

# Promoting and Maintaining Racial Integration: Lessons from Selected New Jersey Towns

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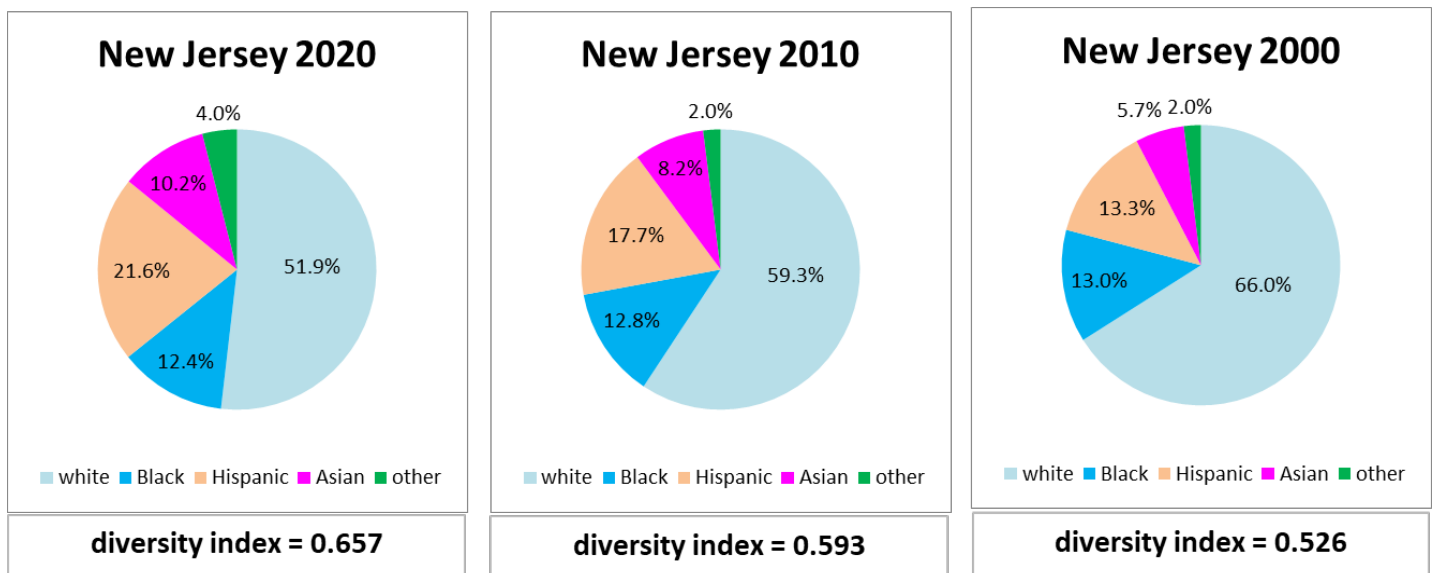


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New Jersey is one of the most diverse states in the nation but also one of the most segregated. Many ethnic groups are represented among the state’s residents, but people of different backgrounds often live in separate towns or in separate neighborhoods within a given town. Given this discrepancy, one might be moved to ask why the state’s macro-level diversity does not generally translate into integration at the micro level. Are there places that exhibit micro-scale diversity, and, if so, what can we learn from them?

New Jersey Future set out to identify places that are “stable and integrated,” to see if we could identify characteristics that such places appeared to have in common. We defined “diversity” using a concept called the [diversity index](#), which the Census Bureau uses to show “the probability that two people chosen at random will be from different race and ethnic groups,”<sup>1</sup> where a higher score indicates a more diverse community. Further, we initially defined “stable and integrated” as municipalities in which: 1) the diversity index was greater than the state index in 2000, and 2) the diversity index in 2020 was equal to or greater than the 2000 index, indicating that the municipality had achieved and maintained an above-average level of diversity over two decades.

After an examination of 59 municipalities (among 565 total municipalities in the state) that met this definition, it became clear that the “stable” part of “stable and integrated” can be elusive. No community remains frozen in time; change is a fact of life everywhere. Many places that are diverse today are diverse in a different way than they were 20 years ago. The state as a whole has become more diverse; the statewide diversity index increased from 0.526 in 2000 to 0.593 in 2010 to 0.657 as of the 2020 Census, with 534 of the state’s 565 municipalities following this trend.



*New Jersey has grown more diverse over the last two decades. In 2000, two-thirds of the population were non-Hispanic white, while as of 2020 the percentage has dropped to just over half. The population shares of Asians and Hispanics have both grown substantially, while the share of people indicating “some other race” (which includes those of two or more races) has doubled.*

1 The diversity index is dependent on the number of different mutually-exclusive race categories that are used in the analysis. The Census Bureau uses eight categories in its analysis. New Jersey Future’s analysis condenses these to five—non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, non-Hispanic Asian, and other—by grouping four of the Census Bureau’s categories into the “other” group, because their numbers are individually very small in New Jersey. Using five categories, the index has a maximum value of 0.8, or 80%.

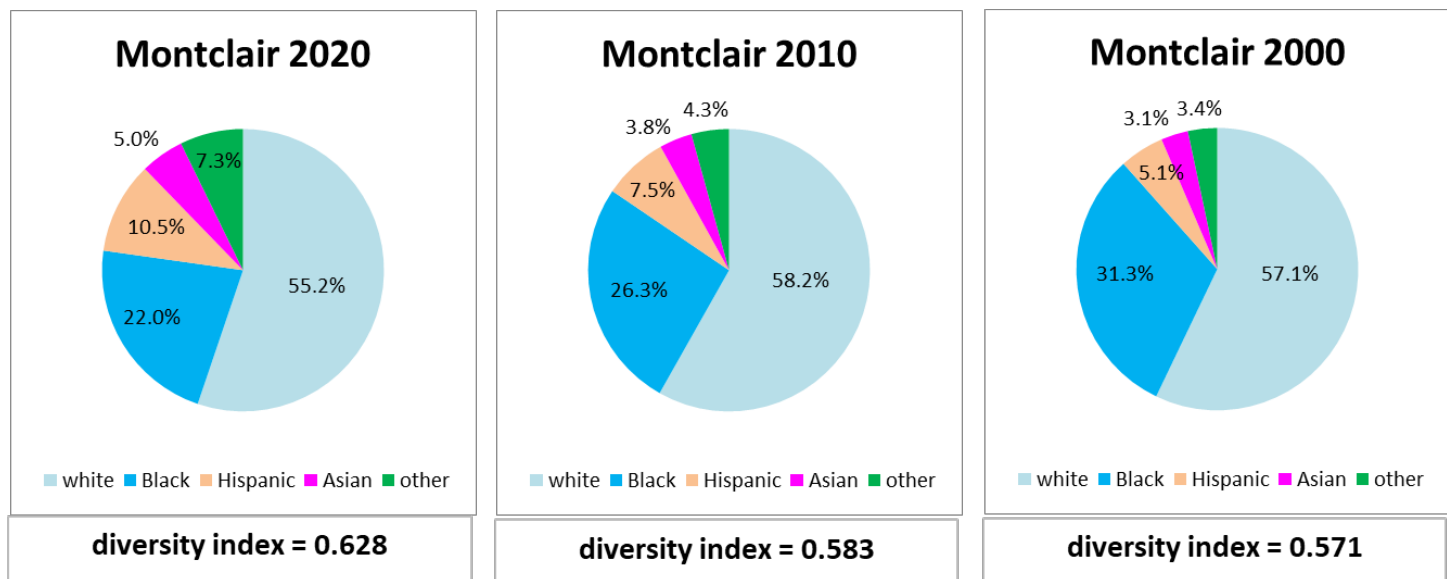
Instead of trying to devise a more sophisticated algorithm for quantifying “stable” integration, we opted to rely on advice from professional colleagues with experience in promoting integration and fighting discriminatory land-use practices. They were able to suggest a set of case-study municipalities that have engaged, in one way or another, in efforts to promote racial inclusivity.

We took an in-depth look at seven municipalities: Montclair, Asbury Park, Cherry Hill, Maplewood, South Orange, Jersey City, and Pennsauken. (Incidentally, all of these except Cherry Hill were among the 59 municipalities that met our initial proposed definition of “stable and integrated.”) Each of these places offered lessons about how to promote and maintain racial integration.

Through this qualitative analysis of case-study towns in New Jersey, integration revealed itself to be the result of factors including more affordable housing, rent control, inclusionary zoning ordinances, engagement on behalf of organizations and community bodies like police and school boards, and the creation of spaces in communities that promote casual interactions among people of diverse backgrounds.

## MONTCLAIR

*The legacy of redlining recedes as demand grows for walkable and transit-oriented development – and raises concerns about displacement.*



*While Montclair’s overall diversity has increased slightly since 2000, it has not kept up with the state; Montclair was more diverse than the state as a whole in 2000 but is less diverse in 2020. Montclair’s Black population as a share of the total has declined from 31.3% in 2000 to 22.0% in 2020, while the Hispanic share and the percent reporting “some other race” have more than doubled, and the Asian population has nearly doubled.*

Montclair lives in the wake of a segregated United States.

The University of Richmond’s [Mapping Inequality](#) project compiles neighborhood maps from 1935 to 1940, where the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) “assigned grades

to residential neighborhoods that reflected their ‘mortgage security’ that would then be visualized on color-coded maps.” Areas deemed to present a low risk for repayment of loans to lenders were colored green, and those with a high risk were colored red. Loans were therefore refused to these demarcated—redlined—areas.

The redlined areas of Montclair, determined to be high risk, are also described in these records as “90% black,” “estimated income \$500-2500,” and “negroes increasing.” The green, low-risk areas are characterized as “0% black,” “estimated income \$3000-50,000,” and “static.”

What is now the Fourth Ward, described by Fourth Ward Councilor David Cummings as the most diverse ward of Montclair, was [formerly redlined](#).

In an interview with New Jersey Future, Cummings expressed how impressions of Montclair as a diverse, stably integrated place in New Jersey are outdated. “People have lived off of Montclair’s past and what it was like a long time ago,” said Cummings.

Cummings’ view of Montclair and its changing diversity stems from a personal perspective, with his family’s roots in Montclair dating back to 1911. He remembers Montclair when he was growing up as about 35% black. Now, Montclair is 22% black. He attributes this change to the opening of “Midtown direct” train service to New York on NJ Transit’s Montclair-Boonton line, which serves six stations in Montclair and gave passengers a one-seat ride to New York Penn Station by eliminating the need for a transfer. The [Regional Plan Association estimates](#) that the creation of one-seat rides on several NJ Transit commuter rail lines caused home values near train stations to rise by an average of \$23,000.

“You can see a direct correlation between that opening up and the beginning of gentrification of the Fourth Ward specifically,” Cummings said.

Montclair’s location, direct line into New York City, and high quality public schools have made the town an attractive place to live. Now, the “township is no longer affordable for a low-income, or even middle [income],” he says.

Alan Mallach, author and city planner, explains the phenomenon of gentrification in attractive areas of New Jersey like Montclair, in an interview with New Jersey Future. “There’s been a tremendous increase in demand in New Jersey for areas that are seen as walkable, attractive, [and] appealing,” he said. (New Jersey Future has been [documenting this trend](#), and in fact growth in such places has accounted for [more than half of the state’s population growth](#) over the past decade.) “There’s a cluster of small cities, where Montclair is maybe the archetype, that typically have commuter rail access, pre-automobile walkable downtowns, [and] very attractive housing stocks.”

Despite the dominant narrative about gentrification, Mallach says that gentrification in New Jersey tends to avoid predominantly Black neighborhoods. He explained that gentrification has a trickle down effect into communities of color, where “the prices and demand for housing in the white areas, if you will, reach a level where upscale demand starts to percolate into the black neighborhoods.” Then areas like the Fourth Ward in Montclair become less affordable.

The result, as Cummings describes it, is longstanding Montclair families selling their homes, profiting, and moving out of Montclair.

At the same time, James Cotter of the Cloverhill Neighborhood Association noted that many of the houses being sold for huge profits are being sold by long-time resident Black families who are cashing out on their investments.

Mallach argues against interfering with this phenomenon as a strategy for preserving racial diversity, saying that the state should not be depriving Black households of the opportunity to benefit from the appreciation of their assets. Preventing displacement is not an issue to be solved by keeping people in place, but rather by offering more affordable housing, allowing households from throughout the income spectrum to continue to live in town—a solution that Mallach does not believe Montclair to be pursuing.

“I think Montclair and other cities should be doing a great deal more to preserve the opportunity for low-income renters to be able to live in places like Montclair,” Mallach said.

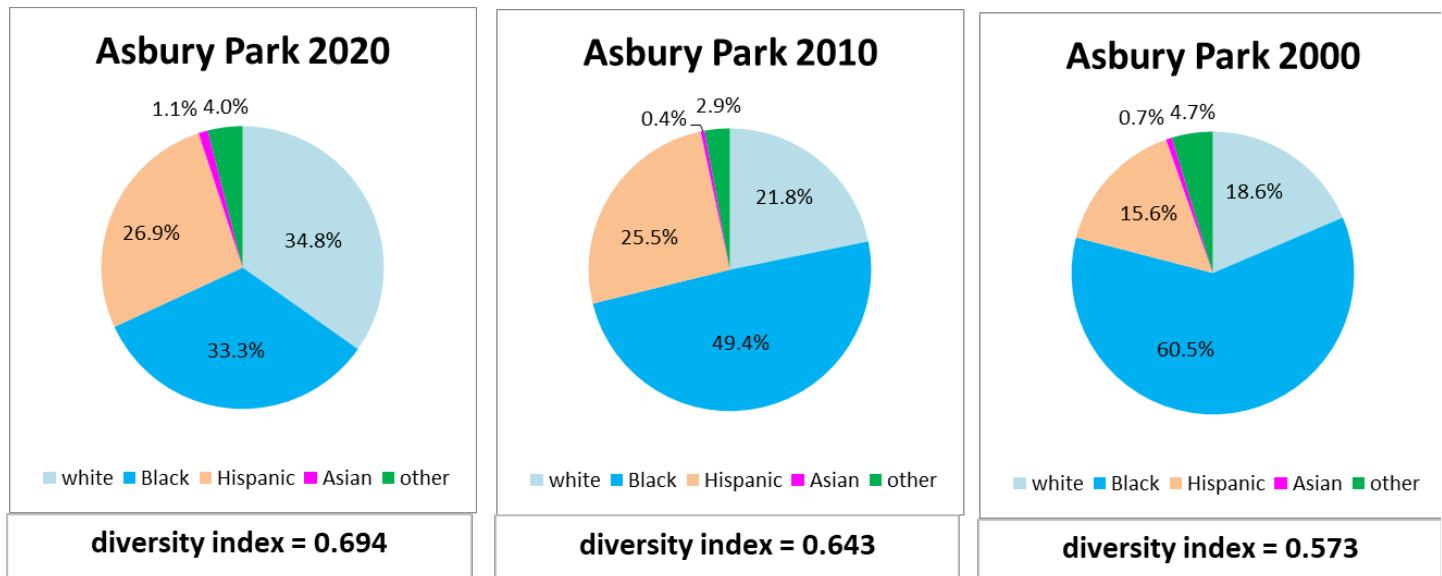
However, development in Montclair has been about more than gentrification. The [Lackawanna Plaza](#), for example, is set to bring more housing to the area, with a minimum of 20% of the units reserved for affordable housing.

The other development taking place in Montclair is community building. Groups in different Montclair neighborhoods are focused on bringing people together and making Montclair a more integrated place. The Cloverhill Neighborhood Association in Montclair, run by James Cotter, is an organization that has a longstanding history of political action and community engagement, from an annual block party to organizing on behalf of local issues. Cloverhill, according to Cotter, “demographically represents what the town aspires to be: multiracial, multiethnic, multigenerational.” The neighborhood association fosters that diversity,

The [Montclair Neighborhood Development Corporation](#) extends its support to the entirety of Montclair, from a career development institute for young adults to help for renters facing eviction. In an interview with New Jersey Future, executive director Rev. Dr. A. Craig Dunn expressed the importance of building community and “extending the invitation,” as steps to maintaining integration. “People are afraid of gentrification, but the gentrification isn’t just about housing, it’s about mindset.” he said. “Once you lose the spirit of community and you think the community is no longer for you, your mindset has been gentrified.”

# ASBURY PARK

*A town with a recent history of inclusion now struggles to maintain its diversity in a changing market.*



*Asbury Park has transitioned from majority-Black in 2000 (when the Black share of population was more than 60%) to plurality-white in 2020, with white and Black each now representing about one-third of the population. The Hispanic share has grown from about one-in-six in 2000 to more than one-in-four today.*

As an entertainment hot spot on the Jersey Shore, the home of the [Stone Pony](#), where Monmouth County native Bruce Springsteen got his start, and a revitalized location for the LGBTQ+ community, Asbury Park is recognized for its cultural cachet.

In a 2017 interview with the Asbury Park Press, author and Asbury Park historian Kathy Kelly described the town's current identity as aligning with the original intentions of the city's founder in 1871. "(Bradley) saw an opportunity here, but I think he also felt a calling, and it was to create a place where middle-class people could come and have their souls recharged by the sea and by leisure," Kelly said.

Asbury Park's recent popularity is due in large part to the [investments](#) of the LGBTQ+ community over the '80s and '90s, as they bought homes and consequently redeveloped Asbury Park.

Now the site of New Jersey Pride, trendy restaurants, and thriving nightlife, Asbury Park is an increasingly popular place to be, and its development has not stopped at bars and restaurants. New affordable housing developments in Asbury Park have made the city more attractive, more livable, and better integrated.

In April 2020, the Asbury Park City Council accepted the Planning Board's affordable housing ordinance. Before then, Asbury Park only had a required 20% rule for the Springwood Avenue Redevelopment Plan Area, stating that "at least 20% of new residential units are required to be sold or rented at levels affordable to low- and

moderate-income households.” The new affordable housing update has added inclusionary zoning in the Central Business District (CBD) Redevelopment Area, Main Street Redevelopment Plan Area, the R3 District along Deal Lake Drive, and the B District.

Moderate-income households are defined as those making [50-80%](#) of the regional median income. Low-income applies to households earning [30-50%](#) of the regional median income, and very low-income households earn [30%](#) or less of the regional median income.

In an interview with New Jersey Future, Asbury Park’s director of Planning and Redevelopment, Michele Alonso, described the goals of this program as being “the creation of affordable housing” and “the retention of affordable housing.”

The [CBD](#) Redevelopment Area Plan includes a permitted “additional 10 feet of building height” to accommodate the 15% of total housing units reserved for low and moderate income housing.

The [Main Street Redevelopment Plan](#) amends rules for housing parcels currently owned by the City of Asbury Park, with 25% of residential units “set-aside” for low-income and moderate-income housing.

Asbury Park also added the [Deal Lake Drive Inclusionary Housing Overlay District](#) to the existing R3 Deal Lake Drive District.

For Main Street, the B district, and the new Deal Lake Drive addition, the development of 5 or more units will require 20% of said units to be reserved for affordable housing. Additionally, the maximum permitted unit density will be increased to accommodate more affordable housing.

Alonso explained that the inclusionary zoning ordinance is a response to gentrification and a 20% increase in property values in Asbury Park.

“We were hearing from local residents that they were getting pushed out of the city. So we did that, and we also put in place a rent control ordinance.”

This [rent control ordinance](#), which Alonso says makes Asbury Park “very unique in New Jersey,” states that landlords cannot request an increase in rent of more than 3.5%.

Still, Alan Mallach, author and city planner, describes segregation following the commuter rail line that separates the east side entertainment district of Asbury Park from the rest of the city.

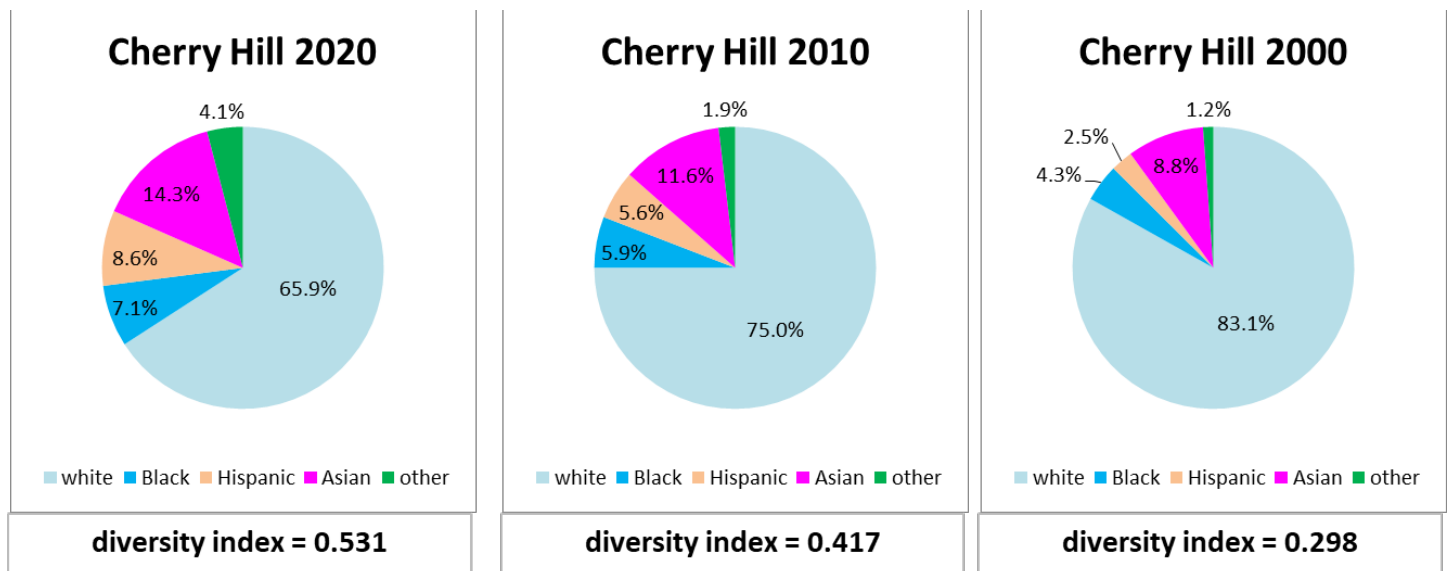
“Running down the middle [of Asbury Park] is NJ Transit’s North Jersey Coast line. Between the ocean and the rail line is gentrified,” Mallach said in an interview with New Jersey Future. “On the other side, much less so, and that tends to follow racial lines to a large extent.”

In Asbury Park, the appearance of diversity at the municipality level does not necessarily translate to integration at the neighborhood level. From one side of Asbury Park to the other, the experiences of racial and economic groups differ. Inclusionary zoning requirements could be the solution to a fully integrated Asbury Park.



# CHERRY HILL

*A former destination for “white flight” embraces diversity.*



*Cherry Hill's diversity index has increased substantially in the last 20 years. In 2000, five out of six Cherry Hill residents were non-Hispanic white, while today the fraction is about two-thirds. All other racial groups have seen their percent of the population increase.*

Until it was [dissolved in 2011](#), the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) had been the state agency responsible for enforcing the [Mount Laurel/Supreme Court decisions](#), which require every New Jersey municipality to allow the creation of housing for low- and moderate-income households. But the Appellate Division of the New Jersey Superior Court found that COAH had been enforcing a very low obligation to affordable housing in many upscale New Jersey suburbs, including Cherry Hill.

“In total, the Court found that COAH eliminated 100,000 affordable housing units without adequate reasoning,” states a [report](#) from the Fair Share Housing Center, who brought these appeals to the court.

But in more recent years, after decades of serving as a destination for (mostly white) households moving out of Philadelphia, and resisting the creation of affordable housing, Cherry Hill appears to be embracing its growing economic and racial diversity.

In Short Hills, a Cherry Hill neighborhood, the Evans-Francis Estates are slated to add 54 affordable housing units to the neighborhood, with one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments and townhouses. These suburban housing units meet the incomes of people making “as low as [20 to 60 percent](#) of median income.”

These housing developments are met by community engagement, activism, and connections. In February 2021, the Cherry Hill school district adopted African-American studies as a [requirement](#) for graduation from high school. The mandate went into effect for incoming students beginning in 2021.



In an interview with New Jersey Future, Tina Truitt, president of the Cherry Hill African American Civic Association (CHAACA), explained how the adoption of African American studies as a graduation requirement began as an initiative by active students in Cherry Hill.

“Their voices put the cherry on top,” Truitt said.

Following George Floyd’s death in 2020, students in Cherry Hill marched. Members of the Cherry Hill police department walked along with them.

The Cherry Hill Police Department has dedicated itself to diversity as well, by expanding the racial profile of its officers and attending regular meetings with Cherry Hill residents to share what the force is doing. Truitt described how the police department keeps up its community connections. “They share new initiatives or programs that they may be thinking about or are about to roll out. They keep us in the loop of their hiring.”

The school district has also worked towards diversifying its faculty, with more teachers of color and more people of color in administrative roles within the school district. Truitt finds that this action from the school district and police department alike indicates the community’s dedication to diversity and integration.

“There are people who really care and want to make sure that it’s an inclusive community for everybody,” she said.

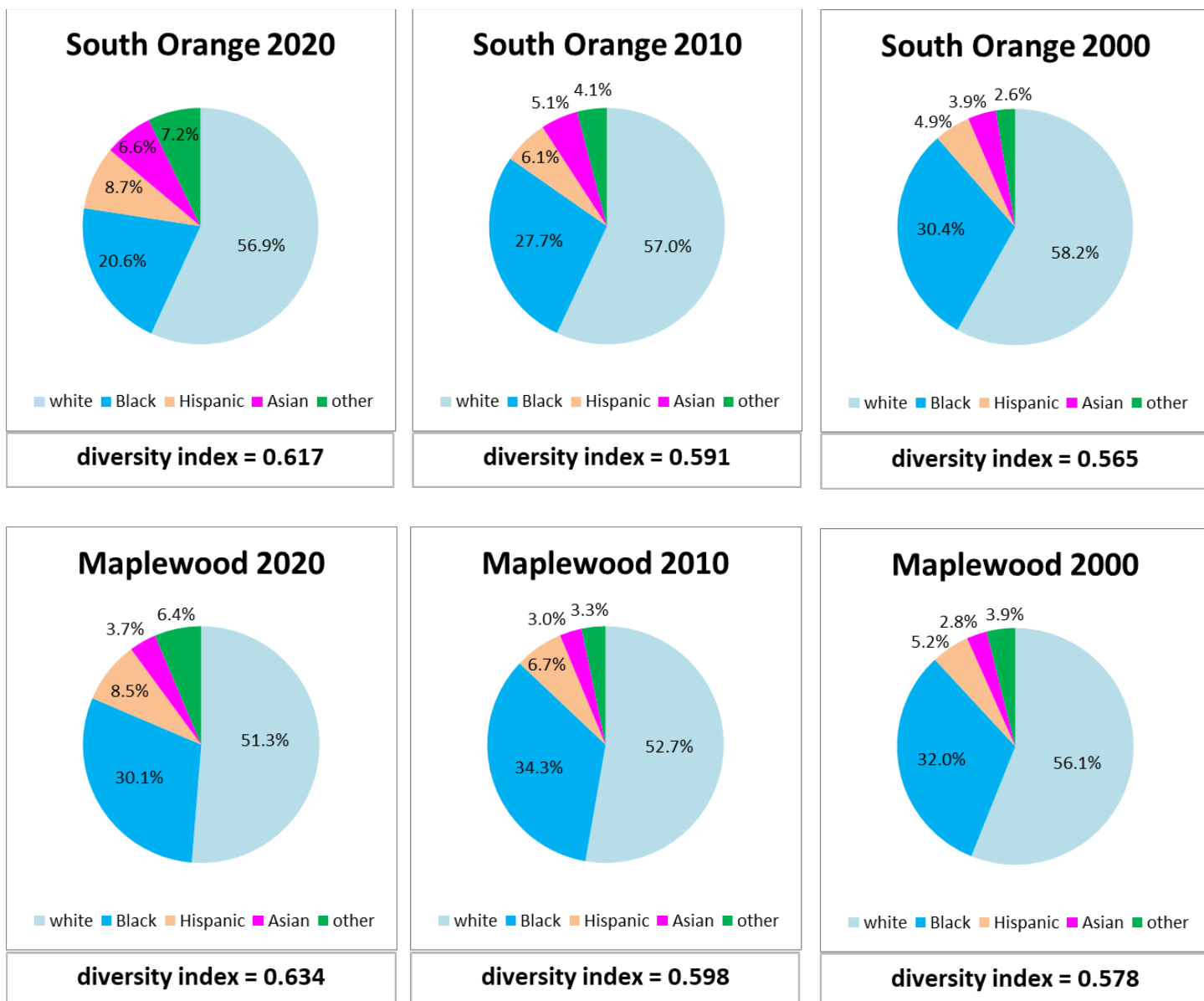
The Cherry Hill African American Civic Association acts as a liaison between the people of Cherry Hill and community leadership, from the school board to the police department to the town government. Truitt expressed that the CHAACA can bring concerns to them and “demand change” if necessary.

The CHAACA serves the community at large by “giving people knowledge and information,” according to Truitt. For example, the group works to encourage community members to understand the importance of exercising the right to vote.

For other cities and communities in New Jersey working towards being stably integrated and diverse, Truitt believes that organizations like the CHAACA play a vital role. “All communities need something similar.”

## SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD

*A coalition of residents from two neighboring towns demonstrates the value and importance of active and continuous engagement on integration.*



*South Orange and Maplewood have both remained remarkably stable in terms of their racial composition, though with a notable decline in the Black share in South Orange as other racial groups have increased their presence, and with the share reporting “some other race” (which includes people of two or more races) growing substantially in both towns. However, with the state as a whole diversifying rapidly, both towns transitioned from being more diverse than the state in 2000 to being less diverse in 2020.*

South Orange village and Maplewood township share a school district, a geographic area, and a non-profit organization, the [South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race](#), that works towards maintaining racial integration.

The coalition was founded in 1996, when the area’s demographics began to change, with

people of color entering the neighborhood and existing residents fearing their property values would fall. Both South Orange and Maplewood townships support the organization financially, a characteristic Eric Dobson, Deputy Director of the Fair Share Housing Center, views as pivotal to successful integration. “The town has to make the investment to keep a coalition like that going,” he said.

In an interview with the nonprofit’s executive director, Nancy Gagnier, she explained that this reaction led some community members to question: “How do we make a community that’s diverse, that everybody’s on board with, and also not have isolated pockets... [where] only black people live, or only Hispanic people live?”

The South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race started by attempting to prove to realtors and hesitant white residents that people of color entering the neighborhood was an economic benefit. Eventually, the coalition’s focus shifted to intentionally integrating all elements of community life, not just real estate and property values. They inquired about schools, town leadership, and race: “Are the schools integrated? Are the boards and committees representative of the community? Could we have opportunities to talk about race?” explains Gagnier.

Two crucial elements of the coalition’s work with government are relationship building and advocacy, which includes letter writing campaigns and regularly attending school board meetings. Gagnier noted how South Orange and Maplewood’s support allows both municipalities to market themselves as sites of racial inclusion. Still, the organization is a “separate entity so that they could go and challenge when political ideologies changed, or leadership and power structures change.”

Despite South Orange and Maplewood’s stability, Gagnier says that integration is an ongoing project. “You still have to, as we have been for the last two decades plus, be intentional and work on things, because you can still develop [exclusionary] pockets or a neighborhood could grow in one way and possibly destabilize a school or school district.”

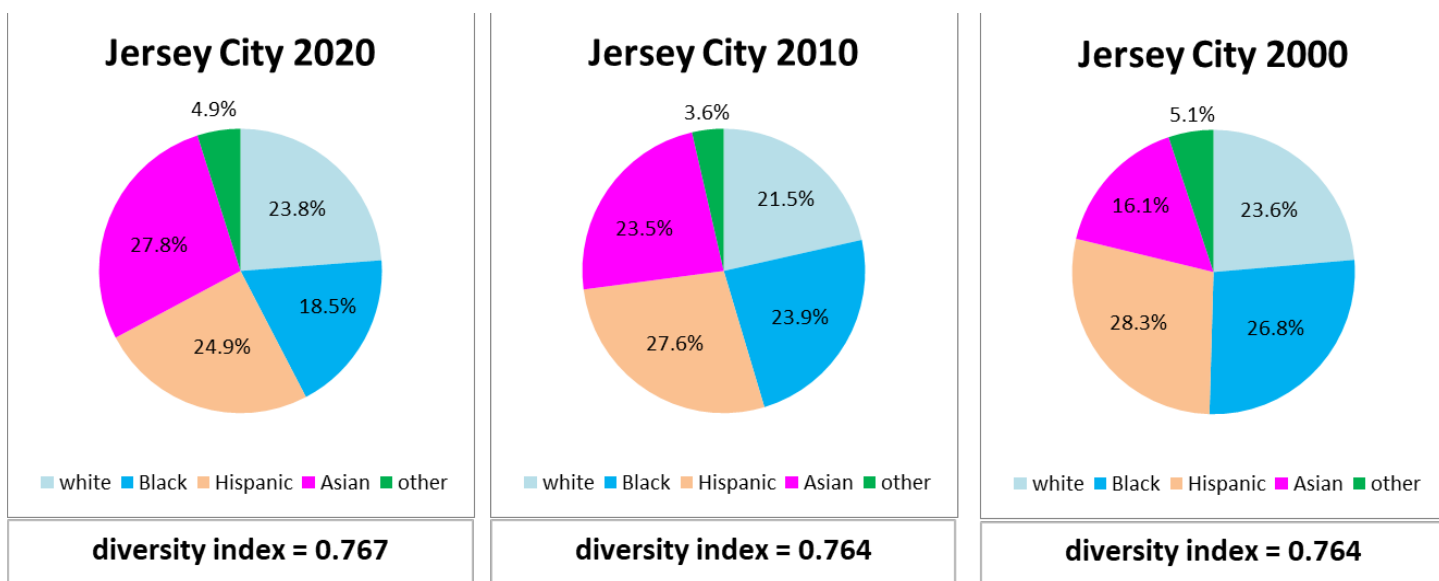
In 2019 the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race published a [Demographic Report](#), which documented rising housing prices and concluded that South Orange and Maplewood lack affordable housing for low income residents. In response the coalition developed the Wealth Gap Equalizer Loan. Every year, they can loan up to 10 people from historically disadvantaged groups \$7,500 that must be paid back in five years with no interest. The loan is meant to help people who are “facing an obstacle of closing costs, or they’re not competitive in the bidding wars, because they need an extra \$5,000 or \$7,000.” South Orange matches the coalition grants with affordable funds, making it so that the “loan is fully forgivable if the person stays in the home for five years,” Gagnier explains.

The coalition works to engage with the community across the board, from integration through arts programming, to political advocacy, to surveys and research. Gagnier finds that the organization’s work in all these areas is what makes them unique. “You’re hard put to find groups that work in all aspects of community life,” Gagnier said.

Demographics research and oral testimony indicate that a community coalition, like the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race, can help stabilize community members as they integrate into new neighborhoods.

# JERSEY CITY

*The state's most diverse municipality finds that diversity is not a static concept.*



*Jersey City was the state's most diverse municipality in 2000 and remains the most diverse in 2020. But its diversity looks different today than it did 20 years ago. While the white share of the population has remained relatively stable, the Black share has declined by eight percentage points, from 26.8% to 18.5%. Meanwhile, the Asian population has grown rapidly enough that the city transitioned from plurality-Hispanic in 2000 to plurality-Asian in 2020.*

Jersey City has been consistently recognized as one of the [most diverse](#) cities in New Jersey and in the nation. However, between 2000 and 2020, Jersey City's non-Hispanic white population has increased.

Eric Dobson, Deputy Director of the Fair Share Housing Center, views this as a sign that Jersey City has to take stability more seriously. The Fair Share Housing Center has been pushing Jersey City to adopt an inclusionary housing ordinance that would require a certain percentage of any new residential development to be affordable to lower-income households. "We've been fighting Jersey City for almost six years now to get an inclusionary zoning ordinance... a real one," said Dobson in an interview with New Jersey Future.

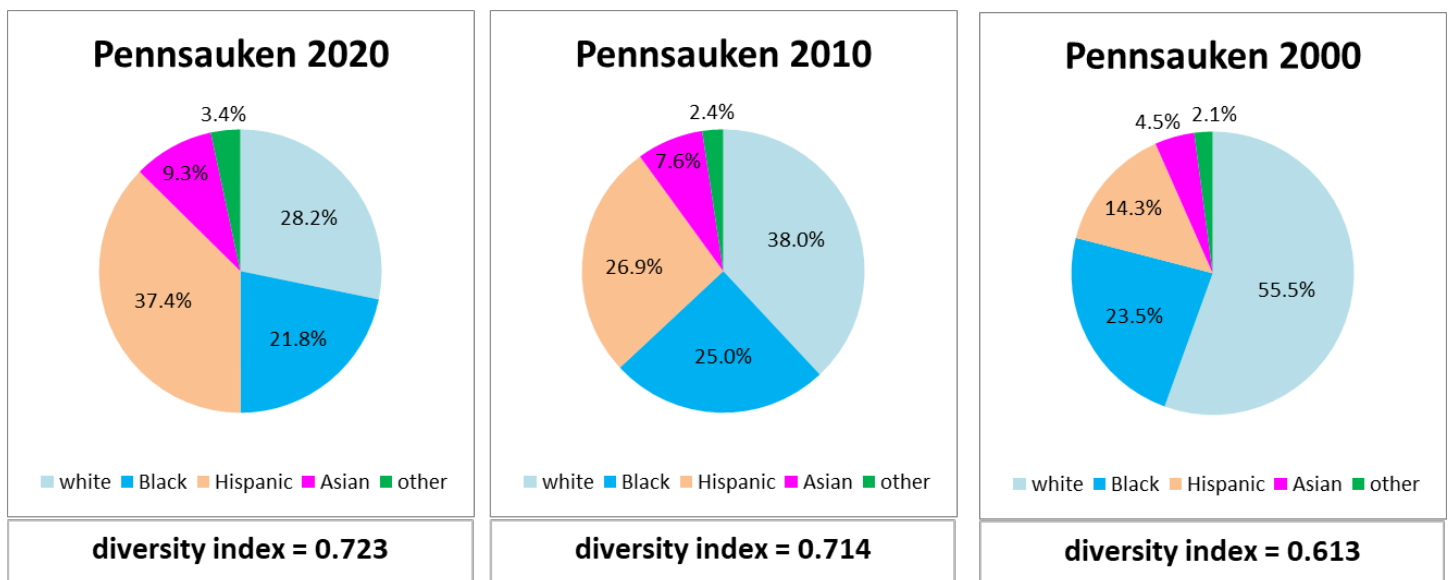
After a 2020 zoning ordinance that allowed developers to pay Jersey City between [\\$25,000 to \\$100,000](#) per unit instead of building said units, the city faced opposition, and was sued by the Fair Share Housing Center. Fair Share Housing Center Executive Director Adam Gordon points out the flaw in the earlier legislation: "The ordinance, as currently written, would enable wealthy developers to build a large number of luxury homes without providing any affordable housing for working families." Since then, Jersey City and the Fair Share Housing Center have worked together to create a new inclusionary zoning ordinance that requires a minimum of [10% to 15% affordable housing](#). The new ordinance has no opt-outs.

Now, the Bayfront Promenade, part of the Bayfront development in Jersey City, will include 35% affordable housing units out of its 209 units. The whole site will require 35% affordable housing throughout, giving it the “most affordable housing of any private mixed-income community of this size in the country,” according to reporting in [ROI-NJ](#).

Despite Jersey City’s high diversity index, the municipal government has been criticized for not being as diverse as the population it represents. For instance, as of 2021 Mayor Fulop’s administration was [76% non-Hispanic white](#). Dobson cited the lack of diversity in Jersey City’s leadership as being a potential reason why this fight for affordable housing went on so long. “There were no black legislators that would stand up and support a stronger ordinance,” he said.

## PENNSAUKEN

*Community engagement is important – and so is diversity in leadership.*



*Pennsauken transitioned from majority-white in 2000 to plurality-Hispanic in 2020. Its Black percentage remained relatively constant, while its Hispanic and Asian shares both more than doubled.*

In the 1990s, Pennsauken was in the throes of white flight, with white community members fleeing from Pennsauken’s neighborhoods as people of color entered the township.

Harold Adams and Lynn Cummings, residents of Pennsauken at the time and advocates for racial integration, decided to try to stem the tide of white flight using classic grassroots activism. They started with conversations amongst neighbors, encouraging people to both stay in Pennsauken in order to combat white flight, as well as move into the town and embrace its growing diversity. These conversations were followed by professional data analysis, through the Fund for an Open Society. The analysis determined that to achieve integration, Pennsauken needed to “encourage more white families to move to Pennsauken and involve more residents of color in Pennsauken’s civic life,” according to a [review](#) of the documentary *The New Metropolis: The New Neighbors*. Pennsauken locals compiled these conversations and data and established the Stable Integration Governing

Board, to work with the town on promoting and maintaining an integrated Pennsauken.

Since then, the Stable Integration Governing Board stopped its work promoting integration in Pennsauken. Eric Dobson, Deputy Director of the Fair Share Housing Center, suggested that the lack of continuous activism is an obstacle for community groups like the Stable Integration Governing Board. He asks, “As that group starts to age... who will be mentoring and training to know how to do this work?”

Despite the dormancy of the Stable Integration Governing Board, a new generation of integration focused leadership has been elected in Pennsauken as the town’s first all-female minority leadership. Mayor Jessica Rafeh, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and an immigrant to the United States from Venezuela, and Deputy Mayor Nicole Roberts, the first Black woman on the township committee, made history when they were elected in [November 2020](#).

In an interview with New Jersey Future, Mayor Rafeh describes how diversity in Pennsauken begins with their representation as women and persons of color. “The biggest thing that Pennsauken has been wanting to make a difference with is starting with the governing body,” she said. Both Rafeh and Roberts recognize that they are representing a community whose diversity looks different than it did in the 1990s, when the Stable Integration Governing Board was formed, particularly due to the growing Latino population.

Members of the township committee put this perspective into action before Rafeh and Roberts’ terms began. In 2020, the Pennsauken town government outreached to non-English speaking residents —specifically Asian residents and Spanish speaking residents — on social media and with door to door engagement to assist them in filling out Census information.

Amy Schmalbach, administrative assistant to the Mayor and Township Committee of Pennsauken, describes Rafeh and Roberts’ approach to integration as defined by engagement. “They are all about engagement...That’s the key to [maintaining] stability.”

In October 2022, Pennsauken is hosting a fall festival to showcase the town’s diversity with flags, food, and music to represent different groups and cultures. The town committee is planning on incorporating Pennsauken schools in the event as well. Rafeh says, “We have all as a committee realized that the only way for us to let people know who lives in town is by representing them.”

At the height of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, Pennsauken town leaders met with local, active students to brainstorm how to further educate the community about Black Lives Matter, culture, and diversity. The students focused on education, suggesting movies to educate older populations on different cultures and backgrounds, and recommended book titles to be acquired for the community library that highlight main characters of color.

Outreach has not stopped at the town committee. Pennsauken’s police and fire departments established youth academy camps and host periodic coffee and donuts with cops to reach younger generations in Pennsauken. Schmalbach explains that the Pennsauken police department reimaged their use of force policies and practiced



community engagement prior to the murder of George Floyd and the increased public attention to police brutality.

Deputy Mayor Roberts highlights Pennsauken's open spaces as key to integration, places where Pennsauken residents come together. "The township has put a lot of effort into beautifying, revitalizing, and renovating. We're really fortunate to be able to continue to build on these open spaces for the entire township of Pennsauken, and [utilizing] that to celebrate our diversity."

Pennsauken's community spaces include a renovated skatepark, where the mayor and deputy mayor note diverse groups of Pennsauken kids go to skate, the Community Recreation Complex with basketball courts and soccer fields, and the Delaware Gardens Park overlooking the Delaware River with walk paths. Through these common spaces, Pennsauken has facilitated [socioeconomic mixing](#), a tool that could be used by city planners to bring people from different backgrounds together.

To maintain these outdoor spaces, the town applies for grants, according to Schmalbach. "Every year that we do this, whether it's the bigger Green Acres grants or the smaller grants from the county, we rotate neighborhoods so we're creating this cohesive parks system," she said. Next, Pennsauken is working to create and open a community center.

Roberts and Rafeh reflect the diverse makeup of Pennsauken's residents through their leadership as minority women and their diverse projects and events. Rafeh contributes, "We are here to serve, and we are here to be their voice."

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Maintaining stable integration begins with the premise that no town or neighborhood's population is static, according to Mallach. "The notion that you can freeze a neighborhood in place, in any community, is preposterous. Neighborhoods don't stay the same." Or, as Dobson concurs, "A town is always moving towards integration or segregation."

Therefore, working to prevent displacement and the loss of a city's diversity is only possible through two avenues, in Mallach's view. "The two things that a city can do is: Number one, **provide more affordable housing**. And number two, make sure you have an effective **rent control ordinance** and make sure it's enforced."

As neighborhoods change and populations age, community leaders in these neighborhoods have to keep up. The fate of the Stable Integration Governing Board in Pennsauken, which became inactive and unfunded by the town, reveals how the community and its governing body must **actively participate in integration**. Pennsauken's new mayor and deputy mayor have shown that the spirit of integration is still alive in Pennsauken and that the active pursuit of integration by town leaders is key to ensuring that the success of past efforts persists into the future.

**Community groups** from Cherry Hill to Montclair have shown how community engagement and advocacy, organized by an association on behalf of the community, make for a more integrated town. The South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race



is the best example of an active organization focused on integration and taking steps to make integration a reality.

**Positive relationships between the community and community bodies**, like school boards and police departments, have kept individuals informed on the changing policies that impact their everyday lives. In Pennsauken and Cherry Hill, these community partnerships also reveal the diverse makeup of authority figures in the community, showing residents from all backgrounds that at least some of their leaders look like them and use their backgrounds to represent the community. These examples influence New Jersey's youth as well; many of the towns studied share the common theme of **young people being involved in the process** of protecting diversity in their communities.

In Pennsauken and in Montclair, **informal sites of integration**, from skateparks to block parties, bring the community together. Especially when consciously calculated by city planners and local officials, these spots give residents a place to gather and see the diverse members of their community.

The adoption of **inclusionary zoning ordinances** in Asbury Park and Jersey City are the work of years of advocacy and have resulted in more affordable housing being planned for in the future. If looking to intentionally create and enforce more diverse housing opportunities as a means of integration, an inclusionary zoning ordinance may be the answer for cities undergoing a housing crisis or suffering from the effects of racial displacement.

To diversify places that have resisted integration, or to continue diversifying places that have started the process, New Jersey towns have the seven case studies above as examples of how to work towards integration. Their lessons involve city planning — the creation of more affordable housing, mandatory inclusionary zoning ordinances, rent control, and informal sites of integration — as well as community engagement to build strong relationships between the people and community bodies and groups that promote integration in New Jersey towns.

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