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**Maplewood, NJ Awarded Neighborhood Preservation Program Grant**

MAPLEWOOD, NJ-- The Township of Maplewood has been awarded a 5-year designation, including an initial $125,000 grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs’ Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP). Pending annual State budget capacity, the Hilton Neighborhood/Springfield Avenue District is anticipated to receive up to $125,000 a year for a total of five years to assist with economic and community development.

In addition to funding, the State’s NPP Team of place-based revitalization experts will provide a robust array of technical assistance and training to guide and empower this local effort. Maplewood is among 40 communities throughout New Jersey to receive this designation since NPP was revived in 2019 by Governor Phil Murphy and Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver as part of their plan to create a stronger and fairer New Jersey.

“I want to thank the DCA for their continued support of Maplewood’s development initiatives. Springfield Avenue is our most robust and diverse business district.  This grant will allow us to continue our efforts to enhance the quality of life for our Hilton community by providing additional amenities and assist us with attracting and retaining an array of new and upcoming small businesses. It’s a big win for all of Maplewood,” said Maplewood Mayor Frank McGehee.

“Hilton Neighborhood/Springfield Avenue District encompasses a portion of the Hilton Neighborhood and a portion of the Springfield Avenue Special Improvement District.  The Springfield Avenue section is a growing pedestrian-focused district, gradually attracting more businesses that serve resident and the surrounding local community.  The Hilton Neighborhood is Maplewood’s most diverse neighborhood, and known for its strong community activism and neighborhood pride,” added Springfield Avenue Partnership Executive Director Nicole Dooskin Wallace.

The program is designed to increase place, economic, civic and social value. It seeks to achieve this by enhancing buildings, streets and a district’s entire physical realm, by supporting and coordinating small business recovery, growth and sustainability, and by marketing district events and activities while also engaging local stakeholders in planning and relationship building. The state’s NPP Team will work closely with the Springfield Avenue Partnership to support an array of bottom-up efforts that create visible and tangible change, leverage other public and private resources, and address real needs and aspirations of stakeholders, including residents and business owners.

The Township and Springfield Avenue Partnership, under the leadership of a local NPP Coordinator with support of a local NPP Stakeholder Team will create an NPP Implementation Plan that combines significant community engagement, local knowledge, and hard data. The resulting Implementation Plan is an achievable and comprehensive set of projects and programs that address local needs and build on local assets in its NPP District.

In total, 31 communities applied for only 20 available NPP designations. Maplewood is part of this new group of 20 communities that includes Newark and South Orange. Since relaunching in 2019, NPP has helped generate physical, tangible change, including addressing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in communities like [East Orange](https://npprogramnj.wixsite.com/npphome/districts%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self).

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