VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD MASTER PLAN

Section 1: Our Village, Our Future

Adopted on October 20, 2020
VILLAGE COUNCIL
MAYOR SUSAN KNUDSEN
DEPUTY MAYOR MICHAEL SEDON
COUNCILWOMAN BERNADETTE WALSH
COUNCILWOMAN LORRAINE REYNOLDS
COUNCILWOMAN PAMELA PERRON

PLANNING BOARD
MAYOR SUSAN KNUDSEN, MEMBER CLASS I
CHIEF JAMES VAN GOOR, MEMBER CLASS II
COUNCILWOMAN LORRAINE REYNOLDS, MEMBER CLASS III
RICHARD JOEL JR., CHAIRMAN, MEMBER CLASS IV
DIANNE O’BRIEN, VICE CHAIR, MEMBER CLASS IV
FRANCES E. BARTO, MEMBER CLASS IV
MELANIE HOOBAN, MEMBER CLASS IV
DEBBIE PATIRE, MEMBER CLASS IV
ALYSSON WESNER, MEMBER CLASS IV

PROFESSIONAL STAFF
MARYANN BUCCI-CARTER, AICP PP, PLANNER
CHRISTOPHER MARTIN, ESQ., ATTORNEY
CHRIS RUTISHAUSER, ENGINEER
JANE WONDERGEM, SECRETARY

MASTER PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE
MELANIE HOOBAN
RICHARD JOEL JR.
SUSAN KNUDSEN
DIANNE O’BRIEN

CONSULTANT: NV5, Inc.
NEIL DESAI, AICP PP
ANNETTE SCHULTZ, AICP PP
RACHANA SHETH, AICP PP
DEDE MURRAY
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.1 INTRODUCTION .............................................................................. 4  
1.2 STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES & PRINCIPLES ............... 8  
  a. Objectives ........................................................................................................ 8  
  b. Principles ......................................................................................................... 8  
1.3 RIDGEWOOD PAST & PRESENT ............................................. 12  
  a. From Native Wilderness to First Church ........................................ 12  
  b. From Railroad Suburb to Historic Village ........................................ 12  
1.4 PLANNING RIDGEWOOD: PAST & PRESENT ............... 18  
  a. Early Planning Initiatives ....................................................................... 18  
  b. The Village’s Existing Master Plan ....................................................... 18  
1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGE ............................................ 22  
  a. Village & Neighborhood Structure ...................................................... 22  
  b. The Structure of Downtown ................................................................. 26  
1.6 DATA SNAPSHOTS .................................................................... 32  
1.7 TRENDS ..................................................................................................... 36  
  a. Demographic & Economic Trends ...................................................... 37  
  b. Technology Trends ..................................................................................... 42  
  c. Regulatory & Infrastructure Trends .................................................... 44  
  d. Environmental Trends ............................................................................. 47  
  e. The COVID-19 Pandemic ...................................................................... 50  
1.8 VISIONING PROCESS OUTCOMES .................................... 52  
1.9 MASTER PLAN REQUIREMENTS & OPTIONS ............. 62  
1.10 2016 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT ...... 64  
1.11 STATE, REGIONAL & LOCAL PLANS .............................. 66  
1.12 STRATEGIES FOR CREATING THE MASTER PLAN . 68  
  a. Determine the Role of the Existing Master Plan’s Parts ... 68  
  b. Address Topics through the Required & Optional Plan Elements ......................................................................................... 68  
ENDNOTES ............................................................................................. 74
1.1 INTRODUCTION

A master plan is a long-range guidance document that sets forth values, principles, goals, priorities, policies, and recommendations for making decisions about the future of a community. A master plan can address a wide range of topics and/or geographic areas of importance to residents and other stakeholders. It can provide an overall vision for a place and identify strategies toward achieving the vision. It can provide direction for investing in transportation improvements and community facilities, protecting ecologically-sensitive areas, becoming more environmentally sustainable, preserving historic resources, and facilitating certain types of development. While a master plan is not a regulatory document, it is the basis of a community’s zoning regulations in that zoning must be consistent with (i.e., reflect the land use intentions of) the master plan.

In 2018, the Village of Ridgewood launched the Our Village, Our Future visioning process as the first step toward creating a new Master Plan. The primary goal of Our Village, Our Future was to implement a community visioning process that reaches out to a broad range of Village residents and other stakeholders (e.g., businesses, institutions, etc.) and encourages them to think about and discuss the values, principles, and priorities that should shape the Village’s next Master Plan for the next 5, 10, 20 years.

This document is the first section of the next Village Master Plan. It reports on the outcomes of the visioning process and provides context, priorities, goals, and principles that will shape the Master Plan elements. It includes the “Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards,” which, as Section 1.9 explains, is a required part of a municipal master plan.

The following are short descriptions of each part of Section 1:

- **1.2: Statement of Objectives & Principles** is a required part of a Master Plan that sets forth its objectives and key principles, as explained in Section 1.9. It also represents the synthesis of the outcomes of the visioning process.
- **1.3: Ridgewood Past & Present** briefly reviews the historical evolution of Ridgewood and identifies the significant changes that have been proposed and/or are taking place in Ridgewood within the past decade.
- **1.4: Planning Ridgewood** recaps the Village’s major planning initiatives—starting with the adoption of its first zoning ordinance in 1920—and identifies all of the parts of the Village’s current Master Plan.
- **1.5: Structure of the Village** describes the physical structure of the Village as a means to better define its character(s).
- **1.6: Data Snapshots** provides a snapshot of local demographic and housing data and offers several key findings.
- **1.7: Trends** examines the Village in a national, regional, and local context. It identifies significant trends that communities across the country are facing today, highlights how Ridgewood has responded to these trends, and offers guidance for the Master Plan to address these trends.
- **1.8: Visioning Process Outcomes** summarizes the key outcomes of the visioning process.
- **1.9: Master Plan Requirements & Options** reviews the State of New Jersey’s regulations regarding the requirements and optional elements of a municipal master plan.
• **1.10: 2016 Master Plan Reexamination Report** reviews this latest study of the current *Master Plan* and highlights recommendations from the report that are still relevant based on the outcomes of the visioning process.

• **1.11: State, Regional & Local Plans** identifies plans and studies produced by state, regional, and local entities that or are relevant to Ridgewood and that should be reviewed during the process of developing the Master Plan.

• **1.12: Strategies for Creating the Master Plan** provides guidance on how to structure and stage the preparation of the Master Plan.

For a more thorough understanding of the visioning process and the methods used to engage the Ridgewood community, visit [www.vision-ridgewood.org](http://www.vision-ridgewood.org), which was the online portal for *Our Village, Our Future*. The website contains detailed summaries of the methods used to engage the Ridgewood community, which include the following (see corresponding images in Figure 1):

1. **Postcard.** A postcard containing information about the visioning process and ways to participate was sent to each of the 8,000+ households in Ridgewood to ensure the broadest possible awareness of and participation in this important project.

2. **Village Voices Discussions.** Focus-group style discussions with students at Ridgewood High School; Downtown business- and property-owners and realtors; seniors and senior providers; and self-led groups of neighbors/friends. From these discussions emerged planning principles to consider for a range of topics in the next Master Plan.
3. **Visioning Questionnaire.** More than 2,000 people responded to this 14-question survey, from which emerged quantifiable sentiments about a wide range of topics; several core values; and thousands of thoughtful comments, suggestions, and ideas.

4. **Map Your Vision Tool.** Users of this web-based engagement tool plotted points on a map of Ridgewood, typed in their concerns about and ideas for those areas, and uploaded photos too.

5. **Visioning Workshops.** More than 55 people participated in small group discussions to evaluate the emerging principles from the Village Voices discussions and to assess the level of priority of topics for addressing in the next Master Plan.

6. **Contact Form Submissions.** 16 residents submitted comments, suggestions, and ideas through the website. Several residents submitted annotated diagrams and illustrations.

---

**Author’s Note:** Excerpts of responses from the Visioning Questionnaire are featured in this document in this format. Any responses featured represent only the viewpoint or opinion of those particular respondents.
Figure 2: Map showing the Village of Ridgewood and neighboring municipalities.
1.2 STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES & PRINCIPLES

This section is the required Master Plan “statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based.”

a. Objectives

The primary objective of this Master Plan is to guide future decision-making and the planning and deployment of public and private efforts and investments in the Village. Within the plan elements, goals, principles, and recommendations regarding policies, programs, strategies, concepts, and regulations should be guided by the outcomes of the visioning process, which are summarized in Section 1.8.

A second objective of this Master Plan is to identify and anticipate trends and recommend ways for the Village to reduce their negative impacts and/or amplify their benefits. Section 1.7 identifies a wide range of trends and includes guidance for how the Master Plan could respond to them in ways that are consistent with the outcomes of the visioning process.

A third objective of this Master Plan is to re-evaluate and/or carry forward recommendations from the 2016 Master Plan Reexamination Report (see Section 1.10) that are consistent with the outcomes of the visioning process. As Section 1.12 states, there is sufficient policy basis to start addressing some of the priority topics.

b. Principles

This subsection refines and explains in further detail the principles that emerged from the visioning process, which are listed in Section 1.8.

General/Village-Wide

1. **Keep a “small-town/village feel.”** As discussed in Section 1.8, this principle is not absolute. Its corollary is to “allow aspects of the Village to evolve, adapt, or change if necessary and beneficial to the Village and to ensure that they do so in ways that maintain or complement the ‘small-town/village feel.”’ One of the challenges Ridgewood will face over the next 5, 10, 20 years is determining what aspects should evolve, adapt, or change. Criteria should be developed that helps the Village assess costs versus benefits and impacts. Section 1.5 describes the overall “structure” of the Village and highlights the typical dimensions that contribute toward the Village’s small-town/village scale.

2. **Strive to be proactive in community planning matters.** The Our Village, Our Future visioning process represents a proactive approach to community planning. Proactive engagement of Village residents and other stakeholders should continue during the development of the various plan elements of the Master Plan.

3. **Plan for the needs of current residents, but also understand and address the needs and preferences of newer residents.** The outcomes of the Visioning Questionnaire captured the sentiments of both long-time residents and newer residents. On the whole, residents recognize that newer residents tend to have different preferences, habits, tastes, and expectations for the community than...
1.2 STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES & PRINCIPLES

their longer-tenured counterparts. This principle recognizes that an eye should be kept toward the future in order to anticipate potential changes in community needs and desires.

4. **Protect and enhance the tree canopy throughout the Village.** Trees are one of the most important elements of the Village’s character and critical to its physical environment. They offer numerous aesthetic and environmental benefits to the Village.

5. **Strive for better fiscal management, responsibility, and accountability while continuing to support the Village’s strong public institutions.** The library and school system are public institutions that most residents enjoy, utilize frequently, and support. They are also strong selling points for people considering a move to the North Jersey suburbs. Despite their important role in and services provided to the community they should exercise sound fiscal management, responsibility, and accountability. The Village and other entities should continue to leverage grants and other financial incentives and to explore shared services and other cost-saving opportunities.

**Housing Affordability**

1. **Create new housing types that would be more affordable and practical for a broader demographic.** Approximately half of Ridgewood’s housing stock is large, with 50 percent of it consisting of houses with 4, 5, or more bedrooms, according to the 2017 American Community Survey. Ridgewood also has many smaller houses with fewer bedrooms that would be more affordable than the Village’s median home value of $740,000 and also more practical for seniors or small families. Over time, a number of these smaller, lower-cost houses have been enlarged or torn down to build much larger houses, which raises their value and potential sale price. The Village should consider techniques, approaches, and appropriate locations for creating smaller and more flexible housing types that would be more affordable and practical for a broader demographic. The Valley Hospital site, for which the *Third Round Housing Element & Fair Share Plan* requires a redevelopment plan to be produced, could be one location to consider such new housing types.

**Seniors**

1. **Recognize that seniors are not a uniform group; their characteristics, needs, and desires vary based on many factors.** Seniors’ housing needs vary based on their age, health, and financial status. Not all seniors want to or need to downsize. These seniors need services that help them stay in their existing houses. Some seniors prefer or need the security and amenities of independent living housing. Those with deteriorating health might want or require daily assistance from in-home providers.

**Downtown**

1. **Maintain the aesthetic qualities/feeling of Downtown.** *Section 1.5(b)* starts to identify and put numerical dimensions toward the aesthetic qualities/feeling of Downtown.

2. **Limit further high-density residential development.** As a starting point, the visual impacts of the new developments on the character and feeling of Downtown need to be assessed. Furthermore, to meet its affordable housing obligations, the Village is required to adopt affordable housing overlays that permit higher densities (of up to 18 units/accres) and building heights of up to 50 feet in parts of Downtown. It will be important to determine which properties have the most development potential given constraints such as lot sizes and minimum parking requirements.
3. **Promote a greater variety of retail types in Downtown.** Having a variety of types of retail stores, eateries, and other commercial establishments can encourage people to stay in Downtown longer and also support activity over a broader timespan. See #4.

4. **Create a mix of complementary/supportive uses that leads to an active downtown day and night.** Downtown has developed into a strong evening destination because of its popular and well-respected restaurant scene. For long-term sustainability as a retail and commercial destination and as a community-serving Village center, Downtown should be active during the day and at night.

5. **Strive for a customer-focused and customer-friendly Downtown.** This is an important “filter” through which the Village should consider decisions about Downtown. Customers should have positive experiences when they enter Downtown, during their stay, and when they leave Downtown.

6. **Create a safe environment for pedestrians of all ages in Downtown.** Despite its walkable scale, people generally do not feel safe crossing streets in some parts of Downtown, especially at night. Several people have been hit by cars while crossing E. Ridgewood Avenue, and one person died. Downtown should feel safe to all pedestrians, whether traveling by foot, wheelchair, cane, or stroller. One of the most frequent ideas suggested by residents in the Visioning Questionnaire is a pedestrian-only street in Downtown.

7. **Consider alternatives that reduce car traffic and the need for parking.** As long as people choose to—or have no other choice but to—drive to Downtown, there will be traffic and a need for temporary personal vehicle storage (i.e., parking). Given the trends described in Section 1.7, policies and regulations regarding parking should also be revisited. For example, parking requirements in zoning regulations tend to be higher than necessary. Furthermore, the parking requirements in the State's of New Jersey's Residential Site Improvement Standards can be adjusted in downtown environments.

8. **Improve communication between Downtown interests/stakeholders and residents.** The needs and wishes of Downtown business operators and those of residents might not always be in alignment. While residents are also Downtown customers, their interests and concerns are likely to be broader than this role. Improving communication could help bridge some gaps.

**Transportation (walking, biking)**

1. **Make streets safer to promote/support walking and biking.** This topic is a high priority for Ridgewood residents and for this Master Plan. See #2.

2. **Improve pedestrian connections between places within the Village.** Given appropriate accommodations and facilities, people will start to walk and bike within Ridgewood more often. This could, eventually, reduce the number of car trips residents some take. Such accommodations and facilities also tend to calm traffic, which can create a safer environment for all road users.

**Parks & Open Spaces**

1. **Energize/activate parks and open spaces throughout the Village.** While not every park and open space in the Village needs to be energized or activated (e.g., creating more playgrounds, as a number of residents suggested in the Visioning Questionnaire) there are certain open spaces where adding amenities could enhance services to residents and/or lead to other benefits. Downtown is one place where this could be the case.
2. Preserve and maintain the Village’s natural, undeveloped open spaces. These areas are beautiful and home to unique ecosystems consisting of forested areas and/or waterbodies that can be enjoyed passively. They can also serve to educate local children and adults about ecology.

Residential Neighborhoods

1. Consider broadening historic protections beyond Downtown to preserve character and instituting design review. Historic preservation tools could be put in place to protect houses in neighborhood susceptible to tear-downs in addition to historic landscapes.

2. Reduce the impacts of tear-downs and the construction of larger, new houses on neighborhood character, open space, and the environment. Many towns in New Jersey and other states have been grappling with this issue and have responded through detailed zoning controls that aim to “right-size” new house construction to preserve character, open space, and trees. The Land Use Element will be the place to examine the existing zoning districts and recommend strategies.

3. Plan ahead for the reuse of houses of worship and other sites, should they become available in the future. Anticipate a time when some houses of worship might decide to relocate, consolidate with an entity in another community, or close due to the lack of active members.
This section highlights the major phases in the evolution of Ridgewood. It ends in a discussion about the changes taking place in Ridgewood today, many of which started to take shape just before the beginning of the *Our Village, Our Future* visioning process.

### a. From Native Wilderness to First Church

The area in and around the current Village of Ridgewood border has been evolving ever since the first non-Native Americans arrived in the second half of the 17th century (see Figure 4 on page 13). Johannes Van Emburgh, a medical doctor who grew up in New Amsterdam (New York City) and practiced in Hackensack, acquired 250 acres of land in 1698 in what the native Lenape called Hoghakas (Ho-Ho-Kus). Two years later, Van Emburgh would build the first house in Ridgewood. A small farming community started to form, comprised of people of mostly Dutch heritage. By 1725, a church called the Peremus Kirk (Paramus Church) was formed, with a physical church structure being constructed in 1735. The Old Paramus Reformed Church, built in 1800, would replace the former structure. It stands today at 660 East Glen Ave. The community would remain fairly stable through the Revolutionary War and the 75 years thereafter. Several streets in Ridgewood bear the names of some of the families who lived here during this period (e.g., Ackerman, Van Dien).

### b. From Railroad Suburb to Historic Village

The development of the Paterson and Ramapo Railroad in 1848 started the evolution of this pastoral community into a railroad suburb and would continue to shape the place we know today as Ridgewood for the next 150 years. Early on, the railroad transported strawberries and other important local crops to markets in the region. At first, the closest 

Figure 3: Photographs representing various phases in Ridgewood’s evolution.
### Major Phases in the Evolution of Ridgewood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Type</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Inhabitants</th>
<th>Housing Types</th>
<th>Local Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NATIVE WILDERNESS</td>
<td>pre-1698</td>
<td>Hoghakas or Hochaos</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Unalachtigo (Lenape)</td>
<td>Wigwam (stone, single-room)</td>
<td>Subsistence Fishing, Hunting, Farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAND PURCHASE</td>
<td>1698-1725</td>
<td>Ho-Ho-Kus</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Dutch settlers (starting with Johannes Van Emburgh)</td>
<td>Cottages (stone, single-room), Houses</td>
<td>Fishing, Hunting, Farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRST CHURCH</td>
<td>1725-1852</td>
<td>Paramus</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Dutch settlers</td>
<td>Cottages (stone, single-room), Houses</td>
<td>Farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAILROAD SUBURB</td>
<td>1853-1893</td>
<td>Ridgewood Township</td>
<td>1,500 (1880)</td>
<td>Wealthy Brooklyrites &amp; Manhattanites; servants and laborers</td>
<td>Houses</td>
<td>Farming, Commuter Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUTER VILLAGE</td>
<td>1894-1930</td>
<td>Village of Ridgewood</td>
<td>7,600 (1920)</td>
<td>Ridgewood natives, New Yorkers; servants and laborers</td>
<td>Houses (1-, 2-, 3-family), Apartments (mid-rise)</td>
<td>Commuter Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VILLAGE</td>
<td>1930-1969</td>
<td>Village of Ridgewood</td>
<td>15,000 (1940)</td>
<td>Ridgewood natives, New Yorkers, Patersonians</td>
<td>Houses (1-, 2-, 3-family), Apartments (over stores, garden, mid-rise)</td>
<td>Commuter Income, Retail, Offices, Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISTORIC VILLAGE</td>
<td>1970-2020</td>
<td>Village of Ridgewood</td>
<td>25,500 (2017)</td>
<td>Ridgewood natives, people from all over the country and world</td>
<td>Houses (1-, 2-, 3-family), Apartments (over stores, garden, mid-rise)</td>
<td>Commuter Income, Retail, Offices, Hospital, Medical, Home-Based Businesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Major phases in the evolution of Ridgewood.
station was Ho-Ho-Kus, but local mill owners and other commercial interests successfully lobbied for a station to be constructed closer to them. The initial name of the station was Godwinville, which was eventually changed to Ridgewood in 1866. Industrial and commercial enterprises started appearing around the train station, and with the first streets being laid out in the 1860s, a central business district would be formed. Houses would soon follow, with the railroad providing wealthy city dwellers from Brooklyn and Manhattan with opportunities to relocate to a more quiet, pastoral environment.

During this time, the municipal boundaries of Ridgewood, as they are drawn today, were located primarily within a large area called Franklin Township (see Figure 19 on page 24). By 1876, Ridgewood Township was formed apart from Franklin Township, and, in 1894, it officially incorporated into the Village of Ridgewood. Between 1880 and 1920, the population of Ridgewood grew from 1,500 to 7,600. By 1940, the population had virtually doubled, with new streets and houses continuing to be developed to accommodate the growing population.

Valley Hospital was constructed in the early 1950s on nine acres of land that had been occupied by the Steilen House, a private residence. The hospital started as a 108-bed facility, but would expand over time up to more than 400 beds. Eventually, hospital officials would try to expand the hospital well beyond 400 beds, as described in Section 1.4.

In the 1970s, Ridgewood acquired land from Washington Township and the Borough of Ho-Ho-Kus, bringing the Village’s total area to nearly six square miles. By the 1980s, Ridgewood’s boundaries were set and its street network fully-developed. In the 40 years since that time, the Village’s population has remained relatively stable within the 24,000-25,000 range.

While the economy, technology, and society changed in myriad ways during this time, Ridgewood did not experience any significant physical changes—or potential for significant changes—until 2010, with the following projects and initiatives (see corresponding images on Figure 5 on page 15):

1. **Downtown Parking Garage.** Plans for constructing a $12 million, 4-story, 240-space parking garage in the Central Business District, or Downtown, moved forward after several years of study, multiple design iterations, and two referenda (one non-binding, one binding).

2. **Downtown Multifamily Development.** Plans for four multifamily residential buildings in Downtown were approved, with construction underway (see Figure 6 on page 16).

3. **Train Station Parking Expansion.** Plans for adding 38 commuter spaces to the train station parking lot at Garber Square moved forward and the project has since been constructed.

4. **Valley Hospital Expansion/Relocation.** After many years of trying to expand its existing facility in Ridgewood considerably, Valley Hospital announced that it would be relocating most of its operations to a new, 7-story, 300+ bed facility in Paramus.

5. **Library Re-Imagining.** The Ridgewood Public Library launched a multi-million dollar capital campaign to fund the renovation of this well-utilized institution. The library previously had been renovated 20 years ago, in 1998.

6. **House Tear Downs.** In residential neighborhoods, changes are taking place gradually, one lot here, one lot there. Mature trees and small houses, some of them with historic character, are being taken down to make way for new, larger houses that might appear out of character.
These are all plans for significant physical changes in a town that has not witnessed any major changes in the past 40 years. Some of these plans met with resistance from groups of residents who sought to preserve the character of the Village and their quality of life. This is not surprising because some of the proposed changes put people in the position of reacting to proposals being put forth by outside actors, which tends to force them to take a side—to either support it or oppose it. Nevertheless, from the perspective of some residents, the proposals also could be seen to represent the evolution of Ridgewood from a historic village to a city.

“I am not a native Ridgewooder, but I have heard every argument regarding the development and/or vision for Ridgewood in the future. Parking garage or no parking garage? High-density or no high-density? Renovate the library or not? Expand the hospital or not? It’s a non-stop debate.”

Furthermore, these plans were put forward under a Master Plan whose core elements date back to 1983. While several master plan elements, amendments, and reexamination reports were adopted since then, how could Ridgewood have proactively planned for its future when the last Village-wide community engagement process and comprehensive long-range planning effort took place more than three decades ago?
Section 1: Our Village, Our Future

Figure 6: Map of public and private investments in Downtown.

- **Hudson Street Parking Garage**: 240-space parking garage
- **Train Station Parking Lot Expansion**: Increased number of parking spaces by reducing landscaped area
- **Van Neste Square Lighting Project**: Lighting improvements to illuminate pathways, trees, monuments
- **Streetlights**: New streetlights to improve pedestrian safety
- **Chestnut Village**: 42 apartments (7 are affordable)
- **Ridgewood Station**: 60 apartments (+9 off-site special needs units)
- **The Dayton**: 93 apartments (14 are affordable)
- **The Enclave**: 47 apartments (+8 on-site special needs units)
- **54 E. Ridgewood Ave**: New restaurant with rooftop bar in historic First National Bank building
Figure 7: "Ridgewood Station" under construction at Franklin Avenue and Chestnut Street.  

Figure 8: The first floor plan of "Ridgewood Station" shows ground floor retail space along Franklin Avenue, which would complement the shops and restaurants across the street.  

Figure 9: "Chestnut Village" under construction along Chestnut Street.  

Figure 10: The parking garage was constructed at the corner of S. Broad Street and N. Hudson Street. 

Section 1: Our Village, Our Future
a. Early Planning Initiatives

In the United States, urban planning as a municipal practice began in the early part of the 20th century. The first zoning ordinances emerged out of Los Angeles and New York in the early 1900s. In the 1920s, the U.S. Commerce Department created model zoning and planning ordinances to help states draft enabling legislation. By 1920, the State of New Jersey Legislature adopted laws enabling municipalities to regulate certain aspects of development, including location. In 1923, when Ridgewood had a population of just over 8,000, it adopted a zoning ordinance. By 1930, Ridgewood had prepared its first Master Plan, but it did not adopt one officially until 1957. As described in Section 1.3, during this time period the population was growing quickly, so planning the orderly growth of the Village became especially important. Over the next 20 years, Ridgewood would revise the Master Plan several times (see Figure 11).

b. The Village’s Existing Master Plan

Ridgewood’s existing Master Plan is a compilation of documents, some of which date as far back as 1983, or 37 years ago. Figure 12 lists each component of it. The report A Reexamination & Comprehensive Revision to the Village of Ridgewood, NJ Master Plan, adopted in 1983, represents the core of the Master Plan. It contains the Land Use Plan and several other plans. Eight years later, Ridgewood adopted a Historic Preservation Plan, followed by an Open Space Plan and a Stormwater Management Plan in the 2000s. Two years after the 2006 Master Plan Reexamination Report, the Village adopted a Housing Plan.
In 2007, an ordinance was adopted that permitted any interested party to formally request amendments to the master plan or the zoning regulations. The rationale behind the ordinance was to create clear procedures for dealing with amendment requests and allowing the Village to charge the requesting entity for any professional services costs incurred. It was intended to facilitate the Village’s dealings with Valley Hospital, but it would eventually lead to the proposal and approval of four apartment developments in Downtown.

Valley Hospital would figure into much of Ridgewood’s planning history around this time (see Figure 13 and Figure 14 on page 20). In the 2010s, the Village adopted a series of amendments to the Land Use Plan. Two of them involved the H (Hospital Zone) district, which governs Valley Hospital. Valley Hospital had presented several expansion plans to the Village during this decade. The most extensive plan called for doubling the hospital’s floor space to almost 1.2 million square feet and raising the building height to eight stories. The 2010 Amendment to the 1983 Land Use Plan sought to protect the residential neighborhoods adjacent to the hospital by limiting its expansion beyond certain parameters (e.g., maximum of 454 beds and five stories). The 2016 Amendment to the 1983 Land Use Plan set additional constraints on the hospital’s expansion (e.g., maximum of four stories). After many contentious meetings, lawsuits, and mediation attempts, Valley Hospital would decide to build a new facility in Paramus to meet its expansion goals.

The 2015 Amendment to the 1983 Land Use Plan was drafted in response to several development proposals in the Central Business District (CBD). New zoning districts were created and mapped to support the development of multifamily residential housing, which, as Section 1.2 described, would lead to the approval of four new multifamily developments. Prior to the adoption of this amendment, residential uses were not permitted.
in the CBD. This represented a significant policy change in the Village. The 2007 ordinance that led to these developments was repealed in 2016.

The 2016 Master Plan Reexamination Report represents the latest comprehensive review of the Master Plan. It includes recommendations for modifications and studies within all of the topics of the plan's parts. Section 1.10 reviews the report's recommendations to determine which ones are consistent with the outcomes of the visioning process and should move forward. It recommends how the Village should proceed with respect to the various parts of the existing Master Plan and also identifies state, regional, and local plans that also should be consulted during the development of the next Master Plan.

The Third Round Housing Element & Fair Share Plan (draft March 5, 2020) reflects Ridgewood's agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center to comply with the Mount Laurel doctrine and Fair Housing Act. The document describes how the Village is addressing its affordable housing obligations through existing affordable units, inclusionary housing, overlay zones, and new zoning districts (see Figure 15 on page 21). A number of existing developments in Ridgewood, such as Ridgecrest, satisfy some of the Village's obligations. With respect to new affordable units, each of the new residential developments in Downtown will include a specified number of affordable units (see Figure 6 on page 16). To further satisfy its unmet requirements for affordable units, the Village will adopt several inclusionary housing zones and overlay zones. One such overlay zone will be adopted for the B1 and B2 districts in Downtown, which will increase the allowable units per acre and permit building heights of up to 50 feet. The existing B-2 districts along N. Maple Avenue (see Figure 16 on page 21) and along Goffle Road will be referred to as B-3 districts and contain inclusionary housing provisions. A 5.4-acre site along Route 17 will be zoned AH-3, which will require a

Figure 13: An aerial photograph of Valley Hospital.

Figure 14: A view of Valley Hospital from N. Van Dien Avenue.
Figure 15: Map highlighting affordable housing sites and zoning districts/overlay zones from the Village's Third Round Housing Element & Fair Share Plan Share.

Figure 16: A number of buildings along the Ridgewood side of N. Maple Avenue are vacant. Many of the properties are owned by Valley Hospital. The agreement also stipulates that a redevelopment plan must be adopted for the Valley Hospital property that requires the development of between 35 to 45 family affordable housing units.
1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGE

a. Village & Neighborhood Structure

Examining the physical structure of a place is an important first step toward understanding its overall character. “Structure” in this sense means the framework of natural features and engineered infrastructure that have shaped the patterns of development and open spaces within the boundaries of a town over time. This section describes the overall structure of the Village and its neighborhoods today.

The features that define the structure of the Village most broadly include:

1. **Rights-of-Way.** The railroad right-of-way, which was created in the mid-1800s, physically divides the Village into two sections, which some residents refer to as the “West Side” and the “East Side.” It also divides the Central Business District into two sections. The PSE&G right-of-way also bisects the Village, but it is a more permeable feature than the railroad right-of-way because streets pass through it in many locations.

2. **Major Roads.** Maple Avenue (County Route 507) runs north/south through the approximate geographic middle of the Village and serves as the eastern limits of the Central Business District. Maple Avenue and Ridgewood Avenue existed prior to the 1860s—though with different names—when the map in Figure 19 on page 24 was published.

3. **Natural Features.** The Ho-Ho-Kus Brook, along with the thick tree cover along parts of it, represent important natural features that contribute to Ridgewood’s structure. The Village’s southernmost border and part of its eastern border follow the path of the Saddle River. Topography also plays a role in Ridgewood, with steep slopes...
Figure 18: A map depicting the "structure" of the Village. Land uses and water features are color-coded according to the legend.
being left undisturbed. It also creates beautiful viewpoints like the one along Crest Road.

4. **Limited Access Highways.** N.J. State Route 17, a heavily-traveled six-lane highway, slices through the eastern part of the Village, cutting off a swath of Ridgewood from the rest of town.

These features, which are mapped on Figure 18 on page 23, contribute to the delineation of districts and neighborhoods. Public schools are also mapped on Figure 18 because they contribute toward residents’ sense of neighborhood identity.

Districts and neighborhoods are divided further into blocks. These blocks are created and shaped by intersections of streets and/or features in the natural landscape. Individual blocks are divided up into lots, which are the basic units on which development takes place. Zoning ordinances, which were first created by the Village in the 1920s, regulate what can be constructed on a lot and how a structure relates with the perimeter of its lot. Subdivision regulations control the division of lots into multiple lots. Regulations can also govern the consolidation of lots to create larger parcels on which to build.

Residential neighborhoods and streets emerged over time as estates or farms on large tracts of land were sold, subdivided, and developed. Houses were constructed on a particular tract during the same time span and, typically, in the same or similar architectural style(s).

The sizes of blocks and their pattern or arrangement contribute toward the scale and character of a place. Ridgewood’s blocks are, for the most part, compact and arranged in interconnected rectangular grids. The exceptions to the grid pattern are several cul-de-sacs, or “dead-end” streets that were created, most likely after the 1950s, in order to be able to build houses on an odd-shaped or leftover parcels within a block.

Figure 19: The current municipal boundary of the Village of Ridgewood overlaid, approximately, on top of an 1861 map of Bergen County.
A typical residential block is approximately 800-1000 by 300-400 feet, with houses having been constructed fairly close to one another in the range of 30 to 60 feet apart. Blocks near the edges of town tend to be longer and curvilinear. The core blocks of Downtown are more compact, at approximately 500 feet by 300 feet, while those along the edges of Downtown tend to be longer.

The radii on Figure 18 on page 23 represent 1/4-mile, 1/2-mile, and 1-mile distances from the center of Downtown, demonstrating the compact, walkable scale of Downtown and the proximity of many homes to Downtown. The 1-mile radius represents a very reasonable bicycle travel radius between residential neighborhoods and Downtown.

These radii are theoretical because the actual travel distances on the ground are based on the connections available between two places. For example, the only two walking connections between the east and west sides of Downtown are the tunnel under the train station platform and a sidewalk along one side of Franklin Avenue. Furthermore, the character and feel of the built environment influences how far people are willing to walk. For example, people are more likely to walk from the train station to Maple Avenue along E. Ridgewood Avenue as opposed to along Franklin Avenue because of the pleasant streetscape and continuous storefronts along every block on E. Ridgewood Avenue, which provide visual interest and comfort (see Figure 21).
b. The Structure of Downtown

The railroad right-of-way divides Downtown into two sides that, for the most part, seem to function independently. The overall structure of each side of Downtown is created by blocks, streets, buildings, and sidewalks. The dimensions of all of these elements taken together contributes to the character and form of each side of Downtown.

East Side of Downtown

The following are some of the general dimensional characteristics of the elements in the east side of Downtown.

Blocks

The blocks in Downtown are laid out in a grid pattern, with each block being approximately 500 feet long (approx. 1/10 of a mile) and 300 feet wide. Block size is an important dimension to note because it starts to define the character of Downtown. These block dimensions create a compact, walkable scale.

Streets

Curb-to-curb streets widths are another important dimension because blocks are defined by intersecting streets and relate to each other by what’s constructed (or not constructed) on either side of a particular street. The widest street in Downtown is Oak Street between E. Ridgewood Avenue and Dayton Street (see Figure 22). It is approximately 90 feet wide curb-to-curb and features a narrow, raised concrete median. N. Broad Street is the next widest street at 60 feet. Chestnut Street is approximately 45 feet wide (see Figure 23). At 33 feet in width, S. Broad Street is one of the narrowest streets in Downtown, which creates a more intimate setting (see Figure 10 on page 17).
Aerial Photograph of Downtown

Figure 24: Aerial photograph of Downtown

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGE
Pavement treatments and the presence of on-street parking are also important because they contribute to the character of and travel behavior along a street. Parking stalls—especially angled stalls—on both sides of the street tend to slow traffic. N. Broad Street features angled parking stall on both sides. Only the west side of S. Broad Street has on-street parallel parking stalls, given the narrow width of this street. Most of the other streets in Downtown have parallel stalls on both sides. Chestnut Street and Oak Street both have parallel parking on the north side and angled parking on the south side. Franklin Avenue east of Oak Street does not have on-street parking on either side, except for a small section across from the Board of Education.

**Buildings**

The mix of architectural styles in Downtown contributes to its character. Many buildings were designed in architectural types and styles popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including Renaissance Revival, Classical Revival, and Tudor Revival. These buildings contribute to the designation of the Village Center Historic District and to the overall compact, walkable scale of Downtown. They contain architectural details such as columns, moldings, cornices, decorative window frames, pilasters, columns, and parapets. Mixed among these older structures are less-stylized, modern buildings constructed after the 1950s.

The scale, orientation, and architectural styles of buildings at the corners of E. Ridgewood Avenue at N. Broad Street and at Chestnut Street make these intersections especially prominent (see Figure 26).

Buildings in Downtown were generally constructed side-by-side within narrow lots. Most building heights are within the range of 1, 2, 2½ or 3 stories, with several 4-story buildings and one 5-story building. The widths of buildings generally fall within one of 20-30 feet, 40-50 feet, and...
60-70 feet. Corner buildings tend to be wider, taller, and more ornate than buildings constructed in the middle of a block.

An important feature that contributes to the character and feel of a place is the design of the facades of wider buildings as they relate to narrower buildings. Generally, wider buildings should appear to be designed in sections that are in proportion to the widths of narrower buildings.

Another important building feature is the height of the first floor as it is expressed on facades. Buildings typically will have a horizontal feature that demarcates this area. The resulting vertical dimension defines the height of storefront windows and doors and the placement height of signs. The typical first floor facade height in Ridgewood is approximately 13 to 15 feet, with newer buildings generally having a taller first floor (along with taller upper stories, as per modern building codes). Figure 27 depicts these dimensions and features.

When apportioned appropriately, these dimensions give buildings—whether one story tall or four, old or new—a compact, pedestrian scale. Some stretches of Downtown’s streets are lined by off-street parking lots instead of buildings. Two-thirds of the west side of N. Walnut Street is lined by off-street parking lots. The southern part of the block where the bus shelter is located also consists of off-street parking. While off-street parking is an important amenity in Downtown, it also detracts from the character and feel of the streets along which it is located.

Sidewalks & Streetscapes

Streetscapes include trees and other types of plantings; pavers; lighting poles and fixtures; street furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, and bicycle racks; and public art. These elements can enhance comfort, safety, and mobility in a downtown. Taken together, streetscape elements contribute to the character, feel, and level of activity of a downtown.
West Side of Downtown

The primary landmarks on the west side are the historic train station, Garber Square, and Wilsey Square. The two squares originally had been reserved by Erie Railroad for future track areas for layovers, but have since been used for parking. Garber Square was recently redesigned by the Village to add more parking spaces, which required the removal of a number of tall trees and reducing the amount of green and open space.

W. Ridgewood Avenue and Wilsey Square/Godwin Avenue are the primary commercial streets within this section of Downtown. In terms of character and form, the first two blocks of W. Ridgewood Avenue resemble the east side of Downtown. Fronting the north side of Wilsey Square is a long series of 2-story buildings with retail storefronts while those that front the west side Godwin Avenue are single story (see Figure 28). The character and form of the south side of Godwin Avenue, with large surface parking areas wrapping around buildings that are set back far from the sidewalk, are vehicle-oriented suburban (Figure 30).

Chestnut Street & S. Broad Street Corridors

Chestnut Street and S. Broad Street extend to the north and south, respectively, beyond Downtown. Along this part of Chestnut Street is the YMCA, Chestnut Village (a residential development that is under construction), and a hodgepodge of buildings that includes an electric substation, one- to three-story industrial and medical office buildings, houses converted into medical offices, auto repair shops, and the Municipal Garage (see Figure 31 on page 31). Most of this part of Chestnut Street is in poor condition and does not have any sidewalks. The development of Chestnut Village and the addition of residents living here could change the dynamics of the corridor.
Along the S. Broad Street corridor is a mix of apartment buildings, single-family houses, professional office buildings, and auto repair shops. There are sidewalks on both sides of the street. S. Broad Street continues into Glen Rock, where the corridor is more industrial and commercial in nature with single story structures lining both sides of the road after it crosses Ackerman Avenue.

**Transition Areas around Downtown**

The transition areas around Downtown consist of religious institutions, professional offices, apartment complexes (see Figure 32), and residential areas with two-family houses. The zoning map in Figure 33 generally depicts the patterns of development in these transition areas.

Figure 31: A view of the Chestnut Street corridor. Chestnut Village, which is being constructed, can be seen in the background.

Figure 32: One of several apartment complexes located just south of Downtown along E. Ridgewood Avenue.

Figure 33: A map showing zoning districts in Downtown and environs.
Section 1: Our Village, Our Future

1.6 DATA SNAPSHOTS

**QUICK FACTS**

**POPULATION**
25,554

**MEDIAN AGE**
41

**MOVED SINCE PREVIOUS YEAR**
9%

**FOREIGN-BORN**
22%

**OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING**
77%

**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**
$162,000

**MEDIAN HOME VALUE**
$739,300

---

**DATA SNAPSHOTS**

**POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

1. **POPULATION OVER TIME + PROJECTIONS**

2. **POPULATION BY AGE GROUP**

3. **RACE/ETHNICITY**

**Data: Ridgewood Not Only a “Family Town”**

With 80% of its housing being single-family structures and a highly-regarded school system, it’s no surprise Ridgewood is known as a “family town.” However, the data indicate that it is not only a “family town” and that it is not as transient as it might seem when families move after high school graduation. Chart #5 shows that 19% of residents moved in to their current home 20-29 years ago while 13% moved in 30 or more years ago. This means more than 1/3 of households have been living in the Village for at least 20 years. And many of these residents are over the age of 55. Chart #2 shows that 26% of the Village's population is composed of adults 55 years of age or older.
### Household Composition

**4. Type of Householder by Pct. of All Households**

- Family: Married couple - 70%
- Householder living alone - 16%
- Household not living alone (roommates) - 1%
- Family: Female householder, no partner - 8%
- Family: Male householder, no partner - 2%

### Housing Characteristics

**6. Pct. of Housing Units by Number of Bedrooms**

- 1 br - 6%
- 2 br - 11%
- 3 br - 28%
- 4 br - 33%
- 5 or more br - 19%
- Studio - 1%

**8. Housing Types**

- **Single Family House**: 1, 6,941, 6,941
- **Duplex**: 2, 616, 308
- **Triplex or Fourplex**: 3 or 4, 272, 68
- **Small Apt. Building**: 5 to 9, 136, 19
- **Small Apt. Building**: 10 to 19, 156, 8
- **Mid-Size Apt. Building**: 20 to 49, 269, 5
- **Large Apt. Building**: 50 or more, 383*, 7*

*Includes the four approved developments in Downtown

### Distribution of Home Values

- Less than $200,000
- $200,000 to $249,999
- $250,000 to $299,999
- $300,000 to $399,999
- $400,000 to $499,999
- $500,000 to $649,999
- $750,000 to $999,999
- $1,000,000 to $1,499,999
- $1,500,000 to $1,999,999
- $2,000,000 or more

### Households by Year Moved In as Pct. of All Households

- Moved in 30 or More Years Ago - 13%
- Moved in 20 to 29 Years Ago - 19%
- Moved in 10 to 19 Years Ago - 18%
- Moved in Less than 10 Years Ago - 50%
- Moved in 50%
“Demographics will have the biggest impact on the Village. We will have tremendous turnover as Baby Boomers pass away or move to Florida, which will lead to less economic diversity because many of the ‘old-timers’ who were teachers, electricians, plumbers, etc. will sell their homes to those who can afford the high housing prices.”
1.7 TRENDS

Communities across the country, particularly those located in proximity to major cities, have been experiencing common social, demographic, economic, environmental, and technological trends that each present certain challenges and/or opportunities.

Ridgewood is located within the New York Metropolitan Area, which includes 26 counties in four states: NY, NJ, CT, PA (see Figure 34). It is one of 900 municipalities in this region. A master plan process is an opportune moment for municipalities to identify trends, understand their nature and potential impacts, and evaluate policy and regulatory options to respond to these trends. This section describes several categories of trends and highlights the challenges and/or opportunities they might present to Ridgewood today and into the next 5, 10, 20 years.

“What trends (i.e., social, economic, natural, tech, etc.) ... will have the most impact, positive and/or negative, on the Village 5, 10, 20 years into the future?” was one of the questions posed in the Visioning Questionnaire. More than 1,500 people provided a response to this open-ended question. The responses indicate that many Ridgewood residents are well-aware of many of the trends described in this section. On the following pages, the description of each trend includes related viewpoints and opinions expressed in the responses to the Visioning Questionnaire.

Figure 34: Map highlighting the New York Metropolitan Area.
a. Demographic & Economic Trends

Demographic trends and generational preferences combined with economic challenges (e.g., increasing housing costs, stagnant wages, and high taxes) can have significant impacts on towns and regions.

Lack of Affordable Housing, An Aging Population & High Taxes

“Property taxes, an aging community, expensive homes, and lack of housing choices.”

Affordable housing is one of the most serious challenges facing communities across the country both large and small. Several interrelated factors contribute to the lack of affordable housing, among them:

- Increasing construction costs, escalating home prices, and shortages of housing combined with a lack of comparable growth in salaries, especially in the lower- and middle-income brackets.

- The aging of the population and the change in housing preferences and needs as older adults age into their 60s, 70s, and beyond.

- A high property tax burden on residents, which can make it difficult for some residents to afford to stay in their houses and for others to purchase a house. This is compounded by federal tax reform that limits the state and local taxes (SALT) deduction.

Affordable housing, particularly for seniors and first-time home-buyers, is one of Ridgewood’s major challenges. Addressing this challenge is one of the top priorities to emerge from the visioning process. With respect to seniors, more than 45% of Ridgewood residents 65 years of age and older are cost-burdened, which means they are paying at least 30% of their gross income toward housing. Figure 35 is map that highlights this same statistic for every municipality in New Jersey.
National Trends in Creating More Affordable Housing: Up-Zoning & Accessory Dwelling Units

Some cities and states have adopted strident measures to increase the supply of housing in their communities. In 2018, the City of Minneapolis, MN “up-zoned” single-family zoning districts by allowing residential buildings in every neighborhood to contain up to three dwelling units. Minneapolis is not an isolated case. In 2019, the State of Oregon adopted a law that “up-zones” single-family zoning in many areas throughout the state. Cities with more than 25,000 residents or that are within a metropolitan service district must permit “middle housing” in single-family zoning districts. “Middle housing” refers to duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and cottage clusters.

Up-zoning would increase the supply of housing units and the variety of housing types and sizes available in a neighborhood. On a sufficiently broad geographic scale, this could reduce housing costs. It would also increase the accessibility of housing by providing more opportunities to rent a unit (in a duplex, triplex, etc.), which is more affordable than purchasing a single-family house. To what extent up-zoning reduces the cost of housing remains to be seen. Construction costs are high, and in desirable neighborhoods newly-constructed units in duplexes and triplexes could be priced at a premium.

In Ridgewood, while the predominant type of residential structure is the detached single-family house, a number of two-family houses, or duplexes, are located in the Village (see Figure 36). R-3 zoning districts, which permit two-family houses, are located on certain streets near Downtown such as Woodside Avenue. Unless the owner lives in one of the units, both units are typically rented out. According to the 2017 American Community Survey, approximately 4% of the Village’s housing stock consists of residential buildings that contain two units, while there are approximately 100 residential buildings that contain three or four units.

Besides up-zoning single family districts, another approach being implemented to augment the supply of affordable housing is to facilitate the creation of accessory dwellings units (ADUs). The American Planning Association defines an ADU as “a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a stand-alone (i.e., detached) single-family home.” Typically, ADUs are required to have their own entrance, kitchen, and bathroom. ADUs can be used by the owner or rented out, but they cannot be sold separately from the main house on the lot. Figure 37 on page 39 illustrates the three different types of ADUs.
In 2017, the State of New Hampshire adopted a rule that requires municipal zoning ordinances to permit ADUs. The rule states: “one accessory dwelling unit shall be allowed without additional requirements for lot size, frontage, space limitations, or other controls beyond what would be required for a single-family dwelling without an accessory unit.” The rule allows for some local exceptions.

**Responses to these Trends in Ridgewood**

- Ridgewood worked with the Fair Share Housing Center to address its affordable housing obligations from the *Mount Laurel* doctrine and Fair Housing Act. The *Third Round Housing Element & Fair Share Plan* (draft March 5, 2020) describes how the Village is addressing these obligations through existing affordable units, inclusionary housing, new zoning districts, and overlay zones. Each of the new residential developments in Downtown will include a specified number of affordable units (see Figure 6 on page 16). Ridgewood also must produce a redevelopment plan for the Valley Hospital property that includes 35 to 45 family affordable housing units.

- A number of organizations have already been providing services to seniors in Ridgewood. Ridgecrest and SHARE provide affordable independent living options to lower-income seniors. The Village’s Highlights in Leisure Time (HILT) program provides residents age 55 and older with social and entertainment programs. The Village also administers the Ridgewood Senior Bus, which provides transportation to local and regional destinations. The organization Age-Friendly Ridgewood promotes awareness of the needs of adults 55 years of age and older when designing projects for Ridgewood. Housing is one of the organization’s primary areas of support and advocacy.

**Master Plan Considerations**

- The Master Plan process is an opportunity to combine the measures developed to meet its affordable housing obligations with additional policies and strategies to create a multi-faceted approach to affordable housing. For example, as part of this approach, ADUs could be discussed and evaluated with residents. Residents should be informed about ADU types, costs, and rules and provided with examples and regulations from similar communities so that the potential advantages and disadvantages of ADUs can be discussed.
Generational Preferences & Differences; Geographic Shifts in Employment & Population

“Many young adults want to live in or very close to an urban setting. This might impact demand for future housing.”

A preference that is commonly ascribed to the younger demographic (i.e., “Millennials” and “Generation X”) and also to older adults without children at home (“Empty-Nesters”) is to live in walkable, lively, urban environments. The former are attracted to this type of lifestyle and also have access in these environments to high-paying jobs requiring at least a 4-year college degree. To attract well-educated workers, many companies have shifted long-standing suburban locations or added new offices to major cities. Many towns and cities within a relatively short commuting distance to New York (e.g., New Rochelle, NY and Hackensack, NJ), have actively sought to capture these generations by facilitating redevelopment in their downtowns and in proximity to transit stations.

As a result of these dynamics, the New York Metropolitan Region population has clearly shifted from outlying counties into those that located closer to New York City (see Figure 38). Bergen County’s population increased by more than 34,000 between 2010 and 2016.

The Millennial generation, which represents those born after 1980 and before the mid-1990s, has certain characteristics that are different from its older counterparts. These differences could have planning implications for communities. A report by the Pew Research Center that analyzes data by generation makes the following general conclusions about Millennials:

- Millennials are better educated than their grandparents.
- Millennials tend to have less accumulated wealth compared to older generations, due in part to higher levels of debt (see Figure 39 on page 41).
- Millennials are more likely to live in their parents’ house and to be at home for longer stretches of time (see Figure 40 on page 41).
- Millennials are marrying and starting families later than previous generations.
- Millennials tend to have fewer children than previous generations.

Given these general characteristics of Millennials, will Ridgewood’s typically large and expensive single family houses be affordable and/or appealing to this generation or the next? In the meantime, real estate database company Zillow Group, Inc. (Zillow) projects that in the next two decades, more than 27% of the owner-occupied homes in the country will become available when adults 60 years of age or older, move out or pass away. In Bergen County’s “Central” area, which includes Ridgewood,
Glen Rock, and Westwood, Zillow estimates that by 2027 more than 11% of houses currently owned by seniors will be placed on the market. Cumulatively, by 2037, approximately 27% of such houses will have been placed on the market. Zillow calls this potential trend the “silver tsunami.”

“More and more families with lots of young, school-age children will continue to occupy the houses of senior citizens when they sell and move away, thereby putting a lot of taxpayer-costing kids into the school system and demanding more from the recreation and library systems.”

On the other hand, if Ridgewood’s highly-regarded school district and proximity to high-paying jobs in New York City continues to attract new families into single-family houses once owned by older adults, might the scenario painted by the Vision Questionnaire response quoted above come to fruition?

Responses to this Trend in Ridgewood

- The new apartment developments being constructed in Downtown will provide an alternative housing type in the Village in convenient locations close to transit. They could appeal to young professionals and to empty-nesters from Ridgewood who might otherwise not have viable options within the Village for downsizing.

Master Plan Considerations

- The Master Plan should include a general assessment of the impacts of the new developments in Downtown with respect to character/form, traffic (vehicular and pedestrian), parking, business activity, and, to the extent possible, demographic composition of new residents (see Figure 6 on page 16). This assessment should inform policy, programmatic, and regulatory strategies.

### Distribution of Wealth Across the Life Course, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Median Family Net Worth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 35</td>
<td>$11,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44</td>
<td>$59,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–54</td>
<td>$124,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–64</td>
<td>$187,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65–74</td>
<td>$224,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 or more</td>
<td>$264,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey of Consumer Finances, 2016.
NEW AMERICA

Figure 39: This table indicates that older generations have a substantially higher median family net worth than younger generations.23

### Figure 2. Share of Young Adults Living with Parents (Age 25-34)

Source: Decennial Census & American Community Survey
NEW AMERICA

Figure 40: This chart shows a marked increase in percentage of people between the ages of 25 and 34 living with their parents since 2005.24
b. Technology Trends

The prevalence of smart phones, apps, and “disrupters” of traditional ways of doing business have revolutionized commerce, transportation, social life, and home life. “Smart City” technologies can help communities become more efficient and sustainable, but they also can cost a lot, require specialized expertise to install and manage, and raise questions about individual privacy and ownership/utilization of personal data.

Innovations in Transportation

“The ride-sharing trend is growing rapidly and has been embraced by young and old. In addition, vehicle technology is rapidly evolving and will soon render our traditional car-centered transportation system obsolete.”

The Internet and mobile phone apps have facilitated innovations in transportation that have transformed the way people travel. In the meantime, autonomous vehicle technology is continuing to evolve and state departments of transportation are taking note and planning for the future. The State of New Jersey recently created an advanced autonomous vehicle task force that will study these vehicles and recommend laws, rules, and regulations to safely integrate them on State roadways.

Car-sharing services such as ZipCar; ride-hailing services such as Lyft; and bicycle- and electric scooter-sharing systems can enhance people’s mobility and reduce the need for car trips, especially in places where car ownership rates are low. Uber recently launched a helicopter service between Lower Manhattan and JFK and likely has plans for expanding this service. Will Uber try to build helipads in towns with large numbers of commuters to New York City?

“Flexible transit,” sometimes called “microtransit,” is not a new concept, but mobile phones enable the deployment of this form of transportation, which can be designed to be have van or bus routes that are flexible, semi-flexible, or fixed and utilize on-demand scheduling via apps. Autonomous shuttles are being tested in campus settings and are starting to appear in some communities. Autonomous vehicles will likely further transform mobility and roadway infrastructure within the next decade or two.

Given limited land available for parking and the expense of structured parking, some communities in New Jersey have launched partnerships with ride-sharing providers to reduce parking demand at their train stations during peak hours. For example, the City of Summit has a ride-sharing program for commuters through which Lyft provides door-to-door service to and from the train station between 5:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. The service is available to commuters with prepaid parking permits and costs the same as the price of daily parking.

Responses to Trend in Ridgewood

- During construction of the Hudson Street Parking Garage, the Village instituted a program to provide transportation via ride-hailing provider Lyft for people who had permits to park on the lot upon which the garage was being constructed.

Master Plan Considerations

- The Circulation Plan should recommend Village-wide strategies for testing or implementing any such approaches or technologies described in this subsection that could help reduce the number of trips taken by personal vehicles and reduce parking demand in the Village. A Downtown Plan could focus on the same, but specifically for Downtown.
Apps & “Smart City” Technologies for Municipal Operations and Management

“The Village needs to get in front of the ‘Internet of Things’ and artificial intelligence to find modern ways to control costs and improve lifestyles. The Village website will become more important.”

Technology has made it possible to control many aspects of operating and managing a municipality. Most well-known among the general populace are app-based parking management systems.

Many technologies will be soon be enhanced by the advent of fifth generation (5G) cellular network technology. 5G offers up to 20 times faster speeds, increased responsiveness, and the ability to connect with more devices at once than older generations. For Ridgewood’s large work-from-home population (see Section 1.6: Data Snapshots), this means faster file transfer speeds.

Infrastructure-focused technologies (often marketed with the “Smart City” moniker), many of which would be greatly-enhanced by 5G, can have a wide array of applications. This includes, for example, street lighting and roadway safety. Digital street-lighting control systems enable public works departments to track, coordinate, and manage energy consumption. Roadway heating systems can melt ice and snow. Major cities have the budgets and staff to deploy such technologies, while smaller communities do not. However, smaller communities such as Ridgewood can work with neighboring municipalities and also leverage expertise from residents who work in the technology field.

5G’s high-band spectrum does not penetrate objects well and tends to have shallow coverage, so “small cell” systems must be installed in frequent intervals and close to one another (see Figure 41). As a result, communities are concerned about the impacts of such equipment on aesthetics and character. Besides the visual impact of small cells, communities are also concerned about the potential health impacts of radiation. In the meantime, the FCC has limited the amount municipalities can charge to install and maintain small cells and shortened the permitting time-frame for their installation.

Responses to Trend in Ridgewood

- For managing parking spaces in Downtown, the Village installed a system of kiosks and integrated it with the ParkMobile app.

Master Plan Considerations

- Policies regarding the utilization of technology in municipal operations and management should be considered in the Master Plan. Proposals to consider technology that manifests physically in the Village (e.g., digital kiosks and Bigbelly™ bins often seen in cities) should be filtered through the principles of the Master Plan.
Online Commerce & Residential and Commercial Delivery

“Online shopping will continue to force local shops to be creative and service-focused.”

Online shopping continues to increase, presenting more competition for retailers with physical stores. According Forrester Research, e-commerce will account for 17% of retail sales by 2022, an increase from 13% in 2017. Large retailers are investing in same-day and one-day shipping and also testing delivery by drones. Increased vehicular traffic is part and parcel of online delivery. Delivery vehicles can increase congestion and contribute to air and noise pollution in residential neighborhoods. In downtowns, besides contributing to the air and noise pollution, e-commerce delivery vehicles can compete with commercial delivery trucks for space, take up customer parking, and create bottlenecks.

Responses to this Trend in Ridgewood

- Accommodating commercial delivery vehicles has been a long-standing challenge in Downtown. Delivery vans and trucks often block parking spaces and can create bottlenecks if intruding on travel ways. The Village had considered limiting the hours when Downtown businesses can receive deliveries, but it did not adopt any changes.

Master Plan Considerations

- The Master Plan should recommend comprehensive policies and strategies for accommodating commercial loading and delivery in Downtown.

c. Regulatory & Infrastructure Trends

Many regulations and transportation systems were written and designed for the way people used to live, work, shop, play, and move around. While regulations can be changed relatively easily, transportation systems can require significant investment to retrofit or redesign.

Outdated Zoning Codes

“I’m generally concerned about retail—not just Ridgewood, but all over—with Amazon continuing to grow ... Perhaps the zoning in Ridgewood needs to be changed to include “experience” places in addition to restaurants and retail.”

In many municipalities, zoning regulations in downtown and industrial areas still permit types of commerce that no longer exist and/or have not broadened their permitted uses to include contemporary types of commercial businesses and industrial operations. The natures of commercial businesses and industrial operations have changed significantly over the past several decades. Zoning needs to be updated to reflect these changes.

The same is true for residential zoning, especially in strong housing markets where older, smaller houses from the 1950s and 1960s might be considered “obsolete” for modern families and where the land is very valuable. Tear-downs and rebuilds taking place under zoning codes that have been in place for decades, without having been reevaluated, can lead to the construction of much larger and more expensive houses that are often out of character and scale with their neighborhoods. Without adequate protections, vegetation and trees are often clear-cut.
Responses to Trend in Ridgewood

✓ Recognizing that its zoning code had been a barrier for certain types of businesses to open up in Downtown (e.g., instructional studios), the Village revised the language and permitted uses within the B-1 and B-2 zoning districts.

Master Plan Considerations

➢ The Land Use Plan Element should provide further direction on residential zoning districts to manage the negative impacts of teardowns and new houses. The Historic Preservation Plan Element should include additional protections within certain locally-designated historic districts that contain houses at high risk for being torn down.

➢ The Master Plan can consider additional zoning modifications in Downtown. The Land Use Plan Element can focus on the other commercial areas in the Village, such as N. Maple Avenue.

Toward More “Complete” Streets

“There is a trend toward people living in commercial areas and walking ... We need to be willing to invest in infrastructure and utilize technology to adapt the community to be more pedestrian- and environmentally-friendly.”

Streets and intersections used to be designed by engineers to facilitate vehicular traffic flow; they were not designed with pedestrians and bicyclists in mind. As downtowns have regained residents and as more people are apt to walk or bike through their communities for leisure, exercise, shopping, or commuting, the lack of facilities for walking and biking puts lives at risk.

Gradually, the paradigm of road design has shifted among state, county, and local transportation and public works agencies toward the concept of “Complete Streets.” This philosophy recognizes that streets should be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation.

Responses to Trend in Ridgewood

✓ Ridgewood residents have been concerned for a long time about the safety of their children as they travel to and from school. In 2003, a Ridgewood Schools Walking Plan was prepared and in 2007 and 2008, Ridgewood received several implementation grants from the Safe Routes to School program.

✓ Ridgewood adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2011, which represents a commitment to designing and constructing all public street projects—when feasible to do so—to safely accommodate travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, and motor vehicles, with special priority given to bicyclist and pedestrian safety.

✓ The Central Bergen Bicycle & Pedestrian Plans present several concepts for bicycle and pedestrian recommendations in Ridgewood.

✓ A painted bicycle lane in Ridgewood is located along the north and west sides of Franklin Avenue between N. Broad Street and W. Ridgewood Avenue. It continues to be a controversial subject.

Master Plan Considerations

➢ The Circulation Plan Element should identify specific recommendations to make streets more walkable throughout the Village and to institute investments in an integrated bicycle facilities network. It should incorporate and effectuate the recommendations of the
Central Bergen Bicycle & Pedestrian Plans. The Master Plan can focus on specific recommendations within Downtown to improve pedestrian safety and to explore the idea of slow speed or pedestrian-only sections of Downtown, which was one of the most frequently mentioned ideas in the Visioning Questionnaire.

Underinvestment in Rail & Bus Infrastructure

“The second tunnel under the Hudson will get built at some point and provide one-seat ride to Manhattan. This will make Ridgewood an even more attractive place to live and raise a family. We will need to think about how to maintain and improve services for residents.”

Twenty percent of Ridgewood’s employed residents commute by public transit, with many of them holding jobs in New York City. The tunnels and bridges that serve the Northeast Corridor in the tri-state area are severely underfunded and in need of repair, replacement, and expansion. The Northeast Corridor rail corridor between Newark and New York City is restricted by infrastructure limitations. The Gateway Program promises to create new rail bridges and tunnels that could facilitate direct service into New York Penn Station. Commuters currently have to transfer at Secaucus to reach Penn Station or continue to Hoboken and transfer to the PATH train or the ferry to reach Manhattan.

The bus is also an important mode of transportation for commuters, including those who travel from other communities to work in Ridgewood. Transit agencies across the country have started reinvesting in bus systems to better serve commuters and employers and to capture new customers. They have been redesigning routes that had not been updated for decades, creating bus rapid transit routes to improve efficiency, implementing app-based schedules and ticketing, and providing more amenities such as bus stops and improved maps and schedules.
Responses to Trend in Ridgewood

- In the Visioning Questionnaire, a number of residents mentioned the possibility of a “one-seat ride” into Manhattan as important for its potential to attract more residents. Residents also pointed to the number of people who work from home. Some believe that this trend will grow and could reduce public transit utilization.

- The bus shelter located at the northwest corner of Oak Street and Dayton Street that marks the Van Neste Square Bus Terminal is deteriorating and attracting nuisance behavior (see Figure 43 on page 46). NJ Transit offered to replace the shelter, but the Village declined the offer because of the potential historic/architectural significance of the structure. The Village is exploring installing security cameras and other measures to improve the bus terminal.

Master Plan Considerations

- The Master Plan should explore ways to improve the layout, design, and circulation (of cars, buses, and pedestrians) of the area centered around the intersection of Hudson Street, Prospect Street, Dayton Street, and Oak Street. This means considering the future of the Van Neste Square Bus Terminal in a broader context.

d. Environmental Trends

Interest in and commitments to environmental sustainability among both the private and public sectors has grown considerably over the past several decades. Environmental sustainability has become an integral part of state, regional, and local planning across the country, and households are demanding products and services that are more environmental-friendly. Superstorm Sandy, which hit the Eastern Seaboard in 2012, ushered in a separate but related movement toward “resilient” communities. And within the past year, climate change and sea level rise have finally started to receive the serious attention that they deserve.

Severe Weather Events, Climate Change, Sea Level Rise

“Climate and weather conditions have an impact on our fields and trees. The increase in construction, particularly in residential neighborhoods, also continues to impact the water table.”

Superstorm Sandy in 2012 was a wake-up call for the country because of the wide swath of destruction it wrought on communities throughout the Eastern Seaboard. The response was a new focus on community “resiliency,” which can be defined as the ability of communities to adapt to and recover from hazards, shocks, or stresses without compromising their long-term prospects. Today, there is more widespread recognition of the role that greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and climate change have in contributing toward severe weather events. A warming climate is also causing sea levels to rise more rapidly than expected, which poses a real and looming threat to life and property in coastal communities and also those farther inland. Many communities are now actively tracking their greenhouse gas emissions and producing local climate action plans to play their part in reducing their impact on climate change.
In New Jersey, Governor Murphy issued Executive Order No. 89, which calls for the preparation of a Statewide Climate Change Resilience Strategy (CCRS). An Interagency Council on Climate Resilience will coordinate efforts across state Executive Branch departments and developing action plans for the executive departments regarding climate change resilience. A new Climate and Flood Resilience Program will be created within the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and a Chief Resilience Officer will be appointed.

Ridgewood’s neighbor, Glen Rock, is planning to launch a climate action plan. As one of its primary actions, the Borough’s Environmental Commission is proposing a renewable energy aggregation program with the goal to have all residents that are currently using the default PSE&G energy supplier to participate in the municipal aggregation program.

Responses to this Trend in Ridgewood

- While Ridgewood is not a coastal community, it has several waterways that course through its neighborhoods: the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook, Saddle River, Goffle Brook, Diamond Brook, and Sprout Brook. They all tend to flood during heavy rainstorms. Tropical Storm Floyd (1999) and Hurricane Irene (2011) flooded streets and homes adjacent to these waterways, causing millions of dollars of damage and putting lives in danger. Bergen County worked with the Village to acquire several flood-prone properties through a floodplain protection trust fund and convert them to open space.

Master Plan Considerations

- The Master Plan must include a statement of strategy on storm resiliency with respect to energy supply, flood-prone areas, and environmental infrastructure. A bill is currently under consideration by the State Legislature to require the Land Use Plan Element to include a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment.
1.7  TRENDS

Toward More Sustainable Communities

“I think becoming a greener society and reducing the amount of waste as a whole is not only ‘trendy’ but a beneficial and necessary part of any future community. We need to reduce our carbon footprint and make recycling, reusing and going green more accessible and more attainable.”

The State of New Jersey increasingly has been encouraging municipalities to think strategically about sustainability and their role in helping the State achieve its own goals. The Municipal Land Use Law was amended recently to require master plans to include a statement of strategy concerning smart growth, storm resiliency, and environmental sustainability. The State also adopted a rule to improve and expand the electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in New Jersey by requiring municipalities to identify existing sites of public EV charging stations and propose locations for future development of such infrastructure while undertaking a master plan reexamination. The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law was also amended to consider the creation of public EV charging infrastructure in appropriate locations within redevelopment plans.

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection is in the process of amending its stormwater regulations to require water quality, recharge, and quantity control to be met using green infrastructure practices.

Responses to this Trend in Ridgewood

- Ridgewood’s Green Team/Environmental Advisory Committee assists the Village Council in long-range planning with respect to environmental issues. It anticipates environmental problems, researches, and recommends solutions.

- The Village was Silver-certified by Sustainable Jersey in 2017. The Village received this recognition after reporting on a wide range of activities, including, for example, installing rooftop solar on several municipal buildings and planting a rain garden to collect stormwater runoff from a parking lot at Habernickel Family Park.

- Several business and Institutions within Ridgewood have established their own internal programs. For example, the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood aims to be certified as a “Green Sanctuary” by its parent association. Ridgewood Public Schools installed solar panels atop the Benjamin Franklin Middle School roof and created a carport with a solar roof.

Master Plan Considerations

- The Master Plan is required to include a statement of strategy on environmental sustainability. Of particular interest to many residents will be strategies for retaining, maintaining, and enhancing the Village’s tree canopy, along with reducing impervious surfaces and preserving green space. These topics can be addressed in the Land Use Plan Element as they relate to development, in a Parks & Open Space & Recreation Plan Element, and in an Environmental Sustainability Plan Element.
e. The COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 Pandemic arrived in the United States just before the preliminary draft of this section of the Master Plan was posted for public comment. Virtually no community in the world has been spared from the health, social, and economic consequences of this virus. The pandemic continues to plague the globe at the time of the updating of this chapter, impacting communities large and small—and no one knows how long it will last. Resurgences of infections are likely later this year and possibly next year. The quarantine has left millions of people unemployed and shuttered businesses. Keeping the quarantine active indefinitely is not an option. Some states are relaxing restrictions and reopening their economies, while others will open up gradually in phases based on various criteria. With the virus expected to reemerge, communities might have to adjust to periods of alternating between tight quarantine restrictions and more relaxed restrictions.

While the terms “resilience” and “adaptation” are typically associated with climate change, they also apply to the pandemic (Chapter 10 focuses on climate resilience in the Village). In the near-term, barring a surge of federal funds, states and local governments will have to adapt to a wide range of fiscal and economic challenges, including bankruptcies, vacancies, unemployment, foreclosures, and revenue shortfalls.

The pandemic is also likely to accelerate or change certain trends and could also change or reorder residents’ values and priorities. At the same time, the pandemic has created, out of necessity, new methods of conducting business that protect public health. While these methods are temporary, should the virus reemerge, they might need to be redeployed periodically or formalized. Alternatively, some of them could reveal to be acceptable to maintain for the long-term. The following are a few potential trends that could impact the Village:

Increased Outmigration from New York City to Suburban and Rural Communities

Since the pandemic began, the news media has been reporting that many New York City residents are considering moving to communities in the suburbs and even farther into regions such as the Catskills of New York. The relative success of remote working and videoconferencing could facilitate this shift. Furthermore, companies might permit more employees to work from home or to have a mixed schedule consisting of days working in the office and days working from home.

A Shift in Values and Priorities Regarding Mobility & Open Space

When offices, stores, and parks were closed, few people were driving; many started walking or riding bicycles. Quiet, empty streets revealed how much space is dedicated to cars. This is especially pronounced in large cities. While sidewalks are usually present, physical distancing can be difficult depending on their dimensions, so people walked along empty streets for getting around or for recreation. Many people took up bicycling, which allows for physical distancing and, in certain cities, can be a viable alternative to transit. The desire for more open space and more safe paths for pedestrians and bicyclists has prompted many cities and towns to close off or dedicate parts of certain streets for pedestrians and bicyclists only. Will residents want some of these temporary changes to become more permanent?

In Ridgewood, the pandemic might reinforce or underscore residents’ values and principles, particularly those regarding open space, pedestrian/bicycle safety, and the Downtown economy (see Section 1.2).
Greater Flexibility & Experimentation

Municipalities have continued to operate by being flexible and experimenting. They also have been experimenting with using streets as spaces for commerce and recreation. As restrictions were gradually lifted to permit outdoor dining, many municipalities have reconfigured sidewalks and parking spaces to create more room for more outdoor dining, shopping, gathering, and waiting on line. They have reallocated curb spaces and parking spaces for restaurant pickup, deliveries, and parklets and closed off certain streets and blocks entirely to vehicular traffic to create more safe space for walking and outdoor commerce. To support business activity during the pandemic, Ridgewood has experimented with closing streets in Downtown on weekends (see Figure 46). An essential aspect of these new arrangements has been finding the appropriate balance to support the viability of retailers, service providers, and restaurants, which vary in terms of their customer timings and traffic patterns. The Village has also started to implement projects to ensure that both the east and west sides of Downtown are equally visible.

“During the pandemic [closures], more people walked the neighborhoods to relax and as a respite from confinement. Trees are an important part of why walking is enjoyable. It’s critical to create streetscapes that provide environmental and emotional nurturing.”

“[Because of] the pandemic, the Village needs to do everything possible to help local businesses.”

Master Plan Considerations

- Many communities, including Ridgewood, adopted new methods of conducting business to adapt to the pandemic. The Village should consider evaluating these methods to determine if they should be continued into the future, especially if they improve efficiency, enhance customer service, reduce costs, or enhance commercial activity. These methods should be described and included in the Master Plan if and where appropriate.

- The Village should monitor the economic impacts of the pandemic, especially on Downtown and on the housing market. The Master Plan should take into account these impacts while also maintaining a long-term vision of the future.

Figure 46: Ridgewood turned parts of Downtown into a commercial and recreational open space during weekends.29
One of the most broad-based methods for engaging the Ridgewood community during the *Our Village, Our Future* visioning process was an online, 14-question “Visioning Questionnaire” that was promoted by postcard to Ridgewood’s 8,000+ households and through local e-mail newsletters and social media. More than 2,000 people responded, which represents 11% of Ridgewood’s adult population. The questionnaire was also open to non-resident business-owners and propertyowners, in addition to former residents and frequent visitors (for work, to visit family, etc.). More than 130 of such people completed the questionnaire. The following pages report on the outcomes of the Visioning Questionnaire and the other methods used to engage the Ridgewood community.

**Outcome 1: A Sense of the Village’s Qualities, Areas & Institutions that Residents Value and Appreciate Most**

The Visioning Questionnaire revealed the qualities, places, and institutions that residents value most (see Figure 47). Based on the responses, at the top of the list are Ridgewood’s public schools. One of the main reasons many people moved to the Village in the first place was to ensure that their children would receive a high-quality, well-rounded education from grade school through high school. Another highly-valued institution, one that many respondents noted is among their favorite places in the Village, is the public library.

Residents highly value and appreciate the small-town/village feel of Ridgewood. In a physical sense, this is especially strong in the Village’s historic Downtown. Residents enjoy Downtown for its historic architecture and compact, walkable nature and also for its local shops and restaurants. A train station located in Downtown gives Ridgewood...
Q7 & Q8: How do you feel about each of the topics listed here with respect to the Village today?

- **Very Satisfied**
- **Satisfied**
- **Neutral or No Opinion**
- **Dissatisfied**
- **Very Dissatisfied**

### Figure 48: A chart from the Visioning Questionnaire Summary of Results that ranks residents’ level of satisfaction about various topics in the Village.

### Figure 49: A chart from the Visioning Questionnaire Summary of Results that compares the responses to the above figure by the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Q7 & Q8: How much do the responses vary by the demographic characteristics of the person responding?

- **Q:** How much do the responses vary by the demographic characteristics of the person responding?
- **A:** Not by much.

### Outcome 2: A Key Principle for the Next Master Plan

One of the principles that rises to the top of the results of the Visioning Questionnaire is to “**Keep a Small-Town/Village Feel**.” While the majority of people who responded to the Visioning Questionnaire would agree that “keeping a small-town/village feel” should be a core principle of Ridgewood’s next Master Plan, there are differences of opinion on how to effectuate this. Based on the responses, a number of residents feel that the changes taking place in Ridgewood are irrevocable, putting the town on the trajectory toward becoming more like a city.

**“It’s too late now, but we shouldn’t be building all the multifamily housing crowding the downtown. It will now be like a city and have less of that small-town feel [that] we loved.”**

As a result, some residents wish to maintain the “small-town/village feel” by preserving Ridgewood as it is, with minimal changes.

**“Future planning should focus on a plan to keep Ridgewood the same as it is now. In fact, maybe turn back the clock to make sure the Village is preserved for the future.”**
However, there are many residents who also believe in this principle but see the need for the Village to change, adapt, or evolve into the future in certain respects. These residents tend to see a “middle ground”—one that respects the Village’s past and present, but that also creates space for the Village to adapt or evolve into the future.

“We have a town that loves traditions, but fears change. We need a solid mixture of both.”

“I would like to see a Village that is progressive with an eye to the future without disregarding the past...”

“I love this town, but that does not mean it should stay stuck in an earlier time to retain its beauty and charm. It can evolve with the rest of the world and still be amazing!”

“The town seems divided on whether to honor its past or secure its future. There has to be a middle ground. While there is always risk associated with changes, such as building a new parking garage or multi-family housing, there is also risk in doing nothing...”

“... I urge you to really try and listen to each other ... There has to be a middle ground when it comes to development and still maintaining the best parts of Ridgewood for years to come.”

Therefore, the corollary principle would be to “allow aspects of the Village to evolve, adapt, or change if necessary and beneficial to the Village, but ensure that it does so in ways that maintain or complement the ‘small-town/village feel!’”

Outcome 3: Residents’ Opinions of the Village’s Strengths and Challenges

While residents might disagree on the extent to which Ridgewood should keep its small-town/village feel, they tend to agree on the status of a wide range of community topics. Visioning Questionnaire respondents generally agree about the Village’s greatest strengths and assets, such as the library, the school system, and community safety, which might have attracted many of them to live in the Village in the first place. They also generally agree on the topics that are most challenging or concerning, such as the high cost of living; the economic health of Downtown; “overdevelopment” and traffic and parking in Downtown; and land use and development. And these sentiments generally are shared by various types of residents (e.g., new residents, long-time residents, young residents, etc.) as Figure 49 on page 53 indicates.

By far the one of the most frequent words used in the response to the question about identifying the most impactful trends was “taxes.” Of course, Ridgewood residents have plenty of company in New Jersey who feel the same way about taxes in their own communities. Section 1.7 delves into this and many other trends that Ridgewood and other communities in New Jersey and across the country are facing. Several participants noted that having a commercially-thriving Downtown is one of the ways the Village can reduce the tax burden on residents.
1.8 VISIONING PROCESS OUTCOMES

Outcome 4: Aspects, Qualities, Parts of the Village to Preserve or Maintain into the Future

The Visioning Questionnaire asked residents to identify the aspects, qualities, or parts of the Village that should stay the same 5, 10, 20 years into the future. The following are the most frequent responses, organized by topic:

Form/Character Aspects
- Keep the “Small-Town Feel” or “Village Feel.”
- The charm, vibrancy, character of Downtown.
- Architecture/historic architecture.
- Train station.

Functional/Operational Aspects
- Walkable/walkability.

Physical Qualities
- Parks and open spaces.
- Trees.

Education
- Quality of schools and education.

Community Facilities & Recreation
- The library.
- Graydon Pool (officially “Graydon Park”).

Social Aspects
- Sense of community and community spirit.

Figure 50: A summary of the results of the Map Your Vision Tool.
Outcome 5: Aspects, Qualities, Parts of the Village that Should Evolve, Adapt, or Change into the Future

The Visioning Questionnaire asked residents to write identify the What aspects, qualities, or parts of the Village should evolve, adapt, and/or change 5, 10, 20 years into the future. The following are the most frequent responses, organized by topic:

Downtown
- More parking (and lower cost).
- A more pedestrian- and bike-friendly downtown.
- Support/help small businesses.

Functional/Operational Aspects
- Make streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Fiscal
- Taxes (i.e., reduce).

Socioeconomic Aspects
- Increase affordability of housing (esp. for seniors).

Community & Recreational Facilities
- The library.
- Graydon Pool (officially “Graydon Park”).
- More playgrounds; improve sports fields.

Social Aspects
- The quality of community discourse (esp. over social media); less venting and more productive solutions; less bullying.

Figure 51: Graydon Park, dedicated in 1931 and listed on the State Register of Historic Places, drew mixed feelings in the Visioning Questionnaire. Residents either want it preserved or replaced with a modern swimming facility—or some combination thereof.

Figure 52: According to the Visioning Questionnaire, residents love the library and generally support its proposed renovation. Some residents believe the library does not need an extensive renovation and expressed concerns about the high cost.
Outcome 6: Residents’ Opinions on Trends that will Impact the Village into the Future

More than 1,500 people provided a response to this open-ended question. The following is a categorized list of the range of trends that were identified frequently.

Trends of Concern

- High property taxes, SALT deduction limits, NJ tax policy.
- Over-development/overcrowding and its impacts on quality-of-life, services (police, fire, EMS), schools, and character.
- Increase in traffic congestion.
- Online shopping/Amazon and its impact on Downtown; high rents.
- Tearing down of historic houses; building of larger houses.
- Climate change and its impact on storms and flooding.
- Water quality and supply challenges.
- Cutting down trees without replacement.

Trends or Traits to Promote

- Affordability (housing)
- Environmentally-friendly/sustainability.
- Diversity (age, socioeconomic, ethnic).
- Walkability/bike-ability.
- Fiscal responsibility.
- More civility on social media.

Trends to Monitor or Adapt To

- Aging population.
- Increase in working remotely/from home.
- Self-driving cars.
- One-seat train to Manhattan and impacts on appeal of Ridgewood.

Outcome 7: Special Places, Ideas & Opportunities, and Areas of Concern

The web-based Map Your Vision Tool asked users to pinpoint locations on a map of the Village and then categorize their comments about that location. Some of the specific ideas that residents provided in their responses to the short-answer questions in the Visioning Questionnaire are represented on the maps in Figure 50 on page 55 (e.g., improving the bus stop, improving street lighting, adding more activity in Van Neste Square, etc.)

The three most common responses represented by the points on the map, organized by topic, include:

- Transportation (cars, parking): Traffic Safety.
- Land Use & Development: Preservation of Small Commercial Nodes/Areas in Residential Neighborhoods.
- Transportation (walking, biking): Safer Walking Conditions (via sidewalks and/or street lighting) and Improved Connections to/between Paths and Trails.

All of these sub-topics are well-represented in the responses to the Visioning Questionnaire, with the exception of the concept of preserving and supporting the small commercial nodes that are located within residential areas.
Outcome 8: Level of Optimism or Concern by Topic

The Visioning Questionnaire asked people to think about the Village 5, 10, 20 years into the future and rate their sentiments about various topics in the range of level of optimism/hope and level of concern/worry. The results (see Figure 53) generally mirror, in reverse, the results of a prior question that asked people to rate their level of satisfaction by topic (see Figure 48 on page 53). Socioeconomic Issues (affordability, aging-in-place) topped the list of topics for level of concern/worry among respondents. This might reflect the understanding that affordability is influenced by many factors; it is not a simple challenge to tackle. Residents also seem optimistic that Ridgewood’s strengths will continue to prevail in the future. One exception is Education & Schools, which ranked second in resident satisfaction, but appears closer to the middle in Figure 53, reflecting concerns about declining school quality that a number of residents noted. Nevertheless, the majority of people still report being optimistic about this topic.

“The schools need to continue to evolve to compete with other towns, whose schools seem to be passing us, and with private schools.”

The responses to these questions elicited people’s feelings and sentiments about each topic. While these responses can inform the level of priority of topics in the Master Plan, they need to be evaluated further in order to determine the level of priority for the Master Plan.
### Visioning Workshop Outcome: Level of Priority by Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>HIGH-MEDIUM</th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>MEDIUM-LOW</th>
<th>LOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Business &amp; Economic Development</td>
<td>▶ Environmental Sustainability</td>
<td>▶ Parks &amp; Open Spaces</td>
<td>▶ Arts &amp; Entertainment</td>
<td>▶ Health &amp; Medical Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Land Use &amp; Development</td>
<td>▶ Utilities &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>▶ Recreation Facilities &amp; Programs (moved from Medium-Low)</td>
<td>▶ Community Facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Socioeconomic Issues (affordability, aging-in-place)</td>
<td>▶ Historic Preservation (moved from Medium-Low)</td>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Education &amp; Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Transportation (traffic, parking)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Public Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Transportation (walking, biking)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outcome 9: Priorities for the Master Plan**

The “Village Voices” discussions were focus group style conversations with various groups of residents and other stakeholders. The discussions were summarized by the planning principles that emerged for various topics.

Evaluating these “emerging principles” was one of the purposes of the two Visioning Workshops held toward the end of the visioning process. During these workshops, participants were organized into in groups of four to seven people to discuss the principles and their level of agreement or disagreement with each of them. They were also asked to assign each topic from a list of topics with a level of priority in terms of being addressed in the Master Plan.
Participants at the Visioning Workshops discussed and evaluated the topics and assigned a level of priority to each one. **Participants were informed at the beginning of the discussion that assigning a low priority to a topic does not mean that it is not important to the Village today or in the future.** An assignment of a topic as “low priority” could mean that it does not require either the immediacy or the degree of visioning and policy direction that the next Master Plan can provide. It also could mean that residents are satisfied with a topic and so it does not require any intervention, rethinking, and/or reinvestment. Conversely, the topics that are ranked “high priority” do require the degree of visioning, policy, and strategic direction that a master planning process can provide. Figure 24 reflects the combined, preliminary results of the discussions of priorities at both of the Visioning Workshops.

Two adjustments are recommended to the levels of priority of topics that emerged from the visioning workshops:

- Move **Historic Preservation** from “Medium-Low” to the “Medium” priority level. Ridgewood’s history is intrinsic to the core principle of “keeping a small-town/village feel,” especially as manifested in its older buildings and landscapes. Historic preservation tools, among other tools, could be useful toward maintaining the character of the Village.

- Move **Recreation Facilities & Programs** from “Medium-Low” to the same priority level of Parks & Open Space, or “Medium.” These two topics overlap in some places and, therefore, should be planned in coordination.

**Section 1.12** provides specific guidance on how these topics can be organized and addressed through required and optional Master Plan elements.

**Outcome 10: Planning Principles**

An initial list of principles emerged from the Village Voices discussions with various groups of people in Ridgewood, which were then discussed and evaluated by participants of the Visioning Workshop. Several principles were removed from the list because participants did not agree with them.

The following is the resulting list of principles organized by topic. They represent a starting framework to guide the direction of more specific goals, policies and recommendations that will be conceived in the various parts of the Master Plan. Additional goals and principles should be informed by the outcomes of the Visioning Questionnaire. The thousands of responses received to the short-answer questions provide a rich source of insight into the key areas of interest or concern, opinions, and sentiments of residents and other Village stakeholders.

**General/Village-Wide Principles**

1. Keep a “small-town/village feel.”
2. Strive to be proactive in community planning matters.
3. Plan for the needs of current residents, but also understand and address the needs and preferences of newer residents.
4. Protect and enhance the tree canopy throughout the Village.
5. Strive for better fiscal management, responsibility, and accountability while continuing to support the Village’s strong public institutions.
Principles Regarding Affordability & Seniors
1. Create affordable options for seniors to be able to remain in the Village. Introduce new residential building types.
2. Accommodate changing demographics, particularly an aging population, by introducing new, more affordable housing types.
3. In the master planning process, recognize that seniors are not a uniform group; their characteristics, needs, and desires vary based on many factors.

Principles for Downtown
1. Maintain the aesthetic qualities/feeling of Downtown.
2. Limit further high-density residential development.
3. Promote a greater variety of retail types in Downtown.
4. Create a mix of complementary/supportive uses that leads to an active downtown day and night.
5. Strive for a customer-focused and customer-friendly Downtown.
6. Improve communication between Downtown interests/stakeholders and residents.
7. Create a safe environment for pedestrians of all ages in Downtown.
8. Consider alternatives that reduce car traffic and the need for parking.

Principles for Transportation (walking, biking)
1. Make streets safer to promote/support walking and biking.
2. Improve pedestrian connections between places within the Village.

Principles for Parks & Open Spaces
1. Energize/activate parks and open spaces throughout the Village.

Principles for Residential Neighborhoods
1. Consider broadening historic protections beyond Downtown to preserve character and consider instituting design review.
2. Reduce the impacts of tear-downs and the construction of larger, new houses on neighborhood character, open space, and the environment.
3. Plan ahead for the reuse of houses of worship and other sites, should they become available in the future.

This initial list of principles is refined and each principle explained in more detail in Section 1.2.
1.9 MASTER PLAN REQUIREMENTS & OPTIONS

Every state has its own requirements for master plans. The State of New Jersey’s Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) provides specific parameters for the content of master plans. These parameters are shown in the diagram in Figure 56 on page 63.

The MLUL stipulates that a master plan must contain, at the least, “a statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based” and a land use plan element.

Of these required elements, the Land Use Plan Element is a central aspect of every master plan in New Jersey. The most recent updates to the MLUL require the Land Use Plan Element to include statements of strategy concerning the following:

- Smart growth which, in part, shall consider potential locations for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations.
- Storm resiliency with respect to energy supply, flood-prone areas, and environmental infrastructure.
- Environmental sustainability.
- Showing the existing and proposed location of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

A Housing Plan Element is a de facto requirement because a municipality is required to have one in order to enact zoning ordinances. Therefore it is shown on Figure 56 on page 63 under “Required Elements.” The detailed requirements of a Housing Plan Element are located in §52:27D-310, which from a different section of the State’s legislative statutes because it involves fair share housing requirements.

Virtually all of the optional elements shown on Figure 56 could be important aspects of any community. However, given the time, staff, public process, and funding a master plan typically requires, each community must determine which aspects most need the strategic and policy direction that a master plan process can provide. Furthermore, a community does not have to produce and adopt the desired optional elements all at once or at the same time as a new Land Use Plan Element.

Optional elements of a master plan also can focus on a specific geography, such as a downtown. A Downtown Plan Element would provide direction on a range of topics appropriate to a downtown area, such as land use, circulation, and economic development.

New Jersey municipalities are required to undertake a periodic reexamination of their master plans at least every 10 years (in Figure 56, see the box under “Master Plan”). Ridgewood last reexamined its Master Plan in 2016. The MLUL includes five aspects that the reexamination must address, among them to identify specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations. Ridgewood’s 2016 Master Plan Reexamination Report describes all of the amendments to the Master Plan and zoning regulations that have taken place since the previous reexamination in 2006 and also recommends corrections and future considerations. Section 1.10 provides more detail on the recommendations within the 2016 Master Plan Reexamination Report. By nature, they are geographically-specific and detailed. The broader concepts that underlie the recommendations are reviewed for consistency with the results of the visioning process.
### New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL): Master Plan Requirements

#### Required Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master Plan Element</th>
<th>Required Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Objectives, Policies &amp; Standards</td>
<td>...upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use Plan Element</td>
<td>...showing the existing and proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future...including a statement of the standards of population density and development intensity recommended...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Plan Element</td>
<td>required by §40:55D-62; see plan requirements @ §52:27D-310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Statement on Relationships to State, County &amp; Contiguous Municipalities</td>
<td>...indicating the relationship of the proposed development of the municipality, as developed in the master plan, to the master plans of the entities listed above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Optional Elements

- Circulation
- Utility
- Community Facilities
- Recreation
- Conservation
- Economic Development
- Historic Preservation
- Farmland Preservation
- Educational Facilities
- Green Buildings & Environmental Sustainability
- Public Access Plan
- Recycling
- Subplans & Subplan Elements
  ...according to periods of time or staging sequences

*Figure 56: Master Plan requirements in New Jersey’s Municipal Land Use Law.*
This report documents the Planning Board’s reexamination of the *Master Plan* and development regulations, pursuant to MLUL requirements, to identify any recommended changes and to suggest areas of further study. The following topics and recommendations from the report are connected to the outcomes of the *Our Village, Our Future* visioning process. Some of the recommendations have been carried forward through prior reexamination reports but still have not been implemented, or only partially so. Some of the recommendations listed below are still valid and should be carried forward (√), while a few should be revisited in the next Master Plan and then either revised or carried forward (○).

### Residential Neighborhood Character & Change
- Study and, if necessary, amend the Land Use Plan Element to address infill subdivisions and the demolition and replacement of existing homes that are incompatible with and/or detrimental to surrounding residential neighborhoods. Amend the development regulations, as necessary and appropriate, to implement and be consistent with any such plan amendments. √

### Downtown & Other Commercial Areas
- Amend the *Master Plan* to reflect designation of the North Walnut Street Redevelopment Area and to be consistent with the redevelopment plan for this area. ○
- Review the Franklin Avenue land use and development patterns, goals and objectives and, if appropriate, amend the land use plan in order to complement the Central Business District (CBD) development on Ridgewood Avenue and other streets. ○
- Continue to evaluate the proliferation of banks and restaurants in the central business district to determine whether amendments are necessary to avoid negative impacts to the pedestrian-oriented shopping environment. √
- Update lists of permitted and prohibited uses in the B-1 and B-2 zoning districts; review and update the C zoning district objectives and policies; evaluate/amend sign regulations. √
- Study the commercial development problems and opportunities in areas outside the central business district, including but not limited to the northern portion of Route 17, Goffle Road, and E. Ridgewood Avenue, in order to determine the most appropriate mix of land use, given the existing conditions, limitations and opportunities that exist. If appropriate, amend the Land Use Plan Element accordingly. √

### Circulation
- Determine if a comprehensive Circulation Plan is needed, or if the current plan should be repealed. If an updated plan is needed, prepare and adopt a new plan. √
- Study opportunities to improve the flow of vehicular traffic and for improved pedestrian safety, particularly at street crossings, in the CBD. √
- Continue to implement the Village’s Complete Streets program. √
- Evaluate the opportunities for a bicycle/multi-purpose path or paths in the Village, including the use of the PSE&G right-of-way for this purpose. √
Open Space & Recreation

- Prepare a comprehensive update to the Open Space & Recreation Plan, incorporating those elements from the current plan, the draft 2008 plan, and the July 2010 report from the Village’s Open Space Committee titled, Achievements and Challenges 2003-2010: Village of Ridgewood Open Space Committee Report to Village Council that remain appropriate, adding and updating components as necessary. ✔

Historic Preservation

- Perform a study to determine if the Village Center Historic District should be enlarged to include the entire B-1 zone district. ☑

- Perform a study to determine if both sides of Franklin Avenue should be added to the Village Center Historic District. The specific boundaries of this area need to be defined. ☑

- Perform a study to determine if the Prospect Street/Woodside Park historic district should be designated in the zoning ordinance. ☑

Environmental Protection

- Evaluate the best approach to addressing the issues of soil grading, and disturbance and tree removal/preservation, and if appropriate, amend the development regulations accordingly. ✔

- Update the master plan text and maps to reflect current environmental conditions, issues and policies in the Village. ✔
1.11 STATE, REGIONAL & LOCAL PLANS

The following plans should be consulted during the development of the Master Plan.

State Plans


Regional Plans & Studies

- **Bergen County Parks Master Plan** – Bergen County, NJ (2019). Identifies characteristics of the County recreation and open space system, plans for the accommodation of the needs of current residents, and responds to projected future growth of the County. Ridgewood is considered “slightly underserved.”

- **Trans-Regional Express (T-REX): Transforming the New York Region’s Commuter Rail System Into an Integrated Regional Rail Network** – Regional Plan Association (2018). Describes a vision and strategic investments that could reduce the commute time to Manhattan in half.


- **Bergen County Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Implementation Study** - Bergen County & NJTransit (2017). Investigates the viability and best

Figure 59: Map of recommended bicycle and pedestrian facilities from the Central Bergen Bicycle & Pedestrian Plans
approach for introducing and providing bus rapid transit services in Bergen County.

- **Central Bergen Bicycle & Pedestrian Plans** – Bergen County, NJ (2015). Identifies safety and mobility improvements for walking and bicycling to and from major destinations in the area, including within Ridgewood.


- **Vision Bergen: The Visioning Component of the Bergen County Master Plan** - Bergen County NJ (2011). Captures and summarizes the results of a visioning process for the future of the County.

### Ridgewood-Focused Plans, Reports & Studies


- **Senior Walkability Workshop Report** – NJ Department of Transportation (2017). Reports on a workshop that included a presentation on senior mobility, a field walk to experience senior mobility issues, and a discussion about field observations and potential improvements.


### Plans, Reports & Studies of Neighboring Towns

- **Borough of Ho-Ho-Kus Master Plan** (2013) - Borough of Ho-Ho-Kus. Ridgewood and Ho-Ho-Kus share a long border. Also, the N. Maple Avenue commercial corridor spans both towns. Coordination and cooperation might improve outcomes for both communities.

- **The Borough of Glen Rock Reexamination Report** (2014) - Borough of Glen Rock. Ridgewood and Glen Rock share a long border and several trails run through both towns. Coordination and cooperation might improve outcomes for both communities.

- Master plans and relevant reports and studies from other neighboring towns (see Figure 2 on page 7).
1.12 STRATEGIES FOR CREATING THE MASTER PLAN

a. Determine the Role of the Existing Master Plan’s Parts

There are five possible courses of action for the parts of the existing Master Plan:

1. If the plan element is still valid and does not require any updates, it can be **retained** as part of the next Master Plan.

2. The plan element can be **amended or updated** as needed and then be adopted as part of the next Master Plan.

3. The plan element can be **replaced** entirely by a new version of that plan element.

4. The plan element can be **removed** if it has been fully-implemented or if it is out-of-date or no longer needed.

5. The plan element could remain “as is” for the time being, perhaps because it is not a high priority topic. Therefore, it would by default be part of the next Master Plan, with the expectation of amending it or creating a new one to replace the previous one.

See Figure 60 on page 69 for recommended courses of action for each part of the existing Master Plan.

b. Address Topics through the Required & Optional Plan Elements

Figure 61 on page 71 summarizes the suggested approaches for addressing various topics through the required and optional plan elements. The following are highlighted as special considerations.

**Create a Downtown Plan Element**

The array of topics listed in Figure 61 on page 71 are generally comprehensive in terms of community planning, but some do not necessarily fit neatly into the framework of a Master Plan. Business & Economic Development refers primarily to Downtown (although it also includes the smaller commercial areas in the Village, such as N. Maple Avenue and Goffle Road). Many of the topics are relevant to this focused area called Downtown. There should be a dedicated **Downtown Plan Element** in which all aspects of Downtown (land use, business and economic development, transportation, public transportation, etc.) are considered in tandem. A Master Plan that addresses the transportation aspects of Downtown in the Circulation Plan Element and the open space aspects of Downtown in the Open Space & Recreation Plan Element would not be easy to follow. This investment in time and effort in Downtown is especially important because it is an opportunity to ensure it’s vitality into the future and to enhance tax revenues.

**Addressing Topics Not Under Ridgewood’s Purview**

It is important to recognize that some topics contain aspects that are not under the purview of the Village. For example, under Public Transportation, NJ Transit plans operational changes and capital investments to the bus and train systems, and the Gateway Project, which
## Determine the Role of the Existing Master Plan’s Parts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Plan Element</th>
<th>Recommended Course of Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003, up. 2010</td>
<td>Open Space &amp; Recreation Plan</td>
<td>Replace with a new Open Space &amp; Recreation Plan (a “comprehensive update” is recommended by the 2016 Master Plan Reexamination Report).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Amendment to 1983 Land Use Plan (H - Hospital Zone)</td>
<td>Remove. Outdated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Amendment to the 1983 Land Use Plan (AH-2, B-3-R, C-R &amp; C Zone Districts)</td>
<td>Remove. The recommendations have been enacted through zoning revisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Amendment to 1983 Land Use Plan (H - Hospital Zone)</td>
<td>Outdated. The Housing Element &amp; Fair Share Plan includes requirements for the Valley Hospital site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Master Plan Reexamination Report</td>
<td>See Section 1.3: Existing Plans for items from this reexamination report that should be either reviewed again or moved forward into the Master Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 60: Recommended course of action for each element of the existing Master Plan.
would impact travel in the entire region, is a multi-agency endeavor. However, Ridgewood can have direct influence over certain aspects of Public Transportation such as the bus shelter, bus stops, the train station, station parking, and circulation around the bus terminal and train station.

With respect to Education & Schools, school facilities, grounds, and fields come under the purview of Ridgewood Public Schools. Under Parks & Open Space, some parks and open spaces are owned and managed by Bergen County and PSE&G. The Village’s Master Plan can make suggestions about these physical features and also identify specific areas of mutual interest and concern on which to cooperate and coordinate with their responsible entities.

Integrate Results of Prior Technical Plans & Studies

It is also important to re-evaluate and integrate the findings and recommendations of any prior technical plans or studies into the appropriate plan elements, if supported by the outcomes of the visioning process (see Section 1.10).

Include the Master Plan Considerations from Section 1.7: Trends

Section 1.7 includes under the discussion of each trend a section titled “Master Plan Considerations.” These and other considerations that are identified during the master planning process can be addressed through the various plan elements.

Consider Implementing Parts of Certain Topics

In some instances, there might be sufficient policy support and technical grounding for starting to implement some recommendations within topics, rather than waiting for the master planning process to be complete. For example, Transportation (walking/biking) is a high-priority topic that several recommendations of the 2016 Master Plan Reexamination Report already reinforce (see Section 1.10), and about which several relevant studies have been completed (see Section 1.11). On the other hand, the Master Plan process can be an opportunity to coordinate the planning of pedestrian and bicycle facilities along with planning for vehicular traffic Village-wide.

Socioeconomic Issues (affordability, aging-in-place) is another high-priority topic for which a foundation has been set through the Third Round Housing Element & Fair Share Plan. The Village adopted a number of affordable housing overlay zones that require residential development to contain a percentage of housing units to be dedicated to people based on income (see Figure 15 on page 21). The Master Plan process can be an opportunity to plan the future of these areas more comprehensively.

Prioritize & Schedule the Production of Master Plan Elements

The Village should prioritize which plan elements to complete first and then create a schedule for their production and adoption. It is suggested that the Land Use Plan, Circulation Plan, and Downtown Plan are completed first, followed by the other plan elements in whichever sequence the Village believes is most appropriate.
### Addressing Topics through Required & Optional Plan Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>MASTER PLAN ELEMENT</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Business &amp; Economic Development</td>
<td>Downtown Plan, Land Use Plan</td>
<td>The Downtown Plan would address this topic. Other commercial corridors and nodes in the Village can be addressed in the Land Use Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Land Use &amp; Development</td>
<td>Land Use Plan, Downtown Plan, Housing Plan</td>
<td>Tear-downs in residential neighborhoods would be addressed in the Land Use Element, as would open space and plantings on private property. The Downtown Plan would focus on land use and development topics in Downtown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Socioeconomic Issues (afford., aging.)</td>
<td>Land Use Plan, Downtown Plan, Housing Plan</td>
<td>The 2018 Housing Plan &amp; Fair Share Element and the agreement between the Village and the Fair Share Housing Center serve as the basis for this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Transportation (traffic, parking)</td>
<td>Circulation Plan, Downtown Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Transportation (walking, biking)</td>
<td>Circulation Plan, Downtown Plan</td>
<td>On-street and off-street facilities for bicycling would be best addressed in the Circulation Plan first because of the need to consider connections within the Village and from the Village to neighboring towns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-M</td>
<td>Environmental Sustainability</td>
<td>Environmental Sustainability Plan, Land Use Plan, Stormwater Master Plan</td>
<td>The Land Use Plan requires statements of strategy about storm resiliency, environmental sustainability, and electric vehicle charging. New requirements and standards for private property development and management can be considered here. A separate Environmental Sustainability Plan can be a strategic plan for the Village’s advancement in Sustainable Jersey. The Stormwater Management Plan can be amended to reflect new stormwater goals and benchmarks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-M</td>
<td>Utilities &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>Utilities Plan, Circulation Plan</td>
<td>The Utilities Plan is an opportunity to integrate planning for the water system with land use/development and environmental sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Parks &amp; Open Spaces</td>
<td>Open Space &amp; Recreation Plan, Downtown Plan, Land Use Plan</td>
<td>This topic should be coordinated with Recreation Facilities &amp; Programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Recreation Facilities &amp; Programs</td>
<td>Open Space &amp; Recreation Plan, Downtown Plan</td>
<td>This topic should be coordinated with Parks &amp; Open Spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Historic Preservation</td>
<td>Historic Preservation Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 61: Table describing how to address various topics through the required and optional plan elements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>MASTER PLAN ELEMENT</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M-L</td>
<td>Community Facilities</td>
<td>Community Facilities Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(library, municipal bldgs.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-L</td>
<td>Education &amp; Schools</td>
<td>See notes</td>
<td>Topics of mutual interest/concern between the Village and Ridgewood Public Schools can be addressed in the appropriate plan element.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-L</td>
<td>Public Transportation</td>
<td>Downtown Plan</td>
<td>The train station and the bus terminal are both located in Downtown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-L</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Entertainment</td>
<td>Downtown Plan, Arts Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Health &amp; Medical Services</td>
<td>Land Use Plan, Community Facilities Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Public Safety Services</td>
<td>Community Facilities Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 62: Ridgewood United Methodist Church, located across from Van Neste Square.
1.12 Strategies for Creating the Master Plan

Photo courtesy of Bill Carbone

Section 1: Our Village, Our Future
photo of Pleasant Park, courtesy of the Ridgewood Wildscape Association