

MAYOR ROBERT D. WHITE
QUARTERLY UPDATE
OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2025

BUDGET

Township Audit

In August 2025, independent auditor Public Accountants Wielkotz and Company, LLC, issued an audit report on the township's 2024 financial statements. The report was reviewed and discussed at the September 3rd work session meeting and the September 17th council meeting. The audit is posted on the township website at www.saddlebrooknj.us.

Temporary Budget

Township Business Administrator Jimmy Homzi and I have prepared a temporary 2026 budget, which was adopted by the township council at the January 5, 2026, reorganization meeting. The temporary budget accounts for 26.25 percent of our 2025 municipal budget. We will work with our township auditor and chief financial officer to prepare a permanent budget for introduction during the first quarter of 2026.

GRANTS

Grant Applications – In Progress

Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Grant

The Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation enhances the lifesaving capabilities of local heroes by providing essential equipment and educational resources to first responders. The township applied for pagers for our volunteer fire department.

N.J. Department of Community Affairs Local Recreation Improvement Grant (LRIG) – Fiscal Year 2026

The LRIG is a competitive grant program that supports improvements to recreational facilities, including parks and community centers. Funds are allocated to cover costs for playground and facility updates, including project development, equipment purchases, and environmental remediation. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs administers the program, with a maximum award of \$75,000. The township has applied to improve the Fifth Street Park Playground.

Sustainable Jersey and Public Service Gas and Electric (PSE&G) Sustainability Grants

The PSE&G Foundation is funding the Sustainable Jersey Grants Program to support local sustainability initiatives in New Jersey municipalities that participate in the program. Eligible applicants must have a Green Team that meets the required standards. The funding cycle will offer grants of \$20,000 and \$10,000 for larger projects, as well as \$2,000 grants for smaller projects or for supporting Green Teams. The number of grants awarded will depend on the quality of the applications, with a focus on \$2,000 awards.

Grant Applications – Submitted/Pending

Bergen County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Fiscal Year 26-27

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding aims to enhance community resilience by upgrading municipal infrastructure. This includes repaving roads, improving sewer systems, enhancing parks, and making public buildings accessible for individuals with disabilities. The township has requested funding for improvements to Miller Street.

U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) Bulletproof Vest Program - Fiscal Year 2026

Established by the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 1998, the Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program is administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. This program reimburses local governments for up to 50 percent of the cost of body armor vests purchased for law enforcement officers. Our police department has applied for funding, and the specific number of vests and the amount to be received will be determined at a later date.

Grant Applications Awarded

U.S. Department of Criminal Justice Community Policing Accreditation Grant

This program assists law enforcement in adopting effective crime-prevention practices. It offers financial support to both agencies and accreditation bodies. To earn accreditation, agencies must meet high standards, which helps build community confidence in policing. The township applied for and received \$43,470.00 in funding.

N.J. Department of Transportation Municipal Aid Grant - Fiscal Year 25-26

The grant is designed to fund municipalities' public transportation projects, focusing on safety and accessibility on New Jersey roads. The township applied for and received \$172,747 for phase two of the Floral Lane roadway enhancements.

Applications Not Selected

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mayor's Youth Group (MYG)

The MYG met on Saturday, October 18, to discuss upcoming events in which the group would participate. These events included the Senior Halloween Party, Trunk-or-Treat, and the Halloween/Christmas Decorating Contests. The group concluded the year with a holiday party and, on the same night, judged the homes participating in the Holiday Home Decorating Contest. Thank you to everyone who has been involved! Township youths entering grades 4-12 are welcome to join the MYG. Anyone interested in registering can call my office at 201-587-2903.

Community Partnership Committee (CPC) / Access for All

The committee met on Thursday, October 23, during the fourth quarter of the year. We continued discussing ways to support community residents. We remain actively engaged with the Saddle Brook Food Pantry and other civic organizations to organize food collection drives in support of the pantry.

At the committee members' suggestion, the township implemented a community calendar on its website. The calendar is helpful because it centralizes local event information and serves as a hub for residents to find activities, fostering connection and shared experiences. Committee Chairman Thomas Van Winkle and I created an informational video about the committee and the services we offer to our residents. The video was posted on all social media outlets.

If you need assistance or have questions, please visit saddlebrooknj.us or call our HELP phone line at 201-587-2912. Leave a message for the coordinator, and you will receive a prompt response.

Green Team and Flood Mitigation Committee

The committee focuses on implementing eco-friendly practices, reducing waste, and raising awareness about environmental issues. We have partnered with the Flood Mitigation Committee on this new initiative, which aims to develop practical solutions to reduce flooding and increase residents' flood awareness. We work closely with local, county, state, and federal officials to explore strategies to prepare our community for potential flooding and protect our homes and streets. The Green Team met on Thursday, November 5, and Thursday, December 3rd. We conducted a clean-up at Veterans Field on Sunday, November 16th.

EVENTS

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES NOTE: Most events are photographed and recorded. The recordings are broadcast on Our Town (Public Access) TV (Ch. 77 – Cablevision, Ch. 38 – Verizon FiOS). The photos and recordings are also posted on the township website and Facebook page.

Shredding Event – Saturday, October 4

A free mobile shredding event took place in the municipal complex parking lot from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Residents brought their unwanted documents containing personal information to be safely and securely destroyed. Thank you to Recycling Coordinator Joan Ramsey and Manuel Brenya from the Department of Public Works for their assistance, and special thanks to Christine Genuario for planning and organizing the event.

Senior Halloween Party – Tuesday, October 21

The Saddle Brook seniors enjoyed a wonderful time at their Annual Halloween Party held at the VFW. Most attendees dressed in costumes, contributing to an evening filled with fun, music, dancing, delicious food, and treats. The event featured a costume contest, offering gifts and prizes for the winners. It was a fantastic way to welcome the fall season and prepare for a happy, spooky Halloween!

Trunk-or-Treat – Saturday, October 25

The township council and I thank everyone who attended and volunteered at the Halloween Trunk or Treat event in the municipal complex's parking lot. The event was well attended and featured a fun-filled afternoon with trunk-or-treaters dressed in amazing costumes. Thank you again for your support!

Holiday Tree Lighting and Party – Friday, November 28

The town held its annual Tree Lighting Ceremony at the municipal complex. We greatly appreciate Mr. Frank Ortega and the High/Middle School Band for their attendance and outstanding performance. Thank you to Fr. Bruce Janiga of Saint Philip the Apostle Church and Pastor Tom Larkin of First Reformed Church of Saddle Brook for delivering the prayers. We extend special thanks to Walter Beese and Joan Ramsey for portraying Santa and Mrs. Claus, and our fire department for transporting them from the North Pole.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure Improvements

Our engineer collaborated with the grant writer to secure approximately \$1.3 million from the EPA's Community Grant for improvements to the Mayhill and Midland Avenue Pump Stations and the force main. In July 2025, a proposal was submitted that includes bid document preparation, construction management, and grant management.

Parks

Kern Place Park

The Township submitted a grant application to Bergen County Open Space for the replacement of the play equipment and safety surface, and for the installation of a sidewalk. Our engineer provided a proposal for engineering and prepared plans. The township has selected the structure, and the engineer is currently working with the vendor, MRC Recreation, to obtain a price to construct the improvements under a co-op.

Fifth Street Park

The Township has received a grant from the New Jersey Division of Community Affairs to construct a basketball court. Additional funding has been secured, and we are moving forward with the project. Our engineer submitted a proposal for engineering services in September 2025.

Spray Park

Our engineer has been authorized to commence with the preparation of plans for a spray pad off Sampson Street next to Veterans' Field. We have begun planning and preparing plans. We are working with the vendor, Commercial Recreation Specialists (CRS), to develop a layout that has been provided and approved. Preparation of bid documents is ongoing.

Mayhill Street Park Phase II

The project to resurface four tennis courts and two basketball courts was put out for bid on July 3, but the bids exceeded the township's budget and were rejected. To stay within budget, the project was modified to remove the basketball courts and convert one tennis court into two pickleball courts.

The revised project was rebid on August 1, with bids opened on August 14. Picerno Giordano submitted the lowest bid of \$284,005, and the town awarded the project to them on August 21. A preconstruction meeting took place on September 16, and the contractor was requested to delay construction until November 1. Asphalt paving was completed in November, with color coating and line striping scheduled for early spring 2026.

Roadway Improvements

Third Street

The Community Development Block Grant funds this road project. Our engineer has begun work and has prepared the construction plans. The project involves installing drainage basins and piping in front of Engine Company #2 firehouse, as well as milling and paving the street from Outwater Lane to Capital Street. The contract was awarded to AJM Contractors on November 13th. Construction began the first week of December with the drainage improvements; however, milling and paving have been postponed until spring 2026.

Tree Streets Water Main Improvements

Our engineer received authorization to start planning on September 18. The project will extend the water main along Maple, Spruce, Larch, and Pine Avenues, connecting to the main on Schepis Avenue to improve water quality for residents. PSE&G will repave these streets in spring 2026. The project was awarded on December 18, with construction expected to begin in winter 2026.

Tree Streets Concrete Improvements

Our engineer was authorized to start work on September 18 and is currently preparing plans. The project includes replacing damaged concrete curbs and reconstructing curb ramps at the Schepis Avenue crosswalks, with the Wilson Avenue end already completed. PSE&G is expected to pave these streets in spring 2026, with bidding for the project going out soon and construction starting in March, weather permitting.

Floral Lane

Floral Lane is funded by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) for the 2025 and 2026 funding years. The engineering proposal was submitted on September 25th and is authorized. Surveying and base mapping are complete, and bid document preparation is underway for submission to NJDOT in January 2026. Once approved, the township will seek bids, with construction expected to start in spring or summer 2026.

South Street

South Street will get funding from the Community Development Block Grant for the 2026 funding year. A proposal for engineering costs will be submitted soon.

Other Repairs and Projects

New Municipal Building Roof Replacement

Our engineer prepared bid documents to replace the leaking front roof of the new municipal building. The project was first advertised in early March, but all bids were rejected due to high prices. A rebid on May 13th also failed, leading to negotiations with Sky Construction, which was awarded the project on July 17th. A preconstruction meeting was held on September 8th, and construction began in early December and is expected to be completed in early January 2026.

Blue Acres Demo Project

The Town received funding to acquire two properties through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Blue Acres program, which includes the demolition of the existing homes. Our engineer will prepare bid documents and oversee construction administration. The town is also consulting with Green Acres and the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office to determine if the buildings at 200 Saddle River Road, located in a mapped historic district, can be demolished. The second property is at 15 Riverview Place.

MISCELLANEOUS ENGINEERING

Tax Maps

The tax maps need updating and conversion to a geographic information system (GIS) format. Our engineer has been authorized to complete this work, which is currently in progress. The updates have been submitted to the Tax Assessor's Office for review. Once we receive their feedback, the engineering team will make the necessary adjustments and submit the revised maps to the State Division of Taxation.

Stormwater Mapping

Our engineer has proposed creating a GIS map of the town's stormwater facilities, as required by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). This project will use existing survey data and include field verification to gather additional information. The township has received a \$25,000 grant for this work, which is nearing completion. Engineering is working with the Department of Public Works to address any missing data, and the mapping will be submitted to the State of New Jersey soon.

Public Service Gas & Electric (PSE&G) Gas Main Replacement Projects 2024 and 2025

In February 2025, PSE&G met with the town to discuss the roads scheduled for gas main replacement that year. The work started in early 2024 and has been monitored by our engineer, who has reviewed the paving lists for both projects. Additionally, the engineer met with the town to discuss paving credits. The town plans to schedule a meeting with PSE&G in early 2026 to review the paving plan and timeline.

OTHER

Redevelopment of Old Town Hall, 93-95 Market Street

The Township is focused on redeveloping and encouraging investment in the old town hall property located at 93-95 Market Street. Successfully redeveloping this area will enhance the township's economic vitality. At the end of 2024, the Council and I passed a resolution designating the property as an "Area in Need of Rehabilitation."

During the December 18th council meeting, we approved a redevelopment agreement with Manor at Saddle Brook LLC, appointing a redeveloper to construct 60 residential apartment units. This plan includes underground parking featuring 40 designated spaces for the police department.

Presentations and discussions have taken place at several township council meetings, allowing residents to be informed and share their opinions during the public comment periods. The redevelopment application has been submitted to the Saddle Brook Planning Board and is scheduled for a hearing on Wednesday, January 21, 2026.

Ordinances Adopted

No. 1792-25 (Adopted October 16, 2025)

An ordinance amending and supplementing Chapter 206 of the code of the township regulating the operation of specific classes of cannabis businesses within its geographical boundaries. The amendment addresses operations related to cannabis cultivation (Ord. #1718-22).

No. 1793-25 (Adopted November 13, 2025)

An ordinance amending the redevelopment plan for 93-95 Market Street to meet current market demands, to prepare an amended redevelopment plan consistent with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7.

No. 1794-25 (Adopted Dec. 29, 2025)

An ordinance establishing the time, place, and manner restrictions for temporary signs on private property. The ordinance serves a legitimate government interest in preserving aesthetics, promoting traffic safety, and maintaining property values, recognized as valid municipal objectives.

Special Events Attended

****Sunday Afternoon, October 5:**** I attended the Mount Virgin Church Car Show at the Saddle Brook Municipal Complex, located at 55 Mayhill Street, Saddle Brook.

****Saturday Evening, October 18:**** I attended the Drums from Heaven Halloween Ball Finale at VFW Post 3484, located at 44 Market Street, Saddle Brook.

****Friday Evening, October 24:**** I went to the Saddle Brook Women's Club Tricky Tray at Three Saints Church, located at 474 Outwater Lane, Garfield, NJ.

****Tuesday Evening, October 28:**** I attended the UNICO "Meet the President" event honoring President Joseph Nasello at Graycliff in Moonachie, NJ.

****Wednesday Evening, October 29:**** I attended the Saddle Brook Board of Education's Meet the Candidates Night at the Saddle Brook Middle/High School.

****Saturday Afternoon, November 8:**** I took part in the Bergen County Baggers cornhole tournament benefiting veterans at VFW Post 3484, 44 Market Street, Saddle Brook.

****Saturday Evening, November 8:**** I attended a Diwali celebration at the Excelsior Banquet Hall, located at 190 US-46, Saddle Brook.

****Sunday Afternoon, November 16:**** I participated in the Saddle Brook Green Team clean-up at Veterans Field in Saddle Brook.

****Saturday Evening, November 22:**** I attended the 125th Anniversary Dinner of the First Reformed Church at VFW Post 3484, 44 Market Street, Saddle Brook.

****Monday Evening, November 24:**** I attended a pizza party hosted by Saddle Brook Recreation to celebrate the Junior Falcon Super Bowl championship win at the Saddle Brook Municipal Complex.

****Saturday Evening, November 29:**** I attended the Milal Mission Gala at the DoubleTree Hotel, located at 2117 Route 4-E, Fort Lee, NJ. The Milal Mission is a non-profit organization based at 30 Legregni Street, Saddle Brook, NJ.

****Tuesday Evening, December 2:**** I attended the Saddle Brook High School National Honor Society Induction Ceremony at the Saddle Brook Middle/High School auditorium.

****Friday Afternoon, December 12:**** I attended the grand opening of Qawiya Fitness, located at 82 Midland Avenue, Saddle Brook.

****Friday Evening, December 19:**** I was present at the Mayor's Youth Group holiday party and the judging of the township's holiday home decorating contest at the Senior Center, 8 Caldwell Avenue, Saddle Brook.

****Tuesday Afternoon, December 23:**** I attended the township crossing guard holiday party and the retirement celebration for Kenneth Sullivan at Que Pasta, 326 Market Street, Saddle Brook.