

Executive Summary

Public input from both the online survey and strategic engagement with key stakeholders, community leaders, and Planning Board was key to understanding the wide range of opportunities that exist for Bordentown City.

For those not accustomed to reviewing plans of this nature, it is not imperative to digest it in its entirety. For simplicity’s sake, the Plan is broken down into 3 main areas:

The Community Profile is an analysis of existing conditions and demographic data. It also contains the new State requirement to assess climate change and a vulnerability assessment that focuses on the increasing frequency of storms, temperature, and sea-level rise, coordinated with Burlington County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Land Use Element Goals, which is a summary of what the Plan seeks to achieve. The goals incorporate ideas based on public input and past City planning efforts.

Land Use Element Strategies, beginning on page 42, are the recommendations of the key elements today that will be utilized by the City to help drive changes to the Land Development Ordinance to come.

Overall, the recommendations contained in any Comprehensive plan are supposed to provide a coordinated and strategic framework for future policy setting in zoning and coordinated public investment. The work to come subsequent to this Plan will require additional public input as the detail necessary to design and implement the recommendations. Further still, many of the recommendations require funding through the City Budget, Capital Improvement Plan, and likely through other sources of funding such as State of NJ, Burlington County, and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. Such efforts always require a high degree of coordination due to the realities of staff capacity, budget constraints, and property rights.

In order to develop a clearer picture for how the components outlined in this Plan come together, the Land Use Strategies are categorized by 4 areas that are inextricably related toward the City’s overall well-being. Although these topics are typically addressed within their particular area of concern, coordination is key:

Downtown and Economic Development; Stressing creativity and placemaking, the economic development strategies place a high degree of emphasis on preserving the best of the City and utilizing the components of history, walkability, and quality of life as drivers for improvement rather than changing the City’s make-up.

Housing and Community Development; Housing affordability is an important concern, particularly for low-income families, smaller household sizes, and those whom seek to age in place and remain in the City. New Jersey’s over-reliance on property tax places a significant financial strain on all households thus posing a threat to diversity and overall affordability of the community. Bolstering opportunities for revitalization and rehabilitation without displacement remain at the fore is an important element of the comprehensive plan.

Open Space, Recreation, and Resiliency; The natural environment is the backbone of any community, whether formal park or strictly a natural resource. Humans need strong access to parks and open spaces for both physical and mental health. The Open Space section of the Plan supports this notion by suggesting some key improvements, strategically coordinated, that are aimed at improving both the City’s connection to and interaction with its parks and natural resources by land and by water.

Circulation and Parking; Stressing connectivity through enhanced pedestrianism and expanded streetscapes, circulation and parking supports land use in many definable ways beyond the servicing of automobiles. Taking a pedestrian-first approach does not mean automobiles are not important or considered; it merely means that once one leaves their car their safety and comfort is of utmost concern. While Americans spend a lot of time in their vehicles, we spend more time outside of it. Facilitating our ability to walk and bike to and throughout the City is of paramount concern for tight knit communities such as Bordentown City.

A simple way of understanding the Comprehensive plan is akin to that of human anatomy. Land use is the “muscle” of a community, public and open spaces are the “tendons and sinew,” and both of these elements are framed on a “skeleton” of streets and infrastructure that come together to make the City [both a living organism and ecosystem](#). And as the American Planning Association - New Jersey Chapter awarded in [2012](#) - "[A Great Place in NJ](#)".

A Comprehensive plan is not an end; it is the beginning of many more meaningful discussions to come as Bordentown City unites under a common vision that seeks to strengthen - not replace - its already fantastic array of assets.

~~Foreword~~ Introduction

What IS a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan, traditionally known in New Jersey simply as a “master plan,” reflects a municipality’s blueprint for future growth and development. The plan includes a vision with a set of goals and recommendations to guide land use and infrastructure planning in a manner intended to protect public health, safety, and the general welfare. Upon adoption by the Planning Board, the comprehensive plan reaffirms the City’s legal basis for zoning and decisions by the planning board and zoning board.

What ISN’T a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is not a law or regulation. Instead, it is a document that lays the groundwork for laws and decisions made by governing bodies such as the City Commission, planning board, and zoning board. Because the comprehensive plan is based on data and public input, government decisions that are consistent with it tend to be more strategic, democratic, and legally supported.

Why is the City updating its Comprehensive Plan?

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires municipalities to update or reexamine their comprehensive plans at least once every 10 years. The previous Master Plan for the City of Bordentown was adopted in 1983 and last reexamined in 2011. In response to changing conditions, assumptions, and priorities, a broad update of the City’s previous plan is necessary to reconfirm and realign the City’s vision to new information and ideas.

Public Process

The 2021 comprehensive planning process relied on several strategies for public outreach including a steering committee, online survey, and stakeholder focus groups. As prior planning and zoning efforts helped develop an existing level of community insight, the Planning Team was able to engage in well-informed discussions with the community and community leaders. Although COVID-19 restricted the ability to host in-person workshops and meetings, use of Zoom video conferencing at public meetings and with stakeholder groups helped establish a dialogue that underscored past planning recommendations and guided additional analysis by the Planning Team. While the public outreach process was sufficient but by no means exhaustive, the comprehensive plan is fully intended to lay the groundwork for future discussions.

This plan seeks to TEE UP SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS in the future. Nothing in the comprehensive plan shall be implemented zero-sum or without attention toward management, enforcement, and other controls. CONTINUED PUBLIC OUTREACH will be ESSENTIAL to refining the details of each recommendation to make Bordentown the best it can be....

Steering Committee

The Bordentown City Planning Board established a Comprehensive plan Steering Committee to guide development of the updated comprehensive plan. The committee consisted of nine (9) members including a mix of representatives from the planning board, committees, local businesses, and residents. Input from the steering committee helped shape the goals and recommendations throughout the planning process.

Stakeholder Focus Groups

The Planning Team held several meetings with key stakeholders throughout development of the comprehensive plan to gather focused input related to specific, often overlapping topics. For the purposes of encouraging open dialogue, individual commentary has been folded into the overall analysis. Together, the combined interviews and online community survey have been insightful and productive.

Formally and informally, the Planning Team met with:
Environmental Commission / Green Team
[Economic Development Advisory Commission](#)
[Bordentown City Board of Commissioners](#)
[Yapewi Aquatic Club](#)

Bordentown Historical Society
Downtown Bordentown Association
~~Fire and EMS~~ [Hope Hose Humane Co.](#)
[Consolidated Fire Co.](#)
Restaurants
~~Churches~~ [Christ Church Parish](#)
~~Public Schools~~
~~Public Works~~ [City Staff](#)
Local Developers [and Property Managers](#)

Stakeholder Input Summary

Historic Preservation

- Continue to further capitalize on the area's historic identity and the associated opportunities for arts, education, tourism, while noting untapped potential in railroad, shipbuilding, indigenous land and indigenous peoples, civil rights...
- Expand preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources
- Minimize the visual impact of mid-century garden apartment buildings in the [historic](#) downtown
- Revisit the Historic Preservation Commission and 2012 Historic Plan Element and address Certified Local Government status, historic district expansion, enforcement, and administrative capacity...
- Pursue historic home programs and opportunities for education, pride, tourism, and rehabilitation

Downtown and Commercial

- Manage parking in ways that fully address enforcement and liability concerns with shared parking
- Enable pop-up retail in a flexible and manageable way
- Revisit past interests in bed and breakfasts establishments with appropriate conditions
- Enable creativity in business opportunities downtown like pop-up retail, etc
- Continue prioritization of Farnsworth outdoor dining, street market, and related opportunities
- Consider the implications and needs of homeownership versus renting
- Improve the appearance of the highway corridor

Open Space, Recreation, and Environmental

- Improve maintenance of open space and parks
- Preserve remaining greenway opportunities
- Consider multifunctionality of parks for socialization, recreation, and education
- Explore green infrastructure improvements to manage stormwater and promote renewable energy use

- Legitimize informal paths near Bordentown Station, Prince St, and Lime Kiln Alley
- Increase focus on public health goals
- Plan for electric vehicles, public and private charging station locations
- Develop a plan for Point Breeze that bridges historic and environmental needs
- Maintain the current high density downtown and minimize sprawl and its effects

General & Administrative

- Enhance communication and collaboration between Bordentown Township, Fieldsboro and the City
- Assess and respond to the needs of emergency services
- Address property maintenance and the permit approval process
- Increase involvement of historic and environmental committees in site plan review

Streets and Public Infrastructure

- Improve sidewalk conditions with lighting, street trees, grading, addressing hazards, historic features
- Strengthen linkages from existing parking to downtown destinations and places of assembly
- Improve pedestrian safety, visibility, way-finding, and access to public restrooms
- Expand opportunities for using the street (markets, fairs, and general dining)

Online Community Survey

An online survey was launched by the Bordentown City Planning Board with assistance by the Burlington County Bridge Commission and Steering Committee. The survey launched on January 15th, 2020 and closed on April 20th, 2020 after [being posted on the City's public notices webpage and Bordentown City Facebook group five times throughout March 2020.](#) ~~receiving 351 responses~~[The survey received 351 responses in total, including 249 responses from residents, or approximately 6% of the City's population. , or approximately 10% of the City population. While the survey sample size is by no means fully representative of the City's entire population, the results do provide an additional snapshot of community interests, including the views of non-residents who are still members of the Bordentown community in a familial, geographic, and economic sense.](#)

~~The following is a summary of survey results, organized by topic:~~ [Despite the limited sample size, the survey suggested the following findings, organized by topic below:](#)

Parking

- Improving parking is #1 priority for visitors, #2 for residents
- 87% visitors [are](#) dissatisfied with parking availability
- 70% residents [are](#) dissatisfied with parking availability

- Bike parking in lieu of a car space is NOT preferred downtown

Pedestrianism

- Pedestrian safety is the #3 priority among residents and visitors
- 93% agree that walkability makes Bordentown a great place to live
- 93% travel within the City by walking
- 60% want better bike/ped access near Routes 130/206
- 33% are dissatisfied with access to D&R Canal Trail
- 36% of residents visit the downtown almost daily, 38% visit businesses along Routes 130/206

Bicycle Infrastructure

- 82% want more bike parking downtown
- 68% agree bike routes are lacking
- Bike parking in lieu of a car space is NOT preferred downtown
- 33% are dissatisfied with access to D+R Canal Trail

Downtown and Commercial

- More local businesses is ranked #4 priority by residents and visitors
- 85% agree that historic character and downtown shopping/dining make the City a great place to live
- Coffee shop, bakery, live entertainment most wanted businesses downtown followed by more restaurants, public spaces, and public art
- 54% of residents and visitors are OK with a medical cannabis dispensary downtown or on the highway

Highway Corridor

- 60% want to see more coordination with Bordentown Township regarding Rte. 130/206
- 36% of residents visit downtown almost daily
- 38% of residents visit businesses along 130/206 almost daily

The vision of the City of Bordentown has been thoroughly established through its sense of community and rich history. Preserving and enhancing the City's small-town historic character and sense of community, we will simultaneously improve safety and quality of life, ~~while continuing to reveal our great sense of community and market ourselves accordingly~~. We will work to ensure our downtown is vibrant and resilient, and we will continue to be good stewards of the environment and provide diverse opportunities for all our residents, businesses and visitors alike. [OL1]

Plan Purpose

The direction of Bordentown City has been thoroughly established through a rich history of planning efforts and adopted documents. Although the City is relatively built-out, a city never stops evolving. As we approach the 40th anniversary of the previous plan, the need for a clear and refined vision, based on the availability of new information, changing conditions, and standing recommendations of previous plans becomes increasingly important to the City's future buildout.

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan aims to clarify the City's vision and provide a blueprint of strategies and recommendations to implement it. The following Comprehensive Plan Goals are intended to consolidate the original 15 goals of the 1983 Master Plan into a clear and concise vision for all future planning efforts that may be expanded upon in specific elements.

Comprehensive Plan Goals

- To preserve and enhance the City's small-town, historic character;
- To improve safety, quality of life, social equity, and sense of community for all residents and visitors;
- To ensure a vibrant downtown and resilient local economy; and
- To advance sustainability and climate resiliency.

Community Overview

The City of Bordentown is a 1-square-mile community known for its small-town character and historic charm. Settled more than three centuries ago, the City's abundant historic resources and traditional development pattern have created an irreplaceable vessel for community within a vastly rural and suburban region. The unique pedestrian-scale of Bordentown and its various assets lend themselves to a tightly-knit urban fabric that is home to many long-time residents and frequently visited by others from within the region.

The City is located in northern Burlington County and situated at the northernmost edge of the lower Delaware River corridor within convenient reach of Trenton, Hamilton, and southern Mercer County. Many of the City's unique assets – such as its waterfront, regional trails, historic character, and transit – further contribute to the City's relationship with neighboring townships and its context within the New York City and Philadelphia metropolitan regions. Recognizing the economic implications of the City's historic assets, waterfront access, highway frontage, and active downtown will be a key factor in strengthening the City's identity and overall vision for the future.

The City of Bordentown has an estimated population of [4,0123,823](#) as of ~~2020~~[2019](#)¹. By 2045, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) has forecasted a local population of

¹. ~~20135-20197~~ *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, US Census Bureau, 2020.*

4,559² based on growth rates and demographic data. While the City is rather small and predominantly built-out, infill and redevelopment opportunities are expected to create limited capacity for growth. As a result, continual assessment of City needs will remain as vital as ever to maintain and enhance the quality of life of its residents and visitors.

Perspective on the Little City with a lot of Charm

The City's historical patterns of development allow it to remain a resilient place. Over time, the City has ebbed and flowed with the tide of the mighty Delaware River. Its compact street network, historic development patterns, and powerful sense of place, though not without their challenges at times, have played host to many formidable personalities over the centuries and decades since its founding. [Time marches on](#), ~~Demographics change~~, but Bordentown City is quintessentially Americana at her best.

As all this prose relates to the Comprehensive Plan, one can merely say that wholesale change is not necessary. Rather, a more surgical approach to making upgrades and adaptations is more appropriate. Household sizes across the country have dropped, and the rise of e-commerce has placed pressures on our beloved downtown comparable to the advent of the indoor shopping mall, but Bordentown's strength lies in her people. Faces change, but what drives people to the City, is the same that keeps us all here - COMMUNITY.

The City of Bordentown has what many other towns in the region do not: deep American history, a downtown with connected and walkable street network, and a riverine and associated environmental network that is readily accessible. Strengthening our connections to our assets, locally and regionally, is the goal of many a Comprehensive plan but remains especially important for our 1-square-mile City.

Planning within the Region

State Development and Redevelopment Plan (2001)

The New Jersey State Planning Commission adopted the *State Development and Redevelopment Plan* in 2001 to promote cohesive planning efforts at the local, county, regional, and statewide levels. While the *State Plan* is due for an update, it continues to provide statewide planning objectives for municipalities regarding strategies for land use, housing, transportation, and other areas of focus.

The *State Plan* has designated Bordentown City and portions of Bordentown Township to be within the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1). Per the *State Plan*, Metropolitan Planning Areas are intended to provide for redevelopment and revitalization, promote compact urban growth,

². DVRPC, *Analytical Data Report 22, County- and Municipal-Level Population Forecasts, 2015–2045*. 2016

stabilize older suburbs, and protect the character of existing stable communities. To achieve this vision, the *State Plan* establishes specific policies, objectives, and recommendations that are reiterated throughout the comprehensive plan.

DVRPC Connections 2045 (2017)

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the nine-county region of Greater Philadelphia. DVRPC's Long-Range Plan, *Connections 2045*, establishes a vision and sets forth recommendations to coordinate regional transportation with land use and other objectives.

Connections 2045 identifies five core principles to achieve its regional vision:

- Sustain the Environment;
- Develop Livable Communities;
- Expand the Economy;
- Advance Equity and Foster Diversity; and
- Create an Integrated, Multi-modal Transportation Network.

Through *Connections 2045*, DVRPC has identified Bordentown City as a Town Center targeted for investment in transit, redevelopment, and greenway connections to surrounding farmland and the regional greenspace network. The goals and recommendations of the City's comprehensive plan are intended to be consistent with the *Connections 2045* regional plan and the guidance therein.

Northern Burlington County Growth and Preservation Plan (2008)

The Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders adopted the *Northern Burlington County Growth and Preservation Plan* (GAPP) in 2008 to promote regional growth management among the 13 participating municipalities. At a more local level of policymaking, the GAPP effectively emphasizes the *State Plan* and encourages local growth and development to occur in county-designated centers – nodes, hamlets, villages, and towns – while preserving farmland, open space, and natural features.

The GAPP designated Bordentown City as a “Town Center” envisioned to incorporate smart growth principles such as transit-oriented development, a revitalized mixed-use downtown, and infill redevelopment. The implications of “Town Center” status for Bordentown - in comparison to surrounding rural townships - are considered through nearly all aspects of the City's comprehensive plan such as tourism, transportation, boating, trails, land use, and housing.

Bordentown Township Land Use Element (2019)

Bordentown Township adopted its Land Use Element in 2019, creating additional context for development at the City's edges and shared relationships related to open space, [highway development](#), local facilities, municipal services, trails, greenways, and general relationships between the Township and the City .

Existing Zoning

A city's zoning ordinance regulates the location, use, and form of development within each zoning district. The current zoning ordinance was adopted in 1983 and amended over the years. The ordinance establishes the following districts, summarized below:

R-1	Residential Low Density
R-2	Residential Medium Density
R-3	Residential Medium/High Density
PLD	Planned Low Density
LC	Local Commercial
HC	Highway Commercial
CI	Commercial / Industrial
L/M	Inclusionary Zoning (Floating/Overlay) Historic District (Overlay)

Residential Low Density (R-1)

The R-1 zone permits single-family detached homes and is characterized by large lot sizes and more restrictive bulk and use requirements than other zones. The R-1 zone forms the City's low-density edge along creeks, streams, and bluffs.

Residential Medium Density (R-2)

The R-2 zone is intended for single-family detached dwellings like the R-1 zone but contains bulk requirements that are more appropriate for lots of intermediate size relative to the R-1 and R-3 zones. Prevailing uses in the R-2 zone are single-family detached houses, garden apartments, and public property. The R-2 zone separates the HC zone geographically from other zoning districts.

Residential Medium/High Density (R-3)

The R-3 zone is intended for single-family detached, single-family attached, and single-family semi-detached dwellings. Bulk requirements in the R-3 zone reflect smaller lot sizes than other districts and complement the historic residential density surrounding the City's downtown core.

Planned Low Density (PLD)

The PLD zone was established to regulate possible subdivision or development of Block 1701/Lot 14, the 100-acre Point Breeze property formerly owned by Divine Word Missionaries. In 2020, however, NJDEP Green Acres and Bordentown City purchased the property for public open space and reuse of the existing buildings for municipal purposes. As such, the PLD zone has been rendered ultimately unnecessary.

Local Commercial (LC)

The LC zone intends to provide a central business district containing a variety of shops and retail stores at a scale that preserves the small downtown character. The LC zone includes parcels along Park Street, Farnsworth Ave, Crosswicks Street, and Burlington Street. Predominant uses within the LC zone include storefronts, neighborhood-oriented services, apartments, and home-offices.

Highway Commercial (HC)

The HC zone includes parcels along Route 130/206 that are intended to absorb commercial uses that service the larger region and typically require greater land area to develop than the amount of land available downtown. Uses along the highway tend to be more oriented to automobile use and provide abundant parking.

Commercial / Industrial (CI)

The CI zone is intended to encourage and minimize the impact of commercial and industrial facilities on the large lots between Park Street and Elizabeth Street. Uses in the CI zone include packaging, warehousing, distribution and storage. The former Ocean Spray plant on Park Street is planned for mixed-use commercial and multi-family redevelopment.

Inclusionary Zoning (L/M)

The L/M zone was established in 2006 to implement the Housing Element by identifying a suitable location for inclusionary affordable housing. The L/M zone requires that development meet the bulk and design standards of the R-3 zone as well as a 20% set aside of units for low- and moderate-income households as defined by the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH). The L/M zone specifically includes Block 902/Lot 20, the rear portion of Block 902/Lot 23, and Block 1101/Lot 5, but is not shown on the City's adopted zoning map from 2018. [The context of L/M zoning district has changed significantly in regards to State affordable housing procedures and the inclusionary housing units approved through possible redevelopment of the Ocean Spray site.](#)

Historic District (Overlay Zone)

The Historic District overlays the local commercial district (LC Zone) along Farnsworth Avenue and the Thompson Street neighborhood, defined as Block 901/Lots 14-28 and Block 902/Lots 1-19 in the Historic Preservation Ordinance. [According to the ordinance, all](#) development applications for properties and improvements within the historic district must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission except for in-kind maintenance, repainting, cleaning, emergency repairs, and improvements to interiors.

Residential Zoning Analysis

While Bordentown has gradually amended its zoning ordinance over the years, the adopted regulations are rather minimal by today's standards and generally lack the vigor to meet the City's land use goals. In fact, many of the zoning standards are ill-suited to the City's prevailing lot sizes, historic character, and natural features. Amending the zoning code to better accommodate existing and desirable conditions with more responsive standards can help simplify the approval process for applicants and the planning and zoning board.

As much of historic Bordentown developed before the invention of modern zoning, applying lot requirements and bulk standards to residential City blocks that have vastly different lot widths, areas, and development characteristics reduces predictability and smoothness of the development process. [This is an especially high priority as the City's residents and volunteer boards do not have the time and resources to spare on bureaucratic "red tape" resulting from outdated regulations.](#)

An analysis of existing lot characteristics based on GIS parcel data emphasizes the need to revisit the bulk and area standards of the zoning ordinance.

One possible approach to improve the City’s planning and zoning procedures is adoption of a form-based code or hybrid zoning code, which can establish basic physical [design](#) principles for new construction. Physical design principles would be based on the existing neighborhood context such as build-to lines and appropriate housing typologies. A code that is tailored to the City’s historic development patterns in such a way can encourage construction that is predictable yet flexible and physically cohesive with current density, irregular lot characteristics, parking needs, and historic architectural features.

Working with residents on a specific vision for development standards in the future through workshops and design charrettes can help ensure that any such form-based requirements meet the needs of the City by creating a cohesive streetscape, while protecting the design freedom of applicants [and eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy](#).

R-1 Zone (Single-Family Detached)

Of the 149 lots in the R-1 Zone, 48% do not meet the minimum area of 12,000 square feet; 37% do not meet the minimum lot width of 80 feet; and 28% meet neither lot area nor width requirements.

R-2 Zone (Single-Family Detached)

Of the 202 lots in the R-2 Zone, 41% do not meet the minimum lot area of 7,500 square feet; 39% do not meet the minimum lot width of 60 feet; and 28% meet neither lot area nor lot width requirements.

R-3 Zone (Single-Family Attached, Detached, and Semi-Detached)

Of the 946 lots in the R-3 Zone,

For a Single-Family Attached Home

50% do not meet the minimum lot area of 3,000 square feet; 23% do not meet the minimum lot width of 20 feet; and 22% meet neither the lot area nor lot width requirements.

For a Single-Family Detached Home

79% do not meet the minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet; 80% do not meet the minimum lot width of 50 feet; and 73% meet neither the lot area nor lot width requirements.

For a Single-Family Semi-Detached Home

86% do not meet the minimum lot area of 7,500 square feet; 80% do not meet the minimum lot width of 50 feet; and 77% meet neither the lot area nor lot width requirements.

Existing Land Use Summary

Land use in Bordentown developed through a traditional development pattern typical of a pre-automobile city. Local commercial uses like retail shops, restaurants, and neighborhood services are generally concentrated within the historic mixed-use downtown of Farnsworth Avenue. Attached and detached single-family homes, apartments, and the occasional park or religious institution form quaint but dense residential streets decreasing in density toward the City's edges.

The Bordentown waterfront has a long history where shipping, shipbuilding, and railroading converged at the mouths of the Crosswicks Creek and the Delaware & Raritan Canal system. Larger parcels throughout the City developed over time and evolved into more specialized uses like senior housing, office buildings, and light industry. Meanwhile, the highway corridor expanded considerably to accommodate auto-oriented commercial uses fronting Rt-130 and Rt-206 resulting from the advent of the automobile, and New Jersey's need to off-set residential property taxes through a reliable commercial ratables base [has solidified this trend](#).

The Existing Land Use Map largely reveals the result of these development patterns and the land use relationships that have unfolded over Bordentown's history. In large part, these patterns have effectively shaped the Proposed Land Use Map.

The following table is a breakdown summary of the City's land use composition by acreage and number of parcels, based on tax data and more detailed field assessment.

Single-Family homes represent the largest share of the City by number of parcels and second largest by acreage. Of the [1,229](#) single-family homes within the City, approximately 751 [\(61%\)](#) are detached and 478 [\(39%\)](#) are attached or semi-attached. The majority of all single-family houses are located within the R-3 zone (Residential High Density).

Multi-Family residences in Bordentown consist of low-rises, garden apartments, and two- to four-unit apartments scattered throughout the City. Some commercial buildings in the downtown contain accessory apartments on upper floors. Approximately 300 apartment units have been approved through redevelopment of the Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area.

Office buildings are generally clustered on Farnsworth Avenue and Third Street. Downtown offices are primarily single-tenant businesses within rehabilitated historic buildings that may contain accessory apartments on upper floors. The office buildings on Third Street are more suburban in character, each containing multiple tenants that share off-street parking across the street. In addition, home-offices are permitted within the downtown and residential zones provided that meet certain requirements in the zoning code.

Local commercial uses such as restaurants, retail shops, barber shops, and neighborhood-oriented businesses are generally oriented to serve City [residents and visitors of the downtown](#). While most of these uses are concentrated on Farnsworth Avenue, some businesses, such as funeral homes and other uses, are located within residential zones [or near the waterfront](#).

Highway commercial uses include auto-services, shopping centers, hotels, and drive-thrus along Route 130 and 206 that are generally oriented to serve passing highway traffic. These uses are primarily accessible by car and contain sufficient parking for regional access.

Industrial uses are generally limited to the CI Zone, which comprises large lots that straddle the freight rail line between Park Street and Elizabeth Street. Additional industrial uses nearer the downtown and residential zones, such as auto body shops are preexisting nonconforming uses that are effectively “grandfathered” in the zoning code.

Parks & Open Space uses include park and recreation areas owned by the State, County, City, and nonprofit organizations like the D&R Greenway Land Trust and Board of Education. Preservation of Point Breeze (formerly Divine Word) by the State of New Jersey for open space has increased the total area of open space in the City by more than 60 acres. The City has approximately 187 acres of parks and open space within its limits. The Open Space and Recreation map shows a breakdown of the open space system by property ownership.

Public & Quasi-Public uses include public facilities, non-profit organizations, religious institutions, and other semi-public entities. These uses are located throughout the City on public and private land and often represent unique partnership opportunities.

Vacant land includes undeveloped, underutilized and unpreserved lots. Approximately 43 acres of vacant land exists in the City, mostly located along the City’s edges and within environmental sensitive areas [such as wetlands or steep slopes](#).

Transit & Trails

Highway and transit connections connect Bordentown to greater Trenton, Philadelphia, and New York. Direct transportation connections to New York City, Philadelphia, Camden, and Trenton include I-295 to the west and the New Jersey Turnpike, U.S. 130, and U.S. 206 to the east. Access to public transit includes New Jersey Transit bus and New Jersey Transit RiverLINE light rail service, which links Bordentown with Camden and Trenton. Further, the Delaware and Raritan Canal begins in Bordentown and extends north to Trenton where it splits off north toward Lambertville and northeast toward South Amboy. The canal trail also forms a section of the East Coast Greenway and Delaware River Heritage Trail extending southward through the City.

NJ Transit RiverLINE

Connecting the Camden-Philadelphia waterfronts to Trenton Transit Center and the Northeast Corridor, the RiverLine is a tremendous asset to the City and the Lower Delaware Riverfront communities. [The Bordentown Station parking lot is also the City’s largest parking resource - and within a 3-minute walk of the downtown.](#)

NJ Transit Bus 409 (Trenton-Willingboro-Phila.)

The 409 bus line connects people to jobs located along the Rt 130 corridor while servicing the downtowns of the communities along the way to Camden and connections to Philadelphia. In

Bordentown, the bus runs along W Burlington St and through downtown Farnsworth before continuing north down Park St to Route 206.

Regional Trails

Several regional trails connect the City to the region's natural and historic resources [and form segments of the Circuit Trails network of Greater Philadelphia](#):

The Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Trail [is a 77-mile state trail that runs along the historic canal towpath beginning at the end of Farnsworth Avenue. The trail splits in Trenton, branching northeast to New Brunswick and northwest to Stockton.](#)

The Delaware River Heritage Trail [is a regional trail linking historic resources, open space, and river communities located along the Middle and Lower Delaware River. The Heritage Trail includes the D&R Canal trail and planned on-road and off-road extensions through Bordentown to](#)

The East Coast Greenway [is a 3,000-mile arterial trail system spanning Key West, Florida to the northern border of Maine. The Delaware River Heritage Trail and D&R Canal Trail feed into the East Coast Greenway, establishing bicycle and pedestrian linkages from Bordentown to major cities and attractions throughout the Atlantic coast.](#)

Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Areas

Redevelopment and rehabilitation through the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) are procedural planning tools that can help municipalities encourage revitalization of properties experiencing vacancy, deterioration, or other adverse conditions created by marketplace variations. Adopted redevelopment plans and neighborhood revitalization plans can set specific goals and standards to achieve the City's vision for revitalization. Rehabilitation areas also enable municipalities to offer short-term tax abatements for home restoration.

The Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area was adopted by resolution in 2012 in response to the blighting influence of the then soon-to-vacated Ocean Spray industrial site at 104 Park Street. In 2016, the *Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area Redevelopment Plan* was adopted by the City Commissioners to encourage compatible re-use of the Ocean Spray site and adjacent Park Street properties in accordance with the City's plans for smart growth. As of the adoption of the 2021 comprehensive plan, the site remains vacant although a site plan for mixed-use commercial and residential development has been approved. Recommendations for amendment of the *Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area Redevelopment Plan* are included in subsequent sections of this comprehensive plan.

The Former Bob McGuire Chevrolet Site was adopted in 2015 for commercial revitalization of the highway. After a redevelopment plan was adopted in 2016, complete redevelopment of the site has resulted in a hotel and carwash facility.

The Route 206 & Elizabeth Redevelopment Area was adopted in 2019 to promote revitalization of the 5-acre site along Route 206 S and north of Elizabeth St. The site comprises four parcels

(Block 1501, Lots 37.01 – 37.04) of which two are occupied by an existing gym, self-defense school, and auto repair shop. The middle two parcels remain vacant and undeveloped. A Redevelopment Plan for the area has yet to be submitted and adopted.

Bordentown Township has utilized the LRHL to encourage redevelopment of multiple sites throughout the Township. In 2019, the Township designated nearly the entire municipality as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation [to encourage investment in repairs and improvements](#). The Township has also established several Areas in Need of Redevelopment [just outside the City](#) that may present impacts and opportunities for the City of Bordentown:

The Southern Gateway Redevelopment Area comprises the commercial district surrounding the southern merge of Route 130 and 206, which borders the City’s southern edge. The Burlington County Bridge Commission prepared a redevelopment plan for the area in 2013 that permits a wide range of commercial uses as a means for economic development along the highway corridor. While the redevelopment area is under the Township’s jurisdiction, efforts to strengthen the City’s bicycle and pedestrian connections through this area should be explored.

The K Johnson/Agway Yates Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 2007 and amended in 2009. The plan is intended to encourage mixed-use development and local employment along the Route 130 to the north of the City. Although ongoing development of the site is characteristic of highway business-park development, the City and Township may work together in the future to further integrate the project into the social and urban fabric of the area through bicycle and pedestrian connections to employment, commerce, housing, and open space [via Park Street and rail right of way](#).

The SAAJ-Taylor/Red Roof Inn Redevelopment Area was adopted in 2008 comprising 7 acres along Route 130/206 south of Ward Avenue. As of 2021, a Holiday Inn Express has been built, while the pad site fronting Bordentown City remains vacant.

Climate Change Vulnerability

Communities throughout New Jersey are expected to experience a wide range of effects from climate change. To urge local resiliency planning, Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation in February 2021 mandating that land use plan elements include an assessment of climate change vulnerability and specific strategies for improving local resiliency. *The following assessment of climate change in Bordentown City is based on findings by the Burlington County Hazard Mitigation Plan, NJDEP Scientific Report on Climate Change, and additional resources made available by state, regional, and national agencies.*

Sea-Level Rise

As the City of Bordentown is located along the tidally impacted waterways of the Delaware River and Crosswicks Creek, rising sea-levels and increased severity and frequency of precipitation will require additional efforts to minimize flood hazards. Particular attention to critical facilities such as utilities and transportation infrastructure will be necessary for protecting health and safety in addition to maintaining the longevity of public infrastructure.

NJDEP has identified the likelihood of three possible scenarios for sea-level rise by 2050³:

- 83% chance of exceeding 0.9ft;
- 50% chance of exceeding 1.4ft; and
- 17% chance of exceeding 2.1ft.

To assess sea-level rise vulnerability in Bordentown based on the projected scenarios, a Sea-Level Rise Vulnerability map has been prepared using GIS data published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Water levels along the Delaware River, Crosswicks Creek, and Blacks Creek are anticipated to encroach existing wetlands and areas currently located within the 100-Year (1-percent annual chance) flood zone. As a result, gradual inundation and greater high-tide water levels are likely to contribute to losses in land area at Bordentown Beach, Lime Kiln Alley Park, and throughout the Blacks Creek stream corridor. Because most of these vulnerable areas already experience intermittent tidal flooding or are located within or near wetlands and floodway, significant losses of *buildable* land by 2050 will be minimal.

However, based on the projected sea-level rise, trees, shrubs, and other vegetation will likely experience increased stress and dieback as sea-levels continue to encroach the City's low-lying areas. Further assessment of erosion control and potential losses to tree canopy, habitat, and marshland evolution resulting from sea-level rise are recommended for future updates to the City's Environmental Resource Inventory to assist with responsive long-term planning.

³. *Scientific Report on Climate Change, NJDEP, 2020*

Precipitation

Spatial climate data have been prepared and mapped online by the New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center at Rutgers University. Based on locally adapted projection models, Bordentown may experience some increase in precipitation by 2040 as noted below.

Changes in Precipitation ^[OL2]		
	1981 – 2020 Average	2020 – 2040 Projected Average
Mean Monthly Precipitation (Summer)	4 – 5in.	5 – 6in.
Mean Monthly Precipitation (Winter)	3 – 4in.	3 – 4in.

An increase in precipitation may cause existing flood zones and wetlands to encroach on areas that do not typically experience flooding. Specifically, encroachment of the existing floodplain into areas further from streams and shorelines may be expected further upstream. As future flood zones are not available as of the date of this assessment, the City should remain up to date with the latest Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and FEMA flood-hazard data as the effects of sea-level rise develop and additional guidance and data from national and state agencies are made available.

Temperature

Spatial climate data have been prepared and mapped online by the New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center at Rutgers University. Based on locally adapted projection models, Bordentown may experience several changes in temperature trends by 2040 as noted below.

Changes in Temperature ^[OL3]		
	1981 – 2020 Average	2020 – 2040 Projected Average
Days with High Above 95°F	<4 – 10	11 – 20
Days with Low Below 32°F	101 – 125	76 – 100
Mean Daily Max. Temperature (Summer)	86 – 90°F	86 – 95°F
Mean Daily Max. Temperature (Winter)	41 – 45°F	41 – 45°F

Mean Daily Min. Temperature (Summer)	56 – 60°F	66 – 70°F
Mean Daily Min. Temperature (Winter)	21 – 25°F	26 – 30°F

Drought and Wildfire

Although Bordentown is expected to experience an increase in average precipitation as the NJDEP Scientific Report on Climate Change notes, precipitation may fall less frequently during dry months, contributing to more intense drought. According to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, wildfire risk in Bordentown is of medium hazard ranking with an “occasional” probability of occurrence, which the City plans to address through a Fire Plan within the next 3 years.

Critical Facilities

[Several critical infrastructure facilities are located within current flood plains and areas expected to experience tidal flooding:](#)

Bordentown Sewerage Authority Wastewater Pump Station

A wastewater pump station operated by the Bordentown Sewerage Authority is located within the existing 100-year and 500-year flood zones in addition to steep slopes greater than 15%. As such, the station is susceptible to increased flooding, erosion, and landslides. [An engineer’s assessment of these potential impacts is recommended to determine what actions, if any, are necessary.](#)

W Burlington Street Bridge

The W Burlington Street bridge over Blacks Creek is located along County Route 662. The bridge footprint and its approximate 450-foot approach is located within the 100-year and 500-year flood zones. Assessment by the Burlington County Bridge Commission may be necessary to evaluate the impacts of sea-level rise, erosion, and general effects of increased flood risk. Note that the W Burlington Street bridge is used by NJ Transit Bus 409.

NJ Transit River LINE

Portions of the light rail tracks and track embankments are located within the 100-year and 500-year flood zones and steep slopes, putting the rail infrastructure at risk for flooding, soil erosion, and landslides. [The River LINE light rail system is operated and managed by the State. Action by the City is likely not necessary.](#)

Future Build-Out

As the City of Bordentown is ~~relatively~~mostly already built-out, growth and development is primarily limited to redevelopment and scattered-site infill on few remaining buildable lots. As a result, large-scale impacts on impervious coverage and flood capacity from development are not expected. Following recent preservation of Point Breeze, which has reduced the City's buildable land by more than 60 acres, the City has relatively few remaining buildable lots that remain unaffected by environmental constraints like wetlands, slopes, and streams. ~~42 acres, is considered vacant undeveloped, or potential buildable land.~~

Parcels in the MOD-IV data that may in-fact be identified as vacant or underutilized are listed in the table below and labelled on the Potential Future Build-Out Map. Area #1 is the 14.3-acre Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area, which is one of the few parcels able to handle any significant development. The Ocean Spray Redevelopment Plan calls for mixed-use residential development not to exceed 20 units per acre with a minimum of 50,000 square feet of adaptive reuse commercial space.

~~Of the other parcels identified, only Route 130 possesses significant development potential.~~ Of the other parcels identified, only Area #2 on Route 206 possesses significant development potential. All other undeveloped land in residentially zoned areas or within the downtown, are fit for small-scale infill consistent with surrounding density. Additionally, some of these vacant lots are significantly undersized and may be considered viable locations for pocket parks or consolidation with neighboring properties in the future.

Considering existing floodplains, wetlands, projected sea level rise, and limited infill, approximately 17 to 18 acres of vacant or buildable land could contribute to future buildout within highly localized locations.

~~Considering existing floodplains, existing wetlands, and the projected one to two feet of sea-level rise, approximately 17-18 acres of vacant or buildable land of the 42 acres identified could contribute to the City's future buildout.~~

Advancing Resiliency throughout the Comprehensive Plan

Adopted elements of the comprehensive plan, such as the Conservation Plan Element, Open Space Element, and Utilities Element include varying levels of discussion related to flood-hazard. Future updates to the comprehensive plan through additional elements are recommended to include further assessment of climate change resiliency strategies.

Open Space, Recreation, and Conservation

Through efforts by the City, D&R Greenway, the Green Team and others, Bordentown has gradually preserved increasingly flood-prone areas along streams and waterways. The Open Space Element and Conservation Plan Element recommend continued preservation of greenways and development of trails along stream corridors and remaining natural land. These efforts are

compatible with and complementary to flood hazard mitigation efforts, placing additional emphasis on the importance of conserving land for ecological services like flood capacity and erosion control.

Circulation, Parking, and Economic Development

Preparation of the Circulation and Parking Element is recommended to include a more detailed assessment of green stormwater infrastructure opportunities to incorporate best management practices into the streetscape. These efforts are also recommended to advance economic development goals for revitalizing the downtown.

Additional Vulnerability Planning Efforts

The City adopted a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance in 2017 to address and guide development in flood prone areas per NJDEP guidance. In addition, the City has or is amidst amending its Stormwater Management Ordinance to comply with updated NJDEP municipal stormwater regulations. Additional guidance and relevant information on similar efforts can be found in the Bordentown Water Department Asset Management Plan and Burlington County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Implementation Strategies

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

As noted in other sections of the comprehensive plan, use of green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) is recommended to mitigate flooding throughout the City. Widespread use of features like swales, rain gardens, rain barrels, permeable pavement, and drought- and flood-tolerant landscaping can help manage stormwater on-site by reducing the amount of runoff entering the City’s storm sewers and waterways. Implementation of GSI is recommended through capital improvement planning, design of parks and public spaces, streetscape improvements, and revised landscaping standards of the zoning ordinance.

Combating the Urban Heat Island Effect

To reduce solar heat gain, also known as the urban heat island effect, the City may consider increased shade tree plantings, preservation of mature tree canopy, and use of lighter groundcover to help offset projected increases in temperature while improving overall quality of life throughout the City. It is recommended that the Shade Tree Committee, Green Team, and Environmental Commission continue to maintain an inventory of the City’s shade tree infrastructure and identify needs for expansion. Additionally, use of materials that increase the reflectivity of ground and building coverage should be encouraged. Implementation may be achieved through reinforced zoning and landscaping standards, thorough review of development applications, and capital improvement planning for parks, streetscapes, and public facilities.

Promoting On-Site Renewable Energy

~~An increase in average temperatures may lead to higher peak energy demand for air conditioning. To improve local resiliency and potentially reduce the likelihood of brownouts, the City should continue to encourage public and private investment in solar and other locally renewable energy sources.~~

Local renewable energy systems can increase the City's energy resiliency during storms, heatwaves, natural disasters, and supply-chain disruptions. The City should continue to encourage public and private investment in local renewable energy sources such as solar and ways of increasing efficiency through microgrid systems, energy recovery systems, and other potentially viable technologies. As an increase in average temperatures may lead to higher peak energy demand for air conditioning, local energy resiliency will be increasingly important.

Advancing Land Conservation

Conservation of environmentally sensitive land can help preserve the City's natural flood capacity and mature tree canopy to help offset the effects of climate change. Conservation Restricted Overlay Zones as proposed by the Land Use Element are recommended to preserve natural land along stream corridors to protect ecological services in the City such as flood capacity, erosion control, micro-climate, air filtration, biodiversity, pollinator habitat, and sound buffering.

Snow and Ice Management

According to the NJDEP Scientific Report on Climate Change, warmer and wetter climate may worsen winter conditions. While the City of Bordentown already does a great job managing snow and ice removal, a strategic snow and ice removal plan for the City's public walkways could ~~help~~ further minimize slipping hazards for pedestrians, especially in troublesome areas like West Park Street, the railroad bridges, and sloped sidewalks.

Land Use Goals

The Land Use Goals of this Plan are steeped in public input and bridge the City's rich history with its eye for the future. While these 10 basic goals are broken down further by specific land use category to follow, they work to achieve a holistic vision for the entire City.

- 1) Nurture a vibrant and resilient downtown.
- 2) Provide high-quality and diverse housing opportunities.
- 3) Preserve and reinforce historic heritage.
- 4) Embrace the highway corridor.
- 5) Re-orient the waterfront.
- 6) Promote climate resiliency and environmental stewardship.
- 7) Advance public health and safety.
- 8) Strengthen regional planning efforts.
- 9) Provide adequate and integrated open spaces.
- 10) Improve mobility and access.

Economic Development Goals

1. **Preserve and enhance** the historic, mixed-use character of the downtown and further integrate history into the City's [strategies for economic development and resiliency](#).
2. **Improve safety and comfort** for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit ridership through streetscape improvements and capital investment planning.
3. **Strengthen pedestrian activity** through a strategic balance of uses and integration with public spaces and streets.
4. **Enhance connectivity and wayfinding** to community assets like historic landmarks, transit stops, open space, and public parking.
5. **Promote opportunities for contextually-appropriate infill**, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse of historic structures.
6. **Manage parking and circulation** to improve safety, visibility, mobility, and access for all modes of transportation.
7. **Treat public streets as public spaces** by continuing to explore opportunities for streetscape amenities, open streets, parklets, and ~~pocket parks~~-[integration of land uses with the streetscape](#).

8. **Embrace the highway corridor** by improving safety, access, and gateways into the City while strengthening the City's ratable base.
9. **Stay current** with emerging land uses, legislation, economic strategies, and administrative best management practices.

Housing and Community Development Goals

10. **Encourage preservation and rehabilitation** of the City's historic housing stock.
11. **Adopt zoning** that respects the City's small-town, historic character and promotes a smooth and ~~fair~~ [intuitive](#) application process.
12. **Encourage high-quality affordable housing options** for low- to moderate-income households and a local workforce.
13. **Promote aging-in-place** through flexible housing types and supportive infrastructure [for all ages](#).
14. **Provide adequate and integrated open space** for highly accessible recreation and leisure opportunities.

Open Space, Recreation, and Resiliency Goals

15. **Provide a diverse range of facilities** to accommodate active and passive recreation needs, [various ages and preferences, and advancement of public health goals](#).
16. **Treat public streets as public spaces** by continuing to explore opportunities for streetscape amenities, open streets, parklets, and pocket parks.
17. **Improve access and connectivity** to open space and community assets by strengthening bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, transit access, and connections to local and regional trail networks.
18. **Incorporate art and history** into public space planning to enrich the social functions offered by parks and open space and promote tourism.
19. **Reinforce environmental stewardship** through conservation, best management practices, [brownfields remediation](#), green infrastructure, and long-range planning.
20. **Embrace the waterfront** through enhanced design, trail connections, tourism opportunities, and public access.

Circulation and Parking Goals

21. **Enhance mobility** throughout the City and strengthen connections to community facilities, employment, transit stops, and across the highway.

- 22. Manage parking demand** and improve pedestrian connections to existing public parking facilities within walkable distances.
- 23. Encourage bicycle use** through infrastructure improvements to make biking safe, convenient, and comfortable.
- 24. Leverage transit investments** through enhanced pedestrian infrastructure, economic and community-oriented programs and events.
- 25. Expand the trail network** to incorporate greenways, open space, rights of way, and regional assets.
- 26. Preserve and enhance alleyways** for [private](#) property access and multi-functionality [where appropriate](#).
- 27. Embrace the highway corridor** by improving safety, appearance, access, and gateways into the City.

Land Use Recommendations

Land use within the City overlaps nearly all aspects of its physical and social landscape and is thus inseparable from issues and outcomes related to public health, economic development, historic preservation, conservation, and other areas of focus, both large and small. Although the strategies and recommendations of this Land Use Element are categorized for practical purposes, they are intended to be viewed through a comprehensive lens and implemented together with recognition of the other elements and the effects decisions play on one another aspect of City life in order to fully advance the City’s vision. These decisions will also serve as the basis for future zoning amendments assuredly to come, but that of which are not part of this process.

The Land Use Element sets the stage for continuing discussions necessary to implement this plan, as well as additional plans in the future. Some recommendations warrant further exploration, such as; amendments to the zoning code, open space and park capital planning, urban design strategies, historic preservation planning and review, and streetscape improvements.

Proposed Land Use Map

The Proposed Land Use Map sets the foundation for other recommendations of the comprehensive plan. Land use descriptions are based on existing development patterns in the City and prior recommendations of the comprehensive plan. While the Proposed Land Use map is ***not*** a zoning map, it establishes a basis for zoning amendments by coordinating recommendations of the Land Use Element with existing conditions and on-the-ground realities within the City.

Residential uses have been categorized based on current zoning, housing types, density, and a preliminary assessment of existing lot characteristics. As suggested in the Residential Zoning Analysis, the City would benefit from [updated zoning standards and possibly](#) a form-based code or hybrid zoning code that fully accommodates existing lot characteristics while advancing the City’s goals.

Office Commercial areas consist of office buildings in residential areas that are occupied by one or more tenants and often have the capacity for off-street parking. Efforts to further integrate these “grandfathered” uses into the surrounding residential neighborhood should be explored through future applications and careful attention to sidewalk connectivity, landscaping, and building setbacks.

Downtown Mixed-Use entails properties fronting Farnsworth Avenue or within the “downtown fringe.” These areas are characterized by narrow lots, re-purposed historic structures, limited off-street parking, accessory apartments on upper floors, local businesses, and pedestrian activity.

Highway Commercial uses are characterized by large commercial lots, often occupied by franchises, oriented toward the highway and accessed predominantly by car.

Waterfront uses include non-residential uses along Crosswicks Creek such as marinas, boating clubs, restaurants, open space, artisan studios, and recreational trails. Many of the uses and structures along the waterfront are located within the existing flood plain but are effectively “grandfathered.” Future use of this zone may necessitate flood-resilient design in response to climate change and increasing flood hazards.

Railroad property includes parcels and right of way owned and/or operated by NJ Transit and rail companies like CSX /Conrail. Railroad right of ways and public transit real estate represent valuable opportunities for local and regional trail development as recommended further within the Land Use Element.

Conservation-Restricted Residential areas as discussed in more detail in the recommendations, encourage preservation of the City’s stream corridors and remaining natural features within residentially zoned areas in response to climate change, flood hazards, and the City’s goals for conservation, greenways, and trail development.

Parks and Public Uses include existing public parks, open space, and public or semi-public facilities existing within such areas.

The Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area establishes permitted uses for reuse of the former Ocean Spray site for light commercial industrial, mixed-use residential, and open space and trail connections as adopted by the *Ocean Spray Redevelopment Plan*.

General & Administrative Recommendations

The following recommendations are administrative and procedural in function but extremely important toward the efficient implementation of the comprehensive plan. These recommendations seek to simplify procedures, increase transparency, assist with planning and zoning decisions, and reinforce general coordination among the City’s many devoted officials, committees, volunteers, and stakeholders. Together, these efforts can limit the exposure to liability by the City and applicants while ensuring predictability and efficiency of private investment.

1. Revisit Past Zoning Efforts

MEETS GOALS:

The previous Land Use Element adopted in 2004 recommended extensive changes to the zoning code that resulted in preparation of an unadopted Land Development Ordinance (LDO) in 2008. That exercise aimed to implement the recommendations of the Land Use Element through a complete overhaul of the existing zoning by establishing new districts, expanding the range of permissible uses, and laying out modified standards for land use

and development. Many of the items included in the LDO are worthy of proscriptive reconsideration, [while some are reintroduced at a conceptual level within this comprehensive plan.](#)

A thorough and surgical approach that reviews and revises the LDO should be a high priority to the City. Included in review of the LDO should be the application and development review process, fees, opportunities for new and recommended land uses, contextually appropriate design standards, and reconfiguration of zoning districts to protect natural and historic resources.

[It is recommended that the City establish a diverse steering committee to dissect the draft LDO with the Planning Board and guide adoption by the Board of Commissioners. Due to the sheer size and complexity of the LDO, a phased or bit-by-bit approach to assessment and adoption is recommended. Facilitated discussions with affected neighborhoods may also prove useful.](#)

2. Amend the Ocean Spray Redevelopment Plan

MEETS GOALS:

A development plan for a mixed-use project was approved for adaptive reuse and redevelopment of the former Ocean Spray industrial site on Park Street. As the plan and its approval are protected under a Redevelopment Agreement, the City should reexamine the adopted *Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area Redevelopment Plan* to ensure that the future use of the site remains consistent with the comprehensive plan if the development should not occur. Specifically, the City and State’s acquisition of the Point Breeze site (formerly Divine Word) directly across the street from the Ocean Spray site presents possible contradictions as the adopted permissible uses of the current *Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area Redevelopment Plan* run contrary to comprehensive civic design. In light of these changes and other recommendations of the comprehensive plan, the City should reexamine the permitted uses within the Redevelopment Plan and the underlying C/I zone and make amendments as necessary.

The Ocean Spray Redevelopment Plan should be amended to supersede the underlying zoning and reflect the preservation efforts of the Point Breeze property. Permitted uses within the Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area should be amended to reflect the City’s goals for historic reuse, mixed-use infill, inclusionary housing, and low-intensity commercial uses intended for the site.

3. Assess the Administrative Review Process

MEETS GOALS:

Permitting, Approval, and Enforcement

An assessment of the development review process, through the lens of the annual Planning Board report, can provide a complete understanding of the City’s administrative

capacities, improve predictability, and effectuate a coordinated economic investment strategy among public and private actors. Assurance that structures are built with sufficient review through updated zoning can assist property owners with design options while also reducing potential public and private liability. Implementation of the comprehensive plan throughout the planning and zoning approval process should be continually explored wherever feasible.

Online Access

The City has greatly expanded its online presence in recent years through development of the municipal website and several resources uploaded to *ecode360.com*. Additional documents have been prepared and uploaded to the Bordentown City Environmental Commission website. Ensuring that all planning documents are up-to-date and easily accessible will ensure meaningful public participation and well-informed decisions in the future.

~~*The City should may consider an outline of the development review process, relevant permit documents and staff contacts.*~~ *The City should consider additional resources to make the development process more understandable by the average applicant. Publicly available documents to consider include an outline of the development review process, relevant permit documents, staff contacts, and zoning bulk/use standards in table form.*

Continued Collaboration

The City of Bordentown is known for the sense of community generated by its residents, volunteers, public officials, businesses, and community organizations. Harnessing the energy of these stakeholders and channeling it is a powerful and efficient strategy for implementing the comprehensive plan.

Similarly, expanding formal relationships with Bordentown Township and Fieldsboro can help implement many of the recommendations of the comprehensive plan that go beyond municipal boundaries such as highway improvements, community programs, trails, open space, the school system, and advancing local planning coordination.

~~*It is recommended that as the City analyzes its capacities, it explore the creation of a liaison position within an Economic Development and/or Planning and Zoning Department to assist with coordination of all the great volunteer efforts happening throughout the City.*~~

As the City analyzes its capacities, it should reexamine the currently unstaffed Community Development and Municipal Affairs Coordinator position and their described duties. Recognizing that many improvements recommended in the comprehensive plan will depend on effective timing with infrastructure repair schedules and similar constraints, the Coordinator could be extremely advantageous at moving items forward in a strategic and cost-effective manner.

~~comprehensive plan~~ 4. Explore Rehabilitation Area Designation

MEETS GOALS:

Establishing an area in need of rehabilitation, as defined by the State of New Jersey, can help stimulate private investment in home restoration and eliminate substandard housing units through a 5-year tax abatement program. According to tax records, more than 90% of the City's housing stock was built prior to 1970, which potentially qualifies the majority of the City for designation. Rehabilitation is not a blight designation but instead a tool that communities can utilize to help offset the increased property tax value resulting from property improvements.

Per the state Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-14), an area may be determined to be in need of rehabilitation if:

A significant portion of structures therein are in a deteriorated or substandard condition and there is a continuing pattern of vacancy, abandonment or underutilization of properties in the area, with a persistent arrearage of property tax payments thereon;

More than half of the housing stock in the delineated area is at least 50 years old, or a majority of the water and sewer infrastructure in the delineated area is at least 50 years old and is in need of repair or substantial maintenance; and

A program of rehabilitation, as defined in section 3 of P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-3), may be expected to prevent further deterioration and promote the overall development of the community.

Statutory rehabilitation can be viewed as a way of combining historic restoration, home rehabilitation, and infrastructure upgrades to holistically improve the physical condition of the City. Despite the stigma of rehabilitation, such efforts would not require or recommend any declaration of blight or dilapidation. Instead, rehabilitation could be wielded more as a public finance tool to soften tax assessment increases typically associated with home repairs and improvements. Note that even homeowners who have already made considerable investments in their homes without rehabilitation programs can still benefit as the investments of their neighbors continue to raise property values throughout the neighborhood.

In addition to direct benefits, designation and recognition by the State as a Rehabilitation Area may even grant the City higher priority status for competitive state and federal programs in the future.

Example

A home is assessed and paying taxes on a property worth \$100,000. A major addition with renovation could see the value of the home, and the taxes it pays, increase to \$125,000.

Under Rehabilitation Area status, the homeowner's valuation freezes at \$100,000. The first year they pay 0% increase; Second year they pay a 20% increase on the added value only; Third year 40% on the added value only; Fourth year 60% on the added value only; Fifth year 80% on the added value only.

At the Sixth year the homeowner will pay fully assessed tax value, but the savings on taxes over those 5 years will have off-set the investment made to the property and both City, neighborhood, and homeowner benefit from the result.

5. Keep the Plan Up to Date

MEETS GOALS:

To advance the holistic vision of the comprehensive plan, the following plan elements should be prepared, listed in general order of urgency and/or practicality:

Circulation and Parking Element

A Circulation and Parking Element has been a longstanding priority for the City. Recommendations and findings of recent studies, such as those prepared by DVRPC, should be combined with the recommendations herein to further explore problems and solutions regarding parking, safety, mobility, and other goals.

Open Space and Recreation Element

The Open Space Element was last updated in 2005. The City should carry forward the recent volunteer effort initiated by the Green Team and Environmental Commission and incorporate additional changes noted in the comprehensive plan such as preservation of Point Breeze, expansion of the trail network, and streetscape infrastructure opportunities.

Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

[A Housing Element and Fair Share Plan was prepared in 2006 to assess affordable housing characteristics in the City and establish a plan to meet the City's State-mandated affordable housing obligations. As much of the context surrounding the projected affordable housing need has changed since the 2006 plan, an updated Housing Element is recommended further herein.](#)

Utilities and Community Facilities Element

A Utilities Element was prepared in 2005 to establish strategies for public utility planning of water and wastewater infrastructure. More recently, the Water Department prepared an Asset Management Plan in 2019, which could serve as a basis for such effort. An updated Utility and Community Facilities Element is recommended to help incorporate stormwater regulations recently mandated by NJDEP, emerging technology and programs to address climate resiliency, and address issues of lead toxicity and water infrastructure upgrades. The City should also continue to coordinate infrastructure upgrades with the

streetscape improvement opportunities recommended throughout the comprehensive plan, such as green stormwater infrastructure, curb adjustments, and public vehicles compatible with narrow streets.

Resiliency & Climate Change

Governor Murphy signed legislation in February 2021 mandating that land use elements include an assessment of climate change impacts and strategies for improving local climate resiliency. This Plan includes an assessment of climate vulnerability and recommends strategies for improved resiliency throughout the comprehensive plan. Subsequent amendments to the comprehensive plan and its various elements should continue to expand and improve upon these strategies.

1. Fine-Tune the Downtown Core

MEETS GOALS:

In coordination with the draft Land Development Ordinance (LDO) described above, the City should amend the zoning ordinance similarly as reflected in the *Proposed Land Use Map* and include additional strategies to revitalize the downtown. For instance, construction of additional single-family residential structures and garden apartments in the downtown core should be discouraged as those uses do not contribute to the commercial mixed-use character of Farnsworth Avenue. Further, activating both sides of the streetscape along Farnsworth Avenue is ideal for ~~revitalizing the downtown through reinforcement of pedestrian-oriented commercial at the ground-level.~~ maximizing pedestrian traffic at the ground-level.

The downtown commercial zone should be amended to exclude new single-family detached homes and garden-style apartments. Permitted residential uses within the downtown core should only be included within mixed-use buildings with ground-floor commercial space to reflect the general historic character of downtown Farnsworth Avenue. Strategies to further integrate existing “grandfathered” residential structures into the downtown commercial mixed-use character should be encouraged and explored through means such as pop-up shops, micro-retail, pocket parks, landscaping, and architectural treatments that can help foster a more functionally and aesthetically cohesive downtown.

Prior to any adopted zoning changes, the priorities of both residents and businesses shall be considered fully and balanced appropriately with proper management strategies.

2. Explore Creative Opportunities to Increase Economic Vitality and Business Development

MEETS GOALS:

Prior master plans have mentioned Hamilton Marketplace, the highway corridor, and similar commercial areas as potential threats to the prosperity of downtown Farnsworth.

However, between COVID-19 restrictions and the burgeoning on-line shopping industry, the most significant threats to a city’s main street are likely no longer just shopping malls and big-box stores [but an increasingly decentralized consumer marketplace](#). Similarly, the rise of delivery services may have implications on the basic needs of food establishments – square footage, frontage, labor, hours – and evolving definitions of what a “restaurant” *actually* is. In recent years, shopping and dining services have become increasingly more fluid and detached from local land use, increasing competition for downtown main streets like Farnsworth Avenue.

The need to promote downtown resiliency and help local businesses compete and engage with modern conveniences warrants increased flexibility and creativity in form and use. Although finer-grain retail can take many forms such as those recommended below, it may be possible to enable multiple types of businesses like pop-up kiosks and outdoor displays through simple, yet transparent zoning permits rather than costly board approvals. Although different from traditional conceptions of commercial uses, these more flexible commercial uses can fit in with the City’s existing charm while meeting other City goals for pedestrianism and economic development.

Bordentown is fortunate to have such uniquely preserved streetscapes. Although there are some pre-zoning “quirks” that would probably not be built today, these are some of the features that most strongly contribute to the quaint small-town character and historic legacy of the City. Narrow streets and buildings constructed before the invention of the automobile have created invaluable opportunities to explore additional uniquely responsive infill development that not only conforms to the historic streetscapes that the community enjoys but complements neighborhood character and generates pedestrian activity for businesses and community life.

Through the revision and adoption of the draft LDO, the City may wish to permit special downtown uses as a strategy for economic development. Conditional uses like accessory entertainment, outdoor dining, pop-up retail, and other uses recommended below may be utilized as a way to boost activity throughout the entire downtown [with specific controls through approval and zoning enforcement](#). [The City may also consider issuing mercantile or business licenses to permit certain activities](#).

Accessory Entertainment

MEETS GOALS:

Allowing flexibility for businesses in the downtown to host temporary live entertainment has been a longstanding priority for Bordentown as a means for economic development and revitalization. Conditions for entertainment within the zoning code will need to address highly variable spatial constraints like historic building dimensions, parking availability, fire safety, In many cases, fire and occupancy codes may severely limit or exclude entertainment opportunities, but safety must remain the utmost priority. Further, controls that address sound levels and protect the quality of life of nearby

residences will be crucial. With respect to these conditions, it is recommended that the City continue to explore ways to accommodate live music and entertainment in response to specific business needs.

The City may establish a temporary assembly use permit for specific or seasonal events with approval contingent upon review by licensed construction and fire code officials regarding maximum occupancy, floor-plan, ingress and egress, fire evacuation, and fire suppression.

The following conditions may be used as a starting basis for codifying entertainment as a conditional accessory use:

- a. Submission of an application and management plan including a layout plan, hours of operation, security arrangements, noise management, etc.***
- b. Compliance with City regulations regarding quiet hours and noise.***
- c. Exclusion of sexually-oriented businesses in the downtown***

Pop-Up Retail

MEETS GOALS:

Pop-up retail can strengthen the viability of local businesses while contributing to an active pedestrian streetscape. Opportunities for pop-up uses such as sidewalk shopping displays and temporary spaces like kiosks, tents, shipping containers, or carts should be explored and added as a conditional use within the downtown commercial zone, provided that specific guidelines are enforced to manage appearance and function of pop-up spaces.

The City may consider permitting pop-up retail as a conditional use restricted to existing storefronts in the downtown commercial zone, such as:

- a. Pedestrian circulation on public sidewalks shall not be impaired or redirected from the expected walkway. A minimum width of five (5) feet must be maintained for pedestrian traffic.***
- b. Outdoor display areas must not exceed the street frontage width of the primary commercial storefront.***
- c. Patrons and pedestrians should be able to clearly ascertain the entrances and exits of business establishments.***
- d. Overhead coverings may not obstruct pedestrian traffic.***
- e. The outdoor display area must remain clean and orderly at all times.***

The City may also consider other design requirements to help instill a specific character of pop-up spaces through encouraged use of materials, furnishings, landscaping, and general layout.

Micro-Retail

MEETS GOALS:

Micro-retail is similar to pop-up retail but occupies ground-floor spaces whose area and frontage may or may not accommodate traditional commercial uses per traditional zoning requirements. Due to their low floor area and subsequently lower rents, micro-retail spaces can provide incubation spaces for business startups such as a quick-service food, retail, or a very small boutique shop. As micro-retail is typically located indoors, it is generally more resistant to seasonal weather than pop-up retail and can provide year-long occupancy for small businesses to grow.

The City may consider micro-retail as a conditional use restricted to resident-occupied businesses in the downtown commercial zone. Conditions could include:

- a. Historically-appropriate façade treatments.***
- b. Review of pedestrian circulation and queuing expectations.***
- c. Adherence to fire code and fire safety protocols.***

Limits to impacts on parking demand may be addressed by coordination with zoning amendments for home occupations and a permanent resident condition.

Outdoor Sidewalk Cafés

MEETS GOALS:

In response to the economic distress caused by the pandemic, the City adopted the Sidewalk Dining Permits ordinance (Section 240-34) establishing basic conditions and procedures for outdoor dining space. Throughout the summer and fall, restaurants were permitted to utilize portions of the sidewalk and in some cases parking space within the street. As is evident by generally positive feedback from residents and business owners, there is lasting support for expanding the development of outdoor dining and related uses in a manner that is sensitive to public and private concerns.

Outdoor sidewalk cafés are a recommended conditional use for the downtown core and waterfront. The following basic conditions are intended to provide manageable requirements for outdoor dining spaces that enhance the streetscape with safe, flexible amenities for restaurants and patrons:

a. Pedestrian circulation on public sidewalks shall not be impaired or redirected from the expected walkway. A minimum width of five (5) feet must be maintained for pedestrian traffic.

b. Patrons and pedestrians should be able to clearly ascertain the entrances and exits of business establishments and outdoor seating areas

c. Overhead coverings may not obstruct pedestrian traffic

d. The outdoor dining area including tables and chairs must remain clean and orderly at all times.

e. Alcoholic beverages must only be served and consumed in the established outdoor dining area.

The City may also consider other design requirements to help instill a specific character through encouraged use of materials, furnishings, landscaping, and partitions.

Bed and Breakfast Establishments

MEETS GOALS:

Bed and breakfast establishments offer accommodations for visitors seeking a unique experience while [drawing clientele](#) for local businesses. Permitting such establishments ***only in select locations*** can increase the City's capacity for tourism while boosting shopping activity in the downtown for a wider array of goods and services than is currently offered. [Further, permission of bed and breakfast uses has been utilized in other historic towns around New Jersey as a means for preserving historic and architecturally significant residences that have relatively large square footage.](#) While the City does not currently permit bed and breakfast establishments, such uses ~~can~~ could contribute [positively](#) to the local economy with minimal impacts to permanent residents ***if integrated responsibly.***

~~Relatively large lots with architecturally significant homes and views of the Delaware River may provide ideal locations for such use. Potential nuisances, such as parking, traffic, or noise, can be addressed through conditional requirements in the zoning ordinance as well as the general City Code. The need to accommodate parking for several guests means simple conversion of any residence in Bordentown into a bed and breakfast will not be feasible. Relatively large lots, which may have capacity for additional off-street parking, as well as existing funeral homes – if they were to ever change ownership – may be viable locations.~~

[Potential nuisances arising from transient occupancy, such as parking, traffic, or noise, can be addressed through conditional requirements in the zoning ordinance as well as regulations and procedures established by the general City Code. However, further community discussions and resident engagement will be necessary to ensure that potential nuisances are adequately prevented wherever bed and breakfasts may be considered a viable permitted use.](#)

Permission of bed and breakfasts near the waterfront and the downtown, are recommended only if conditional upon controls such as:

- a. Full adherence to all State-mandated requirements for bed and breakfasts.*
- b. Site plan review and approval by the Planning Board.*
- c. Compliance with the area and bulk requirements of the underlying zone.*
- d. Permanent occupancy by the property owner and manager of the establishment.*
- e. A reasonable number of guest rooms consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and no greater than 8.*
- f. Prohibition of individual kitchens in guest rooms.*
- g. One off-street parking space per guest room.*
- h. Limitations on live entertainment and/or sales of alcohol.*
- i. (optional) The City may request that applicants seek and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness or advisement from the Historic Preservation Commission to further integrate bed and breakfasts architecturally into the historic streetscape.*
- j. (optional) The City may establish a local licensing procedure with additional controls on operations, management, liability, and a maximum number of bed and breakfast operators in the City.*

Addressing the Downtown Fringe

MEETS GOALS:

Through revision of the draft LDO and amendments to the current zoning, the City may consider how the downtown transitions to – and interfaces with – residential streets. Expansion of the existing downtown zone with conditional uses and revised conditions may be appropriate to allow light commercial, residential-scale offices, home-occupations, certain crafts and mixed-use buildings that are more suitable for the edge of the downtown than within the active commercial core.

Slight expansion of the downtown (Local Commercial) zone, or an addition to the conditional use standards surrounding the downtown per the Proposed Land Use map, can accommodate existing low-intensity commercial uses at the downtown fringe that are currently zoned High Density Residential (R-3). Additional amendments to the zoning ordinance can help establish a more controlled transition from the commercial downtown to the surrounding residential properties in ways that are sensitive to surrounding residential property owners.

3. Explore Creative Infill and Public Space Opportunities

MEETS GOALS:

Several small and underutilized spaces throughout the downtown create opportunities to further activate the street or otherwise contribute to the public realm. Pocket parks, semi-public spaces, green stormwater infrastructure, and pop-up shops can achieve small-scale infill that meets other goals of the comprehensive plan such as enhanced pedestrianism, economic resiliency, and stormwater management.

Specific opportunities to establish pocket parks within the downtown should be explored. The undeveloped corner of Farnsworth and Park ~~may be developed in coordination with a public pocket park on the corner~~, for instance, could include a small public space on the corner without compromising the property owner's existing ability to develop the lot for private use as is their right to do. The City may also consider potential purchase of the southeast corner of Farnsworth and Crosswicks St to achieve a similar effect. Each of these corners could create additional public space and function as visual gateways into the downtown core with signage, landscaping, seating, bicycle parking, historic features, or other amenities.

Pocket Parks

MEETS GOALS:

With respect to the residences in the existing garden apartments on Farnsworth Avenue, the City may wish to work with both property owners and residents to enhance the semi-public courtyard space through landscaping treatments that further activate the street and create small-scale public spaces. Such a space could become a part of the public realm with liability issues subsumed by the City in exchange for public use. Alternatively, this area and others could simply contribute to the downtown with enhanced greenery, landscaping, and green stormwater management.

Farnsworth & Railroad Bridge Deck

MEETS GOALS:

A much more ambitious opportunity presents itself with a deck expansion over the railroad at Farnsworth and Railroad Ave which could create a unique public space in the heart of downtown - perhaps through impending CSX railroad bridge work. The site's high-profile location and adjacent public parking may be ideal for a permanent farmer's market, outdoor performance area, and/or a combination of daily amenities like bicycle parking and seating.

Railroad Avenue Promenade

MEETS GOALS:

Past efforts to create a Railroad Avenue Promenade between Prince St and Third St may be expanded upon with an elevated open deck over the ROW between Prince and Second Streets. A linear plaza running perpendicular to the downtown could improve connectivity to Bordentown Station and its available parking as well as access to a unique downtown

open space. The details of how such a concept may be integrated into the bridge replacement project could be explored [in the near future while recognizing a cost-benefit analysis of such a project may be necessary.](#)

4. Prepare a Circulation and Parking Element

MEETS GOALS:

Pedestrian safety and parking availability remain critical issues among residents and business owners throughout the City and especially the downtown. Past efforts to explore shared-parking opportunities, enhanced pedestrian linkages, and other design strategies should be explored and implemented through a Circulation and Parking Element as recommended elsewhere in the comprehensive plan.

5. Expand Creative Use of the Street

MEETS GOALS:

In the past, the City has restricted vehicle access on portions of Farnsworth Avenue for pedestrians during City-wide events, fairs, and festivals. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City explored temporary closures of Farnsworth Avenue for socially-distanced outdoor dining in the street. Although there were some concerns [related to noise and bar traffic](#), the community was generally supportive of these efforts. As such, additional opportunities should be explored for creative pedestrianization of Farnsworth Avenue for open air markets, pop-up shops, and general use of the street as a public space. However, careful consideration of strategies that address noise, [resident parking](#), emergency vehicle access, [loading zones](#), and other concerns [will be necessary](#).

As the City contemplates use of Farnsworth Avenue, a variety of different options exist as COVID-19 rolls into the Summer of 2021 and the railroad bridge approaches construction. From one-way configurations to full closures, the possibilities for creative use of the street for people are vast [but require coordinated effort](#). Public art, landscaping, lighting, public safety, [development of design standards](#) and emergency access should be included in [future](#) conversations and additional concept development.

6. Address Cannabis Legalization Proactively

MEETS GOALS:

New Jersey voters approved adult use of cannabis for individuals over the age of 21 [by ballot referendum in 2020](#). Licensing requirements ~~for medical and adult use have been established that requires the City~~ [by the State legislature for medical and adult use require all municipalities to adopt zoning to regulate such uses prior to August 21st or else permit cannabis businesses by default as a conditional use in their respective zoning districts.](#) Accordingly, the City should determine where cannabis-related uses should be permitted,

if at all, and where to prohibit them. Such considerations shall consider the land use implications for each license class - retail, cultivation, manufacturing, consumption, delivery, and warehousing – which may be regulated separately.

Cultivation and manufacturing of cannabis related products is akin to industrial type uses and should be limited to industrial zoning districts. Retail dispensing for medical uses is similar to a pharmacy, while adult use and sales resemble more of a bar or lounge.

Although medical use of cannabis is a pharmacy use for patient access, adult use retail cannabis, and its associated traffic, should be limited to the commercial highway zone along route 130 and Route 206 with consideration of proximity and distancing requirements. As such a use could be a significant source of revenue for the City, it is recommended that adoption of a cannabis ordinance include the City's ability to capture 2% of all retail sales per the legislation.

7. Reactivate the Historic Preservation Commission

MEETS GOALS:

The abundance of historic resources in Bordentown City plays a significant role in its local identity and physical character. The deeply embedded historic legacies of the City, which are visible within the physical and social landscape, create unique potential for historic preservation efforts that can also make *broad strides* toward City goals regarding pedestrianism, tourism, housing, open space, and other strategies. The following recommendations are intended to bridge these themes and further incorporate the findings of the 2012 Historic Preservation Element into the City's strategies for land use planning, community facilities planning, and economic development.

The status of the City's Historic Preservation Commission has been unclear. It is recommended that the City reactivate the commission to play a more involved advisory role in the application review process and encourage historic rehabilitation activities through technical assistance and connecting funding sources for public and private projects. As it has done in the past, the commission should continue to collaborate with Bordentown Historical Society to ensure that the commission is staffed and the Historic Preservation Plan Element is advanced and amended as necessary. As it is currently adopted, the Historic Preservation Ordinance establishes a primarily *advisory* role of the commission, rather than *regulatory*, which helps retain a flexible balance between historic preservation goals and the financial capabilities of applicants and property owners.

Expand the Local Historic District

MEETS GOALS:

While the Bordentown Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places envelopes nearly the entire City, the *Local* Historic District as adopted by the City's

Historic Preservation Ordinance represents only a portion of the downtown and Thompson Street as indicated on the *Existing Zoning* map. With an active Historic Preservation Commission, the City can provide supportive review of development applications to address potential impacts on historic landmarks while assisting applicants and property owners with historically appropriate design guidelines.

In coordination with reactivating the Historic Preservation Commission, the City should explore expansion of the Local Historic District to encourage review of development applications and provide technical assistance for property owners to ensure rational implementation and recognition of cost constraints. Additional reassessment of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and its scope for rehabilitation and enforcement should be explored in the future with respect to balancing public and private concerns.

Establish Historic Design Guidelines

MEETS GOALS:

In conjunction with rehabilitation efforts and the above recommendations, the City should revisit the standards of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the recommendations of the Historic Preservation Element. Establishment of specific standards for development activities affecting historic landmarks and districts can guide planning and zoning reviews in a transparent, predictable, and advisory manner.

Specific standards for architectural treatments and improvements such as signs, fencing, and lighting are recommended to encourage private investment in historic rehabilitation and ensure that public and private needs are considered. Priorities should include historic-sensitive signage, finding effective ways of discouraging certain materials like vinyl or aluminum siding, and promoting restoration of corbels, cornice lines, wood, and natural brick. In lieu of strict regulatory requirements, the Historic Preservation Commission can provide technical assistance through educational materials for homeowners and renovators.

Promote Rehabilitation of Non-Historic Structures

MEETS GOALS:

Through reactivation of the Historic Preservation Commission, rehabilitation of non-historic structures within the historic district should be encouraged. As noted above, establishment of design guidelines and educational materials can provide property owners with technical assistance to spur voluntary improvements and historically appropriate renovations. Opportunities to integrate non-historic structures in the downtown should be explored through strategies that activate the ground-level and strengthen the visual relationship of non-traditional buildings and historic landmarks.

Along Farnsworth, it is recommended that the City work with property owners and tenants to strengthen the interface between non-historic structures, the streetscape, and the overall character of the historic district. A focus on reactivating or addressing residential ground-floors facing retail and restaurant establishments should be explored through means like ornamental landscaping and buffering, expanded outdoor seating, parklets, and historic architectural treatments. In the long term, the City may consider a rehabilitation plan that establishes a [targeted](#) strategy to improve land use, circulation, and parking in the area between Farnsworth Ave, Church Ct and 2nd St.

Continue Joint Efforts

MEETS GOALS:

The City should continue to explore opportunities to integrate historic preservation with other initiatives such as public spaces, recreation, trails, public art, and streetscape improvements. Creative team efforts may leverage financial and administrative resources in unexpected ways, while strengthening the City's unique identity and contributing to economic development.

Housing and Community Development Recommendations

1. Amend Residential Zoning

MEETS GOALS:

As the City revisits the Land Development Ordinance, particular attention should be paid to residential zoning. The standards of the current zoning in place do not accommodate prevailing lot characteristics or the historic development patterns that the City has shown great interest in preserving. As noted in the Residential Lot Conformity Analysis above, the zoning causes a high percentage of non-conforming lots. In addition, the development process is further complicated by suburban bulk standards such as front yards that are entirely inconsistent with neighboring historic structures. The resulting process thus requires variances for projects that are well within the City's existing character, while permitting some applications proposals that are not.

Realigning the zoning standards to the City's goals can streamline the development process and provide assurance that projects fit and are value-added investments. Residential zoning districts and their applicable bulk and area requirements should be tailored to prevailing lot areas, lot widths, and reasonable expectations for residential development and rehabilitation throughout the City. As discussed in the Residential Zoning Analysis section, a form-based hybrid [zoning](#) code may be most appropriate.

2. Explore Rehabilitation Designation

MEETS GOALS:

Establishing an area in need of rehabilitation, as defined by the State of New Jersey, can help stimulate private investment in home restoration, eliminate substandard housing units, and authorize the City to offer 5-year tax abatements for home improvements. According to tax records, more than 90% of the City's housing stock was built prior to 1970, potentially qualifying the majority of the City for designation.

Per the state Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-14), an area may be determined to be in need of rehabilitation if:

A significant portion of structures therein are in a deteriorated or substandard condition and there is a continuing pattern of vacancy, abandonment or underutilization of properties in the area, with a persistent arrearage of property tax payments thereon;

More than half of the housing stock in the delineated area is at least 50 years old, or a majority of the water and sewer infrastructure in the delineated area is at least 50 years old and is in need of repair or substantial maintenance; and

A program of rehabilitation, as defined in section 3 of P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-3), may be expected to prevent further deterioration and promote the overall development of the community.

Statutory rehabilitation can be viewed as a way of combining historic restoration, home rehabilitation, and infrastructure upgrades to holistically improve the physical condition of the City. Despite the stigma of rehabilitation, such efforts would not require or recommend any declaration of blight or dilapidation. Instead, rehabilitation could be wielded more as a public finance tool to soften the tax assessment increases that are typically associated with home repairs and improvements. Note that even homeowners who have already made considerable investments in their homes without rehabilitation programs can benefit as the investments of their neighbors continue to enhance property values throughout the neighborhood.

In addition to direct benefits, designation and recognition by the State as a Rehabilitation Area may even grant the City higher priority status for competitive state and federal programs in the future.

3. Preserve and Enhance Alleyways

MEETS GOALS:

Alleys are an important component of a public [and semi-public](#) street network, but their low visibility and limited use often causes them to be overlooked and neglected. To prevent the construction of structures within public right of way, the City should aim to preserve access through its alleyways through continual inspections and [zoning](#) enforcement. Additional opportunities for [optimal](#) use and ~~expansion~~ [strategic connection](#) of alleyways should be explored through the site plan review process and possible acquisition opportunities such as the parking lot on Third Street.

While alleyway improvements are not as high profile as on a primary street, their low-traffic, semi-private nature can create valuable opportunities for use by bicyclists, pedestrians, and even integration into the open space and recreation network. Opportunities to enhance the linkage of dead-end alleyways through cross access easements should be explored. One such example is the four-foot alleyway between Miles Avenue and Park Street, which could contribute to rear parking abilities for narrow lots on Farnsworth Avenue as proposed in the Circulation and Parking recommendations.

Street-Facing Accessory Structures

MEETS GOALS:

In certain areas of the City, accessory structures such as barns, garages, and sheds contribute - almost coincidentally - to a picturesque, rustic pedestrian-scale streetscape despite their general utilitarian use. This phenomenon is noticeable along some of the City's narrowest streets like McKnight Ave, Courtland St, [and Federal St](#). While the location of accessory structures along public right of ways is not permitted in the LDO, fine-tuning the code could further enhance the historic-scale pedestrian network.

Specifically, standards for material use and architectural principles designed to reinforce the character of alleyways could be required for conditional approval of "street-facing accessory structures." The effect may be replicated on Federal St, Coopers Alley, and similar alleyways to create low-traffic, semi-private spaces for property access, leisure, and utilities [in aesthetically pleasing ways](#).

Conditional approval for street-facing accessory structures may include:

- a. Restrict to Courtland St, McKnight Ave, Federal St, Coopers Alley, and any [unnamed](#) public alleyways depicted on the City tax maps.***
- b. Public rights-of-way must remain unobstructed.***
- c. Accessory structures must not contain accessory dwelling units.***
- d. Accessory structures must be located at ~~least five (5) feet~~ [located at a reasonable distance](#) from the applicant's property line.***
- e. The lot must remain compliant with all general requirements of the underlying zone.***
- f. (Optional) The City may require more rigorous use of materials and architecture to achieve and strengthen the intended effect, such as issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission to justify the purpose of the approval. [While this condition may seem stringent, special oversight by the Historic Preservation Commission may be necessary to effectuate the purpose of allowing these structures to face the street, which is typically prohibited altogether by modern zoning codes.](#)***

4. Revisit Past Zoning Efforts

Accessory Dwelling Units

MEETS GOALS:

Accessory dwelling units – also known as ADU’s, “granny flats” or in-law suites – are separate, fully equipped apartment units located on the same lot or within the same structure as an established principal use. An ADU is typically created by way of new accessory structure or expansion, conversion of an existing garage, or conversion of a portion of an existing principal structure.

The flexibility and affordability created by an ADU can benefit renters, property owners, and the general community. For instance, the small floor area, [typically –lower rents, and increased privacy](#) can provide housing accommodations for independent college students, changing family composition, and accessible units for seniors or persons with disabilities. An ADU can also provide supplemental rent income for property owners and utilize unneeded or otherwise undeveloped infill spaces.

To prevent any noticeable impact to the City’s existing density [and streetscape](#), conditions for ADU approval can be established to limit construction to appropriate lots.

Conditional use requirements and application of the standard zoning rules can ensure that ADUs are restricted to properties that have the necessary capacity [for an additional unit](#). Further assessment of the public infrastructure capacity for ADU’s should be explored. Using the draft Land Development Ordinance as a baseline, the following conditions are recommended for the establishment of ADU’s:

- a. The property owner must be a permanent occupant of the lot.***
- b. No more than one ADU shall be permitted per lot***
- c. No ADU shall be used for short-term rentals***
- d. One off-street parking space per ADU [shall be required \(waivable under special circumstances\)](#)***

Prepare a Housing Element

MEETS GOALS:

[A Housing Element is a component of the comprehensive plan that assesses housing statistics and affordability to establish a plan for growth management and State-mandated affordable housing obligations.](#)

A Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan was adopted in 2005 in response to the State Court’s invalidation of the Fair Share Housing Center’s growth-share mandate for affordable housing. Voluntary and proactive Fair Share Housing Center settlement

agreements have since occurred throughout the State among municipalities seeking additional protection from litigation related to affordable housing. At the time, Bordentown City opted to instead meet its anticipated affordable housing obligation through projects that were already underway, including Union Eagle Apartments, Clare Estate, and prospective redevelopment of the Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area.

As the region's obligation has been determined to be 33 units of prior round need and 148 units of prospective need, the City has a number of different projects that meet past need and are eligible to offset prospective need. However, after applying the credits from existing and in-process housing projects to the prospective need, the City must plan for its 89-unit deficit of affordable housing obligations.

With respect to the release of the identified prior and prospective need above, the acquisition and preservation of Point Breeze (formerly Divine Word) for state open space has effectively removed 67 acres of land from the City's buildable area. Any efforts to address the City's affordable housing obligation **must** be based on a vacant land adjustment so that the City can determine its adjusted need now that the availability of vacant land has decreased substantially.

As Bordentown nears full build-out, development of a Housing Element will be essential for growth management strategies and affordable housing obligations; especially to ensure Bordentown residents can age in place. Efforts to plan for scattered site infill and a possible buy-down and rent-restriction program with owners of key multi-family residential properties should be explored in addition to rehabilitation.

While the comprehensive plan includes some market-based solutions for affordability such as ADUs, refined zoning standards, and growth management through the Ocean Spray redevelopment, a Housing Element will be necessary to assess the perceived risk of displacement and strategies for socially equitable housing.

Community Open Space, Recreation Recommendations

1. Prepare a comprehensive update to the Open Space and Recreation Element

MEETS GOALS:

The Open Space Element was last updated in 2005. The City should carry forward the recent volunteer effort initiated by the Green Team and Environmental Commission and incorporate additional changes noted in the comprehensive plan such as preservation of Point Breeze, expansion of the trail network, and streetscape infrastructure opportunities. Implementation strategies should be addressed through a capital improvement plan and conceptual vision for full build-out of each park location.

Recent reactivation of the Parks Committee, consisting of representatives from the community, Environmental Commission and Public Works Department also creates new opportunities for coordination and planning for the parks system.

Coordinate with Public Schools Facilities and Transportation

MEETS GOALS:

Opportunities to expand use of recreation areas of public schools for after-school use should be explored with regard to safety and surveillance needs. Through the Open Space and Recreation Element, efforts to integrate public schools into the City's parks system should be explored through physical design and management solutions. Efforts similar to the Phase I concept plan for the Clara Barton Eco-Schoolyard project should be explored with coordination from the school board, PTA, Green Team, Parks Committee and other groups to implement the goals of the comprehensive plan through the land use of public schools.

Strengthening bicycle and pedestrian connections for regional safe routes to school and school-ground recreation facilities is recommended through long-term planning for transportation, parks, and trails based on the comprehensive plan and studies by DVRPC and other agencies. Additional focus should be placed on safe autonomous transportation for youth at key intersections and community facilities. Parks that provide natural surveillance from facing buildings is ideal.

Explore Pop-Up Park & Parklet Opportunities

MEETS GOALS:

Parklets and pop-up parks can provide flexible pedestrian space and complement outdoor shopping, dining, and leisure in the downtown. Parklets are often the size of an on-street parking space designed to reclaim space in the street for pedestrian leisure. To address the "either-or" conflict of balancing vehicle parking with the habitable public space, a parklet may be designed to be transportable by trailer such as the mobile parklet implemented in Downtown Collingswood, which is transportable to various locations in response to parking demand, street clearing needs, and events. Creation and maintenance of a parklet can also take the form of a valuable community-led project.

Consideration of a mobile parklet within the downtown is recommended as a means to activate the street without permanently compromising on-street parking space. A pop-up, or temporary, parklet can be established through movable and erasable features like planters and paint with coordination among volunteers, property owners, and City officials.

2. Develop a Plan for Point Breeze

MEETS GOALS:

The City recently established a steering committee to guide integration of the park space at Point Breeze and City-owned portion of the property into the greater parks and recreation system. The City will need to coordinate with NJDEP, who owns the majority of the land on potential amenities for bicycle connectivity, waterfront access, scenic views, historic features, and other opportunities for active and passive recreation. [The City should also consider transportation and accessibility accommodations to the new City Hall for seniors and individuals with disabilities.](#)

Development of a long-term plan for Point Breeze should include:

- a. Coordination with the Historic Preservation Commission and Bordentown Historical Society regarding the site's historic status and [cultural and educational potential](#);***
- b. Coordination with [NJDEP](#), [D&R Greenway Land Trust](#), [Bordentown Green Team](#), [Friends of Abbot Marsh](#), and the Environmental Commission regarding linkage of trails to the Bordentown Bluffs, Abbot Marshlands, Thornton Creek and other environmental or recreational features;***
- c. Coordination with Burlington County and DVRPC regarding bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area, Bordentown Station, and downtown Farnsworth via Park Street;***
- [d. Consideration of active vs. passive recreation facilities and their suitability to the site; and](#)***
- [e. Coordination of all efforts with implementation of the open space and waterfront recommendations of the comprehensive plan.](#)***

[Further visioning for Point Breeze may take the form of workshops, surveys, and inclusion in the forthcoming Open Space and Recreation Element recommended above.](#)

3. Explore Greenway and Trail Opportunities

MEETS GOALS:

Greenway corridors are contiguous areas of undeveloped land that encapsulate continuous tree canopy, wild habitat, flood capacity, and [create](#) valuable local and regional trail opportunities. Bordentown is located at the confluence of Blacks Creek, Crosswicks Creek, the Delaware River, and the Delaware and Raritan Canal system. Efforts by the Bordentown Green Team, D&R Greenway Land Trust, and others have begun to preserve the City's greenway corridors. In coordination with these efforts, it is

recommended that the City continue to support and coordinate conservation, and expansion of these networks while exploring the shared use of railroad right of way as part of the overall circulation network.

To strategically preserve additional land without wholesale public acquisition, Conservation Overlay Zones can establish zoning standards that require conservation of natural features and environmentally sensitive land without compromising use of property. For instance, an overlay district can address lot sizes, impervious coverage limitations, and increased buffers for natural features like slopes, streams, woodland habitat, and trails in trade-off. Conservation Overlay Zones may also address the natural hazards noted in the Climate Change Vulnerability Analysis of this plan.

Similarly, a Railroad Zone, as proposed by the Proposed Land Use map and the draft LDO, would establish zoning for all railroad properties in the City including all railroad right of ways and the Bordentown Station parking lot. While the owners of these properties - NJ Transit and CSX/Conrail – would not necessarily be beholden to local zoning regulations, requirements could be set for public uses like trails and recreational features if the City were to propose them or acquire these sites or portions thereof in the future.

In conjunction with planning and zoning review, the City should continue to explore opportunities for conservation easements and trails to expand the local trail network per the Existing and Proposed Trails map.

Rails-to-Trails and Rails-with-Trails

The railroad lines and historic railroading sites in Bordentown City represent significant opportunities to reconnect with the City's railroad heritage and further incorporate historic resources into the City's tourism, open space, and economic development strategies. Operation of the Camden and Amboy Railroad Main Line, extending under the City and connecting Bordentown Station to South Amboy, was an integral milestone in the development of railroading in North America. While the railroad is currently owned by CSX/Conrail and used for intermittent freight traffic to Yardville, the right of way is eligible to be listed as an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places and much of the line north of Robbinsville appears to be abandoned.

The Camden and Amboy Railroad Main Line extends under the City toward several town centers in Central ~~and South~~ Jersey and offers vast potential for an historic regional trail that would exceed State, County, and regional transportation planning goals and set an example for similar efforts occurring across the country. At a minimum, the City should remain aware of the operating status of the railroad and opportunities to pursue regional trail development. However, it is recommended that the City continue to pursue opportunities to negotiate shared-use of CSX/Conrail right-of-way through guidance from the Rails to Trails Conservancy and exploration of design and policy solutions that may reduce liability by the railroad.

4. Reorient the Waterfront

MEETS GOALS:

Bordentown's waterfront is an invaluable amenity that provides access to nature, history, and recreation, both public and private. As the Bordentown Beach area and yacht clubs continue to function as regional attractions for residents and visitors, they also create opportunities to draw visitors to and from the downtown and Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Trail. The City should continue to explore ways of integrating the waterfront with the rest of the City and region through enhanced pedestrian connections, active land uses, public spaces, regional trails, and public events. Collaboration with the yacht clubs, which provide ambiance and charm, with public activities along the river's edge is critical. Dredging needs, combined with public access from Black's Creek to Pointe Breeze are all issues of importance along the waterfront.

Expand Waterfront Trail Connections

The City should continue to enhance access to the Delaware and Raritan Canal Trail, Delaware River Heritage Trail, and East Coast Greenway by extending a connector trail along the RiverLINE Right-of-Way and adjacent to Yapewi and Bordentown Yacht Clubs. Access and security management on private land should be addressed through aesthetically appropriate fencing, landscaping, lighting, and/or surveillance appropriately coordinated. Additionally, connections that link Lime Kiln Alley, Hilltop Park, and the newly preserved open space at Point Breeze as an integrated public open space network is a goal worth further exploration.

A cross-access easement parallel to the NJ Transit right of way can strengthen access to public amenities like the canal tow-path to Bordentown Beach, Bordentown Station, and the Downtown.

Develop a Plan for Bordentown Beach

The 1.8-acre stone parking area at Bordentown Beach experiences highly variable parking demand characterized by heavy use for boat trailers during the summer months and ~~scaree~~ [light](#) use during the off-season. While recreational space has been improved along the beach and wetlands near Blacks Creek, opportunities to expand the range of recreational uses and amenities at the Delaware River and Crosswicks Creek waterfront should be explored to increase habitable space and overall utility of the parking lot.

While the entirety of the Bordentown Beach site exists within the regulatory flood-way, the City should work with NJDEP to determine possible improvements for reorganization of this underutilized asset. Combined, the Bordentown Station parking lot for peak-demand parking on summer weekends will allow reclamation of the water's edge for additional beach space. Additionally, summer event planning is encouraged to be

expanded upon with perhaps more routine availability of pop-up vendors and mobile food establishments.

Improvements to the beach should advance climate resiliency through flood-compatible improvements to the parking lot such as reclaimed wetlands, swales, flood-resistant plantings, and/or floating platforms. Coordination with an identified need for dredging within the area is highly recommended as the value for boating access and the yacht clubs is critical toward to overall atmosphere of the waterfront in general.

Enhance Connections

As the City nears full buildout, limitations for the construction of additional public parking without compromising historic buildings and walkable streets becomes an increasing challenge. Alternative solutions can include strengthening pedestrian connections to existing parking facilities and the waterfront in order to optimize the supply of available parking, preserving and enhancing the City's street network, while enhancing the open space network. Encouraging a comfortable walk from parking facilities to common destinations like the downtown and waterfront can advance public health and help identify needs for enhanced lighting, shade tree coverage, and other environmental and parks improvements that encourage walking.

As either an alternative or complement to the City's downtown shuttle service, an extension of Railroad Avenue could form a pedestrian linkage from the Bordentown Station parking lot to Prince Street to increase convenience of parking outside the downtown, while providing additional public space for leisure and connectivity that includes the integration of the Beach, Black's Creek.

5. Grow the City's Tree Canopy

MEETS GOALS:

Street tree removals have outpaced street tree plantings in recent years. The City should continue to coordinate with the Shade Tree Committee, DPW, Environmental Commission, Green Team, and Parks Committee to preserve and expand the City's street tree canopy on public land and through the site plan review process

An updated street tree and streetscape inventory is recommended for the Circulation and Parking Plan Element in coordination with the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element. Implementation strategies should be addressed through capital improvement planning, site plan review process, and amendment to the landscaping standards of the zoning ordinance as necessary.

6. Coordinate Open Space and Landscaping Design Standards

MEETS GOALS:

The Environmental Commission should continue to provide review of applications and redevelopment plans with respect to open space and landscaping standards. Opportunities to implement the goals and recommendations of the comprehensive plan through commission review and board approval should be advanced where possible. Particular attention to promoting best practices in resiliency, stormwater management, and green infrastructure may be necessary.

7. Encourage Public and Private Investment

MEETS GOALS:

“Greener” Infrastructure

Explore public investment in green infrastructure on public property such as parks, municipal facilities, and right of ways. Green stormwater infrastructure such as bioswales, rain gardens, and rain barrels will help meet NJDEP stormwater management regulations while also contributing to a greener, livelier City. The City should also continue to explore opportunities for solar and other on-site renewable energy sources in addition to more efficient technologies like LED lighting, water efficiency, etc.

The City should continue to seek ways of incentivizing public and private investment in green stormwater infrastructure, solar, recycling, building reuse, and other strategies that may be useful for green building certifications such as LEED.

In coordination with the Shade Tree Committee, Environmental Commission, and other groups, the City should consider providing pollinator habitat on public land. No-mow zones and meadows can free time and resources for public works staff in ways that also contribute to park design, landscaping, and environmental health.

Bicycle Infrastructure

The presence of bicyclists and public investment in bicycle infrastructure is typically a “chicken or the egg” phenomenon, where biking becomes an increasingly accessible mode of transportation with each cumulative effort made to accommodate it. Increasing facilities for bicyclists, such as sheltered bike racks at public locations and intersection safety improvements can truly encourage biking in Bordentown and simultaneously address City goals related to on-street parking demand, personal mobility, social equity, and reduced air and noise pollution. It is recommended that the City continue to explore opportunities and funding sources for public bicycle facilities and incorporate bicycle linkage strategies in its open space planning efforts.

Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles have become an increasingly viable alternative to standard vehicles in recent years. While EV's can lead to cleaner air at the local level, the City should explore potential locations and funding sources for charging stations, while balancing the negative effects of general automobile use such as land consumed for parking, driveway impacts on pedestrianism, and general road safety. Prioritization of EV infrastructure should be balanced with investment in bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements which are typically much more effective and equitable ways of reducing the carbon footprint of cities and individuals.

Regulation of private electric vehicle charging stations and cable management should be considered with respect to potential visual and safety impacts on the public realm.

Circulation and Parking Recommendations

1. Prepare a Circulation and Parking Element

MEETS GOALS:

A Circulation and Parking Element is recommended to assess the recommendations of the Land Use Plan in more detail and more rigorously pursue strategies to address mobility, safety, and parking management. In the meantime, the comprehensive plan and Land Use Element recommend [starting points for discussion and](#) continued exploration of possible solutions by drawing upon guidance from recent studies.

2. Address Visibility Issues

MEETS GOALS:

Visibility concerns exist in many locations throughout the City for pedestrians, [bicyclists](#), and motorists. In many cases, on-street parking is too close to intersections and encroaches crosswalks and curb ramps. In addition to obscuring crossing pedestrians, choked street corners impair the visibility for turning cars and reduce the turning abilities of service and delivery trucks.

To reduce crossing times and address visibility concerns related to on-street parking, depressed curb bump-outs, neck-downs, and enhanced lighting are recommended long-term solutions for all feasible intersections in the downtown and around the public schools. A pilot test may be implemented through paint in the short-term. Use of the expanded sidewalk space for green infrastructure and public space amenities should be explored where feasible. Compatibility with stormwater infrastructure and municipal services should be explored further in development of the Circulation and Parking Element.

3. Improve Sidewalk Connectivity

MEETS GOALS:

~~Bordentown is a highly walkable City despite several opportunities to increase sidewalk connectivity. It is recommended that sidewalks be expanded and buffered with landscaping where appropriate. Through redevelopment of the Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area, Park Street and others missing sidewalks should be achieved to improve pedestrian safety and comfort.~~

Bordentown is a highly walkable and human-scaled City, but several opportunities to increase sidewalk connectivity exist. Redevelopment of the Ocean Spray Redevelopment Area shall include associated Park Street improvements linking the site and Point Breeze to the downtown per the adopted Redevelopment Plan. However, other locations in the City, such as connections into the Lucas-Landon Drive neighborhood, should be addressed through a capital improvement plan that phases sidewalk construction with roadway maintenance schedules, redevelopment, and other timely factors. The 2020 DVRPC Safe Routes to Transit Report has provided a thorough basis for near City-wide implementation.

Zoning enforcement and site plan review can also improve sidewalk connectivity through the development process. In some locations, such as Park Street, parking lots abutting the roadway create pedestrian and circulation hazards that detract from the walkable downtown character of the City. Where possible, parking in rear yards, landscape buffers, clearly designated driveways, depressed curbs, driveway crosswalk aprons, and shared driveways should be encouraged to maintain a cohesive pedestrian-oriented realm.

In other locations, uneven brick and concrete slabs create tripping hazards and obstacles for persons with disabilities. The Circulation and Parking Element should revisit the sidewalk inventory prepared by DVRPC to assess the condition, connectivity, and ADA-compliance of sidewalks throughout the entire City and its gateways.

Where sidewalks currently do not exist or are determined to be substandard with regard to ADA compliance, safety, and contiguity, efforts to improve streetscapes should be pursued through site plan review or public investment. Areas in need of sidewalks and

[streetscape adjustments should be addressed in the Circulation and Parking Element and included in a capital improvement plan.](#)

4. Implement Past Studies

MEETS GOALS:

Several studies have laid the analysis and groundwork for future improvements and coordination with development of a Circulation and Parking Element. Many of the findings should be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Plan through coordination with public works, utilities, [redevelopment, and site plan review](#).

DVRPC Safe Routes to Transit (2020)

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) prepared a study in 2020 to explore safety and connectivity to Bordentown Station. [Safe Routes to Transit provides a strong foundation for assessing circulation needs, which are in many ways relevant to the goals of the comprehensive plan.](#) The City should carry forward the report's findings and incorporate the preferred alternatives into the City's forthcoming Circulation and Parking Element and capital improvement plan.

DVRPC Traffic Calming Alternatives for Rte. 130/206 Corridor (2012)

DVRPC prepared a study in 2012 to explore safety and access issues along Routes 130 and 206. The report proposed multiple concepts supported through public input and traffic data modeling. Collectively, the recommendations would improve the barrier imposed by the highway's current design and unlock opportunities through enhanced crossings, gateway treatments, and management of land use and highway access along the corridor.

The preferred alternatives included:

A Road Diet Scenario involving removal of a travel lane in each direction where the routes overlap. This scenario is cheapest, least invasive, and provides the opportunity to enhance safety, access, and aesthetics of the commercial corridor [by effectively "boulevard-izing" the highway.](#)

A Two-Lane Roundabout Scenario at the southern merge located primarily within existing right of way and involving removal of the northbound Route 130 overpass.

A Left-Turn Lane Scenario at the northern merge, allowing connectivity of Elizabeth Street to Ward Avenue and direct linkage to Bordentown Regional High School.

While implementation of the recommended improvements is ultimately a NJDOT decision, the concepts should remain a priority as the proposed highway and intersection improvements overlap with many of the City's goals.

Bordentown City Bicycle and Pedestrian Study (2005)

A Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was prepared in 2005 to explore concepts for road improvements throughout the City. The plan proposed upgrading intersections downtown with bollards, pavement changes, and sidewalk extensions. This study should be incorporated during the development of an updated Circulation and Parking Element.

5. Expand Trail and Greenway Opportunities

MEETS GOALS:

As noted in the Open Space, Recreation, and Resiliency recommendations, the City has several opportunities to explore shared right of ways to expand the local and regional trail network. Partnerships with railroad companies and utilities are encouraged and may be pursued with assistance and buy-in from other local, state, county, and regional agencies. Rail-to-trail and rail-with-trail opportunities for the Robbinsville Industrial Track ([Camden & Amboy Main Line](#)) owned by CSX/Conrail should be explored as described in the Open Space recommendations.

6. Continue to Establish a Sense of Arrival

MEETS GOALS:

In addition to improving safety and traffic flow through intersection improvements like bump-outs and sidewalk extensions, the City can further define the sense of arrival to the downtown by coordinating landscaping, utility, and stormwater infrastructure upgrades. Additional assessment of turning capabilities of large vehicles is necessary but may be addressed through strategic implementation of depressed curbs, [removable](#) bollards, and [less invasive](#) strategies like paint or pavement changes.

[Gateways into the City from the highway can be treated primarily through landscaping and site layout improvements but will require more involvement through zoning, site plan review, redevelopment \(where appropriate\) and coordination with Bordentown Township and NJDOT. Gateway opportunities related to Routes 130 and 206 should consider past concepts and future discussions by the State.](#)

[The City may pursue painting and branding of the railroad bridge over Route 206 by engaging in a joint effort with the Township, railroad, and NJDOT. This effort may be](#)

[accomplished alongside discussions of a rail-to-trail linkage as discussed in the open space recommendations of the comprehensive plan.](#)

7. Work with NJ Transit and Volunteers

MEETS GOALS:

The City should continue to work with NJ Transit and volunteer organizations and committees to improve the comfort [and user-friendliness](#) of transit infrastructure in the City. Treatment of bus shelters and bicycle parking as community projects could lead to significant placemaking opportunities that reflect and contribute to the local physical character and strengthen community stewardship. Great examples of covered bike racks and bus shelters within the region may be sources of inspiration to further integrate these facilities in Bordentown.

8. Explore Parking Management Options

MEETS GOALS:

[Parking management has been a consistently high priority for Bordentown City, where well-preserved historic density has resulted in competition for space. Relatively small lot sizes, narrow lot widths, and a high percentage of attached and semi-attached homes means that many residents rely on on-street parking to store their vehicles and conveniently access their homes. On Farnsworth Avenue, the reliance on pedestrian visitors and on-street parking that is used by residents, employees, and visiting customers has created very high competition for parking that often overflows onto side streets where residents do not have off-street parking. For a City where walkability and community are cherished assets, this competition for space has ultimately limited imaginations and abilities to utilize public streets for many purposes beyond the movement and storage of automobiles.](#)

[The following parking management options are recommended starting points for further discussions through the forthcoming Circulation and Parking Element of the comprehensive plan:](#)

Revisit the Bordentown EDAC Parking Study

The Bordentown Economic Development Advisory Commission (EDAC) drafted a management plan for downtown parking that explored potential shared-parking strategies. While management of liability and enforcement created challenges for implementation, the drafted study should be revisited and expanded upon through preparation of the recommended Circulation and Parking Element and other

recommendations of the comprehensive plan [regarding driveways, alleyways, and parking management](#).

A good foundation for implementing the City’s parking and circulation goals has been outlined in various local and regional studies. It is recommended that the City continue to utilize these resources and implement [relevant findings](#) through various elements of the comprehensive parking plan.

Encourage Shared Driveways

Shared driveways can enhance pedestrianism within the City by reducing the number of curb cuts and gaps between buildings. Opportunities to encourage shared driveways through site plan approval process should be considered, and where feasible, joint parking layouts should be explored through access easements and parking agreements across property lines. Underutilized alleyways – public and private – may be key to unlocking shared parking areas that span rear and side lot lines. Coordination of off-street parking, driveways, and alleyways is recommended through site plan review and development of a Circulation and Parking Element.

Along the highway, limiting the number of driveways can also lead to significant improvements to traffic safety, traffic flow, and better designed pedestrian access along the highway. It is recommended that the highway commercial zone be amended to improve site plan criteria for driveway management, parking standards, and bicycle and pedestrian access.

Promote Rear-Yard Parking

Through the development of a parking plan, the City should consider concepts for access easements, parking agreements, and zoning amendments to encourage small-scale, shared parking areas in the rear of spatially constrained lots. Organization of rear yards with respect to property access can reduce the number of vehicles parked on-street and the number of driveways required for off-street parking. Additional benefits would include reduced on-street parking pressures and increased continuity of the sidewalk. Further, rear parking areas can be arranged like courtyards, with added amenities like shaded patios, tree cover, pervious pavement, and other improvements that maintain safety, livability, and multi-functionality of off-street parking areas. Such opportunities should be expanded upon in the Circulation and Parking Element with address of management, enforcement, and implementation strategies.

Explore Shared Parking Strategies

Development of a parking plan within the recommended Circulation and Parking Element should continue prior discussions of how to best implement opportunities for scheduled sharing of off-street parking. Strategies in which the City assumes full liability for property

owners should be explored in addition to strengthened pedestrian connections between parking facilities and key destinations. A downtown parking inventory of potential shared parking locations is provided below as a possible basis for a shared-parking strategy. [Additional consideration and accommodations must be made to balance the parking demand by residents, employees, and patrons of the downtown.](#)

[Consider Context-Sensitive Parking Structures](#)

[Modern parking garages can be integrated into the architecture and scale of their surrounding context. While these structures are costly, the City may achieve significant cost-savings by establishing a centralized parking location that frees up public real estate along the City's most parking-congested streets and provides better access to downtown businesses.](#)

[Possible locations may include the interior area behind buildings fronting Farnsworth Ave, Railroad Ave, Crosswicks St, and 2nd St. In any scenario where parking garages are considered, treatment of the streetscape with wrapped building frontage and appropriate architectural details and building preservation should be required to shield the garage from public view. No entrances to or exits from any such garage should be considered on Farnsworth Avenue, and special care regarding parking structures and impacts on residential streets must be considered.](#)

[Consider Paid Parking](#)

[A wide variety of ways to implement paid parking in the downtown can increase turnover and generate revenue to the City. Meters, kiosks, residential and business permits, permit schedules, and mobile apps are some methods the City may consider in the future. However, any such efforts must consider residential parking needs downtown and prevent pushing parking demand to free on-street spaces in residential areas.](#)