



BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK
NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM

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

Prepared February 26, 2024

Adopted March 19, 2024



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

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.

1218 Chestnut Street, 5th Floor

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Highland Park's NPP Stakeholder Engagement Team is made up of eight (8) 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:

- **Melissa Gordeuk** | District Resident
- **Khahlidra Hadhazy** | District Resident & Planning Board Representative
- **Matt Hale** | Borough Councilmember, Economic Development Committee
- **Rebecca Hersh** | Executive Director, Main Street Highland Park
- **John Marron** | District Resident & Arts Commission Representative
- **Christina Sharkey** | District Business Owner, Calico CPA
- **Marcia Shiffman** | Board Member, Main Street Highland Park
- **Grazina Strolia** | Historical Commission Representative

The Borough would also like to extend a special thank you to **New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy** and **Acting DCA Commissioner, Jacquelyn A. Suárez** for providing this funding opportunity to Highland Park.

Additionally, special thanks to **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

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

Consultants

LRK Inc.

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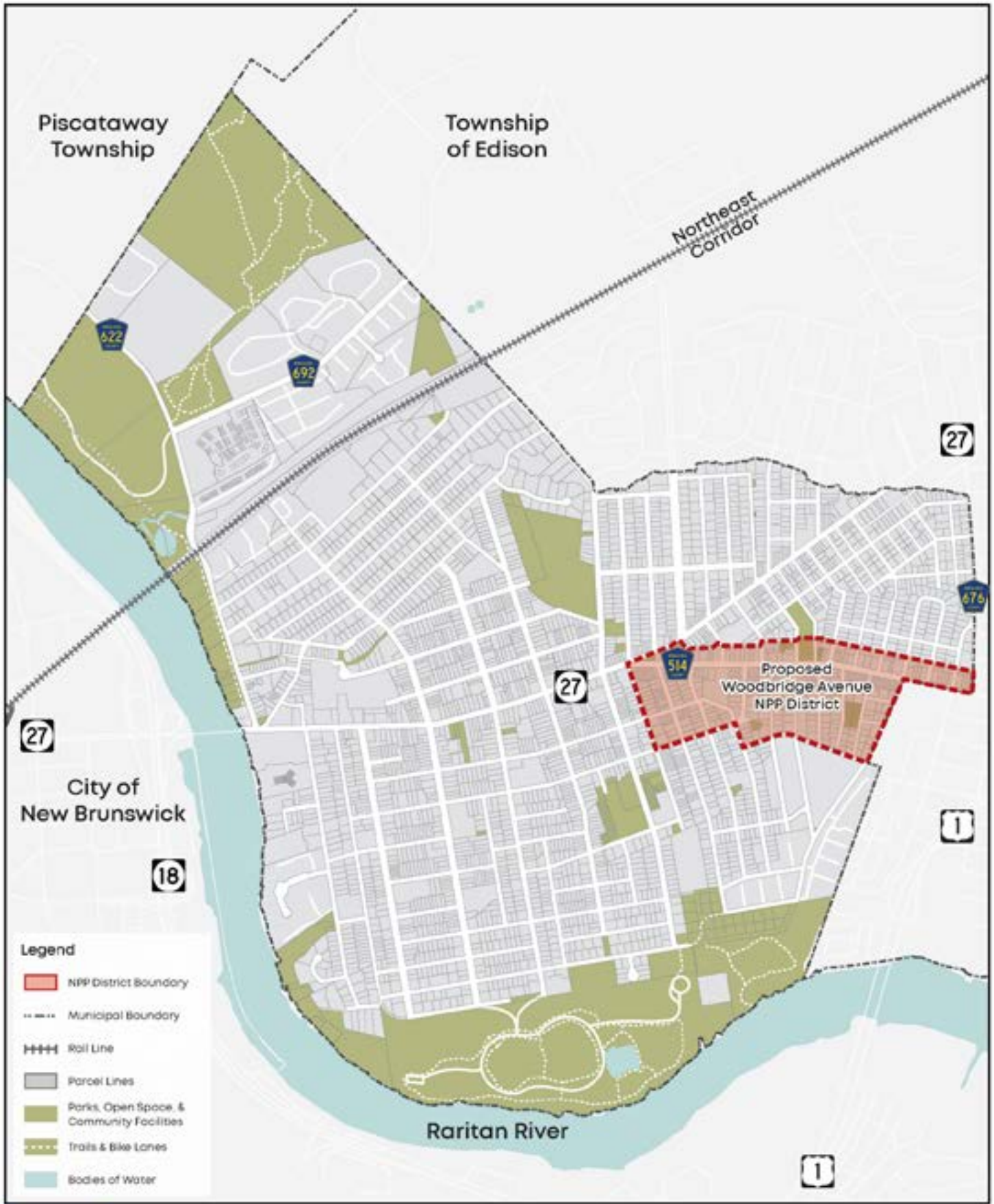
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INTRODUCTION



Overall Map

Proposed Woodbridge Avenue NPP District

Borough of Highland Park, Middlesex County, NJ





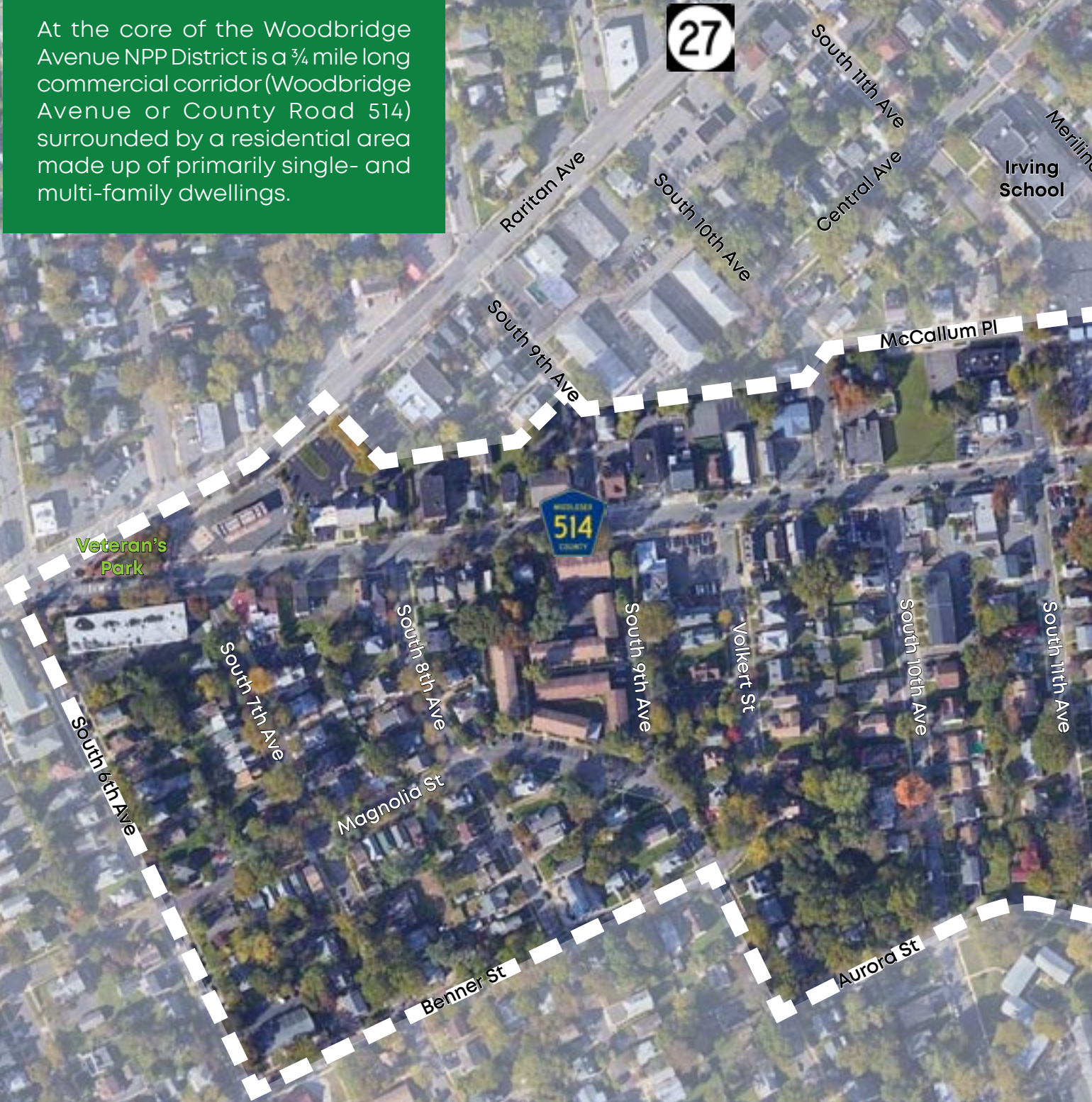
Neighborhood Map

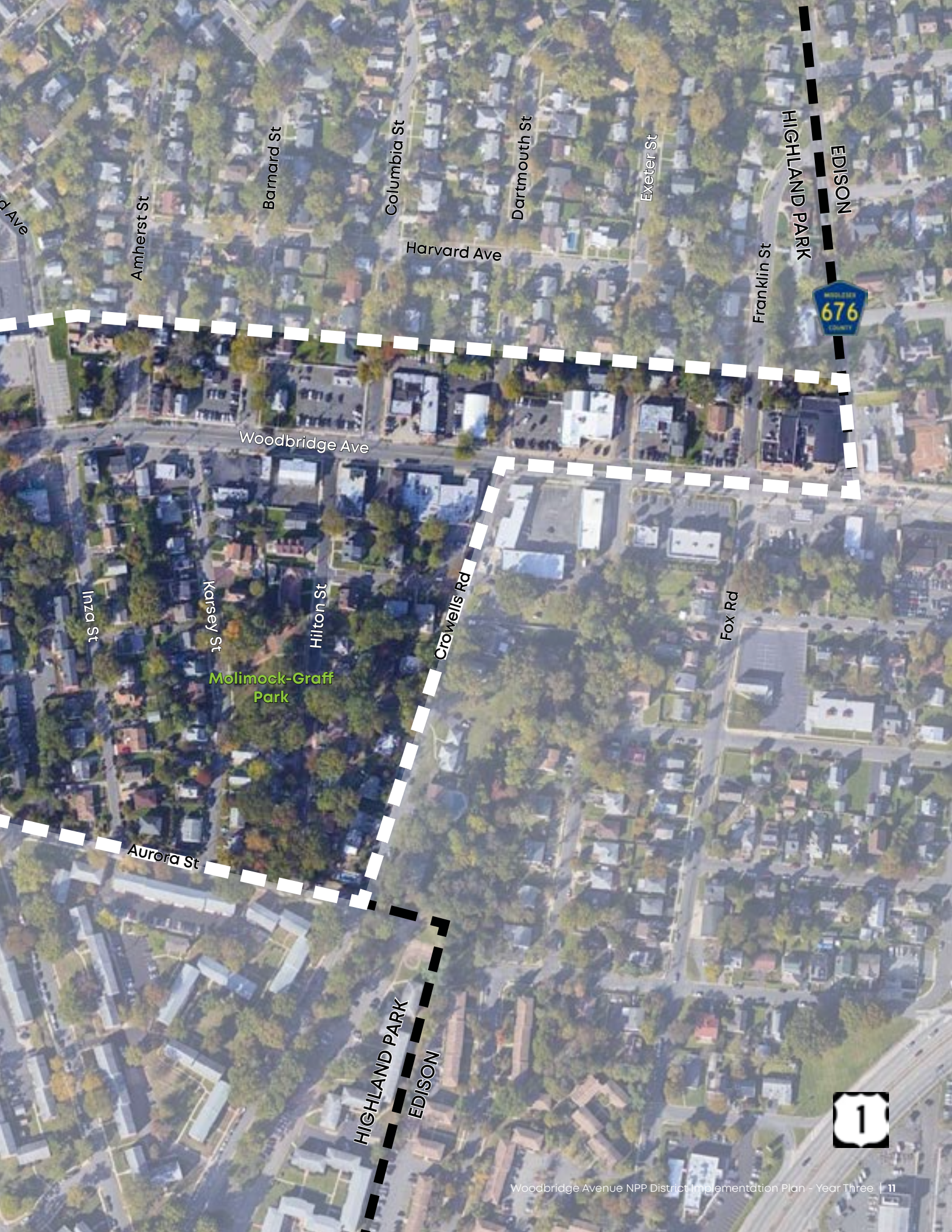
Proposed Woodbridge Avenue NPP District

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 TWO (2023) ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Woodbridge Avenue NPP Stakeholder Team kept the momentum going in Year 2 to bring tangible, substantial improvements to the Woodbridge Avenue commercial corridor. We administered nearly \$60,000 in commercial façade and technical assistance grants to ten businesses. We invested in plant materials and professional layouts for all of our planters for both the summer and the holidays and purchased additional trash and recycling receptacles for the corridor. We also hired a company to install our holiday snowflakes for the second year in a row.

We improved our outreach efforts and hosted a number of events in the District to gather input from residents and businesses including a Business Mixer in April, an open house at Molimock-Graff Park in June, and co-sponsoring a portion of National Night Out in August.

We invested in a parking study, completed by Level G Associates, to understand existing parking conditions for residents and businesses and received recommendations for policy updates that would expand parking opportunities. We also collaborated with our planners and Main Street Highland Park's Design Committee to streamline and modernize our signage ordinance to make it easier for business owners to interpret when making signage decisions.

Finally, we invested in five new street murals in the vicinity of Molimock-Graff Park, painted by local artists. The murals represent a range of themes and ideals near and dear to Highland Park's heart and serve to beautify and calm traffic in the neighborhood.



Woodbridge Avenue Business Mixer



Asian Garden: Before



Asian Garden: After



106 Woodbridge Avenue: Before



106 Woodbridge Avenue: After



B&B Auto Repair: Before



B&B Auto Repair: After



Murals by Sonya & Kit Kat



Murals by Sonya & Kit Kat

LESSONS LEARNED & RESULTING CHANGES

Soliciting applications to our Commercial Façade Grant program was challenging. We found that going door-to-door and chatting with business owners in person was the best way to communicate the value of the grant and NPP programs. Some businesses came to us with a complete plan for improvements while others started from scratch. This extended the project timeline and a few businesses began façade improvements in Year 2 and will apply for additional monies in Year 3 for awnings and signage.

We are also still awaiting the start of major roadwork that will take place along Woodbridge Avenue, a Middlesex County roadway, from South 11th – Duclos Lane. This delay held up plans to plant street trees along the commercial corridor. The money originally allocated for the planting project was reallocated to purchasing additional trash and recycling receptacles.





YEAR THREE (2024) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2024 NEEDS, GOALS, STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Year 3 funds will be allocated evenly between businesses, residents, and visitors. Outreach efforts to both business owners and residents will be ramped up in an effort to get grant-funded projects underway quickly. We plan to introduce a handful of events to welcome visitors to the new and improved Woodbridge Avenue and to share the rich history of the District through public art and performance.

Our goals for Year 3 are as follows:

1. Launch a residential grant program and recruit a minimum of a dozen property owners to partake in the program.
2. Collaborate with the NJ Business Action Center to provide high quality technical assistance trainings to Woodbridge Avenue businesses at no cost.
3. Invest in cleaning and improving existing District amenities (planters, tree pits, banners, etc.) and add new amenities.
4. Plant 20 – 30 new street trees in the commercial corridor in partnership with the Shade Tree Advisory Committee (STAC).
5. Introduce new annual events to welcome visitors to the District, showcase businesses, and bring awareness to the NPP Program.

ARTS & CULTURE

(\$10,000 NPP | \$10,000 TOTAL)

Special Events (\$10,000): Introduce new events such as an Antique Car Show and Woodbridge Avenue History Walk in partnership with community organizations to attract people to the Woodbridge Avenue District.

- Social Value

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

(\$34,500 NPP | \$53,000 TOTAL)

Façade Grants (\$37,000): Solicit Commercial Façade Grant applications from eligible businesses for improvements such as: paint, windows, awnings, signage, planters, grass, bollards, etc. Work with Main Street Highland Park Design Committee on review of applications.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Beyond Main (\$6,500): Invest in a tool to help establish an on-line presence for all Woodbridge Avenue businesses and create a streamlined on-line directory for them.

- Economic Value

Technical Assistance Courses (\$3,000): Collaborate with the NJ Business Action Center to provide quarterly training to Woodbridge Avenue businesses on a variety of topics at no cost.

- Economic Value

Revamp Business Signage & Design Standards (\$6,500): Present amended ordinance to the Mayor, Borough Council and the Planning Board and prepare documentation for introduction and adoption.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

(\$30,500 NPP | \$30,500 TOTAL)

Residential Facade Renovation Grants (\$30,500): Grants for exterior home improvements (stairs, doorways, porches, drainage/landscaping etc.) and sidewalk improvements. Matching requirement to be based on financial need.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

STREETSCAPE

(\$50,000 NPP | \$54,000 TOTAL)

Deep Clean (\$15,000): Matching grants for exterior home improvements (stairs, doorways, porches, drainage/landscaping etc.). Matching requirement based on financial need.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Holiday Decoration Install (\$4,000): Storage, installation, and removal of 21 snowflakes for Woodbridge Avenue light poles.

- Place Value
- Economic Value

Planter Care (\$15,000): Plant materials, planting labor, and seasonal watering for 18 planters along commercial corridor. Includes professional design and layout of planters.

- Place Value
- Civic Value

Redesign & Replace Pole Banners (\$20,000): Redesign and replace 40 - 50 banners on light poles and replace hardware.

- Place Value
- Social Value

ADMINISTRATION

(\$0 NPP | \$14,500 TOTAL)

NPP Corridor Stipend (\$9,500)

Planner Costs (\$5,000)

YEAR THREE BUDGET

Activity	NPP Funding	Borough	OPM
Arts & Culture			
Special Events	\$10,000		
Business Development			
Facade Grants	\$25,000		\$12,000
Beyond Main	\$6,500		
Technical Assistance Courses	\$3,000		
Signage Ordinance		\$6,500	
Residential Improvements			
Residential Facade Renovation Grants	\$30,500		
Streetscape			
Deep Clean	\$15,000		
Holiday Decoration		\$4,000	
Planter Care	\$15,000		
Banner Revamp	\$20,000		
Administration			
Salary: NPP Coordinator		\$9,500	
Salary: Planner		\$5,000	
	\$125,000	\$25,000	\$12,000

