



Borough of Dunellen

2023 Re-examination Report of the Master Plan

BOROUGH OF DUNELLEN,
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Prepared by:
DMR Architects
777 Terrace Avenue
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07604

Francis Reiner, LLA - PP
License #: LI00616700

Daniel Hauben, PP, AICP,
LEED® Green Associate™
License #: LI00630300

Adopted: June 13, 2023

Borough of Dunellen

Re-examination Report

June 2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mayor and Council

Mayor Jason Cilento
 Council President Trina Rios
 Councilwoman Teresa Albertson
 Councilwoman Jessica Dunne
 Councilman Joseph Paltjon
 Councilman Daniel Sigmon
 Councilman Harold VanDermark

Borough of Dunellen

William Robins - Borough Administrator and Clerk
 John Bruder - Borough Attorney
 Scott Olsen - CFO
 Lauren Staats - Deputy Municipal Clerk
 Michael Rossi - Construction Official
 Michael Mullin - Zoning Officer

Planning Board

Roger Dornbierer - Chairman
 Jason Cilento - Mayor
 Trina Rios - Council President
 Barbara Seif - Member
 Thomas D'Amico - Member
 Adam Gordon - Member
 Theresa Ratner - Member
 Erik Walker - Member
 Christopher Brillante - Alternate
 Robert Krause - Alternate
 Cherron Rountree - Secretary
 Lauren Staats - Recording Secretary

Planning Board Consultants

Michael Collins Esq. - Board Attorney
 Lou Ploskonka, P.E. CME Associates - Board Engineer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. SUBSEQUENT STUDIES AND PLANS SINCE THE 2011 MASTER PLAN: 2

III. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER PLAN RE-EXAMINATION REPORT: 6

Identify major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the 2011 Master Plan; 9

The extent to which such problems and objectives have increased or been reduced subsequent to such date; 17

The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the Master Plan or development regulations as last revised; 37

The specific changes recommended for the Master Plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether new development regulations or plan elements should be prepared; 57

Recommendations of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the “Local Redevelopment and Housing Law”. P. L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal Master Plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality; 75

The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure. 82

I. INTRODUCTION

The 2023 Borough of Dunellen Master Plan Reexamination Report is a part of the on-going comprehensive planning process, which is required by the Municipal Land Use Law of the State of New Jersey to be conducted every 10 years. The Borough of Dunellen last adopted a Master Plan in 2011. This Reexamination Report revisits the goals, objectives, concerns, and recommendations identified in the 2011 Master Plan and considers whether and how they have been addressed since the adoption of that Plan. It also provides recommendations for updating the Master Plan, the Borough's ordinances, and the Borough's policy-making and investments.

A Reexamination Report can be adopted as either a guiding document for amendments to be made to the previously adopted Master Plan or as the amendments themselves to the Master Plan. In the case of this Reexamination Report, its adoption shall have the effect of amending and updating the 2011 Master Plan.

The 2011 Master Plan, adopted June 24, 2013, included the following elements:

- Historic Preservation Plan
- Land Use Plan
- Economic Plan
- Summary of the separately adopted Housing Element and Fair Share Plan
- Circulation Plan
- Urban Design Plan
- Utility Service Plan
- Recycling Plan
- Community Facilities Plan
- Recreation Plan

A significant focus of the 2011 Master Plan was the redevelopment of the Borough's Downtown. As this report will show, a number of significant changes have occurred locally, regionally, and globally which will influence the Borough's goals and objectives over the next decade. These include

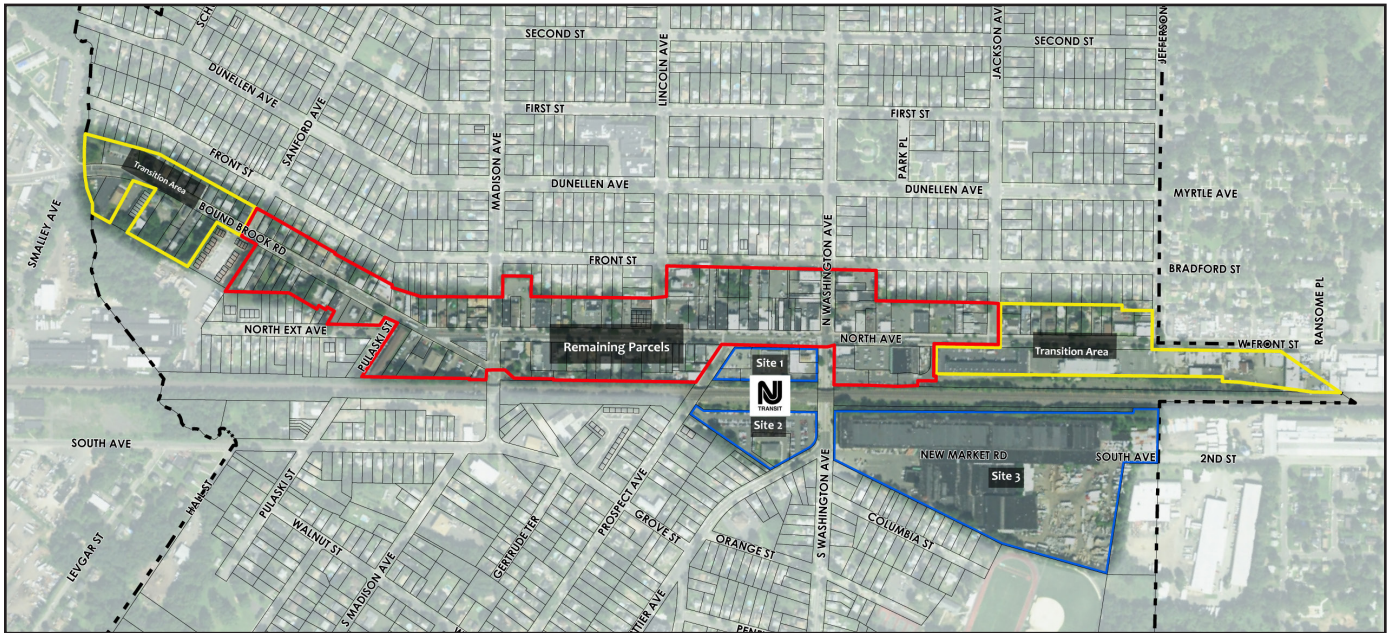
- Several severe storms resulting in local flooding;
- Economic changes exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- The local adoption of the 2016 Downtown Redevelopment Plan
- The legalization of recreational cannabis in New Jersey; and
- Statewide initiatives emphasizing climate-reactive urban design and preparation for the proliferation of electric vehicles.

The Borough has a number of built-in economic advantages over its surrounding communities, including a NJ Transit train station along the Raritan Valley Line, which provides direct train service to Newark and Hoboken and service to New York City via a transfer from Newark. Additionally, there is NJ Transit Bus service to New York City. Dunellen also boasts a walkable pedestrian friendly downtown, with a multitude of businesses and eateries that encompass the downtown core that extends along North Avenue and Bound Brook Road, which is a State road, and portions of Washington Avenue, which is a County road.

The Borough received Transit Village status in 2012, which provides grant opportunities such

as decorative lights in the Downtown that beautifies the Borough's economic core. As a result of these attributes, the Borough has several approved and pending development projects including the Dunellen Station project with 252 one and two bedroom units and 130 townhomes. These projects will provide the downtown density to support the existing businesses and attract new businesses.

The Borough must continue to examine and update its zoning and land use policies and practices in order to maintain and benefit from these advantages and promote the general welfare of its residents and the integrity of its economy.



INTRO FIGURE 1. Downtown Redevelopment Area

This Reexamination Report has been prepared to not only address the statutory requirements at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, but to evaluate the changing needs of the Borough of Dunellen and to determine whether the 2011 Master Plan Report and the related development regulations are still relevant and appropriate. This report is not a Master Plan; rather, it is intended to identify opportunities to better serve the community and its residents through recommendations for changes to zoning, administrative structure, and allocation of resources that are needed in order to achieve the Borough's goals and objectives.

II. SUBSEQUENT STUDIES AND PLANS SINCE THE 2011 MASTER PLAN:

Over the past decade, the Borough has prepared, commissioned, or been the subject of several studies that have had and will continue to have implications for the Borough's development.

1. Dunellen Downtown Redevelopment Plan - 2016 (Amended on February 7th, 2022)

In 2016, the Borough of Dunellen adopted a redevelopment plan for the town's "Main Street Area" which encompasses North Avenue, Bound Brook Road (State Highway 28), from the border of the City of Plainfield to the border of the Borough of Middlesex. The area also stretches across Washington Avenue (County Road 529) from Front Street to New Market Road. The properties in question combine for a total 150 parcels, consisting of more than 70 acres of land,

in which the current uses of the area include retail, office, residential, industrial, public, and vacant land. The Plan's main goals are to revitalize the Borough's economic base and create locations for new job opportunities and locations for uses that are currently in demand. More specifically:

- To promote the effective use of all Redevelopment property and to increase the property tax base of the Borough;
- To improve utilization of the land in the Redevelopment Area, which by virtue of its proximity to transportation could be more effectively employed for the community benefit;
- To revitalize the area with inclusion of land uses of appropriate type, scope, and scale to meet the demands of the market area;
- To remediate contaminated sites as part of the redevelopment process;
- To create a new mixed-use area, including multi-family residential uses and affordable housing;
- To promote the creation of job opportunities in the Borough that will provide opportunities for both existing residents as well as for others in the area;
- To improve business opportunities through promotion of new and diverse economic activities;
- To maximize the leveraging of public and private funds to accomplish comprehensive redevelopment of the area;
- To improve property values within the area to increase local revenues;
- To redevelop land occupied by obsolete structures and uses;
- To enhance the image of the area;
- To improve the public image elements of the streetscape through landscaping, street, furniture, paving, lighting, and pedestrian linkages.

Based upon such assets as its regional location, train station, public parking, visibility from the adjacent roadways and the desire of the Borough leaders and private property owners to effectuate change, the Plan recognizes all these features and provides the groundwork for the development of varied uses that integrate the principles of comprehensive planning.

2. Dunellen Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan – 2016

On February 22, 2016, the Borough of Dunellen adopted and endorsed a Fair Share Housing Plan, as required by the New Jersey Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 et seq.) and the March 10, 2015 Mount Laurel IV decision. The Plan outlines the Borough's Fair Share Obligations from 1999 to 2025 and the means by which it will be addressed. The plan is responsible for accounting for adequate housing stock to support the Borough's projected growing workforce and population and includes several comprehensive reports such as a Vacant Land Inventory and Analysis Report, a Downtown Redevelopment Plan, and a Spending Plan. The fair share obligations are broken into 3 components:

- Rehabilitation Share;
- Prior Round Obligations; and
- Third Round Prospective needs.

The Borough has determined that its participation in Housing First, a Middlesex County wide program, which has allocated \$1,000,000 in funding to Middlesex County municipalities in order to curb homelessness in the Middlesex area, will satisfy its 12-unit rehabilitation obligation.

The Borough does not have a Prior Round Obligation, but has an obligation of 118 units for its Third Round Prospective need. The Borough conducted a Vacant Land Analysis, which concluded that the Borough lacks sufficient vacant or developable land to satisfy that obligation, and adjusted its Prospective Need to reflect a Realistic Development Potential (RDP) of 22 units and an unmet need of 96 units. The Borough is addressing its Prospective Need, including both the RDP and unmet need, through its Downtown Redevelopment Plan, which includes an inclusionary set-aside requirement.

3. Transit Village Designation - 2012

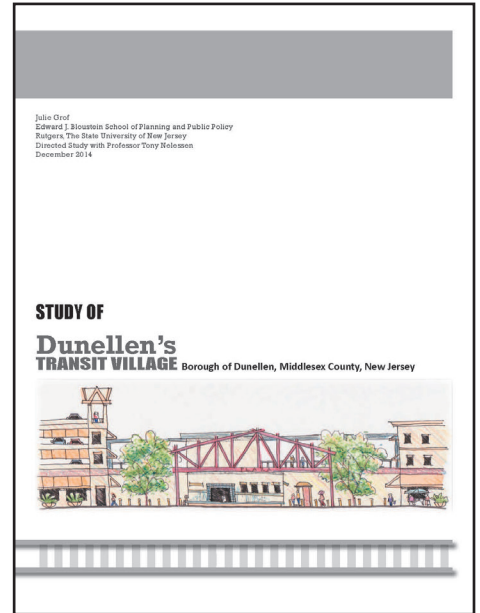
In the summer of 2012, the Borough of Dunellen was designated a Transit Village. The Transit Village Initiative creates incentives for municipalities to redevelop or revitalize the areas around transit stations using design standards of transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD helps municipalities create attractive, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods where people can live, shop, work and play without relying on automobiles.

The project:

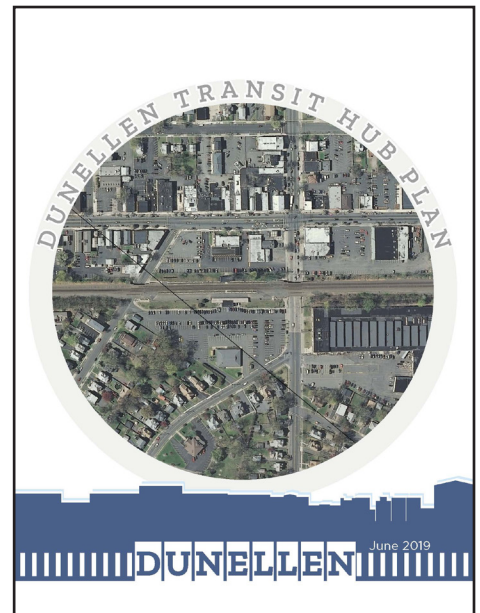
- Creates incentives to redevelop or revitalize the areas around transit stations;
- Includes design standards that support pedestrian friendly transit-oriented development;
- Provides potential funding in the future from some state agencies;
- Applicants are eligible for future grants from the NJ DOT and other organizations.

4. Transit Hub Report – 2019

In 2018, the Borough of Dunellen’s train station was one of



INTRO FIGURE 2. Dunellen Transit Village Study

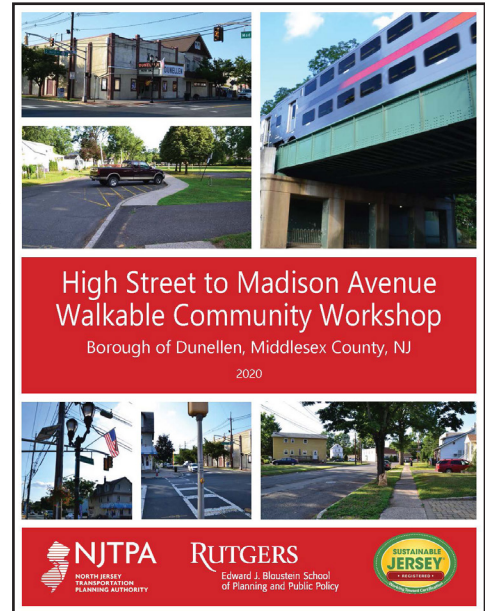


INTRO FIGURE 3. Dunellen Transit Hub Plan

three locations selected for the pilot of the Transit Hub Planning Program, adopted by the Together North Jersey Efficiency Task Force, and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Program, which aims to encourage the creation of vibrant transit hubs around existing train stations and/or stops, supporting the communities' goals for economic development, land use, access to jobs and cultural development.

5. Downtown Revitalization Strategies – Bloustein 2021

In the Fall of 2021, Rutgers' Bloustein School of Planning and Urban Policy and Mason Gross School of the Arts came together to investigate the benefits, legal frameworks, and logistical implementation of murals for artistic and cultural revitalization in the Borough of Dunellen. In 2021, survey results showed that more than half of the survey respondents were in favor of mural implementation. Most respondents suggested locations such as under railroad bridges, or within the immediate downtown area. Themes such as History, Diversity and Inclusion, and Community Unification were the most popular sought-after components of the future murals' themes. In an ongoing charette process with the Borough of Dunellen, students at the Bloustein School compiled these results with the benefits of public art, case studies, and interviews with other communities that have murals, and the varied legal frameworks and logistics surrounding mural implementation.



INTRO FIGURE 4. Dunellen Walkability Study

6. Walkability Study – Rutgers NJTPA 2020

In 2020, prepared as part of the New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's Complete Streets Technical Assistance Program, financed by the Federal Transit Authority (FTA), Rutgers University conducted a study of the existing street accessibility and walkability in the Borough of Dunellen from High Street to Madison Avenue. The Borough of Dunellen has entered into the CSTA program in which 8 municipalities would be selected for a grant of \$10,000 in technical assistance to advance complete street projects. The report is to act as a guide in conjunction with the components of the grant, which will outline several key components of the Borough's highlighted issues regarding street completion, walkability, accessibility and environmentally sustainable developments.

7. Visual Preference Survey - November 2020

A survey was distributed to the public in November of 2020 to gather the public's preferences for the future of the Borough's Downtown. The Survey received 437 responses, 90% of which were from residents. The results of the survey informed amendments the Borough made to its Redevelopment Plan in June of 2021 and in subsequent amendments.

8. Cannabis Survey July 18 to August 18, 2022

In the summer of 2022, the Borough distributed a survey to gage the public's attitudes toward

recreational cannabis both Statewide and locally. The results of the survey indicate that residents, workers, and business owners of Dunellen were generally favorable toward Statewide recreational cannabis legalization and are amenable to or desirous of the Borough permitting one or more recreational cannabis businesses within the Borough, with a preference for cannabis retail or delivery-based dispensaries.

The respondents identified the areas northeast of Jackson Avenue and southwest of Sanford Avenue as the preferred areas for cannabis businesses, while half of respondents were also amenable to the areas between Sanford and Madison Avenues and Jackson to Washington Avenues hosting these businesses.

9. Master Plan Reexamination Survey and Public Meeting

Between August 14th and September 21st of 2022, the Borough hosted a public survey for residents, workers, and business owners in Dunellen to weigh in on their likes, dislikes, concerns, and hopes to guide the Borough in preparing its 2022 Master Plan Reexamination Report. The survey was also used to provide insights for North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, which is working with Dunellen on developing its local Complete Streets policies, and NJ Transit Friendly Planning, which is working with the Borough to prepare a Transit Friendly Visioning Plan for the Borough.

On September 14, 2022, the Borough also hosted an open-form meeting to provide the public with an opportunity to communicate their concerns and ideas with the Borough, its professionals, NJTPA, and NJ Transit. The Survey and public-outreach meeting helped to identify some of the biggest issues from the public's perspective, including taxes, downtown redevelopment, walkability, bikability, and flooding.

III. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER PLAN RE-EXAMINATION REPORT:

Periodic examination. The governing body shall, at least every 10 years, provide for a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations by the planning board, which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination, a copy of which report and resolution shall be sent to the Office of Planning Advocacy and the county planning board. A notice that the report and resolution have been prepared shall be sent to any military facility commander who has registered with the municipality pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2005, c.41 (C.40:55D-12.4) and to the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality, who may request a copy of the report and resolution on behalf of the military facility or municipality. A reexamination shall be completed at least once every 10 years from the previous reexamination.

The reexamination report shall state:

1. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
2. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
3. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing

conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.

4. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
5. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.
6. The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

The MLUL requires that as part of the re-examination report, the major land use problems and objectives that were outlined in the last Master Plan or Reexamination Report be identified. This Re-examination Report will identify the following areas as it pertains to each of the requirements identified above under N.J.S.A 40:55D-89a.

These areas will include:

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Land Use; | e. Community Facilities; | h. Historic Preservation; |
| b. Circulation; | f. Parks, Rec. & Open | i. Recycling; |
| c. Economic; | Space; | |
| d. Housing; | g. Utilities; | |

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 et seq., the Borough of Dunellen conducted a general Master Plan in 2011. The statute requires a general re-examination at least every ten years. Additionally, as a next step in the Re-examination Report process, changes to the zoning ordinance should be considered in order to implement the recommendations of this report.

SECTION 1

Identify major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the 2011 Master Plan;

SECTION 1:

THE MAJOR ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES RELATING TO LAND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE LAST RE-EXAMINATION REPORT INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

The 2011 Master Plan was written prior to the writing and adoption of the 2016 Redevelopment Plan in the Borough, however, these goals and objectives still hold relevance to the Borough's plans for the future, including the use of the redevelopment plan, as well as dedicating resources to things such as hazard mitigation, traffic and circulation, zoning, etc.

The MLUL requires that as part of the reexamination report, the major land use problems and objectives that were outlined in the last Master Plan or Reexamination Report be identified. The following problems and objectives were identified in the 2011 Master Plan.

I. Goals of the 2011 Master Plan:

1. To redevelop the Borough downtown and to promote the Redevelopment Plan;
2. To promote an aesthetically pleasing and safe downtown with a mix of uses;
3. To promote an aesthetically pleasing and safe train station;
4. To preserve any remaining open space and environmentally sensitive lands in the Borough;
5. To facilitate the current and future demand for parking in the downtown to sufficiently accommodate existing and future parking demands, especially in consideration of increased residential and commercial densities permitted and encouraged within the Redevelopment Areas of the Borough;
6. To encourage pedestrian and bicycle activity throughout the Borough;
7. To encourage properly designed commercial and professional office uses;
8. To alleviate the traffic congestion on the major arterials;
9. To work with appropriate agencies to discourage flooding in the Borough.



FIGURE 1.1. Borough Map



FIGURE 1.2. Flooding on Prospect Avenue in 2019

II. Objectives by 2011 Master Plan Element

1. Land Use Objectives
 - a. Encourage the proper design of building facades throughout the Borough;
 - b. Allow and encourage outdoor dining in the downtown;

- c. Encourage the proper design of building facades throughout the Borough;
- d. Within the downtown and redevelopment districts, encourage zero side-yard setbacks and zero to minimal front-yard setbacks discouraging development that purposes parking in front;
- e. Encourage the use of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) techniques in the redevelopment of the downtown;
- f. Encourage the use of sustainable design and energy conservation building techniques in new development and redevelopment;
- g. Increase street furniture located in the streetscape and in the train station, including benches, lighting and trash receptacles;
- h. Minimize reliance on surface parking lots;
- i. Develop a structured parking deck for Borough residents and visitors that is inviting, and provides easy access to the Train Station, shops, and other amenities;
- j. Determine strategies for meeting the Borough's updated COAH obligation for Third Round affordable housing obligation, and apply for substantive certification;
- k. Allow for the creation of housing choices for a wide range of income levels to ensure that people can live and work in the Borough;
- l. Make modifications to the zoning ordinance to prevent the conversion of existing low-density housing neighborhoods to out-of-character multi-family uses;
- m. Utilize on-street parking to create a separation between the automobile and pedestrian realm;
- n. Achieve Transit Village designation under New Jersey Transit guidelines;
- o. Continue cooperation with the Green Brook Flood Control Commission;
- p. Develop a cellular tower land use ordinance;

2. Economic Plan Objectives

- a. Amend the zoning ordinance to allow professional offices and home offices along Washington Avenue;
- b. Identify funding sources for such activities as facade improvement programs;
- c. Provide opportunity locations downtown as public space encouraging the arts, and environment that is pedestrian focused for shopping, gathering, eating and entertainment;

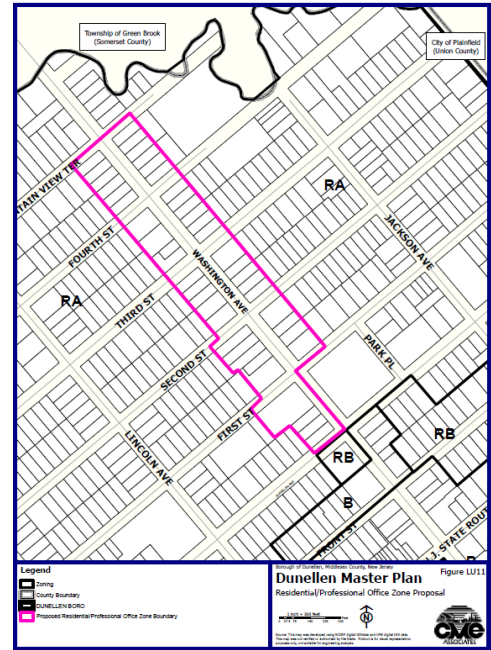


FIGURE 1.3. 2011 Master Plan Recommended Professional Office Overlay Zone



FIGURE 1.4. Dunellen Downtown

- d. Encourage expansion of traditional retail uses in the downtown;
3. Circulation Objectives
- a. Create highly definable pedestrian crosswalks at all necessary intersections particularly in the downtown area;
 - b. Provide vehicular intersection improvements along the major arterials, such as dedicated turn lanes;
 - c. Designate bikeways and bike routes where necessary throughout the Borough;
 - d. Identify funding sources for bikeway and pedestrian improvements;
 - e. Provide traffic calming devices in the downtown and near schools;
4. Urban Design Objectives
- a. Encourage high quality, attractive, architecturally appealing designs and materials that foster a Railroad Town feel;
 - b. Ensure that developments maintain uniform design qualities such as landscaping, pedestrian connections and similar building scale, materials and massing. Comparable attributes improve the overall urban design of the area;
 - c. Encourage accessible, attractive pedestrian areas that offer pleasant seating, adequate lighting, rain cover and aesthetically pleasing landscaping;
 - d. Ensure that the design of buildings adjacent to pedestrian areas enrich the appearance of the space and encourage people to use them;
 - e. Encourage developers to include artwork in public areas;
 - f. Ensure that screening of mechanical equipment on rooftops is visually appealing and harmonious with the building design;
 - g. Ensure the use of pedestrian friendly site design, landscaping, and lighting of parking areas;
 - h. Encourage development that takes advantage of natural lighting;
 - i. Ensure the use of native plantings ranging in seasonal



FIGURE 1.5. Parade on North Avenue



FIGURE 1.6. Madison Avenue Road Repairs



FIGURE 1.7. Historic architectural features



FIGURE 1.8. Pedestrian friendly design.

colors in public and semi-public areas;

- j. Encourage water conservation in landscape designs;
- k. Ensure continuous and ample sidewalks along streets that include landscaping and pedestrian amenities;
- l. Ensure that sidewalks and walkways are furnished with lighting, seating, landscaping, street trees, trash receptacles, bike racks, handicap access, and rain cover;
- m. Provide clear and identifiable streetscape design for intersections that create entry points into the Borough through aligned building facades, signs, markings, and landscaping;
- n. Work closely with NJ Transit in the planning and design of improvements to the train station and bus route facilities to ensure Borough design policies are reflected;
- o. Ensure site and building designs that support and connect with the train station and bus routes;
- p. Allow buildings to be sited at or near the public sidewalk as long as the full potential of the sidewalk is not diminished;
- q. Assure that more intense development is compatible with adjacent less intense development;
- r. Discourage signs at upper levels of buildings;
- s. Encourage the establishment of a palette of colors that can be referenced whenever businesses decide to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings;
- t. Encourage the green character of existing residential neighborhoods;
- u. Ensure urban design principles and building orientations that foster sustainability, environmental quality, preservation and energy conservation;

5. Open Space Objectives

- a. Municipal purchase of parcels that can potentially be used for recreational and open space purposes, particularly along the Green Brook;
- b. Incorporate public spaces into downtown redevelopment efforts;
- c. Create a street tree planting program throughout the Borough;
- d. Ensure that the needs and recreational interests of



FIGURE 1.9. Problematic pedestrian design



FIGURE 1.10. Benches on North Avenue



FIGURE 1.11. Washington Park Gazebo

- people of all social, age groups and abilities are considered to the fullest extent possible in developing recreational facilities;
 - e. Encourage the construction of pocket parks and plazas in association with Borough redevelopment efforts;
 - f. Encourage the creation and interconnection of bicycle and pedestrian trails;
 - g. Ensure proper access, security and maintenance for all parks and recreational facilities;
6. Municipal Services / Community Facilities Objectives
- a. Continue to maintain and upgrade Borough infrastructure;
 - b. Identify funding sources to assist with the service and equipment needs;
 - c. Continue the downtown redevelopment efforts for the creation of a new municipal complex;
 - d. Develop a maintenance plan for all facilities;
7. Recycling Plan Objectives
- a. The Borough should review its recycling programs annually and make any adjustments necessary to meet changing conditions;
 - b. The Borough should consider provisions for the recycling of electronic equipment such as computers, monitors, keyboards, cell phones, and other electronics;

III. Issues and Concerns Identified in the 2011 Master Plan

1. Historic Preservation Element
- a. No historic preservation advisory commission in the land use or legislative process;
 - b. Lack of public education about local history.
2. Land Use Element
- a. Flooding of Green Brook and Bonygutt Brook;
 - b. Known contaminated sites;
 - c. "M" Municipal Zone is in the code, although no properties are zoned for M and it has no bulk standards;
 - d. Size of older, Victorian style houses create opportunities for professional office uses;
 - e. Mismatch between zoning for 2-family dwellings and the locations of two-family dwellings;
 - f. Downtown businesses are not conducive to pedestrian activity;
 - g. The Borough should purchase privately owned vacant land along the Green Brook for passive recreation/conservation;

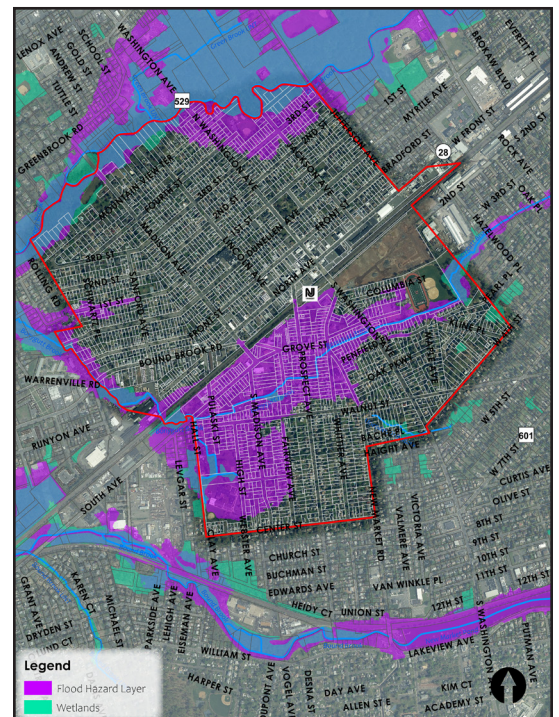


FIGURE 1.12. Flood Hazard Areas and Wetlands

- h. Property maintenance standards should be reviewed or enforced;
 - i. The "B" business zone lists restaurants as a conditional use but does not provide any conditions;
 - j. The standards for the "I" Industrial Zone should be reincorporated into the zoning ordinance;
 - k. Rezone northwest corner of Borough to require single-family dwellings on 75-foot wide lots to keep density low (Proposed RA-75 zone);
 - l. Increase minimum lot size for corner lots;
3. Economic Development Element
- a. North Avenue businesses are not conducive to walkable, active pedestrian downtown;
 - b. Known contaminated sites;
 - c. "M" Municipal Zone is in the code, although no properties are zoned for M and it has no bulk standards;
 - d. Size of older, Victorian style houses create opportunities for professional office uses;

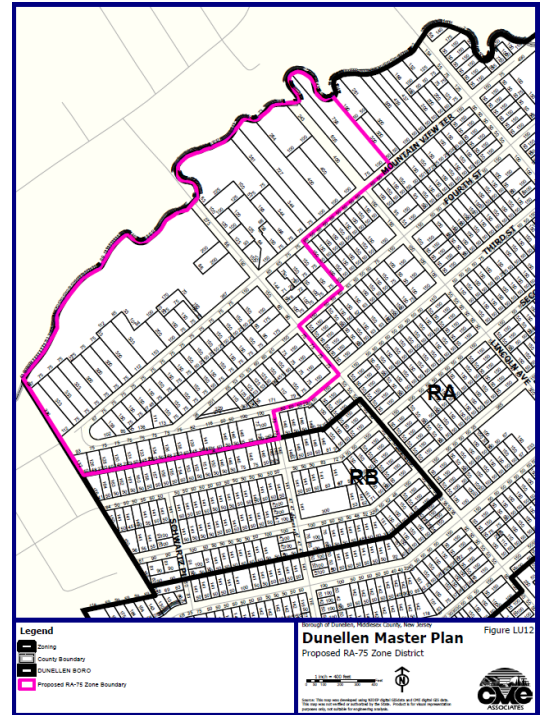


FIGURE 1.13. 2011 Master Plan recommended R-75 Zone

4. Circulation Element
- a. High rate of accidents at the intersection of Washington Avenue and North Avenue;
 - b. Heavy congestion on Washington and North Avenues;
 - c. Bus schedules and train schedules do not allow for timely transfers;
 - d. Several bus stops lack bus shelters;
 - e. Train ticket window has limited hours;

5. Utility Element
- a. Green Brook work by Flood Control Commission and the Army Corps of Engineers makes slow progress;
 - b. Drainage flows south of the railroad embankment are restricted by a railroad culvert along Bonygutt Brook near South Avenue;
 - c. Green Brook is moderately impaired by pollution;

6. Open Space / Recreation Element
- a. Despite having a 9-acre surplus over the State's minimum open space / land area ratio, the Borough was 16 acres short of the recommended open space to population ratio per the National Recreation and Park Association in 2011 and was

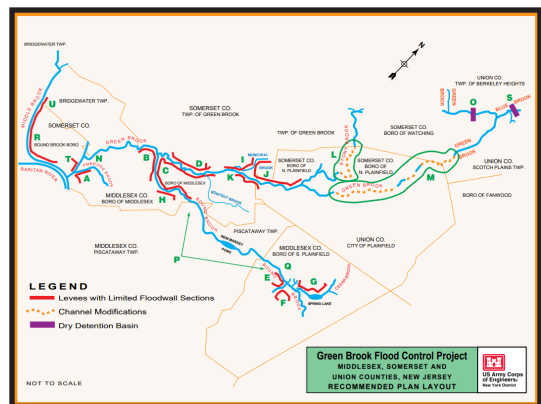


FIGURE 1.14. Green Brook Flood Control Project Plan Map, US Army Corps of Engineers.

projected to be 20 acres short by 2030 based on a 2030 population of 7,530 people. The 2020 population is over 7,600 and the Borough has acquired 13 acres of land since 2011, meaning the Borough is already short of the recommended ratio by 7 acres.

IV. Major Issues Identified by the Public in the 2011 Master Plan:

1. Building Layout Consistency:

- a. Building height and mass design consistency is needed from block to block in the downtown;
- b. Dunellen was named a Transit Village by NJ Transit, and seeks to achieve a consistent design character within its Downtown;
- c. The Borough recognizes redevelopment / rehabilitation within the confines of the transit village framework as an essential means to addressing these conditions;

2. Code Enforcement:

- a. The public identified property maintenance as a significant issue in the Borough during the preparation of the 2011 Master Plan.



FIGURE 1.15. Quick Chek on North Avenue

3. Lack of Professional Services:

- a. The public in 2011 expressed concern that professional services such as legal and medical providers were becoming less present in the Borough and that opportunities for such uses were constrained by zoning.

4. Aesthetics of Downtown Area:

- a. The public stated that signage in the downtown requires better regulations and aesthetic standards.

5. Adequate Parking for Redevelopment:

- a. The public in 2011 expressed concern that there may not be enough parking in the Downtown to accommodate redevelopment.

6. Maintenance of Residential Areas:

- a. The public stated that there was a lack of enforcement of property maintenance in residential areas.

SECTION 2

The extent to which such problems and objectives have increased or been reduced subsequent to such date;

SECTION 2

THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE INCREASED OR BEEN REDUCED SUBSEQUENT TO SUCH DATE:

Since the adoption of the 2011 Master Plan, the Borough has taken certain actions to advance the goals and objectives of the Master Plan and address concerns and issues described in the Plan. Additionally, over the past decade, major events and changes in the needs and behaviors of the public and businesses require the Borough to reconsider its assumptions from 2011 and anticipate how the Borough's needs will change over the next 10 years. Examples include the dominance of e-commerce and the growth of remote working, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic; severe storms such as Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Ida that impacted the Borough; and actions taken by other levels of government such as the State's legalization of recreational cannabis related businesses and the Federal Communications Commission's ruling on local regulation of telecommunications infrastructure.

I. Overall Goals in the 2011 Master Plan:

1. To redevelop the Borough downtown and promote the Redevelopment Plan;

a. Underlying and Related Issues:

i. The Borough recognizes redevelopment / rehabilitation as an essential means to addressing design consistency and improvements to the downtown area.

b. Actions taken by the Borough:

i. The Borough adopted its current Downtown Redevelopment Plan in 2016, which has been amended several times including as recently as May of 2022.

c. Changes in Conditions:

i. The Borough currently has roughly nine redevelopment projects in the works, all of which are located within the redevelopment area. Six have been approved, and several are pending application submission. These projects include mixed use residential/retail establishments, and projects dedicated exclusively to residential development (within the Transition Zone).

2. To promote an aesthetically pleasing and safe downtown area with a mix of uses;

a. Underlying and Related Issues:

i. Redevelopment of the Downtown and advancement of the existing uses and businesses therein requires a downtown which is visually attractive, safe, and includes a variety of uses



FIGURE 2.1. Dunellen Station Project, Under Construction



FIGURE 2.2. 364 North Avenue

to attract visitors, create jobs, and house residents.

- b. Actions taken by the Borough:
 - i. The 2016 Redevelopment Plan has specific design standards that must be adhered to when developing property within the designated area
 - ii. These standards promote a “Railroad Town” theme which includes use of pervious brick pavers, wrought iron materials, and reusable materials
 - iii. The goal with devising design standards that are consistent with the personality and feel of the town is that the area will become more aesthetically pleasing, consistent with sustainability, and create avenues for more streetscape improvements, open space, seating and parking within the downtown;
 - iv. In 2021, the Borough hosted a pop-up park in a portion of the police station parking lot, which was well received by the public.



FIGURE 2.3. 2021 Pop Up Park

- c. Change in Conditions:
 - i. New developments have generally complied with the design standards of the Redevelopment Plan.

3. *To promote an aesthetically pleasing and safe train station*

- a. Underlying and Related Issues:
 - i. A safe and attractive train station area is important to promote transit use, draw more visitors, and enhance the quality of the Downtown.



FIGURE 2.4. Madison Avenue train overpass

- b. Actions taken by the Borough
 - i. The Borough has been working with NJ DOT and State and Federal representatives to prioritize improvement of the train station with incoming federal infrastructure funds.
 - ii. The 2016 Redevelopment Plan established special Redevelopment Areas for the properties immediately adjacent to the train station in order to promote mixed use, provide for parking, and provide new or modernized public services in the immediate vicinity of the train station.

- c. Change in Conditions
 - i. Little change has taken place at the train station to date.
 - ii. Tree plantings around the Train Station parking area have added shade and beauty to the area;

4. *To preserve any remaining open spaces and environmentally sensitive lands within the Borough;*

- a. Underlying and Related Issues:

- i. Lands along the Green Brook and Bonygutt Brook are subject to periodic flooding and contain woodlands and wetlands. Some of those lands are also undeveloped or underdeveloped and within 100-year flood plains.
 - ii. The 2011 Master Plan's Open Space and Recreation Element highlighted that the Borough's open-space to population ratio was short of what it should be both then and when the Borough's population reaches 7,530 persons.
 - iii. Impervious surfaces in the Borough's flood plains exacerbate the impact of storms on homes, businesses, and public infrastructure.
 - iv. The increased pace of redevelopment makes preserving open spaces and sensitive lands critical in keeping a comfortable and high quality of life for its citizens
- b. Actions Taken by the Borough
- i. The 2016 Redevelopment Plan has a specific requirement listed in the overall plan objectives, which states, "Require large development parcels to provide a portion of developed area for recreation and open space use"
 - ii. The Borough is preparing, simultaneous to this document, a Climate Resiliency Plan, to address flooding and hazards related to or exacerbated by climate change.
 - iii. Lands along the Green Brook have been acquired by the Borough;
- c. Change in Conditions:
- i. The adoption of the 2016 Redevelopment Plan gives the Borough opportunities to negotiate with developers to create public open space in the Downtown.
5. *To facilitate the current and future demand for parking in the downtown to sufficiently accommodate existing and future parking demands, especially in consideration of increased residential and commercial densities permitted and encouraged within the Redevelopment Areas of the Borough;*
- a. Underlying and Related Issues:
- i. Downtown Redevelopment typically utilizes a relaxed parking ratio to reduce the cost burden on developers to construct parking and encourage transit usage, especially in transit oriented areas;
 - ii. Dunellen has few public parking areas in the Downtown, and use of those areas is partially constrained due to commuter parking.
- b. Changes in Conditions:
- i. The 2016 Redevelopment Plan contains reduced parking requirements for commercial and residential development, except that the Dunellen Station site is required to comply with the parking ratios of the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) at N.J.A.C. 5:21-1.1 et seq.
 - ii. The parking ratios in the Redevelopment Plan are similar to the ratios provided for high-



FIGURE 2.5. Flooding at McCoy Park

rise apartments in the RSIS. Projects in the downtown are more comparable to mid-rise or low-rise developments, but have the benefit of proximity to the train station.

c. Actions Taken by the Borough:

- i. The 2022-amended Redevelopment Plan includes a Payment In Lieu of Parking, in which developers who fall short of the required parking will be required to pay into a fund which can be used by the Borough to acquire and create new public parking areas.
- ii. The Borough is exploring options to acquire properties as they become available for the construction of parking areas.

6. To encourage pedestrian and bicycle activity throughout the Borough;

a. Underlying and Related Issues

- i. Bicycle and pedestrian activity is a key element of a healthy and vibrant downtown;
- ii. The Borough lacks bicycle paths and, at the time of the 2011 Master Plan, many of the Borough's crosswalks and sidewalks were in sub-par condition.



FIGURE 2.6. End of the Fairview Sidewalk

b. Actions Taken by the Borough

- i. Dunellen has enlisted the aid of NJ Transit and Transit Friendly Planning to conduct an Active Transportation Planning Study in which Transit Friendly Planning will develop goals, objectives and initiatives designed to aid Dunellen in reaching their goals of developing a safe, pedestrian friendly network of infrastructure within the Borough.
- ii. Dunellen is partnering with North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority to develop a complete streets policy which will promote bicycle, pedestrian, and bus friendly circulation.
- iii. The Borough has undertaken or worked with regional authorities to improve and repair sidewalks, crosswalks, and other bike and pedestrian infrastructure.



FIGURE 2.7. Biker on North Avenue Sidewalk

c. Change in Conditions:

- i. The COVID-19 pandemic and the dominance of remote work and online shopping has increased the amount of time people spend at home, and reduced in-person commerce and commuting to places of employment.

7. To encourage properly designed commercial and professional office uses;

a. Underlying and Related Issues:

- i. The mix of uses in the Downtown, and particularly the types of uses that occupy ground

- levels fronting on North Avenue, are not conducive to a walkable pedestrian downtown;
- ii. Borough permits home professional offices in RA and RB zones (Section 115-38.D and E)
 - iii. The Borough has small industrial zone districts on its western and eastern borders of town, but has no zoning standards in place for the zone.
- b. Actions Taken by the Borough
 - i. The Borough's 2016 Redevelopment plan has implemented specific design standards which promote building construction and layout consistent with a "railroad town" theme.
 - c. Change in Conditions:
 - i. The 2016 Redevelopment Plan established design standards for the Downtown.
8. *To alleviate the traffic congestion on the major arterials;*
- a. Underlying and Related Issues:
 - i. Most arterial roads within the Borough are State and County regulated roads which are outside the jurisdiction of the Borough;
 - ii. The intersection of Washington Avenue and North Avenue was reported to have a high rate of traffic accidents.
 - iii. Lack of traffic regulation signage;
 - b. Actions Taken by the Borough:
 - i. Truck Circulation Study, lead by NJ DOT, worth \$250,000
 - ii. New traffic light regulations included in redevelopment plan
 - iii. Borough retains a strong relationship with the NJ DOT
 - iv. Recent partnerships with NJTPA and NJ Transit.
 - c. Change in Conditions:
 - i. Traffic volumes on Route 28 as it passes through the Borough have decreased since 2011, while the rate of accidents has increased;
 - ii. NJ DOT data from 2011 estimated 22,372 average annual daily trips (AADT) on Route 28 as it passes through the Borough to the Washington Avenue intersection, and 12,177 trips thereafter, and a crash rate of 0.87 accidents per trip between mile marker 11.36 and 11.78 (the Middlesex Borough border to Madison Avenue), a rate of 2.77 from Madison Avenue to Washington Avenue, and a rate of 7.73 from Washington Avenue to the Plainfield border.
 - iii. In 2020, the AADT was estimated at 15,693 and the rate of accidents was 5.39 between Middlesex Borough and Madison Avenue and 6.91 between Madison Avenue and the Plainfield border.
9. *To work with appropriate agencies to discourage flooding in the Borough;*
- a. Underlying and Related Issues:
 - i. Approximately one-third of the Borough is located in a flood plain of Green Brook and

- Bonygutt Brook;
- ii. Even beyond the flood plains, portions of the Borough regularly flood due to poor drainage;
- iii. Uses within the flood plains are predominantly one- and two-family dwellings, but also include:
 - (1) Public schools;
 - (2) Childcare facilities;
 - (3) Business uses with outdoor storage;
 - (4) Known contaminated sites;
 - (5) Firehouses;
 - (6) Industrial uses;
 - (7) Public open space;
 - (8) Historic properties
- iv. The Borough's zoning permits impervious coverage as high as 75% on residential properties and 90% on business properties

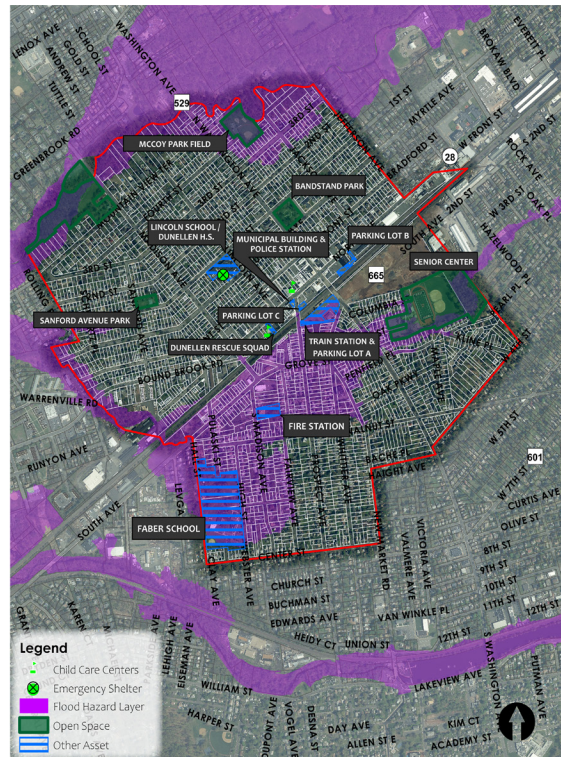


FIGURE 2.8. Borough Assets in relation to flood hazard area

- v. The most flood prone areas have disproportionately high low-income population (southern quadrant) or high minority population (north and eastern quadrants);
- b. Actions Taken by the Borough:
 - i. The Borough of Dunellen has called for the drafting of a Climate Resiliency Plan in concurrency with the Master Plan Re Examination to ensure that environmental attributes and mitigation of natural disasters is a focal point of the planning process in Dunellen
- c. Change in Conditions:
 - i. Superstorm Sandy took place one year after the adoption of the 2011 Master Plan. More recently, the Borough was flooded by Hurricane Ida (2021).
 - ii. NJ DEP has adopted enhanced stormwater management standards for development.

II. Other Objectives Identified in the 2011 Master Plan:

- 1. Land Use Element
 - a. Encourage the proper design of building facades throughout the borough
 - i. Underlying and Related Issues:
 - (1) The Borough's Downtown Vision has centered around a "Railroad Town" aesthetic celebrating the history of the Borough's relationship with its train station
 - ii. Actions Taken by the Borough:
 - (1) The 2016 Redevelopment Plan includes design standards to achieve a desired architectural character.

- iii. Change in Conditions:
 - (1) New buildings are designed in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan
 - (2) Existing buildings have undergone minimal change, if any.
- b. *Allow and encourage outdoor dining*
 - i. Underlying and Related Issues:
 - (1) Outdoor dining is an important component of a walkable downtown, yet few such spaces exist in Dunellen's downtown.
 - ii. Actions Taken by the Borough:
 - (1) The Downtown Redevelopment Plan contains outdoor dining standards, and the Borough permits outdoor dining, but it is not clear where outdoor dining is physically permitted in the Downtown.
 - (a) Cross reference to Chapter 237, "Sidewalk Cafes" is required for clarity.
 - iii. Change in Conditions:
 - (1) Outdoor dining areas have popped up in warm seasons, but in limited instances.
 - (2) COVID-19 highlighted the importance of flexible use of pedestrian and vehicle rights-of-way for outdoor expansion of eating and drinking establishments
- c. *Within the downtown and redevelopment districts, encourage zero side-yard setbacks and zero minimal front yard setbacks discouraging development that serves parking.*
 - i. Underlying and Related Issues:
 - (1) Downtown Redevelopment aims to achieve a dense, walkable environment with little to no open surface parking areas.
 - ii. Actions Taken by the Borough:
 - (1) The Downtown Redevelopment Plan has no side or rear yard setback requirements, and has front yard setback of 16 feet from a building facade to the curb-face (effectively zero-feet to the sidewalk edge).
 - iii. Change in Conditions:
 - (1) New developments have high building coverage ratios and minimal setbacks to the lot lines.
- d. *Encourage the use of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) techniques in the redevelopment of downtown*
 - i. Underlying and Related Issues:
 - (1) Transit oriented urban design and development promotes and capitalizes on use of mass transit facilities such as bus and train stations;
 - (2) It also calls for high density development characterized by a mix of uses, mid-to-high rise building heights, relatively low parking ratios to encourage transit use and



FIGURE 2.9. Mis Amigos outdoor dining

- maximize building area in relation to total impervious coverage, and design that celebrates the sidewalk and accommodates a range of transportation modes
- ii. Actions Taken by the Borough:
 - (1) The Downtown Redevelopment Plan has no side or rear yard setback requirements, and has front yard setback of 16 feet from a building facade to the curb-face (effectively zero-feet to the sidewalk edge).
 - (2) The Redevelopment Plan also has reduced parking standards, flexible densities, and standards that emphasize and attractive and safe sidewalk.
 - (3) Dunellen has enlisted collaboration with multiple New Jersey transportation agencies and hopes to develop a framework and initiative based plan to build upon transit friendly development
 - (4) The Downtown Redevelopment Plan has "Transit Supportive" design and parking standards which are intended to promote transit-oriented urban design, commerce, and commuting habits.
 - iii. Change in Conditions:
 - (1) New developments have high building coverage ratios and minimal setbacks to the lot lines.
- e. *Encourage the use of sustainable design and energy conservation building techniques in new development and redevelopment*
- i. Underlying and Related Issues:
 - (1) The Borough is committed to reducing energy demand from buildings as part of its resiliency goals.
 - ii. Actions Taken by the Borough:
 - (1) Climate Resiliency Plan, in concurrence with the Master Plan Re Exam, aims to better the Borough's use of sustainable and green building techniques to keep up with climate change, while also planning to reduce the impact of potential natural and man-made disasters
 - (2) The Downtown Redevelopment Plan requires new development to:
 - (a) Comply with the State's 2021-adopted electric vehicle parking ratios;
 - (b) Provide green stormwater infrastructure such as rain gardens and bioswales in the sidewalk;
 - iii. Change in Conditions:
 - (1) According to data published by Sustainable Jersey:
 - (a) Between 2011 and 2016 the Borough and the Dunellen Board of Education conducted \$143,395 worth of audits, retrofits, and installation of energy efficient technology on public buildings resulting saving 111,422 annual KWh worth of electricity and 7,545 annual KWh of gas usage (NJ Clean Energy Program).
 - (b) Between 2008 and 2021, 8 commercial, industrial, or public properties and 83 units in buildings with four or fewer dwelling units participated in a New Jersey

energy savings incentive program (NJ Clean Energy Program);

(c) 116 commercial and residential properties installed solar utilities since 2011 (NJ Clean Energy Program);

(d) Between 2015 and 2021, Dunellen saw its total electricity usage decrease by about 1.3 million kWh, driven mostly by an approximately 1.7 million kWh drop in commercial electricity usage (Data from PSE&G).

f. *Increase street furniture located on streetscapes and in train station, including lights, benches and trash receptacles*

i. Underlying and Related Issues:

(1) Street furniture, lighting, plantings, and waste receptacles are important parts of a safe, clean, and inviting transit oriented downtown.

ii. Actions Taken by the Borough:

(1) Redevelopment Plan includes regulations regarding development of streetscape which includes specific material standards to adhere to the "Transit Village" theme which includes the usage of wrought iron, brick awnings, pervious pavers, and more.

(2) Redevelopment Plan also has specific standards to adhere to in terms of planting, in which native plants and trees are strictly to be used in streetscape improvements

iii. Change in Conditions:

(1) Features like sidewalk planters and benches have been erected at a few locations in the Downtown - mainly near the train station.

g. *Minimize reliance on surface parking lots*

i. Underlying and Related Issues:

(1) Older development in the Downtown utilizes surface parking lots including lots located between the building and the streetline;

(2) Problems associated with surface parking include impeding stormwater drainage, creating gaps between buildings that impair walkability, limiting developable lot area.

(3) Large surface parking lots exist to serve train station commuters.

ii. Actions Taken by the Borough:

(1) Downtown bulk standards effectively prohibit parking between a building and the sidewalk;

(2) Downtown Redevelopment Plan allows developers to use on-street parking spaces toward the requirement for certain commercial uses;

(3) Bulk standards in the Downtown are conducive to providing parking beneath buildings.



FIGURE 2.10. Skinner Plaza Parking

- h. *Develop a structured parking deck for Borough residents and visitors that is inviting, and provides easy access to Train Station, shops and other amenities*
 - i. Underlying and Related Issues:
 - (1) As redevelopment takes place with reduced parking standards, parking for visitors to the downtown and for train commuters may become scarce.
 - ii. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) The Borough adopted a Payment In-Lieu of Parking provision in the most recent amendment to the Downtown Redevelopment Plan, which may assist the Borough in acquiring land and constructing a public parking deck.
- i. *Determine strategies for meeting the Borough's updated COAH (Council of Affordable Housing) obligation for Third Round affordable housing requirement, and apply for substantive certifications*
 - i. Underlying and Related Issues
 - (1) The Borough is required to address its State-mandated affordable housing obligation as rules and estimated obligations are published;
 - (2) COAH was rendered defunct by a 2015 NJ Supreme Court decision known as Mount Laurel IV, which remanded to the trial courts COAH's responsibilities to set and enforce municipal affordable housing obligations;
 - ii. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) The Borough adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in 2016 which addressed its affordable housing obligation through participation in the County's housing rehabilitation program and through adoption of a Downtown Redevelopment Plan with affordable set-aside requirements.
- j. *Allow for the creation of housing choices for a wide range of income levels to ensure that people can live and work in the Borough*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) The affordable housing set-aside requirement in the Downtown Redevelopment Plan ensures that between 15 and 20 percent of any new housing created in the Downtown will be dedicated to households earning less than 80% of the Regional Median Income.
- k. *Make modifications to existing Zoning Ordinance to prevent the conversion of existing low-density housing neighborhoods to out of character multi family usage*
 - i. Underlying and Related Issues
 - (1) The 2011 Master Plan noted that there are two-family dwellings and other multi-unit houses in parts of the Borough that are zoned for single-family development only
 - (2) Participants in the 2022 Master Plan Community Meeting noted that there are a number of dwellings in the Borough that are overcrowded or that have been illegally converted to apartments.
 - (3) The RB Zoning District permits two-family dwellings as of right and multi-family dwell-

ings as a conditional use;

- (4) Beyond zoning, the Borough has minimal ordinances regulating the renting of single-family houses or the registration and maintenance of rental houses.
- ii. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) None to date
- I. *Utilize on-street parking to create a separation between the automobile and pedestrian realm*
 - i. Underlying and Related Issues
 - (1) One of the most effective ways to make safe bicycle paths is to use on-street parking as a barrier between a bike path and the vehicular right of way.
 - ii. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) The Borough is partnering with NJTPA to establish complete street policies and procedures.
- m. *Achieve Transit Village Designation under NJ Transit Guidelines*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Dunellen achieved the Transit Village designation on August 28th, 2012.
 - (2) Dunellen implemented design standards conducive to a "Transit Village" to promote building design and layout consistent with the Transit Village theme
- n. *Continue cooperation with Green Brook Flood Control Commission*
 - i. Underlying and Related Issues
 - (1) The GB FCC is a State-authorized body overseeing the Green Brook Flood control project, a joint NJDEP - US Army Corps of Engineers project that started in 1999 with the goal of protecting communities from flooding from the Green Brook.
 - ii. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Dunellen is still currently in cooperation with the Green Brook Flood Control Commission.
 - iii. Change in Conditions
 - (1) The Green Brook Flood Control Project is ongoing.
- o. *Develop cellular tower land use ordinance*
 - i. Underlying and Related Issues
 - (1) Growing reliance on mobile technology results in increasing demand by telecommunications providers to locate cellular communications towers and similar technology.
 - ii. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Dunellen is currently in the early stages of drafting a telecommunications ordinance to create conditions and regulations on the development of cell towers and 5G apparatuses

iii. Change in Conditions

- (1) The Federal Communications Commission adopted a decision in 2018 (effective in 2019) limiting local governments' ability to regulate the deployment of 5G and other "advanced" wireless service technology in public rights of way.

2. Economic Element Plan Objectives

a. *Amend Zoning Ordinance to allow professional offices and home offices along Washington Avenue*

i. Underlying and Related Issues

- (1) As previously stated, the Borough had concerns in 2011 that the zoning in place did not provide adequate opportunities for professional offices;
- (2) Professional offices are conditionally permitted in the RA/RB zones and in the Downtown Redevelopment Plan;

ii. Actions taken by the Borough

- (1) No overlay zone has been adopted along Washington Avenue to date;
- (2) The 2016 Redevelopment Plan permits professional offices.

b. *Identify funding sources for such activities as facade improvement programs*

i. Underlying and Related Issues

- (1) Facade improvements were identified as a potential tool for creating uniform and consistent Railroad Town design in the Borough's downtown;
- (2) Borough may not be eligible for programs like the NJ DCA's Neighborhood Preservation Program, which would fund such projects.

ii. Actions taken by the Borough

- (1) None to date.

c. *Provide opportunity locations downtown as public space encouraging the arts and environment that is pedestrian friendly focused for shopping, gathering, eating and entertainment*

i. Actions taken by the Borough

- (1) Pop-Up park event in 2021 was a success;

ii. Changes in conditions

- (1) Limited to no other spaces in the Downtown.
- (2) Bloustein School at Rutgers conducted a study on street art and murals and provided examples of projects from other towns.

d. *Encourage expansion of traditional retail uses downtown*

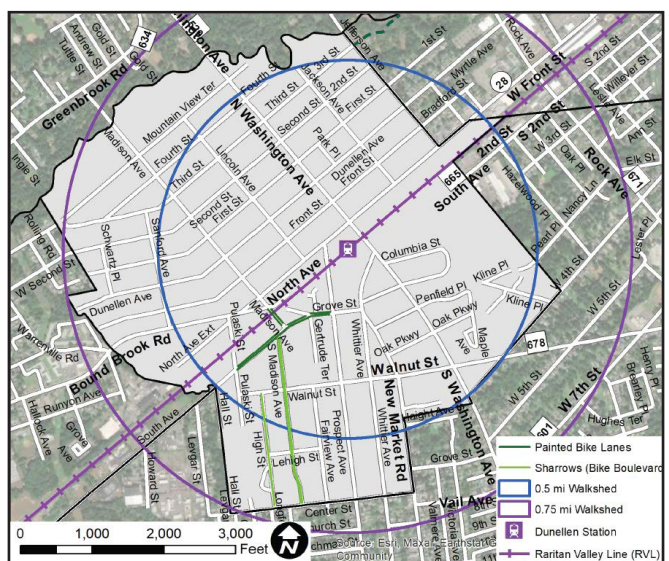


FIGURE 2.11. Transit Friendly Planning Bike Path Map

- i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) The redevelopment plan has expanded on this objective by allowing for mixed used development in the Downtown Redevelopment Area consisting of office and residential uses above ground-level commercial uses;
 - (a) The language in the Redevelopment Plan is vague as to what, if any, retail uses are permitted at street level, and also lacks definitions for uses such as “personal services.”

3. Circulation Element Objectives

a. *Create highly definable pedestrian crosswalks at all necessary intersections particularly within the downtown;*

- i. Underlying and Related Issues
 - (1) Crosswalks were previously badly faded or nonexistent.
- ii. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Crosswalks have been repainted, repaired, and redesigned throughout the Borough;
 - (2) Dunellen is / has been working with several entities to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections and facilities and has made obtaining “complete streets” a main priority;
 - (3) Dunellen has prioritized reducing traffic infractions, improving speed and traffic regulatory signage, and implementing speed bumps onto major roads to enhance safety.



FIGURE 2.12. 2022 Striping Project Location Map

b. *Provide vehicular intersection improvements along major arterial roads, such as dedicated turn lanes;*

- i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Roads that have been identified by Borough residents and the Master Plan Steering Committee as areas of concern in terms of congestion and safety are Washington Avenue, Walnut Intersection, and portions of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th streets where they intersect with major arterial roads
 - (2) Minimal improvements have been made to these roads and intersections.

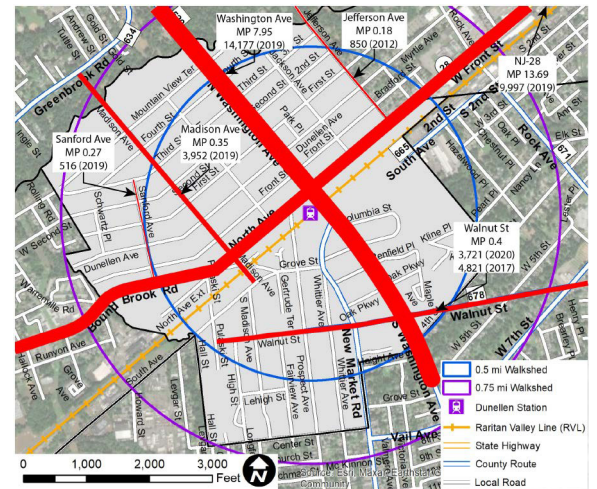


FIGURE 2.13. Road Categories (Arterials in Red)

c. *Designate bikeways and bike routes where necessary throughout the Borough*

- i. Underlying and Related Issues

- (1) A map of bicycle paths in northern New Jersey created by the New Jersey and U.S. Departments of Transportation in 2012 identified Madison, Washington, and New Market Avenues as unsuitable for biking, but identified Walnut Avenue as suitable for biking.
 - ii. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) The 2022 Master Plan Survey and public meeting generated feedback from residents stating that the bike riding in the Borough is unsafe.
 - (2) The 2022 Striping Project includes bicycle symbols on several municipal rights of way.
 - d. *Identify funding sources for bikeway and pedestrian improvements*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) The Borough has identified grant opportunities but has not been funded to date.
 - e. *Provide Traffic calming devices in the downtown and near schools*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Minimal improvements have been made.
4. Urban Design Objectives
- a. *Encourage high quality, attractive, architecturally appealing designs and materials that foster a Railroad Town feel.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Downtown Redevelopment Plan with extensive design standards
 - b. *Ensure that developments maintain uniform design qualities such as landscaping, pedestrian connections and similar building scale, materials and massing. Comparable attributes improve the overall urban design of the area.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Downtown Redevelopment Plan with extensive design standards
 - c. *Encourage accessible, attractive pedestrian areas that offer pleasant seating, adequate lighting, rain cover and aesthetically pleasing landscaping.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Minimal progress has been made to provide permanent pedestrian areas in the Downtown.
 - d. *Ensure that the design of buildings adjacent to pedestrian areas enrich the appearance of the space and encourage people to use them.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Downtown Redevelopment Plan with extensive design standards and land use standards that emphasize pedestrian oriented businesses and activities at the sidewalk level.
 - e. *Encourage developers to include artwork in public areas.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough

- (1) Downtown Redevelopment Plan that encourage murals and art at the street level.
- f. *Ensure that screening of mechanical equipment on rooftops is visually appealing and harmonious with the building design.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Downtown Redevelopment Plan with rooftop equipment screening standards
- g. *Ensure the use of pedestrian friendly site design, landscaping, and lighting of parking areas*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Downtown Redevelopment Plan with extensive design standards.
- h. *Encourage development that takes advantage of natural lighting.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Redevelopment Plan makes little to no mention of this.
- i. *Ensure the use of native plantings ranging in seasonal colors in public and semi-public areas.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Downtown Redevelopment Plan that requires native plantings
- j. *Encourage water conservation in landscape designs.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Redevelopment Plan makes little to no mention of this.
- k. *Ensure continuous and ample sidewalks along streets that include landscaping, and pedestrian amenities.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Redevelopment Plan requires street trees and quality sidewalk furniture.
- l. *Ensure that sidewalks and walkways are furnished with lighting, seating, landscaping, street trees, trash receptacles, bike racks, handicap access, and rain cover.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Redevelopment Plan requires street trees and quality sidewalk amenities.
- m. *Provide clear and identifiable streetscape design for intersections that create entry points into the Borough through aligned building facades, signs, markings, and landscaping.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Existing signs on Route 28, Washington Avenue, and Madison Avenue.
- n. *Work closely with NJ Transit in the planning and design of improvements to the train station and bus route facilities to ensure Borough design policies are reflected.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) Borough is working with NJ Transit and State and Federal representatives to prioritize improvements to the train station.
- o. *Ensure site and building designs that support and connect with the train station and bus*

routes.

i. Actions taken by the Borough

(1) Redevelopment Plan design guidelines emphasize building orientation and design that integrates or respects the Train Station and any adjacent bus stops.

p. *Allow buildings to be sited at or near the public sidewalk as long as the full potential of the sidewalk is not diminished.*

i. Actions taken by the Borough

(1) Redevelopment Plan has zero-foot setbacks to the sidewalk edge.

q. *Assure that more intense development is compatible with adjacent less intense development.*

r. *Discourage signs at upper levels of buildings.*

i. Actions taken by the Borough

(1) Chapter 285 prohibits signs above the first story or more than 17 feet above grade.

s. *Encourage the establishment of a palette of colors that can be referenced whenever businesses decide to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings.*

i. Actions taken by the Borough

(1) No color palette or material reference established for the Downtown.

t. *Encourage the green character of existing residential neighborhoods.*

i. Actions taken by the Borough

(1) Redevelopment Plan encourages and requires green landscaping and streetscaping practices.

u. *Ensure urban design principles and building orientations that foster sustainability, environmental quality, preservation and energy conservation.*

i. Actions taken by the Borough

(1) Redevelopment plan encourages use of sustainably produced materials.

5. Open Space Element Objectives

a. *Municipal purchase of parcels that can be potentially used and/or converted for recreational and open spaces purposes, particularly along Green Brook*

i. Actions taken by the Borough

(1) The Borough has acquired properties along Green Brook;

(2) The Borough has recently coordinated with Blue Acres to begin acquiring additional properties;

b. *Incorporate public spaces into downtown redevelopment effort*

i. Actions taken by the Borough

(1) The Borough hosted a pop-up park in the municipal parking lot across from Borough Hall in 2021;

- (2) The Redevelopment Plan recommends inclusion of public open spaces and requires ten percent of any property to be “landscaped open space.”
- c. *Create a street tree planting program throughout the Borough*
- i. *Underlying Conditions*
- (1) Street trees are known to have immense public benefits, including providing shade, cleaning air, protecting pedestrians and buildings from cars, and increasing property values and neighborhood desirability.
- (2) Several streets throughout the Borough lack street trees but have sufficiently wide curb strips and sidewalk space to plant small trees (maximum mature height of 35 feet).
- ii. *Actions taken by the Borough*
- (1) Redevelopment Plan has specific guidelines in terms of planting trees and flower gardens, in that all planting areas should exclusively hold plants and trees that are native to New Jersey.
- (2) Little to no action taken to plant street trees elsewhere in the Borough.
6. Municipal Services Element Objectives
- a. *Continue to maintain and upgrade Borough Infrastructure*
- i. *Actions taken by the Borough*
- (1) The Borough has been working with utility providers, the Army Corps of Engineers, and other entities to improve infrastructure including utility lines, roads, and storm drainage.
- b. *Identifying funding sources to assist with service and equipment needs*
- i. *Actions taken by the Borough*
- (1) The Borough has worked with the utility providers servicing the Borough to upgrade and replace water, sewer, gas, and electric infrastructure; although more is needed to keep up with natural hazards.
- c. *Continue the downtown redevelopment efforts for the creation of a new municipal complex.*
- i. *Actions taken by the Borough:*
- (1) The Borough is exploring opportunities to include a municipal complex as part of the Redevelopment of the North and South Train Station Lots.
- d. *Develop a maintenance plan for all facilities.*
- i. *Actions Taken by the Borough:*
- (1) The Borough has not prepared a comprehensive maintenance plan for all of its facilities; however, it has conducted continual maintenance, monitoring, and upgrades to its facilities.
- (2) An individual maintenance plan was adopted for the municipal building on August 31, 2022.

7. Recycling Element

- a. *The Borough should review its recycling programs annually and make any adjustments necessary to meet changing conditions.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough:
 - (1) The Borough's Department of Public Works annually to assess its recycling program and consider ways to meet the needs of the Boroughs' residents and businesses.
- b. *The Borough should consider provisions for the recycling of electronic equipment such as computers, monitors, keyboards, cell phones, and other electronics.*
 - i. Actions taken by the Borough
 - (1) The Department of Public Works accepts electronics at the DPW Yard or pickup by appointment.

III. Other Issues and Concerns Identified in the 2011 Master Plan

1. Historic Preservation Element

- a. No historic preservation advisory commission in the land use or legislative process.
 - i. No historic preservation commission has been formed;
 - ii. An independent historic society exists;
 - iii. No land use standards have been adopted to protect historic buildings;

2. Land Use Element

- a. Known contaminated sites.
 - i. There continue to be contaminated sites in the Borough, including in its flood prone areas.
- b. "M" Municipal Zone is in the code, although no properties are zoned for M and it has no bulk standards.
 - i. No properties have been zoned M in the Borough and there are still no specific bulk standards.
- c. Downtown businesses are not conducive to pedestrian activity.
 - i. As previously stated, the Downtown Redevelopment Plan adopted in 2016 permits commercial uses on the ground floor and offices above; but more specific standards can be considered to better control what uses take place on the ground floor.
- d. Property maintenance standards should be reviewed or enforced.
 - i. Property maintenance standards concerning removal of garbage, tall grass, weeds, and dead trees were adopted in 2016 (Article III of Chapter 217 created through Ordinance 2016-14).
- e. The "B" business zone lists restaurants as a conditional use but does not provide any conditions.
 - i. This has not been addressed in the zoning since the adoption of the 2011 Master Plan.

- f. The standards for the “I” Industrial Zone should be reincorporated into the zoning ordinance.
 - i. This has not been addressed in the zoning since the adoption of the 2011 Master Plan.
 - g. Rezone northwest corner of Borough to require single-family dwellings on 75-foot wide lots to keep density low (Proposed RA-75 zone).
 - i. This has not been addressed in the zoning since the adoption of the 2011 Master Plan.
 - h. Increase minimum lot size for corner lots.
 - i. This has not been addressed in the zoning since the adoption of the 2011 Master Plan.
3. Circulation Element
- a. High rate of accidents at the intersection of Washington Avenue and North Avenue.
 - i. No changes have been made to this intersection.
 - ii. Data published by the NJ DOT suggests that accident rates in this area have not substantially improved since 2011.
 - b. Several bus stops lack bus shelters.
 - i. No change
4. Utility Element
- a. Drainage flows south of the railroad embankment are restricted by a railroad culvert along Bonygutt Brook near South Avenue.
 - i. The South Avenue culvert project is advancing, and is expected to take place in 2023.
 - b. Green Brook is moderately impaired by pollution.
 - i. The Green Brook in Dunellen will be the subject of a pilot program for a trash trap to reduce pollution.

SECTION 3

The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the Master Plan or development regulations as last revised;

SECTION 3

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES FORMING THE BASIS FOR THE MASTER PLAN OR DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AS LAST REVISED:

As a part of the Reexamination process, the MLUL requires an assessment of the changes that have taken place in the community since the adoption of the last Master or Reexamination Plan. There are a number of substantive changes at the state and local level since the adoption of the 2011 Master Plan Reexamination.

Much of the data in this section is collected from the U.S. Census Bureau. It should be noted that over the past 20 years, there have been significant changes to the way that the Census Bureau collects and publishes data. In 2000, the Decennial Census collected vast amounts of information about the population through a long form distributed to every household in the United States and its territories. In 2005, the U.S. Census began rolling out the American Community Survey (ACS)- a long form that is distributed on a monthly basis to a small sample of the U.S. population - in order to collect demographic data on a more frequent basis and to reduce the length of the decennial census form. Because the ACS uses a population sample, the results of the survey are statistically manipulated to estimate statistical characteristics of a geographic area and are therefore subject to a sometimes significant margin of error.

While the 2010 Decennial Census still collected some of the more specific, topical data as the ACS (i.e. housing unit characteristics, income and financial characteristics, age characteristics, etc.) the 2020 Decennial Census data is much more limited, making the 2020 ACS the best source for analysis of housing, economic, and demographic trends for Dunellen residents. At the same time, the ACS data for Dunellen between 2009 and 2012, in retrospect, appears to be severely flawed in that it suggests that the population and housing stock of Dunellen increased substantially around 2010 and plummeted in the middle of the past decade. Consequently, for the purposes of this section, any data from the U.S. Census Bureau in this section will come from the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census (Summary File 1) and the 2020 ACS (5-year).

I. Demographics and Population Characteristics:

1. **Population Growth:** The Borough of Dunellen saw dramatic increases in population from the year 1900 to 1930, with a slowdown during the Great Depression and a modest pick-up in the 40s and 50s. The population began to shrink from the 1970s through the 1980s; but the Decennial Censuses from 2000 to 2020 show that the population of the Borough has grown at a slow by steady rate at an average of roughly 5.3% per decade and now exceeds its 1970 peak by more than 550 people.

Rate of Population Growth:

Year	Pop.	Pop. Change	% Change
1900	1,239	---	---
1910	1,990	751	60.6%
1920	3,394	1,404	70.5%
1930	5,148	1,754	51.6%
1940	5,360	212	4.1%
1950	6,290	930	17.3%
1960	6,840	550	8.7%
1970	7,070	230	3.3%
1980	6,593	-477	-6.7%
1990	6,528	-65	-0.9%
2000	6,823	295	4.5%
2010	7,227	404	5.9%
2020	7,637	410	5.6%

2. Age Characteristics: The age composition of the Borough’s population has fluctuated from the years 1990 to 2020. On net, however, the population aged 55 to 64 has more than doubled in size (140.6% growth) over 30 years while the age 20 to 54 cohorts have shrunk in size, as has the age 5 to 9 cohort. Other cohorts have grown modestly in size. Dunellen does not have any senior housing facilities that would attract a large influx of older adults, making it more likely that these population trends reflect an aging-in-place of long-time residents and a decision by younger adults to leave town or select other communities to raise their families. According to the 2020 Census just 68 out of 1,938 residents over the age of 55 had moved to the Borough within the past year, which is a negligible amount.

Based upon that statistic alone, it seems apparent that an older population of people began to move to Dunellen within the 30 year time frame, while the ones who had previously lived there decided to stay. Notwithstanding this pattern, the median age for Dunellen in 2020 was 36.5 , years old, which is young compared to many other communities seeing similar population shifts.

Age	1990	2000	2010	2020	'90-'20 Change
Under 5	503	481	452	645	28.2%
5 to 9	701	422	488	453	-35.3%
10 to 14	352	479	485	539	53.1%
15 to 19	342	401	447	463	35.3%
20 to 24	581	325	482	389	-33.04%
25 to 34	914	1,015	1,056	820	-10.2%
35 to 44	1,488	1,430	1,180	1,203	-19.1%
45 to 54	813	946	1,150	757	-6.8%
55 to 64	394	537	788	948	140.6%
Over 65	920	787	699	998	8.4%

3. **Average Household Size:** The average household size for the Borough of Dunellen has been consistent since the 1970's, which has stayed between 2 and 3 people per household, while gradually increasing towards three persons.

Average Household Size 1970 - 2020:

Year	Households	Size
1970	2,017	2.61
1980	2,298	2.23
1990	2,423	2.66
2000	2,451	2.26
2010	2,566	2.81
2020	2,408	2.98

II. Housing Characteristics:

1. **Occupancy Status:** Between 2000 and 2020, the number of owner-occupied units has decreased by roughly 8%, while the number of renter-occupied units and vacant units have increased. The co-occurrence of these trends suggest that over the past 20 years either there is a high conversion rate from traditionally owner-occupied units to rental units, or there is an increasing rate of owner-occupied units becoming vacant from the year 2000 to 2020. However, the overall number of units has increased by roughly 130 units in that 20 year span.

Occupancy Status by Tenure (2000 - 2020):

Characteristics	2000		2010		2020	
	# Units	%	# Units	%	# Units	%
Owner-occupied	1,692	67.14%	1,651	61.54%	1,589	59.87%
Renter-occupied	759	30.12%	915	34.10%	819	30.86%
Vacant Units	69	2.74%	117	4.36%	246	9.27%
Total	2,520	100%	2,683	100%	2,654	100%

2. **Housing Units by Type:** The number of multi family units is increasing; however, single family residences still dominate the Borough, as single family attached and detached dwellings account for 70% of the Borough's housing units, while leaving slight increases for 2, 3, and multi family housing units.

Housing Units by Type:

Units in Structure	2000		2020	
	# Units	%	# Units	%
Single Family, Detached	1,556	67.5%	1,664	62.7%
Single Family, Attached	120	3.2%	191	7.2%
2	429	17.4%	437	16.5%
3 or 4	208	6.8%	113	4.3%
5 to 9	66	2.1%	72	2.7%
Total	2,520	100%	2,654	100%

Units in Structure	2000		2020	
	# Units	%	# Units	%
10 to 19	57	2.2%	75	2.8%
20 to 49	15	0.7%	92	3.5%
50 or more	0	0%	2	0.03%
Mobile Home	0	0%	8	0.3%
Boat, RV, Van Etc	0	0%	0	0%
Total	2,520	100%	2,654	100%

III. Employment Characteristics for Residents:

1. **Labor and Unemployment Trends:** According to annual labor force data collected by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD), the Borough saw its unemployment rate steadily subside between 2012 to 2019, as the percentage of unemployed people dropped from 8.6% to 3.1% over the nine year span. The number of employed people also grew over that seven year span, along with the size of the Borough's labor force. However, unemployment spiked in 2020 amidst the peak of the Covid-19 outbreaks, and returned in 2021 to 2014-2015 levels.

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Since 2012 (NJ LWD):

Year	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment %
2012	4,479	4,094	385	8.6%
2013	4,456	4,135	321	7.2%
2014	4,513	4,238	275	6.1%
2015	4,537	4,306	231	5.1%
2016	4,538	4,343	195	4.3%
2017	4,691	4,498	193	4.1%
2018	4,653	4,490	163	3.5%
2019	4,698	4,554	144	3.1%
2020	4,591	4,186	405	8.8%
2021	4,635	4,369	266	5.7%

2. **Employed Residents Age 16 and Over By Industry:** The 2000 Census and 2020 ACS data reports the industry sectors in which Dunellen residents worked in those years. The reported industries of employment for Dunellen residents have shifted over the past twenty years; in some cases substantially. The largest growing industry within the 20 year period is Construction, which saw a 256 person increase since 2000, while manufacturing shrank by 213 persons and wholesale shrank by 85 persons. Similarly, there was a comparably sized drop in persons employed in the finance/insurance/real estated sector to the growth in persons working in the professional/scientific/etc. sector, and a sizable jump in persons employed in arts/entertainment/recreation/food/accommodation. 2010 data is not included in this chart due to the unusual spike in population implied by that data, which the Borough believes to be an overestimate by the 2010 ACS.

Employment of Residents Age 16 and Over by Industry:

<i>Industry of Employment</i>	<i># of Residents Employed in Industry</i>		<i>2000-2020 Change</i>
	<i>2000</i>	<i>2020</i>	
<u>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining</u>	0	0	0%
<u>Construction</u>	197	453	129%
<u>Manufacturing</u>	482	269	-44%
<u>Wholesale Trade</u>	124	39	-68%
<u>Retail Trade</u>	495	438	-11%
<u>Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities</u>	206	197	-4%
<u>Information</u>	249	213	-14%
<u>Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing</u>	224	171	-23%
<u>Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services</u>	399	516	29%
<u>Educational, Health and Social Services</u>	608	567	6.7%
<u>Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services</u>	205	330	60%
<u>Other Services (Except Public Administration)</u>	174	214	22%
<u>Public Administration</u>	121	77	36%
Total	3,484	3,484	

- 3. Employed Residents Age 16 and Over By Occupation:** The shifts in the types of occupations held by working age persons in Dunellen matches the shifts in industry, with a proportionately large jump in persons working in service, construction, and maintenance related roles and a proportionately significant drop in the number of working residents employed in production and transportation related roles.

Employed Residents Sixteen and Over, By Occupation (2000-2020):

<i>Industry of Employment</i>	<i>Residents</i>		<i>2000-2020 Change</i>
	<i>2000</i>	<i>2020</i>	
<u>Management, Professional, and Related Occupations</u>	1,233	1,335	8.2%
<u>Service Occupations</u>	444	536	20.7%
<u>Sales and Office Occupations</u>	909	821	9.6%
<u>Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance</u>	363	470	29.4%
<u>Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations</u>	524	322	-38.5%
Total	3,484	3,484	--

4. **Wages:** Between the year 2000 and 2020, the proportion of households earning more than \$100,000 relative to all households has grown while households earning \$35,000 to \$99,999 have become less common in the Borough. It should be noted that the median income of \$59,205 in 1999 has the same buying power as \$91,974 dollars in 2020, and \$74,375 median income in the 2010 ACS has the same buying power of \$88,276 in 2020. While the Borough has seen a growth in the number of households earning more than \$100,000 over the past few decades, it has seen little change in its proportionate makeup of low income households earning less than \$35,000 annually. Consequently, the relative wealth of the median household in the Borough is less than what it was 20 years ago. For the purpose of this Chart, 2010 ACS data is used because the number of households reported in that year's ACS is comparable to those reported in the Decennial Census.

Households Incomes in 2000, 2010, and 2020 as Percentage of Borough Households

	2000	2010	2020
<i>Yearly Income Range</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Less than \$10,000	2.30%	3.50%	4.80%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.60%	2.50%	3.90%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	10.00%	7.40%	7.60%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6.60%	6.00%	5.90%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	16.90%	11.20%	8.40%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	24.40%	19.40%	18.40%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	18.70%	18.50%	12.50%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	13.10%	19.50%	22.50%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2.50%	9.70%	8.40%
\$200,000 or more	1.80%	2.10%	7.60%
Number of Households	2,441	2,568	2,408
Median H.H. Income (\$)	59,205	74,375	75,564

IV. School Enrollment Levels

1. **Public School Enrollment in 2010/2011 and 2021/2022 School Years:** Public school enrollment changes on a year-to-year basis. In some years, schools need to scramble to accommodate an unusually large number of students whereas other years they are at or below a “typical” level. Some towns have seen enrollment decline by hundreds of students over the years. Dunellen, on the other hand, had only 94 more students enrolled in the 2021/2022 school year than it had in the 2010/2011 school year. The total, district-wide enrollment in the 2016/2017 school year was just slightly below the 2010/2011 enrollment, indicating that Dunellen has had a fairly constant rate of enrollment over the past decade. The data below comes from the New Jersey Department of Education’s Annual Fall Enrollment Reports.

Public School Enrollment (Number of Students) in Dunellen by School in the Falls of 2010, 2016, and 2021

<i>School</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2021</i>
Dunellen High School	300	364	349

School	2010	2016	2021
John P. Faber Elementary School	558	519	587
Lincoln Middle School	260	271	276
Total Number of Students in District	1,118	1,154	1,212

V. Characteristics of Local Jobs

- Annual Wages by Industry of Employment:** The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce annually publishes statistics for “Covered” employment at the municipal level. Covered employment includes employers and their workers who are covered by the State’s unemployment insurance program. The NJ LWD indicates that covered employment comprises 95% of employment throughout the State.

This table shows the average number of firms/employers, average employees, and average in each industry within the Borough of Dunellen, and gives the annual wages of each industry for the years 2011 and 2020. Between 2011 and 2020 the number of private firms or employers in Dunellen has increased from 136 to 145 while the average number of annual employees dropped by 59 persons and average wages decreased from \$40,292 to \$38,700. One of the most substantial shifts in local employment appears to be a decline in the presence of firms and workers in the Information, Finance & Insurance, and Real Estate sectors and an increase in firms in the “Professional, Scientific, Technology and Management”, “Administrative, and Waste Management Services”, and “Health and Social Services” industries. Industries that typically pay higher wages, such as Information, Finance & Insurance, and “Professional, Scientific, Technology and Management”, pay less than \$50,000 on average to their employees in Dunellen. Meanwhile, workers in the local Wholesale Trade industry have been earning an average wage in excess of \$80,000.

Covered Employment in Dunellen in 2011 and 2020

Industry	2011			2020		
	Firms/ Employers	Workers	Average Yearly Wage	Firms/ Employers	Workers	Average Yearly Wage
Federal Government	1	23	\$62,005	1	21	\$63,802
Local Government (inc. Schools)	3	248	\$45,300	3	248	\$59,481
Construction	14	63	\$37,516	17	71	\$46,332
Manufacturing	7	42	\$34,974	5	29	\$42,747
Wholesale Trade	7	131	\$90,399	5	77	\$83,978
Retail Trade	24	213	\$33,181	20	240	\$25,921
Transportation and Warehousing	7	17	\$25,049	11	25	\$32,961
Information	5	24	\$34,347	x	x	x
Finance and Insurance	6	29	\$45,012	x	x	x

Industry	2011			2020		
	Firms/ Employers	Workers	Average Yearly Wage	Firms/ Employers	Workers	Average Yearly Wage
Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing	x	x	x	x	x	x
Professional, Scientific, Technology and Management	x	x	x	8	20	\$49,381
Administrative, and Waste Management Services	x	x	x	13	43	\$36,814
Educational	x	x	x	x	x	x
Health and Social Services	x	x	x	12	42	\$20,920
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	x	x	x	x	x	x
Accommodation and Food Services	17	76	\$17,683	15	100	\$20,209
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	23	56	\$27,079	17	55	\$28,005
Unclassified Entities	0		\$0	8	12	\$21,685
Private Sector Overall*	136	828	\$40,292	145	779	\$38,700

x = Value withheld by NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (to protect individual privacy or for other reasons).

* = Private Sector Overall includes number of firms, employers, and average wage from industries where data is withheld.

- Educational Attainment:** According to the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics dataset published by the U.S. Census Bureau, just under a quarter people working in the Borough have a Bachelors Degree or higher. This dataset, which is based on a Census survey data, indicates that 10.7% of local workers have less than a high school education, 18.5% have a high school education or equivalent, 21.8% have some college education or an Associates level Degree according to the most recent data from 2019.

VI. Land Use

- Land Use Change:** The 2011 Master Plan identified a total of 2,091 parcels in the Borough of Dunellen having a combined total of 566 acres. Three-quarters of the Borough's parcels were used for residential purposes, which appear to have included lands used for single and multi-family development as well as common areas owned by homeowner and condominium associations for residential uses. The 2021 tax-lot data published by Middlesex County shows

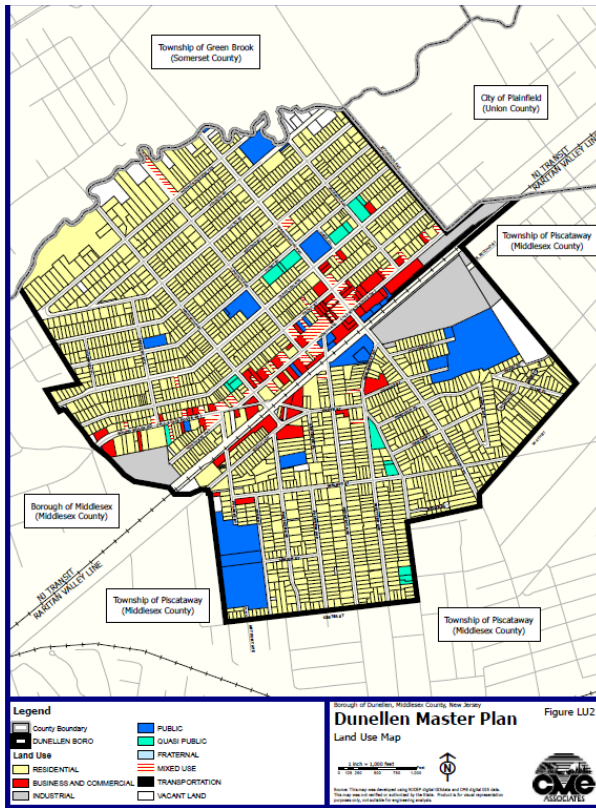


FIGURE 3.1. Land Use Map from 2011 Master Plan

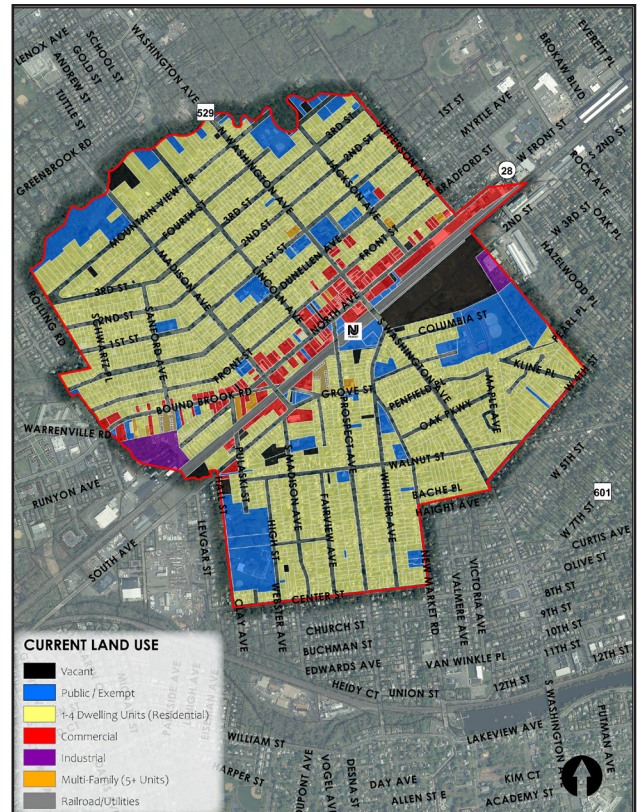


FIGURE 3.2. 2021 Dunellen Land Use Map, prepared by DMR Architects

approximately 526 acres of properties on 2,122 lots, which does not include the 19.3-acre former Art Color site, now known as the Dunellen Station development. It is not clear to DMR why there is a 20-acre discrepancy between the acreage reported in the Borough's 2011 plan and the property data published for 2021.

The data would suggest that there was a significant reduction in the land area dedicated to residential uses; this is a result of large properties along the Green Brook being acquired by the Borough (reflected in the increase in public land area). The data also reflects a substantial decrease in industrial land, related to the redevelopment of the former Art Color site.

Land Use Change - 2011 to 2021

Land Use Category	2011			2020		
	Lots	Acreage	% of Total	Lots	Acreage	% of Total
Residential (1 to 4 units)	1,882	425	75.1%	1,916	373	68.4%
Multi-Family Residential				11	4	0.8%
Commercial/Business	57	19	3.4%	78	29	5.3%
Industrial	3	34	6.0%	2	9	1.6%
Fraternal / Other Exempt	7	3	0.5%	10	3	0.7%
Public	27	44	7.7%	52	67	12.3%
Quasi Public	19	8	1.5%	15	9	1.7%
Transportation	1	2	0.4%	6	16	2.9%
Total	2,091	566		2,123	544	

Land Use Category	2011			2020		
	Lots	Acreage	% of Total	Lots	Acreage	% of Total
Mixed Use	61	12	2.1%	31	6	1.1
Vacant	34	19	3.3%	29	28	5.2%
Total	2,091	566		2,123	544	

VII. Projected Growth

- Long Term Projections:** Using available data, the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) The Borough of Dunellen is not expected to grow at a rapid rate between the years of 2015 and 2050, with minimal percent changes in population, households and employment.

Projected Change in Population, # of Households, and Number of Jobs between 2015 and 2050, according to North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Population			Households			Employment		
2015	2050	% Change	2015	2050	% Change	2015	2050	% Change
7,323	8,547	0.04%	2,579	3,038	0.05%	961	1,256	0.08%

VIII. 2022 Survey and Public Outreach Results

1. Master Plan Re-Examination Survey Results

DMR, on behalf of Dunellen Borough, prepared a 35-question survey which was hosted on SurveyMonkey.com and distributed in hard copy format around the Borough. Responses to the survey, which included questions pertaining to the Dunellen Master Plan Reexamination, the NJTPA Complete Streets initiative, and the New Jersey Transit Friendly Planning initiative, were accepted in online and physical format between August 14 and September 21, 2022. The survey was completed by 265 participants of which 247 (93.21%) were Dunellen residents.

a. Demographics and Relation to Dunellen:

- The plurality of participants (44.53%) was between the ages of 35 and 49, and only 14.34% were younger than 35 years old.
- 11 of the participants owned a business in Dunellen.
- 23% of participants worked from home or remotely the majority of their work days – likely as a result of the Post-Covid economy – and 27.17% worked in portions of New Jersey other than Dunellen or Middlesex County.
- Only 9.06% (24) worked in Dunellen and 4.15% (11) worked in New York City.

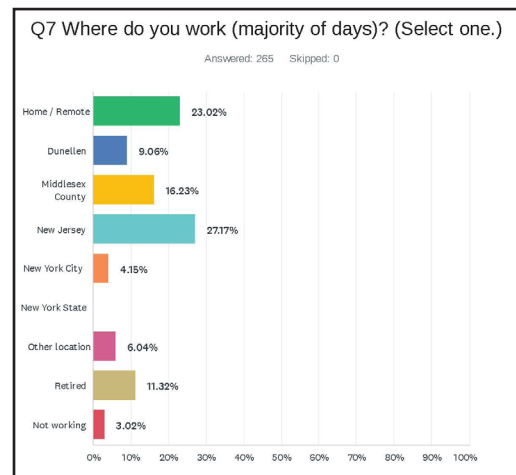


FIGURE 3.3. MP Reex. Survey Q7

- v. 18 of the respondents commute by train and 10 walk to work
- b. Opinions About Dunellen (Question 10):
 - i. When asked what they like most about Dunellen, the three most common responses were “quality of life” (42.26%), “location” (57.74%), and “community events / activities / spirit.”
 - ii. The least common responses were “school system” (13.96%) and “affordability” (16.23%).
 - iii. 17 of the 36 written responses stated that respondents liked the people and/or the small town feel of the Borough.
- c. Downtown Usage:
 - i. 44.53% of respondents say they visit 1 to 2 times per week; 18.49% say they visit a few times per year; and 33.96% visit at least three times per week (Question 11).
 - ii. Respondents stated that they would most like to see more restaurants (49.05%) and grocery stores or specialty markets (46.41%) in the Downtown (Question 12).
 - iii. Breweries were desired by 84 of the 265 participants.
 - iv. The least desired uses were housing over retail (6 affirmative responses), personal services (3), personal fitness (3), and co-working spaces (12).
 - v. 8 of the 29 written responses identified coffee shops as a desired use in the Downtown.
 - vi. More than 50% were favorable towards the idea of establishing a Special Improvement District in the Downtown (Question 13).
 - vii. (Question 18) The plurality of respondents (41.6%) said their comfort with mixed-use depended on the building heights and density, whereas straight “yes” and “no” responses were nearly evenly split at 30.15% and 28.24%, respective to order.
- d. Master Plan Priorities (Question 15):
 - i. The three (3) top priorities identified for the Master Plan Reexamination were the “Downtown” and “Taxes”, with more than 50% of respondents selecting both items, and “Schools” selected by 44.53% of respondents.

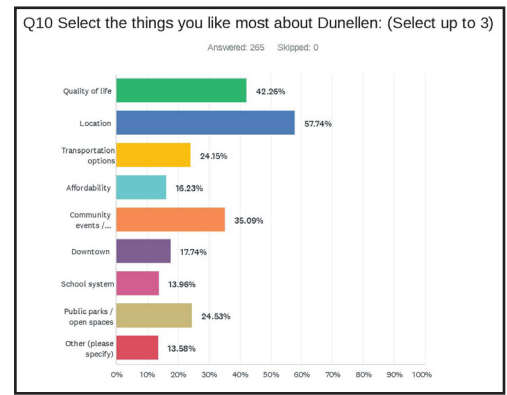


FIGURE 3.4. MP Reex. Survey Q10

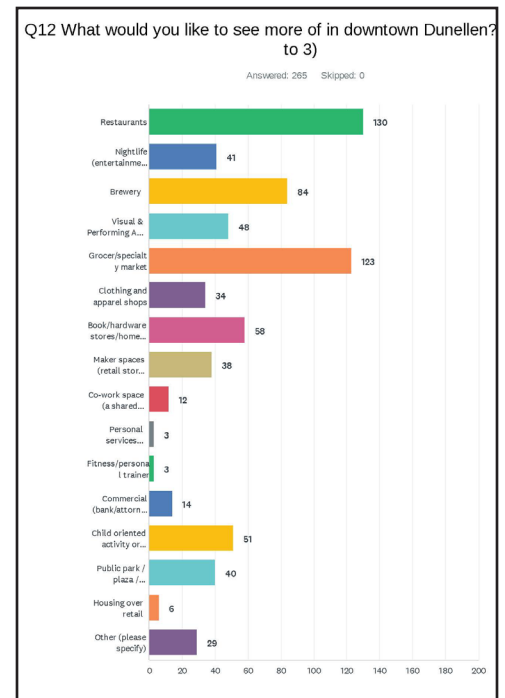


FIGURE 3.5. MP Reex. Survey Q12

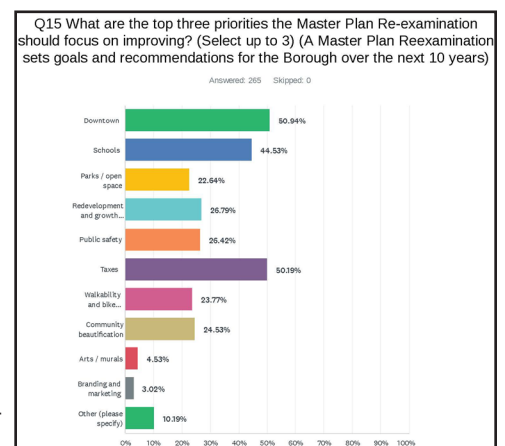


FIGURE 3.6. MP Reex. Survey Q15

- ii. Public art and branding were the least important to respondents, with fewer than 15 people selecting those options.
- iii. Issues like beautification, public safety, redevelopment/growth, and parks / open space were all prioritized by approximately a quarter of respondents.
- iv. The written response section had no dominant or modal response; however, some of the more frequently appearing items included downtown parking, controlling the cost of housing, traffic safety, flood mitigation, school quality, and taxes.

Q17 What are the biggest concerns the Borough should consider over the next 10 years? (Select up to 5)

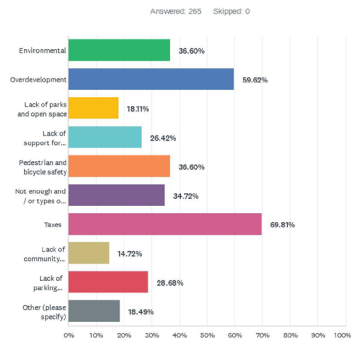


FIGURE 3.7. MP Reex. Survey Q17

e. Green Infrastructure (Question 16):

- i. Respondents were in favor of tree planting (61%), rain gardens (50.19%), and other green infrastructure (60.62%), consistent with their flooding concerns and interest in enhancing the visual quality of the Borough.
- ii. There was moderate support for providing solar panels on public buildings (34.36%) and providing pollinator gardens (43.24%) but slightly less embrace of the Borough providing electric vehicle charging stations (24.71%).

Q16 What sustainability practices would you like to see in Dunellen? (Sustainability represents ways to reduce the carbon footprint in order to maintain ecological balance.) (Select all that apply)

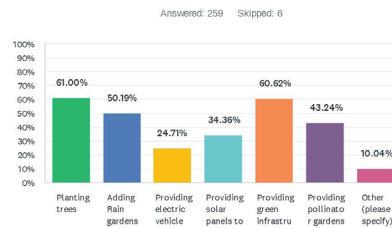


FIGURE 3.8. MP Reex. Survey Q16

f. Next 10 Years (Question 17):

- i. Respondents' number one greatest concern over the next 10 years were "Taxes" (69.81%), followed by "over-development" (59.62%).
- ii. About one-third of respondents also identified "Environmental", "Pedestrian and bicycle safety", and the quantity and variety of businesses as areas of concern.

g. Local Information and Use of Technology (Question 14):

- i. The majority of respondents (more than 60%) state that they get local news and information through word of mouth or through Facebook.
- ii. Most of the 54 written responses identified the Borough's mass emails as their source of information.
- iii. More than half of residents wanted to see the Borough digitize permits, complaint and service request processes, and 47.83% wanted to digitize parking meters.
- iv. Only about a quarter of respondents wanted to see EV charging stations.
- v. Bike-shares and E-scooter shares were favored by less than a quarter of respondents.
- vi. Downtown wi-fi was desired by 41.5% of respondents.

h. Walking Habits:

- i. More than 70% of respondents walk in Dunellen at least once per week, compared to more than 90% of residents who drive that often.

- ii. Bicycle, scooter, and bus usage is uncommon (Question 25).
- iii. More than three-quarters of respondents walk to shopping, dining, or services, or to parks (Q27).
- iv. Just under half walk to get to the Train Station.
- v. 34.88% walk to school or to bring their children to school.
- vi. Thirty-three percent of respondents were amenable to the idea of a jitney service to the train station, but with the caveat that it should not increase their taxes (Q26).
- vii. The most highly cited obstacles to walking in the Borough were concerns about being struck by vehicles (61.69%) and discouragement from walking due to incomplete or poor-quality sidewalk networks (50.4%) and street crossings (35.08%).
- viii. Other highly cited concerns included fear of crime or harassment (17.74%) and a lack of streetlights (28.23%) (Q28).
- ix. Respondents stated that enhancing sidewalk and crosswalk safety and lighting and providing seating and trees would encourage them to walk more (Q29), but only 5.28% of respondents stated that providing maps and directional signage would encourage them to walk more.

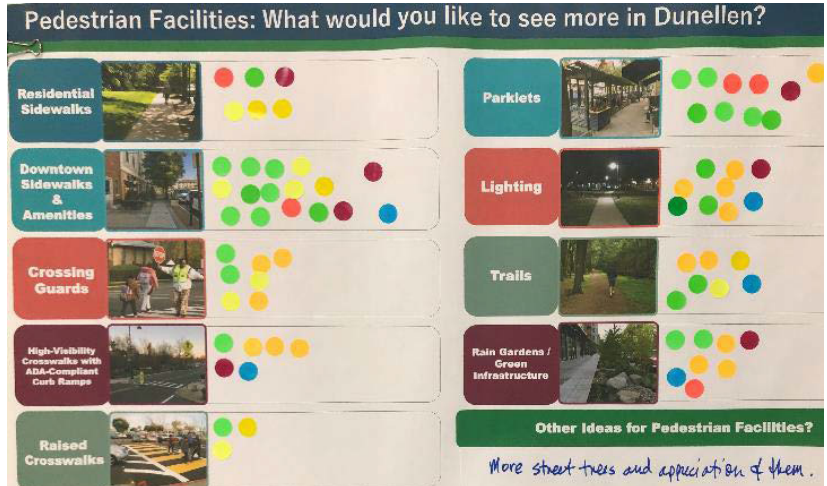


FIGURE 3.9. Interactive preference chart showing public's desired pedestrian friendly improvements and services

i. Biking Habits:

- i. 95 of the 265 survey participants skipped Question 30, which asked where people typically biked in town (suggesting they do not bike), and 37 of the 60 write-in responses were also from non-bikers, equating to 132 respondents or just about half of survey participants that do not bike.
- ii. Respondents who did bike in Dunellen mostly biked to parks (49.41%), downtown shopping/dining (29.41%), school (20.59%), or to visit family and friends (40%).
- iii. The greatest identified obstacles to biking were concerns about sharing the road with

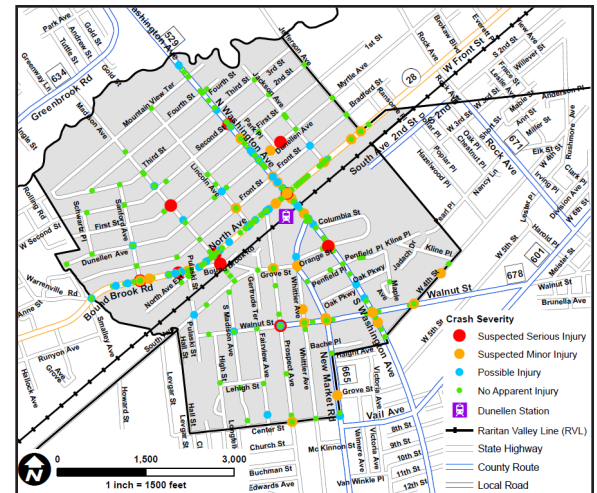


FIGURE 3.10. Map of known accidents in Dunellen

Q28 What are the obstacles to walking in Dunellen? (Select all)

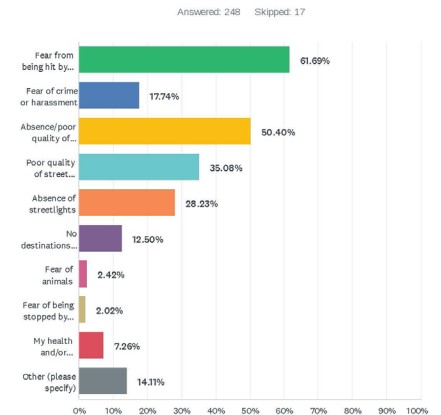


FIGURE 3.11. MP Reex. Survey Q28

drivers, road condition, and lack of bike-parking facilities (Question 31).

- iv. Respondents were favorable towards providing bike lanes (33.21%), with a preference for lanes that were physically separate from cars (41.13%), and also stated that vehicles should travel slower through Dunellen (43.02%) and that street-crossing should be made safer around town (38.11%).
- v. Respondents were favorable towards the Borough providing more bike parking racks (35.47%), but were not eager to see a bikers-interest group (6.79%) or bike-focused events in town (4.53%).
- vi. 83 respondents wanted to see bike racks or bike lockers near the Train Station, but the remaining 174 respondents to Question 33 had no preference about bike infrastructure near the train.

2. September 14 Meeting Notes

a. Traffic And Parking:

- i. These were the most frequently cited item of concern from participants in the public meeting.
- ii. Participants expressed concern about speeding on residential streets as well as doubt as to whether the existing or future parking supply in the Downtown can keep up with increased housing and commercial space.
- iii. Solutions proposed by participants included either cutting back on the permitted redevelopment intensity or acquiring properties for parking.
- iv. Speed bumps or police presence on long, straight streets often used for street racing.
- v. Specific streets highlighted for traffic congestion and accidents included Madison Avenue, Second Street, Bound Brook Road, North Avenue, and Washington Avenue.

b. Greening:

- i. Some participants wanted to see more plantings, trees, and gardens for a mix of street beautification and flood mitigation.

c. Other Comments:

- i. Designate the Dunellen Theater as a historic property.
- ii. More outdoor dining in the Downtown.
- iii. Enhance pedestrian safety in and approaching the Downtown.
- iv. Reduce illegal, overcrowded, or unsafe rental apartments.
- v. Expand Columbia Park into the Dunellen Station Redevelopment Area.

3. Cannabis Survey

- a. Over the summer of 2022, DMR helped the Borough host a public survey on recreational cannabis, which was completed by 282 participants.
 - i. 88% of participants were Dunellen Residents and 45% were ages 36 to 50 years old.
 - ii. 61% of respondents voted in favor of legalizing cannabis in New Jersey,

- iii. 14 respondents said that, while they wanted State-wide legalization, they did not want local recreational cannabis businesses.
- b. While 56% of respondents were supportive of cannabis businesses being located in the Borough, 128 respondents (45.39%) believed cannabis business would be harmful to the Downtown compared to 124 (43.97%) who believed it would benefit the Downtown and 27 respondents saying it would have no impact.
 - i. Respondents who were concerned about the harms of recreational cannabis businesses locally were most concerned about crime and public safety (108 responses).
- c. 223 respondents were supportive of one or more of the six types of legal cannabis businesses in the Borough, with the most popular being a retailer (69.96% supportive) and delivery at a close second (64.13%).
 - i. None of the six business types were supported by fewer than 42% of respondents, with the least popular being manufacturing (business focused on processing cannabis into products like edibles).
 - ii. 100 respondents were comfortable with on-site consumption of cannabis products, and 41 respondents did not indicate where they would be comfortable with consumption.
- d. 71% of respondents preferred limiting cannabis businesses to the area northeast of Jackson Avenue on Route 28; 63% preferred the area west of Sanford Avenue on Route 28; and 50.66% of respondents were equally comfortable with Sanford Avenue to Madison Avenue or Jackson Avenue to Washington Avenue on Route 28 as the locations for cannabis businesses in the Borough.

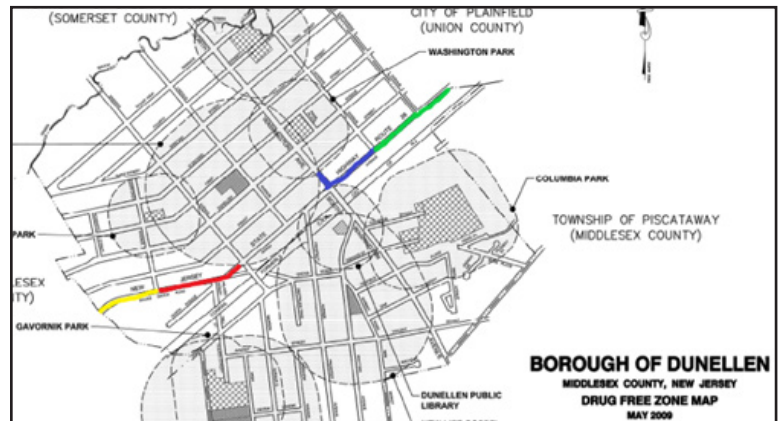


FIGURE 3.12. Location preference map for cannabis survey.

IX. Major Issues Currently Facing the Municipality:

The issues identified in this section are issues that:

- Existed at the time that the 2011 Master Plan was written but were not identified as issues in that Plan;
- Were addressed in the 2011 Master Plan but have evolved since that time; or
- Have arisen since the writing of the 2011 Master Plan.

1. Lack of Mixed Uses, Commercial/Retail Establishments within the Downtown:

- a. Before the adoption of the redevelopment plan in 2016, the downtown significantly lacked adequate projects providing a mix of uses;
 - i. The adoption of the Redevelopment Plan has resulted in several applications for mixed-use developments with ground-floor commercial uses and residential uses above, as

well as one residential-only development at 745 Bound Brook Road, in the Redevelopment Area's "Transition" zone.

- ii. Approved projects include the property often referred to as "Dunellen Station" which proposes 12 or more buildings with a total of 382 dwelling units and roughly 10,000 square feet of retail space;
- iii. As is noted elsewhere in this Report, feedback received through the 2022 Master Plan Reexamination survey and public outreach meeting shows that parking supply in and around the Downtown is a significant concern for residents, workers, and business owners in Dunellen;

(1) Other concerns include whether Borough and School District services will be able to keep up with the new residents and businesses

- b. The 2022 Master Plan Reexamination survey asked residents about their concerns about the Downtown and what uses they would like to see in the downtown
 - i. The most desired uses were specialty markets or grocers and restaurants;
 - ii. Breweries, various retail uses, night-life, child-oriented uses, parks, and visual/performing arts were also identified

2. **Taxes**

- a. Taxes were identified as one of the top areas of concern by participants in the 2022 Master Plan Reexamination survey and public meeting, and identified as a top priority for the Borough to address over the next 10 years.
 - i. The Borough had one of the highest equalized (effective) tax rates in Middlesex County in 2021, at 3.122% (the County high is 3.516% in Highland Park Borough and the County low is 1.634% in Cranbury Township).
 - ii. The Dunellen Board of Education made up 60% of property owners' 2022 tax bills, and the Borough was responsible for just 26% (including 1% for the library tax).
 - iii. Public safety spending makes up 29% of the 2022 municipal budget. Debt service makes up 13%.

3. **Cannabis**

- a. The State of New Jersey legalized recreational cannabis in 2021 and adopted legislation and regulations creating six (6) categories of business licenses for cannabis related operations (cultivation, manufacture, distribution, wholesale, retail, and delivery), as well as a special tax that municipalities may collect on cannabis business revenues.
- b. The public survey distributed by the Borough in July and August of 2022 generated mostly favorable attitudes toward permitting cannabis businesses in the Borough.

4. **Public Transit / Transportation:**

- a. The Borough of Dunellen is serviced by the Dunellen NJ Transit commuter rail station on the Raritan Valley line:
 - i. NJ Transit does not publish boarding statistics by station; however, a 2018 NJ Patch article by Eric Kiefer indicated that 904 riders boarded a train at Dunellen Station on aver-

age weekdays in 2017.

- ii. The Master Plan Reexamination Survey suggests that less than seven-percent of residents commute by train, compared to 11.4% of residents in the 2020 American Community Survey.
- b. The public has also expressed concern that developments in the Downtown are not providing sufficient parking;
 - i. The Redevelopment Plan includes a provision allowing for the one-for-one reduction of required car parking through the provision of bicycle parking spaces, exempts projects smaller than 20,000 s.f. from providing parking for commercial uses, and allows on-street parking to count towards the commercial parking requirement.
 - ii. Simultaneously, the State's 2021 electric vehicle parking rules allow a number of EV-ready parking spaces up to 10% of the total parking requirement to count as two spaces.
 - iii. Lower parking requirements are an effective way to encourage greater use of public transit and alternative modes of transportation, and help reduce hardscapes that exacerbate stormwater runoff and the urban heat effect.
 - iv. The Borough of Dunellen Parking Authority owns several parking lots which include permit, metered, and daily parking, primarily for commuters.
 - v. The 2022 Adopted Budget of the Parking Authority stated that the Authority projects a budget deficit in 2022 due to the shift from in-person working to remote working patterns. The Budget document does not include any specific details that would illuminate the amount of surface parking that could be available for downtown visitors.

5. Lack of open space and seating areas within the downtown:

- a. The Borough's Downtown lacks permanent public open space, and no large developers have emerged with whom the Borough could negotiate for the creation of substantial and centrally located public facilities.
- b. Open spaces in a downtown district are important infrastructure for holding public events, creating a sense of place, reducing the urban heat effect, and making downtowns more desirable places to live, work, and own a business.

6. Affordable Housing Set Aside

- a. The Borough's affordable housing ordinance requires an affordable housing set-aside of 15% for new rental residential developments and 20% for new for-sale residential developments, consistent with its Settlement Agreement with Fair Share Housing Center, its adopted 2016 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, and COAH rules.
- b. Many municipalities have adopted ordinances which limit this requirement to projects that create five or more new dwelling units, so that smaller residential projects are not burdened with the need to set-aside more than 20% of the units constructed.
- c. Dunellen's ordinance, having been adopted relatively early in the Third Round subsequent to the Mount Laurel IV decision, does not have this provision in its ordinance; consequently, projects that have created only three (3) dwelling units in a formerly commercial space

have been required to set-aside one-third of their units for affordable housing.

7. Senior Housing

- a. The Borough's affordable housing plan satisfies its obligations under COAH's rules, the Fair Housing Act, and the Mount Laurel Case Law, but does not provide for zoning that would result in the creation of affordable age-restricted housing.

8. Impervious Coverage in Flood Prone Areas

- a. The 100-year floodplain covers neighborhoods that are in the RA, RB, I, and B zoning districts and the Downtown Redevelopment Area, affecting homes and both commercial and industrial businesses.
- b. Impervious coverage limits in the RA and RB zones are 75% and in the B zone it is 90%.
- c. The Downtown Redevelopment Area has no impervious coverage limit except that 10% of the lots are required to be landscaped.
- d. Impervious coverage exacerbates stormwater runoff, which worsens the impact and duration of flooding.

9. Circulation

- a. The Borough has underdeveloped bicycle path networks, and has engaged with North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority to integrate Complete Streets principals into its policies which would aim to achieve a street network that is safe for multiple modes of travel.

10. Expanding Sidewalk Network

- a. Thirty-four percent of 2022 survey respondents listed that expanding the sidewalk network and improving

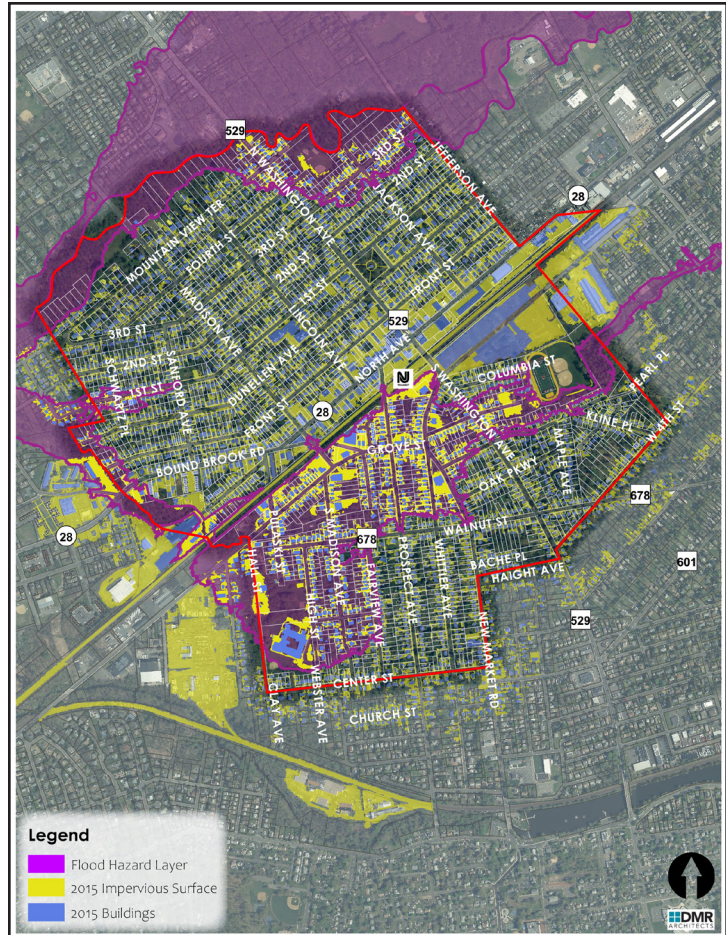


FIGURE 3.14. Impervious surfaces and building footprints in relation to flood plains, per NJ DEP 2015 Impervious Surface data.

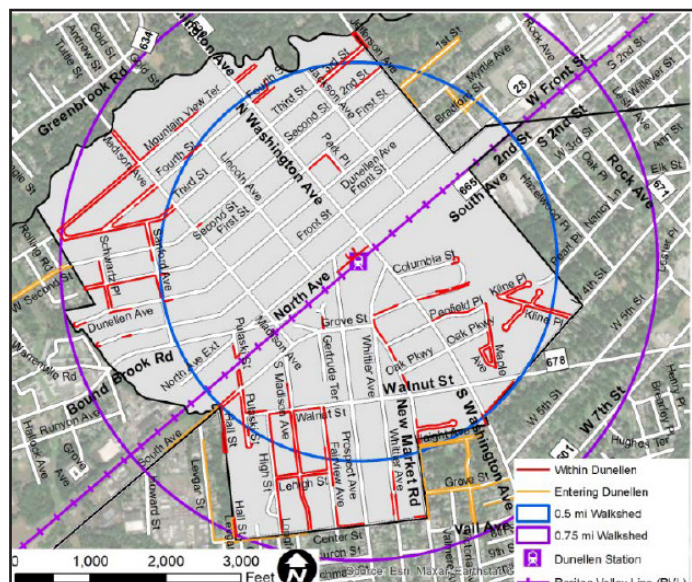


FIGURE 3.13. Transit Friendly Planning map of missing or incomplete sidewalks (red or orange)

sidewalk conditions would encourage them to walk more, and 55% of respondents listed "absence/poor sidewalk conditions" as a major obstacle to walking in Dunellen

- b. According to Transit Friendly Planning's map outlining sidewalk locations, there are over 30 blocks and streets that lack a sidewalk, some of which occupy streets with frequent traffic volume.

11. Online Ordinance

- a. The online ordinance still does not include the "I" Zone requirements;
- b. Additionally, attachments such as the Borough's zoning map and the bulk standards schedule are not contained on the Ecode360-hosted ordinance page, and require additional searches on the Borough's web page.

12. School Quality and Capacity

- a. Public school enrollment in the Borough has remained fairly constant since the Fall 2011 semester.
- b. The Build-Out Analysis completed with the 2022 Climate Resilience Plan estimated that the current zoning and the Redevelopment Plan could permit an additional 2,031 dwelling units in the Borough at full build-out.
- c. While full build-out over the next decade is not likely, redevelopment of the Downtown may result in increased public school enrollment over the next decade.
- d. According to the 2018 New Jersey Demographic Multipliers published by Rutgers University, the average public school children generation rate of new housing units across all housing values are:
 - i. Single-Family Attached: 0.226 public school children per two-bedroom unit, 0.477 PSC per three-bedroom unit;
 - ii. Multi-Family 5 to 49 units: 0.127 PSC/DU studio or one-bedroom, 0.339 PSC/DU 2BR;
 - iii. At an rate of 0.3 PSC/DU, 2,031 units would generate 609 public school children.

SECTION 4

The specific changes recommended for the Master Plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether new development regulations or plan elements should be prepared;

SECTION 4

The specific changes recommended for the Master Plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether new development regulations or plan elements should be prepared;

Section Overview:

Based on the findings discussed in the previous sections of this Report, the Borough makes the following recommendations to guide future planning and zoning decisions and activities:

Goals and Objectives:

Identification of the Goals and Objectives as stated in the 2011 Master Plan.

Land Use Recommendations:

Recommendations for changes to the current Zoning and Land Use patterns for the Borough to ensure growth and complement the existing neighborhoods.

Streamline & Modernize the Zoning Ordinance:

Recommendations for changes to the existing Zoning Ordinance to establish clear and concise requirements.

Circulation, Transit, and Parking:

Recommendations for maintaining and improving various transportation and transit alternatives; modernizing and expanding the current parking system in order to support the continued growth of the Borough and to provide appropriate locations for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

Economic Development:

Recommendations for expansion of market sectors as well as growth to the existing tax base in order to move toward economic sustainability.

Public Facilities and Services:

Recommendations to ensure the Borough's current open and recreational spaces continue to be well maintained and to meet

the community's needs based on new development and future population growth. Recommendations to improve efficiency and reliability of municipal services and facilities.

Environmental/Hazard Mitigation Recommendations

Recommendations to work toward environmental sustainability, flood resilience, and energy efficiency.

I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Goals and Objectives stated in the Borough's 2011 Master Plan have been found to still be applicable within this Re-Examination. The Borough has made much progress towards its listed goals and objectives in the prior Master Plan; however, the Reexamination should refine, clarify, and expand upon those goals and objectives to reflect changes that have occurred over the past decade. Listed below are the revised goals and objectives according to the needs of the Borough of Dunellen. Text that is **bold and underlined** denotes additions, whereas text that is **~~bold and struck through~~** denotes deletions.

1. To redevelop the Borough downtown and to promote the Redevelopment Plan;
2. To promote an aesthetically pleasing and safe downtown, with a mix of uses **that is conducive to pedestrian activity and transit-oriented living and working;**
3. To promote an aesthetically pleasing and safe train station **and encourage public transit usage;**
4. To preserve **~~and protect any remaining open space and~~** environmentally sensitive lands in the Borough, **and to provide adequate recreational and open spaces;**
5. To facilitate the current and future demand for parking in the downtown to sufficiently accommodate existing and future parking demands, especially in consideration of increased residential and commercial densities permitted and encouraged within the Redevelopment Areas of the Borough;
6. To **~~encourage pedestrian and bicycle activity~~ achieve complete streets** throughout the Borough;
7. To encourage properly designed commercial and professional office uses;
8. To alleviate the traffic congestion on the major arterials;
9. To **take reasonable actions and to** work with appropriate agencies to **~~discourage reduce and protect against~~** flooding in the Borough.
10. **To promote appropriate densities and limit impervious coverage in flood-prone areas.**

II. LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS:

The ongoing redevelopment of the Borough's downtown has sparked many residents to offer recommendations and changes to the redevelopment plan, specifically for uses that should be permitted within the downtown redevelopment area

1. Permitting Cannabis in all forms of its intended licensing (Cultivation, Retail, Wholesale, etc)

- a. As previously stated, respondents to the Dunellen 2022 Cannabis Survey were generally favorable toward any of the six legally identified categories of cannabis businesses being permitted in the Borough, with a preference for on-site retail (dispensaries) and delivery services.
- b. Many municipalities around the State have prohibited recreational cannabis uses for the time being to monitor how legalization impacts the communities that welcome dispensaries.
- c. Meanwhile, municipalities that have permitted dispensaries have seen little to no consequences in the form of increased crime or traffic congestion, while generating new revenues from the permitted tax.
- d. The Mayor appointed a Cannabis Task Force, which is weighing the pros and cons of permitting recreational cannabis, and is expected to issue a report in 2023 rendering a recommendation regarding the permission of cannabis businesses in the Borough.
- e. Should the Task Force's decision favor cannabis business, the Borough should consider permitting one or two licensed uses in the Downtown between Sanford Avenue and Washington Avenue, except within existing drug-free zones, and in the I - Industrial Zone. The Borough may choose to support additional licenses in the future.
- f. Permitting cannabis uses will provide revenues to help offset property taxes or pay for desired improvements, and will help to establish the Downtown as a destination in Middlesex County.

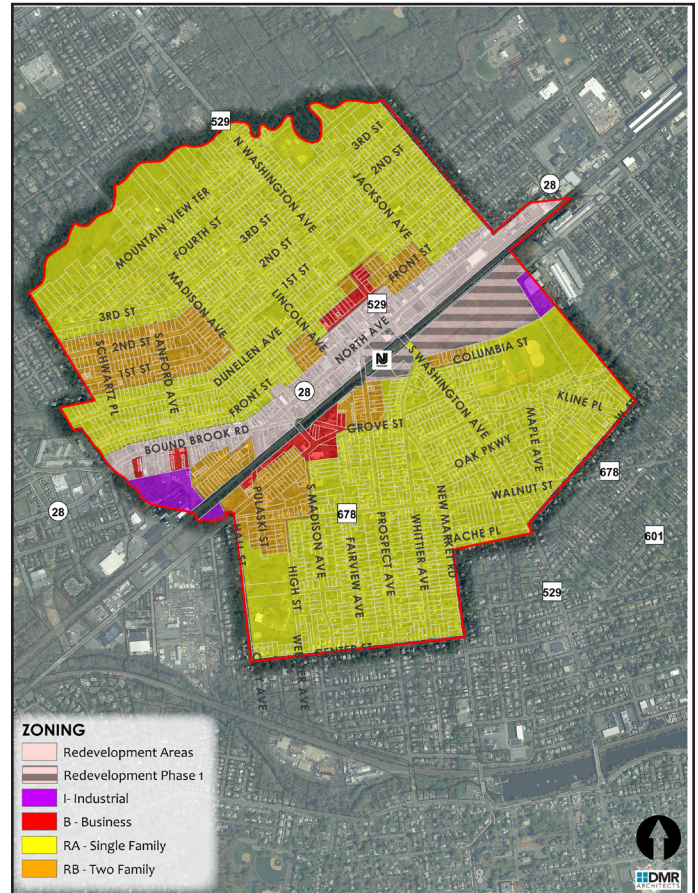


FIGURE 4.1. Current Dunellen Zoning Map



FIGURE 4.2. Cannabis retail at Ascend Dispensary in Montclair, Credit to NJ.Com

2. Implement zoning regulations for Cellular Towers and 5G signal apparatuses:

- a. Municipalities around New Jersey have been updating their regulations on telecommunication equipment in response to the proliferation of 5G and small-cell technology and the FCC decision severely limiting municipal control on the installation of this technology.
- b. Dunellen should consider contracting with companies in New Jersey promoting themselves as telecommunication regulation experts or model an ordinance on one or more ordinances that have been adopted elsewhere in New Jersey.



FIGURE 4.3. Historic photo of Dunellen Theater, obtained from Tripadvisor.com

3. Designation of Dunellen Theater as Historically Preserved Property:

- a. Dunellen Theater, located on 458 North Avenue, came into prominence in 1928 as one of the focal points of public entertainment in the Borough of Dunellen;
- b. One of the main components of the redevelopment plan, and a main focus of this Re-Examination, is to encourage the arts and entertainment industries within the Borough to provide leisure activities for the residents as well as promoting the night life of the downtown;
- c. Designating this theater, which is nearly a century old, as an historically preserved property, will ensure that the building is not torn down, or altered in anyway that does not honor and preserve or enhance its historic character;
- d. This will ensure that the building remains not only a key part of Dunellen's history but an integral part of the Borough's downtown entertainment industry, as well as maintaining its historic characteristics and feel.



FIGURE 4.4. Septuagesimo Uno pocket park on 71st Street in New York City.

4. Acquire Land for Downtown Parking and Parklets:

- a. Considering purchasing properties as they become available in or near the downtown may create opportunities for the Borough to create parking areas, parklets, or other public amenities to support usage and development of the Downtown;



FIGURE 4.5. Pocket park in Toronto.

- b. Revenues collected through the Payment In -Lieu of Parking (PILOP) policy adopted in the Downtown can help in acquiring and developing parking facilities;
- c. The Borough should consider an Open Space tax as a means to fund acquisition and maintenance of downtown parklets, plazas, and open space.

5. Senior Housing Overlay

- a. The Borough may wish to consider establishing an overlay zone within the Borough which would permit age-restricted housing with an affordable housing set-aside requirement;
- b. Such an overlay zone should be centrally located near public and community services, parks, and commercial amenities;
- c. An overlay zone would not affect existing uses and could result in the development of an age-restricted project where a developer is successful in assembling land for the use.

6. Incorporate Green Infrastructure/renewable energy checklist for site plan applications

- a. With the increasing focus on climate change and the need to protect and maintain environmentally sensitive areas, it is imperative that Dunellen incorporates ways and methods to encourage development to utilize renewable energy generation and implement green infrastructure into the building process:
 - i. The Municipal Boards of Dunellen and Mayor and Council should strongly consider adding in a checklist outlining requirements for green infrastructure, and adopt supportive zoning legislation, which would supplement regulations on green infrastructure applicable to each zone;
 - ii. Promoting renewable energy generation and green infrastructure would aide in protecting environmentally sensitive lands within the Borough as well as enhancing the quality of life for its residents;
 - iii. Encouraging and strengthening smaller appropriate scaled commercial and retail nodes within and adjacent to existing neighborhoods;

7. Widening Minimum Lot Widths in the Northwest Section of the Borough

- a. As recommended in the 2011 Master Plan, rezoning the northern and northwestern parts of the Borough to require a minimum lot width of 75 feet for single-family dwellings will reduce the number of subdivisions, helping to minimize impervious coverage in those neighborhoods.

8. Promote the Use of Permeable Pavers around the Borough

- a. The Zoning and Land Development chapters of the Borough code do not define impervious coverage or lot coverage. Applying a definition that counts permeable pavers as only partially impervious will encourage greater adoption of those materials.
- b. The Borough could require the use of permeable pavers in development in and surrounding the flood zone.

III. STREAMLINE AND MODERNIZE THE ZONING ORDINANCE/TOWN WEBSITE:

The Borough's digital presence includes its own website and its ordinance that is hosted on Ecode360.com. As daily activities and information become more and more digitized, the public increasingly expects basic services, information, and routines to be accessible online. The Borough is behind many other municipalities in the State with regards to fully digitizing forms and maintaining a complete online ordinance.

1. Digital services:

The existing zoning ordinance is in need of updating. The following represents an outline of issues pertaining to the existing Zoning Ordinance.

- a. Providing online submission portals for:
 - i. Permits (building, yard sales, etc.);
 - ii. Complaints (including property maintenance, zoning violations);
 - iii. OPRA requests;
- b. Providing consistent and prompt updates on amendments to zoning ordinance and re-development plan online - ensure that the version of the ordinance published on the Ecode360 site reflects the most current code amendments and includes all relevant attachments including the bulk standards table and zoning map;

2. Ordinance Updates for Clarification and Enforceability

- a. Full service restaurants in the B Business Zone should either be given conditions, as it is a conditional use, or be permitted unconditionally in that zone;
- b. Adopt zoning standards for the I (Industry) Zone and keep them on record on the online ordinance;
 - i. This will ensure that any improvements in the zone meet desired bulk, use, and design standards.
- c. Designate properties in the M (Municipal) Zone or eliminate all references to the Zone in the ordinance;
 - i. The standards for the M Zone are only enforceable if properties have been zoned to that district.
 - ii. Alternatively, the M Zone can also be applied as an overlay so as to not preclude development of municipally owned properties for non-municipal purposes.

3. Expand Upon Definitions in Zoning Ordinance

- a. The Borough should provide definitions for uses and other planning terms either in the zoning ordinance or in the downtown redevelopment plan to ensure that the Borough's professionals, Planning Board members, and developers can consistently interpret land use regulations.

4. Permitted Uses

- a. The Borough should carefully review the permitted uses and prohibited uses of each zone

to pinpoint and permit all desired uses while prohibiting undesired uses.

5. **Fair share Housing Compliance**

- a. In coordination with Fair Share Housing Center and the Special Master overseeing the Borough's affordable housing compliance, the Borough should amend its Affordable Housing Ordinance to clarify that the Borough-wide and Downtown-wide inclusionary set-aside requirements that only apply to developments that create five (5) or more new dwelling units so that smaller developments are not required to create affordable units.

6. **Subdivision/Site Plan Checklist**

- a. The Borough should consider revisiting the components of their site plan and subdivision checklists to eliminate or clarify any checklist items that are unclear or unrelated to the Borough. The checklist was borrowed from the New Jersey Zoning and Land Use Administration book published by Gann Law, and contains generic items that may not be necessary.

IV. **CIRCULATION, TRANSIT, AND PARKING:**

The 2011 Master Plan and subsequent studies, reports, and surveys conducted by and for the Borough demonstrate that the Borough's arterial roads, particularly Washington Avenue, North Avenue, Madison Avenue, and their intersections, are prone to traffic congestion and traffic accidents. The Borough has also sought to improve other circulation deficiencies, including pedestrian and bicycle safety and lack of accommodations for those modes of travel. These "alternative" modes of travel are essential to reducing local pollution, traffic congestion, and parking demand, while promoting use and enjoyment of the Downtown and the Train Station.

1. **Adopt a Complete Streets Policy**

- a. Ensure that all future road and transport infrastructure improvements advance road sharing between bikes, pedestrians, cars, and public transit.

2. **Expanding Sidewalk Network**

- a. The Borough should enforce existing requirements for the construction of new sidewalks as part of any approved subdivision or any approved site plan causing the construction of a new principal building, regardless of whether the new sidewalk would connect to an existing sidewalk;
- b. Additionally, or in the alternative, the Borough should establish a sidewalk fund into which an applicant may be required to pay for the cost of constructing a new sidewalk so that the Borough may carry out such construction at such time as may be appropriate.

3. **Speeding and Safety**

- a. As part of its work towards achieving complete streets, the Borough should consider bump-outs at intersections and mid-block to not only make pedestrian crossing safer but to also induce drivers to slow down more effectively than signage might;
- b. Consider working with State Agencies to implement raised crosswalks, especially with flashing pedestrian crossing signage, along Route 28 and at the intersections of Madison and Washington Avenues nearest to North Avenue to help to slow traffic and reduce acci-

dents;

- c. Speed bumps on long residential streets are needed to discourage speeding;

4. **Reducing Traffic Congestion**

- a. The Borough should work with NJ DOT to determine what changes could be made along Route 28 and Washington Avenue to reduce congestion along those roads;

5. **Implementing Bike Friendly Components into Streets**

- a. The Borough should study the usage of on-street parking along Madison and Washington Avenues and their intersecting residential streets to determine if a reduction in the number of spaces on those streets to accommodate complete streets would substantially impact residential parking supply;



FIGURE 4.6. Separated bike lines in Rochester, NY

- b. Bike lanes should be separated from vehicle travel lanes either by floating street-parking lanes or flexible (for emergency vehicle purposes) bollards.
- c. At 80-feet in width, the Washington Avenue right of way can likely accommodate wide pedestrian rights of way, two-way bike lanes, parking, and two-way vehicle traffic;
- d. Madison Avenue, at 66 feet in width, will require lane narrowing and may require a loss of parking on one side in order to accommodate two-way bike lanes. The same applies to North Avenue.

6. **Jitney Services**

- a. The 2022 Master Plan Reexamination Survey showed moderated public support for a Jitney service that would provide limited local public transit services, largely on the condition that such a service did not increase taxes;
- b. Any Jitney service pursued should not only link residents to the train station, but also to Borough schools and parks and grocery stores both within and outside of the Borough;
- c. The Borough should explore grants that may be available from the State, County, or other governmental and quasi-governmental entities for local transit pilot programs.

7. **Digital Parking Meters**

- a. The Borough should work to replace parking meters in the Downtown with digital meters which are compatible with credit cards and mobile payment media;
- b. Parking meters which require input of license plate numbers can help to prevent motorists from exceeding the two-hour limit on metered parking.

8. **Parking**

- a. The Borough should consider reducing the threshold for developments to provide non-residential parking from the current threshold of 20,000 s.f. to 10,000 s.f. of gross floor area;
- b. The Borough should consider implementing digital parking meters which allow for debit/credit card transactions to ensure that paying for parking is easy and streamlined;

- c. The Borough should study the availability of parking in the Downtown during peak commuting and peak downtown shopping hours to assess whether the supply of on-street parking and private off-street parking meets the needs of commuters, residents, and businesses in the Downtown;
- d. The 2022 Parking Authority budget indicates that on-street meters charge only \$0.25 per hour with a two-hour parking limit. The Borough should consider increasing these rates to encourage more frequent parking turnover and better reflect the cost of parking on the community;
- e. The Borough should consider establishing 15- to 30-minute on-street parking spaces at multiple locations along North Avenue to increase the supply of parking for quick-turnover activities such as restaurant pick-ups and visits to pharmacies and other retailers or services where browsing and transactions tend to take less than thirty minutes.



FIGURE 4.8. Mobile-app connected parking meters in San Francisco, CA

V. ENVIRONMENTAL/HAZARD MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Introducing Opportunities for Solar Energy:

- a. Along with electric vehicles, switching over to solar energy would enhance energy efficiency and usage throughout the Borough; and the best way to implement solar energy use is through the implementation of solar panels. There is currently no zoning and/or land use legislation that promotes or outlines guidelines regarding the implementation and usage of solar panels;
- b. The Borough should strongly consider implementing regulations that pertain to the usage and implementation of solar energy.

2. Green Infrastructure

- a. Green Infrastructure will be an integral part of land use development, and is already beginning to become relevant in current components of development. Many towns have implemented Green Infrastructure Checklists into their site plan application processes. The Borough should strongly consider implementing a Green Infrastructure Checklist into their Site Plan Application process. Examples of green infrastructure includes:
 - i. Green Rooftop: A green rooftop consists of a landscaped area or areas on the roof of a building which is seeded with very specific plants that are particularly good for soaking in sunlight and stormwater. A green roof provides shade to the building, cleans the



FIGURE 4.7. Green roof in New York City, credit The Nature Conservancy

air, absorbs stormwater, and reduces heat caused by reflection and absorption of sunlight. The Redevelopment Plan could provide incentives to developers to provide green roofs on projects in the Downtown.

- ii. Permeable Pavers: Permeable pavers not only help to reduce stormwater runoff, but many styles of permeable pavement consist of little to no hardscape, helping to reduce the urban heat effect.

3. **Community Rating System**

- a. The Borough should explore participating in FEMA and the National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System, which rewards property owners in participating municipalities with reduced Flood Insurance premiums based on points earned by the municipality for certain flood prevention and mitigation actions.

4. **Transfer of Development Rights**

- a. The Borough can explore the practicality of using a Transfer of Development Rights system to discourage development or redevelopment in its most flood-prone neighborhoods and focus development and improvement towards less susceptible parts of the Borough. N.J.S.A. 40:55D-144 permits “sending zones” to include “floodplains ... or other lands on which development activities are restricted or precluded by [local, federal, or State laws or regulations]”;
- b. The most effective use of this program will be to allow larger property owners, particularly those with properties contiguous to the Green Brook, to sell any rights they would have had to develop in the floodplain under current zoning to developers in the Downtown or other priority (receiving) areas;
- c. It may also be used to discourage owners of buildings destroyed by floods from attempting to rebuild in the flood zone while allowing them to be compensated for the sale of development rights elsewhere in the Borough;
- d. This would need to coincide with a rezoning of the “sending zones” that reduces the actual allowable on-the-ground development in those zones while allowing them to sell rights based on the zoning currently in place;
- e. Property owners who benefit from selling their development rights to the Borough may then be incentivized to donate the vacant land or portions thereof to the Borough for conservation purposes;
- f. A brief GIS analysis of building coverage based on 2015 building coverage shapefiles published by the NJ DEP overlaid over current tax lot boundaries published by Middlesex County and current property type classification suggests that the average building coverage

Credit Points	Class	Premium Reduction SFHA*	Premium Reduction Non-SFHA**
4,500+	1	45%	10%
4,000 – 4,499	2	40%	10%
3,500 – 3,999	3	35%	10%
3,000 – 3,499	4	30%	10%
2,500 – 2,999	5	25%	10%
2,000 – 2,499	6	20%	10%
1,500 – 1,999	7	15%	5%
1,000 – 1,499	8	10%	5%
500 – 999	9	5%	5%
0 – 499	10	0	0

FIGURE 4.9. Community Rating System, Flood Insurance Premium Discounts by Community Points

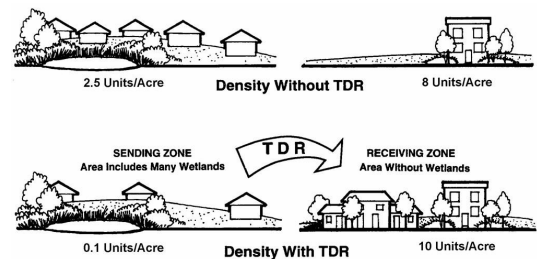


FIGURE 4.10. Example diagram explaining TDRs, from Madison-Morgan Conservancy

on residential properties in the Borough is 15.5% whereas 25% is currently permitted, and that just under three quarters of one-to-four-family residential properties in the Borough have building coverages of 20% or less.

5. Flood Conscious Zoning, Site Design, and Property Maintenance Standards

- a. The zoning in these flood prone areas should reflect and be conscious of the hazards created by the Bonygutt Brook and Green Brook.
- b. Long-Term Objective: The vision for these areas should be to reduce development intensity in these districts so as to protect lives and property and reduce impervious coverage and structures that exacerbate flooding and stormwater runoff. This can be achieved by rezoning flood prone areas with lower permitted impervious coverages and promoting green building practices, among other techniques.

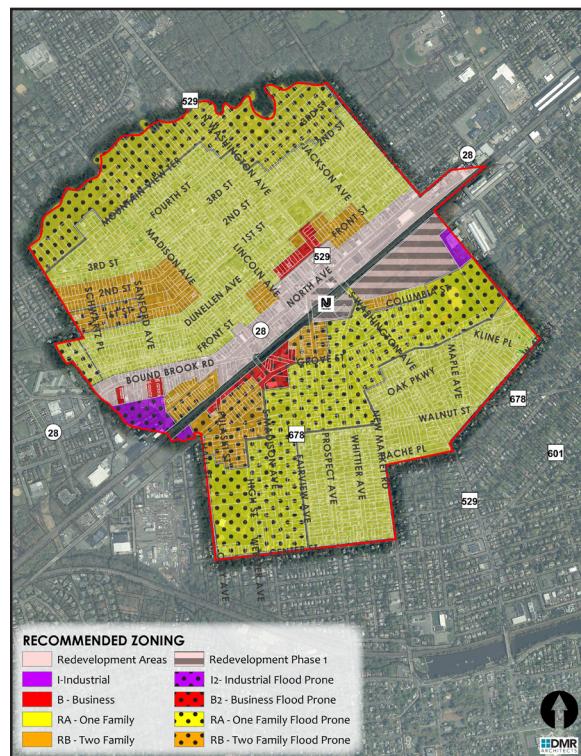


FIGURE 4.11. Proposed rezoning of flood prone areas

- c. The Borough should define impervious and building coverage and provide a coverage discount for permeable pavement and similar technology such that a square foot of permeable pavement equates to a fraction of impervious coverage to that of traditional pavement.
- d. Native Plantings: Plants and trees on lands should be true natives to Middlesex County or to the New Jersey Piedmont region and should be diverse in type in order to protect existing native plants and wildlife.
 - i. Protecting and planting native species are especially key in flood prone areas where plants help to mitigate flood impact;
 - ii. Similarly, encouraging native grasses and limiting regulation of grass heights on private properties also help to enhance the natural environment and mitigate flooding.

6. Sustainability

- a. Help to further reduce the Borough's impact on the environment by encouraging sustainable building practice such as the use of recycled materials and energy saving building practices (based on LEED or other standards) in new public and private construction.
- b. Consider implementing sustainable design requirements for all new development projects including:
 - i. Storm-water Management: Requiring pervious surface and / or storm-water management systems for any proposed development to reduce the impacts to the Borough's sewer system.
 - ii. Green Infrastructure: Promoting infrastructure improvements to include green roofs, planter boxes and trays, permeable pavers, and above or below grade storm-water

management systems, in order to ensure that the post-construction peak runoff rates for the 2 year, 10 year, and 100 year storm events are at maximum of 90 percent of the pre-construction peak runoff rates.



FIGURE 4.12. Sidewalk bioswales in Pittsfield, MA

- iii. Drainage: Site storm drainage conditions should be evaluated, and where consistent with current best practice, should be managed in order to reduce run-off and promote re-use of storm-water in the landscape for both public and private development. For larger parks and open spaces, detention basins and/or wetlands should be considered in order to provide storm water treatment.
- iv. Planting: Plant materials should be selected to provide a valuable landscape amenity that is both attractive and meet sustainability objectives. Plants should be selected for reduced demand for water, fertilizers, pesticides, and maintenance. The introduction of drought tolerant plants in courtyards, esplanades, and future building sites is supportive of the goal of water efficiency for the Borough.
- v. Water Conservation: This should be incorporated into future projects to allow for re-use in non-potable applications, including site irrigation.
- vi. Water Efficiency: Can also be achieved through the inclusion of dual flush or low-flow toilets and urinals, and high efficiency plumbing fixtures into all development projects.
- c. Sustainable Construction Practices:
 - i. Development projects should incorporate resource efficient construction practices.
 - (1) Construction materials where possible should be provided within 200 miles of the project site.
 - (2) Project designs should incorporate efficient building design components to promote material conservation and reduction of construction waste.
- d. Material Efficiency:
 - i. Durability, ease of maintenance, and lower life cycle costs should be considered during the selection of materials for all projects.
 - ii. Utilization of sustainably produced materials with high recycled content will provide significant environmental and human performance benefits.
 - iii. The incorporation of sustainability in the design and construction process of future projects can help to mitigate negative effects on the environment.
 - iv. Designs should include dedicated areas for the recycling and re-use of materials.
- e. Green Energy:
 - i. Encourage the use of rooftop and building mounted solar energy and other micro-generation technology, and ensure that these structures are clearly permitted and regulated in the Borough's zoning.
- f. Energy Efficiency:
 - i. High performance lighting controls should be included in the electrical lighting designs

of future projects and be complementary with other day lighting techniques in creating high quality lighting in all campus facilities.

- ii. Effectively using high performance HVAC strategies and systems will provide high energy efficiency, thermal and acoustic comfort, improved indoor air quality, and lower maintenance costs.
- iii. Future products should address requirements on an individual basis, allowing for the greatest flexibility and response to building location, orientation on the site, and specific usage.
- iv. Natural ventilation through operable windows should be considered for energy efficiency and healthier indoor air quality.
- v. Usage of light or mid-toned roof colors should be used for year round energy efficiency, as opposed to black roofs that absorb heat from the sun.

7. Tree Replacement Fee

- a. Chapter 275, Section 14 establishes a fee for removal of trees within the public right of way. The Borough should expand this chapter to require replacement or payment into a tree planting fund for healthy trees removed from private property, at rates based on tree caliper.
- b. Tree replacement is important for protecting and enhancing natural beauty, noise attenuation, maintaining clean air, and mitigation flood impacts.

VI. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICE:

The provision and maintenance of high quality public services and facilities is critically important to the success of any municipality, but especially considering the on-going redevelopment initiatives in Dunellen. As such the Borough needs to continue to monitor and determine future municipal and school facility needs.

1. Open Space

- a. The Borough may consider adopting an open space tax, which provides for a dedicated and consistent source of funding for acquisition or improvement of municipal open space. Revenues can be used on a “pay-as-you-go” basis or to debt service costly projects.
 - i. An open space tax ensures that open space is never overlooked in annual budgeting;
 - ii. A dedicated fund can be used to acquire and develop pocket parks in the Downtown;
 - iii. It also ties into initiatives the Borough may pursue to acquire or improve open space for flood mitigation purposes.
- b. The Borough can incentivise downtown redevelopers to create parklets in exchange for increased building height or other relief from the Redevelopment Plan requirements.

2. Improve / Maintain Schools:

- a. The Borough should consider working with the Board of Education in order to determine future needs for school and athletic facilities and programs, which include:
 - i. Updating the Long-Range Facility Plan;
 - ii. Determining future projections of students based on redevelopment and revitalization efforts;
 - iii. Considering alternatives for meeting the growing educational needs of the community for both new construction as well as renovation of existing facilities;
 - iv. Considering collaborative opportunities to meet the community's needs through shared services and joint use of facilities;
- b. The Borough and BoE should ensure that redevelopment does not increase school enrollment while depriving schools of tax revenue.

3. Parking Authority

- a. The Parking Authority should conduct a five-year needs assessment of its infrastructure;

4. Relocate Flood Prone Facilities

- a. The Borough should plan for the relocation of facilities out of flood prone areas

5. Shared Services

- a. The Borough should explore the costs and benefits of sharing services with adjacent municipalities, including combining school districts, which may help to alleviate local tax burden.

6. Municipal Complex

- a. Partner with redevelopers of Sites 1 and 2 to provide new municipal facilities or a municipal complex.

7. Solar Generation Opportunities

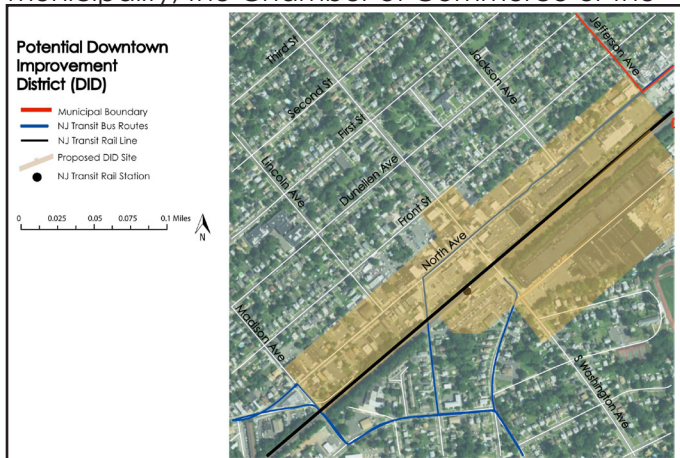
- a. The Borough should take advantage of grants and other incentives for solar arrays and rooftop solar on public properties;
- b. Parking lots (Columbia and McCoy Parks, fire station, train station) and cleared flood prone areas such as the rear of Block 41, Lot 1.01 are excellent locations for ground-mounted solar provided electrical equipment is at least 1 foot above base flood elevation;
- c. Solar generation can offset the costs of powering municipal facilities and has the potential to generate clean and inexpensive electricity for property owners;
- d. Purchase outright, lease, or borrow.

VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**1. Downtown Improvement District**

- a. Survey downtown business owners about establishing a DID/SID/BID (synonymous);
- b. DIDs are non-profit organizations formed by local ordinance and funded by a special as-

assessment on commercial properties within the District to provide services that benefit and promote the district;

- c. A DID provides a number of benefits including marketing the downtown, creating a uniform identify for the downtown, running local events, providing street cleaning and maintenance services, and more.
- d. The NJ DCA website states, "The BID allows the businesses of a municipality to operate more like the businesses in a mall, managed by a single group rather than by each individual merchant on his or her own. The BID operates with a funded budget, and pursues a strategy to grow business by managing the appearance, the marketing, the events, for the commercial corridor in ways that the municipality, the Chamber of Commerce or the Business Development Committee cannot do. State law also grants the District Management Corporation of the BID a variety of powers and capabilities for improving and enhancing the viability of the district, unless otherwise constrained by the municipality's enabling ordinance for the BID."
- e. DIDs are eligible for grants and zero-interest loans from the State for downtown improvement.



2. Pursue "Main Street" Grants and Loans

- a. Explore and pursue grants and low-interest loans and technical assistance programs for Downtown enhancement and preservation, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOPE IV program;
- b. Having a DID may improve the Borough's chances of qualifying for or receiving such grants.

Traditional Financing Model

Total Number of DID Parcels: 58	Proposed DID Budget	DID Assessment Rate	Average Assessment Fee
DID Parcel Assessment: \$11,695,300	\$50,000	0.26%	\$517
	\$100,000	0.51%	\$1,034
	\$200,000	1.03%	\$2,068
Budget Share: 60%			

FIGURE 4.13. Bloustein School proposed DID area boundaries and financial analysis.

3. Erect Celebratory Entrance Signs

- a. Erect signage indicating entry into Dunellen on New Market Road, Walnut Street;

4. Tax Base Outside Redevelopment Area

- a. The Borough should explore options to expand its tax base outside of the redevelopment area, including in its I Zone and in the B Zone surrounding the intersection of Madison Avenue and South Avenue;
- b. This should look beyond commercial services and office; rather, it should ensure that these zones meet the needs of modern, high value, light industrial uses that are low traffic and nuisance generators, for such time that existing uses in this zone extinguish;

- c. The Borough should coordinate with the Borough of Middlesex and the Township of Piscataway to ensure that the zoning standards on both sides of the municipal borders are consistent and conducive to a uniform and high quality project;
- d. Promoting non-residential development outside of the redevelopment area ensures that the school district enjoys the tax benefits of the Borough's growth.

5. Market Locational Advantages

- a. The Borough should promote itself as being located in close proximity to preserved natural areas and golf courses to the north and west, Raritan River to the south, and shopping and employment opportunities in Piscataway to the east.

SECTION 5

Recommendations of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the “Local Redevelopment and Housing Law”. P. L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal Master Plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality;

SECTION 5

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PLANNING BOARD CONCERNING THE INCORPORATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THE “LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING LAW”. P. L. 1992, C. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 ET AL.) INTO THE LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT OF THE MUNICIPAL MASTER PLAN, AND RECOMMENDED CHANGES, IF ANY, IN THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THE REDEVELOPMENT PLANS OF THE MUNICIPALITY.[N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89]

I. BACKGROUND

The Borough of Dunellen Redevelopment Plan was adopted in February of 2016, with amendments as recently as the spring of 2022. The plan has focused its efforts to an ongoing project to redevelop its downtown area, which encompasses 70 acres and 150 properties generally along Route 28 (Bound Brook Road and North Avenue) and Washington Avenue. The decline of industry and increase in storefront and commercial vacancies has prompted these efforts.

The Redevelopment Plan permits a diverse mixture of commercial uses, including retail, restaurants, office, commercial, civic and entertainment, with multi-family housing to establish the North Avenue corridor as a pedestrian friendly, mixed-use downtown with a railroad town aesthetic and an attractive streetscape. As a Transit Village designated by NJ Transit, the Redevelopment Plan also includes “transit supportive” parking and building design standards which aim to encourage transit usage through compact and dense development within the immediate proximity of the NJ Transit Train Station and bus stops.

The Redevelopment Plan was written and has been amended to preserve the history of the Borough while implementing cutting edge redevelopment strategies, sustainable development principles, design consistency and aesthetics. The plan's vision is to create a sustainable economic base while creating locations and jobs for uses that are in demand in the Borough.

The plan implements these strategies for the downtown area and provides a “vision” for the revitalization through:

1. Promoting the effective use of all Redevelopment property and increasing the property tax base of the Borough;
2. Improving the utilization of land in the Redevelopment Area that is in close proximity to transportation;
3. Revitalizing the areas in terms of type, scope, and scale in order to meet the demands of the market area;
4. Remediating contaminated sites;
5. Creating new mixed use areas, such as multi family residential uses and affordable housing;
6. Promoting the creation of job opportunities.

Since the implementation of the 2016 Redevelopment Plan a significant amount of development has been proposed and approved in the downtown. The Borough has nine (9) ongoing redevelopment projects (5 approved with 4 pending application submission) within the Redevelopment Plan area at the time of this writing, and has partnered with Rutgers and other entities to conduct a number of studies pertaining to economic development and

infrastructure improvements in the Downtown, which are identified in the introduction to this report.

II. Current Redevelopment Projects (Approved)

1. Dunellen Station (Art Color Site)/(Mixed Use) - 252 One-Bedroom apartments, 252 Two-Bedroom apartments, and 130 Townhomes for sale with 9,240 square feet of retail space;
2. 528 North Avenue Multi Family Complex (Residential Only) - 40 multi bedroom apartments;
3. 150 North Avenue Multi Family Complex (Mixed Use) - 14 multi bedroom apartments with 1,578 square feet of retail space;
4. 440 North Avenue (Mixed Use) - 9 multi bedroom apartments with 1,155 square feet of retail space;
5. 390 North Avenue - Architectural Improvements for Chicken Holiday (Retail Only) - Rehabilitation and aesthetic improvements of the site;
6. Lily Yip Table Tennis - Thee (3) rental apartments, one (1) affordable, as part of reconfiguration of existing table tennis facility.

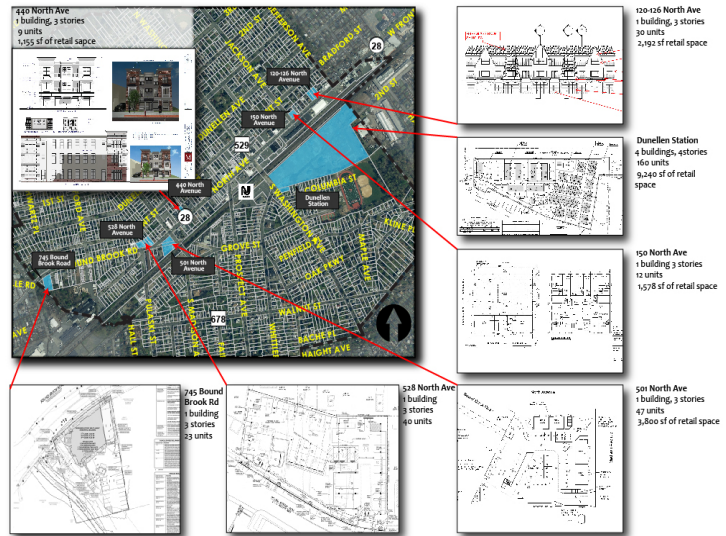


FIGURE 5.1. Dunellen Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Areas Map with ongoing redevelopment projects

III. Current Redevelopment Projects (Pending Application Submission or Approval)

1. Pending Application for 120-126 North Avenue (Mixed Use) - proposed 33 multi bedroom apartments with 2,192 square feet of retail space;
2. Pending Application for 501 North Avenue (Mixed Use) - 47 multi bedroom apartments with 3,800 square feet of retail space;
3. Pending Application for 745 Bound Brook Road (Residential Only)/(Inside Transition Zone of Redevelopment Area) - 23 apartments both single and multi bedroom;
4. Pending Concept for South Side Train Station (Residential Only) - 37 multi bedroom apartments.

IV. Redevelopment Plan Recommendations

1. Review Downtown Redevelopment Plan: The Borough should review the Redevelopment Plan to address the following items:
 - a. Permitted Uses:
 - i. The Redevelopment Plan should define or expand upon the intended meaning of permitted and prohibited uses, such as “personal services”, to ensure that inappropriate uses are not inadvertently allowed and that desired uses are not inadvertently excluded in the Downtown;

- ii. The Redevelopment Plan does not currently clearly permit certain uses on the North Avenue corridor that are typically desired in a downtown, such as retail, childcare, groceries, banking, art or craft oriented uses, or performance arts. Permitted use language should be revised as appropriate to permit desired uses;
 - iii. Outdoor Dining/Retail: The redevelopment plan has requirements for outdoor dining areas; however, these regulations are stated “where outdoor dining is permitted,” and the Redevelopment Plan does not identify where outdoor dining is permitted. The Plan should be updated to identify where in the Downtown outdoor dining is permitted.
 - b. Bulk and Design Standards
 - i. The Borough should consider requiring a building setback of between 10 and 20 feet from the rear lot line where the adjacent use to the rear is one-or-two-family residential. The setback should also contain a planted buffer with trees for privacy and noise attenuation;
 - ii. The Borough should consider requiring a minimum distance of between 50 and 100 feet between any two curb openings on North Avenue in order to encourage lot consolidation and reduce the risk of vehicular and pedestrian accidents on North Avenue by reducing points of conflict between vehicles entering and exiting sites and vehicles and pedestrians in the right-of-way.
 - iii. The Borough should consider establishing reasonable maximum building requirements in terms of density, FAR, or coverages, while permitting bonuses for developers to exceed those maximums by providing amenities such as public open space, green roofs, or other desired improvements.
 - c. Review Downtown Off-Tract Improvements Language
 - i. The Borough's legal counsel should review the off-tract improvements requirements within the Redevelopment Plan to ensure that the provisions therein are adequate to obligate a developer to contribute to or execute public improvements necessitated by their project(s).
- 2. Establish Color and Materials Guidelines
 - a. Adopt a guiding document identifying preferred color and material choices for redevelopment and rehabilitation projects in the Downtown;
 - i. Should identify the make and model/style number of paints, furnishings, materials, and fixtures where appropriate.
 - b. Require rooftop materials and paved surface materials to meet a minimum Solar Reflective Index (SRI) in order to limit the impact of new buildings on the urban heat effect. The required rating should be based on green building standards such as those required for LEED certification
- 3. Environmental Standards and Guidelines
 - a. Consistent with other recommendations in this document, amendments to the Redevelopment Plan should encourage or require green design and construction practices that reduce flooding, improve resident quality of life, and enhance the quality of the downtown

and the Borough as a whole.

4. Accommodating E-Commerce

- a. Since 2011, and especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a shift away from the traditional models of retail and food based services and an emphasis on “contactless” exchanges;
- b. These include ordering food and retail items for curbside pick-up, mobile application (“app”) based delivery services and the like;
- c. On-and-off street parking spaces that were once needed for customers to leave their car while they shop, dine, or pick-up in-store or at a restaurant are increasingly being used for short term parking and standing by app-based delivery drivers and by customers waiting for their order to be brought to their car by a store/restaurant employee;
- d. On the opposite end of this trend, some retailers that may have traditionally sold products from a storefront are opting for a showroom style of business, in which customers order a product based on an in-store experience, but the product is shipped from a remote warehouse, reducing the floor area required for storage;
- e. The Borough should ensure that the Redevelopment Plan permits commercial uses that function in this way while creating standards that protect and promote the desired character of the Downtown, a high quality of life, and efficient pedestrian, bike, and vehicular traffic;
 - i. Regulation may include requiring dedicated off-street parking spaces for delivery and curb-side pickup as near to building entrances as is practical;
 - ii. Retail and commercial service definitions should permit showroom based retailers that display goods on site for order and shipment from a warehouse;
 - iii. It should also permit retail uses to include accessory services that provide an experience to attract customers to the location, such as on-site eateries and amusement.

5. Protect Historic Buildings

- a. Identify buildings of historical and cultural value in the Redevelopment Area;
 - i. Consider implementing design standards that preserve historic facades and encourage facadectomy - the practice of constructing modern additions to historic buildings while maintaining historic facades intact where feasible, in lieu of demolition - and adaptive reuse.
 - ii. Standards may need to be flexible where the condition of the existing



FIGURE 5.2. Structured parking erected above historic building in Portland, OR.

buildings do not allow for partial preservation.

6. Embrace Bus Stops

- a. The Borough should consider providing incentives to Downtown Redevelopers to provide specific accommodations related to bus stops within the street frontage of a redevelopment project, such as shelter, seating, wayfinding signage, and commercial services.

7. Monitor Vacancies, and be Flexible

- a. The Borough should monitor vacancy patterns in the Downtown - including locations and durations of vacancies - and periodically reassess whether the permitted uses or the prescribed two stories of office/residential over one story of commercial is viable;
- b. Be prepared to permit uses that may be more industrial than commercial, such as last mile delivery sites, in the Downtown, subject to strict conditions to protect the community, if vacancies persist.

Downtown Redevelopment Areas in Dunellen

Site No.	Redevelopment Area	Block/Lot
1	South side of North Avenue between Prospect Avenue, South Washington Avenue and NJ Transit Property	Block 69, Lots 1, 1.01, 2, 2.01, 3
2	South Washington Avenue, New Market Road, Prospect Avenue, and NJ Transit Property	Block 70, Lots 13 and 13.01
3	South Washington Avenue between NJ Transit Property and Columbia Street	Block 85, Lots 1 and 2
4	North Avenue between Jackson Avenue and Jefferson Avenue	Block 1, Lots 15.01, 15.02, and 14-23
5	Between North Avenue and Front Street between North Washington Avenue and Jackson Avenue	Block 2, Lots 11.01 and 10-20
6	Between North Avenue and Front Street between Lincoln Avenue and North Washington Avenue	Block 32, Lots 1-13, 14.01, 14-24, 24.01, and 25-28
7	North Avenue between Madison Avenue and Lincoln Avenue	Block 33, Lots 14.01, and 14-23
8	Bound Brook Road from Sanford Avenue to Madison Avenue	Block 34, Lots 10.01, 22-24, 24.01, 25, 26, 27.01, 27.02, 28-38, 38.01, and 38.02
9	Bound Brook Road from Sanford Avenue to Middlesex border	Block 48, Lots 16-28
10	Bound Brook Road from Middlesex Border to Pulaski Street	Block 49, Lots 25, 26, 27.01, 28-38, 39.01, 39.02, and 40-44
11	Bound Brook Road between Pulaski Street and Madison Avenue bordering NJ Transit	Block 50, Lots 1-6
12	Rail ROW	Block 51, Lots 1-3 and NJ Transit Property
13	Bordered by Bound Brook Road, Madison Avenue, and North Avenue	Block 65, Lot 1
14	North Avenue between Madison Avenue and Prospect Street	Block 66, Lots 1-5, 6.01, 7-9, 10.01, 10.02, 11-14, 15.01, 15.02, 16-20 and 17.01
15	South East corner of North Ave and North Washington Avenue to NJ Transit property and North East to Plainfield City Border	Block 86, Lots 1-5, 4.02 and 4.03

SECTION 6

The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

SECTION 6

The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

I. Background

The State passed P.L. 2021, c. 171 on July 9, 2021, which requires that “Electric Vehicle Supply/Service Equipment” (EVSE) and “Make-Ready” parking spaces must be permitted as an accessory use in every municipality in the State, and which ordered the N.J. Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to publish a model ordinance establishing the minimum standards for EVSE and Make-Ready spaces. The model ordinance, published by the DCA on September 1, 2021, is effective in all municipalities regardless of whether they have adopted an ordinance implementing the Model Ordinance, and supersedes or expands upon any existing ordinances a municipality may have previously adopted.

The Borough of Dunellen has not yet adopted an ordinance implementing the model ordinance; however, the Downtown Redevelopment Plan requires new development to comply with the model ordinance.

The Borough should adopt an ordinance implementing the model ordinance Borough-wide to ensure the State’s requirement is enforced consistently across the Borough and across new projects.

Beyond adoption of an ordinance implementing the State’s Model Ordinance, the Borough may consider the following recommendations for expanding EV infrastructure:

II. Optimal Locations for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure:

1. Borough Fleets

- a. Fleet Electrification: The Borough should rank its fleet vehicles and services by which would provide the greatest and most immediate “bang for their buck” to electrify:
 - i. Vehicle Use Patterns: Police patrol vehicles are typically beneficial to electrify because they are disproportionately used for low-speed and local driving as well as idling.
 - ii. Vehicle Age and Condition: Older vehicles and vehicles requiring excessive repair should be prioritized.
 - iii. Facilities: Facilities which have the most modern electrical systems or easiest to wire may be the most immediately beneficial to serve as charging locations.
 - (1) Priority facilities should be the police parking lot across from Borough Hall, Public Works facilities,

2. EVSE at the N.J. Transit Station

- a. The Borough should explore providing electric vehicle charging stations in the Train Station

parking lots.

3. EVSE Wayfinding

- a. The Borough should erect wayfinding signage in the Downtown directing EV drivers to available charging stations.

4. Implementing an Electric Vehicle Charging Network:

- a. Grants are available through the State and Federal Government to fund the creation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure on public property and for acquisition of electric fleet vehicles.

5. Flood Safety

- a. EV charging equipment in parking structures in flood prone areas should be equipped with shut-off mechanisms that can be triggered during flood events to ensure the safety of emergency response personnel and building occupants.

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Pursuant to the requirements of Article 11 of the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), this Reexamination Report restates the goals, objectives, and issues identified in the Borough of Dunellen 2011 Master Plan; details changes that have taken place since the writing of that Master Plan; and provides recommendations regarding amendments to the 2011 Master Plan, the Borough's regulations, the Borough's Redevelopment Plan, and the location of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

The adoption of this Reexamination Report will operate as an update to the Borough of Dunellen's 2011 Master Plan, along with the Community Resiliency Plan being prepared simultaneously with this Report and the 2016-adopted Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. For all intents and purposes, the Borough's "Master Plan" will consist of the 2011 Master Plan and the three above referenced documents until such time that an updated comprehensive Master Plan is adopted.

Following the adoption of this Reexamination Report, the Borough may adopt ordinances or carry out initiatives recommended in the Report, as they will be considered to be consistent with the Borough's Master Plan.