

HIGHLAND
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PARK

BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK
NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM

**WOODBIDGE AVENUE NPP DISTRICT
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Adopted: March 15, 2022



**BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK
NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

**WOODBIDGE AVENUE NPP DISTRICT
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Prepared by:

Borough of Highland Park NPP Stakeholder Engagement Team

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

221 South Fifth Avenue

Highland Park, NJ 08904

with assistance from:

LRK, Inc.

Public Ledger Building, Suite 756

150 S. Independence Mall W.

Philadelphia, PA 19106

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:

- **Annalee Avila** | District Resident
- **Pat Barry** | Owner, FBN Auto
- **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
- **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 **Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler** 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

Emma Von Thun, MPA | Assistant to the Borough Administrator / Project Manager

Consultants

LRK Inc.

Jim Constantine, PP

Chris S. Cosenza, AICP, PP, LEED AP

Sadie Middleton

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INTRODUCTION

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) was established in 1975 by the passage of the “Maintenance of Viable Neighborhoods Act.” The mission of the NPP is to promote the social and economic development of neighborhoods. This is done by identifying and recruiting stakeholders to form partnerships to address a community’s challenges. The NPP takes a comprehensive approach to neighborhood development, which affords municipalities flexible and creative options and encourages private investment.

In 2021, Governor Phil Murphy and Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver announced the request for applications for the program from municipalities throughout the state that met certain household income criteria. Highland Park applied for and in October 2021 was awarded a \$125,000 NPP grant. This grant amount is to be used in two phases.

The first phase of the program involved the identification of an NPP Coordinator who is in charge of developing and ensuring the successful implementation of this plan. Additionally, the NPP Coordinator is responsible for facilitating the meetings of the NPP Stakeholder Engagement Team, made up of district residents, businesses, community volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and a member of Borough Council. In their capacity, the Stakeholder Engagement Team reviewed data from the community via an online community survey and community outreach meetings.

This document is the culmination of the planning phase and will serve as a guide throughout the second phase of this program: **implementation**.

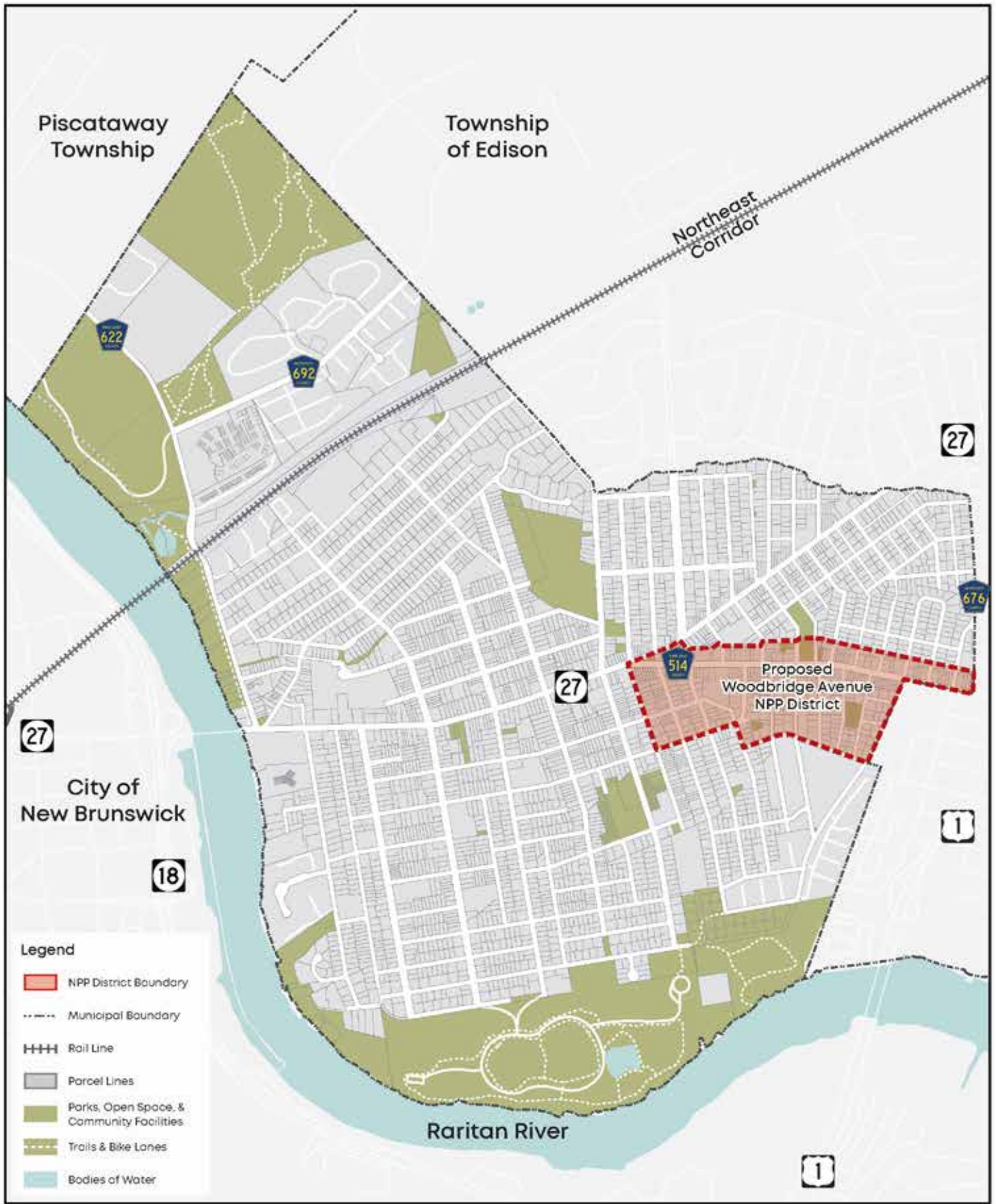
WELCOME TO THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK

The Borough of Highland Park is a walkable, vibrant community located within an hour of New York City and Philadelphia and only a short walk away from New Brunswick, the vibrant county seat of Middlesex County and home to Rutgers University.

Highland Park is the perfect place to live if you want to remain close to urban centers and all of the amenities they provide but enjoy a slower-paced, community-oriented small home town feel. Highland Park is incredibly diverse, as reflected by people of various faiths, races and economic classes.

Our restaurants showcase this diversity with unique offerings such as Venezuelan, Greek, Turkish, Small Batch bakeries and Kosher food. Our businesses range from local bicycle shops to car dealerships, live music venues, nail salons, fitness studios, dollar stores and high-end gift shops.

Highland Park is only 1.7 square miles but our 15,000 residents and 5,500 households enjoy this diversity of people and places that make it the greatest small town in New Jersey.



Overall Map

Proposed Woodbridge Avenue NPP District

Borough of Highland Park, Middlesex County, NJ





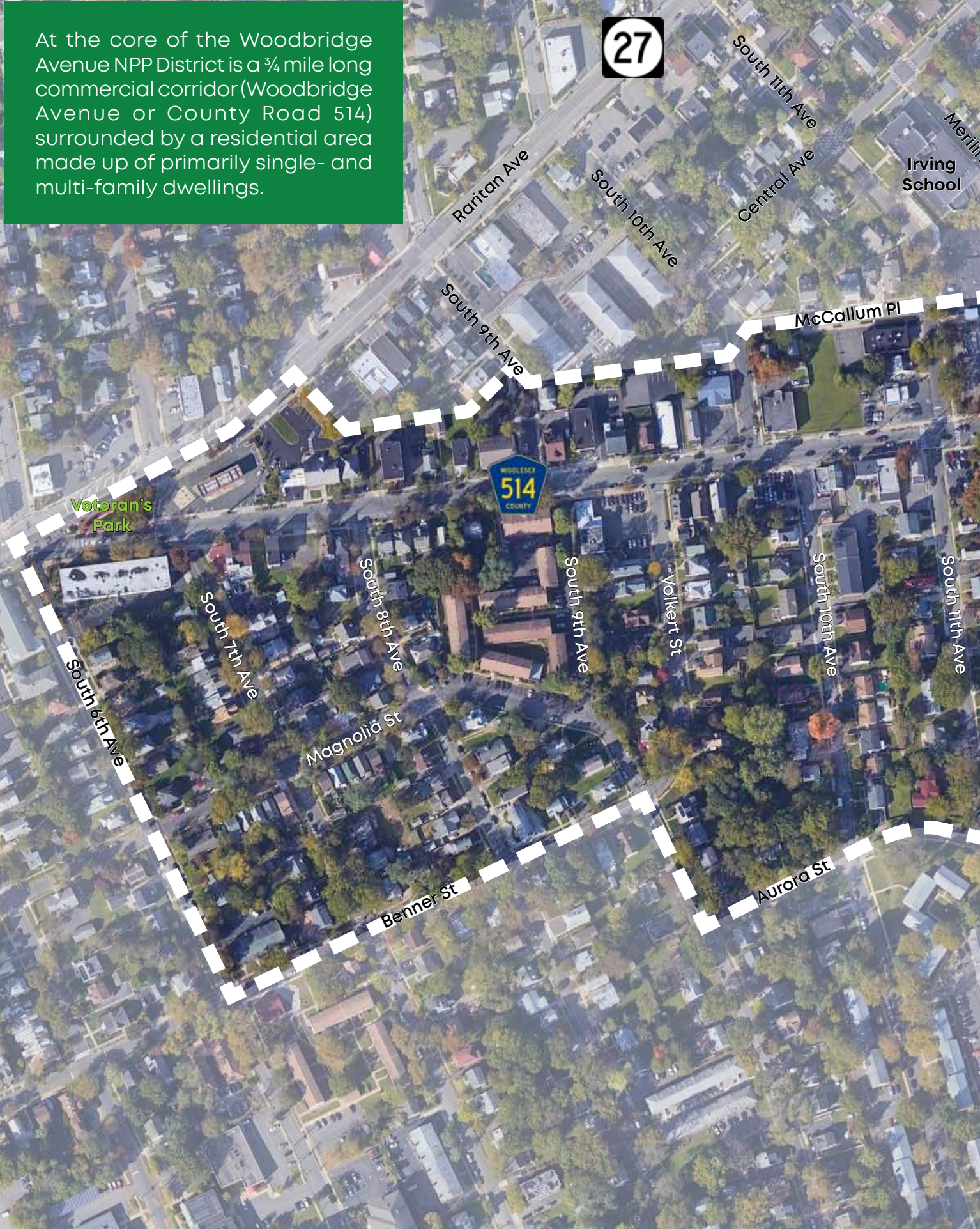
Neighborhood Map

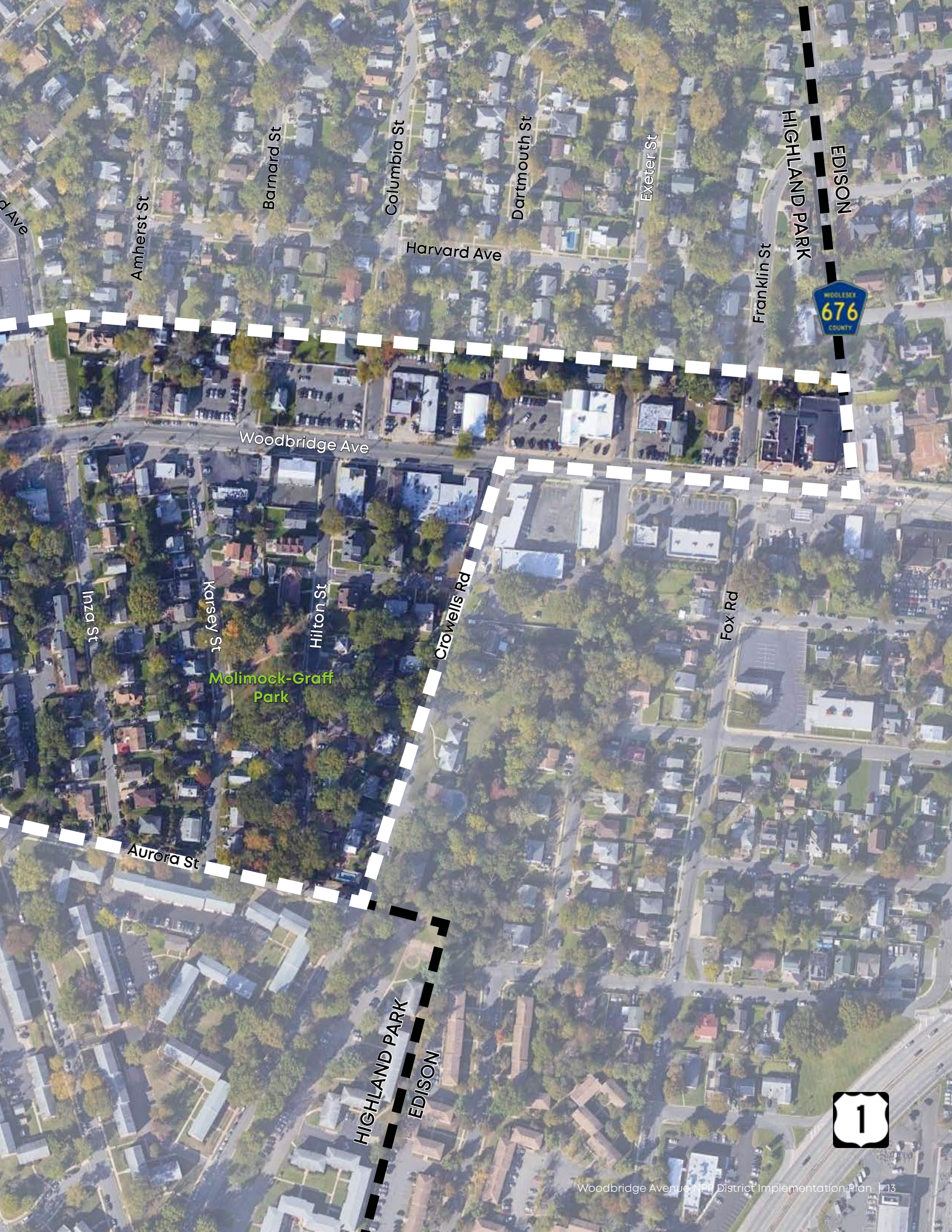
Proposed Woodbridge Avenue NPP District

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.





d Ave

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

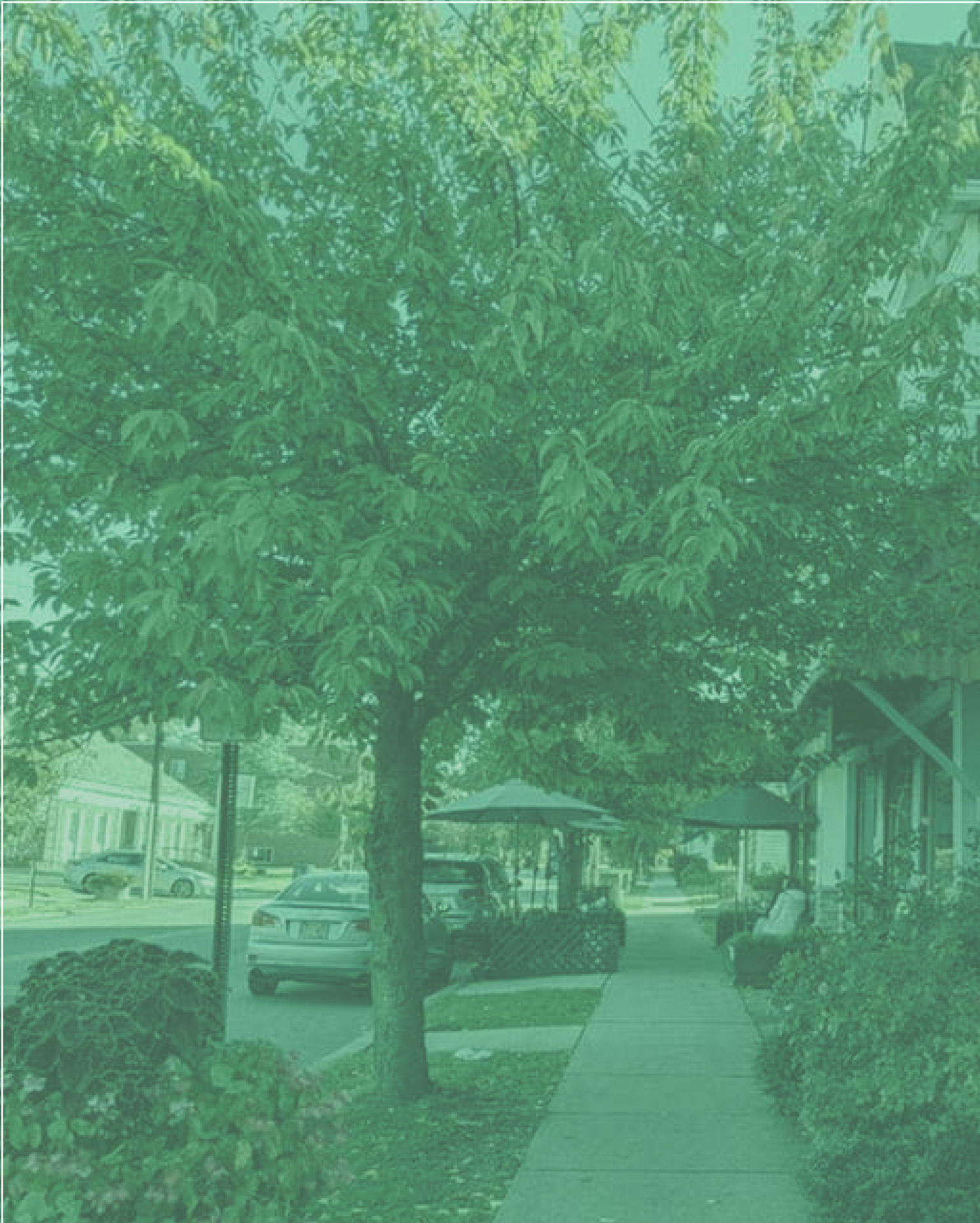
Molimock-Graff Park

Aurora St

HIGHLAND PARK

EDISON







NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Woodbridge Avenue NPP District is home to more than 30 businesses, nearly a thousand residents, and more than 200 households. The following table shows an estimate of the mix of building types and uses in the district.

Structural Use	Number of Structures	% of Structures
Housing	215	80%
Commercial	35	13%
Mixed-Use	15	5.5%
Other	5	1.5%
Total	270	100%

RESIDENTIAL

The district is within census tract 12, block groups 3 and 4 which are 48.6% and 63% low-moderate income respectively. An assessment of the residential portion of the district by the Borough's Director of Code Enforcement found the following regarding the conditions of residential structures:

Property Type	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Single Family	10%	25%	45%	20%
Multifamily	15%	25%	50%	10%
Mixed-Use Structures	15%	50%	25%	10%

Nestled in the residential portion of the district is Molimock-Graff Park - also known as Karsey Street Park - which is the primary recreational area in the district and one of only three municipal parks located in the Borough.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

COMMERCIAL

Woodbridge Avenue is one of three commercial corridors in Highland Park and is a major gateway that marks visitors' arrival into the Highland Park community from neighboring Edison Township. Woodbridge Avenue businesses range from auto sales & repair, personal services, medical offices, and restaurants.

Since Woodbridge Avenue is a Middlesex County roadway (County Road 514) its upkeep is the responsibility of the County. Motorists in the region commonly use Woodbridge Avenue as a convenient way to get from Edison to New Brunswick and to Highland Park's "downtown." Woodbridge Avenue is also a convenient way for pedestrians that live in the district to access Raritan Avenue within the Borough's Central Business District. Businesses along Woodbridge Avenue are highly visible to auto and foot traffic.

In addition to commercial buildings, Woodbridge Avenue is also home to the Irving Primary School and a dozen single- and multi-family homes.

During a walk-through of the district during the application process, the Director of Code Enforcement found the following regarding the condition of commercial structures and other infrastructure:

Property Type	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Mixed-Use Structures	10%	25%	45%	20%
Other (Schools)	100%	0%	0%	0%
Curbs, Streets, and Sidewalks	20%	20%	40%	40%

Note: Residential Mixed-Use Structures includes all mixed-use structures in the NPP district. Commercial Mixed-Use Structures includes only those on Woodbridge Avenue.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHALLENGES

2019 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION

In 2019, the Borough undertook an effort to reexamine its Master Plan and make strategic updates to the Land Use Plan Element. A number of issues were identified through community input via an online survey - which received 545 unique responses - and community open houses. Relative to the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District, the challenges can be summarized as follows:

Challenge #1: As one of the primary entry corridors to Highland Park, Woodbridge Avenue is not a pleasant gateway. It lacks cohesion along the streetscape and appears disconnected from the adjoining neighborhoods and the rest of the community.

Challenge #2: Portions of the Woodbridge Avenue corridor are an unpleasant experience for pedestrians, characterized by uneven pavement, poor lighting, and a lack of street trees, bus shelters, and abandoned street furniture where sidewalks are also often obstructed by auto businesses.

Challenge #3: Woodbridge Avenue has numerous parking lots and several vacant properties that are missed opportunities for public space such as mini parks or multi-purpose facilities.

Challenge #4: The Woodbridge Avenue corridor should retain elements of its unique mix of uses and characteristics while at the same time acting as a gateway or entry point to Raritan Avenue (Highland Park's Downtown). This will mean creatively working with existing auto-oriented business and services on ways to develop a more aesthetically pleasing transition between the two neighborhoods.

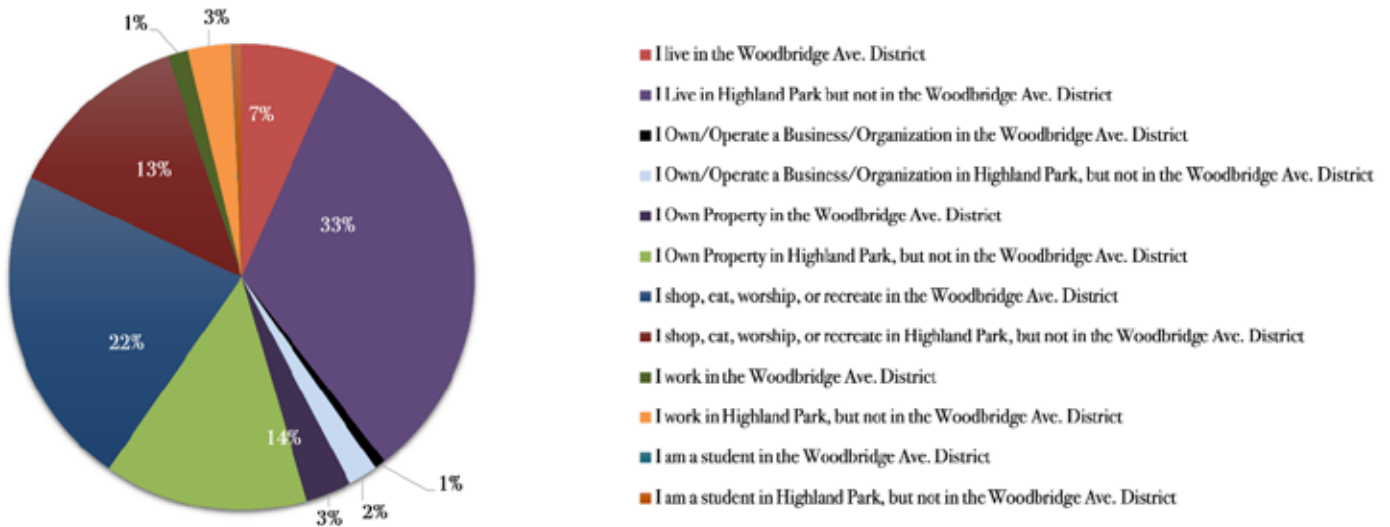
NEIGHBORHOOD CHALLENGES

2021 NPP ONLINE SURVEY

The Borough launched a 12-question online survey in November 2021 to assist with information gathering from district and Highland Park residents and visitors. The questions in the survey prompted respondents to consider the current state of the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District and what their vision for the district is five years into the future.

The Borough received an overwhelming response to the survey and received 594 responses by the time the survey closed on December 31, 2021.

What kind of stakeholder are you in Highland Park and in the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District?



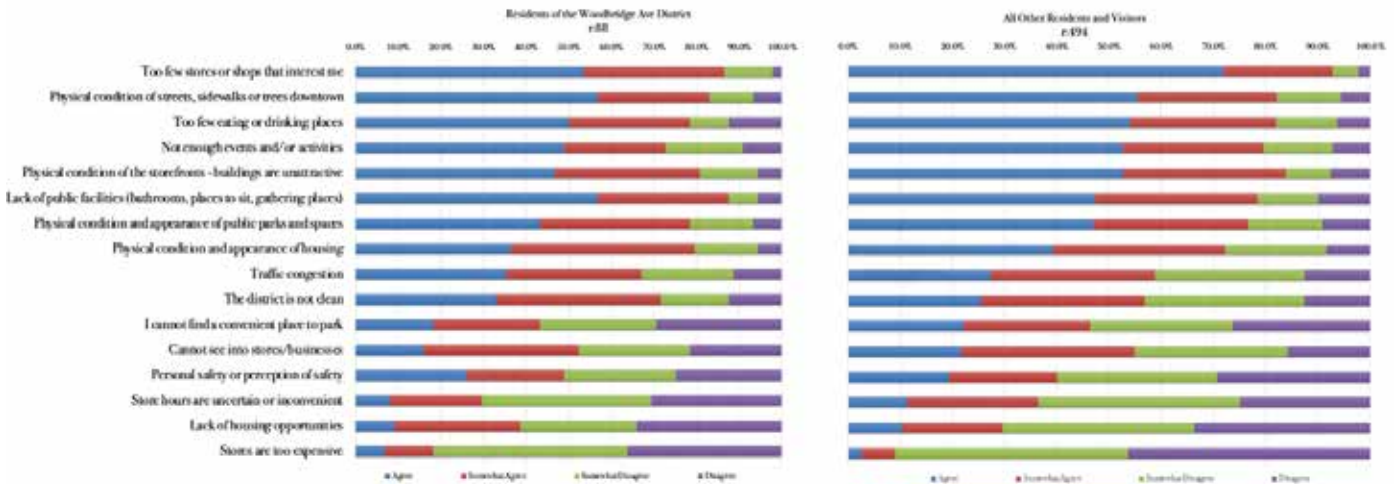
NEIGHBORHOOD CHALLENGES

Survey respondents identified the following as the greatest challenges facing the district:

1. Poor condition of streets, sidewalks, and trees in the district
2. Too few stores & shops that interest them
3. Lack of public facilities (bathrooms, places to sit, gathering places)

Respondents were also asked to indicate how much they like the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District as a whole in its current state. Business owners indicated either “it could use some work” or “not at all.” Similarly, very few district residents indicated the district was “amazing” and most feel that “it could use some work” or that they didn’t like it at all.

Which one of the following are the main reasons you do not enjoy the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District more often?



NEIGHBORHOOD CHALLENGES

DISTRICT OUTREACH MEETINGS

Three meetings were held in December 2021 to meet with district businesses and residents to discuss their favorite parts of the district and what their greatest challenges are. Feedback gathered during these meetings was essential in creating the Implementation Plan (IP).

- Business Roundtable: Wednesday, December 8, 2021, 7 PM
- Resident Meeting (Daytime): Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 1 PM
- Resident Meeting (Evening): Thursday, December 16, 2021, 7 PM

While many topics – from community events to share spaces – were discussed, four themes were recurring in all of the meetings:

1. Concern for the safety of pedestrians due to sidewalk conditions, limited lighting, and limited crosswalks
2. Need for property owners – commercial and residential – to take pride in their property’s appearance and maintain and reinvest in their property
3. Desire for a sense of connection to the rest of the Highland Park community aside from residents that live near Woodbridge Avenue
4. Recognition that Woodbridge Avenue is a first impression point for visitors to Highland Park and the value in making that first impression distinctive.

More information from these meetings can be found in the **Data Collection & Analysis** section.

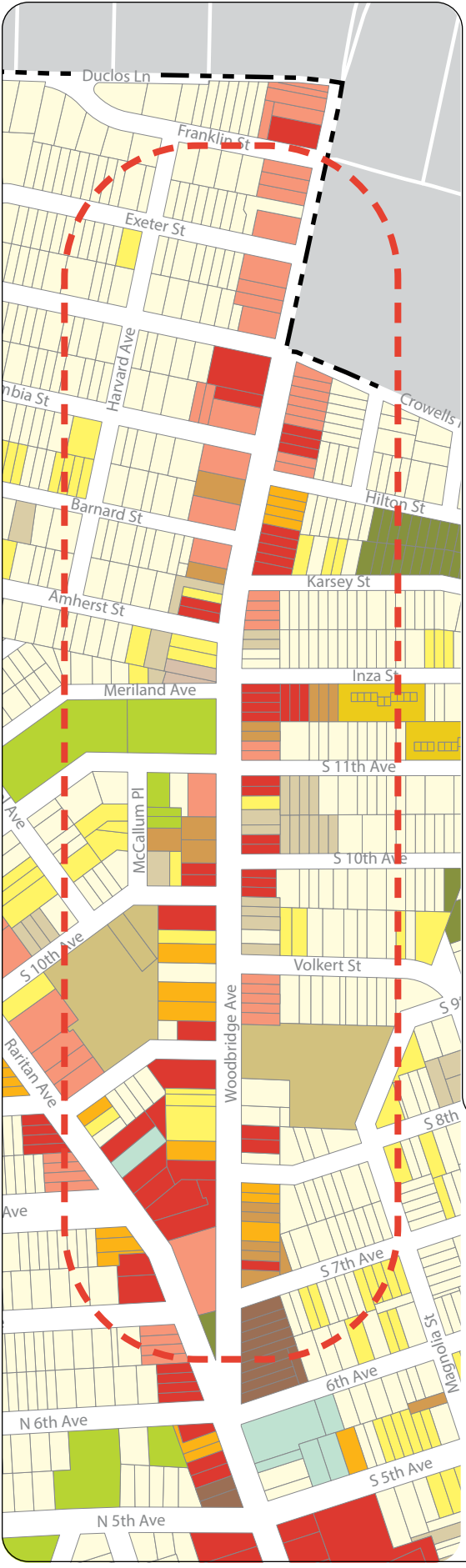
LAND USE & ZONING

As part of the strategic update to the Land Use Plan Element in 2019, the Borough analyzed the existing land use relative to the underlying zoning, and found that there were various disconnects resulting in a number of non-conforming uses throughout Woodbridge Avenue as well as within the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District. See the Land Use and Zoning maps on the right.

Generally, the “C” Commercial zoning district (in pink on the Zoning Map) permits uses generally found in a traditional downtown setting, including uses permitted in the “CBD” Central Business District (retail and personal service businesses on the ground floor, and banks, artist studios and artistic instruction space on the upper floors), restaurants (except carry-out restaurants), lawn and garden shops, offices and laboratories. However, the corridor is dominated by auto-oriented uses particularly in the section closest to the Edison border, and a mix of non-conforming residential uses and other uses in the section closer to the downtown.

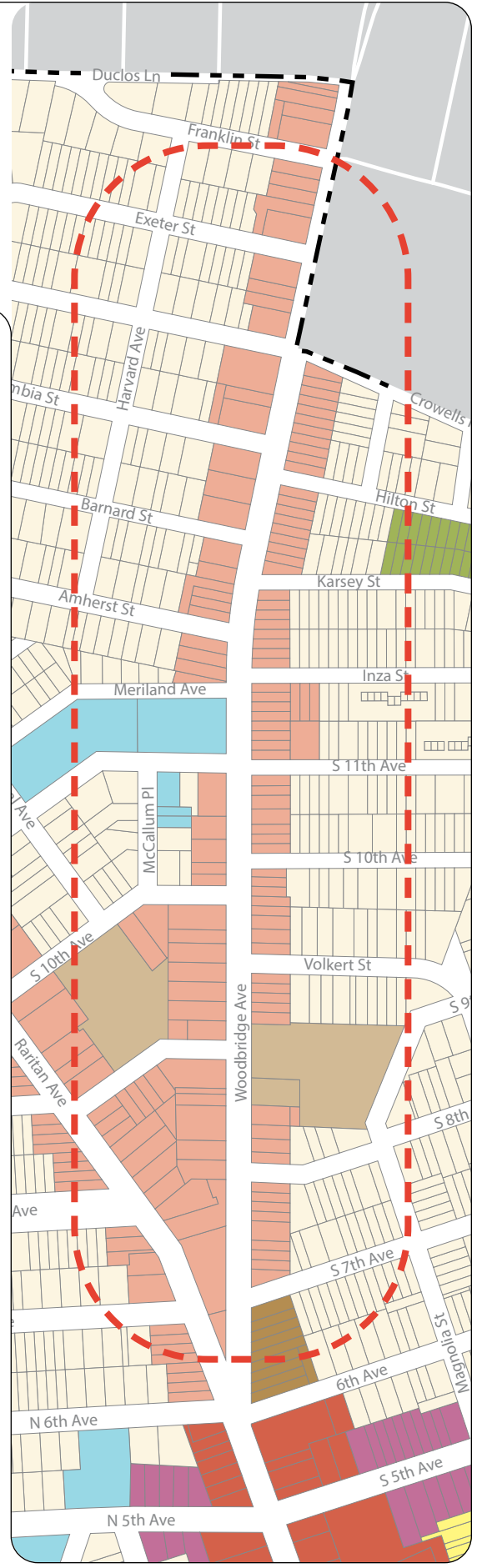
The “RA” Single-Family Residential zoning district (in light yellow on the Zoning Map) permits only single-family detached dwellings. The neighborhood south of Woodbridge Avenue contains a mix of residential uses, including some non-conforming two-family dwellings, townhomes, garden apartments, and multi-family apartments.

Among the various land use strategies identified by the community included retaining elements of unique uses and characteristics of the Woodbridge Avenue corridor, allowing for adaptive-reuse, and encouraging more diversity and mix of uses, combined with pedestrian-friendly streetscape improvements.



- Zoning Districts:**
- Commercial
 - CBD
 - Conservation & Recreation
 - Community Services
 - Single-Family
 - Garden Apartments
 - Mid-Rise Residential

- Land Use:**
- Single-Family
 - Two-Family
 - Townhouses
 - Multi-Family
 - Garden Apartments
 - Mid-Rise Apartments
 - Retail
 - Auto Commercial
 - Office
 - Quasi-Public
 - Community Facility
 - Recreation/Conservation



NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS

Eastern Woodbridge Avenue: This portion of the Woodbridge Avenue commercial corridor closest to Raritan Avenue feels like an extension of Highland Park’s downtown in terms of use, character, and streetscapes as well as being more pedestrian-friendly.

White Rose System: This Highland Park institution is a town favorite and attracts diners to Woodbridge Avenue day and night (24/7). The System also has a distinct mid-century design that could be replicated on other parts of Woodbridge Avenue.

Molimock – Graff Park: Commonly known as Karsey Park, Molimock – Graff Park is the only green space in the district and one of few small parks in the Borough. In its current form, it has a small jungle gym area, benches, and picnic tables.

Automotive Repair & Sales Shops: There are a plethora of automotive sales and repair shops, which offer considerable workforce development opportunities and create a unique “mechanics and makers” vibe. Auto-related businesses have been touted as a challenge for the district during conversations with stakeholders due to their industrial appearance, frequent driveway curb cuts over sidewalks, and challenges with walkability.

Veteran’s Park: A small corner park with a large piece of history on it – the recently refurbished Doughboy Statue – Veteran’s Park is where downtown and Woodbridge Avenue meet. Veteran’s Park is privately-owned but the property owner is friendly to suggestions.

Irving School: Highland Park’s Irving School is home to all of Highland Park’s students ages Pre-K through 1st Grade. The school brings a lot of foot, bicycle, and automobile traffic to Woodbridge Avenue and its adjacent side streets during drop-off and pick-up. The school also boasts a large parking lot and playground that can be used for community events.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS



SERVICES	FOOD & DINING	OTHERS	TRANSIT & WALKABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highland Park Laundromat 81 Woodbridge Avenue Young Moo Kwan Kendo (Vacant) 170 Woodbridge Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ellinikon Greek Grocery 284 Woodbridge Avenue White Rose Hamburgers 114 Woodbridge Avenue La Rosa Pizzeria 104 Woodbridge Avenue Park Pub 182 Woodbridge Avenue Pithari Taverna 18 Woodbridge Avenue Asian Garden Parking Lot 147 Woodbridge Avenue Highland Park Wine & Liquors Parking Lot 111 Woodbridge Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lantern-Style Light Fixtures Highland Park Entry Sign 221 Woodbridge Avenue Historical Clock 111 Woodbridge Avenue Planters So. 7th - So. 11th Street Trees Southside Cleanup Immanuel Church of New Jersey 11 Woodbridge Avenue EDUCATION Irving School 121 So. 11th Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empty Lot 20 Woodbridge Avenue International Flowers Mural STAC Arts Commission MSHP Facade Grant MSHP Tree Planting Grant So. 11th & Woodbridge Traffic Light Box NJ Transit Bus Shelters 87 Woodbridge Avenue 116 Woodbridge Avenue AUTO P & K Auto Clinic 70 Woodbridge Avenue

Woodbridge Ave District, Highland Park
Neighborhood Preservation Program
Department of Community Affairs







IMPLEMENTATION PLAN YEAR ONE



NPP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

YEAR ONE

Highland Park will focus on visible and tangible changes in the district during the first year to capture the attention of businesses and residents and showcase the potential of the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District. Objectives during the first year include:

1. Strengthening connections between businesses and residents along the commercial corridor and in the adjacent residential neighborhood to develop a cohesive neighborhood identity and establish Woodbridge Avenue as a dynamic entry point into the Highland Park community.
2. Improving the streetscape and pedestrian experience by making physical improvements that enhance walkability and perceived safety.
3. Working with anchor businesses to strengthen their operations and exploring the recruitment of new businesses to the commercial corridor.

ARTS & CULTURE

(\$6,000 NPP | \$11,000 TOTAL)

Highland Park is a community packed with artists and art enthusiasts. Art walks, art festivals, murals, spoken word jams – Highland Park has them all. In order to brighten the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District, the Borough will partner with the Highland Park Arts Commission and Artist’s Collaborative to bring public art to the district in the form of permanent and temporary murals, painted trash cans and traffic boxes, sculptures, and other forms. Additionally, it is our intention to begin to rotate some annual events in town to the district to ensure they are accessible to all residents and to bring members of the community to the district to promote increased activation and see the changes being made.

Public Art Installations (\$5,000): Work with Arts Commission to identify appropriate spaces for permanent or temporary public art installations. OPM available through Middlesex County Arts & History Grants (~ \$2,500).

- 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. OPM available through Middlesex County Arts & History Grants (~ \$2,500).

- Social Value

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

(\$11,000 NPP | \$22,000 TOTAL)

Woodbridge Avenue businesses are highly visible to both pedestrians and drivers who pass by or commute between Edison and New Brunswick. They would benefit greatly from improved facades, signage, and landscaping to attract new customers by capitalizing on their visibility. Matching grants of various sizes will be available for the duration of the NPP program and amounts will depend on a business' square footage and needs. Businesses will be matched with a local consultant to assist them in developing a plan for maintaining and improving their business' exterior that is in line with the look and feel the Borough is working to curate in the district.

Façade Grants (\$11,000): Partner with Main Street Highland Park Design Committee to implement a Façade Grant program which will include awnings, signage, planters, grass, bollards, etc. OPM secured through 2019 CDBG funding (\$11,000).

- Place Value
- Economic Value

COMMUNITY SPACES

(\$30,000)

There are very few municipal recreational and open spaces in Highland Park and Molimock-Graff Park is one of them, conveniently located in the heart of the district. The park is in need of some upgrades in order to be able to host community events such as Earth Day and National Night Out. In particular, electric service is needed, which would be a first step in making Molimock-Graff Park a more versatile space. The Borough will also host a park clean-up day shortly after the electric installation is complete to celebrate the new and improved Molimock-Graff Park.

Electric Service at Molimock – Graff Park (\$30,000): Install infrastructure for electric at Molimock – Graff Park, , making it a much more suitable option for community events moving forward. Any electric boxes that are installed will be wrapped with artwork commissioned from a community artist.

- Place Value
- Social Value

RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

(\$0 NPP | \$20,000 TOTAL)

Both the online survey and resident outreach meetings indicated a desire for existing housing to be improved. Providing residents in the district with resources – both financial and technical – to better care for their homes is an essential part of improving the condition of residences in the district. Gearing up for year two, the Borough will work with the Department of Code Enforcement to develop a targeted enforcement plan and solicit applications for porch renovation and sidewalk grants that will become available in years 2 – 5.

The Borough is also planning on repopulating the tree canopy in the district over the five years of the grant in partnership with the Borough's Shade Tree Advisory Committee. Trees will help improve air quality in the district and contribute to real estate values. The Borough has an outstanding grant proposal to kick start the neighborhood tree planting effort in year one but if not awarded those funds, tree planting will begin in year two.

Neighborhood Advisory Board (\$0): Form a Neighborhood Advisory Board to aid in building grassroots awareness of NPP opportunities as well as get additional input from residents in the district.

- Social Value
- Civic Value

Neighborhood Tree Planting (OPM – \$20,000 TD Bank Grant Pending): Plant approximately 40 new street trees in residential neighborhood (including on private property) through a community planting day.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

STREETSCAPE

(\$70,000 NPP | \$130,000 TOTAL)

A significant portion of year one funds will be earmarked towards improving the streetscape along Woodbridge Avenue to attract visitors and businesses. The first steps will be to upgrade the existing electric poles with outlets so seasonal holiday decorations can be purchased and installed. Other proposed activities include building tree pits for sections of Woodbridge Avenue lacking trees, designing an archway that will announce drivers' arrival in Highland Park, and upgrading street signage and wayfinding signs. Funds have been allocated during the duration of this grant to purchase new street furniture to create gathering space and trash cans to assist with keeping Woodbridge Avenue clean.

Rent Holiday Decorations (\$5,000): Rent much-requested holiday decorations to match holiday décor along Highland Park's Raritan Avenue.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Install Outlets on Electric Poles (\$15,000): Install electric outlet on poles along Woodbridge Avenue.

- Place Value

Purchase Street Furniture (\$7,000): Purchase additional benches, planters, and trash cans to line Woodbridge Avenue based on common gathering places.

- Place Value
- Social Value

Commercial Tree Planting (\$36,000): Create tree pits and plant new street trees on streets with limited trees along Woodbridge Avenue commercial corridor. OPM available through NJ Urban & Community Forestry Stewardship grant (~ \$60,000).

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Gateway Feature Planning & Design (\$2,000): Connect with designer to create preliminary designs for archway at entry point between Edison and Highland Park.

- Place Value
- Social Value

Upgrade Street Signage & Wayfinding (\$5,000): Update street signs along Woodbridge Avenue and signs that indicate arrival to Woodbridge Avenue NPP District. May include historical signs for historical buildings along commercial corridor.

- Place Value
- Social Value

TRANSPORTATION

(\$18,000)

Woodbridge Avenue needs to be able to safely accommodate all users, including drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Over the five years of the grant, it is our desire to slowly implement the concepts outlined in Highland Park's 2019 Bike/Ped Plan. The Borough will purchase additional bike racks to be placed outside of popular destinations to make bicyclists feel more secure biking to Woodbridge Avenue. The Borough will also work with Middlesex County to secure approval to stripe parking spots along Woodbridge Avenue – a traffic calming mechanism – making it safer for pedestrians by encouraging drivers to slow down. The Borough also would like to begin to better connect the two sides of Woodbridge Avenue by installing crosswalks across the avenue, with approval from Middlesex County.

The Borough has an existing relationship with Middlesex County DOT due to an upcoming roads project that will include repaving of 1/3 of Woodbridge Avenue to the Edison border as well as installing new ADA curb cuts and improving drainage issues.

Purchase Bike Racks (\$3,000): Purchase additional bike racks to place near popular destinations to encourage cycling.

- Place Value

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

- Place Value
- Civic Value

Crosswalk Installation (\$10,000): Design and paint colorful, mid-street crosswalks to enhance pedestrian safety.

- Place Value

ADMINISTRATION

(\$15,000)

NPP Coordinator Stipend (\$9,000)

Borough Planner (\$6,000)

BUDGET - YEAR ONE

Activity	NPP Funding	Municipal Match	OPM
Arts & Culture			
Public Art		\$5,000	\$2,500
Special Events	\$1,000		\$2,500
Business Development			
Facade Grants	\$11,000		\$11,000
Community Spaces			
Electric Install at Molimock-Graff Park	\$30,000		
Residential Improvements			
Tree Planting: Neighborhood			\$20,000
Streetscape			
Gateway Feature Design	\$2,000		
Enhance Signage	\$5,000		
Rent Holiday Decorations	\$5,000		
Install Outlets	\$15,000		
Purchase Street Furniture	\$7,000		
Tree Planting: Commercial	\$36,000		\$60,000
Transportation			
Crosswalk Installation	\$10,000	\$5,000	
Purchase Bike Racks	\$3,000		
Administration			
Salary: NPP Coordinator		\$9,000	
Salary: Planner		\$6,000	
	\$125,000	\$25,000	\$96,000





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN YEAR TWO



ARTS & CULTURE (\$6,000)

Public Art Installations (\$5,000)

- Place Value
- Social Value

Community Events (\$1,000)

- Social Value

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (\$16,000 NPP | \$28,000 TOTAL)

Façade Grants (\$12,500): OPM secured through 2021 CDBG funding (\$12,000).

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Technical Assistance (\$2,500): Offer webinars and in-person consultations with NPP businesses on a range of topics from building an online presence to state-of-the-art 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 (\$1,000): Purchase bulk décor to fill windows while landlords recruit new tenants.

- Place Value

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

- Place Value
- Economic Value

COMMUNITY SPACES (\$6,500)

Park Amenities (\$6,500): Purchase additional benches, trash cans, and recreational equipment for Molimock - Graff Park.

- Place Value
- Social Value

RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS (\$56,500)

Home & Lawn Care Classes (\$1,000)

- Social Value
- Economic Value

Neighborhood Advisory Board (\$0)

- Social Value
- Civic Value

Neighborhood Tree Planting (\$10,000): Plant approximately 20 new street trees in residential neighborhood (including on private property) through a community planting day.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Porch Renovation Grants (\$22,000): Matching grants for exterior home improvements (stairs, doorways, porches, drainage/landscaping etc.). Matching requirement based on financial need.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Sidewalk Grants (\$20,000): Matching grants available for sidewalk improvements as determined by the Borough's town-wide sidewalk improvement program.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Shared Tool Library (\$1,000): Purchase of tools to be kept in a lending library and lent out to district residents for home improvement projects.

- Economic Value
- Civic Value

Workforce Development Program (\$2,500): Work with Middlesex County Office of Business Development on developing a workforce development program centered on existing business types in NPP district (auto, cannabis, light industry).

- Economic Value
- Social Value

STREETSCAPE

(\$50,000 NPP | \$70,000 TOTAL)

Gateway Feature (\$35,000): Purchase and install archway across Woodbridge Avenue, welcoming individuals to Highland Park.

- Place Value
- Social Value

Tree Planting (OPM - \$20,000 CDBG): Plant 40 new street trees along Woodbridge Avenue commercial corridor. OPM secured through CDBG funding (\$20,000).

- Place Value
- Social Value

Pedestrian Lighting (\$15,000): Purchase and install pedestrian-scale lighting to illuminate sidewalks.

- Place Value
- Social Value

ADMINISTRATION

(\$15,000)

NPP Coordinator Stipend (\$9,000)

Borough Planner (\$6,000)

BUDGET - YEAR TWO

Activity	NPP Funding	Municipal Match	OPM
Arts & Culture			
Public Art	\$5,000		\$5,000
Special Events	\$1,000		
Business Development			
Facade Grants	\$12,500		\$12,000
Technical Assistance Courses	\$2,500		
Vacant Storefront Decor	\$1,000		
Community Spaces			
Park Amenities	\$6,500		
Residential Improvements			
Porch Renovation Grants	\$22,000		
Sidewalk Grants	\$20,000		
Home & Lawn Care Classes	\$1,000		
Shared Tool Library	\$1,000		
Tree Planting: Neighborhood		\$10,000	
Workforce Development Program	\$2,500		
Streetscape			
Gateway Feature Purchase & Installation	\$35,000		
Pedestrian Lighting	\$15,000		
Tree Planting: Commercial			\$20,000
Administration			
Salary: NPP Coordinator		\$9,000	
Salary: Planner		\$6,000	
	\$125,000	\$25,000	\$37,000



GENERAL
TIRE





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN YEAR THREE

ARTS & CULTURE

(\$6,000)

Public Art Installations (\$5,000)

- Place Value
- Social Value

Community Events (\$1,000)

- Social Value

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

(\$17,500)

Façade Grants (\$15,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Technical Assistance (\$2,500)

- Economic Value

COMMUNITY SPACES

(\$3,500)

Park Amenities (\$3,500)

- Place Value
- Social Value

RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS (\$50,000)

Home & Lawn Care Classes (\$500)

- Social Value
- Economic Value

Neighborhood Advisory Board (\$0)

- Social Value
- Civic Value

Neighborhood Tree Planting (\$10,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Porch Renovation Grants (\$14,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Sidewalk Grants (\$28,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Workforce Development Program (\$2,500)

- Economic Value
- Social Value

STREETSCAPE

(\$28,000)

Purchase Street Furniture (\$13,000)

- Place Value
- Social Value

Pedestrian Lighting (\$15,000)

- Place Value
- Social Value

TRANSPORTATION

(\$25,000)

Bus Stop Improvements (\$20,000): Redo curb aprons to bus stops without shelters, purchase benches to place near bus stops.

- Place Value
- Social Value

Trial Bike Lanes (\$5,000): Based on approved Bike/Ped Plan, implement trial bike lanes during spring – fall.

- Place Value
- Social Value

ADMINISTRATION

(\$15,000)

NPP Coordinator Stipend (\$9,000)

Borough Planner (\$6,000)

BUDGET - YEAR THREE

Activity	NPP Funding	Municipal Match	OPM
Arts & Culture			
Public Art	\$5,000		\$5,000
Special Events	\$1,000		
Business Development			
Facade Grants	\$15,000		
Technical Assistance Courses	\$2,500		
Community Spaces			
Park Amenities	\$3,500		
Residential Improvements			
Porch Renovation Grants	\$14,000		
Sidewalk Grants	\$28,000		
Home & Lawn Care Classes	\$500		
Tree Planting: Neighborhood		\$10,000	
Workforce Development Program	\$2,500		
Streetscape			
Pedestrian Lighting	\$15,000		
Purchase Street Furniture	\$13,000		
Transportation			
Bus Stop Improvements	\$20,000		
Trial Bike Lanes	\$5,000		
Administration			
Salary: NPP Coordinator		\$9,000	
Salary: Planner		\$6,000	
	\$125,000	\$25,000	\$5,000





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN YEAR FOUR

ARTS & CULTURE (\$6,000)

Public Art Installations (\$5,000)

- Place Value
- Social Value

Community Events (\$1,000)

- Social Value

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (\$27,500)

Façade Grants (\$25,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Technical Assistance (\$2,500)

- Economic Value

RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS (\$67,500)

Home & Lawn Care Classes (\$1,000)

- Social Value
- Economic Value

Neighborhood Advisory Board (\$0)

- Social Value
- Civic Value

Neighborhood Tree Planting (\$10,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Porch Renovation Grants (\$29,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Sidewalk Grants (\$25,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Workforce Development Program (\$2,500)

- Economic Value
- Social Value

STREETSCAPE (\$16,000)

Purchase Street Furniture (\$16,000)

- Place Value
- Social Value

TRANSPORTATION (\$18,000)

Purchase Bike Racks (\$3,000)

- Place Value

Crosswalk Installation (\$15,000)

- Place Value

ADMINISTRATION (\$15,000)

NPP Coordinator Stipend (\$9,000)

Borough Planner (\$6,000)

BUDGET - YEAR FOUR

Activity	NPP Funding	Municipal Match	OPM
Arts & Culture			
Public Art	\$5,000		\$5,000
Special Events	\$1,000		
Business Development			
Facade Grants	\$25,000		
Technical Assistance Courses	\$2,500		
Residential Improvements			
Porch Renovation Grants	\$29,000		
Sidewalk Grants	\$25,000		
Home & Lawn Care Classes	\$1,000		
Tree Planting: Neighborhood		\$10,000	
Workforce Development Program	\$2,500		
Streetscape			
Purchase Street Furniture	\$16,000		
Transportation			
Crosswalk Installation	\$15,000		
Purchase Bike Racks	\$3,000		
Administration			
Salary: NPP Coordinator		\$9,000	
Salary: Planner		\$6,000	
	\$125,000	\$25,000	\$5,000





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN YEAR FIVE

ARTS & CULTURE (\$6,000)

Public Art Installations (\$5,000)

- Place Value
- Social Value

Community Events (\$1,000)

- Social Value

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (\$40,000)

Façade Grants (\$37,500)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Technical Assistance (\$2,500)

- Economic Value

RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS (\$80,500)

Home & Lawn Care Classes (\$1,000)

- Social Value
- Economic Value

Neighborhood Advisory Board (\$0)

- Social Value
- Civic Value

Neighborhood Tree Planting (\$10,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Porch Renovation Grants (\$35,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Sidewalk Grants (\$32,000)

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Workforce Development Program (\$2,500)

- Economic Value
- Social Value

STREETSCAPE
(\$8,500)

Purchase Street Furniture (\$8,500)

- Place Value
- Social Value

ADMINISTRATION
(\$15,000)

NPP Coordinator Stipend (\$9,000)

Borough Planner (\$6,000)

BUDGET - YEAR FIVE

Activity	NPP Funding	Municipal Match	OPM
Arts & Culture			
Public Art	\$5,000		\$5,000
Special Events	\$1,000		
Business Development			
Facade Grants	\$37,500		
Technical Assistance Courses	\$2,500		
Residential Improvements			
Porch Renovation Grants	\$35,000		
Sidewalk Grants	\$32,000		
Home & Lawn Care Classes	\$1,000		
Tree Planting: Neighborhood		\$10,000	
Workforce Development Program	\$2,500		
Streetscape			
Purchase Street Furniture	\$8,500		
Administration			
Salary: NPP Coordinator		\$9,000	
Salary: Planner		\$6,000	
	\$125,000	\$25,000	\$5,000





DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

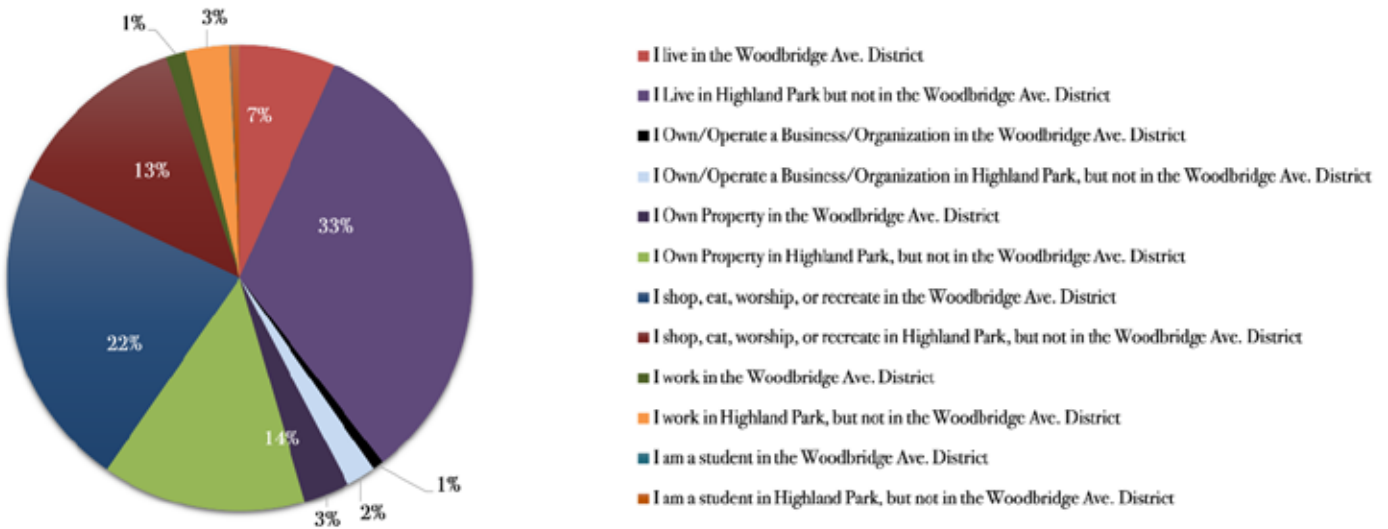
ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

This plan was created with significant input from NPP district residents & businesses, Highland Park residents & businesses, Borough Council, volunteer boards & commissions, and visitors.

With technical assistance from DCA, the Borough launched a 12-question online survey about the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District on November 18, 2021. The survey was available in five different languages (English, Spanish, Kreyol, Tagalog, and Portuguese) and open to anyone who lives, works, shops, eats, or creates in Highland Park. The survey was widely shared via social media, the Borough’s email list, and through community partners’ networks. The Borough received an overwhelming response to the survey and received 594 responses by the time the survey closed on December 31, 2021.

DCA Technical Assistant Stephania Gonzalez played an integral part in analyzing results from the survey and prepared a number of visuals and graphics representing respondents’ top priorities for the NPP district.

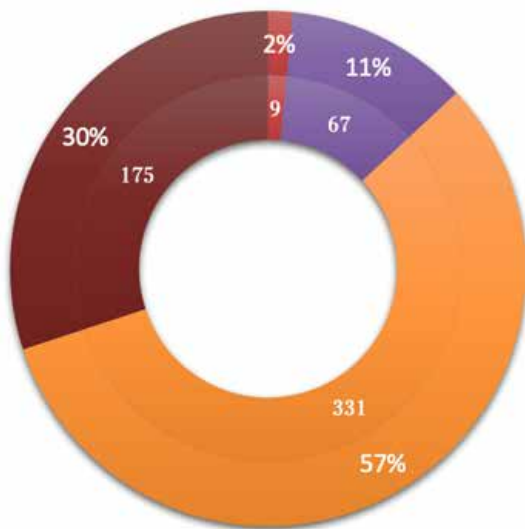
What kind of stakeholder are you in Highland Park and in the Woodbridge Ave. District?



HOW MUCH DO YOU LIKE THE WOODBRIDGE AVENUE NPP DISTRICT RIGHT NOW?

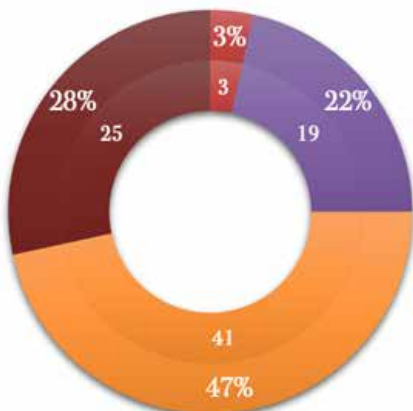
- **2%** liked the district “A lot. It’s amazing! Don’t change a thing!”
- **11%** are “I’m Satisfied [with the district]. It’s Pretty good, but could still be improved.”
- **57%** liked the district “A little. It’s OK. It could use some work..”
- **30%** did not like the district at all.

How much do you like the Woodbridge Ave. District (as a whole) right now?
r: 582

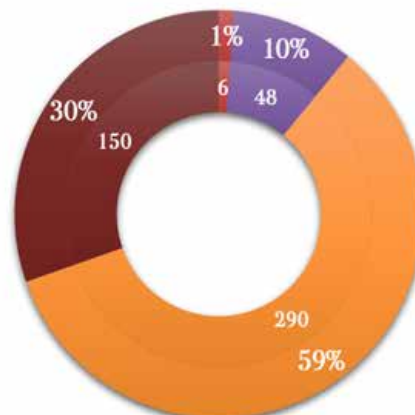


- A lot. It’s amazing! Don’t change a thing!
- I’m satisfied. It’s pretty good, but could still be improved.
- A little. It’s OK. It could use some work.
- Not at all.

Residents of the Woodbridge Ave District
r: 88

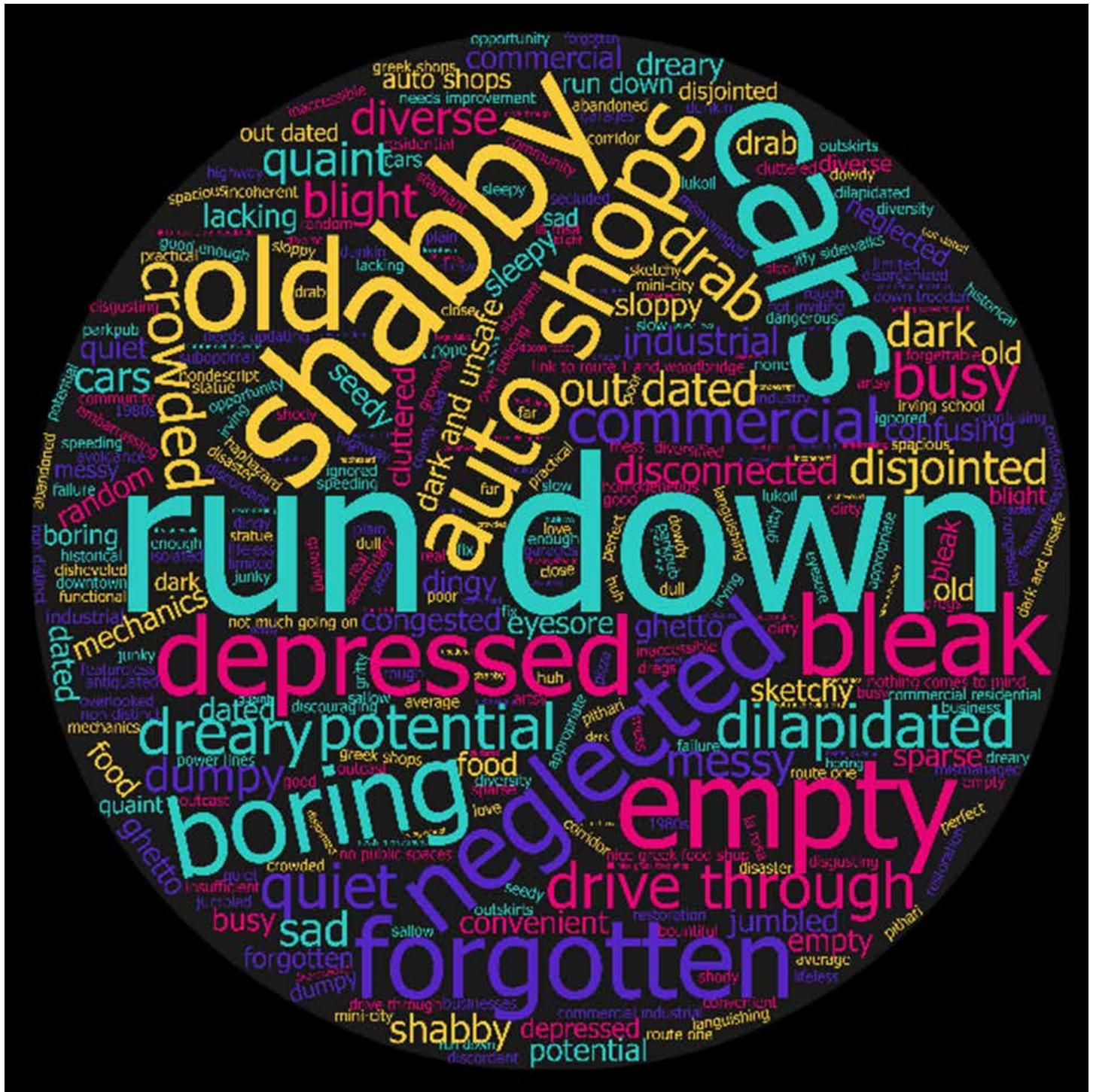


All Other Residents and Visitors
r:494



PRESENT DAY VS. FUTURE

The survey prompted respondents to use one word to describe the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District as it is in the present day and one word to describe what they would like it to be like in five years.

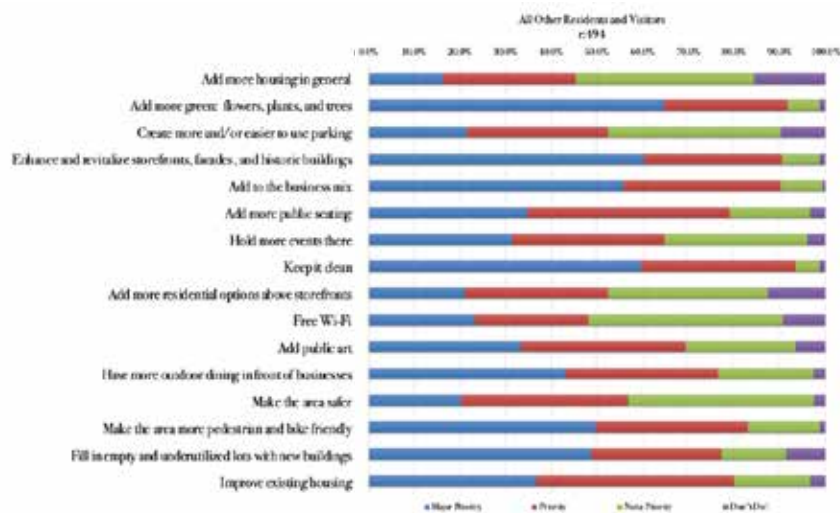
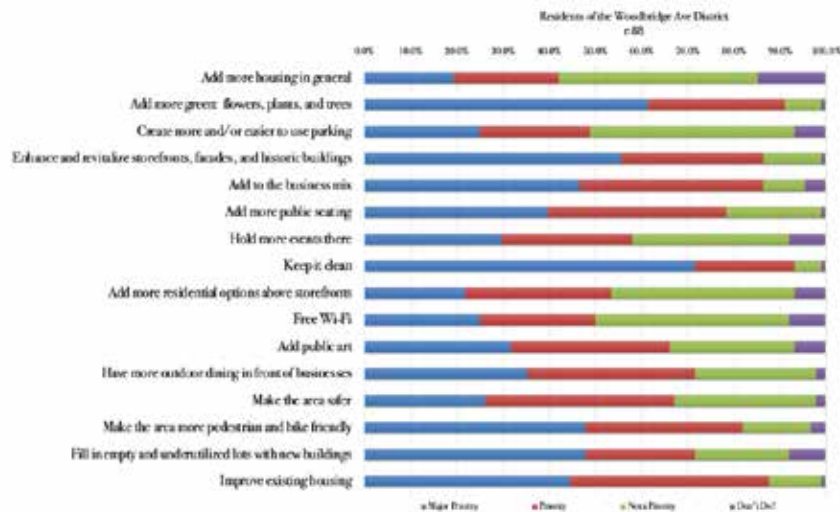


Word Cloud of Words Given to Describe the Present Day

PRESENT DAY: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN REASONS YOU DO NOT ENJOY THE WOODBRIDGE AVENUE NPP DISTRICT MORE OFTEN?

The answers to the above question were very similar between both district residents and district visitors. The top reasons respondents do not go to the district more often are:

- Poor condition of streets, sidewalks, and trees in the district
- Too few stores & shops that interest them
- Lack of public facilities (bathrooms, places to sit, gathering places)



WHICH PHOTO CAPTURES THE “FEEL” YOU WOULD LIKE THE WOODBRIDGE AVENUE DISTRICT TO HAVE IN THE FUTURE?

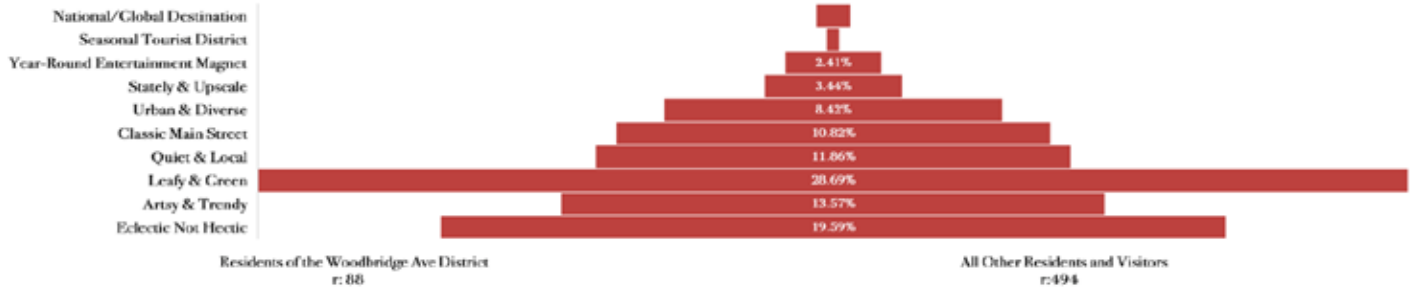


Leafy & Green

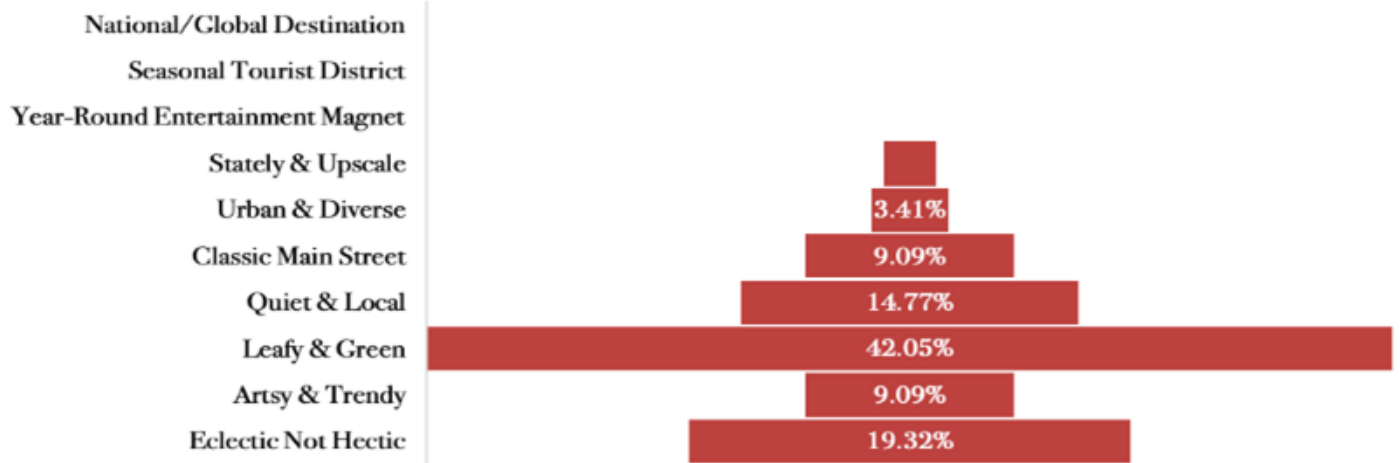


Eclectic Not Hectic

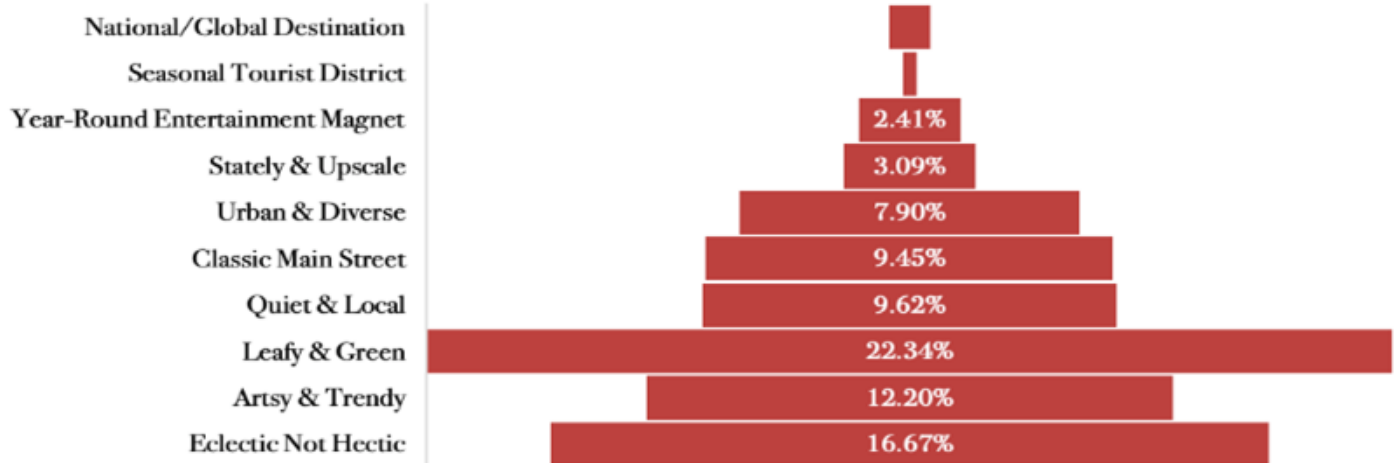
Which image best captures the "feel" you would like the Woodbridge Ave. District to have in the future?
n:582



Residents of the Woodbridge Ave District
n: 88



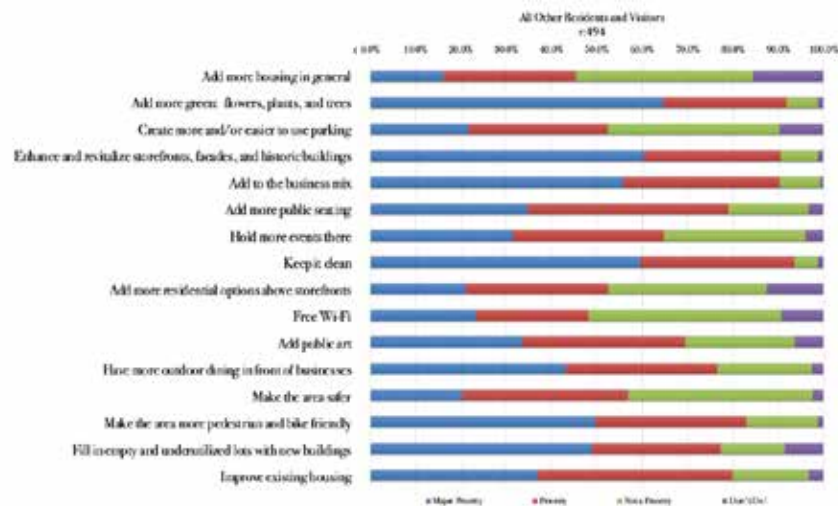
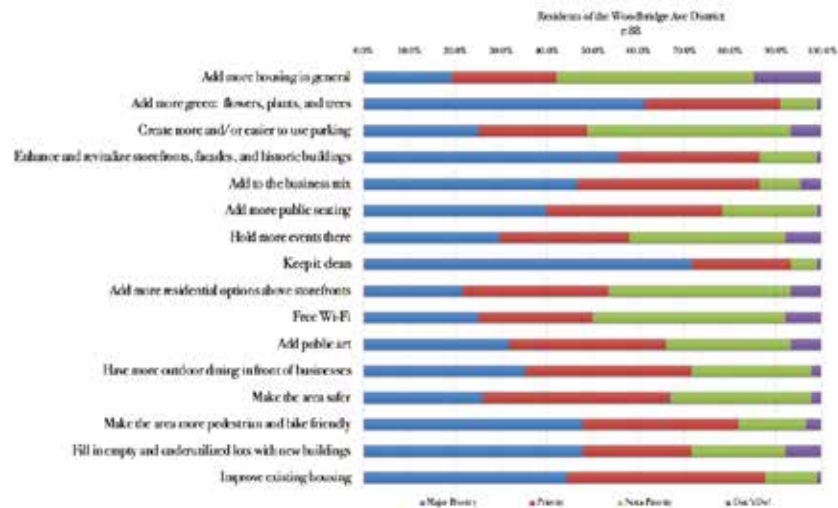
All Other Residents and Visitors
n:494



FUTURE: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU WANT TO SEE HAPPEN MOST IN THE WOODBRIDGE AVENUE NPP DISTRICT?

The answers to the above question were once again very similar between both district residents and district visitors. The top things respondents want to see take shape in the Woodbridge Avenue NPP District are:

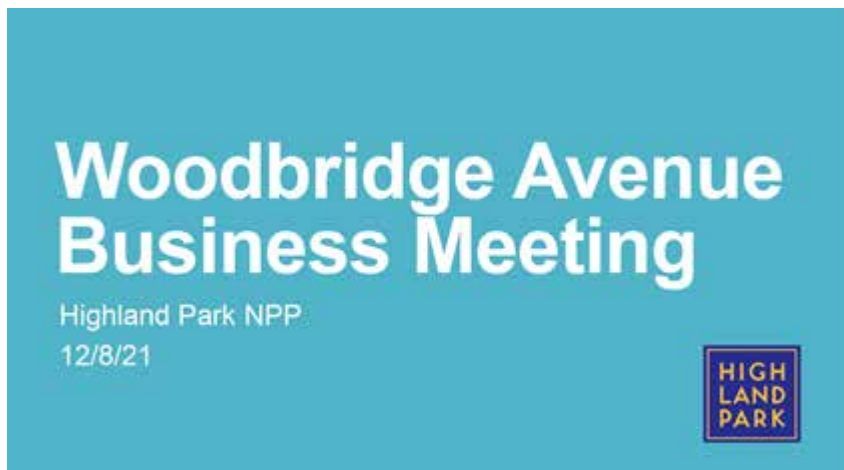
- Add more greens, flowers, plants, and trees
- Keep it clean
- Enhance and revitalize storefronts, facades, and historic buildings
- Make the area more pedestrian and bike friendly
- Add to the business mix



BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

The Stakeholder Engagement Team hosted a Business Roundtable virtually on Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Businesses were invited to attend via mail and the NPP Coordinator traveled business to business in-person to follow-up on the invitation. Individual emails were also sent to 30+ business owners whose emails were available online.

Six engaged business owners ended up attending the meeting which was facilitated by Councilman Matt Hale. The business owners represented an array of businesses including auto repair, personal services, medical, and light industry. The discussion was robust and candid and there were a lot of good suggestions made as to how the NPP grant monies could be used to assist businesses and help them thrive.



*How does this fit into
your vision for your
business and
Woodbridge Avenue as a
whole?*



RESIDENT OUTREACH MEETINGS

There were two meetings held for district residents to learn about the NPP program and to offer insight as to their favorite things about the district and opportunities for improvement.

- Resident Meeting (Daytime): Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 1 PM
- Resident Meeting (Evening): Thursday, December 16, 2021, 7 PM

Six engaged residents attended each of the two meetings. District residents were notified about the meeting via Nixle, message board along Woodbridge Avenue, and door hangers that were delivered to every residence in the district.



