CITY OF PLAINFIELD 2021 MASTER PLAN RE-EXAMINATION REPORT

Prepared for: City of Plainfield

Prepared by:



Nishuane Group, LLC

105 Grove Street, Suite 3

Montclair, NJ 07042

October 8, 2021

2021 Master Plan Re-examination Report

City of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey

October 8, 2021

Prepared for:



City of Plainfield

Prepared by:



Steven Martini, PP, AICP New Jersey Professional Planner (PP) License #33LI00633000

Michele Delisfort, PP, AICP New Jersey Professional Planner (PP) License #33LI00615500

The original of this report was signed in accordance with NJSA 45:14A-12 and 40:55D-89.

2021 Master Plan Re-examination Report

Table of Contents

Introduction
A. Major problems and objectives related to the 2020 Master Plan
B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to August 2020
C. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policie and objectives.
D. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulation should be prepared.
E. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation or redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effect the redevelopment plans of the municipality
F. The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.
Appendix: Resolution R 293-2115

Introduction

As stated in the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1, et seq.), a municipality's Master Plan provides the bases for land use decisions, including City zoning ordinances, redevelopment plans and the review of development applications. A municipal Master Plan is required to be updated and reexamined at least once every ten (10) years. A Master Plan may be updated more frequently, based on changes in assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the Master Plan as last revised.

In August 2020, the City of Plainfield ("City") adopted their 2020 Master Plan ("Master Plan"). Prior to the 2020 Master Plan, the last Master Plan and Re-examination Report prepared was the 2009 Master Plan and Re-examination Report. In February 2021, the Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act was signed into law ("Cannabis Act"). The Cannabis Act provides for the legalization of a cannabis market that will be subject to State regulation by the Cannabis Regulatory Commission ("Commission") for the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, wholesale, sale and delivery of cannabis. The Cannabis Act also legalized the recreational use of marijuana by adults 21 years of age or older, subject to the comprehensive regulatory and licensing framework as outlined by the Commission. On August 19, 2021, the Personal Use Cannabis Rules, N.J.A.C. 17:30-1 et seq. ("Cannabis Rules") were enacted by the State of New Jersey setting forth terms and conditions for the cannabis market.

The adoption of the Cannabis Act and the Cannabis Rules prompted the preparation of this Reexamination Report.

In May 2021, seventy percent (70%) of residents supported the City referendum, voting in favor of bringing cannabis businesses to the City. A survey was also conducted by the City Administration, which resulted in seventy-eight percent (78%) of residents indicating they would be in favor of cannabis businesses in the City. The results of the referendum and the survey demonstrate that the residents of the City recognize the numerous benefits associated with permitting cannabis businesses to be located within the City.

The introduction of cannabis businesses to the City will produce numerous economic benefits to the City. The cannabis businesses will generate additional employment opportunities for residents. Cannabis businesses will allow the City to collect additional tax revenue, which can be used to improve local services. It will generate new businesses in the City, complementing the existing industrial district while also creating activity in the central business districts.

Social justice and equity can be addressed and furthered through the regulation of cannabis businesses. Through education, job training, and eventual equity partnership, the City may offer opportunities for individuals who were disadvantaged by drugs laws in the past.

The infusion and inclusion of the burgeoning cannabis industry was not substantially contemplated in the 2020 Master Plan. The primary focus of this Re-examination Report is to

implement the Cannabis Act and Cannabis Rules by establishing proper guidelines for cannabis businesses to operate in Plainfield.

Unless modified within this Re-examination Report, all other content in the 2020 Master Plan remains valid and in effect.

This Re-examination Report of the City of Plainfield Master Plan adheres to the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law and addresses the requirements of N.J.S.A 40:55D-89, which consists of the following:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last re-examination report ("2020 Master Plan").
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- c. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
- d. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
- e. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.
- f. The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

A. Major problems and objectives related to the 2020 Master Plan

The following are the Goals and Objectives identified in the 2020 Master Plan (noted as "How We Get There" in each element).

Land Use Element

• Continue to further the goals from the 2009 Master Plan

- Revitalize/redevelop underutilized areas.
- Provide desired land use areas that support jobs and other economic opportunities.
- Restore stability in "transitional areas".
- Maintain character and density of established neighborhoods and support comparable values in new developments.

• Review zoning-related issues

- Review, evaluate and reclassify current zoning as needs are identified, including for open spaces, schools, institutional uses, commercial recreational facilities and other businesses.
- o Rezone or eliminate zones that aren't achieving desired goals.
- Ensure all changes are reflected in zoning ordinances and map.

Explore a range of related development and quality of life opportunities

- Work with Union County College to coordinate its expansion plans and collaborate with South Plainfield on the feasibility of a river walkway, work with Union County to use underutilized parking deck in the Park- Madison development to provide more parking for TOD development in the area.
- o Evaluate regulations for mixed-use zones.
- o Adopt already approved streetscape guidelines, undertake a Parks Master Plan.
- o Develop a plan to reconcile flood hazard zones in redevelopment areas.

Housing Element

• Diversify Housing Options

- o Identify areas that could be rezoned to allow for alternate housing types.
- Create partnerships with developers of specialty housing for targeted populations.
- Establish a luxury residential rental market, providing housing opportunities for new residents and those seeking to downsize yet remain in Plainfield.
- Modify zoning to accommodate multi-generational housing.
- Continue to explore revitalization and adaptive reuse of dilapidated, abandoned and underutilized commercial properties.
- Expand funding of the Comprehensive Housing Assistance Program (CHAP).

• Make Home Ownership the Goal

- Establish a redeveloper fund financed by developer contributions, to fund affordable housing and other community needs.
- Explore ways to provide assistance to those who have homes and mortgages but are adversely affected by the current economic downturn.
- o Focus programs on lower and moderate income households.
- Give non-profit housing developers first dibs before properties are taken to auction.

• Educate and Inform

- Establish a Housing Resource Center where residents can receive help on housing and related issues.
- Expand existing homebuyer training programs.
- Continue sharing information on availability of mortgage financing available through state and other sources.
- Expand financial literacy programs.

Economic Plan Element

- Provide a variety of job training programs and educational opportunities for City residents.
 - Encourage partnerships with the Board of Education, Union County College and its Center for Economic and Workforce Development.
- Expand the City's tax base by attracting new and diverse businesses to the City.
- Promote the redevelopment of vacant, abandoned and underutilized properties.
 - Continue to advance the redevelopment efforts within the Transit Oriented Development Downtown (TODD) and the Transit Oriented Development Netherwood (TODN) Districts.
- Retain and grow industries that are thriving in the City, including medical/healthcare, industrial, and commercial.
- Provide career advancement, good living wages, and bridge the gap of economic inequality
- Facilitate entrepreneurship in the City by creating facilities for start-up businesses to grow, including maker spaces, co-working spaces, business incubators, and others, to attract and develop opportunities for small scale manufacturing and technology-driven entrepreneurs.

Circulation Element

• Enhance Transit Oriented Development (TOD) investments through infrastructure improvements

- Invest in improvements to train station facilities.
- o Implement planned initiative to create North Avenue pedestrian mall.
- Develop parking plan around downtown station.

• Encourage all modes of mobility

- Adopt a Complete Streets Ordinance.
- Where they can be accommodated, develop new bicycle and pedestrian facilities along City roadways.
- o Create biking connections between Plainfield and surrounding municipalities.
- o Enhance pedestrian safety through sidewalk improvements and changes to streets and public spaces.

• Insist on the equitable investment of public transportation services and facilities in Plainfield

- Improve locations of bus stops to make them more convenient to residents and improve livability.
- Construct bus shelters at heavily used bus stops.
- o Integrate micro-mobility services such as bike share programs to complement public transportation services.
- Enhance bicycle safety in and around train stations and bus stops.
- Develop bike and shuttle routes from train stations to multifamily developments.
- Encourage new development to promote the use of and provide adequate space for dockless bicycles.

• Develop mass transit connections between Plainfield and nearby centers of employment and education

- Partner with transit providers to create transit routes from Plainfield to Rutgers
 University and other employment facilities in New Brunswick.
- Work with NJ TRANSIT to improve local bus routes to increase reliability and frequency of service.

Community Facilities Element

• Evaluate the Situation

Assess the current levels of service and usage.

• Identify Target Actions

- Accommodate the under served and underrepresented population of the City.
- o Develop additional public health and wellness programs for children and seniors.
- o Promote healthy practices in striving to be a sustainable community.

• Enhance and Improve Existing Assets

- Advocate the arts and cultural wealth of Plainfield.
- Invest in modern accessible civic spaces throughout the City.

Recreational and Open Space Element

• Keep the City Open

- o Preserve and acquire open space in order to enhance the quality of life.
- Create open space conservation awareness programs for residents.
- Evaluate the current utilization of existing public open space.

• Maximize Existing Assets

- Upgrade park and open space facilities.
- Maintain parks and open spaces in a state of cleanliness and good repair through the efforts of the Recreation Division and Public Works Department.

Survey

- Examine the evolving needs of residents of all ages to identify changes needed to existing recreational facilities and programs.
- Seek to provide open space in residential, commercial, institutional, civic and mixed use areas, with input from these constituencies.

Conservation Element

• Preserve Natural Resources

- Create an inventory of natural resources in the City to keep track of resources and conserve them.
- Create a plan to preserve environmentally sensitive areas (those areas where the natural environment can easily be harmed).
- Maintain quality of water resources and make sure they are adequate to supply the entire city.
- Preserve and maintain environmentally critical sites, such as Cushing Road Detention Basin and other wetlands.
- Preserve and enhance existing open space, woodland and natural vegetation.

• Encourage environmentally sustainable initiatives

- Promote sustainable developments and redevelopments to reduce effects on the environment.
- Create and/or preserve greenway corridors along streams and water bodies in the City.
- Restore ecology by preserving and improving existing flora, fauna and endangered species.

• Curb climate change effects and incorporate resiliency

- Make organized efforts to reduce energy use, Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and increase energy efficiency in mobility, sustainable buildings and public spaces.
- o Include resiliency plan for existing and future development especially for the floodplain areas.

Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element

• Create a more livable city

- o Ensure appropriate land uses in appropriate plans.
- Establish appropriate population densities and concentrations.
- Adopt standards for new development promoting energy efficiency through architectural and site design.
- Encourage pedestrian friendly atmosphere and infrastructure.
- Prevent and reduce urban sprawl, especially in downtown and Transit Oriented Development areas.

• Encourage sustainable buildings

- o Build sustainability with ample natural air, ventilation and open spaces.
- Promote use of renewable energy, including solar and wind energy systems.
- Advocate for Green Technology and Green Building standards.

• Strengthen neighborhoods

- Promote historic districts, parks and open spaces, natural energy resources.
- Institute a tree protection ordinance.
- Create awareness for the 3Rs Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (not only for waste management).

Recycling Element

- Maintain a positive relationship among the City, PMUA, residents and business.
- Increase commercial and institutional recycling rates within the city.

- Continue to educate residents, in both English and Spanish, on the importance of 3-R (reducing, reusing, and recycling) and how to recycle properly.
- Work with the Police Department, Department of Public Works, Inspections Division and PMUA to address issues of illegal dumping of waste on private and city property; currently the owner of the property is responsible for its removal.

Utility Services Element

- Ensure the utility infrastructure is sturdy and efficient enough to handle existing, new and increased development.
 - Plan and implement new utility infrastructure to replace aging and obsolete systems that serve development and redevelopment areas.
 - Require, where appropriate, that the cost of the creation, expansion or extension
 of utilities related to development or redevelopment be borne by the property
 owner or developer.
 - Encourage the City and land use boards to promote the underground placement of all utilities in development and redevelopment areas.

• Provide easy access to the range of City utilities for all residents and business owners

- Make available safe and adequate utility supplies and infrastructure including power, heat and communications utilities, a public (potable) water supply, sanitary sewers, wastewater disposal and treatment and stormwater management.
- Maintain, upgrade, expand and protect the existing utility infrastructure.
- Plan and implement new utility infrastructure to replace aging and obsolete systems, where applicable.

• Take efforts to lead Plainfield toward becoming a Smart City

- Coordinate smart design and technology solutions for housing, mobility, sustainability and governance.
- Provide adequate and efficient high technology infrastructure accessibility including fiber-optic data transmission lines, digital switching stations, telecommunication facilities and high-speed Internet access and other technologies as they emerge.
- Work with high-technology providers in planning for the creation and expansion of high technology infrastructure.

B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to August 2020.

The 2020 Master Plan was adopted approximately one year ago. Therefore, the assumptions, policies, goals and objectives that formed the basis for the 2020 Master Plan remain valid and applicable. However, the adoption of the Cannabis Act and the Cannabis Rules prompted the preparation of this Re-examination Report.

C. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.

The adoption of the Cannabis Act and Cannabis Rules prompted this Re-examination Report. The assumptions, policies, goals and objects that formed the basis for the 2020 Master Plan remain valid and applicable.

D. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.

As the cannabis market takes shape in New Jersey, it is proving to be a thriving and economically beneficial industry. As mentioned previously in this Re-examination Report, a referendum and survey both conducted in May 2021 demonstrated overwhelming support by City residents for the located of cannabis businesses in the City.

Further, the City seeks to establish social justice and equity agreements with cannabis business operators. These agreements will include the hiring of local individuals who were disadvantaged by drugs laws in the past and provide them with resources to become successful entrepreneurs of the cannabis industry.

Land Use Element

On August 16, 2021 the City adopted Ordinance 2021-24 providing certain terms and conditions for the regulation of cannabis businesses in the City. Thereafter, on August 19, 2021, the Cannabis Rules were enacted. The City desires to amend the Master Plan to implement the Cannabis Rules.

Zoning amendments are necessary to appropriately control the location and operation of cannabis businesses. It is recommended that the City's Zoning Ordinance be amended to permit all 6 (six) classes of cannabis businesses. Cultivation (Class 1), manufacture (Class 2), distribution (Class 3), wholesale (Class 4) and delivery (Class 6) are appropriate permitted principal uses in the City's Light Industrial District, including those within Redevelopment Areas, with specific locations to be determined based upon the Cannabis Rules, siting requirements, and in conjunction with other City land use goals. Retail (Class 5) is an appropriate permitted principal use in all districts wherein retail is permitted, including those within Redevelopment Areas, with specific locations to be determined based upon the Cannabis Rules, siting requirements, and in conjunction with other City land use goals. Criteria utilized in locating cannabis facilities must adhere to the state and local siting requirements of the State and City. Additionally, other factors will determine the limitations of potential sites, including public health and safety standards and other City objectives.

Economic Plan Element

Cannabis businesses are categorized into six (6) classes. All six (6) classes will be permitted in the City. Cannabis will add to the existing manufacturing and industrial sectors, especially within the West End of the City where there is a large cluster of industrial and manufacturing uses present. Overall, the inclusion of the cannabis industry will contribute towards attracting new and diverse businesses to the City while augmenting existing businesses. Additionally, a transfer tax will bring in new revenue into the City's government and administration. Secondary impacts will also occur as these new workers will be spending disposable income in the City, which contributes to the ongoing economic growth of Plainfield.

- Provide a variety of job training programs and educational opportunities for City residents.
 - Cannabis businesses will be required to provide training and guidance for employees to be on the path for managerial positions.
- Expand the City's tax base by attracting new and diverse businesses to the City.
 - Cannabis is a thriving industry that will offer new opportunities in the City for businesses to grow.
 - The cannabis market will bring in contemporary businesses into Plainfield.
 - The City's tax base will be bolstered via the transfer tax.
- Retain and grow industries that are thriving in the City, including medical/healthcare, industrial, and commercial.
 - The existing manufacturing and industrial sectors of Plainfield will be bolstered through the inclusion of cannabis businesses. Businesses associated and ancillary to cannabis, such as the production of cannabis paraphernalia and accessories, will also rise in the City.

- Facilitate entrepreneurship in the City by creating facilities for start-up businesses to grow, including maker spaces, co-working spaces, business incubators, and others, to attract and develop opportunities for small scale manufacturing and technology-driven entrepreneurs.
 - Cannabis businesses will be encouraged to start and grow in Plainfield, especially by City residents.
 - Social justice and equity agreements will allow for individuals who were disadvantaged by drug laws in the past to create opportunities to become an apprentice at a cannabis business, which in time and experience, will lead to an equity partnership.

E. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

Cannabis retail businesses are appropriate uses in any district that permits retail within all Redevelopment Areas of the City. Cannabis businesses with operations involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, wholesale, and delivery of cannabis are appropriate uses in any district that permits light industrial within all Redevelopment Areas of the City. The specific locations of those businesses should be determined in conjunction with the City's other planning and land use goals.

F. The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

The adoption of the Cannabis Act and Cannabis Rules does not necessitate any changes to the public electric vehicle infrastructure as recommended by the 2020 Master Plan.

Appendix: Resolution R 293-21

CITY OF PLAINFIELD

R 293-21

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PLAINFIELD, IN THE COUNTY OF UNION, REQUESTING THAT THE PLANNING BOARD REEXAMINE THE CITY'S MASTER PLAN WITH RESPECT TO RECENTLY ENACTED CANNABIS REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, on February 22, 2021, Governor Murphy signed into law the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act, *N.J.S.A.* 24:61-31 *et seq.* (the "Act"), which provides for the legalization of a cannabis market that will be subject to State regulation by the Cannabis Regulatory Commission (the "Commission") for the cultivation, distribution, and sale of cannabis, and legalizing the recreational use of marijuana by adults 21 years of age or older, subject to the comprehensive regulatory and licensing scheme established by the Commission; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Act, on August 21, 2021 the City of Plainfield (the "**City**") enacted Ordinance MC 2021-24 authorizing the licensure of certain cannabis businesses within the City, and also enacted Ordinance MC 2021-25 establishing certain local taxes with respect to the same; and

WHEREAS, on August 21, 2021 the Commission issued its initial regulations in accordance with the Act, which regulations are codified at *N.J.A.C.* 17:30-1.1 *et seq.* (the "**Regulations**"); and

WHEREAS, the City Planning Board has enacted a Master Plan (the "**Master Plan**") in accordance with Section 28 of the Municipal Land Use Law, *N.J.S.A.* 40:55D-1 *et seq.*; and

WHEREAS, Section 89 of the Municipal Land Use Law provides for the periodic reexamination of master plans by municipal planning boards, in whole, or in part to address evolving conditions or changes in law; and

WHEREAS, the City Council hereby requests that the City Planning Board reexamine the Master Plan to determine whether modifications are necessary or desirable in furtherance of the Act and the Regulations,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Plainfield, County of Union, New Jersey, as follows:

I. GENERAL

The aforementioned recitals are incorporated herein as though fully set forth at length.

II. PLANNING BOARD REQUESTED TO REEXAMINE MASTER PLAN

The City hereby requests that the City Planning Board reexamine the Master Plan to determine whether modifications are necessary or desirable in furtherance of the Act and the Regulations.

III. <u>SEVERABILITY</u>

If any part of this Resolution shall be deemed invalid, such parts shall be severed and the invalidity thereby shall not affect the remaining parts of this Resolution.

IV. <u>EFFECTIVE DATE</u>

This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

ADOPTED BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

September 13, 2021

Abubakar Jalloh, R.M.C.

CLERK'S CERTIFICATION

I, Abubakar Jalloh, City Clerk of the City of Plainfield do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Plainfield City Council.

Abubakar Jalloh, R.M.C. Municipal Clerk

✓ Vote Record - Resolution R 29	93-21					
			Yes/Aye	No/Nay	Abstain	Absent
 ☑ Adopted □ Adopted as Amended □ Defeated □ Tabled □ Withdrawn □ Consenus 	Charles McRae	Voter	\square			
	Joylette Mills-Ransome	Mover				
	Steve Hockaday	Voter				
	Ashley Davis	Voter				Ø
	Sean McKenna	Seconder				
	Stacey Welch	Voter				Ø
	Barry N. Goode	Voter	\square			