Comprehensive Operational Review of the Montclair Fire Department

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Executive Administrative Summary

Any review of the municipal operations by a third party must be conditioned upon a clear understanding that the elected officials and administration of that community establish the priorities and needs of that community. No outside party can make those decisions. However, an assessment report such as this provides insight and recommendations as directed based on our professional experience. NJ Community Solutions, LLC (NJSC) performed this assessment based upon our New Jersey experienced fire service and administrative professionals designed to give the Township Council and Manager recommendations to improve the Montclair Fire Department operations, staffing and address concerns raised by the Township.

Furthermore, it is always important to keep in mind that any organization is subject to decisions made by previous governing bodies. Those decisions significantly impact the operations today that some may consider unusual or controversial. Change in any operation, especially local government in New Jersey, requires time, and sometimes extraordinary effort. The recommendations that we make provide some choices that the governing body may wish to implement, recognizing that it may take time to realize the impact of those changes. Therefore, it is very important that the administration of Montclair Township carefully discuss these recommendations and make changes based upon your best judgment.

NJCS makes a number of recommendations to address significant issues that are summarized to include the following key areas:

Staffing, Workforce, and Organizational Capacity
Staffing shortfalls are a central theme. The roster has declined over recent years and vacancies in key leadership and administrative roles have not been consistently filled. Clearly, we recognize that the cost of staffing under the current budgetary constraints is an extremely difficult decision—limited by New Jersey spending and tax levy limits. Currently, the department has relied on extensive mandatory overtime to maintain coverage, producing high annual overtime totals that erode morale, increase fatigue, and threaten retention. Furthermore, administrative and prevention functions are understaffed, with part-time support unable to keep pace with inspection demands. Like so many New Jersey municipalities, balancing providing safety and costs of personnel is complex and difficult—to say the least. We provide several options to consider for addressing staffing levels and costs. The critical decisions needed for this issue alone must be taken in light of all the issues presented in the report, for example, the staffing levels of the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Furthermore, a review of the current labor agreement seems to indicate that the township has not established contractual minimum manning, however, a close review of the agreement is recommended (See Article 15 and 33). If manning levels are changed, consideration to have a thorough discussion with the FMBA should be initiated before the change is made. Lastly, recruitment efforts are limited and the auxiliary firefighter program that once broadened the candidate pool has been discontinued, reducing the department's ability to replenish and diversify its workforce.

Fire Prevention, Records, and Data Management

Fire prevention and records management are under-resourced and vulnerable. The Fire Prevention Bureau lacks sufficient full-time inspectors and administrative support to manage plan reviews, inspections, and fee processing, especially as inspection responsibilities expand. This is a significant concern as the Township moves forward. A cyber incident in 2023 disrupted records and exposed the absence of a dedicated records manager to restore and validate critical data. Further, the high volume of false alarms further strain resources and reflect weak enforcement of the municipal alarm ordinance.

Policies, Planning, and Facilities

Policy and planning of the department is lacking. The existing standard operating procedures (SOP) and policy documents vary in the format needed for a thorough understanding of operational responsibilities and functions. In today's litigious environment, it is important that SOPs are clear, up-to-date, and carefully administered to maintain a safe and accountable operation. The department lacks a comprehensive multi-year strategic plan, an apparatus replacement schedule, a long-term facilities plan, and a succession plan for leadership continuity. To illustrate, the two of the fire stations are nearly 125 years old and were not designed for modern apparatus or contamination control.

The Glen Ridge Interlocal Issues

The concern for the equitability of the interlocal agreement between the Township and Glen Ridge to provide fire services was an explicit request. We recommend that Montclair not abandon this agreement but consider renegotiating the agreement that addresses a more accurate equitable cost sharing between the two communities. After review of the Shared Services Agreement, we believe a close legal review of the Agreement is needed. Our evaluation is that the agreement does not provide a clause

for Montclair to end the agreement – an option only limited to Glen Ridge. However, there is a provision to mutually modify the Agreement.

Training, Professional Development, and Special Operations
Training and professional development are constrained by the same staffing pressures that affect operations. There is no formal, NFPA-aligned supervisory development program for first-level officers and limited capacity to release personnel for external courses. Without a sustained investment in training and mentoring, the department will struggle to meet the requirements of modern day firefighting and administration of the workforce.

Fire Station 3
The temporary closure of Fire Station 3 for structural repairs has raised questions about coverage and travel times to that area of the Township. The closing of a fire station is -- no matter which community – a highly charged public issue. Clearly, Station 3 needs a substantial investment in order to use it safely. But, to establish a clear need, the lack of data has limited our review. We do provide information on travel times that is designed to assist the Township with this difficult decision.

Conclusion
Montclair faces a significant dilemma between current departmental capacities and ability to provide the funding for this service. The most urgent priorities are restoring and right-sizing staffing, strengthening fire prevention and records management, implementing NFPA-aligned training and officer development, and developing multi-year capital, facilities, and strategic plans. Addressing these areas in a coordinated way will improve the department's ability to provide Fire safety and response to the demands of a changing community.

The problems identified are not isolated; they compound one another. As mentioned, the Council and Manager are constrained by decisions made in previous administrations. That is not to say that anyone was wrong or acting in bad faith. However, the hope is that this report provides you with the identification of problems and recommendations for solutions that should be considered based upon priorities established by the Township Council and administration.

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Introduction

In June of 2025, the Township of Montclair engaged NJ Community Solutions, LLC, to perform a comprehensive operational review of the Montclair Fire Department. The study was prompted primarily by two issues:

1. The temporary closure of Fire Station 3 due to structural integrity concerns forced the relocation of Engine 3 to Fire Headquarters. The closure raised the question as to whether Fire Station 3 is an essential component in the delivery of local fire protection.

2. A request from the Fire Chief for authorization to fill certain vacancies within the Fire Department. That request raised the issues as to whether filling vacancies within the organization is essential for the delivery of local fire protection.

While the study was underway, two additional issues were included for review: The shared services agreement for fire protection services delivered to the Borough of Glen Ridge and a proposed initiation of a Fire Department first responder EMS program. An evaluation of the interlocal agreement and the first responder program are included here also.

While there are many recommendations for improving operations, that should not be interpreted as a lack of dedication or commitment by members of the Fire Department. Throughout this project, Fire Department representatives were open and candid in their answers and fully responsive to our several requests for information. Their assistance is acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

Among the questions to be answered by this study is whether Fire Station 3 is essential for the delivery of fire protection to the township and what the appropriate level of staffing for the Fire Department should be. To address each of those questions, a number of assessments and evaluations were performed including:

- Community Risk Profile
- Target Hazard Assessment
- Analysis of Service Demand Levels and Emergency Incident History
- Fire Department Deployment and Resource Allocation
- Insurance Services Office Evaluation
- Personnel and Organization Structure
- Training & Professional Development Programs
- Fire Station Location Analysis
- Fire Prevention Bureau Operations
- Policies, Procedures and Planning
- Recruitment Programs
- Analysis of the Interlocal Agreement for Fire Protection for the Borough of Glen Ridge
- Analysis of the proposed Fire Department EMS First Responder Program.

During a five month period, a comprehensive review of the Montclair Fire Department was conducted. The study included multiple onsite visits, inspection of target hazards within both Montclair and Glen Ridge, interviews with Fire Department leadership and rank and file members, analysis of available records and response data and analysis of several programs.

The report that follows includes our assessment of each of these areas as well as our several recommendations.

The result of our assessment is contained in 44 recommendations for improved Fire Department operations. An analysis of the fire protection coverage provided by the three existing Montclair fire stations based on mapping of travel time is included. Additionally, four options for staffing the Fire Department have been presented with our analysis of the impact of each option.

The table of recommendations and page reference is included here:

Table of Recommendations

#	Table of Recommendations	Page
1	Initial response of adequate staffing levels should be addressed through increase of the staffing levels and development of automatic aid response to fires and emergencies within the fire protection coverage area.	45
2	Develop pre-incident fire response plans for each of the recently constructed mid-rise large area apartment complexes.	45
3	Develop automatic aid response procedures for additional fire and rescue mutual aid resources on report of a fire, smoke condition, hazardous materials release, or other significant fire event in one of the mid-rise, large area apartment complexes. Automatic Aid response of the additional fire and rescue resources must be dispatched upon report of the emergency to bolster the initial response of the local fire force and to have the supplemental automatic aid units arrive on scene within a reasonably short response time.	45
4	Multi-company drills should be scheduled periodically at each of the recently completed mid-rise large area apartment complexes to exercise the pre-emergency plan and to familiarize all responding local and mutual aid resources with the configuration of the occupancy including the life safety and fire protection features of the facility.	45
5	Consistent with recommendation #1, initial response of adequate staffing levels should be addressed through increase of the staffing levels and development of automatic aid response to fires and emergencies reported at high-rise residential apartment buildings located in the coverage area.	52
6	A pre-incident fire response plan for the residential high-rise occupancies be developed that includes the pre-planned automatic aid response of additional fire and rescue mutual aid resources on report of a fire, smoke condition, hazardous materials release, or other significant fire event inside one of the high-rise occupancies. Response of the additional fire and rescue resources should be upon first report of the emergency in order to bolster the initial response of the local fire force and to have the supplemental automatic aid units arrive on scene within a reasonably short response time. Due to the variances in fire protection equipment and systems in the residential high-rise buildings, a separate pre-incident fire response plan must be developed to address the unique features of each building.	52
7	Multi-company drills and building familiarization tours must be scheduled periodically at each of the residential high-rise occupancies to exercise the pre-emergency plan and to familiarize all responding local, automatic, and mutual aid agencies with the configuration of the occupancy including the fire protection features of the facility.	52
8	The Fire Department should collect data on fire losses to property and contents, as well as pre-incident values, to better document the ratio of loss to property saved during fires.	63
9	Fire Officials should conduct a regular review of false fire alarm activations and enforce the municipal alarm ordinance as needed to control the number of false fire alarm responses.	64
10	A fire officer should be assigned as the fire records manager for the agency, responsible for the review, accuracy, and completeness of all fire incident reports. This officer would also be responsible for producing a monthly summary of fire and emergency reports that should be submitted to the governing bodies through the office of the Fire Chief. This officer would also be responsible for the transition from the NFIRS system to the new NERIS platform including providing training for all Fire Department officers in the use of the new software system.	65
11	Members of the Fire Department should conduct a detailed fire risk assessment of all large residential, mercantile, commercial, and institutional occupancies to develop a plan to effectively combat structural fires and other major emergencies involving high and medium hazard occupancies located in the city.	83

12	Consistent with recommendation #3, the Fire Department should seek to develop automatic aid agreements with area fire agencies to provide for a more robust and timely response to structural fires and other major emergencies that may occur in medium and high hazard occupancies in the township and borough.	83
13	Develop comprehensive, relevant, and up to date job descriptions for each position.	84
14	Consideration should be given to including specific administrative responsibilities for lieutenants, captains, and Battalion Chiefs to help develop the administrative capacity of the members in those roles.	84
15	Add two, full time, career firefighters to the fire prevention bureau to serve as a supervising fire inspector and fire inspector.	88
16	Expand the administrative support staff from part-time to full-time to handle the increased workload and walkup window and telephone coverage.	88
17	Implement a plan to use off-duty Montclair firefighters who are certified fire inspectors to supplement on a per-diem basis, the full-time inspectors.	88
18	Reinstitute the in-service inspection by use of on duty fire suppression personnel certified as fire inspectors.	88
19	Review all financial reporting and recording of fire prevention bureau activities to assure full regulatory compliance.	88
20	Review the probationary firefighter training program including the probationary firefighter handbook and the mentoring elements to assure they continue to meet the requirement of the Fire Department and NFPA Standard 1001.	99
21	Develop a robust and full featured first-level supervisory training and professional development program that will prepare individuals for promotion to the supervisory ranks. The program should conform to the qualifications outlined in NFPA 1021 and have a formal mentoring component. The Leadership in Supervision program offered by the National Fire Academy is an excellent program that should be included as part of the professional development of newly promoted officers.	101
22	The Fire Department should require first-level supervisors to obtain certification as Fire Instructor Level 1 offered by the NJ Division of Fire Safety.	101
23	The Fire Department should require newly promoted first-level supervisors to enroll in the Managing Company Officer program offered by the National Fire Academy.	101
24	Develop a robust and full-featured, upper-level supervisory training and professional development program to prepare individuals for promotion to the chief officer ranks. The program should conform to the qualifications outlined in NFPA 1021 and include a formal mentoring component.	102
25	The Fire Department should require newly promoted chief officers to enroll in the New Executive Chief Officer program offered by the National Fire Academy.	103
26	Members promoted to the role of deputy chief and Fire Chief should be encouraged to enroll in the Executive Fire Officer program offered by the National Fire Academy.	103
27	The training program for special operations task force members and members operating in a support role for specialized rescue incidents should be configured to meet the training requirements of NFPA 1710 and NFPA 1006, Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications, and NFPA 1670, Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Rescue Incidents.	103
28	All existing policies and procedures in the form of memos, general orders, standard operating guidelines, and policies should be reviewed and updated using a consistent SOG format and indexing convention. One member should have the responsibility to assure documents are reviewed and updated on an annual basis.	103
29	Develop a multi-year replacement schedule for fire apparatus.	105
30	Develop multi-year replacement schedules for certain high cost equipment with regulated useful life such as: self-contained breathing apparatus and personal protective equipment.	105
31	With input from appropriate professionals, develop a long term facilities improvement plan.	105

32	Develop a comprehensive, multi-year, community driven strategic plan.	106
33	Develop a comprehensive succession plan for continuity of leadership during periods of transition.	106
34	A member of the Fire Department should be designated as the liaison to the Planning Boards in both municipalities in the fire protection coverage area so concerns regarding proposed projects can be addressed early in the planning process.	111
35	Analysis of the most recent ISO report for Montclair shows that the Fire Department should include three areas of focus to potentially improve or retain its current rating: Firefighter Training, Company Officer Training, Fire Prevention Certification and Training.	114
36	Develop a telecommunications operator orientation and continuing training and education program that is based on nationally and state recognized telecommunications standards that include quality assurance and mentoring components.	115
37	Develop comprehensive communication protocols and procedures for dispatching Fire Department resources.	115
38	A project team with representatives from township administration, Montclair Ambulance Unit, police, and Fire Departments should be established to implement and establish the protocols for a Fire Department First Responder Program. The stakeholders above should conduct periodic reviews of the program to adjust as needed.	118
39	The absence of response data did not allow for a clear recommendation on whether Fire Station 3 is essential for full fire protection coverage. Analysis of travel times from the three existing fire stations found that Montclair enjoys very good travel time coverage. Approximately half of the Fire Station 3 response area would have increased travel times in the event that station remains closed; however, almost half of the response district would continue to have four minute coverage from Fire Headquarters.	126
40	A comprehensive recruitment program should be developed that includes reinstating the role of auxiliary firefighter.	127
41	Assuring that each community continues to understand and benefit from the value of this essential shared service requires a full understanding of the costs of the service and benefits provided. Each of the calculations in this analysis should be used during any negotiations of the interlocal agreement between Montclair and Glen Ridge for fire protection services to ensure it is seen as equitable by each party.	130
42	Consideration should be given to developing a Community Risk Reduction Program following the guidelines of NFPA 1300.	130
43	As a component of its long range plan, the Montclair Fire Department should consider accreditation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence as a model for continual organizational improvement.	132
44	When renovating existing or designing new fire stations for the Montclair Fire Department, it will be important to include special consideration for the unique features important for fire station facilities.	133

The report that follows includes our assessment of each of these areas as well as our several recommendations.

Community Risk Profile

An objective analysis of the fire protection and rescue needs of a municipality would not be complete without examining the major factors that drive the fire suppression, emergency medical services, and specialized rescue requirements of a fire agency. These include the physical and demographic characteristics of the area, the service demand levels and resulting emergency incident history of the Fire Department. An examination of these key factors will assist in making specific observations about the scope and complexity of the fire, emergency medical and rescue challenges faced daily by the Fire Department in a given community. Such an examination will result in a community risk profile that the governing body can use to make informed and objective decisions regarding Fire Department staffing and organization, as well as fire apparatus, equipment, and facilities purchases. We will begin our community risk profile with an examination of the demographic and physical characteristics of the municipality.

Community Characteristics

The Township of Montclair is situated in north central Essex County in the northeastern portion of New Jersey. Nestled at the foot of the First Watchung Mountain, the municipality is about 12 miles west of Midtown Manhattan and about eight miles north of the county seat in Newark. According to the 2020 United States Census, the municipality has a population of 40,921 which is an 8.5% increase from the 2010 census count of 37,669. The estimated population in 2024 is 41,076, continuing the trend in population increase. This reflects a reversal of a downward trend which showed a steady decline in population over the previous five decades from the highest population count in 1970 of 44,043.

The community is considered a commercial and cultural hub of Northern New Jersey and an inner suburb of New York City. The area has become a destination point in the metropolitan area due to the concentration of restaurants and entertainment venues in the township. The city has diverse neighborhoods and land uses located close to one another. Within its borders are six distinct commercial centers, six rail stations, several large mid-rise apartment buildings, a portion of a large medical center, an art museum, and several academic and athletic buildings on the campus of the state's second largest university. Residential development in the township is dominated by suburban neighborhoods of single-family houses, stately older homes on large lots, multiple mid-rise apartment houses, four senior housing buildings and several recently constructed mid-rise residential over commercial mixed use complexes. A portion of the county's largest park is also located along the western edge of the community.

History

The first inhabitants of the community were the Lenni Lenape, an Algonquian people who became known to later-arriving European settlers as “the Delaware Indians.” They hunted and trapped along the hillside of the First Watchung Mountain in the western part of the community and passed over the mountains on their way to gather shellfish at the shore. Watchung means “high hill” in the language of the Indigenous Lenape people. The first European settlers came to the area with the founding of Newark by English people from Connecticut in 1666. The lands of the Newark settlement extended westward to First Mountain. Azariah Crane, his wife Mary Treat Crane, and their son Nathaniel, built a home in 1694 near the present intersection of Orange Road and Myrtle Avenue. Other pioneers arrived soon after, and the frontier settlement of Cranetown came into being in what is now the southern part of Montclair.

In 1679 Dutch settlers acquired land from the Lenape Indians west of the Passaic River and north of Newark, an arrangement later confirmed by the British government. Early in the 1700's John Speer, a member of the Dutch community, built a home that stands today on Upper Mountain Avenue just north of the Montclair border. Other Dutch settlers established farms in what is now the northern half of Montclair. This community became known as Speertown. Later Valley Road was laid out, thus providing a link between the two settlements.

During the Revolutionary War, First Mountain provided observation points for following the movements of the British to the east. A strong tradition holds that both George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette were in Cranetown briefly in October of 1780. The boulder at the corner of Claremont Avenue and Valley Road marking the site of "Washington's Headquarters" is one of Montclair's better-known landmarks.

Speertown would remain a rural hamlet well into the 19th century; however, beginning about 1800, several developments led to the transformation of Cranetown into a small commercial center. One development was the opening of a general store by Israel Crane, who received trade from a wide area. In 1806, Crane led a group of businesspeople in obtaining a charter from the State for building the Newark-Pompton Turnpike. Constructed over the next several years, the turnpike came through Montclair as Bloomfield Avenue and vastly increased the flow of commerce. Israel Crane broke new ground as well in opening a wool mill on Toney's Brook. In the 19th and early 20th century, Toney's Brook supported several mills, which produced lumber, beer, calico, brass fittings, and pasteboard boxes. Also

important for the economic development of the area was the completion of the Morris Canal in 1831. Meanwhile, in 1812, the Bloomfield ward of Newark became a separate township, which included the future Montclair. The village of Cranetown now became known as West Bloomfield and a post office was established under that name.

The most decisive event for the emergence of Montclair was the coming of the railroads. In 1856, the Newark and Bloomfield Railroad Company inaugurated regular service to West Bloomfield. By changing trains at Newark and taking a ferry from Hoboken, people could travel from the future Lackawanna Plaza to New York in an hour and twenty minutes. Attracted to the country setting with its panoramic views, people in the cities began riding the train to West Bloomfield, some for Sunday excursions, others for vacations, and still others seeking to make their home here. By 1860 West Bloomfield was becoming a commuter town with its own marked identity and influential residents persuaded the post office to adopt the name Montclair.

Dissatisfaction with existing service led to a move to bring a second railroad to town. When Bloomfield authorities declined to authorize a bond issue to underwrite another railroad, Montclair residents were successful in securing from the State legislature a charter for a separate township. Thus in 1868, the Township of Montclair was created. The plan for another railroad went forward and by 1873 the Greenwood Lake line was completed with five stations in Montclair. In time, as many as six thousand people would commute daily from Montclair via the two railroad lines. Trains also ran on Sunday.

The population of the community grew rapidly as New York businesspeople and their families began building homes along the mountainside. The new residents sought to create in Montclair a model "country town" with convenient access to the city. Their vision was shared by a notable artist colony that began forming in the 1870's. A central figure was the landscape painter, George Inness. Able and dedicated community leaders endowed the town with superior schools, an excellent public library, a distinguished art museum and many large and influential churches.

By the beginning of the 20th century, a richly diverse population characterized the community. A new influx of New Englanders was joined by African Americans from the South and by Irish, Germans, Italians, Scandinavians, and others newly arrived from Europe. Great mansions went up, but so did many modest homes. Between 1880 and 1930, Montclair's population leaped from 5,147 to 42,017. Talented people continued to be attracted to the community and by the 1930's more than 130 Montclair residents were listed in each issue of WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA.

The period following the Second World War was marked by tremendous expansion of the metropolitan area. New suburbs popped up in the hinterland along with shopping malls and corporate offices. No longer a country town, Montclair faced the challenge of preserving its character as a gracious residential community while at the same time sustaining its aging commercial centers. Social changes of the 1960's and 70's brought further challenges. In 1977 the Board of Education established a system of magnet schools with the aim both of achieving racial balance and of enriching the curriculum. After many years under the commission form of government, the community adopted the manager-council plan. Revenue considerations led to the Town of Montclair returning to the status of Township.

Geography

Part of the New York/New Jersey metroplex, the township has a total land area of 6.25 square miles, including 6.24 square miles of land and 0.01 square miles of water. Nestled along the eastern flank of the First Watchung Mountain in the north-central portion of the county, the township is bordered by the Essex County municipalities of Bloomfield, Cedar Grove, Glen Ridge, Orange, Verona, and West Orange in Essex County, and Clifton and Little Falls in Passaic County.

The southern border of Montclair is a straight line between Eagle Rock, on the ridge of the First Watchung Mountain, and the point where Orange Road begins at the foot of Ridgewood Avenue. The eastern border is roughly a straight line between that point and a point just southwest of where Broad Street crosses the Third River. The western border runs roughly along the ridge of the First Watchung Mountain between Eagle Rock and the Essex County/Passaic County border. The northern border is the border between those two counties.

Topography

The topography of the township can be best described as valley floodplain that gradually rises to a ridge formed by the First Watchung Mountain near the western edge of the municipality. Elevations range from 299 feet above sea level near the southern border with West Orange to 608 feet at the western border in Eagle Rock Reservation at Crest Drive. Some higher locations in the township provide excellent views of the surrounding area and of the New York City skyline about 12 miles away.

Several streams flow eastward through Montclair: Toney's Brook in the center, Nishuane Brook in the southeast, Wigwam Brook in the southwest, Pearl Brook in the northwest, and Yantacaw Brook in the northeast. All are in the Passaic River watershed. Yantacaw and Toney's Brooks are dammed in parks to create ponds. Wigwam, Nishuane, and Toney's Brooks flow into the Second River, and the others flow into the Third River, each of which drain into the Passaic River. Montclair lies just north of the northernmost extent of the Rahway River watershed.

There are only two appreciable bodies of open water in the township. A shallow 1.5-acre pond fed by and flowing into Toney's Brook is located in Edgemont Memorial Park on Valley Road near the center of the community. A second shallow .5-acre pond is located in Yantacaw Brook Park near the northeast border with Bloomfield.

Demographics

The township has long celebrated its diversity, a feature that has attracted many to the community. The township has a racial makeup of 59.51% White, 18.4% Black or African American, 5.52% Asian and smaller percentages for other races including Native American and multiracial populations. Montclair also has a sizeable Hispanic population (people of Hispanic origin can be of any race). People of Hispanic or Latino origin account for 10.92% of the township's residents.

Montclair has attracted many New Yorkers. Many residents work for major media organizations in New York City, including The New York Times and Newsweek. A March 11, 2007, posting in the blog Gawker.com listed some of those who work in the media and live in Montclair. Many residents are commuters to New York City and the metro area. Many young urban professionals are attracted to the community because of the cultural and culinary opportunities in the area, the availability of modern upscale apartment complexes and the easy commute into Manhattan and Downtown Newark.

As of 2024, the estimated population of Montclair is 41,076, showing a slight increase from the 2020 census data which recorded 40,921 residents. Since the 2010 census count of 37,669 residents, the population in the township has increased by 3,407 residents, a percentage increase of 9%. This increase in population is likely due to the construction of several large area residential complexes along Bloomfield Avenue in the central portion of the community.

The population density in 2024 is estimated at 6,582 persons per square mile, an increase of 9% from the population density of 6,036 persons per square mile at the 2010 census.

According to township Fire Officials, the Bloomfield Avenue corridor has an average population density of 12,871 persons per square mile. The southern one-third of the township has a population density of 10,070 persons per square mile. The northern 2/3 of Montclair has a population density of 5,542, almost half the density of the southern portions of the community. The areas adjacent to and south of Bloomfield Avenue in Montclair are among the most densely populated areas in Essex County. NFPA and other private risk assessment organizations view areas with a population density of greater than 3,000 persons per square mile to be a "dense urban area."

The median age in the township is 39.6 years, with 37.3 years for males and 42.1 years for females. 26.9% of the population were under the age of 18, 5.5% from 18 to 24, 10.9% from 25 to 34, 30.5% from 35 to 54, 12.5% from 55 to 64, and 13.6% who were 65 years of age or older.

The median household income in Montclair is $243,751, indicating a relatively affluent community. The poverty rate stands at 6.38%, which is lower than the national average. The average per capita income is reported to be $94,286.

Transportation

Roads and Highways

As of May 2010, the township had a total of 100.62 miles of roadways, of which 86.68 miles were maintained by the municipality and 13.94 miles by the Essex County Road Department. Most major arterial roads in the township are oriented north/south and include Bloomfield Avenue (County Route 506), Claremont Avenue, Grove Street, Harrison Avenue, Orange Road, Valley Road, and Watchung Avenue.

There are no major high-speed roadways within the township. Access points to the Garden State Parkway and New Jersey State Route 3 are located about one mile northeast of the northern township border in Clifton. Another access point to the Parkway is one mile east on Watchung Avenue in Bloomfield. Access to Interstate Route 280 is located about one mile west of the southwestern corner of the township in West Orange.

Public Mass Transit

Montclair is considered a commuter suburb of New York City. NJ Transit is the provider of public transportation. The average Montclair commute is 38 minutes each way. About 24% of commuters take mass transit, while 59% drive alone. Twelve times more Montclair commuters take mass transit than the national average.

NJ Transit bus routes operate in the township. Routes 11, 28, 29, 34, 97, 191, and 705 run through Montclair, mostly going along the main corridor of Bloomfield Avenue. Many of the routes originate in Newark. One route services Montclair State University and one connects to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Midtown Manhattan.

Rail service in the township is extensive with the NJ Transit Montclair-Boonton line serving New York Penn Station and Hoboken Terminal to the east, and Hackettstown to the west. Seven NJ Transit rail stations serve Montclair: Bay Street, Walnut Street, Watchung Avenue, Upper Montclair, Mountain Avenue, and Montclair Heights in Montclair, and Montclair State University station in the Great Notch area of Little Falls. Only the Bay Street station has weekend train service. There is also an NJ Transit rail station in Glen Ridge at Bloomfield and Ridgewood Avenues.

Airport access is via Newark-Liberty International Airport located about 15 miles south. Public transit access to the airport is available via rail or bus connections at Penn Station in Newark.

Educational Institutions

Public Schools

The Montclair Public Schools is a public school district that serves students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The district consists of seven elementary schools, three middle schools and one high school. The district is classified by the New Jersey Department of Education as being in District Factor Group "I", the second highest of eight groupings. District Factor Groups organize districts statewide to allow comparison by common socioeconomic characteristics of the local districts.

As of the 2022–23 school year, the district, comprised of 11 schools, had an enrollment of 6,216 students and 564.6 classroom teachers (on an FTE basis), for a student–teacher ratio of 11.0:1. Schools in the district include:

- Bradford Elementary School – 87 Mt. Hebron Road - 375 students in grades K-5.
- Charles H. Bullock Elementary School – 55 Washington Street – 428 students in grades K-5.da
- Edgemont Elementary School – 20 Edgemont Road – 255 students in grades K-5.
- Hillside Elementary School – 54 Orange Road – 581 students in grades 3-5.
- Nishuane Elementary School – 32 Cedar Avenue – 412 students in grades PreK-2.
- Northeast Elementary School – 603 Grove Street – 374 students in grades K-5.
- Watchung Elementary School – 14 Garden Street – 385 students in grades K-5
- Buzz Aldrin Middle School – 173 Bellevue Avenue – 607 students in grades 6-8.
- Glenfield Middle School – 25 Maple Avenue – 521 students in grades 6-8.
- Renaissance Middle School – 176 Fullerton Avenue – 201 students in grades 6-8.
- Montclair High School – 100 Chestnut Street – 1,961 students in grades 9-12

Private Schools

Montclair Kimberly Academy – Three schools serving more than 1,000 students:

- Primary School – 224 Orange Road – grades Pre-K -3.
- Middle School - 201 Valley Road – grades 4-8.
- Upper School – 6 Lloyd Road – grades 9-12.

St. Cassian School – 190 Lorraine Avenue – Catholic parochial school – 270 students in grades Pre-K-8.

Immaculate Conception High School – 33 Cottage Place – Catholic high school – 246 students – grades 9-12. (This school closed in June of 2025)

Lacordaire Academy – 155 Lorraine Avenue - Catholic college preparatory day school – 265 total students – coed - Pre-K-8 and young women - grades 9-12.

Montclair Cooperative School – 65 Chestnut Street – 132 students in grades K-8.

Deron School of New Jersey – 130 Grove Street – 127 special needs students in grades K-8.

Fusion Academy – 427 Bloomfield Avenue – 38 students in grades 6-12.

Child Daycare and Nursery Schools

Precious Jewels Child Care Center is located at 100 Bloomfield Avenue on the first floor of a three-story legacy Type III Ordinary construction residential over commercial building and has a capacity of 33 children between the ages of 2 ½ to 6.

Park Street Academy preschool is located at 6 Park Street on the first floor of a two-story legacy Type III Ordinary construction residential over commercial building and has a capacity of 105 children between the ages of 2 ½ to 6.

Neighborhood Child and Infant Care infant to pre-school daycare and aftercare program is located at 30 Maple Avenue in a two-story mixed construction Type V Wood Frame and Type III Ordinary complex of three buildings with a capacity of 85 children between infant to age 13.

Early Explorers Preschool is located at 67 Church Street in a two-story Type V Wood Frame construction former parsonage connected to the Unitarian Universalist Church. The preschool has a capacity of 36 children between the ages 2 ½ to 5.

Goddard School of Montclair is on the first floor at 2 Seymour Plaza in a recently built four-story podium construction Type V lightweight Wood Frame over Type I Fire-resistive protected steel and concrete building with a capacity of 162 children between infant to age 13. An automatic fire sprinkler system is installed.

Montclair Community Pre-K School is located at 49 Orange Road in a 2 ½-story legacy Type III Ordinary construction building with 11 classrooms with a capacity of 200 children between ages 3 to 5. An automatic fire sprinkler system is installed.

Kidville Montclair Preschool is located at 516 Valley Road in a one-story legacy Type III Ordinary construction building attached to a supermarket. The Pre-K school serves children ages 2 – 3.

St. James Preschool is located at 581 Valley Road in a two-story Type IV Heavy Timber construction wing of the historic St. James Episcopal Church. The preschool has a capacity of 111 children ages 16 months to 4 years.

Colleges and Universities

A portion of the campus of Montclair State University, the state's second-largest university with 22,570 (2024) enrolled students, is located at the extreme northern end of the township at 1 Normal Avenue. While much of the 486-acre campus lies within the neighboring municipality of Little Falls with a small portion in Clifton in Passaic County, a number of academic and athletic buildings and parking garages are located within Montclair's borders at the southern end of the campus:

- Alexander Kasser Theater – 500-seat performing arts venue.
- Panzer Athletic Center – indoor fieldhouse and gym hosting basketball and volleyball competitions.
- Chapin Hall – academic building for the music program with 225-seat recital hall.
- Susan A. Cole Hall – administrative offices for student services.
- Freeman Hall – 250-student residence hall and dining facility.
- Russ Hall – 100-student apartment style residence hall for upper class and graduate students, offices for student counseling and psychological services.
- Large indoor parking garages, maintenance building, and cogeneration plant.

According to school public safety officials, most of the buildings have fully automatic fire sprinkler systems and have been renovated to bring the legacy buildings up to current life safety and fire protection standards. Montclair Fire Department is responsible for all technical and confined space incidents that occur on the entire campus.

Local Government

The Montclair Municipal Building is located in a three-story Type II Non-combustible office building at 205 Claremont Avenue that houses many of the offices of the township government including the Office of Affordable Housing, Building Department, Division of Code Enforcement, Housing and Property Maintenance, Office of Emergency Management, Engineering Bureau, Finance and Tax Office, Health and Human Services, Human Resources, Township Attorney, Office of Information Technology, Office of Sustainability, Parking Utility, Planning and Community Development, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Rent Control, and Senior Services.

The Montclair Public Safety Building is located at 647 Bloomfield Avenue in a large three-story legacy Type III Ordinary construction building that houses the Police Department and Municipal Court. The building formerly housed a township fire station.

The offices of the Department of Community Services and the Township Engineer and the Public Works garage are located at 219 North Fullerton Avenue in a complex of two-story Type II Non-Combustible buildings.

The township Water Bureau and sewer facility are located at 54 Watchung Avenue in a one-story Type II Non-Combustible construction commercial building.

The Montclair Animal Shelter and Animal Control is located in a two-story commercial building at 77 North Willow Street in a two-story Type II Non-Combustible building.

Public Safety

Police Department

The Township is protected by the Montclair Police Department with a staff of 112 sworn officers including one police chief, one deputy chief of operations, and personnel including patrol officers, a detective bureau, school resource officers, a traffic unit, a motorcycle unit, and public safety communications operators.

Emergency Medical Services

The Montclair Ambulance Unit, an independent, nonprofit agency provides emergency medical services to the residents and visitors to the township. Over 60 staff members, including administrative, operations, and career and intern Emergency Medical Technicians staff the agency's five ambulances. The agency responds to more than 5,500 911 calls per year from their headquarters at 95 Walnut Street, a former fire station located in the central portion of the township.

Hospital-based paramedics are dispatched to Advanced Life Support criteria emergency medical calls.

Fire Department

The Montclair Fire Department protects the Township of Montclair and the Borough of Glen Ridge with a combined estimated 2024 population of 49,280 residents in a combined area of 7.52 square miles. The population density of the combined fire protection area is 6,553 persons per square mile. The department is currently staffed with 70 career members including one Fire Chief, one deputy Fire Chief, three Battalion Chiefs/shift commanders, one Battalion Chief/training officer, seven captains, one Fire Official, 12 lieutenants, and 44 firefighters. Support personnel include one full-time and two part-time civilian administrative assistants. Three part-time fire inspectors are also employed. According to Fire Officials, The department is currently budgeted for 77 firefighters, with an actual staffing level of 70. Fire Officials report that the department was budgeted for 89 members in 2020. There are currently a number of vacancies in the ranks.

The department deploys three engine companies and two truck companies from three stations:

- Fire Headquarters – 1 Pine Street – Engine 1 and Truck 1 – located in the south central area of the township.
- Fire Station 2 – 588 Valley Road – Engine 2 and Truck 2 – located in the Upper Montclair area in the northern portion of the township.
- Fire Station 3 – 151 Harrison Avenue – Engine 3 (station is currently closed and under renovation) – located in the southwestern portion of the township. Engine 3 is temporarily operating from Fire Headquarters.

The department responds to fires, hazardous materials incidents, utility emergencies, and all types of technical rescues. The agency also conducts code enforcement inspections and fire prevention and education activities. The department responded to 2,522 emergency calls for service in 2024.

The department also provides fire protection and fire prevention/code enforcement to the Borough of Glen Ridge by contract.

Emergency Management

The Office of Emergency Management is coordinated by a retired member of the Department of Public Works along with representatives from the Fire and Police Departments, the Montclair Ambulance Unit, the township Health Department and Hackensack UMC Mountainside Hospital. The Township's Emergency Operations Center is located in Fire Headquarters at 1 Pine Street.

Parks, Recreational and Open Spaces

The township maintains 175 acres of municipal parks and recreational spaces including:

Alonzo F. Bonsal Wildlife Preserve, 23 Riverview Drive West – 20.68-acre nature preserve on the northern border of the township with Clifton offers hiking, passive recreation and bird watching along nature trails that wind along the banks of the Third River.

Bird Sanctuary - Highland Avenue above Mountainside Park – 3.45-acre wooded natural area offers bird watching.

Canterbury Park – Canterbury Drive and Planschet Drive - 8.22-acre recreation area offering tennis courts, basketball court, bikeways, coasting hill, children's playground, and walking paths.

Christopher Park – Label and Christopher Streets – 1.55-acre open space area.

Crane Park – Lackawanna Plaza, Bloomfield Avenue - .31-acre pocket park offering gardens and benches.

Edgemont Park – Valley Road – 15.5-acre recreation area offering two softball diamonds, shelter house with restrooms and kitchen, children 's playground, bikeways and footpaths, baseball, softball, ice skating, playground, 1.5-acre pond and walking paths.

Essex Park – Chestnut Street and Essex Avenue – 9.9-acre recreation area offering an indoor ice arena, community swimming pool, children's playground, restrooms, and a snow sledding hill.

Graz Park – Claremont and Bloomfield Avenues - .57-acre pocket park with benches, gardens, and footpaths.

George Washington Field - Baldwin Street and Glenridge Avenue in Glen Ridge - 2.38-acre multi-use playing field.

Kaveney Field - Grove and Walnut Streets – 2.2-acre softball and junior baseball field with lights, patio, and restrooms.

Mountainside Park - Upper Mountain Avenue – 33.19-acre recreation area including seven tennis courts, nature trail, basketball court, softball diamond, sledding area, swimming pool, children's playground, restrooms, Iris Gardens floral park, and athletic field.

Nishuane Park - Cedar Avenue between High Street and Harrison Avenue – 17.66-acre recreation area including six tennis courts, softball diamond, baseball diamond, football field, nature area, basketball courts, swimming pool, restrooms, sledding area, children's playground, parking lot, footpaths, and outdoor stage (adjacent to Fire Station Three).

Rand Park - North Fullerton Avenue and Chestnut Street – 4.18-acre recreation area including four tennis courts, basketball court, parking lot, restrooms, and children's playground.

Sunset Park - Norwood Avenue and Sunset Park - .63-acre pocket park with benches and footpaths.

Tuers Park - Stonehenge Road – 8.14-acre recreation area including a softball diamond, basketball court, children's playground, and bikeways.

Watchung Park - Watchung and Midland Avenues – 1.10-acre park with benches and footpaths.

Yantacaw Brook Park - Club Road – 11.51-acre park with bikeways, footpaths, and ½-acre pond.

Several Essex County parks are also located in the township:

Anderson Park - Bellevue and North Mountain Avenues – 14.4-acre athletic field with soccer, lacrosse, football, field hockey, and special events facilities.

Brookdale Park - Grove Street, Bellevue Avenue, Watchung Avenue – 42.74-acre athletic field with 4 softball diamonds, exercise trail, running tracks, athletic fields, children's playground, blacktop game area (county park shared between Montclair and Bloomfield).

Eagle Rock Reservation - Eagle Rock Avenue – 408.34-acre county park with September 11 Memorial, nature trails, scenic observation deck, softball field, restrooms, cooking and picnic area, and parking lots. (Eastern edge of park bordering West Orange).

Glenfield Park - Maple Avenue – 19-acre county park with two basketball courts, three tennis courts, two softball diamonds, community center with game rooms, meeting rooms, craft rooms, kitchen, and restrooms, two children's playgrounds, footpath, and nature trail. Mills Reservation - Normal Avenue – 143.08-acre county park with nature trails on the northwestern border with Cedar Grove.

Cemeteries

Rosedale Cemetery – 408 Orange Road – 125 acres, most of which are in neighboring Orange and West Orange.

Mount Hebron Cemetery – 851 Valley Road – 30 acres with garden mausoleum with the northern portion in neighboring Clifton.

Immaculate Conception Cemetery – 712 Grove Street - 40 acres with mausoleum.

Utility Providers

Electric and natural gas service is provided to Montclair and Glen Ridge residents and businesses by Public Service Electric and Gas Company, a privately owned utility company that is the largest provider of electric and natural gas services to more than two million customers in New Jersey. The company maintains a large indoor electrical substation at 60 Valley Road near the center of the central business district. PSE&G also operates a district office just south of the southern border of the township at 284 North Park Street in East Orange.

The Township of Montclair and the Borough of Glen Ridge obtain their water from North Jersey District Water Supply Commission (NJDWSC). The Township of Montclair and the Borough of Glen Ridge are partners in the NJDWSC, which owns and operates the 29.6 billion-gallon Wanaque Reservoir and Treatment Plant and the 7-billion-gallon Monksville Reservoir. The Borough of Glen Ridge has three interconnections with Montclair through which it receives its water supply. The water is received by the Township of Montclair through its Grove Street Pumping Station and is pumped throughout the township. The Montclair system also includes three municipal wells, one in each of the three pressure zones.

Wastewater treatment is the responsibility of the township and is managed and maintained by the Montclair Water Bureau & Sewer Utility.

Communication services in the township are provided by several television and fiberoptic companies including Optimum, Spectrum, Xfinity, and Verizon Fios fiberoptic service, and Direct TV and Dish satellite service.

Commercial Development

The Montclair Chamber of Commerce lists 5,223 business occupancies in the township. The township's economy is diverse with various sectors including professional services, mercantile shops and more than 125 restaurants. Commercial development in the community is concentrated along the Bloomfield Avenue corridor in the central portion of the township and along Valley Road in the northern portion of the township commonly referred to as Upper Montclair. There are also several smaller commercial districts spread throughout the township.

There are six distinct commercial zones:

Montclair Center

Also known as Downtown Montclair, this district, centered on the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue, South Fullerton Avenue, Glenridge Avenue, and Church Street, is the township's main commercial zone. This intersection is also known as Six Corners. It is home to some of Montclair's largest stores and features many upscale restaurants and boutiques near the center of this commercial area. Many of the older one-story commercial structures in this area have been recently renovated and are occupied by upscale shops and eateries.

Historic properties in this district date from the 1840s to the 1960s. The majority of the 176 structures within the district are commercial properties that are one to three stories in height. These buildings feature a variety of architectural styles popular in the 19th and 20th centuries. Notable properties within the district are stately commercial buildings along Bloomfield Avenue, including 295 Bloomfield Avenue (built 1892), a three-story, Queen Anne-style building; 605-609 Bloomfield Avenue (built c. 1924), a two-story, Classical Revival-style building; and 536-540 Bloomfield Avenue (built 1926), a two-story, Classical Revival-style building. In 2015, Montclair Center won the Great American Main Street Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The district includes several recent redevelopment projects that have added hundreds of living units and ground floor retail space. These new projects include the six-story two

building residential over commercial Valley and Bloom complex with 258 living units, 20,000 square feet of office space, 20,000 square feet of ground floor retail space, and an attached parking deck, and the nine-story 159-room MC Hotel. Recent developments also include The Clair Apartments with 40 luxury residences and a first-floor parking garage, and Two South Willow Apartments, a six-story residential over commercial building with 200 luxury apartment units, ground floor retail space, rooftop patio, and a parking deck.

Along South Park Street there are a number of redeveloped retail spaces occupied by shops and restaurants along with the six-story Sienna mixed-use building with 98 condominium units over upscale retail shops. Near the eastern end of this district is Lackawanna Plaza, which once housed the Lackawanna railway station. Developers have proposed a redevelopment plan of the eight-acre Plaza site that includes 300 apartment units and more than 110,000 square feet of retail space. The addition of a large chain supermarket has also been in the offering. The district is within walking distance of two NJ Transit rail stations: Walnut Street Station - 0.6 miles and Bay Street Station - 0.8 miles.

Upper Montclair

In the northern section of the township is the second largest commercial district known as Upper Montclair. The district with more than 90 historic commercial buildings dating from the 1880s to the 1930s designed in architectural styles such as Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, and Neo-Classical has been designated a historic district. The center of the district is the intersection of Valley Road and Bellevue Avenue and incorporates a four-block strip of commercial occupancies along Valley Road. The Upper Montclair business district is home to several restaurants, shops, chain stores, and the historic Bellevue Theater. The district is anchored by a Kings supermarket at the northern end opposite Oakwood Street. Heading south on Valley Road, several restaurants, a bakery, a gasoline service station, and a row of two-story Tudor Revival style mercantile shops with offices and apartments above line the street. A key historic structure in the district is the three-and-one-half-story brick building at 630 Valley Road on the southwestern corner of Lorraine Avenue that was a former Masonic Temple (circa 1920) and is now occupied by a chain kitchen supply and gourmet food store on the ground floor with offices above. The two-block mercantile row is anchored at the southern end by the historic Fire Station Two which was built in 1902. St. James Episcopal Church, a Gothic Tudor-style stone, and timber frame church with bell tower built in 1878, is located opposite the fire station at 581 Valley Road.

The district continues two blocks south on Valley Road and contains several one- and two-story mercantile buildings including a large chain drug store, an auto service and rental shop,

a women's clothing store, the Upper Montclair Post Office, a two-story bank and office building, a veterinary hospital, and a strip of one-story mercantile shops and restaurants. The large seven-story 100-unit Bellaire Condominium apartment house is located behind the row of stores and along the NJ Transit rail right-of-way. The district is anchored at the southern end by a shopping center with an Acme supermarket, a preschool, a restaurant, a laundromat, and a youth theater. The Upper Montclair district is served by the Upper Montclair NJ Transit railway station located one block west of Valley Road. Anderson Park, a 14.85-acre parcel of land, borders the district on the west across the NJ Transit right-of-way.

Watchung Plaza

This area is located at the intersection of Watchung Avenue and Park Street and is divided between two Montclair ZIP Codes, 07042 and 07043. It is home to many "Mom and Pop Stores" and other small businesses. Watchung Plaza has its own post office and is served by the Watchung Avenue NJ Transit railroad station. The compact two-block business district includes a restaurant and deli, a hardware store, an auto service station, a row of shops with apartments above, a row of one- and two-story mercantile shops and a bank branch that are centered around a small park with a bus stop. Another row of one- and two-story mercantile shops and businesses line one block of Watchung Avenue west of the park.

Walnut Street

Built near the Walnut Street train station in the central portion of the township, this five-block commercial district is centered along Walnut Street between Forest and Grove Streets and features many restaurants and cafes as well as the Montclair Brewery, the only operating brewery in the township. In the spring, summer, and fall the parking area for the train station is home to the Montclair Farmer's Market. The buildings along Walnut Street are mostly two- and three-stories with mercantile shops and restaurants on the ground floor and offices and apartments on the second floor. A one-block section of Grove Street extending north also is lined with legacy one-story mercantile shops and restaurants. Many of the mercantile buildings in the district have been restored while retaining their legacy flavor. Anchoring the district at the east end is the large seven-story First Montclair House, a federally subsidized senior citizen and disabled retirement community with more than 130 apartment units.

South End

Located in the southern end of the township near the intersection of Cedar Avenue and Orange Road, this compact two-block commercial district features one- and two-story strip stores with restaurants, personal care shops, and businesses. Anchored by a small pocket park at Orange Road and Orange Road West at the northern end of the district, the area stretches south for two blocks with commercial businesses and automobile parking on both sides of the street. A large three-story mercantile building is in the middle of the district that houses two restaurants and barbershops on the ground floor with apartments on the upper floors. A parking area with angled spaces is located on Orange Road West at the rear of the strip of shops. The district is anchored at the southern end by a row of one-story mercantile shops and businesses. This district is not served by a rail transit station but has a bus stop.

Valley Road

Located between Chestnut Street and Claremont Avenue, is a compact three-block commercial district known locally as "Frog Hollow." Stretching north from Claremont Avenue, this area features a strip of eight attached Tudor-style one-story shops at the southern end. Heading north, the area has numerous commercial buildings that appear to have been converted from previous residential houses. Near the northern end of the district is a one- and two-story strip mall that features a convenience store, a personal care salon and a bicycle shop. Across the street is a strip of one-, two-, and three-story mercantile buildings with retail shops on the ground floor and offices and apartments above. The northern end of the district is anchored by a one-strip mall with six small restaurants and food shops. This district has neither a rail station nor a bus stop.

Industrial and Manufacturing Occupancies

Alcaro Metal Plating, located at 112 Pine Street, was identified as the only manufacturing occupancy in the township.

Hospitals and Medical Centers

Hackensack Meridian Health Mountainside Medical Center, also known as Mountainside Hospital, is an acute-care hospital located at the border of Glen Ridge on Bay Avenue at Highland Avenue near the east central portion of the township. The hospital has 365 beds and serves Northern Essex County as part of the Hackensack University Health Network. Mountainside Hospital is one of only two for-profit hospitals in New Jersey. It is also a

clinical campus and affiliate of the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine and provides clinical clerkship education for the medical school's osteopathic medical students. As of 2020, Mountainside Hospital provides 12 specialties and hosts 47 full-time interns and residents. It is designated a community perinatal center, intermediate, and a primary stroke center.

The large seven-story mid-rise complex features several buildings and additions, many of which have been relatively recently renovated and are covered by state-of-the-art fire protection and life safety systems. The complex also includes a large three-story medical arts office building across the street, and a large five-story open parking deck located across Highland Avenue in Montclair.

Skilled Nursing, Assisted Living and Rehabilitation Centers

Family of Caring Montclair is located at 42 North Mountain Avenue in a two-story Type II Non-combustible construction masonry building with a capacity of 70 beds offering subacute rehab, skilled nursing, respite, memory, and hospice care. Automatic fire sprinklers are installed throughout the building.

Montclair Care Center is located at 115 Gates Avenue in a two-story Type II Non-combustible construction masonry building with a capacity of 64 beds offering subacute rehab, skilled nursing, respite, memory, and hospice care. Automatic fire sprinklers are installed throughout the building.

Hackensack UMC Mountainside Transitional Care Unit is located within Mountainside Hospital at 1 Bay Avenue with a capacity of 18 beds offering skilled nursing care. Automatic fire sprinklers are installed throughout the building.

Little Senior Residence is located at 71 Christopher Street in a three-story Type V legacy wood frame construction former private residence converted and expanding for senior care use. The facility has a capacity of 29 beds offering long term nursing, memory, assisted living, respite and hospice care. Automatic fire sprinklers are installed throughout the building.

Horizon Manor South is located at 89 Christopher Street in a three-story Type V legacy wood frame construction former private residence converted for senior care use. The building has a capacity of 18 beds offering independent living, assisted living, memory, and respite care. Automatic fire sprinklers are installed throughout the building.

Horizon Manor North is located at 73 Overlook Road in a three-story Type V legacy wood frame construction former private residence converted for senior care use. The building has a capacity of 18 beds offering independent living, assisted living, memory, and respite care. Automatic fire sprinklers are installed throughout the building.

Theaters and Performing Arts

Montclair is home to several theaters including:

The Wellmont Theater at 5 Seymour Street in Montclair Center is a theater and concert venue originally constructed in 1922 and renovated in 2006. The almost 2500-seat venue supports live performances including concerts and comedy shows.

The Clairidge Theater at 486 Bloomfield Avenue is a six-screen movie theater inside the Hinck Building in Montclair Center. The theater screens independent, documentary, and foreign language films.

The Bellevue Theater at 260 Bellevue Avenue in Upper Montclair is an historic Tudor-Revival 885-seat, four-screen movie theater that originally opened in 1922. Closed since 2017, a local theater group has been working to reopen the theater and proposes to screen contemporary films and host the annual Montclair Film Festival.

Hotels, Inns and Motels

The MC Hotel located at 690 Bloomfield Avenue in the Montclair Center area is an upscale four-star hotel with eight stories and 159 guest rooms. The Type I Fire-Resistive concrete and protected steel frame hotel has meeting spaces and features a 95-seat restaurant with a 106-seat rooftop bar and lounge with panoramic views of the Manhattan skyline in the distance. An underground parking garage completes the project. The hotel is equipped with state-of-the-art fire protection systems including automatic fire sprinklers and firefighting standpipe valve stations in the stairwells.

The George located at 37 North Mountain Avenue, is an upscale four-star 31-room inn. The three-and-one-half story legacy Type III Ordinary construction building was recently renovated with the fire protection and life safety systems updated.

Residential Development

Residential development in the township is dominated by single family homes in orderly neighborhoods. Most of the homes are of legacy Type V Wood Frame balloon construction. Of the 15,542 housing units reported in the township in 2021, more than half (9,297 units – 59.8%) were built before 1939. Of the residential structures, 7,691 units (49.48%) were one-family detached homes, 592 units (3.8%) were single-family attached homes, 1,861 units (11.97%) were two-family houses, 1,320 (8.49%) were 3-4 unit buildings, 1,001 units (6.44%) were in 5-9 unit buildings, 861 units (5.53%) were in 10-19 unit buildings, and 2,212 units (14.23%) were located in buildings with 20 or more units.

The single family housing stock in the southern portions of the community are situated on smaller lots while the homes in the central and northern portions of the township are situated on larger lot sizes. Proportionally, the homes in the upper portion of the community tended to be larger than the homes in the southern wards. The median house price for the township was $1,100,000 in 2024, more than twice the national median price point of $440,931.

The multi-family housing stock in the community is diverse and includes a large number of apartment houses and complexes that are scattered around the community ranging from small apartment houses with three to four apartments to low-rise multi-building garden-style apartments to large mid- and high-rise complexes with hundreds of living units.

According to Fire Officials, the residential housing stock in the township includes 313 three-family units and 77 four-family units. Much of this housing is in NFPA 220 Type V Wood Frame constructed buildings. Larger apartment buildings with more than four families are generally of Type II Non-combustible masonry construction or Type I Fire-resistive construction. There are 160 such occupancies in the township. Further, there are 605 properties with apartments usually placed on the upper floors above mercantile and other commercial uses. Most of these multi-family occupancies were constructed prior to the modern construction code and do not contain automatic fire sprinkler systems.

There are also a number of rooming houses and single room occupancies concentrated in the southern portion of the community that are located in wood frame structures that usually lack adequate fire protection systems such as automatic fire sprinklers.

Senior Housing

There are four affordable senior housing projects in the township containing 304 dwelling units:

First Montclair House, located at 56 Walnut Street in the central part of the community is a seven-story Type I Fire-Resistive construction HUD-subsidized senior housing building with 130 rental units built in 1980. The project includes 19 efficiency units, 106 one-bedroom units and 4 two-bedroom units. The building has a Community Room and an on-site superintendent. The building is equipped with a fire alarm system and an automatic fire sprinkler system that provides coverage of the common areas and the basement only.

South End Gardens located at 340 Orange Road in the southern portion of the township is a three-story Type V Lightweight Wood Frame construction HUD-subsidized senior housing building with 100 rental units built in 1987. The building includes 100 units including 25 efficiency units and 75 one-bedroom units. The building is equipped with a fire alarm system and a full coverage automatic fire sprinkler system that includes fire sprinklers in the large combustible lightweight wood truss attic that spans the length of the 300-foot-long structure.

Pine Ridge of Montclair is located at 60 Glenridge Avenue adjacent to the Bay Street train station near the Montclair Center business district. The four-story Type I Fire-Resistive construction HUD-subsidized senior housing building with 50 rental units built in 2002. The building has Community Room and an on-site superintendent. The building is equipped with a fire alarm system and an automatic fire sprinkler system.

Montclair Inn located at 27 Hillside Avenue near Montclair Center is a historic building containing 24 one-bedroom rental congregate-care units. The facility was opened in 1994 in a three-story legacy Type V Wood Frame construction former mansion-style private "residence" that has been converted for senior housing. The building is equipped with a fire alarm system and an automatic fire sprinkler system.

Glen Ridge

The Montclair Fire Department provides fire protection and fire prevention services by contract to the adjacent borough of Glen Ridge. The 1.28 square mile borough is located along the eastern flank of Montclair and stretches from its southern border with East Orange and Orange about two miles north to Watchung Avenue. The Township of Bloomfield

borders the borough to the east. The borough is a maximum of six blocks wide from east to west, and it is only two or three blocks wide in "the Panhandle" north of Bay Avenue. According to the 2020 United States Census, Glen Ridge has a population of 7,802 which is a slight increase (3.7%) from the 2010 census count of 7,527. The estimated population in 2024 is 8,204, continuing the trend in population increase. This reflects a reversal of a downward trend which showed a slight decline in population over the previous five decades from the highest population count in 1970 of 8,518. This recent population increase may be due to construction in 2021 of a 110-unit luxury apartment building, The Clarus Glen Ridge at 227 Baldwin Street at the Montclair border.

The borough was incorporated in 1895 after seceding from the Township of Bloomfield and is considered a primarily residential community and an inner suburb of New York City. Within its borders there are only a few commercial occupancies, one rail station, one large high-rise apartment building, three large mid-rise apartment buildings, one recently constructed luxury mid-rise apartment complex with an attached parking deck, a large country club with golf course and the major portion of a large medical center. There are no industrial or large manufacturing occupancies in the borough. The remainder of development in the borough is dominated by suburban neighborhoods of single-family houses, most of which are stately older homes on large lots. Similar to Montclair, the home and lot sizes increase in the northern portion of the borough. The median home price for a single-family home in Glen Ridge in 2025 was $1,234,000, which was almost triple the national median price ($440,913). Out of the 2,549 housing units in the borough, 84.7% of them are detached single-family units. The average household income in Glen Ridge is $300,489 with a poverty rate of 1.02%. The median age in Glen Ridge is 41.1 years: 41.7 years for males, and 40 years for females.

There are only two primary roadways in the borough. Bloomfield Avenue (County Route 506) bisects the borough as it runs from southeast to northwest between the borders with Bloomfield on the east and Montclair on the west. Ridgewood Avenue runs north and south from Bloomfield Avenue through residential areas as it traverses the length of the borough.

The borough has a full-time police department with a staff of one police chief, two captains, two lieutenants, six sergeants, one detective sergeant, one detective, ten police officers, four communications operators, and two civilian staff members (2022). The Glen Ridge Volunteer Ambulance Squad provides emergency medical services to the residents and visitors to the borough. The Squad responded to 1,215 911 calls in 2024. Hospital-based paramedics are dispatched to Advanced Life Support criteria emergency medical calls. The Glen Ridge Office of Emergency Management coordinates responses to disaster situations in

the borough with one OEM coordinator and three deputy coordinators, one of which is the police chief. Fire protection and fire prevention/code enforcement are provided by contract by the Montclair Fire Department.

The Glen Ridge Public Schools serve students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. As of the 2024-2025 school year, the district, comprised of five schools, had an enrollment of 1,789 students and 147 teachers (FTE) with a student–teacher ratio of 12:1. Schools in the district are Forest Avenue School with 145 students in grades Pre-K–2, Linden Avenue School with 158 students in grades Pre-K–2, Central School with 136 student in Pre-K-2, Ridgewood Avenue School with 539 students in grades 3–6 and Glen Ridge High School with 811 students in grades 7–12.

Facilities accessible through the Recreation Department include nine public parks, a community pool, and a senior/community center. A public works department is responsible for maintaining critical infrastructure in the borough and operates the water and sewer utilities and picks up trash and recycling.

Evaluation of Target Hazard Occupancies

A critical component of conducting a community risk assessment of the fire and rescue hazards located in a community is to identify specific critical occupancies within the service area. These are sometimes referred to as “target hazards.” Examples of critical facilities might include:

- hospitals
- nursing homes and assisted living centers
- community shelters
- schools
- airports
- important government offices
- emergency operations centers
- hazardous materials sites
- major roadways
- water and sewage treatment plants
- critical communications centers

Also considered for inclusion are buildings with substantial value to the community (economic, historic, other), and other facilities that, if damaged or destroyed, would have a significant negative impact on the community. Utilizing a rating or scoring system assigned to each property can help to determine which target hazards are the most critical. Some

experts recommend the use of the Occupancy Vulnerability Assessment Profile (OVAP) score as a method to determine and categorize occupancy risks. The OVAP scoring system utilizes several components for assigning a score to an occupancy that include:

- Number of occupants/life safety
- Building construction
- Impact (including economic) to the community
- Number of stories
- Presence of automatic fire suppression/detection systems
- Overall size (square footage)
- Number of fire hydrants or alternate water supply sources nearby
- Level of hazard of contents, equipment, or processing systems
- Building usage

The resulting OVAP score places an occupancy into one of five levels of risk:

- Low – occupancies that pose minimal risk to the community
- Moderate - occupancies that pose a moderate risk to the community
- High – occupancies that pose a high risk to the community
- Very High – occupancies that pose a very high risk to the community
- Extreme – occupancies that pose a significant technological or hazmat exposure risk.

The study team has toured and identified a number of occupancies in the coverage area that should be considered target hazards that may pose a challenge to the local fire agency.

Mid-Rise Large Area Residential Developments

Mid-rise large area residential developments are an important part of the redevelopment effort in the township. Several of these structures have already been completed, one is under construction, and another has been completed in Glen Ridge. Several others have been proposed or are in the planning stages in the coverage area. Mid-rise buildings are generally defined under the building and fire codes as being between four and seven stories high and under 75 feet in total height. They are designed to be built below the building height that would require the use of fire resistive materials for the structural frame. Modern mid-rise large area residential buildings are generally built using non-fire resistive materials such as lightweight wood framing. The use of lightweight building materials reduces the cost of construction while decreasing construction time. Some designs may include one or two lower floors of Type I Fire Resistive construction topped with up to five stories of Type V Lightweight Wood Frame construction. This type of building is often referred to as a hybrid or podium structure as the building code treats them as two separate occupancies.

A common issue with lightweight wood frame buildings is that the construction method allows for large undivided void spaces between the floors and in the attic or cockloft areas. The type of lightweight wood frame construction used in these complexes often takes advantage of an exception in the building and life safety codes that allows for the use of a NFPA 13R residential fire sprinkler system for coverage of the upper wood frame residential floors of the building. This type of fire sprinkler system is designed to only protect the occupied spaces of the interior of the building. Depending upon the time of construction of these buildings the sprinkler systems were not required to cover smaller areas such as small bathrooms, closets, void spaces, balconies, and attics. These systems are designed to suppress contents fires and allow for the escape of building occupants. They are not designed to protect the structural frame of the building, nor are they designed to extinguish a fire attacking the structural frame. This will allow for the unchecked spread of fire in areas not covered by the sprinkler system should a fire breach the drywall covering in occupied areas or if the fire starts from an electrical or mechanical source inside one of the voids.

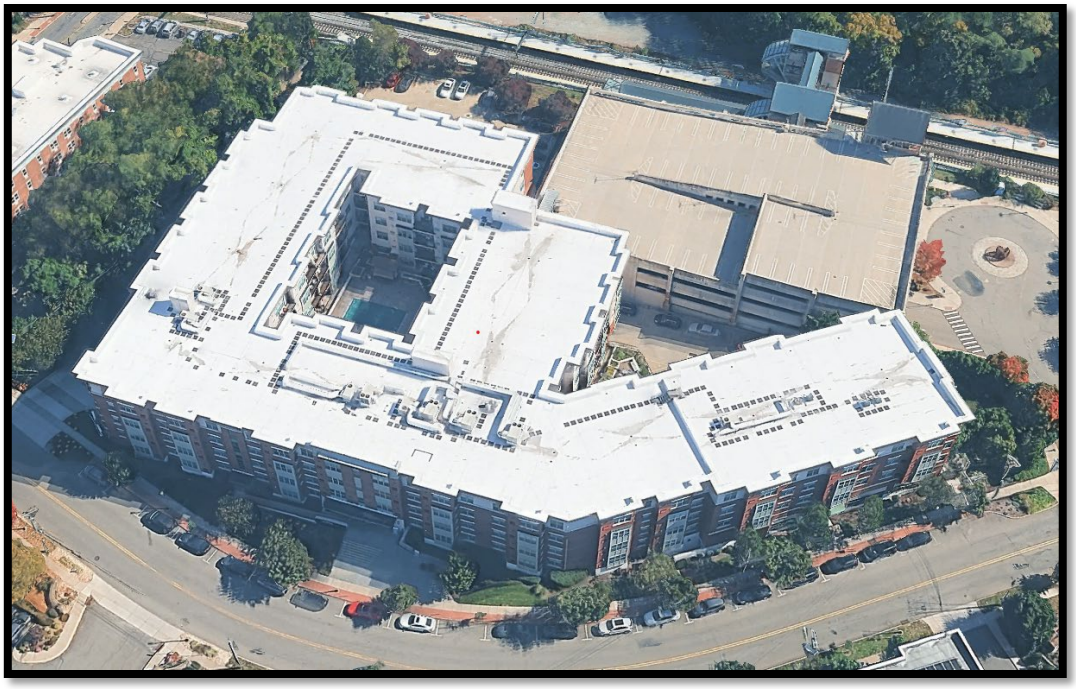
An example study on how fire may rapidly spread in this type of mid-rise lightweight wood frame large area residential building can be found in the case of the Avalon at Edgewater apartment complex in Edgewater, New Jersey that was destroyed during a blaze on January 21, 2015. An accidental fire in a wall in a lower floor apartment of the more than 400 unit complex was started by maintenance personnel using a torch to make plumbing repairs. The fire quickly spread through the combustible voids inherent in lightweight wood frame construction and extended to the unsprinklered combustible attic space. The building was destroyed resulting in the displacement of more than 1000 residents. The seven-alarm fire was fought by more than 300 firefighters from surrounding Bergen, Hudson, and Union counties and a fireboat from the FDNY.

Avalon at Edgewater Apartments – January 21, 2015 – 1000 residents displaced.
https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=avalon%20edgewate%20fire&view=detail&mid=EE05D1A13B90C26A4CD1EE05D1A13B90C26A4CD1&ajaxhist=0\

Included here are photos and descriptions of a sampling of the mid-rise large area residential developments recently completed in the coverage area:

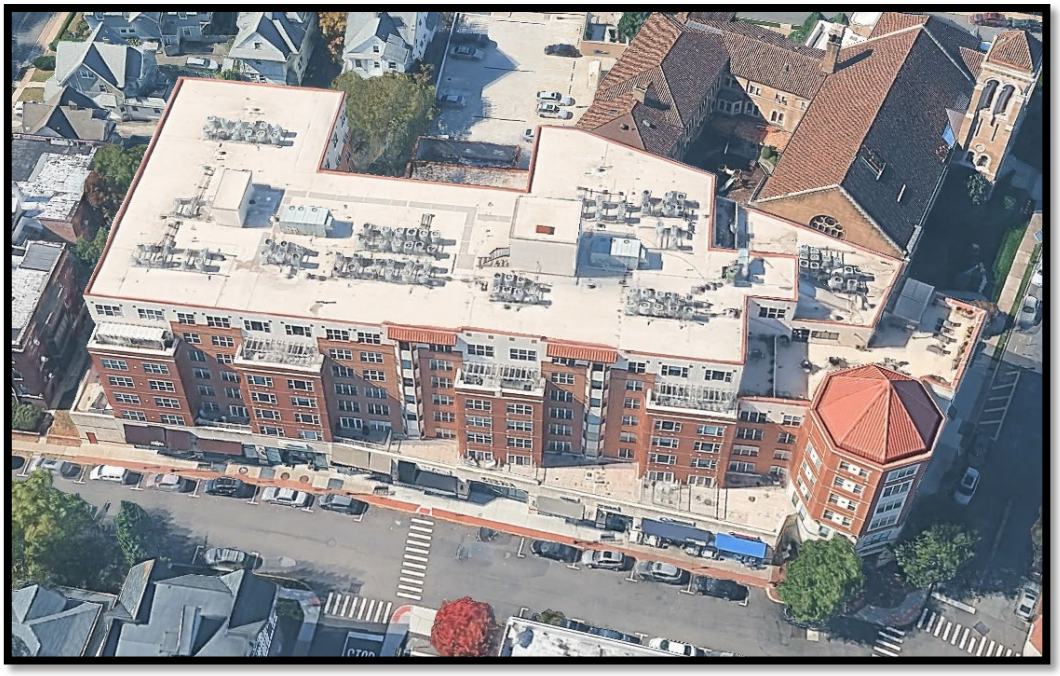
Valley and Bloom – 34 Valley Road - two building six-story apartment complex with 258 residential units and attached parking garage completed in 2015.

Two South Willow – 2 South Willow Street – six-story mixed-use residential over retail apartment complex with 200 living units, interior courtyard, rooftop terrace, and underground parking garage completed in 2021.

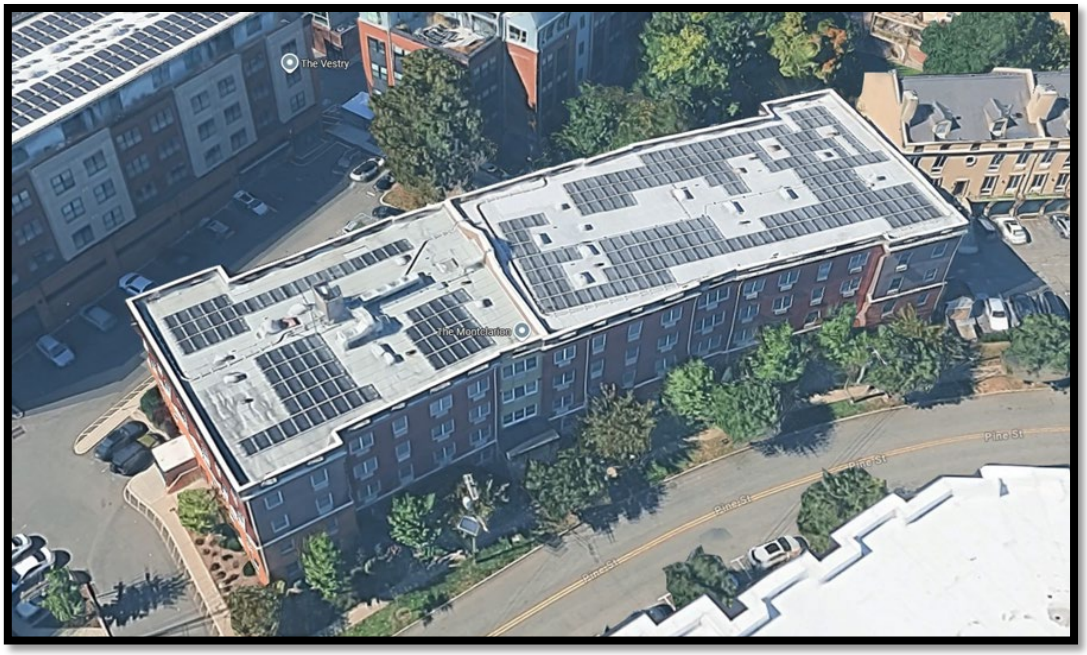


Alister Montclair – 11 Pine Street – four-story residential apartment complex with 163 living units, interior courtyard swimming pool and attached parking garage completed in 2009.

Clarus Glen Ridge – 277 Baldwin Street, Glen Ridge – four-story residential apartment complex with 110 living units, interior courtyard and an attached parking garage completed in 2021.



Sienna – 42 Park Street – six-story mixed-use residential over retail condominium apartment building with 98 living units, multiple street-level shops, and an underground parking garage completed in 2007.

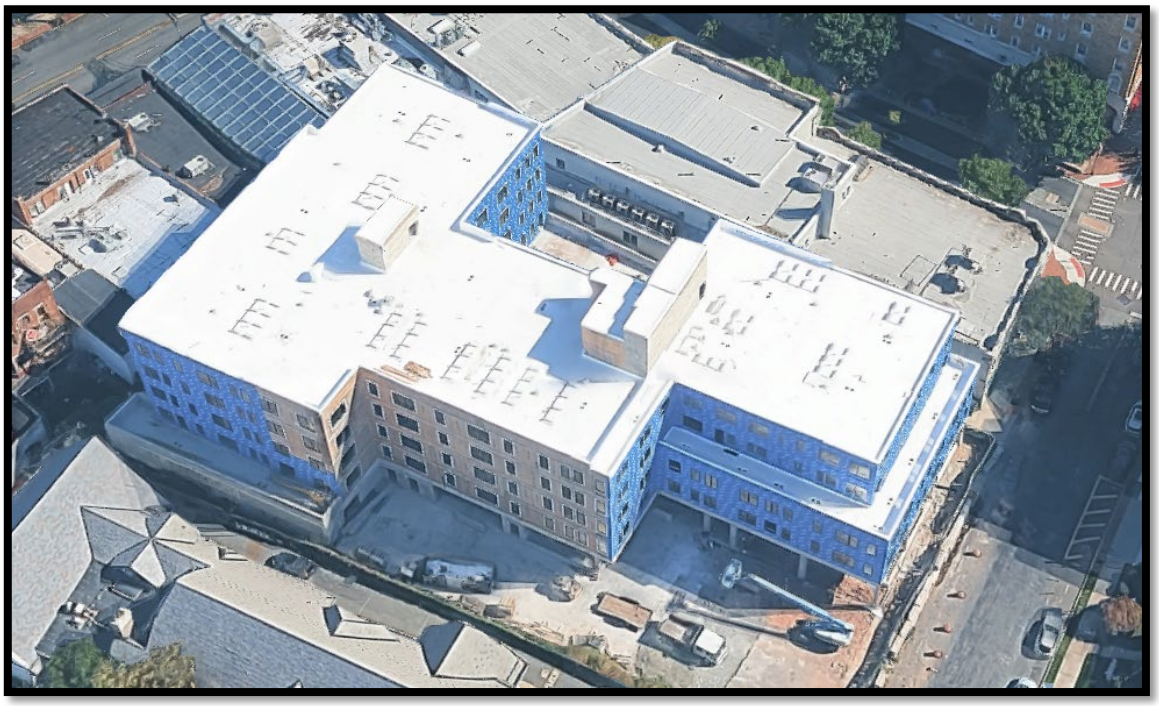


The Montclarion – 10 Pine Street – four-story residential apartment building with 56 living units.

The Vestry – 147 Bloomfield Avenue – five-story mixed-use residential over retail apartment building with 46 living units, rooftop terrace, and underground parking garage completed in 2020.

The Montclarion at Bay Street Station – 125 Bloomfield Avenue - five-story mixed-use residential over retail apartment complex with 40 living units and an underground parking garage completed in 2017.

The Clair – 37 Orange Road – four-story mixed-use residential over retail apartment building with 40 living units, rooftop terrace, and interior courtyard and completed in 2024.



65 Church Street – five-story mixed-use residential over commercial apartment building with 74 living units and covered parking level – under construction, expected completion in 2026.

These structures often have an exceptionally large footprint spanning an entire city block and may include an attached or underground parking deck that is often required to have a fire sprinkler system and fire standpipe outlets. The lower floors are sometimes designed as common amenity space, or for retail shops and restaurants. They often also include tenant amenities such as fitness centers, lobbies, interior open courtyards, rooftop terraces, and outdoor swimming pools. These types of structures can have a large resident population with as many as 375 living units in the complex. The interior floor layouts are often complex and can be confusing under smoke conditions. Firefighters searching multiple apartments on each floor may need to use rope search lines to maintain orientation and avoid becoming lost in the building.

While NFPA Standard 1710 does not have specific staffing recommendations for these types of mid-rise large area residential structures, many fire service leaders have begun to refer to these types of buildings as "horizontal high-rises" due to their large footprint and high density occupant load. NFPA recommends a staffing level of 27 to 28 firefighters for a fire occurring in a three-story garden-style apartment building and 42 to 43 firefighters for a fire incident occurring in a high-rise building. While these mid-rise residential buildings do not meet the standard definition of a high-rise building (seven stories and higher), due to the large area and height of these complexes, increased staffing needs are evident for successfully combatting fires in these occupancies.
Montclair Fire Officials report that there are no established pre-emergency plans for fires and emergencies occurring in these types of occupancies and multi-company drills and building familiarization tours for fire personnel have not been recently conducted. The Fire Department does not have standard operating guidelines that address many of the concerns with this type of construction, and current on-duty staffing is insufficient to meet the demands that a working fire in one of these occupancies will require.

These factors, as well as a high life hazard with the large occupant load in these buildings, makes these occupancies a high-risk target hazard concern for the local Fire Department.

The current minimum staffing level of the local Fire Department is 16 members, well below the number of firefighters needed to successfully combat a fire in one of the mid-rise large area residential developments in the coverage area. While township Fire Officials have historically depended upon fire mutual aid resources to supplement staffing needs during fires at high-hazard occupancies, such supplemental resources are called upon only after the initial responding Montclair firefighters have already arrived on the scene to evaluate the incident. This results in a substantial delay in the notification and response of additional fire resources. Further dependence on this system of obtaining additional fire and rescue

resources for a major emergency incident in a mid-rise large area residential development is obsolete and township Fire Officials need to explore automatic aid agreements with neighboring Fire Departments to provide additional staffing upon the initial alarm of a fire or other major emergency in these massive buildings. The township should also consider increasing the number of on-duty firefighters to provide for a timely and robust early response to fires and major emergencies in the mid-rise large area residential occupancies located within the coverage area.

- **Recommendation 1:** Initial response of adequate staffing levels should be addressed through increased staffing levels and development of automatic aid response to fires and emergencies within the fire protection coverage area.

- **Recommendation 2:** Develop pre-incident fire response plans for each of the recently constructed mid-rise large area apartment complexes.

- **Recommendation 3:** Develop automatic aid response procedures for additional fire and rescue mutual aid resources on report of a fire, smoke condition, hazardous materials release, or other significant fire event in one of the mid-rise large area apartment complexes. Automatic Aid response of the additional fire and rescue resources must be dispatched upon report of the emergency to bolster the initial response of the local fire force and to have the supplemental automatic aid units arrive on scene within a reasonably short response time.

- **Recommendation 4:** Multi-company drills should be scheduled periodically at each of the recently completed mid-rise large area apartment complexes to exercise the pre-emergency plan and to familiarize all responding local and mutual aid resources with the configuration of the occupancy including the life safety and fire protection features of the facility.

High-Rise Residential Apartment Buildings

A number of high-rise residential condominium and rental apartment buildings are located within the township and in Glen Ridge. The structures range from seven to nine stories in height and are of Type I Fire-Resistive reinforced concrete and protected steel construction. Three of the structures feature more than 100 living units. All of the buildings were constructed prior to the 1970s thus predating requirements for enhanced fire protection features such as full fire sprinkler systems and advanced fire detection and occupant alerting systems that are found in modern high-rise construction. The 2021 International Fire Code

mandates the retrofit of full fire sprinkler systems in residential high-rise buildings. Building owners are required to file a compliance schedule with the local fire code official and complete the retrofit of fire sprinklers within a 12-year timeframe. The NJ version of the International Building Code was adopted with the retrofit requirement for full fire sprinkler systems in existing high rise buildings removed. The status of the retrofit compliance schedule of the high-rise residential apartment buildings in Montclair and Glen Ridge is unknown.

Fire protection features in these older buildings include only partial coverage fire sprinkler systems in the basement areas. One more than 100-year-old building is equipped with no fire sprinklers at all. Each building is equipped with a fire standpipe system that serves all floors. The newer buildings have the standpipe hose outlets located in the enclosed stair towers which is more conducive to building occupant and firefighter safety during a fire. The older units have the standpipe hose outlets located in the public hallways which places a greater exposure to heat and smoke during fire operations to occupants and firefighters. Many of the residential high-rise buildings have attached parking decks and underground parking garages. Some of the underground parking facilities are equipped with fire sprinklers and/or fire standpipe systems on each level.

Some of the newer residential high-rise buildings have an elevator recall system that includes firefighter service features that allow fire personnel to manually control the operation of the elevators during a fire, and stationary building fire pumps to maintain adequate firefighting water pressure to the upper floors. Some of the buildings are also equipped with stairwell pressurization systems to assist with smoke control in the escape egress paths from the upper floors. One of the buildings, the Rockcliffe Apartments, is equipped with two smokeproof fire escape towers. None of the buildings are equipped with fire communications radio repeater booster systems. The density of the construction materials of a high-rise building tend to degrade radio signals thus making radio communications between firefighters operating in the building during an emergency very challenging.

There are no pre-emergency plans for the response to fires and emergencies at any of the residential high-rise apartment buildings in the fire protection coverage area and site and floor plans are not available to responding firefighters. The Fire Department does not have standard operating guidelines for fire operations in high-rise buildings that outline the duties and responsibilities of all responding local and additional arriving fire and rescue mutual aid resources. Multi-company drills and building familiarization tours have not been recently

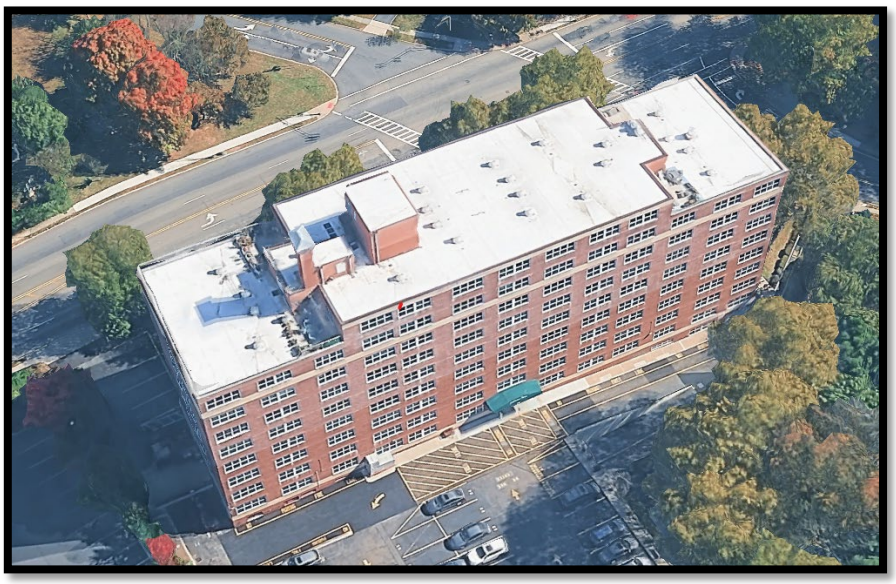
conducted so fire personnel have a limited knowledge of the building configurations and floor layouts of the structures.

A sampling of high-rise residential apartment buildings in the coverage area include:

Hawthorne Towers Apartments - 36 Hawthorne Place – seven-story Type I Fire-Resistive construction residential apartment building – 133 living units – built in 1962 - no fire sprinkler system on the tenant floors or common spaces – fire sprinklers in the basement only – fire standpipe system with hose outlets on each level – underground parking garage.

Rockcliff Apartments – 10 Crestmont Avenue – seven-story Type I Fire-Resistive construction cooperative apartment building built in 1940 – 103 living units - fire sprinklers in basement storage

area and boiler room only – two smokeproof fire escape towers – fire standpipe system in stairwells with hose outlets at each floor level – underground parking garage.



Parkway House – 926 Bloomfield Avenue, Glen Ridge – nine-story Type I Fire-Resistive construction high-rise residential apartment building with 101 living units built in 1965 - no fire sprinkler system in tenant spaces and common areas – fire sprinklers only in two-level underground parking garage, partial basement area and boiler room – equipped with a fire pump – enclosed elevator lobbies on all floors - four penthouse level apartments have direct access to the rooftop.

Claremont Avenue Apartments – 415 Claremont Avenue – seven-story Type I Fire-Resistive construction condominium apartment building built in 1957 – 85 living units - fire sprinklers in

basement storage areas and boiler room only – scissor staircases – fire standpipe system in stairwell with hose outlets at each floor – underground parking garage.

57 Union Street – eight-story legacy Type I Fire-Resistive construction residential condominium building built in 1908 – 15 living units - no fire sprinkler system - fire standpipe system with hose outlets on each level.

A high-rise building is defined under the New Jersey Building Code of 2021 as a building with an occupied floor located more than 75 feet above the lowest level of Fire Department vehicle access. This will generally equate to a building more than six stories in height. NFPA 1710 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, 2020 Edition recommends that the initial full alarm assignment to a fire in a high-rise structure should provide for an effective response force of 42 firefighters (43 if the building is equipped with a fire pump). This standard has become a nationally recognized consensus standard of best practice for Fire Departments that respond to fires in high-rise structures in their response districts. The standard was developed and refined after a critical job task analysis was conducted that looked at the staffing requirements for each of the various immediate tasks needed to successfully combat a structure fire in a high-rise building.

These critical tasks include:

- Establishment of a stationary incident command post outside of the hazard area for the overall coordination and direction of the initial full alarm assignment with a minimum of one officer with an aide dedicated to these tasks and all operations are

to be conducted in compliance with the incident command system – 1 officer and 1 firefighter.

- Establishment of an uninterrupted water supply to the building standpipe/sprinkler connection sufficient to support fire attack operations. If the building is equipped with a fire pump, one additional member with a radio to be sent to the fire pump location to monitor and maintain operation – 1 firefighter (2 firefighters if building has a fire pump).
- Establishment of an effective water flow application rate on the fire floor at a minimum of 500 gpm from two hoselines, each operated by a minimum of two members to safely and effectively handle the hoseline – 4 firefighters.
- Establishment of an effective water flow application rate on the floor above the fire floor at a minimum of 250 gpm from at least one hoseline, with each deployed hoseline operated by a minimum of two members to safely and effectively handle the hoseline – 2 firefighters.
- At a minimum, an initial rapid intervention crew (IRIC) assembled from the initial attack crew and, as the initial alarm response arrives, a full and sustained rapid intervention crew (RIC) is established – 4 firefighters.
- Provision of two or more search-and-rescue teams consisting of a minimum of two members each – 4 firefighters.
- Provision of one officer, with an aide, dedicated to establishing an oversight at or near the entry point on the fire floor(s) – 1 officer and 1 firefighter.
- Provision of one officer, with an aide, dedicated to establishing an oversight at or near the entry point on the floor above the fire – 1 officer and 1 firefighter.
- Provision of two or more evacuation management teams to assist and direct building occupants with evacuation or sheltering actions, with each team consisting of a minimum of two members – 4 firefighters.
- Provision of one or more members to account for and manage elevator operations – 1 firefighter.
- Provision of a minimum of one trained incident safety officer – 1 officer.
- Provision for a minimum of one officer two floors below the fire floor to manage the interior staging area – 1 officer.
- Provision of a minimum of two members to manage member rehabilitation and at least one of the members to be trained to the ALS level – 1 firefighter and 1 paramedic.
- Provision of an officer and a minimum of three members to conduct vertical ventilation operations – 1 officer and 3 firefighters.
- Provision of a minimum of one officer to manage the building lobby operations – 1 officer.

- Provision of a minimum of two members to transport equipment to a location below the fire floor – 2 firefighters.
- Provision of one officer to manage external base operations – 1 officer.
- Establishment of an initial medical care component consisting of a minimum of two crews with a minimum of two members each with one member trained to the ALS level (paramedic) capable of providing immediate on-scene emergency medical support, and transport that provides rapid access to civilians or members potentially needing medical treatment – 2 firefighters and 2 paramedics.

Total effective response forces a minimum of 42 firefighters (43 if the building is equipped with a fire pump).

Fires in high-rise residential occupancies present unique challenges for firefighters. Fires occurring in this type of occupancy are very demanding and labor-intensive due to the fire possibly being located many stories above street level. Firefighters must transport all their equipment to the floors below the fire where a staging area will be established and an attack on the fire is initiated.

Firefighters will also be wholly dependent upon the building fire standpipe system to put their hose lines into operation on the fire floor. Even if the building is equipped with a full coverage fire sprinkler system, firefighters are required to make entry into the fire area to search for unaccounted occupants and to complete extinguishment of the fire. While this category of building is constructed of fire-resistive materials, the combustible contents in the tenant spaces can fuel extremely hot burning fires that can be punishing for firefighters trying to gain access to the fire floor public hallway and tenant spaces. Ventilation points are also limited to the fire apartment windows. Due to the probability of a large number of tenants that may be seeking to evacuate the building during a fire incident, several firefighters must be assigned to coordinate their safe removal from the upper floors.

The sheer size of these high-rise residential occupancies would prove a challenge for the local fire agency in the event of a fire, smoke condition or hazardous materials released in the building. Fire operations in high-rise residential buildings require additional resources well beyond the available on-duty firefighting force of the township. The fact that all of the high-rise structures are not equipped with full coverage fire sprinkler systems further compounds the difficulties encountered with controlling a fire in one of these buildings. These factors, as well as a high life hazard factor with the large occupant load in these buildings, makes these occupancies a high-risk target hazard concern for the local Fire Department.

The current minimum staffing level of the local Fire Department is 16 members, well below the recommended number of firefighters needed to successfully combat a fire in one of the high-rise residential apartment buildings in the coverage area. While township Fire Officials have historically depended upon fire mutual aid resources to supplement staffing needs during fires at high-hazard occupancies such as high-rise structures, such supplemental resources are called upon only after the initial responding Montclair firefighters have already arrived on the scene to evaluate the incident. This results in a substantial delay in the notification and response of additional fire resources. Further dependence on this system of obtaining additional fire and rescue resources for a major emergency incident in a high-rise residential building is obsolete and township Fire Officials need to develop automatic aid agreements with neighboring Fire Departments to provide additional staffing upon the initial alarm of a fire or other major emergency in these unprotected buildings. The township should also consider increasing the number of on-duty firefighters to provide for a timely and robust early response to fires and major emergencies in the high-life hazard high-rise residential occupancies located within the coverage area.

- **Recommendation 5:** Consistent with recommendation #1, the initial response of adequate staffing levels should be addressed through increase of staffing levels and development of automatic aid response to fires and emergencies reported at high-rise residential apartment buildings located in the coverage area.

- **Recommendation 6:** A pre-incident fire response plan for the residential high-rise occupancies be developed that includes the pre-planned automatic aid response of additional fire and rescue mutual aid resources on report of a fire, smoke condition, hazardous materials release, or other significant fire event inside one of the high-rise occupancies. Response of the additional fire and rescue resources should be upon first report of the emergency in order to bolster the initial response of the local fire force and to have the supplemental automatic aid units arrive on scene within a reasonably short response time. Due to the variances in fire protection equipment and systems in the residential high-rise buildings, a separate pre-incident fire response plan must be developed to address the unique features of each building.

- **Recommendation 7:** Multi-company drills and building familiarization tours must be scheduled periodically at each of the residential high-rise occupancies to exercise the pre-emergency plan and to familiarize all responding local,

automatic, and mutual aid agencies with the configuration of the occupancy including the fire protection features of the facility.

Service Demand Levels & Emergency Incident History

Among key factors that should be examined in an evaluation of the fire protection needs of a community are the type and frequency of fire and rescue incidents that occur in the coverage district. The types of emergencies that a fire agency is called to respond to determine the type of apparatus and equipment that the Fire Department will need to control the situation, while the volume of emergencies determines the number of fire and rescue vehicles and personnel that the agency must deploy to successfully counter multiple and/or simultaneously occurring incidents. While previous incident history serves as an excellent predictor of the type and frequency of fire and rescue incidents that may occur, municipalities should also consider the potential for new building developments and significant changes in existing occupancies when evaluating the fire and rescue protection requirements of a community.

On Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 8 a.m., the Montclair Fire Department received a report of a fire at the Grace Presbyterian Church on the corner of Grove Street and Tuxedo Avenue. No one was inside the church at that time. Fire units arrived to find fire reaching from the basement to the roofline at the rear of the church. The fire was well advanced at the time of FD arrival, and it took multiple hoselines and master streams to bring the fire under control. Fire and water damage to the nearly century-old building was extensive. The fire reached third-alarm status with units from several Essex County Fire Departments assisting at the scene or providing standby coverage at Montclair fire stations. Four firefighters received minor injuries and were treated and released from the hospital. There were no reported civilian injuries. Investigators later determined that the fire originated in the basement.

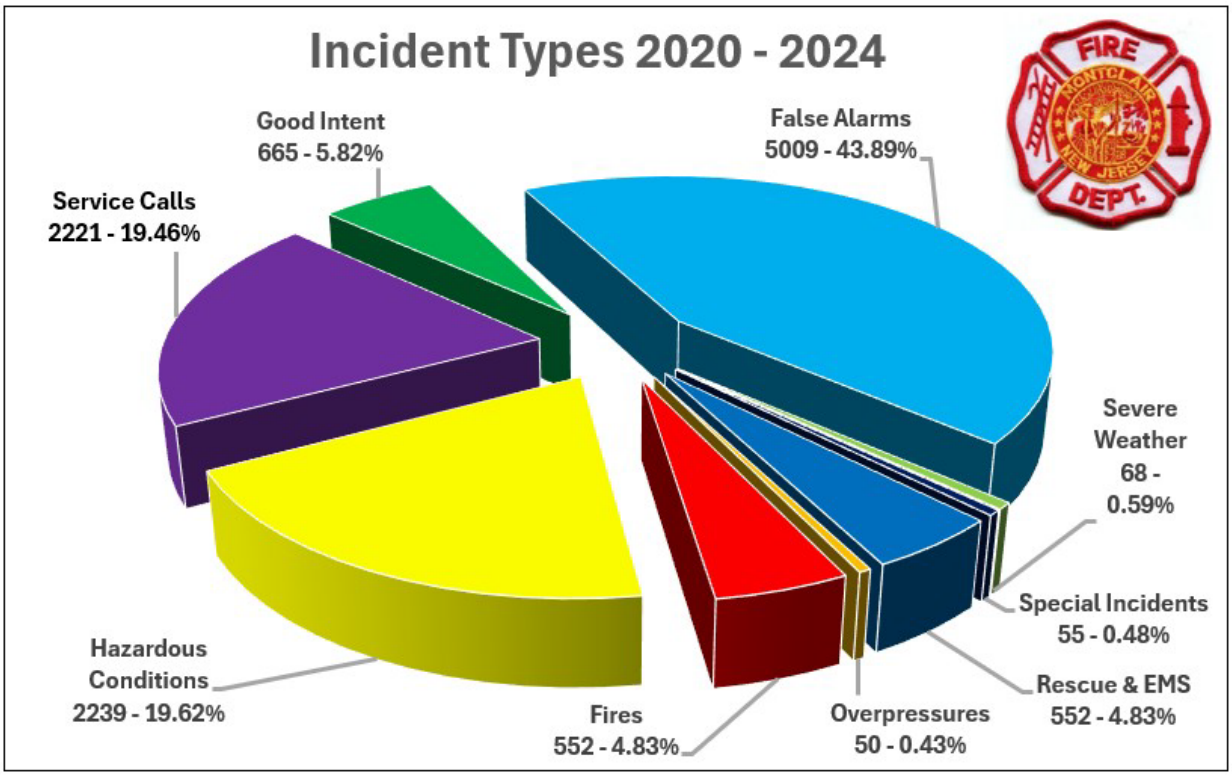
Fire Departments provide invaluable services to communities throughout the nation. They respond to a wide variety of emergencies involving fires, explosions, hazardous conditions, and natural and manmade disasters. They also respond to nonemergency service calls as determined by local policy. Often, what is described by an emergency caller to 9-1-1 dispatchers does not accurately reflect the demands of the actual incident. Nevertheless, Fire Departments are trained and prepared to respond to a broad array of situations. It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the local fire authority is prepared, staffed, and equipped to carry out this mission at the level of expectation of the residents and taxpayers.

The Montclair Fire Departments provides emergency fire and rescue response coverage to the 6.24 square mile Township of Montclair with an estimated 2024 population of 41,076 residents, and by contract to the 1.28 square mile Borough of Glen Ridge with an estimated 2024 population of 8,204 residents. The combined fire and rescue response area of 7.52 square miles is home to an estimated 49,280 residents yielding a population density of 6,553 residents per square mile. The U.S. Census Bureau defines an “urban area” as having a minimum of 5,000 residents per square mile.

The Montclair Fire Department participates in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), a system established by the United States Fire Administration with the intent to provide local fire agencies with an incident data analysis tool to help communities gather and determine the local fire and emergency service demand levels. The system is coordinated in New Jersey by the state Division of Fire Safety. Montclair has participated in the program for many years, and the staff of the Fire Department has provided five years of NFIRS incident data covering their response history from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2024, to assist in preparing this report and recommendations.

NFIRS data covering a total of 11,411 fire and emergency incidents that were responded to in the combined coverage area during this time period were used in this analysis. The yearly number of incidents ranged from a high of 2,522 incidents in 2024 to a low of 2,055 incidents in 2020. This yields an average yearly incident volume of 2,282 incidents over the five-year study period. This also shows a steady trend in increase in service demand for the Fire Department of about 22% over this five-year period or an average annual increase of about 4.5%.

Analysis of Incident Types – Five-Year Study Period 2020 – 2024



All Types of Fires (552 incidents – 4.83%) – Fires accounted for a small percentage of Fire Department responses during the analysis period. This percentage of fire incidents is in line with the statistics reported by the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety in their NFIRS analysis report entitled "Fire in New Jersey 2015" which states that while actual fires in structures account for a small percentage of the activity of Fire Departments, these incidents are the cause of 80% of the reported property damage by fire in the state. This category includes all types of fires including fires in residential and commercial structures, fires in motor vehicles and other types of transportation vehicles, and all types of outsides fires occurring in brush, grass, trash, and rubbish. This category is further broken down into the following sub-categories:

> **Fires in Residences (275 incidents – 49.81%)** - Historically, fires in residences are low frequency but high impact events for most communities. 85% of civilian fire fatalities occur in residences. The majority of firefighter fireground injuries occur while fighting fires in residential settings. The low overall number of structural fires in the coverage area is in line with other communities with similar demographics as

Montclair. National statistics show that almost one-half of all fires occurring in residences are caused by cooking, especially unattended cooking.

Other Structural Fires (78 incidents – 14.13% - This category includes all fires occurring in commercial occupancies such as stores, warehouses, offices, institutional buildings, manufacturing, and industry. While the percentage of fires is comparatively lower than fires in residential occupancies, commercial fires typically account for most of the fire damage to property in the coverage area. While the total number of fires in commercial occupancies is much lower than residential fires, firefighters attempting to extinguish fires in commercial structures are three times as likely to be seriously injured or killed while fighting fires in commercial buildings rather than in a residential setting.

All Other Fires (199 incidents – 36.05%) – This category includes all other types of fires that occurred outside of structures including natural vegetation fires such as brush, grass and mulch fires; all types of fires involving motor vehicles such as passenger cars, trucks, construction vehicles, and recreational vehicles; all types of trash or rubbish fires including those occurring in dumpsters and compactors; and all other types of unclassified fires occurring outside buildings or in other special structures.

Overpressures, Ruptures, Explosions, Overheat (No Fire) – (50 incidents – 0.43%) – This includes all types of overpressure events from steam, air or gases, and chemical reactions; all types of explosions including bombs, munitions, fireworks, and dust; and ruptures caused by excessive heat where no ensuing fire is found.

Rescue and Emergency Medical Services (552 incidents – 4.83%) – This category includes all types of rescue and emergency medical responses including rendering basic first medical aid and assisting local EMS providers; persons trapped in stalled elevators, all types of personal rescues such as motor vehicle accidents with injuries, motor vehicle accident extrications, and extrication of persons trapped in building collapses; trench/below grade rescues; confined space rescues; water rescues; emergency lock-ins; high angle rescues; and extrication of victims entrapped in machinery.

Hazardous Conditions (2239 incidents – 19.62%) – This category includes all types of emergency responses that require the Fire Department to take actions to protect life and property from hazards posed by the uncontrolled release of hazardous substances. These include natural gas, propane, and steam leaks; flammable liquid and hazardous material

releases; chemical, biological, radiological, and explosive hazards; and all other types of imminent hazards to the public, property, or the environment. This category also includes all types of emergency responses that require the Fire Department to take actions to protect life and property from hazards posed by conditions such as outdoor electrical hazards, weather-related hazards, and natural and human-caused disasters. The category is the second largest type of incident category that the Fire Department responded to.

Service Calls (2221 incidents – 19.46%) – This covers all types of service-related emergencies and non-emergencies that the Fire Department responds to including in-station standbys, aircraft medical evacuation standbys, animal rescues, and other non-emergency public service type calls. The category is the third largest type of incident category that the Fire Department responded to and reflects the broad variety of services that the department provides to the coverage area.

Good Intent Calls (665 incidents – 5.82%) – This includes calls dispatched and cancelled prior to fire unit arrival, wrong location or no incident found, steam or other gas mistaken for smoke, honest mistakes, and all other types of non-malicious calls for the Fire Department to investigate.

False Alarm & False Call Responses (5,009 incidents – 43.89%) – This category accounted for the largest portion of Fire Department responses during the analysis period. This category includes: all types of emergency responses to investigate activations of fire, smoke, and carbon monoxide detection systems; fire alarm and fire sprinkler system activations where no fire, smoke or carbon monoxide was found. This percentage of incidents is in line with national trends as the proliferation of fire detection and suppression systems are increasingly mandated in new and renovated structures. Urban/suburban communities such as Montclair and Glen Ridge with many private residences and apartments can expect that alarm system activations may account for as much as from one-third to one-half of all fire incident responses. While the ratio of actual fires that are detected by these systems compared to the number of activations caused by unintentional activations or system malfunctions is quite small, each fire alarm activation must be treated by the responding Fire Department as an actual fire until the source of the activation has been investigated.

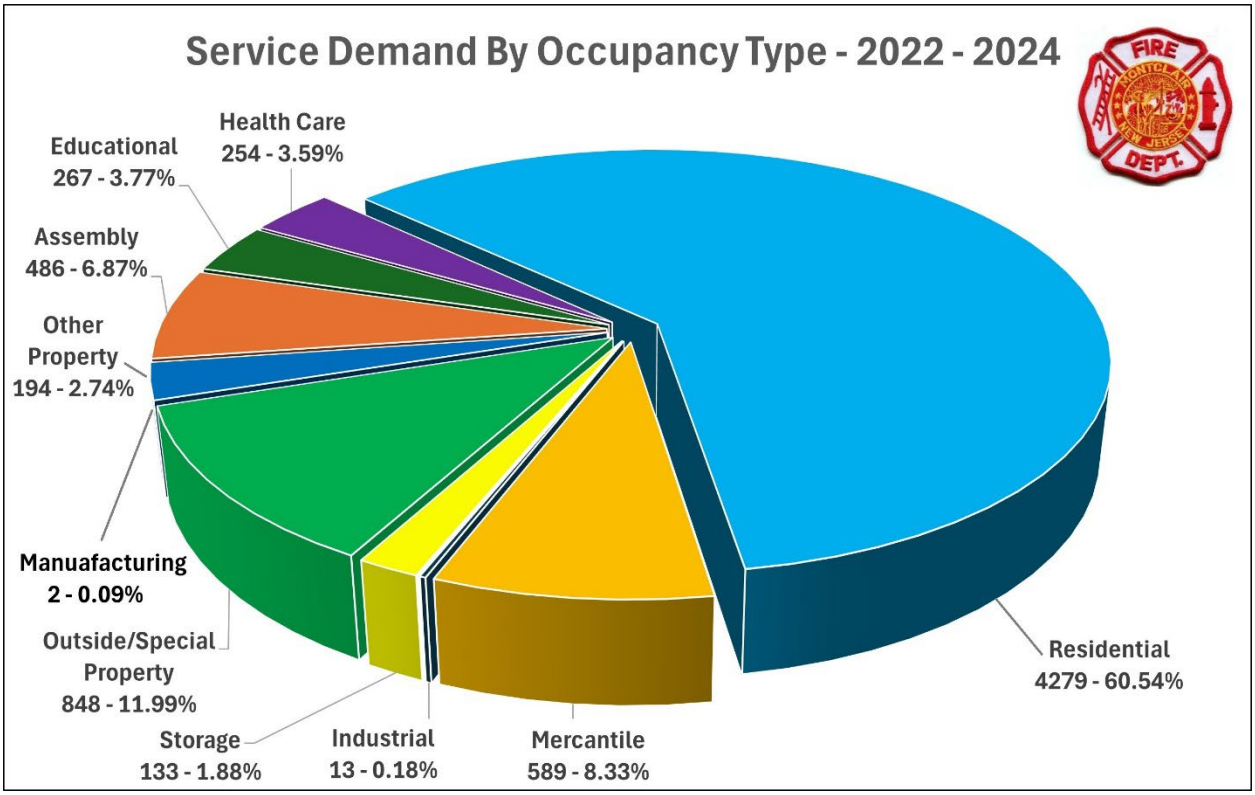
Severe Weather & Natural Disasters – (68 incidents – 0.59%) – this category includes calls for the Fire Department to assess damages to property because of earthquake, flood, and windstorms including hurricanes, tornados, lightning strikes, and other natural disasters. The category excludes incidents where other services, such as rescue, firefighting, and

damage control other than damage assessment are performed. This category can fluctuate considerably each year due to the possible occurrence of severe storms.

Special Type of Incident (55 incidents – 0.48%) – This includes all other types of incidents that are reported to and are investigated by the Fire Department including all types of citizen complaints of code or ordinance violations.

Analysis of Service Demand Levels By Occupancy Type – 2022 - 2024

Certain types of occupancies can often account for a greater portion of the service demand levels in a community. An urban/suburban community such as Montclair can expect to have higher levels of service demand in residential properties due to the larger ratio of residential occupancies than commercial properties located in the service area. Communities that have a concentration of commercial, manufacturing, or industrial occupancies can expect to see a greater percentage of their service demands from these types of non-residential occupancies. Information on the frequency, losses, and types of fires for each property use can assist in targeting fire prevention programs and fire protection or suppression systems for each type of property.



Service demand levels for the combined coverage area were examined over a three-year period spanning January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024. The occupancies are divided into nine distinct property types based on the occupancy usage:

Assembly (486 incidents – 6.87%) - This category includes fixed-use recreation and entertainment occupancies including sports arenas, ice and roller rinks, indoor and outdoor swimming facilities, health clubs, theaters, auditoriums, ballrooms, playgrounds, exhibit halls and museums, indoor and outdoor amusement centers, restaurants, nightclubs, public buildings, bus and train stations, and houses of worship

Educational (267 incidents – 3.77%) – This category includes schools, public and private, pre-schools, nursery schools, daycare facilities, college classroom buildings, and other educational occupancies.

Health Care, Detention and Corrections (254 incidents – 3.59%) – This category includes nursing homes, mental health disability facilities, rehabilitation facilities, hospitals, hospice facilities, clinics and ambulatory care facilities, doctor and medical arts offices, jails, prisons, and juvenile detention centers, and police stations.

Residential (4279 – 60.54%) – This category includes all types of residential occupancies including one and two-family homes, multi-family dwellings including apartments, condominiums, townhouses, rowhouses, tenements, boarding and rooming houses, hotels, inns, and motels, residential board and care facilities, assisted living facilities, dormitories, sorority and fraternity houses, and barracks. This category represented the greatest percentage of overall service demand during the study period. As may be expected in communities with a large percentage of residential housing stock such as Montclair and Glen Ridge, the demand for Fire Department services in the coverage area was highest in residential properties.

Mercantile (589 incidents - 8.33%) – This category includes all types of business uses including stores, food and beverage sales, supermarkets, clothing and apparel sales, households' goods, specialty and personal care shops, recreational supply shops, service stations, motor vehicle sales and repair, department stores, banks and ATM kiosks, veterinary offices, post offices, and general business offices. This category represented the second third highest percentage of overall service demand during the study period.

Industrial (13 incidents – 0.18%) – This category includes energy generation and production plants, chemical, medical, biological, testing, electronics, and general research

laboratories, defense and military installations, airport facilities, computer centers, electrical, gas, and communications distribution facilities, gas and flammable liquid distribution systems, water, sewer and sanitation facilities, farms, orchards, and livestock production, mining and quarrying facilities.

Manufacturing (2 incidents – 0.09%) – This category includes all types of manufacturing processes includes the mechanical or chemical transformation of raw materials into new products including factories, foundries, and mills.

Storage (133 incidents – 1.88%) – This category includes all types of storage facilities including outside storage areas, outbuildings and sheds, contractors field offices, grain elevators and silos, livestock and poultry barns, stockyards and pens, refrigerated storage, vehicle storage including airplane hangars, boat storage, parking garages, detached residential garages, fire stations, warehouses, docks, marinas, piers and wharfs, and residential self-storage units.

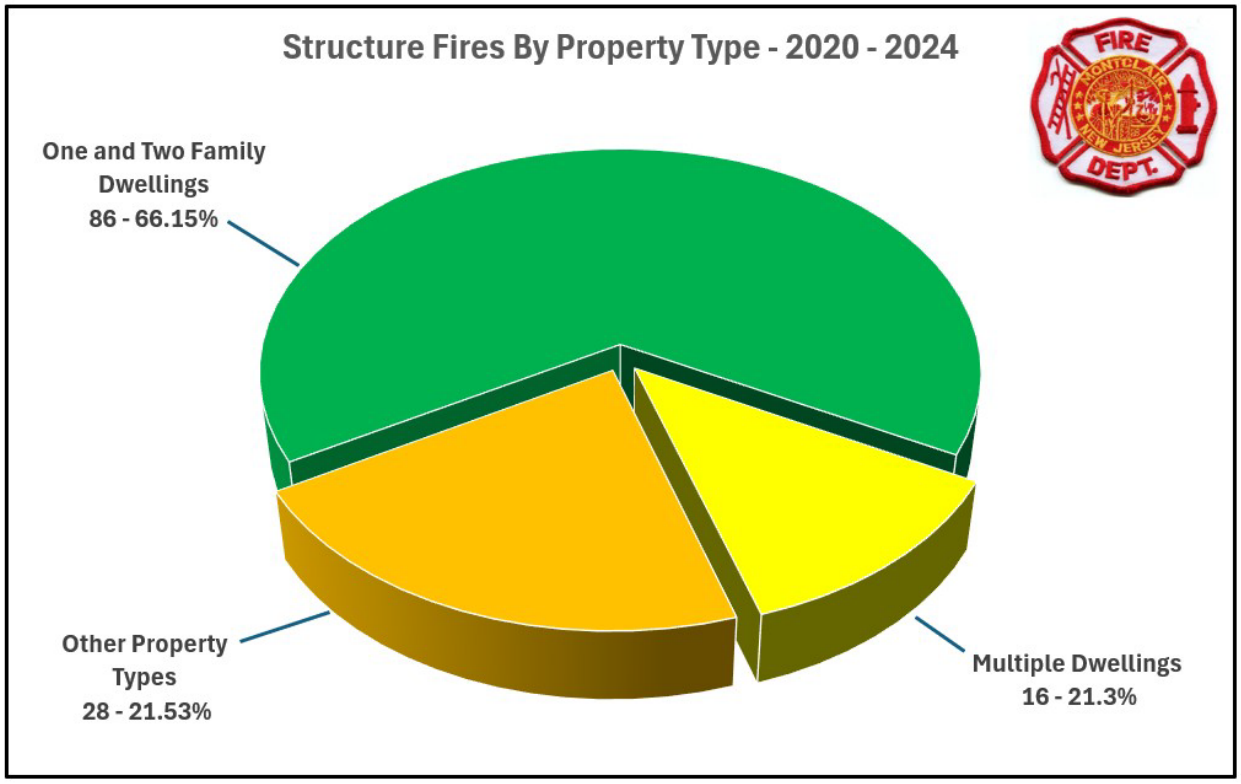
Outside or Special Property (484 incidents – 11.99%) – This category includes outdoor properties including dumps, landfills, recycling centers, bridges, tunnels, outbuildings, protective shelters, open land and fields, campsites and parks, vacant lots, undeveloped land, beaches, golf courses, cemeteries, open water including oceans, seas, tidal waters, lakes, rivers and streams, railroad rights-of-way and yards, highways and residential streets, vehicle parking areas, aircraft runways, taxiways, and loading areas, construction sites, pipeline, power line, or other utility rights-of-way, and industrial plant yard areas. This category represented the third highest percentage of service demand during the study period.

Other Properties, Undetermined or Not Reported (194 incidents – 2.74%) – This category includes any other properties uses not identified in the previous categories or are undetermined or not reported.

Analysis of Structure Fires By Property Type – 2020 – 2024

Certain types of property uses can often account for a greater portion of the structure fires occurring in a community. Urban/suburban communities such as Montclair and Glen Ridge can expect to have a higher number of structure fires occurring in one and two family dwellings due to the often larger ratio of one and two-family living units than multiple dwelling residential occupancies containing three more living units in the coverage area. It should be understood however that fires occurring in multiple dwellings pose a greater threat to the community as many more people occupying living units adjacent to the fire unit are

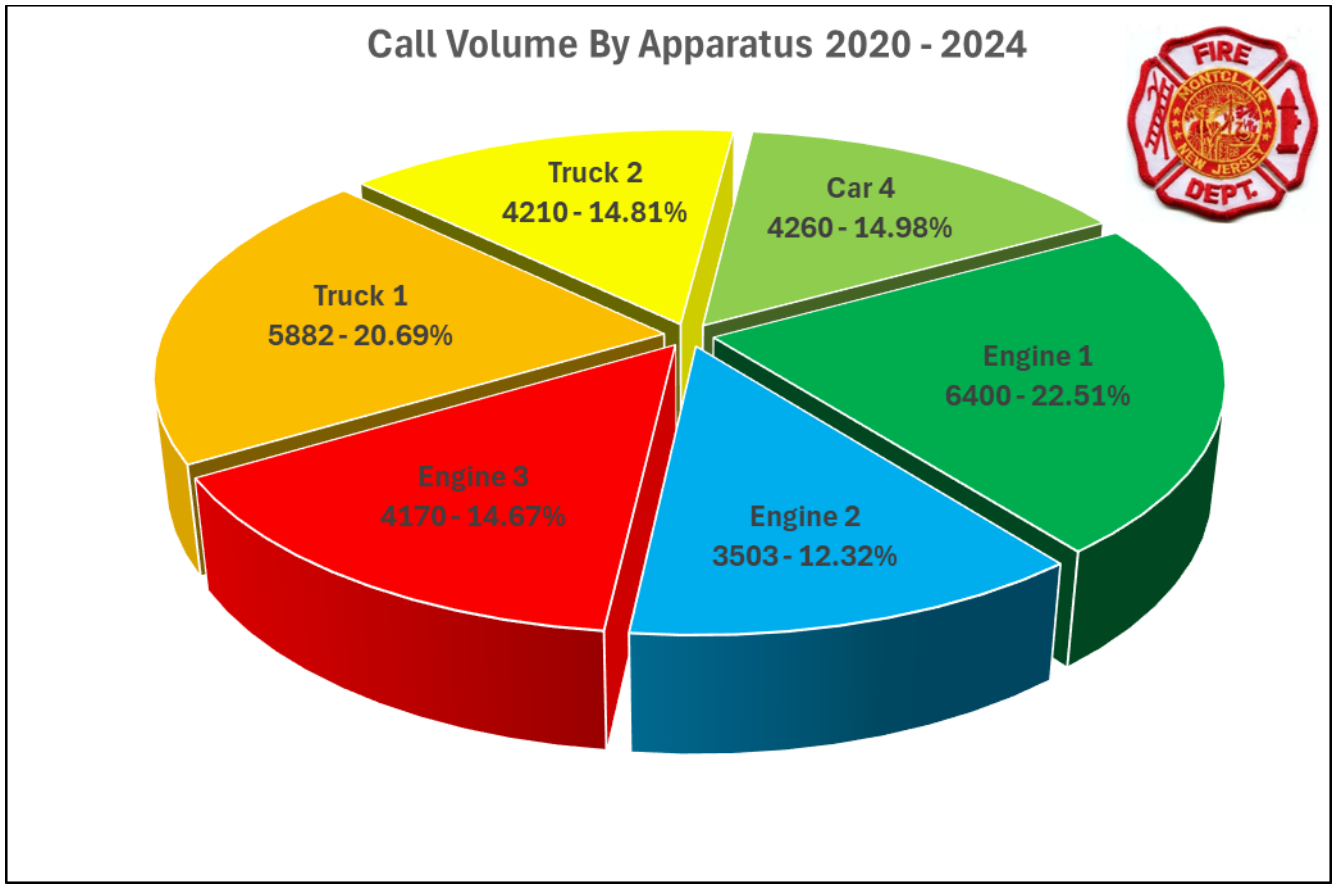
exposed and affected than during fires in one and two-family dwellings. Combined Montclair and Glen Ridge have a 2023 estimated 18,091 housing units. Of these housing units, 12,353 (68.28%) are one and two-family dwellings and 5,738 (31.71%) are multiple dwellings containing three or more living units. Information on the frequency, losses, and types of fires for each property use can assist in targeting fire prevention programs and fire protection or suppression systems for each type of property.



Call Volume By Apparatus

Call volume by apparatus was tracked for the five-year study period. Over the time period from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2024, the data showed that Engine 1 and Truck 1, both quartered at Fire Headquarters at 1 Pine Street, made the most responses of all apparatus with Engine 1 responding to 6,400 (22.51%) of all incidents while Truck 1 responded to 5,882 incidents (20.69%). Engine 3, now quartered at 1 Pine Street after the temporary closure of Fire Station 3 at 151 Harrison Avenue, responded to 4,170 incidents (14.67%) during the same time period. Engine 2 responded to 3,503 incidents (12.32%) and Truck 2 responded to 4,210 incidents (14.81%) during the study period. Apparatus response totals have remained steady during the study period with the five-year average number of apparatus responses at 5,685 per year. It is interesting to note that there was a 20% reduction

in apparatus responses during 2020, likely due to modified response criteria during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Fire Loss to Residential and Commercial Structures

Fire Officials report that they currently do not document fire loss to structures or contents when completing their fire incident reports. The NFIRS system has the ability to track fire loss in a community. The basic incident form has an area where the estimated total property and contents dollar loss and the pre-incident value of the property can be entered and is a required field for all fires where the value is known. Montclair has elected to not complete this information due to concern that a Fire Department estimate of the value of the loss may affect the outcome of an insurance settlement for the impacted property owner. The intent of the NFIRS system is to provide an estimate, not a qualified assessment of the dollar loss to a property. Collecting property and content losses illustrates the magnitude of the fire problem, provides an additional indicator of the incident severity, and can be used to evaluate progress in fire protection. This information can help local communities, states, and

the country determine the amount that should be spent on fire protection. Estimated property and content losses are also crucial for identifying types of situations where high monetary losses are common. This information helps target fire prevention programs. Loss estimates also can be used to evaluate the cost effectiveness of various equipment and fire protection practices. Estimates of the pre-incident value of fire-damaged property yields a view of the property saved by the responding fire agency.

- **Recommendation 8:** The Fire Department should collect data on fire losses to property and contents, as well as pre-incident values, to better document the ratio of loss to property saved during fires.

False Alarm Responses

Response to fire alarm activations accounted for 5,009 incidents or 43.89% of all fire incidents during the five-year study period. False activations of fire alarm systems put an increased workload on the Fire Department who must respond to every alarm to verify whether fire or emergency conditions are present at the occupancy. With the increase in required fire alarm systems in most commercial and multi-family residential properties and the growing popularity of fire alarm systems in private dwellings, the local Fire Department can expect to respond to numerous false fire alarm activations. This is generally due to two primary causes, malfunctions of the alarm system and unintentional activations due to a variety of causes such as steam, dust, cooking fumes, insects, for example. During the study period, system malfunctions accounted for about 35% of false activations while unintentional activations accounted for almost 63% of the total. Malicious activations and other causes accounted for only about 2% of false alarms.

Multiple false fire alarm activations can affect the response capabilities of the Fire Department by tying up otherwise needed fire resources to respond to actual emergencies in the coverage area. The possibility of an inadequate initial fire response due to township fire units being committed to a false alarm response could significantly affect the overall incident outcome during an actual fire. It should be noted that multiple false fire alarm activations also have a detrimental effect on the behavior of the building occupants. People tend to become complacent when the fire alarm is sounded repeatedly for needless or unintentional causes and may fail to take the appropriate exit actions during an actual fire emergency in the building. A review of the tragic events during a multiple student fatality fire that occurred in a dormitory at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey on January 19, 2000, is a stark example of the effect of multiple false fire alarms on building occupants.

Montclair has experienced substantial growth in high-density residential apartments with several additional such developments proposed or in the planning or construction stages. Each of these developments is required by code to be equipped with fire alarm systems. The Fire Department has seen an increase in false fire alarm activations in the existing developments and can expect to see the increase continue as the structures proposed or under construction are occupied. The best method to control and reduce the number of false activations in these types of occupancies is to ensure that the fire alarm devices have been properly installed during construction and maintained by building management following occupancy. Some municipalities have found success in controlling false fire alarm activations by adopting and enforcing a fire alarm ordinance that includes a tiered schedule of fines that can be used to encourage property owners to correctly maintain their alarms systems. Montclair adopted such an ordinance a number of years ago, but Fire Officials admit that enforcement of the provisions of the ordinance have been lax due to insufficient personnel to administer the process. Fire prevention and fire safety educators should focus on compliance through education of property owners and occupants to ensure a minimum number of false fire alarm activations and when necessary, enforce the penalty provisions of the municipal ordinance.

- **Recommendation 9:** Fire Officials should conduct a regular review of false fire alarm activations and enforce the municipal alarm ordinance as needed to control the number of false fire alarm responses.

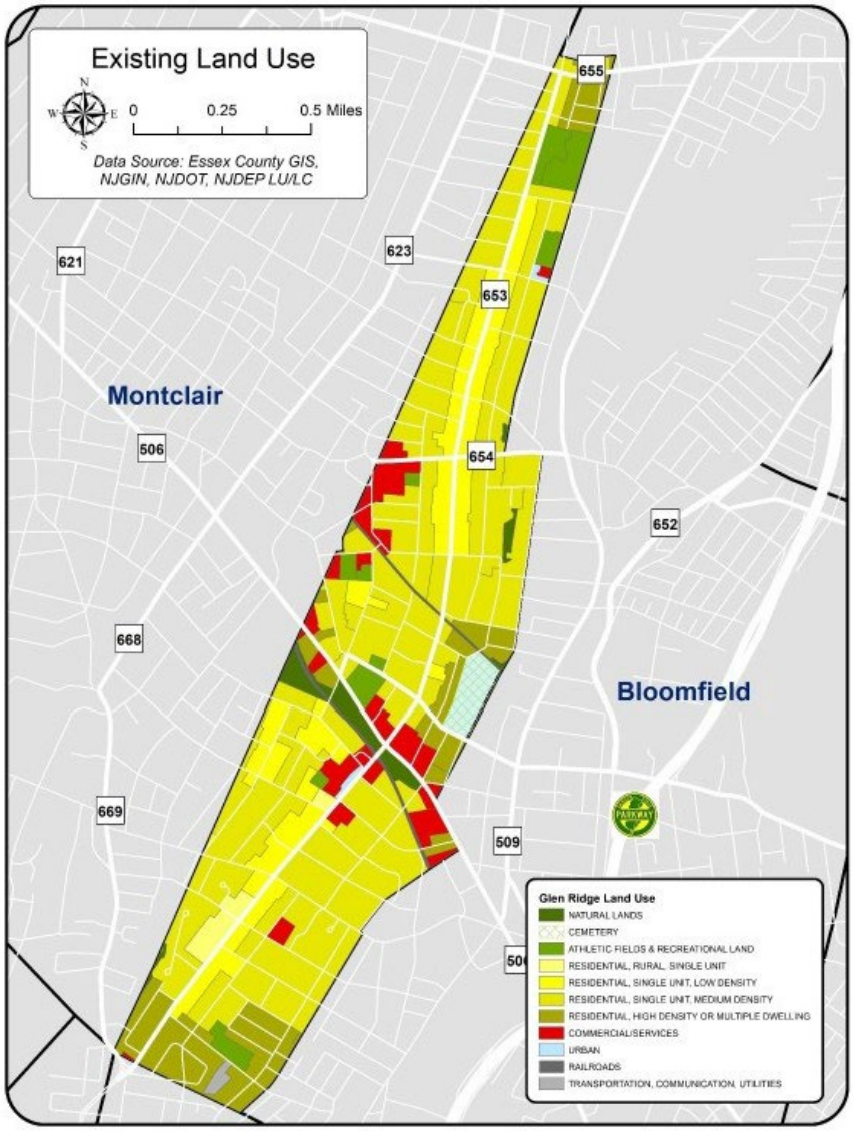
During the data review process, it was noted that Montclair Fire Officials do not conduct periodic analysis of their calls for service data. The agency has available to them more than five years of response data. This information should be reviewed on an annual basis as such reviews can better illustrate the actual workload of the agency and identify trends in response volume and frequency that can assist the agency and the municipalities with fire prevention and code enforcement activities. Many fire agencies produce a monthly summary of Fire Department activities and an expanded annual report of Fire Department operations that is submitted to the governing body that often contains the type and volume of calls for service. There currently is no officer formally assigned as the fire records manager from the department. An officer should be assigned to this position and would be responsible for reviewing all submitted fire incident reports for accuracy and completeness and producing a monthly summary of fire and emergency reports that should be submitted to the governing bodies through the office of the Fire Chief.

Montclair has been using the National Fire Incident Report System (NFIRS) for many years. The federally administered program is slated to transition to a new version of the fire reporting system later this year. The new version called the National Emergency Reporting Information System (NERIS), will provide a more functional software platform for fire and emergency agencies that provides advanced analytical tools that can be used by Montclair fire and local government officials to make data-driven informed decisions regarding Fire Department operations. The former NFIRS system is scheduled to be migrated to the new NERIS platform in the fourth quarter of 2025.

- **Recommendation 10:** A fire officer should be assigned as the fire records manager for the agency to be responsible for the review, accuracy, and completeness of all fire incident reports. This officer would also be responsible for producing a monthly summary of fire and emergency reports that should be submitted to the governing bodies through the office of the Fire Chief. This officer would also be responsible for the transition from the NFIRS system to the new NERIS platform including providing training for all Fire Department officers in the use of the new software system.

Service Demand Levels & Emergency Incident History – Borough of Glen Ridge

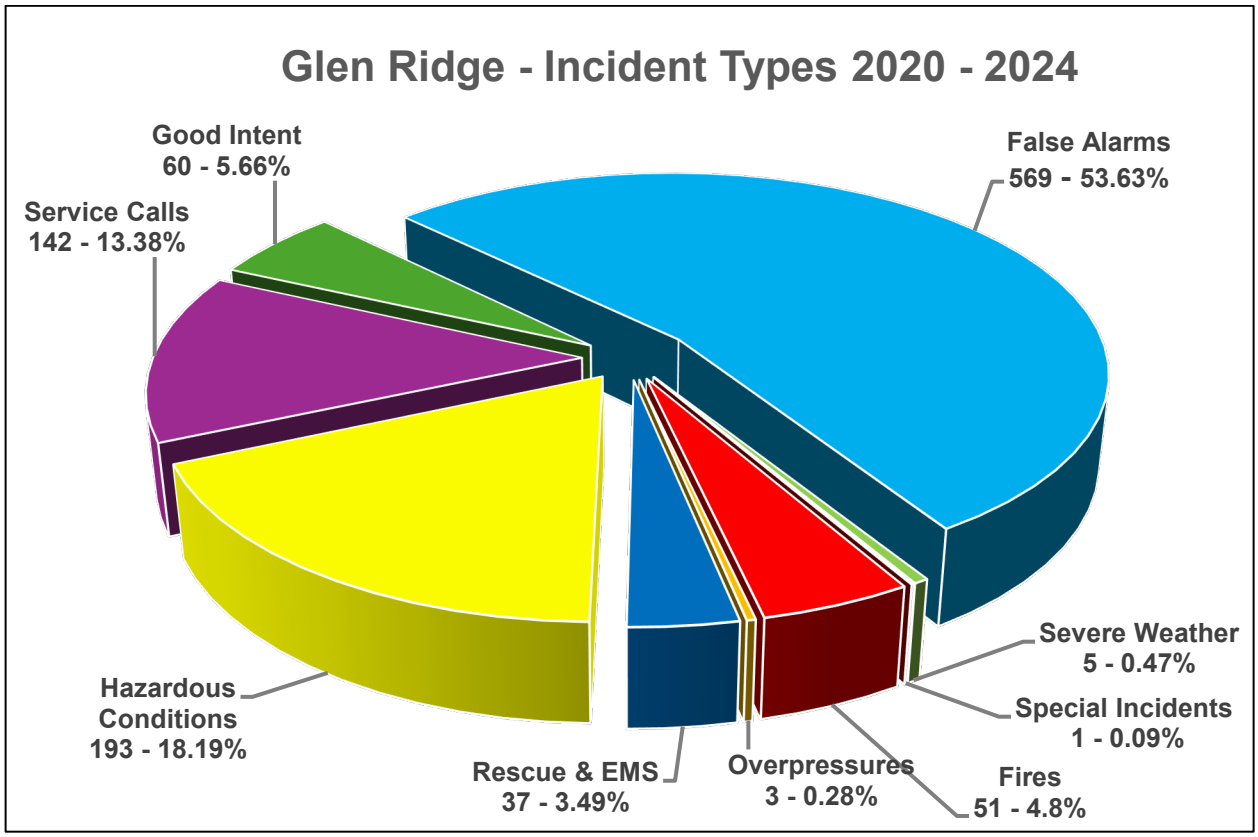
The Montclair Fire Department provides emergency fire and rescue response coverage on a contract basis to the 1.28 square mile Borough of Glen Ridge with an estimated 2024 population of 8,204 residents. The population density is 6,409 persons per square mile. The borough is mainly a residential area dominated by one and two-family homes with a few multiple dwellings including one residential high-rise building. About 90% of the community is zoned for residential uses. Non-residential uses include a scattering of commercial occupancies along the Bloomfield Avenue corridor and the large campus of the Hackensack Meridian Mountainside Medical Center. It should be noted that Glen Ridge has no industrial, manufacturing, or warehousing facilities within the borough.



Land Use Map of the Borough of Glen Ridge

Analysis of Incident Types – Glen Ridge - Five-Year Study Period 2020 – 2024

NFIRS data covering a total of 1,061 fire and emergency incidents in Glen Ridge during the five-year time period from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2024, were used in this analysis. The yearly number of incidents ranged from a high of 273 incidents in 2024 to a low of 180 incidents in 2022. This yields an average yearly incident volume of 212 incidents over the five-year study period. This also shows a steady trend of increased demand for the Fire Department services of about 43% over this five-year period or an average annual increase of about 8.6%.



All Types of Fires - (51 incidents – 4.8%) – Fires accounted for a small percentage of Fire Department responses during the analysis period. This percentage of fire incidents is in line with the statistics reported by the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety in their NFIRS analysis report entitled "Fire in New Jersey 2015" which states that while actual fires in structures account for a small percentage of the activity of Fire Departments, these incidents are the cause of 80% of the reported property damage by fire in the state. This category includes all types of fires including fires in residential and commercial structures, fires in motor vehicles and other types of transportation vehicles, and all types of outsides fires occurring in brush, grass, trash, and rubbish. This category is further broken down into the following sub-categories:

> **Fires in Residences - (25 incidents – 49.01%)** - Historically, fires in residences are low frequency but high impact events for most communities. 85% of civilian fire fatalities occur in residences. The majority of firefighter fireground injuries occur while fighting fires in residential settings. The low overall number of structural fires in the borough is in line with other communities with similar demographics as Glen

Ridge. National statistics show that almost one-half of all fires occurring in residences are caused by cooking, especially unattended cooking.

Other Structural Fires - (3 incidents – 5.88% - This category includes all fires occurring in commercial occupancies such as stores, warehouses, offices, institutional buildings, manufacturing, and industry. While the percentage of fires is comparatively lower than fires in residential occupancies, commercial fires typically account for most of the fire damage to property in the coverage area. While the total number of fires in commercial occupancies is much lower than residential fires, firefighters attempting to extinguish fires in commercial structures are three times as likely to be seriously injured or killed while fighting fires in commercial buildings rather than in a residential setting.

All Other Fires - (23 incidents – 45.09%) – This category includes all other types of fires that occurred outside of structures including natural vegetation fires such as brush, grass and mulch fires; all types of fires involving motor vehicles such as passenger cars, trucks, construction vehicles, and recreational vehicles; all types of trash or rubbish fires including those occurring in dumpsters and compactors; and all other types of unclassified fires occurring outside buildings or in other special structures.

Overpressures, Ruptures, Explosions, Overheat (No Fire) – (3 incidents – 0.28%) – This includes all types of overpressure events from steam, air or gases, and chemical reactions; all types of explosions including bombs, munitions, fireworks, and dust; and ruptures caused by excessive heat where no ensuing fire is found.

Rescue and Emergency Medical Services - (37 incidents – 3.49%) – This category includes all types of rescue and emergency medical responses including rendering basic first medical aid and assisting local EMS providers; persons trapped in stalled elevators, all types of personal rescues such as motor vehicle accidents with injuries, motor vehicle accident extrications, and extrication of persons trapped in building collapses; trench/below grade rescues; confined space rescues; water rescues; emergency lock-ins; high angle rescues; and extrication of victims entrapped in machinery.

Hazardous Conditions - (193 incidents – 18.19%) – This category includes all types of emergency responses that require the Fire Department to take actions to protect life and property from hazards posed by the uncontrolled release of hazardous substances. These include natural gas, propane, and steam leaks; flammable liquid and hazardous material releases; chemical, biological, radiological, and explosive hazards; and all other types of

imminent hazards to the public, property, or the environment. This category also includes all types of emergency responses that require the Fire Department to take actions to protect life and property from hazards posed by conditions such as outdoor electrical hazards, weather-related hazards, and natural and human-caused disasters. The category is the second largest type of incident category in the borough that the Montclair fire units responded to.

Service Calls - (142 incidents – 13.38%) – This covers all types of service-related emergencies and non-emergencies that the Fire Department responds to including in-station standbys, aircraft medical evacuation standbys, animal rescues, and other non-emergency public service type calls. The category is the third largest type of incident category that Montclair fire units responded to and reflects the broad variety of services that the department provides to the borough.

Good Intent Calls - (60 incidents – 5.66%) – This includes calls dispatched and cancelled prior to fire unit arrival, wrong location or no incident found, steam or other gas mistaken for smoke, honest mistakes, and all other types of non-malicious calls for the Fire Department to investigate.

False Alarm & False Call Responses - (569 incidents – 53.63%) – The category is the largest percentage of type of incidents in the borough that Montclair fire units responded to. This category includes: all types of emergency responses to investigate activations of fire, smoke, and carbon monoxide detection systems; fire alarm and fire sprinkler system activations where no fire, smoke or carbon monoxide was found. This percentage of incidents is in line with national trends as the proliferation of fire detection and suppression systems are increasingly mandated in new and renovated structures. Urban/suburban communities such as Glen Ridge with many private residences and apartments can expect that alarm system activations may account for as much as from one-third to one-half of all fire incident responses. While the ratio of actual fires that are detected by these systems compared to the number of activations caused by unintentional activations or system malfunctions is quite small, each fire alarm activation must be treated by the responding Fire Department as an actual fire until the source of the activation has been investigated.

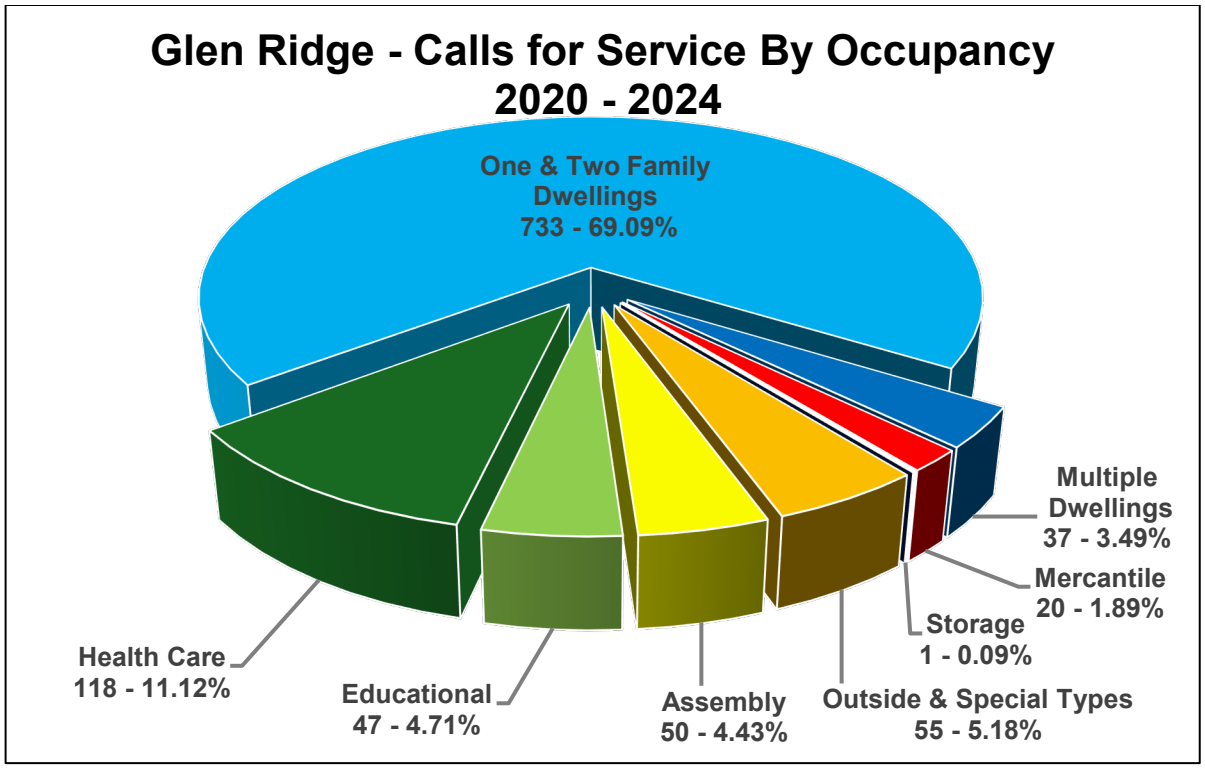
Severe Weather & Natural Disasters – (5 incidents – 0.47%) – This category includes calls for the Fire Department to assess damages to property because of earthquake, flood, and windstorms including hurricanes, tornados, lightning strikes, and other natural disasters. The category excludes incidents where other services, such as rescue, firefighting, and damage control other than damage assessment are performed. This category can fluctuate considerably each year due to the periodic occurrence of severe storms and hurricanes.

Special Type of Incident (1 incidents – 0.09%) – This includes all other types of incidents that are reported to and are investigated by the Fire Department including all types of citizen complaints of code or ordinance violations.

Analysis of Service Demand Levels By Occupancy Type – Glen Ridge - Five-Year Study Period 2020 – 2024

Certain types of occupancies can often account for a greater portion of the service demand levels in a community. An urban/suburban community such as Glen Ridge can expect to have higher levels of service demand in residential properties due to the larger ratio of residential occupancies than commercial properties located in the service area. Communities that have a concentration of commercial, manufacturing, or industrial occupancies can expect to see a greater percentage of their service demands from these types of non-residential occupancies. Information on the frequency, losses, and types of fires for each property use can assist in targeting fire prevention programs and fire protection or suppression systems for each type of property.

Service demand levels for the combined coverage area were examined over a three-year period spanning January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024. The occupancies are divided into nine distinct property types based on the occupancy usage:



Assembly (50 incidents – 4.43%) - This category includes fixed-use recreation and entertainment occupancies including sports arenas, ice and roller rinks, indoor and outdoor swimming facilities, health clubs, theaters, auditoriums, ballrooms, playgrounds, exhibit halls and museums, indoor and outdoor amusement centers, restaurants, nightclubs, public buildings, bus and train stations, and houses of worship

Educational (47 incidents – 4.71%) – This category includes schools, public and private, pre-schools, nursery schools, daycare facilities, college classroom buildings, and other educational occupancies.

Health Care, Detention and Corrections (118 incidents – 11.12%) – This category includes nursing homes, mental health disability facilities, rehabilitation facilities, hospitals, hospice facilities, clinics and ambulatory care facilities, doctor and medical arts offices, jails, prisons, and juvenile detention centers, and police stations. The category represents the second highest percentage of service demand for the Fire Department in the borough. Of the total incidents in this category, 73 were emergency responses to the Medical Center.

Residential (770 – 60.54%) – This category includes all types of residential occupancies including one and two-family homes, multi-family dwellings including apartments,

condominiums, townhouses, rowhouses, tenements, boarding and rooming houses, hotels, inns, and motels, residential board and care facilities, assisted living facilities, dormitories, sorority and fraternity houses, and barracks. The category was further broken down into incidents occurring in **One and Two-Family Dwellings (733 incidents - 69.09%)** and incidents occurring in **Multiple Dwellings** of three or more living units **(37 incidents – 3.49%).** This category represented the greatest percentage of overall service demand during the study period. As may be expected in communities with a large percentage of residential housing stock such as Glen Ridge, the demand for Fire Department services in the coverage area was highest in residential properties.

Mercantile (20 incidents – 1.89%) – This category includes all types of business uses including stores, food and beverage sales, supermarkets, clothing and apparel sales, households' goods, specialty and personal care shops, recreational supply shops, service stations, motor vehicle sales and repair, department stores, banks and ATM kiosks, veterinary offices, post offices, and general business offices. It should be noted that Glen Ridge has a limited number of commercial occupancies.

Storage (1 incident – 0.09%) – This category includes all types of storage facilities including outside storage areas, outbuildings and sheds, contractors field offices, grain elevators and silos, livestock and poultry barns, stockyards and pens, refrigerated storage, vehicle storage including airplane hangars, boat storage, parking garages, detached residential garages, fire stations, warehouses, docks, marinas, piers and wharfs, and residential self-storage units. As mentioned previously, Glen Ridge has no warehousing occupancies.

Outside or Special Property (55 incidents – 5.18%) – This category includes outdoor properties including dumps, landfills, recycling centers, bridges, tunnels, outbuildings, protective shelters, open land and fields, campsites and parks, vacant lots, undeveloped land, beaches, golf courses, cemeteries, open water including oceans, seas, tidal waters, lakes, rivers and streams, railroad rights-of-way and yards, highways and residential streets, vehicle parking areas, aircraft runways, taxiways, and loading areas, construction sites, pipeline, power line, or other utility rights-of-way, and industrial plant yard areas.

Other Properties, Undetermined or Not Reported (0 incidents – 0%) – This category includes any other properties uses not identified in the previous categories or are undetermined or not reported.

Deployment of Personnel

One attribute of a proficient fire response agency is the ability to consistently deliver a timely and adequate amount of fire response personnel and firefighting equipment to the scene of fires and rescue emergencies to combat the type and frequency of urgent conditions that are likely to occur in a community. The challenge for most fire agencies is to determine how to deploy the resources that the municipality provides to their best advantage. And to do so in such a manner that an effective firefighting force arrives at the scene to rapidly contain, control, and mitigate the effects of fire or other damaging conditions on the lives and property of the community inhabitants. The response must be tailored to the type of reported emergency so that the dispatched resources appropriately match the severity of the expected hazards.

Fire agencies need to conduct a risk assessment of the structures, occupancies, and physical features present in the community to determine what are the types of responses that are likely to occur. The governing body must determine the level of fire protection the community is willing to support through the level of funding for the fire and rescue agency. Community leaders continually struggle with the question as to what is the level of risk that the public is willing to accept while balancing the cost to taxpayers.

The Montclair Fire Department is currently budgeted for 77 positions and staffed with 70 positions. The agency is further divided into an Operations Section, under the direction of the deputy chief, consisting of four fire suppression platoons working a 24-hour on, 72 hours off, shift staffing three engine companies and two ladder companies. Each engine and ladder company are assigned an officer and two firefighters. Each shift is supervised by a Battalion Chief deployed in a command vehicle. The Operations Section, with 68 total authorized positions, maintains a minimum on-duty shift strength of 16 personnel at all times. With several current vacancies on each platoon, overtime is utilized to maintain this minimum staffing level. The Administration Section, also under the direction of the deputy chief, consists of a Fire Prevention office staffed by a Fire Official, three part-time fire inspectors, and two part-time secretaries. A Battalion Chief is assigned as chief of training. A civilian administrative assistant is also assigned to the office of the Fire Chief.

One measure that can be referenced to help resolve the question as to what constitutes an appropriate level of on-duty firefighting resources for a community is NFPA 1710: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, 2020 Edition. This consensus document has been recognized by the fire service and government agencies as the standard to determine what levels of firefighter staffing and equipment needs are

appropriate given the types of fire and rescue risks the community may face. The standard recommends staffing and equipment levels for structural fire responses to various sized occupancies including single family dwellings, strip mall type commercial complexes, garden style apartment buildings, and high-rise buildings.

Montclair contains many examples of each of these types of buildings as well as several other high hazard commercial and institutional occupancies. As an example, the standard calls for the deployment of at least 16 firefighters staffing three engine companies, one ladder company and one chief officer to effectively deal with a structure fire in a typical 2000 square foot two-story single-family dwelling without a basement and with no exposures (buildings in close proximity). One additional firefighter is required when an aerial device is put in service. These resources, known as an effective response force (ERF), should be dispatched at the outset of the incident.
The standard also requires that Fire Departments establish response time performance objectives for alarm handling, turnout time, and travel times for all emergency calls:

- Alarm handling times should be established with a performance objective of having an alarm answering time of not more than 15 seconds for at least 95% percent of the alarms received and not more than 40 seconds for at least 99% of the alarms received. Any call not answered within 20 seconds shall be routed to a secondary answering point should the primary answering point be unable to answer a call. The answering point should be equipped with an alarm that sounds in the center if a call is not answered, (not processed, just answered), within 60 seconds. An alarm processing time performance objective of not more than 64 seconds for at least 90% of the alarms received, and not more than 106 seconds for at least 95 percent of the alarms, as specified by NFPA 1221, Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems

- Turnout time is defined as the time interval that begins when alarm notification to the responding units is announced via an audible alarm or visual annunciation or both and ends at the beginning point of travel time. Turnout times should be established with a performance objective of 80 seconds for fire and special operations responses and 60 seconds for response to emergency medical calls (EMS). (The standard allows an extra 20 seconds for responses to fire and special operations calls for responding personnel to don their personal protective equipment (PPE) before mounting the apparatus for response).

- Travel time is defined as the time interval that begins when a unit is enroute to the emergency incident and ends when the unit arrives on scene. (Travel times are affected by the proximity to the alarm address and a number of factors including traffic, terrain, weather, time-of-day, for example, some of which are beyond the control of the responding units.)

These three intervals combined are termed total response time, which includes the time interval from the receipt of the alarm to when the first emergency response unit has arrived on scene and is initiating action or intervening to control the incident. Fire Departments shall establish service delivery performance objectives that include specific time intervals for each major service component, i.e., fire suppression, EMS, and special operations, that also include objectives for the percentage of responses that meet the time objectives.

For example, the standard recommends that the response time objectives for a fire suppression incident in an urban/suburban setting such as the Township of Montclair would be for the initial responding fire company to arrive on the scene with a minimum staffing of four personnel in the first four minutes (240 seconds) of travel time or less 90% of the time. The second responding fire company would be expected to arrive within six minutes (360 seconds) of travel time or less for 90% of such incidents. For other than high-rise fire suppression incidents, the balance of the initial full alarm assignment would be expected to arrive within eight minutes (480 seconds) or less of travel time for 90% of such incidents. For high-rise fire suppression incidents, the initial full alarm assignment for a fire suppression incident in this type of occupancy the balance of the initial full alarm assignment would be expected to arrive within 10 minutes, 10 seconds (610 seconds) or less travel time for 90% of such incidents.

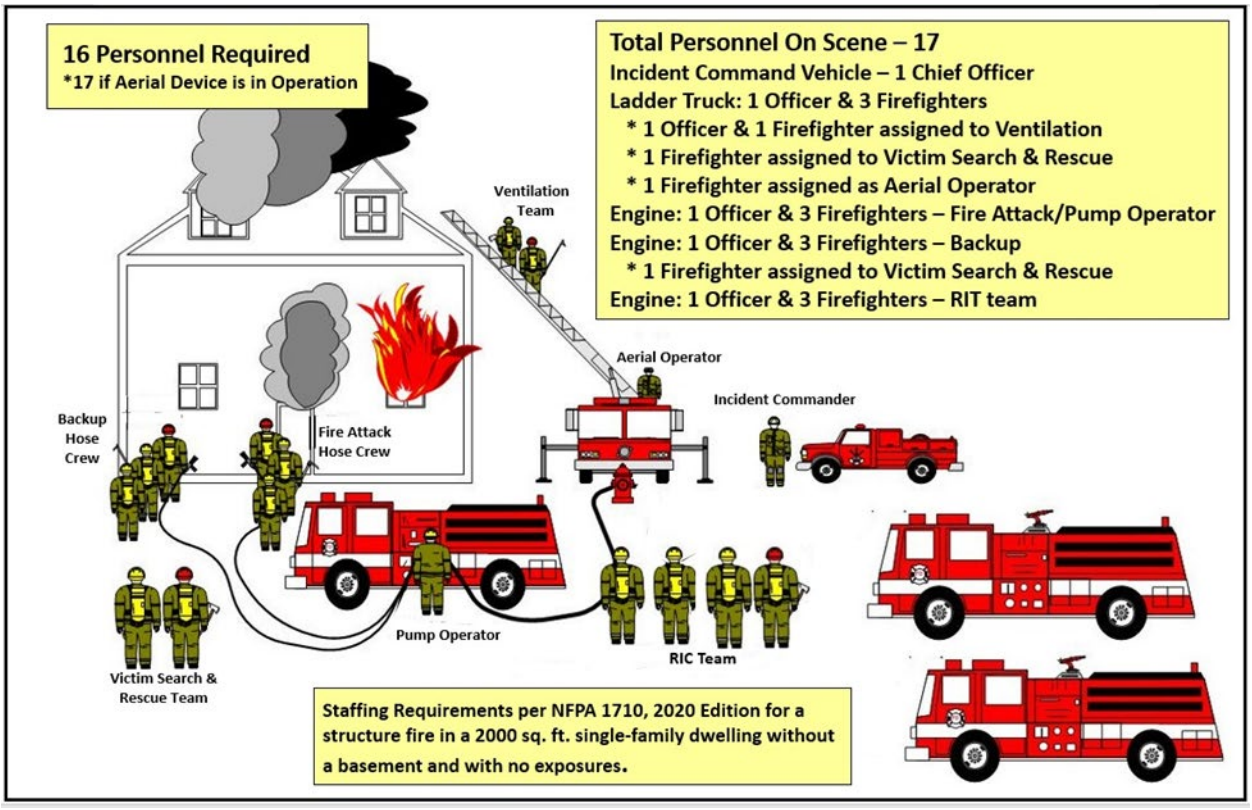
The standard further recommends that for EMS incidents where an advanced life support (ALS) unit response is required, the initial responding basic life support unit (BLS) or Fire Department fire responder unit (FR) with automatic external defibrillation (AED) capabilities would be expected to arrive within four minutes (240 seconds) or less of travel time for 90% of all EMS incidents. The responding ALS unit would be expected to arrive within eight minutes (480 seconds) or less of travel time for 90% of all such incidents.

The standard recommends that each engine or ladder company be staffed with at least four firefighters, one of which is an officer. Specialized companies such as rescue companies should be staffed with the minimum number of on-duty members required to deal with the tactical hazards, high-hazard occupancies, high incident frequencies, geographical restrictions, or other pertinent factors as identified by the agency. There is also a provision in the standard that allows additional staffing to respond to an incident by other means such as

in auxiliary vehicles as long as the staffing objective is met within the established response time objectives for each type of emergency response.

The standard does not recommend specific staffing objectives for each type of special operations incidents such as vehicle rescue, water rescue, confined space rescue, trench rescue, rope rescue, and hazardous materials incidents, for example. The standard recommends that each agency should adopt response criteria that includes staffing, equipment, and resources necessary to successfully mitigate special operations incidents that conform to existing federal and state OSHA requirements.

These nationally recognized response time and staffing objectives have been established using a task analysis process utilizing job performance criteria that considers a combination of factors that include firefighter safety, fire service best practices, and compliance with state and federal regulations.



The standard outlines the staffing requirements for the initial full alarm assignment for a structure fire in a typical 2000 square foot single-family dwelling without a basement and with no exposures (building or other property in close proximity). The standard further outlines the staffing requirements for the initial full alarm assignment for fires in more

complex structures including open-air strip shopping centers, garden-style apartment buildings, and high-rise buildings (structures with the highest floor greater than 75 feet above the lowest level of Fire Department vehicle access). Buildings that are greater than seven stories in height are generally classified as high-rise occupancies.

The Fire Department shall have the capability for additional alarm assignments that can provide for more personnel and services including the application of water to the fire; engagement in search and rescue, forcible entry, ventilation, and preservation of property; accountability for personnel; and provision of support activities for those events that are beyond the capability of the initial first-alarm assignment. The Fire Department shall be permitted to use established automatic aid or mutual aid agreements to comply with the recommended performance objectives including response times and staffing requirements.

The list of required staffing functions for the initial full alarm assignment for a structure fire in a typical 2000-square foot single-family dwelling as described above includes:

1) Establishment of incident command outside of the hazard area for the overall coordination and direction of the initial full alarm assignment with a minimum of one member dedicated to this task – 1 officer.
2) Establishment of an uninterrupted water supply of a minimum of 400 gpm for 30 minutes with supply lines(s) maintained by an operator – 1 firefighter.

3) Establishment of an effective water flow application rate of 300 gpm from two hoselines (fire attack and backup), each of which has a minimum flow rate of 100 gpm with each hoseline operated by a minimum of two members – 4 firefighters.

4) Provision of one support member for each fire attack and backup hoseline deployed to provide hydrant hookup and to assist in laying hoselines, utility control, and forcible entry – 2 firefighters.

5) Provision of at least one victim search and rescue team with each such team consisting of a minimum of two members – 2 firefighters.

6) Provision of at least one team, consisting of a minimum of two members, to raise ground ladders and perform ventilation – 2 firefighters.

7) If an aerial device is used in operations, one member to function as an aerial operator to always maintain primary control of the aerial device – 1 firefighter.

8) At a minimum, an initial rapid intervention crew (IRIC) assembled from the initial attack crew and, as the initial alarm response arrives, a full and sustained rapid intervention crew (RIC) is established – 4 firefighters.

9) Total effective response force (ERF) with a minimum of 16 firefighters (17 if an aerial device is used).

Note: The State of New Jersey requires the presence of an incident safety officer (ISO) at the scene of all types of working structures fires. This provision adds an additional ISO-qualified fire officer to the staffing requirements outlined above.

It should be noted that much of the single-family housing stock in both Montclair and Glen Ridge exceed more than 2,000 square feet in living area and most are equipped with a basement. In some cases, many of the private homes in both communities range well above the 4,000 square foot range.

The standard goes on to identify the staffing needs for response to fires in larger occupancies such as strip shopping centers ranging from 13,000 square feet to 196,000 square feet and in a typical 1200 square foot apartment within a three-story, garden-style apartment building. Both Montclair and Glen Ridge have many examples of these types of occupancies:

1) Establishment of incident command outside of the hazard area for the overall coordination and direction of the initial full alarm assignment with a minimum of one member dedicated to this task – 1 officer and 1 command aide.

2) Establishment of two uninterrupted water supplies of a minimum of 500 gpm for 30 minutes with each supply lines maintained by an operator – 2 firefighters

3) Establishment of an effective water flow application rate of 500 gpm from three hoselines (one fire attack, one backup and one exposure), each of which has a minimum flow rate of 150 gpm with each hoseline operated by a minimum of two members – 6 firefighters.

4) Provision of one support member for each fire attack, exposure, and backup hoseline deployed to provide hydrant hookup and to assist in laying hoselines, utility control, and forcible entry – 3 firefighters.

5) Provision of at least two victim search and rescue teams with each such team consisting of a minimum of two members – 4 firefighters.

6) Provision of at least two teams, each team consisting of a minimum of two members, to raise ground ladders and perform ventilation – 4 firefighters.

7) If an aerial device is used in operations, one member to function as an aerial operator to always maintain primary control of the aerial device – 1 firefighter.

8) At a minimum, an initial rapid intervention crew (IRIC) assembled from the initial attack crew and, as the initial alarm response arrives, a full and sustained rapid intervention crew (RIC) is established – 4 firefighters.

9) The establishment of an initial medical care component consisting of at least two members capable of providing immediate on-scene emergency medical support and transport that provides rapid access to civilians or members that potentially need medical treatment – 2 firefighters or two EMTs.

10) Total effective response force (ERF) with a minimum of 27 firefighters (28 if an aerial device is used).

The standard makes further recommendations for minimum staffing levels for fires occurring in high-rise structures, which are defined as a building with the highest floor greater than 75 feet above the lowest level of Fire Department vehicle access. This is interpreted to mean buildings where the upper floors are beyond the reach of Fire Department aerial devices. Both Montclair and Glen Ridge have several examples of high-rise structures including several high-rise apartment buildings of more than seven stories in height and one hotel occupancy with nine floors. Both communities also have several large area residential structures that would also demand additional staffing requirements by virtue of their size should a structure fire be encountered in one of these massive complexes:

1) Establishment of a stationary incident command post outside of the hazard area for the overall coordination and direction of the initial full alarm assignment with a minimum of one officer with an aide dedicated to these tasks and all operations are to be conducted in compliance with the incident command system – 1 officer and 1 firefighter.

2) Establishment of an uninterrupted water supply to the building standpipe/sprinkler connection sufficient to support fire attack operations. If the building is equipped with a fire pump, one additional member with a radio to be sent to the fire pump location to monitor and maintain operation – 1 firefighter (2 firefighters if building has a fire pump).

3) Establishment of an effective water flow application rate on the fire floor at a minimum of 500 gpm from two hoselines, each operated by a minimum of two members to safely and effectively handle the hoseline – 4 firefighters.

4) Establishment of an effective water flow application rate on the floor above the fire floor at a minimum of 250 gpm from at least one hoseline, with each deployed hoseline operated by a minimum of two members to safely and effectively handle the hoseline – 2 firefighters.

5) At a minimum, an initial rapid intervention crew (IRIC) assembled from the initial attack crew and, as the initial alarm response arrives, a full and sustained rapid intervention crew (RIC) is established – 4 firefighters.

6) Provision of two or more search-and-rescue teams consisting of a minimum of two members each – 4 firefighters.

7) Provision of one officer, with an aide, dedicated to establishing an oversight at or near the entry point on the fire floor(s) – 1 officer and 1 firefighter.

8) Provision of one officer, with an aide, dedicated to establishing an oversight at or near the entry point on the floor above the fire – 1 officer and 1 firefighter.

9) Provision of two or more evacuation management teams to assist and direct building occupants with evacuation or sheltering actions, with each team consisting of a minimum of two members – 4 firefighters.

10) Provision of one or more members to account for and manage elevator operations – 1 firefighter.

11) Provision for a minimum of one trained incident safety officer – 1 officer.

12) Provision for a minimum of one officer two floors below the fire floor to manage the interior staging area – 1 officer.

13) Provision of a minimum of two members to manage member rehabilitation and at least one of the members to be trained to the ALS level – 1 firefighter and 1 paramedic.

14) Provision of an officer and a minimum of three members to conduct vertical ventilation operations – 1 officer and 3 firefighters.

15) Provision of a minimum of one officer to manage the building lobby operations – 1 officer.

16) Provision of a minimum of two members to transport equipment to a location below the fire floor – 2 firefighters.

17) Provision of one officer to manage external base operations – 1 officer.

18) Establishment of an initial medical care component consisting of a minimum of two crews with a minimum of two members each with one member trained to the ALS level (paramedic) capable of providing immediate on-scene emergency medical support, and transport that provides rapid access to civilians or members potentially needing medical treatment – 2 firefighters and 2 paramedics.

19) Total effective response force a minimum of 42 firefighters (43 if the building is equipped with a fire pump).

Given that the Montclair Fire Department maintains an on-duty minimum shift strength of 16 firefighters and officers, the agency barely meets the minimum resource requirements for most small single-family dwelling fires called for in the standard. Deployment of the resources from the three township fire stations should allow for the arrival of the initial fire company in less than 4 minutes and the balance of the first alarm resources in less than 8 minutes to almost all areas within the township and borough boundaries. There are no formal provisions in place for the recall of additional chief officers and off-duty personnel for all structural fire incidents. Fire mutual aid systems are in place with adjoining fire agencies in Essex County to supplement the on-duty fire forces for greater alarm incidents.

One aspect of the city's building stock that is of special concern to the study team is the number of mid-rise residential buildings in the township that pre-date present building and life safety codes that require fire sprinkler coverage for mid-rise structures. A mid-rise structure is defined as a building between four and seven stories in height. While several of the residential mid-rise buildings have full or partial fire sprinkler systems installed, a number of the buildings do not have any fire sprinkler coverage. A fire occurring in one of the unsprinklered residential mid-rise occupancies would prove very taxing for the present on-duty complement of 16 firefighters and would require additional fire rescue resources from outside of the township. The present policy of response to reported fires in these high-risk structures does not include the automatic dispatch of additional firefighting forces from surrounding mutual aid communities. The Fire Department must consider expanding the initial fire response to residential mid-rise structures in the city beyond the present on-duty fire forces and develop automatic aid agreements with neighboring Fire Departments to fill this gap in response coverage.

In an urban/suburban environment such as Montclair with high population density dwellings in close proximity, multifamily occupancies, older mid-rise apartments, high-rise apartments and high occupancy institutions, including a hospital, schools, and portions of the campus of a major university, the Fire Department's response capability must be enhanced with additional personnel, apparatus, and resources for the initial alarm assignment.

While current fire mutual aid pacts provide additional staffing and equipment for large incidents, these resources are not dispatched until the arrival of the initial township fire resources, and an assessment of the situation has been made before calling for reinforcements. This method of deployment fails to provide for a timely response of additional resources to large fires and emergencies presented by the type, density, occupancy, and construction of several target hazard occupancies in the coverage area.

Automatic aid agreements differ from mutual aid pacts in that all resources identified as needed on the initial alarm are dispatched immediately according to specific dispatch criteria. In this way, the effective response force (EFR) is assembled more quickly for the type of structural fire or emergency encountered. Credible reports such as fire or visible smoke reported in the target structure are used to filter more routine calls, examples include: alarm activations, odor of smoke, smoke from unattended cooking.

This method of deployment seeks to provide for a timely response of all anticipated resources within an accelerated time frame. Delivering an effective response force rapidly to the scene of structural fires in high- and medium-hazard occupancies like shopping centers, large commercial buildings, and institutional buildings such as hospitals and schools, as well as high occupancy large area residential buildings and high-rise residential towers, will ensure the likelihood of a more successful outcome of the incident while protecting the lives and property of the inhabitants. It will also enhance the operational safety of all firefighting personnel involved in mitigating the incident.

The Montclair Fire Department is well positioned and equipped to combat structural fires in small residential occupancies, however, the current deployment plan of personnel and equipment is not sufficient to combat fires and other emergencies that may occur in the considerable number of mercantile shops and restaurants, garden apartment complexes, older mid-rise apartment buildings, large commercial buildings, large area mid-rise apartment buildings, and high-rise residential apartment towers located throughout the township and the borough. The Fire Department along with the governing body should consider conducting a detailed risk assessment of the large structures and complexes in the

community. Such an assessment would assist in planning for a more robust fire response to structural fires and other major emergencies reported in these occupancies.

- **Recommendation 11**: Members of the Fire Department should conduct a detailed fire risk assessment of all large residential, mercantile, commercial, and institutional occupancies to develop a plan to effectively combat structural fires and other major emergencies involving high and medium hazard occupancies located in the township and borough.

- **Recommendation 12**: Consistent with recommendation #3, the Fire Department should seek to develop automatic aid agreements with area fire agencies to provide for a more robust and timely response to structural fires and other major emergencies that may occur in medium and high hazard occupancies in the township and borough.

Organizational Structure & Staffing

The current organizational structure for the Montclair Fire Department consists of a total of 70 members as follows:

Montclair Fire Department Current Organization Staffing	
Position	Number of Personnel
Fire Chief	1
Deputy Chief	1
Battalion Chiefs	4
Captains	7
Fire Official	1
Lieutenants	12
Firefighters	44

Position Descriptions

The study team was provided with job descriptions for the positions of firefighter, lieutenant, captain, Battalion Chief, and deputy chief. The current job descriptions for the roles of firefighter, lieutenant, and captain while comprehensive, are dated. Each should be reviewed to assure that they remain consistent with contemporary requirements and

demands to include all of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and expectations required for each role.

The position of captain is similar to lieutenant. Both have the same authority and responsibilities when serving as company officers. In Montclair, captains are used as station commanders and can serve as acting Battalion Chiefs when necessary. Certain captains are assigned as house captains and have responsibilities associated with facility maintenance.

The job description for the role of Battalion Chief is actually an early version of the deputy chief job description. The job description should be completely revised to assure it addresses all of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and expectations required for the position of Battalion Chief.

The role of Fire Official includes statutory responsibilities and authority. In Montclair, the Fire Official role is considered a promotion in rank. The department should develop a position description for this role that includes both the statutory and the local requirements and expectations.

The job description of deputy chief does not exist. Instead, a position description based on a memorandum from a former township manager outlining the roles of administrative and operations deputy chief was provided. A job description should be created that addresses all of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and expectations required for the position of deputy chief.

- **Recommendation 13:** Develop comprehensive, relevant, and up to date job descriptions for each position.

- **Recommendation 14:** Consideration should be given to including specific administrative responsibilities for lieutenants, captains, and Battalion Chiefs to help develop the administrative capacity of the members in those roles.

Fire Prevention Bureau

The New Jersey fire code began with the Uniform Fire Safety Act of 1983, leading to the adoption of the Uniform Fire Code (UFC) in 1985. This act was spurred by a series of tragic fires in the early 1980s and established a framework for consistent fire safety standards statewide. The act required establishment of local enforcement agencies (LEA) and the registration of life hazard use (LHU) occupancies. The code has evolved through various updates. Effective October 2024, the state requires the use of the 2018 International Fire Code, New Jersey Edition.

Life Hazards Uses refer to buildings or businesses that pose a potential risk to human life, public welfare, or firefighters. The state's Uniform Fire Safety Act mandates the registration and inspection of these high-risk locations to enforce fire codes designed to prevent fires and protect occupants. Key aspects of the code include requirements for maintaining fire escapes, ensuring accessible fire extinguishers, and addressing specific hazards like the proper clearance for combustible materials around buildings.

In some communities with older downtowns such as Montclair, violations from the original code or subsequent retrofit fire codes are sometimes found. The most common violation continues to be windowless basements without the required fire alarm or fire suppression systems. In addition, Fire Departments continue to find occupancies operating without life hazard use registration.

The duties and responsibilities of the Fire Official and fire inspectors are expanding. The increase and popularity of food trucks, pop-up shops, farmer's markets, sporting, and community events all tax fire prevention bureaus. These events require fire inspections on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Consistent with event timing, inspections are necessarily made during evenings, weekends, and holidays when most municipal fire prevention bureaus are closed. To accommodate these inspections, some Fire Departments use on-duty firefighters certified as fire inspectors.

The Montclair fire prevention bureau is understaffed with the current workload in Montclair and Glen Ridge. The staffing consists of a career fire officer serving as the Fire Official, two part-time civilian inspectors, and a part-time administrative support. The part-time civilian fire inspectors were previously limited to working for six-month periods.

In the past, the Fire Department utilized on duty personnel to perform in-service inspections of non-life hazard use occupancies. As of February 3, 2025, according to the Uniform Fire Safety Act, a certified fire inspector must now conduct any fire inspection. The local in-service inspection program was paused around that time.

The two tables below illustrate the annual work accomplished by the fire prevention bureau taken from their LEA reports to the Division of Fire Safety.

Montclair Local Enforcement Agency			
Year	**2024**	**2023**	**2022**
Total Life Hazards Uses	326	320	308
Life Hazard Uses Inspected	326	291	308
Life Hazard Uses Reinspected	191	10	90
Life Hazard Use Certificates Issued	310	291	308
Total Non-Life Hazard Uses	789	1058	1038

Non-Life Hazard Uses Inspected	591	470	1038
Non-Life Hazard Uses Reinspected	51	0	74
Non-Life Hazard Use Certificates Issued	500	470	1038
Permits Issued	246	226	237
Permits Inspected	255	226	237
Certificates Issued	488	472	517
Certificates Applied	488	472	0
Penalties Issued	26	19	10
Fire Investigations	13	12	30
Complaint Investigations	36	6	35
Complaints Resolved	36	6	35
Imminent Hazard Violations	1	0	6

Glen Ridge Local Enforcement Activity Report			
Year	**2024**	**2023**	**2022**
Total Life Hazards Uses	36	29	30
Life Hazard Uses Inspected	36	36	30
Life Hazard Uses Reinspected	13	0	3
Life Hazard Use Certificates Issued	36	35	30
Total Non-Life Hazard Uses	25	17	44
Non-Life Hazard Uses Inspected	8	6	44
Non-Life Hazard Uses Reinspected	2	0	2
Non-Life Hazard Use Certificates Issued	8	3	44
Permits Issued	2	2	8
Permits Inspected	2	2	8
Certificates Issued	0	0	0
Certificates Applied	0	0	0
Penalties Issued	0	0	0
Fire Investigations	3	1	5
Complaint Investigations	1	0	5
Complaints Resolved	1	0	5
Imminent Hazard Violations	0	0	0

The local Fire Official reported that a change in the inspection of multi-family dwelling units will become effective in January 2026. At that time, the New Jersey Bureau of Housing will no longer inspect the 1,100 multi-family dwelling units within the jurisdiction. The responsibility for those inspections will be transferred to Montclair, adding significant workload to an understaffed fire prevention bureau.

The documentation of fire inspections and fire prevention activities is critical. The Montclair Fire Prevention Bureau records were impacted by a 2023 cyber-attack, and a portion of their records were never recovered. Consequently, the data provided was incomplete including the financial information.

Fire prevention bureaus are intended to be financially self-supporting, and it is critical that Fire Department authorities be able to fully evaluate the cost effectiveness of the operation. It is essential that the financial recording related to all fire prevention bureau activities be consistent, thorough, and audited to assure compliance.

The Montclair Fire Department uses the Alpine Software Red Alert Red MNX platform as its records management system. A growing number of fire prevention bureaus have switched to Spatial Data Logic (SDL) software for records management. SDL is currently used by the local building department and expanding it to the Fire Department would allow enhanced collaboration between agencies responsible for inspection programs.

- **Recommendation 15:** Add two, full time, career firefighters to the fire prevention bureau to serve as a supervising fire inspector and fire inspector.

- **Recommendation 16:** Expand the administrative support staff from part-time to full-time to handle the increased workload and walkup window and telephone coverage.

- **Recommendation 17:** Implement a plan to use off-duty Montclair firefighters who are certified fire inspectors to supplement on a per-diem basis, the full-time inspectors.

- **Recommendation 18:** Reinstitute the in service inspections by use of on duty fire suppression personnel certified as fire inspectors.

- **Recommendation 19:** Review all financial reporting and recording of fire prevention bureau activities to assure full regulatory compliance.

Staffing Levels

Although there is no standard to establish the number of firefighters on duty, an assessment of the overall risks within the community, the built environment and the availability of the local firefighting resources can all inform decisions on staffing levels.

Just as there are no two communities that are identical, there are no two Fire Departments that are exactly the same. However, useful comparisons can be drawn from similar communities and Fire Departments. Two Essex County Fire Departments, the townships of West Orange and Bloomfield, are illustrated below for staffing comparisons with Montclair:

Fire Department Comparison							
Fire Department	**Population**	**Coverage (Square Miles)**	**Total Staff**	**Personnel / Shift**	**Total 2024 Responses**	**Fire Stations**	**Apparatus Staffed**
Bloomfield	42,947	5.3	78	19	3,916[1]	4	Engines 4[2] Ladders 1
West Orange	48,276	12	86	20/21	2,757 (fire) 4,999 (EMS)[3]	5	Engines 3 Ladders 1 Ambulances 2
Montclair	49,280[4]	7.5[5]	70	16/17[6]	2,522[7]	3[8]	Engines 3 Ladders 2

In 2017, the Montclair Fire Department had a staffing level of 87 members, distributed among line firefighting personnel and administrative staff members. In 2025, the staffing level has been reduced through attrition to 70[9] members responsible for coverage of line and staff positions. This reduction of 17 personnel over an eight year period results in a staffing level decrease of 19.5%.

To provide 24/7 coverage, the firefighting force is divided into four groups, one of which is on duty for a period or shift of 24 hours. Each group is led by a shift commander, typically a Battalion Chief, and staffs three engine companies and two ladder companies, each staffed with either a captain or lieutenant and two or in some cases, three firefighters.

[1] Bloomfield total responses include EMS – First Responder incidents.
[2] Operation of four engine companies is based on full staffing, otherwise one engine is placed out of service.
[3] West Orange Fire Department provides EMS basic life support transport service.
[4] Montclair population total includes Glen Ridge.
[5] Montclair coverage area includes Glen Ridge.
[6] Montclair current staffing is two groups with 16 and two groups with 17 personnel.
[7] Montclair total responses includes 273 responses in Glen Ridge during 2024.
[8] Montclair Fire Station 3 currently closed for structural repair.
[9] Funding in 2025 included 77 positions, however, 70 positions are currently filled.

Two of the existing groups have 17 members, the remaining have 16 members. Since the Fire Department operates with a minimum on duty roster of 16 personnel, there is an unsustainable reliance on overtime to fill vacancies. By comparison, in 2017, there were two groups with 20 members and two with 21 members. Consequently, the reliance on overtime to fill vacancies at that time was not as great.

The history of overtime use in the last three years illustrates the reliance on overtime to maintain 16 members on duty at all times as shown in the table that follows:

Year	Overtime Hours	Dollar Amount
2024	20,035	$1,337,716.
2023	17,710	$1,338,042.
2022	16,370	$1,285,017.

Although the cost of overtime remained relatively stable over the three year period, the actual number of hours required to fill positions increased by 18%. The cost of overtime can vary based on the tenure and rank of the individual filling the vacant position. The number of hours worked provides a more accurate assessment of the actual amount of overtime that occurs.

An important outcome from the reduction in staffing levels is an increase in the occurrence of mandatory overtime. This practice means that a member who has completed a 24 hour shift is ordered to remain on duty to fill a vacancy that otherwise could not be filled voluntarily. The department limits continuous duty to 48 hours except in emergency circumstances, nevertheless, mandatory overtime has both a negative impact on morale and critically, on member health and wellness.

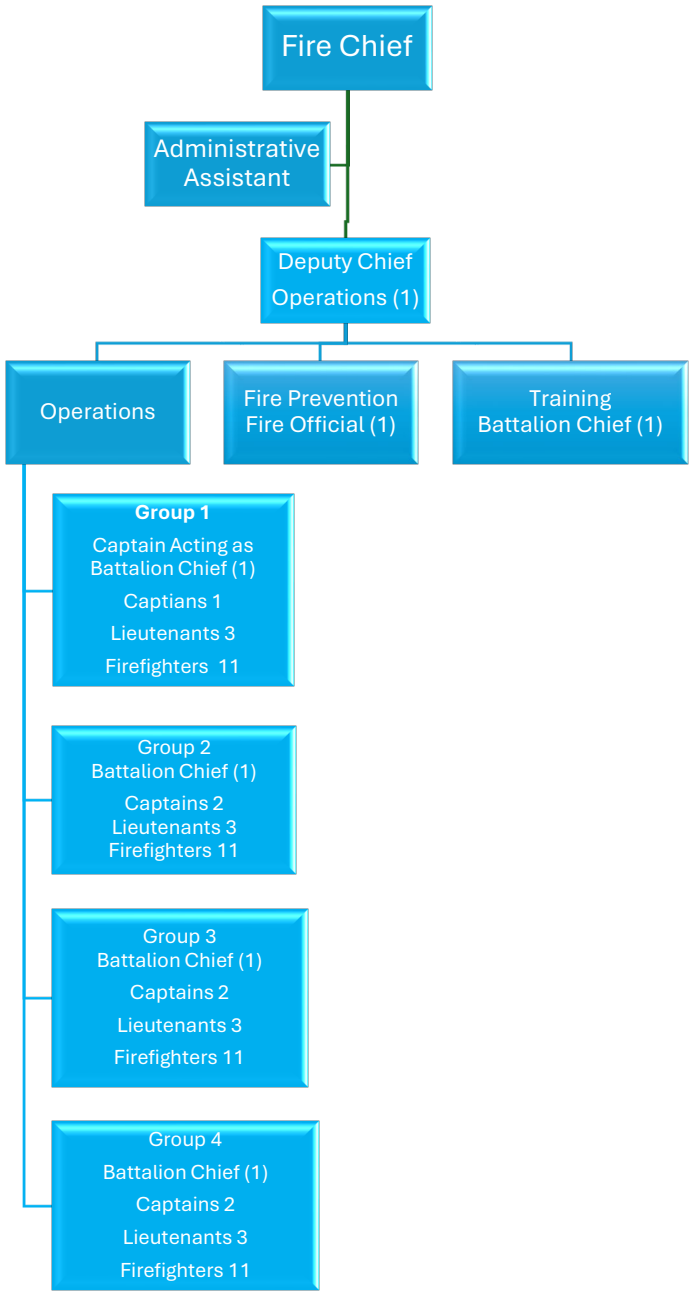
In order to maintain a minimum staff of 16 personnel while reducing overtime, the department roster would need to be increased to 80, an increase of 14 over the current complement of 66 line personnel. That total is calculated using the most recent year leave time experience and is illustrated in the following formula:

Staffing Calculation	
Average Work Week in Hours	42
Average Leave Time (total authorized leave time / 52 weeks)	8.462428
Hours of coverage required each week	168
Minimum Staffing Level	16
Number of Personnel to fill one position on 24 hour basis, 7 days per week: (168 / 42-8.462428)	5.009307
Required number of personnel to maintain 16 person minimum: 5.009307 x 16 = 80.14	**80**

In addition to the increased use of overtime to maintain constant staffing of 16 personnel on duty, the administrative staff have been further reduced. One of two deputy chief positions is vacant and has been temporarily filled by a Battalion Chief who also serves as training officer. A vacancy in a line Battalion Chief position is being filled by a captain. The reduction of staff has a cascading negative impact on overall operations.

Ultimately, the level of fire protection a community has is determined by the level it is willing to pay for. The following are five staffing options for consideration, each including an organization chart:

Option 1: Maintain Existing Staffing Level of 70 Personnel

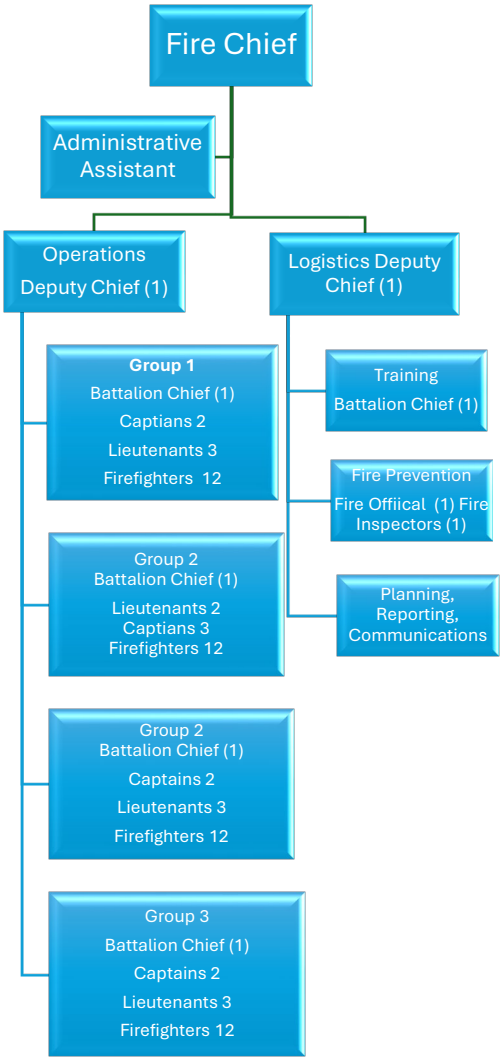


Option 1: Maintain status quo of 70 personnel.

- Discussion: The current staffing creates an unsustainable level of overtime coverage and does not address the immediate requirements to address administrative functions including fire prevention and training.

- Impact: Although the current level of fire protection is maintained, the negative impact of increasing levels of overtime and diminished administrative capacity are a consequence.

Option 2: Increase staffing level to the budgeted 77 personnel

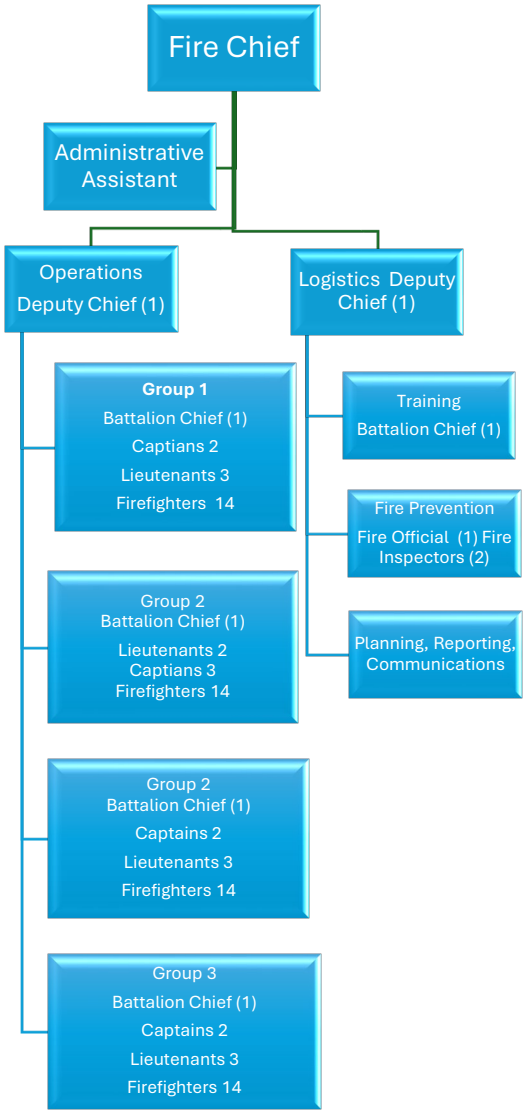


Option 2: Increase staffing level to 77 personnel.

- Discussion: In 2025 a total 77 positions were included in the budget.
- Impact: The addition of seven personnel will provide some though not sufficient staffing to substantially reduce overtime. In this scenario, each of the four groups

could be increased by one firefighter, the deputy chief role filled, the training officer role maintained at the Battalion Chief level and one inspector added to the fire prevention bureau.

Option 3: Increase staffing level to 87 personnel.



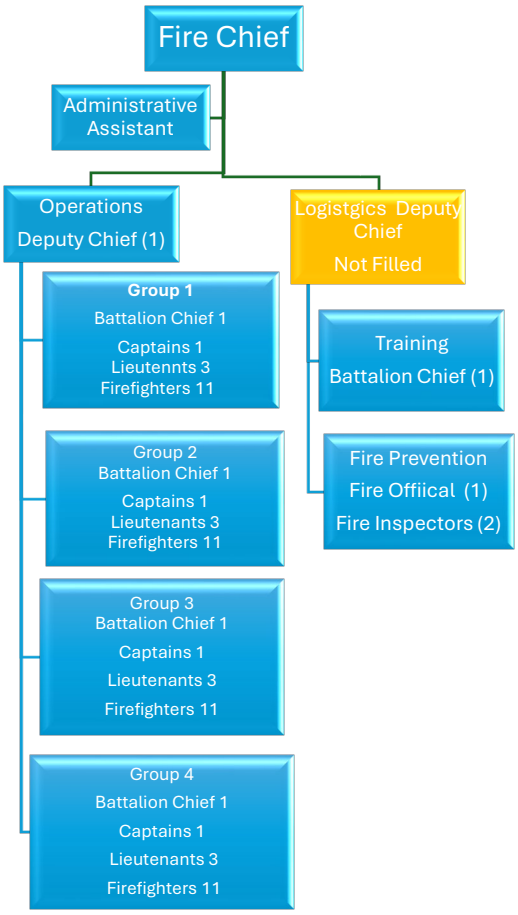
Option 3: Increase staffing level to 87 personnel.

- Discussion: This option provides the optimal level of fire protection for operating the existing complement of three engines, two ladder trucks and the administrative and support staff while reducing the reliance on overtime expense. On duty staffing would be increased to 20 personnel on each of the four shifts, a logistics deputy chief

position would be filled, the training chief role would be maintained, and two full time fire inspector positions would be added.

- Impact: While this option provides an optimal level of fire protection, it would represent an additional 10 personnel from the existing budgeted level of 77.

Option 4: Maintain existing staffing level of 70 personnel and eliminate one Ladder Company.



Option 4: Maintain existing staffing level of 70 personnel and eliminates one Ladder Company

- Discussion: This option will yield approximately 12 personnel that are currently assigned to one of the two ladder companies. These positions can then be distributed within the organization to improve staffing on remaining companies and reduce reliance on overtime and improve fire prevention bureau staffing.
- Impact: Significant increase in response time of ladder company to northern area of response district. Potential, negative impact on the ISO rating for reduction of ladder

company. Reduces on-duty firefighting capacity by one ladder and reduces one company officer per shift. Logistics deputy chief role is not filled. Improved staffing levels on remaining companies, improved operational capacity in fire prevention, and a reduction in overtime. The reduction of one ladder truck may be mitigated in part by the acquisition of a quint apparatus that combines many of the features of a pumper and ladder truck.

Option 5: Longer Term Option -- Regional Approach to Fire Protection

Option 5: Longer Term Option -- Regional Approach to Fire Protection

- Discussion: Montclair already maintains a shared service agreement with the Borough of Glen Ridge for fire protection. That experience should be leveraged to further explore expansion of regionalized fire protection services among other communities.
- Impact: The benefits can include improved coverage and response times, reducing duplication, sharing the cost of personnel, equipment, apparatus, and facilities while moderating the cost of fire protection.

Training and Professional Development Program

One of the hallmarks of a professional fire agency is a robust comprehensive training and competency development program. It has been said that the most important asset of a fire agency is its personnel. A training program that well prepares the organizations personnel is central to its mission. Fire Department training is an ongoing process that requires periodic refresher training as well as exposure to new concepts and tactics. Every fire agency has a duty to ensure that all personnel have been prepared to perform at a high level of competency in a wide variety of subject areas. This can only be ensured by the Fire Department having an organized and mission-focused system of instruction and practice.

The training program should also cover not only entry-level firefighting personnel but should also include components that are targeted at the professional development of all ranks and positions in the agency including first-level supervisors and chief officers. The professional development program should include not only firefighting personnel but also any civilian and support personnel attached to the agency. Personnel such as those assigned to administrative support staff, communications personnel, fire apparatus maintenance professionals, and fire alarm maintenance staff should also have a clear guidance path for maintaining and enhancing skills in their areas of responsibility.

In the State of New Jersey, certain entry-level training is required of firefighters along with periodic refresher training in several subject areas. Numerous federal and state regulations such as those promulgated by federal OSHA and NJ PEOSHA require both initial and annual refresher training in a number of special operations areas including hazardous materials response, bloodborne pathogens, and certain technical rescue subject areas. The federal Respiratory Protection Act requires annual recertification training for all personnel who utilize Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). NFPA standards indicate that all emergency response personnel receive initial and on-going training and education in the subject areas that they may be expected to respond to. NFPA 1500, a standard that outlines a recommended safety and health program for fire agencies requires that all firefighting personnel be certified to NFPA standards for each type of job function that they may be assigned to. The standard further recommends that each job position receive periodic refresher training and updated education in the relevant topic areas. NFPA standards also recommend that all firefighters participate in live-fire training exercises annually.

The Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) is a private organization that establishes a classification schedule that evaluates the fire suppression capabilities of a fire agency. Insurance professionals use such classifications to establish fire insurance rates for commercial and residential properties. ISO recommends that firefighters receive periodic training and education in various subject areas to receive maximum credit under their Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) that includes:

- Company level training – 16 hours per member per month.
- Officer training – 12 hours per year of continuing education for all officers.
- New driver and operator training – 60 hours of initial orientation training.
- Existing driver and operator training – 12 hours of refresher training per year.
- Hazardous materials training – 6 hours per member per year.
- Recruit training – 240 hours per recruit in the first year of employment.
- Officer certification – all officers certified to at least Fire Officer 1 standards (NFPA 1021).
- Access to training facilities with a drill tower and a live-fire training structure (smoke room) – 18 hours per year per member.

For maximum credit ISO requires that the agency conducts building familiarization pre-incident planning inspections of each commercial, industrial, institutional, and other similar structures once a year for maximum credit in the FSRS. Records of the inspections should include complete and up to date notes and sketches. The agency must also supply credible records to ISO to receive credit for all firefighting training events.

Professional Development Program

The Fire Department filled the training officer position in February 2024 after being vacant since 2007. The role of a dedicated training officer will be critical in 2026 as Fire Departments will be scrambling to meet the compliance date for the new NFPA 1010 Standard. NFPA 1010 is replacing NFPA Standards 1001, 1002, 1003, and 1005 to address a number of training requirements. Fire Departments are facing a compliance date of June 30, 2026, and should anticipate additional funding needs to meet the training requirements.

The training officer's primary task should be to oversee the development of new firefighters, develop, and monitor the on-duty training of current members and offer outside training programs for members. Due to the lack of a second deputy chief, the training officer has been assigned various other administrative duties.

The department has benefitted from the renewed focus on training. For the first time in several years, the groups have been participating in live-burn training at the Morris County Fire Academy. Additionally, joint live-burn training is scheduled with their mutual aid partners from the Orange Fire Department in November 2025. A Training Committee was formed that will explore additional training programs for 2026. While the department leadership supports personnel attending outside training programs, the current staffing level has limited the ability for members to get release from duty to attend outside training. Additional funding should be allocated to support member attendance in outside training programs.

The Montclair Fire Department used in-service suppression members to conduct non-life hazard fire inspections until a change in State regulations in February 2025 which required all inspectors to be certified inspectors. The department hosted a fire inspector training program to increase the number of fire inspectors to 14. The Fire Department delivered an emergency medical responder training program for all members. This training would enable the implementation of a first responder medical program.

The Fire Department training records are stored in a variety of records management systems, the Garden State Municipal Joint Insurance Fund, Vector Solutions Training Program, Red Alert MMX and recently added Lexipol Fire Rescue 1.

Recruit Training

The department requires all new firefighter recruits to attend a county fire academy-based entry level firefighter training course that conforms with New Jersey requirements for certification as Firefighter Level One. This course conforms to NFPA 1001, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications and well prepares each recruit prior to employment

as a firefighter. Certification in Hazardous Materials, Awareness and Operations levels, and several other required training courses including Bloodborne Pathogens, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), and National Incident Management System (NIMS) is also included in the curriculum.

Upon graduating from the fire academy program, the recruit firefighters are placed on a cycle of orientation training on a suppression group. During this orientation cycle, the recruits are exposed to all facets of operation of Fire Department equipment and versed in department policies and procedures. A probationary firefighter handbook was developed for recruits, and a captain is assigned as their mentor and trainer to oversee their development. Prior to completion of a one-year probationary period, the handbook is reviewed for successful completion by the recruit's assigned company officer.

- **Recommendation 20**: Review the probationary firefighter training program including the probationary firefighter handbook and the mentoring elements to assure they continue to meet the requirement of the Fire Department and NFPA Standard 1001.

Promotional Testing Program

The Township of Montclair is not under the jurisdiction of the New Jersey Civil Service regulations for any matters related to municipal employment. Instead, local Fire Department employment is governed by the provisions of NJ Title 40, allowing for a degree of flexibility in both hiring and promotion. However, in response to recent challenges involving promotional testing, the Fire Department is planning to utilize the NJ Civil Service Commission to conduct its next promotional testing process. Following the next promotional selection process, Fire Department and municipal officials should carefully review the procedures and examination results to assure that the Civil Service examination process meets the needs of the Montclair Fire Department.

First-Level Supervisory Development Program

All prospective first-level supervisors including lieutenants and captains in the organization will be subject to the testing procedures required by the NJ Civil Service Commission promotional process. Preparation for the testing procedure requires a prospective supervisor to study several fire service reference manuals and other study materials and be well versed in fire and emergency control operations and supervisory theories. The study process is rigorous and requires considerable commitment on the part of the prospective supervisor.

Supervisor candidates sit for an examination conducted periodically by state officials. The scoring results are then forwarded to the municipalities and the candidates. Following satisfactory completion of the testing process, the prospective first-level supervisor candidates are placed on a ranked list that the municipality uses for promotion to fill vacancies in the supervisory ranks.

While this testing process is thorough and well prepares most candidates for promotion, the study materials and testing process, while relevant and useful, are generic and not tailored to the actual job performance requirements of an entry-level supervisor in the Montclair Fire Department. This requires the agency to orient newly promoted or acting company officers to better prepare them for their new job roles.

The Fire Department has no formal officer development program and no list of required or suggested certifications, classes, or educational levels to become a first-level supervisor or to maintain and develop further supervisory skills and knowledge. There is also no formal mentoring process for newly promoted company officers to ensure that individuals successfully complete the on-boarding process and are introduced to all aspects of their new roles and responsibilities.

It has been acknowledged by Fire Department management professionals that the transition from firefighter to company officer is the most difficult and most important change that firefighters will experience during their career.

Progressive fire agencies have recognized the need to support newly promoted fire officers and have developed excellent first-level supervisor programs for their personnel. The programs are usually based of the qualifications outlined in NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications and the specific roles and responsibilities of first-level supervisors in the organization.

The first-level, fire suppression supervisors are responsible for the delivery of daily in-service training programs, despite many officers never receiving formal fire instructor training. Currently, the department has four members certified as Level 1 Instructors and two as Level 2. While instructor certification is only required for live fire training, it would be valuable for all fire instructors to be certified.

The Managing Company Officer program offered by the National Fire Academy is a multiyear curriculum that introduces emergency services leaders to personal and professional skills in change management, risk reduction, and adaptive leadership. It is

considered by many fire service leaders as the first step in the professional development of emerging leaders. The program offers several courses intended to develop and enhance the skills needed by first-level supervisors to successfully make the transition from firefighter to company officer. The multi-year curriculum is offered for no fee through the academy. The link to the program is here:
https://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/programs/managing-officer/

- **Recommendation 21**: Develop a robust and full featured first-level supervisory training and professional development program that will prepare individuals for promotion to the supervisory ranks. The program should conform to the qualifications outlined in NFPA 1021 and should have a formal mentoring component. The Leadership in Supervision program offered by the National Fire Academy is an excellent program that should be included as part of the professional development of newly promoted officers.

- **Recommendation 22:** The Fire Department should require first-level supervisors to obtain certification as Fire Instructor Level 1 offered by the NJ Division of Fire Safety.

- **Recommendation 23:** The Fire Department should require newly promoted first-level supervisors to enroll in the Managing Company Officer program offered by the National Fire Academy.

Chief Officer Development Program

All prospective Battalion Chiefs will be subject to the testing procedures required by the NJ Department of Personnel promotional process. Preparation for the testing procedure requires a prospective chief officer to study several fire service reference manuals and other study materials and be well versed in fire and emergency control operations and supervisory theories.

The testing process is rigorous and requires considerable commitment on the part of the prospective chief officer candidate. Following satisfactory completion of the testing process, the prospective chief officer candidates are placed on a ranked list that the municipality uses for promotion to fill vacancies within the agency ranks. While this testing process is thorough and well prepares most candidates for promotion, the study materials and testing process, while relevant and useful, are generic and not tailored to the actual job performance requirements of an upper-level supervisor in the Montclair Fire Department. This requires

the agency to orient newly promoted chief officers to better prepare them for their new job roles.

The department has no formal officer development program and no list of required or suggested certifications, classes, or educational levels to become an upper-level supervisor or to maintain and develop further supervisory skills and knowledge during their career. There is also no formal mentoring process for newly promoted chief officers to ensure that individuals successfully complete the on-boarding process and are introduced to all aspects of their new roles and responsibilities.

Progressive fire agencies have recognized the need to support newly promoted chief officers and have developed excellent upper-level supervisor programs for their personnel. The programs should be based of the qualifications outlined in NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications, and the specific roles and responsibilities of upper-level supervisors in the organization.

The Executive Fire Officer program offered by the National Fire Academy is a multiyear curriculum that is designed to support the needs of fire agencies in preparing executive-level chief officers to meet the ever-changing demands of the dynamic communities in which they serve. The program content is designed to promote self-awareness and life-long learning for chief officers and is considered the pinnacle of fire service education levels.

It is considered by many fire service leaders and government officials as an important qualification for executive level fire service leaders. The multi-year curriculum is designed to introduce students to the concepts of leadership and self-awareness, organizational strength building, and community focus. A capstone project that includes development of a research paper and presentation based on a complex organizational issue that the student's agency has faced is a requirement. The course is offered for no fee through the academy. The link to information on the program is here:
https://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/programs/executive-fire-officer/

- **Recommendation 24**: Develop a robust and full featured, upper-level supervisory training and professional development program that will prepare individuals for promotion to the chief officer ranks. The program should conform to the qualifications outlined in NFPA 1021 and should have a formal mentoring component.

- **Recommendation 25**: The Fire Department should require newly promoted chief officers to enroll in the New Executive Chief Officer program offered by the National Fire Academy.

- **Recommendation 26**: Members promoted to the role of deputy chief and Fire Chief should be encouraged to enroll in the Executive Fire Officer program offered by the National Fire Academy.

Specialized Rescue Training

A number of years ago, the Montclair Fire Department responded to a technical rescue incident and found they lacked the equipment and training to effectively address the incident. As a result, the department began to acquire equipment and training for these low frequency high risk incidents.

In 2024, the department received grants for trench rescue and confined space awareness, operations, and technician level training. Montclair is located within Essex County which is designated an Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) county. UASI Special Operations Task Force assets are available to support responses to technical rescue incidents that may occur within a large portion of Northern New Jersey.

- **Recommendation 27:** The training program for special operations task force members and members of the department operating in a support role for specialized rescue incidents should be configured to meet the training requirements of NFPA 1710 and NFPA 1006, Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications, and NFPA 1670, Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Rescue Incidents.

Policies, Procedures, and Planning

Standard Operating Procedures

Firefighting continues to evolve to meet the needs of the community and its customers. A few decades ago, the typical fire responses were limited to building fires, vehicle fires, brush fires, and automobile extrications. Today's firefighters must be prepared to respond to a wide variety of calls for service including emergency medical. swift water, confined space, and high angle rescue just to name a few.

At the same time, the former "typical" responses have significantly changed and will continue to change. The building industry, seeking less expensive and quicker construction techniques are using more lightweight and prefabricated components. Modern furnishings burn faster and hotter due to the increased use of plastics and petroleum products.

A critical guide for firefighters to follow in addition to their training and experience are current and comprehensive Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's). These documents reference mandates and best practices from agencies such as the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety (NJDFS), Public Employee Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and Local, County, State and Federal regulations.

Montclair Fire Department subscribes to Power DMS, an online file storage system that permits members to have easy access to a variety of documents. Among the documents stored on PowerDMS include memos, General Orders, Policies & Procedures and Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs). While a comprehensive range of procedures are covered, the quality and detail of the documents varies as does the formatting.

There is no consistent numbering system currently used to help distinguish and categorize the documents. Many of the documents that are in memo form should be converted to SOGs. Likewise, the Policy & Procedures and General Orders should also be reformatted as SOGs and follow a consistent numbering system. We recommend that a consistent format and numbering convention be adopted and have shared examples with the Fire Chief.

Moreover, policies and guidelines that are no longer relevant but have not been updated or removed can negatively impact how members view the value of operational procedures. Ideally, one person should have the responsibility to assure that the documents are reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

- **Recommendation 28:** All existing policies and procedures in the form of memos, general orders, standard operating guidelines, and policies should be reviewed and updated using a consistent SOG format and indexing convention. One member should have the responsibility to assure documents are reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Apparatus Replacement Schedules and Capital Plan

The Fire Department maintains a six-year capital plan as a forecasting tool for budgeting and scheduling the replacement of costly items. The requirements for replacement and the cost of various types of equipment such as self-contained breathing apparatus and personal

protective clothing compel Fire Departments to develop replacement schedules for these and other future purchases. The Fire Department should, with appropriate professional guidance, develop a facilities improvement plan. This is especially important because two of the existing fire stations are nearly 125 years old.

The purchase of fire apparatus is a significant financial commitment for a municipality. Montclair Fire Department does not currently maintain an apparatus replacement schedule; it is recommended that one be created with input from the township CFO. Ideally, a replacement schedule paces the purchase of apparatus to avoid the need to acquire multiple units in one year.

The NFPA is a consensus standards making organization responsible for the creation and updating of fire protection and life safety standards and codes. NFPA Standard 1901 *Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus* provides guidance on the specification and performance of fire apparatus. While compliance with the standard is voluntary, fire industry best practices often reference the standard when analyzing fire apparatus construction and performance.

A related NFPA standard, NFPA 1911 *Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus* sets the minimum requirements for establishing periodic inspection, maintenance, and testing program for in-service apparatus. This standard also provides guidance on retirement of fire apparatus. This standard includes an appendix with the recommendation that fire apparatus be placed in reserve status after 15 years of use and replaced when 20 years old. Several factors impact the service life expectancy of fire apparatus. The quality of the manufacturer, level of training for the users of the vehicles, care and maintenance performed as well as the frequency and extent of use.

- **Recommendation 29**: Develop a multi-year replacement schedule for fire apparatus.
- **Recommendation 30**: Develop multi-year replacement schedules for certain high cost equipment with regulated useful life such as: self-contained breathing apparatus and personal protective equipment.
- **Recommendation 31**: With input from appropriate professionals, develop a long term facilities improvement plan.

Strategic Planning

In order for any organization, public or private, to reach its full potential, it must have a plan. An organization that knows where it is going, knows the environment in which it must

operate, and identifies how to get there, will have the best chance of meeting the needs of the community and achieving its goals.

Strategic planning is especially important for Fire Departments because public safety agencies – and the fire service in particular – find themselves in a very competitive and complex time. Our nation's first responders are continually being challenged to be more efficient while maintaining their effectiveness. Public expectations are increasing while financial and other resources are decreasing. Impacts are being felt across the nation as the effectiveness of our public safety systems strain against the pressure and change. With these issues in mind, planning teams need to have a clear understanding of their organization's direction, the public's expectations, and the impact of limited resources to accomplish specific goals and objectives. In order to make the most efficient use of available resources, organizations must set goals and objectives based on constructive efforts while eliminating programs that do not serve the customer.

- **Recommendation 32**: Develop a comprehensive, multi-year, community driven strategic plan.

Succession Planning

Fire Departments rely on consistent, experienced, and well-trained leaders. Succession planning is an important goal to prepare organizations for the inevitable transition in leadership. Effective leaders understand that they are building an organization that will thrive beyond their tenure.

Succession planning includes mentoring future leaders within the organization. Mentoring strengthens relationships, accelerates learning, and improves organizational continuity by setting the foundation for a succession plan. Creating such a plan is especially important for the Montclair Fire Department because there are a number of officers eligible to retire now.

- **Recommendation 33:** Develop a comprehensive succession plan to assure continuity of leadership during periods of transition.

Master Plan Reviews – Montclair & Glen Ridge

The study team reviewed the master plan reexamination reports for both communities and identified several issues that should be of special interest for the Fire Department:

Two of the recommendations identified in the Land Use and Parking Subcommittee section of the report state:

1. *Enact land use regulations that promote sustainable development patterns.*

   Response: The land use plan defines sustainable development as increased density in activity nodes near transit stations and commercial districts. This has largely been accomplished in Montclair Center and adjacent to the Bay Street train station. The Unified Plan recommends that incentive zoning in the C-1 Activity Node in the land use plan permit an increase in height to 8 stories and 75 units per acre.

3. *Utilize density bonuses to ensure public benefits accompany high-density development.*

   Response: The Plan recommends that density bonuses be tied to sidewalk/pedestrian infrastructure upgrades, bicycle parking infrastructure, bike share or car share programs, and contributions to planned public transit improvements.

Both of these recommendations appear to have been made without consideration for the impact that they may have on Fire Department operations. Taller buildings and greater unit density of future projects in the township will have a direct impact on the Fire Department's ability to deliver adequate fire and rescue services without bolstering the current staffing level.

Buildings with heights of 7 stories and above are considered high-rise buildings. The NFPA recommends an effective firefighting force of 42-43 firefighters to adequately control and extinguish fires, conduct search, and rescue operations during fires occurring in high-rise buildings. The current staffing level of the Fire Department is well below this number and there are no automatic aid agreements in place with neighboring Fire Departments to bolster the initial response to a fire in a high-rise structure located in the township or Glen Ridge.

The document also recommends tying density bonuses to a number of infrastructure enhancements including sidewalks, parking, ride share programs, and public transit, yet makes no mention of enhancements such as staffing, equipment, training, etc., that should be

made to the Fire Department to absorb the additional service demands made on the agency by these large developments.

The 2023 report furthers states in the Flexible, Affordable Urban/Suburban Lifestyle Subcommittee report:

- *Issue: There isn't enough diversity in terms of the types and prices ranges of housing available in Montclair.*

  Response: This is not an issue. Less than 50% of the Township's housing stock is comprised of single-family detached homes, with much of the Township's housing stock comprised of two-family and multi-family dwelling units (see Table 1). Since 2016, the Township has added over 644 new dwelling units including 606 multi-family units, 10 two-family homes, 30 single-family homes and three ADU's (accessory dwelling units).

The document does not mention the impact of these additional housing units and the attendant increase in resident population on Fire Department operations while the staffing levels of the Fire Department has been reduced over the same time period.

Glen Ridge: Master Plan Reexamination Report – 2020:

The master plan reexamination report for Glen Ridge details some interesting facts regarding growth in the small 1.8-square borough that is essentially built-out.

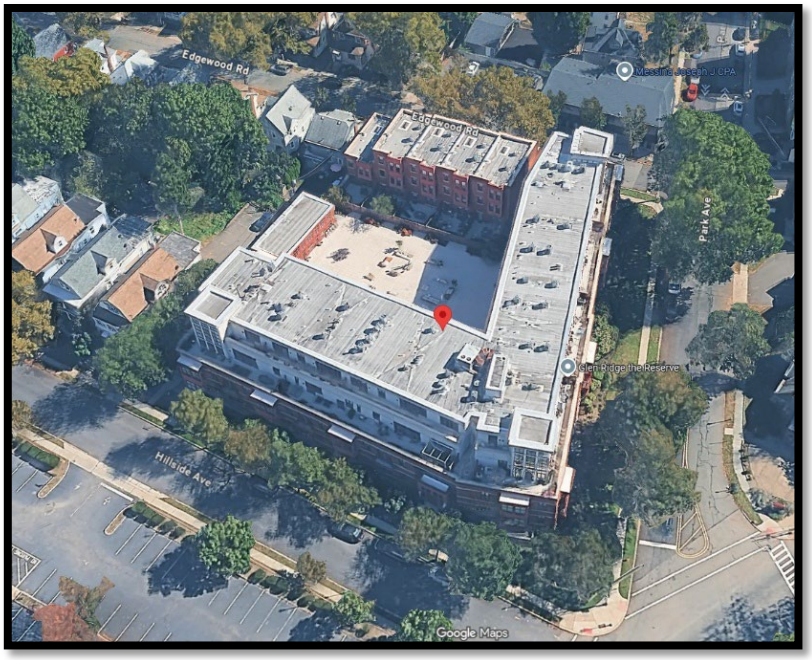
Growth

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's (NJTPA) population forecast indicates that the total population of Glen Ridge will continue to grow into the year of 2045 to 8,589 residents, just slightly over the peak population in 1970 of 8,518 residents. This forecast of a 12.36% increase in population from 2010 indicates a potential for a range of development activities, including additional housing, infrastructure, and transportation improvements in order to meet the needs of all current and future residents.

Much of the borough land use is limited by zoning to single-family residences. The report states that:

The overwhelming majority of Glen Ridge's housing stock are single-family units (87.69%), with only 5.00% being units in buildings with 2-4 apartments and 7.31% are units in buildings with five or more units. Just in the last decade from 2008 to 2018, no multifamily units or mixed-use units were constructed, where 30 1 & 2 family units were constructed, according to New Jersey Certificate of Ownership data. Two major redevelopment projects were built in the last few years in Glen Ridge. In 2006, a former Verizon property at 85 Park Avenue was redeveloped into the Reserve at Glen Ridge, a three-story 37-unit upscale condominium apartment building completed in the early 2000s. In 2021, the Clarus at Glen Ridge, a four-story residential upscale apartment complex with 110 living units located at 277 Baldwin Street was completed.

Clarus Glen Ridge – 277 Baldwin Street, Glen Ridge – four-story residential apartment complex with 110 living units, interior courtyard and an attached parking garage completed in 2021.



Glen Ridge the Reserve – 85 Park Avenue, Glen Ridge - four-story upscale condominium apartment building with 37 units including an interior courtyard, fitness center, underground, heated parking garage and other building amenities located nearby the Glen Ridge NJ Transit commuter rail station complete in the 2006.

The Montclair Fire Department provides fire protection and code enforcement services to the borough of Glen Ridge under the terms of a shared services agreement. The agreement, which was renewed in 2022, provided for payment to Montclair of $850,000 in 2023, less than the $925,000 the township received the previous year. The Glen Ridge payments are scheduled to rise about $60,000 each year to $1.4 million in 2032. Glen Ridge has the option to extend the agreement for five additional years – climbing to just over $1.7 million in 2037. While annual increases are built into the agreement to provide funds for the Fire Department to continue to deliver adequate fire protection and code enforcement services to the borough, it is unknown if the current fire protection contract includes a provision for adjusting the contract for future large scale developments and their possible impact on Fire Department operations.

Involvement early in the planning process is vital to keeping the local fire agency informed about proposed development and redevelopment projects that are put forward by developers to the planning review committee at the local government level. Having an assigned Fire Department representative participating in these important meetings keeps the fire agency abreast of proposed new occupancies within the municipality and allows for a voice at the

table to address any fire protection concerns that the agency may have regarding the type, size, and configuration of a particular project. The Montclair Fire Department currently has no representative assigned to the Planning Boards in either Montclair or Glen Ridge. Fire Officials report that they are only apprised of a new development in either municipality when the proposed plans are presented to the local Fire Official for final review. This causes a conflict for the fire agency as often while the proposed project may be compliant with the current applicable building and life safety codes in force at the time of construction, other concerns such fire hydrant placement, Fire Department sprinkler and standpipe connection location, Fire Department access or other operational concerns with the proposed structure may not have been adequately addressed in the plans.

- **Recommendation 34:** A member of the Fire Department should be designated as the liaison to the Planning Boards in both municipalities that make up the fire protection coverage area so that any concerns regarding proposed projects can be addressed early in the planning process.

Insurance Services Office Evaluation

The Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) collects information useful in many aspects of insurance underwriting. That information includes evaluations of public fire protection through the Public Protection Classification (PPC) program.

A community's investment in fire mitigation is a proven and reliable predictor of future fire losses. Insurance companies use PPC information to help establish fair premiums for fire insurance — generally offering lower premiums in communities with better protection. Many communities use the PPC as a benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of their fire-protection services. The PPC program is also a tool that helps communities plan for, budget, and justify improvements.

The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) is a manual containing the criteria ISO uses in reviewing the fire prevention and fire suppression capabilities of individual communities or fire protection areas. The schedule measures the major elements of a community's fire protection system and develops a numerical grading called a Public Protection Classification (PPC™).

The FSRS lists many items (facilities and practices) that a community should have to fight fires effectively. The schedule is performance based and assigns credit points for each item. Using the credit points and various formulas, ISO calculates a total score on a scale of 0 to 105.5.

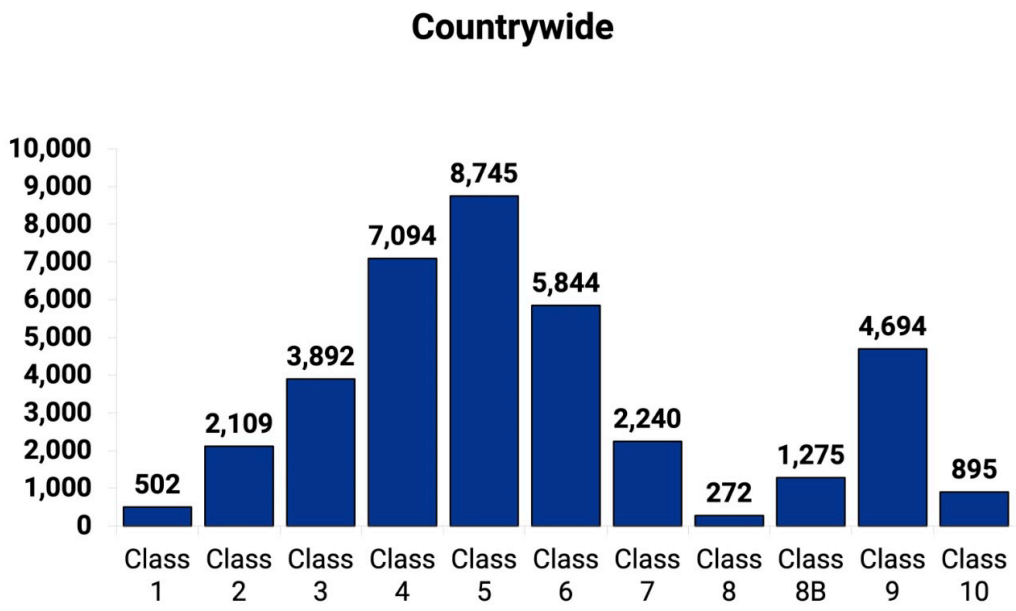
Three primary areas of a community's fire suppression system are considered for the FSRS: emergency communications, Fire Department (including operational considerations), and water supply. In addition, the schedule includes a Community Risk Reduction section that recognizes community efforts to reduce losses through fire prevention, public fire safety education, and fire investigation.

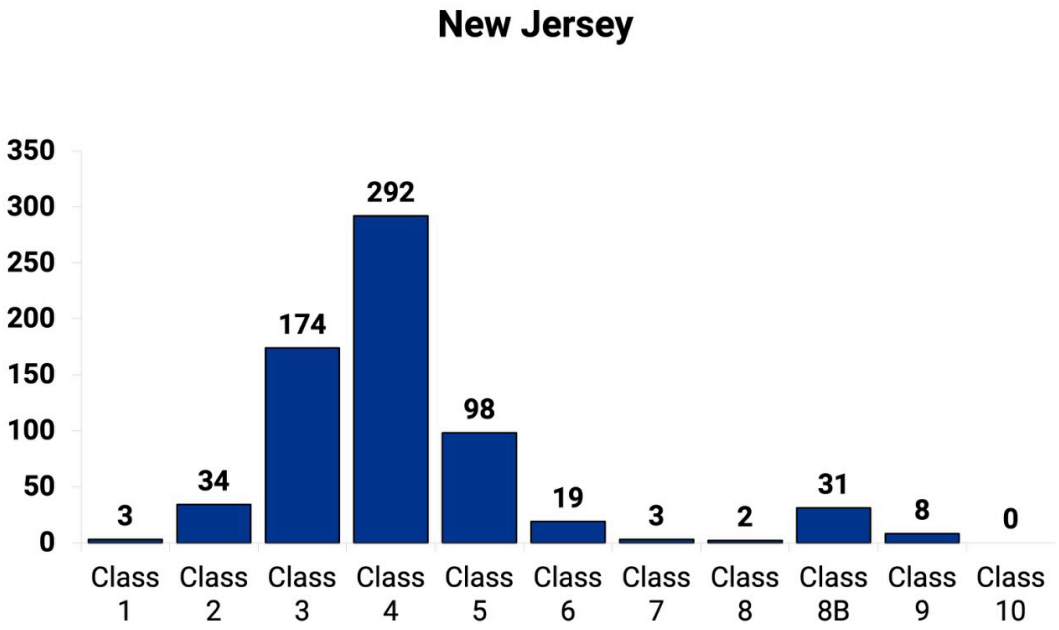
ISO analyzes the data obtained during the survey process and assigns a Public Protection Classification from 1 to 10. Class 1 generally represents superior property fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria. Insurance underwriters use the grade ratings in their consideration of risk from property damage caused by structural fires while setting commercial and residential fire insurance premiums for municipalities. Communities with lower PPC ratings will generally enjoy lower commercial and residential property insurance premiums. Notably, ISO is only concerned with the protection of structures from fire damage and does not consider other capabilities of the local Fire Department such as technical rescue, emergency medical, hazardous materials response, disaster mitigation services, among others.

The fire suppression rating factors in Montclair were last surveyed in a report created in February 2017, by representatives from ISO and received at that time a total credit of 81.45 points, ranking the community as a **Class 2** rated municipality.

The PPC number assigned to the community will depend on the community's score on a 100-point scale:

PPC	Points
1	90.00 or more
2	80.00 to 89.99
3	70.00 to 79.99
4	60.00 to 69.99
5	50.00 to 59.99
6	40.00 to 49.99
7	30.00 to 39.99
8	20.00 to 29.99
9	10.00 to 19.99
10	0.00 to 9.99





The above graphs depict the distribution of fire rating classifications for municipalities in the United States and New Jersey downloaded from the ISO website: isomitigation.com on August 14, 2025.

- **Recommendation 35:** Our analysis of the most recent ISO report for Montclair revealed that the Fire Department should include three areas of focus to potentially improve or retain its current rating:

    1. Firefighter training
    2. Company officer training
    3. Fire Prevention Certification and Training

Based on the time interval from the most recent ISO evaluation (2017), Montclair should anticipate an updated review soon. It should also be anticipated that the reduction of personnel from 87 in 2017 to the current staffing level of 70 may result in a rating reduction to Class 3.

9-1-1 Dispatch

The dispatch center is the first interaction the public encounters when requesting a response from emergency service providers. The Montclair Police Department operates the Montclair dispatch center; however, the center is located in fire headquarters. While not a focus of our review, the team visited the dispatch center to get a better understanding of fire dispatch protocols and operations.

The work of dispatchers, now more commonly referred to as Telecommunicators, is recognized as an essential component of the public safety continuum. The 9-1-1 emergency system is designed to provide the public with rapid and efficient phone access to police, fire, and EMS. The system is of robust construction with built in redundancy to assure that even during high-volume events, 9-1-1 calls will be directed to emergency telecommunicators.

Calls placed to 9-1-1 are received at the community's designated Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for processing. When a 9-1-1 call is received, the caller's phone number and location are simultaneously received and displayed at the PSAP through the system's Automatic Number Indicator (ANI) and Automatic Location Indicator (ALI). These are critical components of the 9-1-1 system that allow telecommunicators to verify the location of the caller and a phone where the caller can be reached again if necessary.

The Borough of Glen Ridge Police Department operates their own 9-1-1 PSAP and dispatch center. Fire calls received in Glen Ridge are not transferred via the 9-1-1 system to Montclair. Instead, the Glen Ridge dispatcher transmits the information via radio to the Montclair dispatcher. This procedure is neither optimal nor recommended because it does

not provide the Montclair dispatcher with the location and phone number information that would otherwise be available in a 9-1-1 transfer.

The Montclair 9-1-1 center is staffed by civilians who are responsible for dispatching both police and Fire Department units. When a vacancy occurs in staffing, a sworn police officer fills the position. During significant fire emergencies, a member of the Fire Department is sometimes assigned to the 9-1-1 center to assist with dispatch operations.

Two separate but interfacing technology software platforms are part of the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system used by in the Montclair 9-1-1 center. Recently, the Fire Department upgraded an existing software program to a mobile version to record dispatch times more accurately and to provide access to the agency's records management system (RMS) by units operating in the field.

While the Montclair dispatch center members have received basic training in Fire Department operations and procedures, it was reported that more is needed. Support and training of personnel assigned to this critical role should be thorough and robust. Such a training program for telecommunications operators should be based on certification requirements of the state Office of Emergency Telecommunication Services (OETS), and recognized standards such those promulgated by APCO, and NFPA 1061 - Standard for Public Safety Telecommunications Personnel Professional Qualifications.

- **Recommendation 36:** Develop a telecommunications operator orientation and continuing training and education programs that are based on national and state telecommunications standards that include quality assurance and mentoring components.

- **Recommendation 37:** Develop comprehensive communication protocols and procedures for dispatching Fire Department resources.

Mutual Aid Agreements

Fire Departments have long relied on mutual aid assistance from neighboring agencies to supplement a community's fire resources when local resources are exhausted. Typically, mutual aid is requested when the local Fire Department arrives on the scene and determines that additional resources are needed to mitigate the emergency. This approach results in the delayed arrival of mutual aid resources.

An increasing number of New Jersey Fire Departments have entered into automatic aid agreements with neighboring departments for certain incidents, such as reported structure fires. A crucial benefit of automatic aid is that the neighboring agency is dispatched at the same time as the host agency so their response time to the incident is greatly reduced. A local example of an automatic aid agreement for reported structure fires exists among the Fire Departments of Belleville, Bloomfield, and Nutley. Currently, the Montclair Fire Department does not participate in any automatic aid agreements. As noted earlier in this report, development of an automatic aid agreement is recommended.

The Fire Department is a member of the Essex County Fire Mutual Aid System that is dispatched through the East Orange Fire Department. Mutual aid communications are streamlined using a radio system hosted by the Mutual Aid Center that supports interoperability with the host agency and mutual aid partners. Mutual aid activities are coordinated using one county fire coordinator assisted by seven deputy coordinators. A member of the Montclair Fire Department currently serves as the county fire coordinator.

Every two years, the Essex County Fire Mutual Aid Plan is reviewed, revised, and approved by the Essex County Fire Chiefs Association. Working with each of the municipal Fire Chiefs, the county fire coordinator develops specific response assignments (run cards) to meet the requirements set forth in the New Jersey Fire Service Resource Emergency Deployment Act. Each run card includes units for response to the incident location and units to provide engine companies and ladder companies for station coverage. The run cards list detailed instructions for rapid intervention teams, firefighter rehabilitation, and cascade services to refill self-contained breathing apparatus bottles.

The traditional role of the fire service has evolved over the years to include specialized rescue and building collapse. These types of low frequency high risk responses are labor intensive and require many hours of initial and refresher training. These training requirements are a challenge for most volunteer and many career Fire Departments.

Essex County is one of the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) counties in New Jersey. Federal UASI funds are used to purchase equipment and train firefighters to respond to low frequency, high risk incidents. Specialized UASI resources are available including the Metro Strike Force and Neptune Water Supply System. The nearest Metro Strike Force assets are based in Millburn, Morristown, Newark, and Paterson with staffing provided by the Millburn, Morristown, Newark, and Paterson Fire Departments.

The Montclair Fire Department is equipped and trained to provide highly specialized rescue such as confined space and trench rescue. The members are also trained to the operations level for hazardous materials emergencies and for complex hazardous materials incidents the Nutley Fire Department can be requested.

Montclair Emergency Medical Services

A comprehensive assessment of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) was not conducted as part of this study; however, local officials requested that we comment on a recent proposal from the Fire Department to begin a "First Responder" program.

The Montclair Ambulance Unit, an independent agency founded in 1953, provides emergency medical services in the Township. Like many other local EMS units, volunteers provided the service for many years. Beginning in 1985, due to reduced availability of volunteers, the agency hired its first paid employee.

According to the Montclair Ambulance Unit staffing report, they offer the following services:

- One basic life support ambulance in Montclair 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- One basic life support ambulance in Montclair with a variable schedule. Monday-Friday 8AM-10PM, Saturday 10AM-10PM, 12PM-8PM.
- Monday-Friday approximately 9AM-5PM, additional staff in the building can fill the roles of first responder, public information officer or, potentially staff another basic life support unit if needed.
- A road supervisor is available 9AM-9PM on Saturday and 8AM-8PM on Sunday.
- Staff have access to a supervisor 24/7/365 via an on-call schedule.
- Additional upstaffing for football games and contracted events.

In New Jersey, and more broadly throughout the nation, the fire service plays an integral role in the delivery of EMS typically in one or more of these levels:

- First Responder: Providing immediate, non-transport EMS care prior to and until relieved by a higher-level medical provider.
- Basic Life Support (BLS) transport: EMS transport with providers trained to the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification level.
- Advanced Life Support (ALS): Providers are trained to the level of Mobile Intensive Care Paramedics (MICP). This may be transport or may rely on a BLS agency for patient transport. In New Jersey, the MICP system is hospital based.

Fire Departments have strategically located stations, a command structure, highly skilled and disciplined personnel, and established training programs that make the fire service well suited for delivery of EMS services. Currently, Montclair Fire Department members have received training in Emergency Medical Response (EMR) but are not routinely dispatched to emergency medical incidents.

Fire Officials reported that there are times when the Montclair Ambulance Unit was not immediately available to respond. In those instances, and in specific medical emergencies, the immediate response by the Fire Department can be a valuable addition to the local emergency medical response system.

In our experience, Fire Department first responders are successful because they typically respond with three members as an engine or ladder company. Two of the members provide immediate patient care while the third records vital patient information. This coordinated level of care eliminates the need for the ambulance crew once arrived, to initiate patient triage and medical history ensuring expedited transport to a medical facility.

While we believe that the Fire Department may be well positioned to deliver a First Responder program, there is considerable work to be done to establish response protocols and a periodic program review process. The review process should include a project team made up of representatives from the Fire Department, township administration, police department and Montclair Ambulance Unit. Continued collaboration with community partners is recommended to establish First Responder program protocols.

- **Recommendation 38:** A project team with representatives from township administration, Montclair Ambulance Unit, police, and Fire Departments should be established to implement and establish the protocols for a Fire Department First Responder Program. The stakeholders above will conduct periodic reviews of the program to adjust as needed.

Fire Station Location Analysis

The placement of fire stations within a community has a direct impact on the efficient operation of a Fire Department. The ability of the local fire agency to deliver an effective fire and rescue force in a timely and consistent manner is a hallmark of a capable emergency organization. There are two reference standards that can be applied to station location for career fire organizations. These standards are NFPA 1710: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special

Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, 2020 Edition, and the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Fire Suppression Rating Schedule.

NFPA 1710 recommends that a Fire Department serving an urban/suburban community like Montclair Township should be able to muster an effective firefighting force of 16/17 firefighters at the scene of a structure fire involving a 2000 square foot single family dwelling in 8 minutes or less, 90% of the time. This includes the arrival of the first-due engine within 4 minutes of travel time, 90% of the time, the arrival of the second responding fire company within 6 minutes of travel time or less for 90% of such incidents, and the balance of the effective firefighting force within 8 minutes, 90% of the time.

The ISO standard recommends that each protected area should have a first-due engine company located within 1.5 road miles and a ladder or service company located within 2.5 road miles of any structures in the built-upon area. Analysis of the most recent ISO report on the coverage area is contained elsewhere in this report.
There are several contributing factors that also must be considered when selecting a site of a fire station, including: centralized location, access to major roadways, local traffic conditions, and the nature of the fire district to be protected. Centralized location means that a fire station would ideally be situated in an area that provides for reasonable travel times for apparatus to respond to service demands within their primary response zone. This is typically referred to in the fire service as the first-due response area. While not always possible due to local conditions, fire stations should ideally be located at or near the geographic center of their first-due response area. This would generally allow for the shortest travel routes to calls for service within their primary response zone. A fire station that is situated at the far end of their first-due response area can be expected to have increased travel times resulting in longer response times.

Access to major roadways is a factor that must be considered because proximity to the arterial streets in the community will allow for a timelier response of fire apparatus. If a fire station is located deep within a residential or commercial development with lengthy travel distances to major roadways, response times can be expected to be longer. If possible, fire stations should be located on or very near a major thoroughfare.

Local traffic conditions must also be considered. Areas that experience periodic heavy traffic and congestion, especially during commuting hours, can be expected to have lengthier response times. This is because the apparatus must contend with a high volume of vehicles along the roadways. An example is a fire station located near a school. Student drop-offs by

private vehicles, school buses and foot traffic could possibly impede a timely response by a fire apparatus.

The nature of the fire district is also a factor to consider. Topographic features such as steep hills, narrow roadways, low underpasses, weight limited bridges and overpasses, limited access highways, tunnels, railroad crossings, rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water will all have an effect on apparatus response times. Any manufactured or natural land features that constrain or restrict the flow of vehicle traffic need to be considered. Large tracts of undeveloped land separating already developed areas can also lengthen travel distances.

The Township of Montclair occupies a total land area of 6.24 square miles. Along with the Borough of Glen Ridge which occupies a total land area of 1.28 square miles, the total combined fire protection coverage area is 7.52 square miles. The coverage area is roughly rectangular in shape and measures approximately 5 miles north to south and about 2.5 miles east to west at its widest point along the Bloomfield Avenue corridor. The topography of the coverage area can be characterized as valley floodplain that gradually rises to a ridge formed by the First Watchung Mountain near the western edge of Montclair. There are few steeply sloped streets or narrow passageways that would impede access of large fire apparatus. There are no major bodies of water located within the coverage area and no limited access highways. The street grid is adequate with virtually all areas having ready access to arterial roadways that generally run in a north/south direction. All railroad crossings are at grade level or are underpasses that do not substantially impede fire apparatus access to any areas. There are also no large, undeveloped tracts of land in the coverage area which can be best described as “built out.”

The Montclair Fire Department began as a volunteer effort in 1884 when the municipal government recognized the newly organized Hook and Ladder Company as the first fire company serving the community. The fledgling fire company, later reorganized as Montclair Hose Company No. 1, was quartered in a garage on Bloomfield Avenue at Valley Road near the present day location of the police department. Subsequently, three additional fire companies were organized. Excelsior Hose Company No. 2 was organized to protect the southern end of the township and was located in a small house at Harrison and Cedar Avenues, the present day site of Fire Station 3. Washington Hose Company No. 3 initially operated from a station located at 210 Bloomfield Avenue. The two-story brick building still stands opposite the Montclair Mews townhouse complex. Cliffside Hose Company No. 4, organized to provide fire protection for the northern section of the community, was located on Bellevue Avenue near the railroad crossing before relocating to a new station at 588 Valley Road, the present day location of Fire Station 2.

Traditionally, volunteer fire stations were built in areas that were adjacent to neighborhoods where the volunteers lived or worked. This typically resulted in various individual fire company stations scattered among several areas of a municipality. Under the older volunteer response model, volunteer firefighters were summoned to their neighborhood fire station via a bell, siren, or air horn in the event of an alarm. This required members to transport themselves to the station on foot or by driving a short distance. The location of Fire Station 2 on Valley Road in the Upper Montclair section in the northern end of the township and the location of Fire Station 3 at the intersection of Harrison and Cedar Avenues in the Nishuane Park area at the southern end of the township are good examples of fire station locations being originally sited with consideration to the proximity of volunteer members' homes and workplaces. Both stations were built in the early 1900s when volunteer firefighters staffed the department.

This response model served the volunteer fire service well for many years until demographic and socio-economic changes made the single company fire station system unsustainable for many communities. This often resulted in the consolidation of multiple single companies into a centrally located station to house all the community apparatus. This merging of fire companies into one location often did not consider the effect of travel times to the station by off-duty volunteers. Because the consolidated station was no longer located in the neighborhood where the members lived or worked, travel times to the fire station lengthened and overall response times suffered. Available off-duty volunteers had to travel farther to the station to respond to a call thus adding precious minutes to overall response times. This factor, among others, eventually led to the hiring of career members to staff the fire stations.

Travel time is also a factor that must be considered when evaluating fire station locations. A fire agency has little control over travel time (time, speed, and distance) other than placing fire stations in locations that provide for reasonable travel times to all locations within a fire response district. The layout of streets and major roadways and their impact on fire apparatus travel times are rarely a consideration as a community evolves and new developments are constructed. The safe operation of fire apparatus is also a limiting factor in travel time as increasing apparatus response speed is not a prudent option when piloting large fire vehicles through civilian traffic. The safety of the motoring public and the responding firefighters must not be compromised in a vain attempt to overcome long travel distances by speeding fire apparatus.

One fire service accepted methodology for measuring the travel time of a responding fire apparatus is based on an algorithm developed in a study by the RAND Corporation in

conjunction with the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) in 1977. The study determined that the average speed of a fire apparatus on an emergency response was 35 miles-per-hour over average terrain, with average traffic and weather conditions, and slowing for intersections. Using the RAND calculation, a responding fire apparatus can be expected to safely travel approximately 2.5 miles in 5 minutes and about 5 miles in 10 minutes. The RAND study used the FDNY as the model for the study so response territory that is markedly different from an urban city can affect travel time. The size and configuration of fire apparatus can also affect travel times. Larger apparatus like ladder trucks and fire tankers/tenders can be expected to have longer travel times. However, the RAND formula has proven very reliable over time and is used by ISO and other agencies to dependably estimate fire apparatus response times.

The Township of Montclair Township and the Borough of Glen Ridge are presently served by five fire companies operating from two fire stations:

- Fire Headquarters– 1 Pine Street, Montclair – Engine 1, Truck 1, and Engine 3. (see note below)
- Station 2 – 588 Valley Road, Upper Montclair – Engine 2 and Truck 2.
- Station 3 – 151 Harrison Avenue – Engine 3. (see note below)

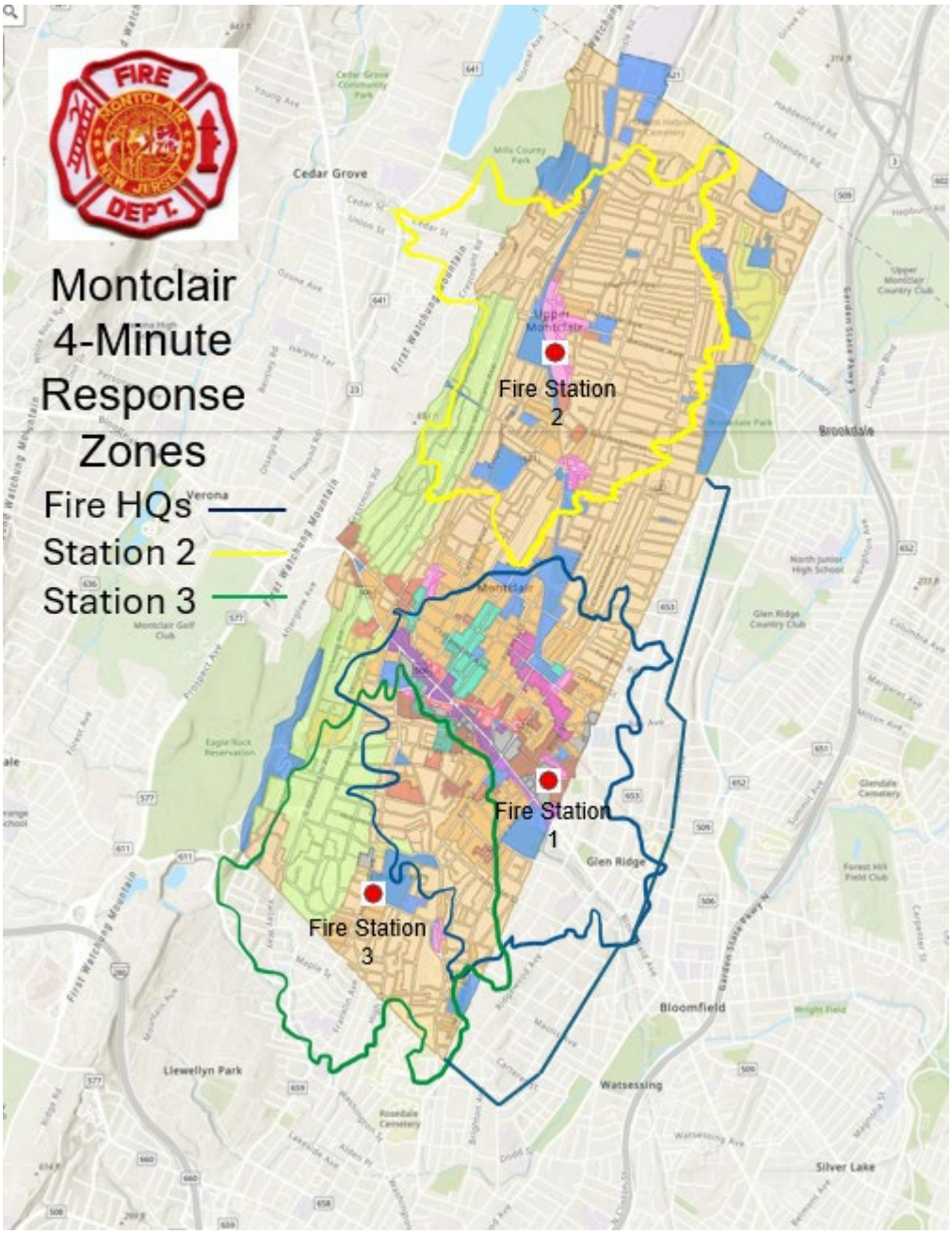
Note: Engine 3 formerly operated from Fire Station 3 located at 151 Harrison Avenue in the southern portion of Montclair, but the station was closed in July 2023 following an engineering evaluation that concluded that the station required structural repairs. Since that time, Engine 3 has been operating from Fire Headquarters pending a determination on the future status of Station 3.

Fire Station Location Four Minute Response Time Coverage

The map shown on the following page illustrates the four-minute travel time limits for each of the three Montclair fire stations. The map depicts the travel time limits using actual roadway miles for responses initiated from each station.

The projected travel time from each fire station expressed in 4-minute travel distances using color-coded travel time perimeter polygons overlaid onto a township land use map. The contours of the Borough of Glen Ridge on the central and southeastern flank of the township have been overlaid in black. The four-minute travel distance for Fire Headquarters is depicted in blue, Station 2 in yellow, and Station 3 in green.

Each fire station location is displayed as a red cross within each station district.



The map clearly indicates that the current fire station locations cover the majority of the coverage area within four minutes.

Fire Headquarters, 1 Pine Street

This station, constructed in 2004, houses Engine1, Truck 1, Rescue, Battalion Chief, and the temporarily relocated Engine 3. The facility serves as fire headquarters and includes the administrative offices of the Fire Chief, deputy chief and fire prevention. Several training props are also located here.

The station location provides very good coverage for the central business district on the Bloomfield Avenue corridor along with several of the large multi-family residential complexes in this area. Fire Headquarters also provides substantial, four minute response coverage for much of Glen Ridge except for some residential areas in the northern and southern ends of the borough. The location of this station close to the border with Glen Ridge also provides substantial coverage overlap with that of Station 3. The coverage area does fall short of providing four-minute coverage to the westernmost area of the central business district. It is interesting to note that in the fire company deployment analysis contained in the 1989 *O'Hagan Associates* report, the location of a possible consolidated fire station at 1 Pine Street was judged to be a least desirable location due to the high volume of vehicle traffic along Bloomfield Avenue and a small area of Glen Ridge being located over a mile and a quarter from the proposed site. Despite those issues, the new Fire Headquarters was built at this location in 2003.

Fire Station 2 at 588 Valley Road

This station, built in 1901-1902, houses Engine 2 and Truck 2. It appears to be ideally situated near the geographic center of the Upper Montclair section of the coverage area. Only small portions of residential areas in the northwest, northeast and east central areas of Montclair are out of reach of the four-minute response zone. The station does not provide four-minute response coverage for any areas in Glen Ridge. The location also provides four-minute response coverage for a portion of the eastern section of the Township of Cedar Grove. The four-minute response zone for Station 2 has virtually no overlapping coverage areas with the other Montclair fire stations.

Station 3, 151 Harrison Avenue

This station, constructed in 1901, houses Engine 3. The station is currently closed to address structural issues. A plan for an addition and renovation of the station is under consideration by the municipal governing body. This station location provides very good coverage for the southern portion of Montclair south of the Bloomfield Avenue corridor. There is considerable overlap with the four-minute coverage area from Fire Headquarters. Station 3 only provides a minor amount of four-minute response coverage to Glen Ridge. The location of Station 3 also provides four-minute response coverage for a portion of the northern end of West Orange. It would appear that Station 3 is located too close to the southern border of the township and would benefit if the location were shifted to the north. In an ideal scenario, a consolidated station with fire units from Fire Headquarters and Station 3 located just south of the Bloomfield Avenue corridor in the south central area of Montclair would provide better overall coverage for the southern half of the response district.

Location of Emergency Incidents

An important consideration that should also be factored into the location of a fire station is the concentration of the location of emergency incidents that the department has historically responded to. Such data can sometimes be displayed in a graphic form known as a heat map. Geo-coded locations of incidents are depicted as an overlay to a coverage area map that clearly shows the historic service demand levels and frequency for the response district. Unfortunately, geo-coded incident data was not available for this report.

Another important consideration that should also be factored into the location of a fire station is response time data for fire units quartered at existing fire stations. Such data can provide validation of a fire station's ability to provide timely and consistent responses to emergencies located within the coverage area and can also show the effect that concurrent or sequential emergencies can have on response times. Such response data was unavailable for this report.

Anecdotally, Fire Department officials report that response times from Station 3 are often faster to many areas within the Fire Headquarters response district. Frequent traffic congestion near Fire Headquarters and the location of Station 3 with immediate access to the Harrison Avenue thoroughfare, were offered as features that affirm the superior location of

Station 3. While we do not dispute this assertion, we were unable to confirm it due to the lack of available response time data.

- **Recommendation 39**: The absence of response data made it difficult to provide a clear recommendation on whether Fire Station 3 is essential for full fire protection coverage. Based on analysis of travel times from the three existing fire stations, Montclair enjoys excellent travel time coverage. There is a portion of the Fire Station 3 response area that would have increased travel times in the event that station remains closed; however, a large portion of the response district would continue to have four minute coverage from Fire Headquarters.

Recruitment

The Montclair Fire Department does not have a plan for recruitment of new members; it should. Unlike recent years, the fire service is facing an increasingly competitive environment for hiring candidates with the greatest potential for success. Developing a comprehensive recruitment program is an opportunity to introduce a broad range of community members to a career in the fire service.

Some examples of recruiting efforts include:

- Youth Fire Academy: These programs, typically one of two weeks in length offered during summer months, expose young people to the basics of the role of a firefighter.
- Adult Fire Academy: Like the youth academy, the adult version is offered in a convenient scheduling format to expose members of the community to the varied aspects of firefighting.
- Career Day: Attendance at local high school career day events is another opportunity to provide information on the fire service as an opportunity for students contemplating a career choice. This option may be of special value with the presence of Montclair State University in the community. Participating in college level career events could attract more students to consider a fire service career.
- Community Events: Recruitment efforts that include participation in community events enhances the opportunity to interact with the broadest range of community members.
- Auxiliary Firefighter Program: In past years, the Montclair Fire Department maintained the role of auxiliary firefighter. This unpaid position allows citizens to gain firsthand experience to better understand the role of firefighting as a career. We

recommend that the role of auxiliary firefighter be reinstituted as a way to provide another opportunity to enhance the department's recruitment efforts.

The US Fire Administration has developed a comprehensive recruitment guide that may be of value in development of a local recruitment program. The guide can be found here: https://www.usfa.fema.gov/blog/retention-and-recruitment-manual/

- **Recommendation 40:** A comprehensive recruitment program should be developed that includes reinstating the role of auxiliary firefighter.

Interlocal Agreement with Glen Ridge

Beginning in 1990, the Township of Montclair entered into an interlocal agreement with the Borough of Glen Ridge for the delivery of fire protection services. The agreement resulted from a recommendation in a study of the Glen Ridge Fire Department conducted in 1998 following a major fire in that community that included a fire fatality.

Based on the several provisions of the interlocal agreement, the Montclair Fire Department provides a full array of services including fire suppression, rescue and fire prevention programming and inspections for the community of Glen Ridge.

Prior to 1990, fire protection in Glen Ridge was provided by their own Fire Department that included an on-duty staff of two career firefighters supplemented by a declining number of volunteers that collectively operated one engine and one ladder truck. Since 1990, Glen Ridge has enjoyed a dramatically improved level of fire protection provided by a fully career Fire Department operating three engines and two ladder trucks.

The success of any interlocal or shared services agreement often turns on the relationship between the parties involved and whether the agreement is viewed as equitable by the parties. As part of this comprehensive review of Fire Department services, the study team was asked to also review the interlocal agreement to assure that it provides fair compensation for the Township of Montclair.

The most recent agreement went into effect on January 1, 2023, and has a term of 10 years, terminating on December 31, 2032. The agreement includes a renewal option of up to five years at the sole discretion Glen Ridge. The table that follows shows the annual fee paid by Glen Ridge to Montclair for fire protection services:

Year	Annual Rate
2023	$850,000.
2024	$911,111.
2025	$972,000.
2026	$1,033.330.
2027	$1,094,444.
2028	$1,155,555.
2029	$1,216,666.
2030	$1,277,777.
2031	$1,338,888.
2032	$1,400,000.

Although it is not known how the original fee structure was determined, the increase in annual rate appears to be a straight line formula. There are other ways to calculate a shared services program that can be used to consider a more equitable sharing of the costs. The following tables illustrate Some examples are shown in the tables that follow:

Table 1: This table compares the annual fee paid by Glen Ridge as a percentage of the overall Montclair Fire Department Budget. This total does not reflect the full cost of delivery of fire protection for Montclair. For example, costs related to employee benefits and capital and facility expenses are not included.

This table is the basis for comparison for other methods of determining an annual fee.

TABLE 1

Montclair Fire Department 2025 Operating Budget	
Salaries & Wages	$10,357,595.
Other Expenses	$478,829.
Total	$10,836,424.
2025 Glen Ridge Payment	$972,000.
% of Budget Paid by Glen Ridge	**8.9%**

Table 2: This table totals calls for service to calculate the basic amount of services provided. This method only compares incident responses not the type or duration of those responses. It also does not include any other services provided such as fire inspections or public fire safety education programs. A calculation is included showing what the annual fee would be if based on call volume. The total is relatively close to the amount included in the existing agreement.

TABLE 2

Annual Call Volume (five year average)	
Montclair	2,282
Glen Ridge	212
% of Glen Ridge Responses	9.2%
Annual Fee Based on % of Call Volume	**$996,951**

Table 3: The following table calculates a potential fee based on a comparison of the populations from each community that receive fire protection services. The fee on a per capita basis would be more than twice the current rate paid.

TABLE 3

Per Capita Calculation	
Montclair	41,076
Glen Ridge	8,204
% of Glen Ridge to Montclair Population	**19.9%**
Annual Fee on Per Capita Basis	**$2,156,448**

Table 4: In addition to calculating fees based on population, another method is to consider the value of the property protected. In this analysis, the assessed value of property in Glen Ridge is compared on a percentage basis to the assessed value of the property in Montclair. The property values are from the "Equalization Table for the County of Essex 2025". The fee based on assessed value would be approximately two and half times the current rate paid.

Table 4

Assessed Value Calculation	
Montclair	$11,711,853,706
Glen Ridge	$2,685,990,679
% of Glen Ridge to Montclair Assessed Value	**22.9%**
Annual Fee Based on Assessed Value	**$2,481,541**

Providing fire protection on a regional basis can be both a cost effective and efficient way to deliver this vital public safety service. Both Montclair and Glen Ridge should be congratulated on being innovators in this area and for maintaining the agreement for 35 years.

- **Recommendation 41:** Assuring that each community continues to understand and benefit from the value of this essential shared service requires a full understanding of the costs of the service and benefits provided. Each of the calculations in this analysis should be used during any negotiations of the interlocal agreement between Montclair and Glen Ridge for fire protection services to assure it is seen as equitable by each party.

General Recommendations

Community Risk Reduction (CRR)

Progressive fire agencies have embraced the concept of an "All Hazards" approach to helping their communities identify, prioritize, and reduce risks. The Montclair Fire

Department should embrace an all-hazards approach to reducing community risk that can be formally structured through adoption of a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) program. Recently, the National Fire Protection Association (NPFA) adopted Standard 1300, "Standard on Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Plan Development to assist Fire Departments in developing CRR plans.

> **Recommendation 42:** Consideration should be given to developing a Community Risk Reduction Program following the guidelines of NFPA 1300.

Fire Service Accreditation

The Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) is a non-profit agency formed through the alliance of the International City/County Management Association and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. Through the CPSE Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), fire service agencies may achieve accreditation that will:

- Provides greater community alignment.
- Encourages quality improvement.
- Facilitates input from and builds positive relationships with labor.
- Identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses.
- Allows for the establishment of a plan for improvement.
- Provides data supported decision-making.
- Communicates management and leadership philosophies.
- Ensures your agency has a defined mission and related objectives.
- Encourages the development of organizational procedural documents.

Accreditation is a voluntary process that leads Fire Departments from good to great. Accredited agencies are described as transparent, data-driven, community and outcome focused, strategic oriented, well organized, properly equipped, staffed, and trained.

Our study team believes that the Montclair Fire Department should include CPSE accreditation in its long range planning as a model for continual organizational improvement. Additional information is available electronically at: [Accreditation Overview - Center for Public Safety Excellence (cpse.org)]

Recommendation 43: As a component of its long range plan, the Montclair Fire Department should consider accreditation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence as a model for continual organizational improvement.

Fire Station Design Considerations

Two of three existing fire stations in Montclair are nearly 125 years old. Constructed during a time when fire apparatus was smaller, less equipment was required and there was little understanding of design features to support health and wellness of firefighters, these venerable buildings are obsolete by modern standards. Both facilities are candidates for significant renovation or replacement. This section is meant to provide background on the importance of modern fire station design.

Fire stations are unique among public buildings. They must be designed for continuous operation, house large fire apparatus and equipment, provide living quarters for staff, include administrative offices, and incorporate specialized features for training firefighters.

The evolution of fire station design has followed the evolution of the fire service. With a greater number of women joining Fire Departments, gender has influenced the design of locker rooms, sleeping areas and bathroom facilities. Fire apparatus is larger, sometimes much larger, compared with only a generation ago. Modern fire stations require a minimum apparatus bay door opening of 14 feet in width and 16 feet in height. Among the most significant and important, station design evolution relates to firefighter health and safety.

Cancer is a leading cause of occupational illness and death among members of the fire service. While exposure to carcinogens and other contaminates on the fireground and emergency incidents is a continuing risk associated with firefighting, those same toxins can be carried back via firefighting personal protective equipment and apparatus into the fire station.

The schematic that follows is an example of a fire station with design features that limit the spread of potential contaminates within the facility. Those areas in red (hot zone) are the spaces that may be exposed to carcinogens and other contaminants. The yellow areas (warm zone) are transition spaces between the contaminated areas and clean area. The green area designates the clean spaces (cold zone).

The Firefighter Cancer Support Network, an organization dedicated to firefighter cancer support, noted the following in a white paper titled "Taking Action Against Cancer in the Fire Service" https://www.firefightercancersupport.org/print-materials

> The design of fire stations, whether for new construction or renovation, must include such standard design features as state-of-the-art equipment and systems for adequate air flow, removal and capture of carcinogens and particulates, appropriate location, and ventilation of storage rooms for contaminated PPE and other equipment, washer-extractor and gear drying equipment, as well as clear separation of living quarters from the apparatus floor. In short, architects should be working to design cancer out of fire stations.

- **Recommendation 44**: When renovating existing or designing new fire stations for the Montclair Fire Department, it will be important to include special consideration for the unique features important for fire station facilities.

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Finally, we wish to thank Mayor Baskerville and the members of the Township Council for their confidence in our work and for the opportunity to assist the Township of Montclair. We remain committed to providing the best possible guidance as the Township addresses the complex challenges facing municipalities across New Jersey.

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