



Township of Montclair

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**MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT
4th WARD COMMUNITY MEETING NOTES
July 29, 2026**

Twenty-six people attended the meeting, along with Planning Board members Mayor Baskerville, Shivaun Gaines, Keith Brodock and Nicole Wallace; Historic Preservation Commission Chairperson Kathleen Bennett; and Councilors Toler and Harrison. A list of attendees is attached. Ms. Talley discussed the Master Plan Reexamination process which included a PowerPoint presentation. Residents had the following comments:

1. The Master Plan has not benefited African American residents in Montclair and the population has been steadily decreasing. Homes and rentals in the South End are subject to rising costs and increasing gentrification, and the Lackawanna Plaza development will only add to that trend. The Township should redefine what affordable housing means.
2. Distribute affordable housing opportunities more evenly, as the bulk of affordable housing is found in the Fourth Ward.
3. Bike infrastructure needs significant improvements to enable residents to easily access amenities and services outside their neighborhoods.
4. Montclair's current infrastructure, particularly stormwater management systems and the energy grid, is not equipped to manage the growing population. There are people dependent on oxygen who are impacted by repeated blackouts. PSE&G and other infrastructure providers should be included in the conversation.
5. Seniors are leaving the township and the state as costs rise. Create community-oriented neighborhoods with room for all populations.
6. Master Plan should include recommendations to create more publicly accessible arts programming and community spaces.
7. The Master Plan should include implementation strategies and timelines to ensure accountability for achieving the proposed goals.
8. Tree coverage has been reduced in Montclair with new developments. Other towns require builders to provide a reason for cutting down trees.
9. Development in Montclair appears to be driven by developers rather than the public, as reflected in projects such as the Lackawanna Plaza redevelopment. The Township should provide opportunities for early public input on development proposals and encourage developers to incorporate the vision and priorities of

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residents and community members. Building public consensus early in the process can help facilitate development in the long term.

10. Numerous variances granted in the Fourth Ward have resulted in the expansion of modest worker housing into larger, more expensive homes. Examples include properties along Ward Street, Mission Street, New Street, Dey Street, Talbot Street, and William Street. The Township should consider implementing a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limit to better regulate the size of additions. Existing homes that have been enlarged could be evaluated to establish an appropriate FAR threshold, with the goal of allowing reasonable additions while preventing oversized expansions that alter neighborhood character and reduce housing affordability.
11. The Master Plan should be comprehensively rewritten rather than updated and should more fully consider the needs and perspectives of Montclair's Black community. The term "Master Plan" was described as carrying racist connotations and should be reconsidered.
12. Land use boards should exercise caution when granting variances to well-funded developers..

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