

TOWNSHIP OF MAPLEWOOD



MASTER PLAN



Prepared by:
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With the assistance of:
FHI Studio
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ADOPTED | August 8, 2023

Township of Maplewood Master Plan

Maplewood, NJ

Prepared for:

The Township of Maplewood Planning Board

Prepared by:

The Maplewood Master Plan Steering Committee

With:

BFJ Planning

115 Fifth Avenue

New York, NY 10003

ADOPTED | August 8, 2023



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Adopted on August 8, 2023 by the Maplewood Planning Board.

The original of this document has been signed and sealed in accordance with New Jersey Law.

All photos are from BFJ Planning unless otherwise noted

Township of Maplewood Master Plan

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS

OVERVIEW

The Maplewood Master Plan is a “blueprint” for the Township. It outlines Maplewood’s vision for the future and provides community-established goals, objectives, and strategies for the orderly and balanced future physical, economic, social, and fiscal development. This document is not a law or regulation, but it provides guidance to elected officials and decision-makers as they take land use, zoning, transportation, and capital investment actions. The Master Plan relies on community outreach, stakeholder interviews, data analysis, and existing plans and studies completed by the Township and other agencies.

The basic purpose of a master plan, as stated by New Jersey statute within the “Municipal Land Use Law” (MLUL), is “to guide the use of lands within the municipality in a manner which protects the public health and safety and promotes the general welfare.” The Township last undertook a comprehensive master planning effort in 2004, and since then, has completed periodic reexamination reports, in accordance with the MLUL, to review the Master Plan and reconsider goals in the context of changes to the community. Reexamination reports are required to be prepared by the Planning Board at least once every 10 years; the Township’s most recent Reexamination Report was adopted in 2011.

In late 2021, Maplewood issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a planning consultant to prepare a full new Master Plan. The Township assembled a Master Plan Steering Committee led by then Mayor Frank McGehee and retained a consultant team led by BFJ Planning to assist in this effort. The 2023 Master Plan represents Maplewood’s continuing effort to ensure that its planning policies and land use goals and objectives remain current, effectively respond to the

issues facing the Township, and reflect the community’s long-term vision to be a diverse, welcoming, and inclusive place for people of all ages and walks of life.

PROJECT LEADERSHIP

The Master Plan process was led by a steering committee including representatives from the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Green Team, and Special Improvement Districts, as well as the Mayor. The committee met regularly with the consultant team to review project deliverables, discuss issues and recommendations, and plan for public engagement. In addition, the committee briefed the full Planning Board, to keep them apprised of progress. The Master Plan Steering Committee members are as follows:

- Dean Dafis – Mayor and member of the Planning Board
- Karen Pisciotta – Planning Board Chair
- Frank McGehee – Former Mayor and Township Committee Member
- Tom Carlson – Planning Board Member
- Liz Ward – Planning Board Member
- Morgan McCray – Zoning Board of Adjustment Chair
- Veda Truesdale – Green Team Member
- Cat Delett – Maplewood Village Alliance Executive Director
- Nicole Wallace – Springfield Avenue Partnership Executive Director

PUBLIC OUTREACH

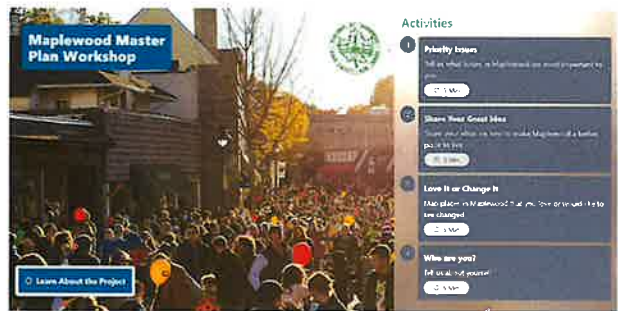
Public engagement was a vital component of the Master Plan process, to assure that the recommendations were generated and supported by Maplewood’s residents, workers, property owners, and the Township as a whole. The consultant team provided many opportunities for public input, including virtual and in-person meetings, an online workshop/survey, focus group meetings, pop-up events, meetings with Township staff and agency stakeholders, and mini-workshops. The outreach methods were designed to maximize stakeholders’ ability to participate in the planning process, and to provide a range of opportunities to provide input in a safe and comfortable way, especially in light of ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As initial background information was being collected, the consultant team worked closely with the Master Plan Steering Committee to design and implement a comprehensive public engagement process that could be modified as needed to respond to emerging needs. The following subsections describe the various components and outcomes of this process.

Online Workshop

Public engagement commenced with a virtual workshop designed to gather input from the community about their vision for the future of Maplewood. The workshop was launched in July 2022 and was open through mid-September 2022. To enable broad participation, the workshop was designed to allow for use on desktops, laptops, tablets, and mobile devices, and was available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Russian. The workshop consisted of three activities:

- Activity 1: Priority Issues
 - Tell us what issues in Maplewood are most important to you
- Activity 2: Share Your Great Idea
 - Share your ideas on how to make Maplewood a better place to live
- Activity 3: Love It or Change It
 - Map places in Maplewood that you love or would like to see changed, and tell us why



Online Workshop

Source: Photograph by Jamie Meier (Live Love Lens Photography)



Pop-Up Event at MAPSO Funk Fest



Pop-Up Event at Senior Center



Pop-Up Event at Maplewoodstock

Community members were able to participate in all three activities, or choose which they wanted to complete. The workshop also gathered voluntary demographic information from participants to ensure that the entire breadth of the community was being represented.

The virtual workshop was promoted through coverage in local press by The Village Green, e-blasts to project stakeholders, and in-person pop-up events around the Township, such as Bingo at the Senior Center, Maplewoodstock, and the MAPSO Funk Fest. The consultant team also posted promotional flyers at locations such as the Community Fridge, Community Pool, Extra Supermarket, Stop & Shop, Hilton Branch Public Library, Township Hall, Maplewood train station, and Memorial Park. In order to boost diverse representation of workshop responses, the consultant team conducted further outreach by attending a Hilton Neighborhood Association meeting; connecting with the Maplewood Youth Advisory Committee, MAPSO Legends, South Orange/Maplewood Coalition on Race, and the South Orange-Maplewood School District; and reaching out to local apartment management companies to publicize to renters.

Collectively, these efforts helped to attract more than 2,400 Maplewood residents in visiting the virtual workshop platform, with more than 1,000 activities completed and more than 2,300 individual comments provided.

Township-Wide Public Workshops

A total of three public workshops were held to enable the entire community to learn about the planning process, share their concerns and priorities, and provide feedback on draft recommendations for topics covered in the plan. The first workshop was held on October 25, 2022, at the Woodland, and was attended by about 30 people. The consultant team presented an overview of the planning process, explanation of the Master Plan's purpose, highlights from the existing conditions analysis, and results of the online workshop. The presentation was interspersed with live polls, which allowed attendees to indicate whether the virtual workshop feedback reflected their key priorities and concerns. This interactive exercise was beneficial as it illustrated that the workshop



Public Workshop at The Woodland



Public Workshop at The Woodland



Public Workshop at DeHart Community Center



Public Workshop at DeHart Community Center

attendees and the online workshop respondents were generally in agreement. Once the presentation concluded, attendees were invited to engage in a town hall-style discussion.

The remaining two public workshops were held in-person over two dates, to maximize participation and attendance. The first meeting was held on March 15, 2023, at the Woodland, while the second was held on April 15, 2023, at the DeHart Community Center. Each workshop covered the same content and followed the same format. A total of about 50 participants combined attended both workshops. At each session, the consultant team shared (1) an overview of the planning process, (2) feedback from the online and previous in-person public workshops, and (3) the vision statement, guiding principle, goals, and objectives. Attendees then participated in an open house session to provide feedback on the draft strategies and recommendations. A series of “stations” were set up for the open house, each allowing attendees to speak with a moderator from either the consultant team or Master Plan Steering Committee, and to write comments or place color-coded stickers indicating their level of support, directly onto a presentation board. While this “Dot Point Exercise” is not a scientific survey, it was helpful to get a general idea of which issues were most important to participants, which had consensus, and which needed further investigation.



Public Workshop at The Woodland

Mini-Workshops

Smaller workshops, referred to as “mini-workshops,” were hosted to hear feedback on the draft strategies and recommendations from key stakeholder groups. The meetings covered largely the same material as two later Township-wide public workshops, with a focus on the vision, goals, and strategies. These mini-workshops took place either in-person or virtually via the Zoom platform in March and April 2023, and consisted of the following:

- **Business Owners:** The consultant team met with local business owners and real estate brokers based in the Township at two meetings: on March 22, 2023, at the Hilton Branch Public Library, and on March 30, 2023, at the Burgdorff Center for the Performing Arts.
- **Seniors:** The team met with representatives from Maplewood’s Seniors Advisory Committee, Program Supervisor of Maplewood’s Department of Community Services, and the Two Towns for All Ages Coordinator on March 29, 2023, at the DeHart Community Center.
- **Working Artists:** A virtual meeting was held on April 12, 2023, with representatives from Maplewood’s vast community of artists.
- **Neighborhood Associations:** The consultant team met virtually with representatives from Maplewood’s Neighborhood Associations on April 12, 2023.
- **Houses of Worship:** On April 20, 2023, the team met virtually with religious leaders from several of Maplewood’s houses of worship.



Business Owners and Seniors Mini-Workshop Flyers

Township Staff, Focus Group and Stakeholder Meetings

A series of virtual meetings were organized to hear from Township staff, members of boards, committees, and commissions, local organizations, and residents about current initiatives, issues and priorities as they relate to their areas of expertise. These meetings were also designed to inform the meeting participants about the planning process to encourage continued participation in future events to help ensure that the Master Plan recommendations capture their identified needs and priorities. The meetings were grouped into the following categories:

- **Economic Development:** The consultant team met with the Mayor, Business Administrator, Assistant Business Administrator, and a member of the Committee on Entrepreneurship and Economic Development on June 9, 2022.
- **Public Works, Engineering, and Public Safety:** The team met with representatives from Maplewood's public works, engineering, and public safety sector including the Police Chief, Fire Chief, the Superintendent of Public Works, and the Township Health Officer on June 9, 2022.
- **Parks, Recreation, and Sustainability:** On June 14, 2022, the consultant team met with Maplewood's Library Director, the Director of Community Services, and the Director of Engineering and Public Works.
- **Arts, Historic, and Cultural Resources:** The consultant team held a meeting with representatives of Maplewood's arts, historic, and cultural resources on June 15, 2022. Attendees included representatives from the Historic Preservation Commission Chair and the Maplewood Arts Council Chair.
- **Zoning, Housing, and Development:** On June 15, 2022, the team met with the Director of Community Development, Zoning Officer, and other staff representing the Planning and Zoning Boards and the Affordable Housing Board.
- **Community Institutions:** Several meetings were held with representatives of Maplewood's nonprofits and community organizations: the Seniors Advisory Committee on August 11, 2022, the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race on December 8, 2022, and advocates for Maplewood's special needs families and individuals on February 15, 2023, and March 8, 2023.
- **Sustainability:** Members of the consultant team, along with the Township Engineer and the Community Development Director, met with representatives of the Environmental Advisory Committee, Sustainable Maplewood Committee, and Green Team on August 17, 2022, and September 22, 2022.
- **Arts, Cultural, and Historical Resources:** The team met with representatives of Maplewood's artistic and cultural sector on August 17, 2022, and February 21, 2023. The consultant team also met with the Maplewood Historic Preservation Commission on December 15, 2022.
- **Transportation and Mobility:** The consultant team met with representatives of Maplewood's transportation and mobility sector on August 23, 2022, to discuss future visions and plans for connectivity.
- **Downtown Maplewood:** Members of the team met with local business owners in Maplewood Village, Springfield Avenue, and other commercial areas on September 22, 2022, with a follow-up meeting with the Maplewood Village Alliance on October 11, 2022.
- **Zoning and Development:** Members of the consultant team met with professional architects and planners residing in Maplewood on November 28, 2022, and with the Township Planner on January 12, 2023.
- **Public Health:** A member of the team met with Maplewood's Public Health Officer on January 27, 2023, to discuss the efforts of the Sustainable Jersey Health Gold Committee.
- **Maplewood Youth:** The consultant team met with the Maplewood Youth Advisory Committee on January 24, 2023, and with the South Orange Maplewood School District School Leadership Team (SLT) on February 14, 2023.

In addition to the above, the consultant team briefed Maplewood's Planning Board on March 14, 2023 in order to prepare for the public workshops which took place in March and April 2023.

Summary of Public Engagement

The Master Plan process engaged hundreds of Maplewood residents, municipal staff, members of boards and committees, business owners, and nonprofit representatives, with many individual opinions and suggestions. Yet, the input gathered from the engagement process was remarkably consistent, with several recurring themes that directly shaped the Plan's vision, goals, and objectives.

Residents love living in Maplewood. They understand and treasure that the Township is unique among New Jersey's suburbs in its racial and economic diversity and its welcoming environment. These values are what attracted many residents to Maplewood, and they are an intrinsic part of its character.

At the same time, the community recognizes that there is room for improvement, and they are looking for targeted changes that can:

- Retain diversity and incorporate equity and inclusivity into all aspects of Maplewood;
- Keep the Township affordable for people at various stages of life;
- Support and revitalize local business areas to generate activity and enhance aesthetics and a sense of place;
- Expand transportation options that don't require an automobile – for a variety of needs including commuting, shopping, access to the greater region, and health care;
- Stay proactive on sustainability initiatives, with a heightened focus on resiliency, in the wake of recent major storms; and
- Ensure high-quality and accessible parks and community facilities.



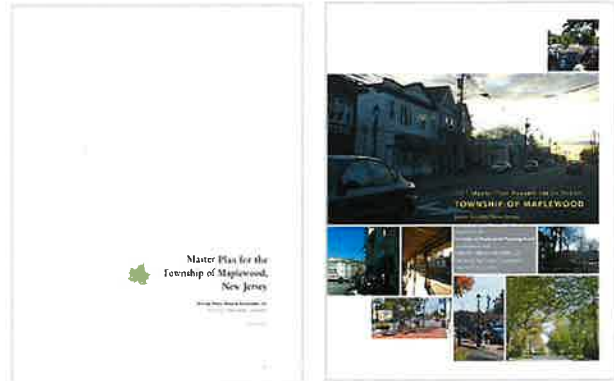
PREVIOUS PLANNING INITIATIVES AND REPORTS

Master Plans and Reexamination Reports

Maplewood Master Plan – 2004

The Township's 2004 Master Plan notes changes that occurred since the 1997 Reexamination Report, including establishing a jitney service in 1997, creating the Community Coalition on Race in 1998, commissioning the 1999 Economic Development Plan, and establishing the Historic Preservation Commission and the 1978 Arts Center in 2001. The 2004 Master Plan is organized into 12 chapters, covering areas such as housing, community facilities, open space, historic preservation, and economic development. Key goals include:

- Promoting and supporting stable racial integration throughout the Township.
- Supporting policies, programs and plans that promote wellness by encouraging walking, bicycling, outdoor recreation, and all forms of physical exercise.
- Improving the quality of commercial ratable spaces, especially along Springfield Avenue, without harming the character of adjoining residential neighborhoods.
- Facilitating affordable housing to benefit young families, the elderly, and middle-class professionals, which are the categories that find it difficult to live locally.
- Preserving the physical housing stock and the architectural and landscaping character of residential neighborhoods.
- Exploring the possibility of sharing additional community and municipal services with adjacent communities.
- Further exploring and investigating ways that Maplewood can integrate sustainability in new development, through both building and site design.



Maplewood Master Plan, 2004, and Maplewood Master Plan Reexamination Report, 2011

Maplewood Master Plan Reexamination Report – 2011

The 2011 Master Plan Reexamination Report retained the same policies, objectives, and assumptions from the 2004 Master Plan, with the addition of a focus on environmental sustainability. The 2011 Reexamination also provided detailed recommendations for changes/updates to zoning ordinances, parking policies, and policies, including for the residential zones; Springfield Avenue, and the Maplewood Village/Station Area.

Adjacent Community Master Plans

South Orange Master Plan – 2021

Maplewood and South Orange enjoy a close relationship, both in proximity, and in shared resources; the municipalities share a school district and recently merged their fire departments. The South Orange Master Plan's Mobility Element covered Valley Street, a commercial corridor that serves as a key connector between South Orange and Maplewood, and recommended improvements outlined in the New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's (NJTPA) 2020 plan. Other suggested pedestrian improvements include a new greenway along the Rahway River to provide a safe pedestrian and biking connection between Maplewood and South Orange.

South Orange's Land Use Element explores methods to increase its customer base in commercial zones, especially along its boundary with Maplewood. The Quality of Life Element recommends consolidating the operations of South Orange's Public Works Facility, which is located within a floodplain and in close proximity to parks, and suggested the potential for a shared-use agreement with Maplewood that would allow for a reduced presence at the South Orange facility.

West Orange Master Plan Reexamination and Plan Element Updates – 2019

West Orange’s Master Plan Existing Conditions Element includes a section for sidewalks and trails, with options for creating a path running parallel to Cherry Lane, to provide a better connection to Millburn and Maplewood, particularly when the lower portion of Cherry Lane is closed on Sundays.

Irvington Master Plan - 2002

While Irvington’s Master Plan does not include specific recommendations for Maplewood, it does highlight the relationship between the two communities. Irvington and Maplewood have fairly compatible land use and zoning along their boundaries. However, the plan notes that the north side of Springfield Avenue, zoned RO Research Office and consisting of a NJ Transit bus facility, is incompatible both with adjacent residential areas in Maplewood and with the Springfield Avenue commercial area west of Elmwood Street in Irvington. The status of this facility is unlikely to change, at least in the near term, as NJ Transit has recently invested in upgrades.

Union Master Plan – 2021

The Economic Development Element within Union’s Master Plan has recommendations for Vauxhall, a community that borders Maplewood, including coordinating events between Vauxhall and Maplewood and sharing resources for these events, with the potential effect of boosting economic development for both townships. Union’s Master Plan also indicates consistency in zoning along the municipal borders.

Millburn Master Plan Reexamination and Updates – 2018

Millburn’s border with Maplewood primarily consists of residentially zoned areas and the South Mountain Reservation, and no changes are proposed in these areas. There is a small OR-2 office district along Millburn Avenue near the Maplewood border, which the Millburn plan notes has some vacancies. No specific recommendations are provided, other than to monitor the district for potential zoning changes if vacancies persist. The plan also highlights the history of collaboration among the Green Teams for Millburn, Maplewood, and South Orange and recommends continued partnership efforts.

Newark 360: City of Newark Master Plan – 2022

Maplewood and Newark share a border along Irvington Avenue and the Ivy Hill neighborhood of the city. Newark’s plan notes that the development patterns along this corridor differ between the two municipalities, but that uses along both sides are well-established and not likely to change.

Essex County Planning Initiatives

Essex County Master Plan

Most of the County’s Master Plan elements were adopted in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the Land Use Element and the Housing Element both adopted in 1989, and the land use conditions in Essex County have changed so much since that their goals and policies are quite outdated. However, the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan was adopted in 2003. Its recommendations relevant to Maplewood include suggested improvements in South Mountain Reservation, a portion of which lies within the Township. Since Maplewood’s 2004 Master Plan, the Township has supported and continues to support these recommendations, which would provide additional recreational opportunities to Maplewood residents. The Essex County Comprehensive Transportation Plan was adopted in 2013. The plan outlines five goals: 1) Maintain a Safe and Efficient Roadway System; 2) Increase the Use of Mass Transit; 3) Increase and/or Provide More Opportunities for Walking & Bicycling; 4) Connectivity for All Modes of Transportation, Especially Intra-County Connectivity; and 5) Foster and Support Development & Industrial Growth. These goals are generally consistent with the transportation and land use goals of this Master Plan. Recommended projects in the County’s Comprehensive Transportation Plan that are relevant to Maplewood include a Valley Street Corridor study (now underway), improvements at and around the Maplewood Train Station, and a feasibility study of an extension of the Newark Light Rail along the old Boonton Line.

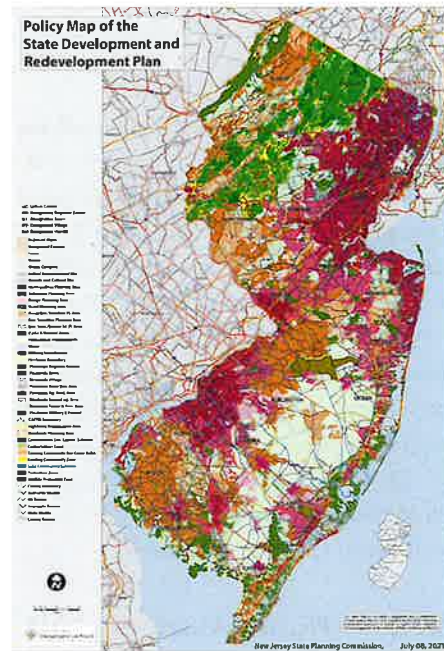
Solid Waste Management Plan

New Jersey’s Solid Waste Management Act requires that each solid waste management district develop a an overall solid waste disposal strategy for the district, including identifying suitable sites for disposal. The Essex County Solid Waste Management Plan was initially adopted in 1980 and

last amended in 2021. Since the closure of the Hackensack Meadowlands Landfill and opening of an Energy Recovery Facility in Newark in the 1990s, this facility has handled all municipal processible waste in the County. The 2021 amendment extends the current Waste Disposal Agreement (WDA) between the Essex County Utilities Authority and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey through December 2025. With the populations of both Maplewood and the County remaining fairly stable, with modest growth, the amount of solid waste generated is not expected to increase significantly, and the Newark facility should continue to serve the County's needs. The Township's recycling rates have generally exceeded goals established by the County.

State Development and Redevelopment Plan and Cross-Acceptance Process

In 2001, the New Jersey Legislature adopted the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), a policy guide for land use planning intended to be the basis for the State's infrastructure and other capital planning decisions. Under the State Planning Act, municipal master plans should be evaluated, and if necessary modified, to reflect the State Plan's policies. The SDRP uses planning areas, centers, and environs as a spatial framework for implementing statewide goals and policies. Maplewood is neither designated as a "center" (i.e., a central place within a planning area where growth should be attracted or contained), nor as an "environs" (i.e., areas outside centers in the fringe and rural/ environmentally sensitive planning areas). With the exception of the portion of the Township within the South Mountain Reservation, Maplewood falls within Planning Area 1 (PA-1), the Metropolitan Planning Area. The SDRP indicates that this area will provide for much of the State's redevelopment. Within this context, Maplewood is considered an "older suburb," with existing character that the State Plan seeks to protect through targeted growth and redevelopment. The South Mountain Reservation is designated as a "Park or Natural Area," and the State Plan's goal is to preserve its open space and recreational value. The State Office of Planning Advocacy has been in the process of updating the SDRP, and completed a draft in 2005; however, the process has not been completed. The land use plan in this Master Plan is generally consistent with the statewide goals and objectives of the existing SDRP and the policy objectives of the various planning areas.



Policy Map of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, 2021

Source: New Jersey State Planning Commission

Transportation

Complete Streets and Traffic Calming Policies

In 2012, Maplewood adopted a Complete Streets Policy, requiring that all public street projects, both new construction and reconstruction (excluding maintenance) shall be designed and constructed as Complete Streets whenever feasible, with special priority for pedestrian safety. Meanwhile, the Township's Traffic Calming Policy, most recently revised in 2017, identifies a need for measures to limit neighborhood cut-through traffic, reduce traffic speeds through neighborhoods, facilitate pedestrian/bicycle use, and control intersection traffic flow. The policy provides guidelines for assessing, designing, implementing, and evaluating traffic calming projects, including a rating system to compare potential projects.

Irvington Avenue: Creating A Complete Corridor – 2014

This project was completed as part Together North Jersey's Local Demonstration Project Program (LPD), a program seeking to advance and support projects that are consistent with Regional Plans for Sustainable Development (RPSD) goals. Irvington Avenue is an important corridor for Irvington, Maplewood, Newark, and South Orange. The project's goal was to enhance mobility and wayfinding along a 1.5-mile stretch of Irvington Avenue. Special emphasis was placed on Maplewood Corners, a nickname for the Irvington Avenue

area in the northeastern section of the Township. Overall, the project recommends creating a Complete Streets Plan for this area and improving its management capacity, physical environment, and consumer appeal. The Complete Streets Plan includes bolstering multi-modal transportation options by adding a bike lane along the entire corridor. Physical improvements to Maplewood Corners include aesthetic updates to the streetscape, especially at the intersection of Parker, Clinton, and Irvington Avenues; more public seating and pocket parks; and a midblock crossing on Hillcrest Place. Additionally, this project recommends that business owners operating in Maplewood Corners form a Merchant's Association to work together to draw in customers.

Local Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning Assistance – 2018

Maplewood applied for and received Local Planning Assistance through the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), to improve safety, lighting, and traffic issues at several streets. The Township subsequently conducted a transportation study on Burnett Avenue, Prospect Street, Ridgewood Road, Wyoming Avenue, and two intersections on Valley Street. The study's goals included addressing traffic speeds, improving safety and visibility, reducing crashes, and evaluating lighting levels. The project provided an understanding of existing conditions, constraints, and opportunities in the focus areas; a lighting assessment; an intersection design review; and planning level concepts. It also included recommendations for street improvements, including narrowing travel lanes, curb extension, crosswalk visibility enhancements, and ensuring ADA-compliant sidewalk widths. The Township has implemented some of these recommendations, including adding a four-way stop at Burnett Avenue and Rutgers Street and narrowing travel lanes on Prospect Street.

Valley Street Improvements – 2022

Essex County was awarded a \$3.65 million grant through the New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's FY 2020 Local Safety Program to improve conditions at 11 intersections along Valley Street. The project aims to enhance both safety and operability of the street, with proposed improvements including curb extensions, pedestrian signal improvements and median refuge islands, among others.

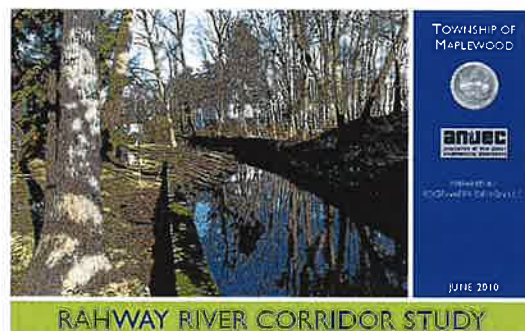
Parks and Open Spaces

Memorial Park Master Plan – 2014

Memorial Park is an important public resource for the Township and is designated as a local Maplewood Historic Landmark as well as being listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The 2014 Master Plan sought to ensure the future maintenance of the park's landscape and historical character and to form a nonprofit to help raise funds for preservation. The project team researched the history of Memorial Park; assessed its facilities and landscape conditions; collected public comments; and created a 15-year plan for maintenance, repair, and improvements. Top priorities were improving the outdoor stage and amphitheater; enhancing the library's outdoor space; increasing lighting park-wide; renovating the skating rink, tennis court, and playground; achieving ADA compliance throughout the park; and restoring and maintaining Duck Pond. The Maplewood Memorial Park Conservancy was incorporated in 2017 and today has over 40 members and an eight-person board of directors. A partnership agreement with the Township was signed in 2018.

Rahway River Corridor Study – 2010

The Rahway River Corridor Study assessed existing conditions of the 38-acre area bounded by Valley Street, South Orange, and Oakland Road/Memorial Park to the south. The analysis revealed that the River is mostly hidden behind buildings, causing a perception of discontinuity among Memorial Park, South Orange's Waterlands Park, and Maplewood Village. Recommendations focused on re-engaging with the public, making the Rahway River Corridor more aesthetically appealing, and improving connectivity between surrounding parks and areas.



Rahway River Corridor Study, 2010

Housing

Housing Element and Fair Share Plan – September 2018

The MLUL and the New Jersey Fair Housing Act require municipal planning boards to adopt a Housing Plan Element as part of the Master Plan, and municipal governing bodies to adopt a Fair Share Plan. Key details of the Housing Element & Fair Share Plan include:

- Rehabilitating existing substandard housing
- Constructing more senior rental units
- Developing more supportive and special needs housing
- Utilizing inclusionary housing development
- Adopting zoning for inclusionary housing development
- Creating more assisted-living residences

To address its unmet need, the Township pledged to start a homeownership program, adopt a Mandatory Set-Aside Ordinance, amend Redevelopment Areas 1-3 to require developers to set aside 35% of the total housing units as affordable, continue conversations with a developer to build a 182-unit assisted living facility, and amend the Maplewood Country Club Overlay Zone.

Mid-Point Review of Affordable Housing Activities – 2020

As a statutory midpoint review requirement of the Fair Housing Act, the Township completed the midpoint review of affordable housing activities in 2020. The document summarizes the 2018 Fair Share Plan and the progress made on its goals. Since 2018, the Township's Mandatory Set-Aside Ordinance (MSO) has resulted in the creation of additional affordable housing units and the fulfillment of the housing rehabilitation obligation by earning and/or applying 114 housing credits toward its rehabilitation goals. The Township is in the process of fulfilling the remaining unmet need of 362.

Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance -2020

Maplewood amended its zoning code to permit accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in its single- and two-family zones, subject to a number of conditions including on size, occupancy, and density. The ordinance was subsequently revised to clarify that ADUs will not be permitted on designated historic properties, unless they have received a certificate of appropriateness.

Demographics and Public Health

Maplewood Healthy Community Planning Report – 2022

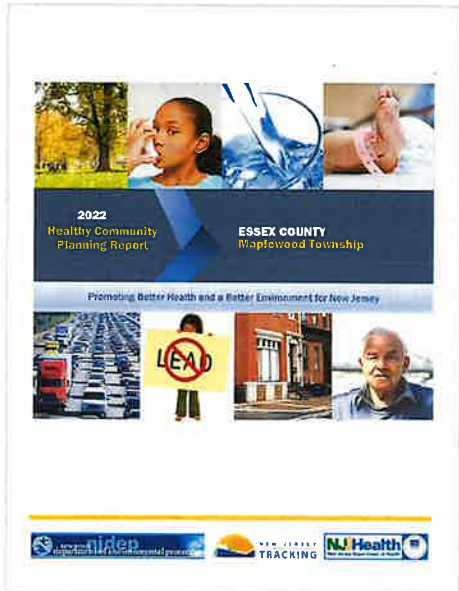
Healthy Community Planning New Jersey, developed by the State's departments of Health and Environmental Protection, provides municipalities with municipal-level reports that give an overview of the municipality's public health and environmental data. The report serves as a guide for the Township to prioritize local public health and environmental concerns.

Demographic Report for South Orange and Maplewood – 2019 and 2022

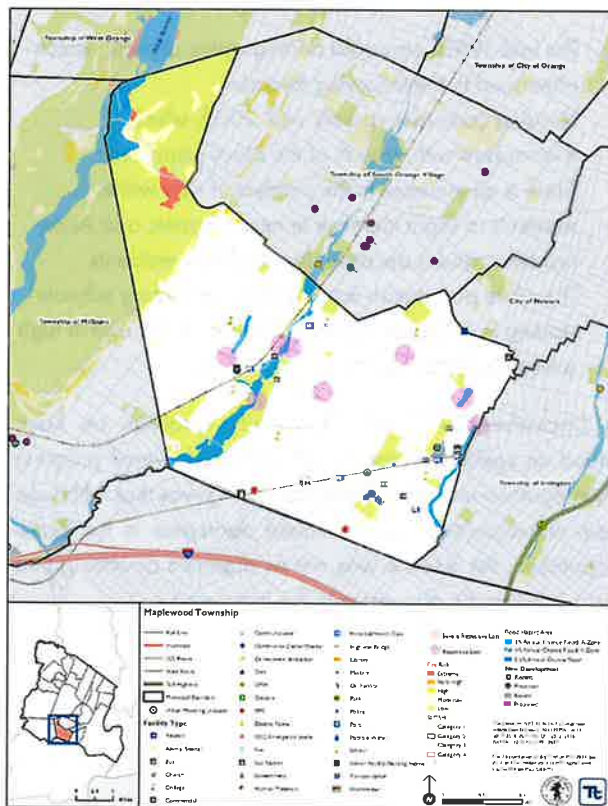
In 2019, Maplewood and South Orange's Community Coalition on Race produced a demographic report to monitor the progress on ongoing integration efforts of both residential areas and schools. The report analyzed trends in racial demographics, housing, income, and school enrollment in both municipalities, with key findings including:

- The late 1990s saw swift demographic change, which plateaued in the following decade.
- Housing costs rose rapidly until 2005, which overlapped with growth of the Black population.
- There is an increase in the number of new white residents, a slight increase in new Hispanic and Asian residents, and a decrease in new Black residents.
- The white population increased in elementary schools starting in 2006, in middle schools in 2010, and in high schools in 2015.

In December 2022, the Community Coalition on Race issued an updated report, which indicated overall progress on integration initiatives. One key finding was that, although both municipalities saw continued decreases in the Black population, the decline was not as dramatic as anticipated or as is occurring elsewhere in the Northeast.



Maplewood Healthy Community Planning Report



Township of Maplewood Hazard Area Extent

Source: Essex County All Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2020

Environmental Resources

Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan – 2018

As a requirement of the New Jersey NJDEP municipal stormwater regulations, the Township developed and adopted a Municipal Stormwater Management Plan (MSWMP). The MSWMP guides the Township on how to approach stormwater runoff for both current and future developments Township-wide. The Township's Stormwater Control Ordinance was adopted in 2006 and revised in 2011.

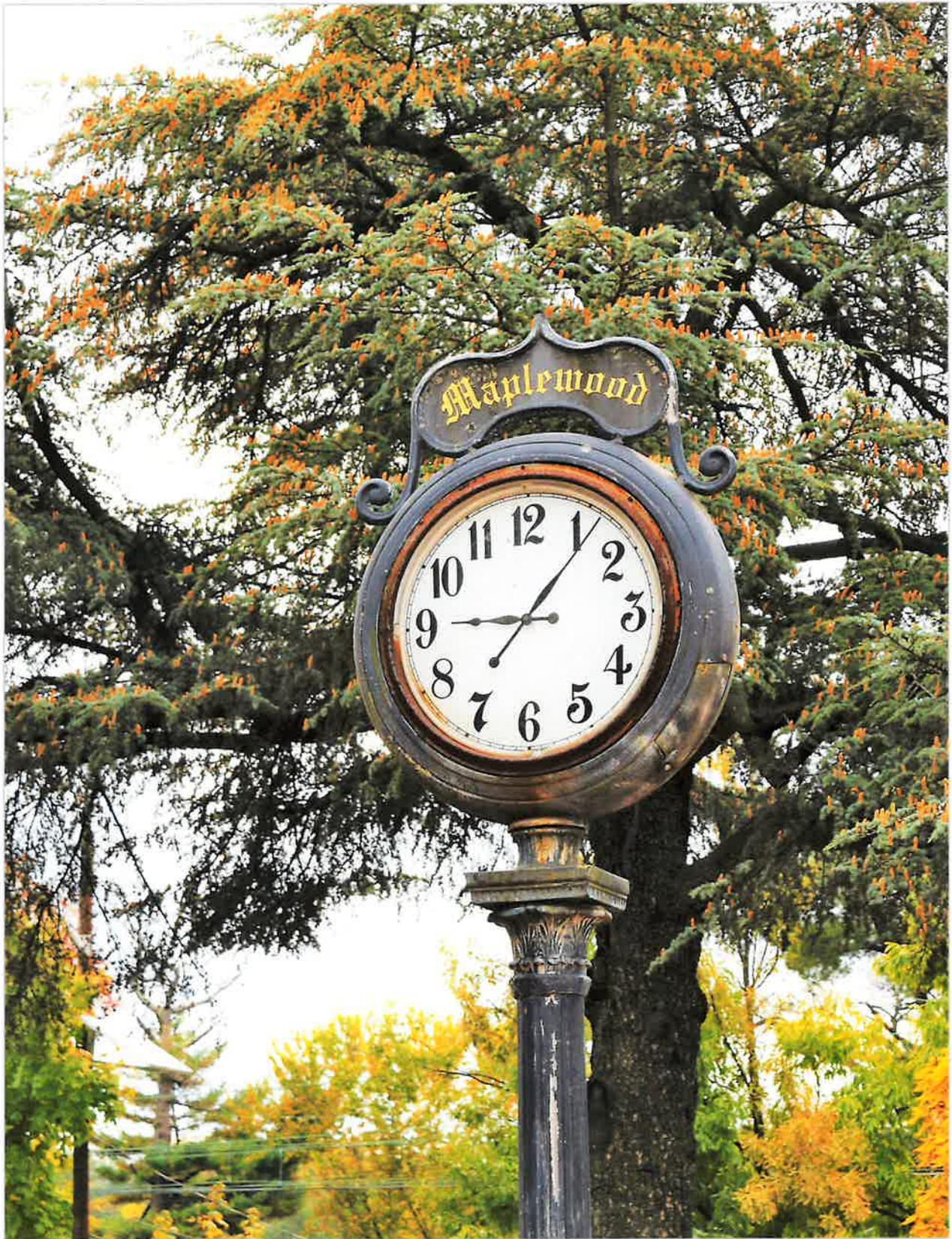
Essex County All Hazard Mitigation Plan – 2020

A hazard mitigation plan approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and adopted by the jurisdiction makes the jurisdiction eligible for federal disaster assistance and grant funds. It identifies the latest risks and vulnerabilities to natural and human-made resources along with suggested actions (i.e., Action Status, Action Category, and Priority Level). The Essex County document summarizes 14 proposed hazard mitigation initiatives for Maplewood to pursue, including:

- Integrate the Master Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Stabilize the streambank and mitigate structures along the Rahway River
- Upgrade the Fire Headquarters
- Investigate options for drainage improvements by the Crooked Brook
- Improve the sanitary sewer and stormwater conveyance

Environmental Resources Inventory – 2006

This comprehensive environmental resources inventory is the first time Maplewood thoroughly documented its natural assets, in order to inform future planning, land use decisions, initiatives, and protection or rehabilitation of the Township's environmental resources. This inventory encourages residents to catalog plants and animals in Maplewood to expand specific knowledge of the wildlife present. The Environmental Advisory Committee is in the process of revising the existing inventory.



2

SECTION 2: VISION, PLANNING GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

VISION

Maplewood's diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and voices create an inclusive community that combines suburban living and urban vibrancy. Our vision is that residents are welcome to enjoy all of the assets that make our Township so attractive: an attainable home that meets their needs; high-quality neighborhoods that are resilient to climate change; excellent community facilities and services; strong connections to the region; a thriving local business community; and a wealth of historic and cultural resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: EQUITY

The planning principles identified in this Master Plan are closely linked and often overlap, but the foundation for each is EQUITY. According to the American Planning Association, “Planning for social equity means recognizing planning practices that have had a disparate impact on certain communities and actively working with affected residents to create better communities for all.” Historically in planning, certain groups and communities have been excluded both from the planning process and from sharing in many of the positive outcomes of planning, such as clean environments, affordable housing, safe and attractive open space, accessible transportation, and educational opportunities.¹

This Master Plan recognizes that Maplewood’s planning processes can and should ameliorate inequities and facilitate planning decisions that do not disadvantage any one area or neighborhood, and that support:

- Equity in connections to jobs, schools, recreational assets, and municipal services and programs.
- Equity in access to high-quality, affordable housing and strong, attractive neighborhoods.
- Equity in protection from the impacts of climate change and storm events.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The Township of Maplewood proposes the following planning principles and objectives to advance the Master Plan Vision:

Connection

Maplewood enjoys excellent access to the regional highway network and the NJ Transit rail system, making it a great place for residents who commute into Manhattan or seek proximity to other jobs and assets in the region. But the same infrastructure that creates this access also serves to divide the Township, which – together with historic development patterns – have acted to create “two Maplewoods” that are disconnected both physically and socially. Thoughtful land use and transportation planning can help to stitch the various pieces of Maplewood back together, while careful attention to communication and community programs can ensure that all neighborhoods have a positive experience with municipal services.

1. Ensure safe and accessible mobility for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders, as well as those who drive.
2. Leverage opportunities to better connect public and community facilities such as parks, schools, business districts, and natural resources.
3. Strengthen the distinct characteristics of the commercial areas while promoting a cohesive and recognizable identity for Maplewood.
4. Enhance social connections through effective municipal communication and programming across the Township.

¹ Adapted from, “Knowledgebase Collection: Social Equity,” by the American Planning Association, <https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/equity>

Quality of Life

The same qualities that make Maplewood an attractive community generate interest in new development that has the potential for negative impacts on neighborhoods, while escalation in housing costs in the region creates pressure on affordability for existing and future residents alike. At the same time, ongoing reinvestment in the Township is critical to maintaining a vibrant local economy, and can create opportunities to achieve larger planning goals such as improvements to the public realm and municipal facilities, affordable housing and environmental sustainability.

1. Preserve and create affordable housing opportunities for residents of all incomes, ages, abilities, and family types.
2. Support appropriate infill development and redevelopment throughout Maplewood that builds on community assets and minimizes unwanted impacts.
3. Reinforce residential quality of life by ensuring smooth transitions between intensities of use and addressing nuisance issues.
4. Recognize and protect Maplewood's historical and cultural resources as a vital part of the community's identity.

Resiliency

The devastating impacts of Hurricane Ida reinforced the critical need for Maplewood to respond aggressively with measures to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change to avoid future loss of life and property damage. At the same time, the Township has an opportunity to show leadership in environmental sustainability efforts, embracing strategies that reduce its carbon footprint while shoring up its protection from natural disasters. Lastly, the pandemic has highlighted the need for public health initiatives that address issues such as emergency preparedness, mental health support, and wellness programs.

1. Act to mitigate and adapt to climate change and improve capacity to recover from emergencies and natural disasters.
2. Support environmental sustainability initiatives that improve waste and energy systems, enhance the tree canopy, protect natural resources, and reduce the impact of development.
3. Upgrade infrastructure systems to improve function, lessen critical vulnerabilities, and address neighborhood disparities.
4. Support health and wellness in Township programs, coordination with regional initiatives, and public-private partnerships, and ensure awareness and accessibility.

3

The first part of the book discusses the importance of the number 3 in various cultures and religions. It explores how the number 3 is often associated with the Holy Trinity in Christianity and the Three Musketeers in French literature. The text also touches upon the mathematical significance of the number 3, such as its role in the Fibonacci sequence and its use in geometry.

In the second part, the author delves into the psychological aspects of the number 3. It discusses how the number 3 is perceived as a symbol of balance and harmony. The text also explores the concept of the 'rule of thirds' in art and design, which is a principle that has been used for centuries to create aesthetically pleasing compositions. The author concludes by reflecting on the enduring appeal of the number 3 and its significance in human history.

The third part of the book focuses on the cultural and historical significance of the number 3. It examines how the number 3 has been used in various mythologies and legends, such as the three Fates in Greek mythology and the three wishes in fairy tales. The text also discusses the role of the number 3 in ancient numerology and its influence on modern numerology practices.

In the final part, the author explores the number 3 in contemporary culture and media. It discusses how the number 3 is often used in branding and marketing, such as the three stripes on a flag or the three dots in a logo. The text also touches upon the number 3 in popular culture, such as the three main characters in a story or the three acts of a play. The author concludes by reflecting on the versatility and enduring appeal of the number 3 in our lives.

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SECTION 3: MAPLEWOOD TODAY

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

Population Overview

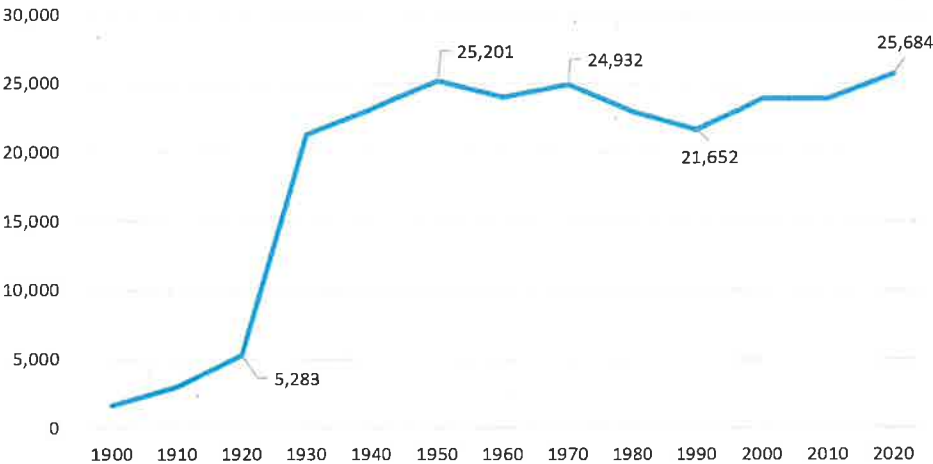
Since 2000, which represents the decennial Census reflected in Maplewood’s last full Master Plan (2004), the Township’s population has increased 7.6%, from 23,868 residents to 25,684 residents, with nearly all (88%) of that growth coming since 2010. However, Maplewood’s population has increased at a slower rate than Essex County overall, both for the full 20-year period and for the past decade. The County’s population grew 8.8% from 2000 to 2020, and 10.2% since 2010. Chart 1 depicts the historic population change in Maplewood since 1900. As shown, the Township experienced its most dramatic growth from 1920 to 1930, which is when many of Maplewood’s neighborhoods were developed. Population projections from the North Jersey

Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) estimate that growth in Maplewood and Essex County will both slow through 2050, but that the County’s growth rate will remain slightly higher for the period, with projected annualized growth of 0.423% for the Township and 0.431% for the County, for the period from 2015-2050.²

In terms of density, Maplewood had 10.3 residents per acre in 2020, similar to Essex County, at 10.7 residents per acre, and consistent with comparable suburban communities in the region. Both the Township and the County saw an increase in density from 2000 to 2020, but all of Maplewood’s increase came after 2010, which could reflect more recent construction of new housing units.

Chart 1: Historic Population in Maplewood, 1900-2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 1900-2010; 2020 P.L. 94-171 Redistricting File



² Source: NJTPA 2015-2050 socioeconomic forecasts, Approved September 13, 2021, and NYMTC 2015-2055 SED Forecasts, Approved October 22, 2020.

Age Composition

Due to a high margin of error in the Census Bureau’s 2020 5-Year Estimate of the population by age, a reliable detailed analysis of Maplewood’s age distribution was not possible. While it is clear that the Township’s population has become older since 2000, as shown by its increasing median age, its median has grown at a lower rate since 2000 than Essex County’s (8.6% for the County vs. 5.8% for Maplewood).

This difference with the County is seen in population changes for Maplewood in two key age groups. Since 2010, population growth in both places has been led by seniors 65 or older, with growth of 21% for Essex County and 15% for Maplewood. However, the Township saw significantly greater growth in its working-age and youth populations. Maplewood’s working aged population (aged 18-64) increased 5.2% since 2010, compared with nearly flat (0.1%) growth in that group in the County. Leading the increase in the Township was the 18-34 age group, which saw growth of 19% from 2010-2020, an unusual trend compared with other suburban communities. Typically, this young adult age cohort is declining in the suburbs, as the high cost of housing creates a barrier for people starting out in their careers. Data for Maplewood appear to indicate the Township is an entry point to the housing market for both renters and owners, but that many of these people may not remain long-term. The next older cohort, age 35-49, fell 5.8% from 2010 to 2020. The changes in the past 10 years may reflect the construction and occupancy of several large

rental complexes in Maplewood, which provided additional housing options targeted at young professionals and seniors.

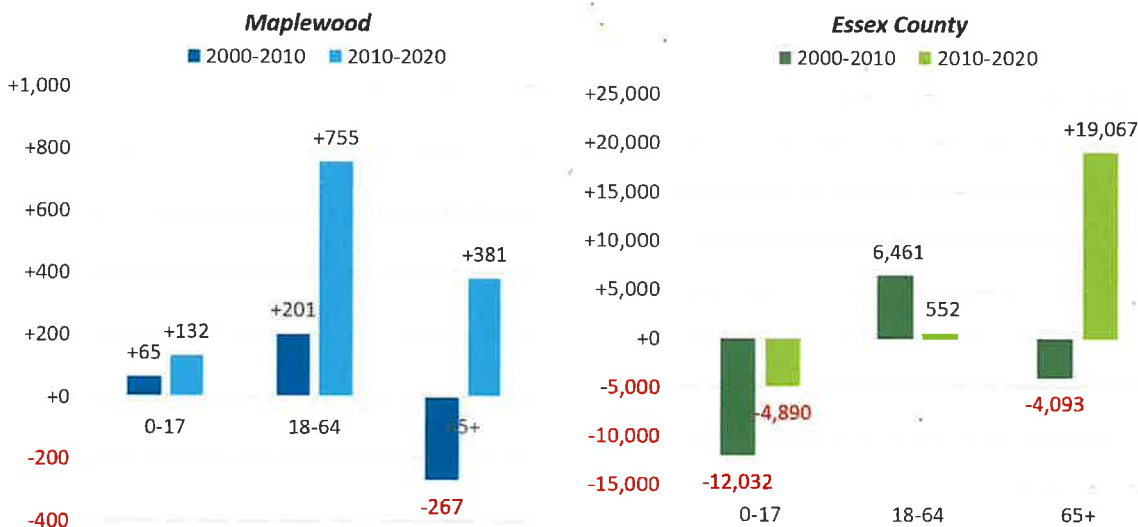
In addition, while Essex County experienced a decline of 2.5% in its population under 18 since 2010, the Township saw growth of 2% among youth in the same period. However, this increase in Maplewood’s youth population occurred at the middle and high school levels, with the percentage of children aged 10-14 increasing 14.4% and the share of children aged 15-17 growing 7.5%. The population under the age of 10 declined 5.7% in the Township over the period.

These age composition trends suggest Maplewood’s strength in attracting young people without children and families with somewhat older children. This would be consistent with anecdotal evidence indicating that the Township often draws residents from urban centers such as Hoboken, Jersey City, and Brooklyn, as their young families outgrow small housing units. At the older end, Maplewood appears to be attractive to empty-nesters and retirees, similar to Essex County overall.

Looking at age of householder trends, the share of householders aged 25-54 decreased in both Maplewood and Essex County from 2010 to 2020. Households aged 55 and older were responsible for nearly all of the gains since 2010 in both areas, a reflection of the aging population and the fact that people are waiting longer to have children.

Chart 2: Population Change by Major Age Groups in Maplewood and Essex County, 2000-2020

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Decennial Census, ACS 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate.



Households and Tenure³

Maplewood and Essex County both added relatively few households during the early 2000s, but over the past decade, growth has accelerated. The Township added 626 new households (+7.6%), while the County added 29,201 households (+10%). The past two decades marked a shift in household character in the County as a whole, with a sharp rise in the number of non-family households either living alone or with unrelated roommates, as households with children fell in number. In Maplewood, however, household growth was led by married-couple households with children, adding 193 such households, or growth of 5.2%, and largely offsetting a drop in single-parent family households. The only non-family household type that saw growth in the Township over the past decade was householders over 65 living alone, which grew 51 units, or 6.7%, since 2010 after declining 1.6% from 2000 to 2010.

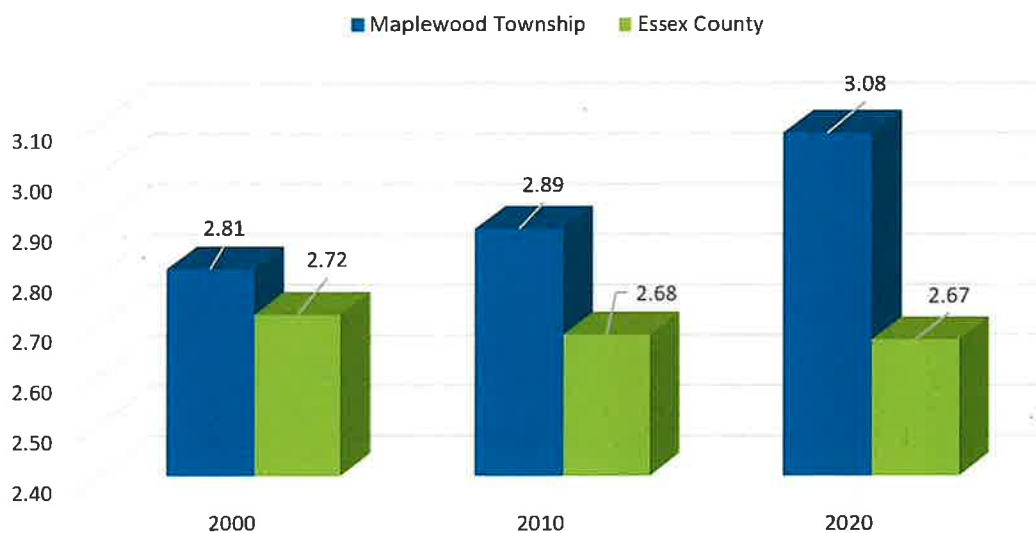
Average household size in Maplewood has grown since 2000 regardless of tenure, rising 5% for home-owning households and 12% for renting households. The Township's 2020 average household size for both owners and renters (3.18 and 2.67, respectively) is significantly larger than Essex County (2.99 for homeowners and 2.42 for renters).

Additional data on housing tenure (rental vs. ownership) is problematic due to the timing of construction of several significant rental housing developments in Maplewood, which occurred at the end of the decade. It is assumed that some developments may have been constructed – and thus counted by the 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) as housing units – but not yet occupied, and identified as vacant units. The full release of the decennial 2020 Census may provide additional data that would address this issue.

Among owner households, both the Township and the County saw increases, but the minimal (0.5%) growth in Essex County overall was among owner households of four persons or fewer, while Maplewood saw 2.3% growth. The Township's increase was driven by owner households with four persons or more, but it also saw growth among single-person owner households.

Chart 3: Average Household Size in Maplewood and Essex County, 2000-2020

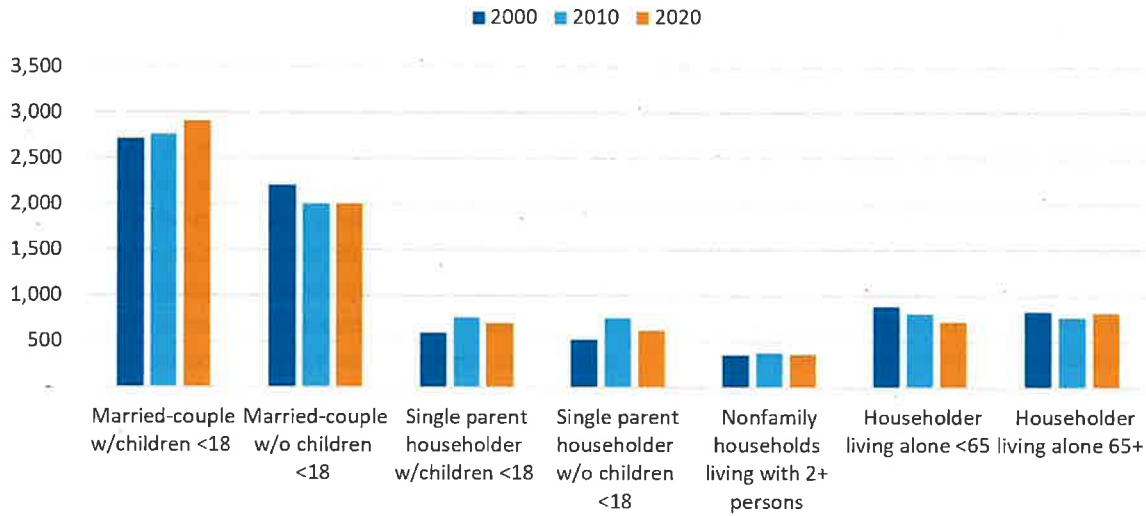
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Decennial Census, ACS 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate



³ Under Census Bureau methodology, housing units and households are closely linked, but distinct. A housing unit refers to the physical structure, while a household refers to the person or people occupying that structure. A household is essentially an occupied housing unit.

Chart 4: Households by Type in Maplewood, 2000-2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Decennial Census, ACS 2016-2020 5-Year Estimate



Race and Ethnicity

Maplewood is a very diverse community in terms of race and ethnicity, with nearly half (49%) of residents identifying as people of color, up from 44% in 2000. Over the past decade, the Township’s population growth has been driven by non-Hispanic individuals who identify as belonging to two or more races (up 796 people), followed by those who identify as Hispanic (up 587 people) and white non-Hispanic (up 585 people). The share of the population identifying as Black non-Hispanic decreased in size by 449 residents (down 5.5%).

Maplewood has a sizeable number of residents (24%) who speak a language other than English at home, an increase from 19% in 2000 but still well below the County’s share of such residents of 37%. Of residents who speak non-English languages at home, more than half speak an Indo-European language other than English or Spanish (which may include Haitian Creole, French, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, or various languages from India). Another one-quarter of such residents are Spanish speakers.

Chart 5: Distribution of Total Population by Mutually Exclusive Race-Ethnicity in Maplewood & Essex County, 2000-2020

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 2000-2010, 2020 P.L. 94-171 Redistricting File

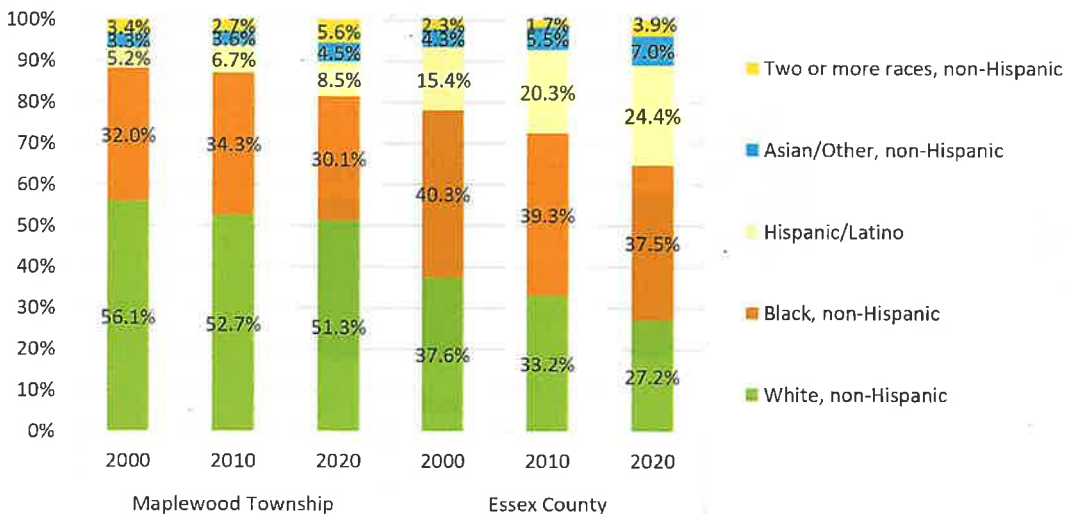
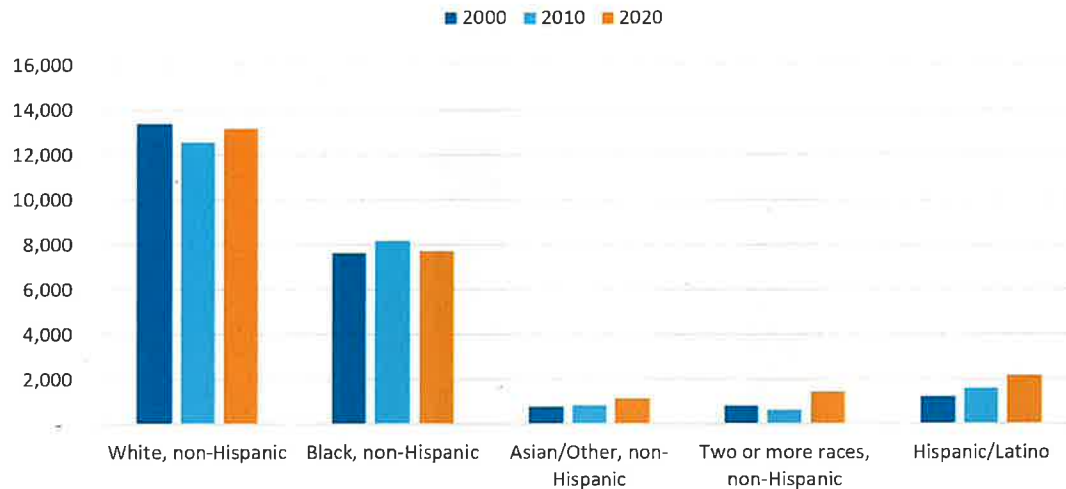


Chart 6: Population Change by Mutually Exclusive Race-Ethnicity in Maplewood, 2000-2020

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 2000-2010, 2020 P.L. 94-171 Redistricting File



Housing

According to the U.S. Census, as of 2020, Maplewood had a total of 9,269 housing units, an increase of 654 units, or 7.6%, from the 8,615 units that existed in 2000. During the 2000-2020 time period, Maplewood's housing unit growth outpaced the Township's gain in households, (+2.7 and +0.1 percentage points during the 2000s and 2010s, respectively). This could be a positive sign, given the region's housing shortage, but, as discussed, may also reflect the timing of occupancy of newly constructed rental housing. While a similar trend also occurred in Essex County during the 2000s (+1 percentage point), in the last decade, its household growth exceeded the gain in housing units (-3.3 percentage points), further exacerbating the County's limited housing inventory.

Maplewood's housing stock is predominantly owner-occupied. As of 2019, the share of renter-occupied units was 22.6%, a small increase from 2000 (21.9%). Again, these data may not reflect full occupancy of recently constructed rental housing complexes.

On average over the five-year period from 2016 to 2020, 5.6% of the Township's housing units were constructed since 2010 compared with just 3.1% of units in Essex County, indicating a faster pace of new housing construction. However, the Township's housing stock remains fairly old, with 84.5% of units built prior to 1970, versus 68.8% in the County. Many older units in Maplewood were built during the 1920s, during its period of significant growth. Typically,

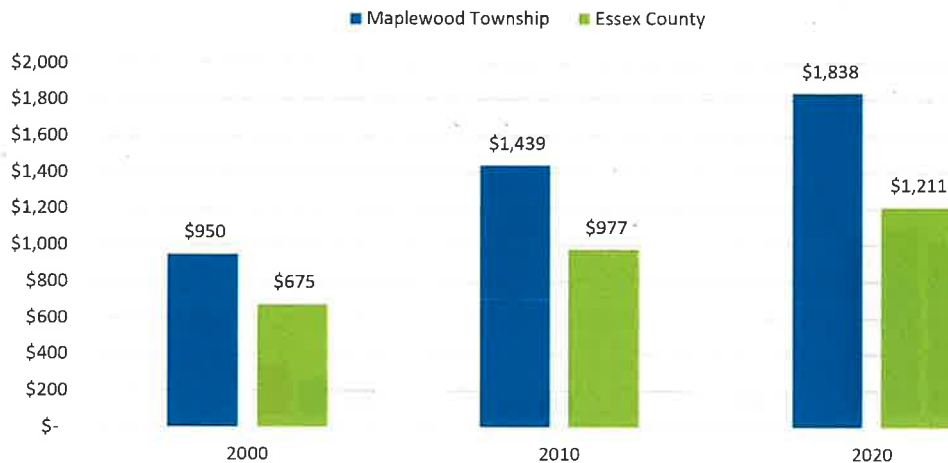
housing units built prior to 1978 are at risk of containing lead paint or asbestos, which are considerable health risks. They are also less likely to be well-insulated and require additional energy to heat, which significantly contributes to climate change.

In 2020, Maplewood had relatively few small housing units with two bedrooms or less (29%) versus the County (53%). This distribution in the Township's housing supply may make it difficult for certain smaller households, for example individuals living alone, couples without children, and single parents, to find housing. While families with children make up 44% of households in Maplewood, units with three or more bedrooms, ideal for families, account for nearly 71% of the Township's housing stock. Even given the Township's increasing household size, this statistic indicates a possible mismatch.

In 2020, 68% of Maplewood's housing units were single-family, down from 71% in 2000. This share is nearly double that of the County, where just under 40% of units are single family. Among multifamily units, the dominant form is in duplex buildings, accounting for 16% of the housing stock in Maplewood, up from 13% in 2000. The remaining multifamily stock is primarily 3-4 family homes, at about 4%, and larger complexes of 50 units or more at about 7%. All types of multifamily housing have grown in share in Maplewood, with the strongest growth among apartment complexes of 10-19 units.

Chart 7: Median Gross Rent in Maplewood and Essex County, 2000-2020

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2000 SF3, ACS 2006-2010 & 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates.



The decline in share of single-family housing, combined with the overall growth of housing units, indicates that most newly constructed units have been in multifamily housing. Notable newer-construction rental projects include 20 luxury units at Clarus Maplewood next to the train station, 30 housing units at 1701 Springfield Avenue, the 235-unit Avalon Maplewood at Springfield and Boyden Avenues, a 30-unit building at 1701 Springfield Avenue, the 33-unit Maplewood Lofts development on Springfield Avenue, Maplewood Crossing on Burnett Avenue with about 125 units, the 50-unit Parc at Maplewood Station complex on Dunnell Road, and the 20-unit Alvia building on Valley Street.

Housing Costs

Today, Maplewood is considered one of the most highly sought-after communities in New Jersey for residential property, and both housing prices and rents reflect that demand. Home prices have sharply grown in the Township over the past two decades. A significant increase occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic as regional households sought homes outside of heavily urban communities. According to Zillow's Home Value Index, single-family home values in Maplewood grew from \$435,000 in May 2012 to \$616,000 in March 2020, while condo home values increased from \$186,000 in May 2012 to \$244,000 during the same period. Since the pandemic, single-family home values have risen further, reaching \$795,000 as of April 2022, and condo values were up to \$292,000 in April 2022. Redfin reported that 82% of homes were selling above list price in April 2022, an indicator of a sellers' market.

Median gross rent (including rent plus utility costs) increased by 27.7% from 2010 to 2020 in Maplewood, compared with a gain of 24% in the County. After adjusting for inflation, the Township's median rent increased by 9% over this time period.

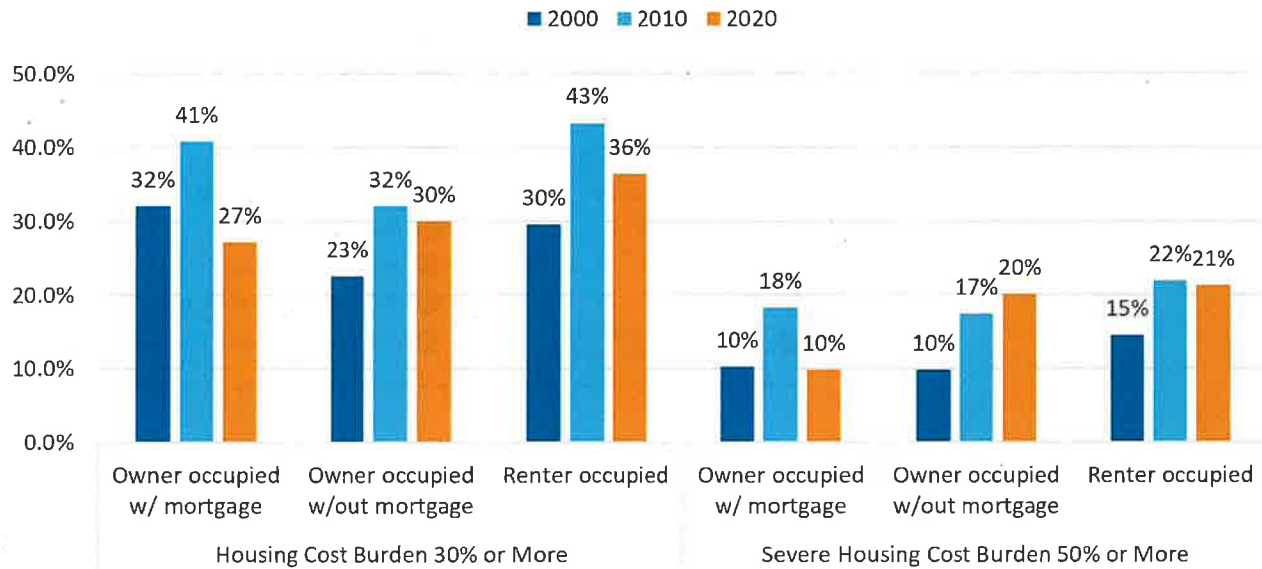
There were 403 vacant housing units within Maplewood in 2020 according to the Census Bureau's 2020 redistricting data files, up from 159 in 2010 and 163 in 2000, as reported in the decennial censuses.⁴ The 2016-2020 ACS estimated that the majority of Maplewood's vacant units were on the market for rent or "other" vacancies, which is defined by the Census Bureau as undergoing rehabilitation or long-term unoccupied units. The number of "other" vacancies increased from 45 units in 2000 to 252 units in 2020.

Over the five-year period of 2016-2020, the Township had an average homeowner vacancy rate of 0%, with hardly any units available for sale, while the County had a vacancy rate of 1.6%, also very low and a sign of a very tight home-buying market. According to Apartments.com, there were 41 rental units on the market in Maplewood on September 19, 2022. This would represent a vacancy rate of 2.3% using the ACS 2019 estimate of rental units within the Township, which is considered very low vacancy rate. As noted, Maplewood had a large number of constructed but not yet occupied units at the end of the decade. These units, not currently listed for sale or available for rent, are excluded from the calculation of tenure-specific vacancy rates but do represent that the market is responding to the need for rental housing within the Township.

⁴ A significant portion of these vacant units were likely newly constructed multifamily units that were not yet occupied.

Chart 8: Share of Maplewood Households With Unaffordable Levels of Housing Costs by Tenure, 2000-2020

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2000 SF3, ACS 2006-2010 & 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates



Affordability Cost Burden

The threshold for adverse impacts from housing-related costs, or cost burden, is generally considered to be the point where 30% or more of gross income is being spent on housing-related costs. Households residing in owner-occupied units should not be paying more than 30% of their gross income on principal, interest, taxes, and insurance, while renter households should not be paying more than 30% of their gross income on rent, utilities, and any related fees.

While the threshold for housing related cost burden is generally considered 28%-30%,⁵ households with extremely low incomes, such as \$20,000 or less, may experience cost burden when spending less than these thresholds. This reflects the inherent challenge of trying to make ends meet on a very low income.

In Maplewood, despite rising housing costs from 2010 to 2020, the number of housing cost-burdened homeowners with a mortgage spending more than 30% of income on housing fell from 2,103 households to 1,401 households (-702), a reduction in share of total households from about 41% to 27%. The number of cost-burdened renter households

decreased by 171 households, or about 20%, a reduction in share of total households from approximately 43% to 36%. These findings indicate that Maplewood is becoming a more affluent community where both property owners and renters are experiencing lower rates of cost burden than in the past. Nonetheless, over 20% of renter households and owner households without a mortgage are experiencing severe housing cost burden, spending 50% or more of their incomes on housing-related costs. This share of renter households has only slightly improved since 2010, and for owner, non-mortgage households, has worsened over the past decade. Many owner households without a mortgage are likely to be seniors who have paid off the mortgage but still face property taxes and other expenses to maintain their homes.

⁵ The Uniform Housing Affordability Controls actually sets the threshold for housing cost-burden at 28% of gross income for owner-occupied units, which is slightly more stringent than the 30% rule of thumb.

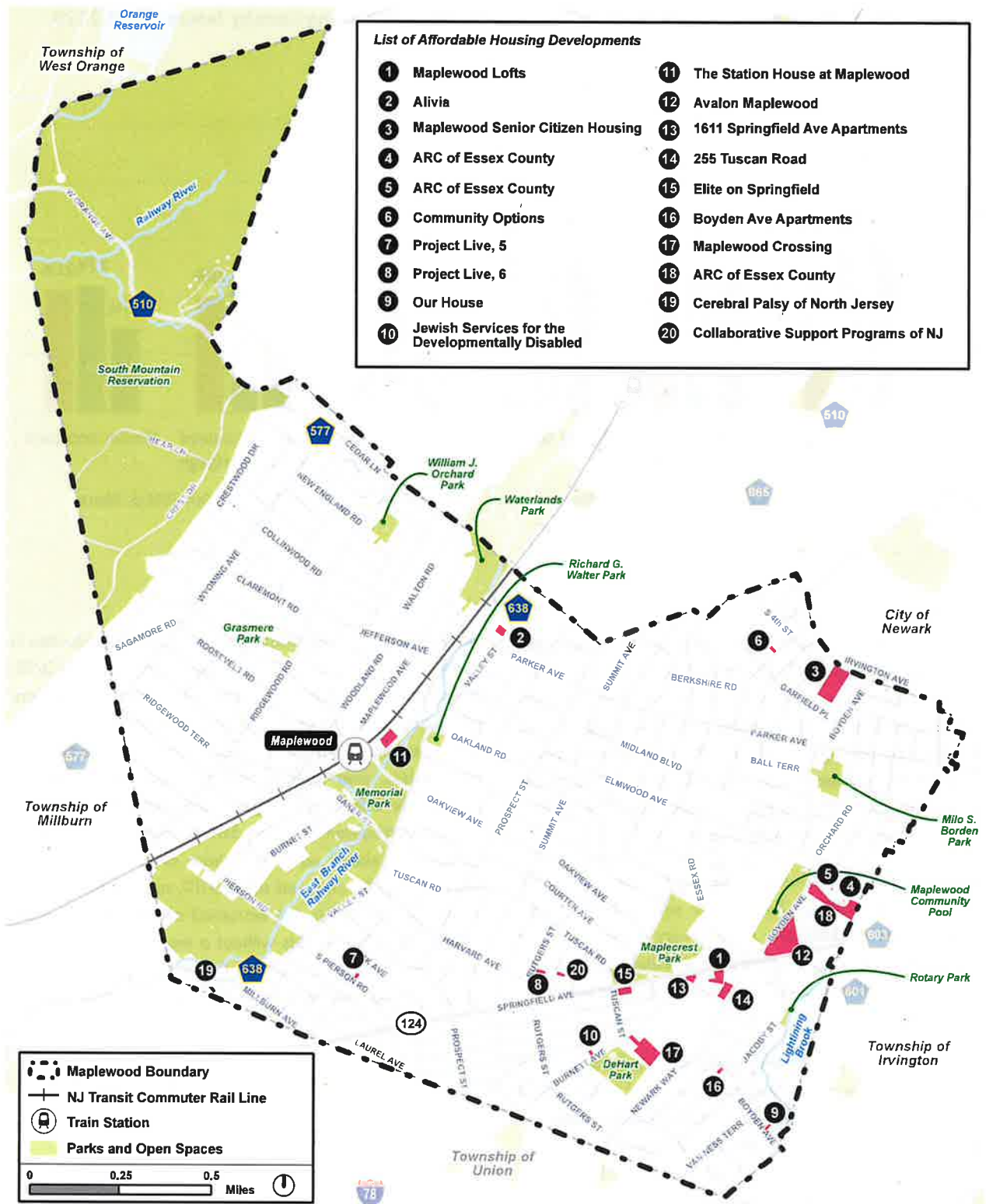


Figure 1: Location of Affordable Housing Developments

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), Housing Element Fair Share Plan, Mid-Point Review of Affordable Housing Activities, BFJ Planning.

Affordable Housing Planning

Maplewood has endeavored to provide a variety of housing options, including a substantial number of affordable housing units (see Figure 1). The Township opted into the State’s affordable housing compliance process early-on and, from 1993 through 2009, received Substantive Certification from the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH). In 2017, after additional rounds of litigation ensued at the state level and the affordable housing compliance process was transferred to the courts, Maplewood reached a Settlement Agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC) on its affordable housing obligations, which are summarized in Table 1, below. Following the Settlement Agreement, Maplewood prepared a Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan, as well as implementing ordinances, which were approved by the court in November 2018 in a Final Judgment of Compliance and Repose (“Final Judgment”).

The Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan indicates that the Township has fully addressed both its prior-round obligation and its Third Round Realistic Development Potential (RDP) obligation, through construction of senior and special

needs housing as well as inclusionary housing (market-rate units in combination with affordable units).

Of the 99 units credited toward Maplewood’s Prior Round and Third Round obligations, 34 units are family rental units. The remaining 65 units are age-restricted and special needs units. As the Township does not contain owner-occupied affordable housing units, it may be beneficial to include this type of unit as part of future projects to promote a wider variety of housing options.

The Township has implemented a Homeownership Program, in which the Township can partner with a non-profit developer to identify housing units or properties suitable for purchase and rehabilitation, via a subsidy. Units may be foreclosed homes, other existing homes, or new homes on vacant lots, and must be deed-restricted and sold only to income-eligible households. However, due to the high cost of land and housing in Maplewood, this program is only anticipated to produce 2 affordable units through 2025.

Table 1: Share of Maplewood Households With Unaffordable Levels of Housing Costs by Tenure, 2000-2020

Sources: Maplewood Fair Share Settlement Agreement, 2017.

Cumulative 1987-2025 Affordable Housing Obligations	
Obligation Type	Obligation
Prior Round	51
Third Round Realistic Development Potential (RDP)*	82
Third Round Unmet Need	362
Present Need (Rehabilitation)	114
Present Need (Rehabilitation Obligation)	129
Total	609

* RDP reflects a Vacant Land Adjustment (VLA) that identifies the available land suitable for development of affordable housing.



Maplewood Crossing



The Alivia

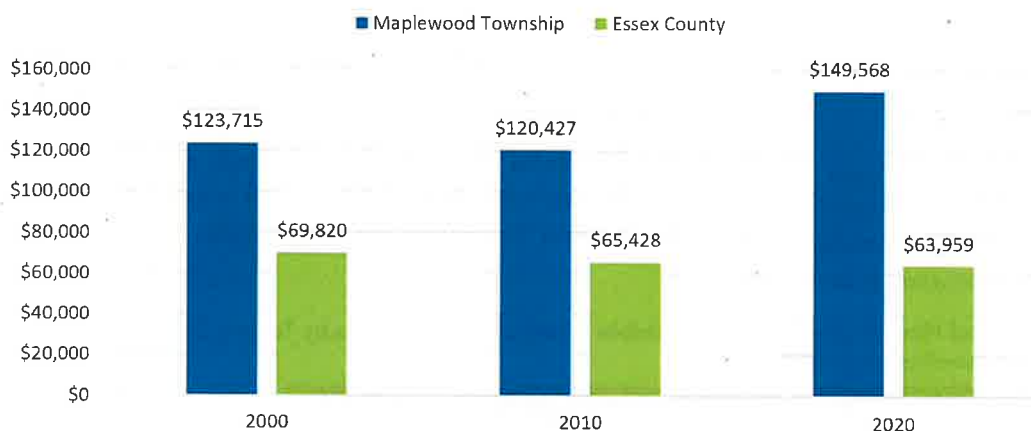
Table 2: Income Distribution: Maplewood, 2000-2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census and 2006-2010 and 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Household Income	Maplewood					
	2000		2010		2020	
	# of Households	Share of Total	# of Households	Share of Total	# of Households	Share of Total
Less than \$50,000	2,500	29.0%	1,834	22.3%	1,155	14.2%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	2,758	32.7%	2,185	26.6%	1,726	21.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	1,582	18.7%	1,591	19.4%	1,192	14.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	741	8.8%	980	11.9%	944	11.6%
\$200,000 or more	866	10.3%	1,620	19.7%	3,110	38.3%
Total	8,447		8,210		8,127	

Chart 9: Median Household Income in Maplewood & Essex County, 2000-2020 (in 2020 Dollars)

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2000 SF3, ACS 2006-2010 & 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates



Income and Educational Attainment

Maplewood’s inflation-adjusted median household income grew nearly 21% over the past two decades, from \$123,715 in 2000 to \$149,568 in 2020, while Essex County’s adjusted median income fell by 8.4% to \$63,959. During this period, the number of Maplewood households earning \$200,000 or more increased from 866 households to 3,110 households. Today, nearly half (49.9%) of the Township’s households have income exceeding \$100,000 a year, compared with about 21% of households in the County.

The share of Maplewood’s population below the poverty line in 2020 was very low, at just 4.4%, compared with 15.3% in Essex County as a whole. These levels have remained largely stable since 2000, and in the Township, are fairly constant across racial and ethnic groups. In the County, poverty rates among Black, Hispanic, and multi-racial residents are much higher than those for white residents.

However, income levels are not evenly distributed. As shown in Figure 2, the lowest-income households in the Township are concentrated in the eastern and southern portions, while the highest-income areas are in the northwestern two-thirds of the Township. Interestingly, some of the lowest-income areas closely correlate with those identified as “hazardous” or high-risk in historic redlining maps.⁶

Looking at the Gini Index of Inequality, a measure of statistical dispersion intended to represent the income or wealth inequality within an area, household income inequality within both Maplewood and Essex County has remained largely unchanged over the past decade, at 44.1 and 54.7, respectively. Maplewood’s Gini score is lower than the U.S. as a whole, though it is still considered a high level of income inequality and is much higher than most developed countries.

⁶ <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58>

Chart 10: Share of Residents Below the Federal Poverty Line, Maplewood & Essex County, 2000-2020

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2000 SF3, ACS 2006-2010 & 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates.

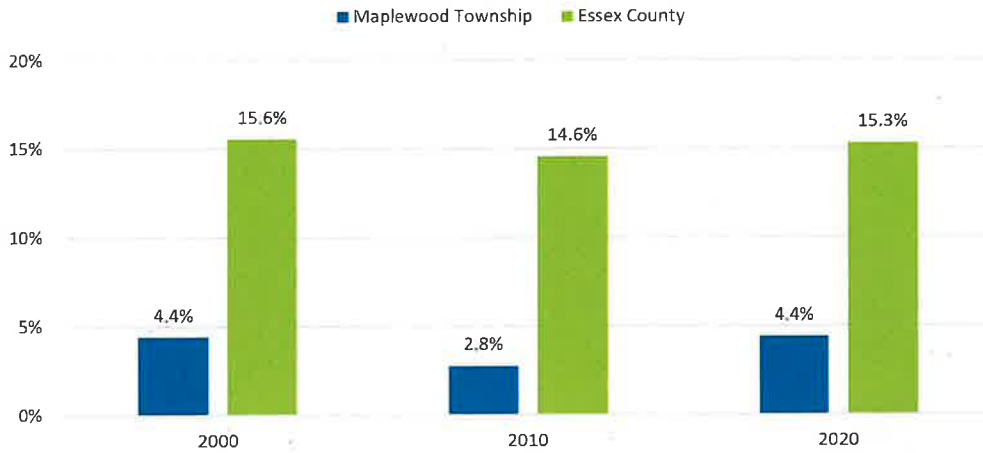
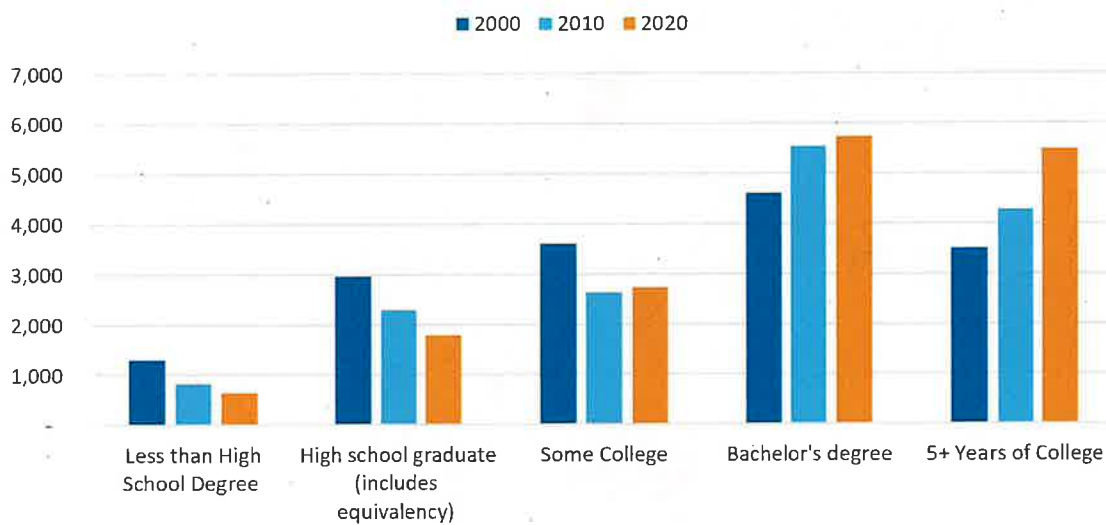


Chart 11: Total Maplewood Population Aged 25+ by Educational Attainment, 2000-2020

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2000 SF3, ACS 2006-2010 & 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates



Household income is linked to the educational attainment of residents. Since 2000, Maplewood's share of residents with less than a four-year college degree fell from nearly half (49.2%) of residents over age 24 to 31.5% in 2020. Meanwhile, those with a bachelor's degree or higher-level degree grew in share from about 51% to 69%. The percent changes for residents with less than a high school degree and with an advanced degree were significant, at a decline of almost 23% and growth of nearly 28%, respectively.

The increasing lack of diversity in Maplewood's educational attainment, when examined in conjunction with income levels, indicates a shift away from the Township's past levels of economic diversity, even as the community remains racially and ethnically diverse.

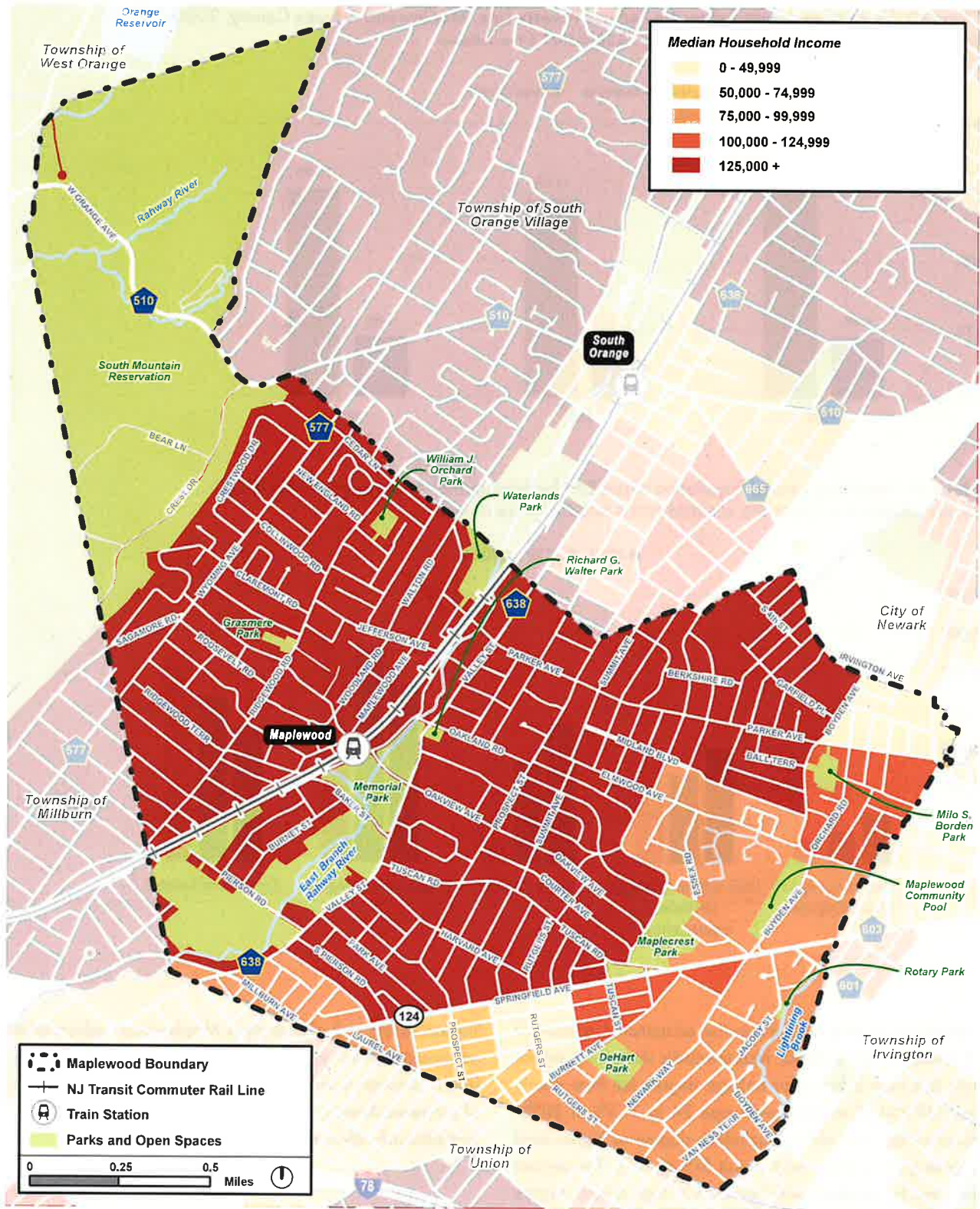


Figure 2: Median Household Income in Maplewood

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates (Exported from Urban Footprint), BfJ Planning

Quality of Life

Crime

The Township has seen a dramatic reduction in crime rates over the past several decades. In the 1980s, violent crime incidents (including murders, rapes, robberies, and assaults) occurred at a ratio of 396 per 100,000 residents in Maplewood, later falling to just 153 such incidents per 100,000 during the 2010s. Crime rates reached a long-term low of 55 incidents per 100,000 in 2020, the lowest recorded rate since 1985.⁷ Nonviolent property crimes in the Township averaged 4,055 incidents per 100,000 residents in the 1990s, gradually declining to 1,702 incidents per 100,000 residents during the 2010s. Like the violent crime rate, 2020 marked an all-time low for nonviolent crime, at 1,335 incidents per 100,000 residents. These trends are in contrast to the experiences of many communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, where crime rates (both violent and nonviolent) have increased, in some cases significantly.

Social Vulnerability Index

Many quality-of-life conditions can be viewed through a community resiliency lens. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) aggregates metrics that depict the resilience of communities when confronted by external stresses on human health, such as natural or human-caused disasters or disease outbreaks.⁸ Factors in this analysis include metrics such as poverty status, lack of vehicle status, crowded housing, unemployment, minority status. Figure 3, on the following page, illustrates areas in Maplewood that experience the highest levels of CDC-defined social vulnerability. These areas tend to correspond to the areas of lowest median household income.

Rates of Insurance

According to ACS data, the percentage of uninsured residents in Maplewood fell from 10.2% in 2012 to 3.9% in 2020, likely due to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The Township's level of uninsurance is very low, at 8.8%, well below the County's uninsurance rate of 11.3%. With the availability of national health insurance for older residents in the form of Medicare, few, if any, seniors in the Township lacked health insurance in 2012 or 2020. The share of uninsured adults in Maplewood in 2020 was highest among non-citizens, at 13.9%, followed by those without a high school degree (15.5%).

Jobs in Maplewood

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program, the number of jobs located in Maplewood has grown modestly, by 2.9%, over the long-term, from 6,269 jobs in 2002 to 6,453 jobs in 2019. Over the past 10 years, the Township added 335 jobs, a gain of 5.5%.

Employment levels in Maplewood have varied widely by sector. From 2009 to 2019, the sectors with the greatest job gains included Other Services⁹ (+310), Accommodation & Food Services (+176), Health Care and Social Assistance (+72), Construction (+68), and Manufacturing (+53). Industries with the greatest losses included Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (-301) and Finance & Insurance (-153).

Maplewood's largest and primary employer is the South Orange-Maplewood School District, with 816 workers across the entire district. Other major employers include NJ Transit, Winchester Gardens, the Township of Maplewood, Maplewood Beverage Packers, and the Maplewood Country Club.

⁷ Source: <https://nj.gov/njsp/ucr/uniform-crime-reports.shtml>. Due to changes in the methodology of assessing crime rates, it is difficult to compare past crime rates pre-2018.

⁸ <https://svi.cdc.gov/>

⁹ Establishments in this sector are primarily engaged in activities such as equipment and machinery repairing; promoting or administering religious activities; grantmaking; advocacy; and providing dry-cleaning and laundry services, personal care services, death care services, pet care services, photo-finishing services, temporary parking services, and dating services.

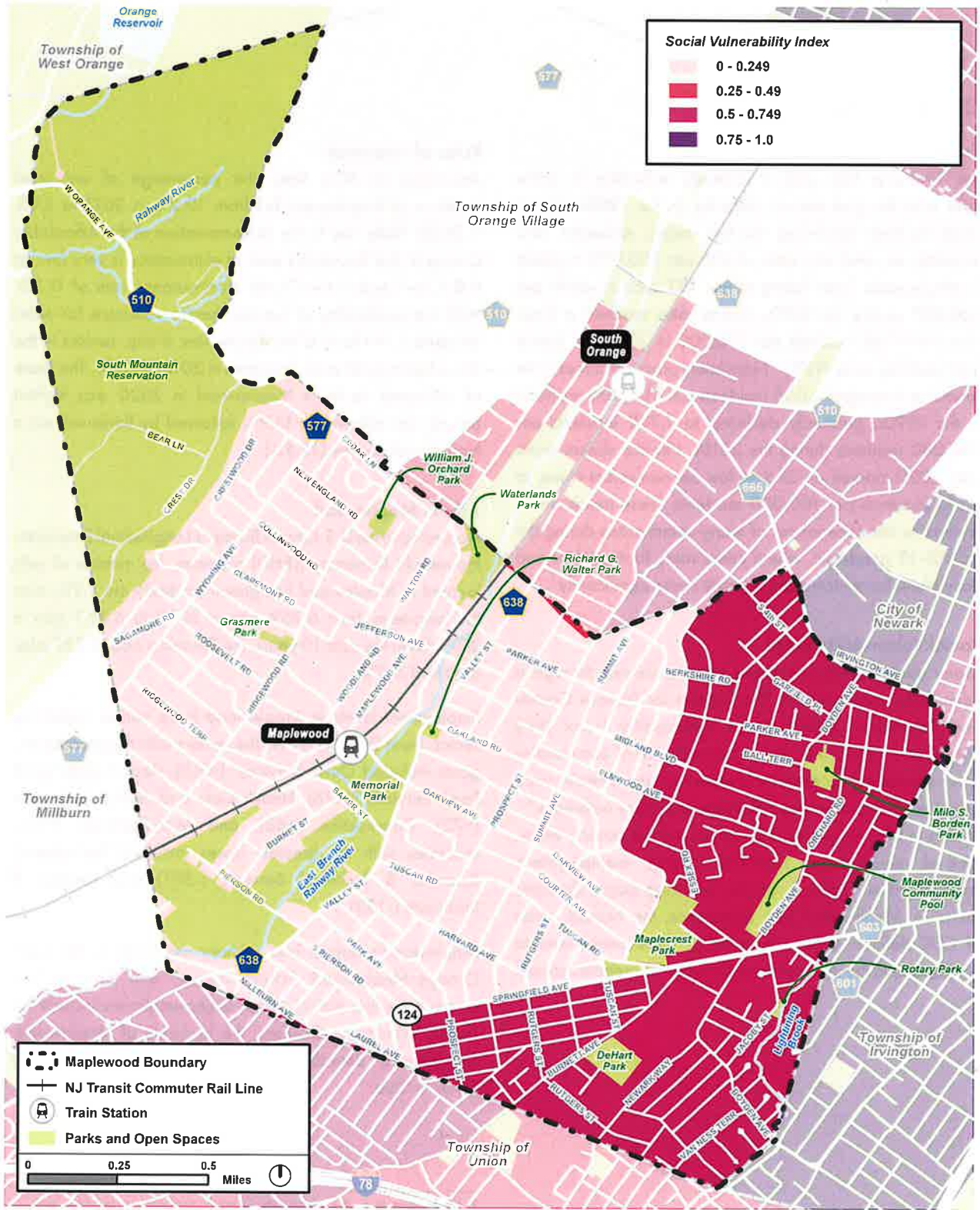


Figure 3: Social Vulnerability Index in Maplewood

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Exported from Urban Footprint), BFJ Planning

Chart 12: Local Jobs in Maplewood by Industry Group, 2002-2019 Share of Residents Below the Federal Poverty Line, Maplewood & Essex County, 2000-2020

Note: Industries with relatively small numbers of jobs grouped among similar industry groups.
 Source: US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program, 2002-2019.

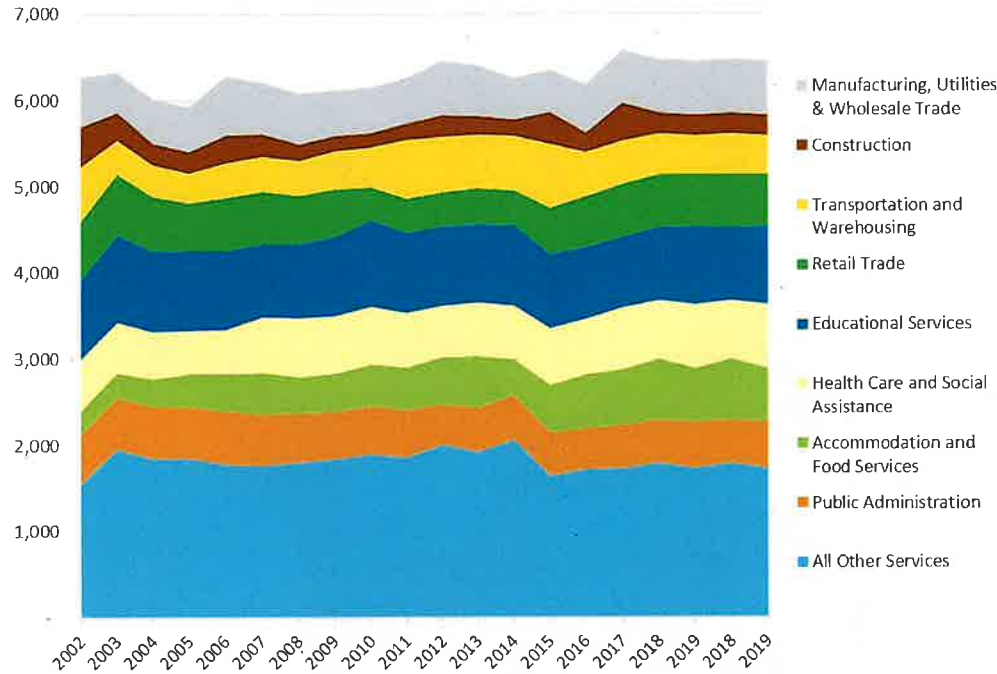


Table 3: Major Employers in Maplewood, 2022

Sources: Dun & Bradstreet; DataAxle; South Orange-Maplewood School District.

Employer Name	Location	Staff Size
South Orange-Maplewood School District	Academy Street	816
NJ Transit	Boyden Avenue	500
Winchester Gardens	Elmwood Avenue	250
Township of Maplewood	Valley Street	210
Maplewood Beverage Packers	Camptown Road	165
Maplewood Country Club	Baker Street	132
South Mountain YMCA	West Parker Avenue	90
DCH Millburn Audi Parts Department	Millburn Avenue	62
Bell Medical, LLC	Millburn Avenue	60

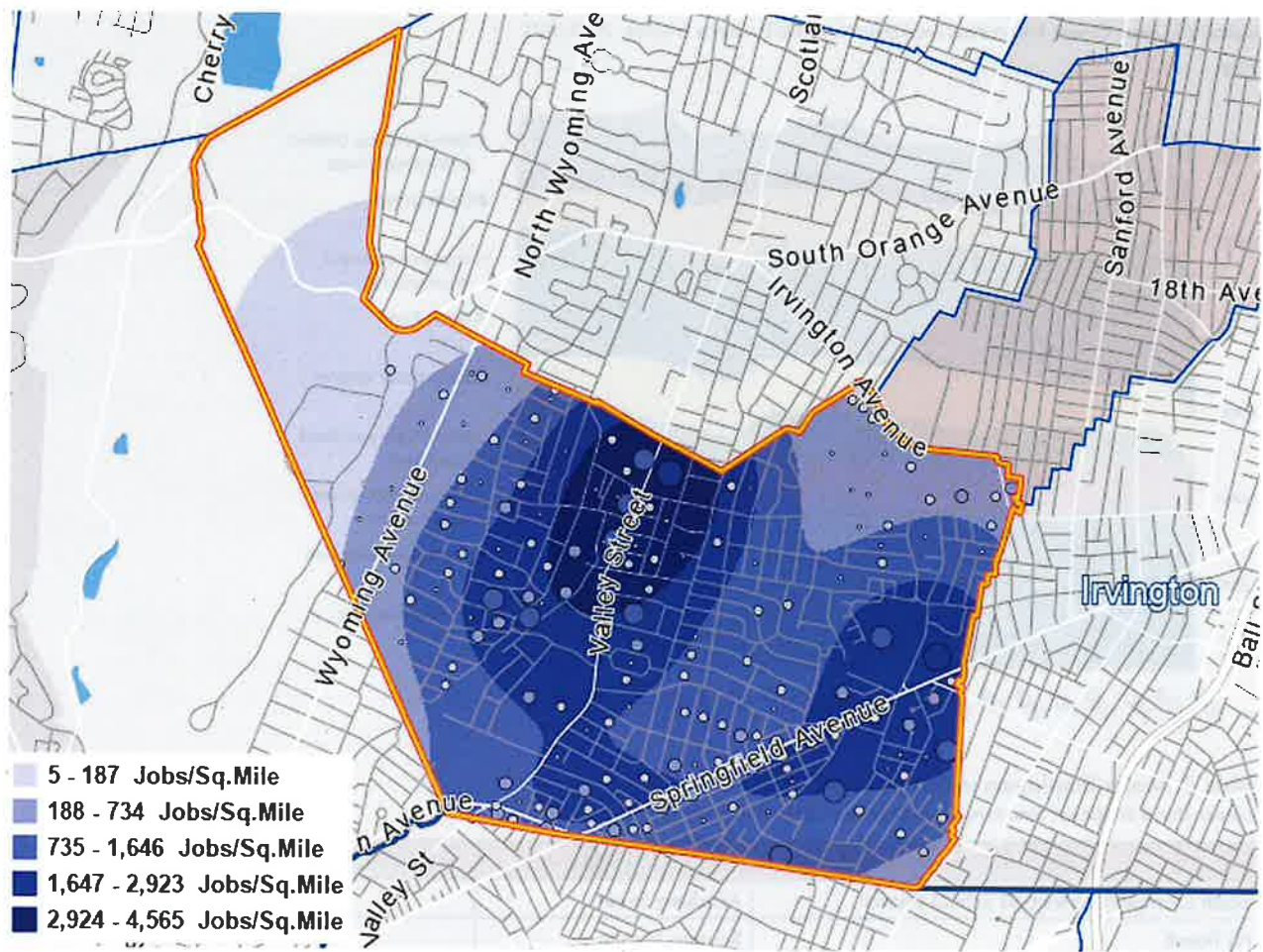
Employment of Maplewood Residents

According to LEHD data, job growth among Maplewood residents has been strong, with gains of 14% from 2002 to 2019, and an increase of 10.1% since 2009. Gains over the past decade were strongest among workers aged 55+ (+912), those that identify as white (+618), and workers with a high school degree or less (+836), while those with a bachelor’s or advanced degree saw the greatest losses (-143).

Since 2009, industries that led the job growth of Township residents include: Health Care & Social Assistance (+371); Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (+215); Accommodation & Food Services (+173); Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation (+153); Transportation & Warehousing (+130); and Information (+72). Only the Educational Services and Manufacturing sectors saw sizeable job losses among resident workers (-114 and -41, respectively).

Figure 4: Jobs Located in Maplewood

Source: US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program, 2019

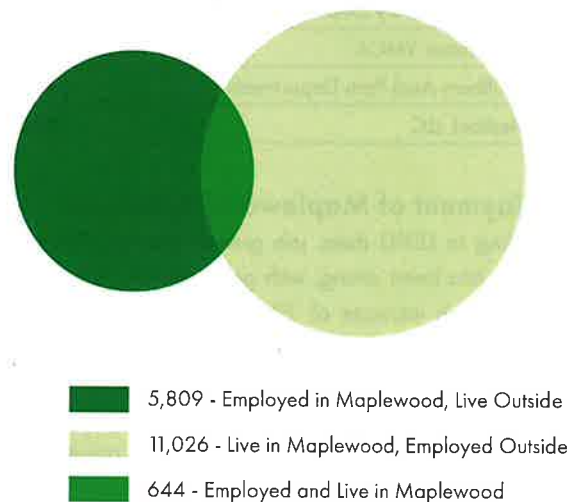


Among workers employed in Maplewood, about 42% reside elsewhere in Essex County, while 16% live in Union County and 7.5% in Morris County. Workers in the Township commute from a range of nearby towns: 8.5% from Newark, followed by Irvington (4.3%), Union (3.9%), South Orange (3.3%), and East Orange (3%). Of people who work in Maplewood, 10% also reside in the Township.

For employed Maplewood residents, about 26% work in Essex County, followed by New York City (21.9%, mostly Manhattan) and Union County (10.5%). Common commuting destinations for Township residents, in addition to New York City, include Newark, Jersey City, Livingston, Parsippany-Troy Hills, Union, and Elizabeth. A total of 5.5% of employed Maplewood residents also work in the Township. Table 4 shows the top 10 locations of jobs held by Maplewood residents, and the top 10 locations where people working in Maplewood live.

Figure 5: Jobs Located in Maplewood

Source: US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program, 2019



- 5,809 - Employed in Maplewood, Live Outside
- 11,026 - Live in Maplewood, Employed Outside
- 644 - Employed and Live in Maplewood

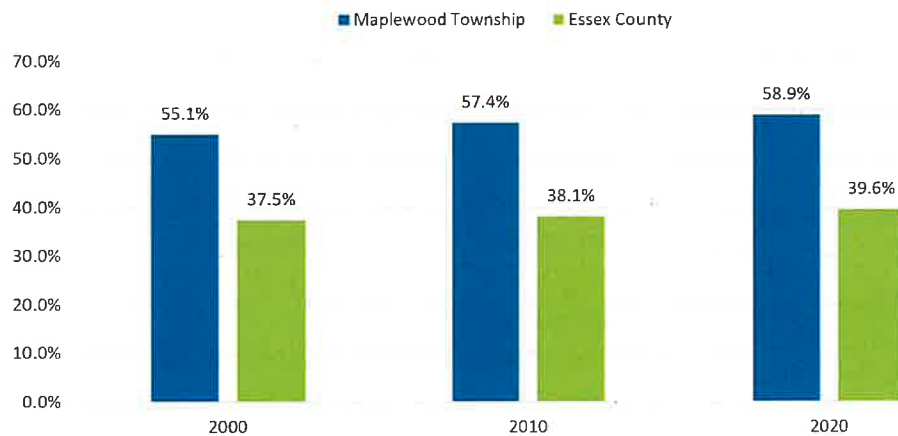
Table 4: Travel to Work Inflow/Outflow Profile, 2019

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD Program, 2019.

Maplewood Residents			People Working in Maplewood		
Location of Job	Number	%	Place of Residence	Number	%
New York, NY	2,558	21.9%	Newark, NJ	546	8.5%
Newark, NJ	914	7.8%	East Orange, NJ	195	3.0%
Jersey City, NJ	370	3.2%	New York, NY	174	2.7%
Elizabeth, NJ	202	1.7%	Elizabeth, NJ	143	2.2%
Summit, NJ	197	1.7%	Jersey City, NJ	90	1.4%
Florham Park, NJ	156	1.3%	Kearny, NJ	62	1.0%
East Orange, NJ	154	1.3%	Linden, NJ	61	0.9%
Morristown, NJ	118	1.0%	Paterson, NJ	59	0.9%
Secaucus, NJ	108	0.9%	Plainfield, NY	52	0.8%
Paramus, NJ	102	0.7%	Roselle Park, NJ	41	0.6%

Chart 13: Total Maplewood Population Aged 25+ by Educational Attainment, 2000-2020

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2000 SF3, ACS 2006-2010 & 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates



Commutation

Reflecting the employment destinations of Maplewood residents discussed above, from 2000 to the five-year period of 2016-2020, the share of working Township residents using personal automobiles to get to work dropped from about 71% to 56%. At the same time, more workers used public transit, increasing from 2,586 to 3,485 workers, or from 21% to 26% in the share of total workers.

Despite the greater use of transit for commutation, households in both Maplewood and Essex County are increasingly choosing to have cars over the past two decades. The share of households with two or more cars is far higher in Maplewood (58.9%) than in the County (39.6%), reflecting the Township's more suburban character. Meanwhile, the

share of households without a car in Maplewood declined from 7.3% in 2000 to 6.7% in 2020. Nonetheless, the fact that about 40% of Township households own one car or fewer indicates an ongoing need for a robust non-automobile transportation system.

The share of employed Maplewood residents who work from home has grown significantly, from 5.7% of workers in 2000, to 4.6% of workers from 2006-2010, then up to 12.1% from 2016-2020. The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a sharp rise in people working from home since March 2020, likely a far higher share than reported in the Census Bureau ACS data over the 2016-2020 period due to the data's time-averaging estimation methodology.

Retail and Office Market

The Township's primary retail area is Maplewood Village, located along Maplewood Avenue from Durand Road to Baker Street. This area includes a mix of neighborhood shops, restaurants, and cafes, as well as a supermarket, banks, and professional offices. The community's only movie theater, the historic Maplewood Theaters, closed recently, with the building part of a site being studied for potential redevelopment. A secondary business district is located along the Springfield Avenue corridor, with a variety of small businesses, convenience stores, restaurants, art galleries, and fitness and dance studios. The Maplewood Village Alliance and Springfield Avenue Partnership operate as Special Improvement Districts (SIDs) for their respective areas, promoting local business development and special events.

Other retail nodes are found on Valley Road, from Oakland Road north to the South Orange municipal boundary, as well as on Irvington Avenue between Putnam Street and Parker Avenue, on Ridgewood Road at the Cedar Lane intersection (Ridgewood Row), and on Elmwood Avenue at its intersection with Orchard Road and Boyden Avenue. Boyden Avenue south of Hughes Street is also emerging as a small retail node.

Maplewood's retail market is part of the Essex submarket, according to Moody's Analytics, an area with 3.4 million square feet of retail space. In this area, retail vacancy rates had been stable from 2010 to 2020, generally in the range of 7% to 9%. In 2021 and 2022, vacancy rates dropped to 5% and 5.9%, respectively, but are projected to increase to within the long-term range in the next few years ahead.

Retail rents in the Essex market have remained largely unchanged over the past decade, rising from \$23.93 per square foot in 2010 to \$24.20 per square foot in 2021. Projected demand for retail space over the next decade is expected to be modest, with no significant new construction currently in the pipeline. Effective rents are expected to rise by 0.8% annually through 2025 to \$25.05 per square foot, then grow by 1.4% annually to 2031.

The broader North Jersey retail market has performed at or just above the national level. Notably, the warehouse and distribution markets have performed best in this larger market area, with strong absorption and growth on a quarterly

basis. Maplewood's light industrial areas are generally concentrated at the southeastern portion of the Township, off Chancellor Avenue, and along the southern border, off Burnett Avenue.

Maplewood's office market is fairly small, with professional offices in the commercial districts and several larger office buildings located along key corridors. The Township is part of the North Garden State Parkway submarket, which contains 4.2 million square feet of space, according to Moody's Analytics. The submarket has seen its vacancy rate drop in recent years, from 14.8% in 2010 to 13% in 2019, and now at 11.7% in 2022. As demand remains strong, effective rents have climbed from \$23.15 per square foot in 2010 to \$25.59 per square foot in 2019 and \$25.45 per square foot in 2022. Moody's forecasts vacancy rates to drop to 7.8% by 2027, while effective rents are projected to increase to \$28.01 per square foot.

The broader North Jersey office market continues to maintain strong performance, with trends superior to that of the nation. Both office vacancy rates and rents have already recovered from their 2019, pre-pandemic levels.

Summary

Since the 2004 Master Plan was adopted, Maplewood has undergone a transformation, becoming a community that is more affluent, highly educated, and well connected to well-paying jobs in the region. With these demographic shifts have come some positive changes – such as lower crime rates and an overall reduction in the share of households experiencing unaffordable housing cost burdens. At the same time, not all of the changes have been positive. While Maplewood can still be considered a unique place in the region with its racial and ethnic diversity and has gained in some communities of color, it has lost a share of its African American population. Meanwhile, although the top-level housing affordability data are encouraging, some of Maplewood's most vulnerable residents, such as seniors, may be struggling to afford to stay in their homes and the community. All of these factors are important to understand given their direct links to land use decisions and potential public improvements. The role of these socioeconomic elements in such future decisions will be explored throughout this Master Plan.

LAND USE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Historical Development

Maplewood first began to be developed in the late 17th century, as part of large tracts of land that were purchased from the Lenape Native Americans by the founders of Newark. Existing trails were surveyed and eventually became roadways, such as South Orange and Clinton Avenues. Through the mid-18th to early 19th centuries, scattered settlements developed on the eastern slope of the First Watchung Mountain, on the ridge to the east, and in the valley between them, along the East Branch of the Rahway River. The early residents built their houses close to the roads and paths that connected the settlements of Newark, Orange, Camptown (now Irvington), Connecticut Farms (now Union), Springfield, and Morristown. Several of Maplewood's earliest buildings survive on its first principal roads: Elmwood, Boyden, and Parker Avenues; Valley Street; and Ridgewood and Tuscan Roads.

In 1831, Lewis Pierson built a gristmill in the valley along the East Branch of the Rahway River, and by 1843 had built Vaux Hall, a Greek Revival-style home just west of the mill. Both structures survive and have been preserved – the mill through adaptive reuse as a commercial building, and the home through designation as a local historic site by the Maplewood Historic Preservation Commission. Other early industrial developments around this time include a paper mill, cider mill, general store, and shoemaker – none of which remain.

Maplewood as it is known today was largely shaped by the railroad that directly connected it to New York City, leading to a transformation from a rural landscape to a suburban one. The Morris and Essex Railway was constructed in 1838, passing through the center of what would become Maplewood Village. By 1863, the first train station was built at the foot of Lenox Place, near the intersection of Baker Street and Maplewood Avenue. In 1902, as part of a major upgrade along the rail line, the tracks were elevated and the present station was constructed on Dunnell Road. The railroad opened up Maplewood as a rural escape for New York City residents, such as Cornelius Roosevelt (uncle

of Theodore Roosevelt), who built large homes as country retreats, primarily on the slope of the First Mountain. The eastern portion of Maplewood – known as Middleville after 1830 and as Hilton after 1880 – began to develop after the opening of the Newark-Springfield Turnpike (present-day Springfield Avenue) in 1806. It served as a stagecoach stop between Newark and Morristown and became a flourishing village, with several hotels, a general store, and local manufacturers of goods such as nails and shoes.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, Maplewood saw many changes in its name and boundaries. Much of what became the Township was within the boundaries of the Township of South Orange when it incorporated in 1861, and a small final piece of land on the southern border was acquired in 1863 with the addition of a section of Millburn. In 1869, the Village of South Orange was created within the Township of South Orange. In 1904, however, a disagreement over taxes led to the Village of South Orange separating from the more rural area of the Township (Maplewood), though the state legislature required the two municipalities to maintain a joint school district. In 1922, the name of the community was changed to the Township of



Bird's eye view of Maplewood, 1910
Source: Maplewood Library

Maplewood. The Township was sparsely developed at the dawn of the 20th century but began to grow rapidly by the mid-1920s, as farmers and estate owners sold their lands for residential development in response to the significant demand for housing by soldiers returning from World War I. By 1926, Maplewood had formed a planning committee and adopted a zoning code, including a provision that no neighboring houses should be identical. Homebuilders and developers began to create distinctive neighborhoods during the 1920s and 1930s in a variety of architectural styles, such as Colonial Revival, Mediterranean Revival, and Craftsman. These houses make up the majority of buildings within Maplewood today and established its neighborhood scale and aesthetics. Most municipal parks were also developed during this time, notably the Olmsted Brothers/Brinley and Holbrook-designed Memorial Park, as were three of the five elementary schools and the high school.¹⁰

Today, Maplewood retains much of the architectural scale and sense of place as established in the early 20th century, reflecting decades of proactive and thoughtful planning that began with its first master plan in 1949. Comprehensive master plans were subsequently adopted in 1968, 1984, and 2004, with updates or re-examination reports prepared during the intervening years.

Land Use

Residential

As shown in Figure 6, the vast majority of land in Maplewood is dedicated to residential use, primarily single-family. Two-, three-, and multi-family development is also present, especially in the eastern part of the Township as well as in Maplewood Village and along portions of Valley Street. The most significant multifamily developments are found on Springfield Avenue near the border with Irvington (e.g., Avalon), and in Maplewood Village (such as Parc at Maplewood Station and Clarus Maplewood). In addition, The Top building provides several hundred condominium units on South Orange Avenue. West of the railroad tracks, single-family homes tend to be on larger lots, while homes south of Springfield Avenue and near the boundaries with Newark and Irvington are typically on small lots. Homes in Maplewood are generally older – with most constructed before 1960 – but in good condition.

¹⁰ Historical context derived from the 2008 Maplewood Historic Preservation Plan Element, Appendix A-1, A Brief History of Maplewood.



Residential Neighborhoods



Residential Neighborhoods



Maplewood Village



Springfield Avenue

Commercial, Retail, and Office

The historic commercial center of the Township is Maplewood Village, which lies along Maplewood Avenue, generally between Lenox Place and Durand Road. This pedestrian-oriented shopping area has a range of retail and service uses in a one- to three-story environment. Shopper parking is located on the street or in small municipal lots behind the buildings, with a concentration of longer-term commuter parking around the train station. The Maplewood Village area also includes a small portion of offices and other commercial uses along Dunnell Road, east of the train station. The Maplewood Village Alliance special improvement district (SID) manages this commercial district, providing services such as cleaning sidewalks, maintaining an online business directory, and assisting with façade renovations, as well as hosting events. Maplewood Village was listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2022, offering the availability of grants, tax credits, and marketing benefits.

Springfield Avenue is Maplewood's most significant commercial thoroughfare, with a mix of auto- and pedestrian-oriented stores along its entire length within the Township. Over time, the corridor has evolved to include more pedestrian-accessible and neighborhood-serving businesses, as well as mixed-use or multifamily developments such as Maplewood Lofts, Avalon, and 1701 Springfield Avenue. This transformation began to occur with the establishment of the Springfield Avenue Partnership SID as well as a zoning change to a Pedestrian Retail Business (PRB) zone and streetscape improvements undertaken as part of the transfer of the roadway jurisdiction from NJ DOT to the Township.

Other concentrations of commercial uses in Maplewood include neighborhood shopping areas on Valley Road between Oakland Road and the South Orange border; Irvington Avenue along the border with Irvington; the "Ridgewood Row" retail node on Ridgewood Road near Cedar Lane; the Elmwood Avenue retail node at the Orchard Road/Boyden Avenue intersection; an auto-oriented retail and service area along Millburn Avenue and Valley Street at the gateway into the Township from Millburn and Union; and office/commercial areas off Chancellor Avenue/Campdown Road along the Irvington boundary and along Rutgers Street and portions of Burnett Avenue.



Valley Street



Irvington Avenue *Source: Google Maps, 2022*



Ridgewood Row



Industrial Uses

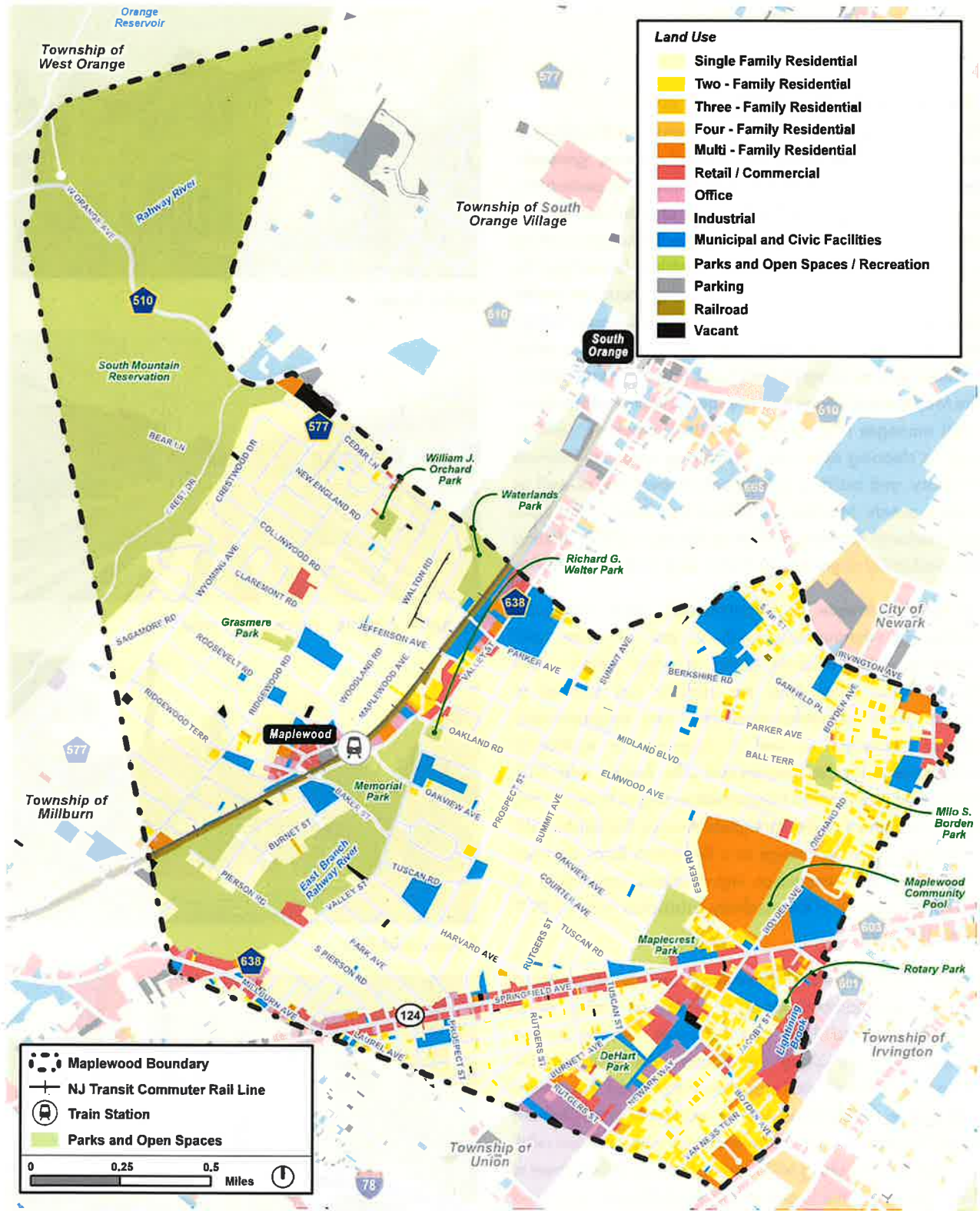


Figure 6: Land Use

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), NJOGIS, BfJ Planning.

Industrial

Most industrial uses in Maplewood are focused in the southeastern portion of the Township, off Rutgers Street and Newark Way as well as Camptown Road (the Olympic Industrial Park). These are typically warehousing, wholesale, or trucking-related businesses that are often interspersed with offices or other general commercial uses and often extend across adjacent municipal boundaries.

Municipal and Civic Facilities

Community facilities, houses of worship, municipal facilities, nonprofit organizations, and schools are located throughout the Township. Community institutions are generally concentrated around Maplewood Village and Memorial Park (Township Hall, the main fire department facility, South Mountain YMCA, and The Woodland and Burgdorff Cultural Center) or in the Hilton neighborhood (the police department, DPW, senior center, and DeHart Community Center). There are three library branches: the main branch on Baker Street at Memorial Park, the Hilton branch on Springfield Avenue at Maplecrest Park, and the adult services branch adjacent to the Community Pool. Four elementary schools are located in Maplewood (Delia Bolden, Clinton, Seth Boyden, and Tuscan) and have historically served their surrounding neighborhoods, although that is changing due to alternative placements as part of the South Orange-Maplewood district school integration initiative. The middle school and Columbia High School, which serve the entire district, are also located within Maplewood. Lastly, NJ Transit operates its Hilton office building and bus garage off Boyden Avenue at the Irvington border.

Parks and Open Spaces

The largest designated open space in Maplewood is the Essex County-owned South Mountain Reservation, which extends into neighboring Millburn and West Orange. In terms of Township-controlled parks, major assets are Memorial Park on Valley Street between Baker Street and Oakland Road, Maplecrest Park at Oakland and Tuscan Roads, and the Community Pool on Boyden Avenue. The smaller parks are Orchard Park off DeHart Road, Milo S. Borden Park off Borden Avenue, and DeHart Park on Burnett Avenue. These amenities generally serve their surrounding

neighborhoods, although DeHart Park is also the location of the community center. Grasmere Park is the site of the Durand-Hedden House. In addition, the Township of South Orange Village owns Waterlands Park, a portion of which (including Chyzowych Field) extends into Maplewood, and the privately owned 90-acre Maplewood Country Club is along Valley Street in the southwestern portion of the Township.

Parking, Railroad, and Vacant Land

Parking, railroad, and vacant land make up the smallest portion of land area in Maplewood. Parking comprises the surface parking lots managed by the Township, NJ Transit, and other private property owners. The two NJ Transit lots are near the train station on Dunnell Road, while municipal lots are concentrated in Maplewood Village and along Springfield Avenue. Railroad-dedicated uses are found along the train tracks. Very little vacant land is left in the Township and is scattered in isolated pockets.



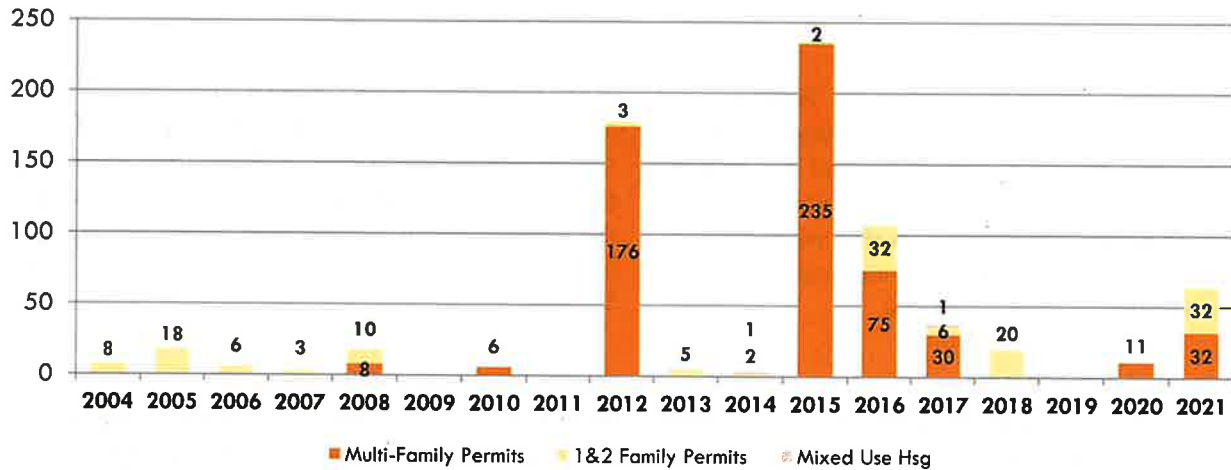
Hilton Branch Public Library



Memorial Park

Chart 14: Maplewood Housing Units by Type of Building Permit, 2004-2021

Source: NJ Department of Community Affairs: Certified Housing Unit Data for years 2004-2021.



Recent Development Activity

Much of Maplewood was developed in the 1920s and 1930s, and it is considered a largely built-out community. However there has been a recent surge of interest in redevelopment of properties for mixed-use and multifamily construction. As shown in Chart 14, the Township issued building permits for 573 multifamily housing units from 2004 to 2021, most since 2012, far outpacing all other residential development. In fact, as illustrated in Chart 15, multifamily construction accounted for the most substantial square footage of any other type of development during the period, resulting in the construction of about 690,000 square feet of space. Most multifamily development replaced existing commercial or industrial uses, such as the Avalon development, built on a former PSE&G site.

Maplewood’s fluctuating history of building permits reflects its lack of vacant land available to develop future residential or nonresidential structures. This means development occurs as individual parcels become available for development. For example, in September 2022, the Township Committee approved a redevelopment plan to facilitate redevelopment of a former dry cleaners site on West Parker Avenue with a 46-unit apartment building.

A similar pattern is in place for neighboring communities, which are also quite developed. In 2021, the most recent year for which data are available, the Township saw 64 residential units approved, while South Orange Village saw zero, West Orange saw eight, Millburn saw 40, Irvington saw 44, and Newark saw 2,650. Many communities in the state have experienced an increase in multifamily housing development in the past five years as they seek to meet

their affordable housing obligations for the current planning period which ends in 2025.

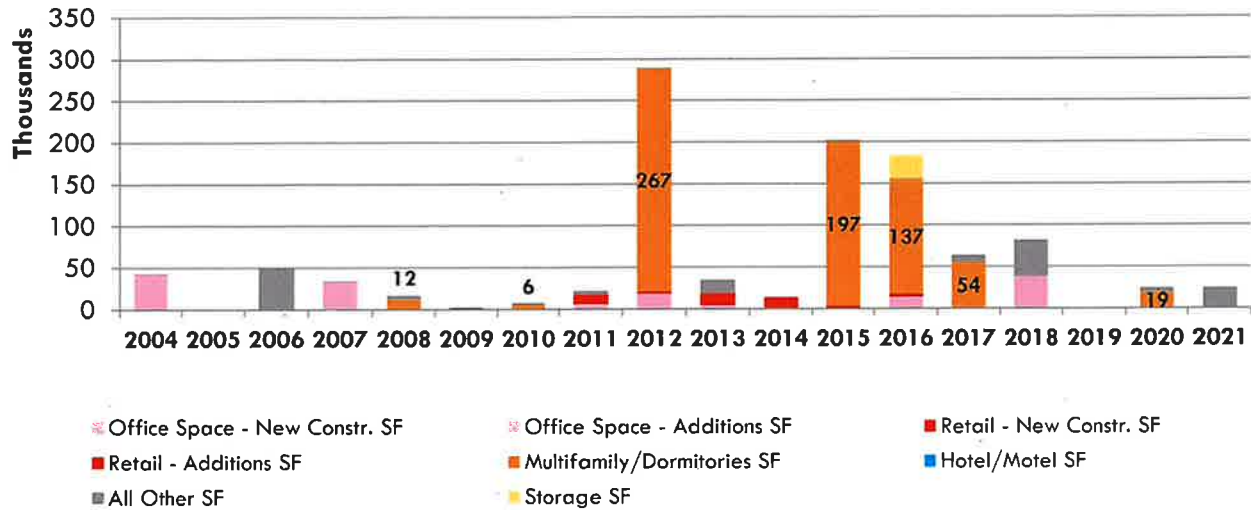
The new development in Maplewood has not been evenly distributed, as it has occurred where zoning allows for multifamily development and where land is available for redevelopment. As shown in Figure 7, since 2016, the majority of the approved development has occurred along the Springfield Avenue corridor, with about 140 units, in addition to the 235-unit Avalon development which was approved in 2015. Smaller pockets of multifamily development have occurred in Maplewood Village, with 17 units on top of the previously approved Clarus Maplewood complex (20 units) and Parc at Maplewood Station building (50 units); as well as along East Parker Avenue at the Irvington border, with 18 units.

Residential Density

Figure 8 illustrates Maplewood’s housing unit density by census block group. As shown, the highest-density areas are found in the eastern portion of the Township, in the Clinton and Hilton neighborhoods. These areas, with density of 6-8 units per acre, are adjacent to fairly high-density residential portions of the neighboring communities of Newark, Irvington, and Union. The rest of Maplewood largely falls between 2 and 6 units per acre, except for a small portion generally bounded by Maplewood Avenue, Valley Street, Pierson Road, and Baker Street. This area is predominantly occupied by the Maplewood Country Club, which skews the density for the group of homes clustered along Burnet Street and Salter Place considerably lower. In reality, this residential area is of comparable density to that of the area north of the railroad tracks.

Chart 15: Non-Single-Family Residential Square Footage by Type of Building Permit, 2004-2021

Source: NJ Department of Community Affairs: Certified Housing Unit Data for years 2004-2021.



Zoning

Zoning sets the parameters to control development and redevelopment of land in a municipality. The Township’s basic zoning requirements are summarized in Table 5 and mapped in Figure 9. Maplewood has 15 zoning districts. There are three single-family residential districts, one two-family district, two multifamily districts, four business districts, two office districts, two industrial districts, and a special continuing care retirement community district. Below are brief descriptions of the existing zones.

Residential

The three single-family residential districts are R-1-4, R-1-5, and R-1-7. All zones all allow for single-family residences and limited home offices as the primary permitted uses, with minimum lot area ranging from 4,000 to 7,000 square feet. The R-1-7 zone also allows targeted density increases in accordance with the Township’s Fair Share Housing Plan. The R-2-4 district allows for both single- and two-family dwellings, as well as limited home offices and multiple dwellings on large lots at the same overall density. The minimum lot size is 4,000 square feet for a single-family dwelling and 5,000 square feet for a two-family dwelling. Lastly, there are two multi-family residential districts: the RGA Residential Garden Apartment District, and the Parkside Zone. The RGA district

allows for multifamily development on approximately 1-acre lots, at a density of up to 15 units per acre.

Continuing Care Retirement Community

The specialized CCRC district is mapped for the Winchester Gardens complex on Elmwood Avenue and essentially permits the existing assisted- and independent-living complex. The district was established in 1990 to facilitate the development of apartment buildings and villas at the senior-living historic estate.

Business

Maplewood’s six business zoning districts are aimed at several intensities of development ranging from neighborhood business to highway commercial, and are differentiated mainly by the development bulk regulations and in certain allowable uses. The NB Neighborhood Business, RB Retail Business, and HB Highway Business districts all allow a range of retail restaurant, office, service uses, and upper-story residential units. However, the NB district also allows multiple dwellings, while the HB district permits convenience stores with gas stations, law enforcement facilities, and alternative treatment facilities. In the RB district, offices are not permitted on the street or lower levels. Drive-thru restaurants are not permitted in any of these zones.

The PRB Pedestrian Retail Business is mapped along much of Springfield Avenue and permits a range of commercial, service, and residential uses that generally promote pedestrian activity, on small lots. Unlike with the three business zones above, off-street parking is neither an accessory nor conditional use in the PRB district.

Office

Maplewood has two zoning districts designed primarily to promote office uses: the OB Office district and the RO Research and Office district. The OB district permits offices, financial institutions, business schools, and residential uses under the RGA district standards. The minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet. The RO district allows office buildings, professional offices, computer centers, and research labs, on lots of at least 80,000 square feet.

under the RGA district standards. The minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet. The RO district allows office buildings, professional offices, computer centers, and research labs, on lots of at least 80,000 square feet.

Mixed Use

Maplewood has one mixed-use district, the Parkside (PS) zone, which permits multifamily units (one- and two-bedroom units only) at a density of 60 units per acre, as well as retail, restaurants, offices, and banks. The district is only found in two locations, both on Dunnell Road, on either side of the Parc at Maplewood Station development. The areas mapped PS are the Maplewood Fire Department building; a two-story office building; a retail building housing an auto body shop, cabinet maker, and home goods/design store; and the train station building and surrounding parking lot.

Industrial

Two zoning districts relate to industrial uses: the CI Commercial and Industrial district and the SLI Special Light Industrial district. The CI district is a generalized industrial zone permitting non-medical office buildings; wholesale businesses, warehouses, and similar light industrial uses; indoor commercial recreation; and breweries and distilleries. The SLI district is mapped on Maplewood's portion of the Olympic Industrial Park and permits a range of light industrial

uses and other limited uses, subject to a number of prohibited uses and landscaping and performance standards. The provisions of this district were developed through agreements with the City of Irvington, which contains the remaining portion of the industrial park.

Redevelopment Areas

The New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) authorizes municipalities to designate properties as an "Area in Need of Redevelopment" or and "Area in Need of Rehabilitation" in order to facilitate development. In order to be designated, a study must be prepared that determines whether the area meets specific stator criteria as provided for in the LRHL. Once an area has been designated as either a Rehabilitation Area or a Redevelopment Area, the municipal governing body may adopt a Redevelopment Plan that governs development in that area. Eight redevelopment areas have been established in Maplewood: three (PSRA, SA-1, and SA-3) along Springfield Avenue between Tuscan Road and Chancellor Avenue, one (RD-2) along Burnett Avenue north of DeHart Park, three (TARA, PORA, and DR-R) adjacent to the train station, and one (7PAW) along the north side of Parker Avenue between Dunnell Road and Valley Street.

Zoning Variances

Variances from the zoning ordinances are heard by the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Adjustment, depending on the type of application. For bulk variances (setbacks, coverage, etc.), the Planning Board has jurisdiction except in cases of single- and two-family homes, which are heard by the Zoning Board. When a site plan or subdivision involves variances that are under the Zoning Board's jurisdiction, it makes the determination on the variance.

The Zoning Board produces annual reports on its activities, which are instructive in looking at the numbers and types of variances requested and granted. In general, if a land use board is seeing substantial requests for relief from a particular regulation, it is an indication that a change to that regulation may be warranted.

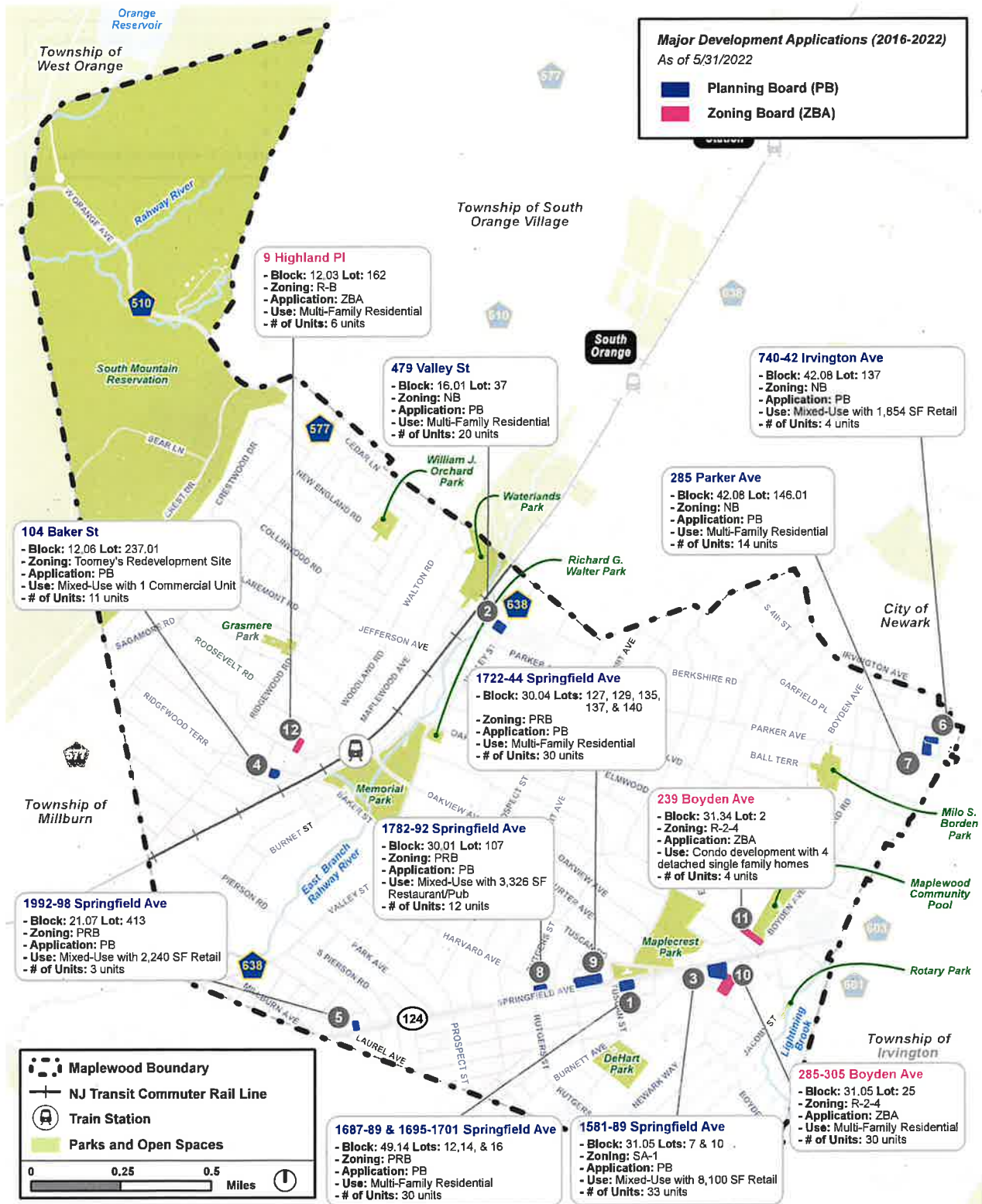


Figure 7: Recent Development Activity: Multifamily, Mixed Use, and Condos

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), Township of Maplewood Planning and Zoning Boards, BfJ Planning.

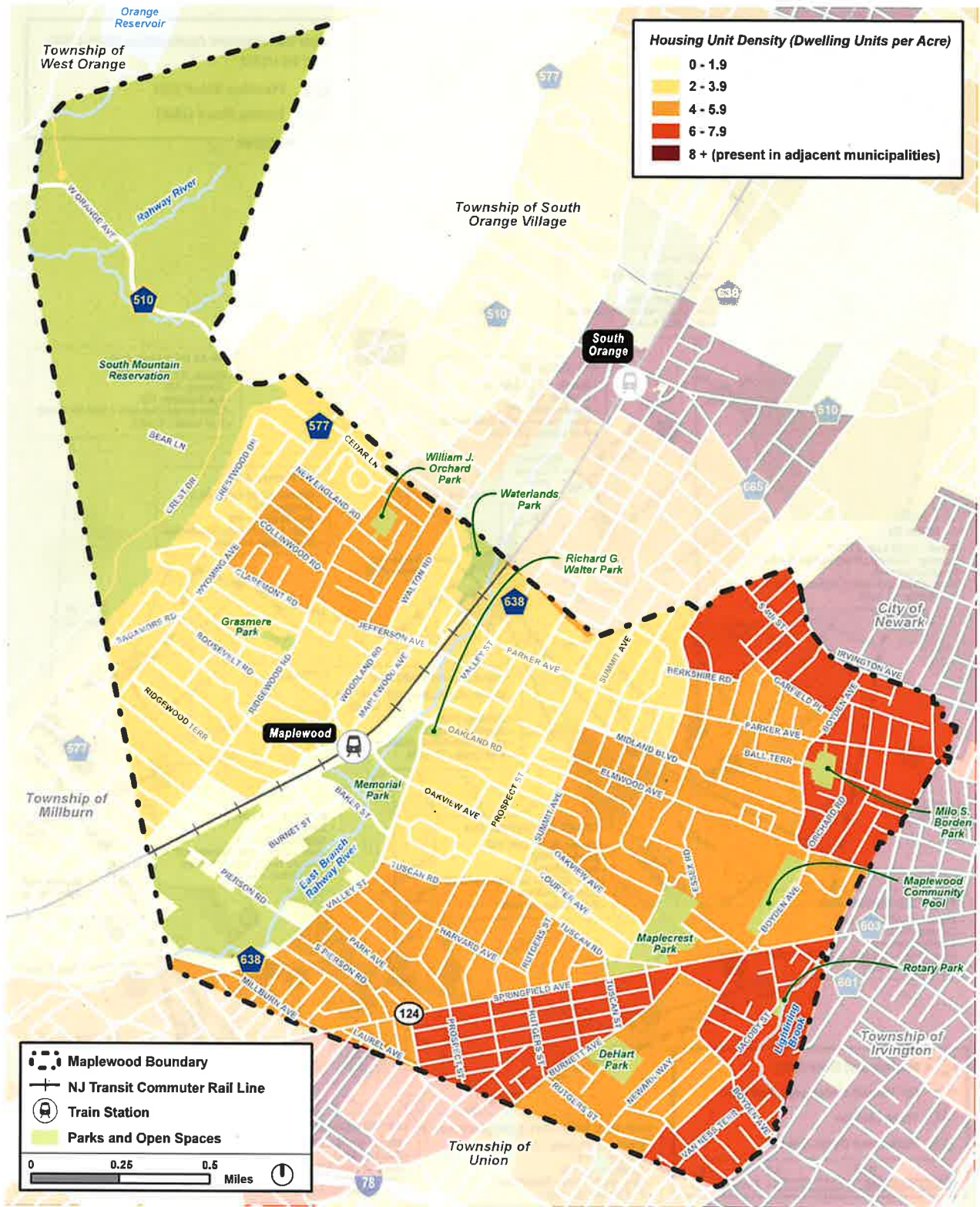


Figure 8: Housing Unit Density

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), Environmental Protection Agency Smart Location Database (Exported from Urban Footprint), BfJ Planning.

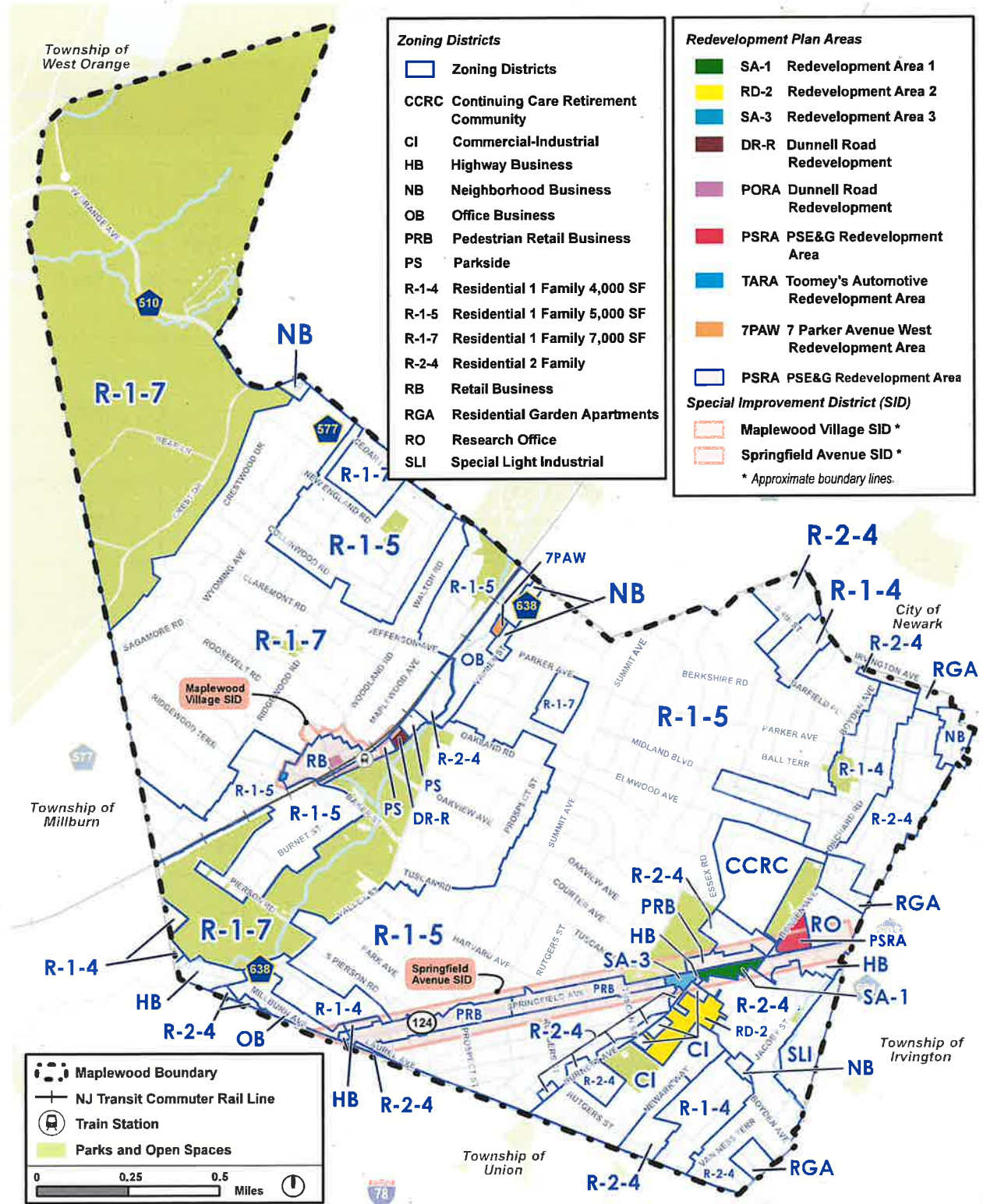


Figure 9: Zoning

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), Township of Maplewood, Robert Catlin and Associates, BfJ Planning.

Table 5: Summary of Existing Zoning Districts

Source: Township of Maplewood, 2022

District	Minimum Lot Area (in SF)	Required Yards (in feet)			Maximum Building Height	Maximum Lot Coverage	Maximum Building Coverage
		Front	Side (one) ^a	Rear			
R-1-4	4,000	25	4	25	2 stories/ 35 ft	45% ^b	30% ^b
R-1-5	5,000	25	5	25	2 stories/ 35 ft	45% ^b	30% ^b
R-1-7	7,000	30	7	25	2 stories/ 35 ft	45% ^b	30% ^b
R-2-4	4,000 for single-family	20	4 for single-family	25	2 stories/ 35 ft	40% for single-family	35% ^b
	5,000 for two-family		5 for two-family			50% for single-family	
RGA	44,000	20 for attached housing	10 for attached housing	25 for attached housing	2 stories/ 35 ft	--	25%
		35 for multiple uses	30 for multiple uses	30 for multiple uses			
CCR	25 acres	40 ft for a one-story building up to 30 ft in height; 50 ft for a two-story building up to 40 ft in height; 100 ft for more than 2 stories or 40 ft ^c			35 ft; up to 50 ft with increased setback	45%	20%
PS	35,000	25	10	50	50 ft	90%	50%
NB	5,000	--	--	15	50 ft; height over 30 ft must be set back ^d	90%	50%
RB	2,500	--	--	15	50 ft; height over 30 ft must be set back	100%	80%
HB	5,000	--	--	15	50 ft; height over 30 ft must be set back	90%	50%
PRB	2,500	None ^e	None ^e	15	50 ft; height over 30 ft must be set back	100%	80%
OB	10,000	15	10	20	40 ft; 80 ft for public purposes	80%	40%
RO	80,000	75	25% of lot width	50 (100 adjoining residential)	50 ft	70%	30%
CI	40,000	25	10	15 (25 adjoining residential)	50 ft	90%	60%
SLI ^f	35,000	25	5 (25 adjoining residential)	15 (25 adjoining residential)	35 ft; 80 ft for office building	--	50%

a For R-1-4, R-1-5, R-1-7, and R-2-4 districts, the required combined side yard is 25% of lot width.

b For lots 12,000 square feet or greater in area, in any district, maximum building coverage shall be 25% and maximum lot coverage shall be 40%.

c Required setback for more than 2 stories or 40 ft is 150 ft from the closest residential property.

d Except for multiple dwellings on South Orange Avenue, which shall have a maximum height of 100 feet above the 460-foot elevation above sea level.

e Except where the lot adjoins a transitional lot, the minimum front yard shall be 50% of that required for the district in which the transitional lot is located, and the minimum side yard shall be a minimum of 15 ft, with required buffering.

f The SLI district is subject to additional provisions for pavement in front yards, distance between buildings, road widths, and driveway and loading areas.

Table 6: Zoning Board of Adjustment Variances Granted, 2015-2021

Source: Township of Maplewood Zoning Board of Adjustment, Annual Reports 2015-2021

Type	Number Approved
Rear Yard/Side Yard Setback	13
Use	11
Front Yard Setback	9
Lot Coverage	4
Minimum Lot Size	2
Building Height	2
Façade Length	1
Fences	1

As shown in Table 6 from 2015 through 2021, the Zoning Board approved a total of 35 variances, with the most common types being use, setbacks, and lot coverage. The Planning Board also produces annual reports, but tabulating variances granted by that board is more difficult, as there are often multiple bulk variances granted as part of site plan approval. However, Planning Board members report that parking is the most common type of variance granted. Signage is also a common variance that appears on annual reports.

Recently Adopted Land Use Ordinances

In the past five years, Maplewood has been active in enacting land use-related ordinances to address a variety of issues. The following ordinances have been reviewed for Master Plan consistency by the Planning Board:

2018

- 2983-18: Permits the installation of a solar energy system within all zones.
- 2895-18: Adds solar collectors as permitted accessory uses.
- 2909-18: Allows single- and two-family homeowners to house one refugee family as boarders.
- 2915-18: Allows medical marijuana alternative treatment centers as a permitted use in the Highway Business and Pedestrian Retail Business districts.
- 2921-18: Adds a mandatory affordable housing set-aside requirement.
- Other ordinances to implement the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, including a development fee ordinance, creation of an overlay district for the Maplewood Country Club, and an affirmative marketing plan.

2019

- 2972-19: Allows electric vehicle charging stations as an accessory use in all zones.

2020

- 2980-20: Changes the definition of Zoning Officer.
- 3002-20: Allows the occupancy of an accessory dwelling unit in certain residential areas where one person is at least 62 years or older.

2021

- 3014-21: Allows accessory dwelling units in homes designated as historic by the Historic Preservation Commission.
- 3015-21: Recommends omitting reference to a specific AASHTO manual regarding sight triangles and rather referencing current guidelines.
- 3032-21: Re-adopts certain provisions of 2915-18 and makes modifications with regard to alternative treatment centers.
- 3048-21: Adds a chapter regulating cannabis businesses.

2022

- 3055-22: Reduces certain distance requirements for cannabis businesses.
- 3056-22: Reduces the permitted distance between alternative treatment centers.
- 3058-22: Requires the Green Development Checklist for all site plan applications.
- 3059-22: Authorizes and encourages electric vehicle supply/service equipment (EVSE) and make-ready parking spaces.

CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

Maplewood is situated in southern Essex County, west of the urbanized areas of Newark and Irvington. The Township is within close distance to the Garden State Parkway, I-78, and I-280 highway corridors. It hosts the NJ TRANSIT Morris & Essex Line commuter rail service with a single local station and stations in the neighboring communities of South Orange to the east and Millburn to the west. The vibrant Springfield Avenue (NJ-124) commercial corridor links Maplewood with Newark to the east and Morristown to the west (via Vauxhall, Millburn, Summit, Chatham, and Madison).

Public Transportation

Passenger Rail

Access to the NJ TRANSIT passenger rail network is provided via the Morris & Essex Lines at Maplewood Station, with eastbound service to Newark Broad Street Station, Hoboken Terminal, and New York Penn Station (see Figure 10). Westbound service is provided via the Gladstone Branch (west of Summit) to Gladstone and the Morristown Line to Hackettstown. Weekday rail service operates in Maplewood from approximately 5:00am to 1:00am. Weekend service operates from approximately 6:00am to 2:00am.

Maplewood offers a robust walking/sidewalk network and a significant portion of the Township falls within a walkshed of 15 minutes or less to the rail station (see Figure 11). Areas with longer walk distances of 20+ minutes, notably north of Wyoming Avenue and south of Springfield Avenue, are served by town-operated jitney buses during peak commuting hours (see below). Four surface parking lots offer options for rail station parking with a total capacity of 655 spaces, five of which are accessible. The rail station itself, however, is not ADA-accessible. Station platforms are not elevated, requiring customers to climb steps to board trains, and the station underpass between the eastbound and westbound platforms features stairs only.

Table 7 shows typical weekday NJ TRANSIT rail ridership (passenger boardings) at Maplewood Station from fiscal year 2015-2022. Ridership was consistent for several years prior to the onset of the pandemic, dropping sharply in FY 2021. NJ TRANSIT reports that the second half of FY 2022 showed an upward trend in ridership, which is anticipated to continue into FY 2023.

Table 7: Passenger Ridership at Maplewood Station, FY 2015- FY 2022

Source: NJ TRANSIT, September 2022.

*FY 2021 data reflect a full fiscal year of COVID-19 impacts, while FY 2020 reflects three months of pandemic impacts.

Fiscal Year (ends June 30)	Average Weekday Boardings
2015	3,402
2016	3,492
2017	3,488
2018	3,382
2019	3,418
2020	2,550
2021 *	440
Q1 FY2022	921
Q2 FY2022	1,205
Q3 FY2022	1,032
Q4 FY2022	1,435



Maplewood Station



Maplewood Station

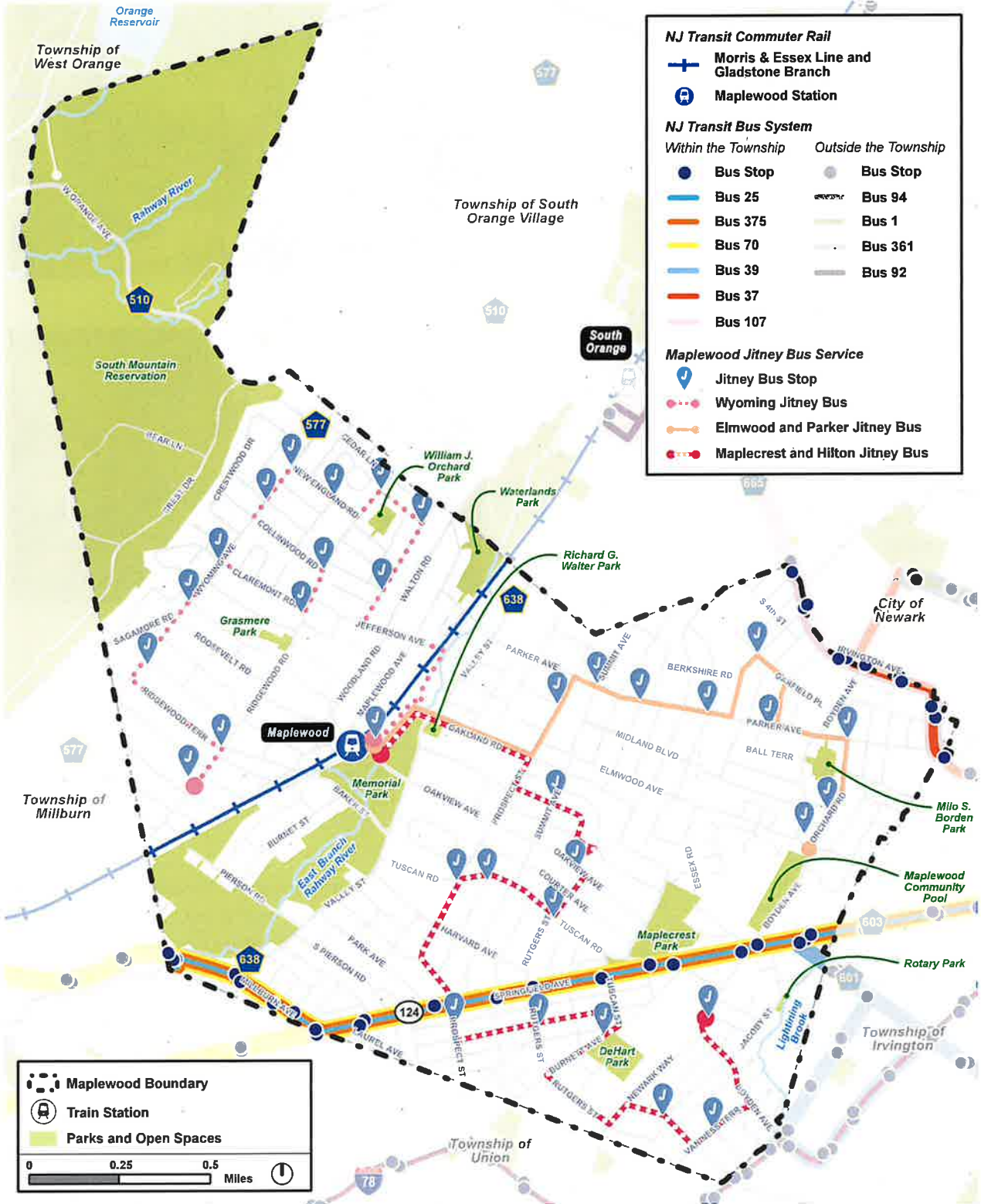


Figure 10: Public Transportation Network

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), Township of Maplewood, BfJ Planning

Bus

Bus services offer another important public transportation option for Maplewood residents and visitors. NJ TRANSIT operates significant service along the Springfield Avenue and Millburn Avenue corridors, including the 25 Springfield Avenue, 375 Springfield Avenue Express, and 70 Newark-Livingston Mall. Roughly one-third of the 25/375 bus trips originate at the Maplewood Loop on Millburn Avenue at the western edge of the Township. Route 70 services continue west to Livingston. Additionally, the 37 Lyons Avenue route offers local service from Maplewood to Newark Liberty International Airport, and the 107 South Orange/Irvington-New York interstate route provides local and express service to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City along Irvington Avenue on Maplewood's northeastern border.

All services operate seven days a week and holidays, from at least 6 am until after 11 pm. These services are part of NJ TRANSIT's Newark service area, including numerous transfer opportunities in Irvington and downtown Newark. Ridership on NJ TRANSIT's local and intrastate bus services have generally rebounded at a faster rate than intercity bus and rail.

Jitney

Since 1997, the Township of Maplewood has operated a commuter jitney (local bus circulator) service to connect residential neighborhoods to the train station. There are three established jitney routes: Maplecrest and Hilton, Elmwood and Parker, and Wyoming. These three routes serve to facilitate use of commuter rail services and mitigate parking demand and congestion downtown.

The jitney service is offered on weekdays, except municipal holidays, with runs during traditional commuting peak periods (6-9 am and 5-9 pm). A single jitney ride costs \$2, and annual passes are available for jitney customers as well as combined jitney and parking fees.

The Township consolidated jitney services in the wake of significant ridership declines during the pandemic. Recently, service was restored to three routes as rail ridership has rebounded. This Township-run jitney service has long been a model in New Jersey and is generally viewed as an important asset to residents. The jitney vehicles, however, are not ADA-accessible. Opportunities exist to pursue grant funding for zero-emissions bus procurement, which at the



Jitney Stop



Village Center Parking Lot

same time may allow the Township to address accessibility of the vehicles (recognizing the current inaccessibility of the train station proper).

Parking

The Township owns 9 parking lots (devoted solely to parking and not associated with another use): five downtown and four along the Springfield Avenue Corridor (see Figure 12). NJ TRANSIT owns two additional lots near the train station. Parking regulations vary by lot, from resident-only commuter permit parking, to time-limited and free parking after morning rush hour and on weekends.

Resident parking permits allow overnight, on-street parking for residents without driveways for \$240 per year. Other combination parking permits can be purchased to include commuter parking and jitney service passes, merchant parking passes, and more. The Township is undertaking an expansion of the ParkMobile app to include commuter payment options.

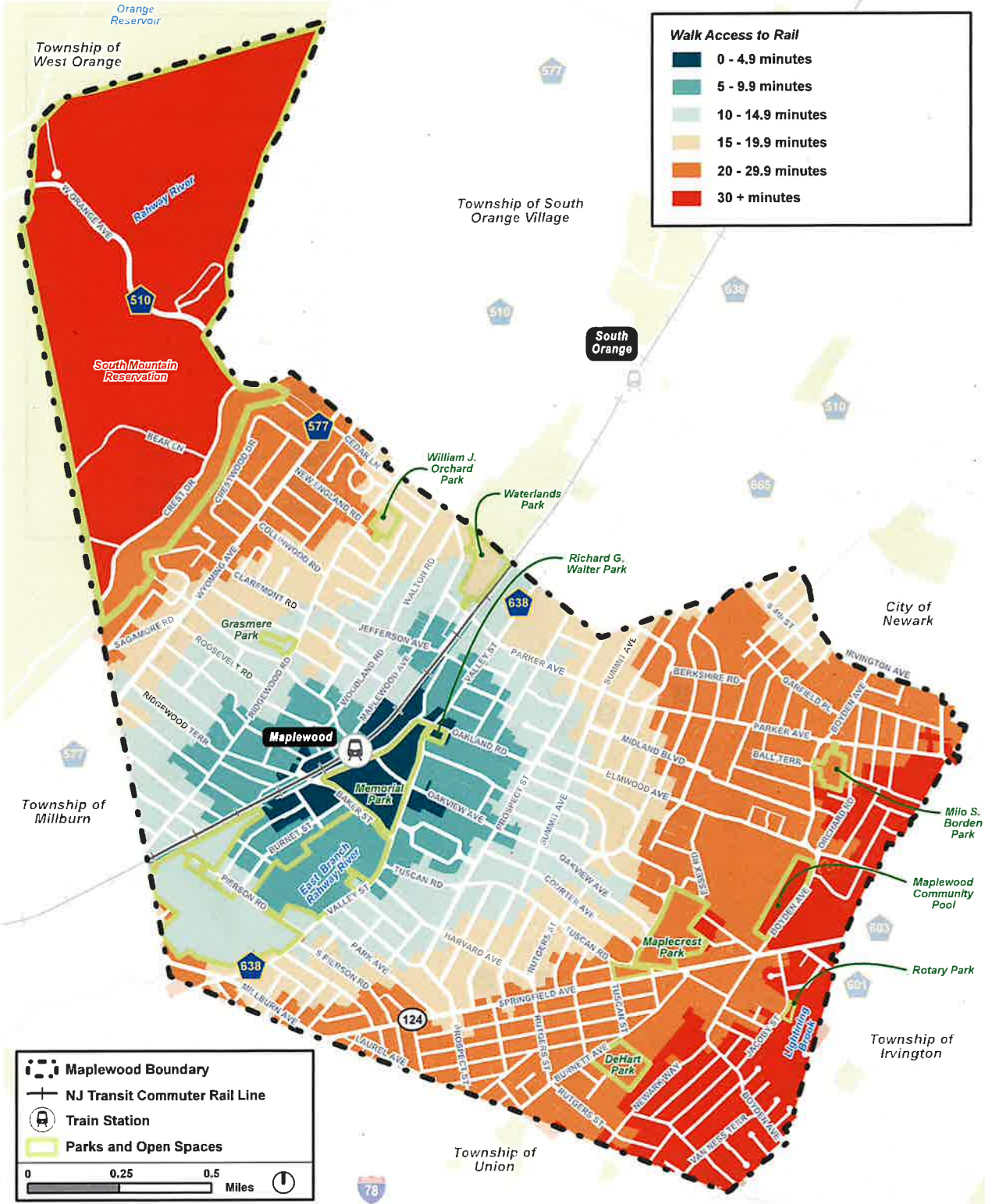


Figure 11: Walk Access to Rail

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) RoadNetwork [Exported from Urban Footprint], Urban Footprint Walk Accessibility Module using data from General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS), BfJ Planning.

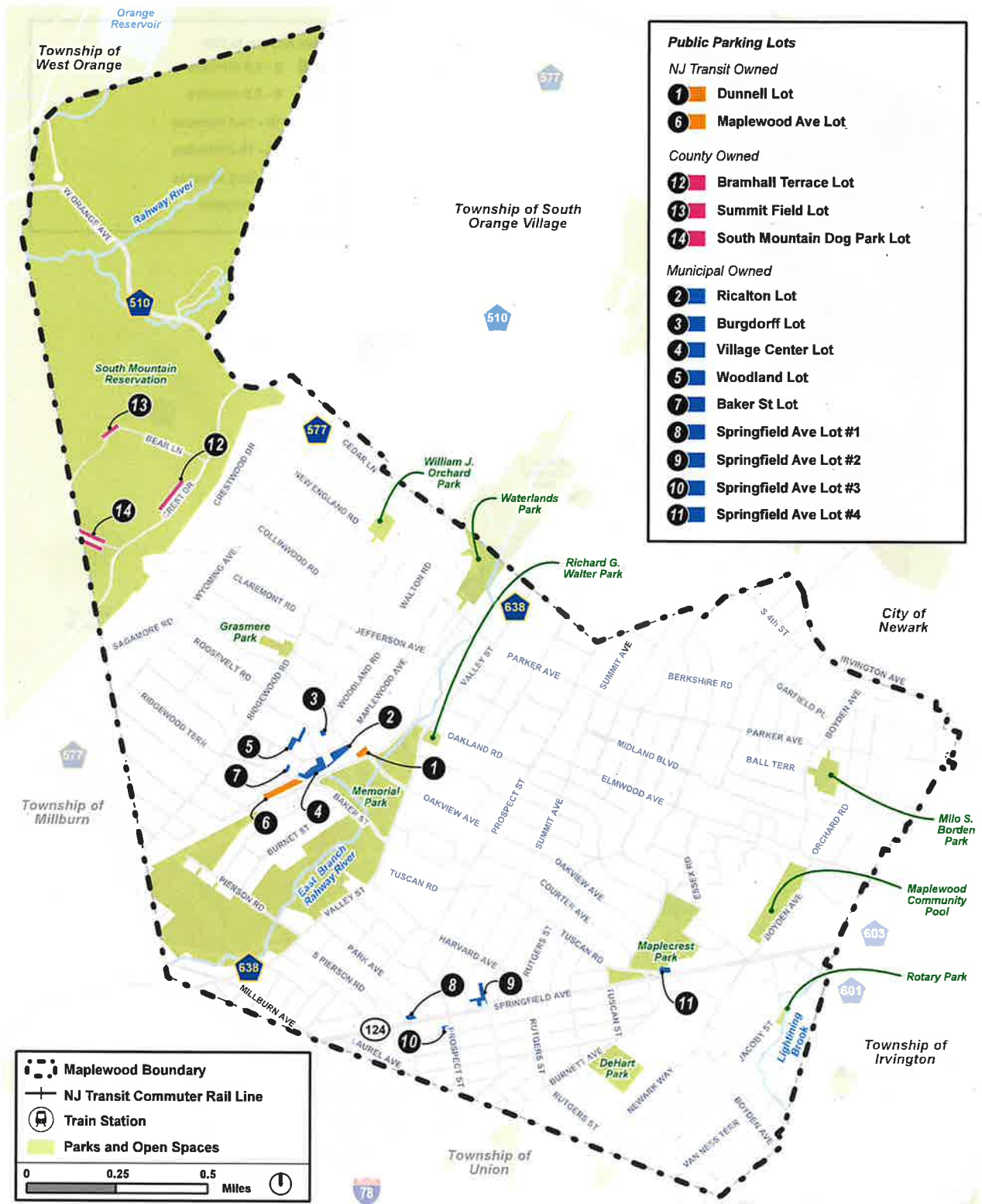


Figure 12: Public Parking

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), Springfield Avenue Partnership, Maplewood Village Alliance, Google Maps, BfJ Planning.

Table 8: Public Off-Street Parking Lots

Source: Township of Maplewood, 2022

Name	Owner
Dunnell Lot	NJ TRANSIT
Maplewood Avenue Lot	NJ TRANSIT
Ricalton Lot	Maplewood
Burgdorff Lot	Maplewood
Village Center Lot	Maplewood
Woodland Lot	Maplewood
Baker Street Lot	Maplewood
Springfield Avenue Lot #1	Maplewood
Springfield Avenue Lot #2	Maplewood
Springfield Avenue Lot #3	Maplewood
Springfield Avenue Lot #4	Maplewood
Bramhall Terrace Lot	Essex County
Summit Field Lot	Essex County
South Mountain Dog Park Lot	Essex County

Roadway System

Regional vehicular access to Maplewood is provided from the Garden State Parkway via NJ Route 124 (Springfield Avenue) and I-280 via Valley Street (Scotland Road in South Orange). Essex County roadways include 510 (South Orange Avenue), 577 (Wyoming Avenue), 638 (Valley Street), 630 (Millburn Avenue), 601 (Chancellor Avenue), and 665 (Irvington Avenue). The jurisdiction of Maplewood’s road network is shown in Figure 13. Road ownership is important because it affects the Township’s ability to undertake improvements or changes and/or informs the level of additional coordination required with Essex County and/or the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT).

Traffic Safety

Safety on Maplewood’s roads represents a concern for all users, from pedestrians to bicyclists to motorists. Crash data were obtained from NJDOT for a three-year period between 2018 and 2020, the most recent data period available. Figure 14 provides a heat map of crash frequency throughout the Township, including pedestrian and bicyclist-related crashes. From 2018-2020, two people were killed on Maplewood roadways and 393 were injured. The fatalities occurred at the intersections of Springfield Avenue and Burnett Avenue and Chancellor Avenue and 44th Street.

The data period includes the impact of the pandemic, which has coincided, on a national level, with a large increase in vehicle crashes and injuries. The reasons for this surge are not yet clear and need future study. This crash analysis is primarily focused on locations that have recurring issues with crashes,

Table 9: Maplewood Intersections with the Most Crash Incidents (2018-2020)

Source: NJDOT Safety Voyager, BFI Planning

Intersection	Injuries	Total Crashes
Boyden Ave. - Boyden Parkway - Springfield Ave	5	21
Prospect St. - Harvard Ave.	5	19
Springfield Ave. - Chancellor Ave.	3	15
Jefferson Ave. - Maplewood Ave.	3	15
Prospect St. - Parker Ave.	2	12
Rutgers St. - Burnett Ave.	5	12
Springfield Ave. - Laurel Ave.	4	11
Millburn Ave. - Valley St.	1	10

as opposed to the change of crash incidents over time. It is assumed that locations shown as crash clusters would have experienced these issues throughout the three-year period, even if there was a particular increase in 2020.

As shown in Figure 14 and Table 9, the Boyden Avenue-Springfield Avenue corridor showed a high incidence of vehicular crashes during the period, including the greatest number of injuries and crashes involving pedestrians (which are of particular concern given the likelihood of serious injury). Prospect Street and Jefferson Street also saw a significant number of crashes. As the map indicates, clusters of crashes occur along the major arterials and at intersections; however, they are not limited to major streets, particularly when involving pedestrians and bicyclists.

Maplewood’s roadway network includes numerous offset and angled intersections, which can play a role in crash propensity and severity. Furthermore, many intersections along Springfield Avenue are unsignalized and/or do not include pedestrian crosswalks at all legs of the intersection, increasing risk.



Intersection at Parker Avenue and Valley Street

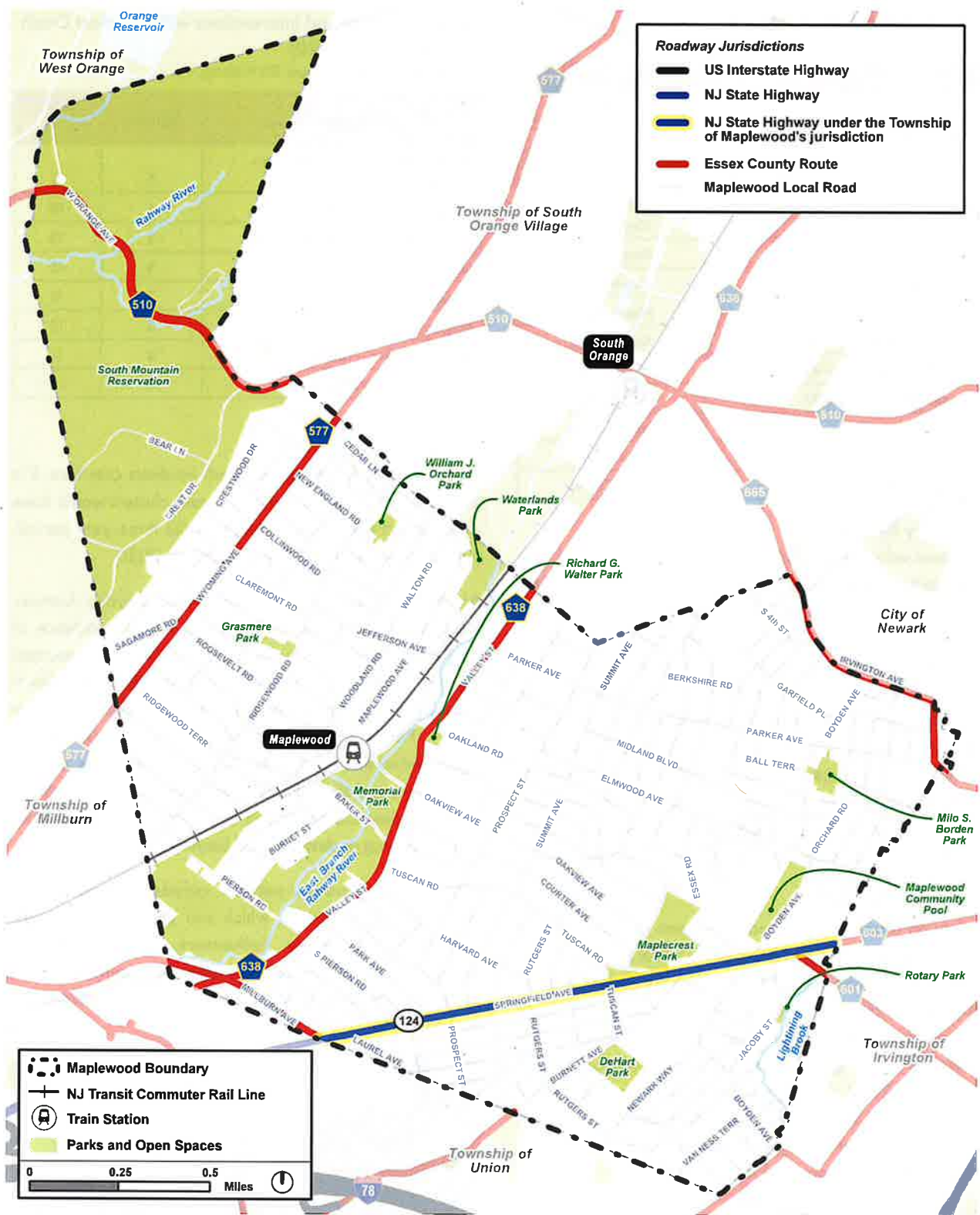


Figure 13: Roadway Jurisdiction

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), BFJ Planning

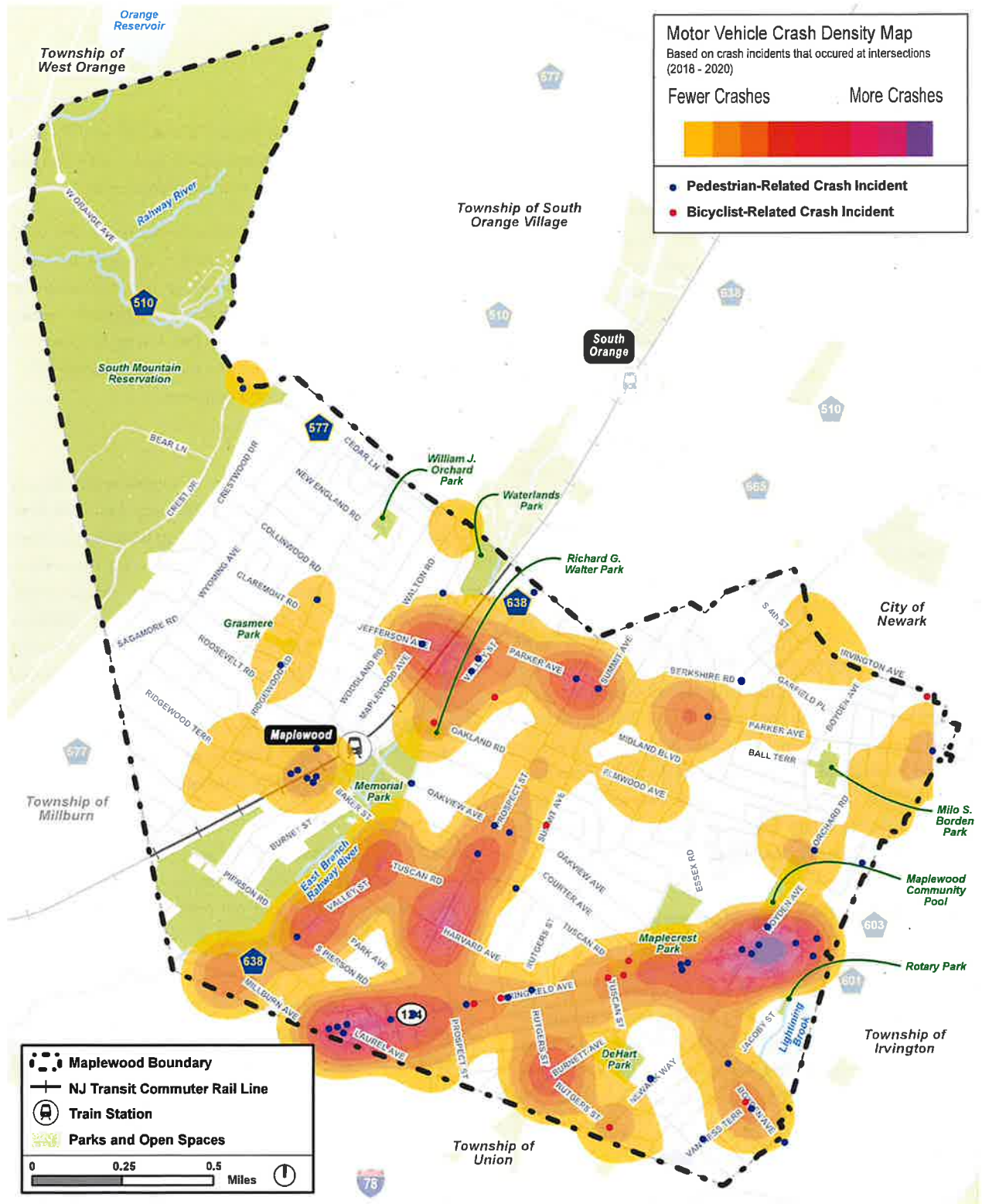


Figure 14: Intersection Crash Density and Pedestrian/Bicyclist-Related Crash Incidents (2018-2020)

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT Safety Voyager; OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), BFI Planning.

Recent and Planned Roadway Improvements

The Township has advanced numerous roadway and safety improvements in recent years, with more anticipated. Engineering plans for a series of ADA improvements Township-wide were funded with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in 2021. Maplewood was also among 14 New Jersey municipalities awarded grant funding for infrastructure improvements through the Emergency Solutions Grant program, funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered by the Essex County Division of Housing and Community Development.

Other local roadway improvement projects, funded by NJDOT, include striping, sidewalk, ADA, and other enhancements for Jacoby and 44th Streets and Lexington Avenue between Indiana and Tuscan Streets. In addition, the County received a \$3,654,000 grant for safety and operational improvements to the Valley Street corridor through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's (NJTPA) FY 2020 Local Safety Program (LSP). The grant includes funding for construction and construction inspection services. The project will improve safety and overall operations at 11 intersections throughout Maplewood and South Orange. Proposed improvements include signal upgrades, pedestrian signal upgrades, curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands where feasible, and leading pedestrian interval (LPI) signal phases to enhance safety. Construction is scheduled to begin in March 2023, pending final plan approvals.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

Existing Network

Sidewalks are prevalent throughout Maplewood, offering a robust walking network linking the Township's residential and commercial areas, parks, schools, and other attractions. While sidewalk gaps do not represent a significant concern, safe pedestrian crossings at intersections are frequently cited as a local need, along with traffic calming to improve safety for walkers and bicyclists.

Off-street paths are generally limited to local parks, notably within and through Memorial Park, Maplecrest Park, and South Mountain Reservation. A greenway has been

considered along the East Branch of the Rahway River as an off-road link between Maplewood and South Orange; however, this project remains in a conceptual state.

Multiple bicycle racks are available on the north and south sides of the Maplewood train station, as well as some locations in the Village and commercial corridors including Springfield Avenue, to encourage non-automobile access from surrounding neighborhoods. The Township does not, however, provide dedicated bicycle infrastructure (i.e., protected bike lanes) on local roadways.

Issues and Opportunities

The Township established a plan for a comprehensive bicycle network in the 2010 Maplewood Bikeway Network Plan. This plan's objectives included advancing bikeway corridors identified in the 2004 Master Plan, enhancing connections between major destinations throughout Maplewood, providing connections to South Orange and Millburn, and focusing safe bicycling opportunities on key corridors including striped shoulders and wayfinding. The plan included signed shared roadways and select off-road segments in Memorial Park, Maplecrest Park, the Waterlands, and other locations. Figure 15 highlights existing and proposed bicycle facilities, including segments implemented since the 2010 plan.

The 2012 Municipal Parking Plan also highlighted the 2010 bike plan, underscoring the importance of cross-referencing related planning efforts and not precluding recommended improvements when changing design of parking or roadway facilities.

Feedback from residents and stakeholders points to an ongoing need to expand and connect Maplewood's network of safe bicycling roadways and facilities. While the pedestrian network is comprehensive, bicycling facilities do not fully connect the Township's communities and activity centers, and the Township does not feature any protected bicycle lanes on local streets. Furthermore, concerns about pedestrian and bicyclist safety point to a desire for intersection improvements, traffic enforcement, and other

counter-measures to encourage non-motorized mobility options for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

In 2017-2018, the Township received Local Planning Assistance through the NJDOT Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs (OBPP) to assess non-vehicular mobility issues. Four areas of concern were highlighted in this effort: Burnett Avenue, Prospect Street, Ridgewood Road, and Wyoming Avenue. Objectives included addressing high traffic speeds, improving safety and accessibility, reducing crashes, calming traffic, and evaluating lighting. Planning concepts were provided for each corridor, including design guidelines and cost estimates for implementation.

Most recommendations focused on narrowing travel lanes with striping and other treatments to calm traffic, enhance visibility of crosswalks, improve sightlines at intersections, and ensure ADA compliance for sidewalks and curb ramps. The Township has pursued traffic calming approaches as part of repaving and striping efforts, notably striping wide shoulders to provide increased visual buffers for bicyclists from vehicular traffic.

Township residents and stakeholders have expressed heightened concerns about flooding and storm-related events, which relate to the roadway network as drainage and storm overflow is typically tied into the street right-of-way. Opportunities exist to incorporate green infrastructure elements into streetscape projects, including rain gardens, permeable pavements, and other treatments to minimize storm run-off. Green infrastructure can complement a complete streets approach, weaving some of these features into traffic calming and other design components.

An end to courtesy school busing will result in more young students walking, further heightening the need for safe routes to school and safety interventions. Traffic calming, safe crossings, and other safety improvements should be designed with all road users in mind, particularly the most vulnerable including children, seniors, and those with mobility challenges.

Summary

Maplewood's transportation network serves multiple purposes for a variety of users. Its roads serve regional drivers who pass through to other destinations, visit to attend special events with a wide geographic draw, or commute to work. Residents of nearby towns regularly patronize businesses and events in the Village and commercial corridors such as Springfield Avenue. Maplewood also benefits significantly from public transportation connections by bus and rail to Newark, Hoboken, and New York City, along with points west in Morris County and the NJ TRANSIT network.

Meanwhile, Township residents must access local goods and services, schools, the train station, and parks, using all modes of transportation. Given Maplewood's relatively small land area, balancing all of these needs is enormously challenging, and there may not be easy solutions. Nonetheless, the Master Plan will explore strategies that are in the Township's control, such as measures to improve safety and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, while identifying paths for advocacy with the State, Essex County, and NJ TRANSIT on cross-jurisdictional issues.



Example of a Shared Road in Maplewood



Pedestrian Environment along Springfield Avenue

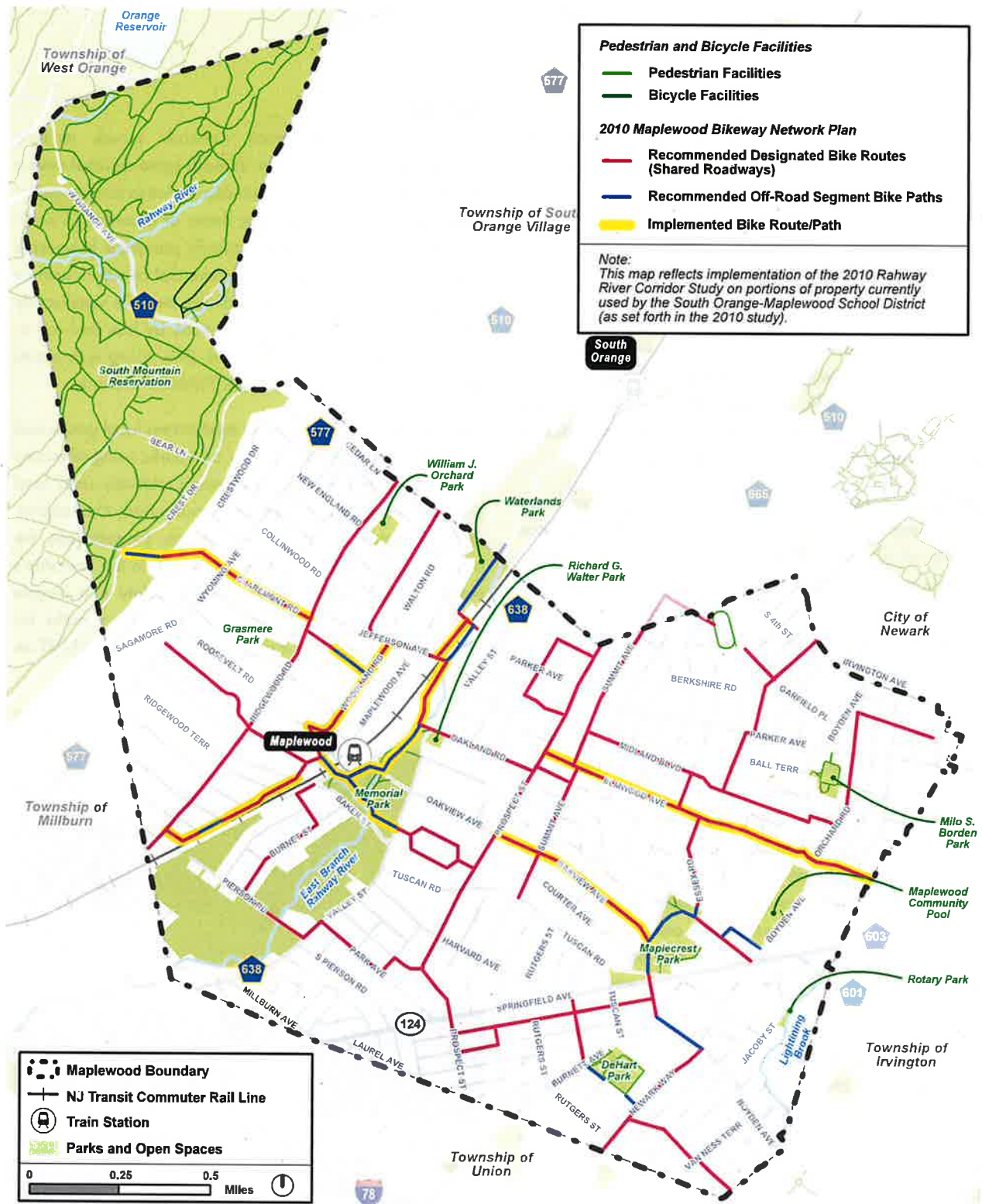


Figure 15: Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), BfJ Planning.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, RESOURCES, AND PROGRAMMING

Parks and Open Space

Parks and open spaces are an important recreational amenity as well as a key green infrastructure asset that supports quality-of-life, the cohesion of the public realm, sustainability, and the coordination of resiliency efforts in light of climate change. Maplewood has a total of 10 public parks, as shown in Figure 16, and listed in Table 10, which account for approximately 22% of the Township’s total land area.

In addition, several open spaces are located in Maplewood that are owned by other municipal entities or privately held, as shown in Table 11.



Orchard Park



Maplewood Community Pool



DeHart Park



Memorial Park

Table 10: Open Space and Recreational Facilities in MaplewoodSource: *Maplewood Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2008; Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI), 2022*

Name	Size (acres)	Location	Facilities
South Mountain Reservation	2,047 (470 acres in Maplewood)	South Orange Avenue	Hiking trails, picnic areas, carriage roads, South Mountain Arena (two indoor ice rinks), Turtleback Zoo
Memorial Park	23.4	Valley Street	3 lit tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, playground, regulation 90-foot baseball field, 2 60-foot softball fields, 2 smaller fields for tee-ball, seasonal ice skating, amphitheater
Maplecrest Park	15	Oakland Road	3 tennis courts, 3 60-foot baseball/softball fields, playground, volleyball court, shelter house with restrooms, skate park
DeHart Park	7	Burnett Avenue	2 lit combination (90-foot or 60-foot) baseball/softball fields; 60-foot softball field; 2 lit tennis courts; playground; walking/jogging path; shuffleboard courts; community building with meeting rooms, kitchen, and restrooms
Milo S. Borden Park	4	67 Orchard Road	Tennis court, playground, shelter house with restrooms, walking/jogging path
William J. Orchard Park	2	De Hart Road	Playground, shelter house with restrooms, 2 tennis courts, basketball half-court
Grasmere Park	1.8	Ridgewood Road	Historic home, herb and flower garden, walking paths, benches
Richard G. Walter Park	1	Valley Street	2 tennis courts, playground, bocce court, 2 lit paddle tennis courts
Rotary Park	0.8	Jacoby Street	Benches, lawn space
Maplewood Community Pool	8	Boyden Avenue	Olympic-size pool, training pool, wading pool, diving pool, volleyball court

Table 11: Private, South Orange, and Board of Education Recreational FacilitiesSource: *Maplewood Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2008; Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI), 2022*

Name	Size (acres)	Location	Facilities
South Orange Facilities in Maplewood			
Waterlands Park (Chyzowych Field)	8.1	West Parker Avenue	Soccer field
South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education Facilities			
Underhill Field	10	Burr Road	Football field, track
Ritzer Field	5	Valley Street & Hixon Place	Multipurpose field used for physical education, marching band practice, soccer, lacrosse
Privately Owned Facilities			
Maplewood Country Club	82.4	Baker Street	18-hole golf course, 4 clay tennis courts, 2 Har-Tru tennis courts, pool
Maplewood Club	1.6	Ridgewood Road	4 Har-Tru tennis courts, clubhouse
South Mountain YMCA	2	Jefferson Avenue	Indoor recreational facilities

The Township also has two community gardens, located at the municipal building and the Maplewood Pool (First Aid Squad Garden). The community garden located adjacent to Township Hall was created in 2010 and contains 32 raised-bed organic garden plots, which encompass over 1,500 square feet. This garden contains four community plots, tended by all of the members of the garden, which generates produce that is donated to various charity organizations within Maplewood and South Orange. The First Aid Squad Garden was established in 2011 and contains 21 raised-bed organic garden plots, which encompasses over 1,000 square feet.

The Township's 2004 Master Plan incorporates an Open Space and Recreation Plan Element, which was subsequently updated in September 2008 as comprehensive, standalone document. Township residents approved the establishment of an Open Space Trust Fund in 2005 by a large margin. The Open Space Trust Fund Advisory Committee, established in 2006, developed the 2008 Plan to guide the stewardship of the Township's open space resources and funds. The Open Space and Recreation Plan has a detailed description of parks and recreation facilities as well as recommended improvements and opportunities for increasing open space in Maplewood. In addition, the 2008 Plan recommends creating greenways and pedestrian/bicycle routes to open space and other destinations in the Township.

As shown in Figure 16, Maplewood's parks and open space are spread across the Township. However, there are gaps in the open space network between Memorial Park and Maplecrest Park, and available public open space in the area between Memorial Park and South Mountain Reservation is limited. While obtaining large parcels for parks and recreation can be challenging, the areas lacking sufficient open space and recreation areas could host smaller features and amenities such as pocket parks, parklets, and green infrastructure, including rain gardens, bioswales, and additional street trees.

The existing sidewalks and recommended bikeway network provides some level of interconnectivity among Maplewood's parks. Wayfinding signage exists along portions of the bikeways, but some locations do not contain

adequate wayfinding signage or have signage that is only visible from only one travel direction. There are opportunities for wayfinding signage enhancements and expansion.

Recent and Planned Improvements

The Township has pursued several recent park improvements, including basketball and tennis court upgrades at DeHart Park, new ADA-compliant restrooms in the shelter house at W. M. Orchard Park, pathway renovations and skate park improvements at Maplecrest Park, and repair/reconstruction of the East Branch Rahway River stone retaining wall and tennis court improvements at Memorial Park.

Representative planned improvements to Township-owned parks include the DeHart Recreational Center parking lot improvements, Duck Pond pedestrian bridge improvements at Memorial Park, and the installation of seven new ADA ramps and refreshed striping of existing crosswalks at intersections immediately adjacent to public parks to increase accessibility and improve public safety.

An important aspect in parks planning is maintenance and management. As is the case in many communities, ongoing challenges for the Township include discouraging vandalism, enhancing park security, and efficient communication involving park-related issues.

The Maplewood Division of Recreation provides adult and youth programming for sports and activities such as art enrichment, the community pool, senior activities and classes, tennis, ultimate Frisbee, yoga, softball, soccer, wrestling, and special needs programming. In addition, the Township hosts races and special events such as the Maplewood in Motion 5k Race.

Community Facilities

Community facilities in Maplewood play an important role in providing essential services and civic spaces that can enable healthier and well-connected neighborhoods. This section highlights key public facilities and nonprofit institutions in the Township, as shown in Figure 17. Community facility planning should actively address any unmet population needs while also planning for anticipated social, environmental, and technological changes.

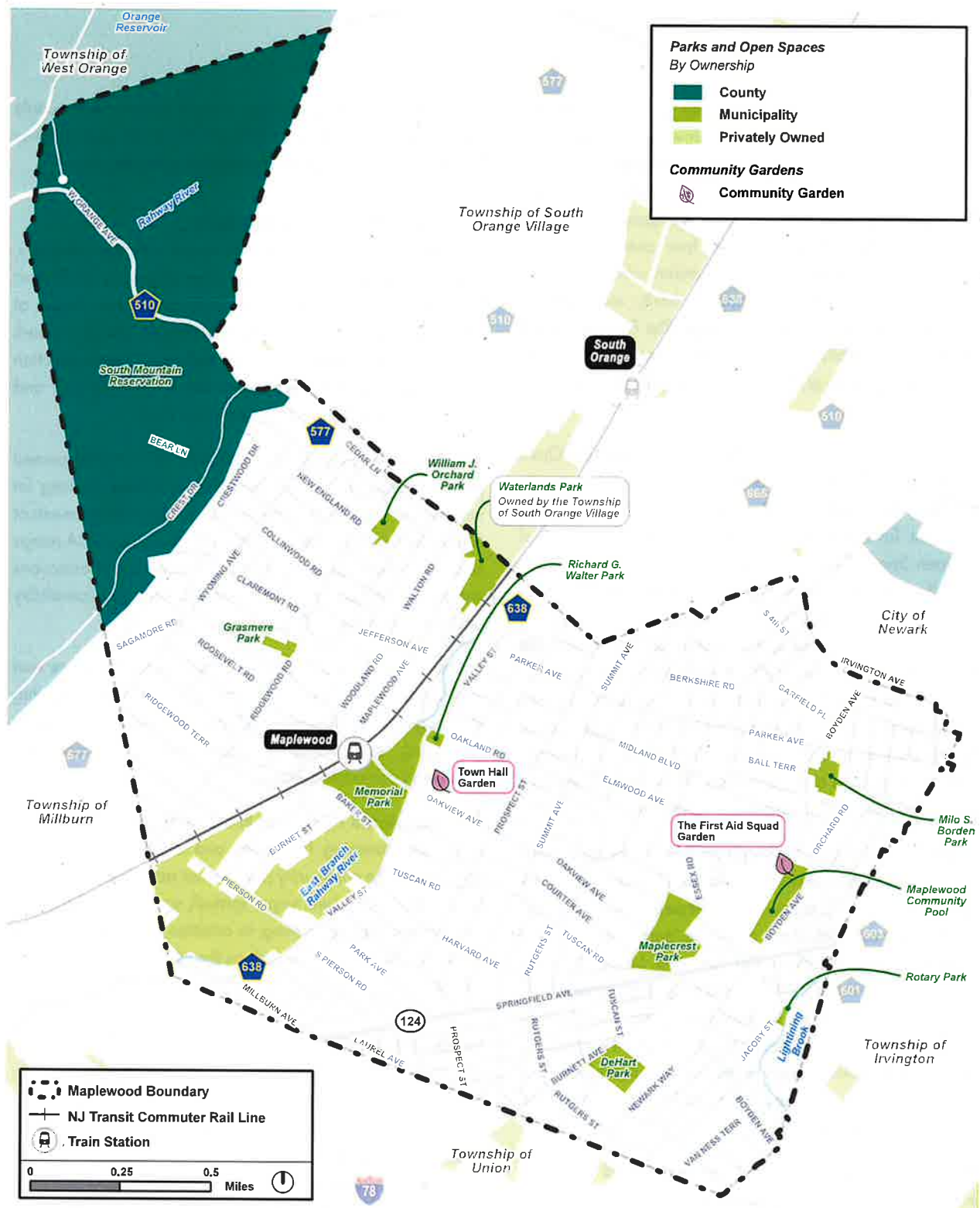


Figure 16: Publicly Owned Parks and Open Spaces

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), Township of Maplewood, BFJ Planning.

Township Facilities

Maplewood maintains several public facilities to serve its municipal functions as well as provide additional cultural and meeting spaces. In addition, to the municipal building on Valley Road, the Police Department on Springfield Avenue, two fire stations serving the recently merged Maplewood and South Orange departments), and the DPW facility off Newark Way, the Township hosts the following facilities:

The Woodland: This Georgian Revival-style historic mansion, formerly the longtime home of the Maplewood Women's Club, has an adjoining auditorium that hosts cultural, educational, and recreational activities.

Burgdorff Center for the Performing Arts: The multi-purpose facility, originally a church, contains a 100-seat theatre and a 1,600-square-foot community room. Both spaces are available for rental to residents and non-residents of Maplewood.

DeHart Community Center: This building, located within DeHart Park, is used for musical performances and recitals, clubs, exercise classes, senior citizens programs, and other activities.

Maplewood Senior Center: This facility, next to DeHart Park, provides a range of programming and activities for seniors.

Public libraries include the Maplewood Memorial Library main branch on Baker Street, the Adult Services branch next to the Maplewood Community Pool, and the Hilton Branch (Children's & Teen Services), on Springfield Avenue. As of 2022, the main branch was undergoing a significant renovation, funded by an \$8.3 million state grant as well as the Township and private donations. The new library will be two stories and more flood-resistant, and will incorporate features such as community meeting spaces, and a business center, and will be fully accessible with an elevator.

Other ongoing and/or planned projects include an Office of Emergency Management (OEM) generator installation, Senior Center ADA improvements, and several enhancements to the municipal building property such as EV charger installation, front walkway improvement, gas line, boiler upgrade, roof replacement for the greenhouses, and the installation of a new roof above the conference room.



The Woodland



Burgdorff Center for the Performing Arts



DeHart Community Center



Maplewood Senior Center

Education

Maplewood shares a school district with South Orange, known as the South Orange-Maplewood School District, with six of the public schools located in Maplewood (see Figure 18 and Table 12). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district was experiencing a trend in rising long-term enrollment, increasing from 6,100 students in 2006 to 7,158 in 2019. However, the pandemic and associated health-related restrictions have contributed to declining enrollment at public schools nationwide. The district’s enrollment fell to 6,786 in 2020, 6,561 in 2021, and 6,540 in 2022. It is not clear whether enrollment will return to pre-COVID levels.

There is one private school that serves Maplewood, Our Lady of Sorrows, located in South Orange and enrolling 130-180 students in grades K-8. Another private school in South Orange, Marylawn of the Oranges, an all-girl, Catholic high school, closed in 2013.

Local students also attend private schools in the broader area including: Montclair-Kimberley Academy in Montclair, Far Brook School in Short Hills, the Pingry School in Short Hills and Basking Ridge, Newark Academy in Livingston, and St. Rose of Lima Academy in Short Hills. Due to lack of available recent nonpublic school enrollment data, it is not clear to what extent enrollment at these schools has increased since the start of the pandemic in April 2020. However, given the decline in public school enrollment, it is assumed that some Maplewood families opted to send their children to these or other private alternatives in the region.

Table 12: Public Schools in Maplewood

Source: South Orange-Maplewood School District

Name	Location	Grades Served
Clinton Elementary School	27 Berkshire Rd.	K-5
Columbia High School	17 Parker Ave.	9-12
Delia Bolden Elementary School (formerly Jefferson Elementary School)	518 Ridgewood Rd.	3-5
Maplewood Middle School	7 Burnet St.	6-8
Seth Boyden Elementary School	274 Boyden Ave.	K-5
Tuscan Elementary School	25 Harvard Ave.	K-5



Delia Bolden Elementary School



Seth Boyden Elementary School Source: SOMA School District



Maplewood Middle School



Columbia High School

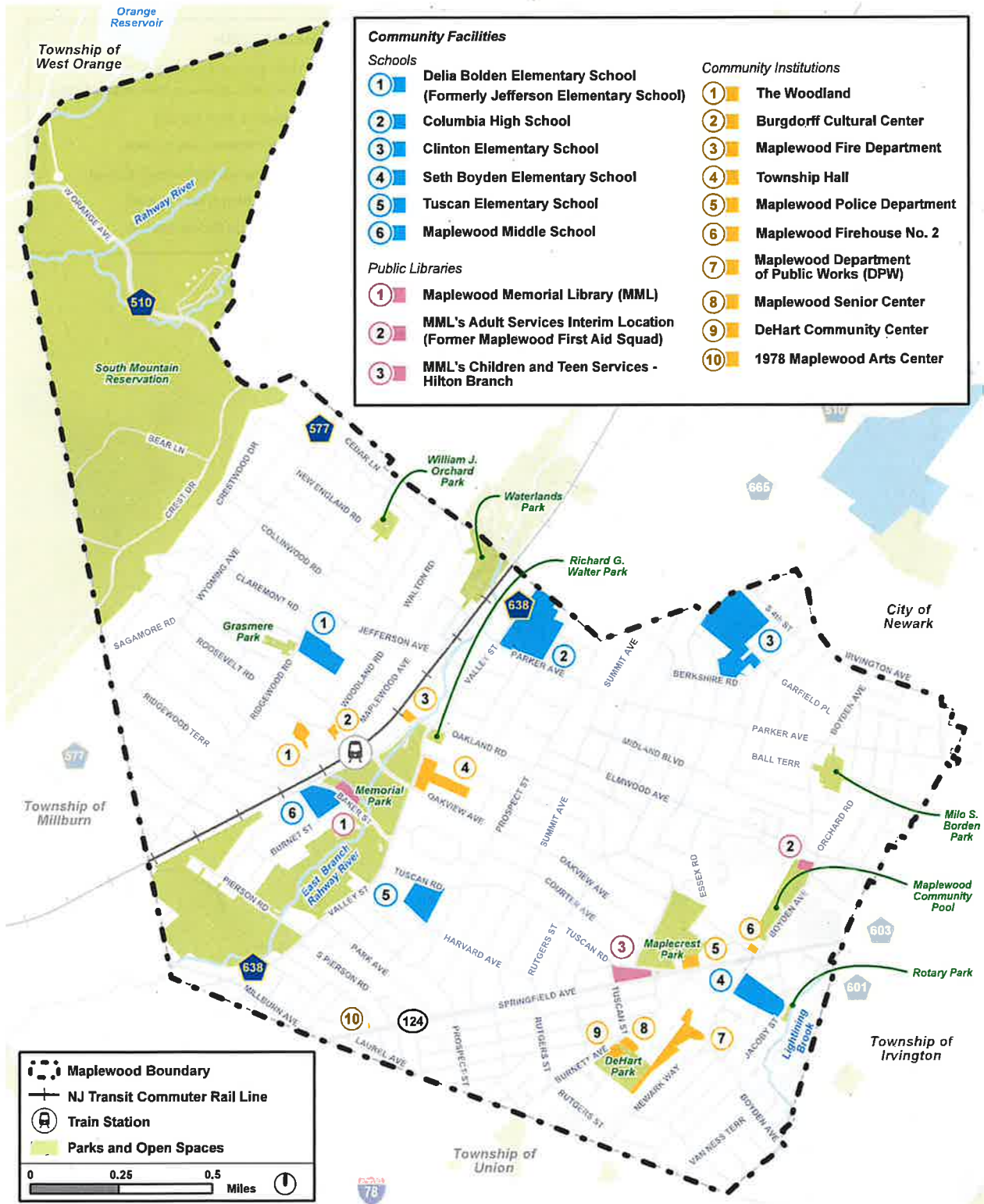


Figure 17: Community Facilities

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), NJOGIS, NJDOE, Google Maps, Township of Maplewood, BfJ Planning.

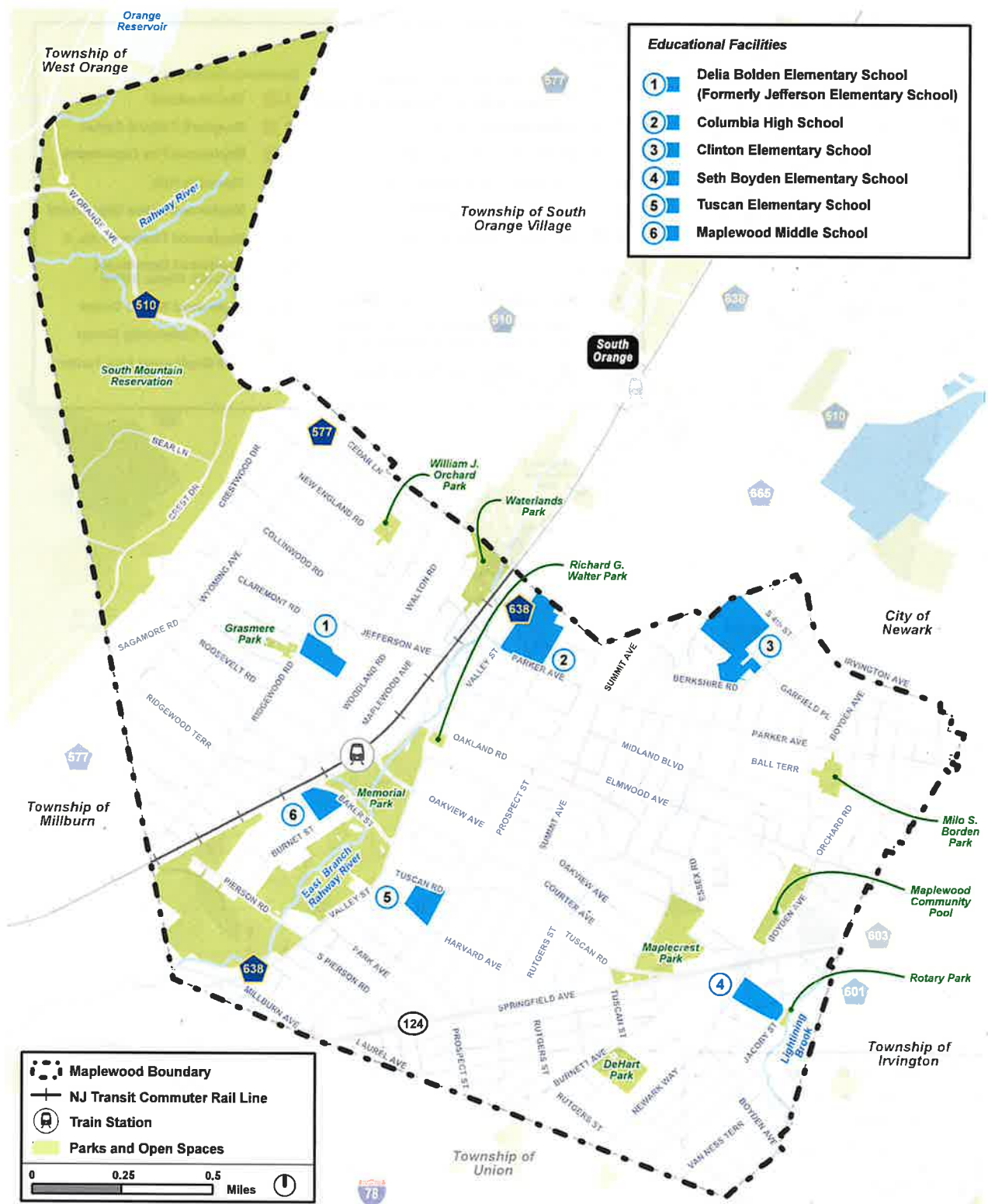


Figure 18: Educational Facilities

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), NJGIS, NJDOE, BFI Planning.



Durand-Hedden House



Maplewood Municipal Building

Healthcare

In the wake of the pandemic, community healthcare facilities are of heightened importance. While Maplewood does not host a regional hospital, it does contain several medical offices, especially along Millburn Avenue. The Township is also in close proximity to regional hospitals such as Overlook Hospital in Summit and St. Barnabas Hospital in Livingston.

Public health is an increasingly important aspect of community planning, and while specific treatments and health-related protocols are beyond the scope of this Master Plan, public outreach and programming are relevant topics for discussion. An identified area in need of improvement involves outreach to vulnerable populations and populations that are sometimes difficult to reach via the main communications channels on the internet, social media, etc. Targeted engagement of these segments of the population are desired and warranted.

The Healthy Community Planning Report, prepared by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and New Jersey Department of Health, contains summary information on a variety of public health topics including air quality, water quality, radon, brownfields, flooding, excessive heat, and open space.

Additional discussion and recommendations regarding public health and related public outreach, including results of Maplewood's Local Health Assessment conducted in the fall of 2022 will be included in the Master Plan.

Other Community Resources

Discussions with stakeholders identified the need to continue to support key community facilities that offer essential goods and services, promote arts and culture, and support equity

and inclusivity. Maplewood is served by numerous community and nonprofit organizations, such as the Maplewood Garden Club; Maplewood Artist Collective; South Mountain YMCA; Memorial Park Conservancy; Maplewood Village Alliance; Springfield Avenue Partnership; the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race; and the Durand-Hedden House & Garden Association, which manages the Durand-Hedden House historic museum and surrounding Grasmere Park.

Historic Resources

Maplewood has a historic charm that balances the preservation of historic resources with innovative sustainable design and green building. Building on its long history of preservation, the Township's Historic Preservation Commission was established in 2001. Maplewood is one of only a few dozen municipalities in the state that has been accepted into the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, which is administered by the National Park Service through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Eligibility for CLG status requires that the Historic Preservation Commission membership meets a specified level of expertise and enables the Commission to serve as a representative of SHPO on local issues. Achieving CLG status is indicative of both the competence of the members of Maplewood's Historic Preservation Commission and the quality of the town's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

The 2004 Master Plan contained a Historic Preservation Element that was followed by a more comprehensive, standalone Historic Preservation Element in 2008. Designated historic resources are discussed below and shown on Figure 19.

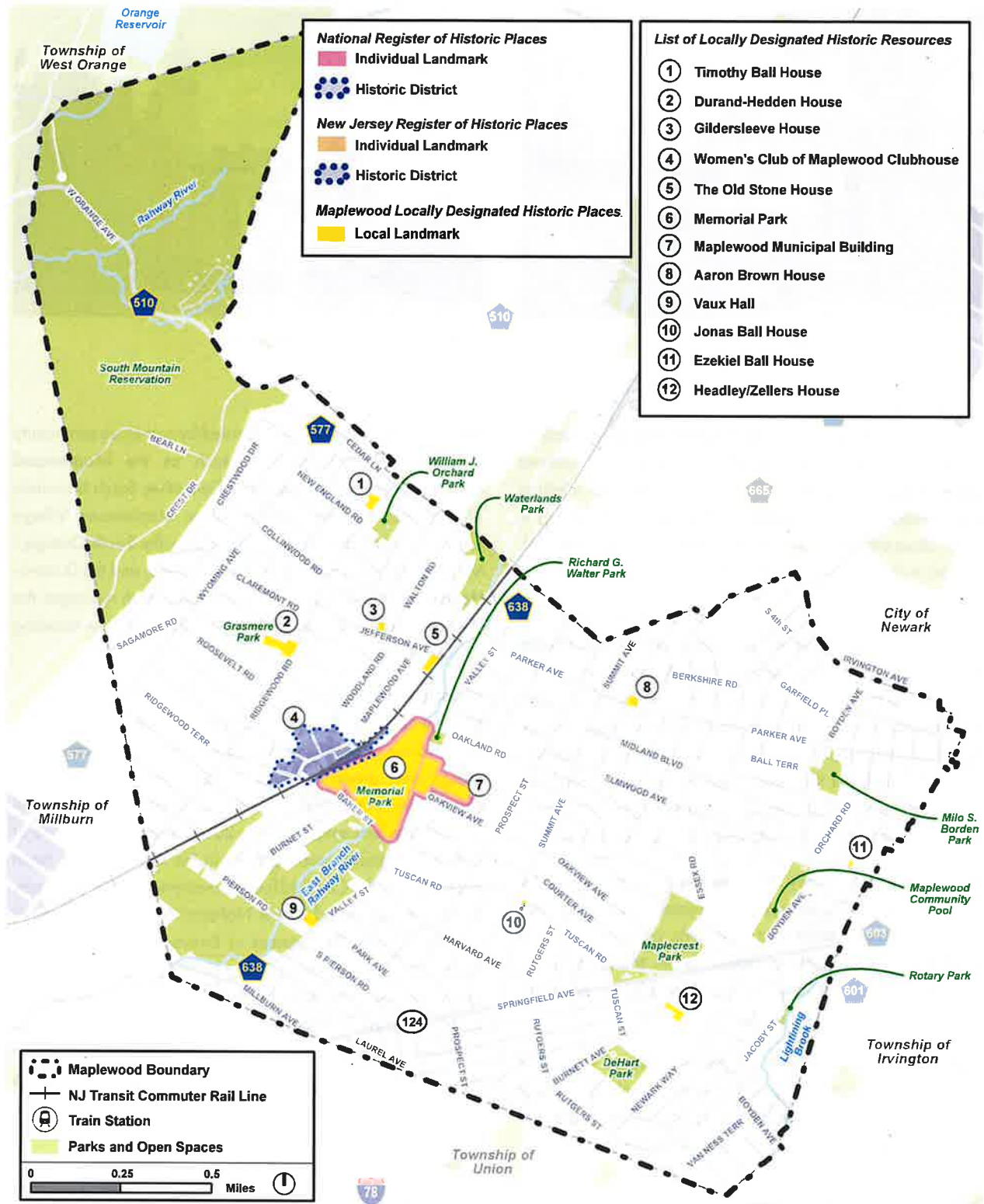


Figure 19: Locally Designated and State/National Historic Districts and Sites

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), BfJ Planning.

Locally Designated Resources

The Historic Preservation Commission has completed detailed surveys of historic resources located throughout Maplewood and amassed a substantial body of information, including identifying and surveying 46 pre-1860 era homes. In addition to buildings and sites, the Commission surveyed numerous historic features such as street-edge stone gutters, bridges, gates, and other features that have significant historic value. These features are summarized within the 2008 Historic Preservation Plan.

State and National Registers of Historic Places

Beyond local historic designations, Maplewood has historic assets deemed significant by the State and National Registers. While some of these listings are also locally designated, others are not. Table 13 provides a complete listing of all buildings and sites in the State and National Registers.

Historic Preservation Initiatives

Since 2001, the Historic Preservation Commission has sought to identify and place historic properties on the Maplewood Historic Resources Inventory list. These efforts included extensive architectural surveys during the 2003-2005 time period, which laid the foundation for the 2008 Historic Preservation Plan, and the large body of information that continues today such as the surveys of the College Hill neighborhood in 2014 and the Golf Island neighborhood in 2017, and pursuit of the Maplewood Village Historic District designation in 2018-2020. Detailed information on local historic resources, including those that do not appear on the State or National Registers, is included in the 2008 Plan.

Table 13: Locally Designated and State/National Historic Districts and Landmarks

Source: NJDEP SHPO NJ and National Registers of Historic Places, last updated July 15, 2022

Note: SR= State Register; NR = National Register; NHL = National Historic Landmark

Historic Districts		
Name	Location	Designation
Maplewood Village Historic District	Maplewood Avenue; Durand Road; Highland, Inwood, and Lenox Places; Baker Street	NR: 4/25/2022; SR: 3/10/2022; COE: 1/9/2017
Memorial Park Historic District	Bounded by Valley and Baker Streets and Dunnell and Oakland Roads	COE: 3/11/2011
Old Main Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Historic District	Morris & Essex Railroad right-of-way (NJ Transit Morristown Line)	SHPO Opinion: 6/7/2004
South Mountain Reservation Historic District	Old Short Hills Road; Northfield, Millburn, Wyoming, and Gregory Avenues	SHPO Opinion: 11/18/2008
State and National Registers of Historic Places		
Name	Location	Designation
Durand-Hedden House	523 Ridgewood Road	COE: 8/27/2010
Maplewood Station	Dunnell Road, Milepost 15.4, NJ Transit Morristown Line	SHPO Opinion: 3/25/1998
Maplewood Memorial Park	Bounded by Valley and Baker Streets and Dunnell and Oakland Roads	NR: 8/4/2015; SR: 2/19/2015
Maplewood Municipal Building	574 Valley Street	NR: 10/1/2014; SR: 5/1/2014; COE: 3/11/2011
Pierson's Mill and "Vaux Hall" (aka The Pierson House)	693-697 Valley Street	COE: 3/17/2000
White Oak Ridge Pumping Station	107 Wyoming Avenue	SHPO Opinion: 8/6/2018

SUSTAINABILITY, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND RESILIENCY

Sustainability

Maplewood is deeply committed to sustainability and has infused sustainable principles, practices, and initiatives throughout its policy, ordinances, and programs. In fact, Maplewood provided founding leadership and was among the 34 municipalities that obtained the inaugural Sustainable Jersey certification in 2009, which underscores the Township's efforts on sustainability with an impact beyond its boundaries. Climate change is a major sustainability issue that should inform policy decisions both in leveraging the Township's ability to reduce its global warming impact and managing the impact of increased rainfall intensity, rising temperatures, ecosystem disruptions, and other threats.

Overview of Existing Policy, Regulations and Conditions

The 2004 Master Plan touches on many of the facets of sustainability, and includes a goal to further explore and investigate ways in which the Township could enhance the extent to which future development could incorporate sustainability in both building and site design. Building on the 2004 Master Plan, the 2011 Master Plan Re-examination Report sets forth the following set of goals and objectives that tie in with key aspects of sustainability:

- Establish a long-range plan for developing a bikeway network in Maplewood.
 - Implement administrative and programmatic efforts in support of bicycling in Maplewood.
 - Promote the incorporation of sustainability in both building and site design of future development and redevelopment, and do so in a manner that maintains viable economic development.
 - Protect and preserve Maplewood's natural physical environment, open spaces and recreational facilities.
 - Support policies, programs and plans which promote wellness by encouraging walking, bicycling, outdoor recreation, and all forms of physical exercise.
- Encourage the development and implementation of transportation modes which are alternatives to the use of private passenger motor vehicles, including consideration of extending the Township's jitney service beyond serving the community's railway commuters.
- The 2011 Re-examination Report also contains an entire chapter focused on sustainability, which summarizes Maplewood's key sustainability policy provisions and the various initiatives that have been implemented. The following plans and studies have been completed by the Township and are relevant to sustainability and/or environmental matters:
- Natural Resources Inventory (2006)
 - Maplewood Climate Initiative Action Plan (2007)
 - Open Space and Recreation Plan Element (2008)
 - Historic Preservation Plan Element (2008)
 - Drainage/Flood Mitigation Improvements Study for four study areas (2009)
 - Community Forestry Master Plan (2009)
 - Rahway River Corridor Study (2010)
 - Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Assistance Report (2018)
- These efforts are supported by a number of ordinances that have been enacted to promote sustainability, including:
- 2332-06: Establishes the Open Space Trust Fund Advisory Committee.
 - 2696-12: Establishes Maplewood Township Green Team.
 - 2801-15 and 2903-18: Establishes the Sustainability Committee.
 - 2893-18: Solar energy systems ordinance.
 - 2971-19: Provides a regulatory framework for the construction of plug-in electric vehicle charging stations.
 - 2972-19: Codifies electric vehicle charging stations as a permitted accessory use in all zones subject to the standards established in the Township's Plug-In Electric Vehicle Ordinance.
 - 3033-21: Revises the procedures for securing a tree removal permit and adjusts fines for violations
 - 3057-22: Prohibits the use of gas-powered leaf blowers.

The policy and regulatory documents listed collectively provide a robust platform for implementing sustainable programs and initiatives, including promoting efforts in the private sector through development that incorporates sustainable/green building and site design features.

Carbon Footprint

Maplewood has estimated both its community and municipal carbon footprints. This calculation evaluates each jurisdiction's carbon footprint in terms of metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions per year. The Township estimated that the carbon footprint from the community-wide electricity, natural gas, and fuel oil use was about 125,000 metric tons of CO₂e in 2021. A more comprehensive estimate of Maplewood's greenhouse gas impact from the University of California, Berkeley Cool Climate Network model, adding in the greenhouse gas contributions of the community from vehicles, food consumed, and other community purchases, came to roughly 475,000 metric tons of CO₂e. This estimate is from 2013, the most recent available, but is indicative of the full magnitude of Maplewood's current climate impact.

Of this total about 3,500 metric tons of CO₂e emissions were from municipal buildings, vehicles, and other municipal assets and activities in 2018. Even after a decade and a half of efforts, reducing Maplewood's greenhouse gas footprint remains a stubborn challenge. Despite its relatively tiny share of the community-wide emissions, the Township plays an outsized role in inspiring and facilitating broader responses. For instance, with Township encouragement, there were 376 rooftop solar installations with 2.36 MW capacity registered with the NJ Clean Energy Program as of April 2023.

Impervious Coverage and Green Infrastructure

Maplewood is largely developed, with the only major exception being the northwest sector fully comprised of Essex County's South Mountain Reservation. A large majority of the Township is zoned residential, with impervious coverage ranging from 40% to 80%, with the highest percentages in the eastern areas. There are localized areas of near 100% impervious coverage in the commercial and industrial zones, including the areas around Columbia High School, Maplewood Middle School, and Underhill Field. With

such high rates of impervious coverage, multiple areas of Maplewood are prone to flooding, insufficient water quality of stormwater runoff, and insufficient aquifer recharge, especially with more frequent intense storms and related impacts anticipated from future climate change.

Green infrastructure helps reduce the area covered by impermeable surfaces, which reduces the amount of stormwater entering storm sewer systems, reduces pollution in adjacent waterbodies, facilitates re-use of stormwater via rain barrels and other methods, and helps mitigate both local and downstream flooding. Common types of green infrastructure include rain gardens, dry wells, bioswales, urban tree canopy, and natural green spaces within parks.

Green infrastructure can play a significant role in mitigating the impacts of stormwater and flooding. In 2018, the Township prepared a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan ("SPPP"),

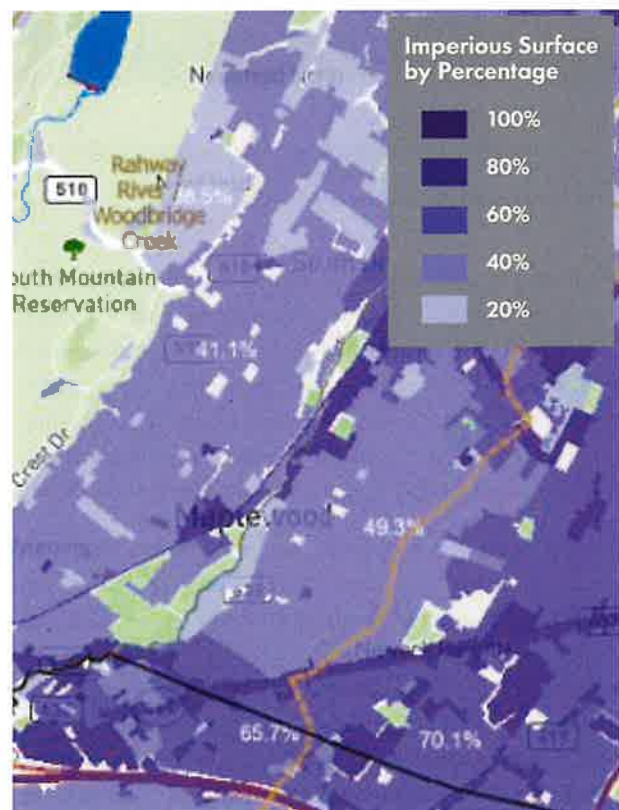


Figure 20: Impervious Coverage (2015)

Source: Rowan University School of Earth and Environment NJ Map, NJDEP Land Use Land Cover (2015), via the Maplewood Environmental Advisory Committee.

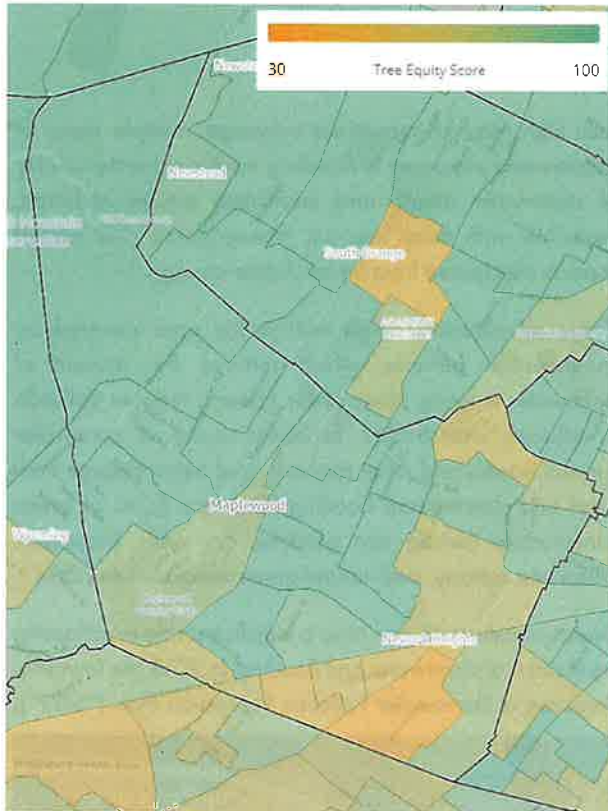


Figure 21: Tree Equity Score

Source: Tree Equity Score, Mapbox, OpenStreetMap, Earth Define, US Tree Map (2020), US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2014-2018, via the Maplewood Environmental Advisory Committee.

which sets its stormwater management and water quality policy, ordinance, program requirements, and initiatives. Consistent with its commitment to sustainability, Maplewood maintains a comprehensive stormwater management program that supports improved water quality, efficient water usage, green building, green infrastructure, and other aspects of sustainability as they pertain to stormwater management.

Notably, impervious surfaces generally correspond with reduced tree canopy and are mutually reinforcing to contribute to localized areas of elevated temperatures, or “heat islands. With extreme heat conditions increasing due to global warming, trees have the added benefit of providing residents with shade. Further, the “greening” of certain areas such as streetscapes and parking lots provides an aesthetic benefit that can be appealing to residents and visitors to the Township in addition to the benefits noted above.

A representative example of green infrastructure in Maplewood is the Hilton Rain Garden, installed in 2011-2012. The project was funded by a \$10,000 grant from the

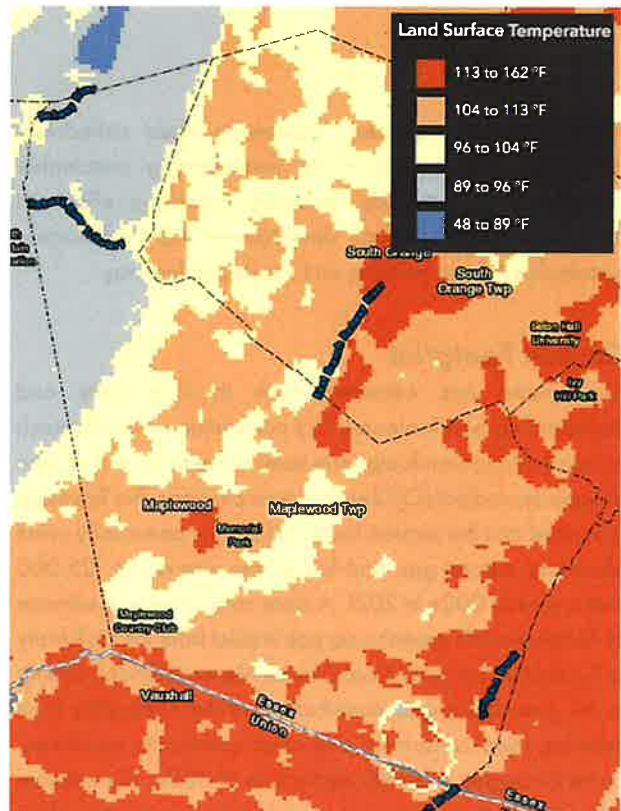


Figure 22: Land Surface Temperature (Summer 2022)

Source: Earthstar Geographics, ESRI, HERE, Garmin, Landsat Missions, NASA Earth Observatory, via the Maplewood Environmental Advisory Committee.

New Jersey American Water Company, and was completed through collaboration between the Maplewood Garden Club and the Township’s Engineering and Public Works Departments. The 1,200-square-foot rain garden adjacent to the Hilton Branch Library features native species plantings and is able to capture approximately 200,000 gallons of stormwater runoff from the library’s roof and parking lot, which is then naturally infiltrated locally, reducing flow into the Elizabeth River. The Hilton Rain Garden was the largest rain garden in New Jersey at time of construction and is still among the largest in the state.

The non-structural stormwater management strategies used in the green infrastructure examples noted above promote the Goals and Objectives from the 2004 Master Plan and the 2011 Re-examination Report. This important class of infrastructure also promotes and is in accordance with the Township’s Stormwater Management Ordinance, the most recent version of which was adopted in July 2021.

Green Buildings and Design

Maplewood has also implemented several ordinances and initiatives related to green buildings and design. Notable examples include the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ("LEED") Certified Maplewood Police and Courts building, the Maplewood Memorial Library (currently being renovated to become fossil fuel-free and LEED-certified with future-oriented energy systems and other sustainability features), and the Township's substantial participation and leadership in the Sustainable Jersey Program. The Township also hosts several private sector green buildings that have attained certification under the LEED program.

Recent Sustainability Projects and Initiatives

One of the key initiatives in the Township of Maplewood is its participation in the Sustainable Jersey Program, overseen by its Sustainable Maplewood committee. After obtaining Sustainable Jersey certification in 2009, the Township continued in the program and achieved Silver Certification in 2019, which it has subsequently maintained. Representative projects and initiatives that Maplewood has completed and/or continues to implement under this program include:

- Installed public electric vehicle charging stations
- Adopted ordinances restricting leaf blower usage and vehicle idling
- Energy Aggregation program to reduce costs and increase renewable energy use for residents
- Conducted energy audits of all main buildings and upgraded lighting for energy efficiency in the Municipal Building, the Public Works building and Memorial Library
- Replaced traffic signals with LEDs, saving two-thirds of the electricity used
- Upgraded street lighting to reduce their overall electricity use by 40%
- Established weekly curbside recycling pickup and created a shared electronics recycling program with South Orange
- Installed an organic turf field at DeHart Park
- Prohibited the use of chemical pesticides in parks and around municipal buildings and implemented the use of green cleaning products in facilities
- Use of bio-diesel in jitney buses and purchase of hybrid vehicles when replacing Township fleet vehicles



Maplewood Police and Courts Building



Public Electric Charging Station at The Woodland

The energy aggregation program noted above is overseen by the Sustainable Essex Alliance and known as the SEA Energy Aggregation Program. The program is led by Maplewood with other members being Glen Ridge, Verona, Montclair, South Orange, Livingston, and Glen Rock. The program purchases electricity for residents with a significantly higher percentage of the energy attributed to renewable energy sources and the electricity is provided at a lower cost than the standard energy rates. SEA Energy Solutions is a component of this program that is guiding residents in the participating towns in ways to increase the energy efficiency of their homes and take advantage of NJ Clean Energy incentive programs.

In addition, the Township has established an Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC), which advises the Township administration on environmental issues including climate change, recycling, clean air, clean water, and protection against health-threatening contaminants.

The Township runs several other green initiatives, including an annual Green Day; the Maplewood Climate Initiative; and a Green Business Program, which helps local businesses assess and optimize their energy, water, and materials usage. Maplewood has a comprehensive environmental action website (<http://maplewoodisgreen.org>) that helps organize and promote these various initiatives.

Resiliency

Maplewood seeks to maintain and enhance community resiliency in terms of the community's ability to withstand, adapt to and quickly recovery from natural disasters and other emergency events. Resilient communities are able to better prepare for emergency events, use preparedness and mitigation strategies to reduce impacts from emergency events, roll-out post-emergency services more quickly, and provide more meaningful and significant support for residents and businesses in their recovery from the emergency events. Collectively, these benefits enable communities to bounce back from emergency events more quickly and fully.

The Township has taken actions to promote resiliency such as the formation of an Emergency Management Office, implementation of the Stormwater Management Ordinance, and installation of green infrastructure projects. In addition, the 2004 Master Plan and 2011 Re-examination Report have goals and objectives pertaining to environmental conservation and sustainability that support key aspects of resiliency such as the 2011 MPRR Objective to "Protect and preserve Maplewood's natural physical environment, open spaces and recreational facilities." Further, the 2010 Rahway River Corridor Study discusses the characteristics of the Rahway River segment that traverses the Township, including discussion of floodplains, wetlands and other environmental features. However, as this report predated the storms and related flooding events that affected Maplewood during the 2011-2021 time period, it does not delve in detailed resiliency planning and design.

There are opportunities for resiliency measures along the Rahway River corridor, including the use and/or restoration of natural floodplains and riparian zones. For example, adjacent underutilized properties such as Chyzowych Field may be able to be used to both provide valuable public open space and to help mitigate potential flooding. In addition, there are many residential properties throughout Maplewood that have storm runoff flowing directly into streets. The Township should employ an education campaign to homeowners to encourage them to reconfigure gutters to flow into yards. This should be paired with an enforcement effort to eliminate illegal flows (i.e. laundry drains and sump pumps that flow directly into the street). Also, as residential

properties are upgraded, the Township should ensure that stormwater systems are brought up to current standards.

Essex County has also generated hazard mitigation and resiliency strategies that pertain to Maplewood. The County analyzed threats and opportunities for enhanced resiliency in the Township during the preparation of the 2020 All Hazards Mitigation Plan (AHMP). Representative hazard mitigation actions that have occurred in Maplewood since its adoption include:

- Installation of emergency generators throughout most municipal buildings and installation of an emergency generator transfer switch at Memorial Library.
- Stabilization of retaining walls along Rahway River along Memorial Park.
- Engineering Department sends out information to homeowners in low-lying areas for installing backflow preventers to prevent sanitary sewer overflows.
- Creation of the Hilton Branch Library rain garden.
- Increased drainage capacity of drainage culverts to mitigate flooding.
- Implemented tree maintenance program and coordination with utilities.

Several additional measures are planned, such as the stream bank stabilization and floodproofing of structures along the Rahway River and Lightning Brook as well as the installation of a back-up generator at the OEM building.

Utility Infrastructure

Drinking Water

Clean drinking water, or potable water, is an essential resource for every community. Drinking water in Maplewood is provided by New Jersey American Water, which processes the water according to stringent water quality requirements.

The age of the water system infrastructure in Maplewood varies, with some portions and components of the system being quite old and in need of upgrading. Drinking water lines in close proximity to the areas subject to flooding could be impacted by changes in the subsurface soil characteristics

due to saturation by floodwaters and subsequent shifting of soil that could strain system components. Due to these and other related factors, the Township engages in ongoing maintenance/upgrades to older and/or vulnerable sections of the water infrastructure, such as replacement of lead pipes.

Wastewater

Wastewater, or sewerage, systems in Maplewood are owned and operated by the Joint Meeting of Essex and Union Counties as well as the Township with respect to certain segments of the infrastructure. Adequate wastewater systems capacity is essential to support existing development and to support additional development and redevelopment. Much of the sewerage system infrastructure in Maplewood is old, with certain sections in need of repair or replacement.

Similar to water lines, sewer lines in close proximity to the areas subject to local flooding could be impacted by changes in the subsurface soil characteristics due to saturation by floodwaters and subsequent shifting of soil that could strain the lines, laterals and other system components. In addition, any resulting leakage from sanitary sewer systems could create environmental hazards related to raw effluent. As a result of the factors outlined above, there is a pressing need for upgrades to older and/or vulnerable sections of the wastewater infrastructure in Maplewood.

Other Utilities

Maplewood's electricity and gas utility is Public Service Electric and Gas Company ("PSE&G"). Telephone landlines, cell phone transmitters, cable and other customary services are also available in the Township. Resiliency considerations for this infrastructure includes that electric service lines, and other service lines such as telephone and cable lines, are strung from poles above ground and are therefore unsightly and vulnerable to tree fall during storms and require extensive pruning of street trees. In addition, in some cases flooding of electrical substations and essential equipment can cause local or regional power systems failure. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure is increasingly being implemented in the Township, including at the municipal building and the Woodland, as well as in private homes. The electric grid and associated infrastructure will need to be monitored to identify the need for upgrades and alterations that will be

required in order to support the planned increasing reliance on electricity to power vehicles, buildings, and equipment.

Solid waste hauling and disposal for residential uses in the Township is handled by third-party commercial waste haulers Waste Management and Waste Industries. Commercial and multifamily users generally also contract with a commercial waste hauler, such as the two mentioned above, to cart away refuse. Curbside recycling services are provided for residents on alternating weeks for fibers (cardboard and paper) and commingled plastic, glass, and metal containers through pickup and processing contractors. Residents and local businesses can drop off additional materials including electronics, used cooking and motor oil, lead acid batteries, used clothing, air conditioners, washing machines, and dishwashers at the Township Recycling Center in the Public Works Yard on Boyden Avenue. Public Works also hosts semi-annual bulk drop off and paper shredding events and collects leaves in the fall and yard waste in the spring for composting at a remote facility.

The Township maintains access to the cellular network via the local and regional cell tower and cellular array network. Wi-Fi access within Maplewood is available at both the Main Library and the Hilton Branch buildings and outside of the buildings. Both library buildings also have computers that the community is permitted to use for a one-hour session per day. The library also lends Wi-Fi hotspots to resident cardholders for a three-month timeframe. In addition, a Wi-Fi pilot program was rolled out in May 2020 where the Township collaborated with the South Orange-Maplewood School District and Data Network Solutions to install an access point antenna on the roof of Seth Boyden Elementary School to provide free broadband internet to the neighboring community.

During emergency events that require that education and certain employment activities be conducted remotely, low-income households may not have connectivity to the internet from devices other than their phones, which heightens the importance of publicly accessible Wi-Fi. The benefits of publicly accessible Wi-Fi also enhance access for contacting emergency services and enhance the dissemination of emergency services updates to residents and visitors during emergency situations.

4

SECTION 4: STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LAND USE AND ZONING

Maintain a strong quality-of-life and consistency of scale in Maplewood’s residential neighborhoods, with safe and convenient access to parks, transit, and other amenities.

Residential areas make up the largest single land use in Maplewood, and its neighborhoods play a major role in giving the Township its look and feel. For homeowners, a house represents their single largest asset, and for all residents – owners and renters alike – the neighborhood is the lens through which they experience Maplewood on a day-to-day basis. It is critical that all neighborhoods have a high degree of aesthetics, functionality, and connection to residential amenities.

At the same time, given Maplewood’s lack of vacant developable land, home upgrades and new development within neighborhoods can be expected to continue. Zoning provisions should accommodate such development in a way that complements existing scale while providing a range of housing opportunities and reinvestment in the community.

Recommendations

Implement context-sensitive zoning revisions, such as changes to density requirements (e.g. floor area ratio) and setbacks, and encouragement of architectural features to break up building bulk: Communities throughout the region are struggling with the scale of new homes in established neighborhoods, given changing tastes that often result in homes that are much taller and larger than their surrounding context. Maplewood already has some design and performance standards in place to control residential development, including provisions that avoid adjacent

homes that are overly similar in design. The Township should consider additional context-sensitive regulations to ensure that new development does not impair the existing development pattern and that it promotes strong aesthetic quality. Some examples for consideration include: linking residential building height to the front yard setback distance; establishing prevailing height standards (i.e. a house cannot exceed existing heights within the vicinity by more than a set amount); establishing floor area ratio (FAR) requirements to control the bulk of homes; increasing side yard setbacks; requiring front-facing garages to be set back from the building façade; and encouraging architectural features (such as dormers) that break up the bulk of large facades. At the same time, building elements that are incongruous with the existing scale or context should be discouraged. For example, Maplewood’s current zoning (Sec. 271-38(B) (3) requires that attached or two-family dwellings include a “simulated conventional chimney” for each dwelling unit, if a working chimney is not required. This requirement can result in unnecessary and inappropriate building features that do not contribute to actual function of the use. Detailed analysis and public input will be needed to determine which measures may be appropriate, recognizing that works for one zoning district may not in another, and to avoid creating the need for a significant number of variance applications.

Improve transitions between low-density residential uses and commercial, multifamily, or mixed uses:

Where low-density (typically single-family) neighborhoods abut downtowns; commercial corridors; or major commercial, institutional, or multifamily properties, careful consideration must be given to setbacks and other zoning provisions, to avoid jarring transitions and potential negative impacts on the residential use. Maplewood’s residential zoning currently addresses this issue by defining a “transitional lot” as:

“The first residentially zoned lot (or lots in common ownership) having a side yard adjoining the side line of a lot in a business zone fronting on the same street and extending into the residential zone no more than two times the minimum lot frontage of the residential zone in which the lot is located.”

Within transitional lots in single- and two-family zones, off-street parking, professional offices, and multiple dwellings are permitted as conditional uses. However, no details are given in terms of what conditions need to be met for such uses to be permitted. The transitional lot definition is highly confusing and has proven difficult to implement.

These provisions should be revisited to improve clarity and balance infill development with protection of neighborhood scale. Rather than defining a transitional lot, the Township should consider defining a transitional area, which could be identified as the first set of three lots within a residential zone with frontage along a side street that intersects with a non-residential zone. Within this transitional area, off-street parking, professional offices and multiple dwellings

would continue to be conditional uses, but the conditions could be specified to balance the protection of established neighborhoods with promotion of infill “missing middle” housing (e.g. townhouses, two-family homes, and small apartment buildings). Conditions should generally seek to focus building bulk away from existing homes and toward adjacent non-residential zoning. Potential elements include:

- Requiring a larger lot size (e.g. 25% larger) than the minimum size permitted in the residential zone, unless the professional office or multiple dwelling is provided within an existing building. This would ensure that non-single-family uses would have additional room for parking and other needed elements, while lessening the incentive to subdivide oversized lots for development of single-family homes.
- For a non-single-family lot abutting a single-family lot, requiring a larger side yard setback (e.g. 50% larger) than the minimum side yard setback required in the residential zone. This provides some additional buffer between the single-family use and the more intensive adjacent use.
- For new construction of professional offices or multiple dwellings, not allowing building height to exceed 3 stories.
- For off-street parking within transitional areas, requiring vegetative buffering to protect adjacent residential uses.



Example of Missing Middle Housing

Source: AARP *Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing*, AARP and Opticos Design

Encourage property maintenance and reinvestment in older buildings to prevent unnecessary demolition, by permitting minor upgrades through a streamlined process:

Because much of Maplewood's housing stock pre-dates current zoning, existing nonconformities may require homeowners to seek variances to undertake even minor changes, such as stair or deck replacements. This process can be quite onerous for the homeowner. The Township should review the zoning code for opportunities to streamline and expedite such upgrades and avoid disincentivizing basic upkeep. The review should also look at opportunities to adjust lot coverage, façade length, and similar requirements, to reduce the need for variances and allow homeowners to make modest expansions, while balancing the need to control bulk.

Review performance, noise and lighting standards:

These provisions should be assessed for consistency with other regulations and best practices, while allowing for ease of enforcement by municipal staff. In addition, the Township should explore ways to ensure that newly constructed buildings reflect not only applicable building codes, but are constructed to standards that assure their longevity and aesthetic value. This could be accomplished through revisions to the design standards as discussed above.

Continue to explore the use of street ends, other public rights-of-way, and easements on private property to provide pathways to parks and the train station:

Maplewood has been successful in creating connections to neighborhood amenities through the use of public rights-of-way. Some examples include streets that abut Maplecrest Park and the connection between Carleton Court and Mountain Avenue/Maplewood Avenue (as illustrated in Figure 23) that provides access to the Village. Similar opportunities should be pursued as they arise, including the use of easements with larger property owners to provide public access. For example, a large portion of Winchester Gardens is devoted to walking paths and abuts the Maplewood Community Pool, but provides no direct access to this amenity. Working with this property owner on a shared-access agreement would enhance access to the pool while also creating the opportunity for areas east of Boyden Avenue (such as Avalon and the Maplewood Village condominiums) with more direct access to Maplecrest Park. Another example would be extending Vermont Street from Burnett Avenue to Boyden Avenue along the DPW property/50 Burnett, a recommendation of the redevelopment plan for this site.



Figure 23: Connection between Carleton Court and Mountain Avenue/Maplewood Avenue

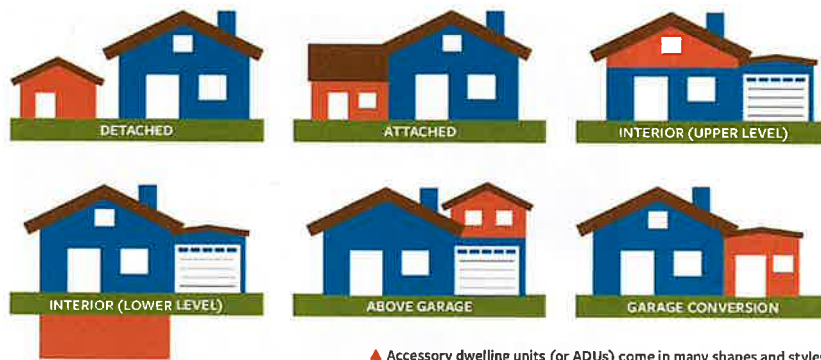
Source: Nearmap, BFI PlanningJ

Work with large institutional and multifamily property owners to address potential impacts on adjacent homes and promote a “good neighbor” approach:

These large properties, and their operations, have the potential to create negative impacts on adjacent single-family neighborhoods, such as noise, traffic, and lighting. The Township should ensure that all existing provisions governing these quality-of-life factors are being enforced, and as large-scale properties come to the land use boards for new approvals, opportunities should be taken to further protect adjacent residents through buffers and operational controls, as permissible.

Provide housing opportunities across income, household size, abilities, and age groups.

A range of housing options exist in Maplewood, including single- and two-family homes, condominium townhomes, small apartment buildings, and more recent transit-oriented multifamily development. This diversity of housing stock serves different segments of the population. Diverse housing options in terms of price ranges, number of bedrooms, and services and amenities for all age groups and those with special needs meet an essential need of the community. This range of options also helps enables existing residents to remain in Maplewood as they graduate through the various phases of life without being priced out. Maintaining a housing stock that can serve a broad spectrum of the community helps to ensure that living in the Township is attainable for those who are just starting out as well as seniors who have raised their families and want to stay in the community.



▲ Accessory dwelling units (or ADUs) come in many shapes and styles.

Examples of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Source: *The ABCs of ADUs*, AARP and Orange Splot LLC

The Township must also continue to affirmatively address its affordable housing obligation as provided for in its current Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. There is an urgent need for affordable housing options throughout New Jersey, the region, and nationwide. For Maplewood, in particular, the community has expressed concerns about escalating housing prices within historically affordable neighborhoods that have become increasingly attractive to new residents and investors.

Addressing these complex issues requires more than a “one size fits all” solution, but rather a toolbox of strategies ranging from deed-restricting units as affordable under the State’s requirements, to simply providing for different housing types by expanding what is permitted and removing barriers to options that are already allowed but not being implemented. Such a multi-pronged approach should seek to identify appropriate strategies across neighborhoods and conditions, to ensure a balance of housing opportunity throughout Maplewood.

Recommendations

Reduce the minimum lot area requirement (currently 2 acres) for multifamily development in the R-2-4 district.

This requirement exists in the R-2-4 district, but attached dwellings are permitted as conditional uses in single-family zones without any apparent minimum lot size. There are no lots in the R-2-4 district that meet this standard, and the few that do throughout Maplewood are already developed. At a minimum, the Township should clarify whether any minimum lot standard is called for as part of the conditional use standards in single-family zones. Any such standard should be uniform across residential zoning districts, and should be small enough to provide for actual development of contextual multifamily development (i.e. small apartment buildings and townhomes).

Revisit the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations to remove potential barriers for implementation:

Communities across the country are finding that accessory dwelling units can be an excellent option to provide a more affordable housing type, particularly for downsizing seniors or small households that are just starting out. In 2020, the Township enacted a zoning change to allow ADUs within any single- or two-family zoning district, subject to satisfaction of certain conditions. This was a positive step that put Maplewood ahead of many of its peers in the state in terms of broadening housing opportunities. However, to-date, no ADUs have actually been constructed. While some of this situation may be related to ongoing pandemic impacts, the Township should reassess the ADU ordinance to determine if any changes are warranted to further promote their development.

Creating an ADU on a single-family lot is not necessarily a small undertaking. In particular, state building code requirements for foundations and weatherization to convert detached garages to dwelling units can be cost prohibitive. Therefore, any ADU regulation should avoid placing undue impediments to the introduction of ADUs, such as owner occupancy requirements (which have been held by courts as illegal in New Jersey), differential tax treatment from single-family homes, or onerous permitting or licensing requirements (including the owner’s annual affidavit of continued compliance). The Township may also consider ways to further incentivize ADUs, such as by relaxing selected zoning provisions to allow homeowners with a detached ADU to also have an accessory shed for storage, increasing the allowable height for accessory structures, or by providing financial incentives from housing trust fund monies in exchange for deed-restricting the ADU as an affordable unit. At the same time, the ADU regulations should be carefully tailored to ensure that the lot does not become a de facto two-family home.



Example of a Two-Family Home in Maplewood

Consider permitting two-family homes beyond the R-2-4 district: As discussed above, attached dwellings (i.e. townhomes) are already permitted as conditional uses in all single-family districts as are ADUs, and multifamily uses are permitted on transitional lots within those zones. Thus, the Township has determined that non-single-family residential uses are appropriate under certain circumstances in single-family zones throughout Maplewood. Expanding the areas where two-family homes are permitted would be in keeping with this approach, and would recognize that two-family housing is an attractive and valid option for many homeowners, whether they are seeking an entry point into the community or are looking to downsize or establish a multi-generational housing structure.

The Township should explore allowing two-family homes as conditional uses in all or certain single-family zones. As a start, the R-1-7 zone could be considered, given its larger lot sizes. Conditions could include minimum lot size, width, and depth to ensure sufficient room for off-street parking and other infrastructure needs. Paramount in the consideration for expanded two-family home development is the assurance of strong building and site design to blend in harmoniously with established neighborhoods. Older two-family homes often appear similar to single-family home and are “stacked,” with one unit on each floor and either no garage or a rear/side garage. More recently constructed two-family homes typically use a side-by-side configuration, which each unit elevated over a front-facing garage served by its own driveway. The result is visually quite different from the existing built context, and also generates more impervious coverage in the front yard and a less safe and appealing pedestrian environment.

Conditions to permit two-family homes in more zoning districts should address these design considerations, through provisions that, among other factors, limit the number and/or frontage of attached garage widths, pavement in front yards, and building heights. These design elements could also be incorporated into the Township’s existing design and performance standards, to achieve a higher level of design for two-family development in the R-2-4 district as well.

Update the rent control regulations for greater clarity and effectiveness: In 2005, Maplewood enacted new rent control regulations, which provided for limits on rent increases, under the jurisdiction of the Rent Leveling Board. However, there are several issues with this code provision. Among other controls, the regulations limit rent increases to no more than the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous three years. This puts the burden on Township staff to track the CPI and could result in high rent increases during inflationary periods. Other communities have addressed rent control in more straightforward ways that also allow for consideration of seniors. For example, Montclair’s rent control ordinance, adopted in 2022, caps annual rent increases to 4%, or 2.5% if the unit has a tenant 65 or older. That ordinance also has a provision for fees, which can help cover the administrative cost of a rent control program. Maplewood should consider amendments to its rent control regulations to more effectively balance affordability controls with protection for landlords and ease of enforcement.

Explore offering incentives to upgrade existing aged apartment stock in exchange for deed-restricting a portion as affordable housing: Maplewood has a number of apartments that, because of their age and configuration, may be offering below market-rate rents. Thus, the gap between their current rent levels and allowable rents under the state’s affordable housing requirements may not be significant. Some of these units could be subsidized through housing trust fund monies and deed-restricted to count toward the Township’s affordable housing obligation. The use of the housing trust fund typically carries requirements to rehabilitate the subsidized unit to a minimum standard. Thus, this arrangement can be a true “win-win” – the Township increases its supply of credited affordable units without the need for new development, and the property owner is incentivized to upgrade its buildings to a higher standard.

Maintain existing affordable housing stock: As part of ongoing implementation of its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, Maplewood should seek the extension of expiring controls for all affordable housing developments as affordability controls near expiration.

Work with nonprofit organizations and the private sector to market Maplewood to a diverse range of prospective residents, and support programs for existing residents to help them better understand and manage ongoing homeowner costs: First-time homebuyers, particularly prospective residents of color, may be hesitant to consider purchasing a home in the Township due to preconceptions about cost, social considerations, and other potential barriers to entry. In addition, potential and new residents may have limited awareness of ongoing costs of owning a home and living in Maplewood. The South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race has programs to market the Township to potential residents of color, as part of its overall efforts to maintain diversity and reduce racial segregation. The Township should work with this organization, other like-minded nonprofits, and private-sector partners such as local realtors to continue ensuring that Maplewood is attractive and attainable to a broad and diverse population.

Explore financial incentives, including tax incentives, to assist elderly residents in the cost of remaining in their Maplewood homes: For seniors who own homes in the Township and wish to remain in their residences, the most significant barrier is typically the property tax burden. While high taxes are a regional issue and the majority of local tax bills are not municipal taxes, Maplewood should consider strategies to mitigate the financial burden on elderly residents. This could take the form of fee reductions or a senior discount program for local businesses.

Consider eliminating or streamlining the annual certification requirement for rental properties: Currently, all rental units in Maplewood – whether in multifamily complexes or within a single-family home – are subject to an annual certification requirement, in addition to an inspection requirement at least once every 24 months. It is important for the Township to keep track of its rental units, and the regular inspection of all rentals is critical to ensure

basic fire safety and address any building code issues. However, the annual certification requirement could be onerous, especially for smaller landlords, and a barrier to the creation of rental units. The Township could consider eliminating or reducing the registration requirements for smaller rental properties.

Ensure that group homes and other residences for special needs individuals are welcomed within the community, both through zoning regulations and education/outreach initiatives including Township staff: Group homes and similar facilities that function as single-family homes are an important resource for special needs individuals who wish to live in Maplewood, and their families. In addition, group home beds can count toward the Township's affordable housing obligation. Maplewood should ensure that group homes are allowed more broadly within single-family neighborhoods, and should implement educational initiatives to assure the public is aware that such facilities are legal and welcomed within the community. While group homes are currently permitted in all single-family zones, homes with more than six people are conditional uses, restricted to designated arterial or collector streets. This requirement is onerous and does not make sense when considering that there are no locational restrictions for single-family homes with more than six occupants.

Explore opportunities to provide and incentivize housing for low- to moderate-income health care workers, including partnering with nonprofits: As part of its ongoing affordable housing efforts and the need to provide high-quality local health and social services, Maplewood should look at the potential to incentivize – potentially through housing trust fund monies and financial assistance from nonprofits and hospital operators – housing units that are affordable and/or targeted to health care workers. Participants in the Master Plan process noted that it can be difficult to find local home health care workers because they often cannot afford to live in the community.

Encourage all types of housing applications to consider incorporating ADA accessibility and principles of universal design for upgrades to existing and new housing

developments: In support of the ability of residents to age in place, and to promote inclusivity and equity for people of all abilities, the Township should encourage – through the land use approvals process and redevelopment initiatives – the use of accessible design in new housing. Educational resources, including available financial incentives, should also be provided to existing residents who are interested in upgrading their homes for enhanced accessibility.

Explore opportunities for strategic revitalization of key areas and properties, including through use of the redevelopment tool.

As a built-out community with virtually no vacant land available for development, Maplewood must look strategically at its developed areas, to channel growth, enhance areas that need revitalization, support the tax base, and provide future housing opportunities. Some of this development is already occurring, such as along Springfield Avenue, while regulatory changes recommended in this plan should unlock further potential. However, some properties or areas will be best addressed through the redevelopment tools available under the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL). These tools are appropriate when properties are unlikely to develop on their own and according to the community's vision, whether because of environmental cleanup issues, difficult physical conditions, or other factors. The redevelopment tool is also useful where revitalization of a large area is contemplated and a holistic approach is needed. Adoption of a carefully tailored redevelopment plan that incorporates community engagement can address issues of site and building design in more detail than is permissible under conventional zoning. At the same time, redevelopment planning should be targeted and well-considered, to avoid an ad hoc or piecemeal approach to revitalization and to provide predictability for nearby property owners and the community as a whole. As with any land use regulation, the redevelopment tool should be grounded in the municipality's overall land use vision, as expressed in the Master Plan.



Millburn Avenue Corridor



Former Movie Theater Building



Maplewood Village



Irvington Avenue

Source: Google Maps

Recommendations

Consider targeted use of the redevelopment tool to facilitate strategic revitalization: The Township should evaluate the potential for new or revised redevelopment or rehabilitation designations for the following areas:

- The Millburn Avenue corridor, currently zoned HB and OB, from the municipal border with Millburn to Springfield Avenue. This area serves as a gateway into the Township and should be strengthened with more community-serving businesses, more attractive design, and establishment of a sense of place that identifies the corridor and adjacent residential neighborhoods as being part of Maplewood. The Township should consider coordinating with Millburn and Union on a joint cross-municipal revitalization effort.
- The Irvington Avenue business district, currently zoned NB, generally between Parker Avenue and Putnam Street. This effort should be coordinated with Newark and Irvington as part of a joint revitalization effort.
- Other opportunity sites, particularly in business or industrial districts, such as the former movie theater building in Maplewood Village, which is currently being studied for a redevelopment designation, and the RD-2 Redevelopment Area off Springfield Avenue, which was designated as a redevelopment area but has not seen any implementation.
- The entire Maplewood Village area, because of the age of its buildings, would qualify as an area in need of rehabilitation. Such a designation does not necessarily result in significant new development; it can accomplish improvements to the public realm (e.g. sidewalks, open spaces, lighting) and infrastructure improvements such as street upgrades and public parking. Working with the Maplewood Village Alliance and the Historic Preservation Commission, the Township should explore whether a rehabilitation designation could accomplish some of these larger public goals.

Ensure maximum transparency for redevelopment planning and other major development: To the greatest extent practicable and allowable under state statutes, Maplewood should provide for public notification and involvement in significant development plans. Any

Township-initiated redevelopment should incorporate a public visioning process. For privately initiated redevelopment or large residential or mixed-use site plans before the Planning Board or Board of Adjustment, the applicant should be strongly encouraged to hold a neighborhood meeting as part of the process.

In addition, beyond minimum statutory notification requirements, the Township should ensure that the wider public is informed of the status of redevelopment or major site plan processes through such methods as e-blasts, announcements at public meetings, bulk mailings, etc. For redevelopment projects, the same noticing requirements as site plans should be used, even though the State does not require this extent.

Review large-scale commercial and industrial zones to ensure the appropriateness of uses and area and bulk controls.

Maplewood has several zoning districts, primarily located on the eastern side of the Township, that are intended to promote large-scale commercial or industrial development. Some of these areas, such as the Highway Business (HB) zoned areas, are remnants of time when Springfield Avenue was intended to be an auto-oriented, regional business corridor. Other areas such as the industrial and office zones, are distinct from the two primary business districts and neighborhood business nodes, in that they tend to house larger business operations and thus have the potential for greater negative off-site impacts. Each of these large-scale areas needs to be strengthened in targeted ways, as they provide valuable services to the community and support jobs throughout the local region.

Recommendations

Consider reducing the Highway Business (HB) zone on Springfield Avenue: The HB zone is only found in three locations on the corridor: a small portion at its western end including the south side of Marie Place, a Walgreens site in the east-central portion of the corridor, and the area on the south side of Springfield Avenue east of Boyden Avenue. Given the longtime overall vision for the corridor as a cohesive, pedestrian-oriented environment

and the community's expressed desire to reduce negative impacts on adjacent neighborhoods, the Township should look at eliminating the zone in selected portions. For the westernmost HB portion, land uses include an office building and associated parking lot, which could be brought into the OB zone, and residential uses which should be rezoned to the appropriate residential district. The Walgreens property could be rezoned to Pedestrian Retail Business (PRB), while most of the area east of Boyden Avenue could be rezoned to Neighborhood Business (NB). Properties that contain uses that are only permitted in the HB zone should retain the HB zoning to avoid creating nonconformities. Where the HB zone remains, the Township should explore potential adjustments to improve aesthetics and address impacts on adjacent residential areas.

Revisit the need for the Research and Office (RO) district:

This district is only located on one property (the NJ Transit Hilton bus garage), which seems to be a better fit for the CI district.

Promote a renewed focus on historic preservation, especially where it can achieve complementary goals

Maplewood's historic built environment is a key part of its attractiveness and sense of place. While the Township has been diligent in preserving many historic buildings, landmarks and culturally important places, development can place pressure on historic resources and lead to inappropriate renovations that detract from their historic value. It is important to inventory historic resources and implement appropriate zoning controls and design guidelines to help promote preservation of the historic resources. These regulatory measures should be balanced with economic considerations and private property rights, both to facilitate preservation of historic resources and to avoid placing a cost burden on property owners to the extent that they cannot afford to maintain historic resources.

It is particularly important to protect historic resources from new development that would be implemented through demolitions rather than historic preservation. In this regard, Maplewood has seen success in promoting adaptive reuse of structures such as The Mill site on Valley Street.

This strategy should continue to be pursued throughout the Township, particularly along the periphery of non-residential districts that abut established neighborhoods.

At the same time, historic designation should avoid the unintended consequence of disincentivizing owners from maintaining and upgrading their properties. The designation process should be transparent and collaborative, involving the property owner to the greatest extent practicable. Once properties are designated, the review of alterations to those properties should be objective, based on clear standards that are understandable to the layperson. In addition, the cost to the homeowner of historically appropriate improvements should be considered in the Historic Preservation Commission's (HPC) review. Historically significant homes have value to the community, but they are also residences, and as is the case for most homeowners, the property likely represents their single largest financial asset. The review of property alterations for historic properties should avoid unduly cost burdening homeowners, and the potential for incentives and financial resources for owners of designated historic properties should be explored.

Lastly, historic preservation should not be viewed in a vacuum. Recognition and designation of historical assets can achieve parallel goals including economic development, strengthening of community facilities and programs, greater arts and cultural awareness, and enhanced community identity. For example, the Township should explore opportunities to recognize sites and buildings that represent the full diversity of its history. Specifically, there may be resources that are historically important for communities of color, immigrants, and the LGBTQ+ community – all groups that may not have been fully recognized in traditional historic preservation efforts.

Recommendations

Update the Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan:

The Historic Preservation Plan Element was last updated in 2008, and since then Maplewood has experienced significant changes in its development context and a broadening of understanding about sites and structures that could benefit from historic designation. A comprehensive update of the Historic Preservation Element would address key topic areas including:

- Streamlining the process for designation of additional historic sites and districts so that additional resources could be designated. The process should incorporate collaboration with affected private property owners of prospective historic designations. Properties that are considered at greatest threat to demolition or deterioration, and/or have the support of the owner for designation, should be prioritized.
- Strengthening the role of the HPC, including clarity on its role in the land use approvals process and greater funding through grants and other sources. The current criteria for review in Section 271-83(E) are vague and should be revised to reduce subjectivity and consider cost burdens on property owners, and the language in Section 271-80(D) on the determination of emergency repairs should be clarified. In addition, the Township Committee should seek input from owners of designated historic or eligible properties in the review process, including potential representation on the HPC. Lastly, agendas and minutes of the HPC should be regularly posted, and vacancies on the Commission publicized for interested residents to apply.
- Promotion of educational programs for property owners about maintenance and improvement requirements of historically designated properties, and exploration of available incentive programs for private property owners. In particular, historic homeowners are not eligible for the State's Historic Property Reinvestment Program tax credit program, which is limited to income-producing properties. The Township should explore local tax or other incentives to support maintenance of its historic properties.

- Documentation of historically valuable infrastructure in Maplewood, with development of guidelines for upgrades or replacement, to balance preservation with modern infrastructure needs (including infrastructure that addresses resiliency needs).

It is important to note that, unless and until the Township's Historic Preservation Element is updated, the 2008 Historic Preservation Element, together with the historic preservation findings and recommendations of this Master Plan, shall stand as the basis for Maplewood's historic preservation regulations, pursuant to the MLUL.

Enact targeted land use regulations to support historic preservation efforts:

With an updated Historic Preservation Element as a baseline, the Township should consider adoption of key ordinances to address preservation goals, including:

- Potential demolition ordinance to require that no demolition permit be granted to a building over a certain age without review by the HPC or approval by the Planning or Zoning Board.
- Encouragement of adaptive reuse of historic buildings for appropriate uses such as general office, personal-service, and retail uses rather than demolition. This may be accomplished by providing flexibility in area, bulk, and parking provisions where re-use of an existing building is proposed.
- Development of design guidelines for distinct areas of the Township to guide historically appropriate and attractive development.

Promote historic tourism: Maplewood has a wealth of historical resources designated at the national, state, and local levels that should be promoted to residents and visitors alike. The Township should highlight these resources to make them more prominent and foster visitation. Some recommendations include enhancing signage/wayfinding for historic assets, improving pedestrian connections between important destinations, and increasing marketing efforts.



Pedestrian Environment in Maplewood Village



Pedestrian Environment along Springfield Avenue



Example of Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure



Maplewood Station

CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

Implement a policy shift to prioritize walking, bicycling, public transportation, and micromobility over automobile parking and throughput.

Maplewood has the opportunity to respond to the community’s desire for safe, convenient, and equitable alternatives to automobile travel. At the same time, residents and visitors alike depend on cars and parking to take advantage of the Township’s many attractions and amenities. Ultimately, policy decisions must reflect an earnest move toward non-auto travel to address safety, environmental, and social goals while addressing, but de-emphasizing, auto demand. This Master Plan can establish and/or advance numerous efforts to create a more holistic approach to mobility in the Township.

Recommendations

Develop a new Circulation Master Plan Element: The Circulation Element would include a detailed study of existing and projected travel conditions, identify priority areas for safety improvements, incorporate a sidewalk implementation plan, and provide an implementation matrix to better plan for new projects. The Element should focus on designing streets for all users, particularly the community’s most vulnerable users, and identify a comprehensive toolbox for improvements. Priority areas should be at intersections with high crash rates, schools and community facilities, and access to public transportation.

Any proposed transportation infrastructure projects should include cost estimates and designs so that they can be readily advanced by the Township. The Circulation Element should consider the impacts and opportunities associated with temporary street uses such as parklets, outdoor dining, and community events. Restarting the Transportation and Safety Committee will help guide planning and implementation efforts within a community-facing structure.

Update and Implement the 2010 Maplewood Bikeway Network Plan: The 2010 Maplewood Bikeway Network Plan provided a thorough evaluation of existing conditions and potential improvements for a safer bicycling network and facilities. Its objectives included advancing bikeway

corridors identified in the 2004 Master Plan, enhancing connections between major destinations throughout Maplewood, providing connections to South Orange and Millburn, and focusing safe bicycling opportunities on key corridors including wayfinding.

Some progress has been made; however, the plan has largely not been implemented. This Master Plan validates continued community desire for a more bikeable Maplewood and can further codify the need to update and commit to the Bikeway Network Plan.

The 2012 Municipal Parking Plan also highlighted the 2010 bike plan, underscoring the importance of cross-referencing related planning efforts and not precluding recommended improvements when changing design of parking or roadway facilities.

Renew and strengthen commitment to “complete streets” policy: Maplewood adopted a resolution establishing a complete streets policy in 2012. The language and intent of this policy can be further strengthened and integrated into Township planning and design practices to continually enhance street safety and utility for all users. The NJDOT model complete and green streets policy should be consulted for guidance. The policy should also incorporate the use of checklists for compliance with complete streets requirements for planning, capital, and repaving projects; see the Essex County Master Plan Circulation Element for a model. To assist in this effort, the Township should consider establishing a Complete Streets Committee to identify areas for improvement, funding opportunities, and outreach/ educational opportunities.

Adopt a Vision Zero safe systems approach to street safety: An increasing number of communities are committing to the safe systems approach espoused by the Vision Zero movement, with a goal of eliminating deaths and serious injuries on local roadways. Complementary to Maplewood’s complete streets policy would be a Vision Zero systems approach to street safety, inclusive of the myriad departments and stakeholders in the Township that influence or participate in transportation service, design, engineering, and policy. The safe systems approach declares deaths and serious injuries unacceptable, and recognizes human error, human vulnerability, shared

responsibility, and a proactive approach to improved safety. For the Township, this means designing streets to anticipate human error and managing infrastructure to both minimize risk and reduce the impact of mistakes on the human body. The Vision Zero and safe systems approach highlights the vulnerability of specific road users (e.g., pedestrians, bicyclists, the very young and elderly) while focusing on design and policy interventions to all users, including motorists.

Explore Safe Routes to School opportunities and funding:

School access remains a focal point for pedestrian safety, notably for children and caregivers. In a relatively large school district, individual access to school varies significantly, from very walkable, to challenging or impossible walks, to busing. The Township should explore and pursue vital funding sources such as Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant funding.

The SRTS program is a federally funded reimbursement program established in 2005 by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Under the most recent legislation, funding does not provide for a standalone SRTS Program. The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) has elected to continue funding the SRTS program separately. The SRTS program is funded through the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) Federal Aid Program and is being administered by NJDOT, in partnership with the North Jersey Transportation Planning authority (NJTPA).

County, municipal governments, school districts, and schools are eligible to apply to the program, and nonprofit organizations are eligible as direct grant recipients for this solicitation. The SRTS program provides funding for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects.



Bicycle Infrastructure at Maplewood Train Station

Design and maintain roadways for safe, equitable mobility options for all users.

Building on these policy initiatives, Maplewood should develop the procedural tools and physical interventions necessary to support project development and implementation of projects that meet community needs.

Recommendations

Develop complete streets design standards with comprehensive input from Township departments and stakeholders working in street rights-of-way: Fundamental to the enhancement of the Township's complete streets policy is the creation of a complete streets design guide, demonstrating commitment to safe and accommodating street design while offering specific, Township-vetted guidelines for project design and construction. Such a design guide requires thoughtful input from a wide array of stakeholders and a thorough understanding of decision-making processes associated with work in the right-of-way. Most of Maplewood's streets are within the Township's jurisdiction and purview, affording significant opportunity for actionable improvements to meet community needs.

Expand the use of traffic calming tools Township-wide to address speeding, aggressive driving, and distracted driving: In keeping with a Vision Zero safe systems approach, the Township has the opportunity to significantly increase its deployment of traffic calming design interventions on municipal roadways. Corridors ripe for traffic calming include Parker Avenue and Prospect Street, which currently facilitate motorist speeding with wide rights-of-way, straight alignments, and relatively few stops. Traffic calming can take many forms, in accordance with NJDOT guidelines and accepted practices, including:

- Reduce speed limits on Township-owned roads.
- Reduce travel lane widths.
- Install signalized pedestrian crossings (e.g., Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons (RRFBs)).
- Narrow pedestrian crossing distances and add pedestrian refuge islands where needed.
- Introduce speed humps, chicanes, and other design interventions.
- Install radar speed signs.

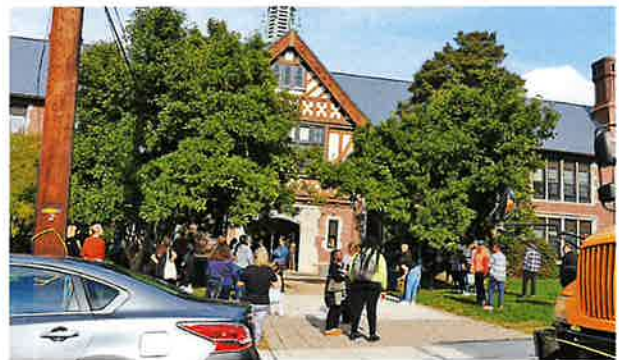


Intersection at Parker Avenue and Prospect Street

In older communities such as Maplewood, many roadway rights-of-way are narrow and present other constraints that may limit the ability to implement adequately protected bicycle lanes, wider sidewalks, or other enhancements. As such, one of the most effective ways to improve safety and reduce the risk of crashes is to lower speeds and calm traffic. Higher motorized vehicle speeds dramatically increase the likelihood of serious injury or death in the event of a crash.

Identify opportunities for safe, protected bicycle lanes:

Where rights-of-way do offer adequate space, the Township is strongly encouraged to design and install protected bicycle infrastructure. Physical protection for bicyclists from motorized vehicle traffic significantly increases bicyclist comfort and better encourages bicycling as a viable mode of travel, particularly for more vulnerable users. In conjunction with an update to the Bicycle Network Plan, Maplewood should pursue a series of coordinated infrastructure investments to facilitate safe and direct bicycling opportunities between neighborhoods and activity centers.



School Pick Up

Improve safety and operations at problem intersections and corridors: Conditions can be improved for all roadway users, including drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users, at numerous intersections and roadway segments identified by community members (see conceptual intersection plans on Figures 24 - 27). Examples include:

- Areas around schools experience heavy traffic during school pick up/drop off and rush hour including Parker Avenue, Springfield Avenue, and Valley Street.
- Intersection examples:
 - Wellesley Street and Franklin Avenue - Potential for all-way stop
 - Valley Street and Parker Avenue – Potential for pedestrian-friendly signal timing (as noted in NJTPA’s Road Safety Audit for Valley Street)
 - Boyden Avenue and Jacoby Street – Potential for improved pedestrian crossing
- Roadway redesigns - Some narrow residential roads may be converted to one-way, such as in the Hilton neighborhood, in conjunction with traffic calming and robust bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements.
- Sight Triangles - There are sight triangle concerns at some intersections, such as retaining walls and landscaping, that create safety issues. One example is the Baker Street and Ridgewood Road intersection. The Township has looked at potential bumpouts at this intersection to improve safety.
- Corridor plans – Major thoroughfares such as Springfield Avenue deserve a holistic assessment to unify facility designs, address intersection and safety deficiencies, and promote placemaking and economic development.
- Lighting – Identify streets where lighting is missing, not maintained, or does not meet code requirements. Streetscape designs should include pedestrian-scale lighting to improve sense of place, comfort, and safety while avoiding excessive light pollution.

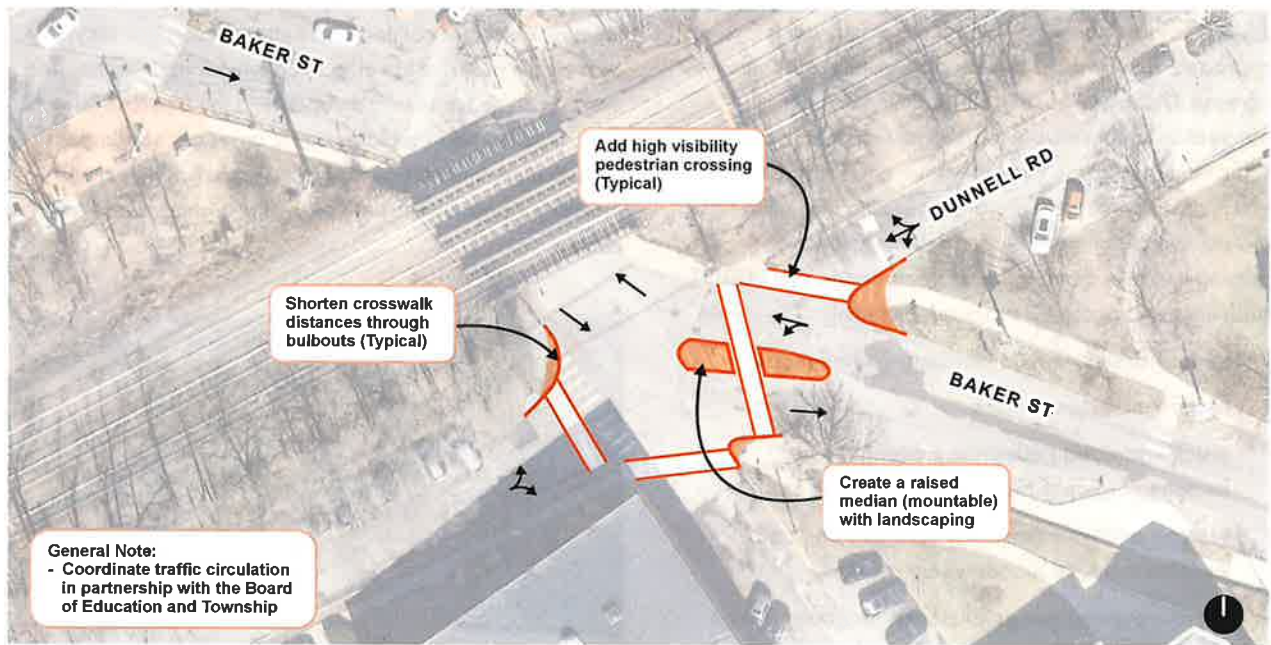


Figure 24: Conceptual Plan for the Intersection at Baker Street and Dunnell Road

Source: Nemap, BFJ Planning

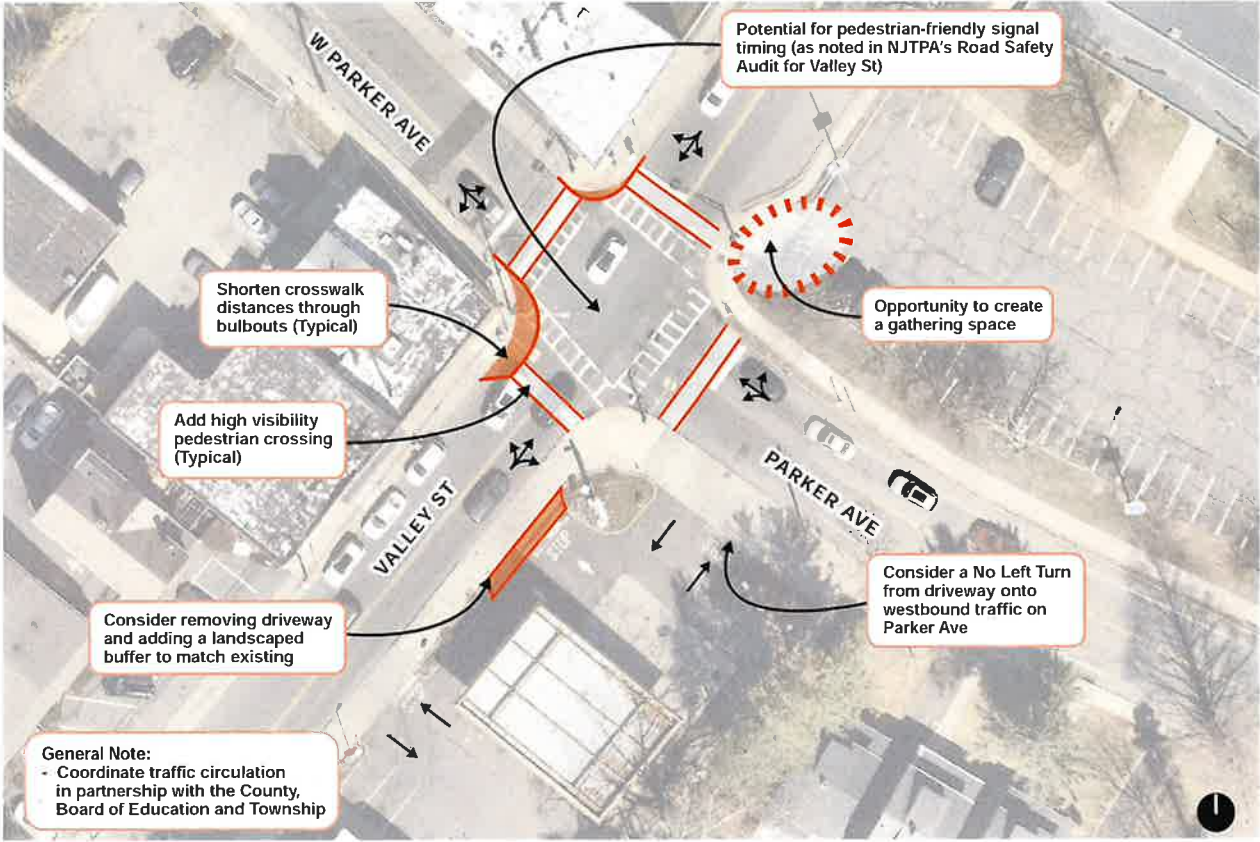


Figure 25: Conceptual Plan for the Intersection at Parker Avenue and Valley Street

Source: Nearmap, BFJ Planning

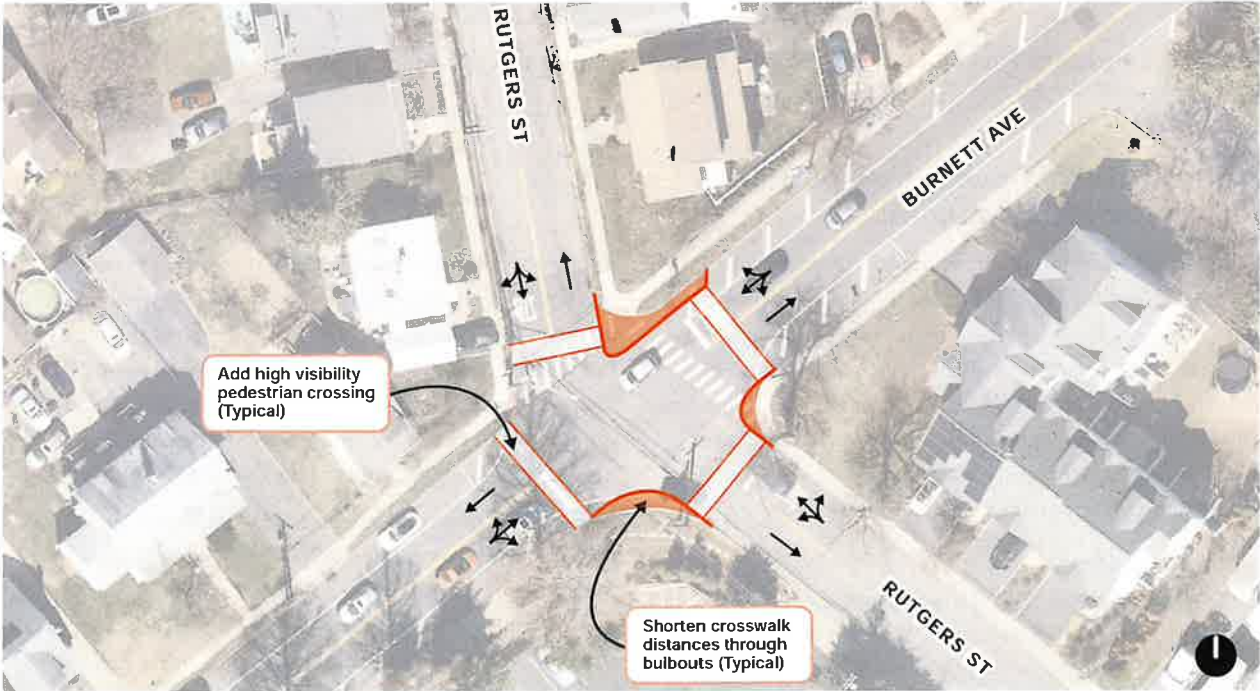


Figure 26: Conceptual Plan for the Intersection at Burnett Avenue and Rutgers Street

Source: Nearmap, BFJ Planning

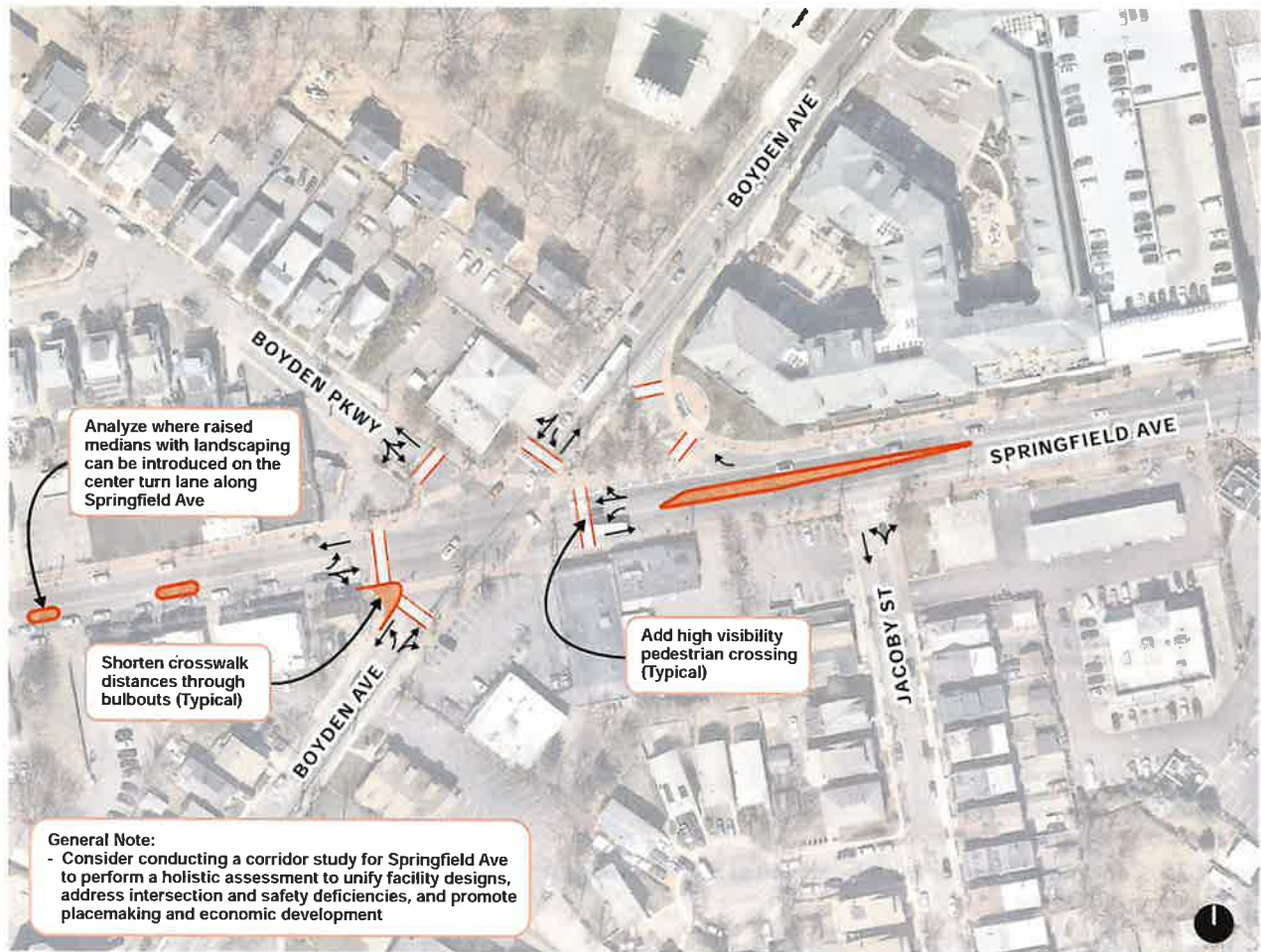


Figure 27: Conceptual Plan for Springfield Avenue between Boyden Avenue and Jacoby Street

Source: Nearmap, BFJ Planning

Expand access to public transportation and micromobility options.

Maplewood is host to significant public transportation assets, including NJ TRANSIT rail, bus, and the Township jitney; however, these services are not fully integrated and do not all satisfy ADA accessibility needs. The Township will benefit from a holistic, modernized analysis of its public transportation options to address current and future travel needs, including technology and accessibility upgrades to improve the user experience and expand access.

Recommendations

Continue to lobby NJ TRANSIT and elected officials for rail station accessibility upgrades: Significant investment is required to upgrade the Maplewood train station to full accessibility for wheelchair users and those with mobility challenges. However, these upgrades are vital to create

a truly equitable and functional transportation system for all community members and visitors. The Township should continue dialogue with NJ TRANSIT and elected officials to explore funding opportunities to meet these needs. New funding sources such as the Federal Transit Administration’s All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP) may be tapped to pursue station upgrades in partnership with NJ TRANSIT.

NJ TRANSIT also used to operate local bus service between Maplewood and South Orange to facilitate rail use at the fully accessible South Orange station. This service was discontinued, and community members have expressed desire to reinstate this connection to encourage and facilitate use of the rail network.

Implement jitney vehicle upgrades to address emissions and accessibility: Maplewood was recently awarded a \$1.15 million grant through NJ DEP to replace its three diesel jitney buses with electric vehicles. These upgrades may require additional vehicle charging infrastructure; the Township should explore available locations and funding opportunities for such equipment.

In addition, like the Maplewood train station, the Township's fleet of jitney buses is not ADA-accessible, further limiting mobility options for many potential users. Although it is not possible for the new electric jitney buses from the DEP grant to be accessible, the Township has secured \$90,000 in CDBG funding from Essex County toward the purchase of an electric ADA-compliant bus to serve seniors on-demand.

Improve communications and real-time information on the jitney system: The Township can improve the jitney customer experience and encourage more ridership on the jitney system by implementing real-time schedule and arrival information via mobile applications. Online and printed route and schedule information can be significantly enhanced to provide clear maps and user-friendly schedules, fare/pass information, and connecting service opportunities including NJ TRANSIT bus (i.e., not only rail). Unified applications and Mobility as a Service (MaaS) approaches can further integrate travel options by combining jitney information with parking availability and payment options. The Township should also lobby NJ TRANSIT to include jitney information in its own array of maps, schedules, trip planning, and mobile applications.

Explore evolution to microtransit to address diverse mobility needs: The continued success of the jitney program presents an opportunity to modernize and further meet community needs through an evolution to microtransit service. Microtransit offers on-demand service through mobile devices or telephone reservation, allowing tailored and user-friendly transit options to community members. A variety of service models may be explored, including full turnkey operations by contractors, to vendor provision of software and dispatching for the Township's own vehicles and operators.

Efficient and attractive microtransit service represents an important opportunity for contributions from developers in lieu of traditional traffic improvements as condition for local approval. Partnerships and mandatory contributions can enhance the Township's own investment while increasing service frequency and reach.

Expand jitney services for non-commuter activities: Whether through the existing jitney operating model or a modernized microtransit service, Maplewood can address a variety of unmet travel needs highlighted by community members, including midday service and connections between neighborhoods and activity centers. The current jitney network is structured around traditional peak period rail travel; however, seniors, parents, and other community members have expressed desire for local, non-auto mobility within the Township. Off-peak service would require additional operating budget but would not require capital expenditure.



Existing Bus Stop along Springfield Avenue

Enhance bus and jitney stops: Shelters, signage, and amenities at NJ TRANSIT and Township jitney bus stops will further encourage ridership and improve the customer experience for public transportation users. Beginning with high-volume corridors such as Springfield Avenue, a coordinated and consistent approach to improving transit customer comfort will further address equity considerations while fostering placemaking and streetscape improvements.

Improve the efficiency of existing and future parking resources.

As in many communities with active downtowns that generate significant traffic for shopping, dining, and employment, Maplewood often hears concerns about the adequacy of public parking. Balancing the need to meet parking demand while avoiding excessive and underused surface parking conditions is a complex process that requires careful study and analysis. The last comprehensive study of Maplewood’s parking assets and utilization was the 2012 Municipal Parking Plan.

Effective management of the parking supply also requires the use of best practices in off-street parking requirements. In addition, the Township must stay abreast of evolving technologies that affect parking, such as the growing demand need for electric vehicle charging stations and the increasing prevalence of scooters and e-bikes.

Maplewood should also create a unified approach to parking policies and facilities to promote a “park once” environment in support of local business, cultural, and institutional destinations. Parking is an important component of Maplewood’s transportation network; however, careful consideration must be given to minimizing unnecessary, short trips between multiple parking facilities and avoid incentivizing driving when walking, bicycling, or other modes of travel are feasible.

Recommendations

Update the 2012 Municipal Parking Plan: Independently, or as part of a Circulation Element update, the Township should conduct an updated assessment of parking facilities. This effort would consider on- and off-street parking,

particularly in the Village and commercial nodes/corridors, identifying typical utilization by day and time, regulations and permit use, and opportunities for greater efficiency to promote mobility and economic vitality in the community.

Streamline and modernize parking regulations and policies: A variety of concerns were raised by community members about existing policies, facilities, and utilization of Township parking assets. For example, some business owners in Maplewood Village indicated that, as some tenant spaces in the Village have repopulated (e.g., on Baker Street), merchant parking has become scarcer, and there was concern that street reconfiguration due to recent development may have exacerbated this situation. However, the Township has performed some analysis of merchant parking utilization and found that it is underutilized. Better education for businesses and wayfinding for merchant parking are possible and encouraged. Some employees are not using merchant parking and are parking in public areas, moving their cars around as needed to meet time limits. Merchant parking is more needed on side streets than Maplewood Avenue.

With the onset of COVID-19, the Township implemented temporary 10-minute parking in front of businesses where clients could pick up their purchases. Businesses have shown support for this strategy. The Township should formalize this short-term parking strategy to encourage business patronage while keeping parking turnover high. The location and regulation of these spaces (particularly enforcement) should be carefully planned and monitored to ensure they are effectively utilized for quick trips and not for longer visits. If short-term spaces are not used and long-term spaces are not available, people will be inclined to use the 10-minute spots for long-term parking.

Opportunities should be explored for designated location(s) for daily train station parkers to shift them slightly away from occupying prime locations in the center of Maplewood Village. Information sources, both online and in print, can better illustrate the locations of publicly accessible parking along with hours and relevant pricing and policies.

Additional opportunities:

- Review off-street parking regulations and permitting to balance adequate supply with the efficient use of space, avoid excess surface parking and be consistent with current best practices. For example, the current requirement for houses of worship is based on number of seats, which may not be applicable for all such uses. In addition, the residential parking requirement is 2 spaces per unit, which in some cases may be higher than the RSIS standards.
 - Transition from parking minimums to parking maximums which can reduce the number of parking spaces which may often go unused, and can make smaller sites more viable for development by lessening the amount of parking that must be provided. For buildings that include structured parking, using parking maximums could free up more ground-floor space for retail, community amenities, or other uses that better engage with the street. Setting parking maximums, as with parking minimums, should be based on analysis that considers the proposed use or mix of uses, the potential for shared parking, and the proximity to transit.
 - Revise the zoning and design standards to clarify and improve the provision and location of off-street parking. Specifically:
 - Add the PRB zone to the parking location requirements for business districts.
 - Clarify the restrictions on parking in front yards.
 - Adjust residential side yard setback requirements to encourage detached garages, the traditional urban form in most of the Township.
 - Encourage underground parking beneath structures, where feasible.
 - Explore allowing overnight on-street parking in residential areas by permit, which would lessen the need for on-site parking and could promote the development of ADUs and two-family homes.
 - Explore the potential to create a Parking Benefit District, where merchants/property owners could share in some of the revenue through streetscape improvements or other local enhancements.
 - Create an improved comprehensive parking wayfinding and signage system (consistent with pedestrian, bicycle, and other wayfinding).
 - Adopt bicycle parking requirements for multifamily and commercial uses.
- Improve the efficiency of existing surface parking:** Where off-street parking lots serve adjacent properties, every opportunity should be taken to connect these lots to reduce the number of separate curb cuts and allow for the shared use of surface parking by adjacent property owners through cross-access and shared parking agreements.
- Update parking requirements for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations:** Maplewood should ensure consistency with the New Jersey parking requirements, including requiring EV charging spaces for certain types of private development. Electric vehicle charging is primarily to be considered an off-street amenity so as not to prioritize vehicle parking/charging over potential pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements in limited rights-of-way.
- Address emerging needs for delivery and short-term loading areas:** In the wake of the pandemic, there is an increased need for short-term drop-off and pick-up areas for delivery of food and other goods. Meanwhile, some residents may forgo the need to own a car and rely on car-sharing as a transportation option, which can reduce the need for off-street parking spaces. In site planning for new residential and mixed-use development, the Township should provide space for short-term loading to leverage efficiencies while avoiding negative impacts on adjacent properties.



Village Parking Wayfinding and Signage System

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Support Maplewood’s small and emerging businesses to help them remain competitive in a challenging retail environment, supporting the continued success of the two primary business districts while strengthening smaller, neighborhood-oriented commercial nodes.

Maplewood’s local businesses have faced significant headwinds from trends in e-commerce, interruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic, and a constantly changing social and economic environment. Today’s small and emerging businesses must be more agile than ever and be able to adapt efficiently to an ever-changing business landscape. Another key factor affecting small and emerging businesses is the change in the local market brought on by new development and revitalization, which can affect the market environment in terms of changing customer demographics, competition with new uses, and potentially higher rents.

In light of these factors, it is more important than ever to support the Township’s small and emerging businesses, both to help existing businesses thrive and enable complementary future businesses to take root and grow. This is particularly true for businesses outside of the two primary retail areas, which lack the support of the SIDs.



Springfield Avenue between Prospect and Yale Streets



Figure 28: Potential Location for the PRB Sub-District
 Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network, (Exported from Urban Footprint), BfJ Planning

Recommendations

Consider creating a sub-district for the Pedestrian Retail Business (PRB) district, to focus commercial and mixed-use development at key nodes where retail is particularly strong: The PRB district spans approximately 5,000 feet along Springfield Avenue. This lengthy corridor has pockets of commercial uses scattered throughout serving residents with basic everyday necessities. The Township should look at revisions to the PRB district to promote the clustering of commercial uses to create recognizable and vibrant nodes. Within these nodes, the ground floor should include active uses to create consistent lively storefronts, implement an attractive and welcoming streetscape, and encourage pedestrian activity. Because parking requirements are often a limitation to providing ground-floor commercial uses, the Township should consider relaxing or eliminating parking requirements for non-residential uses in these nodes. To further strengthen these commercial nodes, residential uses (or related amenities) would not be allowed on the ground floor. A potential commercial node along Springfield Avenue could be between South Pierson Road/Ohio Street and Rutgers Street as illustrated in Figure 28.

Review the zoning code for permitted uses in the business districts: Review permitted uses, area and bulk requirements, parking requirements, and other provisions in Retail Business (RB), Neighborhood Business (NB), and PRB districts to streamline approvals processes overall and remove potential barriers to entrepreneurs, new business types, and experiential retail. Below are some zoning code revisions the Township should consider:

- **PRB District** – The building height setback requirement in the PRB district has required many variance requests over the years and promotes a design with the building bulk pushed toward abutting residential properties. It should be eliminated. Instead, the Township should consider imposing a maximum front building setback (approximately 5 to 15 feet). In addition, the Township should review the regulation stating that PRB lots abutting transitional lots should have a minimum front yard equal to 50% of that required in the residential district where the transitional lot is located. This requirement is confusing and difficult to implement.
- **Change In Use** – Switching from a non-restaurant to a restaurant use requires a minor site plan, review, and approval, which has proved to be onerous to small business owners. The Township should consider waiving the site plan requirement for changes of permitted use, allowing such applications to be handled administratively by staff. In addition, the Township should ensure that doctor’s offices are allowed in all business zones, and urgent care facilities are allowed in HB and OB zones.
- **General Items** – The Township should consider prohibiting storage of materials as a principal use within the business zones if not already prohibited.

Continue to partner with neighboring municipalities on the revitalization of the Irvington Avenue commercial area: The City of Newark, the Townships of Irvington and Maplewood, and South Orange Village should continue their efforts to strengthen the economic vitality of Irvington Avenue to support existing local small businesses and attract new businesses. In 2014, Maplewood, South Orange, and Newark, together with Essex County, the Maplewood Chamber of Commerce, and NJ Transit, collaborated on a Local Demonstration Project referred to as Irvington Avenue: Creating a Complete Corridor, whose recommendations should be carried forward.



Irvington Avenue: Creating a Complete Corridor

In particular, the plan calls for the need to increase management capacity of “Maplewood Corners,” the stretch of Irvington Avenue from approximately Hillcrest Road to Franklin Terrace. The plan recommends the creation of a Merchants Association in the short-term, with the potential to establish a Maplewood Corners Special Improvement District (SID) in the long-term. The potential new SID would build on Irvington Avenue’s special features make it a unique neighborhood commercial node for local residents. In the exploration process, the Township should engage with commercial property and business owners along Irvington Avenue to discuss their concerns and gauge interest in a potential new SID.

Encourage the establishment of new green businesses by ensuring they are permitted in appropriate zoning districts: Green businesses are dedicated to running holistic sustainable practices with awareness of local community and global environmental and public health. Examples include indoor agriculture, battery production and storage, recycling, and sustainable energy technology. Because of the large building footprints likely needed for such operations, the CI and SLI districts are the strongest candidates for these uses. Advances in manufacturing processes have made many of these traditionally intensive uses significantly less impactful in terms of noise and negative environmental impacts; however, performance standards should be incorporated into the provisions for such uses. The Township should leverage Maplewood’s climate leadership to attract businesses working on multiple aspects of the global warming response transformation.

Explore the use of Township-owned facilities for rental by small and emerging businesses, particularly those focused on the arts: The Township could explore the yearly usage of Township-owned facilities, such as The Woodland and the Burgdorff Center for the Performing Arts, to identify opportunities to further optimize the use of spaces in these facilities. If space is available, the Township could look into renting certain spaces out to local small and emerging businesses focused on the arts.

Broaden permitted uses in the Commercial and Industrial (CI) and Special Light Industrial (SLI) districts to encourage entrepreneurship and small business start-ups:

Maplewood's industrial areas are concentrated in the CI districts found along Rutgers Street/Newark Way and the SLI district found along Camptown Road. Potential uses that could be explored include art galleries, maker spaces, food production (e.g. coffee roastery), and limited retail space to accompany light manufacturing (i.e. space to sell products made on-site). These additional potential uses would help to expand the spectrum of industrial uses allowed to meet the needs of small and emerging businesses. New permitted uses should complement and not compete with existing industrial uses. The introduction of standard retail and restaurant uses should be carefully controlled in these areas, to avoid pushing out industrial uses and transitioning to a business district that could compete with established business areas. In addition, new residential uses (unless artists' live/work units) should not be permitted in the CI and SLI zones. Where residential uses exist (such as along Boyden and Burnett Avenues) those properties should be rezoned to R-2-4. The introduction of new uses should also be leveraged to promote greater public access and improved conditions along the Lightning Brook.

Explore opportunities for placemaking at key locations, to showcase Maplewood's creativity, generate economic activity, and build community.

Improvements to the public realm can be highly effective in bringing visitors to commercial areas, whether they are Maplewood residents or visitors. Beyond basic streetscaping enhancements such as sidewalk and landscaping (which are also important) placemaking looks at targeted, creative ways to activate a public space, better connect it with the surrounding area, and make it

a location where people want to visit and linger. When done well, placemaking taps into assets already present in the community, such as a local arts scene or historic and cultural institutions, to build on the community's identity in an authentic way.

Placemaking can also help to establish a stronger community identity where it may be lacking, such as along municipal peripheries where the borders are unclear and residents may not feel part of the community. Some Master Plan participants noted this issue in Maplewood, such as at the southwestern border along Millburn Avenue and along Irvington Avenue. Strengthening gateways into the municipality and establishing consistent streetscapes along key corridors can mitigate these problems and be a source of community pride.

Recommendations

Enhance existing and establish new gateways in strategic locations, through signage, landscaping, and public art:

Gateways are marked entry points into a municipality that serve to create a sense of place, provide orientation, and welcome residents and visitors. Generally, gateways have consistent signage showcasing the municipality's name along with landscaping elements. There is an opportunity to enhance the Township's existing gateways to ensure they serve as clear and identifiable markers welcoming one into Maplewood. In addition, the Township should consider establishing new gateways at key locations to ensure all residents and visitors are aware they are entering Maplewood. An example of an existing gateway is the Maplewood demarcated signage and landscaping at the southeast corner of Springfield Avenue and Laurel Avenue.



Gateway Signage at Springfield and Laurel Avenues

Expand and improve public spaces, such as Ricalton Square, to provide gathering areas and increase pedestrian activity in support of nearby businesses:

As a charming, quaint, community, Maplewood has a number of public open spaces primarily located within the commercial areas. These spaces provide residents with a dedicated space to meet up with family, friends, and neighbors to enjoy a locally purchased beverage or snack, relax, sit, and stroll through. Some existing public spaces could use improvements to landscaping areas and tree canopies, lighting fixtures, overall general maintenance, and programming to attract more residents to stop by and use these spaces at various times of the day. Located at the heart of Maplewood Village, Ricalton Square provides a

wonderful green open space with few seating areas and walking paths connecting the downtown area with the train station area. Ricalton Square has the potential to become a stronger community resource with enhancements to the landscaping, lighting, seating, and overall continued care and maintenance (see Figure 29 for a conceptual plan). In another example, the Maplewood Village Alliance is currently working to enhance the seating area on Baker Street next to the NJ Transit parking lot with public art and additional seating. Finally, the small plaza next to the Walgreen’s at the intersection of Springfield Avenue, Burnett Avenue, and Tuscan Road could benefit from additional seating, public art, and similar placemaking elements.

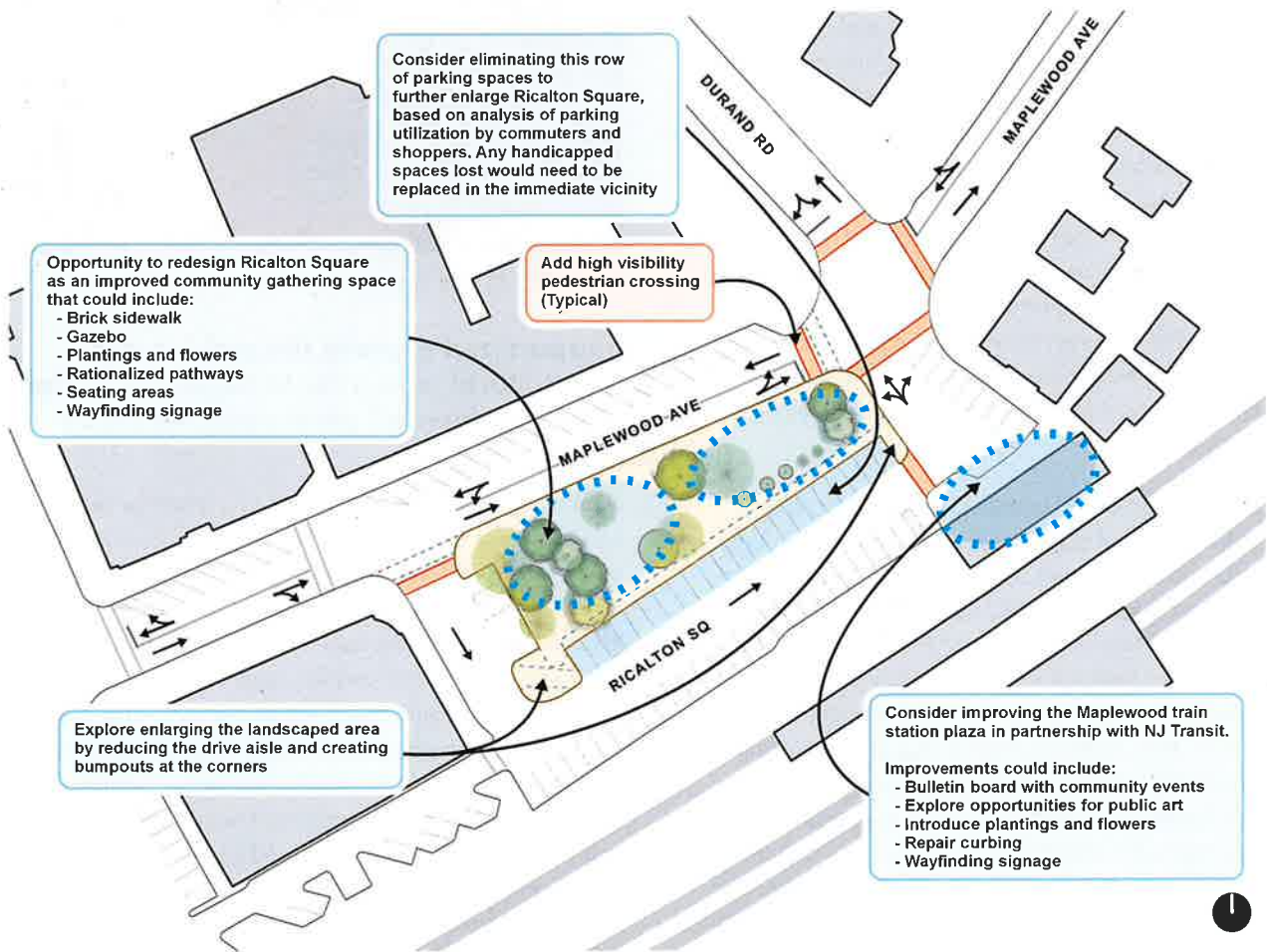


Figure 29: Conceptual Plan for Ricalton Square

Source: Nearmap, BFJ Planning

Take advantage of opportunities to introduce public art in municipal facilities, public spaces (e.g. the train trestle, public parking lots), and in new significant development:

The Township should partner with the local working artists who live in the community to explore opportunities to incorporate public art at key locations. Public art could be used as a multi-faceted tool to enhance public spaces, make the local arts community more visible, promote the various art forms, and support local economic development. Grant funding opportunities are available for public art initiatives. For significant new developments, the Township could encourage property owners to consider dedicating a percentage of space to art programming to continue expanding access to the arts.

Incorporate placemaking into transportation improvements (e.g. make streets safer and at the same time places where people want to be):

Future mobility and transportation projects (e.g. public transit and roadway design) should consider incorporating creative placemaking techniques starting at the projects' onset. Creative placemaking is the art of creating meaningful public spaces associated with transportation projects that recognize and reflect the art, culture, and history of the local community. The Township should partner with local art, community, cultural, and religious institutions to engage community members, especially historically underrepresented populations, to capture their vision for the placemaking initiatives.

Focus pedestrian and bicycle improvements around small commercial nodes, such as the Ridgewood Row area, Irvington Avenue, Valley Street, and the Boyden Avenue/Elmwood Avenue/Orchard Road intersection:

Maplewood has distinct commercial nodes that serve the everyday needs of surrounding neighborhoods. Generally, these nodes are located along roadways that serve as direct routes connecting Maplewood to adjacent municipalities. As such, the roadways with one lane in each direction and narrow sidewalks tend to feel more auto-oriented. Creating a safe walkable and bikeable environment would allow local residents to frequent the commercial nodes on a regular basis by walking or biking rather than driving. This transition in travelling behavior has many benefits such as enhancing air quality, improving public health, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and supporting local businesses.



Public Art at the Maplewood Train Station



Public Art at Yale Corners

Support and expand the vibrant arts and cultural resources to better serve the local Maplewood artists and the entire community.

Maplewood is known in the region as a haven for artists and arts-related organizations, and it is also home to several municipally owned facilities that are well-used and have enormous future potential. The Township recognizes the significant community and economic development value of these resources and will continue to support their growth and evolution through efforts that nurture the arts and cultural community as well as the physical facilities that are expressions of that community. This means promoting arts and culture as a key element of Maplewood's identity and ensuring that the individuals and groups who are active in the artist community can continue to live and work in the community. It also means thinking broadly about what cultural assets the Township offers, to include its historic assets as tourism drivers in addition to their preservation value.

Recommendations

Strengthen the programming and visibility of the Township's Division of Arts and Culture to make artists and arts-related activities more visible in the community:

Maplewood's Division of Arts and Culture is responsible for organizing arts and cultural activities within the Township in collaboration with other organizations, such as the Maplewood Arts Council. The Division also manages the reservations for the Township-owned facilities, including the Burgdorff Center for the Performing Arts and The Woodland. The arts and cultural programs are not as visible in the community as recreational activities. The Township could look into strategies to elevate the arts and cultural activities to ensure the activities are well publicized and accessible to all Maplewood residents.

Create and maintain a comprehensive list of all artists, arts and cultural organizations, houses of worship, nonprofit organizations, and others:

The Township could explore creating a comprehensive list of artists, art and cultural organizations, houses of worship, nonprofit organizations, and others to serve as a living reference document for the entire Maplewood community. This list would help organize all the various talented individuals and organizations into one place, assist with building connections, and make the individuals and organizations more visible to the community. It will be important for this database to remain up-to-date with current contact information.

Undertake an Arts and Cultural Assets Strategic Plan:

Township-owned facilities provide Maplewood and South Orange residents with the opportunity to rent facilities for special events. The facilities, including DeHart Community Center, the Burgdorff Center for the Performing Arts, The Woodland, and 1978 Maplewood Arts Center, are well-sought out venues that require approximately one month advanced reservations, especially for Friday evening and weekend events. On weekdays, local working artists who live in the community, arts and cultural organizations, and community groups rent the spaces for classes, clubs, performances, and practices. The Township should undertake a strategic plan to document all the arts and cultural assets to better understand if the facilities are being optimally used. In addition, the plan should investigate if there is a need for more venue options to host additional arts and cultural related programming such as galleries,

plays, shows, among others. Master Plan participants indicated the need for these community facilities to prioritize the local Maplewood artists, arts and cultural organizations, and community groups prior to other outside individuals or organizations. The plan should:

- Document the use of spaces in Township-owned facilities.
- Determine the condition and needs of facilities.
- Explore strategies to ensure equity of access (e.g. Implement a low cost to participate and support for organizations that serve a broad demographic).
- Look into partnership opportunities with the South Orange Maplewood School District and the region.



The 1978 Maplewood Arts Center

Investigate the potential to establish a community art studio space:

The Township should explore opportunities to create a formal community art studio space where working artists who live in the community could rent work spaces at affordable rates. Potential art studio spaces could be established in Township-owned facilities, in existing vacant commercial storefronts in partnership with local private property owners, in an adaptively reused building, among others. One idea that arose from the Master Plan process is the potential to create a community artist working studio space like Manufacturers Village in South Orange.

Permit a wide range of arts-related uses: Within Maplewood's commercial or industrial areas, the Township should allow a wider range of uses to cultivate the artist community. Uses could include galleries, live/work units,

maker spaces, performance spaces, and other arts-related uses to allow artists to continue living and working in Maplewood. To continue expanding access to the arts, the Township should encourage property owners to dedicate a percentage of a development or redevelopment plan for community art spaces and programming. There is an opportunity for these arts spaces to be sponsored or subsidized making them more affordable for working artists who live in the community to afford renting these spaces. In addition, the Township should explore reducing the barriers for coffee shops, restaurants, and venues to host performances by local artists of all ages and abilities who live in the community to showcase their talents. Potential subsidies could be considered for businesses who wish to host performances at their establishment.

Continue to enhance the Township's planning for economic development initiatives.

Maplewood has several organizations working actively in the economic space, including the two SIDs, the SOMA Chamber of Commerce, and the Township's Committee on Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED). While each of these groups has its own mandate and area of responsibility, there is clearly overlap and potential for greater effectiveness through collaboration. The Township can lead this effort through preparation of planning documents that address economic development issues and opportunities, improving overall communication with the business community, and beefing up its own grant-seeking capabilities to pursue economic development initiatives.

Recommendations

Consider hiring a municipal liaison to the business

community: The municipal liaison could work with the SIDs, Chamber of Commerce, and other key stakeholders to assist all Township businesses in navigating the initial land use approvals process and providing basic business assistance services. These needs are most pressing for commercial areas outside of the SIDs. As part of this position, the liaison could assist with improving information sharing between the Township and all business organizations, and would also be the point person for businesses to call with issues.

Explore hiring a municipal grant writer: The Township would benefit from hiring a municipal grant writer, who could seek out pertinent grant and funding opportunities, prepare and submit the applications with the required sections and supporting documents, and maintain a detailed record of the Township's potential and secured funding opportunities.

Prepare a new Economic Development Element of the Master Plan: The Township should consider updating the 1999 Economic Development Plan to identify new priorities that reflect current local social and economic conditions. This effort could be led by members of the Planning Board and CEED, as well as Township staff.

Pursue a branding initiative to identify, reflect, and promote all aspects of Maplewood.

Maplewood has historically been divided, east-west, by roadways, topography, and demographic differences, and the concept of "One Maplewood" was a recurring theme during the Master Plan process. While residents identify with the Township overall, they may feel a particular affinity and comfort level for their own neighborhood. For example, some residents expressed that they do not feel that parks on the opposite side of town are "theirs," or feel more of a connection to one shopping area than another. At the same time, some residents along the Township's periphery indicated that they do not feel part of Maplewood because of fragmentation caused by intersections and roadways and a lack of easy access to community amenities.

A comprehensive branding initiative for Maplewood could go a long way toward resolving some of these issues, by establishing a unified visual identity for the Township that celebrates the character of individual neighborhoods and places while under the larger umbrella of Maplewood. Similar to placemaking, an effective branding campaign can strengthen community identity and pride. Branding could also celebrate Maplewood's leadership in sustainability, resiliency, and equity efforts. At the same time, the municipal brand should support the existing brands of the two SIDs, which have been carefully cultivated and are highly successful within the region.

Recommendation

Develop a consistent branding and signage program for Maplewood:

A comprehensive Township-wide branding scheme will help residents and visitors visually understand they are in Maplewood through a consistent color scheme, design, style for signage, wayfinding, website, and other media platforms. A unified signage program would focus on consistency for Township-wide assets: park signage, community facilities, gateways, wayfinding signage, municipal parking lots, historic markers and Township publicity materials such as the website. Major gateways into Maplewood should be marked with signage, signature entry markers, and landscaping to welcome residents and visitors. Wayfinding signage guides residents and visitors on where they can find key destinations, such as arts and cultural resources, community facilities, historic sites, and public parking.



DeHart Park Signage



Rotary Park Signage



Municipal Parking Signage along Springfield Avenue



Memorial Park Signage



Municipal Parking Signage for the Woodland Lot



Orchard Park Signage

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, RESOURCES, AND PROGRAMMING

Enhance the existing system of parks and open spaces and expand the system as feasible.

Maplewood's parks and recreation resources are a major quality-of-life amenity for its residents and contribute to its identity. The Township should not only enhance access to parks through safe sidewalks and crossings, but should continue to explore opportunities for new spaces as conditions permit. At the same time, Maplewood must continue to maintain and support existing parks to ensure that they remain attractive, safe, and usable for both the surrounding neighborhoods as well as Township residents overall.

Recommendations

Maintain and improve existing parks and open spaces:

Maplewood's parks and open spaces provide passive spaces to gather, relax, and stroll through as well as active spaces for community events, recreational activities, and sports programming. Master Plan participants indicated that all parks need better maintenance to ensure they remain valuable resources for current and future residents to enjoy. Maintenance, programming, and renovations of these resources should be addressed equitably across the system. In addition, as equipment is upgraded, the Township should incorporate elements that are accessible to all ages and abilities. Lastly, in the face of climate change impacts, the Township should strive to adapt its parks and open spaces to problems such as increased heat and more frequent heavy rainfall. These efforts could include installing more shade structures and implementing drainage improvements to mitigate flooding.

General improvements to all parks and open spaces include upgrading park restroom facilities and water stations, exploring ways to expand operating hours, and creating additional recreational fields. Below are specific examples of necessary improvements to parks and open spaces.

- **DeHart Park** – need for more lighting, trees, signage, and police presence to deter criminal activity near the Newark Way entrance to the park.
- **Maplecrest Park** – need for more lighting, programming, landscaping, replacement of the picnic tables that were removed (including installation of a canopy over the tables), general continued maintenance, and upgraded multigenerational playground equipment. In addition, the tennis court area has been closed since Hurricane Sandy and needs work to reopen it safely to the community.
- **Maplewood Community Pool** – need to review and improve the pool concession stand, equipment, space, and environment. There is a critical need for additional shading structures at the pool concession stand and the community waiting area to enter the pool. The pool could also benefit from additional tables and seating under shading structures. Lastly, the Township should explore making the pool memberships more affordable to ensure equitable access to this community amenity.
- **Memorial Park** – need for more benches, replanted trees, and replaced shrub. Currently, the Maplewood Memorial Park Conservancy is working to plant trees as part of the Memorial Tree Program and Tree Replacement Master Plan, and to plant shrubs as part of the Shrub Replacement Plan, and implement additional seating and internal pathways as part of the Valley Street Border project.
- **Milo S. Borden Park** – need for general continued maintenance, upgraded soccer field, and tree maintenance.
- **Ricalton Square** – need for more lighting, programming, landscaping, and general continued maintenance.

- **South Mountain Reservation (Essex County)** – need to restore the park’s understory and manage the forest health to keep up with the changing climate. Partner with Essex County to explore strategies to address wildlife management in South Mountain Reservation to mitigate the amount of wildlife wandering into the Township.
- **Chyzowych Field** – continue efforts, in partnership with the Township of South Orange Village, to redesign the field as a more accessible, multigenerational, resilient, and valuable community asset.
- **Athletic Fields** – Maplewood’s athletic fields are under enormous demand, and the grass and drainage conditions can be poor, requiring periodic cancellations of events and additional travel to other towns. There is a need for improvements to athletic field facilities, with a focus on durability and low maintenance requirements, new lighting, and new or expanded facilities to increase field capacity. These improvements should not wait on preparation of a new Open Space Element of the Master Plan (see the following recommendation).



Athletic Fields Located Along Baker and Valley Streets

Create a new Open Space and Recreation Plan Element of the Master Plan:

The element should document existing parks and open spaces and establish a continued maintenance plan, as well as explore opportunities for new potential parks and open spaces. In addition to the specific park improvements identified above, broad components that should be addressed include:

- Ensure sufficient amenities, lighting, passive spaces, multigenerational playgrounds, seating, recreational fields and spaces, recycling and trash bins, and water stations to meet the needs of all age groups and abilities.
- Explore opportunities to optimize parks and open spaces to make them accessible and useable all year with consideration to environmental justice and equity.
- Ensure park entry points, facilities, internal pathways, and public restroom facilities are accessible to all Maplewood residents, particularly the senior population, residents with disabilities, and caregivers.
- Continue partnering with South Orange and the school district to best accommodate field usage schedules for business sports, recreational, and school teams.
- Identify new potential open spaces (e.g. community garden, dog park, parks, plazas, etc.).
- Investigate ways to make existing and new parks and open spaces more sustainable and resilient to more frequent heavy rainfall and intensified natural disasters.

Consider creation of an Open Space Zone: Currently, parks and open spaces are classified under various residential and commercial/industrial zoning districts. The Township should consider the creation of a parks and open spaces zoning district dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of these environmental and natural resources, including privately owned recreation.

Continue to expand the open space network as opportunities arise: The Township should perform a yearly review with the Department of Public Works, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, Environmental Advisory Committee, and Green Team Advisory Committee to update

and prioritize the properties highlighted in the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element. This should include a visit to the properties to decide upon which one(s) to submit for grant funding. The Township should prioritize developing parks for both active and passive uses in areas that appear to be underserved, such as the eastern and southern portions of Maplewood.

Continue to seek funding opportunities for parks and open spaces: To support the continued maintenance of existing parks and open spaces and to acquire potential new parks, the Township should continue active efforts in identifying and securing grants and funding opportunities.

Improve connections between parks and open spaces throughout Maplewood.

Maplewood's parks vary in size and location. While they are not typically located close to each other, parks are near residential neighborhoods and should be well-connected to these areas so that residents can readily access them, whether or not they have a vehicle. Wherever possible, the Township should strengthen links to parks and open space assets to form interconnected greenways that provide connectivity to neighborhoods, public facilities (i.e. schools and libraries) and employment areas. The use of coordinated signage, lighting, and street furniture can better mark approaches to parks, while opportunities should be explored to create new pedestrian entry points to improve access.



Lightning Brook

Recommendations

Continue efforts to implement the proposed Rahway

River Greenway: The Rahway River's East Branch runs through the central portion of Maplewood and continues north to South Orange and south to Millburn and Union. The 2010 Rahway River Corridor Study identified the need to revitalize the river in Maplewood to address water quality and flood protection issues. Conceptual plans illustrate opportunities to enhance the river's riparian habitat, manage stormwater runoff, and increase access for pedestrians and cyclists.

The plan proposed creation of a greenway, a combination of walking paths and bicycle routes, along the river seeking to connect Memorial Park in Maplewood to Waterlands Park in South Orange. As a next step, the plan recommended expanding the greenway to connect Maplewood to Millburn and the South Mountain Reservation. The Township of Maplewood is working to realize these plans in coordination with properties along the river between Chyzowych Field and Oakland Road. The Township should continue active efforts to establish the greenway and partner with South Orange to connect both municipalities' greenways at Chyzowych Field.

Preserve and strengthen Lightning Brook as a resilient natural resource accessible to the public:

In partnership with the Hilton Neighborhood Association, the Maplewood Environmental Advisory Committee, and the Townships of Irvington and Union, Maplewood should pursue a comprehensive revitalization of the brook. These efforts should also consider how to make Lightning Brook and the immediate surrounding area resilient to future heavy rainfalls and natural disasters. Where the brook passes through private properties, the Township could work with property owners to acquire conservation easements to implement a multiuse path with native plantings along the brook's edge.

Prepare a comprehensive pedestrian and bikeway pathway plan:

The Township should create a plan documenting pedestrian and bicycle paths connecting community facilities, houses of worship, parks, open spaces, and neighborhoods. This plan could provide residents and visitors with a visual map highlighting the best routes to walk or bike from one location to another. In addition, the plan



Bicyclist on Sidewalk next to Memorial Park

should look into the potential use of “paper” streets (roads illustrated on maps, but not formally built) and street ends to create new access points, as well as the use of public- or nonprofit-owned lands. A continued maintenance plan should be included for existing and future paths. Where the walking or biking paths are located within the public right-of-way, the Township should prioritize sidewalk and roadway improvements along these routes.

Assess existing community facilities to identify needs and opportunities.

Maplewood’s municipal functions occur in old buildings of varying condition, which can limit function based on modern needs. At the same time, there are opportunities to improve the accessibility to these facilities, to ensure that all residents can safely and comfortably access key functions and participate in community programming and events. The Township has been proactive in planning and implementing significant improvements to community facilities, such as the current replacement of the main library branch. Continued long-term planning is needed to identify critical needs for remaining facilities and set priorities for actionable next steps, particularly given Maplewood’s limited available land and the significant cost of needed improvements. A comprehensive assessment of facilities will also help to establish budgetary needs and assist the Township in seeking grants and other funding opportunities.

Recommendations

Prepare a new Community Facilities Plan Element of the Master Plan: This Element would evaluate all municipal facilities to ensure they meet the service needs of the community. An inventory of Township-owned buildings and spaces should be conducted to assess current conditions and space configuration and utilization. Higher-level assessments could be undertaken for facilities owned by Essex County, the Board of Education, South Orange, and others. In addition, Maplewood’s houses of worship should be considered as part of this assessment as they serve as an extension to community facilities by providing spaces for local programming, shelter during natural disasters, and food pantries. The assessment should identify potential opportunities where colocations, expansions, relocations, and upgrades are feasible. The Township should strive to retrofit community facilities with sustainable and resiliency design elements to ensure they could serve as resilient gathering centers during extreme weather-related events. In addition, the plan should explore opportunities to optimize seasonal facilities, such as the Maplewood Community Pool and adjacent surface parking lot, to make them accessible and useable during the off-season with consideration to environmental justice and equity.

Take steps to ensure that all municipal facilities are both compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and embrace principles of universal design: All municipal facilities should be accessible to all Maplewood residents, especially for the senior population and special needs community. The Township should evaluate municipal facilities to ensure they are compliant with the ADA standards for accessible design, and should seek to incorporate accessibility for individuals with both mobility challenges and developmental disabilities. For example, libraries and community centers could have “quiet rooms” for individuals with autism or sensory processing issues. The Township should also embrace universal design principles, meaning that facilities are easy to access, comprehend, and use by all age groups and abilities.

Consider allocating some parking spaces at municipal facilities to special needs individuals, including drivers with small children, the elderly, and anyone who is mobility-challenged: Some special needs individuals do not have

mobility issues that would qualify for a handicap parking permit, but these individuals have trouble walking distances. The Township should explore assigning some parking spaces or accessible drop-off areas at municipal facilities to accommodate the needs of special needs individuals with limited mobility. These parking space would be in addition to the required ADA accessible parking spaces.

As part of land use applications, take every opportunity to improve handicapped accessibility for private buildings and facilities: Beyond accessibility at municipal facilities, the Township should strive to make the entire municipality more ADA accessible, as feasible. As part of land use applications, the Township should consider encouraging private property owners to incorporate ADA accessibility for private buildings and facilities.

Strengthen and expand the Township's lines of communication with the community.

Communication was a significant area of concern for participants in the Master Plan process. Many residents expressed that they do not feel well-informed about what is happening in Maplewood, whether that means learning about an initiative being undertaken by the Township or a major development under consideration, or simply knowing about community events.

The Township has a robust e-blast system and regularly posts updates on its website, but these efforts may have limited success reaching segments of the population that lack strong access to technology or are less digitally savvy, such as seniors. These groups often prefer paper mailings. However, taking that approach can be difficult to reach renters, of which there are a large number in Maplewood.

Township departments exert significant effort toward communicating with residents, businesses, and visitors. However, communication is generally being undertaken in silos, with staff undertaking their own outreach efforts. In today's environment, a more unified, all-encompassing strategy is needed to "fire on all cylinders" – using mailings, paper flyers, website updates, social media, texting, and various other techniques in a coordinated system.

Recommendations

Consider hiring a municipal communications specialist to help streamline communications: The Township could consider creating a staff position for a municipal communications specialist, with responsibility for coordinating all Township communications and providing regular updates about upcoming events. Communications should be made available in the key languages spoken by Maplewood residents, including English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Russian. In addition, the municipal communications specialist could help the Township with staying connected with local community organizations, houses of worship, neighboring municipalities, among others. The specialist could take on many of the recommendations outlined in this overarching strategy.

Set and implement a Municipal Communications Strategy:

Creation of a Municipal Communications Strategy would identify the best ways for the Township to effectively communicate, engage, and reach the community. The strategy would highlight recommendations to improve the Township website and communication with residents. It would provide guidance on how to make the website easier to navigate for all users. The website should host essential information, documents, and reports to serve as resources for the community. Also, the website could be improved with a more robust calendar showcasing community events, engagement opportunities, programs, and meetings. In terms of email blasts, the Township should explore consolidating updates from all Township boards, departments, commissions, and committees into one e-blast if possible.

In addition, the communications strategy would assess the existing communication channels most used by residents, and build from those channels to share activities, community engagement opportunities, events, meetings, programming, or specific updates. Through this assessment, the Township could consider the feasibility of creating a social media platform, such as a Township of Maplewood dedicated Instagram or Facebook page, to help streamline communications. Both the Township website and other communication channels should be updated and maintained regularly.

Continue to establish strategies to reach out to Maplewood’s underrepresented populations, including communities of color, low-income communities, and renters:

Maplewood is home to a diverse community, with residents of varying cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Township should explore the most effective ways to actively engage with underrepresented populations to ensure they are fully aware and can access events, programming, and resources. For example, the Township could partner with South Orange Maplewood Community Coalition on Race to learn from their inclusive community engagement strategies and to potentially co-host future engagement events as needed. For the renter population, the Township could reach out to the management teams at apartment developments to identify the best ways to engage with their tenants (e.g. building events, bulletin board, e-blasts, etc.).

Continue regular coordination with Maplewood’s neighborhood associations: The Township’s neighborhood associations are resources to ensure residents are aware of neighborhood-related events, improvements, and updates.

Provide new residents with a “Welcome Wagon” kit:

To ensure new residents are welcomed, the Township should consider providing new residents with a “Welcome Wagon” kit, which would include all the important information a new resident would need to know to assist with settling into the community. This could include transit information (e.g. jitney bus service), a recycling and trash collection calendar, contacts for key Township departments, information on native trees and landscaping, and yearly events to look out for.

Investigate the potential to provide public Wi-Fi at community facilities and parks: The Township should explore the feasibility of providing residents with free public Wi-Fi at specific locations such as community facilities, parks, and open spaces. The Library’s Hilton Branch and the Springfield Avenue Partnership (SAP) were awarded grant funding to purchase Wi-Fi extenders to expand internet access to the area immediately surrounding the library. The Township could consider implementing Wi-Fi extenders at other community facilities, and publicize this amenity.

Build upon the Township’s existing programming, resources, and services to make them accessible to all residents.

Maplewood has a well-deserved reputation for inclusiveness and acceptance of residents from all walks of life. Maintaining a community that is accessible to all takes constant effort on the part of the municipality, as well as strong collaboration with partners such as adjacent communities, local businesses, and the nonprofit sector, to ensure that municipal programs, facilities, and events are open to all and are also functioning in the most efficient way possible.

Participants in the Master Plan process raised the need for efforts to better serve special needs residents and those with disabilities, as well as a desire for more programming and events for all ages. Maplewood is not alone in this need. Many communities in the region are actively engaging in these areas; for example, a number of local recreation departments offer adaptive sports programs for children with special needs, while others run cross-municipal services for seniors including shuttle buses. The Township should explore opportunities to improve services and programming, both on its own and in partnership with neighboring communities, to ensure possible participation by all residents.

Recommendations

Identify gaps in the Township’s recreational opportunities, such as activities and programming, to ensure all age groups and abilities are accommodated:

Some participants in the Master Plan process identified the need for expanded intergenerational recreational opportunities (sports and non-sports), especially for teens, young adults, seniors, and people with disabilities. Community stakeholders highlighted the importance of ensuring recreational offerings are accessible, equitable, and inclusive of all residents. Specific recommendations include focusing bike and pedestrian improvements around community facilities and recreational amenities, improving communications about recreational programming, and ensuring that programming is inclusive of the full diversity of the community, in terms of age, race, gender identity, and ability.

Establish a Disability Advisory Committee: A Disability Advisory Committee, comprised of Maplewood residents well versed in this important topic, could identify actions to serve and include special needs residents, such as:

- Sharing resources on available programs in the region.
- Compiling information on resources and services for special needs residents in Maplewood that could be provided to new residents as part of the “Welcome Wagon.”
- Explore ways that Maplewood can become an autism-friendly community.
- Advising the Township on upgrades or renovations to municipal facilities as well as transportation/ infrastructure projects to ensure the special needs community is accommodated.
- Implementing sensitivity training for municipal workers on interacting with special needs individuals.
- Planning and implementing community events that are inclusive to the special needs community.
- Incentivizing or encouraging local businesses to hire special needs employees with assistance from local partnerships, such as with the SIDs.

Develop a Township Strategic Department Plan: To better understand the needs of each department, the Township could evaluate each department to identify the current capacity and resources as well as to determine hiring and resource needs.

Continue collaborating with South Orange and other neighboring communities: These municipalities have numerous shared service arrangements enabling them to run more effectively and efficiently. Maplewood and South Orange share fire departments, municipal court services, school systems, and other services. The Townships should continue collaborating with each other and with other neighboring municipalities, as needed.

Partner with local arts and cultural organizations, businesses, community groups, houses of worship, and other organizations to host key events: The Township could look to collaborate with community stakeholders to host larger events rather than many smaller events for similar functions (e.g. holiday events) to enhance the overall event success, increase community building, and reduce costs.



Maplewood Community Fridge and Food Shed

Local community stakeholders could include local arts and cultural organizations, businesses, community groups, houses of worship, and other organizations.

Strengthen and promote community resources related to public health, such as access to affordable healthy food, social services, and wellness programs.

The COVID-19 pandemic elevated public health concerns and soundly established public health as a key aspect of land use planning and design for both public- and private-sector projects. In addition, the isolation and reduced social interaction seen during the pandemic underscored the importance of promoting mental health and social connectedness through the creative use of open spaces and the public realm. The Township should continue current efforts to support public health and wellness of the entire Maplewood community. Some Master Plan participants indicated the need to amplify, promote, and streamline the Township’s public health and wellness programs, resources, and services, especially those related to domestic violence, food distribution, mental health, and social services.

Recommendations

Support and implement recommendations from Maplewood’s Sustainable Jersey Health Gold Committee:

As part of the Township’s Sustainable Jersey certification and efforts to achieve Health Gold status, the Maplewood Health Department prepared a Community Health Assessment Report to capture resident feedback on current public health services and ways to improve these services in an equitable manner. This Master Plan fully supports the Health Department’s efforts, and the Township should consider implementing the report’s short-, medium-, and long-term interventions as recommended by the Sustainable

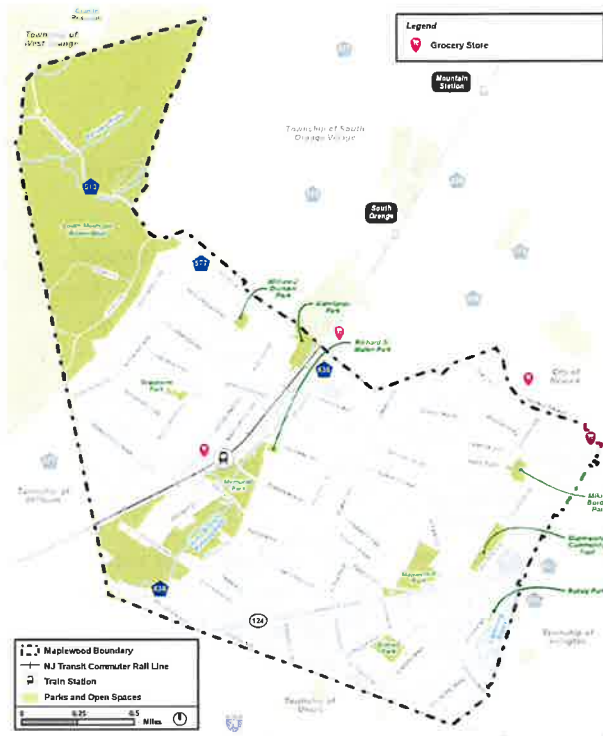


Figure 30: Existing Grocery Stores

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network, (Exported from Urban Footprint), BfJ Planning

Jersey Health Gold Committee. Some of the following recommendations are derived from this report.

Address food insecurity by promoting grocery stores, Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), and similar uses, particularly in the eastern and southern portions of the Township: Maplewood has a limited number of full-service grocery stores (see Figure 30), with some portions of the Township, such as neighborhoods along Springfield Avenue, relying on dollar stores and convenience stores for food. To mitigate this situation, grocery stores, community supported agriculture (CSAs), and food cooperatives should be permitted uses in all business, commercial, and industrial districts. In addition, these uses should be supported as optimal for the ground floors of mixed-use development, as they both respond to a community need and promote an active pedestrian environment. In such mixed-use development, consideration should be given to relaxing parking requirements for the commercial food-related use through shared parking arrangements. In particular, the development of grocery stores and similar uses should be promoted within the eastern and southern portion of the Township, where Maplewood’s low- to moderate-income households primarily reside.

Explore ways to make the Farmers Market more accessible to all residents: Maplewood’s Farmers Market runs on Monday afternoons from June 5 through November 20, at 1866 Springfield Avenue on the surface parking lot. The market provides the community with another option for weekly fresh produce. The Township should consider strategies to make the market more accessible to the entire community, including:

- Evaluate the operating hours.
- Provide transportation access to the market.
- Create financial access by accepting various payment forms.
- Enhance ADA-accessibility within and surrounding the market area.
- Explore the potential to create a Mobile Farmers Market Stand in partnership with Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity (MEND).
- Implement a new jitney bus service route dedicated to taking community members to grocery stores and the Farmers Market with stops that are more accessible in neighborhoods where there are lower income households, people with limited mobility, seniors, special needs individuals, and others in need.



Farmers Market

In addition, the Township should consider expanding the market's operations year-round to provide even greater services to the local community, either by creating an outdoor covered market space or using an indoor flex space. One opportunity could be to approach houses of worship about hosting a reduced-scale indoor market. This could provide a revenue stream to the host facility and typically aligns with their mission to serve the community.

Investigate the potential to create additional community gardens: Maplewood has two active community gardens, at the municipal building and Maplewood Community Pool. The Township should consider the possibility to establish more community gardens where appropriate, expanding the reach and benefits these amenities provide.

Support public and mental health programs and ensure that residents are aware of and have access to mental health and social services: This includes facilitating non-vehicular and transit access to health and social services facilities and organizations so that local residents can safely reach them, and collaborating with relevant agencies on any upgrades to public infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks) that may be needed to improve access. For example, the Township should advocate with NJ Transit to restore bus service along Valley Street, which previously provided access to St. Barnabas Hospital in Livingston. In addition, Maplewood should ensure that local health-care options are available by permitting urgent care facilities in all business districts.



Community Garden at the Municipal Building

Partner with the South Orange-Maplewood School District on future planning efforts.

The school district is an important part of Maplewood's attractiveness and identity; for many families, the schools are the primary way they engage with the community. Schools are also key components of land use in the Township, and they are both generators of – and highly sensitive to – vehicular traffic. Any major long-term planning effort must consider impacts to local schools and the way that residents reach and engage with them.

Although Maplewood's current and projected school-aged population does not currently raise major concerns for the school district, it is important for the Township to maintain a strong, collaborative relationship and ongoing communication with the district on any significant planned development, the needs of individual schools, and transportation issues.

Recommendations

Coordinate with the District on its transportation planning to identify and mitigate hazardous routes, including coordination on Safe Routes to School: Some Master Plan participants stressed the need to improve the safety of school routes, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. The District aims to identify and mitigate hazardous routes to ensure safety and accessibility for Maplewood and South Orange residents, and has engaged a professional engineer in this effort. The Township should coordinate with the District on their transportation planning efforts to collaborate on improving routes to school, including coordination on the Safe Routes to School program.

Maintain close coordination with the District on enrollment trends and significant new housing development that could affect school capacities: The District has retained a new demographer to work on updating the 2017 Demographic Study to illustrate the current student enrollment and future projections. This study will incorporate the District's intentional integration efforts. The Township continue close collaboration and coordination with the District on student enrollment trends, in particular identifying significant new housing development that could affect the facility usage.

SUSTAINABILITY, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND RESILIENCY

Foster development that focuses on energy-efficient, sustainable, and resilient practices.

Building more sustainable developments assists with protecting the resources and systems that support us today so that they will be accessible to current and future generations. The potential impacts of climate change, which is a global issue, must be considered when planning for the future to ensure communities are resilient and can adapt to climate change related impacts. The Township should adopt and enforce land use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space, reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce automobile use by improving walkability. The recommendations below should be taken by the Township take to encourage high environmental standards for development and infrastructure, conserve resources, promote renewable energy, and improve the environmental performance of municipal property.

Recommendations

Prepare a Green Building and Environmental

Sustainability Element of the Master Plan: This element should focus on identifying strategies to build upon and enhance the Township's green building and sustainability initiatives. As stated in New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), the element contents should promote the efficient use of natural resources and the installation and usage of renewable energy systems; improve the incidence effectiveness of recycling and reduce waste; consider the impact of buildings on the environment; allow ecosystems to function naturally; conserve and reuse water; treat stormwater on-site; and optimize climatic conditions through site orientation and design.

Continue to encourage new development and renovations to incorporate sustainable practices compatible with U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) rating systems or comparable principles:

The Township should encourage multifamily and mixed-use developments to incorporate all practicable sustainable design components as feasible. Green components could include greywater recycling, solar energy harvesting, vegetated green roof, among others. The USGBC established the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating systems to guide the creation of green buildings as well as green neighborhoods and cities. There are additional green building certification programs such as the Energy Star Building Certification, Living Building Challenge, and WELL Building Standard. The Township has taken strides to implement sustainable development practices within municipally-owned facilities. In 2008, the Township officially opened the new Maplewood Police and Court Building, which is recognized as the first LEED certified municipal building in New Jersey with the LEED Silver certification.

Support the shift toward reliance on renewable energy

sources: Renewable energy can be replenished by natural sources, such as geothermal, hydro, solar, or wind powered energy. The transition to renewable energy sources provides many benefits, including creating local job opportunities in the green industry (e.g. manufacturing, installation, and continued maintenance of renewable energy sources), improving air quality, minimizing the use of nonrenewable energy sources, providing cleaner and cost-effective energy sources, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Shifting to renewable energy sources is imperative for the future health and well-being of all biodiversity and the natural environment.

As noted in the 2019 New Jersey Energy Master Plan, the State has a goal of reaching 100% clean energy by 2050. Maplewood should support the transition from non-renewable to renewable energy sources, in particular focusing on electrical power sources, also known as electrification or decarbonization. As a first step, the Township should investigate the potential to generate its own distributed generation of electricity (e.g. Maplewood Community Solar). Simultaneously, the Township should assess the feasibility of retrofitting municipal facilities to all-

electric power. Each municipal facility could undergo an energy audit to identify the facility's overall efficiency and potential to be retrofitted. The Township should strive for all municipal facilities to be net zero over time.

Furthermore, the Township could partner with Maplewood's Green Team and Environmental Advisory Committee to provide the community with comprehensive educational resources about the benefits of shifting to renewable energy sources and potential funding opportunities.

Support and implement the Maplewood Community

Energy Plan: Current efforts are taking place in the Township to assist in reaching the State-wide clean energy goal. The Maplewood Community Energy Plan Working Group and the Rutgers Center for Green Building are partnering to develop the Maplewood Community Energy Plan, which seeks to determine the capacity for electrification in the Township, investigate the feasibility of community solar, and study the capacity for adequate electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The Township should support the plan's completion and implementation.

Continue active efforts to improve air quality: The Township has taken strides to improve the air quality and overall public health for all Maplewood residents and biodiversity. As of January 1, 2023, gas-powered leaf blowers are not allowed to be used by residents and contracted landscape professionals. The Township should consider a further ban on gasoline-powered lawn mowers and other gas-powered equipment to further enhance air quality.

Continue seeking additional funding opportunities to implement sustainability and resiliency efforts: Participants in the Master Plan process stressed that a major challenge to fulfilling much needed sustainability and resiliency projects is the amount of funding needed to complete them. The Township should actively pursue grant opportunities to support projects seeking to strengthen its future sustainability and resiliency, and other funding strategies such as a revolving loan fund for projects related to sustainability and resiliency.



Sustainable Jersey

Support continued efforts to maintain and increase Sustainable Jersey certification: In 2019, Maplewood became a certified community as part of the Sustainable Jersey municipal certification program. This nonprofit organization provides tools, training, and financial incentives to support communities as they pursue sustainability programs. Participating communities are required to establish a Green Team to assist with completing actions required for Sustainable Jersey certification. The Township is actively involved in the Sustainable Jersey program and earned the Silver certification status in 2022. Maplewood should continue to support efforts to maintain and increase its certification status.

Establish comprehensive waste management strategies to reduce negative environmental impacts.

As part of overall sustainability efforts and preparation of a Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element of the Master Plan, Maplewood should promote strategies to comprehensively minimize and manage waste. These efforts should focus both on municipal facilities – as a way to lead by example and effectuate change quickly – and on individual property owners, who can collectively have an enormous impact on the waste stream. Many of these strategies also involve education and public outreach efforts, which should be led by Maplewood's Green Team and Environmental Advisory Committee.

Recommendations

Continue working to reduce the volume of waste and promote municipal recycling:

In partnership with Maplewood's Green Team and Environmental Advisory Committee, the Township has taken active strides to minimize the amount of waste at the municipal-wide level, including the composting pilot program and dual stream recycling program in collaboration with South Orange. The Township should continue investigating best management practices to lessen overall waste, while avoiding unintended negative consequences to other communities. In addition, the Township should consider providing incentives and/or creating requirements for recycling by commercial building owners. With the implementation of commercial recycling, business owners would have the structure and support needed to recycle, resulting in a larger impact on waste reduction.

- **Public outreach:** Raise public awareness with flyers, training, and workshops to educate the public about the Township's revised recycling schedule and materials eligible to be recycled. To facilitate a higher rate of recycling, the Township could provide residents with free bins that protect against contamination from rainwater and other elements.
- **Continue to seek ways to reduce single-use plastics:** The Township adopted ordinances banning single-use plastic bags, polystyrene foam containers, and other single-use plastic food items. Maplewood should continue to explore ways to minimize the usage of other single-use plastics, building on efforts underway at the state level.
- **Continue to support and expand the food waste composting program:** There is community interest to see the composting pilot program expanded beyond the 70 participating households. In addition, the Township should facilitate a greater presence of private composting operators in Maplewood.



Recycling Center

Consider the potential to increase the types of items that can be recycled at the Recycling Center:

The Township's Recycling Center provides residents with a facility where they may drop off various items to be recycled. Some items include clothing, electronics, and scrap metals. There is an opportunity to further increase the types of items that may be recycled such as EpiPens, textiles, Styrofoam, and commercial and residential building materials. Furthermore, the Township could provide residents with a list of companies, such as TerraCycle, that collect a broader range of items that are not collected at the Recycling Center.

Create opportunities for local drop off or collection of hazardous waste:

The Recycling Center does not currently accept household hazardous waste materials, such as oil based paint. As a result, Maplewood residents are required to bring hazardous waste to the Essex County Utilities Authority, during special collection days. The Township should explore providing residents with the opportunity to drop off or collect hazard waste at a local site.

Identify key locations to install trash and recycling bins, including "Big Belly" trash compacting bins:

Participants in the Master Plan process stressed the lack of trash and recycling bins throughout Maplewood, such as in the commercial areas and around schools. The Township should identify additional locations where trash and recycling bins may be appropriate.

Support conservation of environmentally sensitive areas.

With two key waterbody resources, various parks and open spaces, and a range of topographical conditions, Maplewood has a wealth of unique and valuable environmental assets that need to be protected. Critical



East Branch of the Rahway River

environmental resources such as riparian areas, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplains help buffer the effect of hazardous weather and climate change, particularly in mitigating the impacts of flooding. In addition to fulfilling their protective role, these resources often provide local habitat for plants and animals, as well as an attractive environment that is an important piece of Maplewood's identity. Priority areas for conservation should be those undeveloped areas that have a high ecological value; will guard against flooding, soil erosion, and stream sedimentation; and/or can connect to a comprehensive parks and open space network.

Recommendations

Review Township ordinances to ensure they are providing maximum protection to environmentally significant areas:

In coordination with the Environmental Advisory Committee, the Township should assess all ordinances that seek to protect the environmental resources, such as conservation easements, steep slopes, stream corridor protection, tree removal, wetlands, wildlife habitat areas, and others to ensure they are as strong as possible. There is an opportunity to revise or enforce the open space regulations for chemical/pesticide use restrictions.

Review the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element

yearly: The Township should review this plan element of the master plan yearly to update the open space and recreation properties and related information, and submit the update to Green Acres.

Create a new Environmental Resources Inventory (ERI):

Last completed in 2006, Maplewood's ERI provides a detailed inventory of all environmental resources along with information on their baseline conditions for measuring and evaluating resource protection issues. The

ERI is an important tool for the Environmental Advisory Committee, Planning Board, Zoning Board, and other environmental groups. This inventory is a useful document to guide modifications to zoning regulations and land use ordinances. Funding is available to create this inventory through the Sustainable Jersey program.

Consider acquiring properties in floodplain areas to reduce vulnerabilities and increase public space along watercourses, such as the East Branch of the Rahway River and the Lightning Brook:

The Township should develop a regular process to contact small and large landowners to request that the Township have an opportunity to purchase the property before the land is placed on the open market. Property owners could also be contacted to discuss the option of placing conservation easements on their land. In addition, Maplewood should prepare at least one application a year for Essex County Recreation and Open Space Trust Fund grants.

Minimize impervious surfaces and implement green infrastructure techniques.

Many properties in Maplewood, especially located in commercial areas, are distinguished by large building footprints, large surface parking lots, and wide roadways (see Figure 31). Many of these features were constructed prior to the adoption of current stormwater management regulations. In some commercial areas, most of the available land area has been consumed by impervious surfaces, leaving little room for landscaping and open space, which filters stormwater and allows for ground water recharge.

One problem with large impervious surface area is the potential for pollution of stormwater. Impervious surfaces collect biological and chemical pollutants (i.e. oil, soaps, chemicals, trash, organic material), which can subsequently pollute either surface waters, or the groundwater that recharges the aquifers that provide a source of drinking water. High volumes of surface water runoff from impervious surfaces can also exacerbate the erosion of areas that are not paved with concrete or asphalt, degrading important landscape elements within the community. These factors, combined with projections of increases in storm intensity,

can lead to additional environmental and physical damage in the future. Another major issue in particular is the impact of impervious surfaces on groundwater recharge. If stormwater discharges directly from impervious areas to piped infrastructure, it is not filtering back into the ground where it may replenish drinking water sources.

Lastly, significant paved areas create a heat island effect which can reduce the enjoyment and usability of many residential and commercial areas, particularly for pedestrians. Current climate change projections indicate a high probability of increasing prevalence of extreme heat, which is magnified by the urban heat island effect. The greening of urban areas by planting trees and other vegetation, installation of green roofs, and similar measures can help mitigate the urban heat island effect and the impacts of increasing ambient temperatures. The trees can also provide shade, which provides a refuge and some welcome relief from the sun during hot weather.

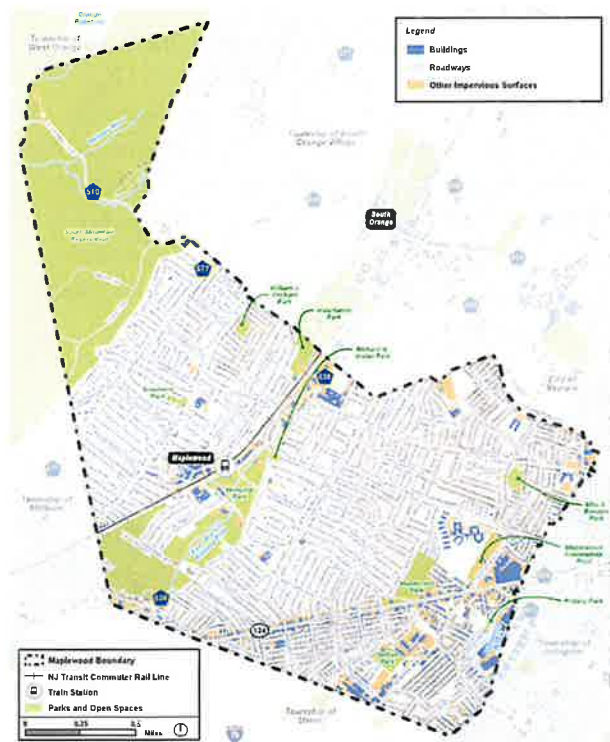


Figure 31: Impervious Surfaces in Maplewood

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network, (Exported from Urban Footprint), BfJ Planning

Recommendations

Maintain and strengthen the Township's existing tree canopy:

Maplewood's beautiful natural environment is one of the many reasons longtime and new residents chose to call it home. With time, the Township has seen the continued loss of the tree canopy due to age, disease, or proper tree care and continued maintenance. There is an opportunity to better maintain and strengthen the existing trees so they may continue serving as sustainable natural resources that also provide many other benefits, such as reducing stormwater runoff, improving air quality, increasing shade, and beautification. The following recommendations seek to strengthen the tree canopy.

- Consider hiring a Township arborist staff person or a forestry consultant, with responsibility for ensuring proper tree care and maintenance of publicly owned trees.
- Investigate the establishment of a Shade Tree Commission to support municipal efforts to maintain and expand the tree canopy.
- Create a Township-wide Tree Canopy Documentation and Maintenance Plan: Similar to the Memorial Park Tree Replacement Master Plan, the Township should explore creating a tree canopy master plan to serve as a guide for the continued maintenance of existing trees and for guidance on planting new trees. To significantly reduce the heat island effect, the Township should strive to increase the tree canopy coverage throughout Maplewood to at least 40%.



Examples of lack of tree canopy in Maplewood Village

- Revise the Tree Ordinance to incorporate language about tree replacement: The Township should aim for a one-for-one replacement requirement when trees need to be removed. Where an owner cannot replace all the trees on their property, an in-lieu program could be established to plant appropriate trees in the immediate vicinity. In addition, the Township should undertake a public education campaign to raise awareness of the existing regulations on tree removal.
- Provide the community with educational resources: In addition to the maintenance of publicly owned trees, the Township should also provide residents with resources to properly care and maintain their private-owned trees. Trainings, workshops, and educational resources on native and invasive species could be provided to the entire Maplewood community.
- Identify locations for new or replanted trees in commercial areas, with a focus on prioritizing areas with less existing tree canopy coverage. When commercial property owners seek approvals for new or significantly altered development, the opportunity to introduce trees, landscaping, and green infrastructure to reduce the existing impervious coverage should be a high priority.

Conduct a Heat Island Assessment and Mitigation Plan:

Generally, the eastern and southern portions of Maplewood have the least amount of tree canopy coverage, and thus experience higher temperatures compared with more shaded areas. This heat island effect poses public health

concerns for residents who live in these neighborhoods. The Township should conduct a comprehensive heat island assessment to identify areas experiencing extreme heat and ways to mitigate these conditions. Some measures could include the implementation of awnings, shading structures, green roofs, cool roofs, green infrastructure, landscaping, or trees. The Township could receive Sustainable Jersey credits for completing this plan.

Modify zoning code to reduce impervious surfaces

coverage: Some strategies for commercial properties include potentially reducing impervious coverage maximums, especially in non-residential areas. In addition, the Township should closely review its ordinances to ensure that they are not having unintended consequence of incentivizing impervious surfaces. Related to ADUs recommendation mentioned earlier in the land use section, the Township should explore the existing impervious coverage allowances to ensure the primary home, ADU, and accessory storage shed could all coexist under the zoning code.

Lead by example at municipal properties:

The Township should consider upgrades at municipal parking lots where landscaping is minimal, to explore the potential for green infrastructure and plantings to reduce runoff. As other municipal facilities are renovated or created, best management practices (BMPs) for green infrastructure should be employed to reduce or minimize impervious coverage, such as use of pervious pavement, bioswales, and rain gardens.



Examples of lack of tree canopy on Springfield Avenue



Maplewood Community Pool Parking Lot

Continue and expand public awareness of sustainability practices: In partnership with the Maplewood Green Team and Environmental Advisory Committee, the Township should continue providing residents with educational resources, such as providing homeowners, property owners, and businesses with information on the benefits of using pervious surfaces and a list of contractors familiar with installing pervious driveways, patios, and walkways. There could be potential to introduce bulk contracting or purchasing.

Rehabilitate aging infrastructure to support existing and potential new development.

Many portions of the Township’s sewer and water infrastructure are past their intended useful life and are either currently in need of repair or will require repairs to maintain the reliability of the sanitary sewer and water systems. With heightened weather-related events expected with climate change, the Township should strive to prepare Maplewood’s infrastructure and public utilities to become more sustainable, resilient, and adapt to these potential future events. The Township should continue active efforts to conserve water, reduce stormwater runoff, and minimize impervious surfaces.

Recommendations

Implement a program to monitor and report on the state of the physical infrastructure and public utilities serving Maplewood: To ensure infrastructure and public utilities are running effectively and efficiently, the Township should regularly monitor and report the current conditions of infrastructure and public utilities. The Engineering Department and various public utility providers should collaborate on these efforts. Examples include Township-owned roadways and storm sewers as well as those utilities provided by other entities such as power, water, and telephone.



Raised Landscaped Median along Midland Boulevard

Explore the use of green infrastructure in roadway projects: The Township should explore the potential to install green infrastructure and use best management practices where practical in coordination with future roadway, sidewalk, and parking lot improvements as well as other public projects. Green infrastructure, also referred to as green streets, assists with reducing the amount of stormwater runoff and mitigating flooding. The Township should encourage green infrastructure practices on both public and private properties.

Maintain and strengthen the Township’s stormwater management infrastructure to ensure the systems are running efficiently: In addition to reducing impervious surfaces and implementing green infrastructure practices, the Township should continue to undertake regular maintenance of storm drains and replace undersized pipes as needed. The Township should also ensure that culverts or drainage canals are continuously maintained and cleared of overgrown bushes, trees, and any other barriers. Storm drain leaders and sump pumps that direct to the street should be addressed. Furthermore, stormwater should be addressed at the source in and around the sewer system.

Upgrade sanitary sewer and water infrastructure, starting with priority locations: Throughout the Master Plan process, participants stressed the need to upgrade aging infrastructure that dates back to the 1930s. The Township should upgrade the sanitary sewer and water infrastructure beginning with priority locations. In addition, the Township should seek to identify grants and funding resources, including resources from funding entities for the purposes of environmental protection, resiliency, and climate change adaptation in order to access the lowest cost means of completing the needed upgrades.

Adopt a one-time sanitary sewer connection fee for new construction: The fee could be based on number of units or square footage, and should be reduced for affordable units.

Encourage interior and exterior water conservation to mitigate the need for additional sewer and water capacity increases: The Township should raise public awareness on water conservation for interior and exterior use, which may include public education campaigns, restrictions on water use, upgrades to public facilities to improve water efficiency, and incentives to property owners to upgrade their properties for greater water efficiency. The Township could partner with Maplewood's Green Team and Environmental Advisory Committee, New Jersey American Water Company, and/or other entities to identify ways to reduce water consumption.

Continue partnership with PSE&G to implement sustainable infrastructure improvements: The Township should continue coordinating with PSE&G on public utility improvement projects. One project example is that the Township should advocate for PSE&G to replace mercury vapor streetlights with more solar energy-efficient LED lighting. Furthermore, the Township should explore the potential for PSE&G to bury electrical lines to beautify the streetscape, improve site lines, and reduce the risk of power outages due to downed trees.

Strengthen Maplewood's flood-prone areas to mitigate the risk and impacts of weather-related events heightened by climate change

Maplewood's floodplains are of significant importance to the health and well-being of its residents, as climate change is increasing the frequency of major storms. During peak rainfall events, substantial impacts can occur to a vast number of properties. For example, Hurricane Ida devastated the area with heavy rainfall and flooding resulting in substantial damages to properties and loss of lives of beloved community members. Some homes and businesses close to the East Branch Rahway River and Lightning Brook are within a 100-year floodplain.

One of the most effective techniques to improve a floodplain condition is the conversion of developed property within a floodplain to undeveloped property replanted with native vegetation. This solution is not easily accomplished due to the high cost of developed real estate and the price to reclaim these lands. Nonetheless, the Township should continue to analyze properties within floodplain areas that may be appropriate for acquisition as open space to accommodate floodwater storage.

General roadway flooding is also an issue in the Township. Flooding could be caused by clogged storm drains and older pipes that are not as large as modern drainage pipes. Drain clogs are caused by stormwater runoff, which is made worse when impervious surfaces aren't buffered by vegetation that could soak up water and stop sediment before it clogs the drain. The Township should continue making active strides to strengthen Maplewood's flood-prone areas to be resilient to more intense weather.

Recommendations

Explore the creation of a Stormwater Utility: Through State enabling legislation, the Township should investigate the potential to create a Stormwater Utility dedicated to regularly maintaining the stormwater infrastructure.

Continue to reference and update the Municipal Stormwater Management Plan: In 2018, the Township developed the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to guide the approach to stormwater runoff for both existing and future developments at the municipality-wide level. The Township should regularly monitor the stormwater infrastructure and update the plan as needed to ensure its effectiveness.

Update regulations to require stormwater management for minor site plans: Maplewood has adopted the State's stormwater management regulations, but there is an opportunity to expand on these regulations to require stormwater management for minor site plans. Such a change should be accompanied by a significant educational campaign to property owners.

Encourage homeowners to disconnect downspouts: Many downspouts are piped underground and discharged to the street. Disconnecting reduces the amount of water running into a storm drain. Redirecting it to the lawn, a garden, or a rain barrel can provide a number of environmental benefits.

Continue to implement initiatives from the County of Essex All Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Update: The Township should continue working to implement recommendations from the County's All Hazard Mitigation Plan. Some recommendations to be implemented include stream bank improvements to stabilize the banks of Lightning Brook and drainage upgrades in the Orchard Road and Wyoming Avenue/Jefferson Avenue areas.

Prepare a flood-prone area study to identify priority locations and determine mitigation strategies: Throughout the Master Plan process, community members raised the critical need to address areas greatly impacted by flooding. The flood-prone area study could also explore how to manage stormwater runoff flows to avoid local and downstream surges as well as identify local stormwater containment opportunities. Stormwater containment includes recognizing and correcting areas of fill that have placed watercourses into channels and pipes. In addition, the plan should consider equity as an overarching theme to ensure strategies include low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. For example, there is a need to manage local rainfall to prevent excessive flows into low-income areas located downstream. It is important to coordinate this planning effort with Essex and Union Counties and various municipalities to address flooding comprehensively. Below are examples of waterbodies and their surrounding neighborhoods noted to have experienced severe impacts due to flooding:

- East Branch Rahway River – Partner with the Township of South Orange Village (for the northern end of the river) and the Township of Millburn and the Township of Union (for the southern end of the river)
- Lightning Brook – Partner with the Township of Irvington
- South Mountain Reservation – Partner with Essex County, the Township of Millburn, and the Township of South Orange Village

Encourage properties located in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) to consider making their property and structures more resilient against future impactful weather events:

The Township should encourage homeowners, business owners, property owners, houses of worship, and others with properties in FEMA's SFHA to make flood-related modifications. Funding opportunities include FEMA's flood mitigation grant programs, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program, and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program.

Partner with South Orange on strategies to mitigate flooding at Chyzowych Field: A portion of the South Orange-owned Waterlands Park, referred to as Chyzowych Field, extends into Maplewood. Master Plan participants indicated the need to enhance this underutilized field into a resilient community resource. Some ideas include the creation of a multigenerational recreational complex for active and passive recreation that incorporates green infrastructure elements. As the park is located in the AE flood zone, these green infrastructure elements seek to capture, divert, and store water to assist with mitigating flooding. Upgrades to Chyzowych Field should ensure that the Rahway River Greenway from South Orange connects with the greenway portion in Maplewood.

Continue the Township's involvement in The Mayors Council Rahway River Watershed Flood Control: The Township should continue to remain involved in the Mayors Council to advocate for the completion and implementation of the Rahway River Flood Mitigation Plan.



Chyzowych Field

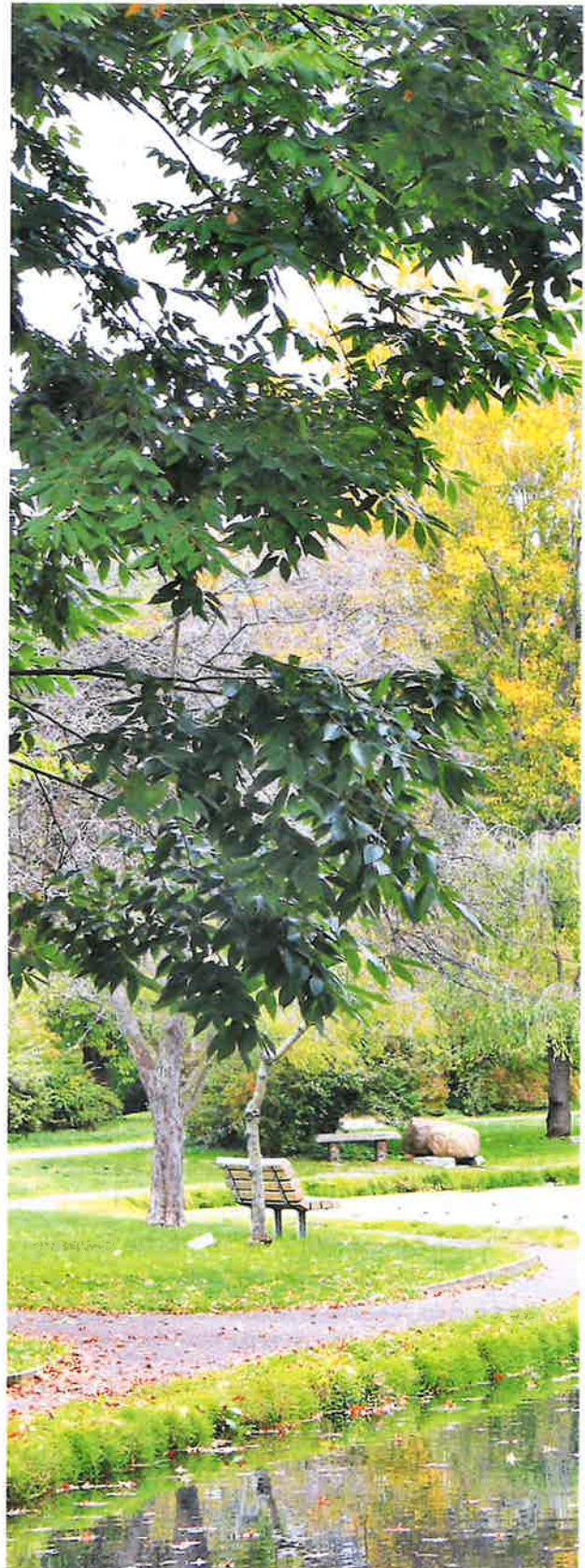
Improve Maplewood's capacity to prepare, respond, and recover from emergency events and natural disasters.

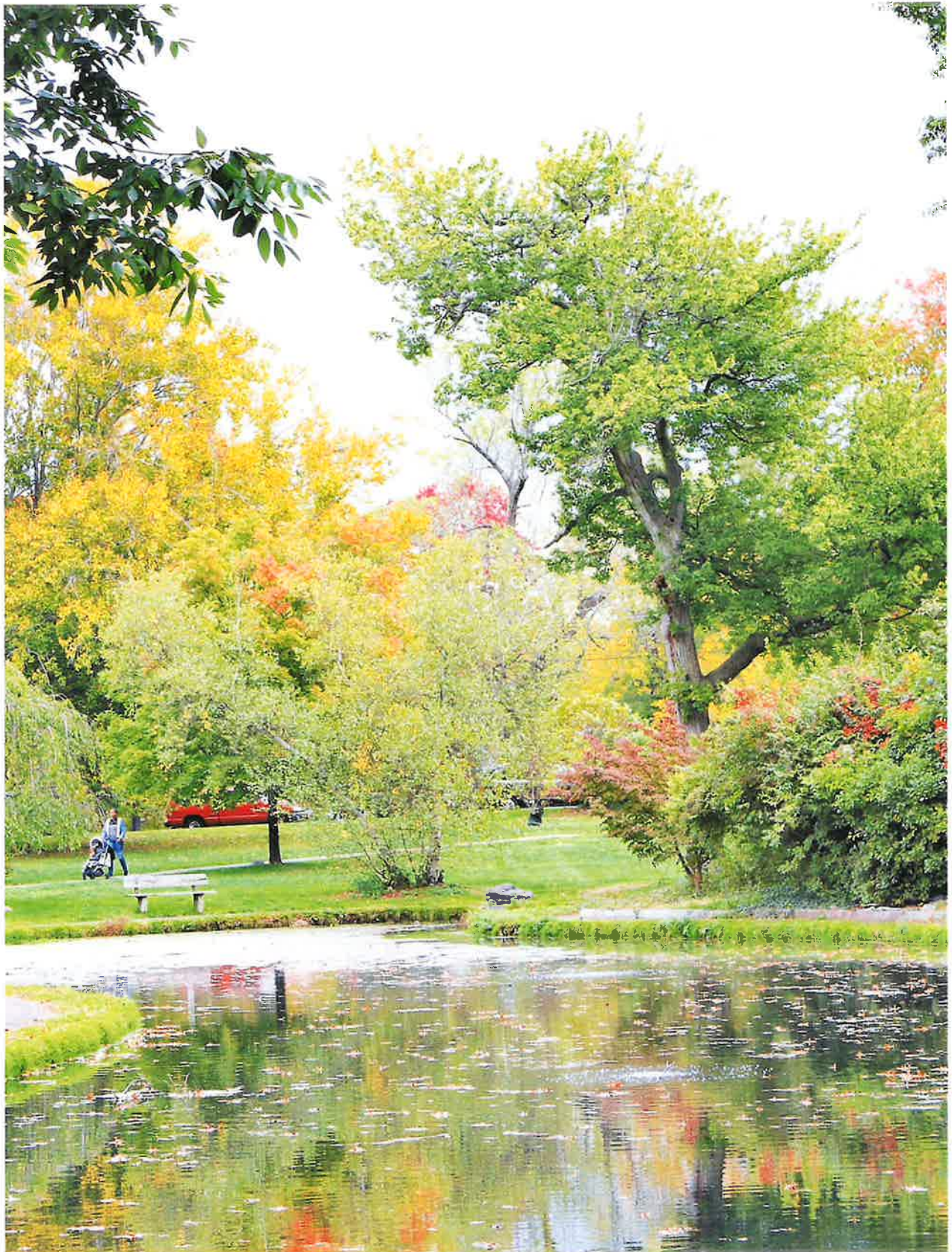
Supplementing the preparation of the physical built environment for future natural disasters, the Township should also provide the community with guidance on how to approach each emergency event type. The Township should raise public awareness about the importance of emergency management through a public campaign, workshops, trainings, and educational resources.

Recommendation:

Provide the Maplewood community with educational and supportive resources to ensure everyone is prepared for future natural disasters.

In preparation for future emergencies and natural disasters, the Township should explore and implement ways to improve communication before, during, and after emergency events and natural disasters is essential to ensure the entire community is aware, prepared, and ready. These efforts should include a focus on disadvantaged populations who may be less able to prepare and recover, such as low-income communities, renters, and residents without a vehicle. This effort should build on the Township's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which is required to be prepared every four years and submitted to the State Police Office of Emergency Management. The latest EOP will be submitted in June 2023 and run through May 2027. As per the NJ Attorney General, the EOP is not a public document due to the sensitive nature of the information on emergencies, vulnerabilities, and planned responses. However, the EOP can inform the resources prepared for and provided to residents to improve disaster-preparedness.





5

SECTION 5: LAND USE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Maplewood is a mature, largely built-out community, with very little vacant land remaining, and its established land use patterns are anticipated to remain largely intact. This does not mean, however, that there are not opportunities to effectuate change in order to achieve the community's vision for the appropriate scale and intensity of development. The Township's population is at its highest level to-date, and while growth is expected to moderate in the coming years, continued increases for Maplewood can be anticipated as a share of regional growth. If the Township does not accommodate some measure of growth, the scarcity of development potential could further drive up the value of existing properties, to costs that may be unattainable for many current and future residents. Maplewood will need to absorb additional density in the form of redevelopment of existing sites, which will require creativity and flexibility to respond to market forces in a manner that is acceptable to the community.

This Master Plan seeks to balance revitalization and change with the preservation of the assets that Maplewood residents value, including historic resources and the built context that gives the Township its distinct identity. The approach is one of targeted, smart growth of business and mixed-use areas, protection of existing neighborhood scale, and strengthening of amenities such as parks and transit. Equity is also an important consideration. Some areas of Maplewood have received significant new density because of availability of land, property ownership, and other factors. But as these portions of the Township are developed, other areas should also be contemplated for context-appropriate infill development, to help ensure that no one neighborhood receives disproportionate impacts of development.

In the near term, the most logical areas to receive density are where it is already occurring in Maplewood: near the train station (i.e., Maplewood Village) and along key commercial corridors (e.g. Springfield Avenue, Valley Street, and Irvington Avenue). These areas are optimal for new residents, given their proximity to local goods and services, transit, and community amenities, and they often contain underutilized properties that are ripe for modern and efficient development. Options can include new mixed-use and multifamily buildings as well as standalone office and retail uses – all of which can serve to enhance street life, local economic activity, and sense of place.

While the Township's low-density residential neighborhoods are not envisioned to change significantly, they too represent opportunities to introduce context-appropriate density. This does not mean transforming single-family areas into apartment buildings, but instead encouraging options such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) – which are already allowed under current zoning – as well as two-family homes and small apartment buildings. Such housing has come to be known as the "Missing Middle," because it represents a residential building type in between detached single-family homes and large apartment buildings, which has been significantly underbuilt since the post-war period. The many benefits of Missing Middle housing include:

- Buildings fit seamlessly into neighborhoods, either because similar building types already exist in the community or because the homes are designed and constructed to preserve or complement the streetscape's appearance and character.

- Neighborhood-scaled multi-unit structures can provide a community with a greater range of housing options, at various price points.
- The housing types fit within – and help to generate – walkable, place-based neighborhoods with community amenities that establish a sense of community.
- The homes can accommodate people of all ages, physical abilities, and stages of life.¹¹

The Land Use Plan that follows seeks to strike the appropriate balance of redevelopment and preservation, to further the key planning goals of connection, quality of life, and resiliency, under the overarching principle of equity.

For Maplewood, Missing Middle Housing could be more efficient than single-family in providing additional units, would be more contextual than larger mid-rise apartment buildings, and could help satisfy the Township’s affordable housing obligation.

¹¹ Adapted from “Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing,” AARP, 2022.

LAND USE PLAN

The Maplewood Land Use Plan (see Figure 32) broadly indicates the proposed location, extent, and intensity of the future development of land for various types of residential, commercial, business, recreational, and public and semi-public purposes.

The Land Use Plan is intended to guide future development in the Township for the next 10 years, under the provisions of the Municipal Land Use Law, in a manner which protects the public health, safety, and general welfare. This Plan is designed to serve as the basis for potential revisions to the Township’s land use ordinances, including zoning, subdivision, and site plan codes.

The Land Use Plan provides an overview of preferred land use types and locations consistent with Maplewood’s overarching planning goals, and in furtherance of the land use strategies and recommendations previously identified in this Master Plan. While it recognizes existing land uses and environmental resources and constraints, it also considers

future potential development, economic trends, and best planning practices.

The Land Use Plan is not necessarily meant to be parcel-specific; it illustrates broad land use patterns for different geographic areas in Maplewood. For example, an area designated as residential may include lots that contain commercial uses. While the existing land use map may pick up these individual uses, the Land Use Plan shows the generalized ideal land use for the area. Designations on the Land Use Plan are not intended to eliminate isolated cases that do not match the indicated land use, but rather to depict the overall desired uses that are envisioned for the area over time.

The Land Use Plan is based on the categories of development discussed below, which are similar to those provided in the 2004 Master Plan. The relationship of these categories to existing zoning is provided, along with recommendations for potential zoning changes. Proposed regulatory and map amendments are summarized at the end of this section. It is important to note that the Land Use Plan’s recommendations are just that: recommendations. Any zoning amendments undertaken by the Township may ultimately vary in some details from these specific recommendations, but should be consistent with the overall policy and intent.

The generalized future land uses are shown using traditional land use colors. Generally, lighter shades of each color indicate less development intensity; as the shade darkens, intensity increases. This map is not a substitute for, and does not supersede, Maplewood’s official zoning map.

Table 14: Land Use Plan Legend

Source: BFJ Planning.

Land Use	Color
Residential (five categories)	Yellow/Orange/Brown/Teal
Business and Mixed Use (four categories)	Red/Pink
Light Industrial/Commercial	Purple
Parks and Open Space	Green
Public and Nonprofit	Blue
Public Parking	Gray
Specialized Areas	As Indicated

Residential

The Land Use Plan shows five levels of residential density, primarily reflecting existing zoning and settlement. This classification is based on the use of the land, not ownership. Maplewood has a number of townhouse or condominium developments that may be single-family in terms of ownership and occupancy, but are grouped in a higher-density category because they are in attached buildings.

It should also be noted that single- and two-family homes may occur in any residential land use category. In addition, the residential land use category does not exclude uses that are often found embedded in residential neighborhoods, such as schools, places of worship, and occasional small businesses. These other uses, if of an appropriate scale, are normally seen as compatible with dwellings in overwhelmingly residential areas, and even as necessary to the proper functioning of neighborhoods. While the Land Use Plan shows current public and nonprofit uses such as places of worship, schools, and governmental facilities, a residential designation is not intended to preclude the future location of such uses, as may be appropriate and allowable by zoning.

1. Low-Density Residential (light yellow)

The low-density residential land use category provides for a density ranging from minimum lot sizes of 4,000 to 7,000 square feet, corresponding to the R-1-4, R-1-5, and R-1-7 zoning districts. This category covers the majority of Maplewood, except for areas in the eastern and southeastern portions of the Township as well as non-residential areas.

Low-density residential areas are typified by well-established, single-family neighborhoods. These areas are envisioned to remain generally at their current density and scale. However, it is recommended that the Township continue to encourage ADUs in either attached or detached structures throughout these zones, and should consider allowing two-family homes as conditional uses in all or certain single-family zones. The R-1-7 district could be considered first for the introduction of two-family homes, given its larger lot sizes. Conditions could include a minimum lot size, width, and/or depth that is larger than

permitted, to ensure sufficient room for off-street parking and other infrastructure needs. For example, the Township could consider permitting two-family homes where minimum lot size and width were at least 1.25 times larger than the minimum required. This is the same ratio of requirements for two-family homes in the R-2-4 district; a 5,000-square-foot lot of at least 50 feet in width is required for two-families, vs. a 4,000-square-foot lot of at least 40 feet in width for single-families. Using the 1.25 ratio for the R-1-7 district would require a minimum lot size of 8,750 square feet and minimum lot width of 87.5 feet to permit a two-family home. The Township could also consider additional locational provisions such as limiting two-family homes to certain major streets. This is an issue for further study and analysis.

As noted in the Strategies and Recommendations section, strong design of current and future two-family homes in the Township is critical to ensure that they are compatible with established neighborhoods and promote a walkable environment. Conditions for permitting two-family homes in single-family districts should incorporate design requirements to reduce the scale of garages, reduce pavement in front yards, and ensure a building height in keeping with adjacent and nearby homes. These provisions should also be incorporated into two-family requirements for the R-2-4 district.

Another change to be considered in all single-family zones (and the R-2-4 district) is a clarification of the provisions for transition lots. As recommended in the Strategies and Recommendations section, rather than defining transitional lots, the Township should consider defining a transitional area. Off-street parking, professional offices, and multiple dwellings would continue to be allowed in transitional areas – as they are on transitional lots – but would be controlled through conditions on lot size, side yard setbacks, building height, and required buffers.

Lastly, the Township should explore context-sensitive zoning regulations to ensure that new development within all residential zones (including the R-2-4 district) is compatible with the existing scale of development, through height, setback, and other bulk controls. The performance, noise,

and lighting standards should be reviewed for clarity and consistency with best practices, and Maplewood should look into ways to streamline and expedite basic property upgrades and reduce the need for variances, to incentivize continued upkeep.

2. Moderate-Density Residential (light orange)

This land use category corresponds to the R-2-4 zoning district and is designed to permit single- or two-family homes at a minimum lot size of 4,000 or 5,000 square feet, respectively. The moderate-density residential designation encompasses many of the neighborhoods on Maplewood's east side, and is intended to preserve and retain the existing permitted residential density. However, it is noted that, within this zoning district, there are existing three- and four-family homes. Traditionally, these units have been located within structures that resemble single-family homes, and they provide a unique and relatively affordable housing type that should be preserved.

Currently, in addition to transitional lots as conditional uses (see discussion above), multifamily residential units are permitted as principal uses in the R-2-4 district on lots of 2 acres or larger. This condition does not exist anywhere in the district, meaning that in practice, multifamily uses are not permitted except on transitional lots. The Township should consider reducing the minimum acreage requirement for multifamily development in the R-2-4 district for smaller apartment buildings (e.g. up to 4 units), to broaden housing opportunities and provide for "Missing Middle" housing.

Of note, there are existing residential properties within the CI district that could be ideal for these types of housing opportunities, rather than commercial or industrial uses permitted under the current zoning. These areas are indicated as residential in the Land Use Plan.



Existing neighborhood-scaled fourplex on Baker Street

Source: Google Maps

3. Garden Apartments/Townhomes (dark orange)

This residential category defines a housing density of 12 to 15 units per acre (for attached units and multiple-use buildings, respectively), and corresponds to the RGA garden apartment district. No zoning changes to this district are proposed.

4. Multifamily (brown)

This category corresponds to existing and approved multistory apartment/condominium buildings in Maplewood, which have generally been permitted through the use of the redevelopment tool or zoning variances. Such developments have typically occurred near the train station, along or near Springfield Avenue, and on portions of Valley Street, and they have often been part of the Township's efforts to meet its affordable housing obligation. Residential density varies according to lot size of these sites, but is generally higher than would be permissible under the RGA district. The Township does not currently have a zoning district in place that would facilitate the development of these types of multifamily buildings, and this Master Plan does not recommend creation of such a zone. However, development of new multifamily buildings could be considered through redevelopment or rehabilitation designation (see discussion below) or, on a smaller scale, on transitional lots as described above.

5. Continuing Care Retirement Community (teal)

There is one such use found in Maplewood, the Winchester Gardens retirement community off Elmwood Avenue, corresponding to the CCRC zone. This land use designation is intended to preserve this important residential use in the Township, and no changes to the zoning district are proposed.

However, with the upcoming fourth round of affordable housing obligations coming in 2025, Maplewood will likely need to continue identifying opportunities to address its obligation, which in a built-out community requires creativity. The Winchester Gardens property has undeveloped and/or underutilized areas which could be considered for context-appropriate development, such as townhomes with an affordable component. Such a change, which would need to be carefully discussed with the property owner, could be considered through the use of an overlay zone similar to what exists at the Maplewood Country Club property.

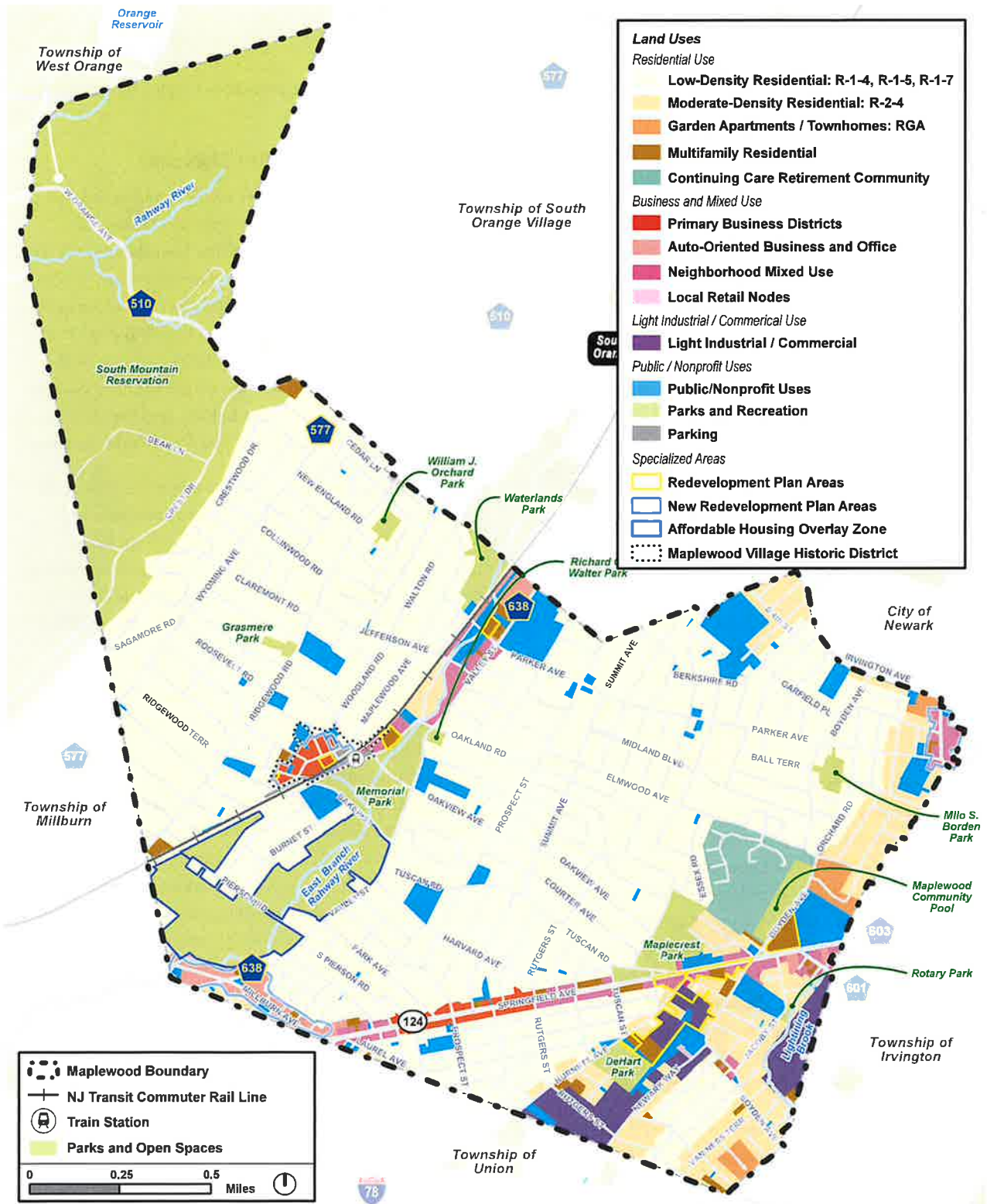


Figure 32: Land Use Plan

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), NJOGIS, BfJ Planning.

Business and Mixed Use

The Land Use Plan groups business (retail, personal-service and professional office uses) and mixed uses (business in combination with residential) into four categories. Unlike the residential categories, which are differentiated primarily by density, the business categories are also grouped by their intensity of use and relationship to nearby neighborhoods and to the automobile.

1. Primary Business District (dark red)

This land use category supports Maplewood's two main business districts, Maplewood Village and Springfield Avenue, both of which are also designated as Special Improvement Districts (SIDs). This category is designated on all of the RB zoning district as well as the portion of the PRB district on Springfield Avenue identified in the Strategies and Recommendations section as the strongest existing commercial node, between South Pierson Road/Ohio Street and Rutgers Street.

This category is envisioned to promote mixed-use areas with a density of development that helps the commercial area thrive and promotes a high degree of pedestrian activity. A wide variety of active commercial and service uses should be permitted, along with multifamily residential uses on upper floors. In order to facilitate this environment, not only should dwelling units be limited to the upper floors in the Primary Business Districts, but inward-facing supportive residential amenities (e.g. structured parking) should be limited in area on the ground floor of buildings and should be located behind a liner of public-facing and public-serving commercial and service uses oriented to the street. Switching from parking minimums to parking maximums, and thus reducing the amount of required off-street parking, should help to facilitate such building configurations. In addition, such ground-level uses should be at-grade, unless not possible due to particular topographical issues on a site, to ensure a connection with street-level activity.

In all business zones, it is recommended that the Township thoroughly review permitted uses, area and bulk regulations, and parking requirements to support small and emerging businesses as well as the arts and cultural community. This review should include an assessment of the permitting process to streamline the approval of desired

business types, such as conversions of retail to restaurant use.

2. Neighborhood Mixed Use (dark pink)

This land use category denotes business and mixed-use areas in Maplewood that serve adjacent residential neighborhoods, and to an extent the Township overall, but have less of a regional draw than the two Primary Business Districts. This designation is indicated for most of the existing NB districts, the PS district, portions of the PRB district not categorized as Primary Business District, portions of the HB district on Springfield Avenue not categorized as Auto-Oriented Business/Office (see below), and the OB zone on Valley Street between Oakland Road and Parker Avenue.

These Neighborhood Mixed Use areas, while often quite walkable, are also well-served by the automobile and typically need some level of off-street parking, either provided on-site or in municipal parking. This classification can serve as a designation that is "in-between" the Primary Business Districts and the Auto-Oriented Business/Office category.

However, some Neighborhood Mixed Use areas may have the potential to succeed to a level that they could be considered Primary Business Districts. For example, as the health and vibrancy of Springfield Avenue improves, the commercial core identified above could expand and create a more active street-level district. In addition, the business district along Irvington Avenue is recommended in this Master Plan for the potential creation of a SID, in collaboration with adjacent municipalities. For these two areas, even though public-facing commercial and service uses are not required on the ground floor (as they are for the Primary Business District designation), they should be highly encouraged, to facilitate greater pedestrian activity.

3. Auto-Oriented Business/Office (lighter red)

Although the business districts described above are highly walkable, there are other areas of the Township where businesses are, and will continue to be, reached primarily by automobile. This land use classification acknowledges this reality, and encompasses the OB district on Millburn Avenue and on Valley Street north of Parker Avenue, the HB district on the western end of Springfield Avenue, and HB-

designated sites on Springfield Avenue where the uses are auto-oriented and not permitted in any other zone (i.e., car washes and convenience stores with fuel pumps).

Two key zoning changes are inherent in this land use classification. The first is the removal of the HB district from portions of Springfield Avenue, bringing these areas to the OB, PRB, NB, or R-1-4 districts as appropriate. As noted in the Strategies and Recommendations section, this change would be consistent with the Township's longtime vision for Springfield Avenue as a more cohesive, pedestrian-oriented environment and the mitigation of potential negative traffic-related impacts on residential neighborhoods.

The second recommended zoning change is the elimination of the RO district on Springfield Avenue, current site of the NJ Transit Hilton bus garage and the only instance of this zone in Maplewood. The RO-zoned site could be considered as either CI or SLI and has been designated as Light Industrial/Commercial (see discussion below).

For both OB- and HB-zoned areas, the Township should explore potential zoning adjustments as well as streetscaping improvements to enhance aesthetics and lessen impacts on adjacent residential areas. For example, language could be added to the code to minimize or reduce the number of vehicular curb cuts and to incorporate a pedestrian condition with a sidewalk separated from the road by a grass strip.

4. Retail Node (light pink)

This land use category identifies a few highly localized, pedestrian-oriented retail nodes that have developed within otherwise single-family neighborhoods. This designation encompasses several sites along Ridgewood Road at its intersection with Cedar Lane (locally called the Ridgewood Row shopping area), and a single site at the Elmwood Avenue/Boyden Avenue/Orchard Road intersection.

Although in most cases these uses have existed for some time, they have retained their single-family residential zoning. The 2003 Master Plan noted a "conscious decision" not to rezone nonconforming land uses, so as to discourage their expansion or alteration. In the case of these retail nodes, because of their location among homes, they are

unlikely to expand. These non-residential sites include some longstanding businesses in the community – as well as newer businesses that are a welcome addition – and their nonconforming status could pose a detriment to their success.

The Retail Node designation recognizes these unique uses and is intended to allow them to continue in their current developed state. The Township may accomplish this by permitting, as conditional uses within single-family zones, retail, office, and service uses within buildings that were occupied by legally nonconforming non-residential uses in existence as of the date of adoption of this Master Plan.

Light Industrial/Commercial

The Light Industrial/Commercial land use designation encompasses Maplewood's two existing industrial zones the SLI and CI districts, as well as the RO district. Currently, the districts are differentiated by uses, with the CI district generally allowing a wider range of uses including non-medical offices, indoor commercial recreation, and breweries and distilleries. The RO district is a more traditional large-scale office zone, although its current use includes activities that would be permissible in the CI district.

The Township could consider consolidating these three districts into one zone that permits all of the current uses in the CI district. Alternatively, the RO district could be brought into the SLI zone, creating an opportunity to revisit – in coordination with the Township of Irvington – the provisions of the SLI district, which have not been updated since 2005. Either option would bring the RO district's area and bulk provisions to a scale of development that is more appropriate for the existing context (the current RO district permits a lot size of up to 80,000 square feet, vs. 40,000 square feet for the CI district and 35,000 square feet for the SLI district).

As noted in the Strategies and Recommendations section, the use standards in both the CI and SLI districts should be broadened to include a range of arts-supportive, food-related, and light manufacturing uses such as art galleries, maker spaces, food production, and limited retail space to accompany light manufacturing. New permitted uses should complement and not compete with existing industrial uses;

thus, standard retail and restaurant uses should be carefully controlled so as not to push out long-established industrial uses, and the introduction of new residential uses should not be permitted. Opportunities to introduce “green” businesses such as indoor agriculture, battery production and storage, recycling, and sustainable energy technology should also be explored. Conditions may need to be established on such uses to mitigate any impacts to adjacent areas and ensure an appropriate scale of development.

Public and Nonprofit

This designation encompasses areas of the Township that contain existing public and nonprofit uses, including municipal facilities, schools, utilities, public or private open space, and nonprofit uses such as houses of worship.

The Parks and Open Space category, shown in green, is intended to promote the maintenance and operation of public parks and privately owned open space and recreation. Currently, Maplewood does not have a zoning district dedicated to preserved park lands (i.e., properties on the Recreation and Open Space Inventory); parks are generally designated with the same zoning as surrounding/adjacent areas. The Township should consider creating an open space zone, which would better identify and protect these properties, as well as the privately owned resources, with limitations on uses and development.

The Public/Nonprofit category, shown in blue, identifies existing municipal, educational, or nonprofit uses. In the event that such uses change in the future – for example, a church or a school closes – the new use should be consistent with the surrounding area. This could include residential use at a density indicated on the Land Use Plan, a new nonprofit use comparable in scale, or a local retail node. The future location of public/nonprofit uses shall be allowed as permitted by existing zoning regulations; schools, houses or worship, and similar uses are typically conditional uses in many zoning districts.

Lastly, public off-street parking lots are indicated in gray. These are either municipal lots or associated with the train station. These uses are anticipated to continue, in order to serve existing needs, and this Master Plan recommends ongoing maintenance and improvements to such parking resources. However, in the event that public parking is

ever considered for redevelopment with new uses, the land use pattern should be consistent with the existing context in terms of use and intensity. Within the Maplewood Village area west of the train tracks, future development of parking lots should complement the Primary Business Area designation, while along Dunnell Road or Springfield Avenue, it should be consistent with either Neighborhood Business or Primary Business Area (if located within that node on Springfield Avenue).

Specialized Areas

The Land Use Plan recognizes specialized areas in Maplewood that serve a distinct purpose or are addressed through overlay zoning, and those areas that have been designated as redevelopment or rehabilitation areas.

5. Historic District

The Township’s State and National register-listed historic district, the Maplewood Village Historic District, was designated in 2022. Under the New Jersey Register, public (state, federal, or municipal) projects in the district are reviewed by the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office. The Maplewood Historic Preservation Commission offers its knowledge and opinions. This Master Plan recommends an update to the Historic Preservation Element, with consideration for designation of additional potential resources. If additional historic districts are designated, they should be added to the Land Use Plan.

6. Affordable Housing

Within the R-1-7 zoning district, the Township has designated a portion of the Maplewood Country Club property (Block 19-18, Lot 1; Block 19-20, Lot 243; and Block 18-3, Lot 24) for multifamily and/or townhome development as part of its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. Such residential development is permitted at a density of 8 units to the acre with a 20% affordable housing set-aside, on the developable portions of the site (i.e., not within designated floodplains or wetlands). As part of preparation of its next Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, the Township should consider establishing this area as an overlay zone, to better identify it as an opportunity for creation of affordable housing.

7. Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Areas

As shown on the Land Use Plan, Maplewood has designated eight redevelopment areas: three (PSRA, SA-1, and SA-3) along Springfield Avenue between Tuscan Road and Chancellor Avenue, one (RD-2) along Burnett Avenue north of DeHart Park, three (TARA, PORA, and DR-R) adjacent to the train station, and one (7PAW) along the north side of Parker Avenue between Dunnell Road and Valley Street. Of these, the RD-2 area has not been implemented, and should be revisited to facilitate appropriate revitalization.

In addition to these designated redevelopment areas, the Township should consider the following additional areas for potential designation as either redevelopment or rehabilitation areas:

- The Millburn Avenue corridor, currently zoned HB and OB, from the municipal border with Millburn to Springfield Avenue (potentially in coordination with the Townships of Millburn and Union).
- The Irvington Avenue business district, currently zoned NB, generally between Parker Avenue and Putnam Street (potentially in coordination with the City of Newark and Township of Irvington).
- The former movie theater building in Maplewood Village (currently being studied for a redevelopment designation).
- The entire Maplewood Village area, which would qualify as an area in need of rehabilitation. Working with the Maplewood Village Alliance and the Historic Preservation Commission, the Township should explore whether a rehabilitation designation could accomplish larger public goals such as façade renovation and improvements to the public realm. Unlike a redevelopment designation, an area designated for rehabilitation may be eligible for short-term tax abatements or payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs), but is not eligible for long-term incentives, nor are rehabilitation areas eligible for redevelopment area bond (RAD) financing or the exercise of eminent domain.

PROPOSED ZONING MAP CHANGES

For the most part, this Master Plan recommends maintaining Maplewood's existing zoning districts, with some modifications to area, bulk, use, and parking provisions to address specific planning issues. However, as illustrated on (Figure 33) and listed below, there are some instances where a map change is warranted:

Business/Office Zones:

- Rezone HB sites along Springfield Avenue to R-1-4, NB, and OB.
- Rezone OB zone along Valley Street between Oakland Road and Parker Avenue to NB. Any future development in this portion of Valley Street should carefully consider traffic impacts to the Valley Street/Parker Avenue intersection, particularly at the high school.
- Rezone the RO district either to CI or SLI.

Industrial Zones:

- Consider consolidating the two industrial districts into one zone.
- Consider rezoning existing residential uses to R-2-4

Parks and Open Space:

- Create a new Parks, Recreation, and Open Space district to accommodate existing public and private parks and recreational uses.

Affordable Housing:

- Explore establishing a portion of the Maplewood Country Club property as an Affordable Housing Overlay Zone to reflect the existing zoning requirements.

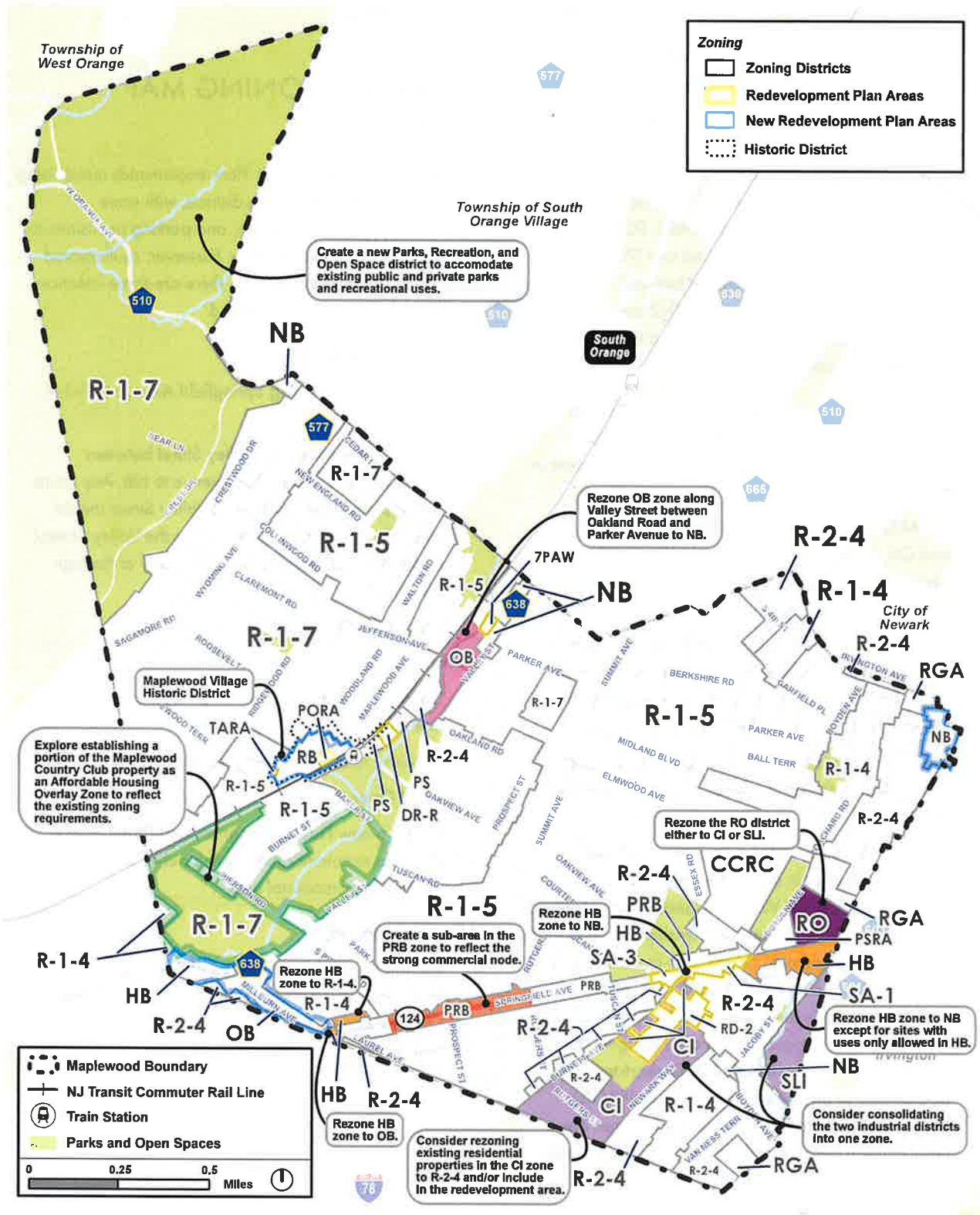


Figure 33: Recommended Zoning Map Changes

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), NJGIS, BfJ Planning.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

As of 2021, the MLUL requires that a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment be completed as part of the preparation of a land use plan element of a municipal master plan in accordance with NJSA 40:55D-28.b.(2)(h). The analysis is designed to identify key hazard-related risk factors, areas subject to potential impacts, and the development of policies and strategies for mitigation of potential impacts, preparedness, post-disaster recovery, and resilient planning and design. The MLUL criteria, which are set forth at NJSA 40:55D-28.b.(2)(h), are set forth as follows:

(h) A climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment which shall

- (i) Analyze current and future threats to, and vulnerabilities of, the municipality associated with climate change-related natural hazards, including, but not limited to increased temperatures, drought, flooding, hurricanes, and sea-level rise;*
- (ii) Include a build-out analysis of future residential, commercial, industrial, and other development in the municipality, and an assessment of the threats and vulnerabilities identified in subparagraph (i) of this subparagraph related to that development;*
- (iii) Identify critical facilities, utilities, roadways, and other infrastructure that is necessary for evacuation purposes and for sustaining quality of life during a natural disaster, to be maintained at all times in an operational state;*
- (iv) Analyze the potential impact of natural hazards on relevant components and elements of the master plan;*
- (v) Provide strategies and design standards that may be implemented to reduce or avoid risks associated with natural hazards;*
- (vi) Include a specific policy statement on the consistency, coordination, and integration of the climate-change-related hazard vulnerability assessment with any existing or proposed natural hazard mitigation plan, floodplain management*

plan, comprehensive emergency management plan, emergency response plan, post-disaster recovery plan, or capital improvement plan; and

(vii) Rely on the most recent natural hazard projections and best available science provided by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.”

Identification of Hazards

Maplewood contains three primary rivers and streams: the Rahway River, East Branch of the Rahway River, and Lighting Brook. Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) and environmental constraints such as riparian zones and freshwater wetlands are associated with each of these waterbodies.

SFHAs within the Township include areas A and AE, as shown on the Environmental Constraints Map. SFHA A exhibits a 1% annual chance of flooding and a 26% chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Since detailed analyses are not performed by FEMA for such areas, no depths or base flood elevations are shown within these zones. SFHA AE encompasses the base floodplain and has base flood elevations indicated on FEMA and National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) mapping.

The Township also contains areas within Flood Zone X. This Flood Zone is an area of 0.2% chance of annual flooding and is, therefore, subject to minimal flood hazard.

Maplewood has exposure to inland flooding events from extreme weather, such as hurricanes and powerful storms, which can cause the waterbodies to swell substantially and flood adjacent low-lying areas. Local flooding from severe rainfall events can also occur. In this case, the water drains from slopes within the same catchment area and accumulates in low-lying areas if insufficient drainage conditions exist. As a result, local stormwater management systems can be overwhelmed during severe rainfall events and create local flooding conditions.

A total of 4.7% of the land within the Township (116 acres) is located within SFHAs, and an additional 4.7% (116 acres) is located within Flood Zone X. These relatively small percentages indicate that Maplewood is less flood-prone than many Essex County municipalities as it pertains to SFHAs and Flood Zone X areas.

That being said, the Township is very susceptible to local flooding from inadequate stormwater management systems. The storm sewer system was originally designed for 5- to 10-percent annual-chance of flooding from storms, and cannot accommodate rainfall resulting from the 1-percent annual-chance storm. Due to this lack of processing capacity, some roadways and properties are more prone to localized flooding from extreme rainfall events.

The NFIP characterizes properties that have had multiple flood claims as either Repetitive Loss or Severe Repetitive Loss properties, depending on how many flood insurance claims they have generated. The Township has 11 repetitive loss properties and does not have any Severe Repetitive Loss properties, as shown below.

An additional hazard that affect the Township to a small degree is susceptibility to landslides. According to the 2020 Essex County All Hazard Mitigation Plan, a total of 37 acres within Maplewood is considered to be class B area that is susceptible to potential landslides. Only 33 buildings exist within these areas.

Another climate change-related natural hazard, which has garnered increasing attention in recent years, is extreme heat and the steady increase in average annual temperature. Extreme heat is typically characterized as a

condition where temperatures stay 10 degrees or more above a region’s average high temperature for a consistent, extended period of time. These higher temperatures can cause hyperthermia and even death. In addition, extreme heat strains local power systems due to increased use of air conditioning systems, which can cause power outages.

Maplewood is susceptible both to extreme heat and high humidity, the combined effects of which can magnify the health risks, as shown in the following image.

Maplewood is projected to continue to be susceptible to extreme heat and average temperature increases. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has noted that the average global temperature in July 2019 was 1.71 °F above the 20th century average of 60.4 °F. For New Jersey, according to the Sustainable Jersey Climate Change Adaptation Task Force (2013), by 2050, the average temperature is projected to increase 3 °F to 5 °F above the existing statewide baseline. Like much of the northeastern U.S., Maplewood is also susceptible to short-term droughts. Because the Township is relatively built-out, typical impacts from drought such as crop failure and increased risk of wildfire are likely to be less pronounced; however, acute impacts to community gardens and private landscaping, as well as risk of wildfire on smaller patches of vegetated area, do pose some risk. Anticipated future higher temperatures would worsen short-term drought conditions, but water supply shortages would be unlikely to occur during a short-term drought.

Table 15: Repetitive Loss and Severe Loss Properties in Maplewood and Essex County

Source: Essex County All Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Update

	Maplewood	Essex County Total
Total Policies in Force	128	4,221
Total Losses	105	4,752
Total Loss Payments	\$1,178,060	\$110,389,033
Repetitive Loss Properties	11	450
Severe Repetitive Loss Properties	0	62
Total Repetitive and Severe Repetitive Loss Combined	11	512

According to the County’s All Hazard Mitigation Plan, the following natural hazards are considered to be of medium to high risk for Maplewood.

High Risk

- Severe Weather (Hurricanes, tropical storms, and associated flooding)
- Severe Winter Weather

Medium Risk

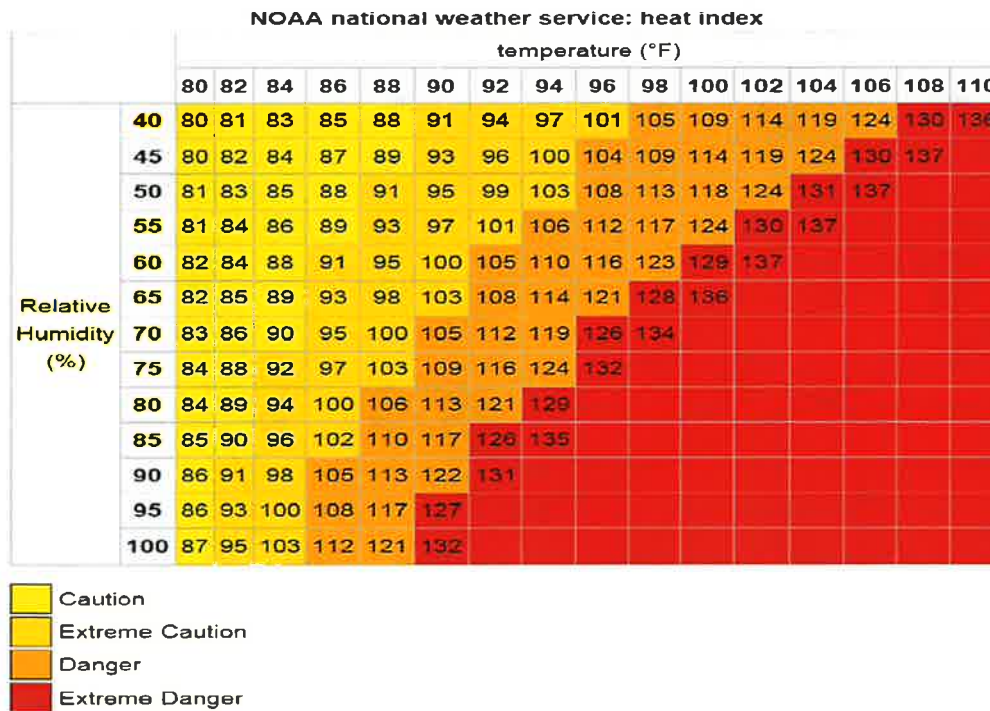
- Drought
- Extreme temperature

Of these natural hazards, the flooding aspect of severe weather has had the most profound impact on the Township in the recent past and has the potential to have substantial, costly additional impacts in the years to come. Therefore, after careful consideration of each natural hazard identified above, the CC&VA build-out analysis will focus on flooding as the key natural hazard under consideration.

However, extreme heat will remain a significant hazard for Maplewood and the larger region, and there are steps the Township should take to mitigate this issue. This Master Plan recommends improving the extent and health of the tree canopy, particularly in neighborhoods that are especially vulnerable to the Urban Heat Island Effect due to a lack of significant vegetation. Additionally, as part of its disaster preparedness efforts, the Township should identify and publicize the locations of cooling and warming centers during extreme heat and cold events, both of which are expected to become more frequent and intense due to climate change. Finally, Maplewood will need to work with the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and utility providers to ensure that residential cooling services are both affordable and able to be supported by the local electrical infrastructure. The current electrical infrastructure could not support full electrification of our residential HVAC systems, and some of the most constrained neighborhoods in terms of grid capacity are also some of the most economically disadvantaged.

Figure 34: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Weather Service Heat Index

Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).



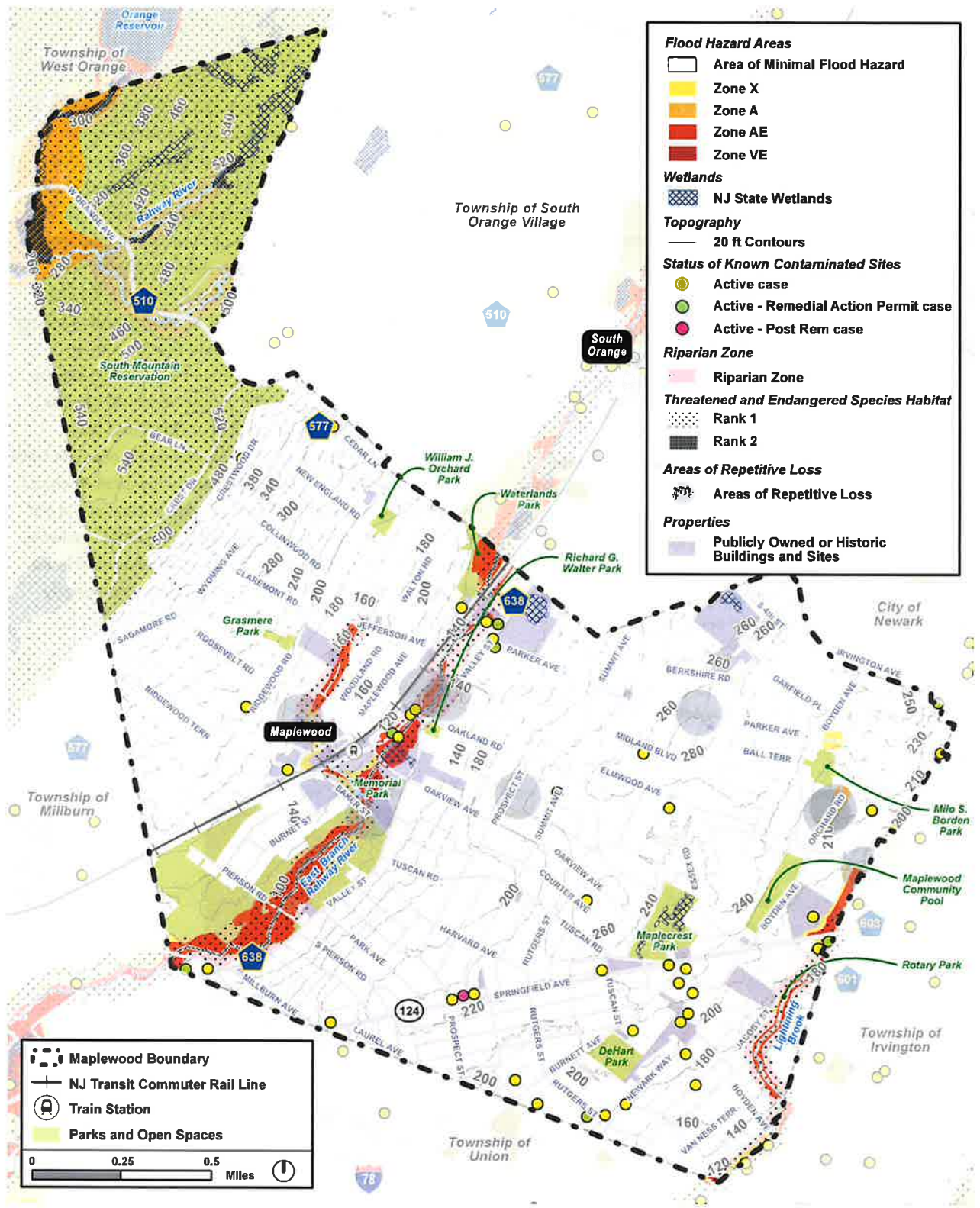


Figure 35: Environmental Constraints

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), U.S. Office of Homeland Security, Maplewood Environmental Resource Inventory, NJ Office for Planning Advocacy, County of Essex All Hazard Mitigation Plan, Tetra Tech, BfJ Planning.

Build-Out Analysis

In accordance with MLUL requirements, the build-out analysis is focused on areas that are prone to impacts from flooding as it pertains to projected future development, since these areas exhibit a higher level of vulnerability and risk. The area that the build-out encompasses was delineated using FEMA's SFHAs.

The build-out analysis includes all lots where 1 square foot or more of the lot or lots would be affected by floodwaters. This methodology is intended to be conservative and considers the entire impacted lot even if only a portion of it would be impacted by floodwaters.

Once the study area was delineated, the lots were screened for the presence of existing development and environmental constraints. Properties that are already developed with single-family homes, and those that are completely or substantially constrained with flood hazard areas, wetlands, or other environmentally sensitive areas (and thus not developable) were removed from the analysis.

The remaining lots were subjected to a land use and environmental constraints analysis, which resulted in the removal of additional lots. Because the build-out deals with the capacity of land to accommodate additional development, only vacant properties and underutilized properties that have been developed with 50% or less of their development capacity, according to the existing zone or redevelopment plan that governs their development, were retained within the analysis.

The results yielded two lots that satisfied these criteria, as shown on the Build-Out Analysis Map on Figure 36, both of which are owned by the Maplewood Country Club. The combined total acreage of the two lots (Block 18.03, Lot 24 and Block 19.20, Lot 293) yields 89 acres. This tract is included in the Affordable Housing Overlay Zone, where a density of 8 dwelling units per acre is permitted. As no commercial parcels met the criteria for further analysis, no additional commercial square footage is projected within the build-out analysis area under consideration.

The resulting residential units that could be implemented on the Maplewood Country Club tract represent an estimate of the density of additional development and associated residents that could be located within the area under consideration; however, it is important to note that the tract is quite large. Therefore, although the entire tract has been considered as part of this build-out analysis, there appears to be sufficient acreage to construct residential units outside of, and sufficiently separated from, the SFHA. Should residential development occur on this tract, all applicable environmental and land use regulations should be adhered to in order to ensure that all of the residential units are sufficiently separated from the SFHA and any associated environmental constraints so as ensure the safety of the residents and the conservation of the environmental resources on this tract.

This build-out analysis only focuses on a portion of the Township: those areas located within a SFHA. As discussed above, there are many other areas that could be subject to additional localized flooding with heavy rains. The Township should continue to implement improvements to stormwater infrastructure to make these areas safer and more resilient to the more frequent storm events. This Master Plan also recommends regulatory changes to stormwater management that are aimed at strengthening Maplewood's entire storm system.

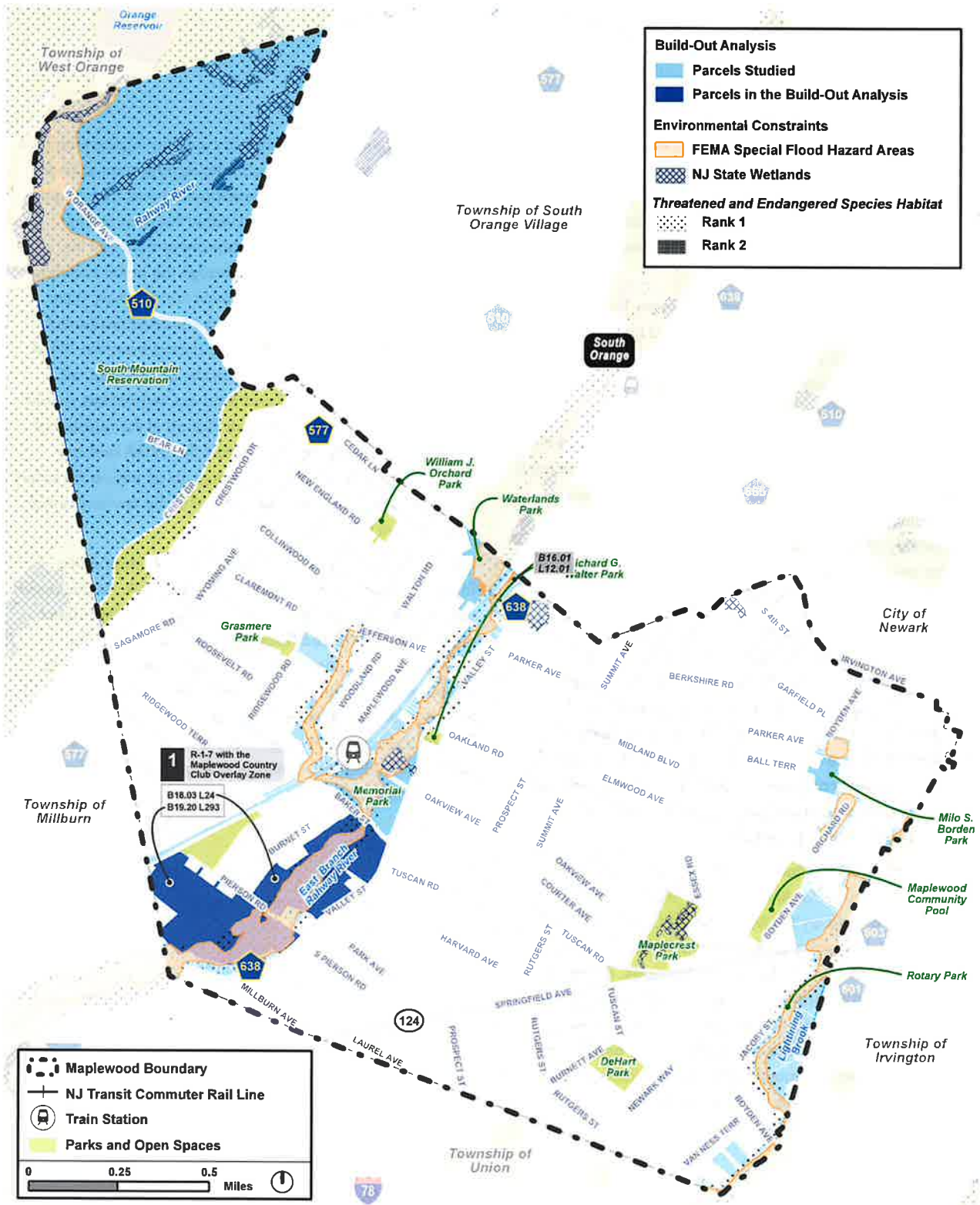


Figure 36: Build-Out Analysis Study Area with Environmental Constraints

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), U.S. Office of Homeland Security, Maplewood Environmental Resource Inventory, NJ Office for Planning Advocacy, County of Essex All Hazard Mitigation Plan, Terra Tech, BfJ Planning.

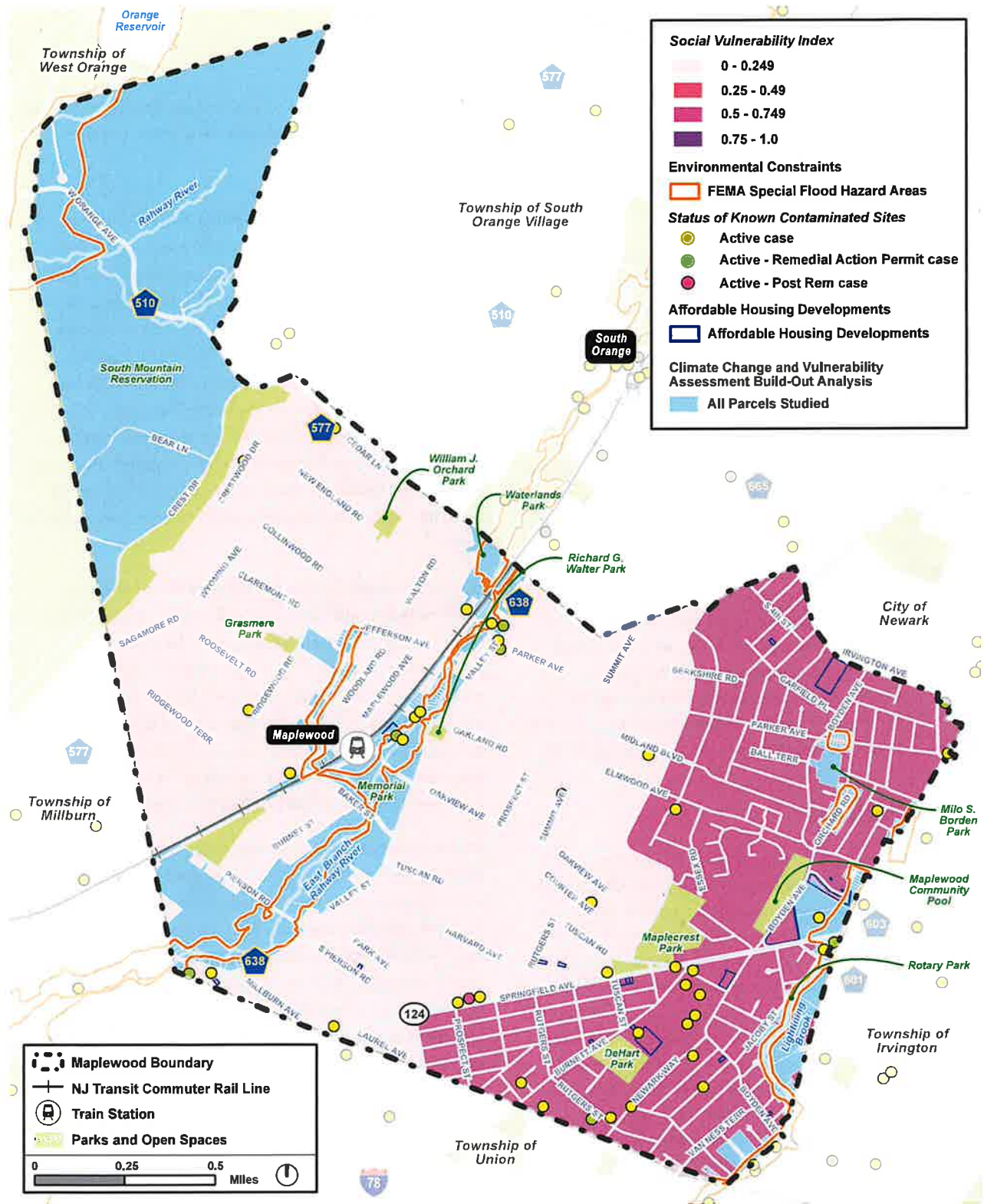


Figure 37: Vulnerable Populations

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Exported from Urban Footprint), U.S. Office of Homeland Security, Housing Element Fair Share Plan, Mid-Point Review of Affordable Housing Activities, BfJ Planning.

In addition, the analysis considers existing zoning and redevelopment plans, and considers current market conditions, trends, and other parameters in order to provide a reasonable estimate of the net development yield for the area under consideration. If the Township were to enact zoning amendments or amend or adopt new redevelopment plans, if new trends emerged in the market, or if other market or regulatory changes should occur, it may change the net development yield in the build-out analysis study area.

As part of the vulnerability analysis and build-out analysis, potential impacts to vulnerable populations were considered. The figure below depicts the geographic distribution of populations using the Social Vulnerability Index. The most vulnerable populations in Maplewood are in the eastern portion of the Township, which also contains Lightning Brook. As shown on the Environmental Constraints Map, Lightning Brook does have an associated SFHA and other environmentally sensitive features. The Brook is also susceptible to flooding during extreme rainfall events, which may cause local flooding due to stormwater management systems becoming overwhelmed during extreme rainfall events. As recommended elsewhere in this Plan, the Township should consider the potential for buyouts of properties (or the most vulnerable portions of the properties) along local waterbodies to reduce the risk of flooding in these areas.

Critical Facilities

Critical facilities in the context of the Land Use Plan and Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment include uses that are necessary for evacuation purposes and for sustaining quality-of-life during a natural disaster, which are to be maintained at all times in an operational state. Examples include police stations; fire stations; first aid and rescue facilities; public buildings such as the municipal building and public works facilities; and quasi-public and private facilities such as schools and telecommunications towers and equipment. Key critical facilities within the Township are depicted on the Critical Facilities Map on Figure 38. Of these, a preschool, gas station, Maplewood Fire Department building, and a cell tower are in relatively close proximity to the East Branch of the Rahway River. In addition, a day care center and a gas station are located near the Lightning Brook. These facilities have a degree of elevation separation from the adjacent waterbodies;

however, they are at a relatively low elevation and may be susceptible to flooding from extreme weather events.

Conclusion

As a built-out community with limited vacant land, most of Maplewood's development potential comes in the form of redevelopment of existing developed properties. For those limited areas identified as vulnerable in the build-out analysis, or for other properties that may be vulnerable to localized flooding in severe storms, redevelopment of existing properties creates opportunities to construct improvements that are more resilient to flooding. Redevelopment in low-lying areas is recommended to include elevated or floodproofed buildings and structures, to the extent feasible, in accordance with current federal, State and local requirements in order to help ensure public safety.

For interior areas that are not subject to these impacts, the climate change focus is on ensuring access to critical infrastructure and essential services in the event of storm events and natural disasters, and on maintaining evacuation routes. These areas can also accommodate new development, given that they are not located within floodplain areas. Such future development should be planned and implemented to leverage the opportunity to improve access to critical facilities and evacuation routes.

Several recommendations pertaining to stormwater management and impervious coverage are included within other sections of this Master Plan. These recommendations facilitate proactive steps toward addressing local stormwater management capacity issues through both "hard" strategies, such as updated infrastructure, and "soft" strategies such as reducing impervious coverage where feasible and replacing the impervious areas with vegetated pervious land area.

Additionally, some of the recommendations in this Master Plan focus on improving bike and pedestrian systems, which would have resiliency benefits in the wake of storm events or natural disasters, as socially vulnerable residents without a vehicle would have more convenient access to necessary services within and near their neighborhoods.

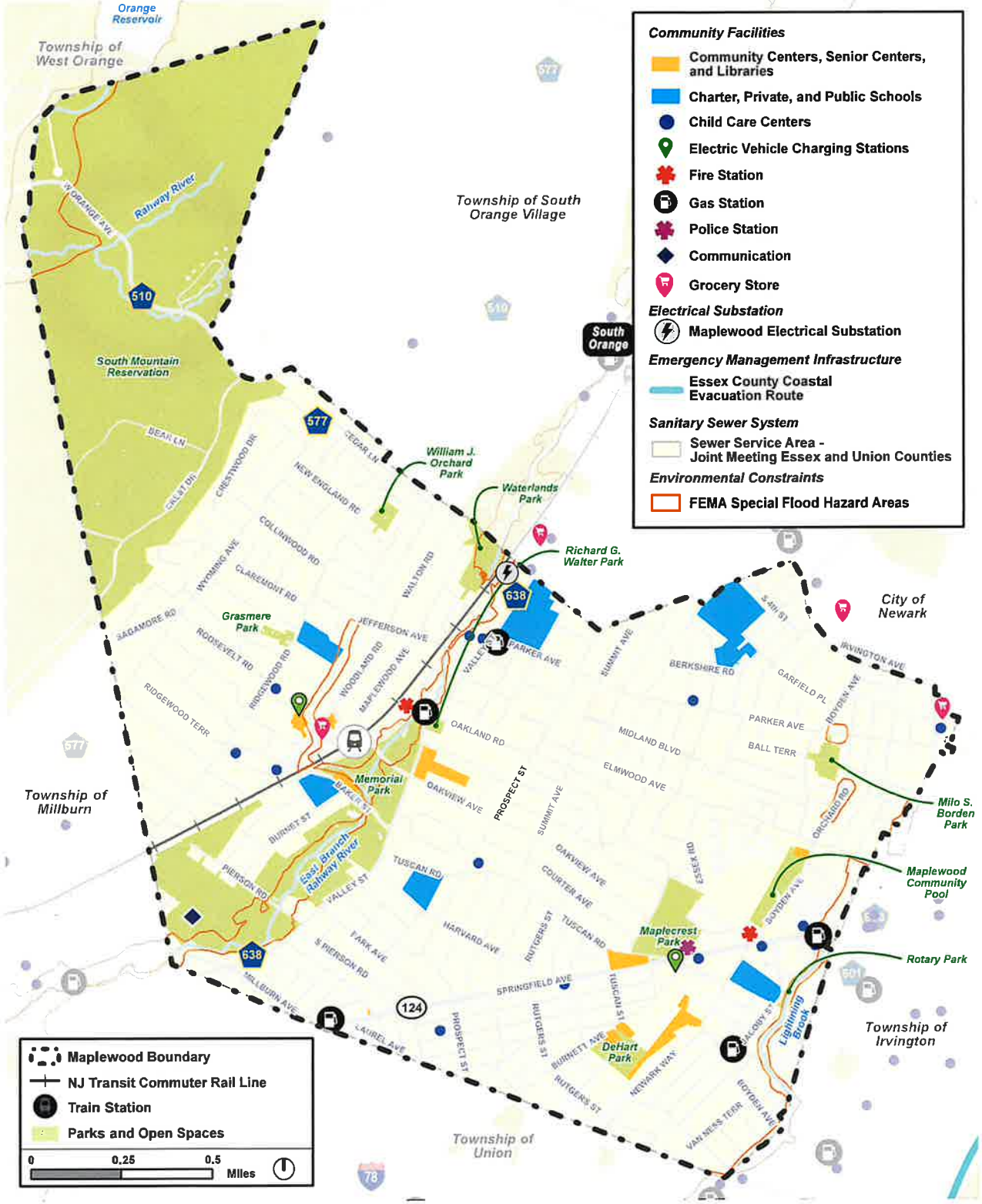


Figure 38: Critical Facilities

Source: Essex County, USGS, NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, OpenStreetMap (OSM) Road Network (Exported from Urban Footprint), NJOGIS, NJDOE, Google Maps, Township of Maplewood, County of Essex All Hazard Mitigation Plan, U.S. Office of Homeland Security, BfJ Planning.

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SECTION 6: IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

Implementation Tools

Having an adopted Master Plan is a critical public policy tool, but it is not sufficient on its own to make change or preservation happen – the Plan must be realized. There are several critical methods that Maplewood will follow to ensure that this Plan is implemented. It is recognized that, given financial constraints that may affect the Township as well as other municipalities, implementation of this Plan is dependent on availability of funding and other economic factors.

Legislation. Zoning is the most familiar tool used to implement a plan. The Township would need to amend certain elements of its zoning code to implement Plan recommendations.

Regional Advocacy. Some recommendations in this Plan may extend beyond Maplewood’s borders, or are outside of the Township’s direct jurisdiction, such as issues involving rail transportation and utilities (water/sewer). These may involve advocating and coordinating with other municipalities, Essex County, NJ Transit, and the State.

Capital Programming. Another key tool is incorporation of the Plan’s recommendations into Maplewood’s capital improvement program (CIP). The ways that the Township spends public revenue for public improvements – road construction and repair, major equipment purchases, improvements to municipal facilities, and new or upgraded parks and recreational facilities – and the standards to which they are built have a major effect on the Township’s function and image.

A CIP is a management and fiscal planning tool. Capital projects are scheduled on a multi-year basis, with each succeeding year seeing the completion of a project, or a phase of a long-term project, as a future year is added. New

projects are proposed as others earlier in the cycle reach completion. This rolling approach enables municipalities to plan for and remain current with necessary infrastructure improvements and other large, non-operational needs, so that long-range planning aspects can be achieved with predictable steps over time. The municipality knows its capital commitments for at least five years into the future. It can thus plan financing in an orderly way and stabilize the tax rate structure by spreading improvement costs systematically over a period of years. In addition, public input into the planning process continues, past the Master Plan’s adoption, as capital budgets are heard publicly. The organized public expenditures on improvements sends a positive signal to private businesses and property owners, allowing them to plan their investment knowing that the Township is also planning responsibly.

Grants and Third-Party Partnerships. Maplewood will continue seeking grant funding for planning and capital projects and will also engage with third-party nonprofit organizations and corporate partners, to meet long-term objectives such as the development of affordable housing. Because of the importance of grant funding in implementing recommendations of the Master Plan as well as other Township priorities, this Plan recommends that the Township hire a grant writer.

Future Studies. Certain Master Plan recommendations require more analysis. Detailed implementation measures can only be crafted through this additional study. For example, the Plan recommends that the Township undertake several updates of individual Master Plan Elements, including a new Circulation Element. These updates would likely entail formation of a special committee with representatives from the Planning

Board, Township staff, relevant boards or committees, and County or State agencies as needed, as well as engagement of a consultant.

Continuing Planning. There are two key aspects to continuing planning. The first is the Township government's sustained work with State agencies, authorities and other municipalities on issues that extend across borders. These groups include NJ DOT, Essex County, and adjacent municipalities. As these entities plan, Maplewood makes clear its concerns and preferences. With an adopted Master Plan, the Township's position is on record and must be considered.

The second aspect concerns development applications before the land use boards, primarily the Planning and Zoning Boards. While the Master Plan cannot contemplate every potential policy decision and may be silent on some issues, its overall vision and policy directives guide the Township's policies, and the actions of the land use boards must be consistent with the Plan.



Action Agenda

In order to implement the various recommendations contained in this Master Plan, the following Action Agenda is proposed, which outlines key actions, the general timeframe for action, the primary responsible entity for implementation, and the order-of-magnitude costs.

The primary responsible entity, by the nature of its mission and authority, is the logical party to oversee implementation of each particular proposal. Some proposals will involve multiple entities, including State agencies. The nature of activity required of the primary responsible entity will vary depending on the type of recommendation. Some activities involve budget commitments and capital expenses, while others entail advocacy and promotion, and some call for administrative action.

Priorities are classified as immediate (1-2 years), mid-term (3-6 years) and long-term (7-10 years). Immediate actions generally involve changes to local ordinances and the highest-priority infrastructure projects or additional studies, or may be activities or policies already in place that should be continued.

Mid-term actions likely involve the Township's capital improvement plans. Some of these items may already be identified, or may be recommendations that have developed as part of this planning process.

Long-term activities are those that are important, but are "down the road" because of limited available resources, both in terms of time and money, to implement them. They may also require further study or planning and design.

The implementation schedule is presented as a "To Do" list, to help the Township review progress on a regular basis. It also allows for convenient updating of the list as items are completed, priorities change or new items are proposed.

Implementation Priorities

This Master Plan contains dozens of individual recommendations that, collectively, may take many years to carry out, depending on available resources, Township priorities, and evolving needs. In addition, the manner of implementation may vary somewhat from the specific parameters of this Plan, based on further study and changes in conditions.

In recognition of these factors, the following Action Agenda is not presented in any order of priority. Some items may have emerged as major areas of focus during the planning process, but could require multiple phases to enact. For example, intersection improvements and other major capital projects will require additional analysis and funding sources. Others are perhaps less pressing, but could be implemented very quickly, such as establishment of advisory committees by the Township Committee.

Based on this Master Plan process, the following recommendations should be considered most critical for the Township to undertake. These priority recommendations are also noted on the Action Agenda tables with a green asterisk (*).

- Commercial and Industrial Zoning:** Several related recommendations are presented that pertain to Maplewood's business and industrial zones, including reviewing permitted uses, streamlining the approvals process for minor applications, and creating a new zone or sub-zone of the Pedestrian Retail Business (PRB) district. Because the Township is seeing significant development interest along Springfield Avenue and in the Commercial Industrial (CI) district, it should act quickly to assess these recommendations so that future development reflects the most current vision for these areas. Recent development within the area identified as the central mixed-use node in the PRB district has not included active, pedestrian-serving ground-floor uses. Such development is a missed opportunity to further strengthen this node, and the zoning (including consideration for parking maximums rather than minimums) should be adjusted as soon as possible to ensure future development creates a more street-oriented environment.

- Scale of Development in Residential Neighborhoods:** Participants in the Master Plan process raised concerns about the impact of development in established neighborhoods, particularly with teardowns that replace existing homes with much larger structures. This Plan recommends that the Township explore a range of zoning options to address residential scale, including provisions to ensure building heights are in keeping with prevailing heights in the vicinity, establishing floor area ratio (FAR) provisions to control the bulk of homes, increasing side yard setbacks, reducing the visual impact of front-facing garages, and encouraging architectural features that break up the bulk of large facades. With the pace of development activity across Maplewood's neighborhoods, consideration of these or other appropriate measures should be given high priority.
- Historic Preservation:** The recent loss of residential structures in the Township that were eligible, but not designated as historic, has heightened the community's focus on historic preservation. At the same time, it is recognized that historic designation can create burdens for property owners, who must maintain and improve their buildings in keeping with historic requirements that can be costly. In addition, owners of historically designated and eligible homes have raised concerns with the designation process and ongoing review by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). This Plan recommends preparation of a new Historic Preservation Element that would seek to balance these concerns, while addressing ways to improve the designation process and provide clarity on the HPC's role in land use approvals. This Plan also recommends that Maplewood consider adoption of a demolition ordinance, to require a demolition permit for buildings over a certain age. Adoption of such an ordinance – which has been enacted in various forms elsewhere in the state – does not need to wait on a new Historic Preservation Element, and could be done in the short-term.

- **Accessory Dwelling Units and Two-Family Homes:** The Township recently enacted ADU regulations, and there was significant interest expressed during the planning process in seeing this type of development occur in Maplewood. The regulations should be revisited promptly to better encourage ADUs. Subsequently, the Township should study the potential to allow two-family homes as conditional uses in some or portions of some single-family zones.
- **Circulation Element and Related Components:** The need for improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure emerged as a major theme of this Master Plan, and it requires a solid planning foundation to establish the Township's policies and implementation actions. It is recommended that Maplewood quickly move to prepare a Circulation Element that will lay out a set of policies around Complete Streets and Vision Zero approaches, and that will identify specific corridor and intersection improvements as well as necessary changes to ordinances and regulations. A new Circulation Element would make the Township competitive in seeking grants and other funding to implement improvements.
- **Tree Canopy and Impervious Coverage:** Maplewood has been active in initiatives to reduce its carbon footprint, decrease impervious coverage, and promote more energy-efficient patterns of development. These efforts are closely linked to climate change resiliency, as portions of the Township that lack significant vegetative cover are susceptible to heat island impacts and stormwater runoff from large areas of pavement, conditions that are steadily worsening with more frequent storms. Therefore, enhancing the tree canopy and increasing green infrastructure is an urgent priority. Short-term items that the Township should pursue include strengthening the tree ordinance, considering reducing impervious coverage limits in non-residential areas, planting street trees (especially in the Hilton neighborhood), and conducting a Heat Island Assessment and Mitigation Plan. These efforts can be funded through grants from organizations

such as Sustainable Jersey, and should be paired with stormwater management initiatives (see discussion below).

- **Stormwater Management:** Hurricane Ida had a significant impact on Maplewood, and such storms are only expected to continue. Several Master Plan recommendations seek to strengthen the Township's stormwater management system to withstand such future events. These include changes to regulations, potential creation of a stormwater utility, and physical infrastructure improvements. Township engineering and public works staff should be given administrative and financial support to undertake these initiatives, and the Township should leverage every opportunity to further these recommendations expeditiously.

Nothing in this section is intended to preclude the Township from undertaking other recommendations of the Master Plan before those listed above. As noted, opportunities may arise to tackle other items first, or conditions may change that result in new priorities. However, each of the recommendations above represent priorities that were clearly expressed by the community during the planning process, and/or have a higher degree of urgency due to known factors such as development pressure.

It is recommended that the Township consider establishing a Master Plan Implementation Committee. This ad hoc committee would be charged with continuing to prioritize Plan recommendations and coordinating the input of elected officials, municipal staff, and other stakeholders. Membership of the committee should include representatives of the Planning Board, the governing body, and municipal administration. Other boards and committees and staff could be included as needed for input on specific recommendations. For example, the Historic Preservation Commission should take the lead on a new Historic Preservation Element, while the Township Engineer will need to be closely involved in stormwater management and a new Circulation Element.

Land Use and Zoning

Recommendation	Type	Responsible Party	Cost	Timeframe
* Implement context-sensitive zoning revisions, such as changes to density requirements (e.g. floor area ratio) and setbacks, and encouragement of architectural features to break up building bulk.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board	Low/None	Short-Term
Improve transitions between low-density residential uses and commercial, multifamily, or mixed uses.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board	Low/None	Short-Term
Encourage property maintenance and reinvestment in older buildings to prevent unnecessary demolition, by permitting minor upgrades through a streamlined process.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board	Low/None	Short-Term
Review performance, noise and lighting standards.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board	Low/None	Ongoing
Continue to explore the use of street ends, other public rights-of-way, and easements on private property to provide pathways to parks and the train station.	Policy/Regulation/ Capital Project	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Township Committee, Engineering Department	Low	Short-Term
Work with large institutional and multifamily property owners to address potential impacts on adjacent homes and promote a “good neighbor” approach.	Policy/Regulation	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Township Committee	Low/None	Short-Term
Reduce the minimum lot area requirement (currently 2 acres) for multifamily development in the R-2-4 district.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board	Low/None	Short-Term
* Revisit the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) regulations to remove potential barriers for implementation.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board	Low/None	Short-Term
* Consider permitting two-family homes beyond the R-2-4 district.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee	Low/None	Short-Term
Update the rent control regulations for greater clarity and effectiveness.	Policy/Regulation	Township Committee, Rent Leveling Board, Department of Community Development	Low/None	Short-Term
Explore offering incentives to upgrade existing aged apartment stock in exchange for deed-restricting a portion as affordable housing.	Policy/Regulation	Township Committee, Affordable Housing Board, Department of Community Development	Low/None	Short-Term
Maintain existing affordable housing by seeking the extension of expiring controls for all affordable housing developments.	Policy/Regulation	Township Committee, Affordable Housing Board, Department of Community Development	Low/None	Ongoing
Work with nonprofit organizations and the private sector to market Maplewood to a diverse range of prospective residents, and support programs for existing residents to help them better understand and manage ongoing homeowner costs.	Policy/ Partnership	Township Committee, Affordable Housing Board, Department of Community Development, Nonprofit Partners	Low/None	Ongoing
Explore financial incentives, including tax incentives, to assist elderly residents in the cost of remaining in their Maplewood homes.	Policy	Township Committee, Affordable Housing Board, Department of Community Development	Low/None	Short-Term
Consider eliminating or streamlining the annual certification requirement for rental properties.	Policy/Regulation	Township Committee, Department of Community Development	Low/None	Short-Term

Land Use and Zoning

Recommendation	Type	Responsible Party	Cost	Timeframe
Ensure that group homes and other residences for special needs individuals are welcomed within the community, both through zoning regulations and education/outreach initiatives including Township staff.	Policy/Regulation	Township Committee, Department of Community Development, Administration	None	Short-Term
Explore opportunities to provide and incentivize housing for low- to moderate-income health care workers, including partnering with nonprofits.	Partnership; Policy/Regulation	Township Committee, Department of Community Development, Nonprofit Partners	Low	Medium-Term
Encourage all types of housing applications to consider incorporating ADA accessibility and principles of universal design for upgrades to existing and new housing developments.	Policy/Regulation	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Township Committee	None	Short-Term
Evaluate the potential for new or revised redevelopment or rehabilitation designations for the following areas: 1) The Millburn Avenue corridor from the municipal border with Millburn to Springfield Avenue. 2) The Irvington Avenue business district, generally between Parker Avenue and Putnam Street. 3) Other opportunity sites, particularly in business or industrial districts, such as the former movie theater building in Maplewood Village, and the RD-2 Redevelopment Area off Springfield Avenue. 4) The entire Maplewood Village area (potential rehabilitation area).	Program/Study	Planning Board, Township Committee	Low	Short-Term
Ensure maximum transparency for redevelopment planning and other major development.	Policy/Regulation	Planning Board, Township Committee, Department of Community Development	Low/None	Ongoing
Consider reducing the Highway Business (HB) zone on Springfield Avenue.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee	Low/None	Ongoing
Revisit the need for the Research and Office (RO) district.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee, NJ Transit	Low/None	Short-Term
* Update the Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan.	Study	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Historic Preservation Commission, Township Committee	Low/Medium	Ongoing
* Enact targeted land use regulations to support historic preservation efforts.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Historic Preservation Commission, Township Committee	Low/None	Ongoing
Promote historic tourism.	Policy/Program/Partnership	Historic Preservation Commission, Township Committee, Library, SIDs, Other Nonprofit Partners	Low/None	Short-Term
* Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee.	Policy/Regulation	Township Committee	Low	Ongoing

Circulation and Mobility

Recommendation	Type	Responsible Party	Cost	Timeframe
 Develop a new Circulation Master Plan Element with a focus on bike and pedestrian mobility and a Vision Zero safe systems approach to street safety.	Study	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee, Engineering Department, Police Department, Department of Public Works	Low/Medium	Short-Term
Update and Implement the 2010 Maplewood Bikeway Network Plan.	Study/Capital Project	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee, Engineering Department, Police Department, Department of Public Works	Low/Medium	Ongoing
Renew and strengthen commitment to "complete streets" policy.	Policy/Regulation	Township Committee, Engineering Department	None	Ongoing
Explore Safe Routes to School opportunities and funding.	Study/Partnership/Capital Project	Township Committee, Engineering Department, Police Department, South Orange-Maplewood School District	Low	Short-Term
Develop complete streets design standards with comprehensive input from Township departments and stakeholders working in street rights-of-way.	Program/Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Administration, Engineering Department, Department of Public Works	Low	Medium-Term
Implement transportation policy recommendations through targeted improvements including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the use of traffic calming tools Township-wide to address speeding, aggressive driving, and distracted driving. Identify opportunities for safe, protected bicycle lanes. Improve safety and operations at problem intersections and corridors. Implement unified pedestrian and bicycle wayfinding system. 	Program/Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Engineering Department, Department of Public Works, Police Department	Low/Medium	Medium-Term
Continue to lobby NJ TRANSIT and elected officials for rail station accessibility upgrades.	Policy/Partnership	Township Committee, Administration, NJ Transit	None	Short-Term
Explore jitney vehicle upgrades (accessibility, emissions), as well as improved communications and real-time information on the jitney system, and consider expansion of the service for non-community activities.	Program/Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Engineering Department	Medium/High	Ongoing
Explore evolution to microtransit to address diverse mobility needs.	Program/Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Engineering Department	Medium/High	Short-Term
Enhance bus and jitney stops.	Program/Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Engineering Department, Department of Public Works	Medium/High	Short-Term
 Update the 2012 Municipal Parking Plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline and modernize parking regulations and policies. Improve the efficiency of existing surface parking Update parking requirements for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations Address emerging needs for delivery and short-term loading areas. 	Study/Capital Project/Policy/Regulation	Township Committee, Engineering Department	Low/Medium	Short-Term

Economic Development

Recommendation	Type	Responsible Party	Cost	Timeframe
* Consider creating a sub-district for the Pedestrian Retail Business (PRB) district, to focus commercial and mixed-use development at key nodes where retail is particularly strong.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee	Low/None	Short-Term
* Review the zoning code for permitted uses in the business districts.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee	Low/None	Ongoing
Continue to partner with neighboring municipalities on the revitalization of the Irvington Avenue commercial area.	Program/Study/Partnership	Township Committee, adjacent municipalities, private sector	Low	Ongoing
Encourage the establishment of new green businesses by ensuring they are permitted in appropriate zoning districts.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee	Low/None	Short-Term
Explore the use of Township-owned facilities for rental by small and emerging businesses, particularly those focused on the arts.	Program/Policy	Township Committee, Department of Community Services	Low/None	Short-Term
* Broaden permitted uses in the Commercial and Industrial (CI) and Special Light Industrial (SLI) districts to encourage entrepreneurship and small business start-ups.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee	Low/None	Short-Term
Revise the use provisions for the PS zone to clarify that fast food restaurants are not permitted (as is the case for the NB, RB, and HB district).	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee	Low/None	Short-Term
Enhance existing and establish new gateways in strategic locations, through signage, landscaping, and public art.	Program/Partnership	Township Committee, Department of Community Services, Department of Public Works, private sector	Low/Medium	Ongoing
Expand and improve public spaces to provide gathering areas and increase pedestrian activity in support of nearby businesses.	Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, SIDs, private sector	Medium/High	Ongoing
Take advantage of opportunities to introduce public art in municipal facilities, public spaces (e.g. the train trestle, public parking lots), and in new significant development.	Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Department of Public Works, SIDs, private sector	Low/Medium/High	Ongoing
Incorporate placemaking into transportation improvements.	Policy/Program/Capital Project	Township Committee, Engineering Department, Department of Public Works	Medium/High	Medium-Term
Focus pedestrian and bicycle improvements around small commercial nodes, such as the Ridgewood Row area, Irvington Avenue, Valley Street, and the Boyden Avenue/Elmwood Avenue/Orchard Road intersection.	Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Engineering Department, Department of Public Works	Medium/High	Medium-Term
Strengthen the programming and visibility of the Township's Division of Arts and Culture to make artists and arts-related activities more visible in the community.	Program/Partnership	Department of Community Services	Low/None	Ongoing
Create and maintain a comprehensive list of all artists, arts and cultural organizations, houses of worship, nonprofit organizations, and others.	Program/Partnership	Department of Community Services	Low/None	Ongoing
Undertake an Arts and Cultural Assets Strategic Plan.	Study	Department of Community Services, Township Committee	Low	Short-Term

Economic Development

Recommendation	Type	Responsible Party	Cost	Timeframe
Investigate the potential to establish a community art studio space.	Study/ Partnership/ Capital Project	Department of Community Services, Township Committee	Low/ Medium	Medium- Term
Permit a wide range of arts-related uses.	Policy/Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee, Department of Community Services	Low/ None	Short-Term
Consider hiring a municipal liaison to the business community.	Study/Program	Township Committee, SIDs, private sector	Low/ Medium	Short-Term
Explore hiring a municipal grant writer.	Study/Program	Township Committee, Administration	Low/ Medium	Short-Term
Prepare a new Economic Development Element of the Master Plan.	Study	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee, SIDs, private sector	Low	Medium/ Long-term
Develop a consistent branding and signage program for Maplewood.	Study/Program/ Capital Project	Township Committee, Department of Public Works	Low/ Medium	Medium- term

Community Facilities, Resources, and Programming

Recommendation	Type	Responsible Party	Cost	Timeframe
Maintain and improve existing parks and open spaces.	Program/ Capital Project	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Engineering Department, Recreation Advisory Committee	Medium/ High	Short-Term
Create a new Open Space and Recreation Plan Element of the Master Plan.	Study	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Engineering Department, Recreation Advisory Committee	Low	Short-Term
Consider creation of an Open Space Zone.	Policy/ Regulation	Department of Community Development, Planning Board, Township Committee	Low/ None	Short-Term
Continue to expand the open space network as opportunities arise.	Program/ Study/ Capital Project	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Engineering Department, Recreation Advisory Committee, Environmental Advisory Committee	Medium/ High	Short-Term
Continue to seek funding opportunities for parks and open spaces.	Program/ Study	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Engineering Department	Low/ None	Short-Term
Continue efforts to implement the proposed Rahway River Greenway.	Study/ Partnership/ Capital Project	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Engineering Department, South Orange	Medium/ High	Medium- Term
Preserve and strengthen Lightning Brook as a resilient natural resource accessible to the public	Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Engineering Department	Medium/ High	Long-Term
Prepare a comprehensive pedestrian and bikeway pathway plan.	Study	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Engineering Department	Low	Long-Term
Prepare a new Community Facilities Plan Element of the Master Plan.	Study	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Engineering Department, Planning Board, Department of Community Development, Essex County, South Orange-Maplewood School District, South Orange	Low	Medium/ Long-term
Take steps to ensure that all municipal facilities are both compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and embrace principles of universal design.	Policy/ Capital Project	Township Committee, Engineering Department, Department of Public Works	Low/ Medium/ High	Ongoing

Community Facilities, Resources, and Programming

Recommendation	Type	Responsible Party	Cost	Timeframe
Consider allocating some parking spaces at municipal facilities to special needs individuals, including drivers with small children, the elderly, and anyone who is mobility-challenged.	Policy/Regulation	Township Committee, Engineering Department, Department of Public Works	Low	Ongoing
As part of land use applications, take every opportunity to improve handicapped accessibility for private buildings and facilities.	Policy/Regulation	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment	None	Ongoing
Consider hiring a municipal communications specialist to help streamline communications.	Study/Program	Township Committee, Administration	Low/Medium	Short-term
Set and implement a Municipal Communications Strategy.	Study/Program	Township Committee, Administration	Low	Ongoing
Continue to establish strategies to reach out to Maplewood's underrepresented populations, including communities of color, low-income communities, and renters.	Study/Program	Township Committee, Administration	Low	Ongoing
Continue regular coordination with Maplewood's neighborhood associations.	Program/Policy	Township Committee, Administration	Low/None	Ongoing
Provide new residents with a "Welcome Wagon" kit.	Program/Policy	Township Committee, Administration	Low	Short-term
Investigate the potential to provide public Wi-Fi at community facilities and parks.	Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Engineering Department	Medium/High	Medium
Identify gaps in the Township's recreational opportunities, such as activities and programming, to ensure all age groups and abilities are accommodated.	Study	Township Committee, Department of Community Services, Recreation Advisory Committee	Low	Medium-term
Establish a Disability Advisory Committee.	Program	Township Committee	None	Short-term
Develop a Township Strategic Department Plan.	Study/Policy	Township Committee, Administration	Low	Short-term
Continue collaborating with South Orange and other neighboring communities.	Program/Policy	Township Committee, Administration, adjacent municipalities	None	Short-term
Partner with local arts and cultural organizations, businesses, community groups, houses of worship, and other organizations to host key events.	Program/Partnership	Administration, Department of Community Services	Low/None	Ongoing
Support and implement recommendations from Maplewood's Sustainable Jersey Health Gold Committee.	Program/Policy	Township Committee, Health Department, Green Team	Low	Ongoing
Address food insecurity by promoting grocery stores, Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), and similar uses, particularly in the eastern and southern portions of the Township.	Policy/Regulation	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Township Committee, Department of Community Development	Low/None	Short/Medium-term
Ensure community members in need of food security are aware of local food resources.	Program/Policy	Health Department	Low	Ongoing
Explore ways to make the Farmers Market more accessible to all residents.	Program/Policy	Department of Community Services, Township Committee	Low	Ongoing
Investigate the potential to create additional community gardens.	Study/Capital Project	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Environmental Advisory Committee	Low/Medium	Short-term
Support public and mental health programs and ensure that residents are aware of and have access to mental health and social services.	Program/Policy	Health Department	Low	Short-term
Coordinate with the South Orange-Maplewood School District on its transportation planning to identify and mitigate hazardous routes, including coordination on Safe Routes to School.	Partnership/Study	Engineering Department, Police Department, South Orange-Maplewood School District	Low/Medium	Ongoing
Maintain close coordination with the South Orange-Maplewood School District on enrollment trends and significant new housing development that could affect school capacities.	Partnership/Study	Township Committee, Administration, South Orange-Maplewood School District	Low	Ongoing

Sustainability, Infrastructure, and Resiliency

Recommendation	Type	Responsible Party	Cost	Timeframe
Prepare a Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element of the Master Plan.	Study	Township Committee, Department of Public Works, Engineering Department, Planning Board, Department of Community Development, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team	Low/ Medium	Short-Term
Continue to encourage new development and renovations to incorporate sustainable practices compatible with U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) rating systems or comparable principles.	Policy/ Regulation	Planning Board, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team	None	Ongoing
Support the shift toward reliance on renewable energy sources.	Policy/ Regulation	Planning Board, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team, Administration	Low	Ongoing
Support and implement the Maplewood Community Energy Plan.	Policy/ Regulation	Planning Board, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team, Administration	Low/ Medium	Ongoing
Continue active efforts to improve air quality.	Policy/ Regulation	Township Committee, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team	Low	Short-Term
Continue seeking additional funding opportunities to implement sustainability and resiliency efforts.	Policy/ Partnership	Township Committee, Administration, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team	Low	Short-Term
Support continued efforts to maintain and increase Sustainable Jersey certification.	Policy/ Partnership	Township Committee, Administration, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team	Low	Ongoing
Continue working to reduce the volume of waste and promote municipal recycling.	Policy/ Regulation	Township Committee, Administration, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team	Low	Ongoing
Consider the potential to increase the types of items that can be recycled at the Recycling Center.	Policy/ Regulation	Township Committee, Administration, Department of Public Works, Environmental Advisory Committee	Low	Ongoing
Create opportunities for local drop off or collection of hazardous waste.	Policy/ Regulation	Township Committee, Administration, Department of Public Works, Environmental Advisory Committee	Low	Ongoing
Identify key locations to install trash and recycling bins, including "Big Belly" trash compacting bins	Policy/ Program	Township Committee, Administration, Department of Public Works, Environmental Advisory Committee	Low	Short-Term
Review Township ordinances to ensure they are providing maximum protection to environmentally significant areas.	Study/ Regulation	Township Committee, Planning Board, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team	Low/ None	Ongoing
Review the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element yearly.	Study	Department of Public Works, Open Space Trust Committee	None	Ongoing
Create a new Environmental Resources Inventory (ERI).	Study	Department of Public Works, Environmental Advisory Committee, Open Space Trust Committee	Low	Ongoing
Consider acquiring properties in floodplain areas to reduce vulnerabilities and increase public space along watercourses, such as the East Branch of the Rahway River and the Lightning Brook.	Study/ Capital Project	Township Committee, Engineering Department	Medium/ High	Short/ Medium-Term
 Maintain and strengthen the Township's existing tree canopy.	Policy/ Capital Project	Engineering Department, Environmental Advisory Committee, Department of Public Works	Medium/ High	Ongoing
 Conduct a Heat Island Assessment and Mitigation Plan.	Study	Engineering Department, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team, Department of Public Works	Low/ Medium	Medium-term
 Modify zoning code to reduce impervious surfaces coverage.	Policy/ Regulation	Planning Board, Township Committee, Department of Community Development, Environmental Advisory Committee	Low/ None	Short-term

Sustainability, Infrastructure, and Resiliency

Recommendation	Type	Responsible Party	Cost	Timeframe
Lead by example on impervious coverage at municipal properties.	Policy/ Capital Project	Engineering Department, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team, Department of Public Works	Medium/ High	Ongoing
Continue and expand public awareness of sustainability practices.	Policy/ Program/ Partnership	Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team, Township Committee	Low	Ongoing
Implement a program to monitor and report on the state of the physical infrastructure and public utilities serving Maplewood.	Policy/Study	Engineering Department, Department of Public Works	Low	Short-term
* Explore the use of green infrastructure in roadway projects.	Policy/ Capital Project	Engineering Department, Department of Public Works	Medium/ High	Ongoing
Maintain and strengthen the Township's stormwater management infrastructure to ensure the systems are running efficiently.	Policy/ Capital Project	Engineering Department, Department of Public Works	Medium/ High	Ongoing
Upgrade sanitary sewer and water infrastructure, starting with priority locations.	Policy/ Capital Project	Engineering Department, Department of Public Works	Medium/ High	Medium/ Long-Term
Adopt a one-time sanitary sewer connection fee for new construction.	Policy/ Regulation	Engineering Department, Township Committee, Department of Community Development	Low/ None	Short-term
Encourage interior and exterior water conservation to mitigate the need for additional sewer and water capacity increases.	Policy/ Partnership	Green Team, Environmental Advisory Committee	Low/ None	Ongoing
Continue partnership with PSE&G to implement sustainable infrastructure improvements.	Policy/ Partnership	Engineering Department, PSE&G	Medium/ High	Ongoing
* Explore the creation of a Stormwater Utility.	Study/Policy	Township Committee, Engineering Department	Low/ Medium	Short/ Medium-Term
* Continue to reference and update the Municipal Stormwater Management Plan.	Policy/ Regulation	Engineering Department	Low/ None	Medium-term
* Update regulations to require stormwater management for minor site plans.	Policy/ Regulation	Planning Board, Township Committee, Engineering Department, Department of Community Development, Environmental Advisory Committee	Low/ None	Short-term
Encourage homeowners to disconnect downspouts.	Policy/ Program	Engineering Department, Environmental Advisory Committee, Green Team	None	Ongoing
Continue to implement initiatives from the County of Essex All Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Update.	Policy/ Program	Engineering Department, Administration	Low/ Medium	Ongoing
Prepare a flood-prone area study to identify priority locations and determine mitigation strategies.	Study	Engineering Department	Low/ Medium	Short/ Medium-Term
Encourage properties located in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) to consider making their property and structures more resilient against future impactful weather events.	Policy/ Program	Engineering Department, Township Committee, Department of Community Development	None	Ongoing
Partner with South Orange on strategies to mitigate flooding at Chyzowych Field.	Study/ Partnership/ Capital Project	Engineering Department, Department of Public Works, South Orange	Medium/ High	Ongoing
Continue the Township's involvement in the Mayors Council Rahway River Watershed Flood Control.	Partnership/ Study	Engineering Department, partner municipalities	None	Ongoing
Provide the Maplewood community with educational and supportive resources to ensure everyone is prepared for future natural disasters.	Program/ Policy	Office of Emergency Management, Health Department	Low	Ongoing