

TOWNSHIP OF MAPLEWOOD



MASTER PLAN



Prepared by:
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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.

Township of Maplewood Master Plan

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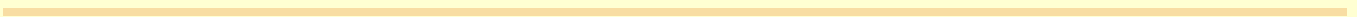
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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS

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

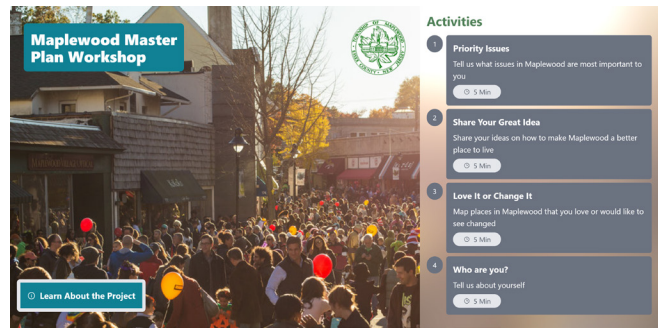
Public engagement was a vital component of the Master Plan process, to assure that the recommendations were generated and supported by Maplewood’s residents, workers, property owners, and the Township as a whole. The consultant team provided many opportunities for public input, including virtual and 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



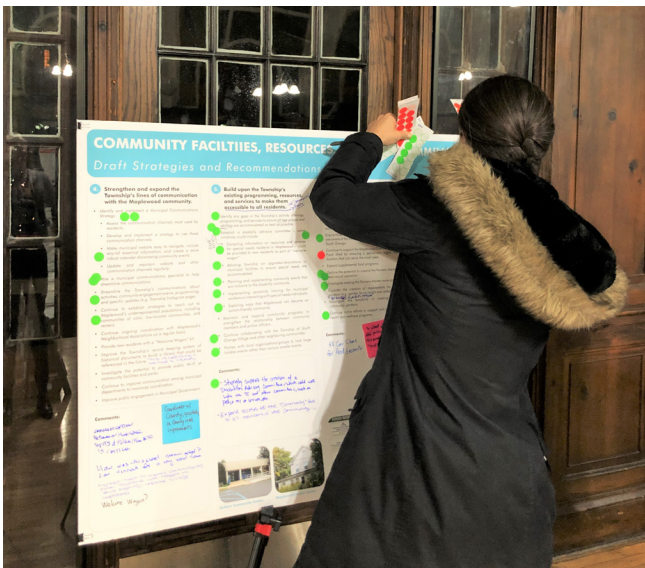
Public Workshop at DeHart Community Center



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.

Township of Maplewood Master Plan

Business Owner Meetings

Please come join us!

Are you a business owner in Maplewood? Join us for one or both of the Business Owner Meetings to share your input on the draft Master Plan strategies and recommendations. Please feel free to attend the meeting date that works best for you. Both meetings will cover the same material.

Meeting Details

March 22	March 30
Wednesday, March 22 nd 2023	Thursday, March 30 th 2023
6:30 pm to 8 pm	8 am to 9:30 am
Hilton Branch Library, Meeting Room, 1688 Springfield Avenue, Maplewood, NJ 07040	Burgdorff Center for the Performing Arts, Community Room, 10 Durand Road, Maplewood, NJ 07040

For more information on the Master Plan and the Planning Process, visit the Township of Maplewood website at www.maplewoodnj.gov/government/township-master-plan

Township of Maplewood Master Plan

Mini-Workshop with Seniors

Please come join us!

Are you a senior resident who lives in Maplewood? Join us for the mini-workshop to share your input on the draft Master Plan strategies and recommendations.

Meeting Details

March 29 Wednesday, March 29th 2023

11 am to 12:30 pm

DeHart Community Center, 120 Burnell Avenue, Maplewood, NJ 07040

Can't make this meeting? There will be more opportunities to share your feedback! Please find the additional opportunities below.

Additional Engagement Opportunities

- Business Owner Meeting
 - Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023, 6:30 - 8 pm
 - Location: Hilton Branch Library, Meeting Room, 1688 Springfield Avenue
- Business Owner Meeting
 - Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023, 8 - 9:30 am
 - Location: Burgdorff Cultural Center, Community Room, 10 Durand Road
- Public Workshop
 - Date: Saturday, April 15, 2023, 10 am - 12 pm
 - Location: DeHart Community Center, 120 Burnell Avenue

For more information on the Master Plan and the Planning Process, visit the Township of Maplewood website at www.maplewoodnj.gov/government/township-master-plan

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.



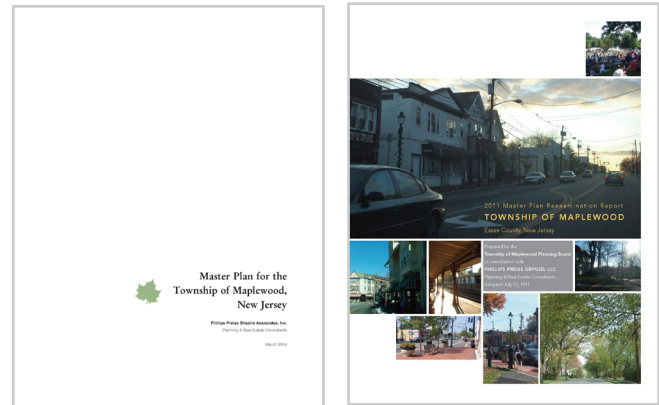
PREVIOUS PLANNING INITIATIVES AND REPORTS

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.

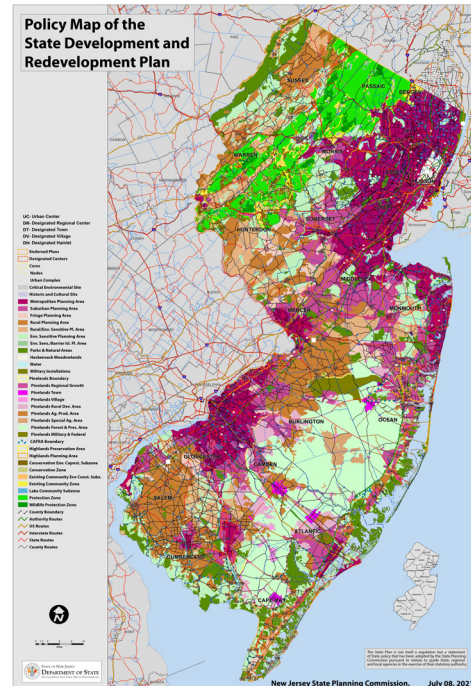
Solid Waste Management Plan

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

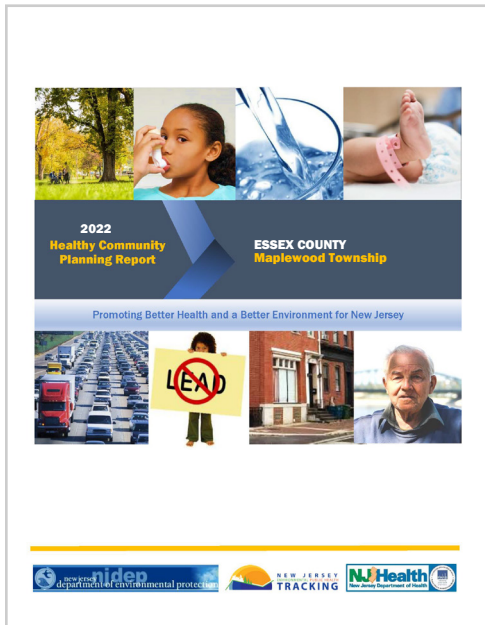
Healthy Community Planning New Jersey, developed by the State's departments of Health and Environmental Protection, provides municipalities with municipal-level reports that give an overview of the municipality's public health and environmental data. The report serves as a guide for the Township to prioritize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

Demographic Report for South Orange and Maplewood – 2019 and 2022

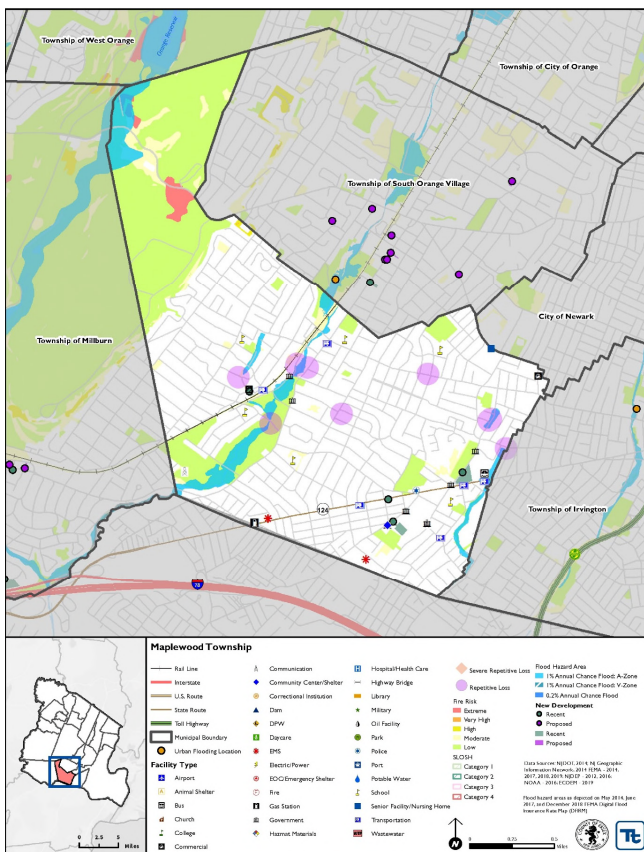
In 2019, Maplewood and South Orange's Community Coalition on Race produced a demographic report to monitor the progress on ongoing integration efforts of both residential areas and schools. The report analyzed trends in racial demographics, housing, income, and school enrollment in both municipalities,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

