



Borough of Sussex Economic Development Master Plan Element



2022

Prepared for Sussex Borough
Planning and Zoning Board
Prepared on July 7th, 2022

Prepared by the
New Jersey Department of
Community Affairs,
Local Planning Services
101 South Broad Street
P.O. Box 813
Trenton, New Jersey 08625
(609) 292-3000

Acknowledgements

Prepared For: Sussex Borough

Mayor

Edward Meyer

Sussex Borough Council

Frank Dykstra

Charles Fronheiser, Jr.

Nicholas Holowach

Robert Holowach (Council President)

Jake Little

Mario Poggi

Sussex Borough Planning and Zoning Board:

Jaime Boffa

Frank Dykstra (Council Representative)

Dixie Ferrington (Secretary)

Rich Klein (Chairman)

Katherine Kuperus

Damaris Ramos Lira

Charles McKay

Edward Meyer (Mayor)

Earl Snook

Karen VanderVeer

Prepared By: NJDCA, Local Planning Services

Local Planning Service Staff:

Sean Thompson, Director

Maria G. Connolly, AICP, PP

Gina Fischetti, Esq., AICP, PP

Geoffrey Gray-Cornelius, AICP, PP

Robert Tessier, AICP, PP

Additional Department of Community Affairs Support:

Amy Heath, NJDCA Graphic Designer

Working Committee Members:

Anita Anthony

Kathleen Esposito

Dixie Ferrington

Ann Giehl-Cole

Robert Holowach

Tammie Horsfield

Alexis Horvath

Rich Klein

Manny Intorella

Damaris Ramos Lira

Brian McDonald

Edward Meyer

Dianna Morrison

Ken Nelson

Mario Poggi

Toni Smith

Photo Credits: LPS, unless otherwise noted

Geoffrey Gray-Cornelius

*Geoffrey Gray-Cornelius, New Jersey Professional
Planner License Number 00649000*

Maria Connolly

*Maria G. Connolly, New Jersey Professional
Planner License Number 00589900*

The original document, on file with the Borough of Sussex, has been appropriately signed and sealed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12 by Geoffrey Gray-Cornelius, AICP, PP, the Local Planning Services team leader for the preparation of this Economic Development Master Plan Element.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Master Plan Element Purpose	5
Planning Process	6
Analyses of Current Conditions	9
Regional Context	9
Transportation	11
Population and Demographics	16
Employment Trends	19
Commuting Patterns	27
Environmental Constraints	32
Property Classification	37
Zoning	41
Cannabis Establishments	45
Commercial Corridors	45
Primary Attractors and Major Destinations	52
Parking Inventory	58
Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure	62
Wayfinding	68
ESRI Business Analyst	69
Utilities and Services	80
Areas in Need of Redevelopment and Rehabilitation	82
Opportunity Zone	86
Relationship to Other Plans and Initiatives	88
Sussex Borough Master Plan (2009)	88
Sussex Borough Central Business District Study, A Revitalization Strategy (1991)	89
Sussex County Ten-Year Mobility Study (2002)	92
Sussex County Target Business and Industry Analysis (2007)	93
Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan (2014 update)	94
Sussex County Complete Streets Plan (2014)	96
Norwescap Neighborhood Revitalization Plan	96
Public Input	99
Household Surveys	99
Business Owner Surveys	103

Recommendations	106
Placemaking Recommendations	107
Utilities Recommendations	134
Parking Recommendations	137
Wayfinding Recommendations	148
Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations	154
Zoning Recommendations	161
Business Improvement Recommendations	164
Economic Development Focus Areas Recommendations	169
Statutory Requirements	200

Maps

Map 1. Sussex Borough	8
Map 2. Sussex Borough Regional Context	10
Map 3. Sussex Borough Road Network	13
Map 4. Sussex Borough Large Truck Routes	15
Map 5. Sussex Borough: Location of Employment for Sussex Borough Residents	29
Map 6. Sussex Borough: Location of Residence for Sussex Borough Workers	31
Map 7. Sussex Borough Water, Wetlands, and Floodplains	34
Map 8. Sussex Borough Steep Slopes and Elevation	36
Map 9. Sussex Borough Property Classification	40
Map 10. Official Zoning Map	44
Map 11. Sussex Borough Commercial Corridors	48
Map 12. Sussex Borough Primary Attractors and Major Destinations	57
Map 13. Sussex Borough Existing Public Parking	61
Map 14. Sussex Borough Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure	65
Map 15. 15-minute, 30-minute, and 60-minute drivesheds from Sussex Borough	70
Map 16. Sussex Borough Former St. Clare's Hospital	81
Map 17. Route 23 Redevelopment Plan Areas A, B, C, and D	85
Map 18. New Jersey Opportunity Zones	87
Map 19. Sussex Borough's Central Business District in 1991	90
Map 20. Sussex Borough Commercial Corridors and NRTC Neighborhood Plan Area	98
Map 21. Sussex Borough Main Street Area Placemaking Recommendations	108

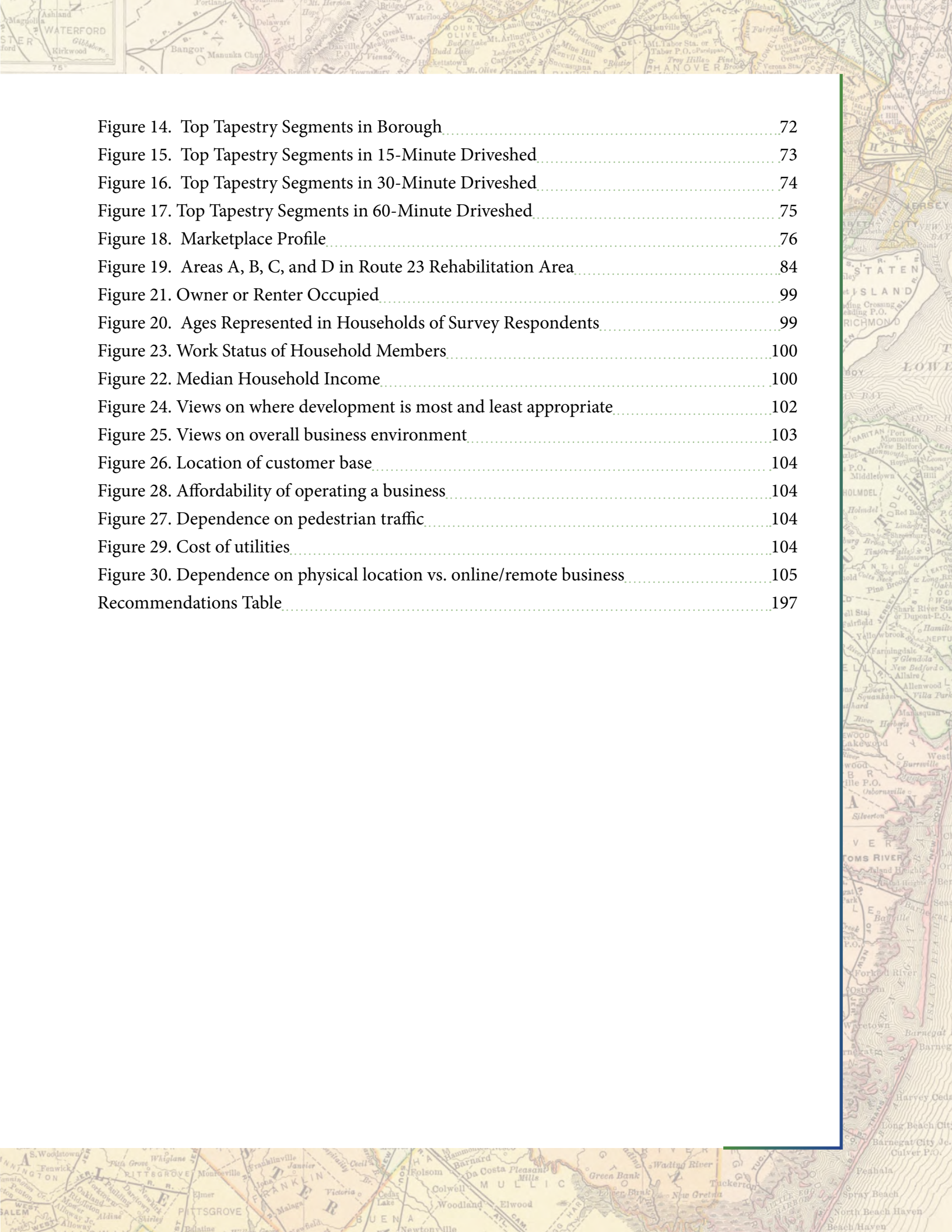


Map 22. Sussex Borough Main Street and Newton Avenue Area Placemaking Recommendations	112
Map 23. Sussex Borough Main Street and Newton Avenue Area Placemaking Concept A	114
Map 24. Sussex Borough Main Street and Newton Avenue Area Placemaking Concept B	115
Map 25. Sussex Borough Placemaking Recommendations: Off-Road Paths	129
Map 26. Fiberoptic Internet WIFI Hotspot Concept	135
Map 27. Sussex Borough Parking Recommendations	138
Map 28. Wayfinding Map Prototype for Sussex Borough that highlights key locations near Main Street including a business inventory	152
Map 29. Sussex Borough Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations	155
Map 30. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Areas	170
Map 31. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Area: Sussex Plaza	173
Map 32. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Area: Main Street Area	176
Map 33. 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map	185
Map 34. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Area: State Route 23 "Island"	188
Map 35. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Area: Former St. Clare's Hospital	192
Map 36. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Area: Highland Avenue	196

Tables

Figure 1. Recommendations Table	2
Figure 2. Population Change	16
Figure 3. Demographic Characteristics	18
Figure 4. Sussex Borough Total Jobs	19
Figure 5. Total Jobs 2002-2019	20
Figure 6. Sussex Borough Jobs by Industry Sector	22
Figure 7. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector	23
Figure 7. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector	24
Figure 7. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector	24
Figure 8. Monthly Earnings by Geography	25
Figure 9. Monthly Earnings for Borough Workers and Borough Residents	26
Figure 10. Worker Educational Attainment	26
Figure 11. Sussex Borough Commuting Flows	27
Figure 12. Property Classification	37
Figure 13. Population and Households within 15-, 30-, and 60-Minute Drivesheds	71

Figure 14. Top Tapestry Segments in Borough	72
Figure 15. Top Tapestry Segments in 15-Minute Driveshed	73
Figure 16. Top Tapestry Segments in 30-Minute Driveshed	74
Figure 17. Top Tapestry Segments in 60-Minute Driveshed	75
Figure 18. Marketplace Profile	76
Figure 19. Areas A, B, C, and D in Route 23 Rehabilitation Area	84
Figure 21. Owner or Renter Occupied	99
Figure 20. Ages Represented in Households of Survey Respondents	99
Figure 23. Work Status of Household Members	100
Figure 22. Median Household Income	100
Figure 24. Views on where development is most and least appropriate	102
Figure 25. Views on overall business environment	103
Figure 26. Location of customer base	104
Figure 28. Affordability of operating a business	104
Figure 27. Dependence on pedestrian traffic	104
Figure 29. Cost of utilities	104
Figure 30. Dependence on physical location vs. online/remote business	105
Recommendations Table	197



Executive Summary

Since the nineteenth century, Sussex Borough, the 0.6-square mile municipality previously known as Deckertown, has served as a commercial and social hub for Sussex County. In recent decades the Borough has experienced declines in both population and jobs. Major employers have left the Borough and small businesses have struggled to prosper in a small market with a limited client base, exacerbated by the increase in online commerce and the competition with larger companies. The Borough has become a bedroom community where over 98% of residents commute to work in another municipality.

Despite these challenges, the Borough has retained its unique charm. Residents value the small-town character and high quality of life that feels like a good place to raise a family. Moreover, the Borough retains a number of assets that make it well-positioned to capitalize on recent economic trends. Main Street is a high-density, walkable, and historic downtown that already has a number of restaurants and stores, as well as the Crescent Theatre. The Borough's small size and pedestrian infrastructure creates connections between Main Street, residential neighborhoods, and the other commercial corridors. The Borough also benefits from being along the State Route 23 transportation corridor, which brings tens of thousands of daily vehicle trips through the Borough.

If the Borough can establish Main Street as a destination, in particular by continuing to expand the variety of stores, restaurants, and activities while also enhancing the area's sense of place, the Borough can convince drivers currently driving through the Borough to stop and eat, shop, and enjoy the Borough's unique offerings. Furthermore, with the shift toward working remotely that began during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Borough is well-suited to attract potential residents looking to relocate from higher-density areas. During the process of plan preparation, the growing occupancy of businesses on Main Street, and the increased demand in the local housing market suggest that these trends are already bearing fruit.

This Economic Development Master Plan Element will serve as an addendum to the Borough's Master Plan. This plan provides 36 *Recommendations*, which are summarized in Figure 1 below, that are broken into eight categories: placemaking, utilities, parking, wayfinding, pedestrian infrastructure, zoning, business improvement, and economic development focus areas. While these recommendation categories cover a wide variety of topic areas, the scope of each is solely within the context of economic development.

These recommendations seek to remedy the obstacles and enhance the positive characteristics identified in the *Analyses of Current Conditions*. In recognition of the logistical and financial constraints of a small municipality, only recommendations that are realistically attainable were included. This plan aspires to provide the Borough with implementable actions that will yield tangible benefits to the Borough's economic vitality.

Figure 1		
Placemaking		
Goal: Enhance the physical identity of public spaces to attract visitors and residents to the Borough's existing and emerging commercial corridors.		
Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Activate Fountain Square and the Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection.	Highest	Short-term
Formalize the existing right of way connecting Main St and Mill St at rear of former Capri Auto Body.	High	Short-term
Activate Deckertown Commons as an outdoor theatre or play space.	High	Short/Medium-term
Establish a physical gateway to Main Street.	Highest	Medium-term
Implement a Façade and Sign Improvement Program for Main Street businesses	High	Medium-term
Use public art to enhance the steps to Harrison Street Parking Lot.	High	Medium-term
Create a multi-use path along Clove Brook connecting Clove Lake with Brookside Park.	Medium	Long-term
Connect Brookside Park to the Papakating Creek Rail Trail.	Medium	Long-term
Create a multi-use trail around the perimeter of Clove Lake.	Medium	Long-term
Utilities		
Goal: Decrease the financial burden of utilities on businesses and residents while improving internet connectivity.		
Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Increase the availability and quality of internet.	High	Short-term
Seek infrastructure investments from local, county, state, and federal sources and pursue efforts to renegotiate rates with SCMUA to address high costs of sewer.	Highest	Medium/Long-term

Figure 1 (continued)

Parking

Goal: Increase parking opportunities near Main Street to encourage access to local businesses.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Remove permit restrictions on existing Borough-owned lots.	Highest	Short-term
Utilize existing lots at Sussex Middle School as auxiliary parking.	High	Short-term
Increase parking wayfinding signage to direct vehicle traffic towards parking.	High	Medium-term
Clarify where Main Street residents, employees, and visitors should park.	High	Medium-term
Create new parking lots at strategic locations.	High	Medium/Long-term

Wayfinding

Goal: Improve signage to encourage drivers to visit commercial corridors in the Borough.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Consolidate signage currently leading drivers out of Borough and increase the prominence of signage marketing Main Street	High	Medium-term
Install pedestrian kiosks with maps	Medium	Medium-term

Pedestrian Infrastructure

Goal: Improve pedestrian safety to allow ease of movement through the Borough's commercial corridors for all modes of transportation.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Calm traffic with raised crosswalks at the Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection.	High	Short-term
Install pedestrian-activated traffic control devices.	High	Medium-term

Zoning

Goal: Update zoning to reflect current conditions and encourage appropriate development.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Clarify/clean up Areas in Need of Redevelopment and Rehabilitation.	High	Medium-term
Update Zoning Map to ensure uniformity with Zoning Code, reflect parcel changes from State Route 23 realignment, and incorporate land use changes recommended in this plan.	High	Medium-term
Evaluate illegal conversion of single-family homes into multi-unit apartments.	High	Medium-term

Figure 1 (continued)

Business Improvement

Goal: Expand organizational capacity to support Borough businesses.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Establish a local chamber of commerce or business improvement organization to provide mutual support to businesses along Main Street and other Commercial Corridors.	High	Medium-term
Leverage Opportunity Zone status to encourage investment.	High	Medium/Long-term
Apply for Main Street New Jersey designation and/or establish an Improvement District.	High	Long-term

Economic Development Focus Areas

Goal: Develop existing and potential economic drivers to address the Borough's unmet potential.

Focus Area	Priority	Timeframe
Former Fountain Square Inn	High	Short/Medium-term
Former Chase Bank Building	High	Short/Medium-term
Former Saint Clare's Hospital	High	Short/Medium-term
Former Capri Auto Body Building	High	Medium/Long-term
Former Blacksmith Cycles Building	High	Medium/Long-term
Former Rainy Day Shoppe Building	High	Medium/Long-term
Sussex Plaza	Medium	Medium/Long-term
Crescent Theatre	Medium	Medium/Long-term
Commercial and Vacant Lots in State Route 23 "Island"	Medium	Medium/Long-term
Undeveloped area east of Highland Avenue	Low	Long-term

** Short-term = Implement immediately; Medium-term = Implement within 5 years; Long-term = Implement within 10 years*

Master Plan Element Purpose

New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that the municipal planning board “prepare and, after a public hearing, adopt or amend a master plan or component parts thereof, to guide the use of lands within the municipality in a manner that protects public health and safety and promotes the general welfare” (New Jersey Statutes Annotated (N.J.S.A.) 40:55D-28). The MLUL requires “a statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based” and a land use plan element (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28b(1)). Additionally, a housing element is required for a municipality to enact a zoning ordinance.

The economic plan is considered a discretionary element that may be included in the master plan “where appropriate.” According to the MLUL, an economic plan element should consider “all aspects of economic development and sustained economic vitality, including (a) a comparison of the types of employment expected to be provided by the economic development to be promoted with the characteristics of the labor pool resident in the municipality and nearby areas and (b) an analysis of the stability and diversity of the economic development to be promoted” (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(9)).




Image 1. Historic fountain in Fountain Square on Main Street.

Sussex Borough adopted its most recent municipal master plan in 2009. The master plan met the statutory requirements listed above, but its scope did not include an economic plan element. Upon adoption by the Sussex Borough Planning Board, this Economic Development Master Plan Element will serve as an amendment to the Borough’s Master Plan.

Note that the MLUL also requires that the master plan be re-examined every ten years. Sussex Borough’s current master plan has passed the ten-year threshold and was under the process of re-examination by the Nelson Consulting Group while this plan was under preparation.



Planning Process



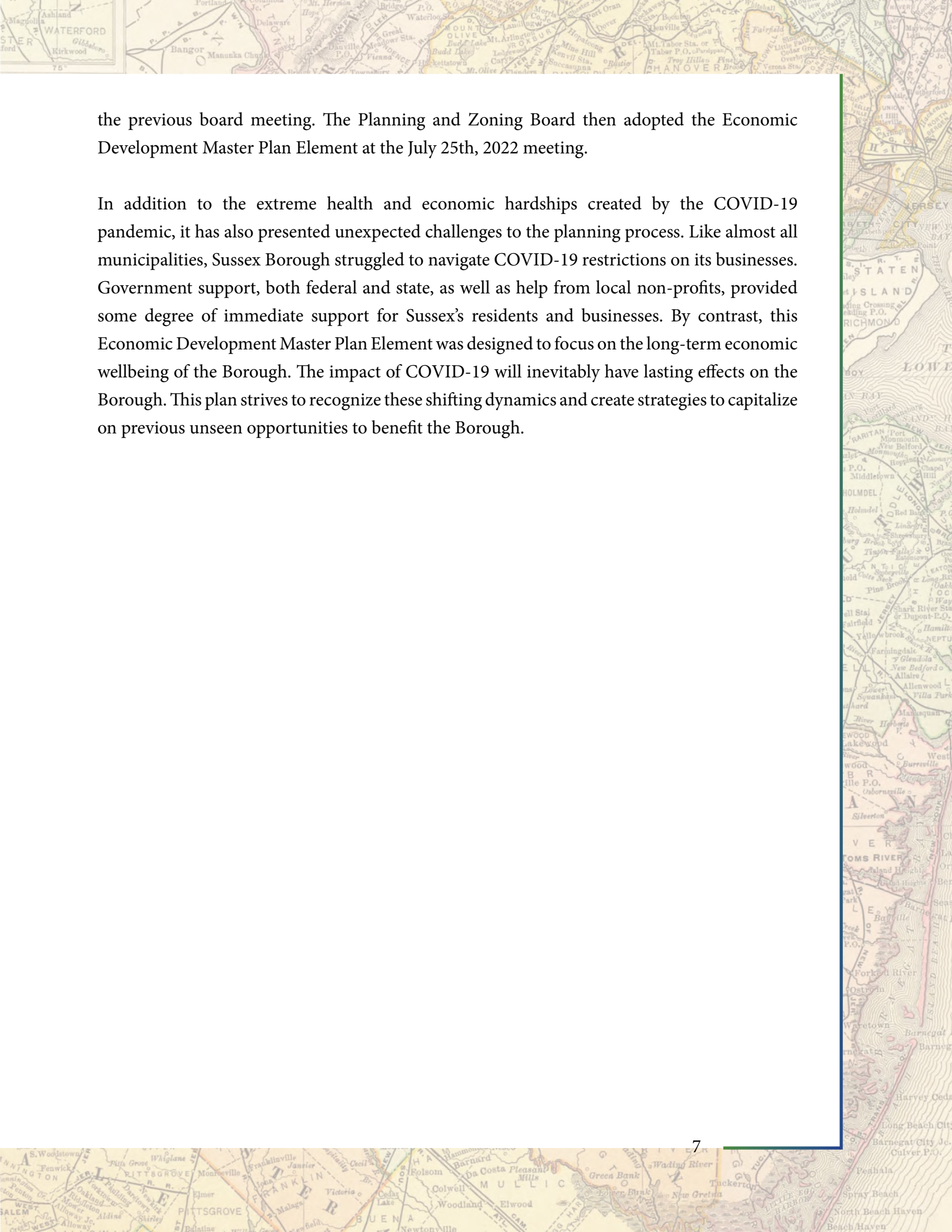
Sussex Borough and Local Planning Services (LPS) held a pre-application meeting on January 10th, 2020, to discuss the types of services offered by LPS that would be most beneficial to the Borough. The Borough submitted an application for LPS to prepare an Economic Development Master Plan Element on February 7th, 2020. The Borough Council passed Resolution #2020-82R on March 19th, 2020, formally authorizing the retention of planning services from LPS and approving the scope of services that LPS prepared. The scope of services detailed projects tasks for the Borough and LPS, defined expected deliverables, and outlined the project timeline.

A kick-off meeting with the LPS project team, the Borough, and the Working Committee was held on June 26th, 2020. This was the first of five Working Committee meetings that occurred roughly once every two months. The Working Committee was comprised of a variety of stakeholders including elected representatives, members of the Planning and Zoning Board, non-profit organizations, and Borough residents and business owners.

Due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Working Committee meetings were held remotely. LPS conducted a variety of analyses of current conditions to provide a background framework for discussing potential solutions with the Working Committee. The Working Committee provided local expertise, helping to align the background research conducted by LPS with how conditions are perceived in the community. While COVID-19 restrictions limited in-person project activities, the LPS team and members of the Working Committee also participated in a walking tour of the Borough on September 3rd, 2020.

LPS conducted additional public outreach to solicit feedback from the public. This included surveys for households and business owners. LPS additionally working in close conjunction with Norwescap, who were concurrently preparing a Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Neighborhood Plan. LPS participated as a member of the Steering Committee for the Norwescap Neighborhood Plan while Norwescap served as a member of this plan's Working Committee.

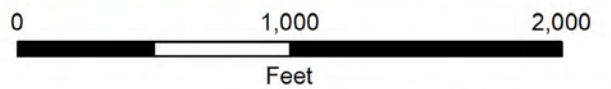
On July 26th, 2021, LPS presented a set of draft recommendations to the Borough's Planning and Zoning Board. After incorporating the feedback from the Planning and Zoning Board into the [Recommendations](#) section, the Working Committee provided final feedback in November and December 2021. LPS returned to the Planning and Zoning Board at the March 28th, 2022 to present the final set of recommendations, including those that were added or amended since



the previous board meeting. The Planning and Zoning Board then adopted the Economic Development Master Plan Element at the July 25th, 2022 meeting.

In addition to the extreme health and economic hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has also presented unexpected challenges to the planning process. Like almost all municipalities, Sussex Borough struggled to navigate COVID-19 restrictions on its businesses. Government support, both federal and state, as well as help from local non-profits, provided some degree of immediate support for Sussex's residents and businesses. By contrast, this Economic Development Master Plan Element was designed to focus on the long-term economic wellbeing of the Borough. The impact of COVID-19 will inevitably have lasting effects on the Borough. This plan strives to recognize these shifting dynamics and create strategies to capitalize on previous unseen opportunities to benefit the Borough.

Map 1. Sussex Borough



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS

Analyses of Current Conditions

Regional Context

Sussex Borough comprises roughly 0.6 square miles in the shape of an octagon in Sussex County, the northwesternmost county in New Jersey bordering both Pennsylvania and New York (see Map 2). The Borough is entirely surrounded by Wantage Township, which it was previously part of. After a referendum in 1891, the town center of Wantage Township, known as Deckertown, officially became its own Borough¹. In 1902, Deckertown became Sussex Borough².

Sussex Borough is roughly 60 miles to the west of New York City, 95 miles to the north of Trenton, and 70 miles to the east of Scranton. Within Sussex County, Vernon Township is located to the immediate east of Wantage Township while the Town of Newton, a comparably sized municipality that serves as the Sussex County seat, is roughly 15 miles to the southwest. Other municipalities that are commonly used as reference points and are closer to New York City to the southeast include Wayne Township, slightly over 30 miles away, and the Town of Morristown, roughly 40 miles away. Warwick and Port Jervis, across the border in New York State, are roughly 14 and 17 miles away, respectively. Sussex Borough is also located less than five miles to the west of the New Jersey Highlands Planning Area, which covers much of Sussex County.

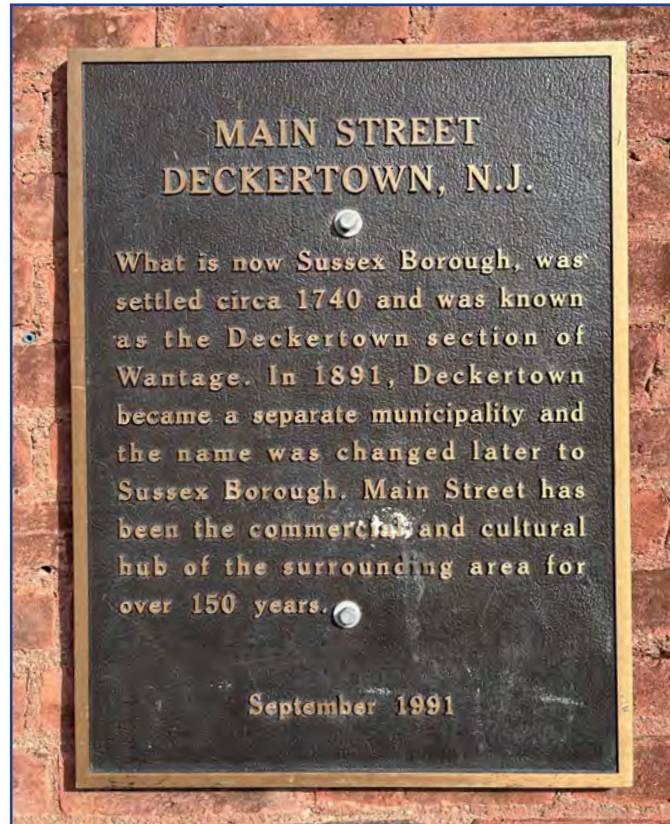
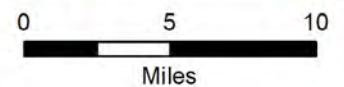
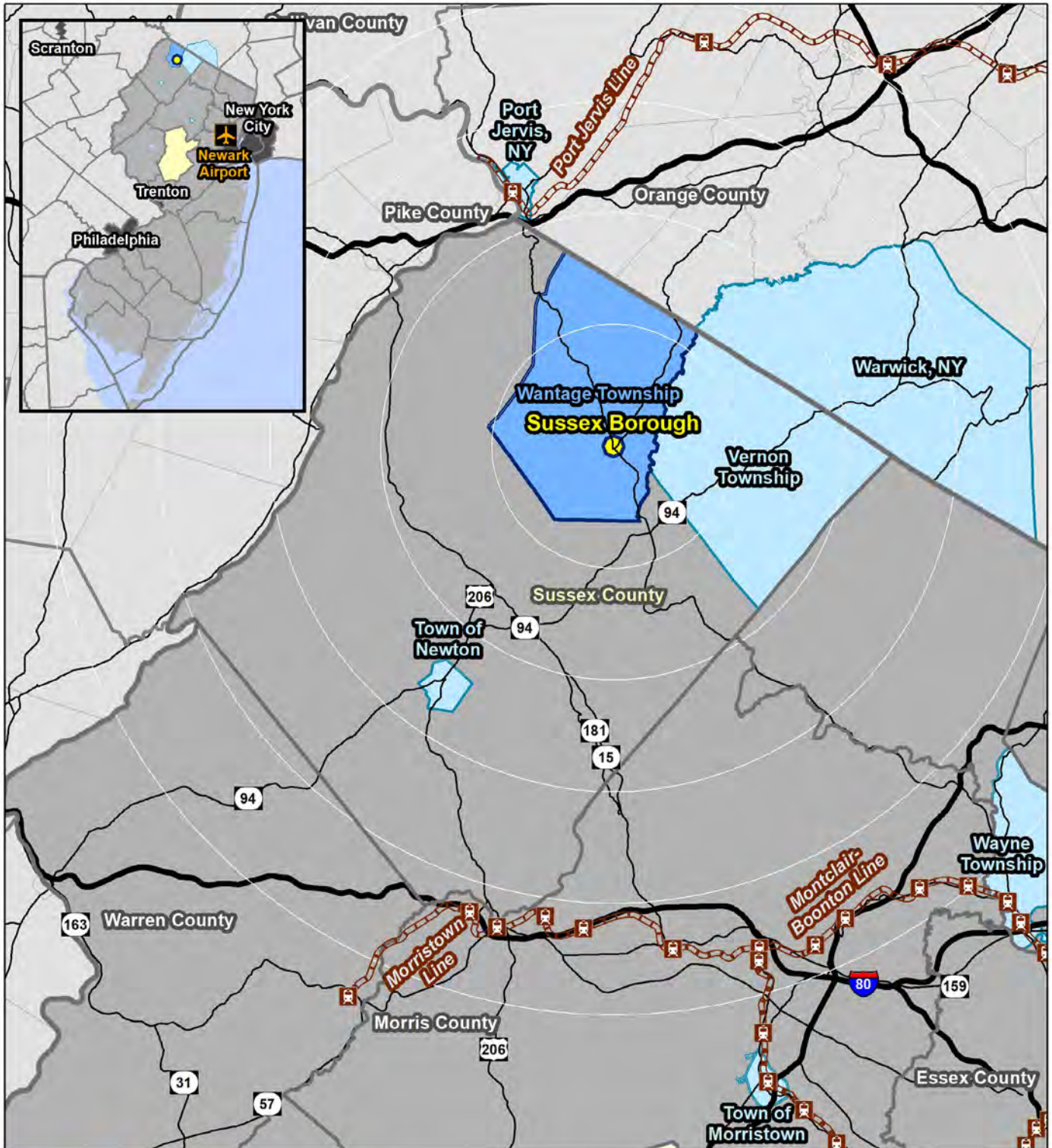


Image 2. Historical plaque located on the Crescent Theatre.

¹ <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/njgs/enviroed/oldpubs/bulletin67.pdf>

² *ibid*

Map 2. Sussex Borough Regional Context



Data Sources: ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS

Transportation

Road Network

State Routes 23 and 284 both pass through the Borough (see Map 3). State Route 23 runs north to south along Clove Avenue, Bank Street, and Mill Street until intersecting with Loomis Avenue and East Main Street where it splits into separate one-way roads: northbound on Hamburg Ave and southbound on Walling Avenue, which had a realignment and extension constructed in 2015. Prior to the realignment, State Route 23 ran bidirectionally along Hamburg Avenue. In its post-realignment configuration, State Route 23 reconnects as a two-way road southeast of the Borough at Lower Unionville Road in Wantage Township.

According to traffic data collected by the New Jersey Department of Transportation between 2017 and 2019, the northbound segment of State Route 23 recorded the highest traffic volume in the Borough with Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 18,869 vehicles. Traffic volume of 10,518 vehicles were recorded on the bidirectional segment of State Route 23 north of the intersection with Main Street (County Road 643). This suggests that nearly half of the traffic entering the Borough northbound on State Route 23 either turns onto another road that leads out of the Borough or, to a lesser degree, ends the trip in Sussex Borough.



Image 3. State Route 23 northbound on the section signed as Hamburg Avenue as the one-way road curves in front of the entrance to Main Street.

County Road 639 (Loomis Avenue) begins at the intersection with State Route 23 and heads west with a daily traffic volume of 7,746 vehicles. County Road 639 turns into County Route 565 at the intersection with Compton Road in Wantage Township. The Sussex Airport, a small public-use reliever airport³, which averages 59

³ <http://www.airnav.com/airport/KFWN>

⁴ *ibid*

aircraft operations per day as of 2019⁴, is located on County Route 565 in Wantage Township. Newark International Airport is roughly 60 miles southeast of the Borough while Stewart International Airport is roughly 40 miles to the northeast.

State Route 284, which is signed as East Main Street and is the only other road in the Borough with traffic volume exceeding 5,000 vehicles per day, runs south from New York State and also terminates at the intersection with State Route 23.

Main Street, or County Road 643, is the only other County Road in the Borough. Main Street runs bidirectionally from its southern “gateway”, the intersection with State Route 23 as it curves from north to west and transitions from Hamburg Avenue to Loomis Avenue.



Image 4. Main Street looking south down the hill towards Hamburg Avenue.

Main Street becomes a one-way northbound road from Spring Street to the northern intersection with State Route 23 (Bank Street/Clove Avenue). Only 559 daily vehicle trips were recorded on Main Street, which is more in line with the volume on the Borough’s local streets in residential neighborhoods than the other County or State roads in the Borough.

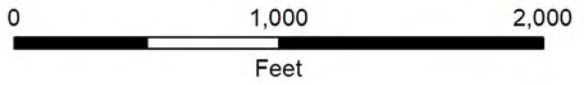
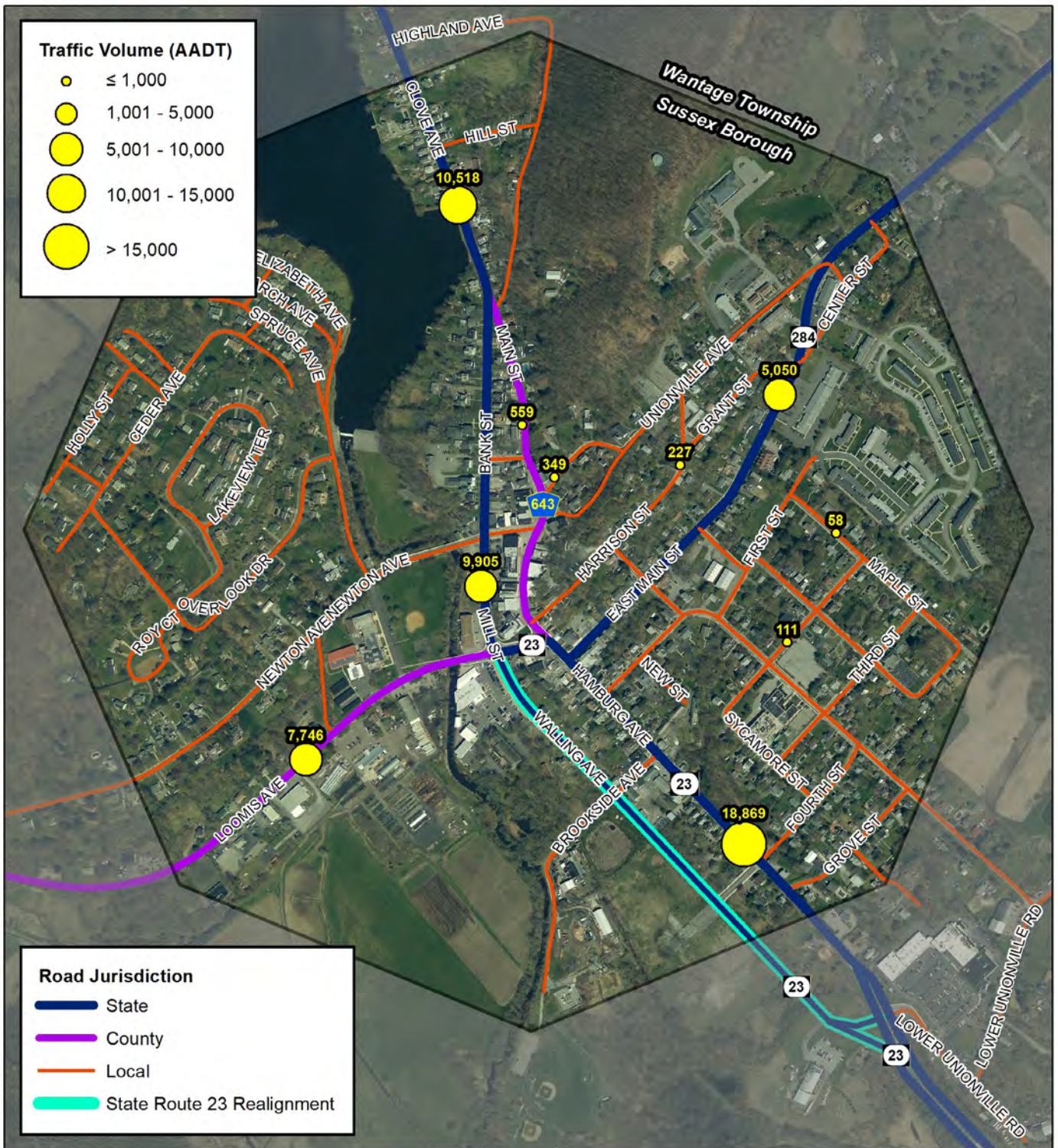
Large Truck Traffic

New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.) 16:32 restricts double-trailer and 102-inch standard trucks to certain roadways by designating a statewide hierarchy for drivers to use⁵:

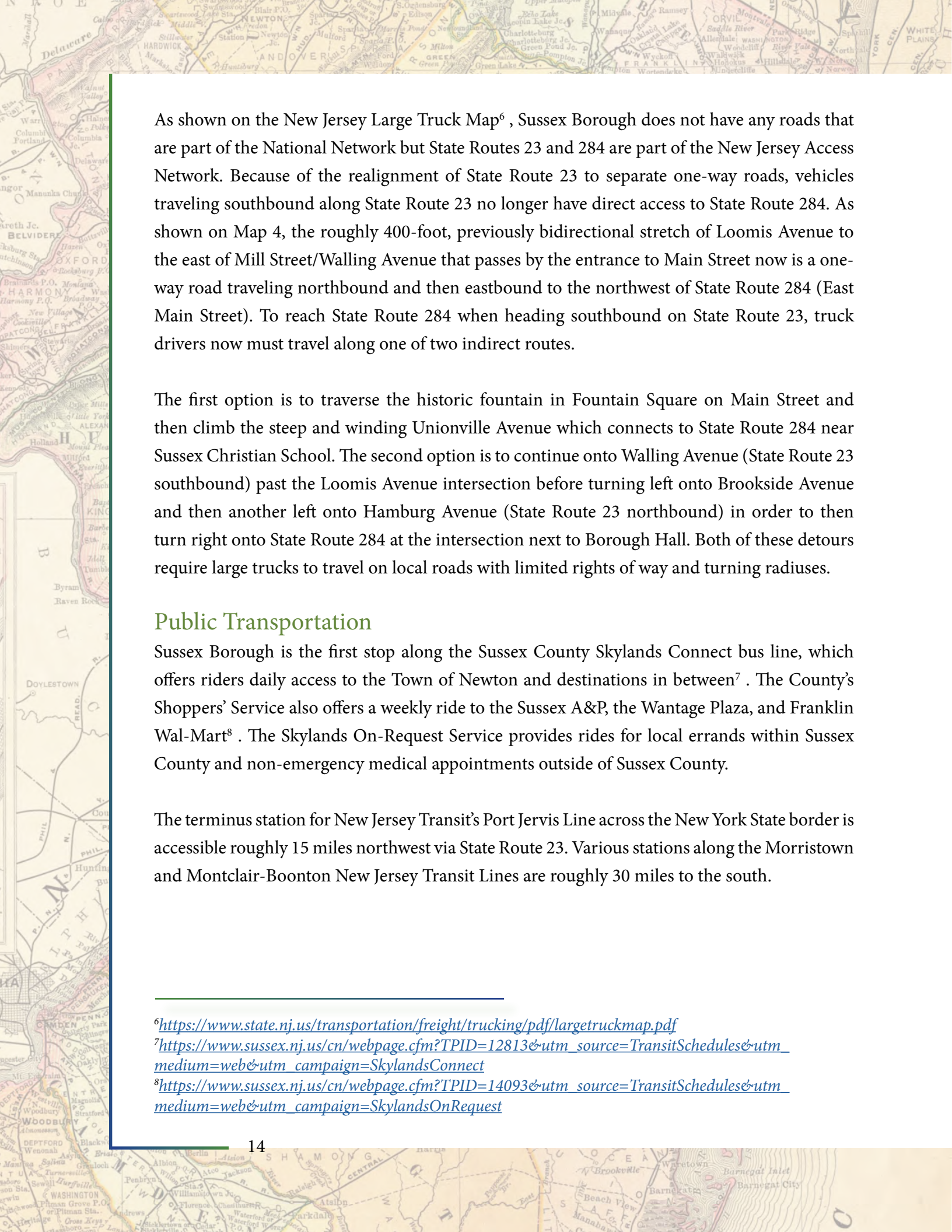
1. The National Network
2. The New Jersey Access Network
3. All other unrestricted roadways in New Jersey

⁵ <http://liberty.state.nj.us/transportation/about/rules/documents/16-32-Current.pdf>

Map 3. Sussex Borough Road Network



Data Sources: ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJDOT



As shown on the New Jersey Large Truck Map⁶, Sussex Borough does not have any roads that are part of the National Network but State Routes 23 and 284 are part of the New Jersey Access Network. Because of the realignment of State Route 23 to separate one-way roads, vehicles traveling southbound along State Route 23 no longer have direct access to State Route 284. As shown on Map 4, the roughly 400-foot, previously bidirectional stretch of Loomis Avenue to the east of Mill Street/Walling Avenue that passes by the entrance to Main Street now is a one-way road traveling northbound and then eastbound to the northwest of State Route 284 (East Main Street). To reach State Route 284 when heading southbound on State Route 23, truck drivers now must travel along one of two indirect routes.

The first option is to traverse the historic fountain in Fountain Square on Main Street and then climb the steep and winding Unionville Avenue which connects to State Route 284 near Sussex Christian School. The second option is to continue onto Walling Avenue (State Route 23 southbound) past the Loomis Avenue intersection before turning left onto Brookside Avenue and then another left onto Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 northbound) in order to then turn right onto State Route 284 at the intersection next to Borough Hall. Both of these detours require large trucks to travel on local roads with limited rights of way and turning radiuses.

Public Transportation

Sussex Borough is the first stop along the Sussex County Skylands Connect bus line, which offers riders daily access to the Town of Newton and destinations in between⁷. The County's Shoppers' Service also offers a weekly ride to the Sussex A&P, the Wantage Plaza, and Franklin Wal-Mart⁸. The Skylands On-Request Service provides rides for local errands within Sussex County and non-emergency medical appointments outside of Sussex County.

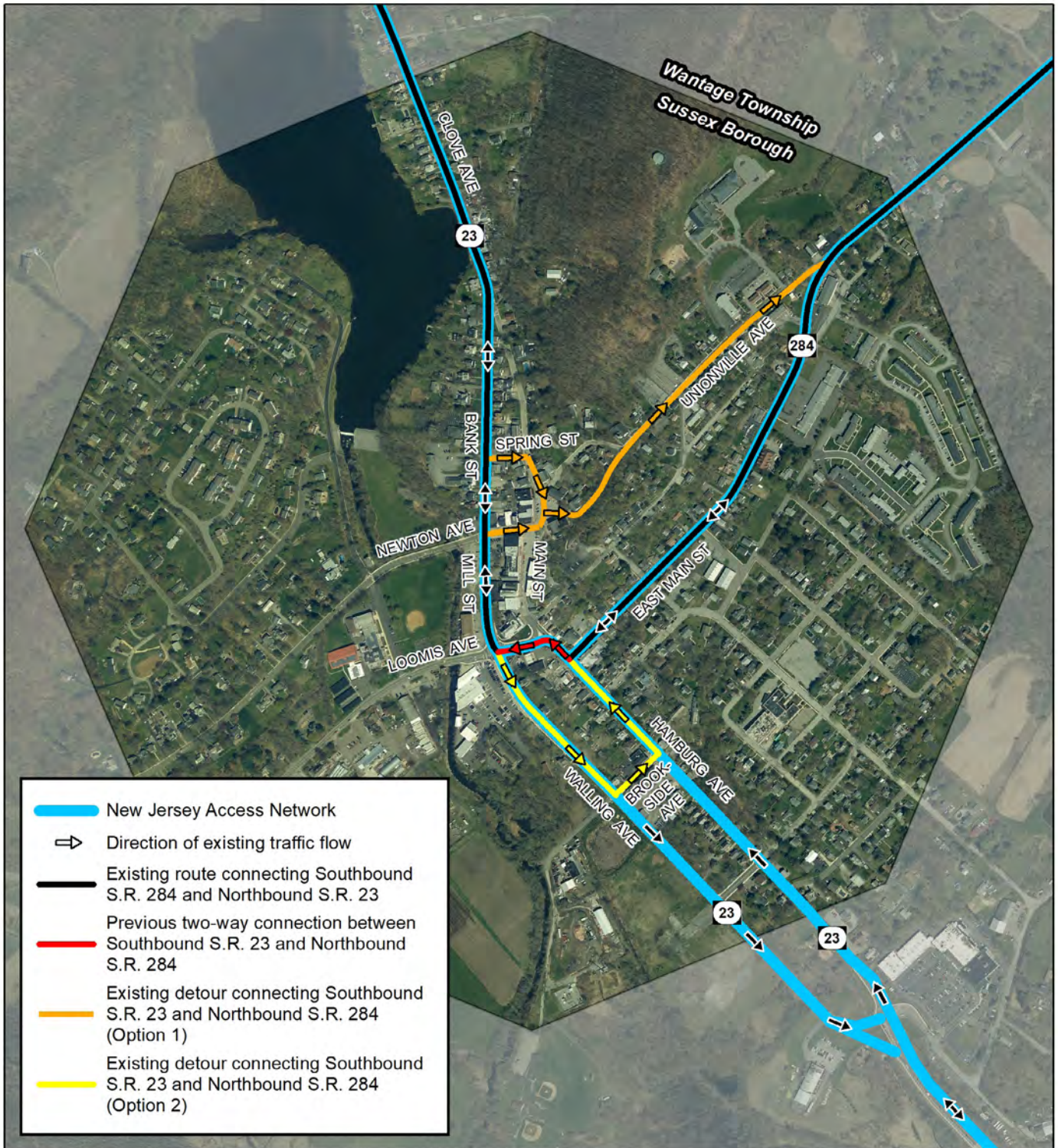
The terminus station for New Jersey Transit's Port Jervis Line across the New York State border is accessible roughly 15 miles northwest via State Route 23. Various stations along the Morristown and Montclair-Boonton New Jersey Transit Lines are roughly 30 miles to the south.

⁶<https://www.state.nj.us/transportation/freight/trucking/pdf/largetruckmap.pdf>

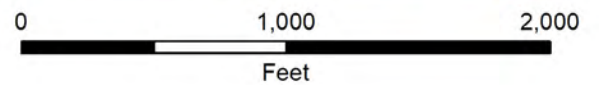
⁷https://www.sussex.nj.us/cn/webpage.cfm?TPID=12813&utm_source=TransitSchedules&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=SkylandsConnect

⁸https://www.sussex.nj.us/cn/webpage.cfm?TPID=14093&utm_source=TransitSchedules&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=SkylandsOnRequest

Map 4. Sussex Borough Large Truck Routes



N
2022



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJDOT

Population and Demographics

Demographic data available from the U.S. Census Bureau highlights stark differences between the Borough and its surrounding geographies, specifically Wantage Township, Sussex County, and the State of New Jersey.

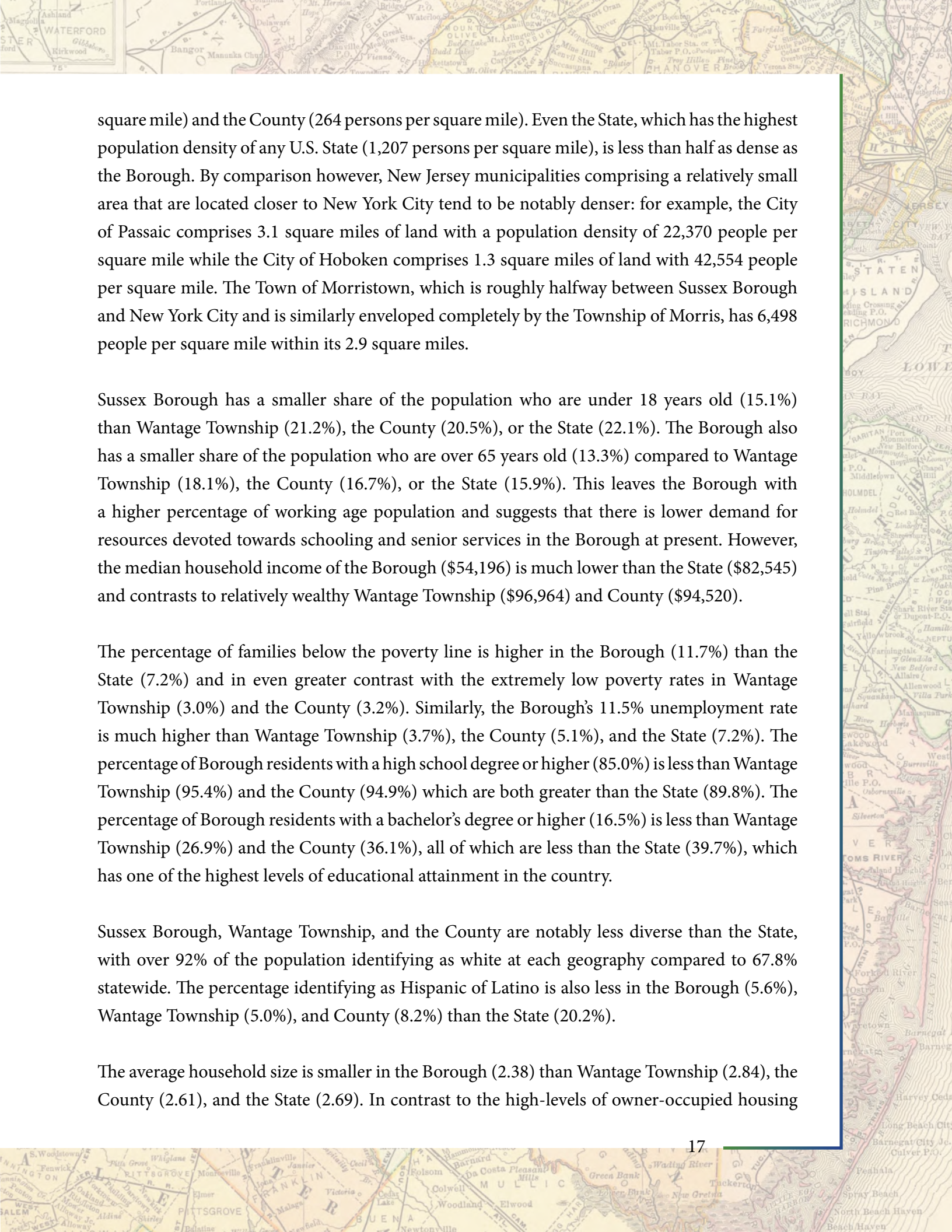
Population growth in Sussex Borough is largely constrained by its small geographic area of less than a square mile. As shown in Figure 2, the Borough’s population grew moderately between 1940 and 1960 and then accelerated between 1960 and 1980 when the population peaked at 2,418. The Borough’s population decreased each decade since then, leading to an estimated population of 1,870 in 2019. Wantage Township, which envelopes the Borough and comprises a larger geographic area, experienced a more rapid and sustained population growth between 1940 and 2010. This was more in line with growth trends seen at the County level, with both geographies increasing in population nearly fivefold over this time period, a rate that is much higher than the State, which roughly doubled in population. Between 2010 and 2019, population in Sussex Borough, Wantage Township, and Sussex County decreased, with the highest rate of decrease experienced in the Borough (12.2%).

Figure 2. Population Change

Year	Sussex Borough		Wantage Township		Sussex County		New Jersey	
	Population	% Change	Population	% Change	Population	% Change	Population	% Change
2019	1,870	-12.2%	10,925	-3.8%	141,483	-5.2%	8,878,503	1.0%
2010	2,130	-0.7%	11,358	9.3%	149,265	3.5%	8,791,894	4.5%
2000	2,145	-2.5%	10,387	9.5%	144,166	10.1%	8,414,350	8.9%
1990	2,201	-9.0%	9,487	30.5%	130,943	12.8%	7,730,188	5.0%
1980	2,418	18.6%	7,268	67.9%	116,119	49.8%	7,365,011	2.7%
1970	2,038	23.1%	4,329	30.9%	77,528	57.4%	7,171,112	18.2%
1960	1,656	7.5%	3,308	30.1%	49,255	43.1%	6,066,782	25.5%
1950	1,541	4.3%	2,543	7.0%	34,423	16.2%	4,835,329	16.2%
1940	1,478	-	2,376	-	29,632	-	4,160,165	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Censuses and 5-year American Community Survey (2015-2019)

The Borough has a remarkably high population density due to its small geographic size and despite population loss taking place for decades. As shown in Figure 3, the Borough’s has 3,170 persons per square mile, which is significantly higher than Wantage Township (162 persons per



square mile) and the County (264 persons per square mile). Even the State, which has the highest population density of any U.S. State (1,207 persons per square mile), is less than half as dense as the Borough. By comparison however, New Jersey municipalities comprising a relatively small area that are located closer to New York City tend to be notably denser: for example, the City of Passaic comprises 3.1 square miles of land with a population density of 22,370 people per square mile while the City of Hoboken comprises 1.3 square miles of land with 42,554 people per square mile. The Town of Morristown, which is roughly halfway between Sussex Borough and New York City and is similarly enveloped completely by the Township of Morris, has 6,498 people per square mile within its 2.9 square miles.

Sussex Borough has a smaller share of the population who are under 18 years old (15.1%) than Wantage Township (21.2%), the County (20.5%), or the State (22.1%). The Borough also has a smaller share of the population who are over 65 years old (13.3%) compared to Wantage Township (18.1%), the County (16.7%), or the State (15.9%). This leaves the Borough with a higher percentage of working age population and suggests that there is lower demand for resources devoted towards schooling and senior services in the Borough at present. However, the median household income of the Borough (\$54,196) is much lower than the State (\$82,545) and contrasts to relatively wealthy Wantage Township (\$96,964) and County (\$94,520).

The percentage of families below the poverty line is higher in the Borough (11.7%) than the State (7.2%) and in even greater contrast with the extremely low poverty rates in Wantage Township (3.0%) and the County (3.2%). Similarly, the Borough's 11.5% unemployment rate is much higher than Wantage Township (3.7%), the County (5.1%), and the State (7.2%). The percentage of Borough residents with a high school degree or higher (85.0%) is less than Wantage Township (95.4%) and the County (94.9%) which are both greater than the State (89.8%). The percentage of Borough residents with a bachelor's degree or higher (16.5%) is less than Wantage Township (26.9%) and the County (36.1%), all of which are less than the State (39.7%), which has one of the highest levels of educational attainment in the country.

Sussex Borough, Wantage Township, and the County are notably less diverse than the State, with over 92% of the population identifying as white at each geography compared to 67.8% statewide. The percentage identifying as Hispanic or Latino is also less in the Borough (5.6%), Wantage Township (5.0%), and County (8.2%) than the State (20.2%).

The average household size is smaller in the Borough (2.38) than Wantage Township (2.84), the County (2.61), and the State (2.69). In contrast to the high-levels of owner-occupied housing

seen in the County (83.1%) and Wantage Township (89.9%), the Borough is predominantly renter-occupied (only 37.8% owner-occupied). There is also a higher rate of vacant housing units in the Borough (19.0%) than the County (14.6%), State (10.6%), and especially neighboring Wantage Township (7.7%). While the median value of owner-occupied units (\$212,400) is less than the County (\$267,500), Wantage Township (\$285,200), and the State (\$335,600), median gross rent in the Borough (\$1,216) is similar to Wantage Township (\$1,204) and comparable, though still less, than the County (\$1,314) and the State (\$1,334).

Figure 3. Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Sussex Borough	Wantage Township	Sussex County	New Jersey
Population				
Total Population	1,870	10,925	141,483	8,878,503
Persons per square mile	3,170	162	264	1,207
Median age (years)	40.5	45.7	44.7	39.9
Under 18 years old	15.1%	21.2%	20.5%	22.1%
65 years and older	13.3%	18.1%	16.7%	15.9%
Percent of families below poverty level	11.7%	3.0%	3.2%	7.2%
Unemployment rate	11.5%	3.7%	5.1%	5.5%
Percent high school graduate or higher	85.0%	95.4%	94.9%	89.8%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	16.5%	26.9%	36.1%	39.7%
Race and Ethnicity				
White	93.0%	95.8%	92.8%	67.8%
Black or African American	2.7%	0.4%	2.3%	13.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%
Asian	1.8%	1.7%	2.1%	9.5%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	6.3%
Two or more races	2.5%	2.0%	1.8%	2.7%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	5.6%	5.0%	8.2%	20.2%
Households				
Total households	776	3,845	53,322	3,231,874
Family households	63.7%	78.2%	71.8%	68.9%
Nonfamily households	36.3%	21.8%	28.2%	31.1%
Average household size	2.38	2.84	2.61	2.69
Median household income	\$ 54,196	\$ 96,964	\$ 94,520	\$ 82,545

Figure 3. Demographic Characteristics (continued)

Demographic Characteristics	Sussex Borough	Wantage Township	Sussex County	New Jersey
Housing Units				
Total housing units	958	4,167	62,418	3,616,614
Occupied housing units	81.0%	92.3%	85.4%	89.4%
Vacant housing units	19.0%	7.7%	14.6%	10.6%
Owner-occupied housing units	37.8%	89.9%	83.1%	63.9%
Renter-occupied housing units	62.2%	10.1%	16.9%	36.1%
Median value of owner-occupied units	\$ 212,400	\$ 285,200	\$ 267,500	\$ 335,600
Median gross rent	\$ 1,216	\$ 1,204	\$ 1,314	\$ 1,334

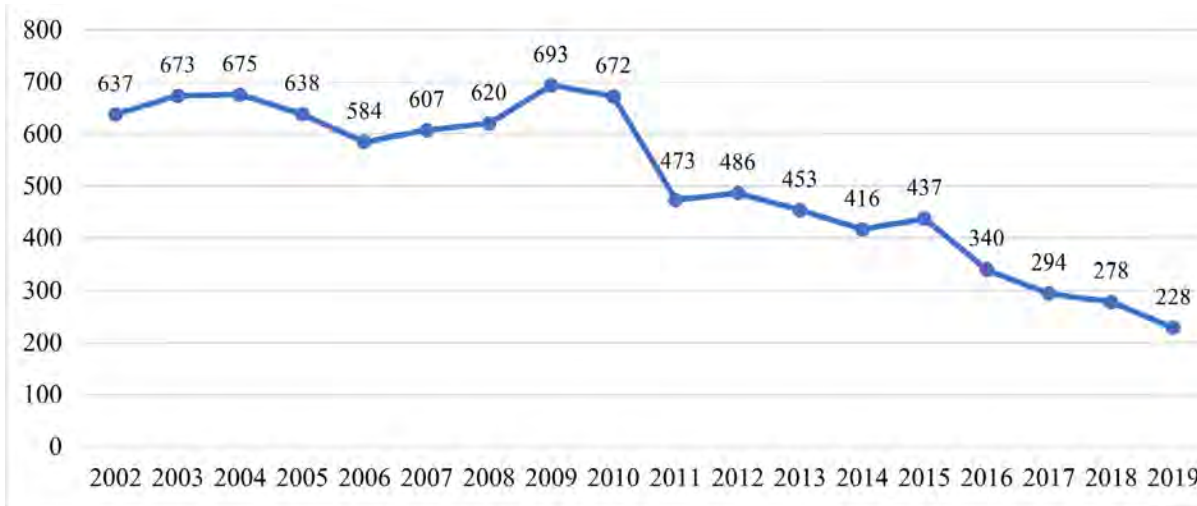
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey (2015-2019)

Employment Trends

Total Jobs

According to data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau’s Center for Economic Studies, Sussex Borough has experienced a rapid decrease in the number of jobs in the past two decades. As shown in Figure 4, there were roughly 600 to 700 jobs from 2002 to 2010. Beginning in 2011, towards the end of the Great Recession, this dropped to less than 500 jobs and continued to consistently decrease over the next decade. In 2019, the most recent year that data was available, there were only 228 jobs left in the Borough.

Figure 4. Sussex Borough Total Jobs



Source: OnTheMap, U.S. Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies

Note that this data shows the number of jobs within the Borough which is different from the number of employed Borough residents who might work in other locations. As described in the [Commuting Patterns](#) section below, there are roughly four times as many employed Borough residents as there are jobs within the Borough, highlighting how prevalent it is for Borough residents to work outside the Borough.

The Borough’s job losses contrast with employment trends experienced in neighboring Wantage Township, Sussex County, and the State. As shown in Figure 5, while Wantage Township also experienced total job losses between 2002 and 2019, the loss of 6.1% of jobs is much lower than the Borough’s loss of 64.2% of jobs over this period. The number of jobs in Wantage Township have also remained largely consistent since 2007, prior to the worst periods of the Great Recession (roughly 2009-2011).

Sussex County and New Jersey experienced an overall increase in jobs between 2002 and 2019, with numbers increasing by 5.3% and 8.7%, respectively. After contracting slightly during the Great Recession, jobs within the County returned to their previous levels around 2014. However, job growth in the County has remained essentially unchanged since then. The State also experienced a contraction in overall jobs during the Great Recession but has experienced modest year-on-year growth since 2012.

The State’s rebound since the Great Recession and the County and Wantage Township’s tempered recovery suggests that the Borough’s extreme job losses cannot be explained by trends at the regional or state level.

Figure 5. Total Jobs 2002-2019

Year	Sussex Borough	Wantage Township	Sussex County	New Jersey
2002	637	2,045	35,734	3,695,628
2003	673	1,943	34,927	3,704,702
2004	675	1,994	36,912	3,723,460
2005	638	2,061	38,170	3,782,820
2006	584	2,020	37,534	3,813,514
2007	607	1,882	37,244	3,858,553
2008	620	1,960	37,458	3,850,208
2009	693	1,834	36,024	3,726,087
2010	672	1,972	37,293	3,732,237
2011	473	1,910	36,246	3,750,028

Figure 5. Total Jobs 2002-2019 (continued)

Year	Sussex Borough	Wantage Township	Sussex County	New Jersey
2012	486	1,927	35,926	3,745,543
2013	453	1,864	36,493	3,790,385
2014	416	1,876	37,774	3,833,892
2015	437	1,803	37,822	3,864,887
2016	340	1,904	37,602	3,941,665
2017	294	1,981	37,284	3,960,442
2018	278	1,895	37,040	3,999,871
2019	228	1,920	37,620	4,018,511
Change in Total Jobs (2002-2019)	-64.2%	-6.1%	5.3%	8.7%

Source: OnTheMap, U.S. Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies



Image 5. The Borough's sharp loss of jobs in the Healthcare and Social Assistance industry sector was exemplified by the closing of the former Saint Clare's Hospital.

Most of the job losses in the Borough since 2002 can be attributed to three industry sectors: Health Care and Social Assistance; Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation; and Retail Trade. The rapid loss of jobs in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry sector can largely be explained by the diminishing, and eventual ceasing, of operations at the former Saint Clare's Hospital. Between 2018 and 2019, the share of Borough jobs in Health Care and Social Assistance fell from 28.4% to 11.8%. In 2014 and 2015, over 50% of the Borough jobs were in this industry sector, comprising over 200 jobs in this industry sector alone. As of 2019, that number had fallen to 27.

The Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation industry sector

Jobs by Industry Sector

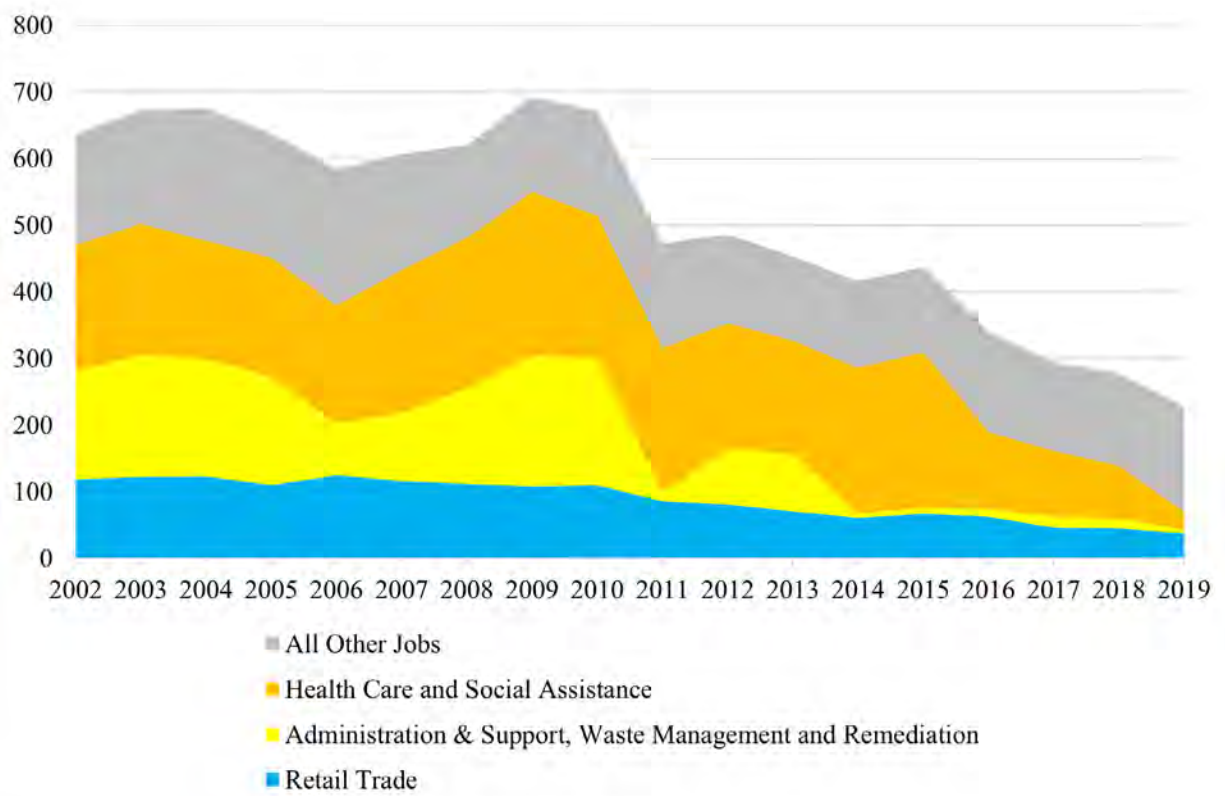
Most of the job losses in the Borough since 2002 can be attributed to three industry sectors: Health Care and Social Assistance; Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation; and Retail Trade. The rapid loss of jobs in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry sector can largely be explained by the diminishing, and eventual ceasing, of operations at the former Saint Clare's Hospital. Between 2018 and 2019, the share of Borough jobs in Health Care and Social Assistance fell from 28.4% to 11.8%. In 2014 and 2015, over 50% of the Borough jobs were in this industry sector, comprising over 200 jobs in this industry sector alone. As of 2019, that number had fallen to 27.

accounted for nearly 200 jobs within the Borough as recently as 2010. This number also dropped precipitously, with less than 20 jobs in this industry sector in every year since 2014.

The trend of jobs within the Retail Trade sector has largely mirrored the overall breakdown of jobs within the Borough, comprising roughly 15-20% of the Borough's workforce every year from 2002 to 2019. This means that the sharp drop in overall job numbers was also felt in the Retail Trade sector.

As shown in Figure 6 below, the number of jobs in all other industry sectors combined remained largely consistent between 2002 (166 jobs) and 2019 (158 jobs), though this number did peak at 204 jobs in 2006.

Figure 6. Sussex Borough Jobs by Industry Sector



Source: OnTheMap, U.S. Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies

The industry sector that has seen the greatest increase in jobs, both in the percentage of the Borough's workforce and in absolute numbers, is Accommodation and Food Services. This industry sector increased from 23 jobs in 2002 to 43 in 2019, plateauing with 64 jobs in both

2006 and 2012. This highlights the relative stability, and tempered growth, in some of the Borough's longstanding restaurants.

Figure 7 shows how employment by industry for residents of the Borough compares with Wantage Township, Sussex County, and New Jersey, as of 2019. While the Borough's small population can be partially attributed to certain industries being over- or under-represented when compared to larger geographic entities, the comparison can still provide insights into the unique breakdown of the Borough's employing industries.

Industry sectors where the share of Borough jobs is notably larger than Wantage, the County, and the State include Accommodation and Food Services; Other Services (excluding Public Administration); and Agriculture Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (this industry sector unexpectedly jumped to 19 jobs in 2019 from zero in every year since 2002). Industry sectors where the share of Borough jobs is less than Wantage, the County, and the State include Utilities; Finance and Insurance; Real Estate and Rental and Leasing; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation; Educational Services; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; and Public Administration. Many of these industry sectors have no jobs within the Borough and have consistently had no or very few jobs even during years when Borough jobs were more plentiful.

Figure 7. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector

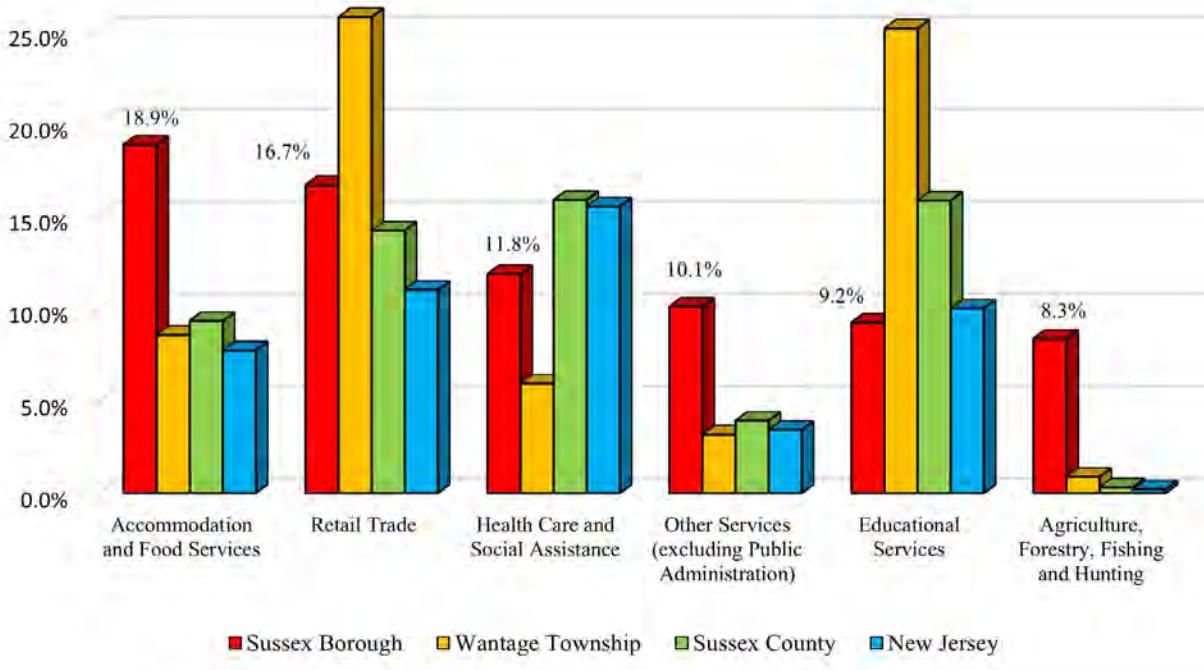


Figure 7. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector (continued)

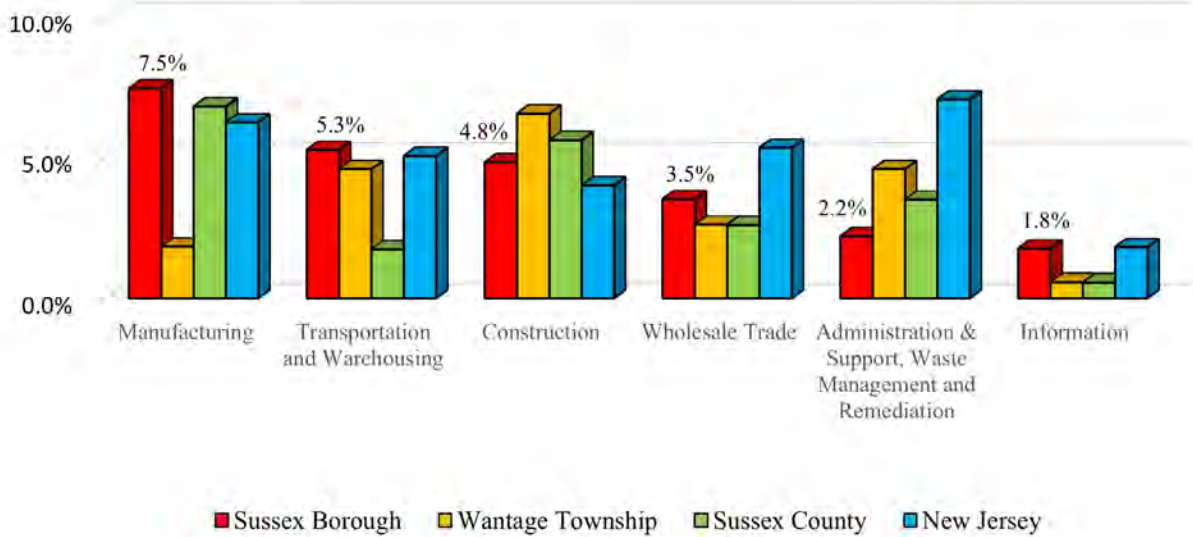
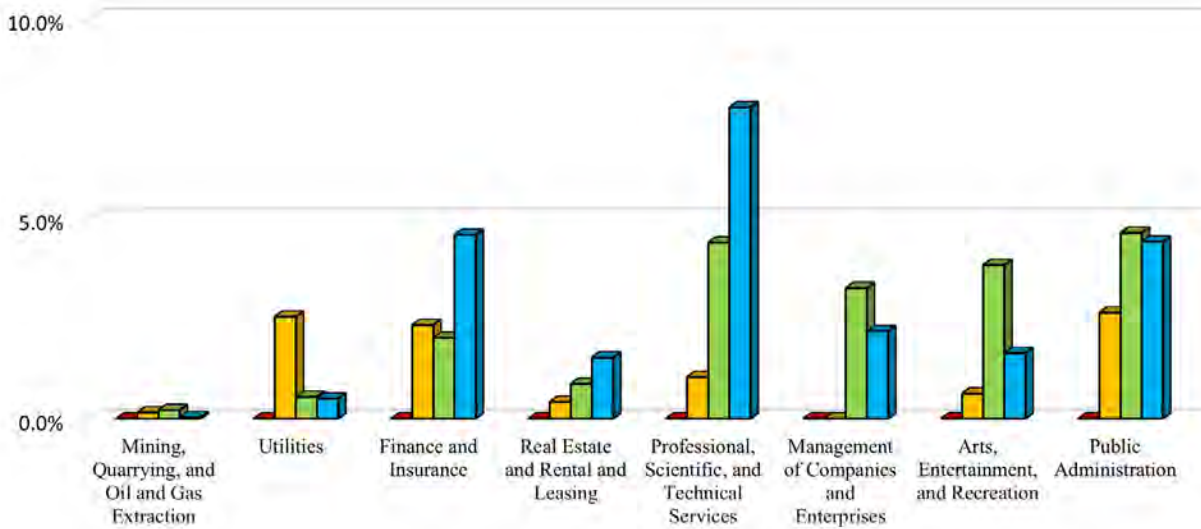


Figure 7. Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector (continued)



Source: OnTheMap, U.S. Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies

This shows that the types of industries that anchor the Borough’s economy are much less diverse than what is seen on a regional or statewide scale. The has left the Borough vulnerable to major shocks when confronted with losses in a few key industry sectors. The evolution of the types and quantities of jobs suggests that the Borough has struggled to hold onto the industry sectors that have traditionally served as the backbone to the economy. As jobs were lost in the three key industry sectors, the Borough was largely unable to offset the losses by revitalizing other parts of the same sector or transitioning to new industry sectors.

Jobs by Earnings

Comparing the employment profiles of employed Borough residents with people who work in the Borough, as well as people employed in Wantage Township, Sussex County, and the State, highlights key differences in employment opportunities.

As shown in Figure 8 below, the share of workers employed within Sussex Borough who earn \$1,250 per month or less (42.1%) is much higher than neighboring Wantage Township (27.6%) and Sussex County (27.4%) and twice as high as the State (21.0%). Similarly, the share of Borough workers who make more than \$3,333 per month (19.7%) is less than half the share seen in Wantage Township (41.6%), Sussex County (43.7%), and the State (51.5%). Some of this discrepancy, especially when comparing to the State level, can be attributed to a lower cost of living in the Borough, though the stark differences with Wantage Township and Sussex County demonstrates that higher paying jobs are available in the immediate area.

Figure 8. Monthly Earnings by Geography

	Workers Employed within Geography							
	Sussex Borough		Wantage Township		Sussex County		New Jersey	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
\$1,250 per month or less	96	42.1%	529	27.6%	10,311	27.4%	843,469	21.0%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	87	38.2%	592	30.8%	10,867	28.9%	1,106,568	27.5%
More than \$3,333 per month	45	19.7%	799	41.6%	16,442	43.7%	2,068,474	51.5%
Total	228	100.0%	1,920	100.0%	37,620	100.0%	4,018,511	100.0%

Source: OnTheMap, U.S. Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies

Looking at the differences in monthly income between workers employed in Sussex Borough and employed residents of the Borough (who overwhelmingly work elsewhere) highlights this discrepancy (see Figure 9). Nearly half (47.8%) of the Borough’s employed residents earn more than \$3,333 per month, while less than a quarter (23.9%) earn \$1,250 or less per month. This suggests that one of the primary factors contributing to the small number of total jobs in the Borough (228) and the number of people who both work and reside in the Borough (15) is the low pay of jobs available in the Borough compared with the surrounding area.

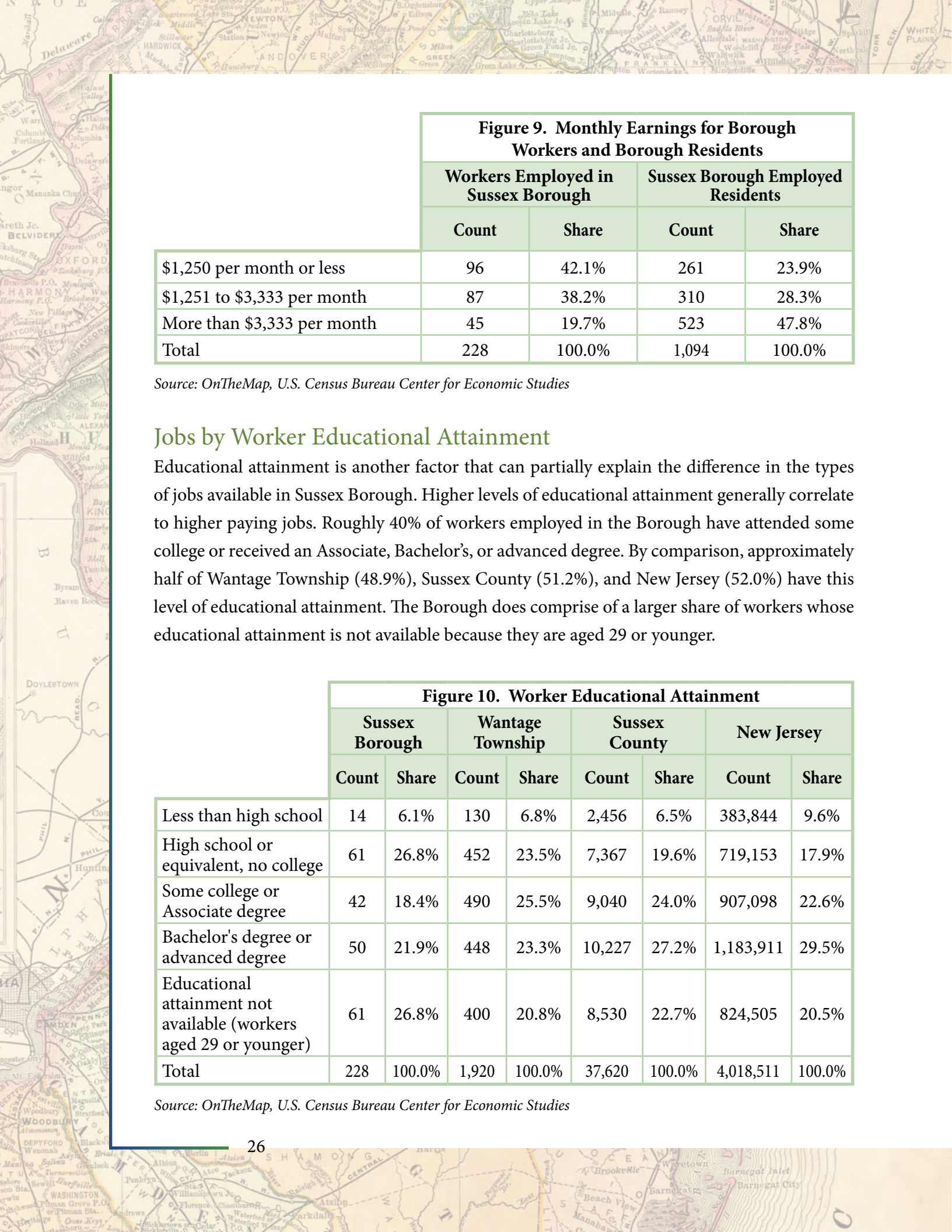


Figure 9. Monthly Earnings for Borough Workers and Borough Residents

	Workers Employed in Sussex Borough		Sussex Borough Employed Residents	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
\$1,250 per month or less	96	42.1%	261	23.9%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	87	38.2%	310	28.3%
More than \$3,333 per month	45	19.7%	523	47.8%
Total	228	100.0%	1,094	100.0%

Source: OnTheMap, U.S. Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies

Jobs by Worker Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is another factor that can partially explain the difference in the types of jobs available in Sussex Borough. Higher levels of educational attainment generally correlate to higher paying jobs. Roughly 40% of workers employed in the Borough have attended some college or received an Associate, Bachelor’s, or advanced degree. By comparison, approximately half of Wantage Township (48.9%), Sussex County (51.2%), and New Jersey (52.0%) have this level of educational attainment. The Borough does comprise of a larger share of workers whose educational attainment is not available because they are aged 29 or younger.

Figure 10. Worker Educational Attainment

	Sussex Borough		Wantage Township		Sussex County		New Jersey	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Less than high school	14	6.1%	130	6.8%	2,456	6.5%	383,844	9.6%
High school or equivalent, no college	61	26.8%	452	23.5%	7,367	19.6%	719,153	17.9%
Some college or Associate degree	42	18.4%	490	25.5%	9,040	24.0%	907,098	22.6%
Bachelor's degree or advanced degree	50	21.9%	448	23.3%	10,227	27.2%	1,183,911	29.5%
Educational attainment not available (workers aged 29 or younger)	61	26.8%	400	20.8%	8,530	22.7%	824,505	20.5%
Total	228	100.0%	1,920	100.0%	37,620	100.0%	4,018,511	100.0%

Source: OnTheMap, U.S. Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies

Commuting Patterns

According to OnTheMap data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Center for Economic Studies shown in Figure 11, only 15 of Sussex Borough’s 1,094 employed residents, or 1.4%, also work in the Borough, as of 2019. A total of 228 people are employed in the Borough, with 213 of these workers, or 93.4%, living outside of the municipality. The net job outflow, or the difference between the number of people living in Sussex Borough and the number of people employed in Sussex Borough, is 866.

As discussed in the *Employment Trends* section above, between 2002 and 2019, the number of employed Borough residents remained roughly the same (1,073 and 1,094, respectively), but the number of jobs within the Borough shrank precipitously from 637 in 2002 to 228 in 2019. The net job outflow increased roughly doubled during this time period (from 436 to 866). While the number of people who both lived and working in the Borough was already relatively low (51 people in 2002, comprising 4.8% of the employed Borough residents and 9.0% of total jobs in the Borough), it has steadily decreased further with only 15 people who work and live in the Borough in 2019 (representing only 1.4% of employed Borough residents and 6.6% of the 228 jobs in the Borough).

Figure 11. Sussex Borough Commuting Flows

	2019		2015		2010		2005		2002	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Living in Sussex Borough	1,094	-	1,048	-	1,038	-	1,100	-	1,073	-
Living and Employed in Sussex Borough	15	1.4%	32	3.1%	45	4.3%	46	4.2%	51	4.8%
Living in Sussex Borough but Employed Outside	1,079	98.6%	1,016	96.9%	993	95.7%	1,054	95.8%	1,022	95.2%
Employed in Sussex Borough	228	-	437	-	672	-	638	-	637	-
Employed and Living in Sussex Borough	15	6.6%	32	7.3%	45	6.7%	46	7.2%	51	8.0%
Employed in Sussex Borough but Living Outside	213	93.4%	405	92.7%	627	93.3%	592	92.8%	586	92.0%
Net Job Outflow	866	-	611	-	366	-	462	-	436	-

Source: OnTheMap, U.S. Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies



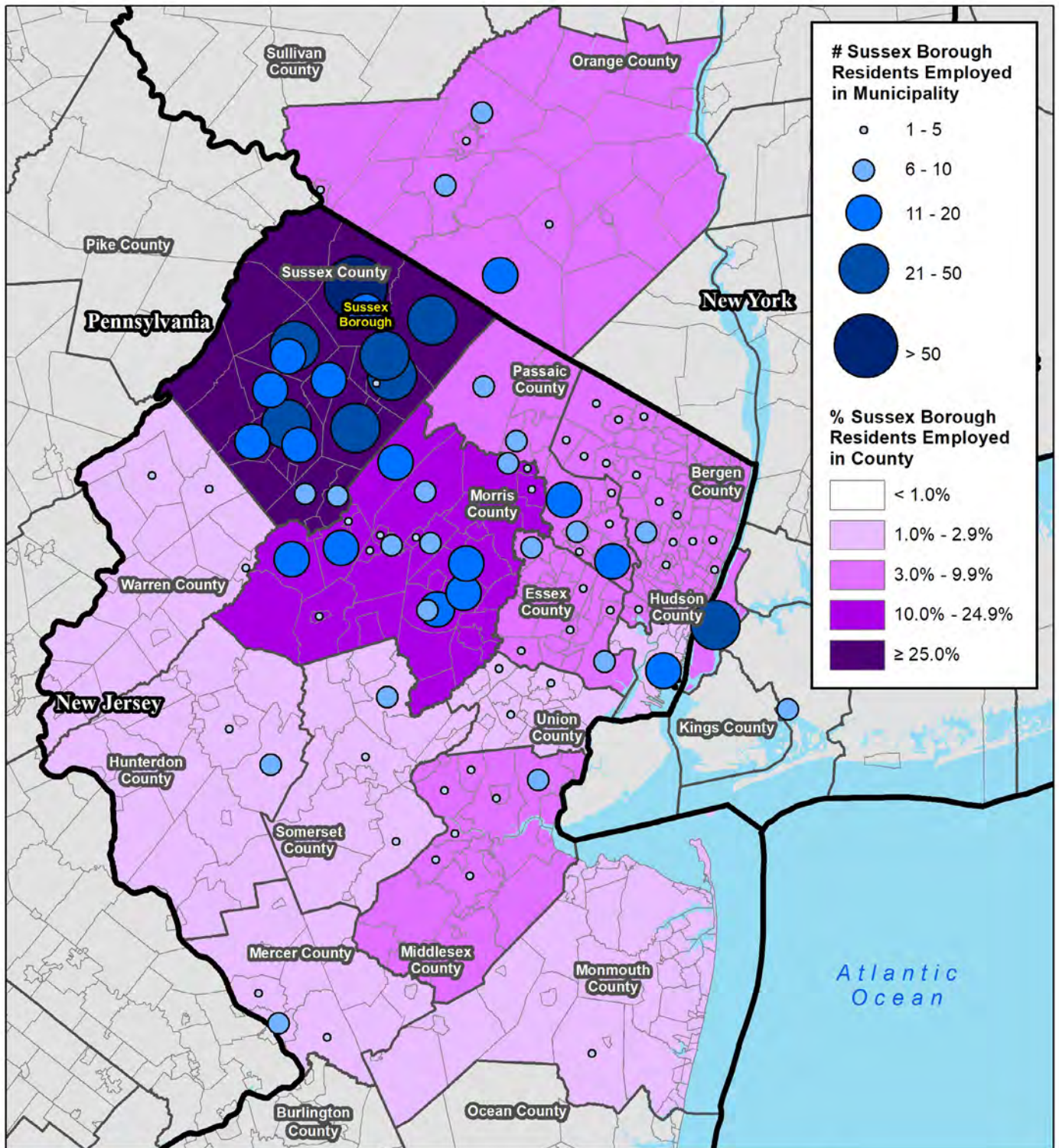
Where Borough Residents Work

As shown in Map 5, 399 of Sussex Borough's 1,094 employed residents (36.5%) work within Sussex County, as of 2019. Municipalities within Sussex County comprise 11 of the 13 most common employment destinations for the Borough's employed residents. Wantage Township is the most common commuting destination with 90 Borough residents while Sussex Borough's 15 employed residents is only the 13th most common. Sussex County municipalities that are more common commuting destinations than the Borough include the Town of Newton (42 employed residents), Hardyston Township (36), Hamburg Borough (31), Sparta Township (29), Vernon Township (27), Frankford Township (24), Andover Township (18), Hampton Township (17), and Branchville Township (16). More employed Borough residents also commute to Manhattan Borough in New York City and Wayne Township in Passaic County (44 and 19 employed residents, respectively) than remain in the Borough for work.

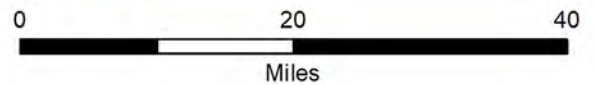
While only modest numbers of employed Borough residents commute to individual municipalities outside of Sussex County, the accumulated total of commuters at the county level shows the trend of employed Borough residents traveling to nearby counties for work. Altogether nearly two-thirds of the Borough's employed residents commute to locations outside of Sussex County (63.5%), predominantly traveling east towards New York City. Morris County to the direct east of Sussex County comprises the biggest contingent of employed Borough residents commuting to a different county for work (153 employed residents). This is followed by Passaic County (74), which is also adjacent to Sussex County, and Bergen County (65), which is to the east of Passaic County and borders New York State to the east. The next most common counties of employment are both in New York State: Orange County (46) to the immediate north of Sussex County, and New York County (44), which solely comprises the Borough of Manhattan.

Despite its proximity, Pennsylvania counties and municipalities are not major commuting destinations for the Borough's employed residents. Lehigh and Monroe Counties employ 5 Borough residents each and the Pennsylvania municipality with the highest number of employed Borough residents is Allentown City in Lehigh County (3). This emphasizes that the economic and employment gravity of the Borough is pulling predominantly to the east towards New York City and, to a lesser degree, to the north into Orange County, New York.

Map 5. Sussex Borough: Location of Employment for Sussex Borough Residents



N
2022



Data Sources: NJDCA, NJOGIS, U.S. Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies



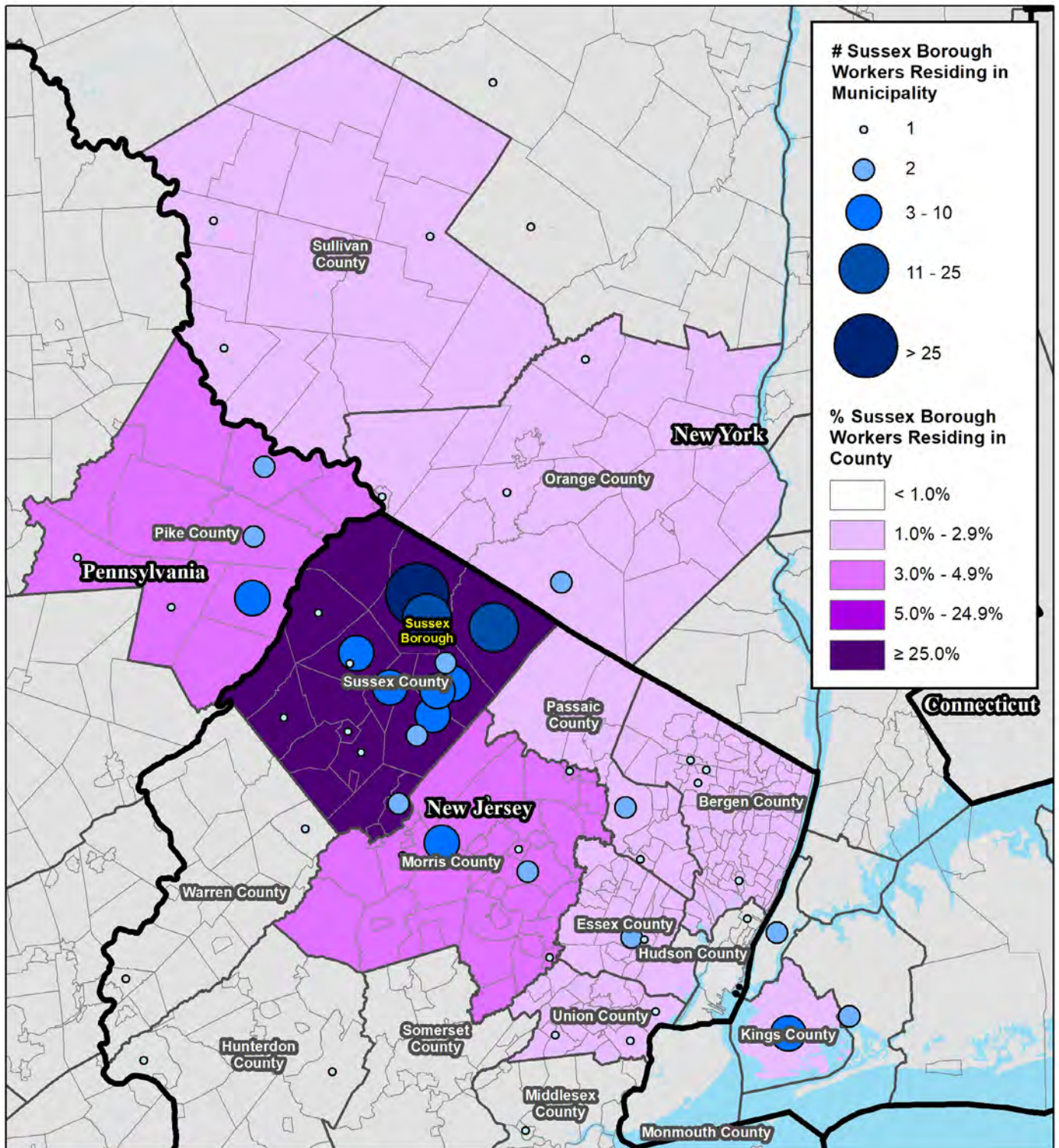
Where Borough Workers Live

An analysis of the location of residence for people working in Sussex Borough shows a slightly different dispersion to the location of employment. As discussed in the Employment Trends section above, the most significant difference is the small, and shrinking, number of people who work within the Borough, which was 228 according to 2019 data. Of this total Borough workforce, 162 (71.1%) live within Sussex County with 91 (39.9%) living in Wantage Township alone. The only other municipalities contributing more than ten workers to the Borough are Vernon Township (20) to the east of Wantage Township and Sussex Borough itself (15).

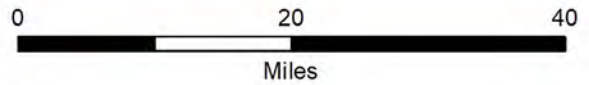
In addition to the majority of workers living in Sussex County, the geographic spread of where Borough workers live is not as dependent as on the pull of New York City as where Borough residents work. Sussex Borough has roughly four times as many employed residents as Borough workers. The vast majority of workers commute to the east towards the greater New York City area, suggesting that the Borough offers more affordable housing opportunities than the communities where these jobs are located.

Analyzing where Borough workers live show that there are as many workers commuting from Pike County, Pennsylvania (9) to the west as Morris County to the east (11), the two external counties that contribute the most workers to the Borough. This is in contrast to where Borough residents work, which is predominantly to the east.

Map 6. Sussex Borough: Location of Residence for Sussex Borough Workers



N
 2022



Data Sources: NJDCA, NJOGIS, U.S. Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies

Environmental Constraints

Water, Wetlands, Riparian Zone, and Floodplains

Sussex Borough's most prominent natural features are Clove Lake and Clove Brook, which flows south from the lake. Wetlands and floodplains, which largely overlap, are found in areas along the lake and brook.

Floodplains are the lands adjacent to a waterbody that experiences occasional flooding, also known as Flood Hazard Areas. 100-year and 500-year floodplains (equal to a 1% and 0.2% annual chance of flooding, respectively) are delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and regulated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Areas within Sussex Borough that are considered to be within floodplains are shown on Map 7.

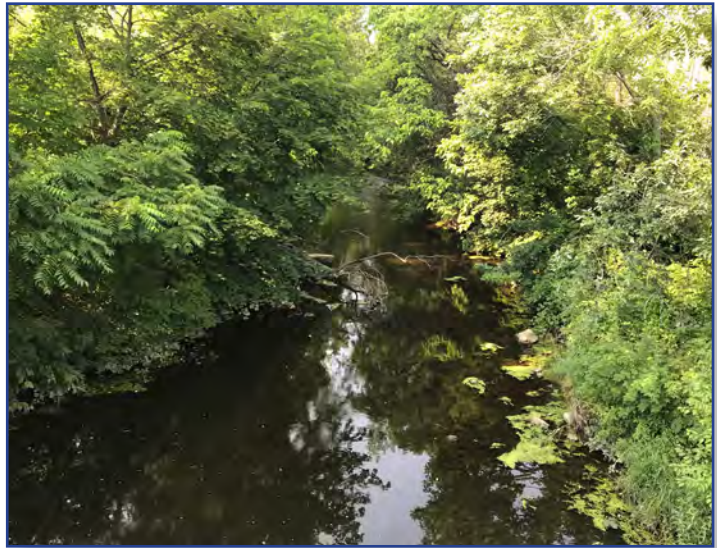
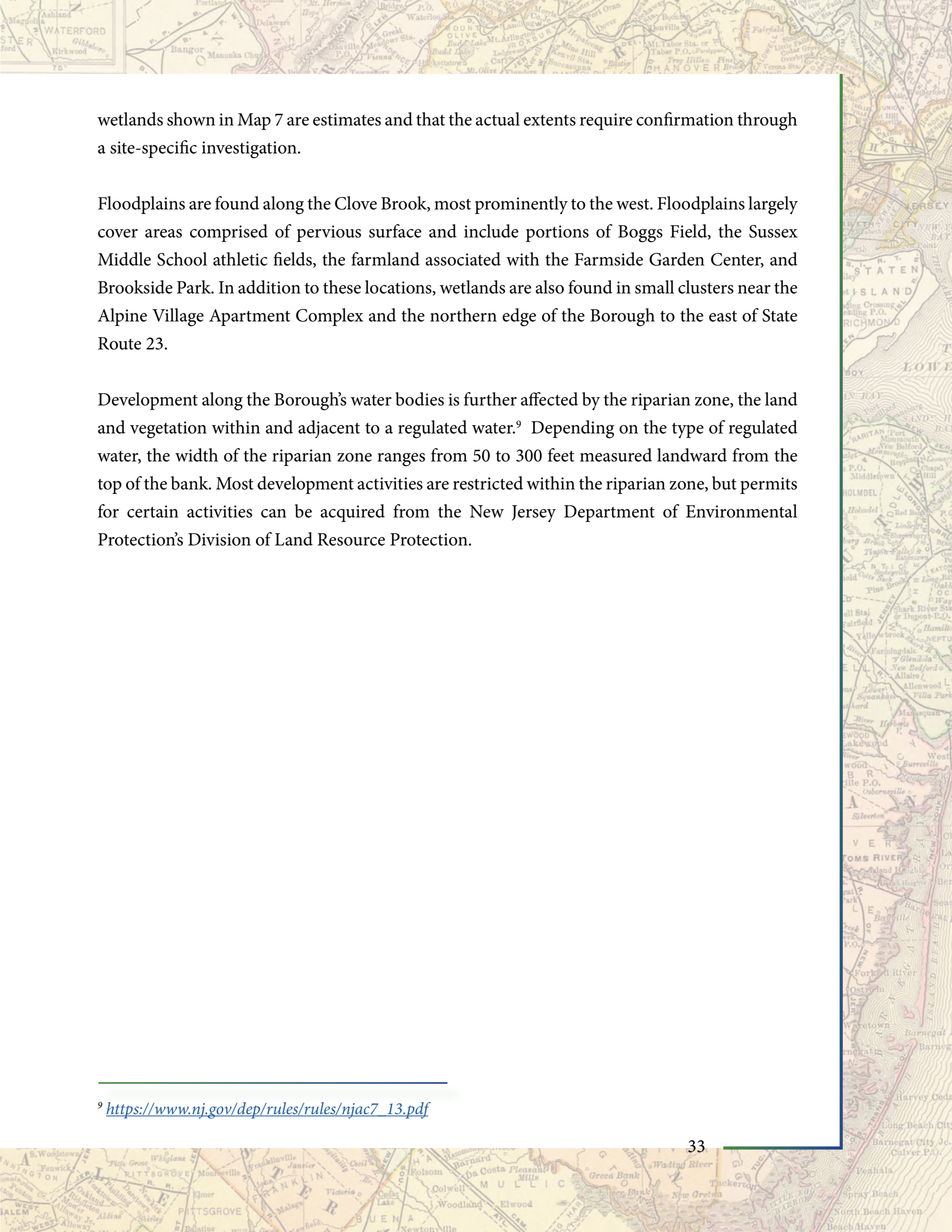


Image 6. The Clove Brook flows from Clove Lake in the Borough's north to the Papakating Creek to the south of the Borough.



Image 7. Most of the floodplains along Clove Brook are covered by pervious surfaces such as the Sussex Middle School athletic fields.

Freshwater wetlands are areas that are saturated or inundated with surface or groundwater for sufficient time to support hydrophytic vegetation. Wetlands play a critical role in filtering pollutants from the water system and serving as a natural stormwater management system, as well as providing critical habitats for a variety of plants and animals. Wetlands in New Jersey are protected with a development buffer of up to 150'.



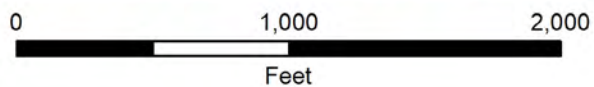
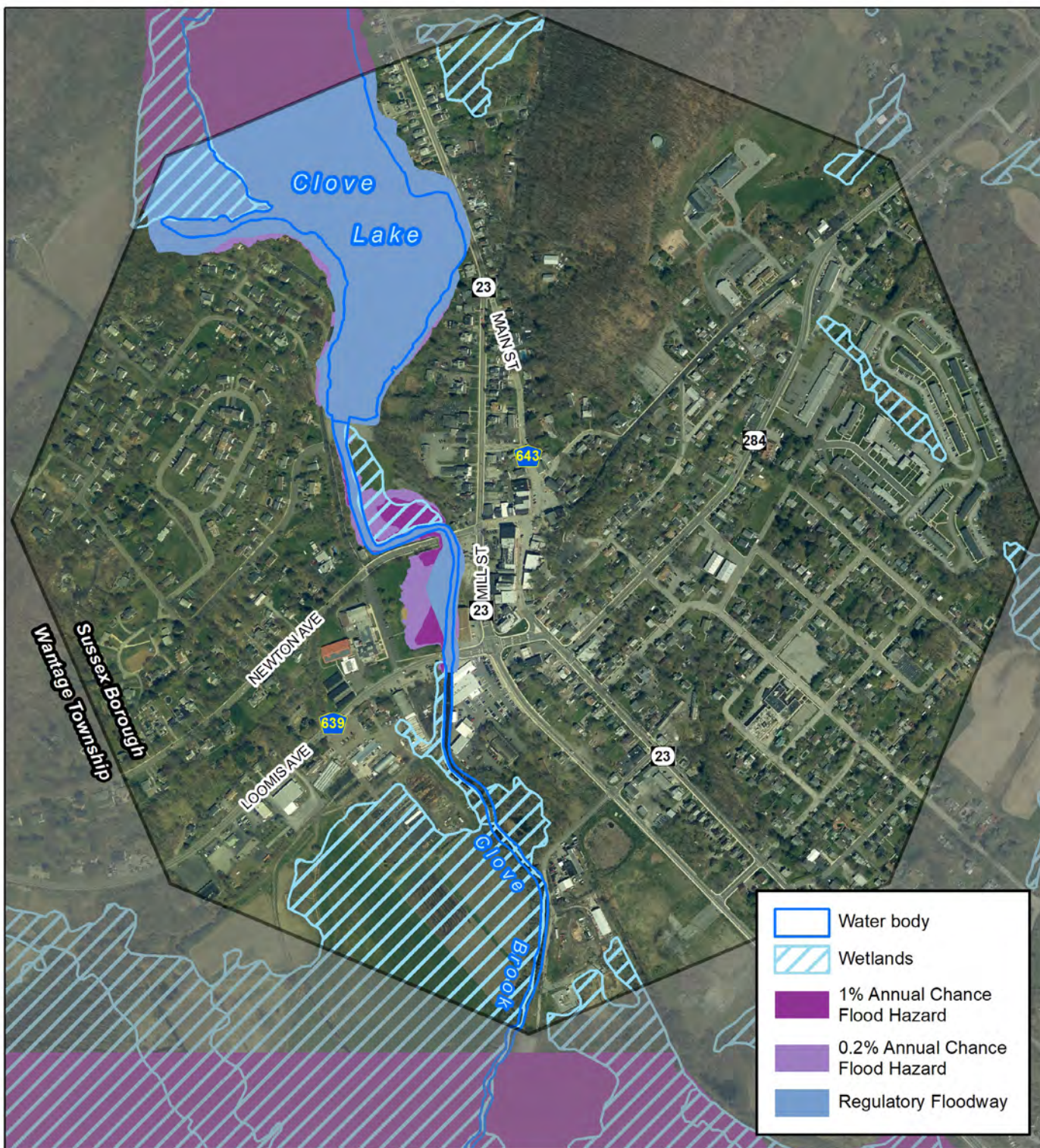
wetlands shown in Map 7 are estimates and that the actual extents require confirmation through a site-specific investigation.

Floodplains are found along the Clove Brook, most prominently to the west. Floodplains largely cover areas comprised of pervious surface and include portions of Boggs Field, the Sussex Middle School athletic fields, the farmland associated with the Farmside Garden Center, and Brookside Park. In addition to these locations, wetlands are also found in small clusters near the Alpine Village Apartment Complex and the northern edge of the Borough to the east of State Route 23.

Development along the Borough's water bodies is further affected by the riparian zone, the land and vegetation within and adjacent to a regulated water.⁹ Depending on the type of regulated water, the width of the riparian zone ranges from 50 to 300 feet measured landward from the top of the bank. Most development activities are restricted within the riparian zone, but permits for certain activities can be acquired from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Land Resource Protection.

⁹ https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/rules/njac7_13.pdf

Map 7. Sussex Borough Water, Wetlands, and Floodplains



Data Sources: FEMA, ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS

Steep Slopes

Sussex Borough is also notable for its topography. The elevation ranges from roughly 440' above sea level along Clove Brook to 580' above sea level at the top of the hill in the northeast part of the Borough between Highland Avenue and the Sussex Christian School. As shown on Map 8, areas with slopes greater than 15% are most prominent near this area. Drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists will recognize that streets in this area, or at least sections of streets, can have noticeably steep grades. In addition to the uphill curve that helps make Main Street so unique, Unionville Road, East Main Street, and Harrison Street also experience a drastic increase in elevation heading to the northeast.

Areas with the highest slope (greater than 25%) account for almost all of the undeveloped areas in the Borough.



Image 8. The highest elevation and the steepest slopes in the Borough are found on the largely undeveloped hill overlooking Clove Lake.

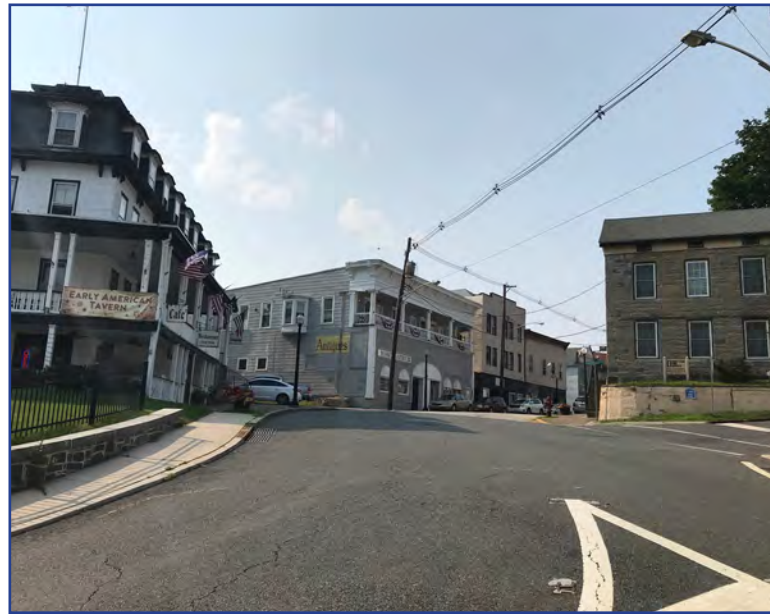
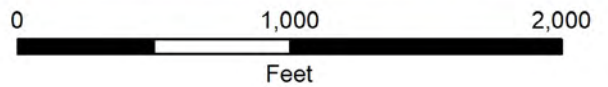
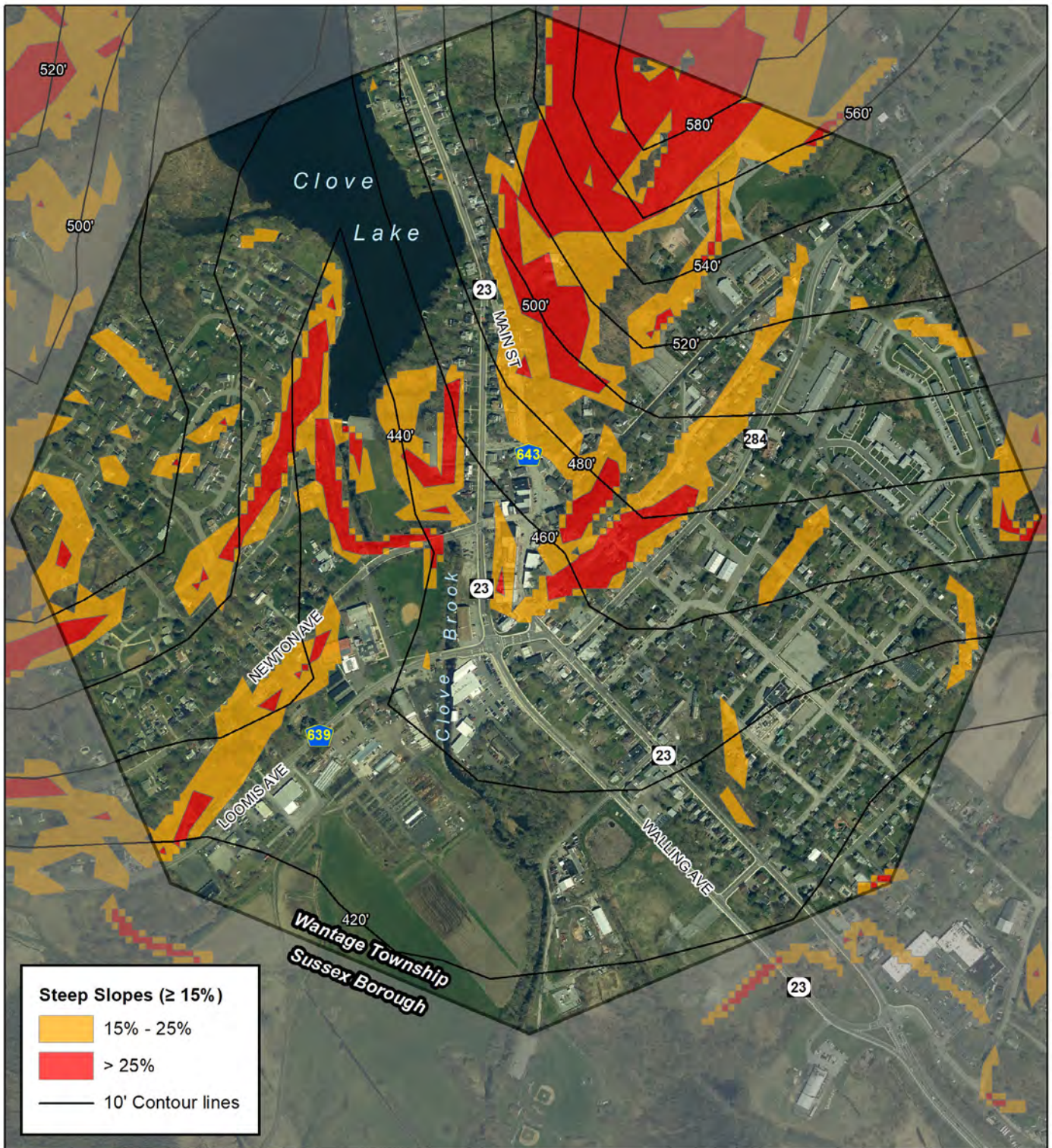


Image 9. Main Street is largely defined by its gentle uphill curve.

Map 8. Sussex Borough Steep Slopes and Elevation



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS

Property Classification

The New Jersey Division of Taxation maintains and updates the New Jersey Property Tax System (MOD-IV) data tables, which are based upon individual parcel records collected by local tax assessors. This data set was matched to a GIS parcel layer for further examination. Each block and lot record contains a property classification code for taxable real property (1 through 4C), railroad property (5A), and exempt property (15A-15F) as shown in Figure 12 and Map 9. Each record (parcel) is assigned only one property classification. Below is a description of property classifications in Sussex Borough.

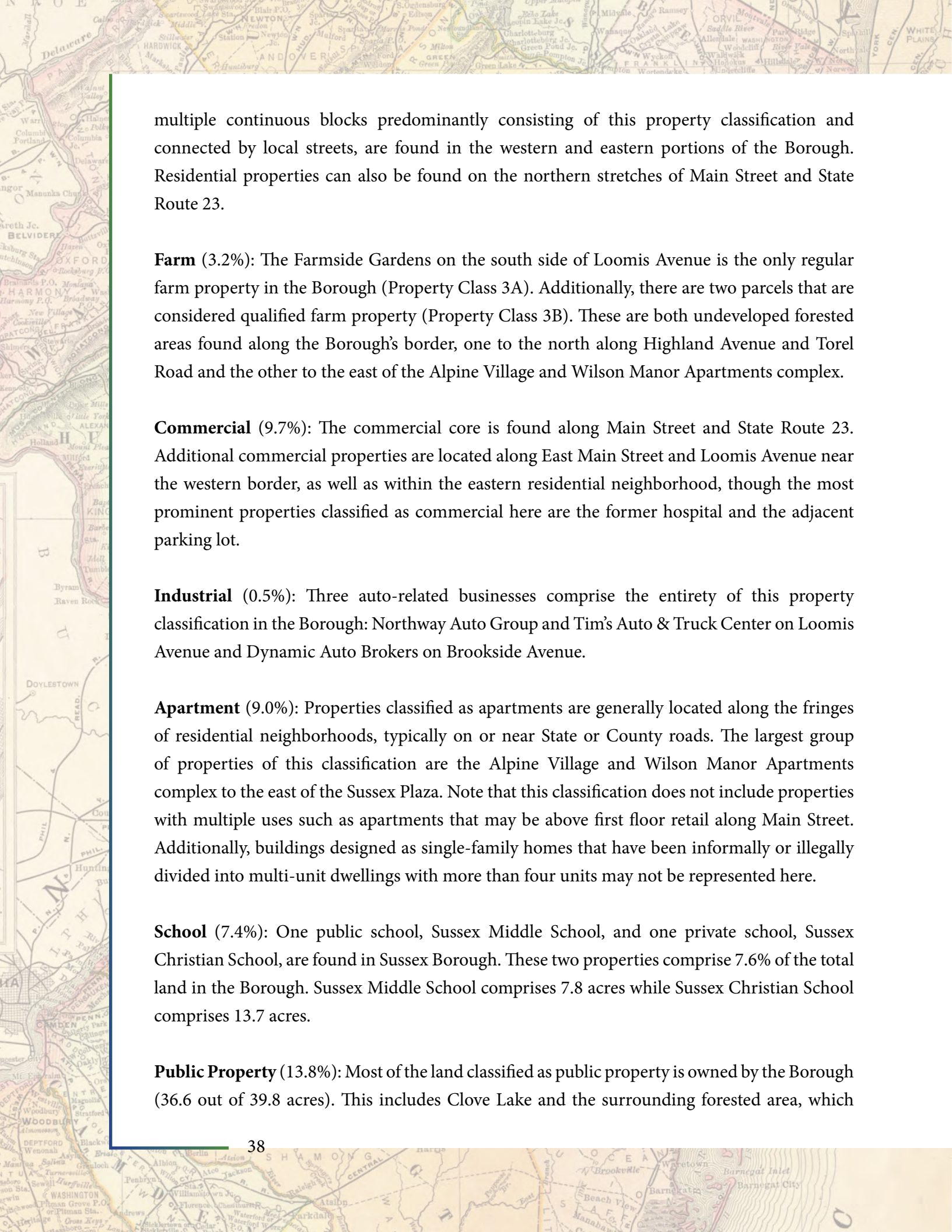
Vacant Land (6.6% of Total Land in the Borough): Small pockets of vacant land are dispersed throughout the Borough. A number of vacant properties are found within the residential neighborhoods in the western part of the Borough. Some vacant properties are also found along commercial routes, most notably along the State Route 23 Southbound. Also note that certain properties that may be perceived as functionally vacant, such as the former hospital building, are not considered vacant by the Division of Taxation’s assessment methods.

Figure 12. Property Classification

Property Classification	Acres		Parcels	
	#	%	#	%
Vacant	19.1	6.6%	41	6.3%
Single Family Residential	129.8	44.9%	450	68.9%
Farm	9.2	3.2%	3	0.5%
Commercial	27.9	9.7%	67	10.3%
Industrial	1.5	0.5%	2	0.3%
Apartment	26.1	9.0%	12	1.8%
School	21.5	7.4%	2	0.3%
Public Property	39.8	13.8%	51	7.8%
Church & Charitable Property	8.2	2.8%	15	2.3%
Other Exempt	2.8	1.0%	5	0.8%
Unknown	3.0	1.0%	5	0.8%
Total	288.7	100.0%	653	100.0%

Source: New Jersey Division of Taxation 2021 MOD-IV data

Residential (44.9%): Parcels assessed as residential comprise the largest property classification in the Borough with almost half of the total land dedicated to this. This classification includes single family homes, as well as buildings comprising up to four units. Residential neighborhoods,



multiple continuous blocks predominantly consisting of this property classification and connected by local streets, are found in the western and eastern portions of the Borough. Residential properties can also be found on the northern stretches of Main Street and State Route 23.

Farm (3.2%): The Farmside Gardens on the south side of Loomis Avenue is the only regular farm property in the Borough (Property Class 3A). Additionally, there are two parcels that are considered qualified farm property (Property Class 3B). These are both undeveloped forested areas found along the Borough's border, one to the north along Highland Avenue and Torel Road and the other to the east of the Alpine Village and Wilson Manor Apartments complex.

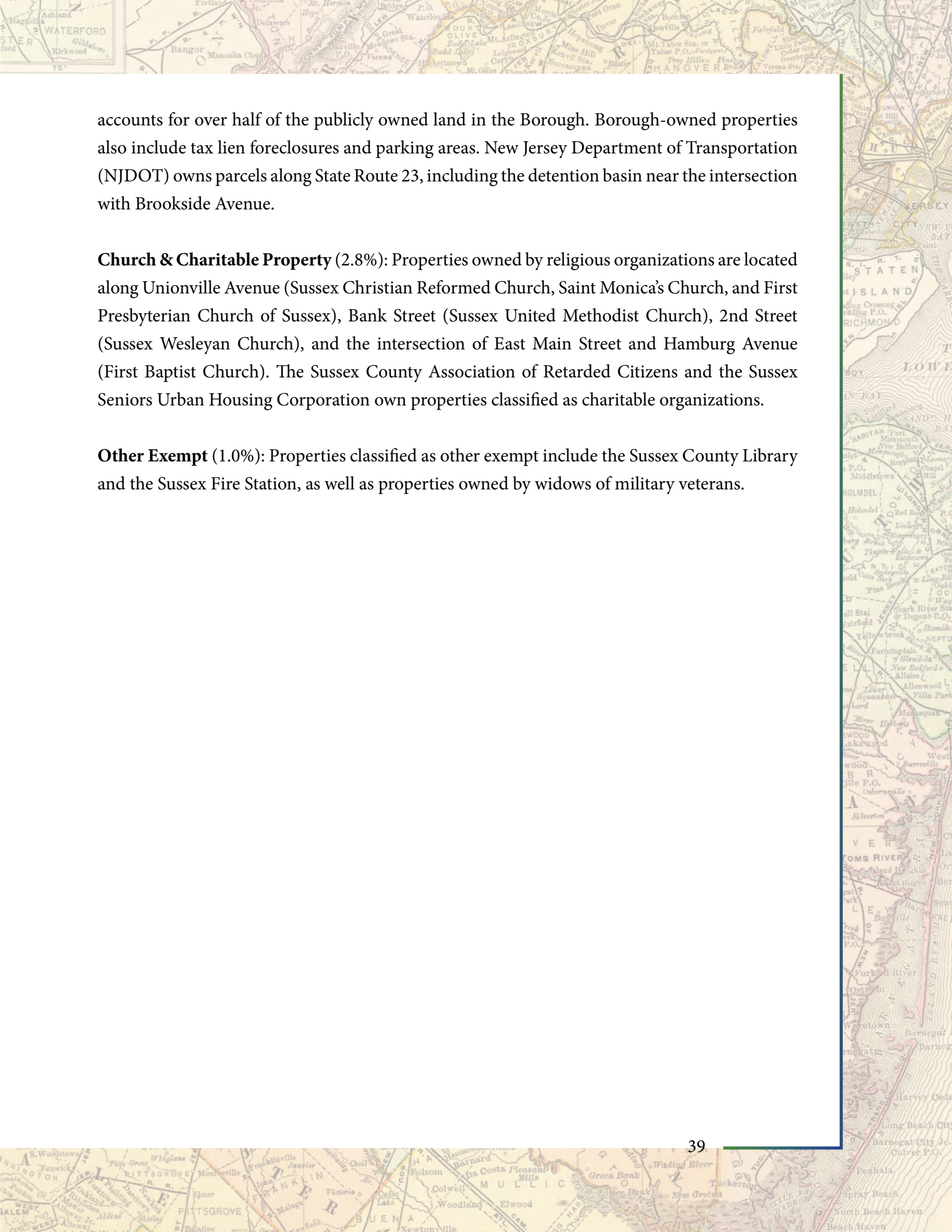
Commercial (9.7%): The commercial core is found along Main Street and State Route 23. Additional commercial properties are located along East Main Street and Loomis Avenue near the western border, as well as within the eastern residential neighborhood, though the most prominent properties classified as commercial here are the former hospital and the adjacent parking lot.

Industrial (0.5%): Three auto-related businesses comprise the entirety of this property classification in the Borough: Northway Auto Group and Tim's Auto & Truck Center on Loomis Avenue and Dynamic Auto Brokers on Brookside Avenue.

Apartment (9.0%): Properties classified as apartments are generally located along the fringes of residential neighborhoods, typically on or near State or County roads. The largest group of properties of this classification are the Alpine Village and Wilson Manor Apartments complex to the east of the Sussex Plaza. Note that this classification does not include properties with multiple uses such as apartments that may be above first floor retail along Main Street. Additionally, buildings designed as single-family homes that have been informally or illegally divided into multi-unit dwellings with more than four units may not be represented here.

School (7.4%): One public school, Sussex Middle School, and one private school, Sussex Christian School, are found in Sussex Borough. These two properties comprise 7.6% of the total land in the Borough. Sussex Middle School comprises 7.8 acres while Sussex Christian School comprises 13.7 acres.

Public Property (13.8%): Most of the land classified as public property is owned by the Borough (36.6 out of 39.8 acres). This includes Clove Lake and the surrounding forested area, which

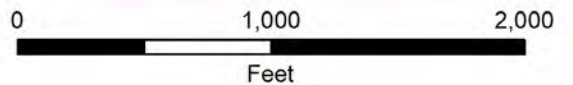
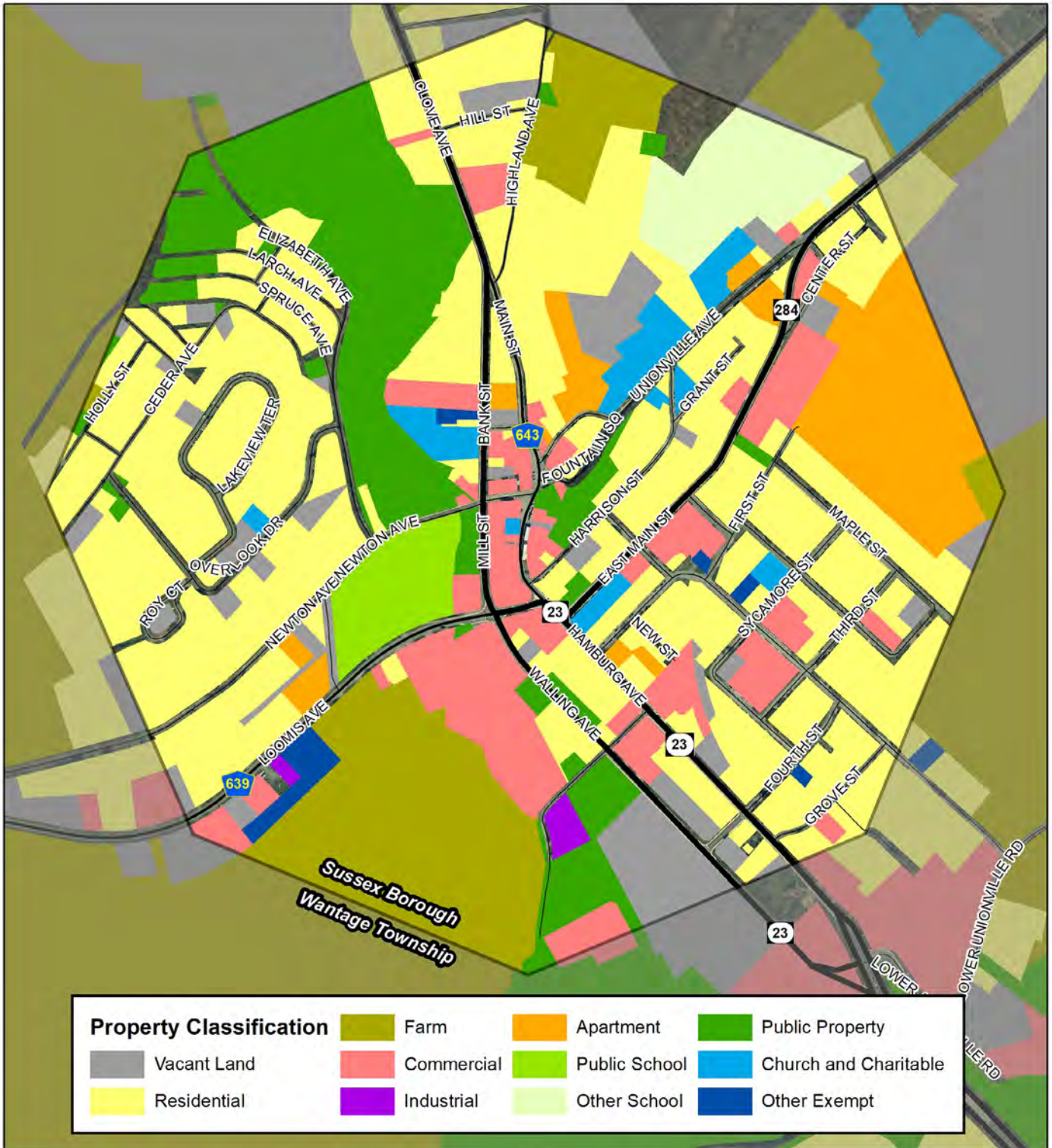


accounts for over half of the publicly owned land in the Borough. Borough-owned properties also include tax lien foreclosures and parking areas. New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) owns parcels along State Route 23, including the detention basin near the intersection with Brookside Avenue.

Church & Charitable Property (2.8%): Properties owned by religious organizations are located along Unionville Avenue (Sussex Christian Reformed Church, Saint Monica's Church, and First Presbyterian Church of Sussex), Bank Street (Sussex United Methodist Church), 2nd Street (Sussex Wesleyan Church), and the intersection of East Main Street and Hamburg Avenue (First Baptist Church). The Sussex County Association of Retarded Citizens and the Sussex Seniors Urban Housing Corporation own properties classified as charitable organizations.

Other Exempt (1.0%): Properties classified as other exempt include the Sussex County Library and the Sussex Fire Station, as well as properties owned by widows of military veterans.

Map 9. Sussex Borough Property Classification



Data Sources: ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation



Zoning

The purpose and permitted uses for the zones identified in the zoning ordinance, are summarized below:

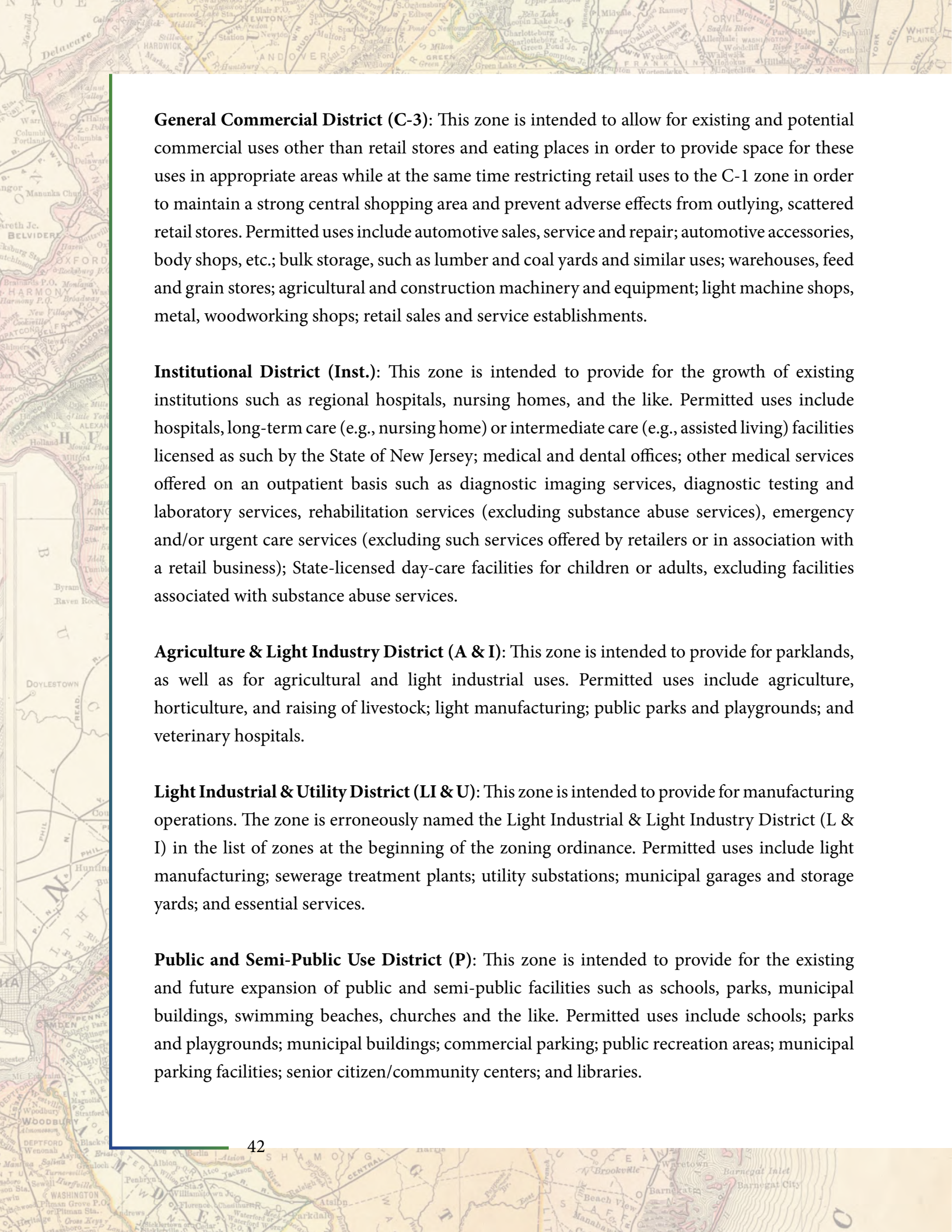
Low Density Residential (R-1): This zone is intended to apply to existing and projected future areas of predominantly single-family homes. Permitted uses include single-family residences at a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet. The conversion of single-family residences to two-family structures are permitted as a conditional use.

Medium Density Residential (R-2): This zone is intended to recognize existing areas of two-family homes in certain sections of the Borough, and to allow a limited amount of new two-family homes and conversion of existing large homes; as well as to allow new office construction and conversion of existing residential buildings to office use, under strict development standards. Permitted uses include single-family detached residences at a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet. Duplex dwellings are permitted as a conditional use.

High Density Residential (Garden apartments) (R-3): The zone is intended to provide for the further development of multifamily dwellings up to two stories in height in appropriate areas. Permitted uses include single family detached homes, duplex dwellings, and garden apartments up to 12 units per acre.

Central Business District (C-1): The zone is intended to provide for commercial uses, including retail stores and consumer services to form the central shopping area of the community. Permitted uses include general business and professional offices; retail sales and services establishments designed to meet the needs of the region; buildings containing apartments on the second or third floors of a building containing a retail store and service establishment or office on the first floor of a building.

Redevelopment Area District (C-2): This zone is intended to allow for the further extension of the central business district through the encouragement of redevelopment of the Creamery and railroad station area toward Clove Brook and the abandoned school site on top of the hill. Permitted uses include municipal buildings and offices; post office, library, banks, and similar public use; regional shopping and service center; craft center; apartments over permitted and commercial uses; and horticultural uses, parks, ponds and lumber yards. Note that the Redevelopment Area District in the Borough's zoning ordinance is different from a designated Area in Need of Redevelopment (sometimes also referred to as a Redevelopment Area).



General Commercial District (C-3): This zone is intended to allow for existing and potential commercial uses other than retail stores and eating places in order to provide space for these uses in appropriate areas while at the same time restricting retail uses to the C-1 zone in order to maintain a strong central shopping area and prevent adverse effects from outlying, scattered retail stores. Permitted uses include automotive sales, service and repair; automotive accessories, body shops, etc.; bulk storage, such as lumber and coal yards and similar uses; warehouses, feed and grain stores; agricultural and construction machinery and equipment; light machine shops, metal, woodworking shops; retail sales and service establishments.

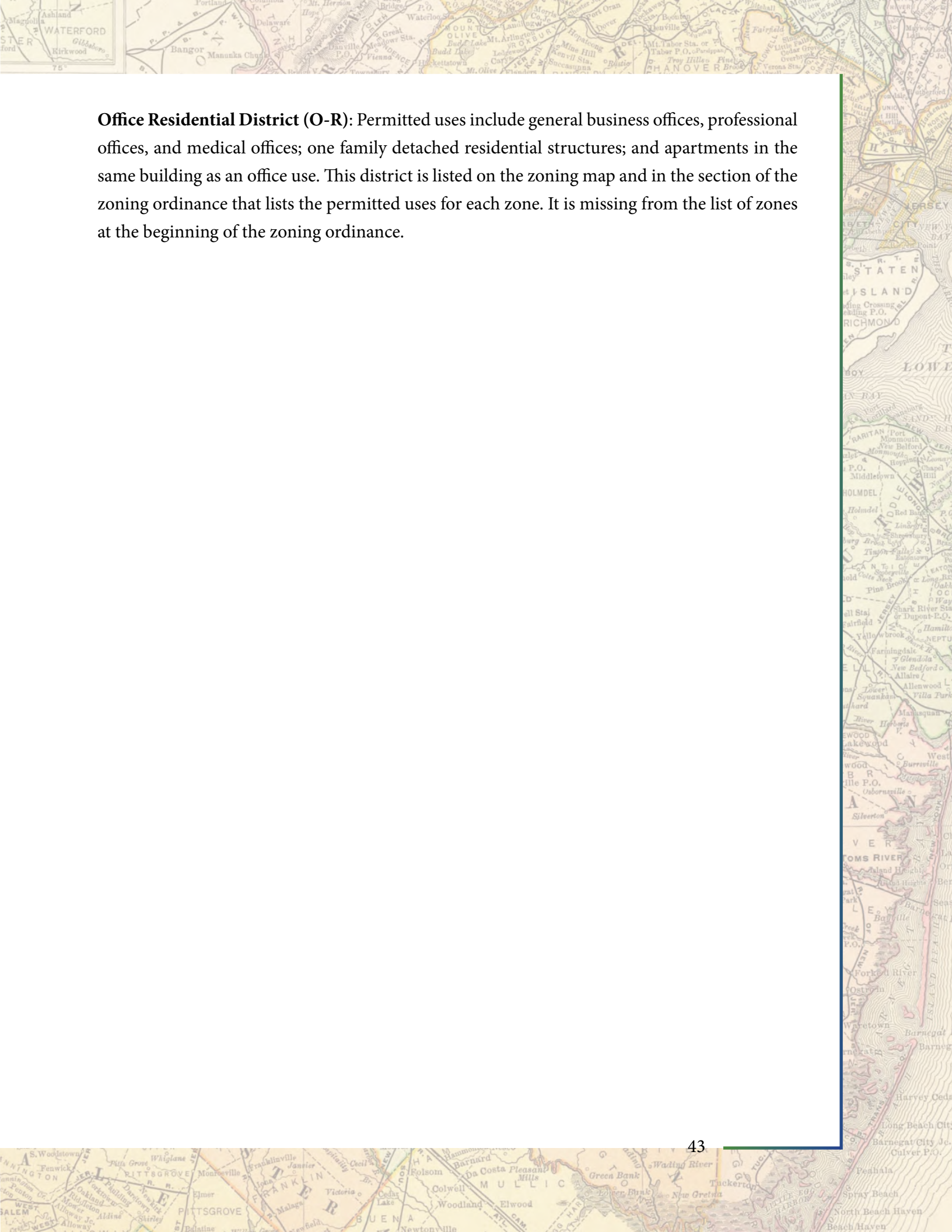
Institutional District (Inst.): This zone is intended to provide for the growth of existing institutions such as regional hospitals, nursing homes, and the like. Permitted uses include hospitals, long-term care (e.g., nursing home) or intermediate care (e.g., assisted living) facilities licensed as such by the State of New Jersey; medical and dental offices; other medical services offered on an outpatient basis such as diagnostic imaging services, diagnostic testing and laboratory services, rehabilitation services (excluding substance abuse services), emergency and/or urgent care services (excluding such services offered by retailers or in association with a retail business); State-licensed day-care facilities for children or adults, excluding facilities associated with substance abuse services.

Agriculture & Light Industry District (A & I): This zone is intended to provide for parklands, as well as for agricultural and light industrial uses. Permitted uses include agriculture, horticulture, and raising of livestock; light manufacturing; public parks and playgrounds; and veterinary hospitals.

Light Industrial & Utility District (LI & U): This zone is intended to provide for manufacturing operations. The zone is erroneously named the Light Industrial & Light Industry District (L & I) in the list of zones at the beginning of the zoning ordinance. Permitted uses include light manufacturing; sewerage treatment plants; utility substations; municipal garages and storage yards; and essential services.

Public and Semi-Public Use District (P): This zone is intended to provide for the existing and future expansion of public and semi-public facilities such as schools, parks, municipal buildings, swimming beaches, churches and the like. Permitted uses include schools; parks and playgrounds; municipal buildings; commercial parking; public recreation areas; municipal parking facilities; senior citizen/community centers; and libraries.

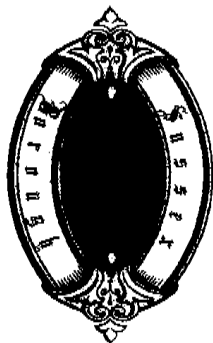
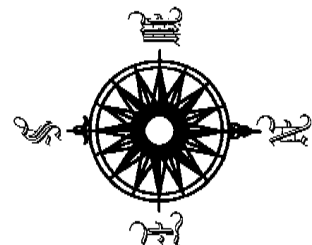
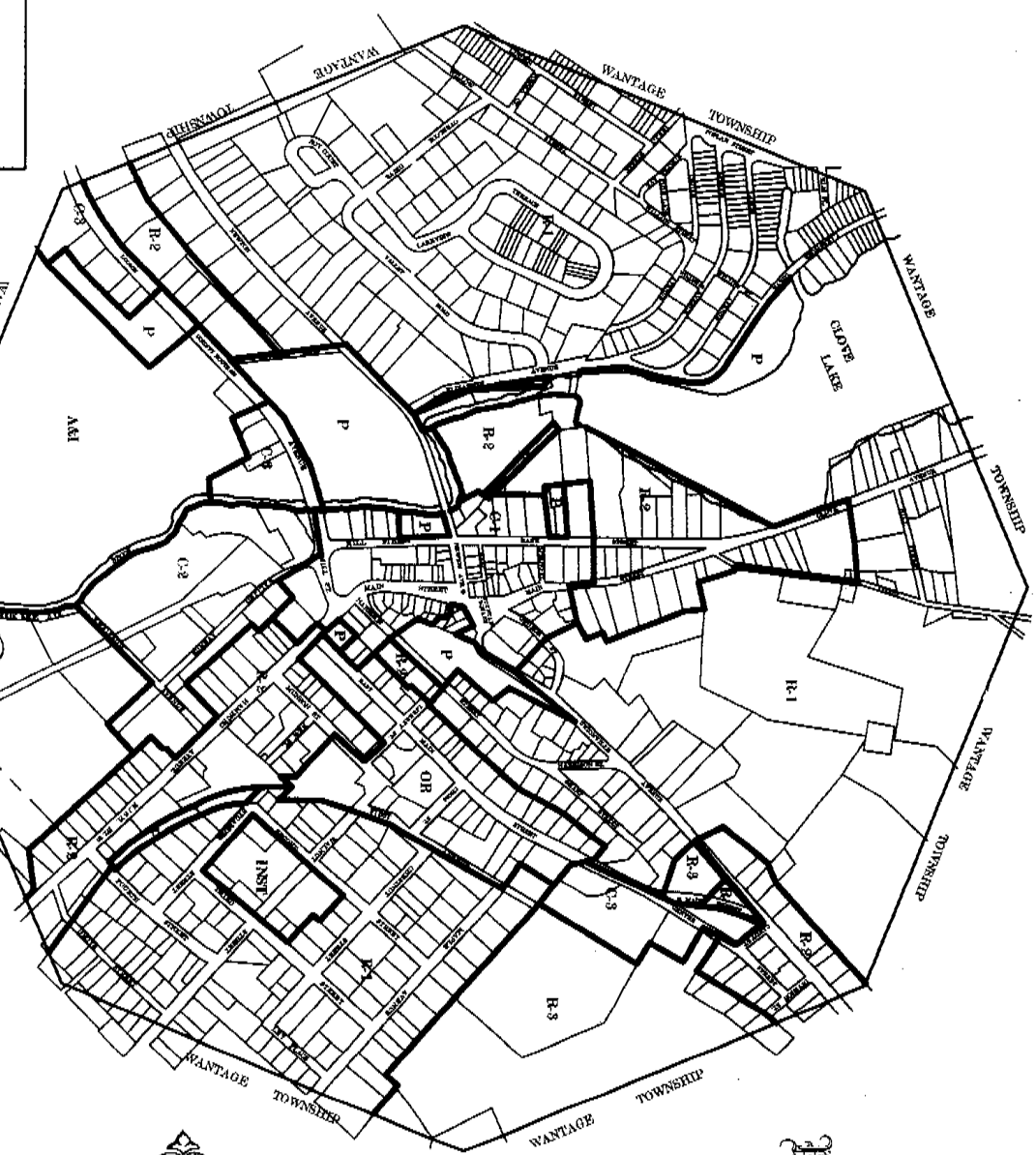
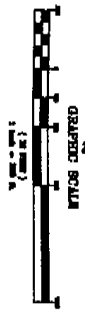
Office Residential District (O-R): Permitted uses include general business offices, professional offices, and medical offices; one family detached residential structures; and apartments in the same building as an office use. This district is listed on the zoning map and in the section of the zoning ordinance that lists the permitted uses for each zone. It is missing from the list of zones at the beginning of the zoning ordinance.



Map 10. Official Zoning Map

Zone	Primary Use
R-1	Low Density Residential
R-2	Medium Density Residential
R-3	High Density Residential (Garden Apartments)
C-1	Central Business
C-2	Redevelopment Area
C-3	General Commercial
Inst	Institutional
A&I	Agriculture & Light Industry
LI&U	Light Industrial & Utility
P	Public & Semi-Public
OR	Office Residential

Legend



Official Zoning Map
 Current LI&U Zone Date: Revised November 2007
 To Be Rezoned C-2
Borough of Sussex
 Sussex County, New Jersey



Cannabis Establishments

Following the statewide adoption of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act (P.L. 2021, c. 16), the Sussex Borough Council adopted Ordinance No. 2021-12 permitting cannabis establishments as a conditional use on July 13, 2021.

The ordinance allows a maximum of four cannabis establishments in the Borough: two cannabis retailers, one cannabis cultivator, and one cannabis manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, or deliverer. One cannabis retailer can be located in the Central Business District (C-1) fronting Main Street, Newton Avenue, or State Route 23, while the other can be located in the General Commercial District (C-3) fronting State Route 284 (East Main Street) or Loomis Avenue. The Borough's sole cannabis cultivator and cannabis manufacturer, wholesale, distributor, or deliverer can be located in either the A & LI Agriculture & Light Industry District or the LI & U – Light Industrial & Utility District.

The addition of up to four cannabis establishments is envisioned to benefit the Borough in direct and indirect ways. The transfer tax which cannabis cultivation, manufacturing, wholesaling, and retailing are subject to will create a new revenue stream for the Borough. Additionally, as one of the only municipalities in Sussex County to adopt legislation permitting cannabis use, the Borough can market the exclusive market access to the region that will be provided to the four cannabis business licensees. Although there is a limit of one cannabis retailer each in the C-1 and C-3 zones, the addition of these retailers can help to fill the vacant commercial lots, in particular along Main Street. This can contribute to the momentum leading to a critical mass of businesses on Main Street that will establish it as a commercial destination.

Commercial Corridors

Commercial activity, including retail and restaurants, are primarily concentrated along four corridors in the Borough. These corridors, which are shown on Map 11, are designated as primary or secondary, with some primary corridors further defined as emerging or pedestrian oriented.

Main Street

Main Street is the historical center, or downtown, of the Borough, as well as the surrounding area including Wantage Township. While pedestrian infrastructure is present on many of the other commercial corridors (see Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure section below), Main Street is the most pedestrian-oriented commercial corridor.

Main Street begins at the “Gateway”, a three-way confluence where State Route 23 northbound turns east onto Loomis Avenue in front of the Early American Tavern (the former Sussex Inn). Despite a prominent visual location, with drivers approaching on Walling Avenue offered a clear view up the Main Street hill, the Gateway currently has little physical presence indicating its significance. An iconic statue that originally served as a water fountain for horses once stood near the Gateway, but it currently is only comprised of a triangular median with NJDOT directional signs pointing to locations outside the Borough’s borders. Instead of welcoming drivers by promoting Main Street, vehicles are diverted away from Main Street and out of the Borough.



Image 10. Main Street businesses in front of Fountain Square.



Image 11. Main Street from Gateway looking north.

The primary commercial stretch of Main Street continues north for two blocks from the Gateway to Spring Street, with the street curving slowly uphill past a series of two- and three-story buildings, many of which date back to the Deckertown era (before 1902). The first floor of most buildings along this two-block stretch is occupied by retail, restaurants, or services. The compact design and high density of commercial businesses in this section makes it naturally suited to pedestrian traffic. Wide sidewalks, public open space, and a road that follows the curved hill further emphasize this area’s pedestrian scale.

The rear parking lots of some businesses on the west side of Main Street extend to the east side of Bank Street/Mill Street, the bi-directional section of State Route 23 which runs roughly

parallel to the west of Main Street (Mill Street runs between Loomis Avenue and Newton Street where it becomes Bank Street heading north). Nearly all of the buildings that previously lined both sides of Mill Street have disappeared over the years, including the eponymous Deckertown Mills which burned down in a fire in 1933. Most recently, three standalone buildings on the west side of Mill Street were demolished during the State Route 23 realignment project.



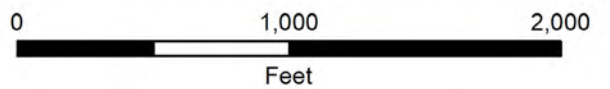
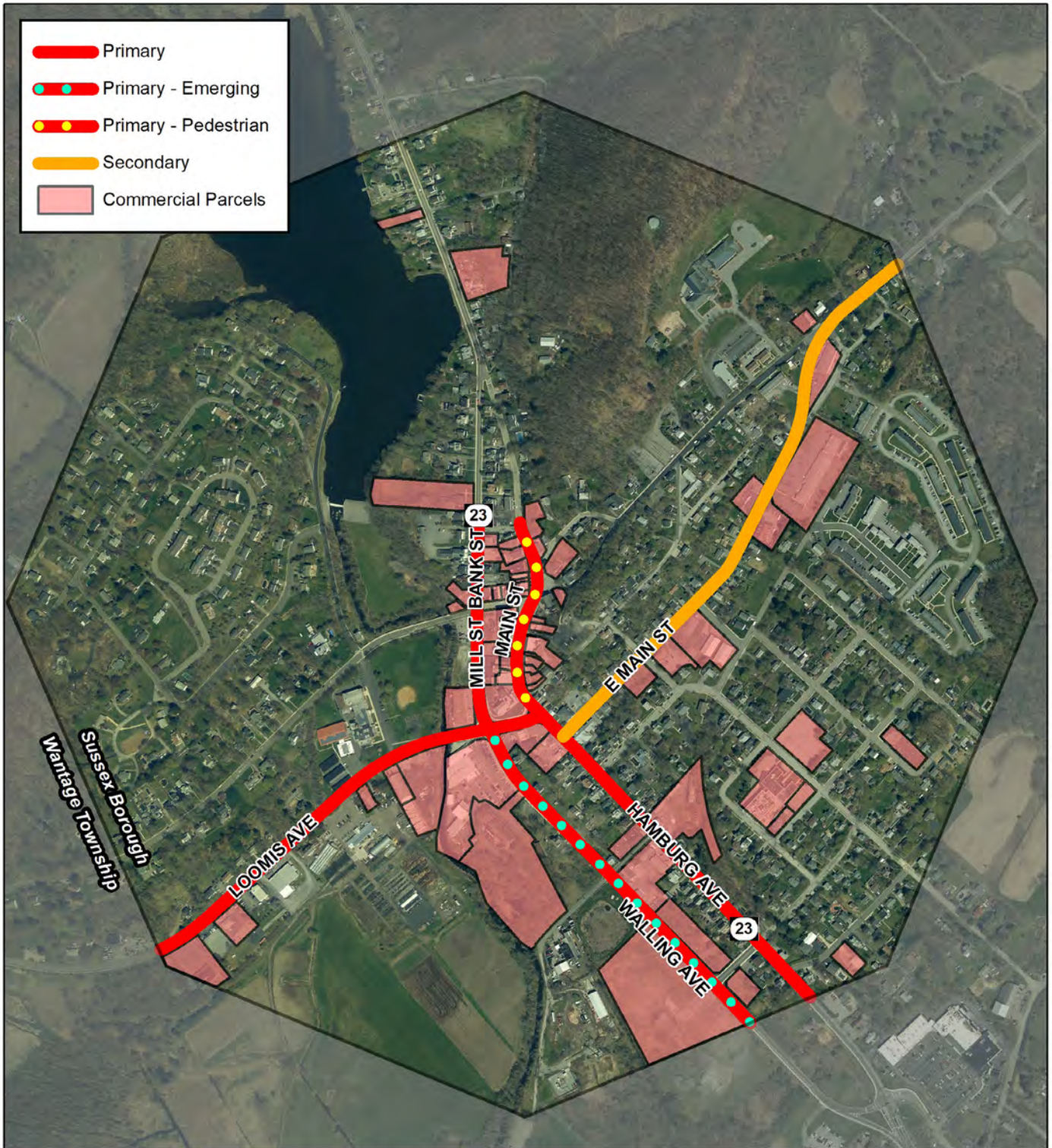
Image 12. The east side of Mill Street (State Route 23) primarily consists of surface parking lots that expose the rear of buildings on Main Street.



Image 13. The former Capri Auto Body building is the only remaining structure on the block of Mill Street (State Route 23) between Newton Avenue and Loomis Avenue. This building partially obstructs the view of Main Street buildings while its vacancy in a prominent location suggests to drivers that this is representative of the Main Street area as well as the Borough.

Although Mill Street is now largely devoid of activity, the parking lots and remaining buildings that front the east side of the street obstruct the view of the rear of buildings along Main Street. In particular, the one-story brick building formerly occupied by Capri Auto Body blocks sight of the Main Street buildings to its rear, as well as a small, mid-block right of way to the south of 33 Main Street that provides pedestrian access from Mill Street to Main Street.

Map 11. Sussex Borough Commercial Corridors



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation

State Route 23 Northbound (Walling Avenue) and Southbound (Hamburg Avenue)

Hamburg Avenue was reconfigured as a one-way road following the realignment of State Route 23 southbound onto Walling Avenue, a parallel street to the south. This created an “island” between the two major one-way roads.

While single-family homes are prominent along Hamburg Avenue, there are clusters of businesses near the intersection of Brookside

Avenue and in proximity to the Main Street Gateway. Most lots along Hamburg Avenue have buildings that front the street, particularly on the south side. By comparison, Walling Avenue is much



Image 15. Walling Avenue was transformed from a local road to the southbound segment of State Route 23 and is less developed than Hamburg Avenue.

less developed. The road is most densely developed at the Loomis Avenue intersection with the Hyundai dealership and U.S. Gas station. The Creamery, the Borough’s only live-work space, is adjacent to the car dealership. To the south, only a handful of buildings are found on the Walling Avenue side of the State Route 23 island. Parcels on the Hamburg Avenue extend disproportionately far into the island, often leaving



Image 14. Hamburg Avenue is now a one-way segment of State Route 23 northbound. Older single-family homes transition to commercial and civic uses near the intersection with East Main Street.

minimal room for development on Walling Avenue. The prominence of empty lots on Walling Avenue exposes the rear of buildings and yards along Hamburg Avenue’s south side.

At the time of plan preparation, a Shop Rite was under construction on the south side of Walling Avenue near the intersection of Wiebel Plaza. Parking lots are planned as part of the Shop Rite development on both sides of Wiebel Plaza across from the Shop Rite building. The addition of the Shop Rite and the anticipated increase in demand to develop nearby parcels define Walling Avenue as an emerging commercial corridor in the Borough.



Image 16. The development of the future Shop Rite on the west side of Walling Avenue (State Route 23 southbound) across from Wiebel Plaza.

Loomis Avenue

Loomis Avenue (County Road 639) extends west from the intersection between Hamburg Avenue and the Main Street Gateway. The south side of Loomis Avenue is predominantly comprised of auto-oriented businesses. Near the Main Street Gateway this includes a gas station and car dealership. After crossing Clove Brook heading west, the most prominent businesses



Image 17. The south side of Loomis Avenue (the left side of the road) is comprised of businesses with large surface parking lots and no pedestrian infrastructure. The only sidewalk along the north side of Loomis Avenue ends at Sussex Middle School.

are Farmside Garden Center, Farmside Florist, and Farmside Supplies. Along with the Sussex Fire Department, this stretch also includes a vehicle repair shop, a small car dealership, and a five-unit strip mall-style row of businesses adjacent to the municipal border. The large lots, large surface parking lots, minimal pedestrian infrastructure, and, after exiting the school zone, high vehicle speeds contribute to the feeling that these businesses are primarily accessible by vehicle.



Image 18. The sidewalk crossing the Clove Brook bridge ends soon after the Tips and Toes nail salon.

In contrast to the auto-oriented design of the rest of Loomis Avenue to the east, the building occupied by the Tips and Toes nail salon fits more into the pedestrian scale design found in proximity to Main Street. This is also one of the only buildings in the Borough that accentuates its proximity to Clove Brook, with windows and a staircase looking out over the water.

Sussex Middle School is found on the north side of Loomis Avenue adjacent to Clove Brook. Residential housing, predominantly single-family homes and an apartment building, is the only other use on the north side of Loomis Avenue until an auto repair just over the border in Wantage Township.

East Main Street

While predominantly residential, a number of businesses are located on East Main Street (State Route 284). East Main Street businesses are largely clustered south of the intersection with Unionville Avenue and on the east side of the street. Ranco Kitchen & Baths and Beckey's Hair Therapy occupy spaces with design features intended to blend in with the adjacent single-family homes, such as pitched roofs with protruding dormer windows and minimal front yard setbacks.



Image 19. Sussex Plaza is the most prominent commercial plaza on East Main Street (State Route 284).

Sussex Plaza is a roughly ten-unit strip mall-style row of businesses with a surface parking lot that fronts East Main Street. Approximately half of the units were unoccupied at the time of plan preparation, with the occupied units used by a daycare center, church, thrift store, and restaurants. The Sussex Plaza and adjacent businesses benefit from modest traffic traveling along East Main Street. However, businesses choosing to locate here instead of Main Street contribute to the difficulty for Main Street to reach a critical mass needed to establish itself as a destination. Because of its potential to play a larger role in the Borough's economy, the Sussex Plaza is considered an *Economic Development Focus Area* discussed at length in this plan's *Recommendations* section.

Primary Attractors and Major Destinations

Sussex Borough possesses a number of attractors that can serve as an anchor to draw in visitors from beyond the Borough, while also serving Sussex residents. These destinations represent a variety of locations that help define Sussex's unique character.

Main Street

Main Street is the most notable asset within the Borough. As discussed in the Commercial Corridors section, Main Street is defined by its historic architecture and pedestrian-friendly street design. Within a compact area, visitors can enjoy a variety of restaurants, retail, and activities that are part of the experiential economy. With the current lack of public parking and relatively



Image 20. Main Street is Sussex Borough's historic downtown, as viewed from the Newton Avenue intersection looking south.

high vacancy rate of first-floor commercial buildings, Main Street has potential to further harness its existing attributes to establish itself as a place where people can shop, eat, and play. The potential for capturing unmet retail demand within the region is discussed in detail in the ESRI Business Analyst section.

One of the most significant attractors on Main Street is the Crescent Theatre. Main Street and the Crescent Theatre are both included in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places¹⁰. The theatre, which was built in 1917 and most recently operated by the Cornerstone Playhouse, serves as one of the major cultural and entertainment destinations within Sussex County.



Image 21. The Crescent Theatre draws visitors from around the County to Main Street.

The stores and restaurants along Main Street are well-positioned to attract theatre attendees interesting in dining or shopping before or after their show. The Crescent Theatre is also identified as an **Economic Development Focus Area**. Its unique role as a cultural and economic driver for the Borough is discussed further in the **Recommendations** section.

There are currently a handful of well-regarded restaurants operating on Main Street, including Bobo Kitchen, and Lorenzo’s Pizzeria. Old Stone on Mill Street and Get Juiced on Hamburg Avenue are also within the immediate vicinity of this hub of restaurants. The most prominent restaurant on Main Street is the Early American Tavern, formerly known as the Sussex Inn. Originally built in 1843 as the Union House, the Early American Tavern’s iconic location and largely original architecture overlooking the Main Street Gateway make it a visual landmark, most prominently when approaching from the south. Main Street is also home to a number of key local businesses such as Baker’s Pharmacy, as well as a handful of antique and specialty stores.



Image 22. The Early American Tavern, formerly known as the Sussex Inn, is a visual landmark at the entrance to Main Street.

¹⁰ https://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/1identify/nrsr_lists/Sussex.pdf

Despite this cluster of restaurants and stores, the prominence of vacant storefronts suggests unmet capacity for businesses that could further enhance Main Street's character and economic potential. As described in the *Public Input* section, *Household Surveys* reiterate a desire for new types of businesses within the Borough. In particular, the types of businesses that respondents called for that are appropriate for Main Street include more sit-down restaurants, bakeries, breweries, and coffee shops, as well as stores that could focus on specialties ranging from local artists and antiques to hardware and home improvement.



Image 23. Bobo Kitchen and Lorenzo's Pizzeria are highly rated local restaurants, located in Fountain Square on Main Street.

Norwescap, a non-profit corporation that provides a variety of services to communities in Hunterdon, Warren, Morris, Somerset and Sussex Counties, owns a building on Main Street that was under renovation during plan preparation. Once completed, Norwescap plans to dedicate the ground floor towards supporting local entrepreneurship by providing amenities such as a commercial kitchen and community organizing room.

Outdoor Recreation

Despite its small size, the Borough contains a relatively large amount of access to natural open space that offer recreational opportunities.

Clove Lake, the Borough's most iconic natural feature, was created in 1926 when the Clove Brook was dammed. While Clove Lake is no longer used for swimming or fishing, it still serves as a major focal point in the heart of the Borough. Drivers heading south on State Route 23 have a picturesque view of the lake as it approaches the road to the west across from Hardin Auto Body. The west side of the lake is accessible via Lake Shore Drive within a residential area. The Borough-owned property abutting the west side of the lake consists of 0.8 acres of sloping green space



Image 24. Clove Lake Beach is one of the only public access points to Clove Lake.

with a few picnic tables. Other than the sidewalks along Clove Avenue (State Route 23), this is the only publicly open space that fronts the water. Despite its close proximity to Main Street, there is minimal public access to the lake, largely because lakeside private residences block this connection. There are no public parking lots near Clove Lake.

To the south of the dam that transitions Clove Lake into Clove Brook is Boggs Field. At the time of plan preparation, the Borough had secured funding for the construction of a playground in Boggs Field through the non-profit Alexandria's Playground.

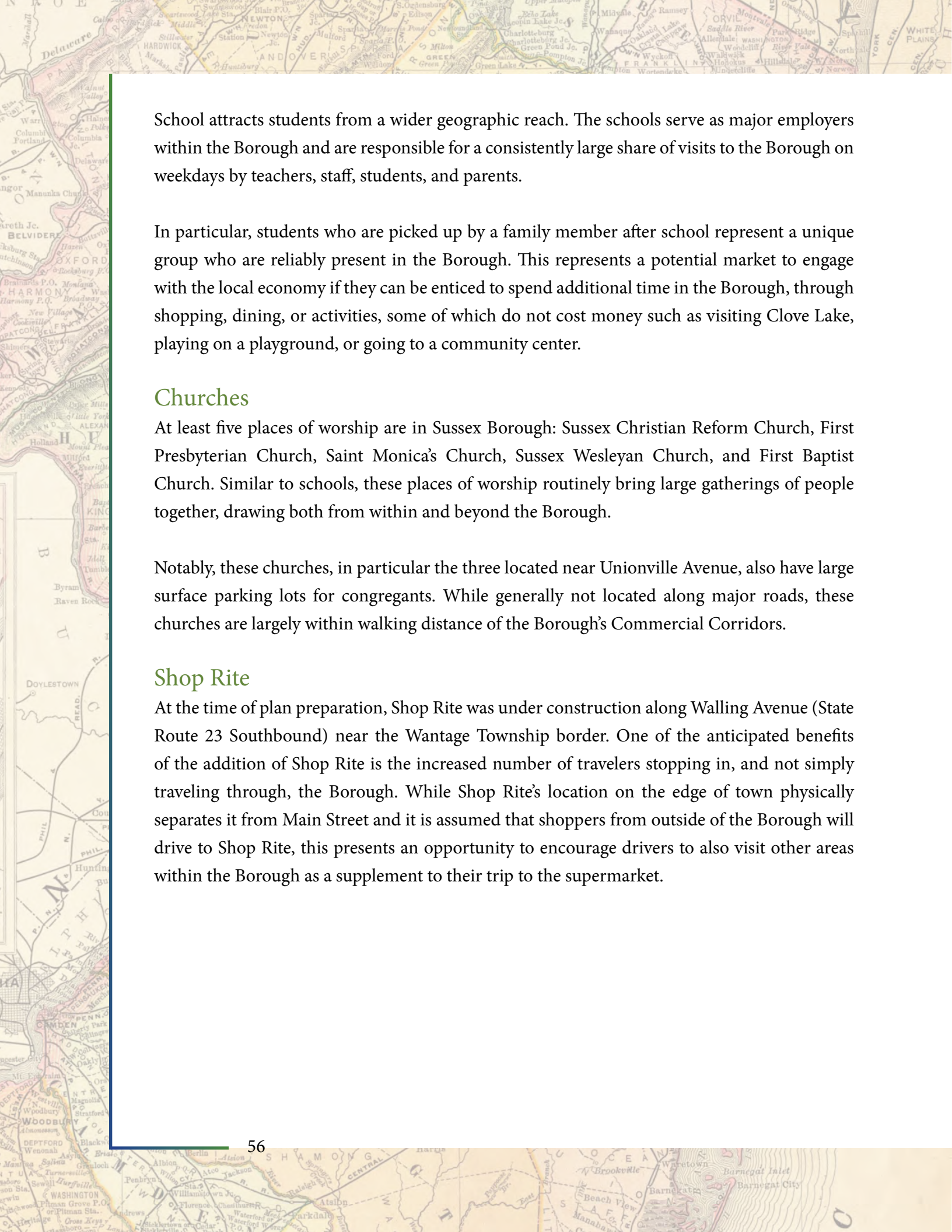
Brookside Park is found just over the border in Wantage Township but owned by Sussex Borough. The park, which is only accessible from Brookside Road in the Borough, has multiple fields and hosts the Sussex-Wantage Little League.

Schools

Sussex Middle School and Sussex Christian School bring students, as well as family members providing transportation, to the Borough. Sussex Middle School serves both the Borough and Wantage Township while Sussex Christian



Image 25. Sussex Middle School is a major employer in the Borough and creates trips for teachers, staff, students, and parents to the Borough.



School attracts students from a wider geographic reach. The schools serve as major employers within the Borough and are responsible for a consistently large share of visits to the Borough on weekdays by teachers, staff, students, and parents.

In particular, students who are picked up by a family member after school represent a unique group who are reliably present in the Borough. This represents a potential market to engage with the local economy if they can be enticed to spend additional time in the Borough, through shopping, dining, or activities, some of which do not cost money such as visiting Clove Lake, playing on a playground, or going to a community center.

Churches

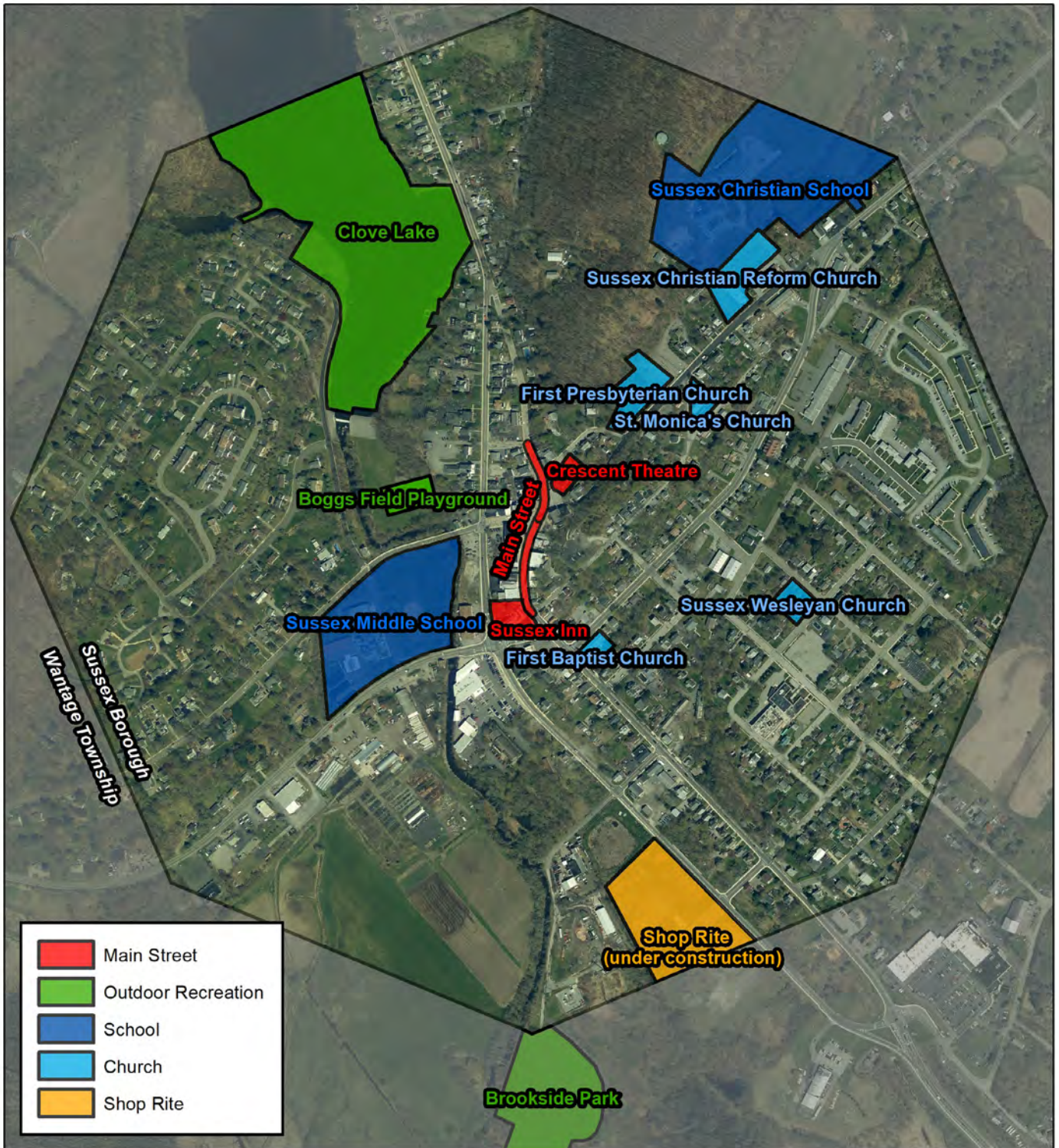
At least five places of worship are in Sussex Borough: Sussex Christian Reform Church, First Presbyterian Church, Saint Monica's Church, Sussex Wesleyan Church, and First Baptist Church. Similar to schools, these places of worship routinely bring large gatherings of people together, drawing both from within and beyond the Borough.

Notably, these churches, in particular the three located near Unionville Avenue, also have large surface parking lots for congregants. While generally not located along major roads, these churches are largely within walking distance of the Borough's Commercial Corridors.

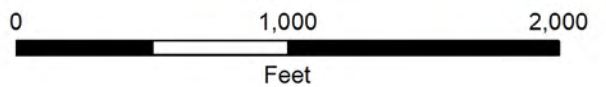
Shop Rite

At the time of plan preparation, Shop Rite was under construction along Walling Avenue (State Route 23 Southbound) near the Wantage Township border. One of the anticipated benefits of the addition of Shop Rite is the increased number of travelers stopping in, and not simply traveling through, the Borough. While Shop Rite's location on the edge of town physically separates it from Main Street and it is assumed that shoppers from outside of the Borough will drive to Shop Rite, this presents an opportunity to encourage drivers to also visit other areas within the Borough as a supplement to their trip to the supermarket.

Map 12. Sussex Borough Primary Attractors and Major Destinations



	Main Street
	Outdoor Recreation
	School
	Church
	Shop Rite



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation

Parking Inventory

A lack of sufficient parking is perceived as a major impediment in Sussex Borough. Consisting of a small geographic area, much of which is undevelopable due to natural features such as Clove Lake and Clove Brook, and a relatively high population density, allocating too much developable land to parking will hinder economic opportunities that could otherwise be devoted to other uses. Conversely, not supplying enough parking will limit the number of customers able to patronize local businesses. There is a particularly acute need to provide parking opportunities in areas that encourage drivers to park once and walk between multiple destinations.

An analysis of impervious surface coverage shows that non-residential parking lots within the Borough are extensive (see Map 13). Businesses located along state and county roads generally have large commercial parking lots on their parcels, most extensively on Loomis Avenue. Exacerbated by gaps in the pedestrian network (see Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure section), this encourages patrons to drive between destinations instead of parking at one location to visit several places. Businesses tend to disapprove of their parking spaces being used by customers of other businesses, so this function is more appropriate with public parking.

In stark contrast to the other commercial corridors in the Borough, Main Street businesses tend to not have designated parking lots. This is largely because Main Street buildings were designed in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century when the predominant mode of transportation was walking or horse-drawn carriage. While Main Street’s pedestrian walkability remains a great asset, its lack of parking has become one its greatest shortcomings that limits the economic potential of its businesses.

Public Parking Lots

As shown on Map 13, there are four existing Borough-owned parking lots, all of which are within 1/8 mile of the primary commercial stretch of Main Street stretching from the Gateway to Spring Street. However, none of these lots are both paved and fully open to the public.



Image 26. The unpaved and unlined Harrison Street Parking Lot is located on the hill above the Crescent Theatre but is partially permit-restricted.



Image 27. The Borough-owned parking lot on the southwest corner of Newton Avenue and Bank Street/Mill Street (State Route 23) is one block from Main Street but is heavily underutilized because it is permit-restricted.

The Harrison Street Parking Lot is unpaved and permit-restricted from 6:00pm to 6:00am, primarily providing parking for patrons of the Crescent Theatre. This parking lot, which overlooks Main Street, is the former location of the Sussex Public School. While this is the largest Borough-owned lot, its irregular shape and lack of lined spaces limit the number of available places to park. To reach the theatre and the rest of Main Street from this lot

requires one to descend a relatively steep set of stairs that are not frequently maintained. The adjacent ramp is currently unusable and blocked off, making access nearly impossible for the mobility-impaired (see [Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure](#) section).

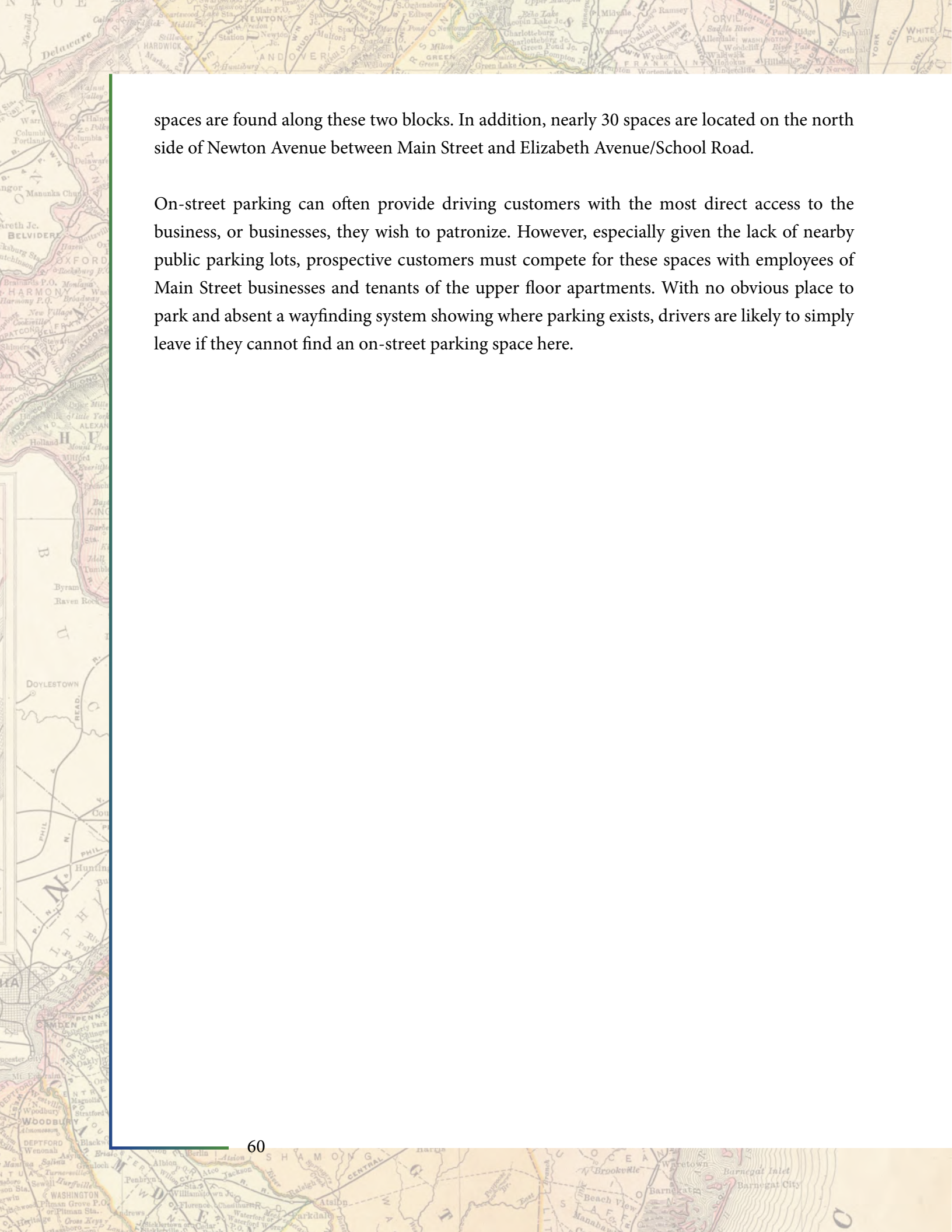
The only paved Borough-owned parking lot is located on the southwest corner of Newton Avenue and Mill Street (State Route 23). This lot has roughly 20 lined spaces that are all permit-restricted. This lot is located only a block from the heart of Main Street and adjacent to high amounts of traffic travelling along State Route 23.

After southbound traffic on State Route 23 converges onto Walling Avenue, there is another small, unpaved Borough-owned parking lot that is also restricted to permit parking.

The lot behind Borough Hall is also unpaved. There is currently no signage indicating whether this lot is open to the public, but the gravel tends to discourage its use despite its location very close to the Main Street Gateway.

On-Street Parking

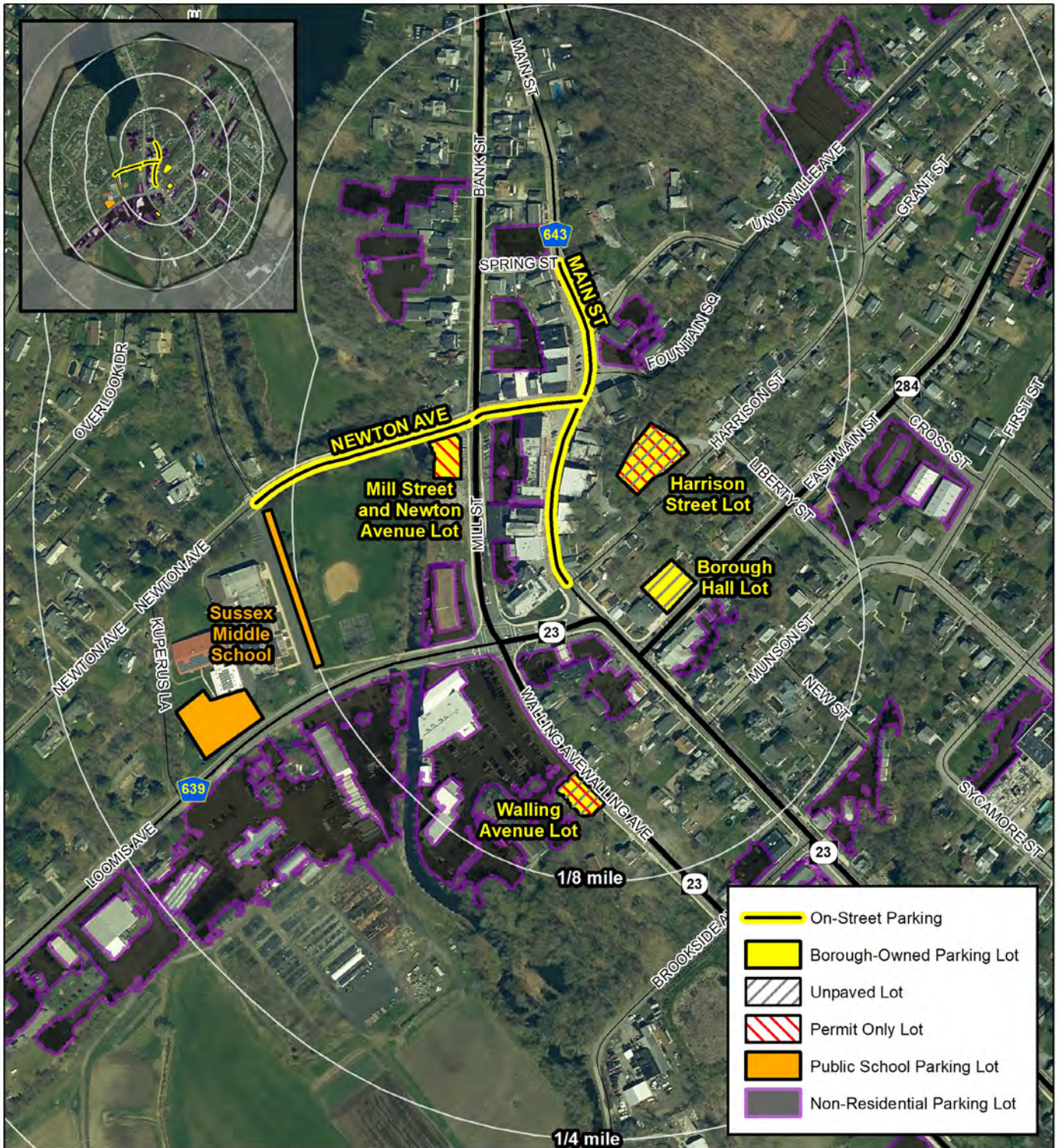
On-street parking helps to offset some of the lack of parking lots in the vicinity of Main Street. Parallel parking spaces line both sides of Main Street from the Gateway to Spring Street, including at the triangular plaza north of the intersection with Newton Avenue. Roughly 70



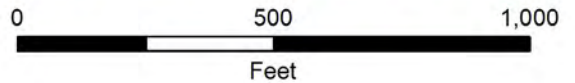
spaces are found along these two blocks. In addition, nearly 30 spaces are located on the north side of Newton Avenue between Main Street and Elizabeth Avenue/School Road.

On-street parking can often provide driving customers with the most direct access to the business, or businesses, they wish to patronize. However, especially given the lack of nearby public parking lots, prospective customers must compete for these spaces with employees of Main Street businesses and tenants of the upper floor apartments. With no obvious place to park and absent a wayfinding system showing where parking exists, drivers are likely to simply leave if they cannot find an on-street parking space here.

Map 13. Sussex Borough Existing Public Parking



N
2022



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDEP, NJDCA, NJOGIS

Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

While a thorough analysis of the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is beyond the scope of this report, the economic wellbeing of the Borough, in particular around Main Street, is inextricably linked to the ability of pedestrian, and to a lesser extent bicyclist, mobility and accessibility.

Sussex Borough has a high level of sidewalk coverage, especially on the state and county roads that predominantly comprise its commercial corridors. However, small gaps in sidewalk coverage at key locations and imperfect crossing opportunities create barriers to safe and efficient pedestrian access.

Main Street

Main Street is completely covered by sidewalks, which tend to be wide and some of which consist of red brick, features that contribute to the distinct, pedestrian-oriented character of this area. Roads that intersect Main Street also tend to have good sidewalk coverage, increasing the accessibility to and from the surrounding residential areas.

The roadway widens drastically as Main Street approaches the intersection with Newton Avenue and the historic fountain in front of the Crescent Theatre, with a particularly large area of roadway pavement found here. A pedestrian crosswalk with standard striping (two parallel lines), but lacking any signage, connects the northeast corner with the sidewalk in front of the theatre. A stop sign controls vehicles entering the intersection from Newton Avenue, though there is not a marked crosswalk. The historic fountain is located in the middle of a triangular plaza with parking on all sides. Unionville Avenue, a one-way street heading



Image 28. Wide sidewalks and its pedestrian-oriented design make Main Street highly walkable.

away from Main Street up the hill, comprises the triangular plaza's third point. Traffic travelling in both directions on Main Street passes along the historic fountain's west. The pavement to the east of the historic fountain is effectively used as a slip lane for traffic turning from Main Street onto Unionville Avenue.

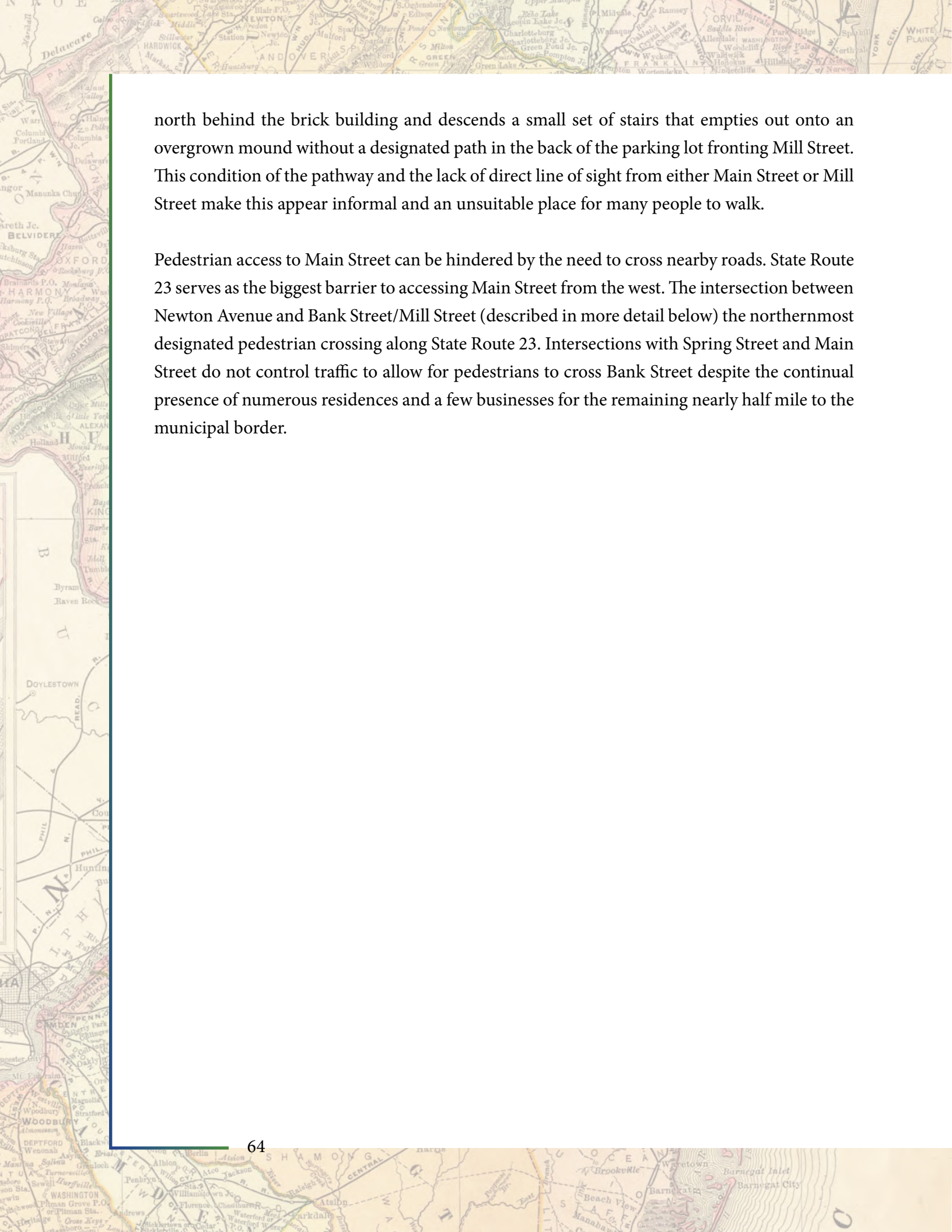
While the narrowing of the right of way as Main Street approaches Loomis Avenue and Walling Avenue to the south helps to calm traffic, vehicles traveling on Main Street often drive at relatively high speeds as the roadway widens and there are not any traffic control features in Fountain Square near the Newton Avenue intersection. The Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection is further complicated by large trucks travelling south on Bank Street which turn onto Newton Avenue and then must navigate around the fountain to continue onto Unionville Avenue, a narrow, uphill road with a sharp turn that is also difficult for trucks to navigate. Navigation applications used by truck drivers may overlook the logistical challenges of fitting a large truck through streets designed for horse-drawn carriages and early twentieth century automobiles, not to mention the effect the presence of large trucks has on the level of comfort felt by pedestrians.

The Harrison Street Parking Lot is accessible from Main Street via a staircase along the back of the Crescent Theatre. The corresponding ramp that extends to the east side of the theatre is unusable and blocked by a barrier on both ends. The ramp transitions to a series of small steps as it approaches Unionville Avenue.

A small right of way exists in the gap between buildings on the west side of Main Street to the immediate south of the antique store at 33 Main Street. This right of way consists of a gravel path leading downhill towards the back of the one-story brick building formerly occupied by Capri Auto Body. The path turns



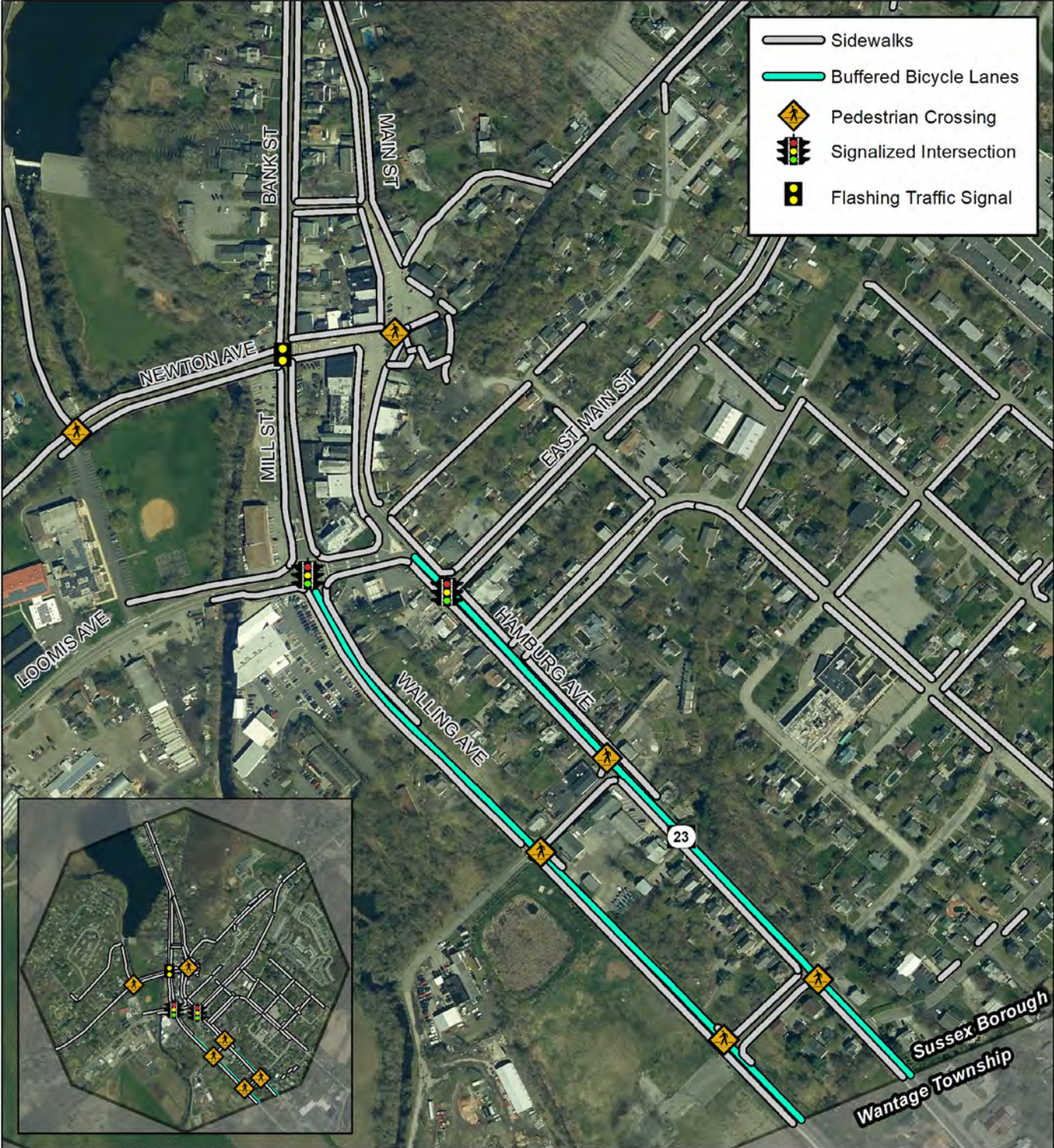
Image 29. The informal path in the right-of-way between buildings on the west side of Main Street leading downhill to the rear of the former Capri Auto Body building on Mill Street (State Route 23).








north behind the brick building and descends a small set of stairs that empties out onto an overgrown mound without a designated path in the back of the parking lot fronting Mill Street. This condition of the pathway and the lack of direct line of sight from either Main Street or Mill Street make this appear informal and an unsuitable place for many people to walk.

Pedestrian access to Main Street can be hindered by the need to cross nearby roads. State Route 23 serves as the biggest barrier to accessing Main Street from the west. The intersection between Newton Avenue and Bank Street/Mill Street (described in more detail below) the northernmost designated pedestrian crossing along State Route 23. Intersections with Spring Street and Main Street do not control traffic to allow for pedestrians to cross Bank Street despite the continual presence of numerous residences and a few businesses for the remaining nearly half mile to the municipal border.

Map 14. Sussex Borough Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

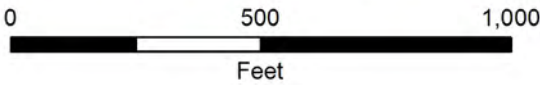


-  Sidewalks
-  Buffered Bicycle Lanes
-  Pedestrian Crossing
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Flashing Traffic Signal



N

 2022



Data Sources:
 ESRI, NJDOT, NJDCA, NJOGIS



State Route 23 Northbound (Walling Avenue) and Southbound (Hamburg Avenue)

Walling Avenue and Hamburg Avenue, the realigned one-way roads comprising State Route 23 northbound and southbound, respectively, have sidewalks on at least one side for their entire length within the Borough. These stretches also contain buffered bicycle lanes, the only designated bicycle infrastructure within the Borough. Pedestrian crosswalks with standard crosswalk markings (two parallel lines) and hi-visibility pedestrian crossing signs are found near the intersections with Brookside Avenue and 4th Street/Wiebel Plaza, roads running between Walling Avenue and Hamburg Avenue that also have sidewalk coverage. The sidewalk that runs on the northeast side of Hamburg Avenue from Loomis Avenue ends mid-block at the vacant Borough-owned parcel.

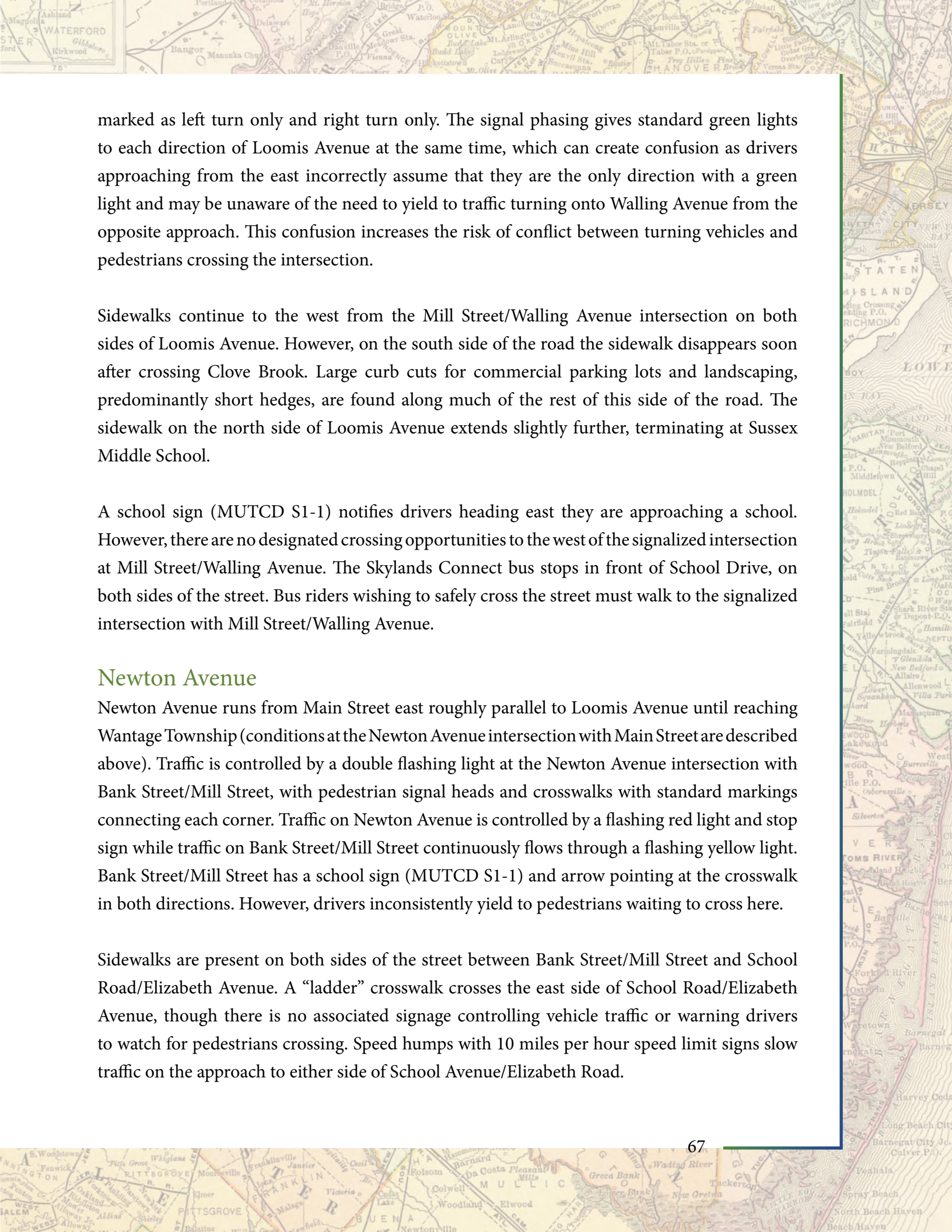
Pedestrian and vehicle traffic along these roads is expected to increase with the completion of the Shop Rite on the southwest side of Hamburg Avenue across from Wiebel Plaza. Parking lots for Shop Rite are planned for the opposite side of Hamburg Avenue from the building, located on either side of Wiebel Plaza. This will significantly increase the number of pedestrians crossing Hamburg Avenue at the existing crosswalks with “yield to pedestrian” signs. A signalized intersection with associated pedestrian signal head or a pedestrian-activated rectangular rapid flashing beacon are more effective methods at controlling vehicle traffic to allow pedestrians to cross.

The intersection of Walling Avenue and East Main Street has a traffic signal with pedestrian signal heads and crosswalks with standard markings across East Main Street and the southeast side of Walling Avenue.

Loomis Avenue

Loomis Avenue (County Road 639) extends west from the Main Street Gateway to Wantage Township. Loomis Avenue has complete sidewalk coverage near the Main Street Gateway and the intersection with Mill Street/Walling Avenue. This intersection is controlled by a traffic signal with pedestrian signal heads and crosswalks with standard markings connecting each corner. Each of the corners at this intersection is curved to allow a quicker turn for vehicles, but this also increases the distance pedestrians are exposed in the crosswalk. The minimum distance to cross Loomis Avenue within the marked crosswalks is 65 feet. Each corner only has a single curb ramp, leading pedestrians close to the traffic they must travel parallel to.

The roadway approaching this intersection from the east has three lanes marked as left turn only, straight only, and right turn only. The roadway approaching from the west has two lanes



marked as left turn only and right turn only. The signal phasing gives standard green lights to each direction of Loomis Avenue at the same time, which can create confusion as drivers approaching from the east incorrectly assume that they are the only direction with a green light and may be unaware of the need to yield to traffic turning onto Walling Avenue from the opposite approach. This confusion increases the risk of conflict between turning vehicles and pedestrians crossing the intersection.

Sidewalks continue to the west from the Mill Street/Walling Avenue intersection on both sides of Loomis Avenue. However, on the south side of the road the sidewalk disappears soon after crossing Clove Brook. Large curb cuts for commercial parking lots and landscaping, predominantly short hedges, are found along much of the rest of this side of the road. The sidewalk on the north side of Loomis Avenue extends slightly further, terminating at Sussex Middle School.

A school sign (MUTCD S1-1) notifies drivers heading east they are approaching a school. However, there are no designated crossing opportunities to the west of the signalized intersection at Mill Street/Walling Avenue. The Skylands Connect bus stops in front of School Drive, on both sides of the street. Bus riders wishing to safely cross the street must walk to the signalized intersection with Mill Street/Walling Avenue.

Newton Avenue

Newton Avenue runs from Main Street east roughly parallel to Loomis Avenue until reaching Wantage Township (conditions at the Newton Avenue intersection with Main Street are described above). Traffic is controlled by a double flashing light at the Newton Avenue intersection with Bank Street/Mill Street, with pedestrian signal heads and crosswalks with standard markings connecting each corner. Traffic on Newton Avenue is controlled by a flashing red light and stop sign while traffic on Bank Street/Mill Street continuously flows through a flashing yellow light. Bank Street/Mill Street has a school sign (MUTCD S1-1) and arrow pointing at the crosswalk in both directions. However, drivers inconsistently yield to pedestrians waiting to cross here.

Sidewalks are present on both sides of the street between Bank Street/Mill Street and School Road/Elizabeth Avenue. A “ladder” crosswalk crosses the east side of School Road/Elizabeth Avenue, though there is no associated signage controlling vehicle traffic or warning drivers to watch for pedestrians crossing. Speed humps with 10 miles per hour speed limit signs slow traffic on the approach to either side of School Avenue/Elizabeth Road.

Wayfinding

As discussed in the *Regional Context* section, Sussex Borough has a relatively high volume of traffic, largely resulting from State Route 23 passing through the middle of the municipality. Loomis Avenue (County Road 639) and East Main Street (State Route 284), which both terminate at State Route 23, additionally bring modest amounts of vehicles into the Borough (see Map 3 above). With a disproportionately high number of vehicles travelling on roads within the Borough compared to the number of Borough residents, this presents an opportunity for businesses to capture the spending potential of people in these vehicles. However, drivers must have a reason to pause their journey and visit a Borough business.

While a single lane in each direction and a relatively narrow roadway helps to discourage vehicles from driving at excessive speeds, state and county roads are largely designed to usher vehicles through the Borough as efficiently as possible. Unless drivers are planning to visit a specific destination within the Borough, there is little visual incentive for them to explore what the Borough has to offer. The lack of parking exacerbates this issue (see previous section). This problem is most acute along State Route 23, which sees roughly 10,000 to 15,000 vehicles daily.



Image 30. NJDOT signage in front of Borough Hall hides the “Visit Historic Main Street” sign.

Loomis Avenue create visual confusion here. Furthermore, the High Point State Park sign largely obscures the view of a “Visit Historic Main Street” sign. All of the destinations on the NJDOT signage are reached by following State Route 23 Northbound as it curves onto Loomis Avenue towards the intersection with Mill Street/Walling Avenue. This suggests to drivers that there

For example, a vehicle approaching the Main Street Gateway on the one-way Hamburg Avenue section of State Route 23 Northbound is directed by two large sets of NJDOT signage to points beyond the Borough (see Image 30). The first set of NJDOT signage seen by drivers is located in front of the Borough Hall. Two separate signs that both direct drivers onto



Image 31. NJDOT signage in the median at the Main Street Gateway directs drivers to locations outside of the Borough and away from Main Street. The small “Shop Small Sussex” sign is overshadowed and difficult to read.

nothing to direct drivers onto Main Street at the Gateway, even though it would simply require driving straight onto Main Street instead of turning with State Route 23 at the Gateway.

Drivers heading south on Bank Street/Mill Street are similarly given little notice of their proximity to Main Street. A sign for the Sussex Inn at the southbound approach to Newton Avenue is the only connection to Main Street given to drivers coming from this direction. The splitting of State Route 23 into two separate roads at Loomis Avenue makes access to Main Street for drivers who have passed Newton Avenue difficult. This requires a driver to continue onto Walling Avenue before turning left onto Brookside Avenue and then making another left onto Hamburg Avenue to approach Main Street from the south, a route that would only be taken by a driver with a previous intention to reach Main Street.

ESRI Business Analyst

ESRI Business Analyst creates a demographic and economic profile at customizable geographic levels using data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. LPS created a profile for Sussex Borough, as well as 15-minute, 30-minute, and 60-minute

is no reason to travel on Main Street, even though it can serve as an alternative route to reaching points north such as Port Jervis and High Point State Park.

As drivers then turn with State Route 23 past the Main Street Gateway, another set of NJDOT signage in the triangular median directs drivers to points beyond the Borough borders (see Image 31). Directions for destinations are spread over a total of five green NJDOT signs attached to two sets of posts. A small “Shop Small Sussex” is located in this median, but its size and location make it difficult for drivers to see, especially given its scale in relation to the adjacent NJDOT signage.

Besides the obstructed “Visit Main Street Sign” and the small “Shop Small Sussex” signs, both of which are easy for drivers to miss, there is

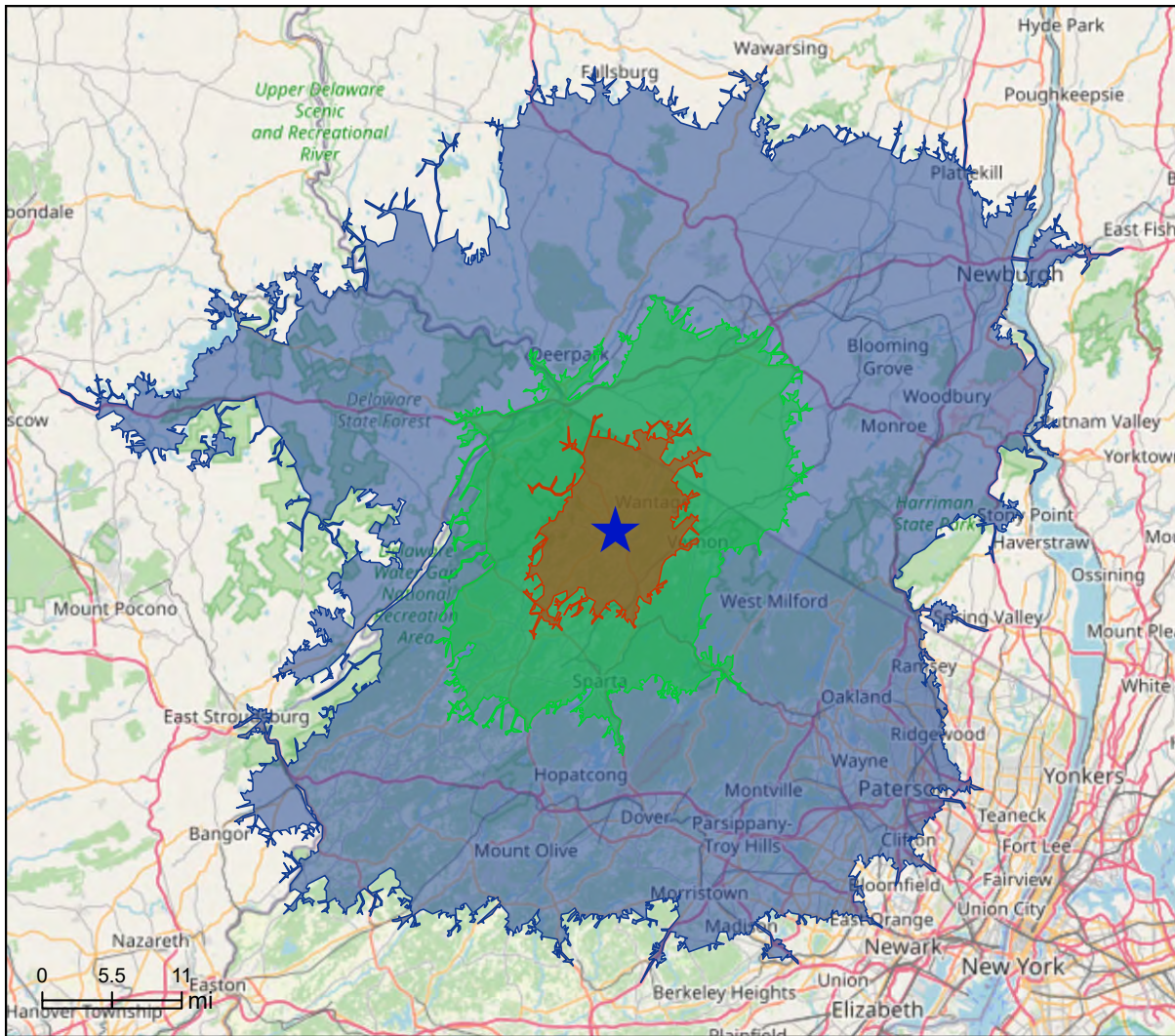
Map 15. 15-minute, 30-minute, and 60-minute drivesheds from Sussex Borough



Site Map

Borough of Sussex, New Jersey
Drive Time: 15, 30, 60 minute radii

Prepared by Esri
Latitude: 41.20982
Longitude: -74.60794



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

drivesheds of the Borough (see Map 15). This allows for a regional analysis that recognizes demand for goods and services in the surrounding area, providing Sussex Borough with the potential to find an appropriate use or mix of uses at a local and regional scale. Note that the figures presented in this section are based on estimates calculated by ESRI, hence the potential for slight discrepancies between the U.S. Census data presented above.

The 15-minute driveshed covers Wantage Township and some small municipalities found along

U.S. Route 206 to the south and State Route 94 to the southeast, such as Branchville, Hamburg, and Franklin. This driveshed also passes into New York State where State Route 284 crosses the border. The 30-minute driveshed covers most of Sussex County and extends as far south as Andover Township and as far east as Warwick, New York. The intersection of Interstate-84 and New York Route 17 is just beyond the 30-minute driveshed to the northeast. The 60-minute driveshed covers an area that includes swathes of southern New York, eastern Pennsylvania, and the New York City suburbs, extending as far northeast as Newburgh, New York and as far southeast as Paterson and the outskirts of Newark.

Despite the Borough's small population size, the drivesheds highlight how accessible the Borough is to a large number of people. As shown in Figure 13, Business Analyst estimates that 30,740 people are within the 15-minute driveshed, 146,288 people are within the 30-minute driveshed, and 1,518,092 people are within the 60-minute driveshed. By tapping into markets with unmet supply that are appropriate for a regional scale, the Borough can establish itself as a destination for people within these drivesheds.

Figure 13. Population and Households within 15-, 30-, and 60-Minute Drivesheds

	Borough	15 Min-Driveshed	30 Min-Driveshed	60 Min-Driveshed
Population	1,788	30,740	146,288	1,518,092
Households	945	14,266	68,572	691,346

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Tapestry Segments

ESRI Business Analyst groups and characterizes a variety of demographic datasets into “tapestry segments” that are designed to provide an understanding of “customers' lifestyle choices, what they buy, and how they spend their free time.” This analysis considers both the type of consumers and their spending potential within each of the 15-minute, 30-minute, and 60-minute drivesheds around Sussex Borough, as well the Borough itself. Figures 14 to 17 show the five most prominent tapestry segments at each of the drivesheds and within the Borough. The presence and concentration of these tapestry segments vary drastically depending on the driving distance from the Borough. Detailed profiles of the eight tapestry segments that can be found within at least one of the geographies can be accessed through the hyperlinks in the tables and the footnotes. Note that these tapestry segments intend to represent a rough generalization of the different consumer groups. Especially at smaller geographic levels, in particular one as small as the Borough, these can therefore appear to overlook certain segments of the population.

Sussex Borough

The Borough is comprised of only two tapestry segments according to ESRI Business Analyst (see Figure 14). As noted above, this is a generalization about consumer preferences and does not mean that all Borough residents fall into these two categories, but instead that this represents the general consumer traits of the Borough’s population. “Front Porches”, who are “composed of a blue-collar work force” for whom “price is more important than brand names,” comprise 70.7% of the Borough’s households¹¹. This tapestry segment has a median household income of \$43,700 which is below the U.S. median of \$56,100. This represents a relatively young group, with the median age of 34.9 lower than the U.S. median of 38.2. The remaining 29.3% of the Borough falls within the “Parks and Rec” tapestry segment, “practical suburbanites [who] have achieved the dream of home ownership” and “budget wisely”¹². This tapestry segment has a median age (40.9) and household income (\$60,000) that is higher than “Front Porches” and the U.S. median. They are still considered a “financially shrewd market” of “budget conscious consumers.”

Figure 14. Top Tapestry Segments in Borough

Households in Borough				
Rank	Tapestry Segment	Percent	# Households	U.S. Share
1	Front Porches	70.7%	668	1.6%
2	Parks and Rec	29.3%	227	2.0%
3	-	0.0%	-	-
4	-	0.0%	-	-
5	-	0.0%	-	-
Subtotal		100.0%	895	3.6%
Other Tapestry Segments in Borough		0.0%	-	-
Total Households in Borough		-	895	-

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

15-Minute Driveshed

Within a 15-minute driveshed, the composition of tapestry segments diversifies to include consumer types not seen within the Borough (see Figure 15). The most prevalent tapestry segment, “Savvy Suburbanites” comprise over a quarter of the 14,266 households within this driveshed. This tapestry segment has a higher median household income (\$108,700) than what

¹¹ http://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/tapestry/segment37.pdf

¹² http://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/tapestry/segment18.pdf

is seen in the Borough¹³. These residents enjoy a “suburban lifestyle”, with over 90% owning their homes, and are “financially active” investors.

“Parks and Rec” is still significant at this geography, comprising over a fifth of households. This is followed by “Green Acres”, which tend to be found in “rural enclaves in metropolitan areas” whose “income is derived not only from wages and salaries but also from self-employment... and increasingly, from retirement”¹⁴. This tapestry segment has a median household income of \$76,800 and a median age of 43.9, with purchasing choices that reflect their “country life”. “Pleasantville” is defined by “prosperous domesticity” with consumers that have relatively high median household incomes (\$92,900) and home values (\$382,000)¹⁵. This tapestry segment’s median net worth (\$339,300) is also much higher than the U.S. median of \$93,300. “City Lights”, which comprises 8.1% of this driveshed, represent a “densely populated urban market”¹⁶, a characterization one might not naturally associate with relatively rural Sussex County. This tapestry segment is “price savvy but will pay for brands they trust” and are environmentally-conscious when shopping.

These five tapestry segments comprise 85.5% of the households in this driveshed, with six other tapestry segments comprising the remaining 14.5% of households.

Figure 15. Top Tapestry Segments in 15-Minute Driveshed

Households in 15-Minute Driveshed				
Rank	Tapestry Segment	Percent	# Households	Percent U.S. Households
1	Savvy Suburbanites	25.6%	3,652	3.0%
2	Parks and Rec	20.5%	2,919	2.0%
3	Green Acres	19.9%	2,833	3.2%
4	Pleasantville	11.4%	1,621	2.1%
5	City Lights	8.1%	1,151	1.4%
Subtotal		85.5%	12,176	11.7%
Other Tapestry Segments in 15-Min Driveshed		14.5%	2,090	88.3%
Total Households in 15-Min Driveshed		-	14,266	-

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

¹³ http://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/tapestry/segment4.pdf
¹⁴ http://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/tapestry/segment21.pdf
¹⁵ http://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/tapestry/segment7.pdf
¹⁶ http://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/tapestry/segment33.pdf

30-Minute Driveshed

As the driveshed expands to 30 minutes, the composition of tapestry segments shifts subtly (see Figure 16). “Savvy Suburbanites” remain the most prominent tapestry segment, comprising 22.6% of the 68,572 households within this driveshed. “Pleasantville” increases its share to 17.5% and is the second most common tapestry segment. This is followed by “Green Acres” and “Parks and Rec” which were both slightly diluted when compared to the 15-minute driveshed but each still comprise over 13% of households. “Front Porches”, which was the most prominent tapestry segment within the Borough but had fallen out of the top five at the 15-minute driveshed, is the fifth most common tapestry segment at the 30-minute driveshed, comprising 6.2% of households. These five tapestry segments represent 73.2% of households in the driveshed.

Figure 16. Top Tapestry Segments in 30-Minute Driveshed

Households in 30-Minute Driveshed				
Rank	Tapestry Segment	Percent	# Households	Percent U.S. Households
1	Savvy Suburbanites	22.6%	15,497	3.0%
2	Pleasantville	17.5%	12,019	2.1%
3	Green Acres	13.6%	9,326	3.2%
4	Parks and Rec	13.3%	9,103	2.0%
5	Front Porches	6.2%	4,281	1.6%
Subtotal		73.2%	50,226	11.9%
Other Tapestry Segments in 30-Min Driveshed		26.8%	18,346	88.1%
Total Households in 30-Min Driveshed		-	68,572	-

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

60-Minute Driveshed

Within the 60-minute driveshed, the “Pleasantville” tapestry segment increases its prominence to comprise 18.6% of the 691,346 households in the area (see Figure 17). “Savvy Suburbanites” decreases its share to 12.2% but is still the second most prominent tapestry segment. “Top Tier” appears for the first time, representing 9.1% of the 60-minute driveshed. This is the wealthiest tapestry segment, with median household income of \$173,200¹⁷, that represents a higher-end consumer market with more disposable income to spend. “City Lights”, which were present at the 15-minute driveshed but disappeared from the top five of the 30-minute driveshed, return at the 60-minute driveshed, comprising 8.3% of households. The top five is rounded out

¹⁷ http://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/tapestry/segment1.pdf

by another new tapestry segment, “Professional Pride”, who are described as “well-educated career professionals that have prospered through the Great Recession.” This segment, which encompasses 4.5% of the driveshed, also have high median household incomes (\$138,100), “take pride in their picture-perfect homes”, and “spend heavily on internet shopping”¹⁸.

Figure 17. Top Tapestry Segments in 60-Minute Driveshed

Households in 60-Minute Driveshed				
Rank	Tapestry Segment	Percent	# Households	Percent U.S. Households
1	Pleasantville	18.6%	128,505	2.1%
2	Savvy Suburbanites	12.2%	84,514	3.0%
3	Top Tier	9.1%	63,154	1.7%
4	City Lights	8.3%	57,192	1.4%
5	Professional Pride	4.5%	31,043	1.6%
Subtotal		52.7%	364,408	9.8%
Other Tapestry Segments in 30-Min Driveshed		47.3%	326,938	90.2%
Total Households in 30-Min Driveshed			691,346	-

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Retail MarketPlace Profile

The Retail MarketPlace Profile estimates the discrepancy between an industry group’s supply, as measured in retail sales to consumers by establishments, and demand, the retail potential at the chosen geographies. If retail demand is greater than retail supply a positive retail gap exists, suggesting that there is unmet potential for that industry at the given geography. If retail supply is greater than retail demand, there is negative retail gap, suggesting a surplus. Figure 18 summarizes these findings for Sussex Borough and the three drivesheds at the three-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) level.

There is often a fluctuation, sometimes drastic, in the retail gap as the driveshed increases. A scarcity of industries that serve the region at one geographic level can often be reconciled as the driveshed increases. Likewise, an industry that may appear to be oversaturated in a place like Sussex Borough may be underrepresented in the rest of the area. Determining which geographic scale is most relevant is industry-specific. Industries that tend to primarily serve the local community can be analyzed at a smaller scale, while industries that can serve a larger area should

¹⁸ http://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/tapestry/segment2.pdf

be evaluated through a more regional lens. Furthermore, an area that “specializes” in a certain industry may appear to be oversaturated, while the higher-than-normal concentration of that industry may be able to succeed, if not thrive, specifically because of this dense concentration. The only industry that has a positive retail gap at the Borough level and the three drivesheds is Furniture & Home Furnishing Stores. While some furniture and home furnishing business is conducted online, the nature of the products sold could make this an industry that would benefit from a physical location that customers could visit. Furniture styles that are unique to a place also present an opportunity to differentiate from the competition and establish a particular niche. Capturing even a small portion of the over \$150 million retail gap within the 60-minute driveshed would represent a massive addition to the Borough’s economy.

Four industries have a positive retail gap at the Borough level, the 15-minute driveshed, and the 30-minute driveshed, but not the 60-minute driveshed: Electronics & Appliance Stores; Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores; Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores; and General Merchandise Stores. While many of the goods that fall within these industries can easily be obtained online, there remains the potential for physical establishments to meet this demand by offering the in-person shopping experience not available on the internet.

Figure 18. Marketplace Profile

	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers					
Borough	\$4,359,571	\$24,016,509	-\$19,656,938	-69.3	3
15-Min Driveshed	\$113,820,981	\$89,191,717	\$24,629,264	12.1	29
30-Min Driveshed	\$579,978,423	\$640,255,084	-\$60,276,661	-4.9	179
60-Min Driveshed	\$6,439,910,842	\$6,728,395,256	-\$288,484,414	-2.2	1,204
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores					
Borough	\$848,934	\$0	\$848,934	100.0	0
15-Min Driveshed	\$22,496,057	\$4,209,081	\$18,286,976	68.5	10
30-Min Driveshed	\$111,819,725	\$45,862,389	\$65,957,336	41.8	58
60-Min Driveshed	\$1,271,318,163	\$1,116,393,313	\$154,924,850	6.5	704

Figure 18. Marketplace Profile (continued)

	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Electronics & Appliance Stores					
Borough	\$844,872	\$0	\$844,872	100.0	0
15-Min Driveshed	\$21,854,281	\$13,412,138	\$8,442,143	23.9	6
30-Min Driveshed	\$110,118,327	\$47,035,364	\$63,082,963	40.1	45
60-Min Driveshed	\$1,248,756,972	\$1,314,977,513	-\$66,220,541	-2.6	616
Building Materials, Garden Equipment & Supply Stores					
Borough	\$1,265,006	\$1,090,952	\$174,054	7.4	2
15-Min Driveshed	\$36,741,114	\$23,523,875	\$13,217,239	21.9	23
30-Min Driveshed	\$187,620,446	\$202,046,721	-\$14,426,275	-3.7	119
60-Min Driveshed	\$2,074,543,129	\$1,986,109,440	\$88,433,689	2.2	1,054
Food & Beverage Stores					
Borough	\$3,953,223	\$4,503,746	-\$550,523	-6.5	3
15-Min Driveshed	\$99,366,648	\$100,381,299	-\$1,014,651	-0.5	27
30-Min Driveshed	\$499,625,015	\$453,255,679	\$46,369,336	4.9	139
60-Min Driveshed	\$5,616,814,872	\$5,584,141,609	\$32,673,263	0.3	1,586
Health & Personal Care Stores					
Borough	\$1,573,964	\$3,271,416	-\$1,697,452	-35.0	1
15-Min Driveshed	\$41,174,630	\$33,095,227	\$8,079,403	10.9	10
30-Min Driveshed	\$215,864,308	\$148,408,516	\$67,455,792	18.5	79
60-Min Driveshed	\$2,352,820,068	\$2,199,897,436	\$152,922,632	3.4	1,034
Gasoline Stations					
Borough	\$2,106,576	\$0	\$2,106,576	100.0	0
15-Min Driveshed	\$52,554,590	\$43,070,032	\$9,484,558	9.9	14

Figure 18. Marketplace Profile (continued)

	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
30-Min Driveshed	\$269,818,877	\$291,765,836	-\$21,946,959	-3.9	66
60-Min Driveshed	\$2,976,568,206	\$2,939,781,121	\$36,787,085	0.6	673
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores					
Borough	\$1,619,600	\$506,069	\$1,113,531	52.4	1
15-Min Driveshed	\$42,204,332	\$6,775,207	\$35,429,125	72.3	11
30-Min Driveshed	\$220,542,243	\$40,939,253	\$179,602,990	68.7	82
60-Min Driveshed	\$2,485,100,411	\$2,526,946,731	-\$41,846,320	-0.8	1,768
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores					
Borough	\$667,865	\$71,696	\$596,169	80.6	1
15-Min Driveshed	\$17,167,383	\$3,994,007	\$13,173,376	62.3	12
30-Min Driveshed	\$86,078,232	\$49,101,088	\$36,977,144	27.4	78
60-Min Driveshed	\$982,797,337	\$996,271,907	-\$13,474,570	-0.7	712
General Merchandise Stores					
Borough	\$3,247,062	\$0	\$3,247,062	100.0	0
15-Min Driveshed	\$82,287,759	\$68,092,311	\$14,195,448	9.4	6
30-Min Driveshed	\$394,623,248	\$226,355,007	\$168,268,241	27.1	49
60-Min Driveshed	\$4,555,141,126	\$4,867,259,770	-\$312,118,644	-3.3	585
Miscellaneous Store Retailers					
Borough	\$807,774	\$1,574,499	-\$766,725	-32.2	5
15-Min Driveshed	\$21,488,254	\$9,040,120	\$12,448,134	40.8	36
30-Min Driveshed	\$109,742,594	\$77,657,985	\$32,084,609	17.1	217
60-Min Driveshed	\$1,224,136,011	\$1,422,201,294	-\$198,065,283	-7.5	1,831

Figure 18. Marketplace Profile (continued)

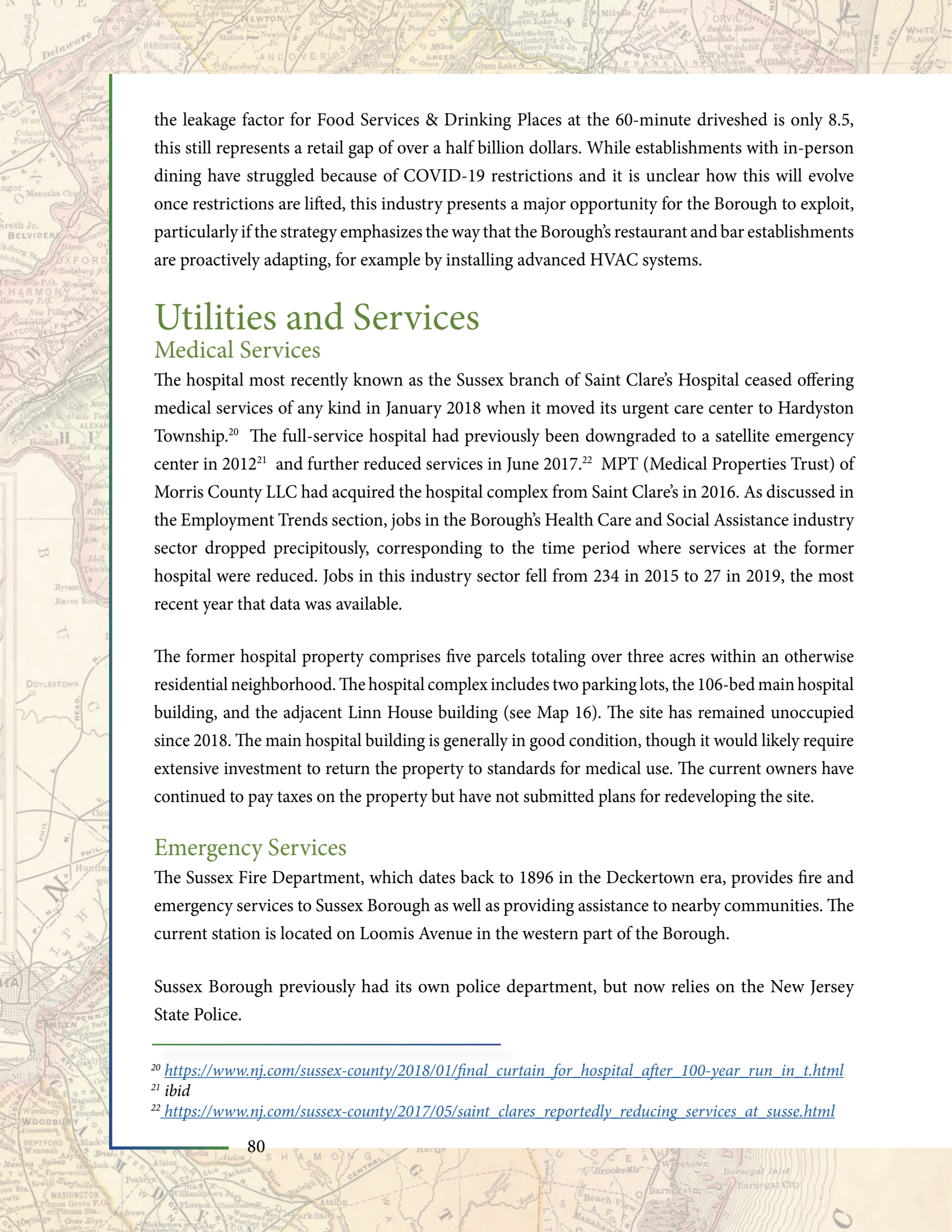
	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Nonstore Retailers					
Borough	\$383,984	\$0	\$383,984	100.0	0
15-Min Driveshed	\$10,412,408	\$27,766,173	-\$17,353,765	-45.5	5
30-Min Driveshed	\$63,468,171	\$52,289,652	\$11,178,519	9.7	22
60-Min Driveshed	\$656,816,446	\$408,249,501	\$248,566,945	23.3	249
Food Services & Drinking Places					
Borough	\$2,314,046	\$3,122,734	-\$808,688	-14.9	11
15-Min Driveshed	\$60,109,393	\$43,433,423	\$16,675,970	16.1	87
30-Min Driveshed	\$308,009,115	\$219,836,124	\$88,172,991	16.7	483
60-Min Driveshed	\$3,476,691,842	\$2,932,444,245	\$544,247,597	8.5	5,474

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

The industry with the greatest retail gap at the 30-minute driveshed is Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores with \$179,602,990 in unmet demand. This industry also has the highest leakage factor (68.7) at this driveshed. Leakage is defined by ESRI as “a measure of the relationship between supply and demand that ranges from +100 (total leakage) to -100 (total surplus).”¹⁹ General Merchandise Stores also has a high retail gap at \$168,268,241, though the leakage factor is only 27.1. The retail gap at the 30-minute driveshed for Electronics & Appliances Stores and Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores is more modest, though the Borough could potentially become a regional hub for these types of industries. For example, as part of a strategy to take advantage of the Borough’s access and proximity to outdoor activities, one or more sporting goods stores that specifically cater to this market could potentially succeed, if not thrive.

Two industries have a negative retail gap at the Borough level but a positive retail gap at each of the three drivesheds: Health & Personal Care Stores and Food Services & Drinking Places. Given its small size, the negative retail gap at the Borough level is likely at least partially due to its location as a center that already draws some visitors beyond its own residents. This also suggests that the Borough can further expand its reach to draw visitors on a more regional scale. While

¹⁹ ESRI Business Analyst



the leakage factor for Food Services & Drinking Places at the 60-minute driveshed is only 8.5, this still represents a retail gap of over a half billion dollars. While establishments with in-person dining have struggled because of COVID-19 restrictions and it is unclear how this will evolve once restrictions are lifted, this industry presents a major opportunity for the Borough to exploit, particularly if the strategy emphasizes the way that the Borough's restaurant and bar establishments are proactively adapting, for example by installing advanced HVAC systems.

Utilities and Services

Medical Services

The hospital most recently known as the Sussex branch of Saint Clare's Hospital ceased offering medical services of any kind in January 2018 when it moved its urgent care center to Hardyston Township.²⁰ The full-service hospital had previously been downgraded to a satellite emergency center in 2012²¹ and further reduced services in June 2017.²² MPT (Medical Properties Trust) of Morris County LLC had acquired the hospital complex from Saint Clare's in 2016. As discussed in the Employment Trends section, jobs in the Borough's Health Care and Social Assistance industry sector dropped precipitously, corresponding to the time period where services at the former hospital were reduced. Jobs in this industry sector fell from 234 in 2015 to 27 in 2019, the most recent year that data was available.

The former hospital property comprises five parcels totaling over three acres within an otherwise residential neighborhood. The hospital complex includes two parking lots, the 106-bed main hospital building, and the adjacent Linn House building (see Map 16). The site has remained unoccupied since 2018. The main hospital building is generally in good condition, though it would likely require extensive investment to return the property to standards for medical use. The current owners have continued to pay taxes on the property but have not submitted plans for redeveloping the site.

Emergency Services

The Sussex Fire Department, which dates back to 1896 in the Deckertown era, provides fire and emergency services to Sussex Borough as well as providing assistance to nearby communities. The current station is located on Loomis Avenue in the western part of the Borough.

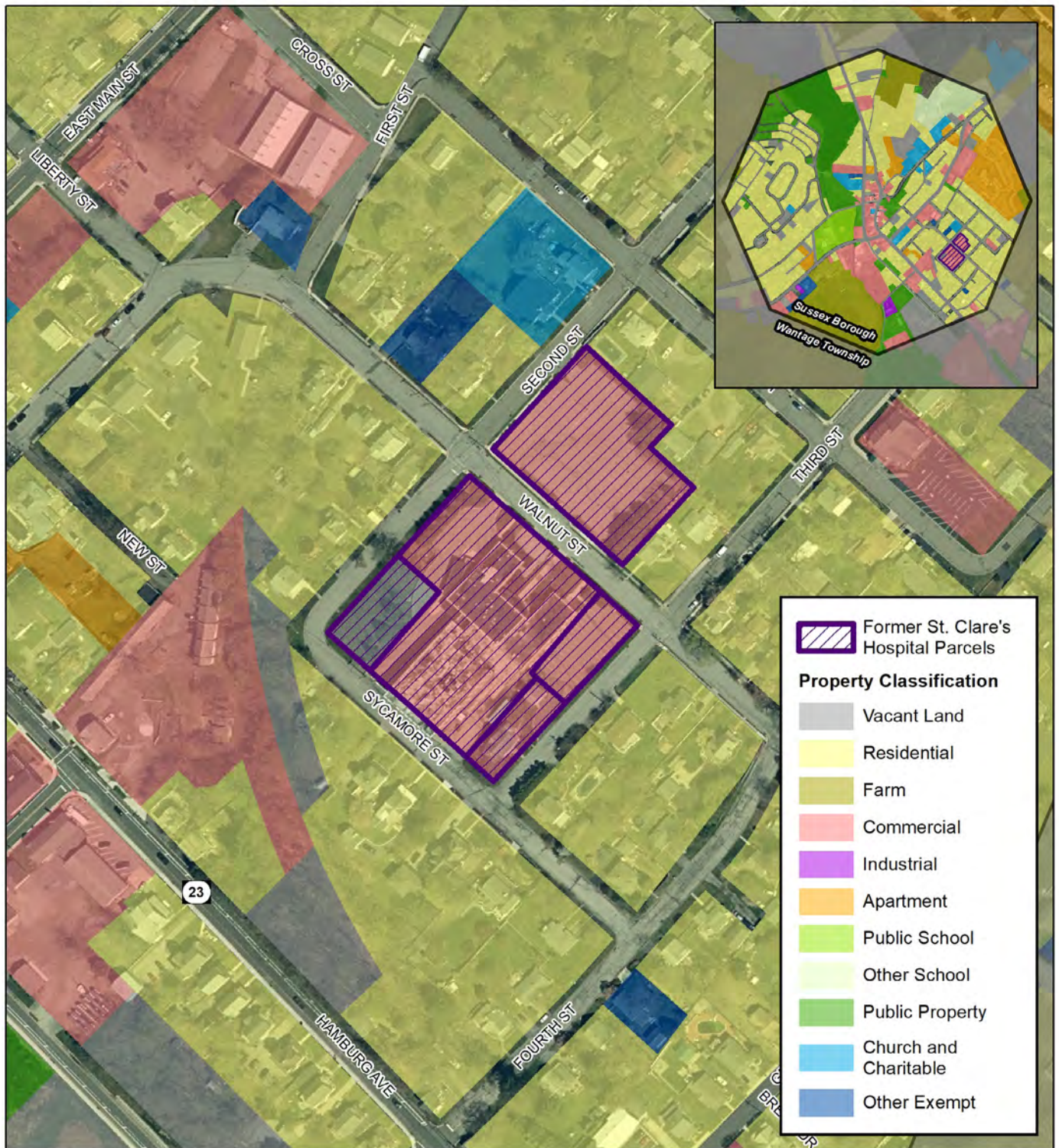
Sussex Borough previously had its own police department, but now relies on the New Jersey State Police.

²⁰ https://www.nj.com/sussex-county/2018/01/final_curtain_for_hospital_after_100-year_run_in_t.html

²¹ *ibid*

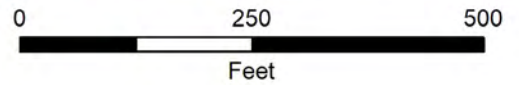
²² https://www.nj.com/sussex-county/2017/05/saint_clares_reportedly_reducing_services_at_sussex.html

Map 16. Sussex Borough Former St. Clare's Hospital



N

 2022



Data Sources:
 ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation



Internet Connectivity

The Borough of Sussex currently has limited high speed internet access from three major suppliers. CenturyLink provides 40 to 50 megabits per second (MPS) over cable. Optimum can provide higher speeds of 100 MPS also over cable lines. Finally, Planet Networks is providing high speed internet of fiber optic cable to the new Shop Rite in the Borough. They can provide up to 100,000 MPS up and 10,000 MPS down. Planet Networks will be expanding into the Borough and can provide high speed Wi-Fi hot spots in the Borough's commercial center.

Sewer and Water Utilities

The Borough of Sussex is serviced by the Sussex County Municipal Utility Authority based upon a 1992 Sewer Service Agreement, which provides a max and minimum usage of 312,000 gallons per month (GPM.) The Borough uses only a portion of this gallonage, approximately 124,000 GPM, but users must be pay for the entire allocation, which is divided among the users. This arrangement makes sewer usage fees in the Borough extremely high for the amount of usage.

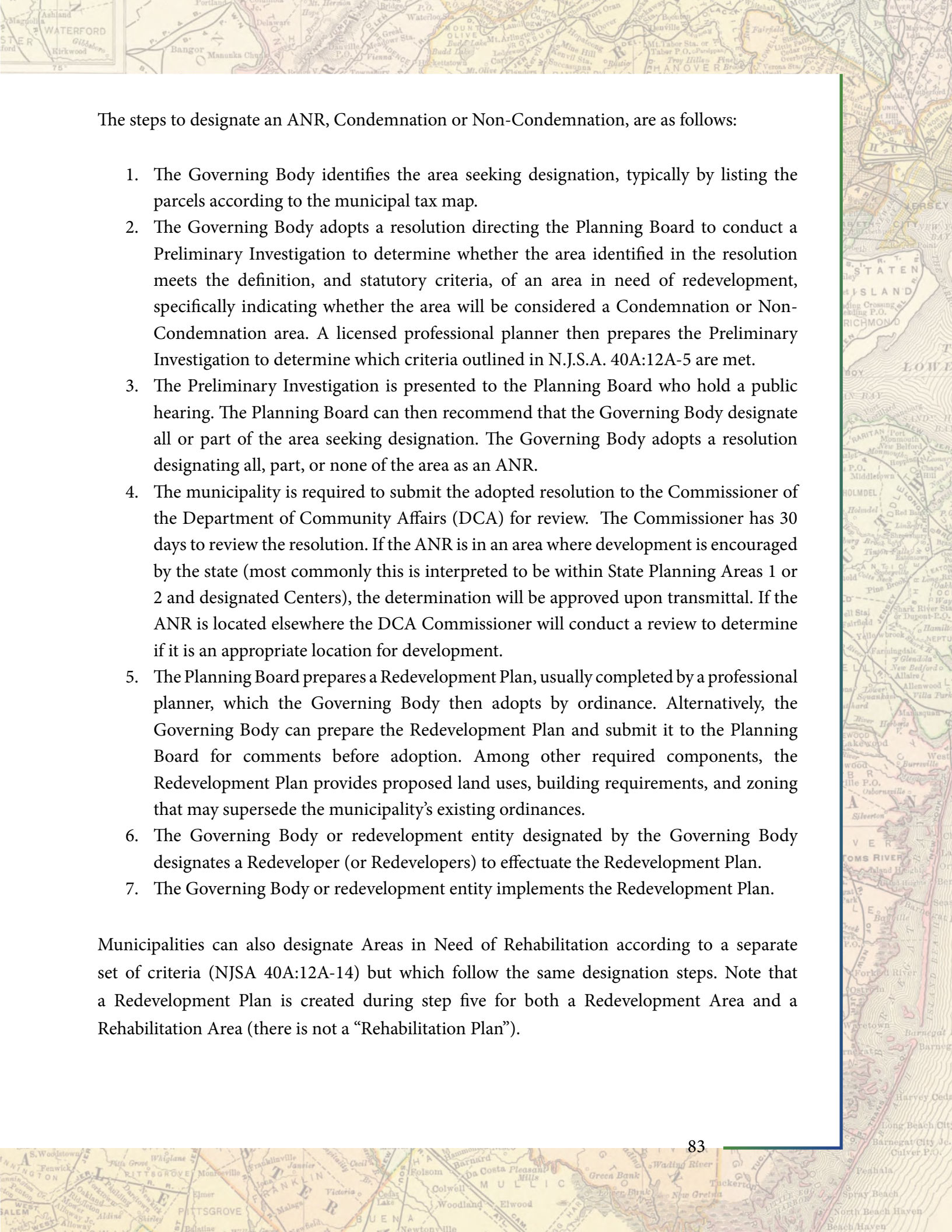
Water for the Borough is provided by the Sussex Water Utility, which runs the water from Lake Rutherford along a stream to Colesville, where there is a settling plant, and then the water is run by pipe to the Borough. There are some pending new and expensive NJDEP mandates which would increase the already high costs of water service to users.

Areas in Need of Redevelopment and Rehabilitation

Designation Process

The New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) empowers municipalities with the ability to designate Areas in Need of Redevelopment and Areas in Need of Rehabilitation as a means to encourage appropriate development. Areas in Need of Redevelopment (ANR or Redevelopment Area) seeking designation must meet one or more criteria outlined in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 to demonstrate that development is unlikely to occur in the private market alone. Municipalities can pursue ANR designations that allow for Condemnation through eminent domain or Non-Condemnation.

Designating ANRs can be a powerful tool to catalyze economic development. The primary benefits are the opportunity to rezone the area and to attract developers with an incentive of receiving a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). More generally, the ANR gives municipalities the opportunity to articulate a clear vision of how the area can develop in a way that aligns with economic development objectives as outlined in the municipal master plan.



The steps to designate an ANR, Condemnation or Non-Condemnation, are as follows:

1. The Governing Body identifies the area seeking designation, typically by listing the parcels according to the municipal tax map.
2. The Governing Body adopts a resolution directing the Planning Board to conduct a Preliminary Investigation to determine whether the area identified in the resolution meets the definition, and statutory criteria, of an area in need of redevelopment, specifically indicating whether the area will be considered a Condemnation or Non-Condemnation area. A licensed professional planner then prepares the Preliminary Investigation to determine which criteria outlined in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 are met.
3. The Preliminary Investigation is presented to the Planning Board who hold a public hearing. The Planning Board can then recommend that the Governing Body designate all or part of the area seeking designation. The Governing Body adopts a resolution designating all, part, or none of the area as an ANR.
4. The municipality is required to submit the adopted resolution to the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for review. The Commissioner has 30 days to review the resolution. If the ANR is in an area where development is encouraged by the state (most commonly this is interpreted to be within State Planning Areas 1 or 2 and designated Centers), the determination will be approved upon transmittal. If the ANR is located elsewhere the DCA Commissioner will conduct a review to determine if it is an appropriate location for development.
5. The Planning Board prepares a Redevelopment Plan, usually completed by a professional planner, which the Governing Body then adopts by ordinance. Alternatively, the Governing Body can prepare the Redevelopment Plan and submit it to the Planning Board for comments before adoption. Among other required components, the Redevelopment Plan provides proposed land uses, building requirements, and zoning that may supersede the municipality's existing ordinances.
6. The Governing Body or redevelopment entity designated by the Governing Body designates a Redeveloper (or Redevelopers) to effectuate the Redevelopment Plan.
7. The Governing Body or redevelopment entity implements the Redevelopment Plan.

Municipalities can also designate Areas in Need of Rehabilitation according to a separate set of criteria (NJSA 40A:12A-14) but which follow the same designation steps. Note that a Redevelopment Plan is created during step five for both a Redevelopment Area and a Rehabilitation Area (there is not a “Rehabilitation Plan”).

ANRs in Sussex Borough

The Sussex Borough Council has adopted at least one Area in Need of Rehabilitation and one Area in Need of Redevelopment resolution in 2013 and 2015, respectively. Both of these ANRs are located along the one-way stretches of State Route 23, both within the “island” and on the southwestern side of Walling Avenue. However, there are lingering issues that could complicate the enforcement of any provisions from a subsequent Redevelopment Plan. These issues are discussed below.

Route 23 Rehabilitation Area

The Borough adopted Resolution #2013-53R designating The Route 23 Rehabilitation Area on April 17, 2013. This Rehabilitation Area comprises four geographic parts: Areas A, B, C, and D. However, the resolution was not submitted to the Commissioner of DCA (step four discussed above). This Rehabilitation Area therefore did not receive approval and was not officially mapped by DCA. In addition to the problems noted above regarding the importance of submitting an ANR resolution, the lack of a map within the DCA database leaves ambiguity of the precise location of the Rehabilitation Area.

While the parcels are clearly listed within Resolution #2013-53R and the general area is clearly intended to include the blocks within the “island” of Walling Avenue to the southwest, Loomis Avenue to the north, Hamburg Avenue to the northeast, and Wantage Township to the southeast, as well as the parcels that front the southwest side of Walling Avenue, the blocks and lots in Area D do not completely match current municipal parcels (see Figure 19 and Map 17). Likely due to amendments to the municipal tax map that occurred during the realignment of State Route 23 Southbound on Walling Avenue, Block 104, Lots 2-16 no longer exist. Instead, the area outlined on the map as Area D now includes Block 105, Lots 1.03, 2-10, 15 and Block 106, Lots 1.02, 11-14. These parcels are included in the Redevelopment Plan that was adopted by the Borough Council on November 26, 2013. Parcels from Areas A, B, and C in Resolution #2013-53R remain the same.

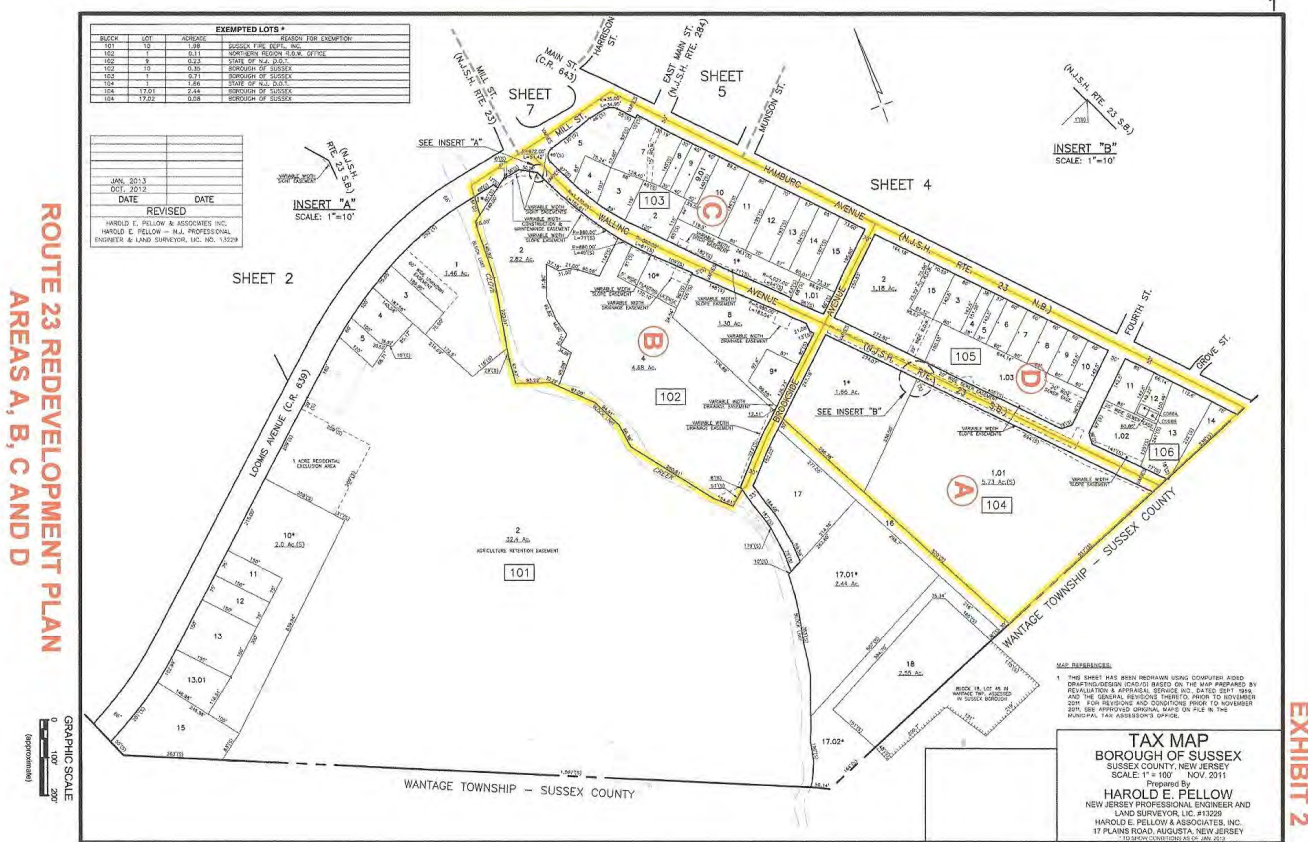
Figure 19. Areas A, B, C, and D in Route 23 Rehabilitation Area

Area	Block/Lots listed in Resolution #2013-53R		Block/Lots listed in Route 23 Redevelopment Plan and current parcel layer	
	Block	Lots	Block	Lots
A	104	1, 1.01	Same as Resolution #2013-53R	
B	102	1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10	Same as Resolution #2013-53R	
C	103	1, 1.01, 2-5, 7-9, 9.01, 10-15	Same as Resolution #2013-53R	
D	104	2-16	105	1.03, 2-10, 15
			106	1.01, 11-14

Resolution #2015-98R Redevelopment Area

The only Area of Need of Redevelopment that DCA has on file, and therefore the only Borough ANR that has met the four statutory requirements for designation, is Resolution #2015-98R which received approval from DCA on July 17, 2015. This Non-Condemnation ANR covers Area A in the Route 23 Rehabilitation Area, the part of the Borough where the Shop Rite is under construction at the time of plan preparation. Wantage Township adopted a separate Redevelopment Area on July 9, 2015 for the area immediately adjacent to the Borough's Redevelopment Area.

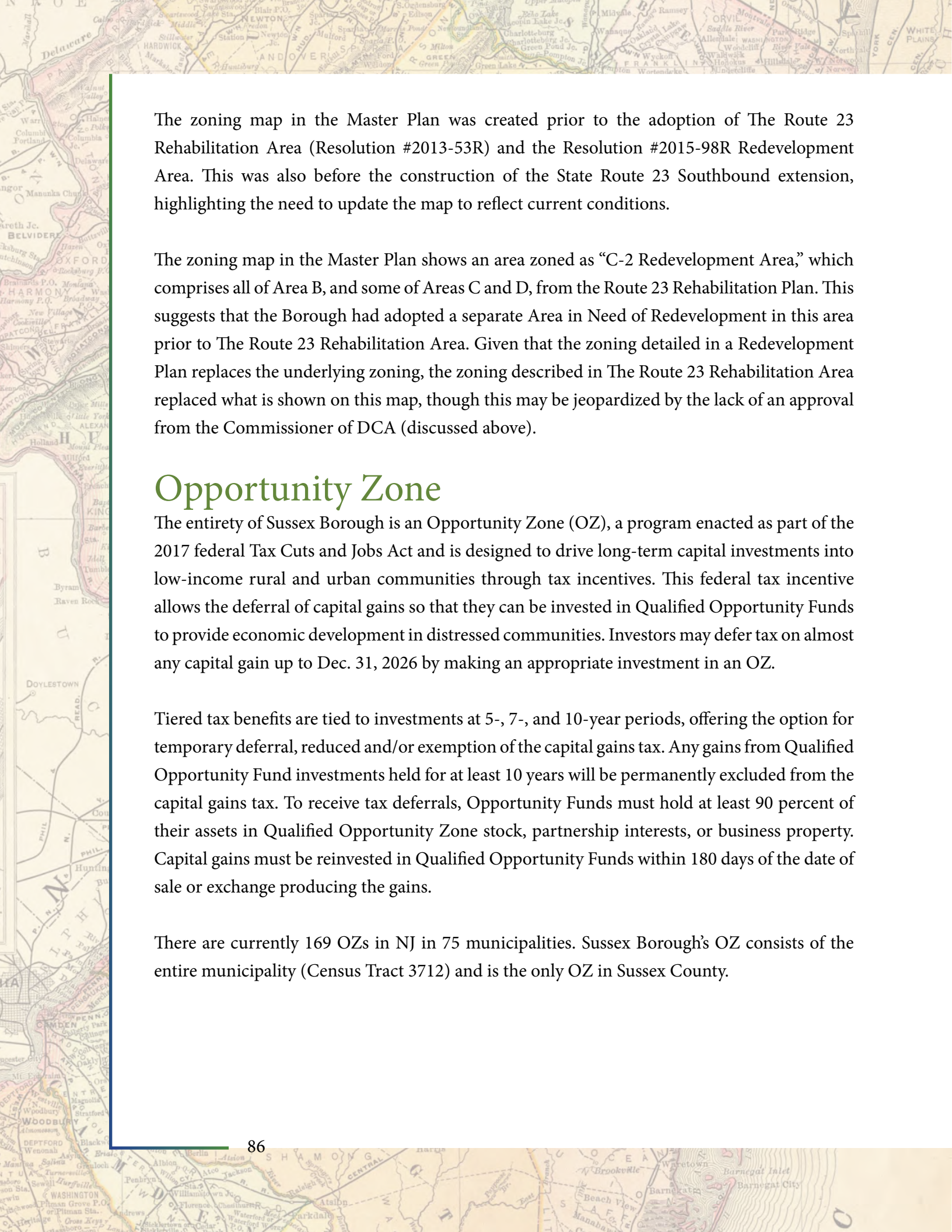
Map 17. Route 23 Redevelopment Plan Areas A, B, C, and D



Source: Route 23 Redevelopment Plan

Redevelopment Area on Zoning Map

The intended location of Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Areas in the Borough is further obscured by what is shown on the zoning map included in the 2009 Master Plan. A more detailed discussion of issues regarding the Borough's zoning map and ordinances are discussed in the Zoning section.



The zoning map in the Master Plan was created prior to the adoption of The Route 23 Rehabilitation Area (Resolution #2013-53R) and the Resolution #2015-98R Redevelopment Area. This was also before the construction of the State Route 23 Southbound extension, highlighting the need to update the map to reflect current conditions.

The zoning map in the Master Plan shows an area zoned as “C-2 Redevelopment Area,” which comprises all of Area B, and some of Areas C and D, from the Route 23 Rehabilitation Plan. This suggests that the Borough had adopted a separate Area in Need of Redevelopment in this area prior to The Route 23 Rehabilitation Area. Given that the zoning detailed in a Redevelopment Plan replaces the underlying zoning, the zoning described in The Route 23 Rehabilitation Area replaced what is shown on this map, though this may be jeopardized by the lack of an approval from the Commissioner of DCA (discussed above).

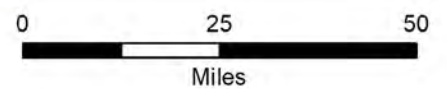
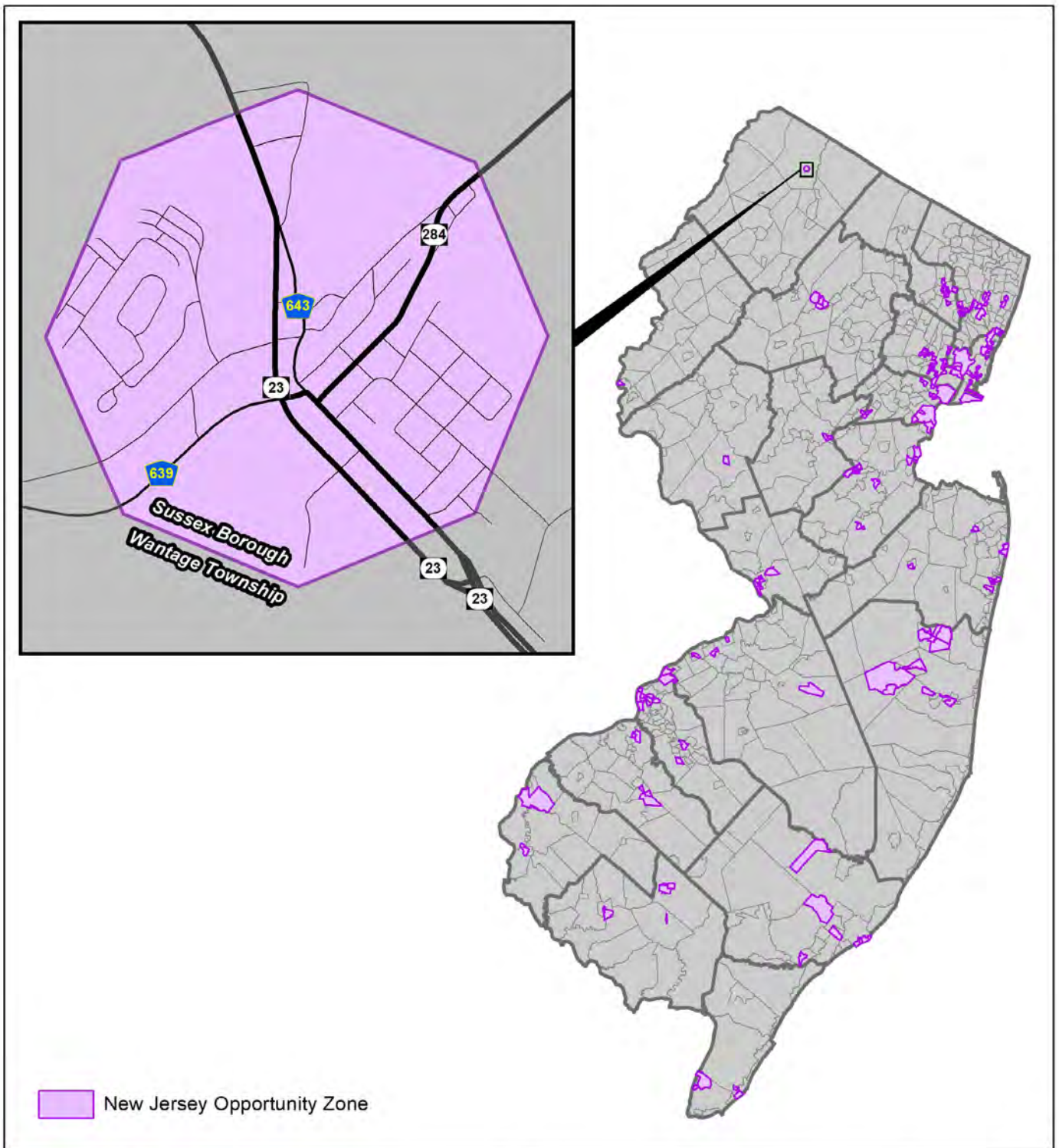
Opportunity Zone

The entirety of Sussex Borough is an Opportunity Zone (OZ), a program enacted as part of the 2017 federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and is designed to drive long-term capital investments into low-income rural and urban communities through tax incentives. This federal tax incentive allows the deferral of capital gains so that they can be invested in Qualified Opportunity Funds to provide economic development in distressed communities. Investors may defer tax on almost any capital gain up to Dec. 31, 2026 by making an appropriate investment in an OZ.

Tiered tax benefits are tied to investments at 5-, 7-, and 10-year periods, offering the option for temporary deferral, reduced and/or exemption of the capital gains tax. Any gains from Qualified Opportunity Fund investments held for at least 10 years will be permanently excluded from the capital gains tax. To receive tax deferrals, Opportunity Funds must hold at least 90 percent of their assets in Qualified Opportunity Zone stock, partnership interests, or business property. Capital gains must be reinvested in Qualified Opportunity Funds within 180 days of the date of sale or exchange producing the gains.

There are currently 169 OZs in NJ in 75 municipalities. Sussex Borough’s OZ consists of the entire municipality (Census Tract 3712) and is the only OZ in Sussex County.

Map 18. New Jersey Opportunity Zones



Data Sources: ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS

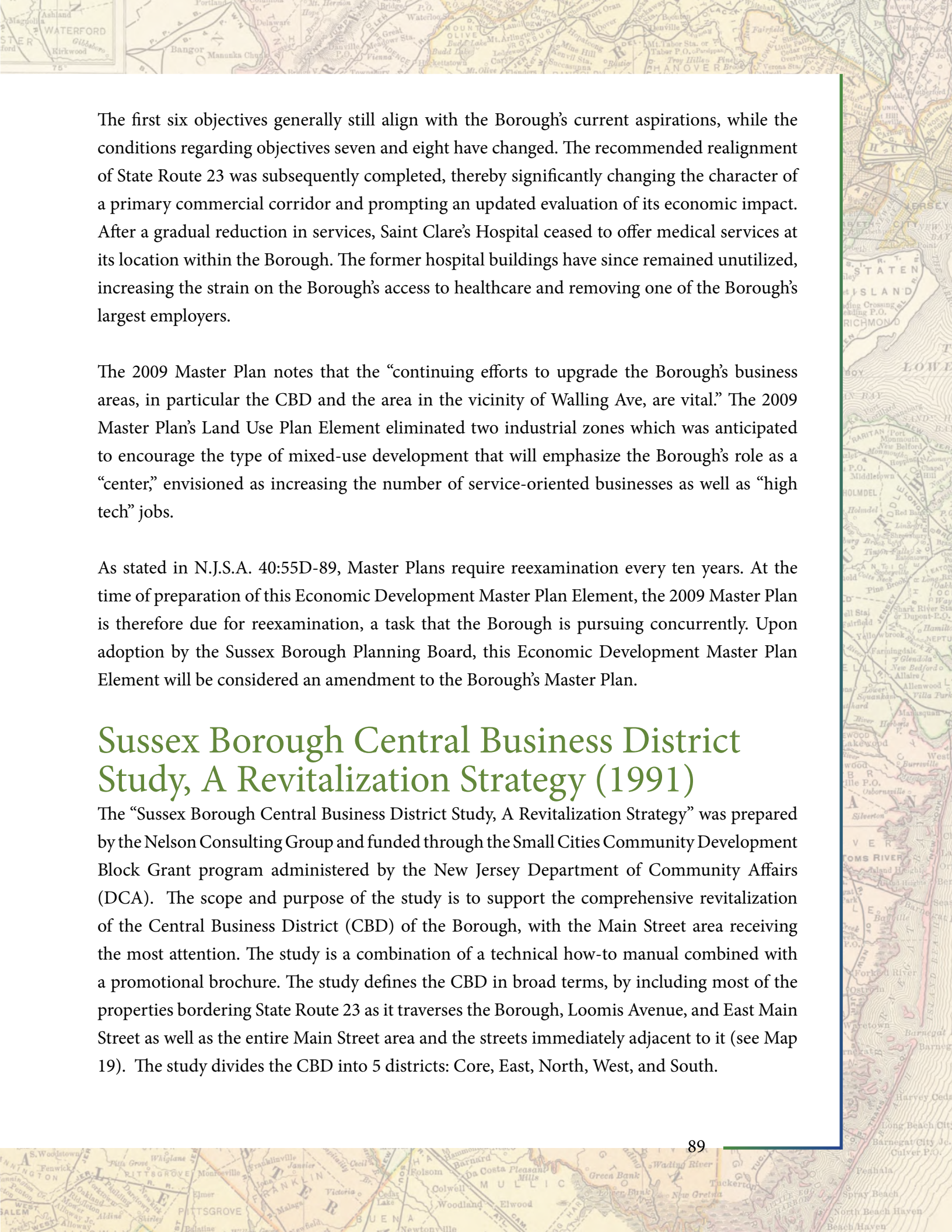
Relationship to Other Plans and Initiatives

Sussex Borough Master Plan (2009)

The most recent Master Plan for Sussex Borough was prepared by The Nelson Consulting Group and adopted by the Sussex Borough Planning Board on October 15, 2009. The 2009 Master Plan replaced the Borough's original 1975 Master Plan. The 2009 Master Plan met the requirements outlined in New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28, by providing (1) "A statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based" and (2) a Land Use Element. The 2009 Master Plan briefly discussed several other element topics, including economic development, but noted that these topics were beyond the scope of the document and should not be considered full Master Plan Elements.

The 2009 Master Plan and, in particular, the Land Use Element's analysis and recommendations, was heavily linked to economic development in the Borough. The 2009 Master Plan specifically included the Economic Development goal "to retain and enhance Sussex Borough's position as the business, cultural, medical and historical center of the region and as one of the logical locations for increased business activity in the eastern part of Sussex County." The eight associated objectives were:

1. *Install and encourage streetscape and other aesthetic improvements throughout the Borough and especially in the business districts in order to make them attractive to visitors.*
2. *Encourage businesses that are technologically oriented and that will compete effectively in the twenty-first century.*
3. *Provide the infrastructure needed by the types of business that the Borough is most likely to attract and retain.*
4. *Encourage the adaptive reuse and development of underutilized and "brownfields" properties.*
5. *Provide sufficient housing for a workforce to staff the economic development endeavors of the Borough.*
6. *Provide the necessary parking facilities in the vicinity of the Main St business district and other business districts of the community.*
7. *Encourage the realignment of Route 23 and reevaluate the land development opportunities in Evaluate how St Clare's Hospital can enhance its role as an economic engine of the Borough*



The first six objectives generally still align with the Borough's current aspirations, while the conditions regarding objectives seven and eight have changed. The recommended realignment of State Route 23 was subsequently completed, thereby significantly changing the character of a primary commercial corridor and prompting an updated evaluation of its economic impact. After a gradual reduction in services, Saint Clare's Hospital ceased to offer medical services at its location within the Borough. The former hospital buildings have since remained unutilized, increasing the strain on the Borough's access to healthcare and removing one of the Borough's largest employers.

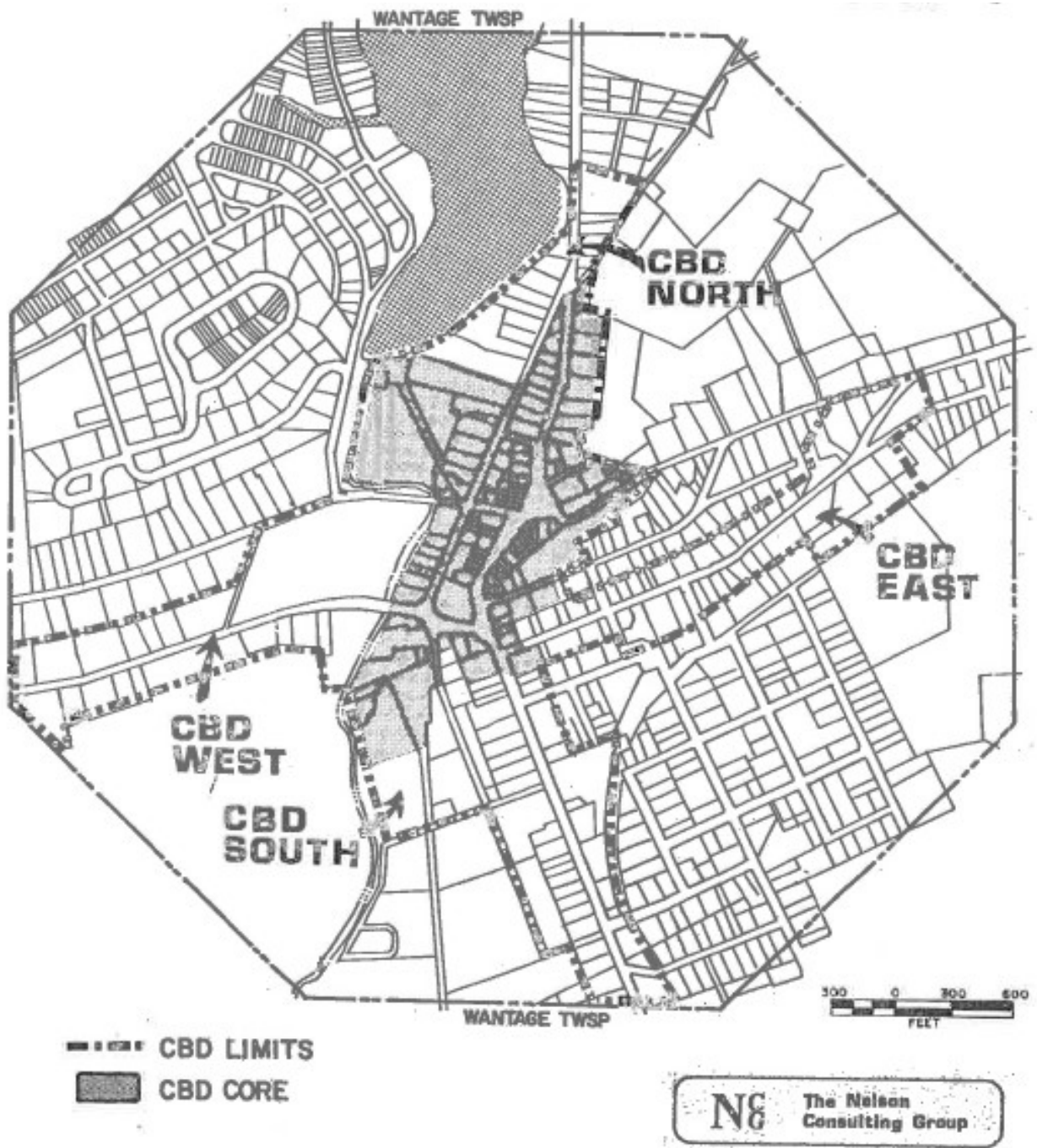
The 2009 Master Plan notes that the "continuing efforts to upgrade the Borough's business areas, in particular the CBD and the area in the vicinity of Walling Ave, are vital." The 2009 Master Plan's Land Use Plan Element eliminated two industrial zones which was anticipated to encourage the type of mixed-use development that will emphasize the Borough's role as a "center," envisioned as increasing the number of service-oriented businesses as well as "high tech" jobs.

As stated in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, Master Plans require reexamination every ten years. At the time of preparation of this Economic Development Master Plan Element, the 2009 Master Plan is therefore due for reexamination, a task that the Borough is pursuing concurrently. Upon adoption by the Sussex Borough Planning Board, this Economic Development Master Plan Element will be considered an amendment to the Borough's Master Plan.

Sussex Borough Central Business District Study, A Revitalization Strategy (1991)

The "Sussex Borough Central Business District Study, A Revitalization Strategy" was prepared by the Nelson Consulting Group and funded through the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program administered by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The scope and purpose of the study is to support the comprehensive revitalization of the Central Business District (CBD) of the Borough, with the Main Street area receiving the most attention. The study is a combination of a technical how-to manual combined with a promotional brochure. The study defines the CBD in broad terms, by including most of the properties bordering State Route 23 as it traverses the Borough, Loomis Avenue, and East Main Street as well as the entire Main Street area and the streets immediately adjacent to it (see Map 19). The study divides the CBD into 5 districts: Core, East, North, West, and South.

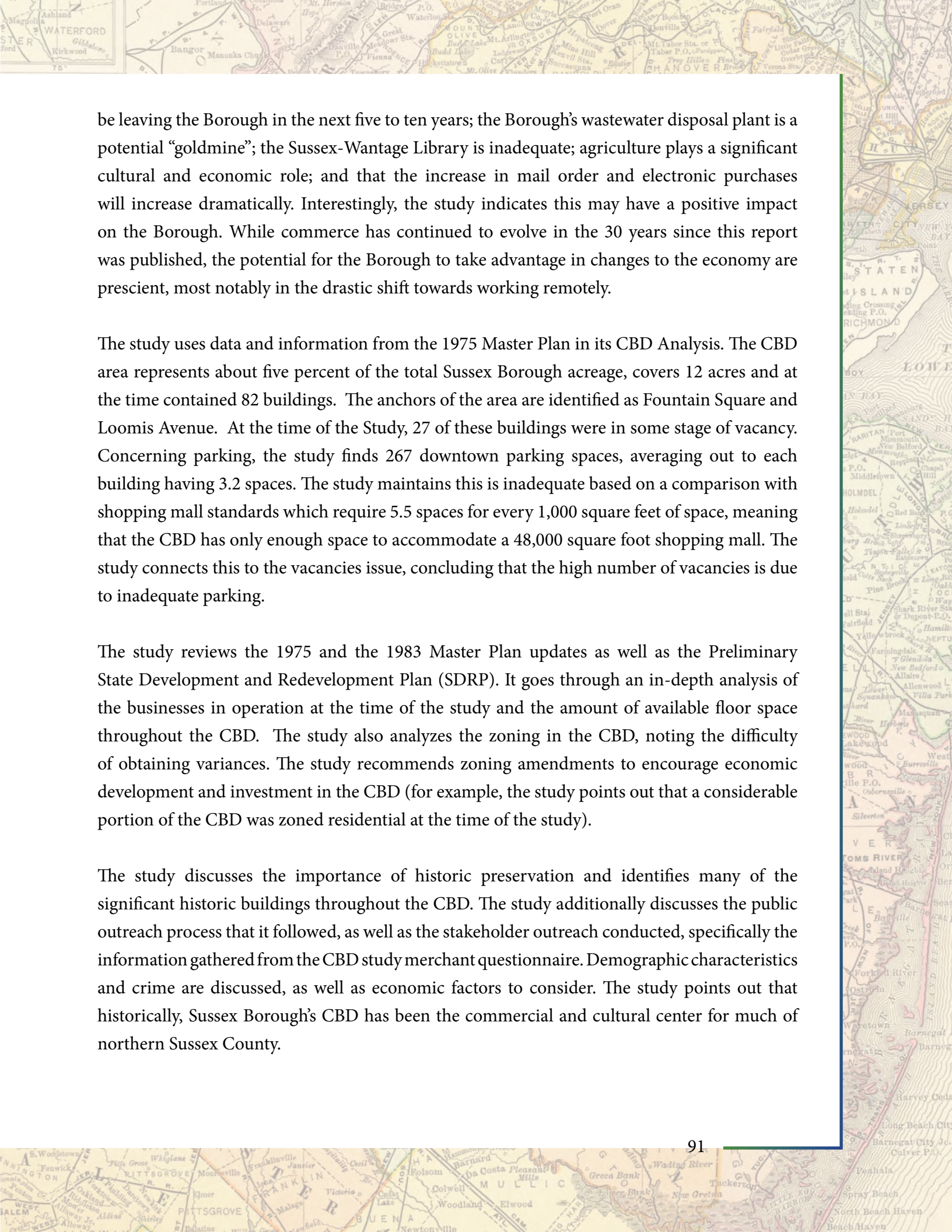
Map 19. Sussex Borough's Central Business District in 1991



Source: *Sussex Borough Central Business District Study, A Revitalization Strategy*

The study uses the National Main Street Center (NMSC) approach and advocates for the use of that organization's approach to revitalization and redevelopment.

The study highlights a number of planning assumptions, many of which came to fruition or are still relevant, including: the Wallkill Valley Hospital (later renamed Saint Clare's Hospital) will

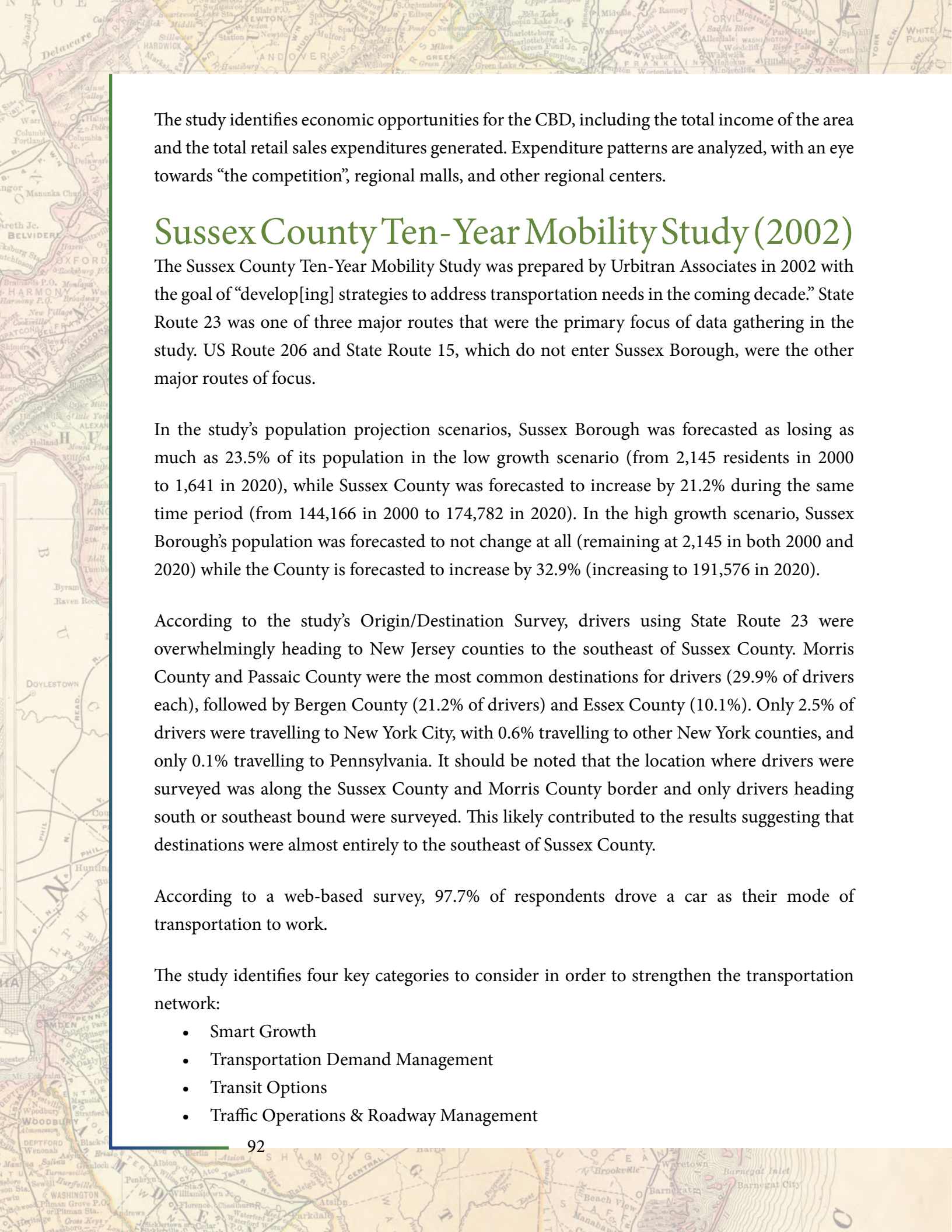


be leaving the Borough in the next five to ten years; the Borough's wastewater disposal plant is a potential "goldmine"; the Sussex-Wantage Library is inadequate; agriculture plays a significant cultural and economic role; and that the increase in mail order and electronic purchases will increase dramatically. Interestingly, the study indicates this may have a positive impact on the Borough. While commerce has continued to evolve in the 30 years since this report was published, the potential for the Borough to take advantage in changes to the economy are prescient, most notably in the drastic shift towards working remotely.

The study uses data and information from the 1975 Master Plan in its CBD Analysis. The CBD area represents about five percent of the total Sussex Borough acreage, covers 12 acres and at the time contained 82 buildings. The anchors of the area are identified as Fountain Square and Loomis Avenue. At the time of the Study, 27 of these buildings were in some stage of vacancy. Concerning parking, the study finds 267 downtown parking spaces, averaging out to each building having 3.2 spaces. The study maintains this is inadequate based on a comparison with shopping mall standards which require 5.5 spaces for every 1,000 square feet of space, meaning that the CBD has only enough space to accommodate a 48,000 square foot shopping mall. The study connects this to the vacancies issue, concluding that the high number of vacancies is due to inadequate parking.

The study reviews the 1975 and the 1983 Master Plan updates as well as the Preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). It goes through an in-depth analysis of the businesses in operation at the time of the study and the amount of available floor space throughout the CBD. The study also analyzes the zoning in the CBD, noting the difficulty of obtaining variances. The study recommends zoning amendments to encourage economic development and investment in the CBD (for example, the study points out that a considerable portion of the CBD was zoned residential at the time of the study).

The study discusses the importance of historic preservation and identifies many of the significant historic buildings throughout the CBD. The study additionally discusses the public outreach process that it followed, as well as the stakeholder outreach conducted, specifically the information gathered from the CBD study merchant questionnaire. Demographic characteristics and crime are discussed, as well as economic factors to consider. The study points out that historically, Sussex Borough's CBD has been the commercial and cultural center for much of northern Sussex County.



The study identifies economic opportunities for the CBD, including the total income of the area and the total retail sales expenditures generated. Expenditure patterns are analyzed, with an eye towards “the competition”, regional malls, and other regional centers.

Sussex County Ten-Year Mobility Study (2002)

The Sussex County Ten-Year Mobility Study was prepared by Urbitran Associates in 2002 with the goal of “develop[ing] strategies to address transportation needs in the coming decade.” State Route 23 was one of three major routes that were the primary focus of data gathering in the study. US Route 206 and State Route 15, which do not enter Sussex Borough, were the other major routes of focus.

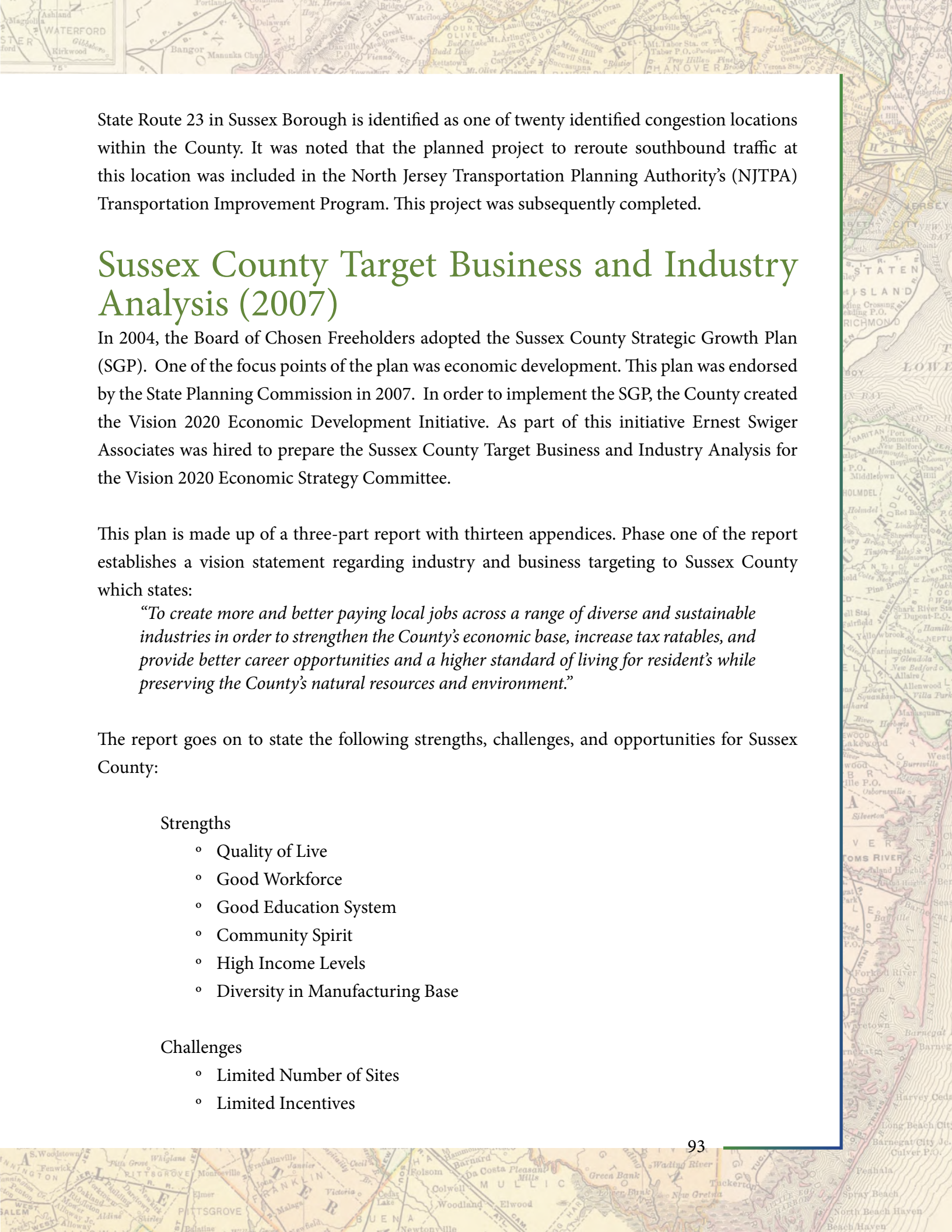
In the study’s population projection scenarios, Sussex Borough was forecasted as losing as much as 23.5% of its population in the low growth scenario (from 2,145 residents in 2000 to 1,641 in 2020), while Sussex County was forecasted to increase by 21.2% during the same time period (from 144,166 in 2000 to 174,782 in 2020). In the high growth scenario, Sussex Borough’s population was forecasted to not change at all (remaining at 2,145 in both 2000 and 2020) while the County is forecasted to increase by 32.9% (increasing to 191,576 in 2020).

According to the study’s Origin/Destination Survey, drivers using State Route 23 were overwhelmingly heading to New Jersey counties to the southeast of Sussex County. Morris County and Passaic County were the most common destinations for drivers (29.9% of drivers each), followed by Bergen County (21.2% of drivers) and Essex County (10.1%). Only 2.5% of drivers were travelling to New York City, with 0.6% travelling to other New York counties, and only 0.1% travelling to Pennsylvania. It should be noted that the location where drivers were surveyed was along the Sussex County and Morris County border and only drivers heading south or southeast bound were surveyed. This likely contributed to the results suggesting that destinations were almost entirely to the southeast of Sussex County.

According to a web-based survey, 97.7% of respondents drove a car as their mode of transportation to work.

The study identifies four key categories to consider in order to strengthen the transportation network:

- Smart Growth
- Transportation Demand Management
- Transit Options
- Traffic Operations & Roadway Management



State Route 23 in Sussex Borough is identified as one of twenty identified congestion locations within the County. It was noted that the planned project to reroute southbound traffic at this location was included in the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's (NJTPA) Transportation Improvement Program. This project was subsequently completed.

Sussex County Target Business and Industry Analysis (2007)

In 2004, the Board of Chosen Freeholders adopted the Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan (SGP). One of the focus points of the plan was economic development. This plan was endorsed by the State Planning Commission in 2007. In order to implement the SGP, the County created the Vision 2020 Economic Development Initiative. As part of this initiative Ernest Swiger Associates was hired to prepare the Sussex County Target Business and Industry Analysis for the Vision 2020 Economic Strategy Committee.

This plan is made up of a three-part report with thirteen appendices. Phase one of the report establishes a vision statement regarding industry and business targeting to Sussex County which states:

“To create more and better paying local jobs across a range of diverse and sustainable industries in order to strengthen the County’s economic base, increase tax rates, and provide better career opportunities and a higher standard of living for residents while preserving the County’s natural resources and environment.”

The report goes on to state the following strengths, challenges, and opportunities for Sussex County:

Strengths

- Quality of Live
- Good Workforce
- Good Education System
- Community Spirit
- High Income Levels
- Diversity in Manufacturing Base

Challenges

- Limited Number of Sites
- Limited Incentives

- Business Climate
- Limited Infrastructure
- Housing Affordability
- Lack of Awareness of Local Business and Business Assistance Programs
- Distance to Markets and Employment
- Apathy

Opportunities

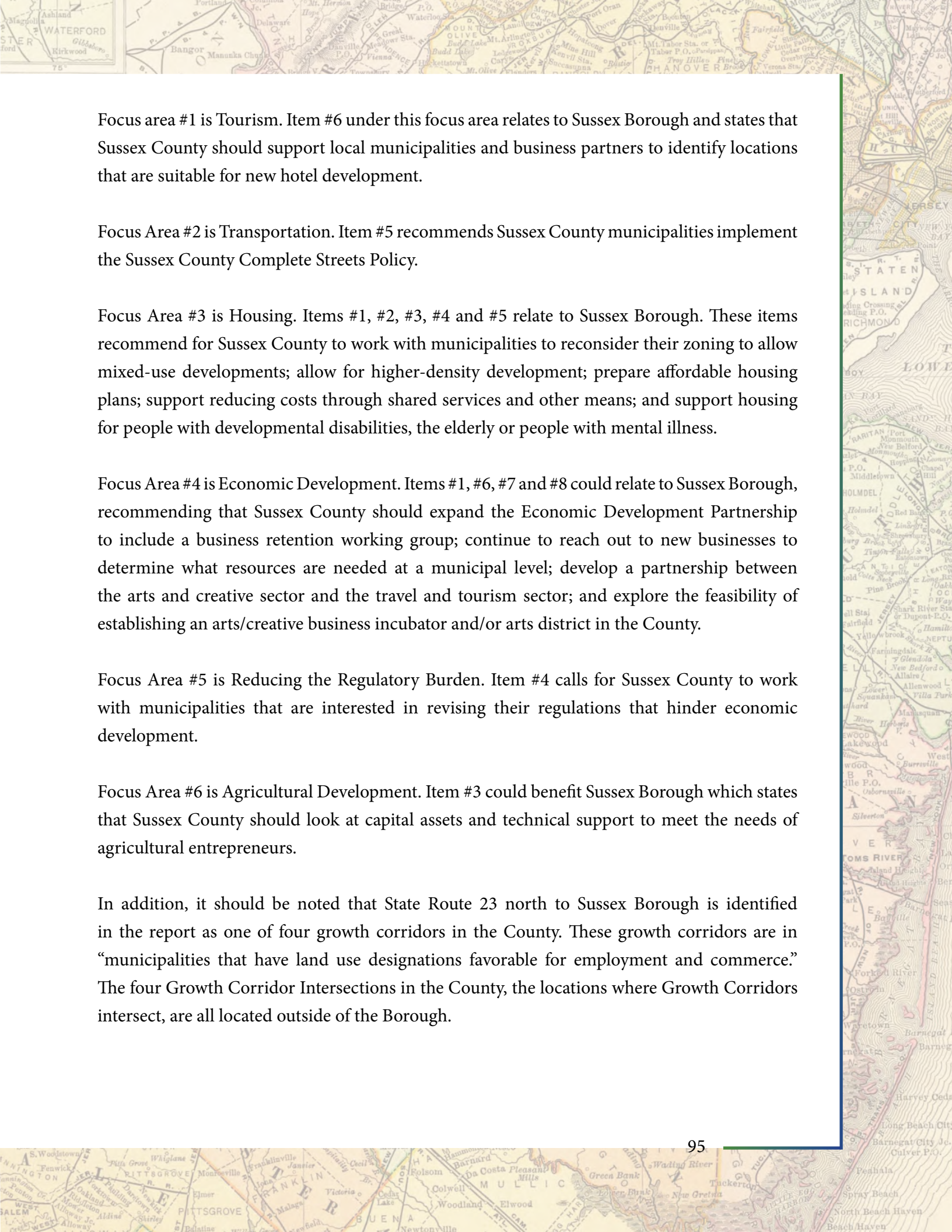
- Local Job Creation
- Local Growth Plans and Planning
- Sussex County Community College Training Potential
- Assistance from State through Plan Endorsement
- Improved Municipal Coordination
- Improved Information Availability (GIS e.g.) and Awareness
- Clearly Identified Growth Areas

Phase two of the report analyzed developable property sites in Sussex County. There was one site located in Sussex Borough. This site is a tract of approximately 30 acres behind the fire station on Route 639 in the southwestern quadrant of the Borough. At the time of plan preparation, this was classified as active farmland.

Phase three of the report details a list of business attraction strategies for attracting business to development sites. The first three actions relate to the designation of development sites and making sure they are zoned and with necessary infrastructure for development. The balance of the initiatives recommends developing better County-wide economic development initiatives, training, and resources. This report suggests the County develop a robust imitative for economic development and Sussex Borough should take advantage of the resources currently available in County Government and the Sussex County Economic Development Partnership.

Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan (2014 update)

In November of 2014, the Sussex County Board of Freeholders adopted the Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan Update (Plan). This comprehensive update reflected changes in the county since the original 2004 Strategic Growth Plan was adopted. This Plan recommends strategies to reduce or reverse the loss of population and economic base of Sussex County. The Plan looks at six focus areas with associated strategies and actions in each focus area. Some of the items within each of these focus areas relate to Sussex Borough.



Focus area #1 is Tourism. Item #6 under this focus area relates to Sussex Borough and states that Sussex County should support local municipalities and business partners to identify locations that are suitable for new hotel development.

Focus Area #2 is Transportation. Item #5 recommends Sussex County municipalities implement the Sussex County Complete Streets Policy.

Focus Area #3 is Housing. Items #1, #2, #3, #4 and #5 relate to Sussex Borough. These items recommend for Sussex County to work with municipalities to reconsider their zoning to allow mixed-use developments; allow for higher-density development; prepare affordable housing plans; support reducing costs through shared services and other means; and support housing for people with developmental disabilities, the elderly or people with mental illness.

Focus Area #4 is Economic Development. Items #1, #6, #7 and #8 could relate to Sussex Borough, recommending that Sussex County should expand the Economic Development Partnership to include a business retention working group; continue to reach out to new businesses to determine what resources are needed at a municipal level; develop a partnership between the arts and creative sector and the travel and tourism sector; and explore the feasibility of establishing an arts/creative business incubator and/or arts district in the County.

Focus Area #5 is Reducing the Regulatory Burden. Item #4 calls for Sussex County to work with municipalities that are interested in revising their regulations that hinder economic development.

Focus Area #6 is Agricultural Development. Item #3 could benefit Sussex Borough which states that Sussex County should look at capital assets and technical support to meet the needs of agricultural entrepreneurs.

In addition, it should be noted that State Route 23 north to Sussex Borough is identified in the report as one of four growth corridors in the County. These growth corridors are in “municipalities that have land use designations favorable for employment and commerce.” The four Growth Corridor Intersections in the County, the locations where Growth Corridors intersect, are all located outside of the Borough.



Sussex County Complete Streets Plan (2014)

The Sussex County Complete Streets Policy & Implementation Plan was prepared by McCormick Taylor, Inc., Project for Public Spaces, and Mercer Planning Associates for Sussex County through a partnership with North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). The Final Report was released in July 2014. The County's goal is "to encourage communities to provide multimodal transportation options to residents and businesses" as a means to encourage Millennials and Baby Boomers to choose the County as a place to "live, work and play." The Plan's Goal #6, "boost economic development of town centers, villages and neighborhoods" highlights the interconnectedness between streets that are safe for pedestrians and bicyclists and places that encourage the type of commerce the Borough seeks to encourage.

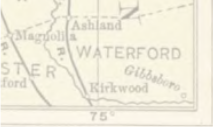
While the pilot project locations are all outside of Sussex Borough, the Plan provides general recommendations based on different corridor types. The Plan provides guidance on user hierarchy, road design, and context for each corridor type. County Road 643, State Route 639, State Route 23, and County Road 284 within Sussex Borough are predominantly identified as the "Main Street" corridor type. Each of these roads transitions to a type of "Rural Highway" outside of the Borough's borders.

Although the Plan does not identify them as such, certain roads within the Borough could be defined using other corridor types and benefit from the design guidance provided. For example, the southern segment of State Route 23 appears to more clearly align with the "Rural Highway C" corridor type, particularly based on planned commercial developments in this area.

Norwescap Neighborhood Revitalization Plan

Norwescap, a non-profit community action program serving communities in Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren Counties, was selected for a Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) Planning Grant in 2020. Through this planning grant, Norwescap created a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for the census block group that comprises the southeastern half of the Borough (Census Block Group 3712.02). This census block group comprises the majority of the commercial corridors within the Borough identified in this plan (see Map 20).

The Division of Housing and Community Resources in the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) oversees the NRTC program. LPS occasionally provides support to the Division of Housing and Community Resources in the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan and Project Application review processes. The NRTC Program provides business entities a 100 percent tax



credit for funds provided to nonprofit entities (like Norwescap) carrying out comprehensive revitalization plans in NRTC-approved neighborhoods.

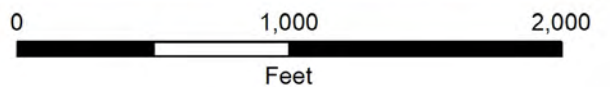
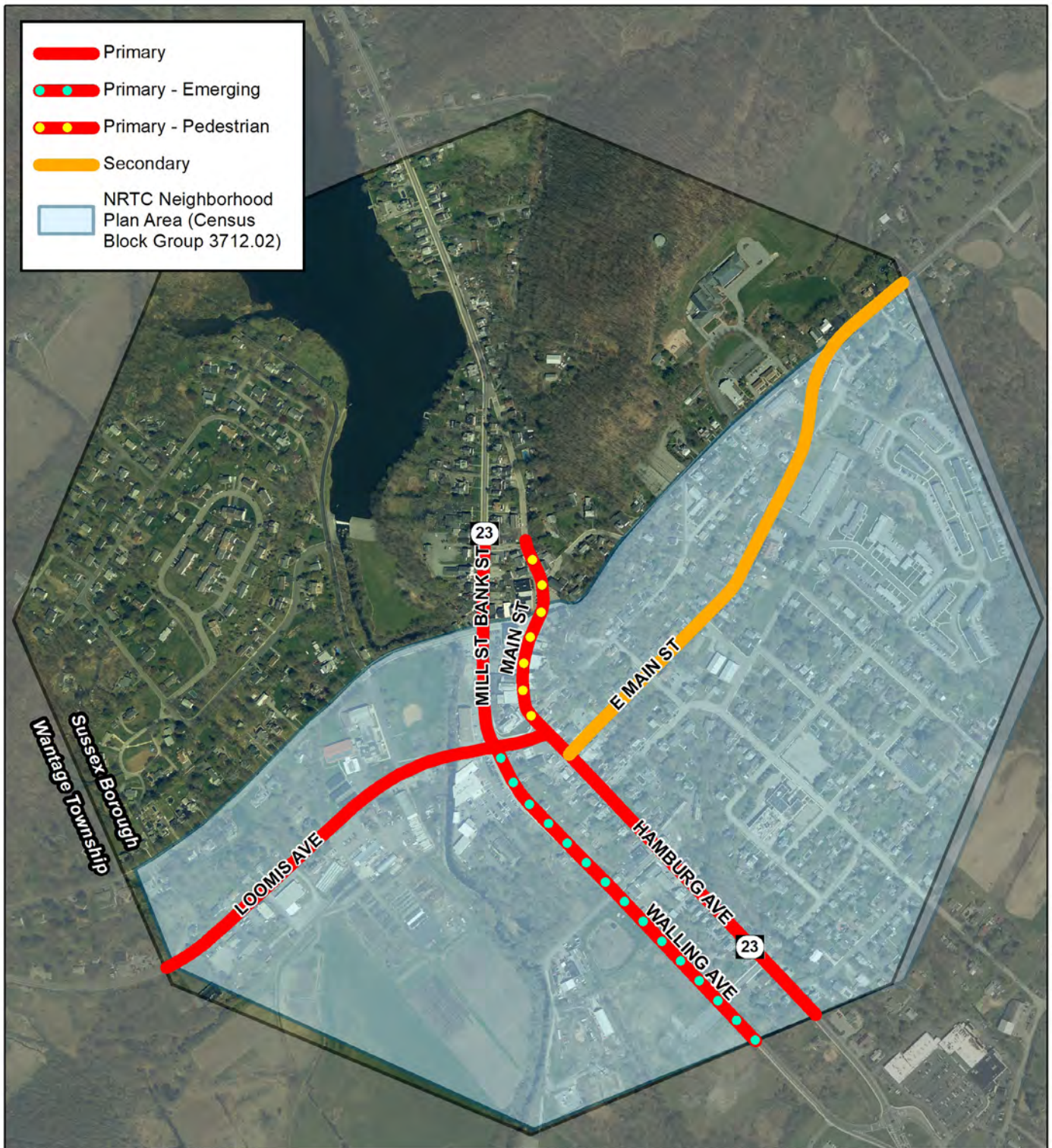
The planning process for the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan occurred contemporaneously with the creation of this Economic Development Master Plan Element. With largely complementary objectives, Norwescap and LPS provided mutual support for their respective plans. Dianna Morrison, Director of Norwescap’s Pathways 2 Prosperity Program, served on the Working Committee of the Economic Development Master Plan Element.

“Neighborhood Plan, 2021-31” was submitted in June 2021. The plan focused on three goals:

1. Cultivate an Inclusive, Safe, and Proud Neighborhood
2. Create Prosperity for All
3. Establish a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home

A variety of strategies were nested within each goal. Specific activities, which largely correlated to the recommendations included in this Economic Development Master Plan Element, were included under each strategy. Each activity includes an estimated cost and potential source of funding. After receiving approval, Norwescap will be eligible to apply for NRTC project funding to implement the activities detailed in their plan.

Map 20. Sussex Borough Commercial Corridors and NRTC Neighborhood Plan Area



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJGIS, NORWESCAP

Household Surveys

Characteristics of Surveyed Households

Sussex Borough households were surveyed to gain insight into residents' views on the Borough's economy. The 16-question survey was sent to households with the monthly water bill. To increase participation, especially from households who rent their home, local community groups also helped to distribute the survey. An online version of the survey, created by Norwescap and posted on the Borough's website, also allowed households to submit a digital version.

Sixty-one household surveys representing 153 residents (2.51 persons per household) completed the survey. The residents from these households comprise 8.2% of Sussex Borough's 1,870 residents. Limitations in surveying resources and constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in some differences in characteristics between survey respondents and the entire population of Borough residents as shown in U.S. Census Bureau data. These discrepancies are noted in the discussion of survey questions below. Nonetheless, the survey provides insight into the views of a wide cross-section of the population.

Figure 20. Ages Represented in Households of Survey Respondents

< 18	14.8%
18-34	16.8%
35-50	18.1%
51-65	26.8%
> 65	23.5%

Surveyed households represented a wide range of ages, with a relatively high response rate from households with residents over 50 years old compared to the overall representation of these age groups in the larger population.

Despite efforts to increase participation from Borough residents who rent their homes, homeowners responded at a much greater rate and represent over 80% of survey respondents.

Figure 21. Owner or Renter Occupied

Rent my home in Sussex Borough.	10.5%
Own my home in Sussex Borough.	80.7%
Own a home in Sussex Borough that is not my primary residence.	8.8%

This is compared to roughly 10% of renters. Respondents who own a home in the Borough that is not their primary residence account for less than 9% of respondents. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, only 37.3% of households

in the Borough own the home they occupy (see [Population and Demographics](#) section).

A wide range of income levels were represented in survey respondents: 27.6% of households earned less than \$50,000; 44.7% earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000; and 27.7% earned over \$100,000. This skews more towards higher earners than the Borough as a whole, where households earning less than \$50,000 represent almost half of all households.

Roughly 10% of survey respondents work in Sussex Borough, either in person or remotely. While this is a small percentage of total respondents, it is larger than the 2.3% estimate of employed residents who also work in the Borough according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Center for Economic Studies

Figure 22. Median Household Income

< \$25,000	10.6%
\$25,000-\$50,000	17.0%
\$50,000-\$75,000	29.8%
\$75,000-\$100,000	14.9%
\$100,000-\$150,000	19.1%
\$150,000-\$200,000	4.3%
> \$200,000	4.3%

(see *Commuting Patterns* section). Roughly 38% of respondents work in another municipality, either in person or remotely. Almost 30% of respondents are retired, reiterating how the survey sample is overly representative of older age brackets.

Figure 23. Work Status of Household Members

Work in person in Sussex Borough	6.5%
Work remotely in Sussex Borough	3.7%
Work in person in another municipality	34.6%
Work remotely in another municipality	3.3%
Unemployed and looking for work	5.7%
Stay-at-home parent	3.3%
Retired	29.3%
Student	10.6%
Other	3.3%

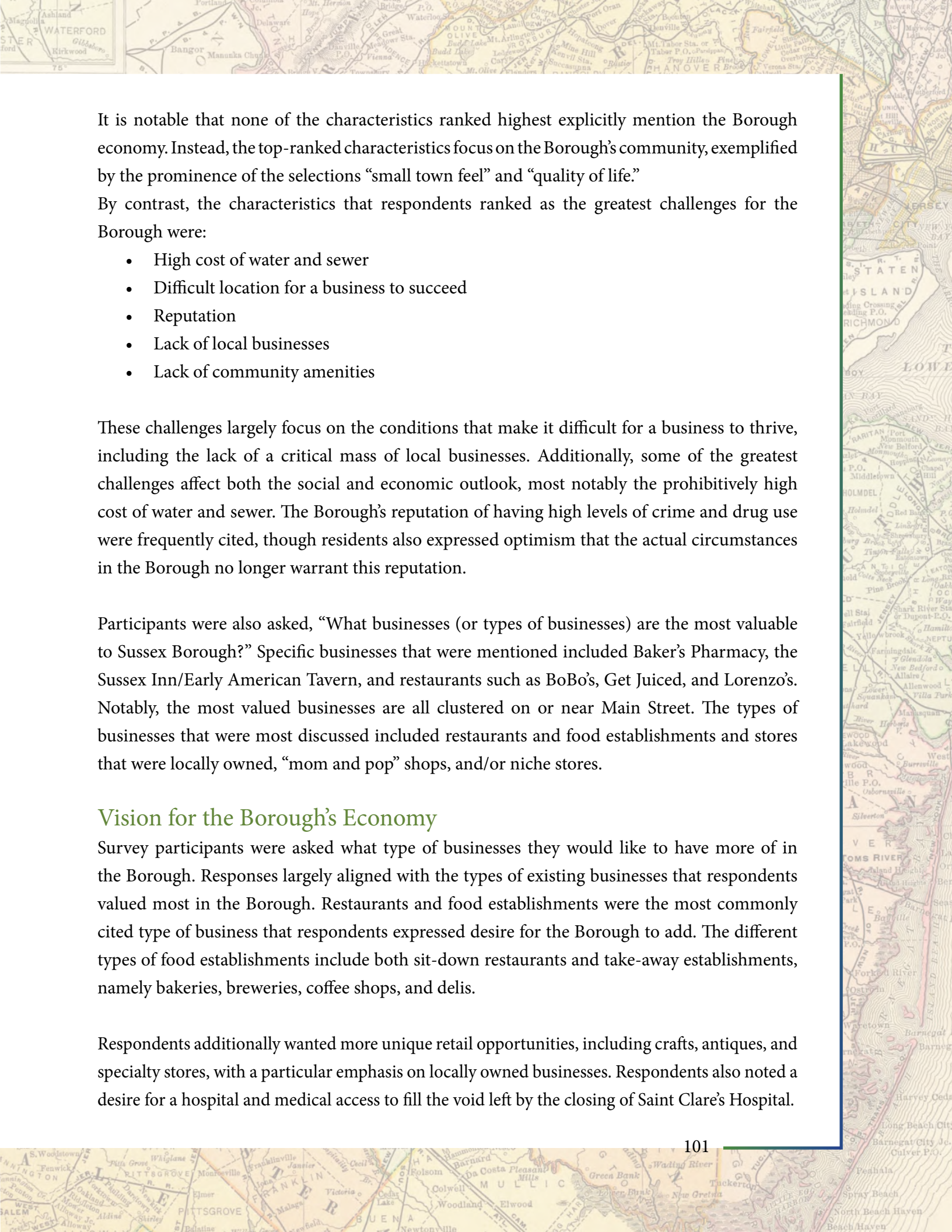
There was only a slight increase in the number of employed respondents who anticipated

working remotely after COVID-19 restrictions are rescinded compared to those who were already working remotely before COVID-19 altered workplace conditions (15.7% compared to 14.8%, respectively).

Views on the Current State of the Borough Economy

When asked to rate the strength, or lack thereof, of different aspects of the Borough, the characteristics that were rated highest were:

- Small town feel
- School system
- Good place to raise children
- Walkability
- Remote location
- Quality of life



It is notable that none of the characteristics ranked highest explicitly mention the Borough economy. Instead, the top-ranked characteristics focus on the Borough's community, exemplified by the prominence of the selections "small town feel" and "quality of life."

By contrast, the characteristics that respondents ranked as the greatest challenges for the Borough were:

- High cost of water and sewer
- Difficult location for a business to succeed
- Reputation
- Lack of local businesses
- Lack of community amenities

These challenges largely focus on the conditions that make it difficult for a business to thrive, including the lack of a critical mass of local businesses. Additionally, some of the greatest challenges affect both the social and economic outlook, most notably the prohibitively high cost of water and sewer. The Borough's reputation of having high levels of crime and drug use were frequently cited, though residents also expressed optimism that the actual circumstances in the Borough no longer warrant this reputation.

Participants were also asked, "What businesses (or types of businesses) are the most valuable to Sussex Borough?" Specific businesses that were mentioned included Baker's Pharmacy, the Sussex Inn/Early American Tavern, and restaurants such as BoBo's, Get Juiced, and Lorenzo's. Notably, the most valued businesses are all clustered on or near Main Street. The types of businesses that were most discussed included restaurants and food establishments and stores that were locally owned, "mom and pop" shops, and/or niche stores.

Vision for the Borough's Economy

Survey participants were asked what type of businesses they would like to have more of in the Borough. Responses largely aligned with the types of existing businesses that respondents valued most in the Borough. Restaurants and food establishments were the most commonly cited type of business that respondents expressed desire for the Borough to add. The different types of food establishments include both sit-down restaurants and take-away establishments, namely bakeries, breweries, coffee shops, and delis.

Respondents additionally wanted more unique retail opportunities, including crafts, antiques, and specialty stores, with a particular emphasis on locally owned businesses. Respondents also noted a desire for a hospital and medical access to fill the void left by the closing of Saint Clare's Hospital.

Respondents were also asked where they felt development was most and least appropriate to occur within the Borough. The former hospital building, Main Street, and Walling Avenue were identified as the most appropriate locations for development, with more than twice as many respondents identifying these as “most appropriate” than “least appropriate.” Residential neighborhoods, near the lake, and near the school were received more than twice as many selections as “least appropriate” than “most appropriate.” Responses were mixed regarding development along most of the County and State roads with roughly similar levels of support and opposition to development.

Figure 24. Views on where development is most and least appropriate

Where is development most appropriate?	
Former hospital building	70.5%
Main Street	63.9%
Walling Avenue (State Route 23 S)	41.0%
East Main Street (State Route 284)	24.6%
Loomis Avenue (County Route 639)	23.0%
Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 N)	19.7%
Bank Street (State Route 23)	19.7%
Other location(s)	9.8%
Residential neighborhoods	4.9%
Near the school	3.3%
Near the lake	3.3%
Where is development least appropriate?	
Residential neighborhoods	57.4%
Near the lake	52.5%
Near the school	47.5%
Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 N)	32.8%
Bank Street (State Route 23)	24.6%
Walling Avenue (State Route 23 S)	19.7%
Loomis Avenue (County Route 639)	18.0%
East Main Street (State Route 284)	13.1%
Former Hospital building	11.5%
Main Street	8.2%
Other location(s)	3.3%

Roughly half of respondents supported the rehabilitation of existing buildings, either to allow for the continuation of the previous use or for a new type of use, in areas where they supported development. Roughly 30% of respondents supported new construction, with more supporting new construction for a new use than the previous use. Reasons why respondents were against development in specific locations included concerns of increased traffic congestion, encroachment into residential neighborhoods, and the perception that the Borough is already sufficiently developed.

Business Owner Surveys

Characteristics of Surveyed Businesses

Businesses in Sussex Borough were also surveyed with a set of 33 questions to gauge the business environment in the Borough. The survey was mailed to known businesses with additional outreach to increase participation performed by local community groups. Eight businesses completed the survey. Given the small sample size, certain characteristics of these businesses are potentially not representative of the entire business community in the Borough. Nonetheless, the responses from these businesses provide insight into the local economic outlook.

Half of the businesses surveyed owned the premises where they operated, while half rented. The types of businesses represented included: contract machine manufacturing, auto body, personal grooming, religious establishment, garden center, and bookstore. The average length of time that these businesses have been operating in Sussex is 56 years, with the 260 years that the First Baptist Church of Sussex has operated in the Borough representing the longest serving business. If the First Baptist Church is removed from the calculation, the average length of operation in the Borough is 31 years. This shows that the responding businesses are long-time pillars of the community.

Surveyed businesses have an average of 4.8 employees, with the number of employees for each business ranging from a single employee to ten employees. This emphasizes the prominence of small businesses within the Borough. All business owners surveyed only owned and operated one business.

Views on the Current State of the Borough’s Business Environment

Over half of respondents rated the Borough’s business environment as “good.” However, some also considered it to be “fair” or “bad.” No respondents rated the businesses environment as “excellent” or “very good.” “Very bad” was also not selected.

Figure 25. Views on overall business environment

How would you rate the overall business environment in Sussex Borough?	
Excellent	0%
Very Good	0%
Good	57%
Fair	29%
Bad	14%
Very Bad	0%

When asked to estimate the approximate breakdown where businesses' customer base lives, over half of customers (56% total) either lived in the Borough or travelled 15 minutes or less. An additional 13% of customers travelled between 15 and 30 minutes while 27% travelled between 30 and 60 minutes. Only 3% of customers travelled over 60 minutes. This suggests that the Borough's businesses are primarily serving the local community, but that Sussex is a destination that people are willing to drive to. Given that very little of the business is coming from over an hour away, there may be an untapped market for the Borough to attract. A more extensive analysis of the different drivesheds is discussed in the *ESRI Business Analyst* section.

Figure 26. Location of customer base

What is the approximate breakdown of where your customers base lives?

% live in the Borough	26%
% travel 15 minutes or less	30%
% travel 15-30 minutes	13%
% travel 30-60 minutes	27%
% travel over 60 minutes	3%

Figure 27. Dependence on pedestrian traffic

How dependent is your business on pedestrian traffic and walk-ins?

Extremely dependent	14%
Very dependent	0%
Somewhat dependent	0%
Minimally dependent	57%
Not dependent at all	29%

Only one respondent considered their business to be extremely dependent on pedestrian traffic and walk-ins. All of the other respondents said they were “minimally dependent” or “not dependent at all.” This likely reflects the location of the responding businesses, which were largely located along roads with high-traffic volumes. While this may reflect the current dynamic of customers, an increase in the walkability of the Borough could bring more customers to many of these businesses.

Figure 28. Affordability of operating a business

How affordable is it to operate a business in Sussex Borough?

Extremely affordable	14%
Very affordable	14%
Somewhat affordable	71%
Somewhat unaffordable	0%
Very unaffordable	0%
Extremely unaffordable	0%
% travel over 60 minutes	3%

Figure 29. Cost of utilities

How expensive are the cost of utilities in Sussex Borough?

Extremely expensive	29%
Very expensive	43%
Somewhat expensive	29%
Somewhat inexpensive	0%
Very inexpensive	0%
Extremely inexpensive	0%
Not dependent at all	29%

Every respondent noted that it is at least “somewhat affordable” to operate a business in Sussex Borough. This is in contrast to, and despite, all respondents considering the cost of utilities in the Borough to be at least “somewhat expensive” (29%), with 43% selecting “very expensive” and 29% selecting “extremely expensive.” The high cost of sewer and water utilities paid by Borough residents is discussed further in the *Utilities and Services* section.

In describing the greatest advantages to operating a business in Sussex Borough, respondents noted the small community that supports local businesses, especially longstanding ones, and the benefits of the Borough’s location. Conversely, the greatest challenges noted include the Borough’s reputation for drugs and crime, low incomes, and not enough traffic to justify hiring or expanding operations.

Effect of COVID-19 on Local Businesses

While some of the surveyed businesses struggled with the impact of COVID-19 restrictions, others felt that the impact was minimal, while some even noted that operations increased during this time. Notably, none of the businesses surveyed furloughed or let go any employees because of COVID-19 related challenges. While this is encouraging, given that the survey was voluntary it is likely that some businesses who were dealing with greater struggles may have decided against completing the survey. Nonetheless, all of the surveyed businesses, even those who struggled during COVID-19 restrictions, anticipated staying in operation, while one expected to expand because their business was doing so well.


Figure 30. Dependence on physical location vs. online/remote business

	% Physical Location	% Online/Remote
Before COVID-19	98%	2%
During COVID-19	84%	16%

Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, surveyed businesses were almost entirely dependent on their physical location, with an average of only 2% of business occurring online or remotely. During COVID-19 restrictions, online and remote business increased to 16% of operations. While this suggests that businesses have altered their approaches to some degree in order to adapt to changing conditions, they are still overwhelmingly dependent on a physical location.



Recommendations

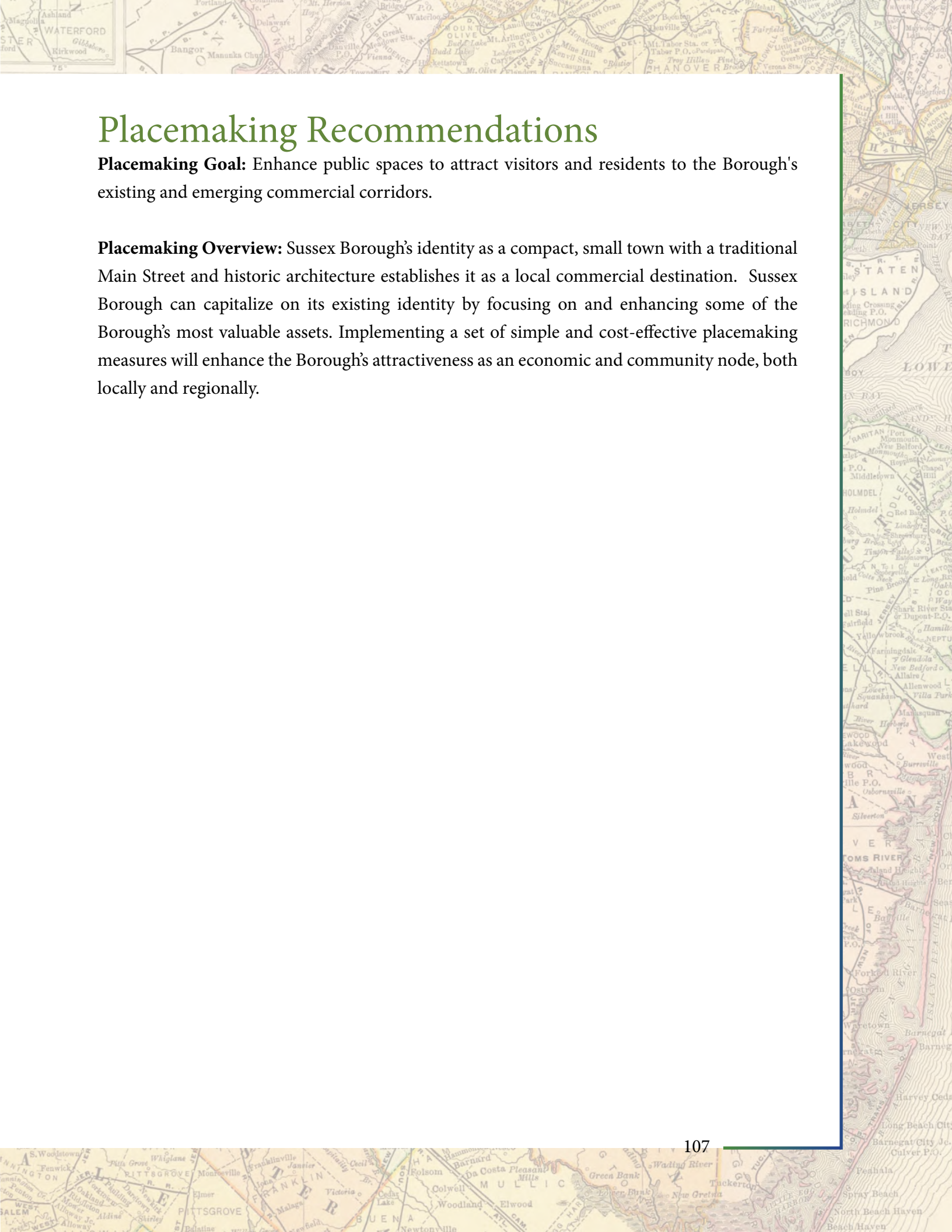


The recommendations in this plan aim to provide the Borough with implementable actions that will yield tangible benefits to the Borough's economic vitality. These recommendations seek to resolve the most pressing issues that were discovered in the planning process through analyses of current conditions and soliciting public input from the community.

Recommendations are broken into eight categories: placemaking, utilities, parking, wayfinding, pedestrian infrastructure, zoning, business improvement, and economic development focus areas. The scope of the recommendation categories included in this plan are solely within the context of economic development. Many of these categories warrant a separate report with deeper analysis that is not within the scope of this plan – for example, a transportation or circulation element could encompass many other issues that fall under the categories of parking, wayfinding, and pedestrian infrastructure.

Each recommendation category provides a goal that relates to economic development that the subsequent recommendations are aspiring to. Each individual recommendation provides a summary of the existing conditions or challenge that lays out the issue that the recommendation is seeking to remedy. This is followed by a description of the recommendation, including an overview of how it can be implemented. Each recommendation is also given a priority-level and timeframe. Priority levels include low, medium, high, and highest. By virtue of being included in this plan as a recommendation, the majority of the recommendations are considered high or highest priority.

The recommendation timeframe is broken into short-term, medium-term, and long-term, with some recommendations falling between two timeframes (i.e. medium/long-term). Short-term recommendations generally have minimal obstacles to immediately beginning the implementation process. These tend to be low- or no-cost options or could be incorporated into existing policies, programs, or actions. Medium-term recommendations require some degree of preparation or funding but can be realistically implemented within the next five years. Long-term recommendations require the greatest degree of logistics and/or financing, but all of which could be implemented within the next ten years. Note that most of the recommendations with long-term timeframes could realistically be implemented much sooner than ten years.

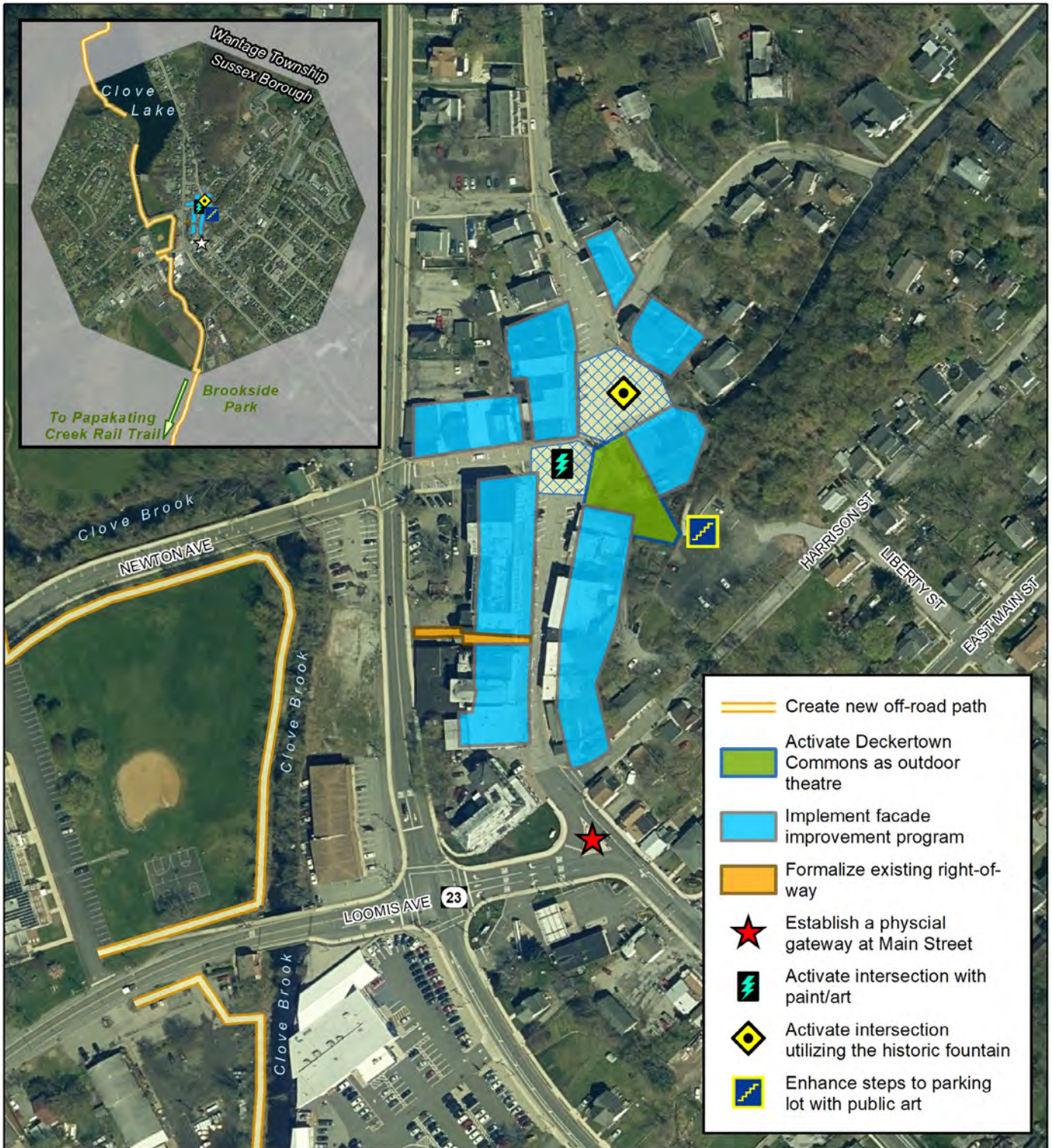










Placemaking Recommendations

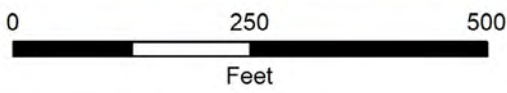
Placemaking Goal: Enhance public spaces to attract visitors and residents to the Borough's existing and emerging commercial corridors.

Placemaking Overview: Sussex Borough's identity as a compact, small town with a traditional Main Street and historic architecture establishes it as a local commercial destination. Sussex Borough can capitalize on its existing identity by focusing on and enhancing some of the Borough's most valuable assets. Implementing a set of simple and cost-effective placemaking measures will enhance the Borough's attractiveness as an economic and community node, both locally and regionally.

Map 21. Sussex Borough Main Street Area Placemaking Recommendations



-  Create new off-road path
-  Activate Deckertown Commons as outdoor theatre
-  Implement facade improvement program
-  Formalize existing right-of-way
-  Establish a physical gateway at Main Street
-  Activate intersection with paint/art
-  Activate intersection utilizing the historic fountain
-  Enhance steps to parking lot with public art



Data Sources: ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation

Placemaking Recommendation: Activate Fountain Square and the Main Street and Newtown Avenue intersection

Priority: Highest

Timeframe: Short-term

Existing Conditions: As the street gently curves uphill from the Main Street Gateway, the right of way expands to the south of the intersection with Newton Avenue, creating a large expanse of pavement between the former Chase Bank building and the Crescent Theatre. The vehicle travel lanes along Main Street are not lined. The width of open roadway, measured as the distance between the northernmost parking spaces on either side of the road, is over 50 feet for two travel lanes in this intersection.



Image 32. Large expanse of pavement at the Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection in front of Deckertown Commons. The faded existing “standard” style crosswalk is barely visible to the left.



Image 33. Roadway expands as Main Street approaches the intersection with Newton Avenue.

In addition to the hazard that a greater crossing distance creates for pedestrians (discussed in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure section), this is simply a large amount of space in a key location that is not being productively used.

Fountain Square is located in the middle of the triangular-shaped “square,” but its small footprint in relation to the rest of the square makes it feel drowned out by the rest of the pavement.

The large amount of pavement in these two adjacent sections of Main Street creates cascading pools of unwelcoming space for pedestrians. Because traffic is not restricted in a deliberate way, it is presumed that this whole area is designed primarily for vehicles, not people.

Recommendation Description:

This area at the heart of Main Street, directly in front of the Crescent Theatre, should be utilized as a node of activity. In addition to the traffic calming measures discussed in the *Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations* including installing raised crosswalks, the Borough should paint the area within the proposed raised crosswalks at the Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection. The specific design, coloring, and style should reflect the character of the Borough. Local artists, businesses, and students should be encouraged to participate in the design and implementation of this piece of art. Images 35 and 36 are examples of this type of intersection activation, though a more subtle design may be more appropriate for the Borough.



Image 34. Historic Fountain in the middle of a large expanse of concrete in Fountain Square.



Image 35. Intersection activated with paint in Portland, OR.
Source: <https://www.pps.org/places/intersection-repair>

Part of Fountain Square should also be activated as public space. There is sufficient room to dedicate a large portion of the square for other uses, while still maintaining an appropriately sized right of way for Main Street traffic, as well as connecting to Unionville Avenue. The historic fountain, which currently sits in a large expanse of concrete in

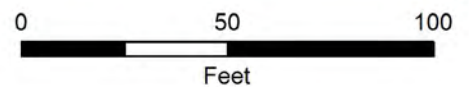
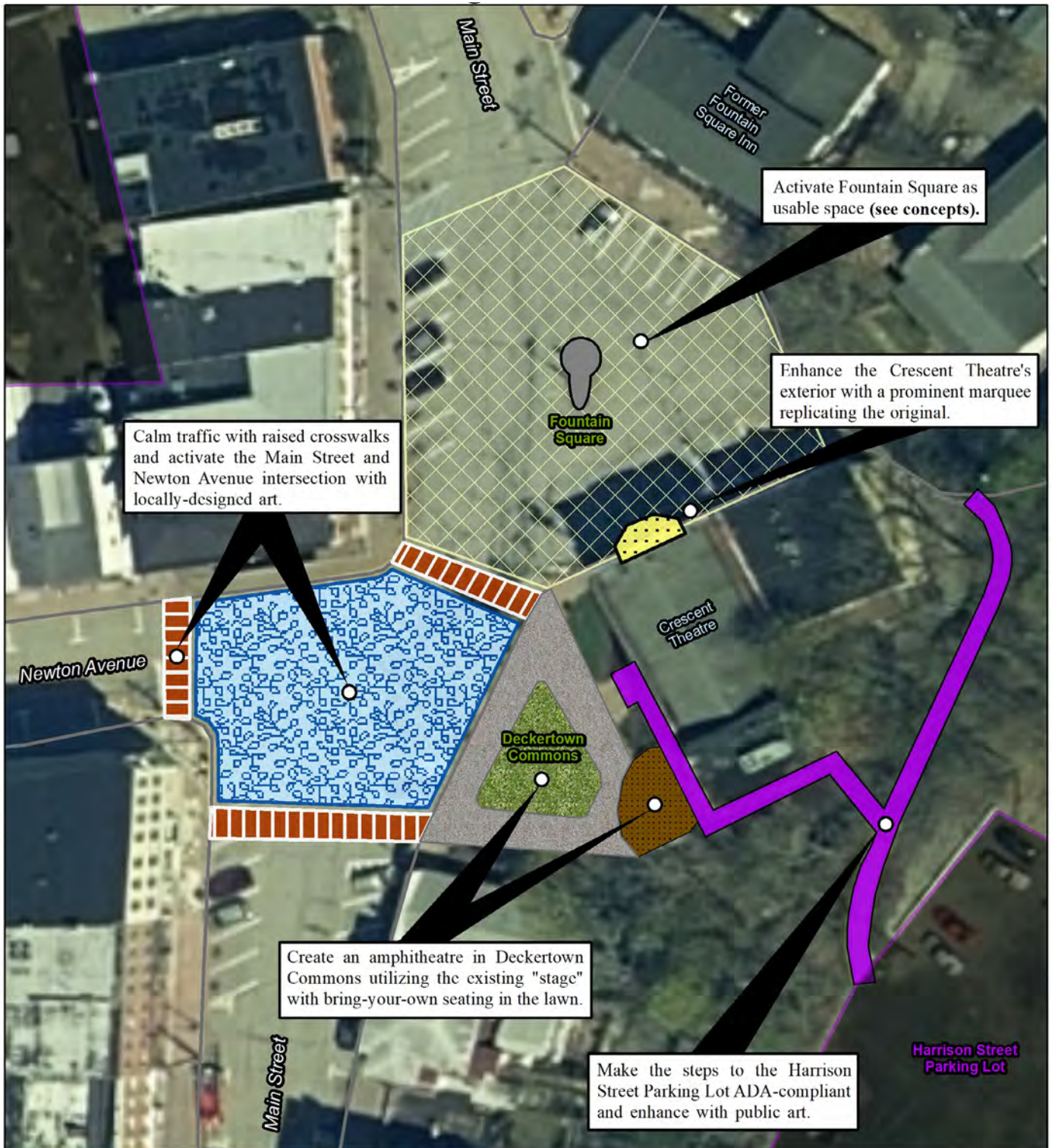
Fountain Square, should be the centerpiece of any future redesign of the square. Increasing the footprint around the fountain in relation to the rest of the square will increase its prominence while also activating Fountain Square as a place to be instead of something to quickly pass by.



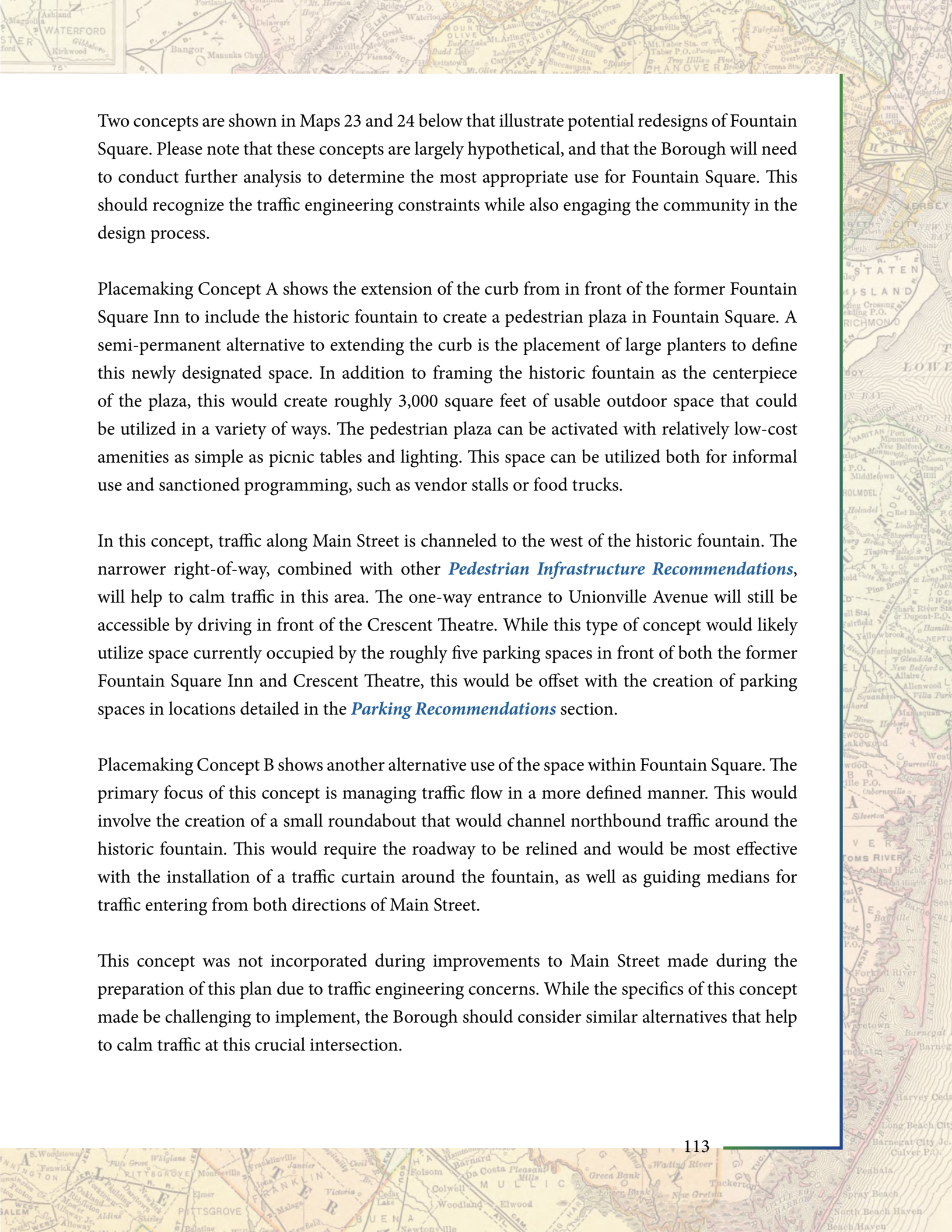
Image 36. Intersection activated with paint in Tampa Bay, FL.

Source: <https://www.bikewalktampabay.org/walk/city-tampa-develops-draft-policy-pilot-program-paint-intersection/>

Map 22. Sussex Borough Main Street and Newton Avenue Area Placemaking Recommendations



Data Sources: ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, Sussex Borough



Two concepts are shown in Maps 23 and 24 below that illustrate potential redesigns of Fountain Square. Please note that these concepts are largely hypothetical, and that the Borough will need to conduct further analysis to determine the most appropriate use for Fountain Square. This should recognize the traffic engineering constraints while also engaging the community in the design process.

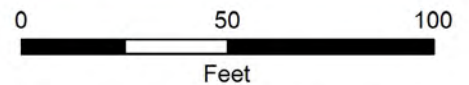
Placemaking Concept A shows the extension of the curb from in front of the former Fountain Square Inn to include the historic fountain to create a pedestrian plaza in Fountain Square. A semi-permanent alternative to extending the curb is the placement of large planters to define this newly designated space. In addition to framing the historic fountain as the centerpiece of the plaza, this would create roughly 3,000 square feet of usable outdoor space that could be utilized in a variety of ways. The pedestrian plaza can be activated with relatively low-cost amenities as simple as picnic tables and lighting. This space can be utilized both for informal use and sanctioned programming, such as vendor stalls or food trucks.

In this concept, traffic along Main Street is channeled to the west of the historic fountain. The narrower right-of-way, combined with other [Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations](#), will help to calm traffic in this area. The one-way entrance to Unionville Avenue will still be accessible by driving in front of the Crescent Theatre. While this type of concept would likely utilize space currently occupied by the roughly five parking spaces in front of both the former Fountain Square Inn and Crescent Theatre, this would be offset with the creation of parking spaces in locations detailed in the [Parking Recommendations](#) section.

Placemaking Concept B shows another alternative use of the space within Fountain Square. The primary focus of this concept is managing traffic flow in a more defined manner. This would involve the creation of a small roundabout that would channel northbound traffic around the historic fountain. This would require the roadway to be relined and would be most effective with the installation of a traffic curtain around the fountain, as well as guiding medians for traffic entering from both directions of Main Street.

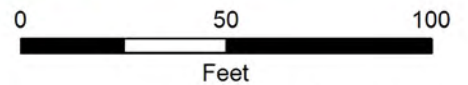
This concept was not incorporated during improvements to Main Street made during the preparation of this plan due to traffic engineering concerns. While the specifics of this concept made be challenging to implement, the Borough should consider similar alternatives that help to calm traffic at this crucial intersection.

Map 23. Sussex Borough Main Street and Newton Avenue Area Placemaking Concept A



Data Sources: ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, Sussex Borough

Map 24. Sussex Borough Main Street and Newton Avenue Area Placemaking Concept B



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, Sussex Borough

Placemaking Recommendation: Formalize the existing right of way connecting Main Street and Mill Street at rear of former Capri Auto Body

Priority: High

Timeframe: Short-term

Existing Conditions: The existing right of way on Main Street which extends to Mill Street adjacent to the former Capri Auto Body building is well-placed to be used as a pedestrian right of way to access Main Street shops from the parking lots on Mill Street. Currently it is unclear if pedestrians are allowed to use the right of way because it appears to be an informal pathway. Furthermore, the condition of the right of way does not attract pedestrians. The pathway is comprised of trodden grass and gravel on a relatively steep incline while the adjacent buildings appear use the space to store trash cans.



Image 37. Mill Street (State Route 23) and the rear of the former Capri Auto Body building as shown from the existing right of way that connects to Main Street.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should formalize this right of way by making it clear with signage that this is a permissible route to reach Mill Street from Main Street.



Image 38. Transformed alleyway in Fort Collins, CO.

Source: <https://downtownfortcollins.org/downtown-alleys/completed-alleys/>

The pathway will need to be improved to meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards, in particular responding to the steep grade. Particular attention should be paid to using durable materials here, as this area is particular susceptible to stormwater runoff and will require the ground to be salted to prevent slipping during the winter.

The installation of public art and lighting would significantly enhance the right of way to establish a defined connection and transition between the pedestrian-oriented uses along Main Street with the vehicles driving along State Route 23. The right of way could become a destination in and of itself, drawing people into a quiet space with interesting artwork, plantings or other features. Images 39, 40, and 41 below show the effect that simple placemaking efforts can have on transforming a similar type of space. Similar to the “*Activate Fountain Square and the Main Street and Newtown Avenue intersection*” recommendation, the art used to activate this type of space should be appropriate to the local context.



Image 39. Before and after of a small alley between buildings in Pittsfield, MA (top) and Camden, SC (bottom).
Source: <https://www.nar.realtor/blogs/spaces-to-places/meet-us-in-the-alley>



Images 40 and 41. Crocheted blankets made by local artisans covering street in Alhaurin de la Torre, Spain. Sources: <https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2021/07/15/local-knitters-create-beautiful-crochet-screen-to-keep-sun-off-the-streets-in-town-inland-from-spains-costa-del-sol/> (left) and <https://www.demilked.com/crocheted-canopy-malaga-eva-pacheco/> (right)

Placemaking Recommendation: Activate Deckertown Commons as an outdoor theatre or play space

Priority: High

Timeframe: Short/Medium-term

Existing Conditions: Deckertown Commons is a small space (roughly 0.1 acres) fronting Main Street next to the Crescent Theatre. Deckertown Commons previously housed benches and a gazebo, but the Borough removed them due to concerns that they had become a space that was attracting crime, specifically for people to drink alcohol and do illegal drugs. As a result,



Image 42. Deckertown Commons to the south of the Crescent Theatre.

Deckertown Commons is currently an underutilized space in the middle of the downtown area, though it is used as a communal meeting space for some programmed activities such as the biweekly Sussex Saturdays.

In addition to the triangular grass lawn surrounded by a stylized brick sidewalk, Deckertown Commons has an elevated space where the gazebo once stood. This location is emphasized by the backdrop of the hill leading to the Harrison Street Parking Lot.

Recommendation Description: Deckertown Commons is uniquely situated with its proximity to the Crescent Theatre and unique layout to be used as an outdoor amphitheater. The former location of the gazebo has the physical presence of a performing space: it is elevated five steps above the rest of the plaza with an elevated platform that is over thirty feet wide which could serve as a stage. Additionally, the space is naturally enclosed by the backdrop of the Crescent Theatre and the hill leading to the Harrison Street Parking Lot. Given these unique attributes, the space is essentially ready for the Borough to pursue programming with audiences encouraged to “bring-your-own” (BYO) seat. Outdoor performances should complement entertainment offered at the Crescent Theatre or can be used as an alternative venue if there are the type of restrictions on indoor activities that have been imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To further accentuate the space as an amphitheater the Borough could create a permanent backdrop and covering to the existing “stage” (see Image 43 for an example of this type of structure). Similar to the recommended construction of a Main



Image 43. Outdoor amphitheater in Stafford, VA. Source: <https://www.tourstaffordva.com/attraction/celebration-stage-at-pratt-park/>

Street Gateway (see “*Establish a physical gateway to Main Street*” recommendation), the Borough could design the stage cover in a style that matches the local character and helps to accentuate the unique feeling of place in this key location.

In addition to the formal programming of concerts and plays, the amphitheater could also serve as an informal performance space. An example of this type of information programming is the Launch Pad in Belfast Maine, pictured in Images 44 and 45. The Launch Pad is a small “stage” that is available to the public all week for public performances.



Images 44 and 45. The Launch Pad in Belfast, ME.

Source: <https://mainstreetmaine.org/listing/launchpad-belfast-maine/>

Furthermore, the Borough should consider other means to activate Deckertown Commons, such as a creative play area. Images 46-49 below show examples from Freenotes Harmony Park that combine music-making and outdoor play in a multi-sensory experience.

While there is an understandable reluctance to install permanent structures in Deckertown Commons due to the concerns that previously led to the removal of the gazebo, the Borough should resist the urge to leave the space empty as a means of keeping away unwanted activity. Instead, the Borough should proactively encourage the types of uses that support an active community space.





Images 46-49. Interactive outdoor musical sculptures designed by Freenotes Harmony Park.
 Source: <https://www.freenotesharmonypark.com/build-a-music-park/>

Placemaking Recommendation: Establish a physical gateway to Main Street

Priority: Highest

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: The gentle curve of Main Street is a prominent view as drivers head up the hill from the Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 Northbound) approach to Sussex Borough. However, the existing signage does not physically emphasize the Gateway or indicate that Main Street is a destination and does not encourage drivers to proceed to Main Street. Although the historic buildings that line the gently sloping Main Street are visible in the distance, the absence of a formal “gateway” to Main Street reinforces the perception for drivers travelling on Hamburg Avenue that they should continue travelling through the Borough.



Image 50. The southern entrance to Main Street, the “Gateway,” as viewed from the transition from Hamburg Avenue to Loomis Avenue. NJDOT signage within the triangular median leads drivers out of the Borough instead of calling attention to Main Street.

Additionally, as discussed in the **Wayfinding** and **Parking Recommendations**, drivers view parking as a challenge.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should construct or install a branded entryway to create a physical gateway at the intersection between Main Street and Hamburg Avenue/Loomis Avenue. This form of placemaking will also aid wayfinding by creating a prominent visual cue to drivers as they approach the gateway. This will clearly indicate to drivers that they are entering Sussex Borough’s downtown and provide visual interest to encourage them to explore the area. While the historic architecture of Main Street, most notably the Sussex Inn, can be seen from Hamburg Avenue, a physical gateway will enhance the connection and emphasize the presence of Main Street as a destination.

The Borough should work with local artists, business owners, and residents to design a gateway that fits with the local character of Main Street. There are numerous options employed in other communities that the Borough can use as reference, ranging from lights strung across the road (Image 51) to a decorative metal arch connecting two streetlights (Image 52) to a “broken” arch with traffic signals (Image 53).

Additionally, pedestrian-scale lighting should be extended down Main Street to the Gateway. As discussed in the *Wayfinding Recommendations*, the NJDOT directional signage should be consolidated to allow for greater visual access to the existing “Visit Historic Main Street” sign in front of Borough Hall. The Borough should also install signage within the gateway median advertising Main Street businesses. This could be similar in design to the existing “Shop Small Sussex” sign but should be at a large enough scale that drivers are able to easily read.



Images 51 and 52. Lighted Fairmount Avenue “gateway” in Philadelphia, PA (left); Main Street Gateway in Garden Grove, CA (right)

Sources: <https://blog.copperhillre.com/neighborhood-spotlight-fairmount> (left), <https://ggcity.org/districts/district-4> (right)



Images 53. Broken arch gateway in Downtown Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.
Source: <https://www.cbcommunityprofessionals.ca/hamilton>

Placemaking Recommendation: Implement a Façade and Sign Improvement Program for Main Street businesses

Priority: Highest

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: Businesses along Main Street generally do not “stand out” with their signage and facades. In particular, when looking down the street it is difficult to discern if there are any businesses in operation. While some businesses have unique and sometimes intricate signage when looking directly in front, there are very few signs or other visual indicators that extend perpendicular from the building towards the street. This contributes to the impression that Main Street is inactive.



Images 54 and 55. Viewed from the sidewalk facing north, businesses on the west side of Main Street generally lack identifying signage protruding from the building. This hides the businesses visually interesting storefronts and makes it difficult for drivers and pedestrians to notice places they may want to visit. Many businesses also lack signage that indicates the name of the store and in some cases makes it unclear if the business is still in operation.



Images 56 and 57. Baker's Pharmacy, a valued local establishment, lacks prominent signage protruding towards the street. The distinctive images in its windows are only visible when in front of the store.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should implement a façade and sign improvement program to encourage businesses to increase the visibility of their individual storefronts and enliven the general atmosphere along Main Street. As part of this effort, the Borough should adopt signage and design standards ordinances that applies to the renovation of existing mixed-use row buildings and new construction in this area. The new ordinances should have a particular focus on providing guidelines for Main Street businesses that preserve and enhance the unique character of the historic buildings. Design standards should encourage businesses to make their storefronts stand out while also fitting into the historic character of the district.

As shown in the Images 58, 59, and 60 below, encouraging a focus on the exterior aesthetics of individual buildings can help to enhance the larger character of the street. By adding a simple sign extending perpendicular from each storefront similar to what is shown in Images 59 and 60 below, Main Street will also increase awareness of its existing businesses to vehicle drivers and pedestrians. The added depth created by this type of signage extending from the row of buildings will also increase the district’s sense of place.

The Borough should encourage investment in businesses’ appearance with incentives such as a matching funds program. Additionally, the Borough should work with Norwescap to acquire funding for façade and signage improvements that they are eligible for as part of the *Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit* (NRTC) plan. Future upgrades to facades and signage could also be funded through an Improvement District (discussed further in the “*Apply for Main Street New Jersey designation and/or establish an Improvement District*” recommendation), which collects an assessment on businesses within the district.



Images 58 and 59. Colorful facades and sidewalk amenities for ground floor businesses in Skaneateles, NY (left); signage for small businesses extending perpendicular from businesses in Cooperstown, NY (right)
Sources: <https://bigseventravel.com/beautiful-small-towns-visit-on-east-coast/> (left); <https://www.visitcentralnewyork.com/articles/take-a-comfort-food-tour-of-central-new-york/> (right)



Image 60. Distinct facades, signage, and sidewalk amenities in Hudson, OH.

Source: <https://www.coworker.com/united-states/ohio/hudson>

Placemaking Recommendation: Use public art to enhance the steps to Harrison Street Parking Lot

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: The Harrison Street Parking Lot connects to Main Street via a stairwell that runs alongside and behind the Crescent Theatre (see Image 61). The steps are uninviting and there is a lack of signage indicating that they are attached to a convenient



Image 61. Stairs leading to the Harrison Street Parking Lot from Deckertown Commons along the Crescent Theatre



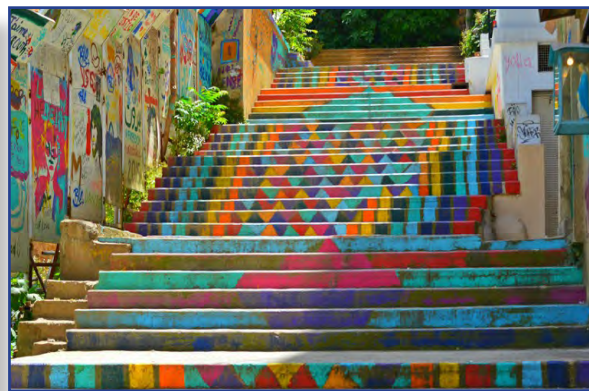
Image 62. Entrance to stairway from the Harrison Street Parking Lot leading to Deckertown Commons adjacent to the Crescent Theatre.

parking area. Especially towards the rear of the theatre visibility is limited and the area around the steps is strewn with garbage and beer cans, suggesting that people congregate here.

The path from the Harrison Street Parking Lot diverges to a ramp that runs along the opposite side of the Crescent Theatre. However, this ramp has a few steps which makes it inaccessible for individuals in wheelchairs and is currently blocked off.

Recommendation Description: Painting the stairs and providing better lighting and signage would make the stairs fun to use, increase visibility and help alleviate perceived parking concerns from businesses and visitors to the downtown. In particular, the small but wide flights of stairs that empty into Deckertown Commons from the Harrison Street Parking Lot and that lead to the Deckertown Commons “stage”, could become more visually interesting by painting the backs of the stairs.

Images 63, 64, and 65 are examples of other places that have painted a staircase in a way that is unique and representative of its particular location. Similar to the other *Placemaking Recommendations* using art to activate public space, the specific design should represent the local character of the Borough. For example, the stairs could be painted to mimic the text of the marquee that was formerly hung prominently above the entrance to the Crescent Theatre (shown in Image 101 in the *Economic Development Focus Areas Recommendations* section).

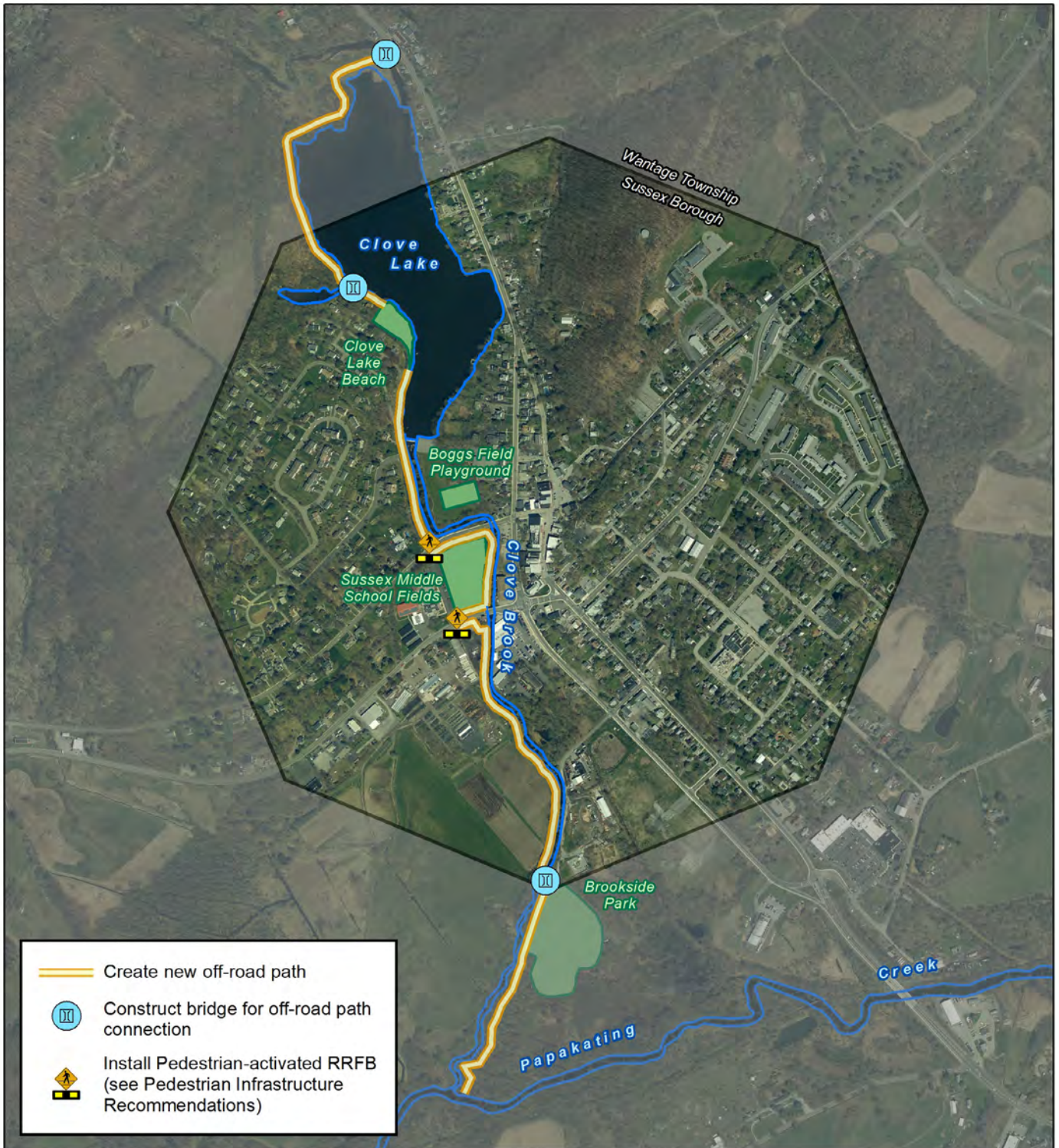


Images 63 and 64. 16th Avenue Tiled Steps in San Francisco, CA (left); and painted staircase in Beirut, Lebanon (right). Sources: <https://www.afar.com/places/16th-avenue-tiled-steps-san-francisco> (left); and <https://www.lebanontraveler.com/en/magazine/beirut-colorful-stairs/> (right)



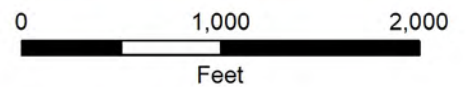
Image 65. Stair Mural of popular children's books at the Clairbourn School in San Gabriel, CA
Source: <https://clairbournschool.com/new-stair-mural-for-clairbourns-middle-school-by-artist-veronica-farren/>

Map 25. Sussex Borough Placemaking Recommendations: Off-Road Paths



N

 2022



Data Sources:
 ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation

Placemaking Recommendation: Create a multi-use path along Clove Brook connecting Clove Lake with Brookside Park

Priority: Medium

Timeframe: Long-term

Existing Conditions: One of the Borough's greatest assets is its proximity to nature and natural features. Within the Borough, this is most prominently represented by Clove Lake and Clove Brook, which flows south from the Clove Lake dam. Multiple recreation locations are found along or near these waterways, but they are currently not connected directly. The Clove Lake Beach, the planned playground in Boggs Field, Sussex Middle School athletic fields, and Brookside Park are all located adjacent to the lake or brook, but largely separated from each other by the Borough's roads and/or the water which serve as barriers to access.



Image 66. Tables and public space at Clove Lake Beach.

The Clove Brook is particularly underutilized despite its potential value as a natural feature. There is limited direct access to it and most adjacent development largely ignores its presence. The building housing the Tips and Toes nail salon (5 Loomis Avenue) is one of the only buildings that is designed to accommodate views of the brook.



Image 67. View of dam separating Clove Lake from Clove Brook.



Images 68-70. Clove Brook separating Mill Street and the Sussex Middle School fields as viewed from the Newton Avenue bridge (top); most parcels that front Clove Brook, such as the rear of the Hyundai dealership hides its relation to this natural feature (bottom left); 5 Loomis Avenue is a rare example of a building designed to emphasize its proximity to Clove Brook with entrances and windows facing the water (bottom right).

Recommendation Description: The Borough should create a multi-use path for walking and bicycling that connects Clove Lake Beach in the north to Brookside Park in the south. In addition to increasing the connectivity discussed in the *Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations* below, this will enhance the Borough's existing recreation facilities.

Map 25 shows where a trail could be located. Please note that the location of the trail on this map is conceptual and the Borough will need to conduct further research to determine where to best locate the trail. In planning for the exact location of the trail, the Borough will need to acquire easements along privately-owned property, comply with all relevant environmental regulations protecting development near New Jersey waterways, and evaluate how to best cross existing rights of way.

In the conceptual plan, the trail is designed to closely follow the existing waterways, connect existing recreational infrastructure, and have a minimal impact on existing private uses. This conceptual trail heads south from the Clove Lake Beach and follows the existing sidewalk on the east side of Elizabeth Avenue. At the intersection with Newton Avenue, the trail crosses at the existing crosswalk that is enhanced with a pedestrian activated rectangular rapid flashing beacon (see “*Install pedestrian-activated traffic control devices*” recommendation). The trail then follows the perimeter of the Sussex Middle School athletic fields before crossing Loomis Avenue at a new crosswalk (also discussed in the “*Install pedestrian-activated traffic control devices*” recommendation). The trail continues past the building housing the Tips and Toes nail salon to reconnect with the west side of the Clove Brook. After running parallel to the west of the Clove Brook past the Farmside properties, the trail crosses the brook at a newly constructed bridge near the entrance to Brookside Park.

Placemaking Recommendation: Connect Brookside Park to the planned Papakating Creek Rail Trail

Priority: Medium

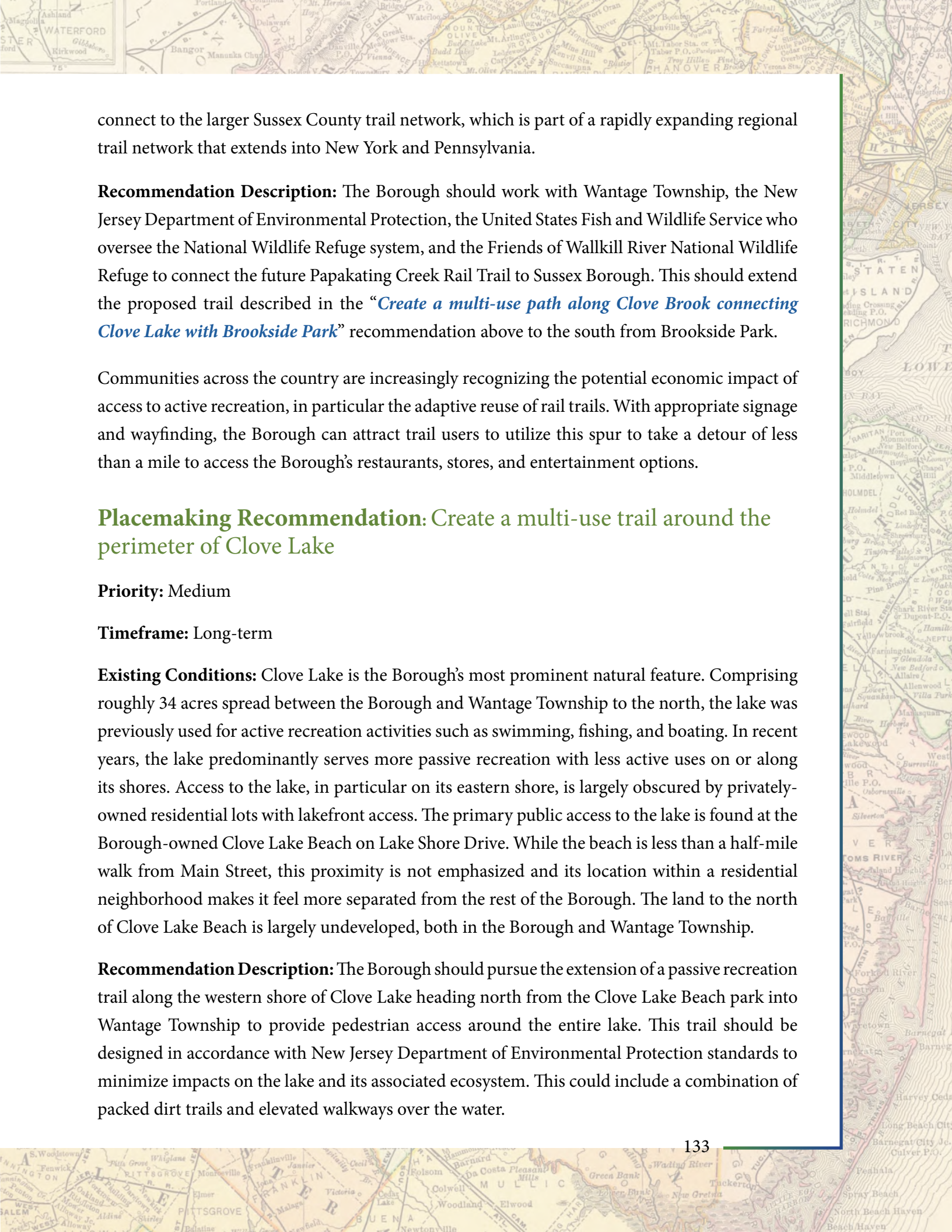
Timeframe: Long-term

Existing Conditions: Brookside Park is owned by Sussex Borough but located over the border in Wantage Township to the south. The Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge, located to the east of the Borough, acquired a section of the right of way for the former Lehigh and New



Image 71. Entrance to Brookside Park

England Railroad tracks that follows the Papakating Creek, which passes the Borough roughly ¼ mile south of Brookside Park. A proposed rail trail on this section of the right of way will



connect to the larger Sussex County trail network, which is part of a rapidly expanding regional trail network that extends into New York and Pennsylvania.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should work with Wantage Township, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service who oversee the National Wildlife Refuge system, and the Friends of Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge to connect the future Papakating Creek Rail Trail to Sussex Borough. This should extend the proposed trail described in the “*Create a multi-use path along Clove Brook connecting Clove Lake with Brookside Park*” recommendation above to the south from Brookside Park.

Communities across the country are increasingly recognizing the potential economic impact of access to active recreation, in particular the adaptive reuse of rail trails. With appropriate signage and wayfinding, the Borough can attract trail users to utilize this spur to take a detour of less than a mile to access the Borough’s restaurants, stores, and entertainment options.

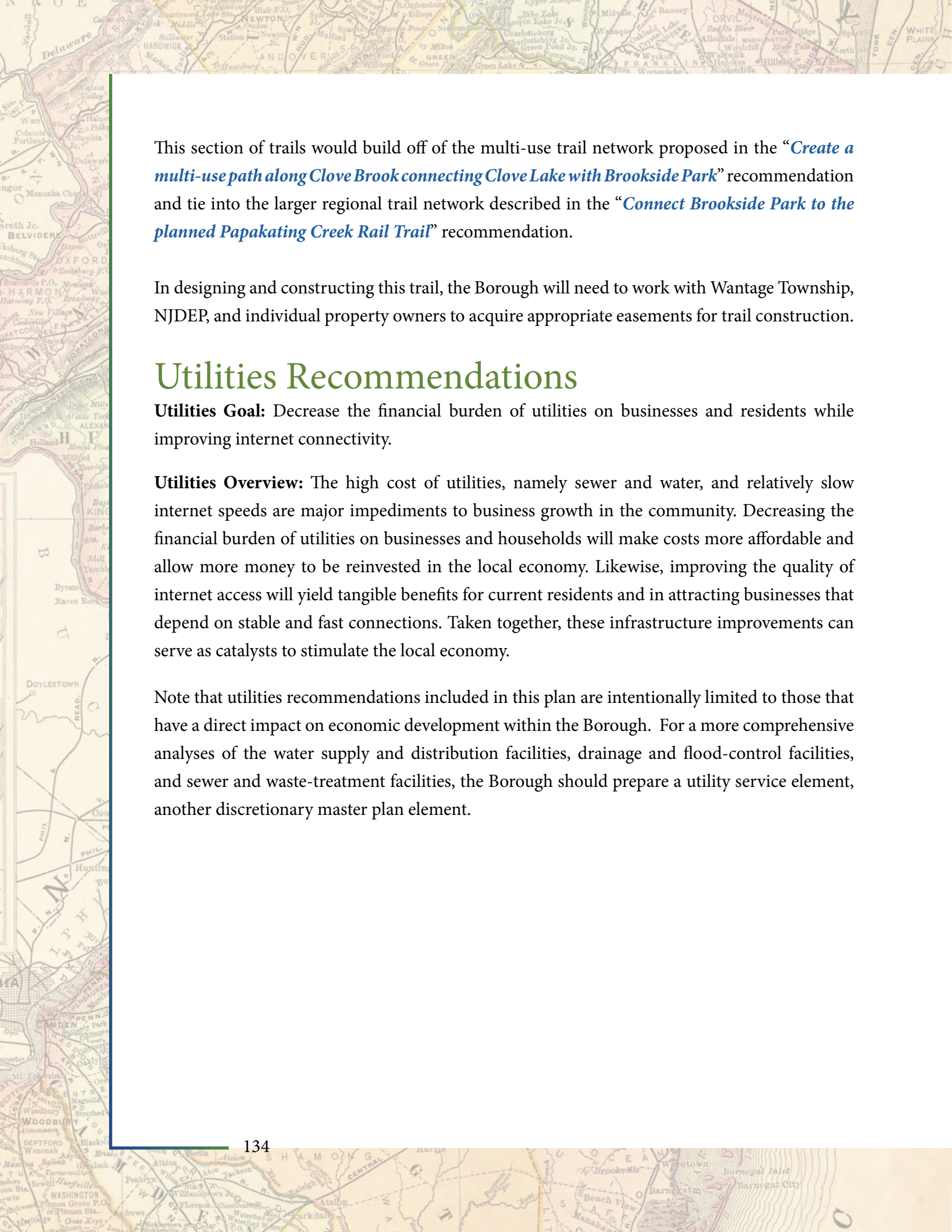
Placemaking Recommendation: Create a multi-use trail around the perimeter of Clove Lake

Priority: Medium

Timeframe: Long-term

Existing Conditions: Clove Lake is the Borough’s most prominent natural feature. Comprising roughly 34 acres spread between the Borough and Wantage Township to the north, the lake was previously used for active recreation activities such as swimming, fishing, and boating. In recent years, the lake predominantly serves more passive recreation with less active uses on or along its shores. Access to the lake, in particular on its eastern shore, is largely obscured by privately-owned residential lots with lakefront access. The primary public access to the lake is found at the Borough-owned Clove Lake Beach on Lake Shore Drive. While the beach is less than a half-mile walk from Main Street, this proximity is not emphasized and its location within a residential neighborhood makes it feel more separated from the rest of the Borough. The land to the north of Clove Lake Beach is largely undeveloped, both in the Borough and Wantage Township.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should pursue the extension of a passive recreation trail along the western shore of Clove Lake heading north from the Clove Lake Beach park into Wantage Township to provide pedestrian access around the entire lake. This trail should be designed in accordance with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection standards to minimize impacts on the lake and its associated ecosystem. This could include a combination of packed dirt trails and elevated walkways over the water.



This section of trails would build off of the multi-use trail network proposed in the “*Create a multi-use path along Clove Brook connecting Clove Lake with Brookside Park*” recommendation and tie into the larger regional trail network described in the “*Connect Brookside Park to the planned Papakating Creek Rail Trail*” recommendation.

In designing and constructing this trail, the Borough will need to work with Wantage Township, NJDEP, and individual property owners to acquire appropriate easements for trail construction.

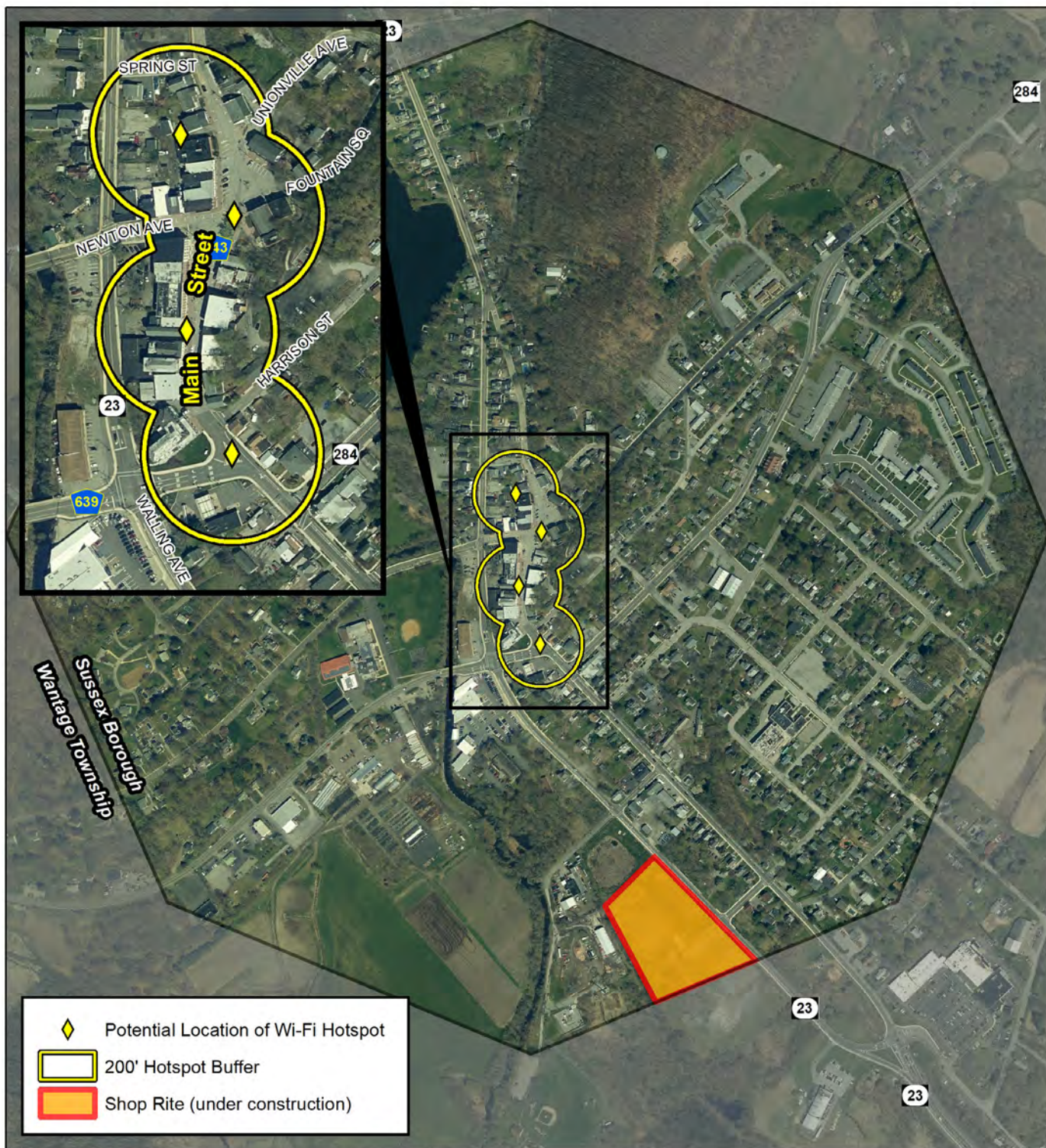
Utilities Recommendations

Utilities Goal: Decrease the financial burden of utilities on businesses and residents while improving internet connectivity.

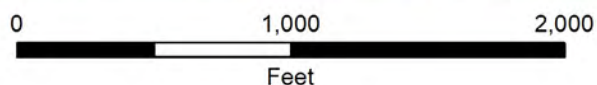
Utilities Overview: The high cost of utilities, namely sewer and water, and relatively slow internet speeds are major impediments to business growth in the community. Decreasing the financial burden of utilities on businesses and households will make costs more affordable and allow more money to be reinvested in the local economy. Likewise, improving the quality of internet access will yield tangible benefits for current residents and in attracting businesses that depend on stable and fast connections. Taken together, these infrastructure improvements can serve as catalysts to stimulate the local economy.

Note that utilities recommendations included in this plan are intentionally limited to those that have a direct impact on economic development within the Borough. For a more comprehensive analyses of the water supply and distribution facilities, drainage and flood-control facilities, and sewer and waste-treatment facilities, the Borough should prepare a utility service element, another discretionary master plan element.

Map 26. Fiberoptic Internet WIFI Hotspot Concept



N
 2022



Data Sources:
 ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS



Utilities Recommendation: Increase the availability and quality of internet

Priority: High

Timeframe: Short-term

Existing Conditions: Internet quality within the Borough has been limited due to a lack of competing providers and dependence on copper wire technology. As part of the development for the new Shop Rite along Route 23 under construction at the time of plan preparation, a new provider, Planet Networks, has installed fiberoptic lines at this development on the southern edge of the Borough. Planet Networks has expressed willingness to extend the fiberoptic lines into the Borough to provide broadband access, including Wi-Fi hotspots along Main Street.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should coordinate with Planet Networks to increase the availability of high-speed internet access to businesses and households by expanding the fiberoptic network. The Borough should also work with local businesses and Planet Networks to create an agreement to provide free Wi-Fi hotspots along Main Street. As shown on Map 26, a conceptual plan shows how four Wi-Fi hotspots with 200-foot coverage buffers could provide complete coverage along Main Street from the Gateway to Spring Street. Once the Wi-Fi hotspots are installed, the Borough should advertise the free Wi-Fi access as part of its marketing and businesses retention strategies.

Utilities Recommendation: Seek infrastructure investments from local, county, state, and federal sources and pursue efforts to renegotiate rates with SCMUA to address high costs of sewer

Priority: Highest

Timeframe: Medium/Long-term

Existing Conditions: The high cost of utilities was frequently mentioned in *Business Owner* and *Household Surveys* as one of the greatest challenges facing the Borough. The sewer costs are based upon a 1992 agreement with the Sussex County Municipal Utility Authority (SCMUA) that requires the payment of a minimum gallonage that far exceeds what the municipality will ever realistically use. SCMUA has unilaterally extended the original agreement. The high cost charged by SCMUA is passed on to Borough households and businesses, either directly for homeowners or indirectly for renters. Given that the Borough has a relatively small population this results in households with monthly utility bills of hundreds of dollars. Among other opportunity costs, the inflated cost of housing has taken away money that landlords could

otherwise invest in the upkeep and improvement of rental properties.

The water utility is owned by the Borough with the only supply from Lake Rutherford. Water is transported through long-distance piping and a settling plant. The Borough is expected to perform costly upgrades mandated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), which will further increase water rates for the Borough.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should continue to advocate for a restructuring of the existing agreement with SCMUA. If the Borough is unable to find a solution directly with SCMUA, the Borough should seek legal assistance to challenge the excessively high rates and unilateral extension of the existing contract. The Borough should advocate for a fair fee system based only on usage instead of the minimum gallonage agreement that SCMUA has unilaterally extended.

Additionally, the Borough should seek infrastructure funding to address the NJDEP-mandated water system upgrades. The Borough should coordinate with the New Jersey Infrastructure Trust Fund and Sussex County to seek support for the finance or refinance improvements to the water system. The Borough should also pursue additional grants, ideally by retaining a grant writer, to look for funding from outside sources to address water system upgrades.

Parking Recommendations

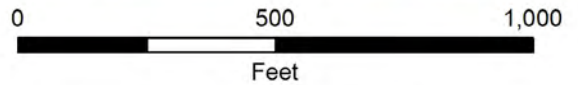
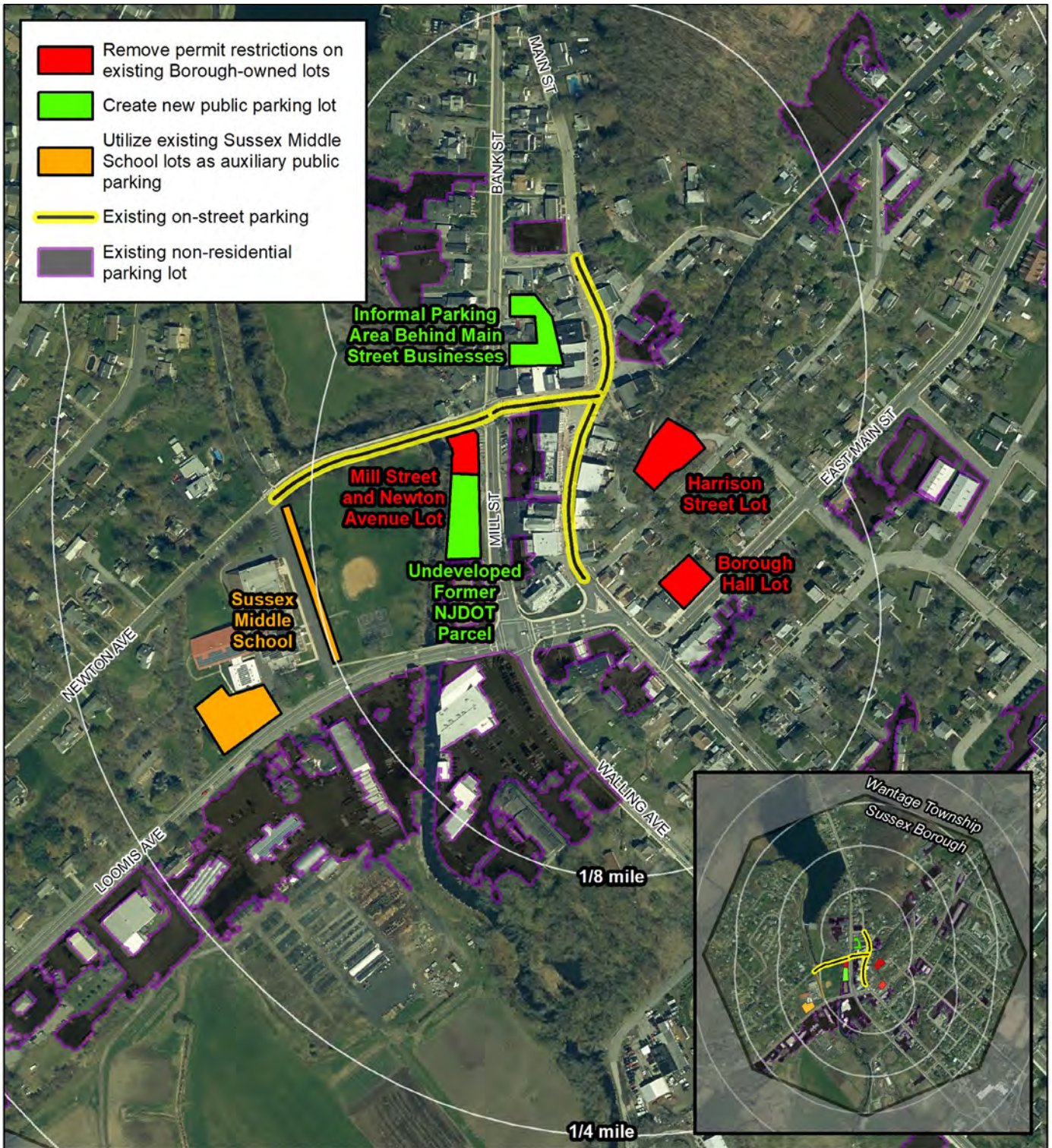
Parking Goal: Increase parking opportunities near Main Street to encourage access to local businesses.

Parking Overview: The lack of parking is a major impediment preventing potential customers from visiting Main Street businesses. Parking options along Main Street are limited to the parallel parking spaces on the street. The minimal on-street parking spaces that are available along Main Street are often taken by residents or business owners, further exacerbating the challenge of finding parking for shoppers, especially if they are less familiar with the Borough.

Businesses in the rest of the Borough generally have commercial parking lots on their premises that are sufficiently large for their operations. The parking issue, as well as the potential solutions, are therefore largely concentrated around Main Street. A variety of methods can significantly increase the number of parking spaces for visitors to access Main Street businesses. Furthermore, the Borough would benefit from taking a comprehensive approach to parking management by installing simple wayfinding signage and clarifying where residents, workers, and visitors should park.

The Borough should also be careful to avoid “over-correcting” the perceived lack of parking by dedicating too much land for surface parking that could be better utilized for other uses.

Map 27. Sussex Borough Parking Recommendations



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDEP, NJDCA, NJOGIS

Parking Recommendation: Remove permit restrictions on existing Borough-owned lots

Priority: Highest

Timeframe: Short-term

Existing Conditions: The Borough owns three parking lots within 1/8 mile of Main Street that are currently unused or largely underused as public parking due to permit restrictions and/or the conditions of the lots: the lot at the southwest corner of the intersection of State Route 23 (Bank Street/Mill Street) and Newton Avenue, the Harrison Street Parking Lot, and the Borough Hall Lot. The absence of a public parking lot is a major contributing factor to the perceived general lack of parking near Main Street.



Image 72. The Borough-owned parking lot at the intersection of Bank Street/Mill Street (State Route 23) and Newton Avenue currently is permit-restricted. Despite its location on the Borough's highest volume road and proximity to Main Street, less than half of the 23 spaces are typically utilized.



Image 73. The Harrison Street Parking Lot is located on the hill above the Crescent Theatre and overlooking Deckertown Commons. Despite the parking lot's proximity to Main Street, it is difficult to access and is permit restricted from 6:00pm to 6:00am.

also as a parking lot for the Crescent Theatre. It is unpaved and permit-restricted from 6:00pm

The lot at the southwest corner of the intersection of State Route 23 (Bank Street/Mill Street) and Newton Avenue is paved and contains 23 parking spaces that are currently permit-restricted. This is the most visible Borough-owned parking lot, with roughly 10,000 vehicles travelling daily along this stretch of State Route 23.

The Harrison Street Parking Lot currently serves as both a municipal parking lot where residents or business owners can buy monthly permits or pay for daily or hourly spots in and

to 6:00am. The site is roughly 0.5 acres and zoned Public/Semi Public. It is the largest Borough-owned lot, but it is irregularly shaped, partially due to the gravel that spills into the surrounding area. The parking lot has access to Main Street from a steep staircase that wraps around the Crescent Theatre and is not frequently maintained. The adjacent handicap ramp is currently blocked off and is not truly handicap accessible because the ramp has a few stairs near where it meets Unionville



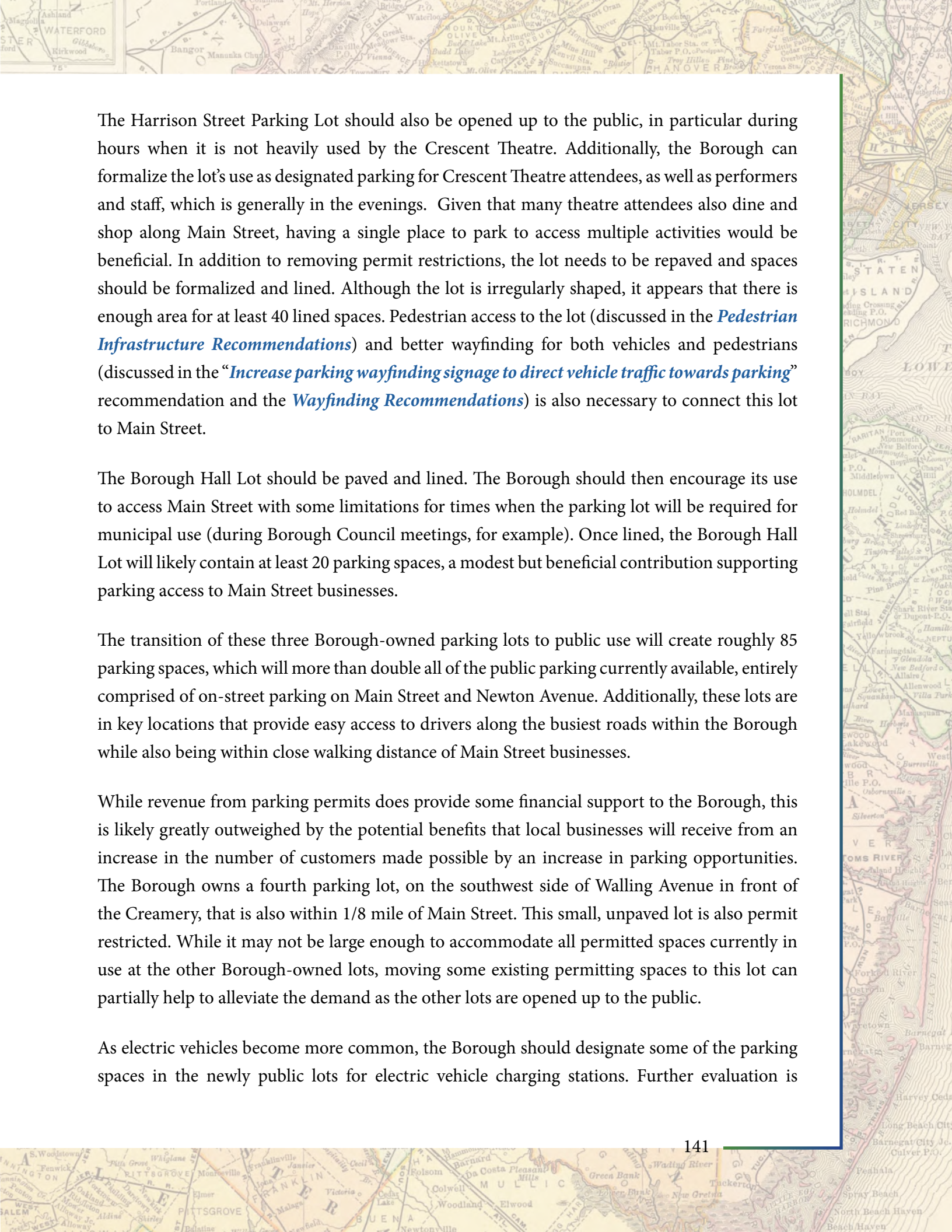
Image 74. Deckertown Commons and Main Street as viewed from the Harrison Street Parking Lot.

Avenue. The staircase and adjacent area are littered with beer and soda bottles as well as other trash, suggesting that this area is used by people to congregate in a partially hidden location.

The Borough Hall Lot, which is located on Hamburg Avenue at the intersection of East Main Street near the Main Street Gateway, is also unpaved. While there is no signage explicitly limiting parking to Borough Hall uses, it does not appear that this lot is open for general public use.

Recommendation Description: The quickest way to increase the supply of parking near Main Street is to utilize the existing three Borough-owned lots in the immediate vicinity as a compliment to the existing on-street parking. The primary benefit to adapting existing lots is that it does not require new land to be designated towards surface parking, but instead a simple reorganization of how it is used.

The parking lot that could most easily be converted to public parking and which would provide the greatest benefit to the Borough's businesses is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of State Route 23 (Bank Street/Mill Street) and Newton Avenue. In addition to the good condition of the lot, it is in a prime location to attract traffic travelling along State Route 23, particular vehicles heading south. With appropriate signage highlighting its proximity to Main Street (discussed in greater detail in the ***"Increase parking wayfinding signage to direct vehicle traffic towards parking"*** recommendation), opening up this lot for public use can help to capture more of the potential customers that currently tend to drive through the Borough without stopping.



The Harrison Street Parking Lot should also be opened up to the public, in particular during hours when it is not heavily used by the Crescent Theatre. Additionally, the Borough can formalize the lot's use as designated parking for Crescent Theatre attendees, as well as performers and staff, which is generally in the evenings. Given that many theatre attendees also dine and shop along Main Street, having a single place to park to access multiple activities would be beneficial. In addition to removing permit restrictions, the lot needs to be repaved and spaces should be formalized and lined. Although the lot is irregularly shaped, it appears that there is enough area for at least 40 lined spaces. Pedestrian access to the lot (discussed in the [Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations](#)) and better wayfinding for both vehicles and pedestrians (discussed in the "[Increase parking wayfinding signage to direct vehicle traffic towards parking](#)" recommendation and the [Wayfinding Recommendations](#)) is also necessary to connect this lot to Main Street.

The Borough Hall Lot should be paved and lined. The Borough should then encourage its use to access Main Street with some limitations for times when the parking lot will be required for municipal use (during Borough Council meetings, for example). Once lined, the Borough Hall Lot will likely contain at least 20 parking spaces, a modest but beneficial contribution supporting parking access to Main Street businesses.

The transition of these three Borough-owned parking lots to public use will create roughly 85 parking spaces, which will more than double all of the public parking currently available, entirely comprised of on-street parking on Main Street and Newton Avenue. Additionally, these lots are in key locations that provide easy access to drivers along the busiest roads within the Borough while also being within close walking distance of Main Street businesses.

While revenue from parking permits does provide some financial support to the Borough, this is likely greatly outweighed by the potential benefits that local businesses will receive from an increase in the number of customers made possible by an increase in parking opportunities. The Borough owns a fourth parking lot, on the southwest side of Walling Avenue in front of the Creamery, that is also within 1/8 mile of Main Street. This small, unpaved lot is also permit restricted. While it may not be large enough to accommodate all permitted spaces currently in use at the other Borough-owned lots, moving some existing permitting spaces to this lot can partially help to alleviate the demand as the other lots are opened up to the public.

As electric vehicles become more common, the Borough should designate some of the parking spaces in the newly public lots for electric vehicle charging stations. Further evaluation is

necessary to determine how many spaces should be designated and the logistics necessary to provide charging stations. In particular, the Borough should determine which public parking lots are most appropriate for electric vehicle charging stations, specifically if the stations should be clustered together or spread out at different parking lots. The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities' Clean Fleet²³ and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's It Pays to Plug In²⁴ are two statewide programs that offer financial support for municipalities to install electric vehicle charging stations. In addition to encouraging a type of transportation with a lower carbon footprint, supplying electric vehicle charging stations can help to attract visitors to the Borough who can dine or shop while their vehicle charges.

Parking Recommendation: Create new parking lots at strategic locations

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium/Long-term

Existing Conditions: As described in the “*Remove permit restrictions on existing Borough-owned lots*” recommendation above, the Borough lacks public parking lots in the vicinity of Main Street. In addition to existing parking lots that are underutilized because of the permit restrictions or poor conditions described above, there are places near Main Street that are not currently used for any formal use despite the relatively high density of the area. This includes the parcel formerly owned by the New Jersey Department of Transportation on the west side of Mill Street (State Route 23), which is currently an undeveloped lot and the area behind the Main Street businesses to the north of Newton Avenue, which is currently informally used for employee parking.



Image 75. Undeveloped former NJDOT lot on Mill Street (State Route 23) adjacent to Borough-owned lot visible in the background. A new surface parking lot in this location could accommodate 40-50 spaces.

²³ <https://www.njcleanenergy.com/ev>

²⁴ <https://www.drivegreen.nj.gov/plugin.html>

Recommendation Description: To complement the strategy of reallocating existing parking lots for public use described in the “*Remove permit restrictions on existing Borough-owned lots*” recommendation above, two strategic locations near Main Street should be utilized to create additional parking. Both locations are currently underutilized and are unlikely to be developed as an alternative use.

The first area that should be reconstituted as a parking lot is the parcel formerly owned by the New Jersey Department of Transportation on the west side of Mill Street (State Route 23). This undeveloped lot is directly to the south of the existing Borough-owned lot at the northwest intersection with Newton Avenue. This 1/3-acre parcel should additionally add 40-50 parking spaces to the 23 existing spaces in the Borough-owned lot. This would provide an abundance of parking only a block from Main Street that would further yield the benefits of establishing public parking along State Route 23.

Proximity to the Clove Brook will require use of permeable pavement and potentially other techniques to mitigate stormwater runoff that may slightly reduce the size of this parking lot. The Borough will need to work with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to ensure that construction of this parking lot meets all standards and requirements to develop in close proximity to the water.

The other strategic location that would benefit from a coordinated parking approach is the area behind the Main Street businesses to the north of Newton Avenue. This gravel and partially paved area, which is accessible by a small access road on Newton Avenue, is currently used as an informal parking lot for businesses along Main Street. The gravel parking lot connects to the paved parking lot to the south of Respectrum Books at corner of Bank Street (State Route 23) and Spring Street. The horseshoe shaped area of roughly 1/3 acre wrapping around 14 Bank Street should be formalized as a parking lot to further increase the supply of parking. This would



Image 76. Entrance to the informal parking area behind Main Street businesses as seen from the access point on Newton Avenue across from former Chase Bank building.

require coordination and formal agreements between the different businesses whose parcels comprise part of this area.

If this parking lot is utilized as public parking, direct access from State Route 23 should be emphasized with clear signage (see *“Increase parking wayfinding signage to direct vehicle traffic towards parking”* recommendation below). Alternatively, given that this location is not as clearly visible as the existing and proposed lots southwest of Newton Avenue, this lot should be designated as parking for people who work and/or live on Main Street. Discussed further in the *“Increase parking wayfinding signage to direct vehicle traffic towards parking”* and *“Clarify where Main Street residents, employees, and visitors should park”* recommendations below, this would leave more spaces in other lots and on-street open for visitors and others generally parking for shorter amounts of time.

As discussed in the *“Remove permit restrictions on existing Borough-owned lots”* recommendation above, the Borough should designate some of the new parking spaces for electric vehicle charging stations.

Parking Recommendation:
Utilize existing lots at Sussex Middle School as auxiliary parking

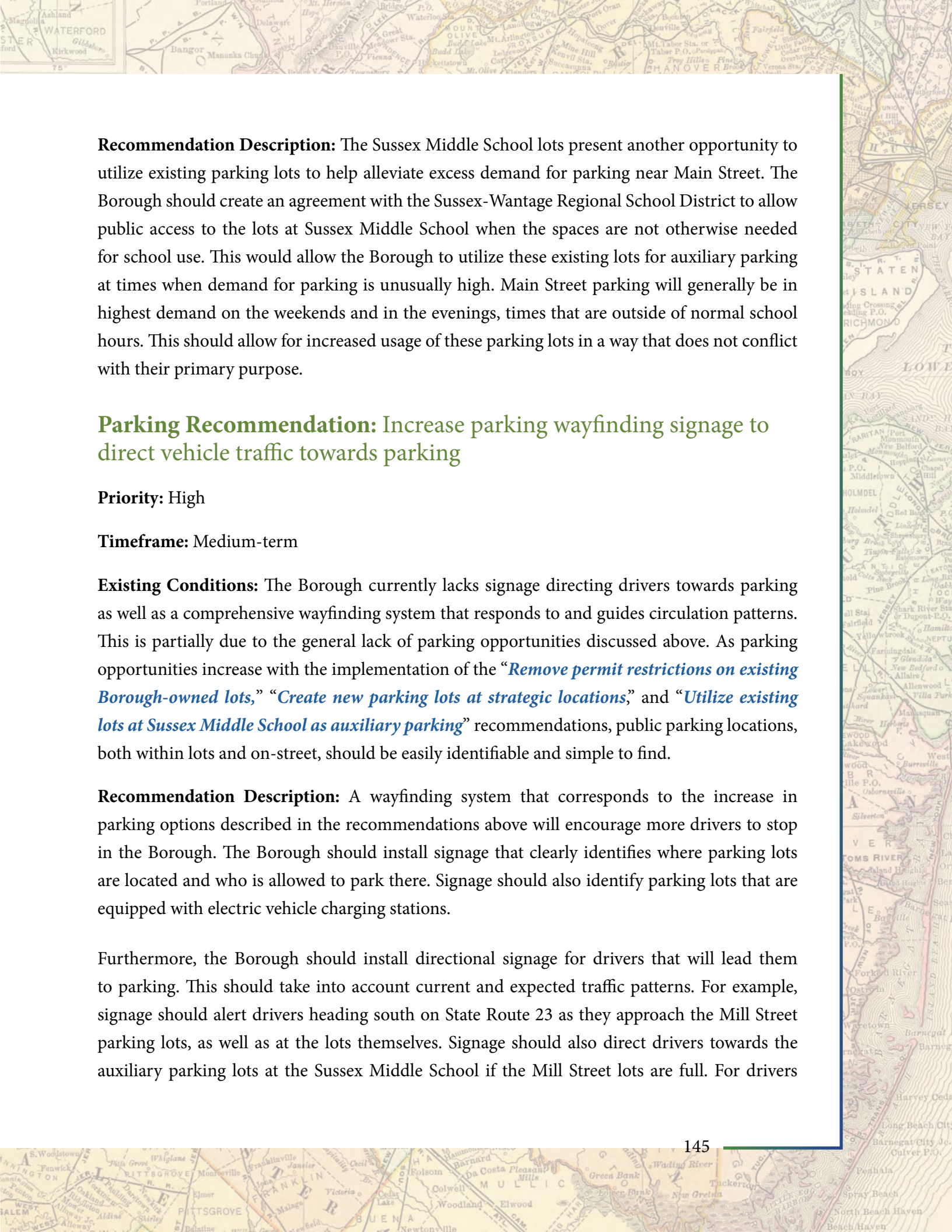
Priority: High

Timeframe: Short-term

Existing Conditions: Sussex Middle School contains two large parking lots and is located just over 1/8 mile away from Main Street. Despite its relatively close location, these parking lots are not considered to be part of the Main Street area network of parking. The nearly 100 parking spaces in these two lots are used to their maximum capacity during school hours, but significantly less during the evening and weekends.



Images 77 and 78. Sussex Middle School has two parking lots that are less than ¼ mile from Main Street which could be utilized as overflow.



Recommendation Description: The Sussex Middle School lots present another opportunity to utilize existing parking lots to help alleviate excess demand for parking near Main Street. The Borough should create an agreement with the Sussex-Wantage Regional School District to allow public access to the lots at Sussex Middle School when the spaces are not otherwise needed for school use. This would allow the Borough to utilize these existing lots for auxiliary parking at times when demand for parking is unusually high. Main Street parking will generally be in highest demand on the weekends and in the evenings, times that are outside of normal school hours. This should allow for increased usage of these parking lots in a way that does not conflict with their primary purpose.

Parking Recommendation: Increase parking wayfinding signage to direct vehicle traffic towards parking

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: The Borough currently lacks signage directing drivers towards parking as well as a comprehensive wayfinding system that responds to and guides circulation patterns. This is partially due to the general lack of parking opportunities discussed above. As parking opportunities increase with the implementation of the “*Remove permit restrictions on existing Borough-owned lots,*” “*Create new parking lots at strategic locations,*” and “*Utilize existing lots at Sussex Middle School as auxiliary parking*” recommendations, public parking locations, both within lots and on-street, should be easily identifiable and simple to find.

Recommendation Description: A wayfinding system that corresponds to the increase in parking options described in the recommendations above will encourage more drivers to stop in the Borough. The Borough should install signage that clearly identifies where parking lots are located and who is allowed to park there. Signage should also identify parking lots that are equipped with electric vehicle charging stations.

Furthermore, the Borough should install directional signage for drivers that will lead them to parking. This should take into account current and expected traffic patterns. For example, signage should alert drivers heading south on State Route 23 as they approach the Mill Street parking lots, as well as at the lots themselves. Signage should also direct drivers towards the auxiliary parking lots at the Sussex Middle School if the Mill Street lots are full. For drivers

A background map of Delaware and surrounding areas, showing various towns and roads. The map is partially obscured by a white text box on the right side.

driving north on Main Street after turning from State Route 23 northbound (Hamburg Avenue), signage should clearly demarcate the on-street parking and direct drivers towards the lots located near, but not on, Main Street if on-street parking is full.

The Borough should also consider incorporating a smartphone app as a compliment to physical wayfinding signage. While this should not be utilized as the only method of parking wayfinding or parking payment if the Borough decides to charge for parking as a revenue source and parking management strategy (see the “*Clarify where Main Street residents, employees, and visitors should park*” recommendation below), parking apps can offer drivers with real-time availability of parking spaces and the opportunity to remotely pay for more time. Most existing parking apps track the availability of parking spaces based on payment, so parking apps may not be practicable if the Borough wishes to continue offering free parking. The Borough could potentially also install sensors at the entrances and exits to parking lots that would provide a count of currently available spaces.

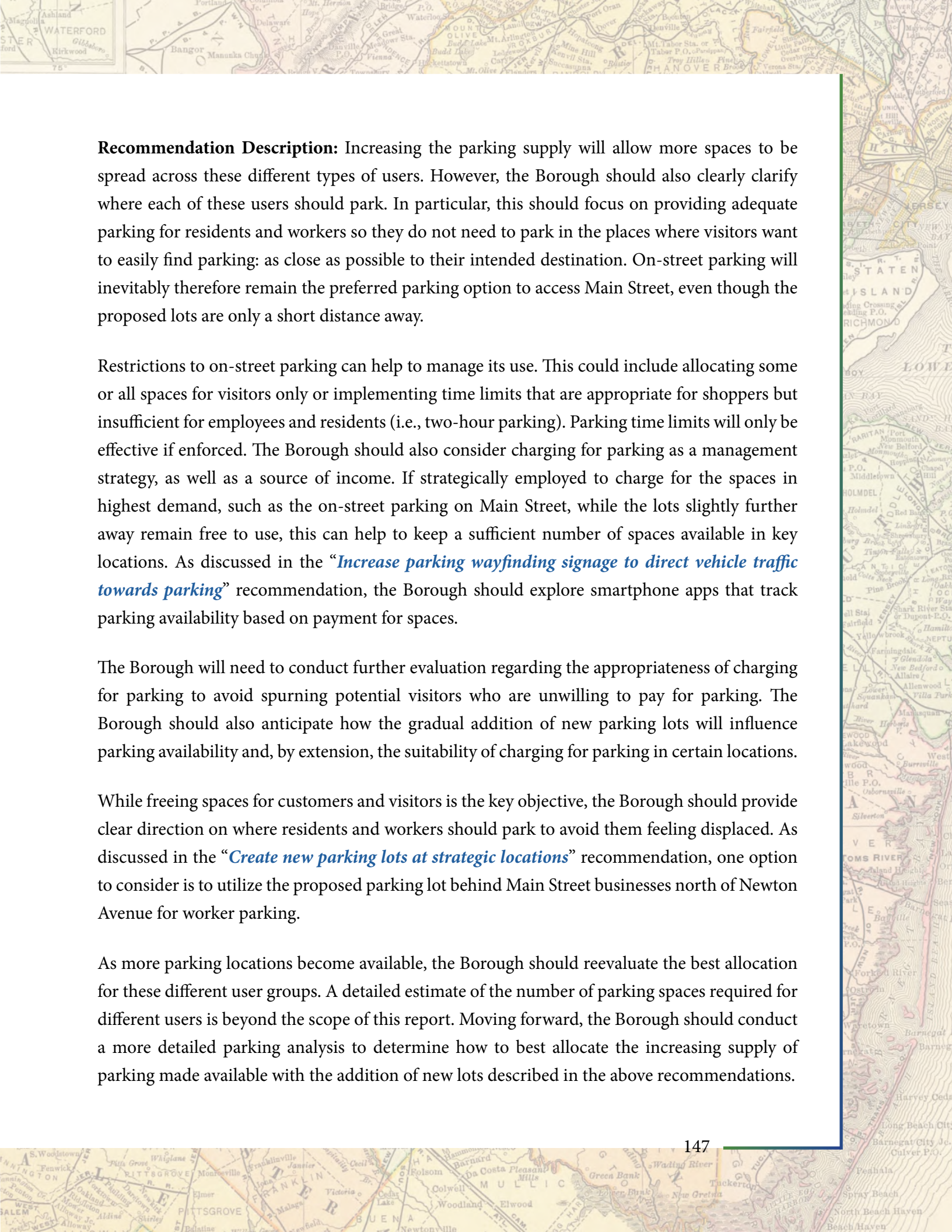
See the *Wayfinding Recommendations* section for further discussion of traffic and pedestrian circulation, in particular the recommendation to “*Consolidate signage currently leading drivers out of Borough and increase the prominence of signage marketing Main Street.*”

Parking Recommendation: Clarify where Main Street residents, employees, and visitors should park

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: Main Street residents, employees, and visitors compete over the limited parking that currently exists along and near Main Street, all of which is on-street parking. Residents and workers tend to park for longer periods of time in a given space when they are at home or work, respectively, than a visitor. This has led to complaints from business owners that potential customers are lost because they do not have a convenient place to park. While simply increasing the supply of parking with the implementation of the “*Remove permit restrictions on existing Borough-owned lots,*” “*Create new parking lots at strategic locations,*” and “*Utilize existing lots at Sussex Middle School as auxiliary parking*” recommendations will partially alleviate this issue, a lack of defined places for these different users to park will likely see the current issue persist.



Recommendation Description: Increasing the parking supply will allow more spaces to be spread across these different types of users. However, the Borough should also clearly clarify where each of these users should park. In particular, this should focus on providing adequate parking for residents and workers so they do not need to park in the places where visitors want to easily find parking: as close as possible to their intended destination. On-street parking will inevitably therefore remain the preferred parking option to access Main Street, even though the proposed lots are only a short distance away.

Restrictions to on-street parking can help to manage its use. This could include allocating some or all spaces for visitors only or implementing time limits that are appropriate for shoppers but insufficient for employees and residents (i.e., two-hour parking). Parking time limits will only be effective if enforced. The Borough should also consider charging for parking as a management strategy, as well as a source of income. If strategically employed to charge for the spaces in highest demand, such as the on-street parking on Main Street, while the lots slightly further away remain free to use, this can help to keep a sufficient number of spaces available in key locations. As discussed in the “*Increase parking wayfinding signage to direct vehicle traffic towards parking*” recommendation, the Borough should explore smartphone apps that track parking availability based on payment for spaces.

The Borough will need to conduct further evaluation regarding the appropriateness of charging for parking to avoid spurning potential visitors who are unwilling to pay for parking. The Borough should also anticipate how the gradual addition of new parking lots will influence parking availability and, by extension, the suitability of charging for parking in certain locations.

While freeing spaces for customers and visitors is the key objective, the Borough should provide clear direction on where residents and workers should park to avoid them feeling displaced. As discussed in the “*Create new parking lots at strategic locations*” recommendation, one option to consider is to utilize the proposed parking lot behind Main Street businesses north of Newton Avenue for worker parking.

As more parking locations become available, the Borough should reevaluate the best allocation for these different user groups. A detailed estimate of the number of parking spaces required for different users is beyond the scope of this report. Moving forward, the Borough should conduct a more detailed parking analysis to determine how to best allocate the increasing supply of parking made available with the addition of new lots described in the above recommendations.



Wayfinding Recommendations

Wayfinding Goal: Improve signage to encourage drivers to visit commercial corridors in the Borough.

Wayfinding Overview: A high volume of vehicle traffic passes through the Borough, particularly on State and County roads. However, most of the existing signage channels drivers out of the Borough instead of encouraging them to visit sites within Sussex. The issue is exemplified and exacerbated by the “sign clutter” that exists near the Main Street Gateway. By consolidating signage, enhancing the Main Street Gateway, and installing pedestrian kiosks, the Borough could institute a simple yet comprehensive approach to wayfinding for vehicles and pedestrians.

Note that a detailed circulation study is beyond the scope of this plan. Recommendations included here refer specifically to wayfinding recommendations that have a direct impact on economic development within the Borough, particularly with increasing the connectivity to Main Street. For a more comprehensive traffic flow analysis looking at different transportation modes, the Borough should prepare a circulation element, another discretionary master plan element.

Wayfinding Recommendation: Consolidate signage currently leading drivers out of Borough and increase the prominence of signage marketing Main Street

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: Multiple New Jersey Department of Transportation signs currently lead drivers approaching the Main Street Gateway along Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 northbound) to a variety of destinations that are all located outside of the Borough. Furthermore, the NJDOT sign in front of Borough Hall blocks the view of the “Visit Historic Main Street” sign, while the NJDOT signs in the median at the Main Street Gateway overwhelms the small, handmade “Shop Small Sussex” sign.

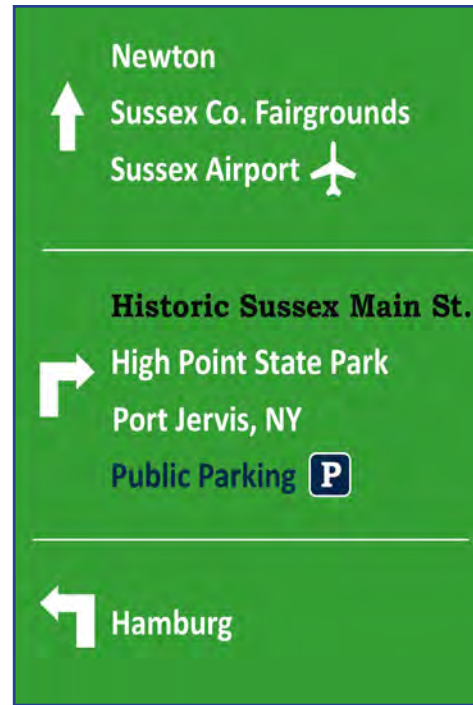
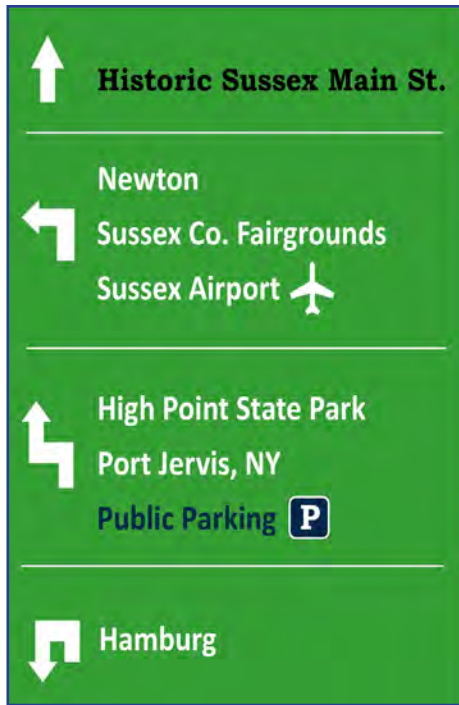
Images 79 and 80. Sign clutter in the median at the intersection of Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 northbound) and Main Street (left) and in front of Sussex Borough Hall (right). NJDOT signs leading to points outside of the Borough overwhelm the “Visit Historic Main Street” and “Shop Small Sussex” signs and encourage drivers to stay on the curve to follow State Route 23 instead of travelling straight onto Main Street.



Images 79 and 80. Sign clutter in the median at the intersection of Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 northbound) and Main Street (left) and in front of Sussex Borough Hall (right). NJDOT signs leading to points outside of the Borough overwhelm the “Visit Historic Main Street” and “Shop Small Sussex” signs and encourage drivers to stay on the curve to follow State Route 23 instead of travelling straight onto Main Street.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should work with NJDOT to simplify and consolidate signage while emphasizing the proximity to Main Street. This will encourage the perception of Main Street as a destination while still providing directions to the other locations outside of the Borough. The conceptual signage shown in Images 81 and 82 demonstrates how new directional signage can include all of the directions currently spread across multiple signs while also promoting the proximity to “Historic Sussex Main St.” The conceptual signage also includes directions towards the public parking along State Route 23 as proposed in the [Parking Recommendations](#) section and discussed in the [“Increase parking wayfinding signage to direct vehicle traffic towards parking”](#) recommendation.

The conceptual sign for the triangular median at the Gateway will instruct drivers who round the curve towards the Mill Street/Walling Avenue intersection instead of driving directly onto Main Street that they can still access Main Street (or the Mill Street parking lot) by turning right onto Mill Street. The Borough should consider moving the consolidated NJDOT signage from Borough Hall to the southern side of the intersection with East Main Street. This would give drivers time to consider the option of continuing onto Main Street. This would also make the existing “Visit Historic Main Street” sign on the Borough Hall lawn more visible.



Images 81 and 82. Conceptual signage to consolidate and replace information on existing multiple NJDOT signs. The sign on the left should be located to the south of the East Main Street intersection on Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 Northbound) to replace the two NJDOT signs currently in the Borough Hall that block sight of the “Visit Historic Main Street” sign. The sign on the right should replace the collection of multiple signs within the triangular median at the Main Street Gateway.

Furthermore, the Borough should install signage with a similar theme of the “Visit Historic Main St.” signage as drivers approach the Main Street area on other County or State roads. This includes the southbound Bank Street (State Route 23) approach to the Newton Avenue, the eastbound Loomis Avenue (County Road 639) approach to the Walling Avenue/Mill Street (State Route 23 southbound/State Route 23) intersection, and the westbound East Main Street (State Route 284) approach to Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 northbound).

Wayfinding Recommendation: Install pedestrian kiosks with maps

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: Similar to the absence of signage for vehicles driving on Borough roads, the Borough also lacks wayfinding support for pedestrians. While the Borough’s small size may seem easy to navigate to locals, a pedestrian wayfinding system can be a major asset in attracting



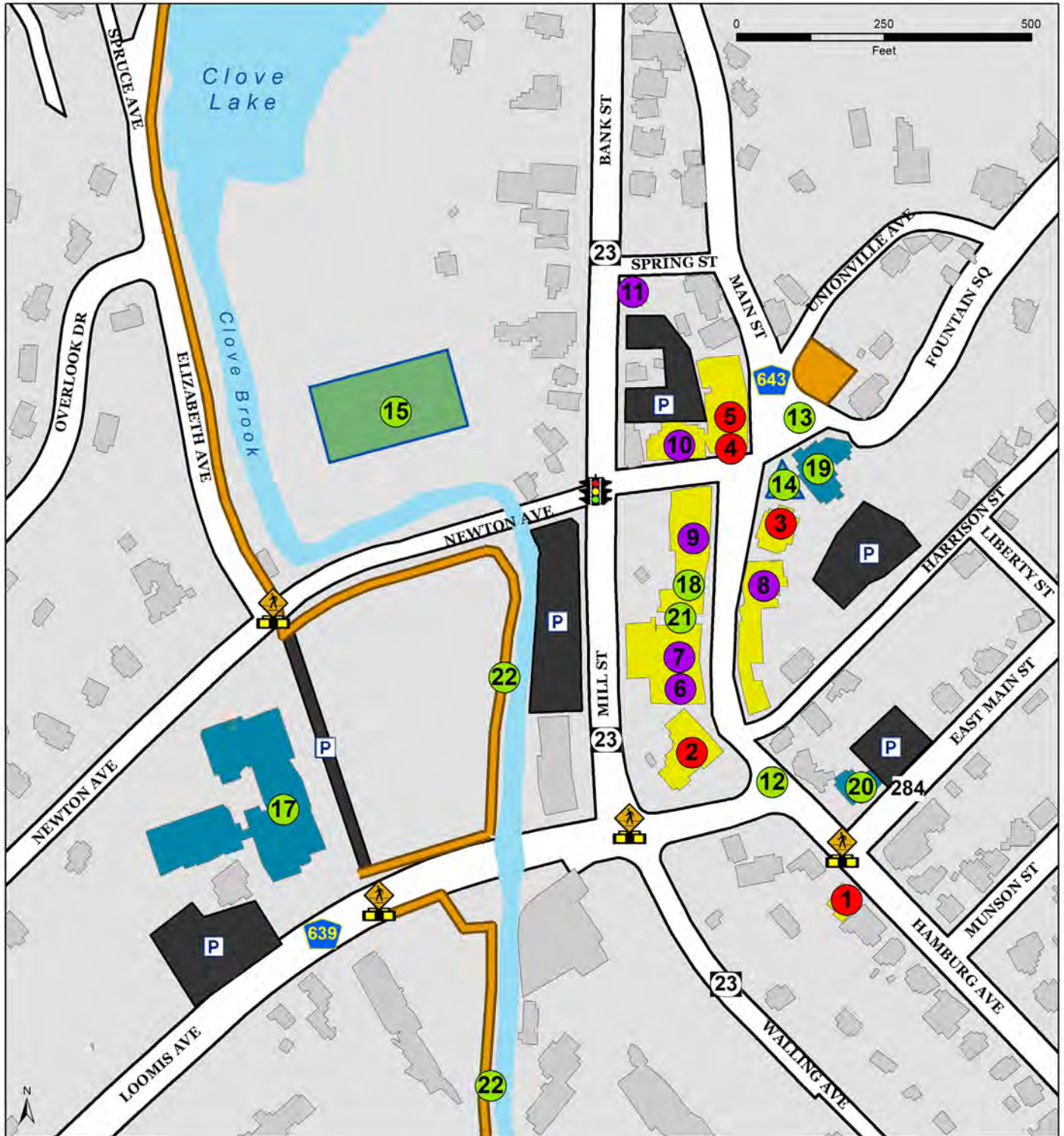
visitors and helping them navigate the Borough's commercial corridors, especially the Main Street area.

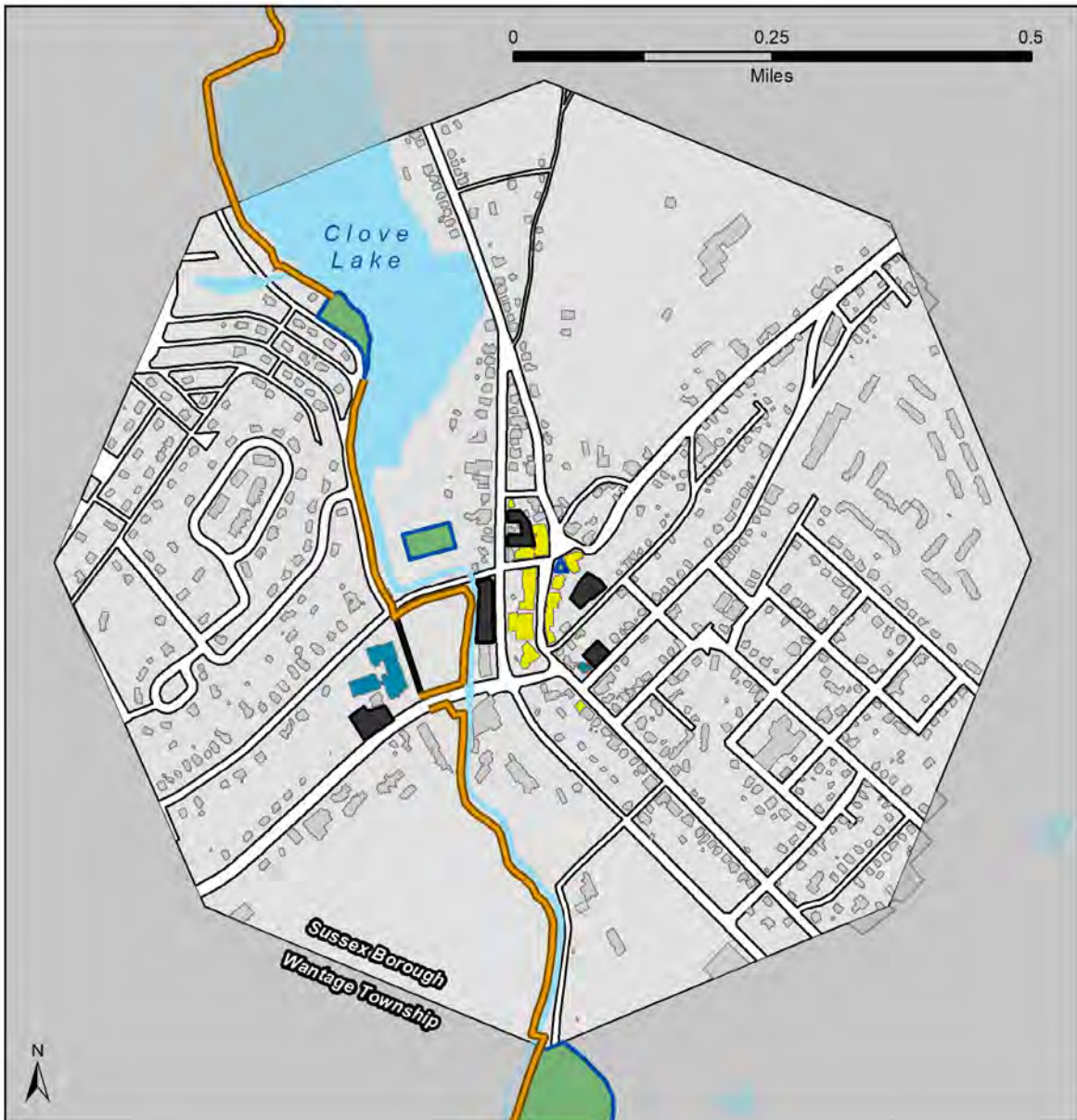
Recommendation Description: Especially as the Borough adds more parking opportunities (discussed in the *Parking Recommendations*), the Borough should install pedestrian kiosks to increase awareness of connectivity between parking locations, Main Street businesses, and pedestrian infrastructure. In addition to aiding pedestrian wayfinding, this will help to establish a sense of place in the Main Street area.

At a minimum, the pedestrian kiosks should include a comprehensible map and an inventory of businesses on Main Street and other nearby locations. An example of the type of stylized map that could be used is shown in Map 28 below. The Borough could also consider “smart” kiosks that offer services such as parking management, Wi-Fi, and interactive maps, among others.



Map 28. Wayfinding Map Prototype for Sussex Borough that highlights key locations near Main Street including a business inventory





- 1 Get Juiced
- 2 Sussex Inn / Early American Tavern
- 3 Taco of the Town
- 4 Bobo Kitchen
- 5 Lorenzo's Pizzeria
- 6 Sussex Antiques
- 7 On Main
- 8 Baker's Pharmacy
- 9 Main Street Barbers
- 10 Curves Ahead
- 11 Respectrum Books
- 12 Main Street Gateway
- 13 Fountain Square
- 14 Deckertown Commons
- 15 Boggs Field Playground
- 16 Clove Lake Beach
- 17 Sussex Middle School
- 18 Norwescap Community Center
- 19 Crescent Theatre
- 20 Borough Hall
- 21 Pedestrian Passageway
- 22 Clove Brook Path

-  Public Parking Lot
-  Park/Open Space
-  Off-Road Path
-  Community Amenity
-  Main Street Area Store or Restaurant
-  Pedestrian-Activated Crosswalk
-  Pedestrian-Activated Signalized Intersection



Map prepared by the Office of Local Planning Services on behalf of Sussex Borough.
 Data Sources: Sussex Borough, ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation



Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations

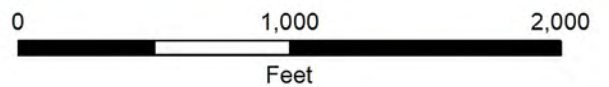
Pedestrian Infrastructure Goal: Improve pedestrian safety to allow ease of movement through the Borough's commercial corridors for all modes of transportation.

Pedestrian Infrastructure Overview: Pedestrian accessibility and safety are prerequisites for a walkable downtown to thrive. Sidewalk coverage in the Borough is already quite comprehensive. Furthermore, the small size of the Borough means it is naturally amenable to a walkable community. However, there currently are some small gaps in sidewalk connectivity and imperfect crossing opportunities that create barriers to pedestrian connectivity. By focusing to improve connectivity at the existing conflict points, the Borough can increase the ease of pedestrian movement throughout its commercial corridor.

Note that a detailed pedestrian safety analysis is beyond the scope of this plan. Recommendations included here refer specifically to pedestrian infrastructure recommendations that have a direct impact on economic development within the Borough. For a more comprehensive evaluation of pedestrian infrastructure, the Borough should prepare a circulation element, another discretionary master plan element.

Many of the *Placemaking Recommendations* also incorporate specific components of pedestrian infrastructure improvements. The “*Activate Fountain Square and the Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection*” recommendation will help calm traffic travelling along Main Street and emphasize the presence of pedestrians within the street. The “*Formalize the existing right of way connecting Main Street and Mill Street at rear of former Capri Auto Body*” recommendation will formalize a mid-block pedestrian connection between two parallel streets. The “*Create a multi-use path along Clove Brook connecting Clove Lake with Brookside Park*,” “*Connect Brookside Park to the Papakating Creek Rail Trail*” and “*Create a multi-use trail around the perimeter of Clove Lake*” recommendations will extend the off-road trail network and increase the Borough’s walkability.

Map 29. Sussex Borough Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS

Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendation: Install pedestrian-activated traffic control devices

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: State Route 23 is a high-volume road that cuts through the heart of the Borough. Even at designated pedestrian crossing locations, namely crosswalks with a “pedestrian crossing” sign (MUTCD W11-2)²⁵ or a flashing yellow light at the State Route 23 and Newton Avenue intersection, vehicles frequently do not yield to pedestrians waiting to cross as vehicle traffic often assumes



Image 83. Vehicle traffic on State Route 23 infrequently yields to pedestrians at the intersection with Newton Avenue despite a flashing yellow light and “pedestrian crossing” signage. This creates barriers to safe pedestrian access in the Borough’s commercial corridors.



Image 84. Pedestrian infrastructure at the intersection of Walling Avenue and Wiebel Plaza across from the Shop Rite under development. Vehicle traffic rarely yields to pedestrians waiting to cross at these locations despite the “pedestrian crossing” signage.

the de facto right of way. The lack of appropriate pedestrian crossing opportunities across State Route 23, as well as other major roads, creates barriers that limit pedestrian accessibility and isolate Main Street from the rest of the Borough.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should work with the relevant transportation jurisdictions (New Jersey Department of Transportation and Sussex County Division of Public Works Office of Roads) to install pedestrian-activated traffic control devices. The

²⁵ https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/hm/2009/part9/fig9b_03_longdesc.htm

standard “pedestrian crossing” signs at the existing crosswalks should be replaced with rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) which flash when activated by a pedestrian pushbutton. As shown in Map 29, locations where a RRFB should be installed include the existing crosswalks on Hamburg Avenue (intersections with Brookside Avenue and Wiebel Plaza/4th Street), Walling Avenue at the Brookside Avenue intersection, and Bank Street at the intersection with Main Street. A RRFB should also be installed at the existing crosswalk on Newton Avenue at the intersection with School Road/Elizabeth Road to create a safe passageway for people who have parked at the Sussex Middle School (as described in the “*Utilize existing lots at Sussex Middle School as auxiliary parking*” recommendation), as well as increase safety for students. Additionally, a new crosswalk with a RRFB should be installed on Loomis Avenue at School Road to connect the school with businesses on the southern side of Loomis Avenue and the Skylands Connect bus stop. Missing gaps in the sidewalk network along Walling Avenue and Loomis Avenue near these crosswalks should also be filled in.

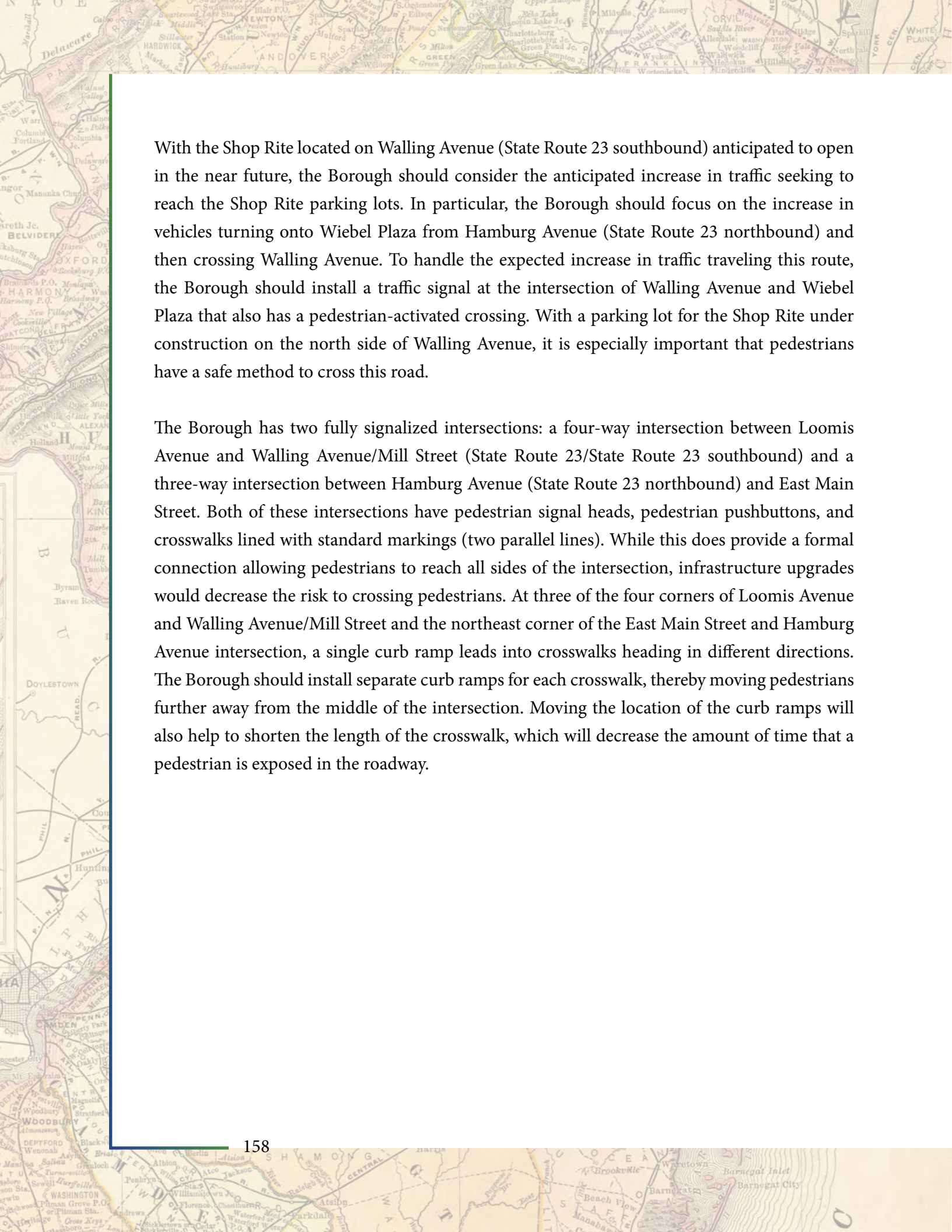


Image 85. The flashing lights of a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) are typically activated with a pedestrian pushbutton to signal to drivers that pedestrians are waiting to cross the street.

Source: <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/rrfb.cfm>

The flashing yellow light and “school crosswalk warning assembly” sign (S1-1)²⁶ on State Route 23 (Bank Street/Mill Street) at the intersection with Newton Avenue generally do not result in traffic yielding to pedestrians wishing to cross State Route 23. With the removal of permit restrictions on the existing parking lot on the southwest corner of this intersection and the construction of an additional lot in the parcel to the south of the existing lot, demand for a safe pedestrian crossing at this intersection will increase. The current light should be replaced with a traditional traffic light that brings traffic on State Route 23 to a stop with a red light when activated by a pedestrian, as well as sensors for vehicle traffic entering from Newton Avenue.

²⁶ https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/hm/2003r1r2/part7/fig7b-01_longdesc.htm



With the Shop Rite located on Walling Avenue (State Route 23 southbound) anticipated to open in the near future, the Borough should consider the anticipated increase in traffic seeking to reach the Shop Rite parking lots. In particular, the Borough should focus on the increase in vehicles turning onto Wiebel Plaza from Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 northbound) and then crossing Walling Avenue. To handle the expected increase in traffic traveling this route, the Borough should install a traffic signal at the intersection of Walling Avenue and Wiebel Plaza that also has a pedestrian-activated crossing. With a parking lot for the Shop Rite under construction on the north side of Walling Avenue, it is especially important that pedestrians have a safe method to cross this road.

The Borough has two fully signalized intersections: a four-way intersection between Loomis Avenue and Walling Avenue/Mill Street (State Route 23/State Route 23 southbound) and a three-way intersection between Hamburg Avenue (State Route 23 northbound) and East Main Street. Both of these intersections have pedestrian signal heads, pedestrian pushbuttons, and crosswalks lined with standard markings (two parallel lines). While this does provide a formal connection allowing pedestrians to reach all sides of the intersection, infrastructure upgrades would decrease the risk to crossing pedestrians. At three of the four corners of Loomis Avenue and Walling Avenue/Mill Street and the northeast corner of the East Main Street and Hamburg Avenue intersection, a single curb ramp leads into crosswalks heading in different directions. The Borough should install separate curb ramps for each crosswalk, thereby moving pedestrians further away from the middle of the intersection. Moving the location of the curb ramps will also help to shorten the length of the crosswalk, which will decrease the amount of time that a pedestrian is exposed in the roadway.

Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendation: Calm traffic with raised crosswalks at the Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection

Priority: High

Timeframe: Short-term

Existing Conditions: Vehicle speed tends to increase as the Main Street roadway widens near the northbound approach to Newton Avenue. Similarly, vehicles traveling south enter this intersection at high speeds, with the intersection partially obscured by buildings from this approach. A faded standard crosswalk (two parallel lines) on the north side of the intersection is the only designated place for pedestrians to cross Main Street in this hub of activity. While this crosswalk is well placed in a location where the crossing distance is minimal, it is largely ignored by vehicle drivers due to how faded it is and the lack of accompanying pedestrian infrastructure.



There is not an obvious place for a crosswalk in the southern part of the Main Street and Newtown Avenue intersection due to the way that the Main Street roadway expands as it approaches this intersection. Nonetheless, pedestrians frequently cross Main Street at informal points to the south of this intersection. There is also no crosswalk across Newton Avenue on the west side of this intersection.

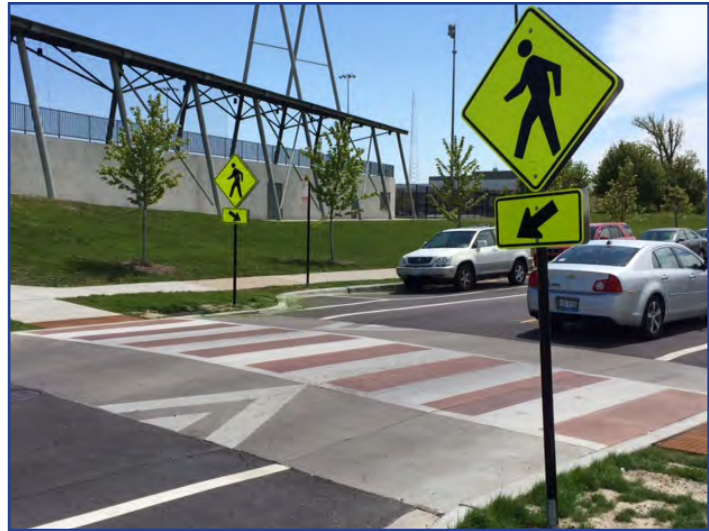
Images 86 and 87. Main Street roadway widens near the Newton Avenue intersection (top), encouraging drivers to drive faster. The faded standard crosswalk crossing Main Street on the north side of the intersection with Newton Avenue and to the south of Fountain Square does not offer adequate protection to pedestrians (bottom).

Recommendation Description:

The Borough should install three raised crosswalks at this intersection to calm traffic and formalize pedestrian crossing here. Raised crosswalks will serve a function similar to a speed table where vehicles are required to slow down to traverse and pay special attention to the roadway. Drivers are therefore more attuned to the presence of pedestrians seeking to cross at this type of location. The three raised crosswalks should be placed at locations where the crossing distance is minimal to reduce the amount of time that pedestrians are within the roadway. Approximate locations of the three raised crosswalks are shown on Map 22 in the *Placemaking Recommendations* section.

The installation of raised crosswalks will also support the *Wayfinding Recommendation* of “*Activate Fountain Square and the Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection*” by framing the intersection.

Throughout the Borough, the current crosswalks demarcated with parallel lines should be replaced with a style that offers higher visibility for drivers, such as a “ladder” design. This type of marking can be done on top of the Main Street raised crosswalks.



Images 88 and 89: Raised crosswalks from Chicago, Illinois (top) and West Palm Beach, Florida (bottom).

Sources: <https://www.visionzerofor youth.org/stories/continuous-improvement-to-support-a-chicago-school/> (top) and <https://www.pedbikeimages.org/details.php?picid=1301> (bottom)



Zoning Recommendations

Zoning Goal: Update zoning to reflect current conditions and encourage appropriate development.

Zoning Overview: Zoning is generally considered one of the most effective tools for municipalities to encourage appropriate development that reflect local priorities. The Borough would benefit from evaluating shortcomings and outdated aspects of the zoning code to better match current and future needs.

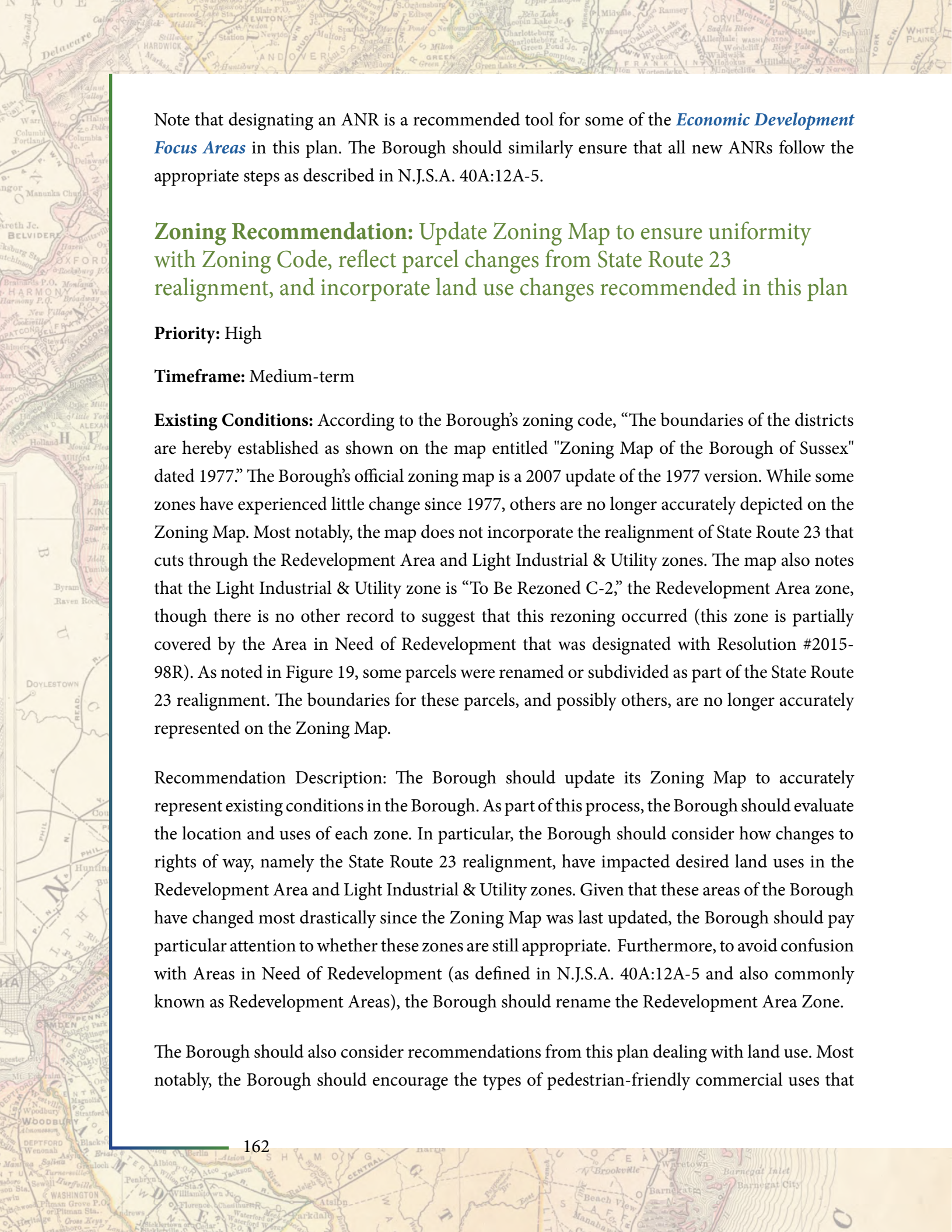
Zoning Recommendation: Clarify/clean up Areas in Need of Redevelopment and Rehabilitation

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: Municipal governing bodies in New Jersey can designate Areas in Need of Redevelopment or Rehabilitation (ANR) according to steps detailed in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 and described in the [Areas in Need of Redevelopment and Rehabilitation](#) section above. Municipalities are required to submit resolutions designating ANRs to the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for review. However, DCA has only received the resolution designating an ANR for one location within the Borough (Resolution #2015-98R covering the area where the Shop Rite is currently under construction). The Borough has passed at least one other resolution designating an ANR (the Route 23 Rehabilitation Area), yet given that this ANR, and potentially others, were never submitted to DCA, the Borough has not fully complied with the designation process. This leaves the Borough potentially vulnerable to legal challenges to the new zoning created as part of a Redevelopment Plan as well as ambiguity that make it difficult to pursue development in these areas.

Recommendation Description: The Sussex Borough Council should adopt a new resolution reaffirming the location of all known ANRs that the Borough intends to effectuate other than the area designated in Resolution #2015-98R. Given that some aspects of these areas may have changed since their original designation, the Borough should evaluate whether the original boundaries are still valid or should be altered. For example, the Route 23 Rehabilitation Area was adopted prior to the reconfiguration of State Route 23 and the subsequent changes to certain parcels as noted in Figure 19 above. During the re-designation process the Borough should also incorporate the relevant recommendations from this plan, notably discouraging drive-thru restaurants from the State Route 23 “island.”



Note that designating an ANR is a recommended tool for some of the *Economic Development Focus Areas* in this plan. The Borough should similarly ensure that all new ANRs follow the appropriate steps as described in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5.

Zoning Recommendation: Update Zoning Map to ensure uniformity with Zoning Code, reflect parcel changes from State Route 23 realignment, and incorporate land use changes recommended in this plan

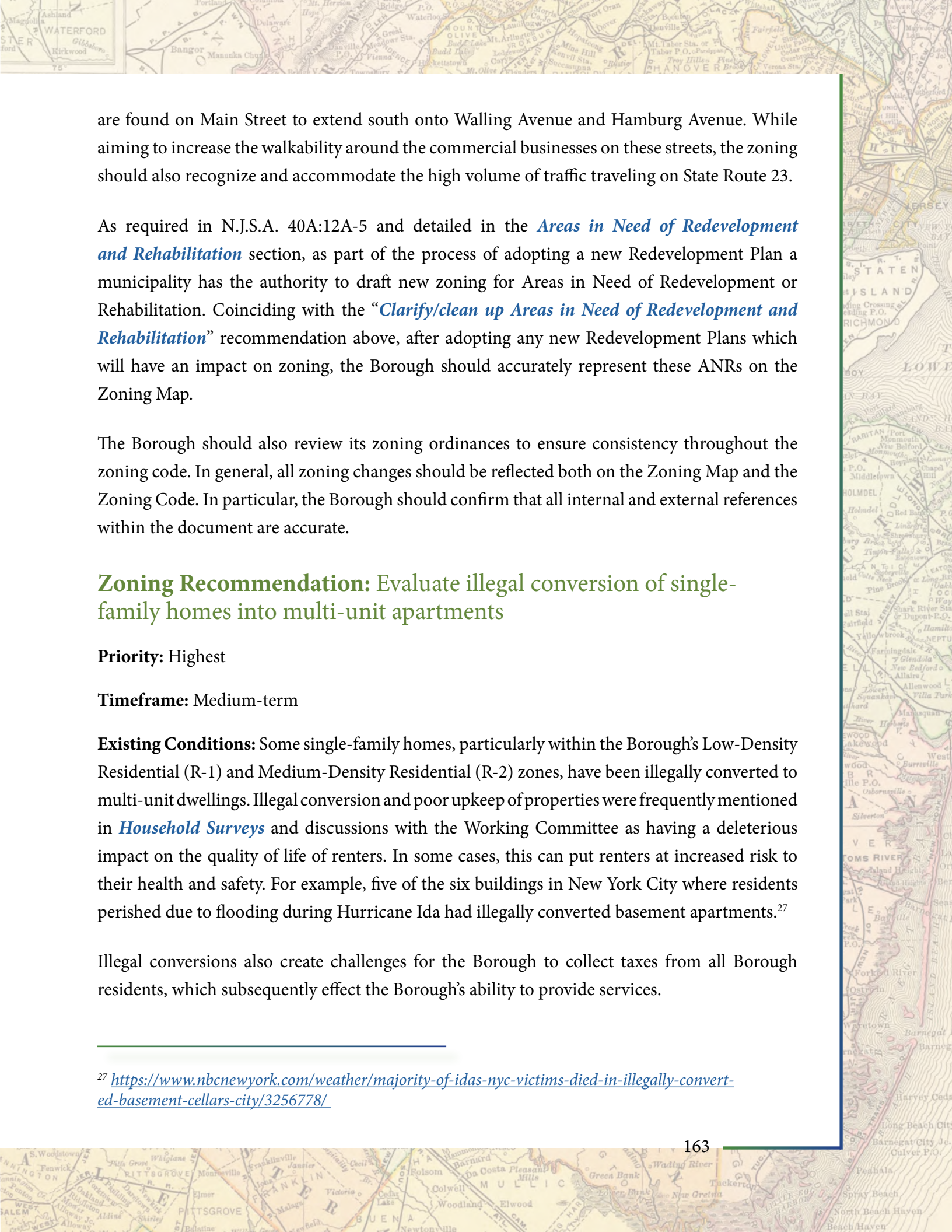
Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: According to the Borough’s zoning code, “The boundaries of the districts are hereby established as shown on the map entitled “Zoning Map of the Borough of Sussex” dated 1977.” The Borough’s official zoning map is a 2007 update of the 1977 version. While some zones have experienced little change since 1977, others are no longer accurately depicted on the Zoning Map. Most notably, the map does not incorporate the realignment of State Route 23 that cuts through the Redevelopment Area and Light Industrial & Utility zones. The map also notes that the Light Industrial & Utility zone is “To Be Rezoned C-2,” the Redevelopment Area zone, though there is no other record to suggest that this rezoning occurred (this zone is partially covered by the Area in Need of Redevelopment that was designated with Resolution #2015-98R). As noted in Figure 19, some parcels were renamed or subdivided as part of the State Route 23 realignment. The boundaries for these parcels, and possibly others, are no longer accurately represented on the Zoning Map.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should update its Zoning Map to accurately represent existing conditions in the Borough. As part of this process, the Borough should evaluate the location and uses of each zone. In particular, the Borough should consider how changes to rights of way, namely the State Route 23 realignment, have impacted desired land uses in the Redevelopment Area and Light Industrial & Utility zones. Given that these areas of the Borough have changed most drastically since the Zoning Map was last updated, the Borough should pay particular attention to whether these zones are still appropriate. Furthermore, to avoid confusion with Areas in Need of Redevelopment (as defined in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 and also commonly known as Redevelopment Areas), the Borough should rename the Redevelopment Area Zone.

The Borough should also consider recommendations from this plan dealing with land use. Most notably, the Borough should encourage the types of pedestrian-friendly commercial uses that



are found on Main Street to extend south onto Walling Avenue and Hamburg Avenue. While aiming to increase the walkability around the commercial businesses on these streets, the zoning should also recognize and accommodate the high volume of traffic traveling on State Route 23.

As required in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 and detailed in the *Areas in Need of Redevelopment and Rehabilitation* section, as part of the process of adopting a new Redevelopment Plan a municipality has the authority to draft new zoning for Areas in Need of Redevelopment or Rehabilitation. Coinciding with the “*Clarify/clean up Areas in Need of Redevelopment and Rehabilitation*” recommendation above, after adopting any new Redevelopment Plans which will have an impact on zoning, the Borough should accurately represent these ANRs on the Zoning Map.

The Borough should also review its zoning ordinances to ensure consistency throughout the zoning code. In general, all zoning changes should be reflected both on the Zoning Map and the Zoning Code. In particular, the Borough should confirm that all internal and external references within the document are accurate.

Zoning Recommendation: Evaluate illegal conversion of single-family homes into multi-unit apartments

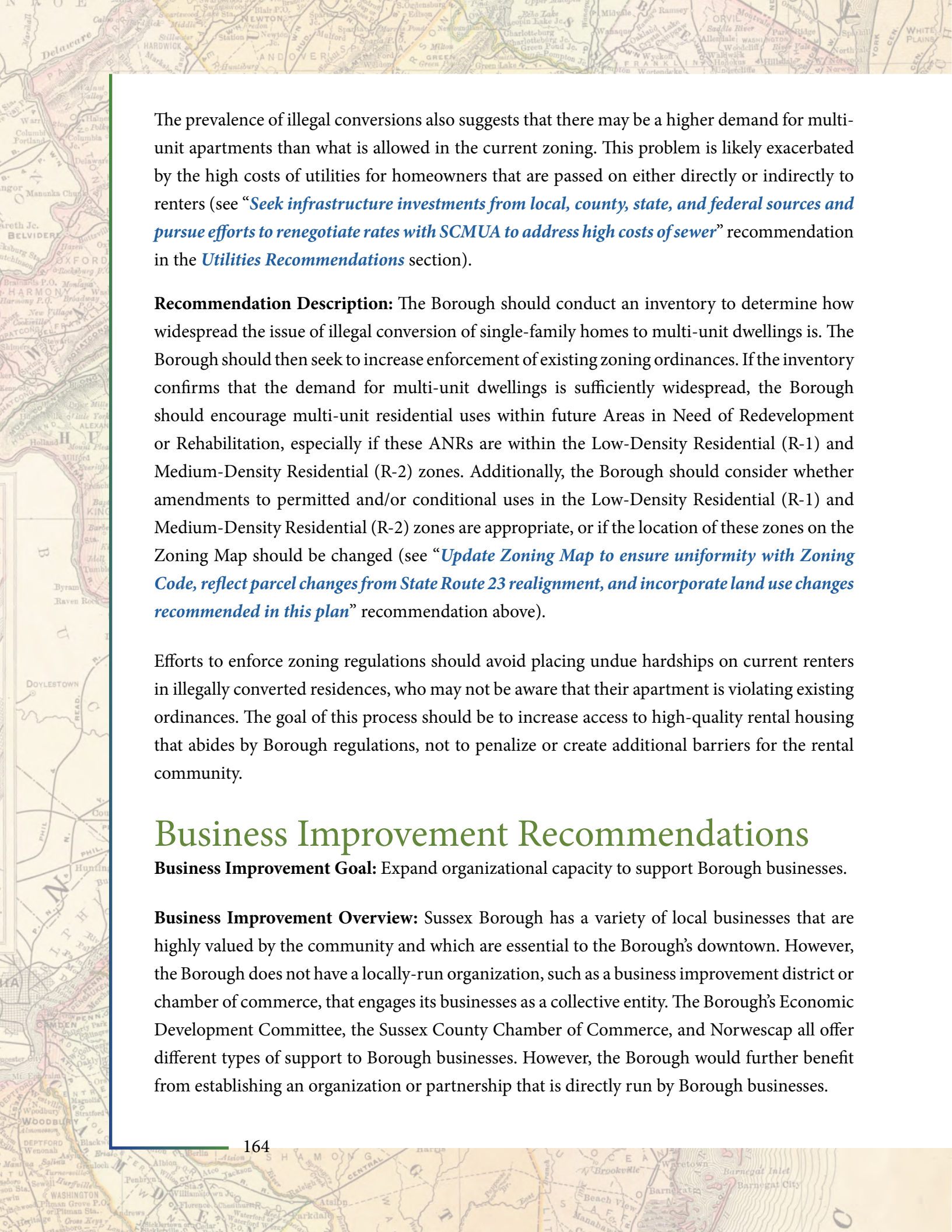
Priority: Highest

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: Some single-family homes, particularly within the Borough’s Low-Density Residential (R-1) and Medium-Density Residential (R-2) zones, have been illegally converted to multi-unit dwellings. Illegal conversion and poor upkeep of properties were frequently mentioned in *Household Surveys* and discussions with the Working Committee as having a deleterious impact on the quality of life of renters. In some cases, this can put renters at increased risk to their health and safety. For example, five of the six buildings in New York City where residents perished due to flooding during Hurricane Ida had illegally converted basement apartments.²⁷

Illegal conversions also create challenges for the Borough to collect taxes from all Borough residents, which subsequently effect the Borough’s ability to provide services.

²⁷ <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/weather/majority-of-idas-nyc-victims-died-in-illegally-converted-basement-cellars-city/3256778/>



The prevalence of illegal conversions also suggests that there may be a higher demand for multi-unit apartments than what is allowed in the current zoning. This problem is likely exacerbated by the high costs of utilities for homeowners that are passed on either directly or indirectly to renters (see “*Seek infrastructure investments from local, county, state, and federal sources and pursue efforts to renegotiate rates with SCMUA to address high costs of sewer*” recommendation in the *Utilities Recommendations* section).

Recommendation Description: The Borough should conduct an inventory to determine how widespread the issue of illegal conversion of single-family homes to multi-unit dwellings is. The Borough should then seek to increase enforcement of existing zoning ordinances. If the inventory confirms that the demand for multi-unit dwellings is sufficiently widespread, the Borough should encourage multi-unit residential uses within future Areas in Need of Redevelopment or Rehabilitation, especially if these ANRs are within the Low-Density Residential (R-1) and Medium-Density Residential (R-2) zones. Additionally, the Borough should consider whether amendments to permitted and/or conditional uses in the Low-Density Residential (R-1) and Medium-Density Residential (R-2) zones are appropriate, or if the location of these zones on the Zoning Map should be changed (see “*Update Zoning Map to ensure uniformity with Zoning Code, reflect parcel changes from State Route 23 realignment, and incorporate land use changes recommended in this plan*” recommendation above).

Efforts to enforce zoning regulations should avoid placing undue hardships on current renters in illegally converted residences, who may not be aware that their apartment is violating existing ordinances. The goal of this process should be to increase access to high-quality rental housing that abides by Borough regulations, not to penalize or create additional barriers for the rental community.

Business Improvement Recommendations

Business Improvement Goal: Expand organizational capacity to support Borough businesses.

Business Improvement Overview: Sussex Borough has a variety of local businesses that are highly valued by the community and which are essential to the Borough’s downtown. However, the Borough does not have a locally-run organization, such as a business improvement district or chamber of commerce, that engages its businesses as a collective entity. The Borough’s Economic Development Committee, the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce, and Norwescap all offer different types of support to Borough businesses. However, the Borough would further benefit from establishing an organization or partnership that is directly run by Borough businesses.

The Borough should also pursue state and federal incentive programs as a means to attract new businesses and support the existing business community. As shown on the *New Jersey Community Asset Map*, Sussex Borough is a New Jersey Redevelopment Authority Eligible Municipality, while the census tract that comprises the entirety of Sussex Borough is also New Market Tax Credit Eligible Census Tract and a Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Eligible Census Tract (see *Norwescap Neighborhood Revitalization Plan*). In addition to the potential benefits offered by these programs, the Borough should leverage its status as the only Opportunity Zone within Sussex County.

Business Improvement Recommendation: Establish a local chamber of commerce or business improvement organization to provide mutual support to businesses along Main Street and other Commercial Corridors

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium-term

Existing Conditions: Past efforts to organize local businesses were tempered by lukewarm interest to collaborate or a feeling that participation did not yield enough tangible benefits. This ultimately prevented the critical mass of businesses necessary to create a mutually beneficial organization. Efforts to revitalize Main Street have picked up momentum, notably with increasing engagement from local business owners participating in various committees including the Working Committee of this plan and the Steering Committee of the Norwescap Neighborhood Plan. The success of Sussex Saturdays also emphasizes the value of engaging local businesses in the commercial and social fabric of the community.



Images 90 and 91. Sussex Borough has many valued local businesses that could benefit from a locally-run organization that represents the collective needs of the business community.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should encourage its business community to create a forum, partnership, or organization that meets regularly for businesses to collaborate, provide mutual support, and address common concerns. The success of this type of organization will depend on businesses “buying in” and taking an active role. The Borough’s Economic Development Committee, the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce, and Norwescap can offer support in these efforts by providing logistical support and potentially helping to moderate discussions, but the Borough should encourage business owners to take the lead in building this network.

This new business improvement district or chamber of commerce should establish tangible goals and benefits for participating members. While the *Business Owner Survey* conducted as part of this plan provided insight into how business owners want to improve the business environment in the Borough, a collaborative forum run by and for business owners can help to further refine this vision. Working collectively can also help to mobilize the business community to enact change by presenting a united voice to the municipality.




Image 92. Handmade sign under NJDOT signage at the Main Street Gateway advertising local businesses

Business Improvement Recommendation: Apply for Main Street New Jersey designation and/or establish an Improvement District

Priority: High

Timeframe: Long-term

Existing Conditions: As described in the “*Establish a local chamber of commerce or business improvement organization to provide mutual support to businesses along Main Street and other Commercial Corridors*” recommendation above, the Borough would benefit from an effort to engage local businesses in the establishment of an organization that engages and supports the Borough’s business community as a unified bloc.



Recommendation Description: After Borough businesses have established the organizational capacity described in the “*Establish a local chamber of commerce or business improvement organization to provide mutual support to businesses along Main Street and other Commercial Corridors*” recommendation, the Borough should support the formation of a formal Improvement District and/or the application to become a Main Street New Jersey community.

The Pedestrian Mall and Special Improvement District Act authorizes municipalities to establish by ordinance an Improvement District (typically called a “Business”, “Special”, or “Downtown” Improvement District).²⁸ The Improvement District, through a locally run District Management Corporation (DMC), is authorized to collect a special assessment on the commercial properties or businesses in the district. This allows the Improvement District to raise funds for local improvements within the district that supplement municipal services, including many of the placemaking efforts recommended in this plan.

Main Street New Jersey, a Main Street America Coordinating Program, supports the revitalization of downtowns throughout the State by providing ongoing technical assistance and training. The MSNJ uses a comprehensive and incremental approach that focuses on four elements: 1. Organization-Civic Value; 2. Economic Vitality-Economic Value; 3. Design-Place Value; and 4. Promotion-Social Value.²⁹ The Office of Local Planning Services at the Department of Community Affairs oversees the MSNJ program and accepts applications on a biannual basis.

In addition to the tangible benefits of the Improvement District and MSNJ programs, participation in these programs would further underscore the Borough’s commitment to preserving and enhancing the unique social and commercial character of Main Street and the Borough.

Business Improvement Recommendation: Leverage Opportunity Zone status to encourage investment.

Priority: High

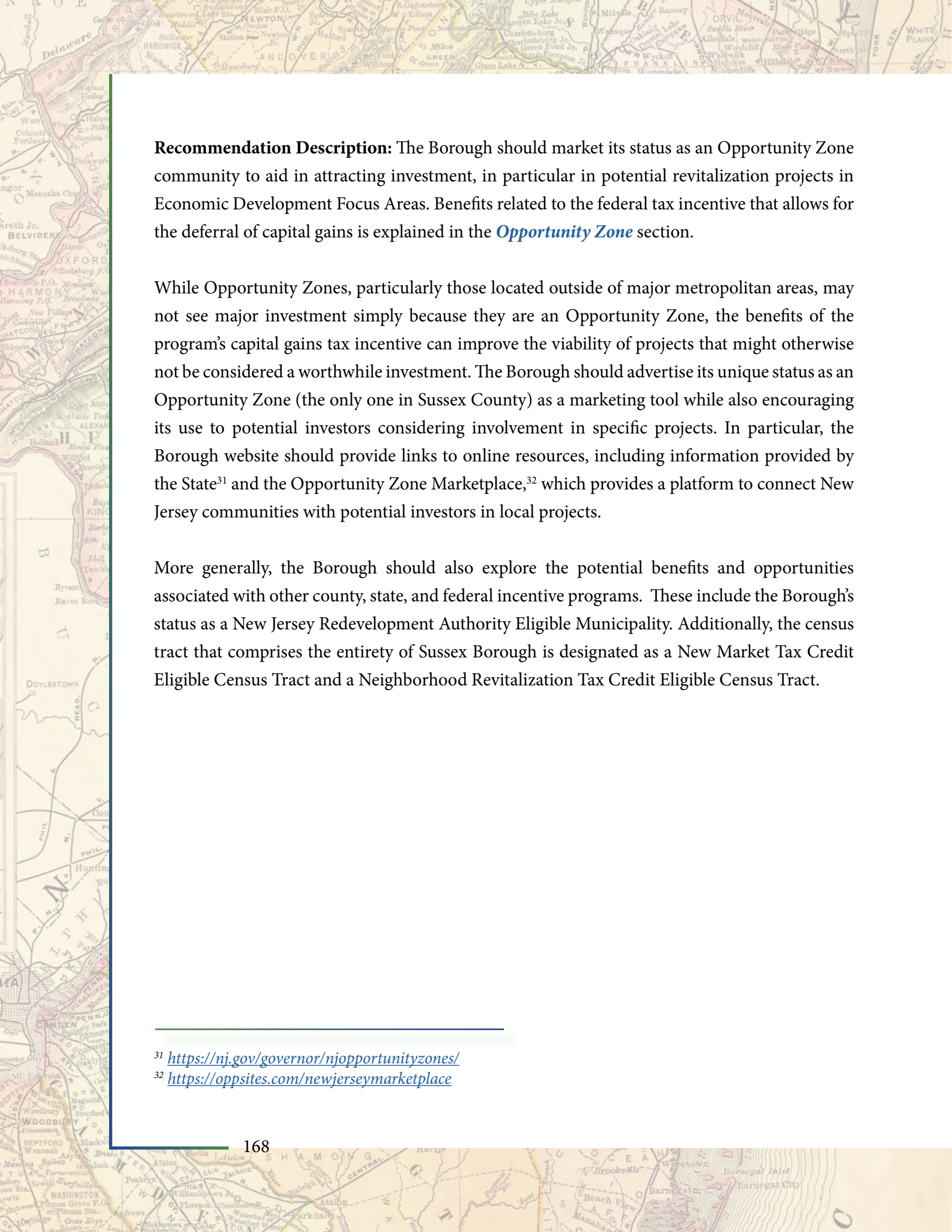
Timeframe: Medium/Long-term

Existing Conditions: The Borough has struggled to attract investment into development projects, notably some of the areas mentioned in the *Economic Development Focus Areas Recommendations*. The census tract that comprises the entirety of Sussex Borough qualified as an Opportunity Zone because of its status as a low-income distressed community.³⁰

²⁸ https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dhcr/idp_faq.html

²⁹ <https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/lps/msnj.html>

³⁰ <https://nj.gov/governor/njopportunityzones/faqs/index.shtml>



Recommendation Description: The Borough should market its status as an Opportunity Zone community to aid in attracting investment, in particular in potential revitalization projects in Economic Development Focus Areas. Benefits related to the federal tax incentive that allows for the deferral of capital gains is explained in the *Opportunity Zone* section.

While Opportunity Zones, particularly those located outside of major metropolitan areas, may not see major investment simply because they are an Opportunity Zone, the benefits of the program's capital gains tax incentive can improve the viability of projects that might otherwise not be considered a worthwhile investment. The Borough should advertise its unique status as an Opportunity Zone (the only one in Sussex County) as a marketing tool while also encouraging its use to potential investors considering involvement in specific projects. In particular, the Borough website should provide links to online resources, including information provided by the State³¹ and the Opportunity Zone Marketplace,³² which provides a platform to connect New Jersey communities with potential investors in local projects.

More generally, the Borough should also explore the potential benefits and opportunities associated with other county, state, and federal incentive programs. These include the Borough's status as a New Jersey Redevelopment Authority Eligible Municipality. Additionally, the census tract that comprises the entirety of Sussex Borough is designated as a New Market Tax Credit Eligible Census Tract and a Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Eligible Census Tract.

³¹ <https://nj.gov/governor/njopportunityzones/>

³² <https://oppsites.com/newjerseymarketplace>

A historical map of the area, showing various towns and geographical features. The map is in a sepia tone and includes labels for locations like Waterford, Bangor, and various P.O.s and stations. The map is partially obscured by the text on the page.

Economic Development Focus Areas Recommendations

Economic Development Focus Areas Goal: Develop existing and potential economic drivers to address the Borough's unmet potential.

Economic Development Focus Areas Overview: The Borough contains nine key locations which are currently unutilized or underutilized as economic and cultural drivers for the community. Each of these “Focus Areas” possesses high value due to its location, historical significance, and potential to become a prominent catalyst for economic growth in the Borough. While the Borough should focus attention on supporting its *Commercial Corridors* generally, specific efforts should concentrate on revitalizing the following Focus Areas because of their outsize impact on the Borough’s economic potential.

Economic Development Focus Area: Sussex Plaza

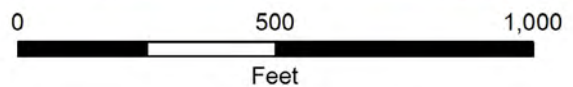
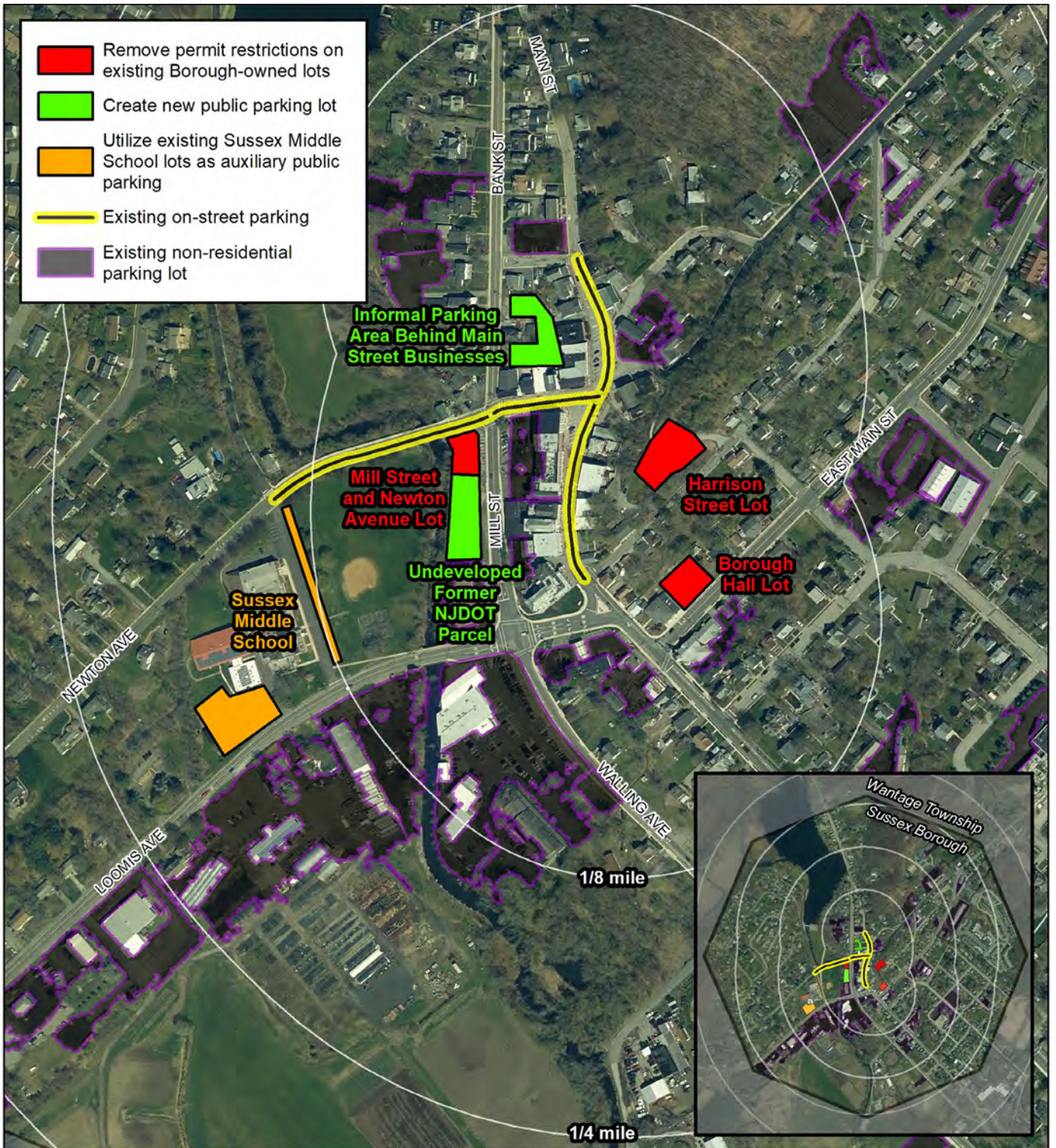
Priority: Medium

Timeframe: Medium/Long-term

Recommendation Description: The Borough should work with the new owner of Sussex Plaza to encourage the increased occupancy of its units. To achieve this, the Borough should support exterior improvements to the building such as a façade improvement program that will help to increase visibility for businesses in the plaza. Norwescap can include a façade improvement program for Sussex Plaza in the next Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) project application funding cycle once the new Norwescap Neighborhood Revitalization Plan is approved by DCA.

The Borough should also consider designating the Sussex Plaza as an Area in Need of Redevelopment (ANR) as a mechanism to encourage investment through the use of long-term tax abatements. The New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) was amended in 2019 to expand the eligibility of properties containing vacant or distressed shopping malls, shopping plazas, or professional office parks to be designated as ANRs (less than 50% occupancy, for two years). The Borough could designate Sussex Plaza as an ANR that will allow the new owner to pursue certain tax abatements and exemptions and other funding opportunities. The designated redevelopment authority may provide long-term tax abatements on improvements to the site and may also create a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for the site. In addition, the redevelopment authority may issue Redevelopment Area Bonds (RABs) to assist in financing development of the site.

Map 30. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Areas



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDEP, NJDCA, NJOGIS

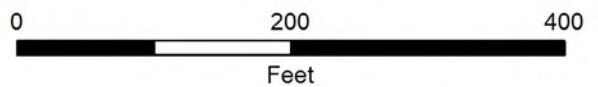


Images 95 and 96. The Alpine Village (top) and Wilson Manor apartment complexes are located to the rear of Sussex Plaza. Despite their proximity, there is no direct access. A wooden fence separates Sussex Plaza's southern parking lot from Wilson Manor (bottom).

Sussex Plaza should leverage its location adjacent to the highest-density housing in the Borough by seeking store tenants geared towards these residents. This is a largely untapped customer base who could benefit from amenities such as a local market that would offset the need to

drive to supermarkets as frequently. The plaza should engage with residents of the apartment complexes to determine what types of stores or services are in highest demand. The plaza should also consider creating more direct transportation connections with the apartment complexes, both for pedestrians and vehicles. This could be partially accomplished by removing the rear fence to create an entrance onto Wilson Road.

Map 31. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Area: Sussex Plaza



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation

Economic Development Focus Area: Former Fountain Square Inn

Priority: High

Timeframe: Short/Medium-term



Image 97. Fountain Square Inn, then known as Goble's Inn, in 1905

Source: <https://www.njherald.com/news/20180520/a-look-back-may-20-gobles-inn-at-sussex>

Existing Conditions: The Fountain Square Inn is a former hotel that dates back to 1823, likely the oldest remaining building in the Borough. The hotel has gone through several owners and name changes, including the DeCamp House and Goble's Inn.³³ The Fountain Square Inn was in use as a hotel and boarding house with a bar on the lower level until closing in 2018. A real estate listing found from 2014 listed 21 rooms that were rented on a weekly basis.³⁴ The liquor license and bar business were included in the price of the property. The property is 0.39 acres and is zoned Central Business.

The building is currently substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, and obsolescent. The property would fall under several of the criteria in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 to be deemed an ANR. The building has been abandoned and has fallen into a state of disrepair. The building requires

³³ <https://www.njherald.com/news/20180520/a-look-back-may-20-gobles-inn-at-sussex>

³⁴ <https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/18811377/82-Fountain-Square-Sussex-NJ/>

substantial upgrades to plumbing, electrical, fire safety and adequate means of ingress and egress to meet current building codes, though it is unclear if the structure is able to be safely rehabilitated due to its extensive level of disrepair.

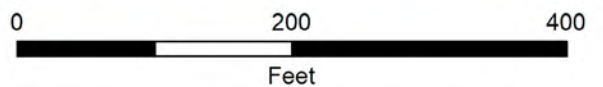
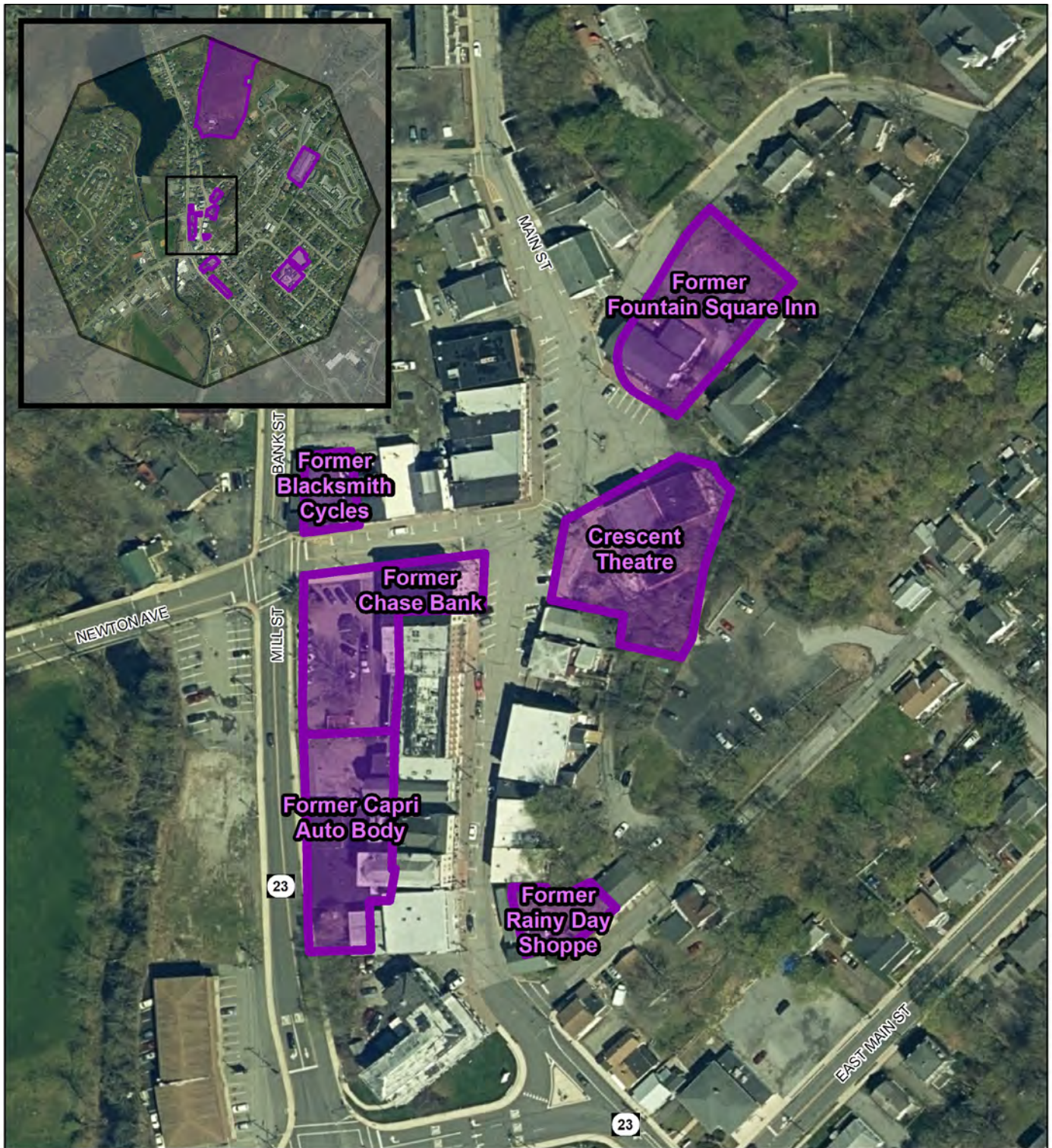
Recommendation Description: The Borough should apply its Unfit Structure Ordinance and/or pursue an ANR designation to encourage the redevelopment or rehabilitation of the former Fountain Square Inn. The Unfit Structure Ordinance allows the Borough to exercise its police powers to repair, close or demolish, or cause or require the repairing, closing, or demolition of such buildings. An ANR designation with condemnation powers will allow the Borough to acquire the property and give or sell the property to a designated redeveloper. The Redevelopment Plan, once adopted, acts as the zoning on the site.



Image 98. The former Fountain Square Inn is vacant and uninhabitable in its current condition.

If its condition allows, the Borough should encourage the rehabilitation of the existing property given its historic value. However, if the state of disrepair makes this unfeasible, the Borough should determine the most appropriate replacement for the building.

Map 32. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Area: Main Street Area



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation

Economic Development Focus Area: Former Chase Bank Building

Priority: High

Timeframe: Short/Medium-term

Existing Conditions: The former Chase Bank building located at the southwest corner of the Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection (57-59 Main Street), directly across from Deckertown Commons and the Crescent Theatre, is one of the most prominent buildings along Main Street, due to both its location and design. This exterior of the building, despite being unoccupied since Chase Bank shuttered its operations, appears to be in good condition. The intricate design of the building, which spans the width of two parcels, includes decorative brickwork framing the windows and an ornamental cornice extending from the roof fronting both Main Street and Newtown Avenue. The marble paneling on the exterior of the first floor is indicative of the building's former use as a bank. The brickwork on the two floors above matches the other traditional Main Street buildings, but its white coloring helps to make this building stand out as a visual landmark.



Image 99. The former Chase Bank building requires extensive environmental remediation but is one of most prominent buildings along Main Street, due to both its location and design.

The former Chase Bank building is also notable for the way that it transitions between Newton Avenue to Main Street. The building slopes down the gradual hill on the Newton Avenue side towards State Route 23. Drivers traveling along Mill Street (State Route 23) in both directions have a clear view of the building's west-facing rear, which is also in notably good condition. This helps to draw visual interest towards Main Street. This rear side does not have the decorative cornice on the roof and the brick exterior is left in a more natural state, but the numerous windows and intricate fire escapes are visually appealing. This suggests that the building's rear is intentionally designed to be second front, in contrast to conditions of buildings further to the south on the same block of Main Street as viewed from Mill Street.



Image 100. The former Chase Bank building fronts both Main Street and Newton Avenue and is highly visible from State Route 23.

In contrast to the genuinely good condition of the building's exterior appearance, the interior requires significant rehabilitation, particularly related to environmental remediation, to return to useable condition. A hazardous material study showed that the building is currently uninhabitable. The high cost to remediate the building was a major obstacle to prospective developers. However, the building was recently purchased at a price that reflects the extensive cost of remediation that will be required to make the building habitable.

The parcel comprising the former bank building also includes the large parking lot that extends west to Mill Street (State Route 23) and south along the backs of the four buildings to the immediate south. This parking lot includes the area formerly used as a drive-through station for the bank, with a two-car kiosk still standing in the southern section of the lot. There are currently 16 lined parking spaces, but the roughly a quarter acre-area could likely be reconfigured to allow for more spaces if the drive-through lanes and kiosk were removed.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should work with the new owner to return the building to useable condition as a mixed-use structure with first floor commercial space. The second and third floors could be utilized as residential. Alternatively, this could be transformed into office space, particularly designed to cater to prospective residents who are looking to relocate to the Borough to work remotely but still want access to the amenities of a designated workspace.

The Borough should continue to support the new owner's efforts to rehabilitate the building, similar to the flexibility shown in reassessing the value of the building to more accurately reflect the current state of the building.

The Borough and new owner should pursue federal, state, and county funding opportunities designated for environmental remediation such as the Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund through a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority.³⁵

The Borough should consider also designating the former Chase Bank building as an Area in Need of Redevelopment (ANR) to allow the new owner to pursue certain tax abatements and exemptions and other funding opportunities. The designated redevelopment authority may provide long-term tax abatements on improvements to the site and may also create a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for the site. In addition, the redevelopment authority may issue Redevelopment Area Bonds (RABs) to assist in financing development of the site.

Economic Development Focus Area: Crescent Theatre

Priority: Medium

Timeframe: Medium/Long-term

Existing Conditions: The Crescent Theatre is located in front of the Fountain Square in the historic downtown of Sussex Borough at 74 Main Street. It is one of the most significant attractors on Main Street. The theatre opened in 1919 and operated as a playhouse and theatre until 1976.³⁶ The building, designed by Paterson architect Flavio P. Grosso and built in a vernacular Beaux Arts style, is included on both the State³⁷ and National³⁸ Registers of Historic Places.



Image 101. Undated photo of Crescent Theatre's former marquee.

Source: <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/8170>

³⁵ https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dhcr/idp_faq.html

³⁶ <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/8170>

³⁷ https://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/1identify/nrsr_lists/SUSSEX.pdf

³⁸ <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/05000965>

The building was the recipient of two Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund Capital Preservation Grants in 2002.³⁹

The theatre serves as a major destination in the Borough, drawing crowds both locally and regionally. The stores and restaurants along Main Street are well-positioned to attract theatre attendees interested in dining or shopping before or after their show.

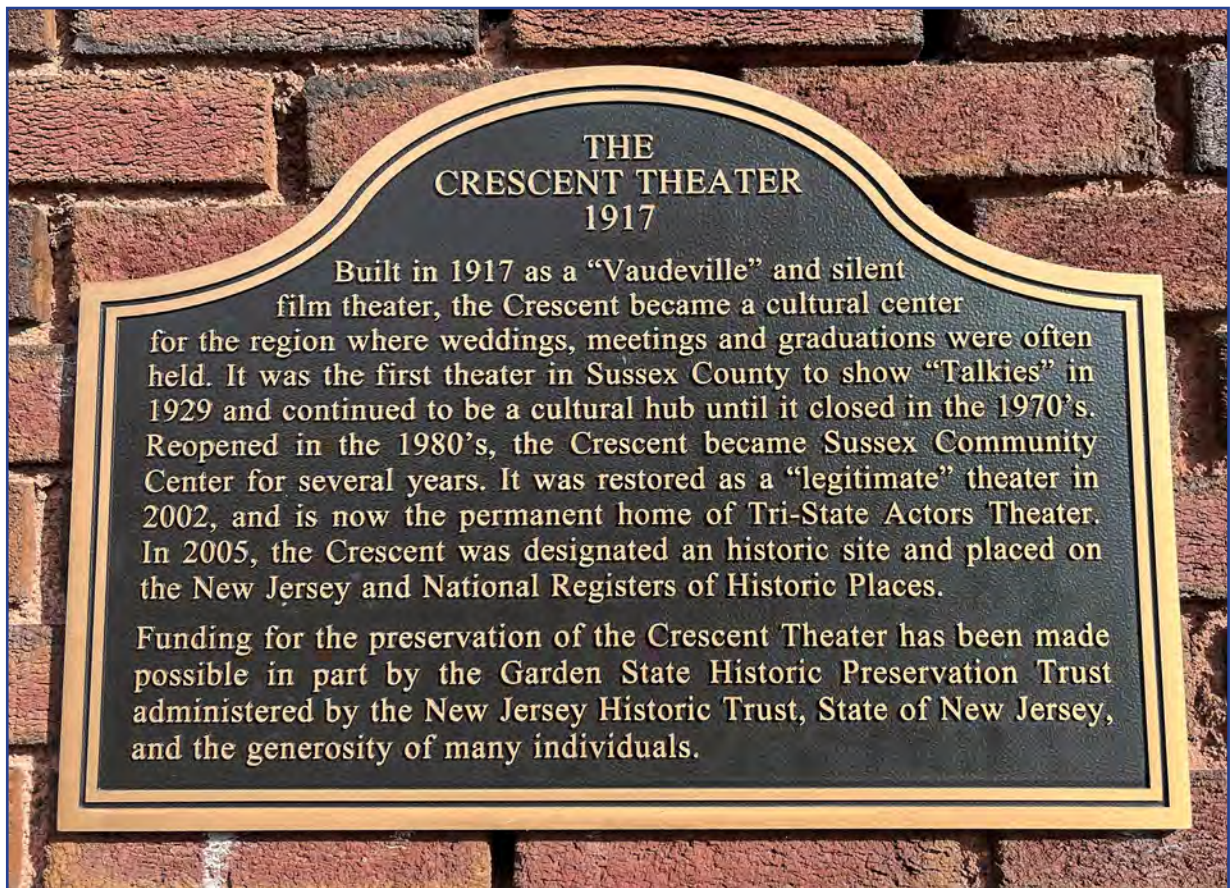


Image 102. Historic marker plaque on Crescent Theatre.

The theatre was operated by the Cornerstone Playhouse, a locally run non-profit organization, from 2011 until 2021. The Cornerstone Playhouse rented the theatre from the Borough for one dollar per year. Ticket revenue supports current operations, and the theatre was able to withstand multiple missed seasons during the COVID-19 economic downturn. However, the theatre is increasingly in need of repairs and renovations that were beyond the financial resources of the Cornerstone Playhouse or the Borough.

³⁹ <https://www.nj.gov/dca/njht/funded/sitedetails/crescenttheater.shtml>

Recommendation Description: The Borough should continue to utilize Crescent Theatre as a social anchor and economic engine for Main Street and the Borough as a whole. The Borough should take steps to further establish the Crescent Theatre as a regional entertainment landmark. This can involve increasing the theatre’s online presence and expanding the types of entertainment offered or increasing the number of shows or performances. For example, the Newton Theatre, one of the only other theatres in the area, albeit a larger one, screens films as a compliment to its live performances.



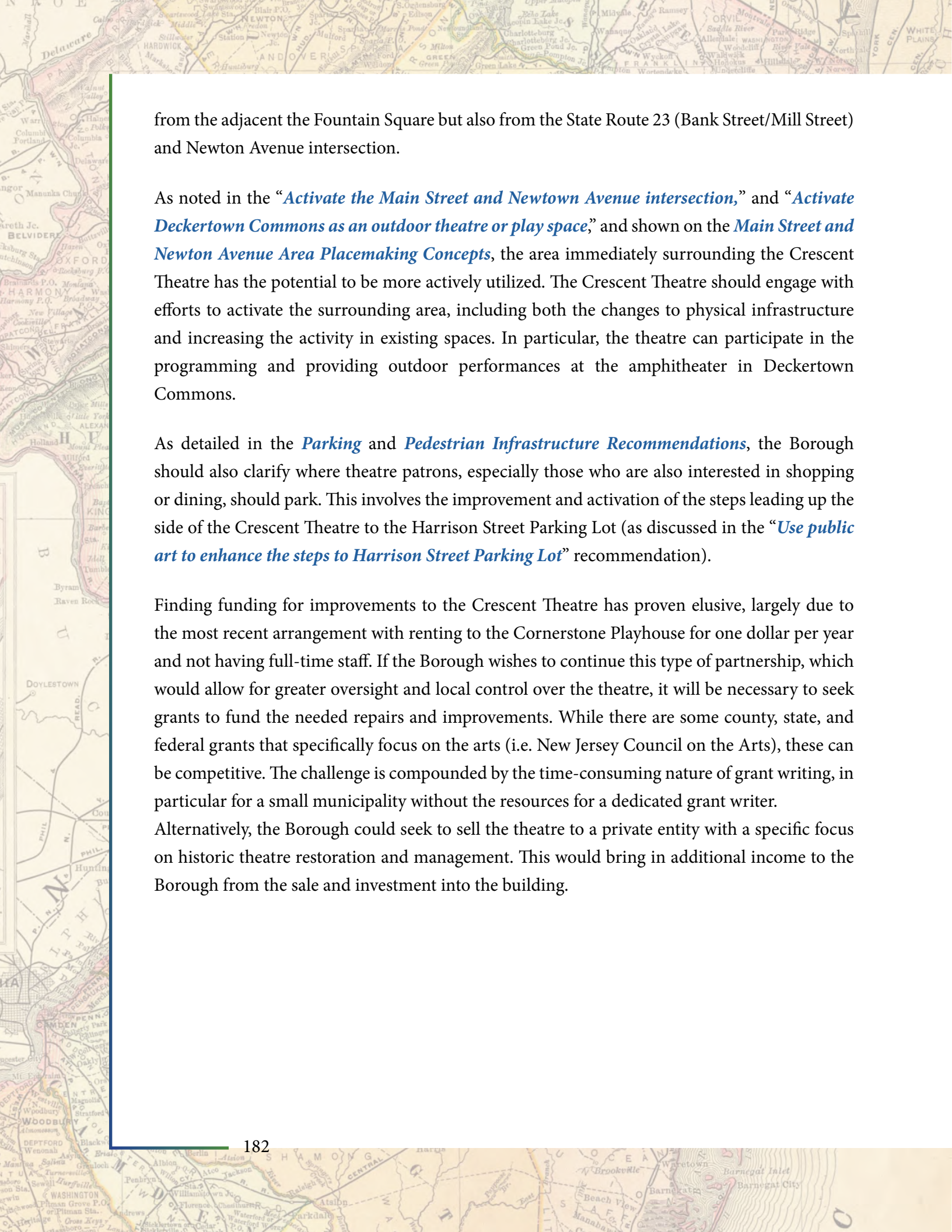
Image 103. The Crescent Theatre entrance faces the historic fountain in Fountain Square.

While the theatre’s historic nature is one of its greatest assets, it could benefit from renovations to the building, both cosmetic and strategic. The Borough should activate the exterior of the



Image 104. The Deckertown Commons are adjacent to the Crescent Theatre.

theatre with signage and façade improvements, in line with what is discussed in the “*Implement a Façade and Sign Improvement Program for Main Street businesses*” recommendation. In particular, installing a marquee that replicates the original grandeur of the theatre would further establish the theatre as a visual landmark. Given its unique location, this would increase the theatre’s visibility not only

A historical map of the Flemington, New Jersey area, showing streets like Newton Avenue, Main Street, and Harrison Street. The map is detailed with street names, landmarks, and geographical features. The text is overlaid on the right side of the map.

from the adjacent the Fountain Square but also from the State Route 23 (Bank Street/Mill Street) and Newton Avenue intersection.

As noted in the “*Activate the Main Street and Newtown Avenue intersection*,” and “*Activate Deckertown Commons as an outdoor theatre or play space*,” and shown on the *Main Street and Newton Avenue Area Placemaking Concepts*, the area immediately surrounding the Crescent Theatre has the potential to be more actively utilized. The Crescent Theatre should engage with efforts to activate the surrounding area, including both the changes to physical infrastructure and increasing the activity in existing spaces. In particular, the theatre can participate in the programming and providing outdoor performances at the amphitheater in Deckertown Commons.

As detailed in the *Parking* and *Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations*, the Borough should also clarify where theatre patrons, especially those who are also interested in shopping or dining, should park. This involves the improvement and activation of the steps leading up the side of the Crescent Theatre to the Harrison Street Parking Lot (as discussed in the “*Use public art to enhance the steps to Harrison Street Parking Lot*” recommendation).

Finding funding for improvements to the Crescent Theatre has proven elusive, largely due to the most recent arrangement with renting to the Cornerstone Playhouse for one dollar per year and not having full-time staff. If the Borough wishes to continue this type of partnership, which would allow for greater oversight and local control over the theatre, it will be necessary to seek grants to fund the needed repairs and improvements. While there are some county, state, and federal grants that specifically focus on the arts (i.e. New Jersey Council on the Arts), these can be competitive. The challenge is compounded by the time-consuming nature of grant writing, in particular for a small municipality without the resources for a dedicated grant writer.

Alternatively, the Borough could seek to sell the theatre to a private entity with a specific focus on historic theatre restoration and management. This would bring in additional income to the Borough from the sale and investment into the building.

Economic Development Focus Area: Former Capri Auto Body Building

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium/Long-Term

Existing Conditions: The vacant one-story brick building located at 30-38 Mill Street formerly was home to Capri Auto Body. It is the only building that fronts the east side of Mill Street (State Route 23) between Newton Avenue and Loomis Avenue. This partially obstructs the rear view of the largely historic buildings along the west side of Main Street, as well as the right of way that passes to the south of 33 Main Street. The building is highly visible to drivers travelling south on Mill Street, in particular the north-facing side wall. The vacant building surrounded by surface parking lots and across from a fenced-off area suggests a feeling of dilapidation to drivers passing through.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should encourage the adaptive reuse of the former Capri Auto Body building. Given its prominent location, this could become a “flagship” business for the Borough, attracting visitors traveling along Mill Street (State Route 23) and helping to establish the character that is a better reflection of the greater Main Street area. Additionally, the north-facing wall of this building should be used as a canvas to advertise Sussex Borough generally and Main Street more specifically to drivers heading south on State Route 23. This would activate an otherwise non-descript wall into a beacon signaling to drivers that there is a reason to stop here.



Image 105. North facing wall of former Capri Auto Body with the right of way connecting to Main Street behind the building

If there is deemed to be insufficient demand to utilize the existing building, the Borough should consider utilizing its Unfit Structure Ordinance and/or pursue an ANR designation to encourage

the redevelopment or rehabilitation of this building. The Borough should also be flexible in working with potential business owners to make the renovations needed to adapt the existing building to alternative uses.

The design of the wall and layout of the parking lot in the northern section of the parcel should be prepared in coordination with the activation of the path leading to Main Street detailed in the “*Formalize the existing right of way connecting Main Street and Mill Street at rear of former Capri Auto Body*” recommendation.

Economic Development Focus Area: Former Blacksmith Cycles Building

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium/Long-Term

Existing Conditions: The commercial building on the northeast corner of the Bank Street/Mill Street (State Route 23) intersection with Newton Avenue is currently unoccupied. This building was most recently occupied by Blacksmith Cycles, whose name was a nod to the blacksmith shop that was originally located on the site, dating back to at least 1885 (see Images 106 and 107). By 1924, the site had been converted into an auto mechanic and expanded to roughly its current footprint.

Since Blacksmith Cycles ceased operations, the building’s appearance has deteriorated. Siding is falling off. Paint and signage for the previous business is fading or peeling. Windows remain boarded up.



Images 106 and 107. The Former Blacksmith Cycles building is prominently located at the intersection of Bank Street (State Route 23) and Newton Avenue.

Similar to the *Former Capri Auto Body Building*, the former Blacksmith Cycles building is highly visible to drivers travelling along State Route 23. This roughly 200-foot block of Newtown Avenue serves as the bridge between State Route 23 and Main Street, suggesting that the building's location at the corner of Newton Avenue has the potential to serve as a northern gateway to Main Street. However, the building's current state of disrepair at a prominent location suggests to passing drivers that the greater Main Street area is in a similar condition.

The informal parking lot proposed to be formalized into public parking in the “*Create new parking lots at strategic locations*” recommendation is located in the rear of the building. This provides the building with direct access to parking that is rare in the Main Street area.

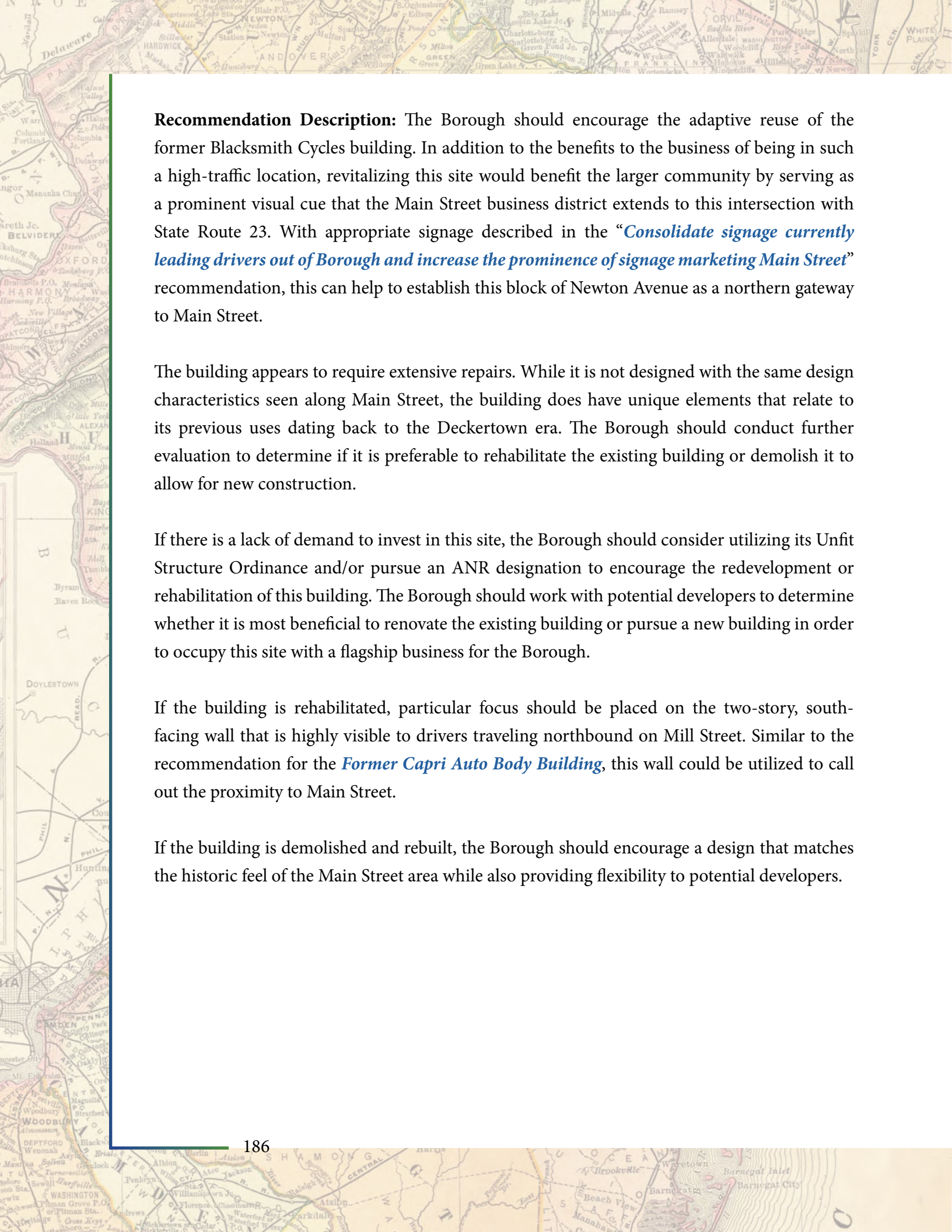
Map 33. 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map



Former blacksmith (identified as “B.Sm.”) shown at northeast corner of Newtown Avenue intersection with Mill Street and Bank Street on 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Deckertown Mills is shown at southwest corner of the same intersection.

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Deckertown, Sussex County, New Jersey from Sanborn Map Company, May 1885. Retrieved from the Library of Congress.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn05455_001/

A historical map of the area around Newton Avenue and Main Street. The map shows various streets, including Newton Avenue, Main Street, and State Route 23. It also shows several buildings and landmarks, such as the Blacksmith Cycles building. The map is detailed, showing street names, building footprints, and geographical features like the Delaware River.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should encourage the adaptive reuse of the former Blacksmith Cycles building. In addition to the benefits to the business of being in such a high-traffic location, revitalizing this site would benefit the larger community by serving as a prominent visual cue that the Main Street business district extends to this intersection with State Route 23. With appropriate signage described in the *“Consolidate signage currently leading drivers out of Borough and increase the prominence of signage marketing Main Street”* recommendation, this can help to establish this block of Newton Avenue as a northern gateway to Main Street.

The building appears to require extensive repairs. While it is not designed with the same design characteristics seen along Main Street, the building does have unique elements that relate to its previous uses dating back to the Deckertown era. The Borough should conduct further evaluation to determine if it is preferable to rehabilitate the existing building or demolish it to allow for new construction.

If there is a lack of demand to invest in this site, the Borough should consider utilizing its Unfit Structure Ordinance and/or pursue an ANR designation to encourage the redevelopment or rehabilitation of this building. The Borough should work with potential developers to determine whether it is most beneficial to renovate the existing building or pursue a new building in order to occupy this site with a flagship business for the Borough.

If the building is rehabilitated, particular focus should be placed on the two-story, south-facing wall that is highly visible to drivers traveling northbound on Mill Street. Similar to the recommendation for the *Former Capri Auto Body Building*, this wall could be utilized to call out the proximity to Main Street.

If the building is demolished and rebuilt, the Borough should encourage a design that matches the historic feel of the Main Street area while also providing flexibility to potential developers.

Economic Development Focus Area: Commercial and Vacant Lots in State Route 23 “Island”

Priority: Medium

Timeframe: Medium/Long-term

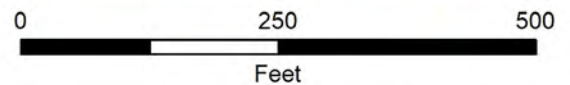
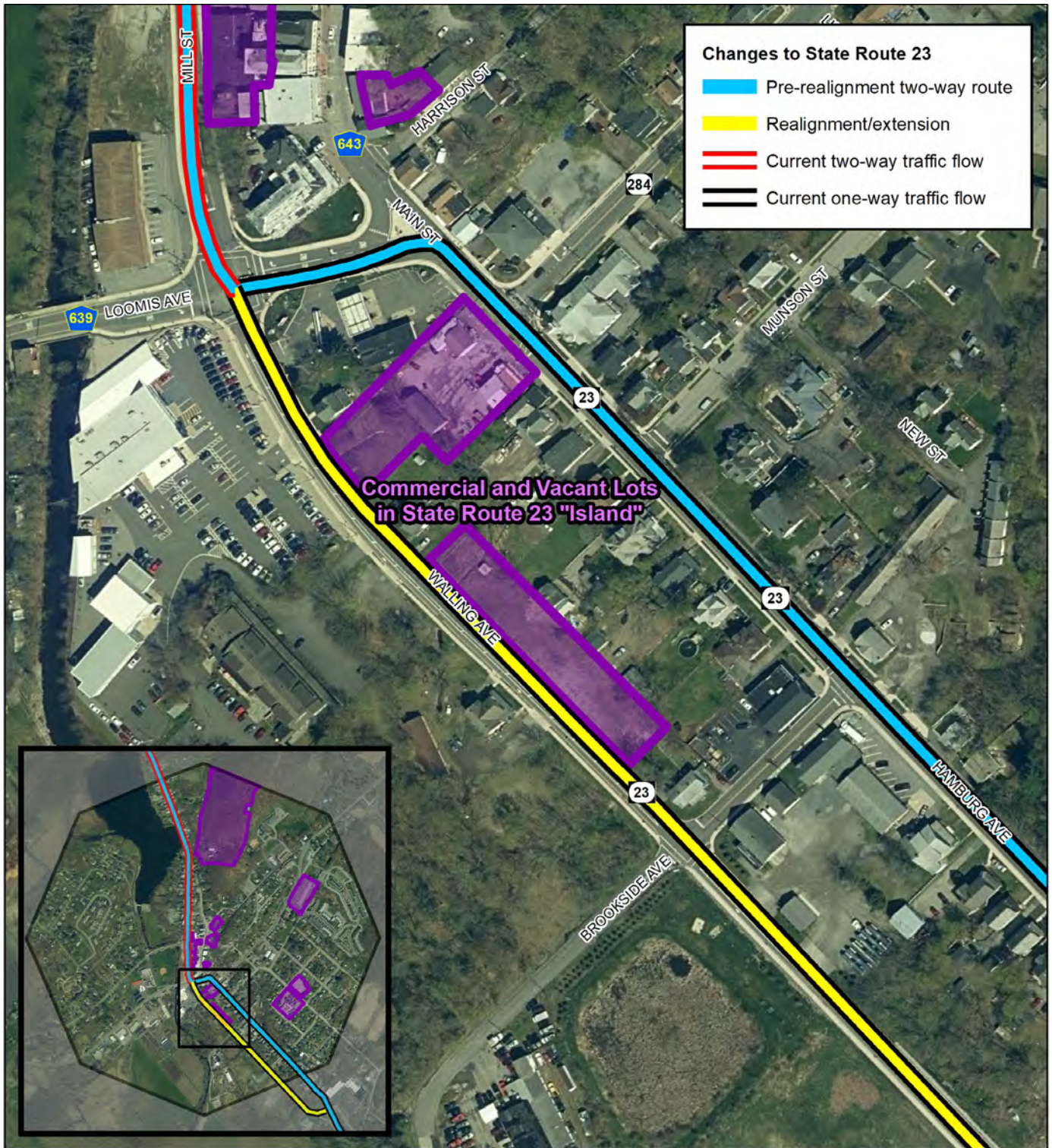
Existing Conditions: The realignment of State Route 23 into separate one-way northbound and southbound streets (Hamburg Avenue and Walling Avenue, respectively) changed the dynamic of land uses in the “island” in the middle. The “island” comprises Area C on the Route 23 Rehabilitation Area (see *Areas in Need of Redevelopment and Rehabilitation* section).

The Hamburg Avenue side of the “island” is predominantly comprised of single-family homes, with commercial uses near the intersection with Brookside Avenue to the south and across from the intersection with East Main Street to the north. The Walling Avenue side of the island is largely undeveloped as this block was previously a local road. The car dealership and the Creamery are located on the opposite side of Walling Avenue near the intersection with Loomis Avenue, but the rest of the southwest side of the block is largely undeveloped. Especially with the increased traffic volume along Walling Avenue since the road realignment, the Borough has considered how to best encourage development in the island, in particular in the undeveloped parcels and existing commercial parcels near the intersection with Loomis Avenue. With the addition of Shop Rite down the road, the demand to develop in this area is expected to increase.

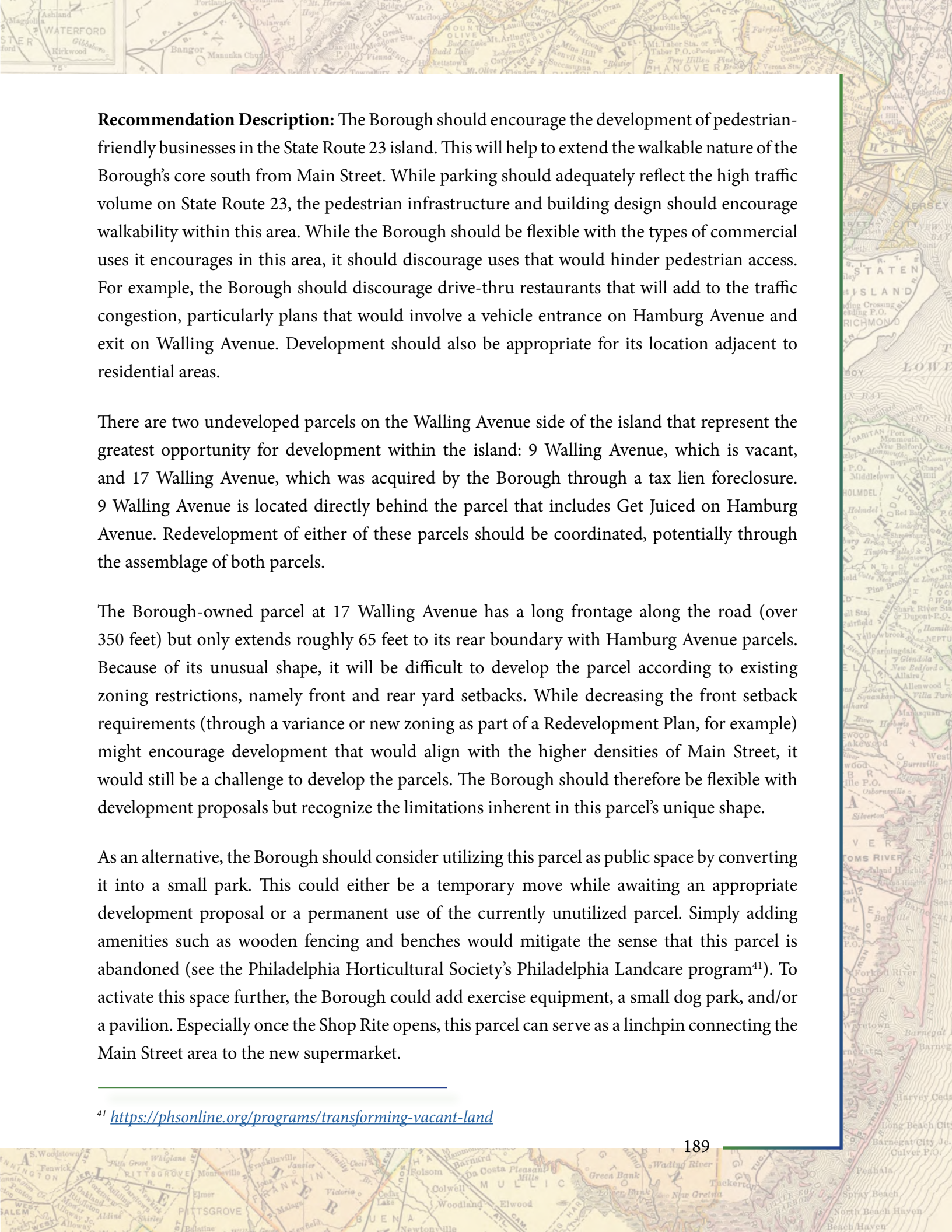


Image 108. The sidewalk abruptly stops at 17 Walling Avenue, an undeveloped lot acquired by the Borough through a tax lien foreclosure. This unusually shaped parcel is one of the only undeveloped areas within the State Route 23 island.

Map 34. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Area: State Route 23 "Island"



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation



Recommendation Description: The Borough should encourage the development of pedestrian-friendly businesses in the State Route 23 island. This will help to extend the walkable nature of the Borough's core south from Main Street. While parking should adequately reflect the high traffic volume on State Route 23, the pedestrian infrastructure and building design should encourage walkability within this area. While the Borough should be flexible with the types of commercial uses it encourages in this area, it should discourage uses that would hinder pedestrian access. For example, the Borough should discourage drive-thru restaurants that will add to the traffic congestion, particularly plans that would involve a vehicle entrance on Hamburg Avenue and exit on Walling Avenue. Development should also be appropriate for its location adjacent to residential areas.

There are two undeveloped parcels on the Walling Avenue side of the island that represent the greatest opportunity for development within the island: 9 Walling Avenue, which is vacant, and 17 Walling Avenue, which was acquired by the Borough through a tax lien foreclosure. 9 Walling Avenue is located directly behind the parcel that includes Get Juiced on Hamburg Avenue. Redevelopment of either of these parcels should be coordinated, potentially through the assemblage of both parcels.

The Borough-owned parcel at 17 Walling Avenue has a long frontage along the road (over 350 feet) but only extends roughly 65 feet to its rear boundary with Hamburg Avenue parcels. Because of its unusual shape, it will be difficult to develop the parcel according to existing zoning restrictions, namely front and rear yard setbacks. While decreasing the front setback requirements (through a variance or new zoning as part of a Redevelopment Plan, for example) might encourage development that would align with the higher densities of Main Street, it would still be a challenge to develop the parcels. The Borough should therefore be flexible with development proposals but recognize the limitations inherent in this parcel's unique shape.

As an alternative, the Borough should consider utilizing this parcel as public space by converting it into a small park. This could either be a temporary move while awaiting an appropriate development proposal or a permanent use of the currently unutilized parcel. Simply adding amenities such as wooden fencing and benches would mitigate the sense that this parcel is abandoned (see the Philadelphia Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Landcare program⁴¹). To activate this space further, the Borough could add exercise equipment, a small dog park, and/or a pavilion. Especially once the Shop Rite opens, this parcel can serve as a linchpin connecting the Main Street area to the new supermarket.

⁴¹ <https://phsonline.org/programs/transforming-vacant-land>

In pursuing this option, the Borough can still retain the option of developing the parcel in the future if there is an appropriate plan for development. If this occurs, the Borough can move any park-related amenities to other recreational or public spaces.

Economic Development Focus Area: Former Saint Clare’s Hospital

Priority: High

Timeframe: Short/Medium-term

Existing Conditions: Saint Clare’s Hospital offered essential medical services to the Borough, first as a hospital and then as an urgent care facility, until ceasing operations in 2019. This left the Borough without easy access to medical facilities, requiring residents to travel to Newton or Sparta for routine health services. In *Household Surveys*, respondents lamented the negative impact that losing the hospital had on the



Image 109. The entrance to the former Saint Clare’s Hospital.



Image 110. The rear of the former Saint Clare’s Hospital on Sycamore Street in an otherwise residential neighborhood.

community. The lack of easy access to healthcare was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The former Saint Clare’s Hospital is located in an otherwise residential neighborhood. While the building would likely require renovations prior to being returned to active use, it is generally in good condition. Residents expressed a strong desire to see medical services return to the



building. This would fit within the current Institutional zoning and appears to be the most natural fit given its former use.

The building's owner has continued to pay taxes to the Borough since medical operations ceased in 2019, but no plans for returning the building to active use have been proposed.

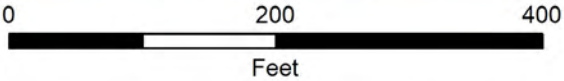
Recommendation Description: The Borough should prioritize returning the building to active use with a preference of using the site to once again provide medical services to the community. To achieve this, the Borough should designate the former hospital as an ANR then prepare a Redevelopment Plan to attract redevelopers to repurpose this important community asset if the current owner does not actively pursue the needed investment and effort into reoccupying the property.

Given that it may be unfeasible to fully return all of the services formerly offered by Saint Clare's Hospital, the Borough should consider utilizing the large premises for multiple smaller operations. While the first priority is for medical services, in particular offering urgent care services, the Borough should also be flexible with allowing associated uses that would also be a natural fit for the specifics of the former hospital building. This could include assisted living facilities, rehabilitation services, or educational uses such as a satellite campus for Sussex County Community College.

While many residents expressed a desire for the building to be rehabilitated, some expressed concerns about the impact that certain uses would have on the otherwise residential neighborhood. The Borough should take steps to provide residents with an active voice in the process of determining future uses of the building to ensure that there is a positive relationship with the local neighborhood.



Map 35. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Area: Former St. Clare's Hospital



Data Sources: ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation

Economic Development Focus Area: Former Rainy Day Shoppe Building

Priority: High

Timeframe: Medium/Long-term

Existing Conditions: The building located at 12-18 Main Street is one of the first buildings that one passes traveling north from the Main Street Gateway. The building occupies roughly 50 feet of frontage, a relatively large presence compared with many of the smaller storefronts to its north. However, this building appears to be in poor condition and is no longer occupied by an active business on street level. The most recent occupant of the building was the Rainy Day Shoppe, but the building has been vacant for years.



Image 111. Deteriorating condition of the former Rainy Day Shoppe building at 12-18 Main Street.

The windows and three of the five doors on the first floor are boarded up. The bricks are in varying levels of decay while another section is missing. The siding that covers the second floor, while used on some other buildings on Main Street, does not match the more historic brick and stone of the adjacent buildings.

Despite the building not being as architecturally prominent as others along Main Street, it occupies a prime location and is well-situated to attract high levels of pedestrian traffic. Especially given its prominent location, the building's current condition contributes to the perception of inactivity and obsolescence of Main Street generally.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should encourage the adaptive reuse or replacement of the building occupying 12-18 Main Street, in particular encouraging the occupation of commercial uses on the first floor. If there is deemed to be insufficient demand to rehabilitate the existing building, the Borough should consider utilizing its Unfit Structure Ordinance and/or pursuing an ANR designation to encourage the redevelopment or rehabilitation of this property.

Although preservation of existing buildings along Main Street is generally preferable, given that the existing building at 12-18 Main Street appears to be in poor condition and does not match the historic architecture generally found on this block, the Borough should consider demolishing the existing structure to allow for a more appropriate use of the location. Any new development, or renovations to the existing building if possible, should complement the aesthetics of the buildings to the north and follow the design guidelines discussed in the “*Implement a Façade and Sign Improvement Program for Main Street businesses*” recommendation. The Borough should also be flexible in working with potential redevelopers in determining an appropriate use for the property.

If the second floor is currently occupied despite the condition of the building, the Borough should work with residents to find alternative housing to avoid a disruptive displacement during the rehabilitation or replacement of the building.

Economic Development Focus Area: Undeveloped area east of Highland Avenue



Image 112. Undeveloped wooded area located on the hill overlooking Clove Lake as viewed from Clove Lake Beach.

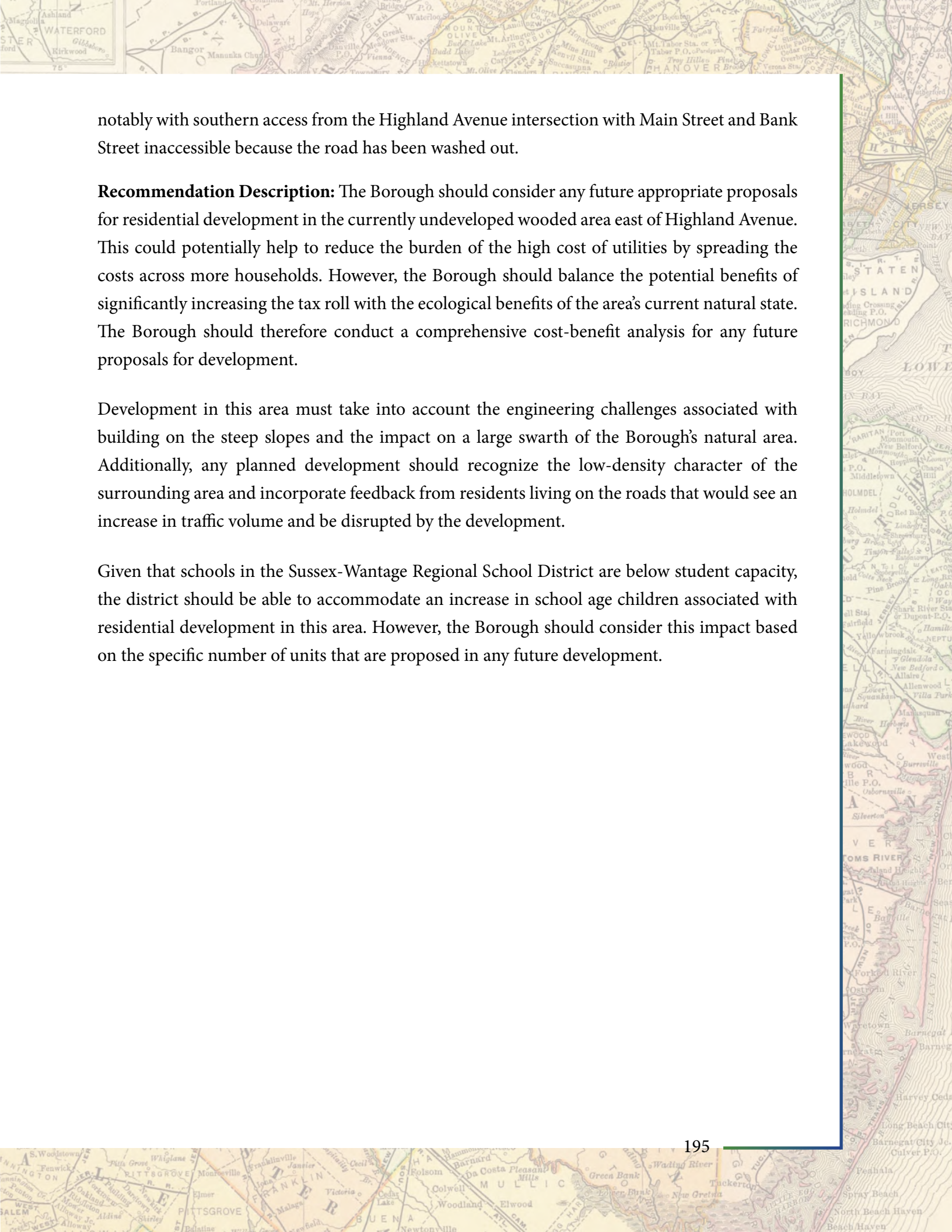
Priority: Low

Timeframe: Long-term

Existing Conditions: The Borough received interest in developing the wooded area to the east of Highland Avenue into a townhouse development in the 1980s. While there are no longer plans to pursue this type of development, this area represents the largest remaining developable area

within the Borough. This area falls within the R-1 Low Density Residential zone.

A major impediment to development in the area are the steep slopes that extend up the hill overlooking Clove Lake from the east side of Highland Avenue. Access to Highland Avenue along existing streets is also currently unsuitable for a significant increase in traffic volume, most



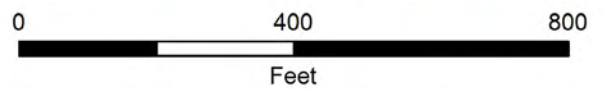
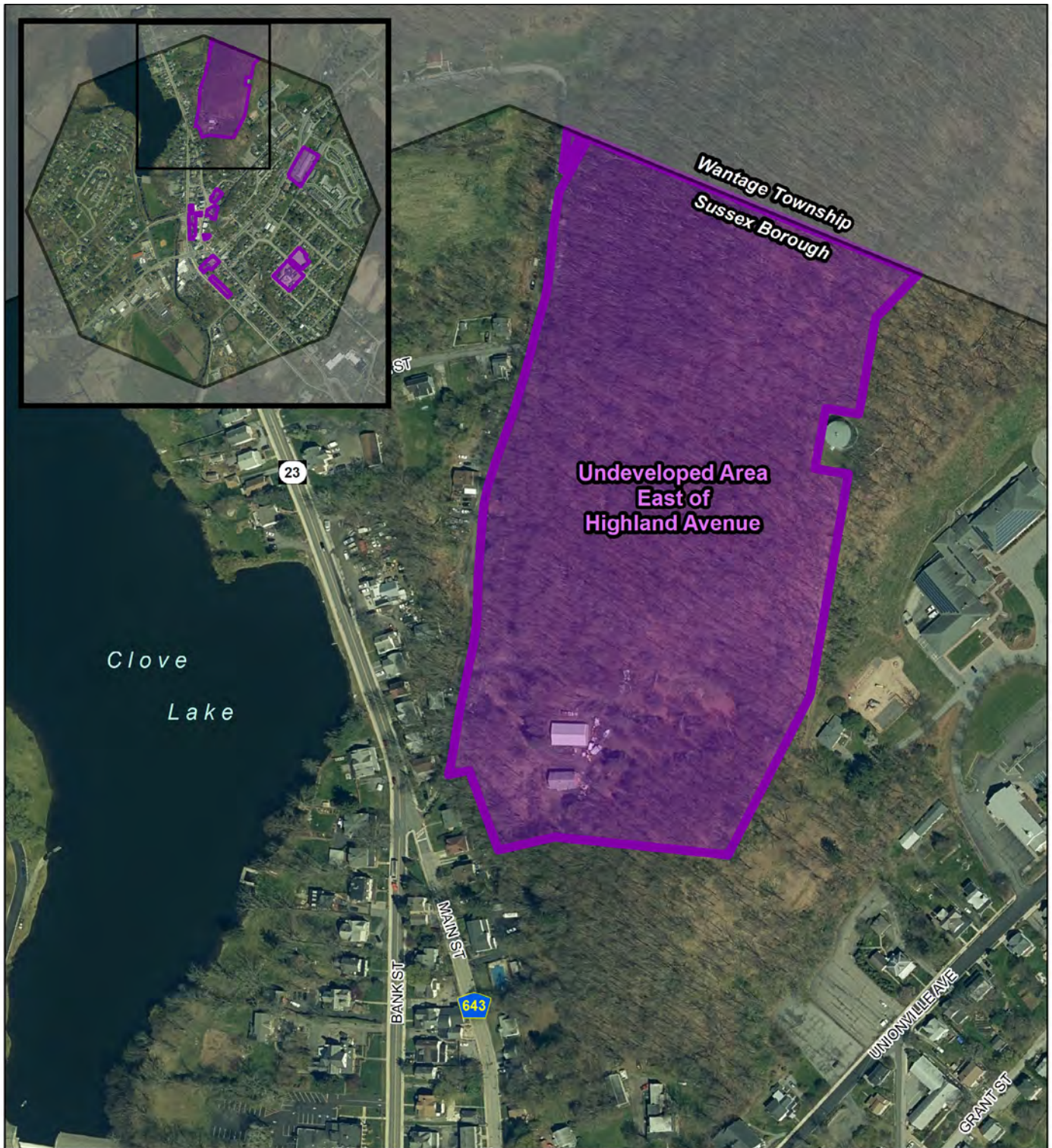
notably with southern access from the Highland Avenue intersection with Main Street and Bank Street inaccessible because the road has been washed out.

Recommendation Description: The Borough should consider any future appropriate proposals for residential development in the currently undeveloped wooded area east of Highland Avenue. This could potentially help to reduce the burden of the high cost of utilities by spreading the costs across more households. However, the Borough should balance the potential benefits of significantly increasing the tax roll with the ecological benefits of the area's current natural state. The Borough should therefore conduct a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis for any future proposals for development.

Development in this area must take into account the engineering challenges associated with building on the steep slopes and the impact on a large swarth of the Borough's natural area. Additionally, any planned development should recognize the low-density character of the surrounding area and incorporate feedback from residents living on the roads that would see an increase in traffic volume and be disrupted by the development.

Given that schools in the Sussex-Wantage Regional School District are below student capacity, the district should be able to accommodate an increase in school age children associated with residential development in this area. However, the Borough should consider this impact based on the specific number of units that are proposed in any future development.

Map 36. Sussex Borough Economic Development Focus Area: Highland Avenue



Data Sources:
ESRI, NJDCA, NJOGIS, NJ Division of Taxation



Placemaking

Goal: Enhance the physical identity of public spaces to attract visitors and residents to the Borough's existing and emerging commercial corridors.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Activate Fountain Square and the Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection.	Highest	Short-term
Formalize the existing right of way connecting Main St and Mill St at rear of former Capri Auto Body.	High	Short-term
Activate Deckertown Commons as an outdoor theatre or play space.	High	Short/Medium-term
Establish a physical gateway to Main Street.	Highest	Medium-term
Implement a Façade and Sign Improvement Program for Main Street businesses	High	Medium-term
Use public art to enhance the steps to Harrison Street Parking Lot.	High	Medium-term
Create a multi-use path along Clove Brook connecting Clove Lake with Brookside Park.	Medium	Long-term
Connect Brookside Park to the Papakating Creek Rail Trail.	Medium	Long-term
Create a multi-use trail around the perimeter of Clove Lake.	Medium	Long-term

Utilities

Goal: Decrease the financial burden of utilities on businesses and residents while improving internet connectivity.

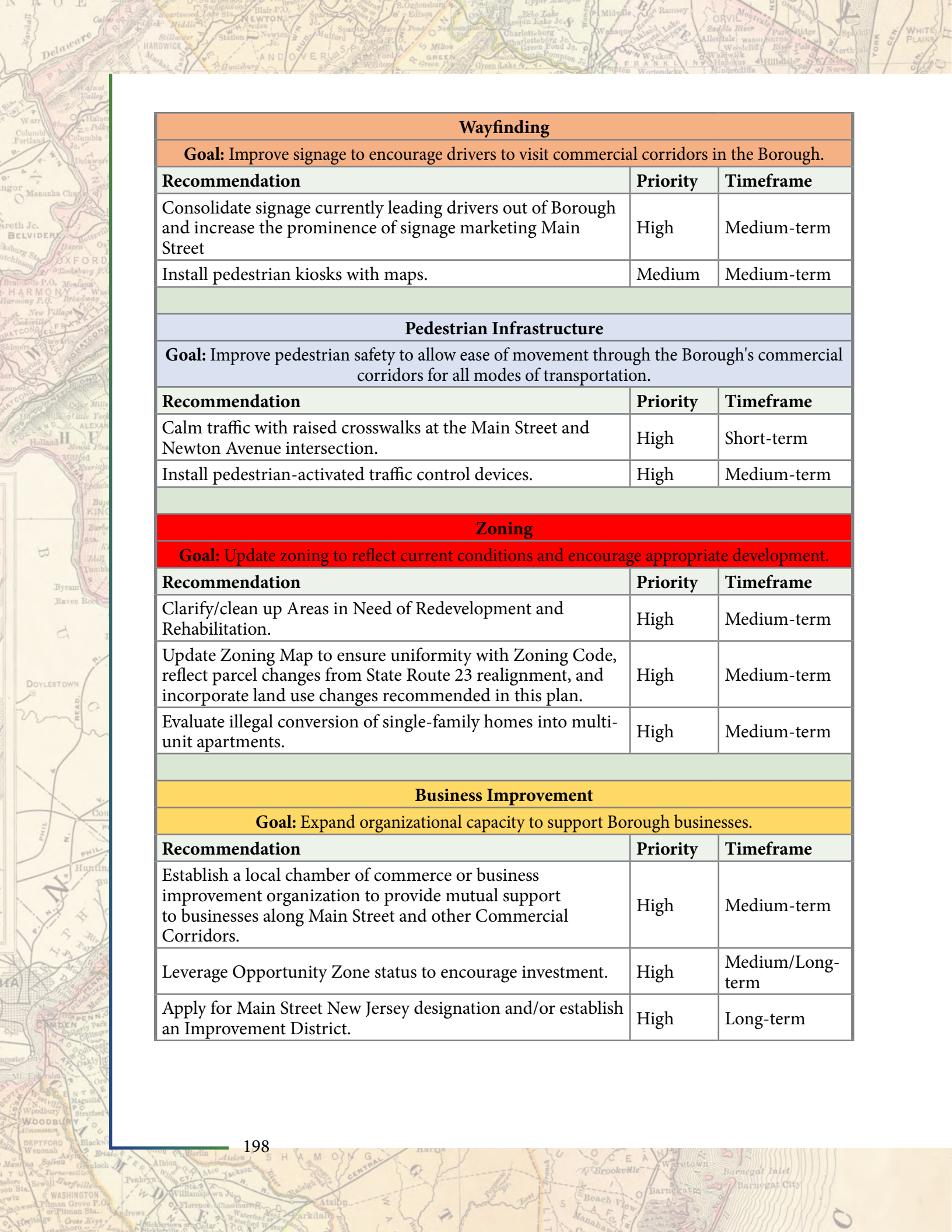
Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Increase the availability and quality of internet.	High	Short-term
Seek infrastructure investments from local, county, state, and federal sources and pursue efforts to renegotiate rates with SCMUA to address high costs of sewer.	Highest	Medium/Long-term

Parking

Goal: Increase parking opportunities near Main Street to encourage access to local businesses.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Remove permit restrictions on existing Borough-owned lots.	Highest	Short-term
Utilize existing lots at Sussex Middle School as auxiliary parking.	High	Short-term
Increase parking wayfinding signage to direct vehicle traffic towards parking.	High	Medium-term
Clarify where Main Street residents, employees, and visitors should park.	High	Medium-term
Create new parking lots at strategic locations.	High	Medium/Long-term





Wayfinding

Goal: Improve signage to encourage drivers to visit commercial corridors in the Borough.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Consolidate signage currently leading drivers out of Borough and increase the prominence of signage marketing Main Street	High	Medium-term
Install pedestrian kiosks with maps.	Medium	Medium-term

Pedestrian Infrastructure

Goal: Improve pedestrian safety to allow ease of movement through the Borough's commercial corridors for all modes of transportation.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Calm traffic with raised crosswalks at the Main Street and Newton Avenue intersection.	High	Short-term
Install pedestrian-activated traffic control devices.	High	Medium-term

Zoning

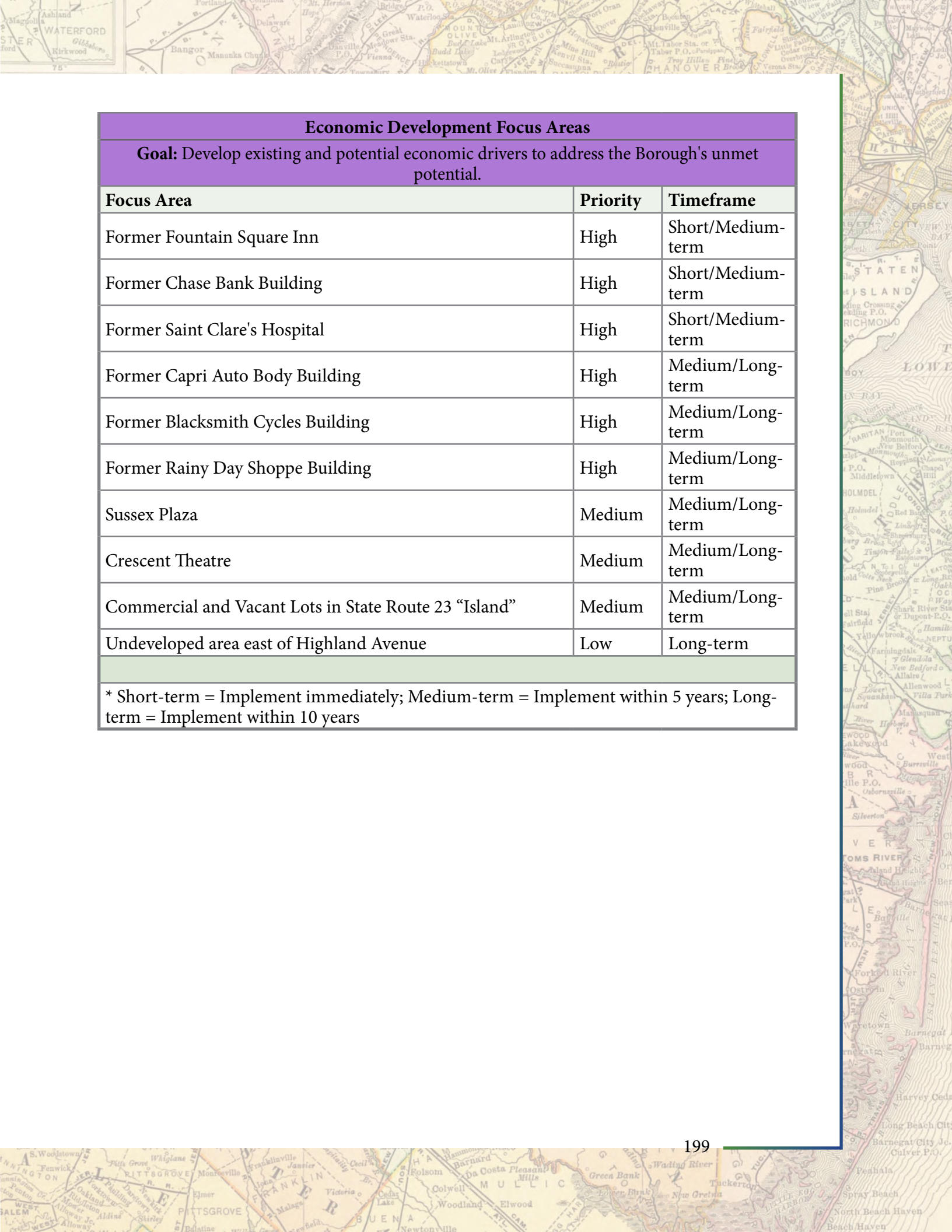
Goal: Update zoning to reflect current conditions and encourage appropriate development.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Clarify/clean up Areas in Need of Redevelopment and Rehabilitation.	High	Medium-term
Update Zoning Map to ensure uniformity with Zoning Code, reflect parcel changes from State Route 23 realignment, and incorporate land use changes recommended in this plan.	High	Medium-term
Evaluate illegal conversion of single-family homes into multi-unit apartments.	High	Medium-term

Business Improvement

Goal: Expand organizational capacity to support Borough businesses.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Establish a local chamber of commerce or business improvement organization to provide mutual support to businesses along Main Street and other Commercial Corridors.	High	Medium-term
Leverage Opportunity Zone status to encourage investment.	High	Medium/Long-term
Apply for Main Street New Jersey designation and/or establish an Improvement District.	High	Long-term



Economic Development Focus Areas

Goal: Develop existing and potential economic drivers to address the Borough's unmet potential.

Focus Area	Priority	Timeframe
Former Fountain Square Inn	High	Short/Medium-term
Former Chase Bank Building	High	Short/Medium-term
Former Saint Clare's Hospital	High	Short/Medium-term
Former Capri Auto Body Building	High	Medium/Long-term
Former Blacksmith Cycles Building	High	Medium/Long-term
Former Rainy Day Shoppe Building	High	Medium/Long-term
Sussex Plaza	Medium	Medium/Long-term
Crescent Theatre	Medium	Medium/Long-term
Commercial and Vacant Lots in State Route 23 "Island"	Medium	Medium/Long-term
Undeveloped area east of Highland Avenue	Low	Long-term

* Short-term = Implement immediately; Medium-term = Implement within 5 years; Long-term = Implement within 10 years

Statutory Requirements

As described in the *Master Plan Purpose* section, New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law requires that an economic plan element should consider “all aspects of economic development and sustained economic vitality, including (a) a comparison of the types of employment expected to be provided by the economic development to be promoted with the characteristics of the labor pool resident in the municipality and nearby areas and (b) an analysis of the stability and diversity of the economic development to be promoted” (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(9)).

This plan describes in detail the existing state of Sussex Borough’s economy. The *Analyses of Current Conditions* section highlights demographic, employment, transportation, environmental, legislative, and infrastructure circumstances and trends showing the Borough’s unique constraints and opportunities. In particular, as described in the *Employment Trends* section, the rapid decrease in employment within the Borough has led to a stark disparity between the quantity and types of jobs available within the Borough with the types of jobs that employ Borough residents. The Borough is unlikely to return to its previous dependence on jobs in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry sector that were lost when Saint Clare’s Hospital diminished operations and eventually closed.

The *Recommendations* of this report focus on a variety of issues within the specific context of economic development that aim to create the conditions that encourage and support small businesses. The Borough is well-positioned for welcoming new and existing commercial businesses, in particular in locations identified as *Economic Development Focus Areas* of this report, to thrive. Revitalizing the Borough’s commercial corridors, with a focus on the Main Street area in particular, will further emphasize the Borough as a retail, dining, and entertainment destination. Additionally, municipal infrastructure improvements, specifically increasing the speed and quality of internet access, will help to attract the increasing number of people desiring to work remotely in a location with a high quality of life and lower cost of living from where they currently work in-person. While remote workers may not technically be employed within the Borough, their presence will have direct and indirect effects on other local businesses by increasing the number of people who are in the Borough during business hours to dine and shop locally.

The Borough is unlikely to depend on a single employer or the types of employment sectors that prevailed in the past decades. While there are many unknowns in the global economy at the time of plan preparation, in particular due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, current economic trends suggest that the Borough can see major improvements to its economy. Indicators on the Borough's economic wellbeing should be measured both by growth in the number of businesses and jobs, increases to household income, and the degree to which these improvements are shared by all segments of the Borough.

