

Master Plan Reexamination Report

Borough of Bound Brook
Somerset County, New Jersey



Prepared for the Borough of Bound Brook Planning Board in accordance with the
New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.)

Adopted by the Bound Brook Planning Board on June 8, 2017.

The original of this report was signed and sealed on June 8, 2017 in accordance with
Chapter 41 of Title 13 of the New Jersey State Board of Professional Planners

Carlos Rodrigues FAICP / PP
New Jersey Professional Planner #5107

CREDITS

Governing Body:	Robert Fazen, Mayor Abel Gomez, Council President Phillip Fiadino Vince Petti Tony Pranzatelli David Rosario
Land Use Board:	Michael Witt, Chair James Ayotte Linda Brnicevic Nicole Epps Robert Fazen Abel Gomez Scott Sloan Mark Speed, Esq. Tricia Smith Howard Wagner
Land Use Administrator:	Jasmine Mathis
Land Use Counsel:	John P. Belardo, Esq McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter
Redevelopment Counsel:	Francis X. Regan, Esq. Decotiis Law Firm
Professional Planner:	Carlos Rodrigues, PP / FAICP Design Solutions for a Crowded Planet

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1.1 Preamble

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 contains the following statement relative to the periodic reexamination of a municipal Master Plan and Land Development Regulations:

The governing body shall, at least every ten years, provide for a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations by the planning board which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination, a copy of which report and resolution shall be sent to the county planning board and the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality. The first such reexamination shall have been completed by August 1, 1982. The next reexamination shall be completed by August 1, 1988. Thereafter, a reexamination shall be completed at least once every 10 years from the previous reexamination.

Bound Brook adopted its first zoning code in 1921, prior to adoption of the 1928 zoning enabling legislation. The town's first *Master Plan* was adopted in 1932. The plan was prepared by Russell Van Nest Black, a well-regarded pioneer of city planning in New Jersey. The plan established six land use categories: two residential districts (one single-family and one multi-family); two business districts (the Main Street / Talmage Avenue corridor and a neighborhood business district at the intersection of Vosseller and Union Avenues); a commercial district; and an industrial district south of the Main Street and the railroad tracks.

The population was projected to reach 16,000 by 1980.

There were four grade crossings of the railroad tracks. The plan called for an underpass at Vosseller Avenue.

The business district was considered "not generally prepossessing. The general impression is not good either as to appearance or as to quality and range of merchandise".

The Raritan River was considered "too polluted to be attractive or safe" and the plan identified a large deficit in recreational opportunities.

The Borough subsequently updated its *Master Plan* in 1954, with the assistance of Robert Catlin. At that time, 10% of the population had been born in either Italy or Poland. There were 1,196 single-family housing units — 68% of the housing stock. About 25% of the population lived in two-family units; 15% lived in apartment complexes; and 7% lived in mixed-use buildings with ground-floor commercial. There was still considerable vacant land — 21% of the Borough's land area. The only large remaining industry was the Silvray Company, located where the Brook Industrial Park is now. It employed 200 people.

The land use plan was relatively simple, with seven designations: two single-family detached districts (A1 = 15,000 square foot lots, A2 = 6,000 square foot lots); a multifamily district; three commercial districts (C1 = Business – Retail/ Services; C2 = Business – CBD; C3 = Business / Limited Industry); and an industrial district.

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The population was projected to grow to 10,500, living in 3,500 dwelling units.

The plan called for a new civic center, to be built at the intersection of Mountain Avenue and East 2nd Street. It also called for the widening of several streets, to increase capacity, namely Tea Street, Vosseller Avenue and a new road through what is now Billian Park.

The plan was again updated in 1963; an update to the Land Use Element of the *Master Plan* was adopted in 1978, also prepared with the assistance of Robert Catlin. A *Re-examination Report* was adopted in May of 1983.

The most recent edition of the full *Master Plan* – addressing both the required master plan elements (goals and objectives, land use plan and housing plan) as well as the then optional elements (circulation plan, utility service plan, community facilities plan, recreation plan, conservation plan, economic development plan and historic preservation plan) was adopted in 1988.

In February of 1996, the Borough adopted the *Tea Street / Middle Brook Redevelopment Plan*, with an amendment to the Land Use Element of the *Master Plan*. This redevelopment plan was substantially amended in July of 2008. The ShopRite shopping center and the Queens Gate apartments were developed in accordance with this redevelopment plan.

Following the catastrophic flooding event caused by Hurricane Floyd in November of 1999, when flood waters reached a 42-foot elevation, the Borough designated extensive areas “in need of redevelopment” in the southern part of town. *Redevelopment Plans for Area 1 and 2* were adopted in 2000, substantially changing the planning framework in those areas. The plan for Area 2 was substantially amended in 2008, radically reducing the size of the area subject to the plan. The plan for Area 1 was partially amended in 2012, without changes to its boundaries; and more substantially amended in 2015. Additional, targeted amendments have been adopted for both redevelopment areas since then.

Bound Brook’s downtown was subject to many flooding events over the years. The entire southern part of the Borough, including the Main Street area, lies within the Raritan River flood plain and its tributaries, the Middle Brook and the Bound Brook, that comprise the western and eastern boundaries of the Borough.

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) addressed these flooding problems through the *Green Brook Flood Control Project*, designed to provide protection from a 150-year flood event. Flood control protection is now in place on either side of the downtown, with a system of levees, flood walls, flood gates, pumping stations and designated “over topping” areas. In July of 2016, most privately-owned properties in the Borough’s low lying areas were removed from the floodplain and are no longer subject to flood proofing and flood insurance requirements. See Section 2.2.

The Borough was an active participant for many years in the State of New Jersey’s smart growth planning efforts,

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having received Center Designation (jointly with South Bound Brook) from the New Jersey State Planning Commission in 2000. These actions were intended to redirect State resources to the downtown area and, in turn attract private investment.

The Borough continues to be well positioned from a planning perspective with respect to current state and county strategic planning frameworks — the Borough’s planning and regulatory documents are closely aligned with the intent and goals of the county and state documents.

In March of 2003, the Planning Board adopted a *Master Plan Re-examination Report* containing a new historic preservation framework, as well as extensive proposed amendments to the Borough’s Land Use regulations.

A *Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan* was also adopted at the same time.

Also in 2003, the Borough successfully petitioned the NJ Department of Transportation and NJ Transit to be recognized with *Transit Village* designation. The *Transit Village* program recognizes communities that have adopted planning and zoning frameworks that support and further encourage transit ridership. Designated *Transit Village* communities are intended to have priority access to state funding and technical assistance for projects within the designated *Transit Village* areas.

New Jersey’s *Transit Village* program loosely defines a passenger rail-oriented transit village as the area encompassed within the ½ mile area around the train station. In the case of Bound Brook, this ½ mile radius encompasses the entire downtown area and the area north of the downtown, all the way up to the Union Avenue / NJ Route 28 corridor. It also encompasses the largely undeveloped area south of the tracks, all the way down to the Raritan River — an area that is both flood prone and encumbered by both passenger and freight railroad right-of-ways.

As such, and relative to other *Transit Villages*, Bound Brook is at a disadvantage, in the sense that conventional transit-oriented land development can occur only in roughly half the transit facility’s catchment area. That notwithstanding, Bound Brook’s transit-oriented redevelopment framework addresses the entirety of the transit village catchment area, albeit with different redevelopment strategies: a conservation, recreation and historic preservation-oriented strategy for the physically constrained and flood prone areas along the river; and a more conventional residential and commercial-oriented redevelopment strategy for the flood protected areas on higher ground.

In August of 2007, the Planning Board adopted a *Re-examination Report* and master plan amendment of the Land Use Element of the Borough’s *Master Plan*. This 18-page report deals almost exclusively with flood protection and stormwater runoff issues in the low-lying areas of the Borough, along with design guidelines for the downtown area.

More recently, in February of 2012, the Planning Board adopted the *Downtown Urban Design Plan* as an element of the *Master Plan*. This plan provides a detailed development framework for the entire downtown area, extending to the riverfront.

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In August of 2014, the Borough adopted extensive amendments to the Land Development Regulations for the B-R district in an effort to facilitate implementation of certain elements of the downtown plan.

In 2015, the Planning Board adopted a *Riverfront Access Plan* as an element of the Borough's *Master Plan*. This plan element provides a blueprint for enhancing public access to the Raritan riverfront and for improving pedestrian and bicycle connections along the riverfront, as well as between the downtown and the riverfront.

While considerable planning attention has been dedicated over the years to certain parts of the Borough — the low lying areas that were severely flooded in 1999, as well as the area between Tea Street and the Middle Brook, designated as Redevelopment Area 3 — no comprehensive reexamination of the Borough's overall planning framework and land development regulations has taken place since 1988.

The downtown area has benefitted from considerable planning analysis and scrutiny, and on-going downtown revitalization efforts enjoy state-of-the-art land development regulations. However, the rest of the Borough (outside the designated redevelopment areas) has not benefitted from a comparable level of attention, and is subject to aging and possibly counter-productive land use policies and development regulations that now require a thorough reexamination and reassessment.

1.2 Statutory Requirements

The MLUL requires consideration of the following five areas (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89a-e) within the Reexamination Report:

- a. Identify major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have increased or been reduced subsequent to such date.



- c. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
- d. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether new development regulations or plan elements should be prepared.
- e. The recommendations of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the “Local Redevelopment and Housing Law” P.L. 1992 c.79 (NJSA 40A:12A-1 et seq) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

These five areas define the broad scope of inquiry for the reexamination effort.

While it has become a tradition among planners in New Jersey to organize municipal master plan reexamination reports according to these five topics, we do not believe this is the best way to present the relevant material, as it does not lend itself to adequately cover the numerous inter-relationships and inter-dependencies found between the topics. Accordingly, this master plan reexamination report, while thoroughly covering the five topics listed in the statute, will follow alternate organizing principles, that in our opinion do more justice to the complex web of considerations that municipal planning must address. The five topics will be referenced and addressed in the appropriate locations, but will not constitute the organizing framework.

1.3 Community Survey and Public Outreach

A community survey / questionnaire was launched in the Fall of 2016 to solicit public opinion on planning-related issues and help gauge the priorities of residents and businesses in addressing immediate issues and in shaping a longer-term vision for the Borough’s land use policies.

The survey instrument was administered electronically, using Survey Monkey. Links to the survey were prominently posted on the home page of the Borough website. Both an English-language and a Spanish-language version were available. Flyers alerting the public to the survey were distributed at community events and placed at prominent locations. Paper copies of the survey were also available and distributed at community meetings.

The complete survey, consisting of 25 questions, including multiple-choice and open-ended questions, can be found in Appendix A, along with a more detailed summary of the results.

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A total of 206 responses were received, including three responses to the Spanish-language version.

The results of the survey must be viewed with caution — the respondents were self-selected, not randomly selected, and therefore they do not necessarily mirror the entire community. For example, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the respondents were female; there were no responses in the 0-18 age cohort, and only 8% in the 19-29 cohort and 15% in the over 60 cohort. Similarly, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the respondents are homeowners, whereas 50% of Borough residents rent their home.

As such, some demographic segments are under-represented, while others are over-represented.

That notwithstanding, the results of the survey provide a valuable window into community perceptions and opinions relative to land use and other planning-related issues.

In general, it can be said that the respondents have mixed feelings about the current conditions in the community and about where it seems to be heading.

When asked to describe Bound Brook in one word, respondents used “community”, “nice”, “quaint”, “historic” and “potential”, but also “dirty”, “lacking”, “expensive” and “divided”.

When asked to describe Bound Brook in 10 words or less, respondents mentioned “experiencing a revival”, “has great potential”, “diverse and energetic” and “centrally-located”, but also “seedy downtown”, “absentee landlords”, “needs face lift” and “unfocused”.

As mentioned, 68% of respondents own their own home; 4% are commercial property owners; 10% work in Bound Brook; and 5% own businesses.

Respondents live in many of the Borough’s neighborhoods.

In terms of household size, 15% are one-person households, 24% are two-person, 23% are three-person, 25% are four-person and 19% are from households with five or more members.

Many respondents are long time residents – 39% have lived in town for 20 or more years, while another 33% have lived in town for over 5 years. But there are also more recent arrivals, as 11% have lived less than one year, and 44% less than 5 years.

Of those who work in town, 50% have done so for less than one year; and 76% have done so for less than 10 years.

Less than half (47%) of respondents have children. Those who do had 54 students enrolled in the public schools, while 26 were enrolled in private or parochial schools.

Everyone shops in town, but only 3% of respondents shop exclusively downtown, while 79% shop exclusively along Union Avenue and 18% shop at both locations. From a planning perspective, this has two important implications:

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the need to diversify and increase shopping opportunities downtown, and the need to re-examine the zoning, development regulations and urban design framework for the Union Avenue corridor, with a view towards improving the pedestrian and shopping experiences.

Respondents are not happy with existing retail and personal services in the Borough. When asked to rank these on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 = Exceptional and 1 = Unsatisfactory, 69% of responses fell within the 3 to 7 range, and 20% chose either 1 or 2.

When asked where they shop for groceries for home, 90% of respondents indicated the ShopRite on Union Avenue. Other popular grocery stores are the Wegman's (15%) and Costco (11%), both in Bridgewater, as well as the local farmers market (6%).

When asked where they are most likely to go to eat out, respondents indicated a few local eateries, but many more restaurants in some of the surrounding towns.

Respondents had many suggestions for the types of additional businesses they would like to see in Bound Brook, such as more and better restaurants, kid-oriented activities, a movie theatre, coffee shops, bar/pub/brewery, art studios, professional offices, book store, fish market and many others.

While many of these uses can be accommodated within existing buildings, others require larger building footprints that might be difficult to accommodate in the Borough. Nevertheless the respondents were clear in indicating a desire for a much more diversified, and to a certain extent more upmarket range of goods and services.

It is also clear, both from the survey and from the analysis of consumer expenditures and other economic data, that a significant "retail leakage" is occurring, that is to say, residents spend a significant amount of discretionary and non-discretionary dollars purchasing goods and services from business located in surrounding towns – because those goods and services are not available in the Borough.

Only 28% of respondents participate in Bound Brook's recreational programs. Perhaps as a result of the low participation rate, 58% indicated that they did not see the need for additional recreational facilities and/or programs.

Of those who participate in the Borough's recreational programs, soccer, swimming, wrestling and basketball were the most popular activities.

Suggestions for additional recreational facilities and/or programs included active recreation, such as more soccer, adult yoga and fitness classes, lacrosse, field hockey, volleyball and gymnastics; and also a desire for walking and bicycle paths along the river, kayaking, and nature and history walks.

Only 1/3 of respondents were aware that the Borough has adopted a *Riverfront Access Plan* that calls for improved

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public access to the riverfront, pedestrian and bicycle trails along the riverfront and throughout the Borough, and a put-in and storage facility for kayaks and canoes.

But 65% of respondents consider it very important to improve public access to the riverfront for bicycling and walking. And 61% consider it very important to allow public access to the paths on top of the flood levees as a way to provide opportunities for bicycling and walking.

The personal vehicle is overwhelmingly (94%) the primary means of transportation within the Borough, although 6% also walk and 1% cycle.



Generally, people think Bound Brook is a safe place to drive, walk and bicycle: 80% think it is very safe to drive; while 46% think it is very safe to walk and bicycle. Walking conditions were rated good (44%) or fair (33%); biking conditions were also rated good (33%) or fair (43%).

When asked to rate a variety of conditions in the Borough, respondents were happy with the overall quality of life (2/3 rated it excellent or good), with public safety (58% excellent or good), and with access to the train station (78% excellent or good); but expressed dissatisfaction with the overall physical appearance of streets, parks and private properties (64% fair or poor), the business mix (2/3 fair or poor), the existing shopping options (86% fair or poor),



access to information about local services and community events (60% fair or poor) and private property maintenance (57% fair or poor). Responses to other conditions were more evenly distributed, indicating lesser consensus.

When asked to rank a wide variety of possible initiatives, 70% of respondents considered it a “high priority” to create programs to upgrade existing run-down housing; other high priority items include promoting the Downtown Arts District and downtown special events (63%), increasing code enforcement and property maintenance (58%), creating community gardens on vacant public lands (52%), creating more public spaces with more community activities (50%), planting more street trees and improve public landscaping (49%), encouraging “green streets” (47%), and reducing vehicular speed and cut-through traffic (45%).

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Other priority items include creating a nature preserve on the publicly-owned lands adjacent to the Middle Brook, north of Union Avenue (84% high or medium priority), adopt land use policies to bring more jobs to town (86% high or medium priority), allow mixed-use buildings with retail, small offices and residential along Union Avenue (78% high or medium priority), remove zoning restrictions to private investments in green building features (76% high or medium), provide incentives to property owners that voluntarily install sustainable stormwater management devices (77% high or medium priority), and install new pedestrian and bicycle bridges over the Bound Brook and the Middle Brook (75% high or medium priority).

When asked to list their top three priorities, if they were in charge of making decisions for the Borough, respondents mentioned a long list of improvements that generally echoed the responses from some of the other questions, such as attracting new businesses and ratables; greening streetscapes; increased code enforcement, zoning enforcement and property maintenance; improving the appearance of public spaces; providing access to the riverfront; and adding bike lanes and pedestrian improvements.

When asked to name features they have seen in other towns that should be emulated in Bound Brook, respondents also mentioned a variety of possible initiatives, such as creating pedestrian precincts (similar to Division Street in Somerville); adding community gardens; renovating the train station; better sidewalks and cross-walks; more attractive public spaces; more walking trails; greater retail variety; and more stringent code enforcement.

The complete list of suggestions can be found in Appendix A.

The land use and planning implications of the community survey are discussed in Section 2.4.4; some may be translated into land use and other regulatory actions in a future Land Use Plan Amendment.

2.1 Regional Location and Context

The Borough of Bound Brook is located in Central New Jersey, in Somerset County, on the north side of the Raritan River, along a dramatic, 90-degree bend. Along its eastern border runs the Green Brook, into which flow the Bound Brook (also known as the Boundary Brook) and the Ambrose Brook. Along its western border runs the Middle Brook. The Delaware & Raritan Canal runs along the southern bank of the Raritan River.

I-287 runs immediately west of the Borough; US Route 22 runs immediately north, separating a small portion of the Borough. NJ Route 28 bisects the Borough. In the southernmost part of the Borough, between Main Street and the Raritan River, are located both active, and non-active passenger and freight rail lines.

Bridgewater Township is the immediate neighbor to the west and north; Middlesex Borough is the immediate neighbor to the east; and South Bound Brook is the immediate neighbor to the south, across the Raritan River.

2.2 Natural Features

Bound Brook is physically defined by the three water bodies named above, which also constitute natural boundaries between the Borough and its immediate neighbors. The Middle Brook and its floodplain defines the municipal boundary to the west; the Bound Brook, and its floodplain, defines a portion of the municipal boundary to the east; and the Raritan River defines the municipal boundary to the south.

There are other smaller water bodies in the Borough, namely Windsor Brook and Piedmont Brook.

The area south of Union Avenue slopes gently downwards towards the Raritan and the feeder streams. Main Street is generally at elevation 40 feet. The area north of Union Avenue slopes gently upwards towards the Watchung Mountains, to the north, reaching elevation 200 north of Route 22. The western end of Union Avenue is at elevation 140; the eastern end at elevation 60.

Bound Brook is part of the Piedmont plateau, a lowland consisting of gently rounded hills separated by wide valleys, with some ridges and isolated hills. In terms of the underlying geology, the entire Borough sits on the Triassic formation (Mesozoic).

The predominant soil types are silt loams (Bowmansville, Penn, Parsipanny, Rowland, Raritan and Neshaminy-Mt Lucas), as well as sandy loams (Dunellen) and "urban land".



PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

The climate is continental, with maximum summer temperatures generally in the mid to upper 90's and winter temperatures generally not below 10 degrees Fahrenheit for extended periods of time. The average annual precipitation is 45 to 50 inches, with rainfall heaviest in July, August and September, and around 30 thunderstorms annually.

The average length of the growing season is 169 days.

The *Environmental Features Map* shows the generalized location of state-regulated natural features, namely freshwater wetlands and natural habitats for sensitive wildlife species, according to New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) mapping. This mapping is generalized and should not be used for site-specific purposes. The wetlands, as might be expected, are associated with the stream corridors. Three types of habitat are identified in Bound Brook: Rank 1 ("generally suitable as wildlife habitat"), Rank 2 ("special concern") and Rank 4 ("state-listed endangered species").

The NJDEP habitat mapping has limitations and is of limited use for detailed planning purposes. Areas identified as rank 1 include the railroad rights-of-way and a substantial urbanized area along the south side of Union Avenue. The area identified as rank 2, of special concern, is Billian Park, which occupies a former municipal landfill. Finally, the areas identified as rank 4 are located along the stream corridors.

The same map also shows the location of 26 "known contaminated sites". These sites are all located along two corridors: Union Avenue and Main Street / Talmage Avenue. Many are current or former cleaners and gas stations / auto service stations. Even after remediation, these sites frequently present limitations to redevelopment as a result of engineering controls imposed through deed restrictions on the properties.

Not shown on the map is Brook Industrial Park, a 4.5-acre remediated US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Superfund site. Chemical spills and groundwater contamination from dioxin caused the site to be placed on the USEPA's National Priority List in 1989. The site is subject to on-going monitoring and continues to be used for various industrial activities. Also not shown are sites that abut the railroad tracks. Many are contaminated by chemical products, such as creosote, used to preserve the railroad ties. Redevelopment of these sites is subject to special NJDEP permits, which may constrain re-grading and excavation, and increase the cost of site preparation.

The *FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map* shows those areas subject to flooding. Areas in the floodway include the Middle Brook Preserve and lands along the banks of the Middle Brook and Raritan River. Areas in the *100-year floodplain* include the rear of the West Main Street neighborhood, including Rock Machine Park, the decommissioned railroad rights-of-way, and an area towards the eastern end of Union Avenue. Areas in the *500-year floodplain* include the ShopRite shopping center, the Bound Brook apartments, the Hanken Road / Verona Place neighborhood, and an area along 2nd Street.

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

The same map also shows the levee system and the vast areas that now have a reduced flooding risk, as a result of *Green Brook Flood Control Project* by the US Army Corps of Engineers. These include virtually the entire area south of 2nd Street, including all of the downtown and most of Billian Park.

2.3 Neighborhoods, Districts and Corridors

The Borough can be viewed as a series of neighborhoods, districts and corridors, each with its own character. See *Neighborhoods, Census Tracts and Census Blocks Map*. Some areas have a stronger and more distinct character, others less so.

The boundaries of each neighborhood are somewhat subjective, while taking into account both the character of the area (lot sizes, lot configurations, general land use) and, to the extent possible, the boundaries of the areas used by US Census to collect and tabulate data. The large tracts of open space were not included.

Bound Brook is divided into three census tracts (CT): CT 511 is the area south of Union Avenue and east of Vosseller Avenue; CT 512 is the area west of Vosseller Avenue and south of West Main Street; finally, CT 513 is the area north of Union Avenue and east of Vosseller Avenue. Bound Brook is further divided into 70 census blocks, which are subdivisions within census tracts. See Table 1. Having census data available at the tract and block level provides a much richer characterization of each neighborhood.

Table 1 — Neighborhoods and Census Blocks

Neighborhood	Census Blocks
Northside	1000-1002
Piedmont	1004-1019, 1024-1025
Central	2000-2008
Thompson Avenue	1000-1006, 1008, 1010
Union Avenue - West	1009, 1011-1015, 1023, 2000-2002, 2009-2011
Union Avenue - East	1023, 1026, 2012
Old Town	1001-1003, 1006, 1006-1012, 2000, 2006-2008
High Street	2001-2005, 2009-2011
Codrington	2004-2005, 2007-2021
Historic Downtown	1004-1005, 1013-1014, 1017-1018, 1021-1023, 2015, 2018
West End	2012-2014, 2017-2018, 3005, 3007-3008, 3010-3011, 3013-3016, 3020
West Main	3000-3003
Talmage Avenue	2019, 3004, 3009

Thirteen neighborhoods were identified, as follows:

Northside

Located North of Route 22, and connected to the rest of the Borough only by Mountain Avenue, this small residential subdivision is functionally more a part of Bridgewater. It consists entirely of single-family homes,

on lots of between 1.5 and 5 acres.

Piedmont

Located south of Route 22 and north of Union Avenue, this residential neighborhood was developed as a series of subdivisions in the early part of the 20th Century. Lots range from $\frac{1}{2}$ acre to $\frac{1}{3}$ acre, with $\frac{1}{4}$ acre to $\frac{1}{6}$ acre lots closer to Union Avenue. The curving streets were designed in the picturesque fashion popular in the early part of the 20th Century, but largely without the cul-de-sacs that later became a standard feature of the suburban landscape.

Central

This neighborhood stretches east from upper Vosseller Avenue to Winsor Street and south to Union Avenue. A predominantly single-family neighborhood, it also includes the Smalley School and the recreational complex at La Monte fields.

Thompson Avenue

Located north of Union Avenue and west of Vosseller Avenue, this area was developed post WWII. It includes blocks with smaller lot single-family housing (50 x 125 foot lots); the small lot neighborhood of Crescent Drive and Cedarcrest Drive (25 x 100 foot lots); a few blocks of slightly larger lots ($\frac{1}{4}$ acre) along Helfen Street; Northbrook Village, a townhouse project on Thompson Avenue; and Queens Gate, a very recent, 140-unit rental project in three, three-story buildings behind the shopping center.

Union Avenue — West

Comprising both sides of NJ Route 28, the western end of this corridor has a 1980's flavor, with strip commercial, auto-oriented uses and larger floor-plate retail, such as the shopping center and the building until recently occupied by Efinger Sporting Goods store. It also includes the Bound Brook Apartments, a large rental housing complex, as well as commercial uses on smaller lots, converted from single-family residential.

Union Avenue — East

The eastern half of the Union Avenue corridor has a late 19th Century character, with churches and other civic uses, such as the High School, and large, stately former single-family structures converted to offices and retail / service uses.

Old Town

Adjacent to Billian Park and to the historic downtown, this is the area north of East 2nd Street, east of Church Street and south of East Union Avenue. An older area, it is characterized by a mix of housing types, including single-family, two-family and multi-family housing, along with commercial uses, and civic uses — the post office, library, city hall and St Joseph's church. Some single-family structures have been converted to commercial uses. Many lots are in the 7,500 to 10,000 square foot range.

High Street

Located along West Franklin Street and High Street, this is a primarily residential neighborhood of single-family and two-family housing.

Codrington

Located south of Union Avenue, west of Vosseller Avenue and north of West 2nd Street, this is largely a single-family neighborhood of 5,000 and 7,500 square foot lots, which also includes a small townhouse project on West High Street, and the small-lot Hanken Road single-family neighborhood that backs onto the Middle Brook flood plain. The Codrington Park recreational complex is at the center of this neighborhood.

Historic Downtown

This is the area along Main Street, east of Columbus Place. It includes the Borough's second commercial core, along with the train station, Brook Arts Center, downtown housing and restaurants, the five-story, 240-units of rental apartments developed by Meridia and the Pillar of Fire building. Most of the Borough's redevelopment efforts to date have focused on this area.

West End

This neighborhood is located north of Talmage Avenue, east of Tea Street and west of Church Street, on either side of West 2nd Street. A mostly residential area of relatively small lots (5,000 to 7,500 square feet), it also includes several civic uses, such as St Mary's Church and La Monte Elementary School.

West Main

This small, three-block area is the only residential neighborhood on the south side of the railroad tracks. It is isolated from the rest of town, and can be reached only by way of two grade crossings: at La Monte Avenue and Vosseller Avenue. Single-family residential occupies both sides of West Main Street, with lots ranging from 4,000 to 15,000 square feet. Rock Machine Park is located behind it. Immediately to the east lies the Brook Industrial Park, a 4.5-acre former Superfund site. Chemical spills and groundwater contamination from dioxin caused the site to be placed on the USEPA's National Priority List in 1989. The site has been remediated. It is subject to on-going monitoring and continues to be used for various industrial activities.

Talmage Avenue

This corridor stretches from Tea Street to Columbus Place. It has a mix of residential, commercial and quasi-industrial uses. Talmage Avenue is a major gateway into the downtown that needs urgent attention and new investment, given the deteriorated condition of the streetscape and the tired look of many of the buildings.

2.4 Land Use and Physical Structure

The Borough of Bound Brook occupies a total area of 1.695 square miles (US Census), of which 1.659 square miles (1,061.8 acres) is land and 0.036 square miles (23.04 acres) is within waterways.

2.4.1 Land Use Categories

Table 2 shows the various categories of land use, according to the Borough's property records for 2015.

Table 2 — Land Use Categories According to Bound Brook Property Records

MOD IV Property Description	Code	Acres	% Total
Vacant	1	54.70	6%
Residential	2	532.08	61%
Public Schools	15A	13.18	2%
Other Schools	15B	2.16	0%
Public	15C	91.01	11%
Church	15D	8.85	1%
Cemeteries	15E	28.45	3%
Other Exempt	15F	20.44	2%
Commercial	4A	80.03	9%
Industrial	4B	9.00	1%
Apartment	4C	26.75	3%
Telephone	6A	0.00	0%
TOTAL		866.65	100%

Source: Bound Brook Tax Assessor Records, 2015.

The discrepancy between the Borough's total land area (1,062 acres) and the area covered by the Borough's tax records can be attributed to two major factors which are not included in the MOD IV data: the area dedicated to public rights-of-way — mostly streets — and the area occupied by Class I property, i.e. railroad-owned rights-of-way and other property.

It is estimated that streets and their rights-of-way occupy 205 acres, or 19% of total land, in the Borough. It is estimated that the railroads own and occupy 44 acres of land in the Borough, i.e. 4% of the total land mass.

Not including streets and railroad properties, 64% of lands in the Borough are occupied by residential uses, of which 61% by single-family detached and attached, and 3% by multi-family (apartments). Publicly-owned lands — mostly parks and open space — account for 11% of the total, and commercial properties for 9%. Cemeteries occupy 3% of the land area, other tax exempt uses occupy 2%, public schools occupy 2%, and houses of worship occupy 1%. Industrial uses occupy a mere 1%, a far cry from the Borough's industrial past.

Table 3 shows the number of properties in each land use category. The vast majority (84%) is residential (other than multi-family). Commercial (9%) is the next largest category.

The *Property Classification Map* shows the spatial distribution of the various land use categories used by the tax assessor. Commercial uses (red) are primarily found along two corridors — Union Avenue and Main Street / Talmage Avenue — as well as along the first three blocks of Mountain Avenue and Hamilton Street north of Main Street.

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Table 3 — Number of Properties by Land Use Categories

MOD IV Property Description	Code	Properties	% Total
Vacant	1	56	2%
Residential	2	2,279	84%
Public Schools	15A	4	0%
Other Schools	15B	7	0%
Public	15C	41	2%
Church	15D	25	1%
Cemeteries	15E	3	0%
Other Exempt	15F	30	1%
Commercial	4A	233	9%
Industrial	4B	1	0%
Apartment	4C	26	1%
Telephone	6A	1	0%
TOTAL		2,706	100%

Source: Bound Brook Tax Assessor Records, 2015.

The number of properties in each category remained quite stable between 1990 and 2016. There is a small reduction in the number of vacant parcels (-7), apartments (-5) and public properties (-6) and small increases in the number of residential properties (+26), church-owned properties (+4) and “other tax exempt properties” (+24).

Residential structures with up to 4 units (light yellow) occupy a substantial portion of the Borough. Multifamily structures (darker yellow) are identifiable in a few discrete locations. The two cemeteries are shown in brown. Parks, recreational fields, civic and educational uses (light and medium blue); and houses of worship (darker blue) can be found throughout the Borough. The single industrial property is shown in purple. A few lots classified as “vacant” are shown in light grey.

This map shows a community with a relatively uncomplicated land use structure. Commercial activities are largely clustered along two corridors — Main Street / Talmage Avenue and Union Avenue — which are easily accessible from the various neighborhoods, while civic and educational activities are located within the various neighborhoods. The exceptions to this principle are the Middle Brook, Piedmont and North End neighborhoods, which are almost exclusively residential.

Historically, economic activities were concentrated in the southern portion of the Borough, with access to the Raritan River, the D&R Canal and the railroads. In 1905, the Borough’s industrial base included the Standard Paint Company, Lythoid Roofing, Waterproof Cloth Company, Graphite Lubricating Company, American Engine Company, Bound Brook Woolen Mills and Pathe Freres, the “moving pictures” manufacturer. Today, the only remaining industrial activities can be found in the Brook Industrial Park, which is still located south of Main Street. The downtown also hosted several hotels in 1905, including the Berkeley, the Annex and the West End Hotel. None exist at present.

2.4.2 Land Use Regulatory Framework — Past and Present

The Borough's zoning and land development regulations are based, as required by law, on the land use element of the municipal master plan. Exceptions to this rule exist where redevelopment areas have been designated, and a redevelopment plan that overrides the underlying zoning has been adopted. See Chapter 7.

Unlike many communities that seek to discourage land use changes, Bound Brook has a history of recognizing that changes to the built environment are both inevitable, and desirable, provided they are appropriately planned for. A review of previous master plans reveals how the Planning Board has sought to take advantage of changing conditions and circumstances to promote desired land use changes in certain parts of the Borough.

Bound Brook adopted its first zoning code in 1921, and its first *Master Plan* in 1932. The plan established six land use categories: two residential categories (one single-family and one multi-family); two business categories (the Main Street / Talmage Avenue corridor and a neighborhood business district at the intersection of Vosseller and Union Avenues); a commercial district; and an industrial district.

The land use plan adopted as part of the 1954 *Master Plan* was also relatively simple, with seven designations: two single-family detached districts (A1 = 15,000 square foot lots, A2 = 6,000 square foot lots); a multifamily district; three commercial districts (C1 = Business – Retail/Services; C2 = Business – CBD; C3 = Business / Limited Industry); and an industrial district.

The most recent Land Use Element of the municipal *Master Plan* was adopted in 1988. It contains 12 land use categories. Seven of these land use categories are residential: R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6 and RS.

- R-1, R-2 and R-3 were detached single-family districts with minimum lot sizes of 40,000, 15,000 and 6,000 square feet, respectively. The Land Use Plan recommended re-designating the portion of R-3 in the northwest quadrant of the Borough to a new designation: R-B (Regional Business) with a four-story maximum building height.
- R-4 was a one- and two-family district with a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet.
- R-5 allowed four-family structures. It applied to the area occupied by the Bound Brook Apartments and to the area immediately to the west of Billian Park.
- R-6 was a garden apartment district on what is now Billian Park. The Land Use Plan recommended re-designating it as O-B.
- RS was a senior citizen housing district located where the Queens Gate apartments now exist.

There were also five non-residential categories: Office-Business (O-B), Business (B-1 and B-2), Commercial (C) and Industrial Park (I-P).

- O-B applied to the eastern section of Union Avenue, as well as to the area now occupied by Billian Park.
- B-1 applied to the western section of Union Avenue.
- B-2 applied to the eastern portion of the downtown.
- C applied to the core of the downtown, as well as to the Talmage Avenue corridor. The Land Use Plan converted the C designation to a B-2.
- I-P applied to the area south of the railroad tracks. The Land Use Plan recommended that industrial uses continue to be permitted, but that the zoning be changed to prohibit the storage of toxic and hazardous materials, as well as scientific and research labs.

The 1988 Land Use Plan recommended various changes to small pockets from one to another of the above designations.

By and large, the areas designated in 1988 as R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-4 continue to be zoned as such today. The B-1 designation along the western section of Union Avenue and a small portion of Vosseller Avenue remains in place. The O-B designation that applies to the eastern portion of Union Avenue and along Mountain Avenue, Hamilton Street and East Street, as well as Billian Park, also continues in place. The single R-6 district along East Street, including both sides of East High Street and East 2nd Street also remains.

Several modifications recommended by the 1988 Land Use Plan to the zoning scheme were implemented. The Regional Business (RB-1) designation was created for the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Union Avenue and Tea Street — the area occupied by the Bound Brook Apartments. The apartment complex appears to have consistently high occupancy rates, and no interest has been expressed by its owners to redevelop the property according to its current zoning designation. As such, the current zoning designation should now be reconsidered.

The Regional Business / Senior Residential (RB/SR) area occupying the northwestern quadrant of the Union Avenue/ Tea Street intersection — the former New Jersey state armory — has been more consequential. The portion of the property with frontage on Union Avenue was successfully developed with a shopping center; while the developable part of the rear of the property has now also been developed, with the Queens Gate apartment complex, although the age restriction requirement was lifted from the housing. The fact that this area was designated as an “area in need of redevelopment”, and benefitted from an adopted redevelopment plan no doubt played an important role in moving these projects along.

A few other modifications have also occurred since 1988. The B-2 district was eliminated and replaced with the B-R district, which applies to the core of the downtown and reaches a little west of Columbus Place. The rest of the Talmage Avenue corridor is designated as NB/R (Neighborhood Business / Residential) and subject to the provisions of Redevelopment Sub-Areas 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6.

In 2012, the Planning Board adopted the *Downtown Urban Design Plan* as an element of the *Master Plan*. This document laid the foundation for extensive amendments to the provisions in the Borough's Land Development Regulations affecting the B-R District, which encompasses much of the downtown. These were adopted in 2014.

The current zoning plan continues to have 12 districts. There are five residential land use categories (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4 and R-6), four non-residential categories (O-B, B-1, RB-1 and I-P) and three mixed-use (residential and commercial) categories (B-R, NB/R and RB/SR).

As previously mentioned, this scheme is modified, and over-ridden, in those areas with adopted redevelopment plans that specifically preempt the underlying zoning.

The *Current Zoning and Redevelopment Areas Map* shows the boundaries of each zoning designation, as well as the boundaries of the three Redevelopment Areas, and respective sub-areas.

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

Table 4 shows principal permitted uses within each zoning designation, along with additional permitted uses, and conditional uses, as of August 2016.

Table 4 — Principal Permitted Uses and Conditional Uses in Each Zoning Designation

Zoning District	Permitted Principal Uses	Additional Permitted Uses	Conditional Uses
R-1	Single-family residential	Public parks; public playgrounds	Home occupations
R-2	Single-family residential	Public parks; public playgrounds	Home occupations
R-3	Single-family residential	Public parks; public playgrounds	Home occupations
R-4	Single-family residential; two-family residential	Public parks; public playgrounds	Home occupations
R-6	Residential: single-family; two-family; three-family; four-family; apartment; public building	Public parks; public playgrounds; single-family detached; funeral homes	NA
B-R	Residential; live/work; elderly care; child care; retail; educational; entertainment; financial services; health club; hospitality; professional office; medical office; restaurant; cultural; government; house of worship; artisan workshops	NA	NA
NB/R	Retail; personal service; appliance repair; laundromat; building trades; bakery; grocery store; restaurant; business, professional and administrative office (first floor only); single-family and two-family residential (upper floor only)	Public parks; public playgrounds; public buildings	NA
OB	Office; business; executive; administrative; medical; professional; single-family residential	NA	Houses of worship; home occupations
B-1	Retail; business, professional and administration office; restaurant	NA	Public garages; gasoline service stations
RB-1	Corporate office center; hotel/motel; data processing; communications	NA	NA
RB/SR	Hotel/motel; medical/dental office; warehouse/distribution; child care center; senior citizen housing; telecommunications; assisted care/nursing home	NA	NA
IP	Warehouse; manufacturing; printing and publishing; truck terminals	NA	NA

Note: Does not include public and quasi-public uses.

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

Table 5 shows principal permitted uses within each Redevelopment Sub-Area, as of August 2016.

Table 5 — Principal Permitted Uses and Conditional Uses in Redevelopment Sub-Areas

Redevelopment Sub-Area	Permitted Principal Uses	Conditional Uses
1.1	Residential; live-work (work component limited to the ground level only); retail (ground level only); personal services (ground level only); hotel (including extended stay facilities); inn; conference center; restaurants and bars (only if associated with a hotel); civic uses; parking; temporary uses, such as farmers markets, flea markets, book fairs and art fairs, subject to a temporary use permit; community gardens	NA
1.2	Residential; live-work; retail, including grocery stores; personal and professional services; hotel and hospitality (including extended stay facilities); inn; conference center; restaurants and bars (ground level or rooftop only); dance clubs, comedy clubs, live music venues and other entertainment facilities; office, research and lab facilities; light industrial uses (only within enclosed, mixed-use buildings); civic, governmental and houses of worship; performing arts centers; stadiums; temporary uses, such as farmers markets, flea markets, book fairs and art fairs, subject to a temporary use permit; vertical farms; community gardens; sculpture parks; solar arrays, wind turbines and other green energy facilities	NA
1.3	Rail lines and rail-related uses on properties owned or controlled by rail companies or rail operators; commuter or multi-purpose parking; civic and governmental uses; public restrooms; recreational and sports-related uses; cafes; temporary uses, such as circuses, amusement rides, farmers markets, flea markets, book fairs, art fairs and similar uses, subject to a temporary use permit; mobile uses, such as food trucks, mobile retail and similar uses, subject to a mobile use permit; tree and plant nurseries; community gardens; sculpture parks; solar arrays, wind turbines and other green energy facilities	NA
1.4	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts
1.5	Residential; live-work; retail, including grocery stores; personal, professional and business services; hotel and hospitality (including extended stay facilities); inn; conference center; restaurants and bars (ground level or rooftop only); sports facilities; health and fitness facilities; offices, including medical offices; civic and governmental uses; museums; art galleries and artist studios; movie theatres, live performance theatres and performing arts centers; temporary uses, such as farmers markets, flea markets, book fairs and art fairs, subject to a temporary use permit; solar arrays (rooftop only), wind turbines and other green energy facilities; community gardens.	NA
2.1	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts
2.2	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts
2.3	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts
2.4	Single-family residential (1-, 2-, 3-family and townhouses); multi-family residential (stacked flats); live-work (only along public streets)	NA
2.5	Single-family residential (1-, 2-, 3-family and townhouses); multi-family residential (stacked flats); live-work (only along public streets)	NA
2.6	Retail sales and service; personal and business services; commercial recreation; health clubs and fitness centers; restaurants and eating and drinking establishments; banks (including drive-through) and savings and loan institutions; financial services and brokerage agencies; offices (above ground floor retail only)	NA
3	Regional shopping center (retail, personal services, office, bank, restaurant, movie theater, auditorium); hotel/motel; medical/dental office; warehouse/distribution; child care center; senior citizen housing; telecommunications; assisted care/nursing home	NA

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

Table 6 shows, for each redevelopment sub-area, whether permitted uses are governed by the underlying zoning or by the applicable redevelopment plan, as of August 2016.

Table 6 — Regulation of Permitted Uses Under Zoning and Redevelopment Plans

Redevelopment Plan Sub-Area	PERMITTED USES GOVERNED BY	
	Redevelopment Plan	Underlying Zoning
1.1	√	
1.2	√	
1.3	√	
1.4		√
1.5	√	
2.1		√
2.2		√
2.3*	√	√
2.4	√	
2.5	√	
2.6	√	
3	√	

** In the part of Sub-Area 2.3 that is also in the B-R district, permitted uses are controlled by the underlying zoning; in the part of Sub-Area 2.3 that is not in the B-R district, permitted uses are controlled by the Redevelopment Plan.*

2.4.3 Non-Conformities Within Current Regulatory Framework

The Non-Conforming Lots as to Minimum Lot Area Map and the Non-Conforming Lots as to Minimum Lot Width Map show the location of non-conforming lots by zoning district. Table 7 summarizes the data on non-conforming lots.

Table 7 — Non-Conforming Lots as to Minimum Lot Size and Lot Width, by Zoning District

Zoning District	Total Lots	Minimum Lot Area (Square Feet)	Number of Non-Conforming Lots - Area	Percent of Parcels in District	Minimum Lot Width (Feet)	Number of Non-Conforming Lots - Width	Percent of Parcels in District
R-1	19	40,000	2	10.5%	180	3	15.8%
R-2	386	15,000	170	44.0%	100	147	38.1%
R-3	843	6,000	279	33.1%	60	518	61.5%
R-4	963	5,000	351	36.5%	50	393	40.8%
R-6	54	5,000	26	48.2%	NA	0	NA
BR	149	NA	0	0.0%	NA	0	NA
NB/R	113	5,000	48	42.5%	50	44	38.9%
OB	203	11,250	117	57.6%	75	141	69.5%
B-1	78	NA	0	0.0%	NA	0	NA
RB-1	1	NA	0	0.0%	100	1	100.0%
RB/SR	3	120,000	0	0.0%	NA	0	NA
IP	30	130,680	18	60.0%	NA	0	NA
TOTAL	2,842		1,011	35.6%		1,247	43.9%

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

There are high concentrations of lots considered deficient as to minimum lot area. Certain sections of the R-2, R-3, R-4 and OB districts are particularly affected. Undersized lots constitute a burden for the property owners and discourage new investments in these properties, as any application involving site plan review must go before the Zoning Board. It is critical that zoning standards that create non-conformities be justifiable and in support of legitimate and explicit public policies, and not just the result of poor zoning practice or administrative oversight.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to document the number of applications to the Zoning Board seeking to remedy these, or other, non-conformities, or the type of relief requested, by zoning district, as the Zoning Board does not prepare Annual Reports, and Borough records relating to the Board’s activities are not available.

The location of non-conforming lots as to permitted use, by zoning district, as per the Borough’s property records, are shown on the *Non-Conforming Lots as to Permitted Uses Map*. Table 8 shows the number of non-conforming lots as to permitted use within each zoning district. There are more non-conforming uses than shown on this map, and these data should be viewed with caution, as they are based on property records, which identify some uses, such as commercial, industrial and residential apartments, but do not distinguish between one-, two- and three-family structures, for example. In addition, these records do not address mixed-use properties.

Table 8 — Non-Conforming Lots as to Permitted Uses, by Zoning District

Zoning District	Permitted Principal Uses	Total Lots	Number of Non-Conforming Properties	% of Total in District
R-1	Single-family residential	19	0	0.0%
R-2	Single-family residential	386	3	0.8%
R-3	Single-family residential	843	4	0.5%
R-4	Single-family residential; two-family residential	963	12	1.3%
R-6	Residential: single-family; two-family; three-family; four-family; apartment; public building	54	0	0.0%
BR	Residential; live/work; elderly care; child care; retail; educational; entertainment; financial services; health club; hospitality; professional office; medical office; restaurant; cultural; government; house of worship; artisan workshops	149	0	0.0%
NB/R	Retail; personal service; appliance repair; laundromat; building trades; bakery; grocery store; restaurant; business, professional and administrative office (first floor only); single-family and two-family residential (upper floor only)	113	0	0.0%
OB	Office: business; executive; administrative; medical; professional; single-family residential	203	9	4.4%
B-1	Retail; business, professional and administrative office; restaurant	78	9	11.5%
RB-1	Corporate office center; hotel / motel; data processing; communications	1	1	100.0%
RB/SR	Hotel/motel; medical/dental office; warehouse/distribution; child care center; senior citizen housing; telecommunications; assisted care/nursing home	3	0	0.0%
IP	Warehouse; manufacturing; printing and publishing; truck terminals	30	0	0.0%
TOTAL		2,842	38	1.3%

Note: Does not include public and quasi-public uses.

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK



As previously mentioned, permitted uses in certain areas are determined by the adopted redevelopment plans, not the underlying zoning. Table 9 shows the number of non-conforming lots as to permitted use, within each redevelopment plan sub-area. The same limitations with data mentioned above apply here.

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

Table 9 — Non-Conforming Lots as to Permitted Uses, by Redevelopment Sub-Areas

Redevelopment Sub-Area	Permitted Principal Uses	Total Lots	Number of Non-Conforming Properties	Explanation	% of Total in Sub-Area
1.1	Residential; live-work (work component limited to the ground level only); retail (ground level only); personal services (ground level only); hotel (including extended stay facilities); inn; conference center; restaurants and bars (only if associated with a hotel); civic uses; parking; temporary uses, such as farmers markets, flea markets, book fairs and art fairs (subject to a temporary use permit); community gardens	10	0		0.0%
1.2	Residential; live-work; retail, including grocery stores; personal and professional services; hotel and hospitality (including extended stay facilities); inn; conference center; restaurants and bars (ground level or rooftop only); dance clubs, comedy clubs, live music venues and other entertainment facilities; office, research, and lab facilities; light industrial uses (only within enclosed, mixed-use buildings); civic, governmental and houses of worship; performing arts centers; stadiums; temporary uses, such as farmers markets, flea markets, book fairs and art fairs, subject to a temporary use permit; vertical farms; community gardens; sculpture parks; solar arrays, wind turbines and other green energy facilities	5	0		0.0%
1.3	Rail lines and rail-related uses on properties owned or controlled by rail companies or rail operators; commuter or multi-purpose parking; civic and governmental uses; public restrooms; recreational and sports-related uses; cafes; temporary uses, such as circuses, amusement rides, farmers markets, flea markets, book fairs, art fairs and similar uses, subject to a temporary use permit; mobile uses, such as food trucks, mobile retail and similar uses, subject to a mobile use permit; tree and plant nurseries; community gardens; sculpture parks; solar arrays, wind turbines and other green energy facilities	30	0		0.0%
1.4	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts	180	0		0.0%
1.5	Residential; live-work; retail, including grocery stores; personal, professional and business services; hotel and hospitality (including extended stay facilities); inn; conference center; restaurants and bars (ground level or rooftop only); sports facilities; health and fitness facilities; offices, including medical offices; civic and governmental uses; museums; art galleries and artist studios; movie theatres, live performance theatres and performing arts centers; temporary uses, such as farmers markets, flea markets, book fairs and art fairs (subject to a temporary use permit); solar arrays (rooftop only), wind turbines and other green energy facilities; community gardens	2	0		0.0%
2.1	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts				
2.2	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts				
2.3	Uses permitted in the underlying zoning districts	20			
2.4	Single-family residential (1-, 2-, 3-family and townhouses); multi-family residential (stacked flats); live-work (only along public streets)	52	1	Gas station	1.9%
2.5	Single-family residential (1-, 2-, 3-family and townhouses); multi-family residential (stacked flats); live-work (only along public streets)	23	0		0.0%
2.6	Retail sales and service; personal and business services; commercial recreation; health clubs and fitness centers; restaurants and eating and drinking establishments; banks (including drive-through) and savings and loan institutions; financial services and brokerage agencies; offices (above ground floor retail only)	9	0		0.0%
3	Regional shopping center (retail, personal services, office, bank, restaurant, movie theater, auditorium); hotel/motel; medical/dental office; warehouse/distribution; child care center; senior citizen housing; telecommunications; assisted care/nursing home	3	1	Apartments	33.3%
TOTAL		457	2		0.4%

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Finally, Table 10 shows the currently required bulk standards by zoning district. Some of these standards will need to be adjusted, to reduce the incidence of non-conformities described above.

Table 10 — Bulk Standards by Zoning District

Zone	Minimum Lot Area (Sq Ft)	Minimum Lot Width	Minimum Front Yard Setback	Minimum Side Yard Setback	Minimum Rear Yard Setback	Maximum Impervious Coverage	Maximum Density (dwelling units/acre)	Maximum Floor Area Ratio	Maximum Building Height
R-1	40,000	180'	50'	25'/60'	75'	25%	NA	NA	2-1/2 stories — 35'
R-2	15,000	100'	50'	12'/30'	50'	40%	NA	NA	2-1/2 stories — 35'
R-3	6,000	60'	30'	6'/20'	25'	50%	NA	NA	2-1/2 stories — 35'
R-4	5,000	50'	30'	6'/15'	25'	60%	NA	NA	2-1/2 stories — 35'
R-6	5,000	NA	30'	25'	25'	65%	NA	NA	2-1/2 stories — 35'
BR	NA	NA	0	0	10'	NA	NA	NA	6 stories — 85'
NB/R	5,000	50'	25'	10'/20'	40'	65%	NA	NA	2-1/2 stories — 35'
OB	11,250	75'	30'	10'/20'	50'	50%	NA	NA	3 stories — 45'
B-1	NA	NA	20'	0'	10'	80%	NA	NA	2-1/2 stories — 35'
RB-1	120,000	100'	75'	50'	50'	60%	NA	0.4	40'
RB/SR	3 acres	NA	25'	10'	10'	70%	60	NA	7 stories — 85'
IP	3 acres	NA	25'	25'/50'	50'	65%	NA	NA	35'

2.4.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

A careful review of the Borough’s land use designations — viewed in light of both existing conditions, as well as current trends and desired future outcomes — has identified a number of areas that call for regulatory changes, and others where further study and evaluation are required.

West Main Street Neighborhood

This small, linear neighborhood of just two blocks consists of 56 lots with 53 older single-family homes on either side of 1/3 of a mile of West Main Street. It is a very isolated area — located between active NJ Transit rail lines to its north and the flood control levees to its south and west. It can be accessed only via two at-grade crossings, at La Monte Avenue and Vosseller Avenue.

The residential structures that front onto West Main Street are in an R-4 zone, which permits one and two-family detached housing. Lot sizes along the north side of West Main Street range from 4,000 square feet to 16,000 square feet, with an average around 8,000 square feet. The building stock is in poor to fair condition, and is primarily renter-

occupied. The ratios between the value of the improvements and the value of the land in this neighborhood are among the highest in the Borough.

As of 2016, with completion of the flood control levee system and federal regulatory remapping, the area is now classified by FEMA as “Zone X — Reduced Risk of Flooding Due to the Levee.” It is anticipated that this reduced risk will be reflected in the value of these properties, and spur market-driven improvements. If, over time, this does not occur, Borough designation as an “area in need of rehabilitation” may be appropriate to attract reinvestment.

Lot sizes along the south side of West Main Street vary, and start around 4,000 square feet. But some flag lots are much larger — in excess of four acres — and extend all the way south to the de-commissioned railroad rights-of-way that parallel the Raritan River. The flood control levees extend in a band along the rear of these large lots, just north of the railroad rights-of-way.

The rear portions of these larger lots are zoned industrial (I-P). Significant areas of this I-P zone are classified by FEMA as “Zone AE — 100-Year Floodplain” due to the potential for ponding inside the levees. The area’s flooding constraints, its proximity to residential properties and an existing municipal recreation facility, as well as the limited vehicular or railroad access to West Main Street, makes it unlikely that the area could or would be developed for industrial uses. The I-P zoning is therefore not appropriate.

Rezoning this area to the proposed Open Space / Civic Uses designation (see following discussion of *New Open Space / Civic Designation*) would reflect its environmental / flooding constraints, and its potential for acquisition as an extension of the existing, adjacent recreational facility.

Industrial-Park (I-P) Designation

This designation applies to the railroad rights-of-ways, to flood prone lands along the river, and to a few parcels where industrial uses are still active.

The entire I-P designation is obsolete and should be eliminated. The railroad rights-of-way should be zoned for railroad uses (see following discussion of *New Railroad Designation*). The undevelopable flood-prone lands along the river should be zoned for a new open space / civic uses designation (see following discussion of *New Open Space / Civic Designation*). The lands currently occupied by the few remaining industrial uses have all been rezoned for other uses through the *Redevelopment Plan for Area 1*.

This is not to say that industrial uses will no longer be permitted in the Borough. Pre-existing industrial uses are grandfathered and are allowed to continue, but not to expand. In addition, the B-R district allows a very limited subset of industrial uses that are commonly referred to as “artisanal manufacturing” — specialized, high value-added uses that require an educated and highly skilled work force, and do not present the types of noxious or intrusive off-site impacts, such as noise and emissions, associated with conventional manufacturing.

The lands occupied by the Brook Industrial Park should be rezoned to a new designation that matches the broad range of uses permitted under the *Redevelopment Plan for Sub-Area 1.2*. The two remaining parcels near Queen's Bridge where pre-existing, non-conforming quasi-industrial uses continue to operate should be rezoned for a designation (see following discussion of *New Riverfront Commercial Designation*) that matches those uses now permitted under the *Redevelopment Plan for Sub-Area 1.3*.

New Railroad Designation

As previously mentioned, all railroad rights-of-way lands in the Borough are currently zoned I-P. This designation is no longer appropriate, whether or not the rights-of-way continue to serve railroad purposes or are vacated. Even if such lands were not compromised by frequent flooding, the Borough's land use strategy does not call for attracting new industrial uses adjacent to the rail tracks. The land under the rail tracks is not subject to local land use regulations as long as it is owned by the railroad. As such, it is appropriate to zone these lands for railroad purposes, and not for industrial or other uses. A new land use designation of Railroad should be added to the Land Use Plan Element. If, in the future, the railroad companies divest these properties, the railroad zoning can be revisited, if necessary.

New Open Space / Civic (OS-C) Designation

This proposed land use designation would apply to (1) areas that are not developable in a conventional sense, due to environmental factors; (2) to all Borough-owned open space, whether developed or undeveloped as parks; and (3) to the two existing cemeteries.

All of these lands are currently included in other zoning designations. For example, the lands along the river are zoned Industrial (I-P), Billian Park and Bound Brook Park are included in the Office-Business (O-B) zone, and the Middlebrook Preserve, the largest publicly-owned parcel, is zoned for Regional Business / Senior Residential (RB/SR). These designations are not appropriate.

Open space, recreational facilities, civic facilities and cemeteries all attract visitors, if successful. As such, it may be appropriate for the new zoning designation to allow development of the types of infrastructure and ancillary uses that encourage attendance and support the users of these facilities.

New Riverfront Commercial (R-C) Designation

This proposed land use designation would apply to the two remaining parcels near Queen's Bridge where pre-existing, non-conforming quasi-industrial uses continue to operate. This designation would match the uses permitted under the *Redevelopment Plan for Sub-Area 1.3* and eliminate any possible confusion with respect to permitted uses.

New Mixed-Use (MUD) Designation

This proposed land use designation would apply to the Brook Industrial Park. Permitted uses should match the

broad range of uses permitted under the *Redevelopment Plan for Sub-Area 1.2* and, again, eliminate any possible confusion with respect to permitted uses.

Regional-Business 1 Designation

The RB-1 designation is focused on large floor plate corporate office, data processing / communications and hotel uses. It applies to the area currently occupied by the Bound Brook Apartments, making it a non-conforming use. The burden of non-conformity discourages reinvestment in the property. The RB-1 designation has not been effective in spurring change and does not provide an appropriate blueprint for future investments and transformation in the area.

A more appropriate designation for this highly visible gateway location on the Union Avenue corridor would allow mixed-use residential / commercial development at a scale to be determined. This can be accomplished through either a revised B-1 designation (see following discussion of *Business 1 Designation*), or by creating a new zoning designation. A more detailed urban design and planning investigation is needed to define a future direction for this area.

Business 1 Designation

The B-1 designation, which applies to the western half of Union Avenue, encourages strip commercial development and does not allow residential.

A detailed planning study of this area is recommended, in order to clearly define a vision going forward. Given the immediate proximity of high- and medium-density residential neighborhoods both to the south and to the north of the Union Avenue corridor, it can be argued that the intent for this area should be to reinforce the pedestrian scale and reign in automotive and auto-dependent uses. This corridor has bus service, continuous sidewalks and moderate size blocks. However, some lots are quite shallow and may present challenges to redevelopment. A more detailed examination of the corridor's urban design possibilities is needed, with a view towards possibly allowing residential over commercial.

A key consideration will be defining the appropriate scale and building height. The district currently allows only 2 ½ stories — a very modest scale, unlikely to encourage substantial new investment. The adjacent RB/SR district, by contrast, allows buildings up to seven stories or 85 feet.

In addition to the planning and urban design analysis, appropriate design standards should be put into place to guide the architectural character of new buildings, as well as the desired character of the streetscape.

Regional Business / Senior Residential Designation

The RB/SR designation applies to Redevelopment Area 3. Although currently built-out, the shopping center portion is aging and could evolve into a higher intensity development in the future. The current zoning allows

significantly more intense development (7 stories or 85 feet) than is presently found on the site. While this may not be the appropriate scale for future redevelopment of this site, neither is the current single-story and single-use configuration. The age-restricted housing provisions were removed from the *Redevelopment Plan*, and should also be removed from the zoning. Additional thought should be given to developing a vision for how this area should evolve in the future. And, similar to the B-1 district, appropriate design standards should be adopted to guide future change.

R-2 and R-3 Designations

There are significant non-conformities in these districts with respect to minimum lot size and lot frontage. These non-conformities constitute an onus for property-owners that are to justify from a public policy perspective. They can be addressed through simple adjustments to the district's bulk standards.

It is estimated that if the minimum frontage in the R-2 district were reduced from 100 feet to 75 feet, the number of non-conforming lots would be reduced by 50 percent, from 147 to 74. None of the affected lots could be legally subdivided. It is estimated that if the minimum lot size in the R-2 district were reduced from 15,000 square feet to 10,000 square feet, the number of non-conforming lots would be reduced by 48 percent, from 171 to 89. None of the affected lots could be legally subdivided.

Finally, it is estimated that if the minimum lot frontage in the R-3 district were reduced from 60 feet to 50 feet, the number of non-conforming lots would be reduced by 80 percent, from 518 to 103. None of the affected lots could be legally subdivided.

In light of these data, it is recommended that these adjustments be undertaken to remedy these situations.

R-4 Designation

The Crescent Drive neighborhood is currently zoned R-4. The neighborhood has an extremely high incidence of non-conformities, both with respect to minimum lot size and to minimum lot width. The neighborhood is overwhelmingly two-family residential. While this is a permitted use, the R-4 designation does not have separate bulk standards for two-family dwellings. The minimum lot size is 5,000 square feet; the minimum lot width is 50 feet. The majority of the lots in the Crescent Drive neighborhood have a 25-foot width, and a lot area of 2,500 square feet. The best way to remedy the situation is to amend the R-4 regulations by adding bulk standards for two-family dwellings, reflecting the existing conditions. This will dramatically reduce the incidence of non-conformity. A similar situation exists along East Street, in the R-6 district.

There is also evidence of conversions of single-family dwellings to two-family dwellings, primarily in certain parts of the R-4 district closer to Main Street. As discussed above, both uses are currently permitted, but do not have distinct development standards. Traditional two-family dwellings are attached vertically, via a party wall, and sit on separate lots. In the R-4 district, two-family dwellings have been created by subdividing existing single-family dwellings into

a ground-floor unit and a separate second-floor unit. This reduces the supply of traditional single-family homes, changes the character of the neighborhood and may create parking issues.

These conversions can be halted, although not reversed, by simple adjustments to the district's regulations. The definition of a two-family dwelling should be adjusted to make it clear that it applies only to two, single-family dwellings attached by a party wall and occupying separate lots. This distinction can be further underscored by clearly defining distinct *building types* for single-family and two-family structures. The zoning should have separate bulk regulations for two-family dwellings. The district would continue to allow both single-family dwellings and two-family dwellings, as building types, but would prohibit the conversion of single-family dwellings to two-family dwellings through internal partitioning.

New Highway Mixed-Use Designation

The R-1 district includes two heavily wooded, undeveloped lots with frontage on the westbound lane of Route 22. Block 97, Lot 2 comprises 12.98 acres and has 2,121 feet of frontage on Route 22. Block 96, Lot 2 comprises 5.4 acres, with 438 feet of frontage on Washington Avenue and 657 feet of frontage on the ramp connecting Mountain Avenue with westbound Route 22. Both parcels have the same owner and are designated as "vacant" in the Borough's tax rolls. Recently, tax appeals have been filed for both properties.

The R-1 designation is not appropriate for these properties. Encouraging additional residential driveways on Route 22 is not a recommended land use policy. Given the two sites' location, and high visibility from the highway corridor, a mixed-use or commercial designation would seem more appropriate. Access to Lot 96 can be achieved from Washington Road; access to Lot 97 can only be achieved from Route 22. Access permits from NJDOT will be required, and these may constrain how the sites can be developed. Further investigation is warranted, with a view towards a different zoning designation that better recognizes the two sites' potential.

Office-Business Designation

There are a significant number of non-conforming lots in the O-B district, both with respect to minimum lot size and lot frontage. In addition, there are indications that the limitations on the residential component in this district may be raising difficulties to property owners and preventing desired reinvestment.

Maintaining the integrity of the older, larger housing structures, along with the prevailing setbacks and scale, will continue to be important, but the strategies for achieving this may need to be re-examined. It may be appropriate to revisit the regulations and possibly allow more residential and mixed-use development in this district.

In addition, explicit design standards to better guide change should be considered, including streetscape standards for the properties fronting directly on East Union Avenue.

Residential 6 Designation

The R-6 designation applies to a relatively small area between East Street and Billian Park. It is entirely subsumed by Redevelopment Area 1, however the *Redevelopment Plan* currently defers to the underlying zoning district with respect to the development standards.

The area is largely residential. The housing stock is in fair to poor condition, with a predominance of rentals, and includes two-family structures along with small apartment buildings. There are quite a few non-conforming lots.

Redevelopment of the nearby Bound Brook hotel site, as well as elsewhere in the downtown, will increase interest in the redevelopment of this area, which is very close to the downtown and to the train station.

It is therefore recommended that the portion of the R-6 district that fronts on East Street — which has a defined character that deserves to be preserved — be rezoned to the modified R-4, with the proposed new bulk standards that reduce non-conformities and the additional controls on building types (see above).

The remaining area covered by the R-6 designation will retain the existing zoning, however the R-6 standards should also be modified. Single-family and two-family will no longer be permitted building types. Instead, the permitted building types will be townhouses and apartment buildings, with a maximum building height of 45 feet. The modified R-6, similar to the modified R-4, will have specific bulk standards for each of the permitted building types, in this case townhouses and apartment buildings. This will provide a superior regulatory framework for the future transformation of this area.

2.5 Public Infrastructure

The vast majority of Bound Brook is well-served by various types of public infrastructure. See Section 2.6 for transportation infrastructure.

Electricity is provided by Public Service Electric and Gas (PSEG). In most places, electric cables are mounted on poles located in the public right-of-way. In the downtown area, electric cables have been placed underground, a far superior solution that should be adopted throughout the Borough, wherever feasible.

Public water is provided by New Jersey American Water Company, the largest investor-owned water utility in New Jersey, with 2.7 million customers. The water consumed in Bound Brook is withdrawn from the Raritan River by NJAW at its water treatment facility in nearby Bridgewater, and conveyed east by way of a major water main that runs along the banks of the Raritan River. There is no indication that private wells are in service.

Sanitary sewer is handled by the Middlesex County Utilities Authority (MCUA). Virtually all of Bound Brook is included in the sewer service area defined in the Lower Raritan Middlesex Water Quality Management Plan adopted by NJDEP. The exceptions are a few parcels located next to the Raritan River. The MCUA has several facilities located

along the riverfront, by the Queen's Bridge, as well as a pump station located in the Middlesex Preserve. A major trunk line / interceptor runs north along the Bound Brook to the MCUA's wastewater treatment facility in North Plainfield. A few properties in the Middlebrook area still rely on septic tanks.

Stormwater is handled by the Borough's storm sewer infrastructure. As part of the US Army Corps of Engineers project additional drainage was added near the diversion pipes in the downtown area.

Voice and data services are provided by Verizon and Cablevision.

Finally, after completion of the US Army Corps of Engineers *Green Brook Flood Control Project*, the Borough is served by a comprehensive system of levees, floodwalls and floodgates that constitute a very significant investment in public flood prevention infrastructure. These facilities are maintained by Somerset County.

There is no indication that any of these elements of public infrastructure will constitute barriers or present capacity limitations to additional growth in the Borough.

Bound Brook's Public Works Department is responsible for maintenance of the storm sewers not associated with the Green Brook flood control project. It is also responsible for maintaining the sanitary sewer system, parks and playgrounds, municipal building and municipal library, street maintenance and sweeping, tree trimming and removal, sign maintenance and snow plowing, removal of yard debris and for parking meter repairs. The Department operates from the public works facility on Chimney Rock Road in nearby Bridgewater.

2.6 Circulation, Connectivity and Mobility

2.6.1 Network Characteristics

Bound Brook is fortunate to have a fairly well connected circulation system.

The Borough's street system defines a modified grid, with blocks of variable size. Most blocks south of Union Avenue are of moderate size and therefore have a pedestrian scale.

There are very few cul-de-sacs or dead-end streets in the Borough, thus guaranteeing a high level of connectivity.

The ratio of intersections per linear feet of street center line — a commonly used measure of connectivity — is 599 for the area south of Union Avenue, which indicates a high level of connectivity and a pedestrian-friendly environment. The same ratio for the entire Borough is 802, which indicates larger blocks and less intersections in the area north of Union Avenue.

The *Transportation and Circulation Map* provides information on various features of the Borough's transportation and circulation infrastructure.

While circulation within the Borough is relatively easy, both natural and man-made barriers constrain circulation between the Borough and its neighbors, forcing both pedestrian and vehicular traffic onto a limited number of through streets.

- To the west, the Middle Brook and I-287 create a 1.7-mile long barrier to circulation between the Borough and Bridgewater that is only pierced in two locations: by Talmage Avenue at the Vernon Noble Memorial Bridge; and at the West Union Avenue bridge. There are also several rail crossings of the Middle Brook, south of Talmage Avenue, but no additional pedestrian and bicycle crossings. I-287 can be accessed from the Borough at the Route 28 and Route 22 interchanges.
- To the south, the combination of freight and passenger rail lines, and the Raritan River, create a one-mile long barrier to circulation between the Borough and South Bound Brook that is pierced only by South Main Street, at the Queen's Bridge.
- The railroad lines also act as a daunting barrier between the Main Street / Talmage Avenue corridors and the south side of the tracks, including access to the riverfront. The small neighborhood along West Main Street south of the tracks and the Brook Industrial Park are accessible only by two at-grade crossings at La Monte Avenue and Vosseller Avenue. The two at-grade crossings are a mere four blocks apart, or roughly 1,300 linear feet.
- To the east, the Bound Brook creates a separation between Bound Brook and Middlesex Borough that is crossed only at the Green Brook bridge on East Main Street and at the East Union Avenue bridge. There are railroad crossings, but no additional pedestrian or bicycle crossings.
- Finally, to the north, Route 22 creates a barrier that is crossed only at Mountain, Thompson and Vosseller Avenues. Route 22 can be accessed from the Borough at these locations.

The practical consequences of having limited road connections between the Borough and its neighbors is that those existing connections have much higher traffic volumes than would otherwise be the case.

These physical barriers also preclude, or at a minimum discourage, circulation by pedestrians and bicyclists. There are no dedicated pedestrian and bicycle bridges linking Bound Brook to its neighbors.

There are also a number of one-way streets in the Borough, primarily in the neighborhoods closer to the downtown. These one-way streets should be subject to a fresh look to see if they are in fact justified and effective, and not just complicating local circulation.

Finally, Tea Street was disconnected years ago at Cedarcrest Drive, to protect that neighborhood from cut-through traffic between Route 28 / I-287 and Route 22. That missing link in the network diverts traffic and places additional stress on the intersections between Cedarcrest Drive and Thompson Avenue, as well as on the intersection of

Thompson and Union Avenues. Other approaches to neighborhood traffic management, such as traffic calming, should be evaluated to see whether they would be able to better address the cut-through traffic situation.

2.6.2 Streets and Highways

There are 25.4 center miles of roads in the Borough. NJDOT has jurisdiction over 2.08 center miles, Somerset County has jurisdiction over 2.73 center miles and the Borough is responsible for the rest, or 20.56 center miles.

Bound Brook is well positioned relative to the regional highway system. It is served by an interstate (I-287), and two state highways (US Route 22 and NJ Route 28).



I-287 runs along the Borough's western edge.

There is a full interchange at West Union Avenue and another nearby interchange at Route 22 and Finderne Avenue in Bridgewater. In 2012, this section of I-287 carried an average of 132,500 vehicles a day.

Route 22 runs along the Borough's northern edge for only 0.6 miles. The Borough is served by a four ramp partial interchange at Mountain Avenue, a partial interchange at Thompson Avenue and a signalized intersection at Vosseller Avenue. In 2014, this section of Route 22 carried an average of 56,400 vehicles a day.

Finally, Route 28 (Union Avenue) runs through the center of the Borough. A two-lane road, with a 66-foot right-of-way, a 40-foot cartway and curb-side parking, it is lined with a mix of residential, commercial and civic uses. Union Avenue functions like a second Main Street, but it carries high volumes of traffic — an average of 23,000 vehicles a day in 2013. It has signalized intersections at Tea Street, Thompson Avenue, Vosseller Avenue, Mountain Avenue and East Street.

There are a number of County roads in Bound Brook: Talmage Avenue / Main Street (CR 533), Vosseller Avenue, from Main Street to Route 28 (CR 635), Tea Street, from Route 28 to the Bridgewater Township line (CR 687), Thompson Avenue, from West High Street to Route 28 (CR 525), Mountain Avenue / Washington Avenue (CR 527), Bolmer Boulevard / East Street (CR 689), South Main Street (CR 527) and Veteran's Memorial Boulevard (CR 654).

The major east / west connectors in the Borough are Main Street / Talmage Avenue and Union Avenue. Other east / west connectors are 2nd Street, High Street and Maple Avenue.

The major north / south connectors are Tea Street, Vosseller Avenue, Thompson Avenue and Mountain Avenue.

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

Church Street is a partial north / south connector.

There are very few private roads in the Borough. All provide just local access.

Most local streets in the Borough have a 50-foot right-of-way and a 28- to 36-foot cartway. Some narrower streets have 40-foot right-of-ways; a few wider streets have 60-foot right-of-ways.

There are 8 signalized intersections in the Borough.

Table 11 provides functional characteristics for major roads in the Borough, such as functional classification, cartway and posted speed limit.

Table 11 — Roadway Jurisdiction and Functional Characteristics

Roadway	Jurisdiction and Functional Classification	Pavement (Feet)	Shoulder (Feet)	Posted Speed Limit (MPH)
Bolmer Boulevard	County Urban Minor Arterial	36/24	0/2	Not posted
East Street	County Urban Minor Arterial	36/24	0/2	Not posted
Hamilton Street	Municipal Urban Major Collector	32/26	0	Not posted
High Street	Municipal Urban Major Collector	39/35	0	25
E. Main Street	County Urban Minor Arterial	30	2	25
W. Maple Avenue	Municipal Urban Major Collector	40	0	Not posted /25
Mountain Avenue	County Urban Minor Arterial	24	4	35
Route 22	NJDOT Urban Principal Arterial	24/36	10/0	55
Talmage Avenue	County Urban Minor Arterial	30	0	30
Tea Street	Municipal and County Urban Major Collector & Urban Local	30	6/0	35/30
Thompson Avenue	Municipal and County Urban Major Collector	28/32	0	25/35
Route 28/Union Avenue	NJDOT Urban Principal Arterial	40	0	35
Vosseller Avenue	Municipal and County Urban Major Collector	30/28	0	25

Source: New Jersey Department of Transportation, Straight Line Diagrams, 2015.

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

Table 12 provides data on traffic volumes, expressed in terms of average annual daily traffic (AADT), for major roads in the borough.

Table 12 — Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) on Major Roads

Roadway	Location	AADT	Date	AADT	Date	Functional Classification
Talmage Avenue	Between Keuren Ave and Talmage Ave			9,143	Sept. 2013	Urban minor arterial
County Route 527/ East Main Street	Between Maiden Ln and Mountain Ave			11,773	May 2015	Urban minor arterial
Mountain Avenue	Between Wahnetah Dr and Hawthorne Ave	11,216	2009	10,806	April 2015	Urban minor arterial
Thompson Avenue	Between W. Union Ave and William St	8,033	2005	8,544	June 2015	Urban collector
Union Avenue	Between Tea St and CR 525	20,122	2007	23,021	July 2013	Urban principal arterial
Vosseller Avenue	Between W. 2nd St and W. High St			4,650	May 2014	Urban collector
Route 22		50,686	2009			Federal highway

Source: New Jersey Department of Transportation, 2013-2015.

2.6.3 Pedestrians and Bicyclists

The older parts of the Borough are well served by sidewalks, and virtually every street — south of Union Avenue — has sidewalks on both sides.

However, most neighborhood sidewalks are only four feet wide and in some locations, such as along the south side of Talmage Avenue, utility poles placed in the sidewalks create obstructions and make the sidewalk barely usable, or not at all, in particular for baby strollers and wheelchairs.

Many older sidewalks are in poor condition, with severe lifting, due to tree roots.

Sidewalks on Main Street are wider, with an average of 10-feet. Sidewalks along Union Avenue are less wide.

More recently developed neighborhoods, north of Union Avenue, may have sidewalks on one side or no sidewalks at all. These neighborhoods generally have low levels of vehicular traffic.

The Borough does not have a sidewalk inventory. There is no register of gaps or missing sidewalk sections, and there is no list of deteriorated sidewalks in need of replacement. Similarly, there is no inventory of curbs that should be depressed and upgraded in order to comply with accessibility requirements.

The Borough currently has no dedicated bicycle facilities. The paved paths on top of the levees built by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as part of the *Green Brook Flood Control Project* offer a readymade opportunity for a dedicated bicycle and pedestrian path. However, when the USACE acquired the easements to construct this facility,

it apparently neglected to obtain permission from a handful of private property owners to allow for public access. As such, the paths on the top of the levees, while informally used by local residents, are officially off-limits to pedestrians and bicycles for the time being.

The Planning Board adopted a *Riverfront Access Plan* in 2015 that contains a detailed strategy for providing public access from the downtown area to the riverfront and developing an ambitious trail system along the riverfront.

Finally, the Borough adopted a "Complete Streets" approach, also in 2015. This policy has not yet resulted in any new on-street or off-street facilities.

There is no data on pedestrian trips or bicycle trips in the Borough.

2.6.4 Transit

Bound Brook is served by passenger rail, bus and jitney transit service.

Bound Brook station is located on NJ Transit's Raritan Valley Line, which offers service to Newark Penn Station and New York Penn Station. It is currently served by 54 NJ Transit commuter trains each weekday. NJ Transit's FY 2014 boarding count indicates 693 average weekday passengers boarding in Bound Brook. Morning rush hour travel time to Newark is about 50 minutes under normal conditions; and between 66 minutes and 93 minutes to New York, with transfer in Newark Penn Station to North Jersey Coast Line or Northeast Corridor trains. The adult fare is currently \$14.00 one way. One seat ride service to New York Penn Station is available during off-peak hours.

The station offers both daily and monthly commuter parking. Currently, there are 70 daily spots and 225 monthly (permit) spots, including three ADA-compliant spaces. Only 17% of commuters with parking permits are Borough residents, whereas 29% are from Somerset, 15% from Piscataway, 8% from Bridgewater, and 6% from Hillsborough and Middlesex. The parking lots are owned by NJ Transit and operated by the Borough. The typical utilization rate is 52% of capacity.



The Station facility itself is currently leased to the Borough and is listed on the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places. NJ Transit and its predecessors have maintained railroad operations within the Bound Brook area for over 150 years. The Central Railway of New Jersey, a predecessor of NJ Transit, operated a variety of railway related activities on portions of the station area, including

engine repair and cleaning facilities, roundhouse and fuel storage.

NJ Transit bus routes 114 and 117 provide service to New York City–Port Authority Bus Terminal. There is a park & ride at the Washington Avenue interchange with US Route 22 in nearby Green Brook.

NJ Transit bus routes 65 and 66 provide service to Newark-Broad Street station. Borough residents may board at multiple stops along Union Avenue.

Somerset County also provides some transit services in the Borough. The SCOOT-R1, SCOOT-R2, DASH 851, DASH 852 and CAT 1R offer more local connections on a limited schedule.

While the level of service provided by the various transit operators is far from good, Borough residents and visitors benefit from higher levels of service than most suburban areas in New Jersey.

2.6.5 On-Demand Transportation Services

Bound Brook is served by a number of small, local taxi services, such as La Sombra, Trackside Taxis, Quick and AAA Taxi. Some taxis provide service to Newark Liberty International Airport.

On-demand car services, such as Uber and Lyft, are also available.

2.6.6 Levels of Service and Circulation Conflicts

No data is available regarding levels of service on these roads or at their intersections.

The *Vehicular Collisions Map* shows local “hot spots” for vehicular crashes. In 2014, a total of 323 reported incidents were filed. The most significant location is the intersection of Tea Street and Union Avenue. Of lesser significance, but also notable, is the intersection of Vosseller Avenue and Union Avenue, and several intersections on Mountain Avenue, from East Main Street to East Union Avenue. Sadly, it was not possible to acquire bicycle and pedestrian crash data for the Borough, although the data is compiled by the Bound Brook police department and forwarded to the NJDOT.

2.6.7 Travel Behavior

There is limited data on the travel habits of Borough residents other than journey-to-work (commuting) data, which typically represents only 40 percent of all trips.

Table 13 shows commuting data for each of the Borough’s three census tracts. As expected, the lower density census tract 513 (area east of Vosseller Avenue and north of Union Avenue) has greater auto-dependency, with 79% of workers driving alone to work, and 82% of households owning two or more cars.

In census tract 512 (area west of Vosseller Avenue and south of Talmage Avenue), 20% of households do not own a car, and 32% own only one vehicle; and while 50% drove to work alone, 34% carpooled.

In census tract 511 (area east of Vosseller Avenue and south of Union Avenue), 15% of households have no vehicle and 49% have just one; and while 55% drove alone to work, 28% carpooled, 7% took transit and 5% walked or bicycled to work.

Table 13 — Journey to Work Characteristics by Census Tract, 2014

	Census Tract 511		Census Tract 512		Census Tract 513	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	2,033		2,477		1,214	
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK						
Car, truck or van		83.5		84.3		87.5
Drove alone		55.0		50.1		79.2
Carpooled		28.5		34.2		8.2
Workers per car, truck or van	1.31		1.30		1.05	
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)		7.0		4.1		3.1
Walked		2.8		2.9		2.3
Bicycle		2.5		4.0		1.5
Taxicab, motorcycle or other means		3.6		1.0		2.1
Worked at home		0.6		3.6		3.5
VEHICLES AVAILABLE						
No vehicles available		15.4		16.3		2.0
1 vehicle available		48.8		26.0		16.2
2 vehicles available		19.9		29.1		52.1
3 or more vehicles available		15.9		28.7		29.8

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

2.6.8 Parking

There is no Borough-wide parking analysis nor is it likely that there is a need for one. While there may be small, localized parking deficits, it would appear that parking is not a pressing issue in most parts of the Borough. Any localized deficits should be able to be addressed through small-scale interventions.

A parking study of the downtown area was conducted in 2011 as part of the *Downtown Urban Design Plan*. That study found no immediate need to increase the supply of downtown parking, but did anticipate the need to increase the supply in the future, as downtown redevelopment projects came on line. The study also offered a number of recommendations for making existing parking resources more efficient and better utilized.

The study was updated in October of 2016, prompted by the increased activity in downtown redevelopment efforts. The Borough has 122 on-street metered parking spaces and 377 spaces in parking lots. There are other on-street parking spaces that are time restricted but free, and others that are free and not time restricted.

A 2013 report by Fitzgerald & Hallaway indicates that there are 20 private parking lots with 455 parking spaces in the downtown. The largest is the 80-space Brook Arts Center lot.

The 2016 study found that there is *no shortage* of parking downtown. However, parking fees and regulations are uneven and there is a deficit of on-street transient parking for stays longer than two hours. The parking meters are functionally obsolete.

The study recommends recalibrating parking fees and time limits; updating the parking technology, with pay-by-cell phone or on-line options; recalibrating the distribution between monthly permits and daily permits in the commuter lots; dramatically increasing parking enforcement; and replacing the meter stock.

NJ Transit's efforts to redevelop the commuter parking lots next to the train station with additional residential, if carried out, will require the construction of a parking deck to replace the existing surface parking and service the new residential tenants.

It is likely that a second commuter parking facility located on the south side of the tracks on the parcel currently occupied by the self-storage facility — an idea anticipated in the *Downtown Urban Design Plan* and in the *Redevelopment Plan for Sub-Area 1.3* — will also be necessary to service primarily commuters originating on the south side of the Raritan River.

The parking standards in the Borough's Land Use Regulations are dated and should be re-assessed. They do not recognize New Jersey's Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS); and are not current with respect to parking requirements for mixed-use projects or for non-residential uses in a built-up environment such as the Borough.

The adopted *Redevelopment Plans for Area 1 and 2* contain lower residential parking standards than required by the RSIS — appropriately recognizing the transit opportunities and the pedestrian-friendly character of the area — and the Borough's Planning Board has routinely granted "de minimus" exceptions allowing residential redevelopment projects to proceed with reduced parking counts.

Recent overnight parking utilization data from the Meridia project validates the Borough's reduced residential parking requirements. The expectation is that per household residential parking demand in the downtown will further decline over time, as the supply of rental housing at reasonable price points increases elsewhere in the region, and rental housing near the train station captures a larger share of transit-oriented households, and a lesser share of the general population.

2.6.9 Conclusions and Recommendations

Largely as a result of the Borough's traditional pattern of development, internal circulation works relatively well for all modes of transportation: vehicular, pedestrian and bicycles. There is a high level of connectivity in the circulation

network, which means that all areas of the Borough — with two exceptions — are easily reachable.

The two exceptions are the small Middlebrook Road neighborhood, north of Route 22; and the small West Main Street neighborhood, south of the railroad tracks.

The high connectivity notwithstanding, there is clearly room for improvements to the circulation network, improvements that will facilitate mobility and reduce existing friction.

While improvements to the vehicular circulation system are likely to be localized and relatively modest, there is considerable potential for improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle circulation system, primarily through dedicated, off-street facilities, as well as new connections that expand the network and increase both its range and its performance.

There is also potential for improvements to the level of service provided by the various transit operators.

Additional recommendations:

New Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing of the Raritan River

The Queens Bridge linking Bound Brook and South Bound Brook is the only crossing of the Raritan River for many miles in both directions. To the west, the closest crossing is the Manville Causeway in Manville; to the east, it is the Landing Lane Bridge in New Brunswick.

A new vehicular crossing of the Raritan River, while very desirable, will be an expensive project, well beyond the scope of a municipal master plan. No ideas for how, or where, to accomplish this are currently on the table.

New Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing of the Middle Brook

This new link is already targeted in the Borough's adopted *Downtown Urban Design Plan* and *Riverfront Access Plan*. It envisions converting the existing, decommissioned freight rail bridge over the Middle Brook into a bicycle/pedestrian bridge, linking the Borough to Bridgewater and linking the Bound Brook riverfront with the future 400+ acres of parkland on the Wyeth property, currently under remediation. Ultimately, the goal is to create a Raritan riverfront greenway linking the Borough to Somerville and Raritan Boroughs.

New Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing(s) of the Bound Brook

Opportunities may exist to create new pedestrian and bicycle connections between Bound Brook and the Borough of Middlesex. The substantial preserved lands in both towns, on both sides of the Bound Brook, constitute a sizable conservation area in the floodplain of the Bound Brook and Ambrose Brook. Billian Park (20 acres) and the adjacent Presbyterian cemetery (28+ acres) to the north, along with the floodplain conservation areas constitute a large chunk of land with limited circulation links. While new vehicular connections through these areas are unlikely, new pedestrian and bicycle connections would enhance the non-motorized circulation system, better link the existing

neighborhoods on either side of the stream corridor and provide better access to these preserved lands.

The responders to the community survey expressed strong support for this concept.

New Grade-Separated Access to South Side of Railroad Tracks

Arguably the most important improvement to the Borough's vehicular circulation system is providing grade-separated access from West Main Street to the area south of the tracks. This access would replace, or perhaps supplement, the two existing grade crossings, and would consist of either a tunnel, or an overpass. It is seen as an absolute pre-requisite for any higher-density redevelopment scenario of Redevelopment Sub-Area 1.3

The *Downtown Urban Design Plan* shows this new connection as an extension of Mountain Avenue, which would require close coordination with the possible future redevelopment of the NJ Transit commuter parking lots.

The possibility of this new grade-separated connection has been considered only at the most conceptual level. It will require a feasibility study at the appropriate time to more fully evaluate the various alternatives and assess the costs and benefits associated with pursuing this idea.

Circulation Plan Element

The Borough does not have a circulation plan element as part of the *Master Plan*. As such, there is no comprehensive, long-term vision for improving circulation and mobility. A circulation plan element that is synched with the land use plan element and the zoning is an indispensable tool for guiding municipal actions and investments in the circulation infrastructure.

Sidewalk Inventory

An essential component of both the circulation plan and the capital improvement plan (see following discussion of *Capital Improvement Plan*) is an inventory of all sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities that exist on the public right-of-way, as well as assessments of their existing conditions. The sidewalk inventory allows the Borough to identify important missing links, if such exist, as well as prioritize reconstruction or modification investments.

The sidewalk inventory would address existing handicap-compatible features, identify missing features and prioritize new investments in upgrading the sidewalk and walkway network, with a view towards achieving full accessibility.

Neighborhood Traffic Calming / Green Streets / Complete Streets

Another important component of the circulation plan is an assessment of the potential for various types of physical interventions in the design of the Borough's streets. Traffic calming interventions are aimed at reducing motor vehicle speed and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety. Traffic calming is often coupled with green infrastructure or green street interventions, where redundant pavement is replaced with pervious and planted surfaces that increase

the infiltration of stormwater runoff and improve water quality. Both traffic calming and green street interventions can be coupled with a “Complete Streets” approach, that seeks to provide a better balance between motor vehicles and other users of streets.

These types of interventions are very local and therefore require building a consensus among those most directly affected by them. This means involving neighborhood residents in the process of identifying the most compelling candidates for these approaches, and developing a consensus regarding what types of interventions to execute.

Capital Improvement Plan

The Borough’s engineers maintain a street evaluation, which is used for grant applications directed to streets requiring urgent intervention. However, the Borough does not have a formal capital improvement plan, which would provide the platform to implement new initiatives — specifically the items on the circulation plan element. As such, specific projects have not been developed and funding mechanisms have not been identified.

While a routine maintenance plan, funded by NJDOT’s Local Aid Program, may ensure periodic resurfacing or rebuilding of badly deteriorated streets and sidewalks, relying exclusively on this program essentially leaves the Borough on auto-pilot, as it does not question the design and features of the streets and other elements of the circulation system that are part of the program, nor does it address any investments in new or modified facilities.

A capital improvement plan tied directly to the circulation plan element would bring clarity and predictability in terms of capital investments in facilities for all modes of transportation, including new bike lanes or bike paths, upgrading of existing pedestrian facilities and location and characterization of new pedestrian facilities, street redesign and so forth. This would better position the Borough to compete for grant funding from programs such as Safe Routes to School, Safe Routes to Transit, Trail Improvements and others.

Quiet Zones

The Borough has been pursuing Quiet Zone designation from the NJDOT for the downtown area. This designation will require improvements to the two grade crossings at La Monte and Vosseller Avenues. NJDOT approval is required and has been requested. Quiet Zone designation will become increasingly urgent as the number of downtown residents, businesses and visitors continues to grow. The Borough is optimistic that the Quiet Zone request will be approved, and that the necessary funding to implement it will be found.

Improvements to Rail Station Access

Passenger access to the NJ Transit rail station is abysmal. Neither of the platforms is ADA accessible and the physical condition of the tunnels and stairs that provide access to the two platforms is seriously deteriorated. The stairs that provide access from South Main Street have been closed for years because of their deteriorated condition. But even if these were fixed and reopened, there is no walkway linking the stairs to the station platform.

As residential redevelopment in and around the downtown results in increased ridership, the pressure to dramatically improve access conditions for these passengers will substantially increase and will need to be addressed.

New Commuter Parking Facility South of the Rail Tracks

It is very important to preserve the option of creating a second commuter parking facility on the south side of the tracks, in particular if the NJ Transit parking lots are redeveloped, as is anticipated. As mentioned, this idea is anticipated in both the *Downtown Urban Design Plan* and in the *Redevelopment Plan for Sub-Area 1.3*. Future redevelopment of the parcel currently occupied by the self-storage facility should keep this option open.

Update Parking Requirements in Borough's Land Development Regulations

The parking requirements in the Borough's Land Development Regulations should be re-visited and updated as needed to better reflect current knowledge of parking demand in mixed-use developed areas such as the Borough. They should also reflect technological changes, such as the need for charging stations for electric and hybrid vehicles, changes in the dimensions of the average vehicle and other relevant developments.

2.7 Parks, Open Space and Recreation

The *Open Space and Community Facilities Map* shows the location of public parks, open space and recreational facilities in the Borough.

Table 14 lists the public parks and recreation facilities in Bound Brook. The Borough filed an updated Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program in February of 2017. All of these properties are now listed on the ROSI.

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

Table 14 — Public Parks and Recreation Facilities

Block	Lot	Acreage	Name	Title	Notes
13.02	50	9.8	Billian Legion Park	Fee	Active recreation
13.02	5	7.7	Billian Legion Park	Fee	Active recreation
13.02	26.01	0.29	Billian Legion Park	Fee	Active recreation
44	1	3.45	Codrington Park	Fee	Active recreation
45	1	0.34	Codrington Park	Fee	Active recreation
45	1.01	0.11	Codrington Park	Fee	Active recreation
103	13	8.0	La Monte Athletic Fields	Fee	Active recreation
4	18	0.37	Maltex Park	Fee	Active recreation
14	1	0.26	Middle Brook Park	Fee	Active recreation
14	2	20.9	Middle Brook Park	Fee	Active recreation
14	3	2.69	Tea Street Sports Complex	Fee	Active recreation
15	1.07	0.4	Bound Brook Rotary Park (Tea St and Talmage Ave)	Fee	Active recreation
1	24	4.35	Rock Machine Park	Fee	Active recreation
68	1.03	27.06	Middle Brook Preserve	Fee	Unimproved
79	5	12.25	Eisenhower Park	Fee	Unimproved - partial diversion (see above)
98.01	1	6.5	North Park	Fee	Unimproved
79	3	4.76	Green Brook	Fee	Unimproved - compensation for diversion to Presbyterian Cemetery
TOTAL		109.23			

Source: Borough of Bound Brook.

The Borough has an appointed Recreation Commission that meets once a month and a part-time Recreation Director. The Recreation Director sees soccer as the sport with the greatest demand among the Borough’s youth. There does not appear to be a comparable demand for soccer among adults, although that could change. The existing soccer fields are not marked and demarcating these fields, as well as providing new fields, is seen as a priority for the program.



The High School offers its own recreation programs, namely wrestling, baseball, football, tennis and track. It does not have a pool and there is no swimming program.

2.7.1 Active Recreation

The distinction between active and passive recreation is not always straightforward, as there are often facilities that combine the two, and the very definition of “active” recreation can be open to debate. To simplify, any park that has an active recreation component, even if the rest of the park is devoted to passive activities, was included in the active recreation category.

Additional sports facilities exist in the public schools.

Altogether, just under 59 acres, or 54% of public open space lands, are dedicated in whole or in part to active recreation uses.

Billian Legion Park

Located on East Main Street, it is a 17.8-acre park on the former municipal landfill. Currently the Borough’s largest improved park, it has been improved over the years with financial contributions from the Billian family, with assistance from the American Legion – Giles Biondi Post #63.



Its history as a former landfill means that certain improvements requiring excavation may be constrained due to subsurface conditions. However, there is now a vast experience with parks on former landfills. With appropriate technologies, additional development of the park is certainly possible, including the addition of permanent structures.

The park is currently improved with a large jungle gym; a baseball diamond with seating; walking paths; a gazebo; and ornamental plantings. It also offers a venue for seasonal fairs, outdoor concerts, outdoor movies and holiday ceremonies.

There is a paved parking lot (currently leased for off-site residential parking) with 70 spaces facing East Main Street, and a gravel parking lot in the north side of the park, which the Borough plans to improve. The Recreation Commission views the availability of parking at Billian Park as an important asset, as most other parks and recreation facilities in the Borough have little or no dedicated parking.

The Recreation Commission would like to further improve the park with a playground for ages 5 to 13; a new volleyball field; lighting the baseball field to allow night practice; and new restroom facilities.

The unpaved levee along the entire east side of the park provides future opportunities for uninterrupted pedestrian and possibly bicycle access from both Union Avenue and the Piedmont neighborhood to the north to the park, as well as to the eastern end of the downtown, the train station area and the riverfront.

Codrington Park

Located on Thompson Avenue, it is the Borough's major developed active recreation facility. The 4-acre facility features the Arthur Herrington Pool complex — two outdoor pools (adult and kiddie); three tennis courts; two ball fields and a soccer field with bleachers; two playgrounds; outdoor basketball hoops; and the Ben Maggio Recreation Center. A newer building has indoor basketball courts and meeting spaces.

The Recreation Commission would like to upgrade the pool and playground, add a "splash pad" for the pool and a refreshment hut, and possibly provide lighting for the outdoor fields. Given the surrounding residential neighborhood, the possible addition of outdoor lighting would have to be executed in a way that is sensitive to the neighbors' privacy concerns.

La Monte Athletic Fields

Located on Crusader Avenue, this is an 8-acre facility with a regulation ¼ mile track and a football/soccer field. It is managed by the Board of Education and used largely for football and track, as well as soccer, during off-hours.

Maltex Park

Located at West Main Street and Vosseller Avenue, this is a 0.4-acre park with an asphalt area with a basketball hoop and a lawn. It is viewed as underutilized. It could be developed as a skate park, if sufficient interest is demonstrated.

Middle Brook Park/Tea Street Sports Complex

This is a 2.7-acre park on lower Tea Street with four baseball fields with dugouts and bleachers; a two-story refreshment hut; and bathroom facilities. The levee along the Middle Brook has a paved walking path, but is currently inaccessible to the public. The Recreation Commission would like to add a picnic area behind the refreshment hut.

Bound Brook Rotary Park

Located at Tea Street and Talmage Avenue, this 0.4-acre park is the most recent addition to the Borough's park inventory. It currently has a Bocce ball court.

**Rock Machine Park**

This 4.4-acre park at 208 West Main Street has a baseball diamond. The park could potentially be expanded to the east through inclusion of

a 4.9-acre wooded tract (Block 1, Lot 24.01) owned by the USACE. It may also be expanded to the west, through acquisition by the Borough of privately-owned property, namely the rear portions of some of the larger lots that front on the South side of West Main Street. The rear portions of those lots are not protected by the USACE levees and remain in the 100-year floodplain.

The park currently has no infrastructure. It is also somewhat isolated as it is located behind the single-family residential neighborhood along West Main Street and abuts the USACE levee to the south. At present it is only accessible from West Main Street. The entrance to the park is not inviting and is poorly marked.

The Recreation Commission would like to expand its soccer program at the park, by adding one or two soccer fields. There is currently no lighting, and the possibility of extending the park's hours of operation by lighting the playing fields has been discussed. The relatively isolated location would facilitate this, but appropriate measures would be needed to mitigate any adverse impacts on the residential neighbors.

2.7.2 Passive Recreation and Natural Habitats

There are a number of parcels in public ownership that do not contain any active recreation facilities and can be found in a "natural", i.e. unimproved state.

Middle Brook Preserve

By far the largest is the unnamed 27-acre parcel (Block 68, Lot 1.03) located in the northwestern part of the Borough. For the purposes of this report, we will call it the Middle Brook Preserve. Currently, this parcel is only accessible by land from a parking lot at the end of an industrial zone on Easy Street in Bridgewater. A short driveway from the rear of the industrial zone's parking lot provides access to a utility pumping station and cell-phone tower. The parcel is fenced in from the Bridgewater side and no other points of public access exist.

The preserve is clearly seen from the top of the levee that runs along the western edge of the Queen's Gate apartment complex, but public access from the Bound Brook side currently requires fording the brook. A pedestrian bridge to access the site from the Queen's Gate side is not currently foreseen. It would likely be an expensive piece of infrastructure given the need to place it above the 500-year flood elevation.

That notwithstanding, providing Bound Brook residents with public access to this site is an important consideration, as is defining an overall vision for the future of these lands which are largely forgotten and ignored. There is every indication that the preserve contains extensive wetlands and therefore conventional development of this site is not possible, even for recreation facilities. The site may also provide habitat for multiple animal species and is possibly bald eagle foraging ground.

Eisenhower Park

This preserved, undeveloped 12.25-acre tract and the adjacent 4.76-acre parcel known as Green Brook Park are located at the very end of East Union Avenue, along the floodplain of the Bound Brook and next to the Presbyterian Cemetery. It is unclear how, if at all, these lands are used by the public.

North Park

Located at Watchung Road and Route 22, this is a 6.5-acre unimproved parcel. It must have been slated for development at some point, as a "paper" cul-de-sac street is shown on the Borough's tax maps. The cul-de-sac was never built and the parcel remains undeveloped and overgrown. It is not clear to what extent, or in what ways, neighborhood residents use this public open space.

Tea Street and Grove Avenue

An unimproved 220 by 180 foot parcel (Block 53.01, Lot 22) in the Hanken Road neighborhood.

In addition to the under-used, publicly-owned parcels, there is also a considerable amount of undeveloped and undevelopable land along the river, currently in private ownership to which the public has no legal access. If public access to these lands were deemed important and in the public interest, it most likely could be secured through agreements with the private property owners, and as part of a comprehensive open space plan. The *Riverfront Access Plan*, adopted by the Planning Board as an element of the *Master Plan*, provides a framework on which to build a broader open space plan.

2.7.3 Public Spaces and Pocket Parks

Bound Brook does not have many examples of public spaces or pocket parks. Arguably, the most important is *Van Horne Plaza* on East Main Street, directly in front of the train station. This roughly ½ acre space (130 x 175 feet) is mostly used for parking and circulation, although it also contains two gazebos, a fountain, seating and planting areas. Sorely in need of improvements, it could easily become the premier public gathering space in the downtown.

In their current locations, neither the public library nor Borough Hall offer easy and simple opportunities for creating new public spaces associated with these facilities. The idea of a new civic center, championed in the early municipal master plans, was never implemented.

At some point in the future, if not already, Borough Hall will become functionally obsolete. Future redevelopment of that site, if and when that occurs, should incorporate a public space component. Alternatively, public space could be created if Borough Hall moves to a different location.

Officer Samuel Kriney Memorial Park at 208 East Main Street (Block 1, Lot 47) is a pocket park dedicated to the fallen Officer. It provides seating and pedestrian access to the commuter parking lot and the train station.



2.7.4 Community Gardens

At present, there are no designated areas for community gardens. However, with the increase in population living in multi-family housing, both in the downtown and elsewhere in the Borough, the demand for community gardens is likely to increase.

The results of the Community Survey indicate strong interest in creating community gardens. Supporting community gardens is also consistent with local policies promoting healthy living and sustainability.



The Borough should explore ways to effectively encourage multi-family housing developers to include community gardens as part of their projects. Roof-top gardens and gardens located on elevated platforms in multi-family buildings provide opportunities for residents to grow their own produce, and also serve important functions in terms of reduction in volume of stormwater run-off, temporary water storage and improved water quality.

The area south of the railroad tracks offers considerable opportunities for new community gardens, as do other under-utilized locations in the Borough. Areas in proximity to the railroad tracks would require planting on raised

beds, due to the historic soil contamination from the railroad use.

2.7.5 Open Space and Recreation Facilities — Present and Future Demand

The planning literature on open space and recreation contains a number of sources that seek to provide guidance on how much land should be dedicated to open space and recreation activities in order to provide the population with adequate access to these amenities. These standards may vary, both over time and geographically, depending upon the extent of urbanization, average density, availability of land, local priorities and cultural factors.

The State of New Jersey no longer stipulates a single open space standard. In its Open Space and Recreation Plan Guidelines, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection’s (NJDEP) Green Acres program intended to provide assistance to local governments in preparing an Open Space and Recreation Plan by referring to the National Recreation and Park Association’s (NRPA) Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines as an “excellent reference on assessing needs and open space and recreation planning” (page 5).

The NRPA standards, first issued in 1934, recommend 6.25 to 10 acres of open space per 1,000 population. These standards are further detailed as follows:

National Recreation and Park Association's Standards			
Type of Park	Minimum Size	Ratio	Service Area
Mini-Park	> 1 acre	0.25-0.5 acres/1,000	1/4 mile
Neighborhood Park / Playground	15+ acres	1-2 acres/1,000	1/2 mile
Community Park	25+ acres	5-8 acres/1,000	2 mile
Major Park	100+ acres	2.5 acres/1,000	NA

These standards are not considered appropriate by many practitioners for urbanized areas and have long been rejected by most cities in the US.

However, with an estimated 2014 population of 10,600, and 109 acres of existing parks and open space, Bound Brook actually satisfies this overall standard, which requires between 66.25 and 106 acres of open space.

New York City follows an alternative standard of 2.5 acres per 1,000 population. This standard has been adopted by many Northern New Jersey towns for open space planning purposes.

The *Open Space Index*, a 2009 publication of New Yorkers for Parks, a non-profit organization “dedicated to ensuring that all New Yorkers enjoy a world-class parks system”, suggests that an appropriate open space ratio is 1 acre per 1,000 residents for active recreation and 1.5 acres per 1,000 residents for passive open space, including community gardens, for a total of 2.5 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. This standard suggests that 40% of a city’s open space should be dedicated to active recreation and 60% to passive uses.

Bound Brook vastly exceeds this standard. The Borough currently has 54% of public open space lands dedicated to active uses, and 46% dedicated to passive uses.

The “balanced land use” guideline, another open space metric sometimes used by New Jersey state agencies, suggests that 3% of a municipality’s developed / developable land should be dedicated to parks and open space. Bound Brook encompasses 1,062 acres of land. Applying this standard to Bound Brook would require 32 acres of land for open space. Again, the Borough already far exceeds this standard.

There are no published data on the number of users at the Borough’s various active recreation facilities. According to the Borough’s Recreation Director, the facilities are generally used on a regular basis. Youth soccer seems to be the most popular sport at the moment and additional fields are contemplated to meet demand.

The NJDEP document referenced above provides guidance on how to undertake a “needs analysis” as part of the open space and recreation planning (OSRP) process:

The OSRP should include an analysis of the adequacy of the current open space and recreation system to satisfy present and projected recreational needs for open space as established by the local government through the planning process. The needs analysis looks at those components of the open space system for which the local government assumes primary responsibility.

The needs analysis can address these topics:

- *A description of current recreation activity levels and participation patterns and trends likely to affect these in the future,*
- *A statement of minimum standards of acceptable recreation service by the community for its citizens. Service standards should be based on geographic distribution of facilities relative to population, quantities of land and facilities of various types available and adequate protection of natural resources,*
- *A discussion of the conditions of existing recreation facilities,*
- *A description of changes which will affect recreation and open space provision such as in number of residents, age structure, land use, leisure time and income, which form the basis for forecast of future open space and recreation needs,*
- *A determination of the additional land and water areas and new or rehabilitated facilities necessary to meet the current and future needs of the community for recreational opportunities and to protect open space resources valued by the community. (page 5)*

It is far beyond the scope of this Reexamination Report to provide this analysis, which might constitute a future Open

Space and Recreation element of the *Master Plan*. For informational purposes, some metrics on field sizes for soccer, baseball and football are provided below.

Soccer

According to FIFA, (the Federation International de Football Association) regulation size soccer fields can vary: from 100 to 130 yards in length and from 50 to 100 yards in width.

A soccer field is described as follows:

A soccer field (or "pitch") must be rectangular, with the longer boundaries forming the sides (or "touch lines") and the shorter boundaries forming the ends (or "goal lines" or "bye lines"), with an anchored goal centered on the goal line at each end. These boundaries should be marked by lines on the ground and a flag in each of the four corners of the field. (Source: <http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~dgraham/lotg/>.)

The official rules allow soccer field sizes to be reduced for female players, players with disabilities and for players under 16 and over 35 years of age. (Source: www.soccerhelp.com.) For example, a 50 by 80 yard field might be suitable for 12-year old players; a 40 by 70 yard field might be suitable for 10-year old players; and a 25 by 50 yard field might be appropriate for 8-year olds.

There is no set standard for the area around the playing field that is kept clear of spectators or obstacles, but a minimum of 10 to 15 feet on every side is recommended to accommodate stray balls and provide extra room for players.

The preferred orientation for a soccer field is for the long axis to follow a northwest / southeast orientation, to suit the fall playing season, or a straight north / south orientation, if the field is to be used year round.

Baseball

A baseball diamond requires 90 feet from base to base, 127 feet 3 3/8" from home plate to second base, and 60 feet behind the batter.

Dimensions for a little league field (or softball) are 1/3 smaller: 60 feet from base to base and 38 feet behind the batter. There is no set standard for the amount of space providing clearance around the diamond, but between 200 and 300 feet of outfield is required.

Football

A National Football League regulation size football field is 160 feet wide by 360 feet long. In addition, the field also has two 30-foot end zones and two 12-foot shoulder areas, for total dimensions of 184 by 420 feet. A high school football field is slightly smaller, at 184 by 360 feet, including the same two, 30-foot end zones and two, 12-foot shoulder areas.

2.7.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Borough does not have a deficit of open space. It currently meets, or exceeds, even the most demanding standards of open space and parkland per 1,000 residents.

However, the Borough's population is increasing, and will continue to grow as new redevelopment projects are built. Enrollment in Bound Brook's public schools has also been increasing. (See Section 2.8.1.) Current expectations regarding open space, on the part of the general public, are higher than they were in years past. Bound Brook today is under greater demographic pressure than 40 years ago with respect to publicly accessible open space. The pressure to provide active open space for the younger cohorts is similarly higher.

As such, the issue in Bound Brook is not quantity of open space, but *quality*. This means having the right types of fields and facilities for active recreation; and providing appropriate access and a supporting infrastructure to the passive open space.

The Borough does not have an adopted open space / recreation element in its *Master Plan* and there is no explicit open space planning framework or strategy, beyond the *Riverfront Access Plan*.

With relatively modest investments, the Borough can achieve, over time, a world-class open space system by building on its existing, in many cases underutilized, assets.

Additional recommendations are:

Open Space and Recreation Plan Element

It would be beneficial for the Planning Board to develop and adopt a formal open space and recreation element of the *Master Plan*, providing an overall guiding framework for public investments, and listing appropriate strategies for implementation.

Public Access to the Waterfront

The adopted *Riverfront Access Plan* is an ambitious document that will require considerable technical and financial resources to execute. The Borough has taken some baby steps towards implementation but much remains to be done. An implementation schedule — listing discrete tasks, projects, time frames and assigning responsibilities for execution — would help clarify roles and responsibilities for implementation among the different stakeholders. It would be helpful to start by clarifying some fundamental questions, such as what (if any) is the appropriate role for the Somerset County Parks Commission. The project will also require sustained community support over time, so efforts to engage community members, perhaps with different interests, such as fishing, kayaking, walking and bicycling, nature and history of place will be very important.

Trails as Functional Elements of The Circulation Network

Resolving the legal issues that currently prevent public access to the trails on top of the levees is a *high priority* implementation item for the Borough. Once that has been accomplished, a detailed plan for linking together the various segments of the levee trail, along with other trail segments, will be needed. This should be accompanied by a multi-year implementation plan that itemizes the various capital improvements and investments needed to create a fully functional trail system that offers not just recreational opportunities for the community but also provides functional transportation alternatives for getting around in a healthy way. This framework should be included both in the Circulation element of the *Master Plan* and in the Open Space and Recreation element.

Improved Signage

The Borough's parks and open space have poor signage or none at all. A concerted effort should be made to identify and name all of these various facilities; to place attractive signage in prominent locations, along with trash and recycling receptacles; and to post the relevant rules and regulations explaining hours of operation and permitted activities.

Develop Vision for Middle Brook Preserve

As by far the largest undeveloped Borough-owned parcel, this currently inaccessible land deserved attention. Recognizing the environmental constraints to conventional development should not mean that the Borough loses interest in this parcel. A creative vision for how this property can be used productively in the interest of the community is needed.

Neighborhood Playgrounds and Tot-Lots

While the Borough has more than sufficient open space, the bulk of these lands is located at the edges of the community and is not within a short walking distance from some neighborhoods. A more detailed evaluation of the need for small neighborhood park facilities, potentially integrating playground equipment, should be undertaken.

2.8 Downtown Public Spaces

The Borough also needs more, and better, relatively small-scale civic spaces in the downtown. An upgraded Van Horne Plaza and a pedestrian only block in front of Brook Theater can be transformational projects. As part of new redevelopment projects, the Borough should pursue opportunities to create additional quality public spaces in the downtown.

2.9 Community Facilities and Civic Functions

Bound Brook can generally be considered a safe town, according to both the responses to the community survey and to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Statistics. In 2014, there were 18 incidents of violent crime; no reported cases of murder, manslaughter or rape; 7 robberies; and 11 cases of aggravated assault. A total

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of 214 property crimes were reported, along with 44 burglaries, 162 cases of larceny/theft, 8 motor vehicle thefts and no incidents involving arson. While ideally none of these incidents would have occurred, the number and type of incidents compares favorably with larger, and more affluent communities. The strength and diversity of the community’s civic institutions no doubt plays a role in keeping it as such.

2.9.1 Schools

The Bound Brook School District operates four elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. See Table 15.

Table 15 — Public School Facilities in Bound Brook School District

Level	School	Location	Grades
Elementary	Lafayette School	60 West High Street	2-3
	La Monte School	337 West 2 nd Street	Pre-K and Kindergarten
	La Monte Annex	330 West 2 nd Street	Pre-K to 2
	Smalley School	163 Cherry Avenue	4 to 6
Middle	Middle School	120 East 2 nd Street	6 to 8
High	High School	111 West Union Avenue	9 to 12

Bound Brook students also have the opportunity to attend the Somerset County Vocational School, located at 14 Vogt Drive in Bridgewater, which offers career and technical programs such as mechatronics, engineering and advanced manufacturing, health and medical science, dance and theater arts.

In 2016, the school district had a budget of \$23.9 million, of which 65% was raised from local sources, and the rest came from State sources, except for \$49,406 that came from Federal sources.

The Bound Brook 2014 school district’s *Long-Range Facilities Plan* describes current school facilities and anticipated projects. See Table 16.

Table 16 — School Facilities Inventory Summary

Sites	Existing	Proposed
Total number of sites	6	8
Number of sites with no buildings	0	0
Number of sites with no instructional buildings	2	2
Schools and Buildings		
Total number of schools with enrollments*	4	6
Total number of instructional buildings	4	6
Total number of administrative and utility buildings	1	1
Total number of athletic facilities	0	0
Total number of parking structures	0	0
Total number of temporary facilities	0	0

* Includes schools with three-digit department code numbers and Fall report enrollments.

Source: Summary of the Long Range Facilities Plan, as amended July 9, 2014.

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The report notes that “incomplete school facilities projects that have project approval from the Department are represented as ‘existing’ in the Plan.” The 2014 facilities inventory indicates the school district’s intention to increase the number of District-owned or leased sites, increase the number of District-operated schools and increase the number of District-owned or leased instructional buildings.

Table 17 compares actual district enrollment to proposed enrollment and projected enrollment for 2014. Actual enrollment was substantially less than either proposed enrollment or the NJ Department of Education’s (NJDOE) projection.

Table 17 — School Enrollment Comparison

Grade Categories	Actual Enrollment	Proposed Enrollment	DOE Projection
Grade K-12			
Grades K-5 & PK SCSE	737	932	816
Grades 6-8	358	393	365
Grades 9-12	591	693	685
TOTAL K-12	1,686	2,018	1,866
Pre-Kindergarten			
Pre-Kindergarten, Age 3	0		
Pre-Kindergarten, Age 4	70	60	61
Pre-Kindergarten, SCSE	0		10
TOTAL Pre-Kindergarten	70	2,078	1,937

* SCSE: Self-contained special education enrollments.

Source: Summary of the Long-Range Facilities Plan, as Amended July 9, 2014.

Enrollment has been increasing, consistent with local population trends (see Section 3.1) and the district’s website indicates that current total school enrollment is 1,931 students.

Table 18 shows how the district proposed to handle increased enrollments in 2014.

Table 18 — School Capacity Summary

	Total Facilities Efficiencies Standards (FES) Capacity	Total District Practices Capacity
(A) Proposed Enrollments	2,078	2,078
(B) Existing Capacity	1,453	1,885
Existing Capacity Status (B) - (A)	-625	-193
(C) Proposed Capacity	2,112	2,052
Proposed Capacity Status (C) - (A)	34	-26

Source: Summary of the Long-Range Facilities Plan, as amended July 9, 2014.

The Plan states “district practices capacity allows the District to include specialized room types in the capacity calculations and adjust class size to reflect actual practices. The District has adequately coordinated proposed school capacities and enrollments in the Plan for grade groups with proposed new construction”.



In 2015, the district implemented the proposed new facilities (St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s) for grade groups K-5 and 6-8. The new construction exceeds the estimated maximum area allowance for “un-housed students” prior to the completion of the work for grade groups 9-12.

The Plan indicates that the NJDOE “determined that the District’s proposed room inventories are educationally adequate. If schools are proposed to provide less

square feet per student than the FES, the District has provided a written justification indicating that the educational adequacy of the facility will not be adversely affected and has been granted an FES waiver by the Department. This determination does not include an assessment of eligible square feet for State support.”

2.9.2 Houses of Worship

The Borough is well served by houses of worship:

Assembly of Christian Churches — 11 East 2nd Street

No information available.

Bound Brook United Methodist Church — 150 West Union Avenue

Offers weekly service and numerous ministries.

Casa Del Banquete c/o Bound Brook Presbyterian Church — 409 Mountain Avenue

A Spanish-language Christian ministry that has operated since 2002 and meets on Saturdays.

Comunidad Cristiana c/o St. John’s Lutheran Church — 319 Winsor Street

A Spanish-language Christian ministry.

Congregation Kneseth Israel — 229 Mountain Avenue

This house of worship offers weekly services, religious education, clubs and fundraisers.

The Congregational Church of Bound Brook — 209 Church Street

This house of worship offers weekly services, religious education, special events, numerous missions and vacation bible trips. The church also collects non-perishable foods to help those in need.

House of Prayer and Evangelism (HOPE) Baptist Church — 519 East Main Street

Offers weekly services, religious education, special events, ministries and vacation bible school. The church

seeks to be active in the community.

Mountain of Prayer Fellowship — 12 Maiden Lane

No information is available.

The Presbyterian Church at Bound Brook — 409 Mountain Avenue

Offers weekly services, religious education, concerts and special events, numerous missions, vacation bible school, and a cemetery. The facilities are used for meetings by the Scouts, AA and other 12-step programs, as well as a pre-school and cantabile choir. The church also participates in FISH hospitality and helps at a local soup kitchen.

St. John Lutheran Church — West Union Avenue and Winsor Street

Offers weekly services and religious education.

St. Joseph Catholic Church — at corner of Mountain Avenue and East High Street

Offers weekly services, religious education, special events, ministries and vacation bible school. The church also organizes collections for a food pantry and makes hospital visits.

St. Mary of Czestochowa Roman Catholic Church — 201 Vosseller Avenue

Offers weekly services.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church — 214 Church Street

Offers weekly services, religious education, special events and numerous ministries.

The United Methodist Church of Bound Brook — 150 West Union Avenue

Offers weekly services, religious education, groups, music programs, volunteering opportunities and a thrift shop.

2.9.3 Health Clinics

Unlike houses of worship, the Borough is not well served by local health clinics. Only two clinics operate in town. Residents must seek most routine and emergency health services in hospitals and clinics located in the surrounding communities.

Family and Community Health Services of Somerset County — 339 West 2nd Street

A non-profit, community agency providing professional family, mental health, addiction services and innovative community based programs. (Source: <http://fcssomerset.org/>, 9/7/16.)

Doctors Express Urgent Care — 601 West Union Avenue

This commercial medical center provides physicals and care for non-emergency medical conditions.

2.9.4 Community Organizations

There are a number of community and non-profit organizations active in the Borough.

American Legion Giles-Biondi Post #63 (also Ladies Auxiliary and Sons of American Legion)

The American Legion is the world's largest veterans' organization. Membership eligibility is based on honorable service in the U.S. armed forces during wartime, according to the American Legion's website. This organization organizes events such as blood drives, visits to the Lyons VA Hospital, places flags at the cemetery, among other events. (Sources: <http://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/somerset-county/2015/12/08/bound-brook-american-legion-honors-veterans/76969834/> and <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=bound%20brook%20american%20legion>, 9/8/16.)

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Bound Brook Lodge 1388 — 305 East 2nd Street

A non-profit member organization that participates in special events and fundraisers.

Loyal Order of the Moose Lodge 988 — 16 Vosseller Av and 218-220 Talmage Av

A non-profit member organization that participates in special events and fundraisers.

Bound Brook Democrats Club

An organization dedicated to the progressive ideas and platform of the Democratic Party. Works at the National, State, County and Local levels for the election of Democratic candidates. (Source: <http://www.boundbrookdemocrats.org/>, 9/8/16.)

Bound Brook Garden Club

A non-profit organization whose mission is to stimulate an intelligent interest in gardening; to urge the preservation of our trees, birds and wild flowers; to encourage community and roadside beautification; and to study the fine art of gardening in all its aspects. Members donate plants or flowers to places such as the library and Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children. They also place wreaths on the graves of veterans in the Bound Brook Cemetery and have made financial contributions to the Twin Borough Scholarship Fund. (Source: <https://bbgc.shutterfly.com> and <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/bridgewater-raritan/articles/bound-brook-garden-club-seeks-new-members>, 9/8/16.)

Bound Brook Republican Party

An organization that supports the Republic Party with various efforts, including fundraising. (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Bound-Brook-Republican-Party-127405149825/>, 9/8/16.)

Bound Brook Revitalization Partnership — 18 Mountain Avenue

A non-profit management entity of the Special Improvement District (SID) that serves the Bound Brook community by aggressively working to improve and enhance the business climate and development opportunities within the downtown. (Source: <http://www.bbrpnj.com/about-us.html>, 9/8/16.)

Bound Brook Seniors

An organization for people age 50 years or older from Bound Brook or surrounding areas. It participated in outings including Atlantic City bus trips, ball games, plays, tours and holiday dinners. (Source: <http://boundbrookseniors.webs.com/aboutus.htm>, 9/8/16.)

The Brook Arts Center — 10 Hamilton Street

Run by the Somerset County Cultural Arts Center, a non-profit organization, it is one of only eight surviving vaudeville houses. Dating back to 1927, it offers live performances and silent movies, hosts educational and fundraising events, and serves as an arts incubator. (Source: <http://www.visitsomersetnj.org/play/arts-and-culture>, 9/8/16.)

Office of Emergency Management

A volunteer organization that provides information to the public during times of crisis and provides assistance with public safety at community events throughout the year. (Source: Bound Brook Welcome Packet, June 2015.)

Rotary Club of Bridgewater and Bound Brook

Founded in 1923 as the Bound Brook-Middlesex Rotary Club, its mission is to create positive, lasting change in communities and around the world through events and fundraisers. (Sources: <https://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary> and <https://www.facebook.com/Bridgewater-Rotary-Club-240482579410592/>, 9/8/16.)

Salvation Army — 214 West High Street and 108 Hamilton Street

Accepts donations of clothing, furniture and household items. The larger organization also provides after school programs, childcare, feeding programs, homeless shelters, senior services and veterans/military personnel services. (Source: <http://newjersey.salvationarmy.org/NewJersey/boundbrook>, 9/8/16.)

Twin Boros Scholarship Foundation

A non-profit organization founded in 1980 that provides college scholarships for students living in Bound Brook and South Bound Brook. (Source: <http://twinboros.org/>, 9/8/16.)

Women's Literary Club — 214 Church Street

Founded in 1885, its mission is to develop a spirit of cooperation among all women of the community for the advancement of general civic interest and public welfare, and provide educational and cultural advantage for its members. (Source: <http://www.njsfwc.org/clubs-view.php?id=WLCBB>, 9/8/16.)

2.9.5 Community Gatherings and Special Events

The Bound Brook Revitalization Partnership (the downtown Business Improvement District) sponsors numerous annual, seasonal and periodic events throughout the year, including the following (some of which are planned):

- Hot Rods & Harleys (annual);
- Riverfest (annual);
- Latin Ball Room Dancing in the Street on Hamilton Street: learn to dance on Saturday evenings in the Fall sponsored by Bound Brook Revitalization in conjunction with Alma Montuno Studio (seasonal);
- Downtown Farmers Market (seasonal);
- Free Family Outdoor Movies in Billian Park (seasonal);
- Wine, Cheese and Chocolate event (periodic);
- Halloween Parade (annual);
- 5K Santa Run (annual);
- Ribbon cutting events, such as the completion of the USACE Flood Control Project and the installation of new Bocce ball courts (periodic);
- Cruise Night at Thrust Automotive (annual);
- Police Department's National Night Out (annual); and
- Artists of Bound Brook event on Hamilton Street (annual).

2.9.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

Bound Brook has numerous community organizations that strengthen community fabric and provide spiritual, educational and material support to community members.

Houses of worship have adjusted to the influx of the Spanish speaking population and many services are now conducted in Spanish.

The Bound Brook Revitalization Partnership appears to be the only organization focused on a specific area, namely the downtown. It would perhaps be advantageous to have a sister organization, albeit possibly with a different legal and organizational format, focusing on the western end of the Union Avenue corridor. The two organizations could potentially cross-market promotions and special events.

It would be advantageous to have a separate non-profit organization dedicated to riverfront access issues, and, more broadly, to open space issues in general. A non-profit organization could provide a specific focus on advancing the many aspects of the waterfront access and greenway plan and would have greater flexibility in attracting and managing grant funding for capital projects.

While there are many houses of worship in town, this use is a principal permitted use only in the B-R district, and then only in upper floors. It is permitted, as a conditional use, only in the O-B district. This places the onus of non-conformity on all existing houses of worship outside the B-R and O-B districts. This situation can be easily addressed

through changes to the Land Development Regulations.

Similarly, public buildings are not a principal permitted use in any zoning district, except for the B-R and NB/R districts. While Borough-owned or leased buildings are exempt from the zoning regulations, other public buildings, such as schools, are not. This too could be better handled in the Borough's Land Development Regulations.

Figure 1: Population Trends

**BOUND BROOK
QUICK FACTS**

Population 2% increase from 2000 to 2010

Density 6,270 persons per square mile of land

Compared to:

Somerset County 1,072 persons per square mile of land

New Jersey 1,196 persons per square mile of land

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

3.1 Population Trends

The 2014 population estimate for Bound Brook is 10,607 persons, or 3.2 percent of Somerset County’s population of 328,704. Bound Brook, Somerset County and the State of New Jersey experienced overall population gains between 1970 and 2014. See Table 19.

Table 19 — Population, 1970-2014

Place	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014 Est.
Bound Brook	10,450	9,710	9,487	10,155	10,402	10,607
Somerset County	198,706	203,129	240,279	297,490	323,444	328,704
State of New Jersey	7,171,112	7,365,011	7,730,188	8,414,350	8,791,894	8,874,374

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Between 1970 and 1990, Bound Brook lost nearly 10 percent of its population. However, the population grew 7 percent between 1990-2000 and 2.4 percent between 2000-2010, respectively.

Somerset County experienced significant population growth between 1970 and 1990 (21 percent), and continues to grow: 24 percent between 1990-2000 and 9 percent between 2000-2010. See Table 20.

Table 20 — Population Change Between Decades, 1970-2010

Place	1970-1980		1980-1990		1990-2000		2000-2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Bound Brook	-740	-7.1	-223	-2.3	668	7.0	247	2.4
Somerset County	4,423	2.2	37,150	18.3	57,211	23.8	25,954	8.7
State of New Jersey	193,899	2.7	365,177	5.0	684,162	8.9	377,544	4.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

While Bound Brook comprises a mere 0.6 percent of the total area of Somerset County, the Borough is almost 6 times denser than the County. In 2010, the only municipalities in Somerset County with greater population densities than Bound Brook (6,270 people per square mile of land area) are South Bound Brook (6,934) and North Plainfield (7,850). The bordering municipalities, Bridgewater and Middlesex Borough, have population densities under 3,900 people per square mile. See Table 21.

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 21 — Population Density, 2010

Place	Population	Area in Square Miles	Land in Square Miles	Density
Bound Brook	10,402	1.69	1.66	6,269.6
Bridgewater	44,464	32.51	32.04	1,387.9
North Plainfield	21,936	2.81	2.79	7,850.0
South Bound Brook	4,563	0.75	0.66	6,933.8
Middlesex Borough, Middlesex County	13,635	3.54	3.52	3,876.2
Somerset County	323,444	304.86	301.81	1,071.7
State of New Jersey	8,791,894	8,722.58	7,354.22	1,195.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The *Population Density by Census Block Map* shows the spatial distribution of population density in 2010 by census blocks in Bound Brook. The northeastern neighborhoods are considerably less dense (between 1 and 4,999 persons/square mile) than the remainder of the Borough. The densest areas (10,000+ persons/square mile) are located in the southern neighborhoods, between West 2nd Street and West Main Street and in the northwestern area between Cedarcrest Drive and Route 28.

In 2014, nearly 50 percent of the male population in Bound Brook was between 25 and 49 years old, while 40 percent of the female population was in the same cohort. Children 19 years and younger represented a quarter of the population for both sexes. However, the female population 60 years and over is almost double that of the male cohort — 16 percent versus 9 percent. See Table 22 and Figures 2 and 3.

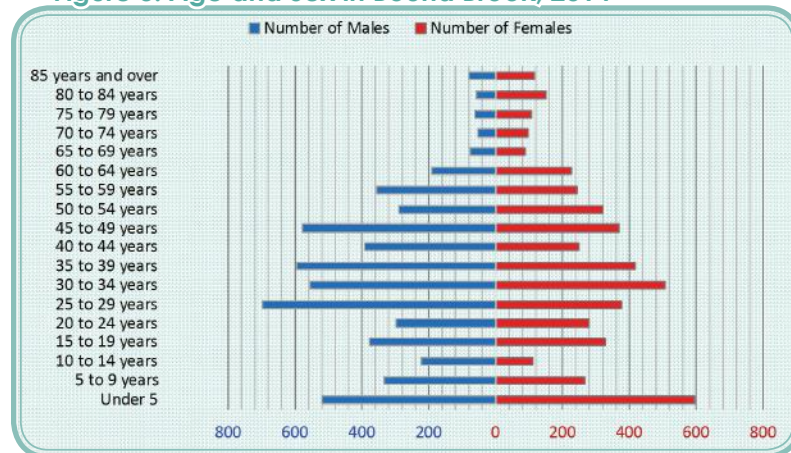
Figure 2: Demographic Trends

BOUND BROOK QUICK FACTS

Median age, 2010	35 years
<i>compared to Somerset County</i>	40
<i>compared to New Jersey</i>	39
Males per 100 females, 2010	110
<i>compared to Somerset County</i>	95
<i>compared to New Jersey</i>	95
49% of male population, 2014	25-49 years
40% of female population	25-49 years
Approx. 25% of both sexes	19 years & younger

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Figure 3: Age and Sex in Bound Brook, 2014



Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 22 — Age and Sex in Bound Brook, 2014

Cohort	Males		Females	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
85 years and over	80	1.4	117	2.4
80 to 84 years	57	1.0	151	3.1
75 to 79 years	63	1.1	107	2.2
70 to 74 years	52	0.9	98	2.0
65 to 69 years	74	1.3	88	1.8
60 to 64 years	189	3.3	229	4.7
55 to 59 years	355	6.2	244	5.0
50 to 54 years	286	5.0	322	6.6
45 to 49 years	579	10.1	371	7.6
40 to 44 years	390	6.8	249	5.1
35 to 39 years	596	10.4	420	8.6
30 to 34 years	556	9.7	507	10.4
25 to 29 years	699	12.2	381	7.8
20 to 24 years	298	5.2	283	5.8
15 to 19 years	378	6.6	332	6.8
10 to 14 years	223	3.9	112	2.3
5 to 9 years	332	5.8	268	5.5
Under 5 years	521	9.1	595	12.2

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Bound Brook is a young community, with a 2010 median age of only 35, and is one of the youngest towns in Somerset County, where the median age is 40 years. The median age in the State is also nearly 4 years older than the in Borough at 39 years.

Also notable is the high ratio of males to females in the Borough. In the County, the State and the United States as a whole there are more females than males. In Bound Brook, there are 110 males for every 100 females. See Table 23.

Table 23 — Median Age and Ratio of Males to Females in Bound Brook, 2010

	Bound Brook	Somerset County	State of New Jersey	United States
Median Age (years)	35.1	40.2	39.0	37.2
Males Per 100 Females	109.7	95.1	94.8	96.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The racial composition of Bound Brook is shifting. Between 2000 and 2010, there was a decline of nearly 13 percent in the white population and an increase of more than 3 percent in the black population. The sector ‘some other race’ increased almost 9 percent. Compared to the State, Bound Brook has smaller percentages in the Black and Asian sectors, and a higher percentage in the ‘some other race’ sector. See Table 24 and Figure 4.

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 24 — Racial Composition of Population, 2000 and 2010

	Bound Brook				State of New Jersey			
	2000		2010		2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
One Race	8,971	88.3	8,178	78.6	8,200,595	97.5	8,551,591	97.3
White	8,385	82.6	7,253	69.7	6,104,705	72.6	6,029,248	68.6
Black or African American	256	2.5	597	5.7	1,141,821	13.6	1,204,826	13.7
American Indian or Alaska Native	31	0.3	56	0.5	19,492	0.2	29,026	0.3
Asian	292	2.9	267	2.6	480,276	5.7	725,726	8.3
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	7	0.1	5	0.0	3,329	0.0	3,043	0.0
Some Other Race	880	8.7	1,818	17.5	450,972	5.4	559,722	6.4
Two or More Races	304	3.0	406	3.9	213,755	2.5	240,303	2.7
TOTAL	10,155	100.0	10,402	100.0	8,414,350	100.0	8,791,894	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

While there has been a shift towards greater diversity in the Borough over the years, 70 percent of the population is white, and the next largest sector is ‘some other race’ (17 percent). See Figure 5.

Bound Brook’s Hispanic or Latino population has grown substantially, increasing from 35 to 49 percent between 2000 and 2010. Also notable is the size of the Hispanic or Latino population in Bound Brook compared to the County and the State of New Jersey. While the sector grew between 2000 and 2010 in each place, it only comprises 13 percent of Somerset County’s population and 18 percent of the State in 2010. See Table 25.

Figure 4: Changes by Population Sector, 2000-2010

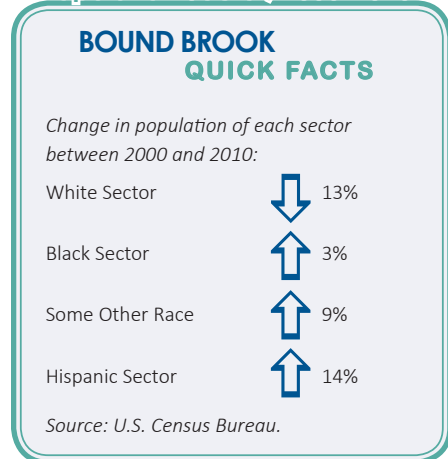
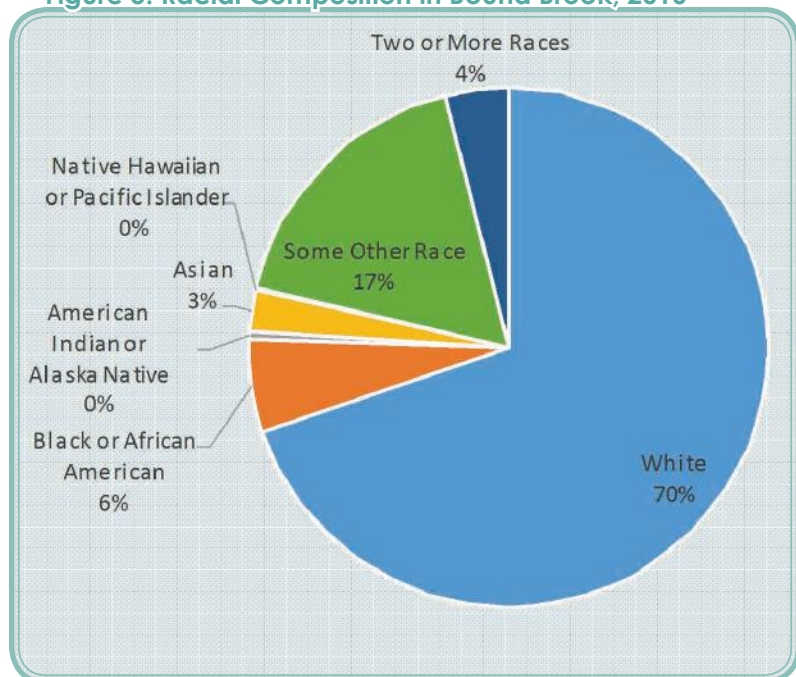


Figure 5: Racial Composition in Bound Brook, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 25— Hispanic or Latino Population, 2000 and 2010

	Bound Brook				Somerset County				State of New Jersey			
	2000		2010		2000		2010		2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic or Latino	3,541	34.9	5,062	48.7	25,811	8.7	42,091	13.0	1,117,191	13.3	1,555,144	17.7
Not Hispanic or Latino	6,614	65.1	5,340	51.3	271,679	91.3	281,353	87.0	7,297,159	86.7	7,236,750	82.3
TOTAL	10,155	100.0	10,402	100.0	297,490	100.0	323,444	100.0	8,414,350	100.0	8,791,894	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The population of CT 511 decreased 7.7 percent to 3,702 people between 2009 and 2014. This census tract comprises 35 percent of the 2014 population of Bound Brook. The median age was 30.7 years in 2014. The Hispanic or Latino sector decreased by 11 percent to 56 percent over the 5-year period. See Table 26.

Table 26 — Selected Characteristics of the Total and Native Populations for Census Tract 511, 2009-2014

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Population	4,013	4,196	3,816	3,944	3,816	3,702
Median Age (years)	30.1	29.6	29.5	29.7	30.8	30.7
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	67.1%	67.9%	64.6%	62.8%	57.5%	55.8%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	29.0%	25.0%	32.4%	33.7%	37.3%	38.7%

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The population of CT 512 increased 17 percent to 4,666 people between 2009 and 2014. This census tract comprises 44 percent of the 2014 population of Bound Brook. The median age was 32.6 years in 2014. The Hispanic or Latino sector increased by nearly 15 percent to 59 percent over the 5-year period. See Table 27.

Table 27 — Selected Characteristics of the Total and Native Populations for Census Tract 512, 2009-2014

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Population	3,986	4,099	4,469	4,310	4,312	4,666
Median Age (years)	35.1	33.7	32.5	32.4	33.1	32.6
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	43.8%	47.1%	49.1%	50.8%	51.8%	58.5%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	48.2%	36.4%	33.4%	31.3%	29.5%	25.2%

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The population in CT 513 increased 3 percent to 2,239 between 2009 and 2014. This census tract comprises 21 percent of the 2014 population of Bound Brook. The median age was 46.3 years in 2014. The Hispanic or Latino sector increased by just over 1 percent to 14.6 percent over the 5-year period. See Table 28.

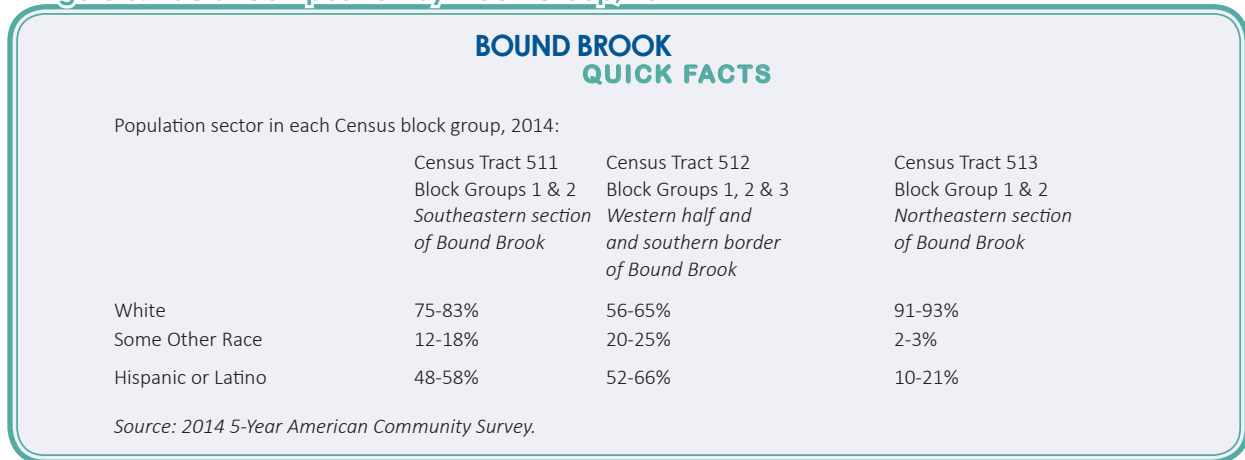
Table 28 — Selected Characteristics of the Total and Native Populations for Census Tract 513, 2009-2014

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Population	2,172	2,104	2,119	2,239	2,334	2,239
Median Age (years)	40.7	42.5	46.4	44.5	45.2	46.3
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	13.0%	16.9%	10.1%	13.6%	16.5%	14.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	81.2%	76.7%	82.3%	80.6%	77.8%	79.6%

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 6: Racial Composition by Block Group, 2014



The *Median Age by Census Block Map* shows the spatial distribution of age throughout the Borough. By and large, the neighborhoods north of Union Avenue have a much older population than the neighborhoods closer to downtown.

Racial composition varies greatly between census tracts and block groups, with the white sector comprising greater than 90 percent of CT 513, block groups 1 and 2; while the white sector comprised 65 percent or less of CT 512, block groups 1, 2 and 3. The sectors ‘Black or African American alone’ and ‘Some other races’ have the highest percentages in the preceding block groups as well when compared with block groups from CT 511.

Block groups in CT 511 and 512 are 50 percent or higher Hispanic or Latino, whereas block groups in CT 513 are 21 percent or less Hispanic or Latino. See Table 29, Figure 6 and the *Hispanic Population by Census Block Map*.

Table 29 — Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin for Block Groups, 2014

	CT 511 Block Group 1		CT 511 Block Group 2		CT 512 Block Group 1		CT 512 Block Group 2		CT 512 Block Group 3		CT 513 Block Group 1		CT 513 Block Group 2	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Population	962		2,740		2,063		1,152		1,451		1,343		896	
White alone	794	82.5	2,042	74.5	1,350	65.4	743	64.5	820	56.5	1,224	91.1	831	92.7
Black or African American alone	17	1.8	140	5.1	227	11.0	13	1.1	244	16.8	8	0.6	39	4.4
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Asian	24	2.5	23	0.8	76	3.7	42	3.6	0	0.0	70	5.2	7	0.8
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Some Other Race alone	115	12.0	498	18.1	400	19.4	290	25.2	281	19.4	35	2.6	19	2.1
Two or More Races	12	0.2	37	1.4	10	0.4	64	5.6	106	7.3	6	0.4	0	0.0
Total Population	962		2,740		2,063		1,152		1,451		1,343		896	
Hispanic or Latino	466	48.4	1,599	58.4	1,362	66.0	607	52.7	760	52.4	137	10.2	189	21.1
Not Hispanic or Latino	496	51.6	1,141	41.6	701	34.0	545	47.3	691	47.6	1,206	89.8	707	78.9

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

3.2 Demographic Trends

One third of the Borough’s population is foreign born. The region of birth for the majority (83 percent) of the foreign born is Latin America. See Figures 7 and 8. This percentage is significantly greater than for Somerset County (33 percent) and for New Jersey (46 percent). See Table 30. In Bound Brook, the second largest population of foreign born (8 percent) was born in Europe.

Unlike in the County and the State, there are more foreign-born residents in Bound Brook who are not naturalized U.S. citizens than those who have become naturalized U.S. citizens. See Table 31.

Figure 7: Foreign Born Population, 2014

**BOUND BROOK
QUICK FACTS**

1/3 of the population is FOREIGN BORN.

Of this population:
 83% Born in Latin America
 28% Naturalized U.S. Citizen
 72% Not a U.S. Citizen

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Figure 8: Region of Birth for Foreign Born in Bound Brook, 2014



Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Table 30— Place of Birth and World Region of Birth of Foreign Born, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total Population	10,607	100.0	328,704	100.0	8,874,374	100.0
Native	7,107	64.1	250,868	76.3	6,969,969	78.5
Foreign Born	3,500	35.9	77,836	23.7	1,904,405	21.5
Europe	279	8.0	11,992	15.4	312,513	16.4
Asia	208	5.9	35,042	45.0	605,809	31.8
Africa	82	2.3	4,192	5.4	94,555	5.0
Oceania	10	0.3	224	0.3	3,265	0.2
Latin America	2,903	82.9	25,285	32.5	872,186	45.8
North America	18	0.5	1,101	1.4	16,077	0.8

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 31— U.S. Citizenship Status, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Foreign Born	3,500	100.0	77,836	100.0	1,904,405	100.0
Naturalized U.S. Citizen	964	27.5	43,752	56.2	989,166	51.9
Not a U.S. Citizen	2,536	72.5	34,084	43.8	915,239	48.1

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Educational levels attained in the Borough are generally lower than for Somerset County or New Jersey as a whole. For the population age 18 to 24 years, only 34 percent went to some college or attained a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 56 percent for Somerset County and 59 percent for New Jersey. The same is true for the population age 25 years and over; in Bound Brook, only 40 percent went to college or attained a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared with 72 percent for the county and 60 percent for New Jersey.

In 2014 high school graduates or those with higher educational levels attained were 77 percent for Bound Brook, 16 percent less than the County and 11 percent less than the State as a whole. See Table 32 and Figure 9.

Figure 9: Educational Attainment, 2014

BOUND BROOK QUICK FACTS

77% high school graduate or higher education

Compared to:

- 94% Somerset County
- 88% State of New Jersey

Almost ¼ of the population 25 years or over have no high school diploma.

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Table 32— Educational Attainment, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 18 to 24 years	935		23,653		785,669	
Less than high school graduate		21.3		14.0		12.9
High school (includes equivalency)		44.6		30.1		29.0
Some college or associate's degree		24.8		39.2		44.9
Bachelor's degree or higher		9.3		16.6		13.5
Population 25 years or over	7,258		226,069		6,052,621	
Less than 9th grade		12.7		3.0		5.4
9th to 12th grade, no diploma		10.0		3.5		6.2
High school (includes equivalency)		37.1		21.7		28.8
Some college, no degree		14.9		14.1		17.0
Associate's degree		5.6		5.6		6.3
Bachelor's degree		11.7		28.8		22.5
Graduate or professional degree		8.0		23.2		13.8
High school graduate or higher		77.4		93.5		88.4
Bachelor's degree or higher		19.7		23.2		36.4

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

3.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

Bound Brook is one of the most compact municipalities in Somerset County, comprising 3 percent of the County's population on just 0.6 percent of its land area.

While Somerset County's population grew by 65 percent between 1970 and 2010, the Borough's population increased only 1.5 percent, and actually declined between 1970 and 1990. The southeastern section of the Borough again lost population between 2009 and 2014, but this was more than compensated by growth elsewhere, and there is every expectation that the Borough's population will continue to grow in the coming years.

There are substantial differences between neighborhoods in the Borough. The population living in the neighborhoods north of Union Avenue is similar to the Somerset County median, in terms of age, race, educational attainment, income and so forth. However, the population living in the neighborhoods south of Union Avenue is very different, and given the higher numbers, skews the Borough's overall population profile.

For example, the Borough's overall population is younger than average. There are more males than females, and working males ages 25 to 39 years make up a quarter of the Borough's population.

The Hispanic or Latino population has significantly increased, and now comprises half of the Borough's population. There is increased racial diversity in the western and southern neighborhoods, while the area north of Union Avenue remains predominantly white and non-Hispanic.

One third of the Borough's population is foreign-born, mostly from Latin America. This population has yet to become naturalized U.S. citizens. Educational attainment levels for the Borough remain low when compared to the County and State.

It is likely that these population traits reflect the influx of new residents that occurred between 1990 and 2010 and that over time the Borough's population profile will become closer to the statewide average. However, in the interim, there may be implications in terms of additional needs for social services, health services, educational services, and other similar services.

Some of the Borough's houses of worship offer services in Spanish, reflecting the changing population. Many businesses in the downtown, and some along Union Avenue, cater to the Hispanic population. These adjustments have occurred largely beyond the realm of the Borough's planning policies.

While these changes in the population's profile are no doubt very important for understanding the evolving character of the Borough, it is not yet clear what, if any, changes they might prompt in terms of the Borough's planning policies. A diversifying population will have more diverse tastes and interests, and will therefore likely require a broader range of options and opportunities. The Borough must remain attentive to its changing population and adjust its land use policies as needed and appropriate to reflect those changes.

4.1 Economic Base

Median household income in Bound Brook declined 9.5 percent between 2009 and 2014 to \$63,017. See Figure 10. Comparatively, median household income increased during that same time period in Somerset County to \$100,903, and in New Jersey to \$72,062. See Figure 11. According to *Investment Somerset: A Collaborative Blueprint for Economic Growth*, Somerset County was the third highest income-earning county in New Jersey and the sixth highest income-earning county in the United States in 2010. Median household income in the Borough was 1/3 less than the Somerset County average and 14 percent less than the statewide average.

The dominant occupations in Bound Brook are: services (25 percent); management, business, science and arts (21 percent); sales and office (21 percent); and production, transportation and material moving (19 percent). Both the County and the State have significantly greater percentages of employees in management, business, science and arts

– 51 and 41 percent, respectively. Conversely, Bound Brook has more workers in service occupations than Somerset County (13 percent) and the State (17 percent) and a much greater share of workers in production, transportation and material moving occupations than the County (8 percent) or the State (10 percent). See Table 33.

Figure 10: Median Household Income, 2009-2014

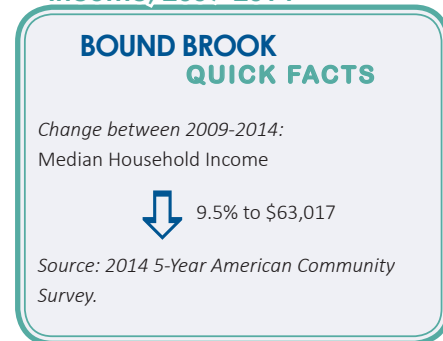
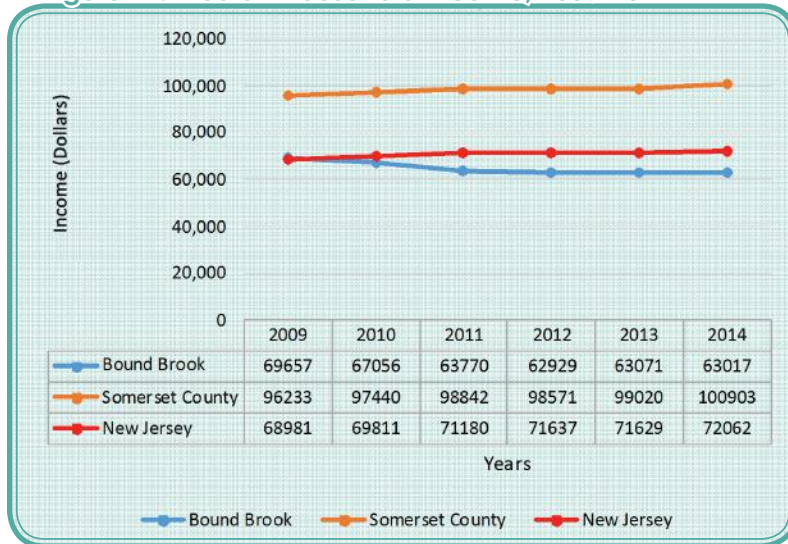


Figure 11: Median Household Income, 2009-2014



Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Table 33— Professional Occupations, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	5,899		167,982		4,235,089	
Management, business, science and arts occupations	1,219	20.7	85,620	51.0	1,722,379	40.7
Service occupations	1,453	24.6	21,282	12.7	710,670	16.8
Sales and office occupations	1,253	21.2	38,707	23.0	1,056,127	24.9
Natural resources, construction and maintenance occupations	846	14.3	9,515	5.7	306,736	7.2
Production, transportation and material moving occupations	1,128	19.1	12,858	7.7	439,177	10.4

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BASE

Figure 12: Occupations and Industries, 2014

**BOUND BROOK
QUICK FACTS**

Dominant occupations:

- Service;
- Management, business, science and arts;
- Sales and office; and
- Production, transportation and material moving.

Dominant industries:

- Educational services, health care and social assistance;
- Retail trade;
- Professional, scientific, management; and
- Administrative and waste management services.

Source: 5-Year American Community Survey.

The dominant occupations in Bound Brook vary between census tracts. CT 511 mirrors the Borough as a whole; but CT 512 has a higher share of workers in service occupations (6 percent higher) and natural resources, construction and maintenance occupations (4 percent higher) than the Borough overall; and CT 513 has a significantly higher share (38 percent) of residents in management, business, science and arts occupations, relative to CT 511 (18 percent) and CT 512 (15 percent). See Table 34 and Figure 12.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics *Foreign-Born Workers: Labor Force Characteristics 2015*, foreign-born workers were more likely to be employed in services; production, transportation and material moving; and natural resources, construction and maintenance jobs. Conversely, native-born workers were more likely to be employed in management, professional, sales and office jobs. With over one-third of the Borough’s population being foreign-born, this supports the notable differences in occupation sectors between the Borough relative to the County and the

State and also helps explain the differences between the three census tracts.

Table 34 — Occupations in Bound Brook Compared to Census Tracts, 2014

	Bound Brook	CT 511	CT 512	CT 513
Management, business, science and arts occupations	20.7%	18.0%	14.5%	37.7%
Service occupations	24.6%	22.0%	30.6%	17.0%
Sales and office occupations	21.2%	25.7%	16.4%	23.3%
Natural resources, construction and maintenance occupations	14.3%	14.7%	18.0%	6.5%
Production, transportation and material moving occupations	19.1%	19.6%	20.5%	15.4%

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Half of the employed population of Bound Brook occupies positions in educational services, health care and social assistance (15 percent); retail trade (14 percent); professional, scientific, management and administrative and waste management services (13 percent); and manufacturing (13 percent). The Borough’s labor force has a greater share of occupations in construction and arts, entertainment, recreation and accommodation and food services, and a smaller share in finance and insurance, real estate rental and leasing, educational services, and health care and social assistance, relative to the County and State. See Table 35.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BASE

Table 35— Industry, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	5,899		167,982		4,235,089	
Agriculture, forestry and hunting; mining	0	0.0	383	0.2	13,701	0.3
Construction	686	11.6	7,749	4.6	235,821	5.6
Manufacturing	735	12.5	21,493	12.8	366,432	8.7
Wholesale trade	210	3.6	5,618	3.3	145,450	3.4
Retail trade	795	13.5	16,333	9.7	474,440	11.2
Transportation and warehousing; utilities	407	6.9	6,334	3.8	242,152	5.7
Information	77	1.3	7,000	4.2	121,100	2.9
Finance and insurance; real estate and rental and leasing	217	3.7	18,030	10.7	365,497	8.6
Professional, scientific, and management; administrative and waste management services	753	12.8	26,609	15.8	540,734	12.8
Educational services; health care and social assistance	864	14.6	37,016	22.0	1,002,887	23.7
Arts, entertainment and recreation; accommodation and food services	658	11.2	10,596	6.3	350,495	8.3
Other services, except public administration	344	5.8	6,358	3.8	190,576	4.5
Public administration	153	2.6	4,463	2.7	185,804	4.4

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The unemployment rate in Bound Brook in 2014 was 7.9 percent, higher than Somerset County's 6.5 percent but lower than New Jersey's 9.7 percent. See Table 36 and Figure 13. Somerset County had the third lowest unemployment rate in the State, with Morris County at 4.3 percent and Hunterdon County at 4.2 percent. While Bound Brook had a greater unemployment rate than Somerset County, it also had a greater proportion of its population in the labor force. The unemployment rate in Bound Brook decreased between 2010 and 2014 to 7.9 percent. See Figure 14.

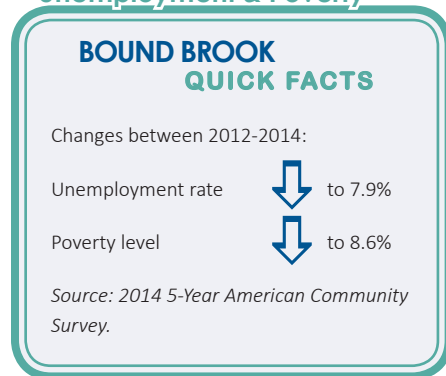
Table 36— Employment Status, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Population 16 years and over	8,447		259,303		7,080,181	
In labor force	6,407	75.8	179,776	69.3	4,695,156	66.3
Civilian labor force	6,407	75.8	179,728	69.3	4,688,186	66.2
Employed	5,899	69.8	167,982	64.8	4,235,089	59.8
Unemployed	508	6.0	11,746	4.5	453,097	6.4
Armed forces	0	0.0	48	0.0	6,970	0.1
Not in labor force	2,040	24.2	79,527	30.7	2,385,025	33.7
Percent unemployed		7.9		6.5		9.7

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BASE

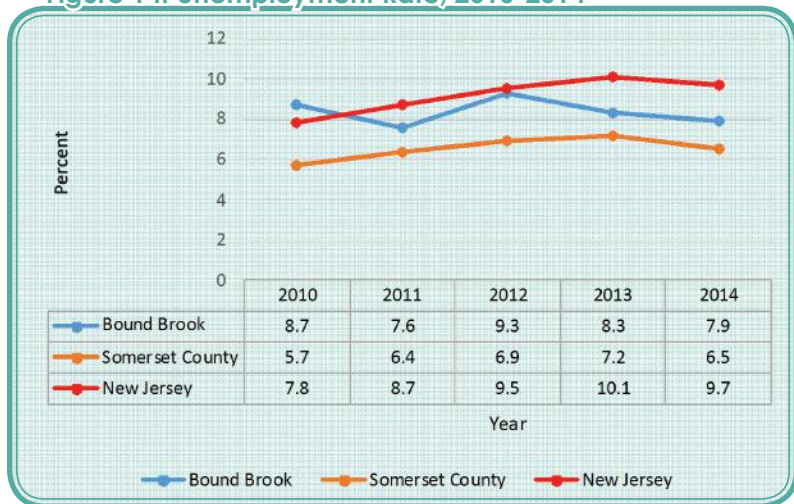
Figure 13: Unemployment & Poverty



Between 2010 and 2014, the percentage of Bound Brook residents living below the poverty level was lower than the statewide average, but higher than in Somerset County. The poverty level in Bound Brook increased by 3.1 percent between 2011 and 2012 but has been steady since then. See Figure 15.

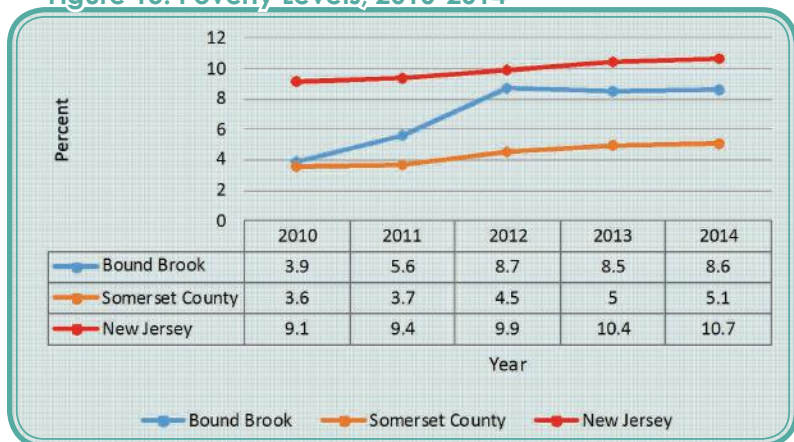
There are significant income disparities between Bound Brook neighborhoods and census tracts, with a \$25,000 difference between the lowest (CT 512) and the highest (CT 513). See Table 37 and Figure 16.

Figure 14: Unemployment Rate, 2010-2014



Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Figure 15: Poverty Levels, 2010-2014



Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Table 37 — Median Household Income in Bound Brook Compared to Census Tracts, 2014

	Bound Brook	CT 511	CT 512	CT 513
Median Household Income	\$63,017	\$58,490	\$55,040	\$80,735

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The unemployment rate in 2014 was greatest in CT 512 (10 percent) and lowest in CT 511 (5 percent). See Table 38.

Table 38 — Employment Status in Bound Brook Compared to Census Tracts, 2014

	Bound Brook	CT 511	CT 512	CT 513
Unemployment Civilian Labor Force	7.9%	5.1%	10.1%	8.2%

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Poverty levels in Bound Brook also vary greatly, with CT 512 exhibiting the highest poverty level (15 percent) and CT 513 the lowest (3 percent). See Table 39.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BASE

Figure 16: Income, Occupation, Unemployment and Poverty by Census Tract, 2014

BOUND BROOK QUICK FACTS				
	Bound Brook	CT 511	CT 512	CT 513
Median Household Income	\$63,017	\$58,490	\$55,040	\$80,735
Dominant Occupation	Service	Sales and office	Service	Management, business, science and arts
Unemployment Rate	7.9%	5.1%	10.1%	8.2%
Percent People Below Poverty	8.6%	4.4%	14.6%	2.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Table 39 — Poverty Levels in the Past 12 Months in Bound Brook Compared to Census Tracts, 2014

	Bound Brook	CT 511	CT 512	CT 513
All people	8.6%	4.4%	14.6%	2.9%

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The number of business establishments in Bound Brook declined 13 percent between 2004 and 2014, resulting in a 29 percent decrease in annual payroll. The number of paid employees also decreased significantly between 2004 and 2014, by 2,693 (-41%), to 3,840 employees. See Table 40 and Figure 17.

Table 40 — Employment in Bound Brook, 2004-2014

Year	No. of Establishments	Change Each Period (Percent)	Paid Employees for		1st Quarter Payroll in \$1,000	Change Each Period (Percent)	Annual Payroll in \$1,000	Change Each Period (Percent)
			Pay Period Including March 12	Change Each Period (Percent)				
2004	359		6,533		50,119		207,026	
2008	346	-3.6	4,326	-33.8	39,974	-20.2	159,649	-22.9
2009	325	-6.1	3,971	-8.2	36,759	-8.0	151,841	-4.9
2010	309	-4.9	3,866	-2.6	34,050	-7.4	148,334	-2.3
2011	304	-1.6	3,887	0.5	35,224	3.4	152,350	2.7
2012	303	-0.3	3,780	-2.8	36,119	2.5	149,569	-1.8
2013	292	-3.6	3,651	-3.4	32,076	-11.2	141,247	-5.9
2014	313	7.1	3,840	5.1	33,252	3.6	147,080	4.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns.

In 2013, Bound Brook’s dominant industry sectors were retail trade (38 establishments), other services except public administration (38 establishments) and accommodations and food services (37 establishments). Between 1998 and 2013, the overall number of establishments decreased 16 percent from 346 to 292, with the largest declines in educational services (-63 percent), real estate and rental and leasing (-50 percent), construction (-31 percent) and finance and insurance (-25 percent). Surprisingly, the sector with the largest growth was manufacturing (+60 percent). See Table 41.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BASE

Table 41 — Change in Industry in Bound Brook, 1998-2013

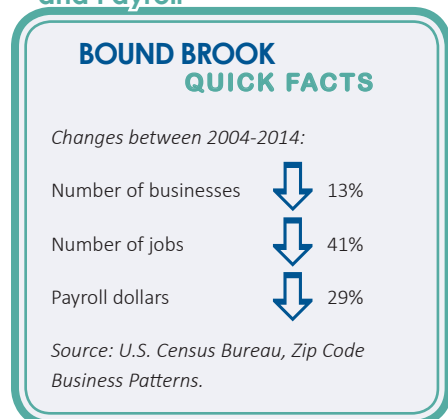
Industry Code Description	1998	2013	Percent Change
Construction	49	34	-31
Manufacturing	5	8	60
Wholesale trade	15	17	13
Retail trade	46	38	-17
Transportation and warehousing	17	17	0
Information	2	2	0
Finance and insurance	16	12	-25
Real estate and rental and leasing	10	5	-50
Professional, scientific and technical services	35	28	-20
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	21	18	-14
Educational services	8	3	-63
Health care and social assistance	39	33	-15
Arts, entertainment and recreation	2	2	0
Accommodation and food services	36	37	3
Other services (except public administration)	39	38	-3
Utilities	1	NA	NA
Management of companies and enterprises	4	NA	NA
Unclassified establishments	1	NA	NA
Number of establishments	346	292	-16

Source: <http://censtats.census.gov/cgi-bin/zbpnaic/zbpsect.pl>

Data from ESRI Business Analyst strongly suggests that Bound Brook is under-served in terms of retail and personal services. This is anecdotally confirmed by the responses to the Planning Board’s 2016 community questionnaire, which indicated a strong desire, on the part of the community, for a whole array of additional shopping and entertainment opportunities in the Borough.

Given the current land use pattern in the Borough and the physical constraints on assembling large parcels, suitable for redevelopment, with the type of large floor plate buildings required by national big-box stores, it is highly

Figure 17: Businesses, Jobs and Payroll



unlikely that the Borough will ever be able to compete for those retail expenditures, made by Borough residents, that are currently going to big-box stores in Bridgewater and other neighboring communities.

On-line purchases of goods and services are also ubiquitous and lead to additional consumer expenditures outside of the Borough.

However, there is every indication that this “retail leakage”, i.e. the amount Borough residents spend on consumer goods and services outside of the Borough, is not limited to big-box stores, and includes uses — such as restaurants — that can be easily accommodated on smaller sites and in

smaller footprint buildings.

The mandatory inclusion of ground floor retail as part of residential projects in the downtown will begin to address this deficit of space for retail and service uses. However, other locations within the Borough should be explored for additional redevelopment opportunities, to further increase the supply of space for retail and related activities in order to reduce, to the extent possible, the amount of retail leakage.

4.2 Fiscal Base

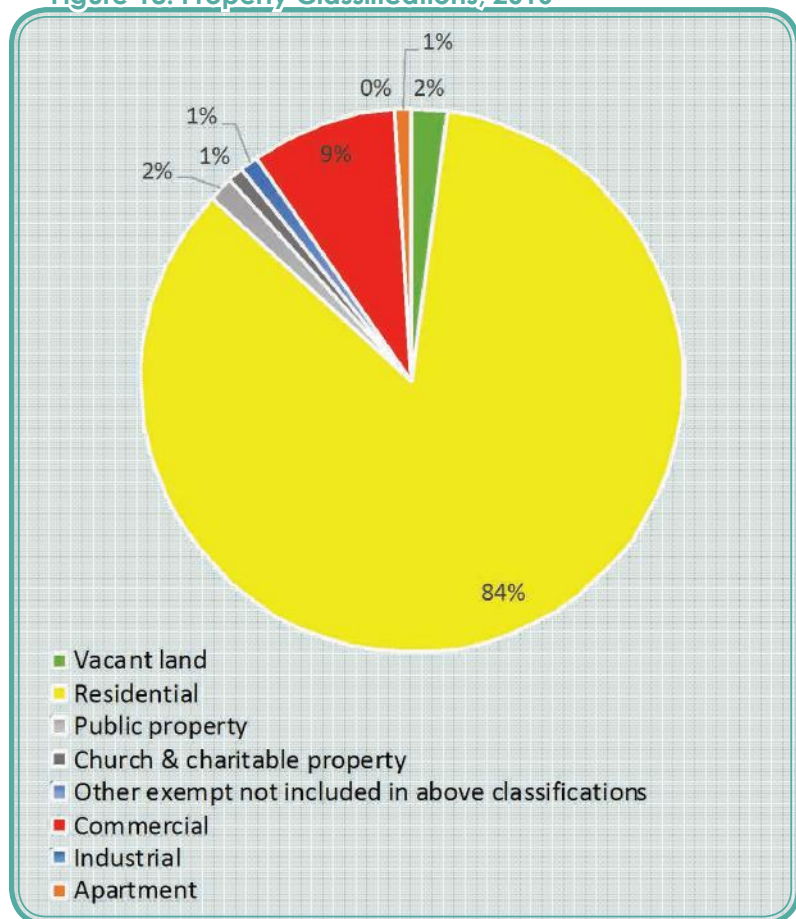
In 2015, the total taxable value of land and improvements in the Borough was a little over \$707 million. The value of land accounted for just under \$208 million, while the value of improvements contributed just over \$499 million. Tax-exempt properties accounted for close to \$97 million, while partial exemptions and abatements accounted for only \$255,200.

The majority of properties (85 percent) in Bound Brook are classified as residential. This includes apartments, which constitute only 1 percent. A total of 9 percent are classified as commercial.

The remaining parcels are classified as vacant land (2 percent), public property (2 percent), other exempt (1 percent), and church and charitable property (1 percent). Four percent of the properties are classified as tax-exempt. See Figures 18 and 19.

Residential properties (not including apartments) constitute 74% of the Borough’s tax-base, and are assessed at \$542 million — an average assessed value of \$238,000. Apartments constitute 6% of the tax base, and are assessed at \$43 million. Commercial properties constitute 18% of the Borough’s tax-base, and are assessed at \$128 million — an average assessed value of \$549,000. Vacant land is assessed at \$8.4 million, and the one industrial property is

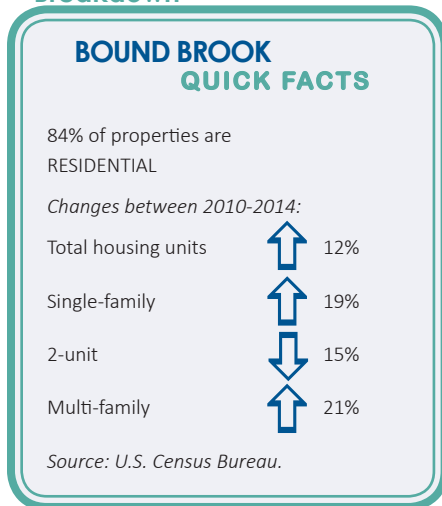
Figure 18: Property Classifications, 2016



Source: MOD IV Data, 2016.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BASE

Figure 19: Housing Stock Breakdown



assessed at \$1.5 million.

The ratio between the assessed value of real estate improvements (building stock, etc) and the assessed value of the underlying land is viewed by economists as an indicator of potential underutilization. Somerset County used this indicator, commonly referred to as the “Improvements-to-Land-Value Ratio” (ILVR) — along with other indicators, to identify areas for additional growth through redevelopment in its most recent *Strategic Planning* documents. Generally speaking, an ILVR value lower than 3:1 indicates under-investment in the building, relative to the value of the land.

Table 42 shows the 2016 ILV ratios for different categories of land uses in the Borough. The ILV ratios are not meaningful for vacant land, or for publicly-owned and other tax-exempt properties. Of interest are the ILV ratios for residential, commercial and apartments. The wide range between the lowest and highest ILV ratios for each of these three categories indicates a wide discrepancy in assessed values. The findings are also depicted in the *Ratios of Improvements to Land Value Map*.

Generally speaking, the highest ILV ratios can be found in the neighborhood east of East Street, which includes sections of East High Street and East 2nd Street; in the South Main Street neighborhood; in the area north of Talmage Avenue and Columbus Place and south of West 2nd Street; and in the area of the Bound Brook apartments, Crescent Drive and Cedarcrest Drive.

There are also a number of neighborhoods with ILV ratios below 3:1. These should be carefully examined to better understand what is causing the low building assessments relative to the land assessments.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BASE

Table 42 — Property Classifications and Improvement to Land Value Ratios (ILVR) in Bound Brook, 2016

Property Class		No. Properties	Percent	ILVR Range		Median ILVR
Code	Description			Minimum	Maximum	
1	Vacant land	56	2%	0.0	0.0	NA
2	Residential	2,279	84%	0.3	51.5	2.7
15A	Public school property	4	0%	3.9	37.1	2.5
15B	Other school property	7	0%	0.0	6.9	1.9
15C	Public property	41	2%	0.0	19.2	NA
15D	Church and charitable property	25	1%	0.0	16.7	3.4
15E	Cemeteries and graveyards	3	0%	0.0	0.1	NA
15F	Other exempt not included in above classifications	30	1%	0.0	19.3	0.4
4A	Commercial	233	9%	0.0	29.6	1.9
4B	Industrial	1	0%	1.4	1.4	1.4
4C	Apartment	26	1%	1.6	30.4	3.8
6A	Personal property telephone	1	0%	0.0	0.0	NA
TOTAL		2,706	100%			

Source: MOD IV Data 2016, State of New Jersey, Department of the Treasury, Division of Taxation.



Equalized valuations for Bound Brook, Somerset County and New Jersey declined between 2009 and 2013, coinciding with the economic recession. Equalized valuations increased in 2014 and 2015 for all three jurisdictions, but had not yet recovered to 2008 levels. See Tables 43 and 44.

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BASE

Table 43 — Equalized Valuations in Bound Brook, Somerset County and New Jersey, 1998-2015

Year and District	Aggregated Assessed Valuation of Real Property*	Average Ratio of Assessed to True Value	Aggregated True Value Real Property*	Assessed Value Class II R.R. Property	Assessed Value all Personal Property	Equalized Valuation
2015 BB	706,818,480	95.45	740,511,765	0	6,142,505	746,654,270
2014 BB	674,875,040	92.72	727,863,503	0	6,135,212	733,998,715
2013 BB	827,501,200	114.65	721,762,931	0	6,857,917	728,620,848
2012 BB	831,409,900	104.36	796,674,780	0	7,787,477	804,462,257
2011 BB	838,140,500	103.16	812,466,557	0	9,023,902	821,490,459
2010 BB	849,089,500	97.04	874,989,180	0	7,937,422	882,926,602
2009 BB	851,886,300	91.91	926,870,090	0	8,160,111	935,030,201
2008 BB	424,036,800	42.19	1,005,064,707	0	3,488,832	1,008,553,539
2007 BB	423,469,700	44.92	942,719,724	0	3,353,867	946,073,591
2006 BB	423,045,100	47.05	899,139,426	0	4,335,940	903,475,366
2005 BB	421,220,900	55.71	756,095,674	0	4,901,049	760,996,723
2000 BB	380,131,300	89.93	422,696,875	0	6,892,010	429,588,885
1999 BB	420,956,600	101.32	415,472,365	0	13,627,879	429,100,244
1998 BB	416,210,200	102.99	404,126,808	0	18,170,505	422,297,313
2015 SC	55,737,088,491	95.63	58,284,757,745	0	77,926,959	58,362,684,704
2014 SC	54,702,868,020	94.73	57,748,736,911	0	75,935,885	57,824,672,796
2013 SC	54,440,068,031	95.77	56,847,494,202	0	87,875,508	56,935,369,710
2012 SC	54,908,597,883	95.04	57,773,475,750	0	101,671,823	57,875,147,573
2011 SC	5,440,138,493	92.88	59,687,339,314	0	105,952,064	59,793,291,378
2010 SC	53,533,032,610	87.73	61,016,907,601	0	107,004,572	61,123,912,173
2009 SC	55,714,538,908	88.41	63,016,424,556	0	100,942,261	63,117,366,817
2008 SC	54,610,737,536	86.21	63,346,535,892	0	85,251,482	63,431,787,374
2007 SC	54,442,379,557	87.37	62,312,380,099	0	81,876,700	62,394,256,799
2006 SC	53,183,937,868	88.11	60,358,179,649	0	86,225,901	60,444,405,550
2005 SC	48,943,543,927	88.89	55,059,614,943	0	93,169,183	55,152,784,126
2000 SC	26,902,668,006	88.01	30,566,713,128	0	88,121,242	30,654,834,370
1999 SC	25,028,773,409	91.07	27,484,449,887	0	112,725,496	27,597,175,383
1998 SC	23,407,855,878	90.20	25,950,527,401	0	125,977,826	26,076,505,227
2015 NJ	981,776,658,332	82.99	1,183,048,455,549	0	1,282,791,000	1,184,331,246,549
2014 NJ	981,676,028,381	84.31	1,164,398,722,910	0	1,366,810,481	1,165,765,533,391
2013 NJ	970,036,983,671	83.75	1,158,321,554,836	0	1,569,392,445	1,159,890,947,281
2012 NJ	982,076,689,427	83.01	1,183,032,331,385	0	1,853,498,505	1,184,885,829,890
2011 NJ	986,326,009,657	79.83	1,235,474,241,228	0	2,034,836,058	1,237,509,077,286
2010 NJ	981,864,674,544	76.79	1,278,578,125,123	0	2,103,136,274	1,280,681,261,397
2009 NJ	957,324,377,980	71.89	1,331,603,904,797	0	1,960,567,654	1,333,564,472,451
2008 NJ	891,585,205,741	65.80	1,355,003,641,018	0	1,757,217,122	1,356,760,858,140
2007 NJ	833,112,658,969	62.81	1,326,296,906,114	0	1,668,154,274	1,327,965,060,388
2006 NJ	743,219,514,179	60.17	1,235,285,449,245	0	1,679,109,379	1,236,964,558,624
2005 NJ	666,117,073,824	61.69	1,079,838,475,930	0	1,811,265,748	1,081,649,741,678

* Exclusive of Class II Railroad Property. Source: New Jersey Department of the Treasury, 2016.

Table 44 — Change in Equalized Valuations, 2005-2015

Year	Percent Change in Total Equalized Property Valuations from Preceding Year		
	Bound Brook	Somerset County	State of New Jersey
2015	1.7	0.9	1.6
2014	0.7	1.6	0.5
2013	-9.4	-1.6	-2.1
2012	-2.1	-3.2	-4.3
2011	-7.0	-2.2	-3.4
2010	-5.6	-3.2	-4.0
2009	-7.3	-0.5	-1.7
2008	6.6	1.7	2.2
2007	4.7	3.2	7.4
2006	18.7	9.6	14.4

Source: New Jersey Department of the Treasury.

4.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

Median household income, unemployment rates and poverty levels are leveling out in Bound Brook, although the Borough as a whole seriously lags behind the County average.

There are significant disparities within the Borough. The Piedmont and Middlebrook neighborhoods (CT 513) have more workers in higher paid occupations (management, business, science), higher median household incomes and much lower poverty rates; while the West Side neighborhoods (CT 512) have more workers in lower paid occupations, much lower median household incomes and much higher poverty rates.

Bound Brook residents work in many occupations, evenly spread over multiple sectors: service (25 percent); management, business, science and arts (21 percent); sales and office (21 percent); and production, transportation and material moving (19). Consistent with the lower levels of educational attainment, higher percentages of Bound Brook residents work in lower-paying jobs in services, construction and transportation than the County and State averages.

The number of business establishments in Bound Brook declined by 13 percent between 2004 and 2014, leading to a 29 percent loss in annual payroll and a 41 percent loss in jobs.

The ratio of jobs to residents is currently at 0.31:1. The ratio of jobs to housing is 0.89:1. Both ratios are low, and suggest that the Borough should take steps to increase in-town employment opportunities.

There are also indications that the Borough is under-retailed, which leads to an exodus of consumer expenditures, by Borough residents, to stores in neighboring communities. The Borough's land use strategy should seek to address this and create additional opportunities for (re)development of new retail and service activities, in order to both increase the Borough's employment base as well as capture a larger share of consumer expenditures by Borough

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BASE

residents.

With respect to the fiscal base, residential properties (not including apartments) comprise 84 percent of the total number of properties, but only 74 percent of the total assessed value. The 26 properties classified as “apartments” are assessed at \$43 million, or 6% of the total tax base.

The 233 commercial properties comprise 9 percent of the total number of properties, but constitute 18% of the total assessed value. They are assessed at \$128 million.

Equalized valuations for Bound Brook declined 1.9 percent between 2005 and 2015, but increased minimally in 2015.

With respect to individual parcels, the ratio between the value of improvements (the building) and the value of the land it occupies (ILVR) varies substantially in the Borough, with the highest ratios concentrated in a just a few neighborhoods. The explanation for the unusually wide variations in these ratios is not entirely clear, and therefore the appropriate policy responses are not apparent. More analysis is required.



This notwithstanding, developing a land use strategy that allows for further growth of the Borough’s commercial tax base should be a priority, consistent with the findings from the analysis of the Borough’s economic base. This would reduce the fiscal reliance on the residential tax base, provide more in-town job opportunities, close to housing, and offer a more diversified range of goods and services to local residents, consistent with the desires expressed through the community survey.

There is also an argument to be made with respect to strategies targeted at encouraging reinvestment in the Borough’s aging residential and commercial building stock and fostering increased property maintenance.

5.1 Characteristics of the Housing Stock

Both Somerset County and New Jersey as a whole have experienced fairly steady housing development in recent decades, with growth averaging 12 percent each decade, as shown in Table 45. Bound Brook, on the other hand, has experienced minimal rates of housing development since 1979, and nearly one-third of the housing stock was built in 1939 or earlier. New, multi-family projects, such as Meridia Downtown and Queens Gate, are too recent to be reflected in this data.

Table 45— Year Structure Built, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	4,185	100.0	124,402	100.0	3,572,138	100.0
Built 2010 or later	0	0.0	886	0.7	22,494	0.6
Built 2000 to 2009	28	0.7	12,510	10.1	345,253	9.7
Built 1990 to 1999	34	0.8	21,963	17.7	325,550	9.1
Built 1980 to 1989	97	2.3	24,700	19.2	420,821	11.8
Built 1970 to 1979	380	9.1	13,933	11.2	460,935	12.9
Built 1960 to 1969	553	13.2	15,659	12.6	495,294	13.9
Built 1950 to 1959	842	20.1	14,469	11.6	560,930	15.7
Built 1940 to 1949	924	22.1	6,668	5.4	296,527	8.3
Built 1939 or earlier	1,327	31.7	13,614	10.9	644,334	18.0

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

This data is hard to reconcile with building permit data from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, which indicates a substantially higher number of units in the period after 1990. See Table 46. Not every building

Figure 20: Characteristics of Housing Stock, 2014

BOUND BROOK QUICK FACTS

- Almost 90% of the housing stock was built prior to 1970.
- Less than 1% has been built since 2000.
- 55% of units are single-family detached
- 33% of units are in 2-4 family attached
- > 50% of units have 1 or 2 bedrooms
- < 13% of units have 4 or more bedrooms

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

permit is completed, and some permits may represent new units that replace demolished units. There is anecdotal evidence that some neighborhoods have witnessed conversions of single-family units into two-family or three-family units, however the data shows no permits for new two- or three-family structures from 1999 to 2015. So there appears to be a level of discrepancy in the data that is hard to understand.

Table 46 — Number of Building Permits Issued in Bound Brook, 1990-2015

	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2015	1990-2015
Single-family	35	112	110	257
Two-family				
3- and 4-family				
5 or more units	18	145	1,036	1,199
TOTAL	53	257	1,146	1,456

Source: Annual Building Permits, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

Bound Brook has a larger share of small multi-family buildings, when compared to Somerset County and New Jersey. One-third of the housing stock in Bound Brook is 2 to 4 unit buildings, much higher than Somerset County (10 percent) and New Jersey (16 percent). Conversely, Bound Brook has a smaller share (42 percent) of single-family detached units, relative to Somerset County (59 percent) and New Jersey statewide (54 percent). See Table 47.

Table 47— Number of Housing Units in Structure, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	4,185	100.0	124,402	100.0	3,572,138	100.0
1-unit, detached	1,735	41.5	73,417	59.0	1,917,194	53.7
1-unit, attached	571	13.6	19,844	16.0	330,619	9.3
2 units	729	17.4	6,196	5.0	340,308	9.5
3 or 4 units	646	15.4	5,693	4.6	229,608	6.4
5 to 9 units	236	5.6	5,484	4.4	171,267	4.8
10 to 19 units	88	2.1	6,603	5.3	178,267	5.0
20 or more units	171	4.1	6,997	5.6	369,568	10.3
Mobile home	9	0.2	146	0.1	34,201	1.0
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0	22	0.0	849	0.0

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

In 2014, there were 4,185 housing units in Bound Brook. More than half (55 percent) were single-family; 17 percent were two-family units, and 27 percent were multi-family (three or more units). Between 2010 and 2014, both the single-family and multi-family housing stock increased by approximately one-fifth, according to these data, while the two-family stock decreased by almost 15 percent. See Table 48.

Table 48 — Housing Stock Composition in Bound Brook, 2010 and 2014

	2010		Percent Change	2014	
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	3,749	100.0	11.7	4,185	100.0
Single-family	1,945	51.9	18.6	2,306	55.1
2 units	854	22.8	-14.6	729	17.4
Multi-family	947	25.2	20.5	1,141	27.2
Mobile home	0	0.0	--	9	0.2

Source: 2010 and 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Bound Brook also hosts rooming houses, which are regulated by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. According to NJS 55:13B-2 (2014), the residents of such facilities are predominantly elderly, disabled and poor, many of whom need social, personal and financial services, protection from building hazards and protections from unscrupulous and predatory neighbors. An April 2015 report from NJDCA’s Bureau of Rooming and Boarding House Standards identifies 6 rooming houses in the Borough:

- 18 West Main Street
- 507 East Main Street
- 129 East 2nd Street
- 411 Somerset Street
- 211 Somerset Street
- 318 Talmage Avenue

Bound Brook has a larger share (53 percent) of 1- and 2-bedroom units when compared to the County (36 percent) and the State (40 percent); and a significantly smaller share (13 percent) of larger housing units with 4 or more bedrooms, again relative to the County (34 percent) and State (24 percent). See Table 49.

Table 49— Number of Bedrooms in Housing Units, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	4,185	100.0	124,402	100.0	3,572,138	100.0
No bedroom	64	1.5	1,143	0.9	102,871	2.9
1 bedroom	842	20.1	12,994	10.4	506,547	14.2
2 bedrooms	1,373	32.8	31,618	25.4	926,328	25.9
3 bedrooms	1,366	32.6	36,625	29.4	1,165,148	32.6
4 bedrooms	407	9.7	32,947	26.5	672,468	18.8
5 or more bedrooms	133	3.2	9,075	7.3	198,776	5.6

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The building stock in Bound Brook is similar to that of the County and State in traits such as heating fuel and selected housing characteristics. Over three-quarters of the occupied housing units utilize utility gas as heating fuel in all three jurisdictions — nearly 90 percent in Bound Brook. Other, less common sources of energy used for heating in Bound Brook housing are electricity (5 percent) and fuel oil or kerosene (4 percent). See Table 50.

Table 50— Housing Heating Fuel, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Occupied housing units	3,470	100.0	115,941	100.0	3,188,498	100.0
Utility gas	3,103	89.4	95,040	82.0	2,364,588	74.2
Bottled, tank or LP gas	23	0.7	1,160	1.0	61,811	1.9
Electricity	175	5.0	10,690	9.2	371,797	11.7
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	133	3.8	8,560	7.4	353,791	11.1
Coal or coke	8	0.2	22	0.0	1,023	0.0
Wood	8	0.2	148	0.1	14,154	0.4
Solar energy	0	0.0	0	0.0	942	0.0
Other fuel	8	0.2	175	0.2	10,317	0.3
No fuel used	12	0.3	146	0.1	10,075	0.3

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

HOUSING

Moreover, there are no occupied housing units in Bound Brook without plumbing facilities, and only 0.4 percent lack kitchen facilities. Similar to the County and State, only 2.0 percent of occupied housing units lack telephone service. See Table 51.

Table 51— Selected Housing Characteristics, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Occupied housing units	3,470		115,941		3,188,498	
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	0	0.0	285	0.2	12,671	0.4
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	14	0.4	817	0.7	25,942	0.8
No telephone service available	68	2.0	1,169	1.0	58,759	1.8

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The occupied housing stock in CT 511 is generally older than in the rest of the Borough with 85 percent built before 1960. Housing in CT 512 and 513 is slightly more recent but the majority of the stock was still built more than 30 years ago. The *Housing — Year Built Map* shows the spatial distribution of the general age of the housing stock throughout the Borough.

There is a significant difference in the types of housing stock between the census tracts. Over 80 percent of housing in CT 513 is single-family detached. CT 511 is characterized by two-family units and multi-family buildings. CT 512 offers a greater variety of housing options.

CT 511 and 512 have a greater share of one-bedroom units, 26 and 24 percent, respectively, compared to CT 513 with 6 percent. Conversely, CT 513 has significantly larger homes, with 4 or more bedrooms (28 percent) than CT 511 (11 percent) and CT 512 (10 percent). See Table 52.



Table 52 — Selected Characteristics for Occupied Housing by Census Tract, 2014

	CT 511		CT 512		CT 513	
	Estimate	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied Units	1,129		1,481		860	
Year Built						
2010 or later		0.0		0.0		0.0
2000 to 2009		0.0		0.5		2.4
1980 to 1999		3.4		4.0		2.3
1960 to 1979		12.0		31.8		19.2
1940 to 1959		27.2		51.5		46.4
1939 or earlier		57.5		12.3		29.7
Units in Structure						
1 unit, detached		29.7		36.4		81.6
1 unit, attached		19.9		17.8		7.7
2 apartments		22.4		12.3		3.3
3 or 4 apartments		10.5		19.9		2.2
5-9 apartments		5.2		8.1		1.5
10 or more apartments		12.3		5.6		3.7
Bedrooms						
No bedroom		0.0		3.2		0.0
1 bedroom		26.0		23.8		5.8
2 or 3 bedroom		62.6		63.2		66.2
4 or more bedrooms		11.3		9.8		28.0

Source: New Jersey Department of the Treasury.

5.2 Housing Trends

In 2014, Bound Brook had a much higher vacancy rate (17 percent) than Somerset County (7 percent) or New Jersey (11 percent). See Figure 21. The rental vacancy rate in all three jurisdictions was higher than the homeowner vacancy rate, with Bound Brook at the higher end (20 percent rental vacancy rate).

The housing stock in the Borough is almost evenly split between owner-occupied (1,850) and renter-occupied (1,620) units. Both Somerset County (78%) and New Jersey (65%) have much larger shares of owner-occupied units. See Table 53.

Table 53— Housing Occupancy, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	4,185		124,402		3,572,138	
Occupied housing units	3,470	82.9	115,941	93.2	3,188,498	89.3
Vacant housing units	715	17.1	8,461	6.8	383,640	10.7
Homeowner vacancy rate		4.5		1.3		1.7
Rental vacancy rate		20.0		10.9		6.5
Owner-occupied units	1,850	53.3	89,848	77.5	2,073,915	65.0
Renter-occupied units	1,620	46.7	26,093	22.5	1,114,583	35.0

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The *Housing Tenure by Census Block Map* shows the distribution of owner-occupied housing (versus renter-occupied housing) in each census block in Bound Brook in 2010. Generally, higher percentages of owner-occupied housing are located in the northern and western neighborhoods of the Borough, while higher percentages of renter-occupied housing are located south of Route 28 and east of Vosseller Avenue. The *Vacant Housing Units by Census Block Map* shows the distribution of vacant housing units in each census block in the Borough.

The year the householder moved into the housing unit is similar over all three jurisdictions compared, with 66 percent of the population moving into Bound Brook in 2000 or later. See Table 54.

Table 54— Year Householder Moved Into Unit, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Occupied housing units	3,470	100.0	115,941	100.0	3,188,498	100.0
Moved in 2010 or later	704	20.3	19,394	16.7	626,639	19.7
Moved in 2000 to 2009	1,585	45.7	51,363	44.3	1,341,261	42.1
Moved in 1990 to 1999	590	17.0	24,331	21.0	581,127	18.2
Moved in 1980 to 1989	185	5.3	10,202	8.8	292,140	9.2
Moved in 1970 to 1979	155	4.5	4,987	4.3	182,593	5.7
Moved in 1969 or earlier	251	7.2	5,664	4.9	164,738	5.2

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

**Figure 21:
Summary of Housing Trends**

**BOUND BROOK
QUICK FACTS**

17% Housing vacancy rate, 2014

Compared with:

7% Somerset County

11% New Jersey

Owner vs. Renter, 2014:

53% Owner-occupied housing

47% Renter-occupied housing

Moved Into Unit, 2014:

56% Moved to Bound Brook
 in 2000 or later

Household Size, 2010:

15% of households have
 5 or more people

Of family households, 2014:

49% Husband-wife families

7% Males, no wife present

16% Females, no husband present

Of non-family households, 2014:

23% Live alone

7% Live with roommate

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau and 2014
5-Year American Community Survey.*

Bound Brook has a higher share of larger households (5 or more persons) than the County or State. In Bound Brook, 16 percent of households have 5 or more persons, compared to the County (11 percent) and the State (12 percent). See Table 55. The *Average Household Size by Census Block Map* indicates that, in 2010, the areas south of East and West High Streets and the area west of Vosseller Avenue had higher average household sizes.

Table 55— Household Size, 2010

	Bound Brook Percent	Somerset County Percent	State of New Jersey Percent
1 person household	22.8	23.3	25.2
2 person household	27.6	29.6	29.8
3 person household	17.9	18.1	17.4
4 person household	15.5	17.7	15.7
5 person household	8.4	7.3	7.2
6 person household	4.0	2.6	2.7
7 or more person household	3.8	1.5	1.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

There are more family households than non-family households in Bound Brook, the County and the State. There is a difference, however, in the proportion of family types in these households. In Bound Brook, there is a smaller percentage of traditional husband and wife families, and a larger percentage of male householder with no wife and female householder

with no husband family types, relative to Somerset County and New Jersey. Additionally, Bound Brook has a greater percentage of non-family households where the householder does not live alone. See Table 56.

Table 56— Housing Occupancy Characteristics, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Occupied housing units	3,470		115,941		3,188,498	
Family households		70.9		72.8		69.3
Married couple		48.6		60.2		50.9
Male householder, no wife		6.6		3.0		4.8
Female householder, no husband		15.8		9.7		13.5
Non-family households		29.1		27.2		30.7
Householder living alone		22.6		23.2		25.8
Householder not living alone		6.5		3.9		4.9

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Figure 22: Summary of Housing Costs, 2014

BOUND BROOK QUICK FACTS

\$283,300 median value of owner-occupied units

Change of median value between 2010-2014:

- ↓ 7% in Bound Brook
- ↓ 8% in Somerset County
- ↓ 10% in New Jersey

\$2,381 median monthly owner costs, with mortgage
\$1,194 median monthly gross rent

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The median value of owner-occupied units in Bound Brook in 2014 was \$283,300. This is 29 percent less than the median value in Somerset County and 11 percent less than the State. Housing stock in the Borough with a median value of \$500,000+ makes up only 3 percent of the inventory, compared to 34 percent in Somerset County and 20 percent in New Jersey. See Table 57 and Figure 22.

Table 57— Value of Owner-Occupied Units, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Owner-occupied units	1,850		89,848		2,073,915	
Less than \$50,000	29	1.6	1,141	1.3	60,078	2.9
\$50,000 to \$99,999	26	1.4	801	0.9	62,688	3.0
\$100,000 to \$149,000	64	3.5	1,723	1.9	115,101	5.5
\$150,000 to \$199,000	197	10.6	3,197	3.6	205,780	9.9
\$200,000 to \$299,999	748	40.4	19,842	22.1	504,321	24.3
\$300,000 to \$499,999	735	39.7	32,301	36.0	709,930	34.2
\$500,000 to \$999,999	51	2.8	26,113	29.1	354,794	17.1
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0	4,730	5.3	61,223	3.0
Median (dollars)	283,300		396,500		319,900	

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The median value of owner-occupied housing declined between 2010 and 2013 in all three jurisdictions. Between 2013 and 2014, however, the median value increased one percent in the Borough while it continued to decline in the County and State. See Table 58.

Table 58— Change in Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units, 2010-2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent Change	Estimate	Percent Change	Estimate	Percent Change
2014	\$283,300	1.1	\$396,500	-0.6	\$319,900	-2.2
2013	\$280,300	-2.8	\$398,800	-2.1	\$327,100	-3.2
2012	\$288,400	-4.6	\$407,300	-3.1	\$337,900	-3.2
2011	\$302,300	-1.2	\$420,500	-2.5	\$349,100	-2.2
2010	\$306,100	--	\$431,200	--	\$357,000	--

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

Selected monthly owner costs for both housing units with a mortgage and housing units without a mortgage are similar for Bound Brook and New Jersey. With a mortgage, monthly housing costs are \$2,000 or more for at least two-thirds of the units and, without a mortgage, monthly housing costs are \$400 or more in at least 94 percent of the units in Bound Brook, Somerset County and New Jersey. See Table 59.

Table 59— Selected Monthly Owner Costs, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Housing units with a mortgage	1,288		64,922		1,448,250	
Less than \$300	0	0.0	26	0.0	551	0.0
\$300 to \$499	0	0.0	131	0.2	5,029	0.3
\$500 to \$699	10	0.8	273	0.4	12,067	0.8
\$700 to \$999	43	3.3	1,190	1.8	40,518	2.8
\$1,000 to \$1,499	134	10.4	4,931	7.6	161,162	11.1
\$1,500 to \$1,999	245	19.0	9,036	13.9	259,755	17.9
\$2,000 or more	856	66.5	49,335	76.0	969,158	66.9
Median (dollars)	2,381		2,728		2,428	
Housing units without a mortgage	562		24,926		625,665	
Less than \$100	0	0.0	13	0.1	2,017	0.3
\$100 to \$199	7	1.2	80	0.3	5,408	0.9
\$200 to \$299	10	1.8	112	0.4	10,398	1.7
\$300 to \$399	16	2.8	271	1.1	16,162	2.6
\$400 or more	529	94.1	24,450	98.1	591,680	94.6
Median (dollars)	882		1000+		972	

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

The majority (58 percent) of renters in Bound Brook pay \$1,000 to \$1,499 per month. The median rent is \$1,194 in Bound Brook, \$1,420 in Somerset County and \$1,188 in New Jersey. See Table 60.

Table 60— Gross Rent, 2014

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		State of New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Occupied units paying rent	1,595		25,059		1,077,463	
Less than \$200	0	0.0	148	0.6	15,768	1.5
\$200 to \$299	0	0.0	308	1.2	32,722	3.0
\$300 to \$499	0	0.0	664	2.6	41,629	3.9
\$500 to \$749	7	0.4	573	2.3	71,395	6.6
\$750 to \$999	279	17.5	1,952	7.8	185,315	17.2
\$1,000 to \$1,499	930	58.3	10,463	41.8	440,571	40.9
\$1,500 to more	379	23.8	10,951	43.7	290,063	26.9
Median (dollars)	1,194		1,420		1,188	
No rent paid	25		1,034		37,120	

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

For owner-occupied units, 46 percent of owners are cost-burdened, spending 30 percent or more of their annual income on housing. Similarly, for renter-occupied units, 47 percent of renters are cost-burdened, spending 30 percent or more of their annual income on housing.

CT 512 most closely reflects the share of annual income spent on housing relative to the Borough as a whole. Households in CT 511 are the most cost-burdened, with a larger share spending 30 percent or more of their income on housing; while fewer households in CT 513 spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing. See Table 61 and Figure 23.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development issues annual guidance regarding “fair market rents” by jurisdiction. Bound Brook is included in the HUD Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon county region. Fair market rent for FY 2017 for this region is \$1,054 for an efficiency unit, \$1,296 for a one-bedroom unit, \$1,654 for a two-bedroom unit, \$2,019 for a three-bedroom unit and \$2,551 for a four-bedroom unit.

Figure 23: Housing Cost Burden by Census Tract, 2014

BOUND BROOK QUICK FACTS					
Percent of households spending 30% or more of their income on housing in the past 12 months, 2014					
	Bound Brook	CT 511	CT 512	CT 513	NJ
Owner-occupied	46%	50%	47%	41%	39%
Renter-occupied	47%	47%	47%	44%	51%

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

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Table 61— Tenure by Housing Costs As A Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months, 2014

	Bound Brook		CT 511		CT 512		CT 513	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total Occupied Units	3,470		1,129		1,481		860	
Owner-occupied units	1,850		379		785		686	
Less than \$20,000	129	7.0	14	3.7	80	10.2	35	5.1
Less than 20%	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
20-29%	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
30% or more	129	7.0	14	3.7	80	10.2	35	5.1
\$20,000-\$34,999	229	12.4	59	15.6	124	15.8	46	6.7
Less than 20%	3	0.2	0	0.0	3	0.4	0	0.0
20-29%	23	1.2	7	1.8	8	1.0	8	1.2
30% or more	203	11.0	52	13.7	113	14.4	38	5.5
\$35,000-\$49,999	194	10.5	55	14.5	91	11.6	48	7.0
Less than 20%	14	0.8	14	3.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
20-29%	57	3.1	14	3.7	30	3.8	13	1.9
30% or more	123	6.6	27	7.1	61	7.8	35	5.1
\$50,000-\$74,999	285	15.4	5	1.3	120	15.3	160	23.3
Less than 20%	96	5.2	0	0.0	42	5.4	54	7.9
20-29%	58	3.1	5	3.1	39	5.0	14	2.0
30% or more	131	7.1	0	0.0	39	5.0	92	13.4
\$75,000 or more	1,013	54.8	246	64.9	370	47.1	397	53.8
Less than 20%	512	27.7	92	24.3	165	21.0	255	32.8
20-29%	245	13.2	54	14.2	132	16.8	59	8.6
30% or more	256	13.8	100	26.4	73	9.3	83	12.1
Renter-occupied units	1,620		750		696		174	
Less than \$20,000	120	7.4	60	8.0	48	6.9	12	6.9
Less than 20%	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
20-29%	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
30% or more	120	7.4	60	8.0	48	6.9	12	6.9
\$20,000-\$34,999	384	23.7	161	21.5	163	23.4	60	34.5
Less than 20%	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
20-29%	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
30% or more	384	23.7	161	21.5	163	23.4	60	34.5
\$35,000-\$49,999	310	19.1	161	21.5	136	19.5	13	7.5
Less than 20%	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
20-29%	109	6.7	75	10.0	29	4.2	5	2.9
30% or more	201	12.4	86	11.5	107	15.4	8	3.0
\$50,000-\$74,999	418	25.8	181	24.1	225	32.4	12	6.9
Less than 20%	34	2.1	0	0.0	34	4.9	0	0.0
20-29%	333	20.6	136	18.1	185	26.6	12	6.9
30% or more	51	3.1	45	6.0	6	0.9	0	0.0
\$75,000 or more	363	22.4	187	24.9	114	16.4	62	35.6
Less than 20%	299	18.5	131	17.5	106	15.2	62	35.6
20-29%	64	4.0	56	7.5	8	1.1	0	0.0
30% or more	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Source: 2014 5-Year American Community Survey.

5.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Borough's housing stock is older than in the rest of the region — a third was built before 1939. This contributes to the Borough's charm, and may also play a role in keeping it affordable, but it also poses challenges, as older units continue to age, particularly if necessary maintenance is deferred.

There is no comprehensive assessment of maintenance conditions for the housing stock in the Borough, however a casual visual assessment suggests that there are neighborhoods where maintenance of the single-family and two-family housing stock has perhaps not kept up. This has not gone unnoticed by the respondents to the Master Plan survey. Deferred maintenance may be associated with rental units managed by absentee landlords but this cannot be confirmed from the existing data. There is also anecdotal evidence that deferred maintenance may be affecting some of the older multi-family rental stock.

Bound Brook has a comparatively high vacancy rate at 17 percent, which surely contributes to the Borough's housing affordability. It is not clear how many of those units are vacant because they require investment to make them habitable and marketable. Most units have utility gas for heating, complete plumbing and kitchen facilities and access to telephone service. However, there are some units that lack plumbing and kitchen facilities — these should be targeted for immediate improvements.

In general, it would appear that the Borough would benefit from increased investment in building maintenance. With respect to rental units, this can be prompted by more vigorous code enforcement efforts targeted at landlords. Investments can also be incentivized in other ways, including through Area in Need of Rehabilitation designation. A better understanding of the causes of deferred maintenance will be instrumental in helping define a housing rehabilitation strategy for the Borough.

A large proportion of the Borough's housing stock is in the form of two- to four-dwelling units. More than half of all housing units are one- and two-bedroom units. Larger units, with 4 or more bedrooms, are more expensive and are mostly located in the neighborhoods north of Union Avenue. Given the higher than average numbers of larger households in the Borough, which also tend to have lower incomes, it is possible that larger, lower income households are occupying smaller units which they can afford.

Housing options vary greatly between census tracts, with a greater percentage of single-family units in CT 513 and a greater percentage of two-family and apartments in CT 511. The neighborhoods with the larger housing units and the larger lots are also those neighborhoods with the older population. This raises questions of whether the existing zoning regulations will allow that population to comfortably age in place, and perhaps accommodate new household configurations, with live-in elderly parents, live-in care givers, or tenants that may help elderly homeowners living on fixed incomes better balance their housing budgets. None of these options are currently contemplated in the zoning.

While no age-restricted housing is currently contemplated in the Borough, the new apartments in the downtown will provide appropriate living alternatives for older households looking to downsize and shed the maintenance and upkeep responsibilities associated with detached single-family living. There are also no zoning restrictions discouraging the development of market-rate age-restricted facilities in the downtown area.

The number of owner-occupied units is still slightly higher than the number of renter-occupied units, but rental units will become the majority, once additional downtown projects are completed.

There are many recent arrivals in the Borough's housing market — two thirds of households have moved into their housing unit since 2000.

Family households remain more prevalent than non-family households, however, husband-wife families comprise a smaller than usual percentage of family types. There is also a higher share of non-family households.

The median value of owner-occupied units in Bound Brook is \$283,300. This value declined after the 2008 recession, but has since stabilized. The Borough constitutes a very attractive market for first time homebuyers in Somerset County. This will likely continue to bring new households and new investment into the Borough.

The median gross monthly rent is \$1,194, which is quite affordable relative to HUD's fair market rents standards of \$1,296 for a one-bedroom unit and \$1,654 for a two-bedroom unit.

This notwithstanding, 46 percent of owners and 47 percent of renters are housing cost-burdened, spending 30 percent or more of their income on housing. Housing cost-burden is highest in CT 511 and lowest in CT 513.

The Borough's housing strategy has relied primarily on incentivizing new multi-family development in the downtown area, as well as in Redevelopment Area 3. New apartment buildings in the downtown offer one- and two-bedroom units ranging from 900 to 1,200 square feet, and these formats will likely be replicated in additional projects in the future. Queens Gate is unusual, with much larger units of around 2,400 square feet.

Ideally, over time, smaller households will occupy the new one- and two-bedroom apartments in the downtown, and larger households will occupy the single-family and two-family units in the Borough's neighborhoods.

By all accounts, the Borough does not currently have an affordable housing obligation, other than a minor rehabilitation component. This reflects the absence of substantial growth in the last 30 years, either in the form of new housing or in the form of new jobs, which have actually been shrinking. The data also indicate that the Borough is quite affordable, relative to the region, and therefore the market provides affordable housing opportunities on its own. However, this could change.

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The Borough does not currently impose a mandatory affordable housing set-aside, as part of new residential construction, except for Redevelopment Sub-Areas 1.5, 2.5 and 2.6.

A comprehensive and detailed Housing Element/ Fair Share Plan element of the *Master Plan* should be undertaken in the near future to provide a substantive basis for the Borough's future housing policy and inform how the Borough's land use policies and land development regulations should evolve with respect to housing.

THE BROADER PLANNING FRAMEWORK page 6-1

This section assesses how the Borough's planning framework and land use regulations compare with those of the state, county and surrounding towns.

6.1 The Planning Frameworks of the Surrounding Municipalities

Middlesex Borough is Bound Brook's immediate neighbor to the east. The two towns are visually and physically separated by the stream corridor associated with the Bound Brook, and are connected by bridges on Route 28 and East Main Street.

Middlesex Borough has two single-family residential zoning designations in place on its side of the Bound Brook. North of Union Avenue, the zoning is R-100, requiring single-family detached housing on lots with a minimum of 20,000 square feet. South of Union Avenue the zoning is R-75, and requires single-family detached housing on lots with a minimum of 7,500 square feet.

There are also extensive publicly-owned, flood-prone lands along the Middlesex Borough side of the Bound Brook. These lands are dedicated open space.

No changes to these existing conditions are contemplated in Middlesex Borough's planning documents.

The planning and zoning framework adopted by Bound Brook for the lands adjacent to Middlesex Borough will not impact the existing land use pattern in that neighboring community, nor will they impact the town's planning and zoning frameworks in any meaningful way.

Bridgewater Township is Bound Brook's neighbor to the north and west. The town has an unusually complex zoning framework, with a total of 50 zoning designations.

The area across from Bound Brook, furthest to the south, is zoned M2 – General Manufacturing. This encompasses the American Cyanamid/Pfizer property, a federal Superfund site under active remediation. The M2 designation allows manufacturing, research and warehouse uses.

North of that – across from Talmage Avenue and Union Avenue – is an area zoned Planned Retail Commercial and Public Development (PRCPD). This designation allows a broad range of business uses, such as offices, hotels and conference centers, research labs, in-door commercial recreation, health clubs and medical uses.

Continuing north, between Routes 20 and 22, is an area zoned Highway Enterprise Center (HEC), which permits offices, services and hospitality uses.

To the north of Bound Brook, west of Thompson Avenue, is an area zoned R-MDU-10.5, a residential designation that allows single-family, townhouses and multifamily uses at a maximum density of 10.5 dwelling units per gross acre.

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South of Route 22 and east of Thompson Avenue is an area zoned R-20, or single-family residential on 20,000 square foot minimum size lots.

The area north of Middlebrook Road is zoned R-50, single-family residential on 50,000 square foot minimum size lots.

Finally, the area east of Mountain Avenue is again zoned R-20.

Only the R-MDU-10.5, R-20 and R-50 districts are directly adjacent to neighborhoods in the Borough. The other zoning designations are separated from lands in the Borough by the stream corridor associated with the Middle Brook. The R-MDU-10.5, R-20 and R-50 districts are not incompatible with the zoning designations adopted for the adjacent lands in Bound Brook.

The *Borough of South Bound Brook* is Bound Brook's neighbor to the south, across the Raritan River and the Delaware & Raritan Canal. The area along Canal Road, between I-287 and South Main Street, is zoned and developed with single-family detached neighborhoods. South Main Street (Main Street in South Bound Brook) is the Borough's downtown, with a concentration of commercial uses, as well as a multi-family residential project. No new river crossings are anticipated between the two Boroughs, and therefore future changes in how the riverfront property is used on the Bound Brook side will have no impact on the South Bound Brook side.

6.2 The State and Regional Planning Frameworks

There is a remarkable alignment between the larger scale planning policies – emanating from the various relevant levels of government – and the Borough's land use and planning policies.

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan/Strategic Plan

The New Jersey State Planning Commission adopted, most recently in 2001, the *New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, (State Plan)*, a document that constitutes the state's official growth management framework.

Under the 2001 *State Plan*, Bound Brook is classified as a Designated Center in the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1) – an area that is served by water, sewer and other relevant infrastructure, including transit, and is developed in a pattern that satisfies minimum density requirements. The *State Plan* envisions PA1 as the priority location for the state to continue to grow, primarily through redevelopment of previously developed sites, as well as through adaptive reuse of existing buildings previously dedicated to obsolete uses, infill of vacant parcels and refill of existing, vacant structures.

In 2000, the Borough of Bound Brook, along with the Borough of South Bound Brook, received Center Designation from the NJ State Planning Commission. Center Designation represents the recognition, on the part of the State Planning Commission, that a community's planning and zoning framework are consistent with the policies and

THE BROADER PLANNING FRAMEWORK

principles for such an area defined in the 1992 (and subsequently the 2001) *State Plan*.

Center Designation recognizes that a community's planning and zoning framework are consistent with the growth management role assigned to it by the State Planning Commission in the *State Plan*. The designation is intended to provide priority funding from state agencies for projects in the designated areas, as well as priority access to technical assistance from state agencies.

The 2001 *State Plan* has never been updated. The ill-fated draft 2012 *State Strategic Plan*, which was intended as its replacement, was never formally adopted, and it appears that the State has abandoned any efforts, at least for now, at further statewide planning. However, the planning framework found in the 2001 *Plan* has, to a certain extent, survived, as it influences the application of various State regulatory programs, as well as the allocation of State financial incentives to real estate development projects and to public infrastructure.

The Somerset County Investment Framework / Strategic Plan

In 2014, the Somerset County Planning Board adopted a *County Investment Framework* to "serve as the geographic basis for all county planning projects and initiatives, and support on-going regional and local smart growth, preservation, economic revitalization, sustainability and resiliency planning initiatives; to achieve tactical alignment of land use, infrastructure and preservation plans, resources, programs, policies and investment decisions; and to convey a clear investment strategy regarding local and regional land use priorities to both public and private sectors".

The *County Investment Framework* builds upon, and further elaborates the spatial policies contained in the 1992 and 2001 State Plans (see above), in the draft 2012 *State Strategic Plan*, and to some extent in the *New Jersey Economic Opportunity Act of 2013*, also known as "Grow NJ", legislation that consolidated several of the state's economic development incentive programs and channels them to locations with certain features and according to certain criteria.

Bound Brook's Town Center area is designated by Somerset County as Priority Growth Investment Area (PGIA) #10. PGIAs are "areas where primary economic growth and community development strategies enhance quality of life and economic competitiveness are preferred, and where appropriate, growth-inducing investments are encouraged". PGIAs are areas where development and infrastructure assets are already concentrated. They are prime locations for the vibrant, mixed-use, live-work environments within walking distance of transit and green space, and that many employers, workers and households desire".

The *County Investment Framework* provides the platform for the updated County Strategic Plan's Guiding Principles, Objectives and Implementation Agenda.

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Bound Brook's planning and zoning are highly consistent with the intent of Somerset County's planning documents, which call for the revitalization of older traditional communities, strengthening of downtowns, redevelopment of under-utilized or obsolete properties, preservation and enhancement of historically-significant properties, landscapes and structures, as well as landscape restoration and enhanced public access to riverfronts.



7.1 Brief History of Redevelopment Planning in Bound Brook

The Borough's authority under the NJ Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (NJSA 40A:12) was first exercised in 1996, with the designation as an "area in need of redevelopment" of Borough-owned lands located immediately to the north of West Union Avenue, to the west of Tea Street and to the east of the Middle Brook. A redevelopment plan was also adopted for this area, known then as the Tea Street / Middle Brook Redevelopment Area, and now known as Redevelopment Area 3. This area was developed, first with the ShopRite shopping center, and more recently with the Queen's Gate apartments.

The Borough again used its redevelopment authority in February of 2000, five months after the devastation caused by Hurricane Floyd, when it adopted an expansive redevelopment plan for the lower lying flood prone areas of town. This plan defined two redevelopment areas: Area 1 included the core of the downtown and the area south of the railroad tracks; and Area 2 included everything west of Church Street and South of High Street.

While Redevelopment Area 1 was mostly non-residential, Redevelopment Area 2 included significant residential areas where the Borough's growing Hispanic population had settled.

The Borough designated a redeveloper for the entirety of Area 2. The designation, and the plan, gave the redeveloper considerable control over the future of the area, including the power of eminent domain.

Concerns with the potential for the substantial displacement of a minority population as a result of these redevelopment actions led the US Department of Justice to file a legal challenge to the Borough's redevelopment plans. The USDOJ and the Borough eventually reached a Consent Agreement, which required changes to the plan for Area 2, but not for Area 1.

An *Amended Redevelopment Plan for Area 2* was subsequently completed and adopted by the Borough in early 2009. It significantly reduced the footprint of Area 2 — essentially limiting it to properties with frontage on Talmage Avenue, Columbus Place and West Main Street.

The Area 1 and Area 2 plans have both been subsequently amended, for both technical reasons and for consistency with the *Downtown Urban Design Plan*, adopted in 2011 as an element of the *Master Plan*.

7.2 Redevelopment Area 1

Redevelopment Area 1 consists of five distinct sub-areas, 1.1 through 1.5.

Sub-Area 1.1 is located east of South Main Street and the South Main Street traffic circle; south of East Main Street; north of the NJ Transit railroad tracks; and east of the Bound Brook channel and the Borough line. It comprises Block 2, Lots 1.02, 2.02, 2.03, 2.04 and 3, as defined on the Borough tax maps.

Sub-Area 1.1 is unique for a number of reasons:

1. It is located at the eastern gateway into the downtown, and is visually prominent for visitors arriving from both the east, on East Main Street / Lincoln Boulevard, and from the south, across the Queen's Bridge, on South Main Street.
2. It is not part of the downtown's mixed-use core.
3. Although the area has been occupied by human activities for many years, it contains no residential structures and few permanent structures of any kind. The Bolmer building, a former automobile showroom and historically the largest structure in the Sub-district, was demolished.
4. All parcels of land within the sub-district — except one — were publicly-owned.
5. A large portion of the sub-district lies within the "residual flood hazard area #3" defined by the US Army Corps of Engineers, which has a base flood elevation of 28.38 feet and a 150-year flood elevation of 28.51 feet. New development within this residual flood hazard area must be elevated one foot above the base flood elevation of 28.38 feet.
6. It is a narrow, one-sided block that backs onto an embankment with active passenger and freight rail tracks and fronts almost entirely on public parkland or land encumbered by the flood control system for over-topping purposes. There are no current residential neighbors across Lincoln Boulevard, and significant future development is not anticipated across the street, given the flood control restrictions.

Sub-Area 1.1 is ideally suited for higher-density residential development, given the easy walking distance to downtown retail and service uses, the train station, cultural and civic uses and adjacent public open space and recreation. Most of Sub-Area 1.1 has been developed by Meridia with 240 residential units in one large building.

Sub-Area 1.2 comprises the lands currently occupied by the Brook Industrial Park. It is located south of Main Street and south of the NJ Transit Railroad tracks. It consists of Block 1, Lots 34, 34.01 and 34.02, as defined on the Borough tax maps, with approximately 9.6 acres of land.

This sub-area suffers from poor vehicular and pedestrian access and very poor connectivity to the downtown, as it relies on two grade crossings (Vosseller Avenue and La Monte Avenue) of the NJ Transit railroad right-of-way for access. The *Downtown Urban Design Plan* envisions the redevelopment of this area as a multi-story, high-tech flex employment center.

However, access to this sub-area can only be upgraded by way of costly infrastructure improvements. The market for suburban office space in New Jersey is in the doldrums, and this is not expected to substantially improve in the foreseeable future. Consequently, redevelopment of this sub-area now allows a much broader range of uses, including residential, and substantially higher intensity options.

Sub-Area 1.2 is currently zoned Industrial Park (I-P). This zoning is obsolete, as the redevelopment plan over-rides the underlying zoning. The Borough's zoning documents should be amended to reflect this.

Sub-Area 1.3 is located between Main Street and the Raritan River, and includes the railroad rights-of-way, as well as several industrial uses near the Queens Bridge. It consists of Block 1, Lots 35, 36, 37.02, 68.01 and 69; Block 2, Lots 4, 5, 5.01, 5.02, 6 and 7; and Block 2.01, Lots 1 and 2 as defined on the Borough tax maps.

The *Downtown Urban Design Plan* envisions the continuation of freight and passenger rail service on the active rights-of-way, and the conversion of the vacated right-of-way into a riverfront greenway — a linear, multi-purpose trail eventually connecting west to the Somerset County Regional Center Greenway, linking Bound Brook to Bridgewater, Somerville and Raritan Borough, and potentially continuing to the east, into Middlesex County, and south, linking into the Delaware & Raritan Canal towpath, in South Bound Brook.

The *Downtown Urban Design Plan* envisions new cultural, civic and recreational facilities in the eastern portion of this sub-district. Commercial development could also occur on those properties with frontage on South Main Street. However, some of this area is in the 100-year floodplain, and is not protected by the flood control devices put in place by the US Army Corps of Engineers project, which obviously creates challenges for further development.

Sub-Area 1.3 is also currently zoned Industrial Park (I-P). This zoning is obsolete, as the *Redevelopment Plan* over-rides the underlying zoning. The Borough's zoning documents should be amended accordingly.

Sub-Area 1.4 is located on both sides of East Main Street, north of the railroad right-of-way, between Church Street and the Borough line with Middlesex Borough. It includes the following parcels:

- Block 1, Lots 43 – 49, 49.01, 50 – 55, 56.01, 56.02, 57 – 67, 68.02, 68.03 and 70;
- Block 7, Lots 21 – 24, 25, 25.01, 25.02, 25.03, 25.04, 25.05, 25.06, 25.07 and 26;
- Block 8, Lots 1, 1.01, 2, 3, 4, 4.01, 5, 6, 7, 7.01, 8, 8.01, 9, 9.01, 9.02, 9.03, 9.04 and 10 – 14; Block 9, Lots 1 - 4, 4.01, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 10.01, 11 and 12;
- Block 10, Lots 1, 2, 3, 3.01, 3.02, 3.03, 3.05, 3.07, 4 – 11 and 13 – 19;
- Block 11, Lots 1 – 9;
- Block 12, Lots 2.01, 3, 4, 5, 5.01, 6, 7, 7.01, 8, 9, 10.01, 10.02 and 11 – 15;
- Block 13, Lots 3, 6, 6.01, 6.02, 7, 8, 9 and 10.01;
- Block 13.01, Lots 13, 14, 14.01, 14.02, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24.02, 25.02, 26.01, 26.02, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31;
- Block 13.02, Lots 5, 26.01, 33 – 44, 44.01, 45, 45.01, 46, 46.01, 47, 47.01 and 50;
- Block 13.03, Lots 1 and 12.01; and
- Block 33, Lots 43 – 49, 49.01, 50 – 56, 56.01, 56.02, 57 – 67, 68.01, 68.02 and 70.

Sub-Area 1.4 encompasses the traditional Main Street, with a mix of retail, commercial, residential and civic uses. The *Downtown Urban Design Plan* envisions the continued revitalization of this traditional mixed-use Main Street.

Most of Sub-Area 1.4 is zoned Business-Residential (B-R), with the following exceptions:

- A number of properties fronting on the east side of East Street and on both sides of East 2nd Street are zoned Residential 6 (R-6);
- Billian Legion Park is zoned Office-Business (O-B);
- Four parcels on the East side of Hamilton Street, south of East High Street, are also zoned Office-Business (O-B);
- A number of properties along both sides of Church Street, south of East 2nd Street, are zoned Residential 4 (R-4); and
- The block defined by John Street, East 2nd Street, Mountain Avenue and an un-named alley behind East Main Street is also zoned Residential 4 (R-4).

The B-R zoning standards were substantially updated in August of 2014 with state-of-the-art land use regulations, which establish three character districts with distinct standards: a Main Street district, an Arts district and a downtown residential district.

As such, the *Redevelopment Plan for Sub-Area 1.4* defers to the underlying zoning, with some exceptions. This does not mean that the underlying zoning is necessarily always appropriate. For example, Billian Park and the Presbyterian cemetery should be zoned for civic and recreational uses, and not for Office-Business. And, as discussed in Section 2.4.4, some of the underlying zoning is no longer appropriate and should be changed.

Sub-Area 1.5 is located at the eastern edge of the Borough, adjacent to the Bound Brook and across from Middlesex Borough. It comprises Block 13.02, Lot 49 (2.69 acres), as well as a Borough-owned, un-subdivided portion of Block 13.02, Lot 50, which has 66.7 feet of frontage on East Union Avenue and a depth of 273 feet. The street address for Lot 49 is 600 East Union Avenue. The lot is currently unimproved. The Borough-owned gravel lot is used for parking.

Both parcels are believed to have been part of the East Gate Park municipal landfill. After the landfill was closed in 1968, Block 13.02, Lot 49 was sub-divided and sold to First National Bank, which built and operated a branch bank facility on the site. That facility was closed and the building demolished. The site continues under the oversight of the NJDEP and future utilization will require NJDEP review and the securing of a Sanitary Landfill Disruption Approval under the provisions of the Solid Waste Management Act (NJSA 13:1E-1 et seq.).

Portions of the site are also in the floodplain of the west bank of the Bound Brook and the north bank of a drainage ditch that discharges into the Bound Brook. The Revised Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Bound Brook, recently

released by FEMA and the US Army Corps of Engineers, do not appear to affect Sub-Area 1.5. The map adopted by NJDEP determines the status of the property relative to NJDEP's Flood Hazard regulations, the base elevations for any future construction on the site, as well as Federal flood insurance premiums.

The *Redevelopment Plan for Sub-Area 1.5* has the following objectives:

- a. Complement the relevant recommendations of the Bound Brook *Downtown Urban Design Plan*.
- b. Create a visually striking eastern gateway into the Borough and the Union Avenue corridor, and provide a suitable anchor to the eastern end of the corridor.
- c. Bring new users and patrons to Billian Park.
- d. Take advantage of the unobstructed views of Billian Park, of the undeveloped lands to the north and of the stream corridor to the east.
- e. Provide a suitable location for uses and/or activities that satisfy latent needs in the Borough.
- f. Assist with on-going downtown revitalization efforts by locating potential new patrons, and transit riders, within walking distance to downtown businesses, activities and transit.
- g. Create a redevelopment framework that facilitates any needed environmental remediation and/or infrastructure improvements and addresses any existing geo-technical constraints.
- h. Permit adequate densities and appropriate building types — including mid-rise buildings — that support transit-oriented development and pedestrian activity, and further downtown revitalization efforts.
- i. Pursue high quality architectural and landscape design that creates iconic and memorable buildings and high quality places and outdoor spaces.
- j. Create opportunities for new, demographically-appropriate residential and high-skill employment space within walking distance of downtown's goods and services.
- k. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections between this area and the core of the downtown.
- l. Promote pedestrian and bicycle activity through appropriate site design, including continuous sidewalks and walkways, buildings sited at the street line, clearly marked crosswalks, and bicycle storage.
- m. Require appropriate parking standards that reflect the in-town location and encourage other modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling, transit, and on-demand rides.
- n. Utilize a "green infrastructure" approach to site design and streetscape improvements, including porous pavements, structural soils in tree planters and use of foundation plantings or movable planter boxes.
- o. Utilize non-structural stormwater management strategies — such as green roofs, cisterns, rain gardens, bio-swales, porous pavements and others — that provide natural habitats, create attractive people places,

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reduce flooding, increase ground water recharge and minimize maintenance requirements for plantings and landscaping.

- p. Utilize high-performance building design and construction to minimize energy needs and operating costs.

The *Redevelopment Plan for Sub-Area 1.5* allows a wide range of uses, including residential; live-work, retail; personal, professional and business services; hotel and hospitality; restaurants and bars; sports facilities; health and fitness facilities; offices; civic and governmental uses; museums; art galleries and artist studios; movie theatres, live performance theatres and performing arts centers; and others.

The underlying zoning for Sub-Area 1.5 is Office-Business (O-B). The 1978 Land Use Element of the *Master Plan* describes the O-B land use district as “designed for offices for businesses, administrative or professional uses. The zone also permits one and two family residences. The *Redevelopment Plan* overrides this zoning, which is obsolete.

7.3 Redevelopment Area 2

Redevelopment Area 2 is very diverse, with a mix of residential, mixed-use, industrial and commercial properties located along the western end of Main Street, and along Columbus Place and Talmage Avenue, north of the NJ Transit railroad tracks.

Redevelopment Area 2 includes 130 separate tax lots. See Table 62.

Table 62 — Redevelopment Area 2 Blocks and Lots

Block	Lot
1	38, 38.01,39, 39.01, 40, 41, 42
3	1, 1.01,3, 3.01, 4, 5, 6
4	1, 1.01, 2, 2.01, 3. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 8.01, 8.02, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16.01, 17
5	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18, 18.01, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
6	1,2,3,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21, 22,23,24,25
7	27,28,29
15	1,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22
16	7, 7.01, 8, 9, 9.01
17	7,8,9,10
18	14,15,16,17
19	13,14,15, 15.01, 16, 17, 18, 19
20	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
21	16, 17, 17.01, 18, 19, 20
23	3.01, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41

Source: New Jersey Department of the Treasury.

The intent of the 2009 *Amended Redevelopment Plan for Area 2* was to encourage targeted new development and significant residential rehabilitation in this section of the Borough to improve the quality of life for the current

residents and business owners, and also enhance the overall image of the Borough. The plan aims to allow redevelopment that is compatible with the nature and scale of surrounding, established stable neighborhoods and complements the existing residential and commercial sector of the community. It is also intended to complement and build upon other planning initiatives and development activity in the Borough, including new development within Redevelopment Area 1.

The *Amended Redevelopment Plan for Area 2* defines six sub-areas — each with their own mix of uses and developed character — based on analyses of land uses in the area and a review of property records:

- Sub-Area 1: West Main Street / NJ Transit Railroad Tracks;
- Sub-Area 2: West Main Street / Columbus Place;
- Sub-Area 3: Talmage Avenue / NJ Transit Railroad Tracks;
- Sub-Area 4: Talmage Avenue (North and South sides);
- Sub-Area 5: Talmage Avenue (north side) / near Tea Street; and
- Sub-Area 6: Tea Street / Talmage Avenue (south side) to La Monte Avenue.

Each sub-area has a different development strategy based on the existing built character conditions and population. Wholesale redevelopment is considered appropriate for some sub-areas given market opportunities, while rehabilitation of existing residential structures is considered more appropriate in other sub-areas given the presence of protected populations.

The boundaries of the sub-areas were drawn based on vehicular and pedestrian accessibility, lot size, existing land use, building type and number of dwelling units. (See *Zoning and Redevelopment Areas Map*.)

Sub-Area 2.1: West Main Street / NJ Transit Railroad Tracks

Church Street and West Main Street define the western-most boundary of Sub-Area 2.1. West Main Street terminates at the NJ Transit railroad tracks. Sub-Area 2.1 forms a triangle that becomes increasingly shallow as it approaches the intersection of West Main Street and the NJ Transit right-of-way (Block 1, Lots 38, 38.1, 39, 39.01, 40, 41 and 42).

Redevelopment of individual lots at the end of West Main Street — which are increasingly shallow and adjacent to the train tracks — may pose challenges and require lot assemblage. On the other hand, this whole area is in the B-R district and subject to the same development regulations as parcels fronting directly on Main Street. It is also a short walk from the NJ Transit train station and downtown retail and services.

Sub-Area 2.2: West Main Street / Columbus Place

The lots on the north side of West Main Street are connected to Talmage Avenue by Columbus Place.

Columbus Place is located at an oblique angle to West Main Street, and therefore creates irregularly-shaped lots where it intersects with Talmage Avenue and West Main Street.

The properties located near Columbus Place are identified on the Borough tax maps as Block 6, Lots 1, 2, 3, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 and Block 7, Lots 27, 28 and 29.

Because of its proximity to the downtown retail core, and the poor condition of existing structures, targeted mixed-use redevelopment within the area was considered both feasible and appropriate as an extension of the downtown.

In addition, a building (or buildings) located at the intersection of Main Street and Columbus Place has the potential to be a significant gateway into downtown Bound Brook.

This entire sub-district is included in the B-R zone and is therefore subject to the same underlying development regulations as parcels fronting on Main Street, with some exceptions. It too is a short walk from the NJ Transit train station and downtown retail and services.

Sub-Area 2.3: Talmage Avenue / NJ Transit Railroad Tracks

This sub-area occupies the block bounded by Columbus Place, West Main Street/NJ Transit Railroad tracks, Talmage Avenue and Vosseller Avenue. It includes several through-lots located directly north of the railroad tracks. The residential buildings that front on Talmage Avenue (Block 5, Lots 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10) are consistent in scale and density — they are all two story buildings built in the early 1900s and the majority are two-family buildings. On the north side of West Main Street, the residential buildings are similar in scale, and typically two-family buildings.

This block presents a significant redevelopment opportunity: it is over 700 feet long and over 200 feet deep, including a number of through-lots. It is located within a short walking distance to the train station and the core downtown area. The significantly-sized lots can realistically be assembled to create a large, well-shaped redevelopment parcel with good access and visibility to the downtown. Its location directly adjacent to the railroad track is similar to Redevelopment Sub-Area 1.1, where the new Meridia building has been developed. Higher-density, taller residential structures would act as a visual and noise buffer for the neighborhood to the north.

Sub-Area 2.4: Talmage Avenue (North and South Sides)

There are a many multi-family and mixed-use buildings in this sub-area, containing a significant number of residential units and residents. The residential buildings are predominantly two-unit, twostory structures. They are for the most part in fair condition, although the streetscape is quite deteriorated.

The plan for this sub-area seeks to promote targeted rehabilitation rather than new development. This approach is based on the concern that if the area were redeveloped, some of the more vulnerable population would need to be relocated and new construction would disrupt the existing, consistent built character.

This approach may still be appropriate, but it has not resulted in visible reinvestment and should therefore be reevaluated in terms of its effectiveness.

Sub-Area 2.5: Talmage Avenue (north side) / near Tea Street

This sub-area starts at North Street, to the east, and doesn't quite reach Tea Street, to the west. Properties within this sub-area include Block 15, Lots 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21; Block 16, Lots 7, 7.01, 8, 9 and 9.01; Block 17, Lots 7, 8, 9 and 10; and Block 18, Lots 14, 15, 16 and 17. It is a predominantly low-scale, residential area, with 16 multi-family buildings (39 units), three commercial buildings and three mixed-use buildings.

Many of the residential structures are two-story, two-family buildings, in fair condition. The current redevelopment plan for this sub-area seeks to avoid wholesale redevelopment, and promotes targeted rehabilitation efforts instead. This approach may still be appropriate, but so far it has not been successful in attracting reinvestment.

Sub-Area 2.6: Tea Street / Talmage Avenue (south side) to La Monte Avenue

This is the westernmost portion of Area 2, from the intersection with Tea Street to La Monte Avenue. It includes two parcels on the north side of Talmage Avenue, along with the southern frontage of Talmage Avenue to La Monte Avenue. The following parcels are included in this sub-area: Block 3, Lots 1, 1.01, 2, 3, 3.01, 4, 5 and 6; and Block 15, Lots 1 and 22. The two parcels on the north side of Talmage Avenue include the Borough's Rotary Park and a vacant parcel. The parcels on the south side of Talmage Avenue are shallow (around 80 feet deep) and directly abut the NJ Transit tracks. There are a number of non-residential uses, including automotive-related uses.

To the west of Tea Street is Route 287. Noting that the area has (1) several underutilized properties; (2) relatively few residential units; and (3) proximity to a major transportation route, the current *Plan* for this sub-area calls for "a regionally-oriented commercial use rather than local commercial or residential use, so as to create a discernible gateway into Bound Brook from Route 287".

Creating a gateway is still a valid objective, but the land use vision was never realistic, and has been further compromised by land acquisitions undertaken by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Larger footprint buildings, requiring substantial parking, are not viable. The plan for this sub-area needs to be amended accordingly.

7.4 Redevelopment Area 3

Redevelopment Area 3 was designated in 1985. It is bounded on the west by Bridgewater, to the north by Route 22, to the south by Union Avenue, and to the east by the westerly side of Tea Street. It includes six parcels, all in Block 68: Lot 1 is a 5.6-acre parcel previously occupied by a state armory; Lot 1.01 is an 0.8-acre parcel previously occupied by a fire company; Lot 2 (3.7-acres) and Lot 4 (0.7 acres) were formerly used as baseball fields; Lot 3 is a 33.6-acre parcel which this document refers to as the Middlebrook Preserve; and Lot 5 is a 3.66-acre parcel. Lots 2 and 4 required a diversion from New Jersey's Green Acres program, which was approved by the State House Commission.

The 1996 *Tea Street / Middle Brook Redevelopment Plan* contains zoning regulations creating a Regional Business / Senior Residential (RB/SR) district. This zoning was adopted as Section 21-10.18 of the Borough's Land Use Ordinance, albeit with some modifications. The zoning allows retail, personal services, professional offices, banks, restaurants, movie theaters, hotels and motels, medical and dental offices, age-restricted housing and child care facilities. The area we now call the Middlebrook Preserve was zoned for warehouse development, similar to the zoning adopted by Bridgewater for the adjacent area.

The 1996 plan was amended by the *2008 Redevelopment Plan Amendment & Modification Report*, which lifted the residential age-restriction requirement.

The portion of Redevelopment Area 3 with frontage on West Union Avenue was developed as a shopping center, with a supermarket (ShopRite) anchor. The portion to the north of the shopping center was developed more recently with 140 residential apartments in three, 3-story buildings. As such, the portion of Redevelopment Area 3 east of the Middlebrook is build-out in accordance with the redevelopment plan.

However, the shopping center portion is aging and may, in the future, become ripe for further, more intense, redevelopment. It occupies an important and highly visible gateway location and anchors the western end of the Union Avenue corridor.

In addition, the 33-acre parcel on the west side of the Middle Brook, as discussed elsewhere in this report, needs a vision. It will not be developed for warehouses, as contemplated by the redevelopment plan. It must be reimagined in light of the site's varied environmental features.

7.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The redevelopment plans are living documents, and have been subject to amendments over time. Additional amendments will likely be adopted in the future, as needed.

Greater Consistency in Standards Between Plan Sub-Areas

The redevelopment plans for the various sub-areas were developed at different times and have been repeatedly amended in a piecemeal fashion. As a result, there are both redundancies and inconsistencies in some development standards applicable to the various sub-areas. This can lead to unnecessary confusion.

It would be advantageous to reconcile and streamline the development standards applicable to the various sub-areas of the plans. This does not mean that a uniform set of standards should be adopted, as different sub-areas may require distinct standards. However, where uniform standards can be justified it is recommended that they be adopted, as this will make the documents more streamlined, user friendly and more effective.

Inconsistencies Between Redevelopment Plans and Land Development Regulations

The relationships between development standards found in the plans for Area 1 and Area 2, and development standards found in the underlying zoning have been somewhat clarified as a result of recent amendments to the plans, but many inconsistencies still exist. These disparities can, and should, be reconciled, as they result in unnecessary confusions.

Similarly, there are inconsistencies between the Area 3 plan and the underlying zoning. For example, Section 21-10.18 of the Borough's Land Development Regulations has not been amended to remove the requirement that the housing be age restricted; the "intent" language still refers to "such uses that support the limited needs of the senior citizens"; the Principal Permitted Uses listed under Section 21-10.18(a)(4) still lists "Senior Citizen Housing"; and Section 21-10.18(d) concerns "supplemental regulations for senior citizen housing."

It is also unclear whether Section 21-10.18(g) — Lighting and Section 21-10.18(h) — Buffering and Landscaping, should be viewed in addition to the general provisions found in Section 21-9.13 On-Tract Improvements — which are applicable to all major subdivision or site plans — or should be interpreted as superseding these general provisions.

The zoning should be amended to eliminate these inconsistencies.

Amendments to Plans for Sub-Areas 1.2 and 1.3

The redevelopment plans for these sub-areas have been recently amended. Additional amendments to the plan for Sub-Area 1.3 are likely, in response to an evolving vision for the developable section of South Main Street.

Amendments to Plans for Sub-Areas 2.4 and 2.5

The current plan for these sub-areas — which encompass virtually all of Talmage Avenue west of Vosseller Avenue —

have not been reassessed since 2000. Very little reinvestment has occurred and the area looks tired and shabby. Both the buildings, and the streetscapes, desperately need significant interventions.

The plans for these sub-areas should be closely examined to determine whether changes are required to attract reinvestment and, if so, what types of changes. Public investments in the public right-of-way could also play a positive role in stimulating reinvestment.

Amendments to Plan for Sub-Area 2.6

As previously mentioned, the “regionally-oriented commercial use” called for in the current plan is neither realistic nor desirable. The plan should be amended to better reflect the physical conditions in the area. A new vision for this important gateway is needed.

Amendments to the Redevelopment Plan for Area 3

As mentioned, this was the first redevelopment plan adopted by the Borough and its vision is dated. Specifically, the shopping center area is aging. The auto-dependent, single-use land use pattern is wasteful of precious resources and no longer viewed as desirable. This site may be appropriate for future, more intense, redevelopment, incorporating higher-density housing (possibly with an affordable component) and other uses. A more compact redevelopment solution will better support a renewed vision for the western section of the West Union Avenue corridor — an area that is likely to undergo changes in the near future, as a result of vacancies and other factors — and complement other potential transformations on nearby parcels.

Area(s) in Need of Rehabilitation

While the Borough has considerable experience with areas “in need of redevelopment”, it has no experience with areas “in need of rehabilitation”. Consideration should be given to exploring whether the rehabilitation designation would benefit certain locations where the objective is to encourage reinvestment in property maintenance and upkeep while maintaining the essential character of those areas.