

# DOWNTOWN BOONTON VISION PLAN

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>	The Hollow Becomes a Cultural and Recreational Destination.....	14
Background .....	1	Recommendations Organization & Implementation.....	14
Study Area .....	1	<b>MAIN STREET .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Mobility Analysis.....	4	Approach .....	16
Demographic and Market Analysis.....	6	Main Street Toolkit .....	17
Land Use Analysis.....	7	<b>MAIN STREET TOOLKIT.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Regulatory Findings .....	8	Toolkit Contents.....	20
Boonton Emerges as a Premier Downtown.....	11	PARKING.....	22
<b>VISION.....</b>	<b>11</b>	Value Main Street Parking.....	22
Redevelopment Transforms the “Old Station Street” Area .....	13	Encourage Use of the Upper Plane Street Parking Lot.....	23
New Investments Create Iconic Public Spaces .....	13	Improve the Upper Plane Street Lot .....	24
Myrtle Continues to Evolve .....	14		

STATION ENHANCEMENTS.....	26	DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT .....	42
New Staircase to Train Platform .....	26	Permit Residential in the B-1 Zone .....	42
Accessibility Improvements at Station .....	26	Permit Off-Site Parking for Residential & Prohibit Front Yard Parking .....	42
New connection between myrtle Avenue and The station .....	27	Upper Main Street Redevelopment .....	43
A grand entrance at Main Street.....	27	Boardwalk Site Redevelopment.....	44
ACTIVATING MAIN STREET.....	28	Post Office Redevelopment .....	48
Permit Rooftop Bars and Patios .....	28	<b>DIVISION STREET .....</b>	<b>51</b>
Permit Cafe Windows .....	29	Approach .....	52
Permit Larger Setbacks for Cafes .....	29	“Old Station Street” Branding.....	56
Strategic Sidewalk Expansion .....	30	Redevelopment Plan.....	56
Case study: Tactical Pedestrian Improvements in Jersey City.....	33	Modern Buildings in a Historic Context.....	58
Post Office Plaza “Pop-Up” .....	34	Gateway Area Redevelopment .....	60
Art on Main Street Program .....	35	Streetscape Improvements .....	64
REVITALIZATION PROGRAMS.....	36	Approach .....	65
Designate Main Street as An Area in Need of Rehabilitation .....	36	<b>MYRTLE AVENUE.....</b>	<b>65</b>
Main Street Façade Improvement Program .....	36	Update Zoning Ordinance to Allow for Flexible Redevelopment and Rehabilitation.....	66
Rehabilitation vs. Redevelopment Designation.....	38	Shared Parking Lot .....	67
Case Study: Streetface Program, Pittsburgh .....	39	Create a Façade Improvement Program .....	67
Upper-Floor Residential Rehabilitation Program.....	40		
Parking Benefit District or Business Improvement District.....	41		

Mid-Block Crossing .....	68
Approach .....	69
<b>THE HOLLOW .....</b>	<b>69</b>
Capitalize on the Morris Canal Greenway Study .....	70
Wayfinding and Gateway Signage .....	71
Access Improvements .....	72
Approach .....	75
<b>PARKING TOOLKIT.....</b>	<b>75</b>
Create a Parking Authority, Utility or Department .....	75
Acquire Properties for Conversion to Municipal Parking Lots .....	76
Adopt a Shared-Use Parking Policy.....	76
Lease Lots for Municipal Parking.....	77
Implement Low-impact Development Techniques.....	77
Low-Impact Development Techniques .....	78
<b>TRANSIT VILLAGE .....</b>	<b>79</b>

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# INTRODUCTION

The vision and recommendations provided in this Downtown Boonton Vision Plan are the product of extensive public engagement and an analysis of the existing land use, regulatory, market, and mobility conditions within the Study Area. The full details of all public outreach and analysis conducted by the consultant team can be found in the Existing Conditions Report ([Appendix A](#)). What follows is a summary of the findings from that work.

## BACKGROUND

In 2015, the Town of Boonton applied to the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's (NJTPA) Planning for Emerging Centers Program for technical assistance to achieve Transit Village designation for the area around the Boonton train station. The Transit Village Initiative is a program jointly sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and NJ TRANSIT that supports municipalities seeking to revitalize areas around existing transit stations using transit-oriented development (TOD) principles. TOD is understood in this context to be a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly district surrounding existing public transit.

In addition to studying the possibility of creating a new mixed-use district around the existing train station, the town wished to examine new parking, circulation, and regulatory changes throughout downtown that would better support a TOD strategy, and in turn, a successful Transit Village application. NJTPA

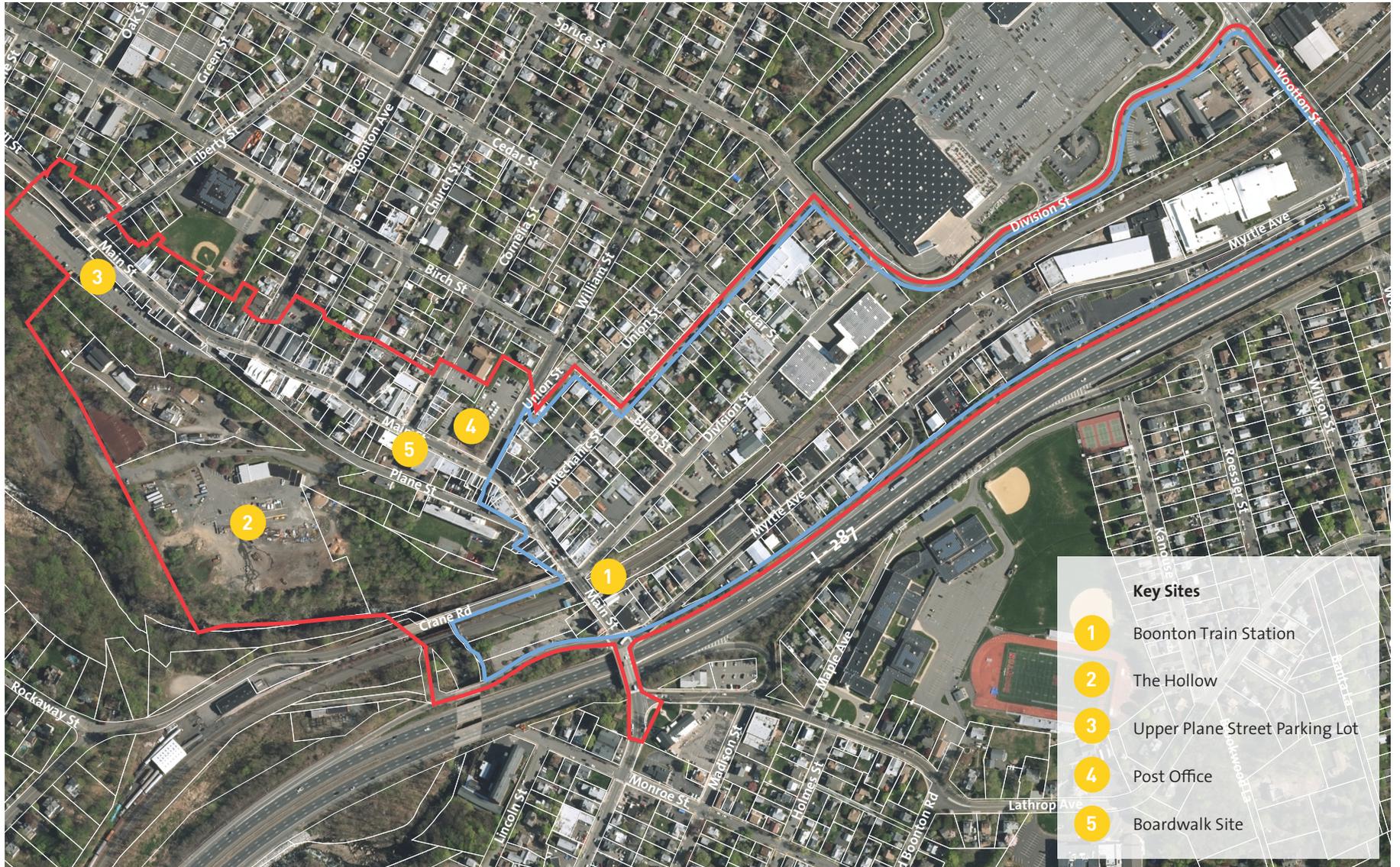
hired a consultant team to help the town complete these tasks.

## STUDY AREA

Two study areas were defined for this project (**Figure 1**). The Transit Village Study Area is what is generally considered the downtown area. It includes Boonton's historic Main Street, the large industrial area west of Main Street known as "the Hollow," Mechanic and Division Streets, Myrtle Avenue, and the Boonton Train Station. This boundary represents the proposed Transit Village boundary. Most of the existing conditions analysis covered this larger study area.

The Lower Downtown Study Area is confined to the areas immediately around the train station, generally encompassing Division Street, Mechanic Street, and Myrtle Avenue. This study area was identified as having more potential for growth around the Boonton Train Station, because it is not as built-out as other parts of downtown. In addition, the scale, type, and character of new development in this Study Area have the potential to be very different from Boonton's historic Main Street. Separating this area from the larger Transit Village Study Area allowed the consultant team to have more specific discussions about regulatory changes and community visioning throughout the public engagement process.

Figure 1: Study Area Map



Transit Village Study Area

Lower Downtown Study Area

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

The public outreach process found that Boonton residents, stakeholders, and business owners love their downtown, but are open to changes throughout the study area (See **Figure 2 and Figure 3**). When asked about some of the issues that need to be addressed, there was general consensus that:

- › Main Street is not safe for pedestrians and lacks public space.
- › Parking improvements are needed throughout the Study Area.
- › Division Street has the most potential to develop into a Transit-Oriented District, as long as the focus is more on high-quality residential development.
- › The Hollow should be developed to provide additional recreational, open space, and historical amenities for the town.

There was less agreement about how the Myrtle Avenue area should develop, with some participants wanting more of a walkable, mixed-use commercial district and others seeing it as an opportunity for a larger, “big-box” retail corridor.

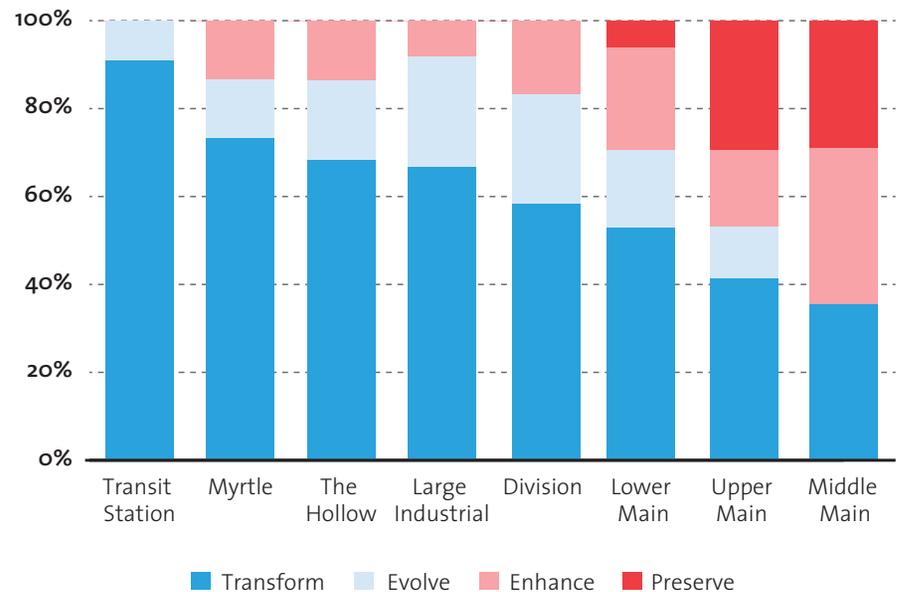
The limited schedule of rail service at Boonton Station was seen as something that would significantly undermine a TOD strategy for the downtown. Many people felt that more frequent service would make the downtown a more attractive place to live. However, changes to the frequency and number of rail trips are not likely to happen in the near future. That said, there is still opportunity for transit-supportive development in the downtown around the train station. Many of the other things public outreach participants wanted to see happened in downtown would support such development, including: enhancing Main Street businesses, improving pedestrian safety and parking, providing attractive new public spaces, and increasing housing choices within the study area.

Participants widely agreed that the town should use all the regulatory tools available to them to encourage new development, including Area in Need of Rehabilitation or Redevelopment designation.

Figure 2: Sub-Area Map



Figure 3: How much change is appropriate in each sub-area?



## MOBILITY ANALYSIS

**Boonton is a multi-modal community.** Boonton Station is centrally located, making it an attractive anchor for a TOD strategy in downtown. The station is served by the Montclair-Boonton line, which provides weekday and limited weekend service to New York City. However, the train lacks bi-directional service through the day, has a limited number of trips, and limited operating hours. Given the limited service, Boonton should place equal emphasis on accommodating auto and bus commuters and local commuters who walk or bike to work.

**The Study Area is well-served by pedestrian facilities, with sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps at most locations, but the quality of the pedestrian realm is noticeably lacking.** On Main Street, narrow sidewalks and high traffic volumes create an unsafe atmosphere for pedestrians. There is a clear need to identify places to expand the sidewalk to provide additional space for pedestrian amenities like café seating, street trees, and street furniture, as well as traffic calming measures. There may be some potential to use no parking zones along Main Street for expansions or traffic calming, as not all of these zones are needed for loading or turning. The pedestrian quality of Main Street is also challenged by the steep grade which climbs significantly between Myrtle Avenue and Upper Main.

Both Division Street and Myrtle Avenue could benefit from wider sidewalks located further from the street edge, fewer driveways, improved pedestrian lighting, and amenities such as street trees. However, both roads have narrow right-of-ways, with property lines typically located at the edge of sidewalks, limiting the width and placement of sidewalks.

Any pedestrian improvements in the downtown will also need to factor in the existing roadway characteristics of Main Street, Myrtle Avenue, and Division Street. Main Street and Myrtle Avenue are designated minor arterial corridors. These corridors carry the heaviest volumes of traffic in the study area, as well as truck traffic and emergency response vehicles. As such, there is less flexibility in the design and modification of these corridors than there are for local streets like Division Street.

**Parking management is counter-intuitive.** The most desirable on-street spots on Main Street are free, while parking spots located further away are pay-to-park. This creates the most demand for these spots, contributing to the perception that there is a lack of parking available on and around Main Street. Free Main Street parking also leads to less use of metered and pay-to-park municipal lots. The Upper Plane Street Lot, the largest source of parking in downtown, is a particularly underutilized asset. Further contributing to this problem is a lack of wayfinding signs to help visitors find the lot, poor lighting and visibility that creates an unsafe feeling, and limited connections to Main Street.

**Bicycle facilities are also lacking** in the Study area due to steep grades, narrow streets and sidewalks, and on-street parking. The proposed Morris Canal Greenway alignment would create a multi-use trail connection between Boonton and the surrounding region, by way of Myrtle Avenue, Plane Street, and Grace Lord Park.

Figure 4: Mobility Existing Conditions



## DEMOGRAPHIC AND MARKET ANALYSIS

**Boonton is a mature, built out community with a stable population.** Most households are owner-occupied, family households, though Boonton does have a higher number of renter-occupied households than nearby municipalities in Morris County. Boonton's median household income of \$90,000 is slightly lower than Morris County, but educational attainment is similar to County figures. Though 65% of the town's housing stock consists of single-family housing, this figure is actually much lower than other parts of Morris County, where nearly 90% of units are single-family homes.

**Demand for multi-family residential housing in Boonton should remain high in the immediate future,** even with 350 new apartments scheduled to come on line just outside the study area at the Avalon Bay development. This is for two reasons. First, Boonton has had almost no new housing construction within the last 20 years, creating pent-up demand for multi-family housing. There has been no new non-single family housing constructed in the last 15 years, and over 50% of housing units in Boonton were built before 1940. The varied age of structures provides Boonton residents with a variety of options when it comes to single-family housing, but the town has very few multi-family housing options compared to surrounding areas. Most of the options are duplexes or upper floor apartments that lack the modern amenities most renters look for.

Next, general trends in the surrounding market areas and throughout North Jersey show that **both millennials and baby boomers would be drawn to studio, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom apartments, particularly those in mixed-use or walkable downtown areas.** These type of households have a smaller impact on town services and school enrollment due to their small sizes. Developers will likely look to position residential development as an extension of Main Street and may push for true mixed-use development.

**Based on market supply and gap data, there is an immediate market for about 10,000 square feet of retail space in the study area.** High-demand sectors that would be a good fit for Boonton are clothing/accessories, grocery and prepared food, and general merchandise. However, traditional market data does not tell the full story for specialty retail markets like Boonton. While residents may not

travel to Main Street to buy everyday basic goods, Boonton's industrial heritage, historic buildings, and thriving arts community are the type of intangibles that attract visitors for dining, specialty shopping, and cultural events who are happy to spend money downtown. Specialty retail experiences and unique, high-end personal services establishments are an increasingly important part of downtown retail. Both offer opportunities for new retail in a way that is compatible with Main Street's existing character. That said, parking and the perception that Main Street is not pedestrian-friendly remain major challenges to growing Boonton's commercial base.

**If the density and activity in the downtown continue to increase, small business growth in Boonton should continue, particularly with tech-savvy, millennial-seeking startup companies.** Boonton is not a traditional suburban office market – even compared to hot, transit-friendly downtowns like Morristown or Summit – but it does not have to be. The existing office spaces and downtown environment have attracted new media firms in addition to small law, insurance, and medical offices. **Boonton's existing office space is non-traditional, and the town can leverage that to attract modern office users seeking creative, flexible, and unique work spaces.** Continuing to attract new businesses can add to Boonton's daytime vibrancy and provide increased patronage to downtown businesses during off-peak hours. Zoning flexibility can help attract new users by allowing for a range of uses and configurations from traditional suburban offices to modern co-working arrangements, ensuring Boonton can meet market demand as it changes. Like issues with downtown retail growth, parking is likely to be a factor in site selection for new businesses, even with the existing train service.

## LAND USE ANALYSIS

**Division Street is best-suited for new development.** Division and Mechanic Streets are home to a number of industrial uses which could redevelop, given the right incentives. Many of the properties along Division Street – especially on the south side of the street – are large parcels which would allow for redevelopment to occur without incurring major costs for lot assemblage. This area is also in close proximity to the train station, which makes it ideal for transit-supportive development. Equally important, they are within a close walk of Main Street. This creates the potential to extend the character of Main Street along Division Street.

**Myrtle may see continued growth, but only as a commercial corridor.** Myrtle Avenue has several characteristics that would make it ill-suited to become a mixed-use, walkable district, including, highly trafficked streets, narrow sidewalks, few pedestrian connections to downtown, and proximity to Interstate 287. However, the area has attracted new businesses in recent years and may continue to be attractive to businesses looking for larger building footprints, more parking, and better truck access than they might find on Main Street.

**There is very little developable land on Main Street.** Most of Main Street is built-out and the aggressively sloping topography, especially to the west of the Middle Main area, makes expansion of existing properties cost prohibitive. Opportunities for new development along Main Street are limited to a few sites with redevelopment potential—the Upper Plane Street Lot, the boardwalk, and the Post Office site. All three are larger parcels with enough lot depth to accommodate new development, are relatively flat compared to other parcels on Main, and front directly onto Main Street.

**A number of buildings on Main Street are in need of improvements.** While some property owners have made significant investments to their facades, many have not, creating a perception that some parts of Main Street are less attractive than others. In addition, residential development is prohibited on Main Street, which has discouraged investment in existing upper floor apartments. The town needs

to look for ways to encourage individual property owners to make interior and exterior investments to promote a high-quality Main Street.

**Main Street lacks the public space and pedestrian amenities characteristic of premier downtowns.** Public space is extremely limited on Main Street. The narrow sidewalks limit the amount of space that can be dedicated to street trees and street furniture. The Post Office plaza and existing boardwalk offer the most potential for new public space on Main Street, but would need to be made available to the public. In Lower Main, open space available at the intersection of Main Street and Division Street could be used to create a more attractive gateway into downtown.

**The Hollow has the potential to provide exceptional recreational and historic amenities that would distinguish Boonton from competing downtowns in the region.** Since the recycling center that occupies much of this area was bought through the Green Acres program through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the area is restricted from being developed as anything other than open space or some other recreational use. The town is currently working to lift the Green Acres restrictions on the recycling center property. Lifting such restrictions will allow the town more flexibility in redeveloping this area. While detailed environmental studies will need to be done before recommendations can be made about what is most appropriate in the area, outreach indicates that improved recreational amenities would have broad public support. This is consistent with the Existing Conditions Report which showed the area contains a number of important historic sites that could be better connected to Main Street and Grace Lord Park through new recreational trails. The proposed Morris Canal Greenway alignment should also be considered in any new plan for The Hollow.

## REGULATORY FINDINGS

**There are no zones within the study area that permit a mix of residential, commercial, and retail uses.** The zoning in the study area is primarily commercial (See Figure 5), with more local-serving uses in the B-1 and B-2 zones around Main Street, and larger commercial zones (C-2, I-2) located further out along Division Street and Myrtle Avenue. Multi-family residential uses are essentially not permitted within the Study Area. Upper-floor residential units were once permitted on Main Street, but due to concerns about the quality of those units, the zoning ordinance was changed to prohibit any new conversions. This is a missed opportunity to bring new housing units to the heart of Boonton's growing downtown. Even with a zoning change, Main Street will only be able to accommodate a limited number of new units. As discussed in the land use analysis, the Division and Mechanic Area is the best-suited to capture most of the demand for new multi-family residential in downtown. As such, a new zone should be created in this area that allows for a variety of multi-family and mixed-use development.

**The town currently has no formal design guidelines or Historic Preservation Ordinance for the downtown area.** Design guidelines could help address a number of concerns about new development, such as the quality of Main Street rehabilitations and how new mixed-use or multi-family buildings might fit with the town's existing character. Adopting design guidelines can help set stylistically consistent, enforceable standards for business and residential storefronts within the Study Area and streetscaping elements.

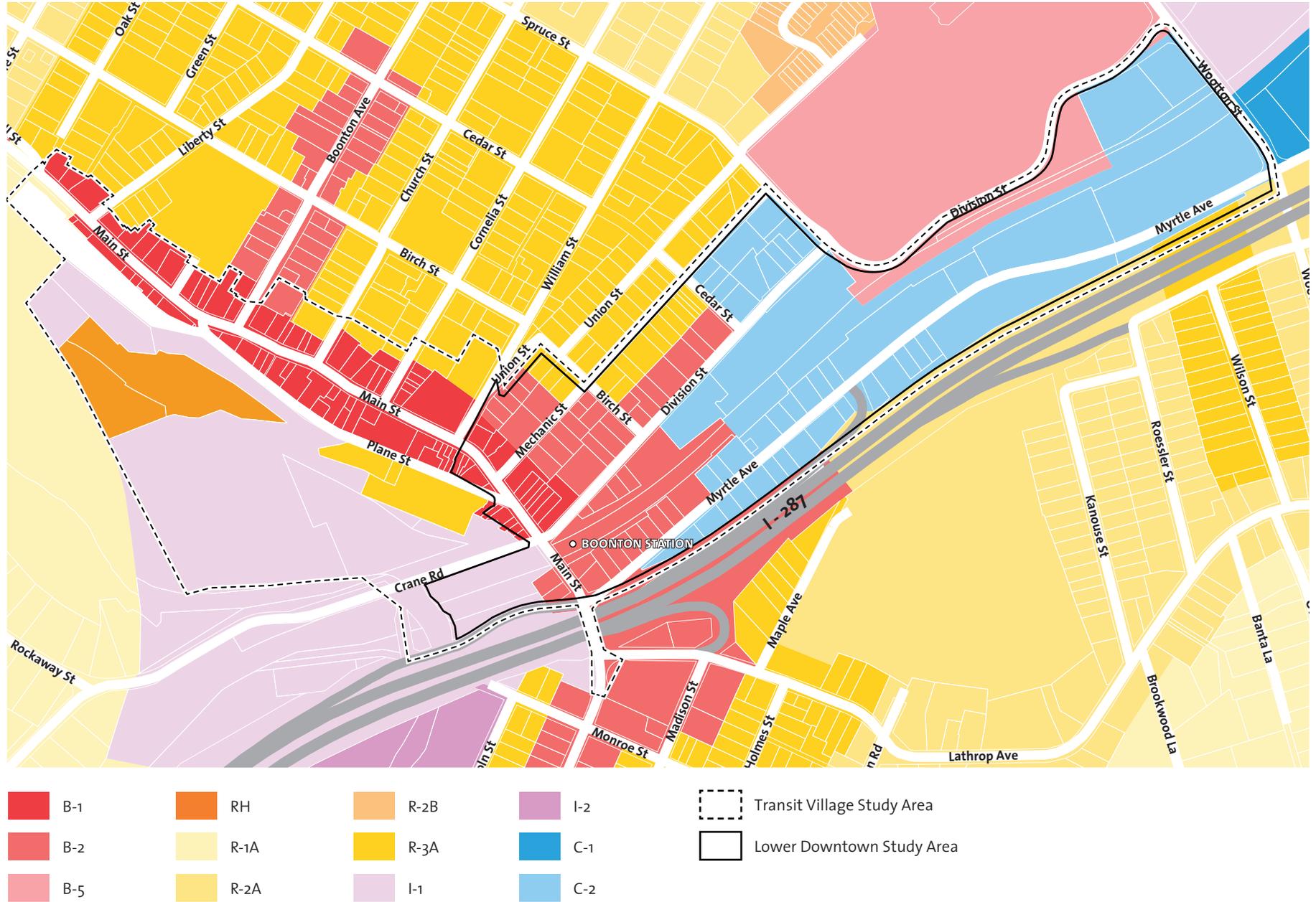
**The Myrtle Area is split between two zones, neither of which completely match the changing character of this area.** The portion of Myrtle Avenue closest to Main Street is zoned B-2. This zoning is intended for small retail business uses similar in character to those found on Main Street. The eastern portion of Myrtle is zoned C-2, which allows for a variety of larger commercial and industrial uses. Neither zoning is well suited for what this area is or could be. Creating a unified zone that is consistent with both the town's vision for this area as well as what type of change is most likely to occur in this area would create more certainty regarding the type of development the town wishes to encourage.

**Front yard parking is permitted throughout the Study Area.** The zoning ordinance currently allows for front yard parking everywhere, including Main Street. Front yard parking breaks the street wall, undermines walkability by prioritizing car access, and decreases vibrancy by occupying valuable space that could be used for retail, restaurants, or other active ground floor uses. This is especially a concern for new development on Division Street. In addition to prohibiting front yard parking, regulations on Main Street (B-1) include provisions for shared or adjacent lot parking that could be applied to other parts of the study area that are walkable to downtown or the train station. Doing so would help balance the need for parking with the desire to improve the pedestrian experience around Main Street.

**The town may need to explore Rehabilitation or Redevelopment designation to encourage growth in key areas.** Though changes to the zoning ordinance will help address the above issues, these changes alone may not be enough to encourage redevelopment. Small lot sizes and individual ownership present challenges to developers who want to assemble parcels large enough for redevelopment along Division Street and Myrtle Avenue. This is a major barrier to Transit-Oriented Development in the Study Area. It may be unlikely that the town can encourage redevelopment in the Study Area simply by permitting new uses in certain zones. Instead, the town may need to consider bulk/density bonuses and Area in Need of Redevelopment Designation as incentives to attract development.

Finally, **Boonton will need to update its Master Plan to conform with any zoning ordinance changes proposed as part of this project.** Additionally, the town will need to make updates to the Master Plan that specifically articulate the town's desire to grow the areas around the Boonton Train Station in order to meet one of the Transit Village Criteria.

Figure 5: Study Area Zoning



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# VISION

The following vision builds upon a strong technical analysis of the economic, land use, mobility, and regulatory environment in Downtown Boonton. It articulates the aspirations of residents as expressed during a robust public engagement process that included a review of goals and objectives from previous plans, stakeholder interviews, surveys, and a public workshop.

## BOONTON EMERGES AS A PREMIER DOWNTOWN

Over the next decade, Boonton will emerge as one of Morris County's premier downtowns. It will be known for its historical and natural assets, startup culture, high-quality restaurants and retail options, and inclusive and diverse housing options.

Facades will be steadily improved using a new Façade Improvement Program, and upper-floor residential units will be rehabilitated to house young professionals attracted by Boonton's burgeoning startup culture. Improved retail offerings will make Downtown Boonton a regional destination for shopping and dining.

Strategic use of redevelopment will encourage key properties, such as the post office and the Upper Plane Street Municipal Lot, to transform. These sites will be



home to modern retail, office, and residential uses that are not currently available on Main Street. These private realm improvements will be complemented by a vastly improved boardwalk site, which will be significantly expanded creating an open space that is unparalleled in the region.

Main Street itself will become a more comfortable experience for pedestrians, the result of sidewalk improvements that will create more room for street furniture and other amenities, pop-up park installations, café windows open

Figure 6: Vision Map



to the street, new rooftop bars, and other strategies to activate the pedestrian realm. The connection between Main Street and Boonton Station will be improved with a new light-filled staircase and an accessible connection to the station platform. Main Street will also be better connected to Grace Lord Park, with sidewalks and a new staircase connecting this incredible natural resource to Main Street and Downtown Boonton.

## REDEVELOPMENT TRANSFORMS THE “OLD STATION STREET” AREA

The Division and Mechanic Street Area (“Old Station Area,” on the Vision Map) will transform into a residential extension of Main Street through the use of Area in Need of Rehabilitation or Redevelopment designation. Division Street will be re-branded as “Old Station Street” to call attention to the area’s locomotive roots. New residents will be attracted to the area because of its proximity to transit, cultural amenities, recreation, and downtown retail. Boonton’s diversity and small town charm will make the area feel welcoming to millennials, established



ICONIC GATEWAY REDEVELOPMENT

families, empty nesters, and everyone in between.

The addition of approximately 200 to 300 new residential units over the next decade will increase demand for personal service and experiential retail on Main Street, creating a new consistent customer base for Main Street retailers. Moderately-sized retail spaces will be interspersed within this new district to accommodate new restaurant, retail, and office users who cannot currently find a home on Main Street.

## NEW INVESTMENTS CREATE ICONIC PUBLIC SPACES

Main Street and the re-branded “Old Station Street” will be united by three new investments. Redevelopment of the property on the northern corner of Main and “Old Station Street” will create an iconic entrance into Main Street Boonton and to the “Old Station Street” district. A wide plaza on this corner will serve as Downtown Boonton’s front porch, welcoming people to town and providing



POST OFFICE POP-UP PARK

a small gathering space for local events. The overlooked and underutilized parking lot on the east side of “Old Station Street” (currently Division Street) will be transformed into Station Park, with a former rail car serving as its main attraction. The rail car will serve as a small coffee shop and information center to connect visitors with Boonton’s high-quality historic assets and retail services. The kids will love it, playing cheerfully while trying to imagine a Boonton before there were cars!

## MYRTLE CONTINUES TO EVOLVE

Myrtle Avenue will continue to evolve as a mixed commercial and residential corridor. The town will allow for innovative responses to difficult lot configurations through flexible regulations. A façade improvement program that favors colorful and creative solutions will provide needed incentive for property owners to rehabilitate their buildings. A new mid-block crossing will slow traffic along Myrtle and create safer pedestrian connections to downtown and the train station. A shared district parking lot will make it easier for property owners to maximize the use of their lots by freeing up space for additional development that would otherwise be dedicated to on-site parking.

## THE HOLLOW BECOMES A CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL DESTINATION

State, county, local, and philanthropic investments in the Hollow and Morris Canal Greenway will make substantial additions to the town’s cultural and historic assets. Downtown Boonton will become known in the region as a place to learn about early American industrial history. Historic institutions such as the Boonton Historical Society and Museum, and United Railroad Historical Society of New Jersey will be integrated into a new park system along the Morris Canal. The park system will include a circuit trail connecting Main Street with the park, and highlights key archaeological assets such as the Railroad Trestle, Turntable and Station Site. This system will be connected into Grace Lord Park, providing residents and visitors miles of high-quality trails and acres of scenic open space.

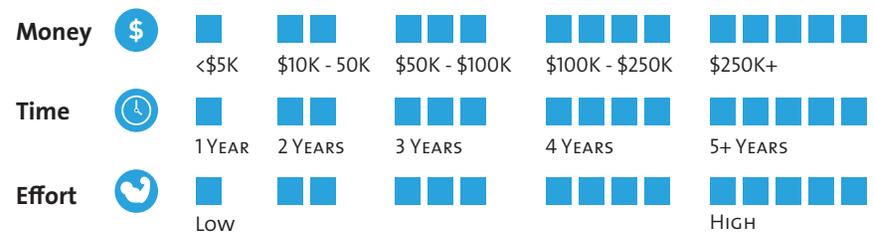
## RECOMMENDATIONS ORGANIZATION & IMPLEMENTATION

The following plan details the steps that must be undertaken to achieve this vision. The report includes four geographic-specific sets of recommendations that focus on:

- › Main Street
- › Old Station Street (Division Street)
- › Myrtle
- › The Hollow

In addition, the report includes a section specifically dedicated to parking recommendations. These recommendations are applicable across the Study Area.

Each proposed recommendation includes a key that show the relative amount of money, effort, and time needed to implement that recommendation. As a general rule, these refer to the mount of costs, effort, and time that the town would incur in pursuing each strategy and do not refer to the private-sector costs of redevelopment.



# MAIN STREET

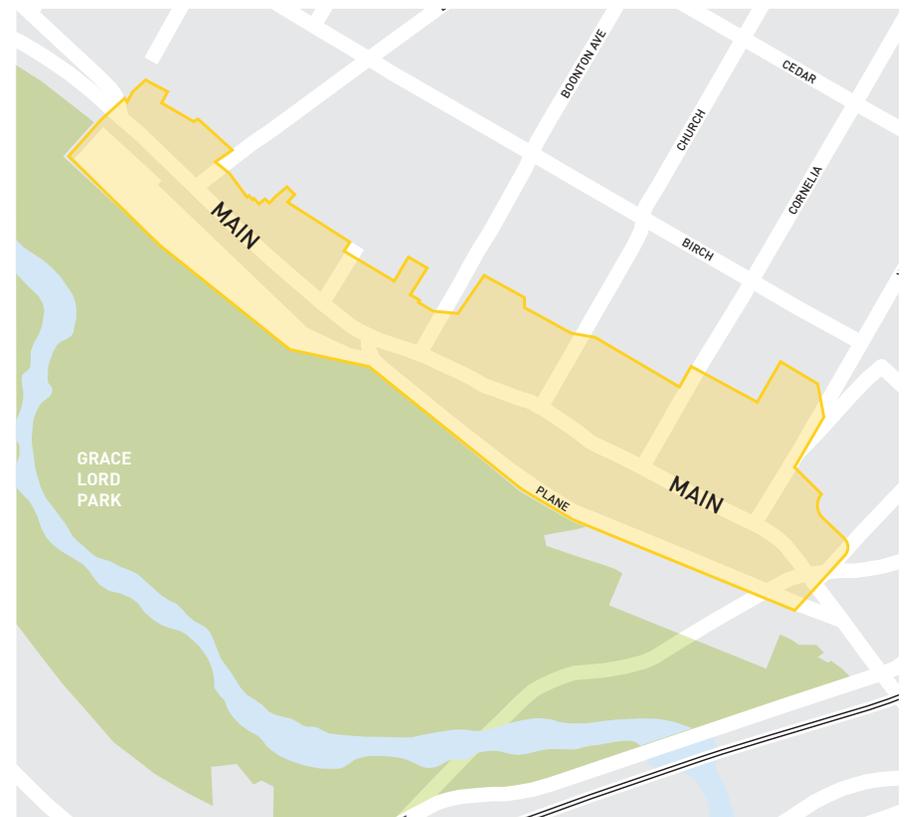
Main Street is the spine of downtown Boonton.

Property owners, business, and the town have invested in restoring facades, upgrading interiors, improving business offerings, and developing more events to attract visitors. The downtown has a great set of restaurants and a diverse collection of retail, service, and arts-related establishments call the area home. The area's historic fabric is a major asset. Its scale and character is unique within the region.

Residents and business owners divide Main Street into Upper, Middle, and Lower Main Street. Middle Main Street is the most successful sub-area and has seen the most recent investment. Lower Main suffers from being downhill from Middle Main. This is exacerbated by the post office, which de-activates the street at a key connection point between Middle and Lower Main. Upper Main Street lacks the strong consistent historic character of Middle and Lower Main street and many properties, especially on the south side of the street, have shallow lot depths that prohibit modern floor plates.

According to the market analysis conducted during the first phase of this planning effort ([Appendix A](#)), there is immediate demand for 10,000 – 12,000 square feet of retail space, in addition to any opportunities for rehabilitation of existing buildings. The major gaps in retail include clothing sales, grocery, and so-called general merchandise.

Figure 7: Main Street Area



## APPROACH

The following recommendations are designed to enhance Middle Main, transform Lower Main, and encourage Upper Main to evolve. This approach was derived from the public outreach process during which residents and stakeholders expressed an interest in taking different approaches to each sub-area.

This report recommends that the town take a multi-prong approach to revitalization that focus on:

- › Improving Parking Management
- › Enhancing Circulation & Transit Connectivity
- › Activating Main Street
- › Revitalizing Existing Assets
- › Strategically Redeveloping of Key Sites

### Experiential Main Street

These objectives are centered around a central effort to improve the experience of living, working, and shopping on Main Street.

The major driver of activity on Main Street will continue to be its restaurants and retail establishments. However, these commercial establishments are operating in a changing environment. Big box stores and online shopping allow consumers to get many of their basics at low prices. Increasingly, people are going to physical stores because it provides an improved experience—they want to touch, see, taste, or feel the product before they buy it. Alternatively, retailers are drawing visitors because they provide a unquiet shopping experience. A specialty cheese store might allow customers to sample before they buy, while a microbrewery allows a visitor immerse themselves in the process before purchasing their six-pack. To be competitive in the region, retailers will have to provide these enhanced experiences.

At the same time, millennials and empty nesters are leaving their suburban subdivisions in search of more active, authentic, and diverse communities. These populations are increasingly seeking out smaller units that meet their modest budgets in walkable, transit-accessible areas with dining and entertainment options.

These trends create an opportunity for Downtown Boonton to attract visitors, residents, and workers by promoting the historic, cultural, and natural resources that distinguish Main Street from other downtowns in the region. The following recommendations focus on enhancing the experience of shopping, living, and working on Main Street. A sample of strategies that accomplish this include:

- › The Facade Improvement Program ([page 67](#)), which seeks to enhance the historic building stock
- › A proposed boardwalk plaza ([page 44](#)) that will create incredible vistas of Grace Lord Park and be a gateway to open space improvements in that area
- › Strategic sidewalk expansions ([page 30](#)) effort to improve the public realm and make Main Street a safer more, comfortable place to walk
- › The Post Office Redevelopment ([page 48](#)), which will link Middle and Lower Main and provide opportunities for modern retail and residential spaces

These larger efforts are combined with smaller recommendations—such as Permitting Café Windows, Permitting Larger Setbacks for Cafes, and creating a Post Office Plaza “Pop-Up”—that will make Main Street a more lively and active space.

## The Nuts and Bolts

Developing a successful experience for visitors, residents, and workers is contingent upon getting the basics working well. This nuts and bolts work should focus on addressing parking issues, improving the pedestrian experience along Main Street, enhancing access to the train station, and using the redevelopment and rehabilitation powers strategically.

### Parking

One of the first topic raised in every stakeholder meeting was the issue of parking. As detailed in the existing conditions report, Boonton currently suffers from poor parking management practices which give the impression that there is insufficient parking to support existing development. In reality, there is enough supply to meet the needs of current businesses if visitors knew it existed and were encouraged to use it.

The parking recommendations are designed to unlock underutilized assets, such as portions of the Upper Plane Street Lot, while rationalizing parking management and improving wayfinding to parking. Combined these strategies should make it feel like the town has built new parking without actually having to construct any spaces.

### Circulation and Station Access

The town is currently the beneficiary of a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant which will focus on improvements to Main Street. The recommendations in this report, including Strategic Sidewalk Expansion ([page 30](#)), will be incorporated into that work and should provide a strong foundation for improving the pedestrian experience along Main Street. Equally important, this report makes recommendations on how the town could improve access to the station and make it a more prominent asset. These improvements will re-enforce Main Street Boonton as a transit- and pedestrian-friendly area, a factor that is likely to drive residential growth going forward.

### Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Powers

Given the complex development pattern on Main Street, a product of more than a century of construction, the town should take a nuanced approach to (re)development. Generally, a municipality should regulate the rehabilitation of existing structures through zoning or an overlay district regulated through an Area in Need of Rehabilitation Plan. New development or substantial redevelopment should be governed by parcel-specific Redevelopment Plans that allow for more detailed standards to address the individual needs of specific sites. Site specific redevelopment plans will allow the town to address complicated sites that may require special considerations due to large grade changes and limited opportunities for on-site parking.

## MAIN STREET TOOLKIT

The recommendations in the following section are presented as a “toolkit.” Each “tool” (recommendation) is designed to serve a specific purpose. Like any good craftsman, however, the town should not be rigid in the use of its tools. The goal is not to use the tool but instead to produce a good result, as expressed in the above vision. Should, over the course of implementation, the town find better tools or need to modify them to meet unexpected needs, then they should do so with gusto. The emphasis must stay balanced between focusing on implementation while keeping a steady eye on the vision.

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# MAIN STREET TOOLKIT



**STRATEGIES, PROGRAMS, AND PROJECTS FOR  
REVITALIZING BOONTON'S MAIN STREET**

## TOOLKIT CONTENTS

### PARKING

[Value Main Street Parking](#)

[Encourage Use of the Upper Plane Street Parking Lot](#)

[Improve the Upper Plane Street Lot](#)

### STATION ENHANCEMENTS

[New Staircase to Train Platform](#)

[Accessibility Improvements at Station](#)

### ACTIVATING MAIN STREET

[Permit Rooftop Bars and Patios](#)

[Permit Cafe Windows](#)

[Permit Larger Setbacks for Cafes](#)

[Strategic Sidewalk Expansion](#)

[Examples: Tactical Pedestrian Improvements in Jersey City](#)

[Post Office Plaza “Pop-Up”](#)

[Art on Main Street Program](#)

### REVITALIZATION PROGRAMS

[Area in Need of Rehabilitation Designation for Main Street](#)

[Main Street Façade Improvement Program](#)

[Rehabilitation vs Redevelopment Designation](#)

[Case Study: Streetface Program, Pittsburgh](#)

[Upper-Floor Residential Rehabilitation Program](#)

[Parking Benefit District or Business Improvement District](#)

### DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

[Permit Residential in the B-1 Zone](#)

[Permit Off-Site Parking for Residential & Prohibit Front Yard Parking](#)

[Upper Main Street Redevelopment](#)

[Boardwalk Site Redevelopment](#)

[Post Office Redevelopment](#)

Figure 8: Main Street Recommendations



# PARKING

## VALUE MAIN STREET PARKING



On-street parking spaces on Main Street are the most valuable parking assets in Boonton. Currently, these spaces are free, although time-limited to two hours. This policy encourages competition for Main Street spaces while discouraging use of other parking assets such as the Upper Plane Street lot. In order to encourage turnover of parking spaces on Main Street, the town should move to a fee-based system. By charging for parking on Main Street, drivers who are willing to park off Main Street are incentivized to do so, thereby relieving pressure on Main Street.

Parking technology has advanced significantly in the past several years, allowing for lower cost of installation and maintenance while providing options such as fee payment via smartphone parking applications. Many systems use solar powered pay stations that are placed at regular intervals and do not require individual meters at parking spaces.

The town should consider charging nominal fees such as \$1.00 per hour so that parking remains affordable. Parking fees should also be applied only during peak hours of usage such as weekdays between 10 am and 6 pm. Assuming a \$1.00 per hour fee for a period of eight hours on weekdays and an average utilization of 70%, the approximately 120 spaces on Main Street between Myrtle Avenue and Hill Street could generate \$175,000 per year in gross revenue. The profits from this revenue could be reinvested in Main Street and used for programming, maintenance, or the purchase of pedestrian amenities such as benches. Fee based parking should also be considered for the lower 60 spaces of the Upper Plane Street lot, as these spaces are competitive with Main Street spaces. These spaces would also generate significant revenue for the town, upwards of \$85,000 per year based upon the calculations used for Main Street.



ON-STREET PARKING PAY STATIONS

Figure 9: Wayfinding and Sidewalk Improvements near the Upper Plane Street Lot



BULB-OUT AND CROSSWALKS



WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

## ENCOURAGE USE OF THE UPPER PLANE STREET PARKING LOT



The Upper Plane Street parking lot is a considerable asset for Main Street properties, yet the parking lot is underutilized. Discussion with residents and property owners suggests that the parking lot is not well used for a number of reasons including:

- › **Perceptions of safety:** the lot is not well-lit and feels isolated
- › **Poor connections:** sidewalk access to and through the parking lot is poor; the staircase connection near Liberty Street, while functional, is uninviting
- › **Lack of wayfinding:** many people are unaware of the location of the parking lot or that it is a municipal parking resource
- › **Fees:** while inexpensive, the parking fees deter usage in favor of Main Street where parking is free

The following measures should be taken to overcome these deficiencies:

- › Provide a pathway and pedestrian lighting along the length of the parking lot
- › Provide a substantially wider staircase to Main Street to replace the existing staircase
- › Provide simple and recognizable wayfinding signage on Main Street
- › Retain fee based parking only for the lower 60 parking spaces. Eliminate parking fees for spaces at the back of the lot. Distinguish free and paid spaces by line stripe color (example: yellow for paid space, white for free spaces).

\* Does not include cost of staircase, sidewalk or lighting improvements (See “[Improve the Upper Plane Street Lot](#)” on page 24)

## IMPROVE THE UPPER PLANE STREET LOT



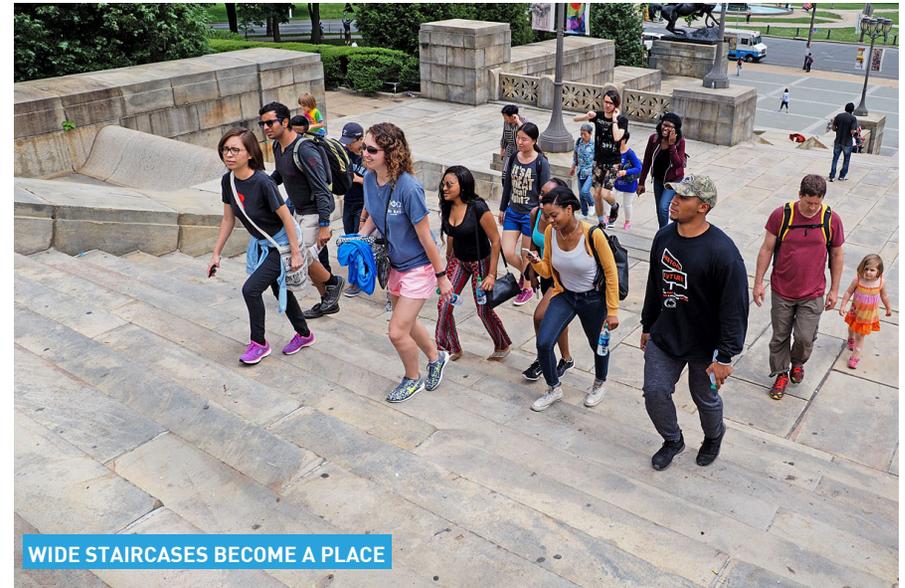
The entrance to Grace Lord Park on upper Plane Street is relatively isolated, being connected to Main Street via a narrow steel staircase or a long walk through a parking lot. This effectively divorces Main Street from one of Boonton’s greatest assets, the Rockaway River and gorge.

To strengthen this connection, a pathway should be provided from Main Street along the east side of the Upper Plane Street parking lot connecting to the entrance of Grace Lord Park. The pathway should be a minimum of 10 feet wide and have pedestrian-scale lighting at intervals sufficient to adequately light the entire sidewalk. This will improve perceptions of safety in the evening and encourage use of the lot. This pathway should also be adopted as the local route of the Morris Canal Greenway. The pathway will also provide an accessible route from Main Street to the Upper Plane Street parking lot and Grace Lord Park.

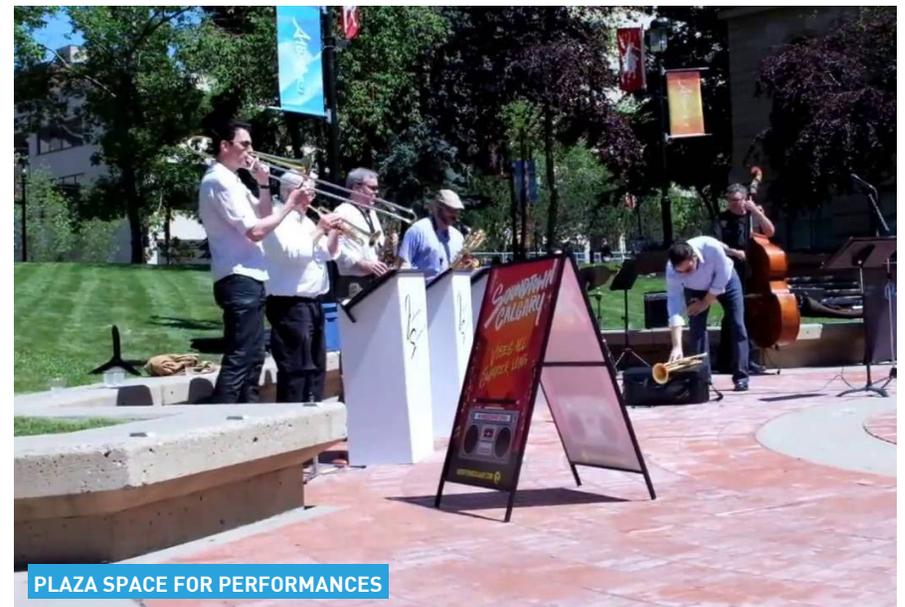
In addition to this connection, a “grand staircase” should be provided that would connect Main Street to the Upper Plane Street lot and sidewalk. The staircase would be approximately 30 feet wide and of masonry construction. The staircase would be located in the proximity of Liberty Street and would replace the existing steel staircase at that location. The staircase is envisioned to be a space to gather as much as it is a functional connection between the Upper Plane Street Lot and Main Street. Development of the pathway at the bottom of the staircase is needed as an accessible alternative route to the staircase.

Several parking spaces should be eliminated at the base of the staircase to allow for the expansion of the sidewalk at the base of the staircase into a small plaza that would afford space for small band performances facing the staircase. This would allow the staircase to also serve as an informal seating and viewing area.

The proposed changes would still allow the Boonton Farmer’s Market to operate in the lot. In the long-term, should the parking lot be redeveloped (See “[Upper Main Street Redevelopment](#)” on page 43), the Farmer’s Market could be relocated to one of the other proposed new public spaces included in this report. The Gateway Area Redevelopment (page 60) would be the most suitable

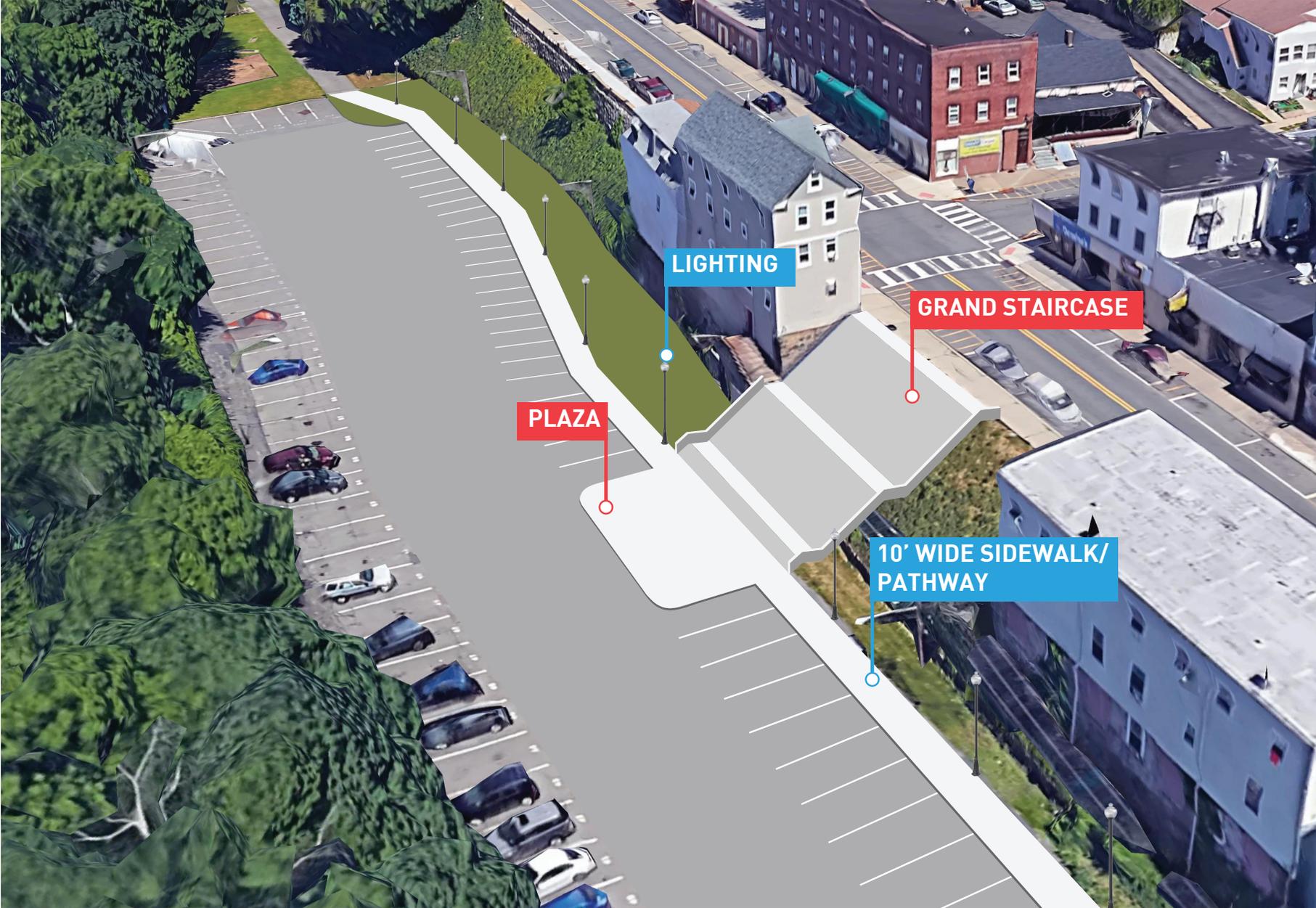


WIDE STAIRCASES BECOME A PLACE



PLAZA SPACE FOR PERFORMANCES

Figure 10: Upper Plane Street Lot Improvements



# STATION ENHANCEMENTS

Figure 11: New Staircase to Platform

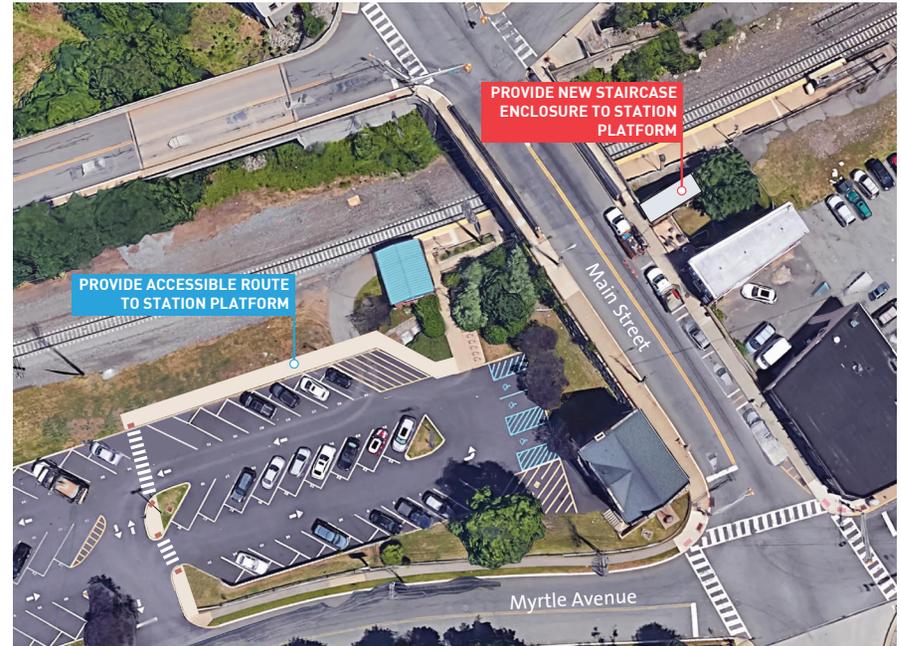


## NEW STAIRCASE TO TRAIN PLATFORM



At Boonton Station, the covered staircase leading from Main Street to the station platform should be replaced with a new light-filled structure that incorporates glass walls and roof elements that would improve natural lighting and visibility and hence perceptions of safety. This would replace the existing steel clad station staircase enclosure which blocks natural light. The town should finance these improvements, while coordinating with NJ TRANSIT to design and implement the improvements. In addition to the staircase improvements, an accessible route to the station should be provided, see **Figure 12** and **Figure 13**.

Figure 12: Improved Station Connections

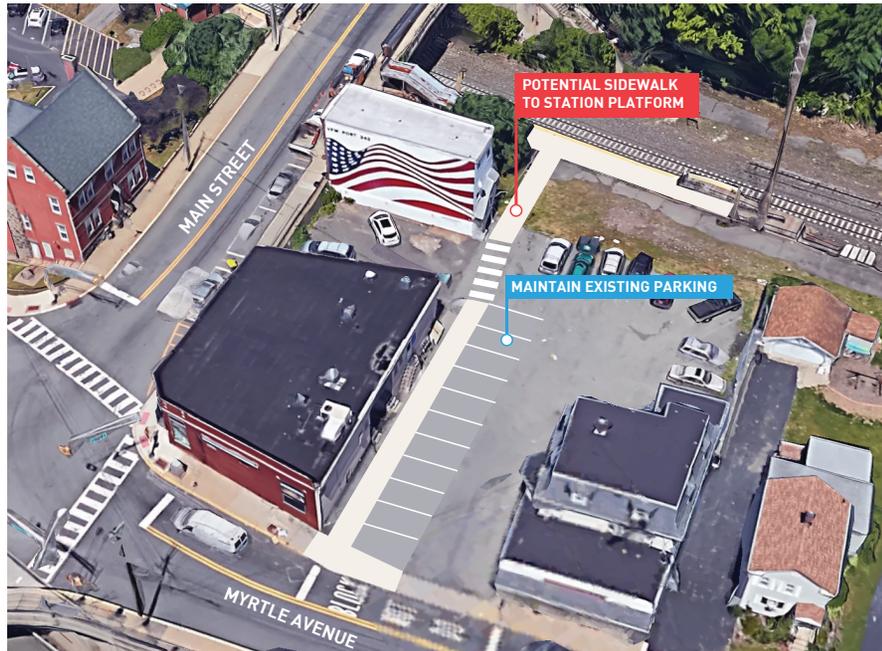


## ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT STATION



A sidewalk, curb ramps, and crosswalks should be provided from the existing sidewalk on Myrtle Avenue through the Boonton Station parking lot, connecting to the station platform sidewalk. This would provide an accessible route from Main Street and would only result in the loss of two parking spaces in the station lot. Pedestrians and those with mobility impairments currently have to walk through the parking lot to gain access to the station platform. Improvements should be coordinated with NJ TRANSIT which manages the lot, but financing will need to be provided by the town.

Figure 13: Improved Station Connections

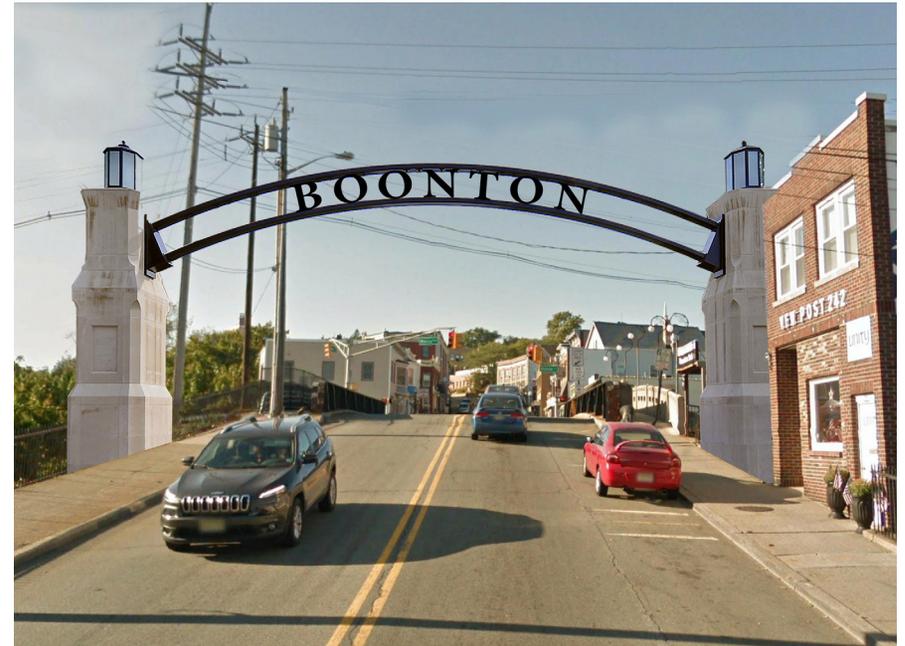


## NEW CONNECTION BETWEEN MYRTLE AVENUE AND THE STATION



A sidewalk and curb ramps should be provided from the existing sidewalk on Myrtle Avenue, through the Main Pharmacy parking lot, connecting to the station platform. This would provide an accessible route from Main Street and would not adversely impact parking in the Main Pharmacy Lot. The construction of, and public access to the sidewalk would require an easement through the property. The town should consider leading and financing these improvements. Coordination with NJ TRANSIT will be needed to design and implement the platform connection.

Figure 14: A “Grand Entrance” at Main Street and the Station



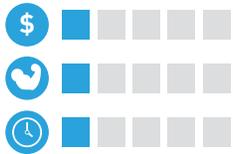
## A GRAND ENTRANCE AT MAIN STREET



The arrival into Downtown Boonton should be celebrated and more strongly associated with the location of the train station. This could be accomplished by constructing gateway columns and an arched structure over Main Street in advance of the Main Street Bridge at the train station. The arch would also function as a landmark for the station staircase.

# ACTIVATING MAIN STREET

## PERMIT ROOFTOP BARS AND PATIOS



Given the shortage of sidewalk space for cafés, the town should consider permitting restaurants to place patios on the roofs of buildings. These patios would also take advantage of what are likely to be spectacular views of portions of Main Street and Grace Lord Park. Rooftop patios could be a major attraction unique to Boonton, further distinguishing Main Street from other regional downtowns.

It is unclear whether there are buildings that could support a rooftop patio structurally. There would also certainly be an improvement cost to create safe places to eat and drink. A pilot project in which the town helps identify potential properties, eliminates application fees, expedites permitting, and provides technical support to the first property (or two) may be a necessary incentive.

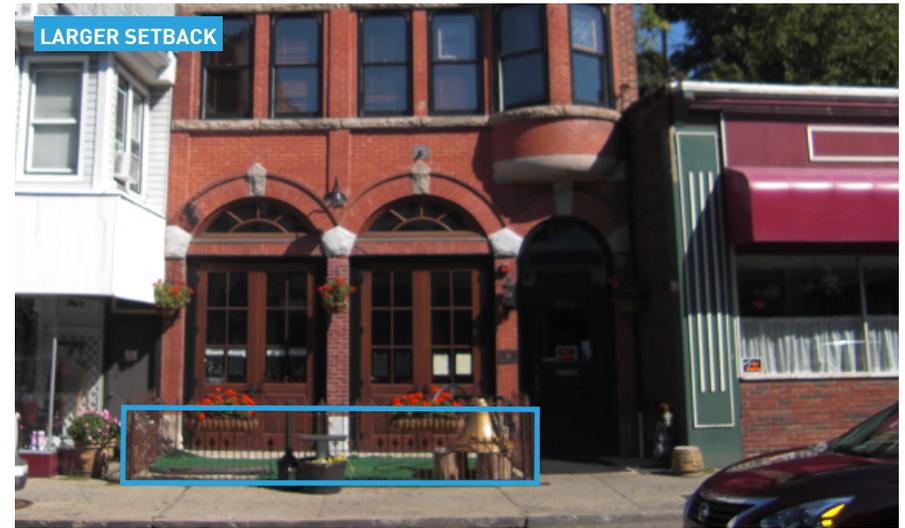




## PERMIT CAFE WINDOWS



Café seating has become a staple of active commercial corridors because it brings activity and life to the street and attractive amenities for visitors. However, there are limited opportunities for café seating on Main Street because of the narrow sidewalks and street. An alternative approach is to allow for café windows. These windows can be opened up to the street during good weather to create a lively atmosphere similar to a sidewalk café, but without occupying any space on the sidewalk. During colder months, these windows can be shut while still allowing patrons to sit and look out over the street.



## PERMIT LARGER SETBACKS FOR CAFES



Another strategy the town may consider is to allow new development to have larger front yard setbacks provided that the space is occupied by sidewalk cafes. This already happens with Maxfield's on Main and helps bring vibrancy to that side of the street. As with Maxfield's, the code should require that an architectural element, such as a high-quality fence or planters – be placed along the current property line. This will ensure that Main Street maintains a consistent street wall--the continuous “wall” created by a series of attached buildings--as you walk along it, which helps frame the public realm and create a sense of continuity and comfort for pedestrians.

## STRATEGIC SIDEWALK EXPANSION



Main Street's sidewalks, like Main Street itself, are relatively narrow, averaging seven feet wide. This limited space does not afford room for pedestrian amenities such as benches, street trees, or sidewalk cafes. There is, however, significant potential for the expansion of sidewalks on Main Street by re-purposing roadway space where parking is restricted. Between Division and Liberty Streets alone, there is over 1,200 linear feet of roadway shoulder, delineated by yellow pavement markings. This represents 30% of the edge of the roadway. While many of these areas are reserved for the turning paths of large vehicles such as fire trucks, other areas are simply left-over spaces where parked cars do not fit. Some areas are restricted due to sight-line limitations or the presence of fire hydrants, but many of these areas could still be re-purposed for pedestrians while protecting both sight-lines and access to fire hydrants.

### Increase Pedestrian Amenities and Safety

Roadway space not used for vehicles should be converted to pedestrian space by extending curb lines and expanding sidewalks. The expanded sidewalk areas should be furnished with benches, street trees, trash receptacles, bicycle racks and other pedestrian amenities. Curb extensions would also increase safety on Main Street by reducing crossing distance, improving visibility beyond parked cars, and slowing vehicles speeds while turning.

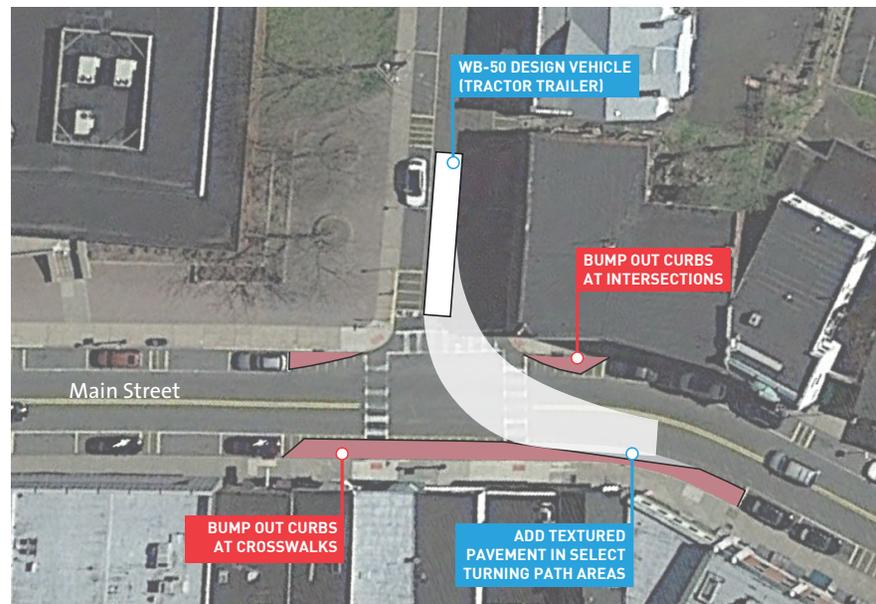
The net effect of expanding sidewalks on Main Street could be transformative for the retail environment. Street trees would bring the corridor to life by adding color, shade, and the potential for lighting decoration in the winter. Benches would provide customers and patrons a place to rest while climbing the hill or eating an ice cream. Other amenities such as bicycle racks and trash receptacles could also be provided in the additional space. The expansion of sidewalks could also be coordinated with a wholesale remaking of the pedestrian realm including new pavement materials such as brick or cobblestone and enhanced building facades and storefronts.



Figure 15: Sidewalk Expansion Concepts



Figure 16: Accommodating Large Vehicles



### Conduct an Analysis to Determine Suitable Locations

To facilitate this conversion, the town should conduct a thorough analysis of the turning movement requirements of large vehicles. This analysis would identify the locations suitable for curb extension and sidewalk expansion and the extent to which curbs could be relocated. As demonstrated in **Figure 16**, sidewalk improvements can be designed to accommodate the specific turning movement requirements of each intersection for a given design vehicle. Curb extensions should be designed so that they do not obstruct the turning movements of large vehicles such as fire trucks, garbage trucks, snow plows, and delivery trucks.

The selection of exact locations for sidewalk expansion and curb bump outs should also be coordinated with property and business owners to ensure that sufficient curbside space is reserved for delivery vehicles. While sidewalk expansion and bump outs may be feasible at multiple locations on Main Street, improvements are not recommended at all intersections or along all areas where parking is currently prohibited. Rather, a select number of locations should be improved to allow for a distributed network of pedestrian respites.

## Consistency with Main Street TAP Grant

The town is actively planning for similar improvements on Main Street. In 2017, Boonton received a \$1 million Transportation Alternatives Projects (TAP) grant to improve safety and enhance the streetscape on Main Street between town Hall and North Main Street. Those improvements are anticipated to include: decorative street lighting, curb and sidewalk improvements, new traffic signals, crosswalk improvements and pedestrian bump-outs, wayfinding and parking signage, and benches and receptacles. The recommended improvements presented within this plan are entirely consistent with the vision presented within the grant application and are consistent with the TAP program requirements. Additionally, recommended improvements would not adversely impact traffic operations or sight-lines along the corridor. As such, the improvements are likely to be supported by the County (Main Street is CR511).

## Use Tactical Improvements to Test Expansions

The town may also consider temporary measures as a means of testing the concepts and soliciting feedback from residents, patrons, public safety officials and business and property owners ([See “Case study: Tactical Pedestrian Improvements in Jersey City” on page 33](#)).

# CASE STUDY: TACTICAL PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS IN JERSEY CITY



PAINTED SIDEWALK EXPANSION



PAINTED BUMP-OUT

In 2017, Jersey City engaged in a series of short-term tactical pedestrian improvements at key locations in the City as a demonstration project in support of their Complete Streets planning process. The reclamation of roadway space for pedestrians typically includes installation of:

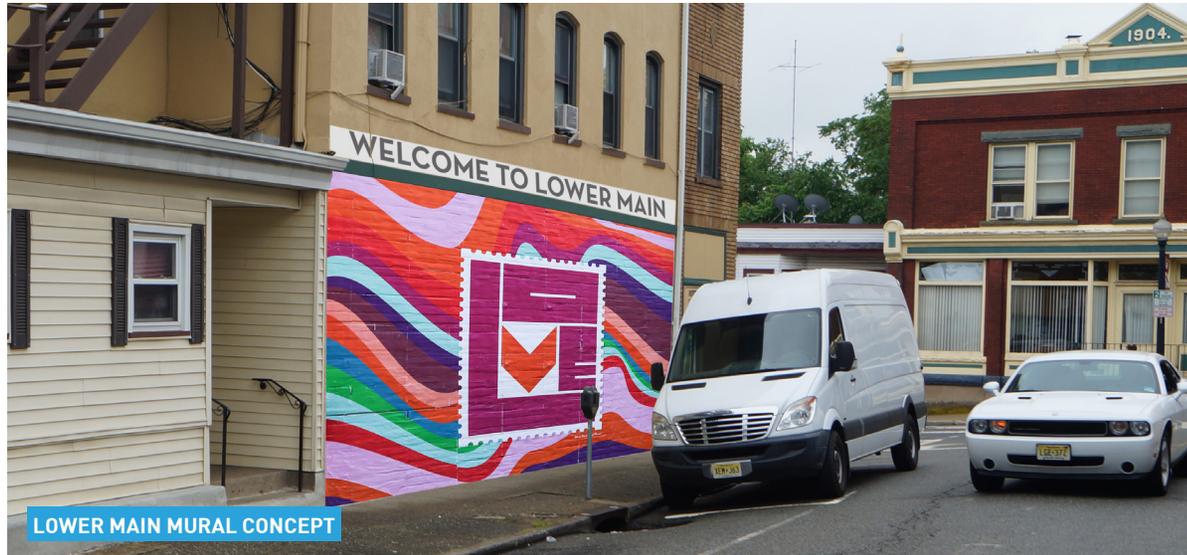
- › Traffic delineator posts
- › Artistic paint on the pavement in the reclaimed pedestrian areas
- › Planters
- › Tables and Chairs

The improvements were very popular with residents and business owners, and the City is currently engaged in designing more permanent installations.

The designs shown are just a few examples of how these recommendations could increase pedestrian visibility and improve safety while creating a sense of place that is unique and vibrant. The town could work with the local community to choose colors and designs that reflect the character of the neighborhood they are implemented in, or use standard uniform colors throughout the town.



Figure 18: Branding Through Art

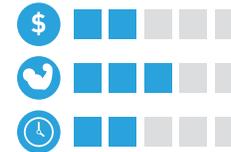


LOWER MAIN MURAL CONCEPT



BOONTON ARTS MURAL

## ART ON MAIN STREET PROGRAM



While a strong retail environment is important for a downtown, there should be other reasons besides shopping to come to Main Street. Boonton's art community is a tremendous asset that the town can better leverage to attract visitors and create a distinct brand for downtown through public art. Boonton Arts has gained a lot of momentum over the past few years with its mural initiative and Dog Days of Summer program. The town should continue to work with Boonton Arts, Boonton Main Street, and local and regional artists to find more opportunities to showcase their work in the downtown. Public art should be encouraged as part of revitalization efforts along Main Street, including the Pop-Up Plaza and facade improvement programs mentioned in this report. Art can also be a form of branding or wayfinding, for example, a large mural can indicate to visitors that there is more to come if they keep walking down Main Street (Figure 18).

The town can be an important partner for the arts by collaborating with existing organizations to design public spaces or pop-up installations, offering public spaces and buildings to be used for public art, and pursuing creative funding opportunities.

# REVITALIZATION PROGRAMS

## DESIGNATE MAIN STREET AS AN AREA IN NEED OF REHABILITATION



The town should designate all buildings that front onto Main Street as an “Area in Need of Rehabilitation.” More information is provided on [page 38](#) about Rehabilitation designation and how it is different than the Redevelopment designation. Designating the entire Main Street as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation is necessary to be able to develop many of the regulatory and incentive tools to implement the Main Street Façade Improvement Program and the Upper-Floor Residential Rehabilitation Program (detailed below). A survey of the area by the consultant team indicated that the town should have no issues meeting the statutory requirements for designation.

## MAIN STREET FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

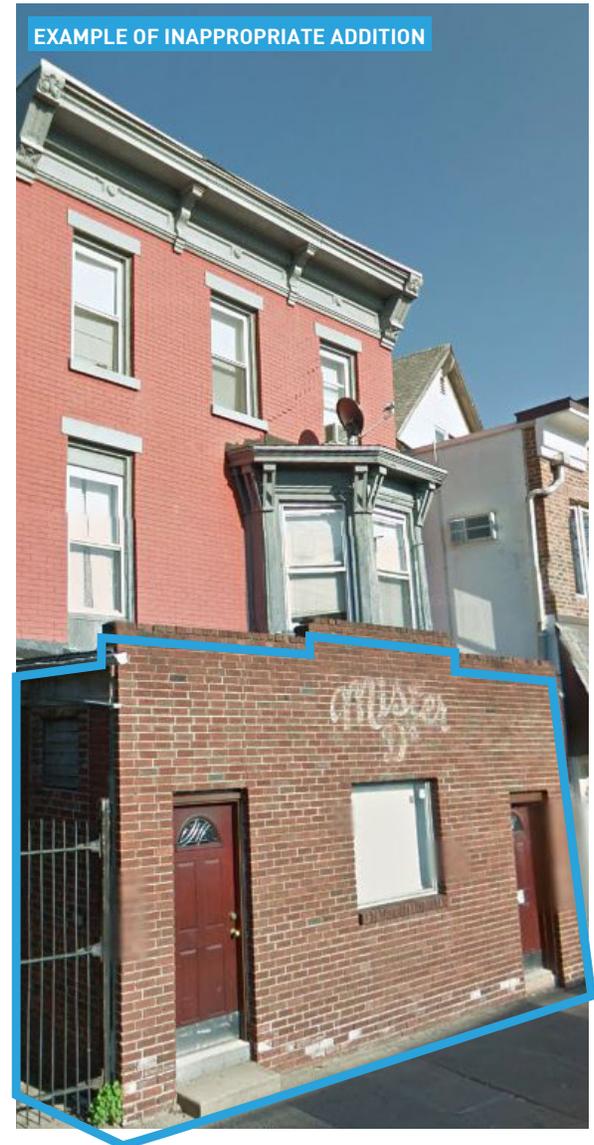


Main Street’s historic buildings and their facades are major assets in the downtown. However, many facades have been improved in ways that detract from the historic character of the area. This includes the use of inappropriate materials, additions to buildings that are historically inappropriate, reducing the amount of transparency (e.g. windows), and removing awnings and other historic building elements. Although this may have made sense at the time, these changes detract from the area’s walkability and make it feel aesthetically chaotic.

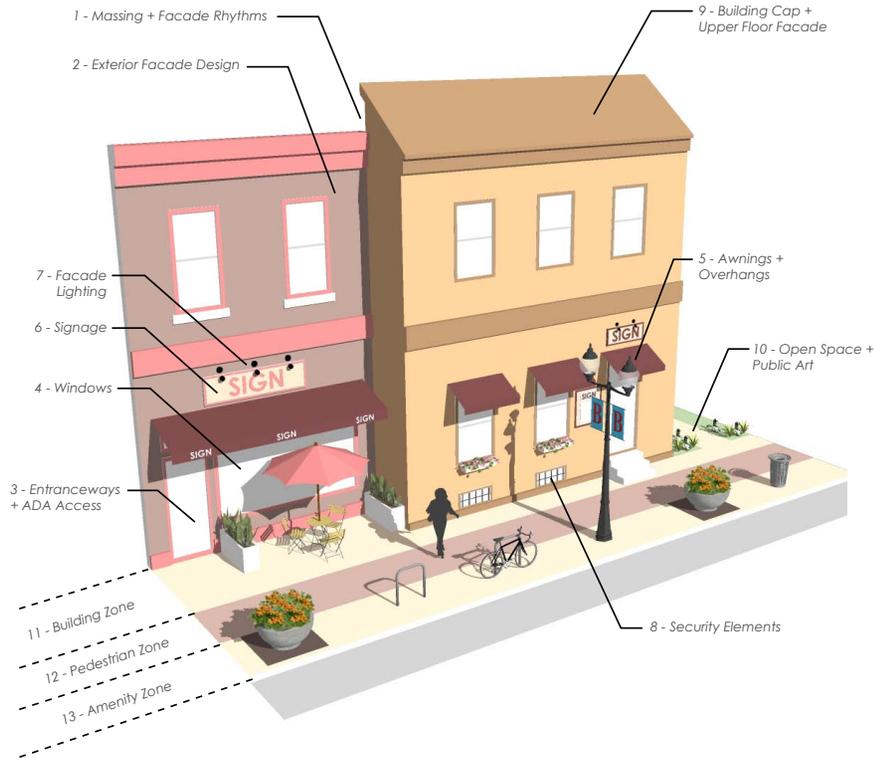
An early step in creating the Façade Improvement Program is to develop well-crafted Façade Improvement Guidelines for Main Street. The town currently has the Design Guide Book which is an excellent start to this work. However, more detailed guidelines that include, for example, the percentage of the ground floor façade that must be window would substantially enhance the predictability of the guidelines.

The town should also consider adopting these guidelines as part of a Rehabilitation Plan<sup>1</sup> for the proposed

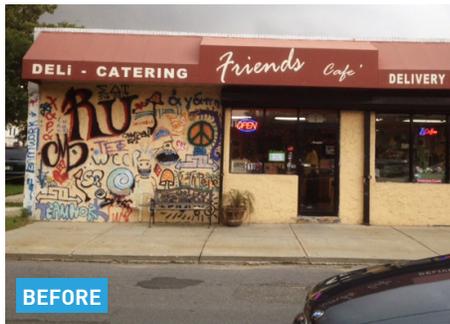
<sup>1</sup>Confusingly in New Jersey, the plans that govern both Rehabilitation Areas and Redevelopment Areas are called “Redevelopment Plan”. To avoid confusion, however, we suggest that the town use “Rehabilitation Plan” to distinguish it from plans that will cover Redevelopment Areas.



**EXAMPLE OF ELEMENTS THAT CAN BE IMPROVED ON FACADES**



**EXAMPLE FACADE REHAB**



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

Main Street Area in Need of Rehabilitation (See “Designate Main Street as An Area in Need of Rehabilitation” on page 36). If precise standards were incorporated into a Rehabilitation Plan, then they could be enforced by the town when any substantial modification was undertaken on Main Street. Thus the standards could serve two purposes: provide guidance to those who voluntarily wish to improve their façade while requiring them to be updated if other improvements are being made to the building.

There are substantial costs to making improvements that are high-quality and historically appropriate. This may explain why property owners have failed to invest in this way in the past. As a result, the town will likely have to provide incentives to property owners to make the necessary investments. The most important incentive should be 5-year tax abatements provided through Area in Need of Rehabilitation designation (See Designate Main Street as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation). However, the town can offer additional incentives:

**Architectural Support Services:** Many smaller towns have leaned on resident architects to provide free or low-cost architectural and cost estimation services to property owners who want to improve their facades. If there is not capacity to provide such specialized services, some towns have hired an architect to provide some generic architectural designs and cost estimation. These typologies can be cheaply modified by individual property owners.

**Preferred Contractors and Economies of Scale:** The town may wish to consider identifying preferred contractors to undertake the work who can guarantee quality construction. If improvements are coordinated and scheduled – for example if there is a once-a-year intake, processing, design, and building period - there is a potential for economy-of-scale savings as materials can be bought in bulk. A contract who knows that they can have multiple projects in one area may be able to reduce costs which can be passed along to the property owners.

**Reduce or Eliminate Fees:** The town should consider reducing or eliminating permit fees associated with Facade Improvements that go through the program. Along with an expedited process and a commitment to working with applicants, these efforts can significantly reduce the cost and, equally important, the hassle of making these kinds of improvements.

## REHABILITATION VS. REDEVELOPMENT DESIGNATION

The New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) was created to empower municipalities with the ability to redevelop specific areas of the community that have deteriorated and are in need of improvement. The law gives Boonton two major tools to improve areas that have deteriorated: Area in Need of Rehabilitation designation and Area in Need of Redevelopment designation.

### Rehabilitation

Designation as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation is a legal term and does not mean that all properties are blighted or in need of significant repair. Instead, an area may be designated if one of the following criteria are met:

- › More than half of the housing stock in the area is at least 50 years old
- › A significant portion of the structures in the area are deteriorated or substandard
- › There is a continuing pattern of vacancy, abandonment to underutilization of properties in the area and a persistent arrearage of property-tax payments
- › A majority of the water and sewer infrastructure is at least 50 years old

Area in Need of Rehabilitation designation allows a municipality to undertake a program of repair and improvement to structures, including providing five-year property tax exemptions and abatements to support redevelopment and rehabilitation of properties. Rehabilitation does not give a municipality the power to acquire property through eminent domain or to provide long-term tax abatements of up to 30 years. These powers are reserved for redevelopment only.

### Redevelopment

In order to designate an Area in Need of Redevelopment, a municipality must demonstrate that a property meets one or more of the eight designation criteria. Generally speaking, the criteria require a municipality to prove that properties are in serious disrepair, no longer usable in their current form, or a danger to public health and safety. Therefore, the threshold for designation is higher than it is for rehabilitation.

Upon designating properties an Area in Need of Redevelopment, the municipality must identify whether it will preserve its right to use eminent domain. The municipality may choose to restrict its ability to use that tool, which often reduces the controversy around redevelopment designation. With redevelopment designation, the municipality is able to provide property owners up to a 30-year tax abatement for improvements made to the property.

Upon designating an area in need of Rehabilitation or Redevelopment, the town must then adopt a “Redevelopment Plan.” The wording here is confusing, as a Redevelopment Plan can cover both rehabilitation and redevelopment areas. The document, adopted by the governing body, defines the municipal objectives for the area in terms of appropriate land uses, public transportation and utilities, recreational and municipal facilities, and other public improvements. Such plans are required by the State for any public acquisition of land for redevelopment purposes to occur.

Redevelopment and Rehabilitation designation may also open up the designated areas to additional incentives at the state level. For more information, please consult the Economic Development Agency website.

## CASE STUDY: STREETFACE PROGRAM, PITTSBURGH

Façade improvement programs are not a new concept, and they have been successful in making substantial changes on Main Streets throughout New Jersey and the rest of the nation. The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) of Pittsburgh has conducted several different Façade Improvement Programs targeted at improving historic commercial facades. URA'S Streetface Program was created to revitalize commercial buildings on neighborhood retail corridors throughout Pittsburgh. Since its creation over 25 years ago, it has helped property owners rehab more than 500 buildings in 32 different neighborhoods in the city. The program has all of the key components any façade improvement plan should have, as detailed below. For the full program guidelines, including design guidelines, visit [the URA's website](#).

### Key Components of a Façade Improvement Program

**Statement of Purpose:** A façade improvement program should have a statement that describes what the program will be used for and why it is important for the community.

**Eligible Areas:** A façade improvement program typically defines a specific area boundary for the program. Any business within this area is eligible to apply for funding. The Streetface Program used a slightly different approach, by allowing any business in a pedestrian-oriented shopping area that was a participant in its Mainstreets Pittsburgh program to apply. This gave the URA flexibility to apply the same program and guidelines to different areas of the city.

**Eligible/Ineligible Improvements:** Each program should have a list of eligible and ineligible improvements or activities. It can be as general or specific as the municipality wants. In Pittsburgh, improvements to the façade of an existing building, construction of a new building façade consistent with approved design guidelines, and architectural design service fees are eligible for funding. Roof or interior renovations are ineligible.

**Design Guidelines:** Façade improvement programs should have an emphasis on good design. The most common way to regulate this is to create a set of design guidelines that eligible businesses must follow when rehabbing a façade. The guidelines should be specific and illustrative to show how the principles should be put into practice. The Streetface Program includes guidelines for new and renovated storefronts, upper floor facades, accessories, painting, and green design/energy conservation.

**Funding Types:** The cost for improvements is typically split between the municipality and the property owner, either as (1) a loan matching the property owner's anticipated investment or (2) a cost-sharing percentage for improvements, capped at a certain dollar amount. The URA split their funding into tiers of 40%, 50%, or 80% matching, capped at \$25,000-\$30,000 per building. Loans were provided at 0% interest, which is also common.

**Funding Terms:** The Façade Improvement Program should also include parameters for how the funding will be disseminated, a time frame in which the improvements must be completed, as well as procedures and/or penalties for default or noncompliance with the other stated requirements.

**Funding Sources:** The Streetface Program was funded through a combination of city, state, federal and nonprofit dollars. Common funding sources for façade improvement programs also include: Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), municipal tax levies, public/private partnerships, county/state Economic Development or Historic Preservation Grants and federal grants (e.g., Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs)).

## UPPER-FLOOR RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM



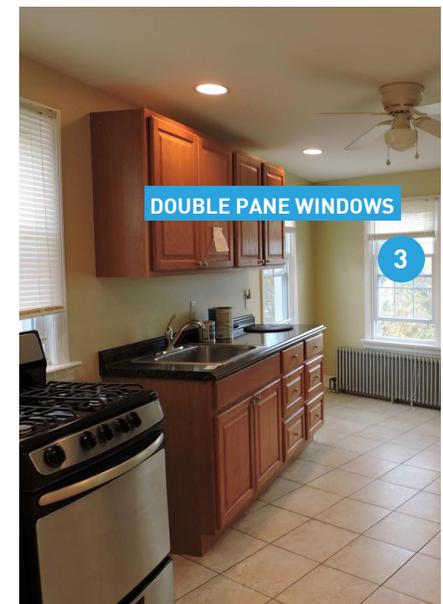
For more than a decade, the town has prohibited the use of upper floor spaces for residential uses. Although some residential uses have been grandfathered and thus continue to be permitted under a pre-existing use exemption, there has been little incentive to invest in the units. In the past, there has been concern that lower-quality units have made the units on Main Street a destination of last resort, the opposite of the image that the town wants to project for its Main Street.

The town should develop an incentive program to encourage the rehabilitation of upper floor spaces along Main Street for residential uses. This should be done in conjunction with the above Main Street Façade Improvement Program and the “Permit Residential Uses in the B-1” recommendation (page 42) and permitting residential uses on Main Street. The tax incentives to invest in Main Street are likely to be cost effective: those looking to move onto Main Street are unlikely to have children and thus will not likely place a major financial burden on the town. They are also likely to have more disposable income which they can use to support local business, including restaurants, convenience retail, and small groceries. Residents are a predictable and steady stream of income for retailers and an injection of a small number of them could add subtle but noticeable vitality to Main Street. Over the long term, a more vibrant Main Street will increase property values and may make it cost-effective for property owners to invest in their upper floors without subsidies.

**Minimum Environmental and Quality-of-Life Standards:** The incentive program should require new improvements to meet, at a minimum, the following standards:

- › All appliances should meet a nationally recognized energy efficiency standard
- › All windows should be double paned and weatherproofed
- › Energy Star (or the like) rated heating and air conditioning systems

Figure 19: Examples of Types of Improvements to Upper Floor Units



- › Insulation that meets the following standards (Attic = minimum R49; Wall = minimum R5 insulation)
- › On-site laundry facilities (not necessarily in-unit)
- › Meeting contemporary electrical code requirements for residential uses

These requirements will ensure that new construction is energy efficient which will reduce the cost of living for new tenants. They should not place an undue financial burden on property owners nor make the units so expensive to rent that they price out the very people the town is wishing to attract. They will also safeguard the town: units with these amenities will be more competitive in the housing market and such investments guarantee that rehabilitated units meet a minimum quality standard.

The town should consult with its Land Use Attorney to ensure that such a strategy is consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL).

**National and State Incentives:** There are a number of national and state incentives that support property owners who wish to make improvements that will reduce energy use. There are also incentives for historic property rehabilitation, although those are often quite complex and require specialized knowledge of historic preservation. The Upper-Floor Residential Rehabilitation Program should provide support services to property owners that will help them access these incentives for rehabilitating historic homes and making energy efficient investments in their property. Examples of such programs include the New Jersey Clean Energy Program’s WARMVantage and COOLVantage rebate programs for heating and cooling improvements and the Energy STAR appliance rebate program, federal tax credits for energy efficiency improvements, and numerous savings programs available through private utility providers.

## PARKING BENEFIT DISTRICT OR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



Parking Benefit District (PBD) is a program through which the town would agree to return all or some parking revenue to area for improvements and/or beautification projects in the district. This report recommends that the town consider monetizing parking in some areas (see Value Main Street Parking) and this revenue could be used to support such a district.

A business improvement district (BID) is a defined area within which businesses agree to an additional tax in order to fund projects within the district’s boundaries. The BID is often funded primarily through the levy but can also draw on other public and private funding streams.

Either type of district, or a combination of the two, could help fund the revitalization projects recommended in this report. In particular, the Facade Improvement Program ([page 67](#)) and the Upper-Floor Residential Program ([page 40](#)) would benefit significantly from the ability to offer cash incentives in addition to tax incentives. Alternatively, funds could be used to support street cleaning, arts projects, and the instillation of street trees, benches, trash cans, district branding, and other public realm amenities that would benefit all businesses in the district.

# DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT



## PERMIT RESIDENTIAL IN THE B-1 ZONE



The town should consider permitting residential uses on upper floors in the B-1 Zone. The growing interest in downtown living by millennials and empty-nesters creates an opportunity for Boonton to attract new residents who will not place a significant burden on the town's taxes. This may also provide an opportunity for people to test the proverbial waters, after which time they may decide to buy or rent a larger home outside of the downtown.

Simply permitting residential uses will likely be an insufficient incentive for property owners to convert upper floors. Thus, the town should consider implementing an Upper-Floor Residential Rehabilitation Program (page 40). Although it is difficult to predict, such a program could result in approximately 10 to 20 new residential units downtown over the next several years.



## PERMIT OFF-SITE PARKING FOR RESIDENTIAL & PROHIBIT FRONT YARD PARKING



Permitting property owners to secure parking off-site for new residential uses will remove a significant barrier to redevelopment. This is already permitted for commercial uses on Main Street, but may need to allow off-site parking to be located further from the residential use depending on the availability of suitable lots for parking. Allowing property owners to secure dedicated parking on municipal lots may help address some of this issue, but must be balanced against the need to ensure there is also sufficient parking for businesses.

At the same time, prohibiting front yard parking will ensure that future development does not destroy the high-quality historic character of the area.



EXAMPLE REDEVELOPMENT

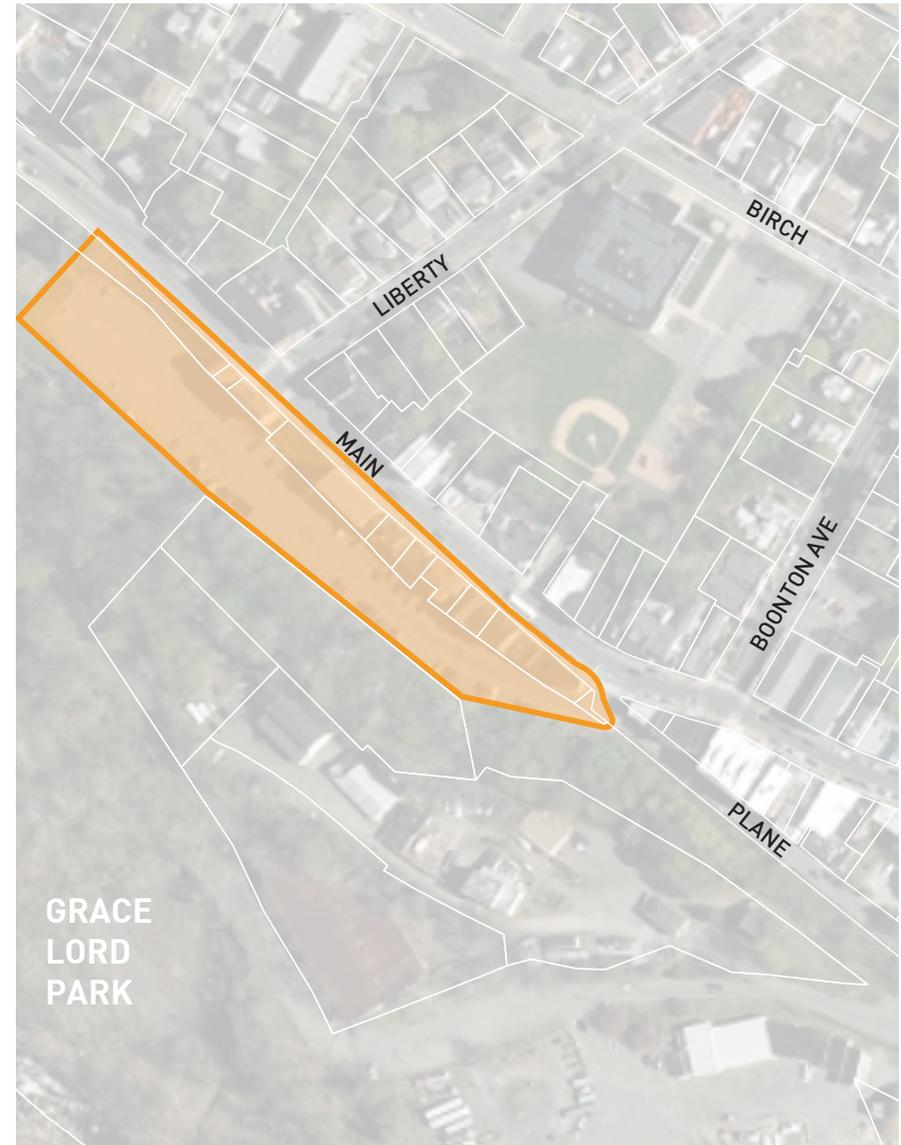
## UPPER MAIN STREET REDEVELOPMENT



The town is currently working with Boonton Main Street to develop a redevelopment plan for Upper Main Street. The public outreach efforts conducted during this process support that effort.

The Upper Plane Street Lot improvements and Grace Lord Park connections recommended in this area are important first steps. Going forward, the redevelopment planning process should investigate how the construction of the staircase, trail, and lighting from that effort could catalyze redevelopment of adjacent parcels. A key component will be identifying which parcels, if any, can be provided additional depth to accommodate modern floor plates. Moreover, a detailed analysis of parking will be required, since this report targets the Upper Plane Street Lot as an opportunity to expand parking access.

Figure 20: Upper Plane Street Lot



## BOARDWALK SITE REDEVELOPMENT



### Single-Site Development Potential

The Boardwalk Site is seen as having potential for redevelopment because it is one of the few parcels on Main Street is currently vacant. However, there are a number of constraints to redeveloping the site:

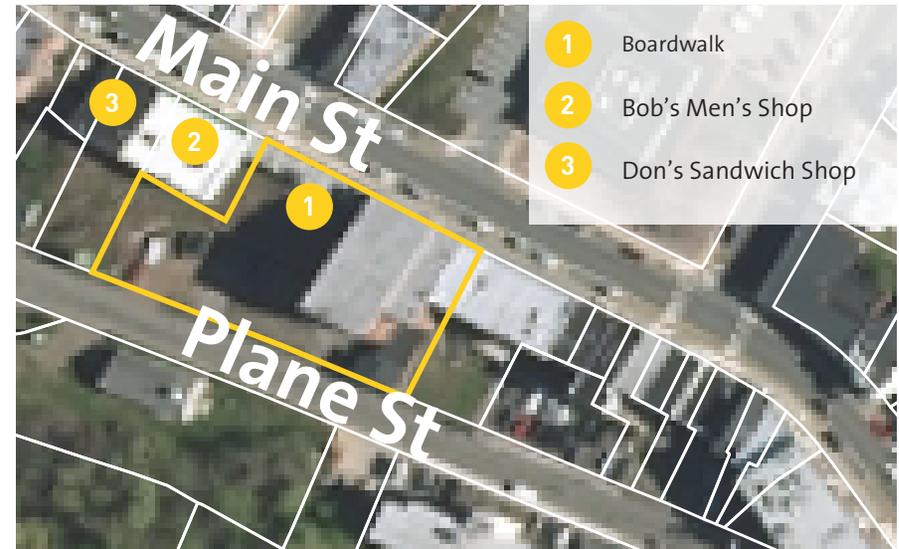
- › The grade change between Main Street and Plane Street is significant, and new construction would either require the construction of a platform or significant changes to the existing retaining wall. Both solutions will substantially increase the cost of development.
- › The lot is deep (approximately 110 feet) but the retaining wall reduces the amount of ground level space. In its current configuration, the lot could accommodate 26 parking spaces. More on-site parking would require either structured parking, parking elevators, or modifications to the retaining wall. All of these solutions would substantially increase the cost of development.
- › The grade change makes accessing parking on Plane Street difficult. An elevator is the likely solution, but this also adds to the development costs.

Given these constraints, the following development opportunities have been identified:

- › A one-story, 4,800 square foot commercial space. Under the current code, 24 parking spaces would be required. To be successful, the developer would have to identify a cost-effective method for providing access to these spaces. The addition of handicap spaces on Main Street could provide some relief.
- › A three-story 16-unit residential building. Under the current code, 24 parking spaces would be required. The building would almost certainly require an elevator for these units to be marketable.

The costs associated with these development may make them unlikely to happen in the next five to ten years.

Figure 21: Boardwalk Site



### Multi-Site Redevelopment

As an alternative to single site redevelopment, the town should consider designating the boardwalk site, as well as the two parcels immediately west of it (Bob's Men's Shop and Don's Sandwich Shop), as an Area in Need of Redevelopment.

#### Program

As illustrated in **Figure 22**, the boardwalk could be extended to create a large public space on Main Street, something that is currently lacking. Such a space would provide opportunities for major town events, concert and movie series in the summer time, and passive recreation, among other activities in an ideal location between Lower and Middle Main. The boardwalk already has spectacular views of the Hollow and Grace Lord Park, but extending it would make it a public space unparalleled in the region. A new high-quality staircase would connect to parking on Plane Street as well as improvements in Grace Lord Park. **Figure 23** illustrates how the boardwalk could take advantage of the grade change to create a one-of-a-kind public space.

Figure 22: Boardwalk Redevelopment Conceptual Site Plan



As drawn in **Figure 22**, the boardwalk wraps around the two adjacent properties. They would be attractive locations for a major restaurant and bar that could also support the regulation of the public space, much as is done in many of the summer “beer gardens” that have become popular throughout the region. Further investigation may reveal that these buildings or sites have potential for more intense development, which might offset the costs associated with developing the area as envisioned.

### Benefits

The inclusion of the adjacent parcels has a number of benefits:

- › The building which currently houses Bob’s Men’s Shop is already constructed on a platform. There is the potential that a new larger building could be constructed on the platform without adding substantial costs to the project. A structural analysis of this platforms would need to be undertaken to identify what addition load, if any, the platform could carry.
- › The building which currently houses Don’s Sandwich Shop could be retrofitted or the site could be redeveloped. The building could either accommodate new residential or commercial uses. An analysis of the building and how it is constructed is needed to understand the opportunities and constraints associated with its redevelopment.
- › The combining of three properties provides an opportunity for a single elevator to service the three uses, which will distribute the cost of its construction.
- › The additional land would allow for 40 parking spaces with only moderate disturbances to the land which serves as the retaining wall for Main Street. These spaces could potentially be shared between the commercial, residential, and recreational uses.

- › The creation a major new public space would create a public benefit that justifies municipal investment, whether through direct expenditure or through tax abatements and payments-in-lieu of taxes.

### Connections to Other Recommendations

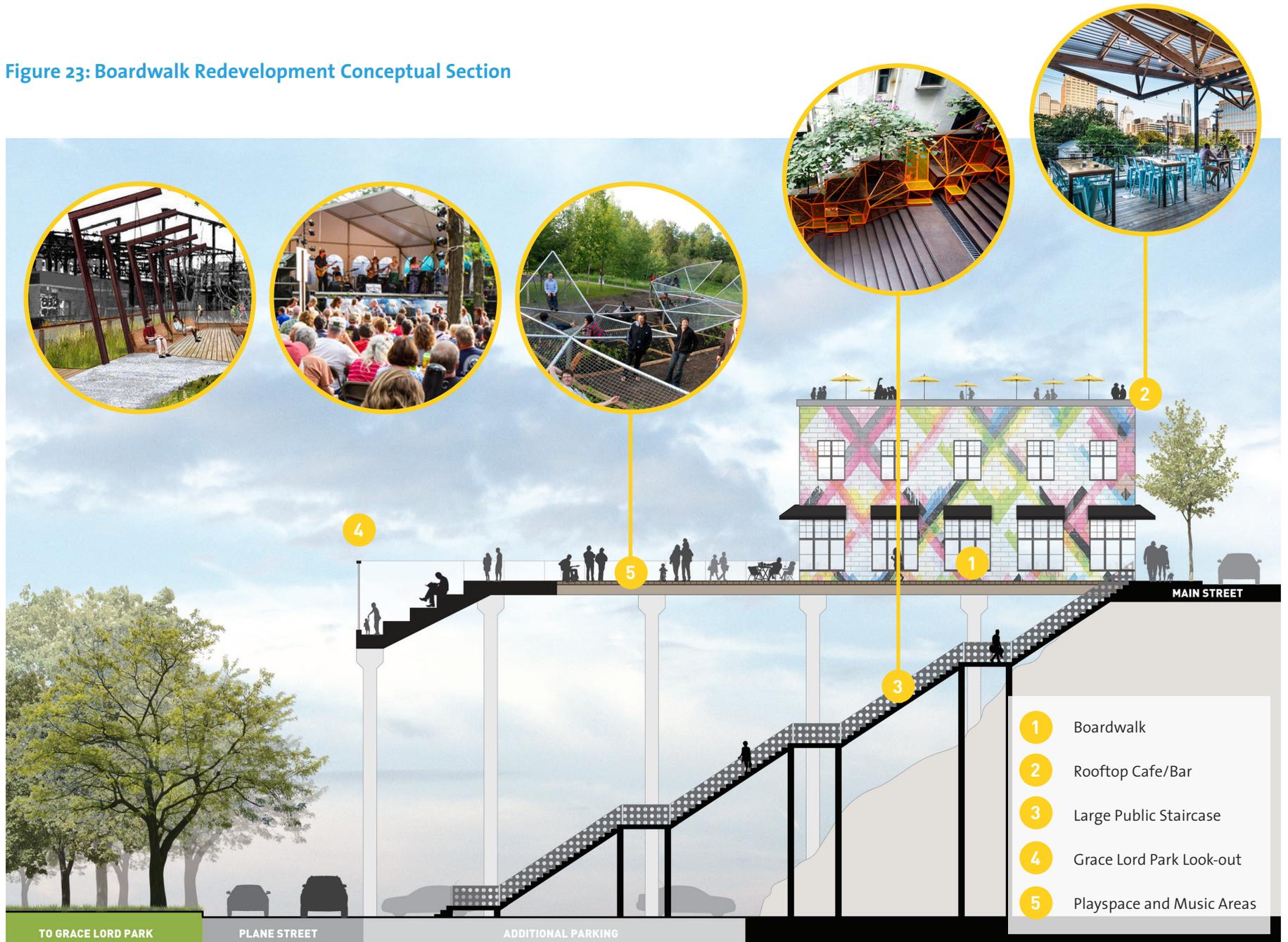
The addition of both a boardwalk and the “pop-up” installation on the plaza in front of the post office (See “[Post Office Plaza “Pop-Up”](#)” on page 34) would activate a critical area of Main Street, helping to better connect lower- and middle-Main Street. The boardwalk would serve as a major regional attraction while the pop-up would likely be appealing to regular Main Street visitors.

This report also recommends that the town work with the county, the state, and NJTPA to make open space improvements to the Hollow and Grace Lord Park (See “[Access Improvements](#)” on page 72). In that section, we recommend that the current staircase used be a gateway to the proposed trail system through Grace Lord Park. A redesigned boardwalk has the potential to create a more prominent and attractive staircase that would significantly enhance investments in the Hollow and the park.

### Structural Analysis & Redevelopment Plan

A preliminary analysis of the structure of the existing buildings as well as the retaining wall would provide significant insight into what is possible on the site. Based on those findings, the town and the property owner should develop a Redevelopment Plan that maximizes the potential for mixed-use development across the two sites. The Plan should take into account the limited ability to accommodate parking on-site and allow the developer to identify off-site space, especially those spaces that would support retail.

Figure 23: Boardwalk Redevelopment Conceptual Section



- 1 Boardwalk
- 2 Rooftop Cafe/Bar
- 3 Large Public Staircase
- 4 Grace Lord Park Look-out
- 5 Playspace and Music Areas

## POST OFFICE REDEVELOPMENT



Stakeholders and residents alike felt that the redevelopment of the post office building provides one of the biggest opportunities for dramatically enhancing Main Street. The site is a linchpin between Upper and Lower Main Street and successful redevelopment could establish a strong connection between the two. As one stakeholder noted, the post office is a large, inactive space that kills the energy of Main Street as you walk down the hill from Middle Main, deterring many people from continuing to walk down to Lower Main.

Redevelopment of this site will require close coordination with the Postal Service. Nonetheless, the time might be ripe for such discussions. The post office is struggling with a sharp decline in mail volume and has sold assets in other areas of the country. In 2009, the Postal Service marked more than 3,000 post offices and retail outlets—out of more than 37,000 nationwide—for closing, citing major financial losses.<sup>1</sup> The Postal Service, therefore, may be interested in collaborating with the town to find a developer who could purchase the site and accommodate the post office’s needs as a tenant rather than a landlord.

However, this will likely be a complicated process and require persistent effort on the part of the town. Developers may need to see demonstrated development potential in Boonton before investing in the property.

### Option 1: Mixed-Use Building and Parking Structure

The site has the potential to accommodate a mixed-use building and on-site parking (**Figure 24**). Stakeholders and the public noted that the size of the site might accommodate a parking structure. The illustration on the following page demonstrates that the site could develop with a parking structure on site. Though this would be an ideal location for a parking garage, there are a few potential issues:

<sup>1</sup> “Possible Closings Raise Alarm”. Charanna Alexander. New York Times, June 19, 2009 <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/21/nyregion/21bpostmarknyc.html>

- › A parking garage is not likely to be economically feasible at this time without significant subsidies.
- › The size of the structure would reduce the sidewalk width along the parking structure significantly and would generally detract from the pedestrian experience along William Street as you approach Main.
- › A developer would need the building facing Main Street to be large (likely at least 5 stories) so that they could recoup the infrastructure costs associated with the parking structure.

### Option 2: Mixed-Use Building and Surface Parking

A more practical option would be to build a mixed-use building facing onto Main Street with surface parking behind (**Figure 25**). This scenario would allow for:

- › ground floor commercial space that fronts onto Main Street
- › modern upper floor residential units
- › residential townhomes (with two parking spaces under the unit) that front onto William Street, connecting Main Street to the neighborhoods behind it

This plan would allow for a wide sidewalk (15 to 20 feet) to continue off Main Street down William Street. townhouses along William Street would provide a stronger transition from Main Street to nearby single family homes than a large parking garage. The townhomes would also likely cause less traffic on William Street than a larger parking structure.

The parking lot as currently drawn could accommodate sufficient parking for both the commercial (1 per 5,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) and residential uses (1.5 per unit) to be parked independently. However, a shared parking agreement would likely reduce parking requirements.

Figure 24: Post Office Option 1 (Recommended with Reservations)

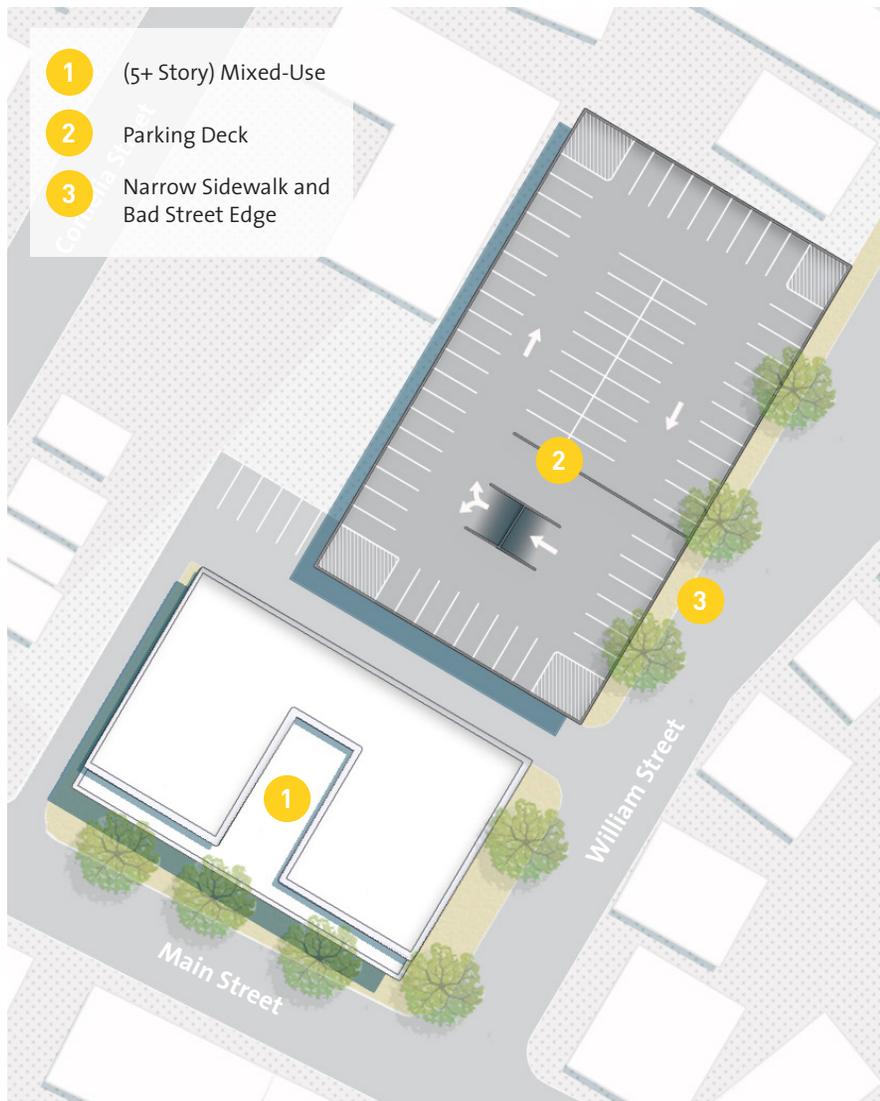
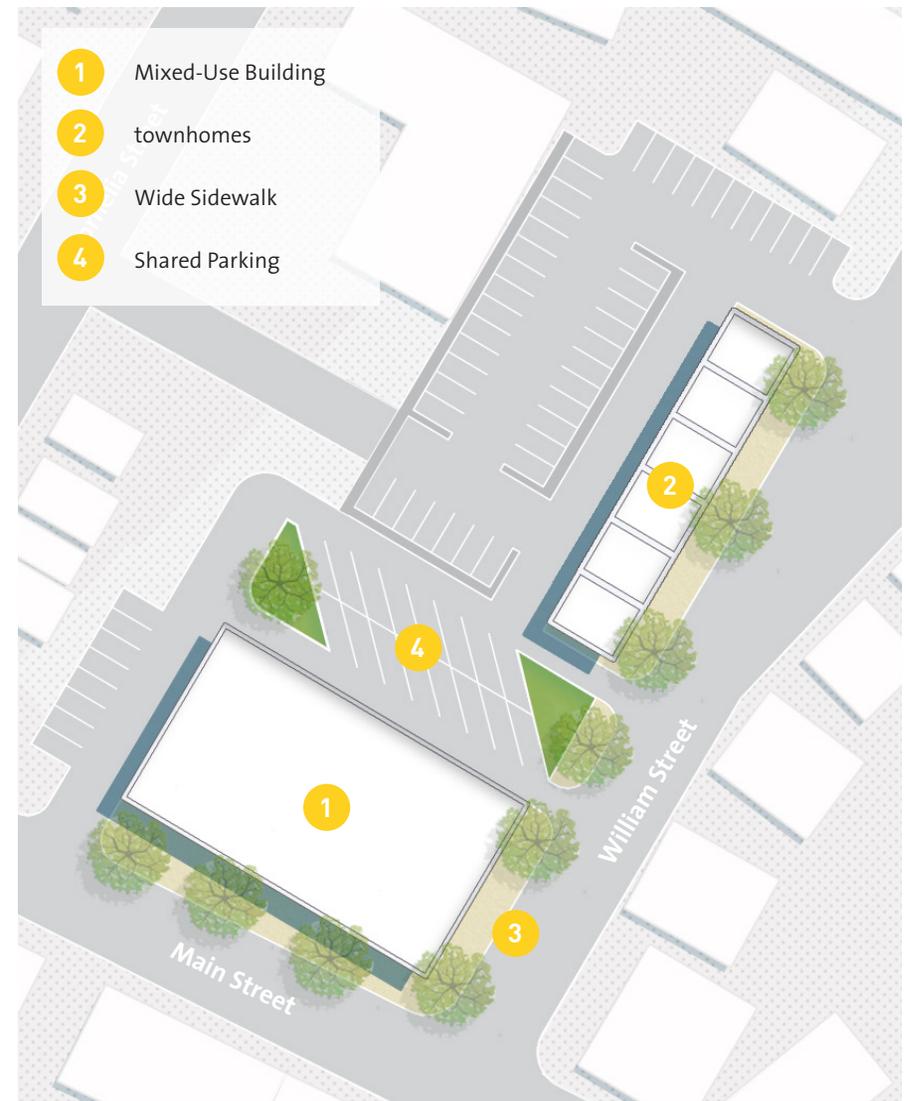


Figure 25: Post Office Option 2 (Preferred Alternative)



**MAIN STREET TOOLKIT**  
Developed as part of the  
NJTPA Emerging Centers Program

# DIVISION STREET

As detailed in the Existing Conditions Report, Boonton's mix of downtown commercial establishments, strong arts community, emerging tech startups, plethora of dining options, walkable environment, and access to regional transit make it potentially very attractive to both empty-nesters and millennials. These assets, combined with the town's existing housing mix and relatively affordable home prices, could allow Boonton position itself as a "haven" for Millennials who may not be ready to purchase a home, but are still seeking to become invested in a local community.

These demographics are increasing demand for various multi-family housing typologies, including apartments, condos, and townhomes, which as a matter of definition tend to be small. While the approved Avalon Bay development will contribute to the supply of luxury multi-family units, a market will likely remain for true walkable mixed-use development in the vicinity of Main Street and lower Myrtle Avenue, particularly if developed in tandem with a heightened commercial, social and cultural atmosphere among local businesses and art institutions.

The only opportunities that Boonton has downtown to meet this demand are on the upper floors of historic buildings on Main Street. Although these units have the potential to be assets, their is not enough of them to meet the demand, nor are they likely to compete with new construction in surrounding areas.

Figure 26: "Old Station Street" Area



## APPROACH

As articulated in the Vision section, this report recommends that the Division/ Mechanic area be transformed into a residential extension of Main Street. As illustrated in **Figure 27**, full build-out of the area would result in the construction of approximately 212 units on lots that are not currently residential. The full build out of this area would absorb much of the demand for downtown housing in Boonton for the next five to ten years. To accomplish this, the town should:

- › Re-brand Division Street as “Old Station Street” to call attention to the historic asset and distinguish the area from its more suburban counterparts.
- › Designate the area as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation or Redevelopment and adopt the Old Station Street Plan included along with this plan.
- › Undertake streetscape improvements that will tame the street to make it more enjoyable and safe for pedestrians.

### Redevelopment

The Old Station Street Redevelopment Plan submitted in conjunction with this report provides a clear regulatory framework for controlling development in this area. As illustrated in **Figure 28 (page 54)**, multi-family residential, mixed-used, and townhouse development will be a driving agent for change. Lots closer to the train tracks, which are deeper, will see more intense development while those on the west side of “Old Station Street” and along mechanic will develop with lower density townhouses that more closely match the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The construction of modern residential units in the Old Station Street Redevelopment Area will make Downtown Boonton more competitive regionally, adding housing options not currently available in Boonton. This residential development will have broad appeal to millennials, families, and empty-nesters who are attracted to Boonton’s small town charm, but looking for low-maintenance units with modern amenities close to downtown.

The increased availability of high-quality modern downtown living opportunities

can support Boonton’s emerging startup community and provide new customers for Main Street retailers. In addition, the Old Station Street Redevelopment Area will allow for limited opportunities for moderately-sized retail spaces for new restaurant, retail, and office users who cannot currently find space on Main Street that meets their needs. This will allow for a mix of uses to develop within the area without drawing too much energy away from Main Street.

### Form Regulations

To integrate into the existing fabric, new development should strike a balance between respecting the existing fabric of Downtown Boonton without trying to mimic historic architecture. The area should have a unique identity that fits well with its surrounding context.

The Old Station Street Plan places strong regulations on the form of the buildings, ensuring that new construction will hold the street edge, have active ground floors, and will replicate the rhythm of the street found on Main Street. However, the plan does not purport to control architectural style and follows the Department of the Interiors Guidelines for developing in Historic Districts by discouraging architectural mimicry. For more information on this topic, see [“Modern Buildings in a Historic Context” on page 58](#).

### Signature Projects: Gateway Area

Currently there is not a strong connection between Division Street and Lower Main Street. A small sliver of a parcel extends 300 feet along the southern edge of Division Street. On the northern edge, a long windowless façade is followed by 175 feet of parking. As a result, there is more than 300 feet of unattractive street frontage that acts as an unwelcoming gateway into this area.

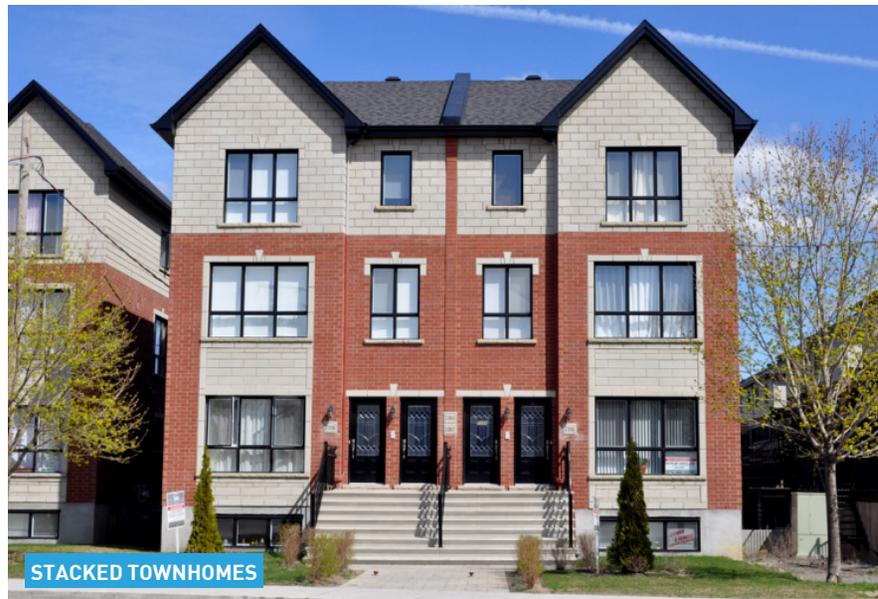
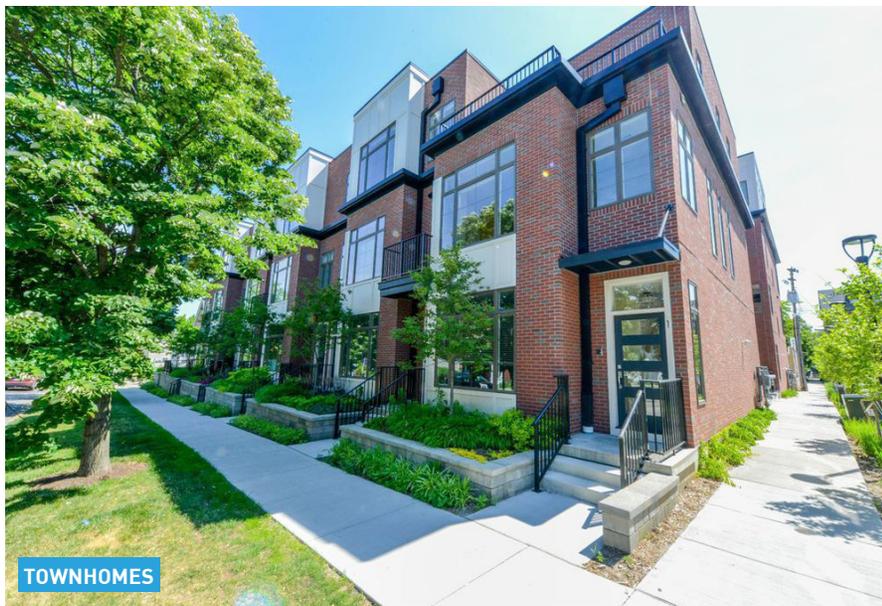
If this area is to become an extension of Main Street and a high-quality mixed-use district, this gateway must be improved. The Redevelopment Plan calls for the development of a signature project on the corner of Station Street and Main

Figure 27: Station Street Redevelopment Plan



**DIVISION STREET**

**Figure 28: Development Types Permitted in the Redevelopment**



Street, which will serve as a link between Lower Main and the redevelopment area. The plan requires that the project include a mix of residential and commercial uses (See [“Gateway Area Redevelopment” on page 60](#)). A public plaza is also required, to allow for a visual connections between the two areas. A large marquee sign will welcome people to Downtown Boonton.

To reinforce the area’s historic railroad connections, the Plan recommends relocating a rail car and re-purposing it into a small cafe and the construction of an open space to support it.

### **Streetscape Improvements**

To meet the goal of transforming the area into a residential and commercial extension of Main Street, the street itself must evolve to meet the needs of its new users. This means wider sidewalks with more amenities, such as benches, trash cans, and pedestrian-scale lighting. These public realm amenities should have a consistent color and design with those elements on Main Street to give the visual signal that this is in fact an extension of Main Street.

A stronger pedestrian realm will also tie this area into the Train Station, supporting the overall goal of creating a transit-supportive neighborhood. The recommended plaza at the concern of Division and Main Street will serve as a gateway into the district while also reinforcing the areas connection to the Train Station.

## “OLD STATION STREET” BRANDING

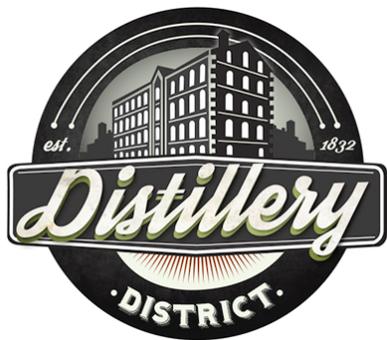


Branding matters and currently the Division Street area is associated with commercial and industrial uses, not residential uses. Rebranding Division Street as a “Old Station Street” will:

- › Call attention to one of Boonton’s major historic structures: the former train station that currently serves as a restaurant
- › Emphasize the areas connection to transit
- › Be a signal that the area is transforming from a heavy commercial and light industrial area into a mixed-use district

The new branding will help market new development and make the area more attractive to potential residents.

Once a major redevelopment project in the area is underway, the township should consider investing in signage to brand the area the Old Station Street District. Signs and/or banners could be located at all entrances to the district and be designed to show connection to Main Street. The new name and branding could also be incorporated into the town’s promotional material.



EXAMPLES OF DISTRICT BRANDING STRATEGIES

## REDEVELOPMENT PLAN



An Old Station Street Redevelopment Plan has been submitted in conjunction with this report. This is a recommended regulatory document and will only take effect once the town has designated the area as one in need of Redevelopment or Rehabilitation and formally adopted the Old Station Street Redevelopment Plans, along with any amendments identified during that process.

The regulations are presented as a redevelopment plan because transformation of the area will require more careful guidance than can be achieved through zoning. The town may also have to provide incentives to developers to achieve the kind of development it would like to see there, including a high-quality public realm.



EXAMPLE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

## Designate the Station Area as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation or Redevelopment

The first step is to designate this area as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation or Redevelopment. Either designation will allow more control over development and ensure that projects support the vision. The plan will also allow the town to use incentive powers that are not available through zoning. [See “Rehabilitation vs. Redevelopment Designation” on page 38 for more information.](#)

## Adopt a Redevelopment Plan

After the town designates this as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation or Redevelopment, the town must adopt a Redevelopment Plan. This plan will lay out the development standards the town would like to see implemented within the area. A redevelopment plan may be as specific as a municipality wants with standards for permitted land uses, building types, architecture, public realm requirements, and more. As a companion to this document an [Old Station Street Area Redevelopment Plan](#) has been developed that reflects the vision established during this project. It provides regulatory language as well as illustrative examples to help the town enact its vision. Though the plan may be adopted as is, the town should also exercise the right to modify the document before amending if necessary.

## Implementation

Redevelopment may proceed in a number of ways. The town may chose to release a request for proposals, setting forth the expectations of the municipality so as to attract the best possible development or redevelopment scenario. Should it find an appropriate applicant, the town can enter into a redevelopment agreement with a redeveloper. The town may do this on a project by project basis, or may enter into a redevelopment agreement with a “master developer” who s responsible for overseeing the overall redevelopment but may subcontract individual projects. All property owners will have to be involved in this process: they can not be forced to redevelop their property unless he town takes the property through eminent domain and pays them a fair market value.

Individual property owners, or groups of property owners, may also move forward with projects without entering into a redevelopment agreement with the town. These property owners; however, will have to follow the standards set forth in the redevelopment plan.

## MODERN BUILDINGS IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

### National Guidelines for New Development in Historic Districts

The Secretary of the Interior provides national guidelines meant to provide for the appropriate preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction of historic properties. The guidelines also include standards for new construction in historic districts that respect the historical context, while allowing flexibility for modern design. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation include the following guidelines for new construction:

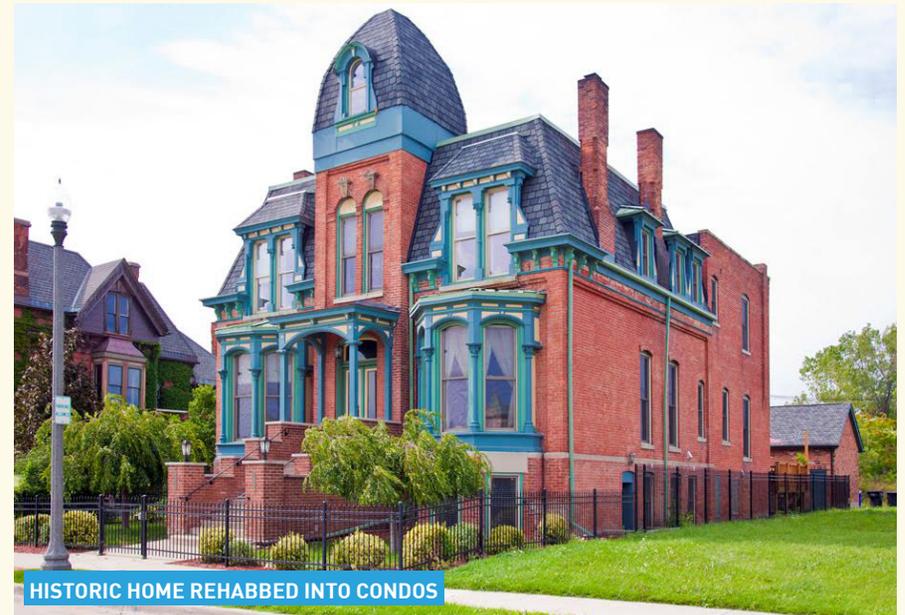
**Standard 3:** *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

**Standard 9:** *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

The intent is to recognize and preserve historic buildings as unique examples of a particular architectural style or time period. Historic buildings create a record of the built environment. Copying the style or architectural ornament of historic buildings confuses the historic record of a place and may in turn diminish the value of the historic building or district.

### Redevelopment Plan Guidelines

Harmonizing the design of new construction with that of existing buildings in Downtown is integral to the success of the Old Station Street Redevelopment Plan. The design guidelines in the plan are modeled on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Properties. As such, they discourage property



owners from duplicating historic features in an attempt to “fit in” with existing buildings.

Instead, the controls on bulk, building form, and key facade elements in the plan are intended to preserve the character of downtown while allowing for modern construction and design techniques. Such efforts will ensure developers can meet market demands while still reinforcing the existing place character of the Downtown. This is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's standards, which consider elements like setbacks, building heights, and facade rhythms, as the defining characteristics of a place, rather than a specific architectural style.

The following examples illustrate the differences between two common approaches to modern construction in historic districts.



#### **Not Encouraged: New Development with “Traditional Architectural Style”**

Often when historic towns are met with new development proposals, they gravitate towards buildings with a familiar architectural style. However, there is a difference between referencing an older style of architecture and copying it. The type of construction shown above does the latter.

Buildings that try to replicate a historic architectural style rely on copying architectural ornaments or key elements inherent to a specific style and applying them to modern building exteriors. This creates the exterior appearance of a historic building, sometimes with little other consideration for how a building fits within a historic context. It is difficult and expensive to duplicate the quality of materials and craftsmanship that went into the original, which means encouraging this type of development far too often ends up looking like a cheap replica rather than high-quality modern construction that references an older style of architecture.



#### **Encouraged: Modern Buildings with “Traditional” Form, Massing, and Materials**

By contrast, there are many ways modern buildings can use the components of historic buildings to create something compatible, yet current. The primary ways to accomplish this are to use the traditional form and massing of the existing urban fabric as well as similar materials and/or colors, without the stylistic embellishments that a “faux historic” building would employ.

Buildings should be built to match the existing street wall, or match the setbacks of nearby buildings to the best extent possible. Buildings should have a similar width, or be broken up into smaller bays to match the width of existing buildings. The overall building height or ground floor height can be the same. Next, matching the size, number, spacing, and height of windows across buildings reinforces the established facade rhythms of the historic district. Finally, using similar materials, like brick and horizontal siding, or material colors can also create consistency with existing buildings without directly copying their style.

## GATEWAY AREA REDEVELOPMENT

### Station Street Park and townhomes



The Gateway Area Redevelopment is a detailed recommendation on what could happen along Old Station Street near where it intersects with Main Street. This project should be considered part of the Old Station Street Redevelopment Area and would be regulated through the redevelopment plan submitted along with this report.

To implement the project, the town should consider acquiring Block 70 Lots 1, 2, 3 and 21.01. These lots should be converted into a small park that serves as an iconic gateway to the Old Station Street Redevelopment Area, as illustrated on the following page. The re-purposing of a historic railroad car as a café and tourist information center would pay homage to the area’s railroad roots while creating a visually impactful gateway element. The café will give new residents a place to stop on the way to the train station on their way to work and serve to direct visitors to local and regional amenities, including the Boonton Historical Society, Grace Lord Park, United Railroad Historical Society, as well as downtown restaurants and shops.

A redesigned parking lot in front of the historic train station will serve as a flexible space. On normal days, the area will continue to serve as a parking lot for the Boonton Station restaurant. However, for special events the area can be opened up and provide space for farmers’ markets, small festivals, community events, and more. The use of high-quality pavers gives the area a distinguished look that unites it with the proposed park on the adjacent lot.

Proposed redevelopment would occur on private property and would not include any land in the rail right-of-way.



Figure 29: Station Street Gateway Redevelopment Area



### Gateway Mixed-Use Building and Plaza



The redevelopment of the Corner of Main Street and “Old Station Street” (currently Division Street) will serve as a link between the new residential on Station Street and the primarily commercial Main Street, as illustrated on the previous page.

This critical corner is currently anchored by a small one-story building which provides little indication that you are entering into one of the region’s great historic live-work-shop districts. Buildings further along Main Street have seen significant additions over the years, many of which are not architecturally consistent with the main building.

A new development on this site has the potential to include a number of critical features.

#### Public Plaza

The building could be pulled back from the corner, creating space for a moderately-sized public plaza. This plaza would open up sight lines to the proposed Station Park, and provide a more elegant transition from Main Street onto “Old Station Street”, and visa versa.

The plaza could serve as public space as well as an outdoor dining area during good weather. This would remind everyone who drove, biked, or walked through this intersection that Boonton has an exciting set of restaurant offerings.

#### Marquee Signage

A marquee sign should sit at the corner, welcoming drivers to downtown Boonton. Smaller pedestrian level signage will direct people to major area attractions including Grace Lord Park. These efforts would help mark this intersection as a gateway and provide the town with an excellent opportunity to advertise Historic Downtown Boonton.

### Mixed-Use Development

This location would be ideal for anyone who wanted to commute to work by train. Moreover, the site is large enough to accommodate parking, allowing families to be a one-car household, should they so choose.

These new residents would bring needed vitality to Lower Main Street, strengthening an area identified by residents as lacking. These residents would likely walk up Main Street to Middle and Upper Main, passing the many business along the way. As such, they would not only straighten Lower Main but also provide support to businesses up and down Main Street.

One concern raised in stakeholder interviews was that no business that needs tractor-tailor access (such as brew-pubs) will locate along Main Street because of the width and the difficulty in loading. The commercial space on the ground floor would have access along “Old Station Street” as well as rear yard loading that could accommodate tractor-tailors. This provides an opportunity for a new business that would not compete with those that currently exist on Main Street.



Figure 30: Gateway Redevelopment Vision



## STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS



Streetscape improvements on Division Street should be focused on significantly enhancing the quality of the pedestrian experience. To accomplish this, sidewalks on Division Street should be doubled in width from the existing five feet to ten feet wide. This additional width will provide a significantly more comfortable pedestrian realm and will allow more space for the provision of utility elements such as pedestrian-scale lighting. Wider sidewalks will also provide more functional space for snow storage and the placement of garbage bins at curbside without interfering with pedestrian movement. Street trees should also be provided at regular intervals on Division Street. The expansion of sidewalk width on Division Street assumes a wholesale remaking of the street and would require expansion of the right-of-way and/or the procurement of easements to allow for the expansion of sidewalks onto private property.

The town could pursue one of two approaches towards realizing this vision. The first approach would be town driven, with the town incurring the cost of reconstruction of the roadway and sidewalks. The second approach would be to require reconstruction of sidewalks by property owners per the town's standards as properties are redeveloped.

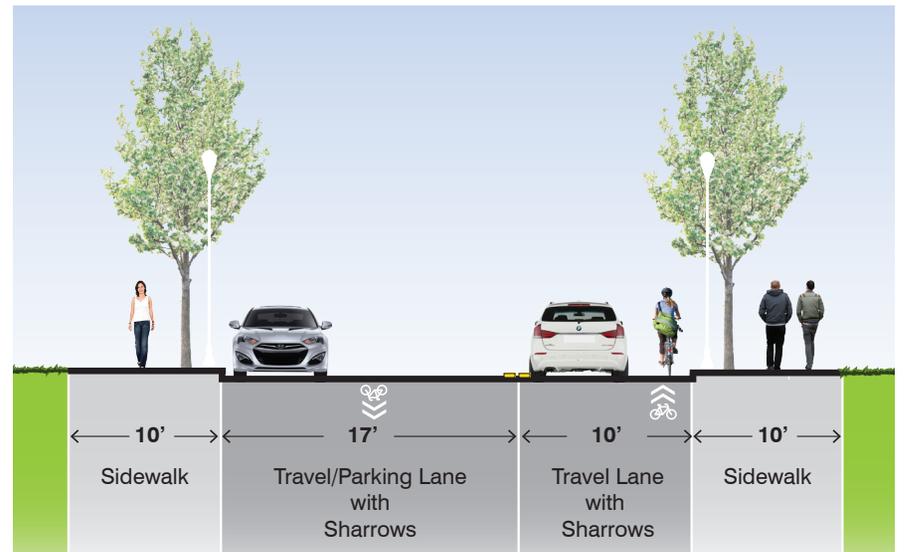
Division Street is also a suitable route for bicyclists. While the roadway and right-of-way width are too narrow to allow for bicycle lanes, the provision of sharrows would assist bicyclists with wayfinding and make drivers more aware of bicyclists.

The goal of the recommended streetscape improvements is to improve the public realm so as to foster redevelopment of, and reinvestment in, properties along Division Street. Improvements should continue to provide access to all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

Figure 31: Proposed Streetscape Improvements on Division Street



Figure 32: Proposed Streetscape Improvements on Division Street



# MYRTLE AVENUE

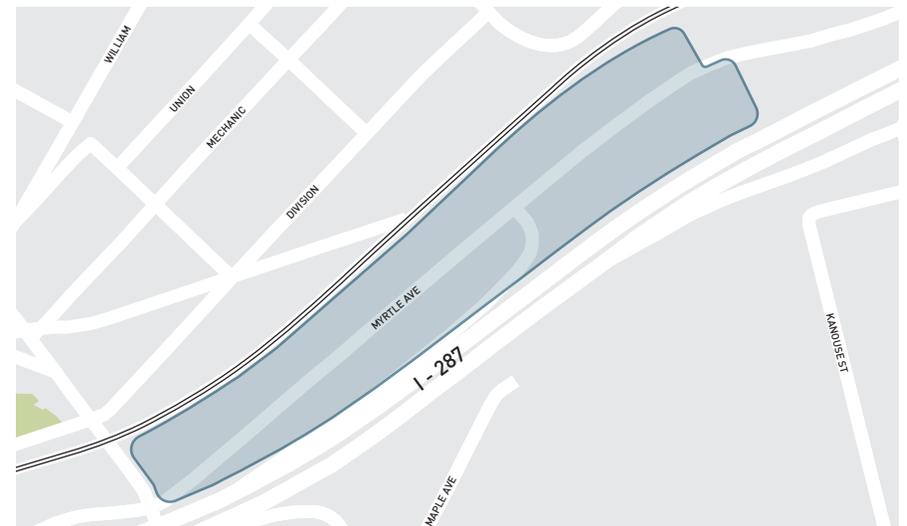
## APPROACH

Myrtle will continue to develop according to the demands of the market. To date, the area has already experienced innovated redevelopment of parcels that have accommodated the unique challenges of the area including minimal lot depths and difficulty accommodating parking. The revamp of Tito's Burritos is a great example of how to take an old building and give it new life and color. The town may be able to encourage more of this type of rehabilitation along Myrtle by deploying a few different tools.

First, a flexible façade improvement program will provide incentives to property owners but with fewer restrictions than the program on Main Street. Along Myrtle the facade improvement program should encourage property owners to be creative while at the same time requiring key improvements such as setting minimum ground floor transparencies.

Next, zoning will be updated to allow property owners to accommodate parking on side and rear yards or to accommodate parking on off street lots. A new town owned parking lot will help ease the burden of parking in the area, and property owners will be able to pay a fee in lieu of providing off-street parking. A new mid-block crossing in front of the historic train station will help to calm traffic and provide additional parking support to properties on the northeast side of the street.

Figure 33: Myrtle Area



Sidewalks on Myrtle Avenue should be improved to create a more comfortable pedestrian environment. However, there are limited segments of sidewalk that can be widened because of the proximity of buildings and walls to the sidewalks. Improvements on Myrtle Avenue should instead focus on improving the quality of the environment by reducing and eliminating driveways and parking lot curb cuts, providing adequate lighting on both sides of the street, and planting street trees on private property adjacent to the sidewalk where space allows.

## UPDATE ZONING ORDINANCE TO ALLOW FOR FLEXIBLE REDEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION



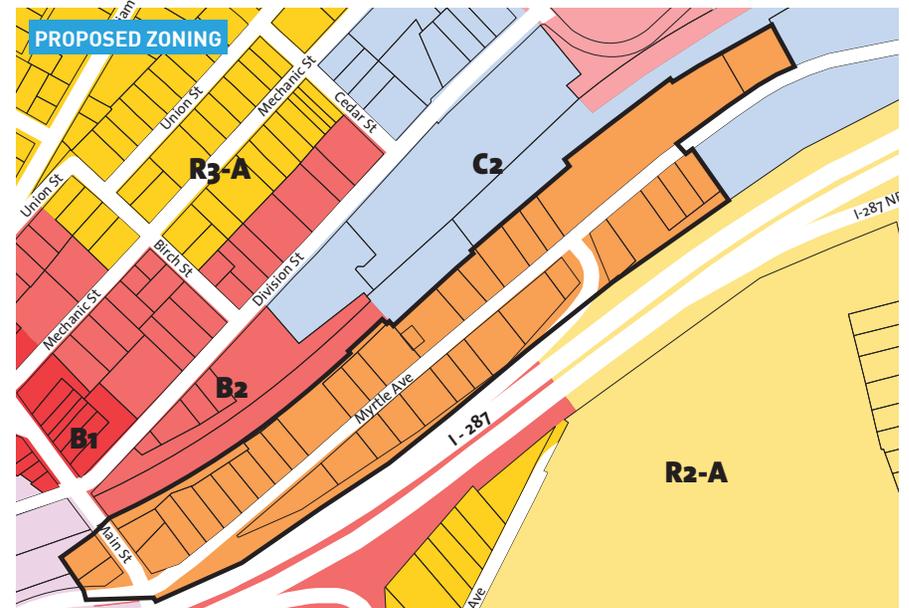
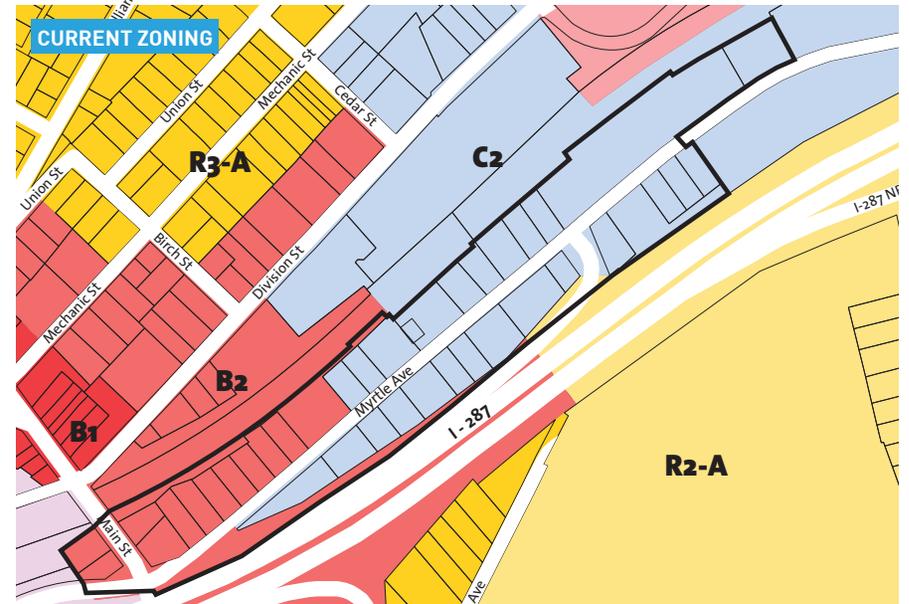
The Zoning Ordinance should be updated to allow for a maximum amount of flexibility in this area, while preserving a few key elements. First and foremost, properties should be prohibited from using their front yards for parking for any reason. The use of front yards for parking makes the area unattractive and reinforces the idea that it is not a destination, but instead a place to pass through. Front yard parking is also dangerous for pedestrians, especially given the narrow roadway width and narrow sidewalks.

To accomplish this, the town should create a new zone for the Myrtle area as illustrated in **Figure 34**. The new zone should:

- › Replicate the bulk standards for the B1 Zone except that the new zone should have a maximum building height of 36 feet. The B1 Zone has no lot minimums which will allow property owners to have more flexibility in finding creative uses and configurations.
- › Permit the same uses as in the B1 Zone. The town may consider continuing to permit motor vehicle service stations as conditional uses as regulated in Article XXI and public garages.
- › Prohibit parking within 10 feet of the sidewalk and require a landscaped buffer between all parking and the sidewalk
- › Require property owners to provide a cross easement to allow rear parking lots to be interconnected
- › Require that parking be accessed through a single driveway with a cub cut of no more than 24 feet.
- › Prohibit parking in which accessing a space would require the driver to back out onto the street

This new zoning district will include areas that were previously zone B2 and C2.

Figure 34: Existing and Proposed Zoning





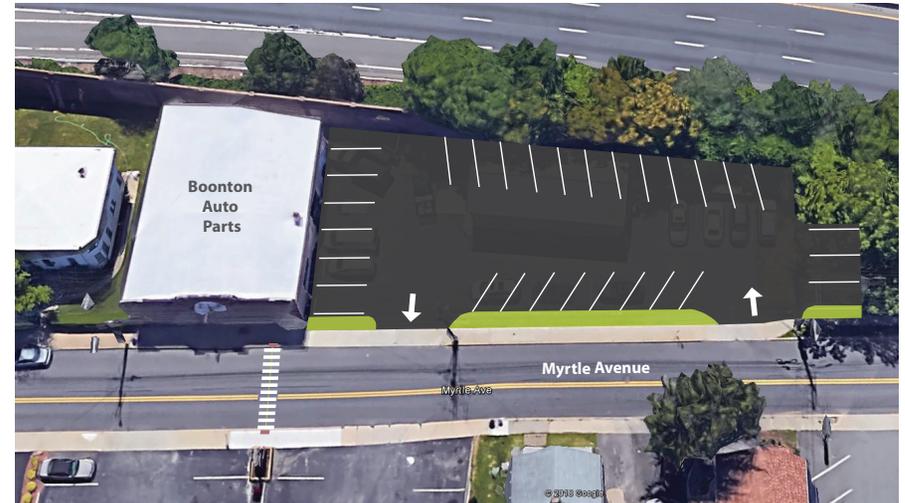
## CREATE A FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



The town should designate Myrtle Avenue from Main Street to Woonton Street as an Area In Need of Rehabilitation and use 5-year tax abatements to incentivize rehabilitation of existing facades. The program should be run in conjunction with the Main Street Façade Improvement Program. Developing design guidelines for both areas will save budget and create a consistent set of requirements.

The design guidelines for Myrtle should be less restrictive than those for Main Street. The major goal along Myrtle should be to encourage creative, eye-catching solutions that also increase the amount of ground-floor transparency. The guide should encourage the removal of additions that are architecturally inconsistent with the rest of the building, used cheap materials, or recessed storefronts. The façade program should encourage property owners to find creative solutions that accentuate the area's character, not detract from it. The program should also target the removal of front yard parking, where possible.

Figure 35: Shared-use Parking Concept



## SHARED PARKING LOT



The reduction and consolidation of driveways and curb-cuts on Myrtle Avenue will necessitate and create opportunities for shared parking along the Avenue. Parking resources should be combined and shared to the greatest extent possible to allow customers and patrons of businesses to park once and make more than one trip by foot. Shared parking also reduces that total number of parking spaces that would be required along Myrtle Avenue.

Specific properties, if redeveloped, would be effective in providing property for a number of surrounding properties. A potential candidate for a shared parking lot is located adjacent to Boonton Auto Parts. An industrial type building is currently located towards the rear of that property and is surrounded by parking. If the building were removed, the parcel could be converted to parking. If combined with the Boonton Auto Parts parking area, the parking facility could provide 28 or more spaces for the Auto Parts store and businesses across the street.

Figure 37: Mid-Block Crossing



## MID-BLOCK CROSSING



Myrtle Avenue is in need of at least one additional crosswalk as the crosswalk at Main Street and at the I-287 on-ramp are spaced almost one-quarter mile apart. The provision of a mid-block crosswalk at the old train station would provide a crossing location that has good sight-line and visibility. This would also provide access between the old train station and properties on the south side of Myrtle Avenue where there is potential for the development of shared parking lots.

The installation of a sidewalk through the old train station parking lot would provide a direct connection to the station building and restaurant, as well as to the rail tunnel underpass (if open and accessible). Visibility of the crosswalk will be important to its safe function. The installation of a crosswalk warning sign and pedestrian actuated yellow flashing beacon would ensure that the crosswalk location is highly visible, particularly while in use.

# THE HOLLOW

## APPROACH

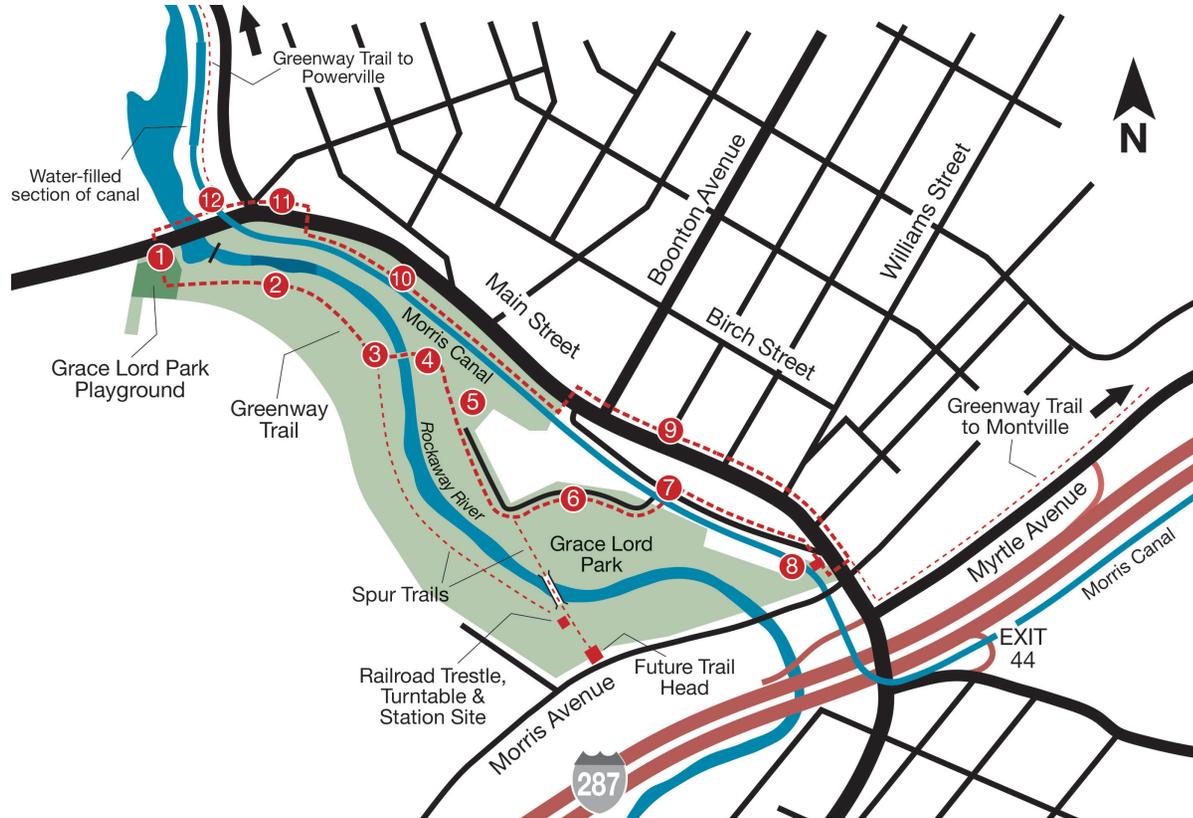
The Hollow was mentioned repeatedly by residents and stakeholders as an opportunity to reclaim Boonton's unique recreational and historical assets. This transitional space, located between Main Street and Grace Lord Park, is currently occupied by a recycling center and is generally considered underutilized. Several historic sites, most notably the Morris Canal and Boonton Iron Works ruins, are located within this area, but are not easily accessible. The recycling center property was bought through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Green Acres program, so it currently can only be redeveloped as some type of open space. Though the town is working to lift these regulations, it is still recommended that a significant portion of the Hollow be reserved for recreational or historical amenities.

Redevelopment in this area should focus on enhancing historic and recreational amenities that distinguish Boonton's downtown from competing downtowns in the region. New recreational trails will provide better connections between Main Street, historic sites, and Grace Lord Park. Programs could be developed to educate visitors about Boonton's early industrial history. Redevelopment of the recycling center focuses on bridging the gap between Main Street and Grace Lord Park, and provides new recreational amenities that are not present elsewhere in downtown, such as play fields, a swimming pool, ice rink, and/or amphitheater.

Figure 38: The Hollow Area



Figure 39: Proposed Morris Canal Greenway Trail



## CAPITALIZE ON THE MORRIS CANAL GREENWAY STUDY

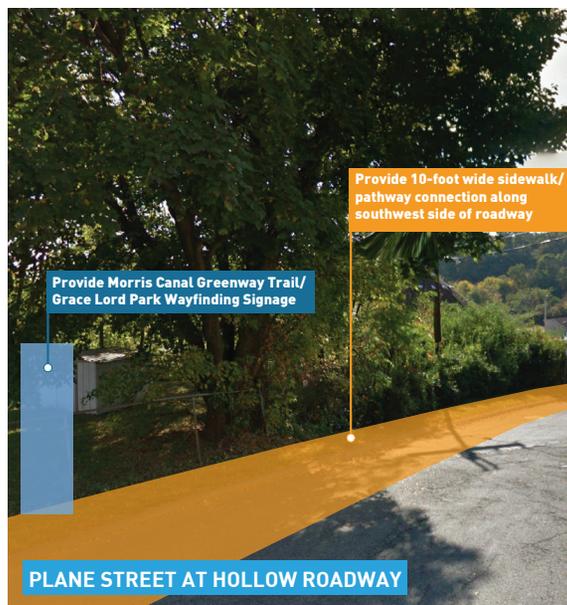


NJTPA is currently undertaking the Morris Canal Greenway Corridor Study which will analyze the path of the historic Morris Canal and identify ways to create a pedestrian and bicycle greenway incorporating remnants of the canal infrastructure and following the original route as closely as possible. The consultant team is evaluating opportunities and constraints to developing a continuous greenway along the 102-mile route of the Morris Canal from Phillipsburg in Warren County to Jersey City in Hudson County. It will also

produce design guidelines and recommendations for an organizational structure to advance greenway implementation and maintenance.

The study is slated to be completed in June of 2018. The town should leverage the interest sparked by the study, as well as the large body of technical information, to identify funding that can better connect Grace Lord Park to Main Street, as identified in the following sections.

Figure 40: Signage Locations Around The Hollow



## WAYFINDING AND GATEWAY SIGNAGE



Entrances to Grace Lord Park and the Morris Canal Greenway Trail are poorly marked or completely lack signage. Main Street also lacks wayfinding for Grace Lord Park and the Morris Canal Greenway. The provision of gateway and wayfinding signage would improve connections to Grace Lord Park and promote these valuable assets.

Signage should be provided at the following locations:

1. Intersection of Plane Street and Main Street
2. Intersection of Hollow roadway and Plane Street
3. Upper Plane Street Parking Lot entrance
4. Grace Lord Park entrance at Upper Plane Street Parking Lot

## ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS



Access to Grace Lord Park is limited to entrances at the Upper Plane Street Parking Lot, West Main Street, and via a driveway and parking lot in the Hollow. Bicyclists and pedestrians often have to walk on roadways and through parking lots to access the Park’s pathways and riverfront. Access should be improved to this area and improvements can connect to and build upon existing segments of the Morris Canal Greenway Trail.

As illustrated in **Figure 41**, specific recommended improvements include:

- › Improvement of the existing sidewalk on Plane Street to a 10-foot wide pathway extending from Main Street to the Hollow access road. The pathway could accommodate the Morris Canal Greenway route and would invite pedestrian and bike traffic into the area which will increase perception of safety.
- › A 10-foot wide pathway along the Hollow access road connecting Plane Street to the Morris Canal Greenway Trail.
- › A 10-foot wide pathway along the east side of the Upper Plane Street parking lot between Grace Lord Park and Main Street. This could become a spur of the Morris Canal Greenway trail and provide bicycle and pedestrian access to the Trail.
- › A “Grand Staircase” connecting Main Street to the Upper Plane Street parking lot sidewalk ([page 24](#)).



PARK SIGNAGE EXAMPLE

Figure 41: Access Improvements in the Hollow



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# PARKING TOOLKIT

## APPROACH

Parking one of the most vital assets contributing to Boonton's Downtown. The management of parking in Downtown Boonton should appropriately managed to ensure that this resource is optimized and remains convenient for residents and patrons of the Downtown.

The town should consider implementing the following measures:

1. Create a parking authority, utility, or department associated with a designated district in Downtown Boonton
2. Acquire properties for conversion to municipal parking lots
3. Lease private lots for municipal parking
4. Adopt a shared-use parking policy
5. Implement Low Impact Development techniques

## CREATE A PARKING AUTHORITY, UTILITY OR DEPARTMENT



The town should consider creating a parking authority, utility, or department that is task with managing and improving parking facilities in the Downtown, and potentially town-wide.

### Parking Authority

A parking authority has the same geographic boundaries as the city that created it but is “a public body corporate and politic and a political subdivision of the State (of New Jersey).” A New Jersey parking authority has five commissioners who are appointed by the governing body of the municipality (city council or city commissioners) for staggered five-year terms, or seven commissioners with two mayoral appointments and five governing body appointments. A parking authority may employ an executive director and any other professional and staff necessary to manage and deliver parking services to the city's residents and the general public.

New Jersey parking authorities have considerable statutory authority. N.J.S.A. 40:11A-6 grants parking authorities the powers necessary to carry out and

effectuate essential government purposes. Furthermore, parking authorities may buy, sell and/or lease property as a lessee or lessor; construct multi-use projects and parking facilities; borrow money; issue bonds; mortgage or otherwise encumber its assets; enter into contracts; and retain earnings.

### Parking Utility

As an alternative to a parking authority, Boonton may consider the creation of a parking utility. A parking utility has a number of the strengths of a parking authority: executive director; operating budget and debt service separate from the municipality; ability to generate annual surplus revenue and retain earnings; ability to set its own rates and fees; and a function strictly limited to providing public parking. Among the limitations associated with a parking utility: limited independence; the executive director usually reports through the city administrator/manager or CFO; the local governing body retains jurisdiction over rates, fees, capital projects, operating budget, and personnel; and parking revenues in excess of annual operating expenses generally are turned over to the city’s general fund.

### Parking Department

Parking departments are the least-independent government entity for managing and operating municipal parking resources. A parking department can stand alone and be on par with other municipal departments. Alternatively, it can be a subsidiary of a large department such as public works or police. The advantage of a parking department is the direct control over operations exercised by the mayor as the chief executive of the municipality. All parking fees and revenues, absent a bond agreement to the contrary, are deposited into the city’s general fund and are available for any and all municipal expenses.

The disadvantage of a parking department is that the parking entity competes with all other municipal departments for budget approval and operating funds. The parking department may not retain annual excess parking revenue in a capital account. Any indebtedness incurred by the municipality to fund parking improvement is counted toward the town’s debt cap ceiling. Increases of parking fees and rates must be approved by resolution or ordinance of the municipal governing body.

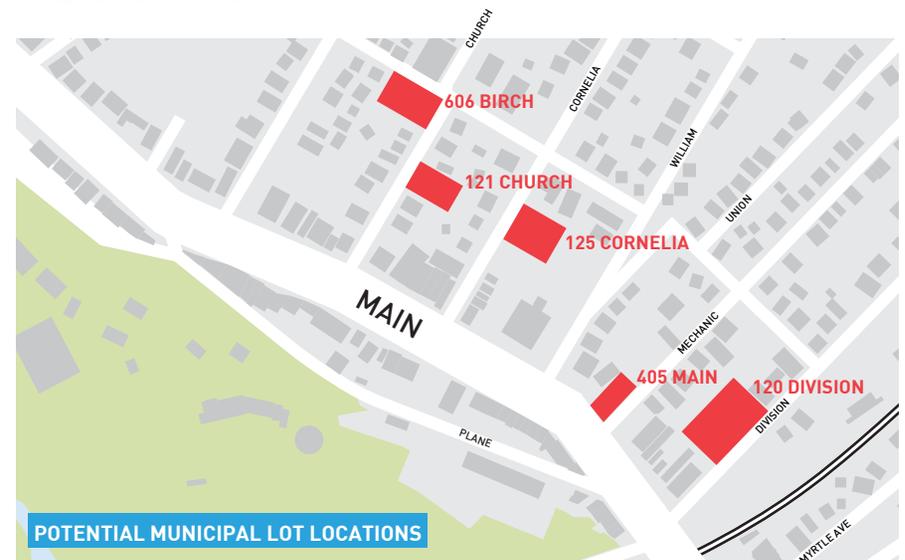
## ACQUIRE PROPERTIES FOR CONVERSION TO MUNICIPAL PARKING LOTS



Municipal off-street parking in Boonton’s downtown is limited to a small number of lots. With the exception of the Upper Plane Street lot, most of those lots are small and are located as much as 500 feet apart. The town should consider expanding the supply of off-street municipal parking by acquiring strategic sites that would allow of a distributed parking network. This approach should be part of a multi-faceted strategy towards expanding and diversifying parking supply in the Downtown.

The following properties may be suitable for conversion to municipal parking:

- > 606 Birch Street
- > 121 Church Street
- > 125 Cornelia Street
- > 405 Main Street
- > 120 Division Street



POTENTIAL MUNICIPAL LOT LOCATIONS

## LEASE LOTS FOR MUNICIPAL PARKING



In lieu of, or in addition to, the acquisition of properties for municipal parking lots, existing private parking facilities could be secured by the town by a lease agreement. Reimbursement for use of private property could be provided via traditional lease payments or by the town providing a tax credit or by assuming maintenance responsibility such as paving, cleaning, and snow removal.

To advance this strategy, the town should identify and prioritize existing lots that are in walking distance of Main Street that are typically underutilized during peak parking demand periods which are typically in the afternoon and evening. For example, the Elks Lodge at 125 Cornelia Street has approximately 30 parking spaces that are relatively underutilized during the week.

## ADOPT A SHARED-USE PARKING POLICY



The town should adopt a shared-use parking policy for the Downtown which will allow parking requirement discounts for mixed uses and for the shared use of parking resources between property owners via a shared-use parking agreement.

The town should provide “boilerplate” agreements for use by private property owners as a means of facilitating agreements. A sample template is provided in [Appendix C](#). This template can be made available on the town’s website. Use of standard agreement form and storage of that agreement with the town will enable the town to monitor and enforce shared-use agreements.

Additionally, the town could provide standard shared-use parking calculations for typical uses allowed in the Downtown. This would enable the town to assess the true peak parking demand of mixed-use developments to ensure that parking is not underserved or overbuilt. A sample calculation table, based upon standards documented by the Urban Land Institute and American Planning Association is provided in [Appendix C](#).

## IMPLEMENT LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES



As parking facilities are enhanced or reconstructed in conjunction with the acquisition of sites for the construction of new parking or with redevelopment, the town should consider implementing Low Impact Development (LID) techniques into its parking assets. LID options for parking lots include pervious pavements and bioswales and/or rain gardens.

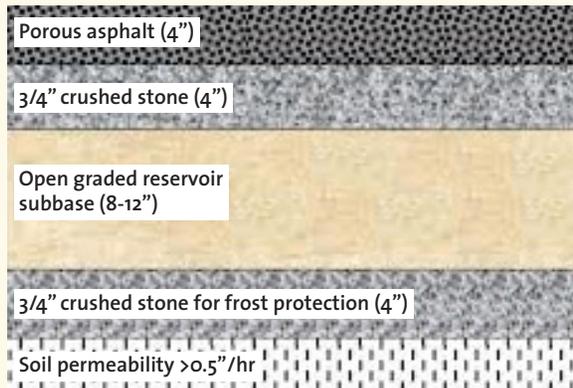
Pervious pavements are available in multiple material and application types. Those most suitable for parking areas include porous asphalt, poured in place pervious concrete, and precast pervious concrete slabs.

Bioswales are vegetated channels that provide treatment and retention as they move stormwater from one place to another. Bioswales slow, infiltrate, and filter stormwater flows. They are typically used as parking lot islands or in medians, as roadside swales, or as landscape buffers. They provide the following benefits:

- › Treat stormwater using vegetation, soil, and microbes
- › Reduce the total volume of stormwater runoff
- › Increase infiltration and groundwater recharge
- › Can be an aesthetic part of the landscape and increase biodiversity

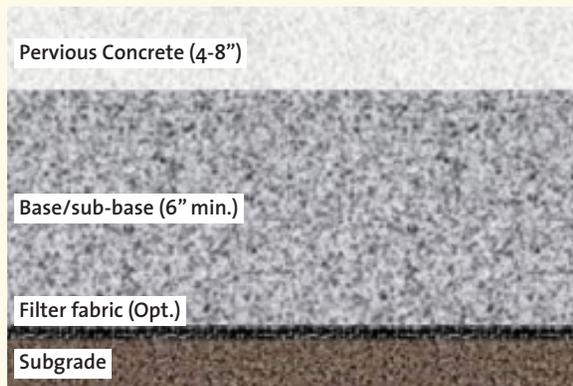
For more information see “[Low-Impact Development Techniques](#)” on page 78.

# LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES



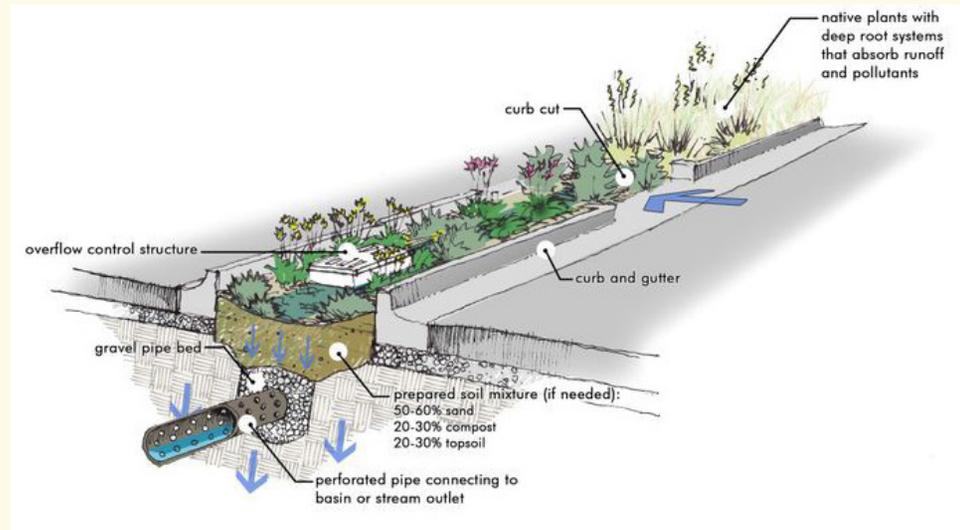
## POROUS ASPHALT

Typical section of porous asphalt construction; Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation Stormwater Program



## PERVIOUS CONCRETE

Typical section of pervious concrete installation; Florida Highway Department



## BIOSWALE COMPONENTS

Typical parking lot bioswale detail; Source: City of New York's Office of Environmental Protection's Standards for Green Infrastructure Guidebook



## TYPICAL BIOSWALE PLANT SPECIES

From left to right (Top): Common Yarrow, Chokeberry, Yellow Wild Indigo, Coneflower, Iris, Spicebush (Middle): Japanese Aster, Bee Balm, Perennial Phlox, Goldenrod (Bottom): Winterberry, Switch Grass

# TRANSIT VILLAGE

Moving forward, the town should be better positioned to apply for Transit Village designation than it was at the beginning of the Planning for Emerging Centers Program. The consultant team has evaluated the town's status on each of the Transit Village Criteria to give the town a sense for what must still be done before applying for designation.

The following table identifies each of the criteria and its current status. It is important to note that tasks "completed" during the Emerging Centers Program will still need to be formally adopted and/or implemented by the town to fulfill the criteria.

It is recommended that the Transit Village Study Area boundary be used as the proposed Transit Village boundary when the town is ready to apply for designation.

# TRANSIT VILLAGE CRITERIA CHECKLIST

Criteria	Basis for Meeting the Criteria	Status	Responsibility (More Information)
1. Attend a pre-meeting application	(a) The municipality has participated in a pre-application meeting with the Transit Village Coordinator no more than six months prior to submitting an application.	Incomplete	Municipal Responsibility
2. Identify existing transit that serves the municipality	(a) The municipality has identified existing transit that serves the community; either rail, light rail, bus or ferry.	Complete	Existing Conditions (Chapter 1.6)
3. Demonstrate municipal willingness to grow around its transit facility in a transit-supportive manner	(a) The municipality has submitted a resolution by the governing body stipulating its willingness to grow in jobs, housing and population around the transit facility.	Incomplete	Municipal Responsibility
	(b) The municipality has documented its visioning process, with stakeholder engagement, for the transit village district.	Complete	Existing Conditions (Chapter 1.3)
	(c) The municipality has provided the portions of its master plan that articulates the plan to grow around its transit facility in a transit-supportive manner.	Incomplete	Municipal Responsibility (See Existing Conditions Chapter 1.2 for support)
	(d) The municipality has provided a map indicating boundaries of the proposed “transit village district” so that they fall no further than a half-mile radius from the transit facility.	Complete	Existing Conditions (Chapter 1.1 - Page 5)
	(e) The municipality has provided a current zoning map identifying all zones in the transit village district along with the applicable zoning codes and land development ordinances.	Partially Complete	Figure 5: Study Area Zoning (pg. 9), Downtown Vision Plan
4. Adopt a transit-oriented development (TOD) redevelopment plan and/or a TOD zoning ordinance which includes a residential component	(a) At least one TOD redevelopment plan or TOD zoning ordinance has been adopted that calls for compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, transit-supportive development, including a residential component at a scale and intensity appropriate for the area.	Complete	Old Station Street Redevelopment Plan
	(b) The municipality has provided a clear map indicating the location of the TOD redevelopment area(s) and/or TOD zone(s).	Complete	Old Station Street Redevelopment Plan
	(c) Each TOD redevelopment plan or zoning ordinance includes or refers to transit-supportive site design guidelines.	Complete	Old Station Street Redevelopment Plan

Criteria	Basis for Meeting the Criteria	Status	Responsibility (More Information)
	(d) Each TOD redevelopment plan or zoning ordinance includes or refers to transit-supportive architectural design guidelines.	Complete	Old Station Street Redevelopment Plan
	(e) The municipality has enacted and documented a parking management system and/or transit-supportive parking requirements for new development near the transit facility.	Complete	Old Station Street Redevelopment Plan <a href="#">Encourage Use of the Upper Plane Street Parking Lot (pg. 23)</a> <a href="#">Value Main Street Parking (pg. 22)</a> <a href="#">Shared Parking Lot (pg. 67)</a>
5. Identify individual sites where TOD real estate projects are anticipated	(a) The municipality has provided a map showing the location of sites where TOD real estate projects are anticipated. Include description of each (block, lot, address, acreage, current use, ownership, existing zoning, proposed development, etc.)	Incomplete	<b>Municipal Responsibility (See Old Station Street Redevelopment Plan for support)</b>
	(b) The municipality has provided project details and status of projects, from (a) above, that have already been submitted to the planning/zoning board for approvals, and for all other sites provided a summary of proactive steps taken by municipal representatives to help move the project along.	Incomplete	<b>Municipal Responsibility</b>
	(c) The municipality has made provisions for the production of affordable housing and included the following statement in the land development regulations for each TOD site: <i>“All new development within the transit village district shall adhere to the affordable housing requirements of the State of New Jersey that are in place at the time the development receives municipal site plan approvals.”</i>	Incomplete*	<b>Municipal Responsibility (Included in Old Station Street Redevelopment Plan)</b>
6. Identify bicycle and pedestrian improvements	(a) The municipality has demonstrated a commitment to improving the general bicycle and pedestrian friendliness of the transit village district through adopted municipal policies, redevelopment objectives, a bike/ped master plan, a complete streets policy, etc.	Complete	<a href="#">Strategic Sidewalk Expansion (pg. 30)</a> <a href="#">New Staircase to Train Platform (pg. 26)</a> <a href="#">Accessibility Improvements at Station (pg. 26)</a> <a href="#">Gateway Area Redevelopment (pg. 60)</a> <a href="#">Mid-Block Crossing (pg. 68)</a>

Criteria	Basis for Meeting the Criteria	Status	Responsibility (More Information)
7. Identify Placemaking efforts near transit	(b) The municipality has implemented at least one bike/ped infrastructure project in the transit village district such as shared use paths, dedicated bicycle lanes, traffic calming, removal of barriers, sidewalk improvements, etc.	Ongoing**	<b>Municipal Responsibility</b>
	(c) The municipality has planned at least one bike/ped infrastructure project in the transit village district such as shared use paths, dedicated bicycle lanes, traffic calming, removal of barriers, sidewalk improvements, etc. If such a project is planned, the municipality must provide plans, funding source and time frame for completion.	Complete**	<a href="#">Strategic Sidewalk Expansion (pg. 30)</a> <a href="#">New Staircase to Train Platform (pg. 26)</a> <a href="#">Accessibility Improvements at Station (pg. 26)</a> <a href="#">Mid-Block Crossing (pg. 68)</a>
	(a) The municipality has added value to the station area with at least one existing or planned amenity such as: public park or plaza with seating, civic building, sculpture or statue, ornamental clock, fountain, memorial, information kiosk, wayfinding signage, etc. If an amenity is planned for the future the municipality must provide plans, funding information, implementation details and timeline.	Incomplete	<b>Municipal Responsibility</b> ( <a href="#">Gateway Area Redevelopment (pg. 60)</a> for support)
	(b) A management organization (such as chamber of commerce, a Main Street organization, improvement district) or other form of organized stewardship is in place or planned for the transit village district. If planned, the municipality must provide a budget, a work plan and time frame for implementation.	Incomplete	<b>Municipal Responsibility</b>
	<p><i>Meet at least two of the following:</i></p> <p>(c) The municipality has documented at least two regularly scheduled community events (farmers markets, street fairs, memorial events, parades or similar) that take place within view of the transit facility.</p>		

Criteria	Basis for Meeting the Criteria	Status	Responsibility (More Information)
	(d) Steps have been taken to maintain and enhance historic character of the district by establishing at least one of the following: historic design guidelines, historic district or architectural review board.	Incomplete	Municipal Responsibility
	(e) The municipality has documented at least two examples of ongoing arts, entertainment or cultural activities (theater, concerts, poetry readings, arts exhibitions, dance classes, etc.) that take place within half-mile of the transit facility.	Incomplete	Municipal Responsibility
	(f) If the blocks/streets closest to the transit facility remain pleasantly active after dark, the municipality has provided a list of all businesses, restaurants, stores, etc. within sight of the transit facility that provide “eyes on the street” beyond 5 pm. Provide map and business hours.		

# **BOONTON PLANNING FOR EMERGING CENTERS**



Report prepared for the North Jersey  
Transportation Planning Authority and  
the Town of Boonton by:

**Group Melvin Design;  
Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.; and  
Phillips Preiss Grygiel LLC**

**APPENDIX A:  
EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT**

**APPENDIX B:  
EXAMPLE FACADE  
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM  
GUIDELINES**

**APPENDIX C:  
SHARED-USE PARKING  
AGREEMENT AND  
CALCULATIONS TABLE**