

Transit Oriented Development

Boonton, NJ

Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy Studio





Planning for Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
Boonton, New Jersey
Course: 970:510:05

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Executive Summary



Develop Transit-Friendly Land Use

Boonton presents a unique opportunity for transit-friendly land use as most of its downtown core is located within a five or ten minute walk to major transit systems. Land use strategies should complement these existing assets and enhance the downtown experience for residents and visitors. This can be accomplished by implementing the following recommendations:

- a. Identify key buildings and parcels viable for adaptive reuse or redevelopment: There are many buildings that are underutilized in the transit district area that could be reinvigorated by adaptive reuse. Parcels where land value is greater than improved value have been identified as high-priority redevelopment areas.
- b. Develop mixed-use districts along key corridors: Zoning for mixed-uses will increase the density of activity and spur economic development.
- c. Increase flexibility of housing types: Accessory dwelling units, which are currently prohibited, would allow for a greater range of current and new development topologies. Additional housing types to encourage medium density should also be pursued.

d. Use design guidelines to revitalize existing façade: Previous planning efforts created low rise building design guidelines to develop appropriate density and façade design for existing and new structures.

e. Emphasize biking and walking as the primary type of mobility within the transit district: The compact, walkable street grid in Boonton provides ample opportunity to walk, but interstate on- and off-ramps create serious safety hazards for pedestrians.

Rezone Transit District Area

The current zoning strategy for Boonton strictly separates land uses. To achieve transit village status and to further the revitalization of the downtown area, the zoning ordinance needs to be reexamined, incorporating mixed-use districts within the transit village zone.

Emphasize Transit Assets

In addition to an extensive historical transportation heritage, the town enjoys NJ Transit train service along the Montclair-Boonton line as well as NJ Transit and Lakeland bus service that run along the main corridor of the downtown. Improvements in design and siting of transit assets in the short-term can spur ridership over the longer-term.

Improve Streetscape

Although Boonton has a walkable, compact street grid, it can improve the safety of the streets for all users and establish important design standards. A Complete Streets policy would increase the safety of the roadway, while a streetscape beautification program will create a more inviting place to walk.

Modernize Parking Management

The current inventory of parking reveals that Boonton has adequate parking supply to meet its daily and special event demand. This crucial element of modernization has potential to boost the town's revenue through on-demand pricing that will also reduce the need to "cruise for parking."

Coordinate and Emphasize Placemaking

Boonton hosts a number of special events, including a weekly farmers market from June until November. To make events like the farmers market more visible, the team provided recommendations for a new location. Other strategies like improved signage and wayfinding, as well as events focused on local restaurants, can expand the scope of Placemaking.

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The background image shows a multi-level transit station. A concrete bridge with a metal railing is in the upper right. Below it, a concrete wall features a small black sign with the word "Boonton" in white. In the foreground, there are trees with bright yellow and green leaves. To the left, a set of train tracks is visible. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

01

What is Transit Oriented Development?

Definition

Despite its popularity, consensus on a definition of TOD has proved evasive. For instance, many definitions in the mid-1990s referred, loosely, to any type of transportation-oriented development, including development oriented around bus, rail, and highways connections. Overtime, TOD has come to be firmly associated with public transportation.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) refers to TOD as, “a residential, commercial, or mixed-use development project, made up of one or more buildings, that has been designed to take advantage of nearby transit and includes features that encourage walking, biking, and transit ridership.” Some of its design elements include:

- Compact and traditional site and building design
- A high quality walking and biking environment
- A mix of transit-supportive land uses
- Attention to place making and the pedestrian realm
- Tallest buildings located closest to transit
- Transit-supportive parking

Cities are facing increased scrutiny to provide livable communities while implementing smart growth strategies. The potential of TODs to reduce housing shortages, suburban sprawl, traffic congestion, and air pollution, have resulted in the creation of federal and state policies that seek to support local initiatives by providing greater flexibility and funding.

Design Features of TOD :

- Designing neighborhoods for cycling and walking with adequate facilities and attractive street conditions
- Creating streets that have good connectivity and traffic calming features to control vehicle traffic speeds
- Developing mixed use spaces, including retail, educational and other public services, and a variety of housing types and prices within each neighborhood
- Managing parking to reduce land consumption and associated costs
- Improving transit stops and stations to be convenient, comfortable and secure

In addition, current demographic shifts in the United States have stimulated demand for developments that are mixed-use and transit-friendly. It is not only students, young professionals, and immigrants - all of whom desire walkable, compact communities – that are largely associated with this trend, but also individuals seeking to downsize their living space as they age.

History

While the rise of TOD as a planning concept has been relatively recent, the underlying principles are not new. Some of the earliest transit oriented developments in America were “streetcar suburbs”. Streetcars made possible the rapid movement of city residents beyond areas that horses and carriages could serve. Following the introduction of the electric traction motor in the 1890s, electric streetcars began serving areas in the periphery that were previously inaccessible and had little development potential. Investment quickly sought out as transportation access for these areas improved. For this reason, development during this period can be thought of as development-oriented transit, entrepreneurs and developers financed streetcar expansions in order to serve their real estate interests.

Following the advent of the streetcar suburbs, other concepts began to evolve, including the Garden City Movement, which is largely the basis of the modern suburb. This period saw land uses become more strongly delineated as the suburbs increasingly became a city of homes while the downtown became a city of work. The movement drew upon both urban necessities and rural sentimentality in order to create a better living environment for residents. On the one hand, this approach advocated for dotting the urban fringe with neighborhoods comprised of single-family, detached homes with agricultural land interspersed among them; while on the other, the movement did not desire to abandon the central city altogether.

By balancing necessity with sentimentality, supporters sought to escape the poor living conditions common in major cities of the time while remaining close enough to maintain the employment necessary to finance their desire to own property. Likewise, the movement hoped to simultaneously enjoy the virtues of a peaceful, rural environment. Crucially, this network of “Garden Cities” was to be spatially organized around the city center, relying upon rail transit to transport residents. However, the concept later evolved to incorporate the private automobile, as its use became widespread.

Together with significant disinvestment in transit infrastructure, the increased affordability of the automobile ensured that nearly all urban streetcar systems in America would be dismantled by the middle of the 20th century. This proved to be detrimental to the long-term stability of inner cities across the country. Having only arisen 30 years prior, these inter-urban rail networks were replaced with electric- and dieselpowered buses in the 1950s.

By the 1960s nearly all U.S. cities had completed this conversion. However increasingly buses came to be viewed as irrelevant by vast segments of the public as the private automobile became even more easily attainable.

The decline of central cities across the country prompted President Kennedy to introduce the 1964 Urban Mass Transit Act (UMTA) to promote economic vitality in existing and future urban developments. Significant federal investments were made in new and legacy heavy rail networks in large metropolitan areas. Contrary to the development patterns associated with the streetcar, most of these systems featured stations that did not incorporate adjoining development but instead operated with a “Park-and-Ride” model.

As transit agencies have come to learn, this model is not conducive to generating ridership. Tasked with identifying increasingly limited funding sources, many came to recognize that leasing unoccupied land along their rights-of-way and around station facilities was an innovative method of generating additional revenue. This joint-development process was soon popularized throughout the 1970s and 80s as an increasing number of transit agencies created departments to facilitate such arrangements. Moreover, studies demonstrating the relationship between ridership and intensive station development further propelled the idea of “transit-supportive development.” As a result, agencies also began to consider pedestrian activity and density near stations in addition to revenue from leased properties.

This new focus on pedestrian interaction and mobility within the vicinity of transit stations sparked a conscious, anti-sprawl movement in the late 1980s. It was at this time that Peter Calthorpe, an urban designer from California, promoted neo-traditional and development-oriented transit concepts. He drew upon principles first exhibited in the historic streetcar suburb and eventually coined the term Transit-Oriented Development.

Transit Village Initiative

The Transit Village Initiative is a program that seeks to aid municipalities in implementing TOD strategies aimed at redeveloping or revitalizing the areas around transit. Launched in 1999, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), in partnership with NJ Transit, administers the program, which prescribes urban design and site-planning ideals. In addition to NJDOT and NJ Transit, state agency representatives form a Task Force that meets regularly to guide the Initiative:

- New Jersey Department of Transportation
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- New Jersey Redevelopment Authority
- New Jersey Transit
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
- Office of Smart Growth
- Main Street New Jersey
- New Jersey Economic Development Authority
- New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency
- New Jersey Commerce & Economic Growth Commission
- New Jersey Council on the Arts



Train tracks at Boonton Train Station



Boonton Train Station

One of the main drivers for implementing TOD in New Jersey has been concerns about economic and population growth. It is hoped that by locating housing near transit facilities, traffic congestion can be mitigated, housing offerings increased, and economic investment expanded across the state. It is also hoped that by incentivizing development of (high-density) housing and retail around transit hubs, growth will be concentrated in cities rather than suburban communities.

In addition to managing the program, the Transit Village Task Force and NJDOT Commissioner also oversee the Transit Villages designation process. To qualify, prospective municipalities must meet six essential conditions:

- Identify existing transit services in the community
- Exhibit a willingness to increase the availability of jobs and housing around transit facilities
- Adopt zoning and/or redevelopment plans based on TOD principles
- Identify specific sites for redevelopment
- Identify bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Program community events, arts, and culture around transit services

Transit Village Task Force

1. Acts as a liaison in each state agency comprising the Transit Village Task Force
2. Provides assistance from each state agency comprising the Transit Village Task Force
3. Furnishes information regarding available grants, loans, and other opportunities
4. Offers funding, when applicable
5. Extends informational meetings, educational programs, and research information

Since the introduction of the program, 30 Transit Villages have been designated (Appendix 3). The first five communities to gain designation under the pilot program were Morristown, Pleasantville, Rutherford, South Amboy, and South Orange. Once a municipality is designated as a Transit Village, it can access various financial and technical tools from the Transit Village Task Force. This technical assistance, along with the state's funding commitment, serves to aid municipalities' vision for redevelopment.

Examples of TOD

TOD has been implemented in a wide range of cities across the U.S. as a strategy to coordinate transit and land use policies and create communities that are walkable, inclusive, and attractive to many demographics. While TOD projects often are geared towards young professionals and childless households, focusing on accommodating families can also attract new populations and retain existing ones.

In New Jersey, many towns have sought to reinvigorate their downtowns and commercial districts by leveraging transit investments. As many of these communities struggled to accomplish this, they enlisted support from various state and federal agencies. One such example is NJ Transit's Transit-Friendly Communities for New Jersey pilot community planning assistance program. Funded through a grant awarded from the federal government, NJ Transit worked with various communities across the state to find opportunities for integrating transit and community improvements.

The Transit-Friendly Planning Assistance Program has demonstrated that it is imperative to think very broadly about the role of transit stations within the communities they serve. The station can be a place unto itself, so long as it is understood in a town-wide context; that is, carefully positioned in the center of community life for the amenities it can provide beyond transportation.

As Boonton's Main Street and transit connections are assets in attracting visitors, future residents, and businesses, this initiative—and the lessons it offers—stands out as particularly relevant.

Foremost, the program shows that in addition to transportation, the “T” in TOD can also be thought of as standing for transaction. In attempting to parlay transit improvements into community and broader economic improvements, it is worth remembering that the very transit connections that are to be improved are themselves the leverage in extracting further public improvements through private developments. For this reason, communities must be proactive in establishing a vision that will shape these developments, so that they are not forced to simply react to developer proposals. This necessitates broad stakeholder participation, as was the case in Riverton, New Jersey, where a redevelopment plan for the city center was able to both dramatically increase density in the village and garner broad community support.

Likewise, Netcong New Jersey's participation in the Transit-Friendly Planning Assistance Program under the guidance of NJ Transit and the Regional Plan Association resulted in a comprehensive vision for both the station district and the underutilized land bordering their downtown. Understanding the need to position itself as a regional center in order to amplify the attraction of local businesses along its Main Street, Netcong committed to a vision of establishing a new neighborhood in a formerly fallow section of downtown that would stitch together Main Street, the existing residential

districts, and the natural resources in the Borough. Along with the station area plan undertaken for Netcong, the borough worked to fulfill their vision by simultaneously pursuing a redevelopment plan. In cooperating with NJ Transit in developing a station area plan, the borough was able to then lay the groundwork for a subsequent redevelopment plan that contained tools for managing future development in a manner complementary to the community's needs.

Moreover, the Transit-Friendly Communities program underscores that, because zoning can only describe what is not permitted rather than what a community would like to see take place, physical design is an important tool in ensuring that redevelopment sensibly integrates with both the existing neighborhoods and the stations that serve them.

In Dover, New Jersey, a consensus-driven plan emerged that sought to assuage local concerns about the quality of future transit-oriented developments in the town. By carefully taking into account the concerns of the inhabitants, it was possible to establish a guideline of design principles that served as the roadmap for integrating the historic business district, former industrial sites, underutilized surface parking lots, and the Rockaway River together with the rail station, allowing for a greater intensity of uses that would also respect the historic qualities of the town.

Dover succeeded by engaging community stakeholders, providing massing of what future development would be permitted to look like and, in the process, serving to calm concerns over how the potential development would fit in the town.

The Transit-Friendly Communities program provides clear examples suggesting that TOD has the most success when implemented as a means for creating a complete community, in which residents have access to quality and affordable housing, open space, and retail in addition to transportation, which can then occupy a central, organizing role. For example, the Maplewood, New Jersey station hosts a concierge service that fills orders for meals and accepts dry cleaning. These tasks are then distributed to local businesses to be taken care of throughout the day and are then returned to the station for pick-up as customers return, in the evening. Additionally, it is not uncommon to find such programming as farmers markets, art fairs, and performances in stations throughout the state.



Intersection of Myrtle Ave and Main St.



View from Plane Street

02

Boonton History & Context





History

Originally a village, Boonton was established on the Rockaway River at a site about a mile and a half downstream from the town's present location. The proximity to natural resources led to the development of an iron-refining forge owned by David Ogden. He renamed the village Boonetown in 1761 after colonial governor Thomas Boone. The ironworks provided iron material throughout the Revolutionary War and included the production of axes, horseshoes, and tires. When the war concluded, operations were passed on to William Scott. By 1830 a group of New York City businessmen saw promise in a location upstream from the village which came to be known as Boonton Falls. With an initial capital pool of \$283,000, the company flourished for half a century, rendering Boonetown Falls a one-industry town. With the discovery of iron deposits in the Great Lakes region and the onset of an economic depression in the 1870s, Ironworks were eventually abandoned as the New Jersey Iron Company ceased operations.

From this experience, Boonton learned a valuable lesson: reliance upon any single industry was detrimental to the economic health of the town. Boonton soon had an opportunity to apply lessons learned as new industries moved into town following the collapse of the New Jersey Iron Company. Likewise, the development of the Lackawanna Railroad in 1875 increased accessibility to the town, which served to support the rapid growth of this period. Without the access provided by the railroad, outsiders would not have been able to commute into

the area to work or shop in the many new industries in the town. Boonton's economy at this time also included a silk factory, knife and nail factory, paper mill, and iron foundry. Individually-owned businesses were also spreading throughout the town, providing additional jobs. This investment, together with the railroad, helped repopulate the town while reinventing its character, in the process. Boonton was no longer a single industry town.

Some of these new industries had a more profound impact upon the town than others. E.F. Drew & Company processed coconut and vegetable oils until the mid-1990s at its Butter Works plant. The facility would grow to become the nation's largest such company. In 1906 Richard Seabury of the Loanda Hard Rubber Company in Boonton began looking for ways to cast new materials. He eventually created the material used to make the world's first molded organic plastics. Boontonware, a line of molded plastic dishware, earned Boonton national recognition and also contributed to the establishment of Radio Frequency Laboratories Inc. in the town. This company used the plastics to produce radios during the 1920s. Electronic firms continued to propagate throughout Boonton: Aircraft Radio Corporation, Measurements Corporation, and Ballantine Laboratories among many others.

Boonton Today

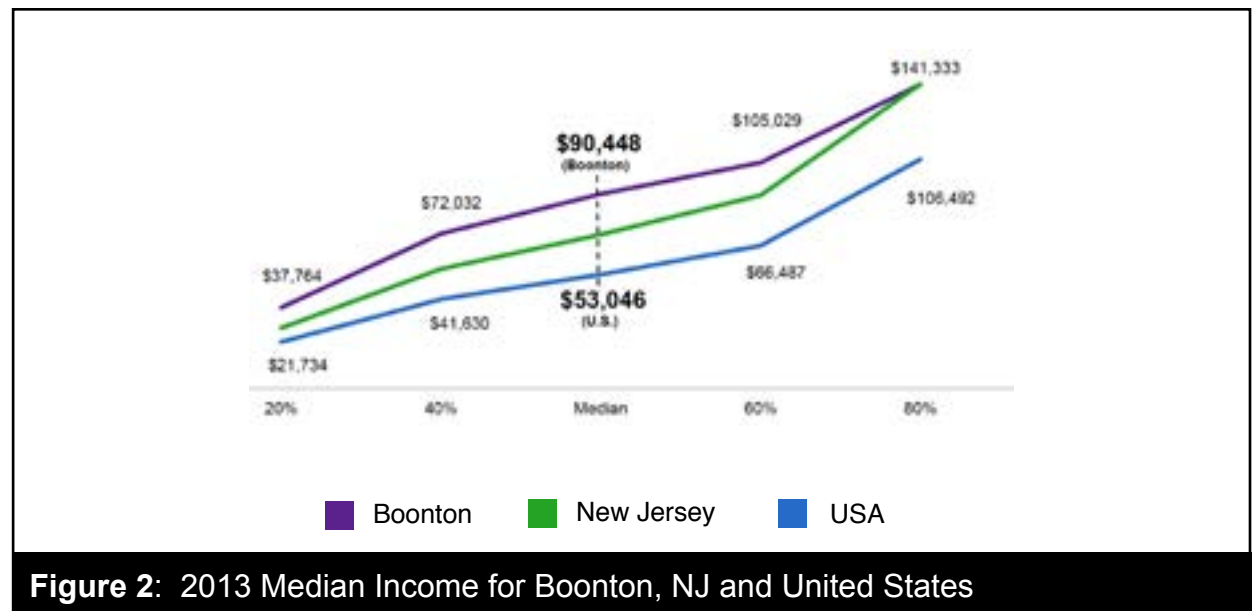
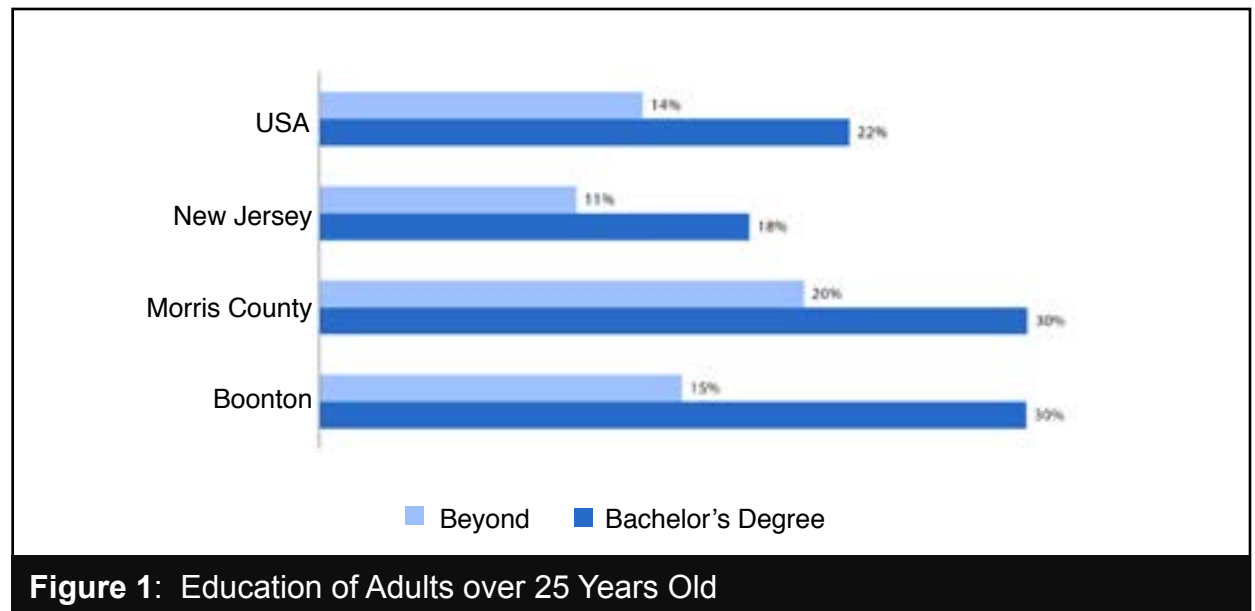
Today Boonton is home to a growing arts community. One of the many events hosted in town is the monthly First Fridays in which live music and

art are performed along Main Street and businesses host special activities and extend their business hours. The Dog Days of Summer event recruited artists in the summer of 2015 to create sculptures of dogs and install them in front of Main Street businesses. These pieces were donated to the Dog Daze Charity Auction.

The town takes great pride in its past, as indicated by the Boonton Historical Society and Museum located in the John Taylor Building. Visitors can still find the remnants of Boonton's iron industry here and in the foundations and structures located in the western side of town. This area, now referred to as The Hollow, has attracted its fair share of development proposals. Much like the new industries that emerged in the early 19th and 20th centuries before it, Boonton's emerging arts community has been transforming this former industrial hub. Most factory sites have been redeveloped or are in the process of being converted for new purposes. The former Butter Works plant has been reclaimed as retail space for local residents.

Demographics

Bolstering these developments is Boonton's desirability from a business development standpoint. Boonton has a well-educated workforce with 30% of residents over the age of 25 holding a bachelor's degree and 15% a master's degree or higher – compared to 18% and 11% respectively for New Jersey. This is also reflected in the high median-household income in the town. At \$90,448,



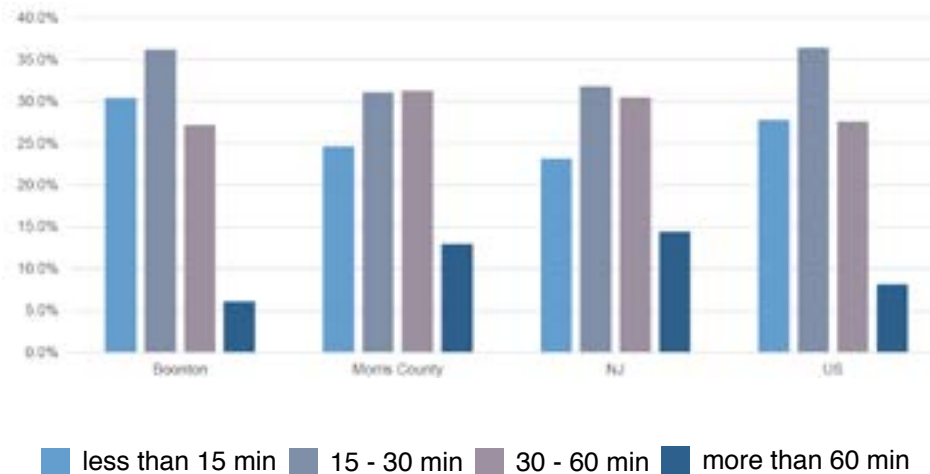


Figure 3: Commute Time Estimates from 2009 to 2013

it is 70.5% higher than the US average of \$53,046. Furthermore, the accessibility offered by I-287, the Montclair-Boonton rail line, and local and commuter buses makes Boonton well-positioned to benefit from high-paying jobs located across Morris County and the New York City metropolitan region. Indeed, while only 40% of households in the United States earn \$66,487 or more per year, the same proportion of households in Boonton earn \$105,029 or more. Additionally, the 2009-2013 American Community Survey found that only 4-8% of commuters in Boonton had a journey of more than an hour to work, compared to 12-14% and 13-15% for commuters in Morris County and New Jersey, respectively. This ease of access improves the quality of life in Boonton and increases the attractiveness of its real estate.

The economic characteristics of the region illustrate that Boonton could successfully attract new residents to the town from surrounding municipalities in Morris County. What's more, the town's peak of 9,261 people in 1970, was around 10% greater than the current population of 8,347, according to census data. It is important to note that this was a gradual change, rather than rapid as in other municipalities that have similarly suffered from industrial decline in past decades. In our opinion this indicates that the losses have occurred because the town is not attracting as many new residents as it had in the past, but has retained much of what made it an excellent place to live in 1970.

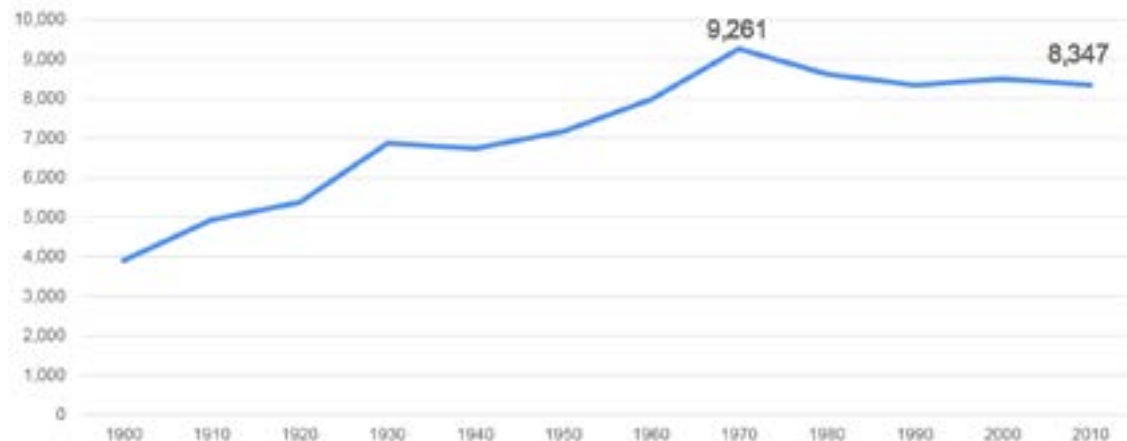


Figure 4: Boonton Population

03

Past Planning Efforts



1998/99 MASTER PLAN

2008 RE-EXAMINATION

NJ-APA CPAP

- Emphasize bus usage
- Relocate train platform
- Focus on concentrated development that supports TOD
- Prioritize quality open space
- Incorporate safe and adequate pedestrian street access
- Create regionally connected bike routes
- Preserve small town historic feel
- Focus development efforts on and around Main Street

1998/99 Master Plan

In 1998 the Town of Boonton coordinated with the local government and the community to set guidelines aimed at shaping the future for its residents. The Master Plan details a variety of goals to guide current and future land development patterns. The plan encourages activation of the commercial corridors from surrounding residential neighborhoods and sets guidelines for the use of the natural amenities along the perimeter of the town.

As a community shaped by its historical industrial base, the goals were developed with the intention of preserving its small-town character and its Main Street. Although Boonton's original industrial

base no longer exists, the remaining structures and foundations established during this time make Boonton ripe for infill development and redevelopment. The former industrial sites, historical Main Street, natural amenities, and public train and bus transit points are valuable assets to the town. The 1998 Master Plan focuses on promoting bikeability and walkability by setting guidelines for safety, infrastructure repair, maintenance of existing routes, and accessibility. The plan pushes for public investment in bicycle amenities such as bike racks and lockers, inviting residences to use alternate forms of transportation. Additionally, the plan calls for sidewalk repairs and maintenance for areas that have potential to generate heavy pedestrian traffic. Among the directives made, the report includes improving facilities for transit vehicles,

traffic calming measures around the interstate ramps, and further coordination with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) for additional funding opportunities. These objectives will increase the value of investments made in Boonton.

Re-Examination

The 2008 Re-Examination Plan addresses major problems and objectives from the 1998 Master Plan. Since 1998 zoning ordinances have been adopted to address issues such as flag lot configurations, billboards, and building orientations. Additionally, the Town of Boonton has created new zoning districts such as those for low density residential and shopping center districts.

A number of circulation improvements were added as well. The town installed new sidewalks on Vreeland Avenue, Park Avenue, West Main Street, Boonton Avenue, Elcock Avenue, Chestnut Street, Oak Street, Hillside Avenue, and Wootton Street. Additionally, a new traffic signal and turning lane was outlined for installation on the Wootton and Myrtle intersection. However, progress on this improvement is still pending. Similarly to the Master Plan, the Re-Examination Plan strongly recommends connecting walking and biking trails to points of interest within the town.

The report builds on the 1998 Master Plan's suggestions for improved visual treatment of streetscapes, which includes signage and wayfinding programs. In addition to recommendations made

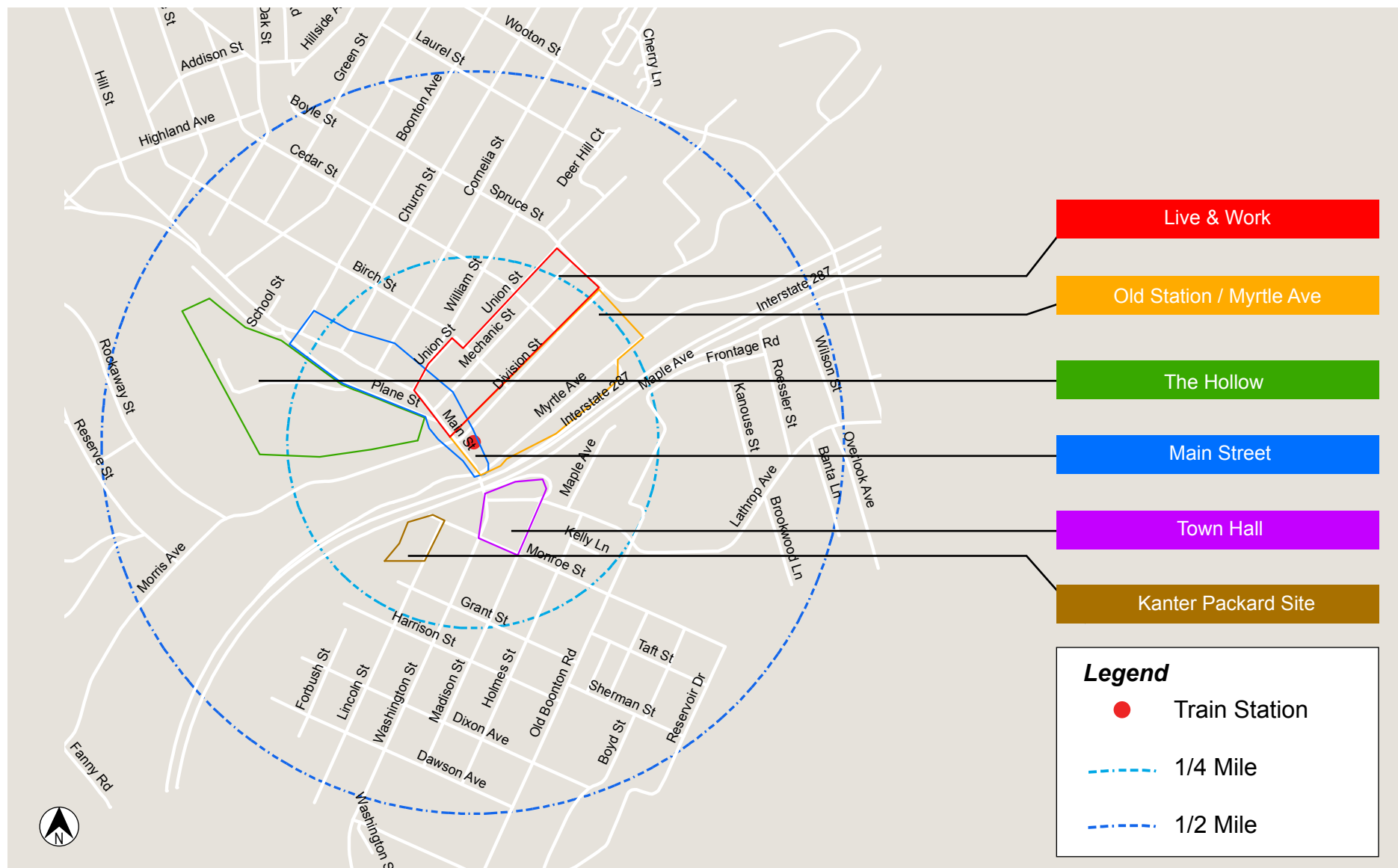


Figure 5: Transit Village Designated Zones

in the previous plan, the re-examination report provides zoning proposals. For example, residential zones in Boonton should introduce regulations for both building and total lot impervious coverage. Moreover, commercial zones in the town should encourage shared parking and enhancement of streetscapes. The recommendations include policy and regulations meant to help rebuild the urban fabric of Boonton.

NJ-APA Community Planning Assistance Program (CPAP)

In early 2015, the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association (NJ-APA) awarded Boonton a CPAP planning grant to help the town assemble a group of volunteer planners to help the town prepare for Transit Village designation by New Jersey Transit. This work will help the town designate the boundaries of its Transit Village area. The goal of the CPAP is to increase the town's population density to support the local economy and to grow the town's public transit ridership. The CPAP project has designated six distinct areas for redevelopment within a half-mile radius from the center of town in order to achieve these goals.

Boonton Transit Village Sub-Area Boundaries

The CPAP report identified six transit village sub-areas within the traditional transit village half-mile radius in which to focus transit oriented development efforts. We have chosen four of these six sub-areas to focus on in order of priority: (1) Main Street, (2) Live/ Work Area (Division Street

& Mechanic Street), (3) Old Station/Myrtle Avenue, and (4) The Hollow. The concentration of these sites around the Boonton train station, the bus routes running through the town, and the Main Street commercial corridor, as the CPAP report states, would allow Boonton to "[take] advantage of the likelihood that residents and visitors will utilize mass transit and walk to various destinations including residences, places of employment, retail, entertainment and recreation." These sites should be the focus of redevelopment and revitalization efforts in Boonton.

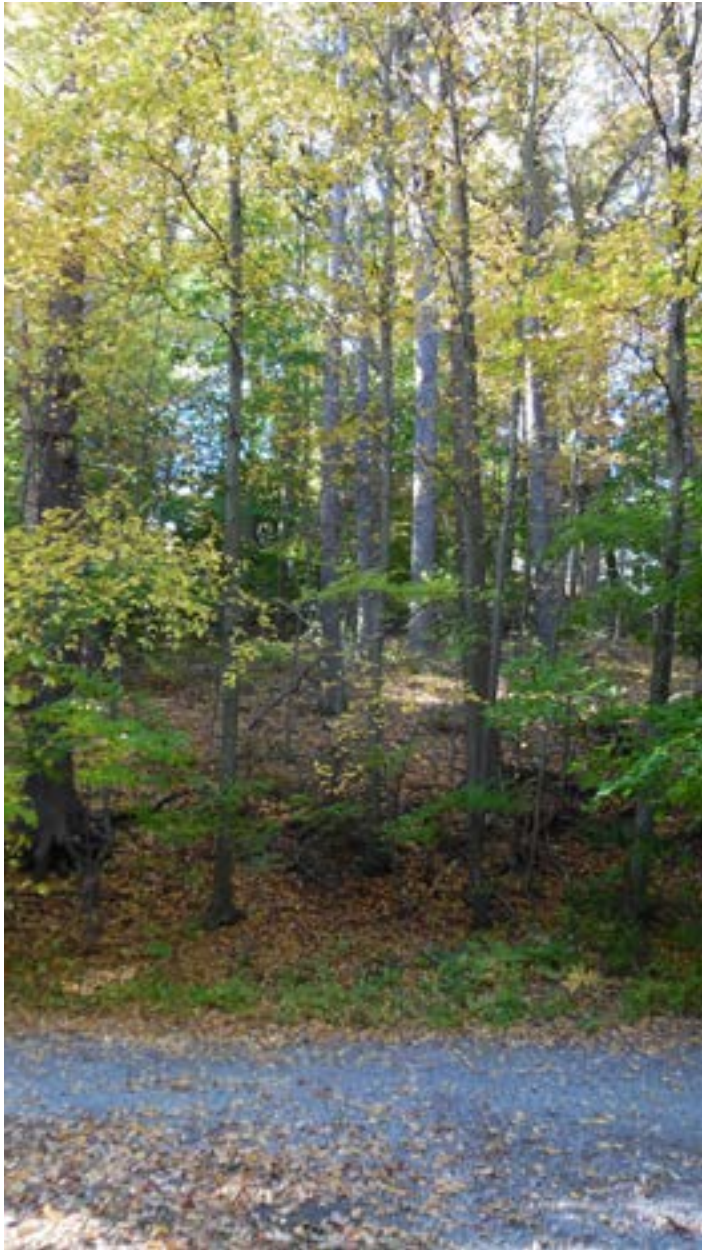
1. Main Street

Boonton's Main Street offers a variety of retail and professional businesses. It also has an eclectic mix of restaurants and entertainment venues. Combined with the historic buildings along the commercial corridor and the burgeoning arts community, there is vibrancy in the town that Boonton should support and cultivate. The Boonton Main Street organization is well situated to enhance and develop these assets, as they are currently working to do, and should be encouraged and supported by the town.

2. Live/Work Area (Division St/Mechanic St.)

The "Live/Work" sub-area off of Main Street, along Division and Mechanic is ripe for redevelopment. A guiding principle of TOD is to encourage residential and commercial density near transit. This density will foster walkability, accessibility, and mobility for both residents and visitors to the town. The "Live/Work" sub-area should be planned and redeveloped within this context. The Town of Boonton is suited for a TOD-style development pattern. Boonton has





significant opportunity to revitalize and grow the downtown and to enhance usability of mass transit and draw upon its industrial past in support of this goal.

3. Old Station/Myrtle Avenue

This sub-area contains the town's original train station. Situated along the Montclair-Boonton line, the area ripe for redevelopment as it currently has an inconsistent development pattern. A vision for the future should focus on this designated sub-area as a prime location of mixed-use residential and commercial development in order to align with TOD principles.

4. The Hollow

The CPAP planning team found there to be a strong market in Boonton for residential development and redevelopment. "The Hollow", which is zoned for industrial uses with a small section of land zoned for high-density residential development, is the current location of the Boonton DPW. This sub-area can support residential development should the Department of Public Works be relocated and a determination of the extent of on-site contamination is made. Redevelopment of the Hollow would also offer Boonton the opportunity to better integrate the town with the Rockaway River, a beautiful but underutilized natural amenity.

In addition to establishing growth boundaries and designated areas, CPAP looked at various transportation and circulation issues. The report confirmed our belief that Boonton needs to improve its pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure to make

active transportation a primary mode of transport. Other findings from the report include a lack of accessibility to transit options, inadequate signage and wayfinding, low rail transit ridership, and vehicle speeding. Despite these perceived weaknesses, the report suggests that traffic calming techniques can improve pedestrian and bicycling safety.



04

Transportation Evaluation & Recommendation



A: Complete Streets

Boonton has a walkable, compact street grid. The typical block size in the downtown transit district area averages about 250' by 470' (Figure 6). These dimensions are comparable to some of the most walkable cities in the United States: Philadelphia (400' by 500'), Chicago (330' by 660'), and New York City (200' by 800'). This characteristic promotes connectivity by making the environment easier for pedestrians to navigate and reduces congestion by providing multiple travel routes for motorized traffic. Expanding and improving upon the walkability of the street grid requires pedestrian and bicycle safety design and policy standards, which are explored at length in this chapter.

Despite a walkable and connected street grid, an examination of Boonton's streetscape reveals an opportunity to improve on bicycle and pedestrian safety. The safety of bicyclists and pedestrians is compromised by multiple on- and off-ramps from Main Street onto Interstate 287. As such, it is crucial to prioritize safety improvements in this area.

Sidewalks are another concern. The long crossings at key intersections in and near the downtown area and the worn condition of the sidewalks pose hazards to pedestrians as well as the worn condition of the sidewalks. Also, this area does not provide sufficient infrastructure for bicyclists, as there is no visible designation of their right of way. Taken together, these issues pose a serious risk for pedestrians and bicyclists. This corridor, which includes the convergence of Main Street and Plane Street at its

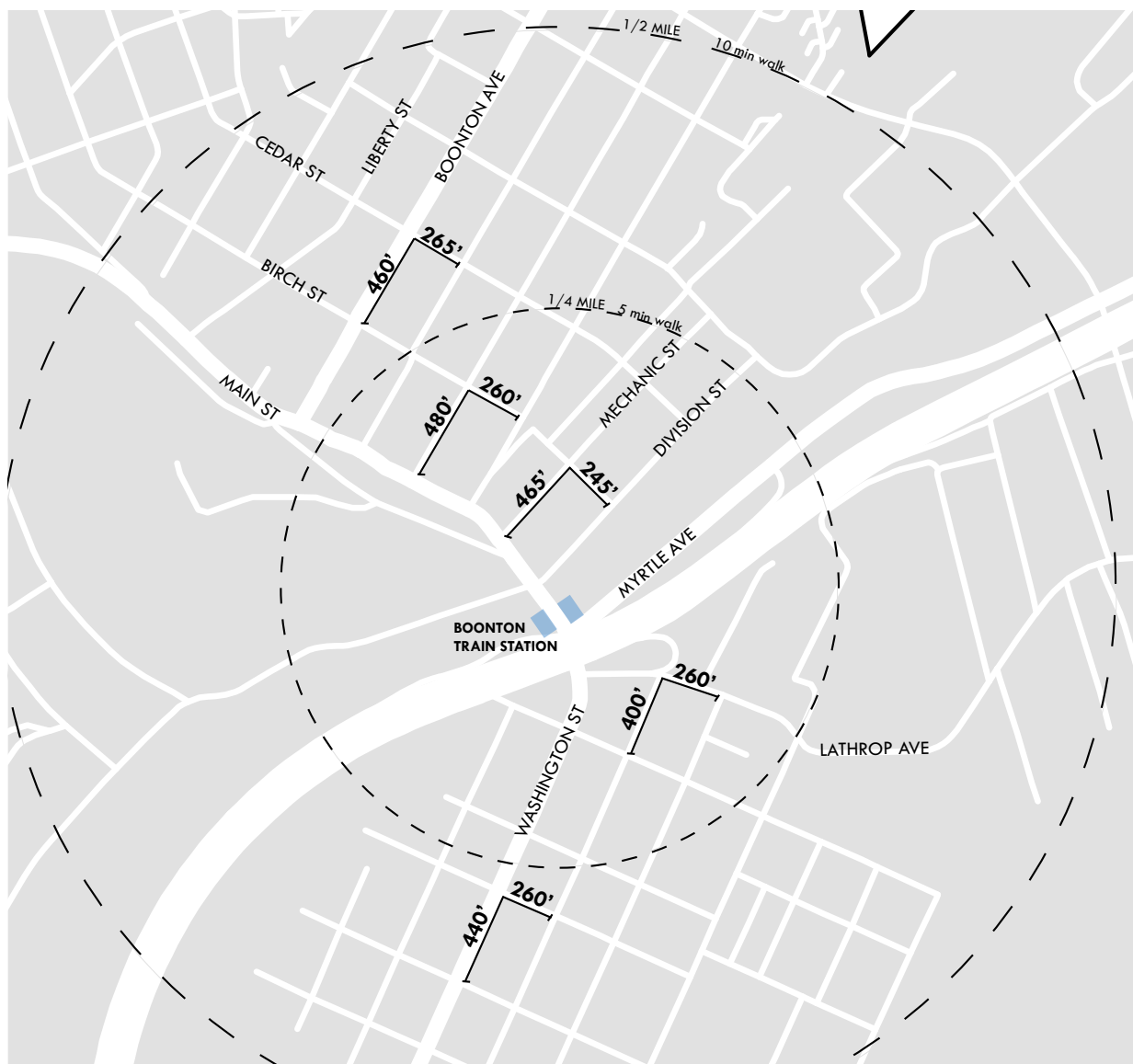


Figure 6: Walkable Grid

northern terminus, and the Main Street-Lathrop Avenue intersection at its southern end, should be a point of focus in improving transportation safety.

Complete Streets Recommendations

- This plan recommends the adoption of a Complete Streets policy. Complete Streets are designed to enhance safety and access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and physical abilities. Complete Streets make it easy and safe to cross the road, bicycle to work, or walk around town. Additionally, they improve transit by allowing buses to run on time and make it safer for people to walk to and from train stations or other points of interest. Essentially, the adoption of Complete Streets policy means that every future transportation project in Boonton will create a better and safer street network for drivers, transit users, pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The design and implementation of Complete Streets can vary because they are created to respond to the local or community context. A Complete Street might include sidewalks, bike lanes, special bus lanes, curb extensions and other amenities to enhance transportation safety. While a Complete Street in an urban area can look much differently from a Complete Street in a rural area, Figure 7 shows what Complete Streets might look like in Boonton. In addition to improving safety for all users of the transportation network, Complete Streets policies and design can vastly increase the livability of Boonton.



B: Alleyways

Alleyways are an important piece of the walking network in Boonton (Figure 8). They provide corridors for pedestrians and allow for convenient shortcuts to contiguous streets and destinations. Because of the Boonton's topography, several alleys

take the form of steep public staircases running behind or along buildings. Our assessment found that this infrastructure has fallen into disrepair perhaps due to a failure to consider this resource as a vital part of the urban streetscape. The alleyways present four fundamental problems: 1) lack of cleaning, 2) lack of maintenance, 3) insufficient lighting, and 4) atmosphere that is uninviting.



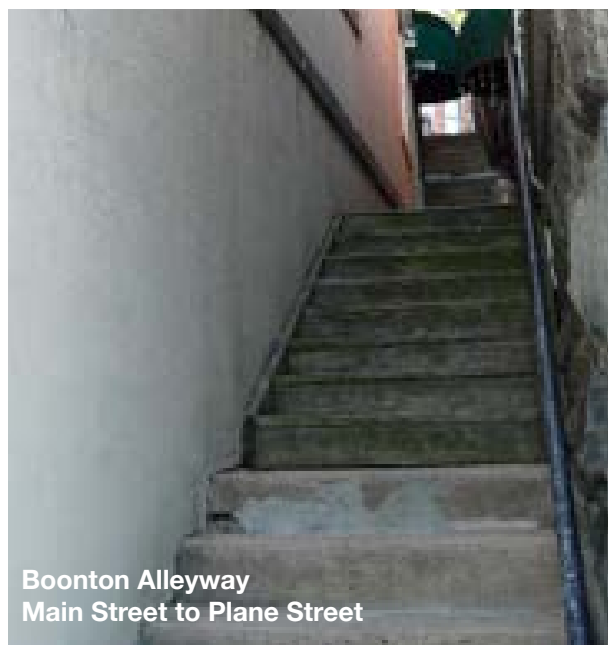
Figure 8: Alley and Passageways in Downtown District

Stairways are being used as trash deposits, releasing unpleasant smells, attracting unwanted animals, and blocking pedestrian circulation. Pavement steps and handrails are highly deteriorated, discouraging walking activity and giving passages a feeling of abandonment. Lack of cleaning and maintenance is compounded by insufficient lighting, which makes visitors feel unsafe and encourages acts of vandalism.

Finally, the alleyway conditions are uninviting for pedestrians. Aesthetic and infrastructure improvements can enhance walkability and create interesting spaces for pedestrian use. Implementing cleaning and maintenance strategies as well as small-scale capital improvements such as lighting, landscaping, public art, and signage will activate open space.

Alleyway Recommendations

- **Waste Disposal** - Neighbors and businesses should be encouraged to manage their waste responsibly in order to keep passages free from trash. Adding trash bins next to businesses and residences can also help to reduce the amount of waste in passages.
- **Lighting** - Pedestrian scale streetlights may be added where feasible to provide added visual interest. In addition, surface lighting of building facades and edges in passages should be encouraged as it provides better visibility and security.
- **Landscaping** - Additional landscaping and greenery should be added wherever possible, particularly vertical elements along the edges of alleys and passages. This should include trees, bushes, shrubs, and flowers as well as vertical plantings in planter boxes, trellises or green screens.
- **Public Art** - Public art should be encouraged to improve passages' aesthetic. This could be achieved by hiring local artists to paint murals to decorate stairs and blank building walls. This would also help to define a unique character for the alleyways and to create a more dynamic experience for pedestrians while engaging the local artist community.
- **Signage** - Wayfinding signage can be the most effective method of raising awareness that passages exist. The signage could also indicate that they provide convenient shortcuts and increase connectivity in commercial areas



C: Bike and Pedestrian Access to Grace Lord Park and Rockaway River

Grace Lord Park is a beautiful green area located along the cascading Rockaway River and a short distance from downtown Boonton (Figure 9). The park offers great opportunities for a variety of recreational activities including hiking, birding, and fishing. The northern area of the park, which is at a longer walking distance from Main Street, has several recreational amenities like a fountain, playground, swings, and a gazebo. However, the southern area of the park located in The Hollow and

near the town center, has several barriers limiting or reducing use. First, pedestrian and bike accessibility is limited since most of the southern section of the river is fenced off. This forces pedestrians and cyclists to take an inside path, and hike up to the northern segment of the river where the park is not enclosed and recreational amenities are located. This is also the only way to access the pedestrian trail that borders the river, which begins at Essex Ave and ends at Morris Ave. A recycling complex occupies the area without appropriate signage leading to the park. There is no indication of the way to the park from Main Street, the train station, or the parking lots nearby. This is particularly an issue for non-residents visiting the area and a barrier to the promotion of tourism. To improve pedestrian and

bike access to the Grace Lord Park and Rockaway River as well as increase recreational opportunities for downtown Boonton residents and visitors, our team suggests relocating the recycling area, adding recreational facilities, and building a river bridge to access the trail. To enhance access and encourage visitors signage should be placed in key locations throughout town.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Recommendations

- Recycling Complex Relocation - The recycling center should be relocated. Our team found one potential new location, the parcels located between North Main Street and Hill Street.
- Recreational Facilities - Open space currently



Figure 9: Pedestrian Access to Grace Lord park

occupied by the recycling complex should be used to extend green area and to establish various recreational facilities such as playgrounds, benches and tables along the riverside, a basketball court, etc.

- River Bridge - A second bridge over the river should be built to connect this part of the park with the trail located on the other side of the Rockaway River. This would allow pedestrians and cyclists direct access to the trail from the southern area, avoiding the challenging topography of the inside path, and enabling them to use the trail in a South-North direction as well as a North-South direction.
- Signage - Signage is the most effective way to indicate how to get to the park from focal points of the town such as the train station, Main Street, and nearby parking lots. Signage should also indicate the path up to the riverfront for pedestrians, cyclists, and tourists.

D: Bus Stops

The New Jersey Transit 871, a local bus route, and the Lakeland Route 46 line serve the Town of Boonton. These two lines operate in central Boonton along West Main Street, Main Street, Myrtle Avenue, and Lathrop Avenue. These corridors have bus stops placed at least every quarter mile for a total of 16 bus stop pairs. Most stops are indicated by posted signs adjacent to the curb. Two bus shelters exist: one at Town Hall (Main St and Washington Ave) and the other at Dell's Village. However, there are a few stops that are completely without signage or designation that they are stops, several of which are

located along Main Street.

The Lakeland 46 bus serves all unmarked bus stops (Figure 10). In the outbound direction these include the Post Office, Boonton Ave, Highland Ave, Lake Ave, and Dell's Village. In the inbound direction Essex Ave, Boonton Ave, and Post Office are without signage. With transit riders already burdened by set schedules determining when buses depart and arrive as well as specific stop designations, the lack of signage at these locations likely to deter potential riders, particularly new riders unfamiliar with all designated stops.

In some places where bus stop signs currently do exist, information that is displayed is misleading and confusing to riders. Specifically, the Lakeland 46 stops along Main Street and W Main Street have NJ Transit bus signs with only a small strip of text indicating that a Lakeland Route 46 actually serves the stop. Branding the stop as NJ Transit is customary in New Jersey as the agency provides bus stop signs upon a municipality's request regardless of who serves the stop. It is nonetheless a branding issue for riders and can complicate the process of riding transit.

Additionally, the signs that exist have very poor visibility. Supplementary items such as benches and shelters typically help make bus stops visible, but in Boonton these only exist in a few locations. Moreover, the installation of benches and shelters is more conducive to attracting riders, as they provide both seats and protection from inclement weather while waiting for the bus. These characteristics of the

bus stops in Boonton are of particular importance considering municipalities are responsible for stop maintenance, and are largely responsible for the placement of stops in the state of New Jersey. Boonton thus has the potential to upgrade these facilities in order to take advantage of the transit assets and services that already exist by creating a safer, more inviting environment to attract additional riders. The improvement of the existing bus stop facilities will not only create a more attractive appearance, but also bring increased awareness and visibility to these facilities, attracting more passengers.

Bus Stop Recommendations

- Signage – Installing signs at all locations should be a top priority. In the outbound direction stops without signs include the Post Office, Boonton Ave, Highland Ave, Lake Ave, and Dell's Village. In the inbound direction Essex Ave, Boonton Ave, and Post Office are without signage (Figure 10).
- Shelters – Benches and shelters are best suited for stops in central, high visibility areas and/or the most popular stops. The areas best suited and in most need of shelter facilities are represented in figure 10. Figure 11 shows three proposed bus shelter designs. All three are intended to reflect Boonton in their form and materials. These bus stop facilities can take many shapes and forms, however many agencies and municipalities have design standards that incorporate aesthetic and functional considerations. These designs are based on the Transportation Research Board's TCRP Report 19, a commonly used design document.

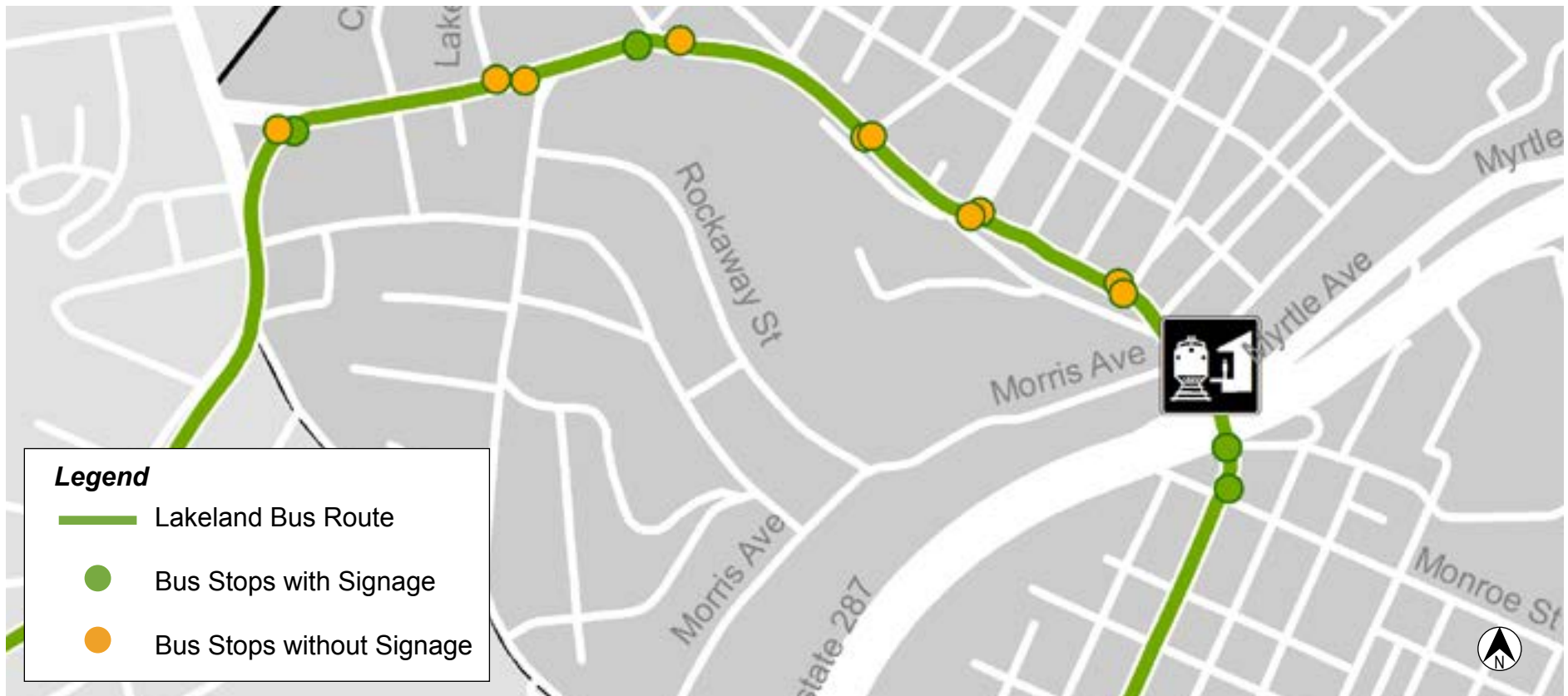


Figure 10: Lakeland Bus Route with Signage

E: Route 871

New Jersey Transit Route 871 connects Boonton with Morristown to the south and Willowbrook Mall to the east. This bus also connects Boonton with the municipalities of Hanover, Parsipanny, Montville, and Lincoln Park. Traveling towards Willowbrook,

the 871 enters Boonton along Vreeland Ave before traveling east along Lathrop Ave. to Washington St. and Main St. The 871 briefly travels north along Main Street before turning right to serve Myrtle Ave before continuing on to Montville. This route deviates from a linear path considerably in order to serve downtown Boonton. While the service is infrequent, Route 871 provides transit service to

regional locations that are otherwise inaccessible or indirectly served by other transit alternatives. Coinciding with the redevelopment of key parcels along Division Street proposed in this report, we also suggest rerouting NJ Transit 871 to this corridor. This increased bus access will enhance the densification and increased activity along the Division corridor.

Route 871 Recommendations

- **Rerouting** - The proposed rerouting would remove the 871 from Myrtle Ave., between Main St. and Wooton St. and instead move along Division St., serving the proposed redevelopment area in addition to the Wal-Mart shopping center. This minor route deviation would encourage transit use by providing more convenient service to Main Street and support increased densities along Division Street. This rerouting would result in an estimated 1-2 minute increase in run time in each direction and have a minimal impact on scheduling because the 871 currently takes 15 minute layovers between trips.

F: Train Station

The train station is currently situated between Main Street and Town Hall. While the location has its strengths, accessing the platform can be difficult. The platform is directly accessible from the west side of Main Street via a long descending stairwell. The other entrance is from the lower surface lot off of Myrtle Avenue. This is the only parking area that is directly accessible to the platform. The station is not ADA accessible due to the extreme grade separation of the street and the platform below and the lack of a ramp or elevator.

Additionally, the current stairwell that allows access from Main Street has very poor visibility with only a

single Boonton Station sign. The great distance from the historic, station head house also exacerbates this visibility issue. The old station building is located about 340 feet from the end of the current station platform. The building is currently privately owned and is occupied by a restaurant, though some of the original station features such as the tunnel to access the opposite platform, and the original platforms remain.

The northern platform facilities and canopy, adjacent to the town lot at Division and Birch, are in poor shape and abandoned. With recent improvements to the Birch Street corridor re-enabling pedestrian access to William Street and the upper neighborhoods of Boonton, access to the old station site and the lower area of Boonton has been



Figure 11: Three Proposals for Bus Shelters

improved. While the current level of rail service is limited, the five inbound and nine outbound trips provide critical links with New York City, the New Jersey rail network, the national rail network and beyond. Improving the convenience of access to the station in order to encourage additional ridership would not only ensure NJ Transit's continued service, but also have the potential to provide dividends later with the ongoing efforts to construct the new Hudson River rail tunnels. The importance of such infrastructure expansion would be the additional capacity for more trains to have direct access to New York's Penn Station. This could provide Boonton with direct access to New York rather than end at Hoboken.

Train Station Recommendations

- **Visibility/Wayfinding** - With the current station having very poor visibility, we advise additional signage to increase awareness of the station's location. Signage that guides pedestrians to the platform stairwell entrance farther up Main Street would inform and direct passengers. The entrance itself should be improved in order to better mark the location as the train station. This could be accomplished with more visible signage, station-related placemaking structures and other items indicating a transit node (Additional signage recommendations on pg. 48). Considering the ADA inaccessibility and visibility needs, a practical clock tower structure with an elevator shaft would fulfill these needs. A clock tower could incorporate traditional station elements, such as the clock, and an iconic roof design

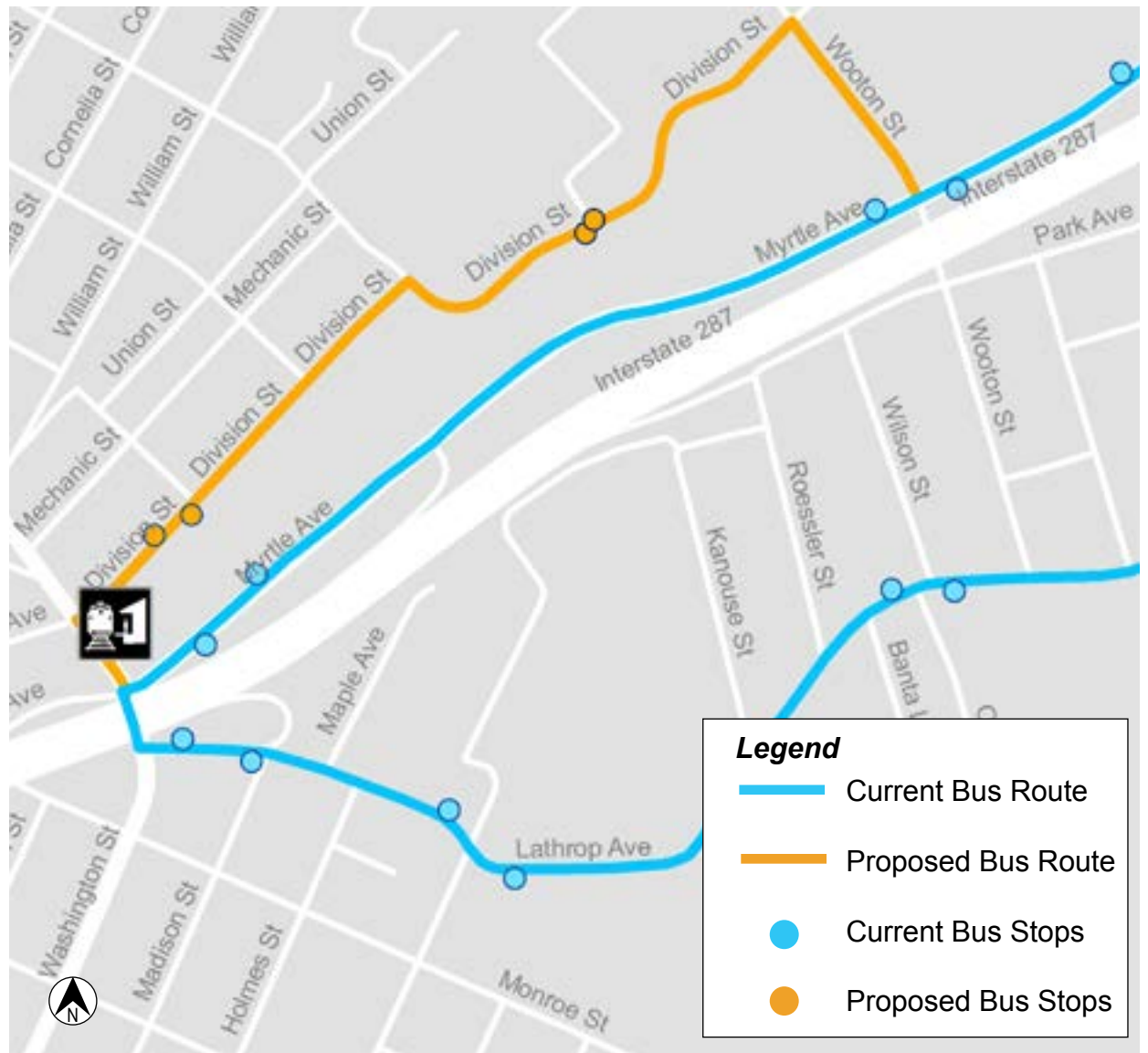


Figure 11: Proposed Route for NJT 871

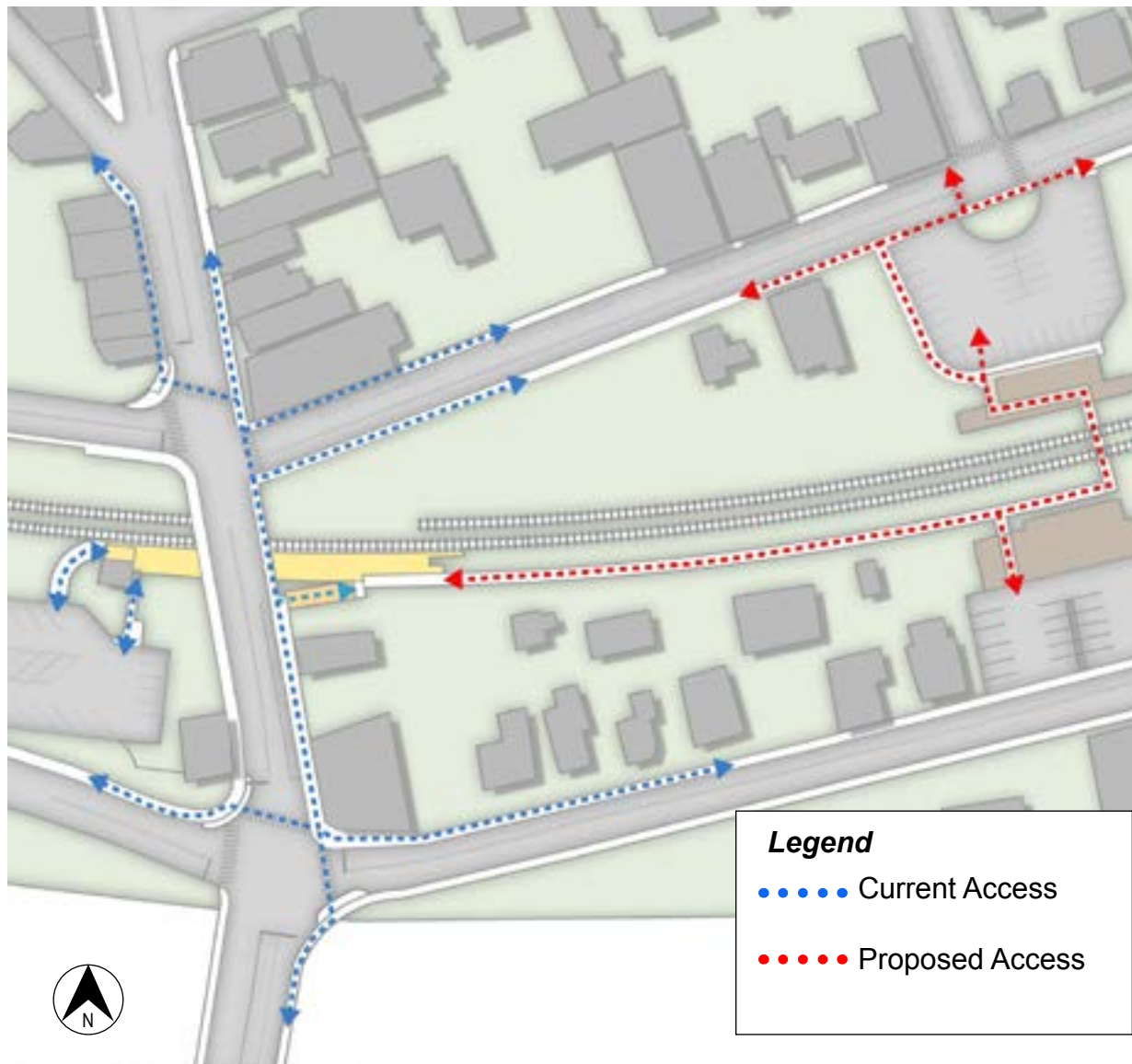


Figure 12: Train Access

symbolic of historic station buildings.

- **Accessibility** - To further increase access to the current station platform, we recommend returning to using the original train station. The current platform is at the former end of the original inbound station platform. As a result, much of the pavement is still present between the current platform and the old station building, providing additional pedestrian and auto access to the station beyond the limited access that currently exists. Renovating the pedestrian tunnel and the station structure on the north side of the rail line would allow access to the municipally owned surface lot at Birch and Division Streets in addition to the recent Birch Street pedestrian enhancements. Additionally, should the Division Street corridor be developed as proposed elsewhere in this report, more convenient access to the current station platform would be afforded to passengers by way of the pedestrian tunnel and inbound platform rehab (Figures 12; Figure 13).

G: Parking

Parking is a crucial element for the success of any downtown area. Due to the high cost of operations and maintenance, efficient management of parking is vitally important for any town's well-being. This plan recommends focusing on more efficient and strategic management of Boonton's existing parking facilities. Our inventory of parking in Boonton indicates that there is enough capacity distributed



Figure 13: Pedestrian Crossing Near Train Station

in the downtown area to meet daily demand and special event demand. Taken together, municipal lots and street parking yield 710 parking spaces. In addition to municipally owned spaces, the downtown area has several other surface parking lots that are privately owned or used exclusively for specific institutions. Introducing a shared parking program for surface lot locations will lead to more efficient use of spots (Table 1, Table 2).

The price to park in Boonton is extremely affordable (Table 3). To park for 12 hours on a weekday, the most one can expect to spend is \$6.00. Commuters who work in Boonton or use the town's public transportation can purchase an annual pass for \$175, which translates to a very low daily parking cost. With its low cost, Main Street is a popular place for residents and visitors to park. However, this can lead to over-parking, which can create safety hazards,

and lead vehicles to cruise for parking, worsening congestion. Incrementally increasing prices to reflect demand can lead to an even distribution of parking.

Bicycle parking is another element of active transportation that needs to be addressed. The present infrastructure is lacking, and offers no incentive for people to use their bicycles. There are currently no bicycle racks or lockers situated in prime locations like the train stations or bus stops. Offering these amenities will encourage residents to travel by bicycle and may provide quicker access to the downtown area. Bicycling is quicker than walking and can greatly increase the number of people who actively shop on Main Street. One way to go about this is by providing bike corrals. This can be done through repurposing parking spaces or no-standing zones. It frees up valuable sidewalk space and can be used to increase visibility in dangerous intersections. Another method is providing bike lockers, a more secure measure of bicycle parking. They can be located inside or outside, wherever sufficient space is available. In Boonton, having these located outdoors would be the most feasible solution. However, the main goal of bike parking should be to position it in convenient spots surrounding the transit hubs.

The final issue in the realm of parking management is the absence of freight loading zones. One of the main concerns for stakeholders, including local businesses, is the lack of available space for freight deliveries and pick-ups. The narrow road width (35') further complicates this issue. This creates

Table 1 Parking Lot Inventory

Lot	Adjacent Street	Parking Spaces
A	Upper Plane St	100
B	Boonton Ave	27
C	Cornelia St/Bider	20
D	Divison St	35
E	American Legion (NJT)	70
F	Kiwanis	39
Total		291

Table 2 On- Street Parking Inventory

Location	Type	Parking Spaces
Division	On-street	30
Main	On-street	130
Liberty	On-street	62
Boonton	On-street	49
Church	On-street	67
Cornelia	On-street	55
Washington	On-street	25
Total		418

Table 3 Cost of Parking 9:00am to 9:00pm on a Weekday

Type	Rate	Total Cost
Permit	\$0.05	\$175/ year
Main Street	FREE!	\$0.00
Side Street	\$6.00	\$0.25/ half hour
Municipal Lots	\$6.00	\$0.25/ half hour
Legion / Kiwanis	\$0.50	\$1.00 / day

a scarcity of space for the most heavily travelled corridor, which can be hazardous for large trucks and other vehicles. The implementation of exclusive loading areas may reduce damage and hazardous conditions.

Typically, a town should look for the right price of on-street parking, a practice that keeps spaces occupied but still has one or two spots empty per block. The elimination of free parking, which currently exists on Main Street, can better allocate scarce space and stimulate economic activity with additional revenue streams. More attractive prices on side streets or surface lots incentivizes residents and visitors to park farther away from Main Street, and generate additional benefits to business. The development of appropriate signage and a demand based pricing program would assist in directing visitors to particular parking lots or side streets.

Any money from potential metered parking should go to a Parking Benefit Fund aimed at operating and maintaining transportation infrastructure. This might range from sidewalk repair and improvements to long-term capital projects such as enhancing the visibility of bus stops and the implementation of bicycle projects. Furthermore, the fund can help direct funding for pedestrian projects to places that generate pedestrian traffic, like town landmarks and historic interests. Shared parking strategies can better balance the temporal variations in parking demand. Furthermore, this practice can use existing parking inventory more efficiently by providing spaces during off-peak hours. A practical implementation of this might be for office and residential parking



Figure 14: Within 1/4 mile buffer from train station

lots or spaces to be grouped. This is an example of a strategy that balances the demand of business hours based on land use and overnight demand.

The creation and implementation of effective signage can assist in directing visitors to surface lots and side street parking. Additionally, improved signage and wayfinding can reduce the need to cruise for parking, which ultimately reduces congestion. The signage can better communicate the inventory and rules of each parking area. The new signage and wayfinding program are eligible to receive funding from the Parking Benefit Fund, as discussed above.

In addition to congestion concerns, signage could be used to direct visitors to special events. This would be a great way for visitors to locate the farmers market as well as any First Friday activities, bringing more revenue into the town.

Boonton should explore the option of eliminating municipal minimum parking requirements or implementing pay in lieu of parking programs in order to maximize space along Main Street. These parking management methods eliminate parking spaces that developers are required to build or allows them to make cash payments instead of providing parking spaces. If these principles are followed, on-street parking would be more efficiently managed, which paves the way for other uses such as bicycling, walking, loading zones, etc. It would be an especially ideal choice if the town wants to continue free two-hour parking. New development that vastly expands parking could be disastrous for transit-oriented development, and removing

the parking minimum addresses this problem. Employers in Boonton can contribute to reducing the amount of private transit used and encourage train or bus ridership. Employers have the option to give a parking cash out to their employees. Under this alternative, workers are given a cash amount in return for giving up their free parking space. This allows for increased demand of transit or biking and walking, and reduces congestion by reducing overall car travel.

Boonton experiences the largest amount of consumer traffic when special events are taking place. First Friday events bring the greatest amount of visitors of any period within a given month. Saturday farmers markets also bring in people to shop. To address this increase in demand, adjusting prices or creating short-term parking plans for special events can lead to decreased congestion and more revenue. Another potential strategy for improved parking management that Boonton should explore as a possibility is a shared parking program made possible through stakeholder collaboration. Before construction of any new additional parking, this plan calls for more efficient management of the existing parking assets.

Parking Recommendations

- Make parking on side streets or in existing surface lots more attractive, reducing the need to cruise for parking and preventing overcrowding of Main Street
- Provide a funding mechanism to absorb new revenue streams from parking
- Implement shared parking strategies
- Improve signage for municipal parking lots
- Eliminate minimum parking requirements or develop “pay in lieu of parking” option
- Improve coordination for special events



Downtown Boonton with Redeveloped Area along Division Street

05

Urban Form Evaluation & Recommendation



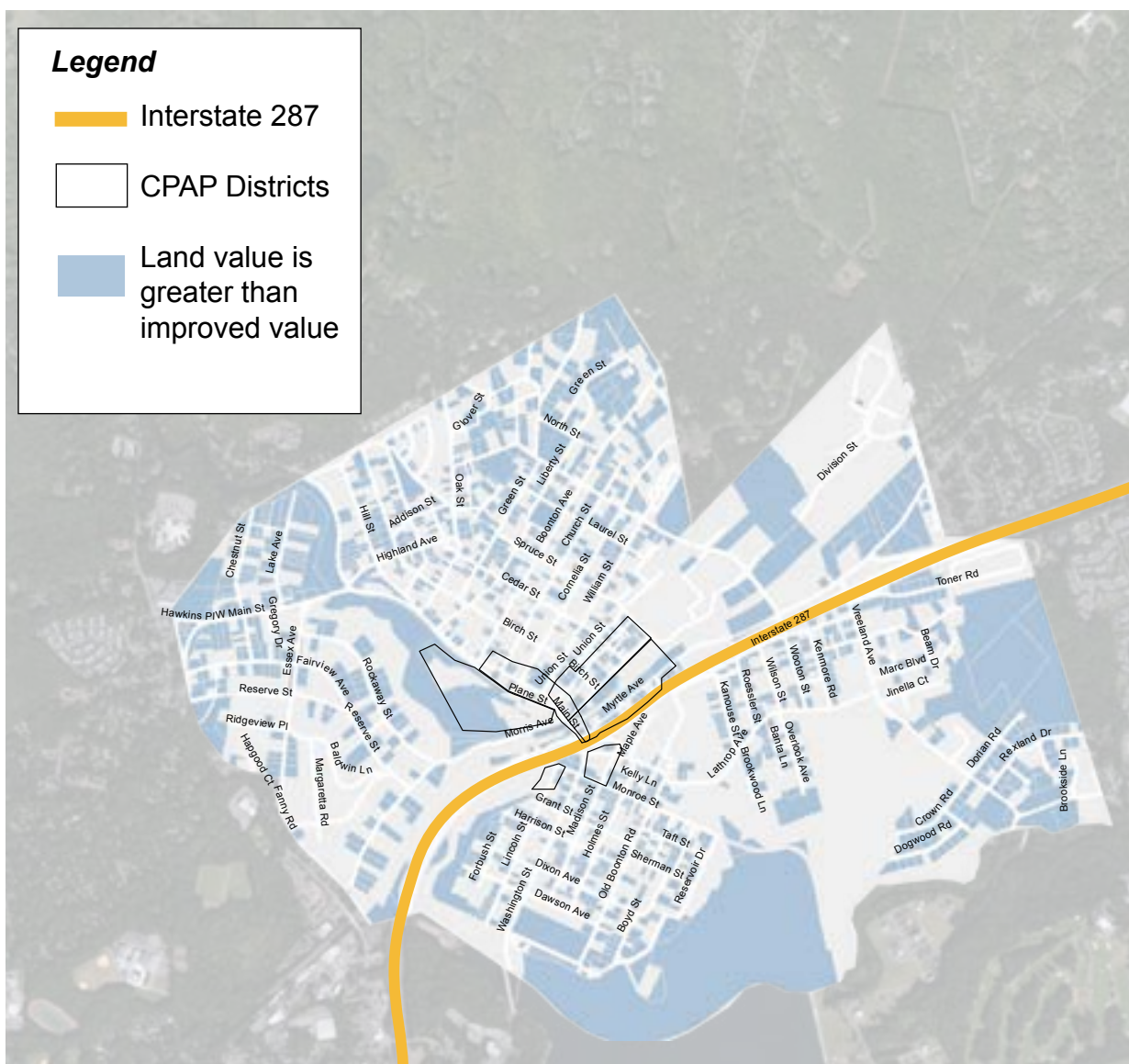


Figure 15: Land Value Map

A: Land Value

Although there is limited developable land remaining in the Town of Boonton, roughly 7% of the town (113 acres) is town-owned open space. As stated in the 1998 Master Plan, Boonton has four designated special areas: community gateways, view corridors, senior citizen housing sites, and stairway and alleys. Setting defined and obtainable development vision in these areas will make Boonton more attractive to developers. Willingness to collaborate and work with different developers will make Boonton a strong and predictable partner for developers to work with. Activating special districts will make areas appear open and vibrant, encouraging more investments to be made in the town. This is especially true of small to medium-sized developers who do not have the resources to create proposals when conditions are unclear. Attracting smaller developers is necessary in order to grow harmoniously with Boonton's current built form.

Land Value Recommendations

- Identify viable buildings and encourage development
- Evaluate town-owned open space for redevelopment potential

B: Redevelopment & Reuse

In 2010, Boonton's population was 8,347, which translates to a density of 3,575 residents per square mile (excluding portions of the town that are water). This is a 10% decrease in population since 1970

when the town's density was 3,966 people per square mile. Considering this population loss since 1970, Boonton has the opportunity to grow by roughly 900 residents without exceeding its past level of density. If this increase is handled properly by ensuring infill development fits in with the existing built environment, it should not disturb current residents of the town or diminish the quality of life in the town.

Boonton is primarily composed of freestanding single-family homes, but there are a number of two- and three-family homes near Main Street and Birch Street that match the town's historic character while having higher density than a single-family home. Increasing density near transit is a major component of transit-oriented development and the town's goal should be to achieve this without disturbing the feel of the town. This both preserves a major attraction of the town—its small town atmosphere—and helps ensure current residents will be comfortable with new development in the town.

As a second method of increasing density, residential uses should be encouraged in the many buildings on Main Street that have vacant second floor spaces. The town should focus on infill development, increasing building size in locations with growth potential. Rezoning for slightly higher density and reaching out to developers to encourage this kind of construction is a great first step. Smaller developers are likely to be more amenable to working in collaboration with the town rather than in opposition to it. New, denser homes built near downtown will be more affordable than single-family homes and can attract young





buyers and empty nesters, stimulating activity on Main Street. Steps like these will stimulate foot traffic to local stores and attract new businesses to the area and helping current ones grow. Increased foot traffic creates more activity on major streets, helping to prevent crime and increase the feeling of safety and comfort in the area.

Redevelopment & Reuse Recommendations

- Proactively seeking out development
- Use design guidelines to revitalize existing facades
- Focus on duplex or triplex development
- Focus on special corridors that are ripe for development: Division Street and Mechanic Street
- Renovate second floor spaces on Main Street for office space or residences



C: Accommodating All Ages

Current residents, especially young families, are the future of Boonton. Retaining this age group will play an important role in the success of the town. As this population ages, many empty nesters and seniors will want to downsize while remaining close to family and their roots in the area. A publication of the Urban Land Institute, points out that two parent households are no longer the majority of households in the country (Higher-Density Development, Myth and Fact). Single parent families, couples without children, empty nesters, and singles are now the fastest growing category. These types of households have different housing needs than two

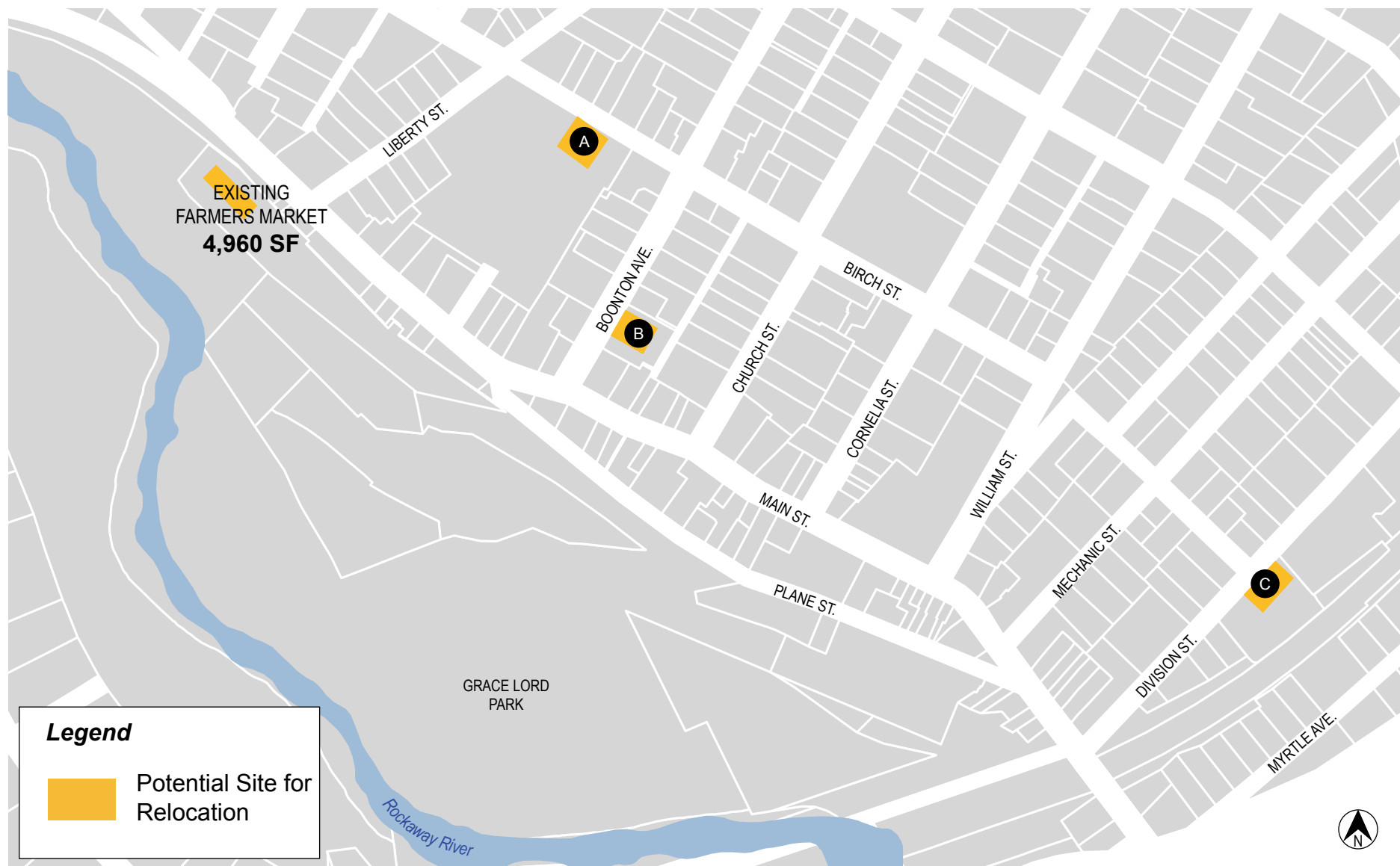
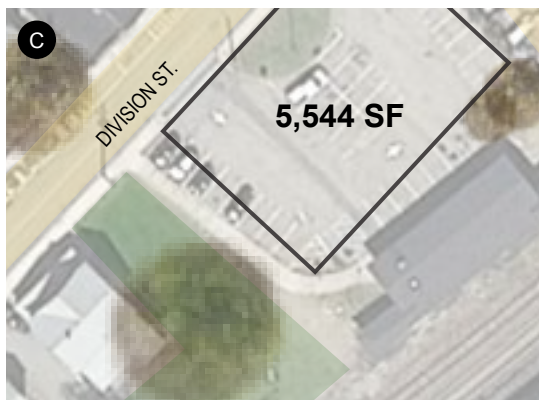
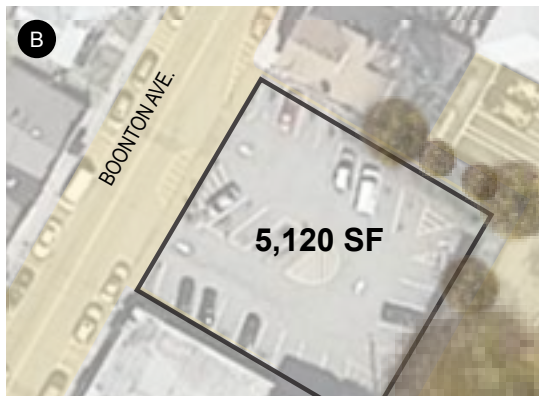


Figure 16: Relocation of Farmer's Market



parent households, and Boonton is suited to meet those needs. These types of households have fewer children, and place less of a burden on public schools, and other public services. Morris County currently offers a lot of upscale rentals and large single-family homes, but limited opportunities for empty nesters and smaller households. Due to its location and the availability of land for development, Boonton is well positioned to pursue this demographic, by offering smaller homes and apartments that are easier to maintain than a detached home, transit-accessible, and located near a vibrant Main Street.

The town possesses land ripe for infill redevelopment near Main Street. Additionally, The Hollow has development potential and is currently underutilized; its proximity to the Rockaway River, Main Street, and public transit is an enormous asset.

Accommodating All Ages Recommendations

- Focus development on retired community and empty nesters who want to downsize
- Redevelop The Hollow, which is ideal for residential development because of its connections to Main Street and nature trails

D: Farmers Market

The farmers market currently takes place on Saturdays in the Upper Plane Street parking lot between 8:30 AM and 2:00 PM. The current location is difficult to find and access. It is near a steep hill, not very visible from the road due to an elevation change, and unwelcoming to pedestrians. The farmers market is an opportunity to draw visitors

into the town and can help publicize the attractive restaurants in Boonton, encouraging shoppers to stay in the town longer. According to a survey done by Project for Public Spaces, 60% of market shoppers reported visiting nearby stores on the same day. Additionally, 60% of those surveyed also said that they shopped in those additional stores only on days that they visit the market. For this reason, it is important for the farmers market to be centrally located on Main Street.

Farmers Market Recommendations

- Make the farmers market more visible with signs
- Explore the option of relocating the farmers market onto Main Street
- Encourage restaurant owners to participate in the farmers market featuring their food at a booth to get residents and visitors excited about the variety of cuisines available

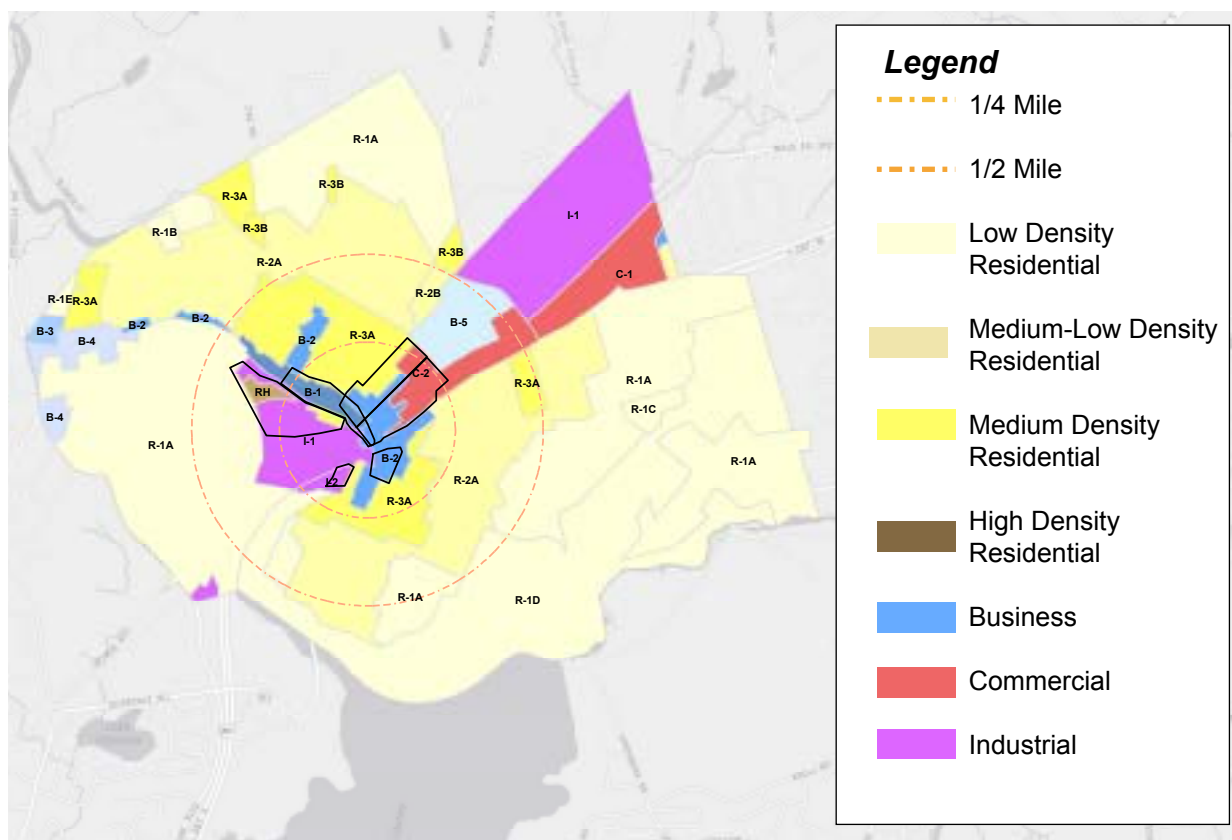
E: Signage

Many great destinations are hidden by the town's topography and access through alleys between Main Street and Plain Street is hidden and is not made visible to pedestrians. Improved signage and access to natural resources create a draw for foot traffic. Vital to commercial streetscapes are informative and attractive visual aids that help direct the flow of foot and vehicular traffic.



Farmer's Market Stand





Natural Amenities Signage: The historic development of Boonton is tied to its natural features. Boonton has access to many natural resources such as the Rockaway River and Grace Lord Park. The town lacks clear signage leading to these amenities, making it less likely for pedestrians to visit and spend time there. For instance, it is not apparent from the road (or from the parking

lot where the farmers market is held) that there is easy access to the river. The proximity of natural areas to Main Street is a great resource, making the area attractive to potential residential developers (Additional signage recommendations on pg. 34).

Transit Signage: Access to the current train station is hidden under the overpass between Town Hall and

Main Street. It is not clear to pedestrians coming from Main Street how to access the train station platform. Transit signs assist with wayfinding and eliminate confusion.

Signage Recommendations

- Improve signage on Main Street: sites of historic and local interest
- Implement signage guidelines from 1998 Master Plan
- Ensure signage meets historic and local design guidelines
- Install signs to point out locations of crosswalks
- Improve access to nature trails along the Rockaway River
- Install signage to designate “gateways” into Grace Lord Park
- Install signs to lead pedestrians to the train station
- Install signs for bus service to New York
- Community gateways should be made more inviting with appropriate signs and relevant information (See additional signage recommendations on pg. 34)

F: Zoning

Boonton's development pattern was established in the late 1800s, shaped by the location of its industrial base, Main Street, and housing. As stated in the 1998 Master Plan, future development will be realized through infill development and revitalization. Currently new residential units are not permitted in the business districts.

District(s)	Proposed Changes/Recommendations
R-1 Residence Districts A, B, C, D	Amend regulations to allow for the conversion or development of accessory dwelling units on existing residential properties. This will increase density without changing the character of the residential community within the R-1 Residence Districts
R-2 Residence Districts A and B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend regulations permitting higher density townhouses relative to the R-1 Residential Districts 2. Amend regulations to allow for the conversion or development of accessory dwelling units on existing residential properties. This will increase density without changing the character of the residential community
R-3 Residence Districts A and B	Amend regulations to allow for low- and moderate income housing not exclusive to the elderly
B-1 Business District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-zone to a mixed-use district to allow for new higher density residential/commercial development. This will eliminate nonconforming uses and allow for increased residential development within the TOD zone 2. Consider re-naming this as the Boonton Downtown District and designating Boonton Main Street as the coordinator of commercial services and retail development. This is not a recommendation for a Special Improvement District (SID) or Business Improvement District (BID) outright since there was past opposition to the idea, but instead an opportunity to familiarize the business community with services that a commercial coordinator entity can facilitate, preparing them for a potential SID/BID in the future 3. Amend regulations to stipulate the permitted use of hotels to be restricted to Bed and Breakfast accommodations 4. Re-locate the existing municipal services within this proposed mixed-use districts to alternative locations as recommended by CPAP in order to maximize development potential. This includes the post office and the municipal building. Amend the zoning for this district to restrict municipal service development once buildings are relocated 5. Amend permitted uses to allow for development of artist studios in order to embrace and encourage the growing artist community in Boonton
B-2 Business District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend permitted uses to allow for development of artist studios in order to embrace and encourage the growing artist community in Boonton 2. Remove motor vehicle service stations as a permitted use in order to allow for more residential and commercial development to support TOD
I-1 and I-2 Industrial Districts	Consider re-locating the current public works facility in the Hollow and rezoning that specific industrial area for higher density residential development, requiring integration with the existing natural resources and requiring the incorporation and maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian routes between the downtown and the river
RH Residential High-Density Zone	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend regulations to allow for 50 units per acre, a development density identified as necessary for healthy TOD residential development in the CPAP report after consultation with the development community in the area as well as exiting density development in other Transit Villages in New Jersey 2. Expand the currently RH Zone further to allow for the redevelopment of the underutilized I-1 industrial zone where the Boonton Department of Public Works currently operates 3. Amend the current parking requirement regulations for one and two bedroom units to be set as maximum requirements as opposed to minimum requirements. This will make development more cost effective and allows developers to have more flexibility in financing proposed residential projects

Changes to current land use will encourage development in areas that are underutilized. Boonton's natural and historic features will remain the foundation in all planning and development efforts. By expanding essential districts in the town, the municipality will be able to protect and enhance its structural fabric. It is important to ensure that planning efforts are in line with appropriate zoning. Not permitting new residential units in the business area hinders the growth of transit oriented development.

Zoning Recommendations

- Allow for mixed-use development.
- Develop an accessory dwelling unit ordinance. This allows people to rent out secondary units on their property, which increases density without new construction.
- Convert several areas zoned exclusively as business districts to mixed-use districts.

G: Arts & Culture

There is a vibrant arts culture on Main Street, with most art galleries are located in the northern section of Main Street. Boonton Arts organization works with Boonton Main Street to improve social and economic development of Boonton and the surrounding areas. Boonton Arts coordinated The Dog Days of Summer, a public art project featuring life-sized dog sculptures displayed along Main Street. Boonton Arts also established a mural initiative to beautify the town with respect to its unique history and architecture.

Boonton Main Street helps business owners with municipal permits through ribbon cuttings, initial press releases, and business development, and Boonton Main Street also heads the farmers market on Saturdays. The upper portion of Main Street is designated as the Arts District. The municipality has many resources. A number of organizations are working in collaboration to coordinate, support, and promote local businesses in Boonton. It is important to use these resources to enrich the community and improve the town's public spaces.

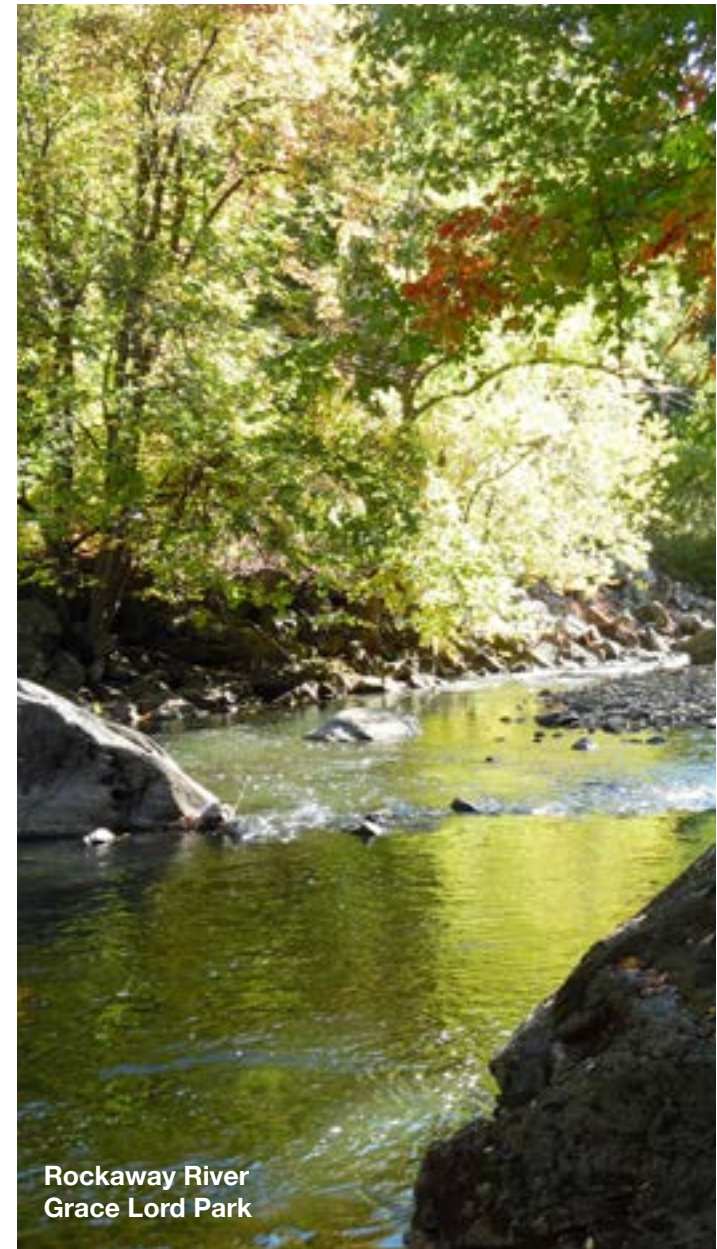
Arts & Culture Recommendations

- Work with existing organizations to educate residents about available resources
- Publicize art gallery openings to nearby towns

H: Main Street

Main Street is the most important historic commercial resource in the town, offering a concentration of retail, mixed use, and public services in the area. Main Street is divided into three parts.

1. Upper Main Street: spanning from the Plane St. parking lot and upward; also known as The Gallery or Arts District.
2. Middle Main Street: spanning from the boardwalk to the post office; also known as the Eating District.
3. Lower Main Street: from the post office downward; this area is generally unidentified and requires the most attention.



Rockaway River
Grace Lord Park



Figure 18: Breakdown of Main Street Districts

Because it possesses one of the few historic Main Street in all of Morris County, Boonton has an opportunity to attract customers, investment, and commercial activity. Unfortunately this process is difficult, businesses will not locate in areas with light foot traffic, and pedestrians are generally not attracted to vacant places.

Improving the retail environment on Main Street is vital to the growth of Boonton. Attractive and interesting restaurants can draw pedestrian traffic to a neighborhood, which leads to increased flow to surrounding businesses. Boonton's municipal government should work with the local business community and Boonton Main Street in establishing strategies to improve the retail culture, drawing attention to restaurants and building upon the success of First Fridays and other special events.

The majority of businesses on Main Street are closed on weekends. Those that are open are only operate for a few hours on select days. There is a culture of absentee landlords and roughly 11 vacancies on Main Street. Many stores do not have business plans and lacking data driven decision-making. Select businesses experience more success on the upper corridor. Operating on irregular hours and closing early can discourage potential customers from visiting and exploring the area. Lack of professional skills affects customer service. Shop and restaurant operators are less likely to invest in physical improvements if landlords do not maintain the buildings.

Main Street Recommendations

- Stimulate activity on lower Main Street by providing additional attractions
- Work with arts community to install exhibits in vacant storefront windows
- Plan additional events focused on restaurants, like an annual "Taste of Boonton" festival
- Actively seek support and funding for Boonton Main Street
- Implement tree planting program on Main Street
- Implement guidelines for operating hours on Main Street
- Provide and enforce guidelines for maintaining storefronts

06

Next Steps



Based on the recommendations in this report, a series of next steps have been developed for the town to start implementing transit oriented development strategies that align with Transit Village application criteria. These steps will set the trajectory of the town in the right direction and lay the groundwork for future changes.

Circulation

With regards to transit and circulation, the town should begin with our recommendations centered on active transportation infrastructure. These range from painting improved crosswalks and share the road (sharrow) markings to more complicated improvements like reshaping intersections to have shorter pedestrian crossings. The town should create signage directing passenger vehicles to the town's parking lots, as well as coordinating parking lot use for special events. Through coordination, the town can better use the parking that is currently underused due to lack of information. Parking infrastructure can be further improved by the use of modern parking management technology such as smart parking meters that accept credit cards and change parking prices intelligently in reaction to current demand.

The addition of bump-outs to the intersections indicated in Section 4 will reduce the time pedestrians spend crossing, which increasing safety and pedestrian comfort. This helps encourage walking, which will bring increased patronage to downtown businesses.



SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS

- Adopt Complete Streets policy
- Coordinate work between the town and Boonton Main Street
- Install signage for pedestrian interests and parking
- Re-locate farmer's market
- Coordinate parking for special events

- Implement crosswalk markings and sharrows
- Install signage for parking
- Coordinate parking for special events
- Build-out of intersection and pedestrian improvements
- Integrate parking management with better technology
- Reconstruct train station and platform

Urban Form

The town should start by improving coordination between Boonton Main Street and the town's government, either funding the organization or helping it seek outside sources of funding. Coordinating the town's economic development efforts with those of the Main Street organization

LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS

- Build-out of intersection and pedestrian improvements
- Reconstruct train station and platform
- Integrate parking management with better technology
- Zone for mixed-uses and higher density
- Redevelop Division and Mechanic Streets with duplex and multi-family units

will help avoid duplicated work and make sure that the town is working towards a shared goal. Boonton Main Street should consider moving the Farmers Market to one of the locations recommended. This move will encourage market customers to explore and patronize other stores on Main Street, while making the market more accessible to pedestrians. To further encourage this sort of exploration, the town should install signage indicating local points of interest and historic structures.

Signage should also be used to encourage use of the area's natural assets. The Rockaway River and Grace Lord Park are great assets to the town, and yet it is not apparent to visitors how to reach them from Main Street.

The biggest and perhaps most complicated step is to rezone portions of town for increased density and mixed-uses, moderately increasing allowable density in order to allow a mix of residential and commercial uses along Main Street. This recommendation does not call for bulldozing the existing buildings, but steady redevelopment over time through infill development, demolishing and replacing homes that are for sale and not good candidates for rehabilitation, and converting older homes that are in good condition into two- or three-family homes. Setting out a clear redevelopment plan with specific goals helps attract developers by making the town's expectations and desires clear. To this end, the town should make sure that the redevelopment plan truly incorporates the input of a wide variety of residents, business owners, and others who care deeply about the town.

- Relocate Farmers Market
- Coordinate work between the town and Main Street Boonton, and seek funding for Main Street Boonton
- Create signage pointing out local points of interest, historic structures and more
- Zone for mixed-uses and increased density along Main, Division, and Mechanic streets
- Establish a clear plan for redevelopment that incorporates the suggestions above and actively seeks input from Boonton residents



Appendix 1: Zoning Proposed Changes/Recommendations

District(s)	Permitted Principal Uses	Prohibited Uses	Permitted Accessory Uses	Noted Regulations	Proposed Changes/Recommendations
R-1 Residence Districts A, B, C, D	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single-family dwellings 2. Institutional uses, churches, other religious uses 3. Municipal parks, playgrounds and buildings 4. Townhouses are permitted in the R-1B District 5. Community residences for developmentally disabled and community shelters for victims of domestic violence 6. Child care centers 	Townhouses are expressly prohibited in R-1D District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> “1. Private garages 2. Normal residential 3. Storage structures 4. Private swimming pools, fireplaces, trellises, lampposts, and other related normal residential structures 5. Off-street parking areas 6. Professional uses, with limitations 7. No more than two roomers or dormers per dwelling” 	<p>A. Townhouses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimum lot area of 12,000 sq. feet 2. No more than 10 townhouse dwelling units per acre 3. No more than 25 bedrooms per acre 4. Ground floor area shall not exceed 20% of lot area 5. Maximum height of 2 1/2 stories or 36 feet, whichever is lesser 6. No more than 8 dwelling units per townhouse <p>B. Accessory buildings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setback of at least 25 ft. from principal building and 15 ft., from property line or other accessory building 2. Maximum height of 16 ft. 3. Off-street parking** 4. Minimum of 20% of entire tract set aside for common open space and facilities” 	Amend regulations to allow for the conversion or development of accessory dwelling units on existing residential properties. This will increase density without changing the character of the residential community within the R-1 Residence Districts
R-2 Residence Districts A and B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As permitted in R-1 Residence District 2. Townhouses as regulated in R-2 District only 		Accessory units as permitted in R-1 Residence District	As regulated in the R-1 Residence District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> “1. Amend regulations permitting higher density townhouses relative to the R-1 Residential Districts 2. Amend regulations to allow for the conversion or development of accessory dwelling units on existing residential properties. This will increase density without changing the character of the residential community
R-3 Residence Districts A and B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As permitted in R-1 Residence District 2. Two family dwellings 3. Multi-family dwellings 4. Low- and moderate-income housing for the elderly 			<p>A. Multi-family dwellings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimum lot area of 40,000 sq. ft. measured within 250 ft. of the front property line 2. No building shall exceed a height of 2 1/2 stories or 35 feet, whichever is lesser 3. Maximum density of 12 dwelling units per acre; Maximum density of 18 habitable bedrooms per acre 4. Total ground floor area shall not exceed 30% of lot area <p>B. Low- and Moderate income housing for the elderly</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimum lot area of 100,000ft. 2. No building shall exceed a height of 2 1/2 stories or 36 ft., whichever is lesser 3. No more than 26 dwelling units per acre 4. Total ground floor area shall not exceed 25% of lot area 	Amend regulations to allow for low- and moderate income housing not exclusive to the elderly

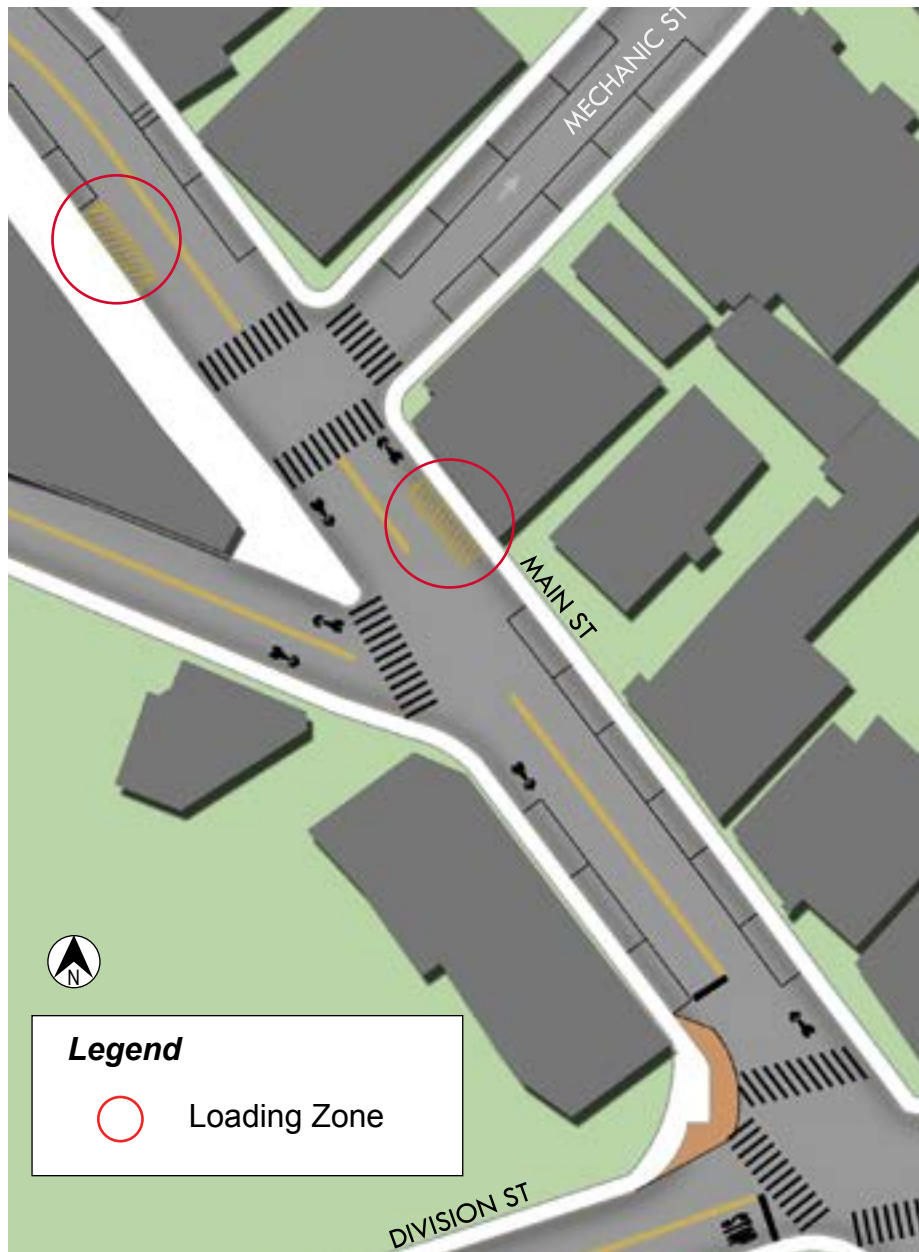
Appendix 1 (Continued)

District(s)	Permitted Principal Uses	Prohibited Uses	Permitted Accessory Uses	Noted Regulations	Proposed Changes/Recommendations
B-1 Business District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retail stores and shops for retail conducted entirely within the confines of the building 2. Banks and financial institutions 3. Central telephone exchanges 4. Offices for professional or business services 5. Restaurants and taverns 6. Theatres 7. Hotels 8. Funeral homes 9. Vocational schools 10. Public buildings and uses 11. Nonprofit clubs, lodges, and fraternal, civic, service or charitable organizations 12. Parking garages (recommend removing this) 13. Institutional uses 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motels 2. tourist and trailer camps 3. Junk yards 4. Warehouse storage buildings 5. coal or fuel storage yards 6. Motor vehicle service stations 7. Public garages or industrial uses 8. New residential dwellings*** 9. Drive-in restaurants or refreshment stands 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Off-street parking 2. Signs in accordance with Boonton Sign Ordinance 3. Accessory uses incident with permitted uses within this district 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-zone to a mixed-use district or implement a TOD zoning overlay that allows for new higher density residential/commercial development. This will eliminate nonconforming uses and allow for increased residential development within the TOD zone 2. Consider re-naming this as the Boonton Downtown District and designating Boonton Main Street as the coordinator of commercial services and retail development. This is not a recommendation for a Special Improvement District (SID) or Business Improvement District (BID) outright since there was past opposition to the idea, but instead an opportunity to familiarize the business community with services that a commercial coordinator entity can facilitate, preparing them for a potential SID/BID in the future 3. Amend regulations to stipulate the permitted use of hotels to be restricted to Bed and Breakfast accommodations 4. Re-locate the existing municipal services within this proposed mixed-use districts to alternative locations as recommended by CPAP in order to maximize development potential. This includes the post office and the municipal building. Amend the zoning for this district to restrict municipal service development once buildings are relocated 5. Amend permitted uses to allow for development of artist studios in order to embrace and encourage the growing artist community in Boonton
B-2 Business District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As permitted in the B-1 Business District 2. Motor vehicle service stations 		As permitted in the B-1 Business District		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend permitted uses to allow for development of artist studios in order to embrace and encourage the growing artist community in Boonton 2. Remove motor vehicle service stations as a permitted use in order to allow for more residential and commercial development to support TOD
B-3 Business District	Designated shopping centers consisting of a building or group of buildings		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Off-street parking 2. Signs in accordance with Boonton Sign Ordinance 3. Accessory uses incident with permitted uses within this district 	Shopping Centers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking spaces shall be separated from building by concrete sidewalk at least 10 ft. in width in front of the building and 6 ft. along the side and rear of the building 2. Concealed area for trash disposal and pickup 3. Marginal access or service roadway to service parking areas 	
B-4 Business District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Office buildings 2. Banks and financial institutions 3. Medical clinics with private dispensaries 4. Shops for hairdressing and dressmaking 5. Studios for artists and musicians, including instruction in art and music (more this to a different area) 6. Institutional uses 7. As permitted in the R-2 Residential District 	Retail of already manufactured goods		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Off-street parking 2. Signs in accordance with Boonton Sign Ordinance 3. Accessory uses incident with permitted uses within this district 	

Appendix 1 (Continued)

District(s)	Permitted Principal Uses	Prohibited Uses	Permitted Accessory Uses	Noted Regulations	Proposed Changes/Recommendations
B-5 Business District (Regional Shopping Center District)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Single Building or group of buildings to be used as a single economic unit exclusively for retail sale and services or professional offices 2. Banks and financial institutions 3. Central telephone exchanges Restaurants and taverns, including drive-ins 4. Theatres 5. Automotive service centers 6. Supermarkets 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residential construction or conversion 2. Industrial operation or use 3. Any club warehouse 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximum height of any building shall not exceed 40 ft. 2. The minimum lot area shall be 20 acres 3. Maximum building lot coverage shall not exceed 25% 4. Maximum impervious surface lot coverage shall not exceed 80% 5. Site plan review is required for any development in the B-5 Regional Shopping Center District 	
C-1 and C-2 Commercial District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business, commercial, and industrial uses in all business and industrial districts 2. Bulk storage 3. Buildings for recreational activities (e.g. bowling, tennis, and similar indoor recreational uses 4. Public buildings and uses 	Outdoor commercial amusements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Off-street parking 2. Signs in accordance with Boonton Sign Ordinance 3. Accessory uses incident with permitted uses within this district 		
I-1 and I-2 Industrial Districts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manufacturing, fabrication, packaging, treatment or conversion of products 2. Scientific or research laboratories 3. Office buildings 4. Warehouses, trucking terminals, and wholesale distribution centers 5. Public buildings and uses 6. Storage and maintenance of construction vehicles and equipment 7. Off-street parking, with stipulations 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Off-street parking 2. Signs in accordance with Boonton Sign Ordinance 3. Accessory uses incident with permitted uses within this district 4. Child care centers in conjunction with office, research, or manufacturing facilities, operated by those facilities 	Regulations outside of the purview of this studio.	Consider re-locating the current public works facility in the Hollow and rezoning that specific industrial area for higher density residential development, requiring integration with the existing natural resources and requiring the incorporation and maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian routes between the downtown and the river
RH Residential High-Density Zone	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High-rise condominiums 2. Municipal park, playgrounds, and buildings 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any use not stipulated in permitted uses 2. Industrial use 3. Supermarket or club warehouse selling food produce 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking garages for use by residents 2. Related residential structures such as a swimming pool, fitness center, clubhouse, library, media room, fireplaces, trellises, lampposts, outdoor recreational facilities, etc. 3. Off-street parking, with stipulations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximum height of 85 ft. 2. Maximum density of 45 dwelling units per acre 3. Maximum building land area coverage shall not exceed 60% 4. No dwelling unit shall exceed more than 2 bedrooms 5. Two bedroom dwelling units shall not exceed 1,200 sq. ft. and one bedroom dwelling units shall not exceed 800 sq. ft. 6. Minimum of 2 parking spaces for two bedroom dwelling units and a minimum of 1.5 spaces for one bedroom dwelling units 7. Any development in this district is subject to a site plan review by the Planning Board 8. At least 20% of the residential units constructed shall be reserved for occupancy by low- and moderate-income households, but if developer deems this percentage requirement to be economically unfeasible, still required to provide some affordable housing in accordance with COAH regulations 	<p>“1. Amend regulations to allow for 50 units per acre, a development density identified as necessary for healthy TOD residential development in the CPAP report after consultation with the development community in the area as well as exiting density development in other Transit Villages in New Jersey</p> <p>2. Expand the currently RH Zone further to allow for the redevelopment of the underutilized I-1 industrial zone where the Boonton Department of Public Works currently operates</p> <p>3. Amend the current parking requirement regulations for one and two bedroom units to be set as maximum requirements as opposed to minimum requirements. This will make development more cost effective and allows developers to have more flexibility in financing proposed residential projects”</p>

Appendix 2: Loading Zone



Appendix 3: Transit Village Designation in New Jersey

Municipalities Designated as Transit Villages

Morristown (1999)
Pleasantville (1999)
Rutherford (1999)
South Amboy (1999)
South Orange (1999)
Riverside (2001)
Rahway (2002)
Metuchen (2003)
Belmar (2003)
Bloomfield (2003)
Bound Brook (2003)
Collingwood (2003)
Cranford (2003)
Matawan (2003)
New Brunswick (2005)
Journal Square/Jersey City (2005)
Netcong (2005)
Elizabeth/Midtown (2007)
Burlington City (2007)
City of Orange Township (2009)
Montclair (2010)
Somerville (2010)
Linden (2010)
West Windsor (2012)
East orange (2012)
Dunellen (2012)
Summit (2013)
Plainfield (2014)
Borough of park Ridge (2015)
Irvington Township (2015)

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