

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Janice Talley, PP, AICP
RE: Master Plan Reexamination Report - Flexible, Affordable Urban/Suburban Lifestyles Subcommittee Report
DATE: May 16, 2023

The Subcommittee met on May 8. In attendance were Kevin Pierre, Kevin Ortiz, Carmel Loughman, Jacob Nieman and Janice Talley.

Issues

This subcommittee's comments on the issues relating to housing and people in the Unified Land Use and Circulation Plan are provided below.

1. There isn't enough diversity in terms of the types and prices ranges of housing available in Montclair. **Response:** *This is not an issue. Less than 50% of the Township's housing stock is comprised of single-family detached homes, with much of the Township's housing stock comprised of two-family and multi-family dwelling units (see Table 1). Since 2016, the Township has added over 644 new dwelling units including 606 multi-family units, 10 2-family homes, 30 single-family homes and three ADU's. Much of the Township's owner-occupied housing is comprised of dwelling units ranging in value between \$500,000 and \$999,999, as indicated in Table 2. Less than 30 percent of the housing stock is valued under \$500,000, making it difficult for lower-income and first-time homebuyers to purchase a home in the Township. Likewise, median monthly rents have increased in Montclair by 45% since 2010 making rental housing less affordable. The Township is committed to providing more affordable housing options and has added 127 deed-restricted dwelling units to the Township's inventory of affordable housing since 2016. This includes 69 units created through redevelopment, six units created through the IZO, six through the 100% affordable program, and 46 units through the extension of affordability controls program. Despite these numbers, however, the need for affordable housing is still strong.*

**Table 1: Housing Characteristics
 Montclair Township, New Jersey**

	2010		2021		Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total housing units	15,513		15,542		.2%
Occupied units	14,520	93.6	14,517	93.4	-.0%
Vacant units	993	6.4	1,025	6.6	3.2%
Vacancy rate - owner	.3		.4		
Vacancy rate - renter	7.5		5.7		
Year Built					
2010 to 2019	0		439	2.8	
2000 to 2009	472	3.1	590	3.8	25.0%
1990 to 1999	530	3.4	363	2.3	-31.5%
1980 to 1989	497	3.2	529	3.4	6.4%
1970 to 1979	578	3.7	727	4.7	25.8%
1960 to 1969	1,133	7.3	1,248	8.0	10.2%
1950 to 1959	1,646	10.6	1,425	9.2	-13.4%
1940 to 1949	1,458	9.4	924	5.9	-36.6%
1939 or earlier	9,199	59.3	9,297	59.8	1.1%
Units in Structure					
One detached	7,555	48.7	7,691	49.5	1.8%
One attached	320	2.1	592	3.8	85.0%
2-units	2,018	13.0	1,861	12.0	-7.8%
3-4 units	1,879	12.1	1,320	8.5	-29.8%
5-9 units	1,169	7.5	1,001	6.4	-14.4%
10 to 19 units	779	5.0	861	5.5	10.5%
20+ units	1,767	11.4	2,212	14.2	25.2%

Source: 2010 and 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profile – SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

**Table 2: Housing Values
 Montclair Township, New Jersey**

VALUE	2010		2021		Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Owner-occupied units	8,714	8,714	9,014	9,014	3.4%
Less than \$50,000	55	0.6%	148	1.6%	169.1%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	41	0.5%	40	0.4%	-2.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	59	0.7%	40	0.4%	-32.2%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	121	1.4%	128	1.4%	5.8%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	762	8.7%	490	5.4%	-35.74%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	2,097	24.1%	2,145	23.8%	2.3%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	4,483	51.4%	4,580	50.8%	2.2%
\$1,000,000 or more	1,096	12.6%	1,443	16.0%	31.7%
Median (dollars)	\$601,100		\$659,600		9.7%

Source: 2010 and 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profile – SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

**Table 3: Gross Rent
 Montclair Township, New Jersey**

Gross Rent	2010		2021	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied units paying rent	5,621		5,441	
Less than \$500	308	5.4%	178	3.3%
\$500 to \$999	1,079	19.2%	237	4.4%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	2,304	41.0%	905	16.6%
\$1,500 or more	1,930	34.3%	4,121	75.8%
\$1,500 to \$1,999			1,951	35.9%
\$2,000 to \$2,499			1,038	19.1%
\$2,500 to \$2,999			470	8.6%
\$3,000 or more			662	12.2%
Median (dollars)	\$1,281		\$1,859	
No rent paid	185		62	

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate Data Profile, 2010 and 2021

- Many current residents who want to stay in Montclair after their children leave the house face a lack of options in town for downsizing. It is becoming less viable for residents to live their whole lives in Montclair, and less likely that future generations can choose to stay in Montclair. **Response:** *This is still an issue and should be combined with issue 4. The Township has addressed this by adopting a new Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance in 2023 with more flexibility for owners of one- and two-family homes to provide accessory dwelling units and continuing to expand the inventory of affordable housing. In addition, the Township’s affordable housing ordinance was amended in 2018 to include a local preference for all affordable units created through the Township’s affordable housing programs.*
- One of Montclair’s unique strengths is its diversity, both economic and social, and there is a danger of losing that diversity due to rising housing costs. **Response:** *Montclair’s racial composition is still diverse, but the Township’s racial composition is changing. As shown in Table 2, the Township’s Black/African American population declined by 8.8% between 2010 and 2020 while the Hispanic/Latino and Asian population increased significantly, and the White population remained relatively static. In comparison, the Black/African American population in Essex County increased by 4.6% while the White population declined by almost 22% (see Table 3). The decline in the Township’s Black population is detailed in Table 4, which shows that number of Black and African-American residents peaked in 2000. This may be due to changes in the Census which added a new category for “two or more races” starting with the 2000 census. On the economic side, Montclair is becoming wealthier, with median household income increasing by 55 percent between 2013 and 2021 (from \$96,503 to \$149,982). This is a much more significant increase than experienced in Essex County (20%) and New Jersey (23%).*

**Table 4: Racial Characteristics
 Montclair Township, New Jersey**

	2010		2020		% Change 2010-2020
Total Population	37,669		40,921		8.6%
Population of one race:	35,974	95.5%	36,495	89.2%	1.5%
White alone	23,416	62.2%	23,364	57.1%	-0.2%
Black or African American alone	10,230	27.2%	9,326	22.8%	-8.8%
American Indian/Alaska Native alone	59	0.2%	80	0.2%	35.6%
Asian alone	1,434	3.8%	2,068	5.1%	44.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander alone	9	0.0%	19	0.1%	111.1%
Some Other Race alone	826	2.2%	1,638	4.0%	98.3%
Two or More Races	1,695	4.5%	4,426	10.8%	161.1%
Black and other races	979		1,548		58.1%

Source: 2010 and 2020: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profile

**Table 5: Racial Characteristics
 Essex County, New Jersey**

	2010		2020		% Change 2010-2020
Total Population	783,969		863,728		10.2%
Population of one race:	759,165	96.8%	773,192	89.5%	1.9%
White alone	333,868	42.6%	261,487	30.3%	-21.7%
Black or African American alone	320,479	40.9%	335,047	38.8%	4.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native alone	3,056	0.4%	4,604	0.5%	50.7%
Asian alone	35,789	4.6%	47,591	5.5%	33.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander alone	286	0.0%	378	0.0%	32.2%
Some Other Race alone	65,687	8.4%	124,085	14.4%	88.9%
Two or More Races	24,804	3.2%	90,536	10.5%	265.0%

**Table 6: Black and African American Population Trends
 Montclair Township, New Jersey**

Year	Total	Black Alone	Black and one or more races	Total Black
1960	43,129	10,385	NA	10,385
1970	44,043	12,251	NA	12,251
1980	38,321	11,057	NA	11,057
1990	37,729	11,697	NA	11,697
2000	38,977	12,497	663	13,298
2010	37,669	10,230	979	11,209
2020	40,921	9,326	1,548	10,874

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Decennial Census Data

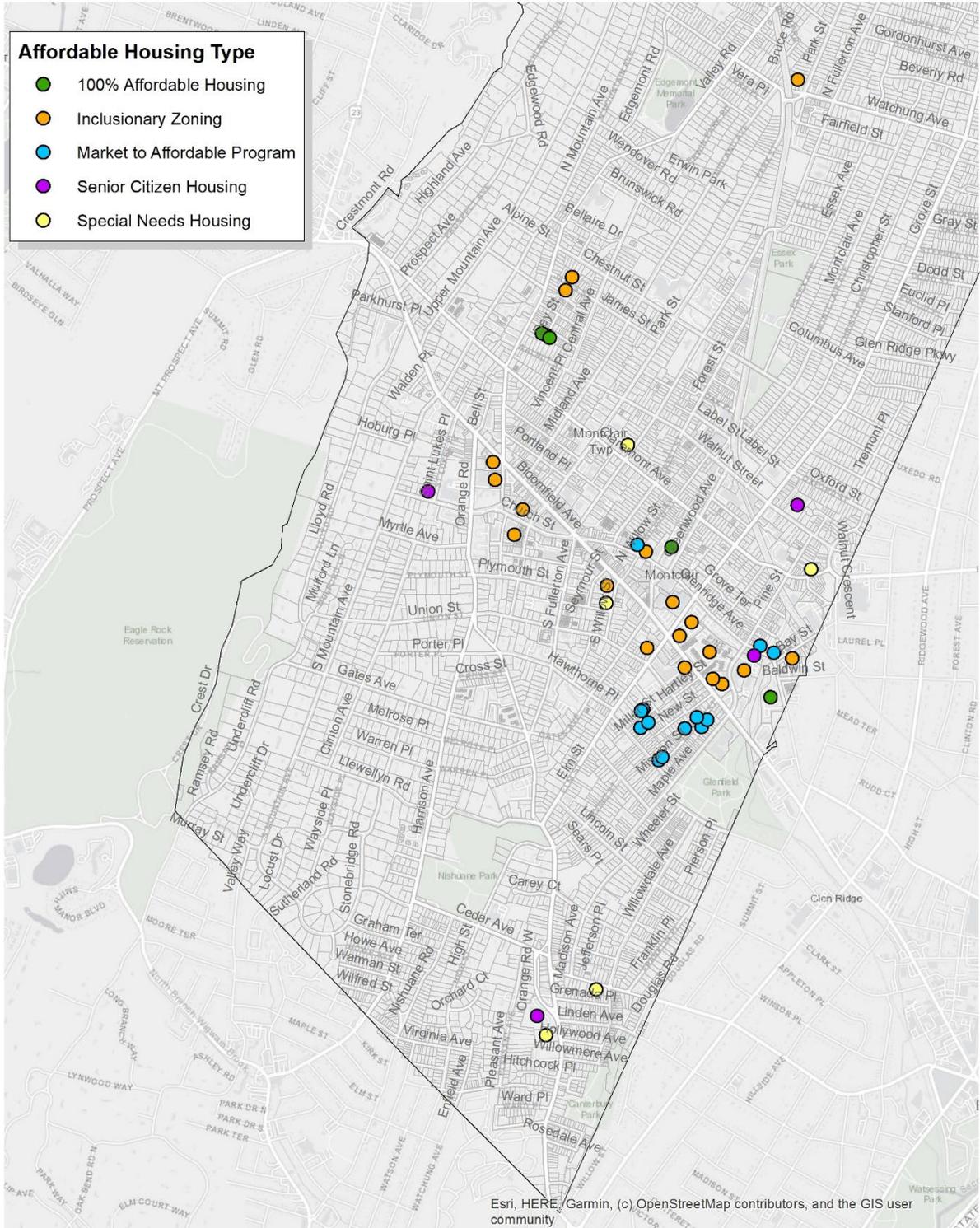
4. Because of rapidly rising housing costs, it is becoming less viable for residents to live their whole lives in Montclair, and less likely that future generations can choose to stay in Montclair. **Response:** *This issue should be incorporated into issue 2 for clarity and consistency.*
5. There currently isn't an equitable distribution of affordable and special needs housing and diversity throughout the town. **Response:** *This is still an issue as much of the Township's affordable housing is in the 3rd and 4th ward as shown on Map 1. The Township should continue to encourage affordable and special needs housing throughout the Township.*
6. Montclair lacks an adequate supply of market rate housing for senior citizens and the disabled throughout the Township. **Response:** *As the baby-boom generation has reached retirement age, the Township's senior citizen population has grown significantly (see Table 7). While there has been no new market rate housing limited to senior citizens, there has been a substantial number of new multi-family housing built that is suitable for seniors as it meets all ADA-requirements.*

**Table 7: Population Characteristics
 Montclair Township, Essex County, New Jersey**

	2013		2021		% Change 2013-2021
Median Age					
Population Total	37,766		40,520		7.29%
Under 5 years	2,228	5.9%	1,949	4.8%	-12.53%
5 to 9 years	2,984	7.9%	3,049	7.5%	2.19%
10 to 14 years	2,908	7.7%	3,471	8.6%	19.36%
15 to 19 years	2,719	7.2%	2,964	7.3%	9.00%
20 to 24 years	1,851	4.9%	1,751	4.3%	-5.38%
25 to 29 years	1,888	5.0%	2,022	5.0%	7.08%
30 to 34 years	2,077	5.5%	2,560	6.3%	23.25%
35 to 39 years	2,719	7.2%	2,490	6.1%	-8.43%
40 to 44 years	2,908	7.7%	3,007	7.4%	3.41%
45 to 49 years	3,021	8.0%	3,221	7.9%	6.61%
50 to 54 years	3,437	9.1%	3,325	8.2%	-3.25%
55 to 59 years	2,757	7.3%	2,510	6.2%	-8.96%
60 to 64 years	1,888	5.0%	2,902	7.2%	53.68%
65 to 69 years	1,360	3.6%	1,745	4.3%	28.35%
70 to 74 years	1,020	2.7%	1,700	4.2%	66.72%
75 to 79 years	944	2.5%	654	1.6%	-30.73%
80 to 84 years	453	1.2%	498	1.2%	9.89%
85 years and over	604	1.6%	702	1.7%	16.18%

Source: 2013 and 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profile

Montclair Affordable Housing Inventory 2023



Map 1: Affordable Housing Locations

7. There is a lack of accessible housing that can meet the needs of the elderly and disabled citizens throughout the town. **Response:** *This should be incorporated into issue 5 for clarity and consistency.*
8. Montclair does not have enough buildings and housing options that are “senior-friendly.” **Response:** *This should be incorporated into issue 5 for clarity and consistency.*
9. There is a concern that the current zoning code is not properly calibrated to make it easy for seniors to access services. **Response:** *This issue is confusing and should be deleted.*
10. The current senior bus route has limited service. **Response:** *The senior bus service was disbanded in 2016 and replaced with EZ Ride who provided bus service to grocery stores and medical offices by appointment using a 16-seat bus. Some days were designated Shoprite days and other days seniors could ride to set destinations on a fixed route. The bus that was previously used for seniors is now used as a jitney for commuters. The EZ Ride bus ended with COVID and was replaced with EZ Ride/Essex County partnerships’ Ride for Life Uber/Lyft program. This program enables seniors in Montclair to ride in a car to a destination of their choice within a 10-12 mile radius free of charge with the help of central dispatch (EZ Ride). Seniors call a dispatcher and are informed of when a car is coming. The Township and Essex County share the expense of these individual rides. This program was implemented as an alternative to the bus which would put seniors in close proximity to other seniors during COVID. The program is still in existence, is wildly popular but is not sustainable over the long-term from a cost perspective nor is it efficient from an environmental standpoint. Additionally, the Township utilizes Essex County Special Transport to offer group trips for local outings when buses are available. Senior buildings that do not have their own bus (South End Gardens, Pine Ridge) can use Essex County Transport busses for weekly trips to grocery stores instead of individual EZ Rides.*
11. Montclair does not have sufficient options for community gardens and small-scale farming. **Response:** *This is not an issue. An ordinance establishing regulations for community gardens was proposed, but never adopted by the Council. Currently, community gardens and small-scale This is not an issue. An ordinance establishing regulations for community gardens was proposed, but never adopted by the Council. Currently, community gardens and small-scale farming are considered a permitted use in all zone districts.*
12. The farmer’s market is a great asset, however, it is only open at one location and only during summer and early fall. **Response:** *This is no longer valid. The Walnut Street farmer’s market expanded its hours and is open all year. A second farmer’s market was opened on South Park Street prior to COVID, but was discontinued. Fresh herbs and produce are provided through community gardens at the Montclair History Center, on Miller Street (HOME Corp) and at Crane Park.*

Recommendations

1. Encourage a mix of housing types to fit the needs of all households (non-family, senior, low-income, etc.). **Response:** *The Township has provided a significant amount of multi-family housing over the past ten years. There is a need for smaller one - and two-family homes that will provide entry level housing for families. The Township should consider allowing larger lots to be subdivided to create smaller lots if affordability restrictions are put in place to provide workforce housing.*
2. Ensure the provision of affordable housing. **Response:** *This is still valid. Rising household incomes in Montclair as a whole have reduced the percentage of cost-burdened households, as indicated in Table 7. Still, almost 2,300 renters spend more than 30 percent of their household income on rent and over 1,800 homeowners spend more than 30 percent of their household income on mortgage.*

**Table 7: Selected Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income
 Montclair Township, New Jersey**

	2010	2021	Percent Change
MORTGAGE AS A PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
Housing units w/mortgage	6,605	6,166	-6.7%
Less than 20.0 percent	1,882	2,496	35.6%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	903	1,260	39.6%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	1,068	537	-49.7%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	594	471	-20.7%
35.0 percent or more	2,158	1,402	-35.0%
Not computed	27	33	
GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
Median monthly rent	\$1,281	\$1,859	45.1%
Less than 15.0 percent	747	782	4.7%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	896	847	-5.4%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	851	972	14.2%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	713	512	-28.2%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	463	374	-19.2%
35.0 percent or more	1,851	1,921	3.8%
Not computed	285	95	

Source: 2010 and 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profile – SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

3. Expand supply of housing for senior citizens. **Response:** *This should be expanded to include disabled and clarified to ensure that housing is accessible. The recently-adopted rent control ordinance limits annual rent increases for senior citizens to 2.5%. This creates a disincentive for landlords to rent to senior citizens. The Township should provide jitney service to seniors and commuters using an electric bus.*
4. Expand fresh food access throughout the Township. **Response:** *The Township has two grocery stores (Acme and Whole Foods). The Pathmark in Lackawanna Plaza, which served the southern half of the Township, closed in 2015 and this area has been designated as a food desert by NJDCA. The Township should continue to work with the property owner to secure a supermarket at this location. Seasonal fresh produce is provided through a weekend farmer’s market and local community gardens.*
5. Maintain character of residential neighborhoods. **Response:** *This should be expanded to clarify what defines residential character. Key components include lot width and distance between houses, which are most visible from the street. Another important criteria is building scale and setback, all of which are limited in the ordinance.*
6. Promote tree conservation. **Response:** *This should be eliminated as it is more appropriately addressed in the new Environmental Sustainability section of the Unified Land Use and Circulation Plan and in the Township’s Conservation Element.*