

Creating Great Places to Age: Land-Use Analysis of Aging-Friendliness

FOR SOMERDALE, NEW JERSEY

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Introduction

The demands of an aging population will require New Jersey municipalities to re-examine how they manage and shape the built environment. Those communities that begin immediately to do this will be in a better position to support and retain their older residents.

In 2007, the World Health Organization published [*Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide*](#), which encourages cities to “become more age friendly ... optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security.” The report notes that the world is rapidly aging and that the proportion of the population 60 and over, which was 11 percent in 2006, is expected to double to 22 percent by 2050 (see *adjacent table*). In response to these projections, the WHO calls upon cities to adapt structures and services to be more accessible to and inclusive of older people, who have differing needs and capacities. The guide considers important aging issues, including transportation, housing, outdoor spaces, and social inclusion.

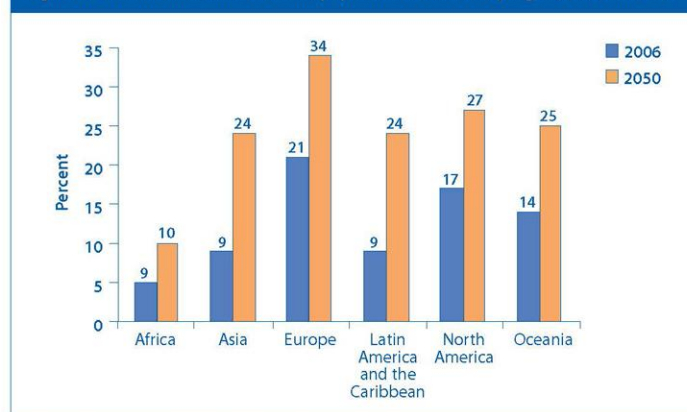
The WHO’s findings and guidelines are particularly relevant to the communities and residents of New Jersey, where the population aged 55 or older has grown significantly since

1990. More than 2.2 million New Jersey residents – 25.5 percent of the state’s population – were at least 55 years old in 2012, with more than half of that total over the age of 65 and nearly 200,000 aged 85 or older. Between 2012 and 2016, the percentage of the state’s population aged 55 and older grew to 27.6. These numbers will be augmented by the fact that people can expect to live longer. The current U.S. average life expectancy of 78 years is projected to increase to 82.6 years by 2050, when the number of older residents will equal the number of youth nationwide. In fact, a recent [AARP report](#) indicated that by as soon as 2035, for the first time ever, there will be more people in the U.S. over the age of 65 than under 18.

According to an [AARP Public Policy Institute report](#) chronicling the preferences of older adults, 87 percent of the population 65 and older would rather grow old in their homes and communities. However, four factors create considerable obstacles to realizing this preference in New Jersey:

1. The way many of New Jersey’s communities have been built means people who don’t or can’t drive aren’t able to get around them easily. According to a report issued by New

Figure 1. Percent distribution of world population 60 or over by region, 2006 and 2050



Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (7).

Jersey Future in September 2017, entitled [Where Are We Growing?](#), “Today’s retirees are disproportionately living in places with land-use characteristics that aren’t conducive to getting around without a car, and this situation is likely to be exacerbated as the rest of the Baby Boom ages into retirement.”

2. More than 43 percent of the older adult population in New Jersey pays at least 30 percent of their gross income on housing costs, which can erode their ability to pay for other necessities. According to a November 2017 [report](#) from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services, the statewide Elder Economic Insecurity Rate (EIRR) is 54 percent, which means that more than half of New Jersey elder-only households lack annual incomes that will insulate them against poverty as they age.
3. More older people than ever are living alone. For example, in the Borough of Somerdale, 28.1 percent of the population 65 and older, or 233 people, lives alone (see **Appendix 1: Somerdale Municipal Profile**). This is greater than the statewide number of 27.2 percent. Taking steps to address this issue is important because [research](#) has shown an adverse relationship between isolation and health and longevity. Findings from [studies](#) on this topic indicate that loneliness can increase the risk of heart disease, arthritis,

Type 2 diabetes, dementia, and even suicide attempts.¹ In addition, New Jersey elders who live alone are much more likely than elder couples to live in economic insecurity.² The way communities are built and the lack of affordable housing options can aggravate these problems.

4. Although older adults clearly prefer to grow old in their homes, they need effective design solutions and adequate support systems to enable them do so. According to 2016 census data, in Somerdale Borough, almost 83 percent of the houses were constructed in or before 1979.³ The vast majority of these structures were likely never designed to be barrier-free in order to accommodate people with limited mobility.

The foregoing factors underscore the fact that municipalities throughout New Jersey must start devising strategies to meet the needs and address the preferences of their growing aging population. This is particularly true as more older people may opt to remain independent longer, rather than move in with younger relatives or live in institutional living quarters such as nursing homes continuing-care communities. Great places to age will need to be safe, affordable and comfortable; offer living arrangements that suit the needs of older people; provide centers of social activity, access to transportation and ways to enhance mobility; enable economic opportunity; and allow older residents to be financially secure. Readily accessible, center-based locations that offer jobs, housing, entertainment, and amenities

¹ Acknowledging the seriousness of this issue, the United Kingdom recently appointed a [Minister for Loneliness](#)

² Living Below the Line: Measuring Economic Insecurity Among New Jersey’s Retired Seniors, NJDHS Division of Aging Services, November 2017

³ Source: 2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

characterize those places that census data and research show are most suited to the needs of people 65 years of age and older. Communities that can take steps to provide these environments will be in a better position to support and retain their older populations than those that fail to act.

Fortunately, municipalities have the ability to shape community design and character through their local planning, zoning, subdivision and land development regulations, redevelopment and revitalization plans, and capital improvement plans. Healthy community design – exemplified by places that offer a variety of housing options with convenient access to food services, green spaces, and employment – results in improved mental and physical health, stronger economies, and improved safety and mobility. But aging-friendly community design doesn't happen by chance; local governments need to intervene to make the necessary changes. Ensuring that a municipality promotes aging-friendly characteristics in the way it governs how its land is used and how public investments are made will help to retain and enhance community vitality and economic viability for all residents

This report summarizes an assessment of the documents that shape in the way things get built in the Borough of Somerdale, New Jersey. The report evaluates the extent to which the community's physical form enables older adults to remain active, healthy, engaged, and capable of continuing to live in their community.

Acknowledgements

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Image 2: Somerdale Steering Committee Meeting 7-30-18



Image 1: Somerdale Steering Committee Meeting 7-30-18



Executive Summary

The Borough of Somerdale is located in the center of Camden County, a 12-mile drive from, and south of, the New Jersey entrance to the Benjamin Franklin Bridge to Philadelphia. The borough borders Magnolia and Lawnside boroughs to the north, Voorhees Township to the east, Lindenwold, Stratford and Hi-Nella boroughs to the south, and Gloucester Township to the west (see **Figure 1, Base Map**). The borough is bisected by Route 30, the White Horse Pike, a defining community feature. The municipality encompasses an area of 1.4 square miles and has a population of 5,298. According to data from the Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey, 15 percent of Somerdale's population was 65 years of age or older, which was greater than Camden County's 14.6 percent and the State of New Jersey's 14.3 percent.

On July 30, 2018, a collection of community representatives was invited to attend a meeting with a project team from New Jersey Future to discuss the existing features of Somerdale's built environment and consider opportunities to enhance the community's aging-friendly characteristics. With funding from the Community Foundation of South Jersey, New Jersey Future is conducting aging-friendly evaluations in various municipalities and the community meeting was the first step in the assessment process in Somerdale. The assembled group described several of Somerdale's positive features including:

- Small community – everyone knows one another

- Local paper (Somerdale Voice) makes it easy to stay involved in town activities
- Strong local leadership that recognizes challenges
- Resident engagement in community events – Movie Night at Ward Field, Somerdale Day bike and foot race, summer concert series at Cooper Towne Center
- Positive tone that doesn't exist in other municipalities, good civic spirit
- Programs to support local businesses – for example Shop Somerdale provides discounts on property taxes for shopping locally
- Active sports programs for children
- Well used recreation facility at the Perry Memorial Complex/Somerdale Senior Center
- Red Fox Run biking/walking trail
- Availability of Park School and Sterling High School recreation facilities are available to resident during off-school hours
- A new development, Reserve at Grace, a mixed-use project, which will bring new economic vitality, housing opportunities, and an activity center to the borough

The group also identified challenges confronting the borough:

- The borough lacks a traditional downtown

- Taxes are high
- White Horse Pike is not pedestrian-friendly and the traffic volumes and speed are major impediments to converting this commercial district into the borough's main street
- The borough lacks identity, or any way to differentiate the town limits along the White Horse Pike which means outsiders do not know when they enter or leave the community
- Older residents are selling their homes and moving out of town because of their inability to keep up with rising real estate taxes and housing costs
- It is difficult to encourage people to engage in community activities
- There is a perceived need to find methods to improve communication between town residents and government officials
- White Horse Pike splits the town in half, making it difficult and costly to provide equitable amenities on both sides of the roadway
- The Somerdale Road/White Horse Pike intersection is a high-accident location
- Somerdale is trying to get bike lanes installed along the full length of Atlantic Avenue

⁴ Land area excludes water bodies

According to data from the Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey, Somerdale ranked 26th of the 37 municipalities in Camden County in population (5,151 people). 15 percent of the borough's population (789 people) were 65 years of age or more compared to the state's 14.4 percent. National and state trends indicate that this population segment is expected to continue to grow considerably.

The borough is Camden County's seventh smallest municipality, at 889 acres, or approximately 1.4 square miles.⁴ The borough's primary business district straddles the one and a half mile length of the White Horse Pike (State Route 30), which bisects the municipality. The four-lane White Horse Pike primarily serves through-traffic, has limited accommodation for pedestrians, and no bike lanes. An additional business district, encompassing the Cooper Towne Center, is located at the northeast corner of the borough (see **Figure 2: Business Districts**).

Somerdale's housing stock is dominated by single-family detached homes, which comprise 70.1 percent of the total number of dwellings in the borough, a far higher proportion than in the state overall (53.6 percent). Apartment units, primarily in larger apartment buildings, comprise 19.2 percent of the total housing stock, and a very small share (4.4 percent) of the total is row- or town-homes. Only 2.5 percent of the borough's housing units are duplexes, compared with the 9.5 percent for the state as a whole. A diverse mix of housing types is important because alternatives to single-family units can offer affordable choices for older residents seeking to downsize but remain in the

community (as well as for younger people seeking a starter home). The percentage of households that pay more than 30 percent of gross income on housing costs, at 45.5 percent, is high and slightly worse than the state as a whole (43.2 percent).

New Jersey's *Local Redevelopment and Housing Law*, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 *et seq.* (the Redevelopment Law) grants municipalities fairly wide latitude, and a broad set of economic development resources, to encourage development within the municipality in locations designated as either "Areas in Need of Redevelopment" or "Areas in Need of Rehabilitation". In 2007, the borough designated a one-and-a-half-acre parcel on Somerdale Road, just west of the intersection of Somerdale Road and Ogg Avenue, as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation. In 2009, following a preliminary Planning Board investigation authorized by the Borough Council in 2007, the borough designated a 15.7-acre area, comprising three parcels off Kennedy Boulevard, as an Area in Need of Redevelopment and a 35.6-acre area comprised of two parcels off Kennedy Boulevard, as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation. Both areas are clustered in the north east quadrant of the municipality adjacent to the Cooper Towne Center.

Somerdale is characterized by a well-defined, dense street network. The borough is served by NJ Transit's local bus service, which provides 13 bus stops, all on the White Horse Pike (see **Figure 3: Circulation–Bus Routes**). Although there is a bus stop at nearly every other intersection along the White Horse Pike, only 44 percent of the land area in the borough is within a one quarter mile radius of the stops, which means that bus service

is not within brief walking distance for more than half of the area of borough. No passenger rail stations are located immediately within Somerdale, but the Lindenwold PATCO rail station is located in adjacent Lindenwold Borough, accessible via NJ Transit bus service connections.

According to Somerdale's Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI), four parks are distributed throughout the borough, covering 28 acres or 3 percent of the area of the community. They range in size from the 2.3-acre Kennedy Boulevard Park Complex, to the 15.3-acre Ward Memorial Field. The four-acre Hilltop Avenue Recreation and Senior Center, which contains active and passive recreation facilities, is located in the geographic center of the municipality. Although widely distributed, the parks are located at greater than a quarter mile walking distance from many of the borough's residential neighborhoods (see **Figure 4: Somerdale Parks, 1/4 Mile Walk**). Nature Trail Park best serves the most Somerdale residents because approximately half the neighborhood west of Atlantic Avenue and North of Somerdale Avenue is within quarter mile of this facility. The Cooper Creek Trail is within walking distance for residents between Hartner Avenue and Columbia Avenue, but it would have to be extended to Lehigh Avenue to place it within a quarter mile of the entire neighborhood down to White Horse Road.

The borough's community/senior center is located at 101 South Hilltop Avenue, a block west of the White Horse Pike, close to the Hi-Nella municipal border and adjacent to the Perry Memorial Complex. Extensive renovations to the facility were

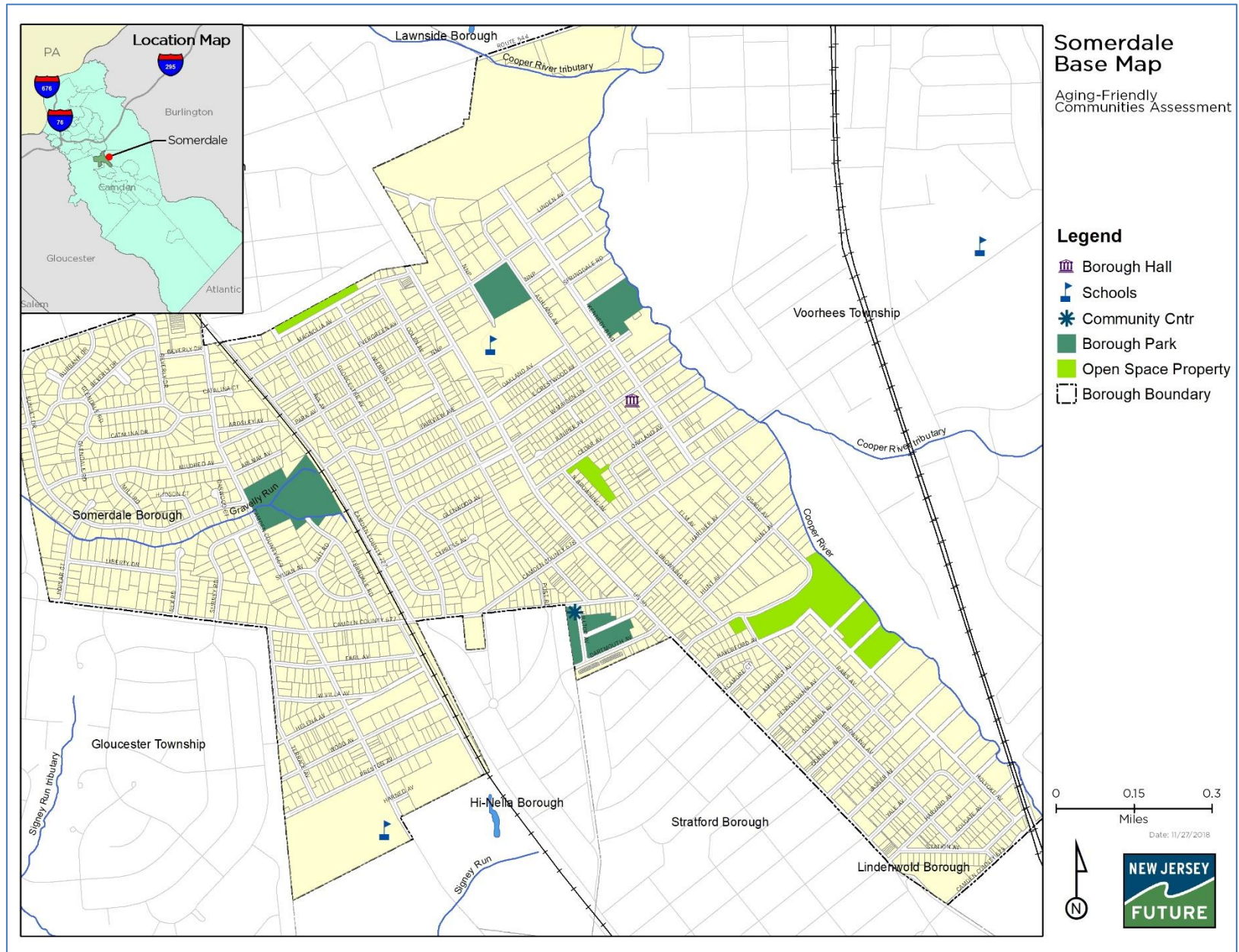
completed in 2016 using Community Development Block Grant funds. Improvements included total renovation of the building interior, replacement of the roof, and addition of a new parking lot. Outside organizations are invited to use the center to present programs about writing wills and various services available within the community. The borough plans to hold health seminars and education programs for older adults at the center. Approximately 15 people use the center each week, and the 20-member Somerdale Senior Group meets at the facility each Monday. The center also hosts meetings of various political organizations and local baseball, softball and basketball associations are regular users. Over the course of a year approximately 300 to 500 people use the facility.

Somerdale has taken steps to address needs of its older residents and projects have been proposed in the borough that, at least in part, contribute to this objective. According to information supplied by the borough engineer, these aging-friendly communities initiatives include:

- Installation and operation of the senior center located in the Hilltop Recreation Complex
- Services provided within Borough Hall
- Provision and maintenance of walking paths, parking and benches at Kennedy Park, Red Fox Run, James Perry Memorial Park, Park School, Glenwood/Hilltop Avenues, Nature Trail Park, and Memorial Park

- Activities and services provided at the Cooper Towne Center, Shoppes at Somerdale, Columbia Center, Evergreen Plaza, and Somerdale Square
- Affordable and market-rate housing opportunities for older adults at Hamilton Court, Somerdale Manor, Green Valley, White Horse Manor, Lynn Apartments, Gateway Village, Warwick Terrace, The Shires at Somerdale, Cooper Towne Village, and the proposed Grace's Walk and The Reserve at Grace.

Figure 1 Base Map



Methodology

The analysis that follows builds from New Jersey Future’s 2014 guide titled [*Creating Places to Age: A Municipal Guide to Best Land-Use Practices*](#). This report offers more detail description of how the aging-friendly criteria can be applied specifically to **Somerdale Borough**. A combination of demographic data, site visits and interviews as well as a review of municipal planning and zoning documents provided the background for the analysis. It should be noted that while the focus of the analysis is on how friendly the borough is to older adults, these same attributes make a community more livable for all age groups.

This report evaluates four major categories of the built environment. For each category the report describes preferred features, assesses whether these features are present in the borough’s built environment, and recommends actions to introduce or enhance the attributes.



I. Mixed-Use Centers Mixed-use centers afford the opportunity for people to live in close proximity to commercial centers, reducing the need to use an automobile to accomplish everyday tasks, while also permitting residents to remain socially connected to their community. Putting homes, stores, offices, and civic buildings near each other allows for those with limited mobility – or with limited desire to drive – to maximize their trip-making by minimizing the distances among different types of destinations. This benefits an aging population, but also creates a vibrant community for all.



II. Housing Providing a variety of housing options beyond single-family detached homes helps to accommodate the different preferences, budgets and access needs of all residents, including older adults. Locating new residential development near a mixed-use center goes one step further by offering the additional benefit of pedestrian access to a variety of destinations. Communities may be undersupplied with the types of housing that older residents want or need – for example, homes with smaller yards, fewer bedrooms, or only one story. Some communities may also have high housing prices in general, making them unaffordable for many. Land-use policy that allows

for a variety of housing types benefits older adults in terms of manageability, affordability, accessibility and safety.



III. Transportation Interconnected transportation networks give people options; enabling them to get from Point A to Point B without the need for highway driving and allowing people to opt for secondary roads, bike lanes, sidewalks or mass transit. Compact and walkable development patterns also create the opportunity for “unplanned encounters” with neighbors and strangers, the kinds of personal interactions that are important for creating and maintaining social cohesion. For older residents who are no longer interacting with coworkers or immediate family members on a daily basis, these types of interactions are an important safeguard against social isolation. Transportation choices mean residents who do not own a car or who choose not to drive will still be able to maintain their mobility.



IV. Public Spaces and Amenities Public spaces such as parks, plazas and trails help to hold a community together. They provide opportunities for exercise and a place for social interaction, help to maintain neighborhood stability and even improve psychological health. They can also provide environmental services, including storm water runoff controls, and remediation

of the effects heat and air pollution, through the installation of trees and shrubbery. Amenities such as community centers also help meet the needs of residents, particularly older adults, by offering programming to address such needs as nutrition, entertainment, and intellectual enrichment.

Smart Growth Metrics

As noted in the introduction to this report, great places to age will need to be safe, affordable and comfortable, offer living arrangements that suit the needs of older people, provide centers of social activity, enhance access to transportation and mobility, enable economic opportunity, and allow older residents to be financially secure. Compact, walkable, mixed-use communities are best suited to meeting these objectives, enabling all residents to continue to live independently as they age. To evaluate the extent to which a community has these characteristics, New Jersey Future developed three municipal-level metrics of compactness and walkability: **net activity density (NAD)** (population + jobs per developed square mile, for 2007), **presence of a mixed-use center**, and **street network density** (as measured by route-miles of local road per square mile). The following narrative presents **Somerdale's** ranking in relation to these three smart growth metrics and describes how the borough compares in these measures to municipalities throughout the state.

Recommendations

Each of the four built environment categories evaluated in the following sections of this report includes descriptions of several category features, a brief discussion of whether the features are present in **Somerdale**, and recommendations for steps the municipality can consider to introduce or enhance the feature.

All of the recommendations are then combined in a summary listing that has been assembled and presented on **pages 39 to 44** of this assessment report.



I. Mixed Use Center

Does Somerdale currently have a mixed-use center and/or are the necessary policies in place to foster development of that center or to create a new one in the future?

PRESENE OF A CENTER

Is there a central business district or other community center that includes a mix of uses?

Mixed-use centers afford the opportunity for people to live within close proximity to commercial and business areas, reducing the need for an automobile to accomplish everyday tasks, while also permitting residents to remain socially connected to their community.



Looking for: a center or centers with homes, stores, offices, and civic buildings in close proximity.

Somerdale does not have a traditional mixed use center. The White Horse Pike, which bisects the municipality, is the borough's primary commercial corridor. This four-lane roadway primarily serves through-traffic and members of the project steering committee indicated that motorists on the pike typically travel at speeds well in excess of posted limits. Frequent, wide driveways interrupt the narrow sidewalks that do exist along the roadway and inadequate building setbacks from the curb line create an uninviting environment for pedestrians. There is no provision for on-street parking that might provide a buffer for pedestrians from the travelways and there are no bike lanes.

The mixed-use Cooper Towne Center, located in the extreme northeast quadrant of the borough, presently serves as a town gathering spot for various community activities. But because it is not centrally located, for most of the residents of the borough, it is accessible only by automobile.

Before investing resources in the Cooper Towne Center, the borough should consider opportunities to establish a town center along the White Horse Pike, between Dartmouth Avenue and the future location of the Reserve at Grace. Based on its existing attributes, this area has considerable potential to serve as the activity hub community representatives have desired. This recommendation is discussed in detail on page 14 – see General Recommendation #1: A Downtown Center for Somerdale.

Net Activity Density (NAD)




Net activity density, a measure of community compactness, is a calculation of municipal population plus employment divided by its developed area in square miles. By capturing both residents and businesses, this calculation provides a picture of the range of activities – and the buildings they occupy – that can be found in the municipality. Net activity density can be thought of as a proxy for building density; i.e., what a place physically looks like when experienced at the ground level.




Looking for: a high NAD, which is a strong indication of an active mixed-use center.

Somerdale's net activity density is 5,966 people and jobs per square mile ranking it in New Jersey Future's "moderate suburban" category, the fourth-highest out of six possible categories. The median net activity density among all 565 municipalities in the state is 5,244, so Somerdale's net activity density is slightly higher than the municipal median.

Although the borough ranks relatively well on the NAD metric, it lacks a town center. This absence is noted above and possible strategies to remedy this condition are discussed in detail at the conclusion of this section.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS that encourage compact, mixed-use development	
<p>Special Improvement District Special Improvement Districts are authorized by state law and created by an ordinance of the local government. They work by collecting a special assessment on the commercial properties in a designated district, which supports initiatives that drive business activity, increase property values, and support marketing and branding efforts.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> formally established SID.</p>	<p>There are no designated Special Improvement Districts in Somerdale.</p> <p>If Somerdale pursues creation of a central business district/town center as described at the conclusion of this section, the borough would be well served by establishing a SID. Creating a SID would encourage business owners in this area along the White Horse Pike to coalesce around projects to promote the center, such as a business marketing program, installation of identity signage, sidewalk improvements, storefront renovations, street furniture and street trees.</p>
<p>Main Street Community Designation Main Street New Jersey is a division within the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. It provides on- and off-site technical assistance and training in downtown revitalization and management. In Fiscal Year 2019, the state budget authorizes \$500,000 to restart and enhance this program.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> Main Street New Jersey designation.</p>	<p>Somerdale is not a designated Main Street Program location.</p> <p>Now that Main Street New Jersey has been renewed, Somerdale should consider enrolling. The program will help the borough develop focused revitalization and streetscape improvement strategies to promote a commercial center. During the program's previous operation, DCA accepted applications for designations every two years. Participating communities received technical support and training to assist in developing or restoring their Main Streets as centers of community and economic activity.</p>
PLANS that encourage compact, mixed-use development	
<p>Master Plan A municipal Master Plan defines the community's vision of how it will evolve over time, the changes it intends make to the major systems encompassed within its boundaries - housing, transportation, recreation, environment and open space - how it will preserve its historic resources and what initiatives it will undertake to meet its residents' needs to remain socially and economically vibrant into the future. The Master Plan is a community's roadmap for decision-making and the foundation for all of its prospective physical, economic, and social development.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> demographic analysis that considers community-wide aging factors and a land-use element of the Master Plan that encourages compact, mixed-use, center-based development.</p>	<p>In 2017, the Camden County Division of Planning worked with the Borough of Somerdale to prepare a comprehensive, well-documented Master Plan Reexamination Report. The report details major land use and development changes that occurred since the municipality's last reexamination report in 2009, and outlines recommendations for changes in regulations and policies that may be needed to achieve the borough's redevelopment plans.</p> <p>Notably, Somerdale's Master Plan Reexamination Report acknowledges the borough's growing elderly population. In addition, the Reexamination Report encourages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatives to detached single-family housing; • Reduced building setbacks; • Smaller residential lot sizes; • Affordable housing; • Universal design; • Accessory apartments; • Compact, mixed-use, accessible development. <p>In combination, all of these factors contribute to a community form that enables older adults to remain active and engaged participants in the municipality.</p>

	<p>However, the Reexamination Report does not connect economic characteristics with the growing cohort of older residents. The socio-economic consequences of these trends are emphasized in the Housing Analysis segment of this report (Part 2) and the Somerdale Community Profile, Appendix 1. These analyses indicate that the borough should update its Master Plan to reflect the evolving and projected socio-economic characteristics of the borough's aging population. Evaluation of these characteristics is essential in order to define aging-friendly strategies the borough could adopt to respond to the community's emerging needs.</p>
<p>Redevelopment or Rehabilitation Plan</p> <p>Redevelopment and rehabilitation plans are adopted by the governing body to guide development within areas formally designated as being in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation. These plans define the vision for the area and control its implementation through very specific building type and design requirements.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> redevelopment or rehabilitation plan that encourages compact, mixed-use, center-based development.</p>	<p>As noted in the introduction to this assessment, Somerdale has taken advantage of the potential of New Jersey's Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. In 2007 and. In 2009 the borough designated six parcels encompassing almost 53 acres off Somerdale Road and Kennedy Boulevard, as redevelopment and rehabilitation areas.</p>

General Recommendation 1: A Downtown Center For Somerdale

As noted above, there is no definable, town center in Somerdale, an issue members of the project steering committee indicated they wished to address. Presently, the Cooper Towne Center serves as a surrogate, and borough officials program this mixed-use retail space as a community meeting place and location for the borough's summer concert series and other events. However, Cooper Towne Center is in the borough's far northeast quadrant and is inaccessible to pedestrians from almost all of the borough's residential neighborhoods.

As an alternative to the Cooper Towne Center, which will continue to be an important retail destination, the borough could consider creating a town center within the more centrally located area on either side of the White Horse Pike between Dartmouth Avenue and the future location of the Reserve at Grace. The Somerdale Community Center and Perry Memorial Complex are already located in this area. A Wawa convenience store, a diner with outdoor seating, a newly constructed urgent care center, a U.S. Post Office, garden apartments and a variety of independent commercial, business and residential land uses are already found here. An Aldi supermarket is located in Stratford, immediately south of Dartmouth Avenue on the White Horse Pike. The area offers infill opportunities to increase density that will be needed

to support retail activity and restaurants. A designated "Area in Need of Rehabilitation" is located approximately one quarter mile west of the White Horse Pike on Somerdale Road, presenting new development opportunity.

The proposed Reserve at Grace, already an important community focus according the participants in the project steering committee, could serve as an important catalyst and northerly anchor for the proposed center and the rehabilitation site could serve as the southerly anchor. These bookends would create strong demarcation points and provide the center with a clear and needed identity. Municipal investments in street furniture, such as benches and bus shelter, street trees and sidewalks, would reinforce the town center. Driveway consolidation to improve pedestrian access and reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts would be needed. Parking access via rear alleys could reduce the need for vehicle access from White Horse Pike. Setting a front-yard "Build-To" line with allowance specifically to enable installation of sidewalks should be adopted now and applied as redevelopment occurs over time

The bus stops at each intersection of the stretch of the White Horse Pike within the proposed town center could serve to attract patronage from outside the borough. In the course of detailing this town center concept further, the borough should develop a circulation plan to ensure all residents have pedestrian or shuttle access to the area.

To address traffic speeds through this segment of the White Horse Pike and to emphasize further the town center character, the municipality should consider applying the three-lane roadway configuration proposed by the DVRPC in its 2003 White Horse Pike Economic Development and Land Use Assessment (see **Image 3: Three- Lane Concept, White Horse Pike**). As a low-cost approach, the borough could employ [pop-up techniques](#) to test this concept temporarily (see [AARP Pop-up Demonstration Tool Kit](#)).

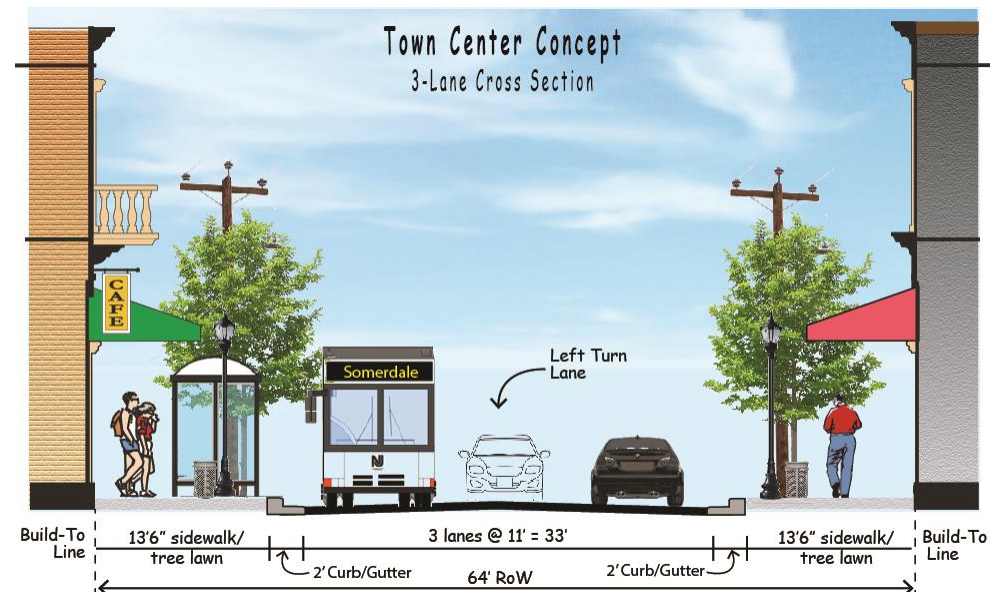
**General Recommendation 2:
Somerdale Town Center Design Workshop**

Somerdale should consider undertaking a design workshop specifically focused on identifying strategies to convert the White Horse Pike between Dartmouth Avenue and the future location of the Reserve at Grace, (see *Figure 2: Proposed Town Center Concept Area*), into a town center with enlivened and inviting public spaces where active and passive recreation and social gathering can occur regularly. A design workshop does not have to be a costly exercise. The New Jersey chapter of the American Planning Association's [Community Planning Assistance Program](#) may be able to provide professional planning and community design service on a volunteer basis to conduct this workshop. Alternatively, this project might be a good fit for a graduate studio project in partnership with the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University.




Figure 2: Proposed Town Center Concept Area






Image 3: Three-Lane Concept, White Horse Pike



LAND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS that encourage compact, mixed-use development

<p>Permitted uses Permitted uses define the types of land uses allowed as of right within a particular zoning district.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> a mix of uses within the commercial centers that promotes walking and encourages visitor activity.</p>	<p>As noted in Recommendation 1, above, the commercial district along the White Horse Pike between Dartmouth Avenue and the future location of the Reserve at Grace presents an opportunity to establish a town center in Somerdale. For this reason, this assessment of the borough's land development standards will focus on zoning requirements applicable to this town center concept area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Somerdale's B-1 Business-Retail district encompasses the proposed town center concept area. The district permits non-commercial uses such as plant nurseries or greenhouses and schools, as well as pet shops; bakeries; bowling alleys, car washes; carpentry, hardware and paint shops; restaurants, diners, and bars; combined commercial and residential buildings; tailoring; dry-cleaning; offices and salesrooms; retail stores for sale of alcohol and food; barber shops and beauty salons; and gas stations.
<p>Prohibited Uses Prohibited uses are the types of land uses not allowed within a particular zoning district.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> uses that conflict with goals for a center area or district, in particular uses that do not support walkability and livability. Prohibition of uses that would support the goals for a center area or district.</p>	<p>The zoning requirements applicable to the B-1 Business District prohibit merchandising, manufacturing, fabricating, altering, finishing or assembling establishments.</p> <p>In general, these use prohibitions are consistent with walkable commercial centers.</p>
<p>Building setbacks Setbacks establish the distance a building is required to be located from the front, side and/or rear property lines.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> limited setbacks in commercial centers in order to create greater street activation, encouraging a more active, inclusive, pedestrian-friendly environment.</p>	<p>The setbacks applicable to the B-1 Business district that encompasses the proposed town center concept area are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The minimum front-yard setback is equal to the average existing setback of buildings within 200 feet on each side ■ The minimum side yard setback is 15 feet ■ The minimum rear yard setback is not less than 20 feet. <p>In the proposed town center concept area, Somerdale should consider build-to lines along the White Horse Pike to establish a consistent street face. The build-to line should be set 10 feet back from the curb line to allow for a comfortably wide sidewalk, street trees, street furniture, pedestrian-scale lighting, bike racks, and appropriately placed bus shelters. Side yard requirements within this district should be eliminated to create an uninterrupted street face, parking should be restricted to the rear of the building and shared parking standards should be developed. Where possible, vehicular access to parcels that front on the White Horse Pike should be limited to driveways off minor intersecting streets. Driveways on White Horse Pike should be eliminated where possible and new driveways to the pike should be disallowed to make walking safer and more comfortable. Although many parcels along the White Horse Pike within the proposed town center concept area are currently occupied by existing buildings, redevelopment is an ongoing process in any</p>

	community and adopting zoning and design standards now that are intended to promote a downtown center will achieve that objective over time.
<p>Lot coverage Lot coverage is that portion of a zoning lot which, when viewed from above, is covered by a building. Greater lot coverage allows for greater density, a key component to a successful mixed-use center.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> greater allowable lot coverage percentages in center and mixed-use districts.</p>	<p>The lot coverage ratio applicable in Somerdale's B-1 Business district is 75 percent</p> <p>Somerdale's lot coverage requirement is appropriate for the smaller lot sizes typical in the borough's proposed town center concept area.</p>
<p>Building height Building height requirements dictate how tall the buildings in a given district can be.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> minimum building heights that encourage density within the mixed-use center area or district.</p>	<p>The borough's zoning regulations do not stipulate a maximum building height in the B-1 Business District provisions.</p> <p>While a building height limit is not recommended, Somerville should consider a building-height minimum. To develop this along the White Horse Pike, and particularly in the proposed town center concept area, Somerdale should consider adopting the US Green Building Council's standards for walkable streets, which recommend a minimum building-height-to-street-width ratio of 1:3 (i.e., a minimum of one foot of building height for every three feet of street width).</p>
<p>Design standards Design standards can be used to preserve and enhance the unique visual qualities in a district, reinforcing goals such as establishing a pedestrian-friendly streetscape.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> specific design standards for buildings, infrastructure, and landscaping that promote a vibrant, walkable mixed-use center environment.</p>	<p>The borough's B-1 Business District zoning requirements indicate that the design standards set forth in Section 162.211, PC-RD District, of the ordinance are applicable to the B-1 Zone</p> <p>Somerdale should consider establishing design standards specifically applicable to the proposed town center concept area. Such standards should be developed as a form-based code (see General Recommendation 2, below) that focus on enhancing the pedestrian experience, improving accessibility, mobility and connectivity. Such standards could include recommendations for streetscapes (trees, street furniture, pedestrian amenities, etc.), building facades (frontage requirements, window area, architectural materials), and signage (height, size, design). Somerdale should consider including funding for town center public improvements in its Capital Improvement Program to demonstrate public support and serve as a catalyst to attract private investment.</p>

General Recommendation 3: Consider Form-Based Codes

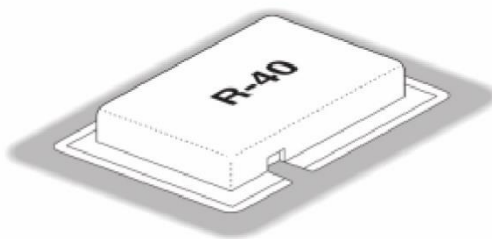
The [Form-Based Codes Institute](https://formbasedcodes.org/) defines a form-based code as “a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation.” Such codes consider the relationships between buildings and the street, pedestrians and vehicles, public and private spaces and the size and types of streets and blocks. A form-based code also establishes rules for parking locations and limits, building frontages and entrance location(s), elevations, streetscapes, window transparency and block patterns (i.e., no oversized “super blocks”). Since form-based codes can be customized, the code for one area might be focused on preserving and enhancing the character of the neighborhood while the goal elsewhere might be to foster dramatic change and improvements. Often, a community’s form-based code can accomplish both with a more tailored approach to community character than conventional zoning (see: [AARP Livability Fact Sheets](#)).

Form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory. They are drafted to implement a community plan. The five main elements of a form-based code are:

1. **Regulating Plan:** A plan or map of the regulated area designating the locations where different building form standards apply.
2. **Public Standards:** These specify elements in the public realm: sidewalk, travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees and furniture, etc.
3. **Building standards:** These control the features, configurations and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm.
4. **Administration:** A clearly defined and streamlined application and project review process.
5. **Definitions:** A glossary to ensure the precise use of technical terms.

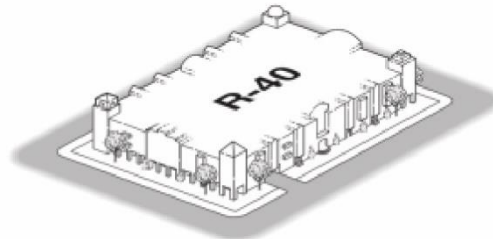
Conventional Zoning

Density use, FAR (floor area ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building heights specified



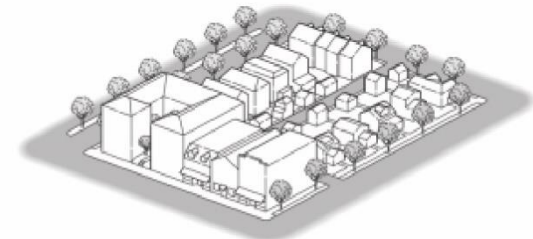
Zoning Design Guidelines

Conventional zoning requirements, plus frequency of openings and surface articulation specified



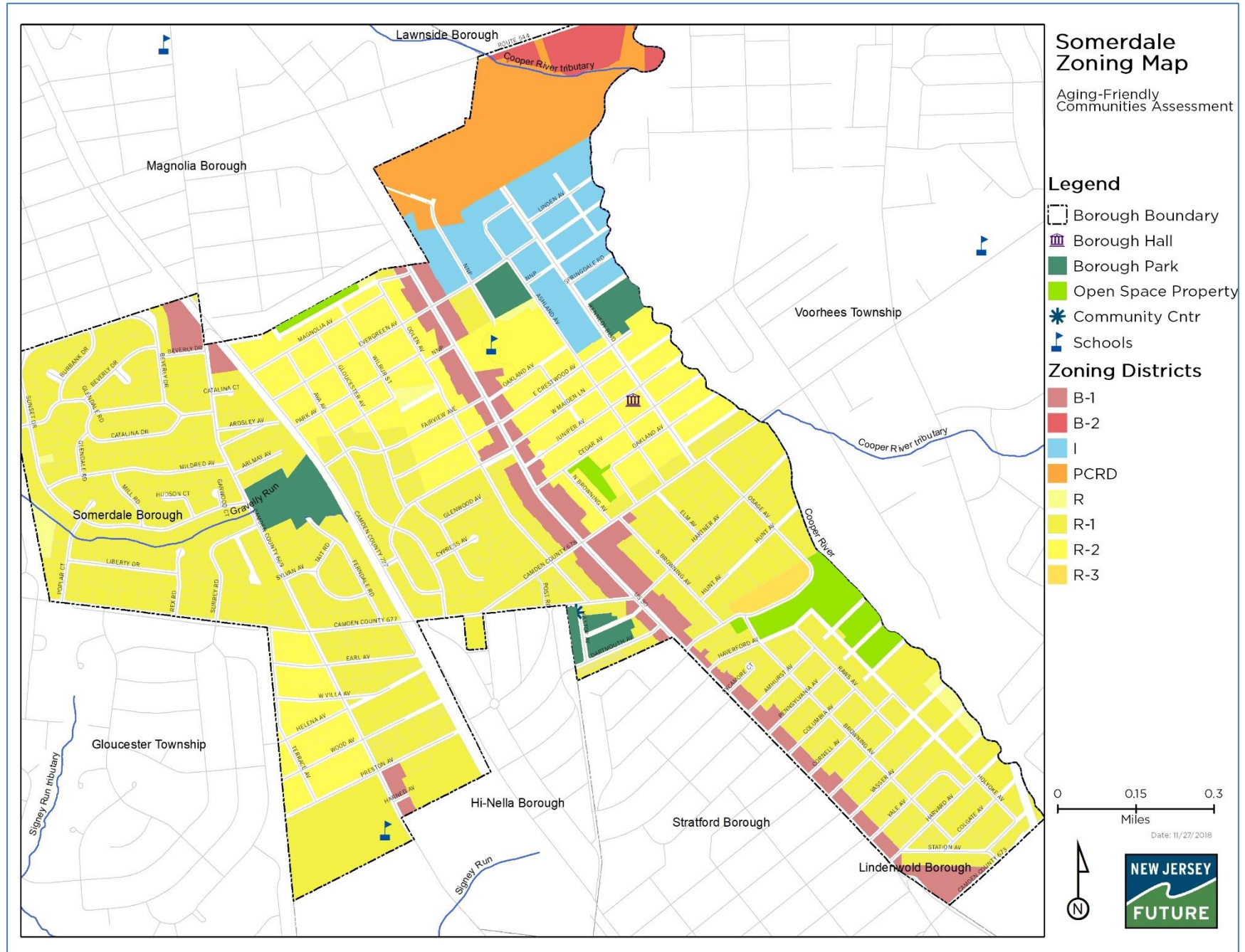
Form-Based Codes

Street and building types (or mix of types), build-to lines, number of floors, and percentage of built site frontage specified



Source: <https://formbasedcodes.org/definition/>

Figure 3: Business Districts





II. Housing

Does **Somerdale** have a supply of housing that is both affordable to older people and consistent with their needs? Does it have the necessary policies, plans and programs in place that will provide a range of housing options into the future?

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY PROFILE

Cost Burden

A household is considered housing cost-burdened if it spends more than 30 percent of its gross income on housing. This report uses this measure over other indicators of affordability because the Census Bureau compiles statistics on the actual number of households that are experiencing this condition, whereas many other metrics rely on inferences from summary statistics.

Percent of all households that are cost-burdened (2011- 2015 ACS):

- Somerdale: 45.5%
- Camden County: 42.3%
- Statewide: 43.2%

Percent of homeowner households that are cost-burdened:

- Somerdale: 40.1%
- Camden County: 35.9%
- Statewide: 37.4%

Homeowner 65+ households that are cost-burdened:

- Somerdale: 48.2%
- Camden County: 47.0%
- Statewide: 47.6%

The proportion of Somerdale households that are cost burdened (i.e. paying at least 30 percent of their gross income on housing costs) for all three of the variables above exceeds that of the state and county. For these reasons, Somerdale should consider pursuing strategies to expand affordable housing options.

Median Household Income

Median household income gives an idea of the purchasing power of the “typical” household in an area. Places with lower household incomes will tend to have higher rates of housing cost burden, all other things being equal, because lower-income households have a harder time paying for most things, including housing.

Median Household Income (2011- 2015 ACS):

- Somerdale: \$51,633
- Camden County: \$62,185
- Statewide: \$72,093

Somerdale Borough's and Camden County's median household incomes are considerably lower than the statewide median but the average housing values in the borough and the county (see below) are also considerably lower than the statewide average.

Median Residential Value The median value of owner-occupied housing units in a jurisdiction gives an idea of how expensive it would be for a current non-resident to buy a home in that place.		Average Residential Value (2014): <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Somerdale: \$140,843■ Camden County: \$181,966■ Statewide: \$352,183 Somerdale’s average home is worth about 40 percent of the average home in the state overall. As a result, the ratio of home values to income in Somerdale is notably lower than in the state as a whole: Statewide, the median household needs just less than five years’ worth of income to purchase the average-priced home, whereas in Somerdale it is less than three years.	
Housing Stock Profile			
Type Housing type refers to the configuration of a unit, typically ranging from single-family detached homes to multi-family buildings to mobile homes. The presence of a range of housing types helps promote affordability and attracts a wider range of family types, from singles to families to older adults.	Somerdale: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ SF Detached: 70.1%■ SF Attached: 4.4%■ Duplex: 2.5%■ 3 or 4 unit bldgs: 3.8%■ 5 or more unit bldgs: 19.2%■ Other: 0%	Camden County: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ SF Detached: 55.1%■ SF Attached: 17.9%■ Duplex: 4.6%■ 3 or 4 unit bldgs.: 3.9%■ 5 or more unit bldgs.:17.8%■ Other: 0.7%	New Jersey: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ SF Detached: 53.6%■ SF Attached: 9.3%■ Duplex: 9.5%■ 3 or 4 unit bldgs.: 6.5%■ 5 or more unit bldgs: 20.1%■ Other: 1.0%
	Somerdale’s housing stock is dominated by single family detached units, as is the case in many suburban New Jersey communities. The borough does have a sizeable share of larger apartment buildings, nearly equal to that of the state, but a much lower share of townhomes and row houses.		
Size A range of sizes, as measured by the number of rooms in a dwelling, is another indicator of affordability and aging-friendliness. For older adults, fewer rooms can be less expensive to own/rent and easier to maintain.	Somerdale: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 4 to 6 Rooms: 46.7%■ 7 to 8 Rooms: 27.7■ 9+ Rooms: 9.1%■ Median # Rooms: 5.6	Camden County: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 4 to 6 Rooms: 45.6%■ 7 to 8 Rooms: 27.8%■ 9+ Rooms: 13.5%■ Median # Rooms: 6	New Jersey: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 4 to 6 Rooms: 48.4%■ 7 to 8 Rooms: 24.3■ 9+ Rooms: 14.0%■ Median # Rooms: 5.7
	The median number of rooms per housing unit in Somerdale is roughly equivalent to that of County and the state. However, despite the fact that homes are smaller and may be more affordable, the borough’s households are cost-burdened.		
Tenure Tenure refers to the conditions under which land or buildings are held or occupied. For this analysis, the distinction is between owners and renters.	Somerdale: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 69.5% owner■ 30.5% renter	Camden County: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 67.5% owner■ 32.5% renter	New Jersey: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 64.5% owner■ 35.5% renter
	Somerdale has a larger share of owners and a smaller share of renters than is true for the county or state. Almost universally throughout the state, renter households are more likely to be cost-burdened than households that own their homes, a likely result of a statewide shortage of rental housing, especially multi-family housing. But homeownership can also be a trap in a down market when older people are forced to remain in larger homes they own so they don’t sacrifice equity they’ve accumulated. In addition, as housing costs rise, homeowners may want to sell their homes and rent smaller, less costly dwellings. An insufficient supply of rental units may preclude this option.		

LAND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS and REGULATIONS that support a mix of housing options

Permitted housing types

Permitted housing types are the type of housing allowed as of right within the various zoning districts. Having a range of types helps promote affordability and also provides access to more options to attract different types of residents, from singles to families to older adults.



Looking for: allowance for a range of housing types, from single-family detached to multi-family, with more density in the mixed-use walkable portions of town.

Somerdale's zoning supports a wide range of housing options, including single-family detached, single family attached, two-family, and multi-family dwellings. However, the breakdown of residential units by type indicates that the dominant unit type is single-family detached, owner occupied. The borough does have a supply of multi-family and rental units. And, according to building permit data provided by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, four three-and four-family units and 26 five or more family units were added to Somerdale's housing stock between the adoption of the Fair Share Plan in 2008 and 2017.

The borough is making concerted effort to increase its affordable housing stock, and is focusing on housing for older residents. Working closely with municipal officials, the proposed Reserve at Grace mixed-use project will provide 37 age-restricted units and offer Somerdale residents a permanent 15 percent reduction on rental rates.

Subdivision standards

Subdivision standards provide rules, regulations and standards to guide land subdivision. Large minimum lot sizes discourage a mix of uses and contribute to sprawling land use patterns. Requiring large minimum lot sizes effectively prevents a mix of housing types and affordability levels within neighborhoods, which can prevent residents from remaining in their neighborhoods as their needs and circumstances change. Large minimum frontage requirements contribute to sprawl.



Looking for: subdivision regulations that permit compact development, allow for a mix of lot sizes.

Somerdale's residential zoning allows for a range of lot sizes within its three residential districts that could encourage various housing types. Zoning in the B-1 Business District that encompasses the proposed town center concept area permits mixed-use development. However, in practice, the vast majority of the borough is occupied by single-family detached residential neighborhoods. The R-1 single family residential zoning district occupies more than 55 percent of the land area of the borough and single-family dwellings account for more than 70 percent of the borough's dwellings. But most homes occupy relatively small lots, the development pattern is relatively dense, and housing value is more aligned with income than it is statewide. Nevertheless, more than 48 percent of the borough's older residents are housing cost-burdened and require affordable options

Somerdale should consider exploring limited incentives, such as density bonuses, increased building height limits, or "of-right" zoning controls that could encourage a wider range of housing types (e.g., single-family attached units, town homes, and/or duplex units). Such units would be better suited to the needs of older residents seeking to downsize as well as Millennials seeking a first-time home.



Inclusionary housing requirements

These policies typically require a fixed percentage of affordable housing to be included as part of new residential development. This promotes ongoing social and economic integration.



Looking for: inclusionary housing requirement.

The borough adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in November 2008. The plan set goals for rehabilitating deficient housing units and providing new affordable units to accommodate needs of households that were likely to move to Somerdale based on future employment opportunities. According to building permit counts provided by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 168 single-family units, four three-and four-family units and 26 five or more family units were

	<p>added to Somerdale’s housing stock between the adoption of the Fair Share Plan and 2017.</p> <p>The borough’s 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Report noted that Somerdale continues to fulfill its COAH requirements and is actively working to incorporate affordable housing in the borough fabric. The recent Gateway Village project, located adjacent to the Cooper Towne Center, added 30 affordable units to the municipality’s housing stock. The Reexamination Report also noted that Somerdale was the first municipality in the state to be granted substantive certification by COAH’s third round obligations and was entitled immunity from builders’ remedy lawsuit for a 10-year period.</p>
<p>Universal design Universal design is the concept of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status. Universal design provides even surfaces, passages wide enough for wheelchairs, and appropriately designed bathrooms and kitchens, particularly for older adults.</p> <p> <i>Looking for: universal design policy or program.</i></p>	<p>Somerdale does not have a universal design standard or policy. Although the concept is gradually becoming more widely understood, it has yet to be adopted formally by many communities.</p> <p>Somerdale should consider adopting a universal design approach for all new and renovated residential development in the borough.</p>
<p>Accessory apartments An accessory apartment (sometimes called an in-law suite) is a separate independent dwelling unit installed as part of a single-family home, converting the home into two units. The accessory unit is a full, self-contained dwelling unit (i.e., it includes a kitchen), has a separate outside entrance, and is typically smaller than the “primary” part of the home. For the occupants of both units, this housing arrangement allows privacy and independence, which is preferred by individuals of all ages. For homeowners who have relatives with aging-related or other disabilities, this arrangement substantially supports their ability to provide assistance for those relatives. For older homeowners, accessory apartments mean they can afford to remain in their primary homes as landlords, or in these units as tenants.</p> <p> <i>Looking for: accessory apartments as a permitted use.</i></p>	<p>Somerdale does not currently permit accessory apartments in any districts.</p> <p>The borough should consider allowing accessory apartments by right in its residential zoning districts, subject to conditions that limit the impact such units might have on the surrounding neighborhood. Conditions might include: 1) a limit of one accessory apartment per lot; 2) a requirement that the principal dwelling or accessory apartment unit be owner-occupied; 3) a minimum lot size or house size; 4) a limit on the size of the accessory apartment to no more than a percentage (ex. 30 percent) of the gross floor area of the house; and/or 5) restricting new entrances to the side or rear of the home.</p>
<p>Home Sharing Home Sharing offers another alternative housing choice option. According to the National Shared Housing Resource Center, homeowners participating in a home sharing program offer “accommodation to a home sharer in</p>	<p>Affordable housing alternatives for older residents of Somerdale are in short supply. As noted above, more than 48 percent of the borough’s older residents are housing cost-burdened. Members of the project steering committee indicated that long-time, older residents are experiencing increasing difficulty keeping up with rising taxes and housing costs and are</p>

exchange for an agreed level of support in the form of financial exchange, assistance with household tasks, or both.

The community is also a beneficiary of home sharing. Shared living makes efficient use of existing housing stock, helps preserve the fabric of the neighborhood and, in certain cases, helps to lessen the need for costly chore/care services and long term institutional care.

A home sharer might be an older resident, a person with disabilities, a working professional, someone at-risk of homelessness, a single parent, or simply a person wishing to share his or her life and home with others. For these people, shared housing offers companionship, affordability, mutual support and much more.

Home Sharing can offer a more secure alternative to other roommate options. Many programs have staff who are trained to screen each program applicant carefully through interviewing, background checking, and personal references.



Looking for: housing options that could simultaneously reduce cost-burdens and isolation, and facilitate aging in place.

moving out of the community. Furthermore, as noted in the introduction to this report, more than 28.1 percent of Somerdale's residents who are 65 and older live alone, and isolation can contribute to myriad health risks. These conditions are likely to become more severe because the number of people 65 and older has grown considerably and this trend is projected to continue into the future.

The forgoing factors suggest that Somerdale should consider various strategies that provide affordable housing options such as home sharing, particularly for older populations, to enable them to continue live in the borough.



III. Transportation

Does **Somerdale** have the transportation infrastructure, policies and plans in place to address the transportation needs of older residents by encouraging multi-modal options and walkability?

WALKABILITY

Street Network Density

New Jersey Future has developed municipal-level metrics to characterize compactness and walkability. One of those measures is street network density (SND), measured by route-miles of local road per square mile. A high SND signifies a well-connected, grid-like street network. Such networks ensure that physical proximity actually translates into ease of access, by providing multiple linkages among properties and neighborhoods so that local traffic isn't forced onto a few "main" roads for every local trip. These linkages are important to pedestrians as well as drivers since pedestrians cannot generally cross private property or leap fences or streams and thus in most places are constrained to walking along the street.



New Jersey Future's [*Creating Places to Age*](#) report identifies six categories to describe street network density. The categories are:

- **Very high:** 20 or more route-miles of road per square mile
- **High:** at least 15 but fewer than 20 route-miles of road per square mile
- **Good:** at least 10 but fewer than 15 routes of road per square mile
- **Medium:** at least 5 but fewer than 10 route-miles of road per square mile
- **Low:** at least 2 but fewer than 5 route-miles of road per square mile
- **Very low:** fewer than 2 route-miles of road per square mile

Somerdale's street network density is **16.2** local road route-miles per square mile, putting it in the "**high**" category. The borough's SND is about two-thirds higher than the median street network density over all 565 municipalities in the state, which is 9.75 route miles per square mile.

Somerdale's high SND suggests that the borough has the necessary street network structure to foster walkability. However, the community lacks a town center and the scattered pattern of destinations throughout the town and commercial destinations along the length of the White Horse Pike corridor make it difficult for residents, particularly those who with mobility restrictions, to access more than one destination at a time or without resorting to using their cars. The west side of the borough has a more suburban development pattern, with cul-de-sacs and fewer intersections. This street layout tends to be discontinuous and discourages walking.

Somerdale should consider identifying current and evaluating potential future pedestrian corridors where benches can be installed. The borough should consider using its SND classification to help market the town as a walkable neighborhood, particularly as it invests in "downtown" or "main street" destinations. Expenditures to improve walkability and connectivity could be included in the borough's Capital Improvement Plan and phased in over time so that the investments are manageable. To track progress over time, the borough could post a map at the borough hall and on the borough's web site of all proposed improvements. To celebrate its accomplishments and inform its residents, each year the map could be annotated to identify completed projects and those slated for the upcoming budget year.

<p>Sidewalks Sidewalks provide many benefits, including pedestrian safety and mobility, and they encourage healthier lifestyles.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> 1) the presence of sidewalks that connect people with area destinations, particularly transit; 2) development regulations that require installation of sidewalks along the frontage of all public streets; 3) sidewalks that accommodate those with disabilities.</p>	<p>Most streets in Somerdale currently have sidewalks, and many have curb cuts at intersections. However, the sidewalk system is incomplete in some residential areas, and sidewalk maintenance is variable, with walkways in excellent condition in some areas and exhibiting safety concerns in others. Further, many sidewalks leading to neighborhoods west and east of the pike, particularly those along the Cooper River, follow steeply sloped terrain exceeding 30 percent in some areas (see Figure 4, Circulation), creating considerable walkability obstacles particularly for people with mobility limitations. Construction and maintenance of sidewalks and curbs is the responsibility of the borough's property owners. Somerdale administers a program to inventory sidewalks throughout the community and conducts repairs as resources are available to do so.</p> <p>Although sidewalks do exist along the entire length of the White Horse Pike, they are often interrupted by wide driveways which present pedestrian/ vehicular conflicts (See Appendix 1, Community Photos, Image 1). Consolidating entrances and moving parking to the rear of buildings facing the pike or providing alley access behind businesses would improve walkability considerably. Several side streets already provide back entrance to businesses on the White Horse Pike. In addition to connecting adjacent rear alleys, consolidating access to multiple businesses would also allow for sidewalk widening and improvements.</p> <p>Somerdale should consider adopting a resolution endorsing a Complete Streets policy and develop standards and guidelines for improvements consistent with Complete Streets principles along the borough's major corridors, including the White Horse Pike, Warwick Road, Somerdale Road and Kennedy Boulevard. The Reserve at Grace development project offers an excellent test case to implement these principles. Driveways to parcels along the White Horse Pike should be consolidated and shared parking and potentially back alley access should be explored. Resources include the 2015 Complete Streets in South Jersey: Lessons Learned report by the Cross County Connection Transportation Management Association and the Camden County Complete Streets policy adopted in 2013.</p>
<p>Crosswalks Crosswalks at intersections provide are a way to make drivers more aware of and deferential to pedestrians. They should also accommodate people with disabilities easily.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> 1) highly visible crosswalks; 2) light timing that favors pedestrians of various abilities, including timed pedestrian signals; and 3) safe spaces in the median of larger crossings.</p>	<p>Residential areas of Somerdale tend to not have crosswalks, even along the relatively high-traffic Warwick Road. Crosswalks on side streets and across Warwick Road would enhance the walkability and accessibility to Nature Trail Park from the adjacent neighborhoods (see Appendix 1, Community Photos, Image 2). Crosswalks along the high-traffic White Horse Pike are in place however, many are not highly visible.</p> <p>Crosswalks and pedestrian walkways are prominent and well maintained at Cooper Towne Center. Kennedy Boulevard has visible and well-maintained crosswalks near the municipal complex, however there are sidewalk gaps on adjacent side streets that force people to walk in the street to reach the municipal building (see Appendix 1, Community Photos, Image 3).</p> <p>Pedestrian safety improvements should be incorporated in all plans to address high-accident intersections on the state-maintained White Horse Pike and the several county roads in the borough.</p>

What Are Complete and Green Streets?

People experience “community” as a complex web of interactions among physical features – the homes they live in, the stores they depend upon for goods and services, the streets they drive on, the sidewalks they walk on, and the parks, playgrounds and public gathering places they frequent. Streets encompass typically over 70 percent of city-owned public space.⁵ Smart Growth America’s Complete Streets Local Policy Workbook⁶ notes that a Complete Streets system – one that is safe, comfortable, and convenient for people walking, bicycling, riding public transportation, and driving – can play a vital role in animating a community’s social and economic life. Furthermore, a tightly integrated, well-connected street network can promote social interaction, enhance accessibility, encourage aging in place, and enhance community health and safety.



Key to the Graphic

- 1 – People walking
- 2 – People using transit
- 3 – People bicycling
- 4 – People driving motor vehicles
- 5 – People conducting business
- 6 – People residing
- 7 – People working/performing maintenance

Streets not only serve a vital civic function, they can also contribute to community appearance, improve the pedestrian environment, and expand a community’s inventory of natural resources by integrating Green Street functions into the design. Green Streets incorporate non-structural management practices within the right-of-way that mimic the natural water cycle to capture, filter, reuse and/or absorb stormwater and ensure that streets remain usable and safe during storm events for all people, regardless of mode. In addition to stormwater management, green streets reduce [heat-island impacts](#) and improve air quality by [removing and sequestering air-borne carbon dioxide](#).

PLEASE NOTE: In September 2018 New Jersey Future introduced its New Jersey Green Infrastructure Municipal Toolkit and launched [gitoolkit.njfuture.org](https://www.gitoolkit.njfuture.org), a website dedicated to green infrastructure planning. The toolkit is an interactive, online resource that includes detailed information, expert guidance and a variety of tools that cities and towns can use to make green infrastructure a mainstream stormwater management strategy in public- and private-sector development projects. The primary intended audience for the toolkit is local elected leaders. Important secondary audiences include appointed officials such as planning board, zoning board and environmental commission or green team members, municipal engineers and planners, municipal administrators/managers, and public works superintendents.

⁵ See <https://www.pps.org/article/streets-as-places>

⁶ <https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/cs-local-policy-workbook.pdf>

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Local Bus Service

Local buses function as a means for people to travel to important destinations within a place or in neighboring places. This service is critical for people who do not or cannot drive, as it connects them to necessary shopping and services in a way that regional bus and rail cannot.



Looking for: high number of bus stops per square mile of developed land.

Thirteen NJ Transit bus stops have been placed across nearly every other intersection within the borough along the White Horse Pike (*see Figure 3: Circulation Bus Routes Map*). Only one of these provides any shelter or seating (*See Appendix 1, Community Photos, Image 4*). Bus service through the town does provide Somerdale residents a high degree of mobility within the borough and to neighboring towns - *but only along the White Horse Pike*. Potential central destinations such as Kennedy Boulevard (outside the industrial zone) and the Cooper Towne Center are outside a quarter-mile radius of any borough bus stop. Only 44 percent of the land area in the borough is within a quarter-mile radius of stops, a distance beyond which [studies](#) have shown increased probability of car use.

Sen-Han Transit Shuttle is the designated senior and disabled transportation provider from Senior Citizens United Community Services. Riders can make reservations from two days to two weeks in advance. Riders can also make reservations to be picked up along a scheduled shopping route to two shopping-center destinations in the area. In addition to Sen-Han Transit, the Rt. 54/40 Community Shuttle provides free round-trip scheduled service to Atlantic City via a NJ Transit connecting service from Lindenwold station.

Somerdale should consider installing seating and shelters at its busiest bus stops, and eventually at all bus stops. NJ Transit will arrange for, and bear the cost of, [installing bus shelters](#) at bus stops provided that a local sponsor, public or private, will agree to accept responsibility for maintenance and liability. Sponsors are permitted to advertise on the structures.

The borough should consider performing a walkability assessment to determine whether older individuals, particularly those traveling from the west side of town, are hindered by the walking distance to bus stops or whether residents throughout the town are hindered by steep slopes on both sides of the White Horse Pike. A shuttle service throughout the borough is recommended to connect residents with bus stops, various other destinations and the broader Somerdale community. Organizations such as [NJ TIP](#), DVRPC, or the Camden County Planning Department may be able to assist the borough in undertaking a walkability assessment.

Rail

Rail transit offers access to regional destinations to which older residents might not otherwise travel if driving were the only option.

There are no passenger rail stations located in Somerdale. Two PATCO rail stations, Lindenwold and Ashland, are located in adjacent towns. Lindenwold station is accessible via a combination of an NJ Transit bus that runs approximately every 30 minutes and requires a connecting bus to travel the last half mile to the station. The PATCO high-speed line extends



Looking for: presence of rail station.

from Lindenwold station into Philadelphia, and riders aged 65 or older are eligible for off-peak hours reduced fare that is half the lowest full fare rate.

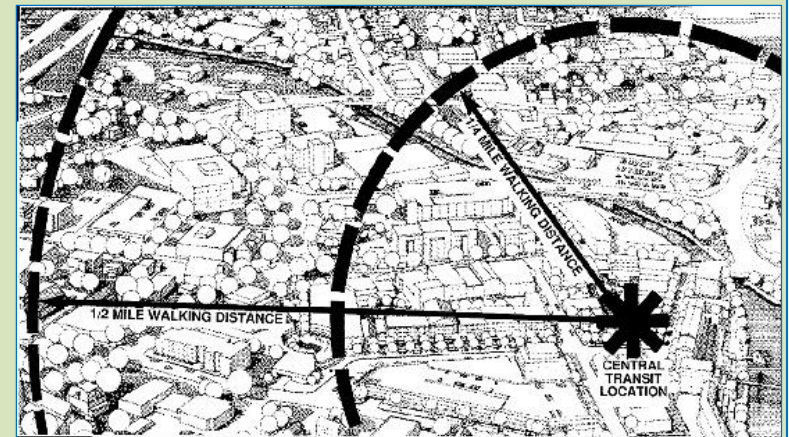
In the scope of the walkability assessment recommended above, Somerdale should assess whether older residents are deterred from traveling to the PATCO Lindenwold station either because the walk to a bus stop is too far or because it is necessary to take two busses to reach the station.

Why ¼ mile walking distance?

A quarter-mile is commonly cited as the distance people are willing to walk to transit stations, public facilities, and retail destinations. The **Planning for Transit-Friendly Land Use: A Handbook for New Jersey Communities**, prepared by NJ Transit, suggests that a reasonable walking distance can vary, based on such factors as topography, sense of safety and security, and presence of interesting activity along the route, but it is generally understood that most people will walk from five to 15 minutes to get to or from a transit station stop. This walk time corresponds to approximately quarter mile to a half mile. A [study of travel behavior](#) also found that each additional walking minute to public transportation increases the probability of car use

A study by the New York Regional Plan Association, **Building Transit-Friendly Communities: A Design and Development Strategy for the Tri-State Metropolitan Region**, offers further support, finding that residents within a quarter-mile of a transit facility are five to seven times more likely to walk to the station than other passengers.

The quarter-mile standard is also supported by park equity research. Jennifer Wolch, Dean of the University of California at Berkeley, College of Environmental Design, wrote in 2002 that a quarter-mile is reasonable “for parents taking toddlers and small children to a park for everyday outings and playground opportunities.”



STREETS

Connectivity

A well-connected local street network offers multiple options and shorter distances for traveling between destinations. Without this connectivity, high density and mixed use can end up meaning that you can see your destination out your window, but a long walk or drive would be needed to get to it. Local road density (miles of local road per square mile) is one measure of how fine-grained the local street network is and thus of how long the average local trip is likely to be.



Looking for: high local road density, greater than 10 miles of road per square mile.

Somerdale residents have access to a variety of transportation modes within the borough, but they are not necessarily connected. Although NJ Transit bus stops are located along the length of the White Horse Pike, the pedestrian route to those bus stops does not necessarily include sidewalks, sidewalks in good repair, resting stations or crosswalks. In addition, walkways on steep slopes and bus stop locations that are greater than a quarter-mile away from more than half of the borough may hinder use. A bicycle lane has been installed on Atlantic Avenue, but it ends abruptly before reaching Somerdale Road to the south and the intersection of Warwick Road to the north, which has poor visibility (**See Appendix 1, Community Photos, Image 5**). In addition, the freight tracks that bisect the borough along North Atlantic Avenue create a formidable obstacle to walkability and accessibility through the community.

The major entrance to Cooper Towne Center is located on Evesham Road, outside the borough. The White Horse Pike entrance leads to the back of the Walmart building and is designed for vehicle rather than pedestrian access, with sidewalks that end abruptly. The entrance from the south, the only access from within the borough, runs through the industrial zone where sidewalks are not necessarily present or maintained. There is no direct bus or shuttle access to the Cooper Towne Center, and the natural slope of the terrain may make pedestrian access difficult.

Somerdale should consider installing safety improvements for pedestrians traveling between the west and east sides of the borough, including along Atlantic Avenue and Warwick Road. Costs for the design and installation of crosswalks, sidewalks and a safe mode of pedestrian freight rail crossing could be included in the borough's capital improvement program and implemented gradually over time through the annual funding increments.

The scope of the above-recommended walkability study should include evaluation of pedestrian access to bus stops and important destinations within the borough such as the proposed town center concept area along the White Horse Pike, Cooper Towne center and borough facilities such as Borough Hall and the community/senior center.

Vehicle Lanes

The number of vehicle lanes of traffic has an impact on walkability.



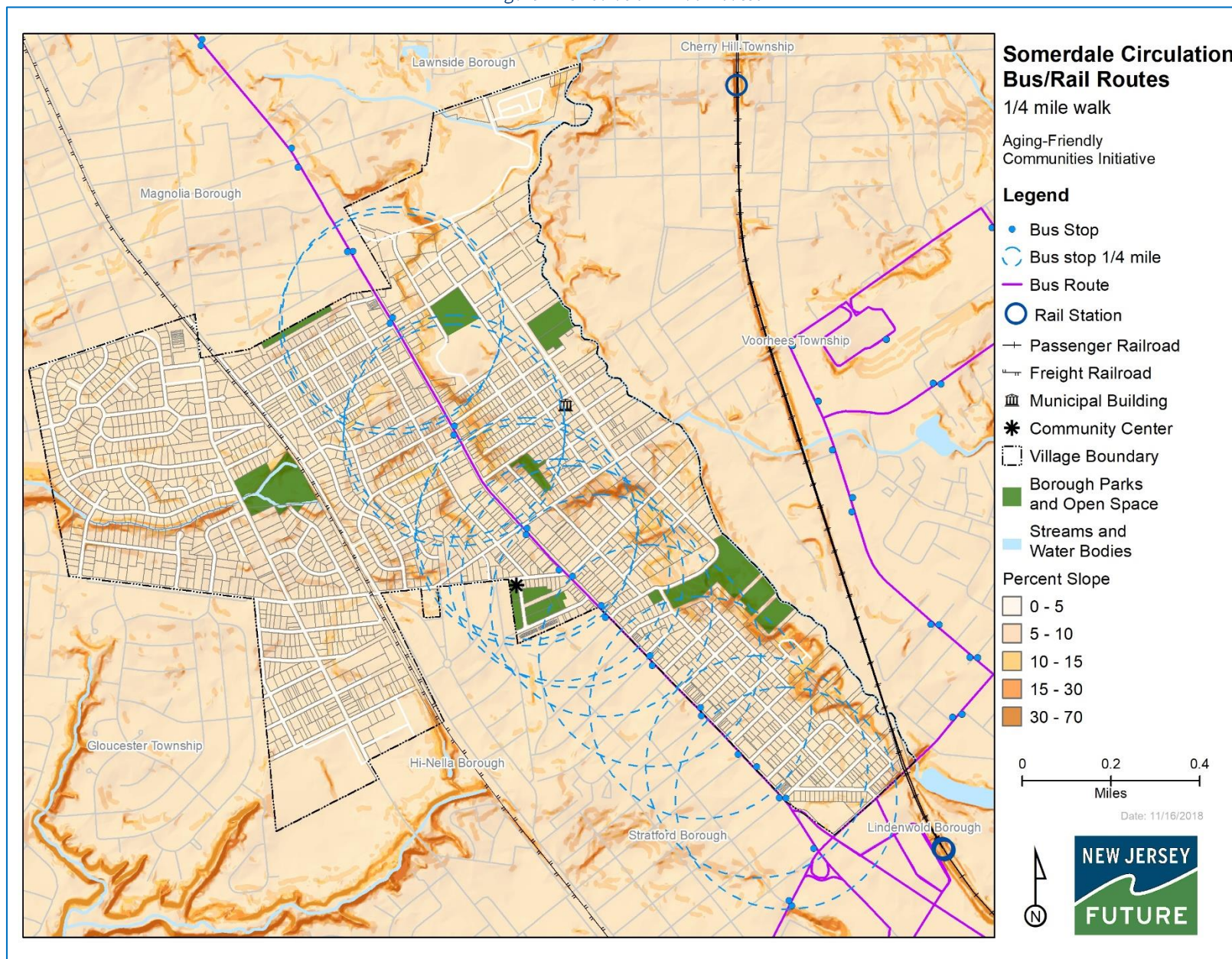
Looking for: reduced vehicle lanes, particularly in center areas to promote walkability.

Most commercial, retail or health care destinations in Somerdale are located along the White Horse Pike, which is a four-lane state highway with no street parking. Reducing the White Horse Pike to a two-lane roadway - examples of which can be found in adjacent Audubon Borough, Haddon Heights Borough, and Berlin Township - with a median turn lane, would provide opportunity to implement Complete Streets design principles and improve pedestrian safety and access (**See Appendix 1, Community Photos, Image 6**). The south end of Kennedy Boulevard has been improved with highly visible crosswalks and a traffic-calming median.

Using the DVRPC 2003 White Horse Pike Economic Development and Land Use Assessment as a guide, Somerdale should enact an economic and community development strategy along the White Horse Pike that includes Complete Streets initiatives; traffic calming measures; reducing travel lanes along the section of the pike that runs through the proposed town center concept area; reduction of street crossing times; enhanced pedestrian crosswalks and islands; and adoption of mixed-use zoning. Since the White Horse Pike is a state roadway, these strategies will require the involvement of and approval from the New Jersey Department of Transportation. The borough should also consider implementing these measures along other major through-roads such as Warwick Road, Kennedy Boulevard, Atlantic Avenue and Somerdale Road.

Somerdale should consider an assessment of local streets to determine where driver sight-line visibility for drivers, pedestrian safety, and overall connectivity and walkability throughout the borough can be enhanced. The borough should lobby the state to reduce the speed limit of the along the section of the pike that runs through the proposed town center concept area. The speed limit along the entire length of the Pike in Somerdale is presently 40 mph, although members of the project steering committee indicated that drivers typically exceed this speed limit. Reducing the posted speed limit and installing Complete Streets designs would reduce accident risk, support redevelopment of the area as a town destination and allow for connectivity between east and west Somerdale.

Figure 4: Circulation - Bus Routes





IV. Public Spaces and Amenities

Does **Somerdale** provide access to public spaces, amenities, and programs for older residents?

PUBLIC SPACES, FACILITIES

Community Centers

Amenities such as recreation centers, senior centers and libraries provide access to learning, information, entertainment, exercise and socializing opportunities, which are critical to healthy aging.



Looking for: community centers and libraries with walking access.

Somerdale's Community Center is located at 101 South Hilltop Avenue, a block west of the White Horse Pike and close to the Hi-Nella municipal border. The facility is adjacent to the Perry Memorial Complex, which includes a playground, basketball courts and baseball/softball fields. The center is located about a quarter mile southeast of the geographic center of the borough, which is near the location of the future Reserve at Grace development. The borough's website indicates that the Somerdale Senior Group meets at the Community Center every Monday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Somerdale does not have a public library and is served by the Camden County M. Allan Vogelsson library, which is located off of Somerdale Road in Voorhees. The library is located approximately one mile from the White Horse Pike intersection with Somerdale Road. Reaching the library from the White Horse Pike/Somerdale Road intersection by NJ Transit bus entails 17 stops traveling first south to the Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine. The trip takes about 20 minutes. The Voorhees Town Center is across the street and a parking lot is approximately 700 feet from the library.

The Cooper Towne Center, at the northern boundary of the Somerdale on Evesham Road, currently serves as a civic gathering space during the municipal-run summer concert series and movie nights. Somerdale Day is held just outside the center on Kennedy Boulevard. The municipal building is also located on Kennedy boulevard, but is not identified as a community gathering site.

Although Cooper Towne Center presently serves as a community gathering spot, there is potential to create a formal town center on the White Horse Pike. This town center concept is described in detail in Section 1 of this assessment, Mixed-Use Town Center.

Public Street Furniture



Street furnishings provide opportunities to rest during the course of business and offer opportunities for interpersonal connection.




Looking for: public furnishings in and along the way to public facilities.

Based upon a brief visual survey of aerial photography, public furniture and amenities appear to be limited or not present along the borough's commercial corridor. Benches are provided at borough parks, Cooper Towne Center, and at the municipal building.

Somerdale should consider conducting a survey of street furniture as part of a broader audit of walking conditions, particularly in those areas frequented by older adults, such as at the community center and at bus stops along the White Horse Pike.

	<p>Benches and street trees should be placed on routes to key destinations to ensure safe walking conditions and shady rest stops.</p>
<p>Joint Use of Facilities Joint use of facilities offers additional locations for providing services and a way to leverage taxpayer money. Joint use is typically governed by a formal agreement, setting forth the terms and conditions for shared use of public property or facilities.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> joint use of community facilities.</p>	<p>Outdoor school recreation facilities at Sterling High School and Park School are available for use by residents during off-school hours.</p> <p>Because the Somerdale Community Center may not be large enough to accommodate all types of events, the borough could maximize the utility of its joint use agreements with the Board of Education by using schools as satellite facilities from which to provide larger-scale programs and services, particularly those that serve older residents. The borough should also consider public-private partnership agreements with private facilities that can serve as community meeting locations. For example, the Somerdale Human Relations Commission has held several annual Multicultural Day celebrations at Flying Fish Brewing Company. Opportunity exists to formulate a joint use agreement for certain events to be held at this facility as well as the proposed Reserve at Grace facility.</p>
<p>OUTDOOR, GREEN SPACE</p>	
<p>Parks/Green Spaces/Trails Open space in towns and cities provides many advantages: formal and informal sport and recreation, preservation of natural environments and the provision of green space, which helps improve air and water quality, and improves mental health. This is a benefit to residents of all ages.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> parks and outdoor spaces that are accessible on foot.</p>	<p>As noted in the introduction to this report, Somerdale is served by four parks encompassing 28 acres, or three percent of the area of the community. Three of the parks are ball fields. Memorial Park is a ball field adjacent to Park School. James Perry Memorial Park, located in the south-central part of the borough, is a complex that also includes a playground, basketball courts and the Somerdale Community Center. Kennedy Boulevard Field also contains a playground and a walking track. Somerdale Nature Trail Park is a seven-acre wooded area located between Warwick Road and the freight railroad and maintained by the borough. The borough plans to extend the existing Cooper Creek trail through a wooded area along the Cooper River between Grant Avenue and Shire Court, and potentially to Lafayette, Vassar and Lehigh avenues. The current trail runs along Grant Avenue across the street from Green Valley Apartments for about 700 feet through a wooded area.</p> <p>Park facilities are not located within a quarter-mile walk of most residential neighborhoods in the borough. The northeast portion of the town has high access to Memorial Park and Kennedy Boulevard Park, but with the exception of the new housing development on Evesham Road, most of the land use within a quarter mile of these recreational facilities is industrial. The James Perry Memorial Park complex is within a quarter mile of only a small number of residential properties in Somerdale, but it is within a quarter mile of residential neighborhoods in Stratford and Hi-Nella. Nature Trail Park is best situated to serve the most Somerdale residents because approximately half the neighborhood west of Atlantic Avenue and North of Somerdale Avenue is within a quarter mile of this facility. The existing Cooper Creek Trail is within proximate walking distance for residents between Hartner Avenue and Columbia Avenue. Extending this trail to Lehigh Avenue would place it within a quarter mile of the entire neighborhood down to White Horse Road. A segment of the Cross Camden County Trail is planned along Atlantic Avenue in a route that would</p>

	<p>connect the Cooper River Greenway region with the Philadelphia regional network DVRPC Circuit Trail.</p> <p>Somerdale should develop an open-space and recreation plan that outlines long term goals, sets a schedule to implement improvements, and delegates open space maintenance responsibility with the objective of developing an integrated pedestrian access network connecting all neighborhoods and commercial areas to all of the borough's parks, green spaces and community destinations. As part of this plan, the borough could consider acquiring or improving additional open space and creating more walking trails and recreational facilities. A possible list of such projects could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Acquiring currently undeveloped wooded lots at the end of Hunt Avenue. This would enable linking the Cooper Creek Trail with residents in the Chestnut Avenue neighborhood by extending the trail to Somerdale Road via Elm Avenue. ■ Creating a walking trail through municipally owned block 70, lot 2 to improve connectivity between Oakland Avenue and Cedar Avenue and provide greater access to the proposed Reserve at Grace. ■ In conjunction with efforts to improve accessibility to the White Horse Pike, installing a paved pedestrian and bicycle path and developing public space using the Park School tract to connect the pike with Grace Street by acquiring vacant block 23 lot 12. ■ Incorporating open space amenities into any redevelopment plans for the designated Area in Need of Rehabilitation on Somerdale Road, near the RiteAid shopping center on Warwick Road and along the northern boundary of the town on the Green Acres tract between Atlantic Avenue and Odlen Avenue. ■ Using municipal properties along the freight railroad south of Somerdale Avenue to provide open-space amenities for the neighborhood south of Somerdale Road and west of Atlantic Avenue.
<p>Green infrastructure</p> <p>Green infrastructure is an approach to managing rainwater and snowmelt by enabling it to infiltrate into the ground where it falls or by capturing it for later reuse. Examples include street trees, pervious pavement, rain gardens, rain barrels, green roofs, vegetated swales and bio-retention basins. Green infrastructure helps to reduce flooding, improves public health, provides jobs, raises property values, beautifies neighborhoods and “downtowns” and supports wildlife.</p> <p> <i>Looking for:</i> municipal policy or ordinance that encourages installation of green infrastructure.</p>	<p>It does not appear that Somerdale has a policy in place regarding the installation of green infrastructure.</p> <p>Somerdale should consider updating its stormwater management regulations to encourage the use of green infrastructure (see A Few Ways to Strengthen Your Town's Stormwater Ordinance, below). It should also integrate green infrastructure into roadway design in conjunction with the implementation of a Complete Streets policy. Doing so would enhance the pedestrian environment and expand the community's inventory of natural resources. The Water Resources Program at Rutgers Cooperative Extension is a good source of information and technical assistance. The New Jersey Future Municipal Green Infrastructure Toolkit includes detailed information and a variety of tools that cities and towns can use to plan, implement, and sustain green infrastructure in public- and private-sector development projects.</p>

A FEW WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR TOWN'S STORMWATER ORDINANCE

Reference excellent guidance and resources that applicants for development permits can use. For example, “For guidance on site evaluation, construction specifications and details, the applicant shall refer to Rutgers Cooperative Extension’s [Green Infrastructure Guidance Manual](#) for New Jersey;” and “For road or highway projects, the applicant shall, at minimum, follow USEPA guidance regarding [Managing Wet Weather with Green Infrastructure: Green Streets](#) (December 2008 EPA-833-F-08-009)” and may also reference the [Urban Street Stormwater Guide](#) published in 2017 by NACTO, the National Association of City Transportation Officials (ISBN 978-1-61091-812-1).”

Include strong, clear definitions for green infrastructure, redevelopment and bioretention. Omit language that indicates your ordinance’s definitions are the same as, or based on, definitions in [New Jersey’s stormwater rules](#) (NJAC 7:8). Sample definitions:

“Green infrastructure” uses or mimics the natural water cycle to reduce stormwater runoff and prevent runoff pollution. Green infrastructure best management practices (BMP) manage runoff close to the source by retention, infiltration, evapotranspiration, and filtration. Green infrastructure BMPs include but are not limited to: bioretention systems including rain gardens, tree trenches and tree boxes; pervious paving systems; green roofs; grass swales; dry wells; vegetative filter strips; constructed stormwater wetlands, cisterns or wet ponds for water capture and reuse, and downspout disconnection. Green infrastructure can be designed to capture and retain the water quality volume of 1.25 inches with no immediate surface discharge.

“Redevelopment” means land-disturbing activity that results in the creation, addition, or replacement of impervious surface area on an already developed or disturbed site. Redevelopment includes but is not limited to: the expansion of a building footprint; addition or replacement of a structure; replacement of impervious surface area that is not part of a routine maintenance activity; and land disturbing

activities related to structural or impervious surfaces. It does not include routine maintenance to maintain original line and grade, hydraulic capacity, or original purpose of facility, nor does it include emergency construction activities required to immediately protect public health and safety.



“Bioretention” means a green infrastructure BMP that consists of a bed filled with soil, gravel, or other material and planted with suitable non-invasive (preferably native) vegetation. Stormwater runoff entering the bioretention system is filtered through the planting bed before being either conveyed downstream by an underdrain system or infiltrated into the existing subsoil below the planting bed.

Apply ordinance requirements to redevelopment projects as well as new development. Sample language:

Where redevelopment that adds, replaces or disturbs (alone or in combination) greater than 5,000 square feet [or a smaller area, if the ordinance applies also to minor development] of impervious surface results in an alteration to more than 50 percent of impervious surfaces of a previously existing development, the entire existing development shall meet the requirements of this ordinance.

Require onsite stormwater retention for the water quality storm (1.25” over two hours). Sample definition:

Onsite stormwater retention is achieved with a natural or constructed, surface or subsurface area or facility designed to retain water for an extended period of time for the purpose of filtering stormwater runoff through vegetated permeable soils, evapotranspiration, or infiltration capture stormwater runoff for beneficial reuse such as irrigation.

Require that the water quality standards (SWQDv) be met with green infrastructure practices before other structural practices.

Define “major development” with a smaller area of disturbance than is required in the state’s model ordinance. The state’s threshold is one acre of disturbance or 1/4 acre of new impervious surface. The Sustainable Jersey draft model ordinance suggests major development be defined as a site that adds or replaces (alone or in combination) 5,000 square feet of impervious surface or disturbs one half acre or more of land. Depending on land-use characteristics, some cities or towns may prefer a smaller threshold (see italics in definition below). Sample language:

“Major development” means any development or redevelopment, as defined by this section, that adds or replaces (alone or in combination) 5,000 square feet or more of impervious surface, or that provides for

ultimately disturbing 1/2 acre *[or 1/4 acre, or 5000 square feet]* or more of land. Major development includes both private and public projects or activities. Disturbance for the purpose of this rule is the placement of impervious surface or exposure and/or movement of soil or bedrock or clearing, cutting, or removing of vegetation.

Extend ordinance applicability to minor development as well as major development. The Sustainable Jersey draft model ordinance suggests the minor development threshold for complying with the ordinance be projects that exceed 1,000 square feet. Some municipalities have adopted an even smaller threshold (Princeton’s minor development threshold is 400 sf; Millburn’s is 250 sf).

Figure 5: Somerdale Parks

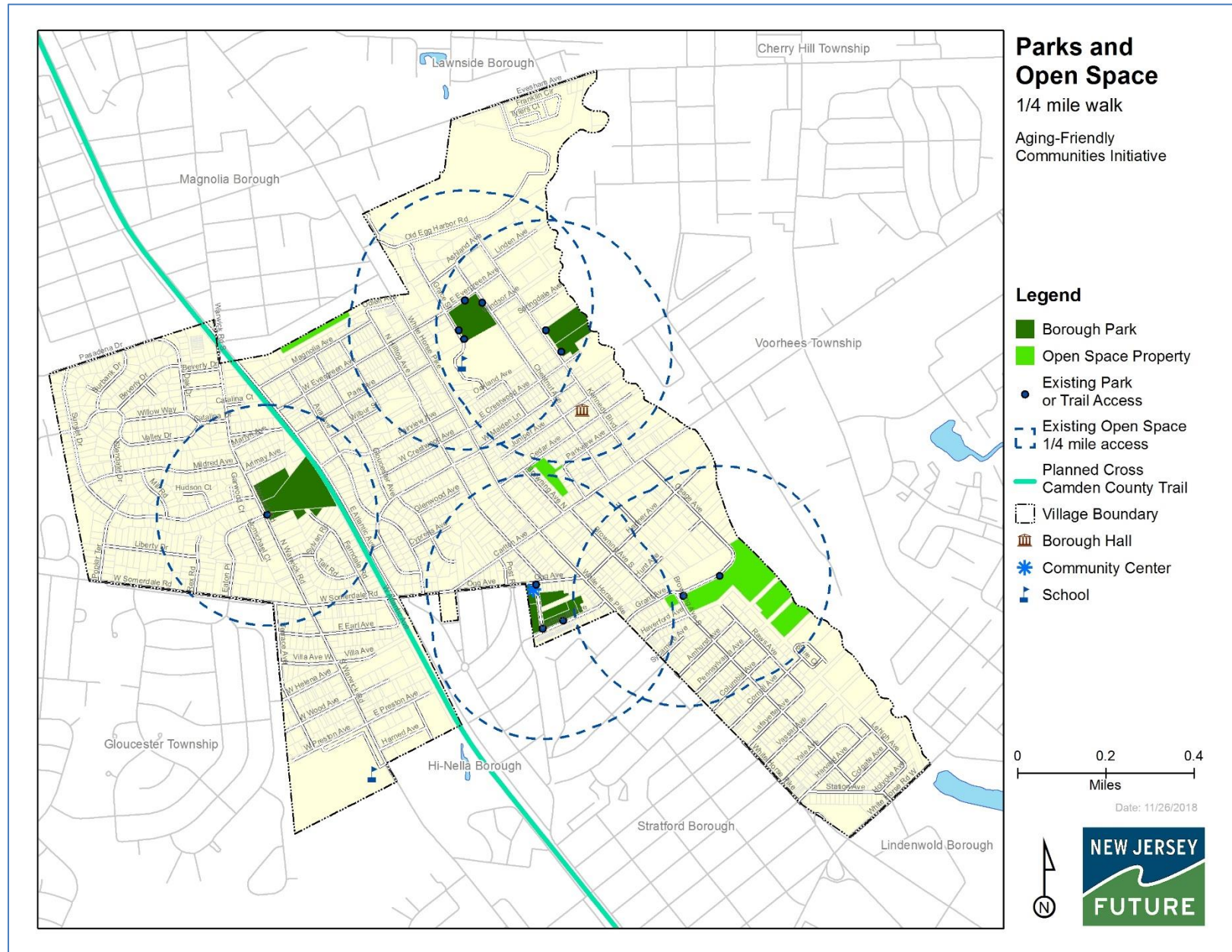
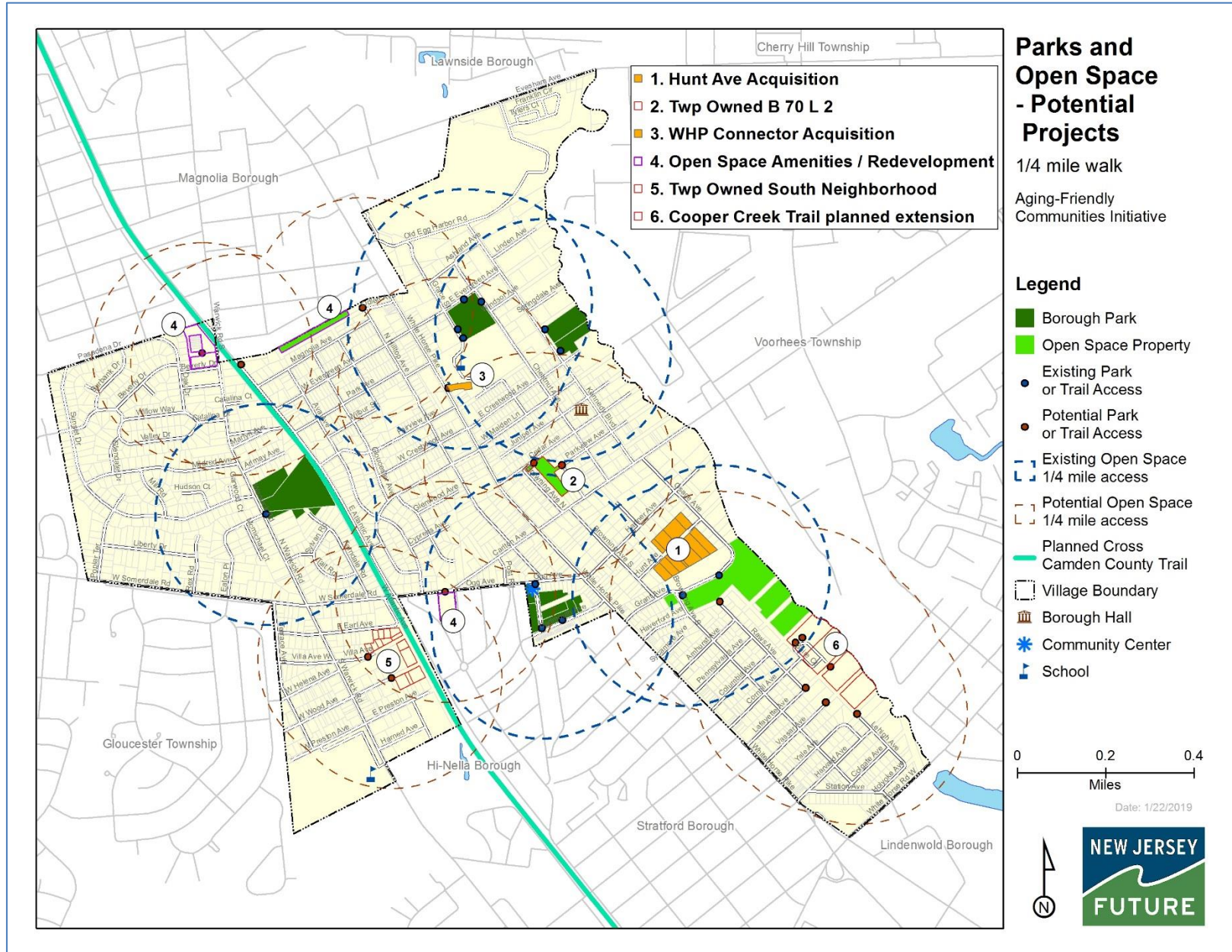


Figure 6: Somerdale Parks – Potential Projects



Summary of Recommendations

Following is a listing of the recommendations presented in the four categories of the built environment evaluated in the preceding sections.



Mixed Use Center

Presence of a Center

1. Before investing resources in the Cooper Towne Center, the borough should consider opportunities to establish a town center along the White Horse Pike, between Dartmouth Avenue and the future location of the Reserve at Grace. Based on its existing attributes, this area has considerable potential to serve as the activity hub community representatives have desired. This recommendation is discussed in detail on page 14 – see General Recommendation #1: A Downtown Center for Somerdale.
2. The scope of the above-recommended walkability study should include evaluation of pedestrian access to bus stops and important destinations within the borough such as the proposed town center concept area along the White Horse Pike, Cooper Towne center and borough facilities such as Borough Hall and the community/senior center.

Policies and Programs that encourage compact, mixed use development

3. If Somerdale pursues creation of a central business district/town center as described at the conclusion of this section, the borough would be well served by establishing a Special Improvement District (SID). Creating a SID would encourage business owners in this area along the White Horse Pike to coalesce around projects to promote the center, such as a business marketing program, installation of identity signage, sidewalk improvements, storefront renovations, street furniture and street trees.
4. Now that [Main Street New Jersey](#) has been renewed, Somerdale should consider enrolling. The program will help the borough develop focused revitalization and streetscape improvement strategies to promote a commercial center. During the program's previous operation, DCA accepted applications for designations every two years. Participating communities received technical support and training to assist in developing or restoring their Main Streets as centers of community and economic activity.

Plans that encourage compact, mixed use development.

5. Somerdale's Master Plan Reexamination Report acknowledges the borough's growing elderly population but does not connect economic characteristics with the growing cohort of older residents. The socio-economic consequences of these trends are emphasized in the Housing Analysis segment of this Age-Friendly Community Assessment report (Part 2) and the Somerdale Community Profile, Appendix 1. These analyses indicate that the borough should update its Master Plan to reflect the evolving and projected socio-economic characteristics of the borough's aging population. Evaluation of these characteristics is essential in order to define aging-friendly strategies the borough could adopt to respond to the community's emerging needs.
6. To develop a building height requirement along the White Horse Pike, and particularly in the proposed town center concept area, Somerdale should consider adopting the [US Green Building Council's standards](#) for walkable streets which recommend a minimum building-height-to-street-width ratio of 1:3 (i.e., a minimum of 1 foot of building height for every 3 feet of street width)

General Recommendation 1 – A Downtown Center for Somerdale

7. As noted above, there is no definable, town center in Somerdale, an issue that members of the project steering committee indicated they wished to address. Presently, the Cooper Towne Center serves as a surrogate, and borough officials program this

mixed-use retail space as a community meeting place and location for the borough's summer concert series and other events. However, Cooper Towne Center is in the borough's far northeast quadrant and is inaccessible to pedestrians from almost all of the borough's residential neighborhoods.

As an alternative to the Cooper Towne Center, which will continue to be an important retail destination, the borough could consider creating a town center within the more centrally located area on either side of the White Horse Pike between Dartmouth Avenue and the future location of the Reserve at Grace. The Somerdale Community Center and Perry Memorial Complex are already located in this area. A Wawa convenience store, a diner with outdoor seating, a newly constructed urgent care center, a U.S. Post Office, garden apartments and a variety of independent commercial, business and residential land uses are already found here. An Aldi supermarket is located in Stratford, immediately south of Dartmouth Avenue on the White Horse Pike. The area offers infill opportunities to increase density that will be needed to support retail activity and restaurants. A designated "Area in Need of Rehabilitation" is located approximately one quarter mile west of the White Horse Pike on Somerdale Road, presenting new development opportunity.

The proposed Reserve at Grace, already an important community focus according to the participants in the project steering committee, could serve as an important catalyst and northerly anchor for the proposed center and the rehabilitation site could serve as the southerly anchor. These bookends would create strong demarcation points and provide the center with a clear and needed identity. Municipal investments in street furniture, such as benches and bus shelter, street trees and sidewalks, would reinforce the town center. Driveway consolidation to improve pedestrian access and reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts would be needed. Parking access via rear alleys could reduce the need for vehicle access from White Horse Pike. Increased building setbacks could be adopted and instituted as redevelopment occurs over time.

The bus stops at each intersection of the stretch of the White Horse Pike within the proposed town center could serve to attract patronage from outside the borough. In the course of detailing this town center concept further, the borough should develop a circulation plan to ensure all residents have pedestrian or shuttle access to the area.

To address traffic speeds through this segment of the White Horse Pike and to emphasize further the town center character, the municipality should consider applying the three-lane roadway configuration proposed by the DVRPC in its 2003 White Horse Pike Economic Development and Land Use Assessment (see **Image 3: Three- Lane Concept, White Horse Pike**). As a low-cost approach, the borough could employ [pop-up techniques](#) to temporarily test this three-lane concept (see also [AARP Pop-up Demonstration Tool Kit](#))

General Recommendation 2 – Somerdale Center Design Workshop

8. Somerdale should consider undertaking a design workshop specifically focused on identifying strategies to convert the White Horse Pike between Dartmouth Avenue and the future location of the Reserve at Grace into a town center with enlivened and inviting public spaces where active and passive recreation and social gathering can occur regularly. A design workshop does not have to be a costly exercise. The New Jersey chapter of the American Planning Association's [Community Planning Assistance Program](#) may be able to provide professional planning and community design service on a volunteer basis to conduct this workshop. Alternatively, this project might be a good fit for a graduate studio project in partnership with the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University.

Land Development Standards

9. In the proposed town center concept area, Somerdale should consider build-to lines along the White Horse Pike to establish a consistent street face. The build-to line should be set 10 feet back from the curb line to allow for a comfortably wide sidewalk,

street trees, street furniture, pedestrian-scale lighting, bike racks, and appropriately placed bus shelters. Side yard requirements within this district should be eliminated to create an uninterrupted street face, parking should be restricted to the rear of the building and shared parking standards should be developed. Where possible, vehicular access to parcels that front on the White Horse Pike should be limited to driveways off minor intersecting streets. Driveways on White Horse Pike should be eliminated where possible and new driveways to the pike should be disallowed to make walking safer and more comfortable. Although many parcels along the White Horse Pike within the proposed town center concept area are currently occupied by existing buildings, redevelopment is an ongoing process in any community and adopting zoning and design standards now that are intended to promote a downtown center will achieve that objective over time.

10. Somerdale's lot coverage requirement is appropriate for the smaller lot sizes typical in the borough's proposed town center concept area.
11. While a building height limit is not recommended, Somerville should consider a building-height minimum. To develop this along the White Horse Pike, and particularly in the proposed town center concept area, Somerdale should consider adopting the [US Green Building Council's standards](#) for walkable streets, which recommend a minimum building-height-to-street-width ratio of 1:3 (i.e., a minimum of one foot of building height for every three feet of street width).
12. Somerdale should consider establishing design standards specifically applicable to the proposed town center concept area. Such standards should be developed as a form-based code (see General Recommendation 2, below) that focus on enhancing the pedestrian experience, improving accessibility, mobility and connectivity. Such standards could include recommendations for streetscapes (trees, street furniture, pedestrian amenities, etc.), building facades (frontage requirements, window area, architectural materials), and signage (height, size, design). Somerdale should consider including funding for town center public improvements in its Capital Improvement Program to demonstrate public support and serve as a catalyst to attract private investment.

General Recommendation 3 – Adopt Form Based Codes

13. The [Form-Based Codes Institute](#) defines a form-based code as “a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation.” Such codes consider the relationships between buildings and the street, pedestrians and vehicles, public and private spaces and the size and types of streets and blocks. A form-based code also establishes rules for parking locations and limits, building frontages and entrance location(s), elevations, streetscapes, window transparency and block patterns (i.e., no oversized “super blocks”). Since form-based codes can be customized, the code for one area might be focused on preserving and enhancing the character of the neighborhood while the goal elsewhere might be to foster dramatic change and improvements. Often, a community's form-based code can accomplish both with a more tailored approach to community character than conventional zoning (see: [AARP Livability Fact Sheets](#)).



Housing

Land Development Standards that support a mix of housing options

14. The borough is making concerted effort to increase its affordable housing stock and is focusing on housing for older residents. Working closely with municipal officials, the proposed Reserve at Grace mixed-use project will provide 37 age-restricted units and offer Somerdale residents a permanent 15 percent reduction on rental rates.
15. Somerdale should consider exploring limited incentives, such as density bonuses, increased building height limits, or “of-right” zoning controls that could encourage a wider range of housing types (e.g., single-family attached units, town homes, and/or duplex units). Such units would be better suited to the needs of older residents seeking to downsize as well as Millennials seeking a first-time home.
16. Somerdale should consider adopting a universal design approach for all new and renovated residential development in the borough.
17. The borough should consider allowing accessory apartments by right in its residential zoning districts, subject to conditions that limit the impact such units might have on the surrounding neighborhood. Conditions might include: 1) a limit of one accessory apartment per lot; 2) a requirement that the principal dwelling or accessory apartment unit be owner-occupied; 3) a minimum lot size or house size; 4) a limit on the size of the accessory apartment to no more than a percentage (ex. 30 percent) of the gross floor area of the house; and/or 5) restricting new entrances to the side or rear of the home.
18. Somerdale should consider various strategies that provide affordable housing options such as home sharing, particularly for older populations, to enable them to continue to live in the borough.



Transportation

Walkability

19. Somerdale should consider identifying current and evaluating potential future pedestrian corridors where benches can be installed. The borough should consider using its SND classification to help market the town as a walkable neighborhood, particularly as it invests in “downtown” or “main street” destinations. Expenditures to improve walkability and connectivity could be included in the borough’s Capital Improvement Plan and phased in over time so that the investments are manageable. To track progress over time, the borough could post a map at the borough hall and on the borough’s web site of all proposed improvements. To celebrate its accomplishments and inform its residents, each year the map could be annotated to identify completed projects and those slated for the upcoming budget year.
20. Somerdale should consider adopting a resolution endorsing a Complete Streets policy and develop standards and guidelines for improvements consistent with Complete Streets principles along the borough’s major corridors, including the White Horse Pike, Warwick Road, Somerdale Road and Kennedy Boulevard. The Reserve at Grace development project offers an excellent test case to implement these principles. Driveways to parcels along the White Horse Pike should be consolidated and shared parking and potentially back alley access should be explored. Resources include the 2015 [*Complete Streets in South Jersey: Lessons Learned*](#) report by the Cross County Connection Transportation Management Association and the Camden County Complete Streets policy adopted in 2013.

21. Pedestrian safety improvements should be incorporated in all plans to address high-accident intersections on the state-maintained White Horse Pike and the several county roads in the borough.

Public Transportation

22. Somerdale should consider installing seating and shelters at its busiest bus stops, and eventually at all bus stops. NJ Transit will arrange for, and bear the cost of, [installing bus shelters](#) at bus stops provided that a local sponsor, public or private, will agree to accept responsibility for maintenance and liability. Sponsors are permitted to advertise on the structures.
23. The borough should consider performing a walkability assessment to determine whether older individuals, particularly those traveling from the west side of town, are hindered by the walking distance to bus stops or whether residents throughout the town are hindered by steep slopes on both sides of the White Horse Pike. A shuttle service throughout the borough is recommended to connect residents with bus stops, various other destinations and the broader Somerdale community. Organizations such as [NJ TIP](#), DVRPC, or the Camden County Planning Department may be able to assist the borough in undertaking a walkability assessment.
24. In the scope of the walkability assessment recommended above, Somerdale should assess whether older residents are deterred from traveling to the PATCO Lindenwold station either because the walk to a bus stop is too far or because it is necessary to take two busses to reach the station.

Streets

25. Somerdale should consider installing safety improvements for pedestrians traveling between the west and east sides of the borough, including along Atlantic Avenue and Warwick Road. Costs for the design and installation of crosswalks, sidewalks and a safe mode of pedestrian freight rail crossing could be included in the borough's capital improvement program and implemented gradually over time through the annual funding increments.
26. The scope of the above-recommended walkability study should include evaluation of pedestrian access to bus stops and important destinations within the borough such as the proposed town center concept area along the White Horse Pike, Cooper Towne center and borough facilities such as Borough Hall and the community/senior center.

Vehicle Lanes

27. Using the DVRPC 2003 White Horse Pike Economic Development and Land Use Assessment as a guide, Somerdale should enact an economic and community development strategy along the White Horse Pike that includes Complete Streets initiatives; traffic calming measures; reducing travel lanes along the section of the Pike that runs through the proposed town center concept area; reduction of street crossing times; enhanced pedestrian crosswalks and islands; and adoption of mixed-use zoning. The borough should also consider implementing these measures along other major through-roads such as Warwick Road, Kennedy Boulevard, Atlantic Avenue and Somerdale Road.
28. Somerdale should consider an assessment of local streets to determine where sight-line visibility for drivers, pedestrian safety and overall connectivity and walkability throughout the borough can be enhanced. The borough should lobby the state to reduce the speed limit of the along the section of the Pike that runs through the proposed town center concept area. The speed limit along the entire length of the Pike is presently posted at 40 mph, although members of the project steering committee indicated that drivers typically exceed this speed limit. Reducing the posted speed limit and installing complete streets designs would reduce accident risk, support redevelopment of the area as a town destination and allow for connectivity between east and west Somerdale.



Public Spaces and Amenities

Public Spaces, Facilities

29. Although Cooper Towne Center presently serves as a community gathering spot, there is potential to create a formal town center on the White Horse Pike. This town center concept is described in detail in Section 1 of this assessment, Mixed-Use Town Center.
30. Somerdale should consider conducting a survey of street furniture as part of a broader audit of walking conditions, particularly in those areas frequented by older adults, such as at the community center and at bus stops along the White Horse Pike. Benches and street trees should be placed on routes to key destinations to ensure safe walking conditions and shady rest stops.
31. Because the Somerdale Community Center may not be large enough to accommodate all types of events, the borough could maximize the utility of its joint use agreements with the Board of Education by using schools as satellite facilities from which to provide larger-scale programs and services, particularly those that serve older residents. The borough should also consider public-private partnership agreements with private facilities that can serve as community meeting locations. For example, the Somerdale Human Relations Commission has held several annual Multicultural Day celebrations at Flying Fish Brewing Company. Opportunity exists to formulate a joint use agreement for certain events to be held at this facility as well as the proposed Reserve at Grace facility.

Outdoor, Green Space

32. Somerdale should develop an open-space and recreation plan that outlines long term goals, sets a schedule to implement improvements, and delegates open space maintenance responsibility with the objective of developing an integrated pedestrian access network connecting all neighborhoods and commercial areas to all of the borough's parks, green spaces and community destinations. As part of this plan, the borough could consider acquiring or improving additional open space and creating more walking trails and recreational facilities. A possible list of such projects could include:
 - Acquiring currently undeveloped wooded lots at the end of Hunt Avenue. This would enable linking the Cooper Creek Trail with residents in the Chestnut Avenue neighborhood by extending the trail to Somerdale Road via Elm Avenue
 - Creating a walking trail through municipally owned block 70, lot 2 to improve connectivity between Oakland Avenue and Cedar Avenue and provide greater access to the proposed Reserve at Grace.
 - In conjunction with efforts to improve accessibility to the White Horse Pike, installing a paved pedestrian and bicycle path and developing public space using the Park School tract to connect the pike with Grace Street by acquiring vacant block 23 lot 12.
 - Incorporating open space amenities into any redevelopment plans for the designated Area in Need of Rehabilitation on Somerdale Road, near the RiteAid shopping center on Warwick Road and along the northern boundary of the town on the Green Acres tract between Atlantic Avenue and Odlen Avenue.
 - Using municipal properties along the freight railroad south of Somerdale Avenue to provide open-space amenities for the neighborhood south of Somerdale Road and west of Atlantic Avenue.

33. Somerdale should consider updating its stormwater management regulations to encourage the use of green infrastructure (see A Few Ways to Strengthen Your Town's Stormwater Ordinance, below). It should also integrate green infrastructure into roadway design in conjunction with the implementation of a Complete Streets policy. Doing so would enhance the pedestrian environment and expand the community's inventory of natural resources. The [Water Resources Program](#) at Rutgers Cooperative Extension is a good source of information and technical assistance. The New Jersey Future Municipal [Green Infrastructure Toolkit](#) includes detailed information and a variety of tools that cities and towns can use to plan, implement, and sustain green infrastructure in public- and private-sector development projects.

Where do we go from here, next steps?

Undertaking each of the recommendations listed above and described in detail in the preceding sections of this assessment will entail a series of administrative actions, policy changes, financial investments, planning, design and construction initiatives. This will be a long-term commitment and will require the use of a considerable amount of community resources both financial and personnel. However, regardless of the direction decision-makers elect to go, the first step in undertaking the recommendations is to develop a detailed implementation program that reflects the goals and aspirations of the municipality and defines community priorities. Setting such priorities will require the municipality to determine which projects are most critical, which ones can be undertaken most readily, and which projects are going to have the greatest impact on improving community aging-friendliness. A complete implementation program encompasses:

1. a breakdown of tasks to accomplish the recommendation;
2. a phasing program and schedule specifying when each task is undertaken in a logical sequence;
3. an estimate of the costs of each action, including planning, design, construction and maintenance where relevant;
4. a likely source of project funding;
5. the identification of who will be responsible to marshal the project through the implementation process, including building necessary community support and engagement.

Sources

- Center for Cities & Schools, University of California, Berkeley <http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/>
- Where We Are Growing? Implications of Recent Demographic Trends in New Jersey, New Jersey Future, September 2017, <https://www.njfuture.org/research-publications/research-reports/implications-of-recent-demographic-trends/>
- Creating Places to Age in New Jersey, New Jersey Future, January 2014 <http://www.njfuture.org/research-publications/research-reports/places-to-age-nj/>
- Creating Places To Age in New Jersey: Housing Affordability and Aging-Friendly Communities, New Jersey Future, December 2015 <https://www.njfuture.org/research-publications/research-reports/places-to-age-2/>
- Creating Places to Age: A Municipal Guide to Best Land-Use Practices, New Jersey Future, January, 2014 <http://www.njfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Creating-Places-To-Age-in-New-Jersey-Municipal-Best-Practices.pdf>
- New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center, Voorhees Transportation Center, Rutgers University <http://njbikeped.org/>
- Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, World Health Organization (WHO), 2007 http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf
- Accessory Dwelling Units, Model State and Local Ordinance, AARP, 2000 <https://www.njfuture.org/research-publications/research-reports/implications-of-recent-demographic-trends/>
- Age-Friendly Communities, Municipal Implementation Tool #30, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), November 2017 <https://www.dvrpc.org/Reports/MIT030.pdf>
- The Broader Connection between Public Transportation, Energy Conservation and Green House Gas Reduction, Linda Bailey, Patricia L. Mokhtarian, Ph.D., Andrew Little, ICF International, February 2008 https://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/land_use.pdf

PLEASE NOTE

In addition to the sources listed above, more than 50 terms throughout this report are [hyperlinked](#) to resources that provide additional information about programs, regulations, recommended strategies, pertinent research materials, and/or articles that supplement narratives throughout this document. Readers who wish to obtain additional information or source documents are encouraged to click on and explore the links.



About New Jersey Future

New Jersey Future promotes growth that fosters vibrant cities and towns, protects natural lands and waterways, enhances transportation choices, provides access to safe, affordable and aging-friendly neighborhoods and promotes a strong economy. The organization does this through original research, innovative policy development and advocacy, strong partnerships and hands-on technical assistance. <https://www.njfuture.org/>

About the Authors

David Kutner PP AICP, Planning Manager

David manages New Jersey Future's land use planning work, emphasizing initiatives to create healthy, active communities for all ages. He is working with municipalities throughout the state to introduce them to the relationship between the built environment and health by considering the connection among land-use development, affordable housing options, and age-friendly places. David has also worked extensively with coastal communities vulnerable to sea-level rise. For the past 5 years he has managed New Jersey Future's Local Recovery Planning Manager program, providing ongoing and direct assistance to municipalities seeking to rebuild from the devastating damage of Hurricane Sandy. His work has focused on helping communities recover from extensive storm damage but also encouraging them to consider the implications of projected sea-level rise and how they might plan for and respond to the challenges of impending flood inundation risks due to a changing climate. He is a licensed professional planner with more than 30 years of land use and environmental planning experience. He has worked as a private planning consultant and held positions in local, county, and state planning agencies in New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Florida.

Tanya Rohrbach, Community Planner

Tanya uses her experience ensuring accuracy and targeted approaches to land-use initiatives to help communities implement smart planning policies and practices that foster resilient and

vibrant places for all community members. Her main focus areas include climate change adaptation and aging-friendly neighborhoods. Prior to joining New Jersey Future, she was a senior planner in the Somerset County Planning Division, where she managed the division's GIS initiatives, supervised GIS staff and assisted with development of regional plans and policies. She was responsible for data analyses to perform regional wastewater planning, flood risk research, and transportation assessments, and to provide local technical assistance. Tanya also has experience working at New Jersey land trusts, where she identified and prioritized lands for preservation at local and regional scales. She holds a master of science degree in Geography and a B.A. in Biology, both from Rutgers University.

Tim Evans, Director of Research

Tim Evans is responsible for the original research and data analysis that support New Jersey Future's policy development and ensures that all of the organization's products and media communications are quantitatively accurate and defensible. He frequently provides data and advice to colleague organizations, serving as an informal research consultant to the smart growth community at large. His analysis and commentary have been featured by a wide range of state and national media outlets. He holds a B.S. in mathematics from Ursinus College, an M.S. in statistics from the University of Virginia, and a master's in city and regional planning from the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University. Prior to joining New Jersey Future, he worked for six years as a mathematical statistician for the Bureau of the Census in Washington, D.C.

Additional Team Members

Elyse Perweiler, MPP, RN

Elyse is the Director of the New Jersey Area Health Education Center and the Associate Director, Planning, Development and Public Policy, New Jersey Institute for Successful Aging (NJISA) at Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine. Elyse was the former Chair of the Program Directors Constituency Group and the NAO Inter-Professional Education (IPE) Task Force. She currently represents AHEC on the DHHS-HRSA Advisory Committee on Interdisciplinary Community-Based Linkages. Ms. Perweiler is involved in inter-professional education, team-based care, and inter-professional learning communities.

Theresa DiVito, Chief Creative Officer

Founding principal of Land Dimensions Inc., a land planning and civil engineering firm that has been working with communities throughout South Jersey since 1979.

COMMUNITY PHOTOS



Transportation

Image 1: Pedestrian/Vehicular Conflicts – White Horse Pike - Although sidewalks do exist along the entire length of the White Horse Pike, they are often interrupted by wide driveways which present pedestrian/ vehicular conflicts. Consolidating entrances and moving parking to the rear of buildings facing the pike or providing alley access behind businesses would improve walkability considerably. Several side streets already provide back entrance to businesses on the WHP. In addition to connecting adjacent back alleys, consolidating access to multiple businesses would allow for sidewalk widening and improvements.



Image 2: Lack of Crosswalks – Warwick Road - Residential areas of Somerdale tend to not have crosswalks, even along the relatively high-traffic Warwick Road. Crosswalks on side streets and across Warwick Road would enhance the walkability and accessibility to Nature Trail Park from the adjacent neighborhoods.

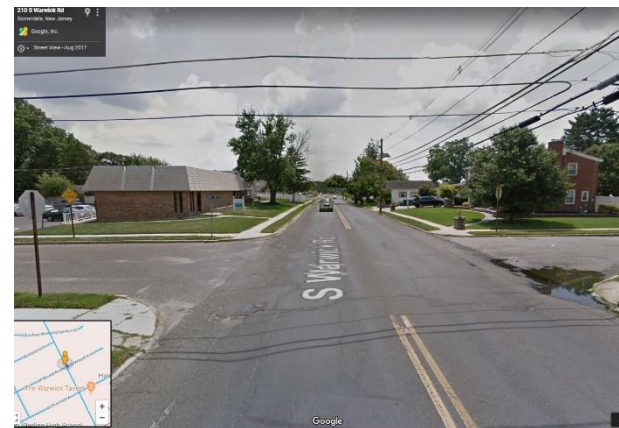


Image 3: Lack of Sidewalks Near Municipal Building – E. Maiden Ln., Juniper Ave., Cedar Ave. - Crosswalks and pedestrian walkways are prominent and well maintained at Cooper Towne Center complex. Kennedy Boulevard has visible and well-maintained crosswalks near the municipal complex, however there are sidewalk gaps on adjacent side streets that force people to walk in the street to reach the municipal building



Image 4: NJ Transit bus stops along White Horse Pike - Thirteen NJ Transit bus stops have been placed across nearly every other intersection within the borough along the White Horse Pike, but only one of these provides any shelter or seating.

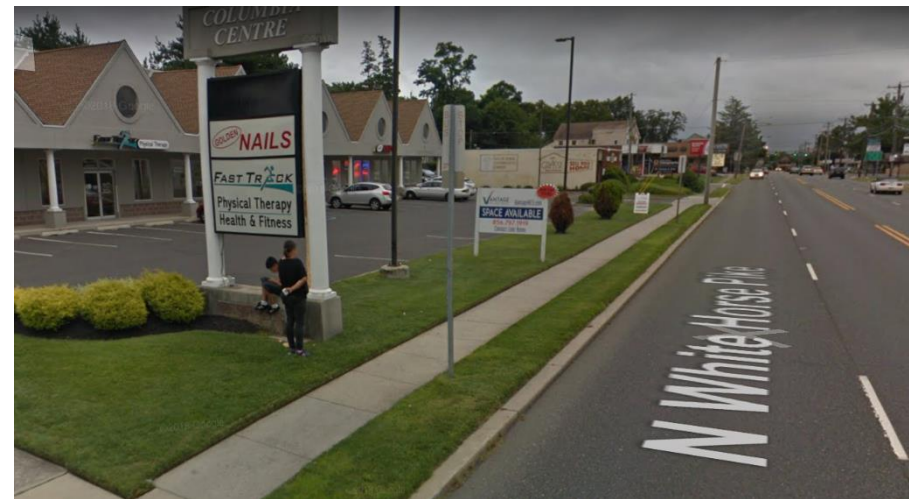


Image 5: Bike Lanes End Abruptly on Atlantic Avenue - A bicycle lane has been installed on Atlantic Avenue, but it ends abruptly before reaching Somerdale Road to the south and the intersection of Warwick Road to the north, which has poor visibility.

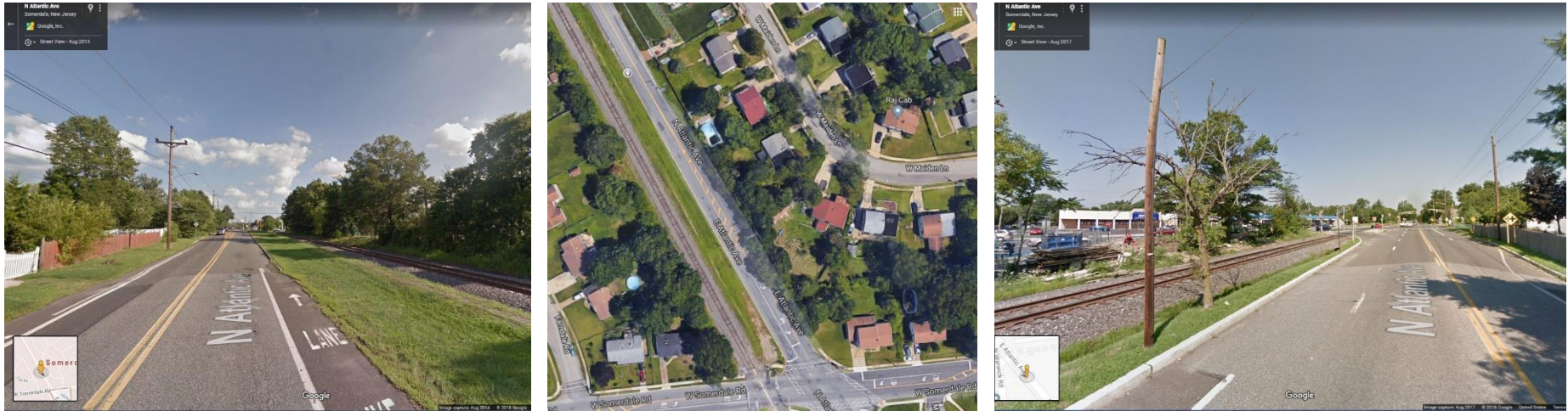


Image 6: White Horse Pike Two-Lane Section in Audubon, Haddon Heights, Berlin - Reducing the White Horse Pike to a two-lane roadway, with a median turn lane, would provide opportunity to implement Complete Streets design principles and improve pedestrian safety and access

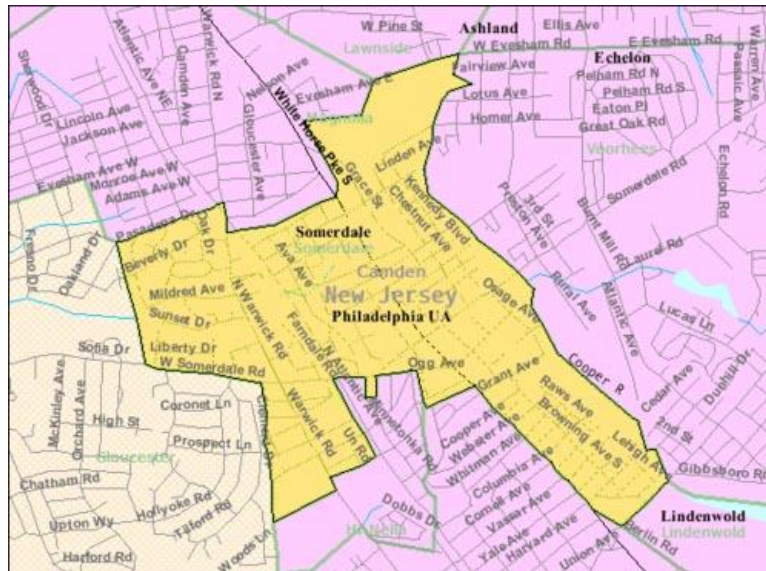


COMMUNITY PROFILE



Borough of Somerdale Municipal Profile

October 2018



Prepared by



INTRODUCTION

New Jersey Future has assembled a municipal profile in conjunction with the **Creating Great Places to Age Initiative** that is being undertaken with funding from the **Community Foundation of South Jersey's Aging Innovation Fund**, whose support made this project possible. The profile is intended to offer a current statistical snapshot of key demographic and economic characteristics of the Borough of Somerdale, particularly as they relate to the borough's older residents. To provide context, Somerdale's values for the data items presented here are compared to statewide values.

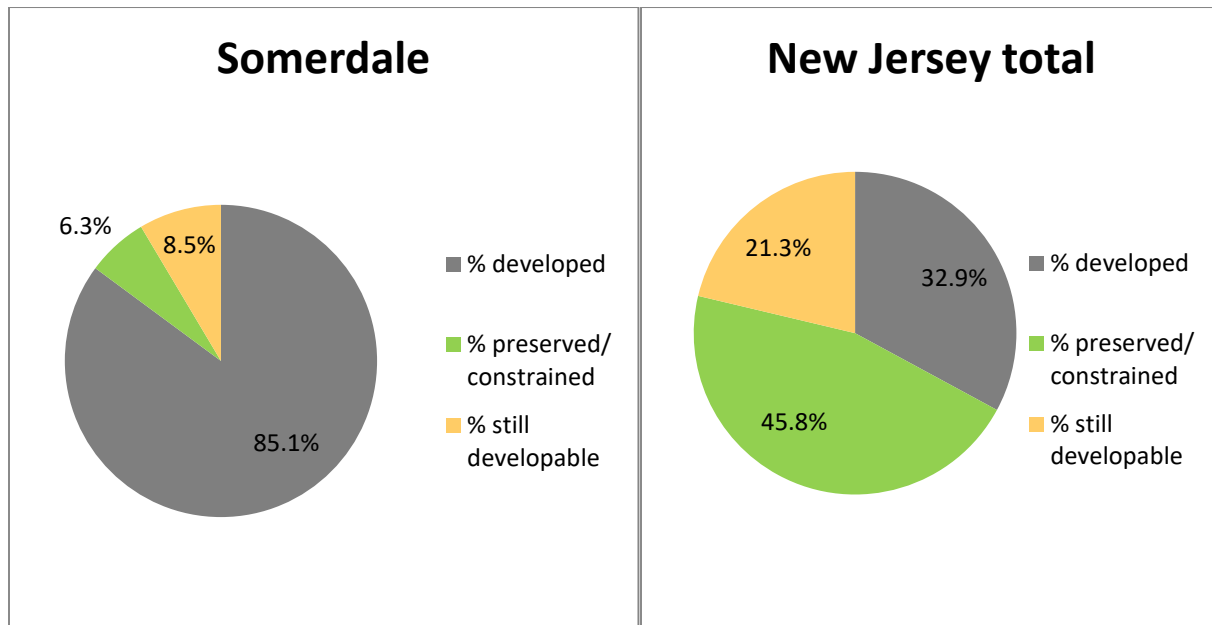
The following data items are presented in this handout. *Except where otherwise indicated, the data source is the Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/news/data-releases.2015.html>.*

- 2007 land-use patterns: % developed, % preserved or constrained, and % still developable [*source: municipal-level data provided to New Jersey Future by the authors of Urban Growth and Open Space Loss in New Jersey from 1986 through 2007, produced jointly by researchers from Rowan and Rutgers universities – project overview page at <http://gis.rowan.edu/projects/luc/>*]
- % built-out (developed acres as % of all developable, i.e. with preserved/constrained lands removed from denominator) [*computed using data from the Rowan/Rutgers project*]
- Net activity density (population + employment per developed square mile) [*computed using the Rowan/Rutgers data on developed acreage, Census Bureau population data, and employment data from the New Jersey Department of Labor*]
- Street network density (route-miles of local road per square mile) [*land area data from Rowan/Rutgers; local road mileage computed from a database of road segments provided to New Jersey Future by Michael Baker Corp., a consultant to NJDOT*]
- Presence of a center (New Jersey Future methodology, using lists of places identified as centers by the State Development and Redevelopment Plan or the master plans for the Pinelands and Highlands, and a list provided by the Department of Community Affairs' "Main Street New Jersey" program of municipalities having a business improvement district)
- Total population
- Population by age group
- % living in poverty: all residents and residents 65+
- Median household income
- Household income distribution
- % vacant housing units
- % owner vs renter
- Living arrangements of the 65+ population
- Housing units by type / # of units in structure
- Average residential value [*source: Rutgers Center for Government Services [New Jersey Data Book](#)*]

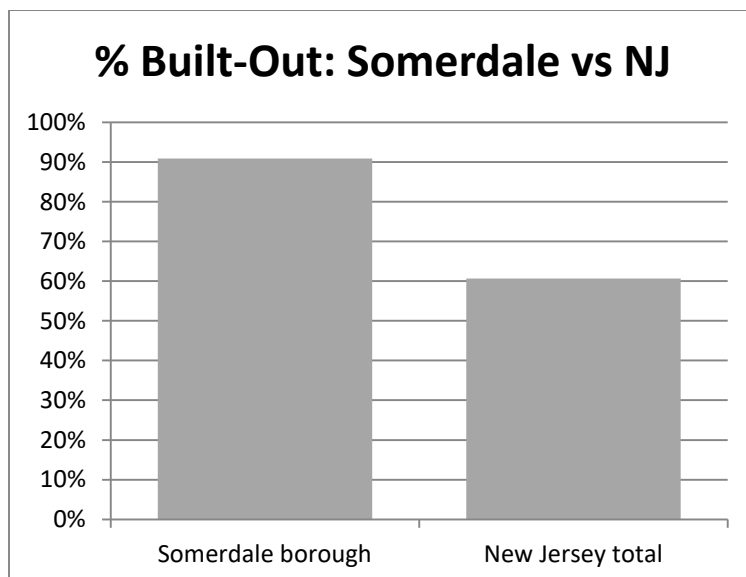
- Years of median household income to purchase average-valued home *[computed using average residential value from the New Jersey Data Book and median household income from the 2015 ACS]*
- Median gross rent
- % of households that are cost-burdened: all households and households headed by someone 65+

2007 LAND USE PATTERNS

Somerdale is much more developed than the state as a whole. A little more than half of what remains is still developable, with the remainder being either permanently preserved (as parkland, for example) or undevelopable due to environmental constraints. Because most of the borough's land is already developed, most new growth is going to happen via redevelopment.



In fact, Somerdale is 90.9 percent built-out – that is, most of its land that can be built on (excluding land that has already been preserved or is environmentally constrained) has already been built on.



SMART-GROWTH METRICS

New Jersey Future has developed three municipal-level metrics of compactness and walkability: net activity density (population + jobs per developed square mile, for 2007), presence of a mixed-use center, and street network density (as measured by route-miles of local road per square mile).

Somerdale's **net activity density** is 5,966 people + jobs per developed square mile, ranking it in New Jersey Future's "moderate suburban" category, the fourth-highest out of six categories. The median net activity density among all 565 municipalities in the state is 5,244, so Somerdale's net activity density is slightly higher than the municipal median.

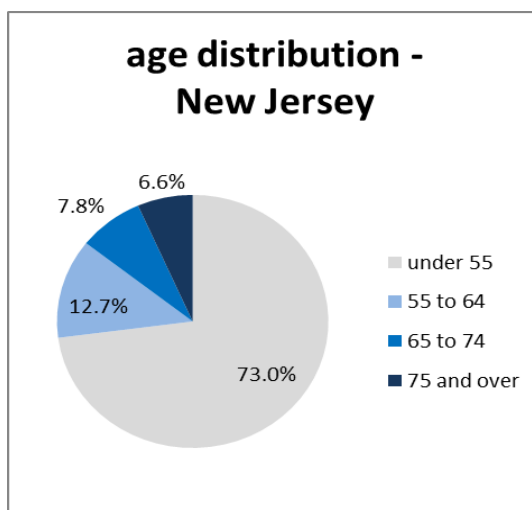
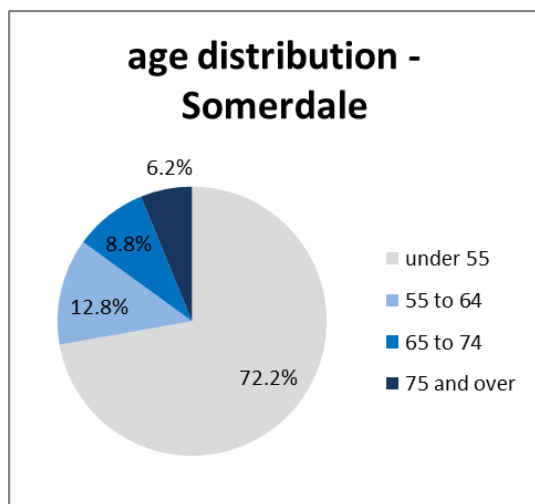
New Jersey Future characterizes Somerdale as "**no centers identified,**" meaning that it does not have a traditional mixed-use downtown, something the borough's leadership is seeking to address.

Somerdale's **street network density** is 16.2 local road route-miles per square mile, putting it in the "high" category, the second highest, providing the borough a good framework from which to build a downtown center. The median over all 565 municipalities in the state is 9.75.

TOTAL POPULATION (2017) = 5,508

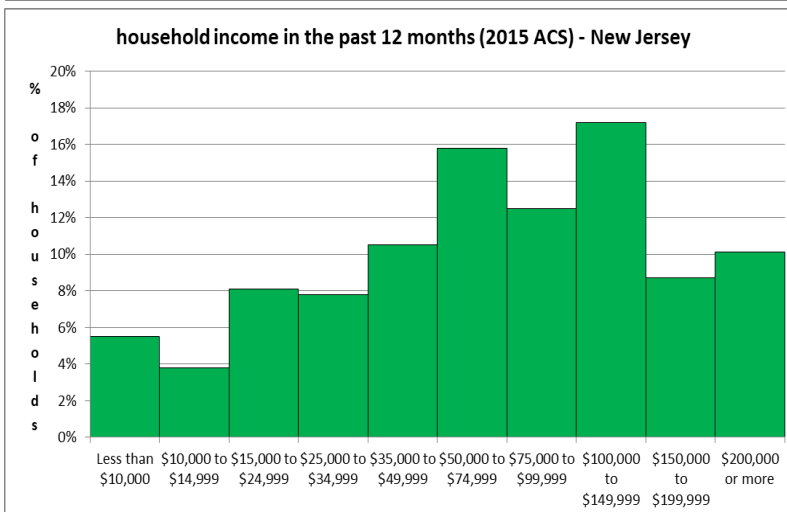
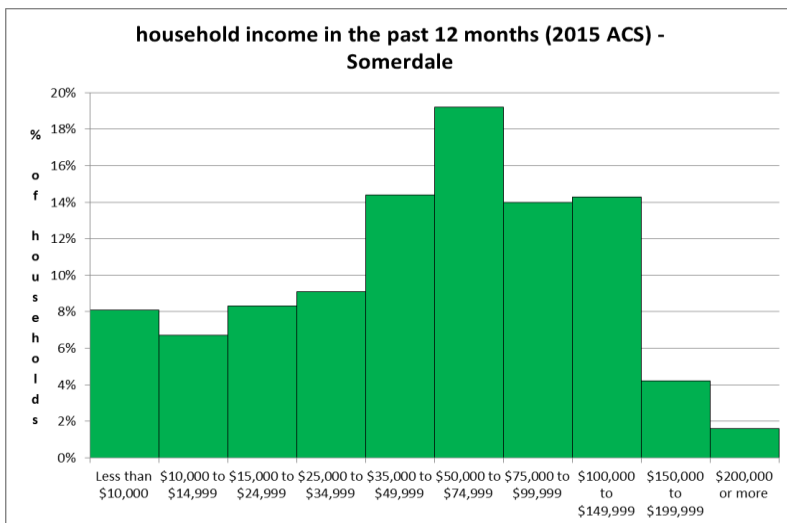
AGE DISTRIBUTION

Somerdale's percentage of residents 65 and older is very similar to that of the state as a whole, with the 75+ age range slightly underrepresented and the 65-to-74 range slightly overrepresented.



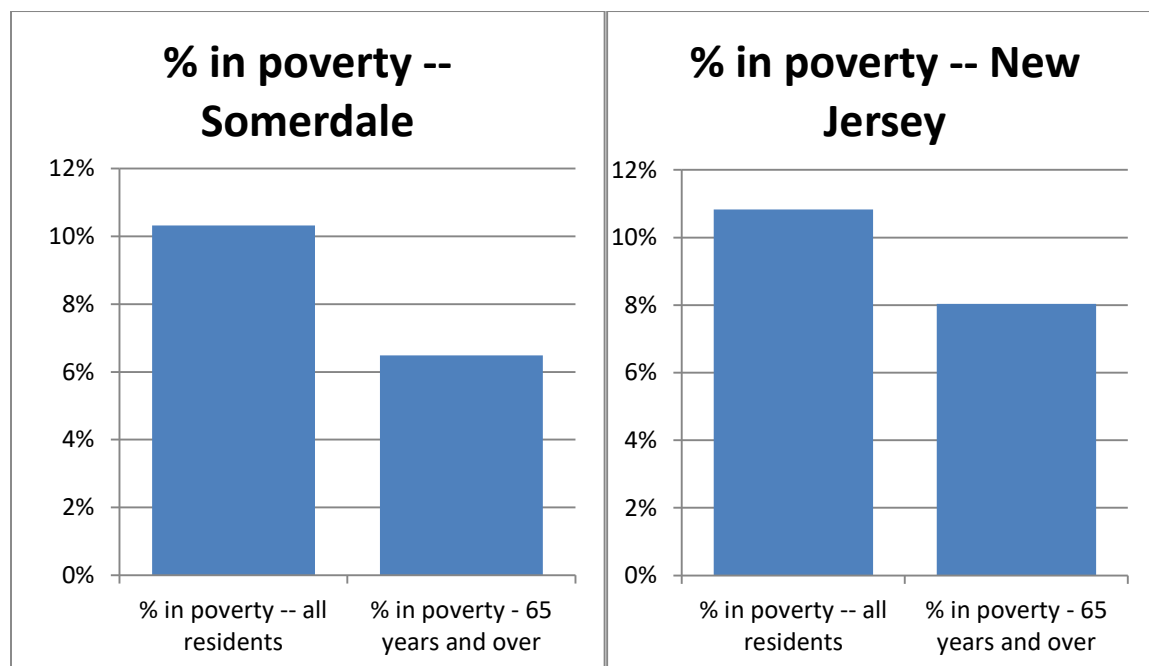
INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Somerdale's income distribution is more pronouncedly middle-class than the state as a whole, with a peak in the \$50K - \$75K range, fewer households in the uppermost ranges, and slightly more households in the income ranges below \$15,000.



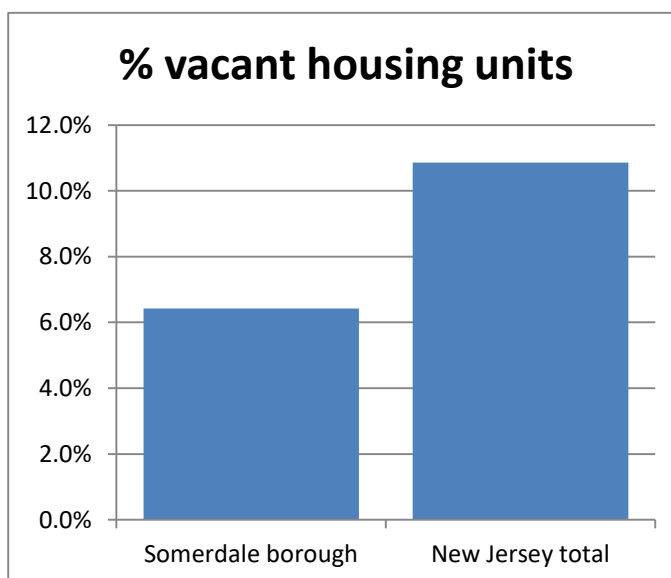
POVERTY

Somerdale's overall poverty rate of 10.3 percent is similar to the statewide rate of 10.8 percent. Among people age 65 and over, Somerdale's poverty rate is lower than for the general population – 6.5 percent, which is also lower than the statewide poverty rate of 8.0 percent for the 65+ population. Somerdale's 65+ residents are somewhat less likely to be living in poverty than is true statewide.



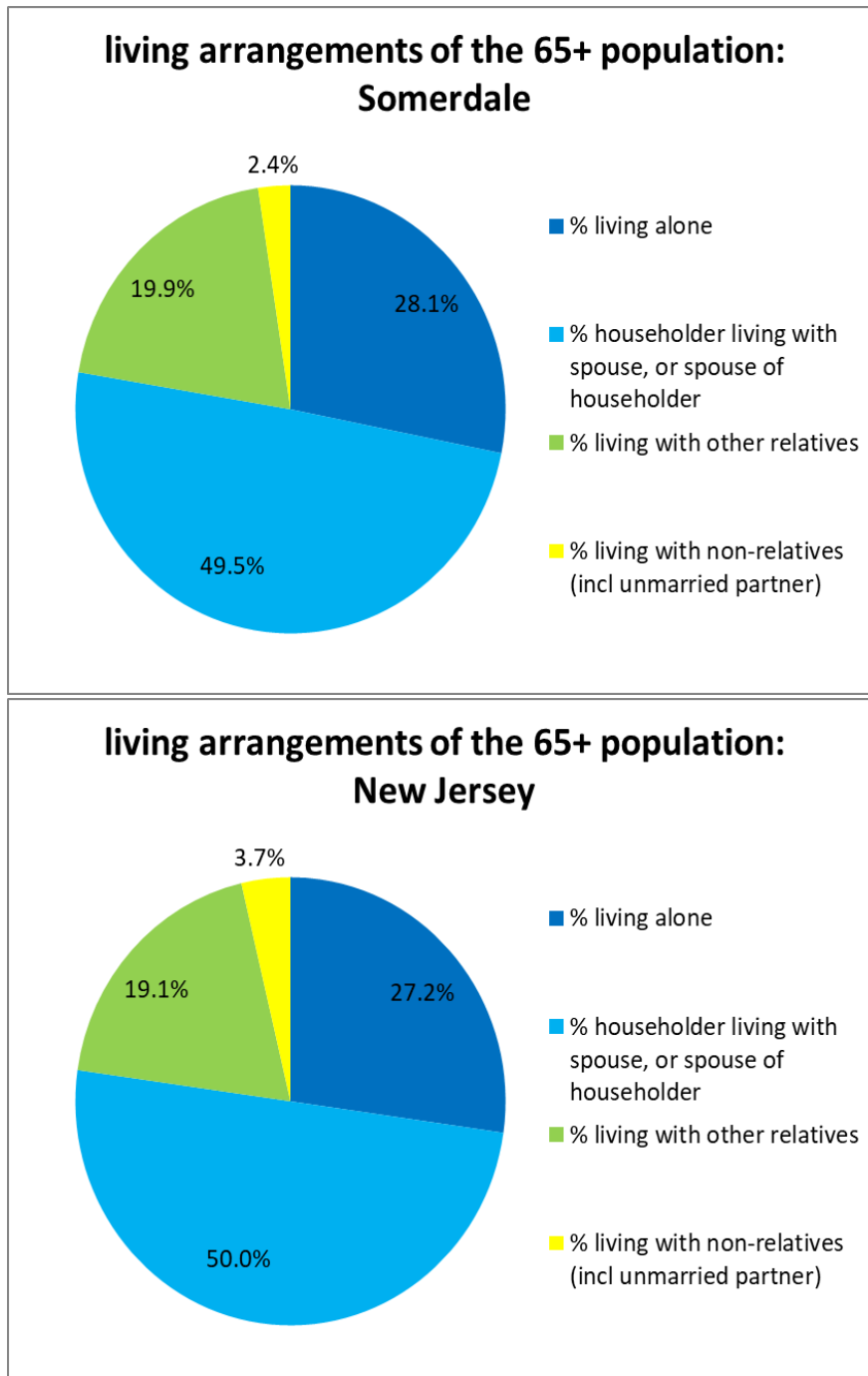
HOUSING VACANCY

Somerdale's housing vacancy rate is a little less than two-thirds the statewide rate: 6.4 percent vs. 10.9 percent statewide.



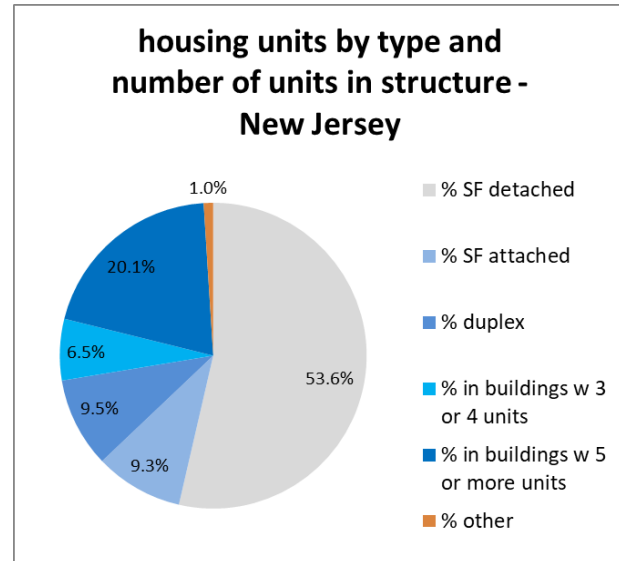
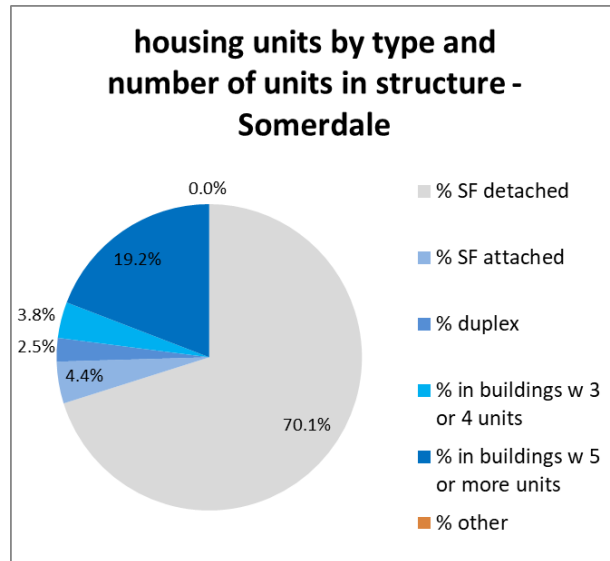
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS/HOUSEHOLDER STATUS

Somerdale's profile of the living arrangements of 65-and-over residents, including the percentage living alone, closely mirrors that of the state as a whole.



HOUSING STOCK

Somerdale's housing stock is dominated by single-family detached houses (70.1% of all units). But it does have a sizable share of larger apartment buildings: 19.2% of all housing units are in such structures, nearly equal to the statewide rate. It has a much lower share of rowhouses and townhouses ("single-family attached") than the rest of the state – 4.4% vs. 9.3% -- and duplexes are also much less prevalent in Somerdale than statewide (only 2.5% vs. 9.5% for the state as a whole).



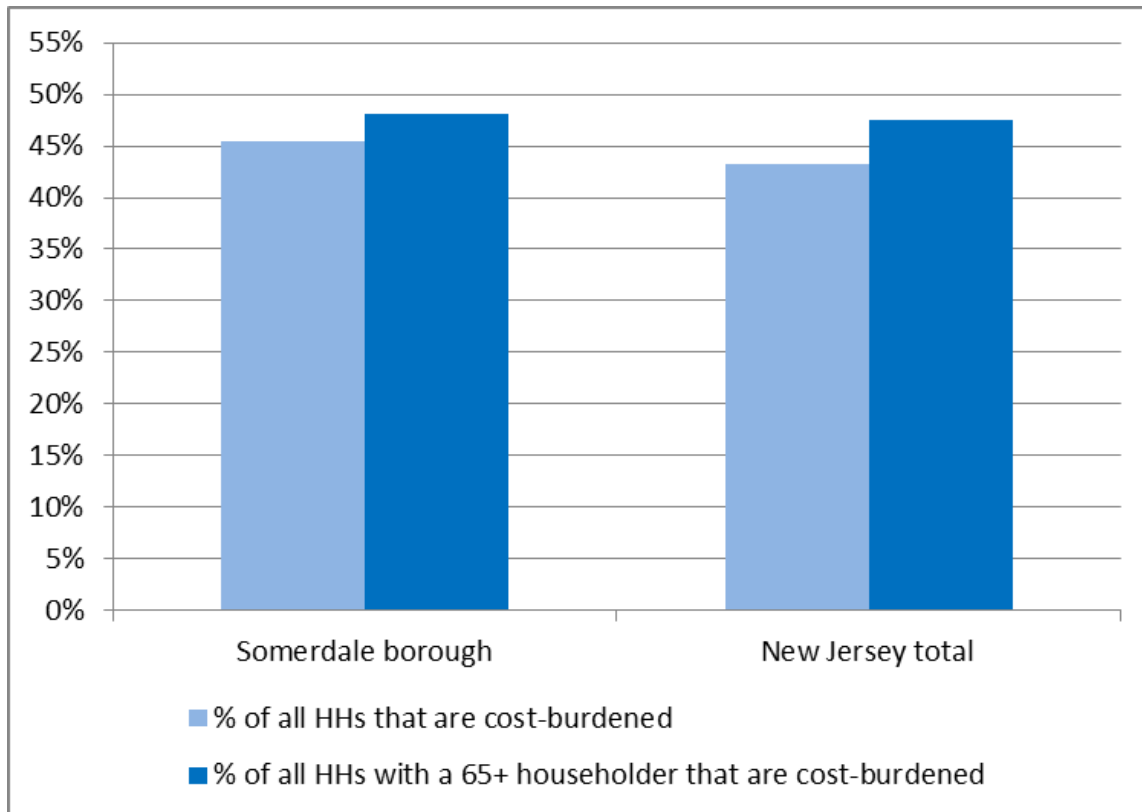
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

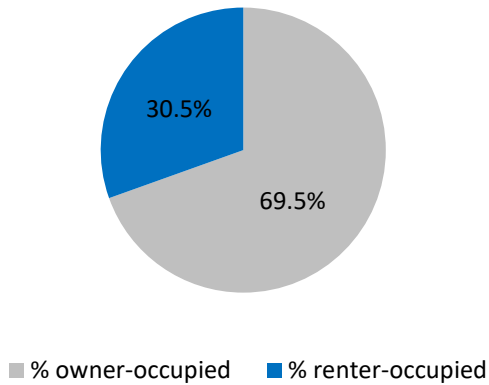
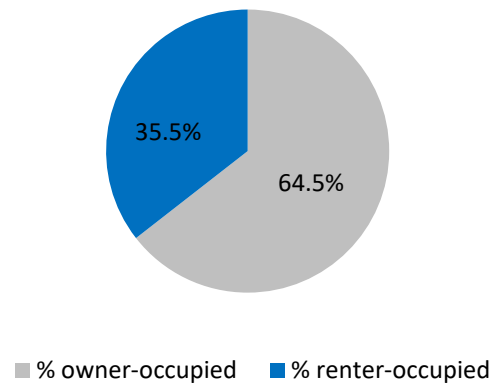
Somerdale's median household income of \$51,633 is less than three-quarters of the statewide median. But its average home is worth only about 40 percent of the average home for the whole state. As a result, the ratio of home values to income in Somerdale is notably lower than in the state as a whole: Statewide, the median household needs just less than 5 years' worth of income to purchase the average-priced home, whereas in Somerdale it is less than 3 years. Because of Somerdale's relatively low home values, and because the statewide median household income is higher, the median statewide household would need less than 2 years' worth of income to purchase the average Somerdale home, making Somerdale a relative bargain for households looking to move in from other parts of the state.

Jurisdiction	Median Household Income, 2015	Average Residential Value	Years of Local Median HH Income to Purchase Average Home Value	Years of State Median HH income to Purchase Average Home Value
Somerdale borough	\$51,633	\$140,843	2.73	1.95
New Jersey	\$72,093	\$352,183	4.89	4.89

HOUSING COST

Somerdale's rate of households that are housing cost-burdened (i.e. paying at least 30% of their gross income on housing costs) is slightly worse than the statewide rate – 45.5% vs. 43.2%. When looking only at households headed by someone 65 or older, Somerdale is again marginally worse – 48.2% vs. 47.6%. In Somerdale and statewide, the percentage of cost-burdened senior-headed households is 3 or 4 percentage points higher than the cost-burdened rate for the general population.



**households by owner
vs renter: Somerdale****households by owner
vs renter: New Jersey**

Roughly three in ten (30.5 percent) of Somerdale households are renters, slightly below the statewide rate of 35.5 percent. Somerdale's rents are generally much lower than statewide: Median gross rent for Somerdale is \$893 per month, compared to a median of \$1,192 for the state, making Somerdale's median rent about 25 percent lower than statewide.

**Median Gross Rent (\$\$),
Somerdale vs. NJ**