



Westfield
Implementable
Comprehensive Plan

Acknowledgements

This Comprehensive Plan is the product of a community coming together. Elected leaders, staff, and the Steering Committee guided the process with steady expertise, while residents, business owners, and local stakeholders brought their ideas, experiences, and hopes for the future. Countless individuals gave their time generously, attending meetings, sharing feedback, and staying engaged at every step. The result is a shared vision, built through collaboration and commitment, that charts a path forward for both the Town and Village.

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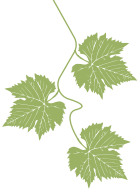
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Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Key Issues</i>	
<i>Downtown Development</i>	14
<i>Housing</i>	60
<i>Infrastructure</i>	94
Future Land Use Map	134
<i>Lakefront and Barcelona Harbor</i>	136
<i>Other Issues</i>	170
<i>Appendices</i>	178

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Introduction

Putting the Plan to Work



A decade of direction

Market St

ONE WAY

NO PARKING
TOLAR FREE

California
Dreamin
←

OPEN



Introduction

A Decade of Direction

The Town and Village of Westfield Joint Comprehensive Plan is more than a policy document; it's a practical guide for shaping the community's future. Covering land use, community facilities, services, and infrastructure, it provides a clear framework for staff, partner organizations, and stakeholders to make decisions aligned with long-term shared goals.

The plan was developed using the Implementable Comprehensive Plan model, a recognized best practice in modern planning. Unlike traditional comprehensive plans, this approach focuses on a few carefully selected Key Issues, shaped through meaningful public engagement and community input. Designed as a hands-on workbook, it outlines actionable strategies, step-by-step guidance, and key resources to help the Town and Village tackle a decade of projects. It captures the momentum generated during the planning process, reflecting the insights of the Steering Committee, municipal staff, elected officials, and community members.

Inside this Document

This workbook is designed for both local government and community use, providing strategies and background information to support informed decisions and action steps.

Introduction

This section lays out the groundwork of the planning process, including the outreach and public engagement that resulted in this plan.

Key Issues

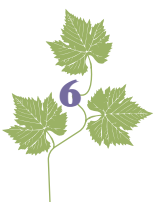
The plan is built around four Key Issues and contains strategies to address the needs and opportunities that residents and stakeholders identified as being the most important for the community. In Westfield, the key issues were identified as Downtown Development, Housing, Infrastructure, and Lakefront Planning & Barcelona Harbor.

Other Issues

This chapter touches on other topics that are important to include in the Comprehensive Plan but require less detail and focus than the Key Issues.

Appendices

This section includes additional and/or more detailed information that helped shape the plan and may serve as a reference as officials and staff begin the work of leading implementation.





Using this Plan

This plan serves as a community-driven blueprint, built on local priorities, aspirations, and input. While it embodies the community's vision, it also lays out practical, realistic strategies and steps the Town and Village can implement effectively.

Each Key Issue chapter begins with relevant background, giving readers the context needed before exploring the Strategies and Recommendations. Each Key Issue chapter also includes:

- **Chapter Vision:** A concise statement of the community's desired future for the Key Issue, setting the tone and guiding the content that follows.
- **This Issue at a Glance:** Key talking points summarizing the most important messages and takeaways—helpful for readers who may not read the entire chapter.
- **Key Issue Strategies:** Practical, implementable recommendations rooted in community input, designed to advance goals and move the community toward its vision.

Each chapter begins with a vision that captures the community's aspirations for the Key Issue, followed by a snapshot of the most important themes, priorities, and challenges identified through community input. Strategies then translate these ideas into practical, implementable steps, connecting community input to actionable recommendations and providing a clear path for thoughtful decision-making. For more detail on existing conditions, see the Community Profile.

Introduction

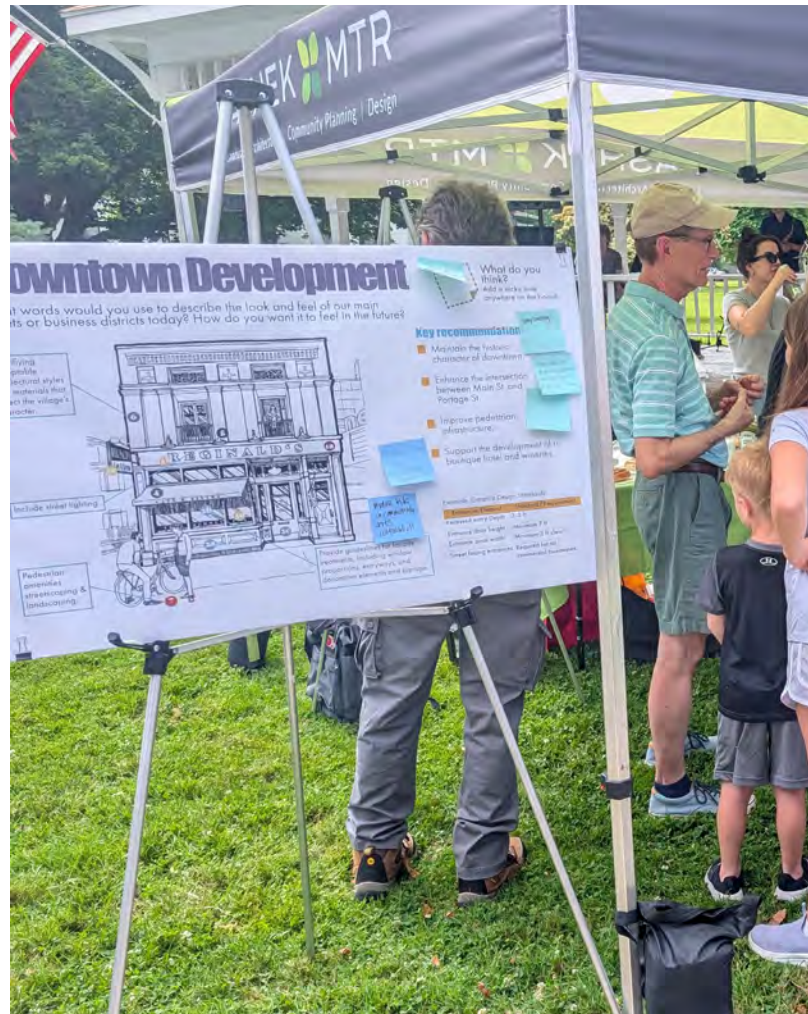
A Plan for the Community

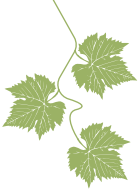
Recommendations informed by robust public engagement are strategy-focused, tailored to the community, and aligned with the Town and Village's strengths, challenges, resources, capacity, and long-term goals. A community-centered plan starts with understanding how residents, business owners, and local leaders experience their environment.

To guide this effort, the project team examined the Town and Village's strengths and opportunities, listening carefully to what residents value most and the challenges they face. This ensured that recommendations are both aspirational and grounded in local realities. Feedback highlighted priorities that matter most to daily life, shaping the plan's focus areas and informing actionable strategies that Westfield can realistically implement over the coming years. Ultimately, this approach fosters a culture of collaboration and ongoing engagement. The plan is designed as a living document, able to evolve as the community grows, circumstances change, and new opportunities arise. It provides a framework for informed decision-making today while preserving long-term goals and community aspirations.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee played a central role in guiding public engagement, identifying Key Issues, and shaping priorities to ensure strategies were tailored to Westfield's unique context. Comprised of staff, community leaders, local professionals, residents, and other stakeholders, the committee brought diverse perspectives and helped establish support for the plan. The committee met five times between Summer 2024 and Summer 2025 at key milestones and provided feedback that helped steer the planning process from start to finish.





Stakeholder Interviews

To inform the planning process, the Steering Committee identified community members with specialized knowledge or unique perspectives to help shape the Key Issues and gather detailed insights about the community. Interviewees were asked to reflect on Westfield's strengths, challenges, and priorities. Their feedback spanned a range of topics, including community services, land use, employment opportunities, downtown development, and housing.

Key insights included:

- **Downtown and Community Character:** *Maintaining a thriving, walkable Main Street and preserving the village's quiet, close-knit character were top priorities. Residents valued the aesthetic appeal of Main Street, public spaces, and access to both Lake Chautauqua and Lake Erie. Design improvements, especially along the Portage Road corridor, were noted as opportunities.*
- **Housing and Population:** *Housing affordability, limited diversity, particularly for seniors, and a growing homeless population were identified as challenges affecting the community's long-term growth and ability to attract families. Economic and Employment Opportunities: Limited local and regional employment options were seen as a barrier to attracting and retaining younger residents. Youth engagement also suffered from a lack of programming and spaces for teens.*
- **Services and Resources:** *Gaps in childcare services and outdated communication tools, such as the Town and Village website, were cited as barriers to community access and engagement. At the same time, the library, public spaces, and overall housing stock were recognized as strong community assets.*
- **Community Cohesion:** *The close-knit nature of Westfield residents stood out as a strength, with people consistently coming together to support one another.*



Introduction

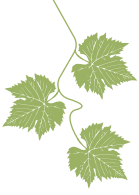
Community Survey

The Community Questionnaire was a key public engagement tool for identifying and framing Key Issues in the Implementable Comprehensive Plan for the Town and Village of Westfield. The Steering Committee worked with the consultant team to create a survey that would best guide the planning process. Open from July to October 2024, the survey was promoted through the Town and Village websites, social media, local news outlets, posters, palm cards with QR codes, and at pop-up events. More than 500 people responded, 55% of whom had lived in the community for over 20 years.



The following is a summary of the responses:

- *Westfield is perceived as having strong public services. It is a well-maintained community with responsive public works, dependable emergency services, a quality library, hospital access, and a strong sense of safety.*
- *Many noted the need for infrastructure improvements, including sidewalk repairs, improved lighting, expanded parking, public transit options, and extended water service.*
- *A major asset to the area is the welcoming, small-town character with an attractive downtown area and a neighborly community.*
- *Survey responses clearly highlighted a strong desire for more affordable housing, improved code enforcement, and revitalization of vacant properties.*
- *Respondents called for new and more diverse leadership, greater transparency, reduced bureaucracy, and stronger communication with residents and businesses.*
- *There was strong support for maintaining and improving existing parks, protecting open space, and preserving agricultural lands.*



September Public Meeting

The Steering Committee promoted the first public meeting, held at Eason Hall, through a mix of posters, flyers, news release, social media, and word of mouth. Residents and stakeholders were invited to learn about the project and weigh in on the community's Key Issues. Approximately 50 people attended, responding to questions like, "What are the biggest challenges facing Westfield over the next decade?" and "What community strengths should we build on?"

The project team shared an overview of the planning process and preliminary engagement findings, then encouraged attendees to discuss their perspectives. Participants reviewed presentation boards highlighting potential focus areas and placed sticker dot votes on the topics they felt were most important. Many also shared written or verbal comments, which were recorded by consultants and committee members.

Housing emerged as a central concern, with community members highlighting issues related to the existing housing stock, opportunities for home improvements, and short-term rentals like Airbnb. Other top priorities included attracting new businesses and employers, addressing drug use and mental health challenges, and encouraging young families and individuals to settle in Westfield. Improving Barcelona Harbor and enhancing access to Lake Erie were also highly valued by participants.

Recommendations Pop-Up Event

As the plan's recommendations took shape, the Town and Village hosted a final pop-up event to gather public feedback. Set up at the weekly Farmers' and Artisan's Market at Moore Park, the consultant team and steering committee welcomed attendees under a tent and grilled hot dogs, inviting the public to "grill" the planning team on the draft recommendations. Visitors were encouraged to review the proposed recommendations and provide targeted feedback, including ranking the importance and usefulness of recommendations, sharing ideas for downtown façade guidelines, prioritizing lakefront amenities, and identifying the types of housing most needed by the community. Many of the insights and suggestions gathered were incorporated into the final plan.



12 month Start Up To Do List

- 1.** Develop a Downtown Property Owner's Guide as the first step toward creating a unified downtown enforcement program.
- 2.** Create and promote a startup business checklist on the Town and Village website to support new entrepreneurs.
- 3.** Engage local wineries to explore potential partnership opportunities.
- 4.** Draft regulations for a short term rental policy
- 5.** Develop a local housing toolkit to connect residents with grants, vouchers, and first-time homebuyer programs.
- 6.** Continue to support County-led broadband initiatives and begin initiate municipal WiFi development
- 7.** Use the sidewalk inventory to reach out to homeowners about replacing high-priority sidewalks through the rebate program
- 8.** Upgrade the community website
- 9.** Add amenities to the recently aquired lakeshore property
- 10.** Adopt a Lakefront Conservation Overlay Zone





Implementation in Action: Why Timing Matters

The planning process has built energy and engagement within the community, and implementation helps maintain that momentum through tangible action. Following through on community priorities demonstrates accountability, showing residents that their input matters and fostering long-term trust. Moving forward also addresses the risks of inaction, as stagnation could lead to resident frustration, uncoordinated development, and missed opportunities for growth or funding. Additionally, a publicly supported plan strengthens funding opportunities by positioning the community as competitive for grants and outside investment, highlighting clear goals and broad consensus.

2 *Downtown Development*

Shaping Downtown Westfield



Guiding Growth and Opportunity



VILLAGE
SPEED
LIMIT
30



AHEAD

Honey

Sweet Day Farm

Vision:

Historic Downtown Westfield will remain a welcoming, walkable center that reflects the character of the area while supporting new businesses and community life. Improvements to buildings and streetscapes will help foster a vibrant environment and encourage future investment.

This issue at a glance:

- Stakeholders throughout the planning process hoped this plan would preserve and leverage historic assets to strengthen identity, tourism, and economic vitality.
- Downtown Westfield has many advantages, including unique shops and independent businesses, a historic character, and walkable scale that encourages exploration on foot and makes it easy to link multiple stops in a single visit.
- By combining physical improvements with business development and cultural programming, Westfield can build on its existing strengths to create a downtown that is both authentically historic and vibrantly alive.
- The Town and Village should participate in the Empire State Development (ESD) Strategic Planning and Feasibility Program to create an economic strategic plan, which may include a market study for a boutique hotel or a marketing campaign.
- Streetscaping improvements and traffic calming elements should aim to make walking the default way to experience downtown by improving pedestrian safety, comfort, and wayfinding.



Downtown Development

Where Westfield Comes Together

Downtown Westfield is the community's front porch, where locals run into neighbors, visitors get their first taste of the local charm, and events bring everyone together. It's walkable, hyper local, and full of historic character. The vibrant downtown business district, framed by beautiful surrounding areas, is an asset to maintain and build upon.

Historic downtown Westfield is the social and cultural hub of the area and plays a central role in economic vitality. During the planning process, stakeholders consistently expressed that preserving the district's historic character, while fostering a supportive environment for small businesses and community life, should guide future decisions. The community sees opportunity to enhance downtown in ways that reflect Westfield's personality, sense of place, and connection to its history.



Time Tested Charm

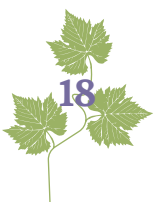
Westfield's architecture tells its story. From the well-preserved brick facades to the ornate cornices and traditional storefront windows, the downtown's historic district offers a tangible link to the community's past. Many buildings are in the Italianate and Colonial Revival styles, creating a distinctive streetscape that sets Westfield apart.

Historic character is one of Westfield's strongest tourism assets. It supports a main street experience that pairs authenticity with charm, qualities increasingly sought by travelers, but even more cherished by residents.

Challenges emerge when the limited supply of historic buildings makes it difficult to accommodate new businesses, and when design guidelines are not consistently enforced, leading to alterations or deferred maintenance that can erode historic integrity. Vacant or underutilized properties, particularly when ground floors sit empty or are occupied by uses better suited to upper levels (such as apartment living or non-retail business), interrupt the continuity of storefront activity and reduce foot traffic. Many small property owners face financial hurdles to rehabilitation, lacking access to capital or awareness of available incentives. At the same time, preservation efforts must balance the need to protect historic character with accommodating modern requirements such as accessibility upgrades, energy efficiency improvements, and flexible spaces that support evolving business models.

“Westfield is a wonderful small community with great natural beauty. Continuing to help retain small businesses should be a priority as well as retaining the country feel of the community.”

- survey response





The Downtown Advantage

Westfield's mix of small businesses, eateries, and cultural attractions draws locals and visitors alike. In the community questionnaire created as part of this planning project, attracting and retaining businesses emerged as the highest priority for the future.

Agriculture, primarily grape cultivation, remains a cornerstone of the community's economy. In 1897, Charles E. Welch moved his grape juice company to Westfield to take advantage of the ideal growing conditions for Concord grapes, cementing a legacy that still shapes the area today. Welch's, a name synonymous with the community's agricultural roots, remains a point of pride and recognition. The Lake Erie Wine Trail builds on this heritage, drawing visitors from across the region, and is often paired with exploration of Westfield's historic downtown and surrounding countryside. Other regional draws include the rich natural landscapes, Lake Erie, and the Chautauqua Institution.

Addressing these issues through targeted business recruitment, upper-floor housing or office conversions, and collaborative marketing can sustain downtown's role as the economic and social heart of the community.



The Main Street Approach

The Main Street Approach, coined by Main Street America, provides a framework for revitalizing older and historic downtowns by harnessing the economic and cultural value of Main Street's historic buildings. It responds to challenges such as sprawl and gradual disinvestment in traditional main street business districts. The approach organizes its work into four interconnected focus areas known as the "Four Points": Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization, offering a comprehensive strategy for addressing both opportunities and challenges within a district.

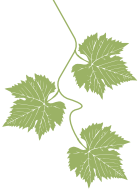
A Vibrant Future

Downtown offers a healthy blend of retail, dining, venues, and personal and professional services, creating a walkable environment that meets local and tourism needs, boosting spending and economic impact. Despite its strengths, the downtown economy faces hurdles:

- Vacant storefronts and underutilized upper floors, which can interrupt the vitality of main street blocks by reducing foot traffic.
- Limited coordinated marketing or recruitment efforts, meaning potential business owners and visitors may not fully recognize Westfield's opportunities.
- Seasonal fluctuations in visitor traffic, which can strain year-round business viability.

Addressing these issues through targeted business recruitment, upper-floor housing or office conversions, and collaborative marketing can sustain downtown's role as the economic and social heart of the community.





Existing Conditions

Westfield's downtown was designed for walking. Sidewalks and crosswalks line the streets, storefronts open directly onto the pedestrian realm, and most attractions are within a short distance. Connections to nearby attractions, such as the amphitheater, the Abraham Lincoln statue, and the landmark Welch's building, add variety and points of interest. Street trees, historic building fronts, and public spaces contribute to the charm.

Some areas of downtown struggle with uneven or deteriorating sidewalks, crossings that are difficult to navigate due to visibility or traffic speeds, and a lack of wayfinding and parking signage. However, there is room to make the pedestrian experience safer while retaining the historic charm of the streetscape.

Momentum and Investment

With strong bones, active local initiatives, and a major state investment, downtown is well-positioned for its next chapter. Westfield was awarded \$4.5 million through the NY Forward program, which can help catalyze transformative projects. The Town and Village are in the third year of a grant program for building improvements in the historic district. The program offers a 50-50 match, capped at \$2,000 per project. With a current pool of \$15,000, the impact could be significantly expanded if matched with county funds, potentially providing up to 10 businesses with a \$6,000 match each for building improvements. These small but targeted investments can make a visible difference in storefront quality and overall downtown appeal. Local organizations continue to host events and programming that draw people downtown, while regional and state partners provide opportunities for coordinated promotion and visitor engagement.



KEY ISSUE STRATEGIES



Downtown Development

Turning ideas into action



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Preserve and Enhance Historic Character

Downtown's historic architecture is a defining asset that shapes its identity and draws residents, visitors, and investment. Strategic placemaking, creating spaces and experiences that encourage people to gather, can establish the intangible assets of community character and social cohesion, and nurture a sense of place and belonging through shared experiences and spaces.



Downtown's historic charm provides the backdrop for spaces where people come together. Beyond the buildings themselves, the area thrives when people connect.



Downtown Development

These strategies, adapted from *Main Street America*, highlight best practices in placemaking and downtown revitalization:

The Power of Ten

Aim for at least ten reasons for people to visit downtown (shops, restaurants, markets, public art, cultural venues, parks, and events). Connect these destinations physically and visually to create a network of experiences.

Multi-Use Destinations

Combine uses in public spaces to attract diverse audiences (farmers markets with live music, parks with art installations, plazas with pop-up retail). Encourage public institutions (e.g., libraries, museums) to serve as community anchors by offering gathering spaces and programs.





Blending Preservation and Placemaking

The positive impacts of historic preservation on the economy and community life are well documented, spanning job creation, stable property values, growth in heritage tourism, environmental benefits, social connections, and revitalization that attracts talent, investment, and small businesses (National Trust for Historic Preservation). Research also shows that areas with a mix of older, smaller buildings of diverse ages support greater levels of economic and social activity than those dominated by newer, larger buildings (National Trust for Historic Preservation).

Main Streets today, like Downtown Westfield, face competition from online retail and suburban shopping centers. Their advantage lies in their ability to create a place or destination where people want to spend time. The most successful downtowns blend preservation with activation in markets, events, public art, and small-scale improvements that make streets feel welcoming and encourage foot traffic (Project for Public Spaces, “Placemaking: Main Street into a Destination Downtown”). Strengthening preservation efforts and tools will honor the legacy and contribute to economic vitality, while ensuring future investment complements the historic character.

Walking & Street Audits

Conduct regular audits with residents, business owners, and planners to assess walkability, safety, and attractiveness. Use findings to target quick improvements, like painting crosswalks or adding benches. Should Westfield create a citizen’s review committee, this could be a task they take on!

Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper (LQC)

Test ideas through low-cost, temporary interventions before committing to major capital projects. Some examples might include planters to define outdoor seating, temporary parklets in parking spaces, pop-up markets in vacant lots.

Streets as Public Spaces

Design streets for people, with elements like wider sidewalks, shade trees, outdoor dining, bike racks, and on-street parking that buffers pedestrians from traffic. Use traffic calming measures to create comfortable walking speeds and safe crossings.

1 | Preserve and Enhance Historic Character

a. **Maintain and expand the building improvement grant program for properties within the historic district.**

What

A building improvement grant program provides financial assistance to property and business owners in the historic district to support exterior repairs, façade upgrades, and rehabilitation projects.

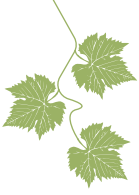
Why

Small grants are proven incentives for encouraging façade improvements and rehabilitation projects, especially for small business owners who may lack capital.

How

Expanding the current 50-50 matching grant program could increase uptake and visibly enhance downtown.





Here's Who Does This Well

Watkins Glen has leveraged a coordinated approach combining updated design guidelines, grant programs, and proactive enforcement to revitalize its historic downtown. This included revisions to the zoning ordinance to require ground-floor active uses, establishing a façade improvement grant, and incorporating public realm enhancements—all supported by community engagement and partnership with the New York State Department of State (NY Forward Program). The result has been increased private investment and a more vibrant, walkable downtown. Watkins Glen used placemaking strategies to transform its Main Street. Through updated design guidelines, a façade improvement program, and traffic calming, the village created a walkable, attractive downtown that supports local businesses and tourism. The approach blended preservation with active programming (seasonal events, coordinated marketing, and public art) turning the street into both an economic driver and a community gathering space.



b. Update and enforce façade design guidelines.

What

While private property owners remain responsible for maintenance, Westfield has successfully aligned this with broader preservation and economic development goals through façade improvement programs. The Village, alongside the Westfield Development Corporation (WDC), has supported façade enhancements for 18 businesses between 2022 and 2024 via a locally funded small business façade program.

Why

Westfield aims to align private property maintenance with preservation and economic development goals by protecting historic character, encouraging investment, and providing clear guidance for consistent, high-quality improvements.

Downtown Development

How

These guidelines should incorporate national best practices such as those recommended by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Tailoring these to Westfield's local architectural vernacular and ensuring compliance with New York State Historic Preservation Law (NY State Historic Preservation Office) will protect character while providing clarity to property owners and developers.

Goals of Design Standards:

- Preserve historic integrity and local identity, reflective of Westfield's character.
- Boost economic development and year-round tourism, reaffirming Westfield as a vibrant small-town destination.
- Continue to create a cohesive, historic small-town aesthetic
- Prioritize human-scale features, pedestrian comfort, and historic streetscape harmony.

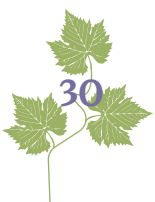
Key Design Principles for a Cohesive Main Street

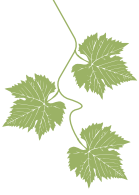
Strong design guidance is most effective when it balances timeless preservation principles with clear, locally tailored standards that property owners, designers, and review boards can apply consistently. A well-crafted design guidelines handbook should be highly visual, using illustrations, diagrams, and examples to make concepts easy to understand and apply.

Westfield's existing design guidelines already provide a solid foundation, with location-specific thresholds that reflect the village's unique character.

Here's Who Does This Well

Both Victor and Livingston County, NY have established design guidelines that prioritize sustainable development, community character preservation, and regional coordination. These efforts contribute to creating vibrant and cohesive communities that are well-planned and thoughtfully developed. Victor's guidelines are highly technical and Livingston County's are more visual.





Illustrative example of a façade upgrade

Decorative elements and signage adds functionality, identification, and character. Place on windows, awning, hanging over the sidewalk, or at the top of the storefront

Specifying acceptable architectural styles and materials that reflect the Village's character

Restored architecture adds beauty and character

Street lighting adds hospitality and safety

Guidelines for façade treatments, including window and entryway proportions, materials like recessed glass, and awnings for weather protection

pedestrian amenities, streetscaping / landscaping



Downtown Development

Model design approaches

<i>Element</i>	<i>Best Practice</i>	<i>When Possible, Avoid</i>
Proportions & Scale	<i>Maintain original façade layout; align signs with historic lines; floor heights max 10-15 ft</i>	<i>Altering window/door sizes; breaking visual rhythm (elements that are oversized or feel out of place)</i>
Storefronts	<i>Keep 40–70% clear glazing; restore transoms; recessed entries; uncluttered windows.</i>	<i>Tinted/reflective glass; blocking views; floor-to-ceiling modern glazing</i>
Materials	<i>Repair historic materials; use durable, paintable substitutes like fiber cement.</i>	<i>Vinyl siding; faux stone; covering original masonry or wood details.</i>
Windows & Doors	<i>Match historic profiles and sizes; use wood or aluminum-clad wood; appropriate stile-and-rail doors; restore original openings when possible; aim for a visible light transmittance of ≥ 0.5.</i>	<i>Vinyl windows; mismatched profiles; blackout glass; rolling security shutters.</i>
Color	<i>Use compatible palettes (60% base, 30% secondary, 10% accent) inspired by existing masonry and historic palettes; highlight details subtly.</i>	<i>Overly bright/clashing schemes; painting unpainted masonry.</i>
Outdoor Features (roofing, awnings, gutters)	<i>Period-appropriate materials (standing seam metal, slate); half-round gutters; fabric, retractable awnings coordinated with building colors.</i>	<i>Asphalt shingles in visible areas; residential K-style gutters; backlighting.</i>
Signage	<i>Encourage pedestrian-scaled, vintage-inspired signs using metal or carved wood; Allow temporary vinyl signs for limited durations (e.g., 120–180 days/year), with size, placement, maintenance, and permit rules clearly defined; Prohibit feather flags, inflatables, etc., in downtown—except during Village-sanctioned events with defined temporal and spatial restrictions</i>	<i>Limit internally illuminated, digital, or scrolling LED signs.</i>
Details	<i>Restore cornices, columns, lintels; Use warm-white lighting (2700K–3000K)</i>	<i>Covering or removing architectural details; using oversized trim.</i>
Streetscaping	<i>Use historically inspired elements(e.g., cast iron benches, painted signage); use native plantings; preserve mature trees; street trees, pedestrian lighting, planter displays</i>	---
New Construction & Maintenance	<i>New buildings should respect adjacent scale</i>	<i>Overly modern styles</i>



Enforcement Considerations

Effective enforcement requires balancing accountability with support. Clear expectations and consistent processes will help maintain downtown's historic character while recognizing the different circumstances property owners may face.

- Property owners are expected to maintain façades, repair damage promptly, and avoid temporary fixes lasting longer than 30 days.
- Enforcement should be coordinated with available resources, including façade improvement grants, New York Main Street funding, and local revolving loan programs.

A Downtown Property Review Committee could be established, including representatives from the code enforcement office, historical society, magistrate's office, and volunteer community members. The committee could meet monthly and would help:

- Review and prioritize properties needing attention.
- Work with owners to encourage timely improvements, offering technical support or referrals to funding programs where possible.
- Determine when stronger enforcement actions are necessary, particularly in cases involving absentee landlords or chronic neglect.



Downtown Development

c. Establish a Unified Downtown Enforcement Program

What

A proactive enforcement program focused on Main Street and the surrounding blocks will guide property owners in maintaining compliance with design and development standards. It will promote a mix of land uses, support efficient infrastructure, and reinforce a sense of place.

Why

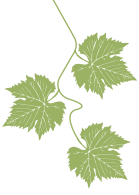
This program helps maintain a cohesive, walkable downtown environment that is both attractive and functional. By simplifying compliance for property owners and preventing alterations that conflict with historic character, it protects the visual and cultural identity of the community. A well-maintained downtown strengthens economic development by drawing businesses, residents, and visitors. At the same time, it balances growth with the preservation of the surrounding rural and agricultural landscape, designating Downtown Westfield as a historic and central hub of economic development in the Town and Village.

How

Key actions include:

- Update zoning overlays to include façade, signage, lighting, and awning standards tailored to Westfield’s historic downtown.
- Require design review for new construction, major alterations, or demolitions to ensure alignment with community character and comprehensive plan goals.
- Provide guidance and support to property owners and developers through a Downtown Property Owner’s Guide and technical assistance on rehabilitation best practices.
- Conduct routine, seasonal inspections using standardized checklists and photo documentation to ensure fairness and consistency.
- Hold annual stakeholder meetings to review rules, highlight success stories, and receive feedback.
- Incorporate enforcement into site plan and special permit reviews to guide investment toward community priorities.
- Adopt a “compliance plus incentive” model, where voluntary compliance provides access to grants, fee reductions, or other benefits.





d. Incorporate green infrastructure into streetscape and redevelopment projects

How

Features like permeable pavers, rain gardens, and native landscaping reduce stormwater runoff, improve downtown aesthetics, and align with other resiliency goals. These can be designed to fit historic contexts, enhancing both environmental resilience and walkability. A reliable garden club or local group of native plant enthusiasts, such as the Chautauqua County Master Gardeners, could help maintain these features.



Downspout



Green parking



Bioretention/Rain Garden



Bioswales



Bumpouts



Permeable Pavers



Bioretention



Tree planting

2

Strengthen the Local Business Environment

While downtown has long served as the heart of the community, shifts in retail patterns, tourism, and small business development highlight the need for a proactive strategy to sustain and expand this role. This recommendation focuses on broadening the mix of shops, dining, and services for residents and visitors, while expanding the tax base, boosting vibrancy and walkability, and reinforcing Westfield's reputation as a welcoming place for entrepreneurs and small businesses.



A diverse and thriving business community is central to a vibrant downtown, and Westfield has more than 100 businesses, many of which are in its downtown core, forming the foundation of its civic and cultural identity.



2 | Strengthen the Local Business Environment

a. Consider zoning updates

How

Some zoning updates may include:

- Require retail, dining, and other high-traffic, pedestrian-friendly uses on the ground floors in core downtown areas to promote street-level activity and engagement. This approach is recommended in the NY State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act and has been shown to increase foot traffic and sales (NYS DOS, 2023).
- Identify suitable sites outside the core downtown for low-impact commercial uses. Allowing offices for professionals such as accountants or attorneys in nearby zones can expand commercial space without detracting from retail vitality downtown.

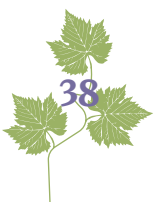
b. Hire a consultant to prepare an economic strategic plan through the Empire State Development (ESD) Strategic Planning and Feasibility Program.

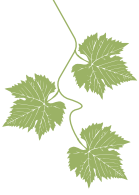
What

This effort would explore opportunities to strengthen the community's economic position and visibility. Potential components could include:

- **Economic feasibility analysis and market study** to assess the viability of projects such as a boutique hotel in the Village.
- **Strategic marketing recommendations** to raise the community's profile, attract visitors, and support local businesses.
- **Implementation framework** identifying target audiences, messaging strategies, and potential funding sources.

The results would provide a roadmap for informed investment decisions and coordinated promotional efforts.





c. Explore the development of a boutique hotel

How

Commissioning a market feasibility study will help identify demand and potential sites, such as the Fairpoint Building. Partnerships with local institutions like the hospital could support such a project, increasing visitor stays and spending.

d. Strengthen business recruitment and coordination

Why

Westfield's long-term economic vitality depends on a proactive approach to business recruitment, coordinated promotion, and unified advocacy.

How

To achieve this, the community should pursue a two-part strategy: establishing a Westfield Business Association and advancing a targeted Downtown Business Recruitment Strategy.

i. Establish a Westfield Business Association

What

A local business association would unify advocacy, marketing, and event coordination efforts, providing downtown businesses with a strong collective voice. This group could complement existing organizations, the Westfield Development Corporation, which promotes economic development through its volunteer board and Executive Director, and the Westfield-Barcelona Community Chamber of Commerce chapter, by focusing specifically on the needs of downtown merchants and service providers. Together, these organizations could share resources, coordinate events, and strengthen Westfield's reputation as both a community hub and regional destination.

ii. Implement a Downtown Business Recruitment Strategy

What

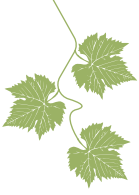
Westfield should develop a structured recruitment plan to fill gaps in the local market and expand opportunities for entrepreneurship. Key steps include:

1. Identify Priority Business Types: Recruitment should target businesses that complement existing offerings and meet unmet community needs. These may include:

- Dining and entertainment venues that appeal to both residents and visitors.
- Retail and service businesses providing everyday essentials, such as groceries, pharmacy services, and family-friendly amenities.
- Tourism-focused businesses like wine and beer tasting rooms, artisan galleries, and outdoor gear rentals that capitalize on the Lake Erie and agritourism economy.
- Professional services that enhance convenience for residents while contributing to the daytime workforce.

2. Match Businesses with Available Spaces: An up-to-date inventory of available downtown storefronts, office space, and mixed-use units should be maintained. This will help connect entrepreneurs with locations that suit their needs, while collaboration with property owners can ensure lease terms and space improvements align with the realities of small business operations.





e. Develop and promote a startup business checklist

What

Create a practical guide for new businesses that covers permits, grants, and local resources. The guide should be available in print and as a digital, interactive version on municipal websites, with clickable links and contact information.

Why

This tool lowers barriers to entry, provides clear step-by-step guidance, and makes it easier for entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses, ultimately encouraging local economic development.

How

The checklist will cover:

- **Business Planning:** Guidance on business models, financial projections, and financing sources.
- **Site Selection:** Steps for reviewing zoning requirements, code compliance, and available spaces.
- **Permitting and Licensing:** A summary of required local, county, and state approvals, including zoning permits, building permits, signage, and health department reviews.
- **Financing and Incentives:** A directory of grant and loan programs, including New York Main Street and local façade improvement funding.
- **Compliance and Operations:** Information on employer registration, sales tax collection, insurance, and labor law requirements.
- **Support Resources:** Contact information for municipal offices, the County IDA, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Small Business Development Center.

An example “Getting Started” checklist might include:

- Speak with the municipal code officer early in the process to confirm zoning, permits, and building requirements before moving forward.
- Choose a business structure (LLC, sole proprietorship, etc.).
- File a “doing business as” (DBA) name registration.
- Apply for a federal Employer Identification Number (IRS.gov).
- Register with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance.
- Secure any required licenses or permits (health, building, signage, etc.).
- Open a dedicated business bank account.
- Prepare a business plan.
- Review insurance needs (general liability, workers’ compensation, etc.).
- Develop marketing tools (branding, website, social media presence).
- Connect with local business organizations or chambers of commerce.
- Submit a zoning permit application to Zoning Officer if needed.
- Arrange a pre-application meeting with the Planning and Zoning Board for new construction, a change of use, or signage projects.
- Obtain site plan approval or special use permits if required.
- Confirm your proposal aligns with the comprehensive plan and zoning regulations.





f. Explore partnerships with local wineries

How

Establish a shared downtown tasting room for classes, events, and bottle sales with cooperative rent agreements or subsidies to reduce costs. Consider a wine shuttle service linking downtown with nearby wineries to encourage cross-visitation. This has been effective in similar regions like the Finger Lakes. Considerations for the wineries include storage space to accommodate shared operations and scheduling.



Downtown Development

g. Promote existing programs and businesses

What

Westfield boasts vibrant events and distinctive local businesses, such as the Westfield Farmers' and Artisans' Market in Moore Park, which was named the Best Farmers' Market in New York State.

Why

Highlighting these assets and expanding their reach will strengthen Westfield's position as a unique, walkable business district that welcomes investment. Stronger visibility supports local entrepreneurs, attracts visitors, and reinforces downtown as a hub of commerce and community life.

How

The Town and Village could boost promotion and increase visibility by actively sharing the community calendar, developing a local business directory (potentially featured in Moore Park), and leveraging events to attract visitors. Westfield should also promote downtown business opportunities through the creation of a Downtown Business Opportunity Guide, highlighting available spaces, community demographics, priority business types, and financing or incentive programs. Marketing efforts should extend beyond the local area through partnerships with the Chautauqua County IDA, the Chamber of Commerce, and regional tourism organizations. A coordinated branding campaign will further position downtown Westfield as a destination for both businesses and visitors.

Here's Who Does This Well

Greensburg, PA's Business Opportunities guide, managed by the Greensburg Community Development Corporation, is a model for how to do a comprehensive and compelling business recruitment resource.

The guide is effective because it pairs a strong sense of place with clear direction for potential investors. It highlights the character of downtown, defines priority business types, and connects entrepreneurs to incentives, property information, and support services. By combining vision with practical resources, the guide makes it easy for businesses to see where they fit and how to get started.

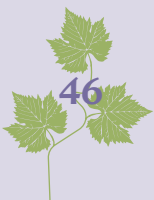




3

Create a Walkable and Connected Downtown

The Village should lead on infrastructure improvements and regulatory updates, while a future Business Association or the Westfield Development Corporation coordinates branding, marketing, and downtown activation. Local community groups can contribute content for signage and gateways, and the County can help secure funding and regional integration. A joint working group should guide early design and funding efforts, with phased implementation over the next 5+ years.



A safe, attractive pedestrian environment will encourage exploration and longer visits. Enhancements to gateways, crossings, and public spaces can connect visitors to key destinations and reinforce downtown's identity.



3 | Create a Walkable and Connected Downtown

a. Strengthen Downtown Gateways

What

Building on the principles of the Main Street Approach, starting with a key intersection and expanding outward activates the Main and Portage intersection into a vibrant, welcoming focal point that announces arrival in downtown Westfield.

Why

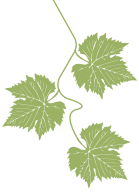
This prominent corner should serve as both a landmark and a community gathering space.

How

Elements could include:

- A more prominent signature gateway feature, such as a distinctive sign, public art, or sculptural element reflecting Westfield's identity (e.g., grape/wine heritage, Lake Erie shoreline, historic architecture)
- Historic-themed streetscaping such as planters, banners, decorative crosswalks, bump-outs with plantings, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and coordinated street furniture
- Integrated wayfinding directing visitors to downtown shops, Moore Park, the farmers market, the lakefront, and historic sites
- Ongoing activation: small events, pop-up markets, seasonal décor, and business-led promotions

After focusing efforts on the intersection of Main and Portage, similar gateway treatments could be applied at other key entrances to downtown to create a consistent sense of place.



What is gateway signage?

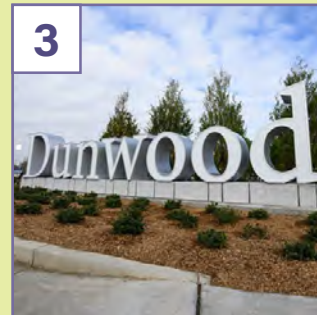
Gateway signage marks important entry points into a community, signaling to travelers that they have arrived and creating a strong first impression. Located at key transition points along transportation corridors, these signs help with navigation, welcome visitors, and reinforce community identity. Incorporating branding elements can strengthen placemaking and even promote traffic calming by signaling a shift to a more pedestrian-oriented area.

A hierarchy of gateway signs ensures visibility, consistency, and scale appropriate to each location:

Primary Gateways placed at major roads and high-traffic intersections at the community's edge, these large, highly visible signs create a bold, memorable presence.

Secondary Gateways located along significant roadways at secondary entry points, these medium-scale signs reinforce the community's identity while remaining proportional to their setting.

Tertiary Gateways found on quieter streets, pedestrian and bicycle trails, or residential approaches, these smaller signs provide subtle wayfinding while maintaining a cohesive look.



b. Install a wayfinding program

What

Create a unified signage program that helps visitors and residents navigate Westfield's parks, trails, shops, restaurants, and cultural landmarks. The system should include pedestrian-scaled signs, directional maps, interpretive panels sharing local history, and highlight key attractions, parking areas, and public amenities. Consistent colors, fonts, and materials should complement the Village's historic streetscape.

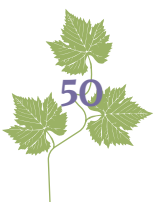
Why

A cohesive signage program improves wayfinding, making it easier for people to explore and enjoy Westfield. Consistency in design reinforces the Village's historic character and strengthens community identity, while interpretive panels enhance the visitor experience by sharing history and stories.

How

The Town and Village could begin by conducting an inventory of existing signs and identifying gaps in wayfinding. Design guidelines should be established for materials, colors, fonts, and messaging to ensure consistency across all signs. Key locations for signs, maps, and interpretive panels should be prioritized near parks, trails, cultural landmarks, and downtown corridors. The program could be implemented in phases, starting with high-traffic areas, and updated over time to reflect new attractions or community events. Community input and local artist involvement could be incorporated to reflect Westfield's unique character. Wayfinding should connect visitors to high-traffic and high-appeal destinations, including but not limited to the following priority destinations:

- Moore Park
- Eason Hall
- Barcelona Lighthouse
- Lincoln-Bedell Statue
- Lake Erie Wine Country trailheads or visitor shops
- Cycling or trail routes
- Local retail or dining
- Welch's Factory
- Amphitheatre



**Signage Considerations include:**

- **Safety:** Place signs so they do not block sightlines or create hazards for motorists, cyclists, or pedestrians.
- **Visibility and Scale:** Use lettering, colors, and contrast that are easy to read at walking speed and from passing vehicles. Size signs appropriately for their viewing distance and minimizing visual clutter.
- **Lighting:** Incorporate external or internal illumination for nighttime visibility while limiting glare and light spill.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Follow all local and state sign regulations, including permitted sizes, setbacks, and materials, particularly within the context of the historic character of Downtown Westfield .

Potential Features include:

- Directional signs and distance markers at major intersections, gateways, and trailheads to guide visitors between downtown and surrounding attractions.
- Large-scale maps at key locations such as Moore Park, Lakeside Park, the business district, and trail access points to orient visitors and highlight walking routes.
- Business and dining directories.
- QR codes on physical signs linking users to digital maps, event calendars, and local business listings.



Downtown Development

c. Strengthen links to local attractions

What

Westfield is home to cultural, recreational, and historic landmarks, including the Abe Lincoln statue, the amphitheater, and the Welch's building. Efforts to improve connectivity between these sites could include enhanced pedestrian pathways, wayfinding signage, and seasonal shuttle or trolley service. Programming and events, such as performances, festivals, tours, and educational activities, can further activate these assets. A coordinated marketing effort can unify these attractions under a shared brand and promote them through regional tourism networks.

Why

Strengthening connections between landmarks and promoting their use will create a more seamless visitor experience, draw activity across downtown, and enhance Westfield's identity and economic vitality. Coordinated programming and branding highlight the Village's historic and cultural strengths, support local businesses, and encourage reinvestment in key sites.

How

The Town and Village could map key cultural and historic sites and identify priority pedestrian routes to link them. Signage, interpretive panels, and seasonal shuttle or trolley service should be deployed to improve wayfinding and accessibility. Programming can be expanded by activating the amphitheater for performances and festivals, integrating the Lincoln statue into tours and educational events, and continue to pursue redevelopment of the Welch's building as a cultural and commercial hub. A marketing strategy should unify these assets under a consistent brand and leverage regional tourism networks to attract visitors and support downtown businesses.



Key Assets

- Abe Lincoln Statue: A cultural landmark commemorating Lincoln's historic stop in Westfield, serving as a gateway for heritage tourism.
- Amphitheater: A community gathering place that supports performances, festivals, and cultural programming.
- Welch's Building: A significant redevelopment opportunity with potential to host mixed-use commercial, cultural, or community uses that complement downtown revitalization.
- Barcelona Lighthouse (1829): The first natural gas-lit lighthouse in the United States, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Westfield Historic Downtown: A concentration of 19th- and early 20th-century architecture, eligible for continued historic preservation and adaptive reuse.
- McClurg Museum: Home of the Chautauqua County Historical Society, located in a historic mansion on Moore Park.
- Moore Park & Gazebo: Central green space that hosts concerts, farmers markets, and seasonal events.
- Lake Erie Waterfront & Beach Access: Fishing, boating, and scenic viewing opportunities.
- Barcelona Harbor: Marina, breakwall, and lakefront amenities that draw seasonal boaters and visitors.
- Patterson Library & Octagon Art Gallery: A historic library with cultural programming and rotating art exhibitions.
- Westfield YWCA: Provides childcare, youth activities, and community services.
- Sports Fields & Recreation Complexes: Spaces for local leagues, school sports, and regional tournaments.
- Westfield Farmers Market: Seasonal market supporting local producers and drawing visitors downtown.
- Vacant & Underutilized Upper-Story Downtown Buildings: Potential for mixed-use housing and office space.
- Former Industrial Sites: Properties that could be repositioned for light manufacturing, creative industry, or adaptive reuse.
- Hospitality Opportunities: Sites suitable for a boutique hotel or bed-and-breakfast expansion.
- Proximity to Chautauqua Institution: A short drive away, offering partnership opportunities to capture visitor traffic.
- Chautauqua Creek Gorge & Fishing Access: A premier trout stream that attracts anglers and outdoor enthusiasts.
- Wine & Grape Region: Proximity to Lake Erie Wine Country vineyards and wineries, supporting agritourism.



Downtown Development

d. Develop a long-term streetscape plan

What

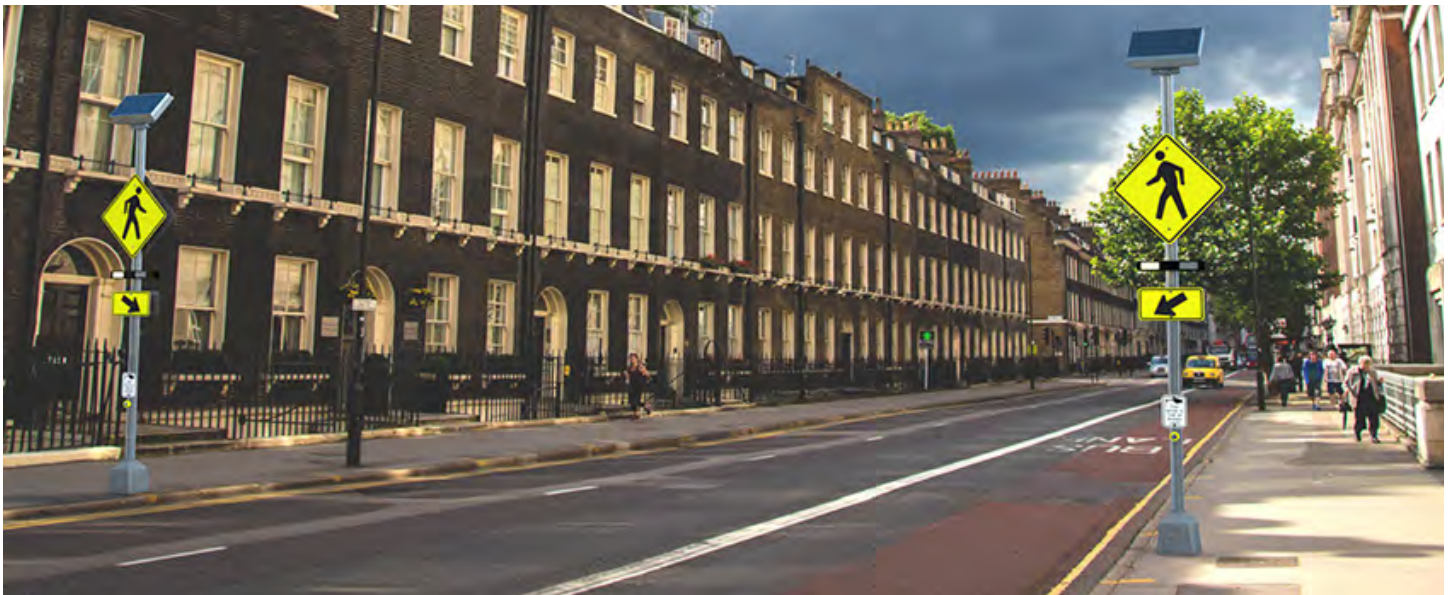
Develop a long-term streetscape plan with traffic-calming features such as bump-outs, pedestrian-friendly lighting, benches, and landscaping that respects historic character. Upgrade pedestrian crossings with features such as rectangular rapid-flashing beacons (RRFBs) at high-priority intersections.

Why

A long-term streetscape plan enhances safety, comfort, and walkability while reinforcing community identity. Traffic-calming features reduce speeding and improve pedestrian visibility, making streets safer for all users. Upgrading crossings with tools like RRFBs addresses safety at key locations where pedestrian and vehicle conflicts are most likely. Together, these improvements foster a more welcoming downtown that balances mobility with historic character.

How

Implement streetscape upgrades at the intersection in coordination with other planned improvements. Work with transportation agencies and pursue funding through safety grants or state programs to support costs.



Example of a solar powered RRFB

THE *Original*
THEATER
MOTEL

30 ROOMS & RESTAURANT

1 1/2 MILE

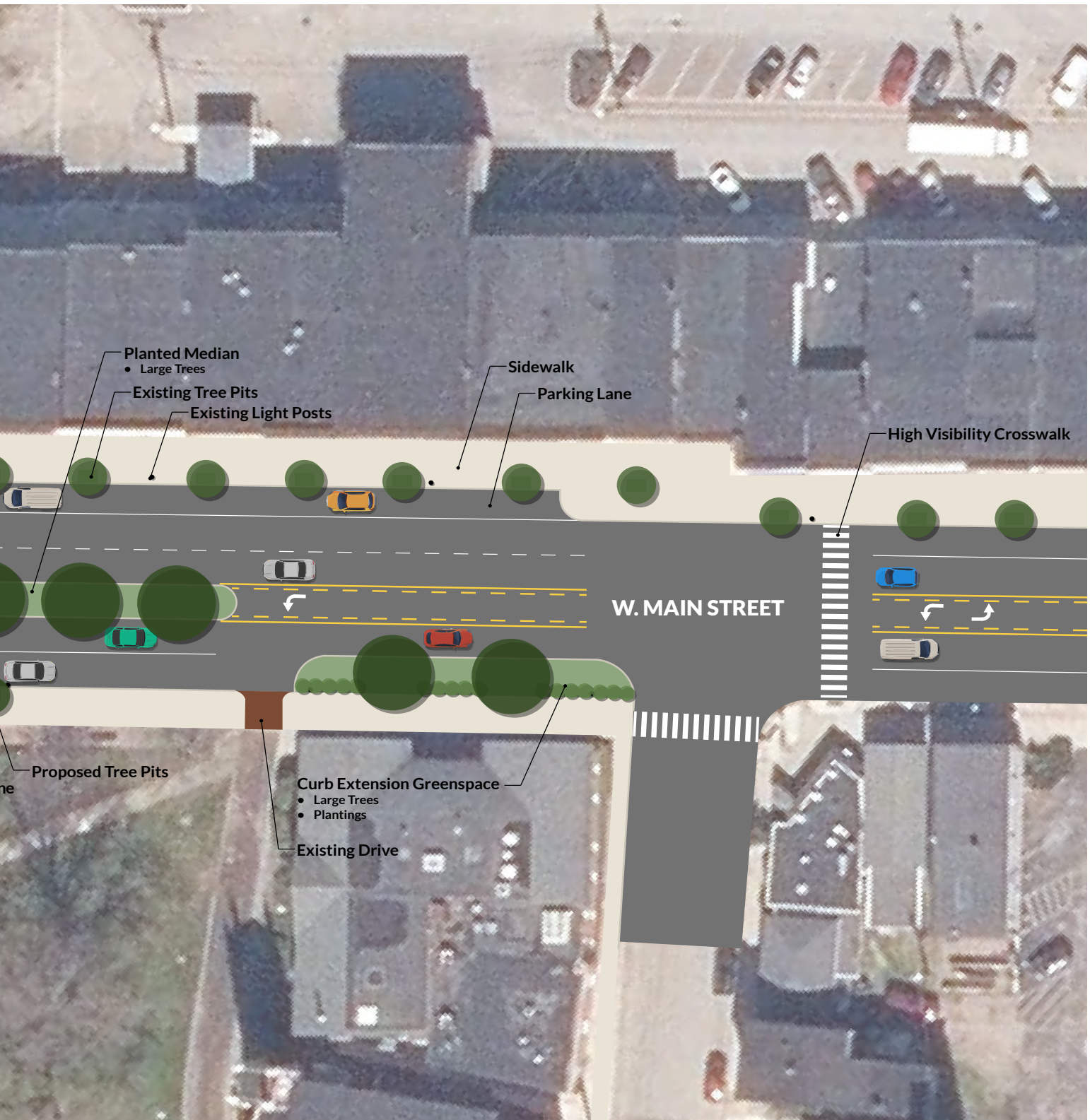
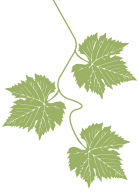
Executive II

Full Dining
ALL WINE & BEER
LUNCHEONS

20

Streetscaping Concept of Main Street and Portage Intersection

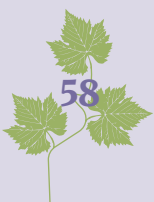




4

Leverage New York State Investments.

The Village of Westfield was awarded \$4.5 million by New York State through the 3rd round of the NY Forward program. It will directly support the planning and implementation needed to attract new businesses, welcome residents and visitors, and enhance overall quality of life for the entire community. Many of the recommendations as part of this comprehensive plan support preliminary project planning as part of the NY Forward.





Coffee Company

The Thrifty Kitty

Flowers & Gifts

Best Budget Insurance

ONE WAY



3

Housing

Building a Community for All



Preserving Character, Supporting Change



Vision:

Westfield will provide access to quality housing for residents at every stage of life, encouraging creative development and a balanced approach to seasonal and year-round housing.

This issue at a glance:

- Questionnaire responses for this planning process highlighted that a high number of short-term rentals, compared to year-round housing, contributes to poor property maintenance and rising housing costs, even as many respondents acknowledged the need for lodging to support tourism. Suggested solutions included stricter property maintenance enforcement and regulations to limit or standardize rentals.
- Community members emphasized that any new housing should reflect and complement the existing character of the Town and Village.
- Westfield's aging, shrinking population and underused housing are putting increasing pressure on the local market, with limited options for smaller, more affordable units and housing for older adults, while seasonal tourism and second homes intensify competition for available properties.
- A local ordinance can regulate short-term rentals by setting rules such as annual registration, unit limits, minimum stays, or owner-occupancy requirements.
- A centralized database of vacant properties, development opportunities, and available housing can help residents and local officials proactively address housing challenges.



Housing

The Stakes are High

Housing is a defining factor in the community's long-term vitality. Across the Village and Town, housing availability, affordability, and quality shape who can live here, how businesses grow, and whether the schools, volunteer organizations, and local traditions remain strong. Housing costs are rising faster than incomes for many residents, while seasonal demand continues to reshape the market. Long-standing homes are aging, and many lack accessibility features. Meanwhile, limited entry-level options make it harder for younger households to establish roots in the community.

Strong year-round housing supports much more than individual households; it sustains the social and economic fabric of Westfield. Permanent residents keep schools open and vibrant, shop locally throughout the year, and participate in civic life. A stable housing base also helps local employers attract and retain workers, reducing turnover and long commutes. Westfield is already experiencing the effects of some of these challenges, including workforce shortages as employees struggle to find affordable homes, the loss of community character as historic houses shift to seasonal use or fall into disrepair, increased pressure to develop rural land, and declining winter activity that impacts local businesses.

Influences on Market Demand

Today, housing in Westfield is shaped by a mix of historic neighborhoods, rural landscapes, and a compact Village core. While the Village allows accessory dwelling units and duplexes, and lot sizes are relatively small compared to those in surrounding towns, the overall housing mix still leaves gaps, especially for smaller,

more affordable units and housing for older adults. A related trend is the growth of second homeownership, which differs from short-term rentals such as Airbnb. In many cases, homes are purchased for seasonal use, occupied primarily during the summer months, and left vacant the rest of the year. This reduces the year-round population base and limits the supply of housing available to residents. The impact is visible in places like Bemus Point, where the majority of homes are seasonal.

Tourism and seasonal homeownership do play a role in Westfield's economy, supporting local businesses during peak months, but they also place added pressure on the housing market. For residents, this can mean higher rents, fewer purchase options, and greater competition for available homes. Vacancies and underused properties further affect the market, as some houses sit empty for much of the year while others remain in poor condition, discouraging investment and reducing neighborhood vitality.





Taking Stock

Westfield's population is aging and shrinking, reflecting a decades-long decline and a median age notably higher than the county overall. A growing share of residents are older adults, many living in larger, older homes that may not match current household needs. While most residents own their homes, a sizable portion of the housing stock sits underused for much of the year. Housing affordability is a concern for many, especially renters, who face a far greater risk of being cost burdened compared to homeowners. These trends point to both a shifting demographic landscape and mounting pressure on the local housing market.

By the Numbers

- *The population of the Westfield area declined by about 7.0% from 2010 to 2020. (Source: Decennial Census, 2020 and 2010)*
- *Westfield has a median age of 50, compared to Chautauqua County's median age of 43, and 24% of residents are 65 years or older. (Source: Decennial Census, 2020)*
- *In 2020 there were approximately 2484 housing units and about 19.6% of housing units are vacant, which is comparable to Chautauqua County as a whole. (Source: Decennial Census, 2020)*
- *72.1% of residents are homeowners. (Source: Decennial Census, 2020)*
- *Over 20% of occupied homes are homes with four or more bedrooms. (Source: American Community Survey, 2022)*
- *29% of homeowners are cost burdened, meaning they spend 30% or more of their income on housing. For renters, that number is much higher, teetering around 66%. (Source: American Community Survey, 2022)*



Housing

Community Objectives

Through community engagement, residents expressed a strong desire to preserve the historic character of the Village core while also expanding housing opportunities for people of all ages, incomes, and life stages. Many emphasized the importance of maintaining year-round vibrancy to support local businesses and sustain the community's social fabric. Participants also called for reinvestment in older housing stock to ensure it remains a valued and functional part of the housing supply. These priorities translate into clear objectives:



Expand the variety of housing types to meet changing household needs.



Promote year-round residency while balancing seasonal economic benefits.



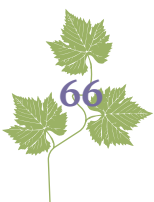
Strengthen neighborhood quality through reinvestment and adaptive reuse.



Align land use policies with housing goals in both the Village and Town.

**“I want to live a life where
70% of my income doesn’t go
to housing.”**

- survey response





Policy Framework

The Village of Westfield and the Town each have distinct zoning allowances and restrictions, influencing where and how different housing types can be built. The Village's relatively flexible zoning for accessory dwelling units and smaller lots contrasts with more limited rural options in the Town. To address housing challenges, comparable towns have taken steps such as short-rental regulations, density bonuses and fee reductions for developments that include affordable units and expedited permitting for projects that meet community housing goals.



Make Zoning Flexible for Redevelopment

As industrial buildings along the I-90 corridor and near Welch's facilities age, some may become candidates for reuse or redevelopment. In at least one case, a warehouse has already been converted into apartments, raising questions about whether zoning changes were needed to allow the project. Looking ahead, the Town and Village may want to consider more flexible zoning in industrial areas to accommodate future redevelopment for multifamily housing or other adaptive uses, rather than limiting opportunities to traditional industrial activity.

KEY ISSUE STRATEGIES



Housing

Turning ideas into action



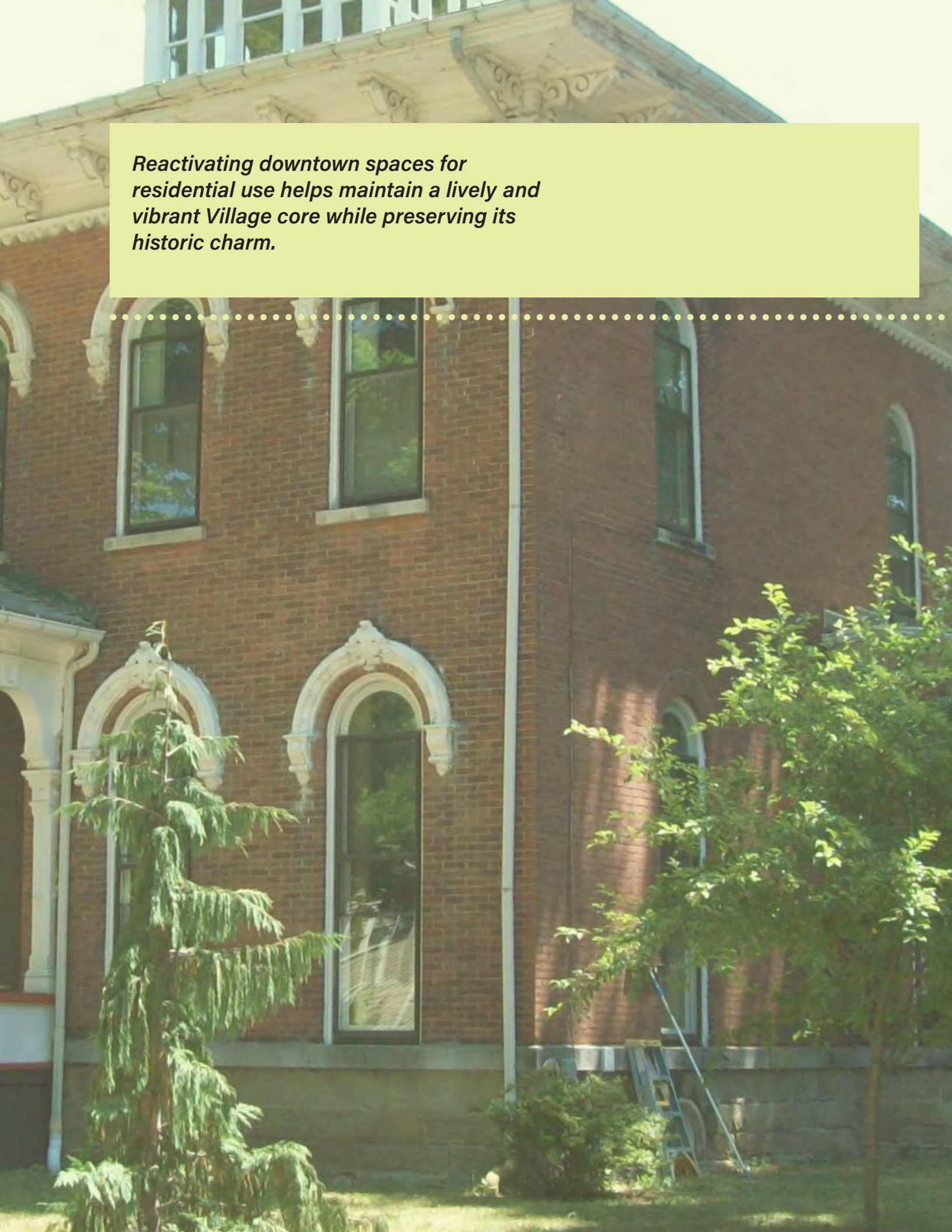
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Support Housing in the Village Core

Strengthen the heart of Westfield by transforming underused downtown buildings into year-round housing, creating a stronger customer base for local businesses and adding to the community's vitality. Mixed-use and historic structures, especially vacant upper floors, present prime opportunities to grow the housing supply without consuming additional land.



Reactivating downtown spaces for residential use helps maintain a lively and vibrant Village core while preserving its historic charm.



1 | Support Housing in the Village Core

a. Increase upstairs residential occupancy in the Village

What

Encourage the completion and conversion of second and third floor spaces of commercial buildings on Main Street into housing.

Why

Upper-floor housing has been part of U.S. downtowns since communities were first built, when shop owners lived above their businesses. Over time, suburbanization and the rise of the automobile led many spaces to be left vacant, rented out, or used for storage, often resulting in deterioration and outdated interiors. Reactivating these spaces brings residents back downtown, supports local businesses, preserves historic character, and restores vibrancy to the Main Street core, all while increasing housing supply.

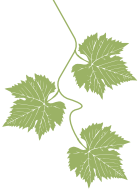
How

Partner with property owners to increase residential occupancy of upper floors in B1 District mixed-use buildings as they become available. This approach requires clear communication about zoning allowances, building code requirements, and available financial assistance, while also offering small grants or technical support to make upgrades feasible.

Here's Who Does This Well

Downtown Beloit, WI Upper-Floor Housing Initiative converts vacant upper floors into apartments. The program funded local architects to create floor plans, helping owners see the potential and meet code requirements. Grants from the city's TIF Housing Fund cover up to 50% of costs, with owners providing matching funds. The initiative has added at least 13 new apartments, boosting the local housing market and bringing new life to the downtown core.





b. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings for residential purposes.

How

Historic structures offer a parallel opportunity. The Village’s Historic Preservation Board, alongside the Westfield Development Corporation and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, can actively encourage adaptive reuse for residential purposes. This could include promoting the use of Historic Tax Credits and preparing a “Historic Housing Conversion Guide” that helps property owners navigate the process while preserving downtown’s unique character. The Village should continue to monitor the Welch building for redevelopment opportunities related to housing and mixed-use commercial development.

The Case for Adaptive Reuse

Adaptive reuse offers communities a practical path toward sustainability, cultural preservation, and economic vitality. By repurposing existing buildings instead of demolishing them, projects generate less waste, reduce carbon emissions tied to new construction, and create opportunities for modern energy-efficient upgrades. Retrofitting often costs less than building new and helps preserve historic character, strengthening community identity and sense of place. Transforming underused spaces such as warehouses into mixed-use, cultural, or hospitality destinations also attracts investment, stimulates local economies, and revitalizes neighborhoods. More than a design choice, adaptive reuse is a long-term investment in the community, ensuring that the past informs a more intentional and vibrant future.



1
Carlton Lofts, Cloquet, MN
A former middle school repurposed into apartments



2
Market Street Lofts, Petersburg, VA
A former warehouse repurposed into apartments



3
Yarn Works, Fitchburg, MA
A former textile mill repurposed into apartments



4
Shoe Factory Apartments Palmyra, PA
A former shoe factory repurposed into apartments

Housing

c. Create a property inventory of viable buildings in the Village

What

The inventory will catalog ownership, square footage, and zoning for all viable buildings in the Village.

Why

A centralized inventory will serve as a living resource for developers, investors, and local leaders, helping guide housing growth in the Village core.

How

The inventory should be created and maintained by Village staff and supported by the Westfield Development Corporation. This database could be for internal purposes or housed on the Village and Town websites. Next steps may include:

- Data Collection – Gather property records, zoning information, and building details (square footage, condition, occupancy) from the Village assessor’s office, GIS data, and other local sources.
- Database Setup – Choose a format for the inventory (Excel, GIS layer, or web-based tool) and structure it so fields for ownership, size, zoning, and notes are standardized.
- Data Entry & Verification – Input collected data and verify accuracy, flagging any gaps or discrepancies for follow-up.
- Maintenance Plan – Assign responsibility to Village staff, with periodic updates (e.g., quarterly or annually) to ensure the inventory remains current.
- Access & Use – Decide whether the inventory is for internal use only or also accessible on Village and Town websites. Provide clear instructions for stakeholders on how to use it to support housing growth decisions.
- Support & Oversight – Partner with the Westfield Development Corporation to assist with updates, review, and guidance on using the inventory for development planning.



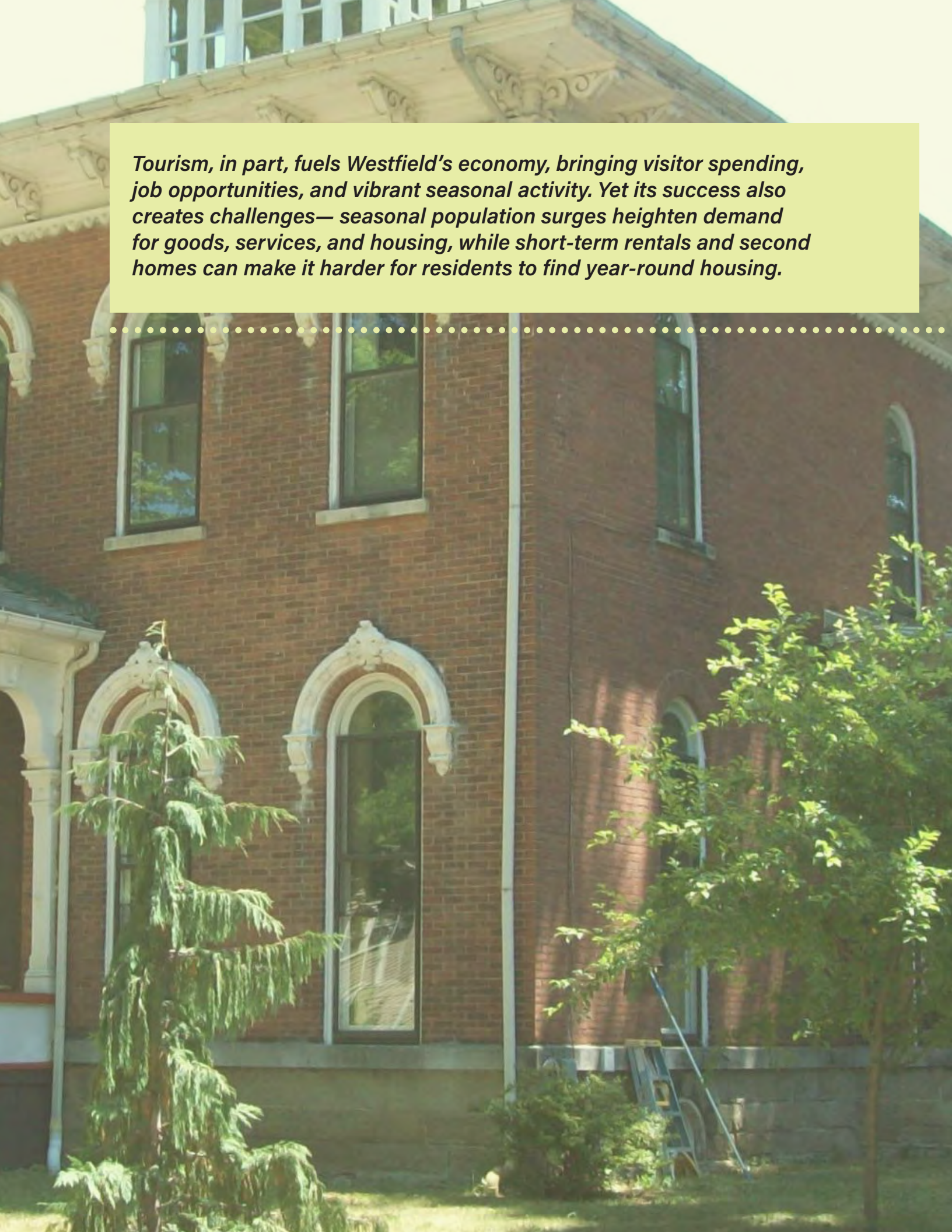


2

Manage Short Term Rentals

Short-term rentals can expand visitor lodging options but may also reduce the supply of year-round housing. A clear policy will help strike a balance between tourism and local housing needs. The presence of seasonal residents and tourism has become increasingly noticeable in the area. In 2020, roughly 20% of housing units in Westfield were vacant. Of these vacancies, about 60% were attributed to seasonal or short-term rental units.





Tourism, in part, fuels Westfield's economy, bringing visitor spending, job opportunities, and vibrant seasonal activity. Yet its success also creates challenges— seasonal population surges heighten demand for goods, services, and housing, while short-term rentals and second homes can make it harder for residents to find year-round housing.

2 | Manage Short Term Rentals

a. Consider Regulations

What

An ordinance can establish regulations on short-term rentals in the Village, which could include annual registration, caps on the number of rental units, minimum stay durations, and owner-occupancy requirements.

Why

Regulations help manage the impact of short-term rentals on housing availability, neighborhood character, and community safety, while ensuring fairness and predictability for both residents and property owners.

How

Village staff should draft the ordinance in consultation with legal counsel and stakeholders. Registration and fee payments should be made available online for ease of compliance. The ordinance should clearly define requirements, limits, and enforcement procedures, and the Village should periodically review its effectiveness and adjust regulations as needed.

Here's Who Does This Well

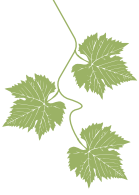
Saratoga Springs, NY (passed Dec. 2024)

Rental Limit: Primary and non-primary residences can be leased for up to 150 days per year (non-consecutive).

License Requirement: Property owners must obtain a short-term rental license from the city

Application Process: Apply in writing or electronically via the city website, including ownership proof, affidavit, insurance, fire inspection, property contact, and application fee.

Compliance: Rentals must have a designated property contact, follow occupancy limits, and maintain valid inspection and permit records from the City Fire and Accounts Departments.



Short-Term Rental Regulation and Enforcement Approaches

Communities have taken different approaches to regulating and enforcing short-term rentals (STRs), balancing the need for housing stability with the reality that many property owners rely on STR income.

In Winooski, Vermont, the City Council adopted STR regulations in July 2024 by folding them into its Public Building Registry system. Every STR must be licensed and inspected, with operators required to carry insurance and obtain a “Certificate of Fitness.” Fees are tiered to discourage speculative use. Owner-occupied units pay \$250 per year, while non-owner-occupied units pay \$1,400 annually. Registrations carry a grace period for compliance, but penalties may be applied for failure to register or maintain a license. Because the registry is public, neighbors can easily see whether a unit is operating legally, an indirect form of enforcement that relies in part on community oversight.

In Saratoga Springs, regulations emphasize safety and accountability. Operators must hold fire inspections, maintain at least \$300,000 in insurance coverage, and designate an emergency contact within 50 miles. STRs are capped at 150 rental days per year, and non-compliance can trigger fines of up to \$7,500 or suspension of the license. Saratoga Springs plans to monitor compliance by using software that scans online listings to identify unregistered properties. Unlike Winooski, its registry will not be public; complaints must be filed formally with the Code Enforcement office, and anonymous submissions are not accepted.



Sample FAQ

Q: What is a short-term rental (STR)?

A: A short-term rental is any residential property (or part of a property) rented out for a short period, typically fewer than 30 consecutive days. STRs can include houses, apartments, or rooms within a home.

Q: Why is the community regulating STRs?

A: Regulations help balance property owners' ability to rent with the need to protect neighborhoods, maintain housing availability, and ensure safety standards are met.

Q: Do I need a license or registration to operate an STR?

A: Yes. All STRs must be registered with the city/town and meet safety and insurance requirements. Registration helps the city track rentals and ensures operators follow local rules.

Q: What fees or inspections are required?

A: Fees and inspections vary by community, but they typically include:

- An annual registration or licensing fee.
- A fire and safety inspection.
- Proof of liability insurance.

Q: How will compliance be enforced?

A: Communities may enforce STR regulations through:

- A public registry of licensed STRs, allowing neighbors to see which units are operating legally.
- Inspections and monitoring of online rental platforms.
- Penalties, including fines or license suspension, for non-compliant rentals.

Q: Can residents report unregistered STRs?

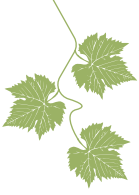
A: Yes. Many communities provide a way for residents to report suspected unregistered STRs to the local code enforcement office or STR compliance team.

Q: How does this affect neighbors?

A: Properly regulated STRs aim to minimize impacts such as noise, parking congestion, and safety concerns, while allowing homeowners to legally rent their properties.

Q: Where can I learn more or get updates?

A: Information will be available on the municipal website, through the building or code enforcement office, and in public notices about STR registration and regulations.



b. Use permitting fees to fund code enforcement or local housing affordability programs.

How

The Village and Town Boards can dedicate a portion of short-term rental revenue to local housing affordability programs. Partnering with housing nonprofits and the Chautauqua County Department of Planning, these funds could help finance first-time homebuyer assistance, rental rehabilitation programs, or workforce housing initiatives, creating a direct link between tourism revenue and local housing stability.

Additional Considerations for Funding Housing Programs

Short-term rental fees can also support proactive housing strategies beyond enforcement and direct assistance. For example, revenue could be allocated to housing studies, property condition surveys, or community outreach initiatives to identify housing needs. The Village and Town could establish a small grant program for homeowners or landlords to rehabilitate existing units, improving quality and safety. In addition, these funds could be used to leverage state or federal housing grants, multiplying their impact on local affordability efforts. By tying short-term rental revenue to these programs, the community can create a sustainable funding source that supports long-term housing stability while maintaining vibrant neighborhoods.

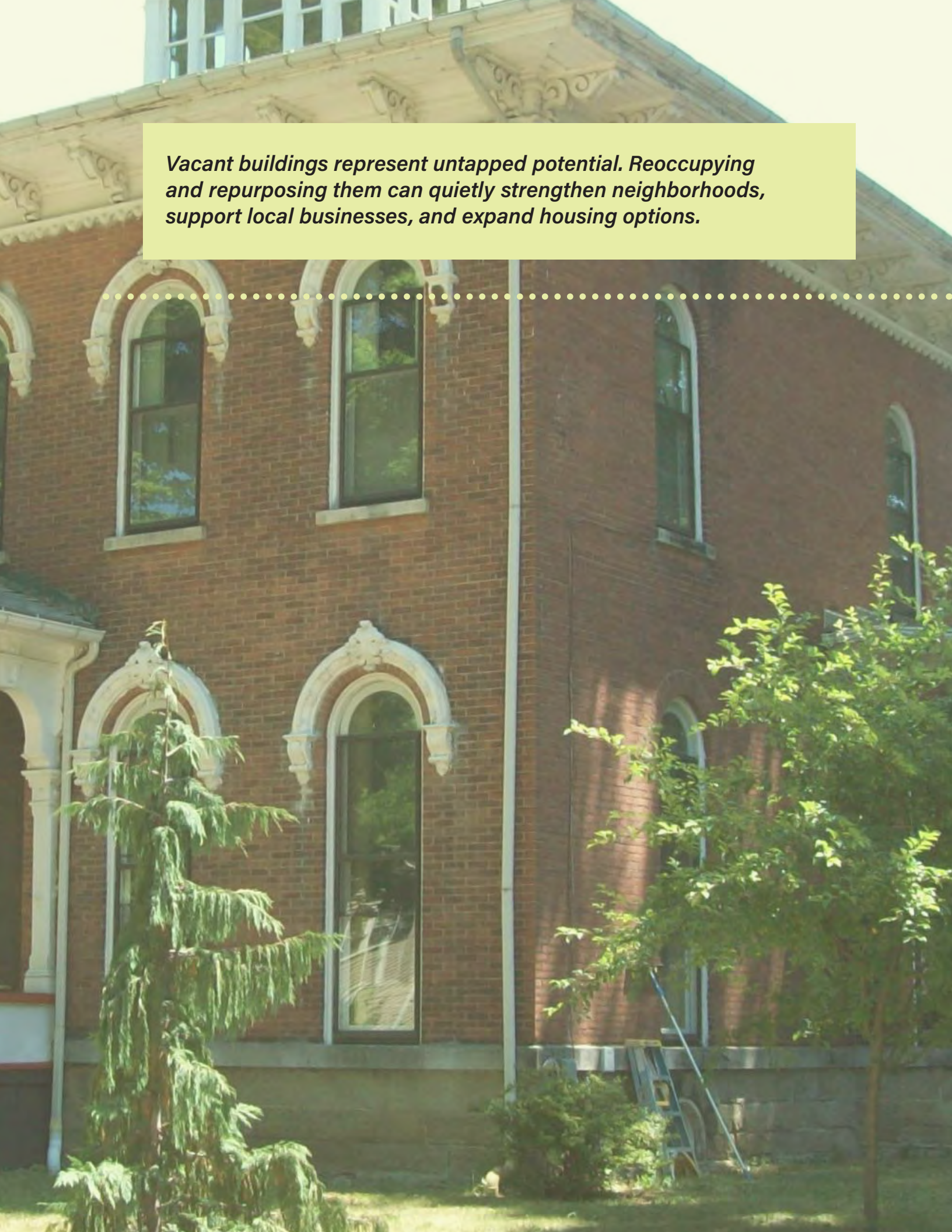
3

Address Vacant and Underutilized Properties

Vacant and underused buildings, whether neglected storefronts, unoccupied upper floors, or long-empty residential units, can have a ripple effect on surrounding properties. Left unattended, they may lower neighboring property values, deter private investment, and contribute to a perception of decline. When rehabilitated and reoccupied, it can become catalysts for economic growth, community pride, and new housing opportunities.



Vacant buildings represent untapped potential. Reoccupying and repurposing them can quietly strengthen neighborhoods, support local businesses, and expand housing options.



3 | Address Vacant and Underutilized Properties

a. **Create a vacant property registry and require regular inspections**

What

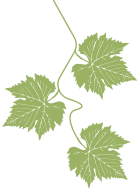
The Village and Town can take a proactive, two-pronged approach that pairs accountability for property owners with incentives to encourage reinvestment. This includes a vacant property registry requiring owners to register buildings that have been unoccupied for a set period (for example, 12 months) and mandating annual inspections. The registry would track ownership, building condition, and future plans.

Why

Tracking ownership and building conditions, along with regular inspections, encourages accountability and helps ensure properties remain safe and secure. Proactive monitoring also discourages long-term neglect and promotes reinvestment in underused buildings.

How

Pair the vacant property registry with annual inspections and escalating registration fees to create a financial incentive for owners to bring buildings back into productive use. Additional strategies, such as outreach to property owners about rehabilitation programs, guidance on redevelopment options, and coordination with local incentives, can further support bringing vacant buildings back into productive use.



Here's Who Does This Well

Under the Connellsville, PA Vacant Property Registry, property owners are required to register each vacant property annually and pay a fee depending on the type of building it is. Owners may request a one-year waiver if the property is actively being sold or prepared for sale. A second waiver can be requested after the first year, subject to review and approval by the city's health board to ensure the property poses no public safety hazards.



b. Impose escalating fees to discourage long-term vacancies

How

To encourage property owners to keep buildings occupied, the Village and Town can implement a system of escalating fees for long-term vacancies, tracked through the vacant property registry. Fees could start modestly but increase annually for buildings left unoccupied beyond a certain threshold, creating a financial incentive for owners to rehabilitate, rent, or sell their properties.

Housing

c. Offer incentives or technical assistance to owners willing to sell or redevelop

How

Recognizing that some property owners may lack the resources or expertise to redevelop their buildings, Westfield could partner with the Westfield Development Corporation or the County to offer incentives and technical support. This could include reduced permitting fees, pre-development grants, design assistance, or guidance in navigating state and federal funding programs. By lowering barriers to investment, it encourages owners to bring underused properties back into productive use, supporting both housing growth and economic vitality.

Pre-development Assistance for Small Property Owners

Small property owners can benefit from pre-development assistance, such as guidance on permitting, site planning, and funding opportunities. By providing technical support and educational resources, Westfield can empower property owners to improve or develop housing in ways that strengthen neighborhoods and increase housing availability.

Here's Who Does This Well

The [White Box Program](#) in Toledo, OH incentivizes property owners to bring vacant first-floor commercial spaces up to current codes to create a functional space ready for customization and occupancy by a business. The grant reimburses 75% of the eligible interior renovation expenses required to meet current state building code, fire safety code, and accessibility requirements, as demonstrated by stamped architectural or engineering drawings.



d. Apply for the Vacant Rental Program (NYS Homes and Community Renewal).

How

To complement local efforts, Westfield can pursue funding through the New York State Vacant Rental Program administered by Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) to identify eligible properties and prepare applications for rehabilitation funding. This program provides financial support to renovate vacant rental units and return them to the market, directly increasing housing availability while helping owners offset renovation costs.



4

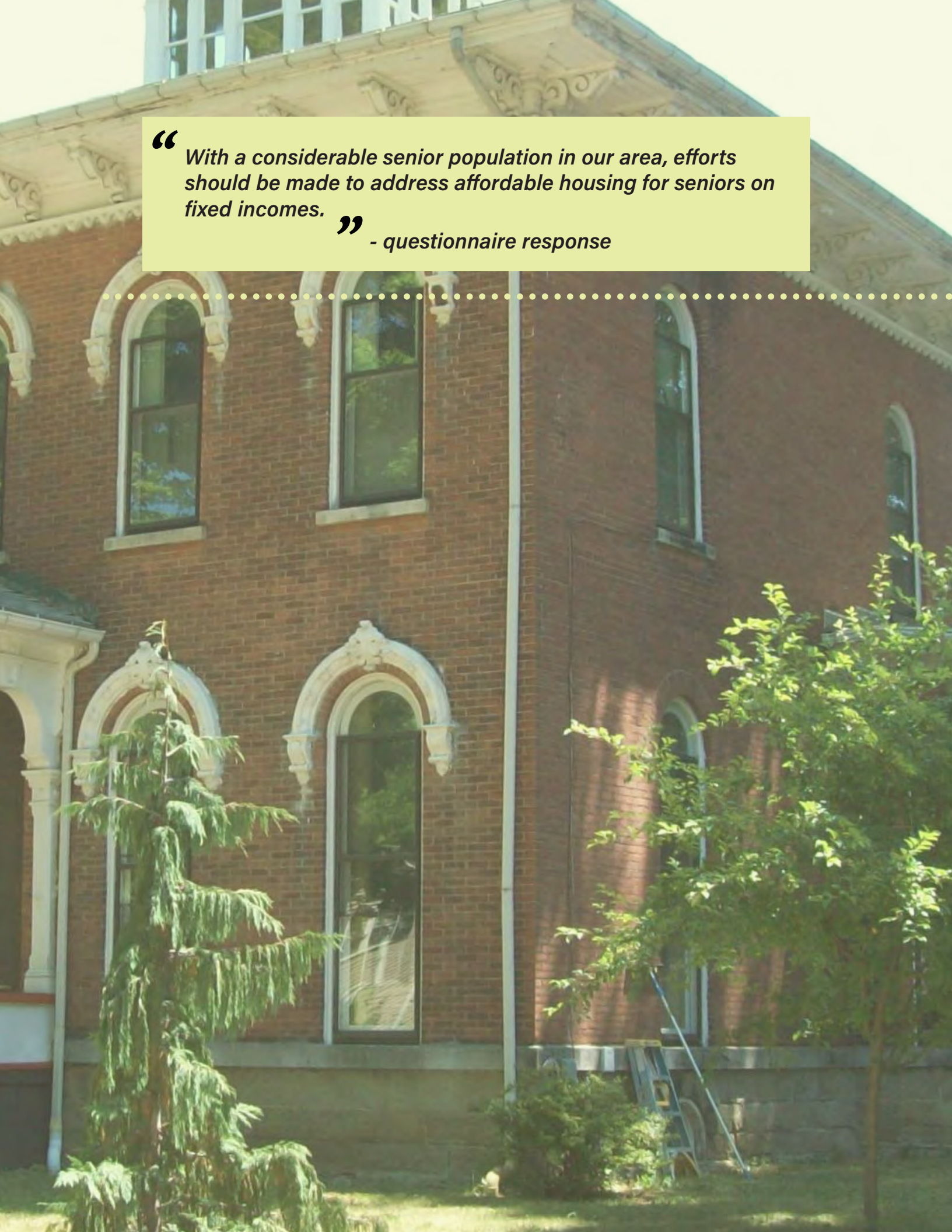
Encourage and Diversify Housing

Ensure Westfield offers housing choices for all stages of life, household types, and income levels while directing new development to appropriate locations. A diverse housing mix, including options for young professionals to homes for older adults, can meet changing needs and strengthen community stability. Connecting residents to resources can help bridge the gap between available housing and those seeking it, while well-placed infill development can expand supply without altering neighborhood character. This recommendation addresses the broader housing market across the Town and Village, focusing on variety, affordability, and accessibility, and sets clear long-term policies to guide where and how housing growth should occur.



“ With a considerable senior population in our area, efforts should be made to address affordable housing for seniors on fixed incomes. ”

- questionnaire response

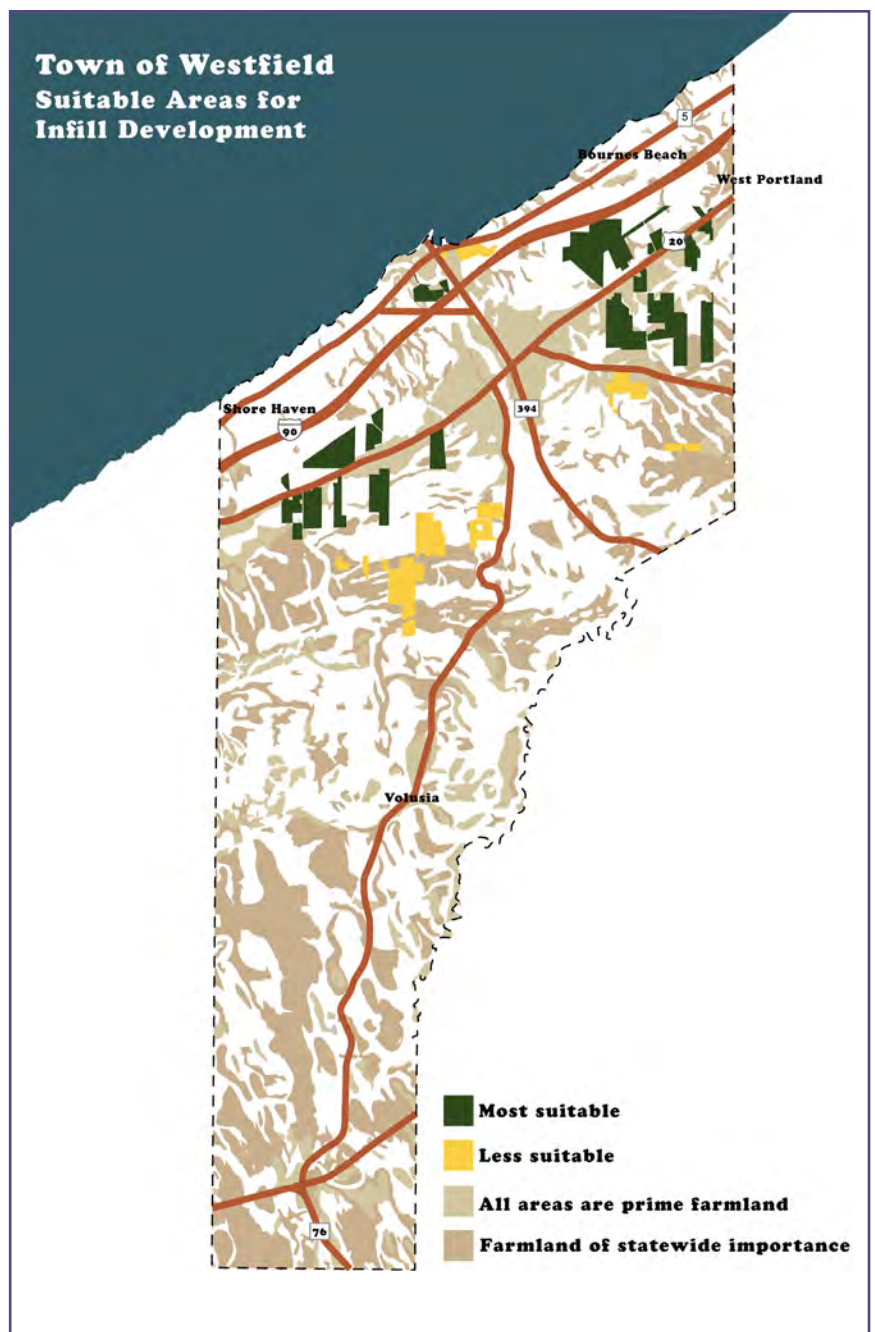


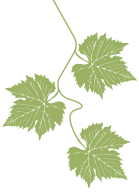
4 | Encourage and Diversify Housing

a. Encourage mixed-use infill development

How

The Town can support a more vibrant and accessible housing landscape by encouraging development that builds on existing community assets while preserving natural areas. Mixed-use infill development should be prioritized in areas with existing infrastructure, such as near commercial corridors or transit hubs, allowing new housing to complement the Town's character without encroaching on environmentally sensitive lands.





b. Support aging-in-place upgrades for existing homes

What

Aging-in-place upgrades, such as accessibility retrofits, wider doorways, improved bathrooms, and energy efficiency improvements, can help older adults stay comfortably and safely in their homes.

Why

Can help ensure long-term stability for residents and reduces the need for relocation.

How

The Town can collaborate with local contractors, nonprofits, or volunteer groups to make these upgrades affordable and achievable.

c. Create a local housing navigator role or toolkit

What

Connect residents with grants, vouchers, or first-time homebuyer programs.

Why

This would connect would-be renters or buyers with existing programs to make housing more accessible and/or affordable.

How

The toolkit could be housed on the Town and Village website, or a navigator role could be shared between the two communities.

d. Promote lower-maintenance housing models

How

Diversifying housing types to include lower-maintenance options, such as cottage courts, small-lot neighborhoods, and age-qualified communities with homeowners' associations, can offer residents greater flexibility and convenience. These housing models can appeal to households of varying sizes and stages of life while keeping upkeep manageable.

Housing

Here's Who Does This Well

Arcona, a neighborhood in Mechanicsburg, PA offers a variety of low maintenance homes, carriage homes, single-family homes, and townhomes. The neighborhood design pays tribute to the farmers who cultivated the land and includes nearly a dozen locally owned businesses, miles of trails and sidewalks, and public gathering spaces. Alleys are placed behind the houses, allowing walkability and community connectivity to be at the forefront.



Housing

The types of housing available shape how a community grows and who it can support. *What kinds of housing do you think Westfield needs more of?*

What do you think? Add a sticky note anywhere on the board!

Other types? Let us know!

Existing Land Use Map

Key recommendations:

- Support mixed-use development in the Village and high-quality housing opinions.
- Evaluate a vacant building policy.
- Evaluate a short-term rental policy.
- Connect would-be renters or buyers with existing programs to make housing more accessible and affordable.

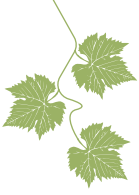
Sticky notes on board:

- Find a way to help homeowners who need help from us
- MIXED INCOME HOUSING
- HOW BUILDS TO MATCH CHARACTER THAT EXISTS
- Build a embedded retro-modern community that gives thoughtful services of big built's retirement communities (e.g. Eden)
- Would need PARKING! (esp winter)
- you approve the housing plans outside of single family residential
- NEW DEVELOPERS TO PREPARE FOR MIGRATION
- EVALUATE STRS IN RESIDENTIAL ZONES
- Should match the character - not cookie cutter
- Home's jobs
- Manufactured - R-20 - 3714

Images on board:

- Cottage Courts
- Mixed Housing Types
- Apartments
- Rowhouses

Community members expressed strong support for housing choices like cottage courts, townhomes, and rowhomes, options that provide lower-maintenance living while respecting Westfield's historic charm. Residents emphasized the importance of building affordable, accessible homes that can serve people across incomes and life stages, while also addressing short-term rental impacts in residential neighborhoods.



e. Consider local incentives

How

Developers who provide affordable or workforce housing could be eligible for incentives such as reduced permitting fees, expedited review, density bonuses where appropriate.

f. Maintain a housing database

What

Create and maintain a centralized housing database that tracks available seasonal and permanent units across the Town and Village. Use this resource to showcase housing opportunities, including rental and ownership options, for both new and existing residents.

Why

Making housing information readily accessible helps residents, newcomers, and workforce populations find suitable options more efficiently. This supports community growth, encourages local employment retention, and strengthens neighborhood stability by reducing barriers to finding and securing housing.

How

Host the database on a shared Town and Village webpage, keeping it regularly updated and easy to navigate. Complement the online tool with outreach to local employers, realtors, and community organizations to promote available units and ensure the resource reaches those who need it most. Additional features, such as filtering by unit type, price range, or accessibility features, can enhance usability and effectiveness.

4

Infrastructure

Strengthening Core Systems



Connecting People and Places



Vision:

The Town and Village will maintain and improve essential infrastructure and services that protect residents and support daily life. Investments will help keep Westfield connected, resilient, and prepared for the future.

This issue at a glance:

- As part of the community questionnaire conducted for this planning project, respondents were asked to rank the importance of various issues for Westfield's future. 63% of participants identified staying current with infrastructure maintenance as very important, highlighting strong community support for proactive investment in public systems.
- Attendees at the recommendations pop-up event ranked upgrades to the water and sewer system as a high priority.
- Community and market demand for housing is real, but growth needs to align with infrastructure capacity to meet land use goals.
- Infrastructure is more than water and sewer systems— it includes streets and connectivity, public spaces, and even digital networks that keep the community connected and functioning.
- Using the sidewalk inventory conducted as part of the planning process, the community should replace high priority sidewalks to support connectivity goals.
- The Town and Village should consider a shared or part-time Communications Coordinator position to improve outreach, manage digital platforms, promote tourism, and strengthen local communication capacity.



Infrastructure

Systems Thinking

Infrastructure isn't just pipes, wires, and pavement— it's the backbone of a community's livability and economic growth. Reliable utilities, well-maintained roads, and functional public spaces make life easier for residents and create a welcoming environment for businesses and visitors alike. Modern infrastructure systems help keep long-term costs manageable, reduce the need for emergency repairs, and allow the community to plan strategically for growth. Aligning infrastructure investments with broader land use and development planning ensures that resources are used efficiently, equitably, and in ways that benefit the entire community.

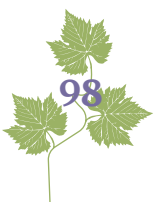
Public spaces, like the Barcelona area and Moore Park, serve as the heart of community life. Accessible, well-maintained public areas provide opportunities for recreation, social connection, and local events that attract both residents and visitors. These spaces enhance quality of life while supporting local businesses and fostering a vibrant, cohesive community identity.

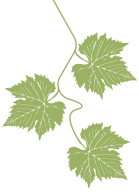
Seasonal Surge

Communities with tourism and seasonal residents experience fluctuating demand on their infrastructure. Roads, utilities, and public spaces must be able to accommodate peak periods without compromising service for full-time residents. Planning for these seasonal surges is essential to maintaining both safety and convenience year-round.

“Tourism is essential to our economy but the locals are the foundation.”

- survey response





Land Use Patterns

Westfield's land is a mix of a compact Downtown village core, residential neighborhoods, agricultural lands, lakefront development, and limited industrial and commercial areas. Each land use contributes to the town's character and requires different infrastructure support.

As demand for housing grows, development must be balanced with infrastructure capacity. Encouraging new housing through infill and thoughtfully located expansions helps meet community and market needs without overextending public systems. Focusing growth in areas already served or easily served by infrastructure maximizes existing investments, supports walkability, and prevents sprawl that could threaten prime agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands. Careful planning for community and market demand, including infill and new developments, ensures that growth aligns with infrastructure capacity, revitalizes neighborhoods, improves housing availability, and preserves Westfield's unique character.



Lake Erie Conservation

The lakefront is one of the community's most valuable assets, offering both recreational opportunities and economic benefits. Existing public access points allow residents and visitors to enjoy the water, but shoreline stability faces challenges from erosion and stormwater runoff. Protecting and enhancing lakefront areas is essential not only for environmental health but also for sustaining tourism, recreation, and the local economy.

Infrastructure

Connectivity and Infrastructure

Walkable and well-connected streets, trails, and public pathways are central to Westfield's health, safety, and economic vitality. Addressing gaps in pedestrian infrastructure, maintaining sidewalks and crossings, and implementing traffic calming measures improve safety and encourage residents to walk, bike, and engage with the community. Regional trail connections support active transportation, connect Westfield to nearby towns, and enhance tourism opportunities.

Investing in connectivity ensures that residents can move safely and efficiently throughout the village and surrounding areas, while visitors can fully enjoy Westfield's amenities. Strong pedestrian, bicycle, and trail networks support public health, promote economic activity, and strengthen the overall livability of the community.





MAIN DINER
Ice Cream

MAIN DINER

SPEED
LIMIT
30



KEY ISSUE STRATEGIES



Infrastructure

Turning ideas into action



1

Invest in Community Infrastructure Systems

Investing in reliable water, sewer, and utility systems is essential for public health, service reliability, and long-term community growth. Ensuring system resilience requires regular maintenance, strategic upgrades such as replacing aging pipes and modernizing treatment facilities, and coordinated expansion to support residential, commercial, and industrial development. Proactive infrastructure management reduces the risk of service interruptions, minimizes long-term repair costs, and positions the Town and Village to accommodate population growth, attract business investment, and support sustainable economic development.



Strategic investment in water, sewer, and utilities directs growth to the right places. By focusing upgrades in priority areas, Westfield can support new housing and businesses efficiently, protect open space, and strengthen community character while keeping long-term costs manageable.



1 | Invest in Community Infrastructure Systems

a. Continue planned water and sewer system upgrades

What

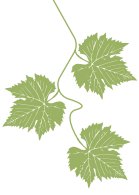
A state-funded project is underway to establish a water benefit district along NYS Route 5, including the installation of approximately 23,000 linear feet of water mains, a chlorine booster station, hydrants, valves, and meters.

b. Plan for infrastructure expansion and growth

How

Targeted expansion of water and sewer infrastructure along Route 20 and Route 5 in the southern part of the Town will support anticipated growth while maximizing efficiency and minimizing taxpayer burden. Other priority growth areas include:

- Village Expansion toward Plank Road: Extending water and sewer services to connect the Village with Plank Road will create opportunities for residential and commercial growth in a contiguous, serviceable area.
- Flat Land Between Railroad and East Main Street: This area offers suitable conditions for new housing development, particularly smaller, affordable units.
- Underutilized Small Lots Within the Village: Infill development on these parcels can increase housing density without requiring significant new infrastructure investment.



c. Plan for broadband and Wi-Fi

How

Support County-led broadband initiatives and establish municipal-owned Wi-Fi to improve connectivity for residents, businesses, and visitors. These efforts should build on the 2023 Downtown Revitalization Plan's recommendations to create a more digitally connected and economically competitive community.

d. Coordinate lakefront conservation and access improvements

How

Investments in shoreline infrastructure such as public docks, stormwater systems, erosion control measures, and pedestrian connections. *Reference Chapter 4 Lakefront Development recommendations of this plan for additional policy direction.*



2

Enhance Public Spaces and Amenities

Amenities in the public realm like gathering spaces and street furniture (e.g., lighting, benches, or trash receptacles) shape daily experiences, support health and safety, and contribute to a community's overall quality of life. In Westfield, investments in these spaces should complement traditional infrastructure by strengthening neighborhood character, attracting residents and visitors, and providing places for gathering and civic life. As standards evolve and community needs change, updating and modernizing these facilities will help ensure they are adaptable for long-term use.



Public spaces and community facilities are just as vital to infrastructure as water, sewer, and transportation systems. Well-maintained and thoughtfully upgraded public facilities are central to community life, offering places for gathering, recreation, and civic engagement.



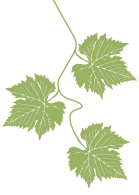
2 | Enhance Public Spaces and Amenities

a. Upgrade Eason Hall

How

Eason Hall acts as a civic hub and recreational facility in the Village and improvements to the building can enhance its usability, accessibility, and programming potential, creating a more inclusive space for residents of all ages. Track state approval of the Eason Hall upgrade, as the approval will trigger release of previously awarded grant funding, as submitted by the Village. Grant funding should be leveraged to address physical upgrades like ADA improvements, modernized restrooms and a gym facility, energy-efficient systems, and flexible multi-use spaces.





b. Modernize streetscapes and lighting

What

Upgrades to streetscape infrastructure improve safety, reduce long-term costs, and contribute to Westfield’s community character. This includes transitioning to energy-efficient fixtures, like streetlights, and adding small-scale public amenities such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, and bike amenities like racks, storage, or repair stations.

Why

Energy-efficient fixtures lower utility costs and reduce environmental impacts, while decorative and context-appropriate fixtures enhance the appearance of both residential neighborhoods and commercial areas. Smart lighting and motion sensors in key pedestrian areas, such as near schools, parks, and downtown crosswalks, can improve safety while conserving energy. Small-scale amenities make significant improvements to the comfort and convenience of everyday life and contribute to overall community character.

How

The Town and Village should identify dark areas along walkable streets, map locations for potential new streetlights, and consider strategically adding fixtures to improve nighttime visibility. Upgrades should be phased in as existing fixtures reach the end of their service life to maximize cost-effectiveness. Funding opportunities from programs such as the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) or utility company incentive programs can help offset installation expenses. Potential areas for furniture and lighting improvements include Moore Park, the Clinton and Portage intersection, Union Street, and the Barcelona Harbor area. Amenities should be added in priority locations, such as Downtown, near schools, along trails, or other popular biking or pedestrian routes.



Motion Sensored Crosswalk Lights



Trash/Recycling Receptacle and Bench



Solar Powered Street Lamps



Squirrel bike racks in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood

Infrastructure

c. Maintain parks and recreation areas

What

Maintenance includes regular upkeep of playgrounds, athletic fields, walking trails, open spaces, and other amenities in current parks.

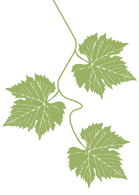
Why

In accordance with the New York Forward projects, maintaining existing parks and recreation facilities is a top priority for the community. Survey respondents also ranked upkeep of amenities in current parks as the highest priority for future parks and recreation efforts, reflecting broad support for preserving these valued public resources. Regular maintenance ensures facilities remain safe, accessible, and welcoming for residents of all ages. Investments in routine upkeep, such as repairing equipment, maintaining landscaping, and addressing accessibility needs, help extend the lifespan of facilities and maximize the return on prior infrastructure investments.

How

The Town and Village should track state approval of funding and continue maintenance as necessary. Routine upkeep should be scheduled consistently and prioritized based on condition assessments to ensure safety, accessibility, and overall community enjoyment.





d. Develop a cohesive street signage program

How

A well-planned street signage program can enhance visibility and navigation across the Town and Village while supporting a consistent community identity. Using uniform design, placement, and materials will simplify wayfinding for residents and visitors and should be coordinated with the strategy outlined in the Downtown Development chapter. This approach reinforces Westfield's character and branding, improves safety for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists, and is a cost-effective investment that enhances the overall public experience.



e. Plan for Public Restrooms

How

As special events grow and the amphitheater expands, there will be increased demand for accessible public restrooms, as well as trash and recycling facilities, particularly near the intersection of Main and Portage at Moore Park. Incorporating public restrooms into future infrastructure planning will be important to support both residents and visitors, though communities should anticipate higher costs for installation and ongoing maintenance.

3

Improve Connectivity Infrastructure

A connected and walkable community supports health, safety, and economic vitality. Sidewalks, trails, and other pedestrian facilities provide mobility options for residents while linking neighborhoods to schools, businesses, and recreational areas. Investments in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure complement other public works projects by reducing traffic conflicts, promoting active transportation, and enhancing the community's appeal to residents and visitors. Designing streets and corridors to accommodate all users helps ensure safe, accessible, and inviting routes for walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation.



Every block with a sidewalk or trail is an opportunity to move, explore, and connect. Small improvements to walking and other routes not only boost daily activity but also bring more people to local shops and restaurants, supporting Westfield's economy.



3 | Improve Connectivity Infrastructure

a. Replace high-priority sidewalks

How

The Village sidewalk rebate program provides an important tool for addressing aging infrastructure while engaging property owners in shared responsibility. Under the program, the Village covers 50% of material costs and provides public works support to remove old sidewalks, with \$5,000 allocated annually.

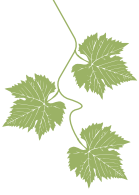
Throughout the planning process, stakeholders identified the sidewalks as an incredible asset to the community but one that requires significant investment to meet safety standards. To guide replacement efforts, a sidewalk inventory was conducted along both sides of Main Street, from Washington and Pearl Streets to Union and Bliss Streets. This inventory identified 8,260 linear feet of high-priority sidewalks, organized into three groups based on repair needs, community input, and overall contribution to walkability:

Group 1 (highest priority): Elm Street, Union Street, Pearl St

Group 2: Clinton St, Washington St, Second St

Group 3: Third Street, First St, McClurg St, Franklin St





“Safety means fixing residential sidewalks”

- survey response



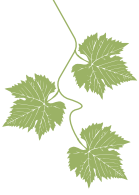
Infrastructure

Based on an estimated cost of \$130 per square yard of installed concrete sidewalk, the proposed sidewalk replacement project would cost roughly \$596,555.

To improve connectivity and address gaps in the existing network, an additional 2,080 linear feet of sidewalk was identified for future construction in the following areas:

- *Utility side of Bliss St from Elm St*
- *West side of Third St between Elm St and Portage St*
- *East side of Union St along the pool*
- *East side of Bliss St to Union St intersection*





North of Main

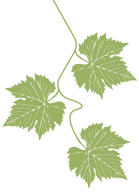


South of Main

Infrastructure

North of Main		
Street Section	Linear ft. Improved Sidewalk	Priority
Clinton Street Between Portage and Pearl	1421	4
West Side	655	
East Side	766	
Pearl Street Between Washington and Main	457	3
West Side	202	
East Side	255	
Washington Street Between Portage and Pearl	1180	5
West Side	584	
East Side	596	
Franklin Street Between Clinton and Washington	370	10
West Side	220	
East Side	150	
Total Linear Feet North of Main	3428	

South of Main		
Street Section	Linear ft. Improved Sidewalk	Priority
Union Street Between Main and Bliss	1510	2
West Side	645	
East Side	865	
Elm Street Between Main and Bliss	1135	1
West Side	215	
East Side	920	
McClurg Street Between Union and Elm	175	9
West Side	50	
East Side	125	
First Street Between Portage and Union	575	8
West Side	330	
East Side	245	
Second Street and W. Second Street to Union	899	6
West Side	572	
East Side	327	
Second Street and W. Second Street to Union	538	7
West Side	165	
East Side	373	
Total Linear Feet South of Main	4832	



b. Clarify sidewalk maintenance responsibilities

How

Providing clear information about sidewalk ownership and maintenance responsibilities helps ensure long-term upkeep and reduces confusion for property owners. Prospective buyers should be informed of their obligations before purchase and the cost of these responsibilities may, in some cases, be negotiated between the buyer and seller as part of the sale. Standardized communication through real estate disclosures, municipal websites, and resident handouts can reduce confusion and improve accountability.

c. Install passive speed limit radar signs

How

Installing passive speed limit radar signs at key entry points and along residential streets will encourage safer driving speeds and improve pedestrian comfort. These devices provide a cost-effective measure for traffic calming and complement broader corridor improvements.



Infrastructure

d. Evaluate and improve the connections between the Village and Barcelona

How

Improving pedestrian and bicycle connections between the Village and Barcelona will expand access to the waterfront and strengthen regional mobility. Specific opportunities include:

- Enhancing the pedestrian route linking the lower parking lot and Welch Trail to the existing sidewalk network, consistent with the 2023 North Portage Plan.
- Supporting the completion of the Chautauqua to Barcelona Trail to create a safe, scenic regional connection for residents and visitors.

e. Collaborate with Chautauqua Area Regional Transit System

How

The Village should encourage CARTS to provide a shelter at the highly visible intersection of Main and Portage, where there is a key transit stop. Partnering with CARTS on these improvements can protect riders from weather, enhance the transit experience, and promote public transportation as a convenient and accessible community amenity.



T-1

HOMETOWN
TROLLEY

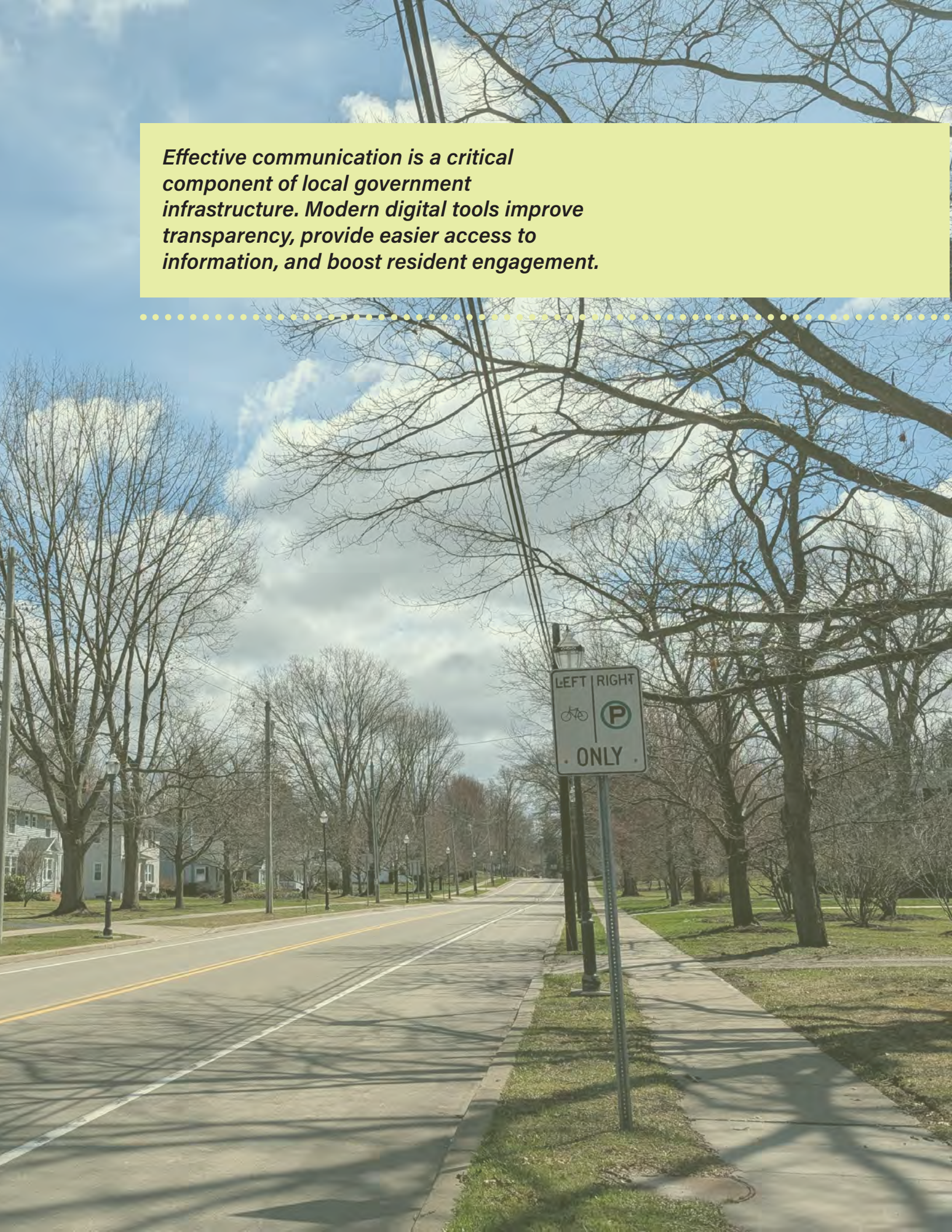
4

Strengthen Digital Communication and Community Engagement

In Westfield, current communication platforms and tools used by the Town and Village governments have limitations, primarily relying on the website and Facebook page, which does not provide two-way interaction between residents and the local government, resulting in gaps in information sharing and outreach. At the same time, community feedback has shown strong interest in transparent, accessible, and timely communication from local government, which requires capacity. Over 60% of survey respondents ranked communication with residents and business owners as very important in the community questionnaire.



Effective communication is a critical component of local government infrastructure. Modern digital tools improve transparency, provide easier access to information, and boost resident engagement.



4 | Strengthen Digital Communication and Community Engagement

a. Upgrade the community website

What

The Town and Village should prioritize updating the community website to improve functionality and user experience

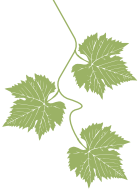
Why

As digital platforms increasingly shape public engagement and service delivery, investments in a coordinated, user-friendly communication system can provide multiple benefits. These include improved resident awareness of government programs and services, cost and capacity efficiencies through shared staffing, and strengthened local economic growth via enhanced tourism promotion and outreach.

How

Key upgrades could include:

- Transitioning to a .gov domain for credibility and security.
- Posting meeting minutes efficiently to free staff capacity for other communications.
- Adding government events to a centralized community calendar.
- Creating a resident dashboard for financial aid, assistance programs, and local services.
- Publishing a quarterly or biannual newsletter, available online, to consolidate information and promote programs



b. Expand social media and outreach

How

A coordinated social media presence can extend the reach of Town and Village communications, promoting programs, events, and resources to a broader audience. By aligning messaging across platforms, the community can maintain a consistent voice and strengthen engagement with residents and visitors alike.

c. Consider Shared Communications Staffing

How

To support these efforts, the Town and Village could establish a shared or part-time Communications Coordinator position. This role would help coordinate outreach, manage digital platforms, support tourism promotion, and build local capacity for efficient and effective communication. By centralizing communications, Westfield can provide more consistent, accessible, and timely information while leveraging staff resources efficiently.



5

Plan for Stormwater Management and Renewable Energy

A proactive approach to environmental infrastructure helps protect natural resources, reduce flooding risks, and prepare the community for future challenges. Integrating stormwater management features, such as rain gardens, bioswales, and strategic tree planting, into street and public space improvements can enhance water quality, manage runoff, and beautify the Village and Town while preserving the scenic views, rural character, and historic landscapes that define Westfield. Protecting prime agricultural lands and natural areas also supports the local economy by sustaining productive farmland and promoting tourism and recreation opportunities. Expanding sustainable infrastructure, including electric vehicle charging stations and energy-efficient LED lighting, builds on Westfield's ongoing initiatives and reduces long-term operational costs.



Infrastructure investments that work with the land, such as tree buffers and land conservation practices, support local agriculture, guide thoughtful development, and preserve the rural and scenic landscapes.



5 | Plan for Stormwater Management and Renewable Energy

a. Implement a facade improvement program for commercial business owners

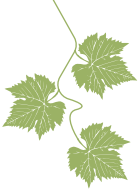
How

The Town and Village should implement standards to address runoff, reduce flooding, and protect local waterways. These standards will guide public and private development projects to manage stormwater more effectively, preserving environmental quality and minimizing costly damage to infrastructure.

b. Develop a renewable energy ordinance

How

A local renewable energy ordinance can guide the siting of industrial or large-scale solar, wind, and other projects (e.g., data mining and battery storage) while protecting agricultural lands, scenic resources, and the character of the community. The ordinance should reflect modern best practices and community values, providing clear standards that balance renewable energy development with land preservation, visual quality, and long-term community goals.



The questionnaire asked residents to consider how important they felt the move toward renewable energy sources was for the community. Here are some of the answers:

“

- *Education of the residents on this is vital. Too many residents understand this topic only from a political standpoint. This renewable energy would supplement our current system and not erase it. It would help keep energy costs down, not cause blackouts when the sun is behind clouds.*
- *I don't necessarily agree that there is a direct correlation between losing agricultural land through the installation of renewable energy sources. There are many ways to incorporate renewable energy sources with the existing community that will have a negligible impact on agricultural land.*
- *That's a tough one. We are so dependent on agriculture, but we owe our future generations a sustained planet.*
- *Renewable energy sources are important especially for the future but not at the expense of losing agricultural land as it is the livelihood for our farmers and growers. Our farmers/growers need to come first as this is their livelihood.*
- *The current generation of "green" energy is ugly, land consuming and inefficient. Also our grid isn't up to date enough to support it. Solar here will have huge issues in the winter months and everyone hates windmills. Someday when our grid is up to par, hopefully they'll have less ugly and more efficient forms of green energy.*
- *I would answer differently if the power remained local.*
- *Cutting down tree for solar fields? I choose trees every time.*
- *I would be okay with solar but not windmills.*
- *Most agriculture in this area is not profitable and younger people do not want to work that hard. Use the land as the market see fit as long as it does not harm the environment.*

”

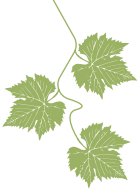
Ordinance Review: Case Study

The Towns of Ripley, Walton, and Evans in New York State have each developed ordinances to regulate renewable energy systems, including solar, wind, and battery storage, to balance environmental goals with community interests.

Ripley has enacted Local Law 1 of 2021, a comprehensive Solar Energy Zoning Law that categorizes solar installations into three tiers based on size and impact. While the town has two existing wind-related laws, they have been deemed inadequate in setting standards. Consequently, the town is considering drafting a wind ordinance like its solar law to provide clearer guidelines for wind energy projects. Additionally, Ripley adopted Local Law 3 of 2022 to regulate Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), defining system types and establishing permitting requirements.

The Town of Walton's zoning code encourages the accommodation of solar energy systems and equipment, ensuring access to necessary sunlight.

Evans has a more detailed approach, particularly regarding wind energy. The town permits the placement, construction, or modification of commercial wind energy conversion systems only through a special use permit issued by the Town Board, following site plan approval by the Planning Board, and after conducting a State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) with the Town Board as the lead agency. For battery energy storage, Evans allows Type 3 systems in all zoning districts as accessory uses, exempt from site plan review but requiring a building permit.



c. Use land planning to support community goals

How

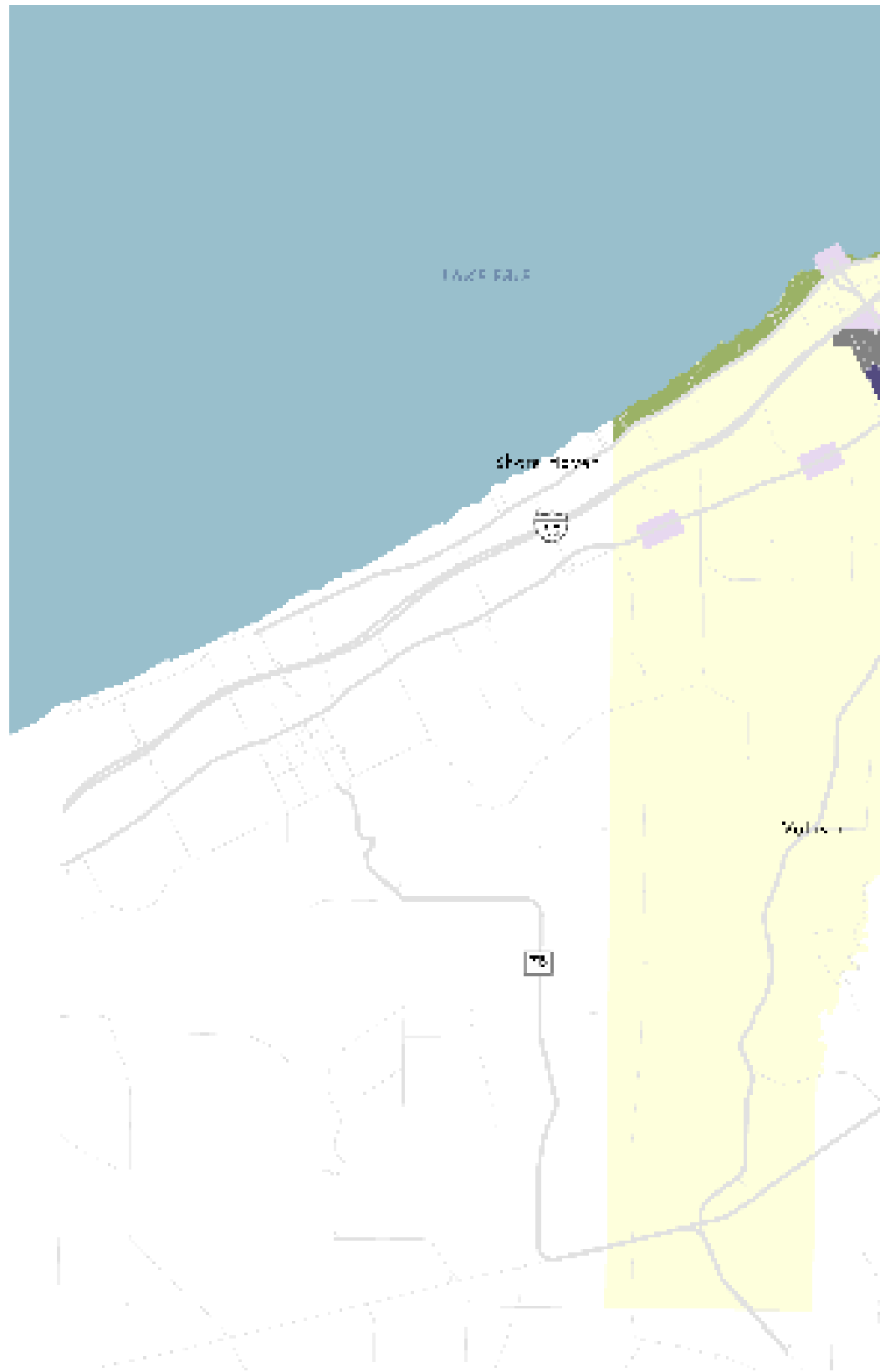
Future development should be guided by the Future Land Use Map, directing growth to areas best suited for expansion while protecting prime agricultural lands, high-value environmental systems, and key scenic views. This approach ensures that infrastructure and renewable energy projects are integrated thoughtfully, supporting sustainable growth and maintaining the Village and Town's unique character.

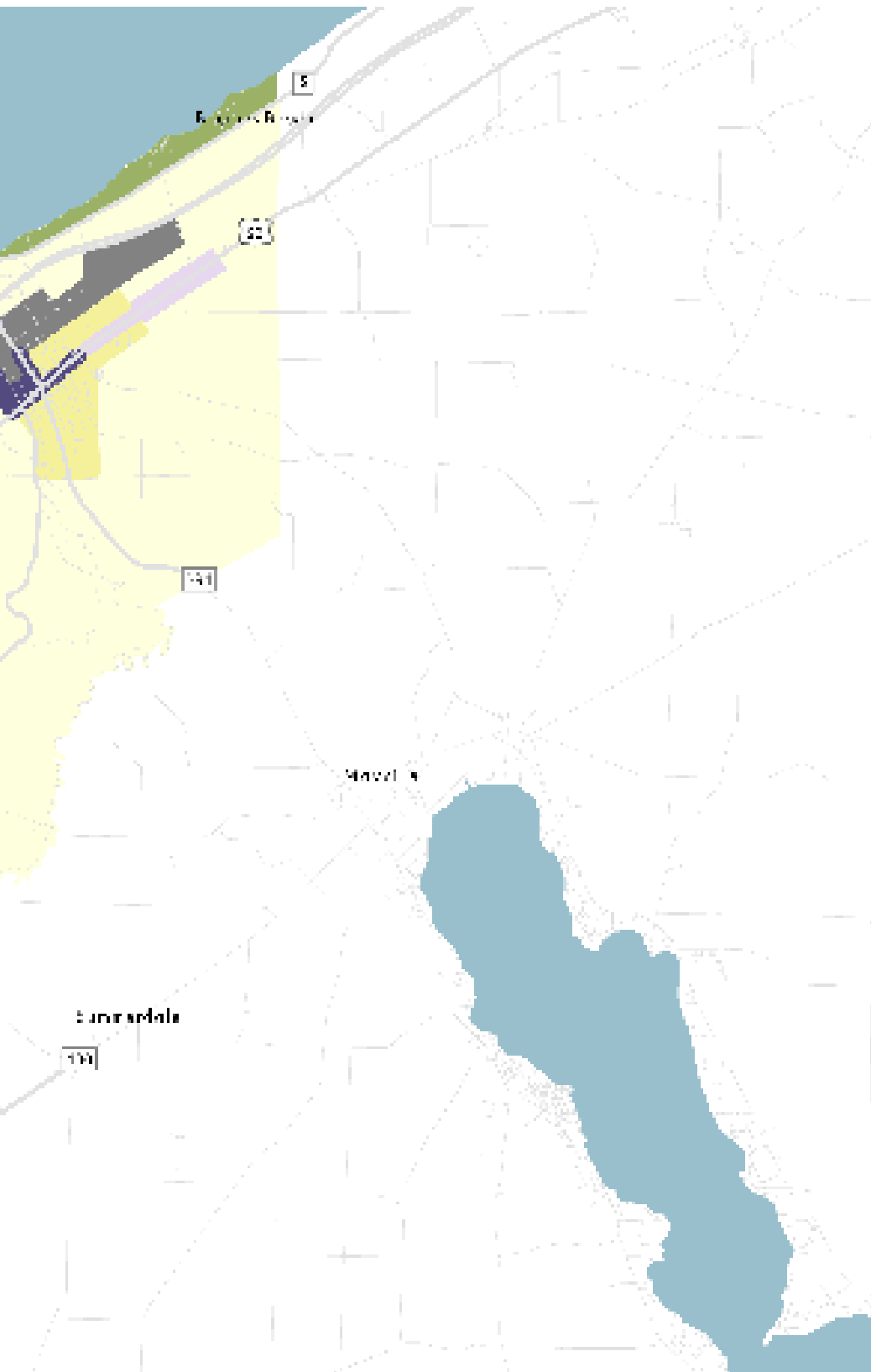
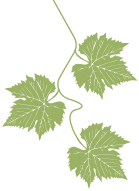


Future Land Use Map

A future land use map provides a broad framework for directing growth, redevelopment, and stewardship of land resources. In a community like Westfield, where the scenic and rural landscapes and vibrant downtown defines much of its character, it's especially important to protect those uses from incompatible development. The map highlights community priorities, like protecting green space and farmland and guiding development to existing infrastructure. Zoning and other local regulations provide the detailed standards to put that vision into practice.

-  ***Agricultural Residential***
-  ***Traditional Neighborhood***
-  ***Mixed Use***
-  ***Commercial Business***
-  ***Lakeside Community***
-  ***Enterprise***





Classifications

Agricultural Residential areas are defined by low-density, scattered residential and agricultural uses with limited infrastructure

Traditional Neighborhood areas are primarily residential but allow for a mix of uses, and supports walkable environments that combine services and housing

Commercial Business areas are defined by retail, service, and office uses, focused on business activity rather than housing

Mixed Use areas are centered on a Main Street core, and combine commercial, institutional, and residential uses in a walkable, historic setting that serves as a community hub

Lakeside Community areas function primarily as residential and seasonal communities bordering the lake, and supports recreation, tourism, and small-scale commercial

Enterprise areas are designated for industrial activity, including manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and related uses

5

Lakefront and Barcelona Harbor

A Community and Regional Destination



Celebrating Natural Assets, Strengthening
Recreation, and Supporting Local Commerce



Vision:

The Town and Village will support the ongoing efforts of Lakefront and Harbor development and Barcelona planning, recognizing the area as a treasured recreational and natural asset, while enhancing the waterfront and commercial areas as destinations for both residents and visitors.

This issue at a glance:

- The first public meeting for this planning project highlighted Barcelona Harbor as one of Westfield's most important yet underutilized assets, signaling its potential for recreation, community gathering, and economic activity.
- Given its proximity to Lake Erie and strong community interest in public beach access, lakeside amenities have emerged as a top priority for this plan.
- Barcelona Harbor is a distinctive area within Westfield, and its unique strengths should be leveraged to establish it as a vibrant, active destination for residents and visitors alike.
- Numerous planning efforts have been undertaken in the Barcelona Harbor area, and this chapter seeks to consolidate overlapping priorities into a single framework to guide future projects as part of the comprehensive plan.
- The recent acquisition of land adjacent to the beach by the Town presents an opportunity to develop new recreational, educational, and family-friendly amenities while preserving the site's natural character.
- Westfield's Lake Erie shoreline is a limited and valuable resource, and lakefront development should prioritize uses requiring direct water access, protect water quality, maintain public access, and reinforce the community's identity as a waterfront destination through careful zoning and environmental safeguards.



Lakefront and Barcelona Harbor

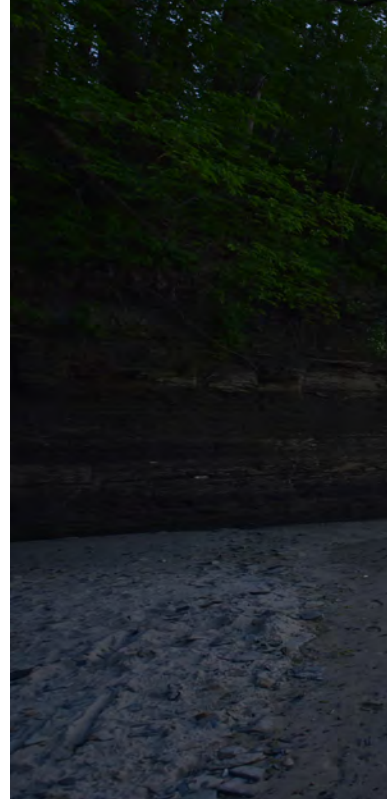
Setting the Scene

Barcelona, a hamlet nestled on the shores of Lake Erie, embodies the quiet charm of a waterfront community. The area features inviting bed and breakfasts, public beach access, and the recently revitalized 40-foot Barcelona Lighthouse, the first in the world to be lit by natural gas, originally completed in 1829. Once a hub for the commercial fishing industry, the harbor played a key role in transporting goods across the lake and remains one of the area's best spots for recreational fishing.

The lakefront offers scenic views and a range of recreational opportunities for boating, kayaking, and other water-based activities. The Barcelona Harbor Business District, centered around the marina, provides small local restaurants and shops that enhance the village's waterfront character. Today, Barcelona Harbor and its surrounding lakefront remain an important community and regional asset, offering the potential to serve as a vibrant public space that attracts visitors, supports local businesses, and encourages new investment, all while preserving its historic and natural character.

The Current Landscape

The lakefront area includes essential infrastructure such as the harbor, docks, and public spaces, many of which are aging and in need of maintenance or modernization. Recent property acquisitions create opportunities to expand recreational amenities, introduce environmental education, and offer more family-friendly programming in natural settings. Commercial districts such as the First Street area serve as important anchors of the lakefront's economic and social activity but would benefit from reinvestment in the form of streetscape enhancements, improved pedestrian connections, and updated storefronts. Transportation infrastructure including gateways, sidewalks, and roadways also shapes how residents and visitors experience the lakefront and access its amenities. At present, the entrance into this waterfront community could be improved to make a stronger statement, highlighting the area as a welcoming destination for investment, tourism, and recreation.





Barcelona's location on the lake imposes environmental constraints that require careful management. Shoreline erosion, water quality protection, and stormwater runoff control are ongoing concerns that must be addressed through sound regulatory frameworks and conservation practices. The community faces the challenge of balancing development pressures with the preservation of scenic views, public access, and ecological integrity.



To safeguard the lakefront's long-term viability, thoughtful land use policies are essential. Prioritizing water-dependent uses and discouraging incompatible development within sensitive shoreline zones helps maintain the lakefront's character and accessibility. Incorporating vegetative buffers, stormwater management, and public access requirements into site plan reviews further protects these resources.

Lakefront and Barcelona Harbor



The Barcelona lakefront is a defining feature of the community's identity, offering environmental, recreational, and economic opportunities along the scenic shores of Lake Erie. Over the years, it has been the focus of several planning initiatives and state-led processes, including the Town of Westfield and Town of Ripley Waterfront Opportunity Plan (2008), the Western New York Downtown Revitalization Initiative (2019), and Westfield Connections: The Westfield Community Planning and Design Initiative (2003). Each of these efforts sought to protect natural resources, enhance public access, and encourage waterfront revitalization. Building on this history, the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) will provide a comprehensive framework to formalize the community's vision for its waterfront and guide future projects.

However, these efforts must be thoughtfully integrated with the Town's broader goals and the joint comprehensive plan to ensure coordinated, consistent policies and investments that reflect community values and priorities. Aligning lakefront strategies with the comprehensive plan enables more effective stewardship of this limited and valuable resource while maximizing the benefits for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Overlapping Priorities

Planning processes in the area have identified several overlapping priorities that remain relevant today:



Barcelona Harbor should be promoted as a recreational destination, supporting activities such as kayaking and fishing, while maintaining docks, marina amenities, and harbor infrastructure like dredging and breakwaters.



First Street offers potential for mixed-use development, with restaurants, retail, apartments, and condominiums creating a dense “Main Street” atmosphere that attracts both residents and visitors.



Waterfront amenities such as a boardwalk connecting existing assets, bathhouses, beach shelters, public beach access with picnic areas and playgrounds, fish cleaning stations, vendor kiosks, a pavilion, interactive kiosks, and a terraced park with amphitheater should be added or enhanced.



Pedestrian and biking infrastructure should be improved to provide safe, convenient connections between the harbor, surrounding neighborhoods, and public spaces.



Entry points, signage, wayfinding, and branding should be upgraded to strengthen identity and make navigation intuitive for visitors.



Streetscape improvements, landscaping, public restrooms, boater facilities, and amenities such as a wine kiosk should be implemented, along with investment in future shops and restaurants to support a vibrant waterfront district.

KEY ISSUE STRATEGIES

Lakefront and Barcelona Harbor



Turning ideas into action

TOWN OF WESTFIELD

Barcelona Harbor
BOAT LAUNCH FACILITY
NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

TOWN OF WESTFIELD
BARCELONA HARBOR &
BOAT LAUNCH FACILITY

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



1

Integrate planning efforts in the Barcelona area

The Barcelona lakefront has been the subject of multiple planning initiatives and state-led processes over the years. To maximize the value of these efforts, it is important that the Town and Village coordinate and integrate recommendations into a single, unified vision. This coordination will ensure that future investments are aligned with community goals, avoid duplication of efforts, and leverage outside funding opportunities more effectively. As an unincorporated area, Barcelona falls under the governance and financial oversight of Westfield Town.



***A key step in this process is incorporating
the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
(LWRP) into the Comprehensive Plan.***



1 | Integrate planning efforts in the Barcelona area

a. Integrate recommendations from the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)

How

Because the LWRP requires the Town to agree to 44 specific policies for the lakefront, its alignment with the broader comprehensive plan will provide consistent policy direction for years to come. These recommendations align with the overlapping priorities defined in this chapter.

b. Advance planned lakefront improvements

How

Several lakefront projects are already identified and funded and moving them forward will be essential to strengthening Barcelona as a regional destination. Planned improvements include remaining projects as part of the restoration of the state-owned lighthouse, which remains a cultural and historic landmark for the community, as well as repair of the breakwater to protect the harbor from storm damage and erosion. Additional priorities include dock and shoreline sidewalk upgrades, which could be complemented by amenities such as a seasonal wine kiosk and public restrooms. Regular harbor dredging and maintenance will improve navigation and water quality, while recreational improvements such as a public fish-cleaning station will enhance the experience for anglers. General beautification efforts, including plantings, string lighting, and public art, will help create a welcoming atmosphere along the waterfront.



2

Upgrade the new lakeshore property

The Town's recent property acquisitions along the lakeshore provide an opportunity to create new recreational, educational, and family-friendly amenities while preserving the site's natural character.



*Improvements can be advanced in phases,
allowing the property to grow into a well-
rounded community destination over time.*



2 | Upgrade the new lakeshore property

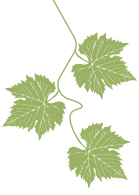
a. Preserve and prepare the site

How

Protect the natural landscape and ecological value of the property given its proximity to the lake and community importance. This may include habitat restoration or shoreline stabilization, as well as the creation of walking trails or interpretive signage that highlight the lakefront's environmental significance. Early investments should focus on low-impact improvements that open the site to the public in a careful and sustainable way.



The aquired property is to the right of this area.



b. Introduce family-friendly amenities

How

New amenities can be added to support day-to-day recreational use. Picnic areas, educational signage, seating, and small shelters will provide spaces for families and groups to gather, while nature play areas for children can encourage exploration and outdoor learning. These improvements will establish the property as a welcoming, family-oriented destination.



c. Develop community gathering space

How

Focus on creating flexible spaces for larger community use. A pavilion can serve multiple purposes, from hosting educational programs and events to providing everyday shelter for visitors. Supporting infrastructure such as parking, pathways, and wayfinding signage should be carefully designed to improve access while maintaining the property's natural character. Together, these enhancements will complete the site as a signature lakefront amenity that strengthens both community life and the area's regional appeal.

3

Activate the First Street Commercial Area

The First Street district serves as an important anchor for Barcelona's economic and social vitality. Strengthening this area will enhance both the visitor experience and local business opportunities. The waterfront area should not become overly developed, so it keeps its natural elements as the highlight, as well as its small-town charm.



“1st Street could be strengthened into the heart of a more attractive and cohesive Harbor Village”

- Waterfront Opportunity Plan (2008)



3 | Activate the First Street Commercial Area

a. Improve the public realm

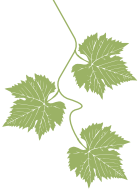
What

Community feedback highlighted the importance of enhancing waterfront amenities. Restrooms, changing areas, and water fixtures for rinsing off sand were among the most requested improvements, along with the addition of a fish cleaning station to support fishing activity. Parking should be expanded and improved, both in terms of availability and accessibility. Pet-friendly areas, such as a designated dog park or pet-accessible shoreline, would also respond to local demand and broaden the waterfront's appeal.

The harbor itself is framed by two sandy beaches, yet public access is limited. Current entry points are confined to a few town rights-of-way, including where Main Street and Portage Street meet the lakeshore. While these locations are occasionally used by residents, they do not function as formal, fully public beach access points. As noted in the Waterfront Opportunities Plan, the absence of bathing facilities and unclear access rights discourage broader use.

Why

These improvements aim to create a more welcoming, accessible, and functional destination for residents and visitors alike. Streetscape upgrades will make the district safer and more attractive for pedestrians, while signage and wayfinding help people navigate the district and reach nearby attractions, including the lighthouse and marina. Strengthening connections and enhancing waterfront amenities reinforces a sense of place, and encourages more activity throughout the area, ultimately broadening the waterfront's appeal and unlocking its full potential.



How

Focus on upgrades to the public areas along First Street and the harbor. This includes streetscape improvements such as widened sidewalks, enhanced lighting, seating areas, landscaping, and bike-friendly infrastructure. It also involves adding wayfinding signage, information kiosks, and clearly defined approach routes with directional signs. Efforts should also include formalizing beach access to improve public use and access, as well as strengthening the connections between First Street and the surrounding neighborhoods.

b. Support Local Businesses

How

A thriving First Street district depends on supporting both existing businesses and new enterprises. Initiatives could include small business grants, façade improvement programs, or flexible zoning that allows pop-up retail and food trucks in designated areas. These strategies will help attract visitors, encourage entrepreneurship, and ensure a diverse mix of commercial offerings that reflect the character of the community. Businesses brought into the area should be small and local to support the community.



Lakefront and Barcelona Harbor

c. Expand Year-Round Activity

How

To maintain vibrancy beyond the peak tourist season, the district can host seasonal and off-season programming such as outdoor concerts, farmers' markets, and small-scale festivals. Implementing a "two fronts" concept, linking First Street, the lighthouse, and the marina with a continuous boardwalk, can create a cohesive waterfront experience, encouraging movement between key destinations and providing additional spaces for events and leisure activities. The "two fronts" concept, which originated as part of the Waterfront Opportunity Plan, shown below, illustrates a continuous, publicly accessible pedestrian path along the water and through the harbor to First Street Harbor Village.

A boardwalk to connect the Lakefront and Barcelona area was highly rated as something participants of the recommendations pop-up would like to be added to the waterfront area.

Excerpt: Waterfront Opportunity Plan, pg. 22



A terraced park and stairs connect the lighthouse and Route 5 to the lower beachfront area.

A boardwalk provides a path between the public pier and marina.



A harbor pedestrian pathway can be implemented in stages.

Portions on private land (beyond the lighthouse in this image) can occur only in partnership with a willing landowner.



Westfield Fisheries
Knot Right Fishing Charter
Quiglin's Bark Grill
Main Diner
TAP ROOM

Public Beach

Lake Shore Center Arts

Calarco's Italian Restaurant 1.7mi

Public Beach

4

Strengthen the Gateway to Westfield and Barcelona

A stronger, more cohesive gateway will signal that they have arrived at a unique and vibrant destination. The Town should continue to partner with NYS DOT to advance placemaking projects along Route 394, as outlined in the Westfield Connections Plan, and coordinate with state agencies to secure funding and approvals. Extending sidewalks from the Village to the Harbor is also a key priority, creating a safe, walkable connection that links key destinations and reduces reliance on vehicle trips. Collectively, these improvements will establish a more attractive and accessible gateway, encouraging repeat visits and greater local investment.



The entrance into Westfield and Barcelona plays an important role in shaping how visitors experience the community.



4 | Strengthen the Gateway to Westfield and Barcelona

a. Advance corridor enhancements

How

Partner with NYS DOT to advance Route 394 placemaking projects from the Westfield Connections Plan. Coordinate with state agencies to secure funding and approvals.

b. Improve walkability

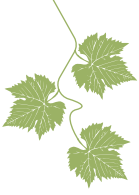
How

Extend sidewalks from the Village to the Harbor to link key destinations and create a safe, connected corridor, per the Westfield Connections Plan.

c. Create a gateway experience

How

Incorporate signage, landscaping, and other placemaking elements at key entry points to establish Barcelona as a distinct destination for investment, tourism, and recreation. This may include additional gateway signage, similar to the recommendation outlined in the Downtown Development chapter of this plan.



5

Protect the Lakefront

Westfield's lakefront along the Lake Erie shoreline is a limited and valuable resource. To preserve public access, protect water quality, and support the community's identity as a waterfront destination, lakefront development should give priority to uses that require direct water access while providing environmental protection.



Guided by a focus on water-based activities, natural resource protection, and public access, this framework fosters a lakefront that balances recreation, stewardship, and community enjoyment.



5 | Protect the Lakefront

a. Establish protective zoning

How

Adopt a Lakefront Conservation Overlay Zone, guiding development within 100 feet of the shoreline, and extending to 150 feet in areas with sensitive erosion conditions or high scenic value to new and public parcels. Zoning should encourage designs that maintain public access and support natural shoreline stabilization where possible.

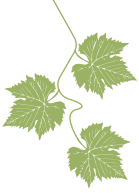
b. Prioritize water-dependent uses

How

Support uses that require direct water access, such as:

- Marinas and boat launches
- Public docks and fishing piers
- Recreational facilities such as swimming areas, kayak rentals, or sailing schools
- Commercial fishing operations

Discourage or prohibit non-water-dependent (e.g., private residences, parking lots, unrelated retail) within the overlay zone unless designed to maintain public access and protect shoreline views, and integrate environmentally sensitive practices.



c. Strengthen environmental protections

How

Require vegetative buffers, stormwater management practices, and natural shoreline stabilization techniques when appropriate, like living shorelines, for all lakefront development. Integrate public access requirements into site plan review to ensure redeveloped parcels contribute to a connected and accessible shoreline while enhancing habitat, water quality, and resilience against erosion.

What are Living Shorelines?

Living shorelines are nature-based strategies for stabilizing shorelines using materials such as plants, rocks, shells, and fiber logs to reduce erosion and create or enhance wildlife habitats. Unlike traditional hard structures like bulkheads or seawalls, living shorelines work with natural coastal processes, maintaining the dynamic connection between land and water. Features such as marsh plants, oyster reefs, and submerged vegetation help slow waves, trap sediment, and build new habitat, making living shorelines a long-term, low-maintenance approach to shoreline management.

Regionally, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper has implemented living shoreline projects throughout the Niagara River and Lake Erie Watershed to restore degraded shorelines. Their program focuses on returning hardened or impaired shorelines to a more natural, resilient, and self-repairing state, supporting sustainable ecosystems that provide greater ecological and protective functions.

Stella Niagara Preserve, Lewiston, NY

The Stella Niagara Preserve is the largest privately owned, undeveloped tract along the Niagara River. Acquired by the Western New York Land Conservancy in 2015, it serves as an important ecological and recreational resource. Prior to restoration, the shoreline was cluttered with concrete debris, limiting public access and harming local habitats. Restoration efforts removed the debris and installed natural materials such as boulders, logs, and native plants to stabilize the shoreline and create wildlife habitat. Shallow water areas were established to support fish spawning, and the paddle-craft landing was improved for safer, easier access for kayakers and canoers. These enhancements improved both public access and ecological value, and made the Stella Niagara project a model for community-driven conservation along the Niagara River.

6

Other Issues

A More Complete Picture



Capturing Additional Community Priorities



WESTFIELD

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Other Issues

Beyond the four Key Issues, this chapter highlights additional topics that are important to the community but did not rise to the level of a Key Issue or may fall outside the direct control of local officials. Rather than prescribing specific strategies, it serves to acknowledge and memorialize these matters, ensuring they are recorded and visible as part of the broader community dialogue.

This plan follows an Implementable Comprehensive Plan approach, which focuses on the four Key Issues identified through extensive input from residents and stakeholders as the community's highest priorities for the years ahead. The topics in this chapter, while still relevant, either fall outside the plan's primary focus, extend beyond local authority, or were considered less urgent in comparison to the main priorities. By documenting these additional matters, the plan provides a more complete picture of community interests and concerns without diluting the focus on actionable priorities.





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150 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE

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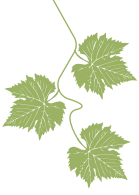
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Collaborative Governance

Planning advisory boards play a critical role in local governance by advising elected officials, serving as a buffer between residents and decision-makers on development issues, and guiding growth in ways that reflect community priorities. Effective boards maintain consistent communication with code enforcement staff to stay informed of actions that impact land use and development. Architectural review should be closely integrated with the planning board, either as a subcommittee or as part of its functions, to ensure that new construction and redevelopment are compatible with the community's character. While architectural review traditionally focuses on historic properties, planning advisory boards apply these principles across the broader built environment. Strengthening collaboration between the Town and Village on planning initiatives can also provide opportunities for joint projects and cost savings, while reinforcing a more unified approach to growth. Strategies for strengthening planning practices within these advisory boards include:

- Providing training to board members on planning, zoning, and development review.
- Establishing clear and consistent communication protocols with code enforcement staff.
- Promoting private property maintenance and supporting stronger code enforcement to uphold community standards for yards, sidewalks, and building upkeep.
- Coordinating closely with architectural review boards to align decision-making.
- Clearly defining the board's advisory role while maintaining independence from political pressures.



Positioning the Town and Village as an Attractive Place to Live for Young Families

Attracting young families to the Town and Village is closely connected to several of the key issues identified through public engagement. Successfully doing so depends on a combination of high-quality schools, a well-maintained and inviting community character, accessible recreational amenities, and a range of housing options suitable for younger households. Recreational offerings can include parks, playgrounds, trails, community centers, and programs that engage children and families, fostering connection and well-being. Implementing the strategies outlined in this plan, including enhancements to the downtown character and the development of diverse housing types, will increase the community's appeal to young families. At the same time, it is important to recognize that attracting and retaining families is an ongoing process that requires attention to additional factors such as economic opportunities, access to services, and continued investment in community amenities. Together, these measures are intended to support long-term population growth, demographic diversity, and the overall vitality of the community.

Other Issues



Promote Community Art Initiatives

Promoting community art initiatives enhances both the vibrancy and livability of the Town and Village while supporting broader planning objectives. Public art projects, including murals, sculptures, and interactive installations, create visually engaging spaces, foster community pride, and provide opportunities for residents to participate in creative expression. These initiatives also increase the community's appeal to younger families, visitors, and potential new residents by reinforcing a unique sense of place.

Downtown Auburn, New York, offers a self-guided art walk featuring over a dozen public art pieces, including mosaics, murals, and sculptures, each highlighting the stories of local artists. Such initiatives demonstrate how public art can transform public spaces into gathering areas, activate downtowns, and celebrate local talent. By integrating community art into broader strategies for neighborhood character, downtown vitality, and recreational amenities, the Town and Village can strengthen social connections, support cultural tourism, and establish itself as a dynamic, welcoming, and creative community.



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Appendices



