

Appendix C

Sample Scope of a Neighborhood Master Plan

Neighborhood Master Plans

A neighborhood master plan is a detailed study of the specific planning issues related to a residential neighborhood and its commercial component. Several neighborhood master plans are recommended as implementation actions for the comprehensive plan. The Guilderland and Guilderland Center neighborhoods are identified as short-term actions. Other neighborhoods, such as McKownville, Westmere, McCormack Corners and Fort Hunter would also benefit from this approach. The plan recommends that the town help to facilitate neighborhood organization and dialogue in these places as an interim measure to determine the extent of neighborhood identity, interest, and concern. These preliminary efforts, which could be organized around a successful public participation model such as the Guilderland Study Circles, could lead to the initiation of neighborhood master plans for these areas as well.

Each neighborhood master plan will be unique. However, there are several common elements that should be included in the process of developing all the neighborhood master plans:

- The town should establish a small (perhaps 5 to 7 member) Neighborhood Master Plan Committee consisting of neighborhood residents, business owners, and other neighborhood stakeholders. The Committee would work with the town's professional planning consultant and town staff in the development of the neighborhood master plan.
- The process of developing the neighborhood master plan should include a series of public workshops in which neighborhood residents, neighborhood business owners, town officials, additional neighborhood stakeholders (for example, the school district) and any other interested/concerned town residents are invited, and encouraged to participate.
- Early in the process, the geographic extent of the neighborhood should be determined. A neighborhood should have an identifiable center and an edge and should be fairly compact. Ideally, the distance between center and edge would be between 1/4 and 1/2 mile -- the distance that someone can comfortably walk in 10 to 15 minutes. For some larger neighborhoods or planning areas, smaller sub-areas might be identified to meet the general criteria of a neighborhood.
- The neighborhood master plan should identify opportunities and constraints for the neighborhood, define a vision, and produce goals and objectives that establish policy for achieving the vision. This component of the plan should be developed in concert with the vision, goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. It is anticipated that the details of the neighborhood master plan will fit well into the more general ideas of the Comprehensive Plan since many of the same residents that participated at some level in the creation of the Comprehensive Plan will be involved in the neighborhood master plan.
- The neighborhood master plan should consider: the appropriate mix of land uses, architectural and urban design characteristics, transportation (including all modes), economic development opportunities, natural resource conservation, recreation, and other areas of concern.
- The neighborhood master plan should make specific zoning code recommendations, should identify sites for appropriate residential and commercial development, should provide suggestions for pedestrian circulation, trails, traffic calming, automobiles and public transportation, and should locate areas for recreation and for open space conservation.
- The master plan should include an implementation section. This section would detail public and private sector activities that would advance the recommendations in the plan, would identify methods of funding neighborhood improvements, and would prioritize actions.

The process for developing a Neighborhood Master Plan should include the following:

- Creation of the Master Plan Advisory Board by the Town Board, including appointment of members.
- Conduct neighborhood meetings to identify issues in greater detail.
- Interview all stakeholders in the area including Town departments, schools, business, and civic groups.
- Identify opportunities and constraints.
- Develop a vision and goals and objectives.
- Develop plan recommendations and the means of implementation.

When the Neighborhood Master Plan is completed, the Committee should submit it to the Town Board for adoption as an addendum or amendment to the comprehensive plan.