

# Fact Sheet: Maplewood Theater Redevelopment Area

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## What is Redevelopment?

Redevelopment, as defined by the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL), is “the conservation and rehabilitation of any structure or improvement, the construction and provision for construction of residential, commercial, industrial, public or other structures and the grant or dedication of spaces as may be appropriate or necessary in the interest of the general welfare for streets, parks, playgrounds, or other public purposes, including recreational and other facilities incidental or appurtenant thereto, in accordance with a redevelopment plan.”

Redevelopment represents an opportunity to revitalize underutilized properties in a manner that contributes to the community, preserves its character, promotes economic growth, and furthers smart and equitable development. Through public engagement and input from various stakeholders, a redevelopment plan can help realize the vision and goals of the community for the site and the Township of Maplewood overall.

## How Does the Redevelopment Process Work?

The redevelopment process is enabled by the LRHL (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A) and can be used to help redevelop specific properties which may otherwise be unable to garner interest or the adequate financing/investment for. The process is broken down as follows:

1. The governing body (Township Committee) authorizes the Planning Board via a resolution to undertake a preliminary investigation as to whether the specific properties identified would qualify as an “area in need of redevelopment” (AINR). The criteria to determine whether a property can be designated as an AINR is set forth at N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-3 of the LRHL. This includes numerous criteria such as substandard conditions, abandoned buildings, vacant land, or smart growth principles, any one of which must be satisfied in order for a property to qualify as an AINR.
2. Should the investigation study find that the property qualifies as an AINR, the Planning Board will then hold a duly noticed public hearing concerning the study. This public hearing provides all persons who are interested in or would be affected by a determination that the property is an AINR to be heard. After deliberation, the Planning Board may then choose to adopt a resolution recommending that the property be designated as an AINR to the Township Committee.
3. Should the Township Committee agree with the recommendation of the Planning Board, the committee may then choose to adopt a resolution designating the property as an AINR (as per N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6), and direct the Planning Board to prepare a redevelopment plan (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7f).

## Benefits of the Redevelopment Process

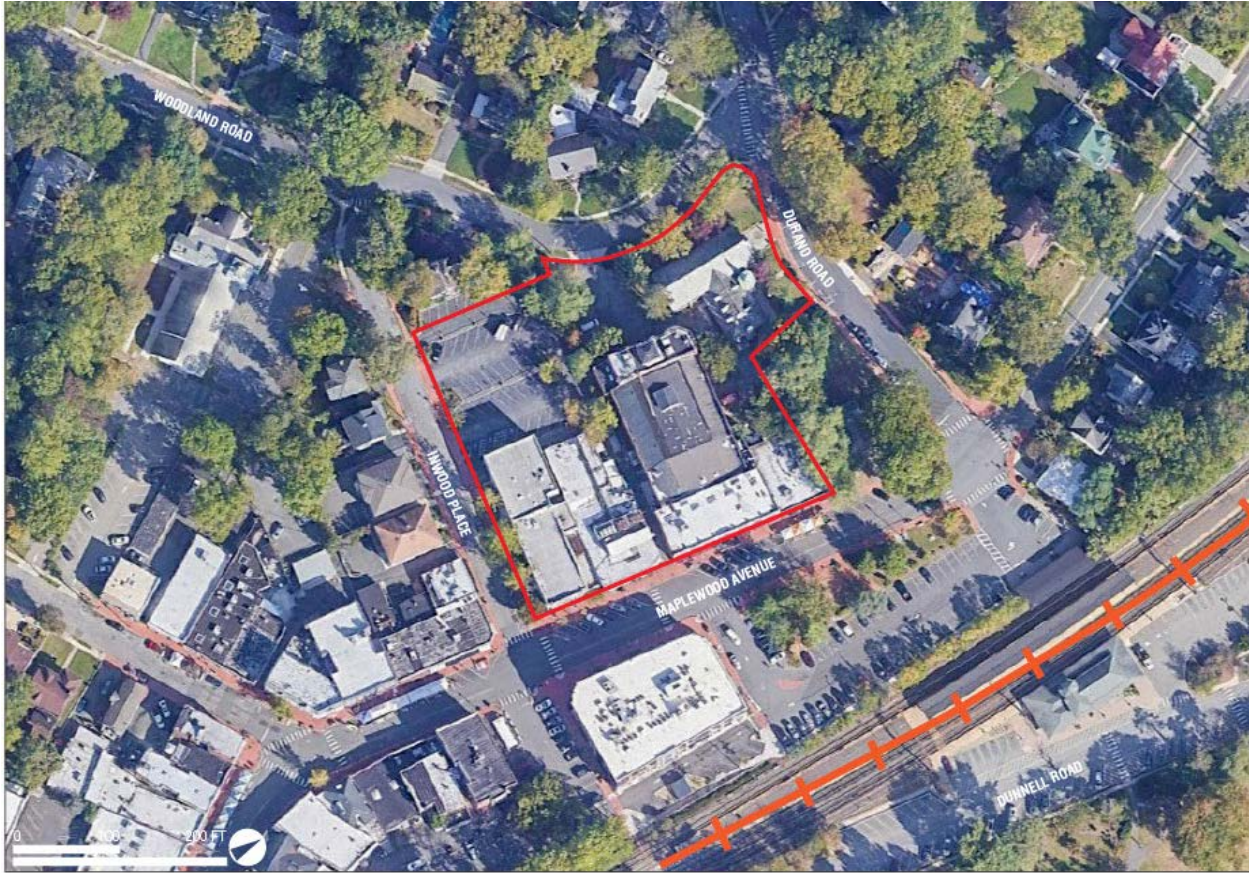
Not only does the redevelopment process incentivize the improvement of stagnant properties, it also offers multiple other benefits and flexibility compared to traditional zoning. These include the ability for the Township to select one or more redevelopers for a redevelopment area, create specific redevelopment regulations, permit specific uses, require a certain standard of building and site design, and to require the provision of community amenities. The Township does not have the ability

to utilize eminent domain in the redevelopment process for a non-condemnation redevelopment area such as this one.

## Where are We Now in the Process?

The Township Committee adopted a resolution on October 3, 2023 agreeing with the recommendation of the Planning Board to designate certain properties in Maplewood Village as in need of redevelopment. The Township Committee has authorized the preparation of a redevelopment plan for the site and in February 2024 retained a planning consultant, Phillips Preiss Grygiel Leheny Hughes, to prepare a redevelopment plan. Two community meetings on February 29 and March 14, 2024 are intended to solicit community input and provide information regarding the redevelopment plan preparation process.

## The Redevelopment Area



The redevelopment area is shown above. It includes the following properties, which are designated as Block 12.02, Lots 100.01, 173, 174, 175, 175.01 and 176 on the Township’s tax maps:

- The former Maplewood Theater building
- The former Bank of America Property
- The Green Way Markets property
- The commercial property adjacent to the theater
- The Burgdorff Cultural Center
- The Township-owned parking lot behind the Theater