



HIGHLAND
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BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK
NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM

**WOODBIDGE AVENUE NPP DISTRICT
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
YEAR TWO UPDATE**

January 11, 2023



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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
YEAR TWO UPDATE**

Prepared by:

Borough of Highland Park NPP Stakeholder Engagement Team

in partnership with the **Borough of Highland Park**

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Highland Park, NJ 08904

with assistance from:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Highland Park's NPP Stakeholder Engagement Team is made up of nine individuals who are committed to the success of the Woodbridge Avenue commercial corridor and the adjacent residential neighborhood. The stakeholder team was formed during the application process in August 2021 and has continued to be a sounding board for all NPP ideas and initiatives. They also played an integral part in collecting essential feedback from residents and businesses in the NPP district and the Highland Park community-at-large regarding their vision for the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District.

The Borough would like to thank the following stakeholder team members for their continued commitment to this program:

- **Sandy Castor** | Director, Middlesex County Office of Business Engagement
- **Khahlidra Hadhazy** | District Resident & Planning Board Representative
- **Matt Hale** | Borough Councilmember, Economic Development Committee
- **Rebecca Hersh** | Executive Director, Main Street Highland Park
- **Tom Langston** | Board Member, Main Street Highland Park
- **John Marron** | District Resident & Arts Commission Representative
- **James Nichols** | Board Chair, Main Street Highland Park
- **Michele Racioppi** | Historical Commission Representative

The Borough would also like to extend a special thank you to **New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy** and **DCA Commissioner, Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver** for providing this funding opportunity to Highland Park.

Additionally, special thanks to former **Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler, Acting Mayor Elsie Foster**, and **Highland Park's Borough Council** for their vision in supporting Highland Park's NPP application and their approval of the resulting NPP plan.

NPP Coordinator

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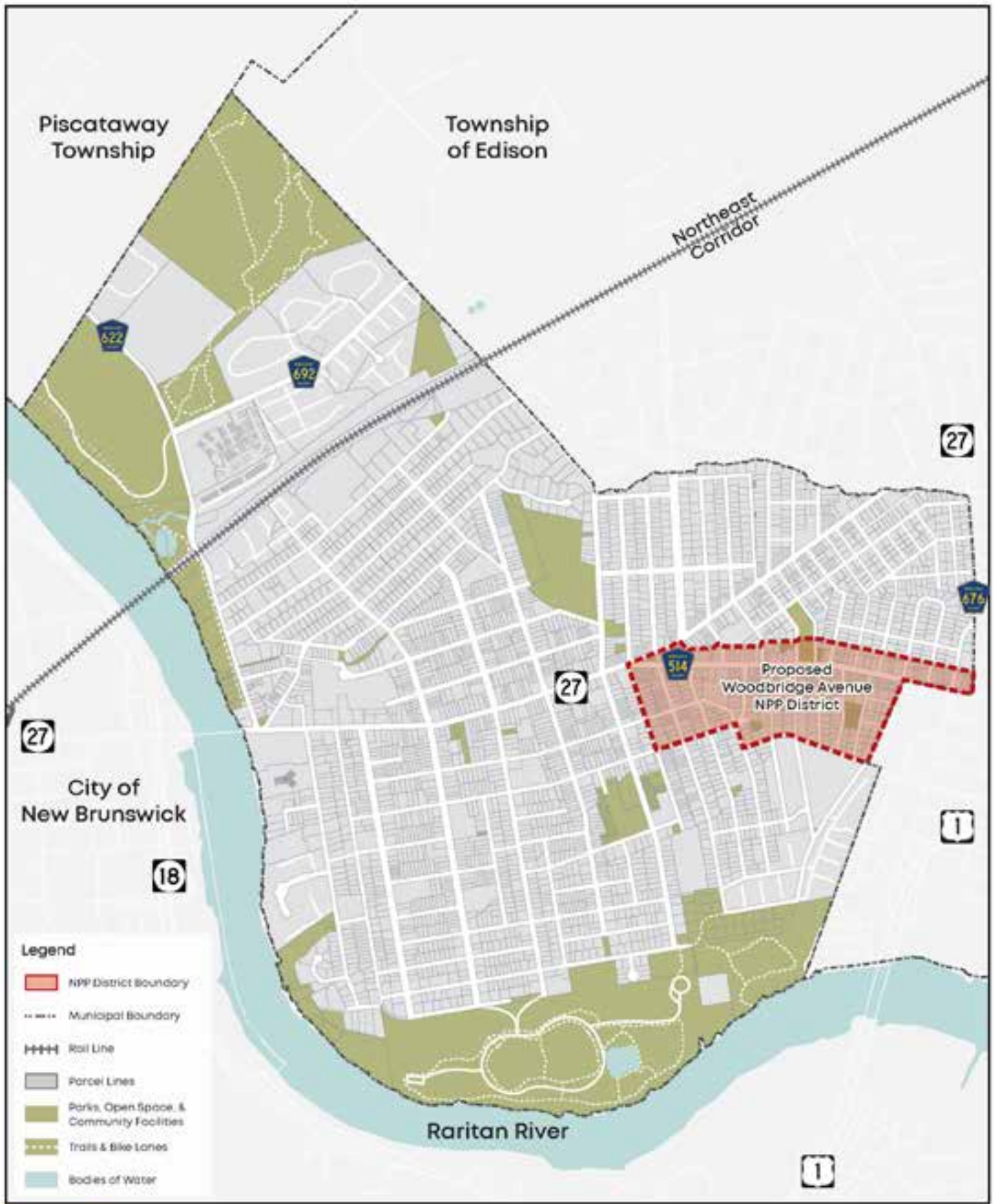
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	7
Location Maps	8
Aerial Map	10
Year One (2022) Accomplishments	13
Lessons Learned	17
Year Two (2023) Implementation Plan	19
Year Two Budget	25





INTRODUCTION



Overall Map

Proposed Woodbridge Avenue NPP District

Borough of Highland Park, Middlesex County, NJ

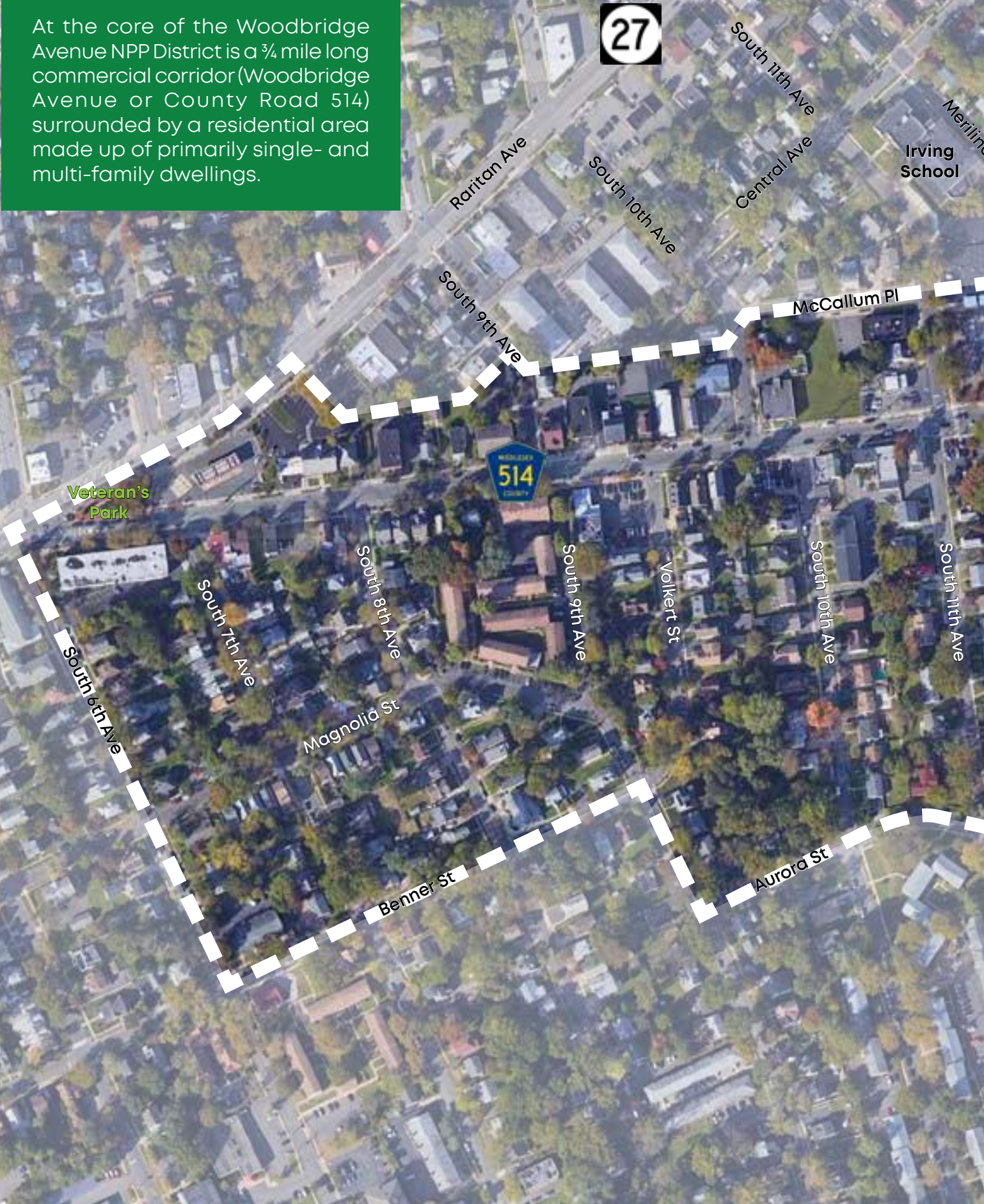


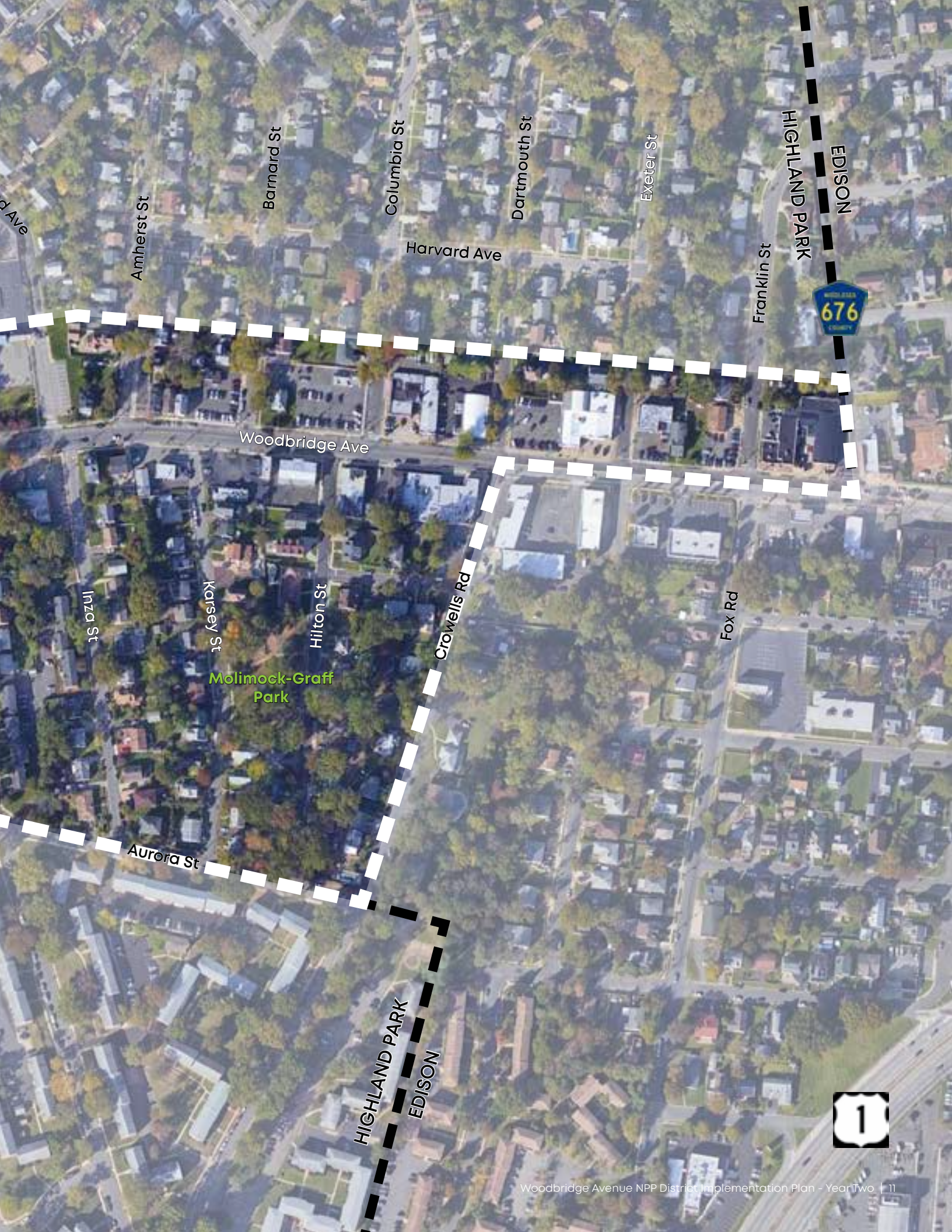


Neighborhood Map
Proposed Woodbridge Avenue NPP District
 Borough of Highland Park, Middlesex County, NJ



At the core of the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District is a ¾ mile long commercial corridor (Woodbridge Avenue or County Road 514) surrounded by a residential area made up of primarily single- and multi-family dwellings.





Amherst St

Barnard St

Columbia St

Dartmouth St

Exeter St

Harvard Ave

Franklin St

HIGHLAND PARK

EDISON



Woodbridge Ave

Inza St

Karsey St

Hilton St

Crowells Rd

Fox Rd

Molimock-Graff Park

Aurora St

HIGHLAND PARK

EDISON







YEAR ONE (2022) ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NPP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

YEAR ONE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Woodbridge Avenue Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) District does not look the same as it did in January 2022. The Borough and the NPP Stakeholder Committee focused Year One efforts on beautifying Woodbridge Avenue, the commercial corridor and gateway to Highland Park, and laying the planning groundwork for future improvements in the district. Beautification efforts include the installation of string lights and holiday snowflakes on street light poles, which first necessitated the installation of electrical outlets by PSE&G, the pruning of street trees, the purchase of benches, trash and recycling receptacles, and bike racks, and the painting of traffic-calming street murals along Benner Street in the district.

Improvements to Molimock-Graff Park, one of two outdoor recreation spaces in the district, included the establishment of electric service to allow for sound at community events, the addition of mulch to playground spaces, and the replacement of an aging fence. The Borough's engineers also conducted an assessment of Molimock-Graff Park's current conditions and made recommendations for improvements moving forward.





LESSONS LEARNED & RESULTING CHANGES FOR YEAR TWO (2023)

The Year One Implementation Plan (IP) was ambitious. Early on in the implementation process it became apparent that business and property owner engagement in the program was going to take months of cultivation and therefore the decision was made to postpone the launch of our commercial and residential grant programs to Year Two in order to ensure adequate reach and success. The Stakeholder Team also realized how many of our plans required close partnership with Middlesex County, as Woodbridge Avenue is a county road, so we pushed a few projects such as parking striping and tree planting to Year Two in order to better coordinate with various County departments. The Borough has been fortunate to have two County representatives participate in all of our stakeholder meetings and look forward to their continued engagement and partnership.

The initiatives outlined in our original Implementation Plan (IP) were conceived based on feedback from nearly 600 residents, business owners, and visitors who responded to an online survey as well as three outreach meetings conducted with property owners and business owners. The Stakeholder Team found that the easiest initiatives to get off the ground in a short amount of time (less than nine months in Year One following IP adoption) were those that required minimal stakeholder engagement. The Stakeholder Team agrees that for the long term success of the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) there needs to be additional feedback from district stakeholders. During Year Two the Stakeholder Team is committed to adding additional Stakeholder Team members, soliciting updated feedback from district stakeholders, and hosting additional opportunities for residents and business owners to become engaged in the program through community events.





YEAR TWO (2023) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

YEAR TWO (2023)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND GOALS

The focus for Year Two will be twofold: ramping up outreach efforts while also maintaining our momentum with district beautification and park improvements. The Stakeholder Team will be trying new methods to reach business owners and will create tailored proposals for each business to attract them to our grant programs. We will also be more consistent with our communications to residents in the District to build consensus and excitement for the program.

Our goals for Year Two are as follows:

1. Continue to improve Woodbridge Avenue and add amenities to make it more inviting to shoppers and businesses.
2. Partner with Middlesex County Office of Business Development to devise plan to fill vacant properties.
3. Launch commercial and residential grant programs and recruit handfuls of businesses and property owners to participate as pilot properties.
4. Solidify improvement plans for Molimock-Graff and Veterans Park and begin infrastructure investment.
5. Explore Woodbridge Avenue parking supply and devise plan for enhanced parking management.

ARTS & CULTURE (\$5,000 TOTAL)

Public Art Installations (\$4,000): Work with Arts Commission to identify appropriate spaces for permanent or temporary public art installations.

- Place Value
- Social Value

Community Events (\$1,000): Host existing Borough events in the district, such as National Night Out, and partner with community organizations to set up new events such as Food Truck Fridays, Car Shows, Summer Solstice Celebration, Juneteenth Celebration, etc.

- Social Value

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (\$8,000 NPP | \$31,000 TOTAL)

Business Outreach Events (\$1,000): Host open house in Q1 of 2023 for all business and property owners on Woodbridge Avenue to meet them and discuss their vision for Woodbridge Avenue in the context of this program.

- Social Value

Facade Grants (\$25,000): Partner with Main Street Highland Park Design Committee to implement a Facade Grant program which will include awnings, signage, planters, grass, bollards, etc.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Technical Assistance Courses (\$2,500): Offer webinars and in-person consultations with NPP businesses on a range of topics from building an online presence to 21st century marketing. Could offer to other businesses in Highland Park for a nominal fee but would be free to NPP businesses.

- Economic Value

Vacant Storefront Décor (\$2,500): Purchase bulk décor to fill windows while landlords recruit new tenants.

- Place Value

Revamp Business Signage & Design Standards (\$0, counted under Planner Costs): Work with Borough Planner on reviewing current design standards for Woodbridge Avenue and how those may be changed to improve commercial aesthetic in the district.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

COMMUNITY SPACES

(\$20,000 NPP | \$23,875 TOTAL)

Park Amenities (\$20,000): Purchase new equipment for Molimock-Graff and Veteran's Park based on recommendations from park studies.

- Place Value

Veteran's Park Study (\$3,875): Conduct existing conditions assessment and develop recommendations for park improvements.

- Place Value

RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

(\$20,000)

Porch Renovation Grants (\$10,000): Matching grants for exterior home improvements (stairs, doorways, porches, drainage/landscaping etc.). Matching requirement based on financial need.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Sidewalk Grants (\$10,000): Matching grants available for sidewalk improvements.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

STREETSCAPE

(\$59,500 NPP | \$95,625 TOTAL)

Irving School Sign Board (\$20,000 | \$5,000 NPP, \$15,000 OPM - CDBG & School Match): Collaborate with Irving School Administration to purchase and install signage board facing Woodbridge Avenue to dress up the frontage of the school and share pertinent neighborhood information.

Holiday Decoration Install (\$4,500): Rent illuminated snowflakes to match holiday decor along Highland Park's Raritan Avenue.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Pedestrian Lighting (\$10,000): Purchase and install pedestrian-scale lighting to illuminate sidewalks.

- Place Value
- Social Value

Tree Planting (\$55,000 | \$35,000 NPP, \$20,000 OPM - CDBG Funding): Plant trees along Woodbridge Avenue in newly established tree pits.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Planters (\$6,125): Purchase additional planters for Woodbridge Avenue to extend past So. 11th Avenue.

TRANSPORTATION

(\$5,000 NPP | \$17,500 TOTAL)

Parking Study (\$12,500): Conduct an inventory of on-street parking supply on Woodbridge Avenue and side streets to formulate improvements in parking management along the commercial corridor.

Parking Striping (\$5,000): Stripe parking spaces along Woodbridge Avenue to make clear where parking is and isn't permitted.

- Place Value
- Civic Value

ADMINISTRATION

(\$7,500 NPP | \$15,000 TOTAL)

NPP Coordinator Stipend (\$9,000)

Borough Planner Costs (\$6,000)

YEAR TWO BUDGET

Activity	NPP Funding	Municipal Match	OPM
Arts & Culture			
Public Art	\$4,000		
Community Events	\$1,000		
Business Development			
Business Outreach Events	\$1,000		
Facade Grants	\$2,000		\$23,000
Technical Assistance Courses	\$2,500		
Vacant Storefront Decor	\$2,500		
Community Spaces			
Park Amenities	\$20,000		
Veteran's Park Study		\$3,875	
Residential Improvements			
Porch Renovation Grants	\$10,000		
Sidewalk Grants	\$10,000		
Streetscape			
Irving School Sign Board	\$5,000		\$15,000
Holiday Decoration	\$4,500		
Pedestrian Lighting	\$10,000		
Tree Planting	\$35,000		\$20,000
Planters	\$5,000	\$1,125	
Transportation			
Parking Study		\$12,500	
Parking Striping	\$5,000		
Administration			
Salary: NPP Coordinator	\$7,500	\$1,500	
Salary: Planner		\$6,000	
	\$125,000	\$25,000	\$58,000

