

BOROUGH OF SAYREVILLE COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

DRAFT: SEPTEMBER 20, 2024



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Borough of Sayreville
Middlesex County, New Jersey

DRAFT: September 20, 2024
Adopted: _____

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The original of this report was signed and
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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Susan S. Gruel'.

Susan S. Gruel, P.P. #1955

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
COMMUNITY FACILITIES	6
School District	6
Municipal Services	16
Emergency Services	16
Community Amenities	26
RECOMMENDATIONS	34
Pursue Needed Municipal Facilities Upgrades	34
Secure Funding for Emergency Vehicle and Equipment Upgrades	34
Enhance Flood Resiliency	35
Plan for Future Growth	37
Encourage Additional Opportunities for Youth Participation	37
Other Considerations	38
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES	39

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INTRODUCTION

The Borough of Sayreville has a diverse network of community facilities that play a key role in enhancing the safety, well-being, and leisure of the Borough's current residents and visitors. Furthermore, this network strengthens Sayreville's position as a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

The purpose of this Community Facilities Element is threefold. It is primarily meant to inventory the Borough's existing community facilities, including schools, emergency services, libraries, and other community services. Additionally, the Element documents recent or planned facility improvements and any current challenges associated with the facilities. It ends with recommendations for improvements or additional community facilities to meet the Borough's future needs.

In early 2024, questionnaires were circulated to leadership in the Borough's School District, Police Department, Fire Department, Office of Emergency Management, Sayreville Emergency Squad, Morgan First Aid Squad, Library, Senior Services, Recreation Department, and Parks Division of the Department of Public Works. The recommendations in this Plan are derived from the results of these surveys as well as discussions with the Master Plan Subcommittee, which was made up of four of the Borough's Planning Board members.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

School District

Sayreville School District's first school—now Woodrow Wilson Elementary—opened in 1933 as the original location of Sayreville War Memorial High School. To keep up with the growing population and housing boom that occurred in the mid-twentieth century, the District has continued to expand its facilities into what it is today.

In the 2022-2023 school year, the District served a total of 6,227 students across 9 schools and employed 669 teachers and staff. The District's 2021-2022 teacher (92.9%) and staff (100%) retention rates out-perform those of the state, and approximately

73.2% of teachers had a minimum of 4 years of experience with the District. Aside from teachers and administrators, the District employs a wide range of specialists, including librarians and media specialists, nurses, school counselors, child study team members, school psychologists, school social workers, student assistance coordinators, and school safety specialists.

The District serves a diverse student population. In the 2021-2022 school year, the District reported racial and ethnic group enrollment data that reflected a student makeup that was 39% White, 18% Hispanic, 18% Asian, 17% Black or African American, 2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 5% two or more races. Furthermore, approximately 29% of students were considered economically disadvantaged, 18% were students with disabilities, and 5% were English Language Learners (ELL). The Sayreville School District provides comprehensive special needs support (including integrated classrooms), before and after school educational support programs, summer camps and programs, and ELL classes.

DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS

The Woodrow Wilson Elementary School was constructed in 1933 as Sayreville's first public school, and the remaining 8 schools were built at various times between the 1950s and early 1970s. The District has kept up with the aging of its facilities by investing in renovations and improvements. Notable recent investments include the District's success in implementing the Cool the School Referendum to address needed school updates, progress toward the development of a joint transportation center with the Borough, an expansion of the District's security measures, and the pursuit of various green initiatives.

Cool the Schools Referendum

In 2019 the Sayreville School District publicly introduced its Cool the Schools Referendum, an initiative which proposed to allocate \$97.7 million toward much needed school improvements. At the time, the average age of the District's schools was 60-years and, as a result, a majority of the buildings did not have central air conditioning and were in need of other structural repairs. The Referendum proposed to allocate approximately \$77 million toward HVAC upgrades throughout the District, \$13.8 million toward

window replacements at select schools, \$5.7 million toward roof replacements at select schools, and \$1.1 million toward upgrading the interior of the Jesse Selover School to bring it up to code for operations as a preschool. In tandem with the Referendum, the District proposed to source the remaining funds needed for the improvements by way of the following:

- An Energy Saving Improvement Project (ESIP) to upgrade the lighting, boilers, mechanical equipment, and electrical infrastructure components throughout the District's schools;
- A Power/Purchase Finance Agreement (PPA) to fund the rooftop installation of solar panels on select buildings in order to offset electricity costs; and
- A Lease/Purchase Finance Agreement (LPA) to fund the construction of a new bus complex.

An initial 2019 stakeholder survey was distributed to gauge interest in the proposed referendum. The results indicated that the majority of parents with students enrolled in a Sayreville school were dissatisfied (33%) or very dissatisfied (31%) with the climate or temperature of their child(ren)'s building, and 83% of respondents indicated a desire for total air condition or climate control to be implemented in every classroom across all Sayreville schools. Nearly 87% of respondents supported the proposed ESIP, 70% supported the Power Purchase Agreement, and 55% supported the Lease Purchase Agreement. Overall, 69% of respondents indicated support for a \$99.7 million referendum, which would account for new roofing, windows, HVAC

upgrades, and a renovation to the Selover School.

Action on the Referendum was initially delayed due to the pandemic, but the initiative was ultimately passed on October 6, 2022 following a vote for the Referendum in which an estimated 62% of respondents voted in favor of it. Improvements have been underway and, as of August 1, 2024, the District had completed the following:

- Installation of HVAC in select large spaces at Arleth Elementary, Eisenhower Elementary, Wilson Elementary, Samsel Upper Elementary, Sayreville Middle, and Sayreville War Memorial High;
- Roof replacements at: Arleth Elementary and Sayreville War Memorial High, 100% finished; Sayreville Middle, 75% finished; and Samsel Upper Elementary, 70% finished. As of August 1, 2024, the District was awaiting metal panels needed to implement roof replacements at Wilson Elementary;
- Installation of walk-in coolers at Sayreville Middle, the expansion of the parking lot at Samsel Upper Elementary, and window replacements at Arleth Elementary (100% finished), Jesse Selover School (100% finished), and Sayreville Middle (70% finished); and
- Updates to the interior of the Jesse Selover School, which brought the building up to code and enabled it to begin operations as a preschool in the 2022-2023 school year.

Security Improvements

Since the adoption of the 2012 Master Plan, Sayreville School District has taken steps to improve security measures District-wide. Since the 2017-2018 school year, the District has hired full-time day and evening campus security monitors to staff each school. In addition to these monitors, each school is assigned a Sayreville Police Officer to provide enhanced security during the school day. The District has also: installed full interior and exterior video surveillance camera systems in all schools; constructed retention vestibules in all schools where all students and visitors must check in and be screened prior to entering the school; installed metal detectors within the vestibules at the middle and high schools; and implemented student ID card systems at the middle and high schools, which must be swiped and verified by a teacher prior to entering school.



Playground at Jesse Selover Preschool

Green Initiatives

The District is in the process of pursuing various green initiatives. In 2020, the District submitted an application to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust grant program. This application outlined a funding request for 4 all-electric school buses to kickstart the District's shift from diesel to a zero-emissions bus fleet. Although the grant was not awarded to the District, the initiative to pursue the project indicates a positive acknowledgment of what's to come.

Furthermore, in tandem with the Cool the School Referendum the District sought out a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) that would provide the opportunity to install rooftop solar panels at certain schools and take advantage of associated tax credits and income from the sale of the electricity produced on-site. In December of 2020 the District accepted RFP submissions from various providers and soon after entered into an agreement. As of August 1, 2024, the District's online Project Updates matrix indicated that the solar panel initiative had been mostly finished, with just the parking canopies at Sayreville War Memorial High left to be completed.

BOMBER'S BEYOND CAFE

Aside from providing education and support for its Preschool through 12th grade students, the District provides its Bombers Beyond 18-21 program for students with disabilities who are transitioning out of school. The Bombers Beyond program was started in 2019 and, since, has expanded in exciting ways. In January 2023 the District opened its pupil-run Bombers Beyond Café at 132 Main Street, which provides individuals within the Bombers Beyond program the opportunity to gain critical life skills, work experience, and job readiness within their own community. The Café offers fresh coffee and baked goods, and the Bombers Beyond program participants are involved in everything from making the coffee to taking orders, managing the cash register, and stocking the café. There are hopes within the District to eventually expand this program into job avenues that would allow the participants to integrate into ADDITIONAL local work settings.

SAYREVILLE STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022

The District's most recently published Strategic Plan was created in September 2017 as a collaboration amongst local educational community stakeholders. Focusing on the five key areas of Facilities, Technology, Finance, Student Achievement, and Climate/Culture, the strategic planning working group identified goals and action steps the District could take through 2022. Some of the outlined goals include: replacing or upgrading HVAC system district-wide, an initiative which is currently in the works; implement 1:1 student classroom devices, a goal which has been widely achieved across the District; and take steps to ensure that parents and guardians, staff and teachers, and students feel safe and respected within the District.

ENROLLMENT TRENDS

The New Jersey Department of Education maintains a database of enrollment dating as far back as the 1999-2000 school year. Table 1 below summarizes Sayreville School District's enrollment trends since the turn of the century, including enrollment totals from the 2000-2001 school year through the current 2023-2024 school year.

Over this 24-year period, Sayreville School District's student enrollment has increased by 12.9%, indicating an overall positive trend since the 2000-2001 school year. Although this table shows that the District experienced decreases in enrollment going into seven school years (2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2011-2012, 2018-2019, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023), the only significant decrease occurred between the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years when the District lost 4.1% of its students. Moving into the 2012-2013 school year, however, this loss was balanced out by a 5% increase in enrollment. There are no immediate indicators as to what caused this particular decrease in enrollment, but a closer look at each school's enrollment for the years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 reflects this overall pattern.

The decrease in enrollment that occurred between the 2020-2021 school year and 2022-2023 school year, however, comes as no surprise following the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, a February 2023 study conducted

¹ Dee, Thomas S. *Urban Institute*, 2023, *Where the Kids Went: Nonpublic Schooling and Demographic Change During the Pandemic Exodus from Public Schools*.

by the Urban Institute reveals that this is a national trend; enrollment data from the 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 school years shows a combined loss of 710,513 public school students across 22 states. While some of this loss can be attributed to increasing private school and homeschool enrollments, there is still a portion (approximately 240,133 students) of the lost student population included in this study that remains unexplained.¹ The 2023-2024 school year represents the first increase in student enrollment since the onset of the pandemic.

As shown in Table 2 below, between the 2010-2011 school year and 2011-2012 school year, every school within the Sayreville School District experienced a decrease in enrollment, with the exception of Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary School which only saw a 2-student increase. The schools that experienced the largest proportional decrease between these two school years were Harry S. Truman Elementary School (-8.6% change) and Emma L. Arleth Elementary School (-7.4% change). Moving into the 2012-2013 school year, every school within the District saw an increase in student enrollment, with Harry S. Truman Elementary School (+9.5% change) and Sayreville Middle School (+7.1% change) seeing the largest increases proportionally.

Table 1: Borough of Sayreville 20-Year Enrollment Trends			
School Year	Enrollment	Change in Number	Change in %
2000-2001	5,481	--	--
2001-2002	5,554	73	1.3%
2002-2003	5,576	22	0.4%
2003-2004	5,682	106	1.9%
2004-2005	5,779	98	1.7%
2005-2006	5,753	-26	-0.4%
2006-2007	5,707	-46	-0.8%
2007-2008	5,772	65	1.1%
2008-2009	5,818	46	0.8%
2009-2010	5,906	88	1.5%
2010-2011	5,927	21	0.4%
2011-2012	5,682	-245	-4.1%
2012-2013	5,964	282	5.0%
2013-2014	6,003	39	0.7%
2014-2015	6,023	20	0.3%
2015-2016	6,068	45	0.7%
2016-2017	6,091	23	0.4%
2017-2018	6,202	111	1.8%
2018-2019	6,177	-25	-0.4%
2019-2020	6,236	59	1.0%
2020-2021	6,229	-7	-0.1%
2021-2022	6,227	-2	-0.03%
2022-2023	6,145	-82	-1.3%
2023-2024	6,187	42	0.7%
Overall Trend SY 01/02 - SY 22/23	--	706	12.9%

Source: NJDOE Fall Enrollment Data, 2001-2002 school year through 2022-2023 school year / Sayreville Borough School District 2023-2024 Onroll Report (dated 2/6/2024) / *Enrollment as of October 15, 2023

Table 2: Enrollment by School 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013

	Sayreville War Memorial HS	Sayreville MS	Emma L. Arleth ES	Dwight D. Eisenhower ES	Harry S. Truman ES	Samsel Upper ES	Woodrow Wilson ES	Total
2010-2011 Enrollment	1,738	1,323	476	546	509	977	358	5,927
# Change	-70	-57	-35	+2	-44	-33	-9	-246
% Change	-4.0%	-4.3%	-7.4%	+0.4%	-8.6%	-3.4%	-2.5%	-4.1%
2011-2012 Enrollment	1,669	1,266	441	548	509	944	349	5,682
# Change	+63	+90	+26	+16	+44	+27	+17	+283
% Change	+3.7%	+7.1%	+5.9%	+2.9%	+9.5%	+2.9%	+4.9%	+5.0%
2012-2013 Enrollment	1,731	1,356	467	564	509	971	366	5,964

Source: NJDOE Fall Enrollment Data, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2013-2014. We note that Cheesequake Preschool and Jesse Selover Preschool were not part of the Sayreville School District during these school years.

Table 3: Sayreville School District Enrollments for the 2023-2024 School Year
(As of October 15, 2023)

	Cheesequake Preschool	Jesse Selover Preschool	Emma L. Arleth ES	Dwight D. Eisenhower ES	Harry S. Truman ES	Woodrow Wilson ES	Samsel Upper ES	Sayreville MS	Sayreville War Memorial HS	Total
Pre-K	184	173	--	--	--	29	--	--	--	386
K	--	--	78	97	89	90	--	--	--	354
1st	--	--	106	111	108	84	--	--	--	409
2nd	--	--	90	104	99	87	--	--	--	380
3rd	--	--	85	93	96	70	--	--	--	344
4th	--	--	--	--	--	--	352	--	--	352
5th	--	--	--	--	--	--	366	--	--	366
6th	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	343	--	343
7th	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	373	--	373
8th	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	401	--	401
9th	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	351	351
10th	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	402	402
11th	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	361	361
12th	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	356	356
Special Education	48	49	101	63	48	36	164	207	293	1,009
TOTAL	232	222	460	468	440	396	882	1,324	1,763	6,187

Source: Sayreville Borough School District 2023-2024 Onroll Report (dated 2/6/2024)

SAYREVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Table 3 above presents the District's current enrollment status broken out by school and grade level. As of October 15, 2023 the District had a total enrollment of 6,187 students across nine schools.

Public Preschools

There are 2 public schools in Sayreville that exclusively offer free preschool-level education and collectively serve 357 students in the current 2023-2024 school year. Both preschools, Cheesequake and Jesse Selover, operate under a program called "Project Before" and offer full-day services with options for before and after school care as well. These are the newest additions to the School District and were opened in response to the District receiving nearly \$2.8 million in Preschool Expansion Aid from the Department of Education for the 2019-2020 school year. Since then, this aid has increased to \$8.8 million for the 2021-2022 school year, \$9.1 million for the 2022-2023 school year, and \$9.6 million for the 2023-2024 school year. The program is open to students ages 3-5 who are not yet eligible for kindergarten. Woodrow Wilson Elementary School serves an additional 29 preschool students in the District.

Cheesequake Preschool

Cheesequake Preschool first began operations in the 2021-2022 school year as part of the District's "Project Before" preschool program. The Cheesequake program location operates out of the former Cheesequake Elementary School building, which is owned by Old Bridge Township Public Schools. After the former Old Bridge elementary school closed in 2019 and sat vacant, Sayreville and Old Bridge entered into a 10-year shared services agreement which permits Sayreville to lease the building through 2030. Cheesequake Preschool offers fall and spring sports programs, daily STEM lessons, and specialty learning in the areas of literacy, art, and creative movement.

Jesse Selover Preschool

Jesse Selover Preschool first began operations in the 2022-2023 school year as part of the District's "Project Before" preschool program. Prior to this, the Jesse Selover School building (located in South Amboy) was used to house the Sayreville School

District administrative offices, although it was initially constructed and operated as a Sayreville elementary school beginning in 1954. The building underwent renovations beginning in winter 2022 and later again in summer 2023, which brought it up to code for modern preschool use. The school is currently undergoing additional renovations made possible by referendum funds, which includes the construction of a secure retention vestibule that is anticipated to be completed by the end of summer 2024. Jesse Selover Preschool offers STEM education, technology integration, and specialty learning in the areas of literacy and creative movement.

Elementary Schools

There are 5 elementary schools in Sayreville, which collectively serve a total of 2,617 students in the 2023-2024 school year.² Of these schools, 4 exclusively serve kindergarten through third grade, while the remaining elementary school (Samsel Upper Elementary School) serves grades fourth through fifth only.

Emma L. Arleth Elementary School

The Emma L. Arleth Elementary School was built in 1959, and a building addition was constructed subsequently in 2000. The school offers before and after school activities, including spirit squad, chorus, math and literacy academies, soccer, basketball, and track. Arleth Elementary School is technologically fit with SMART boards, iPads, Chromebooks, and Document Cameras that support learning at a ratio of 1 device per student. Student support services provided outside of the classroom include speech, occupational, and physical therapy as well as classes for English Language Learners. Recent improvements to the school include new unit ventilators, new windows, new boilers, and the installation of energy efficient lighting.

Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary School

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary School was built in 1969. The school offers the Stars Program, which provides students with the opportunity to engage in enrichment activities, including STEM class, soccer, and basketball. Furthermore, Eisenhower Elementary participates in the District-wide partnership with Leading Edge Education, which provides before and after school programming in the way of homework help,

² Total excludes the 29 preschool students attending Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, and accounts for grades 1 through 5 only.

academic support, and activities that support character building and social skills development. The school building includes a gymnasium/auditorium, art lab equipped with a kiln for pottery, sound-proofed music room, and a library media center that includes a computer lab. The school's PTO supports monthly family nights and recently funded the acquisition of 36 Chromebooks to support student education.

Harry S. Truman Elementary School

The Harry S. Truman Elementary School was built in 1972, and the most recent renovations were completed in 2019. The building is equipped with a library media center, gymnasium, book room, music room, and art room. In addition to participating in the District-wide partnership with Leading Edge Education, the school offers its own math and literacy academies before school as well as clubs, including basketball, Lego, and dance after school. Similar to Arleth Elementary School, Truman Elementary School has a technology device ratio of 1 per student and integrates technology into the classroom using smart Boards, Chromebooks, iPads, and document cameras. Outside of the classroom, Truman Elementary School offers student services, including occupational, speech, and physical therapy. In addition to hosting an annual field day and other events, the school's PTO supports an ongoing cultural arts program that teaches students about various cultures.

Woodrow Wilson Elementary School

Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, nicknamed "the Castle on the Hill", is the oldest school in Sayreville and was built in 1933. The building's gymnasium is fitted with two climbing walls and the school offers a wide variety of art classes, including music, media arts, and art. The school participates in the District-wide partnership with Leading Edge Education to provide before and after school programming for its students. Outside of the classroom, Woodrow Wilson Elementary School offers student services including occupational, speech, and physical therapy.

Samsel Upper Elementary School

Samsel Upper Elementary School was built in 1952 and operated as a small elementary school before being leased by the county for other uses. The school was subsequently remodeled in 2004 and reopened to serve Sayreville's 4th and 5th grade population. The building includes 2 gyms (1 large gymnasium and 1 auxiliary gym), a stage with bleachers, a media center/library, and 3 computer labs. Samsel Upper Elementary classrooms are equipped with Smart Boards, Touch TVs, Chromebooks, and iPads to support student learning. Outside of regular classes, students participate in specialty classes, including PE, world language, art, media art, music, and technology. In addition to participating in the District-wide partnership with Leading Edge Education, the school offers extracurriculars, including sports, student ambassadors, and STE(A)M and Communication clubs. The school is prided for its participation in philanthropic events such as food drives and was recently awarded by the Ronald MacDonald House Charity for collecting 1,000,000 tabs for the organization.

Middle Schools

There is 1 middle school in Sayreville, which currently serves a total of 1,324 students in the 2023-2024 school year.

Sayreville Middle School

Sayreville Middle School was built in 1968. The building is fitted with a number of science labs and a large media center where students can access computers. The Middle School offers a wide range of competitive sports as well as recreational sports and has been recognized by the Special Olympics as a Unified Champion School that supports its special education students. Outside of core classes, students select between electives that include art, music, instrumental music, STEM, Spanish, 21st Century Skills, technology, computer science, forensics, music and technology, and "Histories Mysteries." Sayreville Middle School offers a wide range of clubs and activities—such as Concert Band, community service, and Literacy Magazine—as well as before and after school math and literacy academies to support student learning. In addition, the school's PTO supports several afterschool clubs, which include the History Club, Drama Club, and Baking Club.

High Schools

There is 1 high school in Sayreville, which serves a total of 1,763 students in the 2023-2024 school year.

Sayreville War Memorial High School

Sayreville War Memorial High School was built in 1962 and subsequent renovations occurred in 2008 and 2019, which respectively increased the number of classrooms and equipped the building with a new vestibule and other security features. The building has 12 science labs, 3 gyms, playing fields, and multiple computer labs. Like many other Sayreville public schools, the high school incorporates technology to support student learning and has a ratio of 1 device per student. Sayreville War Memorial High School has been recognized by Newsweek's "Beating the Odds 2015: Top High Schools" list, which commends the school for its success in preparing students for life after their primary education and for helping low-income students score at or above average on state assessments. To achieve this, the school offers advanced placement, dual enrollment, honors courses, and college preparation courses as well as an Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (AFJROTC) program.

The school also engages students in curriculum that explores critical life topics, such as stress management, suicide awareness, nutrition, and CPR. Students have the option to participate in a diverse list of competitive sports—such as bowling, swimming, and lacrosse—and is recognized by the Special Olympics as an official Special Olympics National Banner Unified Champion School. Additionally, the school offers varied options for afterschool clubs and activities, which include the American Sign Language Club, Karaoke Club, Muslim Society, and Environmental Club amongst many others.

SCHOOL DISTRICT CHALLENGES

School Capacity

As of the writing of this Plan, every school within the District is nearly at capacity. The District projects that it will exceed capacity once the construction of the residential developments known as Camelot I, Camelot II, and the residential units at Riverton are complete. Collectively these residential developments are expected to contribute an approximate 1,618 dwelling units to the Borough's housing stock in coming years. With this anticipated influx of residents in addition to the District's already growing student population, it is expected that the District will be in need of new facilities in the near future.

Transportation Complex

One of the most pressing challenges that the District is currently facing is the matter of providing transportation for its students. In 2020 the District made the decision to bring its regular education transportation in house. This decision was a response to the rising costs of external transportation contractors and provided the District with a means of controlling the costs associated with transportation as well as the hiring and oversight of transportation staff. Since then, the District has acquired 66 buses (49 full size buses and 17 minibuses) and expects that this number will continue to grow over the next two years as the District pursues its goal of providing transportation services for all of its students.

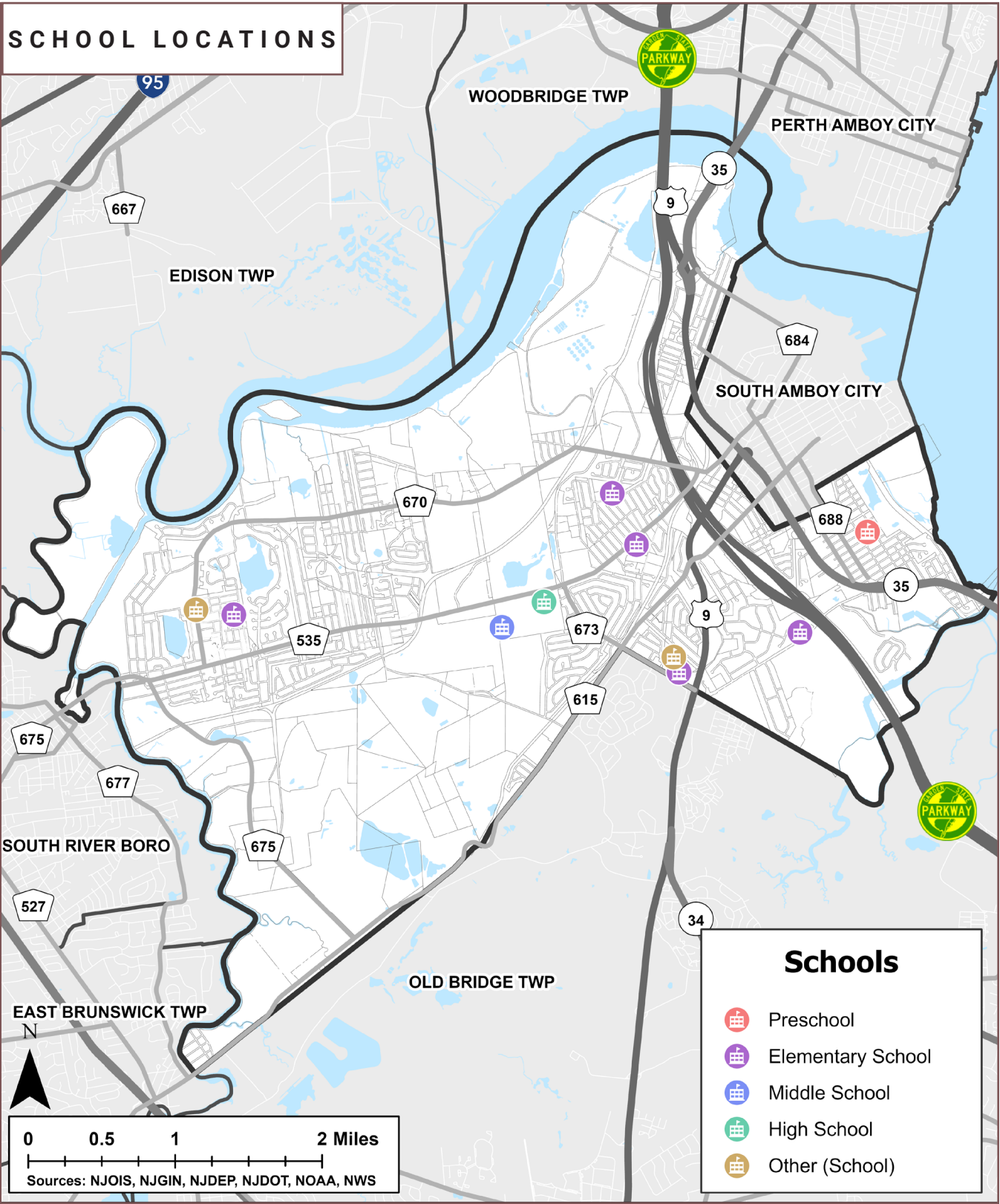
Along with the District's acquisition of buses, it has recognized the need for a modern transportation complex large enough to house and maintain its fleet. The District initially proposed to locate a transportation complex near Jesse Selover Preschool, but this was met with community opposition given its proximity to residential properties. As a potential solution, the Borough discussed an opportunity with the District to construct a joint transportation facility in a more remote location off of Cheesequake Road, which would be used by both the School District and the Borough's Department of Public Works. The District submitted a project application to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for review and received a subsequent approval from the State on May 30, 2023.

Following this approval, the District moved forward with preparing plans for the location, putting the project out for bid, and awarding a \$5.6 million contract to begin construction in September 2023.

On November 13, 2023, however, the Sayreville Planning Board issued a formal report to the New Jersey Department of Education recommending that it reconsider its decision to approve the project. The Board's report indicated that the School District did not properly follow procedural regulations set forth by State statute and administrative code as they apply to the requirement of a local Planning Board to review prospective school facility sites to determine consistency with the Master Plan. The State administrative code referenced in the report requires that a School District submit applications for school facilities projects to its local Planning Board no later than the date it submits an application to the State Department of Education. The Planning Board report indicates that it did not receive an application from the District until on or about October 11, 2023, which was over four months after the project was already approved by the NJDOE.

Further, the report gave the unanimous opinion of the Board that the proposed location posed concerns related to traffic, open space reduction and tree removal impacts, and potential environmental contamination due to the historic use of the property. The Board concluded that the Cheesequake Road location was inconsistent with the Master Plan. The Borough ultimately rescinded the opportunity for the District to utilize the Cheesequake Road site to construct the transportation complex.

As of the writing of this Plan, the District is continuing to search for an appropriate location to construct its transportation complex that is located away from high-traffic areas of town, residential neighborhoods, and floodplains. In the meantime, the District is storing its fleet at various locations throughout the District overnight, which reportedly hinders the efficiency of the District's transportation operations and does not offer a long-term, sustainable solution.



Municipal Services

SAYREVILLE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

Sayreville's Borough Hall is located at 167 Main Street and overlooks War Memorial Park. Borough Hall is home to the following departments: Administration, Borough Clerk, Finance, Public Works, Recreation, Recycling, Tax Assessor, and Tax Collector. The remainder of the Borough's departments are located in a handful of buildings that are scattered throughout Sayreville, including:

- **49 Dolan Street:** Just around the corner from Borough Hall, this is where the Office of Code Enforcement, Construction Department, Bureau of Fire Prevention, Health Department, and Zoning Department are located.
- **1000 Main Street:** This building is located on the northeast side of Sayreville and is where the Borough's Municipal Court, Office of Emergency Management, and Police Department are located.
- **423 Main Street:** The Sayreville Active Adult Center houses the Borough's Office on Aging.
- **3751 Bordentown Avenue:** This property in the Parlin section of the Borough is home to the Sayreville Water and Sewer Department.

Emergency Services

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Sayreville Police Department was established in 1923 and gained its Police Agency Accreditation in October of 2014 through the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. The Police Department's facility is equipped with a back-up generator, detention holding areas, arrest processing facilities, interview rooms, and an evidence storage vault. The Department currently employees approximately 95 officers, 9 dispatchers, 7 administrative staff, and 3 traffic safety bureau personnel (including 1 supervisor and 2 patrol officers, although all Police Department officers conduct parking enforcement duties).

The Department is broadly split into 3 divisions, which include the Patrol, Detective, and Administrative Divisions:

- **Patrol Division:** In addition to patrolling more than 600 miles of local roadways, the Patrol Division trains and manages the Borough's School Crossing Guards and provides assistance in reviewing site plans and conducting traffic surveys when new construction is proposed in the Borough. The Patrol division has three specialized units that offer varied mobility and engagement: Bike Patrol, ATV Patrol, and the Street Crimes Unit.
- **Detective Division:** The Detective Division oversees criminal investigations in Sayreville and is subdivided into 4 bureaus, which include Criminal Investigations, Juvenile Aid, Narcotics, and Identification. This Division is responsible for collecting and processing evidence and conducting undercover investigations, surveillance, and interviews and interrogations as necessary.
- **Administrative Division:** The Administrative Division manages the Departments logistical, personnel, and communication needs. The communications center is shared by the Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services agencies in Sayreville and employs staff who are certified in emergency medical dispatching. This Division also manages the Department's external communications, using social media and other publicly accessible platforms to update Sayreville residents on active incidents, traffic and roadway closures, and lost and found pets. The Division even has its own podcast, which operates under the name of "Sayreville Police Community First" and introduces viewers to Borough personnel and departments, programs and initiatives, and other topics related to Sayreville.

In addition to the above, the Department provides animal control services in partnership with the Tinton Falls Humane Society. The Department's most common service calls are in regard to security alarms and motor vehicle crashes.

Department-Directed Volunteer Groups

Sayreville Police Auxillary

The Sayreville Police Auxiliary was formed in 1941 and is entirely made up of civilian volunteers who receive monthly training. In addition to performing general law enforcement functions—such as street patrol, report writing, and traffic control—the Police Auxiliary provides security for the Borough's special events and assists with street crossings for churches every Sunday.

Domestic Violence Response Team

Founded in 1998, the Domestic Violence Response Team is staffed by trained civilian volunteers. The Team provides “around the clock” counseling for domestic violence victims. Team members meet with domestic violence victims, provide crisis intervention, and educate victims on their legal rights in obtaining restraining orders. Prior to their involvement, members are required to receive a minimum of 40 hours of training on topics that include domestic violence laws, the cycle of domestic violence relationships, and the various types of abuse. At the time of the writing of this Plan, the Domestic Violence Response Team has 6 active volunteers. The Department is working on expanding recruitment for the Team.

Recent Department Investments

Public Safety Complex Upgrades

Since the adoption of the last Community Facilities Element in 2013, the Public Safety Complex has

undergone various renovations and upgrades. Specifically, these include: a roof replacement in 2015; a boiler replacement in 2016; a cooling tower replacement in 2017; and parking lot improvements in 2018. These renovations included the installation of multiple EVSE charging spaces, in preparation for potential future EV acquisitions.

Body Worn Cameras Initiative

In 2021, the Police Department received a \$220,000 grant for the acquisition of body worn cameras for its officers. The Body Worn Cameras Initiative received support from the Borough Council and requires that all on-duty officers wear a body worn camera as part of the complete uniform. The Department announced that this initiative, which aligned with those at a national scale, would lead to more transparency, increased civility, and quicker resolution in police incidents and would provide corroborating evidence and training opportunities as needed.

Ride Share Discounts

Since the adoption of the 2013 Community Facilities Element, the Sayreville Police Department has implemented a ride share discount program on days associated with heavy drinking—such as New Years Eve and the Superbowl—to reduce driving under the influence. Through this program, the Department



Police Department headquarters are located in the Sayreville Public Safety Complex

provides anyone coming in or out of Sayreville with a discount code that can be applied to Lyft rides. The Department initially launched the program on Channel 4 during the Superbowl, which helped it gain regional and, eventually, national attention. The program has since been replicated in municipalities such as North Brunswick (Middlesex County) and Princeton (Mercer County), as well as in the states of Delaware and Nevada.

PULSSE

The Proactive Union of Law Enforcement and Social Service Experts (PULSSE) pilot program was launched in February 2023 as a partnership between the Sayreville Police Department and a team of New Jersey licensed clinical social workers. PULSSE is the first program of its kind and was developed by Lieutenant James Novak as a means of reducing the Department's use-of-force incidents.

One of the initial catalysts for the program was that the Police Department was repeatedly responding to calls regarding community members who were experiencing ongoing issues such as homelessness, domestic violence, or alcohol and drug abuse, amongst others. In reviewing the Department's records, Lieutenant Novak identified that a majority of use-of-force incidents in recent years were associated with residents who required a high number of Police Department visits. Lieutenant Novak found that high numbers of repeated visits often contributed to tensions between the residents and police officers. PULSSE was ultimately designed as a means of mitigating these tensions before use-of-force is required.

PULSSE provides a holistic approach to the situations described above by sending social workers—who have been trained to work with individuals experiencing hardship and mental health crisis—to conduct follow-ups of these residents and pair them with resources and services that can help improve their overall situation. In this way, the program models the ideology of showing up for residents on their good days rather than just their bad days. This practice is beneficial not only because it reduces the Department's overall call for services, but it also serves as a reminder to residents that the Police Department has the well-being of the community in mind.

The PULSSE program is partially funded by a federal Department of Justice grant, which will cover \$33,000 of program costs per year for the next 18 years. This funding covers roughly half of the annual cost of the program, the remainder of which is funded through the Department's budget. The PULSSE program served over 350 Borough residents between February 2023 and December 2023 and, since its launch, has effectuated a 46% decrease in the Department's use-of-force incidents. Due to the program's success and cost-effective design, the PULSSE program has been recognized as a model amongst other police departments and is being replicated in New Jersey municipalities such as the Borough of Red Bank (Monmouth County).

Community Engagement

The Department puts in great effort to meet and build rapport with Sayreville residents through a wide range of community engagement opportunities and specialty programs and events. Highlights from the last few years include:

- The Department utilizes a wide range of social media platforms to increase its presence with younger generations, spread information regarding opportunities for advancement, and reach certified officers in other agencies. The Department utilizes accessible platforms such as TikTok and YouTube and has its own podcast that sheds light on the Police Department in addition to other departments and agencies throughout Sayreville.
- The Department has community outreach officers as well as a Veterans Outreach Coordinator. The Department participates in monthly events like "Coffee with a Cop" at Bombers Beyond Café, in which the community is encouraged to come out and get to know the police force.
- The Department hosts engaging events, such as their Halloween Paranormal Investigation, in collaboration with other Borough agencies to build relationships with the community and teach the history of Sayreville.
- The Department offers an Adult Police Academy, an 8-class series that trains civilian residents on the foundations of the Department. Participants learn about topics including defensive tactics, the policy and procedures of the Department, crime scene and motor vehicle crash investigations, and basic first aid and CPR. Furthermore, participants

engage in staged motor vehicle stops, shoot/don't shoot simulations, and handcuffing techniques.

- In 2019 the Department offered a Women's Awareness and Self Defense Class.
- In the spring of 2023 female officers within the Department started a program called "A Night to Remember" to cover the costs of a prom dress, shoes, hair, makeup, and nails for 3 Sayreville War Memorial High School female students experiencing financial hardship.
- In the summer of 2023, the Department hosted its week-long Police Juvenile Academy and also participated in the School District's annual WillaBees summer camp focused on drug abuse prevention.
- As of the writing of this Plan, the Department is in the process of rebuilding its Chaplain Program, which is designed to leverage the collective actions and influence of police departments and local faith-based leaders to create a comprehensive response in times of crisis or major incidents.
- The Department recently purchased a virtual reality simulator that is designed to replicate the feeling of driving under the influence or driving distracted. The simulator will be a required component of Sayreville driver's education courses and will be brought to public events for the community to experience.

Police Department Challenges

In general, Department recruitment has declined in recent decades. While it was common in the early 2000s to have around 500 people taking the civil service test for the Police Department, Sayreville's most recent civil service test only had 7 people enrolled. In 2021 the Department's Police Chief expressed that recruitment rates were especially challenging in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and 2020 protests. This trend was widely felt across the country, in fact. According to a workforce survey conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum, 172 local law enforcement agencies across North America (167 in the United States and 5 in Canada) reported an average hiring rate decrease of 20.5% between the years 2019 and 2020. Although much of this loss was made up between the years 2020

to 2021, the participating agencies still experienced a 3.9% net decrease in their hiring rate between the years 2019 and 2021.³

The Department has made concerted efforts to offset this trend. In the summer of 2023, the Department offered a free civil service entry preparation course in order to help eliminate learning barriers that may prevent potential recruits from qualifying for a civil service appointment with the Department. Furthermore, the Department has deployed its Community Outreach team regularly and used a wide range of social media platforms to engage the public and encourage recruitment, especially amongst younger generations. The Department's website also has a page specifically addressing its desire to recruit a larger number of officers from underrepresented populations.

In addition to recruitment, general traffic throughout the Borough is a current issue that the Police Department is working to address. Further, while the Department is prepared with EVSE charging stations, it currently does not have any electric vehicles. This is presently not a top priority for the Department, but it is open to potential sponsorships or funding that may enable them to electrify their fleet.



The Sayreville Fire Department Memorial located on the corner of Macarthur Avenue and Main Street

³ "PERF Survey Shows Steady Staffing Decrease Over the Past Two Years." Police Executive Research Forum, Mar. 2022, www.policeforum.org/workforcemarch2022.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Sayreville Fire Department was established in 1916 and is entirely volunteer-run. The Department is made up of roughly 100 volunteers who work under the direction of 3 Fire Chiefs. Sayreville has 4 stations: the Melrose Hose Company located at 235 Oak Street in South Amboy; the Morgan Hose and Chemical Company located at 1A Old Spy Road in South Amboy; the President Park Fire Company located at 5 Roosevelt Boulevard in the Parlin neighborhood; and the Sayreville Engine Company No. 1 located at 250 MacArthur Avenue.

The Department serves approximately 900 request for services annually across 17 square miles of area. It is currently equipped with 11 specialty vehicles, including: 1 mobile rehab unit; 1 rescue truck; 2 high water trucks; 3 brush trucks; 1 flat bottom boat; and 3 Zodiak inflatable boats. The Fire Department as a whole has undergone significant policy and procedure changes since 2015. Additionally, there is a continued emphasis on ensuring that the Department maintains its Division of Fire Safety training requirements and stays up to date with its other annual mandatory classes and trainings.

Recent Department Upgrades

Since the adoption of the last Community Facilities Element in 2013, roof replacements at the Morgan Hose and Chemical Company as well as at the Sayreville Engine Company No. 1 are the only major improvements that have been made to the Fire Department's stations. While the fire station facilities have undergone very little improvement during this period, there has been some investment in additions such as on-site storage sheds.

All of the Department's vehicles and boats are maintained annually, and there are several new trucks that have replaced those that are older or out-of-date. The Department regularly maintains its equipment, and primarily seeks updates or replacements when (a) its older equipment expires or (b) new acquisition is needed to expand operations, such as for water or ice rescue.

Fire Department Challenges and Planned Updates

At the time of the writing of this Plan, the Fire Department's primary concern is in regard to the Department's response times. The Department does not anticipate the need for any major facility or equipment improvements in the coming years. It is, however, making plans to broaden its outreach efforts to younger generations in order to generate a future interest in volunteering with the Fire Department. The Fire Department already assists the Division of Fire Safety at local schools for Fire Prevention Week, and is looking to attend events such as Career Day at the high school.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Sayreville's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Rescue system is supported by the Sayreville Emergency Squad (SES) and the Morgan First Aid Squad (MFAS), both of which are volunteer-run. The Squads' members are broken out into various categories, which include the following:

- **Regular Members:** EMT certified individuals who have been involved in the Squad for less than 12 years. Regular Members are required to commit a certain amount of volunteer hours to the Squad.
- **Lifelong Members:** EMT certified individuals who have been involved with the Squad for a minimum of 12 years. Lifelong Members determine how many hours they want to commit to the Squad.
- **Probationary Members:** Individuals who are in the process of obtaining EMT certification and train with the Squad.
- **Cadets:** Individuals, aged 16+, who are not EMT certified. Cadets receive mentorship, training, and hands-on experience needed to become an EMT.

Both squads work out of buildings that are owned and maintained by the Borough. The Sayreville Emergency Squad building is located at 776 Washington Road in the Parlin neighborhood, while the Morgan First Aid Squad building is located at 1960 NJ-35 in the southeast portion of the Borough.

In terms of patient transportation, SES and MFAS operate within a 40-minute drive of Sayreville and commonly transport patients to medical centers, including: the RWJ University Hospital in New Brunswick, where the majority of patients with traumatic injuries are brought; the HMH JFK University Medical Center in Edison, where the majority of patients experiencing stroke symptoms are brought; and a variety of centers in surrounding municipalities, including Old Bridge, Perth Amboy, and Holmdel.

Funding for both SES and MFAS come exclusively from fundraising and donations. Neither squad bills residents for their services, nor do they receive regular funding from the Borough, County, State or any private funders. It appears that the Borough's grant writing efforts include SES and MFAS, but neither squad has received grant funding in recent years.

Sayreville Emergency Squad

The Sayreville Emergency Squad (SES) was formed in 1936 as a nonprofit volunteer corporation to provide free medical and technical rescue services to Sayreville residents. SES provides EMS ambulance services, heavy rescues and extrications using the Jaws of Life, low angle rope rescues, and water and boat rescues. Upon request, the Squad is also available to provide support at schools, sports, and civic organization events. The SES is equipped with 4 ambulances, 1 rescue truck, 1 utility truck, and 1 18-foot Boston Whaler in addition to common first aid supplies, oxygen, and defibrillators.

SES responds to calls overnight (between 6:00 pm and 6:00 am) and on weekends. In 2023, the Squad responded to approximately 1,900 calls, a majority of which regarded medical emergencies such as chest pain, cardiac arrest, alcohol poisoning, etc. The Squad also responds to calls for maternity-related needs, car accidents, and fire standbys, although these are less frequent.

The Sayreville Emergency Squad currently has 15 Regular Members, 5 Life Members, and 40 cadets and probationary members. Members of the Sayreville Emergency Squad are required to maintain a New Jersey State EMT certification and must be at least 18 years of age.

Sayreville Emergency Squad Challenges

The Squad engages in a funding drive in January and May of every year to collect donations. The majority of these donations are allocated towards the acquisition or repair of integral equipment needed for first response calls (stretchers, for example) and for compliance with State regulations.

The Squad's fleet consists of models from 2010, 2012, and 2015, all of which have accrued high mileage throughout their years of use. Due to the high replacement cost of vehicles and budget restraints, regular vehicle maintenance and repair is prioritized over new acquisition. SES is currently in need of 1 additional first responder vehicle, which would allow a Member to respond to calls and provide basic first aid services without the need for an ambulance. This would be particularly beneficial in cases when other SES vehicles are not available or the Squad is needed to report to a scene quickly to tend to patients while waiting for other first aid services to arrive.

Morgan First Aid Squad

The Morgan First Aid Squad (MFAS) was formed in 1969 as a nonprofit organization and is run entirely by volunteers who are certified EMTs with Basic Life Safety and CPR certifications. In addition to responding to emergency calls, MFAS offers community standby coverage for local events and CPR training classes throughout the year. The Squad runs a Cadet Program, which equips students (ages 16+) with training, mentorship, and hands-on experience needed to become an EMT. The Program currently has 20 participants (plus a waiting list), who meet weekly for educational classes and to gain experience in responding to emergency calls. MFAS currently has approximately 20 active full-time members, 3 part-time members, and 11 lifelong members in addition to their cadets.

MFAS responds to calls between 6:00 pm to 6:00 am on weeknights and weekends. In the past, the Squad had longer hours on weekends but recent staffing shortages have limited their hours of operations. In 2023, the Squad responded to 1,001 calls and, on average, responds to between 1,001 and 1,500 calls on an annual basis. The most common service calls received by MFAS include those for first aid (individuals who are sick or injured), motor vehicle accidents, and fire standbys.

MFAS is equipped with common first aid supplies in addition to: 4 ambulances, 1 of which is out of service due to missing parts that were taken to repair another ambulance; 1 rescue truck that is currently out of service due to a need for maintenance; and 1 rescue boat that is currently out of service due to the fact that current members are not licensed to operate it. Approximately 10 years ago the Police Department donated a first responder vehicle to MFAS; however, this vehicle has since been decommissioned from the fleet due to its condition.

Morgan First Aid Squad Challenges

The MFAS has a committee that organizes an annual fund drive and fundraises through the year, which on average raises \$25,000 annually for the Squad. These funds typically cover the range of medical supplies that are needed by the MFAS.

In the past year the MFAS has undergone a complete change of management and line officers, who are now focused on pursuing much needed fleet repairs and upgrades despite the Squad not having a dedicated maintenance and repair fund. It is important for the Squad to repair its fleet so that it is prepared to assist the Borough and Middlesex County in larger-scale emergencies. As previously mentioned, a considerable portion of the Squad's fleet is out of service. This includes the following:

- 1 ambulance, from which parts were taken to repair another ambulance that was previously out of service. It requires a comprehensive evaluation, interior equipment, and mechanical equipment to be functional. The remaining 3 ambulances, while operational, are in need of maintenance and repair and are the top priority of the Squad.
- 1 rescue truck, which needs a new battery and other mechanical improvements to be functional. Additionally, it is in need of replacement tools and equipment associated with first aid and vehicle extractions. This truck was previously donated to MFAS by a New Jersey senator, whose term has since ended.
- 1 rescue boat, which is in good condition but is not usable due to the fact that current MFAS members are not equipped with boat licenses.
- 1 responder vehicle, which was previously taken by the Borough to conduct repairs but has not since been returned. This vehicle was previously used to tow the Squad's boat for water rescue operations. With this responder vehicle out of service, MFAS is unable to prepare its members for boat licensing or train them for water rescues.

In order to function efficiently and to its full extent, the Squad is in need of the appropriate repairs or replacement of the vehicles listed above. In addition, the MFAS is in need of approximately \$2,000 to \$5,000 to install rearview cameras on all of its trucks, which is



A truck belonging to the Sayreville Fire Department

now required for insurance purposes. Other equipment needs include: new stretchers to replace old, unreliable stretchers that get stuck due to rusty legs; and new radio batteries to replace older, dying batteries.

The building that MFAS works out of has served the Squad well and has undergone some improvements in recent years, including the addition of a new refrigerator and stove. Still, the building could benefit from some minor upgrades, specifically the replacement of loose door handles and the replacement of its existing water fountains.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The primary responsibility of Sayreville's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is to coordinate the Borough's administrative and public safety departments in pre-disaster planning as well as in the midst of emergency or disaster events. The OEM maintains and updates the Borough's Emergency Operations Plans, which are reviewed annually. In the case of an emergency or disaster event, the OEM may coordinate actions such as the evacuation of at-risk residents and the opening of shelters for residents. OEM not only coordinates with Borough departments during emergency events, but also with County, State, and Federal agencies. Additionally, the OEM educates the community on disaster preparedness best practices.

Responding to a Major Weather Event

Leading up to a projected major weather event, the OEM may begin prep work as early as a few days prior depending on the nature and severity of the storm. During this time frame the OEM will establish critical communications with various entities as well as the general public with the goal of ensuring storm readiness. For example, OEM will:

- Coordinate with the Department of Public Works to ensure that relevant equipment such as snow plows or chainsaws are ready and available;
- Contact County and State road officials to identify any areas of concern regarding blocked storm drains;
- Notify the Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management regarding any areas of concern;

- Disseminate weather briefs to representatives from the Police Department, Fire Department, First Aid Squads, and local governing parties and stakeholders; and
- Utilize social media to provide residents with storm updates and preparation tips, such as how to prepare a to-go kit.

The OEM has the jurisdiction to determine whether or not they will open their Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during a major weather event, where they can monitor and respond to the effects of the storm with full phone, radio, and dispatch capacities. The EOC can be opened on a partial/remote or full activation scale; the former offers members of Sayreville's Emergency Management Committees the option to work from outside of the EOC, while the latter requires all members to be on site. The Sayreville OEM maintains thorough contact with the Middlesex County OEM during major weather events, providing updates such as roadway closures due to flooding or a downed electrical wire.

NOAA Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador

The Sayreville OEM is recognized as an official Ambassador of NOAA's Weather-Ready Nation program. This program comprises a national network of organizations that are working to improve "the nation's readiness, responsiveness, and overall resilience against extreme weather, water, and climate events."⁴ In this role the OEM commits to improving two-way communications between NOAA and its partners as well as educating the general public to better prepare them for weather-related events. The OEM utilizes the NWS's Chat 2.0 function during extreme weather events to coordinate real-time communication between Emergency Managers, forecasters, and other partners. It also collaborates with NOAA to disseminate educational materials to local residents, plan outreach events, and identify relevant research initiatives.

Sayreville Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program

The Sayreville OEM helps manage the Borough's local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, which provides residents with 20 hours of basic-level training in areas such as disaster preparedness, light search and rescue operations, and terrorism. Upon the completion of training and the passing of a final disaster

⁴ "About Weather-Ready Nation Ambassadors." National Weather Service, NOAA's National Weather Service, 19 Apr. 2018, www.weather.gov/wrn/ambassadors.

simulation, trainees become CERT members and are eligible to assist in emergency events or in non-emergency projects that enhance the community's safety. CERT training courses, student materials, and equipment are provided free of charge to trainees. The Sayreville OEM coordinates a comprehensive schedule of training opportunities for Borough residents.

As of the writing of this Plan, the most recent CERT Training Class involving the Sayreville OEM began on January 24, 2024 with roughly 35-40 participants from Sayreville, Spotswood, Old Bridge, and other surrounding municipalities with CERT programs. While approximately 23 of those participants are expected to serve Sayreville specifically, the Sayreville OEM is working to develop a Mutual Aid Agreement program with 6 other CERT teams with the intention of combining members and resources as needed during emergency events and for training purposes.

Office of Emergency Management Challenges

Although Sayreville's OEM was initially established as its own entity, over the years it came to fall under the management of the Police Department. Currently, the OEM is in the process of transitioning into its own separate entity once again that will work alongside the Police Department rather than within it. In order to become fully sufficient, the OEM is in need of specific renovations and equipment that fall outside of the budget allocated to them by the Borough.

Equipment

- Needed field equipment include items such as traffic cones, barricades, portable light towers, portable video message boards, a portable camera tower (for the remote monitoring of event spaces), and a hitch mountable/portable post sign.
- A new command vehicle equipped with a computer or tablet for use by the Emergency Management Coordinators (EMCs) to respond to calls and events and transport equipment to and from scenes. As of the writing of this Plan, two vehicles are being shared amongst three EMCs: one new vehicle and one 2008 Ford Expedition. This insufficient number of vehicles often leads to one EMC needing to utilize their personal vehicle and gas to respond to events and emergencies within the Borough. Having a computer or tablet in the vehicle would provide EMCs access to CAD system when responding to calls and allow for the completion of direct reporting to the County from the field.

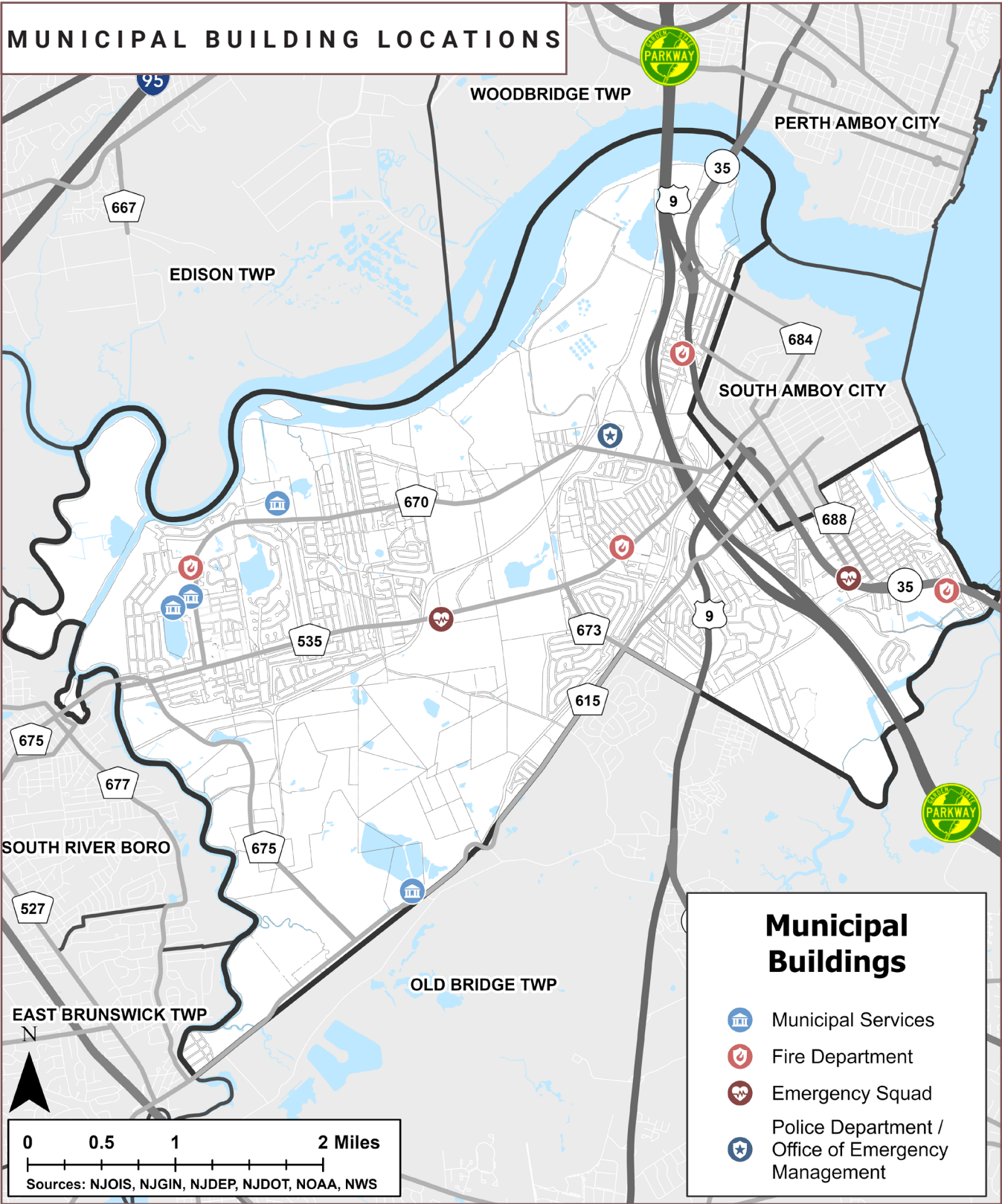
This equipment would allow the OEM to operate independently of the Police Department during local events and on-demand emergencies, which would subsequently free up police department personnel from duties such as managing road closures during weather related events.

Renovations

- Expansion of the OEM mobile command post. The OEM currently has a trailer that would benefit from being outfitted with radios, a meeting area (tables and chairs), computers, and a specialized laptop capable of making and receiving phone calls.
- Room renovations in the Emergency Operations Center, which would include an updated technology wall with two side-by-side 90-inch screens capable of rotating through various information databases such as: the NWS Radar; State of Emergency Evacuations; Resource Requests; Department of Transportation Traffic Cameras; Sayreville cameras and CAD system; local Emergency Response Notification platform; and EOC Operations viewed by Municipality, County, and State. This renovation, which the OEM is currently awaiting, would also include the installation of two regular cable televisions on an adjacent wall.



A public safety sign posted outside of Sayreville Engine Company No. 1



Community Amenities

SAYREVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The building that currently houses the Sayreville Public Library was constructed in 1971, but this is not the start of the Library's history. In 1931, the Free Public Library Association was founded by Sayreville residents; this library was located on Main Street until 1958, when it was moved into Borough Hall. The Library was eventually established as a municipal library in 1960. Today the Sayreville Public Library is a standalone building located at 1050 Washington Road, nestled between Sayreville Middle School to the west, Sayreville War Memorial High School to the east, and John F. Kennedy Park to the north.

Library Programming

The Library hosts a plethora of clubs and runs a comprehensive schedule of events for kids and adults, ranging from yoga sessions to craft programs, resume workshops, a children's summer reading program, and "Family FunDays". The Library has a successful engagement rate with teens from Sayreville's middle school and high school and maintains a large and active teen advisory board. At the time of the writing of this Plan, some of the Library's offerings include an anime club, movie screenings, Dungeon and Dragons tournaments, book clubs, and unisex skin care workshops.

Aside from its educational and social resources, the Library also offers public computers, rentable meeting rooms, and "NJHealthConnect" iPads, which provide cardholders with access to 24/7 telemedicine sites, mental health support resources, and video conferencing apps for telehealth appointments. In addition, the Library hosts health-centric events such as blood drives and clinics regarding vaccine and health monitoring.

The Library is supported by the Friends of the Sayreville Public Library (FOSPL), a volunteer-run group that offers financial and programmatic support to the Library. FOSPL hosts various fundraisers throughout the year to raise funds for the Library, including the tri-annual book sale event and the "Adopt a Book" program, which honors donors by placing their name on a bookplate within a book of their choice. The FOSPL also sponsors the Library's Museum Pass program, which provides library cardholders the opportunity to access Battleship New Jersey, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, or the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum at no cost.

Recent Improvements

Over the last decade, the Sayreville Public Library has undergone a handful of renovations and improvements, including those below:

- **2018:** In May, the Library revealed an expanded and modernized meeting room. The renovation added approximately 12 feet of space to the existing meeting room, a room divider to double the Library's programming capacity, a new overhead projector and sound system, new storage, and a kitchenette.
- **2022:** The Library refurbished the children's room by adding a larger office.
- **2023:** In the spring, the Library created a Memorial Garden dedicated to late members of the FOSPL. The Garden is surrounded by a children's area on one side (with an official Little Free Library box) and a staff picnic area on the other side. The Library repaved its parking lot in August and, shortly after in September, hired a designer to create custom wall installations for the children's room. During this same time frame, the Library replaced damaged sheet rock and wallpaper in the children's room and outside of the meeting room.
- **2024:** Between January to March, the Library renovated the basement kitchen to create a new staff breakroom. As part of this project, new sheet rock was installed over the existing cinderblock walls and furniture was added to create a usable and inviting space. The Library has also commissioned the construction of a 13-foot long wooden play train for the children's room. This train has 3 cars and includes space for a puppet theater.

Recent Initiatives

Fine Free

From June 26, 2022 through July 1, 2022 the Library initiated a Fine Amnesty Week, during which all penalties for overdue books were waived. The goal of this initiative was to remove the burden of fines so that cardholders with overdue books would be encouraged to return them rather than hold onto them even longer. In September 2022, the Library adopted this fine-free approach as a permanent policy for overdue books, CDs, DVDs, audiobooks, and magazines. Overdue museum passes and technology items are still subject to late fees.

Partnership with Middlesex County Office of Career Opportunity

In 2021, the Sayreville Public Library was one of sixty-four New Jersey public libraries to receive American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funding from the New Jersey State Library to “help communities respond directly and immediately to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as address related economic and community needs through equitable approaches.”⁵ In partnership with the Middlesex County Office of Career Opportunity (MCOCO), the Library utilized the \$46,611 award to create a mobile computer classroom to host MCOCO programs and workshops. This effectively established a One Stop Career Center satellite site and pilot program at the Sayreville Public Library. Through this ongoing partnership, MCOCO provides Library staff with curriculum and training to teach basic career-related classes. In turn, the Library offers services such as GED preparation, ESL classes, and in-person assistance navigating MCOCO’s online “Skill Up” courses and certifications. The Library additionally hosts monthly programs such as resume writing and interview skills workshops, and provides information regarding MCOCO’s free job training, apprenticeships, and certification programs.

COVID Precautions

In order to continue serving the community in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library implemented modifications to improve the safety of Library employees and community members alike. The Library, for example, added self-checkout machines and initiated curbside pickup. Further, the Library installed acrylic barriers at all staff desks as well as a new circulation desk and reference desk.

Library Challenges and Planned Improvements

At the time of the writing of this Plan, the Library’s focus in terms of future improvements is implementing measures that will ensure the safety of its staff. More specifically, the Library hopes to install code-entry security doors for staff offices and establish formal emergency safety training opportunities through the Sayreville Police and Fire Departments. Additionally, the Library has voiced that lack of space is consistently an issue—it would someday like to construct a building addition that would house a new teen room as well as quiet study rooms and meeting rooms for Library patrons. The Library intends to seek grant opportunities for such an addition.



Sayreville Library



The Library's Memorial Garden



Sayreville Active Adult Center (previously called the Sayreville Senior Citizens Center)

⁵ Giantomasi, Julia. “ARPA Grant Awards for NJ Public Libraries Announced.” New Jersey State Library, 7 July 2023, www.njstatelib.org/news/arpa-grants/.

SENIOR SERVICES

Sayreville's Office on Aging is based out of the Sayreville Active Adult Center (formerly referred to as the Sayreville Senior Center) located at 423 Main Street. Generally speaking, the Office on Aging is responsible for disseminating educational resources, providing services, and managing a comprehensive schedule of social events for the Borough's senior population.

Active Adult Center

Sayreville's Active Adult Center was originally constructed as a school in 1920. It was later dedicated to the senior citizens of Sayreville on February 16, 1985, and has continuously served Sayreville's senior citizen and disabled residents since. The Center is fully ADA accessible and is equipped with an aerobics and exercise room, computer lab, library, billiards room, and nutrition center, all of which are utilized on a daily basis. This building is also the location of one of Middlesex County's Senior Meal Program congregate sites, which provides low-cost, pre-cooked meals for residents aged 60 and up.

The Active Adult Center offers a comprehensive schedule of monthly off-site field trips and weekly on-site physical and social activities, such as book club meetups, strength and balance training classes, crochet and knitting classes, ice cream socials, and an annual Halloween party. Additionally, the Center connects its constituents with local educational workshops and services by hosting Medicare health enrollment seminars, disseminating information regarding free vaccine services, announcing senior fitness walks hosted by other organizations, and more. These events and opportunities are compiled into a monthly activities list and circulated.

The Active Adult Center has undergone a variety of renovations since 2013. Most notably, in 2019 the roof of the building was replaced. More recently over the last several years, new windows have been installed and the parking lot was repaved.

Transportation

The Office on Aging offers an "Around the Town Bus," which provides senior citizens with transportation to specific destinations in the Borough, including local banks, doctor offices, hair salons, physical therapy offices, and grocery stores. This transportation service is highly popular amongst Sayreville's senior citizen and disabled population,

and accounted for a total of 1,347 rides between November 1, 2023 and January 31, 2024.

Although unaffiliated with the Borough, Middlesex County Area Transit (MCAT) also provides bus transportation for residents to the Active Adult Center for meetings, field trips, and meals. MCAT also provides medical transportation to hospitals or medical offices within Middlesex County (including any location within 5 miles outside of County lines). Both the Borough's and the County's transportation services require reservations in advance.

Office on Aging Challenges and Planned Updates

The Office on Aging currently has no updates planned for the Active Adult Center, nor is it facing any challenges that require immediate attention. There is an anticipated need, however, for building improvements and expanded services within the next ten years.

Specifically, the Office anticipates a need for a pole barn to protect their buses from the elements and potential vandalism or theft. Further, the Active Adult Center's exercise classes are consistently at capacity, which restricts new members from accessing them. These classes have had a demonstrable benefit on the health and safety of the Center's constituents, and the Center recognizes the need for additional funding to support the expansion of their exercise class offerings. In addition, as Sayreville's aging population grows and welcomes younger generations of senior citizens, the Borough will need to employ tools to better understand the aging population's needs and wants as they relate to senior services, programming, and facilities.

It is also worth considering that the current building that houses the Active Adult Center is over 100 years old and was not specifically designed as a senior center. While the building provides adequate space for current senior services and programming, there will likely be a future need for a modernized and expanded facility that can attract and accommodate a diverse spectrum of the aging population within Sayreville and adjacent communities.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

In a combined effort, the Sayreville Recreation Department (“Recreation Department”) and the Parks Division of the Public Works Department (“Parks Division”) activate and manage the Borough’s various parks, recreational facilities, and outdoors amenities. While the Recreation Department is primarily responsible for overseeing recreational programming and the Parks Division primarily manages improvements and maintenance, the two entities coordinate closely to achieve shared goals. For example, they collaborate on an ongoing basis to identify, prioritize, and implement needed improvements throughout the Borough’s parks system.

Additionally, Parks Division staff provides the Recreation Department with event, programming, and rental support as needed. The Recreation Department typically programs 12 to 13 public events a year in addition to summer camp and afterschool programs. Some of the many recreational events and programs that have been offered in recent years include the Borough’s Hit the Bricks 5K, “RAD Women: Women’s Self Defense Class”, afterschool recreation programs, and Little Kids Playtime.



A trail entrance within the Julian L. Capik Nature Preserve

Recreation Department

While the Borough of Sayreville has a total of 28 parks, the Recreation Department oversees programming at just 4 of these sites, which are all centrally located in the Borough:

- **Bailey Park:** Located on South Minisink Avenue and Cheesequake Road, Bailey Park offers passive leisure in the form of open space and rentable picnic areas.
- **Burkes Park:** Adjacent to the Parlin Power Plant, Burkes Park sits at the intersection of Washington Road and Lakeview Drive. It offers both active and passive recreation opportunities, including a baseball field, a playground, rentable picnic groves, a shaded walking path, and the Sayreville 9-11 Memorial.
- **Jackson Avenue Park:** Situated amongst residential properties, Jackson Avenue Park is located on Jackson Avenue off of Washington Road. Similar to Burkes Park, it offers a mix of passive and active recreation including a playground, a baseball diamond, and rentable picnic areas.
- **Kennedy Park:** Located across from War Memorial High School, Kennedy Park is the largest of the four managed by the Recreation Department. Centered around a fishing pond, the park offers a wide range of amenities including a skate park, a playground, 8 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, an outside gym, a sand volleyball court, paved walking trails, and more. A recreation building is also located within Kennedy Park.

The Recreation Department additionally implements programming and manages public use of the following amenities throughout the Borough:

- The basketball courts, football field, and volleyball courts in War Memorial Park.
- The Buchanan River Front Park Boat Ramp.
- The Mickey Sedlak Recreation Center.
- The middle school gym and high school track.
- The Sayreville Sports Complex, which includes a playground, a baseball diamond, and various soccer fields. The Complex is used by the Sayreville Athletic Association.
- The Senior Center Aerobics Room.



Kennedy Park's fishing pond, trails, and open green space offer passive recreation space

- A variety of grass and turf fields throughout the Borough.
- The Julian L. Capik Nature Preserve, which offers 2.9 miles of walking trails, a horse facility and various riding trails managed by a third party, a picnic outlook, an enclosed dog park, a fishing pond, and an archery range. Aside from recreation, portions of the Preserve are used as a tree farm, two recharge lagoons, and a police pistol range located within a restricted area.

Some of the additional duties of the Recreation Department include processing applications for picnic rentals, fishing permits at the Julian L. Capik Nature Preserve, and boat ramp permits. It also offers community adult sports leagues, including co-ed volleyball and softball as well as men's basketball and softball.

Parks Division

The Parks Division of the Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining and repairing amenities at the Borough's recreational facilities, including:

- 28 parks
- 40 basketball courts
- 13 soccer fields
- 19 baseball and softball fields
- 4 volleyball courts
- 20 horseshoe pits
- 2 bocce ball courts
- 9 tennis courts
- 3 football fields
- 1 cricket pitch

Summer Youth Employment Program

Both the Recreation Department and Parks Division participate in the Borough's summer youth employment program, which places teenagers above the age of 15 in temporary, part-time jobs within select departments. Annually, this program typically places 2 participants in the Department of Public Works to provide general support and 40-45 participants in the Recreation Department to serve as summer camp counselors. This program offers local teens the opportunity to develop career-readiness skills and establish a foundation for their future professional pursuits.

The participation of the Recreation Department and the Parks Division in this teen employment program has fostered an effective pathway for local youth to obtain their first jobs while simultaneously serving their communities. The Recreation Department reports that it has seen many of its campers return as counselors in their teenage years. Further, in recent years at least 2 summer youth employment program participants within the Department of Public Works were hired as full-time staff following the end of their program term.

Past and Planned Improvements

Since the adoption of the last Community Facilities Element in 2013, the Recreation Department and Parks Division have overseen countless improvements and upgrades to the Borough's parks and recreational facilities. Some of the more notable improvements that occurred during this time frame include: the installation of a new playground, basketball courts, and pickleball courts at Kennedy Park; rubber mulching at 4 separate park locations; and the laser grading of sports fields. At the writing of this Plan, the bathrooms at Kennedy Park are in the process of being renovated to be fully ADA accessible.

Pending available grant funding, the Borough is tentatively considering additional improvements at Kennedy Park, which would replace a handful of the park's walking paths and sidewalks that are in need of repair. The Department of Recreation and the Parks Division have expressed that improvements at Bailey Park are currently a priority and being prepared for implementation in the year 2025. The park is generally in need of repair, and the Department and Division hope to install a small playground, a splash pad, a gazebo to accommodate rentals, and public bathroom facilities.

Department of Recreation and Division of Parks Challenges

Although many beneficial improvements have been made to the Borough's parks and recreational amenities over the years, the Recreation Department and the Parks Division are in need of new facilities. The Department of Public Works, which the Parks Division falls under, has been in need of a new yard for nearly 20 years. Additionally, the Recreation Department's existing recreation building is outdated for the Department's needs. Because of this, the Department does not have a proper indoor recreational facility to utilize and, therefore, camp and other similar programs are typically cancelled by the Department in the case of rain. The Department is in need of a new recreation building outfitted with a gym, basketball court, and other indoor facilities; having a guaranteed indoor space would ensure that programming can continue as scheduled despite bad weather.

OTHER NOTABLE COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Aside from municipally-managed assets, Sayreville has a handful of private facilities which are worth noting as contributors to the Borough's community network and regional draw.

Starland Ballroom

Originally opened as a banquet hall and tavern in 1962, the Starland Ballroom has been operating as a concert venue since 2003. The venue has hosted well-known artists such as Bruce Springsteen, Fall Out Boy, and Justin Timberlake and, in 2007, was recognized by Pollstar Magazine as one of the top 10 ticket selling venues in North America. The venue is also available for private event rentals, such as weddings.

VFW Post 4699

Sayreville's local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW Post 4699) is comprised of local veterans and current military service members and is part of a national network of such groups. Post 4699 offers a variety of free services for the community, including U.S. Flag Presentations and National Colors displays at local memorials, schools, and community organizations. They additionally provide deceased veterans with military funeral honors as requested by family members. The VFW building doubles as a banquet hall that is available for private event rentals.

Sayreville Historical Society & Museum

Founded in 1974, the Sayreville Historical Society has been working for the last 50 years to preserve, research, and publicly present Sayreville's history. The Society is based out of Sayreville New School No. 1, a historic brick schoolhouse built in 1855 that also serves as the Sayreville Historical



Public boardwalk and boat ramp in Buchanan Park

Museum. It houses thousands of historical artifacts and is open to the public. The Society also conducts outreach within the community and publishes media that highlights their research, including oral histories and genealogical reports of Sayreville residents.

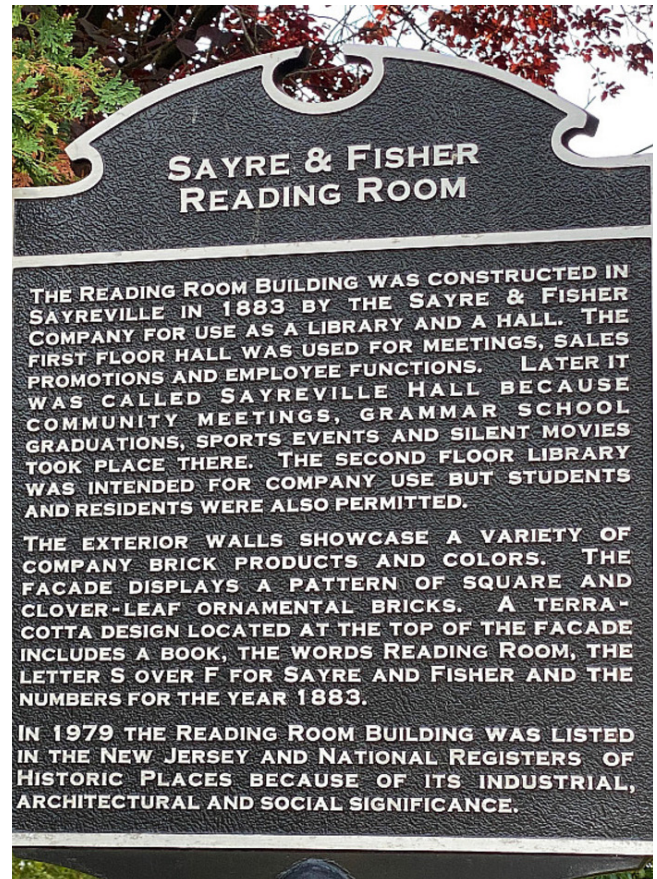
Historic Sites

Sayreville has 1 site listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), which is the Sayre and Fisher Reading Room located at the intersection of Main Street and River Road. This site has been included on the NRHP since 1979 and is categorized as having a level of significance at the State level. It is also listed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places (NJRHP). Although a plaque has been installed recognizing the historical landmark, the building itself is being utilized for a private, commercial use on the ground floor with residential above.

There are 15 additional sites in Sayreville that are included on the NJRHP, including:

- Camden and Amboy Railroad Main Line Historic District
- Garden State Parkway Historic District
- New York and Long Branch Railroad Historic District
- Old Spye Inn (ruins)
- Old Spye Road
- Price Pottery Site
- Raritan River Railroad Historic District
- US Route 9 Bridge (Edison Bridge) (demolished)
- Sayre and Fisher Company Stable (demolished)
- Sayre and Fisher Brick Company Site (destroyed)
- Sayre and Fisher Brick Company Scove Kiln Site
- Tennent Brook South Archeological Site
- US Route 9 Bridge over Victory Circle North (demolished)
- US Route 9 Bridge over Victory Circle South (demolished)
- Victory Bridge (demolished)

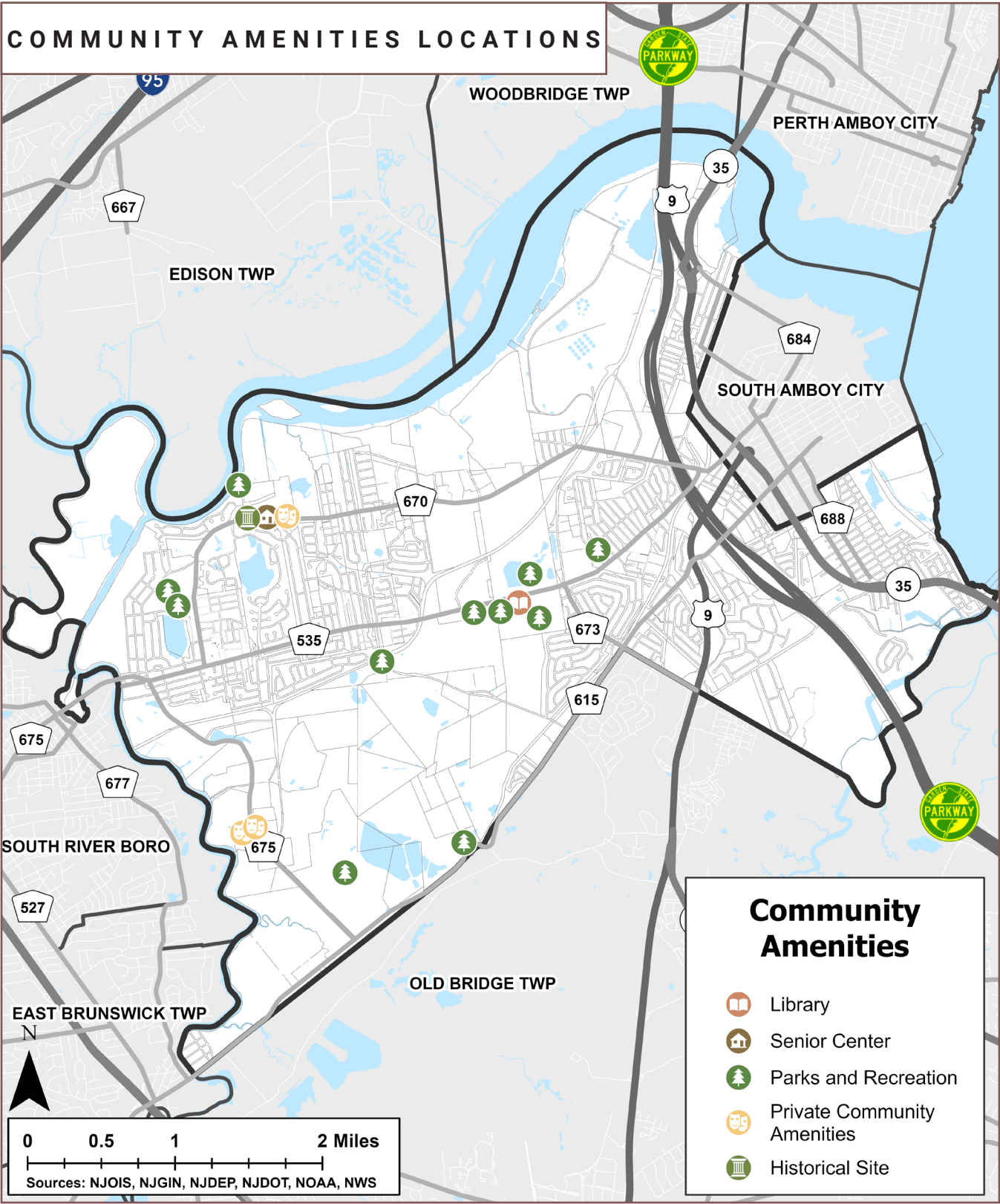
Preservation New Jersey included Sayreville's Old Fire House, located adjacent to Borough Hall, in its 2023 "10 Most Endangered Sites in New Jersey" program. This program "spotlights irreplaceable historic, architectural, cultural, and archaeological resources in New Jersey that are in imminent danger of being lost."⁶ The Old Fire House was constructed in 1909 and has since been used to meet a variety of community needs, providing a place for municipal meetings, government offices, a police station, and even a temporary school classroom.⁷ Although the building has been closed since 2018 due to a burst pipe, in March 2023 it was inspected and subsequently determined to be structurally sound. Members of the community have spoken out advocating for its preservation.



Sayre and Fisher Reading Room Plaque
Source: John Mooney via TAPinto Raritan Bay,
tapinto.net/towns/raritan-bay

⁶ "10 Most: Preservation New Jersey." Preservation NJ, www.preservationnj.org/10-most. Accessed 12 Jan. 2024.

⁷ "Sayreville Fire House Named Among Top 10 Most Endangered Historical Landmarks in NJ." TAP Into Raritan Bay, 7 June 2023, www.tapinto.net/towns/raritan-bay/sections/community-life/articles/sayreville-fire-house-named-among-top-10-most-endangered-historical-landmarks-in-nj.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Pursue Needed Municipal Facilities Upgrades

It is recommended that the Borough prepare a needs assessment for all municipal buildings and facilities to better understand the unique needs of each department and determine appropriate steps to undertake upgrades or new construction where needed. The Borough should specifically prioritize the following projects:

- Because the Borough does not currently have a community center, and the Recreation Department is in need of new indoor recreational space, this Plan recommends that the Borough consider investing in a new facility that can serve both purposes. Further, the Borough may consider planning for anticipated needs for other park and recreation facilities, such as bathrooms, walkways, etc.
- The Borough should continue to provide building upgrades as needed within the facilities that house the Sayreville Emergency Squad and the Morgan First Aid Squad.
- The Borough should continue coordinating with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Board of Education to identify an appropriate location for a new transportation complex to be used jointly to provide storage and maintenance for the School District's bus fleet and DPW's fleet. In this process, the Borough may also consider incorporating space for a new maintenance yard for the Department of Public Works.
- As the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) transitions into its own entity, it is recommended that the Borough provide support in the OEM's efforts to expand the mobile command post and complete technological room renovations in the Emergency Operations Center.
- This Plan recommends that the Borough coordinate with the Library and the Active Adult Center to plan for future upgrades. More specifically, this would include security improvements in the Library and a new pole barn to provide shelter for the Active Adult Center's senior buses.

Secure Funding for Emergency Vehicle and Equipment Upgrades

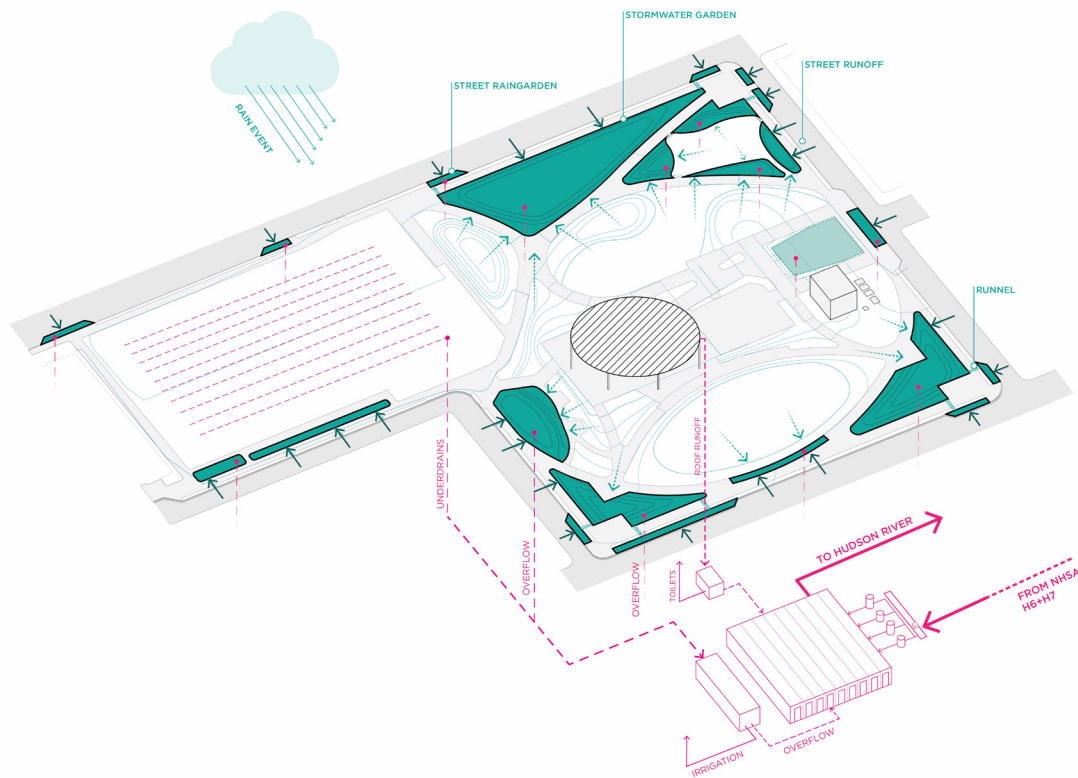
It is recommended that the Borough work to secure budget allocations and/or external funding sources for vehicle, equipment, and technological upgrades within Sayreville's emergency departments, specifically prioritizing the following:

- It is recommended that the Borough provide the Police Department with support in identifying private sponsors and grant opportunities that can endow the Department with electric vehicles for use within the fleet.
- The Fire Department has identified a need to reduce its response times to emergency calls. It is recommended that the Borough seek out funding that could cover the costs of hiring a consulting agency specializing in this field and, if needed, to implement technological upgrades toward this goal.
- It is recommended that the Borough consider exploring financial opportunities that would enable the governing body to allocate municipal budget toward the acquisition of much needed vehicles and equipment for the Office of Emergency Management, Sayreville Emergency Squad, and Morgan First Aid Squad. In lieu of or in addition to municipal budget allocations, the Borough should consider prioritizing any upcoming grant opportunities for these purposes specifically.
- Because both the Sayreville Emergency Squad and Morgan First Aid Squad are in need of vital vehicle and equipment upgrades to continue effectively serving the Sayreville community in coming years, we recommend that the Borough consider providing support to expand the scope and reach of the squads' respective annual fundraising drives. The Borough might, for example, offer marketing and outreach support, work to identify external sponsors, or establish a fund that benefits the squads.

Enhance Flood Resiliency

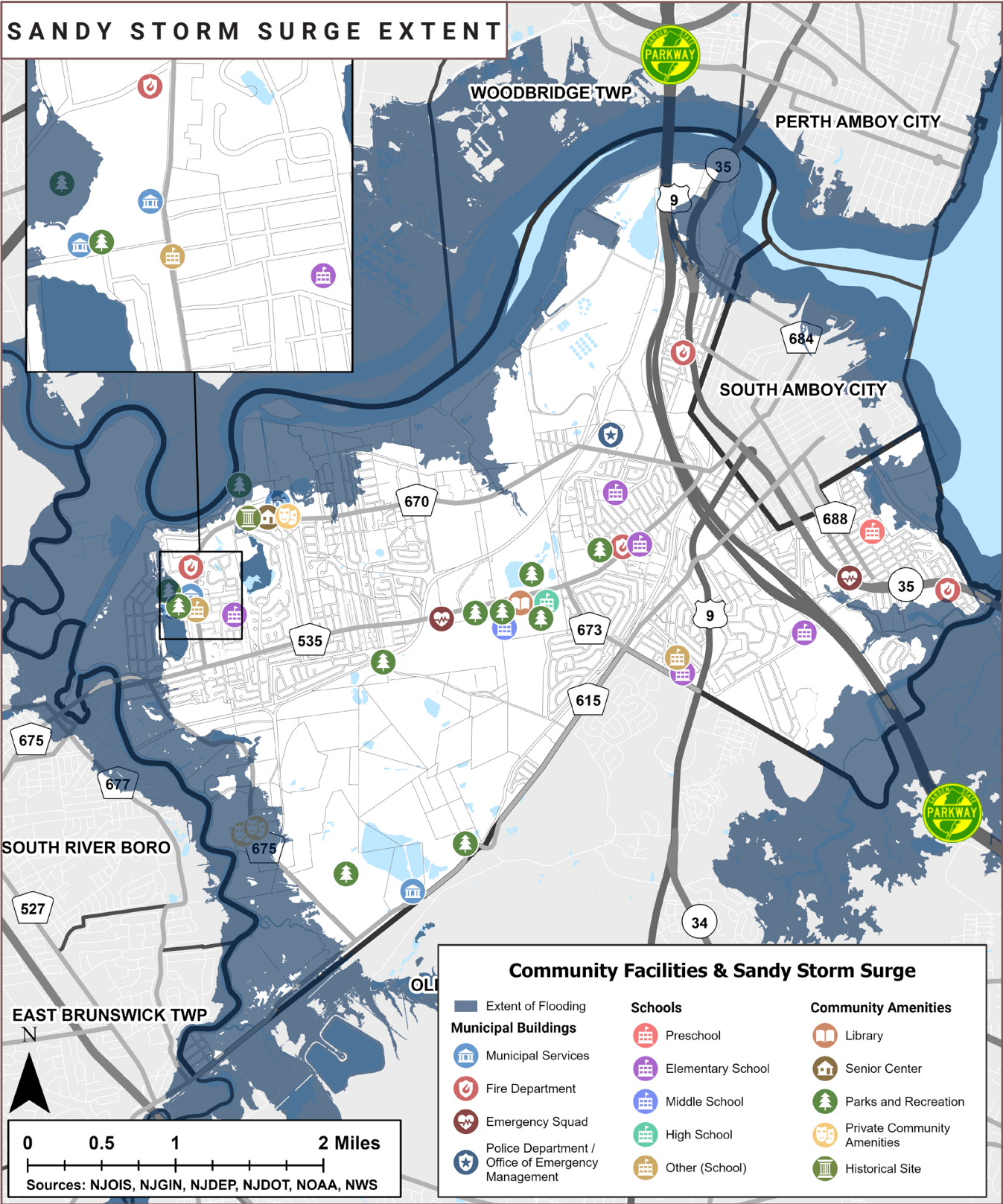
In comparing environmental maps prepared for the 2024 Sayreville Land Use Element with community facility locational maps prepared for this Plan, it is evident that a handful of the Borough's municipal facilities are located within areas that were impacted by storm surge flooding associated with Superstorm Sandy in 2012. With the heightening threats of climate change and sea level rise, it is recommended that the Borough invest in ensuring that these facilities are resilient to flooding and climate change hazards.

- These facilities specifically include: the municipal building located at 49 Dolan Street; the Morgan Hose and Chemical Fire Station; the Morgan First Aid Squad; and the Mickey Sedlak Recreation Center. It is recommended that the Borough conduct an analysis of these existing buildings and provide flood-proofing measures or plan for building relocations as needed to encourage future resilience. While Borough Hall itself did not appear to experience storm surge flooding during Sandy, it should also be protected given its proximity to the areas that did experience such flooding.
- There are multiple parks located within these flood prone areas as well, specifically War Memorial Park and Ken Buchanan Riverfront Park. These parks should be assessed for their capacity to hold and store water in the event of flooding. The Borough may consider installing green infrastructure such as rain gardens, pervious surfaces, or underground cisterns to further enhance the ability of these parks to intentionally flood and act as sponges during severe weather events, in turn protecting adjacent infrastructure and development.
- Although they are not affiliated with the Borough, both the Starland Ballroom and VFW Post 4699 were impacted by Superstorm Sandy flooding. The Borough may consider coordinating with the building owners to provide resources regarding methods and tools that could encourage flood resiliency for these facilities, both of which contribute to the vibrancy of Sayreville's communal ecosystem. Although the Historical Society appears to not have been impacted by the Superstorm Sandy flooding, it should also be included in these efforts given its proximity to the areas that did experience such flooding.



A diagram depicting the stormwater systems built into Hoboken's Northwest Resiliency Park, which are designed to mitigate combined sewage overflow (CSO) events and reduce surface level flooding

Photo Credit: Northwest Resiliency Park (nwpark-cityofhoboken.opendata.arcgis.com)



Plan for Future Growth

The 2013 Community Facilities Element recommended that the Borough more aggressively begin planning for the impacts of the Riverton development (previously referred to as The Pointe) upon the adoption of final site plan approval and further commitment from a designated redeveloper. This recommendation still stands and, since the redeveloper has been appointed and the first phase of the project is in the works, it is prudent that the Borough and developer work together to plan for needed expansions by way of a public private partnership.

- The School District has already expressed a nearing need for additional educational facilities to house its students. The Borough should also consider the expansion of municipal services in the form of police, fire protection, emergency response, and public works facilities. The Borough should prepare for the planning of these expansions to be in place or substantially underway by the time the first phase of Riverton is completed.
- In anticipation of a growing municipal population and the associated need for additional civic services, it is recommended that the Borough consider preparing a program of municipal capital improvement projects projected over a term of at least 6 years, in accordance with MLUL 40:55D-29. Such a program would require discussions between the Planning Board and the acting mayor, chief fiscal officer, municipal officials and agencies, and the school board.
- As Sayreville's aging population evolves, it is recommended that the Borough reevaluate the scope and diversity of its senior services and programming. Further, down the road the Borough may consider investing in a modernized senior facility to replace its current Active Adult Center. In the short term the Borough may consider exploring ways in which the current building can be utilized to its full capacity, as it appears that some portions of the building—such as the ceramics room—are not presently in use.

Encourage Additional Opportunities for Youth Participation

Anecdotal information from the Borough's community facilities and departments indicates that Sayreville has a successful track record of engaging its youth population in meaningful ways. It is recommended that Sayreville continue to establish programs across the Borough to encourage interdepartmental/interagency opportunities to further these efforts. The Borough may specifically consider pursuing the following opportunities:

- Continue promoting existing summer youth employment opportunities and establishing methods to enhance outreach, with a focus on making applications and program information easily accessible online.
- Seek out ways to streamline youth training, work, and mentorship opportunities across most—if not all—municipal departments to provide career readiness opportunities and encourage civic service amongst upcoming generations. The Borough could, for example, formally establish a civic mentorship program that provides an annual cohort of Sayreville middle and high school students with individual or group workshops and mentorship sessions led by municipal employees in rotating departments.
- Coordinate efforts between the Fire Department, Police Department, Sayreville Emergency Squad, Morgan First Aid Squad, Office of Emergency Management, Board of Education, and Library Teen Program to develop a diverse and comprehensive annual schedule of collaborative youth engagement opportunities to familiarize upcoming generations with the field of emergency response services. These opportunities could include professional shadow days, festivals or field days that incorporate obstacles or exercises used in professional emergency training situations, or educational workshops on topics such as educational leadership, fire safety measures, severe weather response, etc.
- Facilitate collaborations that provide opportunities for Bomber's Beyond Café students and alumni to continue developing career readiness skills within their community. For example, the Borough could encourage a partnership between the School District and Library to provide tailored workshops and events that integrate career resources and programming developed by the Middlesex County Office of Career Opportunity.

- Coordinate between the Library, Board of Education, Active Adult Center, Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Parks Division to establish an incentivized youth volunteer program, in which middle and high school students can pursue volunteer opportunities within these facilities to earn credits towards incentives. Such a program could benefit these facilities and students alike by building pathways for learning, civic engagement, and intergenerational connection in the community.

Other Considerations

In addition to the focus areas above, it is recommended that the Borough pursue opportunities to support its community facilities network through the following actions:

- Pursue funding opportunities to support programming expansion at the Active Adult Center, with a specific focus on expanding opportunities for those who cannot currently access the Center's classes due to capacity.
- Pursue opportunities to help achieve the Library's goal of establishing more enhanced security installations and protocols, specifically focusing on funding opportunities and safety training opportunities. For example, the Borough might consider coordinating between the Library, Police Department, and Fire Department to help the Library establish a comprehensive emergency response plan.
- With the recent national uptick in residential solar and electric vehicles, the Borough should consider exploring free training opportunities for the Police Department, Fire Department, Sayreville Emergency Squad, and Morgan First Aid Squad to ensure all emergency response personnel are trained in fire safety best practices specific to these technologies. For example, the National Fire Prevention Association and Interstate Renewable Energy Council offer free training resources in these topics that can be leveraged by municipalities.
- Because many of the Borough's historical sites have been demolished, this Plan recommends that the Borough consider taking action to preserve the Sayreville Old Fire House to preserve the history and culture of the Borough and its residents. The Borough may consider forming a Preservation Committee to lead this process and pursue future preservation opportunities as well.
- As referenced in the 2024 Circulation Element, the Borough may want to consider the feasibility of constructing greenways that would connect Sayreville's network of parks, schools, and other community facilities. This Plan notes that such an endeavor would require in-depth analysis in terms of siting, circulation, and funding, amongst other matters.



Little Library located outside of the Sayreville Library



Sayreville's Municipal Building located at 167 Main Street



Public dog park within the Julian L. Capik Nature Preserve

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- **AIMC Historic Preservation Grants:** The Arts Institute of Middlesex County (AIMC) and the Middlesex Board of County Commissioners jointly offer grants to municipal and non-profit organizations in the County to address historic preservation planning and implementation. Based on previous grant cycles, this Plan recommends that the Borough begin looking for announcements regarding upcoming cycles of this grant beginning in June 2024.
- **Department of Community Affairs LRIG Grant:** The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) offers a Local Recreation Improvement Grant (LRIG) that supports the improvement and repair of public recreation facilities including local parks and municipal recreation centers. The DCA website maintains a list of current requirements, links, and timelines.
- **Department of Homeland Security Loans:** The Department of Homeland Security offers the Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund Program, which supports mitigation projects at the local government level to increase resilience to natural hazards and climate change. The Borough could consider leveraging this loan source to implement any needed flood resilience upgrades in municipal buildings.
- **FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants:** The Federal Emergency Management Agency offers a handful of hazard mitigation assistance grants, which provides funding for eligible mitigation measures that reduce disaster loss, specifically addressing long-term solutions. The Flood Mitigation Assistance grant program and Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) are two such grants that the Borough might consider for the purpose of renovating municipal buildings to be flood resilient. FEMA's website maintains current information regarding requirements and timelines for each grant.
- **FEMA Preparedness Grants:** The Federal Emergency Management Agency offers a plethora of grants supporting municipal emergency response departments. Specifically, the Emergency Operations Center Grant Program provides funding to support "fully interoperable" emergency operations centers, while the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program provides funding support to meet the needs of fire departments and non-affiliated emergency medical service organizations. Another program offered by FEMA is the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant, which provides funding to support fire departments in increasing or maintaining the number of trained, front-line firefighters within their community. The website maintains a list of active funding opportunities, timelines, and requirements.
- **Institute of Museum and Library Services Grants:** The Institute of Museum and Library Services administers a variety of competitive grants for libraries (including public school libraries), such as the Community Catalyst Initiative and National Leadership Grants for Libraries programs. Their website maintains current opportunities and descriptions of the application process.
- **National Endowment for the Arts Grants:** The National Endowment for the Arts is the federal provider of funding for arts and cultural projects and emphasizes projects that benefit the community they are implemented within. The Grants for Arts Projects and Our Town programs are two such grants that can be leveraged by units of local government to creatively engage the community through project-based projects that are artistically, culturally, and socially significant and relevant. The website maintains an active list of funding opportunities and application requirements that tend to recur on an annual basis.

- **National Endowment for the Humanities Grants:** The National Endowment for the Humanities offers a variety of grants programs that support projects and research by institutions such as libraries and historic societies that “promote progress and scholarship in the humanities”. Some of the grants that could potentially be leveraged specifically in Sayreville include the Cultural and Community Resilience program and The Dialogues on the Experience of War program. The website maintained an active list of funding opportunities and application requirements that tend to recur on an annual basis.
- **New Jersey Historic Trust Grants:** The New Jersey Historic Trust provides four types of historic preservation grants, including: the Historic Site Management Grant; Municipal, County, and Regional Planning Grants; Heritage Tourism Planning Grants; and Capital Preservation Grants. Should the Borough choose to pursue more historic preservation efforts, the New Jersey Historic Trust provides useful funding sources.
- **New Jersey State Library Per Capita State Aid Grants:** The New Jersey Public Library’s largest grant program is the Per Capita State Aid program, which offers direct state funding to libraries to support the provision of quality library services throughout the state. The website maintains a description and up-to-date timeline for annual grant cycles.
- **Volunteer Emergency Service Organization Loans:** The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs’ Division of Fire Safety offers low-interest loans ranging from \$1,000 to \$50,000 for fully and partially volunteer fire companies, first aid squads, and rescue squads to help cover the acquisition of new equipment and vehicles and the repair of existing equipment and vehicles. The current cycle is accepting deadlines through June 30, 2024.
- **Other Resources:** In addition to the above, the Borough can tap into applicable funding resources listed on websites such as the Middlesex County Department of Community Services, the New Jersey State League of Municipalities Grant Resource Center, the National Recreation and Park Association Grant and Funding Resources, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (which recently provided a Creative Aging Initiative Grant for libraries and senior centers), and others.



Part of the Fargo Project, this photo depicts the hands-on set up of artist-led community design charette focused on redesigning a stormwater detention basin in Fargo, South Dakota into a multipurpose neighborhood commons. The Fargo Project was funded by the NEA Our Towns Grant program beginning in 2011 and established a partnership between artist Jackie Brookner, The City of Fargo Senior Planner, and the Fargo and West Fargo Public School Districts in addition to other arts institutions.

Source: Jackie Brookner, jackiebrookner.com