

Watsessing Avenue Station

Bloomfield Township, NJ

PLANNING FOR HEALTH, EQUITY, AND SAFETY



RUTGERS

Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy

Agenda

- Station Access
- Transit Oriented Development and Redevelopment
- Placemaking and Community Engagement
- Policy Recommendations

Purpose of the Plan

Purpose:

- Remind community of assets
- Explore opportunities for improvement
- Review best practices
- Offer recommendations

Methodology:

- Researched existing conditions
- Reviewed literature
- Analyzed spatial data
- Fieldwork
- Engaged with the community

Station Access



Watsessing Avenue Station Access

- Access to public transit
- Gateway to greater regional area
- Station as an anchor
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and station upgrades
- Reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes



Benefits of an Interconnected Multi-Modal Network

- Strengthens local economy
- Increases access to employment
- Improves community health
- Decreases vehicle traffic
- Improves air quality

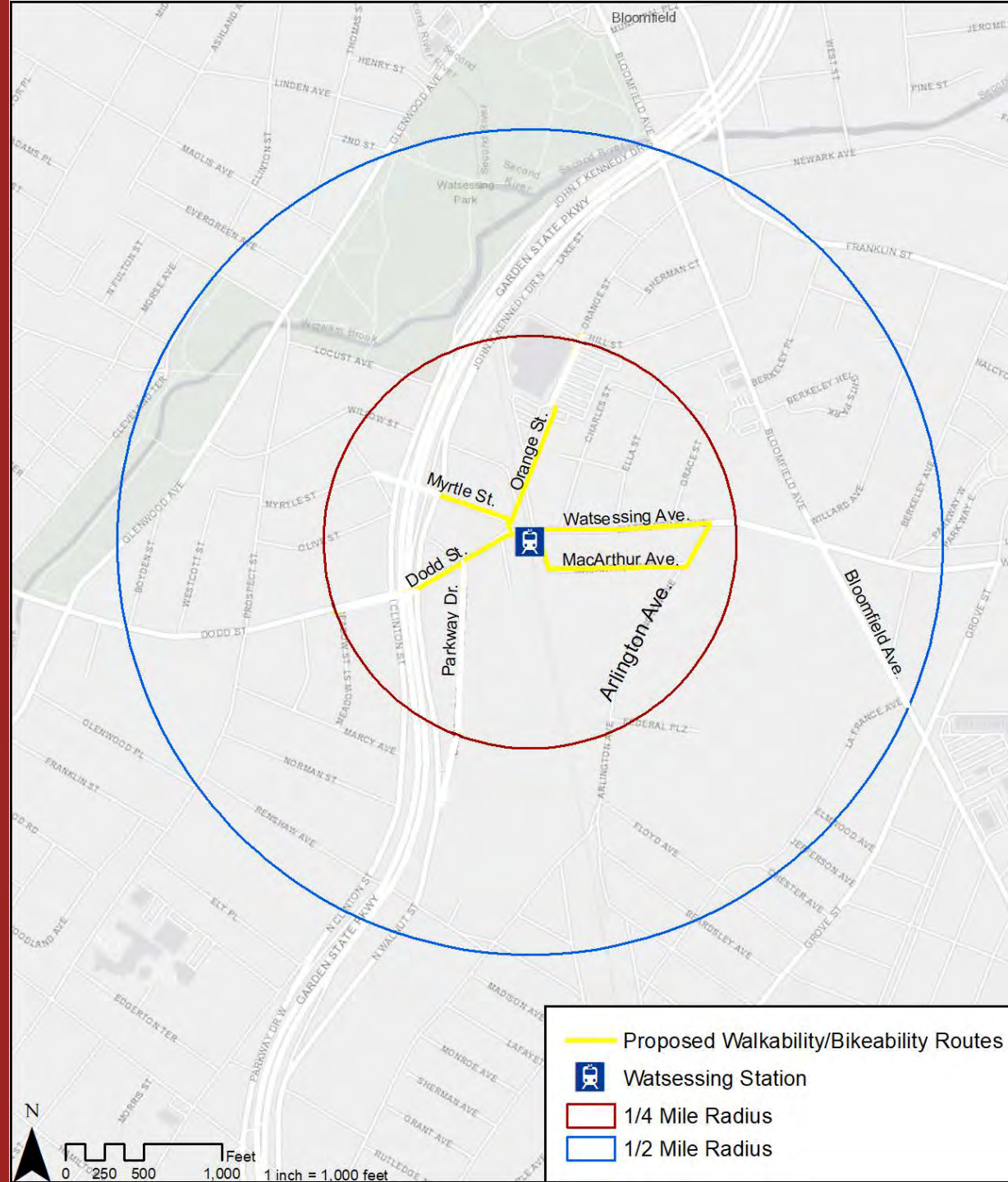


Walkability Assessment

- Conducted on 11/19/2018
- Participants
 - Bloomfield Planner
 - Bloomfield PD
 - Project Team
 - APA Volunteers



Walkability Assessment



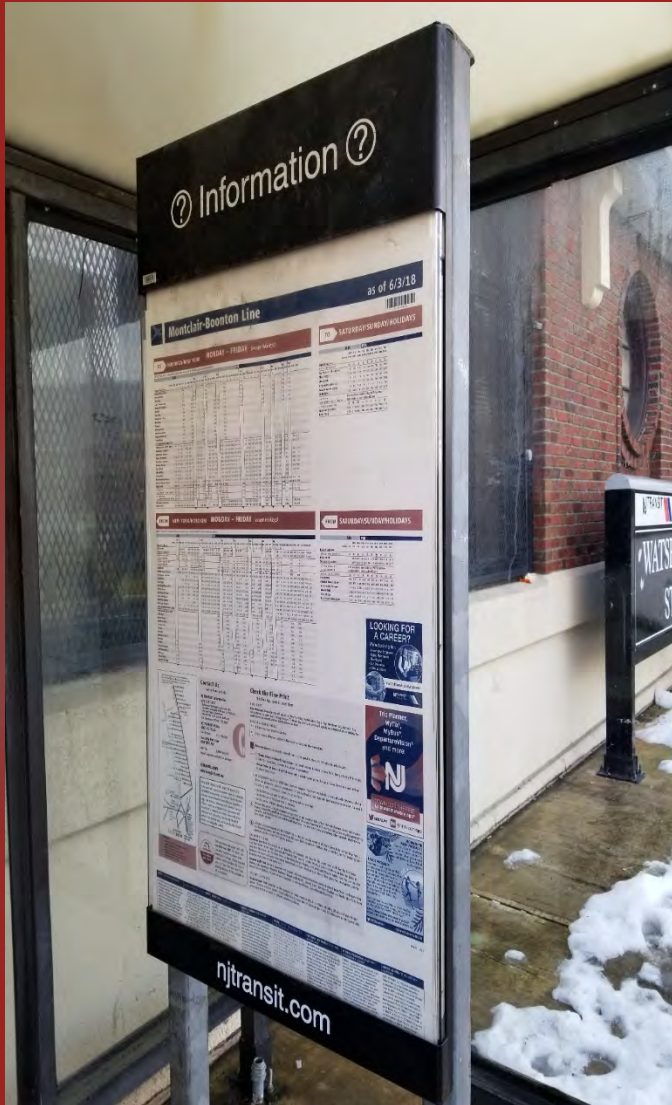
Station Recommendations: Safety



Station Recommendations: Safety



Station Recommendations: Access



Uber



Station Recommendations: Access



Walking Recommendations: Safety



Walking Recommendations: Safety



Walking Recommendations: Access



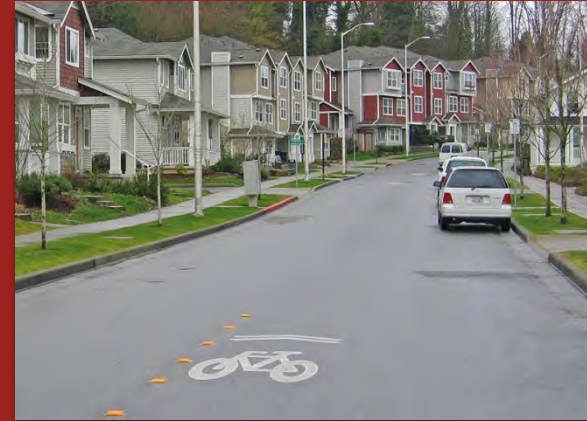
Walking Recommendations: Access



Bike Recommendations: Safety



Bicycle Signs



Sharrows

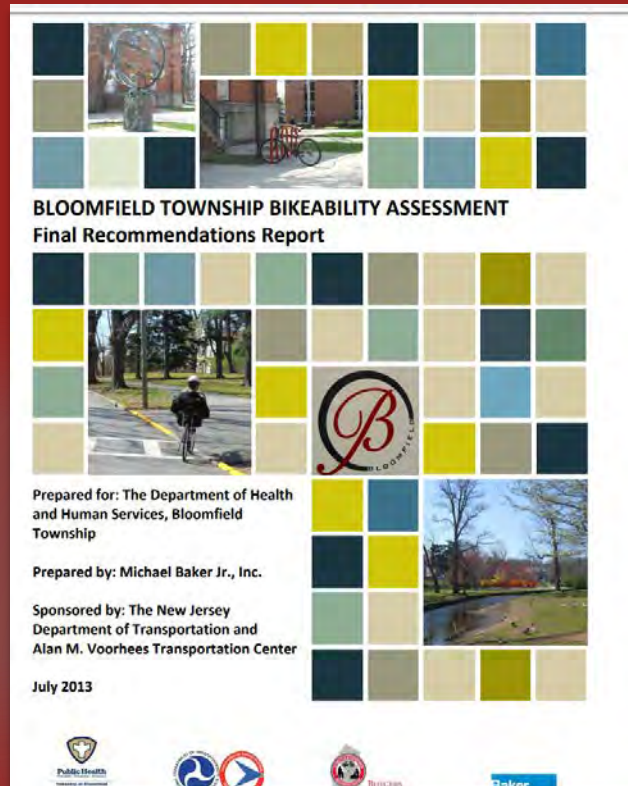


Pavement Collapse



Curb Extensions

Bicycle Recommendations: Access



Refer to Michael Baker Report



Collaborate on Bike Parking



Inverted U Bike Racks



Bike Route Map

Potential Funding Sources

Federal

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

State

- Municipal Aid Program
- County Aid Program
- Safe Streets to Transit
- Bikeway Grant Program
- Transit Village Grant Program

Local

- Transportation Infrastructure Bank
 - New Jersey Infrastructure Bank (I-Fund)

Municipal Aid Program

Eligible Projects

- Bikeway construction
- Mobility enhancement
- Pedestrian safety
- Quality of Life Roadway preservation
- Roadway safety

10% initiative for bike-ped infrastructure



Safe Streets to Transit



Infrastructure Bank

- Transportation: Station Access
 - Transit lanes
 - Right-of-ways
 - Pedestrian walkways
- Environmental: City of Hoboken \$4.3 million low-interest loan for curb-extensions and rain garden green infrastructure improvements



TOD and Redevelopment



Existing Conditions

A Township Ready for Development

Development Statistics

- Bloomfield avg. home values have risen **7.4%** over the past year
- Predicted to rise another **9.3%** within the next 12 months
- **>40%** of housing stock was built before 1940
- Bloomfield ranked **3rd** in NJ for the number of housing units certified for occupancy in 2016

Recent Development

- Parkway Lofts (2014)
- Avalon Bloomfield Station (2015)
- The Grove at One92 (2016)



Existing Conditions

A Neighborhood with great Transit

Rail

- Montclair-Boonton Line
 - Direct access to Newark (Broad St), Secaucus, and Penn Station
 - < 30 minutes direct to NY Penn Station
- Watsessing neighborhood has great mobility assets and could leverage them by concentrating density adjacent to transit stations.

Bus

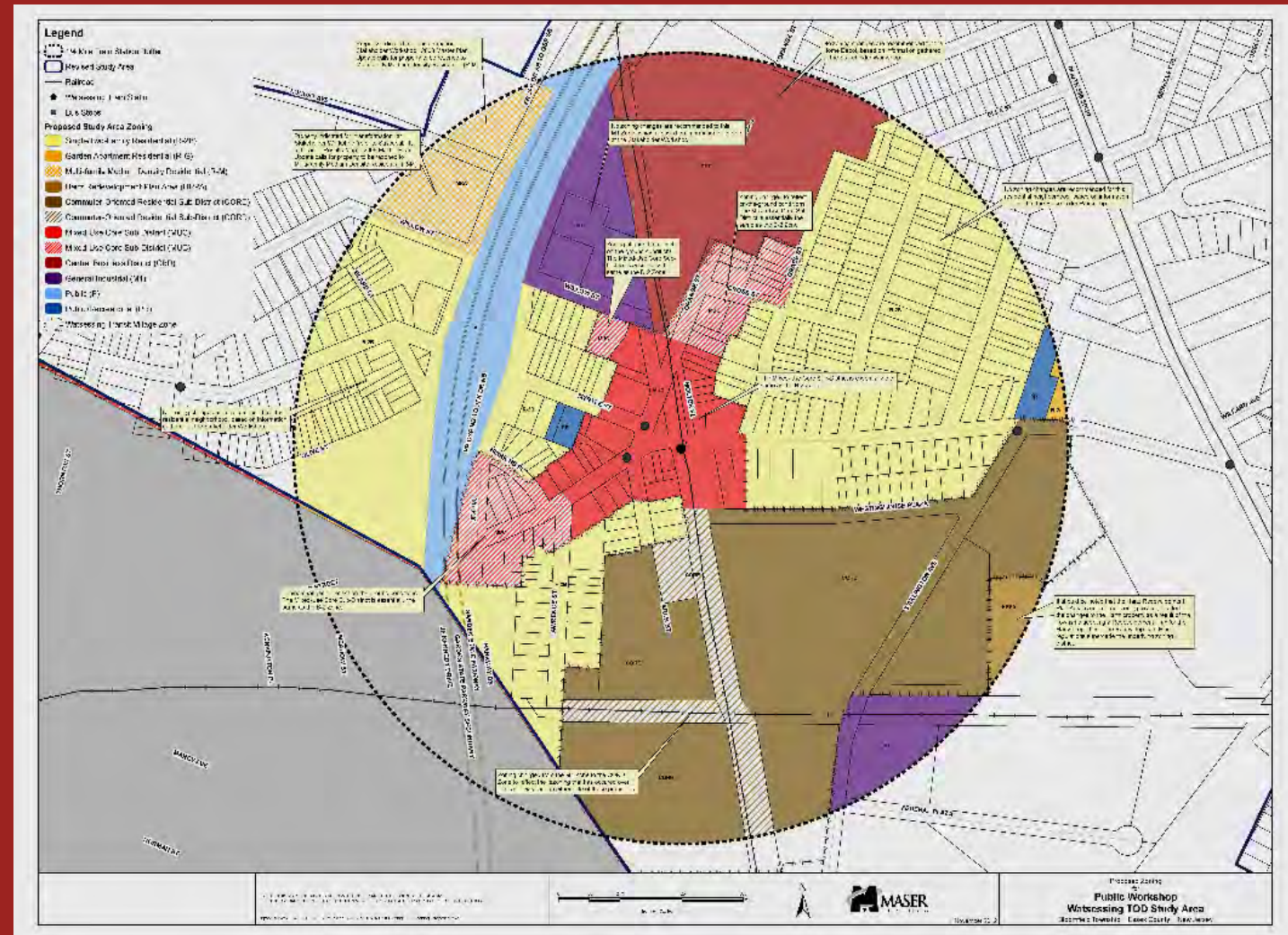
- Route 94
 - Service to East Orange and Irvington



Zoning Analysis

2012 Watsessing Area Redevelopment Plan

- Changed B-2 zone to MUC (Mixed-Use Core)
- Extended MUC Sub District along Dodd and Orange St
- Watsessing has the right zoning to build mixed use buildings with ground floor commercial



Zoning Analysis

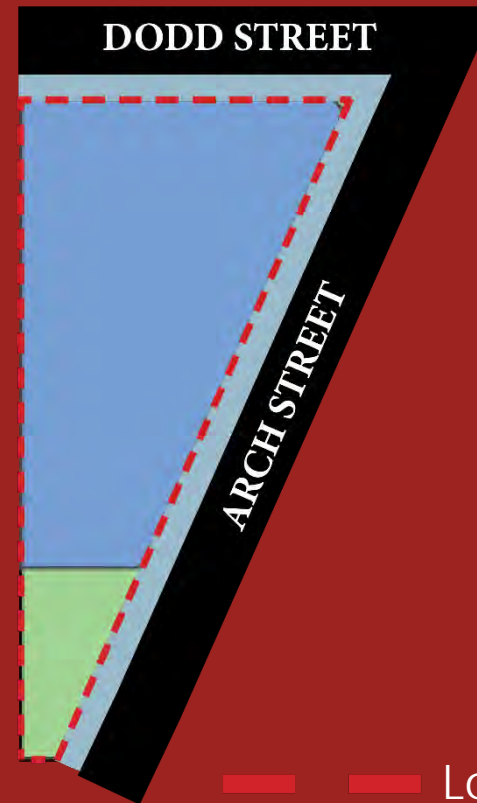
Current Constraints:

Off-Street Parking Requirements

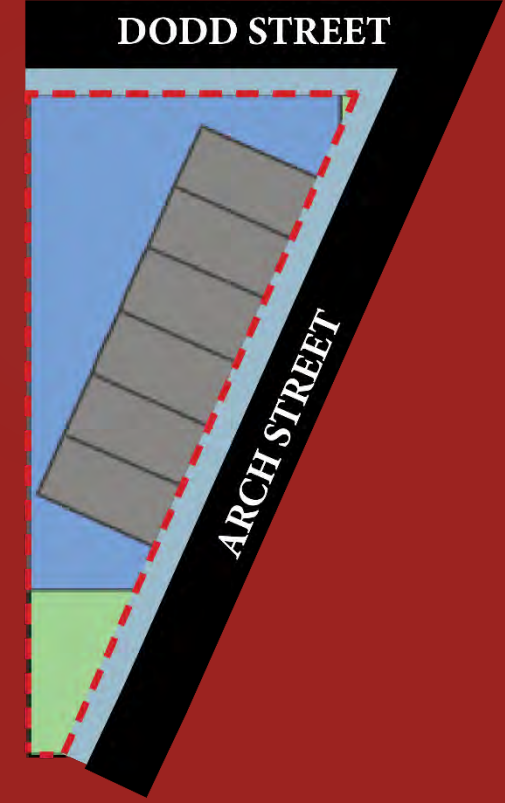
- 53-57 Dodd Street
 - three stories
 - commercial on the first floor
 - residential (four units) on the two upper floors
- Would require 6+ parking spaces
- Drastically reduces use of ground floor
- Under existing zoning, single lot redevelopment is probably not financially viable

53-57 Dodd Street

Existing Structure

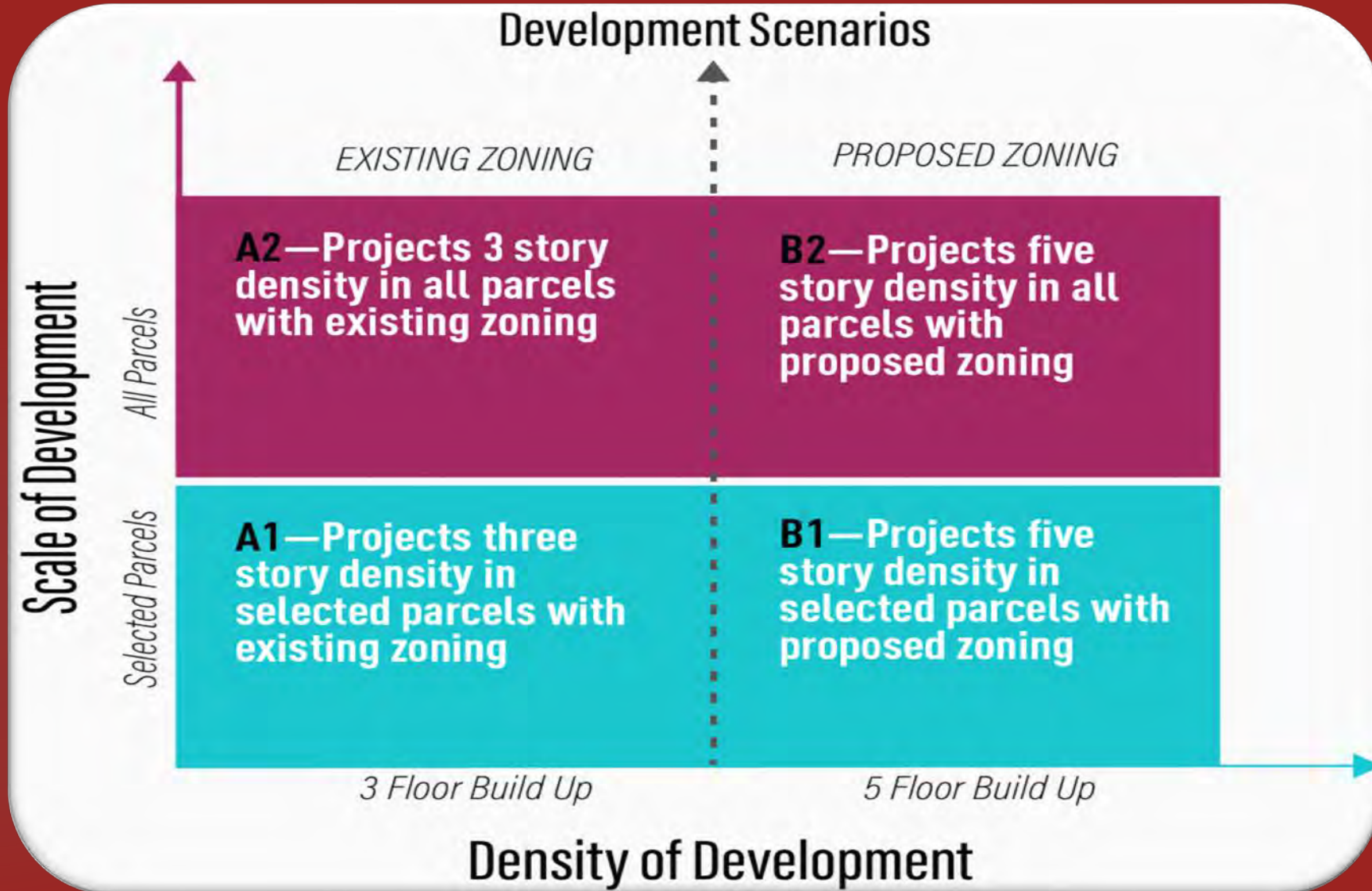


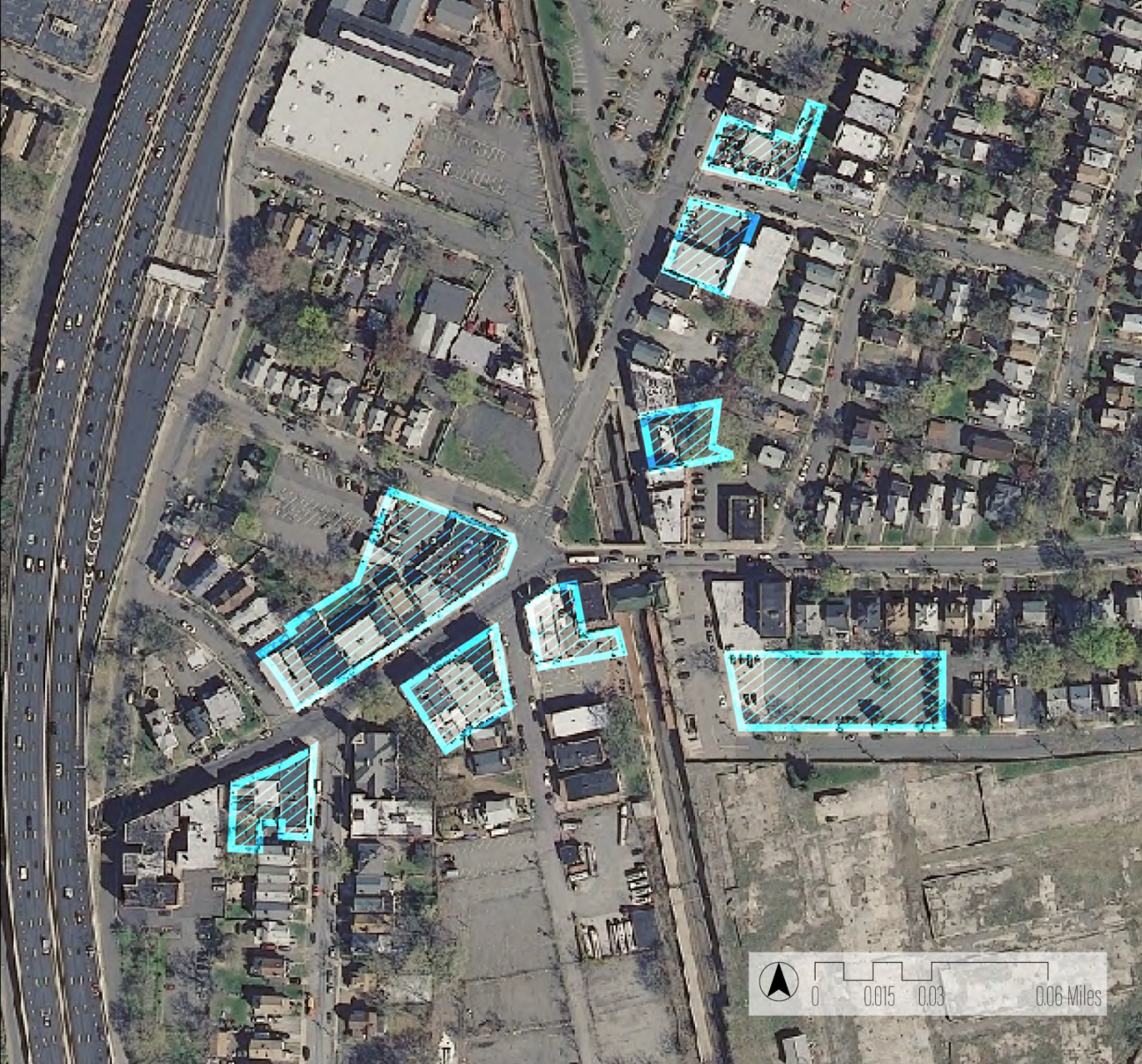
Current Zoning



- Lot Line
- Building Footprint
- Parking Spaces

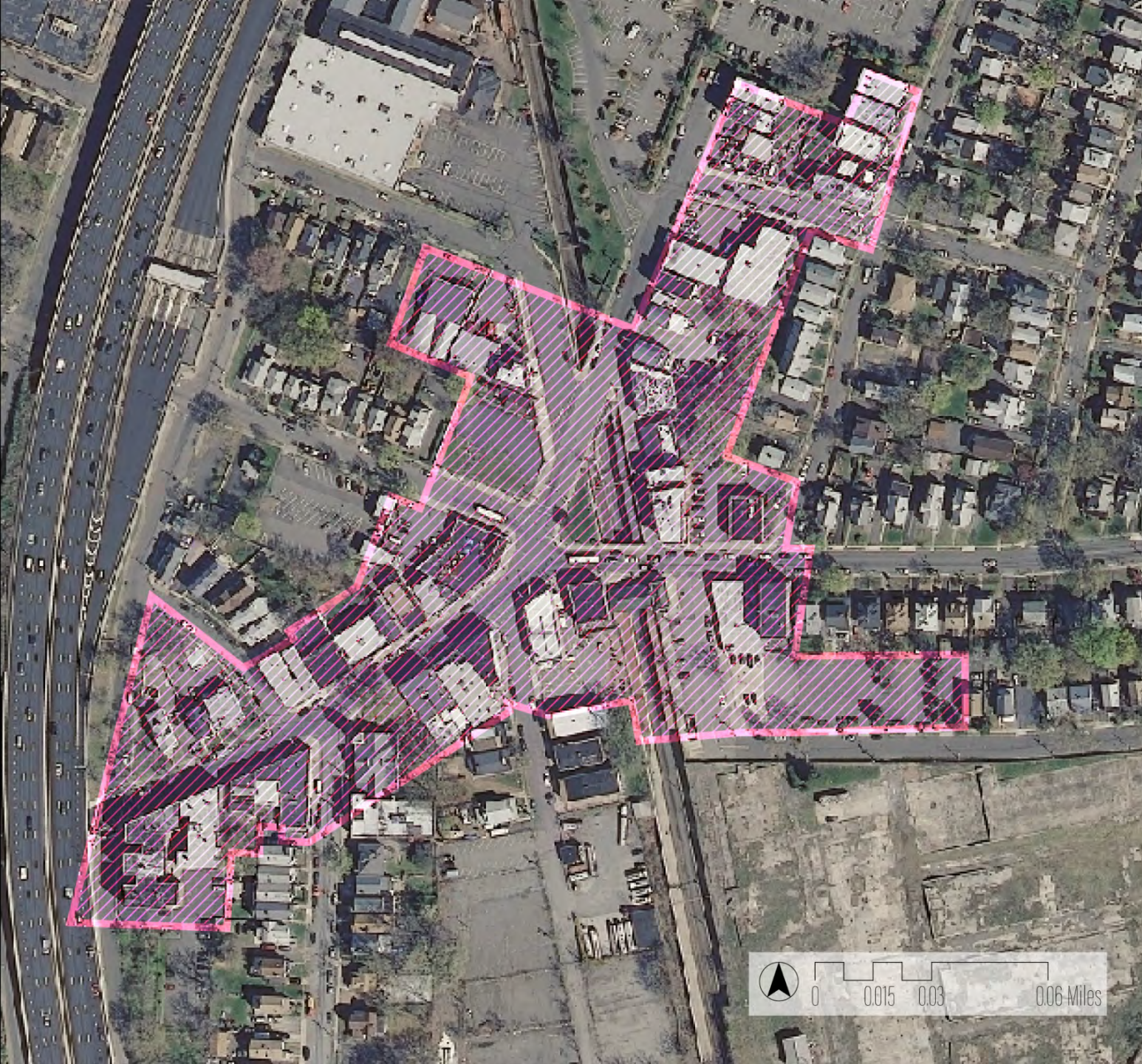
Scenario Planning





Selected Parcel
Redevelopment

Scenario A1 & B1



All Parcels are
Redeveloped

Scenario A2 & B2

Scenario Planning

Methodology

- MOD IV
- Proposed development as a model (Block 96, Lot 1-5)
 - 25 Res. Units and 43 parking spaces
 - For analysis, converted 4 ground floor units to Commercial
- Mirrored development across the MUC zone
- Created a new ratio to see impacts of reduced off-street parking

Calculations

Lot Area to Ground Floor Area (A1/1B)

Lot Area to Ground Floor Area with reduced parking (A2/B2)

Ground Floor Area to 2nd-5th Floor Area

Ground Floor Area to # of Units

2nd-5th Floor Area to # of Units

Ground Floor Area to Commercial Sq Ft

Scenario Planning

Results

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

* B1 compared to A1

- Projected new development is less dense than existing residential buildings

B2 compared to the existing conditions

- **275%** increase in residential units
- **88%** increase in commercial square footage
- **504%** increase in tax revenue

Recommendations

Parking

- Reduce parking minimums, and apply maximums to promote affordable development
 - Share parking with Home Depot to maximize the value of their parking lot
- Consider adding requirements for on-site bike parking



Recommendations

Zoning

- Increase Building Height Maximum
 - Increases Density
 - Promotes Walkability
 - Encourages Business



Recommendations

Design Standards

- Employ a design standard to better integrate new and old development
- Widen Sidewalks to increase walkability



Placemaking



Placemaking and Community Engagement



Community Engagement Matrix

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

Community Engagement Event



“My daughter complains about faded crosswalks”

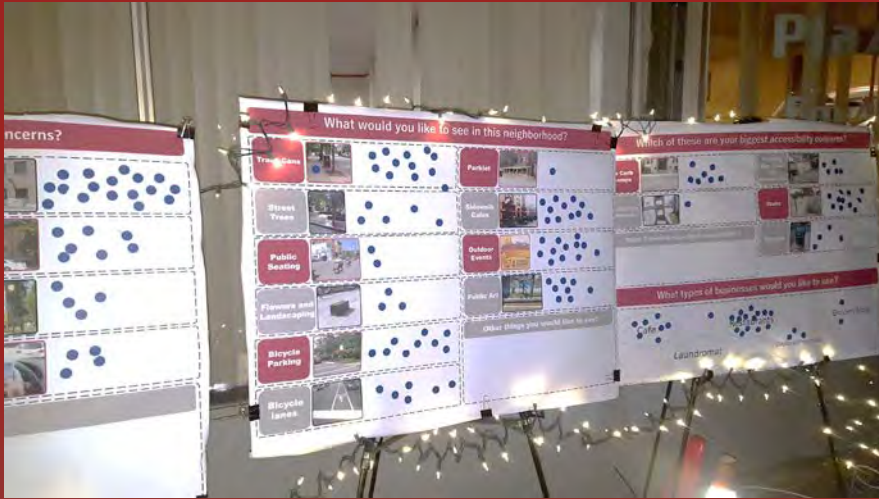


“Watsessing Station needs an elevator”

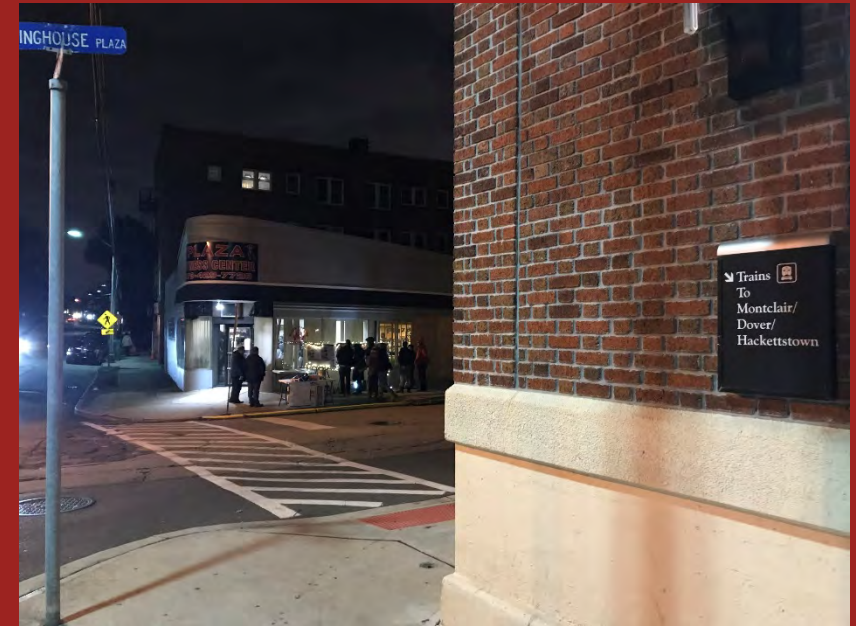
“I work with people with disabilities, having no curb ramps is a problem”



Community Engagement Event



"Town is great, I'm close to food stores, and I can walk to a lot of other stores"



"All types of businesses are needed in this neighborhood, especially restaurants and cafes"



"I would like to see more outdoor events like the Harvest Fest in this neighborhood"

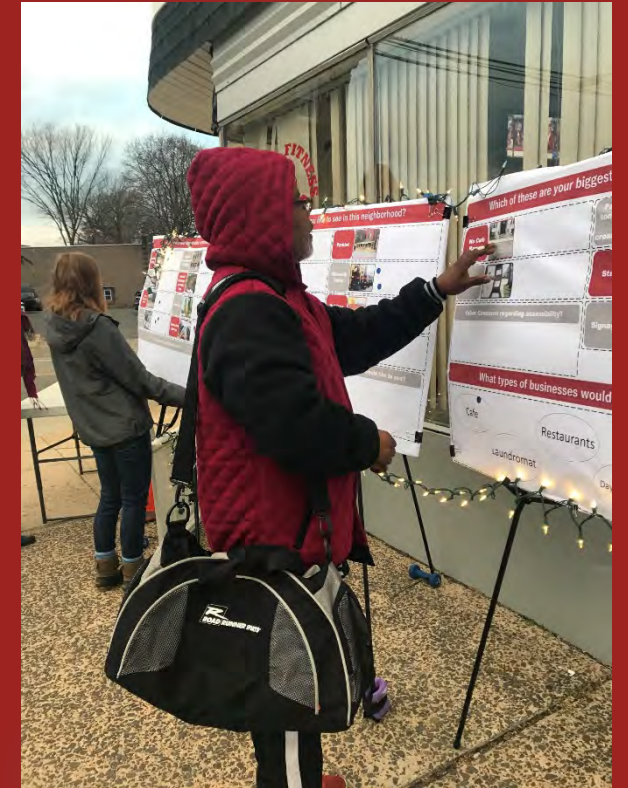
Community Engagement Event

“Holiday decorations should be put up in the neighborhood”

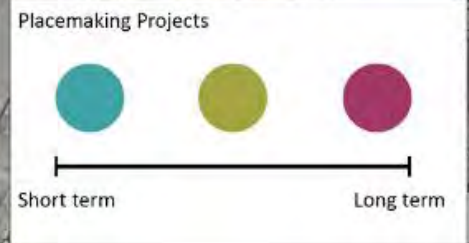


“I bike to the train station everyday, I wish I didn't have to tie it to the wall”

“There's no where for cars to pick up people from the train station and they block traffic”

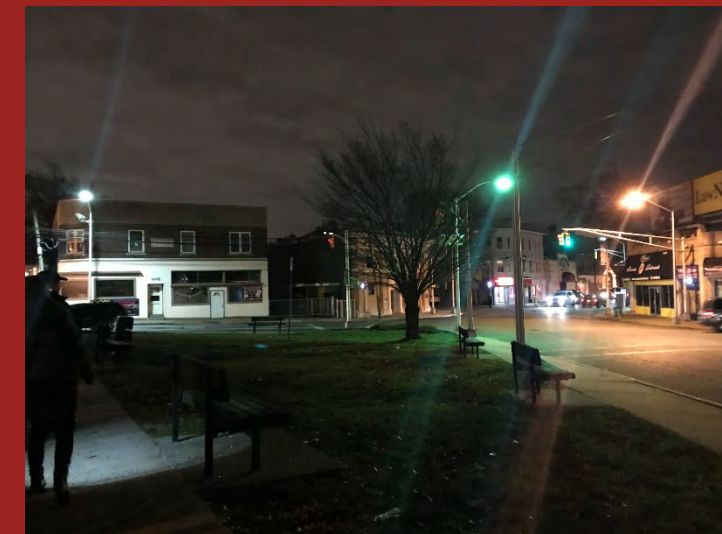


Site Evaluation - Locations



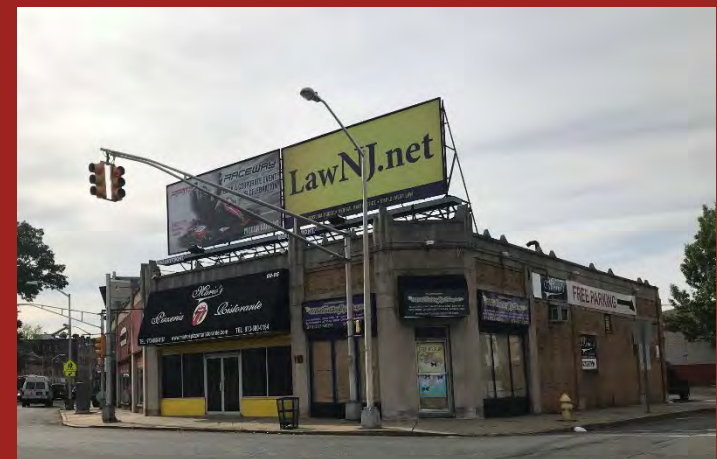
Recommendations

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



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Recommendations



Recommendations



Recommendations



Parklet



Farmers Market



Pop-Up Bike Lane



Community Garden

Recommendations



Recommendations



Dinner Under the Stars

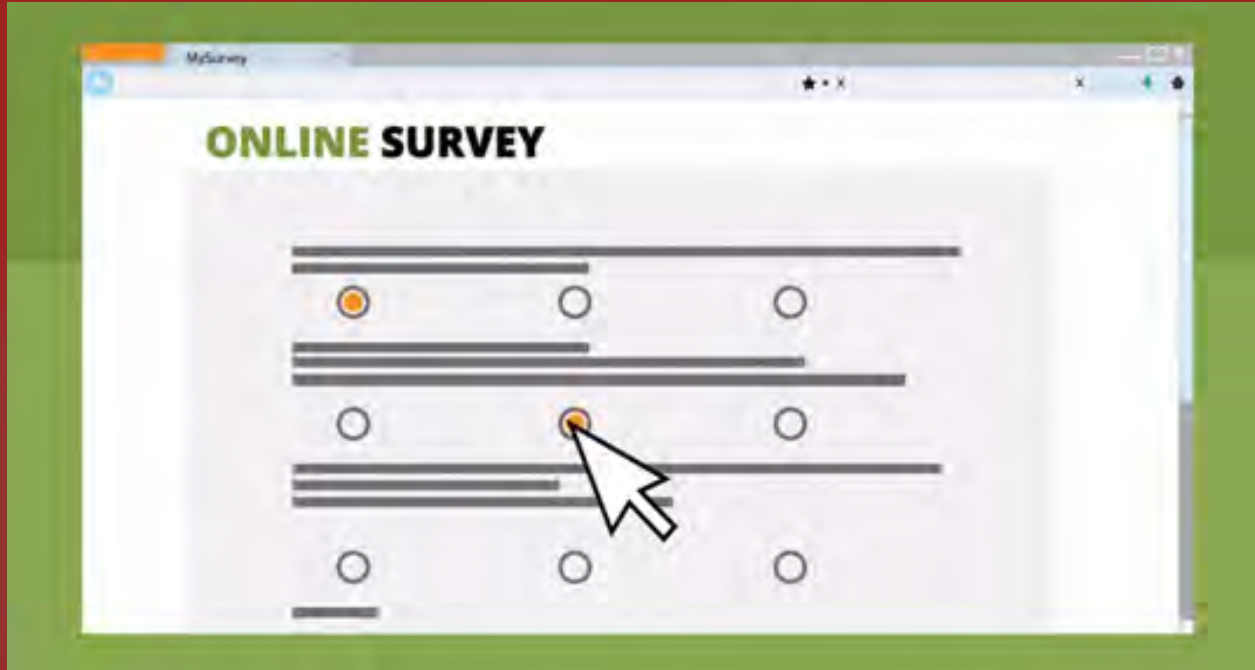


Block Party

Recommendations



Moving Forward: Engagement

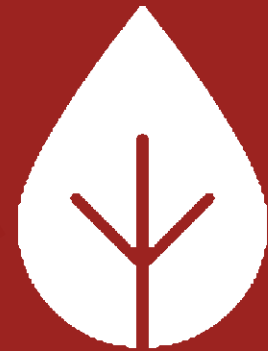


Survey for additional
community input

What do the residents want?

Policy

Recommendations



Topic Areas

- Looked at policies to positively shape a changing neighborhood
- Used examples from surrounding municipalities to promote best practices
- Topic areas
 - Transportation
 - Economic Vitality
 - Equity
 - Health



Parking Permits and Ratios

Recommendations

- Reduce parking minimums, and apply maximums
- Shared parking with Home Depot
- Improve biking and walking infrastructure
- Encourage regular use of public transportation
- Establish parking areas for passenger drop-off, ride hailing services, and carsharing



Sidewalk Cafes and Parklets

Recommendation

- Identify popular restaurants in Watsessing to be sidewalk cafes



Awning and Signage Improvements



Recommendation

- Create uniform signage and awnings to make Watsessing business district a destination



Community Building Program

Recommendation

- Organize events with local businesses



Affordable Housing

Need for Affordable Housing

- **12% of residents are unable to pay their mortgage, rent, or utilities** (2017 Bloomfield Community Health Assessment)

Recommendations

- Use inclusionary zoning to require 10% affordable units
- Expand Bloomfield's rent control policy to include new development
- Continue to provide HUD Section 8 program vouchers



Healthy Housing

Bloomfield Current Policy

- Rental property owners register properties
- Housing inspection every 3 years
- Similar to recommended Proactive Rental Inspections

Recommendations

- Lead testing
- Train housing inspectors on how to provide information to victims of domestic violence



Thank you!

A special thank you to everyone who helped make this project possible:

Bonnie Flynn and the Bloomfield Planning Department

Matthew Watkins, Administrator

Police Department & Health Department of Bloomfield

Greener Bloomfield

APA-NJ Committee

NJ Transit

NJTPA

Project for Public Spaces

Plaza Fitness



For More Information

Reimagining Bloomfield Streets Studio, Fall 2018

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References

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