

CIRCULATION PLAN

Part IV of the Wyckoff Master Plan

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Staff Services: The Planning Association of North Jersey

It is certified that all copies of this document are in conformance with the one which was signed and sealed by Jane Lyle Diepeveen, P.P. License No. 357.

WYCKOFF MASTER PLAN

IV CIRCULATION PLAN

The Circulation Plan is a major element in the development of the comprehensive Master Plan. The purpose of the street system portion of the Plan is to define a desirable circulation pattern and offer solutions to existing traffic problems. Goals are to further the ease of vehicle and pedestrian movement and separation of local and through traffic in order to increase safety and enhance the livability of the community. The Circulation Plan (together with the Community Facilities Plan) also forms the basis of the Official Map on which planned improvements are shown.

Proposed Circulation System

The Circulation Plan shows the proposed traffic circulation system for Wyckoff, with streets designated as highway, arterial, collector or local as defined in the Existing Conditions Study. There are no major changes proposed for the road system: most streets will continue to serve the same functions as at present; but some important additions are proposed.

The direct connection of Cedar Hill Avenue with Godwin Avenue in Midland Park via a new road across the railroad to connect with Clinton Avenue is shown on the Plan. This proposal is also shown on the Midland Park Master Plan. This new connection would greatly facilitate traffic flow which must now negotiate four turns before it reaches Godwin Avenue. The County would be responsible for constructing the new connection. It is recommended that discussion with the County be initiated by the two towns as soon as possible. Meanwhile, placement of the proposal on the Master Plan will insure that the right-of-way for the extension will be preserved when the property involved (now vacant) is developed.

An important new link in the secondary road system is proposed. This is the extension of Ackerson Avenue through the Meer Tract to Wyckoff Avenue near Brownstone Court and the closing of Ackerson Avenue at Russell Avenue. This is a very

dangerous intersection because of poor visibility on both streets, the high speed of Russell Avenue traffic and the closeness of the intersection to the Route 208 overpass and ramps. Because of the steep grade of Ackerson at the intersection, and the curve in Russell Avenue, it is not possible to improve visibility. The new road will divert James Way traffic from this intersection, and will provide Wyckoff Avenue access to the Meer tract.

The Bergen County Traffic Division has proposed that left turns from Main Street onto Wyckoff Avenue be prohibited and that this traffic be diverted to Clinton Avenue which would be signalized. The Planning Board does not agree that traffic should be diverted from Main Street to Clinton Avenue. Left turns should continue to be permitted from Main Street onto Wyckoff Avenue. The Planning Board agrees with the proposal to install a traffic signal at Wyckoff Avenue and Clinton Avenue.

New local streets are proposed to serve future industrial and residential development in the northwest corner of the Township. Once these street layouts become part of an adopted Master Plan, developers will have to provide streets consistent with the planned layout. The proposed industrial roads are not shown as continuing through from Wyckoff Avenue to Lawlins Road. In this way, traffic from industries near Lawlins Road headed for Route 208 will be encouraged to use Franklin Avenue rather than traverse Wyckoff Avenue through the business district. Charles Avenue should be extended across the railroad to provide additional access to the Pulis industrial area.

The new residential streets in this section should have no connection with the industrial area except near Lawlins where there is not room for two new intersections. The new streets are shown to connect with existing deadend streets to form a convenient interior circulation pattern. A connection with the adjacent IEM property in Franklin Lakes is avoided so as to keep commercial traffic out of the residential area.

The streets shown are the skeleton of the new residential street system: additional streets could be added to suit the developers needs, provided the Planning Board approves.

Two unused "paper" streets in the East Wyckoff section should be vacated to avoid additional entrances to industries through residential areas. These are John Street east of Spencer Street and Albert Street south of John Street. In addition, the bed of Marr Avenue connecting with Braen Street in Hawthorne is now being used for truck storage and should be vacated so the property can be taxed.

Two street extensions proposed by the Midland Park Master Plan have been rejected by the Planning Board as being detrimental to Wyckoff development and are thus not shown on the Plan. These are the extension of Linwood Avenue, (serving a proposed multi-family area) to Midland Avenue in Wyckoff near Brook Road, and the continuation of Bank Street to Newton Road opposite Cedar Hill Avenue to provide for industrial development in Midland Park.

Intersection Improvements

As noted in the Existing Conditions Study, a signalized intersection, or a congested intersection without a signal, limits the traffic-carrying capacity of a street for several hundred feet from the crossing. For this reason, intersection improvement is the most effective way of increasing capacity and facilitating traffic flow. This fact is recognized by the federal government in its TOPICS program (Traffic Operation Program to Increase Capacity and Safety) to fund part of the cost of intersection improvements.

The Bergen County Traffic Division has retained Storch Engineering of Florham Park for the TOPICS study and the engineers' preliminary recommendations for the improvement of four Wyckoff intersections are summarized below.

Franklin Avenue - Main Street Intersection

Problems: Traffic back-up on Main Street, very heavy volumes on Franklin.

Recommendations: Signalize intersection; widen Main Street to 38 feet at intersection to provide right and left turn lanes; widen Franklin Avenue (minor), provide left turn lane on westbound side; regrade Franklin Avenue at railroad to provide better visibility.

Wyckoff Avenue - Main Street

Problems: Traffic back-up on Main Street, heavy volume on Wyckoff; high number of accidents.

Recommendations: Widen Wyckoff Avenue pavement between Main and railroad to 38 feet to take flow from Main Street. Regrade Wyckoff Avenue at tracks to improve visibility. Note: The Wyckoff Planning Board recommends two approach lanes on West Main Street and the closing of the old driveway north of the railroad.

Wyckoff Avenue - Godwin Avenue

Problems: Acute angle intersection and heavy traffic volumes make for delay and high number of accidents.

Recommendations: Re-channelize intersection to force northbound Wyckoff Avenue traffic to make a right angle turn either to continue north or to enter Godwin Avenue. Provide an island to separate these two flows, and another island to separate these from Wyckoff Avenue southbound traffic. Note: The Wyckoff Planning Board recommends in addition that left turns from Godwin to Wyckoff Avenue be prohibited.

There are several other intersections which also need improvement to increase safety and relieve congestion. Planning Board recommendations for these improvements are summarized below.

Franklin Avenue - Godwin Avenue

Problems: Second highest number of accidents of any intersection; second highest peak-hour and 12-hour volumes; delay and congestion, high turning movements.

Recent improvement has helped somewhat, but more is needed.

Recommendations: Widen right-of-way and pavements as per Bergen County Plan; (easement along Dairy Queen property has been acquired); provide two lanes entering intersection for each direction with right or left turn lanes as required by traffic flow. If acquisition costs are too high for Township and the County will not pay for them, the Township could petition the County to apply for Federal aid for the improvement.

Godwin Avenue at Shopping Center Entrance

Problem: Traffic backs up on Godwin Avenue waiting to make left turn into shopping center.

Recommendation: Provide left turn lane, or if future conditions warrant, prohibit left turn into shopping center.

Franklin Avenue - Crescent Avenue

Problems: Traffic backs up on Franklin Avenue because of left turn movements, and on Crescent Avenue because of heavy flow on Franklin.

Recommendations: Provide left turn only lanes on Franklin, two approach lanes on each side of Crescent.

Wyckoff Avenue - Crescent Avenue

Problems: Traffic backs up on Crescent Avenue and on Wyckoff Avenue waiting to make left turn into Crescent.

Recommendations: Widen Wyckoff Avenue pavement north of Crescent Avenue to permit left turn lane. Provide left and right turn lanes on Crescent.

Wyckoff Avenue - Russell Avenue

Problems: High number of accidents; poor visibility; traffic backs up on Russell.

Recommendations: Widen pavement on Russell to provide left turn lane; construct islands on Wyckoff Avenue each side of intersection to channel traffic. Cut back woods to improve visibility from Russell.

Russell Avenue - Sicomac Avenue

Problems: Traffic back up in all directions; poor visibility.

Recommendations: Increase pavement radii at corners to improve visibility; widen pavement to provide left turn lanes on Russell and on Sicomac eastbound, right turn lane on Sicomac westbound.

Sicomac Avenue - Mountain Avenue

Problems: Acute angle intersection; traffic backs up on Mountain Avenue and Sicomac Avenue westbound; high number of accidents and poor visibility.

Recommendations: Increase pavement radii at corners to improve visibility and facilitate turning movement; widen pavement to provide left turn lanes on Mountain Avenue and on Sicomac Avenue westbound; right turn lane on Sicomac eastbound. Additional right-of-way will be needed at corners.

Sicomac Avenue - Cedar Hill Avenue

Problems: High number of accidents; heavy left turn movement from Sicomac Avenue causes traffic back up. Traffic backs up on Cedar Hill Avenue.

Recommendations: Provide two approach lanes on Cedar Hill and on Sicomac Avenue eastbound. Cut back trees at northeast corner to provide better visibility.

Wyckoff Avenue - Goffle Road

This acute angle intersection at the railroad has poor vertical and horizontal alignments causing poor visibility. The County Traffic Department is ready to undertake an improvement of this intersection including regrading and traffic light installation, but the State Department of Transportation has advised that the project will

be held up indefinitely because it has no funds in its railroad regrading account to pay its 80 percent share. It is possible that Federal aid will be sought for the improvement.

Funding

The four intersections included in the TOPICS program are eligible for 70 percent Federal - 30 percent State funding. However, the State now has only enough funds left in its Traffic Improvement Program for 1/3 of the projects currently on the list, so that the completion of the improvements by the county is in doubt. At any rate, the time from application to awarding of funds often takes two years, three years if a Public Utilities Commission hearing is necessary as in the intersection involving railroads. Funding of the State share by the County is doubtful as long as the State has the funding responsibility.

Federal aid is available to the County for improvement of other intersections, since all County roads are included in the Federal Aid Urban System (FAUS). The position of the County Traffic Division is that it will make the Franklin-Godwin Avenue improvement only if Wyckoff secures all the necessary property or easements for the additional right-of-way necessary. If the Township feels this is too expensive, it may petition the County to apply for Federal funding for the project.

Street Widths

As noted above, the capacity of many sections of Wyckoff's streets is limited by intersection conditions. Other major factors limiting capacity are the effective width of the pavement and on-street parking.

With the exception of intersections, most parts of the arterial street system have pavements wide enough to carry the present peak hour loads, even with on-street parking permitted. In some places, however, effective pavement width must be increased either through widening or rush-hour parking bans. On-street parking

decreases capacity not only because it is occupying a traffic lane, but because cars leaving and entering the traffic stream cause slow-downs.

Peak hour parking bans are an effective and inexpensive method of increasing road capacity and thus decongesting traffic, especially since adding a lane would require property acquisitions in many cases. The only immediate need for increased capacity (aside from intersections) is on Wyckoff Avenue in the business area. The Planning Board recommends that there be no stopping or standing on the east side of Wyckoff Avenue between the Reformed Church and Franklin Avenue from 4:00 to 6:00 on weekdays, and there be a similar restriction on both sides of Wyckoff Avenue between Franklin Avenue and the railroad. The latter would result in the loss of 23 spaces between 4:00 to 6:00 only. The spaces along the church property are now used by commuters, who would have to park elsewhere.

To provide more parking spaces, the vacant Township-owned lot on Clinton Avenue should be paved for use by long-term parkers. The details are discussed below.

Although parking bans can often solve pavement-width deficiencies, future conditions may dictate street widening. Establishment of future desirable street widths as part of the Master Plan and Official Map are useful tools for requiring wider rights-of-way from developers. A right-of-way greater than 50 feet can not be required unless it is shown on one of these documents.

The Bergen County Master Plan calls for a minimum 60-foot right-of-way on all County Roads, which allows for a four-lane 46-foot pavement with sidewalks on each side but insufficient room for snow piling and utility poles. A wider right-of-way is needed for proper four-lane construction with sidewalks and the Bergen County Planning Board is considering an upward revision. In the meantime, the County is requiring dedication of additional width sufficient for a 60-foot right-of-way whenever property on County Roads is developed, and for an 80-foot right-of-way within 250 feet of an intersection.

Present pavement widths on County Roads range from about 22 to 38 feet, and right-of-way widths from 33 to 70 feet. The County is not planning any road-widening except at intersections, but pavements without curbs are generally widened a foot on each side when they are resurfaced.

At present, an ordinance is in effect prohibiting stopping or standing on most Arterials and Collectors (except where one-hour parking is permitted) but the Ordinance is enforced only where signs are posted (where traffic conditions warrant). Having the Ordinance on the books, however, permits effective widening by banning parking if and when increased traffic should warrant.

To comply with the County Master Plan, the Wyckoff Circulation Plan shows a right-of-way width of 60 feet for all County Roads and for all Arterial streets that are not County Roads. Other streets are shown at 50 feet. This permits the standard 30-foot pavement with sidewalks on each side, or a 36-foot pavement with walks on one side only if future traffic on collector streets should warrant it. The 30-foot pavement can be effectively widened for heavy two-way traffic by banning parking on one side. A 33-foot pavement is required at all intersection approaches where an extra turning lane is needed as noted under "Intersection Improvements".

Other Traffic Problems

Traffic to the municipal athletic field, particularly in the evening, has been the subject of complaints from residents on Woodland Avenue near the field entrance. The establishment of Woodland Avenue as a one-way street has distributed the traffic, but it is recommended that a new driveway along the railroad track be constructed to be used as an exit for both Town Hall and Recreation Field traffic, thus removing existing traffic from the residential area and from Scott Plaza, a dangerous intersection because of its proximity to Monroe Avenue.

There is an unnecessary driveway adjacent to the Stop and Shop shopping center entrance on Wyckoff Avenue and the railroad. This driveway should be closed to prevent the traffic conflict that arises from its occasional use.

Parking

The only area where insufficient parking space is a problem is in the Central Business Triangle and the streets immediately surrounding it, where there is inadequate space at peak periods. Many of the shops provide off-street parking and some of the curb space is restricted to short-term parking, but commuters and store workers use lot space and unrestricted curb space. If a lot could be reserved for long-term parkers, there would be more convenient curb space for shoppers. The large paved area at Washington School on Everett Street would be an ideal location for the commuter parking which now takes place on Wyckoff Avenue, but this area is used by the school children for physical education and by the summer recreation program, and is needed to provide sufficient play space in the neighborhood. If the Township lot at Clinton and Morse Avenues were paved and lined, it could accommodate 34 long-term parkers. If necessary, identification stickers could be distributed so that only residents could use the lot.

Another possibility is for the Township to lease the 25 little-used spaces in the shopping center along the railroad track, nearest Wyckoff Avenue. This is considered more practical than leasing land from the railroad adjacent to these existing spaces and using the parking lot for access to them. If desired, the cost of leasing and improving parking areas for long-term parkers could be covered by requiring an annual permit at a modest fee.

Pedestrian Facilities

The street system serves as a primary means of pedestrian circulation, a fact that must not be overlooked in formulating the Circulation Plan. As the trend to

ever-increasing automobile use is being reversed by considerations of both health and energy savings, more pedestrians will use sidewalks for getting from place to place as well as for recreational purposes. Small children use sidewalks for tri-cycles and wheeled toys, roller skating and hopscotch. If there is no sidewalk, they are more apt to play in the street. The ever-growing population of senior citizens uses walking as an important form of exercise and recreation, particularly if there is a safe place to walk. And residents of all ages use the streets and sidewalks for jogging.

Although the absence of sidewalks is thought to provide a "rural" atmosphere, macadam paved paths can often be provided on one side of the street and without installing curbs, thus retaining much of the "country" appearance. Lack of sidewalks may be acceptable on local service streets where the design discourages fast or heavy traffic and the lots are large, but arterial and collector roads should be provided with walks on at least one side for the safety of older people and of children walking to school. The Planning Board reserves the right to evaluate the need for sidewalks on all but arterial and collector streets.

An on-going program to install sidewalks on all major school routes has been in effect. This program should be extended to include routes to shopping areas and existing and proposed recreation facilities. Two dangerous areas which should be given highest priority are Sicomac Road near Cedar Hill Avenue and the intersection of Cedar Hill Avenue with Newtown Road.

Sidewalks should be at least four feet wide and should be separated from the street pavement by a planting strip of at least two feet, preferably five feet or more.

Bikeways

An increase in cycling, as in walking has been favored by health and energy considerations. Many Wyckoff roads are too narrow to permit cyclists to travel in

comfort or for cars to pass a bicycle without entering the opposing traffic lane. In recognition of the growing need for cycle facilities, the Federal government has instituted an aid program for the establishment of bikeways along roads in the Urban Aid System.

The Circulation Plan proposes the establishment of signed bikeways along one side of major streets wherever it is possible. For least cost, the bicycle pathway should be adjacent to the road pavement and marked by a white or yellow line. In places where the pavement is wide enough (24 feet minimum) only pavement striping and signing would be required. In other places some pavement widening would be necessary. Signing for the existing no-stopping or standing ordinance, or establishment of a no-parking regulation would be necessary if the bicycle path is to be at the edge of the pavement. If it were desired to retain on-street parking, a shoulder or other separation between pavement and bikeway would have to be established to keep cars from parking on the cycle path.

The Bergen County Road Division has no funds for bikeways along County Roads. If the Township wants to widen the pavement or install striping and signing on a County Road, it must apply to the County for permission. Unless the bikeway is planned to be physically separated from the automobile traffic, the County will require a parking prohibition.

The selection of roads suitable for bikeways should be made with the advice of the police traffic officer, and should be based on terrain (not too hilly), traffic counts and community needs. As with sidewalks, a primary consideration should be the provision of safe routes to schools and recreation areas.

One possible route, which would serve the Meer Tract and Eisenhower and Sicomac Schools, would be the inside of the loop formed by Wyckoff, Cedar Hill, Sicomac, and Russell Avenues, with part of the route through the Meer Tract to avoid the Wyckoff-Russell intersection. About half of this route is presently signed for no stopping or standing. An extension along either Wyckoff or Monroe Avenues would provide access to the business district, Washington School and the Recreation Field.

However, there are some steep sections in the route and the pavement would have to be widened in some sections.

A flatter route would be the Crescent Avenue-Godwin Avenue loop with a side loop via Demarest Avenue and the Recreation Field to Franklin Avenue. This route would serve Lincoln School, the County Wildlife Center and the business district as well as the Recreation Field, and most of it would avoid heavy traffic, but two very busy intersections would be included. Only a small part of the loop has no-parking rules now in effect, and pavement widening would be required in many places.