



TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

25 LAKESIDE AVENUE, WEST ORANGE, N.J. 07052

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

ROBERT D. PARISI

Mayor

LEONARD R. LEPORE

Director, Municipal Engineer

Tel: (973) 325-4160

Fax: (973) 669-9588

Email: Engineering@westorange.org

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Mayor and Township Council
Municipal Building
66 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052

RE: **AREA IN NEED OF REHABILITATION**
TOWNSHIP WIDE DESIGNATION

Mayor Parisi, Council President Matute-Brown and Council Members:

Pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-14, the entire area of the Township of West Orange may be designated an area in need of rehabilitation due to the age of the Township's housing stock, sanitary sewer infrastructure and water infrastructure. Specifically, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A – 14(a) states the governing body may designate all or part of the Municipality as being in need of rehabilitation if it determines by Resolution that more than half of the housing stock in the delineated area is at least 50 years old and/or there exists in that area conditions such that a majority of the sanitary sewer and water infrastructure is at least 50 years old and is in need of repair or substantial maintenance. Most of the development of the Township, including housing and the infrastructure needed to support the community such as roadways, sanitary sewers and water mains, occurred prior to 1971 or more than 50 years ago.

To evaluate the age of the Township's housing stock, the Tax Assessor's office, led by Kevin Dillon and with the assistance of Senior Assessing Clerk, Shayne Cavanaugh-Radice, completed a list of all residential units in the Township. The list was completed from sub groups of residential properties by Tax Classification:

- Class 2 - Residential buildings of four families or less including single family homes, townhomes, condominiums and two, three and four family residences
- Class 4C- Apartments designed for use by five families or more
- Class 4A- Commercial properties with residential properties such as residential units over retail units. These are found predominantly in the Downtown Corridor of Main Street/Valley Road
- Class 15- Tax Exempt properties with residential units such as senior citizen buildings

Nursing homes, long term care facilities and assisted living facilities are not included as residential units.

The total number of residential units including all above property classes is:

The number built prior to 1971: 13,311
The number built 1971 and after: 4,724
Percentage built prior to 1970: 78.8%

By Property Taxation Class

Class 2

Total - 14,792
Built prior to 1971 - 11,180
Built 1971 and after - 3,612
Percentage built prior to 1971 - 75.6%

Class 4C

Total - 2,334
Built prior to 1971 - 1,775
Built 1971 and after - 559
Percentage built prior to 1971 - 76.0%

Class 4A

Total - 294
Built prior to 1971 - 292
Built 1971 and after - 2
Percentage built prior to 1971 - 99.3%

Class 15

Total - 615
Built prior to 1971 - 64
Built 1971 and after - 551
Percentage built prior to 1971 - 10.4%

Clearly more than half the housing stock of the Township is more than 50 years old.

I mentioned most of the residential development of the Township, including the sanitary sewer and water mains to service those developments occurred prior to 1971. A few large single-family developments have occurred since then including High Tor Estates on Cunningham Drive and Howell Drive, Paddock Farms and Harper Ridge off Woodland Avenue, Pleasantdale Grande off Oval Road, Highview Gardens by O'Connor Park, Colonial Woods North on Colonial Woods Drive next to Route 280 and the Reserve at Bel Air on Haggerty Drive. Although these are significant residential developments, the infrastructure improvements to the sanitary sewer system, which is now owned and operated by the Township and the water system which is owned and operated by the New Jersey American Water Company are small when compared to the entire Township. Since 1971 the most significant residential development occurred in the development of private residential communities of townhouses and condominiums. This was a result of revisions to the Master Plan and Land Use Regulations in the late 1970's which established Residential Cluster Zones. Of the 21 private associations only three were built before 1971, and these were converted from garden apartments. In all 21 private communities the sanitary sewer system is operated by association management, but in most of those private communities the New Jersey American Water Company operates the water system. Even with nearly thirty sizable residential developments since 1971, the sanitary sewer and water infrastructure improvements associated with them is far less than half of the Township's total sewer and water infrastructure.

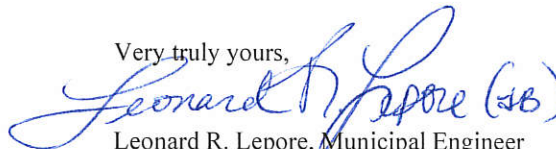
West Orange owns, operates and maintains approximately 100 miles of sanitary sewer mains. Those mains range in size from 8-inch diameter mains in residential streets to 30-inch diameter interceptor sewers. Due to the Township's topography, West Orange owns, operates and maintains nine sanitary sewage pump stations. The smallest is the Dogwood Pump Station which collects wastewater from a few homes at the southerly ends of Dogwood Drive and Dogwood Road. The largest is the Cherry Lane Pump Station. This facility collects wastewater from the westerly slope of the second Watchung Mountain from Route 280 south to the border with Millburn and Livingston. Of the nine pump stations, five of them were constructed prior to 1971. However, one of the five was rehabilitated in the past decade. The other four require frequent maintenance as their electrical and mechanical systems are old. Sourcing parts for them can be difficult. The

Township plans improvements to three of those four stations over the next few years. The sanitary sewer mains in the Township's collection system date back as early as the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when the Joint Meeting of Essex and Union Counties was formed. The sewer mains installed in the first half of the twentieth century were mostly made of vitrified clay. This is a very brittle material, subject to cracking, with pipe joints of oakum and sealed with lead. Also, many of the over 1,000 manholes are constructed of brick with mortar joints. Over time the joints between pipes and the joints between the brick courses deteriorate, allowing for roots and groundwater infiltration into the sanitary sewage collection system. Also, deteriorated joints can lead to misaligned pipes or pipe settlement. Both these conditions create obstructions that allow materials and grease in the sewage effluent to accumulate. As a result, the Township must frequently maintain sections of the sanitary sewage system to prevent accumulation of roots and debris. The Department of Public Works maintains sections on a quarterly, semi annually and annual basis to prevent future sewage backups at known problem areas. Sewage backups also develop in periods of wet weather when extraneous flows from infiltration causes sewage flow rates to rise considerably. This can lead to overflows into basements and discharges into streets from overflowing manholes. The sanitary sewage collection system of the Township requires frequent maintenance in addition to more than half the system being older than 50 years. To reduce maintenance frequency and significantly reduce infiltration, will require sewer main and manhole replacement or relining with costs of at least \$50,000,000.00.

Although a significant amount of new water mains were constructed by New Jersey American Water Company (NJAWC) in new developments both on public streets in new single family residential developments and on private roads in townhouse and condominium developments since 1971, this quantity represents about 13 miles of new water main in a system that consists of nearly 145 miles of mains. This is about nine percent of the water conveyance system. Additionally, the water system requires continued maintenance and improvement to repair water main breaks. Since April 2016 a total of 191 breaks in the distribution system were reported by NJAWC to West Orange. On streets with repeated breaks, such as Lessing Road, NJAWC installed a new water main and services. In recent years new mains were also installed on Arverne Road, a portion of Edgewood Avenue, portions of Old Indian Road, Porter Road, Curtis Avenue and portions of Woodland Avenue. Even with these improvements more than half of the water distribution system is more than 50 years old. As the system ages, water main breaks will continue and NJAWC will install replacement mains. However, this will require a significant amount of new replacement mains to reduce the age of the majority of the system to less than 50 years.

The Township as a whole may be designated an area in need of rehabilitation pursuant to the criteria of N.J.S.A. 40A: 12A-14. The majority of the housing stock in the Township is in excess of 50 years old and the ages of the majority of the sanitary sewer and water infrastructure are greater than 50 years. Furthermore, both the sewer and water system require frequent maintenance.

Very truly yours,


Leonard R. Lepore, Municipal Engineer
Director of Public Works

LRL/tb

cc: John Gross

Richard Trenk

John K. Sayers

Police Chief James Abbott