastbound, Columbia one way southbound and Liberty one way northbound
 - Also could help in the Valley
 - What about on Main Street?
- Other streets too narrow to safely allow parking (e.g., Ridgehurst, Park)
- Need to see whether streets can be widened to allow for parking and vehicles to pass
- Causes emergency vehicle response issues
- Larger **shopping centers** present their own challenges
- Essex Green and Kmart center are responsible for half of all pedestrian/auto accidents in the Township
- Accidents there often due to drivers cutting across rows of empty parking lanes
- Changes needed to parking lot design – what about stop signs and crosswalks in front of stores?
- Property owners should be responsible for these improvements – require as part of any future development applications
- **Sidewalks** should be required in conjunction with new developments, even if there are no existing sidewalks
- **Commuter shuttles**: provide adequate coverage for now
- 150 riders/day for all routes, has been growing
- Would be difficult to expand beyond existing four routes
- Residents in areas not served can park in Township lots and hop on shuttle
- What about adding an additional route for south end of town that goes to Millburn station? Could go down Pleasant Valley Way/Cherry Lane to station
- **Senior shuttle** serves large number of residents – 37,000 trips per year
- Mainly to medical appointments within West Orange
- Has increased as senior population has grown

Community Facilities

Public Schools

- School district **facilities** utilized beyond school hours – allow use by Recreation Department as well outside groups (reduced somewhat due to issue with excessive custodial overtime)
- Facilities **needs**:
- One new elementary school (14 trailers in district now to serve overflow now)
 - No site currently selected
 - A study has been commissioned study which is soon due to be complete

- One potential site: next to Liberty Middle School?
- No issues projected with regard to West Orange High School
- Only current project: replacement of bleacher, which were deemed to be unsafe
- Middle schools in good shape for now as well
- Existing maintenance garage not adequate
- Not enough space for maintenance vehicles and buses
- At very least, need more outdoor area for parking
- Busing provided for 4,500 students – school district and contracted buses have to be kept in town
- Issue with State **school funding formula**: district has a lot of students with great needs, but formula doesn't reflect due to relative wealth of Township
- Many students live with grandparents or other relatives
- Also many students from out of district illegally attending district schools – district has staff assigned to identifying these students
- Large special education population in West Orange, accounts for substantial portion of spending
- Also challenges due to large number of non-English language speakers
- Very diverse community
- No security issues at high school – has security cameras, school resource officer

Police

- Currently no issues with **coverage** of the municipality – divided into various zones with personnel assigned to each
- There are some problems along Township's borders
- Addition of security cameras should help address issues where deployed
- Need to improve visibility of stores, parks and streets
- Issues with antiquated lighting in some areas
- Department has **facilities needs**
- It has "long outgrown" headquarters, and has been very efficient in terms of using its available space
- There are a few substations throughout the Township
- Includes one at Essex Green Shopping Center, as well as in Watchung Heights and at 555 Valley Road
- Watchung and 555 substations are more than police stations – serve as community centers as well
- No desire for new substations at this time, unless there is a defined need
- Primary **equipment need**: communications system currently has some dead spots with some new development – in the process of being redesigned
- Development that causes such deficiencies should pay to address them
- Department would like more full time four-wheel drive vehicles – due to the Township's geography, there are issues when it snows

Fire

- In past six years, Fire Department has increased its services
- Provides backup emergency medical services to the First Aid Squad
- It has added a confined space team, which was mandated by the Department of Labor (in case of emergencies at wells, pumping stations, etc.)
- Fire Department also provides services such as smoke detector inspections, life hazard inspections and non-licensed building inspections – approximately 1,300 inspections per year in total
- Staffing has not changed in recent years but responses have increased
- Large number of fire and medical responses due to Route 280 – respond to accidents on this heavily traveled highway that bisects the Township
- Service is provided from four stations in different sections of West Orange
- Most areas of Township are adequately served
- Longest **response times** are in Belair and Kelly Drive: over 8 minutes (and worse at peak traffic times or during bad weather), should be 4 minutes
- Heaviest response load in Main Street/Valley, but otherwise generally spread throughout the Township
- Some **facilities** needs:
 - Headquarters ready to be replaced – set on pilings, has termite issues, mice and rats
 - Station 4 (Pleasant Valley Way), then Station 3 (Ridgeway) next priorities
 - Land available behind Ridgeway station – could be used as training facility (West Orange firefighters currently go to Middlesex, Morris or Bergen County for training)
 - Each firefighter devotes over 200 hours per year to training – cost and time savings could result from training in West Orange
 - In the interim, need new floor drain at Station 4
- Could make sense for Fire Department to be more centralized
- What about locating Fire Department at First Aid Squad building (formerly was a fire station)?
- Department has **equipment** needs:
 - Ladder truck “desperately” needed
 - New engine at Station 2 to serve Main Street
 - By 2011/12, need to replace Engine 3
 - New ambulance
- No major issues with regard to water supply or pressure

First Aid Squad

- Squad has 60 volunteers who provide coverage 24 hours a day in three shifts (6 AM to 6 PM, 6 PM to 11 PM, 11 PM to 6 AM)
- Call volume has tripled during the past six years
- Fire Department has assisted – provides emergency medical services as well
- Good working relationship between First Aid Squad and Fire Department
- When additional coverage is needed, rely upon private ambulance service or mutual aid

- Like many volunteer squads, have had some trouble attracting and retaining members – go off to college, move, need to take on a second job, less time to volunteer, etc.
- Membership process takes a while because of background checks and other procedures
- Other places are losing their volunteer squads, would like to maintain it in West Orange
- Have been able to attract some new members with scholarships
- Also looking to partner with daycare facilities (to allow stay at home parents to join), working with unemployment centers, recruiting at colleges, etc.
- **Funding:** Township provides fuel, assistance with vehicle repairs, building and maintenance, insurance
- Remainder from donations from residents and others – but have decreased
- No immediate **equipment** needs – vehicles in good shape
- In terms of **facilities**, current headquarters centrally located, but could use second facility in Main Street/Valley area (maybe include in Redevelopment Plan?)
- Need to improve dispatch procedures to properly channel resources
- Education to nursing homes etc. not to utilized First Aid Squad for patient transport – save resources for real emergencies

Library

- Library has **collaborative/cooperative relationship** with other organizations in the Township (including Energy Commission, Arts Alliance, Downtown Alliance, etc.)
- Background data from 2008:
 - 291,337 library visits
 - 396,912 items were borrowed
 - 41,000 reference questions were answered
 - 28,816 registered borrowers
- Total number of books & other materials:
 - 154,000 books
 - 6,360 DVDs/videos
 - 3,714 audiobooks
 - 2,209 music cds
 - 219 periodical subscriptions (approx. 1000 backfile in storage)
 - 50 computers (public and staff)
- **Hours** of operation: 7 days/week, 65 hours/week (except in July and August)
- Member of various organizations, including REBL (Reciprocal Essex Borrowing Libraries)
- Provides approximately 400 programs per year
- Largest one is Summer Reading Kickoff events, with approximately 1,500 people at the Library for the family kickoff evening
- Also provides space for approximately 40 community programs per year
- Changes since 2004:
 - Fewer staff, increased services, as offerings and demand increased
 - Collaborative services with area library automation systems (REBL group)
 - Tory Corner Branch closed

- Increase in reference requests
- Library was going to be anchor of Main Street Redevelopment Area
- Keeping library in current location or elsewhere **downtown** important – serves as an anchor that helps bring people to the area
- Want to continue to serve all aspects of very diverse community
- Continue to engage various different groups
- For example, provide services tailored to teens
- Also teaming up with one-stop workforce centers
- Currently have home delivery – could do more outreach with bookmobile (could serve more broadly as a “technology mobile”)
- Anticipated **trends** do you see in the next few years:
 - Library Building usage increasing
 - Library Building as Public Community Space
 - Flexibility for interior Library Space
 - Public expectation of greater convenience
 - 24/7 services (online, available with library card)
 - Library as e-government provider
- Key **challenges** for the next few years:
 - Coping with aged, outdated library building
 - Maintenance costs
 - Meeting additional needs of the public
 - Providing expanded services/collections for increasingly diverse community
 - Keeping up with technology trends
- Many **facilities** needs:
 - Roof repair (leaks)
 - More meeting room space
 - More seating
 - Study rooms
 - More parking – both for public and employees
 - Teen room
 - Better lighting
 - HVAC system improvements
 - Exhibit space
 - Upgraded phone system
 - Updated electrical system
 - New fixtures in restrooms/bringing restrooms up to code
 - Family bathroom for people with young children
 - Public address system
 - Exterior of building under overhang needs repair

Water and Sewer

- No particular issues anticipated for dealing with future growth in the Township
- Biggest issue with regard to **sewer** is inflow and infiltration

- Dry weather flow not a problem
- There are no geographic issues in terms of capacity and need for modernization
- Currently two major trunk sewers, one on Main St. other on Pleasant Valley Way
- Ten pump stations, each for its own watershed
- Two of these may need to be replaced
- Township looking to eliminate these when possible and replace with gravity sewers
- **Water** service provided by New Jersey American Water Company

Health Department

- Growing demands on Health Department
- In recent years, with fewer employees, have had to do more with less
- More emergent communicable diseases
- Technology needs due to increase in State requirements – need to file reports by computer
- Upgrades needed to electrical system, phone lines etc. to keep up with technology requirements
- Township's population has changed – larger foreign speaking population in particular
- Also cultural differences
- State and federal requirements have become more complicated, but there is less funding from the State
- Health Department also has facilities needs:
 - Dental clinic: currently serves multiple towns, but is “antiquated”
 - More storage space needed for equipment related to bio-terrorism and diseases
 - Improved security needed for offices to safeguard vital statistics and other records
 - Need for indoor storage for senior citizen buses

Historic Preservation

- One change since 2004 Reexamination: there are now seven locally designated historic sites in the Township
- Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) intends to investigate potential designation of two houses in Llewellyn Park
- HPC would like to designate more properties
- Also needs an updated survey of historic sites – necessary to become a “Certified Local Government”
- There are currently **no local historic districts** in West Orange, although some areas could qualify
- Local history collection is housed in the basement of the library – consists mainly of books, maps and photos related to West Orange
- There is very little interaction between the HPC and other Township boards and commissions – currently done more through correspondence
- There should be coordination of meeting dates (e.g., so HPC can weigh in on applications before Planning Board or Board of Adjustment)
- Also perhaps a Council or Planning Board liaison?

- Stronger communication with housing rehabilitation program and Downtown West Orange Alliance would be useful – have worked together with DWOA on streetscape issues in the past
- Desire for greater **education** of the importance of historic preservation
- Challenge in the coming years will be to balance sustainability/green building with historic preservation
- Need to factor in impacts from demolition and promote reuse of buildings as part of **sustainability** efforts – reuse is smart growth
- Need to revamp Historic Preservation Ordinance
- Issue with home demolitions – protect notable architects' work, instead of just setting an arbitrary year threshold
- Perhaps a demolition review law – use Montclair's as an example? (anything 75 years old automatically flagged for review; if building possibly historic, HPC should have time to investigate further)
- Need to be informed of any action affecting properties listed in 1992 Historic Preservation survey
- Some issues with 2004 Master Plan Reexamination:
 - pages 26 and 30: Essex House property is not historic, should not be included in historic district
 - page 29: still need to investigate whether ordinance should be amended to prohibit HPC from considering economic hardship when reviewing an application
 - page 30: the Township has acquired half of the Recollect Augustinian Monastery on Ridgeway Avenue

Main Street

- **Aesthetics** a concern
- There are formal design guidelines for the downtown area in the Zoning Ordinance
- However there may be a need for stronger regulations – able to enact for area included in special improvement district (SID)
- There is a streetscape plan in place, will be implemented soon
- At site level, improve facades and signage – balance aesthetics with being business friendly and First Amendment rights regarding signage
- Excessive coverage of windows also cited as a safety issue
- Future of the **Main Street Redevelopment Area** biggest issue to many people
- Would more commercial development be appropriate (or marketable) in it? Convenience retail and destination retail? What about office?
- How about reconsidering the Redevelopment Area boundaries?
- If no market for condominiums now, perhaps allow more rentals?
- In any event, harness energy from Edison factory – make the area more of a destination and improve its image
- Bring in more amusement attractions/recreation? (Dave and Buster's-type restaurants, classy restaurants for adults, etc.)

- **Parking** is big issue in the area
- May be enough supply, but need better wayfinding signage – waiting to see what happens with Redevelopment Plan before creating
- Renovated parking lot behind Rite Aid an improvement
- For new development, should be centrally located to serve all attractions
- Perception of **safety** an issue – should be more police on foot in the area
- Security cameras in area, and more funding has been requested for additional ones
- Changes to lighting also would help
- At site and building level, increased visibility important – not blocking windows, reducing shrubs, etc.
- Other issues:
 - Improve pedestrian safety in area
 - Cultural differences and many non-English speaking store owners
 - Need to work more with property owners
 - Maintenance issues – work together with Township Code Enforcement
 - Are vacant storefronts preferable to low-end stores?
 - Harrison Avenue could use improvements
- Neighborhood Preservation Program for Watchung Heights completed

The Valley

- **Neighborhood Preservation Program** helping improve area – neighborhood considered safer and more stable
- Addressing infrastructure, road surfaces, sidewalks, aprons/driveways, decorative lighting, etc.
- Will continue physical planning (sidewalk replacements in particular)
- Parks have had facelifts – addressed dinginess, kiddie parks open/closed by residents
- **Parking** a big issue – need more off-street spaces
- Also need to improve traffic and parking around Luna Stage – what about a master plan for traffic for the area?
- Convert some two-way streets to one-way?
- Use back yard of Valley Settlement House for parking?
- Promote additional **services** in the area – coffee shop, tea shop, bagel store, bakery?
- **Vacant lot at Tremont/S. Valley**: pocket park? Commercial? Or parking for nearby businesses?
- Big opportunity along **Central Avenue** – coordinate with Orange’s efforts
- Biddleman building site: could be reused as park or parking lot?
- Support for **arts concept** in the Valley
- Redevelopment in area can be more “gritty” due to arts theme
- Doesn’t necessarily have to be high-end or flashy
- More **rental housing** could be appropriate, particularly close to the Highland Avenue train station
- Tie into Transit Village concept
- Issues with **lighting** on Valley Road – but already planned to be improved

- **Glen Erin Building** is a key site
- Support for West Orange **identity** more so than jointly with Orange – different philosophies, financing etc. in each municipality
- No major issues with **zoning** for area, but Township should be more flexible working with applicants, i.e., more small business-friendly

Other

- **Municipal Complex Parking Lot:**
 - Various users mentioned deficiencies
 - Create small area plan for block – perhaps include parking deck, with open space and/or solar panels on roof?
 - Could create more spaces by better coordinating parking for various uses
- **Ridgeway property:**
 - Possible location for Township office space?
 - Fire training facility?
- Potential sites that are attractive for reuse: JT's and former Amoco station on Pleasant Valley Way, Echo on Northfield Avenue
- **Property on Mt. Pleasant across from recycling:** key site, limit development on it
- **Public Works/Engineering** would have to move if Main St. redevelopment happens
- Continue to promote **shared services** – between the Township and the school district and nearby municipalities
- Existing examples: West Orange provides animal control services to Roseland and Essex Fells, health officer/administrative services to Essex Fells
- Future possibilities:
 - West Orange Fire Department could be lead organization for shared services given its size and breadth of experience
 - It could provide training facilities for multiple municipalities, as no facility in Essex County at present – well-designed facility could be used for multiple purposes (e.g., fire, police, EMS training)
 - Also could be combined school district/Township facilities
 - For example, school district garage not adequate – no place for maintenance vehicles and buses
 - Could create joint vehicle storage and maintenance garage facility
- **Development activity:**
 - Has slowed in past year, but has recently picked up
 - Few new dwellings being built
 - Some large-scale residential projects finishing up (Nordan, Vizcaya, Belair)
 - Also some office activity
- Need to coordinate **COAH** actions with all Township departments (group homes and accessory apartments in particular)
- Economy has made creation of new rental units an issue throughout town – result in impacts
- Utilize Rehabilitation Subcode instead of standard building in built-up areas