Maplewood Messenger

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MAPLEWOOD HISTORY

A New Chapter for Maplewood: Roots Deep in the Neighborhood's Story

The Maplewood neighborhood in Rochester, New York—rooted in early settlements like King's Landing along the Genesee River—has long valued knowledge and community gathering. While the current Maplewood Community Library building dates to 1959, library service in the area stretches back decades earlier through a predecessor branch that served local residents.

LAKE AVENUE BRANCH LIBRARY

Early Library Service: The Lake Avenue Branch

In the early 20th century, the growing Maplewood/10th Ward area relied on the Lake Avenue Branch of the Rochester Public Library. By the 1930s, this branch operated from a modest, temporary location in a former storefront at the corner of Lake Avenue and Owen Street. It was a small but vital resource for the neighborhood, offering books and services in a converted commercial space that was always intended as interim housing.

This branch served the western side of the city, including Maplewood residents, amid the broader expansion of Rochester's public library system (which began branching out significantly in the 1910s–1920s). It addressed the needs of a dense, family-oriented community shaped by industrial growth, including nearby Kodak Park.

The 1959 Transition: A Purpose-Built Home

By the 1950s, the Lake Avenue Branch had become insufficient for the area's needs. Library leaders sought a more central, permanent facility. After considering options like a former Eastman Kodak president's home, they selected three long-vacant lots at the northwest corner of Dewey Avenue and Augustine Street.

Interestingly, that corner had remained undeveloped for decades despite surrounding residential growth—due to factors like trolley track placement, tax assessments, ownership by Aquinas Institute, safety concerns at the intersection, and even a rejected 1941 proposal for a gas station. The library's choice finally brought the first building to the site.

The new Dewey Avenue Branch (later officially known as Maplewood Community Library) opened in 1959 as a bright, 6,200-square-foot facility with large windows, separate areas for adults, teens, and children, plus meeting spaces. It quickly became one of the system's busiest branches, serving thousands with programs, homework help, and community events.

Decades of Service and the Recent Renovation

For over 65 years, the Maplewood Library endured minimal updates while continuing to adapt—hosting story times, ESL classes, citizenship prep, book clubs, and youth activities. By the late 2010s, high usage and the building's age made expansion a priority, as noted in the 2018 Branch Facilities Plan.

Thanks to community advocacy, funding from the City of Rochester, ARPA, and New York State (supported by Assemblymember Sarah Clark), the project advanced. Adjacent properties were acquired and cleared, and the library temporarily moved to Holy Rosary Church on Lexington Avenue in 2024.

The renovation and addition (completed in spring 2026) nearly doubled the usable space to about 9,688 square feet.

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Kimberly VanDerWal

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MESSSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

The Rochester Beacon recently ran an article about the Maplewood neighborhood- it's history, assets and challenges. It was a very balanced, thorough article that gave Maplewood some good press. We've had a lot of additional good news recently. The expanded and renovated Maplewood Library at 1111 Dewey Avenue is now fully open and looks great! With a LOT more room for people and books, small and large meeting rooms, and even a kitchen- this library looks like it will serve the neighborhood well for years to come. Look for a formal ribbon cutting sometime in June!

The City just cut the ribbon on the combined new Maplewood Playground and the Maplewood Genesee River Trail projects! The trail is especially gratifying, as I've been advocating for years to get the last remaining section of the GRT paved and made ADA accessible. It also has bollards to discourage ATV use. The new playground will be a draw for families to the Park and Maplewood in general. It's designed for kids to climb and play in a flow pattern, and looks beautiful! With both parking and the GRT nearby, it's also very accessible. The MNA facebook page has some pictures of the event, with the mayor cutting the ribbon.

Right next to the playground, the new Maplewood Nature Education Center is almost complete- that should also have a ribbon-cutting opening sometime in June. I strongly recommend that you visit and look around once it's open. Sara Scott from the City gave a presentation about the status of the renovation at a recent MNA Town Hall meeting, and it looks amazing!

Remember that the MNA Town Hall meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month, at 7:00 pm in the Chorus Room of the Aquinas Institute. Please consider attending and getting news about your neighborhood! The MNA also needs volunteers for our Gardening Team (maintaining our beautiful community gardens), our litter pick up team (every Monday night at 6:30 starting at Dewey and Alameda unless it's raining) and our PAC TAC patrols. Contact president@maplewood.org if you're interested in joining us!

A New Chapter for Maplewood: Roots Deep in the Neighborhood's Story

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Upgrades feature:

- A prominent new Dewey Avenue entrance.
- Expanded, dedicated zones for children, teens, and adults.
- A new community meeting room and classrooms.
- A secure outdoor play area.
- Improved parking, accessibility, lighting, and safety features.

Looking Forward

Today's renovated Maplewood Community Library honors its pre-1959 roots while embracing a modern role as a dynamic hub for learning, connection, and opportunity in Rochester's 10th Ward. From the humble Lake Avenue storefront to this revitalized landmark at 1111 Dewey Avenue, it remains a cornerstone for families and lifelong learners.

Stop by to explore the new space—or share your memories of the old Lake Avenue or Dewey branches !

2026 Juneteenth Festival

The Greater Rochester Martin Luther King Jr. Commission and Rochester Area Community Foundation are excited to invite you to the 2026 Juneteenth Festival, taking place June 19-20, 2026. This year's theme, "Beloved Community," honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of a society based on justice, equal opportunity, and love of one's fellow human beings. Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans and celebrates the ongoing journey toward equality and justice. Our two-day festival has become a cornerstone event, bringing together thousands of community members for celebration, education, and unity.

Festival Highlights:

* Two days of cultural celebrations and activities
* Live performances, music, and entertainment
* Food vendors, merchandise, and community booths
* Family-friendly activities for all ages

For More Information:
Contact Nikia Washington, Festival Coordinator at Grmlkcommission@gmail.com or (585) 224-6746.

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www.maplewood.org

MNA Town Hall Highlights

March, 2026 – May, 2026

The MNA Town Hall meetings are held at the Aquinas Institute on the first Wednesday of every month at 7pm. They are open to the public, and are your opportunities to find out what is going on in the neighborhood and provide input. The atmosphere is casual, and participation is encouraged.

March 2026

-Government: Yversha Roman reported that the County now has license plate readers, currently just in the towns, not in the City. William Burgess reported that the County has given naming rights for the baseball stadium to ESL. He also reported that they are conducting a study of the issue of short term rentals, e.g. AirBNB's.

Bridget Monroe, City Council, reported on kennel replacements at Rochester Animal Services, upgrading elevators at the Blue Cross Arena, formation of a committee to discuss mayoral and council raises and docking of pay for no-shows, and a Flower Fest Day in June.

Anna Keller, Northwest Neighborhood Service Center, reported 3 new businesses in Maplewood (a salon, a cannabis shop and a corner store). PHAT Boys on Dewey was given nuisance points for selling tobacco to underage people. Sadly, the northwest quadrant had the lowest number of applications for the City's NIA (Neighbors in Action) grants.

-Guest Speakers:

Roxanne Angst, Monroe County 911 administrator, spoke about the 911 system. It was started in 1968, and now takes over a million calls per year. It services 68 agencies in the county, including police, fire, ambulance, animal, parking, etc., and can accommodate 200 languages. A live 911 feed can be viewed at monroecounty.gov. When contacting 911, a phone call gets the fastest response. A text to 911 can also be used if there is a need to be silent or for hearing impaired. The most important information to convey quickly is your location. A cell phone will do that if you allow that feature. Staff is almost back up to pre-covid levels. Screening and training is an extensive year long process.

Sarah Scott from the City's Recreation Department, spoke about the Maplewood Nature Center project. This is located by the pond by the 104 ramp, and is part of Olmsted Park. The building and the grounds are being completely renovated – the exterior, parking lot, playground, bus loop, track around the pond, patio, vegetable gardens, the interior, event spaces, a teaching kitchen, etc. The playground is one of two premier playgrounds in the City. The Center will be open Monday – Saturday, 9-6, and will feature summer camps, educational programs, picnics, and special events. It will be a net zero facility (in energ usage). There will be soft openings in May and June, and will officially open to the public in July.

Other: The MNA membership drive is on. The latest MNA newsletter was available at the meeting, as well as at Maplewood.org.

April, 2026

-Public Safety: RPD reported on the shooting of an officer at Lake and Driving Park – the suspect then committed suicide. There was a shooting in March in West Ridge Plaza – the plaza was issued nuisance points. Also in March, the culmination of a drug ring investigation resulted in swatting 9 locations, including Magee and Electric, where large amounts of cash, cocaine, fentanyl and guns were seized.

-Government: Bridget Monroe, City Council, reported they are proposing a citywide moratorium on billboards. She stated that unfortunately, funds for improvements to the Maplewood Rose Garden (bathrooms, gazebos, etc.) are not in the plan – the public can write letters to the mayor. Also, the northwest district had the highest number of fire incidents. School #7 is in receivership – they are considering making it a community school.

Anna Keller, NWNSC, reported the City is fixing the damage to the vacant area at Dewey/Driving Park caused by a city truck. The City Clean Sweep event is May 2. The NWNSC can provide people with trash bags and pickers at any time if you wish to beautify your neighborhood.

Johanna, from the Maplewood Library, reported that they are moving back into the renovated Dewey Avenue location, and will reopen in April, with a grand opening in June. There is still work to be done on the parking lot, landscaping and the outdoor play area, as well as some tweaks to the interior.

-Guest Speaker: Natalia Lopuchowycz, the City's STRIVE coordinator, spoke. STRIVE works to reduce violence between intimate partners, and to improve survivor safety and offender accountability. They coordinate the efforts of many law enforcement and social agencies, and have a team that handles high risk cases daily. In the City in 2025, there were 3500 incidents, and from 2021-2025, there were 24 domestic homicides.

-Other: The MNA officer and board election results were announced. The Beacon, an online newspaper, will be featuring Maplewood in their upcoming issue. Spring litter cleanup efforts include Clean Sweep, 2 Rochester Walks events, and the MNA weekly pickup – volunteers are needed for these, and for PACTAC and public garden maintenance.

May, 2026

-Public Safety: Officer Jay Blanchard of the RPD announced PACTAC training for 6/1/2026 at 4:30 at the Neighborhood Service Center – please call the NSC to sign up. The purpose of the PACTAC walks is to show a police and citizen presence, and to report any problems – volunteers are needed. He reported a very quiet month of April – good news. The RPD is planning a large police presence again this year in Charlotte for Memorial Day weekend.

MNA TOWN HALL HIGHLIGHTS con't

-Government: William Burgess, County legislator, announced an open house on 5/13 at the County Office Building. There will be a 'healthy pots' event on 6/27, where lead cookware can be exchanged for new, safe items. Plants will be given away too. The County has initiated a freeze on biometrics (stores recording your face) until they can learn more about what they record and how they use the information.

Bridget Monroe reported that the realignment of Dewey and Emerson is underway. Planning is still underway for veterans housing at the location of the Tent City fire.

Anna Keller announced the relaunch of Quad Meetings that are open to the public (in person at the NSC or on zoom)– the first is on 5/20 at 5:15. Issues related to the northwest quadrant will be discussed.

Johanna, from the Library, reported that lunches and snacks are now available.

Guest Speaker: Bridget Monroe spoke about the Miyawaki Forest being implemented on the northwest corner of Dewey and Driving Park. This is a planting method that drastically cuts the growing time for a forest and targets small urban spaces. It will be 1711 square feet of native plants that will be self-sustaining in several years. It will improve air quality, shade, stormwater management, temperatures, and community health and well-being. This year they will replace contaminated soil, and in the Spring of 2027, will plant the forest.

-Other: On 6/26, there will be a mini clean sweep at 9:30 at the Rose Garden. Also, Eastman Business Park is requesting approval for a nuclear reactor – the MNA is voicing its opposition to placing a reactor in the middle of our city neighborhood.

For volunteer opportunities with the MNA, please email info@maplewood.org, or just speak with one of board members at a town hall meeting!

250th Anniversary Events

Celebrate America's 250th with these city events:

- **July 3, 2026: Susan B. Anthony & Frederick Douglass Commemoration, 4 PM at Susan B. Anthony Square Park (free historic speeches).**
- **July 12, 2026: America 250 Festival at ESL Ballpark, 5–9 PM (free music, food, family activities, games, fireworks).**

Details: visitrochester.com/250th | america250rochester.com

MNA MISSION

The Maplewood Neighborhood Association is your organization representing our neighborhood in dealings with City Hall, Monroe County and the State of NY. Our goal is to plan for our community as a diverse and vibrant neighborhood celebrate the strengths and creativity of the residents, encourage home ownership and the residential character of the neighborhood, and represent our interests in decisions that affect our neighborhood.

You can now join the MNA entirely online, and pay membership dues or make donations through PayPal!

JOIN TODAY!

To join the MNA, download the membership form from www.maplewood.org. You can bring the completed form and annual dues payment to any monthly MNA Town Hall Meeting, or mail it to our office. You can also get a form at the townhall meetings.

If you have any questions regarding membership, please contact (585)647-3186 or info@maplewood.org.

Northwest Service Center
400 Dewey Ave Rochester, NY 14611
585-428-7620

Rochester Police Department
West Division Office
1099 Jay St. Bldg. D
Rochester, NY 14611
585-428-9810

Police Headquarters
Public Safety Building
185 Exchange Blvd.
Rochester, NY 14614
585-428-6720

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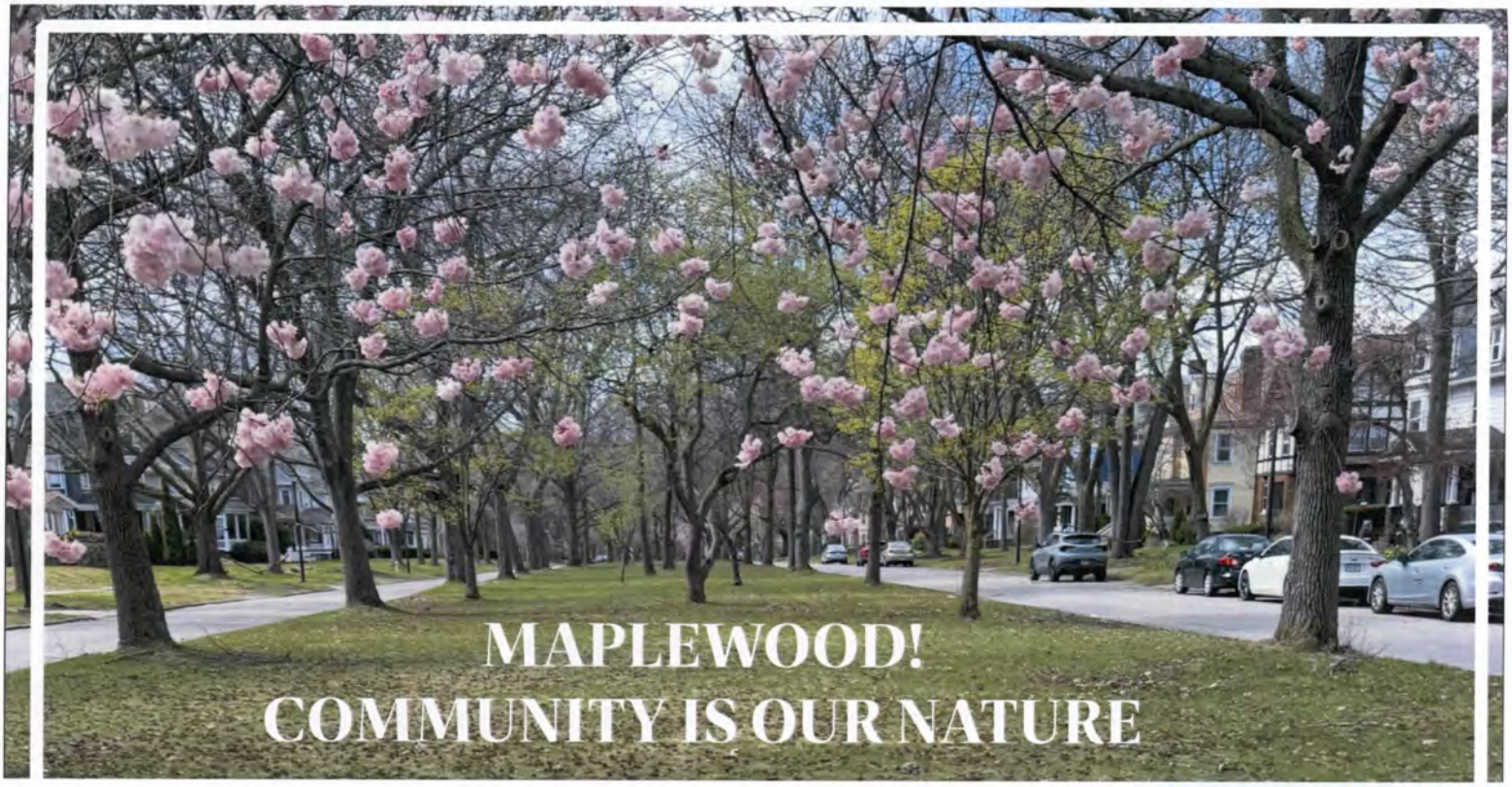

MAPLEWOOD!
COMMUNITY IS OUR NATURE

Every spring, Seneca Parkway in Rochester's historic Maplewood neighborhood transforms into a breathtaking pink canopy as the cherry blossom trees burst into full bloom. Delicate clouds of soft pink flowers arch gracefully over the street, creating one of the city's most picturesque scenes…especially beautiful when captured against the classic homes and lush green lawns.

As the blossoms fade, the neighborhood continues its floral show with vibrant summer roses, while nearby Genesee River Gorge offer scenic trails, cascading waterfalls, and peaceful green spaces perfect for warm-weather strolls. Maplewood truly shines as Rochester's seasonal gem.

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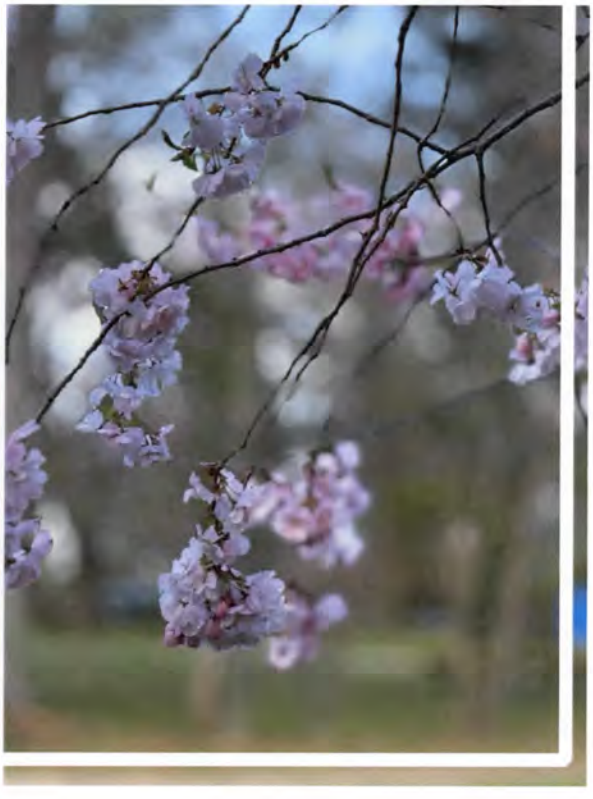

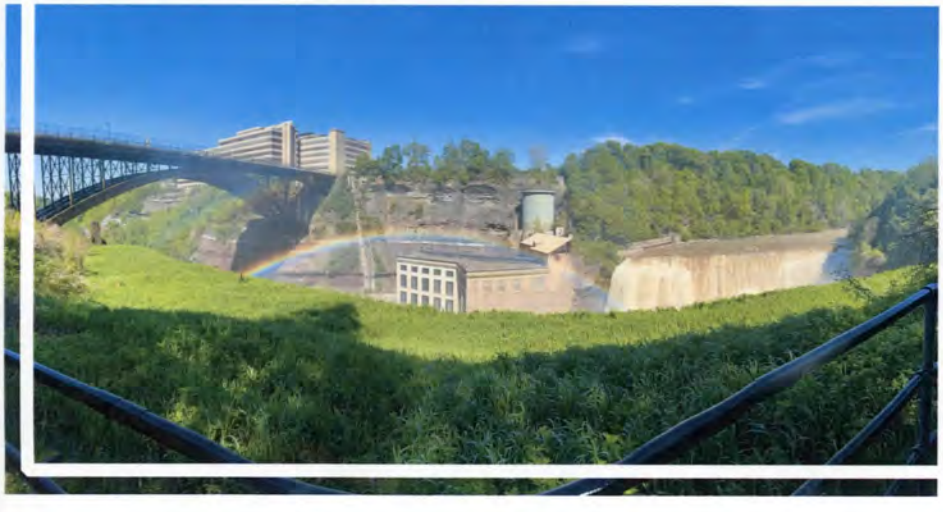

Summer 2026 Events Roundup for Maplewood & Greater Rochester

Summer is here, and Rochester is bursting with festivals, music, arts, and outdoor fun! From our own backyard at the Maplewood Rose Garden to downtown highlights, there's something for everyone. We've highlighted key events in the Rochester area (June–August 2026) with a special focus on local gems.

Right Here in Maplewood: Rose Garden Events
Our beautiful Maplewood Rose Garden (Driving Park Ave & Lake Ave) is in full bloom from early June through fall. It's the perfect spot for walks, photos, or relaxing with family.

Don't miss this free concert!

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) City of Rochester Parks Series

- **Tuesday, July 14, 2026, 6:30–7:30PM A string quartet will perform beautiful music right in the garden. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy the roses while you listen. Free – no tickets required. Rain location will be announced if needed.**

For more RPO info: rpo.org or call the box office at (585) 454-2100.

- Rochester International Jazz Festival (June 19–27): New York State's largest jazz event with 300+ concerts across downtown venues (many free). Headliners at Kodak Hall include Chris Botti, Gladys Knight, and the Count Basie Orchestra.

- Concerts by the Shore: Free music at Ontario Beach Park (select Wednesdays in June).

- Kodak Center (200 Ridge Rd, Rochester):
  - June 5: The Sixties Show
  - June 15: Planet K-Pop Tribute Concert
  - June 16: Lucy Darling: You're Welcome-Tickets & full schedule: kodakcenter.com or (585) 254-0181.

July Highlights

- Party in the Park: Weekly Thursday evening concerts at Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park (food trucks, live music). Continues into August.
- Corn Hill Arts Festival (July 11–12): Historic neighborhood event with artists, vendors, music, and more.
- RPO Parks Series – See Maplewood Rose Garden above! Other neighborhood stops throughout July.
- Concerts by the Shore at Ontario Beach Park (select dates).
- Kodak Center: Derek Hough – Symphony of Dance (July 25). Check kodakcenter.com for updates.

August Highlights

- Party in the Park continues (Thursdays).
- Puerto Rican Festival & Parade: Late July into early August at Parcel 5.
- Concerts by the Shore wrapping up at Ontario Beach Park.
- Kodak Center: Josh Turner and other shows – visit the website for details.

Resources & Contacts

- Maplewood Neighborhood Association: www.maplewood.org | info@maplewood.org | (585) 647-3186
- Visit Rochester Events: visitrochester.com
- City of Rochester: cityofrochester.gov
- Rochester Events Calendar: rochesterevents.com

Mark your calendars, support local events, and enjoy our vibrant community this summer.

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