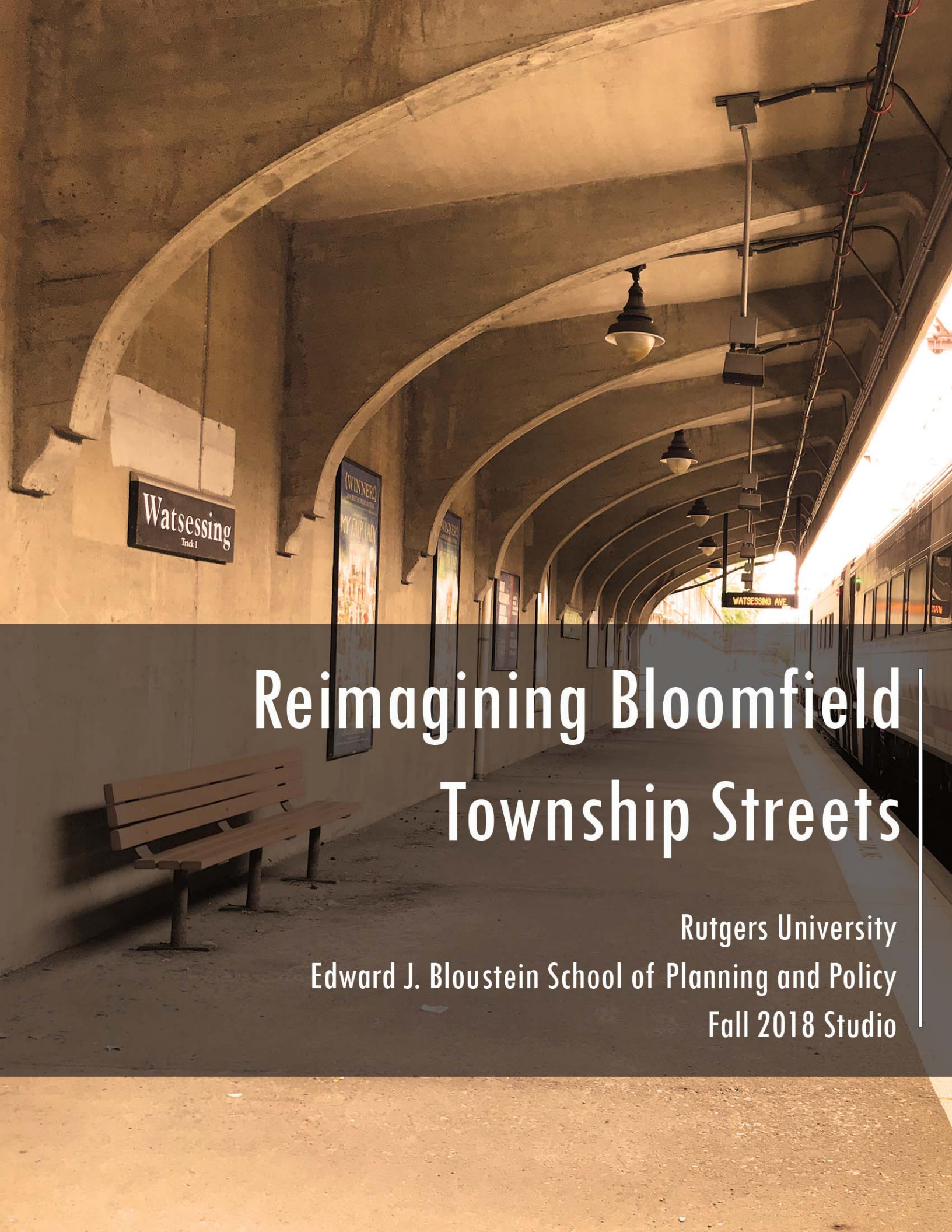

Reimagining Bloomfield Township Streets

Rutgers University
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Policy
Fall 2018 Studio

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Reimagining Bloomfield Streets
Course: 970:510:01

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BLOOMFIELD
TOWNSHIP
New Jersey

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TABLE OF CONTENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

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This report was produced for the Township of Bloomfield as part of the Fall 2018 Transit-Oriented Development and pedestrian/bicycle access studio course at the Rutgers University Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy.

About the Studio: Transit Oriented Development and pedestrian/bicycle access studio course at the Rutgers University Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy created this report in conjunction with the New Jersey American Planning Association's Community Planning Assistance Program and public officials from the Township of Bloomfield to craft an equitable, strategic, and innovative plan for the Watsessing Avenue neighborhood. The studio focused on four areas of investigation: Station Access, Redevelopment and Transit-Oriented Development, Placemaking and Engagement, and Policy Evaluation and Recommendations.

Bloomfield is in a unique and distinguished position to learn from, and improve upon its neighboring development. To support learning from peer municipalities, this report draws upon examples from surrounding towns to promote best practices. The Township of Bloomfield is a 5.33 square-mile municipality located in Essex County, New Jersey (Figure 1). It is located in the northeastern part of the state about 15 miles from New York City. With train connections from Bloomfield to New York City at the Bloomfield Avenue and Watsessing Avenue Stations and to Newark, New Jersey from the Grove Street Light Rail Station, Bloomfield is well positioned to take advantage of the employment and entertainment opportunities in New York City and Newark.

This part of Bloomfield was once a thriving industrial area. Bloomfield was originally settled in 1666 as a part of the City of Newark. It was not until 1812 that Bloomfield became its own municipality, separating from Newark and taking its name from the local Presbyterian Parish named in honor of General Joseph Bloomfield. Finally, in 1893, the municipality was officially designated as a Township under the operating contract that still gives Bloomfield its designation today.

Despite Bloomfield's ever-changing moniker, one constant for the Township since the 19th century has been transportation's pivotal role in catalyzing the municipality's economic growth. In the 1800's, Bloomfield was on the forefront of transportation development. During this time, the Morris Canal was built through the region, creating a new supply chain route for many of New Jersey's large manufacturers. This, along with Bloomfield's proximity to the quickly developing business center of Manhattan, spurred industrial growth and caused residents to flock to the area seeking employment in the bustling Township.

The introduction of the New York/Montclair/Greenwood Lake Railroad in 1856 further contributed to the population growth, spurring infrastructure improvements that allowed the population to nearly double from 4,580 to 7,708 in the period between 1870 and 1890. This growth prompted the construction of colonial style family homes, which began to shape Bloomfield into the more suburban community that it is recognized as today.

The 20th century marked the introduction of bus transit to Bloomfield. The introduction of a bus route from Paterson to the Lackawanna Railroad in 1923 and the beginning of the De Camp bus routes, still operating today, to New York City marked the beginning of Bloomfield's commuting culture. The completion of the Garden State Parkway in 1952

Figure 1: Map of Bloomfield

further contributed to this culture and fostered development throughout Bloomfield in the form of garden apartments and high-rise buildings.

The exciting revitalization period that Bloomfield is beginning to undergo is due, in part, to its rich history. Although the booming era of factory production has long left Bloomfield, what was once the site of the Township's great manufacturers and the homes of their employees, now provide a canvas of beautiful historic buildings and undeveloped lots that serve as great assets towards redevelopment. Additionally, the extensive multimodal network that shaped Bloomfield's growth during the past centuries is primed to transform Bloomfield into a thriving, vibrant, and diverse community.

Purpose of the Document

The Watsessing neighborhood, which houses the Watsessing Avenue Station, is one of Bloomfield's most promising districts and is the cornerstone of the revitalization plan for the southern part of the Township. Located just east of the Garden State Parkway, the neighborhood's strongest asset is its proximity to the historic Watsessing Avenue Station, which connects Bloomfield to Newark, Jersey City, and New York City via the Montclair-Boonton line run by NJ TRANSIT. This report designates a ½ mile radius around the Watsessing Avenue Station as the "study area." The report analyzes the existing conditions of the study area, discusses best practices, and provides recommendations for creating a stronger, more sustainable neighborhood.

As this historic and diverse neighborhood continues to evolve, plans for revitalization and development must continue to grow alongside it. This report is split into four chapters to best address each component of the Watsessing neighborhood's resurgence. These four chapters are Station Access, Transit-Oriented Development, Placemaking, and Policy Recommendations.

Chapter 1: Station Access evaluates strategies for improving pedestrian, bike, and transit access to the Watsessing Avenue Station. The chapter outlines the existing conditions in Bloomfield, best practices for green infrastructure and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, and the results from the walkability and bikeability audit conducted

within the study area. Finally, the chapter provides recommendations for best practices in improving the station's safety and accessibility.

Chapter 2: Transit-Oriented Development analyzes strategies for strengthening transit-oriented development (TOD) around the Watsessing Avenue Station. The chapter covers existing conditions in Bloomfield, conducts an analysis of zoning regulations, and conducts an analysis of the projected impacts of different development scenarios.

Chapter 3: Placemaking focuses on reimagining public spaces to reinvigorate a sense of community in the neighborhood. The chapter introduces the concept of placemaking, outlines methods used to encourage placemaking, and provides recommendations for how Bloomfield can use placemaking to enhance the Watsessing neighborhood.

Chapter 4: Policy Recommendations focuses on recommendations for enacting new policies or changing existing policies to support the goals of multimodal transportation, economically successful redevelopment, and an equitable and healthy community. The section is divided into four topic areas: Transportation, Economic Vitality, Equity, and Health. Each policy subject has an overview, information regarding Bloomfield's current policy, case study examples, recommendations for how Bloomfield can enact new policies or improve existing policies, and potential partners for Bloomfield to work with in pursuing those recommendations.

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2. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Bloomfield is located in Essex County in the northeastern part of New Jersey. This part of New Jersey can be characterized by its close proximity to New York City. Essex County is the second densest county in New Jersey. The high population density in Essex County is primarily due to its close proximity to New York City and the ability of New Jersey residents to commute into the city, which is the economic engine of the metropolitan area (Figure 2).

For the purpose of demographics, the study area is defined as the census block groups that have their center within ½ mile of the Watsessing Avenue Station. The median age in the study area is 39.3 (Figure 3). Notably, in the southern end of our study area, which is located in East Orange, there is a block group with a median age between 50 and 70, much higher than the area average (Figure 3). The median age is likely higher there because of the Good Life Adult Day Care Center and the Park Crescent Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center. The elderly are an important demographic to focus on when improving walking and transit access because they rely more heavily on public transit due to their inability to drive and may have additional needs in terms of accessibility. These needs could include requiring longer street crossing times or accommodations for wheelchairs, walkers, and canes.

The racial composition of Bloomfield differs from the racial composition of Essex County. In Bloomfield, 44% of residents are White, 17% are Black, 28% are

Figure 2: Population density in New Jersey

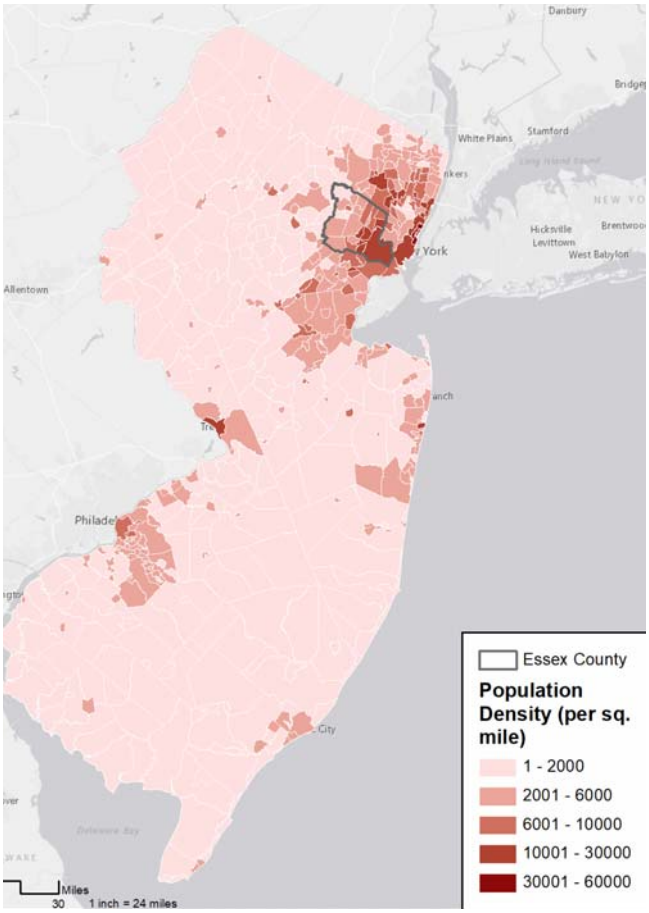


Figure 3: Median age in study area

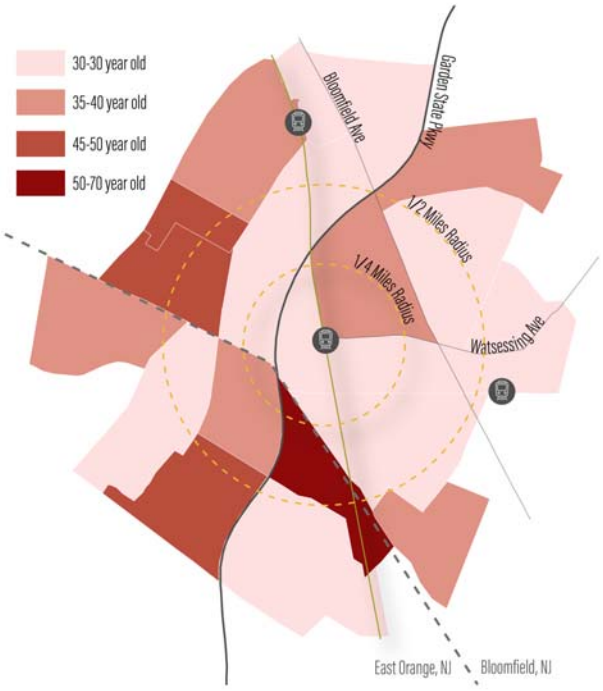


Figure 4: Racial composition in Essex County, Bloomfield Township, and Site Area

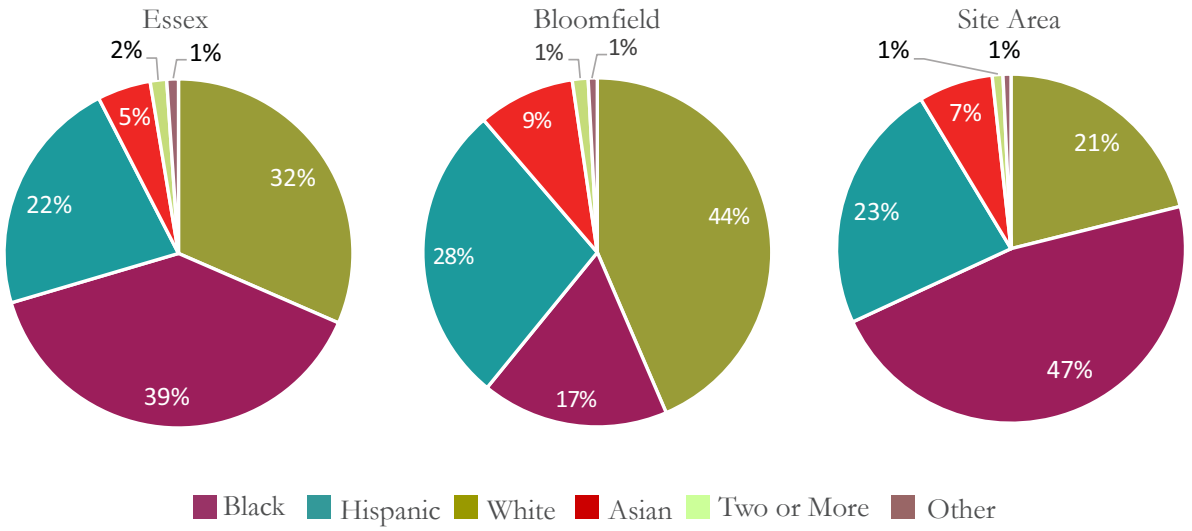
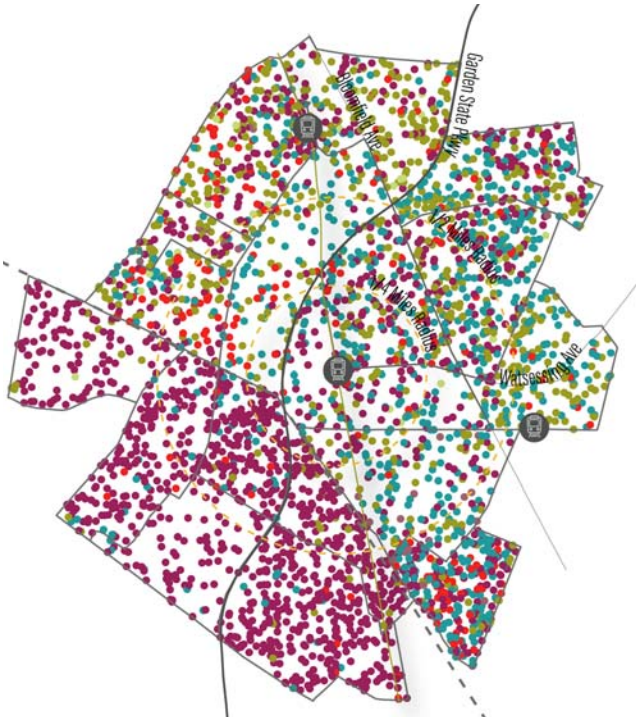


Figure 5: Dot-density map of racial composition in the study area



What is a dot-density map?

A dot-density map shows the density of people or items using dots that represent a certain number of items placed randomly throughout the reference geography. The dots could represent people of different races, education levels, or any other characteristic. The reference geography could be a state, county, municipality, census tract, or census block group. For example, a map of the United States might place dots representing 500 people randomly throughout each county to show the population density in the United States. In this case, the dots do not show the exact locations of people, but they show the density of people in each county.

Figure 6: Unemployment status in study area

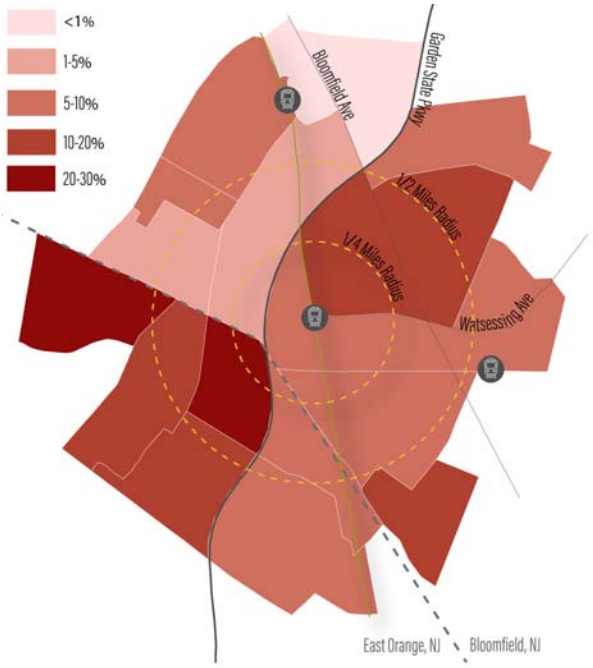
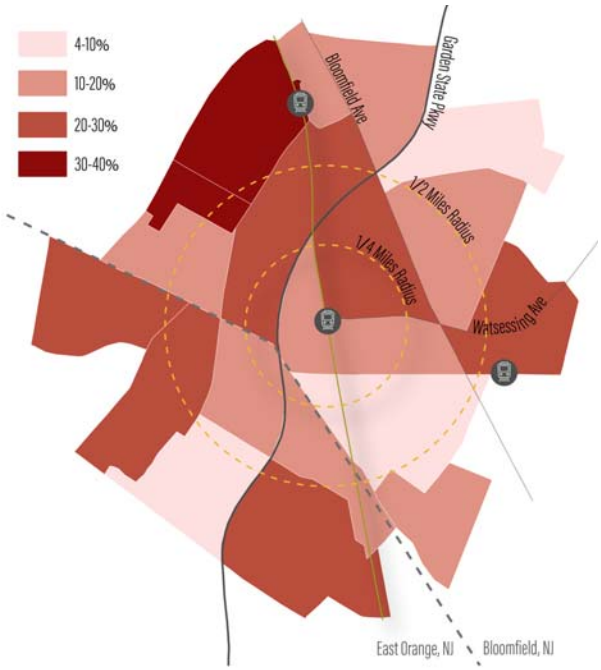


Figure 7: Proportion of individuals commuting using public transportation

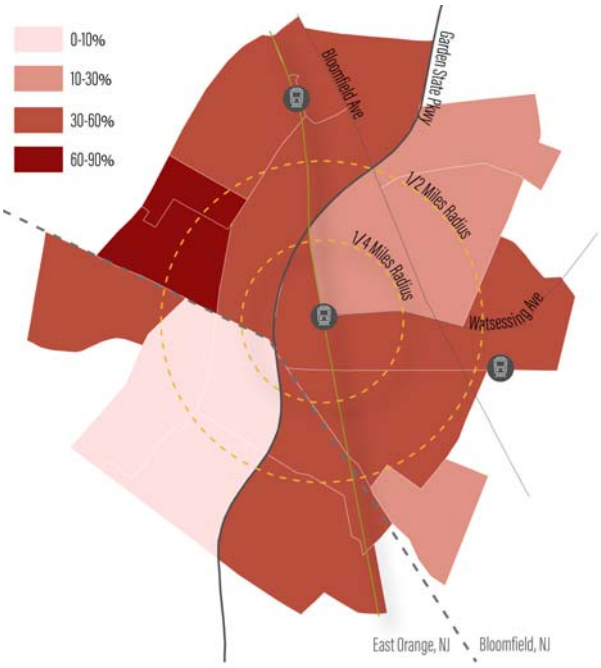


Hispanic or Latino, 9% are Asian, 1% are other, and 1% are two or more races (Figure 4). While White is the largest race demographic in Bloomfield, only 32% of Essex County is White, while Black residents make up the largest race demographic at 39% (Figure 4). Bloomfield also has a higher percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents than Essex County, which is only 22% Hispanic or Latino.

The racial composition of the study area is quite different from Bloomfield as a whole. This is primarily because East Orange has a large Black population. A portion of the population of East Orange is included in the study area because they are within ½ mile of the Watsessing Avenue Station, which means it is likely that these residents use the station. While White is the majority race in Bloomfield, the study area is 47% Black, 23% Hispanic or Latino, 21% White, 7% Asian, and 2% other. There is a clear racial disparity demonstrated along the municipal line between Bloomfield and East Orange with a large Black population in East Orange, but not in Bloomfield (Figure 5). It is vital to consider this difference when implementing policy changes in the Watsessing neighborhood and around the Watsessing Avenue Station.

The unemployment rate in Bloomfield is 7%, which is lower than Essex County's 12% unemployment rate. The unemployment rate in the study area is 11%,

Figure 8: Proportion of individuals commuting using the train



which is comparable to the rate in Essex County (Figure 6). While unemployment is not a significant problem in the study area, it is an important factor because many unemployed people do not have access to a private vehicle, which often leaves them with limited job opportunities. Access to public transit can be a key factor for unemployed individuals in accessing employment opportunities.

Currently, 16% of Bloomfield workers commute using public transportation (Figure 7). This is significantly higher than the statewide rate of 11%, but lower than the Essex County rate of 21%. Bloomfield's transit assets, including the Watsessing Avenue Station, provide the opportunity to increase rates of public transportation ridership to levels equal with other municipalities in Essex County. Notably, 40% of individuals living within ½ mile of the Watsessing Avenue Station currently commute by train (Figure 8).

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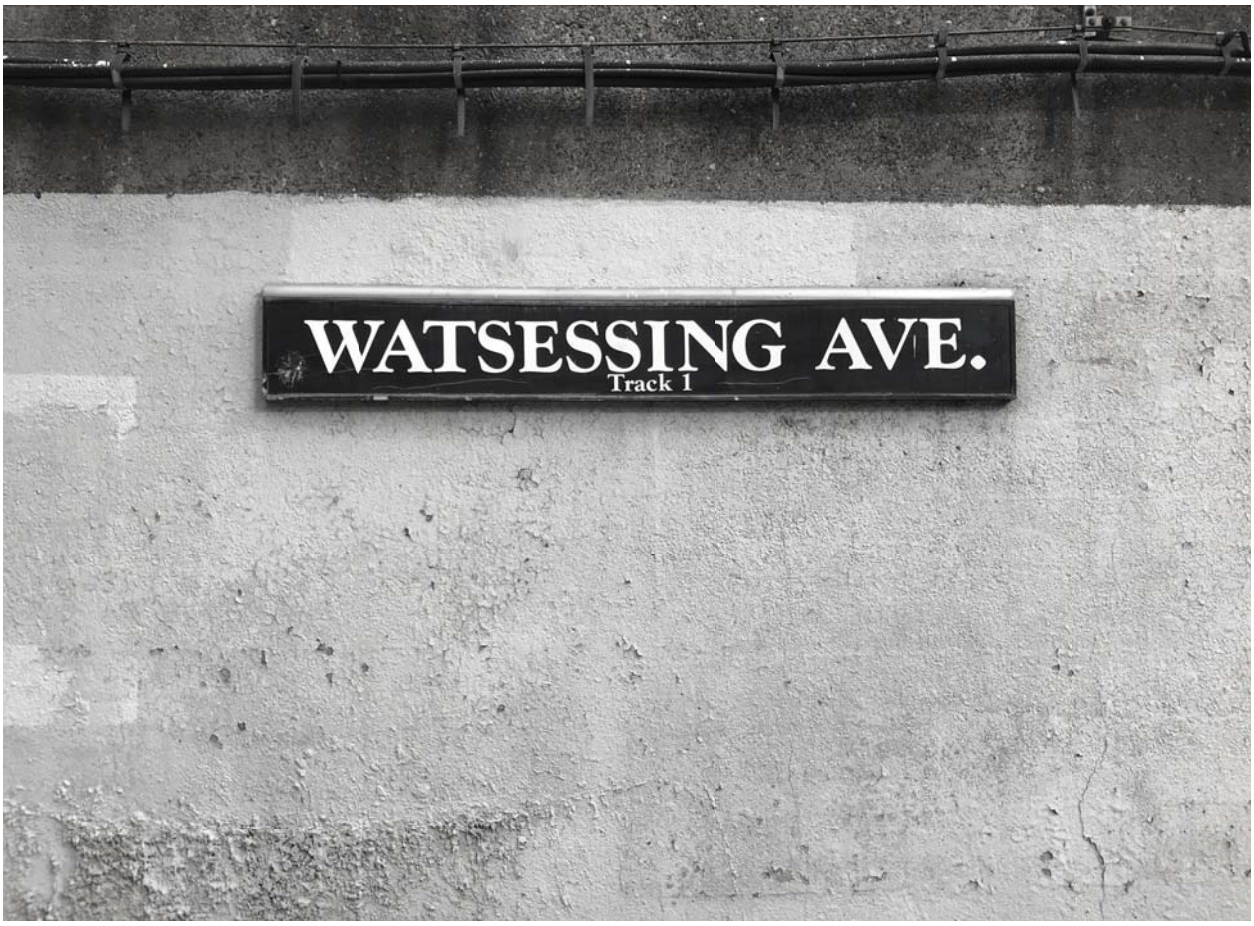


3. STATION ACCESS

Figure 9: Poor Lighting in Station Stairwells

Figure 10: Unmarked Crosswalk

Figure 11: Lack of ADA Compliance for Station Entrances

Figure 12: Open Space Outside the Station Entrance

This chapter summarizes existing conditions, recommendations, and potential funding sources for the Watsessing Avenue Station. Existing bike and pedestrian crash data was analyzed, a walkability assessment was conducted, and best practices were researched to inform the recommendations to the Township of Bloomfield.

3.1 What is Station Access?

Station access can be defined by riders' ability to utilize the transportation services offered at a station. Station access includes access by all modes of transportation including walking, biking, public transportation, and driving. By creating more opportunities for an interconnected multimodal network, Bloomfield would see benefits for its community ranging from strengthening the local economy, increasing employment opportunities, improving community health, decreasing vehicle traffic on the road, and improving air quality.

Proximity to the Garden State Parkway provides Bloomfield residents with easy access to hubs such as New York City and Newark. However, this proximity also poses significant vehicular congestion concerns, particularly during peak hours on principal arterials leading to and from the Garden State Parkway. Although there is the potential to ameliorate traffic congestion with streetscape improvements, due to its central location, Bloomfield will likely continue to experience congestion. For this reason, the importance of accessibility to public transit in Bloomfield cannot be understated. In addition to train access, there are ten NJ TRANSIT bus routes and two private carrier bus routes operated by DeCamp with stops located throughout Bloomfield. As the development of the municipality continues, it is important that public transit service and improvements to walking and biking infrastructure are prioritized to address congestion.

Walking is a free and accessible form of transportation regardless of income, driving ability, or vehicle ownership. Biking, while not free, offers an inexpensive opportunity to independently access jobs and activities in downtown centers and surrounding neighborhoods, regardless of age or vehicle ownership. As a form of exercise, both walking and biking can significantly reduce the risk of heart disease and reduce stress.

Public transit serves as a viable solution for those with limited mobility, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, or children, or for those without access to or the financial means to obtain a personal vehicle. Walking and biking are often combined with public transit use as first and/or last mile transportation to and from transit.

The primary barrier to walking as a form of transportation is distance. A half-mile, approximately a 10-minute walk, is commonly considered the design distance that pedestrians would be willing to travel to reach public transportation. This is also one of the limitations of transit because its usefulness is limited by its catchment area. Catchment areas are limited by how far passengers are willing to walk to access transit. However, catchment areas can be expanded through high-quality multimodal connections, safe bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and vehicle parking.

3.2 Existing Conditions

The Watsessing Avenue Station is located in the center of the Watsessing neighborhood in Bloomfield (Figure 12). The station is on the NJ TRANSIT Montclair-Boonton Line, with trains running to New York Penn Station. However, there are many upgrades that are necessary to serve all members of the local community.

The station currently lacks proper lighting (Figure 9), safe crosswalks (Figure 10), bike racks, and amenities such as additional seating and a food or beverage cart. Furthermore, the station is not currently ADA accessible (Figure 11). There is no elevator at the

station, which makes access for individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and individuals with strollers or suitcases difficult. The station has a low-level platform, which would prevent individuals using a wheelchair from boarding. These improvements would allow individuals with different abilities to access the station, widening the appeal of the Watsessing Avenue Station.

In terms of pedestrian access, there are sidewalks within the study area, however there are sections of Dodd Street and the sidewalk around the station that are missing chunks of pavement. Crumbling pavement is an impediment to those riding bikes, walking, using wheelchairs, pushing strollers or suitcases. Bloomfield currently has limited bike facilities, forcing cyclists to share the road with automobiles. This is unappealing to many residents as it can be unsafe and stressful for both cyclists and drivers. As more developers invest in projects in the neighborhood, part of their agreements could include funding multimodal street improvements. Strategic investments in bike infrastructure will provide residents with more opportunities to connect to jobs, health centers, commercial shopping centers, and other residential neighborhoods.

The Watsessing Avenue Station was once a booming center of activity. With the right investments and funding strategies, the station has the potential to once again serve as a key hub of activity for residents and the region.

Barriers to walking:

- Dangerous intersections (23% major, 26% moderate)
- Crime (11% major, 32% moderate)
- No or poor sidewalk (8% major, 24% moderate)
- Distance (7% major, 19% moderate)
- No place to rest (6% major, 19% moderate)

Figure 13: Crumbling Pavement Outside the Station

Barriers to biking:

- Driver behavior (37% major, 22% moderate)
- No bike lanes (33% major; 21% moderate)
- Traffic volume (32% major; 23% moderate)
- Intersections unsafe (24% major; 23% moderate)
- Road surface not adequate (16% major; 24% moderate)
- Crime (10% major; 19% moderate)
- Signs unclear (8% major; 16% moderate)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Crash History

The pedestrian and bicycle crash history was evaluated to identify the intersections and roads with the highest safety risk. In the study area, 21 bike and pedestrian crashes were reported between 2013 and 2016. Ten of these crashes occurred on Bloomfield Avenue. Four of the 21 crashes involved bicyclists and 17 involved pedestrians. All of the crashes resulted in injuries, but no fatalities were reported (Figure 14).[5]

The most dangerous intersection identified in the study area was Orange Street and Bloomfield Avenue. This intersection has seen seven crashes with both pedestrians and bicyclists between 2013 and 2016. This intersection is a block and a half from the Garden

State Parkway exits and entrances, so people may be inclined to drive faster in this area. It is noteworthy that all four parts of the intersection have marked crosswalks, which shows that crosswalk stripping alone is not enough. The other road with a high number of crashes reported was Prospect Street. This street has seen at least three crashes on the border of Bloomfield and the northern edge of East Orange.[6]

Bloomfield

Between 2013 and 2016, a total of 18 crashes involving cyclists and 109 crashes involving pedestrians were reported in Bloomfield Township. Of these crashes, three were fatal, and the rest resulted in injuries.[7] From 2013 to 2016, 15% of the total pedestrian crashes and 22% of the total bike crashes occurred in the study area.

The most concentrated number of bike and pedestrian crashes occurred just east of the Watsessing Avenue Station. Most crashes took place on Bloomfield Avenue or Franklin Street near the Garden State Parkway. This may be due to the fact that many people walk or bike to the train station, and some are rushing to the train in their vehicle. Additionally, several crashes have occurred on County Road 509 north of the Bloomfield Avenue Station.[8]

Another higher density area of crashes is the stretch of Bloomfield Avenue near the Grove Street light rail station. This concentration of crashes may be attributed to the high density of commuters travelling to and from the train station.[9]

East Orange

Between 2013 and 2016, East Orange reported 22 bike and 186 pedestrian crashes. Within East Orange, one bike and two pedestrian crashes have occurred within a ½ mile of the Watsessing station.[10]

What do residents think about transportation in Bloomfield?

The 2017 Bloomfield Community Health Assessment surveyed residents about transportation use and barriers to transportation use. The study asked respondents about all of their modes of travel and found that 83% of residents drove a car, 47% walk, 29% get rides from friends and family, 24% use ride-hailing services, 20% travel the train, 19% travel by bus, and 3% bike. These findings demonstrate that walking and public transit are significant methods of transportation for residents of Bloomfield. Furthermore, the study asked residents to state whether certain aspects were major, moderate, or not barriers to walking and biking. The results are listed on page 41.[4]

Figure 14: Pedestrian and Bike Crashes

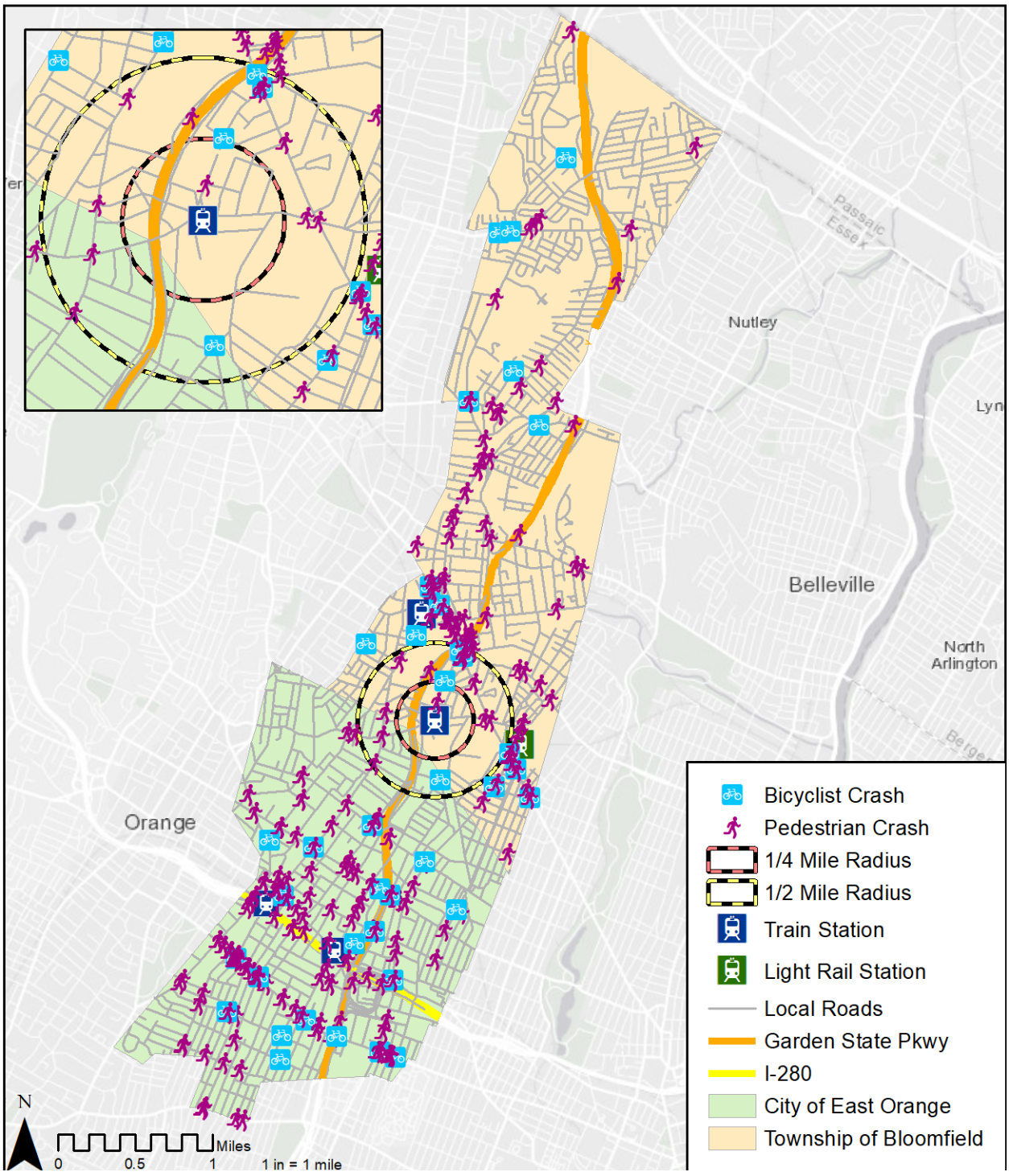
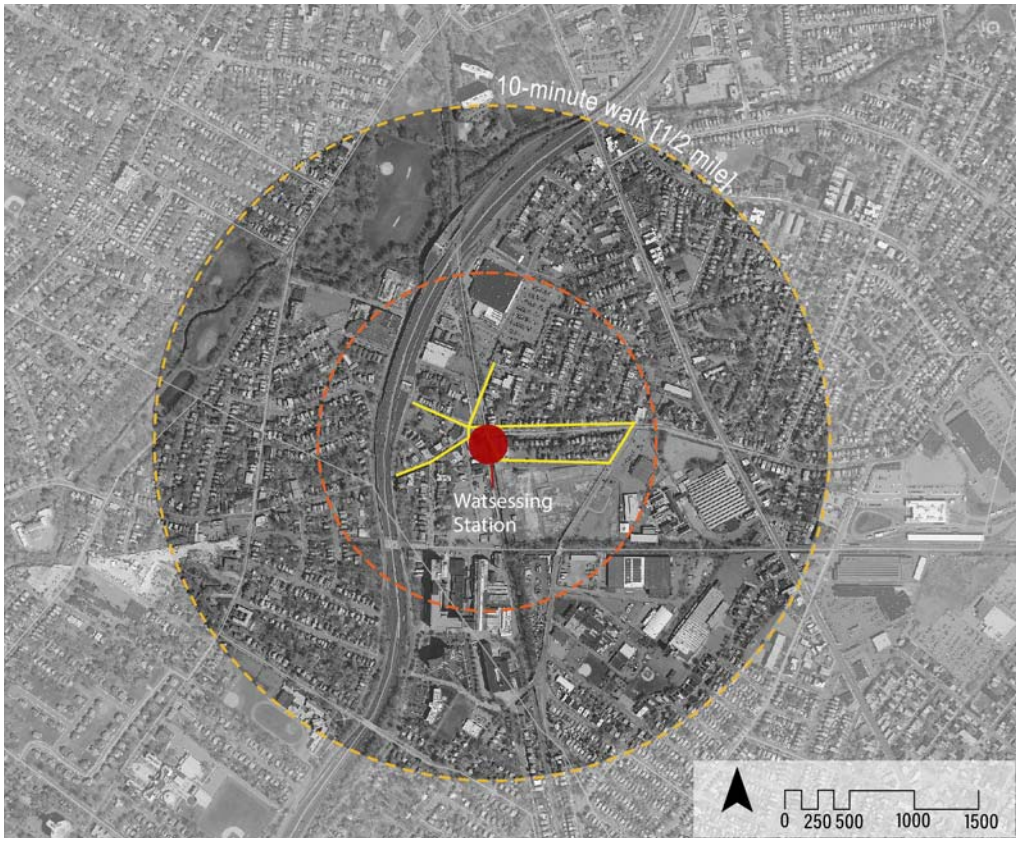


Figure 15: Walkability Assessment Area



Conclusion

While it is encouraging that there are not many crashes directly surrounding Watsessing Avenue Station, this does not imply that the intersections or streets are safe for pedestrians and cyclists. There are many improvements bike and pedestrian facilities that can be implemented in the study area, particularly at the intersections and streets in the immediate vicinity of the station. For more information, see the Walkability Recommendations for Safety on page 33.

Walkability and Bikeability Assessment

A walkability/bikeability assessment is a tool utilized to gather information on the quality of walking and biking infrastructure in a defined area. The assessment consists of observation, discussion of the overall feel of an area, and conversations with local residents. By gathering input from multiple sources, a walkability assessment provides vital and otherwise unobtainable ideas for the improvement of a public space. Current conditions observed around the Watsessing Avenue Station are divided into five categories: walking, biking, station use, aesthetics, and safety.

Some of the common conditions that create an unappealing pedestrian environment include damaged and obstructed sidewalks, lack of bus shelters, and minimal seating in the area surrounding the Watsessing Avenue Station. While perfect sidewalks are an unrealistic expectation, it is important that municipalities maintain their sidewalks following ADA standards to allow access for residents with limited mobility. Another issue commonly encountered during the assessment were obstacles on the sidewalk, which hinder pedestrian travel (Figure 16 and 17). Finally, the study area has minimal street furniture

Figure 16: Sidewalk Debris

Figure 17: Dumpster Obstructing the Sidewalk

and lacks bus shelters. These amenities can encourage people to walk by ensuring that they can rest when necessary and are protected from the elements when waiting for public transit.

The primary biking infrastructure and safety issues observed included a lack of bike parking and high vehicle speeds. Proper bike parking is integral to encouraging multimodal transportation. During the walkability assessment, bikes were observed locked to fences, street signs, and other stationary objects (Figure 18). Furthermore, high vehicle speeds were frequently witnessed, both while people were driving on straight roads and making turns. High vehicle speeds while making turns are particularly dangerous because turning vehicles the most deadly for pedestrians. Additionally, wide radi allow cars to maintain high speeds while turning, which makes hitting a pedestrian deadlier. Reducing vehicle speeds is important for improving both cyclist and pedestrian safety. The notable issues in the immediate station area include a lack of travel information, minimal signage at the station, and limited entrances to the station. Transit information such as route maps and schedules and real-time information about train arrivals can be useful to both new and regular riders. Transit maps help new riders find their way in complicated multimodal systems and real-time information makes it easier for riders to determine when the next train is arriving. Additional points of entry would improve the overall accessibility of the station and allow riders approaching from different directions easier access.

Aesthetic concerns observed in the neighborhood include improper signage on local businesses, unappealing fencing, minimal green space, curbside dumpsters, litter, and vacant buildings. Aesthetics are an important part of developing a sense of community and can influence safety as described in the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles on page 26. Uniform signage on businesses and well-maintained frontages

Figure 18: Bikes Parked at Watsessing Avenue Station

Figure 19: Unmarked Crosswalk on Watsessing Avenue

can bring a sense of pride to a commercial area. For more information on developing consistent signage and awnings for commercial areas, see the Creative Placemaking section of the Policy Recommendations.

Safety concerns observed include a lack of lighting, steep entry staircases to the station platforms, and long, faded, and unmarked crosswalks (Figure 19). The lighting in the stairs to the train platform is insufficient for proper visibility and can make the station feel unsafe, particularly in the evening. Additionally, the stairs are steep and could be difficult to navigate for those with limited mobility. There are a number of crosswalks that are too long for people to cross safely. Finally, there were locations where pedestrians were crossing without a marked crosswalk at Watsessing Avenue (at the intersection with Molter Place) and Orange Street (at the intersection with Watsessing Avenue). While unmarked crosswalks are still legal, it would be safer if there painted crosswalks at these locations.

What do residents think about safety in Bloomfield?

The 2017 Bloomfield Community Health Assessment surveyed residents about their perception of neighborhood safety. Of survey respondents, 85% consider Bloomfield to be safe or very safe. Focus groups respondents shared concerns about poor quality sidewalks and the lack of lighting.[14]

Figure 20: Hoboken Curb Extension with Bioswale

Figures 21: Storm Water Planters in New York City

3.3 Best Practices

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is a cost-effective, flexible, small-scale approach to water management that effectively mitigates the harmful impacts of storm water runoff and air pollution. It can also be effectively used to manage noise pollution, enhance neighborhood safety, and provide a sense of place through community beautification. Green infrastructure practices can feasibly be implemented throughout Bloomfield and should be considered supplemental to recommended improvements to station access at the Watsessing Avenue Station. For more information on the benefits of green infrastructure, see the Policy Recommendations for Green Infrastructure on page 88.

Green infrastructure is a series of best management practices that is typically recognized for its benefits to storm water management, since it captures rainwater at its source rather than directing it across impervious surfaces and into storm sewers that discharge directly into surface waters (Figures 20 - 23). There are many opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure and one of its appeals is that it can be incorporated at varying scales.

It is recommended that elements of green infrastructure design be incorporated wherever feasible into recommendations for improving access to the Watsessing Avenue Station. In particular, it is recommended to construct green infrastructure whenever it can be used as a best-management practice to cut costs. For example, if the costs of site clearing or grading can be avoided during a

Figure 22: Permeable Pavement in New Brunswick

Figure 23: Tree Filter Box in New Brunswick

construction activity through the implementation of a rain garden, then the benefits of implementing the rain garden might outweigh any additional costs.

For the following green infrastructure recommendations, definitions of timeframes for implementation can be assumed as follows:

- **Short-term: 6 months to 1 year**
- **Medium-term: 1 to 5 years**
- **Long-term: 5+ years**

Definitions for general estimated cost estimates can be assumed as follows:

- **Low-cost: Less than $2,000**
- **Medium-cost: $2,000 to $10,000**
- **High-cost: $10,000+**

Table 1: Green Infrastructure Recommendations

Recommendation	Definition	How to implement
Cisterns and Rain Barrels	Collects downspout runoff that can be used as gray water for washing cars or watering plants	Incorporate at the station to capture runoff from the station's roof
Downspout Planters (Figure 20)	A decorative garden designed to catch and filter downspout runoff	Incorporate at the station to capture runoff from the station runoff
Stormwater Planters (Figure 21)	Vegetated structures built into sidewalks to collect stormwater runoff from roadways and sidewalks	Incorporate around the station and into streetscape design.
Tree Filter Boxes (Figure 23)	Pre-manufactured concrete boxes or enhanced tree pits that contain a tree grate and bioretention media. These capture runoff and filter runoff from surrounding impervious surfaces.	Incorporate native plant species and tree filter boxes along local roadways and adjacent to sidewalks
Bioretention and Rain Gardens	Attractive community landscapes composed of native plant garden that overlays a drainage and ponding area for stormwater accumulation	Utilize curb extensions (also known as curb bulb outs or chokers) in use with Rain Gardens to incorporate into improving pedestrian safety and promoting traffic calming
Bioswales (Figure 20)	Landscape element designed to remove pollution from surface water runoff adjacent to roadways and parking areas. They are like Rain Gardens but are designed to handle much larger runoff quantities. Grass swales in particular are often good alternatives for sites with limited subsoil permeability, such as median strips or parking lot islands	Implement adjacent to station parking and in place of excess pavement around the station. Implement into streetscape design such as in roadway medians, between travel lanes and bike lanes, and between sidewalks and the road
Permeable Pavements (Figure 22)	A pavement surface composed of pervious concrete, porous asphalt, interlocking concrete pavers, or grid pavers. These surfaces allow for water to infiltrate through the pavement rather than contributing to runoff	Incorporate into parking stalls at the station's metered parking lot and on-street parking around the station, into bike lanes, and into sidewalks where applicable
Green Roof	A building roof that is partially or completely covered with living vegetation, a growing medium, a waterproof membrane, root barriers, and a drainage/irrigation system. Green roofs are used for water management, carbon sequestration, extending the roof's lifespan, and for architectural/aesthetic purposes	Incorporate into designs of new housing and mixed-use development where applicable

	Time Frame			Cost			Next Steps
Recommendation	**Short**	**Med**	**Long**	**Low**	**Med**	**High**	
Cisterns and Rain Barrels	X			X			Determine locations and install
Downspout Planters		X			X		Determine locations and implement
Stormwater Planters		X			X		Determine locations and begin preliminary design
Tree Filter Boxes		X				X	Determine locations and begin preliminary design
Bioretention and Rain Gardens			X			X	Determine locations and begin preliminary design
Bioswales			X			X	Determine locations and begin preliminary design
Permeable Pavements			X			X	Determine locations and begin preliminary design
Green Roof			X			X	Advance through Bloomfield Township Community Development Department

Figure 24: Public Mural

Figure 25: Outdoor Seating and Planters

Figure 26: Cracked Pavement at Watsessing Station

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

The concept of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) refers to a set of ideas and tools utilized to reduce crime with the design of the built environment. These tools can be used to address crime without requiring police or security officer presence, security cameras, and other safety solutions commonly considered by politicians, communities, and schools. By designing the built environment in a way that encourages community ownership and discourages crime, municipalities can save both money and time while still promoting safe neighborhoods.

Some elements of CPTED are common safety improvements that are often improperly implemented. Other tools are seldom used for crime prevention, yet are important tools for building the community ownership that is the central concept of CPTED.

CPTED principles have been developed since the early 1970s. There are three generations of CPTED principles known as "First Generation CPTED," "Advanced First Generation CPTED," and "Second Generation CPTED." Each generation has a specific focus, though they have the common theme of building a cohesive community. The First Generation

focuses on encouraging residents to take ownership of their community spaces. The Advanced First Generation focuses on aspects that can be more directly controlled, such as land use considerations and travel patterns. The Second Generation focuses on connecting residents to a greater community, placemaking, and cultural growth.

The broad concepts highlighted by the "generations" of CPTED principles listed on the right covers a wide range of specific tools and considerations, which can range from infrastructure improvements to community building activities.

Initial Recommendations

There is a wide array of CPTED tools for Bloomfield to take advantage of when considering safety improvements, especially around high traffic areas like the Watsessing Avenue Station.

Improvements could be made to the sidewalk and pavement in the vicinity of the train station (Figure 26). Large portions of the sidewalk are cracked or heaving, making the area difficult to navigate for people with trouble walking and non-navigable for those in a wheelchair. The sidewalks along many of the streets leading to the station are narrow and could be widened to improve pedestrian mobility.

Aesthetic improvements to the immediate vicinity of the station could help build a sense of community in the area. Currently there is minimal landscaping and large opaque fences are placed above the tracks that run below grade to the northeast of the station. The addition of planters would provide a barrier between pedestrians and vehicles, increasing safety while also improving the image of the station. The large fences could be painted, to improve aesthetics, removed completely, or replaced with clear fences to improve sight lines surrounding the station (Figure 27).

The addition of gathering spaces in the vicinity of the station would encourage residents to congregate around the area, providing natural surveillance. The park across from the street has benches, but they are

The Together North Jersey CPTED Toolkit outlines 12 principles of CPTED[13] :

- **Territoriality:** Build community ownership of the space (Figure 24 and 25)
- **Access Control:** Control over who can access the space and how they can access it
- **Image:** Maintain community space to build pride and ownership
- **Natural Surveillance:** Utilize clear sight lines and lighting to discourage criminals
- **Incompatible Land Uses:** Avoid placing vastly different land uses in proximity of each other (i.e. liquor stores near schools)
- **Movement Predictors:** Provide alternative routes so pedestrians and cyclists are not required to take a predetermined, predictable route
- **Activity Support:** Ensure public spaces are well-utilized, "activate" them with events
- **Displacement:** The movement of crime can be described as negative displacement (the movement of crime made things worse elsewhere), diffusion (crime becomes more widely spread, but less concentrated), and positive displacement (crime is minimized or eliminated)
- **Capacity:** Balance land uses to prevent crossing the "threshold" for a particular land use to become a problem
- **Cohesion:** Build relationships among the community to promote community engagement
- **Connectivity:** Maintain a connection to the greater community to avoid isolation
- **Culture:** Promote community expression to build a sense of identity and pride

Figure 27: Opaque Fencing

Figure 28: Watsessing Avenue Station Entrance

not optimally placed, as they face different directions and are too widely spread out. The front of the station also lacks a gathering space (Figure 28). The area outside the station contains a ticket machine covered by a small shelter, with the remainder of the space being open sidewalk. The addition of benches, chairs, and improved lighting would likely increase perceived safety when entering or exiting the station. A local vendor with a food cart could also make the space more inviting for commuters. The station itself has been rented out to the Bloomfield Policemen's Benevolent Association. Should the station become available again, it could be utilized as a community space or rented out to a local business to act as an indoor gathering space.

There are many other opportunities for Bloomfield to apply CPTED principles. Outreach opportunities with the local community could provide the Township with additional ideas and allow them to address local residents' specific concerns.

3.4 Recommendations

The following section provides recommendations to improve access at the Watsessing Avenue Station. Recommendations are divided into three categories: Station, Walkability, and Bikeability. The recommendations are presented in terms of timeframes for implementation and are defined by general cost estimates. Recommendations in each category are divided into safety and accessibility.

For all recommendations proposed, definitions of timeframes for implementation can be assumed as follows:

- Short-term: 6 months to 1 year
- Medium-term: 1 to 5 years
- Long-term: 5+ years

Definitions for general estimated cost estimates can be assumed as follows:

- Low-cost: Less than $2,000
- Medium-cost: $2,000 to $10,000
- High-cost: $10,000+

Watsessing Avenue Station Recommendations

Recommendations to Enhance Safety

Although discussions with the Bloomfield Police Department have indicated that the area around the Watsessing Avenue Station is not a high-crime area and although the station has many security cameras in place, there is still room for improvement. The implementation of measures to enhance safety at the station is important because it can both improve passenger comfort and have spillover effects into the surrounding Watsessing neighborhood. Recommendations to enhance perceived passenger safety at the station are outlined in Table 2**.**

Recommendations to Enhance Station Accessibility

Improving accessibility at the Watsessing Avenue Station is an important consideration in revitalizing Bloomfield. Station accessibility is defined by riders' ability to utilize the transportation services offered at the station. By enhancing station accessibility, more residents will be able to utilize public transit services and thus be attracted to the downtown area. Currently, the station is not in compliance for design standards set by the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This noncompliance can alienate persons with disabilities and their friends, families, and caregivers. This can impede the success of local businesses and community development. Recommendations for improvements to enhance station accessibility and recommendations that can enhance passenger comfort are outlined in Table 3.

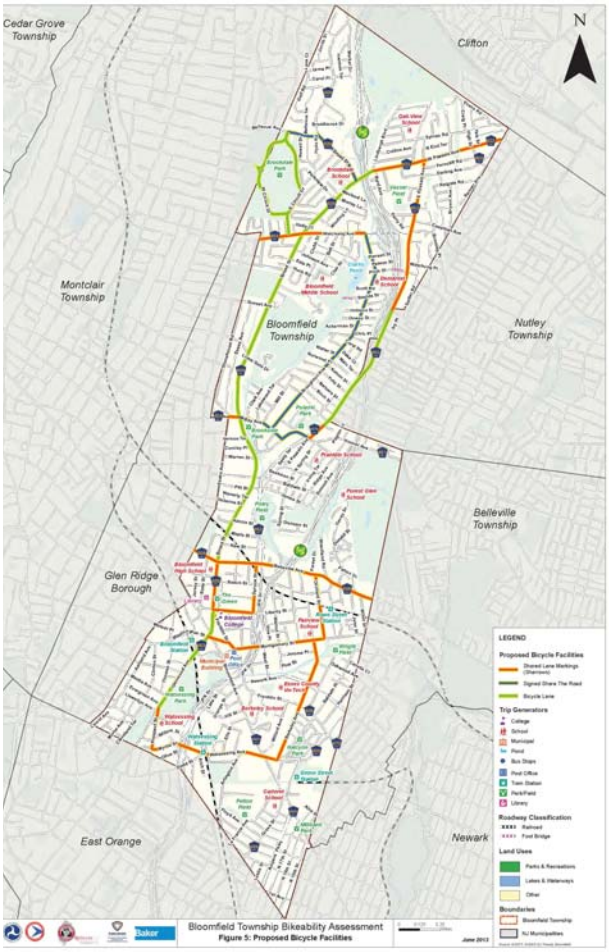
Table 2: Station Recommendations to Enhance Safety

Safety Recommendation	Time Frame			Cost			Next Steps
	Short	Med	Long	Low	Med	High	
Provide regular janitorial maintenance to remove debris, water, and waste from station staircases	X				X		Identify sources of hazards and schedule maintenance
Paint public murals on the station exterior/interior	X			X			Determine locations and gauge community interest
To enhance passenger safety, install convex mirrors onto the station stairwells so that passengers can see around corners	X			X			Determine locations and install.
Upgrade and improve station interior lighting, particularly in the staircases		X				X	Recommend to NJ TRANSIT
Provide additional waste and recycling receptacles at the Station entrances and exits		X			X		Determine locations and schedule maintenance
Provide on-platform emergency call buttons		X				X	Recommend to NJ TRANSIT
Provide on-platform emergency fire extinguishers		X			X		Recommend to NJ TRANSIT
Consider station improvements in the form of upgrades to interior walls and floors			X			X	Recommend to NJ TRANSIT
Remove rubble from previous platform demolition from northern and southern ends of the station			X			X	Recommend to NJ TRANSIT
Lease the station to a local or chain restaurant, such as a coffee shop. This will build a community presence, creating natural surveillance			X			X	Recommend to NJ TRANSIT
Implement green infrastructure elements. (see Green Infrastructure Recommendations Table for more detail)	X	X	X	X	X	X	Determine locations and begin preliminary design

Table 3: Station Recommendations to Enhance Access

Access Recommendation	Time Frame			Cost			Next Steps
	Short	Med	Long	Low	Med	High	
Post maps at the Station of local NJT bus routes that provide access to the Station and/or surrounding Watsessing neighborhood	X			X			Prepare materials and determine best location(s) to post
Post information at the Station regarding permit parking, metered parking, and parking lot locations in the Watsessing neighborhood around the Station	X			X			Prepare materials and determine best location(s) to post
Post maps at the Station of the NJT Montclair-Boonton Train line	X			X			Prepare materials and determine best location(s) to post.
Provide additional seating on the platform for passengers		X			X		Recommend to NJ TRANSIT
Provide additional seating at ground-level around the Station		X			X		Determine locations and implement
Provide designated rideshare staging area at the station			X		X		Conduct feasibility study and determine potential locations
Designate a parking space at the Station for car-sharing services (such as Zipcar or Car2go)			X		X		Conduct feasibility study and gauge interest with potential companies
Provide bus shelters and lighting improvements at local bus stops that are located within ½ mile of the Station. This includes NJT Route 72 Paterson-Bloomfield-Newark, Route 11 Newark – Willowbrook (Newark), Route 94 Stuyvesant Crosstown, Route 34 Market Street (Montclair/Bloomfield)/92 and Route Orange Crosstown			X			X	Determine locations for improvement
Provide ADA accessibility to the platform in the form of ramps or elevators			X			X	Recommend to NJ TRANSIT to explore a feasibility study

Figure 29: Recommended Bike Route Map from Michael Baker Report



Walkability Recommendations

Recommendations to Enhance Safety & Accessibility

Safety is of the utmost important to walkability. People choose not to walk in areas they deem unsafe. Safety enhancements will help to increase the number of people walking in the Watsessing neighborhood.

Accessibility is another important factor in the decision to walk. For people to choose walking over other forms of transportation, primarily driving, there should be minimal barriers to walking. Anything impeding a person's walk could induce them to choose alternative modes of transportation, whether it be trash cans on the sidewalk, difficult to cross intersections, or a lack of proper infrastructure. Recommendations for improvements to enhance safety and accessibility of walking are outlined in Table 4.

Bikeability Recommendations

Recommendations to Enhance Bicycle Safety & Accessibility

In 2013, Michael Baker Inc. published the Bloomfield Township Bikeability Assessment Final Recommendations Report for The Department of Health and Human Services. The report outlines a comprehensive, proposed bicycle network for the Township. The recommendations listed below tie back to the Baker report, and address safety and accessibility concerns within the study area. Best practices for protecting bicyclists and pedestrians as well as strategies to encourage more community members to bike to and from the station are outlined in Table 5.

Table 4: Walking Recommendations for Safety and Accessibility

Theme	Recommendation	Time Frame			Cost			Next Steps
		Short	Med	Long	Low	Med	High	
Safety	Paint unmarked crosswalks at intersection with Molter Place	X			X			Identify currently unmarked crosswalks
	Place in-street crosswalk sign MUTCD R1-6a at crosswalks that say "Stop for pedestrians"	X			X			Identify crosswalks where signs should be placed
	Install better lighting along roadways within the area		X				X	Identify locations in need of lighting improvements
	Shorten crosswalks primarily through the use of pedestrian refuge islands and curb extension		X				X	Conduct feasibility study of pedestrian refuges and shortened crosswalks
	Install Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) signal that notify drivers when pedestrians enter a crosswalk			X			X	Identify crosswalks where RRFBs should be installed
Access to Walking	Remove obstacles from sidewalks such as dumpters	X			X			Notify local business owners of municipal laws regarding blocking the sidewalk
	Improve aesthetics along sidewalks through adding - street trees, green infrastructure, art murals		X				X	Identify potential locations for aesthetic improvements, reach out to the community for ideas
	Replace opaque fencing around northern portion of the station		X			X		Recommend that NJ TRANSIT fencing with fences that do not obstruct sight lines or allow for mural on fencing
	Provide bus shelters at nearby stops			X			X	Reach out to NJ TRANSIT about building bus shelters at stops in Bloomfield, with a focus around the Watsessing Avenue Station
	Close Molter Place to vehicle traffic			X			X	Explore local business interest in temporary closures for Open Streets events

Table 5: Biking Recommendations for Safety and Accessibility

Theme	Recommendation	Time Frame			Cost			Next Steps
		Short	Med	Long	Low	Med	High	
Safety	Paint sharrows on Watsessing Avenue and Dodd Street and install street signs about shared lanes. (See Baker Report)	X			X			Identify sections of Dodd Street and Watsessing Avenue where sharrows should be painted
	Fix collapsing pavement on the shoulders of Dodd Street and Watsessing Avenue		X				X	Identify all locations where pavement is missing or collapsing on roads and sidewalks
	Extend curbs on Dodd Street and five point intersection to slow traffic and limit crossing distance for bicyclists and pedestrians			X			X	Collaborate with traffic engineers and planners to extend wide curbs and add protection for pedestrians
	Install protected bike lanes where possible. Connect to the Bloomfield Township Bikeability Assessment Final Recommendations Report proposed bike network			X			X	Identify roads that can accomodate protected bike lanes
Access to Biking	Install inverted U-rack bike racks at the side of the station where the 12-hour parking is for cars. Covered bike parking may be considered to make biking more attractive	X					X	Collaborate with the Bloomfield Bike Depot and NJ TRANSIT to determine locations and maintenance
	Provide bike facilities such as bike parking using guidance provided by the Michael Baker Bikeability Assessment	X					X	Revisit the Michael Baker Bikeability Assessment and identify locations that could be better served by investing in bike facilities
	Periodically post bike infrastructure maps at the station and major bus stops			X	X			Identify strategic locations for this information to be posted

3.5 Funding Sources

This section details available funding sources that can be used to implement the previously mentioned station, pedestrian, and bike recommendations. Funds are broken down into two categories, federal and state funds, which are both available through the NJ Department of Transportation's (NJDOT) Division of Local Aid and Economic Development (Table 6). Funds for both are provided on a reimbursement basis. Although it is recommended that Bloomfield utilizes all potential opportunities for funding, it should be noted that state funding is generally less restrictive than federal funding.

Federal Resources

The following are Federal Aid programs administered through the NJDOT Division of Local Aid and Economic Development and/or the Metropolitan Planning Organizations that may have funding available to improve station access at the Watsessing Avenue Station.[15]

Local Lead

The Local Lead Program is a competitive program for which projects are applied for through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) sub-region. This program provides federal funds to advance projects through preliminary engineering, final design, right-of-way, and construction. There is an extensive list of criteria that a project must meet to be considered for selection. Transit projects are ineligible, but bike and pedestrian projects may be eligible if all parts of the project conform with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 and Section 4(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act.[16]

More information is available in the Federal Aid Handbook, which can be found at the New Jersey Department of Transportation Local Lead website.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

The SRTS Program was introduced in 2005 under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and has been continued under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST). This program is funded through the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Federal Aid Program and is administered by NJDOT in partnership with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), and the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO).

Due to the proximity of Watsessing Elementary School, East Orange STEM Academy High School, Carteret Elementary School, and Berkeley Elementary School to the Watsessing Avenue Station, there is the potential for the Watsessing neighborhood to use these funds in improving walkability in the area, as long as improves address travel. Counties, municipal governments, school districts, and schools are eligible to apply for this program if they are seeking funding to enable and encourage children to bike or walk to school. Funding can be provided for infrastructure such as the installation of crosswalks, sidewalks, traffic-calming measures, and bike facilities. Regional Safe Routes to School coordinators are available statewide to provide educational and encouraging programs and activities to support students walking and bicycling to school. In Bloomfield, the regional coordinators are available through EZ Ride Transportation Management Association.

Figure 30: Example of Bicycle Parking

Figure 31: Example of Sharrows on Street

For further information, refer to the Safe Routes to School Application Guidance available at the New Jersey Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School website.[17]

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)/ Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside

The TAP was established under MAP-21 and the FAST Act in 2015 and receives funding through a set-aside of the Federal Aid Highway Program. As of the beginning of 2018, the name of this program was changed to Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside, so grants awarded in the future will have this designation.

This program is administered by NJDOT in partnership with NJTPA, DVRPC, and SJTPO. This program is for municipalities or counties seeking to receive funding for community based surface transportation projects with a cultural, aesthetic, and/ or environmental aspect. Projects must fall into one of seven categories, of which the most applicable to improving station access at the Watsessing Avenue Station include:

- The design and construction of trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized transportation modes (Figure 30 and 31)
- The conversion of abandoned rail corridors for pedestrian and bike trails
- Community improvement activities such as streetscaping and corridor landscaping

Participants in this program are able to receive design assistance through the TAP Design Assistance Program. Additional information regarding the application process and criteria, past recipients, and the TA Set-Aside Program Handbook is available at the NJDOT Transportation Alternatives website.[18]

Table 6: NJ Department of Transportation–State and Federal Grant Funding

State Funding	Federal Funding
Municipal Aid	Local Lead
County Aid	Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program
Local Bridges	Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
Safe Streets to Transit	Local Safety/High Risk Rural Roads Program
Transit Village	Emergency Relief
Bikeways	High Priority Projects
Safe Corridors Highway Safety Funds	Transportation and Community System Preservation
Local Aid Infrastructure Fund	-

State Resources

The NJDOT provides approximately $400 million in state aid to municipalities and counties for transportation improvement projects through the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund (TTF). For FY 2017 through FY 2024, NJ TTF funding will be distributed as follows:

- $151.25 million in Municipal Aid
- $10.0 million in Urban Aid
- $161.25 million in County Aid
- $47.3 million in Local Bridges Fund
- $30.1 million in Local Freight Impact Fund
- $7.5 million in Local Aid Infrastructure Fund
- $22.6 in Transportation Infrastructure Bank Fund

The NJ TTF funding options most relevant to station access are outlined below.[19]

Municipal Aid Program

The Municipal Aid Program is a highly competitive program intended to supplement municipal transportation programs with transportation funding. Municipalities qualify for assistance based on proportions determined by the Department of Community Affairs formula that considers population and municipal roadway miles. Priority is also given to municipalities based on prior aid received.

Project categories for which municipalities can apply for assistance under the Municipal Aid program are summarized in Table 6. If received, the State provides 75% of the funds at the time of award concurrence and the remainder after project completion. Typically, municipalities use this funding for repaving, however NJDOT specifically encourages applications for pedestrian safety improvements, bikeways, and streetscapes with the hope to award 10% of all Municipal Aid funds for these projects.

Further information regarding the application process for the TTF – Municipal Aid Program can be found at the NJDOT State Funded Programs website for Municipal Aid.[20]

County Aid Program

The County Aid program provided through the NJ TTF allocates funding annually to projects seeking to improve public roads and bridges under the jurisdiction of the county. In order to qualify for funding, the county must develop an Annual Transportation Program (ATP) and provide a list of

eligible projects that includes a project description, municipality location, project limits, and estimated construction cost.

Counties seeking County Aid program funding must submit an annual report on their expenditure of funds by December 31st of each year in accordance with County Aid regulation N.J.A.C. 16:20A and program submissions must be made within five months of NJDOT's notification of funding allotment for the current State fiscal year (usually prior to August 31st).

Further information regarding the program application, expenditure report forms and samples, information sheets, and the State Aid Handbook are available at the NJDOT State Funded Programs website for County Aid.[21]

Local Aid Infrastructure Fund

The Local Aid Infrastructure Fund is subject to funding appropriation but was established to address emergencies and regional needs throughout the states. Counties and municipalities can apply at any time, particularly for funding for pedestrian and bikeway projects.[22] Additional information can be found at the NJDOT Local Aid Infrastructure Fund website.

Bikeway Grant Program

The Bikeway Grant Program provides funding at the county and municipal level to promote biking as an alternative transport mode as part of the State's goal of constructing 1,000 new miles of dedicated bike paths. Priority through this program is given to the construction of new bike paths, but also considers the construction or delineation of any new bike facility, including bike parking.

More information on the application, past grant recipients, the bikeway handbook, and design guidelines are available at the NJDOT Bikeways website.[23]

Safe Streets to Transit Program

The Safe Streets to Transit Program was developed in 2006 as part of the NJDOT Pedestrian Safety Initiative. Funding through this program is available at both the county and municipal level for projects that aim to:

- Improve the overall safety and accessibility for pedestrians accessing public transit
- Encourage pedestrian travel to transit stations
- Facilitate projects that will improve safety within a ½ mile of public transit facilities

Applications for this program are made through the System for Administering Grants Electronically (SAGE). More information is available at the NJDOT Safe Streets to Transit website.[24]

Transit Village Grant Program

This program is for municipalities that have been designated as Transit Villages by the Commissioner of Transportation and the inter-agency Transit Village Task Force. Additional information regarding the application for funding under this program, municipal aid regulations, Transit Village Grant Recipients for FY 2018, and the Transit Village Program Handbook can be found at the NJDOT Transit Village website.

Currently, the NJ TRANSIT Bloomfield Avenue Station is designated as a Transit Village. Since one designation covers the whole township, the neighborhood around the Watsessing Avenue Station is eligible for Transit Village funding.[25]

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) – New Jersey Green Projects Reserve (GPR)

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund provides provisions to promote green technologies through the establishment of a Green Project Reserve (GPR). State GPRs are required to reserve at least 20% of their annual allocation of CWSRF grants to address green infrastructure and water or energy improvements. Further details on how to apply for

a grant through this program is available at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Division of Water Quality Municipal Finance and Construction Element website (Figure 32).[26]

Local Resources

Many opportunities for funding can be found at the local level, whether it be through local organizations promoting green infrastructure, neighborhood safety, or ADA accessibility principles. It is recommended that Bloomfield explore funding options available through local community organizations.

Transportation Infrastructure Bank

Established under the New Jersey Infrastructure Trust Act N.J.S.A. 58:11B-1 et seq., the New Jersey Transportation Infrastructure Bank (NJTIB) is provided through a partnership with the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank (I-Bank) and the NJDOT.

NJTIB provides low interest loans for local transportation infrastructure projects. In regards to improving station access at the Watsessing Avenue Station, projects such as transit lanes or rights of ways and pedestrian walkways connecting to stations can be eligible for NJTIB loans.

Throughout New Jersey, the I-Bank has been successfully used to fund green infrastructure development. In particular, the City of Hoboken received an approximate $4.3 million construction loan in June 2018 with the NJ Water Bank to implement curb extensions with rain gardens to control storm water inundation and frequent combined sewer overflows (CSOs) on streets located within the City's floodplain.[27]

Figure 32: Rain Garden in Hoboken, NJ

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4.TOD AND REDEVELOPMENT

Figure 33: Bloomfield Housing Occupancy, 2012-2017

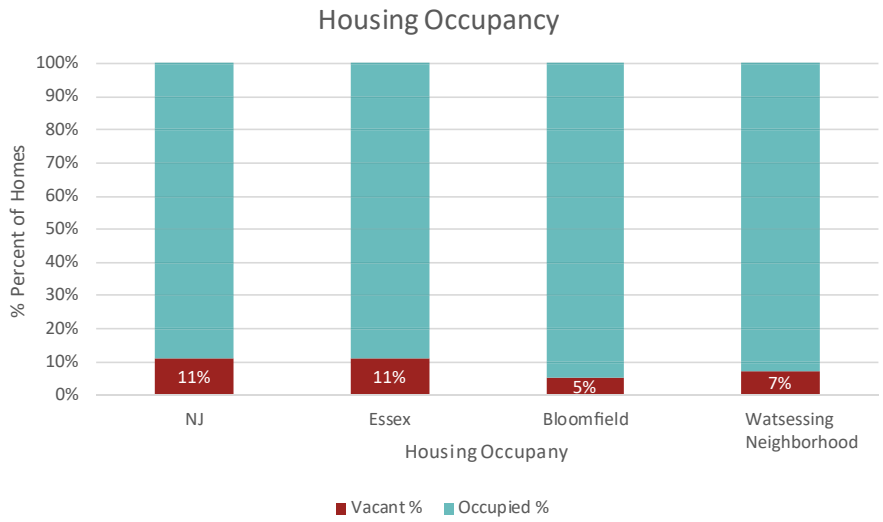
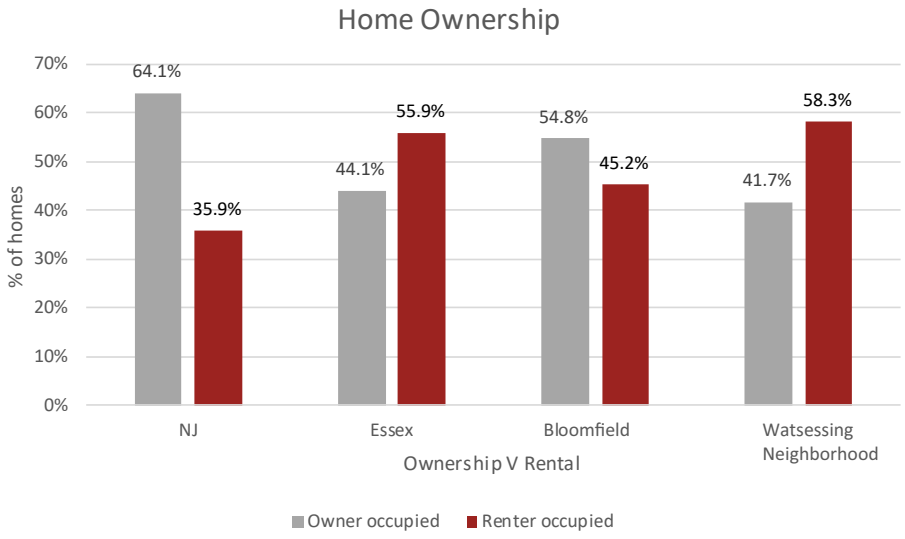


Figure 34: Bloomfield Homeownership, 2012-2017



The purpose of the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) section is to discuss the importance and viability of redevelopment in and around the Watsessing Avenue neighborhood. Using current development trends, zoning, and site inventory analysis, development models were created to better understand the long term ramifications of growth. The recommendations seek to position the Township of Bloomfield for sustainable redevelopment and growth.

4.1 Existing Conditions

This section reviews the existing housing and construction trends around the Watsessing Avenue neigborhood and a variety of conditions which affect development. An examination of the existing housing, construction, and land use patterns provides insight on development trends. Bloomfield has several positive elements, including large open spaces and historic properties, but also several challenges, such as contaminated sites. The rise of luxury developments that are not integrated into the existing community creates additional challenges for Bloomfield.

Housing Statistics

Housing statistics provide an overview of the Watsessing neighborhood's housing market and trends. These patterns can help to provide an understanding of the amount and type of housing needed in the future. Bloomfield has a vacancy rate of 4.4%, lower than both New Jersey and Essex County as a whole. In comparison to Bloomfield, the Watsessing neighborhood has a slightly higher vacancy rate, close to the national average of 6.9% as of January 2018. Low vacancy rates communicate that Bloomfield's housing market is competitive and that there is a potential need for more housing both in the Watsessing neighborhood and Bloomfield as a whole (Figure 33).

In Bloomfield, 45.2% of individuals are renters. The Watsessing neighborhood has 15.1% more renters than Bloomfield. Notably, the Watsessing nieghobrhood had a 13.1% decrease in homeownership compared to Bloomfield as a whole between 2012 and 2016 (Figure 34). Bloomfield has a median home value of $320,500, which is 1.2% more expensive than the state. However, Bloomfield is 15% more affordable than Essex County, which has median home value of $377,700.

The median listed price of a home is $228 per square foot, which is $41 lower than the New York City metropolitan area average (Figure 35).[29] Bloomfield's proximity to and affordability in comparison to New York City may indicate that Bloomfield is on the cusp of large scale development. Recent development, like the Parkway Lofts, which have low vacancy rates indicate an untapped market. As New York City becomes more unaffordable, Bloomfield becomes a more desirable location as a primary residence due to its proximity to transit resources and its more affordable housing. At the same time, Bloomfield is experiencing a quick surge in housing value.

To gain an in depth understanding of the housing market, Figure 35 illustrates that housing values in the Watsessing neighborhood are 34% higher than housing values in Bloomfield. The majority of Bloomfield homes are valued between $400,000 and $749,999. This premium in value reflects the addition of new housing in the Watsessing neighborhood as well as the neigh's link to transit and the economy and

The Housing Market:

Based on recent data from online real estate database, Zillow, Bloomfield home values have gone up 7.4% over the past year, and it is predicted that they will rise an additional 9.3% within the next year.[28]

Figure 35: Bloomfield Home Value, 2012-2017

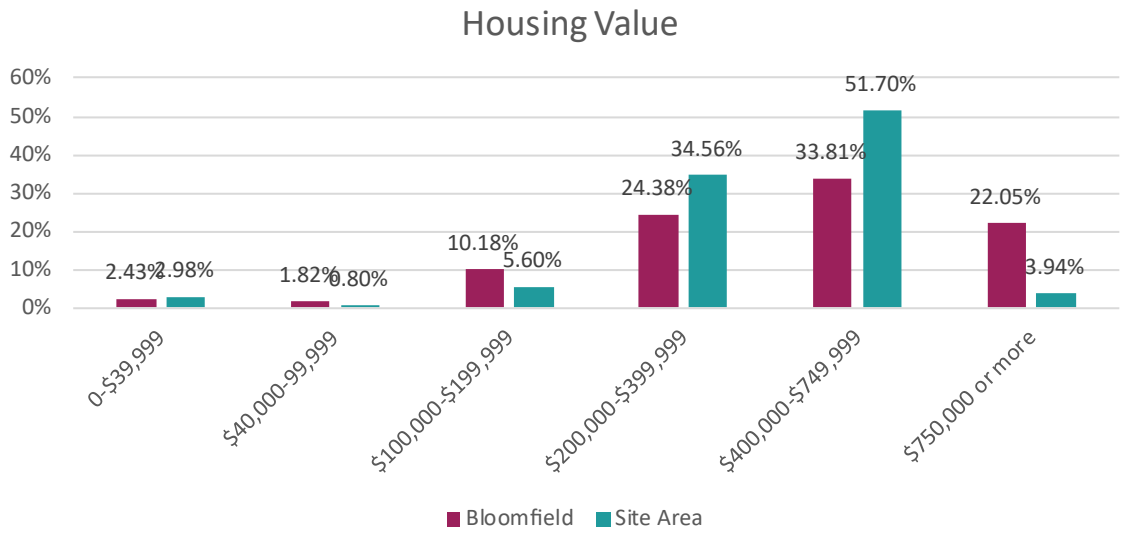


Figure 36: Bloomfield Age of Housing, 2012-2017

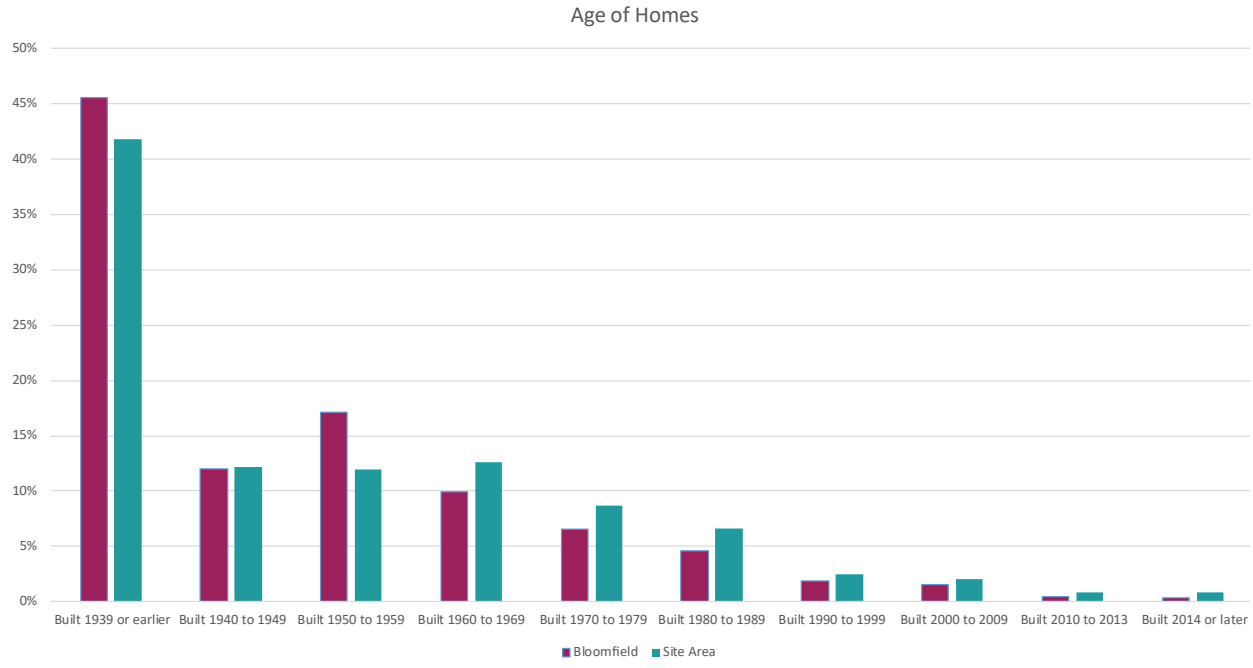
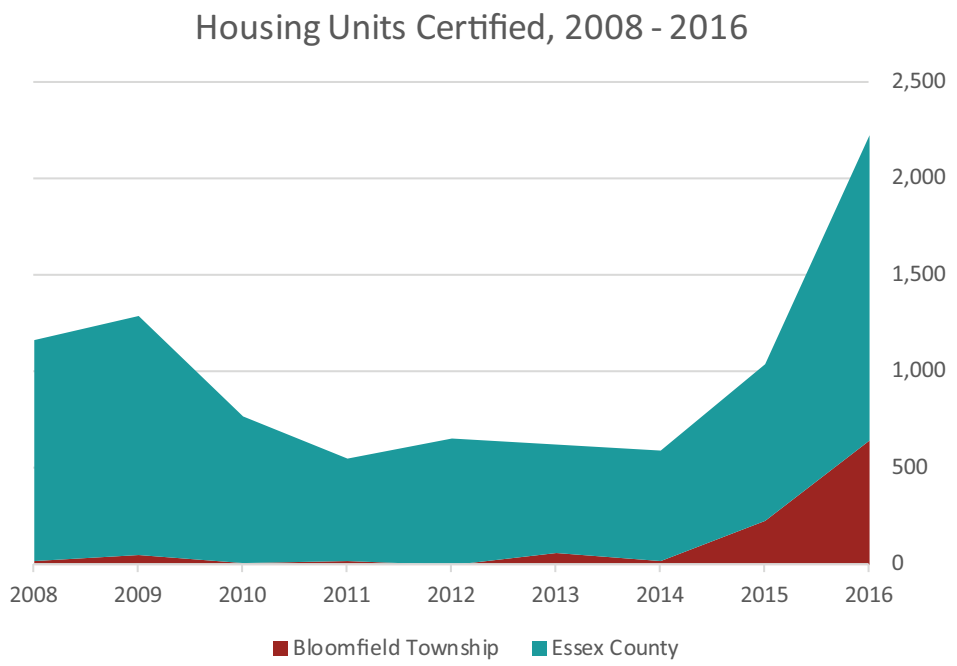


Figure 37: Housing Units Certified Bloomfield Township and Essex County, NJ, 2008-2016



job base of New York City. Additionally, the rise in median home value reflects the significant increase in the number new residential units in the neighborhood. These units generally have much higher values than older housing in the neighborhood, which is reflected in median prices. A specific challenge for this area is the age of the housing stock. A significant number of homes in the area were built before 1939. This falls in line with Essex County and New Jersey as a whole. A large number of homes were built during WWII, but since then there have been very few new homes built in Bloomfield (Figure 36).

The combination of low vacancy rates, high housing market values, and the strong rental market indicate a need for more affordable housing in the Watsessing neighborhood. Given the proximity to Newark and New York City, Bloomfield is becoming a desirable area for young families and professionals.[30] This trend is anticipated to increase as New York City housing prices become more unaffordable, which could substantially affect the scale of development occurring in Bloomfield. To handle the predicted rise in housing demand, Bloomfield will require updated zoning regulations, calibrated off-street parking minimums, and multimodal transportation facilities.

Construction

This section examines the trends in construction and development to provide an understanding of the types of real estate markets emerging in the Watsessing neighborhood. There is a significant amount of new construction occurring in Bloomfield. Post-2008 financial crisis, housing construction has rebounded and steadily increased since 2011. Between 2008 and 2016, 30% of all new housing units in Essex County were built in Bloomfield (Figure 37). In 2016, Bloomfield was ranked 3rd among New Jersey municipalities in the number of housing units certified for occupancy. Notably, 97% of all the units certified in Bloomfield between 2014 to 2016 were multi-

Figure 38: Square Footage of Retail Space Certified Bloomfield Township and Essex County, NJ, 2008-2016

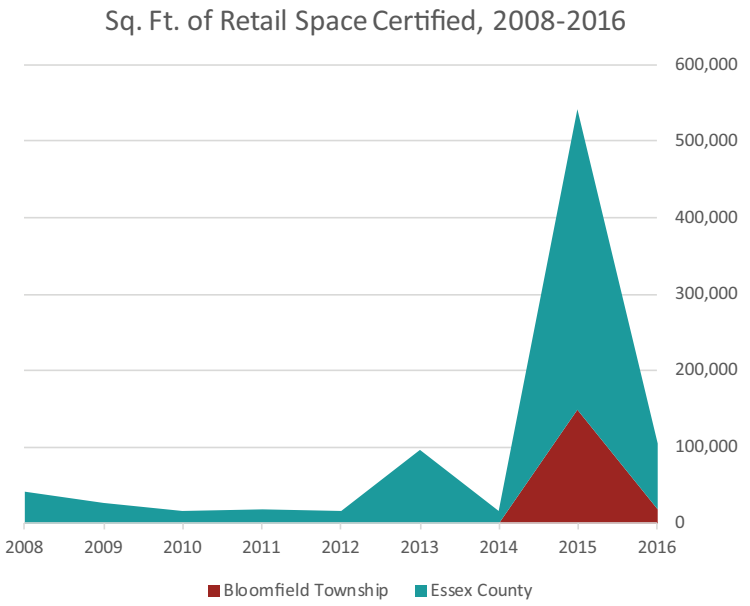


Figure 39: Square Footage of Office Space Certified Bloomfield Township and Essex County, NJ, 2008-2016

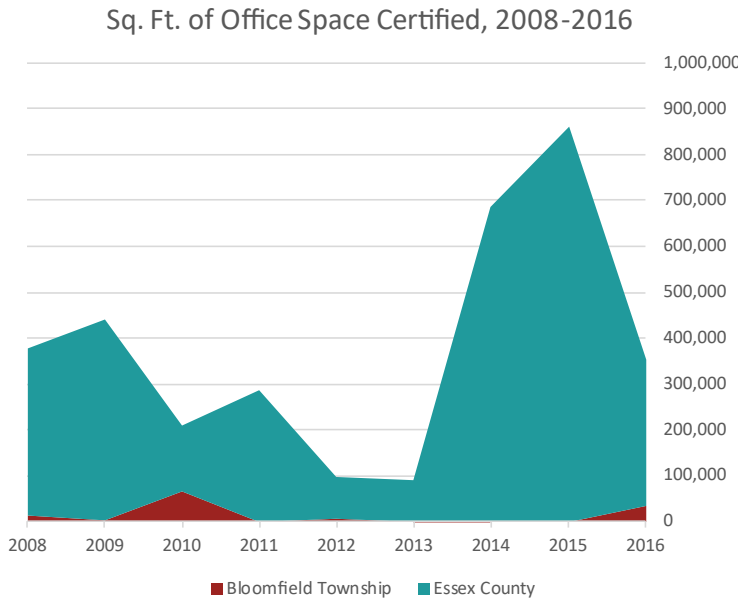


Figure 40: Local Land Uses around Watsessing Area, 1995

Figure 41: Local Land use around Watsessing Area 2012

family units.[31] This could point towards a larger shift toward multi-family homes in the real estate market. Given the strong housing demand and urbanizing nature of Bloomfield, multi-family homes may be a suitable option for the future.

Though no new retail spaces opened in Bloomfield between 2002 and 2014, Bloomfield certified 38% of all square footage of Retail Space in Essex County in 2015 (Figure 38). This was due to the opening of a large storage facility. This facility demonstrated a national trend of increases in storage facilities in urban centers.[32] Office space in Essex County has increased sharply in recent years. In comparison, a nominal amount of office space was certified in Bloomfield (Figure 39). The low number of office space construction indicates Bloomfield may not yet be at a development stage ready for retail or optimal for office space.

Land Use

Over the last 20 years, Bloomfield revised the zoning code several times, changing the land uses allowed on specific parcels within the Township. The Watsessing neighborhood has had no major area-wide change in land use outside of Parkway Lofts (Figure 40 and Figure 41).

Several parcels, including the Norman Towers and Parkway Lofts, have changed from commercial and industrial zoned land into multi-family housing. Industrial land has decreased in Bloomfield by more than 30% between 1995 and 2012.[33] While commercial uses decreased in the Watsessing neighborhood, there is additional commercial land elsewhere in Bloomfield, which leads to a negligible change in commercial acreage. In 2012, Bloomfield created a TOD overlay district in the Watsessing

Figure 42: Station Layout and Parking Layout

neighborhood. Updated land use data would be needed to determine if the overlay had an impact on land use in the Watsessing neighborhood.

Station Layout

The Watsessing Avenue Station is located on the corner of Watsessing Avenue and Westinghouse Plaza. NJ TRANSIT provides commuter rail service to Watsessing Avenue Station along the Montclair-Boonton Line. There is both permit and on-street-metered parking near the Watsessing Avenue Station.

The station has two parking lots (Figure 42). Lot 1 has fourteen 12-hour parking spaces at a rate of $0.75/hour. Lot 2 has 45 permit parking spaces, requiring a six month pass for $110. The permit parking lot did not appear to be more than half full during a field visit on a weekday. This may indicate that there is currently enough long term parking to serve the need at the Watsessing Avenue Station. The metered parking spaces appeared more in demand indicating that the current hourly parking pricing may be too low.

During a community meeting, the Township Administrator noted that parking has been a challenge for Bloomfield. This is not unlike many urbanizing areas. Discussions with a few residents after the site inventory analysis brought up the rise of ride sharing services to replace personal driving trips, which could provide new a mobility option for residents. This option is still confined to the current capacity of the roads in the area, which are mainly one lane in each direction. Transit oriented development could facilitate mobility by supporting businesses within walking distance of residents and allowing access to major job centers via transit. This idea was used as a basis for the proposed regulations in section 2.3 Scenario Planning.

Transit Ridership & Mobility

Ridership and time between trains, or headways, helps to provide an understanding of the usefulness and convenience of transit. If headways are short, riders are more likely to use transit service due to short wait times and confidence of service without referring to a schedule. In 2017, the Watsessing Avenue Station had an average daily ridership of 434 passengers, the highest in decades. In 2012, the station saw a 50% increase in ridership, from a previous high of 204 daily passengers.[34] Trains come every 38 to 45 minutes on average. The shortest time between two trains is 16 minutes, and the longest is 66 minutes. Service during peak commuting hours makes the Watsessing neighborhood an attractive location for development.

Open Space

Residential and commercial property in close proximity to green space typically sees an increase in property value and contributes to an area's vitality. Green spaces are seen as a positive attribute for communities and can help attract new residents or keep current residents from moving away. While there is no central park in the Watsessing neighborhood, there is a small green space across from the Watsessing Avenue Station that could be turned into an active park. Watsessing Park, a large green space with many sports facilities and other amenities, is located to the northwest of the Watsessing neighborhood (Figure 43) and Felton Field, a small neighborhood park is located at the southern edge of the study area. Access to the Watsessing Park is limited as the Garden State Parkway divides the neighborhood from the park. Access to Felton Field is also challenging due to pedestrian conditions along Arlington Avenue. Residents also make use of Halcyon Park, located to the east of, but not in, the Watsessing neighborhood.

Though parks are located within a ½ mile of the Watsessing neighborhood, access is limited due to physical barriers, such as the Garden State Parkway,

Figure 43: Parks and Open Space

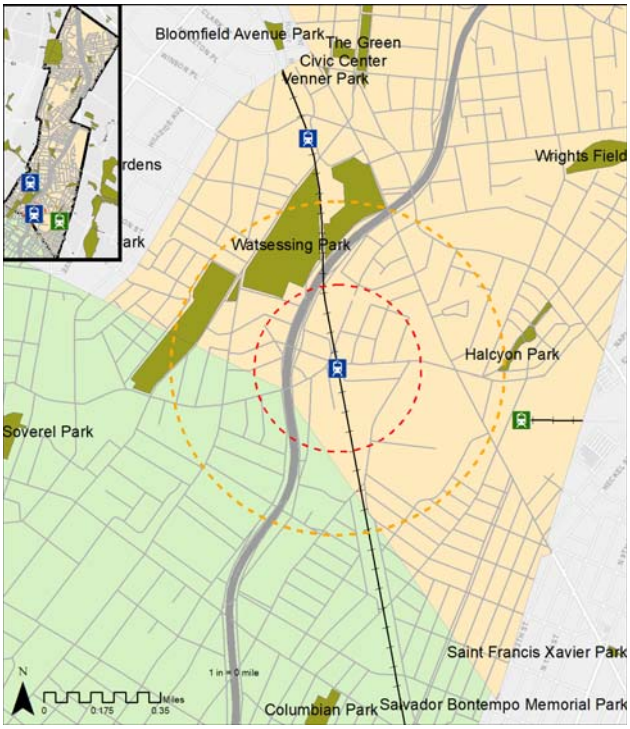


Figure 44: Eligible and Designated Historic Properties

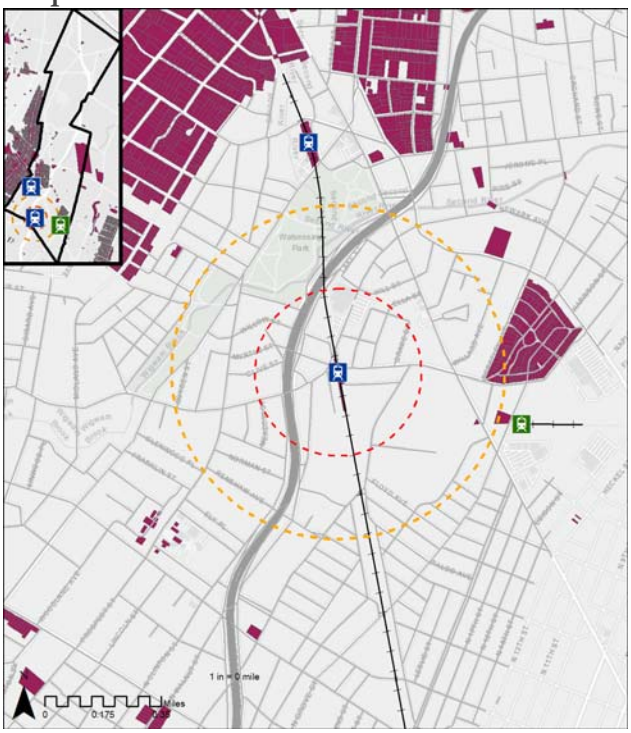
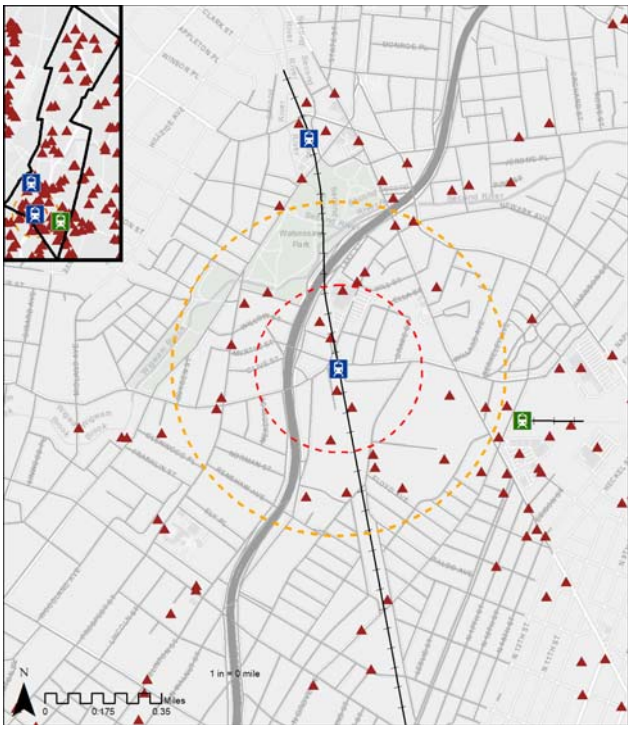


Figure 45: Known Contaminated Sites



and social barriers, such as the wealth disparity between the Watsessing neighborhood and the neighborhood around Halcyon Park. For recommendations on how to enhance park access in the Watsessing neighborhood, refer to the Policy Recommendations for Complete Parks on page 103.

Historic Properties

Historic properties can increase the appeal of a neighborhood because of their character. However, historic preservation may also increase the cost of development. There are a number of historic properties, eligible or designated, in Bloomfield, including the Watsessing Avenue Station, Bloomfield Avenue Station, and the neighborhood around Halcyon Park (Figure 44). Development at the Watsessing Avenue Station should preserve the historic character of the station building.

Contaminated Sites

As in many parts of New Jersey, Bloomfield experiences development challenges due to contaminated sites. Working with contaminated sites has additional costs, but also showcases an opportunity for federal funding. Contaminated sites typically impact the financial viability of development, as the site would need to be cleaned to NJ DEP's standards before development could occur. Depending on current state and federal programs, funding may be available to help with site cleanup. There are six known contaminated sites within ¼ mile and 24 sites within ½ mile of the Watsessing Avenue Station (Figure 45).[35] It should be noted that Figure 45 includes sites where remediation is currently underway, required but not yet initiated, or has been completed.

Recent Development

Recent development provides insight on the emerging trends in Bloomfield. Much of the recent development in Bloomfield centers around its two commuter rail stations, the Watsessing Avenue Station and the Bloomfield Station. Three recent major development projects include the Parkway Lofts, Avalon Bloomfield Station, and The Grove at One92.

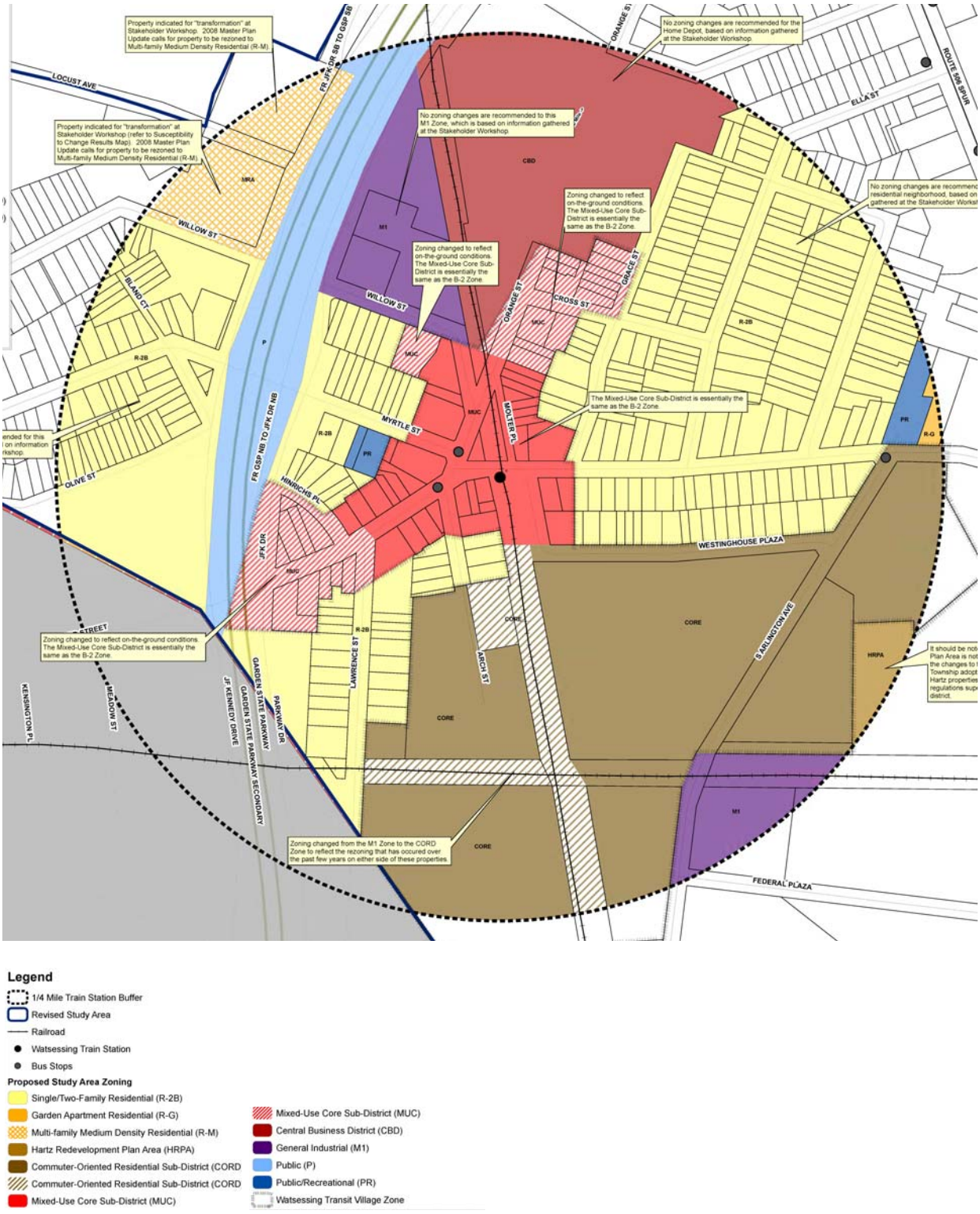
- The Parkway Lofts, completed in 2014 as a result of a rehabilitation project, 361 units. This six-story residential development offers studios, one bedroom, and two bedroom units ranging from $1,700 to $2,800 per month. The project straddles the Bloomfield-East Orange border.[36]
- Avalon Bloomfield Station, located directly across from the Bloomfield Avenue Station, 224 units. This five-story mixed-use development offers studios, one bedroom, two bedroom, and three bedroom units ranging from $1,970 to $2,720.
- The Grove at One92 is a four-story residential complex located within an eight-minute walk to the Watsessing Avenue Station. The 336-unit residential development offers studios, 1 bedroom, and 2 bedroom units ranging from $1,850 to $2,350.[37]

The mixture of adaptive reuse and high density multi-family residential units shows that these types of redevelopment are viable in Bloomfield.

NJ TOD and Transit Village Initiative

New Jersey is one of the few states that has policies and staff dedicated to promoting the implementation of TOD. Staff at NJ TRANSIT and NJDOT look for opportunities to promote transit and active forms of

Figure 46: TOD Zoning After Redevelopment



Legend

- 1/4 Mile Train Station Buffer
- Revised Study Area
- Railroad
- Watsessing Train Station
- Bus Stops

Proposed Study Area Zoning

- Single/Two-Family Residential (R-2B)
- Garden Apartment Residential (R-G)
- Multi-family Medium Density Residential (R-M)
- Hartz Redevelopment Plan Area (HRPA)
- Commuter-Oriented Residential Sub-District (CORD
- Commuter-Oriented Residential Sub-District (CORD
- Mixed-Use Core Sub-District (MUC)
- Mixed-Use Core Sub-District (MUC)
- Central Business District (CBD)
- General Industrial (M1)
- Public (P)
- Public/Recreational (PR)
- Watsessing Transit Village Zone

transportation in order to meet New Jersey's goals of reducing air pollutants and improving mobility for its residents.

NJDOT's Transit Village Initiative program is one of the tools the state uses to promote TOD. Participation in the program requires the adoption of a TOD zoning or redevelopment plan and a list of present resources. These resources include existing transit, bike, and pedestrian plans or improvements; sites ripe for redevelopment; and opportunities for placemaking. Bloomfield Avenue Station is designated as a Transit Village, which provides the following benefits:

- Eligibility for specific grants from NJDOT
- Priority funding from specified state agencies
- Technical assistance from specified state agencies

4.2 Zoning Analysis

This section outlines the current zoning code, how it has changed, and how changing conditions in Bloomfield under current regulation will affect development capacity. An analysis of zoning is critical for redevelopment because zoning changes have direct impacts on negotiations with real estate developers and the resulting developments.

Existing Zoning and Building Regulations

The 2012 Watsessing Area Redevelopment Plan implemented several zoning changes in the Watsessing neighborhood, including the creation of smaller sub-districts within the neighborhood (Figure 46). The analysis only included parcels identified in the Mixed-Use Core Sub district (MUC) area which includes Neighborhood Business (B-2) and Two-Family Higher-Density Residential (R-2B) zoned areas. Table 7 and Table 8 compare current zoning regulations and the proposed MUC zoning regulations.

4.3 Scenario Planning

The purpose of this section is to capture the short-term and long-term impacts of current and alternative zoning regulations in the MUC area. The magnitude of development and its potential impacts are presented as a range of development scenarios. The scenarios are then used to estimate the effects on tax revenue, residential units, and commercial square footage. Scenarios provide insight on the long-term ramifications of zoning regulations on development patterns and could potentially aid in developing sustainable regulations that encourage and extend development.

Current Constraints

Under existing regulations, off-street parking requirements are a major constraint for redevelopment. A majority of parcels in the delineated MUC area do not provide off-street parking, as they were not required to do so at the time they were built. New development or redevelopment will be required to add parking per Bloomfield's current parking requirements. Residential units such as one- and two-family dwellings must provide two parking spaces per dwelling unit.[38] Larger multi-family projects have a parking requirement between 1.5 and 2 parking spaces per unit. Requiring off-street surface parking or garages in a neighborhood will encourage residents to own and use personal vehicles. This undermines the goals of compact, mixed-use development, including supporting local businesses, transit access,

Table 7: Existing Zoning Regulations, Watsessing Neighborhood (B-2)

Standard	Required (B-2)
Use	Multi-Family Units
Max Height	40 Feet
Density	---
Min Lot Area	---
Min Lot Width	---
Min Front Setback	---
Min Rear Setback	---
Max Side Setback	---
Max Building Coverage	100% For Non-Residential 90% If Includes Residential
Max Lot Coverage	100% For Non-Residential 90% If Includes Residential
Max FAR	100% For Residential 90% If Includes Residential
Min Parking Spaces	Estimated 1.5 Per Residential Unit (Varies By Development) Estimated 1 Per 600 Sq. Ft. Of Retail (Varies By Use)
Parking Space Size	9 Feet by 18 Feet

Table 8: Proposed Zoning Regulation, Watsessing Neighborhood (MUC)

Standard	Required (MUC)
Use	Mixed Use
Max Height	5 Stories / 54 Feet
Density	100 Units/Acre
Min Lot Area	---
Min Lot Width	---
Min Front Setback	---
Min Rear Setback	---
Max Side Setback	---
Max Building Coverage	70%
Max Lot Coverage	90%
Max Far	---
Min Parking Spaces	0.625 Per Residential Unit 1 Per 1450 Sq. Ft. Of Retail
Parking Space Size	8 Feet by 17 Feet

Figure 47: Block 94, Lot 26 Parcel Site Plan

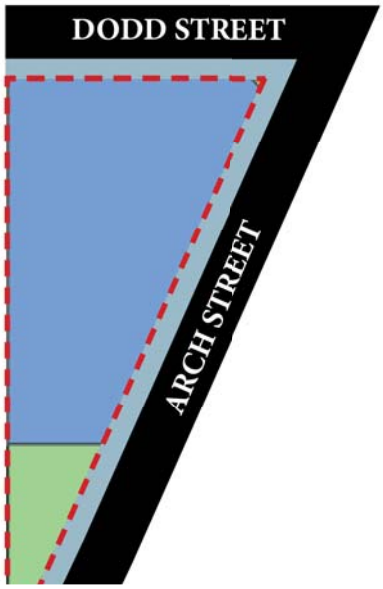


Figure 48: Redevelopment with Current Parking Regulation

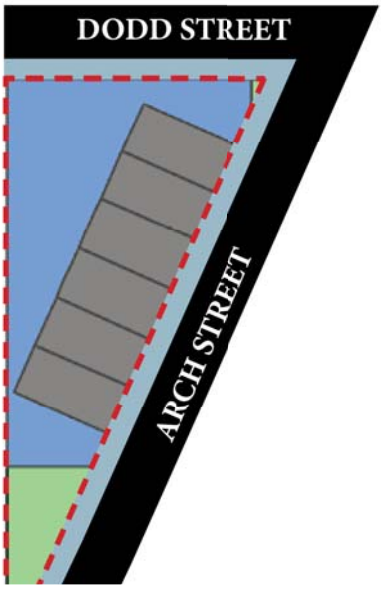
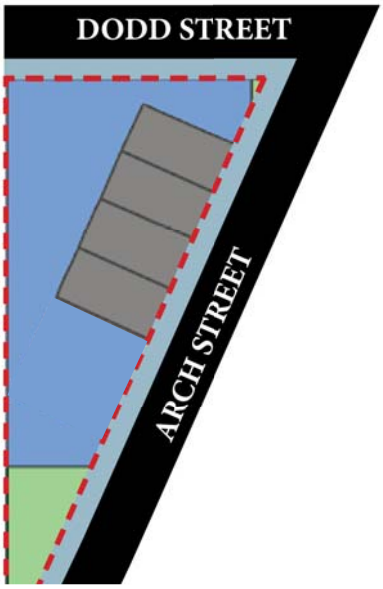


Figure 49: Redevelopment with Proposed Regulation

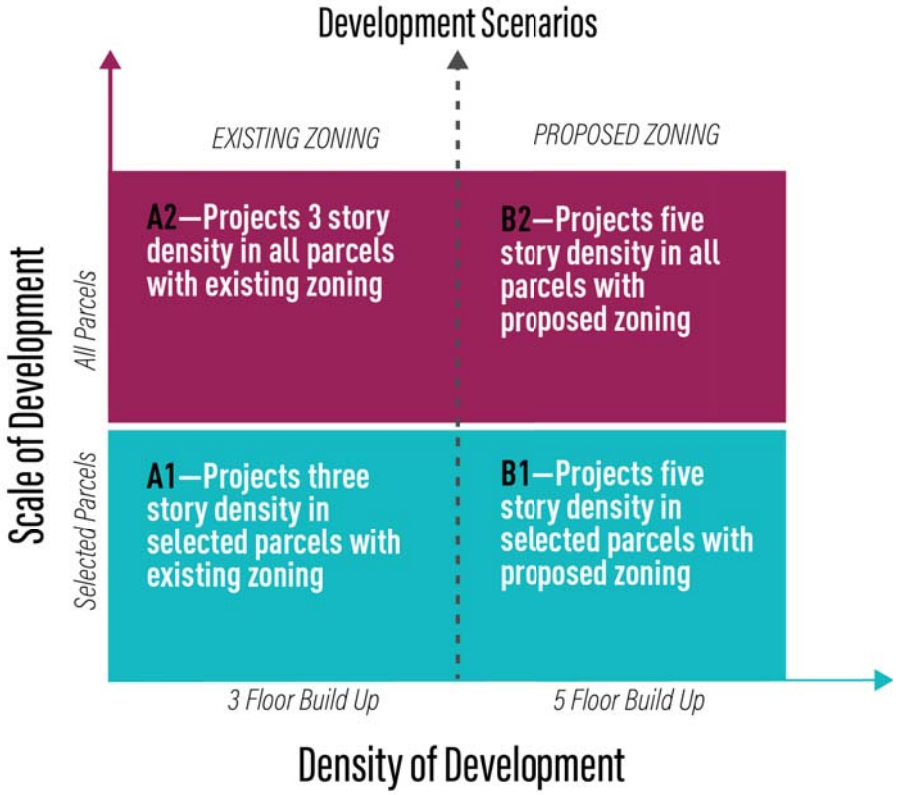


and health. Using Block 94, Lot 26, located on the corner of Arch St and Dodd St, as an example, Figures 47-49 demonstrate the geometric constraints under (1) existing conditions, (2) current zoning application to new development, and (3) proposed zoning applications to new development. Block 94, Lot 26 is currently occupied by a three story building with commercial on the first floor and four residential units on the two upper floors. There is no off-street parking provided.

If this parcel were to be redevelopment in compliance with the proposed MUC code, a developer could create at most 700 sq. ft. of ground floor retail and four residential units, which together would require six parking spaces. It is estimated that the area required for parking if the lot was updated to comply with current code would take away from the existing commercial space, which would be replaced with garage spaces that would use the sidewalk as a driveway. It is predicted that under existing zoning, single lot redevelopment would not be viable from a financial perspective, due the amount of space required and the cost of providing parking that meets the current standards.

If parking requirements around Watsessing Avenue Station were lowered to 0.625 per unit , it is projected that Block 94, Lot 26 could be developed with 1100 sq. ft. of retail space, six residential units, which together would require four parking spaces. This is 400 sq. ft. of additional retail space and two additional residential units than could be achieved under current regulations. This change could make the project more financially attractive to developers. While single-lot development is a small scale for most developers, the proposed parking regulations enable higher cost-effectiveness because more space is able to be leased or sold.

Figure 50: Scenario Concept



Scenarios Concept

Four scenarios were modeled with the analysis separated into near future and long-term future (Figure 50). Near future sites were selected based on a qualitative site evaluation of the MUC area to determine sites that are prime candidates for redevelopment (Figure 51). The scenarios are also divided into those projecting development using existing regulations and those projecting development using regulations and building heights proposed by the research team. It is important to note that all scenarios assume the redevelopment of the whole lot without existing buildings.

A1 Scenario: *Operating under the existing zoning regulation, selected parcels in Figure 51 are developed as three story buildings.*

A2 Scenario: *Operating under the existing zoning regulations, all parcels in Figure 52 are developed as three story buildings.*

B1 Scenario: *Operating under the proposed zoning regulations, selected parcels in Figure 51 are developed as five story buildings.*

B2 Scenario: *Operating under the proposed zoning regulations, all parcels in Figure 52 are developed five story buildings.*

Note: *The proposed development consolidates three parcels, echoing concerns about the financial feasibility of developing single lots discussed previously. Due to this it can be assumed future growth in the area would require the consolidation of multiple parcels. This development was used as a model because it demonstrates the type of development that is occurring in the Watsessing neighborhood.*

Methodology

This section describes the methodology used to model four potential scenarios for the Watsessing neighborhood MUC area. The analysis focuses on how existing and proposed regulations under various development scales affect total number of residential units, commercial square footage, and tax revenues in the near and long-term future.

Using the New Jersey Property Tax System, known as MOD IV, quantitative data was gathered on parcels in the MUC area including existing lot acreage, assessment value, and number of units. To project future development, assumptions were added onto the MOD IV dataset. For example, the following ratios used to predict future developments were based upon a proposed site plan adjacent to the station, on the corner of Westinghouse Plaza and MacArthur Avenue referred to as the proposed development in the rest of the section.

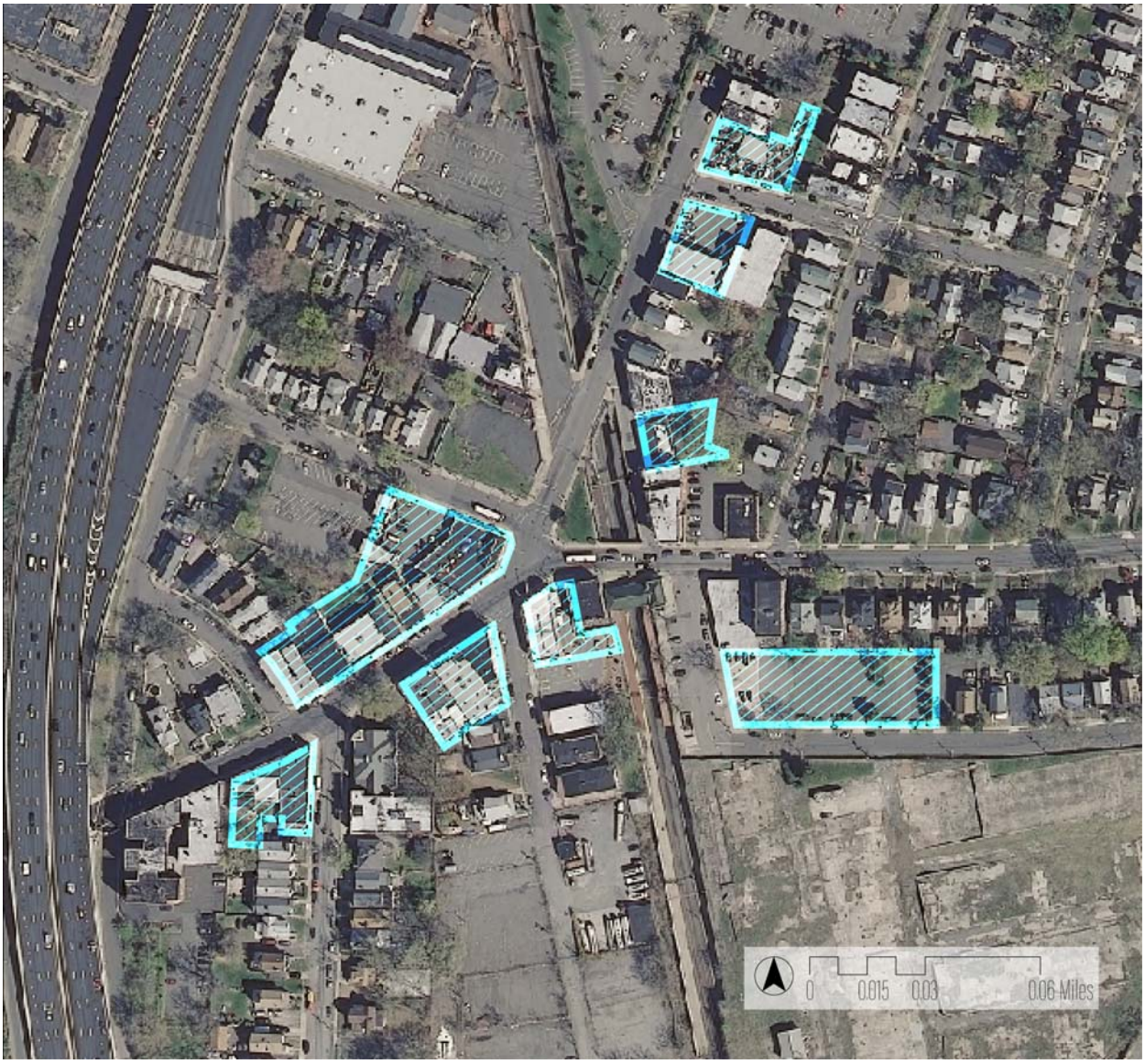
Projected Development Methodology: The proposed development consists of a 12,000 sq. ft. building on a 28,000 sq. ft. lot. The development would be three stories and have 25 residential units with 43 parking spaces, 15 of which would be garage spaces on the first floor of the building. The building footprint was divided by the lot size to calculate what a building footprint would be on all future projected lots. In the following sections, the calculations and associated data will be discussed. These values were used to project how the commercial area, residential units, parking spaces, and tax revenues would be impacted by each development scenario.

Redevelopment Site Selection: The team assessed buildings in the MUC zone. The site selection for scenarios A1 and A2 are based: (1) perceived vacancy, (2) state of the exterior of the building, (3) proximity to train station, and (4) opportunities for contiguous parcel development. The culmination of qualitative and quantitative data helped to determine parcels that are most likely to be developed in the near future (Figure 51).

Commercial Square Footage: To account for many of the MUC lots including commercial storefronts, this analysis calculated that four units on the ground floor would be used as commercial space. A ratio was then created based on the proposed building footprint and estimated commercial area. The commercial square footage ratio, along with the previously mentioned ratio that calculated building footprint compared to lot size, were used to calculate the commercial footage of each parcel projected to be redeveloped.

Residential Units: The number of residential units is based on the projected square footage of the ground floor and upper floors, and the number of stories the

Figure 51: Select Parcels for Revised Zoning Scenarios (A1 and B1)



Scenario A1—Projects three story density in selected areas with *existing* zoning and parking regulations

Scenario A2—Projects three story density in selected areas with *proposed* zoning and parking regulations

Figure 52: All Parcels for Revised Zoning Scenarios (A2 and B2)

Scenario B1—Projects five story density in selected areas with ***existing*** zoning and parking regulations

Scenario B2—Projects five story density in selected areas with ***proposed*** zoning and parking regulations

Table 9: Scenario Results

	Existing	Current Zoning		Proposed Zoning	
		Select Parcels	All Parcels	Select Parcels	All Parcels
		A1	B1	A2	B2
Residential Units	186	236	216	455	697
Commercial Sq Ft	38,350	39,443	43,718	52,397	72,114
Tax Revenues	$769,638	$1,229,309	$1,639,389	$2,601,944	$4,648,369

building would have. This analysis uses the estimated square footage of the second floor because the site plan includes garage spaces on the ground floor. A ratio was calculated to project the square footage of the upper floors once the ground floor of a lot was given. With this data, the total proposed building square footage was able to be estimated. Based on the total square footage of the site plan, the number of units was calculated minus the two units converted to commercial space.

Parking: To evaluate the impact of parking requirements, the square footage dedicated to parking in the site plan was estimated. The parking area compared to the area of the parcel was converted into a ratio. This ratio also took into account the number of units and Bloomfield's parking minimum requirements. In Scenarios A1 and B1, which uses this direct ratio to constrain the area of the building, about 48% of the lot was dedicated to parking. In Scenarios A2 and B2, this ratio was reduced to about 20% of the redeveloped lots, which equates roughly to 0.7 spots per unit.

Property Tax Revenue: MOD IV data was used to collect the 2017 property tax value for each parcel in the study area. An average was taken to estimate what the price per sq. ft. is for the study area. This price was then used to calculate the new assessment value of redeveloped properties. Note that this is a conservative estimate due to new development typically being assessed at a higher value than neighboring buildings.

Results

The models project that as the scale of development and density increases, residential units, commercial square footage, and tax revenue also increase (Table 9 and Figure 53). The Projects Results infographic on page 61, illustrates the magnitude of these projections. However, it is important to note that it is the magnitude of the change that provides insight into the benefits and challenges of each scenario. A2 scenario result in a slight increase in residential units, commercial square footage, and tax revenues. The B1 scenarios have fewer residential units than the A1 scenario when only selected parcels were redeveloped. This is because the projected new development is less dense than existing residential buildings due to the current parking requirement. The scale of development would require a reduction in off-street parking requirements because current parking requirements make small scale redevelopment not financially viable for developers.

The B2 scenario saw the most significant change. By increasing height maximums to five stories and reducing the off-street parking requirements to less than one space per unit, the MUC area saw a 275% increase in residential units, 88% increase in commercial square footage, and 504% increase in tax revenue compared to the existing conditions. Reducing the parking requirements allows a larger portion of the lot to be used for the building footprint, making smaller redevelopment more financially viable. It also has the potential to allow for more open space within projects.

Projection Results

Scenario A1—Projects three story density in selected areas with *existing* zoning and parking regulations

Scenario A2—Projects three story density in selected areas with *proposed* zoning and parking regulations

Scenario B1—Projects five story density in selected areas with *existing* zoning and parking regulations

Scenario B2—Projects five story density in selected areas with *proposed* zoning and parking regulations

4.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations explore modifications to parking, zoning, and design. The recommendations intend to encourage and manage Bloomfield's long term growth.

Parking Recommendations

Based on the various growth scenarios, reducing off-street parking requirements to less than one space per unit in conjunction with (1) the recommendations to improve station access explained on page 90-92 and (2) shared parking arrangements is essential for successful TOD development around the Watsessing Avenue Station.

The following recommendations would help manage parking demands and support TOD development. Although reducing the parking minimum may seem like a contentious political challenge, the reduction of parking minimums has large scale impacts on housing affordability, feasibility of well integrated TOD, tax revenues for Bloomfield, and the provision of open space. Research has found that parking minimums increase the cost of construction, which is passed on to residents.[39] In the case of TOD projects in the Washington, D.C. metro area, TOD projects generated $1.13 to $2.20 in tax and non-tax revenue for every $1 spent on public services for residents and employees.[40] Reducing parking minimums has long-term benefits that help the community as a whole. Based on the results of the scenarios modeled, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Reduce off-street parking minimums: The reduction of the parking minimum, which currently varies between 1.5 and 2 spaces per unit, would increase the area that could be dedicated to residential and commercial space. While it is understandable to be wary of lowering parking minimums, it is essential to build up the density and residential critical mass for businesses to remain financially viable. Adding large amounts of parking can undermine TOD because it encourages residents to have and use personal vehicles as opposed to the walking, biking, public transit, and ride hailing services available to them.

2. Shared Parking with Home Depot: Due to Home Depot's large parking lot and location near residential areas, residents could share the lot during hours when Home Depot is closed. This could alleviate parking challenges and re-use existing resources. Currently, the Home Depot's parking lot dead-ends on the northern side of Orange Street and Cross Street, which prevents pedestrian connectivity. The Rise 2015 project proposed a new big-box retail building typology that would build better connection between large box stores and their surrounding community. The project proposed increased pedestrian connectivity by extending street patterns through parking lots.[41] A similar application in Bloomfield could provide increased pedestrian access and better connectivity between the Home Depot parking lot and the Watsessing neighborhood. Reuse of existing parking is an opportunity to better integrate residential and commercial areas.

3. Explore other opportunities for shared parking: In conjunction with other development proximate to the Watsessing Station, Bloomfield should explore shared structured parking. Bloomfield has experience with this, specifically with the garage at Bloomfield Station. Another successful model is the Pearl Street Garage in Metuchen, which provides spaces to commuters, residents, and visitors, and which was partially funded by payments in lieu of parking.

Zoning & Design Recommendations

The following zoning recommendations work in concurrence with parking recommendations. Given one of the main appeals of Bloomfield is housing affordability in relation to New York City, it is critical that zoning changes encourage density and provide a range of affordability levels. The following TOD-supported zoning recommendations seek to increase multimodal transportation, but also create a mixture of commercial and high density residential areas near the Watsessing Avenue Station.

1. Incentivize or Create Bike Parking Minimums: With an increase in density, more people will be walking and biking in the Watsessing neighborhood. These active modes of transportation can help to increase mobility and improve the health of the neighborhood. Cities around the country and internationally have added bike rack minimums in their code. Other cities have used grants or small tax incentives to have developers create bike infrastructure. These are two options for Bloomfield to add additional infrastructure to encourage an increase in biking.

2. Increase Building Height Maximum: Increasing the building height maximum will increase the number of residential and commercial units. Although scenarios A2 and B1 increased residential units and commercial space, the number of total residential units may not be enough to support businesses. By increasing the building height maximum from 40 feet to six stories, which is similar to the area around Bloomfield Station, there is an increased opportunity for residential units and successful businesses.

3. Widen Sidewalks: By widening sidewalks, Bloomfield can increase the walkability and dynamic uses of public sidewalks. With wider sidewalks, Bloomfield could open sidewalk cafés, add streetscaping, and install public art. These elements are critical to keep public spaces engaging and attractive.

4. Design Standards for Commercial Business: Employing a design standard for the neighborhood, will allow new development to build upon the existing characteristics of Bloomfield's early 20th century buildings. These standards should preserve historic elements unique to Watsessing neighborhood and allow for the revitalization of the area through new development. For more information on creating uniform signage and awnings to create a cohesive commercial downtown, see the Creative Placemaking section on page 73.

Given Bloomfield's housing market and development trends, there is growing need for parking and zoning regulations that encourage development, increase business opportunities, and promote walkable communities. Updating regulations and standards to facilitate these goals will foster cohesive long-term growth in Bloomfield.

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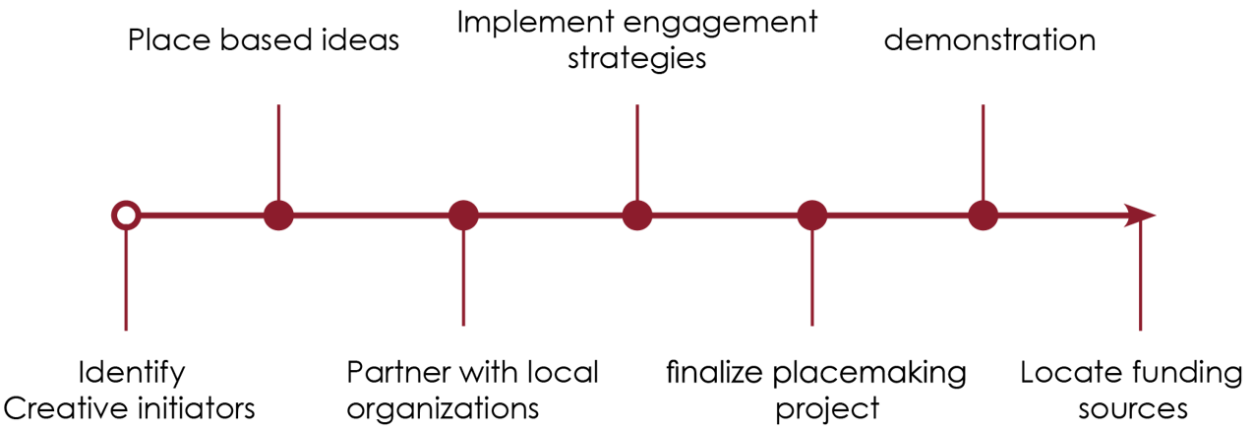
5. PLACEMAKING

Figure 53: Plaza at the Grove at One92. This plaza is not open to the public.

Figure 54: Example of a placemaking project timeline. The process is iterative and municipalities may go back and forth between steps during the process.[43]



This section proposes the creation of communal public spaces through placemaking and community engagement. Through qualitative research, potential areas for placemaking projects were determined. A community engagement event helped gather valuable information from residents about their desires and hopes for the Watsessing neighborhood. Based on the feedback from community residents, recommendations and next steps are discussed.

5.1 Dynamics of the Watsessing Neighborhood

The Watsessing neighborhood has seen an influx of development in recent years. These new developments are rapidly changing the neighborhood. The current pattern of development, seen in Figure 53, includes gated communities which creates a barrier between longtime residents and new community members. Barriers between current and new residents could create a negative dynamic in the neighborhood as changes continue to unfold.

The Watsessing neighborhood does not currently have social spaces for its residents. However, there are many opportunities to create new, vibrant areas for all community members in the neighborhood that could act as a bridge between new and old residents. Community events and activities could also improve the health of the neighborhood by creating places for residents to enjoy the outdoors.

5.2 What is Placemaking and Public Engagement?

Placemaking is a collaborative, interdisciplinary strategy that can be an effective tool to engage the community in shaping the physical and social character of a neighborhood. It involves the private sector, non-profits, and local community working together to grow a city's creative economy, which consists of creative workers and cultural industries.

These initiatives can spur economic development; increase safety and access to community assets; provide a base for long term public engagement; improve health for members of the neighborhood; and create strong relationships between community organizers and local governmental leaders. While there are not many widely accepted quantitative measures of success for placemaking initiatives, Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa have determined some defining characteristics in their paper "Creative Placemaking" for the Mayors' Institute on City Design.

In their report, Markusen and Gadwa developed an exhaustive list of case studies of both successful and unsuccessful placemaking projects. They state that successful projects include creative initiators, place based design, public participation and support, private sector partnerships and support, and community engagement.[42] All elements of a placemaking initiative must work cohesively throughout the stages of development to allow for a unique project that benefits the community.

An integral element in the placemaking process is a creative initiator. The creative initiator is typically a community leader, artists collaborative, or non-profit organization interested in the community and cultivating ideas that will help activate social spaces. Initiators identify strengths and opportunity for cultural growth and create a placemaking strategy that is specific to their own community. Projects could also work to solve a specific issue, such as safety. An example would be the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, where local residents and artists are trained to create murals that help create safer streets for people who live in the neighborhood.

The initiators should gain support from residents, along with both public and private sector interests. Community members could be engaged through charrettes, pop-up parks, and surveys. These events

Table 10: Public Engagement Matrix

Type of Engagement	Goal of Participation	Tools/Activities	Timeline
Informational	Aimed to educate the public about the project and potential outcomes.	Fact Sheet	Early
		Flyers	Early
		Website Postings	Early
		Newspaper ad	Early
Consultation	Gathering information, input and advice from the individuals that live, work or play within the project area	Surveys	Midway
		Public Meetings	Midway
Collaboration	Working with the public to identify issues and solutions.	Charettes	Midway
		Advisory Committee formation	Early
		Demonstration Project	Late
Timeline Legend: Early: 3-4 weeks; Midway: 4-6 weeks; Late: 6-10 weeks			

would all happen at different points within the process of development. Partnering with different public and private interests could help solve multiple problems faced in placemaking, such as maneuvering through regulatory hurdles and securing funding for projects. All successful projects must include community engagement, which is an integral part of determining what improvements should be prioritized. If done well, placemaking projects can have impressive results for the community (Figure 54).

5.3 Methodology

Public Engagement Matrix

Public engagement is an essential part of any planning process because of the valuable information that can be gained from the daily experiences of residents and individuals that regularly pass through an area. Table 10 outlines the different outreach strategies that could be utilized for this report. In the matrix, there are three categories of engagement: **informational**, **consultation**, and **collaborative**.

The **informational** strategy is used to share knowledge about the project with the public. The goal is to educate the community on the methods used to conduct the study and to distribute information regarding the recommendations. Tools that can be used to accomplish this include flyers, fact sheets, website postings, and newspaper ads. All of the tools listed should include the project status, schedule, history, potential issues, a location map, and proposed improvements. There are several distribution methods for flyers and fact sheets that can be utilized including sending mailings to relevant community members, posting in community gathering spaces, and emailing local residents.

The **consultation** phase of public outreach aims to gain information from the public that the project team would not otherwise be able to access. The target audience are the individuals that live, work, and spend time in the project area. This information can be obtained through a survey, either in-person or online, and public meetings. The public meetings can

be paired with existing events such as planning board and town hall meetings or community wide events such as farmers' markets and harvest festivals.

The **collaborative** phase of public engagement provides an opportunity for the public to work directly with the project team in determining the areas of focus and the types of improvements to be made in the study area. These collaborative experiences can be done in the form of charrettes, advisory committees, or public demonstrations. Charrettes are a type of in-person meeting during which the participants look at maps, circle problems areas, and draw what they would like to see.

The suggested timeline for all of the activity options can be found within the public engagement matrix. It is recommended that at least one strategy from each of the three outlined categories of public engagement be utilized during public engagement processes.

Site Evaluation

A site evaluation to determine potential sites for placemaking was conducted using the Power of 10 concept designed by the Project for Public Spaces. The Power of 10 concept is the idea that places thrive when people have 10 or more reasons to be there (Figure 55).[44] One example is Lincoln Square in Chicago, where people can watch a little league game, join a game of ultimate Frisbee, catch a movie, attend a summer concert series, take a dance class, or see a piece of the Berlin Wall.[45] The variety of activities keeps people interested in the space. Some of the best sites to engage with around the Watsessing neighborhood include the Plaza Fitness, Bey Arts Gallery, and the Bethel Church of Love and Praise. Plaza Fitness is a popular destination across from the train station. Potential partnerships include outdoor workout facilities and the promotion of healthy, active lifestyles. The Bey Art Gallery hosts children's art classes, Sip and Paint nights for adults, and has space to host community events. A potential partnership with the art gallery could include displaying local artwork at outdoor events, activities for families and children, or murals and other creative placemaking programing. The Bethel Church could serve as another way to engage with members of the community. The church currently hosts special events such as gospel nights, skate parties, and Thanksgiving dinners in addition to regular services.

In addition to community engagement and outreach, some areas that could benefit from physical placemaking changes include the small triangle park across from the station, Molter Place, the underpasses on Dodd and Myrtle Streets, and the corridor of Watsessing Avenue. The park in front of the station is currently vacant and underutilized because there are only a few benches surrounding a patch of overgrown grass (Figure 56). Its strategic location across from the train station makes it a prime spot for programming. This could be a permanent park with programming, vendors, or art. The programming could include having movable seating and tables, coffee carts, food trucks, and events.

Molter Place (Figure 57) is a small side street across from the train station. There is potential to close this block off, both temporarily and permanently, as the street is not heavily used by cars and only serves as storage for a few parked cars. Both active and vacant storefronts line the street and owners may be interested in partnering for a placemaking event. Closing the street could create an attractive place for restaurants, sidewalk cafés, and small shops. Adding moveable seating, string lights, and other decorative elements can help make the closed street a pedestrian friendly space. For more information on Sidewalk Cafés, see the Creative Placemaking section of Policy Recommendations on pages 95-97.

The underpasses beneath the Garden State Parkway on Dodd and Myrtle Streets that connect Watsessing neighborhood to the Bloomfield downtown area are a great opportunity for creative placemaking (Figure 58). Art and lighting could help make the underpasses feel safer and more inviting to walk through, while connecting the Watsessing neighborhood with the businesses and Watsessing Park on the other side.

Figure 55: Potential Locations for Placemaking

Figure 56: Plaza located across from the Watsessing Avenue train station

Finally, Watsessing Avenue itself is a prime location for placemaking and streetscape improvements that can help create a sense of community and safety through art, street improvements like benches, lighting, and trees. For additional recommendations on streetscape improvements, refer to the Station Access recommendations on page 29.

Other areas initially considered as having potential to be transformed through placemaking include the abandoned railroad tracks and the vacant lots behind the Plaza Fitness, which are both opportunities to increase green space. Recognizing the need to coordinate with various ownership and development entities, considering these locations for long-term placemaking development is recommended.

Figure 57: Image of Molter Place

Event Summary

An event was held in front of Plaza Fitness near the Watsessing Avenue Station on November 27, 2018 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. During the event, residents were asked to provide feedback on improvements they would like to see in the neighborhood. The event included three interactive boards focusing on safety concerns, accessibility concerns, and amenities (Figures 59-61). Individuals were given stickers to place on any of the three poster boards to indicate which areas concerned them the most, and which amenities or improvements they wanted to see in the Watsessing neighborhood (see Appendix A).

Throughout the event, five trains stopped at the station. Each time, approximately 5 to 10 transit riders provided input on the neighborhood. Additional participants were patrons of Plaza Fitness, a gym near the train station, and pedestrians walking through the area. By the end of the event, approximately 30 people responded on the boards or provided verbal feedback. The majority of the participants were residents of the Watsessing neighborhood. Respondents who were not Bloomfield residents were from neighboring towns. The main topics that were mentioned and frequently marked on the interactive boards were a lack of pedestrian-scale lighting, drivers not stopping for pedestrians, lack of ADA accessibility, and a desire for sidewalk cafés. This event was instrumental in developing the recommendations for enhancing placemaking in the Watsessing neighborhood.

Figure 58: Image of the underpass below the Parkway

Figure 59: Interactive Boards at Community Engagement Event

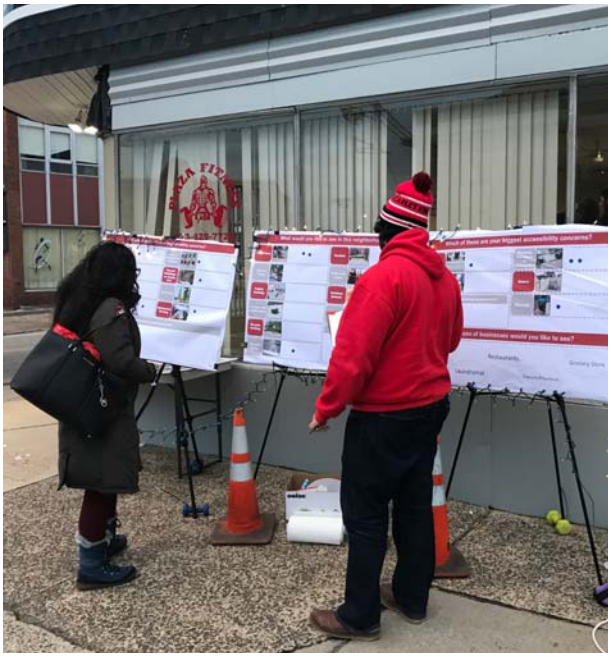


Figure 60: Participants at Community Engagement Event

Figure 61: Participants at Community Engagement Event

Figure 62: Stairs at Watsessing Avenue Station

Table 11: Recommendations Matrix

Issue	Action	Location	Cost	Priority
Pedestrian Scale lighting	Add pedestrian scale lighting, holiday decorations, string lights	Everywhere	High	High
Drivers not stopping for Pedestrians in Crosswalks	Painted crosswalks, pedestrian lighting	Intersections, particularly from the train station to Molter Place	Low-Medium	High
Faded crosswalks	Painted crosswalks	Intersections, particularly from the train station to Molter Place	Low	High
Lack of neighborhood amenities	Trash cans	Next to station, Plaza	Low	Medium
	Install bicycle lanes		Low-High	Medium
	Install adequate bicycle parking	Install parking next to Train Station	Low	
	Restaurants	Molter Place	Low	High
	Sidewalk cafés	Plaza, Molter Place	Low	High
	Outdoor events	Plaza	Medium	Medium
	Public art	Plaza, Molter Place, Underpasses	Low	Low

5.4 Recommendations

The community engagement activity yielded insights from neighborhood residents. The biggest safety concerns were the lack of pedestrian scale lighting, faded crosswalks, and drivers not stopping for pedestrians crossing the streets. One way to address these concerns is painting high visibility crosswalks at intersections to increase pedestrian visibility. Paint is a cheap and effective method to enhance pedestrian safety.[46] Lack of lighting is a safety issue because it makes it harder for drivers to see pedestrians. Although adding pedestrian-scale street lamps is a necessary improvement to make for the area, small changes such as string lights across Molter Place and holiday decorations with lights could bring visual interest to the area and thus enhance pedestrian visibility.

The highest concerns about accessibility are the stairs and lack of elevators at the station (Figure 62). Parents with strollers expressed concerns about the difficulty of using the stairs and many people cited the need for an elevator. The stairs also currently act as a barrier for people with disabilities. Recommendations include investing time and resources to work with NJ TRANSIT on improving the accessibility of Watsessing Avenue Station. Street improvements should incorporate ADA-compliant curb ramps. For more information about street improvements, see the Station Access recommendations on pages 29 - 34.

Residents expressed the desire to see trash cans, bike lanes, bike parking, sidewalk cafés, restaurants, and outdoor events in the Watsessing neighborhood. Providing additional trash cans and overall maintenance and cleaning of the station would greatly improve the perception of safety and comfort. Residents also expressed the desire to see additional bike parking. Currently, cyclists chain their bikes along the wall outside of the station, which is neither safe nor visually attractive for the neighborhood (Figure 63). Secure and plentiful bike parking could address this

Figure 63: Bikes parked along the wall

concern. There was a strong desire for more sidewalk cafés, restaurants, and outdoor events expressed at the community engagement event. Some voiced the desire for the area to feel more like a neighborhood, suggesting that more restaurants and cafés could help. Pop-up cafés and food trucks in the plaza in front of the Watsessing Avenue Station and along Molter Place could provide food options, while helping small businesses in the area by attracting people to walk and spend time in the Watsessing neighborhood.

Watsessing Voices

"My daughter complains about faded crosswalks"

"I work with people with disabilities, having no curb ramps is a problem"

"Watsessing Station needs an elevator"

Providing moveable seating and tables would encourage people to spend time in the area, which would benefit the current businesses and potentially attract new businesses to fill the vacant storefronts.

Furthermore, there was a desire to see more outdoor events like the Harvest Fest, which takes place annually near the Bloomfield Avenue Station. The Harvest Fest takes place on a one-mile-long marketplace with food courts and a KidZone with games and activities.[47] An event like this would be a great opportunity to engage various businesses and community members such as the Bey Arts Gallery, antique shops, Iron Horse Café, and Plaza Fitness. Plaza Fitness was generous and supportive of the community engagement event held by the event team and recognized the positive benefits of neighborhood events.

Implementation

Placemaking projects around the world have started as small, inexpensive demonstrations. Because long term changes can be costly and difficult to implement due to issues ranging from lack of public support and political roadblocks, creating quick, inexpensive demonstration projects to gather public support is a good way to garner interest. A successful demonstration project can also be used as strong support in an application for grants or funding. Project for Public Spaces refers to this method as "lighter, quicker, cheaper", and it has launched successful public markets, waterfront parks, piers, and plazas across the world. Project for Public Spaces believes that:

> "the quality of public space has always been best defined by the people who use it. The growing success of "lighter, quicker, cheaper" projects all over the world is proof that expensive and labor-intensive initiatives are not the only, or even the most effective, ways to bring energy and life into a community's public space"[48]

The use of LQC projects, over time, can help create lasting and meaningful public spaces that involve local vendors, artists, and residents alike. LQC, also

What is a Parklet?

A parklet is an extension of a sidewalk from the curb into the street. It is generally an installation of public seating, art, plants, and other elements that provide a place to socialize, eat, drink, celebrate, create, work, and play. A parklet is installed on one or several parking spaces and extends to the width of the adjacent space.[50] *Parklets have been found to benefit surrounding businesses. Revenue increased at a café in Philadelphia by 20% after a parklet was installed outside. In Long Beach, California, parklets increased the number of customers visiting adjacent restaurants.*[51] *Furthermore, taxpayers do not foot the bill for parklets. Cities generally jumpstart the initiative by providing small grants to fund demonstration projects. The increased revenue from businesses offsets the loss of revenue from the removal of one or more parking spaces.*[52]

referred to as tactical urbanism and demonstration projects, has been championed by developers who believes short-term and low-cost solutions to dead spaces leave lasting impacts on neighborhoods. While many projects may take a longer approach, short term change is a great way to start projects that can be expanded to long term projects or open space plans.[49]

LQC projects have many benefits that Bloomfield, and specifically the Watsessing neighborhood, could leverage to create long term change that allows for cohesive open space connecting residents new and old. Aside from the ability to implement quick changes to an inactivate space, such as a street or plaza, an LQC project has the ability to quickly test ideas out. For example, with inexpensive materials, local programmers have the ability to set up quick fall or winter markets in unused public spaces. If these are not attractive to residents, they can easily be taken down. On the other hand, if they are attractive to residents, it shows that a project in the area could potentially garner funding sources for long term change from the success of the demonstration project. Holding an event could help create a sense of community as they gain a greater understanding of what their community could offer. A succession of demonstration projects could ultimately culminate in the creation and execution of a shared vision, with the partnership of multiple stakeholders, to create positive change in the neighborhood by creating a loved space for residents. As discussed in the recommendations, the Watsessing neighborhood has multiple locations that could use the LQC process to leverage support and create positive long term changes.

Molter Place Implementation Example

Molter Place is a small secondary street perpendicular to the train station. It is currently used by automobiles for on-street parking and as a cut through (Figure 64). There are currently some small businesses on the street while some storefronts are empty. Due to its proximity to the train station, Molter Place has been identified as a high priority location for placemaking in the Watsessing neighborhood. While the street is not inviting presently, changes to the street through LQC projects could make the street a great pedestrian street with seasonal markets, food vendors, and coffee stands for train passengers. It will take multiple iterations of LQC projects, along with coordination and partnership from local officials and the private sector, to execute the ultimate vision.

Based on community feedback, residents would like to see more outdoor events, sidewalk cafés, restaurants, and bike parking in the area. With this information, Molter Place would be a great street to test out these

Figure 64: View of Molter Place

Figure 65: Molter Place with an example of a temporary street shut-down.

new amenities. To first test them out, they could decide to close off some on street parking spots and have coffee and food stands station themselves in those spaces (Figure 65). If this is too expensive for a first step, Bloomfield could use tables and chairs with themed decorations and serve coffee. If commuters and residents enjoy this first step, it could then be taken a step further by closing off all parking spots on the street and hosting a local food vendor day. During this step, partnerships with local food vendors are needed. Partnerships during this stage can turn into lasting relationships that could be used for long-term vendors or programmers in the future.

After sufficient iterations of temporary shutdowns on Molter are implemented, full day street shutdowns could be used to further test the idea of a pedestrian street for the neighborhood. Still using LQC methods, the township could use temporary bollards or traffic cones to signify that the street is shut down for the day. Bloomfield could build on existing partnerships from earlier demonstration projects with vendors and artists to create themed outdoor events. These could include a winter market, a fall fair, or outdoor street cafés with local restaurants. These projects may be successful or may not draw many residents to the street. LQC ideals allow Bloomfield to test out growing ideas and visions at a low cost. If multiple street shutdown projects are successful, it could signify that residents in the area truly want an outdoor space that could host events and cafés, as they had expressed through community engagement. As one can see, multiple successful demonstration projects, as seen with the potential example of Molter Place provided, could lead to long term support and ideas for a vision that changes the dynamics of a neighborhood. Bloomfield, using the success of the LQC projects as a jumping point, could decide to create an open space plan for the area that could eventually close off Molter Place and make it into a permanent pedestrian only street.

This project could then lead to other improvements to the area, such as creating a livelier park across the street from the train station. In this case, small, inexpensive demonstration projects could lead to impactful change in the Watsessing neighborhood, as it has for many other cities, large and small, across the country.

Next Steps

As Bloomfield moves forward in the public engagement process and placemaking initiative, an electronic survey should be implemented in the community to capture greater residential feedback. This can be accomplished by using an inexpensive survey creator, such as Survey Monkey or a tool from the NJTPA Public Engagement index. Tear-off flyers could be distributed throughout the community with information about the survey and the link to it.

The Township can partner with the Center for Creative Placemaking at Bloomfield College. The Center provides consulting services and facilitates public engagement events.

Bloomfield can also collaborate with local businesses to install a community parklet. The businesses sponsor the design and installation and provide the maintenance of it. Businesses are willing to do this because of the benefits parklets have for attracting customers to adjacent businesses. Project for Public Spaces can help to jumpstart this process.

Outdoor events are in high-demand as evidenced in the community feedback that was received. Events such as “Block Party” and “Dinner Under the Stars”, which are hosted by Bloomfield Center Alliance (BCA), can be held in the Watsessing neighborhood to promote sociability and placemaking. For more information on BCA, see the Business Improvement District section on pages 92 - 93.

The Bloomfield Beautification Committee should be involved in the development process as this organization is suitable for making aesthetic improvements in the community, which include plantings and clearing of debris.

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6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 12: Policy Recommendations – Transportation and Economic Vitality

Topic	Policy	Recommendation
Transportation	Complete Streets	Revise and update the current Complete Streets policy
		Provide space for on-street businesses in Complete Streets projects
		Establish a "Play Streets" program
		Set up benchmarks to evaluate project implementation
	Safe Routes to School (SRTS)	Pass a municipal resolution to encourage all local schools to develop their SRTS program
		Work with school district to develop SRTS programs at local elementary schools
	Green Infrastructure	Pass a municipal resolution supporting incorporating Green Infrastructure into projects
		Implement the Green Infrastructure recommendations in report
	Parking	Reduce parking minimums, and apply maximums
		Implement Shared Parking with Home Depot
		Improve safety and accessibility of Watsessing Avenue Station
		Encourage regular use of public transportation
		Establish parking and staging areas for passenger drop-off, carsharing, and ride-hailing services at Watsessing Avenue Station
Economic Vitality	Improvement Districts	Expand the Bloomfield Center Alliance service area to include Watsessing neighborhood
	Pink Zones	Implement streamlined zoning for the commercial district in Watsessing neighborhood
	Creative Placemaking	Identify popular restaurants in Watsessing neighborhood that have characteristics for and potential to meet design standards for sidewalk cafés
		Apply for grant for awning and signage improvements for storefronts and streets
		Organize community events with local business owners

This section integrates the information presented in the Station Access, TOD, and Placemaking chapters to present policy recommendations for this report. This chapter is divided into four topic areas to illustrate the recommendations clearly: Transportation, Economic Vitality, Equity and Health. Under each of these topic areas, there are multiple policy subjects, which each have a definition, summary of Bloomfield's current policy, case studies, policy recommendations, and partners for Bloomfield to work with in pursuing those policies. Policy recommendations are summarized in Tables 12 and 13.

6.1 Transportation

Transportation is important for all aspects of urban life, as it allows people to move among different locations. In the 19th century, Bloomfield was at the forefront of transportation development, with a canal and extensive rail network built to support the Township's manufacturing industry. Today, priorities for transportation infrastructure are closely related to equity, safety, walkability, and lifestyle outcomes. In this context, the extensive road networks in Bloomfield fall short on pedestrian accessibility and green design, which makes walking unpleasant. The heavy use of cars, through traffic of trucks on the residential streets, and insufficient parking spots make for an even more distressing travel environment. The following sections will cover policy recommendations that will address these transportation issues.

Complete Streets

The concept of Complete Streets focuses on safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers. Complete Streets addresses issues related to mobility, accessibility, community and economic development, safety, health, transportation cost, and equity.[53] The design of Complete Streets (Figures 66 and 67) requires a variety of elements that are categorized into seven street components: [54]

Figure 66: A high traffic street without complete street improvements

Figure 67: An example of a Complete Street

Table 13: Policy Recommendations – Diversity in Planning and Health

Topic	Policy	Recommendation
Diversity in Planning	Affordable Housing	Mandate inclusionary zoning to make at least 10% of units permanently affordable in new developments
		Expand rent control policy to include newly developed units
		Continue to provide HUD Section 8 program vouchers for the subsidization of rent for low-income residents
	Diversity in Planning	Create a public engagement plan to increase minority and low-income involvement in public meetings
		Complete a community profile to determine of boards and committees reflect the community that they serve, and increase diversity where it is lacking
		Pass a resolution in support of increasing diverse representation on boards and commissions
Health	Complete Parks	Pass a Complete Parks resolution to promote parks as an important part of the community fabric
	Local Park Development	Build on the potential of the triangle pocket park across from the Watsessing Avenue Station
	Healthy Corner Store Initiative	Pursue further phases and/or health events with the existing stores
		Expand the Healthy Corner Store Initiative in Bloomfield
	Healthy Housing	Add lead testing to existing rental unit inspections
		Train housing inspectors on how to provide information to victims of domestic violence
	Health in All Policies (HiAP)	Integrate a Health Impact Assessment into planning for complete streets and green streets
		Adopt HiAP for Bloomfield
		Integrate HiAP into the next Bloomfield Master Plan

Pedestrian: This denotes the area between the curb and the adjacent building frontage. Key design elements for this component include appropriate sidewalk widths and ADA accessible curb ramps

Building and Furnishing: This refers to all street furniture and other physical elements that affect the sidewalk including: bike parking, pedestrian-scale lighting, street furniture, and street trees.

Bike: This refers to design elements within the public right-of-way, including bike lanes, cycle tracks, shared-use paths, shared lanes, and bike route signs.

Curbside Management: This relates to the space between the travel lane and the sidewalk, including on-street car parking, on-street bike parking, loading zones, and bus stops.

Vehicle/Roadway: This denotes the portion of the public right-of-way that is intended for motor vehicle use, including travel lanes, speed humps, raised medians, and preferred/exclusive bus lanes.

Urban Design: This refers to aspects of urban form that affect Complete Streets, including driveways, utilities, and storm water management.

Intersection & Crossing: This relates to street crossings, including treatments to facilitate safe movement of all modes at intersections.

Bloomfield Current Policy

Bloomfield passed a resolution in 2011 to establish a Complete Streets policy which drew a general outline for initiating relevant projects. Aside from support for the projects, this resolution also specified three exemptions:

- Pedestrian and bike facilities shall not be required where they are prohibited by law.
- Public transit facilities shall not be required on streets not serving as transit routes and the desirability of transit facilities will be determined on a project basis.
- If the cost of pedestrian, public transit, and/or bike facilities cause an increase in project cost by more than 5%, as determined by engineering estimates, then approval from the Mayor and Council must be obtained before bidding out the project if the project is funded by local tax dollars.

These exemptions need a complete revision in order to better support the implementation of Complete Streets projects, and to meet the requirement of the Sustainable Jersey Actions as well.

Case Study: A Compact Walkable Environment (Somerville, NJ)[55]

Somerville, NJ, adopted a Complete Streets policy with the goal of encouraging new growth by promoting a safe, walkable community for millennials and baby boomers.

Success 1: Using a road diet to achieve traffic calming on Veterans Memorial Drive

Somerville took advantage of their Transit Village designation to apply for grants to convert Veteran's Memorial Drive into a Complete Street. The project removed one of the two lanes in each direction. The Borough also rebuilt the sidewalk and constructed a new bike path to link the train station to the hospital. Now Somerville also intends to utilize a Safe Routes to School grant for additional sidewalk upgrades and new traffic signals on Veterans Memorial Drive to further improve pedestrian safety around their schools.

Figure 68: Division Street, Somerville

Success 2: New retailers and apartment complexes bring life to commercial core on Division Street

Division Street was altered to have clearly marked sidewalks protected by bollards, act as a traffic-calmed roadway, and be easily transformed into a central event space when needed (Figure 68). It has since become a central gathering place. Retail vacancies have dropped from 50% to 0% and community events are now held there on a regular basis.

The redevelopment project, "Green Seam," aims to turn a former landfill into a regional recreation spot, within walking distance of the downtown. Walking and biking trails are planned across the parcel, providing access to recreation centers, along with beautiful views of protected wetlands.

Success 3: Regional connections have been improved to allow car-free commutes to jobs in nearby communities

The Bridgewater-Raritan-Somerville Regional Center Partnership identified important green corridors such as along the Raritan River, and from Duke Farms to

Bridgewater Commons Mall. A regional trail system was established, allowing people to walk and bike between the municipalities safely. Somerset County opened a new pedestrian bridge over Route 22 in 2012, creating a safer connection to the Bridgewater Commons mall from Somerville.

Somerville's success with Complete Streets demonstrates that success can be achieved outside of major cities.

Case Study: Ciclovia (New Brunswick, NJ)

Ciclovia is an Open Streets program in New Brunswick, NJ that temporarily opens streets to pedestrians and cyclists in conjunction with a street fair. It addresses equity issues regarding the use of streets, promotes small businesses, and inspires active living (Figure 69).[56]

Success 1: The New Brunswick Ciclovia brings social and cultural incentives for public engagement, promoting social integration and community cohesion.

Success 2: Ciclovia's systematic evaluation approach gauges current effectiveness to inform changes to the event.

Intercept surveys are conducted at the event to capture attendees' experiences. Measures range from attendees' demographic characteristics to their overall impressions of the event and Ciclovia's effect on their exercise and active transportation habits.

Figure 69: Ciclovia, New Brunswick

Recommendations

Recommendation (1): Revise and update the current Complete Streets Policy.

- State that all municipal transportation projects and master plans should include pedestrian and bike design elements and transit amenities where appropriate, including but not limited to curb extensions, radar feedback signs, pedestrian refuge islands, road diets, bike lanes and parking, wayfinding signage, lighting, seating, and other elements.[58]
- Add best practices and implementation checklists that include considerations for health, storm water management, equity, and implementation elements. Making these updates to the policy language could qualify Bloomfield for Sustainable Jersey Complete Streets Action[59] points, both for Adopt a Complete Streets Policy[60] and Institute Complete Streets Actions.[61]
- Emphasize a commitment to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected multimodal transportation network.
- Include recognition of the fact that flexibility and community context is needed when addressing needs of streets and users.
- Include language acknowledging the health, economic, and equity benefits of Complete Streets.
- Include a clear procedure that requires high-level approval prior to granting written exceptions for Complete Streets requirements.
- Integrate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals to help improve safety for pedestrians. See the CPTED section on pages 26 - 27 for more information.
- Integrate Green Infrastructure into Complete Streets projects. See the Green Infrastructure section on pages 87 - 90 for more information.

- Establish a Complete Streets advisory body to help with the Complete Streets policy compliance and to provide ongoing feedback to the Township related to the implementation of the Complete Streets Policy. At least one member should receive Complete Streets training.
- A clear definition of users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicle users, and motorists), of all ages and abilities. These definitions are important to avoid excluding vulnerable roadway users like seniors and children.
- Removal of "whenever feasible" language. It is not well-defined and can dilute the effectiveness of the policy when there is no stated process for who makes the decision about when accommodations are "feasible."
- Removal of "excluding maintenance" language. Policies that exclude maintenance will not receive Sustainable Jersey points.
- Removal of the 5% cost fluctuation limit specified in the 2011 resolution, since costs of most projects fluctuate by more than 5% on a regular basis.

Recommendation (2): Provide space for on-street businesses such as sidewalk cafés and restaurants in Complete Streets projects.

- In this respect, Complete Streets relates to Pink Zones (see page 93) to promote the economic vitality of the community by specifically boosting small businesses.
- Sidewalk cafés shall be incorporated into Complete Streets projects. This will contribute to placemaking by creating unique community identities that help create more enjoyable pedestrian environments.

What are Open Streets?

Open Streets programs temporarily close certain streets to automobile traffic so that people can use them for a variety of non-driving activities ranging from walking to biking, playing, dancing, and other social activities. At Open Streets events, "people traffic replaces car traffic, and the streets become 'paved parks' where people of all ages, abilities, and social, economic, or ethnic backgrounds can come out and improve their mental, physical, and emotional health."[57] *One small-scale approach to Open Streets is Play Streets, which are easier to organize and can be held more frequently than Open Streets. Play Streets programs are generally aimed at combating childhood obesity.*

Recommendation (3): Establish a "Play Streets" program.

- Play Streets is a smaller version of Open Streets that is suitable for Bloomfield. It is a portable method for creating active play space to encourage healthy lifestyles for children and their families.
- Implement pilot programs on low-traffic streets to get feedback from residents.

Recommendation (4): Set up appropriate benchmarks to evaluate project implementation. Sample benchmarks include:

- Linear feet of new and existing pedestrian infrastructure
- Mileage of new and existing bike infrastructure
- Number of green street practices used (e.g. rain gardens, bioswales, and planters)
- Bike and pedestrian counts
- Commute mode percentages
- Percentage of transit stops accessible via sidewalks and curb ramps

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- NJ TRANSIT
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
- EZ-Ride/Meadowlink Transportation Management Association
- Local business owners
- Neighboring municipalities

Safe Routes to School

The NJ Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is a statewide initiative that seeks to enable students to safely walk and bike to school (Figure 70). The mission of SRTS is to help communities identify issues, create partnerships, and implement projects and programs to encourage walking and biking to school as a safe daily activity. Several studies have shown that children benefit academically from active commuting. One study found that half an hour of daily physical activity could help alleviate attention disorders.[62] Additionally, this program is conducive to the planning and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic and air pollution in school districts.[63]

Bloomfield Current Policy

Bloomfield received a Gold level SRTS Recognition Award in 2018 for its efforts in providing children with safer, more accessible walking and biking routes to school. Brookdale Elementary School and Franklin Elementary School were certified as SRTS Recognition Program winners for their commitment to walking and biking to school. These two schools held several walk to school days, a poster contest, and safety presentations. They also conducted walk audits, student arrival and departure travel tallies, and created informational pedestrian safety videos.

Case Study: Walking School Bus (Bound Brook, NJ)

While the number of students in the Bound Brook school district is increasing, the district does not offer school bus service. This often results in parents driving their children to school, causing congestion on the small residential streets. To address this, Smalley Elementary School in Bound Brook started a "Walking School Bus" program where students and staff meet in the morning at a designated spot and walk to school along a pre-assigned route. This program helps alleviate congestion and creates an opportunity for children to be active, strengthen friendships, and become familiar with their community.[64]

Case Study: Public Schools Wellness Regulation (Camden, NJ)

The Camden City Public Schools Wellness Regulation describes how the school district can work with local public works, public safety, and the police department to make improvements for safer and

Figure 70: Children crossing the street

easier access to schools. The Camden school district explores the availability of using federal Safe Routes to School funds to finance such improvements. The School Wellness Council also encourages student use of public transit by working with NJ TRANSIT to provide transit passes for students.[65]

Recommendations

Recommendation (1): Pass a municipal resolution to encourage all local schools to develop their SRTS programs.

- Adopt a Complete Streets Policy Checklist to earn Sustainable Jersey points, and qualify the municipality for Gold level SRTS recognition.
- Facilitate ongoing support from the PTA and PTO, and establish an active School Wellness Council for Gold level SRTS recognition.

Recommendation (2): Work with the School District to develop SRTS programs at Watsessing, Carteret, and Berkeley Elementary Schools.

- Create a District School Travel Plan to map out how to improve pedestrian and bike travel to school. Coordinate this effort with Complete Streets and CPTED policies
- Assist the school district with identifying optimal locations for installing bike parking for students.
- Start Walking School Bus programs for local schools.
- Apply what has been learned from the currently recognized SRTS programs in Bloomfield to other schools in the Township.
- Assist the school district in adopting active transportation to school policies and standardize transportation safety rules to improve student safety.

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- EZ-Ride/Meadowlink Transportation Management Association
- Sustainable Jersey for School Actions
- Local elementary schools and middle schools
- NJ TRANSIT

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is a series of best management practices to capture storm water runoff at the source. It can be incorporated at various scales into streetscapes, building facades, and public spaces to improve a community's quality of life. Green infrastructure has a number of benefits including effectively managing storm water runoff, improving air quality, and increasing neighborhood vitality.

Impacts on Storm Water Management

Green infrastructure (Figure 71) captures, filters, absorbs, and reuses storm water in a way that mitigates the human health risks and hazards caused by storm water runoff. Storm water runoff is exacerbated by impervious surface cover and is currently the leading cause of water pollution since it carries pollutants such as trash, oil, pesticides, bacteria, and sediments into waterways that can kill aquatic life and contaminate drinking and recreational waters[66] In addition, storm water runoff poses a safety hazard and can exacerbate flash flooding conditions. Storm water runoff is of particular concern in Essex County because over 57.8% of land has impervious surface cover.

Impacts on Air Quality

Although green infrastructure is primarily recognized for its benefits to storm water management, it can also be used to improve air quality, particularly lowering the level of ground-level ozone. Ground-level ozone is formed when emissions from electric utilities, motor vehicle exhaust, and gasoline vapors are exposed to sunlight. Exposure to ground-level ozone has been linked with respiratory illnesses (especially among children, the elderly, and those with asthma) and can impose harmful effects on Bloomfield's ecosystems.[7] Ground-level ozone has also been linked with contributing to the urban heat island effect, in which urban areas are significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas. Ground-level ozone is of particular concern for Bloomfield because Essex County does not meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone.[68]

Green infrastructure that incorporates street trees has been found to lower surface air temperatures that helps to reduce ground level ozone. Shaded surfaces in general can be 20 to 45 degrees cooler than unshaded surfaces. Street trees have also been found to absorb up to nine times more pollutants than distant trees and help covert harmful gasses back to oxygen. Studies have even shown that children that live in areas with more street trees tend to have a lower prevalence of early childhood asthma.[69]

Impacts on Neighborhood Vitality

Perhaps one of the most tangible impacts of green infrastructure is the impacts that it can have on neighborhood vitality. The following summarizes additional benefits of green infrastructure design within a community.

Community Beautification: Green infrastructure creates an easy opportunity to beautify a community. Street trees in particular can enhance the aesthetics of a streetscape by shielding visual curbside pollution such as garbage cans, signs, and utility poles.[70]

Safer Streets: Street trees can serve as a traffic calming measure. Research has found that trees reduce the stress levels of drivers and contribute to fewer instances of "road rage."[1] In addition, street trees have been found to contribute to safer driving speeds since they can add a sense of enclosure that can result in motorists reducing speeds by up to 15 mph.[72]

Safer Neighborhoods: Street trees have been found to have a measurable impact on reducing crime rates. This is likely due to the fact that the presence of street trees creates opportunities for community interactions.[73]

Figure 71: Bioswale at the curbside

Noise Mitigation: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that trees when combined with shrubs can reduce up to 50% of noise to the human ear.[74] This means that street trees can act as a noise buffer between residences and traffic.

Sense of Place: With the incorporation of green infrastructure measures, a street can take on a sense of place. Locations such as these can become community gathering spaces or can be used to enhance a community by providing spaces for learning about native plant species and aspects of the water cycle. Measures such as cisterns, downspout planters, and storm water planters can even be used as places for community murals or for street branding.

Bloomfield Current Policy

Bloomfield does not currently have any policy requiring or supporting green infrastructure to manage storm water runoff, reduce flooding, or improve air quality. The Storm Water Control Code defines a storm water management basin as "an excavation or embankment and related areas designed to retain storm water runoff" and allows it to "be planted mainly with wetland vegetation (most constructed storm water wetlands)." This shows that Bloomfield's current code allows for green infrastructure to be used to manage storm water, though they do not currently have policies calling for green infrastructure.

Case Study: Green Infrastructure Initiative (Jersey City, NJ)

The Green Infrastructure Initiative in Jersey City, NJ, consists of a city-wide rain garden campaign, focused on the idea of reducing flooding and the incidence of combined sewer overflow events in its neighborhoods. Through rain gardens and tree filter box installations, this initiative has helped to improve surface water infiltration, which is beneficial for reducing surface water pollution and mitigating risks associated with flash flooding hazards. These facilities also provide an opportunity to capture storm water and divert it to community gardens.[75]

Case Study: SMART Initiative (Camden, NJ)

The Camden SMART (Storm water Management and Resource Training) Initiative aims to develop a comprehensive network of green infrastructure as well as training programs and policy development for the city. Camden City has conducted several park improvement projects which focus on the storm and sanitary sewers system in and around the park, making those parks natural processors of storm water. Meanwhile, the city and the county have cooperated with local and state entities in tree planting and rain garden projects to capture storm water and improve air quality.[76]

Recommendations

Recommendation (1): Pass a municipal resolution supporting incorporating Green Infrastructure into projects.

- Green infrastructure projects should be integrated into Complete Streets projects, together enhancing access to the Watsessing Avenue Station.

Recommendation (2): Implement the green infrastructure recommendations discussed in the Green Infrastructure section in Station Access on page 22 - 26. Though the Watsessing neighborhood is not at an overly high flooding risk, it is important to capture storm water runoff at the higher points in the town to minimize flooding in lower lying areas.The changes occurring around the Watsessing Avenue Station present a unique opportunity for the incorporation of green infrastructure into design. This design can serve as both a learning opportunity and template for the incorporation of potential green infrastructure development throughout other parts of Bloomfield and Essex County and can brand Bloomfield as a leader in resiliency design.

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- NJ Department of Environmental Protection
- Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program
- New Jersey Tree Foundation
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- Local Wastewater Treatment Plants

Parking Recommendations

Lack of parking is a major point of contention for almost all downtowns in the United States. Municipalities assert that their business districts need ample parking. However, cities also must keep in mind the negative economic, environmental, land use, and societal effects of having too much parking. In order to create vibrant TOD, municipalities must realize that minimizing use of private vehicles, and therefore minimizing the number of parking places, is in their best interest. Best practice parking regulations with TOD include:

- Reducing parking requirements for new development
- Variable rate parking and parking time limits
- Improving pedestrian, biking, and public transit infrastructure and encouraging ridesharing to limit use of private vehicles

Bloomfield Current Policy

Bloomfield has numerous ordinances pertaining to parking. There are ordinances specifying regulations for parking permits, meters, rates, and time limits. Many residential side streets have permit parking to accommodate the parking needs of its residents. Streets that are within the Central Business District have metered and timed parking (Figure 72).[77] An express parking zone on Broad Street exemplifies a progressive parking strategy that aims to meet the needs of "pop-in" consumers. The creation of layered parking zones which cater to specific demands of that area or street promotes parking balance.

Case Study: Managing Parking Demand (Summit, NJ)

Summit, NJ has put significant resources into addressing their parking shortage to positively impact the business district. Traffic studies found that Summit, NJ was suffering from a chronic midday parking deficit.[79] Between commuters parking all day, employees parking at municipal buildings, and a flourishing business district, Summit required parking for restaurants, retailers, and other services.

In order to address parking issues, Summit removed single space meters and added multiple space meters which was more user friendly, convenient, and lowered operating costs.[80] They also implemented

Figure 72: Metered parking, Dodd Street

express parking, which designates a 15-minute parking spaces to accommodate customers stopping briefly.[81] Furthermore, Summit implemented variable parking rates, giving the municipality the ability to increase rates during peak periods or popular events and thus maximize revenue. With the parking policy changes that Summit has adopted, the city has seen improvements in its parking capacity, turnover rates, revenue collection, and overall budget health of its parking authority.

Recommendations

Recommendation (1): Implement the recommendations to reduce parking minimums for new development and share parking with the Home Depot in the Watsessing neighborhood in the TOD section on pages 60 - 62.

Recommendation (2): Implement the recommendations to improve safety and accessibility of the Watsessing Avenue Station covered in Station Access on pages 29 - 34.

Recommendation (3): Encourage regular use of public transportation.

Residents moving into the new residential apartments in the Watsessing neighborhood have the benefit of living just a few blocks from a train station that goes directly into Manhattan. They will also have access to NJ TRANSIT bus service and the PATH Train in Newark Penn Station. Encouraging regular use of these modes and improving access to them can encourage residents to become less car dependent.

Recommendation (4): Establish parking and staging areas for passenger drop-off, car sharing, and ride-hailing services at the Watsessing Avenue Station.

- Creating specific areas for passenger drop-off and ride-hailing services to wait for passengers will encourage the use of these methods of accessing the station, which has limited parking.
- Designating specific parking spaces for car sharing services will provide another method for individuals to access the station.

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- NJ TRANSIT
- NJ Department of Transportation
- Bloomfield Planning Board
- Bloomfield Township Council

6.2 Economic Vitality

Economic vitality is often the primary interest for municipalities looking to improve their development strategies. Municipalities know that their communities cannot function smoothly without a successful business district (Figure 73). This section details how Bloomfield can build a strong, vibrant, and welcoming business district in the Watsessing neighborhood to complement the growing residential development.

Business Improvement District

A Business Improvement District (BID) can support businesses in organizing together to bring supplemental services to their neighborhood with the goal of creating a popular commercial destination. In a BID, business owners form an entity to which taxes

Figure 73: Storefronts, Watsessing Avenue and Dodd Street

are paid in exchange for individualized services. These taxes often go towards beautification, sanitation, events, activities, and programming for the area.[82] In New Jersey, the Department of Community Affairs runs Main Street New Jersey, which provides assistance to local communities to support economic redevelopment and historic preservation. Main Street New Jersey takes a four-point approach in providing aid to downtowns, which includes:[83]

Organization: Building a Main Street organization that brings local stakeholders together so that they can create long-lasting and positive change within the community

Economic Restructuring: Focusing on market forces and economic trends to create a competitive and vibrant main street

Design: Focusing on creating a visually appealing main street, with emphasis on historic preservation, traffic management and calming, and creating a quality place for community members

Promotion: Marketing a fun and attractive downtown to shoppers, investors, and residents.

Bloomfield Current Policy

Bloomfield currently has a Special Improvement District called the Bloomfield Center Alliance, Inc. (BCA). The BCA is committed to creating the best downtown possible for Bloomfield business owners, residents, and visitors.[84] This SID is only partially located in the study area.[85]

Case Study: Bloomfield Center Alliance (Bloomfield, NJ)

Bloomfield's SID, the Bloomfield Center Alliance, is a community development organization that represents the commercial district in the south-eastern portion of Bloomfield. As the representative for the downtown, Bloomfield Center Alliance manages the budget to create a safer, cleaner, more beautiful, and more tourist-friendly business district.

Under the purview of Bloomfield Center Alliance's Board of Trustees and Staff, the SID hosts events and programs in the SID's commercial district. They also provide support to new and existing local businesses to help them integrate into the community. Their website provides crucial resources for new businesses such as:

- Listings of available properties
- Contacts for opening a business
- Market research and local survey data to support business decisions for marketing and operations

The website also has a calendar on the front page detailing upcoming community events in the SID such as a Holiday Craft Fair.[87]

Case Study: Art and Business Partnership (Rahway, NJ)

Rahway's Art and Business Partnership was organized in 2009 to promote business, culture, and social interactions in the BID in Rahway's commercial district. The BID places a strong

Figure 74: Creating a place at the Cultural Crawl 2018, Rahway NJ

emphasis on the arts (Figure 74) and works to build strong arts organizations.[88]

Rahway's Art and Business Partnership has four main goals:

1. Create a diverse, vibrant, and economically and socially sound community within Rahway.
2. Develop activities and programs that encourage the long term success of the art community.
3. Promote awareness of the value of the arts and directly support arts programs that encourage the diversity of Rahway citizens and businesses.
4. Create and encourage an atmosphere that builds strong arts organizations that increase the community and business appeal of Rahway.

Recommendations

Expand the BCA service area to include the Watsessing neighborhood. BCA can use existing resources to assist the Watsessing neighborhood in creating a vibrant business district.

Figure 75: Local businesses within residential houses in New Brunswick, NJ

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- Bloomfield Center Alliance, Inc.
- Local business owners

Pink Zones

A pink zone is an area where zoning regulations are streamlined in order to remove many of the obstacles that small scale entrepreneurs and developers experience because of strict zoning ordinances. By loosening zoning regulations, these small scale entrepreneurs are able to carry out creative short-term or long-term projects.[89] The most common implementation of pink zones allows people to run businesses from their residence more easily (Figure 75). The ambition in providing opportunities to small actors rather than only to large scale developers is to give local actors a chance at economic recovery and development.[90]

Bloomfield Current Policy

Bloomfield does not have any policies promoting pink zones as a strategy for economic development.

Figure 76: Participants at Bloomfield Community Engagement Event

Case Study: Pink Zones (Detroit, MI)

Detroit, MI has started an initiative called "Pink Zoning Detroit." The hope is that "the process will ultimately spur regulatory change to make revitalization of the city's neighborhood main streets easier."[91] The project is privately funded by a $75,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight foundation. Through this grant, Detroit assembled three teams to create visions for walkable, mixed-use activity in three select commercial areas. These concepts are then compared with Detroit's zoning and building codes to identify how the zoning can be reformed to reflect Detroit's new vision.

Recommendations

Implement streamlined zoning for the commercial district in the Watsessing neighborhood. Make it easier to attract restaurants to Molter Place, to go along with recommendation to eventually close the street and add sidewalk cafés for placemaking benefits

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- Bloomfield Center Alliance
- Department of Community Development
- Partnership with local non-profits (similar to Detroit who received a grant to fund this pilot project)

Placemaking

The Project for Public Spaces defines placemaking as "a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution" (Figure 76).[92] Successful placemaking can bring economic, cultural, and aesthetic benefits to a community. For more information on placemaking and recommendations for the Watsessing neighborhood, see Chapter 3: Placemaking on pages 73 - 74.

Bloomfield Current Policy

Bloomfield does not have policies to specifically promote placemaking. However, they have a Cultural Commission that promotes the arts in Bloomfield. Meanwhile, the BCA specializes in programming and events for Bloomfield.

In regard to sidewalk cafés, which is one placemaking technique, Bloomfield's zoning code states that "a sidewalk café shall utilize no more than six feet or 1/2 of the sidewalk located directly in front of the restaurant space, whichever is less. In no case shall less than four feet of sidewalk be available for pedestrian traffic."

Case Study: Placemaking (Montclair, NJ)

Montclair has put a lot of resources into placemaking in its commercial district. This district is now known for its vibrancy with numerous sidewalk cafés and parklets where people can eat, drink, and chat (Figure 77). Montclair also partnered with a local Girl Scout troop to create a "Community Street Quilt" where children came together to paint intersections throughout the community. This project was a quick and easy way to beautify Montclair's streets, slow down cars through design interventions, and bring neighborhood children together.

Case Study: Uniform Awning and Signage (Highland Park, NJ)

Highland Park invested in an awning assistance program for their main street that funded awnings up to $1,500 per storefront with a maximum of a $5,000 grant per property. This program allows business owners to receive funding for new storefront awnings that are uniform with the rest of the downtown. Highland Park also updated bike and pedestrian signage to ensure consistency with main street signage standards.[93]

Recommendations

Recommendation (1): Identify popular restaurants in the Watsessing neighborhood that have the characteristics for and potential to meet design standards for sidewalk cafés.

Molter Place has been identified as a high priority location for placemaking in the Watsessing neighborhood. While the street is not inviting presently, changes to the street through LQC projects could make the street pedestrian friendly with seasonal markets, food vendors, and coffee stands for train passengers. For more information about transforming Molter Place, see the Molter Place Implementation Example on pages 75 - 77.

Recommendation (2): Awning and signage improvements for storefronts and streets.

Creating a uniform color scheme and style for storefronts can bring a strong identity and pride of place for a business district as well as improving wayfinding for shoppers. Some different types of signage include maps, information kiosks, educational

Figure 77: Parklet in Montclair, NJ

The Benefits of Sidewalk Cafés

Sidewalk cafés create active and vibrant public spaces by connecting local restaurants to the outside community and creating a pleasant outdoor atmosphere, especially in the summer months. Sidewalk cafés contribute to placemaking by creating a unique identity for community members and visitors, as well as keeping eyes on the street which makes a community feel safer and more welcoming.

signs, and directional signs. Signage improvements can help visitors find their way around a neighborhood, provide historical and cultural information about a neighborhood, and create a uniform image (Figures 78 and 79).

Recommendation (3): Organize community events with local business owners.

Community events are great opportunity to engage various businesses and community members such as the Bey Arts Gallery, antique shops, Iron Horse Café, and Plaza Fitness.

Figure 78: Uniform signage in Highland Park, NJ

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- Project for Public Spaces
- Bloomfield Center Alliance
- Bloomfield Planning Board
- Bloomfield Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department

6.3 Equity

Equity is an important issue in urban areas. As urban areas continue to grow, low-income neighborhoods are losing their sense of community, political voice, and economic power as they are pushed out of their homes and replaced by higher-income residents. This section details tools that Bloomfield can use to ensure that underrepresented communities have a voice as their neighborhoods continue to grow and see an influx of high-end development.[94]

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing should be a key focus for the Township of Bloomfield. As new residential units with rents over $2,000 per month become available Bloomfield will need to address the problems associated with their changing community.[95] One of the hot topics associated with neighborhood change

Figure 79: Uniform awnings in Highland Park, NJ

What is Gentrification?

Gentrification is a form of neighborhood change that occurs when higher-income groups move into low-income neighborhoods, increasing the demand for housing and driving up prices.[96]

Positive and Negative Impacts

- *Rising property values*
- *Increased commercial activity*
- *Growth in tax revenue for municipality*
- *Decreased affordability*
- *Displacement of existing, low-income and minority communities*
- *Loss of community and local culture*

What is Inclusionary Zoning?

It is a regulation that requires that a certain share of units in new projects be set aside for families under a given income threshold who typically earn no more than 80% of the Area Median Income.[97]

is gentrification. This is divisive and complex topic. Bloomfield is an ideal location for gentrification because of its one-seat public transit connection to Manhattan from the Watsessing Avenue Station.

Recently, new luxury housing had been built in Bloomfield, including Parkway Lofts, a luxury gated apartment complex located just a few blocks from the station (Figure 80). With more luxury apartment complex projects being planned and built, Bloomfield will see a growing population and increased development interest in their municipality. However, it is important that Bloomfield also works to combat the negative impacts of gentrification. The best way for Bloomfield to avoid the displacement of low-income residents while still fostering development is to implement a comprehensive affordable housing policy.

Bloomfield Current Policy

Current ordinance requires a 20% set aside for affordable housing though the ordinance has largely not been enforced. In 2016, Bloomfield re-initiated use of its rent control ordinance.

Though current affordable housing policies have been underutilized, there is a demonstrated need for enforcement these policies in Bloomfield. According to the Bloomfield Community Health Assessment completed in 2017, 12% of residents reported that they were not able to pay their mortgage, rent, or utilities. Focus group participants expressed concerns about the lack of affordable housing and the increase in rent prices.[98]

Case Study: Cove on the Bay (Keansburg, NJ)

The New Jersey Mortgage and Finance Agency (NJHMFA) is currently working on the Cove on the Bay project in Keansburg, NJ. This mixed-use project, expected to be completed in the spring of 2019, includes condos, retail, and restaurants. More than half of the 184 residential units in the development are dedicated to affordable housing (Figure 81).

Much of the funding was provided by NJHMFA, which acts as the affordable housing banker for New Jersey. If a state project has at least 20% affordable

Figure 80: The Parkway Lofts apartments in Bloomfield, NJ

Figure 81: Cove on the Bay, Keansburg, NJ

What is the New Jersey Mortgage and Finance Agency?

It is a state agency that provides grants, tax credits, direct loans, special bonds, and other financial resources for projects that provide affordable housing. This agency can help fill the financial gap between the municipality and the developer to provide affordable units.

What is a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program (N.J.S.A. 40A:20-1)?[99]

Is a program that serves as valuable revitalization tool for municipalities that qualify for distressed areas. The PILOT program allows municipalities to exempt developers from property taxes for a set period of time when making improvements to existing buildings or creating new projects in areas in need of redevelopment. A significant portion of these projects include developing affordable housing units. Municipalities have found the program to be a good way to meet affordable housing demand. In this program, developers pay an annual service charge to the municipality instead of real estate taxes. This service charge, in lieu of taxes, significantly increases the return on investment for the developer and creates developer interest in affordable housing.

housing, NJHMFA can provide financing. NJHMFA provided a 4 percent low income housing tax credit to the Cove on the Bay project. The credit attracted approximately $11.3 million in private equity, $35 million in permanent financing, and $5.1 million from NJHMFA funds. The diverse financing used for the Cove on the Bay project provides a model that can bridge the gap between the municipality's need for affordable housing and the developer's need for a return on investment.

Recommendations

Recommendation (1): Mandate inclusionary zoning to make at least 10% of units permanently affordable in new developments.

- Use the PILOT program to encourage development of new projects
- Work with NJMFA to create diverse funding to achieve affordable housing projects

Recommendation (2): Continue to provide HUD Section 8 program vouchers for the subsidization of rent for low-income residents.

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- New Jersey Mortgage and Finance Agency
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development

Diversity in Planning and Public Engagement

Including the diverse voices that make up a community is an important part of the planning process. Every community is made up of people of different ages, races, abilities, incomes, and life experiences that shape their beliefs and give them a unique perspective. For a city to function equitably, all citizens must feel that they have the opportunity to be engaged, be heard, and contribute to the changes in their community. Sustainable Jersey created an initiative to achieve higher levels of public engagement called the Public Information and Engagement Initiative. Their public engagement goals include:[100]

- Provide platforms for public officials to engage with citizens about issues that affect quality of life
- Increase transparency of municipal information by making sure that it is publicly available in easy-to-find locations and usable formats
- Allow common governments functions to occur online for greater efficiency
- Strategically disseminate important public news, so that it reaches as much of the public as possible

Sustainable Jersey also has a more tangible tool to increase diversity on boards and commissions. They developed a plan and timeframe for municipalities to review the level of diversity in the planning process. The timeline calls for municipalities to:[101]

- Gather community information for municipal, county, state, and federal profiles.
- Complete a survey to assess if diversity on boards, commissions, and other areas of the planning process reflect the diversity of the community.
- Recommend improvements to the Mayor to improve levels of diversity in all stages of the municipal planning process

Bloomfield Current Policy

Bloomfield does not have a policy specifically promoting diversity on boards and commissions. In order to disseminate public news, Bloomfield

Sustainable Jersey writes that "Communities should strive for board and commission membership that reflects the community profile in terms of race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, political beliefs, physical ability, national origin, cultural identification, national identification, and family structure."[102]

shares current local news, public meeting dates, and information for town events on the homepage of their website.

Case Study: Increasing Diversity on Boards and Committees (Maplewood, NJ)[103]

In 2016, Maplewood Township compiled a community profile to assess the makeup of the Township's 16 boards and committees in comparison with the Township's demographics. Based on the results, the Mayor urged Maplewood to pursue higher levels of diversity in relation to race, age, and homeownership status. In response to this recommendation, Maplewood partnered with the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race to increase diversity.

Case Study: Prioritizing Public Engagement (Trenton, NJ)

The City of Trenton prioritized public engagement as one of the beginning steps for their long range master plan, Trenton250. By prioritizing public engagement, the Trenton250 planning team was able to encourage broad public participation in establishing the goals of the plan. To maximize participation, Trenton approached their outreach efforts in two phases:[104]

Initial Outreach

The planning staff for Trenton250 went on a listening tour to get an idea of what various stakeholders wanted to include in the master plan.

Phase I: Visioning

Youth Summit: Young residents are unlikely to attend public meetings, so the planners brought the meeting to a local high school where over 20 visions were submitted and five students were chosen to participate on the Master Plan Steering Committee.

Project Website: The Trenton250 team created a website that had multiple easy opportunities to participate in the planning process. The website was created alongside a Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram account where people engaged with the planners and submitted their own visions online.

Multi-Lingual Latino Engagement: Trenton250's planning team worked with a local non-profit, El Centro, to hold a public meeting in Spanish for the growing Latino community in Trenton. Additionally, the website and all printed materials were available in Spanish.

"Going to the People" @ Art All Night: The Trenton250 team hosted an interactive visioning art installation event for the public to participate in.

Phase II: Writing the Reports

Four Wards, One Conversation: Planners held an open house where community members were asked "What opportunities are there to make Trenton a premier economic and cultural center, and to build on arts, industry, and education?"

Issues and Opportunities Report: The planning team published an editable Google document for residents to provide input on issues and opportunities in Trenton.

Public Comments on Draft Report: The final stage of the public outreach included two rounds of public comments, which allowed the public to make comments on any part of the plan.

During the Trenton250 planning process, the City made sure that citizens were engaged from beginning to end. This was vital in ensuring that citizens felt pride in the changes that were coming to their community and creating a plan that was beneficial for the entire community.

Recommendations

Recommendation (1): Create a public engagement plan to increase minority and low-income involvement in public meetings.

- Be sure to engage the public during all phases of the plan, not only in pre-planning or completion phases (Figure 82)
- Meetings should be convenient and easy for all to attend. Hold meetings and events on different days and times to account for non-traditional work schedules and at locations that are public-transit and ADA accessible. In addition to this, seek out opportunities to attend community events such as street fairs to bring the planning process to where the people already gather.
- Make resources available in multiple languages and through various forms of communication such as website, social media, flyer, newspaper articles.
- To engage students and their parents, hold events at schools such as Watsessing, Carteret, and Berkeley Elementary Schools
- Involve local leaders, such as religious leaders, community advocates, and business owners

Recommendation (2): Complete a community profile to determine if boards and committees reflect the community that they serve and act on the results to increase diversity where it is lacking.

Recommendation (3): Pass a resolution in support of increasing diverse representation on boards and commissions. This policy should include all boards and commissions rather than being limited to planning. It is important that there is representation of the community in the feedback that Bloomfield receives.

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- Faith communities
- Minority community leaders
- Local elementary, middle, and high Schools

Figure 82: Students presenting their work at a public meeting.

6.4 Health

The fields of urban planning and public health originated together in the late 19th century to address large outbreaks of disease caused by unsanitary living and working conditions. Subsequently, the field of urban planning began to focus on separating activities considered unhealthy from residential areas through the use of zoning. At the same time, the widespread acceptance of the germ theory lead those in the field of public health to turn their attention toward addressing the medical causes of disease rather than the social ones.[105] Though the fields of urban planning and public health diverged, they still share the common aim of improving wellbeing using participatory methods and increasing have found common cause on many issues.

Areas where urban planning and public health goals overlap include preventing injuries by improving bike and pedestrian safety; increasing physical activity and improving mental health through access to green spaces; and improving air and water quality through the built environment through measures such as green infrastructure and mixed-use development that encourages walking and public transit use.[106] Some of

the challenges of reconnecting urban planning and public health include addressing health disparities, examining the social causes of poor health, and creating a participatory process that engages marginalized voices.[107]

Bloomfield Community Health Assessment

In 2017, the Bloomfield Department of Health and Human Services (BDHHS) partnered with Montclair State University to conduct a Community Health Assessment (CHA).[108] This effort built on the CHA completed in 2013 to fine tune the questions and methodology. The assessment included a resident survey, four focus groups, and interviews with key informants.

Resident Survey: Online and hard copy survey available in both English and Spanish. The survey asked about:

- Social determinants of health including housing, transportation, environmental hazards, and accessibility
- Health status
- Health and substance use behaviors
- Barriers to health

Focus Groups: One in each ward (North, Central, South) and one open to all residents. Participants were asked to identify:

- Largest health issues
- Barriers to health
- What they would change about Bloomfield to make it a healthier place

Key Informant Interviews: Interviews were conducted with five key informants.

The CHA included sections on disease, physical activity and nutrition, and social determinants of health. The top concerns according to survey respondents were:

- Environmental living conditions (38%): This was defined as walking/biking safety and water quality
- Financial insecurity (36%): This was defined by its impact on healthy eating and exercise and inability to pay rent or mortgage
- Chronic disease (26%)
- Substance use (25%)
- Mental health (24%)
- Lack of physical activity (21%)
- Lack of access to healthy food (20%)
- Lack of access to housing (17%)
- Crime (15%)
- Town not walkable (12%)

The study found that Bloomfield has the following rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, overweight, and obesity:

- Diabetes: 10% of residents (25% in 2013)
- High Blood Pressure (Figure 83): 27% of residents (51% in 2013)
- Overweight: 38% of residents
- Obese: 30% of residents

The study found that many residents do not participate in physical activity and that many have poor diets:

- Physical Activity: 31% do not participate in physical activity
- Fruits: 43% of residents said they consumed fruit once per day
- Vegetables: 30% report consuming other veggies, 26% green veggies, 10% colorful veggies, and 9% legumes

Figure 83: Blood pressure screening

This information is important when planning major changes in communities, such as the redevelopment occurring in the Watsessing neighborhood, because health is greatly impacted by the quality of the neighborhood and the opportunities that it offers. The lack of physical activity and prevalence of chronic disease speak to the need to improve access to parks, the quality of sidewalks, and the safety of the public space so that residents can feel safe and encouraged to exercise outdoors.

Complete Parks

Complete Parks is a policy that states that all residents of a town should be within ½ mile of a park that is appealing and safe. There are seven key elements of Complete Parks:

Engage: Inclusive, Meaningful, Ongoing Dialogue. Parks should reflect the desires of the residents that use them.

Connect: Safe Routes to Parks. There should be safe routes to access parks by walking, biking, transit, and driving. Green space should be safe and have good signage directing individuals to and throughout parks.

Locate: Equitable Distribution of Complete Parks. Parks should be easily accessible and towns should seek to increase green space in areas that lack access.

Activate: Community-Led Park Activities and Programs. Parks should include both formal programs and flexible space for informal community activities.

Grow: Parks Maintenance and Ecology. Parks need to be managed and maintained in a way that makes them attractive to and safe for all kinds of people.

Protect: Safety In and Around Parks. Parks should align with efforts to prevent violence and promote public safety in a community.

Fund: The Support Network for a Complete Parks System. Towns should seek to distribute funding equitably across their town, prioritizing areas with greater health and social disparities.

Such an effort would offer an opportunity for the Planning Department to work with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department.

Bloomfield Current Policy

Complete Parks

Bloomfield does not have a policy to ensure that all residents live within a ½ of a park. The 2017 Community Health Assessment states that all residents are within ½ mile of a private or public area that promotes active lifestyles. This includes municipal parks and county parks, but it also includes municipal services, municipal land, and private country clubs

Figure 84: A pocket park in Bloomfield, NJ

What is a pocket park?

A pocket park is a small park, typically no more than 1-3 lots in size, created using vacant lots, irregularly shaped plots, or other forgotten land.[109] *Successful pocket parks are "accessible; allow people to engage in activities; are comfortable spaces and have a good image; and finally, are sociable places."*[110] *By nature of their small size, pocket parks serve the immediate community and should be created with the needs of the local community in mind (Figure 84).*

This may not represent residents' true access to parks depending on the use of municipal services and land or if residents are not members of the country club.

Bloomfield has an Open Space Trust Fund that could be used to help with implementing a Complete Parks policy. Other partners include the Bloomfield Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department and Department of Health and Human Services.

Local Park Development

Three parks are located within a ½ mile walking distance of residents in the Watsessing neighborhood: Watsessing Park to the west, Halcyon Park to the east, and Felton Field to the south. Watsessing Park is a 69-acre recreational area with a large number of sports fields; Halcyon Park is a small park with a fountain and benches; and Felton Field offers baseball facilities and a playground.

Watsessing residents may under utilize these areas for a variety of reasons. The location of Watsessing Park on the other side of the Garden State Parkway requires that when walking to the park neighborhood residents travel through unpleasant underpasses along busy roads that lack lighting. While the walk to Halcyon Park is not unpleasant, it is possible that Watsessing neighborhood residents do not feel comfortable because of the wealth disparity between the two neighborhoods. Heavy traffic along Arlington Avenue makes walking to the Felton Field less desirable.

Though none of these parks are central to the neighborhood, all of the parks are accessible to residents. Bloomfield should consider improving access to Watsessing Park and Felton Field as well as enhancing amenities at Felton Field. Improved access to these facilities would support greater usage by residents. Improved facilities at Felton Field would also support increased usage. Additionally a park in the central area of the Watsessing neighborhood could be an important step toward improving residents' access to green space.

Case Study: Creating a Parks Master Plan (Houston, TX)
When creating their new Parks Master Plan, the Parks and Recreation Department in Houston, TX, created an online survey to determine residents' priorities. However, the majority of the respondents were white, with high incomes, which did not match the racial and income makeup of the city as a whole. In order to engage minority and lower-income residents, the department worked with Rice University to conduct an in-person survey in parks in three neighborhoods with high concentrations of black and Hispanic residents. Through this process, they found that residents in these neighborhoods were more concerned with park maintenance and safety than with walking and biking access to parks, which the previously surveyed white residents had prioritized.[111]

Case Study: McKinley Elementary School (Newark, NJ)
The Trust for Public Land worked with officials at the McKinley Elementary School in Newark, New Jersey, to redesign the asphalt lot that had served as a play space for many years into a beautiful playground. The students were involved in a participatory design process in which they surveyed the site, interviewed community stakeholders, and worked with professional architects to design the new playground.[112]

Recommendations

Complete Parks

Recommendation (1): Pass a Complete Parks Resolution to promote parks as an important part of the community fabric.

- ChangeLab Solutions, which creates model policies that promote health, has model language for a Complete Parks Resolution available at: http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/complete-parks-indicators.
- Part of the Complete Parks Policy includes establishing Safe Routes to Parks. These routes can be integrated with Complete Streets, Green Infrastructure, and Safe Routes to School goals to enhance the outcome.

Local Park Development

Recommendation (1): Build on the potential of the triangle pocket park across from the Watsessing Avenue Station.

- Pocket parks serve the immediate community and should reflect their needs and values. Designing the park is an opportunity to use community engagement and placemaking techniques to gain feedback from the residents and business owners in the Watsessing neighborhood and the individuals who use the Watsessing Avenue Station.
- A few ideas to start with, as mentioned previously, include moveable seating, a coffee cart or other small food option, and programming from the local organizations.

Recommendation (2): Improve the playground at Watsessing Elementary School.

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- Bloomfield Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Department
- Local business owners
- Watsessing Elementary School

Healthy Corner Store Initiative

The Healthy Corner Store Initiative is an initiative of the Food Trust, which was founded in Philadelphia in 1992. The goal is "to expand the sale and marketing of affordable, nutritious food in corner stores in lower-income communities, which often have the

lowest access to healthy foods and the highest rates of diet-related disease."[113] There are four phases of the initiative:

- **Phase 1:** Make inventory changes. Owners must offer four healthy products from two categories: fruit, vegetables, whole grain, and lean protein (Figure 85).
- **Phase 2:** Display marketing materials. Owners must display marketing materials raising awareness of the healthy food options in the store and encouraging healthy choices. After this phase, owners are eligible for a $100 incentive check.
- **Phase 3:** Participate in business training. Owners can participate in one-on-one, in-store training on how to source, price, and display healthy foods.
- **Phase 4:** Receive a Healthy Corner Store Conversion. Owners that have completed phases 1-3 are eligible for conversion, which includes installation of small shelving and/or refrigeration units to increase space for healthy foods.

The New Jersey Healthy Corner Store Initiative was established in 2014 as a partnership between the Food Trust and the NJ Partnership for Healthy Kids.

Bloomfield Current Policy

As of 2017, Bloomfield has two corner stores participating in the New Jersey Healthy Corner Store Initiative. These are Friendly News and Food located at 143 Grove St and Tobacco King II located at 128 Montgomery St.[114]

The 2017 Bloomfield CHA found that only 43% of residents stated that they eat fruit once per day and between 9% and 30% of residents say that they consume different types of vegetables. Furthermore, 30% of residents are overweight and 38% are obese. According to respondents, 20% ranked lack of access to healthy food as their top health-related concern for Bloomfield. Some of the reasons for not eating healthy food include the cost, lack of time for shopping, quality of healthy food, distance to the store, lack of knowledge on how to eat healthy and lack of transportation.[115] The Healthy Corner Store Initiative can address issues including lack of time for shopping, distance to the store, and a lack of transportation by providing healthy options near to residents. It can also help to address the lack of knowledge on how to eat healthy by including marketing that indicates what foods are healthy, healthy recipe cards, and other promotions, such as tastings and cooking demonstrations.

Figure 85: Healthy food options at a grocery store

Case Study: Partnering for Health Events (Asbury Park, NJ)

The Alliance for a Healthier Asbury Park and EZRide, the local Transportation Management Association, held a health event at La Tapatia Groceria to promote them as part of the Healthy Corner Store Initiative. The event included free samples of healthy foods and a health screening for blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, BMI, and stroke risk.[116]

Case Study: Healthy Corner Store Toolkit (Jersey City, NJ)

Jersey City began their Healthy Corner Store Initiative in 2017 and has since published a toolkit to help expand the program. The toolkit includes a number of challenges they faced and possible solutions to those challenges.[117]

Problem: Jersey City had difficulty getting store owners to work with the government because they associated the Health Department with inspections and shut downs.

Solutions:

- Jersey City recommended that the Health Department offer assistance with health inspections and remedying any health code violations for participating stores. They recommended that officials emphasize that they are invested in the store's success because it means a success for the program.
- Jersey City found that it was easier to get stores that accept credits from the federal program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to participate because they were familiar with working with the government and had already made efforts to sell healthy food in their store.
- Jersey City also recommended tapping into community organizations to have local patrons of the store ask the owner to consider providing healthy options.

Problem: Jersey City found that some owners were wary of selling fresh produce because they worried about losing money due to spoilage.

Solutions:

- One option is for stores to start by providing other healthy products such as 100% fruit juice, low-sodium beans, or whole grains.
- Another option is to begin selling products that use fresh produce, such as smoothies, as an option for stores to use over-ripe produce and maintain their bottom line.

Recommendations

Recommendation (1): Pursue further phases and/or health events with the existing stores.

- Depending on what the two corner stores have done so far, Bloomfield could encourage them to add new marketing materials, participate in training, or apply for a conversion, giving them access to shelving or small refrigeration units.
- Bloomfield could also pursue events such as health screenings, healthy cooking demonstrations, or other events to support the two healthy corner stores and create support for adding additional stores. These kinds of event can be tied in with placemaking and public engagement efforts.

Recommendation (2): Expand the Healthy Corner Store Initiative in Bloomfield.

- There are several corner stores in the study area that could participate in the Healthy Corner Store Initiative. Examples includes D@D Caribbean Grocery located at 8 Arlington Ave, Original Tropical located at 29 Dodd St, and Bachman's Market located at 510 Prospect St, East Orange.

Figure 86: Homes lining a street in Bloomfield, NJ

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Local business owners
- Bloomfield Center Alliance

Healthy Housing

Unsafe housing and exposure to chemicals or other toxins has negative health impacts on residents. Exposure to lead for children can lead to brain damage, kidney damage, lower IQ scores, developmental delays and learning disabilities, seizures, coma, and, at high enough levels, death.[118] Healthy housing is the broad idea that housing should be safe, well-maintained, free from toxins, and affordable. Ensuring healthy housing is one way to improve the health of the population and keep neighborhoods from becoming blighted with unsafe and unsanitary housing (Figure 86).

Bloomfield Current Policy

Bloomfield's code requires rental property owners to register their properties and calls for an inspection of rental housing at least once every three years or when the unit changes occupancy. If there is a complaint, an inspection must be conducted within 10 days. The inspection determines whether the unit complies with the Zoning Ordinance Code, Property Maintenance Code, Uniform Construction Code, BOCA Maintenance Code, Housing Code, Building Code and/or Uniform Fire Safety Act.[120] Requiring property registration and inspection every three years is consistent with guidelines for a Proactive Rental Inspection program, which recommends inspections every two to five years.[121] Proactive Rental Inspection programs are preferable over complaint-based inspection programs in protecting the health and safety of renters because some renters, particularly low-income, non-English speaking, immigrant, or other vulnerable renters, may fear retaliatory measures such as a raise in their rent or eviction if they make a complaint against their landlord.

Lead Testing in NJ

New Jersey law requires that local health departments test paint and other possible sources of lead in the home of any child whose lead test results show elevated levels of lead in their blood, which is more than 5 micrograms. Children should be tested at 12 months and 24 months of age or tested if they are under six and have not been tested before. All health insurance plans in New Jersey covering more than 50 people are required to cover this testing. Local health departments are required to provide blood tests for lead to any child that does not have insurance. If a blood test shows elevated levels of lead, the health department must assess the family's need for community resources and provide education about how to decrease risk.[119]

The Housing Code states that a unit may be found unfit for human habitation if there are problems with the condition of the structure (problems with the roof, walls, ceiling, floors, and stairs or dampness or exposure) or the structure lacks potable water, hot-water, connection to the sewage system, toilet facilities, bath facilities, kitchen facilities, lighting, heating, windows and adequate ventilation, or secure doors and windows to prevent unauthorized entry.[122]

Case Study: Lead Testing (Rochester, NY)

In 2005, Rochester, New York passed a Lead Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Ordinance, which requires inspections for lead paint in addition to the existing inspection process. This policy requires a visual inspection for deteriorating paint in all pre-1978 rental units and a dust test for lead in rental units in identified high-risk areas. Units that do not pass inspection are required to implement interim control measures, such as covering lead-based paint with non-lead based paint or using lead safe practices to remove lead-based paint on surfaces that experience friction such as doors, windows, and stairs.[123] An evaluation four years after the law went into effect found that 94% of units passed visual inspections and 89% passed wipe tests, indicating that the law was effective in reducing the threat of lead paint poisoning for the citizens of Rochester.[124]

Case Study: Addressing Domestic Violence (New Brunswick, NJ)

New Brunswick, New Jersey implemented a Healthy Housing Initiative, which focuses on physical and environmental conditions that impact healthy housing and the relationship between community organizations and the community they serve.[125] In conducting housing inspections, inspectors noticed that a high number of households displayed evidence of domestic violence. The inspectors sought training on how to provide information to victims of domestic violence from the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital Office of Health and Community Initiatives.

Recommendations

Recommendation (1): Add lead testing to existing rental unit inspections

Bloomfield already has an ordinance that is similar to the recommended Proactive Rental Inspection programs because the ordinance requires rental property owners to register their properties and requires inspections at least once every three years. Adding lead inspections to the already existing program of rental unit inspections will further improve the health of housing stock. In the 2017 Bloomfield Community Health Assessment, 57% of residents said they do not have access or know where to get information about lead poisoning prevention.[126] Providing information about lead poisoning prevention during rental inspections could be one method to share this important information with residents.

Recommendation (2): Train housing inspectors on how to provide information to victims of domestic violence.

Robert Wood Johnson Hospital Office of Health and Community Initiatives or another organization can provide training on how to notice signs of domestic violence and how to provide information to victims of domestic violence if evidence is observed. Even if this is not something that inspectors have encountered before, this is an important ability for inspectors, as they may be some of the few people to gain entry into the home of a person experiencing domestic violence.

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Community Development Department
- Bloomfield Department of Planning
- Greener Bloomfield

Health in All Policies

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is the broad idea that population health is impacted by decisions made outside of the public health and medical fields. The World Health Organization defined HiAP as "a horizontal, complementary policy-related strategy contributing to improved population health."[127] The American Public Health Association defines HiAP as "a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas." Some key goals of HiAP include supporting collaboration between sectors, creating win-win scenarios to benefit multiple partners, engaging the community and stakeholders, and creating structural and procedural change that helps to integrate health into all local policy decisions. HiAP helps to address causes of health disparities rather than treat individual health risks.[128]

HiAP in New Jersey

Though there are not any towns or cities that have formally adopted HiAP in New Jersey, there is interest from health, planning, and transportation departments in taking a broader perspective on health. To support this interest, Together North Jersey hosted a workshop on using the HiAP framework for non-health decision making.[129] Furthermore, HiAP Professional Development is one of the Sustainable Jersey Actions.[130]

Bloomfield Current Policy

Bloomfield does not include HiAP in their Department of Health and Human Services Strategic Plan. However, they have a partnership with "Eat. Play. Live...Better.," which is "a community-wide initiative to make healthy choices easier by supporting policy, system and environmental changes that promote healthy people in healthy places."[131] The initiative uses a Collective Impact model, focusing on creating a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone organization. This initiative has similar tenants to HiAP and could be included in a broader HiAP policy.

Case Study: A Health Focus in the Master Plan (Trenton, NJ)

Trenton, New Jersey integrated a health perspective into their most recent Master plan update. One of the eight guiding principles is "Cultivating a Healthy City," with key objectives including access to nature, fresh foods, and quality healthcare. In their Issues and Opportunities Report, Trenton identifies health issues relating physical health and environmental health.[132] Their priorities in the Blueprint for Action include Clinical-Community Linkages, Healthy Lifestyles, Public Safety, the Physical Environment, and Economic Development. Some of the planned actions include increasing healthy foods and physical activity in schools, implementing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design to deter crime and make public spaces welcoming, and enhancing urban agriculture. So far, the Trenton Neighborhood Restoration Campaign has participated in two data collection efforts—mapping of all of the vacant parcels in Trenton and creating detailed data sets on neighborhood and property conditions.[133]

Case Study: Using HIA for Transportation Planning (Somerville, MA)

In 2009, Massachusetts passed a law to create the Healthy Transportation Compact that integrated human and environmental health as explicit decision-making criteria for transportation planning throughout the state.[134] The law required transportation agencies to complete a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) for transportation projects to integrate health into the decision-making process. The pilot HIA in Somerville, Massachusetts, which looked at removing an elevated highway, considered exposure to air pollution and noise, lack of green space, lack of mobility for modes other than vehicles, pedestrian safety, and lack of access to jobs, goods and services, community areas, and recreational areas.[135] Some of the accomplishments of the program include:[136]

- The creation of a Complete Streets Certification Program that allows municipalities to apply for funding
- The transit authority purchased 40 new, more efficient buses and is piloting electric and hydrogen fuel cell buses to reduce emissions
- The Department of Public Health created a Mass in Motion grant to fund healthy food access and increasing physical activity in municipalities
- The Office of Energy and Environment added greenhouse gas emissions to transportation project selection criteria

What is a Health Impact Assessment?

The World Health Organization defines HIA as a "means of assessing the health impacts of policies, plans and projects in diverse economic sectors using quantitative, qualitative and participatory techniques."[137] A HIA is typically completed to help assess the health impacts of a project that does not fall under the typical definition of health services. This could be a transportation, housing, economic development, or other project. The results from the HIA help decision makers consider the health impacts of different options and explicitly include health outcomes in the decision making process.

Recommendations

Recommendation (1): Integrate HIA into planning for complete streets and green streets

- Bloomfield has the chance to integrate a HIA into planning for the new street improvements in the Watsessing neighborhood. This practice can integrate human and environmental health goals into planning, ensuring that the street serves the best interests of the community and not simply as a place for mobility alone.

Recommendation (2): Adopt HiAP for Bloomfield

- Adopting HiAP in Bloomfield can lead to structural change that encourages departments to work together to achieve common goals. This will require knowledge of existing policies and cross-department collaboration, which is the first step in creating a policy unique to the needs in Bloomfield.
- ChangeLab Solutions has two How-To Guides for adopting HiAP
- From Start to Finish: How to Permanently Improve Government through Health in All Policies
- A Roadmap for Health in All Policies: Collaborating to Win the Policy Marathon
- Recommendation 3: Integrate HiAP into the next Bloomfield Master Plan
- The last Master Plan in Bloomfield was completed more than a decade ago in 2002 and was followed by reexaminations in 2008 and 2014. Executioin of a wholly new Master Plan at this time would help move the township forward to meeting its goals. The new Master Plan can include health as a specific goal and integrate it across topic areas with the Trenton 250 Plan as an example.

Potential Partners for Bloomfield

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Greener Bloomfield
- Montclair State University's "Eat. Play. Live... Better." Initiative
- New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Subregional Planning

FIGURE & TABLE CITATIONS

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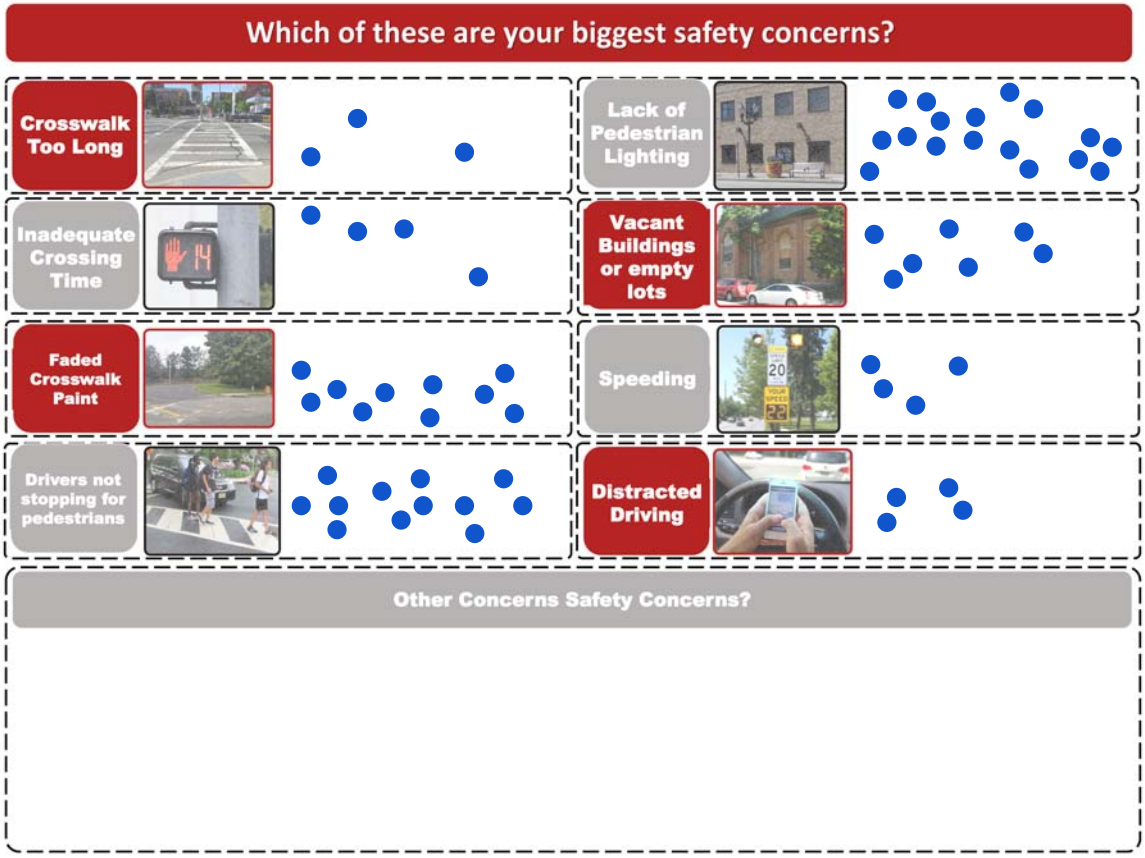
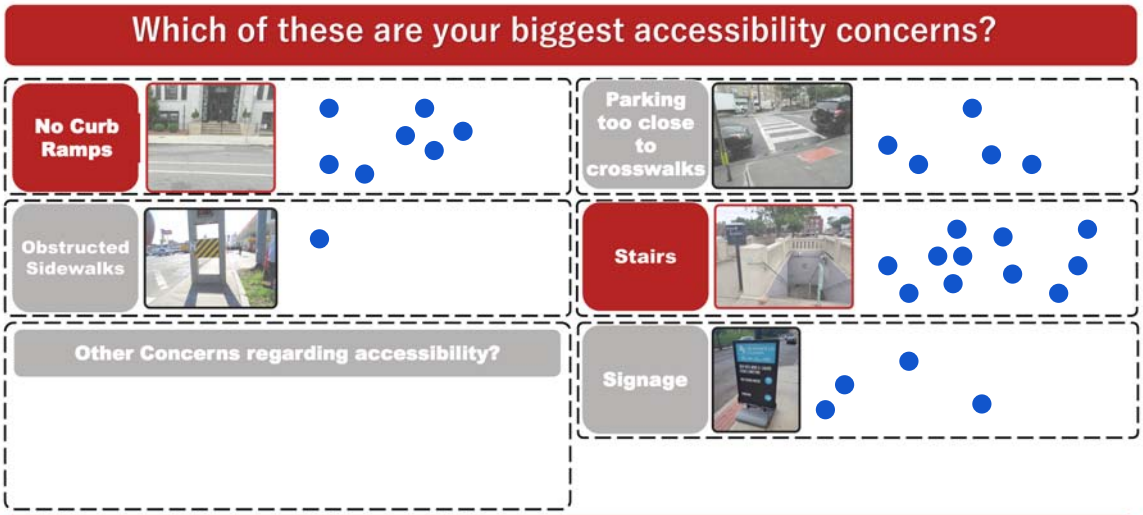
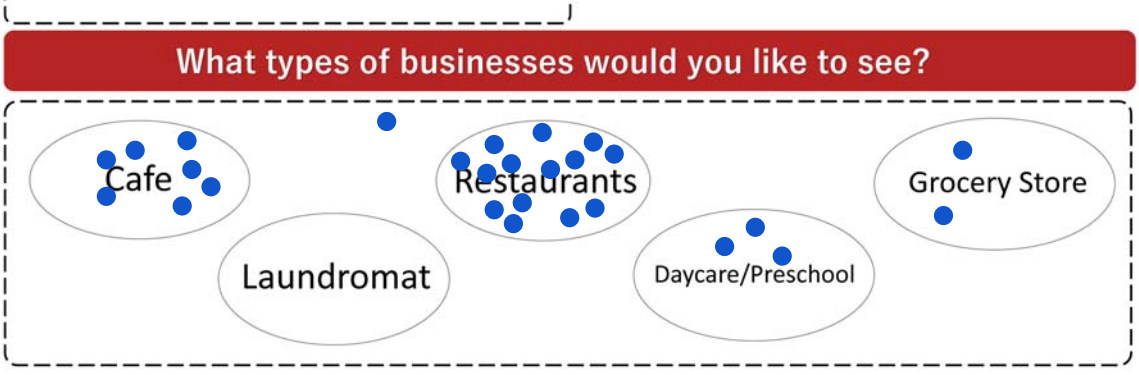
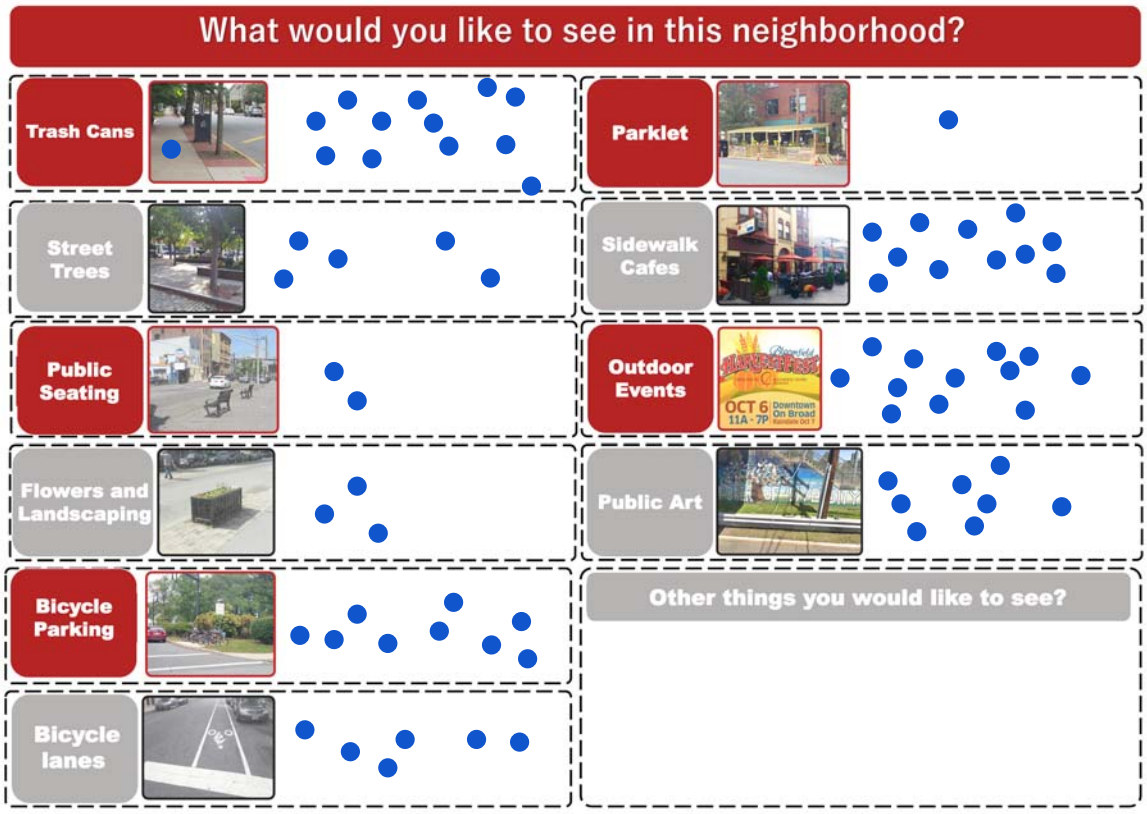
APPENDIX: PLACEMAKING EVENT BOARDS


Which of these are your biggest safety concerns?
Crosswalk Too Long
Lack of Pedestrian Lighting
Inadequate Crossing Time
Vacant Buildings or empty lots
Faded Crosswalk Paint
Speeding
Drivers not stopping for pedestrians
Distracted Driving
Other Concerns Safety Concerns?


Which of these are your biggest accessibility concerns?
No Curb Ramps
Parking too close to crosswalks
Obstructed Sidewalks
Stairs
Other Concerns regarding accessibility?
Signage


What types of businesses would you like to see?
Cafe
Restaurants
Grocery Store
Laundromat
Daycare/Preschool


What would you like to see in this neighborhood?
Trash Cans
Parklet
Street Trees
Sidewalk Cafes
Public Seating
Outdoor Events
OCT 6
11A - 7P
Flowers and Landscaping
Public Art
Bicycle Parking
Other things you would like to see?
Bicycle lanes

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ATP	Annual Transportation Program
BCA	Bloomfield Center Alliance, Inc.
BDHHS	Bloomfield Department of Health and Human Services
BID	Business Improvement District
CHA	Community Health Assessment
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
CSO	Combined Sewer Overflow
CWSRF	Clean Water State Revolving Fund
DVRPC	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
FAST	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (2015)
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GPR	New Jersey Green Projects Reserve
HIA	Health Impact Assessment
HiAP	Health in All Policies
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
LQC	Lighter Quicker Cheaper
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (2012)
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MUC	Mixed Use Core
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act (1970)
NJDOT	New Jersey Department of Transportation
NJTIB	New Jersey Transportation Infrastructure Bank
NJTPA	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
PPS	Project for Public Spaces
RRFB	Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (2005)
SAGE	New Jersey System for Administering Grants Electronically
SID	Special Improvement District
SJTPO	South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization
SMART	Storm Water Management and Resource Training Initiative
SRTS	New Jersey Safe Routes to School
TAP	Transportation Alternatives Program
TOD	Transit-Oriented Development
TTF	New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund