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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 2006 East Orange Master Plan provides a “comprehensive” guide to support the mission and strategic planning of the City for the next 10 years. Since the last Master Plan was prepared in 1990, the City has undertaken significant strides to improve the City’s image, quality of life and economy.

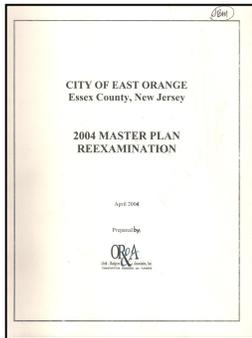
The East Orange Master Plan represents a collaborative master planning effort that included City residents, the business community, the Master Plan Advisory Committee, the Planning Board, elected officials, department heads, and key staff members. Public meetings and surveys were utilized to increase the opportunity for community input.

The East Orange Master Plan recommends a comprehensive planning framework to Guide the nature, intensity and location of future development that best furthers the City’s well-being; encourages quality designed, decent and safe housing for all East Orange residents; emphasizes high quality jobs and businesses while respecting the City’s existing commercial character; promotes safe and efficient traffic circulation; preserve the City’s buildings, districts and sites that reflect the City’s rich history and culture; improves quality of the City’s community facilities and social services; enhances solid waste collection and disposal; provide for the active and passive recreational needs of the City’s residents and visitors; provide pedestrian and bicycle linkages among the City’s parks and other recreation areas; and to, increases recycling awareness in the City.

To summarize, the 2006 East Orange Master Plan represents a collaborative and comprehensive planning effort that includes many new topics that were not addressed in the 1990 Master Plan. New Topic Areas include: promoting the City’s single-family bedroom community, increasing home-ownership and market rate housing in the City, utilizing economic development strategies via redevelopment, the UEZ and the Business Improvement District; and promoting the performing arts and cultural centers in the City.

INTRODUCTION

The City of East Orange, 3.9 square miles in area, is centrally located in Essex County. The City is well-served by major roadways with direct access to Interstate 280, the Garden State Parkway, and nearby Routes 287, 78 and 80. The City is adjacent to Orange, Bloomfield, and South Orange Townships; as well as the Borough of Glen Ridge, and the City of Newark. East Orange provides a diversity of land uses, including older, well-established residential neighborhoods and apartment buildings, several major commercial corridors and other scattered non-residential nodes, a number of institutional uses, cemeteries, and numerous public schools and scattered park facilities. The City is served by two train stations, with the potential reopening of a third station, as well as an extensive bus network.



2004 East Orange Master Plan Reexamination

Since the preparation of the last Master Plan in 1990, the City has begun a transformation implemented through its many redevelopment initiatives, ongoing residential rehabilitation and increased home ownership efforts. Other major initiatives include expanding its single-family bedroom community, implementing the school construction projects, strengthening and enhancing the existing businesses, promoting community pride, enhancing overall quality of life, maintaining and expanding the diversity of cultural and entertainment uses, and upgrading the commercial corridors through more diverse and upscale uses. A copy of the City’s “Bridge to Tomorrow” conceptual rendering has been included as an appendix at the end of Master Plan. This rendering seeks to promote arts and culture, retail and entertainment, public places, education and transportation through development schemes and connections between the Civic/Arts and Commercial Hubs.

MASTER PLAN REQUIREMENTS

A Master Plan provides a comprehensive guide for the future development of a community. It serves as a comprehensive approach to planning issues and considers many factors impacting a community’s economic development needs.

The Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1, require that a municipality periodically reexamine and update its Master Plan, at a minimum every 6 years. The

last time the City of East Orange prepared a Master Plan was in 1990. Subsequently, a Master Plan Reexamination report was prepared in 2004, which recommended the need for a new comprehensive Master Plan.

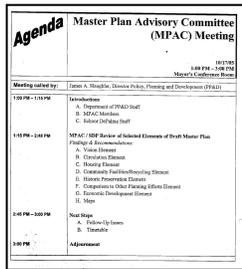
This Master Plan includes the following components:

- Vision Statement
- Demographics and Community Profile
- Land Use Plan
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Historic Preservation
- Circulation
- Community Facilities, Recreation and Open Space
- Policy Statement indicating Relationship of Plan to other State, County planning efforts
- Action Plan

Upon adoption of the Master Plan by the Planning Board, the Plan gives the community the legal basis for control over future development. The Master Plan provides the basis for land use planning policy and zoning changes. These recommendations are then referred to the Governing Body, or City Council, for their review and use in guiding zoning and other land use decisions. Most changes are implemented in the form of zoning amendments and land development ordinances. It is suggested that the City revisit its entire zoning ordinance in order to become consistent with the recommendations provided in this Master Plan.

MASTER PLAN PROCESS

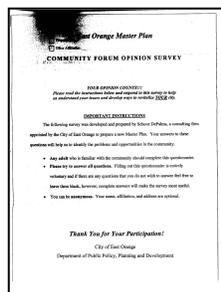
The City of East Orange initiated this process in the beginning of 2005. As part of the planning process, a Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) was established to help guide the plan and provide coordination with City boards, departments, and constituents.



MPAC Kick Off Agenda

A Kick-off Meeting was held on March 29, 2005 with the MPAC to discuss the overall scope of the project and the meeting’s schedule. Over the first several months, informational meetings were held with key public officials and East Orange staff members. As one component of public outreach, informational meetings were held in each Ward to identify key issues, both at the discrete Ward level and at the City-wide level. In addition to the Ward meetings, a meeting was held with the Business Community specifically to obtain additional feedback and input. Key discussion items included retaining and upgrading existing businesses, while promoting the downtown and encouraging more diverse uses and specialty stores.

A community survey was distributed at each of the Ward meetings and the Business Community meeting as another method for the community’s input and recommendations. Summary findings of the surveys have been included within the Appendix of this Plan. During the process, draft elements of the Master Plan were presented to the MPAC, the public, the Planning Board and their Executive Committee for their review and feedback. Upon completion, the Master Plan was presented to the Planning Board at two separate meetings, and additionally to the City Council for their review. Comments heard from each of the meetings have been incorporated into the Final Draft.



MPAC Community Survey

MASTER PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Municipal Land Use Law (40:55D-28) requires that every municipal master plan contain a statement of Goals and Objectives that serves as the basis for the community’s comprehensive master plan. The Goals and Objectives set forth in this master plan outline the vision for what the City of East Orange hopes to achieve over the next 10 to 15 years. The Goals and Objectives have been established through comments received at the Ward community meetings, indicated through the community public surveys, by revisiting the City’s current planning initiatives including the 1990 Master Plan and 2004 Master Plan Reexamination, the City’s “Bridge to Tomorrow” visioning document, and through input by the Master Plan Advisory Committee.

The Goals are developed as an overall framework for the development of the City. The Objectives provide a more specific approach to achieving the Goals.

GOALS

- To guide the nature, intensity and location of future development with respect to a mix of residential, commercial, recreational, and institutional uses that best furthers the city's physical, economic and social well-being and planning environment.
- To advance efforts to provide quality designed, decent, and safe housing for all East Orange residents.
- To emphasize high quality jobs and businesses, collaborative partnerships, and enhancement of the local tax base, while respecting the commercial character of the community and creating a stronger and more diverse economy.
- To improve roadway, transit use and facilities management to promote safety, efficient traffic circulation and neighborhood preservation and to identify responses to local and regional transportation issues.
- To encourage the preservation of buildings, districts, sites, objects and structures that reflect the cultural, social, economic and architectural history of the city, as well as, promoting historical significance.
- To improve range, quality and cost-effectiveness of community services and facilities.
- To enhance solid waste collection and disposal, water supply and distribution, management of sanitary and storm water effluent.
- To provide for the active and passive recreational needs of residents and visitors to the city.
- To provide pedestrian and bicycle linkages among parks, recreation areas, and neighborhoods and between neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- To increase recycling levels and awareness in the city.

LAND USE AND ZONING OBJECTIVES

Future Growth and Zoning Strategy

- Maintain steadied population density and increase intensity of development in commercial business districts while maintaining existing residential neighborhood levels.
- Minimize incompatible land uses.
- Ensure that the undersized lots, including the City-owned properties, are developed in a way that is consistent with their surroundings, through appropriate density and massing controls, design standards and sound land use planning.
- Identify those undersized lots, including the City-owned properties, which may offer additional parking or open space opportunities.
- Revise land use guidelines to better reflect existing conditions and changes in development objectives.
- Rezone areas that lack conformity with existing and planned land uses.
- Encourage development at sites well-served by public transportation.
- Promote neighborhood stabilization and improvement.
- Connect and upgrade city's scattered commercial centers.
- Intensify pedestrian activity and provide attractive public spaces and parking lot enhancements throughout city.
- Hold quarterly informational sessions on planning, land use and zoning issues initiated by the city.
- Incorporate the existing natural and historic resources in the City's future development and revitalization strategy.
- Ensure new development, expansions and renovations of commercial, residential and public uses meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the New Jersey Barrier Free Access Code.
- Promote sound land use planning in areas where flooding occurs by limiting the impervious cover, providing best management practices, and stormwater management controls.
- Revise zoning ordinance to encourage new and diverse businesses within the commercial districts, discouragement of non-ratables, and elimination of repetitive businesses in close proximity.

Quality Design

- Develop detailed design guidelines to guide and compliment existing and future land uses and zone areas, including residential in-fill standards to address new development in existing neighborhoods.
- Enhance the physical appearance and economic value of existing neighborhoods.
- Achieve a high quality image and appearance in new developments.
- Improve and enhance the visual character, appearance, and attractiveness of the community.
- Utilize better urban design, mixed-use and smart growth strategies in future and existing developments.

Intergovernmental Review

- Encourage greater customer-friendly services by inter and intra-governmental agencies to the general public, including upgrading the City's website and the application materials.
- Reconfigure zoning ordinance and map to comply with policies and objectives as stated in the 2006 Master Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**Comprehensive Strategy**

- Utilize the Business Improvement Districts (BID) and Chamber of Commerce to strengthen networks and coordination of improvements.
- Strengthen the economics of central business districts through attracting more diverse and upscale businesses, help existing businesses to expand, and encourage higher-quality uses.
- Develop a top-notch workforce through close coordination among institutions: economic development; employment and training agencies; the public schools and colleges; and the business community.
- Identify central themes for marketing the City and central business districts.
- Maximize the use of existing buildings, infrastructure, and vacant or abandoned land to advance economic development.

- Support the development of compact, highly planned mixed-use activity centers that including commercial shopping, employment, housing, and recreation opportunities throughout neighborhoods.
- Encourage diverse and high-end commercial activity and uses within major commercial corridors of the City.
- Create entertainment and cultural opportunities for future and existing population.
- Discourage new non-ratable uses, and the conversion of commercial and industrial properties into non-ratable uses.
- Develop community and labor force profile as part of a comprehensive economic development marketing strategy.
- Discourage expansions of or applications for new low-end commercial uses within the city.
- Avoid repetitive low-end commercial businesses and eliminate repetitive businesses in close proximity to each other.
- Stimulate private investment and growth of new employment sectors.
- Develop parking strategies for both long and short-term parking in central business districts.
- Promote artists live/work spaces in redevelopment areas.
- Ensure implementation of all existing economic development based redevelopment plans.
- Support culture and the arts in East Orange.
- Require high-quality building, landscaping, and signage design along key corridors in the city.
- Partner with regional, state and national economic development organizations to promote the City.

Existing Businesses

- Identify and capitalize on a motivating factor for people to visit central businesses districts and spend money within the city.
- Retain and attract jobs in City's strengthened areas and in targeted new sectors.
- Preserve and expand existing businesses in non-central business district areas.
- Actively support efforts of existing business to remain competitive, encouraging a sense of pride, and recognizing the value of small businesses and entrepreneurs.

- Nurture small and start-up businesses.
- Improve business operations and quality of products.

Information Technology

- Utilize City's website and information technology services and facilities to implement and regularly promote economic development strategies, objectives and incentives for existing and new businesses.
- Create a Geographic Information System (GIS) of real estate and business inventory, and a venue for space available for rent/purchase.
- Develop an economic development policy and resource newsletter, distributed quarterly at a minimum.

Intergovernmental Review

- Develop user-friendly, marketing strategy to promote City's economic development initiatives and objectives to the general public.

Public-Private Partnerships

- Build public-private partnerships to promote and enhance economic development objectives.
- Partner with local banks to devise a micro loan program designed to facilitate mixed-use projects.

HOUSING OBJECTIVES

Comprehensive Strategy

- Change the public image of East Orange through rehabilitation and development of new housing throughout neighborhoods.
- Strengthen and recapture single-family neighborhoods.
- Promote City as a bedroom community.
- Better promote the City's housing initiatives, i.e. the homebuyer's workshops and grants, through community outreach and utilization of the City's website.
- Develop design standards for infill and new construction, to encourage integration and compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods, densities and massing.
- Tailor rehabilitation and improvement programs to specific neighborhood needs.

- Promote East Orange at the local, state, regional and national level to encourage new residents and home buyers.
- Utilize strategies such as municipal auctions to return dilapidated and/or underutilized lots to tax rolls.
- Build public-private cooperation, using public incentives where appropriate.
- Discourage conversions of existing homes and storefronts that result in non-ratable development.

New Housing Development

- Encourage new housing developments for young professionals, senior populations, and artists.
- Achieve a high quality image and appearance in new housing developments.
- Ensure implementation of all existing housing based redevelopment plans.

Existing Housing

- Stabilize rental housing market.
- Anchor and preserve the character of single-family neighborhoods and promote owner occupancy.
- Encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of homes and apartments by property owners.
- Identify lead based homes and remediate immediately.

Intergovernmental Review

- Provide detailed housing design guidelines for treatment of buffers to create a smooth transition between residential areas and nonresidential areas.
- Develop design standards for infill and new construction to ensure compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Character of City

- Educate and promote appreciation of historic properties.
- Maintain historic bedroom-community heritage within the City.
- Protect and enhance existing historic properties.

- Encourage adaptive reuse where appropriate.
- Revise zoning ordinance to better reflect historic character of the City.
- Establish a Historic Preservation Commission.

Historic Inventory

- Identify, inventory, and document historic buildings structures, sites, objects, roads and districts.
- Actively protect historically significant properties.
- Create GIS inventory of historic buildings and sites.
- Identify historically significant park areas and urban trails.

Historic and Cultural Heritage

- Prepare additional nominations to the State and National Historic Registers for historic places.
- Encourage historic and cultural institutions to develop and grow within city.
- Market city's historic and cultural heritage.

CIRCULATION

Roadway Systems

- Evaluate designated truck routes to minimize impact on residential areas.
- Improve maintenance and function of street system.
- Developing ways to better manage traffic and reduce traffic congestion and accidents.
- Balance land use with the capacity of circulation systems.
- Utilize traffic calming techniques in areas where most appropriate.
- Protect residential neighborhoods from adverse effects of heavy traffic.
- Pro-actively maintain City streets and parking lots; additionally include appropriate funding for this in the City's annual budgeting process.
- Seek funding for design and construction of intersection improvements where appropriate.
- Improve the integration of land use and transportation planning.
- Improve communications with Essex County pertaining to control of catch basins, sewer and sanitary lines along County roads.

Transit Uses & Facilities

- Maximize use of local transportation (bus and transit).
- Enhance signage, streetscape and overall appearance near public transit uses and facilities.
- Develop cohesive transit hubs that utilize transportation uses, parking, circulation and related design elements to foster an enhance quality of life, housing and economy.
- Consider a City-wide shuttle program to offer services from transit areas and employment centers to residents of East Orange.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Pathways

- Reduce auto dependency by advancing efforts to create a more “pedestrian-friendly” environment.
- Provide improved pedestrian crossings at key intersections within neighborhoods.
- Utilize sidewalk and streetscape improvements, visual linkages and signage to encourage residents and visitors to walk or bike to key commercial corridors.
- Improve safety, create better and more pathways and integrate bicycle lanes on existing roadways, where appropriate.

Parking

- Encourage development of peripheral parking for visitors, shoppers and employees within city and internal shared parking strategies.
- Improve meter revenue collections.
- Develop parking strategies for both long and short-term parking in residential neighborhoods and within the downtown.
- Identify additional parking within neighborhoods, including evaluating usage on undersized lots.
- Improve parking safety, maintenance and attractiveness.
- Implement user-friendly way finding signage to identify parking areas throughout the City.

COMMUNITY & PUBLIC FACILITIES

Capital Improvements & Public Services

- Coordinate capital improvement programs, projects and initiatives to deliver public services.
- Provide public safety facilities (sufficient in size and strategic in location) that will ensure rapid and adequate response to emergency calls from all sectors of the community.
- Maintain and upgrade community facilities and related infrastructures in order to maximize their use.
- Provide arts and cultural services which are accessible to all residents.
- Coordinate funding, locations and delivery of public services.
- Explore methods of generating additional revenue to fund operational and capital projects.
- Update capital improvement program and create a capital improvement budget.

Public Utilities

- Promote and support increased cooperation between police, fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) departments and residents to encourage safety awareness.
- Minimize adverse environmental effects of new development through the coordination of regulations and inter-governmental review procedures.
- Develop a program for a city-wide storm water management system that conforms to most recent state and federal mandates.
- Continue passive water conservation measures pending further investigation of new long-range sources of potable water and the release of the aquifer capacity.
- Increase the recycling rate of 25 percent to that consistent with the goals of the Essex County Recycling Plan.
- Upgrade and maintain County roads and infrastructure, where possible. If under another jurisdiction, the City should coordinate and monitor improvements with the necessary agency.
- Maintain and upgrade storm water sewer service in all areas of the city and take measures to eliminate urban-run-off pollutants as required by state mandates.
- Control the quantity and quality of storm water run off from new development.

- Address flooding issues through routine maintenance and upgrading of the stormwater system.
- Development of alternative energy sources for heating of municipal buildings and resources.

Community Facilities & Institutions

- Coordinate police initiatives and planning programs to improve the quality of life in the city.
- Continue to decrease crime rates.
- Insert at least one (1) police substations in each ward of the City.
- Utilize and market library facilities and its services and programs to the community.
- Consider utilizing school buildings as an extension to the community.
- Developing a public arts commission to promote and encourage awareness of the arts.
- Integrate the Mayor's Art Council with Department of Recreation and Cultural Affairs.

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

Existing Parks

- Preserve and enhance access to open spaces.
- Make better use of existing recreational areas.
- Encourage proper redesign of existing parks to enhance the needs of residents.
- Actively discourage vandalism and loitering, and increase police presence in existing parks.
- Maximize use of outside funding sources for improvements.

Parks & Open Space Development

- Provide additional recreation areas by developing pocket or neighborhood parks, wherever practical.
- Promote a broad range of recreational opportunities and facilities for people of all ages and abilities.
- Encourage utilization of undersized lots for pocket parks and open space.

- Utilize public-private partnerships for park development, especially as part of future redevelopment initiatives.

Recreation Facilities

- Identify and inventory all recreational facilities, which are both private and public.
- Provide indoor athletic facilities for all ages.
- Improve the maintenance and safety at all primary and accessory recreational facilities.
- Eliminate existing barriers to recreation facilities and programs by developing a policy of “inclusion recreation.”
- Encourage joint-use agreements for recreational facilities constructed on school sites and made available for public use.

Tree Inventory

- Create enhanced tree preservation and planting guidelines.
- Preserve and expand trees by utilizing innovative development incentives, programs and agreements.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive public education initiative on tree maintenance, preservation and expansion to residents and businesses.
- Develop GIS inventory map of tree species types and locations throughout the city.
- Diversifying tree types within the City to hedge off any future diseases that may eliminate large segments of the city’s tree population.
- Create a city-wide community forestry management plan.
- Identify additional funding sources to plant new tree types.
- Increase inventoried trees by 2015 for 20,000. This goal should be divided equally amongst city, business owners, developers, and local residents.

RECYCLING

Collection, Disposition and Recycling

- Conserve energy in residential, commercial, and transportation areas.
- Support programs to recycle paper, cardboard, glass, metal, plastics, motor oil, and to compost or generate energy from tree pruning, brush, and other vegetation.

- Promote the use of goods containing recycled materials through City purchasing policies and other efforts.
- Encourage and meet annual recycling measures.
- Increase outreach and education pertaining to the City's recycling schedule.
- Coordinate with the Board of Education, neighborhood associations, and business community to increase recycling efforts.