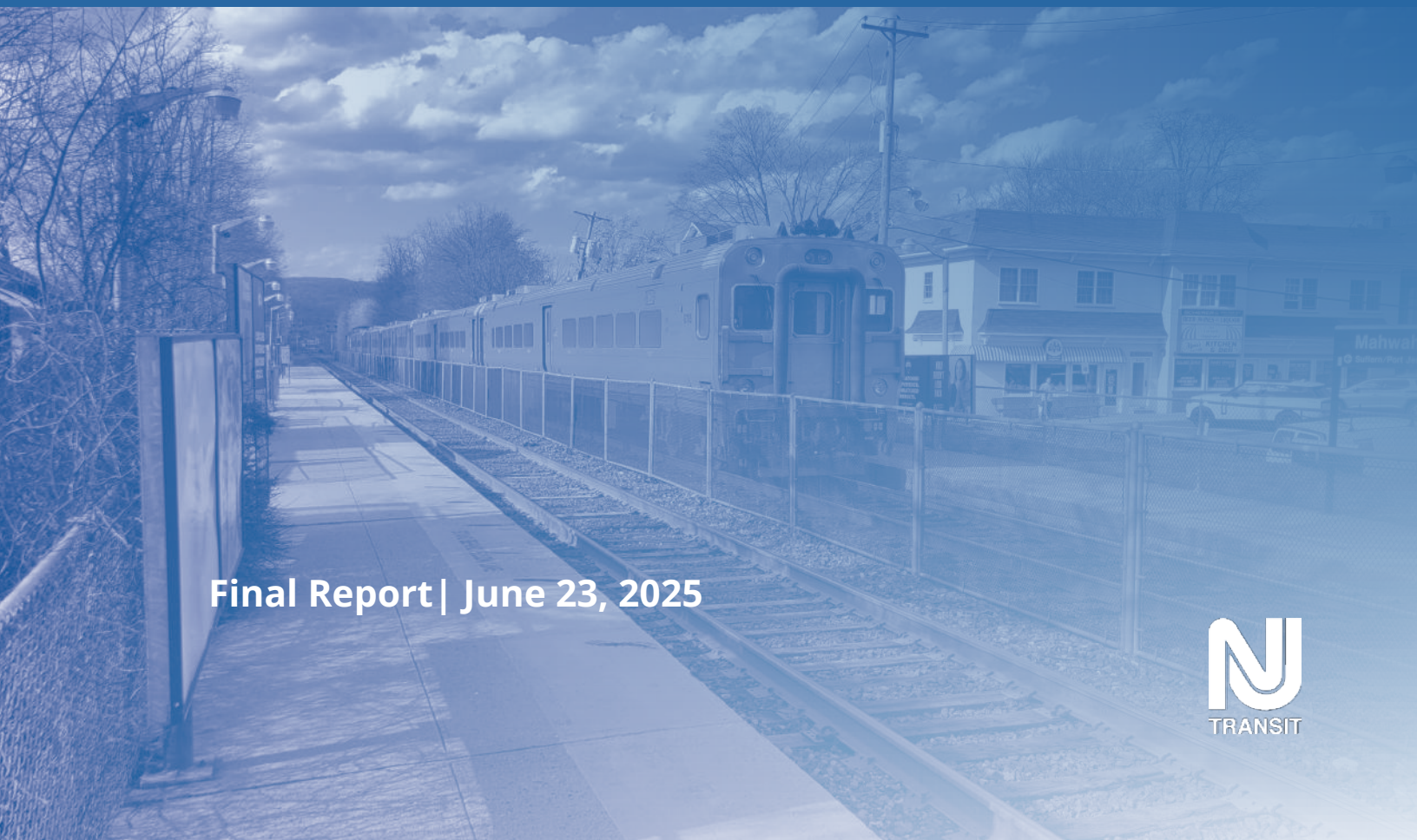
Mahwah Station TOD Study

Transit Friendly Planning Technical Assistance



Final Report| June 23, 2025

NJ TRANSIT

Acknowledgments

NJ TRANSIT would like to thank all parties who participated in the creation of this Transit Friendly Planning study through meetings, conversations, stakeholder surveys, events, and other activities. Their feedback contributed greatly to the development of this study. It is our sincere hope that the Mahwah Station TOD Study will serve the Township of Mahwah, helping its residents and visitors to safely and conveniently access the NJ TRANSIT system, give people more transportation choices in and around Mahwah Station, and help create a safer, more interesting, and more convivial place in the neighborhood around Mahwah Station.

NJ TRANSIT

Megan Massey, AICP, PP, Director

Michael Swan, AICP, PP, Assistant Director

Richmond Oppong, Government and Community Relations Regional Manager

Jeremy Colangelo-Bryan, Chief Planner

Transit Friendly Planning Program Consultants

NV5

Regional Plan Association

Arterial

Municipal, County, and Regional Advisors

Ben Kezmarsky, Mahwah Township Business Administrator

Jonathan Wong, Mahwah Township Council

Michael McPartland, Bergen County Department of Economic Development Deputy Director

Lisa Lee, MPA, M. Div., LCO, EZ Ride Director of Sustainability Programs and Regional Safe Routes Coordinator

Marybeth Duffy, Mahwah Township Director of Recreation

Diane Stripe, Mahwah Museum Director

Michael Kelly, PE, Mahwah Township Engineer

Darlene Green, PP, AICP, Mahwah Township Planner

Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, PP, AICP, New Jersey Highlands Council Planning Manager

Photograph Credit(s)

Any photograph that does not contain a source or credit is an NV5 photograph.

Disclaimer

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1

Introduction

Background

NJ TRANSIT partnered with Mahwah Township to conduct a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Study of the Mahwah Station and its surrounding area (referred to as the Study Area) in conjunction with project consultants NV5, Arterial, and the Regional Plan Association (RPA). The Study is intended to inform future land use policy and development of the area around the Mahwah Train Station in a transit-friendly manner.

Mahwah Township

Mahwah Township is the largest community geographically, and the 12th largest by population, of the 70 municipalities in Bergen County. Bergen County is the most populous county in New Jersey and strategically situated in close proximity to New York City and lower New York State. Mahwah, due to its large population, natural features, and being home to Ramapo College, is an important center in the County.

Mahwah is also the northernmost municipality within the Highlands Region containing a NJ TRANSIT train station. Its location within the Highlands further emphasizes its ecological significance to the region, but also creates an extra layer of consequential regulation that must be considered during any planning and visioning exercise.

Project Area

The Study Area consists of a quarter mile radius around the Mahwah Train Station. Spatially, this represents a very small portion of the Township overall. A quarter mile radius encompasses 9.5 acres, less than one tenth of one percent of all land area in the municipality.

The Study Area is bisected from north to south by the NJ TRANSIT Main Line and Bergen County Line tracks. From west to east the Study Area is bisected by East Ramapo Avenue on the west side of the train track, and by Miller Road on the east side of the track.

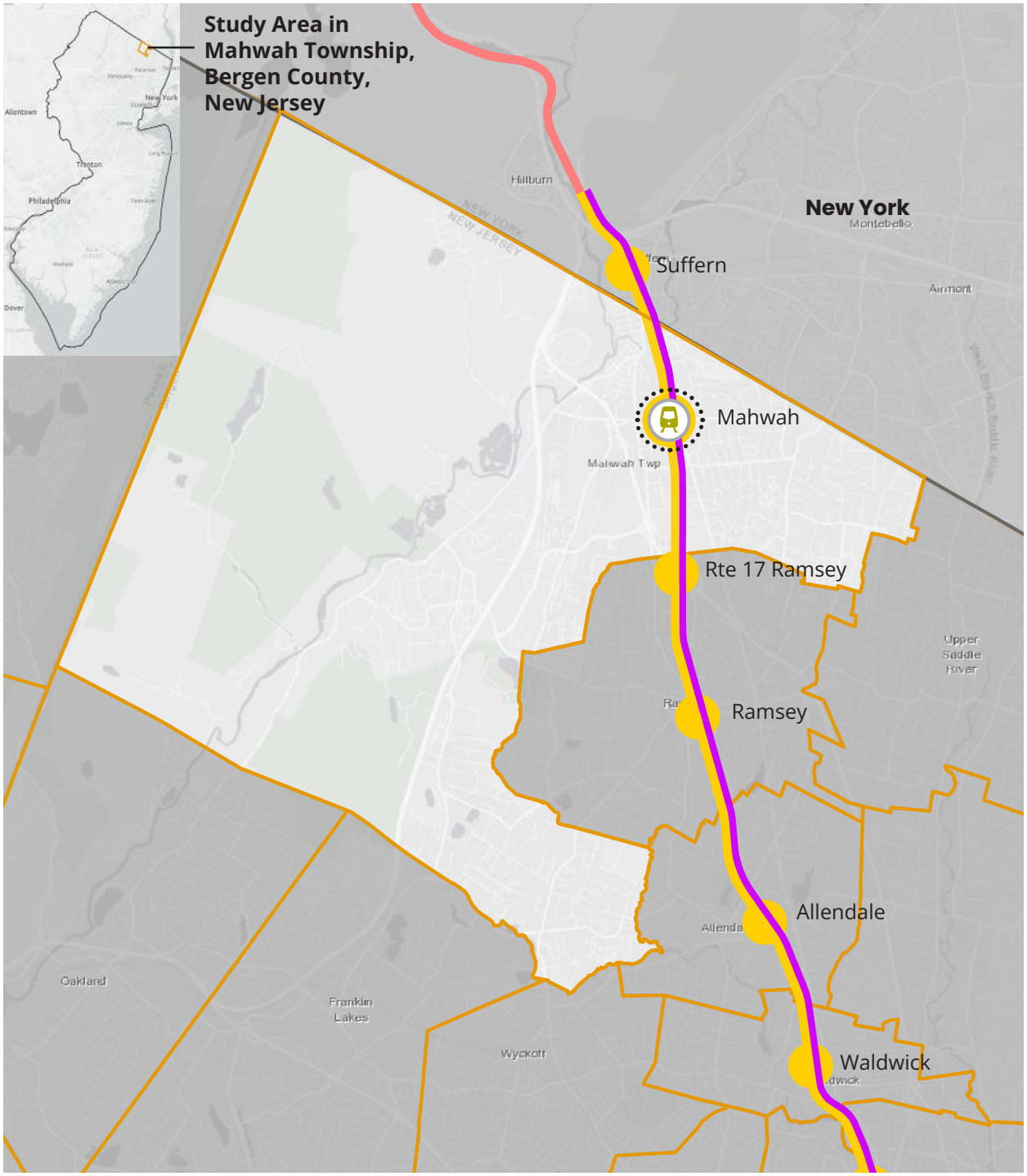
Properties within the Study Area include a range of mostly low-intensity land uses, including single-family dwellings, garden apartments, parks and open space, surface parking, retail, industrial, public uses, and vacant land.



MAHWAH STATION FROM MILLER ROAD

Source: Arterial

Map 1.1: Mahwah Regional Context



Source: Esri, HERE, State of New Jersey, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, EPA

Purpose

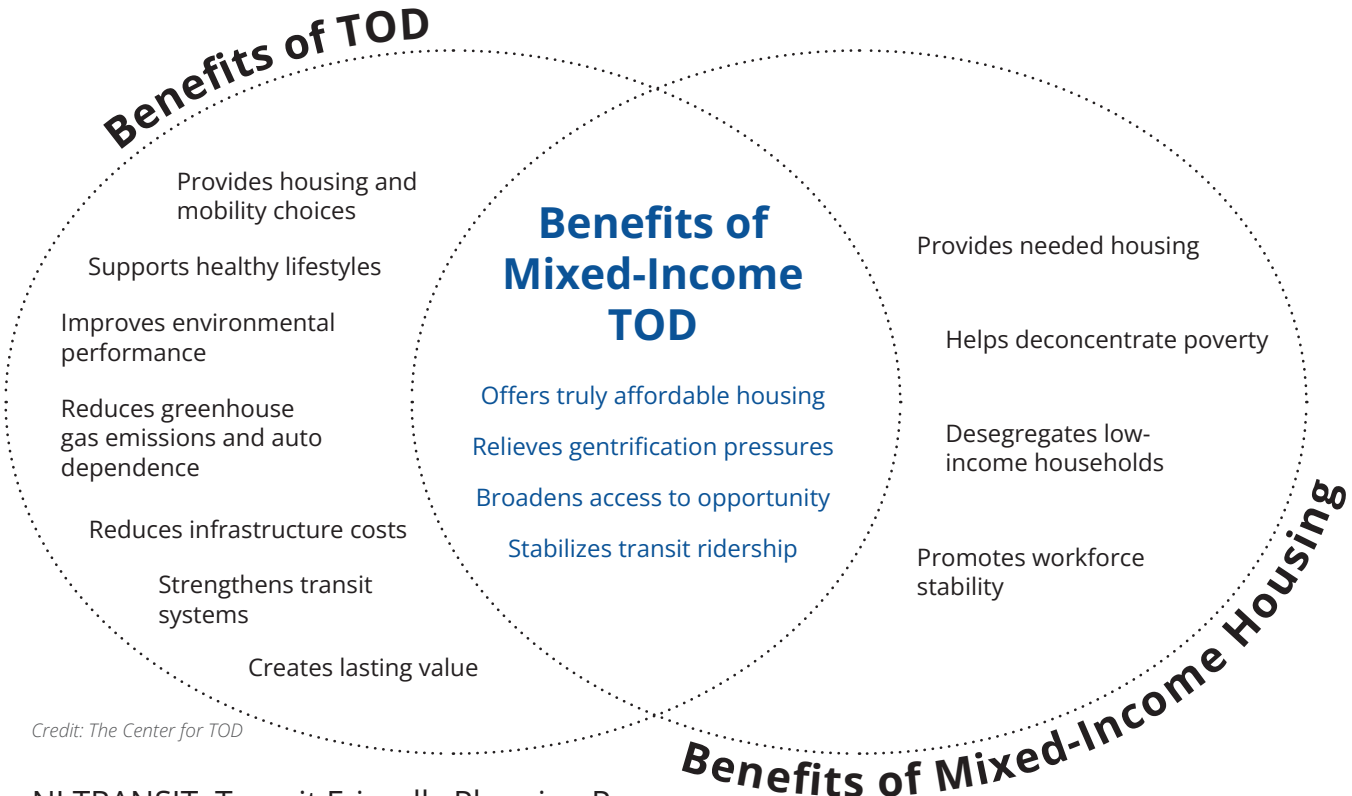
The purpose of this plan is to create a framework for implementing transit-oriented development for Mahwah Station and the surrounding area. The plan will be guided by transit-friendly land use principles.
NJ TRANSIT defines Transit Oriented Development (TOD) as development that is "walkable, mixed-use development centered around and integrated with transit stations". NJ TRANSIT has found that TOD can accomplish the following:

- Increases transit ridership
- Promotes regional economic growth
- Expands equitable and inclusive access
- Increases affordable housing
- Diversifies housing types
- Promotes sustainability
- Directly benefits station communities
- Increases transportation resiliency through an increase in travel options
- Gives residents freedom to choose the best transportation option for themselves



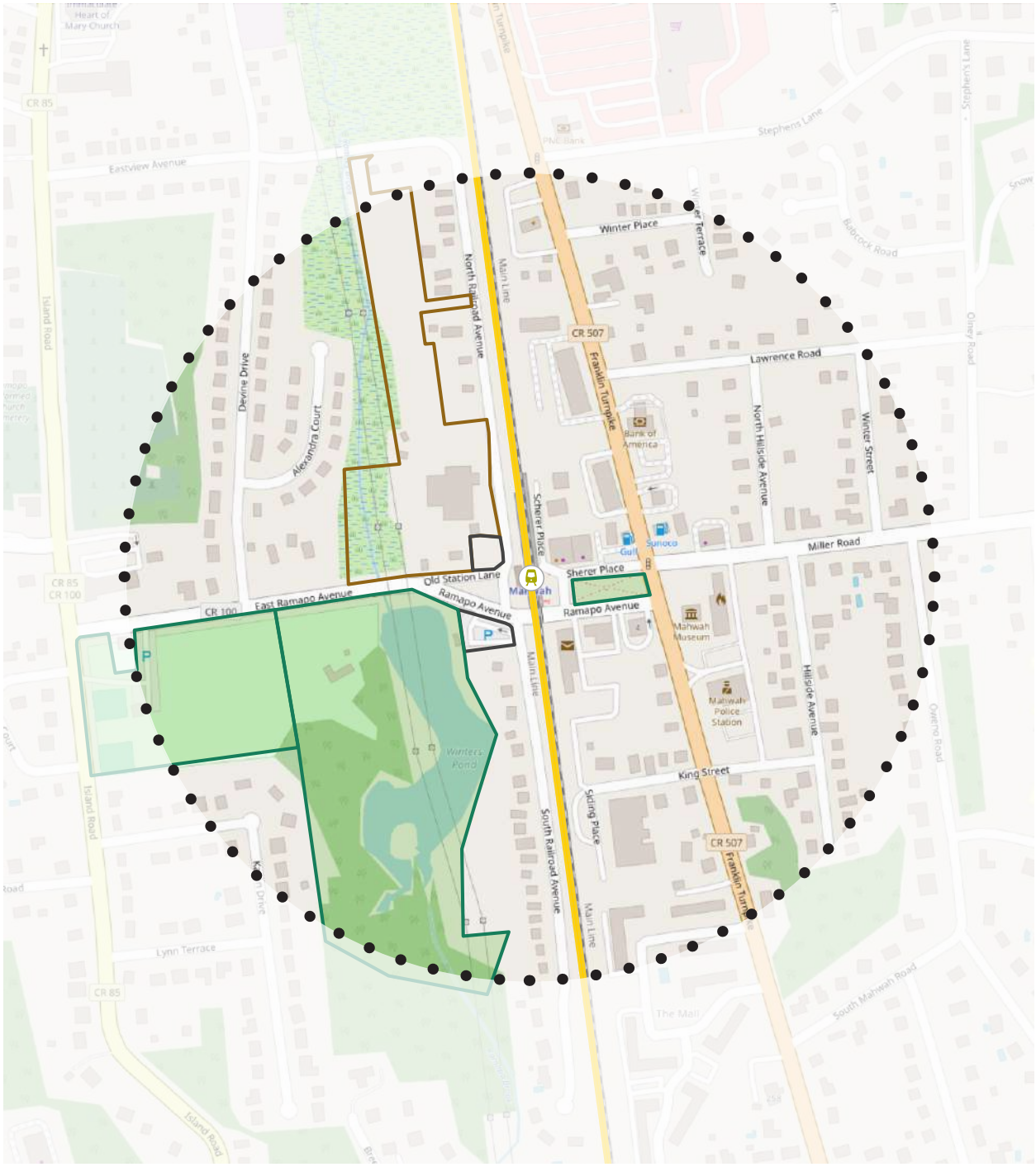
MAHWAH STATION FROM EAST RAMAPO AVENUE

The benefits of TOD, mixed-income housing, and how those benefits intersect are indicated in the following Venn Diagram.



Credit: The Center for TOD

Map 1.2: Mahwah Station TOD Study Area



LEGEND

- Study Area
- Mahwah Train Station
- Station Parking
- DPW Site/Municipal Land
- NJ TRANSIT Main/Bergen Line
- Parks and Open Spaces

Source: Esri, HERE, State of New Jersey, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, EPA

0.04 0.08 Miles

New Jersey Place Types

The Study Area is best described as a *Suburban Place* on the NJ TRANSIT Place Types transect.

This means that the Study Area is characterized by a more suburban environment that is less dense than the Town Center place type which comes before it in the "place type" transect, and more dense than the rural place type that comes after. *Suburban Places* tend to be located further from larger cities, serve as transit hubs for a larger commuter shed, and provide more peak-based transit service. There is often a large volume of passenger drop-offs and a high demand for parking. The street grid supports movement from residential areas to transit nodes, primarily accessed by automobile.

Mahwah Station serves as a transit hub that takes commuters to larger cities or job centers and is busiest during peak times. There is a mix of uses around the station and more residential and institutional uses as one moves further from the station. For these reasons, the project team finds this place type to be the most accurate when describing the Study Area.

Discussed in the Land Use Design Principles Memorandum (included in this document as Appendix B) is the potential for the Study Area to become a *Town Center Place*. A *Town Center Place* is characterized by more dense development with neighborhood-scale residential, retail, and office spaces. Areas surrounding the Town Center generally have lower-density uses, where residential development can be either mixed-use or standalone.

Recommendations in this document can be adjusted in scope, scale, and density. They should be calibrated based on the outcome the community wants, whether that be to continue as a *Suburban Place* or evolve into a *Town Center Place*.



Urban Center | **Urban Neighborhood** | **Town Center** | **Suburban Place** | **Rural Place**

MORE DENSE & DIVERSE ← → **LESS DENSE & DIVERSE**

Credits (Left to Right): Mercer Planning Associates, PatersonGreatFalls on Flickr, Ken Lund on Flickr, Doug Kerr on Flickr, Vinnie Langdon III on Flickr.

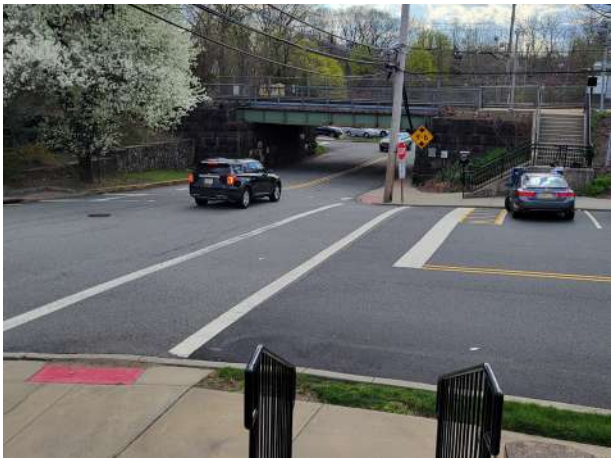
Photo Panel 1.1: Elements of Mahwah's Suburban Character



SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING



RETAIL AND SERVICES ON MILLER ROAD



RAMAPO AVENUE CROSSING



RAMAPO COLLEGE SIGN



THE OLD MAHWAH STATION MUSEUM



VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK

Key Definitions

In addition to **Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**, there are three other terms that will be used throughout this document that may be unfamiliar to readers. These include **Active Transportation**, **Placemaking**, and **Transit Walkshed/Bikeshed** which are defined by NJ TRANSIT as:

- **Active Transportation -** Any self-propelled, human-powered mode of transportation, such as walking or bicycling.
- **Placemaking -** The multi-faceted process of collaboratively creating quality public places that people want to live, work, play, and learn in.
- **Transit Walkshed/Bikeshed**:

  The area of a reasonable distance from which people might be expected to bicycle to or from a transit facility. For pedestrians, this is typically a 3/4 to 1-mile radius, though it is also affected by factors such as topography, availability and quality of sidewalks, and level of traffic stress.

  For bicyclists, the range is typically a 2-to 3-mile radius, is similarly affected by factors such as topography, availability and quality of cycling facilities, and level of traffic stress.



STOREFRONTS ON MILLER ROAD



BICYCLIST ON EAST RAMAPO AVENUE
Source: Arterial

"Transit friendly development needs to be designed for the human scale and consider the experience of a pedestrian before accommodating people in cars. Development should fit the neighborhood context. It is often clustered around the transit facility, promotes street-level activity, and balances both peak and off-peak rider and resident demands for the space."

-Transit Friendly Planning: A Guide for New Jersey Communities

(NJ TRANSIT, 2022, p. 40)

Benefits

NJ TRANSIT has found that TOD benefits station communities by:

- Creating value around stations
- Revitalizing business districts
- Creating places that offer easy, non-automotive access to daily destinations, therefore increasing access to jobs
- Expanding viable, appealing transportation choices, including biking, walking, and rolling
- Facilitating growth that optimizes use of existing infrastructure
- Reducing the number of parking spaces required for each use
- Enhancing social connections and community cohesion by bringing people, activities, buildings, and open spaces together.



For more information on transit oriented development, read the Transit Friendly Planning Guide at njtransit.com/transitfriendly

Resources

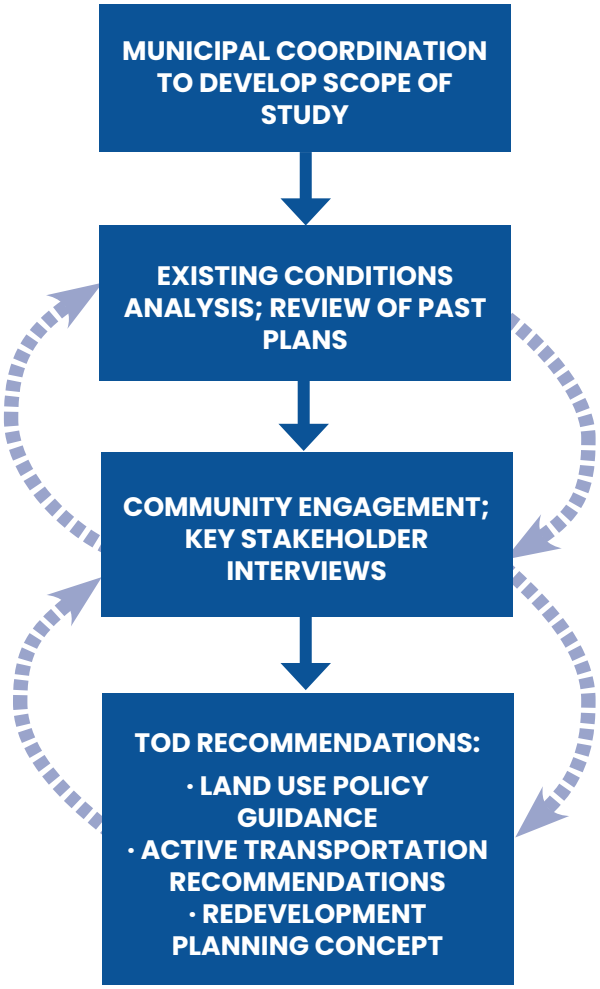
There is an ever-growing body of literature that describes best practices, policies, strategies, implementation, and benchmarking to support transit-oriented development. Key resources include:

- *Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Transit-Oriented Development Program*
- Department of Transportation (DOT) Transit-Oriented Development Program
- NJ TRANSIT
  - *Transit Friendly Planning: A Guide for New Jersey Communities*
  - *Gentle Density and Missing Middle Housing in New Jersey: A Guide for New Jersey Communities*
- New Jersey Department of Transportation
  - Manual of Best Practices for Transit-Oriented Development
  - Transit Village Initiative
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)
  - Transit Hub Planning Program
  - TNJ Guidebook for Transit Hub Planning

Study Methodology

The study was conducted by staff members from NJ TRANSIT's Transit Friendly Planning (TFP) Program and consultants, NV5, Arterial, and the Regional Plan Association (RPA). Initiated during the Spring of 2024, the NJ TRANSIT Project Team coordinated with the Township of Mahwah administration to determine a scope of work to address current needs and complement ongoing planning efforts. The process diagram to the right indicates the main tasks that were undertaken in the development of this study.

It is the Project Team's understanding that the Township is considering the preparation of a new Land Use Plan Element in the Spring of 2025. This document was developed with that in mind, and prepared in a manner that would facilitate incorporating the recommendations contained herein into the Township's future land use policies and zoning regulations.



STUDY METHODOLOGY DIAGRAM





Transit Friendly Planning Program Mission

NJ TRANSIT's mission is to move New Jersey and the region by providing safe, reliable, and affordable public transportation that connects people to their everyday lives, one trip at a time.

This Study was developed by NJ TRANSIT through the Transit Friendly Planning (TFP) Program, providing technical planning assistance to the Township of Mahwah. The TFP Program is dedicated to strengthening the link between public transit and land use, and strives to promote equitable, economically resilient, and environmentally sustainable outcomes that improve the quality of life for all New Jerseyans.

The TFP Program plays an active role in improving transit access and helping communities plan for the future. In 2022, the TFP Program published Transit Friendly Planning: A Guide for New Jersey Communities as a resource describing the most important principles in transit-friendly planning, which guide communities on how to:

- Encourage healthy, active, and economical modes of transportation that meet the mobility needs of people throughout the state.
- Promote equity, environmental justice, and the right to live, work, and move through safe and healthy communities with access to transit.
- Contribute to community identity and sense of place.
- Enhance economic vitality and access to retail and community services.
- Support vibrant, pedestrian-friendly activities and places.
- Enable people of all ages and abilities to access the economic, cultural, and environmental destinations that make New Jersey a great place to live and work.

> -Transit Friendly Planning: A Guide for New Jersey Communities
>
> (NJ TRANSIT, 2022, p. 5)




STAND BEHIND YELLOW LINE

2

Existing Conditions

Introduction

This chapter describes existing conditions in the Study Area. It includes existing land uses, demographic factors, environmental conditions, underlying zoning, development activity, development constraints, access and circulation, and infrastructure.

The descriptions throughout this chapter are derived from various geographic data, supplemented by observation of conditions in the field.

Land Use

Map 2.1 (page 16) illustrates the general land use pattern of the Study Area. For explanatory purposes, the land use descriptions are divided into four quadrants.

- The northeastern quadrant consists of the Franklin Turnpike corridor with food and beverage establishments such as Rita's Italian Ice, Sushigo, Tandoori Bites, and Roxanne's Brick Oven Pizza, among others. Services such as a dental office, salons, a physical therapy office, a dog groomer, multiple banks, and two gas stations are located in this area. Veteran's Park straddles the northeastern and southeastern quadrants. Single-family detached residences are also located in this area.
- The southeastern quadrant contains services and residential including the Mahwah Police Department, Rutan Poly Industries (a plastic bag supplier), the Mahwah Museum, the Mahwah Fire Department, the northern portion of a garden apartment complex, and single-family detached dwellings.
- The northwestern quadrant, north of East Ramapo Avenue and west of the train track, consists primarily of single-family detached residences concentrated along Devine Drive and North Railroad Avenue. The Mahwah Recycling Office (a local DPW site) is located west of the train station between the clusters of residences. Unimproved land owned by DPW extends north to North Railroad Avenue.
- The southwestern quadrant, south of East Ramapo Avenue and west of the train track, consists primarily of the 15-acre Winter's Park and a 16-acre preserved open space parcel containing Winters Pond. The remainder of this quadrant consists of single-family detached dwellings.

Key destinations mentioned herein are indicated on Map 2.2 (page 17).



Photo Panel 2.1: Land Use Example



LOW - DENSITY RESIDENTIAL



APARTMENT RESIDENTIAL



COMMERCIAL



PARK / PUBLIC PROPERTY

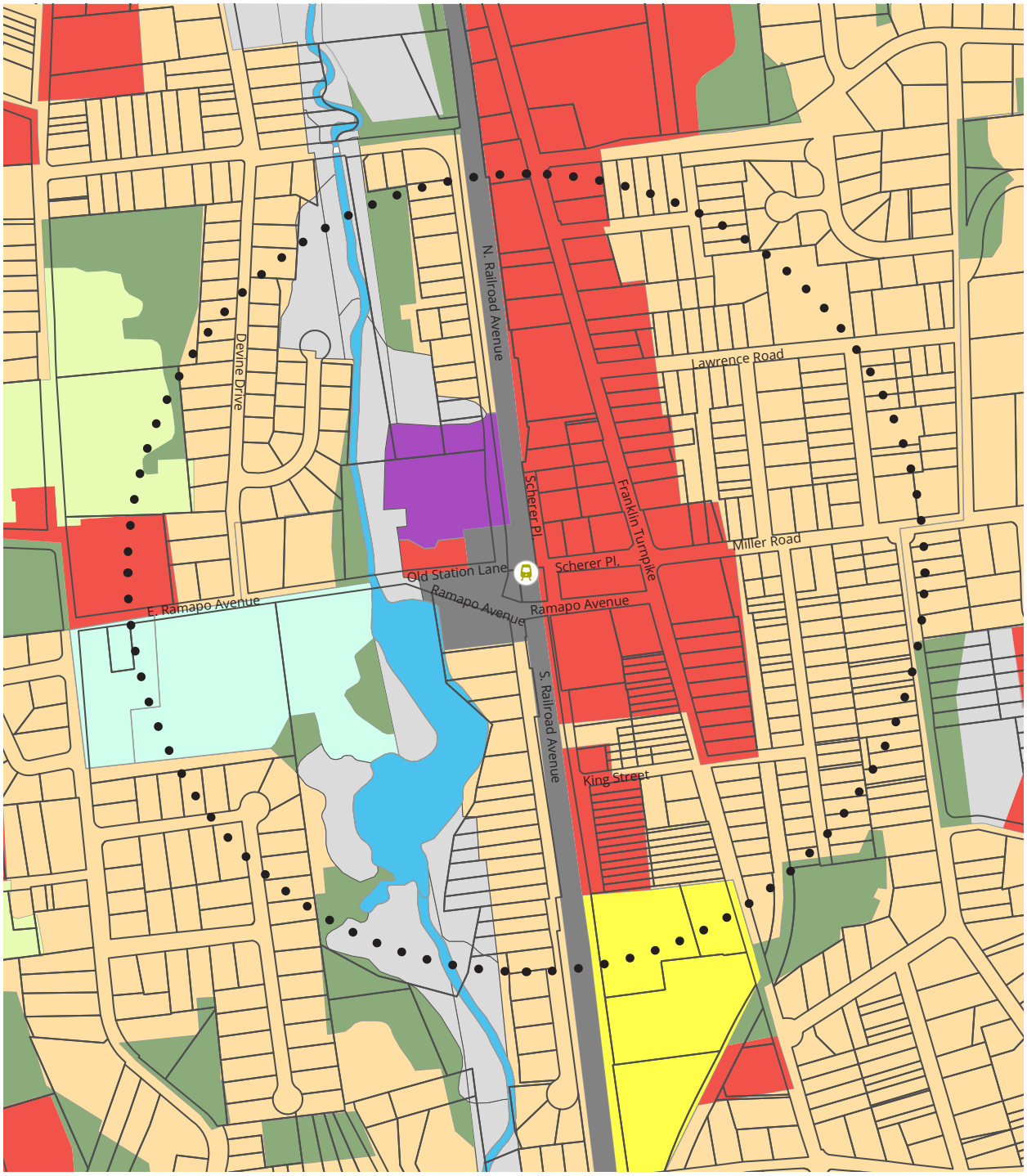


MUSEUM



FIRE STATION

Map 2.1: Study Area Land Use



LEGEND

Study Area

Mahwah Train Station

Bodies of Water
Cemetery
Forest
Railroad
Recreation Land
Commercial/Services
Residential - High Density
Residential - Low to Medium Density
Transportation/Utilities
Other

0.04 0.08 Miles

N

Source: Esri, HERE, State of New Jersey, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, EPA

Map 2.2: Study Area Destinations



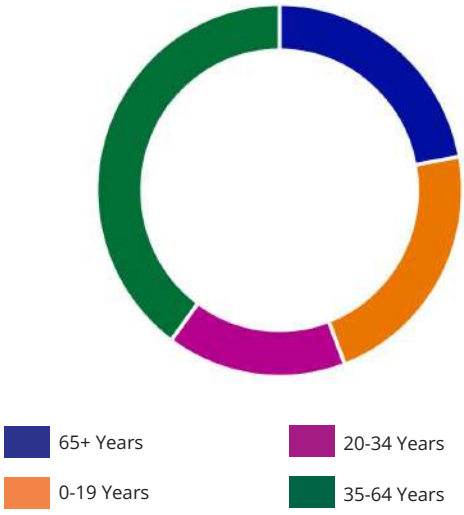
Demographic Factors

The Township of Mahwah has approximately 25,375 residents[1]. The population has remained stable during the past 13 years (2010-2023), but the township has experienced changes in age, racial composition, and housing tenure. In general, Mahwah has seen modest growth of older adults and in the Hispanic, Asian, and Black populations. The aging population is also reflected in the changing household composition, with fewer households with minors and more with one or more seniors. There has also been a modest increase in renter-occupied housing units, although the town remains largely one of owner-occupied households[2].

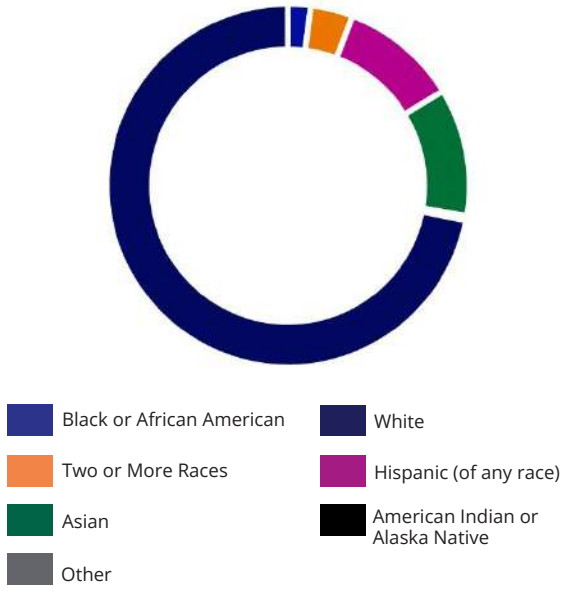
As of 2023, the median age in Mahwah is 48 years, which is higher than Bergen County's median of 42 years. Approximately 10,123 of the town's residents are in the 35-64 age bracket, representing approximately 40% of the total population[3]. The substantial share of the middle-aged population also suggests a significant presence of mid-career to established professionals residing in the town.

The Township's racial composition is predominantly White (72%), followed by Asian (11.4%) and Hispanic (10.5%), with differing geographic concentrations. While the White population is prevalent throughout Mahwah, it is particularly concentrated in the eastern areas. The Asian population is largely clustered around the station area and Franklin Turnpike, and the Hispanic population shows higher concentrations in the southernmost and western regions of the township[4].

2023 Population by Age



2023 Population by Race



1 American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 5-year estimates
2 American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 5-year estimates for 2010 and 2023
3 American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 5-year estimates
4 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates 2023. Estimates of White, Black, Asian, and other population based on non-Hispanic ethnicity.

2010 - 2023 Demographic Change

Since 2010, Mahwah's total population has remained relatively stable, decreasing slightly by 47 residents. The median age has increased by 6.7 years and households with one or more people 65 years and over has increased 158%, indicating an aging population.

The racial composition of the township is diversifying. The Hispanic population has seen a substantial 135.3% increase, the Asian population has grown by 25.1%, and the Black or African American population increased by 21.1%, while the White population has decreased by 12.7%.

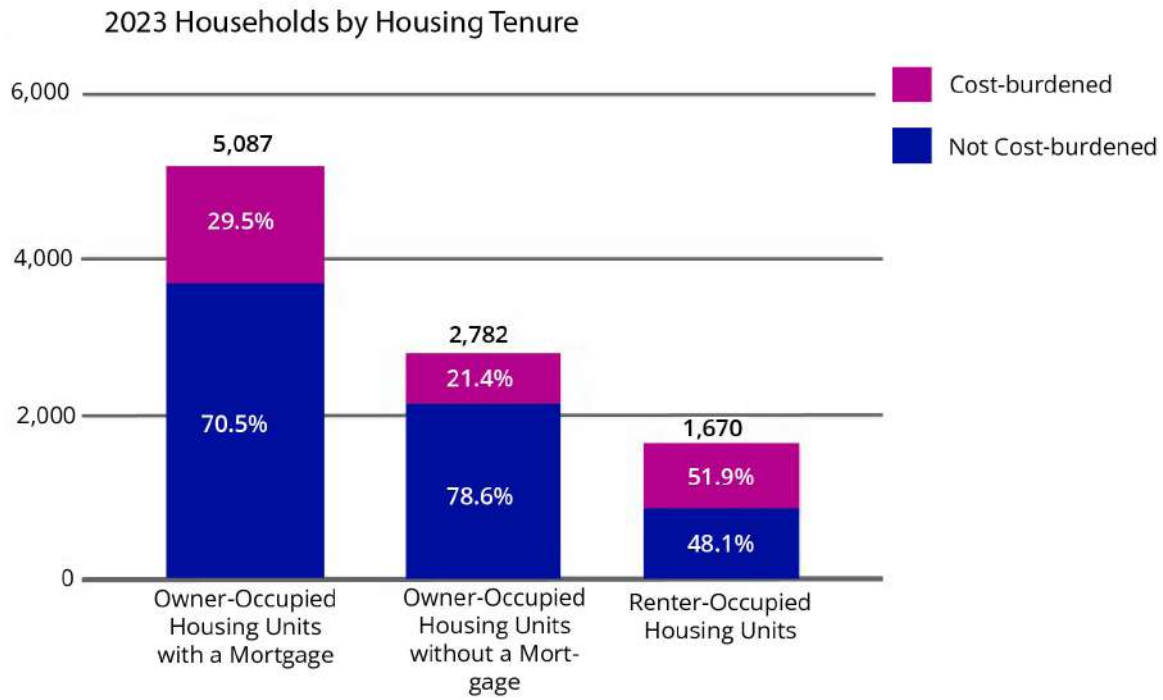
Additionally, housing tenure is shifting. Owner-occupied housing units with mortgages have decreased by 18%, while those without mortgages have increased by 30.2%. Renter-occupied units have also increased by 18.8%. However, cost-burdened renter households have risen by 18.3%.

Table 2.1: Change in Age, Population, and Race - Mahwah Township Demographics from 2010 - 2023

		2010	2023	Net Change	Percent Change
Age	Median Age - Mahwah	41.4	48.1	6.7	16.2%
	Ages 0-19	6,340	5,616	-724	-11.4%
	Ages 20-34	4,138	4,036	-102	-2.5%
	Ages 35-64	11,299	10,123	-1,176	-10.4%
	Ages 65+	3,645	5,600	1,955	53.6%
Pop.	Total Population	25,422	25,375	-47	-0.18%
Race	White	20,936	18,267	-2669	-12.7%
	Asian	2,307	2,885	578	25.1%
	Hispanic (of any race)	1,129	2,657	1,528	135.3%
	Two or More Races	344	974	630	183.1%
	Black or African American	412	499	87	21.1%
	Other	11	66	55	500.0%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	283	27	-256	-90.5%
	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders	0	0	0	-

Table 2.2: Housing Tenure and Social Change - Mahwah Township Demographics from 2010 - 2023

		2010	2023	Net Change	Percent Change
Housing Tenure	Owner-occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage	6,198	5,087	-1,111	-18%
	Cost Burdened Owner-Occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage	3,061	1,501	-1,560	-51%
	Owner-occupied Housing Units without a Mortgage	2,137	2,782	645	30.2%
	Cost Burdened Owner-Occupied Housing Units without a Mortgage	580	594	14	2.4%
	Renter-occupied Housing Units	1,406	1,670	264	18.8%
	Cost-burdened Renter Households	733	867	134	18.3%
	Average Household Size	2.44	2.37	-0.07	-2.9%
Social	Households with one or more people under 18 years	3,170	2,236	-934	-29.5%
	Households with one or more people 65 years and over	2,605	4,129	1,524	58.5%



Environmental Conditions

The Study Area includes several environmental constraints including water bodies, flood hazard areas, contaminated sites, wetlands, critical habitat, and topography.

Water Bodies

Masonicus Brook: A freshwater non-trout (FW2-NT) stream with a 300-ft buffer under Highlands regulations. Exemptions may apply for pre-exisiting development.

Winter Pond: Located on municipally designated open space, also subject to a 300-ft buffer and Green Acres Program review.

Flood Hazard Area and Wetlands

A regulated floodplain follows Masonicus Brook, most within the 100-year flood zone, and some edges in the 500-year floodplain. Development in these areas requires NJDEP permitting requirements pursuant to N.J.A.C. §7:13-1.1. Adjacent wetlands also require permitting under N.J.A.C. §7:7A-1.1.

Known Contaminated Sites

A NJDEP-designated contaminated site exists within the DPW site due to groundwater contamination. Future redevelopment of the site may require remediation efforts.

Critical Habitat

According to the New Jersey Highlands Council, the Study Area does not contain any critical habitat or vernal pools. The New Jersey Department of Fish and Wildlife's Landscape Project interactive mapping tool indicates that the land adjacent to the Masonicus Brook is suitable habitat for certain habitat, including some of "Special Concern", though no records of any of the species which may utilize this land have been identified.

Grading, Topography, and Soils

The Study Area slopes downward from east to west. The eastern edge has a topography of 250 - 350 feet above sea level, sloping towards the western edge, which sits just above 200 feet. Some portions contain steep slopes. Much of the constrained area is immediately along the rail tracks and to the west of the railroad tracks, containing a mix of severely, moderately, and limited constrained slopes. Development of any site with steep slopes may carry restrictions or require additional permitting.

The area's soils are generally well-draining, but site-specific soil testing is recommended before any development.

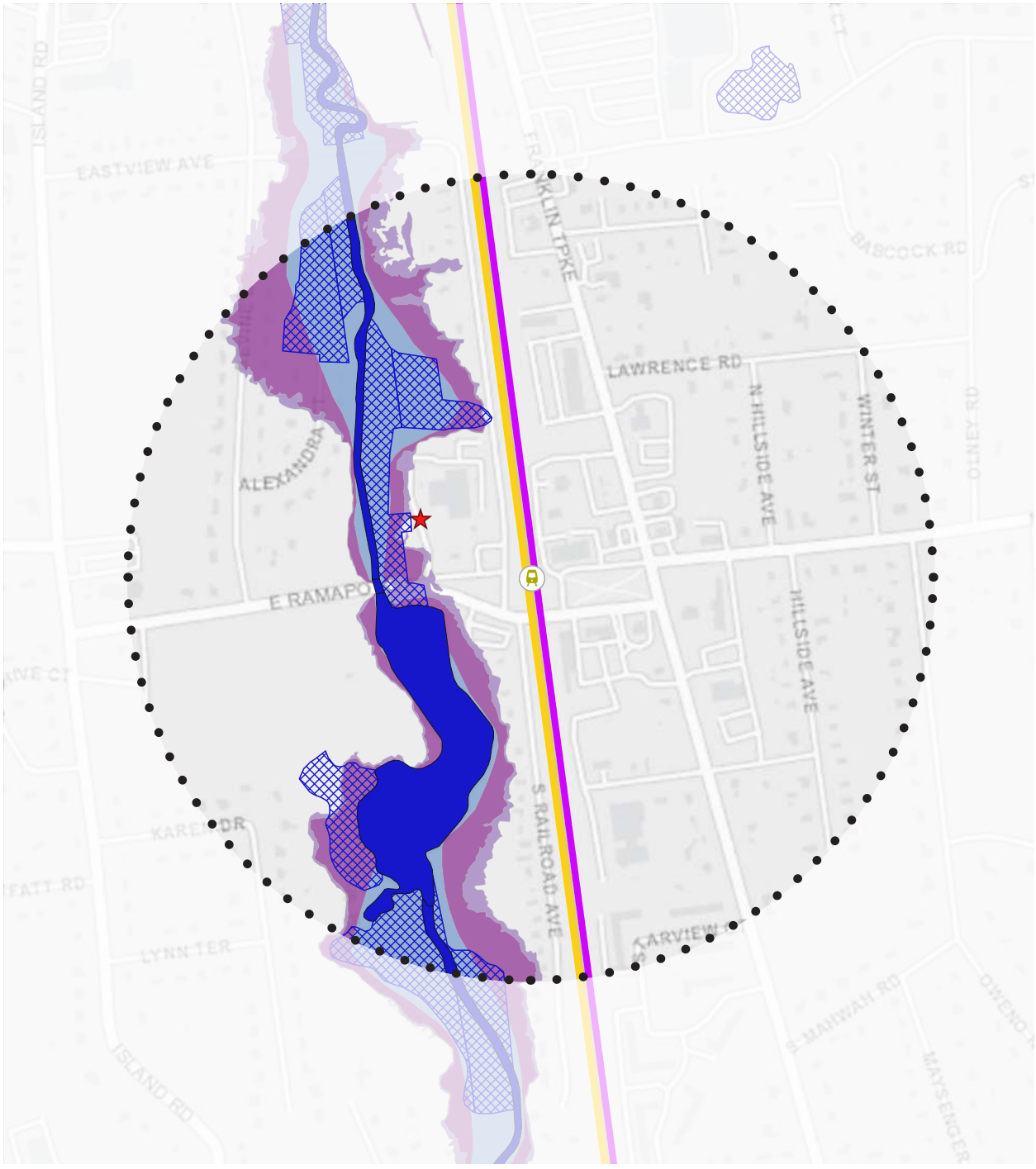
Highlands Region

The Study Area falls within the Highlands Region and is subject to The Highlands Act and Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (NJHC). Mahwah Township submitted a Petition for Plan Conformance for this area, which was approved in 2010. The NJHC's regulations restrict warehouse development and impose environmental standards and land use controls.

Development within 300 feet of open water is prohibited. Given the presence of the Masonicus Brook, significant portions of the study fall within the 300-foot buffer zone. However, exemptions exist under the Highlands Act.

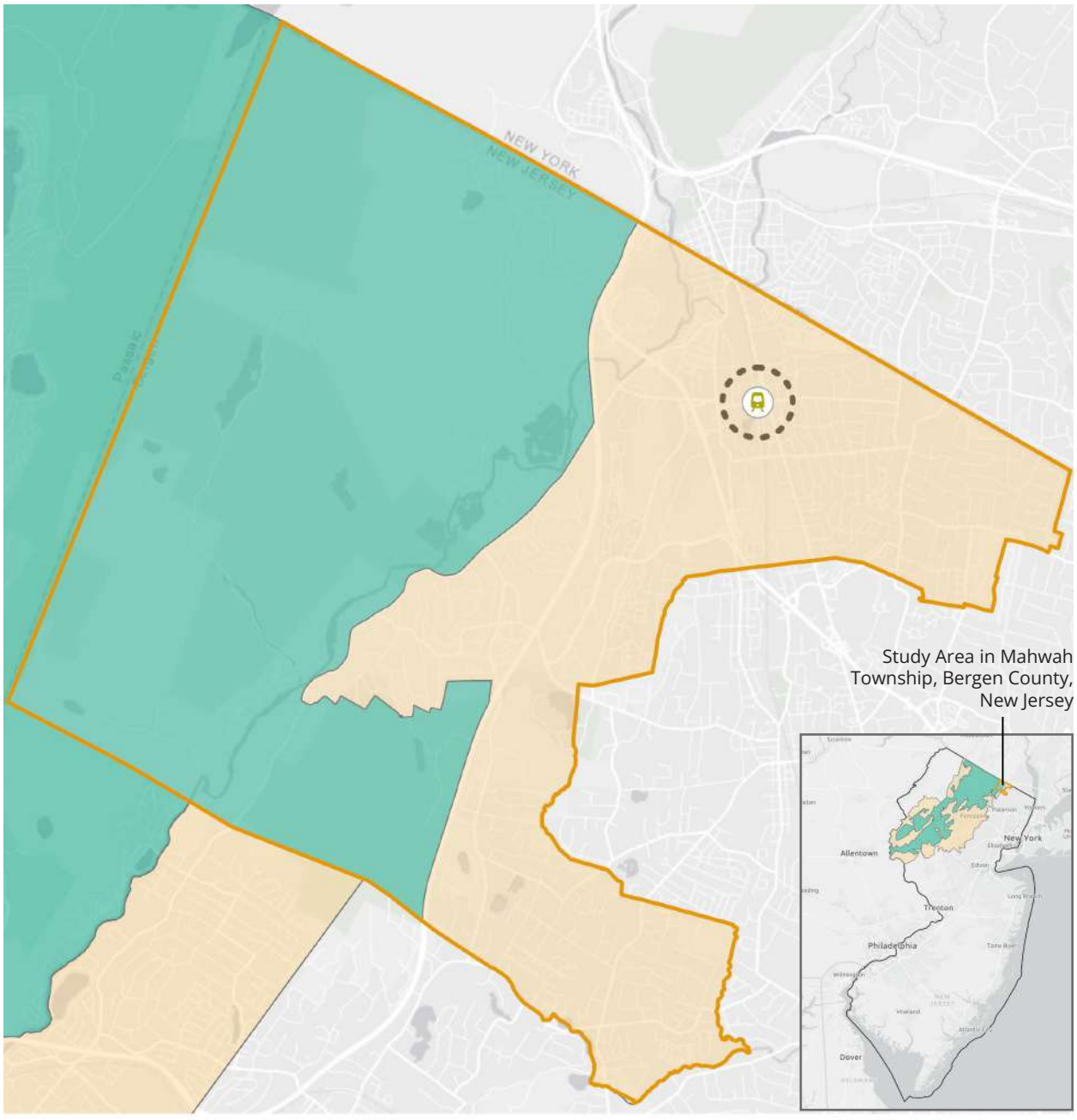
Recommendations relating to exemptions are discussed in Chapter 4.

Map 2.3: Environmental Conditions Map



Source: Esri, HERE, State of New Jersey, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, EPA

Map 2.4: Highlands Region Map



LEGEND

- Study Area
- Mahwah Train Station
- Mahwah Township
- Highlands Preservation Area
- Highlands Planning Area

Source: Esri, HERE, State of New Jersey, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, EPA

Underlying Zoning

The Study Area includes 11 zoning districts that permit a variety of uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, municipal, and open space. To the east, the rear yards of commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential zones abut the rail line, and beyond Franklin Turnpike to the east there is mostly single-family residential zoning. To the west, institutional, open space, and single-family residential zones extend off of North Railroad Avenue and Ramapo Avenue, though the principal use of a large portion of the area zoned for residential uses is municipal government uses, such as the DPW recycling center.

The following table summarizes the zones located within the Study Area, while the map to the right shows the zones in relation to the quarter-mile radius around the station. A more in depth analysis of existing zones can be found in the Appendix.

Map 2.5: Study Area Zoning Map



Table 2.3: Existing Zoning in the Mahwah Station Study Area

	Zone		Acres	Share of Study Area (%)
	R-15	Single-Family Residential	2.35	24.76
	R-5	Single-Family Residential	1.79	18.81
	R-10	Single-Family Residential	1.36	14.29
	GA-200	Garden Apartment	0.18	1.88
	BRZ	Block 82 Redevelopment Zone	0.35	3.68
	P-OS	Public Open Space	1.92	20.26
	B-10	Neighborhood Business	0.80	8.40
	B-12	General Business	0.34	3.60
	CEM	Cemetery	0.17	1.76
	GI-80	General Industry	0.13	1.37
	ED	Education	0.11	1.19

Access and Circulation

The site is accessible, to varying degrees, by public transportation, pedestrian access, and motor vehicle, but less accessible by micromobility modes such as bicycling.

Public Transportation: The Study Area is served by NJ TRANSIT rail service via the Main Line and Bergen Line. NJ TRANSIT does not operate any bus lines in Mahwah. Coach USA runs a ShortLine private bus service from Mahwah to New York City on weekdays between 5:45 AM and 6:55 AM, with return trips from New York to Mahwah between 4:35 PM and 6:25 PM.

Pedestrian Access: Sidewalks are found on most streets within the Study Area, though there are gaps. East Ramapo Avenue has sidewalks, though the sidewalk ends on the south side of the street at the northeastern edge of Winters Pond.

Pedestrian movement in the Study Area is limited. On Ramapo Avenue, because the sidewalk on the south side stops at the NJ TRANSIT rail viaduct, pedestrians must cross to the north side to continue. The sidewalk on the south side begins again about 55 feet after the viaduct.

Franklin Turnpike has sidewalks on both sides. However, there are several gaps. On the west side, the largest gap is near the Delta Gas Station. There is also a rough asphalt walkway between the shopping centers at 180 and 190 Franklin Turnpike. On the east side, the longest sidewalk gap is near the Sunoco Gas Station.

Miller Road, east of Franklin Turnpike, contains pedestrian friendly uses while having significant gaps in the sidewalk, particularly at 109 Miller Road on the north side of the street, and Fire Company 1 on the south side. Veterans Park, which abuts Miller Road on its north side, does not have a sidewalk along the north side.

Motor Vehicle Access: Regional auto access to the Study Area comes from the west and south via Interstate 287 to the west, which has access to US Route 202, and NJ Route 17 with access to streets leading to the Study Area. Within the Study Area, north-south access is through Franklin Turnpike, and east-west access is through East Ramapo Avenue on the west side of the train tracks and Miller Road on the east side of the train tracks.

Street parking is limited to Miller Road and Scherer Place. Otherwise, parking is limited to private and public lots. Parking for the Station is limited to two municipally owned lots west of the Station on either side of East Ramapo Avenue. These are restricted to Mahwah residents with parking permits, and contain approximately 70 spaces.

Additionally, East Ramapo Avenue has been described as a traffic “pinch point”, particularly during summer weekends.

Micromobility Access: No bike lanes, scooter lanes, or other micromobility lanes (protected or unprotected) are located within or near the Study Area. While it is possible to utilize these forms of transportation in the Study Area, the lack of facilities designed for micromobility may limit their use in and around the Study Area.

Safe Streets For All (SS4A) Grant: The Township received grant funds under the Federal SS4A program that are to be used for pedestrian safety infrastructure improvements. The Township is planning to install Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons at two intersections:

1. East Ramapo Avenue and South Railroad Avenue
2. East Ramapo Avenue and Scherer Place

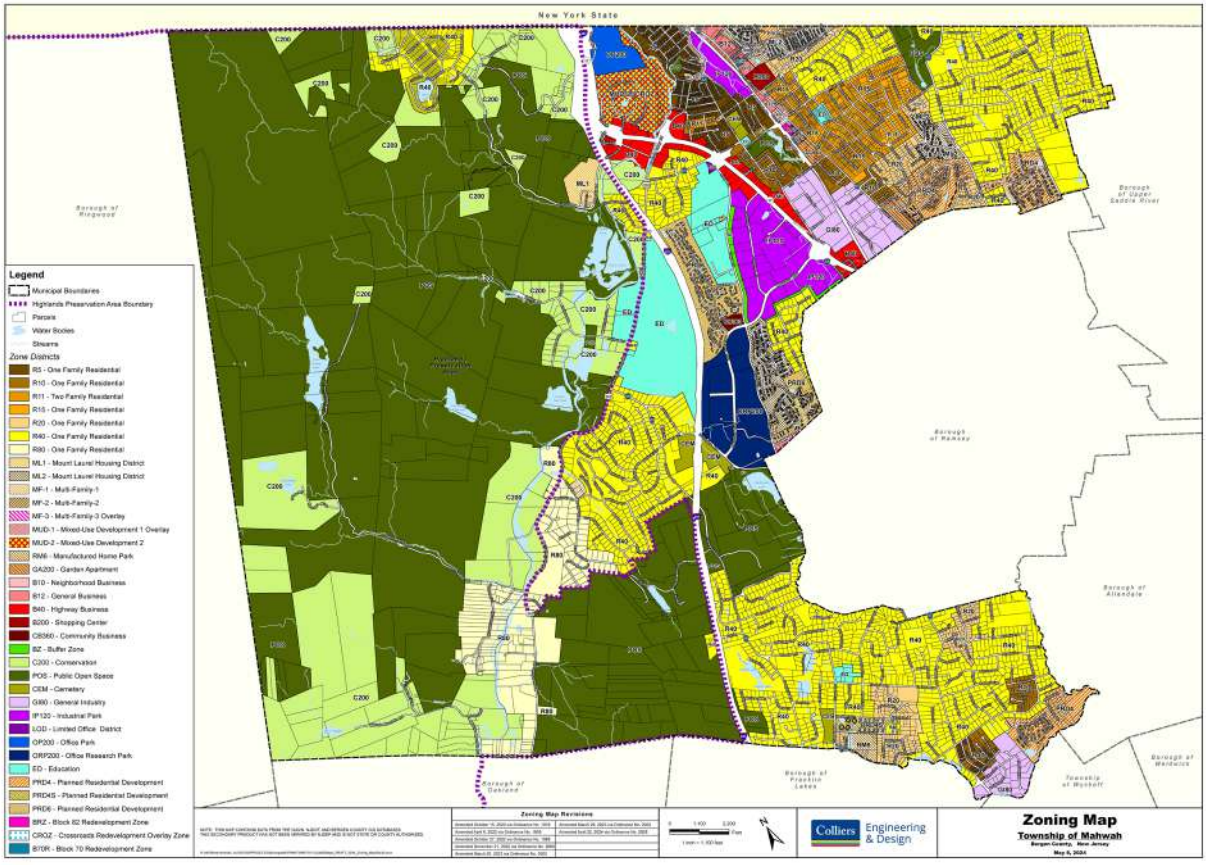
Both intersections are located within the Study Area.

Development Constraints

Highlands Restrictions: Highlands restrictions are stricter than the underlying zoning regulations and other State regulations relating to stream corridors. Some exemptions appear to apply within the Study Area, which would allow for future development. Additionally, depending on the extent of future development in the Study Area, the Township may consider applying for Highlands Center Designation of the Study Area, which would allow for more permissive development.

Environmental Constraints: The site is encumbered by streams, wetlands, other open waters, a Flood Hazard Area, Known Contaminated Sites and steep slopes. These constraints will need to be taken into account for any future development within the Study Area and may require additional permitting.

Existing Zoning Regulations: The Study Area contains 11 separate zoning districts. While some of these districts contain uses and standards conducive to transit friendly downtown development, others do not. Recommended changes to zoning regulations are provided in Chapter 4.



Map 2.6: Mahwah Township Zoning Map

Source: Colliers Engineering and Design, and the Township of Mahwah

Access to Study Area: The site is served by NJ TRANSIT rail, sidewalks, and streets for motor vehicle access. NJ TRANSIT does not operate a bus line in Mahwah. Bus access is limited to a private company, Coach USA, with buses to and from New York City on weekdays only.

The sidewalk network has gaps, both on main thoroughfares such as East Ramapo Avenue and Franklin Turnpike, and residential streets such as Devine Drive. Furthermore, the Study Area lacks bicycling and micromobility infrastructure.

Regarding automotive access, the Study Area lacks street parking, with parking mostly limited to public and private lots. Parking for the Station is restricted to two municipally owned lots. These lots are for residents only and use of the lots require permits from the Township. The lots are located to the west of the Station on either side of East Ramapo Avenue. The lots contain approximately 70 total spaces (approximately 30 spaces in the nothern lot and approximately 40 spaces in the southern lot).

Franklin Turnpike, for which changes are recommended in Chapter 4, is a County road. The Township will need to coordinate with Bergen County to implement any of the proposed recommendations to Franklin Turnpike (Bergen County Route 507).

For the Study Area to grow in a transit friendly manner, multi-modal infrastructure improvements and improved access to and from the Study Area overall will be key.

Cultural Resources: As indicated in the discussion regarding the Historic Preservation Inventory, there are historic sites within the Study Area. Additionally, adjacent to the Study Area to the southeast is the Cragmere Historic District. These cultural resources may impact future development and may require additional NJDEP or Historic Preservation Commission review.



HISTORIC KEMP HOUSE IN THE CRAGMERE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Source: The Mahwah Museum



HENRIETTA AND JOHN WINTER BUILDING IN THE CRAGMERE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Source: The Mahwah Museum



3

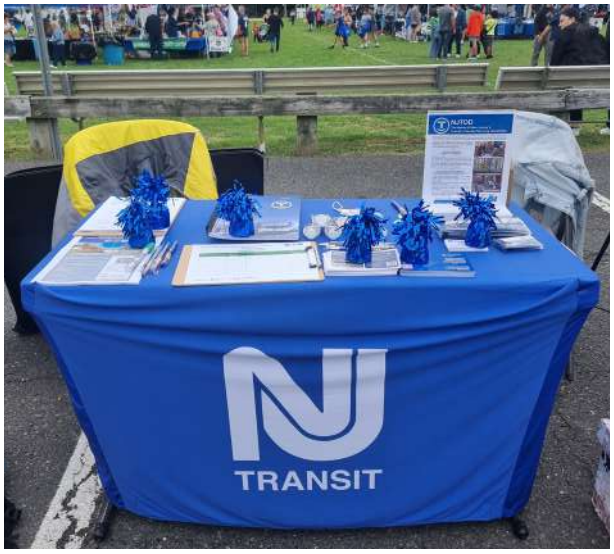
Community Engagement Summary

Community Engagement Process

Community feedback is as important to the planning process as having a complete understanding of the physical conditions of the place that is being planned. While physical conditions determine what can be built, community feedback determines what should be built.

Three input mechanisms were used:

1. A public survey conducted by NJ TRANSIT.
2. Community events held in person with members of the Mahwah community.
3. Interviews with key stakeholders in the community.
4. A virtual public information session.



NJ TRANSIT TABLE AT MAHWAH DAY



Public Input Survey

The public input survey was conducted by NJ TRANSIT. The survey consisted of 17 questions and an option for additional comments. The survey was administered electronically with access via a website. Questions focused on the respondents' relationship to the Mahwah Station area, transit ridership, use of amenities near the Station, views on safety, interest in the types and intensity of development in the area, and questions regarding housing affordability. The survey received 202 responses.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Fifteen (15) individuals were contacted for the purpose of completing a questionnaire and conducting interviews. Eight of the people contacted attended interviews. Three interviews were conducted on Thursday, January 9th, Wednesday, January 22nd, and Thursday, January 23rd.

Attendees included Township officials and professionals, one elected official, one Bergen County official, and the Director of Sustainability of EZ Ride, a regional Transportation Management Association (TMA).

Virtual Public Information Session

The project team held a virtual public meeting via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, April 23, 2025 from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. The meeting included a presentation with a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation. Six members of the public attended the meeting.

The presentation was followed by a question and answer session. There was support for the community center and a preference for the medium density redevelopment proposal.

Community Events

The project team engaged residents at two community events: Mahwah Day on September 28, 2024, and a separate event at the Mahwah Library on October 12, 2024. In addition to providing a table, the project team brought a board to both events containing three questions and a satellite map of the train station area. Respondents would answer using sticky notes, with the option to place comments directly on the map at specific locations.

Mahwah Day was partially hampered due to poor weather, which reduced the tabling time from five hours to two hours.



MAHWAH DAY OUTREACH EVENT
September 28, 2024



MAHWAH PUBLIC LIBRARY OUTREACH EVENT
October 12, 2024

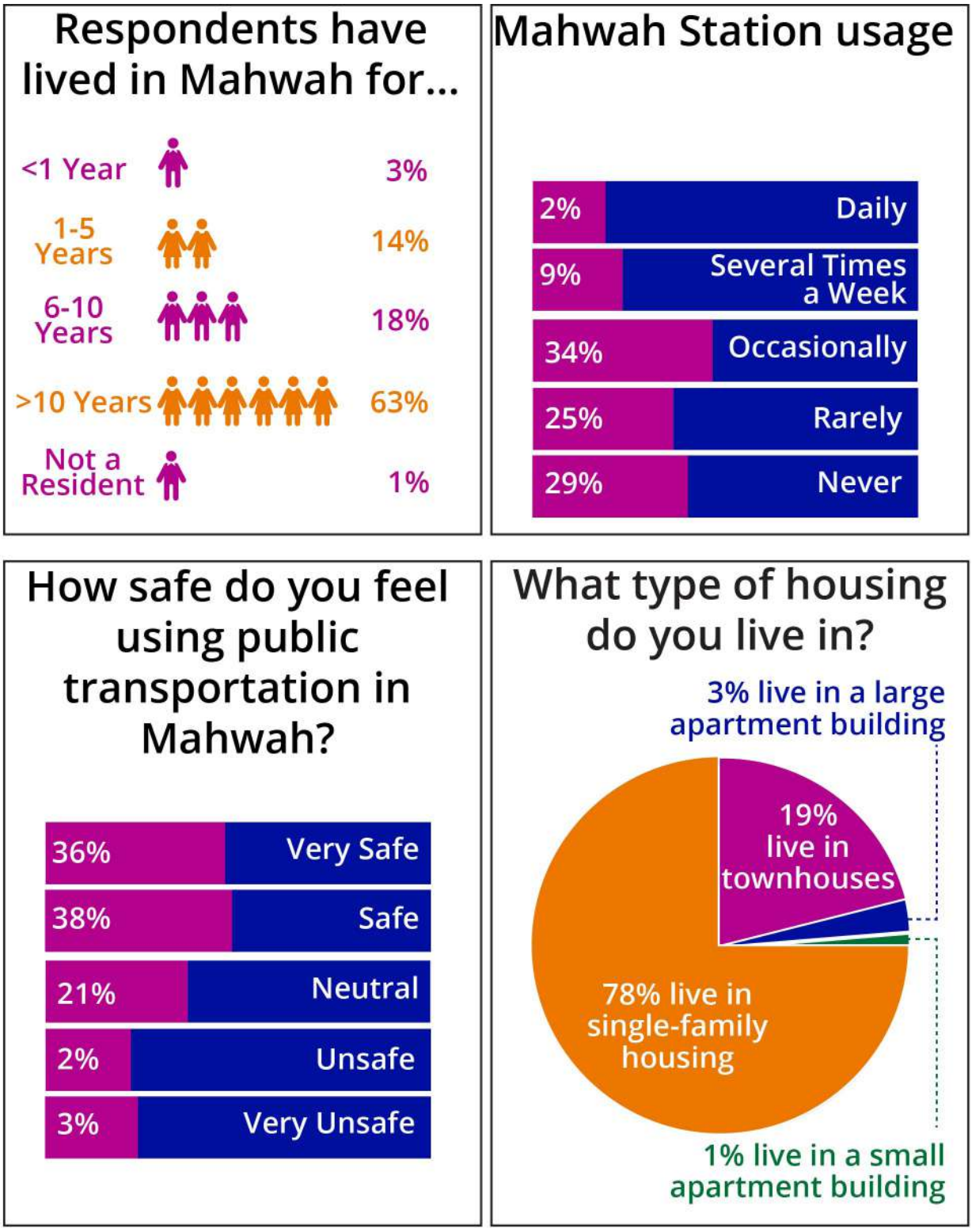
Key Findings

The following are examples of the questions used to prompt discussion from respondents:

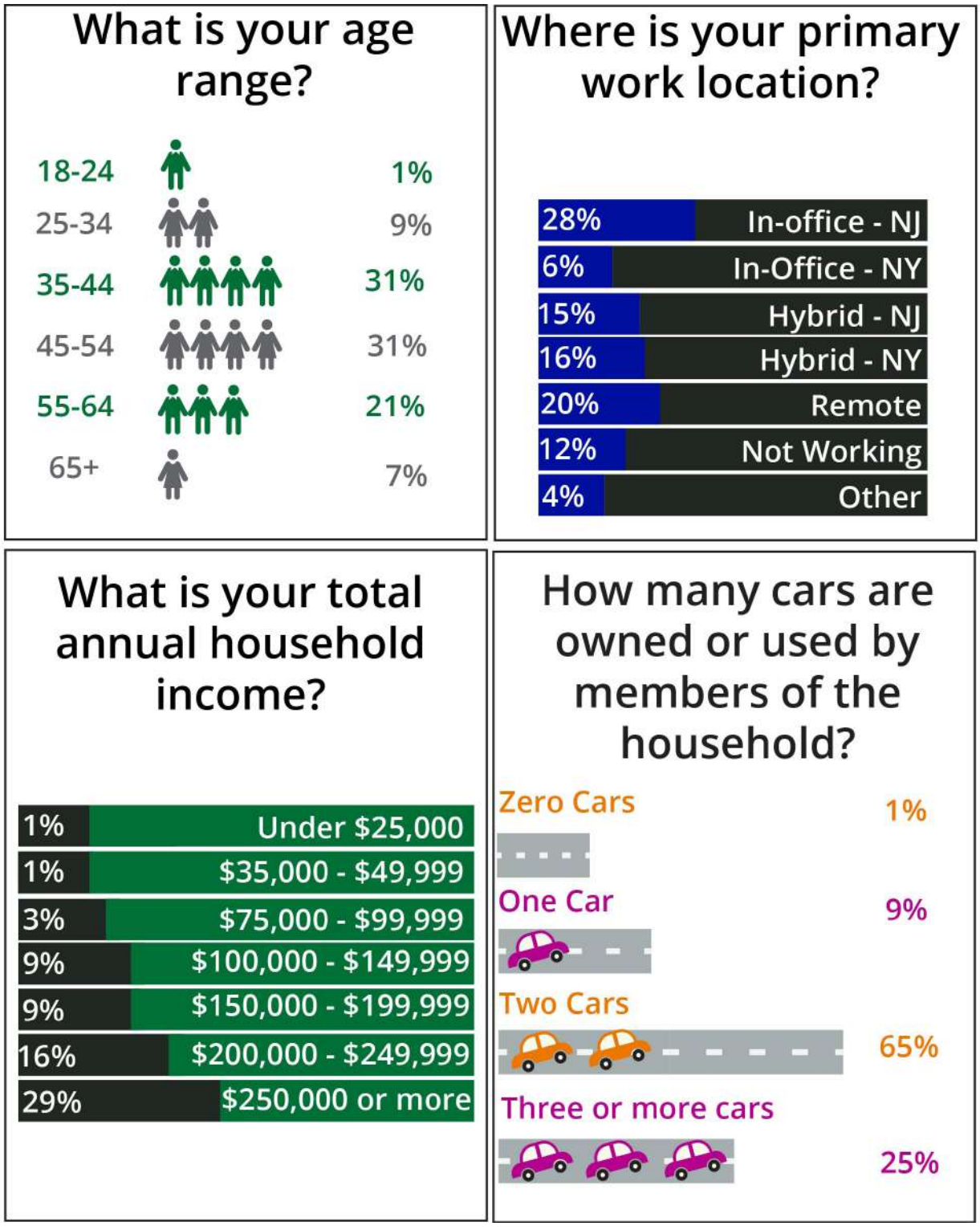
- "What type of housing would you like to see built near the Mahwah Train Station in the next 10 years?"
- "What type of development would you like to see more of in Mahwah?"
- "What concerns do you have, if any, about transit-oriented development in Mahwah?"

There is strong support for transit-oriented development (63%), even when it is described in detail as "most likely [to] include mixed-use buildings with residential apartments/townhomes, commercial retail stores, and recreational spaces within close walking distrance of transit," though 50% of respondents prefer no additional housing. The infographics on the following pages summarize the data received from respondents.

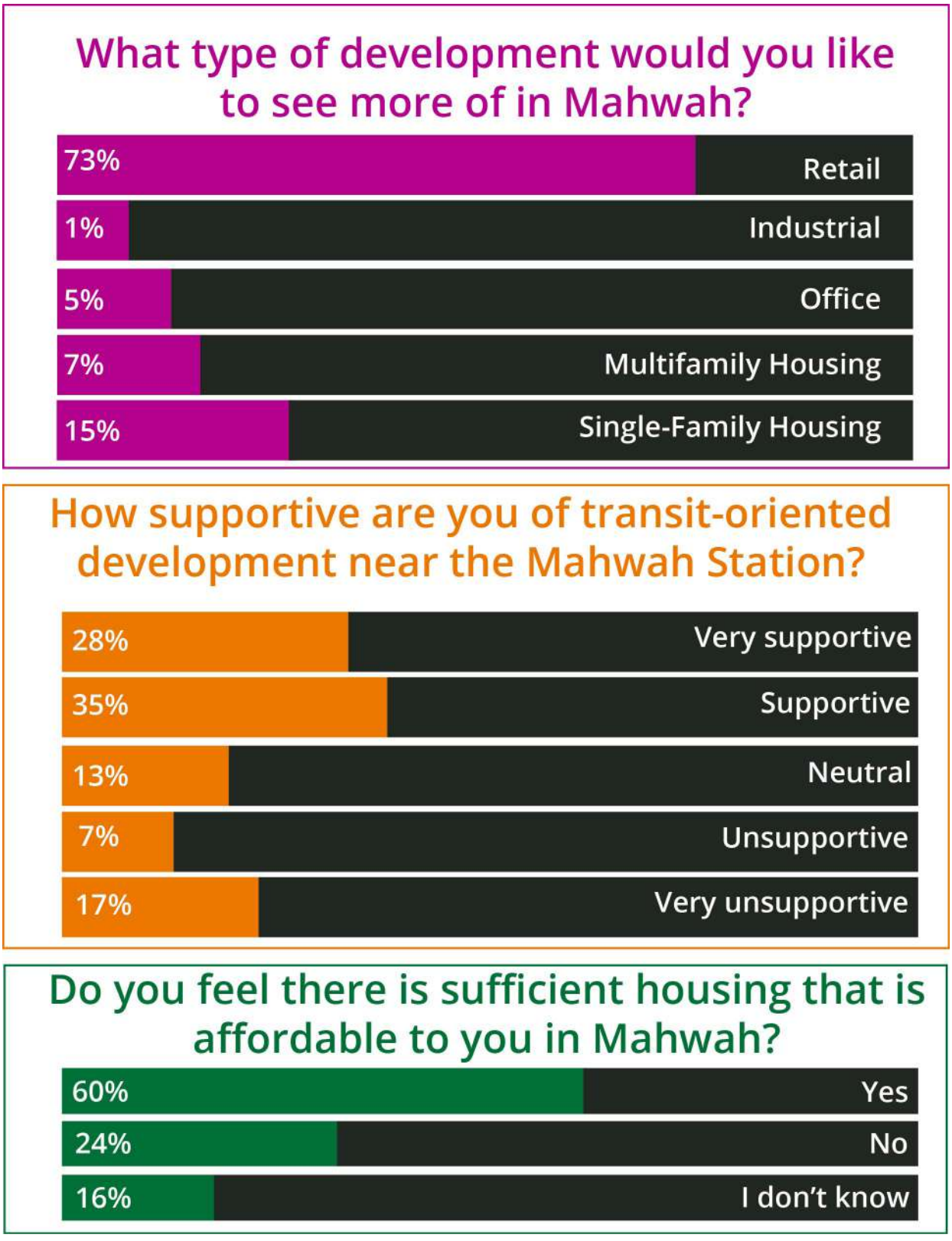
Infographic: General Information about Survey Respondents



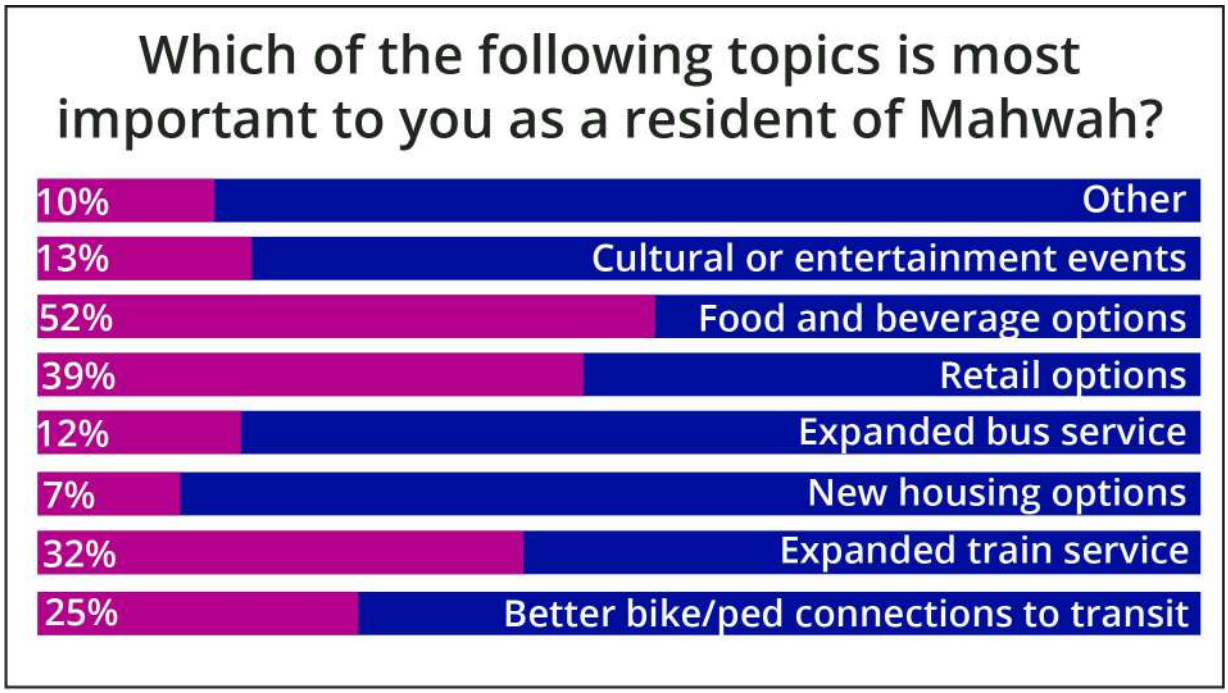
Infographic: General Information about Survey Respondents

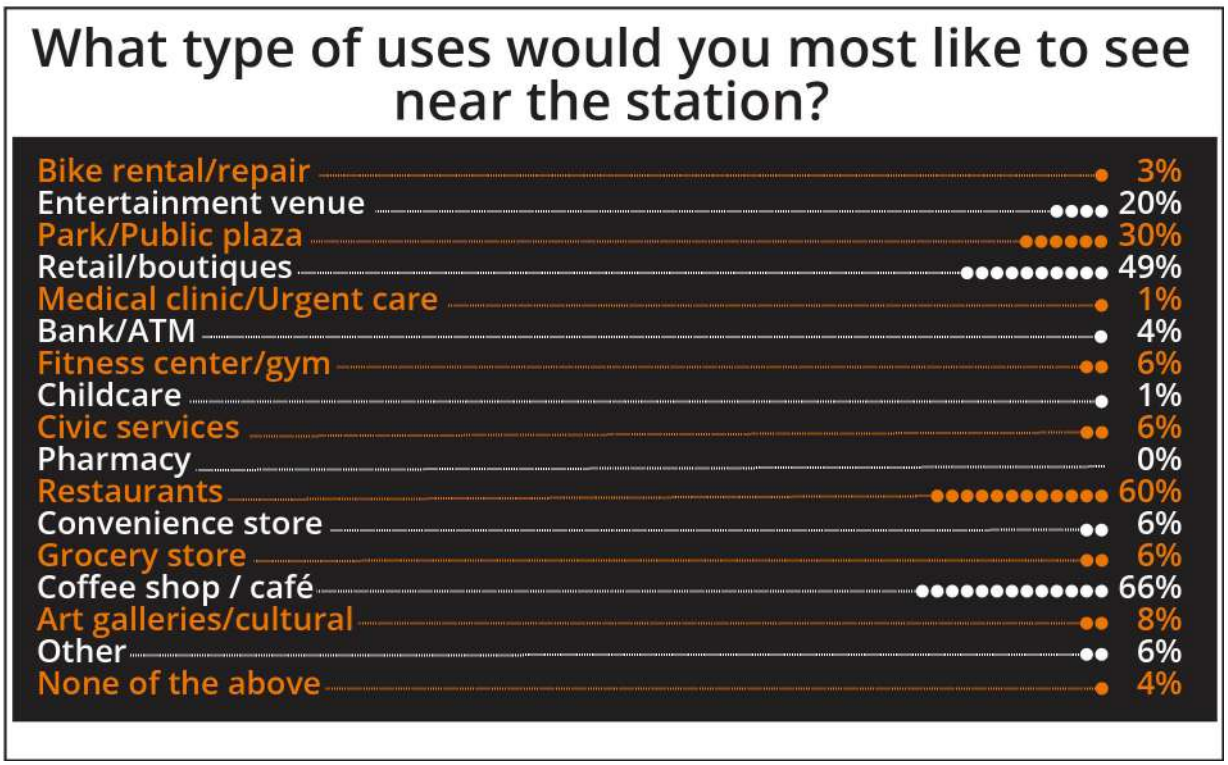


Infographic: Housing and Development



Infographic: Transit-Oriented Development Information






NJTRANSIT
MAHWAH

4

Recommendations

Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter presents recommendations to the Township of Mahwah centered around three sections as indicated herein.

Following the recommendations, this chapter concludes with resources relating to implementing the recommendations.

All recommendations are for consideration by the Township's governing body. These are planning recommendations, as such, implementation would require engineering design, permitting, and other approvals.

Effectuating many of these recommendations require changes to local ordinances, the use of redevelopment powers, and coordination with Bergen County or the Highlands Council.

Recommendations are divided into three categories: active transportation, recommendations for redeveloping the Department of Public Works site, and zoning and land use policy recommendations.

These recommendations will require community engagement, sustained commitment, and the ability to vision beyond local election cycles. In whole or in part, the Project Team believes that the vision herein will make Mahwah a healthier and more prosperous community.

Active Transportation

This section recommends two broad strategies relating to active transportation, Complete Streets and Station Area Access. Within each strategy are a battery of recommendations relating to active transportation.

The Department of Public Works Site Specific Redevelopment

This section recommends three redevelopment concepts for the municipally-owned Department of Public Works site, and an analysis of the economic impacts of the recommended redevelopment(s).

Zoning and Land Use Policy

This section recommends an overlay zone for the Study Area, and additional land use policy implementation recommendations relating to Redevelopment and Highlands Center Designation.

Active Transportation Key Strategies:

1. Complete Streets
2. Station Area Access and Public Spaces



Active Transportation Strategies

This plan outlines two main strategies to enhance access and public space in and around the train station. Each Strategy is supported by a series of 'Key Moves' designed to implement the strategy effectively. Together, the 'Strategies and Key Moves' respond directly to the deficiencies highlighted in the Existing Conditions section of this report.

Strategy 1: Complete Streets

a. Establish Street Typologies that balance and prioritize the appropriate transportation modes.

b. Create a uniform furniture, materials and wayfinding palette that reflects the history and culture of Mahwah.

Strategy 2: Station Area Access & Public Space

a. Integrate appropriate First/Last Mile amenities into Station Area.

b. Connect and maximize existing public spaces around the train station.



TABLED CROSSING IN UNION, NJ *Source: Arterial*



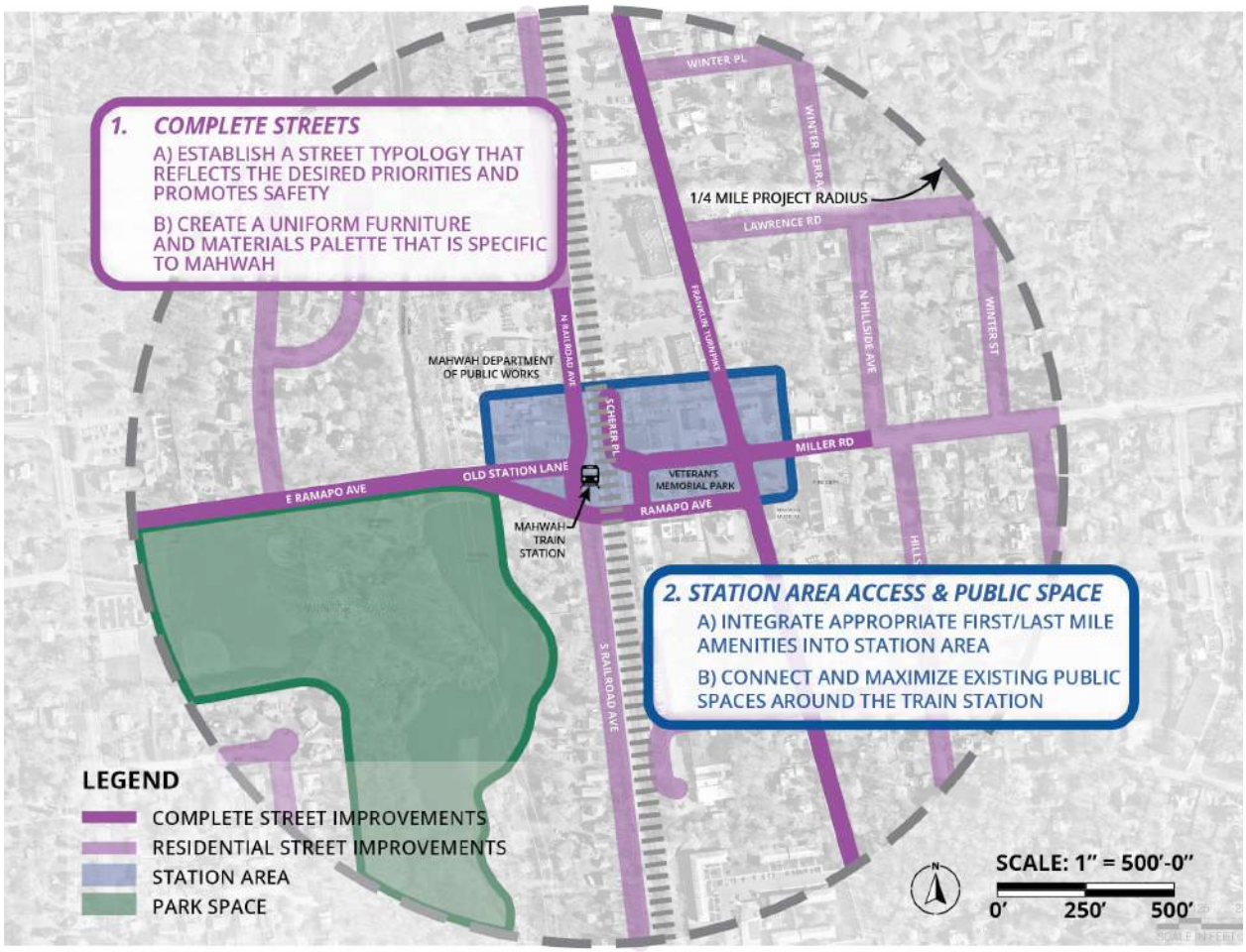
PUBLIC SPACE IN MONTCLAIR, NJ *Source: Arterial*

Complete Streets is a policy and design approach to planning streets that considers all users, all modes of transportation, and all ability levels. Complete streets balance the needs of drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, emergency responders, and goods movement based on local context.

—Transit Friendly Planning Guide, p. 32



MADISON, NEW JERSEY
Source: New Jersey Complete Streets Design Guide



Map 4.1: Strategies and Key Moves *Source: Arterial*



FRANKLIN TURNPIKE *Source: Arterial*



VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK *Source: Arterial*



PLACE-FIRST **MOBILITY-FIRST**





WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES OF THE STREETS SURROUNDING THE TRAIN STATION?







FUNCTIONALITY **ARTS & CULTURE** **HEALTH & THE ENVIRONMENT**

Streets That Do More:
PRIORITIES + PERFORMANCE



Source: Arterial

How a street is designed, furnished, and maintained is largely determined by its intended function. Is it a major thoroughfare meant to accommodate trucks, buses, and cars traveling between cities? Or is it a main street in a small downtown, serving local shops and pedestrians? Ideally, a well-designed street reinforces its purpose through appropriate infrastructure.

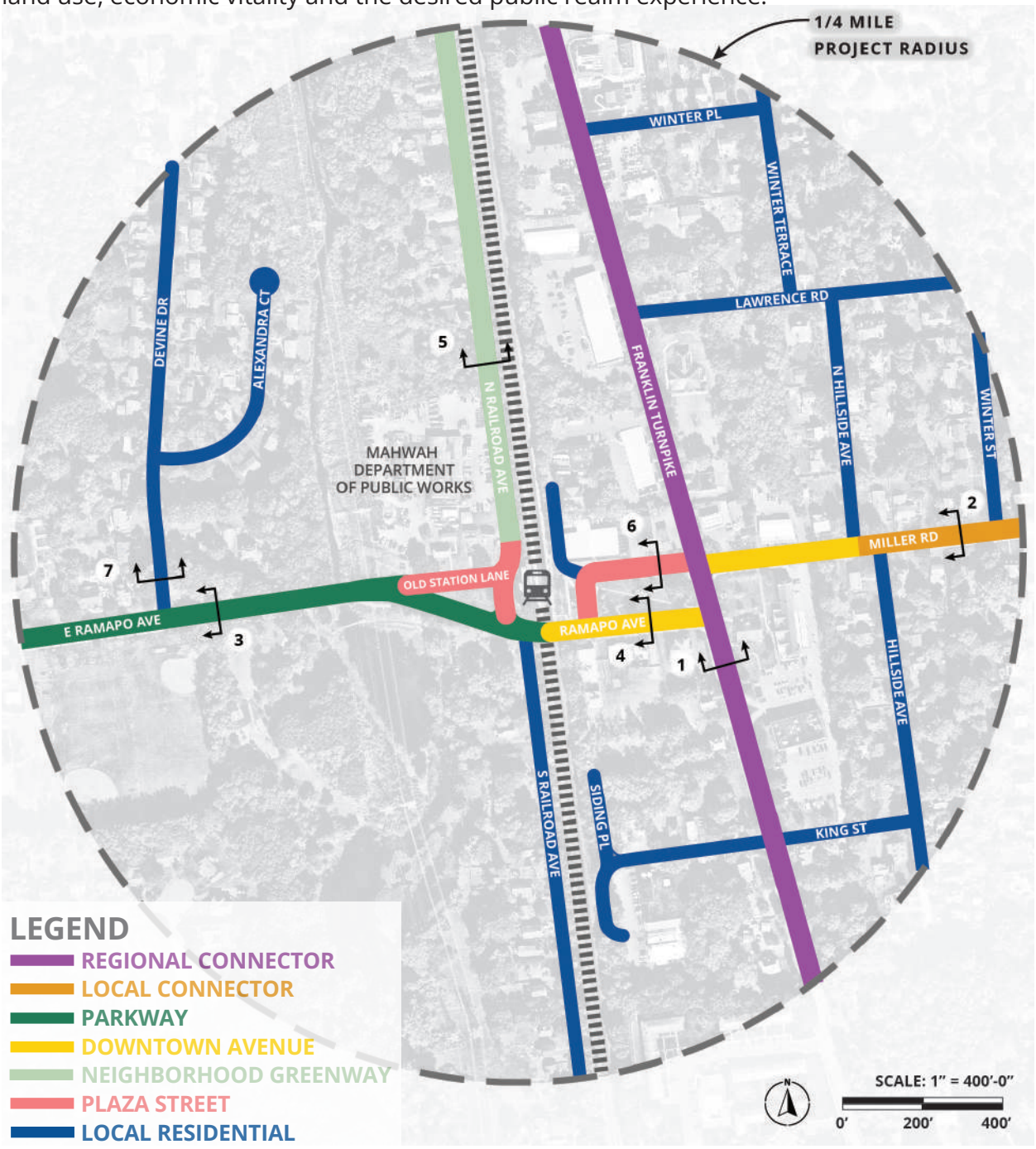
Each street within the Study Area falls somewhere along a spectrum of priorities: *place-first*, *mobility-first*, or *car-first*.

- **Place-first streets** emphasize the pedestrian experience, featuring elements such as public space, outdoor seating, and pedestrian- or bicycle-friendly amenities that enhance comfort and usability.
- **Mobility-first streets** prioritize the efficient movement of people - whether by car, bicycle, public transportation, or other modes - with infrastructure designed to support a range of travel options.
- **Car-first streets** are focused on the movement of goods and vehicles, with minimal interruptions and infrastructure that facilitates consistent traffic flow.

The project team began by evaluating the intended uses of the Study Area's street network. This analysis, combined with community input, guided the recommendations for improvements. The most significant transformations are proposed for streets whose current physical characteristics do not align with their intended function.

Street Typology Within the Study Area

Each of the streets within the study area has been identified by its type, also referred to as a "transect". **This typology is used to articulate a vision for each street that reflects the current and anticipated character of the surrounding area.** Unlike 'Functional Classifications' which categorizes roads primarily by the level of service the road is intended to provide in terms of its vehicular traffic capacity, the typology is intended to provide (vehicular traffic capacity) - this Street Typology considers the character, context, land use, economic vitality and the desired public realm experience.



Map 4.2: Street Typology

Source: Arterial

Seven (7) distinct Street Types have been identified within the Study Area as follows:



1. Regional Connector Page 46



2. Local Connector Page 48



3. Parkway Page 50



4. Downtown Avenue Page 52



5. Neighborhood Greenway Page 54

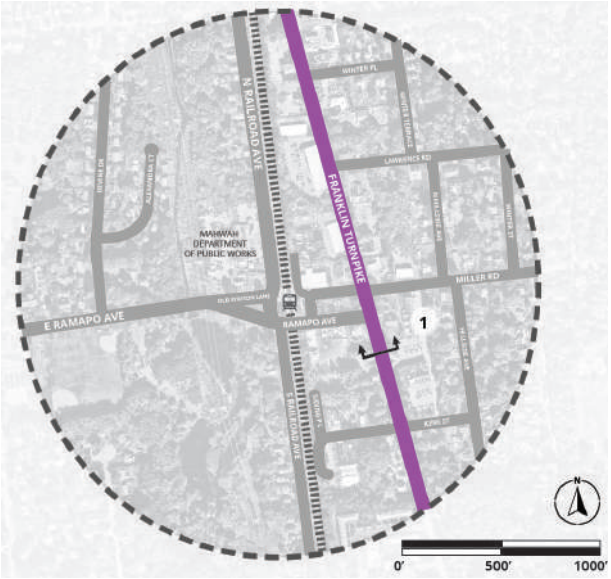


6. Plaza Street Page 56



7. Local Residential Page 58

Street Typologies:
Regional Connector



Source: Arterial

Map 4.3: Street Typologies: Regional Connector



Source: Arterial

EXISTING STREET

Streets:

- Franklin Turnpike (County Route 507)

The Regional Connector is a busy street that links several towns and serves as a hub for both local businesses and public services. It typically has one lane of traffic in each direction and sees a lot of cars throughout the day, often moving at higher speeds. Because of this, it's important to include a landscaped buffer - like trees, grass, or plantings - between the street and the sidewalk. This not only helps make the street feel more welcoming but also improves safety and comfort for people walking along it. Designated bicycle facilities such as bicycle lanes (in accordance with AASHTO's 2024 Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities) should also be evaluated to improve safety for all users.

Key Characteristics:

Existing Conditions:

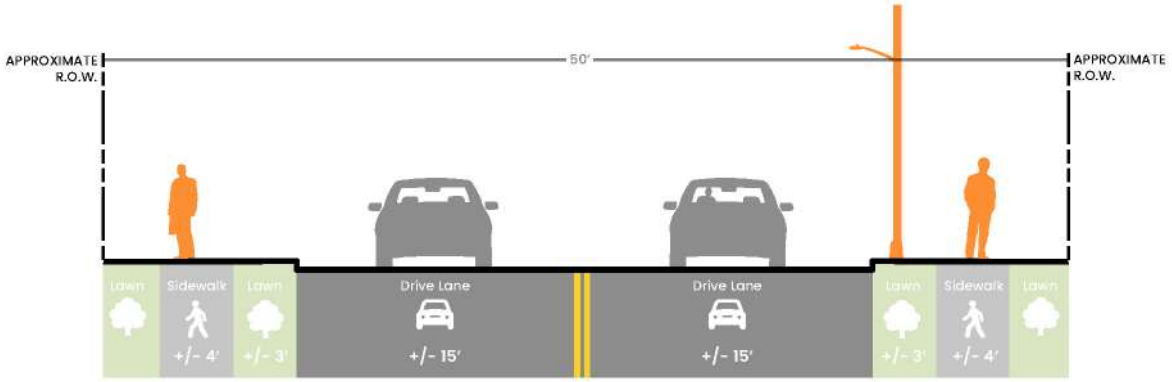
- Narrow sidewalks
- Curb cuts break up the pedestrian network
- Lack of pedestrian lighting
- Lack of pedestrian and vehicular wayfinding
- Wide travel lanes
- Lack of bicycle facilities

Proposed Conditions:

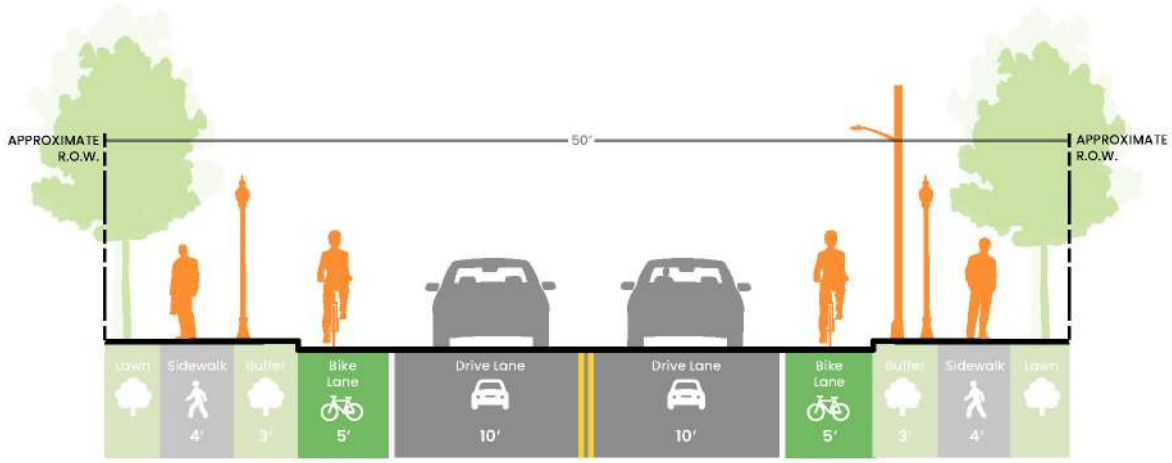
- Continuous sidewalk with planted buffer on both sides
- Consistent, large shade trees planted behind the sidewalk where possible
- Bicycle facilities
- Pedestrian and vehicular lighting



The Regional Connector currently prioritizes cars, with wide travel lanes and minimal pedestrian infrastructure. Given its role in connecting the train station, retail, and community facilities, we recommend shifting to a "Mobility-First" approach - supporting safer, more comfortable access for pedestrians and cyclists while calming vehicle traffic.



EXISTING STREET SECTION



PROPOSED STREET SECTION



Source: Arterial

Street Typologies:
Local Connector



Source: Arterial

Map 4.4: Street Typologies: Local Connector



Source: Arterial

EXISTING STREET

Streets:

- Miller Road

Local Connectors are streets lined with single-family homes set back from the road. While they carry a steady flow of cars - sometimes even quite a bit of traffic, they also play an important role in connecting neighborhoods to main roads, schools, parks, and other local spots. Because they're both busy and residential, it's important to design these streets in a way that keeps traffic moving while still making the area safe and pleasant for people walking or biking. Solutions may include a shared roadway where both vehicles and bicyclists share operating space.

Key Characteristics:

Existing Conditions:

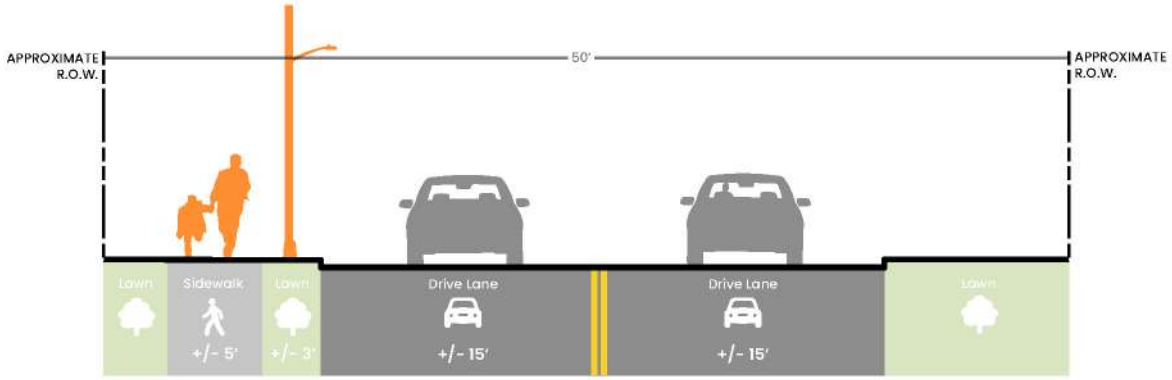
- Sidewalks limited to one side of the road
- Lack of street trees
- Lack of pedestrian lighting
- Lack of pedestrian and vehicle wayfinding
- Wide vehicular travel lanes

Proposed Conditions:

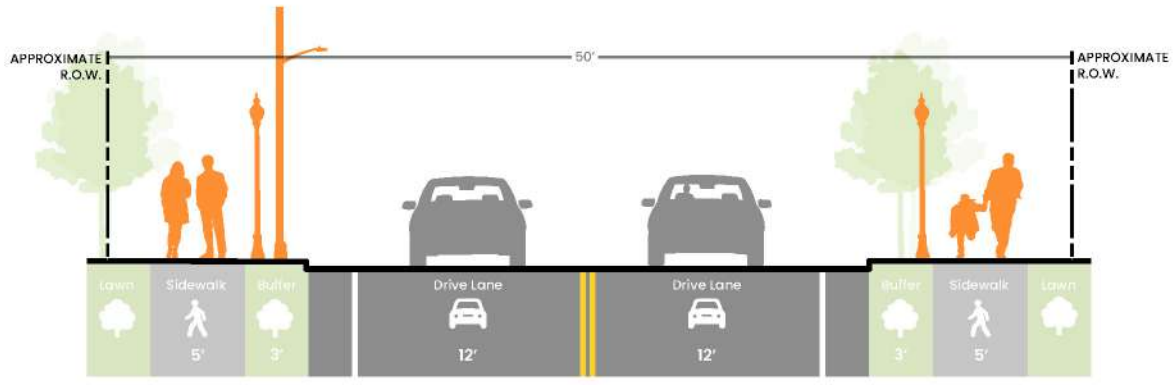
- Consistent sidewalks
- Wide sidewalks with planted buffer
- Medium sized shade trees planted behind the sidewalk where feasible
- Pedestrian scale lighting
- Shared roadway



The Local Connector currently prioritizes cars, with wide travel lanes and minimal pedestrian infrastructure. Given its role in connecting visitors to the Station Area, we recommend shifting to a "Mobility-First" approach - supporting safer, more comfortable access for pedestrians and cyclists while calming vehicle traffic.



EXISTING STREET SECTION

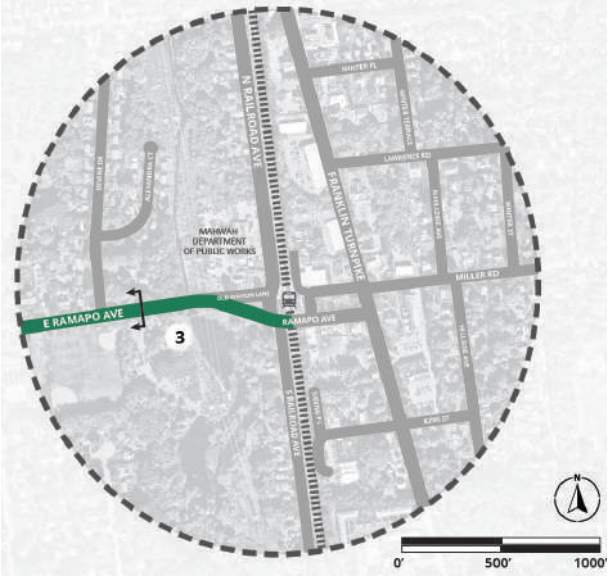


PROPOSED STREET SECTION



Source: Arterial

Street Typologies:
Parkway



Source: Arterial

Map 4.5: Street Typologies: Parkway



Source: Arterial

EXISTING STREET

Streets:

- E Ramapo Avenue

Parkways are beautiful, tree-lined streets surrounded by parks or green space on both sides. They're designed for everyone - drivers, walkers, and cyclists alike - and often include wide sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and plenty of shade from mature trees. The goal is to create a pleasant, scenic route that feels just as inviting for a stroll or bike ride as it does for a drive, blending transportation with nature and open space.

Key Characteristics:

Existing Conditions:

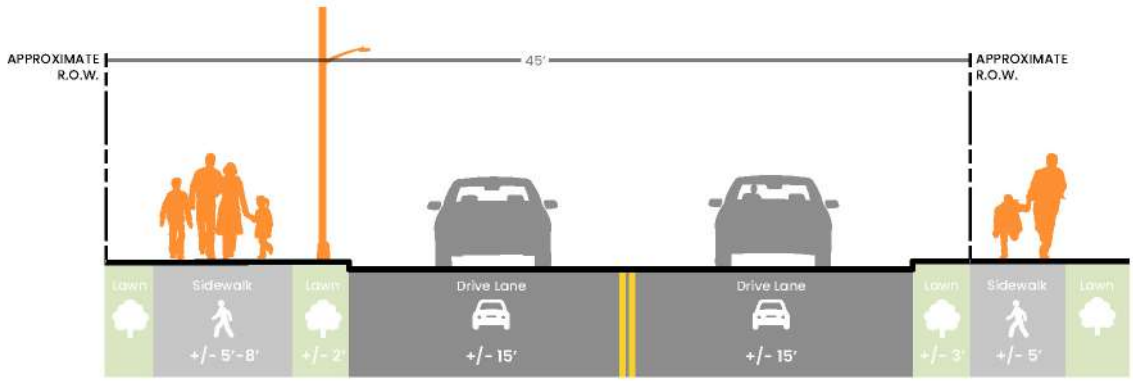
- Parks/green spaces on both sides of the street
- Narrow sidewalks
- Lack of pedestrian lighting
- Lack of pedestrian and vehicular wayfinding
- Limited shade trees
- Lack of bicycle facilities

Proposed Conditions:

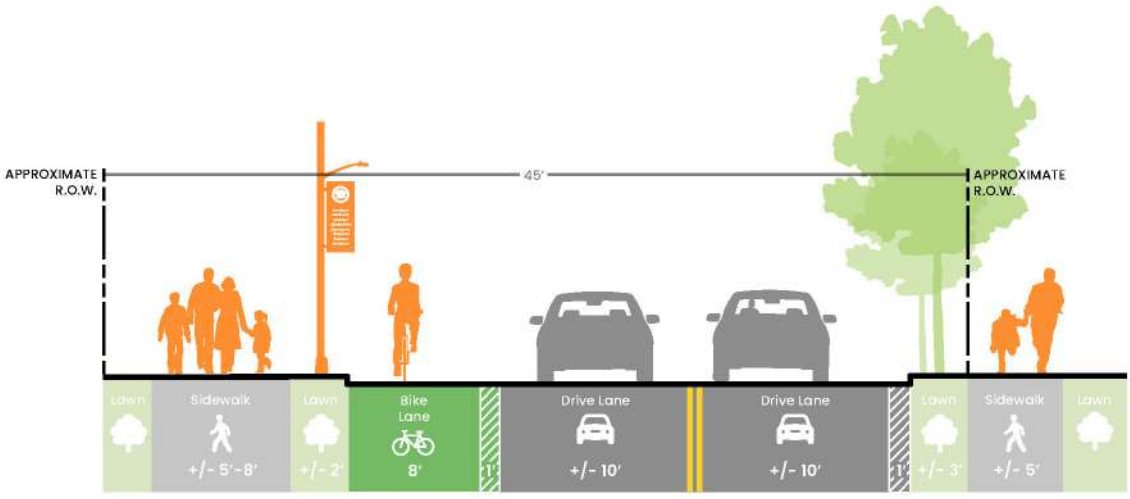
- Two-way cycle track along park
- Continuous, large shade tree canopy one on side (due to utilities)
- Banners along park/ utility poles
- Wide, promenade style sidewalk along park side
- Pedestrian scale lighting



The Parkway currently prioritizes cars, with wide travel lanes and minimal pedestrian infrastructure. Given its role in connecting visitors to the Station Area, we recommend shifting to a "Mobility-First" approach - supporting safer, more comfortable access for pedestrians and cyclists while calming vehicle traffic.



EXISTING STREET SECTION

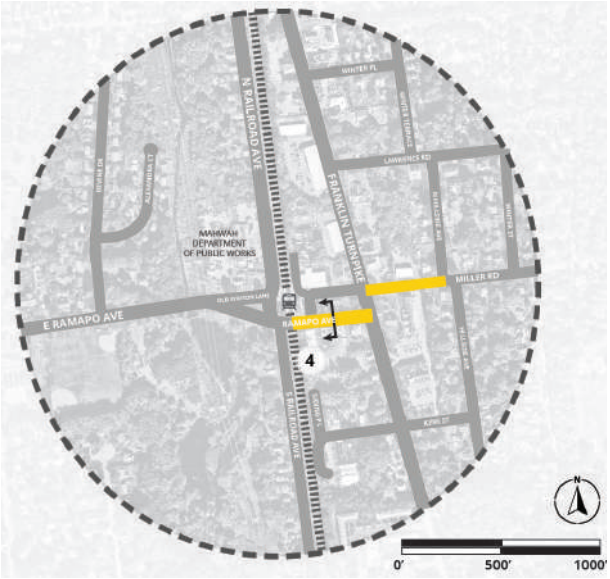


PROPOSED STREET SECTION



Source: Arterial

Street Typologies:
Downtown Avenue



Source: Arterial

Map 4.6: Street Typologies: Downtown Avenue



Source: Arterial

EXISTING STREET

Streets:

- Ramapo Avenue
- Miller Road

Downtown Avenue is a vibrant, mixed-use street buzzing with shops, restaurants, and entertainment that attract people from all over the region. It usually has one travel lane in each direction, along with wide sidewalks that make room for outdoor dining, window shopping, and plenty of foot traffic. Clear signs help both drivers and pedestrians find their way, creating a lively, easy-to-navigate environment that feels active day and night.

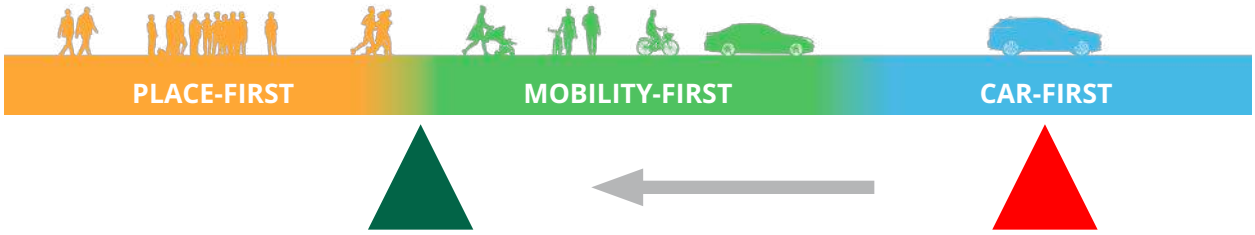
Key Characteristics:

Existing Conditions:

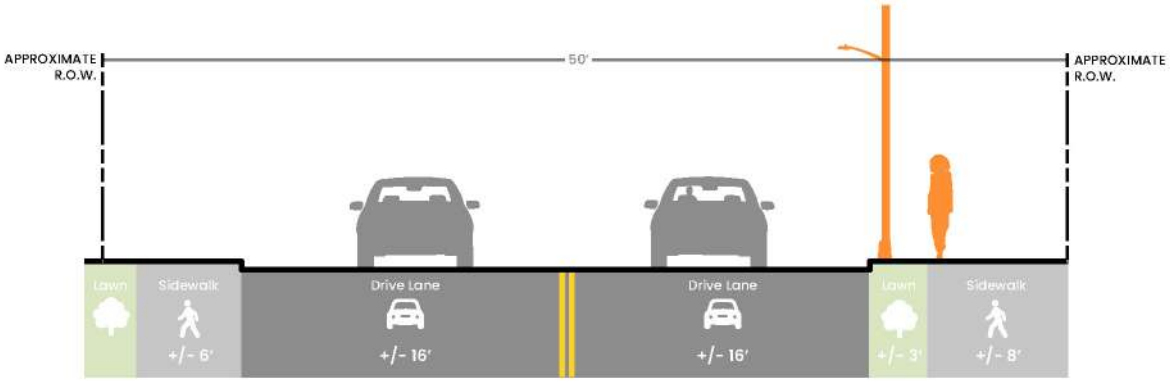
- Sidewalks on both sides of the street
- Lack of street furniture
- Lack of street trees
- Pedestrian and vehicular lighting
- Lack of bicycle facilities

Proposed Conditions:

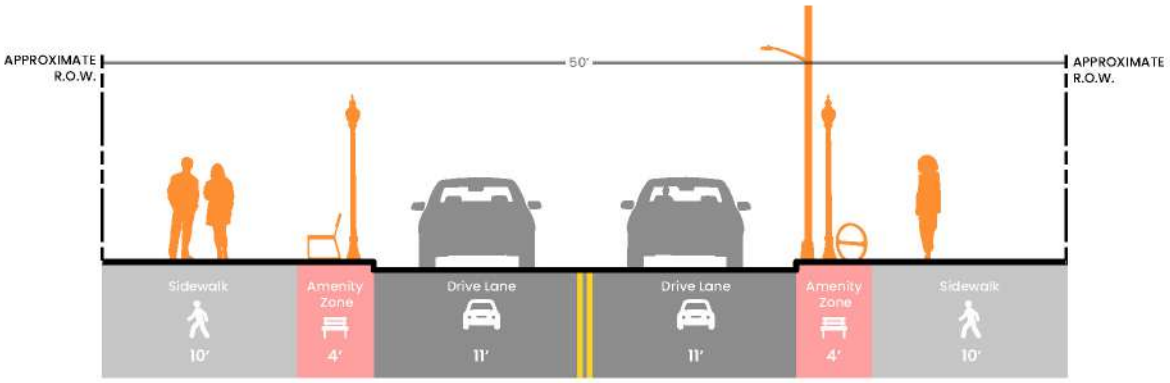
- Wide sidewalk with ample amenity zone, room for shopping, and outdoor dining/cafes
- Ample seating areas should be located throughout the amenity zone
- Consistent, medium sized trees with special care to minimize visual obstruction of storefront signs
- Pedestrian and vehicular lighting
- Shared roadway or dedicated bicycle facilities
- High visibility and/or decorative textured crosswalks
- Pocket parks located along the street to promote socializing and offer areas for respite



The Downtown Avenues currently prioritizes cars, with wide travel lanes and minimal pedestrian infrastructure. Given its role in connecting the train station, retail, and community facilities, we recommend shifting to a "Mobility-First" approach - supporting safer, more comfortable access for pedestrians and cyclists while calming vehicle traffic.



EXISTING STREET SECTION

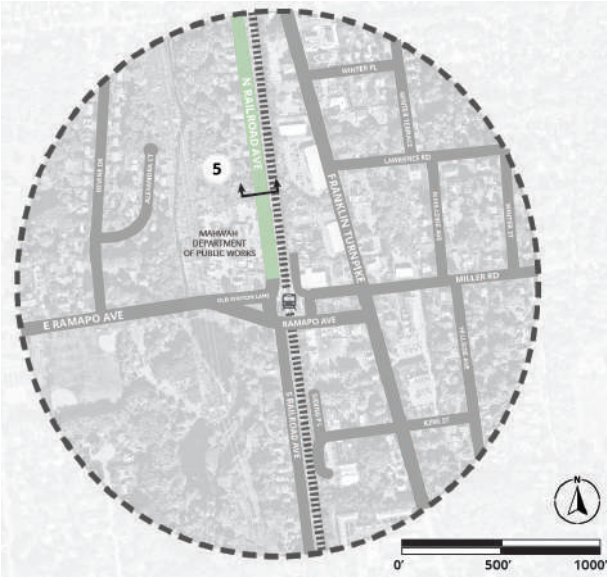


PROPOSED STREET SECTION



Source: Arterial

Street Typologies:
Neighborhood Greenway



Source: Arterial

Map 4.7: Street Typologies: Neighborhood Greenway



Source: Arterial

EXISTING STREET

Streets:

- N Railroad Avenue

Neighborhood Greenways are quiet, narrow streets that connect homes to nearby parks and open spaces. Designed for easygoing travel, they're shared by walkers, bikers, and the occasional car, all moving at a calm pace. With speed limits usually set at 15 mph and "Share the Road" signs and markings, these streets create a safe, relaxed environment where everyone - on foot, on wheels, or behind the wheel - can comfortably get around.

Key Characteristics:

Existing Conditions:

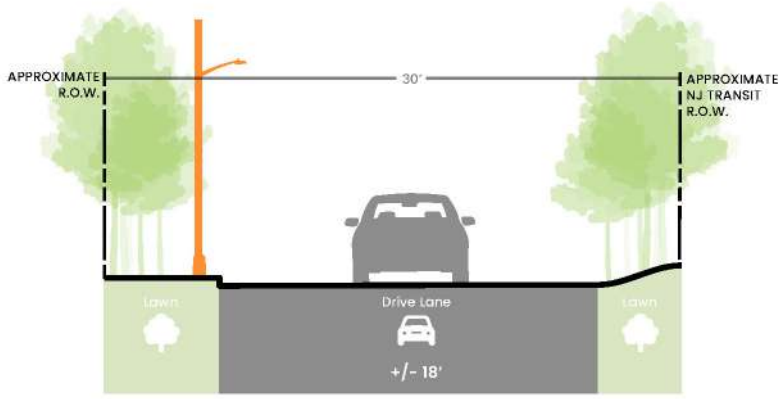
- Lack of sidewalks
- Lack of pedestrian and vehicular lighting
- Large trees on both sides of the roadway
- Narrow roadway

Proposed Conditions:

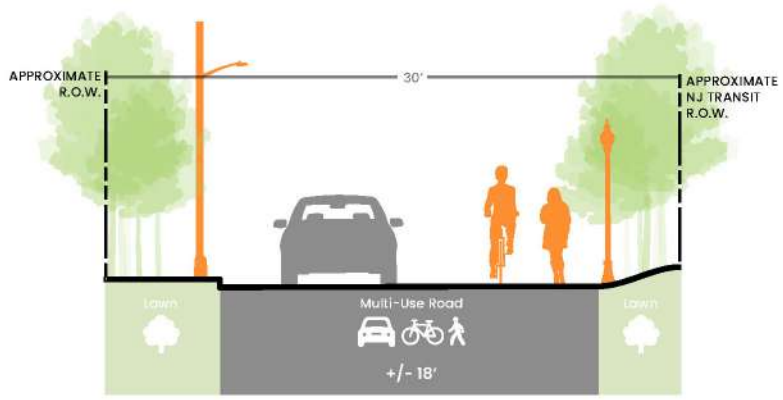
- Tinted/colored surface treatment
- "Shared Road" signs and markings indicating vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians
- Traffic calming measures including speed bump, chicanes or neck downs
- Pedestrian scale lighting
- Reduced speed limit (15 mph)



The Neighborhood Greenway currently prioritizes cars, with little to no pedestrian infrastructure. Given its role in connecting residents to the train station, we recommend shifting to a "Mobility-First" approach - supporting safer, more comfortable access for pedestrians and cyclists while calming vehicle traffic.



EXISTING STREET SECTION

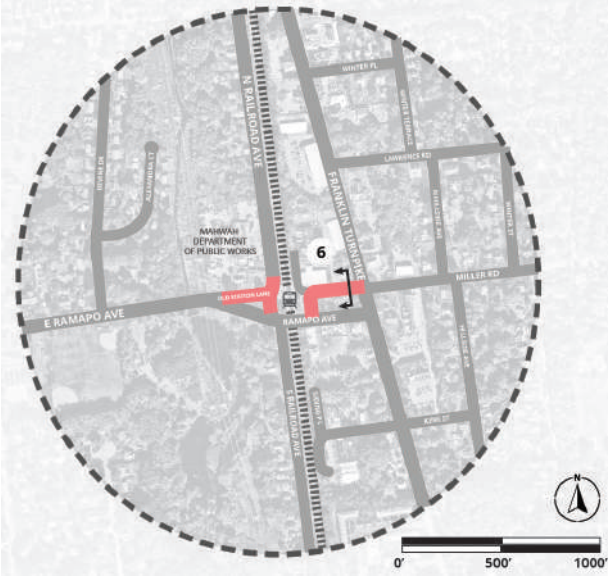


PROPOSED STREET SECTION



Source: Arterial

Street Typologies:
Plaza Street



Source: Arterial

Map 4.8: Street Typologies: Plaza Street



Source: Arterial

EXISTING STREET

Streets:

- Old Station Lane
- N Railroad Avenue
- Scherer Place
- Miller Road

Plaza Streets are lively areas right next to the train station, designed to be hubs of activity. During rush hours, they serve as "mobility hubs," where commuters can easily connect to the first and last parts of their journey. But come evening and weekends, these streets transform into vibrant gathering spots for local cafes, community events, and casual relaxation. Often, Plaza Streets are car-free during weekends or events to help create a more walkable, people-friendly space (see page 68 for more on Mobility Hubs).

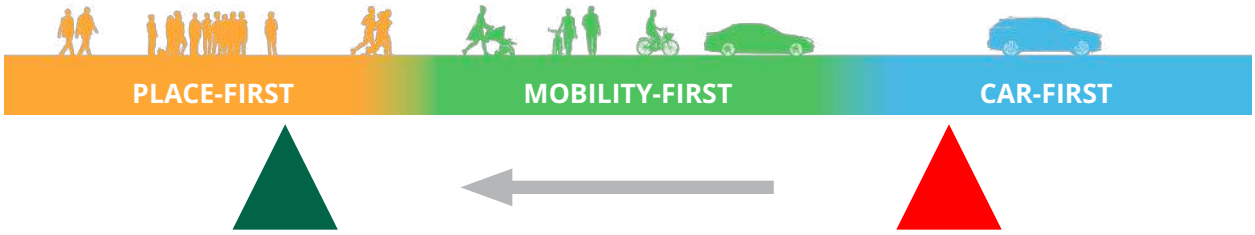
Key Characteristics:

Existing Conditions:

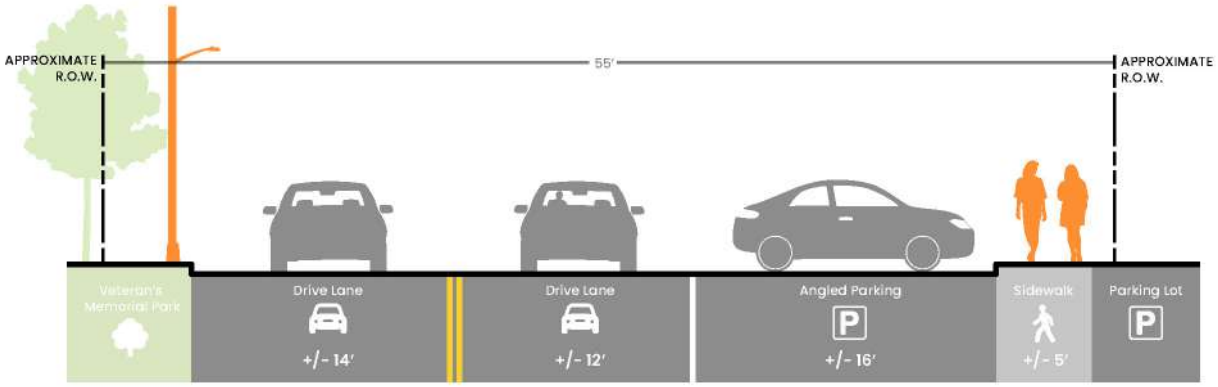
- Two-way traffic
- Angled parking
- Gap in the sidewalk network
- Lack of pedestrian lighting
- Lack of street trees
- Lack of site furniture
- Lack of bicycle facilities and bicycle parking

Proposed Conditions:

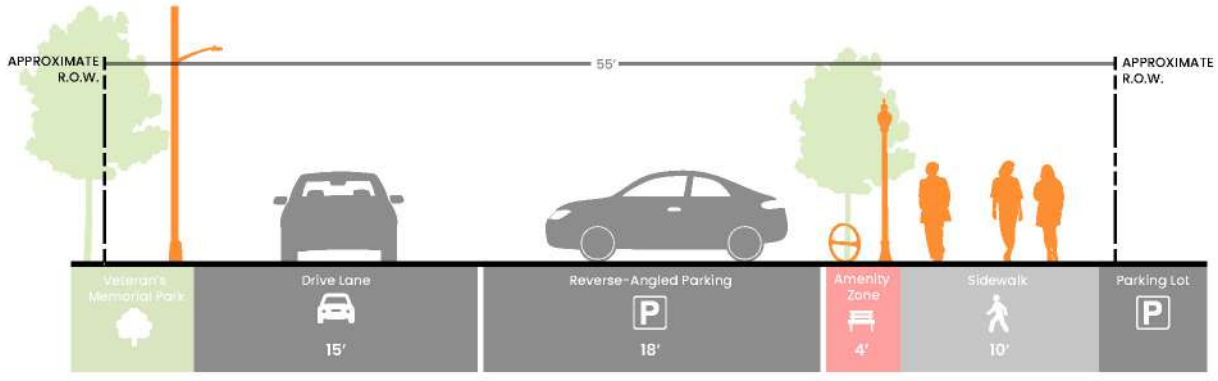
- Pedestrian oriented space
- Curbless, one-way shared street
- Ample seating
- Consistent, medium shade canopy
- Pedestrian scale lighting
- Limited on-street / back-in parking spaces and car drop-off zones
- Bicycle parking



The Plaza Streets currently prioritize cars, with wide travel lanes and minimal pedestrian infrastructure. Given their role in connecting the train station, retail, and public spaces, we recommend shifting to a "Place-First" approach - supporting safer, more comfortable access for pedestrians and cyclists while calming vehicle traffic.



EXISTING STREET SECTION



PROPOSED STREET SECTION



Source: Arterial

Street Typologies:
Local Residential



Source: Arterial

Map 4.9: Street Typologies: Local Residential



EXISTING STREET

Streets:

- Devine Drive
- Alexandra Court
- S Railroad Avenue
- Scherer Place
- Siding Place
- Winter Place
- Winter Terrace
- Lawrence Road
- N Hillside Avenue
- Winter Street
- Hillside Avenue
- King Street

Local Residential Streets are quiet roads mainly serving the people who live along them, lined with single-family homes set back from the street. These streets are not only important for getting around but also serve as gathering spaces for the community. Common features include one or two lanes of traffic, on-street parking, sidewalks, and a row of shade trees or landscaping that helps separate walkers from passing cars.

Key Characteristics:

Existing Conditions:

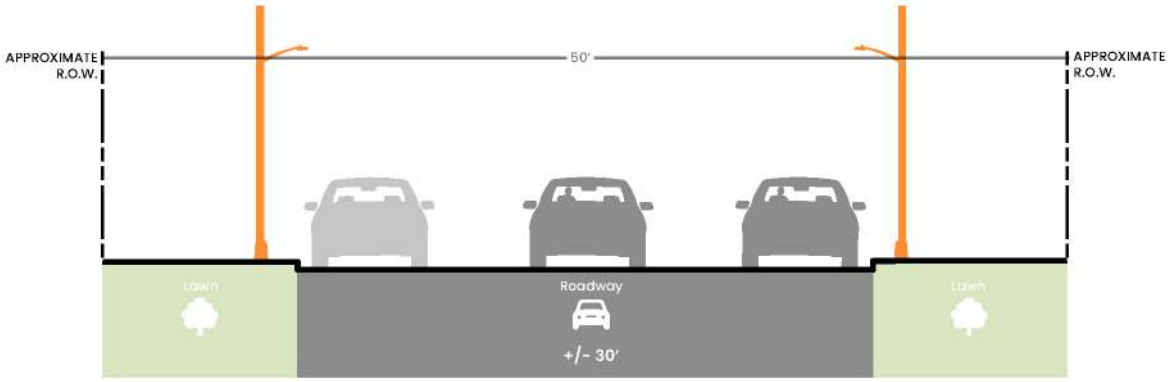
- Lack of sidewalks
- Lack of pedestrian lighting
- Lack of street trees

Proposed Conditions:

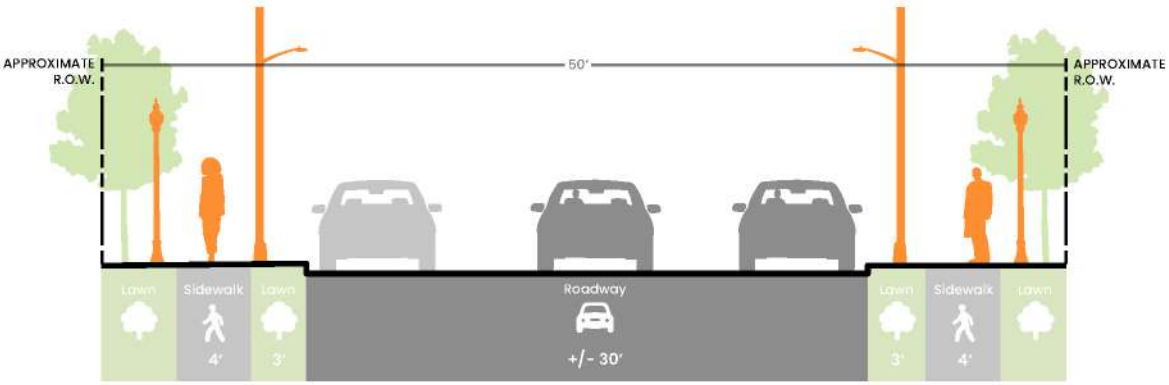
- Consistent sidewalks
- Vegetated buffer separating traffic from sidewalk
- Consistent, medium shade canopy
- Pedestrian scale lighting
- Shared roadway signs or pavement markings for bicyclists



The Local Residential streets currently prioritize cars, with wide travel lanes and little to no pedestrian infrastructure. Given their role in connecting residents to the train station, retail, and community facilities, we recommend shifting to a "Mobility-First" approach - supporting safer, more comfortable access for pedestrians and cyclists while calming vehicle traffic.



EXISTING STREET SECTION



PROPOSED STREET SECTION



Source: Arterial

Station Area Safety Improvements

The United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has a collection of countermeasures that are proven to enhance the safety of all road users on all types of roads. More information can be found *here*. These countermeasures complement safety measures identified in the Transit Friendly Planning Guide. A sixth safety countermeasure, Tabled Roadways, is not found in the FHWA resource but is included due to its potential applicability to the Study Area.



Source: Arterial

Walkways

Designating a space for pedestrians separate from motorists is the most critical way to improve safety. Walkways should be a connected network without gaps or abrupt changes. Walkways should be a minimum of 4' wide for two people to comfortably pass each other, but preferably 8-15' wide in more highly trafficked areas.



Source: Arterial

Bicycle Lanes

At minimum, bicycle lanes should be clearly marked with thermoplastic roadway striping. Bicycle lanes should be 5-6' wide and separated from motorists on roadways with higher vehicle volumes and speeds. Buffers can be painted, planted, utilize street parking or utilize flexible delineators. Bicycle lanes should be considered wherever multiple modes of transportation are expected, such as the train station. The 2024 AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities provides design options and details for a range of facility types.



Source: Arterial

Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements

Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements includes high-visibility crosswalks and lighting. Some crosswalk standards are too muted and not visible enough for high pedestrian areas. Continental crosswalks are recommended at most intersections because they are bold and last longer than traditional transverse crosswalks.



Source: Arterial

Pedestrian Scale Lighting

Providing adequate lighting is critical for pedestrian safety. Pedestrian lights should be dark sky compliant, should avoid shining into residences, and should be located at all crosswalks as well as every 50-75' in areas where pedestrians will be in the evening, including near retail and the train station. Light poles can be decorated with banners or hanging flower baskets to emphasize that pedestrians are priority.



Source: Arterial

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB)

RRFBs flash lights when activated to increase visibility of pedestrians at crosswalks to motorists. The Township of Mahwah received an SS4A grant in 2023 for the installation of two RRFBs within the Station Area. The anticipated locations are along East Ramapo Avenue at the South Railroad Avenue intersection and the Scherer Place intersection.



Source: Arterial

Tabled Roadways, Intersections and Crossings

Additional safety measures not mentioned by the FHWA are tabled roadways, intersections and crossings (tabled means that the grade is raised to be flush with sidewalks, rather than sidewalks being lowered to be flush with roads). Tabled roadways, intersections and crossings bring motorists up to the pedestrian level. These traffic calming measures slow down traffic and increase visibility for pedestrians. Tabled roadways, intersections and crossings should be considered in areas with high pedestrian traffic volumes, such as near the train station.

Uniform Materials Palette

The streetscape materials palette should aim to honor Mahwah's rich history and traditional aesthetic, particularly in the area surrounding the historic train station. Drawing inspiration from Mahwah's past, the materials should reflect the Township's early roots as a transportation hub and its connection to the local industries of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Traditional elements such as brick, natural stone, wrought iron, and wood should be incorporated, mirroring the architectural heritage of the train station and surrounding buildings. The use of these materials will evoke the timeless charm of Mahwah's early settlement, while ensuring durability and functionality for modern use. Notable historical references, like the station's original 19th-century design, should inspire the palette, maintaining the integrity and character of this important cultural landmark.

The palette should be durable and easily maintained while respecting the Township's historical and aesthetic context. The ground plane should be constructed with classic, natural, and durable materials, including tinted concrete, clay brick or natural stone. This combination will evoke the historical character of Mahwah, grounding the design in the Township's past while providing a robust and practical foundation for everyday use.



SPECIALTY PAVEMENT IN UNION, NJ

Source: Arterial



STREET FURNITURE IN UNION, NJ

Source: Arterial



EXAMPLE OF A UNIFIED STREETSCAPE PALETTE: STUYVESANT AVENUE - UNION, NJ

The furniture style should reflect the Township's heritage by using natural materials such as wood, metal, and stone, ensuring a balance between tradition, durability, and ease of maintenance. A variety of seating types should be provided to encourage social interaction. Where comfort or sitting for longer periods of time are a priority, benches with backs should be provided. This is especially important for older residents or others who may benefit from more supportive seating. Single seat "cube" style benches can be used in areas where shorter term gathering and socializing are expected.

Bicycle racks should be placed at key corners, mid-block locations, building entrances and at the train station to encourage cycling and provide secure parking.

Trash receptacles should be located strategically, particularly near high-traffic areas like convenience stores, cafes, and restaurants, with regular intervals of about 100 feet to ensure cleanliness.

A thoughtfully integrated palette will create a functional, aesthetically pleasing environment that honors Mahwah's historic roots while meeting the needs of the modern community.

Wayfinding Signs: Enhancing Mobility and Promoting Sustainable Transportation

Wayfinding signage plays a critical role in guiding pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers through downtown Mahwah, especially around the Mahwah Train Station. Properly designed and strategically placed signs can enhance walkability, encourage cycling, and improve the overall transportation experience. Clear and intuitive wayfinding not only helps visitors and residents navigate the area more effectively, but also fosters a sense of place, strengthens the local economy, and supports the goal of reducing car dependency.

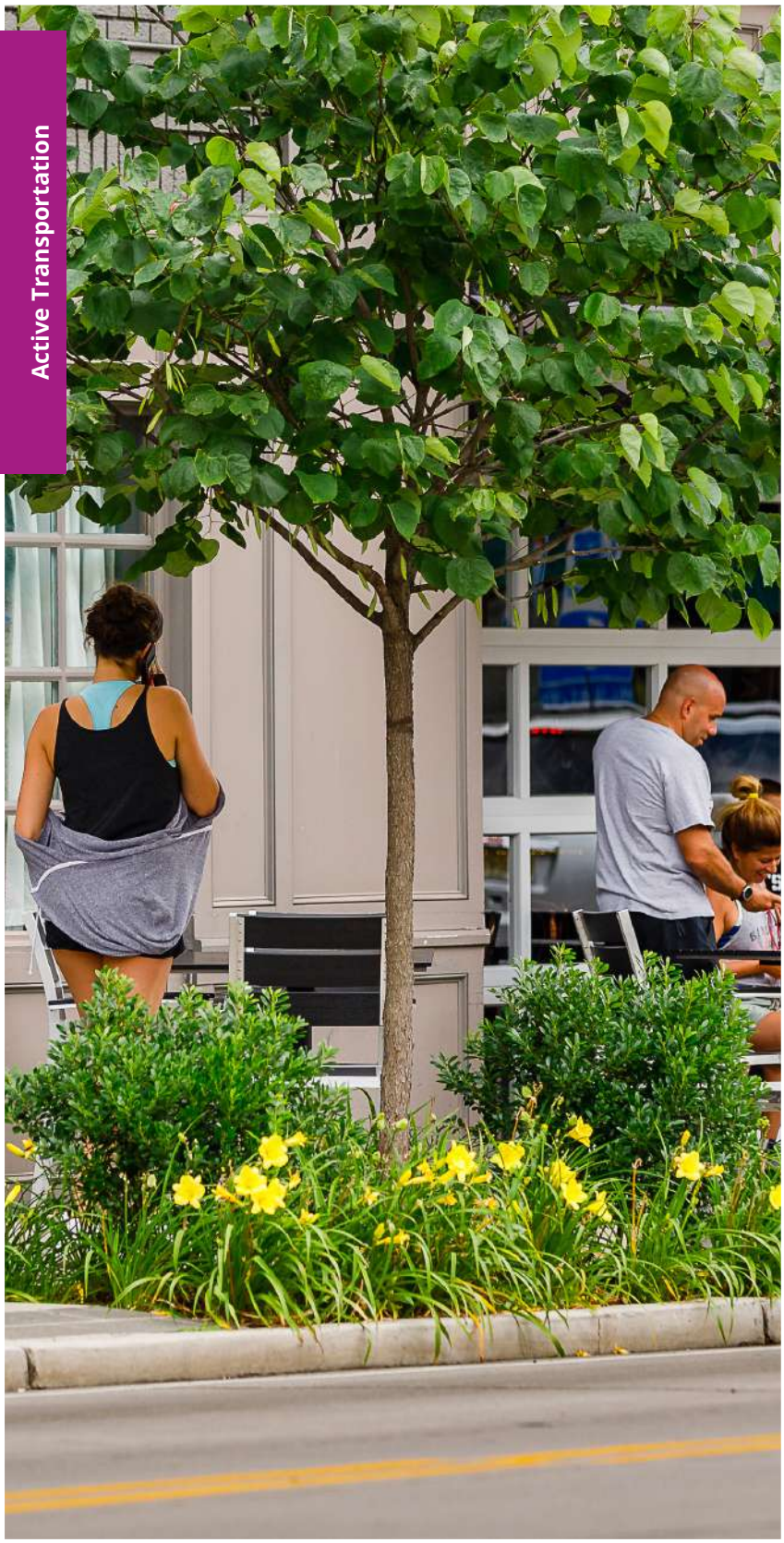
Recommendations:

- **Design Consistency and Local Character:** The fonts, colors, form, and size of wayfinding signs should reflect Mahwah's unique character and align with the town's historical and traditional aesthetic, especially around the train station area. The design should establish a clear visual hierarchy to guide users effectively.
- **MUTCD Compliance and Strategic Placement:** Signs should adhere to the standards set by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) and be placed along primary circulation routes like Franklin Turnpike and Ramapo Avenue. Focus should be on key destinations, parking areas, and access points that lead to the train station and nearby services.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Focus:** Wayfinding signs should cater to pedestrians and cyclists, highlighting walking and biking routes to the train station. Incorporating walking times rather than just distances makes the signage more relatable and actionable, particularly for those considering walking or biking as a feasible transportation option.
- **Encouraging Sustainable Transportation Choices:** Clear directional signs should emphasize pedestrian and bicycle routes to the train station, promoting these eco-friendly transportation modes over driving. By providing visible cues, walking and cycling routes are made as appealing and straightforward as driving, contributing to reduced traffic congestion around the station.
- **Minimizing Visual Clutter:** Regulatory signs, such as parking or traffic regulations, should be grouped together on single poles. This reduces visual clutter and ensures wayfinding signs stand out clearly, offering a cleaner and more cohesive streetscape.
- **Highlighting Key Destinations:** Wayfinding signage should not only point to the train station but also highlight other key destinations within the downtown area, as well as regional destinations when appropriate. This supports the idea of the train station as a central hub, connecting Mahwah to the broader region.
- **Clear and Simple Maps:** Maps should be provided at key locations such as kiosks and street corners, with varying scales to show both local and regional destinations. Maps should be designed for simplicity and readability. Consideration should be given to digital or interactive maps, if feasible, to engage users with up-to-date information while ensuring they are easy to maintain.



WAYFINDING EXAMPLE

Source: Arterial





STREET TREE, INFILTRATION PLANTER, RAIN GARDEN



Source: Arterial

Street Trees & Green Infrastructure

A Street Tree and Green Infrastructure Strategy that guides the implementation of Green Infrastructure should be developed with the Environmental Commission. The strategy should then identify practical goals and defined steps to ensure that shade trees are planted, maintained and monitored over time. This commitment to healthy trees represents a long-term investment in the beauty, biodiversity and character of Mahwah. The strategy should include a study that analyzes:

- Gaps in canopy coverage
- Species diversity
- Tree sizes (diameter at breast height - DBH)
- Historically significant tree stands
- Grow space and condition

This study should then offer guidance on selective removal of trees and the number, species, size, location and methods for planting trees over the next 5-10 years.

A green infrastructure strategy should be established that determines the appropriate location for these interventions, and provides an approved plant palette within the context of a general set of guidelines. As part of that strategy, it is recommended that all existing storm sewers/inlets are identified as potential locations for green infrastructure, enhancing stormwater resilience and making streets more attractive. Finally, a maintenance program should be formed to ensure adequate care. This strategy should also be developed with the Environmental Commission.

STATION AREA ACCESS & PUBLIC SPACE

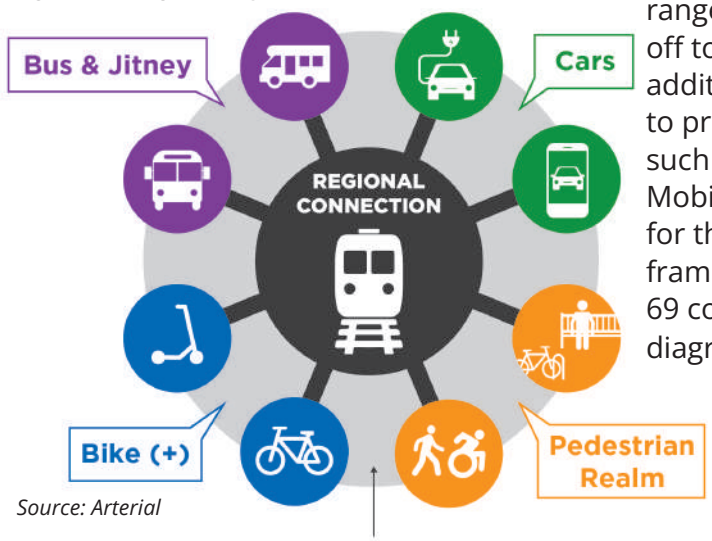
Mobility Hub

The "first/last mile" connection refers to the initial and final segments of a journey in public transportation. It describes the distance from a person's home or destination to the nearest transit station or stop. The first mile involves getting from your starting point to a transit hub, while the last mile is the distance from the transit hub to your final destination.

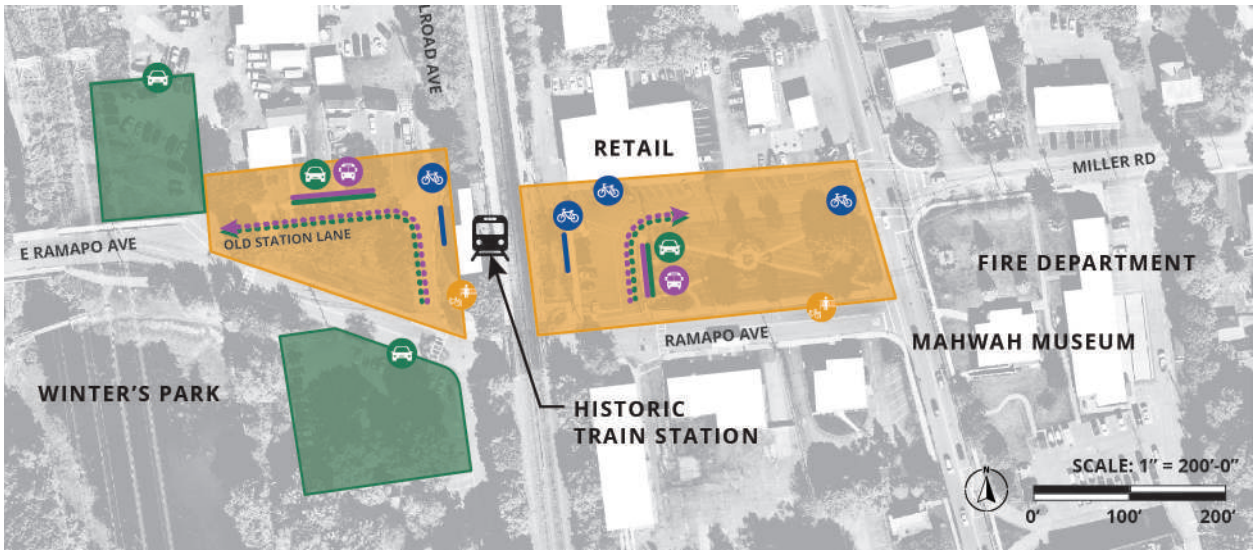
These connections are crucial because they often influence the convenience and accessibility of using public transport. Effective solutions for first/last mile connectivity can help improve the overall transit experience.

In support of The Mahwah Township Master Plan, this plan seeks to improve transportation options and reduce dependency on automobile transport. In order to achieve this goal, the station area should be designed as a "Mobility Hub" that offers the amenities that support first/last mile connections. These amenities range from bicycle parking and car drop-off to Jitney shelters and car parking. In addition, the amenities should be allocated to prioritize the most vulnerable users such as pedestrians and cyclists. The Mobility Hub diagram serves as a legend for the following map and the colored frames surrounding the photos on page 69 correspond with the icon colors in the diagram.

MOBILITY HUB DIAGRAM



Source: Arterial



Map 4.10: First/Last Mile Amenity Locations

Source: Arterial



CAR SHARE/JITNEY DROP OFF
Source: Shade Comforts



SHARED STREETS
Source: Arterial



BICYCLE PARKING/STORAGE
Source: Arterial



SEATING AREAS
Source: Arterial



WIDE SIDEWALKS
Source: Arterial



WAYFINDING
Source: Arterial

Public Space

Vibrant public spaces and plazas are essential to the vitality of downtowns and areas near train stations, serving as key gathering points that enhance both social interaction and economic activity. These spaces create welcoming environments where people can linger, meet friends, or simply enjoy the surroundings, making the district feel alive and inviting throughout the day. In transit-oriented locations, plazas near the train stations provide natural waiting areas and smooth the transition between travel and local activity, encouraging commuters and visitors to explore nearby shops, restaurants, and services. By supporting a mix of uses - such as seating, shade, public art, and performances - well-designed public spaces help establish a strong sense of place and community identity, which in turn increases foot traffic and fosters investment in the area.

Mahwah's Station Area is home to a variety of public spaces, each offering distinct recreational and passive uses. Winter's Park serves as the area's primary active recreational space, with sports fields and a playground that draw families and youth. Lisa DiGuilio Tranquility Park and Veterans Memorial Park provide smaller, passive environments, each framed by surrounding streets and enhanced with landscaping, seating, and contemplative elements. The Mahwah Museum also contributes to the public realm with its expansive front lawn, which offers potential for community use and gathering.

While each of these spaces offers value on its own, they currently exist as isolated pockets without clear connections between them. By creating a cohesive network that links these assets - especially across the railroad tracks - the Station Area can be transformed into a more vibrant and walkable district. Strengthening these connections would unlock the full potential of the area, where the collective impact of the parks and public spaces would be far greater than the sum of their parts.

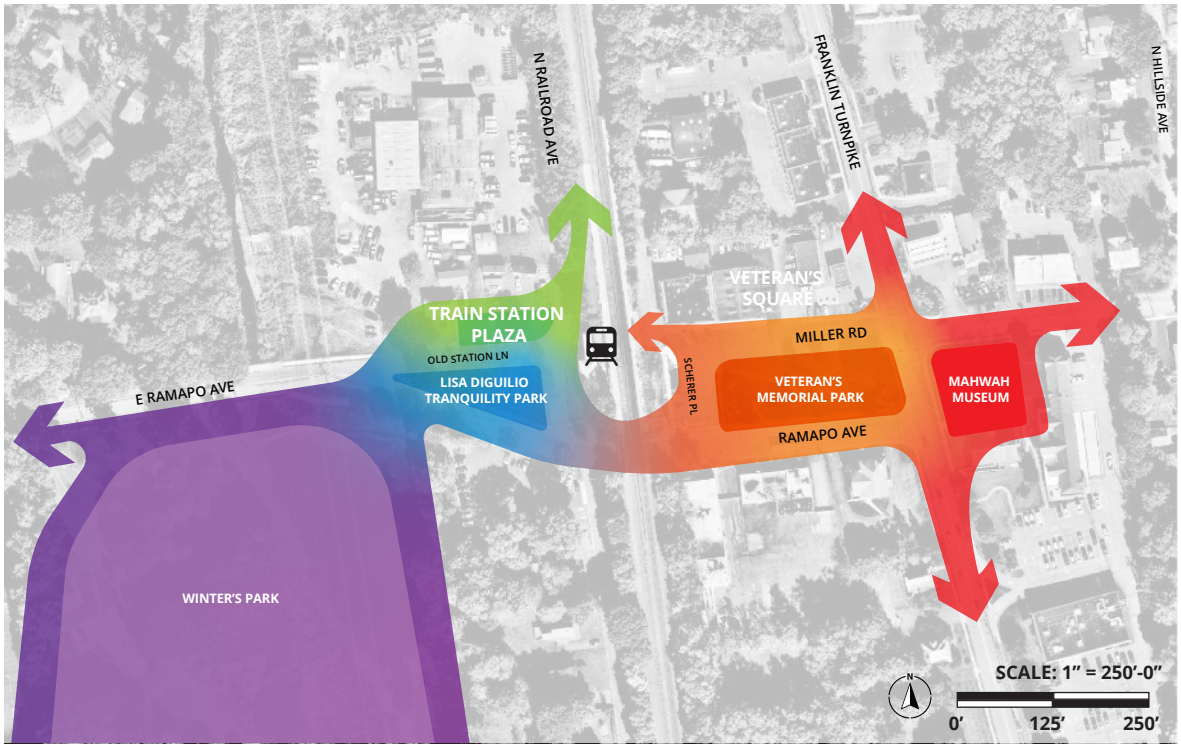
General Recommendations:

- Create a visual connection between the various public spaces through the use of wayfinding, a consistent furniture and materials palette, wide sidewalks and crossings and other visual cues.
- Install tabled intersections and crossings to expand the existing public spaces and enhance the pedestrian connections between them.
- Install pedestrian and bicycle amenities throughout the Station Area to encourage activity.

The images on page 71 illustrate these recommendations.



EXISTING PUBLIC SPACES



PROPOSED PUBLIC SPACE NETWORK

Source: Arterial

The Vision Plan

Circulation and Access

Vehicular circulation is organized as one-way for ease of drop-off/pick-up and wider sidewalks and pedestrian space.

On the west side of the train station, N. Railroad Avenue is one-way northbound from Ramapo Avenue to Old Station Lane. On the east side of the train station, both Scherer Place between Ramapo Avenue and Miller Road, and Miller Road between Scherer Place and Franklin Turnpike, consist of two travel lanes and parking.

Circulation and Access Recommendations:

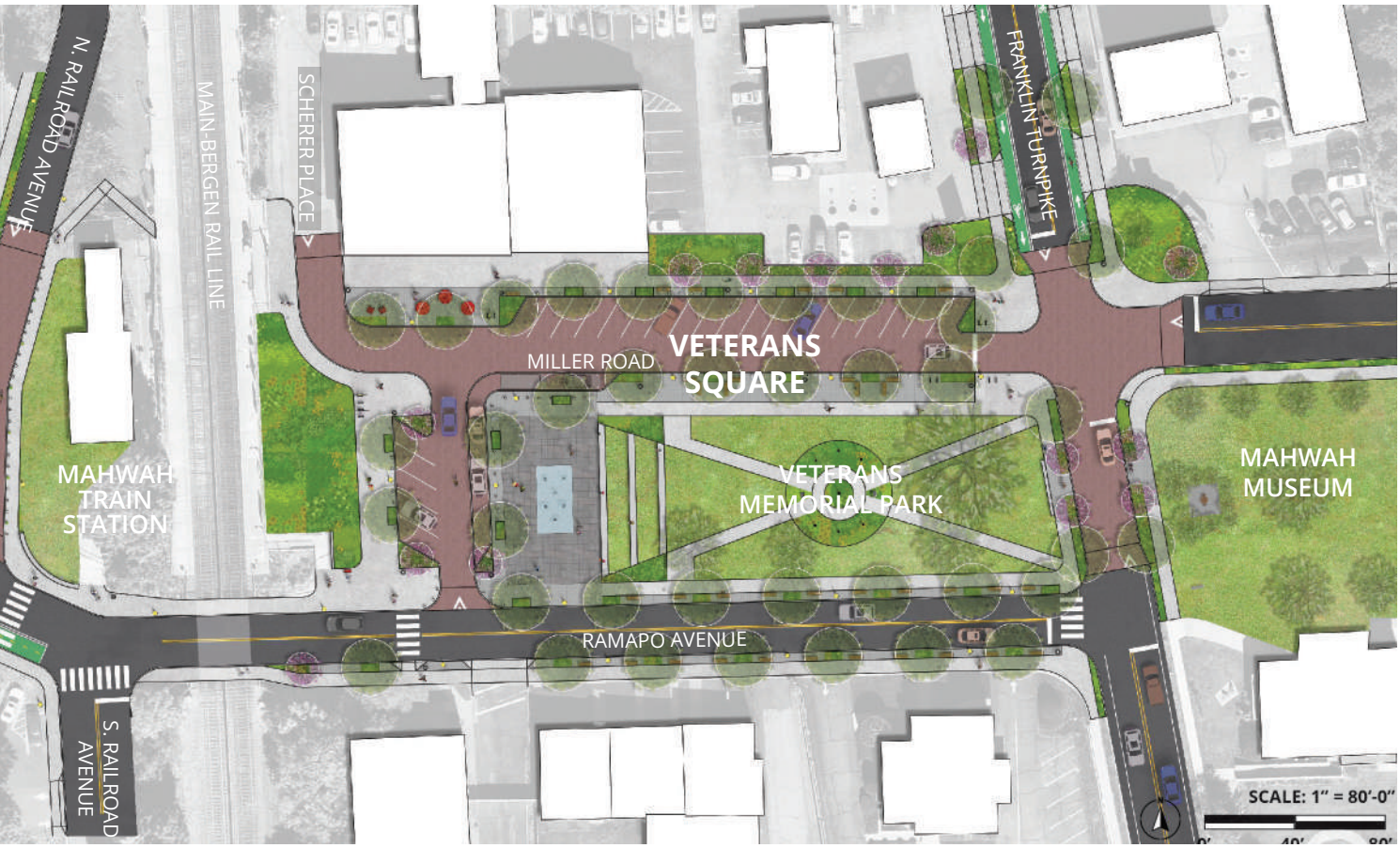
- Reconstruct Old Station Lane as a one-way street with traffic circulating counterclockwise.
- Reconstruct Old Station Lane, Scherer Place, and Miller Road from Ramapo Avenue to Franklin Turnpike as one-way streets to create drop-off/pick-up loops for commuters and visitors.
- Table the streets immediately surrounding the train station to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists.
- Install new ramps leading to the station platforms to improve access.
- Raise the grade of the Miller Rd. and Franklin Tpk. intersection so it is flush with the sidewalk to improve safety for pedestrians and connect Veterans Square to the Mahwah Museum.
- Close the driveway on Miller Road connecting to the gas station to provide a continuous sidewalk and a more comfortable pedestrian experience.



First/Last Mile

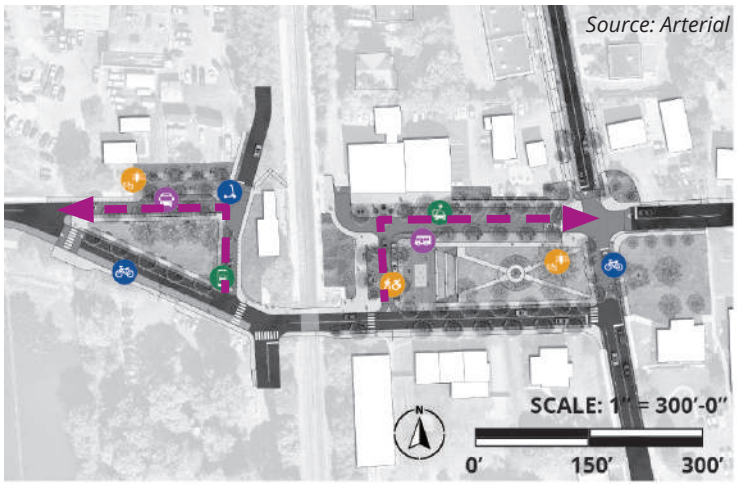
To improve first/last mile connections in the station area, a mobility hub is proposed. As discussed on page 68, mobility hubs make switching between walking, biking, driving, and transit more effortless, comfortable, and safe.

The space outside the train station does not have facilities for each of these 'last mile' modes and nearby surface parking lots, on-street parking, and travel lanes are poorly organized. There is no dedicated drop-off zone, encouraging drivers to idle and stop wherever it's convenient to pick up and drop off passengers. The Access Transportation van does not have a designated drop-off or pick-up zone and neither the shuttle nor bus stops nearby have modern bus stop amenities. There is no bicycle parking at the train station and no supportive bike amenities.



Source: Arterial

The Mahwah train station area does not accommodate as many transportation modes as it could. Each mode should be well organized and provide modern amenities to users. The following amenities should be considered for each mode.



CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

LEGEND

Pedestrian Realm

Bus & Jitney

Bike (+)

Cars

First/Last Mile Recommendations:

- Explore feasibility of bicycle facilities along Ramapo Avenue and Franklin Turnpike (in partnership with Bergen County) in accordance with AASHTO's 2024 Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.
- Install a new plaza adjacent to the Historic Train Station museum.
- Install driveway aprons at driveways to close the gaps in the sidewalk network.
- Install pedestrian scale lighting.

STATION AREA ACCESS & PUBLIC SPACE

The following renderings articulate a vision of what the eastern portion of the Study Area may look like if the recommended improvements are developed.

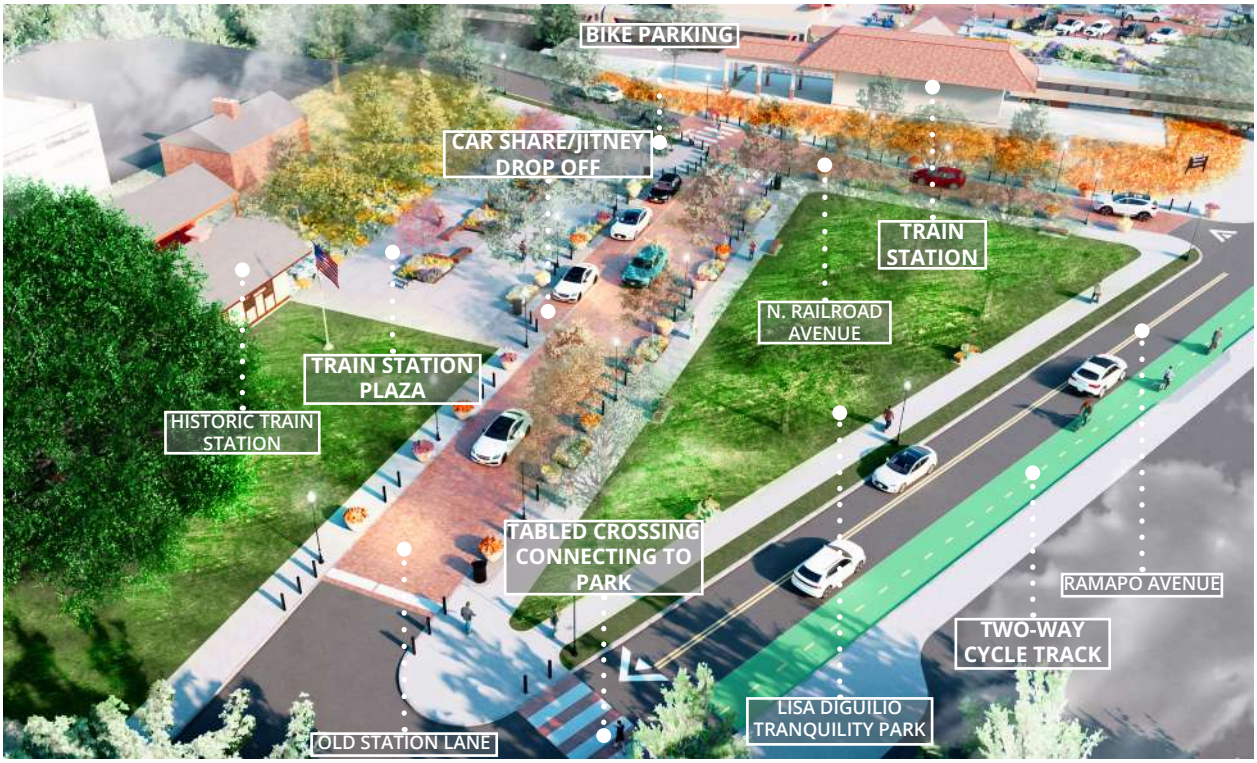


VIEW OF VETERANS SQUARE AT MAHWAH STATION



VIEW OF VETERANS SQUARE AT MAHWAH STATION

The following renderings articulate a vision of what the western portion of the Study Area may look like if the recommended improvements are developed.



VIEW OF TRAIN STATION PLAZA AT MAHWAH STATION



VIEW OF TRAIN STATION PLAZA AT MAHWAH STATION

Source: Arterial

Department of Public Works Redevelopment Site

1. Concept 1: The lowest density scenario
2. Concept 2: A medium density scenario
3. Concept 3A and 3B: Two higher density scenarios



Department of Public Works Redevelopment Site

During the initial stages of the study, the Township identified the existing Department of Public Works (DPW) site as the location for the proposed redevelopment alternatives. The Township plans to move the DPW to a new facility on Micik Lane.

The DPW site encompasses Lots 29, 30, 31, and 38 within Block 58, containing a total land area of 8.94 acres, of which 65% is unimproved. The portion that is recommended for redevelopment is indicated in the image on the following page.

This plan outlines three development "concepts", varying in density, for the Department of Public Works (DPW) site. These concepts range from 5 to 21 dwelling units per acre, utilizing different housing types, including stacked townhouses, walk-up apartments, and elevator apartments. Key constraints included maintaining space for existing public amenities, including the Station parking lot, Old Mahwah Station Museum, and the public recycling center.

The concept plans are preceded by general design guidelines that apply to each concept and an economic analysis of the proposed concepts follows. For additional information regarding the Redevelopment process (pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq), see page 98.



Map 4.11: Department of Public Works Site

General Design Guidelines

- Development is concentrated on Lots 29, 30, and the southernmost portion of Lot 38 (see Map 4.11 on page 77).
- Pedestrian safety and access is enhanced by repaving Old Station Lane and South Railroad Avenue in a manner that is visually distinct from other streets.
- Complete sidewalk network along the edges of the site, including missing portions along Old Station Lane, though not including the edges of Lots 31 and 38.
- Recommended developments take the proximate flood hazard area into account.
- Each concept contains dedicated retail space that is accessible by the public and covenient for users of the station.
- Parking should be located toward the rear of the site and screened with landscaping, opaque fences or walls, or within a building.
- Street parking should maintain adequate bump-outs for pedestrians at street corners and utilize plantings for green separation between sidewalk and parking area.
- Tuck-under parking should only be permitted along sides of buildings that do not face a public street.
- At-grade platform parking should prioritize screening or more active uses adjacent to the street.

Housing and Building Types



TOWNHOUSES *Source: Bright MLS*



WALK-UP *Source: Market Square Architects*



ELEVATOR *Source: Russo Development*



COMMUNITY CENTER *Source: Madison Arts Center*

Housing and Building Types

- **Townhouses/Stacked Townhouses** achieve higher density than single-family detached dwellings while minimizing change from existing lower density housing.
- **Walk-up Apartment Buildings** achieve higher density while keeping total building height to approximately 35 - 45 feet, slightly larger than a single-family detached dwelling and smaller than an elevator apartment building.
- **Elevator Apartments Buildings** effectively increase density near transit. Architectural design, including setbacks and facade detailing, can mitigate the perceived massing at street level.
- **A Community Center Building** would be available to the public and ideally funded by the redeveloper. This would provide indoor recreational space in Mahwah.

Parking Types

- **Surface Parking** should be tucked toward the back of the site and screened with landscaping or architectural elements, so the impact on the streetwall/sidewalk experience is minimized
- **Street Parking** should maintain adequate bump-outs for pedestrians at street corners and utilize plantings for green separation between sidewalk and parking area
- **Open Tuck-Under Parking** should be located along the backsides of buildings and not at the expense of the active pedestrian frontages
- **Structured Parking** should prioritize screening or active uses along street level for pedestrian experience.

Parking Types



SURFACE PARKING
Source: Better Town Toolkit



STREET PARKING WITH PLANTED BUMPOUTS
Source: NACTO



OPEN TUCK-UNDER
Source: Better Town Toolkit



STRUCTURED WITH ACTIVE EXTERIOR
Source: Epic Management

Redevelopment Alternative Concept #1

Concept 1 is the lowest density scenario at 5.1 du/acre. The envisioned design assumes that the existing station parking, recycling facility, and museum remain unchanged.

Housing Type

The housing type consists of two-story stacked townhouses. The townhouses feature pitched roofs to complement the surrounding residential context and architectural style. This concept provides an estimated **46 units.**

Parking Type(s)

Parking is positioned at the rear of buildings to screen automobiles from public view, prioritizing the more attractive building facades. Additional resident parking is provided by a row of screened spaces along the west side of the lot and parallel "street" parking around the courtyard. The concept includes **55 residential parking spaces**.

Layout

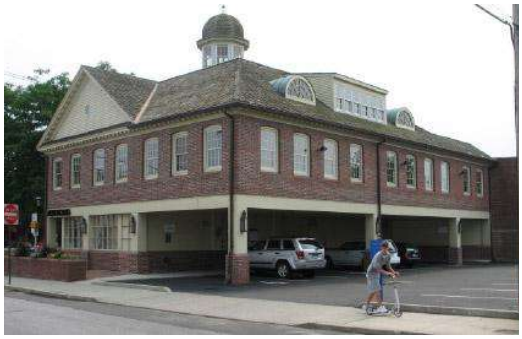
An internal driveway functions like a street, providing access to the development from East Ramapo Avenue and North Railroad Avenue. The internal driveway defines a central courtyard, around which two-story stacked townhouses are arranged.

Retail

2,400 square feet of retail storefront space is located in the building that fronts along the existing station parking area.



TOWNHOUSES



OPEN TUCK-UNDER PARKING



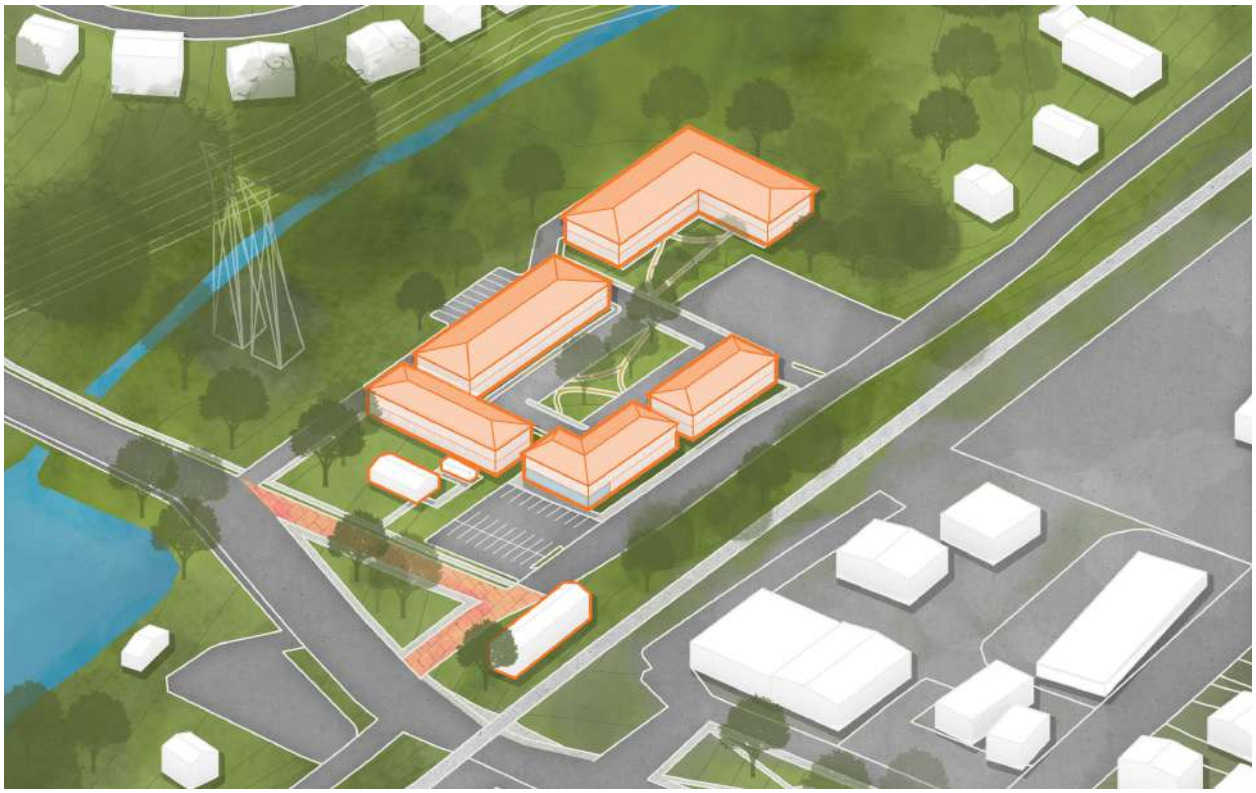
STREET PARKING WITH PLANTED BUMPOUTS



SURFACE PARKING WITH SCREENING



PLAN VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT #1



AXONOMETRIC VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT #1

Redevelopment Alternative Concept #2

Concept 2 is a medium-density layout of 9.7 du/acre. This design assumes that the Old Station Museum remains in place, but the station parking and recycling drop-off facility are relocated on the site.

Housing Type

The housing type consists of four walk-up apartment buildings and residential units above the community center. Pitched roofs are used to complement existing architectural context. At an average of 3.5 stories, this concept yields approximately **87 dwelling units**. Massing along North Railroad Avenue is narrower and shorter to respect the existing context.

Parking Type(s)

Parking is positioned at the rear of buildings to screen automobiles from public view, combining tuck-under, surface, and "street" parking for a total of **96 parking spaces**.

Layout

Residences extend along North Railroad Avenue in four separate buildings. The recycling drop-off and station parking are relocated to the western portion of the site with access on East Ramapo Avenue. The site is accessible from North Railroad Avenue via two curb cuts. Planted buffers screen surface parking lots. Station parking is reconfigured into five parallel spaces adjacent to the station, ten spaces behind the museum, and a 15-space lot on the western edge, maintaining 30 spaces.

Retail and Community Center

A mixed-use building containing **2,400 square feet of retail**, a public **3,000 square foot community center**, and apartments is located in the southeast corner of the site.



WALK-UP APARTMENTS



OPEN TUCK-UNDER PARKING



COMMUNITY CENTER



STREET PARKING WITH PLANTED BUMPOUTS



SURFACE PARKING WITH SCREENING



PLAN VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT#2



AXONOMETRIC VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT#2

Redevelopment Alternative Concept #3A

Concept 3A and 3B share the same layout and footprint. The concepts vary in density and resulting parking: 14 dwelling units per acre (3A) and 21 dwelling units per acre (3B). They rearrange the existing recycling center and station parking, as was done in Concept 2, but shifted slightly eastward along with the internal drive.



Housing Type

Concept 3A is an elevator apartment building with an average height of five (5) stories with platform podium parking across the entire ground floor of the building. The courtyard is elevated to the second floor, above parking. This design would yield approximately **125 dwelling units**.



Parking Type(s)

Parking consists of platform podium parking internal to the building within which are **137 parking spaces**.



Layout

Residences are housed in a single apartment building surrounding a courtyard. Additional units are proposed on the upper floors of the community center/ retail mixed-use building. The building is set back more than 100 feet from East Ramapo Avenue to minimize visual impact. Podium parking is wrapped by the building exterior, making it indistinguishable from the rest of the building. Architectural stepbacks are used along upper floors to minimize the massing from street-level.

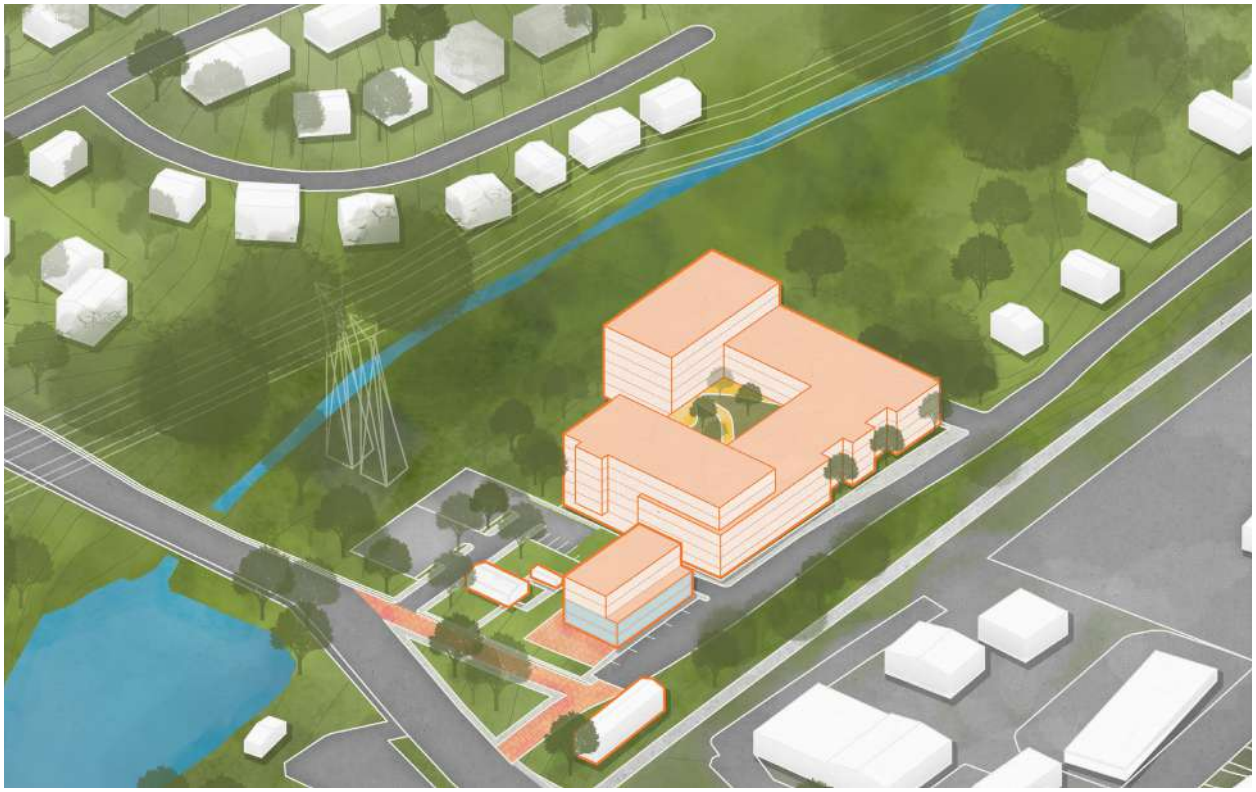


Retail and Community Center

A mixed-use building containing **2,400 square feet of retail**, a public **3,000 square foot community center**, and apartments is located in the southeast corner of the site.



PLAN VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT#3A



AXONOMETRIC VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT#3A

Redevelopment Alternative Concept #3B

Concept 3A and 3B share the same layout and footprint. The concepts vary in density and resulting parking: 14 dwelling units per acre (3A) and 21 dwelling units per acre (3B). They rearrange the existing recycling center and Station parking, as was done in Concept 2, but shifted slightly eastward along with the internal drive.



Housing Type

Concept 3B is an elevator apartment building with an average height of seven (7) stories. The courtyard is elevated to the second floor, above parking. This design would yield approximately **188 dwelling units**. Additional parking is located in a surface lot.



Parking Type(s)

Parking consists of **188 spaces of platform podium parking** internal to the building and screened surface lot parking.



Layout

Residences are housed in a single apartment building surrounding a courtyard. Additional units are proposed on the upper floors of the community center/ retail mixed-use building. The building is set back more than 100 feet from East Ramapo Avenue to minimize visual impact. Podium parking is wrapped by the building exterior, making it indistinguishable from the rest of the building. Architectural stepbacks are used along upper floors to minimize the massing from street-level.



Retail and Community Center

A mixed-use building containing **2,400 square feet of retail**, a public **3,000 square foot community center**, and apartments is located in the southeast corner of the site.



PLAN VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT #3B



AXONOMETRIC VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT #3B

Economic Analysis

The proposed redevelopment is anticipated to have a positive economic effect on the station area, Mahwah Township, and the region generally, particularly as measured against an environment where housing prices continue to rise.



Housing Prices Continue to Rise

Between 2004 and 2024, the typical home value in Mahwah increased from $377,000 to approximately $620,000. This represents an increase of $243,000 or an appreciation rate of 55% in two decades. This is visualized in Graph 1 on page 89.

Rents have also increased steadily over time by approximately 54%. This trend accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is visualized in Graph 2 on page 89.

As home values and rents increased, vacancy rates have dropped, as indicated in Graphs 3 and 4 on page 89. This indicates that the demand for homes in the area has exceeded the available supply, contributing to appreciation and higher rents.



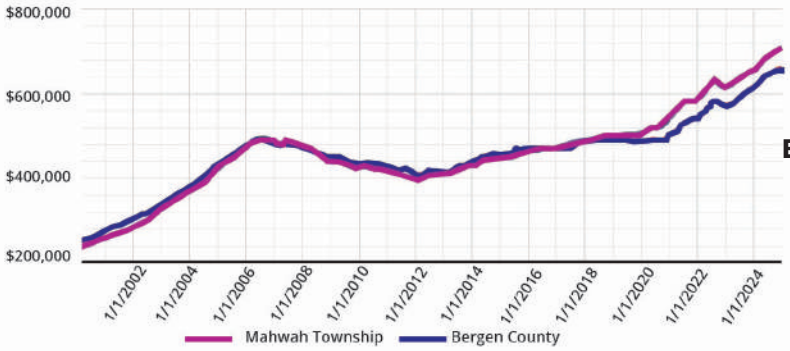
Economic Impact

The economic impact of the proposed development concepts is measured using four metrics: potential number of jobs created, labor earnings, gross domestic product, and local tax revenue generated from the proposals. The range of potential impacts is indicated to the right. Ranges are determined using the lowest estimate (Concept 1) and the highest estimate (Concept 3B).

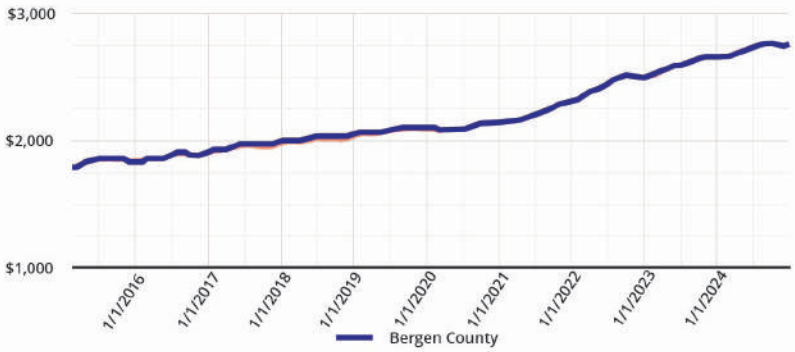
- **Jobs created**: 229 – 1,298
- **Labor earnings**: $14,008,148 - $79,367,931
- **Gross domestic product**: $50,697,800 - $287,228,649
- **Local Tax Revenue Generation**: $483,678 - $2,593,003

Additional information, including the estimated impact of each concept, and an explanation as to how the estimations were calculated, is included in Appendix D.

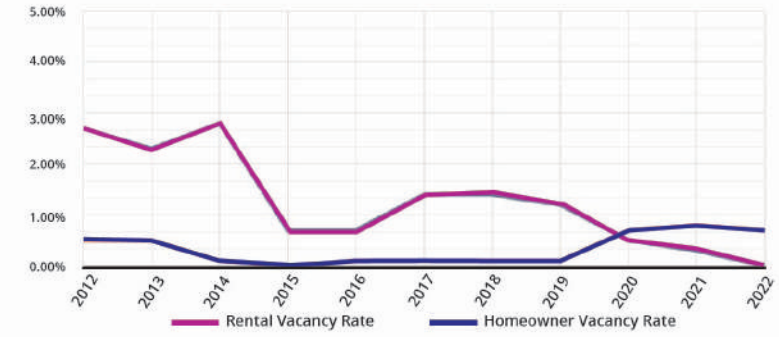
HOUSING MARKET TRENDS SHOW DEMAND FOR HOUSING IN MAHWAH



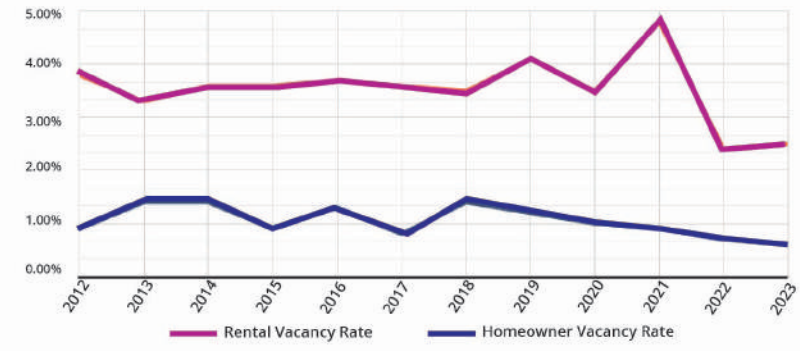
GRAPH 1: TYPICAL HOME VALUES BY YEAR IN MAHWAH AND BERGEN COUNTY (2002 - 2024)



GRAPH 2: TYPICAL OBSERVED RENTS BY YEAR IN BERGEN COUNTY (2015 - 2024)



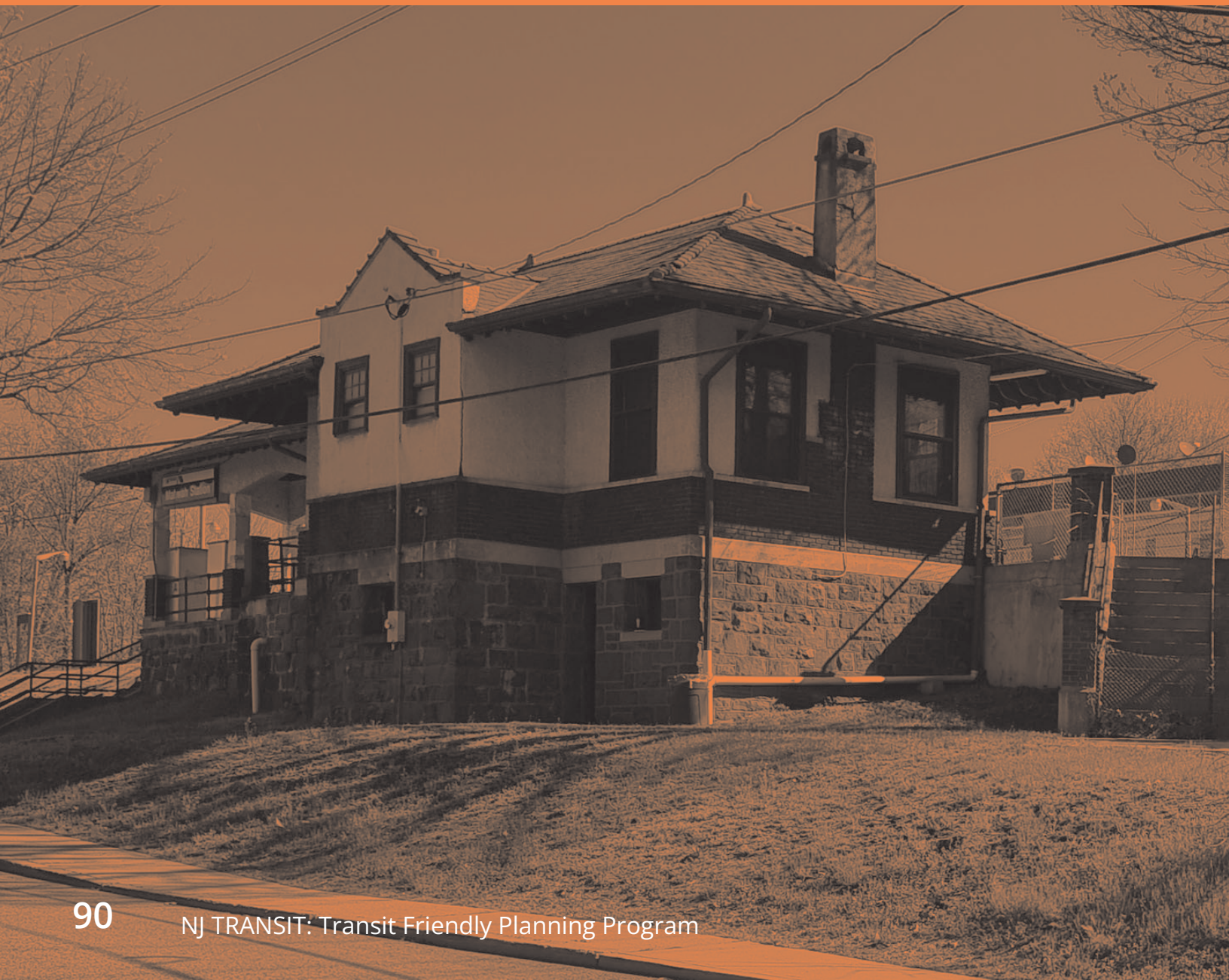
GRAPH 3: MAHWAH'S VACANCY RATES BY YEAR (2012 - 2022)



GRAPH 4: BERGEN COUNTY VACANCY RATES BY YEAR (2012 - 2022)

Zoning and Land Use Policy Recommendations:

1. Transit-Oriented Development Overlay Zone
2. Redevelopment
3. Highlands Center Designation



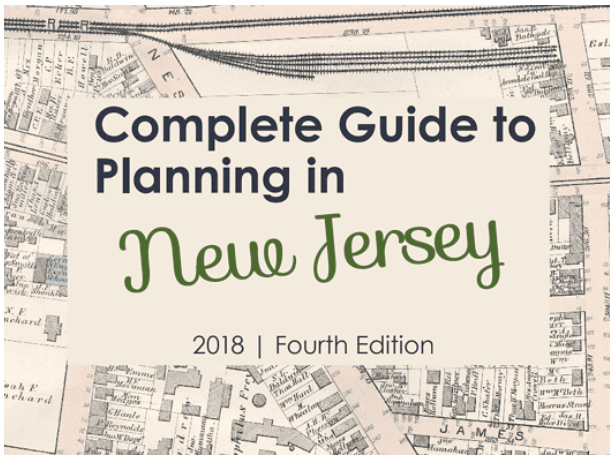
Transit Development Overlay Zone

This Transit Development Overlay Zone is a recommendation designed to align development within the zone boundaries according to TOD principles. Like other zoning districts in Mahwah Township, the overlay zone[1] contains permitted principal uses, accessory uses, prohibited uses, and bulk standards. It may also have additional standards, including permitted conditional uses, and specific design standards relating to elements such as lighting, building design, landscaping, parking, signs, etc.

The overlay recommendation was chosen over a rezoning to provide opportunity for TOD while giving residents and elected officials the freedom to guide development in the manner best suiting the community based on market conditions. The success of TOD is not only determined by the proposed regulatory framework, but by the active interest and promotion of TOD by leadership coupled with public reception. Additionally, the overlay preserves the permitted use status under current zoning. This method of implementing TOD has been successful in other parts of New Jersey and provides the additional benefit of maintaining existing regulations for property owners. The flexible approach of the overlay zone is an effective strategy for TOD that gives agency to the community and leadership.

A framework for an ordinance for the overlay zone is included, as well as instructions for implementation. The framework includes a purpose, general instruction, and zoning elements as indicated herein.

Purpose: The purpose of this Mahwah Station Overlay Zoning District is to foster Transit Oriented Development in the Mahwah Station Area, a quarter-mile radius around Mahwah Station.



THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO PLANNING IN NEW JERSEY

Source: APANJ

General Instruction: The Mahwah Station Overlay Zoning District enhances the underlying zoning districts and provides additional land development options. Underlying zoning regulations are still applicable. Permitted uses in the Overlay District are required to conform with the Overlay District area, bulk, and yard requirements. Permitted principle uses in the underlying zones that are not permitted in the overlay zone are not eligible to utilize Mahwah Station Overlay Zoning District regulations. If a use is permitted in the overlay district and the underlying zone, those seeking zoning permits, Planning Board approval, or Zoning Board of Adjustment approval shall choose either the underlying zone requirements or the overlay zone requirements, but not both. Any deviation from the chosen standards shall require the appropriate statutory relief pursuant to the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law.

1 If the Township pursues New Jersey Transit Village Designation (see page 101 for more information regarding the Transit Village program), a change to the underlying zoning is required and an overlay zone would not qualify.

Map 4.12: Township of Mahwah Overlay Zoning



LEGEND

- Study Area
- Mahwah Train Station
- Transit - Oriented Overlay Zone
- R-15 Single - Family Residential
- R-5 Single - Family Residential
- R-10 Single - Family Residential
- GA-200 Garden Apartment
- BRZ Block 82 Redevelopment
- P-OS Public Open Space
- B-10 Neighborhood Business
- B-12 General Business
- CEM Cemetery
- GI-80 General Industry
- ED Education

Source: RPA and Mahwah Township Zoning Map

Permitted Principal Uses: Permitted principal uses should be determined by the public through community feedback and those that the Council and Planning Board determine are appropriate for the area. Recommend uses include:

- Residential uses, including: single-family detached and semidetached, two-family detached and semidetached, triplex, quadruplex, townhouse, multifamily, and garden apartment as defined in §24-1.5. It is recommended that the code define "Stacked Townhouses" and consider permitting them by right in the overlay district.
- Food and beverage uses such as restaurants and take out restaurants, both of which are defined in §24-1.5 of the Township's Land Development Ordinance. Other uses the Township may wish to permit that are not defined include: bar or tavern, brewery (in its various forms licensed by the State of New Jersey) and similar uses (such as distilleries and meaderies), and cafes.
- Commercial uses such as animal hospitals, auction houses, finance, insurance, and real estate offices, fitness and health clubs, health and wellness centers, health care facilities, places of assembly, and recreation facilities as defined in §24-1.5.
- Retail sales, retail service, and convenience stores, as defined in §24-1.5.
- Essential public facilities, essential services, critical land uses, licensed child care centers, and educational uses as defined in §24-1.5.
- Structured parking as a principal use.
- Any combination of permitted uses should be permitted within one building, multiple buildings, on one lot, or on multiple lots. The Township may wish to limit residential apartments to being above the ground floor of a mixed-use building, or in the rear portion of the ground floor of a mixed-use building to encourage more storefronts.

Permitted Accessory Uses:

- Accessory uses customarily incidental to a permitted principal use should be permitted in the overlay zone.
- Outdoor dining should be permitted in conjunction with permitted food and beverage uses. The standards in §24-4.29 for the MUD-1 Overlay District may provide a model for regulating outdoor dining in the Station Area Overlay Zone.

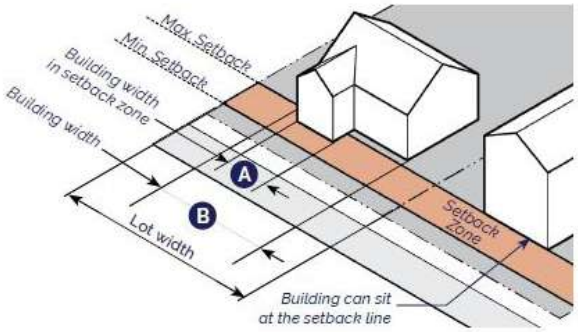
Prohibited Uses: All uses not expressly permitted are prohibited.

Area, Bulk and Yard Requirements:

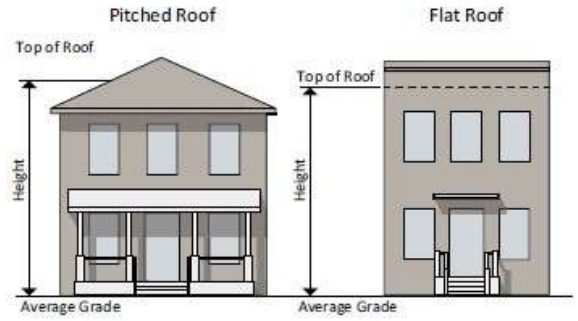


RECENTLY CONSTRUCTED TOWNHOUSES IN MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY
Source: Sharbell Development Corporation

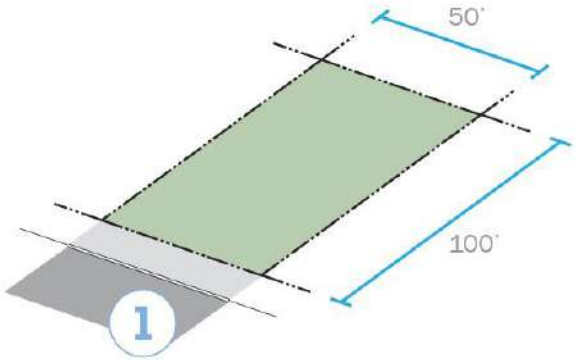
- Minimum Lot Area: Smaller minimum lot sizes lead to greater density. The Township should determine the density they desire, and base minimum lot size on the preferred density. For a traditional Town Center, a minimum of 2,500 sf. - 5,000 sf. may be appropriate. The Township may also determine that a sliding scale based on the use may determine the minimum lot size.
- Minimum Lot Width: See "minimum lot area" above.
- Minimum Lot Depth: See "minimum lot area" above.
- Maximum Lot Coverage: Lot coverage should be determined based on the desired intensity of development, tempered by environmental considerations. As discussed in the Existing Conditions Memorandum, due to the Township being within the Highlands Region, there are additional regulations limiting impervious coverage.
- Building Height: Building height should be commiserate with desired density and permitted uses. If mixed-use and multifamily development are desired, a maximum height of at least 45 feet and four stories is recommended, up to as high as 75 feet and seven stories.
- Front Yard Setback: Front yard setback should be determined based on the type of road the property fronts on. For roads like Franklin Turnpike, the setback should be 0 - 5 feet at a maximum. It may be slightly more restrictive on less active streets.
- Side Yard Setback: Side yard setbacks should be determined based on the desired density, though five feet, and a combined setback of 10 feet in aggregate may be appropriate.
- Rear Yard Setback: Rear yard setbacks



Source: South Bend, Indiana Zoning Ordinance



Source: Montgomery County, Maryland Department of Permitting Services



Source: New York City Zoning Handbook, 2018 Edition

should be based on adjacent uses and zones, with greater setbacks required when adjacent to residential uses and zones, and smaller ones when adjacent to commercial or industrial uses.

Design Standards: The Township may consider design standards for development within the overlay. One approach to design standards would be to catalog traditional architectural styles in the Township, or use an existing database such as the Historic Preservation Inventory, using the data to identify a common architectural style or styles emblematic of the Township. That can be translated into design standards for building treatments such as windows, doors, roof styles, lighting fixtures, color palettes, and more, ensuring that future development is stylistically characteristic of Mahwah, helping to foster a continued sense of place.

Lighting: The Township should consider lighting regulations specific to the overlay zone. Lightings standards should include:

- Pedestrian scale lighting with a maximum height of 14 feet.
- LED lighting with a color temperature between 2,700°K - 3,000°K.
- Downward focused, full-cutoff.
- Dark Sky Compliant

Additional Options: The following regulations may help craft desired land use regulations for the Study Area.

Bonuses: The Township may create bonuses for developers for things such as building height, density, coverage, etc. To obtain bonuses, developers may be required to build parks or other public amenities, provide stormwater mitigation infrastructure above what is required, or similar improvements.

Conditional Uses: The Township may be comfortable with certain uses only if conditions are met, such as landscape buffering. Conditional uses may allow for the development the Township wants while mitigating what it does not want.

Impervious Coverage: The Township may permit developers to exceed impervious coverage limits if the developer provides a green roof. One means of accomplishing this would be to allow a 1% increase permitted impervious coverage for every 2% of the site containing a green roof, up to an identified cap.



RANGE OF LIGHTING FROM THE WORST OPTION TO THE BEST OPTION
Source: New Jersey Conservation Foundation

Additional Design Considerations

Minimize Pavement, Maximize Stormwater Management

Sidewalks and open space can be a great place to address the environmental impact of development. Using green infrastructure can decrease heat island effect, provide a pleasant and welcoming outdoor environment, and manage stormwater. Some ideas include:

- Incorporating stormwater management techniques, such as bio-retention areas, bioswales, etc., into streetscape, open space, and landscape design that encourage infiltration and water reuse to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff.
- Using landscaping that is designed to be contextual with the ecology of the surrounding area.
- Providing shade and reduce heat island effects by planting shade mature trees with a large canopy.
- Using native and drought tolerant landscaping to minimize irrigation.
- Minimizing impervious surfaces by utilizing permeable pavers and soft landscaped area.

-Transit Friendly Planning Guide (Pg. 55)





SMALL-SCALE BIORETENTION SYSTEMS

Source: New Jersey Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual (Chapter 9.7, Pg. 3)



ARCHITECTURAL VARIETY WITH CONTINUITY

Source: Transit Friendly Planning (Pg. 41).
Photo Credit: JazzGuy via Creative Commons on Flickr

Balance Architectural Variety With Continuity

In addition to controlling of building elements and occupancy, it is important to have a variety of massing, textures, and materials. This type of variety will keep users more engaged with the built environment. However, there is a need to balance variety with continuity. The range of architectural detailing and building types should work together to form a cohesive identity.

-Transit Friendly Planning Guide (Pg. 41)

Parking Maximums

Some argue for a market-based approach to parking, letting private developers determine how much parking to include in projects. Some municipalities, recognizing the value of urban land, have gone further, implementing "maximums," which prohibit more than a certain threshold of parking from being constructed.

"Right-sizing" can be accomplished through a variety of targeted means. In 2015, the Borough of Metuchen revised its parking guidelines for zones in the central business district, reducing the total required by 50 percent, and instituting these specifications as the maximum amount that may be built, rather than a minimum amount that may be exceeded. Metuchen created a Payment in Lieu of Parking (PILOP) mechanism, through which developers can pay a fee ($5,000 per market unit, $2,500 per affordable unit), instead of building parking spaces on-site (Metuchen City Code § 110-154 F).

Many transit users begin and end their journeys using cars. Many NJ TRANSIT Park and Ride facilities serve an important role for larger commuter sheds in rural portions of New Jersey. Therefore, parking reforms will look different from community to community and must be context sensitive to local needs.

While the next generation of active transportation, and micro-mobility and micro-transit technology and infrastructure will help to close this first and last mile gap, parking will remain an aspect of many riders' transit experience for the foreseeable future. However, how parking is considered—through design and management strategies that prioritize safety, efficiency, and a human-scale environment—can have a significant impact on the transit-friendly nature of a place.

-Transit Friendly Planning Guide (Pg. 99)

Promote Active Street Fronts

The average walking speed of a human is about 2.5 to 3 mph, compared to 25 or 35 mph for someone traveling in a car. This means pedestrians are able to absorb the details of the buildings around them with much more attention. This is why the first and second floors of a building are the most important when designing for a human scale. This building frontage next to the pedestrian is sometimes referred to as the "street wall."

Transit Friendly Planning encourages mixed-use development that is oriented toward the street and not set back too far from the sidewalk. In a more residential area, the setback can be scaled to the road width and neighborhood character, but front entrances and porches should still be facing the sidewalk.

On the first floor, it is important to promote active uses that allow people to interact. The first floor should avoid "blank walls" by encouraging windows and doors at the ground level. For commercial uses, some ways to activate these spaces are retail displays and restaurant seating, while for office uses and hotels, reception and waiting areas and lobbies can serve the same function. Parking should not be situated between the sidewalk and the building.

-Transit Friendly Planning Guide (Pg. 41)



ACTIVE STREET FRONTS

Source: Transit Friendly Planning Guide (Pg. 41).
Photo Credit: B. Krist for Visit Philadelphia

Redevelopment

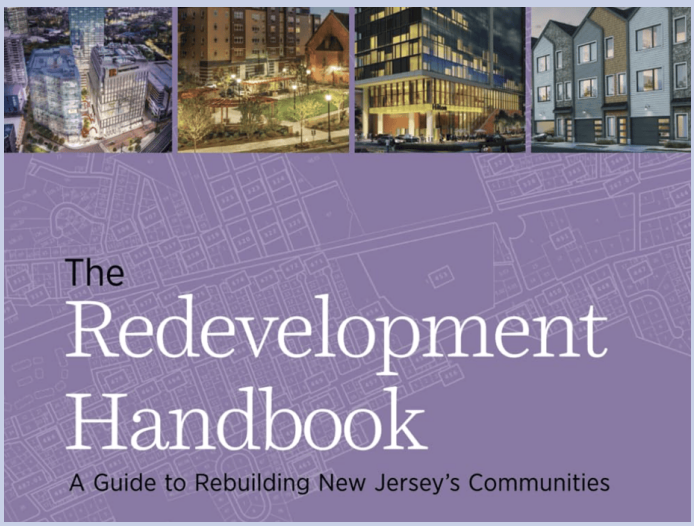
Concerning the DPW site, one means of establishing land use policy is through the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.

The LRHL provides the Township with the ability to redevelop areas that may be contaminated or otherwise blighted through a two-step process:

1. **Area in Need of Redevelopment Study:** The Township Council may direct the Planning Board to study a site to determine if it qualifies as an Area in Need of Redevelopment. This is determined based on statutory criteria. If the Study recommends that the Area meets some or all of the criteria and the Township Council agrees with the findings of the report, they may declare the site an Area in Need of Redevelopment.
2. **Preparation of a Redevelopment Plan:** If declared an Area in Need of Redevelopment, the Township may then prepare a Redevelopment Plan. A Redevelopment Plan contains regulations unique to the site regardless of the underlying zoning regulations. The Township may create bespoke, specific regulations, including permitted uses, bulk standards, design standards, and more, specific to the Redevelopment Area. These regulations may supersede the underlying regulations if the Township Council prefers that option.

The LRHL also allows the municipality to offer enhanced fiscal tools to prospective redevelopers that may incentivize the development of the Redevelopment Area. The Township may also require the Redeveloper to provide certain public benefits, such as environmental remediation, public amenities, or other improvements that may not be possible without utilizing the LRHL.

If the Township would like to explore utilizing the LRHL, it is recommended they consult with the appropriate Township officials, staff, or professionals, and review the relevant statute(s). **This document does not constitute an Area of Redevelopment Study, nor can it provide any basis for the declaration of an Area in Need of Redevelopment.**



COVER OF THE REDEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK: 3RD EDITION
Source: APA New Jersey

The Redevelopment Handbook, written by Stan Slachetka and David Roberts, is considered the authoritative reference guide for Redevelopment in New Jersey.

A Transit-Supportive Redevelopment Plan:

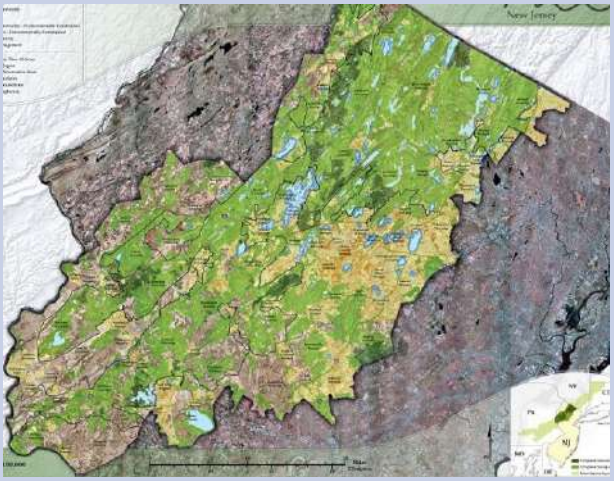
- Allows for community control of the vision.
- Increases predictability of outcome.
- Enables a redevelopment authority (which may be the governing body) to negotiate with developers.
- Incorporates transit-supportive design standards, which may include a form-based code.
- Regulates public realm improvements.
- Recommends siting standards, including building placement, the road grid, active transportation amenities, and public open space.
- Plans ahead for existing or future transit facility site or operational needs.

Redevelopment is a core component of transit-supportive development because it provides an opportunity to revitalize the existing built environment around transit facilities. Redevelopment enables a municipality to assemble land under dispersed ownership into an appropriately sized transit-supportive development parcel. The law authorizes a municipality to deploy other legal and financial tools, such as eminent domain, Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOTs), and bonding.

-Transit Friendly Planning Guide (Pg. 165)



Highlands Region Center Designation



THE HIGHLANDS REGION

Source: The Highlands Council

A portion of Mahwah Township has been designated as a Highlands Center, though some of the planning work required to formalize the designation remains incomplete. With Center designation the Township is able to tailor their planning to the Study Area, instead of defaulting to the underlying zoning requirements. It is recommended that the Township complete the planning process for Center Designation. Additional information relating to Highlands Center designation can be found in the Appendix.

Implementation Resources

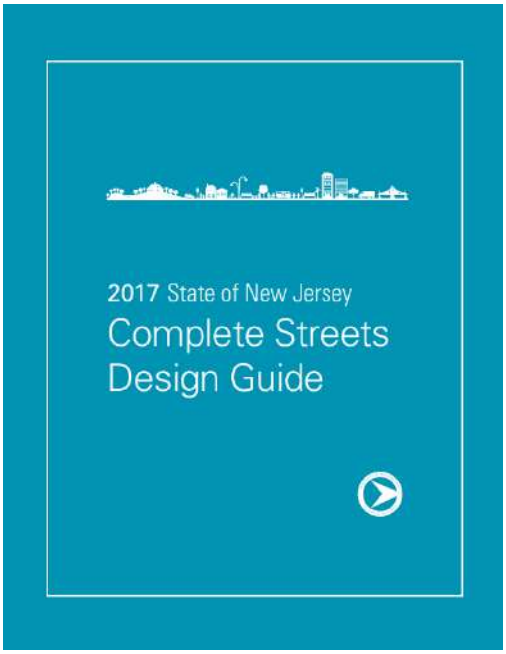
Additional Planning

Public Engagement

Before any development plan is adopted, there should be community outreach and engagement. The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority has a Public Engagement Toolkit which outlines best practices for outreach and engagement. Effective community engagement is also often a prerequisite for implementation grants from the State.

Complete Streets

Neither Bergen County nor Mahwah have a Complete Streets policy or plan in place, which could also unlock potential sources of funding and technical assistance.



Funding Sources

NJEDA Grants

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority offers numerous grants. While some grants are for municipalities, many are for businesses. The Township, pending its final vision for the Study Area, may consider partnering with existing and potential local businesses by acting as a facilitator and resource to assist businesses in obtaining grants to locate or expand in the Mahwah Station area.

NJDOT Grants

If the Township pursues the recommendations in this document relating to active transportation and aesthetic streetscape improvements, they should consider applying for competitive grants through the New Jersey Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside program which "provides federal funds for community based 'non-traditional' surface transportation projects designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the nation's intermodal system."

Additionally, NJDOT's Local Aid Resource Center has information on state and federal funding sources for local transportation improvements and can assist in the grant application and planning processes for the Municipal Aid Program and the Local Aid Infrastructure Program.

Funding Sources, Continued



New Jersey Municipal Tax Abatement

The State of New Jersey offers tax exemption and abatement programs in addition to those available under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs offers a Municipal Tax Abatement Handbook to guide municipalities in these matters.

NJDEP Brownfield Contaminated Site Remediation & Redevelopment

Through NJDEP's Office of Brownfield Reuse (OBCR), the NJDEP works with municipalities and neighborhoods impacted by contaminated sites. The program coordinates planning, resource acquisition and remediation with a focus on reuse, and through the Brownfield Reimbursement Fund Program can reimburse developers for remediation costs. This funding source may be applicable to the Department of Public Works site.

FTA Transit-Oriented Development Planning

Federal Transit Administration

This Federal grant program provides funding for local communities to integrate land use and transportation planning with transit capital investments. Technical assistance is available for certain TOD projects. Funding requires that planning must examine ways to improve economic development and ridership.

Transit Village Designation

TRANSIT VILLAGE INITIATIVE

Another option that could unlock funding sources for Mahwah may be to pursue designation as a New Jersey Transit Village. This would require Mahwah to be advanced in planning for multiple mixed-use, transit-oriented developments within a ½ mile radius of its train station, and requires a change to underlying zoning (the recommended zoning overlay would not qualify). Being designated as a transit village allows municipalities to apply for implementation funding as well as prioritizes them for additional technical assistance and governmental coordination. Park Ridge Borough is the closest municipality with a designated Transit Village.

Affordable Housing

The New Jersey State Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency has several affordable housing programs geared toward multifamily development which could potentially fund the development envisioned in the concept plan for the Department of Public Works site.



A

Appendix A: Existing Conditions Memorandum

Introduction

NJ TRANSIT is partnering with Mahwah Township to conduct a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Study of the Mahwah Station and its surrounding area in conjunction with project consultants NV5, Arterial, and the Regional Planning Association (RPA). The result of the Study will be a Vision Plan that is intended to inform future land use policy and development of the area around the Mahwah Train Station in a transit-friendly manner.

This memorandum analyzes existing conditions within a quarter mile radius of the Mahwah Train Station (referred to as the *Study Area*). The memorandum contains the following:

- A description of the *Study Area*, which includes: an aerial of the *Study Area*; Environmental conditions, including, but not limited to, flooding, remediation, grading, and other physical environmental conditions, and; the zoning underlying the *Study Area* and those areas adjacent to the *Study Area*.
- An analysis of the relationship between the *Study Area* and the train station.
- A review of the relevant planning documentation and literature at the local and regional levels that serve as the underlying policy basis for land use regulations in the *Study Area*.
- A review of development activity within the *Study Area*, including analyzing Planning and Zoning Board activity and recent development.
- An analysis of development constraints.

A separate Redevelopment Alternatives memorandum will contain additional analyses of the Station Area, including a summary of crash history utilizing the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety Numetric Crash Analysis Tool.



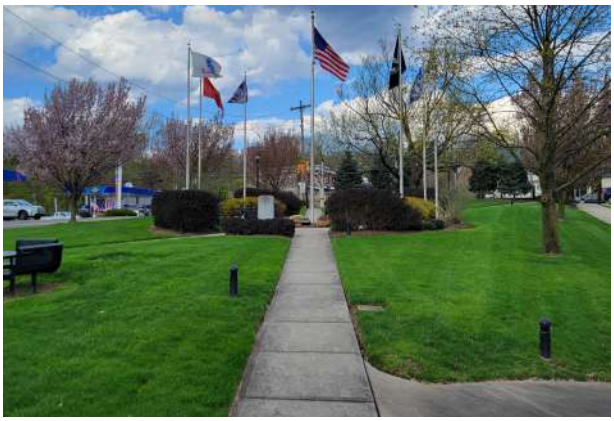
TRAIN ARRIVING AT MAHWAH STATION

Project Area

The *Study Area* consists of a quarter mile radius around the Mahwah Train Station. The *Study Area* is bisected from north to south by the NJ TRANSIT Main Line and Bergen County Line tracks. From west to east the *Study Area* is bisected by East Ramapo Avenue on the west side of the train track, and by Miller Road on the east side of the track. The north south and east west bisects create four quadrants, neatly dividing the *Study Area* for explanatory purposes.

- The northwestern quadrant, north of East Ramapo Avenue and west of the train track, consists primarily of single-family detached residences concentrated along Devine Drive and North Railroad Avenue. The Mahwah Recycling Office (a local DPW site) is located west of the train station between the clusters of residences. Unimproved land owned by DPW extends north to North Railroad Avenue.
- The southwestern quadrant, south of East Ramapo Avenue and west of the train track, consists primarily of the 15-acre Winter's Park and a 16-acre preserved[1] open space parcel containing Winters Pond. The remainder of this quadrant consists of single-family detached dwellings.

- The northeastern quadrant consists of the Franklin Turnpike corridor with a variety of land uses. This area contains food and beverage uses such as Rita's Italian Ice, Sushigo, Tandoori Bites, and Roxanne's Brick Oven Pizza, among others. Services such as a dental office, salons, a physical therapy office, a dog groomer, multiple banks, and two gas stations are located in this area. Veteran's Park straddles the northeastern and southeastern quadrants. Single-family detached residences are also located in this area.
- The southeastern quadrant contains a mix of uses, including the Mahwah Police Department, Rutan Poly Industries (a plastic bag supplier), the Mahwah Museum, the Mahwah Fire Department, the northern portion of a garden apartment complex, and single-family detached dwellings.



VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK



RAMAPO AVENUE CROSSING

Mahwah Train Station

Land Use Around Mahwah Station

Physical geography and the built environment have influenced land use around the Mahwah station, including rail tracks, the street grid, a highway, and a creek. The station is served by NJ TRANSIT's Main Line and Bergen County Line and Metro-North Railroad's Port Jervis Line. The station is located at the intersection of South Railroad and Ramapo Avenue, the latter being one of the two[2] east-west streets that cross under the rail tracks. The rail tracks run south to north along the northeastern part of Mahwah's township borders, parallel to Franklin Turnpike Avenue, NJ Route 17, and the Masonicus Brook.

Properties within a 0.25-mile radius of the Mahwah Station have a range of mostly low-intensity land uses, including single-family dwellings, garden apartments, open space, surface parking, retail, industrial, and vacant land.



THE MAHWAH MUSEUM



WINTERS POND

Map 1.1: Study Area



The street grid, existing block size, and the Masonicus Brook, has influenced land use within the *Study Area,* generally dividing east and west along the train tracks.

East of the tracks, Veteran's Memorial Park connects the station to Franklin Turnpike. The Turnpike is a prominent commercial corridor featuring a mix of banks, civic facilities, restaurants, and gas stations. Southeast of the station (Block 82), there are several parcels with vacant storefronts and vacant land, previously assembled as an Area in Need of Redevelopment[3]. One existing multifamily building (5 Scherer Place) is across the street from the station, and another garden apartment complex (Mall & Starview Gardens) is located on Franklin Turnpike, about a quarter mile south of the station. Further east land uses consist of detached single-family dwellings.

West of the tracks, the landscape is characterized by a mix of municipal uses, greenspace, an artificial lake, and single-family residences. A significant municipal area adjacent to the station encompasses two station parking lots, a Department of Public Works (DPW) facility, a recycling center, and greenspace along the Masonicus Brook. Winter's Park and Pond extend this green corridor southward. To the west, Commodore Perry Fields & Mahwah Recreation Annex and Apple Montessori School occupy a portion of the *Study Area*.

Property within a 0.25-mile radius of the Mahwah Station consists of 350 parcels, representing approximately 143 acres of land. Almost half of the parcels in the *study area* (46% or 164 of the total) are residential properties. These properties contain 328 dwelling units (DUs) distributed over 52 acres of land, equivalent to a density of 6.35 DUs per acre.

Map 1.2: Study Area Annotated with Nearby Transportation Infrastructure



Map 1.3: Study Area With MOD IV Property Classes



The other half of the housing units (49% or 163) are located in two parcels with multifamily buildings[4]:

- Mall & Starview Gardens apartments at 250 Franklin Turnpike (with 154 units)
- 5 Scherer Place (9 units)

These two multifamily properties have a surface area of 5.6 acres, representing a residential density of 29 DUs per acre.

The *Study Area* also includes 17 vacant parcels totaling 8.6 acres, concentrated among four primary owners. Notably, 1 Blue Hill Plaza holds the largest land area, with 6.6 acres across eight parcels.

Furthermore, 11 single-story commercial or manufacturing properties occupy 5.5 acres. This group includes underutilized properties such as the torn-down Delta Oil Change, the Wells Fargo Bank building, and several other retail and

According to NJ TRANSIT's Transit-Friendly Planning Program, neighborhoods surrounding a transit facility can be categorized into one of five place types: urban centers, urban neighborhoods, town centers, suburban places, and rural places. Mahwah's station area can be classified as a suburban place type. This category features "*mixed-use development along primary paths to transit…surrounded by low-density land uses that are typically separated and clustered according to zoning*…"[5] While Franklin Turnpike exhibits some mixing of uses, the zoning regulations encourage low-density, single use development, contributing to the *Study Area's* overall "low-intensity suburban" character.

Study Area Context

Spatially, the *Study Area* represents a very small portion of Mahwah Township. A quarter mile radius encompasses 9.5 acres, less than one tenth of one percent of all land area in a municipality that is greater than 26 square miles[6] in size.

Mahwah Township is the largest community geographically, and the 12th largest by population, of the 70 municipalities in Bergen County. Bergen County is the most populous[7] county in New Jersey and strategically situated in close proximity to New York City and lower New York State. Mahwah, due to its large population, bounty of natural features, and being home to Ramapo College, is an important center within the County.

Mahwah is also the northernmost municipality within the Highlands Region[8] containing a NJ TRANSIT train station. Its location within the Highlands further emphasizes its ecological significance to the region, but also creates an extra layer of consequential regulation that must be considered during any planning and visioning exercise.

While the *Study Area* represents a small portion of the region, it is a significant connector. The Main and Bergen County Line connect to Suffern in lower New York State, and can transport commuters to New York City by way of Secaucus and Hoboken, both destinations in their own right. Therefore, better understanding the *Study Area* and its potential for Transit-Oriented Development can enhance the neighborhood around the station while further benefiting the region.

Area Relationship to the Mahwah Train Station

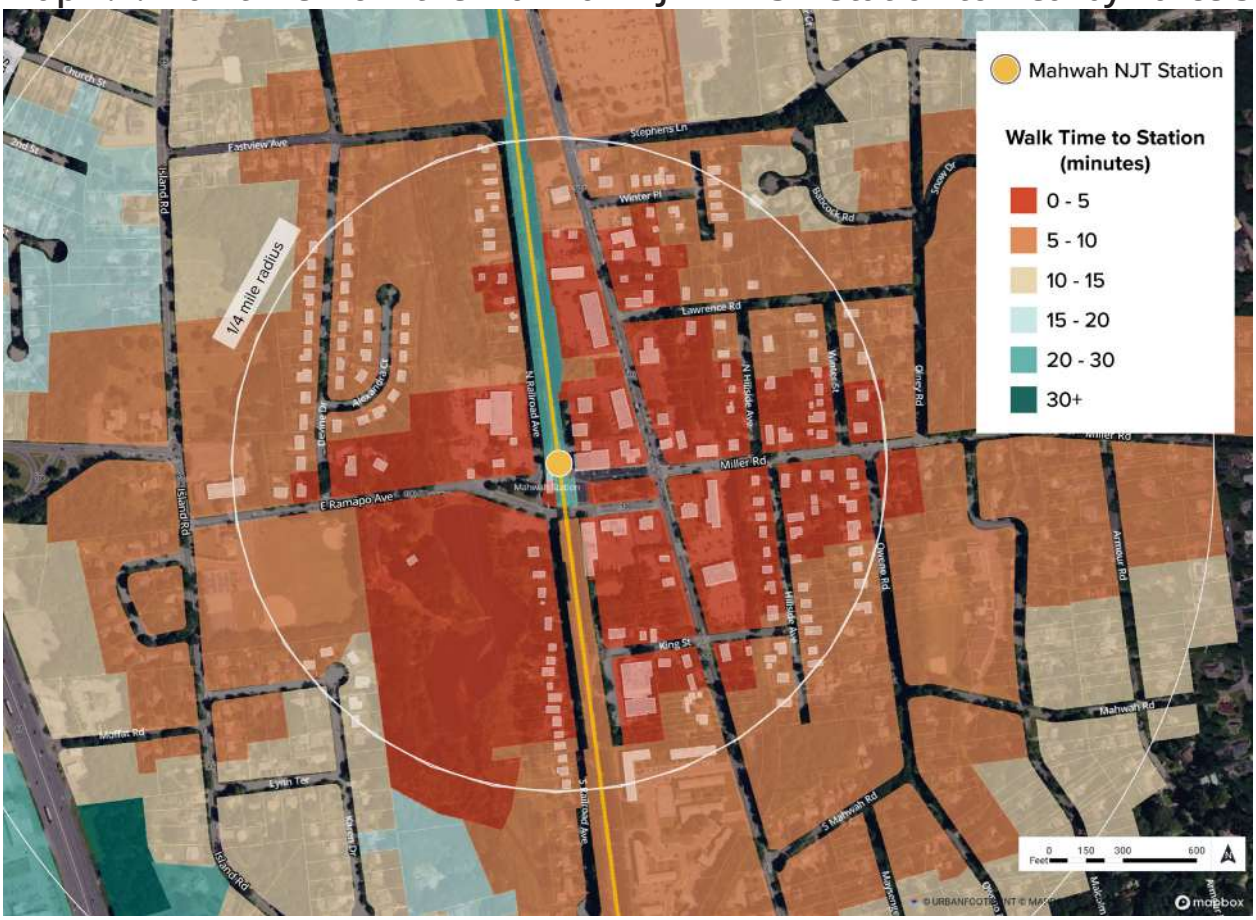
The station's surrounding area is designed as a community gathering point. Veteran's Memorial Park, at the corner of Franklin Turnpike and East Ramapo Ave, regularly hosts parades and ceremonies, including on Memorial Day and a signature event on Mahwah Day. Franklin Turnpike, running south to north and parallel to the tracks, is a prominent commercial corridor featuring a mix of banks, civic facilities, and restaurants.

The street grid, defined by existing infrastructure and the Masonicus Brook, largely determines the physical relationship between adjacent neighborhoods and the train station. As mentioned in the previous section, the grid layout divides east and west along the train tracks. At the same time, the absence of pedestrian crossings along Franklin Turnpike poses a significant safety concern and limits east-west connections. Additionally, large blocks (58 and 61) and a lack of connectivity in the street grid on the west side of the tracks further hinder efficient, safe, and walkable connections.

Despite having a limited grid, the station can still be reached through a substantial walking catchment area. Based on a network analysis, we estimated that 982 parcels (with 756 households) are within a 15-minute walk to the train station, including all parcels within the 0.25-mile radius. Moreover, 423 parcels (with 474 households) are accessible to the station within 10 minutes, and 183 lots (with 80 households) within a walking time of 5 minutes or less[9].

In front of the station, Ramapo Avenue is one of two track crossings within Mahwah. The road crosses under the rail line with a low clearance height of 9'6" and is limited to a width of roughly 35', containing two car lanes and one sidewalk. The crossing is a potential bottleneck for pedestrians, cyclists, and car movement.

Map 1.4: Walktime from the Mahwah NJ TRANSIT Station to Nearby Parcels



The station serves as the primary public transit service for residents. NJ TRANSIT's Main/Bergen Line offers key connections to major transportation hubs, including Secaucus Junction (56-minute commute time) and Hoboken Terminal (one hour 15 minute commute time). Service runs every 20-30 minutes during peak hours and hourly during off-peak hours. In 2023, the station averaged 101 weekday boardings[10]. The station is currently undergoing critical state-of-good-repair work on its roof, retaining walls, and electrical system as part of the first phase of its upgrade project[11].

While there is potential to increase frequency and create new multimodal transit options, there is significant opportunity for development within the station area. Key development opportunities are in the 8.6 acres of vacant lots and 5.5 acres of underutilized commercial properties.

Two sites in particular are most appealing for redevelopment: the soon-to-be-relocated Department of Public Works (DPW) facility at 142 N Railroad Avenue and the Block 82 Redevelopment Zone (BRZ) at the southwest intersection of Ramapo Avenue and the Franklin Turnpike.



SIDEWALK UNDER NJ TRANSIT RAIL VIADUCT

The DPW site encompasses multiple lots adding up to a total of 8.5 acres fronting Old Station Lane and extending up North Railroad Avenue behind the row of single-family houses. On the site is a single-story structure (20,000 sq ft), two smaller sheds (roughly 650 sq ft each), the old Mahwah station museum (1,100 sq ft), and the northern station parking lot (33 spaces), all clustered together on the southeast portion of the lots.

Block 82, defined by Ramapo Avenue, Franklin Turnpike, King Street, and the rail tracks, covers an area of approximately 4.3 acres, excluding the Blue Foundry Bank lot. It hosts five empty, single-story storefronts across from Veteran's Memorial Park, two single-family homes, and two small industrial businesses along King Street, and the remaining vacant area. While the Mahwah Township Council recently adopted a Redevelopment Plan for Block 82, the intended redeveloper was dissolved and divested, which has put the development on indefinite pause[13].

Existing public areas and ample green space within Mahwah are important assets that may support new development. Directly adjacent to the station is Winter's Park and Pond, a natural space over 14 acres in size, and Veteran's Memorial Park, a public space serving as the station's plaza. Additional recreation facilities including Commodore Perry Fields and the Mahwah Recreation Annex are open spaces within the *Study Area*. A portion of the Mahwah Cemetery is also located within the *Study Area*.

The Mahwah Station serves a substantial catchment area. While some infrastructure improvements are needed, the station's location and existing built environment offer opportunities to create a more convivial and transit-friendly downtown station area.

Land Use Policy Context

Like all municipalities in the State of New Jersey, the foundation of Land Use Policy for the Township of Mahwah and the *Study Area* is the Municipal Land Use Law found in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 (*et. seq.*). The Municipal Land Use Law requires that the Township prepare a Master Plan consisting of a Land Use Plan Element (among other required and optional elements) which provides the policy basis for the Township Land Development and Zoning Ordinance. Similarly, Bergen County has a County Master Plan which includes a land use element and transportation element.

A further layer of land use policy and regulation, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act, significantly affects development and land use in the Township (and by extension, the *Study Area*) due to Mahwah's location within the Highlands Region.

Mahwah Township Master Plan

The Township prepared a comprehensive master plan in 2013. Subsequent master plan reexamination reports were prepared in 2017 and 2020, and the 2020 Master Plan Reexamination Report was amended in 2024. Amendments were made to the Master Plan in 2017, 2019, 2020, 2023, and 2024. The most recent Housing Element and Fair Share Plan Amendment was adopted in 2024[12].

The 2013 Master Plan contains the following elements: Land Use, Sustainability, Environmental Inventory, Community Facilities, Traffic and Circulation, and a Historic Preservation Inventory. The Land Use Plan Element was amended in 2017, 2020, 2022, and 2023. These plan elements are relevant to the *Study Area* in the following ways:

- **Land Use Plan Element.** The land use plan element contains several goals that are relevant to the Vision Plan. Namely, these include the concentration of development in the easterly portion of the Township that prioritizes the protection of environmental features and is considerate of flood hazard areas. Furthermore, open space and trails should provide greater linkages in the municipality. Finally, the historic aesthetic design in the municipality should be carried forward into future development and redevelopment.

- **Franklin Turnpike Study Area.** The Land Use Plan Element includes a Study of Franklin Turnpike, specifically the southern area. The southern area roughly corresponds with the southeastern and northeastern portions of the *Study Area*. Recommendations include modifications to bulk regulations to achieve a more appropriate neighborhood design.

- **Sustainability Element.** Sustainability goals include the adoption of land use policies to reduce sprawl, preserve open space, improve transportation options, and create compact, walkable development wherever possible. Additionally, the plan contains goals for more sustainable and energy efficient construction and to reduce dependency on automobile transport. This Study is the perfect companion to the Township's sustainability goals.

- **Environmental Inventory.** The Masonicus Brook is identified as a tributary to the Ramapo River that is classified as a FW2-NT (Non-Pinelands fresh water, non-trout) stream.

- **Community Facilities Element.** The plan indicates that several community facilities, including municipal open space, the Department of Public Works Recycling Center, and Fire and Police Stations are located within the *Study Area*. The Ambulance Service is located just outside the *Study Area* to the southeast.

- **Traffic and Circulation Element.** Franklin Turnpike is identified as a principal arterial road and Ramapo Avenue is identified as a minor arterial road. Miller Road is identified as a collector road, while the remainder of the roads in the *Study Area* are considered local roads.

  The plan indicates that bicycle facilities are non existent in the Township.

  The plan recommends studies of municipal and station parking lots due to them filling quickly on weekdays. Additional studies that are recommended include a Safe Routes to Schools plan and a Township-wide trail system study.

- **Historic Preservation Inventory.** Mahwah Township contains 307 historic sites. Four of these sites, 47, 56, 58, and 59, are located in the *Study Area*.

  Site 47 is the Erie Railroad Station. The Station is a board and batten depot built between 1860 and 1880. It is located at 142 N Railroad Ave at the site of the Department of Public Works building. Of the four sites in the *Study Area*, this is the only one noted for its historic use of the property, rather than just the architectural significance of the structure.

  Sites 56, 58, and 59, consist of the J. Winter Building and Henrieta Building (Site 56), the Mahwah Police Station (Site 58), and the Mahwah Fire Department (Site 59). The Police Station, built in the 1970s, is noted for its modernist appearance. The other buildings are noted for being emblematic of early 20th century development, with Site 56 typifying storefront design of that era, and Site 59 for its

rustic qualities.

- **Subsequent Reexaminations.** Reexamination reports prepared in 2017 and 2022 contained the following land use changes:

  2017 Wellhead Protection Ordinance. The 2017 plan recommended adopting a Wellhead Protection Ordinance, limiting land uses and facilities that may contaminate well water. This has been adopted as §24-10.2 of the Land Development Ordinance.

  2022 Recommendation to Adopt a Redevelopment Plan for Block 82. The 2022 Reexamination Report recommended adopting a redevelopment plan for a multi-family resdential development at 14 dwelling units per acre. The RDA is in the *Study Area* and has not been redeveloped.

Bergen County Master Plan

Bergen County adopted a County-wide Master Plan on April 11, 2023[14]. At the municipal level, such documents are considered to be "big picture", providing guidance and regional perspective.

The document contains and Land Use and Housing Element and sections on Economic Vitality, History and the Arts, the Environment and Natural Resources, Transportation and Mobility, Public Facilities, and Sustainability.

Objectives of the plan range from encouraging Smart Growth and limiting sprawl to encouraging a variety of housing at a range of densities and using green construction techniques. These objectives are complementary to NJ TRANSIT's Transit Friendly Planning Program and Guide. Of note for the purposes of this TOD Vision plan are the following:

- Business Support in the Economic Vitality Plan: The County Plan lists County programs that support business development. These may be useful as Mahwah seeks to develop the area around the Station.
- The Transportation and Mobility section discusses multi-modal transit, public transportation, transit-oriented development, and transportation network improvements in the County. This provides meaningful, regional context for Mahwah as it seeks to develop the *Study Area* in a transit-oriented manner.
- The Sustainability section is complementary to Transit Friendly Planning as it discusses complete streets, green infrastructure, economic development and growth in a sustainable and equitable manner. Goals and recommendations found in this section may inform design recommendations in the TOD Vision Plan.

Study Area Zoning Districts

The existing zoning[16] in the *Study Area* permits residential, commercial, industrial, municipal, and open space uses. 11 zones are located in the *Study Area*. To the east, the rear yards of commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential zones abut the rail line, and beyond Franklin Turnpike to the east there is mostly single-family residential zoning. To the west, institutional, open space, and single-family residential zones extend off of North Railroad Avenue and Ramapo Avenue, though the principal use of a large portion of the area zoned for residential uses is municipal government uses, such as the DPW recycling center.

The following table summarizes the zones located within the *Study Area*, while the map to the right shows the zones in relation to the .25-mile radius around the train station.

The column to the left of the zone name indicates the zone color shown in the map. The table also indicates the number of acres of each zone in the *Study Area* and the percentage share of each zone in the *Study Area*. Finally, the table includes the maximum permitted impervious coverage (in percentage terms), building stories, and dwelling units per acre.

The table contains weighted averages of permitted maximums for coverage, stories, and dwelling units per acre. These are an average of the standards in the study area based on the extent of each zone within the .25-mile radius of the Station.

Map 1.5: Study Area Zone Districts



Table 1.1: Zoning Districts Within the Study Area

	Zone		Acres	% Share	Cov %	Stories	Units/Acre
	R-15	Single-Family Residential	2.35	24.76	40%	2.5	2.9
	R-5	Single-Family Residential	1.79	18.81	40%	2.5	8.7
	R-10	Single-Family Residential	1.36	14.29	40%	2.5	4.4
	GA-200	Garden Apartment	0.18	1.88	70%	2.5	22
	BRZ	Block 82 Redevelopment Zone	0.35	3.68	30%	3	14
	P-OS	Public Open Space	1.92	20.26	5%	3	n/a
	B-10	Neighborhood Business	0.80	8.40	80%	3	n/a
	B-12	General Business	0.34	3.60	80%	3	n/a
	CEM	Cemetery	0.17	1.76	15%	3	n/a
	GI-80	General Industry	0.13	1.37	80%	3	n/a
	ED	Education	0.11	1.19	65%	2.5	n/a
Weighted Average					**38.31%**	**2.70**	**-**
Residential Weighted Average					**40.31%**	**2.53**	**6.17**

Residential Zones (R5/R10/R15). 5.7 acres, or 59.7% of the land area within the 0.25-mile radius, is zoned for residential use, most of it in a contiguous area east of the tracks. Many of these districts allow for the highest density of single-family buildings in Mahwah's current zoning. About one-quarter (24.7%) of the land area in the *Study Area* is zoned R-15, one-fifth (18.8%) is zoned R-5, and one-seventh (14.3%) is zoned R-10. Compared to their higher-numbered counterparts from R-80 to R-20, the R-15, R-10, and R-5 zones allow for more compact forms of single-family buildings with higher coverage over smaller lot areas and reduced side yard requirements.

Block 82 Redevelopment Zone (BRZ).Several parcels directly to the southeast of the station constitute the Block 82 Redevelopment Area. Following tract being declared an Area in Need of Redevelopment, the Town adopted a Redevelopment Plan for Block 82, Lots 1 and 3 through 30 on September 9, 2024[18]. This latest amendment concluded with a final density of 14 units per acre, maximum improved coverage is 60%, maximum lot coverage is 30%, and maximum height of 38 feet or 3 stories[19].

Prior to these revisions, Mahwah Township Center Redevelopers, the majority owners of Block 82, advised the Superior Court of New Jersey that the multi-level senior assisted living facility proposed for the site was no longer viable on February 22, 2024. Monarch Company JV, LLC, the intended operator, had been dissolved and divested, and the owners could neither proceed without an operator nor reach an agreement with the Township on an alternative inclusionary development. As a result of a motion granted on June 28, 2024, the Township maintained affordable housing immunity. Judge Christine Farrington determined that Mahwah Township would not be obligated to utilize the site, satisfying the Mount Laurel Doctrine through the inclusionary zoning of the site alone. The township accordingly removed multi-level senior care facilities from the Redevelopment Plan, stating the intent to reduce high-density development on the site[17].

Garden Apartment Zone (GA-200). Just south of the Block 82 Redevelopment Area, the quarter-mile includes the GA-200 Garden Apartment zone district around the Mall & Starview Garden Apartments at 250-240 Franklin Turnpike. The Garden Apartment use in this zone allows for higher density multi-family development with density limits permitting a range of 8 to 22 units per acre, with a greater number of units per acre allowed if the units have fewer additional rooms beyond the kitchen and bathroom. No more than eight dwelling units per building or twenty-four units per attached building is permitted. Each building may not be more than 160 feet long, 35 feet or 2 ½ stories in height. Similar to other zones in Mahwah Township, a minimum distance between two buildings is determined based on a fixed proportion between the length and the height of both buildings. The maximum permitted improved lot coverage is 70% and the maximum permitted lot coverage is 30%.

Open Space Zones (POS, CEM). The Public Open Space (POS) District allows for public open space and recreational facilities and agricultural uses. The Cemetery (CEM) District permits cemeteries, including mausoleums intended to hold the dead. In POS zones, no more than 15% of the lot area may be improved and no more than 5% may be covered. CEM zones permit a maximum lot coverage of 15%. Across from the DPW recycling center, Winter's Park is zoned as Public Open Space. On either side of Island Road, Mahwah Cemetery is zoned as a Cemetery.

Business Zones (B10, B12). The business zones B10 ("Neighborhood Business") and B12 ("General Business") are within the *Study Area* along Franklin Turnpike. Both zones permit retail, restaurants, public recreation, offices, healthcare, and childcare uses as principal uses. The B12 zone permits additional principal uses such as automobile sales and bus terminals. For both B10 and B12 zones, the maximum permitted improved lot coverage is 80%. For B10 zones, the maximum permitted lot coverage is 50% and 40% for B12 zones. Buildings within the B10 and B12 zones are permitted to be slightly higher than buildings in residential zones, with a maximum building height of 40 feet and 3 stories. Some of the bulk requirements for the B12 zones are more restrictive than B10 zones, with a front yard setback of 40 feet as opposed to 10 feet. The various restaurants, offices, and auto dealerships along Franklin Turnpike appear to use the required front yard for accessory uses such as signage and occasionally for parking. Of note, §22.6.2.b.2 prohibits parking in front yards unless parking is located a distance of 30 feet or more from the street right-of-way.

Industrial Zones (GI-80, IP-120). General Industry (GI-80) includes manufacturing, material sales, distribution and warehousing, and machine shops among its principal uses. Industrial Park (IP-200) is less inclusive, limiting uses to activities such as planned industrial facilities, research laboratories, printing plants, and self-storage facilities. GI-80 zones permit a maximum improved lot coverage of 80% and a maximum lot coverage of 40%. IP-120 maximums are slightly less, allowing 70% improved lot coverage and 35% lot coverage. Like the business zones, a maximum height of 40 feet and 3 stories is permitted for either GI-80 or IP-200 zones. Southeast of the site, Rutan Poly Industries, Inc. off of King Street is zoned GI-80. Far to the north along Masonicus Brook, a small corner of Acupac Packaging falls within the *Study Area*.

Institutional Zones (ED). Education Districts (ED) permit elementary and high schools, as well as colleges and universities (Approximately 1,250 feet east along E. Ramapo Avenue from Mahwah Station is the Apple Montessori School). Education Districts allow for a maximum improved lot coverage of 65% and a maximum lot coverage of 30%. A maximum height of 35 feet or 2 stories is permitted, similar to the adjacent residential zones.

Zoning Districts Beyond the Study Area

The Township has Zoning Districts beyond the *Study Area*. Descriptions of relevant Districts which may provide context for possible zoning changes within the *Study Area* are included herein.

Planned Residential Development (PRD4, PRD4S, PRD6). The regulations outlined for PRD zones offer insight into some specific types of multi-family dwelling permitted in other zones in Mahwah, as well as area and yard requirements and other performance standards that apply to their development.

In Mahwah's PRD zones, multi-family development must follow additional design guidelines to provide mixed distributions of units following a specific set of housing typologies. Alternatively, PRD zones are limited by equivalent R20 zoning if they do not proceed as Planned Residential Developments. The set of five dwelling types outlined for PRD zones include (1) Single-family detached dwellings; (2) Single-family semi-detached dwellings and Townhouses (considered together for most regulations but separately for area, yard, and bulk controls); (3) Garden apartments, Triplexes, and Quadruplexes; (4) Townhouse-duplex combinations (for PRD6 zones only); and (5) Adult homes.

Sub-designations of PRD zones allow for different overall residential densities on the lot suggested by their nomenclature, with PRD4 allowing for 4 units per acre of total land area and PRD6 allowing for 6 units per acre.

The maximum net residential density in PRD zones is further limited by set densities per dwelling type, which are effectively weighted by limits on the percentage share of the dwelling unit that vary by sub-designation. As an example, the residential density may be as high as 14 units per acre for Garden apartments, Triplexes, and Quadruplexes in PRD6 zones, but this density will ultimately be limited by the 35% maximum limit for housing units of this dwelling type. PRD4S is a special variation of PRD-4 offering reduced restrictions on yards, buffer areas, and minimum lot area to function as a transitional use between the manufactured home parks and single-family home development types currently in Mahwah to adult home and single-family semi-detached dwelling types, allowing these two types exclusively in equal 50% shares. PRD6 zones uniquely allow for townhouse-duplex combinations, and all 100% of this type may be constructed rather than the mixture with a minimum percentage of dwelling types typically required in PRD zones.

Suggesting their favorability within the housing unit mixture, the townhouse and single-family semi-detached dwelling type has the highest maximum limit and tie with the Garden apartment, Triplex, and Quadruplex dwelling type for the highest minimum limit across all PRD sub-designations. Correspondingly, within the area, yard, and bulk controls, the townhouse dwelling type alone allows for the highest maximum lot coverage at 50%, while the garden apartment, triplex, and duplex dwelling types allow for the highest improved lot coverage at 75%, although it also requires the largest minimum yards.

Additional open space requirements and environmental standards apply to PRD zones. A minimum of 20 percent of land area must be residential open space. This is defined to include common recreation areas and buffer areas. Additional environmental restrictions focus on limiting the potential impediment or alteration of water-bodies, in the zone. This includes restricting the increase to the runoff of the natural or existing state of a property, requiring a 20-foot setback from stream or watercourses or an easement of at least 15 feet from the edge of any body of water, and prohibiting development where the slope grade is greater than 16% as well as the land disposal or seepage of sewage based on the seasonal levels of the water table and the proximity to channels, surface watercourses, and groundwater sources.

Mixed-Use Development (MUD-1, MUD-2). A single large area to the northwest of Mahwah Station, primarily occupied by a large office tower complex for the Platinum Passport Travel Agency, falls under two overlay zones that allow for mixed-use development. The larger, primary overlay is Mixed-Use Development 2 (MUD-2), which has the stated purpose of developing an underutilized site to provide credits toward the Township's affordable housing obligation. It is divided into three distinct areas based on permitted use: (1) hotel and OP-200 office uses over a minimum of 30 acres, (2) mixed-use, inclusionary, multi-family residential with some B200 business uses over a minimum of 58 acres, and (3) B40 business, big-box retail, and IP-120 industrial uses over a minimum of 30 acres. The MUD-2 overlay allows for an enormous bulk through increases in maximum building heights, allowing up to 300 feet and 25 stories for the hotel and office area, 65 feet and 5 stories for the residential area, and 45 feet and 2 stories for the commercial area, likely due to its context near the existing office tower. The Mixed-Use Development 1 (MUD-1) overlay allows for multi-family housing and B10 business uses over a large portion of land around an existing road between the MUD-2 overlay to the east and the Ramapo River to the west. Despite a mostly conventional maximum building height of 38 feet or 3 stories and density of 14 units per an acre, the MUD-1 overlay significantly increases the typically allowed coverage, with a maximum improved lot coverage of 85% and a maximum lot coverage of 80%.

Highlands Region

In addition to the zoning designations summarized above, development within the *study area* may be subject to regulations set by The Highlands Act and the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (NJHC). The NJHC regulates the Highlands Region in Mahwah, including the station *study area* (0.25-mile radius). The municipality submitted a Petition for Plan Conformance for both areas, which the Highlands Council approved on December 16, 2010. The NJHC's regulations include warehouse restrictions, environmental standards, and land use ordinances[23].

NJHC regulations prohibit development within 300 feet of open waters. Given the presence of the Masonicus Brook, significant portions of the study fall within the 300-foot buffer zone. However, the Highlands Act also includes seventeen exemptions from the provisions of the Act and the Regional Master Plan[24].

Environmental Data

This section contains information regarding environmental constraints located within the *Study Area*. These include water bodies, flood hazard areas, contaminated sites, wetlands, critical habitat, and topography. This is followed by a map of environmental constraints on page 17.

Water Bodies

Masonicus Brook: The Masonicus Brook, a FW2-NT classified stream[20], is located to the west of the train station. It is a tributary to the Mahwah River. Within the *Study Area*, it runs parallel with the train tracks approximately 400 - 500 feet to the west of the train tracks. The stream is classified by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) as an FW2-NT stream[21], meaning the stream is subject to man-made wastewater discharges (FW2) and is not a trout maintenance stream (NT). Statewide, such streams contain a 150 foot buffer. Due to being located within the Highlands, that buffer is extended to 300 ft., though as discussed earlier, parts of the *Study Area* may qualify for exemptions due to development that was constructed prior to the regulations taking effect.

Winters Pond: The Winters Pond is located on municipally designated open space[22] south of East Ramapo Avenue and west of South Railroad Avenue. It is subject to the 300 ft. Highlands buffer. Development around this site may be subject to review by Green Acres.

Highlands Region and Transit-Oriented Development

While the mission of the Highlands Council is the protection of the natural resources within the region, the Highlands Water Protection Act and Highlands Regional Master Plan contain provisions for smart growth and development. The two relevant mechanisms in this instance include one exemption (number four), and Highlands Center designation.

According to exemption number four, redevelopment within the 300-foot buffer of open waters may be permitted as long as the reconstruction of any building or structure stays within 125% of the footprint of existing impervious surfaces on the site, not to exceed an additional quarter acre (10,890 sf.), whichever is the lesser.

The Highlands representative for Mahwah Township indicated that the Study Area may be eligible for Highlands Center designation. This would exempt the *Study Area* from some Highlands regulations, defaulting to the underlying zoning requirements and other applicable State regulations[25].

Flood Hazard Area

To the west of the train tracks, following the Masonicus Brook, there is a regulated floodplain[26]. Most of the flood hazard area (FHA) is in the 100 year floodplain (one percent annual chance flood hazard), while at the edges of that area, parts are located within the 500 year floodplain (0.2 percent annual change flood hazard). Most types of development proposed within the FHA and riparian corridor are subject to NJDEP permitting requirements pursuant to N.J.A.C. §7:13-1.1 (et. seq.).

Wetlands

Adjacent to portions of the Masonicus Brook and Winters Pond are regulated wetlands[27]. Regulated wetlands contain transition areas which vary in width depending on the quality of the wetlands. Wetlands quality and transition areas are determined pursuant to N.J.A.C. §7:7A-1.1 (et. seq.). Like the FHA, most development located in and around wetlands are subject to NJDEP permitting requirements.

Known Contaminated Sites

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:26E-1.8, the NJDEP defines a contaminated site as "*all portions of environmental media and any location where contamination is emanating, or which has emanated there from, that contain one or more contaminants at a concentration above any remediation standard or screening criterion.*" The NJDEP maps the location of these sites.

Within the *Study Area* is one known contaminated site. It is within the DPW site, and NJDEP records indicate that it is related to groundwater contamination[28]. Therefore, future redevelopment of the site may require remediation efforts.

Critical Habitat

According to the New Jersey Highlands Council, the *Study Area* does not contain any critical habitat or vernal pools. The New Jersey Department of Fish and Wildlife's Landscape Project interactive mapping tool indicates that the land adjacent to the Masonicus Brook is suitable habitat for certain habitat, including some of "Special Concern", though no records of any of the species which may utilize this land have been identified[29].

Grading, Topography, and Soils

Topography within the Study Area slopes downward from east to west[30]. The eastern edge has a topography of 250 - 350 feet above sea level. This slopes downward towards the western edge of the *Study Area* to a low point just over 200 feet above sea level. Portions of the *Study Area* contain steep slopes. Much of the constrained area is immediately along the rail tracks and to the west of the railroad tracks, containing a mix of severely, moderately, and limited constrained slopes. Development of any site with steep slopes may carry restrictions or require additional permitting.

Soils in the *Study Area* are generally well draining[31], though the suitability of soils for development should be investigated on a site by site basis.

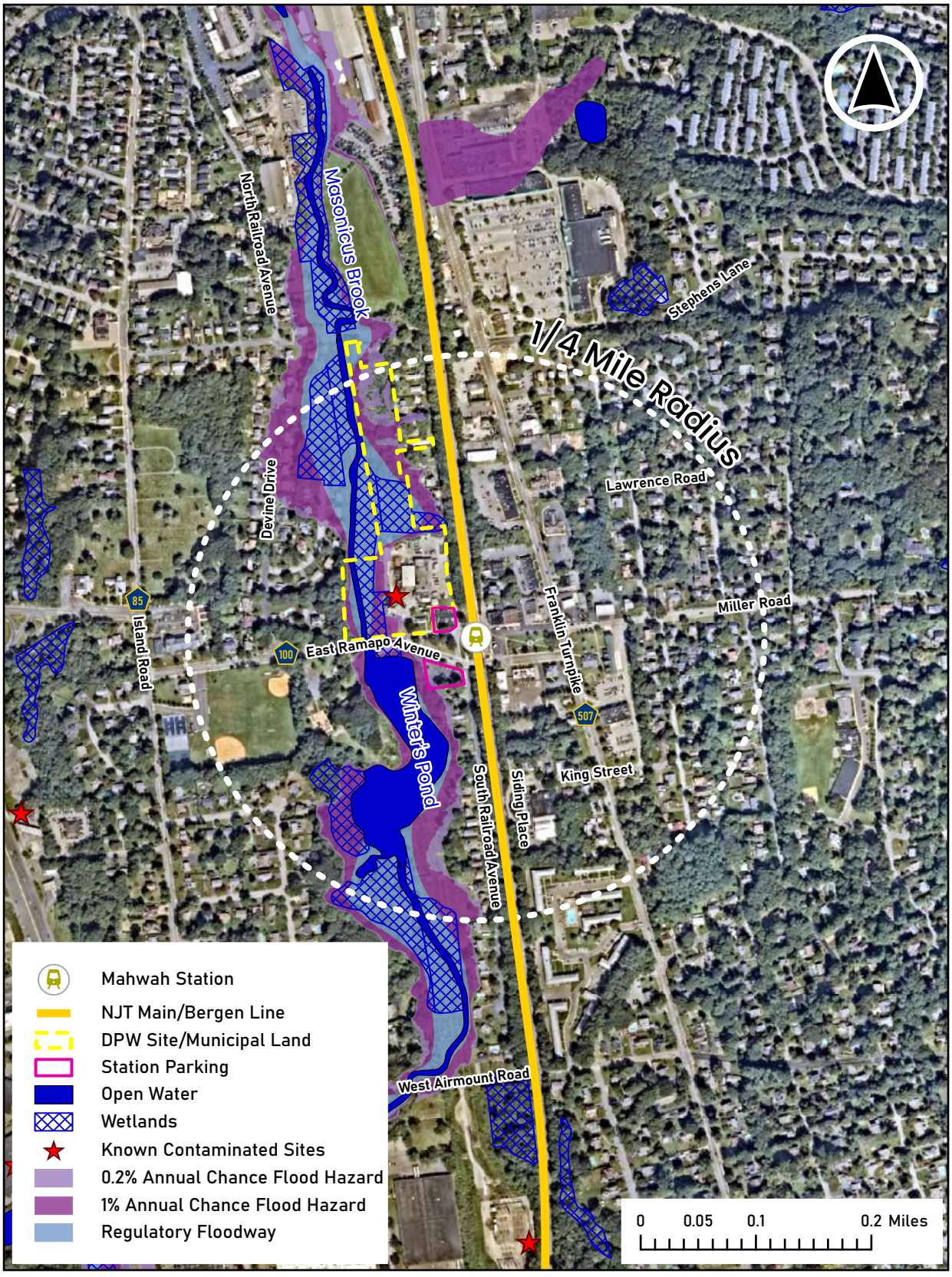
Access

The site is accessible, to varying degrees, by public transportation, pedestrian access, and motor vehicle, but less accessible by micromobility modes such as bicycling.

Public Transportation: As discussed earlier in this memorandum, the *Study Area* is served by NJ TRANSIT rail service via the Main Line and Bergen Line[32]. NJ TRANSIT does not run any bus lines in Mahwah. Coach USA runs a ShortLine private bus service from Mahwah to New York City on weekdays between 5:45 AM and 6:55 AM, with return trips from New York to Mahwah between 4:35 PM and 6:25 PM.

Pedestrian Access: Sidewalks are found on most streets within the *Study Area*, though there are gaps. East Ramapo Avenue has sidewalks, though the sidewalk ends on the south side of the street at the northeastern edge of Winters Pond.

Map 1.6: Study Area Environmental Constraints



Layer Credits: ESRI, FEMA, Nearmap, NJDEP, NJOGIS, NJ TRANSIT

It is not possible to continue into the core of the Study Area on the south side of Ramapo Avenue, forcing a crossing to the north side to walk under the NJ TRANSIT rail viaduct. the southern sidewalk starts again on the south side approximately 55 feet beyond the rail viaduct.

Similarly, Franklin Turnpike, the other major thoroughfare within the *Study Area*, contains sidewalks on either side of the street with notable gaps. On the west side, the largest gap is along the Delta Gas Station property and, and between the shopping centers located at 180 and 190 Franklin Turnpike is an asphalt walkway in poor condition. On the east side, the longest gap is along the Sunoco Gas Station property. Examples of sidewalk gaps are shown on the right.

Miller Road, east of Franklin Turnpike, contains pedestrian friendly uses while having significant gaps in the sidewalk, particularly at 109 Miller Road on the north side of the street, and Fire Company 1 on the south side. Veterans Park, which abuts Miller Road on its north side, does not have a sidewalk along the north side.

Smaller residential streets such as North Hillside Avenue to the east of the Station and Devine Drive to the west of the Station do not contain sidewalks, limiting pedestrian access for those living in close proximity to the *Study Area*.

While sidewalks exist along many streets, there is a lack of east west pedestrian crossings along the rail line. The only available crossing within the *Study Area* is on Ramapo Avenue, which lacks a sidewalk on the south side of the crossing. Sheet 49 of the Mahwah Township Tax Maps shows a 50-foot right-of-way for East Ramapo Avenue. It may be possible to reconfigure the roadway within the existing to right-of-way to better accommodate nonmotorized modes of travel.

Motor Vehicle Access: Regional auto access to the *Study Area* comes from the west and south via Interstate 287 to the west, which has access to US Route 202 and



SIDEWALK GAP ON FRANKLIN TURNPIKE



SIDEWALK GAP ON EAST RAMAPO AVENUE

NJ Route 17 with access to streets leading to the *Study Area*. Within the *Study Area,* north-south access is through Franklin Turnpike, and east-west access is through East Ramapo Avenue on the west side of the train tracks and Miller Road on the east side of the train tracks.

Street parking is limited to Miller Road and Scherer Place. Otherwise, parking is limited to private and public lots. Parking for the Station is limited to two municipally owned lots west of the Station on either side of East Ramapo Avenue. These are restricted to Mahwah residents with parking permits, and contain approximately 70 total spaces.

Additionally, East Ramapo Avenue has been described as a traffic "pinch point", particularly during summer weekends.

Micromobility Access: No bike lanes, scooter lanes, or other micromobility lanes (protected or unprotected) are located within or near the *Study Area*. While it is possible to utilize these forms of transportation in the *Study Area*, the lack of facilities designed for micromobility may limit their use in and around the *Study Area*.

Table 1.2: Development Activity

Township-wide Permit Information (2020 - 2024)							
Year	**Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits**	**Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits (new construction)**	**Office Space (# of permits)**	**Office Space (sf)**	**Retail Space (permits)**	**Retail Space (sf)**	**Other Nonresidential Space (sf)**

Block	**Lot**	**Address**	**Board**	**Application Type**	**Approval**	**Description**
82	1, 3-17, 26, 29, 30	East Ramapo Ave. / Franklin Tpk./ King St. /	Board of Adjustment	C and D Variance	7.19.2023	Variances to construct mixed-use senior housing with
70.02	121	149 Franklin Tpk.	Board of Adjustment	Conditional Use (D3) variance.	8.3.2022	Construct new service station and Dunkin Donuts with
71	6, 72	150 Franklin Tpk.	Planning Board	Amended Site Plan	8.22.2022	Atrium expansion of Roxanne Brick Oven
47	28.01	15 Mountain Avenue	Planning Board	Minor Subdivision	9.11.2023	Minor subdivision for single-family
70.02	21	149 Franklin Tpk.	Planning Board	Site Plan	9.11.2023	Trailer application and rear setback
68	14, 14.01	62 Franklin Tpk.	Planning Board	Site Plan	Oct. 2024	Upgrade existing service station and

Development Activity

Development activity, including Township-wide aggregated permit information and Board applications in the *Study Area* are indicated in the table on the following page.

Aggregated permit data is provided by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. Information is only available for the entire municipality, rather than specifying the *Study Area*.

This provides general trends for the municipality, but lacks specificity. The Board applications give a better sense of development within the *Study Area*. Since 2020, six applications for development have been approved in the *Study Area*. Two were approved by the Board of Adjustment, and four were approved by the Planning Board.

The mixed-use senior development project, while approved, will no longer be developed (as indicated earlier in this memorandum).

Three of the applications are minor, involving a subdivision for a single-family detached dwelling, a trailer for an existing service station, and an expansion of an atrium at a restaurant.

The largest project occurred in 2022 and involved rebuilding a service station with a Dunkin Donuts. The most recent approval was in October of 2024, involving site upgrades to an existing service station and convenience store.

It is possible that some of the permit data applies to the *Study Area* through as-of-right development that is exempt from Board approval, but that data is not available at this time.

Overall, development within the *Study Area* since 2020 has been limited.

Summary and Analysis of Site Constraints

Existing Zoning Regulations: The *Study Area* contains 11 separate zoning districts. While some of these districts contain uses and standards conducive to transit friendly downtown development, others do not. The Township may consider rezoning some or all of the Study Area, or adopting a transit friendly downtown overlay district that allows for more cohesive, transit friendly downtown development reflecting the Township's vision for the *Study Area.*

Highlands Restrictions: Highlands restrictions are stricter than the underlying zoning regulations and other State regulations relating to stream corridors. Some exemptions appear to apply within the *Study Area*, which would allow for future development. Additionally, depending on the extent of future development in the *Study Area*, the Township may consider applying for Highlands Center Designation of the *Study Area*, which would allow for more permissive development.

Environmental Constraints: The site is encumbered by streams, wetlands, other open waters, a Flood Hazard Area, Known Contaminated Sites and steep slopes. These constraints will need to be taken into account for any future development within the *Study Area* and may require additional permitting.

Access to Study Area: The site is served by NJ TRANSIT rail, sidewalks, and streets for motor vehicle access. NJ TRANSIT does not operate a bus line in Mahwah. Bus access is limited to a private company, Coach USA, with buses to and from New York City on weekdays only.

The sidewalk network has gaps, both on main thoroughfares such as East Ramapo Avenue and Franklin Turnpike, and residential streets such as Devine Drive. Furthermore, the Study Area lacks bicycling and micromobility infrastructure.

Regarding automotive access, the *Study Area* lacks street parking, with parking mostly limited to public and private lots. Parking for the Station is restricted to two municipally owned lots. These lots are for residents only and use of the lots require permits from the Township. The lots are located to the west of the Station on either side of East Ramapo Avenue. The lots contain approximately 70 total spaces (approximately 30 spaces in the nothern lot and approximately 40 spaces in the southern lot).

For the *Study Area* to grow in a transit-friendly manner, multi-modal infrastructure improvements and improved access to and from the *Study Area* overall will be key.

Cultural Resources: As indicated in the discussion regarding the Historic Preservation Inventory, there are historic sites within the *Study Area*. Additionally, adjacent to the *Study Area* to the southeast is the Cragmere Historic District[33]. These cultural resources may impact future development and may require additional NJDEP or Historic Preservation Commission review.

Endnotes

1 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Recreation and Open Space Inventory. Accessed in January, 2025 <https://dep.nj.gov/otpla/rosi/>
2 The other east-west street crossing is Airmount Road, located ±0.5 miles south of the station.
3 Green, Darlene A., and Colliers Engineering & Design, Inc. Redevelopment Plan for Block 82, Lot 3 through 30 Amendment #2, Township of Mahwah, Ordinance No. 2039. Accessed January 17, 2025. < https://ecode360.com/MA0529/laws/LF2166688.pdf>
4 Analysis based on MOD-IV database. Single-family dwellings shown as Property Class 2 and Apartments as 4C.
5 Ramsey's Route 17 station area, located one stop south of Mahwah and brought up as a reference by local stakeholders, is also classified as a suburban place by NJT. NJ TRANSIT, Transit Friendly Planning: A Guide for New Jersey Communities, 2022. https://transit-friendly-planning-njtransit.hub.arcgis.com/pages/guide
6 2020 Decenial Census (Geography, Land Area in Square Miles). Accessed January, 2025 < https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mahwahtownshipbergencountynewjersey/LND110220>
7 New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforcehttps://www.nj.gov/labor/labormarketinformation/assets/PDFs/dmograph/est/copest23.htm
8 NJ Highlands Council. Accessed January, 2025 <https://www.nj.gov/njhighlands/planconformance/status/>
9 Walk times based on Regional Plan Association analysis using MOD IV and network analysis of existing streets and sidewalk grids. Average walk speed was assumed to be 3 miles per hour.
10 NJ TRANSIT Friendly Planning, Mahwah Station TOD Study Documents: About Mahwah, 2024. https://transit-friendly-planning-njtransit.hub.arcgis.com/pages/about-mahwah
11 Mahwah Township, Mahwah Train Station Upgrades, March 2024. https://www.mahwahtwp.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=116
12 Mahwah Township Master Plan documents. https://www.mahwahtwp.org/Archive.aspx?AMID=41
13 Green, Darlene A., and Colliers Engineering & Design, Inc. Redevelopment Plan for Block 82, Lots 1 and 3 through 30 Amendment #2, Township of Mahwah, Ordinance No. 2039. Accessed January 17, 2025. <https://ecode360.com/MA0529/laws/LF2166688.pdf>.
14 Resolution Adopting a New Bergen County Master Plan. https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/images/Departments__Services/Planning__Engineering/bergen-county-master-plan/adopted-docs/resolution-to-adopt-bergen-county-master-plan-4-11-23.pdf
15 Resolution Adopting a New Bergen County Master Plan. https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/images/Departments__Services/Planning__Engineering/bergen-county-master-plan/adopted-docs/resolution-to-adopt-bergen-county-master-plan-4-11-23.pdf
16 Zoning Regulations of Mahwah Township, New Jersey. §24-1 (et. seq.), including Attachments 4, 5, and 6. Accessed January, 2025 < https://ecode360.com/34814044 > (Applies to all references to Mahwah Township Zoning Ordinance)
17 Green, Darlene A., and Colliers Engineering & Design, Inc. Redevelopment Plan for Block 82, Lots 1 and 3 through 30 Amendment #2, Township of Mahwah, Ordinance No. 2039. Accessed January 17, 2025. <https://ecode360.com/MA0529/laws/LF2166688.pdf>.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid, pg. 25.
20 NJDEP Geographic Information Systems. New Jersey Geoweb. Accessed January, 2025 < https://dep.nj.gov/gis/nj-geoweb/>
21 NJDEP Surface Water Quality Standards Fact Sheet. NJAC §7:9B. Accessed January, 2025 < https://www.nj.gov/dep/wms/bears/docs/FactSheet-SWQS-2020.pdf >
22 https://dep.nj.gov/otpla/rosi/

23 New Jersey Highlands Council, Mahwah Township Plan Conformance. https://www.nj.gov/njhighlands/planconformance/mahwah.html
24 New Jersey Highlands Council, Exemptions and Waivers. https://www.nj.gov/njhighlands/act/exemptions/index.html
25 Highlands Center Designation. Accessed January, 2025 <https://www.nj.gov/njhighlands/planconformance/guidelines/centers.html>
26 NJ Adapt New Jersey Flood Mapper. Accessed January, 2025 < https://www.njfloodmapper.org/ >
27 NJ Highlands Council Interactive Map. Accessed January, 2025 < https://www.nj.gov/njhighlands/gis/interactive_map/ >
28 NJDEP Known Contaminated Site. NJEMS Site ID 11,715.00. NJDEP Geographic Information Systems. New Jersey Geoweb. Accessed January, 2025 < https://dep.nj.gov/gis/nj-geoweb/>
29 NJ Fish and Wildlife Landscape Project Interactive Map. Accessed January, 2025 < https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/24e1435701b94fbab4fa7f789b2efad9/ >
30 NJ Highlands Council Interactive Map. Accessed January, 2025 < https://www.nj.gov/njhighlands/gis/interactive_map/ >
31USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Web Soil Survey. Accessed January, 2025 < https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx >

B

Appendix B: Land Use Design Principles Memorandum

Purpose

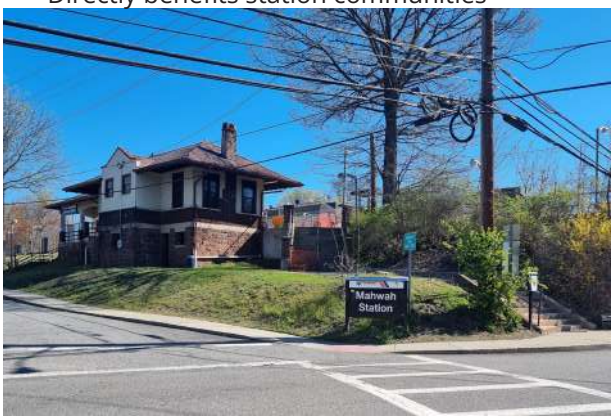
NJ TRANSIT is preparing a transit-oriented development vision plan for Mahwah Station and the surrounding area. The plan will be guided by transit-friendly land use principles.

What does this all mean? This memorandum details the meaning of transit-oriented development, explains what a vision plan is, and provides background on NJ TRANSIT's Transit Friendly Planning program. Furthermore, it will explore the Transit Friendly Planning place typologies, and indicates why Mahwah falls under the "*Suburban Place*" type. This is followed by the land use principles for *Suburban Places*, and how they apply to the Mahwah Station TOD Study. The report ends with a vision of how the area might look and feel if it evolved from a *Suburban Place* type to a *Town Center Place* type.

What is Transit Oriented Development?

NJ TRANSIT defines **Transit Oriented Development (TOD)** as development that is "*walkable, mixed-use development centered around and integrated with transit stations*[1]*".* NJ TRANSIT, through its Transit Friendly Planning Program and other mechanisms, has found that TOD can accomplish the following:

- Increases transit ridership
- Promotes regional economic growth
- Increases transportation resiliency through an increase in travel options
- Expands equitable and inclusive access
- Increases affordable housing
- Diversifies housing types
- Promotes sustainability
- Directly benefits station communities



MAHWAH STATION TODAY

How Does TOD Benefit Mahwah?

NJ TRANSIT has found that TOD benefits station communities by:

- Creating value around stations
- Revitalizing business districts
- Creating places that offer easy, non-automotive access to daily destinations, therefore increasing access to jobs
- Expanding viable, appealing transportation choices, including biking, walking, and rolling
- Facilitating growth that optimizes use of existing infrastructure
- Reducing the number of parking spaces required for each use
- Enhancing social connections and community cohesion by bringing people, activities, buildings, and open spaces together.



MAHWAH STATION HISTORIC PHOTO

Source: Mahwah Museum, Date Unknown

1 *https://www.njtransit.com/tod*

What is a Vision Plan?

The American Planning Institute, a nation-wide professional organization that provides certification for planners, defines visioning in planning as:

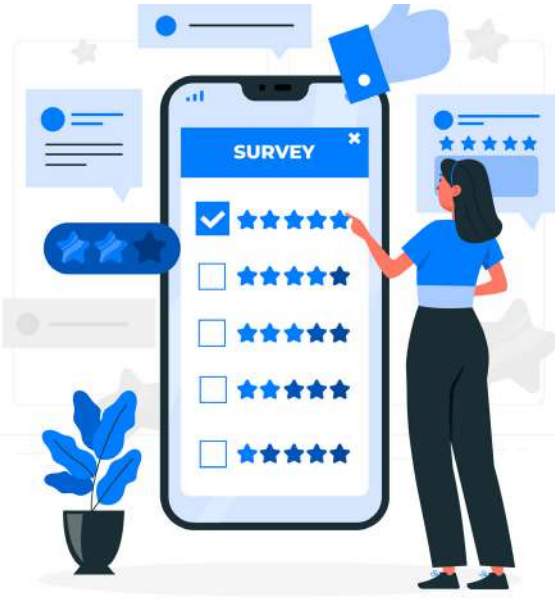
> *...a participatory planning process that seeks to describe an agreed-upon desired future for a community. To do this, citizens and stakeholders are actively engaged in discussions and exercises about alternative futures. Successful visioning processes lead to broad agreement about a preferred future, which in turn leads to implementation strategies involving changes in public policy and actions. Visioning exercises help communities begin to consciously create a future by advancing a shared sense of purpose while encouraging the leadership needed to fulfill that purpose.*[2]

What Does the Vision Plan Process for Mahwah Station Look Like?

In the context of the Mahwah Station TOD Vision Plan this means:

- Soliciting community feedback from residents through a publicly available survey
- Engaging key stakeholders, including elected and municipal officials, Township professionals, and leaders of local and regional organizations
- Providing a range of design alternatives for selected properties in the Study Area and obtaining feedback from the community in a public forum
- Compiling the feedback to create a Vision Plan for Mahwah Station and the surrounding area





Source: Freepik, accessed via American Planning Association

2 *American Planning Association PAS QuickNote No. 15 <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9007612/>*

Transit Friendly Planning Program Mission

NJ TRANSIT's mission is to move New Jersey and the region by providing safe, reliable, and affordable public transportation that connects people to their everyday lives, one trip at a time.

This Vision Plan is being developed by NJ TRANSIT through the Transit Friendly Planning (TFP) Program, providing technical planning assistance to the Township of Mahwah. The TFP Program is dedicated to strengthening the link between public transit and land use, and strives to promote equitable, economically resilient, and environmentally sustainable outcomes that improve the quality of life for all New Jerseyans.

The TFP Program plays an active role in improving transit access and helping communities plan for the future. In 2022, the TFP Program published *Transit Friendly Planning: A Guide for New Jersey Communities* as a resource describing the most important principles in transit-friendly planning, which guide communities on how to:

- Encourage healthy, active, and economical modes of transportation that meet the mobility needs of people throughout the state.
- Promote equity, environmental justice, and the right to live, work, and move through safe and healthy communities with access to transit.
- Contribute to community identity and sense of place.
- Enhance economic vitality and access to retail and community services.
- Support vibrant, pedestrian-friendly activities and places.
- Enable people of all ages and abilities to access the economic, cultural, and environmental destinations that make New Jersey a great place to live and work.

—Transit Friendly Planning Guide, p. 5



Transit Friendly Planning Place Typologies

The Transit Friendly Planning Guide identifies five "place types" that generally describe the range of density surrounding most transit facilities in New Jersey.

Urban Center

The *Urban Center* place type contains:

- High population density
- A diverse mix of commercial, civic, and residential uses
- Active streetscapes and open spaces
- High employment and housing density
- Often historic urban areas with a central transportation hub
- Sidewalks are wide, transit may have a more substantial presence

Urban Neighborhood

- Walkable and urban built environment
- Lower population and employment density than *Urban Centers*
- Uses are more residential-oriented with office and commercial uses interspersed throughout.
- Streetscape is active and diverse

Town Center

Often located in a Community's central business district (CBD).

- Urban character of neighborhood-scale residential, retail, and office.
- Area surrounding the CBD generally contains lower density uses
- Residential uses are either mixed with commercial or stand alone.
- Streetscape contains range of users

Suburban Place

- Characterized by a more suburban environment
- Usually contain mixed-use development along primary paths to transit
- Surrounded by low density land uses that are typically separated and clustered according to zoning classifications.

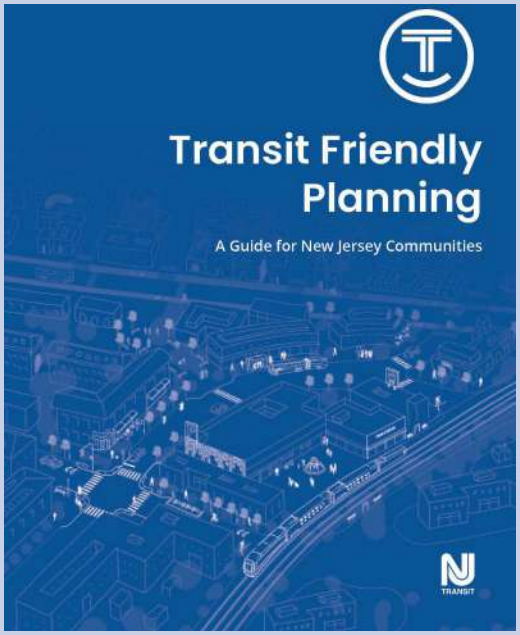
Rural Place

- Small town, "Main Street" feel
- Mixed, compact commercial center surrounded by low-density residential uses.



Source (Left to RIght): Mercer Planning Associates, PatersonGreatFalls on Flickr,

Transit Friendly Suburban Place



This plan is grounded in the framework laid out in the Transit Friendly Planning Guide for the five "place types" found in New Jersey. **The *Study Area* most closely resembles the "*Suburban Place*" place type.** Through robust community feedback and an in depth analysis of the Township's land use policy documents, this plan synthesizes the community's vision for the Study Area with the transit friendly planning principles identified in the Guide.

To read the full Guide, visit the *Transit Friendly Planning website*.

Suburban Place

A Suburban Place is characterized by a more suburban environment than the Town Center place type which comes before it in the "place type" transect. They tend to be located further from larger cities, serve as transit hubs for a larger commuter shed, and provide more peak-based transit service. There is often a large volume of passenger drop-offs and a high demand for parking. The street grid supports movement from residential areas to transit nodes, primarily accessed by automobile.

Mahwah Station serves as a transit hub that takes commuters to larger cities or job centers and is busiest during peak times. There are a mix of uses around the station and more residential and institutional uses as one moves further from the station. For these reasons, the project team finds this typology to be the most accurate when describing the Mahwah station area.

The Transit Friendly Planning Guide identifies key principles for the Suburban Place types as they relate to development and design, access, and active transportation.

Development and Design

Transit-friendly planning leverages the presence of transit to support and enhance vibrant communities. Transit area development, public spaces, transit facility design, and wayfinding need to work together to create a welcoming and easily-navigable environment for all users.

Key Principles

- **Create active transit area development:** Commercial, residential, and/or mixed-use development is clustered around the transit area and along primary paths to the transit facility. Residential development is mostly low-rise with slightly higher densities and building heights near the transit area.
- **Design a welcoming public realm:** Sidewalks accommodate all types of users and serves as a buffer on busy roads. Open spaces are within walking distance of the transit facility, and are landscaped or paved for active or passive uses.

- **Build complete transit facilities:** The transit facility may be the focal point of the community and should use design elements that are representative of the quality of service and the identity of the place. Both large and small transit shelters may be utilized.
- **Provide wayfinding and local identity:** Wayfinding signage starts one to two miles away from the transit facility and directs users from major roadways, including coordinated signage for passengers exiting the transit facility to local area destinations.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

The success of a transit system depends on its users being able to readily access transit facilities using a variety of transportation modes, including walking, biking, bus, personal vehicle, and other mobility options like scooters and ride-hailing. As municipalities throughout the state seek to grow their downtowns, enhancing circulation to and from transit facilities will be critical to ensuring safe and convenient access to jobs, commerce, and recreation.

Key Principles

- **Promote circulation patterns that support transit operations:** Transit operations support low to moderate ridership with mostly commute-based trips.
- **Provide convenient transfers between various modes of transportation**: Intermodal transfers are mainly private automobiles to transit with some first and last mile demand from nearby neighborhoods.
- **Encourage context-sensitive parking that supports transit:** Parking is concentrated at transit facilities in a manner that supports park and ride usage.
- **Implement transit supportive curbside management policies:** Curb space is typically in less demand, with needs for curbside access varying significantly based on the local context.

Active Transportation

Active transportation is self-propelled, human powered transportation, such as walking or bicycling. The transit network in New Jersey—bus, rail, light rail, paratransit, and ferry—relies on active transportation as a component of basic functionality, recognizing that all transit users are pedestrians at some point in their journey. Transit Friendly Planning, therefore, recommends the expansion of active transportation as a primary way to access transit in all types of places, from urban centers to rural places.

Key Principles

- **Implement complete streets to improve transit access:** Generally, there is a continuous sidewalk network between the transit and surrounding neighborhoods, with high-visibility crosswalks and traffic signals support, low-stress bicycle routes, and curbside management strategies to manage the large volume of drop-off traffic.
- **Create new trails and connections:** Trails link residential neighborhoods and connect to transit, parks, schools, libraries, markets, and employment centers, and may include on-road segments and utilize low-stress facilities to improve the user experience.

Can the *Study Area* Become a Town Center Place Type?

While the Mahwah Station Area is currently a suburban place type, survey responses collected by NJ TRANSIT indicate some interest in elements of a Town Center place type. Alternatively, survey responses also indicate some opposition to more intense development. This section explores the competing ideas found in the survey responses and discusses what a transition from a Suburban place type to a Town Center place type may look like for the *Study Area*.

What is the Town Center Place Type?

A *Town Center* is typically found in a community's Central Business District (CBD) and is characterized by more dense development with neighborhood-scale residential, retail, and office spaces. Areas surrounding the CBD generally have lower-density uses, where residential development can be either mixed-use or standalone. In contrast, a *Suburban Place* is usually defined by a lower density and more auto-oriented environment.

Support for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Diverse Housing

Survey responses indicate strong support for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), with over 63% of respondents supportive or very supportive of TOD, while just over 20% expressed opposition. Notably, the survey question contains a brief description of TOD, "TOD would most likely include mixed-use buildings with residential apartments/ townhomes, commercial retail stores, and recreational spaces within close walking distance of transit…" This may suggest a demand for the key components of TOD.

When asked, "What type of housing would you like to see built near the Mahwah Train Station in the next 10 years?", 50% of respondents preferred no additional housing, while 50% favored more diverse housing options. Among the housing types included in the survey question, townhouses, smaller apartment buildings, and large apartment buildings received strong support, while single-family homes and duplexes were significantly less favored.

Demand for Retail, Restaurants, and Cafés

Survey responses also indicate very strong support for more retail, restaurants, and cafés in the *Study Area*.

In response to the question, "Which of the following topics is most important to you as a resident of Mahwah?":

- 52% of respondents selected more food and beverage options as their top priority.
- 39% prioritized increased retail options.

Similarly, when asked, "What types of businesses, services, or public spaces would you most like to see near Mahwah Train Station?" (select up to three):

- 66% of respondents chose coffee shops and cafés.
- 60% of respondents wanted restaurants.
- 49% of respondents supported retail shops or boutiques.

Interest in Train Service and Active Transportation

In addition to TOD and retail demand, survey responses indicate strong interest in improving transit accessibility and alternative transportation options.

When asked, "Which of the following topics is most important to you as a resident of Mahwah?", a significant portion of respondents identified transportation-related improvements:

- 32% supported expanded train service.
- 25% sought better pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit.

This interest in alternative transportation suggests that residents may be open to reducing reliance on cars, enhancing walkability, and improving access to transit infrastructure. It also indicates that the current bike, pedestrian, and train infrastructure is lacking and requires upgrades.

Expanding pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure could complement the transition to a Town Center by making the area more accessible, walkable, and transit-friendly. In turn, this could support business growth, improve commuter convenience, and reduce congestion-related concerns.

Opposition to Town Center Development

While data suggests that many residents are open to development, it also highlights a competing perspective. Although 50% of respondents support additional housing near the station, the other 50% believe no further housing is needed.

Responses to related survey questions reinforce this competing perspective:

What type of development would you like to see more of in Mahwah?

- Retail: 73%
- Industrial: 1%
- Office: 5%
- Multifamily Dwellings: 7%
- Single-Family Dwellings: 15%

These results indicate a strong preference for retail, while interest in multifamily housing, industrial uses, and commercial uses was low. This suggests that residents do not envision Mahwah as an emerging employment center or a high-density mixed-use area.

Similarly, when asked about concerns regarding transit-oriented development (TOD) in Mahwah, responses indicate strong aversion to overcrowding:

What concerns do you have, if any, about transit-oriented development in Mahwah?

- Overcrowding: 60%
- Parking Issues: 36%
- Changes to the Neighborhood: 35%

These findings suggest that many residents value Mahwah's suburban character and are hesitant about major changes. Concerns over density, parking, and neighborhood transformation indicate that while some survey respondents support growth, a significant portion of the community prefers to preserve Mahwah's existing suburban identity.

Ultimately, the data presents competing possibilities—one where Mahwah Station evolves into a mixed-use district, and another where it remains a low-density, suburban community with less change. The future direction of the area remains uncertain, resting on a delicate balance between these contrasting perspectives.

Mahwah Station as a *Town Center*

Stated very plainly, the Mahwah Station area as a *Town Center* would represent a change. It may contain more housing, potentially provide more jobs, and possibly include more destinations like restaurants, entertainment, and cultural activities. It may also be louder, brighter, more dense, filled with taller buildings, and contain more people. From the survey responses, we know that these changes are simultaneously popular and unpopluar. While this may seem contradictory, it makes a lot of sense.

On the supportive side, the desire for more transit-oriented development is rational. People want more places to be with other people. Wanting more restaurants, cafés, and retail options closer to home represents a desire for convenience and for places to spend free time. People also like having variety and choice, so being able to choose to take the train to a destination, or ride a bike around town is also sensible. Finally, 50% of respondents being supportive of more and different type of housing, including apartments and townhouses, is very reasonable in a time of housing scarcity and high housing costs.

Similarly, opposition to this type of development is also reasonable. The *Study Area* is a *Suburban Place*, and residents and visitors like the station area as a *Suburban Place*. Change in the form of more or larger buildings, additional lighting, and more people may make residents uncertain of the outcome of change. Knowing you like something as it is makes keeping it the same a comfortable option. And while some changes seem sensible or exciting, the possibility of it turning out differently than you expect, and the uncertainty that brings, may create resistance to change. After all, haven't all people been to places that are different then where they live and not like it, or like it less than where they live? Being supportive and unsupportive of TOD are both reasonable views, even if held at the same time by the same individual.

The role of the planning process in this instance is to plan for positive outcomes, reduce uncertainty, and work to mitigate the negative aspects of change while also being honest with residents about what change may look like.

Change can mean more...more choice, more options, more places to create memories. It can mean more noise, more light, more people. It can mean safer streets and more places to walk or bike. It can mean more difficulty finding parking, or more traffic on the weekends.

But more housing choice, more entertainment, and a safer and more comfortable neighborhood may also mean young people can stay closer to home without needing to purchase an expensive home. It can mean choosing ones hometown as a place to meet new people and spend time with friends. It can mean a place where kids, teenagers, parents, and the elderly can get around safely and find convival places to spend time with loved ones, or meet new people.

The following page takes an unorthodox approach to visioning in the form of a story of what the Mahwah Station area as *Town Center* may be like. This method of illustrating with words attempts to paint a picture of what the Mahwah Station area can look and feel like if developed in a manner consistent with the *Town Center*

Envisioning Mahwah Station as a *Town Center*

Imagine taking a walk down Franklin Turnpike in April of 2035.

After finishing an article about some new bands from New York City that you love, you leave your apartment to see an exhibit at the new Mahwah Museum location at the intersection of Miller Road. Your friend from Ramapo College is volunteering there and assisted with a new exhibit, and you would like to support her. Also, it is an easy walk for you, since you live on the third floor of an apartment building located on Miller Road next to the station.

The walk to the museum is a pleasant one. People are sitting outside of Rita's, which is in the same general location as it was a few years ago when you were still in high school, but at the base of the apartment building you live in. High school kids are outside with their friends and parents are wrangling small children as they try to run across the brick pedestrian plaza that is Miller Road to play in Veteran's Park. One mother gives up after a moment, the area is well lit, and she can see the kids from her bench on the plaza. The nearest cars are sitting at a red light on Ramapo Avenue, on the other side of the street trees. You think it is safe enough for the kids to run around, and she seems to agree.

You see a full rack of e-bikes charging as you walk to the corner of Franklin Turnpike. You had been thinking of getting one, but you prefer to spend your money on the monthly train pass that takes you to college at NJIT in Newark four days a week.

As you cross the well marked crosswalk across Franklin Turnpike, you look up at the newer apartment building ironically called "The Old Fire Station". It was built a year after you moved into your building, and you used it as a case study for your Architecture and Urbanism class. It's modern, but the developer used the Mahwah Fire Department Company 1 building built in 1914 as architectural inspiration.

You would have designed a few things differently, but you like that they utilized the fieldstone base on the ground floor and dark green shingles on the peaked dormers.

The smaller building on the corner of Miller Road on the east side of Franklin Turnpike is another apartment building. It is three stories in height. The museum is located on the ground floor. You look through the tall, shop style glass windows and see your friend putting final touches on the exhibit. Before going in you run into the cafe next door that is located in the base of the same building and get two croissants to share.

After seeing the exhibit, you and your friend invite some of your classmates to your apartment to hangout. You all used to hangout at your parents house which was much bigger, but the take out options are much better over here. Your parents think the area is a bit loud, but if you walk west of the station where your old house is, you aren't able to hear much.

You remember the deal you made with your parents when you were deciding which college to attend. You would go to school locally instead of moving to Chicago for art school if they helped you pay rent for your own apartment (no roommates!). You originally thought that meant getting an apartment near school in Newark, but your folks suggested the "new fancy apartment building" by the train station in town.

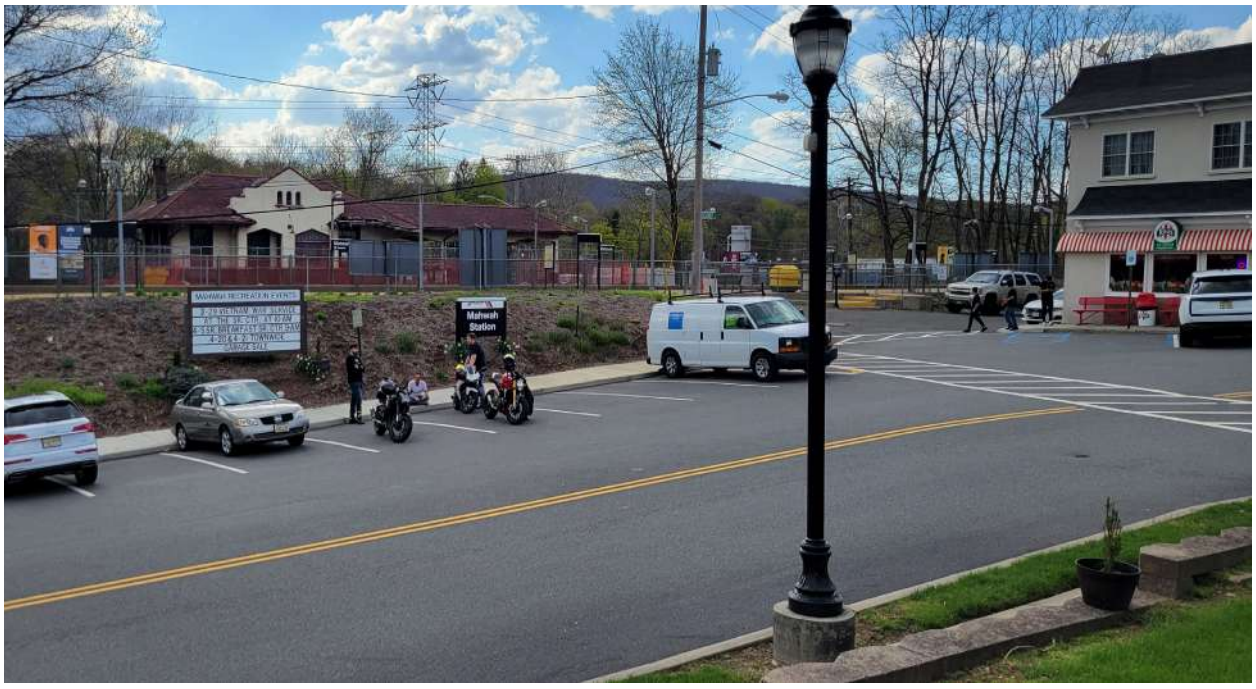
Living so close to home felt like missing out at first, but the train, the new restaurants and shops, and the ease of getting around the neighborhood made it convenient and fun and you always planned on moving to New York City after college anyway. The city life could wait a few years while you finished school. Plus, it was really easy to get into the City from Mahwah Station to see some of your favorite bands, and the long train ride gives you time to study.

Conclusion

TOD visioning gives residents of Mahwah an opportunity to interact with NJ TRANSIT and imagine different futures for the area around the train station. By using the *Suburban Place* and *Town Center* place types as a guide, residents can think about the future of their community and ask if it should change, stay the same, or do something in between.

As planning practitioners, the project team is responsible for telling the story of TOD, and in telling that story, it should include the benefits associated with it, and share the changes that may be less popular. Change is uncertain, and it involves more of, well, all sorts of things. More entertainment, more noise, more restaurants, more people, more housing, taller buildings, and the list goes on. Honest feedback from residents, and honest answers about change from the project team make the visioning process useful.

The ultimate goal of this project is to envision a future where Mahwah takes all of the elements that make it a wonderful place to live and use that as a foundation for a safer, more convivial, and more economically successful station area. This can be accomplished at different scales. As discussed herein, it can be accomplished at the scale of a *Suburban Place*, or with the right policies, at the scale of a *Town Center* place. Objective information, new ideas, active listening, and honest feedback can help the community decide which vision of the future works best for Mahwah, therefore creating a path forward for Mahwah Station and the surrounding neighborhood.



SCHERER PLACE AND MAHWAH STATION

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Appendix C: Community Engagement Memorandum

Community Engagement Memorandum

NJ TRANSIT is preparing a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Study for Mahwah Station and the surrounding area. As part of due diligence in preparing the Study, NJ TRANSIT and the project team has completed four types of community engagement and public outreach to obtain feedback from Mahwah residents, visitors, and key stakeholders to inform the Study and Vision Plan.

Four community engagement mechanisms were utilized:

1. A public survey conducted by NJ TRANSIT.
2. Interviews with key stakeholders in the community.
3. Community events held in person with members of the Mahwah community.
4. A virtual public information session that shared the results of the Study with the community.

Public Input Survey

The public input survey was conducted by NJ TRANSIT. The survey consisted of 17 questions and an option for additional comments. The survey was administered electronically with access via a website. Questions focused on the respondents relationship to the Mahwah Station area, transit ridership, use of amenities near the Station, views on safety, interest in the types and intensity of development in the area, and questions regarding housing affordability. The survey received 202 responses.

The majority of survey respondents were middle-aged, with 83% of respondents aged between 35 and 64 years, with 62% being between the ages of 35 and 54. There were no respondents below the age of 18, one respondent aged 18-24, 15 respondents aged 25-34, and 11 respondents aged 65 or older. Most respondents have lived in Mahwah for over ten years (63%), while 18% have lived in Mahwah for 6-10 years, 14% for 1-5 years, and 3% for less than one year. One percent of respondents did not live in Mahwah.

Additional information about the respondents indicates that a plurality (43%) of respondents work in New Jersey, either in an office full time (15%) or on a hybrid schedule (28%). 22% of respondents work in New York, with 6% working in-office full time, and 16% working a hybrid schedule. 20% of respondents are fully remote workers and 12% are either retired or unemployed. All respondents except one own a car, with a majority (65%) owning two cars, followed by 25% owning three ore more cars, and nine percent owning one car. Household incomes skewed higher, though a plurality (31%) opted not to respond to the question. Of the 109 people that did respond, 94% live in households with an income equal to or greater than $100,000.00 a year, with almost half of that group living in households with an income equal to or greater than $250,000.00 per year.

All respondents except for one are familiar with Mahwah Station. Two percent of respondents utilize the station daily, while nine percent utilize the station several times a week. A plurality of respondents, 34%, use the train station occasionally, and 25% use it rarely. Twenty-nine percent of respondents report never using the Station. Most respondents feel safe (39%) or very safe (36%) using public transportation in Mahwah, followed by 21% that feel neutral regarding safety and transit usage. Three percent of

respondents feel very unsafe using public transit in Mahwah, and two percent feel unsafe. Regarding nearby parks, nearly half of respondents (46%) visit them occasionally, while 22% visit several times a week and three percent visit daily. On the other hand, twenty percent of respondents visit rarely, and nine percent never visit.

Respondents are generally supportive of transit-oriented development near Mahwah Station. The question is phrased as "*How supportive are you of transit-oriented development (TOD) near the Mahwah Train Station? TOD would most likely include mixed-use buildings with residential apartments/townhomes, commercial retail stores, and recreational spaces within close walking distance of the train station*." 28% of respondents are very supportive and 35% are supportive of TOD, and 13% of respondents are neutral. Seven percent of respondents are unsupportive, and more than double (17%) are very unsupportive of TOD.

Respondents were also asked about the benefits and concerns they have regarding TOD. More retail businesses, enhanced public spaces, improved public transportation, and increased property values ranked as the most popular benefits. On the other hand, overcrowding (60%), parking issues (36%), and changes to neighborhood character (35%) were the most cited concerns regarding TOD.

In terms of what respondents would like to see in the station area, food and beverage options and retail options are the most frequent responses, this is followed by expanded train service and better pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit. This was the case for those that identified as residents and those that identified as visitors, though only three respondents indicated that they are visitors. When asked about categories of land uses they would like to see near Mahwah Station, an overwhelming 73% said retail and 22% said housing (7% chose multifamily housing and 15% chose single-family housing), with the remainder favoring office uses (5%) and industrial uses (1%).

When asked more specifically about housing, most respondents indicated that they feel there is sufficient affordable housing available in Mahwah (60%), with 24% indicating that there is not sufficient affordable housing available in the Township and 16% indicating that they do not know. The vast majority of respondents (78%) live in single-family dwellings and 19% live in townhouses. Only four percent of respondents live in apartments, split between large apartment buildings (3%) and smaller apartment buildings (1%). Half of respondents do not believe more housing is needed in the Mahwah Station area in the next 10 years. Of the other half of respondents, 7% think single-family housing should be built over the next ten years, 1% support duplex development, 13% favor townhouses, and 29% favor apartments with two-thirds of that group preferring smaller apartment buildings and one-third preferring large apartment buildings.

The survey results are included in pages 141 - 149 of this document.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Fifteen (15) individuals were contacted for the purpose of completing a questionnaire and conducting interviews. Eight of the people contacted attended interviews. Three interviews were conducted on Thursday, January 9th, Wednesday, January 22nd, and Thursday, January 23rd.

Attendees included Township officials and professionals, one elected official, one Bergen County official, and the Director of Sustainability of EZ Ride, a regional transportation corporation.

Community Events

The project team engaged residents at two community events: Mahwah Day on September 28, 2024, and a separate event at the Mahwah Library on October 12, 2024. In addition to providing a table, the project team brought a board to both events containing three questions and a satellite map of the train station area. Respondents would answer using sticky notes, with the option to place comments directly on the map at specific locations.

Mahwah Day was partially hampered due to poor weather, which reduced the tabling time from five hours to two hours.

A photo of the completed board with comments from the event attendees is included on page 145.

Virtual Public Meeting

The project team held a virtual public meeting via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, April 23, 2025 from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. The meeting included a presentation with a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation. The project team included:

NJ TRANSIT

- Michael Swan
- Richard Oppong

NV5

- James Clavelli
- Bettina Zimny
- Collin Rieger

RPA

- Marcel Negret
- Christine Garner

Arterial

- Dave Lustberg
- Lexi Smaldone

Six members of the public attended the meeting.

Michael Swan introduced the project, team, and the Transit-Friendly Planning program to the audience. James Clavelli presented existing conditions.

Dave Lustberg from Arterial presented the project team's recommendations relating to active transportation. Marcel Negret and Christine Garner presented the project team's recommendations for redeveloping the Department of Public Works site. James Clavelli finished the presentation with recommendations for land use policy in the Study Area.

The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

The team received comments and questions from three of the six participants.

There was support for the proposed community center and a preference for the medium density redevelopment proposal.

There were questions about parking, which were answered by the project team.

There was support for traffic calming measures.

Public Input Survey Results

1. How long have you been a resident of Mahwah?
    - Less than 1 year: 6 responses (3%)
    - 1 - 5 years: 28 responses (14%)
    - 6 - 10 years: 37 responses (18%)
    - More than 10 years: 128 responses (63%)
    - I am not a resident: 3 responses (1%)
2. Are you familiar with the Mahwah Train Station?
    - 201 responses (99.9%)
    - 1 response (less than 1%)
3. In the past year, how often have you used the Mahwah Train Station?
    - Daily: 5 responses (2%)
    - Several times a week: 19 responses (9%)
    - Occasionally: 68 responses (34%)
    - Rarely: 51 responses (25%)
    - Never: 58 responses (29%)
    - 1 respondent skipped the question.
4. In the past year, how often have you visited Veteran's Park and/or Winter's Park?
    - Daily: 6 (2.97%)
    - Several times a week: 44 (21.78%)
    - Occasionally: 92 (45.54%)
    - Rarely: 41 (20.3%)
    - Never: 19 (9.41%)
5. Which of the following topics is most important to you as a resident of Mahwah? (Select up to two)
    - Better pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit: 46 (25%)
    - Expanded train service: 59 (32%)
    - New housing options: 12 (7%)
    - Expanded bus service: 21 (12%)
    - Retail options: 71 (39%)
    - Food and beverage options: 94 (52%)
    - More cultural or entertainment events: 23 (13%)
    - Other: 18 (10%)
    - 20 respondents skipped this question.
6. Which of the following topics is most important to you as a visitor to Mahwah? (Select up to two)
    - Better pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit: 1 response
    - Expanded train service: 1 response
    - New housing options: 1 response
    - Retail options: 1 response
    - Food and beverage options: 2 responses
    - 199 respondents skipped this question.

7. How safe do you feel using public transportation in Mahwah?
    - Very unsafe: 6 (3.24%)
    - Unsafe: 4 (2.16%)
    - Neutral: 38 (20.54%)
    - Safe: 71 (38.38%)
    - Very safe: 66 (35.68%)
    - 17 respondents skipped this question.

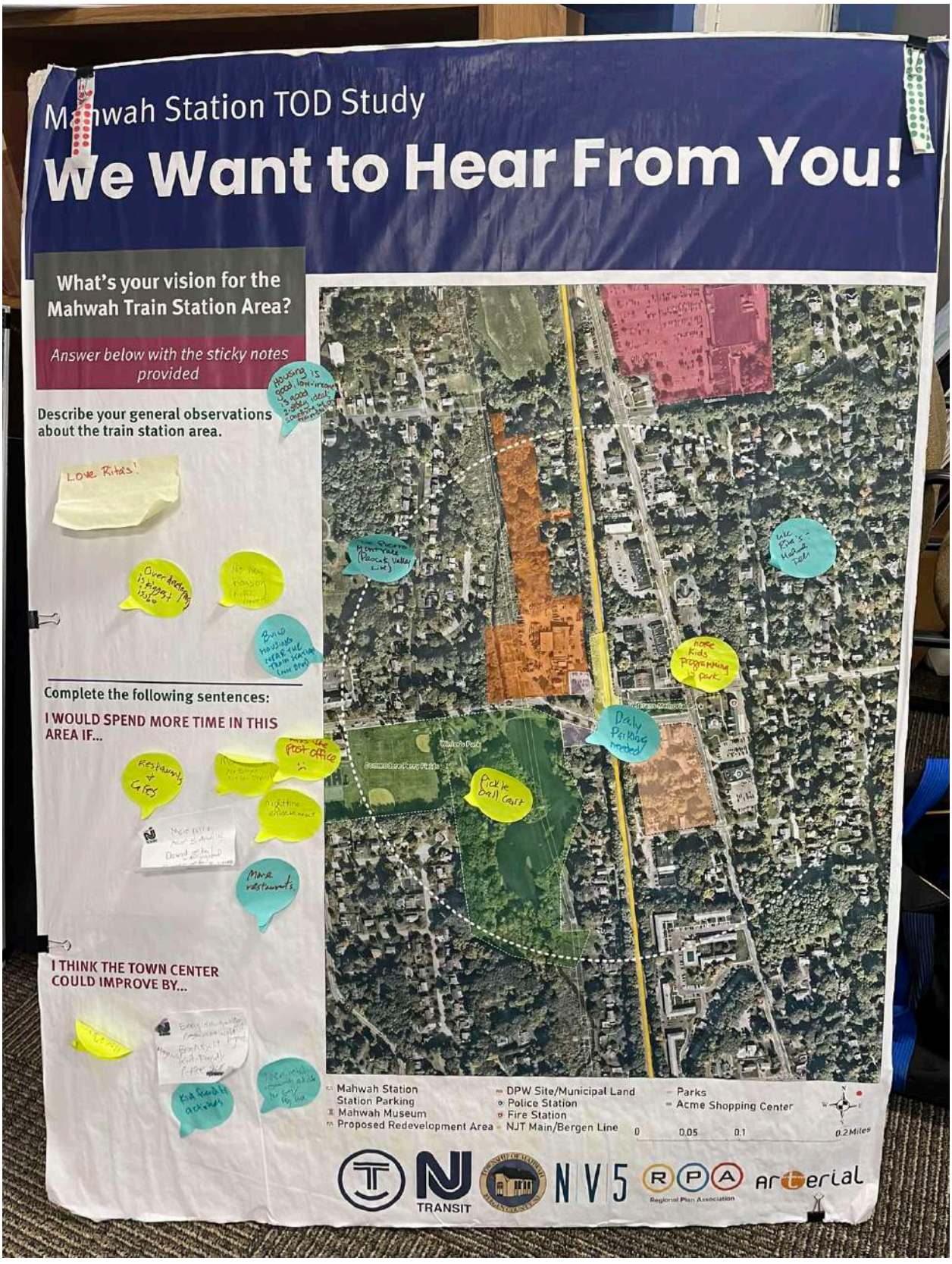
8. How supportive are you of transit-oriented development (TOD) near the Mahwah Train Station? TOD would most likely include mixed-use buildings with residential apartments/townhomes, commercial retail stores, and recreational spaces within close walking distance of the train station.
    - Very unsupportive: 31 (16.76%)
    - Unsupportive: 13 (7.03%)
    - Neutral: 24 (12.97%)
    - Supportive: 65 (35.14%)
    - Very supportive: 52 (28.11%)
    - 17 respondents skipped this question.
9. What type of development would you like to see more of in Mahwah?
    - Retail: 106 (73%)
    - Industrial: 1 (1%)
    - Office: 7 (5%)
    - Multifamily housing: 10 (7%)
    - Single-family housing: 22 (15%)
    - 56 respondents skipped this question.
10. Do you feel there is sufficient housing that is affordable to you in Mahwah?
    - Yes: 97 (60%)
    - No: 39 (24%)
    - I don't know: 26 (16%)
    - 40 respondents skipped this question.
11. What type of housing do your currently live in?
    - Large apartment building: 4 (3%)
    - Smaller apartment building: 1 (1%)
    - Townhouse: 30 (19%)
    - Duplex: 0 (0%)
    - Single-family housing: 121 (78%)
    - 46 respondents skipped this question.

12. What type of housing would you like to see built near the Mahwah Train Station in the next 10 years?
    - I don't think more housing is needed: 73 (50%)
    - Large apartment building: 15 (10%)
    - Smaller apartment building: 28 (19%)
    - Townhouse: 19 (13%)
    - Duplex: 2 (1%)
    - Single-family housing: 10 (7%)
    - 55 respondents skipped this question.
13. What is your monthly mortgage or rent payment?
    - $999 or less: 4 (2%)
    - $1,000 - $1,249: 2 (1%)
    - $1,250- $1,499: 4 (2%)
    - $1,500 - $1,749: 5 (3%)
    - $1,750 - $1,999: 5 (3%)
    - $2,000 - $2,249: 11 (7%)
    - $2,250 - $2,499: 8 (5%)
    - $2,500 - $2,999: 19 (12%)
    - $3,000 - $3,499: 18 (11%)
    - $3,599 or more: 35 (22%)
    - I don't have a home payment: 15 (9%)
    - Prefer not to answer: 36 (22%)
    - 40 respondents skipped this question.

14. In your opinion, what benefits do you think transit-oriented development would bring to Mahwah? (Select up to three)
    - Reduced traffic congestion: 10 (3%)
    - Increased property values: 54 (15%)
    - More job opportunities: 35 (10%)
    - Enhanced public spaces: 62 (17%)
    - Improved access to public transportation: 60 (16%)
    - A mix of housing options: 23 (6%)
    - More retail businesses: 84 (23%)
    - No benefits: 31 (8%)
    - Other*: 7 (2%)
    - 40 respondents skipped this question
15. What concerns do you have, if any, about transit-oriented development in Mahwah? (Select up to two)
    - Overcrowding: 98 (36%)
    - Parking issues: 58 (21%)
    - Changes to the character of the neighborhood: 56 (20%)
    - Environmental impact: 23 (8%)
    - Affordability of housing: 11 (4%)
    - No concerns: 20 (7%)
    - Other*: 8 (3%)
    - 40 respondents skipped this question
16. What type of businesses, services, or public spaces would you most like to see near Mahwah Train Station (Select up to three)?
    - Coffee shops or cafes: 107 responses (24%)
    - Grocery stores: 9 responses (2%)
    - Convenience stores: 9 responses (2%)
    - Restaurants: 97 responses (22%)
    - Civic Services - Community Center, Library, etc.: 9 responses (2%)
    - Childcare Services: 2 responses (0%)
    - Bike rental or repair shops: 10 responses (2%)
    - Fitness centers or gyms: 9 responses (2%)
    - Banks or ATMs: 6 responses (1%)
    - Art galleries or cultural centers: 13 responses (3%)
    - Medical clinics or urgent care facilities: 2 responses (<1%)
    - Retail shops or boutiques: 79 responses (11%)
    - Parks or Public Plazas: 48 responses (11%)
    - Entertainment venues (e.g., theaters, cinemas): 32 responses (7%)
    - None of the above: 7 responses (2%)
    - Other: 9 responses (6%)
    - 17 respondents skipped this question.
    -
17. What is your age?
    - 17 and under: 0 (0%)
    - 18-24: 1 (1%)
    - 25-34: 15 (9%)
    - 35-44: 49 (31%)
    - 45-54: 49 (31%)
    - 55-64: 34 (21%)
    - 65 or older: 11 (7%)
    - 43 respondents skipped this question.

18. Where is your primary work location?
    - In-office - NJ: 44 (28%)
    - In-office - NY: 9 (6%)
    - Hybrid - NJ: 23 (15%)
    - Hybrid - NY: 25 (16%)
    - Remote: 31 (20%)
    - Not working/Looking for a job/ Retired: 19 (12%)
    - Other/More Details (please specify): 7 (4%)
    - 44 respondents skipped this question
19. How many automobiles do you have for use by drivers in the household?
    - Zero: 1 (1%)
    - One: 15 (9%)
    - Two: 103 (65%)
    - Three or more: 40 (25%)
    - 43 respondents skipped this question.
20. What is your total annual household income?
    - Under $25,000: 1 (1%)
    - $25,000 - $34,999: 0 (0%)
    - $35,000 - $49,999: 1 (1%)
    - $50,000 - $74,999: 0 (0%)
    - $75,000 - $99,999: 5 (3%)
    - $100,000 - $149,999: 15 (9%)
    - $150,000 - $199,999: 15 (9%)
    - $200,000 - $249,999: 26 (16%)
    - $250,000 and over: 46 (29%)
    - Prefer not to answer: 50 (31%)
    - 43 respondents skipped this question.

Public Input Board



Virtual Public Meeting Presentation Cover and Agenda



Agenda

- Introduction
- Existing Conditions
- Recommendations
- Q&A Session

Transit Friendly Planning | Mahwah Station TOD Study

D

Appendix D: Redevelopment Alternatives and Station Analysis Memorandum

Study Area and Redevelopment Site

Study Area

As described in the Existing Conditions Memorandum dated February 11, 2025, The *Study Area* consists of a quarter mile radius around the Mahwah Train Station. Land uses within the *Study Area* include single-family detached dwellings, garden apartments, parks and open space, surface parking, retail, services, industrial, and vacant land. Eleven (11) zoning districts are located within the *Study Area*, including residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional zones, and a redevelopment area. The *Study Area* contains environmental constraints, including a flood hazard area, wetlands, known contaminated sites, and steep slopes. The *Study Area* is located within the Highlands Region Planning Area. The site also contains recognized cultural resources, including four historic sites.

Department of Public Works Site

During the initial stages of the project, the Township identified the existing Department of Public Works (DPW) site as the location for the proposed redevelopment alternatives. The Township plans to move the DPW to a new facility on Micik Lane.

As indicated in the maps on the following page, the DPW site encompasses Lots 29, 30, 31, and 38 within Block 58, containing a total land area of 8.94 acres, of which 65% is unimproved. Site improvements are primarily located on Lot 29, which includes a single-story structure (20,000 sq ft), two smaller sheds (roughly 650 sq ft each), the Old Mahwah Station Museum (1,100 sq ft), and the northern station parking lot (33 spaces), all clustered together on the southeast portion of Lot 29. Lot 29 has frontage on East Ramapo Avenue and Old Station Lane to the south, and North Railroad Avenue to the east. Lot 31 has frontage on Old Station Lane.

Lot 30 is 0.37 acre in size and fronts on North Railroad Avenue. It contains the public recycling center that consists of large bins and parking spaces and is for use by residents of Mahwah.

THE OLD MAHWAH STATION MUSEUM



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING



Lot 31 is 0.20 acre in size and fronts on North Railroad Avenue. It is unimproved and contains dense vegetation.

Lot 38 is four acres in size and has frontage on North Railroad Avenue on small portions of its northern and eastern sides. A portion of the DPW parking area is located on the southern portion of the lot, but it is otherwise unimproved and contains grass and dense vegetation.

The relocation of the DPW facility provides opportunity for redevelopment and new uses. It is assumed that the Old Station Museum, North Station parking lot, and recycling drop-off facility uses will remain on site.

Map 1.1: DPW Site Acreage



Map 1.2: DPW Site Existing Improvements



Proposed Zoning and Land Use Policy Recommendations

Any attempt to create a transit-oriented development or neighborhood will require a change to land use regulations within the *Study Area*. Changes should reflect the ultimate vision chosen by the Township.

Three general recommendations are made herein:

1. An overlay zone that encompasses the extent of the Study Area providing an optional series of land use regulations that permit transit oriented development.
2. Specifically for the DPW site, exploring the possibility of using the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law to investigate and, pending the results of the investigation, possibly designate the tract as a redevelopment area.
3. Seek and obtain Highlands Center Designation for the *Study Area*.

Where this section states that a use, policy, or regulation is deemed desirable by the public, it is referring to the NJ TRANSIT survey data that was obtained as part of the Vision Plan.

Overlay Zone

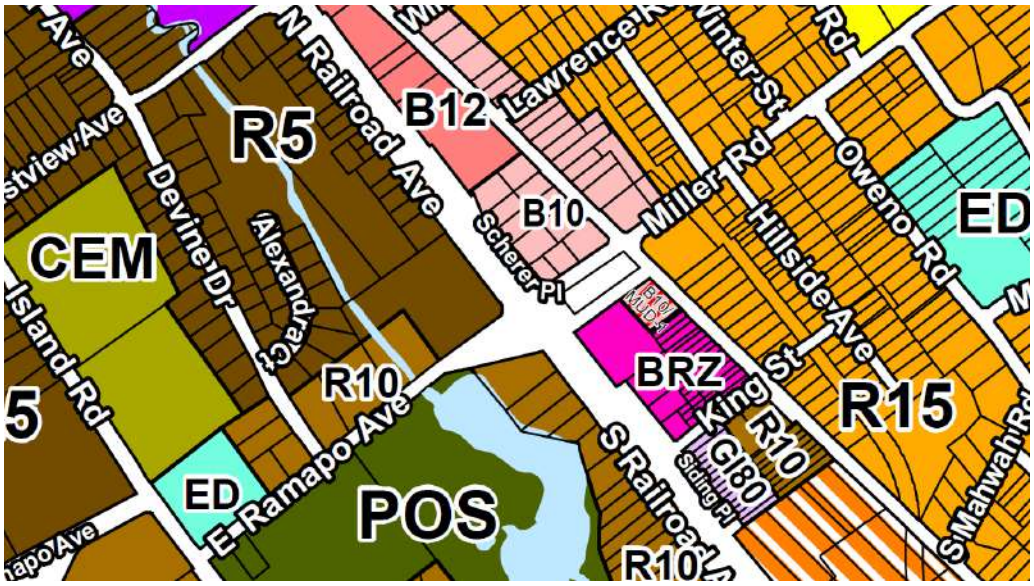
As indicated in the Existing Conditions Memorandum, the Study Area consists of eleven (11) separate Zoning Districts, including residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional zones, and a redevelopment area.

If the Township opted to pursue a holistic, transit-oriented approach to making the *Study Area* more transit-friendly, an overlay zoning district may present the most simple and efficient means of doing so.

This approach carries two key benefits. First, is creates a universal zoning standard for the Study Area, which makes a TOD neighborhood possible. Second, because it is an overlay district, it does not displace the underlying zoning, and will not render existing uses nonconforming. This allows for the possibility of TOD without complicating land use regulations for existing uses.

This second benefit is also a potential drawback. Because the underlying zoning is still valid, it creates the possibility that the *Study Area* may not develop in a transit-oriented manner, rather, it is possible that future development is in line with the underlying zoning.

That being said, if there is a market for TOD in Mahwah, the overlay zone will facilitate its development.



Map 1.3: Study Area Existing Zoning

How Does the Overlay Zone Function?

Like any other zoning district in Mahwah Township, the overlay zone contains permitted principal uses, permitted accessory uses, prohibited uses, and bulk requirements. It may also have additional standards, including permitted conditional uses, building design standards, and specific standards relating to other elements such as lighting, landscaping, signs, etc.

A simple framework for the overlay zone is proposed, as well as instructions for implementation. The framework includes a purpose, general instruction, and zoning elements as indicated herein.

Purpose: The purpose of this Mahwah Station Overlay Zoning District is to foster Transit Oriented Development in the Mahwah Station Area, a quarter mile radius around Mahwah Station. It is intended to increase denser, mixed-use development then what currently exists in the Mahwah Station Area, while promoting safe and equitable access to the Station itself.

General Instruction: The Mahwah Station Overlay Zoning District enhances the underlying zoning districts and provides additional land development options. Underlying zoning regulations are still applicable. Permitted uses in the Overlay District are required to conform with the Overlay District area, bulk, and yard requirements. Permitted principle uses in the underlying zones that are not permitted in the overlay zone are not eligible to utilize Mahwah Station Overlay Zoning District regulations. If a use is permitted in the overlay district and the underlying zone, those seeking zoning permits, Planning Board approval, or Zoning Board of Adjustment approval shall choose either the underlying zone requirements or the overlay zone requirements, but not both. Any deviation from the chosen standards shall require the appropriate statutory relief pursuant to the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law.

Permitted Principal Uses: Permitted principal uses should be based in those uses desired by the public through community feedback and those that the Township Council and Planning Board determine are appropriate for the area. Some recommend uses include:

- Residential uses, including: single-family detached and semidetached, two-family detached and semidetached, triplex, quadruplex, townhouse, multifamily, and garden apartment as defined in §24-1.5. It is recommended that the code define "Stacked Townhouses" and consider permitting them by right in the overlay district.
- Food and beverages uses such as restaurants and take out restaurants, both of which are defined in §24-1.5 of the Township's Land Development Ordinance. Other uses the Township may wish to permit that are not defined include: bar or tavern, brewery (in its various forms licensed by the State of New Jersey) and similar uses (such as distilleries and meaderies), and cafes.
- Retail sales, retail service, and convenience stores, as defined in §24-1.5.
- Commercial uses such as animal hospitals, auction houses, finance, insurance, and real estate offices, fitness and health clubs, health and wellness centers, health care facilities, places of assembly, and recreation facilities as defined in §24-1.5.
- Essential public facilities, essential services, critical land uses, licensed child care centers, and educational uses as defined in §24-1.5.
- Parking Structures.
- Any combination of permitted uses should be permitted within one building, multiple buildings, on one lot, or on multiple lots. The Township may wish to limit residential apartments to being above the ground floor of a mixed-use building, or in the rear portion of the ground floor of a mixed-use building to encourage more storefronts.

Permitted Accessory Uses:

- Accessory uses customarily incidental to a permitted principal use should be permitted in the overlay zone.
- Outdoor dining should be permitted in conjunction with permitted food and beverage uses. The standards in §24-4.29 for the MUD-1 Overlay District may provide a model for regulating outdoor dining in the Station Area Overlay Zone.

Prohibited Uses: All uses not expressly permitted are prohibited.

Area, Bulk and Yard Requirements:

- Minimum Lot Area: Smaller minimum lot sizes lead to greater density. The Township should determine the density they desire, and base minimum lot size on the preferred density. For a traditional Town Center, a minimum of 2,500 sf. - 5,000 sf. may be appropriate. The Township may also determine that a sliding scale based on the use may determine the minimum lot size.
- Minimum Lot Width: See "minimum lot area" above.
- Minimum Lot Depth: See "minimum lot area" above.
- Maximum Lot Coverage: Lot coverage should be determined based on the desired intensity of development, tempered by environmental considerations. As discussed in the Existing Conditions Memorandum, due to the Township being within the Highlands Region, there are additional regulations limiting impervious coverage.
- Building Height: Building height should be commiserate with desired density and permitted uses. If mixed-use and multifamily development are desired, a maximum height of at least 45 feet and four stories is recommended, up to as high as 75 feet and seven stories.
- Front Yard Setback: Front yard setback should be determined based on the type of road the property fronts on. For roads like Franklin Turnpike, the setback should be 0 - 5 feet at a maximum. It may be slightly more restrictive on less active streets.
- Side Yard Setback: Side yard setbacks should be determined based on the desired density, though five feet, and a combined setback of 10 feet in aggregate may be appropriate.
- Rear Yard Setback: Rear yard setbacks should be based on adjacent uses and zones, with greater setbacks required when adjacent to residential uses and zones, and smaller ones when adjacent to commercial or industrial uses.

Design Standards: The Township may consider design standards for development within the overlay. One approach to design standards would be to catalog traditional architectural styles in the Township, or use an existing database such as the Historic Preservation Inventory, using the data to identify a common architectural style or styles emblematic of the Township. That can be translated into design standards for building treatments such as windows, doors, roof styles, color palettes, and more, ensuring that future development is stylistically characteristic of Mahwah, helping to foster a continued sense of place.

Additional Options: The following regulations may help craft desired land use regulations for the Study Area.

Bonuses: The Township may create bonuses for developers for things such as building height, density, coverage, etc. To obtain bonuses, developers may be required to build parks or other public amenities, provide stormwater mitigation infrastructure above what is required, or similar improvements.

Conditional Uses: The Township may be comfortable with certain uses only if conditions are met, such as landscape buffering. Conditional uses may allow for the development the Township wants while mitigating what it does not want.

Impervious Coverage: The Township may permit developers to exceed impervious coverage limits if the developer provides a green roof. One means of accomplishing this would be to allow a 1% increase permitted impervious coverage for every 2% of the site containing a green roof, up to an identified cap.



GREEN ROOF *Source: Freepik*

Off-Street Parking Requirements:

The recommended permitted principal uses include parking structures. The Township may wish to permit parking structures as an alternative to, or a means of mitigating, minimum parking requirements.

The New Jersey Transit Friendly Planning Guide discusses parking minimums and parking maximums. On one end of the recommendation spectrum is the elimination of parking minimums. While this is one solution, the existing suburban and auto-centric nature of Mahwah may better lend itself to the other side of the spectrum, which is instead having parking maximums. See the below for information regarding parking maximums, and a discussion regarding contextually appropriate parking requirements.

Parking Maximums

Some planners and advocates have argued for a more market-based approach to parking, letting private sector developers determine how much parking to include in their projects. Some municipalities, recognizing the innate value of urban land, have gone a step further, implementing "maximums," which prohibit more than a certain threshold of parking from being constructed.

"Right-sizing" can be accomplished through a variety of targeted means. In 2015, the Borough of Metuchen revised its parking guidelines for zones in the central business district, reducing the total required by 50 percent, and instituting these specifications as the maximum amount that may be built, rather than a minimum amount that may be exceeded. Metuchen also created a Payment in Lieu of Parking (PILOP) mechanism, through which developers can pay a fee ($5,000 per market unit, $2,500 per affordable unit), instead of building parking spaces on-site (Metuchen City Code § 110154 F).

At the same time, many transit users begin and end their journeys using cars. Many NJ TRANSIT Park and Ride facilities, often located in the Rural Place Type, serve an important role for larger commuter sheds in rural portions of New Jersey. Therefore, parking reforms will look different from community to community and must be context sensitive to local needs.

While the next generation of active transportation, micro-mobility, micro-transit technology and infrastructure will help to close this first and last mile gap, parking will remain an aspect of many riders' transit experience for the foreseeable future. However, how parking is considered—through design and management strategies that prioritize safety, efficiency, and a human-scale environment—can have a significant impact on the transit-friendly nature of a place.

—Transit Friendly Planning Guide, p. 99

Redevelopment

Concerning the DPW site, one means of establishing land use policy is through the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.

The LRHL provides the Township with the ability to redevelop areas that may be contaminated or otherwise blighted through a two step process:

1. **Area in Need of Redevelopment Study:** The Township Council may direct the Planning Board to study a site to determine if it qualifies as an Area in Need of Redevelopment. This is determined based on statutory criteria. If the Study recommends that the Area meets some or all of the criteria and the Township Council agrees with the findings of the report, they may declare the site an Area in Need of Redevelopment.
2. **Preparation of a Redevelopment Plan:** If declared an Area in Need of Redevelopment, the Township may then prepare a Redevelopment Plan. A Redevelopment Plan contains regulations unique to the site regardless of the underlying zoning regulations. The Township may create bespoke, specific regulations, including permitted uses, bulk standards, design standards, and more, specific to the Redevelopment Area. These regulations may supersede the underlying regulations if the Township Council prefers that option.

The LRHL also allows the municipality to offer enhanced fiscal tools to prospective redevelopers that may incentivize the development of the Redevelopment Area. The Township may also require the Redeveloper to provide certain public benefits, such as environmental remediation, public amenities, or other improvements that may not be possible without utilizing the LRHL.

If the Township would like to explore utilizing the LRHL, it is recommended they consult with the appropriate Township officials, staff, or professionals, and review the relevant statute(s). This document does not constitute an Area of Redevelopment Study, nor can it provide any basis for the declaration of an Area in Need of Redevelopment.

Highlands Region Center Designation

A portion of Mahwah Township has been designated as a Highlands Center. The Highlands representative for Mahwah Township indicated that some of the planning work required to formalize the designation remains incomplete. With Center designation the Township is able to tailor their planning to the Study Area, instead of defaulting to the underlying zoning requirements, therefore it is recommended that the Township complete the planning process for Center Designation. The Highlands Center Designation would give the Township greater flexibility in crafting land use regulations in the *Study Area*.



THE HIGHLANDS REGION
Source: The Highlands Council

Active Transportation Analysis

Mahwah is the largest municipality by land area in Bergen County, New Jersey. Most of Mahwah's residents live outside of the *Study Area*, though a significant number of residents do live within a 20-minute walk of the train station, as discussed in the Existing Conditions Memorandum.

To facilitate transit-oriented development, it is necessary to create a safe, comfortable, and efficient means of transportation for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, and drivers.
To this end, the following three items are discussed herein:

1. Observations of existing conditions relating to active transportation.
2. Provision of terminology relating to active transportation, including mobility, complete streets, and street typologies.
3. Strategies than can be applied to the *Study Area* to create a safer, more comfortable, and more efficient means of transportation for all users.

Key Observations

Overview
The project team observed several obstacles to active transportation in the *Study Area*:

1. The Study Area contains a number of active and attractive points of interest.
2. Barriers to pedestrian, bicycling, and other forms of active transportation, including high volumes of cut through traffic, unsafe streets and intersections, and a lack of wayfinding. These result in a compromised pedestrian experience.
3. Deficiencies in pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure.
4. A plethora of public spaces and amenities that lack connectivity.
5. Gaps in regional public transportation and train station accessibility.
6. Lack of east-west connectivity within the *Study Area.*

Points of Interest

Station and Service
NJ TRANSIT trains stop at the Mahwah Train Station, which is on both the Main line and the Bergen County line. The trains provide service to Secaucus Junction, Hoboken Terminal, and Newark. The trains run approximately every hour on weekdays. The station had an average weekday ridership of 157 passengers.

Recreation
The *Study Area* contains recreational points of interest, including:

- The Mahwah Museum
- The Old Train Station Museum
- Parks and open spaces, including: Winter's Park, Veterans Memorial Park, and Lisa DiGuilio Tranquility Park

Food and Beverage Options
The *Study Area* contains food and beverage uses, including:

- The Mahwah Deli
- Rita's Italian Ice
- Sushigo Japanese and Asian Cuisine
- Tandoori Bites
- Roxanne's Brick Oven Pizza

Constraints

High Volumes of Cut-Through Traffic
Drivers from outside of Mahwah are using the *Study Area's* streets, primarily Franklin Turnpike, to get between major highways, generating traffic and creating an uninviting atmosphere for residents.

Unsafe Streets and Intersections
Streets do not have the design elements and safety measures needed to protect drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists, such as street trees, sidewalk extensions, pedestrian lighting and high-visibility crosswalks.

Lack of Wayfinding
There is no signage for parking, public spaces or businesses in the *Study Area*. The drivers that are cutting through have no way of knowing that there are reasons to stop and spend time in the area.

Compromised Pedestrian Experience
Narrow sidewalks, dim lighting and dangerous crosswalks/crossings are a few factors that compromise pedestrian safety and create an uncomfortable walking experience in Mahwah's downtown.

Sidewalks

The sidewalks in the *Study Area* are generally narrow and are lacking the amenities necessary for a walkable downtown community. There are numerous locations in the *Study Area* that are lacking sidewalks. Noncontinuous sidewalks discourage walking and other modes of active transportation.

In some instances, the sidewalk is broken by a driveway curb cut. This is the most prominent on Franklin Turnpike. Disconnecting the sidewalk network at driveways gives priority to cars, which in turn encourages drivers to take these turns quickly where they may not notice nearby pedestrians.

A similar instance occurs on Miller Road where the street abuts retail parking. There is no definition of where the roadway ends and where the parking lot begins. Pedestrians are forced to walk uncomfortably between parked and moving cars.

There are also instances where the sidewalk terminates or does not exist. This occurs on Ramapo Avenue, Old Station Lane, Miller Road and most Local Residential streets within Mahwah's downtown.



TRAFFIC ON FRANKLIN TURNPIKE



OLD STATION LANE



FRANKLIN TURNPIKE AT MILLER ROAD



NARROW SIDEWALK ON FRANKLIN TURNPIKE



MILLER ROAD

Bike Facilities

The bicycle infrastructure in Mahwah is extremely limited. The are no dedicated bicycle lanes in the downtown. Providing bicycle infrastructure throughout the downtown will increase the use of active transportation in the greater downtown area.

There is one bicycle rack within the downtown and it's located in Winter's Park, which is across the street from the southbound side of the train station. Municipal codes recommend bicycle racks be considered for any site plan submission.



BICYCLIST



BICYCLE RACK AT WINTER'S PARK



DRIVEWAY ON FRANKLIN TURNPIKE

Disconnected Public Spaces

There are three public spaces within the *Study Area*. Each has different amenities and style, leaving them feeling disconnected from each other and the downtown.

Veterans Memorial Park

Veterans Memorial Park is a half-acre park just east of the Mahwah Train Station and fronts Franklin Turnpike. The park was traditionally designed with a central focal point that the paths radiate from. The park contains benches, picnic tables, memorials, manicured landscaping, and both pedestrian and path lighting. The pedestrian lights feature banners honoring military members.

The "back" of the park, or the side that faces the train station, is blocked visually by conifer trees and a landscape wall. The park does not look inviting from this point of view.



VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK



VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK FROM THE STATION

Lisa DiGuilio Tranquility Park

On the opposite side of the train tracks is Lisa DiGuilio Tranquility Park. This is a quarter-acre informal park featuring manicured landscaping, a few benches and a picnic table. The seating provided in this park is placed in direct sunlight and lacks shaded opportunities. The furniture provided in Lisa DiGuilio Tranquility Park is different from Veterans Memorial Park. While both parks are positioned adjacent to the train station, they are disconnected by the rail line and the overall lack of cohesion.

Winter's Park

Winter's Park is the largest of the three at 17-acres. The park is across E. Ramapo Avenue from Lisa DiGuilio Tranquility Park. Winter's Park has several amenities including a large pond, benches, picnic tables, a gazebo, a playground, recreation fields and a municipal annex building.

Winter's Park has a different feel from both Veterans Memorial Park and Lisa DiGuilio Tranquility Park, and clearly serves a different purpose. While the two smaller parks are intended to serve the downtown area, Winter's Park is intended to serve a wider range of Mahwah residents.



LISA DIGUILIO TRANQUILITY PARK



WINTER'S PARK



MAHWAH STATION

Station Accessibility

The train station is not ADA accessible and is lacking general mobility amenities like bike racks and a drop-off area.

Regional Bus Service

There are no NJ TRANSIT bus routes that pass through Mahwah's downtown. Shortline has a bus route that serves Franklin Turnpike, but there are no stops within the *Study Area*. The lack of bus service increases the dependency on cars to get to and around the *Study Area*.

Shuttle Service

Mahwah does not offer a shuttle service to the train station for residents. Mahwah has a program called Access Transportation that provides service for senior citizens, people with disabilities and other residents who are unable to drive. Residents need to submit an application to use this service and are encouraged to donate one dollar per ride.

Street Connectivity

The railroad right-of-way, which follows a north-south path, impedes the construction of roads in an east-west direction as at grade crossings are not easy to obtain. There is only one east-west crossing within the *Study Area* at which traffic—car, pedestrian, and bicycle, can cross the railroad tracks. At this crossing, which is at Ramapo Avenue, there is one travel lane in each direction and one narrow sidewalk on the north side of the street. With limited east-west connectivity, traffic can back up at these crossings. These backups lengthen commutes and, perhaps more importantly, stifle business activity in the *Study Area*.



MAHWAH TRAIN STATION ACCESS

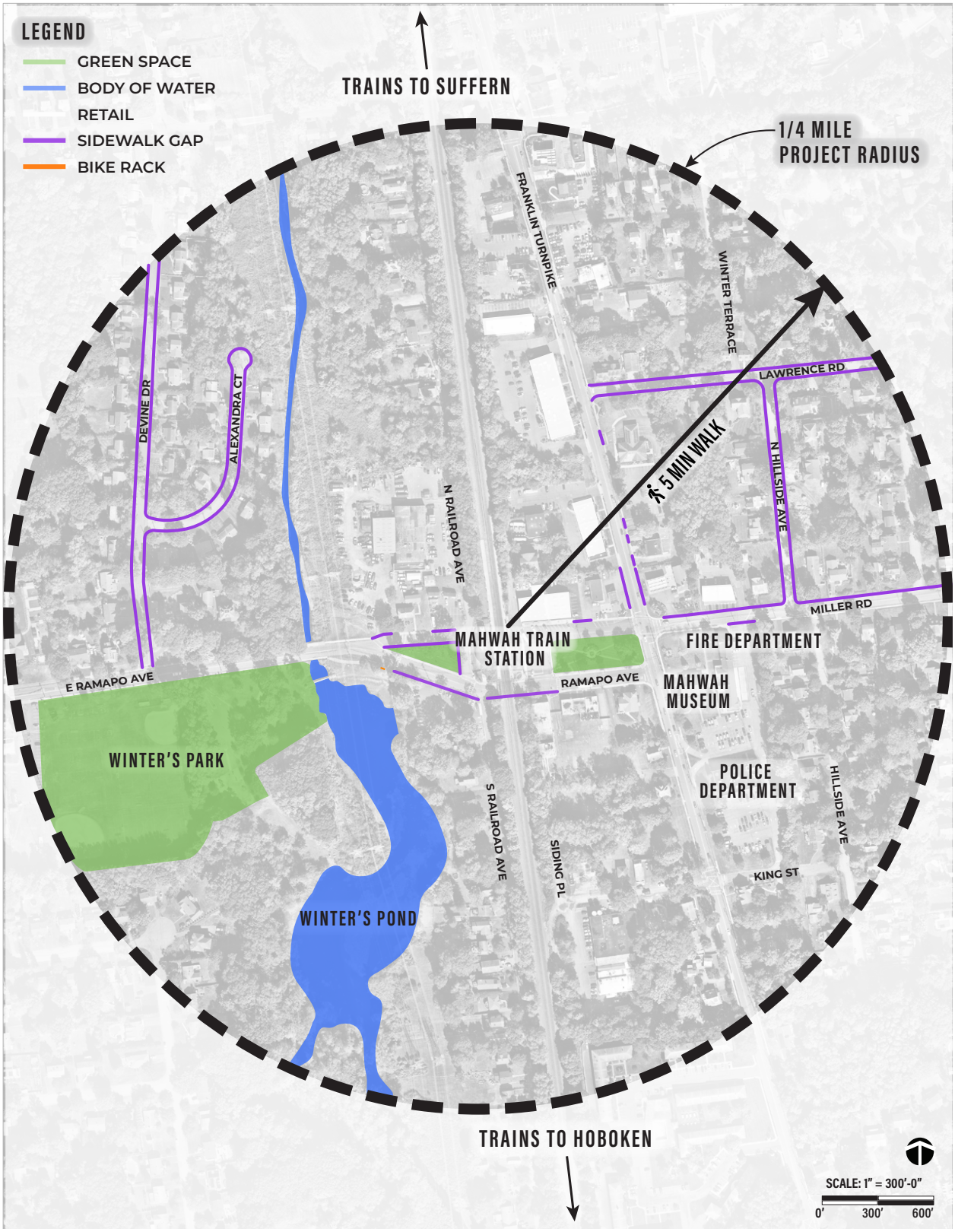


EAST RAMAPO AVENUE UNDERPASS



STREET CONNECTIVITY DIAGRAM

Map 1.4: *STUDY AREA* Key Map



The Vocabulary of Mobility

To envision new ways of traversing the *Study Area*, it is necessary to understand terms that may be new to the community. These will help to envision different ways to travel around the station area. Learning these terms will also aid in understanding the suggested strategies the Township may use to create a safer, more comfortable transportation environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, commuters, and drivers of all ages and abilities.

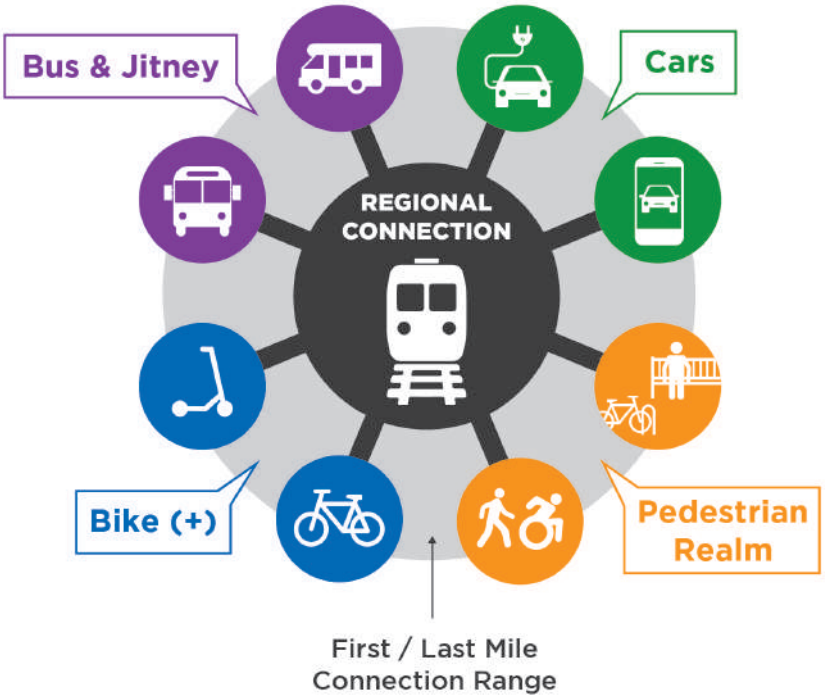
These terms include: **Mobility Hub**, **Street Typology**, **Sidewalk Zones**, and **Complete Streets**.

Mobility Hub

A mobility hub is a node in the transportation network that seamlessly integrates various modes of transportation. Mobility hubs increase first/last mile connectivity by providing infrastructure that supports an array of travel options. Switching between walking, biking, driving, and mass transit is effortless in mobility hubs because they exist within a well designed, comfortable, and safe public space.

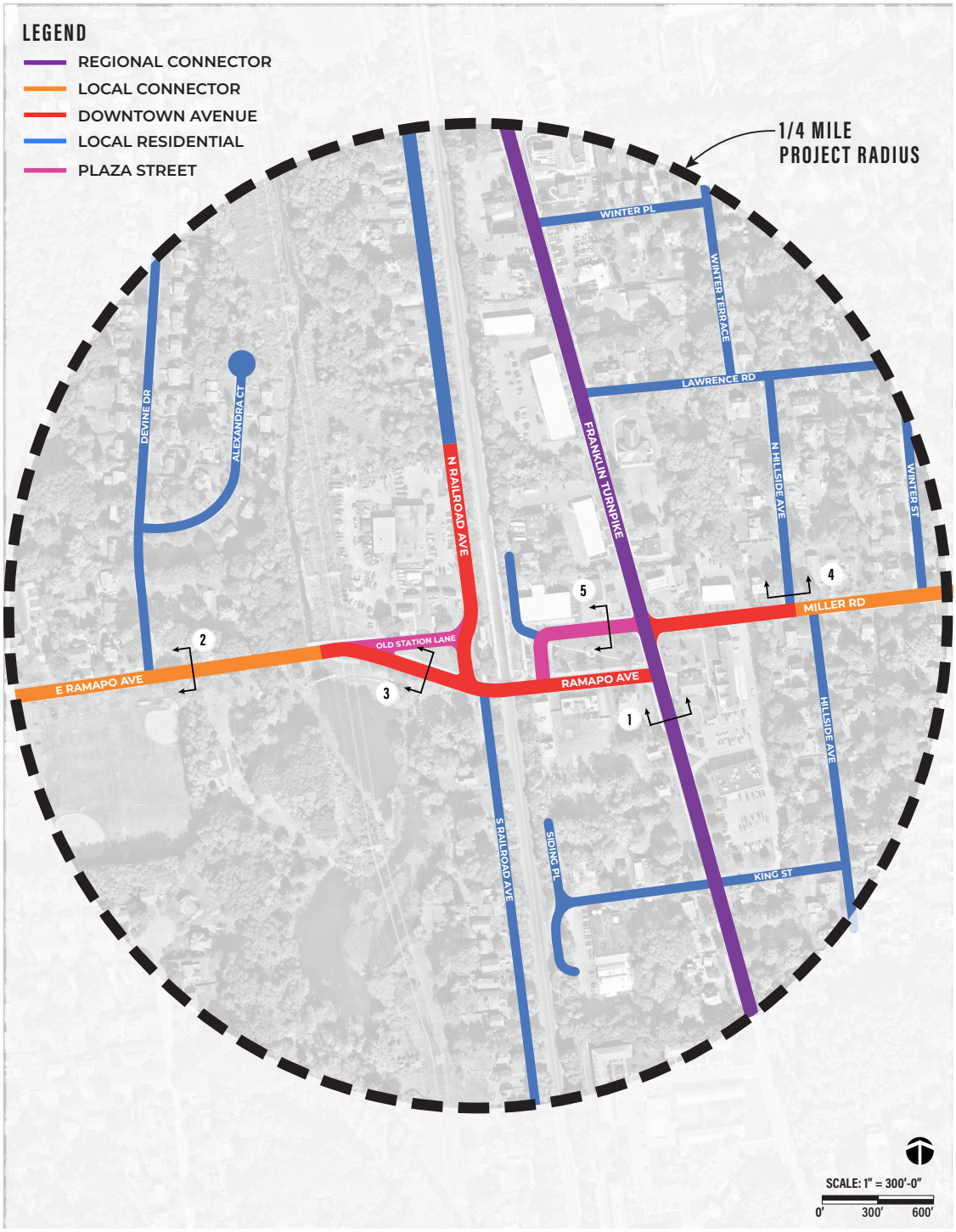
The space outside the train station does not have facilities for each of these 'last mile' modes. The nearby surface parking lots, on-street parking, and their travel lanes are poorly organized. There is no dedicated space for a "kiss and ride", encouraging drivers to idle and stop wherever it's most convenient to pick up and drop off passengers. The Access Transportation van does not have a designated drop-off or pick-up zone. Neither the shuttle or bus stops nearby have the amenities that many modern bus stops offer. There is no bicycle parking at the train station and are no supportive bike amenities like lockers.

While this term may be new to the community, the concept is not new in Mahwah Township. The Mahwah Township Master Plan seeks to improve transportation options, and create compact, walkable development wherever possible and to reduce dependency on automobile transport. In order to achieve this goal, the area must provide the amenities associated with a modern mobility hub. This will serve to support mass transit ridership, minimize congestion, support the local economy, and create an enjoyable atmosphere in the heart of downtown for residents and visitors to enjoy.



Street Typologies

Also known as "transects", **Street Typologies** outline a vision for the streets based on the existing/ proposed character and feel of the surrounding area. The typologies differ from the "Functional Classification" often used to categorize streets based on their capacity to move vehicular traffic. Functional classifications do not take into account the context or surroundings that the road is passing through. There are five (5) "Street Typologies" within the *Study Area*: Regional Connector, Local Connector, Downtown Avenue, Local Residential and Plaza Street.



Map 1.5: Street Typologies in the *Study Area*

Regional Connector

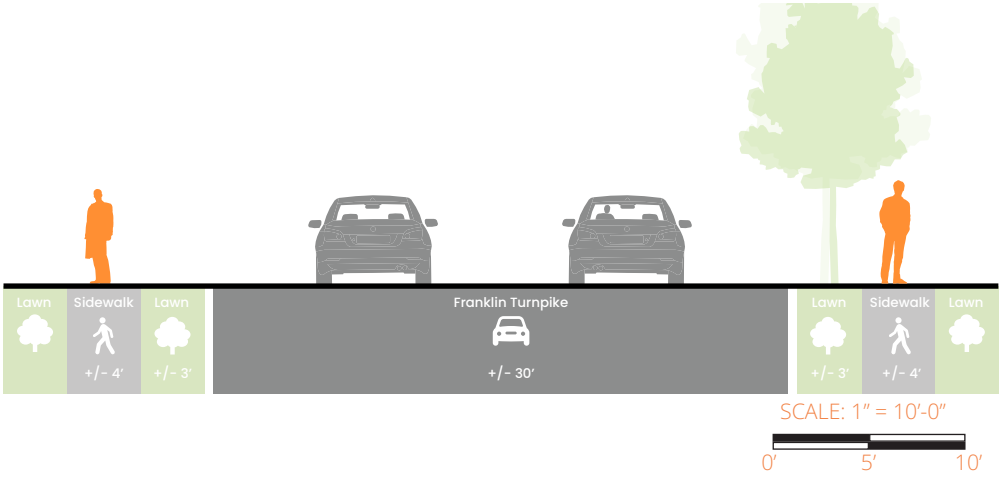
The Regional Connector is a mixed-use corridor lined commercial and institutional uses. That connects multiple municipalities. These streets typically have two travel lanes, one in either direction. Sidewalks with a buffer should be provided for pedestrian circulation, safety and comfort. Clear and comprehensive pedestrian and vehicular wayfinding is essential.

Key Characteristics

- Wide sidewalk with ample amenity zone
- Seating areas should be located throughout the amenity zone
- Consistent, medium sized trees with special care to minimize visual obstruction of storefront signs
- Pedestrian and vehicular lighting
- High visibility crosswalks



EXAMPLE: FRANKLIN TURNPIKE



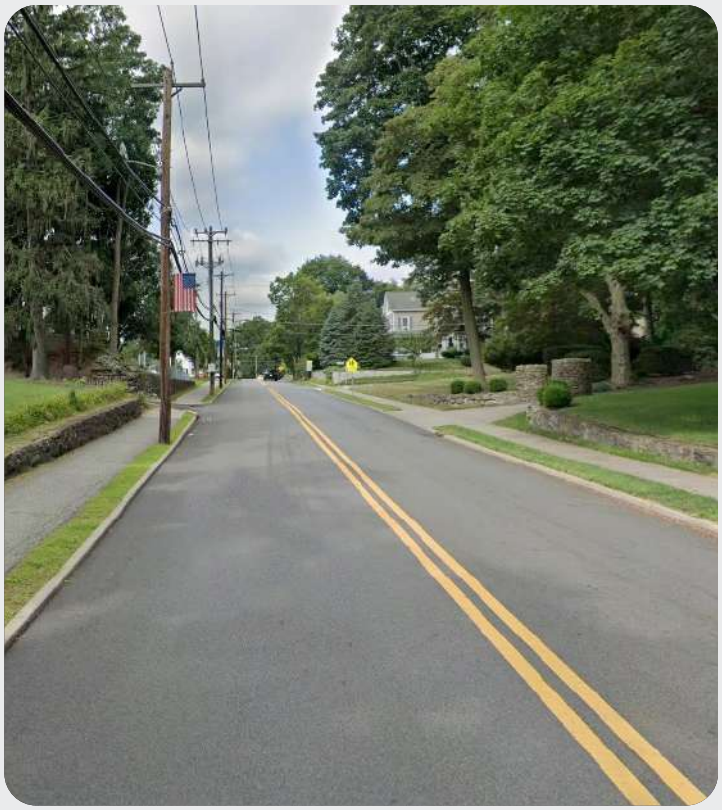
1 **REGIONAL CONNECTOR**

Local Connector

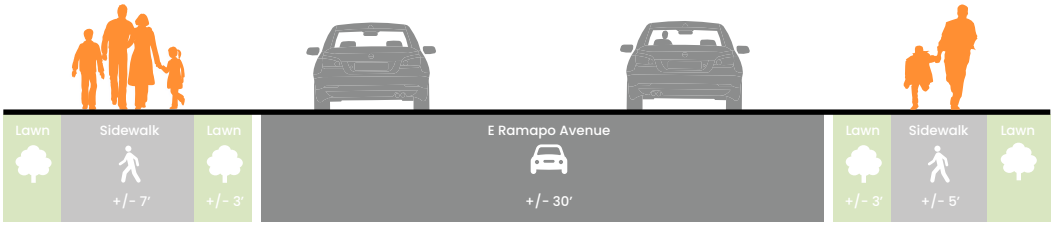
These roads are mostly lined with detached residential dwellings setback from the street. They have moderate to heavy vehicular traffic as they often connect residents and surrounding communities to major roads and destinations.

Key Characteristics

- Consistent sidewalks
- Vegetated buffer separating traffic from sidewalk
- Consistent, medium sized trees
- Pedestrian scale lighting



EXAMPLE: EAST RAMAPO AVENUE



2 LOCAL CONNECTOR

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

0' 5' 10'

Downtown Avenue

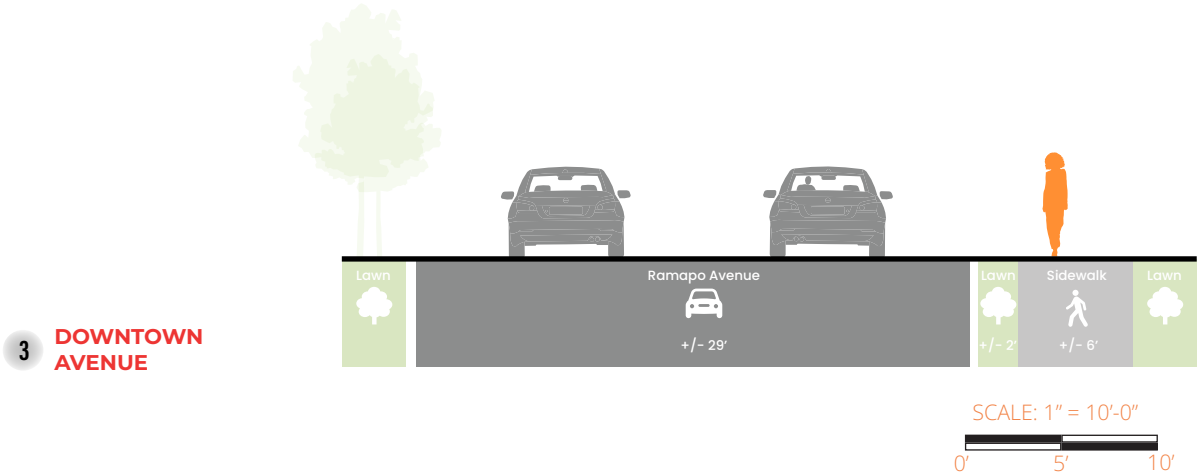
The Downtown Avenue is a vibrant mixed-use corridor lined with restaurants and retail that attract people from the region. These streets typically have two travel lanes, one in either direction. Ample sidewalks should be provided for pedestrian circulation, shopping, and outdoor dining. Clear and comprehensive pedestrian and vehicular wayfinding is essential.

Key Characteristics

- Wide sidewalk with ample amenity zone, room for shopping, and outdoor dining/cafes
- Ample seating areas should be located throughout the amenity zone
- Consistent, medium sized trees with special care to minimize visual obstruction of storefront signs
- Pedestrian and vehicular lighting
- High visibility and/or decorative textured crosswalks
- Pocket parks located along the street to promote socializing and offer areas for respite



EXAMPLE: RAMAPO AVENUE



3 **DOWNTOWN AVENUE**

Local Residential

Local Residential Streets are mostly lined with detached residential dwellings setback from the street. They are used primarily by the residents living on that street and become a social center and activity space for the neighborhood. They typically have sidewalks separated from the street by a tree-lined strip. They have 1-2 travel lanes and on-street parking.

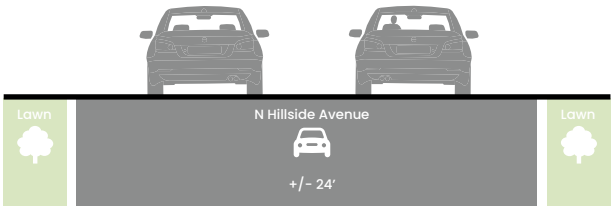
Key Characteristics

- Consistent sidewalks
- Vegetated buffer separating traffic from sidewalk
- Consistent, medium shade canopy
- Pedestrian scale lighting
- On-street parking



EXAMPLE: NORTH HILLSDALE AVENUE

4 LOCAL RESIDENTIAL



SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

0' 5' 10'

Plaza Street

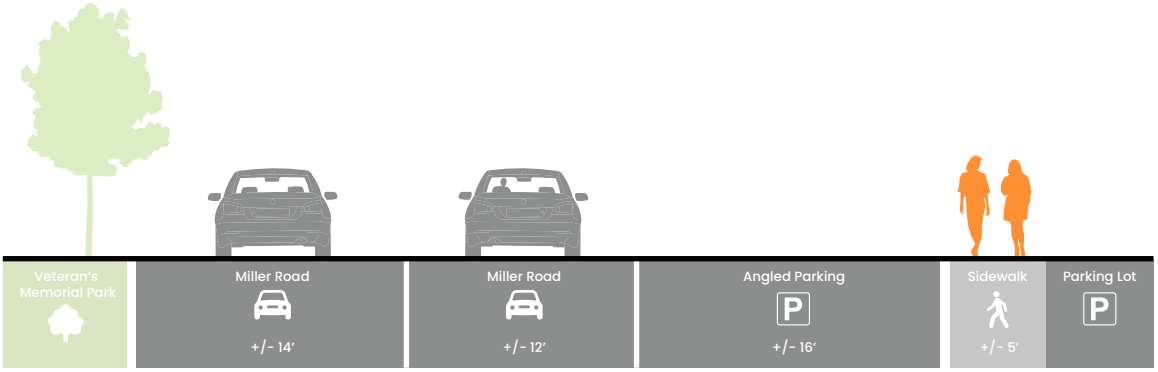
Plaza Streets are similar to Downtown Avenues in that they are lined with restaurants and retail. However, Plaza Streets are not through streets and are used primarily for accessing the businesses on that street. They typically are flexible streets that can be temporarily closed for events, but when open have 1-2 travel lanes and on-street parking.

Key Characteristics

- Ample sidewalks
- Ample seating
- Consistent, medium shade canopy
- Pedestrian scale lighting
- On-street parking



EXAMPLE: MILLER ROAD



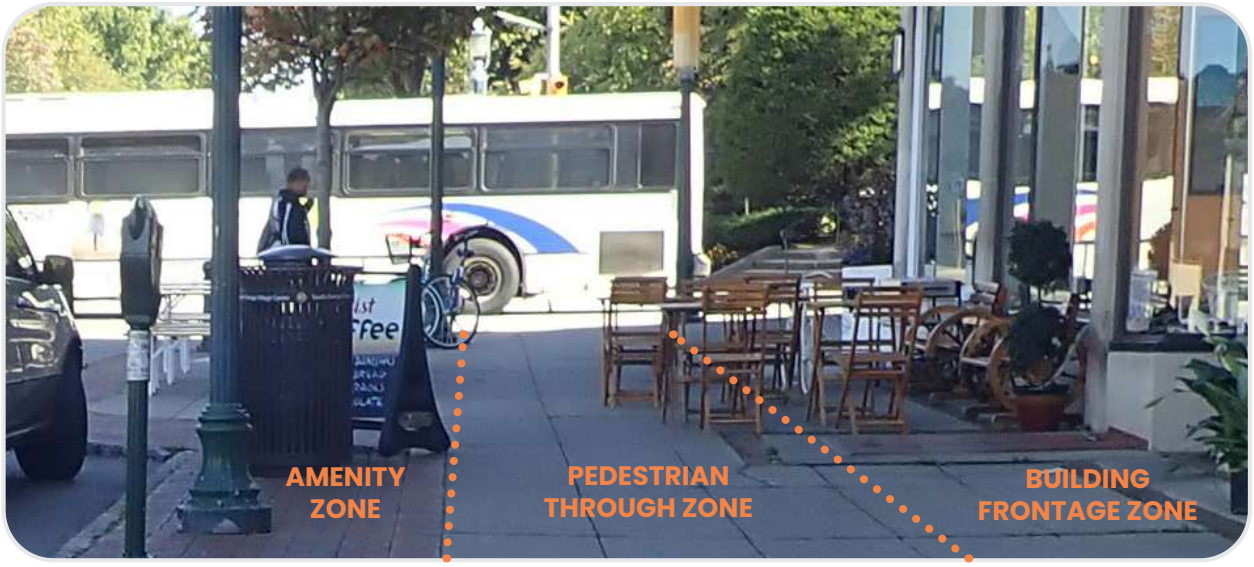
5 PLAZA STREET

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

0' 5' 10'

Sidewalk Zones

Streets and sidewalks are comprised of several components. The following terms and diagram provide a model for improved sidewalks with three zones, each serving a specific purpose. The zones are as follows:



Amenity Zone: These are multi-purpose areas that provide a buffer between live traffic and pedestrian activity. They house utilities and furnishings such as benches, wayfinding signage, trees, lighting elements and other appropriate streetscape design features. Note: The amenity zone may not always be feasible located adjacent to the curb. Power lines and utilities may obstruct the growth of trees . In constrained conditions, it may make sense to locate any seating adjacent to building faces. In these scenarios, amenity zones should be placed along building facades in addition to a buffer, which separates pedestrian through zones from vehicular activity.

Pedestrian Through Zone: This is the part of the sidewalk unobstructed by objects. No lighting, signage, or furnishing should be placed here. This is the most crucial element within the sidewalk and no other zones should encroach on this area.

Building Frontage Zone: The building frontage zone provides an area of transition between public space and private. This area contains building canopies, entrances, outdoor cafe seating areas, and signage for businesses. At the discretion of the town, tables and chairs may encroach on the pedestrian through zone as long as a 5’ clearance is left unobstructed for pedestrian travel.

Complete Streets Should be the Ultimate Goal

If the objective is to create a truly walkable, transit-friendly, transit-oriented neighborhood, the ultimate goal should be Complete Streets.

Complete Streets is a policy and design approach to planning streets that considers all users, all modes of transportation, and all ability levels. Complete streets balance the needs of drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, emergency responders, and goods movement based on local context.

—Transit Friendly Planning Guide, p. 32



MADISON, NEW JERSEY

Source: New Jersey Complete Streets Design Guide

Active Transportation Strategies

Streets are more than just conduits for car traffic. They're places where moments, big and small, happen every day. Streets should be designed with all moments and users in mind. Streets should, at minimum, move pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles safely and efficiently. More importantly, they should be woven into a community's economic and social fabric.

While cut-through traffic is unavoidable, it should not endanger and oppress residents. This report outlines a path, which shifts this burden of cut-through traffic from Mahwah residents to the drivers who use the downtown as a through-route.

Similarly, the train station is more than a place where commuters board and exit trains. It's an anchor that supports the Central Business District and one of the most prominent public spaces within the *Study Area*. The station and its surroundings should be designed to benefit the downtown by creating a more inviting and prosperous place.

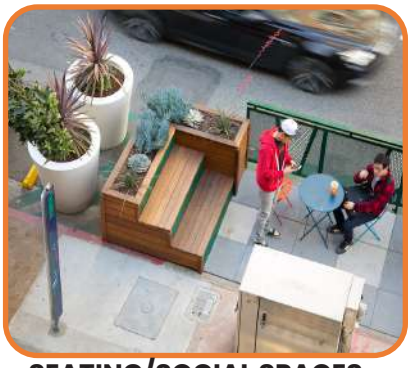
The Mahwah train station area does not accommodate as many transportation modes as it could. Each of these modes should be well organized and provide modern amenities to users. The strategies relating to the pedestrian realm, bicycling, public transportation, and automobiles located on the following page should be considered for each mode.

1. Pedestrian realm

The pedestrian realm is comprised of all the public spaces where pedestrians can circulate, socialize, wait for the bus, window shop and more. First and foremost, the pedestrian realm should be safe and easily navigated. Pedestrian elements such as wide sidewalks, wayfinding signs, clear sight lines, minimum crossing distances, curb bump outs and high visibility crosswalks are the baseline. For this reason, it should also include shade trees, parklets, seating areas, wayfinding, pedestrian scale lighting, public art and other elements. Care should be taken to observe and anticipate pedestrian desire lines (the most direct paths that pedestrians will want to take) and place these amenities along those routes.



AMPLE SIDEWALKS



SEATING/SOCIAL SPACES



FLUSH/CURBLESS STREETS



WAYFINDING/SIGNAGE

2. Bike (+)

The City of Pittsburgh's 2020 Bike Master Plan uses the term Bike (+) as a catchall term when referring to infrastructure and facilities to accommodate conventional pedal cycles, electric bikes, electric scooters, and the like. Mahwah should provide these modern mobility options and support them with infrastructure such as structured bike parking, bike share stations, bike lockers, scooter share stations, and bike repair stations. These should be located immediately adjacent to the train station entrances.



BIKE LOCKERS



BIKE/E-BIKE SHARE



SCOOTER SHARE



STRUCTURED BIKE PARKING

3. Bus and Jitney

NJ TRANSIT and Jitney buses should be a convenient, preferable alternatives to private automobiles. Bus stops should have adequate shelters with benches, real-time route information, public art, off-board payment options, and raised curbs for accessible boarding. In addition, Shuttle stops should have bus bays, which allow buses to pull aside without contributing to traffic or congestion. Bus and Shuttle stops should be located adjacent to storefronts to encourage patronage at local businesses.



RAISED PLATFORM



BUS SHELTER



BUS BAYS



OFF-BOARD PAYMENT OPTIONS

4. Cars

Parking is necessary in downtowns. However, to support the downtown character and to create a comfortable atmosphere for other users, parking should be kept outside of main pedestrian areas. Furthermore, a percentage of all parking spaces should be reserved for electric car charging as well as car sharing options such as ZipCar. This will reduce dependency on private automobile ownership and provide additional mobility options to the downtown. “Kiss and Ride” is a term used to describe designated pick-up/drop-off areas. They allow cars to pull aside and wait for train passengers without idling in traffic, which avoids traffic conflicts and congestion. These should be easily identifiable and located so that access to the train station is convenient. These areas usually have a parking time limit to encourage high vehicle turnover. Kiss and Rides can be used by family members or friends that may be picking up or dropping off passengers at the train station area; however, they may also be used by taxis and ride sharing services such as Uber or Lyft. This will reduce traffic conflicts and facilitate organized flow of traffic within the train station area.



CAR SHARING



ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING



DESIGNATED DROP-OFF LANES



KISS AND RIDE LANE

Crash Analysis

Mahwah Station is located in northeastern Mahwah Township. This section of the Township, particularly the Franklin Turnpike corridor, is among the most developed portions of the Township. It contains the busy intersection of Franklin Turnpike (County Route 507) and Miller Road and is less than half a mile from a junction with NJ-17, which sees heavy traffic, connecting to Interstate 287 approximately one mile to the north.

The project team conducted an analysis of crashes in the *Study Area* from 2017 - 2021[1]. Crash data was acquired using the New Jersey Department of Highway Traffic Safety (NJDHTS) Numetric tool. The data is mapped on the following page.

Crash Distribution: Crashes in the Mahwah Station area between 2017 and 2021 were heavily concentrated along Franklin Turnpike, both in terms of overall crash numbers as well as crash severity.

- A total of 62 crashes occurred within the *Study Area* between 2017 and 2021.
- Of the 62 crashes in the *Study Area*, 36 crashes took place on Franklin Turnpike, including the only minor injury crash and four of the five possible injury crashes. The only other possible injury crash took place on E Ramapo Avenue, directly adjacent to the old Mahwah DPW site.

Bicyclists and Pedestrians: Zero crashes involved a bicyclist or pedestrian.

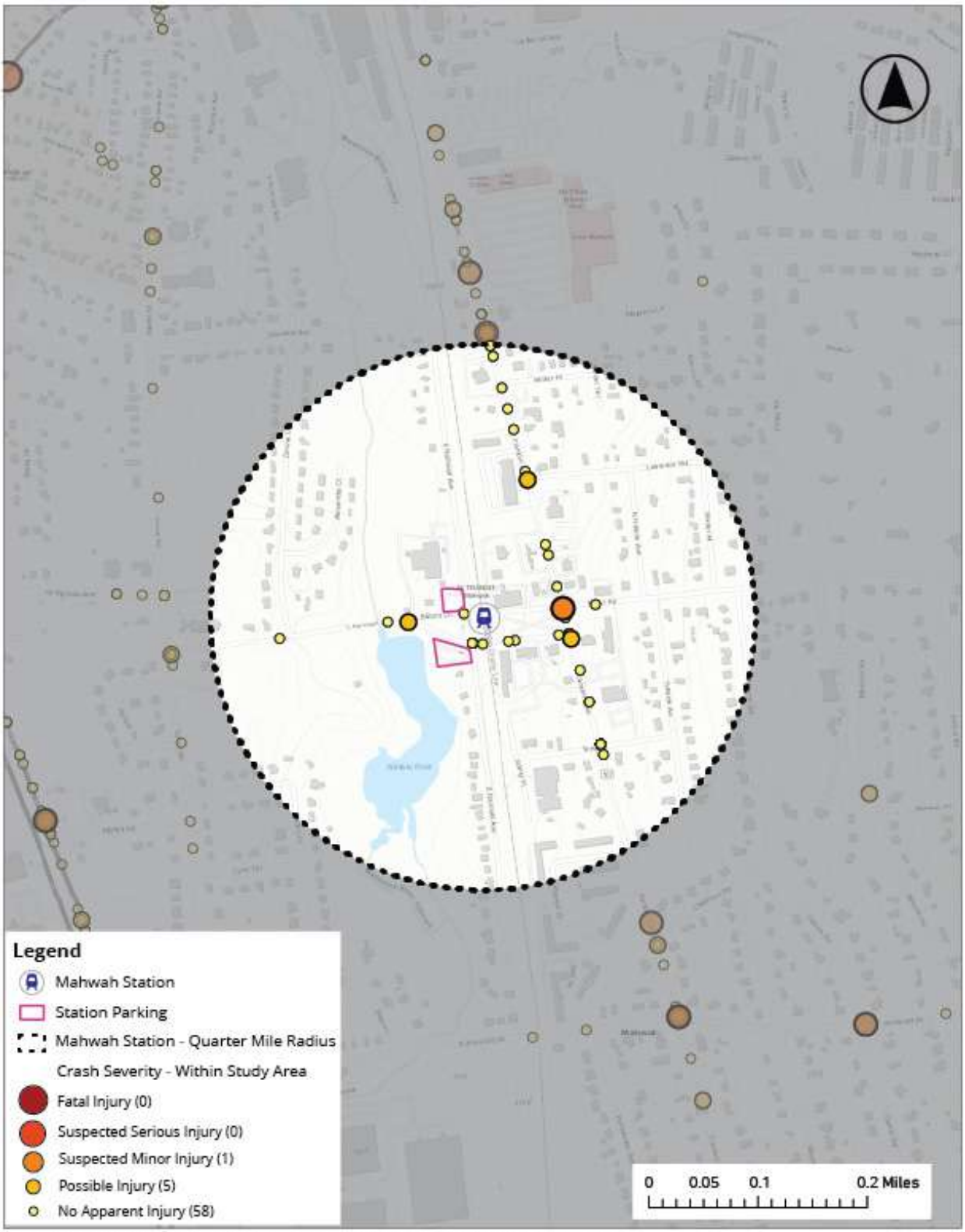
Crash Types: The most common crash types were rear-end crashes (46.8%) and fixed-object crashes (37.1%).

Crash Factors: 82.3% of crashes were due to distracted driving.

Time of day: Most crashes occurred between 2:00 PM and 4:00 PM (21%) and 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM (18%).

1 2021 is the most recent year containing complete data.

Map 1.6: Study Area Crashes (2017 - 2021)



Layer Credits: State of New Jersey, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, EPA, USDA

Overview of Infrastructure

Public Water and Sewer

Publicly available data indicates that the entire Study Area is located within a Sewer Service Area (SSA) and a public water franchise and service area.

1. Sewer Service Area: The site is located within the Northwest Bergen County Utilities Authority (NBCUA) SSA. While the site is in the SSA, available capacity is not known at this time.

2. Public Water Purveyor Service Area: The site is located within the Mahwah Water Department Franchise Area. While the site is in the franchise area, available capacity is not known at this time.

Location of pipe infrastructure for water and sewer is not publicly available. Being within either service area does not guarantee that pipe infrastructure exists for every lot or property within the respective service areas.

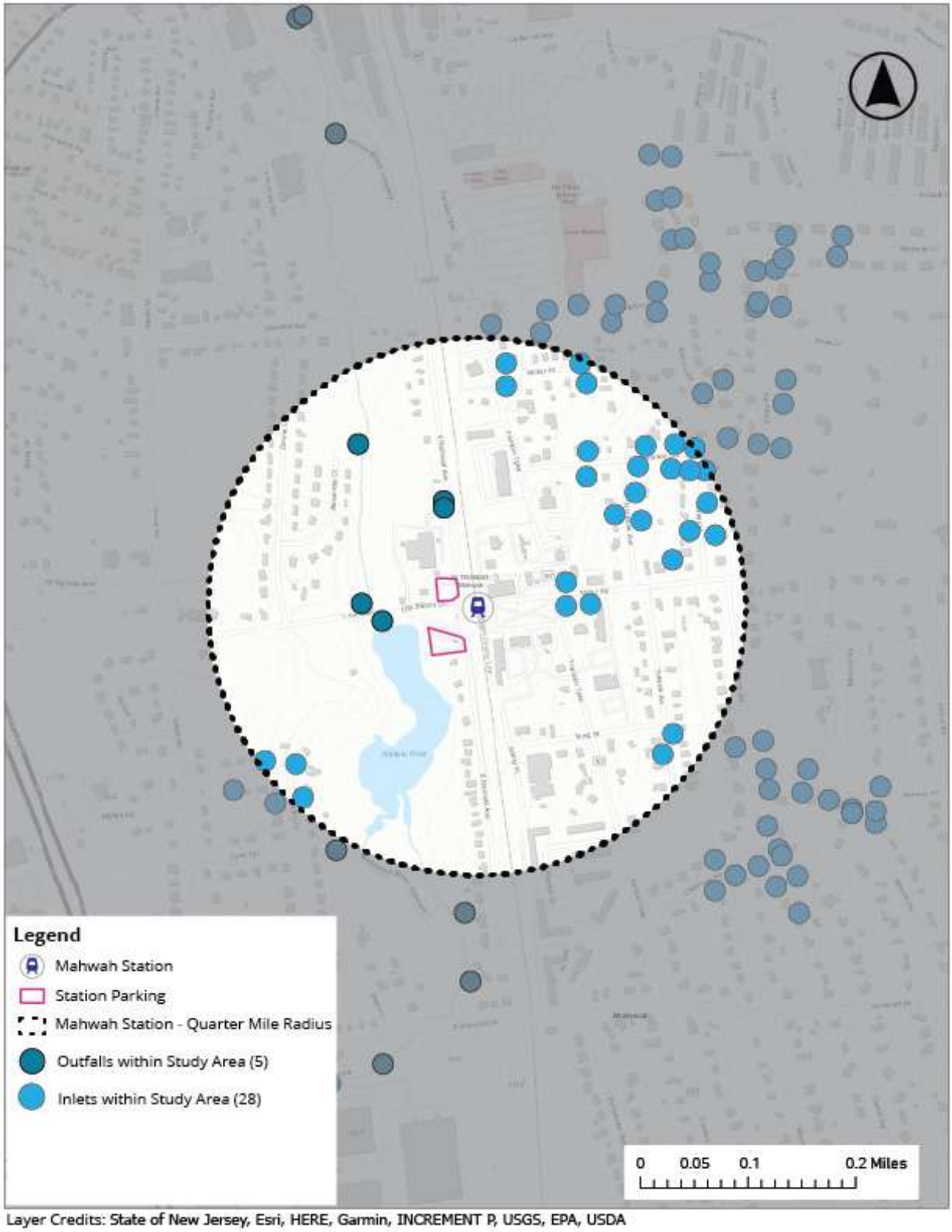
Inlets and Outfalls

Publicly available data indicates that there are five stormwater outfalls and 28 stormwater inlets located within the Study Area. The location of the inlets and outfalls is shown on Map 1.6 on the following page.

No combined sewer overflows are located in the Study Area[1].

1 https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/images/Departments__Services/Planning__Engineering/bergen-county-master-plan/environmental-and-natural-resources_part2

Map 1.7: Study Area Inlets and Outfalls



Layer Credits: State of New Jersey, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, EPA, USDA

Redevelopment Site

Like transit-oriented development generally, redevelopment must be grounded in reality and a practical understanding of site development to be successful.

This section briefly touches on two site constraints, environmental contamination and existing utilities. Before shovels are every put into the ground to develop a project, these elements and similar conditions must first be considered.

Site Constraints

While the site is feasible for TOD, the location is physically constrained by the Masonicus Brook waterway, the corresponding FEMA flood hazard area, overhead transmission lines along the wetland area, the corresponding power utility easement, and a separate Northwest Bergen County Utility Authority sewer easement. While residential and non-residential construction is allowed in the flood area, it must follow additional requirements. The single-family homes within the block along North Railroad Avenue and across the water on Alexandra Court are also considered contextual constraints.

Environmental Remediation

As indicated in the Existing Conditions Memorandum, there is a Known Contaminated Site (KCS) on the DPW site.

Records from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection[2] indicate the existence of a KCS case dating back to mid 1980s. At that time, it was determined that this was an immediate environmental concern, requiring individuals impacted to cease use of groundwater and instead use bottled water. The case remains open.

This impacts the future redevelopment of the site in the following ways:

1. As part of the due diligence process for any redeveloper, an ASTM Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment[3] will be prepared. This will involve obtaining all available public records and other information to determine the extent of the contamination.
2. If the site is still contaminated, the remediation required by law will need to be completed prior to the redevelopment of the site.



Utility Easements

The western side of Lot 29 contains a 150-foot wide utility easement and high tension electrical wires. A 15-foot wide Northwest Bergen County Utility Authority (NWBCUA) easement runs through the site.

Any future development of the site will need to consider these easements and determine if there are any development restrictions resulting from them.

2 NJDEP Known Contaminated Site. NJEMS Site ID 11,715.00. NJDEP Geographic Information Systems. New Jersey Geoweb. Accessed January, 2025 < https://dep.nj.gov/gis/nj-geoweb/>

3 ASTM International < https://www.astm.org/e1527-21.html>

Three Redevelopment Concepts and Design Alternatives

Four development concepts, varying in density, were prepared for the DPW site in this TOD Vision Plan. These concepts range from 5 to 21 dwelling units per acre, utilizing different housing typologies, including stacked townhouses, walk-up apartments, and elevator apartments. Key constraints included maintaining space for existing public amenities, including the Station parking lot, Old Mahwah Station Museum, and the public recycling center, and adhering to maximum allowable impervious lot coverage.

All concepts incorporated 2,400 square feet of new retail space with frontage on Old Station Lane, facing the station area. Higher-density concepts (2, 3A, and 3B) also included 3,000-4,000 square feet of indoor community space. Design references for these concepts include the NJ TRANSIT's Transit Friendly Planning Guide and the Regional Planning Association's Better Town Toolkit[4].

In subsequent pages, general design guidelines will be provided, followed by each design alternative which will be shared in detail. The following table provides a summary of each concept, including the size of the proposed uses, number of stories, total dwelling units, dwelling units per acre (which is indicated as d/u per acre), total parking spaces, and the building type for each proposed concept.

Table 1.1: Design Alternatives Build-Out Summary

Design Concept	Gross Floor Area (sf.)	Community Facility Area (sf.)	Commercial Area (sf.)	# Of Stories	Total Dwelling Units	D/U Per Acre*	# Of Parking Spaces**	Building Type
1	56,845	0	2,400	2	46	5.1	85	Stacked Townhouse
2	112,355	3,000	2,400	3.5	87	9.7	126	Walkup Apartment
3A	169,230	4,000	2,400	5	125	14	167	Elevator Apartment
3B	251,260	4,000	2,400	7	188	21.2	218	Elevator Apartment

**Density is based on the number of dwelling units (average area of 1,100 sf.) by lot surface (parcels 29, 30, 31, and 38 combine for 8.9 acres)*
***Includes 30 dedicated spaces for NJ TRANSIT Station parking in addition to parking for residents.*

4 Regional Plan Association's Better Town Toolkit <https://rpa.org/work/reports/better-town-toolkit>

General Site Design Guidelines

All four development concepts abide by the following general design guidelines:

- Focus development on lots 29 and 30, leaving the majority of lots 31 and 38 in their vegetated, undeveloped state. This accomplishes the following:
  - Provides a vegetated buffer zone between the development and the adjacent single-family residential dwellings.
  - Utilizes the existing street infrastructure with the publicly accessible buildings (retail and community center) fronting on the existing station parking lot and Old Station Lane.
- Enhance pedestrian safety and access by repaving Old Station Lane and South Railroad Avenue in a manner that is visually distinct from other streets, letting pedestrians, motorists, and other users know that this is a shared space[5].
- Complete sidewalk network along the edges of the site, including missing portions along Old Station Lane, though not including the edges of Lots 31 and 38.
- Develop in a matter considerate of the proximate flood hazard area by:
  - Locating housing away from the Masonicus Brook and the proximate wetlands, wetland transition area, and flood hazard area.
  - Utilize floodwater and stormwater mitigation strategies that, at a minimum, comply with all relevant state and local requirements, and incorporate porous pavement, bioswales, and other biophilic infrastructure where possible.
- A portion of each concept contains dedicated retail space that is accessible by the public and convenient for Mahwah Station users and passengers.
  - Concepts 2, 3A, and 3B contain a community center for Mahwah Township residents. If this community space is constructed in the future, programming of the space should be determined by the Mahwah Township Recreation Department in collaboration with other Municipal departments.
- Regarding parking improvements, the follow guidelines are observed:
  - Surface lots should be located toward the back of the site and screened with landscaping or opaque fencing/walls, minimizing the view of automobiles from the public view shed, instead prioritizing the building and other aesthetic treatments.
  - Street parking should maintain adequate bump-outs for pedestrians at street corners and utilize plantings for green separation between sidewalk and parking area. This provides a protective barrier for pedestrians, makes the environment more attractive, and provides shade while minimizing heat-island effect.
  - If tuck under parking is utilized, it should only be permitted along sides of buildings that do not face a public street. Ideally, internal parking with active ventilation will be utilized to the greatest extent possible.
  - At-grade platform parking should prioritize screening or more active uses adjacent to the street.

5 United States Federal Highway Administration Safety Programs <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferjourney1/library/countermeasures/33.htm >

Photo Panel 1.1: Types of Parking Facilities



SURFACE LOT PARKING



PARALLEL STREET PARKING



TUCK UNDER PARKING



AT-GRADE PLATFORM PARKING WITH ACTIVE USES ADJACENT TO THE STREET

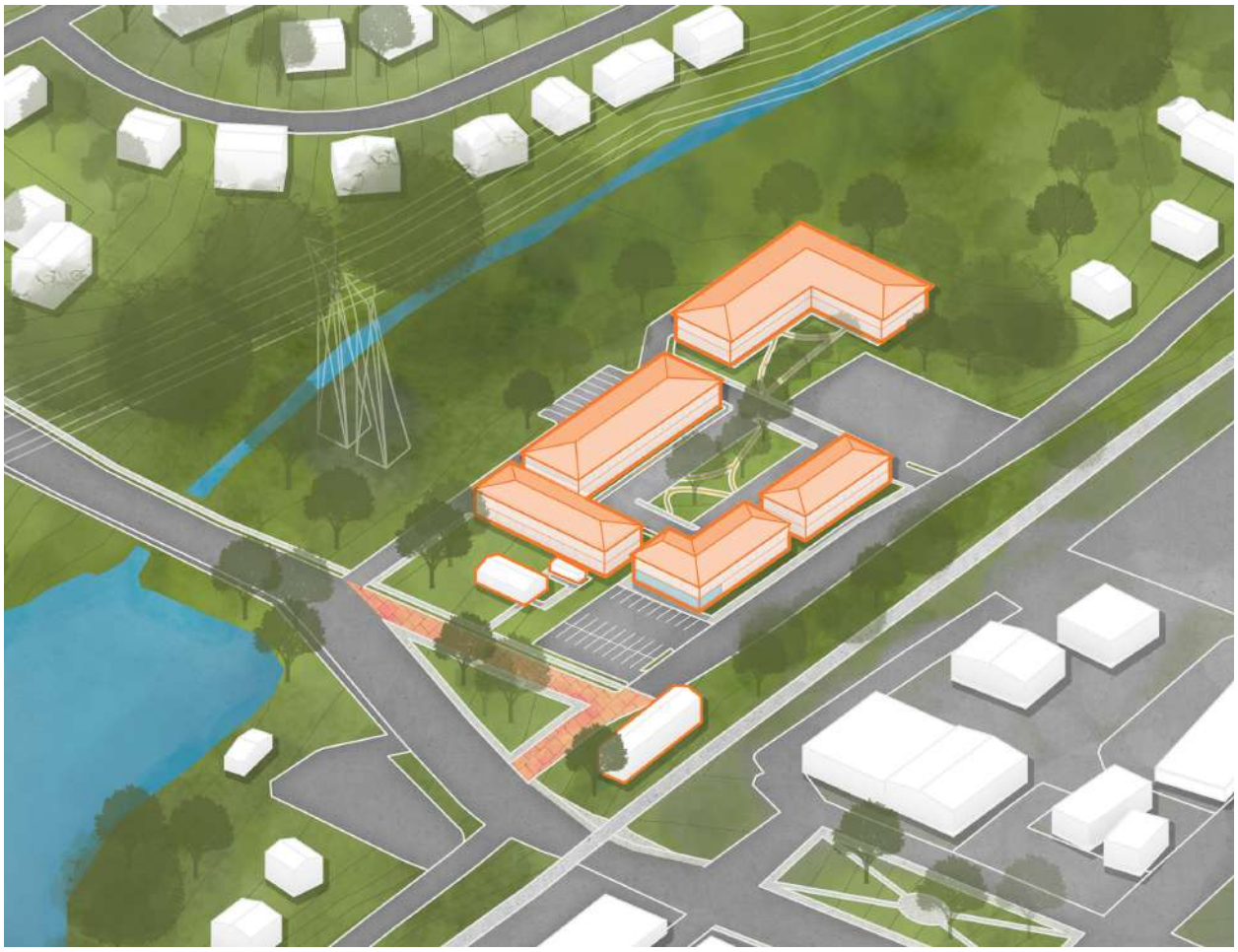
Redevelopment Alternative #1



PLAN VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE #1

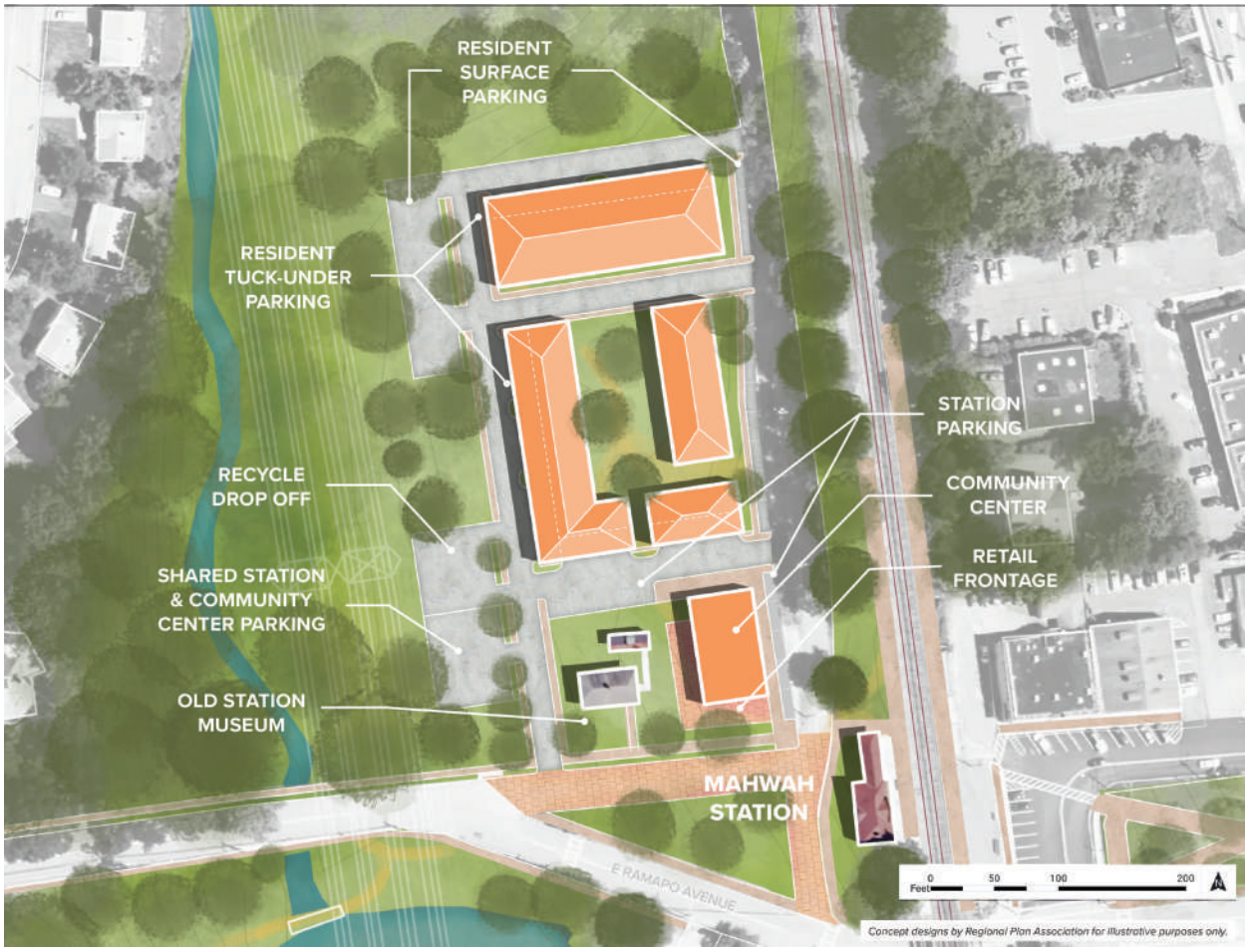
Assumptions: Concept 1 is the lowest density scenario at 5.1 du/acre. The envisioned design assumes that the existing station parking, recycling facility, and museum remain unchanged.

Design: An internal driveway functions like a street, providing access to the development from East Ramapo Avenue and North Railroad Avenue. The internal driveway defines a central courtyard, around which two-story stacked townhouses are arranged. The townhomes feature pitched roofs to complement the surrounding residential context. This concept provides an estimated 46 total dwelling units. Residential parking primarily utilizes a tuck under, rear-loaded placement strategy, with at-grade parking located beneath the living spaces, either open or within garages. Parking is positioned at the rear of buildings to screen automobiles from public view, prioritizing the more attractive building facades. Additional resident parking is provided by a row of spaces along the west side of the lot and parallel "street" parking around the courtyard. The concept includes 55 residential parking spaces, a ratio of 1.2 spaces per dwelling unit. The existing station parking lot retains its 30 spaces.



AXONOMETRIC VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE #1

Redevelopment Alternative #2



PLAN VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE #2

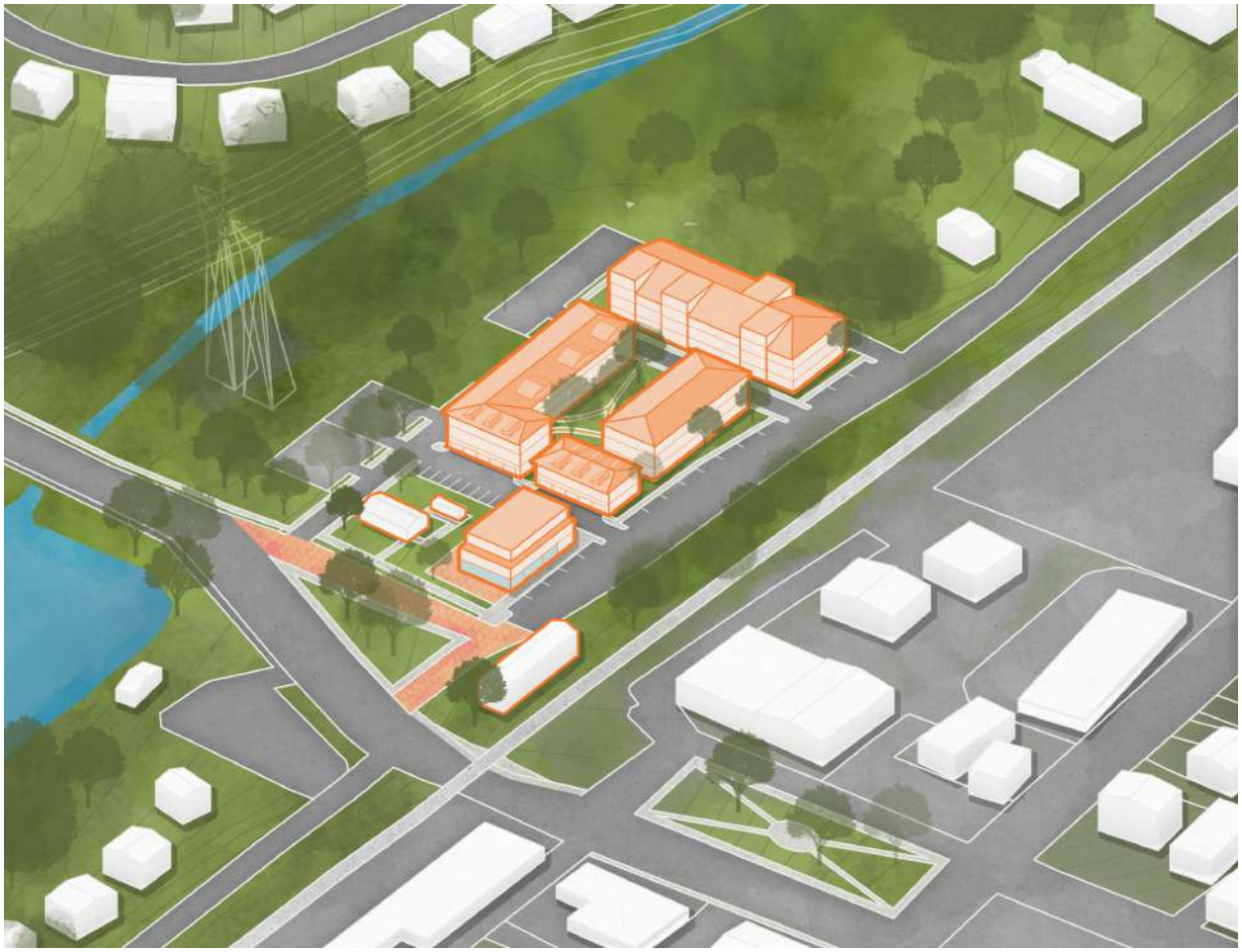
Assumptions: Concept 2 is a medium-density layout of 9.7 du/acre. This design assumes that the Old Station Museum remains in place, but the station parking and recycling drop-off facility are rearranged within the development layout.

Design: The concept includes a separate, publicaly accessible building with a community center and retail use along East Ramapo Avenue/Old Station Lane. Residences extend along North Railroad Avenue in four separate buildings.

The recycling drop-off and station parking are relocated to the western portion of the site with an access point on East Ramapo Avenue. Additionally, the site is accessible from North Railroad Avenue via two curb cuts. This layout, and the use of planted buffers, screens surface parking lots from public view. The recycling drop-off area is slightly reduced for more efficient space utilization. Station parking is reconfigured into five parallel spaces adjacent to the station, ten spaces behind the museum, and a new 15-space lot on the western edge, maintaining a total of 30 spaces. This reconfiguration leverages the flood-prone area, improves pedestrian flow along East Ramapo and North Railroad Avenues, and frees the prime southeast corner of the site for a 3,000-square-foot community center paired with 2,400 square feet of new retail space.

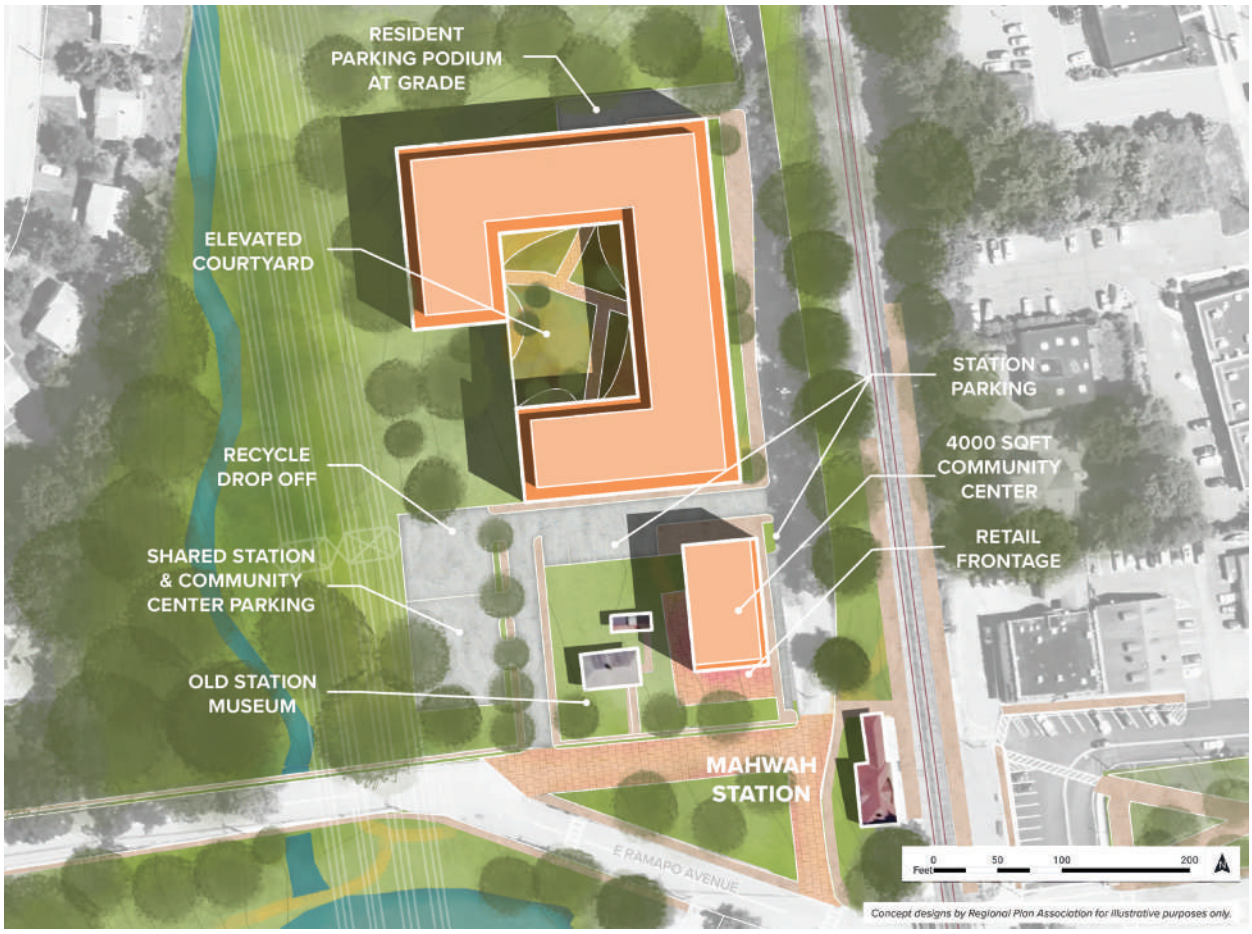
Residential buildings maintain a similar footprint to Concept 1. Four walk-up apartment buildings,

along with residential units above the community center and retail building, are incorporated. Massing along North Railroad Avenue is narrower and shorter to respect the existing context while massing at the rear is slightly deeper and taller. Pitched roofs are employed to complement existing architectural styles. At an average of 3.5 stories, this concept yields approximately 87 dwelling units. Residential parking, comprising tuck-under parking at the rear of three buildings and a surface lot at the northwest corner, totals 96 spaces, or a ratio of 1.1 spaces per dwelling unit.



AXONOMETRIC VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE #2

Redevelopment Alternative 3A and 3B



PLAN VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES #3A AND #3B

Assumptions: Concept 3A and 3B share the same layout and footprint. The concepts vary in density and resulting parking: 14 dwelling units per acre (3A) and 21 dwelling units per acre (3B). They rearrange the existing recycling center and Station parking, as was done in Concept 2, but shifted slightly eastward along with the internal drive.

Design: The community center, located in the same area as concept 2, is expanded to 4,000 square feet. The retail remains 2,400 square feet in size.

Residential units are housed within a single apartment building surrounding an internal courtyard, with additional units on the upper floors of the community center/retail mixed-use building. The building is set back more than 100 feet from East Ramapo Avenue and behind the mixed-use community facility to minimize visual impact. To adhere to the 2.9-acre impervious lot coverage limit, at-grade platform podium parking is predominantly used for residents. Podium parking should be designed in a manner that the parking is wrapped by the building exterior, making it indistinguishable from the rest of the building. This enhances the pedestrian experience by maintaining the streetscape along North Railroad Avenue. Building setbacks (also known as architectural stepbacks) are used along upper floors to minimize the massing from street-level.

Concept 3A is an average of 5 stories tall with platform podium parking across the entire ground floor of the building. The courtyard is elevated to the 2nd floor, above parking. This design would create approximately 125 dwelling units. Residential parking totals 137 spaces, or a ratio of 1.1 spaces per dwelling unit.

Concept 3B is an average of 7 stories tall with platform podium parking across the entire ground floor of the building, an elevated courtyard, and an additional surface lot area adjacent to the recycling facility. This design creates approximately 188 dwelling units. Residential parking totals 188 spaces, or a ratio of 1.0 spaces per dwelling unit.



AXONOMETRIC VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE #3A



AXONOMETRIC VIEW OF REDEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE #3B

Evaluating Each Concept

While all four concepts are based on transit-oriented design principles, each has distinct differences and advantages. These concepts are developed in recognition of site constraints, but utilize a variety of assumptions regarding density and layout.

Transit-oriented development prioritizes walkable, mixed-use development that increases the diversity of housing types while promoting regional economic growth. By creating more opportunities to utilizes public transportation, this type of development provides accessible and safe non-motorized mobility options while fostering face-to-face interaction and activity, a convivial atmosphere, and a more interesting place. Below is an evaluation of each concept from a transit-friendly planning perspective.

Concept 1:

The primary advantage of this concept is that it minimizes disruption related to existing on-site programs. However, failing to integrate existing programs into a cohesive urban design is a significant trade-off for such a prominent location. Additionally, the site could support a higher density level with a minimal change in building footprint.

Density: This concept is similar to the existing context in that it utilizes a typology of stacked townhomes. However, the site can support a higher level of density with a minimal change in building footprint or even an additional story so that the stacked townhouses are three floors tall.

Parking: Residential parking leverages a tuck-under strategy, which optimizes land use efficiency and maintains street character. However, by keeping the north station parking lot and recycling center as-is, the surface lots would significantly disrupt the pedestrian experience. Such disruption could be partially mitigated by screening with landscaping or architectural walls.

Land Uses: The inclusion of 2,400 square feet of retail oriented towards the station parking lot addresses the need for mixed-use development, which is crucial for an active station area and strengthening Mahwah's downtown identity. However, the retail's relationship with the station parking lot is suboptimal for creating a strong sense of place, and there is limited integration with the Mahwah Station Museum. The recycling drop-off center appears oversized and should be integrated more effectively within the development.

Concept 2:

This concept offers a more holistic design that enhances pedestrian experience and better aligns programs with site constraints. The inclusion of a community center strengthens the Mahwah Museum's programming and establishes a focal point for the neighborhood, bringing more activity and a stronger sense of place.

Density: The walk-up apartment scheme achieves higher density than Concept 1 with a similar footprint, by using slightly deeper floor plates, increased building height, and consolidated interior circulation. This density increase further supports walkable, transit-oriented activity and commerce.

Parking: The parking strategy, which relocates parking to the rear of the site and diversifies parking types (tuck-under, street, surface), minimizes pedestrian disruptions, and appropriately positions parking near flood hazards rather than building structures.

Land Uses: On the southeast corner, a new 3,000-square-foot community center and 2,400-square-foot retail space complement the Old Station Museum and create a centralized community space. Residents have expressed interest in seeing new retail and a community facility related to a TOD project. The right-sizing of the recycling drop-off center enhances spatial efficiency.

Concepts 3A and 3B:

These concepts achieve high density within impervious limits and maximize community center space. Concept 3A offers the potential for a gravel trail network connection to Winter's Pond, from unused residual impervious lot coverage. Concept 3B trades some open space for additional resident parking.

Density: An elevator apartment building effectively increases density near transit. Architectural design, including setbacks and facade detailing, can mitigate the perceived massing.

Parking: Platform podium parking efficiently accommodates resident parking but requires careful street-level design (programming or screening) to maintain an active pedestrian experience. Street parking and relocated surface lots mitigate pedestrian disruptions and are appropriately placed near flood hazards instead of building structures.

Land Uses: The southeast corner features a new 4,000-square-foot community center and 2,400 square feet of retail, creating a prominent community space. This is the largest community space allocation among the design alternatives. The recycling drop-off center is right-sized.

Photo Panel 1.2: Housing Typologies



TOWNHOUSES



WALKUP APARTMENT



COMMUNITY CENTER



ELEVATOR APARTMENT

High Level Traffic Impacts of Each Redevelopment Alternative

Per the Institute of Transportation Engineers' (ITE) publication Trip Generation, 11th Edition (2021), the estimated weekday daily and peak hour site trips associated with each of these design concepts is presented in the table below.

Table 1.2: Projected Site Trip Generation

Design Concept	Gross Floor Area (sf.)	Total Dwelling Units	Weekday			AM Peak Hour			PM Peak Hour		
			Enter	Exit	Total	Enter	Exit	Total	Enter	Exit	Total
1	56,845	46	185	185	**370**	9	28	**37**	25	15	**40**
2	112,355	87	316	317	**633**	12	38	**50**	37	21	**58**
3A	169,230	125	284	284	**568**	11	35	**46**	30	19	**49**
3B	251,260	188	427	427	**854**	16	55	**71**	45	29	**74**

Trip generation for Design Concepts 1 and 2 are based on ITE land use code 220, "Multifamily Housing (Low-Rise)", defined as "two to three stories". Design concepts 3A and 3B are per land use code 221, "Multifamily Housing (Mid-Rise)", defined as "four to ten stories". We note that LUC 220 has a higher average trip generation rate than for LUC 221; this is why the trip generation for Design Concept 3A (125 units) is less than that for Concept 2 (87 units).

The rates in the table above assume no credits for proximity to rail or other transit services. Trip Generation does provide separate trip calculations for subcategories "close to rail transit" and "not close to rail transit"; however, the number of data points for the latter is much fewer and there are inconsistencies between the applications of varying rates. Instead, we recommend that vehicle trip reductions based on transit usage be considered per NJ TRANSIT and/or MetroNorth ridership statistics, and census-reported journey-to-work and similar demographic data.

Based on the projected peak hourly traffic volumes reported in the table above, the most traffic intensive design concept (3B) is projected to generate between 71 and 74 vehicles during the weekday peak hours, with a maximum directional trip generation of 55 exiting trips during the weekday morning peak hour. This equates to an average rate of just under one vehicle per minute, and transit usage can be expected to reduce the number of vehicle trips further.

The area surrounding the Mahwah train station is characterized by single-lane roadways and intersection approaches, and other evidence of congestion and queuing such as the "don't block the box" intersection striping on northbound Franklin Turnpike approaching the Ramapo Avenue and Miller Road intersections. However, traffic loads of this magnitude will not be anticipated to significantly impact traffic congestion and delays in the area, especially once distributed among primary approach and departure routes to and from the north, south and west.

Economic Analysis

This section of the report analyzes the following:

- Housing market trends
- Comparable development
- Cost estimates
- Economic impact
- Tax revenue generation

Housing Market Trends

General housing market conditions in Mahwah and Bergen County indicate the potential feasibility of TOD in this location. Comparable developments further demonstrate a favorable local market for a project of this type[6].

Over the past two decades, rents and home values have steadily increased, indicating that the demand for homes in the region exceeds the current available inventory[7][8]. The effects of limited supply can be observed in the appreciation rates and rents in Mahwah and the broader housing market of Bergen County.

Between 2004 and 2024, the typical home value in Mahwah increased from $377,000 to approximately $620,000. This represents an increase of $243,000 or an appreciation rate of 55% in two decades[9]. Like home values, rents have increased steadily over time. The typical rent in Bergen County in 2015 was $1,790. By 2025, it has risen to $2,760, a net increase of $970 or 54%. Rents increased most rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic, rising from $2,092 in 2020 to $2,720, a net increase of $670 or 32%[10].

As home values and rents increased, vacancy rates have dropped, remaining well below the typically recommended 3.5% for homeowners and 5% for renters[11]. Mahwah's rental vacancy rate has stayed below 2% in the past decade, while its owner vacancy rate has remained below 1%[12]. In Bergen County and throughout most of the past decade, rental and homeowner vacancy rates have remained below 4% and 2%, respectively[13]. This indicates that the demand for homes in the area has exceeded the available supply, contributing to appreciation and higher rents.

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6 See "Comparable Development" section. Based on Costar underwriting reports for three projects in Bergen County near NJT's rail stations along the Main the Pascack Valley lines.

7 NYU Furman Center: Supply Skepticism Revisited (Nov 2023)

8 Regional Plan Association: Policy Choices & Housing permits in the Region (Sept 2023)

9 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, home value in Mahwah trended closely with Bergen County. After 2020, the trends have diverged, with home appreciation in Mahwah accelerating at a slightly slower pace compared to the County. RPA analysis based on Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI) of mean listed value of rents ranging in between the 35th and 65th percentiles.

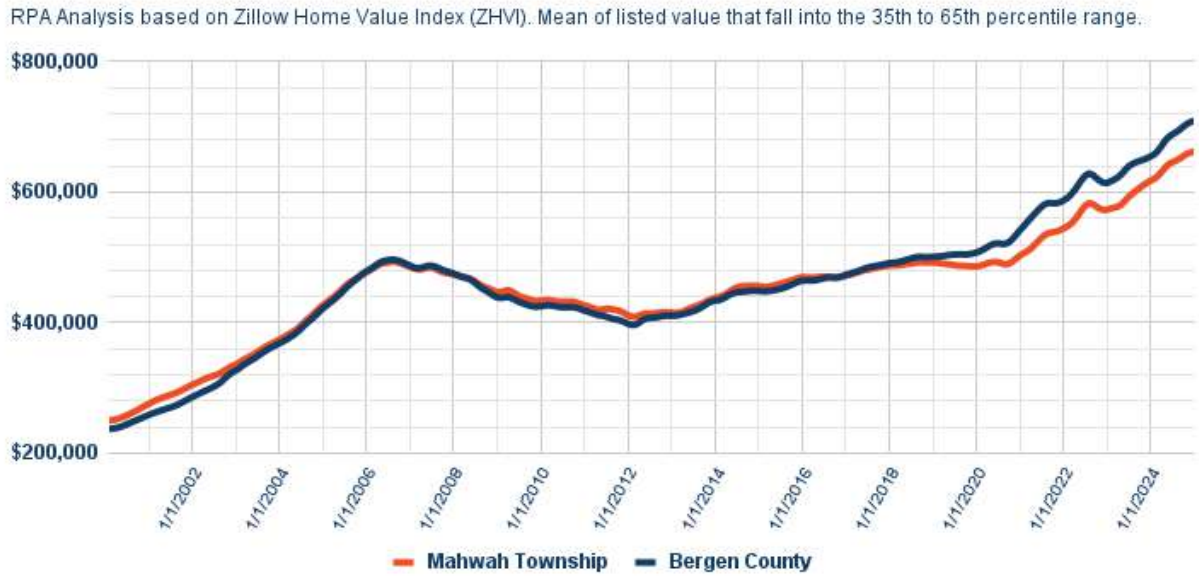
10 RPA analysis based on Zillow Observed Rent Index (ZORI) of mean listed value ranging in between the 35th and 65th percentiles. Given the small rental market in Mahwah, aggregated historical data is not available. However, the broader market in the county provides insights and can is used as a benchmark.

11 NYU Furman Center: Supply Skepticism Revisited (Nov 2023)

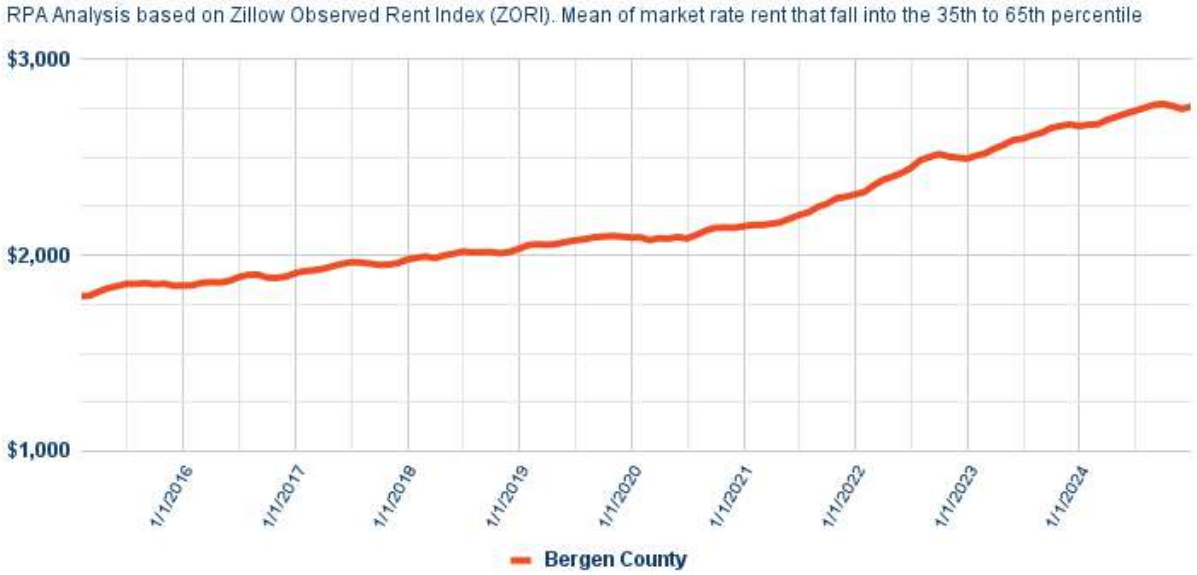
12 Regional Plan Association analysis based on ACS - 1 Year Estimates Table DP04

13 Ibid

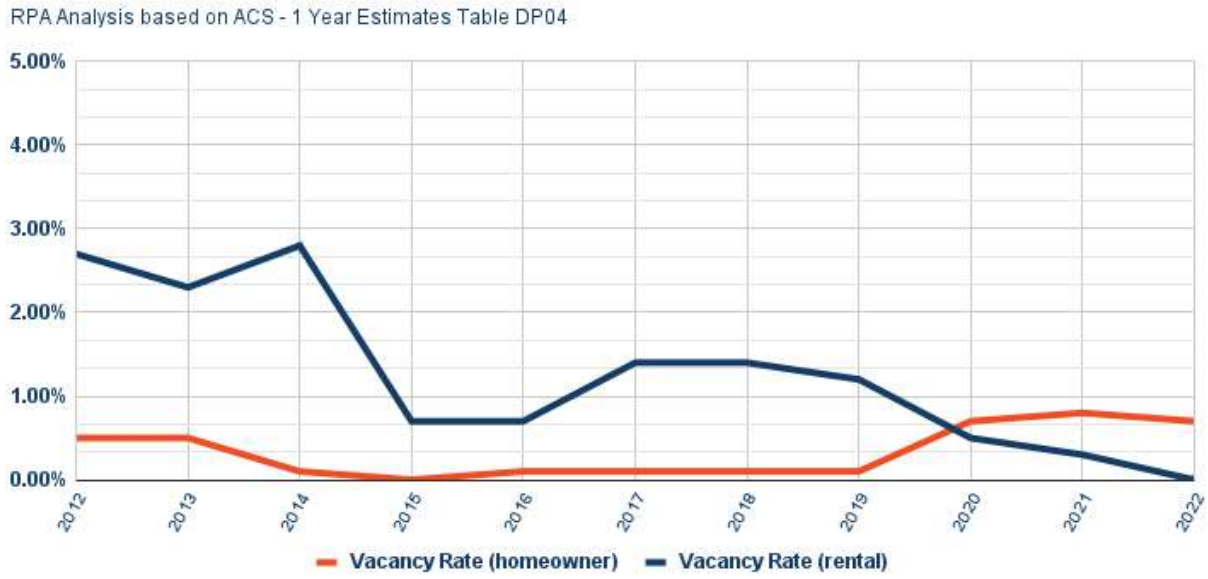
Typical Home Values by Year in Mahwah and Bergen County (2002 - 2024)



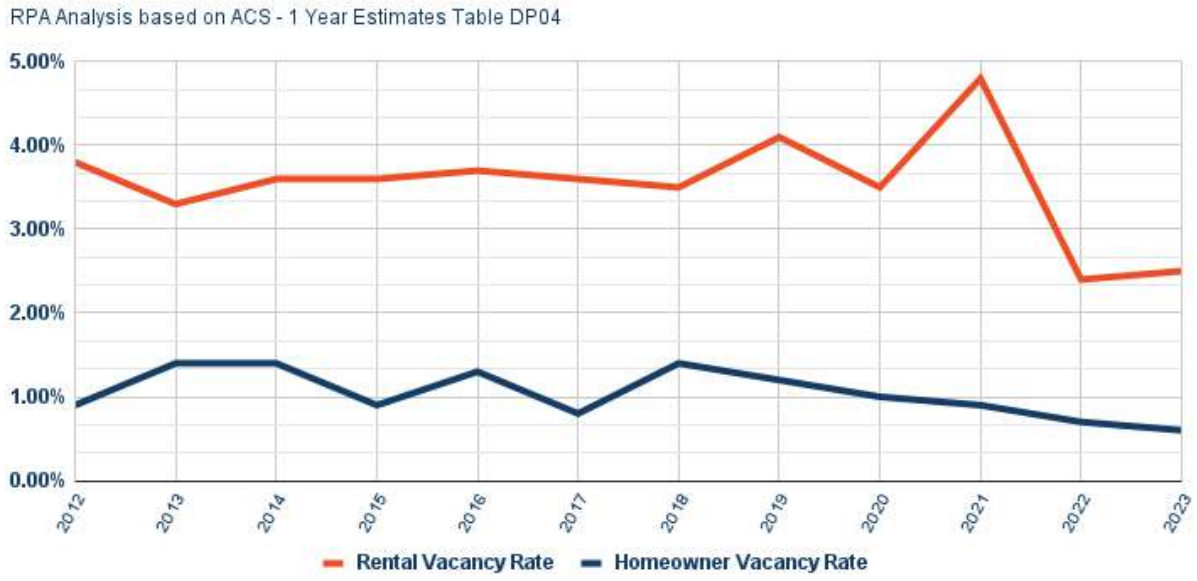
Typical Observed Rents by Year in Bergen County (2015 - 2024)



Mahwah's Vacancy Rates by Year (2012 - 2022)



Bergen County Vacancy Rates by Year (2012 - 2022)



Economic Impact

Bringing any of the concept plans to fruition would have a significant economic impact. These impacts can be measured by the potential number of jobs, labor earnings, gross domestic product, and local tax revenue generated from the site's development.

Based on the estimated development investment for the highest density concept (3B), the project could generate up to 1,300 jobs, $79.4 million in earnings, and $287 million in gross domestic product in northern New Jersey. About half (47%) of these economic benefits would likely materialize in Bergen County[14].

The following estimates represent the direct, indirect, and induced economic effects generated throughout the project's development period, resulting from investments in NJ businesses in the residential structures industry sector. On average, building a multifamily property takes between 18 and 24 months. However, this can vary greatly depending on the size, location, permitting process, and other factors like weather and supply availability. Larger projects and complex designs will often take longer.

Table 1.3: Potential Economic Impacts

Design Concept	Bergen County			Northern New Jersey		
	Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Earnings	Jobs	Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Earnings	Jobs
1	$40,457,712	$6,883,191	109	$50,694,800	$14,008,148	229
2	$82,049,147	$13,959,267	221	$102,810,191	$28,408,838	465
3A	$154,054,041	$26,209,674	416	$193,034,614	$53,339,937	872
3B	$229,226,941	$38,999,065	619	$287,228,649	$79,367,931	1,298

RPA analysis based on RIMS II Type II Multipliers Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Industry Sector: Residential structures (code 2334OR).

14 RPA analysis based on RIMS II Type II Multipliers Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). Industry Sector: Residential structures (code 2334OR). Northern New Jersey includes Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren counties.

Tax Revenue Generation

took the total construction cost to estimate annual property taxes and used that as the valuation based on the "replacement cost" valuation method. We then multiplied this by the 2024 all-inclusive tax rate for Mahwah, which is 2.064 per 100 dollars of valuation[15]. This assumes that any new properties constructed will not have any exemptions or abatements. We found that the annual additional property tax generated by the potential development ranges from $483,678 under concept 1 to $2,593,003 under concept 3B.

Table 1.4: Potential Tax Revenue

Design Concept	# Of Stories	Building Type	Valuation (Comparable Cost Method)	Tax Rate	Annual Tax Revenue
1	2	Stacked Townhouse	$23,434,000	0.02064	$483,678
2	4	Walkup Apartment	$45,816,000	0.02064	$945,642
3A	5	Elevator Apartment	$84,615,000	0.02064	$1,746,454
3B	7	Elevator Apartment	$125,630,000	0.02064	$2,593,003
Note that this is only an estimate. Any new construction will necessarily affect the town budget and total property value, both of which will affect the calculations of future tax rates.					

15 Bergen County Abstract of Ratables.

Community Benefits

The project team has identified community benefits for the project relating to:

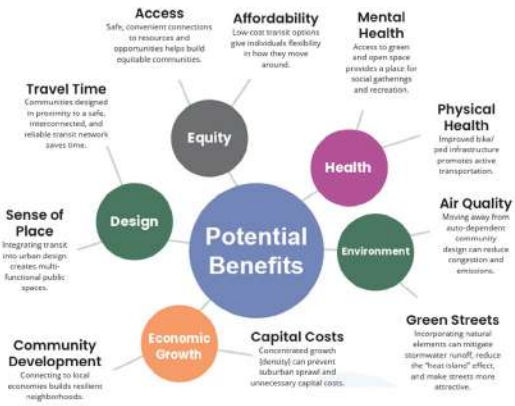
1. Zoning and Land Use
2. Active Transportation
3. Economic Impact

Zoning and Land Use

The feedback the project team received from the community and key stakeholders was primarily focused on the Study Area being the "unofficial downtown" of the Township. Survey respondents emphasized a desire for additional uses, with a preference for retail and food and beverage uses.

The recommended zoning policies contained herein provide a regulatory framework to permit those uses in the Study Area while acknowledging the need for greater density to make them financially viable.

Through a zoning overlay, strategic use of redevelopment, and completion of the Highlands Center Designation, the Township will have the tools to create an a vibrant, interesting, and more dynamic Station Area that can turn Mahwah's unofficial downtown into an official downtown. Furthermore, the overlay zone and redevelopment alternatives allow for this change to occur on a sliding scale based on community preferences and market demand.



Source: Transit Friendly Planning Guide, pg. 12.

Active Transportation

The project team has identified gaps and weaknesses in the active transportation infrastructure in the *Study Area*. This includes narrow sidewalks, gaps in sidewalk infrastructure, dim lighting, disconnected public spaces, and difficulties for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Strategic solutions, including relating to the public realm, bicycle infrastructure, greater variety of transportation options, and improved parking infrastructure can create a safer and more vibrant Station Area. Through wayfinding and safer public gathering places, the Station Area can become a more community oriented and dynamic part of the community.

Economic Impact

The proposed redevelopment alternatives create opportunities for direct and indirect economic benefits for the community in the region. Positive impacts include more jobs, more tax revenue, and in overall increase in economic activity.

Like the land use benefits mentioned herein, this project identifies a sliding scale of options, envisioning different scenarios based on community preferences and market demand.

Conclusion

Vision planning gives the community an opportunity to imagine different potential futures for their community.

By providing a range of possibilities and identifying the associated benefits, the Township can understand how different scenarios can effect the community in a variety of ways.

By recommending the tools to make these visions a reality, this document serves as a practical guide for creating a safer and more convivial Station Area for residents and visitors.


WAH RECREATION EVENTS
9 VIETNAM WAR SERVICE
THE SR. CTR. AT 10 AM
BREAKFAST SR. CTR 9-AM
-20 & 4-21 TOWNWIDE
GARAGE SALE
Mahwah
Station