

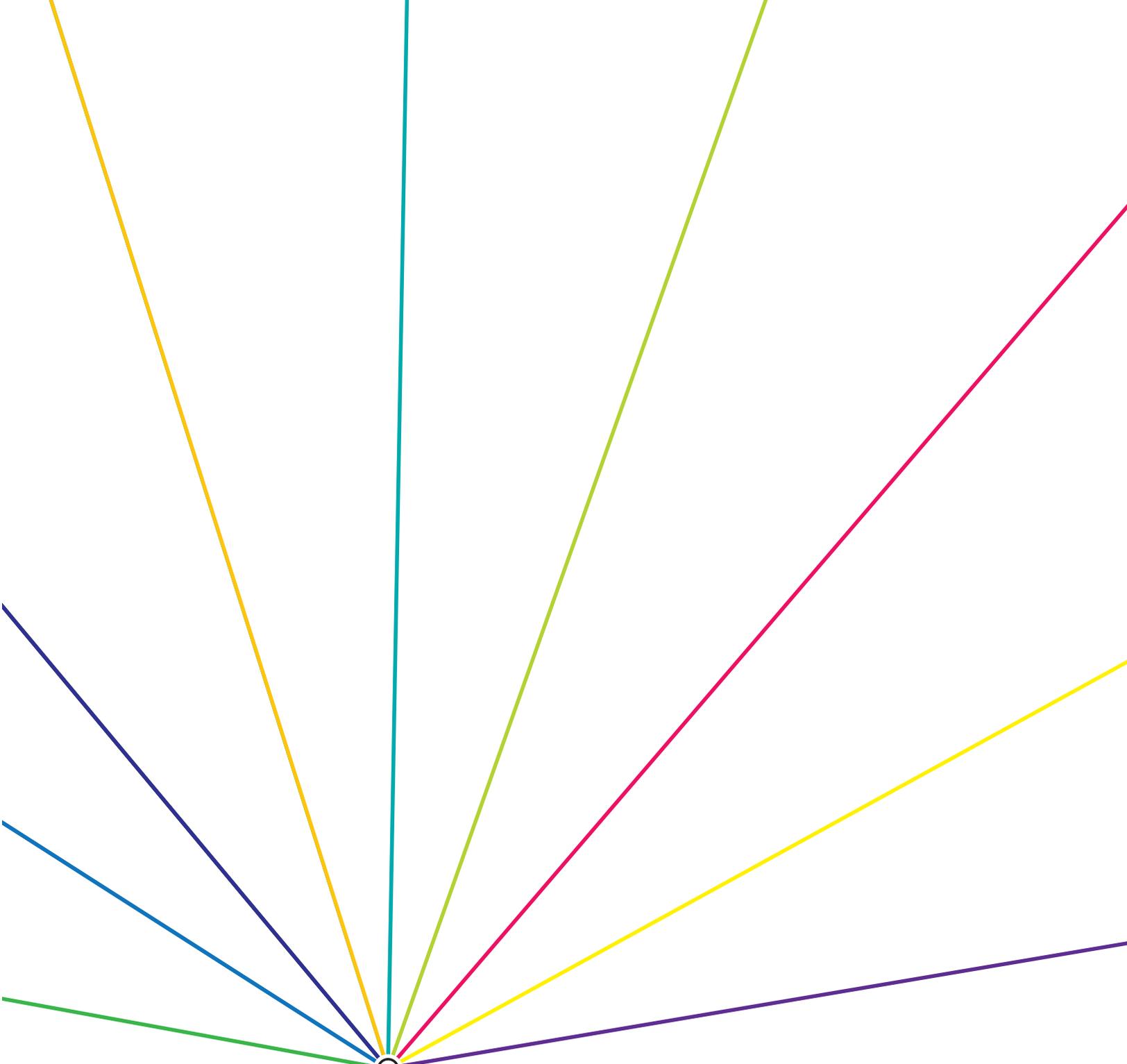


Edison

Township Master Plan



Prepared for the Edison Planning Board
Adopted - July 15, 2024



Ed son
Township Master Plan

MASTER PLAN

Township of Edison

Middlesex County, NJ

Prepared for:

Edison Planning Board
100 Municipal Boulevard
Edison, New Jersey 08817

By:

BFJ Planning
115 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10003
212.353.7474

Adopted on July 15, 2024 by the Edison Township Planning Board



Susan Favate, PP, AICP
License No. 33L100613100



The original of this document has been signed and sealed in accordance with New Jersey Law

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mayor

Sam Joshi

Planning Board

Leonard Sendelsky, Chairman

J.P. Singh, Vice-Chairman

Ronald Lai

John Soltez

John Poyner

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Lav Patel, Alternate Member

Cassandra Augustine, Secretary

Ronald Cucchiaro, Weiner Law Group, Attorney

Henry D. Bignell, Sr., PP, Consultant Planner

Charlie Carley, D&R Engineering, Engineer

Master Plan Committee

Robert Diehl, Chief of Staff

Leonard Sendelsky, Planning Board

Ronald Lai, Planning Board

Dennis Pipala, Planning Board (former)

Walter Stochel, Open Space Advisory Committee

Joe Luistro, Former Police Officer

Joyce Ship-Freeman, Township Council (former)

Gail Pawlikowski, Edison Public Schools

Sandeep Ramakrishna, Resident

Jennifer Harrison, Middlesex County

Ken Jobson, Resident

Bruce Diamond, Resident

Consultant Team

BFJ Planning

Susan Favate, PP, AICP

Noah Levine, PP, AICP

Peter Van den Kooy, PP, AICP

Emily Tolbert, AICP

Christine Jimenez, LEED GA

Urbanomics

Tina Lund, AICP

Peter Furst, AICP



CONTENTS

1/	Introduction	5
2/	Population and Socioeconomic Trends	23
3/	Land Use and Built Environment	37
4/	Transportation and Mobility	61
5/	Parks, Open Space, and Natural Resources.....	87
6/	Community Facilities and Cultural Resources	103
7/	Infrastructure, Resilience, and Sustainability	127
8/	Land Use Plan	145
9/	Implementation and Action Plan	191

1/ INTRODUCTION



MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

The Township of Edison has embarked on an approximately year-long planning process to develop its new full master plan since 2003. A master plan, ultimately adopted by the Planning Board, is a document that guides the Township's planning efforts for the next 10 years. The plan provides elected officials and administrators with a roadmap for making decisions on land use, zoning, and capital investment. The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires each municipality to re-examine its master plan at least every 10 years. Edison most recently completed a master plan re-examination in 2011.

The Township retained BFJ Planning, a planning consulting firm, to assist with developing the new Edison Master Plan. The first phase of the planning process involved conducting research, data analysis, mapping, and meetings with community stakeholders. The consultant

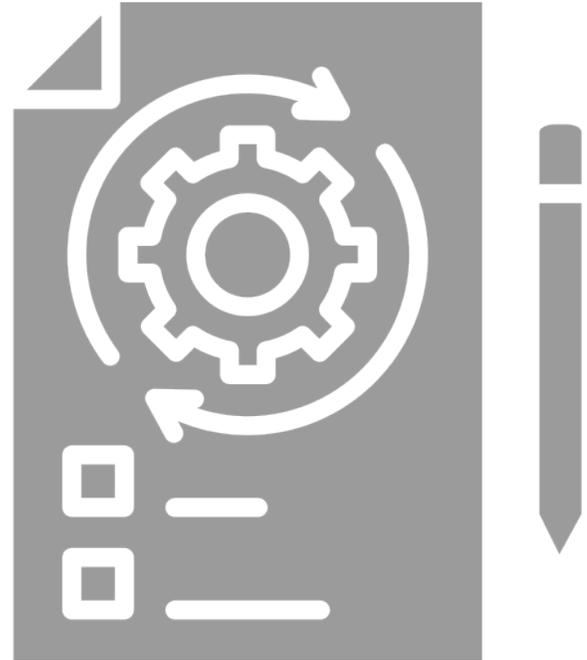
team met Township staff, members of boards and committees, and other representatives of stakeholder groups, to learn about the issues of importance and key initiatives. In addition, there was an interactive online "Ideas Wall," an in-person public workshop, and a series of virtual neighborhood meetings, to hear directly from the larger Edison community. The information gathered was compiled to create this report referred to as Edison Today. The report includes a community socioeconomic profile and covers existing conditions for land use and the built environment; transportation and mobility; open space, recreation, and environment; and infrastructure, community facilities, and cultural resources. This report aimed to establish a planning baseline of existing conditions to lay the groundwork for assessing issues and opportunities within the subsequent full Master Plan document.

Photo above courtesy of Edison Township

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A Master Plan is a “blueprint” for a municipality. It outlines a community’s vision for the future, and documents the goals, objectives, issues and recommendations of the community at that point in time. It is not a law, but it provides guidance to elected officials and decision-makers when they make land use, zoning and capital investment decisions. A master plan should document community-established principles, guidelines, and strategies for the orderly and balanced future economic, social, physical, environmental, and fiscal development of the Township.

A Master Plan is organized into Chapters or “Elements.” The Municipal Land Use Law provides guidance as to the required and optional components of a Master Plan (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89). Once a Master Plan has been adopted, a municipality may update Elements one at a time, as needed.



HOW IS A MASTER PLAN USED?

The **Mayor and Township Administration** use the Master Plan to identify or confirm priorities, policy direction, and determine how best to allocate staff time and resources.

The **Township Council** uses the Master Plan when adopting new laws and ordinances, allocating budgets, and making spending decisions. For example, the decision to change the zoning code, fund new programs, build capital improvements, fund property acquisitions, and so on, should be consistent with the Master Plan’s goals and objectives, or designed to effectuate its recommendations. As the body that adopts zoning ordinances, the Council should understand that the Land Use Element of the Master Plan is the foundation establishing the Zoning Map and Zoning Regulations.

The **Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment** use the Master Plan to guide their decisions when reviewing development applications.

New development should be consistent with the goals, objectives and recommendations of the Land Use Element of the Master Plan.

The **Planning Board**, as the agency tasked with preparing and adopting the Master Plan, also uses it to guide its development and adoption of Edison’s Capital Improvement Plan.

Other **State, County and Local governmental agencies** use Edison’s Master Plan to understand Township priorities and to coordinate projects that may impact each other’s borders.

Businesses and investors use the Master Plan to understand where the Township is going to invest its resources.

Edison **residents** can use the Master Plan to hold their elected representatives accountable to the community-driven vision.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public outreach, input, and engagement is an essential part of the Edison Master Plan. Public input helps to inform what issues the Township needs to address and what opportunities there are to address these needs. The outreach process helps to understand Edison from those that know it best – those that live and work in the community. The community engagement strategy included a multi-faceted effort to reach as many stakeholders as possible.

Public workshops (2)

The public workshops were intended to provide a space for participants to learn about the process, and provide guidance and feedback on draft recommendations for topics covered in the plan. Each workshop included a presentation of work completed to date followed by interactive activities to solicit feedback from participants. The first workshop on October 19, 2022 was attended by approximately 30 people. The purpose of this meeting was to inform the public about the Master Plan and to begin the discussion of what Edison should focus on for the next 10 years. At the second workshop on April 19, 2023, the consultant team to presented draft strategies and recommendations for topics covered in the plan.

Virtual Ideas Wall

The ideas wall was a forum that allowed participants to post ideas, respond to the comments of others, and up- or down-vote comments that they agree or disagree with. A total of 220 comments were received over a two-month period.



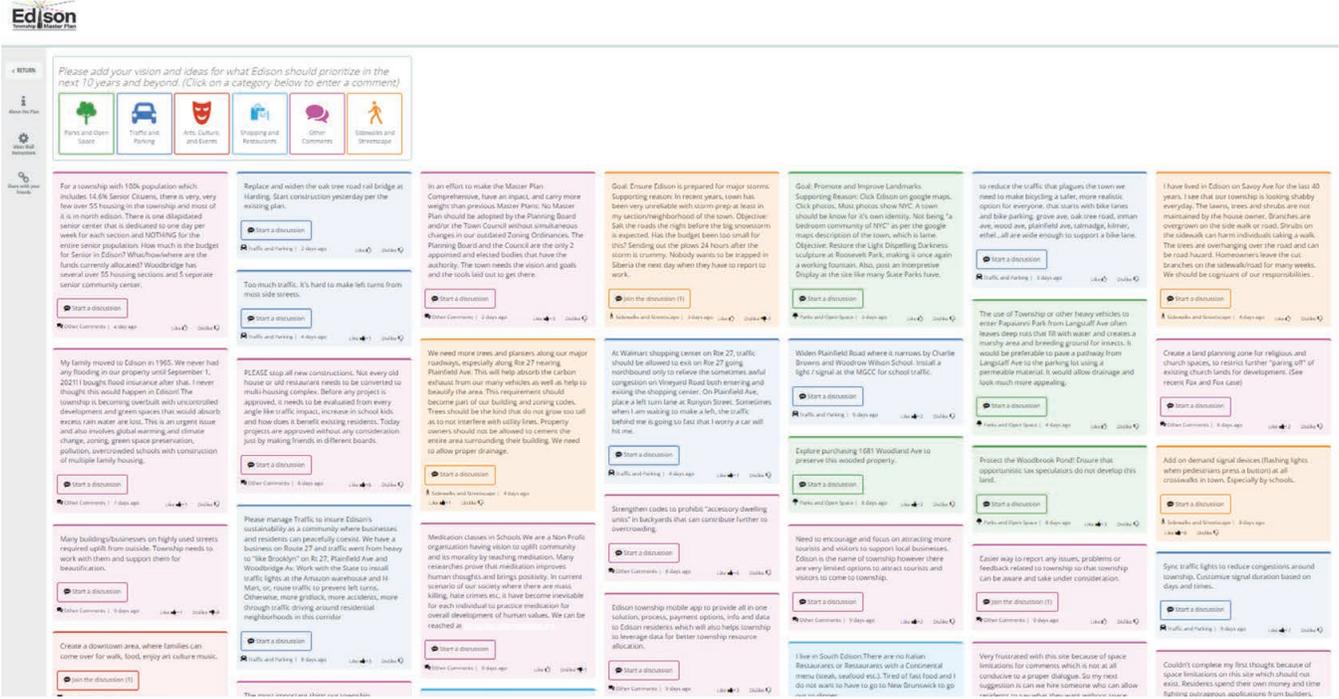
Public Workshop 1 - Roundtable Discussions



Public Workshop 2 - Workstation Discussions



Public Workshop 2 - Workstation Comments



Screenshot of Virtual Ideas Wall

Neighborhood Meetings

BFJ Planning hosted six neighborhood meetings virtually on Zoom between November 14 and November 17, 2022, to provide an opportunity for residents to discuss neighborhood specific issues. In order to target different areas of the Township, meetings were organized around three general areas: North Edison, East/South Edison, and West/South Edison. Two meetings on different days and times were provided for each area in an effort to accommodate as many people as possible. Attendance at the meetings ranged from 10-28 residents, with a total of over 100 participants combined for the six meetings.

Focus Group and Stakeholder Meetings

Focus group meetings were organized with active members of the community and department heads to help ensure that the Master Plan is representative of the community as a whole and that it includes realistic and publicly supported goals and objectives. Focus group meetings with the public were conducted early in the process to provide an opportunity for special interest

or key stakeholder groups to discuss specific topics of concern. Attendees were largely members of the various active committees that are already versed in the issues.

The planning process also included a series of meetings with Township department heads and staff who are actively engaged in the topics being discussed. The focus of these meetings was to form a full picture of existing conditions and to identify key issues and opportunities for the future.

Pop-Up Meeting

BFJ Planning attended the Edison Harvest Fair on October 15, 2022 at the Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park. The Edison Master Plan booth was set up in a prominent location in front of the Edison Memorial Tower. Visitors were invited to learn about the Master Plan and write down their ideas on a large flip-pad. Dozens of families attended the event.

PRIOR PLANNING EFFORTS

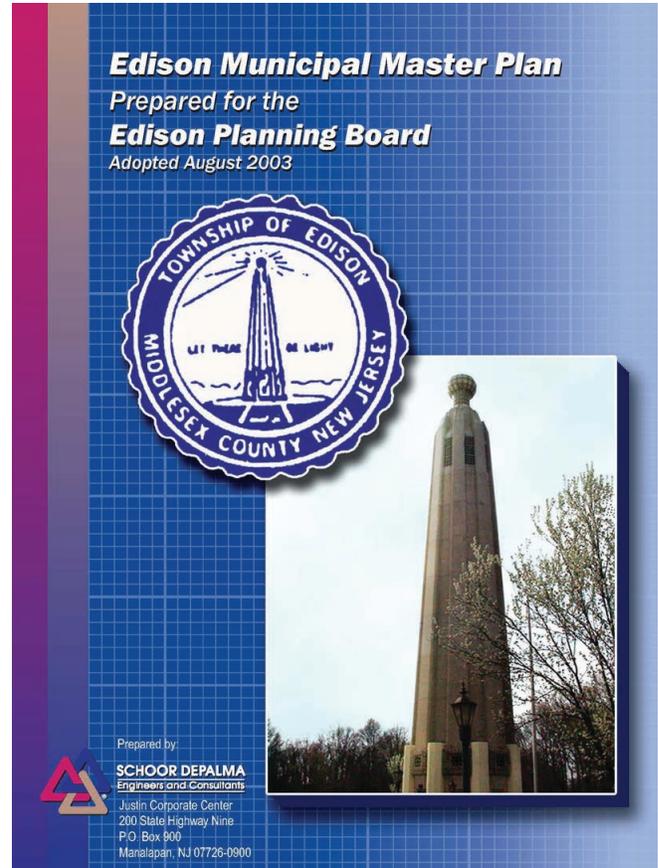
Master Plan, 2003

The Township's current Master Plan was adopted in 2003. A summary of the 2003 Community Vision goals and objectives are listed below:

- Encourage the preservation of distinct, cohesive neighborhoods.
- Encourage well designed, anti-sprawl land development that is consistent with established neighborhoods and land use patterns while preserving the community's suburban and urban landscapes which make Edison a unique and desirable place to both live and work.
- Consistent with recommendations in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan for Metropolitan Planning Areas, capitalize on opportunities for redevelopment.
- Encourage new development consistent with the scale of established land uses while preserving the character and developed nature of existing neighborhoods and proximate land uses at densities which consider available vacant land.
- Encourage the continued development of existing and potential business corridors and centers including but not limited to Amboy Avenue, the Revlon Property, the Ford Property, the Jackson Avenue Redevelopment Area, and the Seaport Village.

Reexamination Report, 2011

New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-8) requires that a municipality re-examine its master plan at least every 10 years. The Reexamination Report provides an opportunity to review the Master Plan's goals and objectives, document what has been accomplished or changed, and to recommend amendments to the Master Plan. The Township completed a reexamination report in 2011 which identified priority issues facing the Township, including:



- Preservation and enhancement of residential neighborhoods through reduction of zoning impediments to property maintenance and upgrades, and protection of encroachment by incongruous uses.
- Completion of ongoing redevelopment initiatives at the Hartz/Ford Site, the Revlon property, Jackson Avenue, and Meadow Road.
- Implementation of the Amboy Avenue Neighborhood Preservation Program to revitalize the commercial district and address parking issues.
- Enhancement of environmental protection through green buildings and infrastructure, remediation, preservation, riparian lands and steep slope protection.

- Re-use of Camp Kilmer Property for township recreation including re-use of Building 1072, homeless housing, and public works garage.
- Rehabilitation initiatives and transit-oriented development (rail and bus) on Route 27.
- Mediation of the COAH Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and initial plan endorsement.
- Circulation planning for freight movement, ongoing bicycle and pedestrian planning and coordination with regional transportation initiatives.

Other Relevant Township Plans

The process of developing this Master Plan takes into consideration other planning initiatives undertaken by the Township, including the following:

Edison Township

- Edison Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, 2018
- Midpoint Review of Affordable Housing Activities & 2020 Monitoring
- Edison Township Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, DRAFT 2020
- Edison Township Affordable Housing Status Memo, 2022
- Edison Township Environmental Resource Inventory, 2021
- Healthy Community Planning Report, 2022
- Edison Smart Growth Planning Initiative, Regional Framework Plan, 2007

Middlesex County

- D2040 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2022
- Middlesex County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan, 2008
- Middlesex County Bicycle Pedestrian Plan, 2001
- New Horizons in Mobility, Middlesex County Transportation Plan Element, 2013
- Lower Raritan-Middlesex County Areawide Water Quality Management Plan (LR-MC WQMP)
- Middlesex Greenway Access Plan Health Impact Assessment, 2014

Adjacent Community Master Plans

Borough of Metuchen

Metuchen completed a master plan in 1983 and reexamined it most recently in 2016, the same year it adopted a new Housing Element & Fair Share Plan and Recreation & Open Space Element. The Borough also adopted a new Land Use Element in 2014, a Circulation Plan Element in 2019, and a revised Municipal Storm Water Management Plan in 2021.

Both the 2016 Re-Examination Report and the Circulation Plan make clear Metuchen's concern with traffic generated, in part, as an effect of being a town center serving Edison's growing population. The Borough sees an opportunity to reduce traffic through redevelopment of Township industrial sites into new mixed-use nodes that can relieve pressure on Metuchen's downtown. The I-287/Route 27 interchange is also noted as a problem area, with the Borough seeing pass-through traffic as commuters drive to jobs in Edison. Metuchen would like to work cooperatively with the Township to address these and other transportation challenges, and specifically recommends the expansion of shuttle services between train stations and regional destinations in Edison.

Township of Woodbridge

Woodbridge adopted its most recent full Master Plan in 2009, a Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Plan Element in 2012, and a Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan in 2014. In addition, the Township has adopted the Keasby 5 Redevelopment Plan in 2008 to facilitate redevelopment of the Keasby section of Woodbridge, close to the southern municipal border of Edison, as a regional industrial area. Such redevelopment has not occurred, and instead the area is undergoing restoration of natural wetland habitats. This redevelopment area is next to undeveloped areas of Edison along the Raritan River that were formerly part of the Raritan Arsenal, and restoration of wetlands is generally consistent with Edison's long-term goals to enhance the condition and public access along the riverfront.

NJ Transit, with support from Woodbridge, has plans to develop a major transit-oriented development project at the Metropark station, with 225 residential units and

250,000 square feet of commercial space. This Master Plan includes recommendations for the adjacent area of Edison that would reflect and complement the development. This includes revitalization of Wood Avenue to improve pedestrian connectivity to the train station and consideration of new uses along Thornall Street.

Township of Clark

Clark last adopted a Master Plan in 2003, with a re-examination report completed in 2013 and a Housing Element & Fair Share Plan adopted in 2017. As the portion of Clark that abuts Edison is primarily parkland (the municipal pool complex, Union County Oak Ridge Park and Ash Brook Reservation) with a small area of single-family homes, the planning documents do not speak directly to any cross-municipal issues with Edison.

Township of Scotch Plains

Scotch Plains' Master Plan was adopted in 2001, with the most recent re-examination report completed in 2018 to facilitate targeted rezonings as part of its affordable housing compliance. The area along the municipal border is largely residential in both communities and is not addressed in recent planning documents.

Borough of South Plainfield

South Plainfield adopted its Master Plan in 2000 and its most recent re-examination report in 2014. The Borough also amended its land use plan element in 2014 to improve the zoning ordinance and zoning process. Land uses along both sides of the municipal border are largely consistent, including residential uses, preserved open spaces, and a commercial area along Oak Tree Road and Park Avenue. The Borough has recently developed a large townhouse complex, "The Kingsley" at the former Motorola site on Durham Avenue next to Edison just south of I-287. Although this land use is not consistent with the light industrial development adjacent to the Township off Talmadge Road, it is significantly buffered from such industrial uses, as well as several single-family homes along Runyons Lane.

Township of Piscataway

Piscataway's master planning documents are not readily available. The Township shares a border with Edison in the Camp Kilmer area, from New Durham Road south to the border with Highland Park. Land uses along the border are largely consistent, including light industrial uses, community uses (several schools on the Piscataway side and the Edison Job Corps Center and municipal uses on the Edison), and recently constructed affordable housing complexes in both communities. Components of Rutgers University's Livingston Campus are also in both municipalities. Generally, Edison's land uses in this area include more large-scale warehouse-type uses than in Piscataway, and the current zoning could provide for development of more such uses. Recommendations in this Master Plan supporting a broader array of uses, as well as stronger connections to the Edison Train Station, would promote greater land use compatibility between the two communities. Of note, new mixed uses in Camp Kilmer in Edison could also serve adjacent residential development in Piscataway.

Borough of Highland Park

Highland Park adopted its Master Plan in 2003 and the most recent reexamination report and Land Use Element in 2019, as well as a Housing Element & Fair Share Plan in 2016. The Land Use Element makes recommendations for two key corridors that connect the Borough with Edison: Raritan Avenue (Route 27) and Woodbridge Avenue. For these areas, the Borough recommends creating gateways, including traffic calming features and design enhancements to transform the corridors from high-speed auto-oriented commercial corridors into safe livable streets. Further, the Land Use Element envisions the redevelopment of strip mall sites along these corridors into multi-family housing and activation through bicycle access, sidewalk improvements, landscaping, pocket parks, and seating areas. Such recommendations are similar to those in this Master Plan for the Route 27 and Woodbridge Avenue corridors. However, the introduction of multifamily uses for these areas of Highland Park has the potential to create traffic and other impacts in Edison, and should be closely

monitored. Generally, there are opportunities for the two municipalities to coordinate on improvements along these key corridors.

Middlesex County Planning Initiatives

Destination 2040: Middlesex County Strategic Plan

This strategic plan, launched in 2018, is intended to guide the County's policies, plans, programs, and investment decisions, and will ultimately include five chapters: Economic and Workforce Competitiveness; Transportation and Mobility; Land Use, Development, and Housing; Sustainability and Community Resilience; and Healthy, Safe, and Inclusive Communities. As of summer 2023, the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) component of Destination 2040 has been completed. The OSRP identifies existing open space, future open space needs, and future open space opportunities throughout Middlesex County. Within Edison, the plan makes the following observations for County-owned facilities:

- **Thomas A Edison Park:** There is limited pedestrian access. Sports facility fences dominate the visual experience. The model airfield and barbecue grills get little use. Sea level rise will result in the loss of 22.82 acres
- **Roosevelt Park:** There is potential to improve pedestrian and bicycle access.
- **Middlesex Greenway:** There is opportunity to expand the Middlesex Greenway into a countywide greenway system. Additional study and exploration are needed to implement this vision.

Growth in population and employment in Middlesex County suggest a need for additional open space, and the OSRP notes that Edison has one of the highest open space needs in the county. The plan identifies several opportunities to achieve open space in the Township on both public and privately owned lands, primarily concentrated in the vicinity of the Raritan River. These recommendations are consistent with the vision of this Master Plan to enhance public access along the waterfront.

Other Middlesex County plans and studies that were reviewed as part of Edison's Master Plan process include:

- Middlesex County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan, 2008
- Middlesex County Bicycle Pedestrian Plan, 2001
- New Horizons in Mobility, Middlesex County Transportation Plan Element, 2013
- Lower Raritan-Middlesex County Areawide Water Quality Management Plan (LR-MC WQMP)
- Middlesex Greenway Access Plan Health Impact Assessment, 2014

Solid Waste Management Plan

New Jersey's Solid Waste Management Act requires that each solid waste management district develop an overall solid waste disposal strategy for the district, including identifying suitable sites for disposal. The Middlesex County Solid Waste Management Plan was most recently revised in 2022. The Plan designates the Middlesex County Landfill (previously known as Edgeboro Landfill Phase II Expansion) in East Brunswick as the County's long-term disposal site. The Plan projects solid waste generation through the year 2039 and indicates sufficient resources to accommodate these levels. As of 2019, Edison's recycling rate was 65%, slightly lower than the County overall but above the Plan's goal of 60%. This Master Plan supports strategies to improve recycling rates and processes in Edison, which is consistent with the County's Solid Waste Management Plan.

State Development and Redevelopment Plan and Cross-Acceptance Process

In 2001, the New Jersey Legislature adopted the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), a policy guide for land use planning intended to be the basis for the State's infrastructure and other capital planning decisions. The State Office of Planning Advocacy has been in the process of updating the SDRP, and completed a draft in 2005; however, the process has not been completed. Under the State Planning Act, municipal master plans should be evaluated, and if necessary modified, to reflect the State Plan's policies. The SDRP uses planning areas, centers, and environs as a spatial framework for implementing statewide goals and policies.

Most of Edison is in the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA-1), except for the Barnes Wildlife Preserve and areas along the Raritan River, which are in the Environmentally Sensitive Area (PA-5). As the most “urban” planning area included in the SDRP, the PA-1 seeks to provide for much of the state’s future redevelopment revitalize cities and towns, promote growth in compact forms, stabilize older suburbs, redesign areas of sprawl, and protect the character of existing stable communities. This Master Plan supports and furthers each of the policy objectives set forth for the PA-1.

In the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA-5), the SDRP’s intention is to protect environmental resources through the protection of large contiguous areas of land, accommodate growth in Centers, protect the character of existing stable communities, confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers, and revitalize cities and towns. Edison’s Master Plan supports the continued preservation of sensitive environmental resources in the areas designated as PA-5 within the Township, and further supports and furthers each of the policy objectives set forth for the PA-5.

Additionally, several sites in North Edison are identified in the SDRP as Critical Environmental Sites (CES), noted as elements of natural systems, small areas of habitat, and other features that should continue to be expressed in the future landscape through protection and restoration. Designating an area as a CES means that the site is of local, regional, or statewide significance, and that its protection and enhancement is of primary importance. The following Critical Environmental Sites are designated in Edison:

- Lands east of Woodland Avenue, north of Oak Tree Road, and west of the CSX freight line, including areas associated with the Edith Stevens Wildlife Preserve, Petti Farm, and Woodland Avenue Park.
- Preserved woodlands and stream corridors associated with the Beaver Crossing development south of Inman Avenue/
- Wooded sections of the Ash Brook Reservation, along the Scotch Plains border.
- Vacant wooded land on the north side of Inman Avenue, opposite the Inman Grove shopping center.
- Wetland areas on an island in the Raritan River between Edison and Sayreville.

Lastly, two areas have been shown on the SDRP Policy Map as Parks and Natural Areas, identified as lands representing public investment specifically for resource preservation and the provision of recreational opportunities:

- Conserved areas of Petti Farm on the westerly side of the CSX freight line north of Oak Tree Road.
- Edison State Park.

This Master Plan promotes the policies of the SDRP relating to Critical Environmental Sites and Parks and Natural Areas, through open space acquisition, the creation of greenway links, and preservation of natural areas. As noted in the 2001 Master Plan, it is recommended that the SDRP Policy Map be updated to include additional municipal resources within the Parks and Natural Space designation, such as Thomas A. Edison County Park, Roosevelt County Park, the Edith Stevens Wildlife Preserve, and the Barnes Preserve.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The Township of Edison proposes the following planning goals and objectives to advance the overarching vision for the Master Plan:

HOUSING

Support and strengthen Edison’s residential neighborhoods:

This goal represents the need for a comprehensive approach to build a more sustainable and liveable community that can thrive for years to come. By rehabilitating older housing stock, Edison can preserve the unique character and charm of its neighborhoods while also reducing waste and promoting energy efficiency. Updating bulk provisions will ensure that new homes are built to an appropriate size and scale, preventing the development of oversized and out-of-place structures. Addressing zoning requirements for undersized residential lots will reduce the need for variances, helping to promote affordability and a range of housing choices. Finally, code updates to regulate short-term rentals will help maintain the integrity of neighborhoods and prevent disruption to long-term residents.

Provide a diverse range of housing options across income, household size, and age groups:

Edison must maintain and encourage diversity in the type and character of available housing, allowing for a range of housing options that can support varied residential communities while preserving the scale of established neighborhoods. By working together to promote accessible, affordable, and diverse housing options, the Township can help to ensure that the community is a welcoming and inclusive place to live for all residents. This includes a continued effort to implement the Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan, which will help to meet Edison’s Fair Share housing obligation



The Residence at Roosevelt Park Senior Living



Robert Holmes Gardens



Single-family block

and increase the availability of affordable housing. The Township must also work closely with the Edison Housing Authority to rehabilitate and upgrade existing facilities, and strengthen physical, social, and economic connections with the surrounding communities.

Encourage smart growth principles, locating housing close to shopping, employment, and transit, and at reasonable densities to conserve energy and open space and maintain a balanced density throughout the township:

Edison can help to create dynamic communities by encouraging mixed land uses, where residential, commercial and recreational uses are close proximity, and can benefit from each other. Encouraging compact mixed-use and pedestrian friendly development near train stations is a tool to make station areas more dynamic and support public transit. This development type can also be used to create more dynamic and resilient shopping and employment centers such as the Menlo Park Mall and at the Hartz Mountain site.

The Edison Station area is one of the most underutilized assets in the Township. With its central location and access to regional public transportation, it has the potential to be an ideal location for a transit village, a type of development that combines mixed-use development with transit-oriented design. Future development could provide housing opportunities with easy access to transportation, job opportunities, and community amenities. For the broader community, development could generate economic activity and support local businesses, while also creating a more vibrant, walkable urban environment. The planning framework would require careful study and consultation with the community to ensure that designs are context sensitive and compatible with the surrounding area's existing architecture and urban fabric. The north side of the station is largely industrial and has more of an opportunity for mixed-use development than the south side which is a stable one- and two-family neighborhood.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Explore a mix of strategies along Amboy Avenue to balance revitalization and local scale.

Amboy Avenue is an important neighborhood-oriented commercial corridor, with a rich history and diverse range of businesses. To promote economic activity and a vibrant and sustainable future for this area, Edison needs to consider a range of strategies. Continuing to improve the aesthetics and pedestrian environment, such as through the addition of street trees, public art, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, will help to make the area more inviting and attractive to visitors and residents alike. One concern expressed by the public is ensuring that any new development is consistent with the character of the surrounding area and does not negatively impact the pedestrian environment. The Township should revisit zoning regulations to reduce allowable heights and to develop design guidelines which would ensure that new developments and renovations are consistent

with the area's unique character and sense of place. Parking is also an issue. Acquiring well-located land for development of public parking, or securing shared parking arrangements within existing private lots, would make it easier for visitors and residents to access Amboy Avenue's businesses and services.



New development on Amboy Avenue

Appropriately control large-scale industrial uses while providing for future growth and development of Edison’s ratable base, including the Raritan Center Industrial Park, Heller Industrial Park, and the Route 1 and Route 27 corridors:

This goal addresses the need to balance future growth and the development of Edison’s tax base with appropriate control of large-scale industrial uses, which can negatively impact the quality of life for residents. A key strategy is to carefully consider where warehousing, distribution, and fulfillment centers should be allowed. These uses tend to generate a high volume of commercial traffic. It may be appropriate to limit these activities in certain areas. It is also important to clarify definitions for these uses within the zoning code, as existing regulations were developed before the advent of large-scale, 24-hour fulfillment centers. The Township should follow best practices for warehouse operations established by the state to ensure responsible, sustainable, and safe industrial development.

Advance plans for an Entertainment District at Hartz Mountain site:

In addition to being a popular destination, the Hartz Mountain Entertainment District is an important economic engine for the community; it creates jobs and attracts visitors from both within and outside Edison to shop at local businesses. This planned mixed-use development is in the process of being built out. Plans have evolved since their initial conception from the initial envisioned pedestrian-friendly lifestyle center, and development has recently occurred on a site-by-site basis. There is a need to revisit the redevelopment plan to ensure that future development is more cohesive and well-connected for pedestrians. This could include improving wayfinding signage; landscaping; and providing for a pedestrian boulevard or other similar amenity to encourage people to walk, rather than drive, between different entertainment options, which can help to reduce traffic congestion and improve the overall pedestrian experience. By creating a focal point

for pedestrian activity, a boulevard can attract new businesses, which can in turn help to drive foot traffic and stimulate local economic growth.

Consider appropriate new uses for the Menlo Park Mall complex to help it flourish:

The retail environment in Edison and the country as a whole has shifted in recent years. Factors such as the rise of e-commerce have resulted in a general decline in traditional brick-and-mortar retail sales, nationwide. While the Menlo Park Mall appears to be resilient to these changes, it is important to work with the mall’s owner in providing for some flexibility to ensure underutilized areas of the mall could be adapted if needed. By allowing for a repurposing of underutilized space on the site, the Township can help to reduce the environmental impact of new development, preserve valuable community assets, and create new opportunities for economic growth and development. Zoning could be modified to allow for a broader mix of uses on the site as diverse as senior living, recreation and community services; hospitality; healthcare, academic, and other institutions; and innovative commercial uses such as labs, technology firms, commercial kitchens, and microbusinesses. Expanding permitted uses could incentivize more retail property owners to upgrade, while aesthetic improvements in the public realm – together with strong site planning – can serve to enhance the overall look and experience of these areas and make them friendly to the pedestrian as well as the automobile.

Selectively utilize redevelopment planning to facilitate strategic revitalization of underutilized and challenged sites:

From a broad policy perspective, it is typically better to use traditional zoning as a tool to regulate future development. However, utilizing redevelopment planning can help to address a wide range of issues, such as blight, vacancy, and disinvestment, in a holistic and effective way to leverage public and private investment and stimulate local economic growth. Redevelopment planning involves a careful analysis of the site and its surrounding context, as well as an assessment of the community’s needs and priorities. Opportunity

areas discussed as candidates for new or amended redevelopment designation include the Camp Kilmer Area (new), Plainfield Avenue and Route 27 (amended), Amboy Avenue in Clara Barton (amended), and the Hartz

Mountain Property (amended). It is also important to address disinvestment in smaller, scattered locations that may be more challenging to redevelop.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Improve efficiency and safety of the roadway network, which are significant quality of life and economic development issues:

A well-functioning roadway network is essential to the overall quality of life for residents and the economic development of the community. Efficient and safe roads can make it easier for people to get to work, school, and other important destinations, which can improve overall productivity and economic growth. There are certain areas of Edison where pedestrian safety is a major concern, particularly around heavily trafficked corridors such as Route 1 and Route 27. Plainfield Avenue is also an important corridor to address. By improving pedestrian safety along these roadways, the Township can reduce the number of accidents and injuries that occur, and generally make Edison a more comfortable place to get around in. To achieve this goal, the Township must develop a new Circulation Element, which will guide site specific improvements of the roadway network and coordinate these with county and state agencies.

Use traffic calming tools to reduce speeds and improve safety in residential neighborhoods:

This Master Plan discusses a variety of strategies to achieve this goal. To start, the Township should adopt a Complete Streets Policy, which will ensure that all roadway projects consider the safety and convenience of all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Many community members also raised the need to lower traffic speeds on some roads to improve safety and improve the quality of life for residents. This Plan also identifies opportunities for “road diets,” which involve



Rt. 27 at Plainfield Ave

reducing the number of lanes on a roadway in order to slow traffic and provide more space for other modes of transportation. The Township should also consider ways to increase visibility in areas with poor lighting, such as with lighting, road reflectors, and barrier markers. These opportunities could also be addressed in a new Circulation Element, as discussed above.

Reduce incidental commercial traffic in residential areas:

By reducing commercial traffic in residential areas, it is possible to create a safer, quieter, and more livable environment for residents. Edison has designated a network of roads where commercial traffic is permitted, and communication of these routes is an important aspect of managing traffic and ensuring the safety of both commercial drivers and residents. The Township should address ways to better inform residents and businesses about these routes. This could include more frequent signage and online maps that are made available to local government websites and mobile applications.

Make streets more pedestrian friendly, particularly around key activity nodes such as schools and other community facilities, transit stops, and retail corridors:

Largely speaking, the transportation network in Edison is oriented toward vehicular transportation and is less friendly to walking or biking. Residents generally expressed support for improving the sidewalk network, particularly near schools, public transit, commercial corridors, and along connector roads. Improving connectivity for walking and bicycling will help to connect neighborhoods, improve the physical health of residents, and provide an alternative means of travel for short trips. This goal supports several objectives to improve walkability. First, the Township must update the Sidewalk Improvement Plan to properly assess the location and condition of existing sidewalks and where new sidewalks should be prioritized. Developing new sidewalks can be done through the land approvals process. The Township can also develop an incentive program to help private property owners address gaps in the network. This goal also addresses pedestrian, bike, and scooter connections, such as a new connection from Edison Station to Rutgers University Livingston Campus.

Expand trails on abandoned railroad rights-of-way, along transmission lines, and other underutilized corridors:

Wherever possible, the Township should link existing parks and open space assets to form interconnected greenways that provide connectivity to neighborhoods, public facilities (i.e. schools and libraries), and commercial areas. Many residents supported the creation of bicycle paths that connect recreation areas and other parts of town so that bicycling can be a safe and attractive alternative to driving. In addition to paths along roads, there are underutilized corridors such as unused railroad spurs or areas under transmission lines that could be used to provide these connections. In general, most planning for off-street paths has focused on connections



Area under transmission line

that meet regional needs and connections. The Township should develop its own plan which examines both regional connections as well as more local locations which would provide alternative transportation routes between neighborhoods and parks.

Enhance Edison’s existing multi-modal transit system with expanded intra-municipal transit options and improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure:

Work to expand intra-municipal transit options could include increased bus routes or shuttle services to key destinations (i.e. Edison Light Transit). Additionally, the goal addresses the opportunity to promote transit-oriented development both at the Edison Train Station, and in Township areas near the Metropark Station. For residents, transit-oriented development could provide easy access to transportation, job opportunities, and community amenities, while also promoting sustainable living and reducing the need for car travel. It would also help to make Edison Station easier to access for others by all modes of transportation.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Expand access to parks and open spaces:

The goal of expanding access to parks and open spaces can be achieved through several objectives. First, updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) can provide a comprehensive approach to identifying and prioritizing open space and recreation opportunities. Improving the trail system and connections between parks can enhance accessibility and connectivity within the park system. Expanding the footprint of parks and open spaces can provide additional opportunities for outdoor recreation and leisure activities. Finally, better utilizing undeveloped publicly owned open spaces can provide cost-effective ways to expand park and open space offerings, while also preserving natural areas. By pursuing these objectives, Edison can enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors, while promoting physical activity and preserving the natural environment.

Continue to improve facilities and adapt to changing needs:

The evolving needs of the community require changes in the way parks are developed and utilized. In recent years, the demand for open spaces that can accommodate different recreational activities has increased. The population of Edison has grown and diversified, leading to a need for parks that cater to a range of interests, including recreation such as cricket, fitness, relaxation, and cultural activities. In response, the Township's parks and recreation department is developing plans to provide more facilities that can meet the current and future needs of the community. Additionally, the department is working to create more diverse programming that includes a wide range of activities and events that cater to different age groups and interests.



Papaianni Park and Minnie B. Veal Community Center Park

Increase public access and new uses along the Raritan River while protecting natural resources along the waterfront including the preservation of trees and vistas:

The Raritan River provides a unique opportunity for Edison residents to enjoy nature and participate in various activities, such as kayaking, fishing, and hiking. The goal is to increase the public's ability to access the riverfront by improving existing trails, creating new ones, and constructing additional recreational facilities. There also may be limited opportunities for new water-enhanced or water-dependent uses which could bring more people to the waterfront. The use of appropriate design guidelines can help to balance the need for public access and new uses while preserving the natural resources of the waterfront area.

Conserve natural resources and continue to work toward preservation of open space:

As a growing community, Edison faces challenges in balancing development with environmental protection. Preserving open spaces can help maintain a healthy ecosystem, provide recreational opportunities for residents, and enhance the community's quality of life. The Township has identified areas for preservation, including wetlands, forests, and other habitats that are home to various plant and animal species. To achieve this goal, Edison can implement various strategies such as acquiring open space for preservation, working with

landowners to implement conservation easements, and partnering with state and federal agencies to fund conservation projects. The Township can also develop a comprehensive plan to manage natural resources and open spaces, including monitoring and regulating land use to minimize the impact of development on the environment. By working to conserve natural resources and preserve open space, Edison can ensure that future generations have access to the town's natural beauty and ecological diversity.

INFRASTRUCTURE, RESILIENCE, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Maintain and improve Township utilities to support the current and future population.

Overall, maintaining and improving the Township's utilities, including stormwater and sewer infrastructure, is crucial for ensuring the health, safety, and well-being residents and the environment. With Edison's significant amount of impervious coverage, stormwater runoff is a major concern, causing flooding, erosion, and water pollution. By improving and maintaining the stormwater management systems and implementing green infrastructure practices, the Township can effectively manage stormwater while improving water quality and reducing the risk of flooding. Similarly, the aging sewer system needs regular maintenance and upgrades to avoid issues and improve the efficiency and reliability of the system.

Reduce impervious surfaces and implement green infrastructure strategies:

Strategies under this goal can help manage stormwater runoff and reduce pollution, while also providing additional benefits such as improved air quality, heat reduction, and increased biodiversity. One strategy is to adapt a new tree ordinance that will help prevent trees from being removed. The Township can also reassess stormwater control regulations to fully address

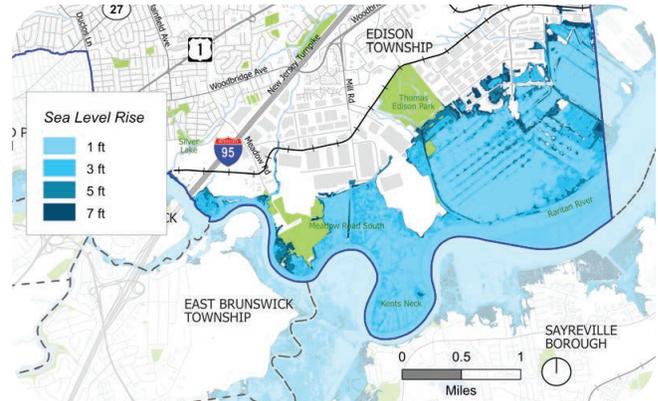
runoff issues. Impervious coverage allowances can also be minimized for new developments. The Township should also consider recommendations of the Rutgers Impervious Cover Assessment and create a reduction action plan. By achieving these objectives, Edison can promote environmentally friendly practices and reduce the impact of development on natural resources.

Promote sustainability initiatives and develop a green building and environmental sustainability element of the Master Plan:

This goal aims to improve public health and the quality of life through sustainability practices, such as reducing air and water pollution, minimizing waste, and promoting clean energy. For example, the Township should encourage circular waste management, which aims to minimize waste and make efficient use of resources. Promoting renewable energy sources is another objective, which will help reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources and decrease carbon emissions. Additionally, sustainable construction and design standards should be encouraged in the building code to promote environmentally friendly and energy-efficient building practices.

Make Edison more resilient to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise:

Responding to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise requires action and a proactive approach to protect the Township’s residents and infrastructure from flooding, more frequent and intense storms, and other events. Making Edison more resilient can involve a variety of strategies. For example, the Township can invest in infrastructure improvements that are designed to withstand flooding and extreme weather events. Edison can also focus on other resilience-building measures such as developing emergency response plans and increasing public awareness about the impacts of climate change. This can involve working with community groups, schools, and local businesses to educate residents about ways they can prepare for and respond to emergencies.



Edison should also work with property owners in high-risk areas to make their buildings less vulnerable in the short term, and also to discourage future development of these areas in the long-term.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Address short-term space needs and opportunities for municipal services:

The DPW, Police, and Fire Departments all identified pressing facility and equipment needs to fulfill their duties. Addressing the space needs for municipal services in Edison is essential to ensure that it can continue to provide necessary services to its residents, attract and retain qualified personnel, and maintain a high quality of life. As the Township continues to grow and develop, the demand for public services, such as police and fire protection, water and sewer services, and public works, also increases. Inadequate space for municipal services can lead to inefficiencies, decreased productivity, and difficulty in providing necessary services to residents.

Plan comprehensively for improved community-oriented facilities to serve all Edison residents:

During the outreach process, residents expressed the need for community centers that are more accessible – in particular for residents in the south and west side of the Township. There is also a need to improve existing facilities and programming at community centers, the senior center, and at libraries. Given the scope of facilities

and identified needs, the Township should develop a Community Facilities Plan Element of the Master Plan, which would involve additional public outreach and studies to help Edison prioritize and dedicate funding and space to projects.

Embrace collaboration to support recreational, cultural and educational opportunities:

The Township recognizes that partnerships and collaboration with community organizations and institutions can play a critical role in providing a range of opportunities for residents to engage in recreational, cultural, and educational activities. By working together with these groups, Edison can create a more diverse and inclusive array of programming that meets the needs and interests of all residents. This collaborative approach also enables the Township to pool resources and maximize the impact of its investments in these areas, leading to a more robust and sustainable cultural and recreational scene that benefits the community as a whole. To address school needs, the Township can also work with the Board of Education on the development and implementation of a School Facilities Master Plan (SFMP). The SFMP

provides a roadmap for the district to address facility needs and make decisions about facility investments, such as renovations, additions, or new construction.

Improve public information communication:

This goal seeks to enhance the flow of information between the Township and its residents. This can be achieved through various means such as updating the municipal website, creating a Township mobile application with a calendar of events township-wide, and utilizing social media to disseminate information. The objective is to make information more readily available and accessible to residents, improving transparency and accountability in government operations. Additionally, the Township can work to establish more effective channels of communication with community groups and organizations to ensure that everyone is kept informed of important news and events. By improving public information communication, Edison can strengthen its connection with residents and promote greater community engagement.

Protect Edison’s valuable historic assets as important components of its identity:

This goal focuses on preserving the Township’s unique historical character and enhancing the quality of life for its residents. Edison has a rich history dating back to 1666 and contains a number of significant historical landmarks and properties, such as the Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park and the Edison Memorial Tower. By preserving these assets and promoting their historical significance, the Township can attract visitors, boost tourism, and provide educational opportunities for residents. The goal also involves identifying and designating additional properties that have historical significance and developing policies and programs that encourage their preservation.

Support Edison’s arts and cultural organizations and institutions:

The Township recognizes the significant role that arts and cultural organizations play in enhancing the quality of life of residents, promoting economic growth, and creating

a sense of community. This Master Plan discusses opportunities to support these organizations, strengthen partnerships, and encourage the development of new programs and initiatives that promote cultural and artistic expression. The objective is to provide access to diverse cultural experiences and support local artists and creatives to enhance the community’s cultural vibrancy and attract visitors to the Township. Additionally, this goal intends to promote support the preservation of historic landmarks, art galleries, museums, and other cultural assets that contribute to the unique identity of Edison.

Explore partnerships with Middlesex College:

The Township should identify opportunities to have a more collaborative partnership with Middlesex College, with the goal of providing more opportunities for the community to participate in cultural, recreational, and educational events. By sharing facilities, the community will benefit from increased access to venues suitable for hosting events such as art exhibits, theatrical performances, concerts, and lectures. The partnership will also help to promote cultural and educational activities in the area, which can enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike. Additionally, the sharing of facilities can lead to cost savings for both the college and the township by maximizing the use of existing resources. As Middlesex College continues to expand, the Township should be an active partner to ensure that any growth outside of the existing campus is well planned, and that any proposed improvements on the campus fully address off-site impacts. Middlesex County has shared a broad vision and preliminary plans for substantial improvements to the college, but many questions remain regarding the use and scale of the proposals. Participants in the master plan process raised concerns about traffic and parking impacts, among other issues. It is critical that Township officials be fully aware of the details of the proposal so that they can ensure that the quality of life for Edison’s residents – particularly those living near the college – is preserved.

2/ POPULATION AND SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS



Photos courtesy of Edison Township

This section provides an overview of Edison’s population and demographics, such as age, race and ethnicity, household size and composition, and income. Examining these demographics helps tell the story of where the Township has been, who lives in Edison today, and where it is going in the future. It also helps to understand what the community will look like in the future and what the demand for services will be.

The data used in this analysis come from the U.S. Census Bureau, and represent the most current and reliable data available. The surveys used are the 2000, 2010, and 2020 Decennial Census and the 2017-2021 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS). The data from the ACS are estimates with margins of error, whereas the data from the decennial censuses are counts that represent a “snapshot” of the demographics at that time.

Since the 2003 Master Plan, Edison has grown to its highest population level and experienced significant socioeconomic changes that have led to higher education levels, greater wealth, and major shifts in racial and ethnic characteristics. Driven in large part by the nature of its housing stock and community amenities, the Township is highly attractive to seniors as well as to young families of increasing size. However, housing opportunities appear to be more limited for young adults (e.g. singles and young couples), and there remains a need for a diverse range of affordable housing options. In addition to housing, these demographic trends will help to inform findings and recommendations throughout this Master Plan, such as for recreational needs, mobility considerations, and infrastructure upgrades.



Photos courtesy of Edison Township



The data (with associated sources) and discussion presented in this chapter suggest several trends of importance for Edison:

- Population growth has leveled off after prior high-growth periods. Annual incremental growth is projected to be slightly less than Middlesex County from 2015 to 2050.
- Following nationwide trends, Edison's population has become older overall.
- The Township attracts families with young children. Edison has a considerably larger share of youth residents under age 18 and of prime labor force aged adults aged 35-49 compared with the county.
- Edison has seen significant racial and ethnic shifts in the past 20+ years. From 2000 to 2021, the Asian non-Hispanic population more than doubled in size and now comprises more than half of the Township's population. There were also increases in the Hispanic and Black populations. Meanwhile, the white non-Hispanic population dropped by more than half. Nearly half of Edison's 2021 population was born outside of the United States, with only Jersey City having a higher number of Indian-born residents among municipalities in the state.
- Edison has become wealthier. Since 2000, median household income (adjusted for inflation) rose modestly, compared with a decline for Middlesex County.
- Edison has become more educated, with a significant increase in the number of residents aged 25+ with a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Over the past two decades, Edison saw a decrease in non-family households and significant increases in family households. This contrasts with trends in the County, which saw strong growth among both non-family households as well as family households. Average family size also increased slightly from 2000 to 2021 in Edison, while the County's average fell over the period.
- School children generation in Edison is largely dependent on housing unit types. Newer apartment rentals generate far fewer schoolchildren than both older units or newer single-family or attached townhome developments.
- The Township has been active in facilitating affordable housing to meet its Fair Share Housing obligations, but has a remaining obligation for the Third Round (covering 1999-2025) both in terms of new construction and rehabilitation.
- Edison has seen moderate job growth since the last Master Plan, with Transportation and Warehousing as the largest growth sector.

POPULATION OVERVIEW

As shown in Figure 1, Edison’s major population growth since 1940 occurred in the post-World War II period from 1950 to 1970, and the period from 1980 to 2000 that saw significant development of townhouses, particularly in the North End of the Township. Since 2000, which represents the decennial Census reflected in Edison’s last full Master Plan (2003), the Township has experienced moderate population growth, increasing by about 10%, from 97,687 in 2000 to 99,967 in 2010 and an estimated 107,636 residents in 2021. Over the full period, Edison’s growth somewhat lagged that of Middlesex County, which saw an increase of nearly 15% from 2000 to 2021, but the Township has seen a sharper growth rate (+7.7%) since 2010 compared with the County (6.3%).

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) forecasts incremental growth in Edison at a rate of 0.214% annually from 2015 to 2050, versus annual growth of 0.354% for Middlesex County.

AGE COMPOSITION

Following nationwide trends, over the past 21 years, Edison’s population has become older overall, with its median age increasing from 36.3 years in 2000 to 38.1 years in 2010 and 38.4 years in 2021.

Both the Township’s senior population aged 65+ and its youth population under age 18 consistently increased from 2000 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2021, as other age groups saw inconsistent growth from one decade to another. Gains among the senior population were especially strong in both Edison and the County (+33% and +47%, respectively), as was the gain among those aged 50-64 (+23% and +58%, respectively). Edison’s youth population under age 18 increased by 23% (+4,873 persons), while its young adult population aged 18-34 dropped by 22% (-5,341 persons) and its prime labor force aged population grew by 11% (+2,630 persons).

In 2021, Edison is notable for having a considerably larger share of youth residents under age 18 (26%) than the County (22%) and having a higher share of prime labor force aged adults aged 35-49 (25% vs. 21%). These

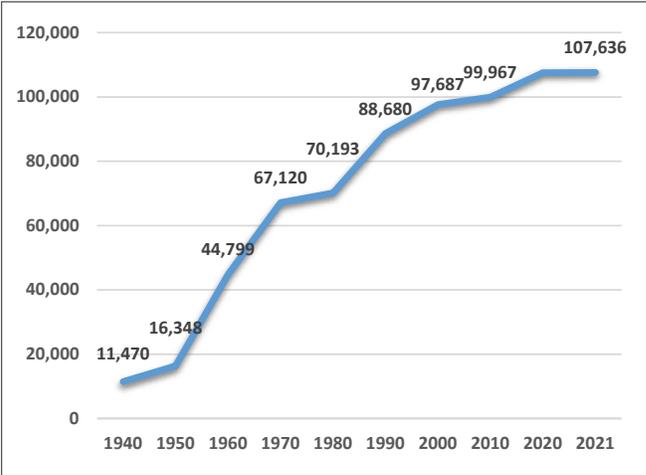


Figure 1: Population in Edison, 1940-2021

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 1900-2010, 2020 P.L. 94-171 Redistricting File, ACS 2021 1-Year Estimate.

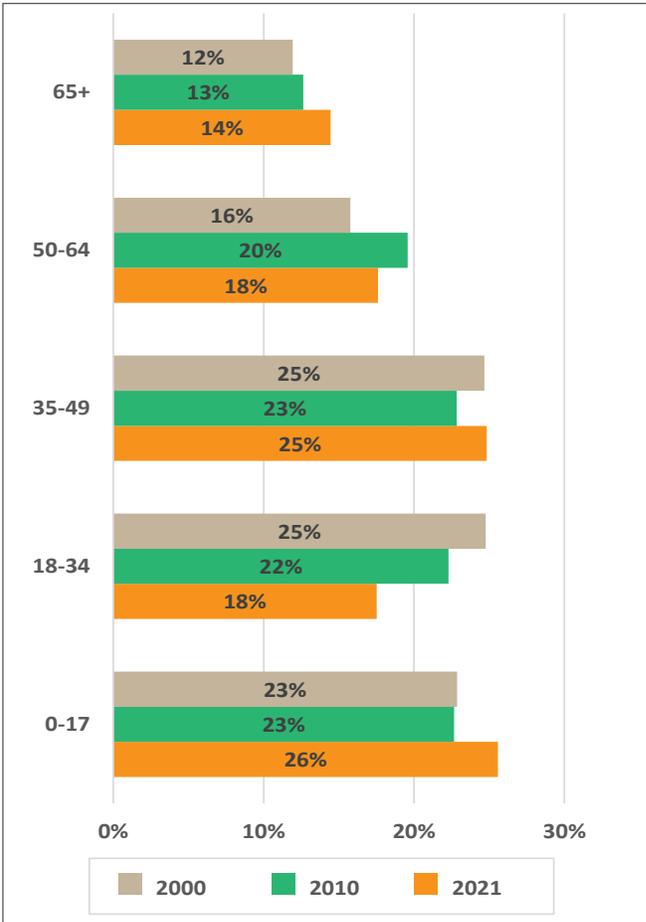


Figure 2: Edison Population Change by Age Groups

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 2000-2010, ACS 2021 1-Year Estimate.

distributions suggest that the Township attracts families with young children. It is slightly less popular than the County overall with young adults aged 18-34, as well as with the older labor force adult population aged 50-64, but Edison’s share of the senior population is roughly comparable with that of Middlesex County.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

From 2000 to 2021, Edison’s demographics shifted, driven by new births, aging of the population, and migration. During this time, the Asian non-Hispanic population more than doubled in size, from 28,920 people to 57,050 residents. By 2021, the Asian non-Hispanic population made up 53% of Edison’s population, up from 30% in 2000 and more than double the share of this population for Middlesex County overall (26% in 2021). The Hispanic population in Edison nearly doubled as well, from 6,226 people to 12,714 residents, while Black non-Hispanics also saw strong gains, increasing from 6,458 people to 7,716 residents (+20%). Meanwhile, the white non-Hispanic population dropped by more than half, from 54,461 residents to 26,768 people.

Nearly half (48%) of Edison’s 2021 population was born outside of the United States, up from 41% in 2010. The top places of birth for the foreign-born population in the Township include India (57% of foreign-born residents), followed by China excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan (6.5%), the Philippines (4.6%), and Korea (2.1%).

Over the five-year period from 2016-2020, Edison had the third-highest share of Asian-born residents among New Jersey municipalities, at 37% of the Township’s total population, after Plainsboro (45%) and Palisades Park (42%). Among the Indian-born population, Edison ranked second among the state’s municipalities, with 26% of its population born in India, just after Plainsboro (33%). Only Jersey City had a larger number of Indian-born residents (26,478, vs. 25,925 for Edison).

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

From 2000 to 2021, Edison’s median household income rose by more than \$50,000, or 72%, compared with a gain of nearly \$38,000, or 62%, for Middlesex County over the same period. However, when adjusted for inflation, the Township’s median household income grew by just 5.7% during those years, while the County’s level actually declined by 0.5%.

The distribution of household income in Edison has shifted in the past two decades, with sizeable gains in upper-income levels and sharp drops in the lower-income groups. In 2021, the Township had a higher share of households earning \$150,000 or more a year (30%) compared with the County (26%) and a smaller share in the lower-income groups earning less than \$100,000 a year (49% vs. 54%).

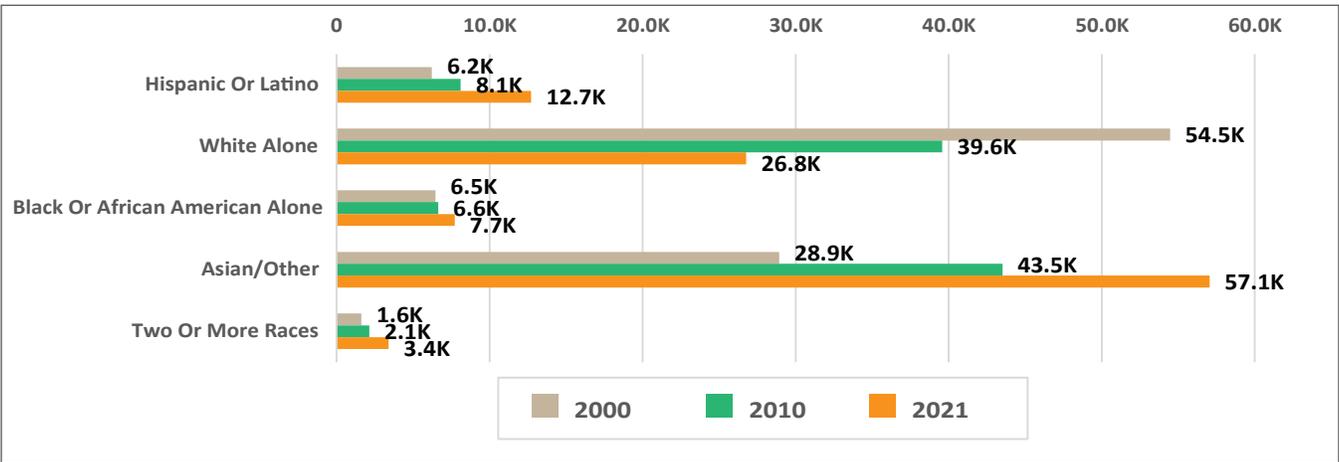


Figure 3: Edison Distribution of Population by Mutually Exclusive Race-Ethnicity

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 2000-2010, ACS 2021 1-Year Estimate.

	2000	2010	2021	Numeric Change	% Change
					2000-2021
Median Household Income (Unadjusted)					
Township of Edison	\$69,746	\$86,725	\$119,939	+ \$50,193	+72.0%
Middlesex County	\$61,446	\$77,615	\$99,427	+ \$37,981	+61.8%
Median Household Income (2021\$)					
Township of Edison	\$113,440	\$107,770	\$119,939	+ \$6,499	+5.7%
Middlesex County	\$99,940	\$96,449	\$99,427	- \$513	-0.5%

Table 1: Median Household Income, Edison and Middlesex County

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Summary File 3, 2010 & 2021, ACS 1-Year Estimates.

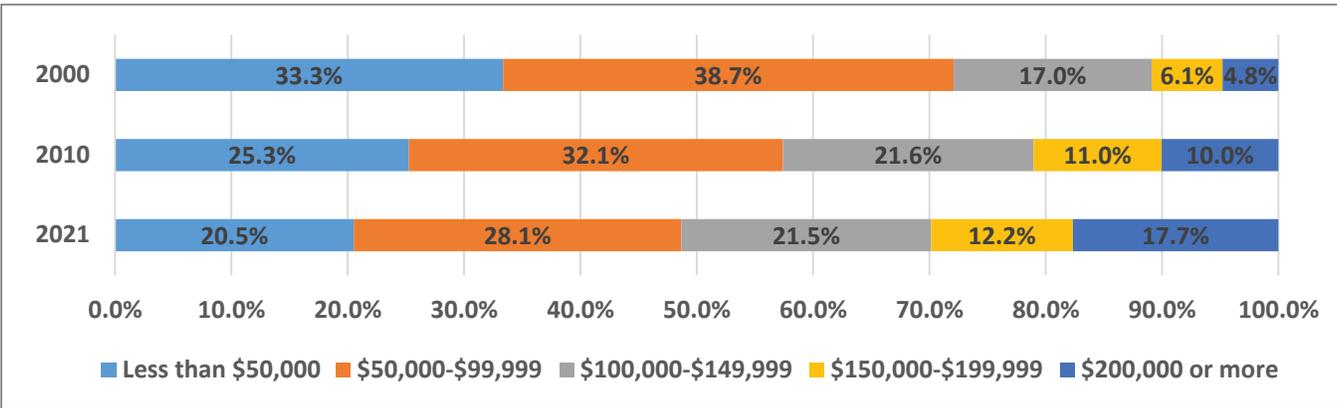


Figure 4: Distribution of Household Income in Edison

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Summary File 3, 2010 & 2021, ACS 1-Year Estimates.

Median household income levels vary considerably by household type. In 2021, the highest median income levels in Edison were among married-couple families with children under age 18 (\$159,301), five-person families (\$184,048), and families with three or more earners (\$196,014).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), which is closely correlated with household income, aggregates metrics that depict the resilience of communities when confronted by external stresses on human health, stresses such as natural or human-caused disasters, or disease outbreaks. Population characteristics in this dataset include metrics such as poverty status, lack of vehicle status, crowded housing, unemployment, minority status.

This tool was established to help local officials identify communities that may need support in preparing for hazards and/or recovering from disaster. Figure 5 illustrates areas in Edison that experience the highest levels of CDC-defined social vulnerability, according to Census tract.

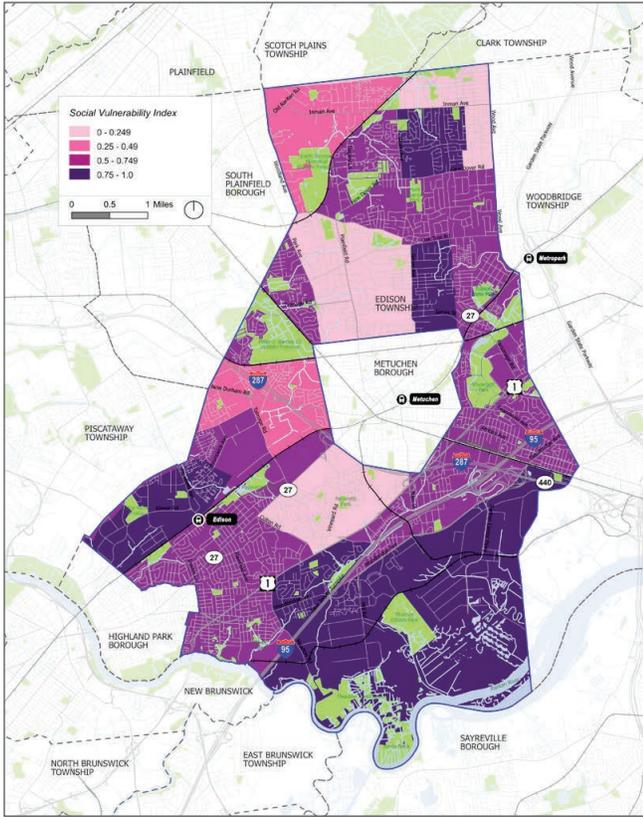


Figure 5: Social Vulnerability Index

Source: CDC, Urban Footprint, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Over the past two decades, Edison’s residents have become increasingly more educated, with a gain of 14,831 residents aged 25 or older with a bachelor’s degree or higher level of education (+52%). Today, residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher account for 58% of the population aged 25 or older, up from 42% in 2000 and 53% in 2010.

Middlesex County overall has lower levels of educational attainment, with 45% of residents aged 25 or older having at least a bachelor’s degree in 2021. However, the County’s educational attainment levels are increasing sharply, at a rate outpacing Edison’s. From 2000 to 2021, the share of County residents aged 25 or older with at least a bachelor’s degree grew by 62%, versus a gain of 52% in the Township.

The most significant growth rate by education level in Edison over the past two decades was among those with a master’s degree or higher, which increased by 69% since 2000 (+8,031 residents).

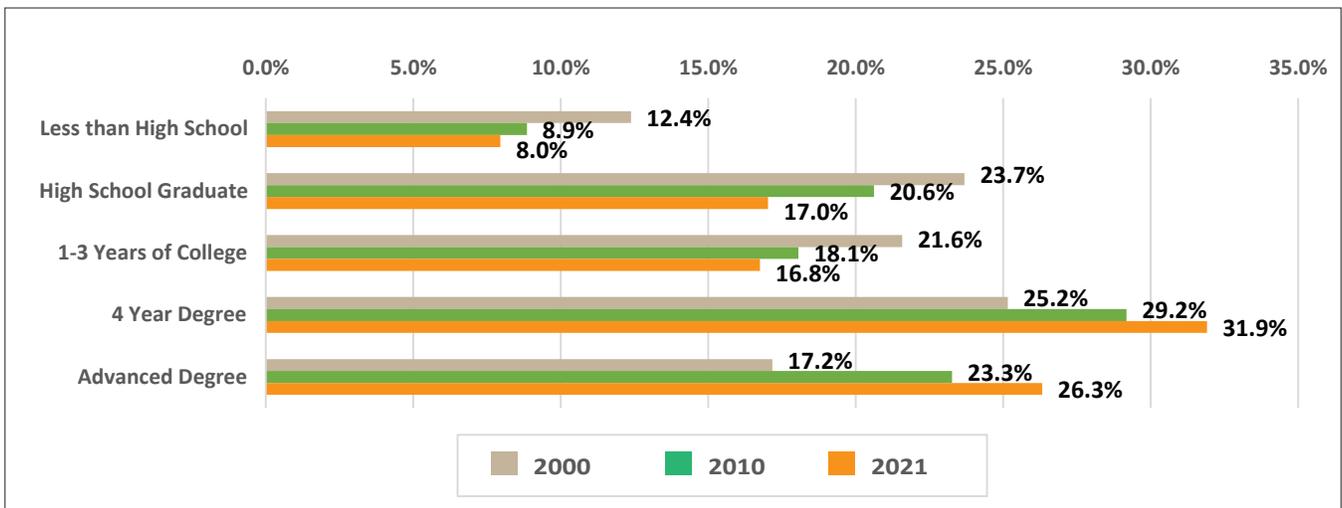


Figure 6: Distribution of Population Aged 25+ by Educational Attainment

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2000 Summary File 3, 2010 & 2021, ACS 1-Year Estimates.

HOUSING

HOUSEHOLD TYPES

Over the past two decades, Edison saw a decrease in the number of non-family households (-9.8%), including individuals living alone (-836 households) and non-family households with others, typically individuals living with roommates (-72 households). At the same time, family households increased significantly in number (+3,552 households). This trend was in contrast to the experience for the County overall, which saw strong growth among both non-family households living alone or with others as well as family households (both types increased by 16%).

As large family households increased in number in Edison from 2010 to 2021, the Township’s housing supply added several thousand large units with four or more bedrooms (+1,792 four-bedroom units and +1,203 units of five bedrooms or more). This trend is evident when looking at the distribution of homeowner and renter households by the number of bedrooms for 2021. As shown in the figure below, among owner-occupied households, Edison had a higher share of units with four or more bedrooms. However, on the rental side, the largest share of units in the Township are two-bedroom units.

In looking at the makeup of families, in 2000, there were 12,272 families with children under the age of 18 in Edison. By 2021, such households had increased to 15,049, a gain of 23%. Middlesex County also saw its number of families with children grow over the period, but its increase was far smaller, at 5.9%. All of the gain in the Township from 2000 to 2021 among families with children occurred in households with children aged 6-18 (+2,942 households); the number of households with children under age 6 declined by 832 households.

Married-couple families in Edison were responsible for nearly 75% of the gain in family households since 2000 (+3,552 households), with single-parent families making up the remaining increase (+908 households).

HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY SIZE

The average household size in Edison and Middlesex County were nearly equal in 2000, at 2.72 and 2.74 persons per household, respectively, but by 2021, the Township’s average residents per household had grown to 2.82, while the County’s had stayed at the same level.

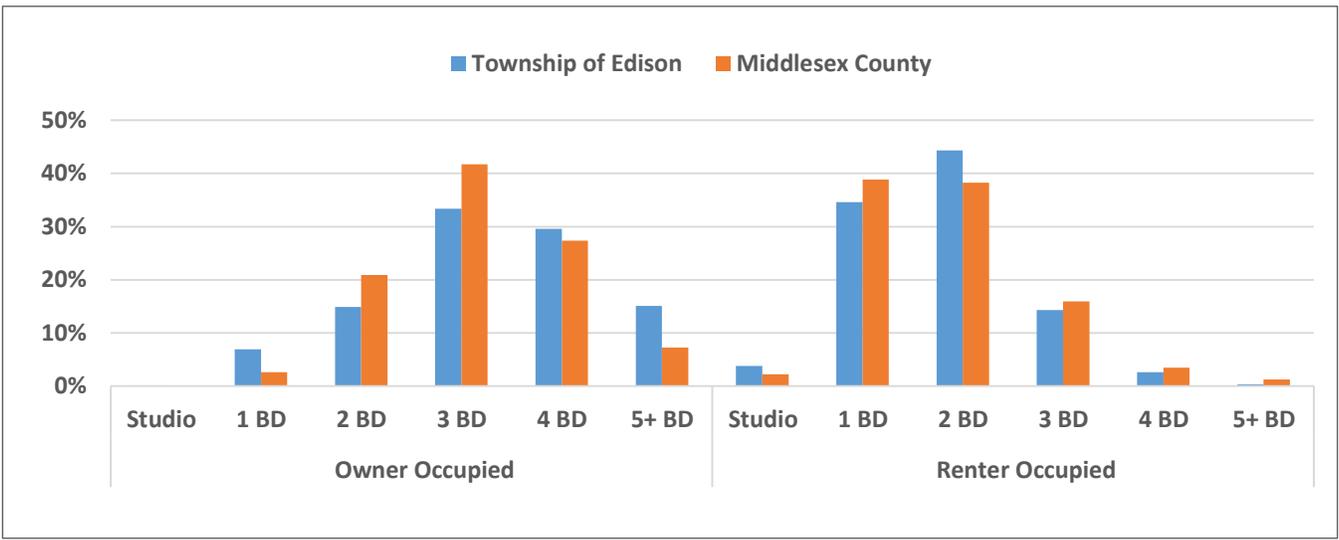


Figure 7: Distribution of Homeowner and Renter Households by Number of Bedrooms

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2021 1-Year Estimate.

	2000	2010	2021	Numeric Change	% Change
					2000-2021
Average Household Size					
Township of Edison	2.7	2.8	2.8	+0.1	+3.6%
Middlesex County	2.7	2.8	2.7	0.0	-0.8%
Average Family Size					
Township of Edison	3.19	3.26	3.21	+0.0	+0.6%
Middlesex County	3.23	3.29	3.19	0.0	-1.2%

Table 2: Average Household and Family Size

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 2000-2010, ACS 2021 1-Year Estimate

A similar trend occurred with family size, with Edison’s average increasing by 0.6% from 2000 to 2021, as the County’s average fell by 1.2% over the period. The Township’s growing share of households with families has led to its increased household size in recent years. From 2000 to 2021, the number of persons living alone fell by 11%, and the number of two-person households was largely unchanged. Meanwhile, the number of households with three or more people grew by 21% in Edison, led by gains of four-person households (+1,971), three-person households (+1,065) and those with at least five (+495).

In Edison, the average household size climbed since 2000 among renter households but remained stable among homeowner households. A similar trend occurred in Middlesex County over same period.



Figure 8: Average Household Size by Tenure

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 2000-2010, ACS 2021 1-Year Estimate.

SCHOOL CHILD MULTIPLIERS

Looking at the average number of K-12 public school children residing in housing units built in any year in Edison, according to the ACS 2016-2020, there was little variation by tenure. But, students were slightly more likely to reside in rental housing units (0.48 students per unit) compared with homeowner units (0.41 students per unit).

However, the generation of school children from rental units in the Township varies significantly by the age of the unit. The average number of school children per unit living in newer apartments (built in 2000 or later) was much less (0.11 students per unit) compared with the average number of students per unit built in any year (0.48 students per unit). Because newer units tend to command higher rents, those families who can afford a higher monthly housing cost may choose a single-family house versus an apartment. In contrast, families whose income limits their options on the single-family home market may look to Edison’s substantial stock of older units (many complexes date to the 1970s or 1980s).

On the homeowner side, the opposite is true: newer-construction homeowner units (whether detached single-family or attached condo/townhome) had a much higher average number of students per unit (0.68 students per unit) than either newer-construction rentals (0.11 students per unit) or rentals built in any year (0.48 students per unit).

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Despite rising housing costs, from 2010 to 2021, the number of housing cost-burdened homeowners (those with a mortgage spending more than 30% of monthly income on housing) fell from 7,008 households to 3,906 households, falling in share from about 46% to 30% of mortgage-holding homeowner households. The number of cost-burdened renters decreased by 801 households, from about 44% to 36% of all renters. In the County, the share of cost-burdened homeowners with a mortgage fell by nearly 13 percentage points, similar to Edison’s decrease, while the share of cost-burdened renters rose slightly, by 0.4 percentage points. Both the Township and County saw a spike in the percentage of housing cost-burdened residents – likely reflecting the impacts of the Great Recession in 2008-2009 – but these numbers have since moderated closer to 2000 levels.

In 1992, Edison adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and subsequently received first round substantive certification from the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH). However, the Township did not file a cumulative second round plan with COAH and was sued for exclusionary zoning by two developers. By a

	Township of Edison			Middlesex County		
	2000	2010	2021	2000	2010	2021
Share of Total by Tenure & Mortgage Status						
Renters: >30%	28.0%	43.6%	35.6%	34.9%	45.6%	46.0%
Homeowner w/ Mortgage: >30%	27.7%	45.9%	30.2%	29.5%	46.1%	33.3%
Homeowner w/out Mortgage: >30%	17.5%	20.9%	17.6%	19.3%	27.0%	22.8%
# of Housing Units						
Renters: >30%	3,435	5,301	4,500	29,643	40,720	47,665
Homeowner w/ Mortgage: >30%	3,908	7,008	3,906	32,626	60,081	41,275
Homeowner w/out Mortgage: >30%	1,015	1,279	1,978	8,552	14,816	17,000

Figure 9: Housing Cost Burden in Edison and Middlesex County

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Summary File 3, 2010 & 2021, ACS 1-Year Estimates.

1999 Consent Order, Edison’s zoning regulations were declared unconstitutional for failure to provide a realistic opportunity for affordable housing. This order facilitated settlement agreements with the developers that resulted in the development of the Rivendell II inclusionary rental development on Truman Drive and the Center Place at Edison inclusionary senior rental development on Woodbridge Avenue. The Court granted the Township a “Final Judgment” of compliance for its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in December 2003, which was later extended to December 2009.

In the most recent round of compliance activity, Edison entered into a Settlement Agreement with Fair Share Housing Center (“FSHC”) in 2016, which established the Present Need (Rehabilitation), Prior Round (1987-1999), Gap (1999-2015), and Prospective Need (2015-2025) obligations shown in Table 3. Later that year, the Special Master issued a report recommending that the Court grant a final Judgment of Compliance and Repose (“JOR”). Based on further amendments and coordination with the court, the Township completed a fully executed Amended Settlement Agreement in 2017.

The Township has been active in facilitating affordable housing units through inclusionary zoning and other means. As of May 2022, Edison had realized the construction of 1,059 units of the 1,310 units required to satisfy the first phase of its Third-Round obligation (covering 1999-2025) and rehabilitated 33 units of the 421 units required. An overview of project types and mechanisms is provided below.

Housing Rehabilitation Program

Edison has implemented a Housing Rehabilitation Program to rehabilitate existing housing stock by renovating older units owned by low- and moderate-income households to create a higher-quality housing stock and improved living conditions within the rehabilitated units. As noted above, the Township has completed 33 of the units required and continues to operate an active Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Obligation Type	Obligation
Prior Round	964
Third Round	2,530
1999-2025	1,310
2025-2035	610
2035-2045	610
Present Need (Rehabilitation)	421
Total	3,915

Table 3: Edison’s Cumulative Affordable Housing Obligations

Source: Edison Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, Amended December 2016

New Construction Inclusionary and 100% Affordable Housing

The Township has over 44 inclusionary and/or 100% affordable housing projects, including family rental, age-restricted rental, family for-sale, age-restricted for-sale, special needs, and Market to Affordable family rental projects. As of May 2022, one inclusionary project identified in the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan is pending (Rivendell Heights), but it is anticipated that this project is moving forward. The Township granted site plan approval in December 2018 and signed a Developer’s Agreement in August 2019. Upon completion, the project will create 38 affordable units.

Market to Affordable Program

Through its Administrative Agent, Edison operates a Market to Affordable Program, which aims to create 115 affordable housing units by providing a subsidy in exchange for implementing 30-year affordability controls. The program initially offered a \$50,000 subsidy, but this was determined to be insufficient to generate adequate private-sector interest, and it was increased to \$85,000 per unit. In addition, a down payment assistance subsidy is provided. This subsidy was initially \$10,000 and was increased to \$15,000, which further fueled interest. The Market to Affordable Program also gives an option for a subsidy of up to \$105,000 per unit for a two- or three-bedroom unit.

As of May 2022, the Township had completed 12 Market to Affordable sale units out of the 115 units proposed in the Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan. With increased interest in the program, it is anticipated that many additional affordable units will be established during the balance of the Third Round time period, ending July 1, 2025. As market-rate multifamily housing developments in Edison continue to age, there may be opportunities to explore additional market to affordable rental conversions. There also may also be opportunities to collaborate with the Housing Authority to expand its portfolio as well as complete renovations to existing Housing Authority units, as needed.

Supportive Housing

In early 2020, Edison gave its Administrative Agent responsibility for marketing its group home campaign, and by April 2020 an aggressive outreach campaign was in place. As a result, the Township has completed four new group homes for a total of 14 credits. Also, a four-unit group home is awaiting funding approval from the Township, and a proposed expansion of Imani Park would provide 55 special needs units that could be applied toward meeting the program's goals, if approved and built. Other interested nonprofit entities with whom the Township has been in communication should generate additional special needs bedrooms prior to the end of the Third Round in 2025, which are expected to address the entire 153 credits envisioned to be generated by this program.

Very Low-Income Units

As part of the Settlement Agreement, the Township agreed to require that 13% of all affordable units constructed or approved after July 1, 2008, be affordable to households earning 30% or less of area median income (AMI). The affordable housing units that satisfy this requirement are known as very low-income units. As of July 1, 2020, a total of 91 of the 509 units (18%) of the affordable housing units that have been approved since 2008 are reserved for very low-income households, which fully satisfies and exceeds the requirement for the production of very low-income units.

EMPLOYMENT

JOBS IN EDISON

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), the total number of jobs located in Edison has increased moderately over the long-term, from 74,785 jobs in 2003 to a recent peak of 81,923 jobs in 2019, then falling to 80,179 jobs as of 2021. This results in a total increase of 5,397 jobs, or 7.2%, over the 18-year period. Within that timeframe, the period from 2003 to 2010 (which included the Great Recession) showed a loss of 5,581 jobs (-7.5%), but job growth was strong in the 2010s, with a gain of 10,976 jobs (+16%) from 2010 to 2021.

In the more recent period from 2010 to 2021, the sectors with the most sizeable job gains in Edison included Transportation & Warehousing (+8,382 jobs); Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation (+2,976 jobs); Professional, Scientific &

Technical Services (+2,537 jobs); Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+746 jobs); Construction Services (+466 jobs); Information Services (+340 jobs); and Health Care & Social Assistance (+140 jobs). Industry sectors with the largest losses including Manufacturing (-1,013 jobs); Government Services (-959 jobs); Wholesale Trade (-654 jobs); Finance & Insurance Services (-642 jobs); Retail Trade (-319 jobs); Other Services (-310 jobs); Educational Services (-186 jobs); and Real Estate Services (-174 jobs).

According to data from the Middlesex County Office of BusinessEngagement, Edison istheheadquartersofmany major corporations with workforces spanning the region, nation, and globe. The largest employers headquartered in the Township are Hackensack Meridian Health (36,000 workers), Orion Innovation (5,000 workers), J.M. Huber (4,000 workers), IRIS Software (4,000 workers), and Brillio (2,515 workers). Jobs in Edison are concentrated in

Company Name	Primary Industry	Employees
Hackensack Meridian Health	Hospitals & Physicians Clinics	36,000
Orion Innovation	Business Services	5,000
J.M. Huber	Manufacturing	4,000
IRIS Software	Business Services	4,000
Brillio	Software	2,515
Anderson & Collins Clinical Re-search	Healthcare Services	2,265
HashTip	Telecommunications	2,234
ZSL	Business Services	1,760
Indecomm Global Services	Business Services	1,500
Towne Home Care	Healthcare Services	1,252
Binary Semantics	Business Services	1,194
Albireo Energy	Manufacturing	1,060
MTF Biologics	Hospitals & Physicians Clinics	1,026
Make Up forever	Retail	1,026
Ray Catena Auto Group	Retail	968
Metal Textiles	Manufacturing	959
Utsav Fashion	Retail	740
Diaspark	Business Services	691

Table 4: Largest Employers Headquartered in Edison, 2022

Source: Middlesex County, Office of Business Engagement, 2022.

the Raritan Center area, around the Menlo Park Mall, at the industrial area off Talmadge Road, and along Route 27 at the I-287 interchange.

The NJTPA has forecast employment growth in Edison at a rate of 0.227% annually, compared with 0.387% annually in Middlesex County over the period from 2015-2050.

EMPLOYMENT OF EDISON RESIDENTS

Job growth among Township residents has been modest over the past 20 years, with gains of 5.4% (+2,662 jobs) from 2000 to 2019 and an increase of just 0.9% (+450 jobs) since 2009. Job gains over the past decade have varied by type of worker and industry, with declines among workers under the age of 55 (-2,525 jobs) and growth among workers 55 and older (+2,975 jobs).

The top industries with gains for employed Edison residents included: Administration & Support, Waste Management, and Remediation (+903 jobs); Health Care and Social Assistance (+724 jobs); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+717 jobs); Transportation and Warehousing (+666 jobs); and Accommodation and Food Services (+439 jobs). In the past decade, some industries

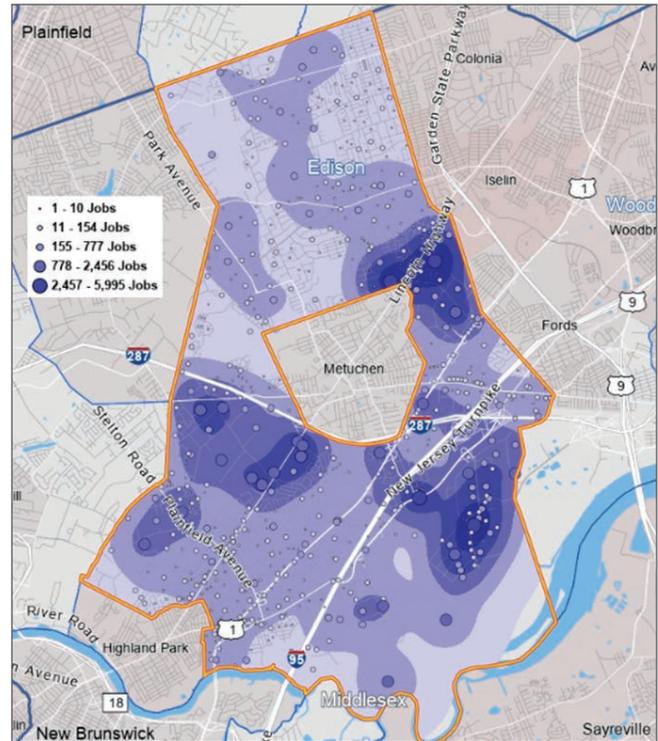


Figure 10: Location of Jobs in Edison

Source: US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer–Household Dynamics (LEHD) Program, 2019.

	Count	Share		Count	Share
All Counties	52,113	100.0%	All County Subdivisions	52,113	100.0%
Middlesex County, NJ	21,476	41.2%	Edison, NJ	8,445	16.2%
New York County, NY	4,869	9.3%	Manhattan, NY	4,869	9.3%
Somerset County, NJ	4,383	8.4%	Woodbridge, NJ	2,862	5.5%
Union County, NJ	4,093	7.9%	New Brunswick, NJ	1,731	3.3%
Essex County, NJ	2,487	4.8%	Piscataway, NJ	1,681	3.2%
Hudson County, NJ	2,246	4.3%	Jersey City, NJ	1,408	2.7%
Morris County, NJ	2,112	4.1%	South Plainfield, NJ	1,265	2.4%
Mercer County, NJ	1,709	3.3%	Newark, NJ	1,232	2.4%
Monmouth County, NJ	1,637	3.1%	Franklin, NJ	1,150	2.2%
Bergen County, NJ	1,529	2.9%	Bridgewater, NJ	940	1.8%
All Other Locations	5,572	10.7%	All Other Locations	26,530	50.9%

Figure 11: Job Locations of Employed Edison Residents, 2019

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer–Household Dynamics (LEHD) Program, 2019.

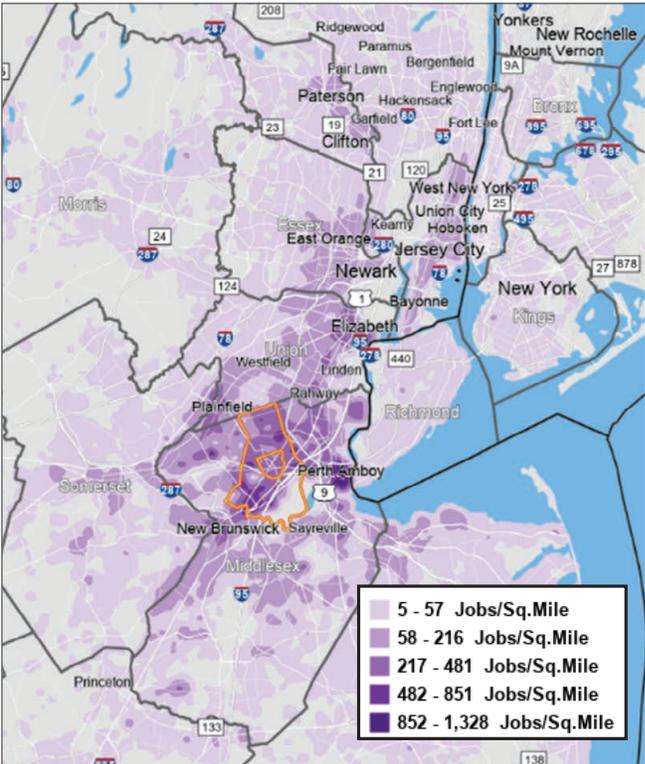
lost a large number (over 250) of employed Township workers, including: Manufacturing (=1,086 jobs); Educational Services (-547 jobs); Wholesale Trade (-535 jobs); Retail Trade (-481 jobs); and Public Administration (-298 jobs).

The top industries for resident workers in 2019 included: Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (7,829 jobs); Health Care and Social Assistance (7,125 jobs); Retail Trade (4,904 jobs); and Educational Services (4,063 jobs).

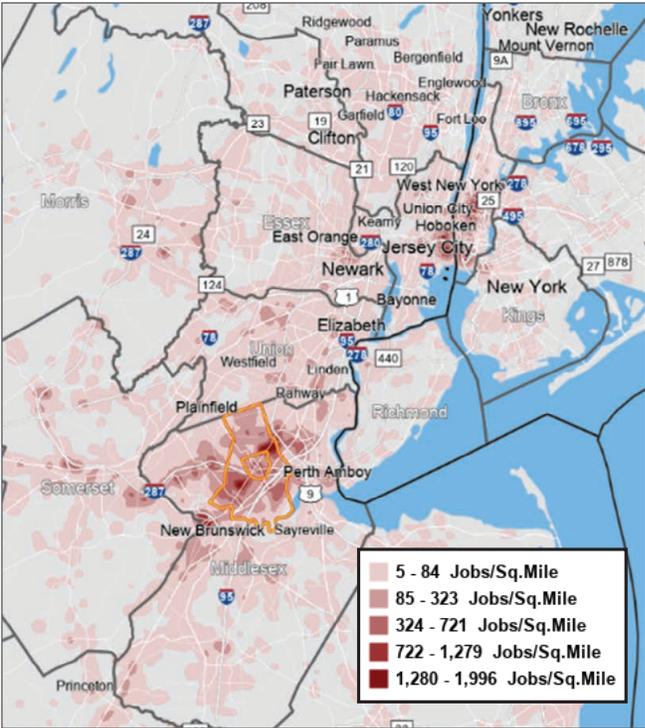
COMMUTATION

Among workers employed in Edison, 91% reside in New Jersey, 39% in Middlesex County, 11% in Union County, and 7% in Monmouth County. Workers in the Township commute from a number of places: 10% live and work in Edison, and another 5.7% live in Woodbridge, followed by Perth Amboy (3.8%), New York City (3.7%), and Piscataway (2.6%).

Among employed Edison residents, 85% work in New Jersey. A total of 4.1% work in Middlesex County, followed by Manhattan (9.3%) and Somerset County (8.4%). Some 16% of employed residents also work in Edison, while another 12% commute to New York City and 5.5% travel to Woodbridge. New Brunswick, Jersey City, and Piscataway are all popular commuting destinations as well.

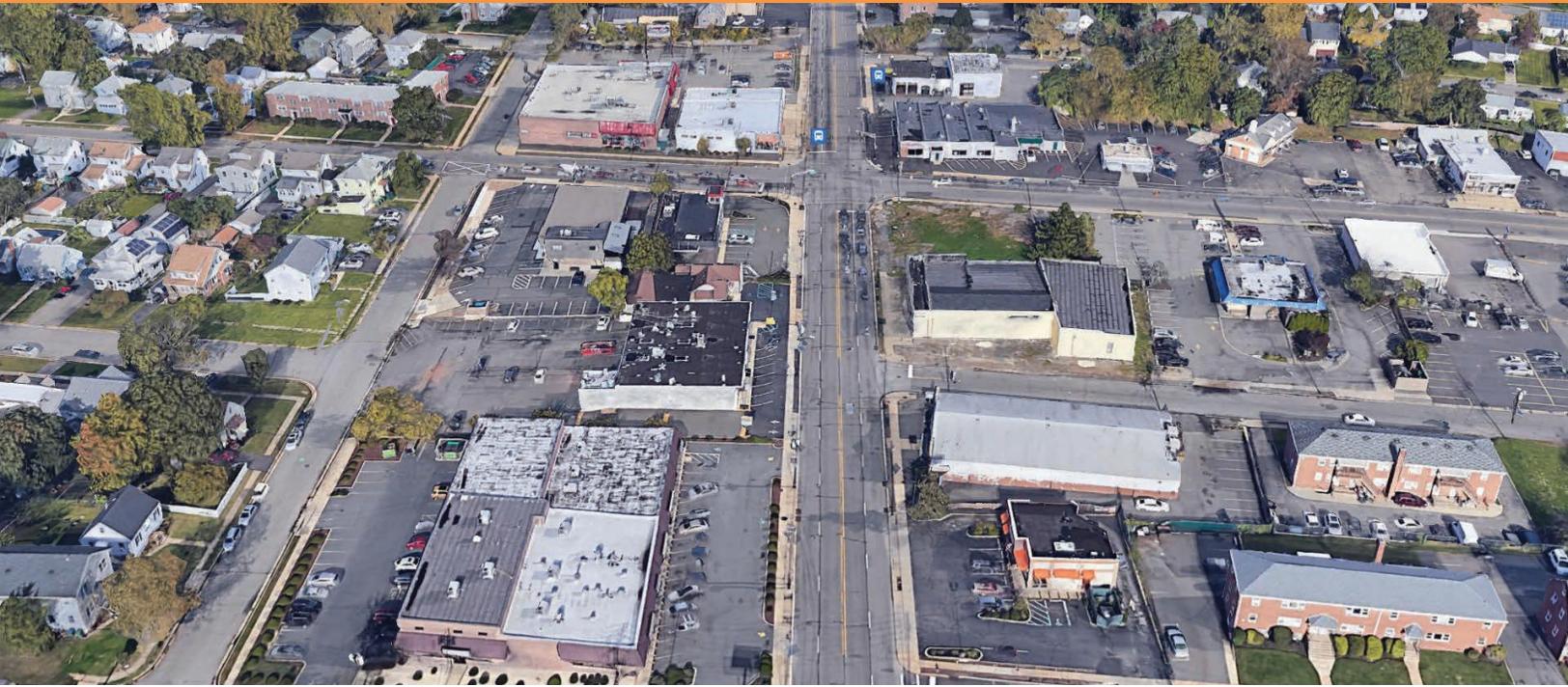


Home Location of Edison Workers
Source: LEHD On the Map (2019)



Work Location of Employed Residents
Source: LEHD On the Map (2019)

3/ LAND USE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT



This chapter explores the Township’s land uses as well as the current regulatory framework and development controls. The data (with associated sources) and discussion presented in this chapter suggest several development trends that are of importance for Edison:

- Land uses are very diverse compared with other municipalities in New Jersey. Single-family uses comprise just over a quarter of the land area. Industrial uses and open space are second- and third-largest land use categories, respectively.
- On a square footage basis, no type of development in Edison has had more impact in recent years than warehousing and storage. Since 2014, some 5.6 million square feet of storage space has been permitted in Edison. The scale and operation of newer warehouses are much greater than in the older warehouse areas, reflecting a shift to a 24/7 fulfillment center model.
- While Edison’s most significant residential growth occurred from the 1950s through the 1970s, its housing stock has been continually replaced. Most residential development – both single-family and multifamily – has occurred through the demolition of existing homes.
- The number of housing units has increased moderately since 2000, primarily in the single-family market, which is averaging about 50 new homes a year in Edison. Multifamily housing has been built in large spurts, with the most recent occurring at the end of the decade.
- Both Edison and Middlesex County have become denser over time, but the County’s rate of increase is higher.
- The number of owner-occupied units has grown more sharply than rental units for both single- and multifamily unit types.

- Both homeowner and rental vacancy rates have remained well below adequate levels over the past several decades. The very low vacancy rates suggest substantial unmet demand for housing.
- In the summer of 2022, the median sales price for single-family homes in Edison reached an all-time high. Prices have subsequently fallen, reflecting the impact of rising interest rates, which have increased home mortgage costs.
- The office market is robust, with low vacancy rates, and has outperformed peer markets in New York in recent years, as rents have surpassed pre-pandemic levels. The outlook for the local market is strong over the next five years, with predictions for steadily rising rents and declining vacancy rates.
- The warehouse sector is in high demand, with a very low vacancy rate and average rents that have steadily increased in the past 10+ years. The outlook for the warehouse and distribution market in Central New Jersey remains very strong, due to above-average growth and low vacancies. The market outlook for data centers is also strong.
- Edison's retail vacancy rate is relatively low, despite significant new retail space that has been recently constructed or is proposed/under construction.



Recently built single-family homes



Heller Industrial Park



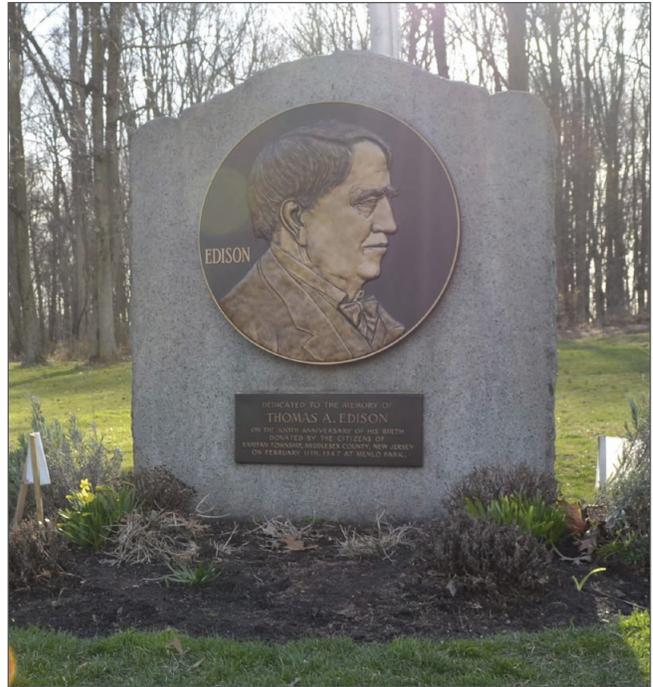
Strip commercial on Oak Tree Road

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The earliest known residents of the area now known as Edison were the Raritan people of the Lenni-Lenape Native Americans, who lived in the area and traveled through it to reach the shore. As of the mid-17th century, a group of some 1,200 warriors was led by Chief Matouchin (basis for the name of the present Borough of Metuchen). Native American trails such as the Minisink Trail along the Raritan River became the basis for development of roads that are still used today. By the late 1600s, European settlement of the community began with the granting of several land grants in Piscatawaytown, centered at St. James Episcopal Church near the intersection of Plainfield and Woodbridge Avenues. Early settlers included the Dunhams and Bonhams, whose names contribute to place names today. Originally known as Raritan Township, Edison was formed from portions of Woodbridge and Piscataway townships. Properties dating from the colonial era are found in this area of Edison and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Old Post Road, an early public road in New Jersey, passes through Edison and was the center for Bonhamtown, a hamlet that served as the seat of justice for Middlesex and Somerset counties in the early 1690s. Another early settlement occurred in the Stelton section, with the founding in 1689 of the Stelton Baptist Church, the second-oldest Baptist church in New Jersey. Other key settlements in the area included Metuchen, New Durham, and Oak Tree.

The community played a major role in the Revolutionary War. The British occupied this area from December 1776 to June 1777 resulting in numerous skirmishes with the Americans at places such as Piscatawaytown, and Bonhamtown. On June 26, 1777 a major battle occurred between the American forces commanded by General Stirling, fought the British under the command of General Howe. The Battle of the Short Hills began at what is now Oak Tree Road and Plainfield Road, and continued through the hills to the north.



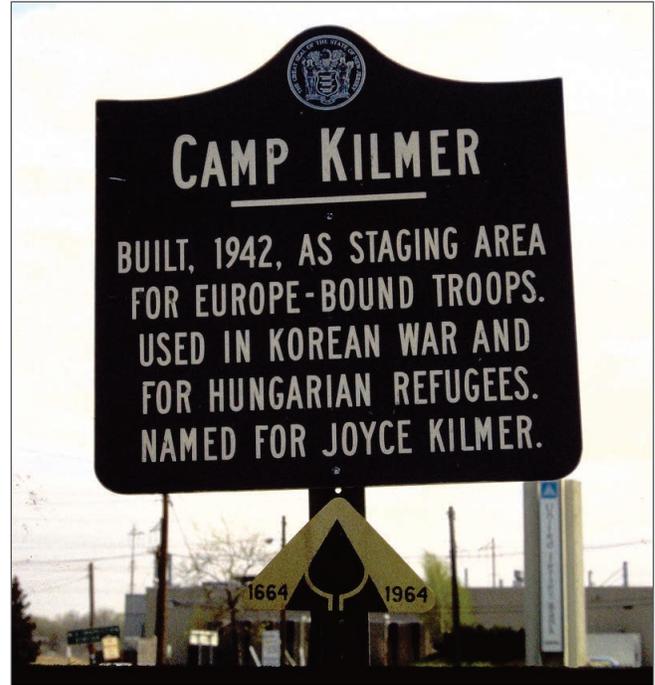
Edison's population grew slowly through the 19th century, with the opening of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Easton and Amboy lines, and the community was incorporated as Raritan Township in 1870. The railroad also attracted the attention of entrepreneur Thomas Edison, who built his laboratories in the Menlo Park section of the township in 1876. At this location, the "Wizard of Menlo Park" developed some of his most famous innovations, including the phonograph, the electric railway, and the incandescent lamp. When Edison relocated the facility to West Orange 10 years later, the buildings fell into disrepair before ultimately collapsing. By the turn of the century, the Township had become popular as a destination for summer residences seeking respite from nearby cities. Metuchen was the commercial and social center, and in 1900 petitioned the state to be incorporated as a separate municipality. In 1905, Highland Park also incorporated as a separate borough. The rest of Edison retained its largely rural character, with scattered settlements that evolved into distinct neighborhoods. Key sections of the Township

that developed in the early 20th century include Clara Barton, Nixon, Lindenau, and Potters Crossing an African American community along Inman & Grove Avenues.

During World War I the Army acquired thousands of acres of land between Woodbridge Ave. and the Raritan River, for the Raritan Arsenal. During World War II, Camp Kilmer served as a staging area and part of an installation of the New York Port of Embarkation. Troops were quartered in this area, just west of the Edison train station, in preparation for transport to the European Theater of operations. In time, the camp became the largest processing center for departing and returning troops, processing over 2.5 million soldiers.

The post-World War II period brought the township's largest population growth, spurred by the need for housing by returning veterans and new access to the interstate highway system (I-287 and Exit 10 on the NJ Turnpike were not built until after 1964). During this period, major sections of southern Edison were developed, including Lincoln and Washington Parks, and Haven Village. In 1954, a group of women (Women for Edison) proposed a change in the name of the township, and the voters selected Edison as the new name. In 1959, Menlo Park Mall opened on Route 1, while in 1963 the U.S. Army's Raritan Arsenal complex along the Raritan River was closed. Portions of the 3,200-acre site became Thomas Edison County Park, Middlesex College, and the Raritan Center Business Park, the largest industrial park east of the Mississippi River. Development that occurred prior to

In the 1990s, Edison and the adjacent Iselin portion of Woodbridge became a destination for South Asian immigrants, particularly from the Indian subcontinent. Centered along Oak Tree Road, the influx brought new residents, businesses, and cultures to an underutilized commercial strip, and returned Edison to double-digit population growth. With this significant growth through the second half of the 20th century and into the 21st, Edison is now a mature, largely built-out community. Most future development will occur through redevelopment and reuse of existing sites.



Overall, Edison's development pattern has been shaped by its location along the Raritan River near its mouth at Raritan Bay, which provided navigable water access for industry, and by the major highways bisecting the township. I-287 traverses Edison in an east-west direction, while the New Jersey Turnpike, Route 1, and NJ Route 27 (Lincoln Highway) cross diagonally in a more north-south direction. In addition, the Borough of Metuchen is located entirely within Edison's boundaries, making the two communities "doughnut towns" where one municipality completely surrounds another. Together, the highways and unusual municipal boundaries serve to separate the 32-square-mile Edison into segments, which has led to the development of places with distinct characteristics.

EXISTING LAND USE

Edison is often considered a predominantly low-density residential community, and single-family residential does represent the highest share of land use; however, the built environment actually shows some diversity. As shown in Table 5 and Figure 12, approximately 26% of the Township's land area consists of single-family residential uses, representing the vast majority of all residential uses. Apartments and townhouses make up just 4% and 3%, respectively, of Edison's land use, although they do contribute to the Township's higher population density relative to Middlesex County as a whole. Townhouses are found primarily in the northern portion of Edison, while multifamily uses are scattered throughout the Township.

Aside from roadways, the second-largest land use in Edison, at 15% of land area, is industrial, reflecting the significant presence of the Raritan Center Business Park and Heller Industrial Park in the southeastern section, as well as large-scale warehouses off Talmadge Road, along Route 27, and in the Kilmer section of the Township. While these warehouse uses are generally consistent with the zoning in place, the scale and operation of newer warehouses are much greater than in the older areas. This is consistent with a macro-level shift in warehousing from a light industrial/distribution use to a 24/7 fulfillment center model, with significantly different impacts on adjacent land uses.

Parks and open space make up about 12% of Edison's land area, including large regional spaces such as Edison State Park, Barnes Wildlife Preserve, and Edith Stevens Memorial Wildlife Preserve, in addition to Township parks, private golf courses, and preserved wetland areas along the Raritan River. Another public-facing land use category consists of institutional uses such as schools, libraries, municipal and other governmental facilities, houses of worship, and Middlesex College. Collectively, these institutional uses make up 8% of Edison's land area.

Land Use	%
Single-Family Residential	25.9
Industrial	14.5
Parks and Open Space	11.9
Commercial	6.5
Institutional	8.4
Multi-Family	4.0
Townhouse	2.5
Transportation & Utility	2.2
Vacant/Unknown	8.8
Agriculture	0.2

Table 5: Edison Land Use

Source: NJDOT, NJDEP, NJOGIS, BFJ Planning

Commercial uses take up approximately 7% of the Township's land and are primarily focused along the major corridors of Route 1, Route 27, and Oak Tree Road, as well as smaller nodes at Inman Road, Amboy Avenue, and New Durham Road. In addition, Menlo Park Mall occupies about 70 acres along Parsonage Road off Route 1.

The final major land use category is vacant/unknown, which makes up about 9% of Edison's total land area. Vacant land is scattered throughout the Township but is particularly concentrated in the southern portion, in wetland/floodplain areas and portions of the former Raritan Arsenal complex. With much of the remaining vacant land in Edison environmentally constrained, most future development potential consists in redeveloping existing, underutilized properties, or smaller infill-type development on scattered parcels.

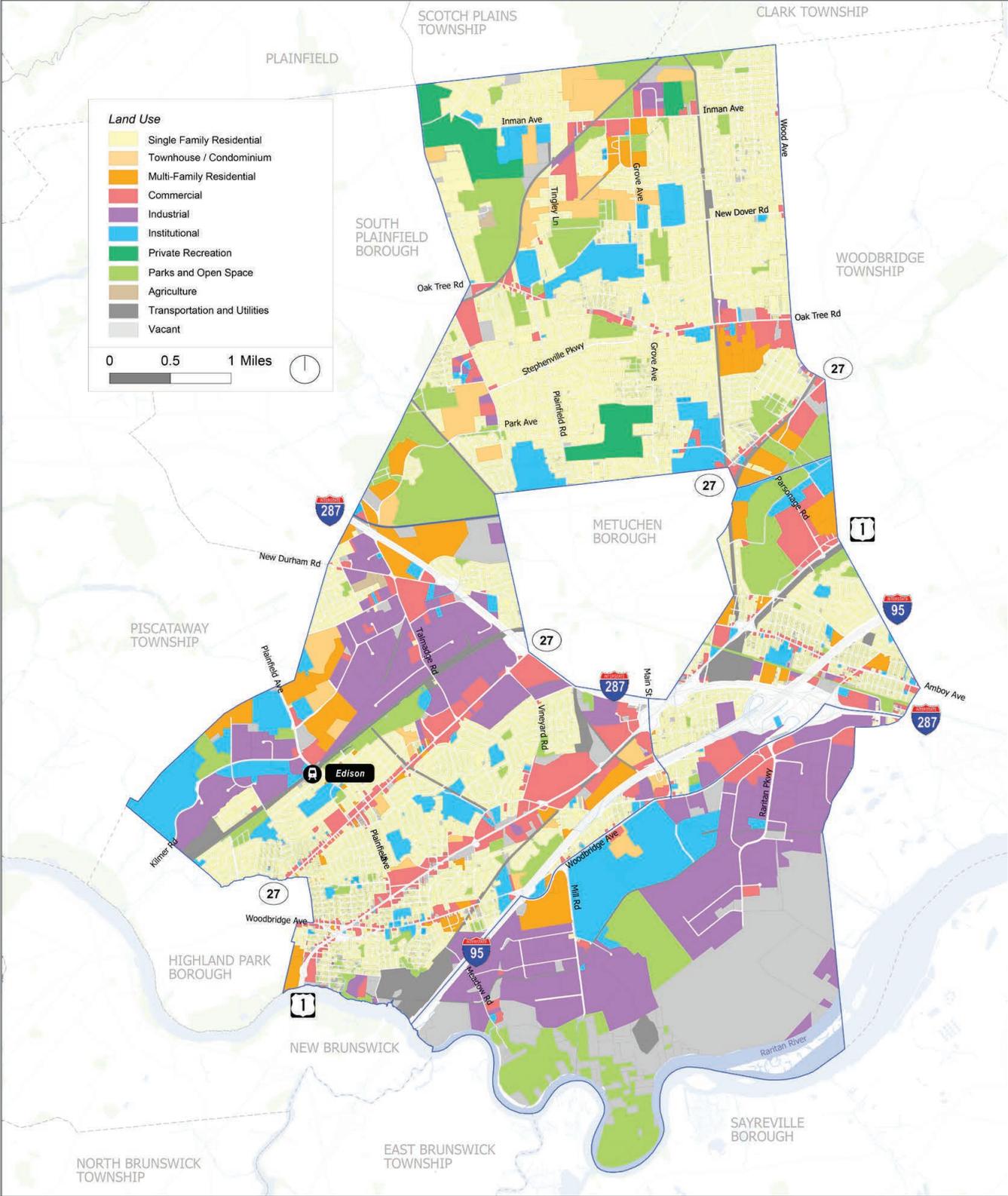


Figure 12: Edison Land Use Map, 2022

Source: NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BfJ Planning.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

As noted, most of Edison’s land use area is devoted to single-family residential uses, and that is what continues to be developed, for the most part. As shown in Figure 13, the Township issued a total of 874 single-family units from 2004 to 2020, averaging about 50 new homes a year. At the same time, multifamily housing has been built in spurts, most recently from 2018-2020, when a total of 412 apartment units were permitted. This recent development includes the 220-unit Camelot at Edison apartment complex at a former factory site across from Herbert Hoover Middle school, the 86-unit first phase

of the Truman Square apartment complex in the Kilmer section, and the construction of 40 apartments adjacent to the existing Millbrook Village complex on Horizon Drive. Much of this development – both single-family and multifamily – has occurred through the demolition of existing homes. According to data from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, a total of 517 single-family homes were demolished from 2004-2020, or about 30 per year.

On a square footage basis, no type of development in Edison has had more impact in recent years than warehousing and storage. As shown in Figure 14,

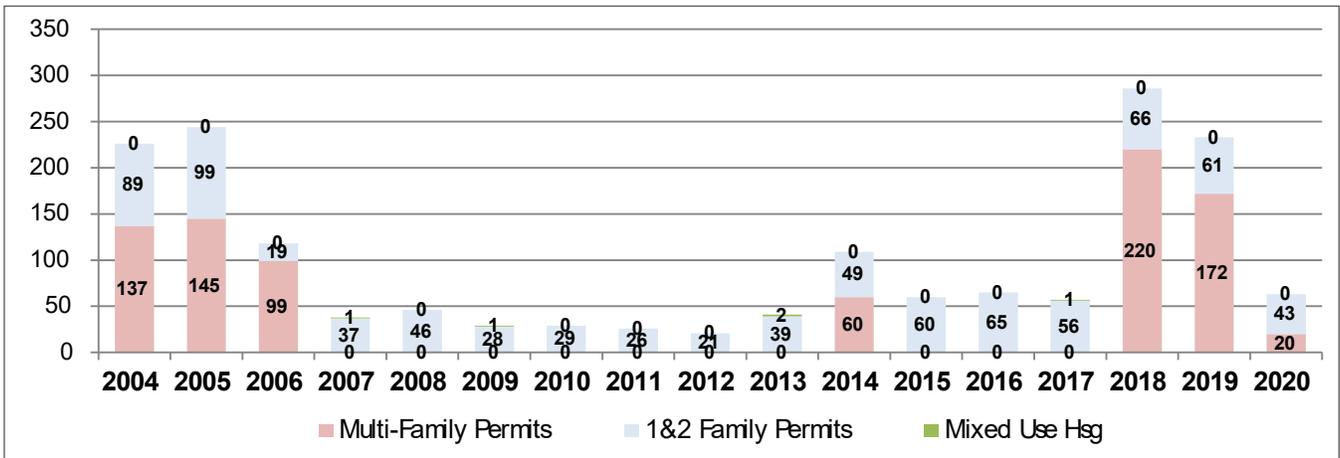


Figure 13: Edison Housing Units by Type of Building Permit, 2004-2020

Source: NJ Department of Community Affairs: Certified Housing Unit Data for years 2004-2021.

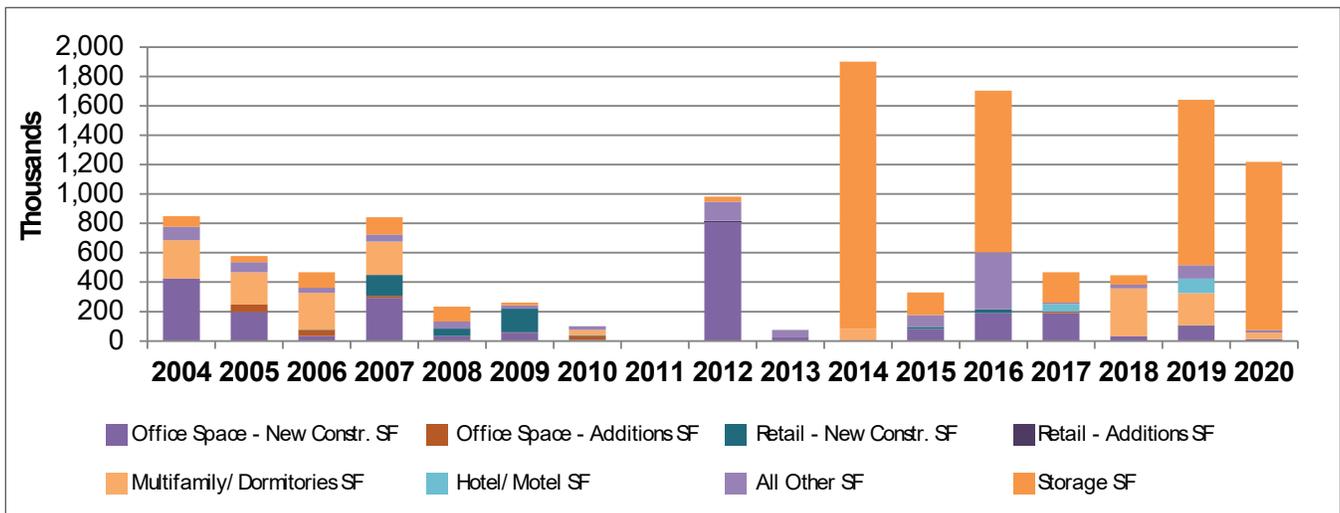


Figure 14: Edison Non-Residential Square Footage by Type of Building Permit, 2004-2021

Source: NJ Department of Community Affairs: Certified Housing Unit Data for years 2004-2020.

permitting of storage uses accounted for the most substantial square footage of any other type of development during the period, especially in the past decade. Since 2014, some 5.6 million square feet of storage space has been permitted in Edison. In fact, in 2020, when the pandemic led to a dramatic decrease in development overall, storage and warehousing uses saw a robust level of activity and accounted for 94% of all permitted square footage.

Edison's highly fluctuating history of building permits is typical of communities that are largely developed and lack large areas of vacant land, meaning that development occurs as individual parcels become available for development. A similar pattern is in place for the Township's larger neighboring communities, which are also quite developed. In 2020, the most recent year for which data are available, Edison saw 63 residential units approved, while Metuchen saw 23, Woodbridge saw 740 (nearly all multifamily), Piscataway saw 108, Scotch Plains saw 18, South Plainfield saw 9, Clark saw 135, and Highland Park saw 40. In most cases, the majority or all permits issued were for multifamily housing. Many communities in the state have experienced an increase in multifamily housing development in the past five years as they seek to meet their affordable housing obligations for the current planning period which ends in 2025. With a subsequent new affordable housing round, municipalities can expect to have new obligations that will need to be met in the next planning period. For Edison in particular, some of its prior-round obligations will carry over to future rounds.

HOUSING

Housing Units

In 2021, Edison had 38,923 housing units compared with 36,302 units in 2000, a gain of 8.1% (+2,905). Housing unit growth (+8.1%) slightly outpaced household gains (+7.5%) over this period. A similar trend occurred in Middlesex County, with housing unit gains (+15.9%) exceeding household growth (+15.8%).

Since the 1970s, both homeowner and rental units have increased in number in Edison; however, the share of homeowner units fell from about 73% in 1970 to 64% in 2000, before rising again slightly to 65% in 2021. Over the past 20 years, the number of homeowner units increased by 9.1% in Edison and 12% in Middlesex County. The number of rental units grew by just 4.7% in the Township, while the County saw a gain of 23% in the last two decades. The share of homeowner units in both Edison and Middlesex County has remained highly stable since 2000.

The number of owner-occupied units in Edison has grown more sharply than rental units for both single- and multifamily unit types. This trend is not new; the share of rental units has been falling since it peaked in 1980. Just over 62% of Edison's housing units were single-family in 2021 (23,547 units). Roughly 90% of these are owner-occupied (21,483 units), with the remaining 8.8% (2,064 units) rentals. Since 2000, the number of multifamily rentals in the Township is largely unchanged, but the number of multifamily homeowner units rose by 44%,

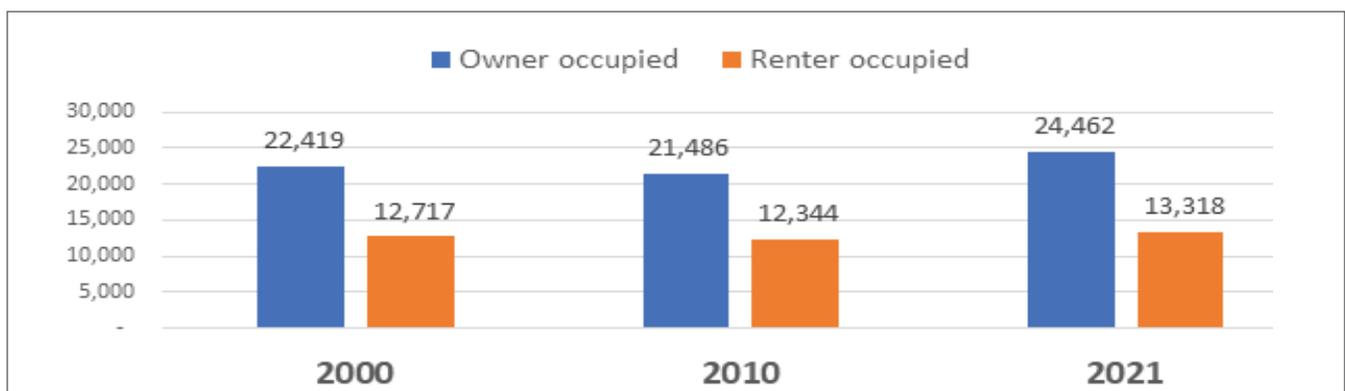


Figure 15: Edison Housing Units by Tenure

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 2000-2010, ACS 2021 1-Year Estimate.

from 1,810 units to 2,606 units. Of multifamily units, the rental portion fell from 86% in 2000 to 81% in 2021. This differs from the County, where the rental share of multifamily units rose from 81% to 84%. Most of Edison’s growth in multifamily units (both owner- and renter-occupied) has been in buildings of 10-19 units, which added 1,153 units from 2000 to 2021.

Figure 16 illustrates Edison’s housing unit density by census block group. As shown, the highest-density areas, of 8 or more units per acre, are found in the areas corresponding to large apartment complexes: Oak Tree Village off Oak Tree Road and Rivendell at Edison, Blueberry Village, Edison Village, and Victoria Park, off Plainfield Avenue just north of the Edison train station. Other higher-density areas, of 6-8 units per acre, are located off Woodbridge Avenue west of Route 1, a portion of the Clara Barton neighborhood, and the area just south of the Barnes Preserve. The rest of Edison largely falls under 6 units per acre.

Both Edison and Middlesex County have become denser over time, but the County’s rate of increase is higher. As shown in Figure 17, since 1990, Edison’s population density has grown by about 21%, while the County’s density is up by about 28% over the same time period.

While Edison’s most significant residential growth occurred from the 1950s through the 1970s, its housing stock has been continually replaced. As a result, the median year built of the Township’s housing units has climbed from 1971 in 2000 to 1977 in 2021. Homeowner units had a median year built of 1968 in 2021, while rental units were generally more recently constructed, with a median age built of 1983. Compared with Middlesex County, Edison’s housing stock is newer. In 2021, 12% of the Township’s housing stock was built in 2000 or later, versus 15% of County units, but a higher percentage of County units (48%) were constructed in 1970 or earlier, compared with the Township (42%). Units built before 1970 are at greater risk of containing lead paint or asbestos, and are also less likely to be well-insulated and require additional energy to heat, which significantly contributes to climate change.

Units in Structure	2021	
	# of Housing Units	Share of Total
Single Family	23,547	62.3%
2-4	2,274	6.0%
5-9	3,027	8.0%
10-19	4,529	12.0%
20-49	2,322	6.1%
50+	1,521	4.0%
Mobile Home, RV, Other	560	1.5%
TOTAL	37,780	

Table 6: Units in Structure for Housing Units in Edison

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Summary File 3, 2010 & 2021, ACS 1-Year Estimates.

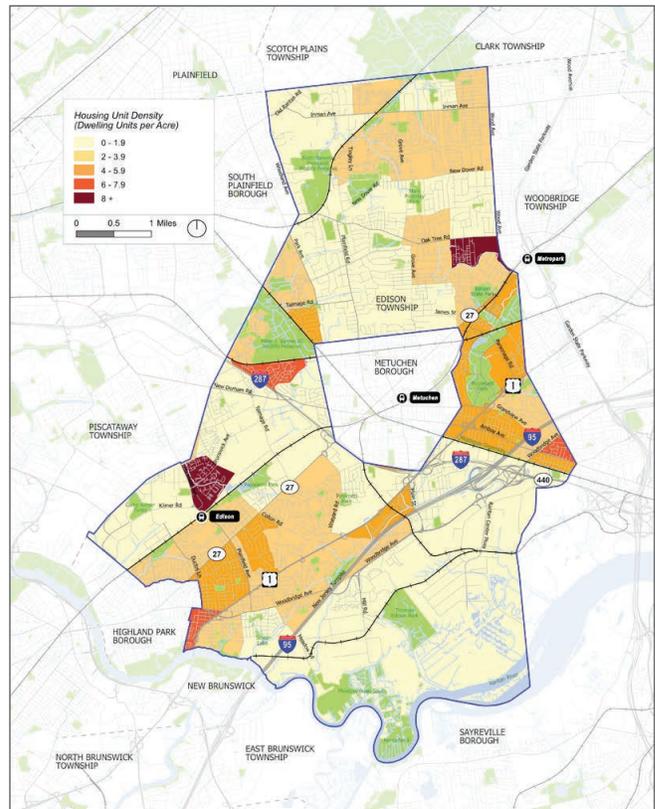


Figure 16: Housing Unit Density

Source: Urban Footprint, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BFJ Planning.

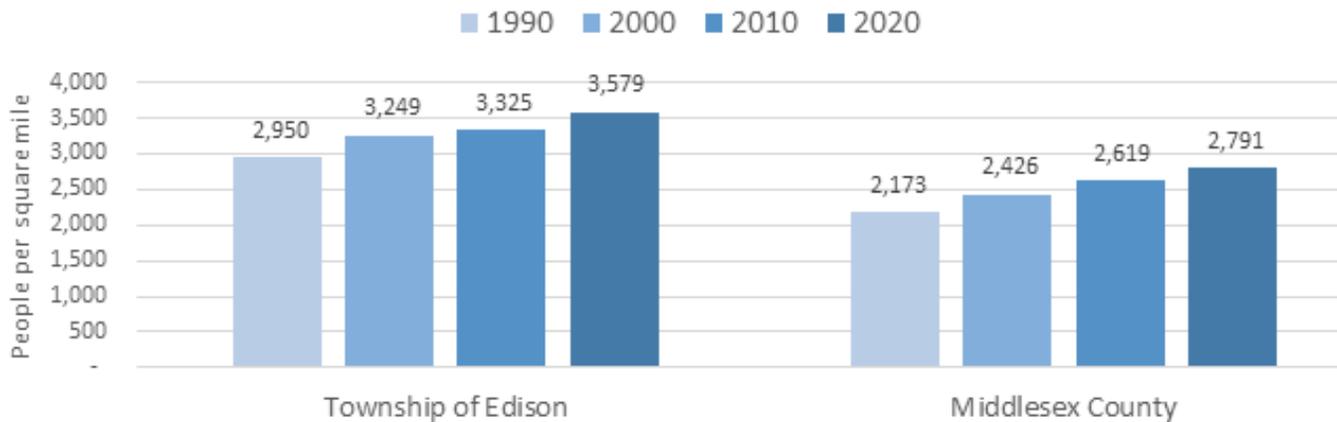


Figure 17: Historic Population Density, 1990-2021

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 1900-2010, 2020 P.L. 94-171 Redistricting File, ACS 2021 1-Year Estimate.

Year Structure Built	2021	
	# of Housing Units	Share of Total
Built 2020 or later	240	0.6%
Built 2010 to 2019	1409	3.6%
Built 2000 to 2009	2824	7.3%
Built 1990 to 1999	3204	8.2%
Built 1980 to 1989	10359	26.6%
Built 1970 to 1979	4486	11.5%
Built 1960 to 1969	7031	18.1%
Built 1950 to 1959	6771	17.4%
Built 1940 to 1949	905	2.3%
Built 1939 or earlier	1694	4.4%
TOTAL	38,923	

Table 7: Year Structure Built for Housing Units

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021, ACS 1-Year Estimates.

Housing Vacancies

When vacancy rates and home prices are at healthy levels of affordability and availability, housing production keeping pace with household growth indicates a healthy market. But very low vacancy rates and high housing prices, both locally and regionally, suggest substantial unmet demand for housing. Healthy vacancy rates, where households are able to find places to live and property owners can find buyers or tenants, are generally in the range of 1.3% to 2% for homeowners and 7% to 9% for renters. Lower vacancy rates of 4% to 5% are usually considered healthy in urban areas.

In Edison, homeowner vacancy rates have remained well below adequate levels over the past several decades, ranging from 0.6% in 2000 to 0.8% in both 2010 and 2021. Renter vacancy rates are also below healthy levels, reaching an estimated low of 0.0% in 2021, versus 5.2% in 2010, and 2.8% in 2000.

According to Apartments.com, there were roughly 500 rentals available for occupancy in mid-October 2022 in Edison, which would represent a vacancy rate of 3.8% when compared with American Community Survey (ACS) housing estimates. This is an improvement from the ACS estimate of 0.0%, but still lower than what is considered adequate in a healthy market. Similarly, Middlesex County had a vacancy rate of 3.2% using current market listings, compared with the 2021 ACS estimate of 2%.

An analysis of homeowner vacancy rates using on-the-market inventory market data from real estate listings firm Redfin generated homeowner vacancy rates of 0.8% in Edison and 0.7% in Middlesex County for August 2022, a time where active listings are generally fewer than the spring, when the housing inventory for sale is highest. These vacancy rates were unchanged from the 2021 ACS estimate for Edison, but higher than the vacancy rate estimated for Middlesex County (0.7% vs. 0.2%), owing perhaps to the market cool-off seen at the national and regional level with rising home loan interest rates.

Housing Market Trends

In August 2022, the median sales price for single-family homes in Edison reached \$518,000, near the all-time high recorded several months earlier in June (\$620,000). As of September 2022, national single-family home sales had fallen about one-quarter from the prior year, reflecting the impact of rising interest rates, which have increased home mortgage costs. However, in Edison, single-family home sales have grown 44% since the fourth quarter of 2019, while condo sales were up 45% in the same time period. Middlesex County was seeing similar strong sales results, at 38% for single-family homes and 46% for condos. While single-family home sales in the Township dropped slightly from the second quarter to the third quarter 2022, it is not clear whether this decline is the

start of a downward trend comparable to the national housing market slowdown or the local market taking a rest from recent price gains. For Middlesex County, the 2022 market is showing no signs of slowing down, with an all-time high for single-family home sales recording in the third quarter.

In a concerning sign of inadequate market supply, Redfin reported in August 2022 that the number of months of supply on the market for homes was just 1.8 months in the County and 2.3 months in Edison. This is down considerably from the monthly average of 4.0 months in Edison and 4.1 months in the County, from 2012 to 2021, but an improvement from the year-to-date 2022 average of 1.7 months in Edison and 1.9 months in the County. Additionally, the average number of days on the market for single-family homes had dropped to just 26 days on average in 2022 in both Edison and Middlesex County, well below the average of recent years (71 days in Edison and 67 days in the County over the 2012-2021 period). The decline in available single-family housing over the last several years reflects many factors, including pent-up demand from the COVID-19 pandemic, financial incentives for homeownership due to low interest rates and rapid home value growth, and other macroeconomic trends.

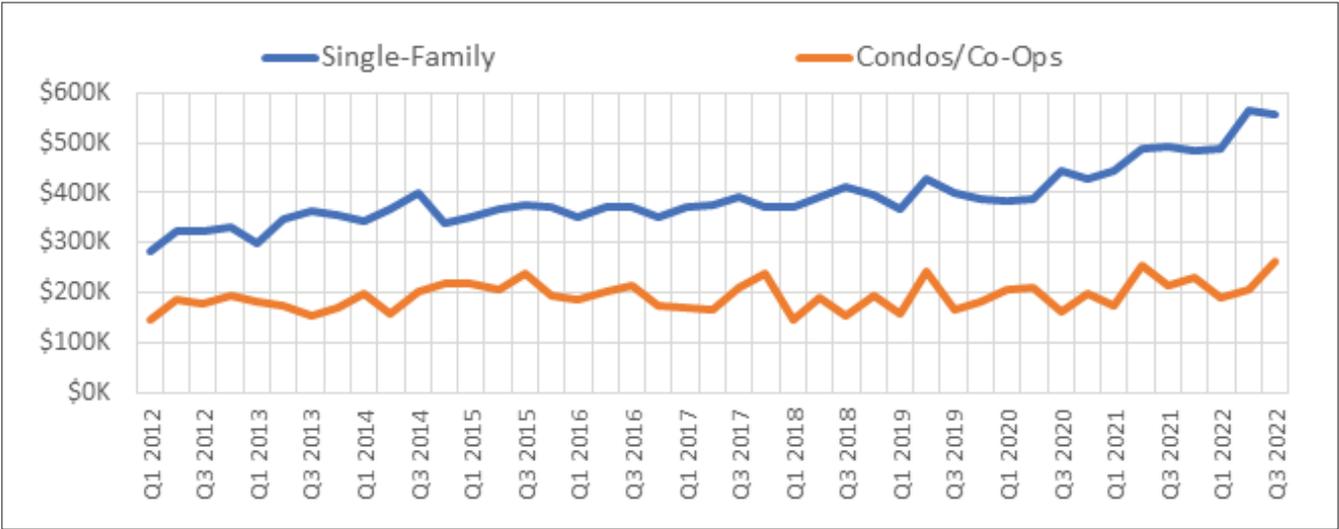


Figure 18: Edison Median Sales Price by Housing Type, Q1 2012 - Q3 2022

Source: Redfin, Housing Market Data, 2/2012- 8/2022.



Figure 19: Market-Rate Apartment Market Median Effective Rent & Vacancy Rate, Northwest Middlesex Sub-market, Q1 2011 – Q2 2022

Source: Moody’s Analytics REIS, 2011 Q1 – 2022 Q2.

On the rental side, the Township has a large market-rate apartment market, with several thousand units across more than 70 sites. The ACS reported median gross rent (rent plus utility expenses) in Edison at \$1,772 in 2021, up from \$1,319 in 2019 and \$913 in 2000. Rents were lower in Middlesex County overall, at \$1,655 in 2021. At the upper end of the rental market, about 20% of Edison renters paid \$2,000 or more in 2021, up from 6.2% in 2010. Adjusting for inflation, gross rent in Edison grew by about 19% from 2000 to 2021 and 8.1% from 2010 to 2021, well above household income gains for the period.

According to real estate data provider Moody’s Analytics REIS, market-rate apartment rents in Edison averaged \$2,106 per unit in the second quarter of 2022, with vacancy rates at 1%. In the Northwest Middlesex County sub-market, rents averaged \$1,708 for the period, an all-time high, while average vacancy rates were just 1.7%.

OFFICE, RETAIL, AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Office

Edison has a sizeable office market, with more than 3.5 million square feet of space. The average rent was \$21.85 per square feet in the second quarter of 2022, with a vacancy rate of 8.3%. Within the broader Metropark/

Edison/Woodbridge sub-market, the average rent was \$23.12, with a vacancy rate of 13.6%. With very low vacancy rates, the Township’s office market is quite strong within the larger Central New Jersey office market, which itself has outperformed peer markets in New York in recent years, as rents have surpassed pre-pandemic levels.

However, Edison’s broader sub-market is seen as weaker than peer sub-markets like South Middlesex, Hillsborough/Franklin, and New Brunswick, which were top performers due to rent and vacancy rate improvements. Some older properties in Edison have struggled more than others, but much of the older office space is in high demand, with low rents and full occupancy. The outlook for the local market is strong over the next five years, with steadily rising rents and declining vacancy rates.

Retail

Edison’s retail market includes nearly 3.3 million square feet of space. The Township’s retail vacancy rate is low, at 10.6%, with an average rent of \$22.61 per square foot as of the second quarter of 2022. Situated within the North Middlesex sub-market where average rents are \$22.57 per square foot and about 7.6% of inventory is vacant,

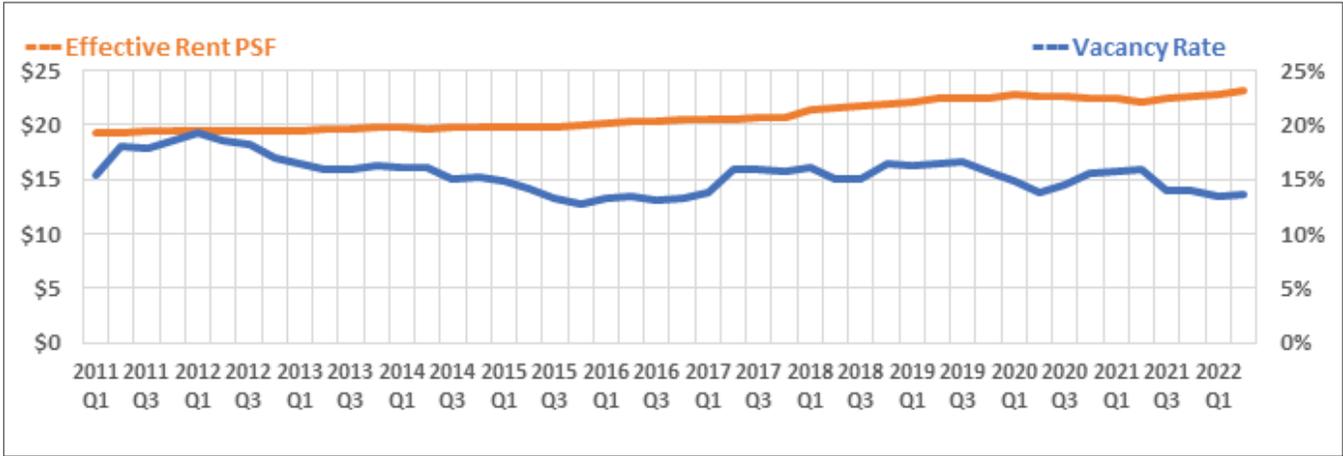


Figure 20: Average Rents & Vacancy Rate, Metropark/Edison/Woodbridge Office Sub-market, Q1 2011 – Q2 2022

Source: Moody's Analytics REIS, 2011 Q1 – 2022 Q2.



Figure 21: Average Rents & Vacancy Rate, North Middlesex Retail Sub-market, Q1 2011 – Q2 2022

Source: Moody's Analytics REIS, 2011 Q1 – 2022 Q2.

Edison’s retail market is comparatively desirable. Its rents exceed both the sub-market and the Central New Jersey Region (at \$20.86 per square foot).

The Township has added 82,300 square feet of new retail space over the past two years, including Edison Town Square, a regional shopping center on Route 1; the Aldi on Route 27, and the Carmax on Route 1. Another 100,000 square feet is proposed or under construction at Edison Town Square.

Moody’s Analytics ranks the Central New Jersey retail market 12th in the Northeast U.S. by rent and occupancy performance, and Edison’s sub-market is ranked 10th out of 16 in this broader market. The Central New Jersey retail market was showing signs of weakening in the second quarter of 2022, with a decline in net absorption and a vacancy rate of 12.4% after several quarters of strength. Vacancies are above pre-pandemic levels. The five-year outlook for Edison’s sub-market is positive, outperforming the national market and the Central New Jersey region with moderately increasing rents and declining vacancy. But growth will be challenged by weak demographic trends and competition from e-commerce.

Warehouse

Edison has over 25 million square feet of warehouse space, mostly in its southern portion, including at the Heller Industrial Park, Raritan Business Center, and Kilmer and Talmadge Road industrial areas. The Township’s warehouse sector is in high demand, with a vacancy rate of 0.3% and an average rent of \$7.48 per square foot in the second quarter of 2022. Compared with surrounding sub-markets in the Central New Jersey region, warehouse rents are highest in Edison. At the regional level, the Township’s rents are competitive, below average per square foot rents of \$14.41 in New York City, \$9.71 in Long Island, \$9.83 in Westchester County (\$9.83), and Northern New Jersey (\$8.08).

The Central New Jersey warehouse market is ranked 13th in the Northeast by Moody’s Analytics in terms of rent and occupancy, and Edison’s sub-market, North Central Middlesex, ranks 5th out of eight in the broader market. The outlook for the warehouse and distribution market in Central New Jersey remains very strong, due to above-average growth and low vacancies. The local sub-market is expected to see strong rent growth through 2027, although increased inventory added to the market will contribute to rising vacancy rates, albeit well below pre-pandemic levels.

Data Centers

According to Jones Lang LaSalle, the market outlook is strong for data centers in New Jersey in 2022. That sentiment was shared by CBRE; however, it was noted that new data center supply under construction could begin to affect asking rents, which have remained stable despite a low vacancy rate.

The New York Tri-State area ranked in the top 10 most active U.S. markets for data centers in terms of 2021 absorption. In New Jersey, the user demand for data centers is dominated by the banking and financial services sector (50% of total demand), followed by healthcare (15%) and technology firms (10%). The New Jersey market is concentrated in two areas: the I-95 corridor in Northern New Jersey and the I-287 corridor in Central New Jersey. There are two co-location data centers in Edison, both at 3003 Woodbridge Avenue near the I/95/I-287 junction. The 43-acre site contains an 830,000-square-foot facility housing a 25.6-megawatt Iron Mountain data center and a 10-megawatt Steadfast Networks data center. Just west of Edison, there are eight data centers along the I-287 corridor in Piscataway. However, this use does not appear to be permitted in any business or industrial zone in Edison.



Figure 22: Average Rents & Vacancy Rate, North Central Middlesex Warehouse Sub-market, Q1 2011 – Q2 2022

Source: Moody’s Analytics REIS, 2011 Q1 – 2022 Q2.

ZONING

Edison's basic zoning requirements are summarized and mapped in Table 8 and mapped in Figure 23. Below are brief descriptions of the existing zones.

RESIDENTIAL

The Township has five single-family zoning districts: the R-AA, R-A, R-BB, R-B, and R-C districts. These zones allow for single-family residences as the primary permitted use, as well as houses of worship, schools, or golf courses, with minimum required lot sizes of 7,500 to 40,000 square feet. The R-A zone also has a Planned Residential Development (PRD) option for attached single-family development, with a minimum lot size of 40 acres. In addition, the R-B zone has a Planned Unit Development (PUD) option allowing a mix of uses commercial uses, apartments, townhouses, and mid-rise (6-9 stories) residential uses. The PUD option in the R-B zone requires at least 350 acres, with affordable housing set-aside requirements. Both the PRD and PUD options have been used in several locations off Talmadge Road in North Edison, to facilitate clustered single-family or townhouse development. Given the lack of significant contiguous vacant land remaining, it appears that the ability to use PRD or PUD development is no longer present.

The Township also has three townhouse zoning districts, the R-A-th, R-BB-th, and R-B-th, primarily in North Edison, that allow development at a density ranging from 8 to 15 units per acre, on at least 25 acres of land. These zones appear to be related to the Township's Housing Element & Fair Share Plan, as they require affordable housing set-asides for complexes larger than 10 units.

Finally, Edison's L-R district allows single-family homes, townhouses, and garden apartments on at least 3 acres of land, with office buildings, nursing homes, and recreational amenities allowed as conditional uses. This district, which is found throughout Edison, also has affordable housing set-aside requirements consistent with the three townhouse zones.

Edison seems to have at least six zoning districts to facilitate townhouse development. Because these are generally built-out, the Township may consider, for clarity and ease of use, consolidation based on density. Also, there may be a need to examine the R-B district, which has areas, such as in the Clara Barton and Lindenau neighborhoods, where the lots do not meet the minimum size requirements and there are two-family homes. These nonconforming areas may need to be recognized in a separate zone to ensure that they are preserved and maintained as affordable entry points into homeownership.

BUSINESS

The Township's four commercial zones permit development intensities ranging from local business to highway commercial, differentiated by minimum lot size and permitted uses. The L-B Local Business district allows a mix of retail, office, and service uses on small lots, with automobile service stations and drive-in banks as conditional uses. This district is found throughout Edison, including Oak Tree Road and Inman, Woodbridge, and Amboy Avenues. The General Business zones, GB and GB-H, are auto-oriented and allow more uses, such as theaters and commercial recreation, motels, auto dealerships, and some manufacturing. Dog kennels, veterinarian's clinics, and drive-in restaurants are conditional uses in both districts, while in the GB-H zone, conditional uses are drive-through restaurants and some auto repair and car washes. Also, within the GB-H zone, a "Village Center" provision, for lots with at least 650 feet of frontage along Route 27, allows greater FAR and more permissible setbacks and parking requirements. The GB-H district is along most of Route 1 as well as parts of Route 27, while the GB zone is on Route 27 and portions of Oak Tree and Talmadge Roads and Inman, Plainfield, and Woodbridge Avenues.

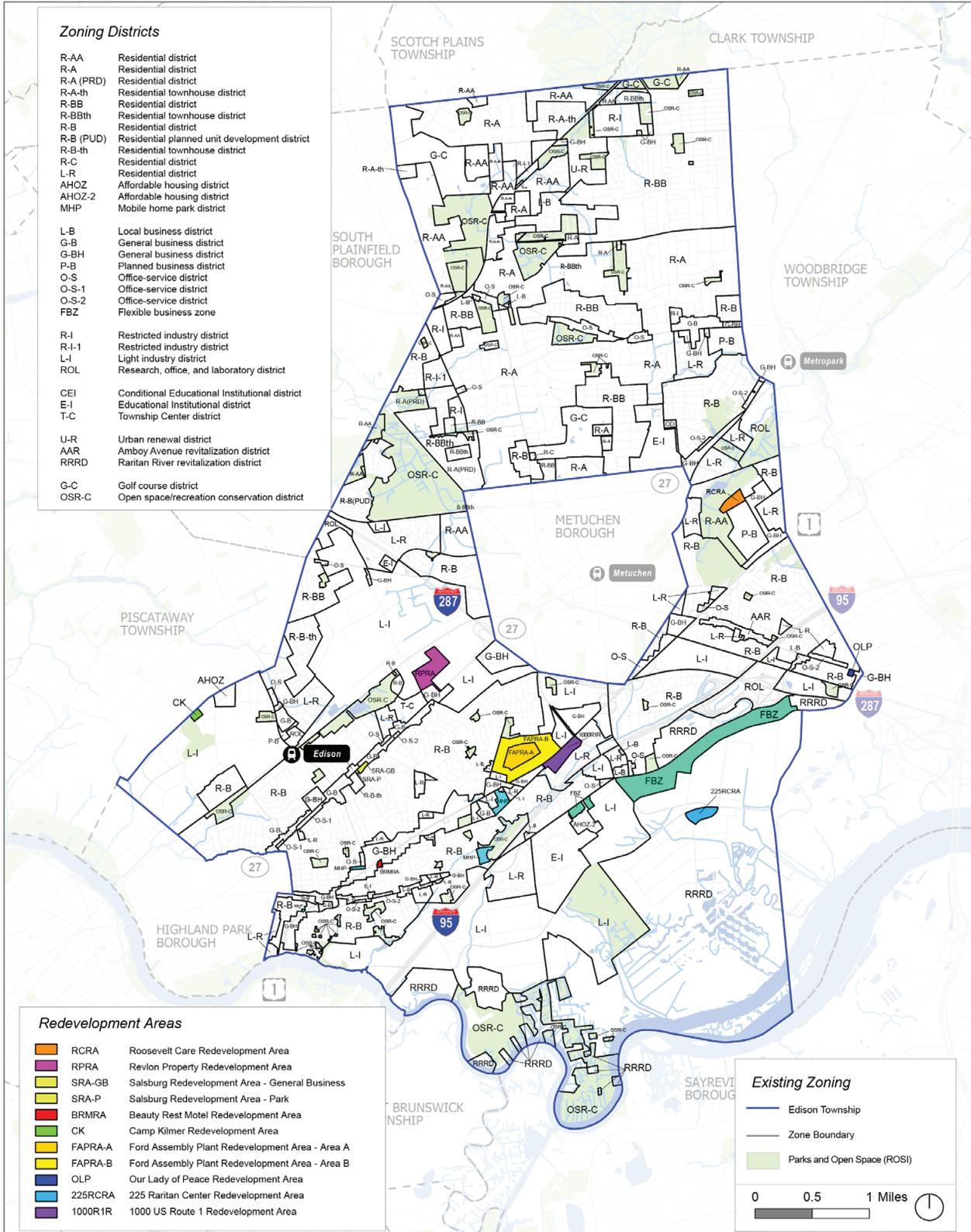


Figure 23: Zoning

Source: Township of Edison, 2011

Table 8: Summary of Existing Zoning Districts (Residential and Business Zones)

District	Minimum Lot Area	Required Yards (feet) ¹				Maximum Building Height ²	Maximum Lot Coverage	Floor Area Ratio ⁴
		Front ³	Side (one)	Side (both)	Rear			
Residential Zones								
R-AA	40,000 sf	50	20	50	75	2 ½ stories 44 ft	25%	0.15
R-A/R-A (PRD)	20,000 sf	35	15	30	60	2 ½ stories 40 ft	30%	0.25
R-BB	10,000 sf	25	10	25	30% of lot depth	2 ½ stories 35 ft	40%	0.37
R-B	7,500 sf	25	6	18	30	2 ½ stories 32 ft	40%	0.44
R-C	7,500 sf	20	6	18	25	2 ½ stories 32 ft	40%	0.55
R-A-th	25 acres	25 for local roads, 50 for all others	35	70	45	30 ft	50%, excluding recreation facilities, patios, steps.	--
R-BB-th								
R-B-th								
L-R	5 acres	50	50	100	50	3 stories 35 ft	50%	0.4
Business Zones								
L-B Local Business	7,500 sf	See Note 5.	12	25	40	2 stories 30 ft	75%	0.3
G-B General Business	10,000 sf	30	15	30	25	2 stories 30 ft	75%	0.25
G-BH General Business	20,000 sf	50	15	30	25	2 stories 30 ft	80%	0.25
P-B Planned Business	5 acres	100	50	100	50	2 stories 30 ft	80%	0.6
O-S Office-Service	20,000 sf	35	15	30	60	2 stories 30 ft	65%	0.25
O-S-1 Office-Service	7,500 sf	256	6	18	25	2 stories 30 ft	65%	0.3
O-S-2 Office-Service	7,500 sf	256	6	18	25	2 stories 30 ft	65%	0.3

Source: Township of Edison, 2023.

¹ Permitted modifications allowed in certain districts, and no side or rear yard required in any commercial or industrial zone adjacent to a railroad right-of-way.

² Number of stories or feet, whichever is the lesser.

³ The required front yard setback for any new single- or two-family dwelling shall be equal to the average front yard setback of the existing homes located on adjacent lots, when such homes have an existing front yard depth greater than specified in the schedule.

⁴ FAR shall not apply to industrial parks or to construction of a single-family detached dwelling in the O-S zone.

⁵ Minimum front yard is 15 feet or the height of the principal building up to 25 feet, whichever is greater.

Table 9: Summary of Existing Zoning Districts (Industrial and Specialized Zones)

District	Minimum Lot Area	Required Yards (feet) ¹				Maximum Building Height ²	Maximum Lot Coverage	Floor Area Ratio ⁴
		Front ³	Side (one)	Side (both)	Rear			
Industrial Zones								
L-I Light Industry	80,000 sf	50	40	80	40	3 stories 45 ft	See Note 7	0.5
RRRD Raritan River Revitalization District	80,000 sf	50	40	80	40	3 stories 45 ft	See Note 7	0.5
R-I Restricted Industry	80,000 sf	50	50	100	50	2 stories 30 ft	80%	0.4
R-I-1 Restricted Industry	80,000 sf	75	50	100	50	2 stories 30 ft	70%	0.4
ROL Research, Office, and Laboratory	100,000 sf	50	50	100	50	--	85% ⁸	1.0
Specialized Zones								
E-I Educational-Institutional	40,000 sf	100	75	150	75	5 stories 65 ft	75%	0.35
T-C Township Center	80,000 sf	100	50	100	50	3 stories 100 ft	65%	0.35
AAR Amboy Avenue Revitalization	5,000 sf	5 ⁹	15 if abutting a residential zone; 5 if a public street intervenes next to a residential zone; otherwise zero ¹⁰		25	3 stories 40 ft	95%	None, but no use may exceed 2,500 sf floor area per floor
G-C Golf Course	115 acres	35	15	30	60	2.5 stories 35 ft	75%	0.05
AHOZ ¹⁰ Affordable Housing	10 acres	50 ⁶	50	100	50	3 stories 35 ft	50%	0.50

Source: Township of Edison, 2023.

- 1 Permitted modifications allowed in certain districts, and no side or rear yard required in any commercial or industrial zone adjacent to a railroad right-of-way.
- 2 Number of stories or feet, whichever is the lesser.
- 3 The required front yard setback for any new single- or two-family dwelling shall be equal to the average front yard setback of the existing homes located on adjacent lots, when such homes have an existing front yard depth greater than specified in the schedule.
- 4 FAR shall not apply to industrial parks or to construction of a single-family detached dwelling in the O-S zone.
- 5 Minimum front yard is 15 feet or the height of the principal building up to 25 feet, whichever is greater.
- 6 Maximum shall be 45% if buildings include parking decks and/or garages.
- 7 Lot coverage is 80% for lots not located in an approved industrial park, 85% for lots located in an approved industrial park.
- 8 Maximum shall be 80% if buildings include parking decks and/or garages.
- 9 Required front yard setback in the AAR zone allows a tolerance of 0.25 feet. Any deviation from the required 5-foot setback, including this tolerance, requires a variance.
- 10 If vehicular access to the rear of the property is not possible, a maximum 15-foot alleyway is permitted along or within the frontage of the building. In cases where the building is more than one story, all additional stories shall be built over the alleyway, consistent with side yard requirements, pursuant to governing building codes.
- 11 The AHOZ district has additional requirements for building length, space between buildings, dimensions of townhouse units, and density.

The P-B Planned Business district is Edison's largest-scale commercial zone and is mapped on the Menlo Park Mall site, the eastern end of Oak Tree Road on the south side, and a portion of Plainfield Avenue west of the Edison Train Station. It permits a similar range of uses as the GB-H district but includes a provision for shopping center development on lots of at least 10 acres and/or proposed buildings of at least 75,000 square feet.

There are three office/service districts in Edison, each permitting offices (professional as well as medical/dental) and single-family homes. In the OS and OS-1 districts only, some personal-service and retail uses are also permitted, but in no case are any food-related uses allowed. Other than the differences in permitted uses, the OS-1 and OS-2 districts are identical. As with the LB district, the OS districts are found on scattered sites throughout Edison, particularly along Oak Tree Road.

For both the commercial and office/service zones, the relatively minor differentiations among zones means that a single commercial corridor can have multiple zoning districts in place, even though its character is largely consistent. For example, Oak Tree Road is an auto-oriented corridor characterized by small- to medium-sized strip shopping centers with a range of retail, service, and restaurant uses. Yet while much of the corridor is zoned O-S, there are pockets of LB, G-B, and P-B. Along Woodbridge Avenue from the Highland Park border to Route 1, there are four different business zones in place. The Township should consider streamlining the business and office zones to provide greater differentiation and allow for zoning to be consistent along both sides of a corridor. This would offer predictability for properties along a corridor and establish more consistency of use and scale. The Township should also look at removing single-family homes as permitted uses in office/service districts due to the potential for incompatibility.

INDUSTRIAL

Edison has five industrial zoning districts, the largest of which is L-I Light Industry. This zone allows offices, scientific or research labs, manufacturing and assembly, warehousing distribution, limited retail, packaging and bottling plants, printing facilities, indoor recreation, and

wholesale uses. Conditional uses include restaurants; transportation facilities, truck depots, and auto repair in designated industrial parks, freight yards, and telecommunication towers and equipment. Heavy industrial uses and truck terminals are prohibited uses. The minimum lot area is 80,000 square feet and the maximum height is 3 stories or 45 feet, although designation as an industrial park (on sites of at least 25 acres) affords some flexibility in building height as well as uses. The L-I zone is mapped on most of Edison's industrial areas: the large area off Talmadge Road west of the NJ Transit railroad tracks, a portion of Route 27 between Talmadge Road and I-287, much of the former Camp Kilmer area off Plainfield Avenue, parts of Route 1, and the Heller Industrial Park.

The RRRD Raritan River Revitalization district encompasses the Raritan Business Center in southeastern Edison as well as much of the vacant areas along the Raritan River that formerly housed the Raritan Arsenal complex. Permitted uses in this zone include industrial parks, offices, scientific or research labs, manufacturing, warehouse distribution (excluding truck terminals), some retail uses, packaging and bottling operations, printing facilities, educational and training uses, indoor theaters, and hotels/motels. Conditional and prohibited uses and height/bulk requirements are similar to the L-I district, with permitted modifications for industrial parks.

The Restricted Industry districts, R-I and R-I-1, are intended to provide for less intensive industrial uses, in recognition of proximity to environmentally sensitive areas and non-industrial uses such as residential neighborhoods. The R-I zone permits offices, scientific and research labs; some manufacturing; processing and printing facilities; and commercial recreation limited to tennis, racquetball, and swimming facilities. Residential and commercial uses as well as uses involving hazardous substances are prohibited, while freestanding telecommunications towers are conditional uses. The R-I-1 zone allows the same uses as the R-I district but a somewhat broader array of light industrial as well as indoor agricultural uses and freezer/cold storage facilities. The R-I and R-I-1 bulk provisions are similar to the L-I district except that maximum permitted building

height is 2 stories, or 30 feet. Both zones are mapped in very limited locations, including along Park Avenue and Meridian Road north of Oak Tree Road.

The ROL Research, Office, and Laboratory district allows offices, educational and training institutions, limited retail and restaurants, science and research labs, indoor theaters and commercial recreation uses, and motels and hotels, on lots of at least 100,000 square feet. There is no maximum building height. The ROL district is found in only three locations in Edison: at the I-287/I-95 interchange, on Plainfield Avenue just west of the train tracks and on Wood Avenue south of Route 27, along the Woodbridge border.

All of the industrial districts have requirements for buffers in areas contiguous to residential districts and for screening of outdoor storage of materials and equipment.

A number of issues have been raised with Edison's industrial zoning, primarily with the L-I district, where the scale of buildings and intensity of use varies widely by area. Areas that developed in the 1970s and 1980s – such as Heller Industrial Park and most of the Camp Kilmer area – the buildings are characteristic of light industrial and warehouse uses of the time, typically less than 100,000 square feet and under 40 feet in height. However, in newer developed portions of the L-I district, including on Route 27 near the I-287 interchange and off Kilmer Road, the buildings are significantly larger and taller, consistent with modern industrial uses that operate 24 hours a day and generate substantial truck traffic. Although “truck terminals” are expressly not permitted in the L-I district, the definition of this use appears to be more consistent with port-related operations than with contemporary fulfillment operations (e.g. Amazon). Updating the definition would more clearly prevent major fulfillment centers, which also often seek variances to exceed allowable height.

OPEN SPACE

The OSR-C Open Space/Recreation Conservation district is intended to preserve public, quasi-public, and other lands that host open space/recreational facilities or

are environmentally sensitive. The zone is meant to encompass all federal, state, county, municipal, and private parks, with conservation restrictions imposed to prevent future development. However, it appears that not all parks have been placed in this zone; for example, Roosevelt Park is mapped as R-AA.

The G-C Golf Course district is mapped in two areas to support private golf courses in North Edison: Plainfield Country Club and Metuchen Golf and Country Club.

SPECIALIZED ZONES

In addition to the zoning districts above, there are several specialized districts intended to support specific uses. The E-I Educational-Institutional district allows schools; hospitals; institutions for children, the aged, the indigent, and the handicapped; offices (including medical and dental); and testing labs or clinics. This district has been mapped on some (but not all) schools as well as Hackensack Meridian-JFK University Medical Center, Middlesex College, and some nursing homes/assisted-living facilities. The E-1 zone also has a small overlay district, the Conditional Educational Institutional (CEI) District Overlay, which imposes restrictions to protect wetlands and address stormwater runoff.

The T-C Township Center district was created to facilitate the development of the Edison Square Office Park complex on Route 27, adjacent to the municipal complex. The zone is only mapped in this location. While it is built-out, the T-C district could be revisited, given the existing vacancies of some buildings and the significant underutilization of parking areas.

The AAR Amboy Avenue Revitalization district encompasses most of Amboy Avenue between Route 1 and the NJ Turnpike and is intended to facilitate economic development according to aesthetic standards. The permitted uses are the same as in the L-B Local Business district, with the addition of instructional facilities for martial arts, dance, art, music, and similar uses. In addition, restaurants are permitted to offer entertainment and outdoor dining, while entertainment-related uses are permitted to offer limited food. Mixed-use buildings with up to 75% of the building floor area

devoted to residential use are also allowed. A number of uses not conducive to a neighborhood business district are prohibited, such as gas stations, fast food restaurants, adult entertainment, auto repair, and banquet halls. The AAR district also includes building and façade design standards. Generally, this district has not been successful in encouraging the location of new businesses and the development of mixed-use buildings since its adoption in 2014. Therefore, in 2016, the Township adopted a redevelopment plan that established an overlay district, the Commercial Corridor Overlay District, allowing property owners to develop either under the existing zoning or according to a form-based zoning code (see discussion of redevelopment plans below). Edison has two affordable housing zones, the AHOZ and AHOZ-1 districts, created to facilitate affordable housing at specific locations. The AHOZ district is mapped in the Kilmer section, at the Truman Square complex, while the AHOZ-2 district is mapped on the Centerplace at Edison complex adjacent to Middlesex College.

There are several other zoning districts which are in the regulations but do not appear to have been mapped. The E-1 Educational District 1 was intended for a 2.25-acre piece of property at the intersection of Truman and Kilmer Roads, for dedication to the school district as part of a redevelopment plan, while the T-1 Township District 1 zone in the same area was meant to accommodate other public uses. In addition, an AHOZ-3 district is identified to be mapped for the planned Rivendell Heights affordable housing development in the Kilmer section, while an AHOZ-4 district is to be mapped for the Camelot at Edison complex.

Additionally, the MHP Mobile Home Park district is designated (but not mapped) for existing mobile home parks in Edison. Lastly, the FBZ Flexible Business Zone is a floating district that can be mapped in a zoning district and allow the site to be developed according to the use and area/bulk standards of the G-B, G-BH, L-I, O-S, O-S-1, O-S-2, R-I, R-I-1, or RRRD districts. Residential uses are not allowed in the FBZ district. This floating zone does not appear to have been used.

REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

The New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) authorizes municipalities to designate properties as an “Area in Need of Redevelopment” or an “Area in Need of Rehabilitation” in order to facilitate development. In order to be designated, a study must be prepared that determines whether the area meets specific stator criteria as provided for in the LRHL. Once an area has been designated as either a Rehabilitation Area or a Redevelopment Area, the municipal governing body may adopt a Redevelopment Plan that governs development in that area.

Since the 2003 master plan, Edison has conducted more than a dozen redevelopment studies, a number of which have resulted in the preparation of redevelopment plans. However, only a few redevelopment plans have been formally designated and mapped on the Zoning Map:

- Exxon Plant/Lukoil Redevelopment Area: In 2018, the Township designated a 56-acre area on Route 27, just southwest of the I-287 interchange, which formerly housed an ExxonMobil research lab and synthetics plant and at the time was the location of a Lukoil gas station and Dunkin Donuts shop. The designation was intended to ameliorate known traffic problems by creating an acceleration ramp off I-287. Ultimately, the redevelopment designation resulted in the construction of an approximately 900,000-square-foot distribution center that became home to an Amazon fulfillment center. The related road infrastructure improvements have not yet occurred.
- 720 Route 1 Redevelopment Area: This area along Route 1, between the Old Post Road interchange and East Side Avenue, was also designated in 2018. It has since been redeveloped with an Open Road BMW facility and Wendy’s.
- 1015 Route 1 Redevelopment District (overlay): The Township designated this area, a portion of the former Ford assembly plant located southwest of the Route 1/I-287 interchange, as an overlay redevelopment district in 2017. It has recently been developed with a Carmax facility. The remainder

of the Ford plant site is being redeveloped by Hartz Mountain properties subject to a separate redevelopment plan, which has not been added to the zoning map. This development, known as Edison Towne Square, includes a Sam’s Club, several retail and restaurant options, a Topgolf facility, and the Supercharged indoor go-kart facility.

- Commercial Corridor Overlay District: As noted above, this designation was established in 2016 to facilitate revitalization of the Amboy Avenue commercial corridor in Clara Barton. The overlay incorporates all of the AAR district as well as the Tano Mall shopping center, just west of Route 1, which is zoned G-B. The overlay provides for a mix of uses with maximum building heights of 4 stories, or 45 feet. Since its establishment, the overlay zoning has resulted in the development of one building, on the south side of Amboy Avenue between Cabot and Brower Avenues.

ZONING VARIANCES

Variations from the zoning ordinances are heard by the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Adjustment, depending on the type of application. For bulk variances (setbacks, coverage, etc.), the Planning Board has jurisdiction except in cases of single-family homes, which are heard by the Zoning Board. In addition, when a site plan or subdivision involves variances that are under the Zoning Board’s jurisdiction, it makes the determination on the variance. The Zoning Board hears use variances and some bulk variances involving height and floor area ratio (FAR).

The Zoning Board produces annual reports on its activities, which are instructive in looking at the numbers and types of variances requested and granted. In general, if a land use board is seeing substantial requests for relief from a particular regulation, it is an indication that a change to that regulation may be warranted. From 2013-2022

As shown in the table below, the Edison Zoning Board has generally seen between 100 and 200 variance requests each year, with a clear majority of bulk variance requests

District	Year								
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*	2021
Use	23	18	35	41	25	27	32	21	29
Bulk	60	87	155	144	101	119	117	52	122
Lot Area, Width, or Depth	6	15	22	17	15	22	22	9	20
Front, Rear, or Side Yard Setbacks	32	39	65	59	35	44	37	18	41
Building or Impervious Coverage	13	18	27	33	19	27	24	17	25
Building Height	1	2	2	3	1	2	7	1	4
Parking/Loading	3	2	4	3	5	3	5	2	8
Other Bulk Variance*	5	11	35	29	26	21	22	5	24
TOTAL	83	105	190	185	126	146	149	73	151

Figure 24: Zoning Board of Adjustment Variance Applications, 2013-2022

Source: Township of Edison, 2023

* The Zoning Board received 50% fewer applications in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

** Includes lot coverage by deck/patio; accessory building yard or height; signage; fences; and required setbacks from pipelines, stream banks, cell towers, and gas stations.

dealing with setbacks. Other common requests pertain to the area, width, or depth of the lot, or coverage by buildings or total impervious coverage. For the past 20 years, the Township’s annual reports have noted that the majority of bulk variances requested are in residential zones, and of those, about half or more than been in the R-B district. Examining the yard setback and lot coverage requirements for this zone has been a primary recommendation of the reports for the past several years.

RECENT ZONING INITIATIVES

In 2022, the Township implemented several zoning and other code changes, mostly administrative in nature, affecting development in Edison:

- Ordinance 2140-2022: Amended the fee schedule to incorporate a new set of fees for residential development.
- Ordinance 2145-2022: Amended the fee schedule to revise/add fees for certain development permits.
- Ordinance 2151-2022: Revised Chapter 34 (Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan) to exempt one- and two-family homes from stormwater management requirements.
- Ordinance 2152-2022: Revised Chapter 14 (Building and Construction) to change the responsible entity for various permitting and review actions from the Township Engineer to the Director of Planning and Engineering.
- Ordinance 2153-2022: Revised Chapter 39 (Land Use) to change the definition of Administrative Officer from the secretary of the Planning Board to the Township Clerk.
- Ordinance 2154-2022: Revised Chapter 37 (Zoning) to modify the fees for certain zoning permits.
- Ordinance 2159-2022: Amended the fee schedule to modify application and escrow fees.
- Ordinance 2160-2022: Repealed Chapter 33 (Flood Damage Prevention and Protection) and replaced with a new Chapter 33 (Floodplain Management).



Edison

Township  Master Plan

4/ TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY



Edison's existing transportation system is comprised of a state, county and local roadway network, sidewalks, bikeways, mass transit, freight railroads, and waterborne freight along the Raritan River. In developing the Circulation Plan, an inventory of existing circulation conditions was prepared to identify and evaluate the location and types of facilities for all modes of transportation. The data and discussion presented in this chapter suggest several transportation trends that are of importance.

Edison's transportation network is a defining feature that has shaped its growth, and its proximity to the regional network has both positive and negative impacts

The transportation system is comprised of a roadway network, mass transit, sidewalks, bikeways, and freight transit along railroads and the Raritan River. The Township is strategically located halfway between New York City and Philadelphia, at the crossroads of I-95 and I-287, and is just west of the Garden State Parkway. Limited access highways such as Route 1 and Route 27 also traverse the Township.

For its residents, Edison has excellent access to jobs in the region, while access to the regional roadway network has helped the Township and nearby municipalities to become a significant warehousing, manufacturing, and distribution hub for commercial goods. Although

these uses are a large component of the local economy, negative impacts such as increasing truck traffic and congestion have become

a major issue. The highway network, along with other barriers such as railroads and electric transmission lines, has had the effect of disconnecting the Township

physically. The sidewalk network throughout Edison has many gaps, discouraging walking as a way to get around. As a result, many residents identify more closely with their local neighborhood compared with the Township as a whole.

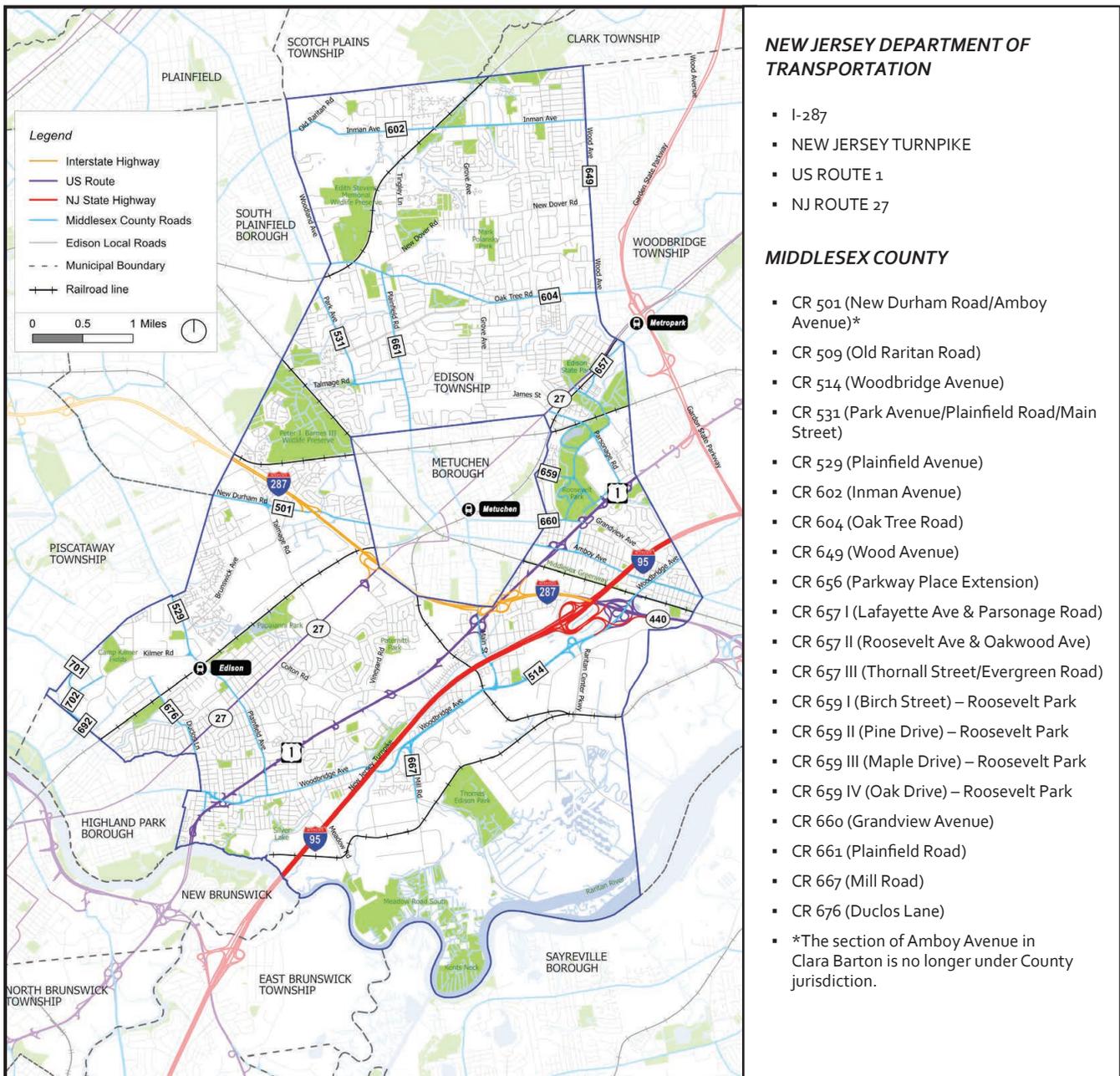


Figure 25: Roadway Jurisdiction

Traffic congestion is very high during commuting periods but is also persistent on many corridors throughout the day.

According to data from the Census Bureau, there are many more people who work in Edison than there are employed residents. In 2019, there were 42,975 employed residents in Edison. In comparison, there were just over 70,000 jobs in the Township, 90% of which are held by non-residents. Because Edison has a large cluster of industrial and commercial space, travel by employees who work in the area is of particular interest. Approximately half of workers in Edison reside in Middlesex or Union Counties. This underscores the importance of the automobile as the primary means of transportation for workers in the Township; most of these workers presumably access Edison via I-95 or I-287.

While these interstates provide excellent roadway access, they also heavily influence travel patterns within the Township. Peak period congestion on the interstate system and some of the ramp lead to high traffic volumes. Motorists frequently use the arterial and local road system to circumvent congestion or accidents on the interstates. Consequently, traffic operations on local roads are intertwined with the interstate system that traverses the Township.

Generally, the transportation network in Edison is oriented toward vehicular transportation and is less friendly to walking or biking.

Residents commented that sometimes local roads can be hazardous to walk and bike as drivers travel at unsafe speeds to avoid traffic. Most neighborhoods do not have consistent sidewalks. Gaps in the sidewalk network are also missing along major commercial corridors. During the public outreach process, many residents cited the need for continuous sidewalks, particularly near schools.

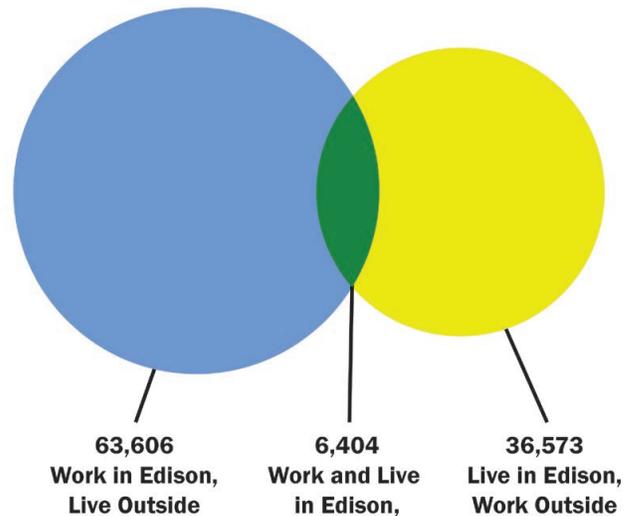


Figure 26: Inflow/Outflow Commutation



Intersection of highways and major roadways in Edison (I-287, I-95, Route 1, and Route 440)

Residents also discussed the need to improve sidewalk maintenance, lighting, street trees, and other landscaping. There is also a need for dedicated infrastructure for bicyclists, which is almost non-existent. The combination of the unfriendly environment for pedestrians and bicyclists combined with major regional roadways and elevated limited-access highways makes this a very autocentric place.

Rail ridership dropped significantly during COVID, but it is expected to increase as conditions continue to normalize.

Many Edison residents use the Metropark and Metuchen train stations. The Metropark station has NJ Transit service as well as Amtrak regional service and Acela Express service. A significant amount of development is anticipated to occur in the near future around the Metropark Station, which could impact transportation conditions in the area.

Freight transport continues to be an important aspect of Edison's circulation network.

The Township and the surrounding region is a nationally recognized hub for industry, warehousing, and fulfillment centers. As industrial park development continues, the Township needs to plan appropriately to alleviate congestion on local roadways and direct truck traffic away from residential neighborhoods. NJTPA has established the goal of shifting freight movement to non-truck modes when possible. This includes the continued use of freight rail and marine transport. It is imperative that the use of additional modes of transportation does not contribute to more truck traffic on local roads.

Edison must continue to maintain and improve transportation infrastructure, in partnership with Middlesex County and the State.

Edison is responsible for approximately 260 miles of municipal roadway. The Township also features a number of U.S., State, and County arterial roads. Since the prior Plan was adopted a wide range of

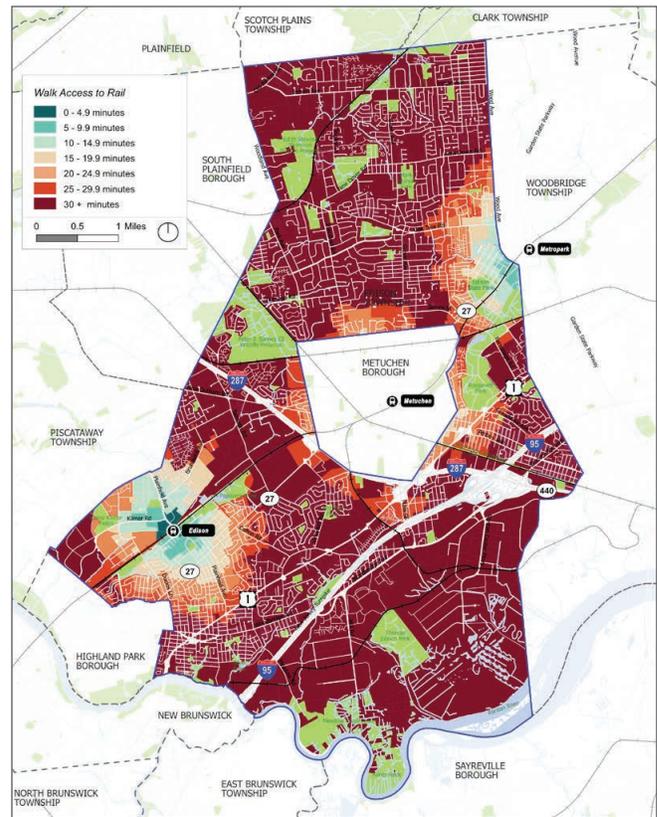


Figure 27: Walk Time to Train Stations

transportation improvement projects relating to roads, bridges, transit and bicycling and pedestrian facilities have accomplished, including:

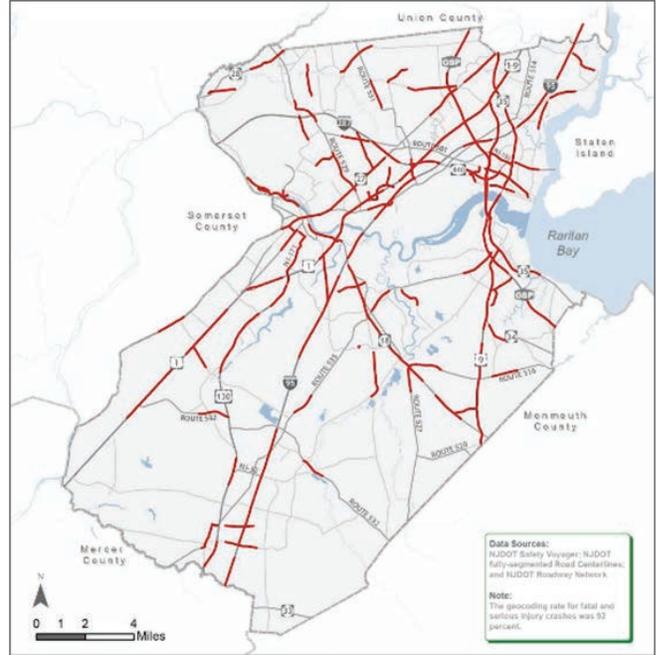
- Route 1 Widening, I-287 to Union County
- CR 514, Woodbridge Avenue (CR 514) and Raritan Center Parkway Grade Separation
- CR 657, Evergreen Road, Widening and Northeast Corridor Bridge Replacement
- Middlesex Greenway and New Greenway Bridge over Route 1
- The Township both started and ended Edison Light Transit Service, a shuttle which ran to and from the Edison Train Station.

A significant amount of transportation planning work has been completed by other agencies.

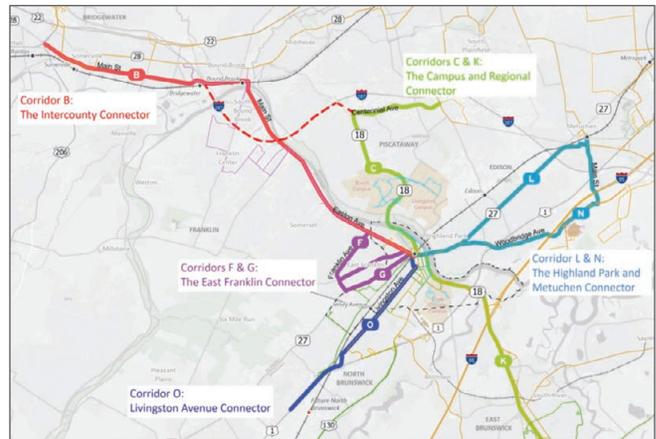
This chapter considers policies and recommendations identified in regional transportation studies and plans including the following:

- Regional Transportation Initiatives and Programs
- Middlesex County's Vision Zero Action Plan (2022)
- New Horizons in Mobility Transportation Plan (2013)
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Plan 2035
- NJTPA Active Transportation Plan
- Greater New Brunswick Transportation Study
- Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan (2003)
- NJTPA- FY 2015-2016 Sub Regional Study Program

Figure 28 on the following page is shows data from Middlesex County's New Horizons in Mobility Transportation Plan (adopted in 2013). The map provides a list of proposed or potential projects within Edison which would make the County's transportation network more responsive to present and future needs.



High Injury Network (2010-2019) from Middlesex County Vision Zero Action Plan



**Corridors for Advanced Study
Greater New Brunswick Transportation Study**

Proposed projects New Horizons in Mobility Transportation Plan (2013)

- C11 – US Route 1 / Plainfield Avenue Capacity and Operational Improvements.
 - C12 – Route 27 / Wood Avenue intersection improvement.
 - C13 – Route 27 / Plainfield Avenue Capacity and Operational Improvements.
 - C14 – I-287 / Route 27 Interchange Improvements.
 - C15 – I-287 New Southbound Ramp at National Road and Mack Road.
 - C16 – Study proposals for ferry and/or waterborne transportation services at points to be determined along the Raritan River for potential transportation and/or recreations purposes.
 - C17 – Northeast Corridor / Evergreen Road, widening of Evergreen Road underpass. [Update: Completed]
 - C18 – Northeast Corridor and Conrail underpasses widening at Parsonage Road between Route 27 and Oakwood Avenue.
 - C19 – Plainfield Avenue widening Kilmer Avenue to Ethel Road. [Update: Completed]
 - C20 – Raritan Center Industrial Highway, Extension of Riverside Drive - Parkway Place Extension (CR656) from Raritan Center Parkway to Mill Road (CR 667). [Update: A connection has been built to Parkway Pl. and Raritan Center Parkway. It is not clear where the extension to Mill Road will be.]
 - C21 – Edison Train Station surrounding area; improve pedestrian accommodations including Plainfield Avenue – Stelton Road (CR 529) approaches: Kilmer Road, Central Avenue. Railing and support wall approaching the underpass. Replace deteriorated railings and support walls at railroad underpass. Install sidewalk from the Metroplex complex to the railroad underpass. [Update: Completed]
 - C22 – Woodbridge Avenue and Duclos Lane (CR676). Traffic signal, crosswalk enhancements, signage and sight distance improvements.
 - C23 – Woodbridge Avenue and Gurley Road. Crosswalk enhancements, signage and sight distance improvements. [Update: Completed]
 - C24 – Advance East Coast Greenway Short Term and Long Term Proposed Facilities including ECG off street routes.
 - C25 – Provide Middlesex Greenway Proposed Extensions to Raritan Center
 - C26 – Develop Middlesex Greenway extension to Roosevelt Park along Amtrak easement from Pierson Avenue to Northeast Corridor near Roosevelt Park.
 - C27 – Implementation of Route 1 Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridor Case Study NJDOT Report Recommendations. It is proposed that this include an alternative bikeway facility primarily on Route 1 South that would replace the former US Route 1 "Power Trail" proposal along the PSE&G power lines on Route 1 North; and that it provide bicycle access to nearby residential facilities, Menlo Park Mall and Roosevelt Park.
 - C28 – Provide new and/or expanded safe and secure/protected bike parking or bike station facilities at all train stations, major bus terminals, and activity centers.
- Accomplishments*from Prior Transportation Plan:**
- C5a – Route 1 Widening, I-287 to Union County.
 - C6a – CR 514, Woodbridge Avenue (CR 514) and Raritan Center Parkway Grade Separation.
 - C7a – CR 657, Evergreen Road, Widening and Northeast Corridor Bridge Replacement.
 - C8a – Middlesex Greenway and New Greenway Bridge over Route 1.

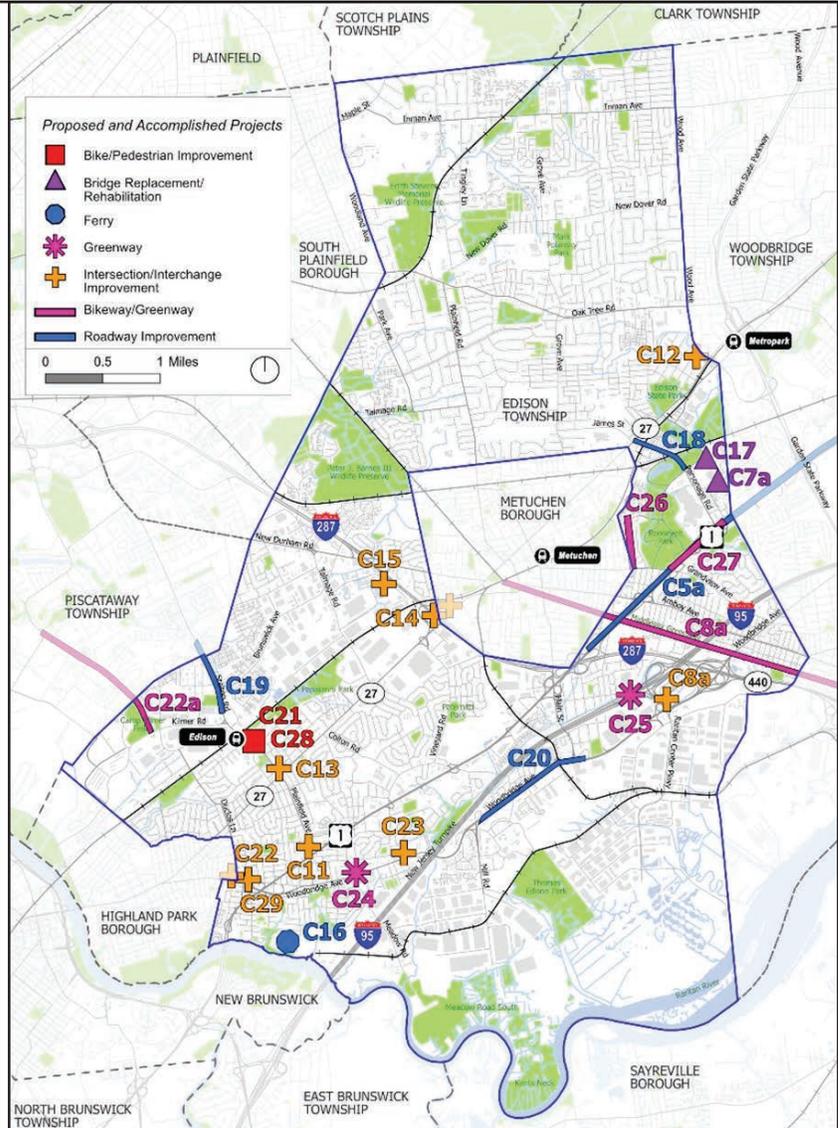


Figure 28: Proposed projects New Horizons in Mobility Transportation Plan (2013)

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Improving mobility in and around Edison has been a significant concern for residents and officials for many years. Persistent traffic and the lack of efficient public transportation options have made it difficult for residents to get around, and have had a negative impact on the quality of life. This plan encourages policies and actions that improve connections within the community, improve safety and access to services, minimize traffic delays, accommodate the movement of goods efficiently and economically, encourage non-auto modes of transportation, and improve on the overall quality of life. This section identifies a variety of focus areas for the Township to consider.

IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND SAFETY OF THE ROADWAY NETWORK, WHICH ARE MAJOR QUALITY OF LIFE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Edison is bisected by the interstate road system and contains one major interstate-to-interstate interchange and two interstate-to-arterial road interchanges. While these interstates provide excellent roadway access, they also heavily influence travel patterns within the Township. The Township experiences significant peak period congestion on the highways and arterials. Motorists frequently use the arterial and local road system to circumvent congestion. As seen in Figure 29, traffic congestion is most severe during the morning and evening commute periods. Congestion in the evening appears to be over a longer period, progressively ramping up in the afternoon until about 7 pm. Accidents on the interstate system can also result in many traffic diversions onto arterial and local roads in Edison. Consequently, traffic operations on local roads are intertwined with the interstate system that traverses the Township. On Routes 1 and 27, congestion is not limited to commuting hours; these roads tend to be busy throughout the day on both weekdays and weekends. The growth of warehousing and fulfillment centers, some of which operate around the clock, has also resulted in increased traffic.

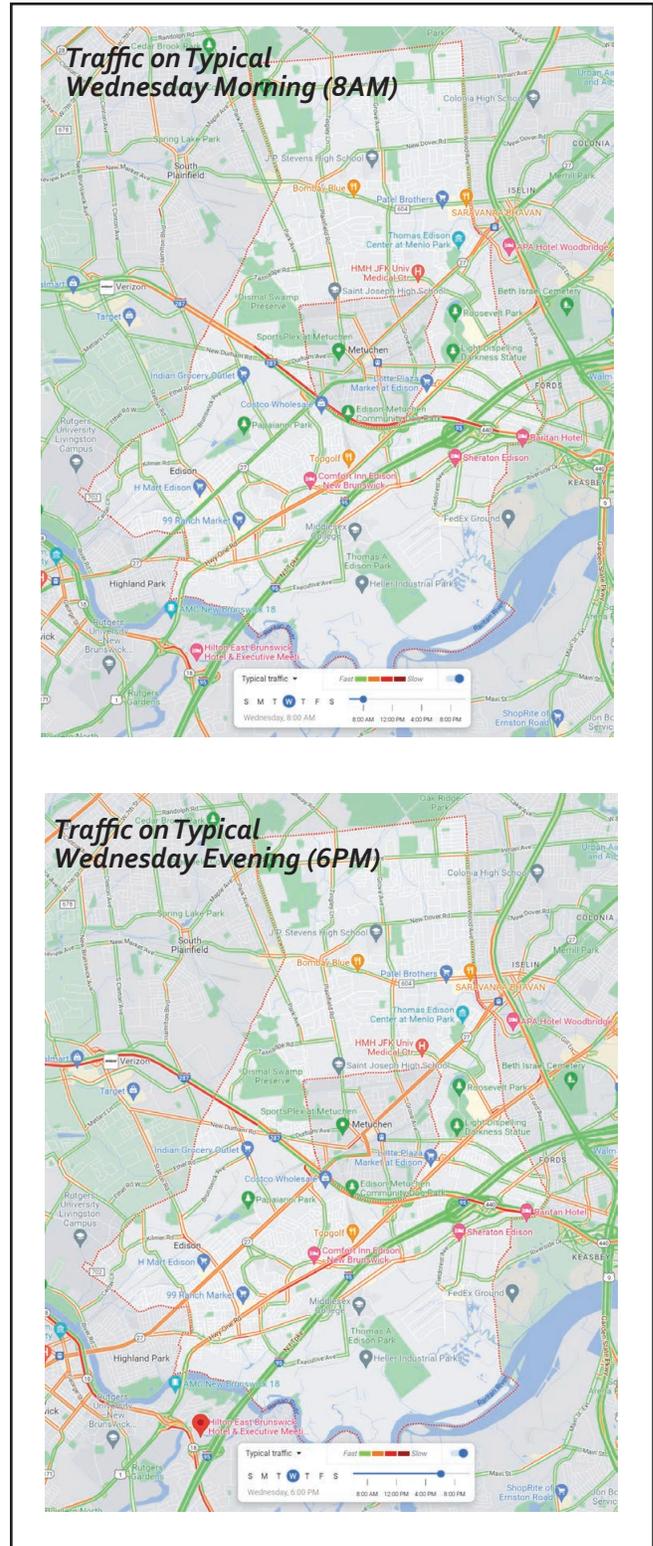


Figure 29: Typical Congestion

Source: Google Maps

Traffic volumes are expected to continue to grow throughout Middlesex County unless mitigation measures are taken. Actions that will help include infrastructure improvements that address capacity, operational and safety improvements on the supply side of the equation and travel management and land use strategies on the demand side.

Figure 30 shows the location of recent crashes for motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The number of accidents at these locations indicates areas where safety enhancement programs should be prioritized. Note that all of these intersections have at least one road is under county or state jurisdiction, and more than half of the intersections include a local road. The recommendations below address traffic congestion, speeding, pedestrian safety and pollution. The Township will need to work closely with the County and State, as most arterial and collector roads are in their jurisdiction.

Recommendations

Develop a new Circulation Master Plan Element

The Circulation Element would include a detailed study of existing and projected traffic conditions, identify priority areas for safety improvements, and provide an implementation matrix to better plan for new projects. The Element should focus on designing streets for all users and identifying locations where traffic calming tools and improved pedestrian facilities may be appropriate. Priority areas should be at intersections with collision hot spots. Any proposed transportation infrastructure projects should include cost estimates and designs so that they can be readily advanced by the Township. The plan would also identify opportunities, in conjunction with County and State Plans, for signal time changes and the synchronization of traffic signals throughout Edison in order to facilitate traffic flow and reduce pollution from stop and start traffic

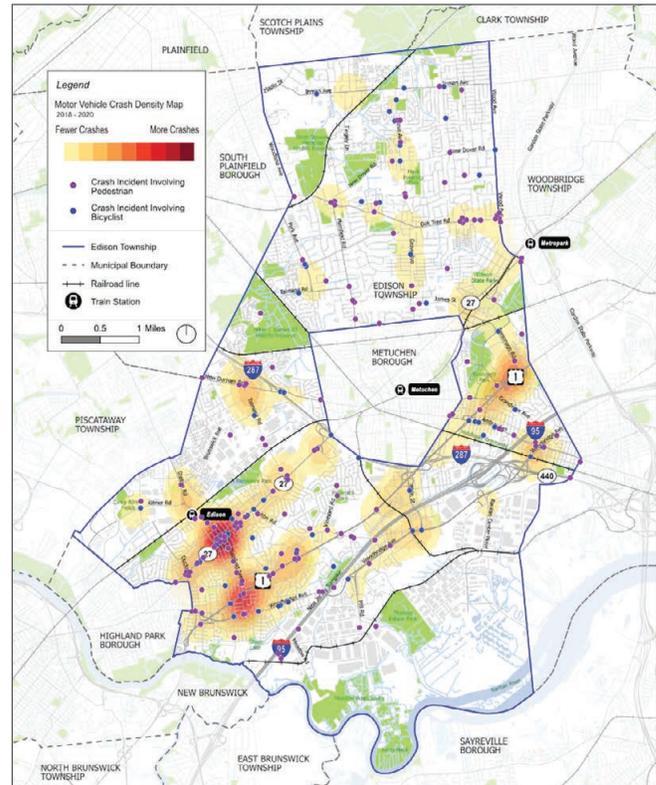


Figure 30: Crash Map

Intersection	Crashes Involving Injuries	Total Crashes	Jurisdiction
Route 1 - Plainfield Ave (CR 529)	18	70	NJDOT/MC
Plainfield Ave (CR 529) - Greenwood Ave	23	62	MC/Local
Route 1 - Parsonage Rd (CR 630)	15	55	NJDOT/MC
Route 1 - Old Post Rd	16	54	NJDOT/Local
Lincoln Hwy (NJ 27) - Vineyard Rd	10	37	NJDOT/Local
Route 1 - Prince St	8	37	NJDOT/Local
Plainfield Ave - Kilmer Rd	6	37	MC/Local
Lincoln Hwy - Talmadge Rd / Sturgis St	10	36	NJDOT/Local
New Durham Rd - Talmadge Rd	9	34	MC/Local
Lincoln Hwy - Schuyler Dr	10	34	NJDOT/Local

10 Intersections with Highest Total Crashes

Source: NJDOT Safety Voyager – Motor vehicle crash data is for three-year period between 2018 and 2020. Crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists were collected for a five-year period.

Address pedestrian safety along the Plainfield Avenue corridor, with a focus on Edison Station, Route 27, and Route 1.

The intersection of Plainfield Avenue and Route 1 has the highest number of total crashes, followed by the intersection of Plainfield and Greenwood Avenues, which is directly adjacent. These two intersections also have the most crashes involving injuries. Many residents expressed anecdotal concerns about safety and congestion in this area, particularly as Plainfield Avenue provides access to Edison Station, Thomas Jefferson Middle School, and the Edison Public Library main branch. The Plainfield Avenue intersections with Kilmer Road and Brunswick Avenue, just north of Edison Station, are also on the list in Table 12. Edison should work with the County to study traffic safety improvements for the entire Plainfield Avenue corridor.

Improve pedestrian safety along Route 1 and Route 27

The Township will need to work with NJDOT and Middlesex County to improve sidewalks and conditions at intersections along both corridors. Routes 1 and Routes 27 have numerous intersections with a high number of crashes. This is not unexpected given the fact that the roads carry a significant amount of traffic relative to local roads, permit higher speeds, and often provide access to busy shopping areas or highway interchanges. These roads also have intersections with the most crashes involving injuries. As seen in Figure 30, both Route 1 and Route 27 (west of Metuchen) appear to have a higher density of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists. Residents have stated that while people walk along these corridors, it feels very unsafe, and crossing the wide roads can be extremely problematic.



Plainfield Avenue and Route 27



Intermittent sidewalks on Route 1

USE TRAFFIC CALMING TOOLS TO REDUCE SPEEDS AND IMPROVE SAFETY IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

During the peak commuting hours, traffic congestion on arterial roads can spill over onto local roads in residential neighborhoods as drivers try to avoid traffic. This cut-through traffic affects the safety and quality of life in local residential neighborhoods, particularly near schools. This is a frequent concern in residential areas around Edison Train Station, where drivers speed and frequently ignore pedestrian crossings (i.e. along Stoney Road and Central Avenue). Speeding is also reported on north-south roads in north Edison such as Roxy Avenue, Tingley Lane, and Grove Avenue. Reducing speeding, improving safety for motorists and pedestrians on these roads, and limiting the amount of cut-through truck traffic was a priority identified by many residents. This could include traffic calming devices and enhanced enforcement to discourage speeding. In addition, Woodland Avenue, which straddles the boundary between Edison and South Plainfield, is a key north-south connector between Oak Tree Road and Inman Avenue, whose pavement conditions, inconsistent markings, and narrow width creates congestion issues. Coordination with South Plainfield is needed to address these concerns.

Recommendations

Adopt a Complete Streets Policy

Currently, Edison lacks a Complete Streets Policy, which is a formal declaration that the Township will consider “all users” when planning, designing, and operating streets. “All users” includes pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit passengers of all age and ability, as well as automobile drivers and transit-vehicle operators. In 2009, NJDOT was among the first state DOTs in the nation to adopt an internal complete streets policy. Communities of all sizes throughout the state have joined NJDOT in adopting complete streets policies. Middlesex County, Metuchen, and Woodbridge have already enacted resolutions in support of Complete Streets.



Complete Street design alternatives for a neighborhood street
Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)

Elements of a Complete Street



Pedestrian infrastructure

- Sidewalks
- Crosswalks
- Median crossing islands



Traffic calming measures

- Center medians
- No free-flow right-turn lanes
- Face-out parking



Public transit accommodations

- Bus rapid transit
- Bus shelters
- Dedicated bus lanes



Disabilities Act of 1990 compliant facilities

- Audible cues
- Reachable buttons
- Wheelchair friendly sidewalks



Bicycle accommodations

- Bike lanes
- Neighborhood greenways
- Bicycle parking



Green spaces

- Landscaped zones
- Street trees
- Refuge areas

Elements of a Complete Street

Source: The Zebra

Complete Streets are designed to respond to its specific community context and need. A Complete Street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions/bump outs, narrower travel lanes, and roundabouts. For example, features like curb bump-outs can serve to reduce traffic speed and make the sidewalk more attractive to pedestrians. Design of these features needs to ensure they can accommodate the turning movements of emergency vehicles, and should be appropriate to the function of the roadway. Some Complete Streets interventions would not be appropriate for truck routes or major arterials.

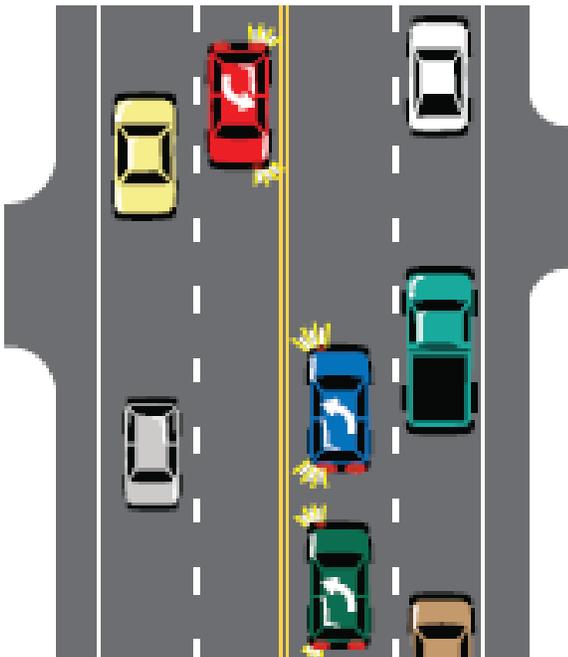
Identify opportunities to lower traffic speeds

Some roadways are 40 or 45 miles per hour (mph) and a section of Woodbridge Avenue is 50 mph. The Township should study locations where it may be appropriate to lower traffic speeds without impacting capacity. Speed limit should also be codified in the municipal code to help with clarity and enforcement.

Traffic studies have consistently found that low to moderate speeds (closer to 30 miles per hour) allow the maximum number of cars to use a roadway (the so-called roadway capacity). As speeds increase, capacity slightly decreases because cars spread out more along the road. The average driver will correctly seek a greater distance from other cars as speed increases. The next recommendation discusses opportunities to narrow roads that are wider than they need to be. This has the effect of lowering speeds as well as reducing the amount of impervious coverage.

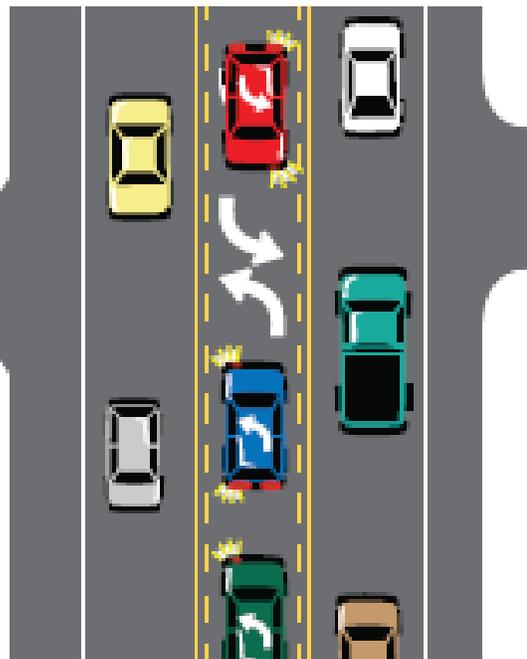
Study opportunities for a "road diet"

A road diet is a traffic engineering strategy that involves reducing the number of lanes on a roadway in order to create more space for other uses, such as bike lanes, sidewalks, or landscaping. The concept of a "road diet" is to reconfigure the roadway to prioritize safety, mobility, and access for all users, rather than just vehicles. The basic idea behind a road diet is to reduce the width of the roadway, which can help to slow down traffic and reduce the likelihood of accidents. The reduced lane widths can also make the road more comfortable and safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.



Before:
A four-lane road behaving like a three-lane road

Source: Federal Highway Administration



After:
A Road Diet providing a two-way left-turn lane

Road diets are becoming increasingly popular as a way to improve safety and accessibility for all road users, as well as to create more livable and sustainable communities. However, it's important to note that road diets are not a one-size-fits-all solution, and their effectiveness depends on the specific context of the location and the community's needs, and should be undertaken with traffic counts.

Oak Tree Road is one example where a road diet could help to improve safety and accessibility while maintaining traffic flow. The Township should consider a road diet along this corridor, which could include the conversion of the four-lane roadway into three lanes with one lane in each direction and a center turn lane. This change could be done with striping alone.

Another example for a road diet could be on Central Avenue between Plainview Avenue and Stony Road at Papaiani Park. This roadway segment is also an important link between Papaiani Park and Plainfield Avenue, which provides access to Edison Station and the Thomas Jefferson Middle School. The corridor is overly wide, and its generous width encourages vehicles to drive at faster speeds than appropriate, making the road unwelcoming for pedestrians and bicyclists. Sidewalks are also intermittent on both sides. The figure to the right shows how excess roadway width could be used to create a multi-use path as well as additional landscaped areas to make this a more attractive gateway to and from the park and train station area.

In addition to Oak Tree Road and Central Ave, other candidates for a road diet include Kilmer Road, parts of Pierson Ave under Rt. 287, and Rt. 27 west of Plainfield Ave (to Highland Park).

Improve lighting and install road reflectors and barrier markers along all roads

Many residents have commented that lighting on Edison's streets is poor, which is difficult for drivers and pedestrians. Many roads do not have street lights, while others have lights that are out. According to the 2011 Master Plan Reexamination, the police previously surveyed street lights and identified over 200 that were

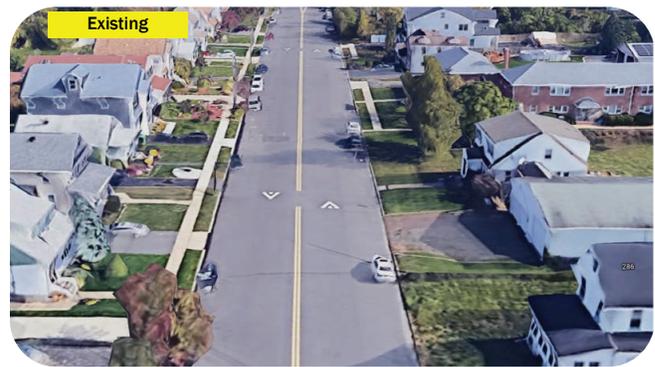


Figure 31: Example of Road Diet Concept on Central Ave

out Township-wide. Poorly lit streets are particularly problematic in the winter months when it gets dark earlier.

Adequate lighting helps drivers to see the road and potential hazards more clearly, reducing the risk of accidents and collisions. Road reflectors and barrier markers also help to delineate the road and improve safety in low-light conditions. These features are especially important on roads with high speeds or heavy traffic, as well as on local roads with sharp turns, curves, or other challenging features. Lighting helps pedestrians and bicyclists to see and be seen, making it safer for them to navigate the roadways. Lighting along roads also provide an aesthetic appeal and it creates a sense of security for people. It also helps to increase the sense of order and organization in the area, which can improve overall community satisfaction.

Priority areas would be adding lighting around activity centers such as schools and other community facilities, Edison Station, and parks. Some of the priority roads that could benefit from lights, as stated by residents are Inman Avenue, Wood Avenue, Grove Avenue, Tingley Lane, Plainfield Avenue, Talmadge Road, and New Dover Road. The Township should also address where lights are needed on local roads in residential neighborhoods. The Township should consider LED lights which are energy efficient and brighter. Covers should be installed to reduce light pollution.

PLAN ALTERNATE TRUCK ROUTES TO ALLEVIATE CONGESTION ON LOCAL EDISON ROADWAYS

Edison has a rich history as an industrial center due to its rail infrastructure, access to the Raritan River waterfront and proximity to the interstate highway system. Freight transport is an important aspect of its circulation network, given that the Township and the surrounding region has progressively become a hub for industry, warehousing, and fulfillment centers. Many thousands of regional jobs are tied to the northern New Jersey goods movement sector which includes some of the nation's busiest freight facilities. However, the increase of truck



traffic has had a significant negative impact within Edison on congestion, pollution, and quality of life. As industrial park development continues to increase, the Township needs to plan appropriately to alleviate congestion on local roadways and direct truck traffic away from residential neighborhoods.

Intrusion of truck traffic into neighborhood was another priority issue expressed by residents. Some common problems include noise pollution, air pollution, traffic congestion, safety hazards, damage to roads and property, and other quality-of-life issues. Sometimes trucks drive through residential neighborhoods, often inadvertently when GPS sends them through those areas. Residents noted that truck traffic is bad on Route 1, Old Post Road, Main Street and Morris Avenue, Talmadge Road, Plainfield Avenue and Route 27, and Amboy Avenue. While signage could be improved, trucks often ignore signs that are posted.

To address these problems, the Township should consider the following:

- Re-evaluate truck routes in the Township, and work with Middlesex County and NJDOT to map these areas and make information readily available.
- Implement traffic calming measures on residential roads, such as speed humps or rumble strips to slow down truck traffic.
- Encourage the use of alternative modes of industrial transportation, such as rail or barge, to reduce truck traffic.

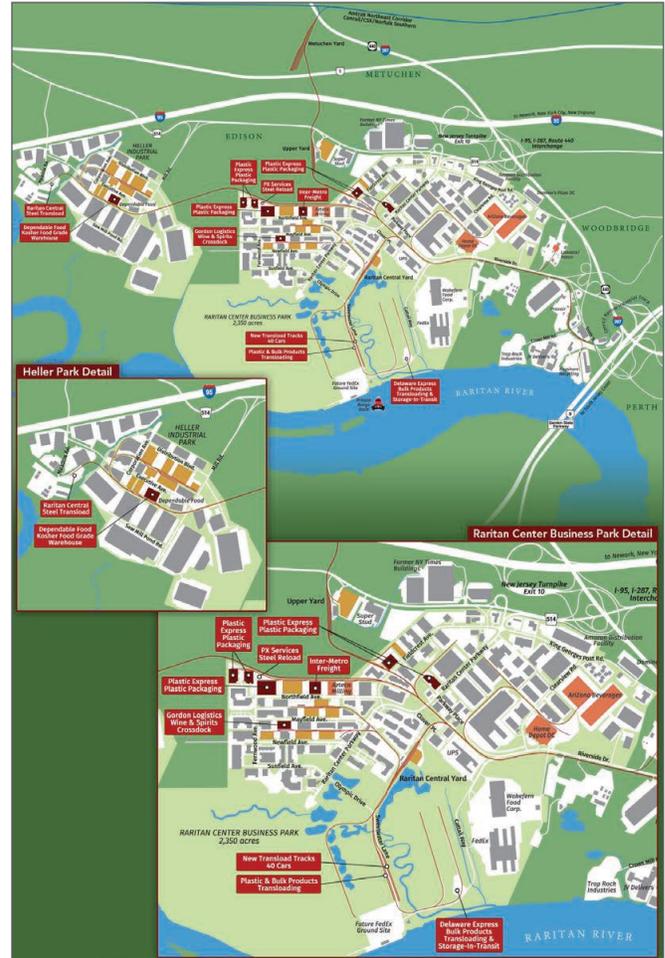
- Collaborate with community groups and organizations to gather input and feedback on truck traffic issues, and increase enforcement where needed.

It's important to note that these solutions are not a one-size-fits-all, and their effectiveness depends on the specific localized needs and context. The solutions should be tailored to the specific needs of the community, and implemented in collaboration with residents and local officials.

MAKE STREETS MORE PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY, PARTICULARLY AROUND KEY ACTIVITY NODES SUCH AS SCHOOLS AND OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES, TRANSIT STOPS, AND RETAIL CORRIDORS.

Generally speaking, the transportation network in Edison is oriented toward vehicular transportation and is less friendly to walking or biking. Residents frequently expressed the need for safer options for non-vehicular transportation throughout the Township to create a healthier and more walkable community.

Participants consistently reported that walking in Edison is dangerous and unpleasant and supported adding sidewalks and improving existing sidewalks. Throughout the Township, there are a patchwork of sidewalks that are not continuous. When asked where sidewalks are most needed, responses included: Oak Tree Road and Wood Avenue (by the gas stations); Parsonage Road (at bridges); Talmadge Road (especially at curves); Plainfield Avenue; and near the Metropark Station. Sidewalks are needed everywhere, but residents are particularly concerned about having consistent sidewalks near schools, parks, libraries, post offices, and train stations. This was echoed by many residents in the outreach process who expressed their desire to make Edison a more walkable/bikeable community.



Raritan Center and Heller Industrial Park
Source: Rail Enterprise Group - Raritan Logistics Center

Street crossings were also a major discussion topic as residents expressed concerns about unmarked crossings, lack of pedestrian beacons, and heavy traffic. These concerns were especially critical when discussing children's routes to school, but also have implications for shoppers, commuters, and others who may prefer to walk to their destinations. Some intersections that were cited as problematic included: Plainfield Avenue and Route 27; Route 1 and Old Post Road; and Warwick and Oak Tree Roads.

Figure 32 shows priority areas for sidewalks as identified by comments from the public. Residents generally expressed support for improving the sidewalk network, particularly near schools, public transit, commercial corridors, and along connector roads. Better connectivity

for walking and bicycling will help to link neighborhoods, improve the physical health of residents, and provide an alternative means of travel for short trips. Even in areas where sidewalks exist, there is a need to fill in gaps and repair and maintain sidewalks that have been cracked or uplifted by tree roots. Opportunities to fill gaps in the sidewalk network should be pursued, particularly near schools and parks. Another priority should be developing continuous sidewalk paths along commercial roads and collector roads on at least one side of the street. All commercial development that is retail or mixed use in nature should provide bicycle/pedestrian links to adjacent neighborhoods and adjacent commercial developments.

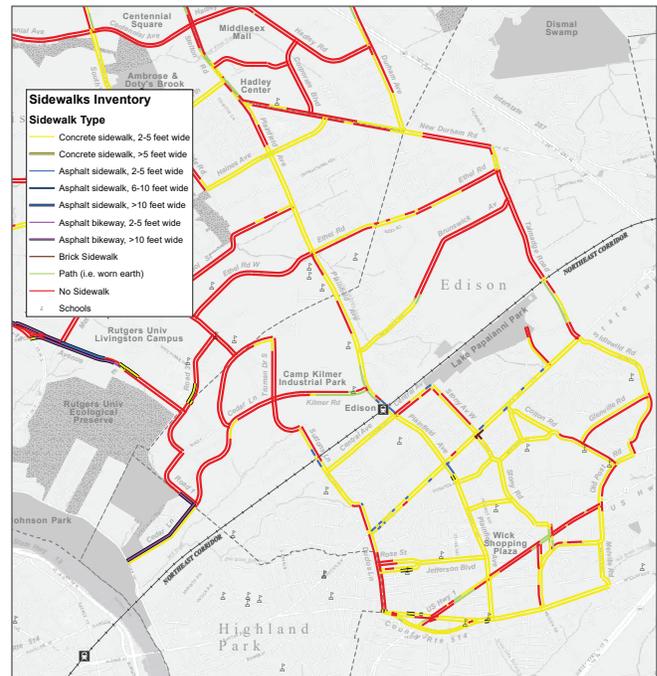
The images to the right show the sidewalk and pedestrian infrastructure conditions along the CR 529 corridor (Plainfield Avenue) from Edison to Dunellen. While this study doesn't cover the entire Township, it provides helpful information about missing infrastructure in and around Edison Station, Camp Kilmer, and Rutgers Livingston Campus. The study provides details on missing sidewalks, missing crosswalks, missing ramps, missing pedestrian signal heads, and presence of countdown timers.

Recommendations

Update Sidewalk Improvement Plan

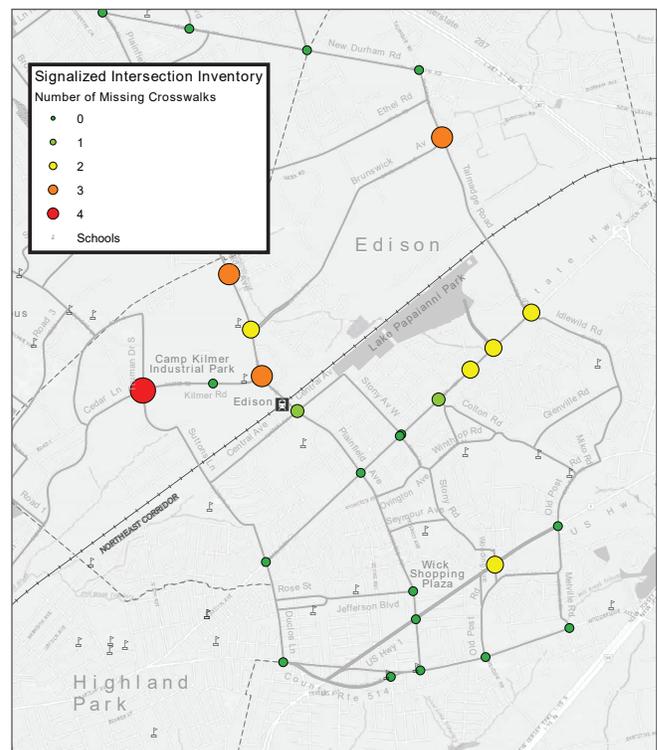
In 2005, the Township developed a sidewalk improvement plan, identifying curb/and sidewalk needs on a block-by-block basis. The study focused on areas near points of interest which tend to attract pedestrian traffic such as parks, community centers, and schools. The intention was not to repair or install sidewalks on all roads, but to maximize the budget set for each year of the program.

At the time of the study, the cost to install necessary replacements was listed at \$15 million for curbs and \$34 million for sidewalks. It was determined that, due to the large amount of investment required, the focus would be on sidewalks first. Unfortunately, it is not clear what work has been completed since 2005. A subsequent study is needed to update the data to determine which sidewalks should be prioritized in the short-, medium- and long-term, and what anticipated costs would be.



Sidewalk Inventory

Source: CR 529 Corridor Study, Middlesex County



Number of missing crosswalks

Source: CR 529 Corridor Study, Middlesex County

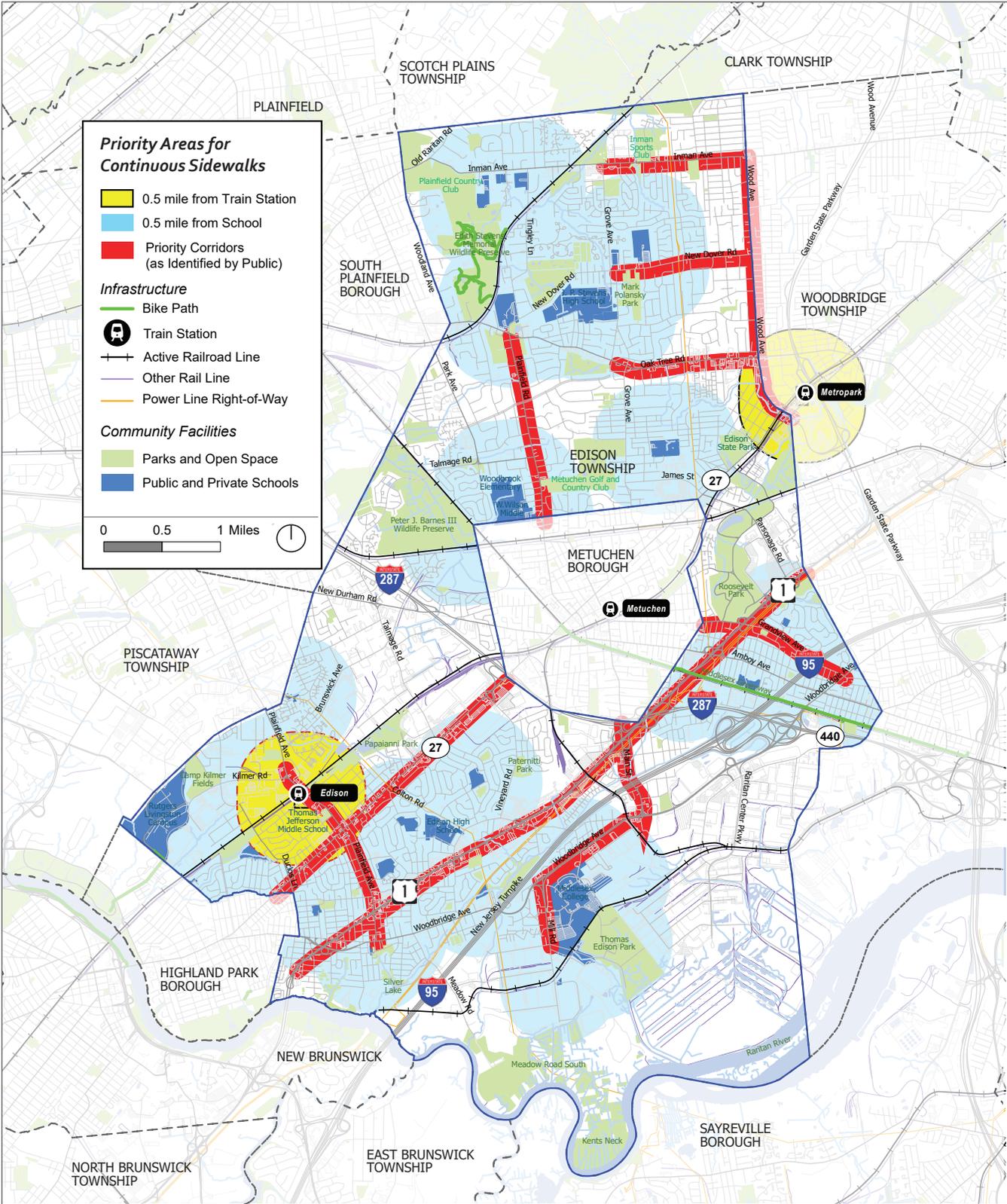


Figure 32: Priority Areas for Sidewalks

The prioritization matrix should include factors such as: strategic need/level of connectivity provided, physical constraints, ownership/jurisdiction, neighborhood support, and cost. The plan could also identify opportunities for funding sources, potential partnerships, agreements or easements needed for private property, and other short-and long-term maintenance needs.

Support Safe Routes to Schools and other projects to improve safety and reduce congestion near schools

Edison should continue to work with the Board of Education to identify ways to reduce congestion resulting from school-related traffic. There are also problematic hot spots that need to be studied and addressed. Part of this can be done by making it easier and safer to walk or bike to school. Many residents report that existing conditions are not suitable for walking because of the lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and excessive traffic speeds around schools.

The Township should work with the school district and Keep Middlesex Moving (KMM, Middlesex County's non-profit transportation management association) to identify issues and areas in need of improvement, and coordinate efforts on securing Safe Routes to Schools grants. Sidewalk and intersection improvements should be prioritized in areas within 2 miles of schools, as residents who live in those areas are not offered a free busing option. Certain areas under 2 miles have a subscription bus service. Many parents choose to drive students because walking or biking is not seen as safe. The Township should prioritize improving the sidewalk network within 2 miles of schools. These improvements would help to cut down on congestion. There are some Township owned properties in these areas which do not have sidewalks, and should be prioritized for implementation.

Advance efforts to fill sidewalk gaps through the land use approvals process:

Many of the neighborhoods with sidewalks were originally developed with those amenities; other areas were not built out the same way. Encouraging new sidewalks has been a challenge for the Township over the years. In the past, there were many instances of homeowners choosing not to build them on their property when there

were no adjacent sidewalks, citing maintenance and liability concerns. Currently, development regulations require sidewalks for redeveloped homes located within 2 miles of a school. Owners outside that radius are permitted to ask for relief. Along County-owned roads, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are permitted where feasible, but municipalities are responsible for implementation and maintenance.

In cases where a development application is before either the Planning Board or the Board of Adjustment, priority should be given to filling sidewalk gaps as part of the application review process, in particular where the adjacent properties have them. In addition, Edison can include a requirement for sidewalks in the inspection for a new Certificate of Occupancy (CO) at the time of sale, so when a property changes ownership, the sidewalk is required to be up-to-date.

Facilitate and incentivize sidewalk improvements on private property

Right now, the burden of installing and maintaining sidewalks is on individual property owners. While they have a responsibility to keep sidewalks in good condition, enforcement is difficult. It is also difficult to compel property owners to build sidewalks when none currently exist, particularly in cases when a property is not requesting anything from a land use board. Strategies the Township could take to incentivize maintenance and upgrades on private property through partial subsidies include:

- **Voluntary Program:** Consider a program where property owners on prioritized streets could opt into a program which would reimburse sidewalk investment costs by 50% up to a specified maximum. Property owners could also be offered 5-year low interest loans (at the municipality's nominal rate) to pay for these improvements. In this situation, the property owner would submit a request indicating the desired improvement. The Township would utilize a pre-selected contractor who could provide preferred rates based on bulk quantity. This program enables homeowners to pay for sidewalk repair at a lower cost than typically

available on an individual basis. A similar program has been used in Somerville, NJ.¹

- **Involuntary Program:** For high-priority streets, the Township may consider a program where it takes a more direct approach at replacing or adding new sidewalks. Sidewalks and potentially curbs could be placed on a determined number of roads per year. Property owners would be noticed well in advance. The cost of improvements would be at least partially assessed to individual property owners and could be paid off over a 5-year period. The Township would be responsible for the cost of curb radii, handicap ramps, and sidewalks at intersections. Each year, the program would be evaluated for consistency and coordination with County, State, and neighboring municipal construction activities, new development, roadway resurfacing, and utility work. Efforts should be made to coordinate sidewalk and curbing improvements with other road improvement projects.

Work with NJDOT to address pedestrian crossings and underpasses

The Township should discuss with NJDOT the potential to improve pedestrian crossings, particularly at Plainfield Avenue and Route 1, which is a connecting route to schools, Edison Station, and shopping. Other problematic areas to prioritize include Parsonage Road and the intersections of Old Post Road and Route 1; and Route 1 and Woodbridge Avenue. Some alternatives to improve safety would be to provide more time for pedestrian crossing and to ensure those locations are adequately lit. Several participants suggested adding overpasses and underpasses in areas where it would be difficult to cross at street level due to street width. These areas should be studied in conjunction with the County and NJDOT.

Improve connections for bicyclists

Residents stated that continued efforts are needed to improve connectivity and safety for bicyclists. While

some residents were concerned about the safety of biking on Edison's heavily trafficked roads, with the proper infrastructure, biking can become a safe alternative mode of transportation. In 1995, Edison developed a Bicycle Master Plan which identified nearly 95 miles of bicycle routes and paths. The network was intended to connect neighborhoods, schools, shopping and business areas. Among the roads designated in the plan for bike lanes were Grove Avenue, Plainfield Road, Plainfield Avenue, Tingley Lane, Inman Avenue, Oak Tree Road, Amboy Avenue, Woodbridge Avenue and Talmadge Road. These roads were also highlighted by residents as opportunities as well as Kilmer Road, Ethel Road, Wood Avenue, and the PSE&G transmission line corridors. The Open Space Advisory Committee has revived this initiative and is currently working on a revised bike plan and maps

Improve pedestrian, bike, and scooter connections to Rutgers University Livingston Campus

In its 2030 Master Plan, Rutgers proposes improvements to transportation, housing, open space and facilities that will promote a greater level of cohesion between campuses and a stronger relationship between Rutgers and the Raritan River. The Township should work with Rutgers to build bicycle connections from the Livingston Campus to the Edison Train Station and Route 1. This will help to offer a transportation alternative to Rutgers students as well as to residents and workers north of Edison Station.

Developing a pathway along Cedar Lane and Kilmer Road would also provide a missing link to the East Coast Greenway. It would also make it easier to walk from the station to the campus' various recreation facilities including SHI Stadium. Rutgers currently has a scooter rental system. The Township should investigate the potential to create an off-road multi-use path to accommodate these vehicles. A potential route could follow an old rail siding from the station parking lot, behind the Kilmer Post Office facility (which is not fully utilized), cross Truman Drive onto the NJ Motor Vehicle inspection station (which is underutilized), cross Kilmer Rd, and follow the driveway/old road along Edison Angels softball fields to the Road 1 and Joyce Kilmer Ave intersection.

¹ <https://www.somervillenj.org/sidewalks>

EXPAND TRAILS ON ABANDONED RAILROAD RIGHTS-OF-WAY, ALONG TRANSMISSION LINES, AND OTHER UNDERUTILIZED CORRIDORS.

Open space should provide passive and active recreation opportunities and preserve environmentally sensitive areas. Wherever possible, the Township should link existing parks and open space assets to form interconnected greenways that provide connectivity to neighborhoods, public facilities (i.e. schools and libraries), and commercial areas. Many residents supported the creation of bicycle paths that connect recreation areas and other parts of town so that bicycling can be a safe and attractive alternative to driving. Priority areas for

bike paths should be along major roads, around schools, within neighborhoods, and also along roads that connect commercial and residential areas so residents can use their bicycle to run errands.

Unused rail rights-of-way are scattered throughout Edison. These properties, most of which were once used to move freight, are an important resource for potential future transportation uses. The expansion of highway, transit, freight rail, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities is often constrained by the availability of suitable rights-of-way. NJTPA's Plan 2035 views these properties as strategic resources for the region and recommends protecting the identified rail rights-of-way, especially those that have been identified as having potential future transportation uses.

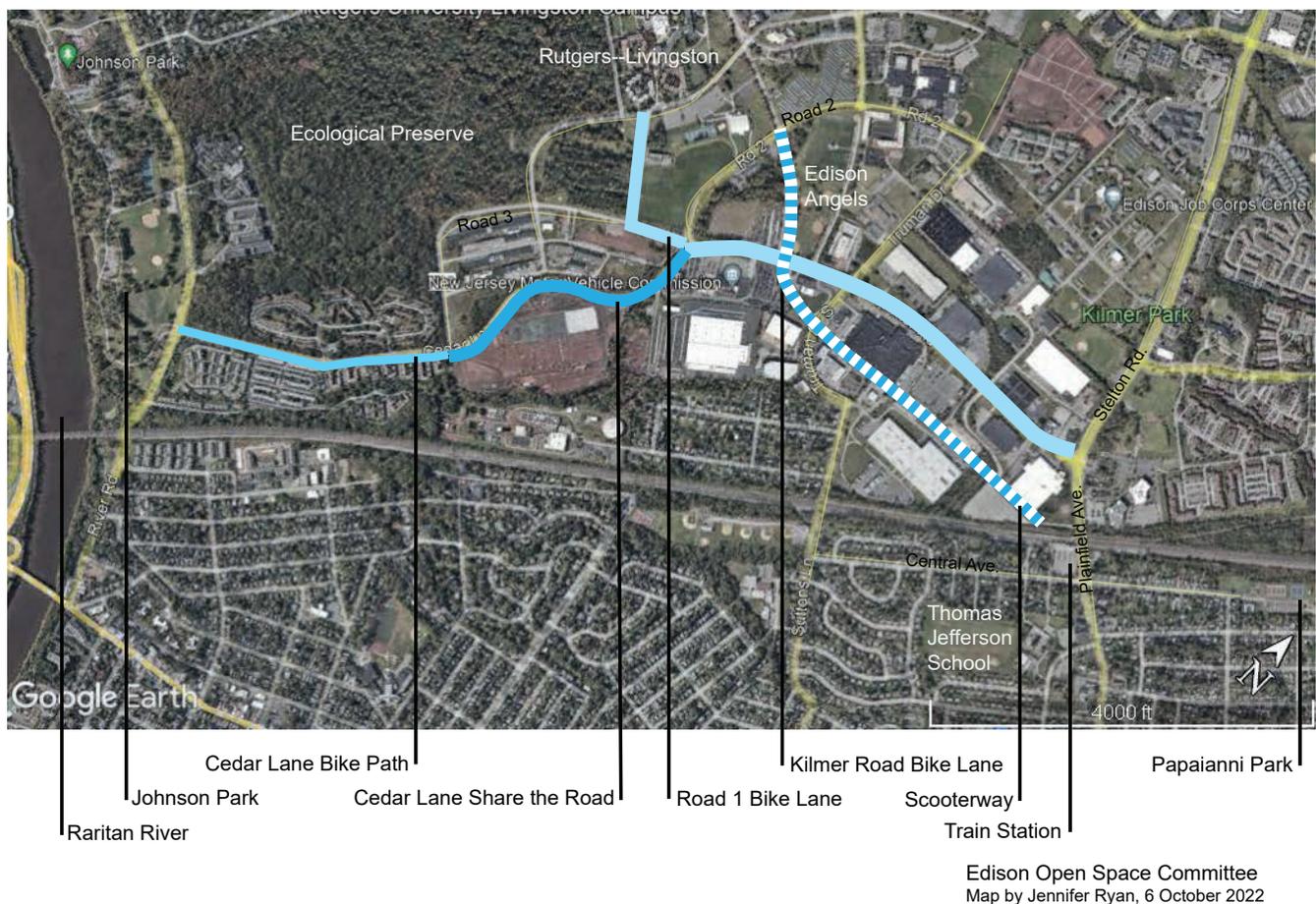


Figure 33: Potential Kilmer Road Bike Lanes

Source: Open Space Advisory Committee (2022)

One opportunity to pursue is the transmission line which runs between Papaanni Park and Route 1. This route has the potential to connect the park with an off-road path to Washington Elementary School and Edison High School. This project could dovetail and with the creation of a multi-use path along Central Avenue, which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

Develop a Comprehensive Trail Plan:

There are various plans that look at open space and off-street paths in Edison. Most have a focus on transportation connections that meet regional needs and connections. The Township should develop its own plan which examines both regional connections as well as more local locations which would provide alternative transportation routes between neighborhoods and parks. This could include the study of inactive rail corridors and land beneath transmission lines. This plan should examine the following opportunities:



Transmission line near Papaanni Park



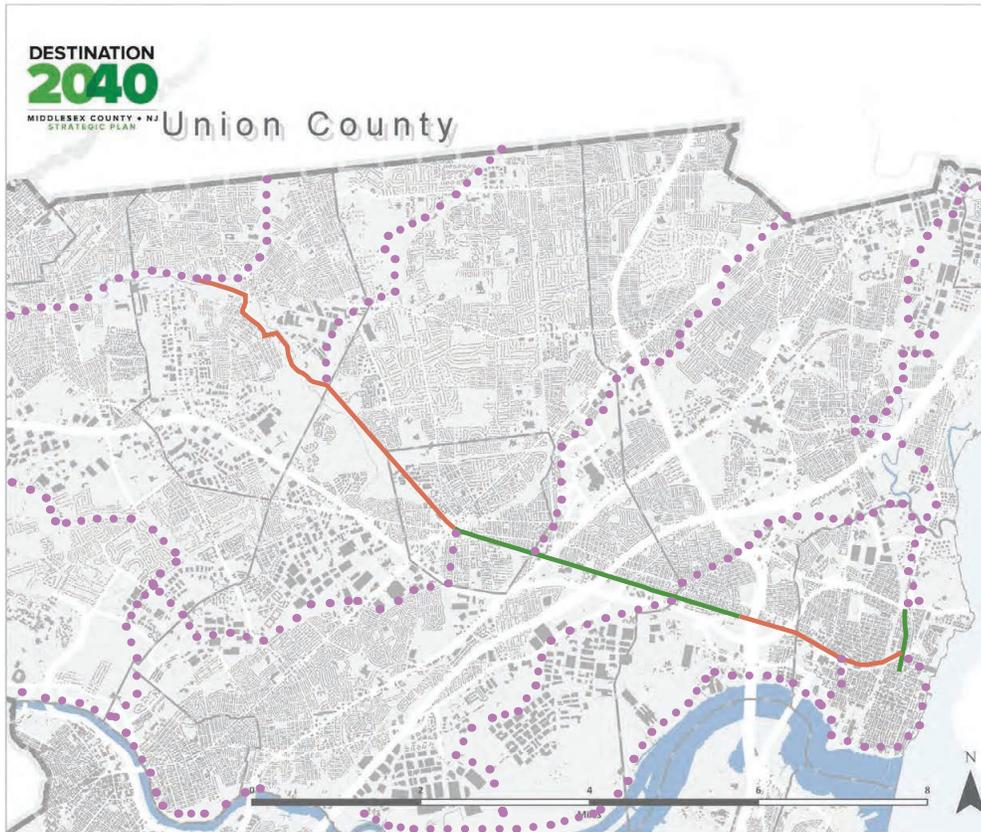
Figure 34: *Conceptual off-street path along transmission line*

- Extensions of the Middlesex Greenway,
- Creation of link between Middlesex Greenway and Roosevelt Park
- Local connections to the East Coast Greenway
- Development of a trail along Route 1 in the PSE&G-owned rights-of-way,
- Expansion of greenway at the Barnes Preserve. If right-of-way is needed for railroad, study whether there is enough room for both rail and a pedestrian/bicycle path.
- Opportunities for bicycle paths along the Raritan River waterfront.
- Bicycle parking and amenities at major public transportation and activity centers.

- Conversion of rail spurs to bicycle/pedestrian paths: Many of the rail-to-trail opportunities previously identified are those abandoned links that could connect to a larger trail circulation network. There may be smaller opportunities to provide alternative pedestrian/bicycle routes to schools by decommissioning inactive rail spurs.

Extend the Middlesex Greenway

One recent success was the creation of the Middlesex Greenway, which utilizes an abandoned rail right-of-way between Metuchen, Edison, and Woodbridge. This facility also comprises a key segment of the East Coast Greenway through Middlesex County. The potential exists to extend the Middlesex Greenway from its initial terminal points further along the rail lines in either direction northwest toward South Plainfield, southerly toward the proposed off-road East Coast Greenway alignment along the Raritan River coastline through



Map 5.1: Middlesex Greenway Extension

MIDDLESEX COUNTY • NJ
Open Space and Recreation Plan 2021 Update

Area of Detail

Legend

- Middlesex Greenway Extension
- Existing Greenways
- Potential Greenway Opportunities
- Building Footprints

Prepared: 06/14/2021
By: CUES, Rutgers University

Middlesex Greenway Extension and other Greenway Opportunities
Source: Middlesex County Open Space and Recreation Plan (2021)

Raritan Center, and easterly toward Perth Amboy. This part of this East Coast Greenway - Middlesex Greenway network could be part of a larger Central Jersey Circuit linking also the privately proposed Raritan Center and Raritan River Greenways as a continuous loop serving Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge Perth Amboy, South Plainfield and Piscataway.

Improve wayfinding signage to the Middlesex Greenway and other off-road paths:

Residents have stated that while they acknowledge the Middlesex Greenway is an important asset, many residents have no idea that it's there. More can be done to direct people to trail heads, in particular from Amboy Avenue. Graphic design standards have been developed for the Greenway by the Together North Jersey Local Technical Assistance Program. As a starting point, directional signs should be installed on all of the side streets that provide immediate access to trail entrance points. This effort could then be expanded to become a part of a greater wayfinding plan which helps to advertise the amenity, create a sense of place, ease navigation through the trail, enhance user experience, and build a storyline for the trail.

Revisit Route 1 Powerline Trail

A long-standing bikeway proposal (Route 1 Powerline Trail) recommended that a bikeway be built along the Route 1 northbound corridor within the PSE&G utility easement through Woodbridge and Edison. This utility corridor alignment was proposed to provide bicycle access to Roosevelt Park, Menlo Park Mall, Woodbridge Center, and numerous commercial establishments along Route 1, and serve a number of residential areas in this vicinity of Edison and Woodbridge. However, in light of opposition from PSE&G to utilize the power lines right-of-way, an alternative bikeway facility on an alignment on the southbound side of Route 1 should be explored to provide desired access to the above noted facilities. This could include utilization of AMTRAK right of way near Route 1 and Grandview Avenue.



Middlesex Greenway Waypoint Signs

Source: Middlesex County



Example of path under a transmission line - Trolley Line Trail in West Windsor, New Jersey.

Photograph courtesy Jerry Foster, wwbp.org

Study pedestrian & bicycle link along Liddle Ave (private road)

The township should investigate the possibility of acquiring Liddle Avenue (private road), which is a private road off Amboy Avenue. The current property owners have not enforced their right by closing the road and it is currently used by the community. This roadway could become an important pedestrian and bicycle link to the nearby Middlesex Greenway.

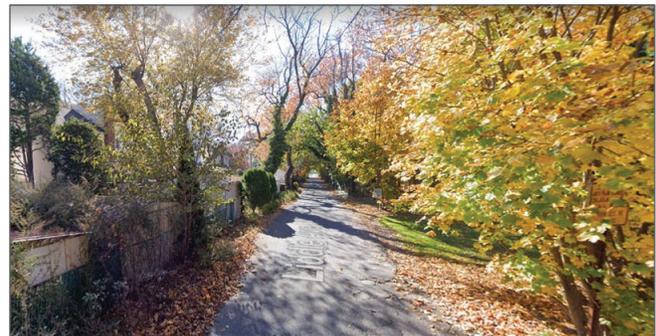
ENHANCE EDISON'S EXISTING MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT SYSTEM WITH EXPANDED INTRA-MUNICIPAL TRANSIT OPTIONS AND IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE.

Edison is served by NJ Transit and AMTRAK on the Northeast Corridor Line, which runs from Washington DC to Boston. This line provides considerable intrastate- and New York City-oriented service, with stops in such regional employment and activity centers as Princeton, New Brunswick, Metropark, and Elizabeth, and access to other key NJ Transit rail lines at Newark Penn Station, Secaucus Junction, and Hoboken Terminal. Residents have convenient access to the Edison Station in Edison, the Metropark Station in Woodbridge, and the Metuchen Station in Metuchen. In 2020, Edison Station average weekday boardings was 1,944. Ridership has significantly dropped during COVID to about 854 people at the start of 2021.² Ridership is expected to increase as conditions continue to normalize. Parking is in three different lots which provide 775 total spaces. The spaces are currently 55% occupied (2022), but they were above 80% occupied pre-COVID.³

The Township should support efforts to decrease automobile use and promote public transit, walking, and bicycling as preferred modes of transportation. There was support from the public for the improvement of public transportation, and improving access to mass transit also has the potential to alleviate vehicular congestion.



Liddle Ave (private road) at Amboy Ave



Liddle Ave (private road)



Liddle Ave (private road) at Middlesex Greenway

Recommendations:

Promote transit-oriented development (TOD)

Mixed-use development around rail stations and other public transportation hubs is called transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD promotes a symbiotic relationship between compact mixed-use communities and transit infrastructure with the goal of increasing transit use and reducing automobile commuting trips. From a TOD perspective, land around Edison Station could be considered underutilized, especially

² Source NJTransit. 2021 data reflects a full fiscal year of COVID-19 impacts.

³ Source: Correspondence with NJTransit.

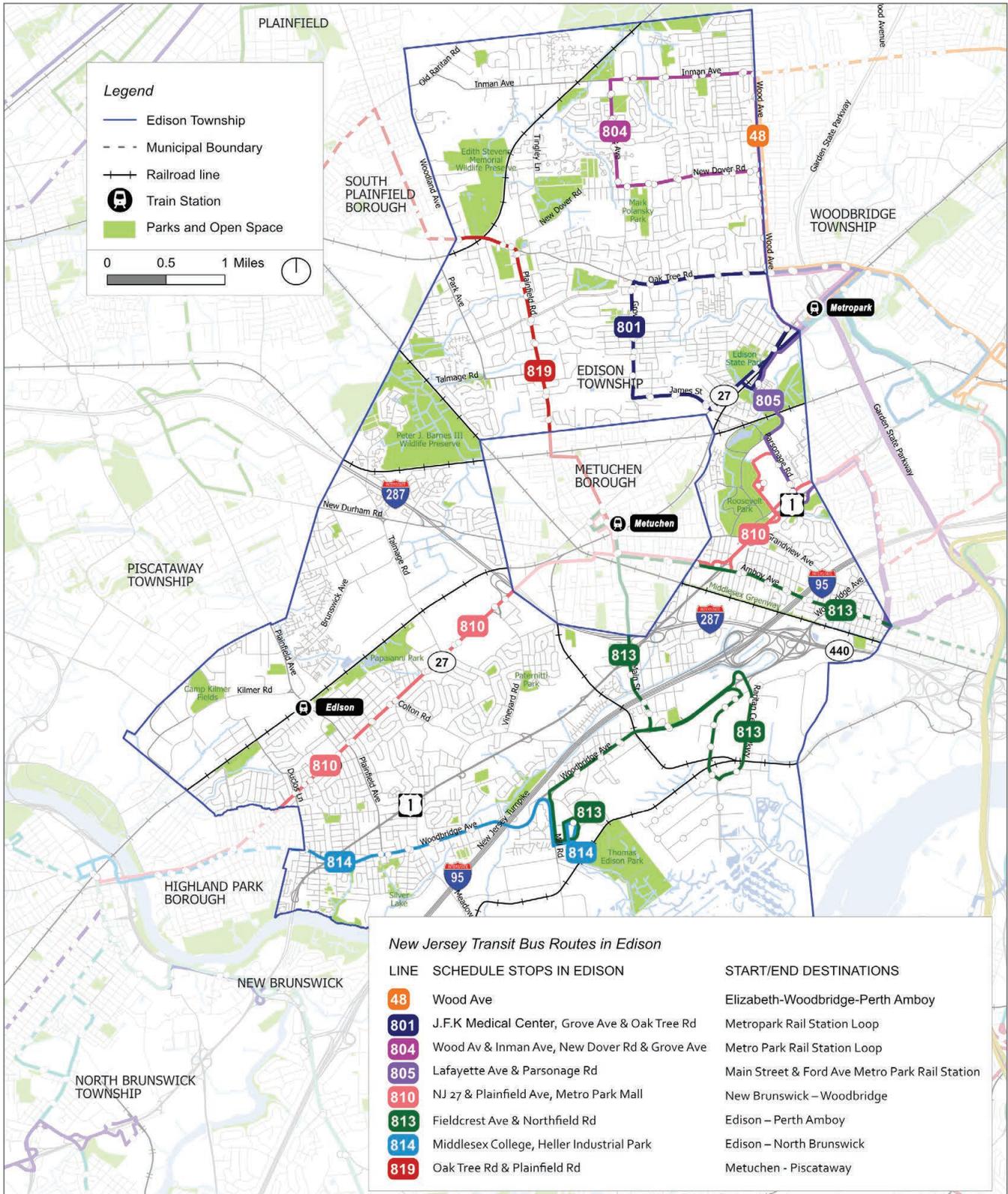


Figure 35: Public Transportation Network

Source: NJ Transit, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BfJ Planning.

in comparison with other stations along the Northeast Corridor. Areas directly to the north of the station are primarily light industrial in nature. More can be done to highlight the entrance to the station from the north, which is hidden from Plainfield Avenue.

Promotion of TOD at Edison station is discussed further in Section 8. In New Jersey, the state's Transit Village program supports efforts to create TODs near stations. Acceptance into this program makes a municipality eligible for state funding and technical assistance, and provides access to grant programs from NJDOT. One recent Transit Village initiative includes the proposed TOD project at Metropark Station in Woodbridge. The project will include the creation of Class A office and retail space; housing opportunities; community amenities; and station-area improvements, including bicycle, pedestrian and infrastructure upgrades.

Advocate to NJ Transit for improved bus service

Many residents expressed concern about the bus network including the limited hours of operation, the frequency of bus service, and adequacy of accessibility to some of these lines. Most of these bus lines operate only on weekdays and some only during peak commuting hours. Essentially, service is unreliable and does not get residents to the destinations that they want to go to such as Edison Station, housing complexes, Middlesex College, Rutgers, libraries, Metuchen town center, other neighboring towns, and the wider region. Where possible, Edison should work with NJ Transit to get more bus routes in the Township, both to Edison Station and to shopping areas within the Township. Where there is existing bus service, the Township should work with NJ Transit, other bus operators, and the County to improve signage and schedule information, and to improve pedestrian conditions near Edison Station (i.e. along Plainfield Avenue).

Revisit Edison Light Transit (shuttle)

Edison should also encourage shuttle bus service between train stations and large residential complexes or commercial areas such as Raritan Center, as well as

generally improve access to areas near train stations. The Township previously operated the Edison Light Transit shuttle service, which provided service between residential complexes and the train station. Since 1999, NJ Transit has helped 20 municipalities start similar programs through its competitive Community Shuttle Program, which is funded through the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program. The program offers seed money to communities for the purchase of shuttles, as well as operating assistance during the first three years a shuttle service runs. However, it is not currently funded for expansion.

Encourage park-and-ride facilities

Participants expressed the need for nearby park and ride facilities. The Township should investigate opportunities to partner with commercial property owners to create new park-and-ride facilities. These can be implemented through shared-use agreements with uses such as theaters and shopping malls where parking demand peaks during evenings or on weekends and unused parking is available during commute hours. Shared use park-and-ride facilities are a cost-effective alternative to building standalone parking facilities.



Edison
Township  **Master Plan**

5/ PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES



INTRODUCTION

Parks and open space help define a community's character, provide space for passive and active recreation, contribute to public health, mitigate flooding, and support wildlife habitats. Over 10% of Edison's total land area, almost 2,000 acres, is dedicated to parks and open space. An additional 344 acres are private spaces with recreational uses. There are more than 85 parks and open spaces in Edison, most of which are owned and managed by the Township, with others under the jurisdiction of Middlesex County, Union County, the State, or non-profit/private entities. Edison's parks and open spaces range in size from less than half an acre to 309 acres of land, and offer a variety of active and passive recreation from sports facilities to walking trails and places to sit and enjoy fresh air.

The Township's park network is supported by year-round recreational programming run by the Department of Recreation, including several youth leagues, summer camps, and the availability of public park rental.

Open space conservation and protection is critical for human health and the integrity of the natural environment. Open spaces, forests and wetlands provide habitats for plants and animals, buffers from flooding and storm surges, absorb stormwater runoff, and improve air quality. Enhancing and preserving the natural environment will have long-term positive effects on Edison's ability to thrive in the face of climate change and sea level rise. The importance of natural resources is also highlighted when discussing issues related to sustainability and resiliency such as the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events. These critical environmental issues are discussed in Chapter 7: Infrastructure and Sustainability.

PRIOR AND ONGOING PLANNING EFFORTS

Since Edison's last Master Plan in 2003, a range of efforts to improve open space, recreation and the environment have been completed, including the following:

- Since 1998, the Edison Open Space Advisory Committee has preserved over 959 acres.
- The Middlesex Greenway, between Metuchen and Woodbridge, opened in 2012.
- Edison completed an Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2018 and updated its Environmental Resource Inventory in 2021.
- Middlesex County produced an Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2022.
- Edison's first community garden opened in Thomas Swales Park in 2022.
- In November 2021, Edison residents voted to reinstate a tax to contribute to the Open Space Trust Fund.

There are a number of ongoing efforts to improve open space conservation and parks and recreation in Edison, including:

- Extension of the Middlesex Greenway
- Middlesex D2040 OSRP, 2022
- Barnes Preserve Preservation Commission Draft Master Plan 2023
- Implementation of a splash park and other improvements to Papaianni Park.
- Planned construction of Edison Sports Recreation Center for youth leagues next to Edison Jets Youth Football Field
- Clean ups of open spaces including the Raritan Ravine, Traverse Avenue, Fox Road, Edison Dog Park and Silver Lake by the Edison Environmental Commission and partner organizations.



Edison State Park



Playground at Roosevelt Park

- The Open Space Advisory Committee has launched a Bicycle Initiative to plan for bike routes in Edison.
- Middlesex College Expansion plan, 2022. While this project was announced, there is not a formal plan with specific details on a proposed program of uses and an anticipated timeframe.

EXISTING PARK FACILITIES

Figure 36 shows the location of park, recreation, and open space resources in Edison. Edison's Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) lists 84 parks and open spaces, not including State or private properties that may provide supplemental benefits to Edison residents. Of the park land, 71% is managed by the Township, 22% is managed by Middlesex or Union County, and 5% is managed by the State.

Some of the larger public park facilities are listed below. In addition to public properties, there are several privately owned and operated recreational centers including golf courses, swimming pools, boating, and sports clubs.

MAJOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES IN EDISON

Peter J. Barnes III Wildlife Preserve

This preserve formerly known as Dismal Swamp is the largest open space in the Township. In addition to 459 acres within Edison, there are 325 acres within Metuchen, and South Plainfield. Two thirds of the preserve is owned by the Township and the remainder is owned by Middlesex County, Edison Wetlands Association, or private landowners. The Edison portion is characterized a variety of deciduous wooded, mixed shrub, and herbaceous wetlands. The Bound Brook runs through the landscape.

According to Edison's ERI, the Barnes Wildlife Preserve is home to over 175 species of birds and two dozen species of mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, as well as a dozen threatened and endangered species. This primarily deciduous wooded wetland has Federal Priority Status for wetlands protection as designated by the US EPA. In addition to the preserve's importance as a critical habitat, it may have value as a cultural and historic site. It is listed in Edison's Locally Important Historic Sites list, and archaeological digs have uncovered Native American artifacts.



Residents enjoy the Preserve through hiking, biking, and riding trails. The Edison Wetlands Association operates the Triple C Ranch and environmental education programs.

The Lehigh Valley Railroad and Port Reading Railroad lines border the preserve on the north and south respectively. There has been discussion of extending the Middlesex Greenway along the Lehigh Valley Railroad to connect Metuchen, Edison, and South Plainfield. The Metuchen portion of the Preserve is planned to be improved with trails and other amenities, including public parking, as part of a redevelopment approved on Durham Avenue in December 2022.

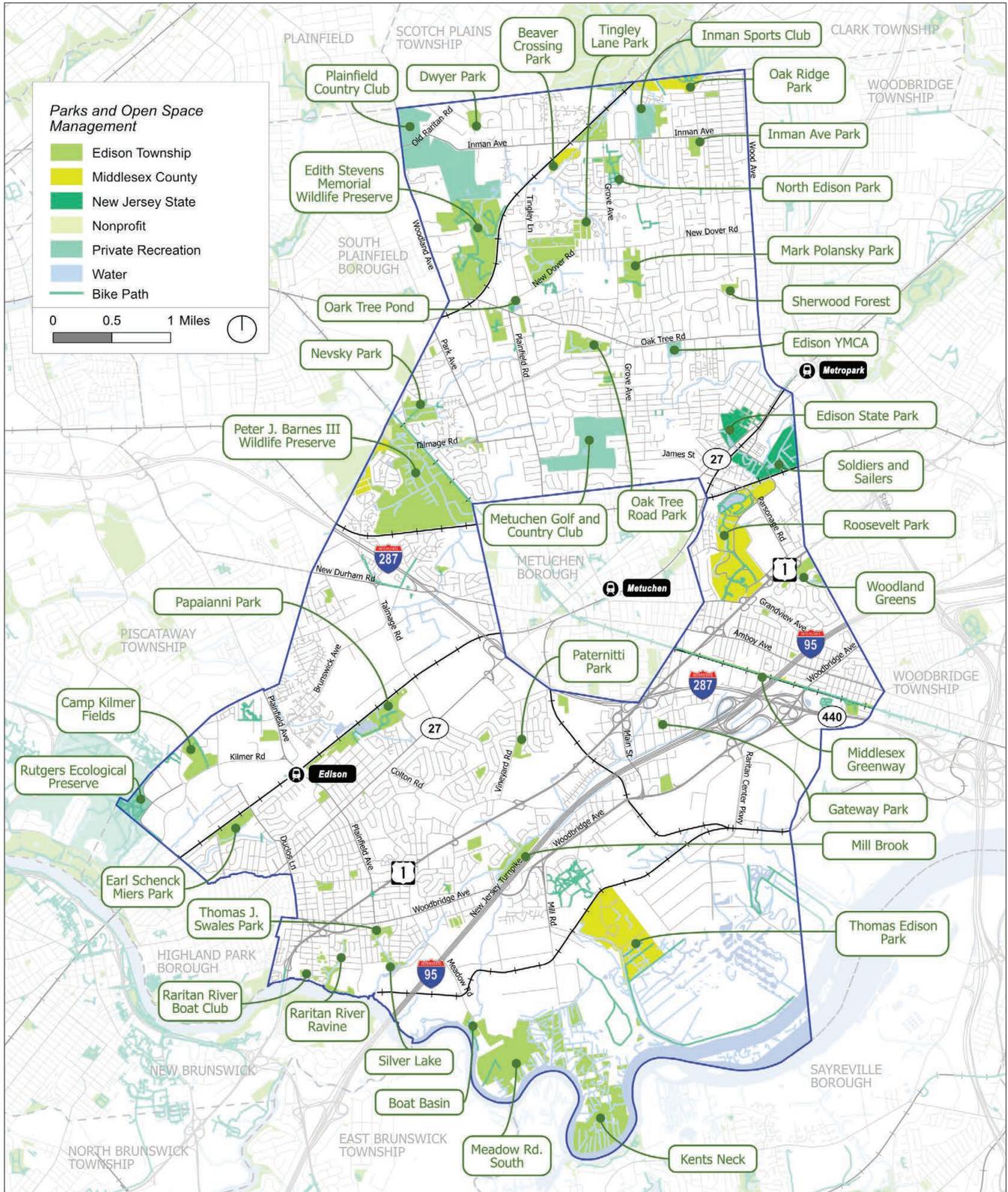


Figure 36: Park and Open Space Facilities

Source: NJDEP, NJDOT, NJGIS, BFI Planning.

Edison Boat Basin and Raritan River Walkway

Edison Boat Basin and Raritan River Walkway is a 2.4-acre property located at the end of Mill Road. It is the only public access point to the Raritan River. The public can purchase daily or annual permits to park and launch boats. There is also a fishing dock, walking trail and boardwalk, and a gazebo. The 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan identified opportunities to improve this park, including a dedicated kayak launch, boat washing station, and restrooms. The half-mile walkway along the riverfront could be better maintained and expanded to give access to Edison's 7 miles of river frontage, connect to waterfront parks in neighboring Woodbridge, and link to regional greenways.



Edison Boat Basin

Papaianni Park

Also known as Central Park, this 67-acre park abuts Edison's Municipal Complex. The park has open lawns and a large parking lot that provide space for hosting large township events. Most recently, the first official Diwali Celebration filled the park with thousands of guests.

The park features an 8-acre artificial lake with a walking path, sports fields, backstops, tennis courts, basketball courts, a pavilion provided by Edison Arts Society, and a memorial to Edison residents lost in 9/11.

Improvements underway during 2022 – 2023 include the addition of a splash park, new bathroom and changing stalls, turf installation on the baseball diamond and football field, and other improvements to make the park more of a destination.



Papaianni Park

Edith Stevens Memorial Wildlife Preserve

The preserve which has one of the largest deciduous forested areas of the Township and an important wetland area, offers hiking and biking. When combined with adjacent Woodland Park and Petti Farm, the area is 84 acres. All of the preserve is in the Short Hills Battle Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its significance during the Revolutionary War.



Edith Stevens Memorial Wildlife Preserve

Thomas A Edison Park

Thomas A. Edison Park is a 174-acre county-owned facility in the southeastern section of the Township, next to Middlesex College and wedged between the Raritan Center and Heller Industrial Park. The portion of the park neighboring the College includes recreation facilities: tennis courts, baseball and softball fields, soccer fields, a track, and model airplane field. There is also a portion of the park that is forested. According to Middlesex D2040, there is limited pedestrian access, sports facility fences dominate the visual experience, and the model airfield and barbecues are not being used. Middlesex D2040 also projects that sea level rise will result in the loss of 23 acres.



Thomas A Edison Park

Roosevelt Park

This County-owned park, located east of Metuchen, includes 196 acres of land used for active and passive recreation. There are bicycle and walking trails through the park, and its recreation facilities include playing fields, a skating rink, tennis courts, basketball courts, softball fields, picnic groves, playgrounds, and fishing. The Stephen J. Capestro Theater is an open-air theater where the County hosts Plays in the Park. Roosevelt Park also contains two important monuments: The Veterans Memorial and the Light Dispelling Darkness sculpture.



Roosevelt Park

Middlesex Greenway

The Middlesex Greenway is a celebrated addition to the County's biking and walking trail system. The rail-to-trail project runs along the former Lehigh Valley railroad line and links Woodbridge, Edison, and Metuchen. The greenway, which opened in 2012, runs through Edison parallel and two blocks south of Amboy Avenue. It allows for pedestrian, bicycle and ADA access along 3.5 miles and spans 42 acres (20 of which are within Edison.) The Middlesex Greenway is popular and has inspired discussions for its expansion from Metuchen through Edison's West side to reach South Plainfield Borough. There have also been proposals to connect the greenway with additional trails to the north and south using utility corridors and street improvements.



Middlesex Greenway

Edison State Park

Edison State Park, 38.5 acres located in the eastern side of Edison just north of Route 27, is home to the Edison Memorial Tower and Thomas Edison Center Museum. The grounds have several archaeological sites, including the location of the former Menlo Park Lab, outbuildings, and the Sarah B. Jordan Boarding House. These historical landmarks are discussed further in the Historic Preservation section. The Menlo Park nature trail brings visitors through the forested portion of the lot.

The Edison Memorial Tower Corporation is embarking on a grassroots community effort to expand the Thomas Edison Center museum. The discussions with the public identified the needs of the center in terms of programming and physical space, surrounding property and access to the site.





THOMAS EDISON CENTER
AT MENLO PARK

VISION FOR NEW THOMAS EDISON CENTER AT MENLO PARK





LEGEND

- MUSIUM EDUCATIONAL SPACE
- OFFICE SPACE
- SUPPORT SPACE
- EXPANSION





Plans for expansion of Thomas Edison Center
Source: SSP Architects

NATURAL RESOURCES

Water Resources

Surface water comprises 2.6% of Edison's area, with water bodies including the Raritan River, the Rahway River, and several brooks, creeks, and tributaries. Generally, water bodies in northern Edison are freshwater, while the Raritan river and its tributaries are brackish. By the State's water quality standards, the Raritan River and its tributaries can support uses for shell fishing and recreation.

Raritan River

The Raritan River along Edison's southern border is a vital environmental resource. The southeastern portion of Edison along the river is largely Phragmites Dominate Wetlands and Saline Marsh. The Federal Business Center in Raritan Center owns several hundred acres of wetlands between the Raritan Center and the Raritan River, of which 337 acres are deed restricted wetlands. Garden State Buildings C/O Summit owns over 600 acres of wetlands to the west of Federal Business Center's property.

Other surface and ground waters

There are a few manmade lakes in Edison that are linked to streams or rivers. Silver Lake is on a tributary to the Raritan River, Lake Papaanni is a widening in the Ambrose Brook, and Roosevelt Park Lake is fed by the South Branch Rahway River.

Edison sits on two aquifers: the Brunswick Aquifer and the Potomac-Raritan Aquifer.¹ The Brunswick Aquifer comprises about 70% of the Township, covering all of North Edison and much of the eastern portion of the Township. The Potomac Aquifer makes up the remaining 29% of Edison. All nine community water supply wells

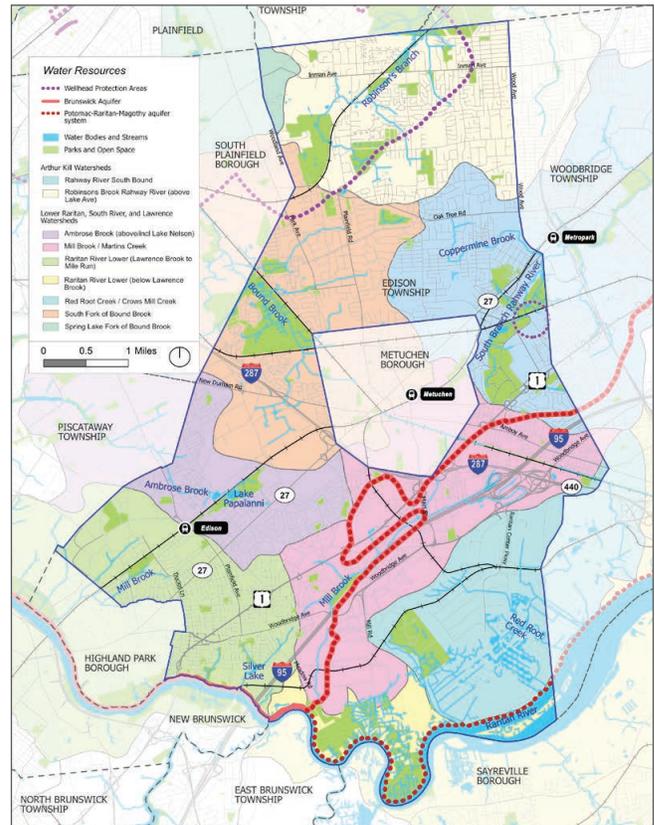


Figure 37: Water Resources

are located in northwest Edison on the Brunswick Aquifer. The water quality of these wells is discussed in the Infrastructure chapter.

Watershed Management Areas are designated by NJDEP. Edison falls within the Arthur Kill Water Management Area (WMA7) and the Lower Raritan, South River, and Lawrence Water Management Area (WMA9).² There are nine watersheds in Edison Township mapped by the United States Geological Survey (USGS)³

¹ Edison Township ERI Update, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey, 2021; NJGS Aquifers of New Jersey 1998, NJDEP

² New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Bureau of Geographic Information System (BGIS), "Watershed Management Areas in New Jersey"

³ Edison Township ERI Update, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey, 2021

Wetlands

Edison has 2,832 acres of wetlands covering about 14% of the Township’s area (see Figure 38).⁴ Wetlands in Edison are primarily deciduous wooded wetlands (45%) and phragmites dominate coastal wetlands (24%). The most prominent wetland areas are the Barnes Wildlife Preserve, the Stevens Memorial Wildlife Preserve, Edison State Park, and a large area along the Raritan River.

Critical Habitats

Core Habitat Areas are areas of undisturbed natural habitats that are greater than 100 acres in size.⁶ There are four areas in Edison with this classification: the Raritan River and Wetlands, Barnes Preserve Wetlands, the Rutgers Preserve, and Goodman’s Crossing (Ashbrook Swamp). These areas are composed of natural features such as wetlands and forests that support plant and animal species.

NJDEP’s Landscape Project has identified additional areas that provide critical habitats for state-listed endangered, threatened, or special concern species, including areas around Robinson’s Branch River (Stevens Memorial Wildlife Preserve), Bound Brook (Barnes Preserve), Coppermine Brook, the South Branch Rahway River (Roosevelt Park and Soldiers and Sailors Preserve), the Raritan Ravine, Silver Lake, and Mill Brook.⁵ Wildlife species that are endangered, threatened, or of special concern are listed in Table 10.

State Endangered Species
<i>Peregrine Falcon, Pied Billed Grebe, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle</i>
State Threatened Species
<i>American Kestrel, Cattel Egret, Grasshopper Sparrow, Osprey, Savannah Sparrow, Yellow Crowned Night Heron, Wood Turtle</i>
Species of Special Concern
<i>Snowy Egret, Cooper’s Hawk, Glossy Ibis, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Wood Thrush, Eastern Box Turtle</i>

Table 10: Critical Wildlife Species Found in Edison

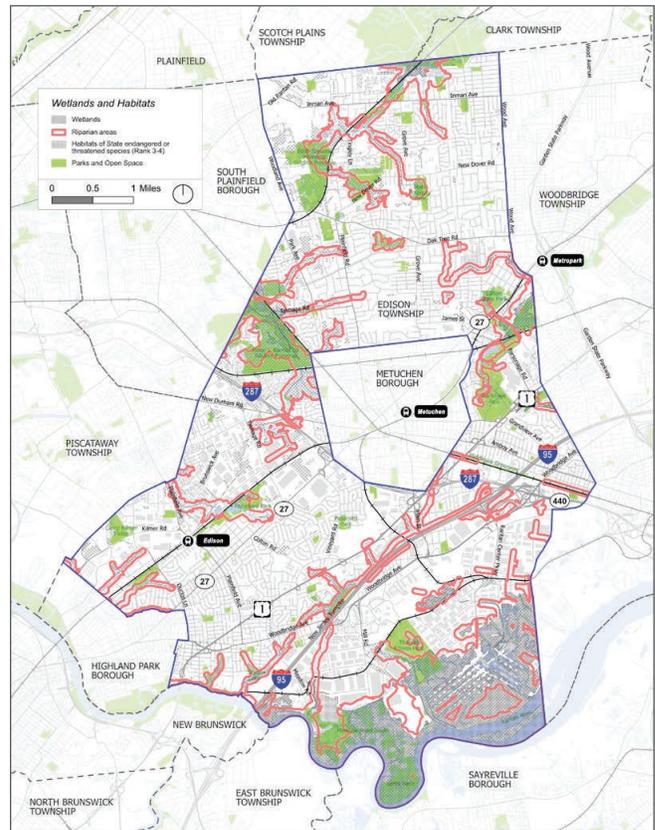


Figure 38: Wetlands and Critical Habitats

Source:

⁴ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Division of Information Technology (DOIT), Bureau of Geographic Information, “Land Cover,” 2015.

⁵ Edison Township ERI Update, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey, 2021.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Open Space Advisory Committee

Planning for parks and open space in Edison has gained momentum since the founding of the Open Space Advisory Committee in 1999. In the same year, the Township established the Open Space Trust Fund and developed an Open Space Plan. In November 2021, Edison residents voted to reinstate taxes to contribute to the Open Space Trust Fund, which had been discontinued in 2016. Since its founding, the Committee has acquired and preserved over 30 properties accounting for over 959 acres of land. The Committee continues to keep an inventory of candidate properties for acquisition, which includes underutilized properties such as privately-owned and capped landfills, vacant properties, undeveloped residential or commercially zoned lands, and powerline and utility rights-of-way.

Environmental Commission

The Edison Environmental Commission aims to index and suggest uses for open land, coordinate activities and educate the public on environmental concerns, prepare guidelines for the Edison Tree Fund, and develop and update an inventory of trees. Recent activities include community outreach, anti-litter campaigns, clean-ups, and other information campaigns. Over the next 10 years, the Commission will prioritize the protection of trees, anti-graffiti and dumping efforts, promotion of renewable energy and sustainable construction, and public awareness campaigns.

Green Team Advisory Committee

The Township's Green Team Advisory Committee sponsors sustainability initiatives and programs such as Earth Day events. They also oversee the Township's ongoing participation in Sustainable Jersey, a program that certifies municipalities based on steps they have taken to ensure the long-term quality of life. Certification gives municipalities access to grants and helps identify funding opportunities for projects. Edison was certified Bronze in 2020.

Barnes Preserve Preservation Commission

Pursuant to the State's Barnes Preservation Act (formerly 2009 Dismal Swamp Preservation Act), the Barnes Preserve Preservation Commission is establishing a Regional Planning Board with the powers and duties of a municipal planning board. The Commission's Master Plan, which was adopted in May 2023, supersedes any municipal ordinances or local master plans of land use guidelines, with any property located in Barnes Preserve (formerly the Dismal Swamp Preserve) to be managed by the Barnes Preserve Commission.

The properties identified on the Commission's jurisdictional boundary map have been agreed upon by Edison and its neighboring municipalities. The plan makes several recommendations for the stewardship and preservation of the wetlands within the Barnes Preserve. Those that may impact Edison include provisions to limit development within a buffer of the wetlands, watershed and stormwater management for areas that drain into the preserve, and restriction of vehicular access while encouraging educational and passive recreational access. The Commission will seek funds to acquire and protect environmentally sensitive areas in the vicinity of the preserve's current boundaries.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Edison's 2003 Master and Plan and 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan outlined several goals and strategies, many of which are still relevant today. Through public engagement, the Township's residents shared new issues and ideas. This chapter provides a revised list of strategies to expand and enhance Edison's parks and recreational assets, conserve open spaces and the natural environment, and be more sustainable and resilient to climate change and sea level rise. The following are key areas for the township to focus its efforts:

EXPAND ACCESS TO PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Some neighborhoods in Edison have better access to parks and open space than others. Figure 39 illustrates walking distance to parks. The U.S. Conference of Mayors has set a goal for all Americans to live within a 10-minute walk to a park or green space. In Edison, 41% of residents live within a 10-minute walk to a park while 79% live within a 20-minute walk (about a mile). Barriers including railway lines, highways, walls and fences may be preventing Edison's residents from accessing close-by parks. In other instances, there may not be enough parks and greenspace in some neighborhoods.

Residents consistently expressed interest in having more access to open space. In particular, residents of southwestern Edison highlighted the disparity in parks on their side of town. There was also general support for connecting parks and open spaces through a system of trails and sidewalks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Update the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)

The OSRP should be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with the Open Space Advisory Committee to determine short- and long-term priorities and strategies. Edison should share the latest OSRP document with the NJDEP New Jersey Green Acres Program to ensure

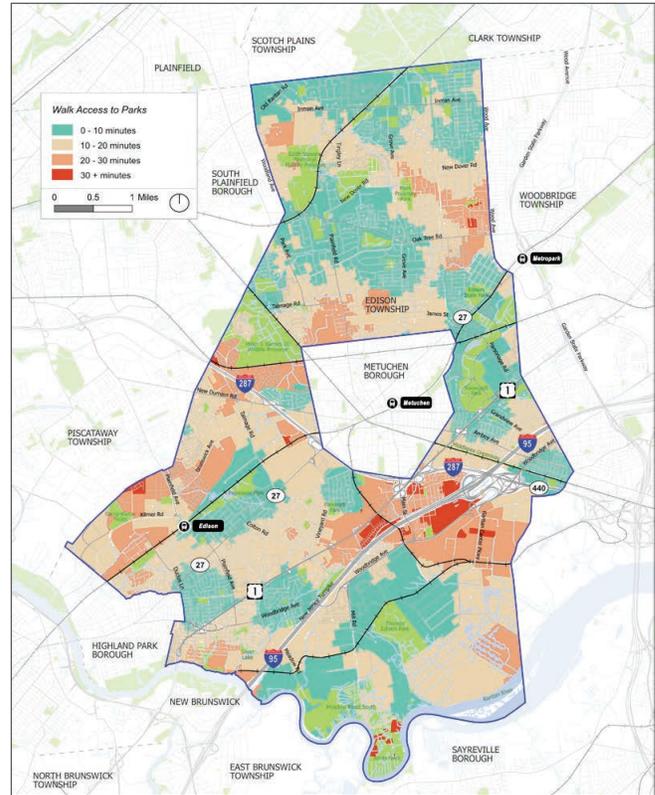


Figure 39: Walk Access to Parks

Source: Urban Footprint, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BFJ Planning.

that parks and open spaces are accurately listed on the ROSI and eligible for funding. The plan should emphasize equity and address parks in all parts of town to ensure residents have equal access to quality facilities. The OSRP update should be a collaborative effort among relevant commissions, committees, nonprofits, departments, and the public. Edison should identify funding sources for acquisition, maintenance, and improvements and continue to apply for the Middlesex County Open Space Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, NJDEP Green Acres grants, Environmental Infrastructure Trust (EIT), and the NJ State Urban Parks Program.

Improve trail system and connections between parks

There is potential to improve Edison’s trail system and connections to nearby parks. For example, currently Edison State Park to Roosevelt Park’s north is separated by a freight railway line. There are no pedestrian crossings, and the Parsonage Road and North Evergreen Road underpasses are narrow and without sidewalks. The idea of utilizing the utility rights-of-way to the west of the park and the corridor along Route 1 has been proposed to connect Roosevelt Park with the Middlesex Greenway, North Edison, and potentially neighboring Townships (Woodbridge and Clark).

Expand the footprint of parks and open spaces.

It is a priority of Edison’s residents to add to the open space and recreation system as opportunities arise. Middlesex County’s 2022 OSRP identified that the Township has one of the highest open space needs in the County. Strategies to expand Edison’s parks, recreation, and open space assets include:

- Continue to work with the Open Space Advisory Committee in its efforts to acquire and preserve properties for open space, conservation, and recreational use.
- Annually update the list of priority properties to be acquired in the OSRP with the help of the Commission.
- Create a procedure for contacting the owners of large tracts of open space and present them with options for purchase or conservation easements.
- Incorporate recommendations from the 2022 Middlesex County OSRP and 2018 Edison OSRP, identifying strategic properties for acquisition.
- Explore the potential, with Middlesex County, to combine publicly owned lots with adjacent parks to expand their footprints.
- Consider brownfields, greyfields, underutilized land, and redevelopment areas for their open space and recreational potential.

Better utilize undeveloped publicly-owned open spaces

Edison Township owns over 500 acres of undeveloped open spaces including Kents Neck, Meadow Road South, Tingley Lane Park, and several additional areas named in Table 14. In addition, 166 acres of open spaces are unnamed. There is limited access to some of these open spaces. Many are locked in by developments and inaccessible to the general public (i.e. Sherwood Forest), while others are environmentally sensitive wetlands near the Raritan River or provide buffers around streams. Some neighbor existing parks and could provide opportunities for future passive or active recreational use.

CONTINUE TO IMPROVE FACILITIES AND ADAPT TO CHANGING NEEDS

Residents value their neighborhood parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. However, several of these resources need maintenance or major upgrades (similar to reinvestments underway at Papaiani Park). At community engagement events, residents described neglected and dangerous playgrounds, unusable recreation facilities, lack of lighting, litter, and vandalism. An up-to-date capital improvement plan tied to the priorities established in the OSRP will guide the DPW in addressing park maintenance needs. The DPW aims to update Edison’s playgrounds and recreation facilities on an ongoing basis; having a plan will provide a to-do list and designated funding. Some general improvements that could be implemented across the Township are added lighting, waste bins, trees, trails, and accessibility improvements to make parks attractive and safer for all users. Some priority areas identified through public outreach are shown in Figure 40.

In addition to the DPW’s maintenance of parks, the Township should continue to support and expand the Environmental Commission’s volunteer efforts to clean up parks and open spaces. Building off Edison’s first community garden’s success, bringing this initiative to other local neighborhood parks can engage the public with parks and provide healthy, local food production and education.

Edison should also add to its recreational facilities to reflect cultural shifts in popular recreational activities. As noted by the DPW, enrollment in football and softball has declined, while interest in soccer and baseball programs is still strong. Repurposing underutilized football or softball fields for a broader range of sports uses would improve the utilization of these facilities. Residents expressed a need for more lighted tennis courts, pickleball courts,

swimming pools, splash pads, cricket fields, and indoor sports facilities. Other opportunities could be expanding the Minnie B. Veal Community Center and/or a new community center in South Edison to replace the Stelton School. Community centers will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

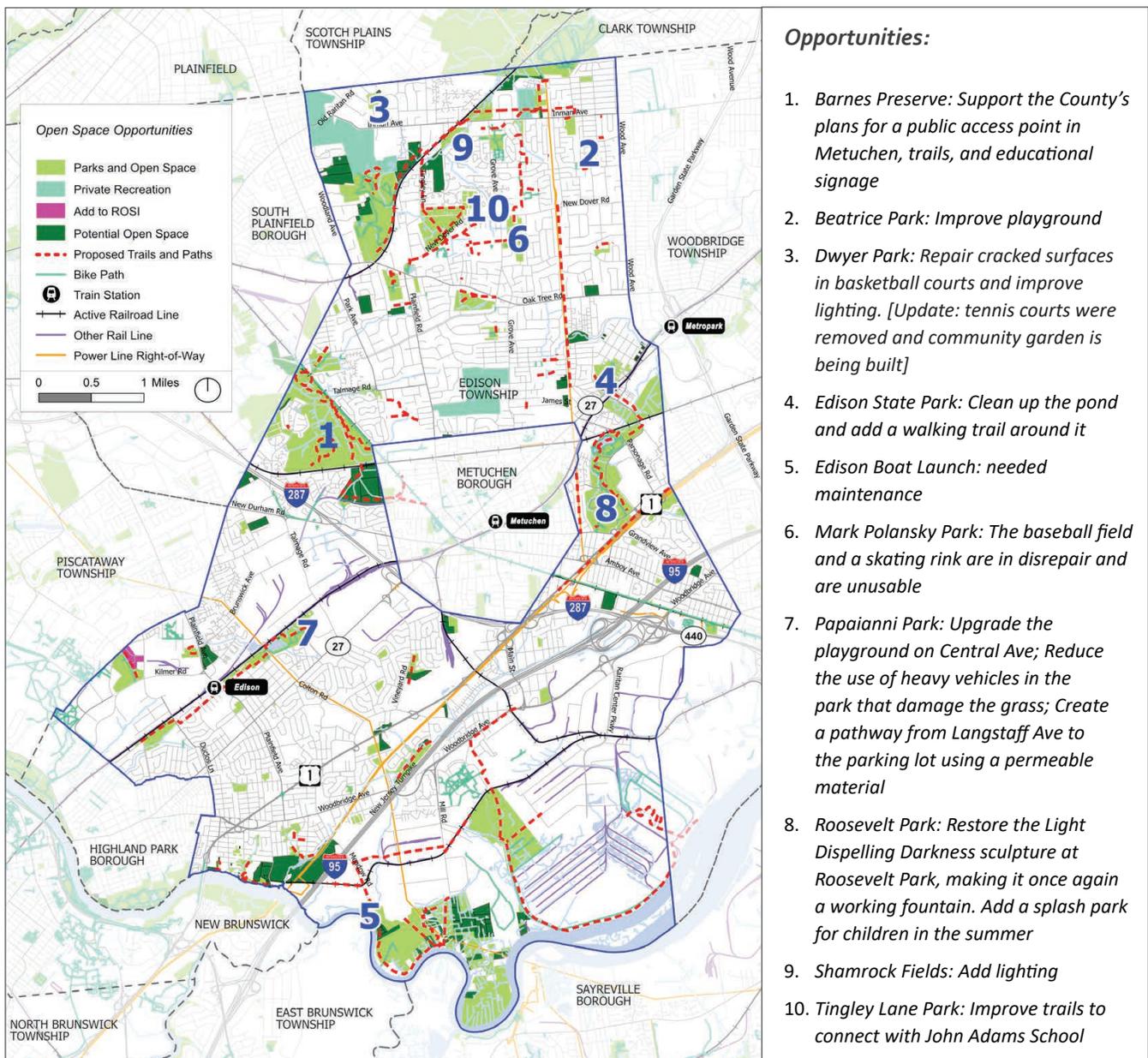


Figure 40: Open Space Opportunities

Source: Edison Township OSRP (2018), Middlesex County OSRP (2022), Open Street Map, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BfJ Planning.

PARTNER WITH MIDDLESEX COLLEGE TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Edison should work closely with Middlesex County and Middlesex College on implementing their plans to provide public open space and community facilities to the campus—including a cricket field, indoor sports facilities, and an arena for performances and community events. Edison should develop partnerships as these plans are implemented, with the goal of making some of the facilities open to local residents. Such facilities can fill identified needs of Edison’s residents and potentially avoid the need for significant spending by the Township. However, as previously discussed, many questions remain about the scope of the proposed project, including loss of trees and green space and traffic impacts. The Township must advocate strongly for its residents’ interests, particularly in those neighborhoods that have the potential to experience negative impacts from additional development at the College.



Rendering of new venues planned at Middlesex College

INCREASE PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE RARITAN RIVER

Many residents indicated support for improved access to the Raritan River waterfront along with more things to do along the river. Public access is currently limited to two areas: a narrow strip of land adjacent to the Boat Basin, and the end of Glendale Ave. There is also private access from the Raritan River Boat Club; however, that area is not publicly accessible. A large portion of the waterfront is adjacent to private properties in Raritan Center, which are also not publicly accessible. Opportunities to improve publicly accessible waterfront areas are shown in Figure 41 and discussed below:

1. Lots on the eastern portion of the riverfront (within Edison) include privately owned wetlands and a dock facility for industrial barges near the border of Woodbridge, which is currently under construction. These areas on the eastern side of the Township’s waterfront contain critical wetland habitats and are vulnerable to flooding, storm surge, and sea level



Edison Boat Basin



Raritan River Boat Club

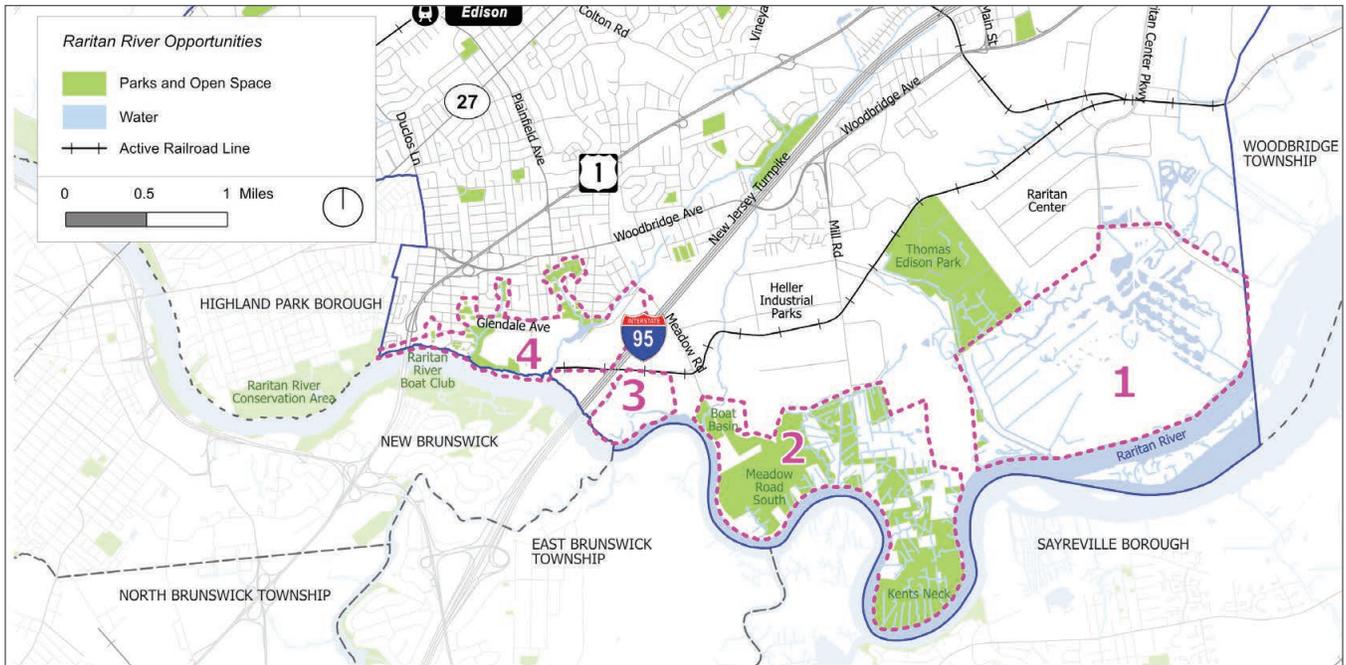


Figure 41: Raritan River Opportunity Areas

Source: NJDEP, NJOGIS, BfJ Planning

rise. Furthermore, remediation may be required due to legacy infrastructure from the land's former use as the Raritan Arsenal. Future development of this area should reflect these environmental constraints and should leverage opportunities to create publicly accessible recreational trails along the waterfront. A trail in this location has the potential to connect the boat basin to Woodbridge's waterfront park.

2. The area of Kent's Neck and Meadow Road South, also known as Salt Meadows, is another potential public access point. Both Middlesex County and Edison OSRPs have identified eight privately owned lots contiguous with publicly owned land in this area and have recommended their acquisition by the Township. However, this part of the waterfront is also vulnerable to flooding, storm surges, and sea level rise, and has sensitive wetland habitats and areas contaminated by former industrial and waste uses. While the landfills at Meadow Road South are capped, they require ongoing monitoring and maintenance. With the closure of the dump site on Meadow Road, Edison should consider ways to clean up this site for appropriate public use that will
3. There is an additional lot just east of the New Jersey Turnpike in the floodplain. The Township should limit any private development on this site and negotiate with the owner to provide a public use.
4. The area of the waterfront west of the New Jersey Turnpike is on higher ground and could potentially see some development. The Township identified a lot off of Glendale Road as a priority for public acquisition and development. The Township should conduct a study to determine appropriate waterfront uses for this area, such as a marina with boating, hotel, restaurants, and walkways. This area is further discussed in the Land Use Chapter.

not further degrade Raritan River's water quality and ecosystem.

The Open Space Advisory Committee recommends the addition of a kayak trail through Edmonds Creek, Black Ditch/Martins Creek and Town Ditch and a walking path and viewing platforms along the former NJ Clay & Brick Co's Railroad connecting to Mill Road (see Figure 42).

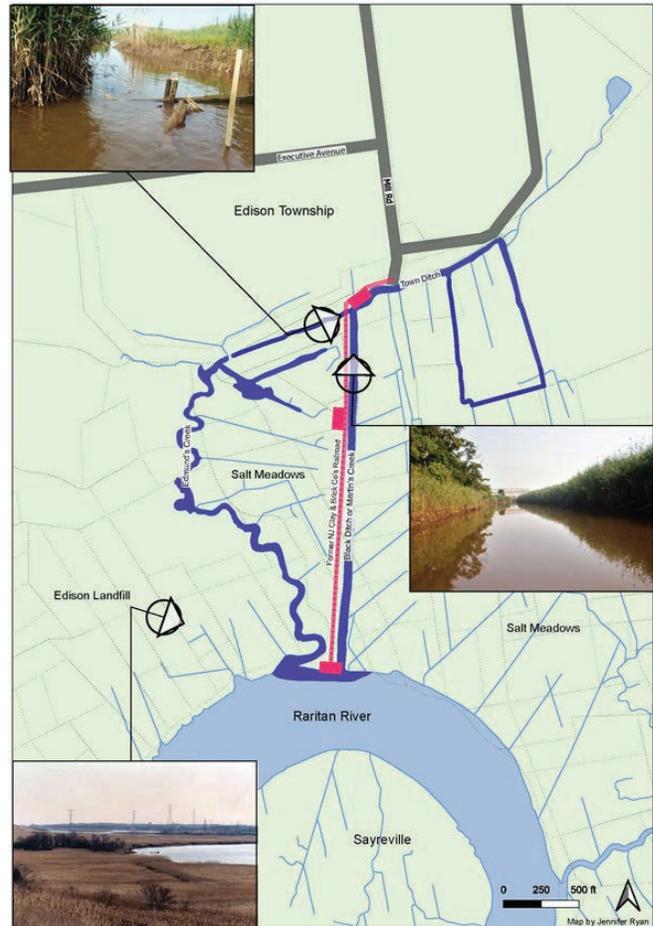
CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES

Edison should seek opportunities to conserve natural resources and environments, including wetlands, waterbodies, woodlands, trees, and wildlife. In addition, the Township should use responsible ecological management practices to protect the integrity of critical environments, the habitats of endangered and threatened species, the scenic qualities of resources, and public health. Edison should also encourage the protection of privately owned open space, wetlands, and forest lands through incentives, easement purchases, density transfers, and deed restriction programs. Protection of these resources can help to mitigate flooding and other impacts of climate change. Many natural resources cross municipal boundaries, thereby requiring coordination with State, County, and neighboring jurisdictions.

Other conservation strategies the Township should take include:

- Preserve and create connective corridors between forests and wetlands to support the migration patterns of wildlife;
- Combine contiguous tracts of open space to ensure biodiversity;
- Manage uses allowable next to forests and wetlands to ensure that the natural habitats and patterns of wildlife are not disturbed;
- Improve public access to nature through environmentally conscious trail systems and educational programs to generate public awareness and stewardship for nature; and
- Restrict development and uses in the vicinity of watersheds to prevent wetlands, surface water, and groundwater pollution.

Wetlands are the most significant natural resource in Edison by land area, notably the Raritan River wetlands and the Barnes Preserve. In addition to providing critical habitats mitigating the effects of stormwater flooding the Raritan River wetlands provide a buffer from the river, helping to mitigate effects of sea level rise, storm surges, and flooding. The Township should work with community partners to encourage the wetlands'



Edison's Raritan Salt Meadow Kayak Trails

Edison, NJ
Edison Open Space Advisory Committee
June 27, 2022

Legend: — Kayak Trail
— Walking Path
□ Dock/Viewing Platform
□ Edison Tax Parcels

Figure 42: Proposed Salt Meadows Kayak and Walking Trail

Source: Edison Open Space Advisory Committee

conservation and lessen the impacts of potential disasters. This includes private property owners and the Rutgers Raritan River Consortium, which has completed several studies of the river and its wetlands. The Barnes Preservation Commission has also been an active partner in stewardship of the preserve. Edison should continue to work with the commission, neighboring municipalities, and Middlesex County to support the development of publicly accessible trails within the preserve, a new public access point in Metuchen, and connections to other assets, such as the Middlesex Greenway.

6/ COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the departments and institutions that keep the Township running, the organizations that support it through social services and arts, and the historic resources that contribute to Edison's identity. The data and discussion presented in this chapter suggest several issues that are of importance:

Community Facilities

DPW, Police, and Fire Departments

Edison's Department of Public Works and the Police and Fire Departments have pressing facilities and equipment needs to fulfill their duties, which will require substantial capital investment.

Public Schools

Public school enrollment has begun to decline following extensive growth over the past decade, but overcrowding remains a major concern. A recently launched major capital improvement plan will address many of these issues; however, the Township and school district should closely collaborate on development trends to address future enrollment needs.

Libraries

Current library facilities are not sufficient to serve a community of Edison's size. Expansion of the North Edison branch is underway, while other branches are streamlining operations to address shifting needs of the population.

Community Centers

There is community desire for a second community center to supplement the existing Minnie B. Veal facility. The future use of the Stelton school building, formerly a community center, is undetermined and will need to be assessed in light of significant renovation costs.

Middlesex College

Middlesex County recently launched a substantial strategic investment plan for Middlesex College, which may provide opportunities for some of the multipurpose community spaces Edison residents desire. While this project was announced, there is not a formal plan with specific details on a proposed program of uses and an anticipated timeframe.

Cultural Resources

Thomas Edison Center

The Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park has initial funding and plans for a new museum facility, and is working on additional fundraising for the project.

Historic Preservation Commission

Edison's Historic Preservation Commission has a number of initiatives underway to strengthen protection of locally important historic resources.

MUNICIPAL, PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

There are 1,920 acres of publicly owned land in Edison, representing about 12% of land (excluding roadways) in the Township. As shown in Figure 43, these properties may be municipal, county, state, or federally owned land and include parks and open space, public schools, public facilities, municipal offices, and other public uses.

Edison's main government offices are located at the Municipal Complex next to Papaiani Park, including the Planning and Engineering, Public Works, Police and Fire Departments, as well as the mayor's offices and Township Council chambers.

Public Works

Edison's Department of Public Works (DPW) addresses stormwater management, park and road maintenance, waste collection and sanitation. In addition to its offices in the Municipal Complex, the DPW has three garages: one for parks on Nevsky Street, one for roads on New Durham Road, and one for sanitation off Truman Road.

Police Department

Edison Police Department is headquartered in the Edison Municipal Complex. There is a mechanic's garage on-site, along with fuel pumps for police and other public vehicles. A secondary police site at the Public Safety



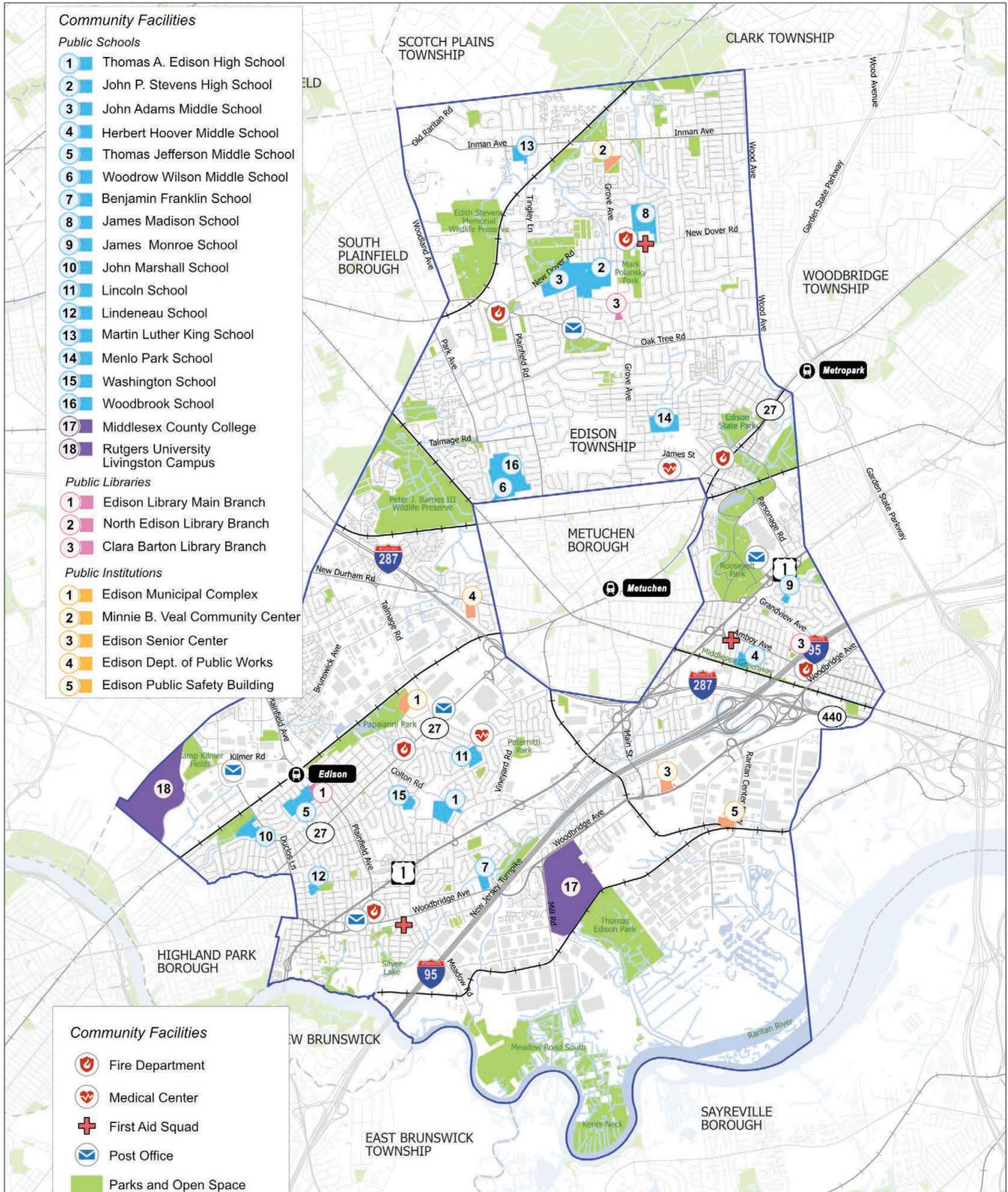


Figure 43: Community Facilities

Source: Urban Footprint, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BfJ Planning

Building at 205 Raritan Center Parkway, in a former fire station, is used for office space, tactical training rooms, classrooms, and similar activities.

The Police Department is comprised of a chief of police and two deputy chiefs that oversee the patrol bureau, administration bureau, and investigations bureau. The administration bureau also includes the traffic unit and community oriented policing initiative, which was re-introduced in 2020 with three full-time officers and an additional 28 officers to assist in the effort. Specialized units including juvenile and school resource officers fall under the investigations bureau.

The Police Department has a contract with Middlesex County to join its radio system and replace the current patch system within the next year. The County is improving radio tower infrastructure, and once it is operational, the Edison Police Department should have full coverage.

Fire Department

The Edison Fire Department, with headquarters at the Municipal Complex, has six fire stations distributed throughout the Township. The department operates 10 fire pumpers, two aerial trucks, two brush trucks, one rescue truck, and 12 support vehicles. In 2013 (most recent data year available), the department responded to 2,925 service calls, including 70 structure fires, 56 rescues, 154 vehicle accidents and 414 first responder medical calls. In addition, the Fire Prevention and Inspection Bureau is responsible for life hazard use occupancies and smoke detector inspections, and fire safety complaints and concerns. The Fire Department is

primarily composed of career firefighters. Volunteerism has declined significantly in recent years to fewer than 20 volunteer firefighters.

Fire stations are located in the Clara Barton, Piscatawaytown, Stelton, New Dover, Woodland, and Menlo Park/Tower Section neighborhoods. A seventh station, the Public Safety Building, is partially occupied by the police department, and the Township is leasing the fire truck bays to Hackensack Meridian JFK University Medical Center for ambulance dispatch. Once the hospital moves to a new facility, this will open up more space for both the police and fire departments.

Emergency Care and Ambulance Services

JFK University Medical Center provides emergency medical services to Edison. The non-profit, 498-bed community hospital serves Middlesex, Union and Somerset Counties and has more than 900 affiliated physicians. JFK Medical Center offers a complete array of advanced services, including general and specialized surgery, cardiac care, maternity and pediatric care, and emergency medicine.

Supplementing response by the Edison Fire Department, the Raritan Valley Regional EMS is a non-profit organization that provides free, volunteer emergency medical services. Founded in 1935, this service is funded through donations and proceeds from renting out its facilities for events. Raritan Valley Regional EMS has three locations within Edison:

- Edison First Aid Squad No. 1, 33 Lake View Boulevard
- Edison First Aid Squad No. 2, 848 New Dover Road
- Clara Barton First Aid Squad, 1079 Amboy Avenue

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Minnie B. Veal Community Center

The Minnie B. Veal Community Center is Edison's only all-purpose community center. Adult classes (available free to senior citizens) include aerobics, yoga, meditation, and membership in various recreational clubs. Teen and children's classes include arts and crafts, sewing, flag football, track and field, soccer, chemistry, STEM classes, and SAT Prep, as well as membership in clubs.

The Edison Recreation Department offers a number of public events which may take place in the community center or in public parks, and also offers before- and after-school childcare programs for working parents, operating out of the public elementary and middle schools.

Former Stelton School/Community Center

The former Stelton School building on Plainfield Avenue was previously used as a community center, but has been closed since 2018 due to issues with the condition of the building. The site is on the ROSI, and therefore must be used for a qualified community use.

Senior Center

Edison's Department of Senior Citizen Services provides a variety of programming for seniors including social and recreational events, a nutrition program, tax preparation assistance, support groups, self-defense courses, transportation, and health insurance counseling. Individuals aged 65 and over (in some instances 55 and older) can find senior services at the Edison Senior Center in Yelencsics Park on Woodbridge Avenue. In 2022, the senior center was closed for renovations and reopened in 2023.

Edison YMCA

The Edison YMCA, in partnership with the Jewish Community Center of Middlesex County, opened its facility on Oak Tree Road in 2002. Facilities include an indoor swimming pool, health and fitness center, gym with basketball courts, classrooms, and playground. The



Minnie B. Veal Community Center



Former Stelton School



Edison JCC & YMCA

Y offers programming for youth and adults including swimming lessons, fitness classes, and childcare. The YMCA is a non-profit organization and requires membership for use of the facility and programming. Membership with the Edison branch also provides access to the Metuchen, South Amboy, and Piscataway YMCA locations.

LIBRARIES

Edison Library was founded in 1927 and has three locations. The main branch building on Plainfield Avenue was constructed in 1969, and expanded in 1975 and 1987. This location is being renovated, but with no expansion to the 18,000-square-foot building footprint.

The Clara Barton branch was constructed in 1969 to replace former locations within a firehouse and a local church. It was expanded in 2003.

North Edison Branch opened in 1971 and was expanded most recently in 1992. It is currently undergoing a 10,000-square-foot expansion funded by the State and the Library Board, which will bring its total size to approximately 28,000 square feet.

A Bookmobile was added in 1973, decommissioned in 2017, but was recently reinstated.

Edison Library provides the community with a collection of over 300,000 items in addition to computers, printers, and internet access. The library is part of the M.U.R.A.L. (Middlesex Union Reciprocal Agreement Libraries) which allows patrons to borrow from partnering libraries in the counties. All library branches offer educational programming, and each branch has a meeting room that can be reserved for use by community organizations for a suggested donation. These branches serve as community focal points and important aspects of neighborhood identity.

In 2021, the Edison Library adopted a strategic plan that addresses internal operations, embracing cultural differences in its collections and programs, and facilities review.



Edison Public Library - North Edison Branch

SCHOOLS

Primary Education

Edison's public school system has two high schools, four middle schools, 11 primary schools, and two pre-K facilities, operated and maintained through 19 facilities.

Total enrollment in the school district for the 2021-22 school year was 16,102 students, representing growth of 1,800 students, or about 13%, in the past 10 years (see Table 11). However, since 2019, enrollment has decreased by 427 students, primarily at the elementary level, where enrollment has fallen by 7% (491 students) since its 2017 peak, as well as at the middle school level, where enrollment is down by 3% (124 students) from its 2019 peak. High school enrollment has continued to increase, as a peak "bubble" is currently moving through the 10th and 11th grades. Public Pre-K enrollment has declined by 37% since it peaked at 103 students in 2018. This may or may not have an impact on public school enrollment, as many private pre-K options are available in Edison and surrounding communities.

In 2018, Sundance Associates prepared a demographic report to project enrollments for all of Edison's public schools.¹ Growth was observed at about 190 additional students per year from 2000-2007 and 370 additional

¹ <https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1602531810/edisonk12njus/rxgmv962a5jfmmdmkgzn/DemographicStudy2018.pdf>

students per year from 2013-2018, but was then projected to moderate to 102 additional students per year from 2018-2023. An extended projection predicts a decline of about 100 students per year for 2023-2028. The demographic study's predicted pattern of an increase in enrollments followed by a decline is holding true, albeit at even lower-than-expected enrollment numbers. As shown in Chart 2, the actual 2021-22 cohort was about 700 students below the predicted total enrollment number. It is not clear the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic was a factor in this more pronounced decrease.

Despite these lower-than-expected numbers and the expected decline in enrollments, Edison's public school system has experienced overcrowding for some years. The 2018 demographic study found that school enrollment was above the State's capacity standards and the district's Functional Efficiency Standard. According to the School District, high school classes are especially large, with over 1,100 students per grade. Generally, elementary schools are less crowded, but the situation varies by school. Overcrowding is most prominent in North Edison, but is also experienced by some schools elsewhere in the Township.

The Edison School District has prepared a \$96 million, five-year capital improvement plan that began implementation in the fall of 2022, to address overcrowding throughout the school system. Projects will include additional classroom space, new or improved gyms, auditoriums, and other amenities.

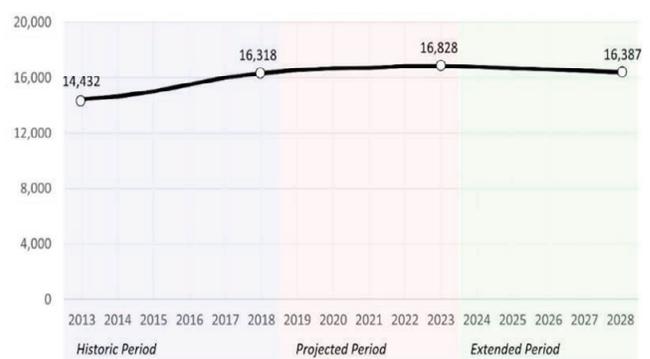
In addition to Edison's public school district, there are a number of parochial and private schools. St. Francis Cathedral School (pre-K through grade 8) and St. Joseph High School, both in Metuchen, also serve Edison residents.

Table 11: Edison Public Schools and Enrollment

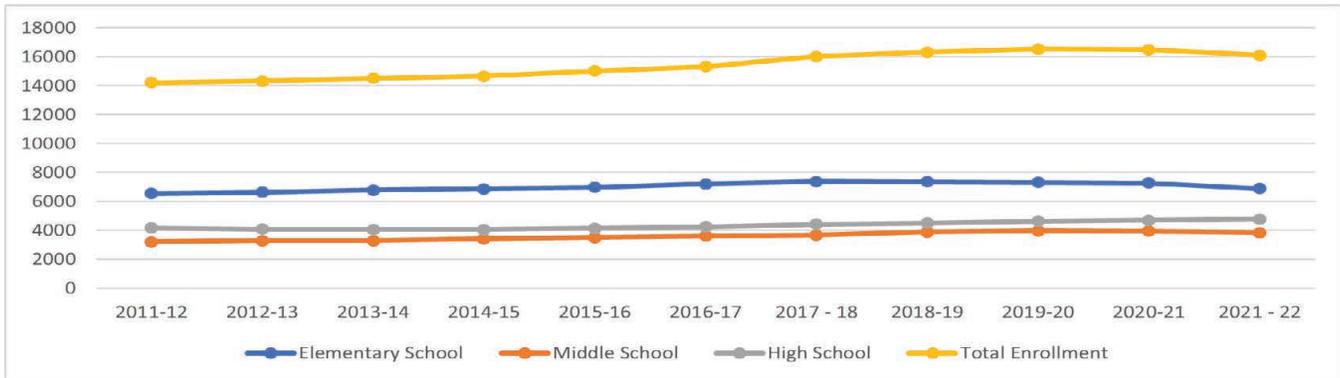
Public Schools	Total Enrollment 2021-2022
High Schools	
Thomas Edison High School	2,221
John P. Stevens High School	2,643
Middle Schools	
John Adams Middle School	978
Herbert Hoover Middle School	909
Thomas Jefferson Middle School	867
Woodrow Wilson Middle School	1161
Primary Schools	
Benjamin Franklin School	602
James Madison Intermediate School (3-5)	585
James Madison Primary School (K-2)	455
James Monroe School	521
John Marshall School	736
Lincoln School	900
Lindeneau School	444
Martin Luther King School	618
Menlo Park School	796
Washington School	589
Woodbrook School	902
Pre-K	
Edison Early Learning Center	53
Franklin D Roosevelt School	124

Source: New Jersey Department of Education

Figure 44: Edison Public Schools and Enrollment



Source: "Demographic Study Public School Enrollments for Edison Township Schools," Prepared by Sundance Associates, 2018, revised 2019.

Figure 45: Edison Public Schools Total Enrollments (2011 to 2021)

Source: New Jersey Department of Education

HIGHER EDUCATION

Middlesex College

Middlesex College, located on 188 acres on Woodbridge Avenue, is a public community college under the provision of Middlesex County. For the 2020-2021 school-year, there were 10,085 students enrolled: 44% part-time and 56% full-time. The college offers over 85 degree and certificate programs, continuing education, workforce training, and in-person and online courses. Many students take their first two years of college education at Middlesex College and then transfer to public universities to complete their degrees. The college does not provide student housing, and 11% of students live in Edison. In November 2022, the County announced a Community, Innovation and Opportunity Strategic Investment Plan (CIO) to transform Middlesex College into a regional destination and provide for multipurpose community uses including a magnet school and cricket pitch.

Rutgers Livingston Campus

Rutgers Livingston Campus is located primarily in Piscataway, but a portion of the campus is within Edison, including the areas west of Cedar Lane and Rd. 2 in the Camp Kilmer area. Facilities on the Edison portion are the grounds maintenance shop, facilities trade shop, crew practice facility, material services storage, and parking

Table 12: Edison Township Parochial and Private

Parochial Schools
Rabbi Jacob Joseph High School
St. Thomas Aquinas High School
Pesach Raymon Yeshiva Elementary & Middle School
St. Matthew Elementary & Middle School
Saint Helena Elementary & Middle School
Private Schools
Wardlaw-Hartridge High School
Lakeview School/Cerebral Palsy Association Elem./ Middle School
Private Pre-K and Early Education (through grade 2)
Helping Hand Nursery School
You & Me School
Lil Big Ones
Apple Montessori School
New Friends Childcare & Preschool
Peppermint Tree Child Care
Plaza Child Care
Keith Wold Johnson Child Ctr
John Kenney Child Care Ctr
Little Treasures Learning Center
Little Flower Montessori School
Higher Education and Technical Schools
Rutgers University – Livingston Campus
Middlesex College
Rabbi Jacob Joseph School
PC Age Computer Training School – Edison
Lincoln Technical Institute – Edison

lots. The Livingston Campus is the home of the Rutgers Business School and also includes student housing, student center, sports arena and the Rutgers Ecological preserve (discussed in the Open Space chapter). Rutgers also owns a record retention facility at 7 Kilmer Road and leases 100 Metroplex Plaza for Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care Outpatient Services.

ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park

Currently the Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park is a two-room museum about the inventions of Edison's Menlo Park laboratory. The surrounding Edison State Park also contains the 1938 Edison Memorial Tower, nature trails, and informative kiosks. The Center regularly hosts student groups and community events and is visited annually by people from all over the country and the world. There is great potential for the improvement of this site and the surrounding park, both for local educational programming and heritage tourism.



Thomas Edison Center

Stephen J. Capestro Theater

This outdoor amphitheater is located in Roosevelt Park. Middlesex County presents a plays-in-the-park series with three musicals each summer.



Mural sponsored by Edison Arts Society

Edison Arts Society

Founded in 1998, the Edison Arts Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to local arts and education. Initiatives include a gallery at the Township Municipal Complex exhibiting the work of local artists and a new gazebo in Papianni Park, where the society hosts poetry readings and outdoor concerts. In 2021, the society commissioned local artists to produce five murals throughout Edison and hosted a program on Amboy Avenue with four custom-painted upright pianos outside of commercial spaces. While the society does

not currently have its own facility, it has partnered with Edison's Schools, Middlesex College, and the Jewish Community Center to host exhibitions and programming.

Historic Edison Valley Playhouse

Historic Edison Valley Playhouse was founded in 1964 and has worked with volunteers and theater enthusiasts over the years to produce plays, musicals, and performing arts events. The playhouse building was built in 1895 and is located at 2196 Oak Tree Road near the intersection of Woodland Avenue.



Historic Edison Valley Playhouse
Source: EVPlayhouse.com

Middlesex College Performing Arts Center Studio Theater

The College's theater has student performing arts productions open to the public. Additional arts and cultural programming and support for the community is provided through the Arts Institute of Middlesex County.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Community Partners

Metuchen-Edison Historical Society

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society is a non-profit organization that aims to promote interest in and appreciation for the history of the Borough and Township. The Society collects and preserves an archive of local historical resources and makes them available to the public. In addition, the Society produces a regular newsletter, website, and YouTube channel; conducts local history research projects; and hosts historical events and walking tours.

Edison Historic Preservation Commission

In 1999, Edison established a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in accordance with the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law. The Township updated its Land Development Ordinance to outline the purpose and obligations of the HPC, procedures for designating landmarks, certificates of appropriateness, review standards and regulations, and violations. In addition to promoting the identification and preservation of important historic resources, the HPC also seeks to



Middlesex College Performing Arts Center
Source: Middlesex College

educate the public about the importance of historic buildings, places, and other resources and about how property owners can maintain their properties in a culturally sensitive way.

Locally Recognized Historic Sites

In the 2003 Master Plan, 56 significant sites were recommended for historic landmark designation. These would need to be officially designated by the Township Council and regulated by ordinance. The first two sites identified by the HPC as locally recognized historic landmarks, both in 2001, were Stelton Baptist Church and St. James Episcopal Church identified shortly after.

Stelton Baptist Church, founded in 1689, is the second oldest Baptist congregation in New Jersey. A church was first constructed on this site in 1748. It was rebuilt in 1825, and following a fire, was rebuilt again in 1851. Another fire in 1924 resulted in the reconstruction of the church in its present form.

Located in the Piscatawaytown/Lindeneau neighborhood of Edison, St. James Episcopal Church is the second-oldest church in Edison. The original church was constructed following the granting of a charter by the Queen of England in 1704 and formation of a parish in 1724. During the Revolutionary War, from 1776-77, the church was used as a British barracks. The original church was destroyed by a tornado in 1835 and was rebuilt in 1836-37 using pieces of the original structure and fixtures in the form that stands today.

National and State Register Listed Sites

Figure 4.6 identifies designated and eligible historic sites and districts in Edison. Sites listed on the State and National registers receive a variety of benefits. Listing on the State Register gives property owners access to matching grants and low-interest loans from the New Jersey Historic Trust for rehabilitation, while listing on the National Register provides access to 20% federal income tax credits for eligible substantial rehabilitations. Both the New Jersey Register law and the National Historic Preservation Act provide for review when an action by a public agency (municipal, county, state or federal agency respectively) could cause damage to the listed or eligible resource.

In Edison, five individual landmarks and one historic district are listed on both the National and State Registers (see table below).

Roosevelt Hospital

The former Roosevelt Hospital Building is located east of Roosevelt Park. This Colonial Revival-style building was constructed in 1935 and began admitting patients in 1937. It was originally for the treatment of tuberculosis patients, which resulted in the preservation of open spaces around it to provide fresh air and quarantine the population. For many years, the Roosevelt Care Center, a long-term care facility, operated at the site. The facility was renovated in 2018 and opened as an affordable senior-living apartment building known as The Residence at Roosevelt Park.

Table 13: New Jersey State and National Register Listed Individual Landmarks and Historic Districts

Listed - Individual Landmark		National Register Date	State Register Date
Roosevelt Hospital	1 Roosevelt Drive	3/5/2002	1/9/2002
Laing House of Plainfield Plantation	1707 Woodland Avenue	10/27/1988	3/23/1988
Homestead Farm at Oak Ridge	Oak Ridge Golf Club	10/25/1995	9/8/1995
Thomas A. Edison Memorial Tower	Christie Street	11/30/1979	10/9/1979
Benjamin Shotwell House	26 Runyon's Lane	6/4/1987	4/28/1987
Listed – Historic District		National Register Date	State Register Date
Short Hills Battlefield Historic District		5/9/2014	2/12/2014

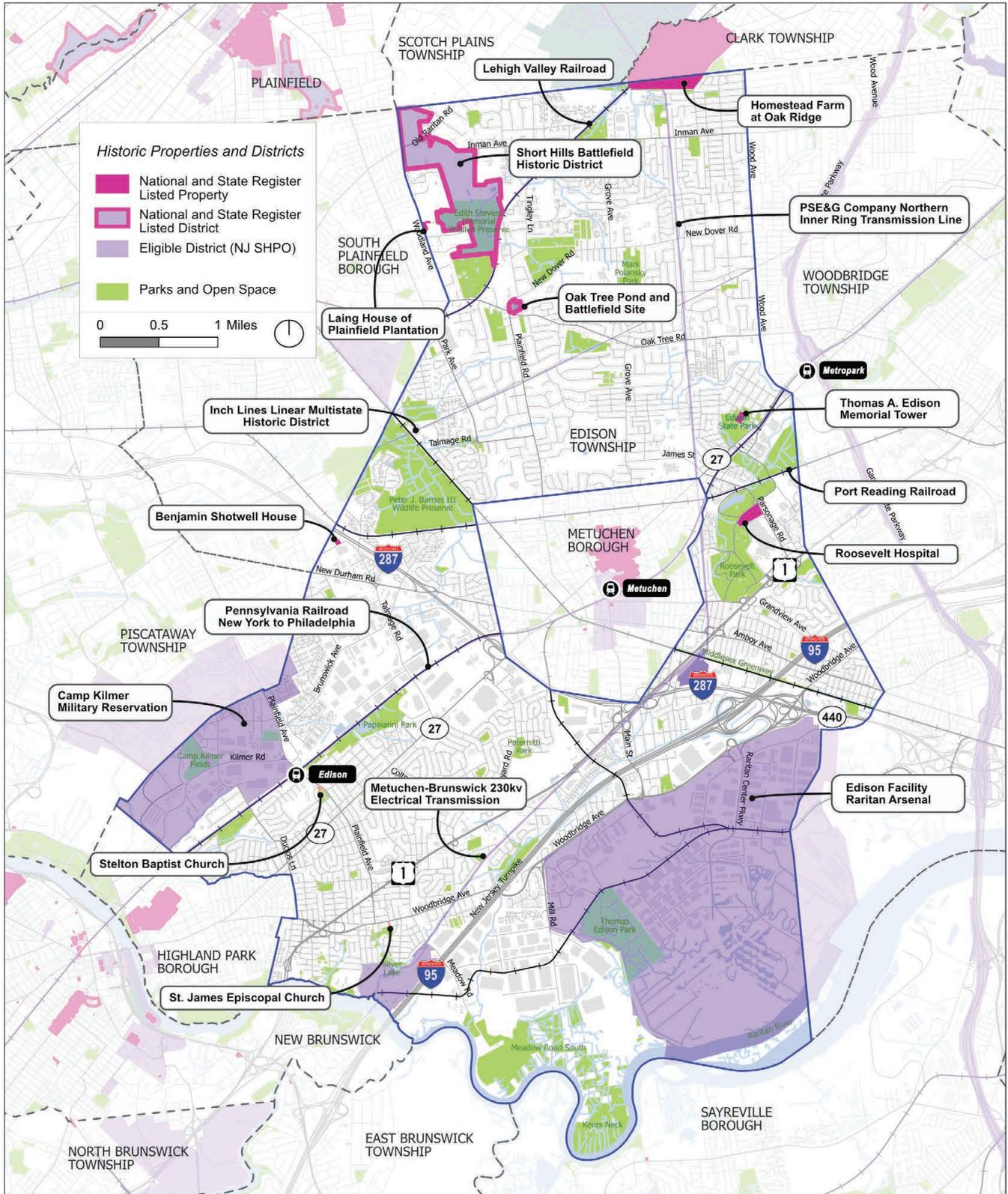


Figure 46: Historic Sites and Districts

Source: NJDEP, NJDOT, NJGIS, BFI Planning

Laing House of Plainfield Plantation

The Laing House is on the site of the Plainfield Plantation of the Laing Family, founded in 1689. The house is significant for its association with the early settlement of the area by Scottish Quakers.

Homestead Farm at Oak Ridge

The Homestead is located within Union County's Oak Ridge Park. The oldest section of the building was constructed around 1730. It is significant for its affiliation with the Revolutionary War.

Thomas A. Edison Memorial Tower

Located in Edison State Park, the Memorial Tower was built in 1938 in the Art Deco-style to commemorate Thomas Edison and his Menlo Park laboratory that was located there. Considered the first research and development facility in the world, Menlo Park accommodated more than 200 professionals from 1876-1884. Edison received more than 400 patents for inventions and discoveries.

Benjamin Shotwell House

The Shotwell House was built before 1775 and was later occupied by the Runyon family until 1946. The family name has been remembered on several streets in the Stelton neighborhood.

Short Hills Battlefield Historic District

The only designated historic district in the Township, the Short Hills Battlefield site covers a large area in northwest Edison encompassing portions of the Plainfield Country Club, Edith Stevens Memorial Wildlife Preserve, Woodland Park, and Oak Tree Pond Park. The Battle of Short Hills took place during the Revolutionary War on June 26, 1777.



Homestead Farm at Oak Ridge



Thomas A. Edison Memorial Tower



Memorial at Oak Tree Pond Historic Park

National and State Eligible Individual Landmarks

As shown in Table 14, there are nine eligible historic districts in Edison reviewed by the NJ State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). In addition, there are four sites that have been determined eligible for State and National Landmark designation (see table below). However, only St. James Episcopal Church has a Certificate of Eligibility (COE), dating from 1990. In March 2024, the SHPO determined the Piscatawaytown Burial Ground, which is next to St. James Episcopal Church, to be eligible for New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Preservation, and recommended further background research and archaeological investigation. A third site, the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home, was demolished

despite survey findings of its significance for design, materials, and workmanship. The fourth site in this category, the Public Service Electric & Gas Metuchen Sub-Station, is not recommended for an intensive survey

Additional eligible sites may be found within eligible historic districts. There are 233 sites included in surveys in the NJDEP data table. Some of these have been evaluated for significance.

Edison's 2011 Reexamination report added a goal to nominate qualifying properties to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Recommendations from both the 2003 and 2011 documents regarding historic preservation are still applicable today.

Table 14: Eligible Historic Districts of New Jersey, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

New Jersey State Eligible Historic Districts	SHPO
Union County Park System Historic District	3/18/2005
Edison Facility, Raritan Arsenal	7/15/1992
Camp Kilmer Military Reservation Historic District	9/22/1988
Inch Lines Linear Multistate Historic District	8/31/1993
Lehigh Valley Railroad Historic District	3/15/2002
Public Service Electric and Gas (PSE&G) Company Northern Inner Ring Transmission Line	12/31/2013
Metuchen to Burlington Transmission Line	6/10/2019
Port Reading Railroad Historic District	3/15/2002

Table 15: State and National Eligible Individual Landmarks

Eligible - Individual Landmark		SHPO Date	COE Date
St. James Episcopal Church	2136 Woodbridge Avenue		1/17/1990
Piscatawaytown Burial Ground	2136 Woodbridge Avenue	3/8/2024	
Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home (demolished)	132 Evergreen Road	7/20/1994	
Public Service Electric & Gas Metuchen Sub-Station	234 Pierson Avenue [Block 795]	5/3/2012	

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

ADDRESS SHORT-TERM SPACE NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Edison's DPW and the Police and Fire Departments have the most pressing facilities and equipment needs to fulfill their duties, which will require substantial capital investment.

The DPW has three garages: one for parks on Nevsky Street, one for roads on New Durham Road, and one for sanitation off Truman Road. These facilities have faced challenges in the past, including flooding of the Nevsky Street garage during Hurricane Ida, and a fire that burned down the Dorm Avenue garage, that have required mitigation measures, redesign, and rebuilding. To prevent destructive incidents in the future, the Township should proactively plan for necessary upgrades and retrofits.

Edison should also continue to identify additional space to meet DPW's needs for storage, parking, and recycling. The former municipal recycling facility on Meadow Road was recently closed. The Township is dedicating a new recycling area at the New Durham Road DPW property. In addition, acquiring more garbage trucks would allow for a more consistent trash pick-up program.

The Township should expand the Police Department mechanic's garage. Currently it has only one mechanic's bay; two additional bays are needed to be able to efficiently service the fleet of 120 police vehicles. In

addition, the Police Department has recommended a new municipal impound lot and acquisition of a tow truck. The previous impound yard, at the DPW garage on New Durham Road, could not accommodate larger vehicles and trucks, forcing the Township to outsource towing of these vehicles to neighboring municipalities or private companies and resulting in the loss of fees that could have been collected. The Township is pursuing creation of a new, permanent impound yard at the former recycling site on Meadow Road, allowing for expanded vehicle storage capacity.

Edison's Fire Department should upgrade firehouses through expansion or reconstruction to meet the needs and dimensional requirements of modern firefighting equipment. There have been no major upgrades to the firehouses in over 15 years, with the last station renovations happening around 2004. For firehouses built in the 1930s and 1960s, there are issues such as the size of bays, which cannot accommodate modern fire engines, restricting the Township's capacity to acquire the appropriate equipment to address emergencies. There is also a need for additional apparatus bays and office space that may justify the reconstruction or expansion of some of Edison's fire stations.

Currently, three firehouses have dedicated space for use by volunteers, but with this component declining, these spaces could be reconfigured to accommodate pressing needs, such as dedicated spaces for washing hazardous chemicals off of firefighters' protective gear.

PLAN COMPREHENSIVELY FOR IMPROVED COMMUNITY-ORIENTED FACILITIES TO SERVE ALL EDISON RESIDENTS

Develop a Community Facilities Plan Element

Given the scope of facilities and identified needs, the Township should develop a Community Facilities Plan Element of the Master Plan, which would involve additional public outreach and studies to help Edison prioritize and dedicate funding and space to projects. The Community Facilities Plan Element should address the following issues and opportunities:

Dedicate a new Community Center to meet the needs of residents in South and West Edison

Edison should seriously consider dedicating a second community center in south Edison. Currently, the Minnie B. Veal Community Center in North Edison is the only active, all-purpose community center, while the YMCA – also located in North Edison – requires membership fees. There is community desire for a second community center that is more accessible to residents in the south and west side of town.

During the public outreach for this plan, residents expressed their desire for multiple community centers in the town that people could walk or ride their bike to. They identified some potential locations for the Township to consider: the Raritan Center; Top Golf area; Wood Avenue between Route 27 and Oak Tree Road; a vacant municipally owned building in Camp Kilmer; Nixon neighborhood; and the Menlo Park Mall.

Desired programming and amenities suggested by residents include: performing arts; swimming pool; indoor skating; rock climbing; indoor running track; indoor sports facilities; meeting spaces; and after school care. Some residents expressed a need for smaller community centers in various neighborhoods so that people can walk or bike to them rather than having one main center.



Former Stelton School building

Improve facilities and programming at the Minnie B. Veal Community Center and the Edison Senior Center.

In the Community Facilities Plan Element, Edison should study the feasibility of expansion and upgrades to the Minnie B. Veal Community Center. Residents feel that it is underutilized and the building is too small. Others observed that the playing fields there are in bad shape and could be improved.

The Township should also continue to evaluate ways that the Senior Center could be improved to meet the needs of the senior community. Some residents noted that the building is an unattractive space where they would want to spend their time. While renovations to the building in 2022 may have addressed some of the aesthetic issues, residents also expressed that they would like to see improved programming and communications. Some services that seniors would like to see are organized field trips, professional geriatric services, Medicare counseling, and stronger social services. According to public engagement participants, the Senior Center does not advertise activities well, its website is outdated, the newsletter is not published regularly, and there is an over reliance on social media which many seniors do not use.

Invest in the expansion of Library facilities and programming support the Library's Strategic Plan

Current library facilities in Edison are not sufficient to serve a community of the Township's size. Expansion of the North Edison branch is underway, while other branches are streamlining operations to address shifting needs of the population. Edison should support the libraries efforts to improve and implement their strategic plan and potentially go beyond the plan.

Public outreach participants expressed consistent concerns that the expansion of the North Edison Branch is not sufficient. The Library is seeking a replacement vehicle to reinstate the bookmobile program. However, the bookmobile can only provide book exchange, not the space needs that a library can accommodate (places to sit, meeting rooms, after school programming, etc.).

Edison's residents envision their libraries as being larger and equally accessible to all parts of town. Libraries should be walking distance from schools and residential neighborhoods. The Township would like to increase programming and uses of the libraries to keep up to date with community need and the changing ways people access information, media, and entertainment.

Assess potential use of municipally owned sites

Publicly owned land and buildings should be considered to fulfill the departmental and community needs described above. The Township should also consider acquiring property where appropriate, including through engagement with the federal and state governments regarding any property that may come up for sale in the future. Two key properties that the Township should address in the near-term are the Stelton School and the Truman Building.

The former Stelton School building, on Plainfield Avenue in south Edison, was previously used as a community center, but has been vacant since 2018 due to the deteriorated condition of the building. The Township is looking to contract an expert to make a formal

assessment of the building. Potentially, the building façade could be retained while the roof could be replaced and asbestos covered.

The Stelton School site is on the ROSI, and thus must be used for a qualified community use, such as recreation, education, or another cultural activity. The use could be determined through the Community Facilities planning process discussed above, with some suggestions including a community center, a library expansion, or a local museum. The site is strategically located near other community facilities including the library, schools, churches, and Stelton Park, offering some potential for shared parking and access. Any future use of the school site would need to be carefully analyzed to avoid contributing to existing traffic problems in the area.

The Truman Building site in the Kilmer area may have potential for use by DPW or Edison Police Department to fulfill their pressing needs discussed above.

EMBRACE COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT RECREATIONAL, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Support the Thomas Edison Center's efforts to fund a new museum and educational facility.

In 2022, The Township received a \$1.5 million grant from the State to go toward youth sports, history and culture. Of this award, \$250,000 is dedicated to the planned new Thomas Edison Center museum. The larger facility will include an auditorium that can be used for speaking engagements, school field trips, and potentially even community events. Additional funding is needed, and the Center is seeking opportunities.

Collaborate with Middlesex College on its future planning initiatives.

In November 2022, Middlesex County announced a Community, Innovation and Opportunity Strategic Investment Plan (CIO) to transform Middlesex College into a regional destination and provide for multipurpose community spaces including a magnet school and cricket pitch. This significant plan may provide opportunities for some of the multipurpose community spaces Edison residents desire. For example, residents have expressed the need for a performing arts center, community center, and recreational facilities.

While this project was announced, there is not a formal plan with specific details on a proposed program of uses and an anticipated timeframe. According to the project announcement, the CIO Strategic Investment Plan includes the development of the following amenities:²

- Open-air multipurpose community venue for concerts, cultural events, and multiple sports such as baseball, soccer, or lacrosse.
- Workforce development and conference center.
- Community park featuring an educational children’s amenity.
- Student Center, including both campus and community amenities.
- Middlesex County Magnet School.
- Destination athletic complex including 14 multi-sport synthetic fields, 16 tennis courts, and a recreational cricket field.
- Enhanced exterior spaces including public art, seating, pedestrian walkways, and water features.
- Renovations to seven existing campus buildings.
- Housing in six new buildings.

The proposed Middlesex County project also has the potential to generate negative impacts for Edison, primarily traffic, as expressed by participants in the Master Plan process. The Township will need to coordinate closely with the College and the County to ensure that its residents are accruing the benefits while

not being overly burdened by new development. Many questions remain that will need to be addressed on behalf of the Township.

Work with the Board of Education on development and implementation of a School Facilities Master Plan Element

The Township should work with the Edison School District to create a School Facilities Master Plan Element. This would include a public outreach process and in-depth study of the school district’s needs and priorities.

Despite a recent decline in enrollments, and the district’s capital improvement plans, overcrowding in Edison’s public schools remains a major issue. Many residents experienced first-hand the strain to the system caused by extensive growth in the past decade, and have yet to see the impact of expanded facilities or lower enrollment. These residents consistently expressed that alleviation of overcrowding in upper grades is a high priority, and many feel at least two more new schools are required. In addition, residents have concerns with the condition of existing schools and the equitable distribution of resources across the district. Residents would like to see amenities such as swimming pools, and support greater collaboration with Rutgers University.

Input from the school district was gathered during this planning process, and administrators are confident that the planned capital improvements – which include significant increases in classrooms at both high schools – will address the overcrowding issues. However, it is critical that the Township and School Board closely collaborate on development trends to address future enrollment needs. This Master Plan recommends consideration for additional development around the Edison train station and revitalization of key corridors such as Plainfield Avenue and Oak Tree Road, which could include new housing. In addition, the Township must continue to address its affordable housing requirements as mandated by the State. The school district and the Township should discuss opportunities for new facilities that could accommodate future population growth, such

² <https://www.middlesexcollege.edu/2022/11/middlesex-college-campus-to-be-transformed-under-a-new-education-and-infrastructure-plan/>

as land the district currently owns near Thomas Edison Middle School and vacant or underutilized light industrial properties that may become available.

Transportation issues involving the schools also came out in the public engagement process, including issue with ingress and egress at school parking lots, lack of sidewalks, and rules about school bus service. These are addressed further in the Transportation chapter of this plan.

Improve Public Information Communication

Some residents expressed dissatisfaction with Edison's communications, and there is room for improvement through the use of various communications tools via multiple platforms, some of which the Township is already using in some way.

The Township could expand its use of Nixle or another platform beyond just emergencies, to send out automated calls, texts, and emails to share information about town events, changes in trash collection, and traffic alerts. Residents are also interested in receiving a weekly newsletter and e-blasts with upcoming events and activities and other information. The Facebook and NextDoor social media platforms are used by many residents and could be leveraged by the Township to reach a wider audience.

Development of a mobile app for Township information could be a way to easily organize information and share it with a wide audience at their leisure. However, this should be coordinated with website updates and improvements to ensure that there are not conflicting sources of information. Residents would like Edison to better maintain its website to keep it up to date. In addition, a 311 line could be a convenient way for residents to share complaints with the Township. Residents can call 311 and report incidents such as building code violations, noise complaints, illegal parking, or roadway or sidewalk maintenance issues.

To Increase transparency and accountability, Edison could consider requiring its departments, boards, commissions, and committees to create publicly

accessible annual reports. For example, the ZBA is required to issue an annual report on variance requests, which can inform necessary changes in the zoning code.

PROTECT EDISON'S VALUABLE HISTORIC ASSETS AS IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF ITS IDENTITY.

Staff and support the Historic Preservation Commission.

The HPC has been dormant for the past 10 years; however, efforts in 2022 to revitalize the commission include the addition of four new members, bringing the total up to five. The Township should ensure that the HPC is properly staffed, in accordance with the Township ordinance requirement of seven members and two alternates, appointed by the Mayor. In addition, the code requires that a vacancy be filled within 60 days.

An executive board was established and the HPC is developing its short- and long-term goals and objectives, including reevaluating the list of locally important historic resources, reviewing the zoning ordinance, and recommending adjustments with the goal of formally designating local historic sites.

The priority issues for the HPC are:

- Updating potential historic sites list to reflect current opportunities for designation.
- Ensuring that new developments are consistent with the character of existing neighborhoods.
- Advocating for revitalization, restoration or maintenance, and reuse of historic buildings, places, objects, sites and structures instead of demolition or deterioration.
- Reviewing the zoning ordinance and recommending adjustments to maintain and develop appropriate and harmonious settings for historic architecturally significant structures, buildings, places, objects or sites within the Township.

Additionally, the HPC supports the creation of zoning design guidelines that would enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity, continuity, and visual interest of the Township. Guidelines would include recommendations that would prevent alteration or new construction not in keeping with the historic or cultural character with certain neighborhoods.

Update the Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan.

An initial key step in the HPC's initiatives is the update of the 2003 Historic Preservation Element to incorporate recommended sites, any actions that were taken on those sites, and identification of additional sites that should be considered. Some specific preservation opportunities identified by the HPC and other stakeholders include:

- Document the historical significance of the Raritan River, at places such as Martin's Dock, Player Avenue/Raritan River Boat Club, Salt Meadows, Raritan Arsenal.
- Continue Edison Tower preservation efforts, and support the expansion of the Thomas Edison Center at Menlo Park. Consider creation of a historic district for the Menlo Park neighborhood in Edison State Park.
- Former Edison Mines (Cedar Street at Coppermine Brook)
- Camp Kilmer
- Raritan Arsenal, remaining buildings at U.S. EPA on Woodbridge Avenue, Middlesex College Officers Row, and related buildings.
- Firehouses, the police department, and school buildings
- Police Department
- Preservation of Petti Farm, the last farm in Edison
- Nixon Nitration Works site
- Potters Crossing
- Neighborhoods with buildings over 50 years, such as Piscatawaytown, Clara Barton, Bonhamtown, Oak Hills and Stelton.

- Peney House, 205 Tyler Road
- Dismal Swamp Native American Site, Talmadge Road
- Mundy House, Pumptown, 4001 Park Avenue
- Metuchen Country Club
- Old Hickory Farm house, Inman Avenue
- Thoms House, New Dover Road
- Ferrante House, Woodland Avenue.
- Silver Lake
- The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route. A National Historic Trail runs along Old Raritan Road in Edison. It is marked in Scotch Plains and on Maple Avenue in South Plainfield, but not in Edison.
- Placing signs that mark the route of Thomas Edison's first electric railroad route from Menlo Park to the Metuchen Country Club.
- Placing signs that mark the route of the Camp Kilmer Army Railroad from WWII.

This Master Plan incorporates by reference the existing Historic Preservation Element. Unless and until a new Element is adopted, the existing Historic Preservation Element, together with the recommendations of this Master Plan, shall provide the statutory basis for Edison's historic preservation ordinance, as consistent with the MLUL.

Pursue designation as a Certified Local Government through New Jersey's State Historic Preservation Office to be eligible for grants and other opportunities.

Annually, NJ SHPO offers competitive Historic Preservation Grants, funded through annual allocations from the National Park Service. Grants can be used for a variety of preservation activities such as architectural and archeological surveys, preparation of national register nominations, preparation of the Historic Preservation Element for the Master Plan, Historic structure reports, construction documents, disaster planning for historic properties and districts, and more.

In addition to the benefit of qualifying for grants, Certified Local Governments receive the benefit of having a closer working relationship with the SHPO and help identifying properties which are eligible for federal tax incentives and development grants.

Edison can improve on its eligibility to apply to become a Certified Local Government. Necessary steps include revising the local Historic Preservation Ordinance, fully staffing the HPC, and creating a system to maintain an inventory of local historic resources to fully qualify. The SHPO can help Edison come up with a strategy to maintain its inventory. A Township-wide historic preservation plan will help streamline and focus this process.

Designate more sites and districts at the State and National levels and formally designate sites on the local register.

The Edison HPC could work with SHPO to identify potentially eligible sites to State and National Register nomination. Grant funding should be sought to fund the research and nomination writing for identified sites and districts, and the HPC may also consider working with local partners such as the Edison-Metuchen Historical Society or Rutgers University to help with the production and research components of nominations.

To officially designate local landmarks, the HPC, Township Council, Planning Board, property owner, and public must be involved. Once the procedure outlined in the code has been followed and the Township Council votes to designate a local landmark, records of the landmark must be incorporated into the Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and township tax assessor's records. The local registry should be publicly accessible.

Consider revising the Historic Preservation Ordinance for clarity and to comply with Certified Local Government guidelines.

- Add historic district criteria for designation, add historic district guidelines, and add a definition of "historic district". Add power to Historic Preservation Commission duties (recommending designations and reviewing applications).
- Currently, there is a mention of "historic preservation overlay zone" in the definition of "permit" in the zoning section, but no definition of what that is, text of designation of such a zone, or procedure for drawing one.
- Clarify the difference between a landmark and an historic structure and the regulations each are subject to. Currently, as written, regulations apply to historic structures. The definition of "historic structure" is not provided.
- The Commission members should be required to have professional qualifications in line with standards defined by the National Park Service or the NJ SHPO.
- Clarify procedure for application review related to alterations or new construction affecting designated landmarks and historic districts. Provisions for the Commission to make binding decisions or to recommend denial or approval to a body which has the final decision-making authority.
- Emergency repairs section should be revised to require an accelerated review by the Commission, rather than no review at all. The section should define emergency review and outline procedures.
- Currently, the code says failure of the commission to report within 45 days will be interpreted as a recommendation for a permit. If the Commission is not fully staffed, they should not be held to this deadline, and permits should not be granted.
- The procedure for demolition applications for an historic structure should be clarified and strengthened. Currently, the HPC can recommend

postponement, and the Zoning Officer may require it, but postponement for review is not in and of itself required.

Develop zoning guidelines to balance preservation and revitalization, including consideration for historic design guidelines.

Edison should utilize the New Jersey State Rehabilitation Subcode N.J.A.C. 5:23-6, which defines and establishes provisions specifically for the rehabilitation of historic buildings, for Planning and Zoning Board considerations. Among other criteria, historic buildings are those that are listed on the State or National Register, either individually or as part of a designated district, or eligible for listing. The Subcode identifies building elements that may meet relaxed code requirements in order to preserve the historic value and integrity of a historic building, such as using original or replica building materials and construction methods that may not otherwise meet the provisions of the Subcode.

The Township should also explore adoption of design criteria and guidelines for development at historic sites and districts. Edison could create overlay districts with use and bulk requirements to preserve the historic character of districts with concentrations of historic resources. Neighborhoods with buildings over 50 years of age should be considered for historic district designation, including sections of Piscatawaytown, Clara Barton and Bonhamtown; an area located between Gaskill Avenue, Knapp Avenue, Suttons Lane and Route 27; and the residential areas near Edison Train Station. In addition, where there is aged infrastructure that may be historically valuable (e.g. stone train trestles), guidelines should be developed on replacement or upgrade of these assets, to balance their historic significance with the need to ensure functionality.

Consider adopting a demolition ordinance.

Edison should consider the adoption of a demolition ordinance that prevents a land use board from granting a demolition permit until the HPC conducts a review for

historical, architectural, or other appropriate significance, and offers an opinion on whether it is eligible for local landmark designation. The HPC can then advise the approval board on further applications for permits. This process can put a pause on development and allow the community time to make an appropriate decision.

Since the 2003 Master Plan, several historic sites have been demolished, including four that were identified by the HPC. Having a demolition ordinance and a well-staffed commission could have prevented the loss of these historic sites.

Promote adaptive reuse.

Adaptive reuse of historic buildings can maintain the character of a neighborhood, preserve a historically significant building for future generations, and provide a sustainable and economically viable alternative to demolition. The concept of adaptive reuse means to alter a building that historically had a certain use for a new purpose. One example of an adaptive reuse project in Edison is the Heritage on Amboy Avenue. Originally the Clara Barton School, the building was repurposed as a senior assisted housing facility. The Township, with the help of the HPC, can advocate for the reuse of older buildings rather than their demolition or alteration that is not in character with existing neighborhoods. This may require consideration for zoning ordinance changes to streamline the approvals process and incentivize the re-use of existing buildings.

Explore the potential for a local museum to house historical artifacts.

The HPC would like to find a location to house Edison's historical artifacts and allow the public to view them. Stakeholders have also expressed interest in a local museum. The Township could explore the feasibility of a local museum including partnership opportunities, available sites, and funding sources.

SUPPORT EDISON'S ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

Support Edison's Cultural Arts Committee.

This recently created committee was created to facilitate collaboration between Edison's arts and cultural institutions, help identify partnerships to collaborate on Township events or programming, and potentially assist the Township to apply for grants. The Township should continue to support this committee to ensure that it is successful.

Continue to provide support to existing art, community, and cultural organizations and welcome newcomers.

Edison has a number of arts and cultural organizations such as the Edison Arts Society, Historic Edison Valley Playhouse, the Edison Center at Menlo Park. The Middlesex County Arts Institute is also an active partner for support and programming. A centralized listing that could be a responsibility of the Arts and Culture Committee could help the public identify them and participate.

Permit a wide range of arts-related uses throughout commercial/industrial areas and take advantage of redevelopment opportunities to expand arts space.

Edison has ample industrial areas, several of which are no longer large enough to meet the needs of modern industries. These spaces could be repurposed for creative uses that may be welcomed by the public. With the changing retail landscape, areas along major corridors like Route 1 or Route 27 could have more flexible zoning to allow for some creative uses that can enliven some of these areas. Another place where an arts-related uses may thrive is Clara Barton, where storefronts are often changing over. Artists' studios and galleries could provide for an active use of those spaces without attracting too much automobile traffic. Artists' studios could provide demonstrations, lessons, display areas, and retail of locally made products to the community and visitors.

Auto-oriented shopping centers and the Menlo Park Mall could also provide an interesting space for artist studios, workshops, galleries and retail to liven up underutilized areas.

Strengthen the programming and visibility of arts-related and cultural activities.

While the Arts Society has regular exhibits in the Municipal Complex, additional locations should be explored to display the work of local artists and increase their visibility and reach. Many communities have collaborative programming with the schools to display student work at local businesses, municipal buildings, parks and public spaces.

In addition, Edison has a strong multi-cultural community. The Township's recent inaugural Diwali celebration is a great example of how the Township can partner with local businesses and cultural organizations to provide community-oriented events.

Promote historic tourism through wayfinding and signage for historic and cultural assets, improve pedestrian connections between important destinations, and increase marketing efforts.

Edison should provide a wayfinding signage to direct visitors and residents to cultural and historic destinations. The signage should have a consistent, aesthetically appropriate design, that relates to Edison's cultural identity. These should be placed to direct visitors to iconic places such as the Edison Tower, but also to community facilities, and other attractions.

Neighborhoods could also have special signage to give them a physical reminder of their shared identity and history. Signage should also be improved for Edison's parks. The signage could include the name of the park and the street address.

Creating an identity and brand for Edison and marketing and promoting its attractions and assets can help to make Edison and its residents feel more connected across the Township. This can also leverage economic benefits of local and regional tourism to the area.



Edison

Township Master Plan

7/ INFRASTRUCTURE, RESILIENCE, AND SUSTAINABILITY



Edison’s utilities include water, gas, electricity, cable, and internet. This chapter summarizes the current provision and physical condition of this infrastructure, and any planned improvements. The chapter also reviews climate change and sea level rise and what Edison should expect as temperatures rise, extreme storm events increase, and water levels and land elevations change. Some of the key issues and opportunities identified are:

- The public wants faster, more reliable, and more affordable options for internet providers.
- Edison’s water and sewer infrastructure is aging and requires upgrades and constant maintenance to ensure quality service to the Township’s residents into the future.
- A significant amount of impervious surface and insufficient or lacking stormwater systems make roadways and neighborhoods prone to flooding and runoff pollution. Future climate change and sea level rise impacts will exacerbate these issues.
- Sustainability measures, in terms of energy production, the use of resources, waste management, and building construction and design, are becoming increasingly essential to ensure Edison’s future.
- Investing in sustainability practices will improve public health in Edison by reducing pollutants, cooling temperatures, increasing physical activity, and improving the overall quality of life.
- Resilience in the face of climate change and sea level rise will require preparedness and mitigation measures to ensure the safety and vitality of Edison’s residents, businesses, and environment.

UTILITIES

Water

As shown in Figure 47, Edison has three water service areas: Edison Water Utility serves the southwestern portion of the Township, Middlesex Water covers the eastern portion, and New Jersey American Water provides service to part of North Edison near the border with Clark and Scotch Plains.

The Township's Department of Water and Sewer was established in 2019 after a voter referendum to locally manage water distribution and sewer utilities for Edison rather than sell or lease operations to a third party. This ended a longstanding contract with New Jersey American Water to serve the southwestern part of the Township; the company still has a contract to operate a portion of water service and infrastructure in North Edison.

Edison Water and Sewer Utility, which is currently housed in rented space, now serves approximately 12,000 water customers. The Utility is responsible for the operation, management, control, and maintenance of the water distribution system and collection of user and connection fees.

The Utility purchases water from Middlesex Water and New Jersey American Water, sourced from the Millstone River, the Raritan River, and the Delaware and Raritan Canal. The Utility is responsible for testing the drinking water, while NJDEP and the U.S. EPA regulate the water.

Sewer

Edison Water and Sewer Utility is also responsible for the sewer system in the entire Township. The Utility operates and maintains the sewer collection system, which includes 21 pump stations, and oversees any extensions and improvements and collection of user and connection fees. All of Edison is sewered; its sewage is treated by Middlesex County Utilities Authority (MCUA) in South Amboy.

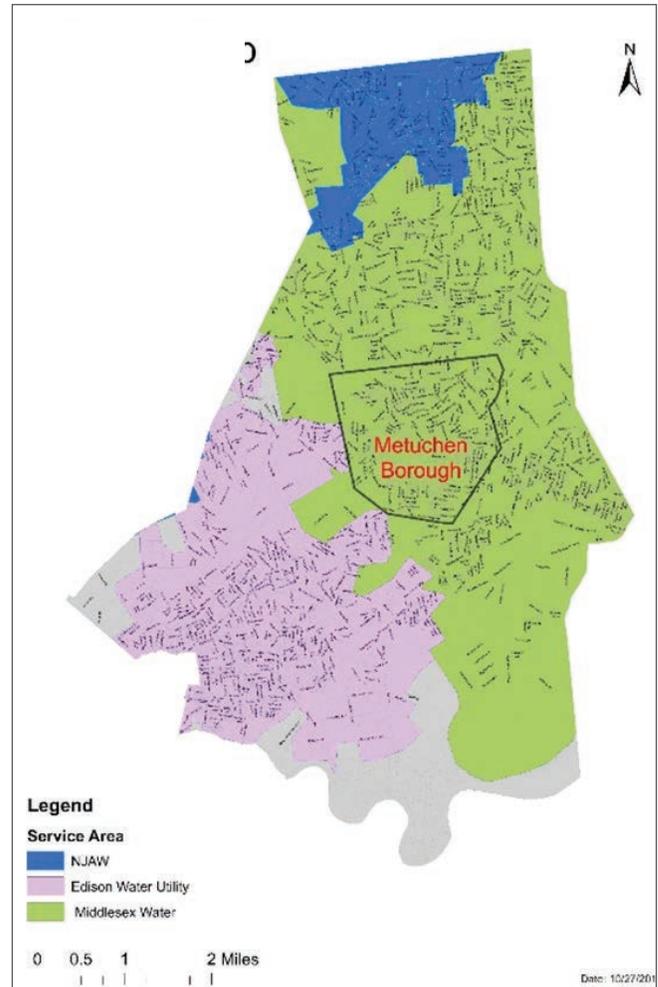


Figure 47: Water Service Areas

Source: Township of Edison, 2017.

Stormwater

Edison's stormwater system is separate from its sanitary sewer system, but many older areas have insufficient or completely lacking stormwater systems. Stormwater pollution prevention is enforced by Edison's Departments of Health and Human Services, Planning and Engineering, and Public Works.

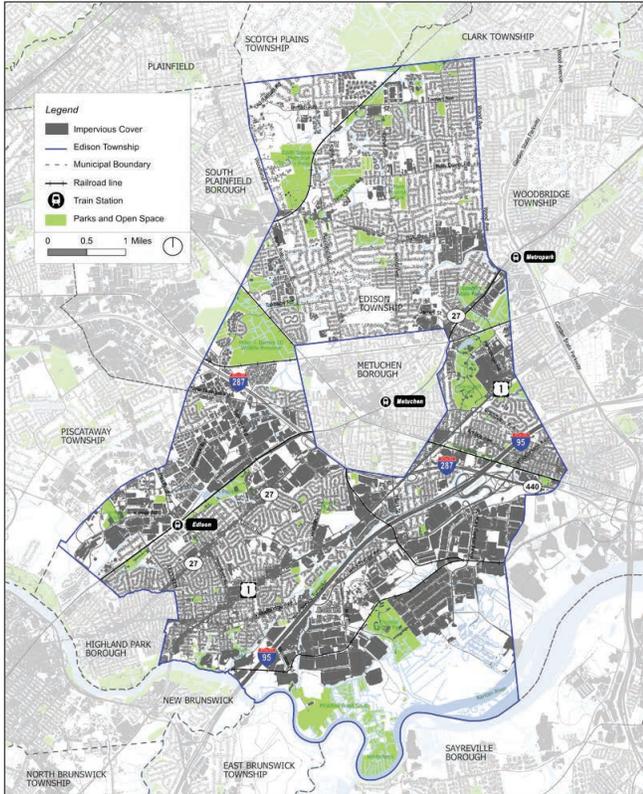


Figure 48: Impervious Surface Coverage

Source: NJOEM, NJDOT, NJBGIS, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BfJ Planning.

In 2008, the Township’s Stormwater Management Plan addressed impacts related to Edison’s high level of impervious surfaces and the hydrology of the Raritan River.¹ Goals of the plan included reducing flood damage, stormwater runoff and soil erosion from new developments; preventing non-point source pollution; and maintaining groundwater recharge and the integrity of streams for biological and drainage purposes. In 2015, the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resource Program developed an Impervious Cover Assessment and Reduction Action Plan, which analyzed Edison’s impervious surfaces and identified site-specific strategies to reduce impacts through green infrastructure.²

Electricity and Gas

Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) provides Edison’s electricity and gas. There are five power plants in the Township, all located in the south side of Edison. In addition, there are five substations: four in the south and one in the New Dover neighborhood of North Edison. PSE&G transmission lines cross the Township via utility rights-of-way.

PSE&G has a plan to install 37,000 feet (over 7 miles) of new gas pipes throughout Edison in 2023-2024. The pipes being replaced date from 1923-1962, and the project will require almost 100 roads to be repaved.

Solar energy is becoming more prominent in the Township. There are seven solar photo-voltaic (PV) grid supply installations, including one that covers the ILR Landfill in south Edison. There are four publicly owned solar facilities: one on the EPA property at Raritan Center, one on the Middlesex College campus, and two on the rooftop of the Municipal Complex. There are also two New Jersey Community Solar Pilot Program projects in Edison—one next to the Kin-Buc Landfill and one on a rooftop on Woodbridge Avenue.

Cable and Broadband

Cablevision has a 15-year contract with Edison per the Township Code, dating from 2014. The company provides cable infrastructure to residents, facilities, and businesses and provides for two public television stations.

Edison is currently served by Optimum as an internet provider, although there is not a contract in place. In March 2023, the Township authorized an execution of a rights-of-way agreement with Comcast of New Jersey II, LLC to permit the installation, use, and maintenance of cable television service facilities within public rights of way for purposes of providing another option for television and internet services.

¹ https://cms2.revize.com/revize/townshipofedison/Departments/Engineering%20Department/Edison_MSWMWMP_2008.pdf

² Edison OSRP 2018; 2015 Impervious Cover Assessment and Reduction Action Plan, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resource Program

Waste Management

Edison's Department of Public Works (DPW) addresses stormwater management, park and road maintenance, waste collection and sanitation.

Sanitation and recycling collection are provided to residents via 16 garbage districts that determine when collection occurs. The Township Code requires that all garbage be disposed of at designated sites in the Meadow Road and Kents Neck area. The former recycling center on Township-owned property on Meadow Road (just north of the Boat Basin) closed, and the Township is planning to open a new, more centrally located recycling facility at the former police impound yard on New Durham Road. The Middlesex County Utilities Authority (MCUA) processes Edison's waste, most of which is transferred to a landfill in East Brunswick.

There are five landfills in Edison, all of which are closed and capped. Four are in southern Edison near the Raritan River: the Township Landfill, Kin Buc #1, Kin Buc #2, and ILR Landfill. There is one landfill, the Ashbrook Lotano Landfill, in North Edison. The Landfill Gas-to-Energy Project is a Middlesex County sustainable waste management project that converts methane gas released from the Township and ILR landfills to produce electricity to power the MCUA operations in Sayerville. This project virtually eliminates methane gas – a contributor to global warming and climate change – from being released from those landfills.

Middlesex County provides drop-off sites throughout the county for other types of waste that are not collected at the curb, and hosts events for collection of hazardous wastes and educational programs about recycling, composting, and waste reduction.

Roadway Management

The Edison DPW has a 25-year roadway management program that prioritizes roads for resurfacing. The Township has acknowledged that this program is not sufficient, and additional road maintenance is needed to address ongoing needs such as crack sealing. Addressing small repairs in the short term is economical, as it helps

to avoid much larger fixes in the long term. However, short-term fixes do not always allow for the necessary coordination with other infrastructure projects such as installation of gas mains or water pipe replacement work.

Emergency Management

Edison's Office of Emergency Management, a partnership of several municipal departments including the police and fire departments, includes a coordinator and three deputies appointed by the mayor. The office prepares for disasters and oversees the response in coordination with the County, State, and federal government. In addition, the volunteer Edison Community Response Team (Edison CERT) assists the community in times of disaster. Volunteers receive specialized training from the police and fire departments, Raritan Regional EMS, and other first-responders.

In the event of an emergency, Edison residents are notified by text or email through Nixle, phone calls through Global Connect, and announcements made on Edison TV and the Township website. Additional announcements may also come from local radio stations and the County and State Offices of Emergency Management. The County produced its most recent Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) in 2022. The State's Office of Emergency Management maps hurricane evacuation routes, designated routes to direct coastal communities inland in the event of a hurricane. The routes should be accessible during a disaster and should be kept open for access by first responders to deploy to emergency areas. State hurricane evacuation routes pass through Edison in the Clara Barton neighborhood: Route 1, the New Jersey Turnpike, and Route 440 (see Figure 4g). During an evacuation, additional roads may be designated as emergency routes to get people to safety in shelters such as schools, public facilities, or other places.

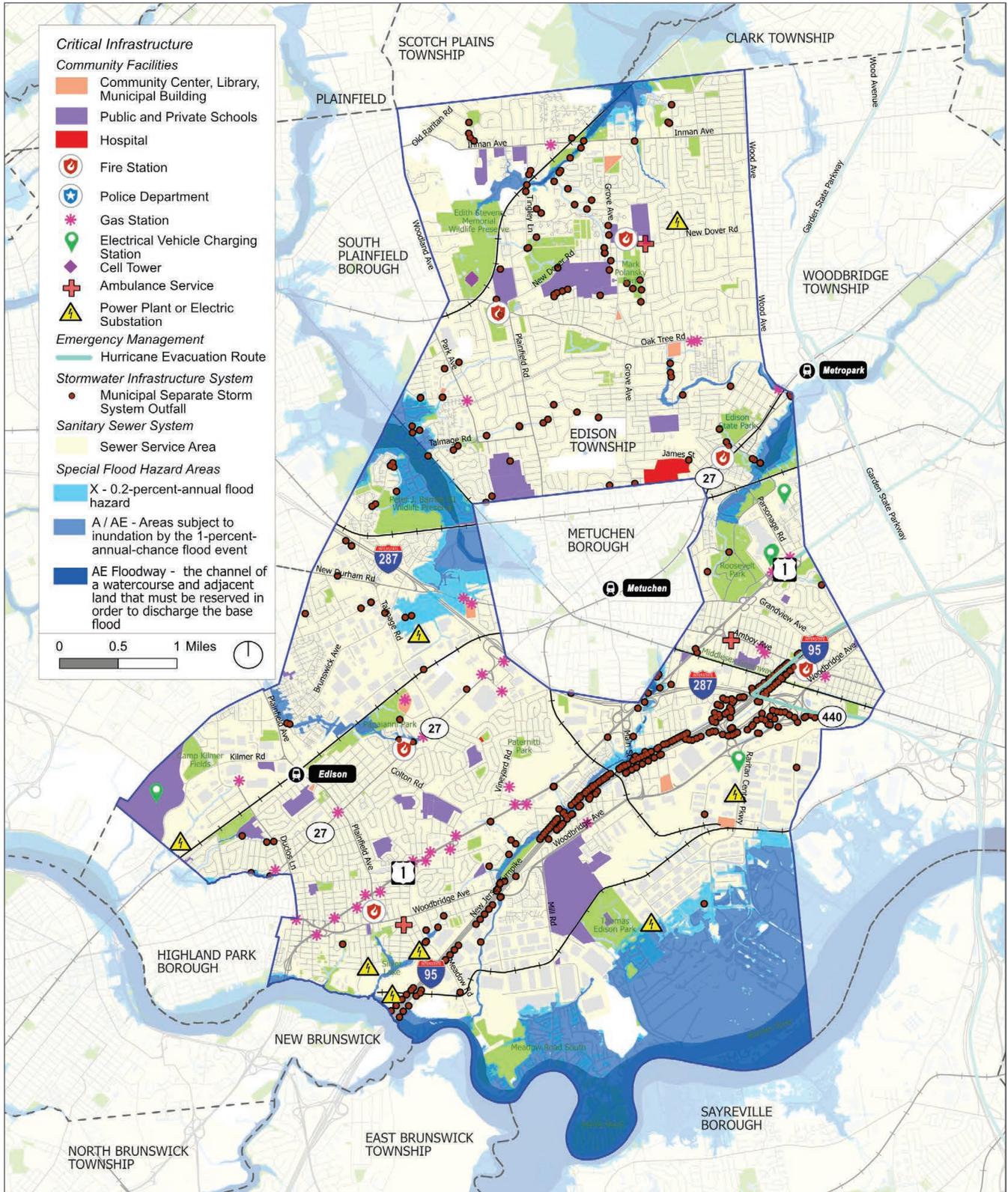


Figure 49: Critical Infrastructure

Source: USGS, US Department of Justice, US Office of Homeland Security, NJOEM, NJDOIT, NJBGIS, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BFI Planning

TOPOGRAPHY

Edison is mostly flat with a few hilly areas; most of its land is less than 100 feet above sea level. The highest elevation in the Township is 220 feet above sea level, in Clara Barton, while the nearby Heights neighborhood ascends to 200 ft above sea level. Other areas with relatively high elevations are found in North Edison, particularly north of the Stevens Memorial Wildlife Preserve and the border of Plainfield, where the elevation is 180 feet, leading to the name of “Short Hills” for the Revolutionary War battlefield in this part of the Township. Some of the steepest inclines in Edison are found in the south, particularly from the Raritan River Ravine west to Highland Park Borough. The lowest elevations are found along the Raritan River where the land is below 10 feet above sea level.

FLOODPLAIN

Edison’s location along the Raritan River about 2 miles inland from the Raritan Bay – combined with its streams, high percentage of impervious coverage, and flatness – make it especially prone to flooding. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has established Flood Hazard Areas to rate the risk of flooding. Some 2,719 acres, or 14% of Edison’s total land area, falls within a special flood hazard area with high risk of flooding, as defined by a 1% annual chance or 100-year flood (A, AE). Flood hazard areas of moderate risk, as defined by a 0.2% annual chance or 500-year flood (X-shaded), encompass an additional 434 acres, or 2.2% of Edison’s total land area. There are no areas categorized as VE, areas along coasts with additional hazards due to storm-induced velocity wave action. Figure 50 shows areas in Edison at risk of flooding.

Areas within the 100-year floodplain are found along the Raritan River, Bound Brook, Mill Book, Silver Lake, Ambrose Brook, South Branch Rahway River, Coppermine

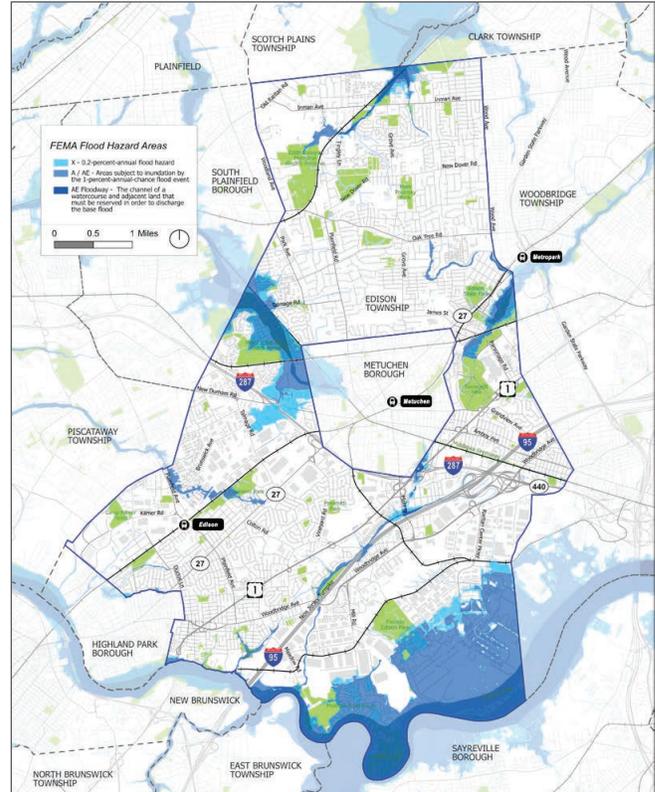


Figure 50: FEMA Flood Hazard Areas

Source: NJOEM, NJDOIT, NJBGIS, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BFJ Planning.

Brook, and Robinson’s Branch and tributaries. Flooding of these areas impacts more than 800 residential units and over 2,000 residents, including the Greenfield Garden Residences in northeast Edison near Menlo Park; the Kilmer neighborhood including Blueberry Village, Edison Village and Rivendell; and the Bonhamtown and Nixon neighborhoods. In addition to impacts on residents, over 1,600 jobs within the floodplain could be at risk.³

Areas within the 500-year floodplain are found around the Raritan River and the Barnes Preserve, affecting residents living in Edison Woods and other neighborhoods around the wetlands and Talmadge Road.

3 Urban Footprint, Risk and Resiliency Analysis using FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, Special Flood Hazard Areas, updated 12/16/2021

CLIMATE CHANGE

Rising Temperatures

In 2021, the New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center at Rutgers University produced a report, *State of the Climate New Jersey*, that indicated the state has seen temperatures rise by 4 degrees Fahrenheit since 1900. This is two times the global average rise in temperature. Projections for temperature rise in New Jersey by 2100 estimate 5-8 degrees above preindustrial levels in a moderate Green House Gas (GHG) emissions scenario and 8-14 degrees above preindustrial levels in a high GHG emissions scenario. State data from 1890 to 2012 show an overall upward trend in mean annual temperature and an upward trend in mean annual rainfall. Out of the 20 warmest years on record, 15 have occurred since 2000.⁴

This increase in temperature is significant because of impacts on human health and the environment. Higher temperatures degrade air quality by increasing pollutants which can exacerbate conditions such as asthma. Warm temperature increases the spread of diseases carried by insects. Rising humidity levels in combination with hot temperatures can be dangerous for human health. Air conditioning use causes increased demand for power which can result in power outages and snowballing negative impacts.

Edison is located in the Central New Jersey Climate Zone, which experiences 15-20 days annually at 90 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Because of the high percentage of impervious paved surfaces in the Township, there is a heat island effect that can increase temperatures further.

Increasing Annual Rainfall

Annual rainfall in New Jersey has increased by 7% in the past 100 years. Projections show an increase of 5%-8% by 2100 and increases in extreme 24-hour rainfall by 5%-15%. In addition to the increase in rainfall overall, the emerging pattern shows that rainfall is concentrated

into more extreme weather events, leaving periods of drought in between. A high percentage of impervious surfaces and lack of stormwater infrastructure mean Edison is prone to flash flooding during such events.

Extreme Weather Events

Disasters caused by extreme weather events have increased in frequency and cost since the 1980s. The National Center for Environmental Information provides information on statewide billion-dollar weather and climate disasters. Disaster events that have cost over \$1 billion in New Jersey include droughts (10%), flooding (5.2%), freezes (1.7%), severe storms (36%), tropical cyclones (21%), and winter storms (26%). In the 1980s, there were five severe storms, in the 2010s there were 21, and from 2019-2021 there have already been 10, with four of them occurring in 2021 alone. In the 1980s, the cost of events was between \$1-\$2 billion, or 2.6% of all costs for billion-dollar disasters from 1980-2021. In the 2010s, the cost of damage was \$20-50 billion, and in 2021 alone, damages reached \$5-10 billion, 17% of the cost of all disasters since 1980.⁵

Hurricane Ida, a post-tropical cyclone and federally declared disaster, landed in New Jersey on September 1, 2021, bringing flash flooding and heavy rainfall that surpassed anticipated levels. The Raritan River experienced the most flooding of all rivers in New Jersey.⁶ Edison experienced stream flow intensities 20 times the threshold for flash flood warnings. In all, 30 lives were lost in New Jersey, hundreds were evacuated, and there was widespread damage to infrastructure, homes and businesses.

By the time hurricanes make landfall in New Jersey, they are typically reduced to tropical storm categorization due to lower wind speeds. However, longer hurricane seasons, more frequent storms, and increasing rainfall intensities justify looking to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration storm surge maps. Figure 51 shows storm surge risks for Category 1 hurricanes. In

⁴ New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center at Rutgers University, *State of the Climate, New Jersey 2021*, <https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/State-of-the-Climate-Report-NJ-2021-4-18.pdf>

⁵ NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters (2022). <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/>, DOI: [10.25921/stkw-7w73](https://doi.org/10.25921/stkw-7w73)

⁶ Rutgers New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center, *State of the Climate, New Jersey 2021*, <https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/State-of-the-Climate-Report-NJ-2021-4-18.pdf>

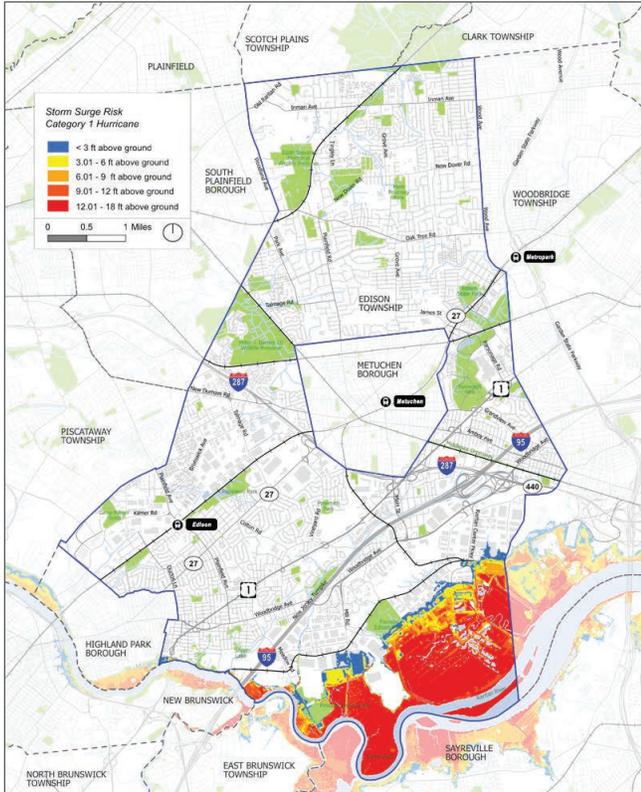


Figure 51: Storm Surge Risk

Source: NOAA, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BFJ Planning

a Category 1 Hurricane, Edison could see storm surges up to 18 feet in the Raritan River, coastal wetlands, and Raritan Center. In the event of a Category 4 hurricane, storm surges could be over 20 feet above ground and would have drastic impacts on the Raritan Center and Heller Industrial Park.

Droughts and Wildfire Risk

With rain concentrated in more intense events, periods of drought are also being experienced more often in New Jersey, making the state more susceptible to fires. According to the USDA Forest Service, about 15% of Edison's total land area is at moderate or high risk of wildfire.⁷ In the summer of 2022, dry brush caught fire and ignited 60 acres at Edison's Kin Buc landfill and surroundings. The cause was likely due to dry conditions and the sun.

⁷ Urban Footprint; USDA Forest Service, Wildfire Hazard Potential, 2018.

⁸ Urban Footprint, Risk and Resiliency Analysis using USDA Forest Service, Wildfire Hazard Potential, 2018.

⁹ <https://njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/State-of-the-Climate-Report-NJ-2021-4-18.pdf>

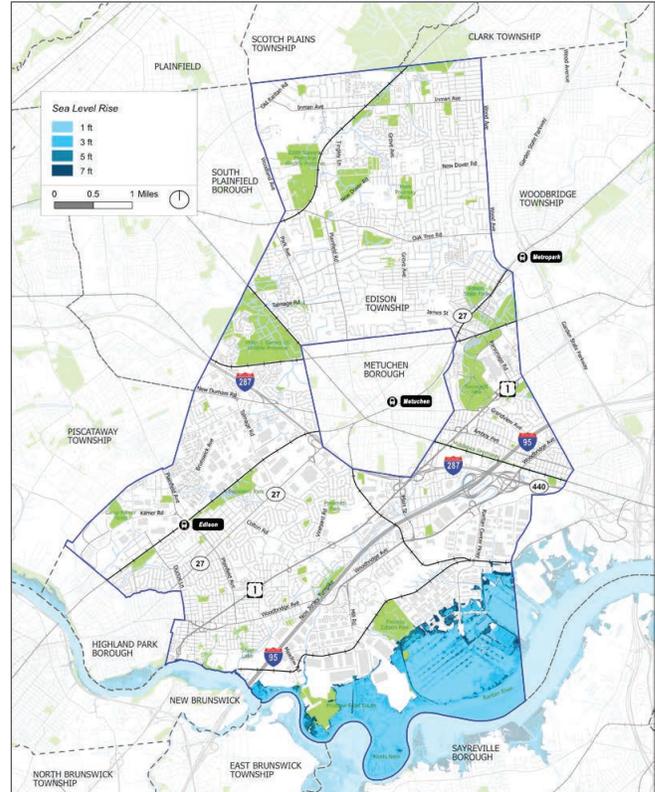


Figure 52: Sea Level Rise

Source: NOAA, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BFJ Planning

Wildfire risk includes both undeveloped land in the Township such as the Stevens Wildlife Preserve and the Raritan River Wetlands and developed areas including residential neighborhoods such as Pumptown and Menlo Park. It is estimated that approximately 14,400 people live in a fire hazard zone including 11,000 people living in moderate risk areas and 3,400 people living in high risk areas. There are over 5,000 residential units and over 8,500 jobs at risk in Edison's fire hazard zones.⁸

Sea Level Rise

Sea level rise, a significant impact of climate change, will inundate coastal properties and result in more severe flooding and storm surge impacts. Sea levels in New Jersey have risen by about 0.2 inches per year and by approximately 18 inches in the past 100 years, and are rising at increasing rates in the most recent decades.⁹

Rates in New Jersey are more than double the global average because its land is simultaneously receding. Sea levels in the state are projected to increase by 0.5 to 1.1 feet by 2030, by 0.9 to 2.1 feet by 2050, and 4 to 6.3 feet above the 2000 mean sea level by 2100. The projected ranges will depend on various scenarios for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

In Edison, rising sea levels will impact areas along the Raritan River, especially areas of low elevation to the east of the Turnpike all the way to the border of Woodbridge (see Figure 52). By 2100, sea level rise could render 10% of Edison's area under water. Analysis of areas affected by sea level rise indicates that there are few people living in areas at risk of inundation. However, with the amount of sea level rise projected for 2050 (1-3 feet), over 600 jobs could be impacted.¹⁰

With 1 foot of sea level rise, 6.9% of Edison's total land area, including most of Kents Neck, Meadow Road South, and the Raritan Arsenal area, will be inundated.¹¹ A Portion of Thomas Edison Park will also be affected by sea level rise. These impacts will likely happen before 2050, and potentially even by 2030. With any further sea level rise, and without adaptation strategies, buildings in Raritan Center will be on sites that could be permanently and irreversibly inundated by 2100. In this process, four active contaminated sites would be submerged. The Kin Buc and ISL Landfills in south Edison are above sea level because of the fill of trash; however, this could present environmental issues if water seeps into these filled areas.

KNOWN CONTAMINATED SITES

The NJDEP produces a list of known contaminated sites to identify areas where soils and ground water have been contaminated by hazardous substances. These are mapped in Figure 53.¹² There are 153 known contaminated sites in Edison, all of which have one or more active cases or remedial action permits. These sites may have any number of pending and/or closed cases. A total of 111 Active cases in Edison have ongoing remediation work. Four cases are "Active Post-Rem" meaning there are restricted uses and limitations where a remedial action permit has not been issued yet, while 38 cases are "Active – RAP" meaning they have restricted or limited uses and have a remedial action permit. Pending cases are where a site with contamination has been identified, but no formal evaluation on the extent of the contamination has been performed yet. There are no pending cases in Edison.

Known contaminated sites are distributed throughout the Township, but the highest concentration is in south Edison. There are hotspots around Talmadge Road and Brunswick Avenue and around Route 1 and Plainfield Avenue. These sites may be contaminated because of former or current uses as fuel stations, cleaners, industrial sites, dumps, or landfills.

Of the five landfills in Edison, the Kin-Buc landfills are the most significant. Located at the end of Meadow Road, these two landfills were designated as a Superfund site in 1983. While remediation, drum removal, capping, and shoreline restoration have been completed, the site requires ongoing operation and maintenance activities.

¹⁰ Urban Footprint, Risk and Resiliency Analysis using NOAA, Sea Level Rise and Coastal Impacts, updated August 2019.

¹¹ "NOAA Office for Coastal Management Sea Level Rise Data: 1-10 ft Sea Level Rise Inundation Extent", Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Ocean Service (NOS), Office for Coastal Management (OCM), 2017.

¹² Known Contaminated Site List for New Jersey (Envr_NJEMS_KCSL) (Web Mercator ArcGIS Online Service), NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP)

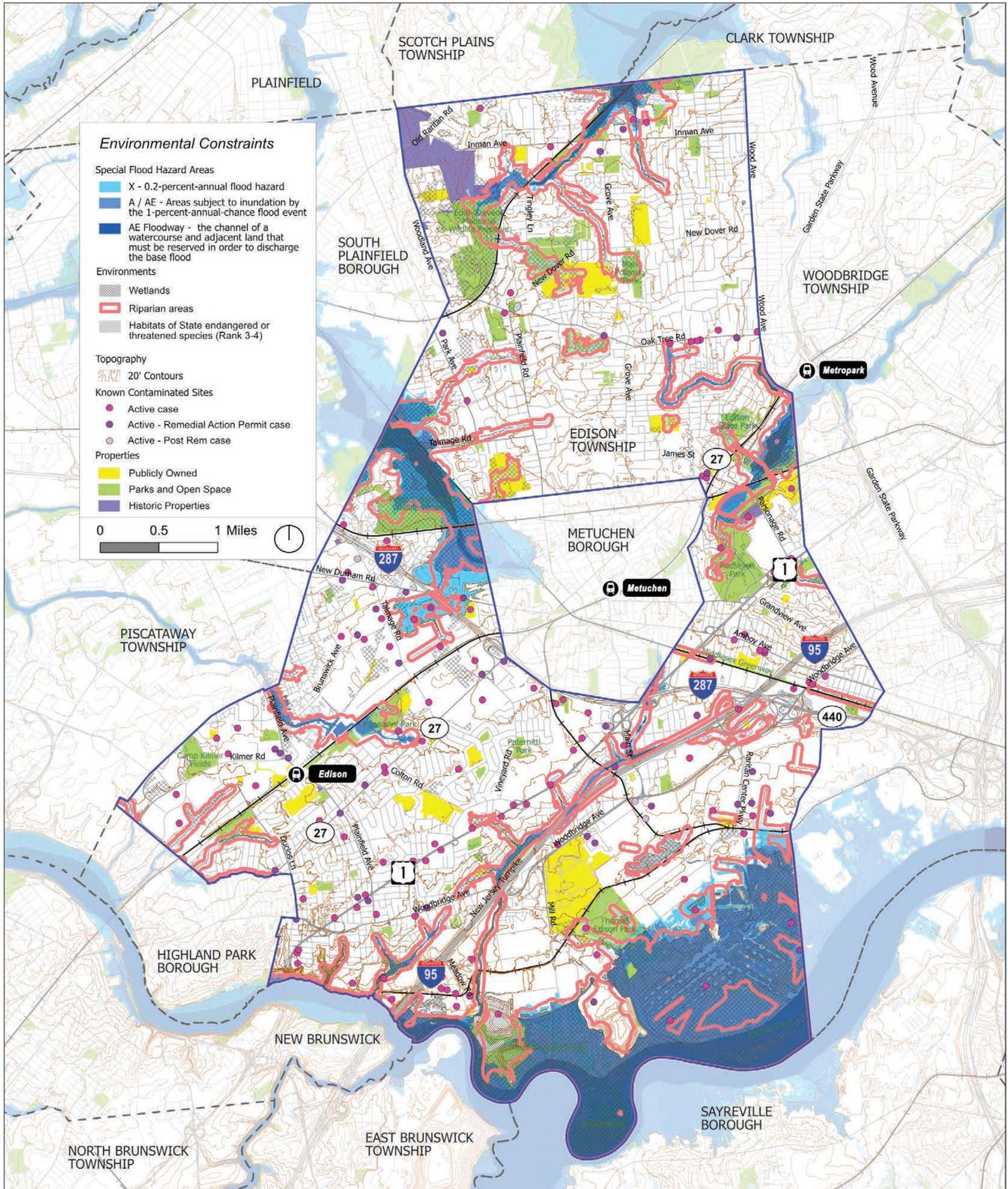


Figure 53: Environmental Constraints

Source: USGS, NOAA, Middlesex County, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJOGIS, BfJ Planning

RECOMMENDATIONS

MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE TOWNSHIP UTILITIES

Implement the Township’s plan to provide high-speed affordable internet to Edison residents.

Broadband and digital access is becoming a more critical issue for the public because of increased work-from-home models, greater reliance on the internet for information, and online schooling during extreme weather or other events (e.g. COVID-19). During the community engagement process, many residents expressed dissatisfaction with the current broadband availability in Edison.

In March 2023, the Township adopted an ordinance authorizing execution of a rights-of-way agreement with Comcast of New Jersey II, LLC to permit the installation, use, and maintenance of cable television service facilities within public rights of way to provide a full suite of television and internet services. Following the adoption of the ordinance, Comcast will be building out new infrastructure and will be competing directly with Optimum. This competition will provide Edison with more options and gives residents the freedom to fairly choose the right service provider for their families.

Coordinate with Middlesex Water Company and New Jersey American Water to ensure safe drinking water.

Middlesex Water Company is one of two providers of potable water in Edison. In 2022, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), in partnership with NJDEP, produced a Healthy Community Planning Report, which identified higher-than-average indicators in Edison’s water that require closer attention. One of these, community drinking water, shows instances of maximum permissible contaminant levels for PFOAs, and violations for minimum treatment levels for lead and copper.

Middlesex Water Company owns nine public community water supply wells in northwestern Edison. While there are wellhead protection areas—buffers around the wellheads to prevent contamination of the supply—nearly 12% of wells sampled between 2002-2018 had maximum permissible contaminant level exceedance for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and other compounds.¹³ In 2021, Middlesex Water moved to rely on surface water sources and suspended its wellfields. The company completed a new treatment facility to target PFOAs in June 2022 and is constructing a new treatment plant to be fully in service by mid-year 2023.¹⁴

Support Edison’s Department of Water and Sewer in implementing its long-term objectives.

The Township spends a significant amount of resources repairing the water system on an ad hoc basis; Edison saw about 45 water main breaks in 2021. These can be unpredictable without accurate knowledge of the system. Edison Water and Sewer Utility requires investment into mapping the current system and replacing problem areas. At present, the department estimates that there are approximately 150 miles of water mains that need replacement. Any pipes classified below 6 inches are considered undersized and require replacement. There are 4-inch mains throughout Edison that cannot meet the volume and pressure required by the fire department. In addition, there are several mains constructed of materials that should be replaced due to hazards to human health and the environment, including asbestos, concrete, galvanized steel, lead, and copper.

Of the 21 sewer pump stations in Edison, many are in poor condition and five were damaged in Hurricane Ida in 2021. FEMA has completed inspections of the pump stations, and engineers are working on mitigation strategies to protect them during future storm events. This includes bringing underground stations above-ground. It has been difficult to get repair equipment and replacement parts, especially after the COVID-19

¹³ https://www.nj.gov/health/hcpnj/documents/county-reports/HCPNJ_fullreports/MIDDLESEX_EDISON%20TWP.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.middlesexwater.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Tier-2-PN-PFOA-2nd-3rd-Q-COMBO-822.pdf>

pandemic interrupted supply chains. Edison should work with its departments to stock repair equipment and replacement parts for emergencies.

Edison’s Department of Water and Sewer has two separate capital improvement plans for the water system and the sewer system with priority projects for the next five years. They are currently applying to the Infrastructure Bank for grants to fund necessary studies, capital improvements, and system rehabilitation.

The water plan allocates \$40 million to capital improvements and priority projects for 2022-2027. This covers everything from installation of smart water meters and fire hydrants, cleaning and relining of water mains, to a distribution system survey to understand water loss.

The sewer plan allocates \$30 million to capital improvements and priority projects for 2022-2028. This includes the replacement, repair, and upgrades of specific pump stations; assessments and replacement of force mains; township-wide flow metering and inflow and infiltration (I&I) investigations; GIS mapping updates to locate miles of missing pipe data; establishment of a manhole numbering system, inceptor sewer investigations and rehabilitation, collection system sewer system rehabilitation, manhole inspections, and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system and flow metering. After the completion of these initial priorities, a 10-year sewer rehabilitation program will ensue. Currently underway are repairs of the Evergreen pump station, improvements and rehabilitation of the West Side pump station, electrical and control upgrades at the Tingley Lane pump station, and a joint intermunicipal project to replace the Metuchen pump station.

Support the Efforts of the Department of Engineering to Upgrade the Stormwater Infrastructure.

Stormwater runoff can impact public health, aquatic ecosystems, and the use and enjoyment of water features, due to flooding, runoff, pollution, and erosion.

Areas of insufficient or lacking stormwater systems, combined with a significant amount of impervious surface, make roadways and neighborhoods prone to flooding and runoff pollution.

The 2022 Healthy Community Planning Report observed that surface water in Edison has “impaired water quality,” which prevents usage for water supply, consumption fishing, and recreation.¹⁵ In addition, ground water and soil contamination with hazardous materials and wastes prevent the use of some land for development in the Township. The NJDEP’s 2004 Source Water Assessment Report and Summary found that there is medium to high susceptibility to contamination in Edison’s water service area, which is typical for surface water sources in built-up areas.¹⁶

In Edison, roadway flooding has been a major issue in areas without drainage. Some neighborhoods that were developed in the post-WWII residential boom need significant improvements, such as the Lincoln Park and Washington Park neighborhoods and other areas south of Route 27 that tend to flood more frequently.

The stormwater drainage system is a locally significant infrastructure asset, but the condition and exact location of the existing sewer and stormwater system is not well known. The stormwater system in some parts of the Township is more than 100 years old, and records have been lost or never updated. Some data on storm system outfalls, management basins, and pollution discharge elimination system are shown in Figure 49 on page 131.

The Township has engaged Mott MacDonald to study where stormwater infrastructure is insufficient or in need of repair, and to identify priority areas for improvements. Edison should digitally map infrastructure to assess maintenance and upgrade priorities. The Township may want to conduct a watershed-wide analysis of stormwater flows – a Hydrologic and Hydraulic study - to determine where the runoff is coming from, how much, where is it going, and whether the current systems are adequate to handle current and future conditions.

¹⁵ https://www.nj.gov/health/hcpnj/documents/county-reports/HCPNJ_fullreports/MIDDLESEX_EDISON%20TWP.pdf

¹⁶ https://cms2.revize.com/revize/townshipofedison/Departments/Water/Edison%20CCR%20Report_2021.pdf; www.state.nj.us/dep/swap/

Coordinate Infrastructure upgrades and maintenance with PSE&G

PSE&G has a plan to install over 7 miles of new gas pipes throughout Edison in 2023-2024. This project will require almost 100 roads township-wide to be torn up and repaved. Water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure also lies below Edison's streets. While challenging, the Township should make best efforts to communicate and coordinate these large infrastructure projects between the Water and Sewer Utility, Department of Public Works, Engineering, and PSE&G to reduce the number of times roads are torn up to access infrastructure.

REDUCE IMPERVIOUS SURFACES AND IMPLEMENT GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES

Nearly 43% of Edison's land area is covered with impervious surfaces, which includes buildings, roadways, parking lots, and other paved areas that cannot absorb water. Excessively wide roads, large parking lots, and building footprints contribute to the Township's high proportion of impervious surfaces, which – combined with the Township's primarily flat topography, lack of stormwater infrastructure, wetlands, and streams – make it especially prone to flooding and runoff pollution. In addition, impervious surfaces often absorb heat and contribute to a heat island effect.

Green infrastructure can help reduce flooding and pollution and cool localized areas. Trees help to absorb rainwater and mitigate flood risk, provide shade, cool down temperatures, clean the air, filter noise from traffic, and improve aesthetics, along with many other benefits. Trees along streets have the secondary benefit of helping to reduce traffic speeds. The following recommended strategies increase tree cover and other green infrastructure elements.

Update and maintain tree inventory.

Edison should support the Environmental Commission's efforts to maintain a tree inventory and protect the trees; implement a street tree initiative on public lands and along major corridors; and encourage residents and

businesses to plant new trees and maintain existing trees on private property through education campaigns and potential grant-funded incentive programs.

Adapt a New Tree Ordinance to Prevent Trees From Being Removed and Encourage Enhancement of the Tree Canopy.

Edison's tree ordinance is about 15 years old and should be rewritten for clarity to make it more enforceable and to incorporate modern best practices. The tree ordinance should be written in a way that clearly prioritizes the objective of preserving Edison's tree canopy.

- The Township should maintain a list of invasive species that are not allowed in tree replacement plans.
- The definition of clear-cutting should be revised. Currently, the definition indicates that every tree on the property is removed. Other municipalities define clear-cutting as a certain number of trees based on the size of the lot.
- The ordinance should define "tree save area." The term is used under the section on obtaining a tree removal permit. A tree save area is a designated area in which a cluster of existing trees must be preserved.
- The tree replacement credits should be strengthened with the main objective being the replenishment of the tree canopy.
- In-lieu planting should only be allowed where the replacement trees can't be practicably planted on-site.
- The Tree Fund should be expanded to allow residents to request street trees on their property. As written, the fund can only be allocated towards trees on public property.
- The administration of the Tree Fund could be improved. Currently, the fund requires Township Council approval for any and all appropriation. It should be managed by the Engineering Department with oversight of the Business Administrator and/or Township Council.

- Specimen trees are defined in Edison's code as trees with a diameter of breast height of 16" or greater. There are currently almost no protections for these large trees in the code. Township should consider prohibiting any removal of these trees except in cases of hazard, disease, or demonstrated hardship.

Revise Stormwater Control Regulations to Fully Address Runoff Issues

Currently, Edison's code requirements for major developments follow guidelines set by the State. Many municipalities have gone beyond the State's minimum requirements and have established a minor development threshold that requires some level of stormwater management for small infill development projects or significant expansions to existing residences. Edison used to have such requirements, but in September 2022, the stormwater control code was amended to remove regulations and exempt one- and two-family homes in R-B, R-BB, R-A and R-A(PRD), R-AA, and all other zones from stormwater controls.¹⁷ This is seemingly contrary to the objective of eliminating flooding from stormwater, especially in the residential areas that are experiencing flooding already.

It is always important to balance the need for effective stormwater management with costs to homeowners. However, a significant land area in Edison is devoted to existing residential neighborhoods, many of which were developed with little to no stormwater infrastructure. Ensuring that new development or major expansions in these areas incorporate stormwater systems is the best opportunity to address known drainage issues in these neighborhoods and ensure an effective Township-wide stormwater infrastructure system.

Identify Opportunities in the Zoning Code to Limit Impervious Coverage

Opportunities include reducing maximum coverage requirements, requiring landscaping and permeable paving, reducing driveway widths, and encouraging decks rather than impervious patios.

¹⁷ ORDINANCE O.2151-2022, An Ordinance Amending Chapter 34 "Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan," Subsection 34-8 "Stormwater Control" Of The Code Of The Township Of Edison, In The County Of Middlesex, New Jersey

In parking lots, landscaping requirements should mandate trees on landscaped islands at every 10-15 parking spaces. As the requirement is currently written, trees are only mandated along the periphery of the parking lot. This leaves a large, unshaded, paved space, which creates a heat island effect and significant runoff potential.

Edison should consider parking maximums for large-scale commercial and industrial uses. Parts of Edison are dominated by huge parking lots at shopping centers, offices, and industrial centers. Currently parking is on a minimum basis which tends to overproduce parking and can prevent new uses on vacant lots. The township should also incorporate green infrastructure as part of public infrastructure projects (i.e. when the Township repaves streets, adds bike lanes, or expands sidewalks).

In addition, the Township should consider changing the zoning code's buffer requirements by refocusing the purpose on the preservation of the tree canopy. Currently, buffers are only mentioned in relation to screening between single-family dwellings and other uses.

Educational campaigns can get the public involved in the change. The Township could provide resources about rain gardens, downspout planters, and rain barrels that home and business owners can use on their private property. Additionally, the public should be educated about how to keep stormwater drains clear of litter and leaves.

Implement the Recommendations of the Rutgers Impervious Cover Assessment and Create a Reduction Action Plan.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program completed an Impervious Cover Assessment and Reduction Action Plan for Edison in 2015, and the Township should take advantage of this resource. The Assessment set a 10% reduction goal for each of Edison's nine subwatersheds which results in a total reduction of

692.5 acres of impervious surfaces in Edison. The report provides simple and cost-effective solutions to help the Township achieve this goal:

- Elimination of impervious surfaces that are not necessary (e.g. “depaving” and replacing with soil and vegetation that absorb and filter rainwater)
- Reducing or converting impervious areas to pervious surfaces (e.g. pervious concrete, porous asphalt, interlocking concrete pavers, and grid pavers)
- Impervious cover disconnection practices (redirecting runoff from rooftops and paved surfaces to pervious areas (e.g. raingardens and rainwater harvesting)

The Assessment suggests the next step is to develop an action plan to identify opportunities to eliminate, reduce, or disconnect impervious surfaces where possible and practical. The report provides three example opportunities in Edison which are: The Woodrow Wilson Middle School, John Adams Middle School, and the Middlesex County Police Academy. Recommendations that respond specifically to the conditions on each site were made such as bioretention systems, curb cut locations, and educational programs.

Edison should take this work to the next level and work with Rutgers on a full-scale action plan that identifies priority projects and follow up with their implementation.

PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES AND DEVELOP A GREEN BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT OF THE MASTER PLAN

Many land use and transportation recommendations in this Plan also address sustainability. For example, promoting more walkable environments and reducing automobile dependence will result in lower GHG emissions and positive public health outcomes. Facilitating transit-oriented development would minimize sprawl. In addition, there are a number of sustainability-focused strategies that the Township can pursue to achieve its overall sustainability goals and improve its Sustainable Jersey ranking from bronze to silver, opening opportunities for additional grant funds.

An effective way to identify and promote these sustainable practices and development policies would be to develop a Green Building and Environmental Sustainability (GBES) Element of the Master Plan. Best practices would address smart growth (where development should be concentrated and minimized) and ways to reduce GHG emissions, energy use, automobile use, and waste. The Township can also become a more sustainable community by requiring a higher bar for green building both in construction and operation. The following are sustainability measures that could be addressed in a GBES Element:

Modify the Township Code to Encourage Circular Waste Management.

Edison should take a circular approach to waste management, which aims to keep materials and products in circulation for as long as possible with the goal of eliminating waste. This includes reusing materials, recycling, converting materials into another useful form (e.g. composting food waste). A circular economy and waste management depends on the design of products and systems to change the way in which materials are attained to how they are disposed.

Composting is currently not permitted in the Township, as the code does not allow for the collection of waste on private property. Edison should revise this section of the code and provide educational programs about how to compost at home. The DPW would need more capacity to provide door-to-door compost pickup. However, drop-off bins could be provided in neighborhood parks, schools, and community gardens. Educational programs at community gardens, schools, and community centers could use compost to nourish plantings. Municipal compost converted to soil could be made available to people who want to use it in their home gardens and landscaping public property and parks.

Recycling is an area where Edison could improve. Residents would like to see an increase in the frequency of recycling pickup, and the DPW has expressed a need for a dedicated recycling center. The Township is currently making minor improvements to the DPW lot on New Durham Road to provide for a new recycling collection facility. Edison could also consider purchasing a Styrofoam recycling machine and plastic bag collection bins, and develop intermunicipal agreements with neighboring municipalities to collect these items.

An educational campaign for recycling could inform residents about how to recycle correctly: which plastics are recyclable, the need to separate paper from plastics, glass, and metals, and how to dispose of items that are not accepted by the recycling system such as plastic bags, plastic toys, rigid plastics, large metal items, and Styrofoam/EPS. Educational campaigns about reducing waste could also affect the volume of trash and recyclables. These campaigns can encourage reusable bags, water bottles, and containers while discouraging the use of products with negative environmental impacts, such as single-use plastics.

As of May 2022, NJ implemented a ban on plastic and paper bags, Styrofoam food packaging, and plastic straws. To go beyond these measures, the Township could explore additional measures to advance plastic waste reduction and increase plastics recycling. Guidance from the state is provided in a 2023 report from the New Jersey Plastics Advisory Council.¹⁸

See this recent state report. <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/pac-first-year-report-2023.pdf>

reduce single-use plastics packaging

plastic bags, other single-use plastics, and Styrofoam. As more and more communities in New Jersey are enacting such regulations, businesses and residents are adjusting their behavior accordingly. Particularly for chain stores or restaurants, plastic regulations elsewhere in the state may have already forced these businesses to adapt, so Edison's enacting such bans would not create an undue burden.

Promote Renewable Energy Sources.

Edison should embrace opportunities to reduce GHGs by encouraging alternative modes of transportation and energy. Electricity demand will increase as people move from gas-powered to electric vehicles, gas stoves to electric stoves, and oil to electric heating systems. The Township should continue embracing sustainable energy sources such as solar, wind, and innovative practices like recapturing methane gases from landfills and waste. This includes the installation of renewable energy and heating sources at publicly owned facilities. Zoning or other regulatory changes may be needed to facilitate these strategies. The Township can also provide electric vehicle (EV) chargers in public spaces such as schools, libraries, community centers and public parking lots, and should update its zoning code to incorporate the State's EV charging regulations.

The Landfill Gas-to-Energy Project is a Middlesex County sustainable waste management project that converts methane gas released from landfills to produce electricity. The existing project at the ILR Landfill demonstrates that this method virtually eliminates methane gases – a contributor to global warming and climate change – from being released from those landfills. Edison should investigate the feasibility of implementing landfill gas-to-energy projects at its four other landfills.

There are currently two New Jersey Community Solar Pilot Program projects in Edison—one next to the Kin-Buc Landfill and one on a rooftop on Woodbridge

¹⁸ Accessed at: <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/pac-first-year-report-2023.pdf>

Avenue. Edison should continue to embrace the State’s community solar program and pursue opportunities for additional solar installations, particularly given its prevalence of large, flat-roofed industrial/warehouse buildings. Zoning revisions to accommodate rooftop installations should be incorporated, as needed.

Add Sustainable Construction and Design Standards to Edison’s Code.

The Township should continue to support and facilitate the Environmental Commission’s efforts to promote sustainable construction methods, including consideration for adding green building standards to its code and providing incentives for sustainable construction processes. The Township can consult green building standards, including the U.S. Green Building Council LEED Standards and the National Association of Homebuilders Green Building Initiative. Examples of standards are consideration of site orientation and design to reduce energy consumption; use of low-energy fixtures, water-saving fixtures, and other appliances; use of natural light through building design; and use of LED lights instead of incandescent ones. The Township could conduct energy audits and retrofit existing municipal facilities to improve energy efficiency, leading by example to incorporate net zero energy and living and restorative building practices where possible.

Improve Public Health and the Quality of Life Through Sustainability Practices.

The above sustainability practices will help make Edison a healthier place to live by improving air and water quality, reducing environmental toxins, and encouraging physical activity.

Edison currently has high levels of carcinogenic and non-carcinogenic air toxins, which can affect human development, reproduction, respiration, and organ function.¹⁹ The Township, compared to the State, has a higher percentage of children under six years of age with elevated lead levels in their blood, and higher rates of heart disease deaths than the State.

The New Jersey Department of Health provides resources for municipalities to address public health issues, including a list of relevant Federal and State grant opportunities.²⁰

Edison should continue addressing lead sources in the built environment and water to reduce exposure. The Township should work to replace lead pipes in the water infrastructure, provide access to grants for lead paint removal, and educate the public about the dangers of lead.

Other actions the Township can take to improve public health include adding additional year-round public recreational facilities, providing healthy food options through community gardens and educational campaigns, and using complete streets and comprehensive zoning code reform to effect positive change on community health outcomes. Complete streets allow people to walk and bicycle safely, promote the use of public transit, and reduce the prioritization of cars. Outcomes include fewer traffic-related injuries and fatalities, lower rates of respiratory illnesses, and increased physical activity.

¹⁹ https://www.nj.gov/health/hcpnj/documents/county-reports/HCPNJ_fullreports/MIDDLESEX_EDISON%20TWP.pdf

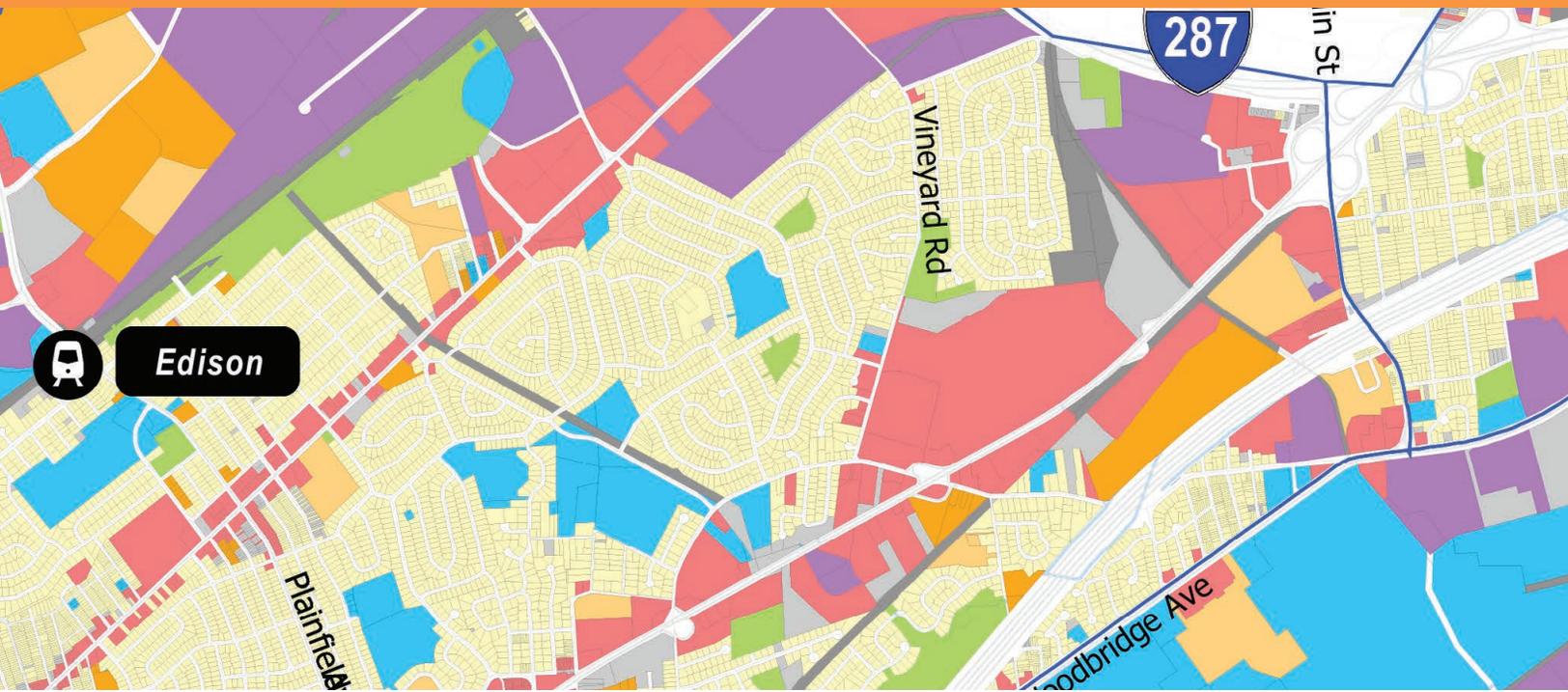
²⁰ <https://www.nj.gov/health/hcpnj/about/resources/>

MAKE EDISON MORE RESILIENT TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE

Edison should continue to work with the County and State to prepare its residents for severe storms, extreme temperatures, flooding, wildfires, and droughts. Hurricane Ida is fresh in the minds of the Township's residents, who experienced the damaging effects of flash flooding, high winds, and storm surges. The increasing incidence of such events should be a significant concern of the Township. Likewise, faster than average rates of sea level rise in New Jersey will be a concern for areas along the Raritan River. Emergency management plans and information about preparedness strategies should be widely accessible by the public. The Township should provide informational events, post accessible information on the Township website, and provide brochures to residents about how to be prepared and what to expect in an emergency situation.

As discussed, a significant portion of land adjacent to the Raritan River is expected to be impacted by sea level rise in the long term and other flood impacts in the short term. New development in flood-risk areas should be minimized, and in some cases, the Township should explore working with homeowners to buy out properties and convert them to open space (there are only a few residential properties in Edison's floodplains). The Raritan Center and Heller industrial Park complexes lie near or in wetland areas vulnerable to sea level rise, flooding, and storm surges. Edison should work with these areas to identify mitigation and adaptation efforts, including emergency preparedness, and potentially obtain easements for portions of these properties that are subject to sea level rise, and work with these complexes to adapt their sites.

8/ LAND USE PLAN



LAND USE STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An effective comprehensive planning approach for land use in Edison is one that seeks to support strong residential neighborhoods and important key historic assets while responding to demographic and market shifts to facilitate strategic revitalization. Zoning is the primary tool to achieve this balance of preservation and revitalization, although housing programs and capital investments on public infrastructure can also serve to address identified land use concerns.

Figure 54 illustrates the land use approach based on the policy discussion of issues and opportunities from prior chapters. This approach to the organization of land uses forms the basis for the Township's Land Use Plan and rezoning proposals discussed in this section. The following items were identified as specific areas of focus for the Township to consider:

SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN EDISON'S RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Housing makes up the largest portion of Edison's land area, and the vast majority is single-family. The Township has many well-established residential areas that provide the foundation for its sense of community and desirability as a great place to live. The following recommendations seek to preserve and strengthen the scale, aesthetics, and quality-of-life throughout Edison's neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Encourage upgrades of older housing stock

The Township should facilitate property maintenance and reinvestment in older buildings to prevent unnecessary demolition. Homeowners seeking to upgrade may need variances due to existing nonconformities. Owners should be allowed to undertake minor, “in-kind” upgrades such as stair or deck replacements without needing a variance, while small improvements such as fences and sheds should be allowable without needing an onerous approval process.

Preserve residential buffers

Maintain and/or establish residential buffers where single-family residential uses in established neighborhoods are proximate to more intensive uses, such as commercial or industrial uses or large-scale multifamily.

Review signage, performance, noise and lighting standards

These provisions within the zoning ordinance should be reviewed for consistency with other regulations and modern best practices, while allowing for ease of enforcement by municipal staff. For signage, changes to best practices and recent legal decisions on regulation may need to be addressed to ensure maintenance of community quality-of-life. For lighting, there are opportunities to incorporate modern standards and technologies, such as the growth of light-emitting diode (LED) lighting and additional standards to control lighting glare in addition to spillage. For example, regulations should address digital billboards and their potential impacts on nearby or abutting residential neighborhoods. Revisions to the lighting standards should embrace a “Dark Sky” strategy, both to reduce light pollution generally and to minimize the amount of bright light close to residential areas.

Update bulk provisions to appropriately control the scale of new homes

The Township should explore context-sensitive zoning revisions to ensure that new residential development balances the needs of modern households while maintaining consistency with the established scale and aesthetic quality of existing development. The key issues are building height, setbacks, lot coverage, and building materials. Some examples of measures that could be considered include linking residential building height to the front yard setback distance, increasing side yard setbacks, reducing allowable lot coverage, and creating guidelines that break up the bulk of large facades and promote high-quality, durable building materials. Detailed analysis is needed on these efforts to determine which measures may be appropriate, recognizing that what works in one neighborhood may not in another, as well as to avoid creating the need for a large number of variance applications.

Address zoning requirements for undersized residential lots to reduce variances

Consider a new zone for a portion of the R-B district where most lots do not meet the minimum size requirements and two-family homes are present, or adjusting use and bulk requirements for the zone to accommodate non-conforming lots. This zone represents a disproportionate number of bulk variances, and its yard setback and lot coverage requirements have long been cited in annual zoning reports as needing attention.

APPROPRIATELY CONTROL LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRIAL USES

Edison has long been known as an industrial hub, given its excellent highway access, freight rail network, and access to navigable portions of the Raritan River. Almost 15% of the Township's total land area is devoted to industrial uses, and at least 5.6 million square feet of warehouse/storage space has been permitted in Edison since 2014 – accounting for the most substantial square footage of any other type of development. However, the nature of these uses has changed dramatically with the rapid growth of online retail, especially in the wake of pandemic shutdowns which accelerated this trend. Traditional warehousing uses were fairly low-scale, typically up to 30-40 feet in height, and operating similarly to other light industrial uses (i.e. 9-5 or similar). Today, with high consumer demand for quick delivery of products ordered online, fulfillment centers (e.g. Amazon) may operate 24 hours a day, with large fleets of tractor-trailer sized trucks. Depending on the location and configuration of fulfillment centers, the potential impacts on local roadways and adjacent neighborhoods can be substantial, in terms of traffic, aesthetics, noise, and increase in impervious coverage.

These issues are not unique to Edison. A 2020 study by Jones Lang LaSalle estimated that demand for industrial real estate in the U.S. would exceed 1 billion square feet by 2025. In November 2021, CNBC noted that 96% of existing industrial space was already in use; thus, demand would need to be filled largely with new development.¹ The issue is that industrial zoning in Edison, like many communities, pre-dates the large-scale fulfillment center trends and lacks effectiveness ways to regulate these issues. Revisions are needed to address impacts of warehousing uses and incorporate best practices.

At the same time, the Township should ensure that existing warehouse facilities, such as Heller Industrial Park and Raritan Center, are not made non-conforming uses. For example, existing uses often combine more traditional warehouse models with newer technologies and market-based delivery methods that could be

conflated with a “fulfillment” use. Any definition or zone district changes should protect against such unintended consequences on pre-existing uses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Clarify definitions for warehousing, distribution, and fulfillment

Edison's existing zoning regulations for large-scale light industrial uses were developed in a different era and do not reflect the current market trends and scale of development. Currently, there are two definitions in Edison's zoning code that pertain to these uses:

TRUCK TERMINAL

Means an area and buildings where trucks load and unload cargo and freight and where the cargo and freight may be broken down or aggregated into smaller or larger loads for transfer to other vehicles or modes of transportation. Truck terminals are transshipment facilities which include ancillary storage facilities and parking areas for trucks awaiting cargo and may include facilities for servicing of trucks.

WAREHOUSE

Means a facility designed for the storage of goods and materials and having restricted access to the general public. Such use shall not include repackaging or assembly of products.

Of these definitions, truck terminals most closely align with the recently developed fulfillment centers on Route 27 near the I-287 interchange, as warehouses do not include packaging. Truck terminals do not appear to be permitted anywhere in the Township, and are in fact prohibited uses in the LI and RRRD districts, although they have recently been developed in the LI district. The definition of truck terminal does not seem to differentiate between cargo that is going to commercial/industrial users, vs. cargo that is going to individuals (i.e. cargo shipped to retailers vs. Amazon). From a traffic perspective, the difference between end user is significant, with the volume of goods being distributed to individuals being much higher. Edison should develop

¹ <https://www.dailyrecord.com/story/news/state/2023/01/25/nj-surge-in-warehouse-complexes-group-urges-early-action/69835691007/?fbclid=I-wAR1vAWQE9F359XTTfJVeKWB1ZbEwodFJJbBcMvhdQ9GR4HVVeAaReTMQxck>

a definition for fulfillment centers that makes it clear that they are specific to individual end users, and a definition for distribution facilities that does not include fulfillment centers. The Township of Howell has taken this approach, creating these definitions:

FULFILLMENT WAREHOUSE/CENTER

Those facilities involved in receipt of bulk products and the storage, separation, and distribution of said products on an individual basis to individual end-user individuals.

DISTRIBUTION

Those facilities engaged in the receipt, storage, and distribution of goods, products, cargo, and materials, including trans-shipment by boat, rail, air, or motor vehicle. Distribution shall not include fulfillment warehouse/center(s).

These definition changes are illustrative only and should be considered in combination with potential zoning changes discussed below. Along with these changes, Edison should consider regulating where warehouse, distribution, and fulfillment centers should be permitted, with particular focus on how such uses would impact local roads and adjacent residential uses. As noted above, any industrial zoning-related changes should be carefully undertaken to avoid making existing warehouse and distribution uses non-conforming.

Reduce the amount of land area zoned for intensive industrial uses

Edison has two zoning districts, the R-I and R-I-1 districts, that provide for restricted industrial uses appropriate to be located near environmentally sensitive areas and non-industrial areas, at a height of 2 stories/30 feet. However, these zones are in place only in very limited areas, in north Edison, and they often contain non-industrial uses like offices. The vast majority of industrially zoned land is either LI or RRRD, both of which allow more intensive uses. The Township should consider reducing the LI district to encompass its current locations generally south of I-287 and east of the NJ Turnpike, along the river between the Turnpike and Route 1, and along Talmadge Road west of the NJ Transit railroad tracks. For these LI

areas (including Heller Industrial Park), an overlay zone could be explored to support improvements to existing facilities without rendering them non-conforming fulfillment centers.

For the remaining LI areas - including near I-287 in the Clara Barton neighborhood, Routes 1 and 27, and in the Camp Kilmer Area - the Township could consider several options, including:

1. Rezoning to either the R-1 or R-I-1 zone,
2. Creation of a new zone or sub-zone that protects abutting residential zones through increased buffering and other measures, and
3. Potential designation as a redevelopment or rehabilitation area (see discussion below).

For the latter two options, the Township should consider the potential to allow owners of industrial property to explore introducing affordable or inclusionary housing. Undeveloped or underused parcels that abut residential zones could be ideal for transition to housing, particularly in light of the ongoing need to meet Edison's affordable housing obligations. With the definition changes discussed above, this would significantly reduce the potential for new large-scale fulfillment or distribution centers in these areas. Any existing fulfillment or distribution centers would become legally nonconforming, though creation of nonconformities should be minimized to the greatest extent practicable.

Follow best practices established by the state for warehouses

As discussed, Edison is not the only municipality in New Jersey to face pressure from large-scale warehousing/distribution uses. As of January 2023, three bills were before the State Legislature to deal with these uses. One requires a master plan re-examination report to set forth recommendations on the siting of warehouses consistent with the State Plan and with warehouse siting guidance policy adopted by the State Planning Commission. A second requires county planning board approval for certain warehouse development and provides for the installation of solar panels on these facilities. A final bill requires the State Planning Commission to adopt a

model ordinance for the siting of certain warehouses and provides for technical assistance, with allocated funding through the Department of Community Affairs. While the outcome of these bills is not certain, the State Planning Commission has been actively engaged in planning and outreach regarding large-scale warehouse and distribution facilities, and is developing voluntary guidance. The Township should closely monitor these developments and consider revising its code and/or planning policies according to best practices established by the Commission.

EXPLORE CONTEXT-APPROPRIATE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IN THE EDISON TRAIN STATION AREA.

The Edison Train Station area is characterized by a wide range of uses and intensity of development. On the east side the tracks, the zoning is single-family residential (R-B), although two-family homes exist adjacent to the main station parking lot. West of the tracks, the zoning is primarily light industrial (L-I), with research/office/laboratory (ROL), Planned Business (PB), general business (GB), Office-Service (O-S) and open space/recreation/conservation (OSR-C) zones along Plainfield Avenue. The station is served by three lots, all owned by NJ Transit, totaling 817 spaces. The largest of these is Lot #3, off Kilmer Road, which was developed for parking in 2010, essentially doubling capacity. However, during the pandemic, ridership at the station fell dramatically, and has not recovered to prior levels. While the two lots

on the east side of the tracks remain well-used, Lot #3 is significantly underutilized. This lot is difficult to access by vehicle, being located behind industrial uses, and requires that users walk to Plainfield Avenue to cross under the tracks and access the station. In addition, NJ Transit owns a vacant parcel on the north side of the tracks along Plainfield Avenue. These factors create opportunities to explore a mixed-use revitalization of the station area that links disconnected areas, promotes the use of mass transit, and supports economic development through the introduction of new businesses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish TOD zoning to facilitate higher-density, context-sensitive development around the Edison train station

The zoning and scale of the Edison station area differs significantly on the east and west sides of the tracks, requiring different approaches to development. This plan suggests exploring two new districts:

Transit District 1: south side of the tracks, west of Central Avenue and between Pappaianni Park and Rutgers Street

This area is currently zoned single-family (R-B) but does include some two-family homes. Here, the focus would be on small-scale, infill multifamily development that is contextual to the neighborhood, including two-family homes, townhomes, senior housing, and small multifamily buildings. Single-family uses would continue to be allowed.

Transit District 2: north side of the tracks, west to Truman Drive South/Suttons Lane, north to Kilmer Road/Kilmer Field, and east to Plainfield Avenue and properties just east

This area has several non-residential zoning designations, primarily L-I. Given the distance from established low-density neighborhoods and larger lot sizes, more intensive development could be appropriate. Permitted uses could include multifamily apartments, senior housing, townhomes, offices, convenience retail, hotels, restaurants, schools, and dormitories.



Aerial of north side of station

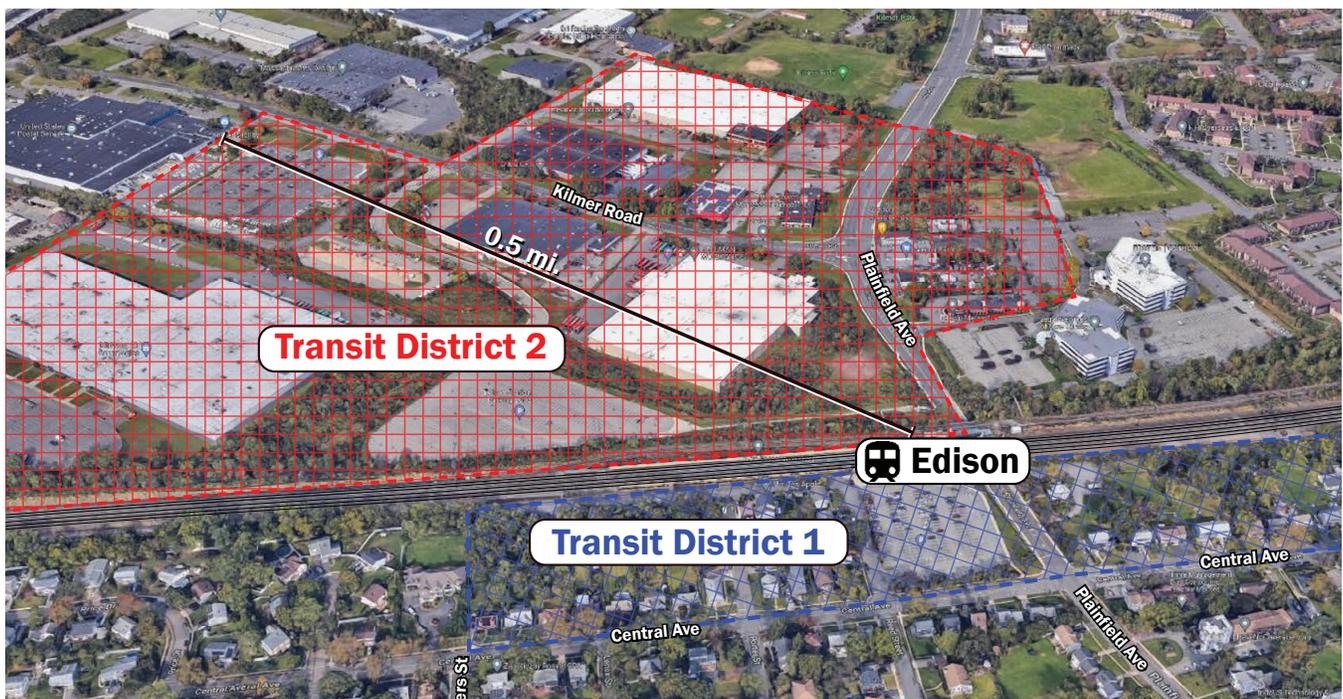
In both zoning districts, new development should incorporate the following:

- Consideration for reduced parking requirements (i.e. less than required by the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) given proximity to transit. However, future development should have strong pedestrian connections to the station and should provide any parking on-site. Any development occurring on the existing parking lots would have to replace all public parking lost.
- Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the station as well as nearby parks and municipal facilities.
- Affordable housing set-asides that help Edison meet its ongoing affordable housing obligation.

- Use of the highest standard of design that mitigates visual impacts on nearby lower-scale development. Design guidelines should be prepared to provide clear direction regarding the achievement of high-quality development.
- Utilization of sustainability strategies such as embracing opportunities to introduce tree cover, green infrastructure, and green building design.
- Creation of new or enhanced public spaces to establish a stronger sense of place.

Assess TOD potential near Metropark Station

Metropark Station, located in Woodbridge just over its boundary with Edison, is a major intermodal hub on the Northeast Corridor line, with NJ Transit, Amtrak, and bus service, and significant parking for commuters.



Transit District 1
 Permit slight increase in residential density provided buildings are contextual to neighborhood. Could include: single-family (already permitted), two-family homes, townhomes, senior housing, and multi-family up to four units.

Transit District 2
 Permitted uses could include multi-family apartments, senior housing, townhomes, offices, convenience retail, hotels, restaurants, schools, and dormitories.

Figure 55: TOD Land Use Approach for Edison Station Area

There is major development planned around the station in Woodbridge. Under a public-private partnership plan announced by Governor Murphy in 2022, a 12-acre parking lot next to the station will be developed with 230-250 apartments and 250,000 square feet of office and retail space, as well as community amenities and station improvements.

Edison has several office properties along Thornall Street that appear to be underutilized and are within walking distance to Metropark station, and there are also several underutilized properties on the Edison side of Wood Avenue that, with some sidewalk improvements, could also be easily accessible to the station. The Township should consider designation of these areas as an area in need of redevelopment, to facilitate a holistic analysis of development potential that can leverage planned TOD in Woodbridge and revitalize the Edison side of the train station area. The Thornall Street portion is separated from low-density residential neighborhoods by the railroad, Route 27, and a large wooded area, and its proximity to the Route 27 and Garden State Parkway would mitigate development-related traffic impacts from new development. In addition, Wood Avenue is an important link to Oak Tree Road. Revitalization of Wood Avenue, including sidewalk improvements, could spark improvements on this major commercial corridor as well. Lastly, TOD in this area of Edison could create opportunities for additional affordable housing to help the Township meet its current and future obligation.

Explore Transit Village designation within Edison

Transit Village designation, overseen by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, requires municipalities to demonstrate a commitment to revitalize and redevelop transportation hubs into mixed-use neighborhoods with a strong residential component. In turn, the designation opens up eligibility for a number of State grants. The area that makes up a Transit Village district is a half-mile radius around the transit station. Currently, there are 34 designated Transit Villages in New Jersey, including Metuchen.

In order to achieve Transit Village designation, the municipality must show support for transit-oriented development (TOD) and document that there are multiple TOD projects in the vicinity. To ensure that the community is supportive of development and higher density, Transit Village potential should be addressed in the Master Plan.

Although specific TOD projects are not planned within a half-mile of the Edison station area, the existing Blueberry Village apartment complex falls within this area and is walkable to the station. In addition, there are opportunity sites in the vicinity that could accommodate new development at a higher density, through targeted zoning revisions, as discussed. Meanwhile, the development planned near Metropark Station in Woodbridge – together with consideration of additional development in this area within Edison – could make the case for a Transit Village designation around that station.

UTILIZE REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING TO FACILITATE STRATEGIC REVITALIZATION AND COHESIVE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS.

Redevelopment is a key land use tool in New Jersey to promote revitalization of properties facing issues that are unlikely to be addressed by existing market forces. The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) empowers municipalities to designate areas “in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation,” providing for various planning and financial tools to make projects more feasible and to remove deleterious conditions. A redevelopment designation may also qualify projects in the designated area for financial subsidies or other incentives programs offered by the state.

In the past 20 years, Edison has conducted more than a dozen redevelopment studies, a number of which have resulted in the preparation of redevelopment plans. However, only a few redevelopment plans have been formally designated on the Zoning Map. More recently, the pace of redevelopment studies appears to have

increased, as the Township has conducted a series of redevelopment studies on smaller sites throughout Edison.

The redevelopment tool is appropriate for many locations in Edison. However, the Township could be more strategic in its use, both to facilitate revitalization of specific problematic sites or locations, and to provide for a comprehensive planning approach for larger areas that can unlock community benefits and infrastructure improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider new or amended redevelopment designation for key opportunity areas

There are several locations where a redevelopment or rehabilitation area designation would make sense, or where revisions to existing redevelopment plans are needed:

Camp Kilmer Area:

This large area is in the southwest portion of Edison, generally west of the NJ Transit railroad tracks and south of Plainfield Avenue. Most of the area is zoned L-1, characterized by a mix of warehouses, large-scale public uses (e.g. a Post Office distribution center, Township DPW facility, and DMV complex), institutional/non-profit uses (homeless shelter, Hindu temple, and support facilities for the Rutgers Livingston campus), recreational facilities, and affordable housing. With this hodgepodge of uses, the area lacks cohesion or a sense of place. However, it has great potential due to its proximity to the Edison train station and Rutgers and ample developable land. Beyond the areas discussed above for TOD zoning, the Township should explore a redevelopment designation, including preparation of a redevelopment plan, for the Camp Kilmer area. The plan should address the appropriate mix of uses and area, height, and bulk standards, as well as potential infrastructure improvements (i.e. trails and sidewalks) and introduction of community amenities such as new or upgraded recreational facilities and possibly a new

public school facility. Preparation of a redevelopment plan provides the opportunity to better connect this area to the rest of Edison and the surrounding community.

Plainfield Avenue and Route 27:

The intersection of these two major roadways is generally regarded as one of the most challenging areas of Edison. As detailed in the crash analysis, it is a hot spot both for total vehicular crashes and those involving bikes and pedestrians. The area is generally a weak environment for walking, with inconsistent sidewalks and large and numerous curb cuts. The aesthetic environment is also poor, characterized by one-story buildings with vacancies, a lack of vegetation, and significant impervious coverage. A redevelopment designation and plan are appropriate for this location, encompassing the area currently zoned G-B along Route 27 between Division Street and Sheppard Place, to facilitate a comprehensive planning process that could include changes to permitted uses as well as sidewalk improvements and other infrastructure upgrades.

In August 2022, the Township designated several individual properties in this area as in need of redevelopment; however, the sites are not contiguous and included additional disconnected properties over a mile away, just west of Route 27's intersection with Talmadge and Sturgis Roads. A comprehensive redevelopment plan is needed for the Plainfield Avenue/Route 27 area that incorporates the potential of both condemnation and non-condemnation approaches. Individual properties within this area may be in reasonably good condition and thus not subject to condemnation, but including them in a redevelopment plan would represent a holistic approach and could bring amenable property owners to the table to undertake necessary improvements on their sites.

Amboy Avenue in the Clara Barton Area:

As discussed below, the Township should consider replacement of the Amboy Avenue Revitalization (AAR) overlay district with a new rehabilitation area that more effectively balances revitalization goals with the existing context.

Hartz Mountain Property:

In 2007, the Township adopted a redevelopment plan for the former Ford Assembly Plant property on Route 1. At the time, the developer (Hartz Mountain) envisioned a pedestrian-friendly lifestyle center, including a movie theater, 150-room hotel, retail, restaurants, and office space. In addition, the plan contemplated the developer donating land for a community center, including a full-service YMCA, swimming complex, indoor basketball courts, and meeting space. Given market changes, the developer has shifted its strategy to more of a traditional retail area, with a focus on entertainment uses such as Topgolf and the Supercharged indoor go-kart facility. Neither the pedestrian infrastructure nor the community center use have occurred. These changes have required revisions to the redevelopment plan. As discussed below, a new, comprehensive redevelopment plan is needed to reflect an entertainment district and identify bike/ped and community-oriented amenities.

Metropark Vicinity (Wood Avenue and Thornall Street):

As noted above, this area has potential for TOD, to build from what is already planned next to the station in Woodbridge. The area for potential redevelopment designation would encompass non-single-family residential properties on the Edison side of Wood Avenue between Route 27 and Oak Tree Road, and Thornall Street between Wood Avenue and the Greenfield Gardens apartment complex. This area should also include 226 Route 27, whose owner has expressed interest in a redevelopment designation study.

Raritan Riverfront:

As discussed below, the waterfront area between Route 1 and Silver Lake Avenue has significant revitalization potential, but is constrained by physical conditions. It would benefit from redevelopment designation and preparation of a redevelopment plan addressing allowable uses, public improvement, and strong waterfront design.

Create and maintain a map of all redevelopment and rehabilitation areas

One challenge communities face when competing with other municipalities that have redevelopment opportunities is offering a user-friendly platform that enables developers to quickly and efficiently view redevelopment opportunities. Developing a map that depicts all of Edison's existing redevelopment and rehabilitation areas would provide a user-friendly tool that developers could easily reference to identify opportunities of interest. Several options exist in terms of the user interface for the map, ranging from creation of a simple PDF map for easy viewing, download, and email distribution to interested developers, to creation of a GIS map layer placed on the zoning map. The GIS option would enable areas in need of redevelopment and/or rehabilitation to be linked to their respective studies and/or plans, all of which could be accessible via the Township's website.

A one-page profile of each redevelopment/rehabilitation area could also be created as an executive summary for each property and be linked to the site location on the map featured on the Township's website. The profiles would provide a user-friendly quick reference highlighting the site attributes and the redevelopment or rehabilitation opportunities provided.

Mapping would provide a "big picture" visualization of all of the redevelopment and rehabilitation opportunities that are available in Edison, which would facilitate community-wide land use and economic development planning and implementation.

Consider preparation of a scattered-site redevelopment plan

All of the redevelopment and rehabilitation studies that have not yet been subject to the creation of a stand-alone redevelopment plan could be included in one larger scattered-site redevelopment plan. This plan could group similar sites under similar use and bulk standard frameworks, utilize similar design guidelines, etc.,

while still offering the opportunity to create separate subsections for unique sites that require special use, bulk, and design requirements/standards. Some key points to this approach include:

- Creating one scattered-site redevelopment plan would provide substantial cost savings, as only one public process would be required for the creation of numerous redevelopment areas featured within the scattered-site redevelopment plan.
- It is recommended that highly controversial sites still be subject to separate redevelopment studies and plans so as not to derail the larger scattered site redevelopment plan.
- The scattered-site redevelopment plan could contain a map that depicts all of the sites, and corresponding GIS mapping layers that would be integrated with the overall redevelopment and rehabilitation GIS layer and mapping interface noted above.
- One-page executive summary site profiles are recommended to be created for each site for ease of reference by interested developers. These profiles would be included in the scattered site redevelopment plan and linked to the GIS mapping on the Township's website.

EXPLORE A MIX OF STRATEGIES ALONG AMBOY AVENUE TO BALANCE REVITALIZATION AND LOCAL SCALE

Amboy Avenue, in the Clara Barton section of Edison, has received a large amount of capital improvements and planning attention over the years, to fulfill a vision that this area could become the Township's "downtown." However, despite major streetscape improvements, creation of the Amboy Avenue Revitalization (AAR) district, and establishment of the Commercial Corridor Overlay District, the area has seen little private investment. Meanwhile, the one new development that has resulted from the overlay zoning, a four-story building, has received mixed community support given concerns that it is out of scale with the area. In general,

regulatory and streetscaping activities have not been able to overcome the corridor's physical challenges: shallow lots that provide limited opportunity for on-site parking, a lack of off-street public parking, and existing residential uses that interrupt the commercial pattern and streetscape.

Given these limitations, its non-centralized location, and lack of a train station, it is unlikely that Amboy Avenue can ever become a true "downtown" comparable to larger, traditional downtowns like Metuchen. However, the corridor could be strengthened into a unique neighborhood business area that would draw from nearby neighborhoods for convenience goods and mom and pop stores and restaurants. A range of actions are recommended along Amboy Avenue, in recognition that zoning alone is not likely to solve its underlying issues and spur revitalization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Reduce allowable height along Amboy Avenue

As noted, four-story development on Amboy Avenue has received mixed support from the surrounding community, as the existing development pattern is generally one to two stories. The Township should consider reducing the allowable building height to three stories, except that a fourth story could be allowed on selected key sites (see below). In these cases, the fourth story must be set back from both the street frontage and adjacent residential properties, as consistent with the current redevelopment plan. In addition, any structured or under-building parking must be designed to be concealed from Amboy Avenue by a liner of retail and/or restaurant uses.

Consider replacement of the AAR district with a new rehabilitation area

The Commercial Corridor Overlay District was established in 2016 following designation of the Amboy Avenue business district as an area in need of rehabilitation and preparation of a redevelopment plan. The redevelopment plan, which incorporated a community engagement process, is a thoughtful document that encourages strong design principles. The new four-story



Amboy Avenue

building does not appear to have been built according to the standards established in the redevelopment plan, which requires that a fourth story be set back 10 feet from the rest of the building façade to minimize the impact of additional height on the streetscape. While the development of this building shows that the use of the redevelopment tool can be effective in spurring development interest, it is notable that this project is the only new building constructed since 2016 under the redevelopment plan. One other four-story building was approved but not built, while a three-story building was proposed but not approved. Most properties on Amboy Avenue are small and shallow, making new development (including required off-street parking) very difficult.

The presence of the AAR zone along with the overlay district is confusing, while the use of an overlay approach instead of a superseding redevelopment area may not be as effective at incentivizing new investment. The Township should consider establishment of a non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment, which could incorporate many of the design principles and development standards of the existing redevelopment plan, with some modifications discussed below. This change would eliminate the need for property owners



within the area to “opt in” to the rehabilitation area, which could incentivize more owners to propose development that is consistent with the redevelopment plan.

The focus for redevelopment along Amboy Avenue should be on sites that have sufficient area, width, depth, and access to accommodate new development and mitigate potential impacts on nearby residential uses. Thus, to incentivize revitalization, the Township could consider a fourth story on sites that are larger than a half-acre, have Amboy Avenue and lot depth of at least 100 feet, and have access to two streets (i.e., corner lots). These characteristics, which apply to a handful of properties along Amboy Avenue, will help to ensure strong site design. Any change on allowable height will require an amendment to the existing redevelopment plan.

Explore strategies to secure public parking.

The lack of off-street public parking is one of the most significant constraints to both new development and the health of existing businesses along Amboy Avenue. The Township should explore opportunities to acquire property for public parking, in strategic location(s) that could serve the entire business district. An ideal central location is between 4th Street and 7th Street, where there are several underutilized properties,

including with excessive paved areas and front yard parking. Establishment of a municipal parking lot in this area creates an opportunity to implement aesthetic improvements, reduce overall impervious coverage, and connect to the Middlesex Greenway. The Township should also explore opportunities for shared parking agreements with private property owners, so that public parking may be permitted, after regular hours, for businesses such as banks that are only open during the day.

In addition, as noted in the transportation section, the Town should investigate the potential to acquire the Little Avenue (private road) right-of-way, to create a key pedestrian and bicycle link to the greenway as well as enhance the overall Amboy Avenue corridor.

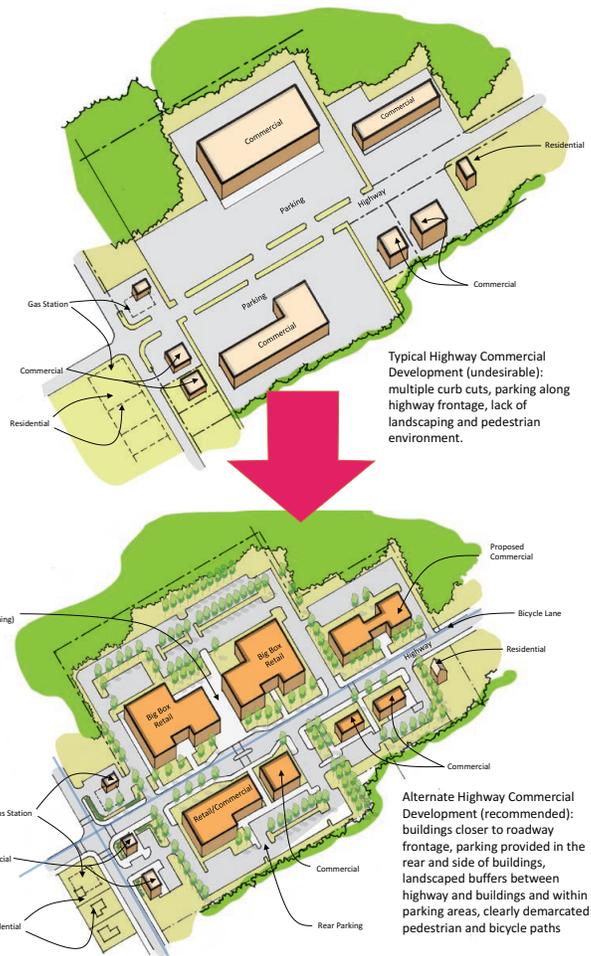
IMPROVE THE AESTHETICS AND PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT OF COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

In the public outreach process, many residents expressed the need to transform the major commercial corridors such as Route 1, Route 27, Old Tree Road, and Woodbridge Avenue. Most of these commercial corridors have developed over time into a myriad of strip centers and single-use and underutilized properties that do not have coordinated access, shared parking, cohesive architecture or encourage foot traffic. The design and orientation of buildings along the corridor vary significantly, as evidenced by the range of front yard setbacks. Many of the properties have free-standing stores with modest or minimal visual distinctiveness, parking lots in the front, with pylon signs, and limited landscaping.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop design guidelines for commercial corridors

Continuous street trees and landscaping treatments can create an aesthetically pleasing environment for both pedestrians and motorists. Residents expressed the need to create more cohesive and aesthetically pleasing commercial corridors which are friendly to both



Recommended design standards for commercial corridors

pedestrians and drivers. Landscaping and trees add to curb appeal, help with stormwater drainage, and attract pedestrian activity and businesses. Strong site design and aesthetics also establish a sense of place that can mark these corridors as important “town center” nodes.

Improving these corridors largely relies on the voluntary actions of private property owners. This can be achieved over time by adopting appropriate zoning regulations, including incentives and guidelines to encourage good design in future development. Guidelines should:

- Encourage buildings to be sited closer to the road to create a friendlier pedestrian environment;
- Create more green space with consistent setbacks, street trees, and plantings;
- Consider low-impact design guidelines;

- Require standards for signage to make them more consistent and aesthetically pleasing;
- Require open spaces, parking areas, sidewalks, signs, lighting, landscaping, and utilities to be well related to the site and arranged to achieve a safe, efficient and contextually sensitive development; and
- Ensure that on-site parking has better access management (i.e. fewer curb cuts) and is well-landscaped and oriented toward the side or rear of buildings rather than in the front.

Commercial corridors that are most appropriate for specific attention in design guidelines include Oak Tree Road, Woodbridge Avenue, Inman Avenue, Plainfield Avenue, and Route 27 from Plainfield Avenue to the Highland Park border.

ENCOURAGE NEW USES AND PUBLIC ACCESS ALONG THE RARITAN RIVER.

The Raritan River is a major untapped resource for Edison. Although the Township has substantial river frontage, it is characterized by scattered industrial uses, landfills, wetlands, and vacant industrially zoned land with significant environmental constraints. Public access is limited to the boat launch and adjacent walkway on Meadow Road, with additional private recreational access at the Raritan River Boat Club at the end of Player Avenue. The riverfront area is a special resource that should be visually and physically accessible to the public to the maximum extent practicable while respecting private property rights, land constraints, and incorporating environmentally friendly design within waterfront access improvements. The riverfront also presents economic development opportunities with the introduction of new, water-related uses that can activate the waterfront and allow for its greater enjoyment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Support revitalization of the Raritan River waterfront through the redevelopment tool

While much of the Raritan Riverfront zone is highly constrained by existing industrial uses and wetlands, the portion generally between Route 1 and Silver Lake Avenue

has great potential for revitalization. This area has large underdeveloped properties, such as along Silver Lake and Glendale Avenues and at the end of Lloyd Street. There are limited residential uses here, and existing industrial uses have no connection to the waterfront; they could be located in any industrial area. In addition, it appears that the Township owns a significant (7+ acre) wooded parcel off the end of Glendale Avenue and including a portion of the waterfront. This property abuts several street ends, providing opportunities to establish new vehicular or pedestrian connections.

New development in this portion of the waterfront is constrained by the narrowness and condition of streets, the number of individual property owners, steep topography, and the presence of existing industrial uses. To overcome these issues and provide for a cohesive development approach, a redevelopment designation is probably most appropriate. This designation should be followed by preparation of a redevelopment plan that incorporates the following concepts:

- **Allowable uses:** Water-dependent and/or water-enhanced uses such as marinas, hotels, and residential.
- **Public access:** Required public waterfront walkway.
- **Infrastructure improvements:**
 - Street extensions to enhance connectivity (e.g. linking street ends).
 - Pavement and curbing improvements, including street widening as possible given the narrowness of many existing streets.
 - Implementation of stormwater management and other utility systems.
- **Strong Waterfront Design:** Design guidelines to facilitate a cohesive look unique to Edison's riverfront.

Based on the success and timing of revitalization of this portion of the riverfront, a similar approach could be explored east of the Turnpike. New development of that portion is more challenging given the presence of active industrial uses and ongoing environmental cleanup. However, this portion of the waterfront would

be appropriate for expanded public access to build on the trail near the boat launch and provide opportunities for enjoyment of wetland areas. This open space-oriented approach could be addressed through designation as an area in need of rehabilitation and municipal or county acquisition of waterfront land and/or easements (see below).

Consider introducing public access easement requirements

In tandem with redevelopment planning, Edison should investigate the potential to require that properties abutting or contiguous with the Raritan River include maximum practical provision for public access, including an access easement of 25 feet in width along all river frontage. These easements should be mapped and legally recorded. Over time, public access infrastructure could be created within these easement areas based on funding opportunities and as part of any future development.

Explore all available funding opportunities to develop a network of waterfront walkways

Edison should pursue available state, federal, and county funding sources to facilitate planning and construction of walkway elements. These sources may include initiatives and programs that deal with resiliency, infrastructure, environmental justice, open space improvements, and public health. In addition, property owners along the riverfronts should be approached by the Township with offers to purchase easements (using Open Space Trust Funds).

PROVIDE A DIVERSE RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS ACROSS INCOME, HOUSEHOLD SIZE, AND AGE GROUPS.

There is an ongoing need for affordable housing options in the Township, as is the case for much of New Jersey and nationwide. For Edison, in particular, there is a lack of high-quality, modern housing at price points for young people entering the market. In addition, the Township has a significant affordable housing obligation that is must

continue to address affirmatively. Thoughtful, creative housing strategies can address both the statutory obligation and the need to meet market demands.

Diverse housing options in terms of price ranges, number of bedrooms, and services and amenities for all age groups and those with special needs meet an essential need of the community. This range of options also helps enables existing residents to remain in Edison as they graduate through the various phases of life without being priced out. Maintaining a housing stock that can serve a broad spectrum of the community helps to ensure that living in the Township is attainable for those who are just starting out as well as seniors who have raised their families and want to stay in Edison.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continue to implement the Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan to increase the availability of affordable housing in the community

Edison has been proactive in meeting its affordable housing obligations, and has facilitated a range of housing options including apartments, townhomes, and public housing as well as single-family homes. However, the declining amount of vacant land, and the increasing costs of housing development, will require a robust toolbox of housing strategies and creativity to utilize that every opportunity for create additional affordable housing. Strategies that Edison should explore include:

- **Inclusionary Development:** Development of any future multifamily uses shall include the required affordable housing set-aside, as set forth in the HE&FSP.
- **Market-to-Affordable Programs:** Explore offering incentives, through the Township's affordable housing trust fund, to upgrade existing aged apartment stock in exchange for deed-restricting a portion as affordable housing. This would have the effect of taking credit for affordable units without any new construction.
- **Maintenance of affordable housing stock:** Seek the extension of expiring controls for all affordable housing developments as affordability controls near expiration.

- Public-private partnerships:** Explore potential public-private partnerships to develop affordable and workforce housing. While there are a variety of ways that these partnerships could take shape, one option could be for the Township to partner with a combination of nonprofit and for-profit developers. This approach would enable the project team to leverage private capital, fundraising from the nonprofit sector, and potentially also a land donation or an allocation from Edison's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, if appropriate and feasible. Such a strategy could be applied to developing for-sale multifamily units such as townhouse or condominium-style housing, renovation and deed restriction of single-family homes, or rental housing. In addition, if the pro forma and funding stack for the project is established in certain ways, even though the nonprofit sector would be involved, the land and improvements may be able to be taxed at the full or nearly full tax rate. Potential nonprofit partners for these or similar approaches include JFK University Hospital, which could have an interest in providing housing affordable to its staff.
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** Investigate the feasibility of implementing an accessory dwelling unit program for properties that are able to accommodate the increased intensity of land use in terms of parking and light, air and open space in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses. Representative design typologies of ADUs that may be appropriate include accessory dwellings established through the construction or retrofitting of an additional detached structure, through an addition that is attached to an existing structure, or within a portion of an existing structure such as the upper story of a residence or commercial structure.

These units can be ideal for young adults starting out, downsizing seniors, and multigenerational households. ADUs could be one strategy in Edison's ongoing affordable housing planning, to create a limited number of affordable units on existing built lots instead of via new development. The Township may consider allowing ADUs as

conditional uses in large-lot residential zones. ADUs are most appropriate for deep lots that can accommodate a rear accessory structure and/or the off-street parking required to serve both the principal structure and ADU. Such larger lots are in the R-A-A and R-A zones, generally in North Edison. Conditions could include minimum lot size, width, and depth to ensure sufficient room for off-street parking and other infrastructure needs. This issue requires further study and analysis to develop effective standards that ensure compatibility with the scale of existing neighborhoods.

State building code requirements for foundations and weatherization to convert detached garages to dwelling units can be cost prohibitive. Therefore, any ADU regulation should avoid placing undue impediments to the introduction of ADUs, such as owner occupancy requirements (which have been held by courts as illegal in New Jersey), differential tax treatment from single-family homes, or onerous permitting or licensing requirements. The Township may also consider ways to further incentivize ADUs, such as by relaxing selected zoning provisions to allow homeowners with a detached ADU to also have an accessory shed for storage, or by providing financial incentives from housing trust fund monies in exchange for deed-restricting the ADU as an affordable unit. At the same time, the ADU regulations should be carefully tailored to ensure that the lot does not become a de facto two-family home.

Work with the Edison Housing Authority to upgrade existing facilities and better connect them with the community

The Housing Authority is exploring the potential to revitalize its properties, Julius Engel Gardens off Woodbridge Avenue in the Bonhamtown section, and Robert Holmes Gardens, in North Edison. Both of these properties have room to add units and are in need of rehabilitation. The Authority is pursuing U.S. HUD Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) funding, which allows public housing agencies to leverage public and private debt and equity in order to reinvest in the public

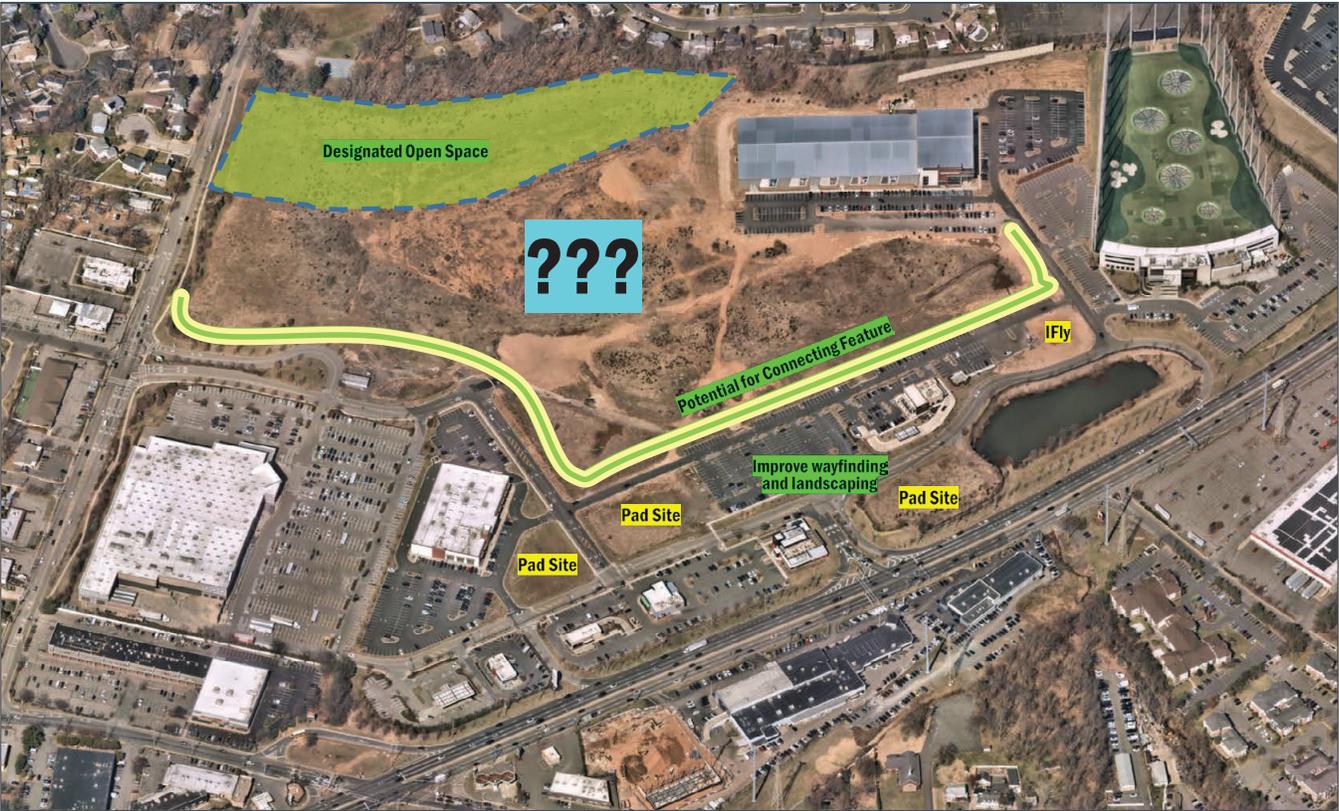
housing stock. Through the RAD program, units move to a Section 8 platform with a long-term contract that, by law, must be renewed, to ensure that the units remain permanently affordable to low-income households. Residents continue to pay 30% of their income toward the rent and retain the same basic rights they possess in the public housing program, and the program maintains the public stewardship of the converted property through rules on ongoing ownership and use.

As the Housing Authority embarks on this revitalization program, the Township must be an engaged partner. The RAD program presents the opportunity to better connect these housing complexes with adjacent areas, and to potentially introduce mixed-income housing and mixed uses (e.g. retail and restaurants) to provide more amenities for residents. Edison could also consider rezoning public housing sites to an affordable housing overlay zone, both to recognize the existing sites and to ensure that future redevelopment includes the continued provision of affordable units. This new overlay

could require a set-aside of affordable units for new development, in exchange for building at a height and/or density greater than permitted by the underlying zoning.

ESTABLISH AN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT AT THE FORMER FORD ASSEMBLY SITE

The redevelopment of the former Ford Assembly site is a long-term project that has evolved over time with shifts the market. As initially proposed by the developer, Hartz Mountain, the approximately 100-acre site would be a lifestyle center, incorporating residential uses as well as stores, restaurants, a movie theater, walking trails, and community uses. Changing economic conditions in the wake of the Great Recession forced a strategy shift to focus more on commercial and entertainment uses. Since then, the developer has requested, and received, multiple revisions to the redevelopment plan to facilitate construction of the Edison Towne Square retail center



Edison Town Square - Aerial

and large individual users such as Top Golf and the Supercharged go-kart complex. The site is generating “buzz” and has potential to become a unique retail and entertainment destination within the region. However, redevelopment has occurred in a piecemeal way that, in essence, develops pad sites with little connectivity or sense of place, and plans for a 7.5-acre parcel to be set aside for community use have not been finalized.

RECOMMENDATION:

Amend the former Ford Assembly Redevelopment Plan to unlock the site’s potential as an entertainment district

The Township should work with Hartz Mountain on a new redevelopment plan that takes a comprehensive look at the remaining development of the former Ford Assembly site. Of particular importance is the creation of a pedestrian network that can allow visitors to park once and explore all the amenities available, as well as link to the future community use and the surrounding neighborhoods. This approach could minimize the need for vast areas of surface parking (potentially through the construction of parking decks) and mitigate traffic issues that have arisen with the opening of popular destinations such as Top Golf and Supercharged. As the market continues to evolve post-COVID, new uses should be considered for the area, such as additional hotels and multifamily housing geared toward young professionals and empty-nesters.

The redevelopment plan should also identify the appropriate location and amenities for the future community use. Public engagement for this master plan has consistently identified the need for a new community center in a central location. The Hartz Mountain site could be an ideal location for such a center. Any community use should be designed to connect with the existing Paterniti Park and be walkable from residential areas off Vineyard Road.

CONSIDER APPROPRIATE NEW USES FOR THE MENLO PARK MALL COMPLEX TO HELP IT FLOURISH

Menlo Park Mall is a major regional shopping complex occupying about 1.3 million square feet on a 70-acre site. The complex is generally healthy, with the owner, Simon Property Group, having made significant investments over the years and showing flexibility to adapt to changing market forces. This includes bringing in experiential tenants such as laser tag and fitness, as well as developing small pad sites along Route 1 for food-related uses. Nevertheless, the mall remains subject to the same challenges that face all brick-and-mortar retailers, in particular the explosive growth of online shopping. While the outlook for Menlo Park Mall is positive and the complex is poised to remain a retail destination, the Township should consider flexibility in the land use regulatory environment to enable the mall area to adapt and continue to thrive.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Explore new zoning that gives flexibility in introducing new uses and repurposing space

The Township can help to ensure that Menlo Park Mall is in a strong position to adapt to market changes by creating a flexible regulatory environment. New zoning should be considered that allows for a broad mix of tenants and uses, including recreation; hospitality (hotel); healthcare, academic, and other institutions; and innovative commercial uses such as labs, technology firms, commercial kitchens, and microbusinesses. Given the proximity of Hackensack Meridian’s JFK University Medical Center, medical-related uses could be particularly viable. In addition, the southwest side of the mall abuts Roosevelt Park and could be appropriate for the introduction of a small number of multifamily residential units. The presence of the park buffers this portion of the mall property from existing neighborhoods and would provide recreational amenities for future residents. And, the mall’s existing internal road network could allow new uses to be accessed from Parsonage Road, minimizing the impact on Route 1.



Menlo Park Mall

The mall's owner has expressed interest in developing the rear (southwest) portion of the site for multifamily uses. While the introduction of significant new uses can be challenging, and the impacts of such a change should be carefully considered, the Township should engage with the owner in thoughtful consideration of future development potential. Limited residential development that is either age-restricted or clearly marketed toward empty-nesters or young professionals could be an appropriate reuse of underutilized areas of the site, without generating significant adverse impacts on local infrastructure and the school system. Any introduction of residential uses should incorporate strong design aesthetics and connections (including via bike and pedestrian networks) to nearby recreation and other amenities, to ensure a high quality of life for future potential residents.

EXPLORE ZONING ALTERNATIVES AROUND MIDDLESEX COLLEGE TO BUILD ON RECENT INITIATIVES

As discussed elsewhere in this Plan, Middlesex College has embarked on a major capital investment plan to introduce recreational, cultural, workforce development, and educational amenities to its campus. The college already has a substantial presence on Woodbridge Avenue, serving some 10,000 full- and part-time students, more than 10% of whom live in Edison.

The college's plans and growth potential create an opportunity for the Township to revitalize, activate, and beautify this area, which lies between the Turnpike and the Raritan Business Center/Heller Industrial Park. The R-B-zoned area east of the Turnpike, generally bounded by Vista Drive and Old Post Road, could be appropriate for the introduction of college-related uses such as school administration facilities, faculty and student housing, and amenities that serve these uses. This neighborhood is primarily small single- and two-family homes, and in the short-term, it is likely to remain so. However, as the college continues to grow and evolve, the introduction of additional uses would make sense.

As noted previously, there are many unanswered questions about the scope of the project. These include whether there is any additional vehicular access proposed to the campus, how the proposed uses will affect traffic, how parking will be provided on-site given the apparent replacement of existing parking with new buildings, and whether the housing is intended to be for students, faculty, or the public.

Middlesex College is located within the E-1 zoning district, which does not appear to permit many of the uses proposed (e.g. housing and stadiums). Nevertheless, as a publicly owned site, the college is not subject to normal site plan requirements and is not reviewed by the Planning Board. It is critical that the Township be a strong advocate to ensure that issues such as traffic, parking, noise, and lighting are fully addressed to avoid potential negative impacts on the adjacent neighborhoods and Edison overall.

The language in this Master Plan regarding the college's plans should not be taken as an endorsement of the preliminary concepts available to the Township as this plan was drafted. It is expected that, as the plans evolve with further detail, the Township will be an involved partner to assure that Edison can realize the possible benefits of the college's growth while mitigating off-site impacts.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Consider a potential overlay zone for the college area to introduce new uses.

The Township should consider an overlay zoning approach, which would give property owners the option to develop with a broader array of uses. Commercial and auto-oriented uses be focused along Woodbridge Avenue, where they are already present, while uses more complementary to traditional single-family homes (e.g. small-scale faculty/student housing) could be supported along interior side streets. It is important to note that nothing in this recommendation is intended to facilitate a sweeping land use change or remove existing homes. An overlay zoning district would simply expand development options, in recognition of the opportunity presented by the college's initiatives.

STREAMLINE AND CLARIFY ZONING DISTRICTS AND ENSURE HIGH QUALITY-OF-LIFE THROUGH STRONG REGULATORY PROCESSES AND CODE ENFORCEMENT.

Development of a new master plan affords the opportunity to address a wide range of "clean-up" items in the zoning ordinance, other regulations, and the land use process. The following recommendations are geared toward general land use planning policy and ordinance amendments as well as other land use issues not covered above.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Consider code updates to regulate short-term rentals

The incidence of short-term rentals, in which a resident renting out their property or dwelling unit for short time period, via a commercial online platform such as AirBnB or VRBO, has been steadily increasing throughout

the region. Although Edison's zoning code is silent on this issue, the Township is not immune to the trend. It is recommended that the zoning code be revised to expressly define short-term rentals and regulate them appropriately. Some municipalities choose to permit these uses but control them through fees and inspection requirements, while others opt to prohibit them outright. Heavily used short-term rentals are generally not suitable for low-density residential neighborhoods due to impacts such as traffic and noise. However, prohibiting these uses completely requires having the capacity to enforce the restriction. Reasonable regulations on short-term rentals may achieve a balance of controlling the impacts while providing for a fee structure than can recoup the cost of code enforcement efforts. More study of this issue is required to determine the optimal course of action.

Address mismatches between existing or preferred use and zoning

The 2011 Master Plan Re-Examination Report recommended several specific zoning map changes to parcels to better reflect their intended use. It does not appear that these changes were implemented; therefore, this Plan carries them forward, as summarized in the Zoning Map changes below.

Consider streamlining similar districts, transitioning redevelopment areas and affordable housing zones into traditional zoning, and eliminating un-mapped districts

Edison has a number of zoning districts to facilitate townhouse development, which are now generally built-out. The Township should look at creating a single district to accommodate these existing developments, based on the applicable built densities. This could allow for the consolidation of very similar districts and overall simplification of the zoning map.

For the business districts, there are a variety of zoning districts along Edison's commercial corridors, including GB, GB-H, O-S, O-S-1, and O-S-2. In practice, there is little difference in terms of bulk and uses across these zones when they are found along the same corridor. At the same

time, these zones are also found in pockets throughout Edison in environments that are not highway-oriented. The Township should undertake a comprehensive review of its business zones to ensure that they better match the existing and future conditions; business areas within neighborhoods that serve a local market should not have the same zoning as large-scale shopping areas along major highways. Streamlining some business and office zones would allow for zoning to be consistent along both sides of a corridor, offering predictability and greater consistency of use and scale.

Similarly, there are several areas that are zoned industrial (LI, R-I, or R-I-I) but are actually consumer-oriented commercial uses, not warehouse or distribution facilities. The Township should consider rezoning these areas to one of the OS zones, as appropriate. Office-service areas can also be explored for the introduction of mixed uses. For example, the TC-zoned property on Route 27 next to the municipal complex and Papaiani Park is experiencing vacancy in its office spaces and has a significant amount of underutilized parking. Particularly for the rear portion near the municipal building, infill development including a range of uses could be considered. The Township should also look at removing single-family homes as permitted uses in office/service districts due to the potential for incompatibility.

In all business zones, the Township should conduct a thorough review of permitted uses, area and bulk regulations, and parking requirements to support small and emerging businesses as well as the arts and cultural community. This review should include an assessment of the permitting process to streamline the approval of desired business types, such as conversions of retail to restaurant use.

Where development has been fully completed subject to a redevelopment area or affordable housing overlay designation, consideration should be given to transitioning these sites into an appropriate traditional zoning district, again based on applicable density. Finally, there are several zoning districts that appear in the Township's regulations but are not mapped. These zones should either be formally designated on the zoning map or, if no longer applicable, should be removed from the regulations.

In addition to specific ordinance amendments recommended in this Master Plan, it is recommended that the Township review the ordinance annually to ensure that key sections such as the definitions, procedures, fees, and other sections reflect current best practices and data. For example, updates to definitions to reflect new uses, processes, and terminology should be completed annually.

LAND USE PLAN

The Edison Land Use Plan indicates the proposed location, extent, and intensity of future development of land for various types of residential, commercial, business, recreational, and public and semi-public purposes. The Land Use Plan is intended to guide future development in the Township for the next 10-year period, in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Land Use Law, in a manner that protects the public health, safety, and general welfare. This Plan is designed to serve as the basis for potential revisions to the Township’s land use ordinances, including zoning, subdivision, and site plan codes.

The Land Use Plan provides an overview of preferred land use types and locations consistent with the Township’s overarching planning goals. In essence, it is an intersection of existing land use, zoning, environmental constraints, and Master Plan recommendations. The map accompanying the Land Use Plan is not meant to be rigidly parcel-specific; it illustrates broad land use patterns for different geographic areas in Edison. For example, an area designated as residential may include lots that contain commercial uses. While the existing land use map may pick up these individual uses, the Land Use Plan shows the generalized ideal land use for the area. Designations on the Land Use Plan are not intended to eliminate isolated cases that do not match the indicated land use, but rather to depict the overall desired uses that are envisioned for the area over time.

The Township Land Use Plan is based on the following categories of development. The relationship of these categories to existing zoning is provided, along with recommendations for potential changes to zoning designations. Proposed amendments to regulations and the zoning map are summarized at the end of this section. It is important to note that the recommendations contained in the Land Use Plan are just that: recommendations. Any zoning amendments undertaken by the Township may ultimately vary in some details from these specific recommendations, but should be consistent with the overall policy and intent.

The generalized future land uses are shown using traditional land use colors. Lighter shades of each color indicate less development intensity; as the shade darkens, intensity increases. This map is not a substitute for, and does not supersede, Edison’s official zoning map.

Table 16: Generalized Future Land Uses

Land Use	Color
Residential (three categories)	<i>Yellow/Orange</i>
Commercial (e.g. retail, office, hotel)	<i>Red</i>
Industrial	<i>Purple</i>
Parks and Open Space	<i>Green</i>
Institutional (public and nonprofit)	<i>Blue</i>
Transportation and Utilities	<i>Gray</i>
Agriculture	<i>Beige</i>
Specialized Uses	<i>As Indicated</i>

RESIDENTIAL

The Land Use Plan shows a range of housing types, primarily reflecting existing zoning and settlement, grouped into three levels of intensity. This classification is based on the use of the land, not ownership. Edison has a number of townhouse or condominium developments that are single-family in terms of ownership and occupancy, but are grouped in a higher-density category because they are attached. Also, there are scattered group homes and similar uses that may be owned and operated by nonprofit agencies, but function as single-family homes and are thus indicated in that land use category.

In addition, the residential land use category does not exclude uses that are often found embedded in residential neighborhoods, such as schools, places of worship, and occasional small businesses. These other uses, if of an appropriate scale, are normally seen as compatible with dwellings in overwhelmingly residential

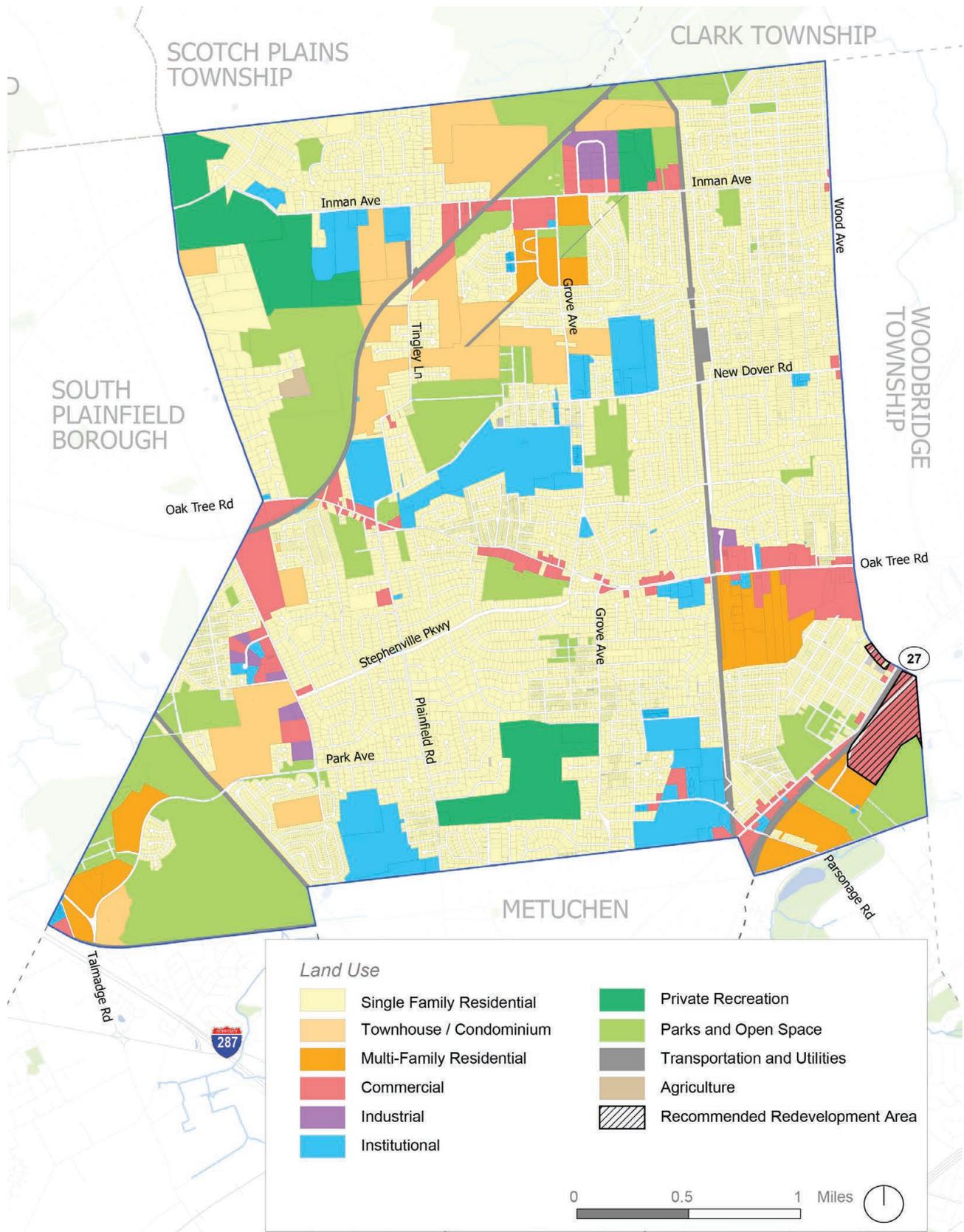
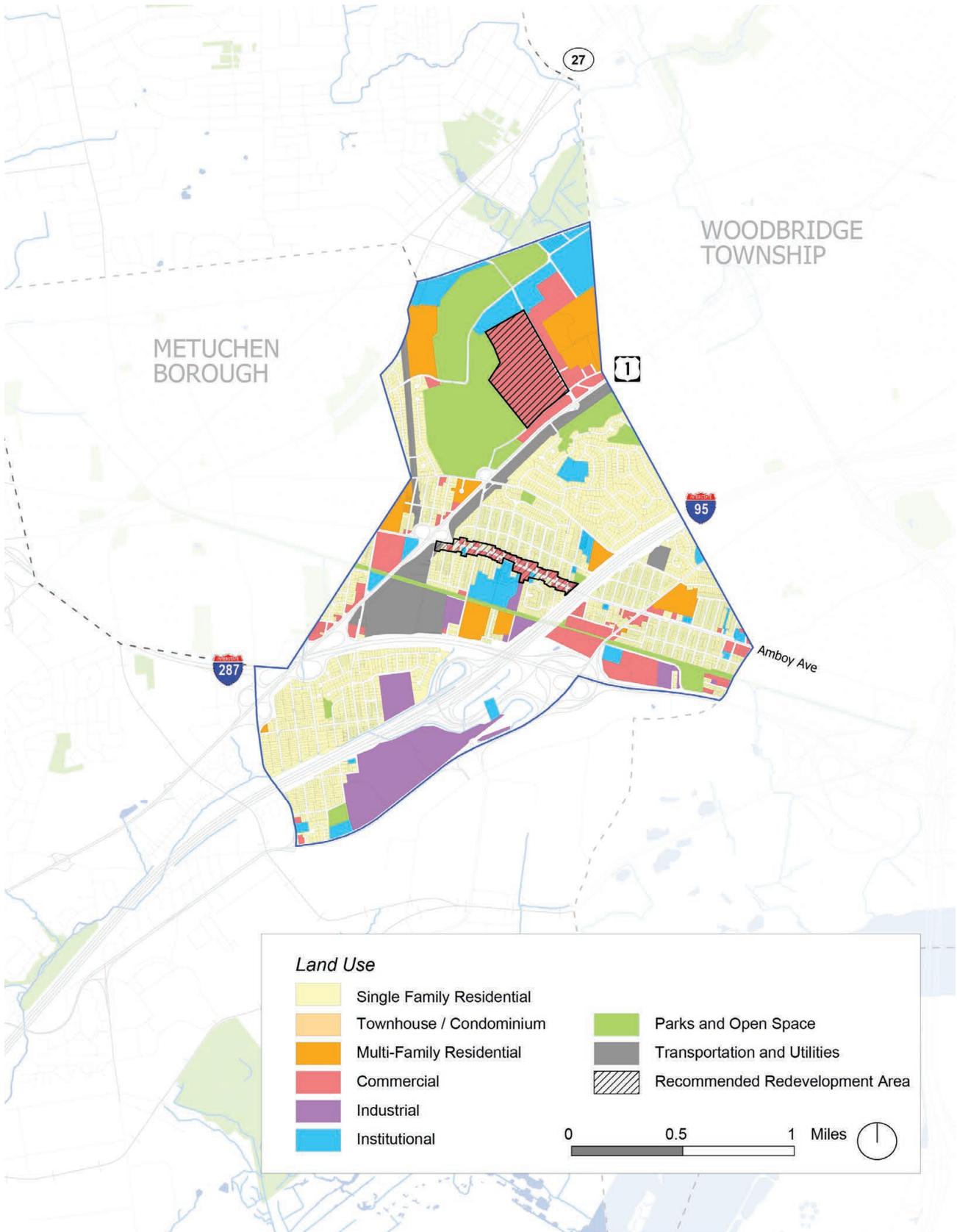
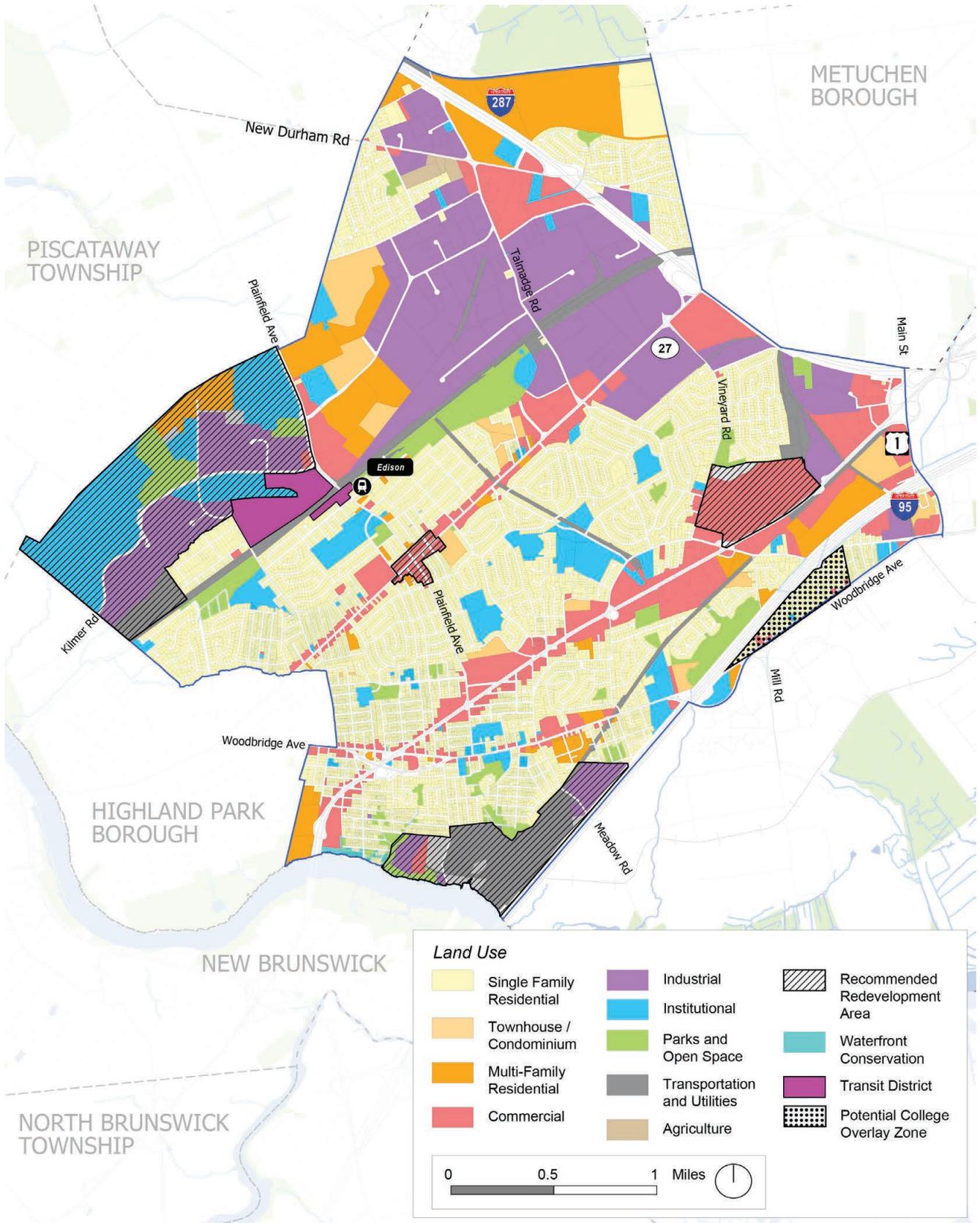
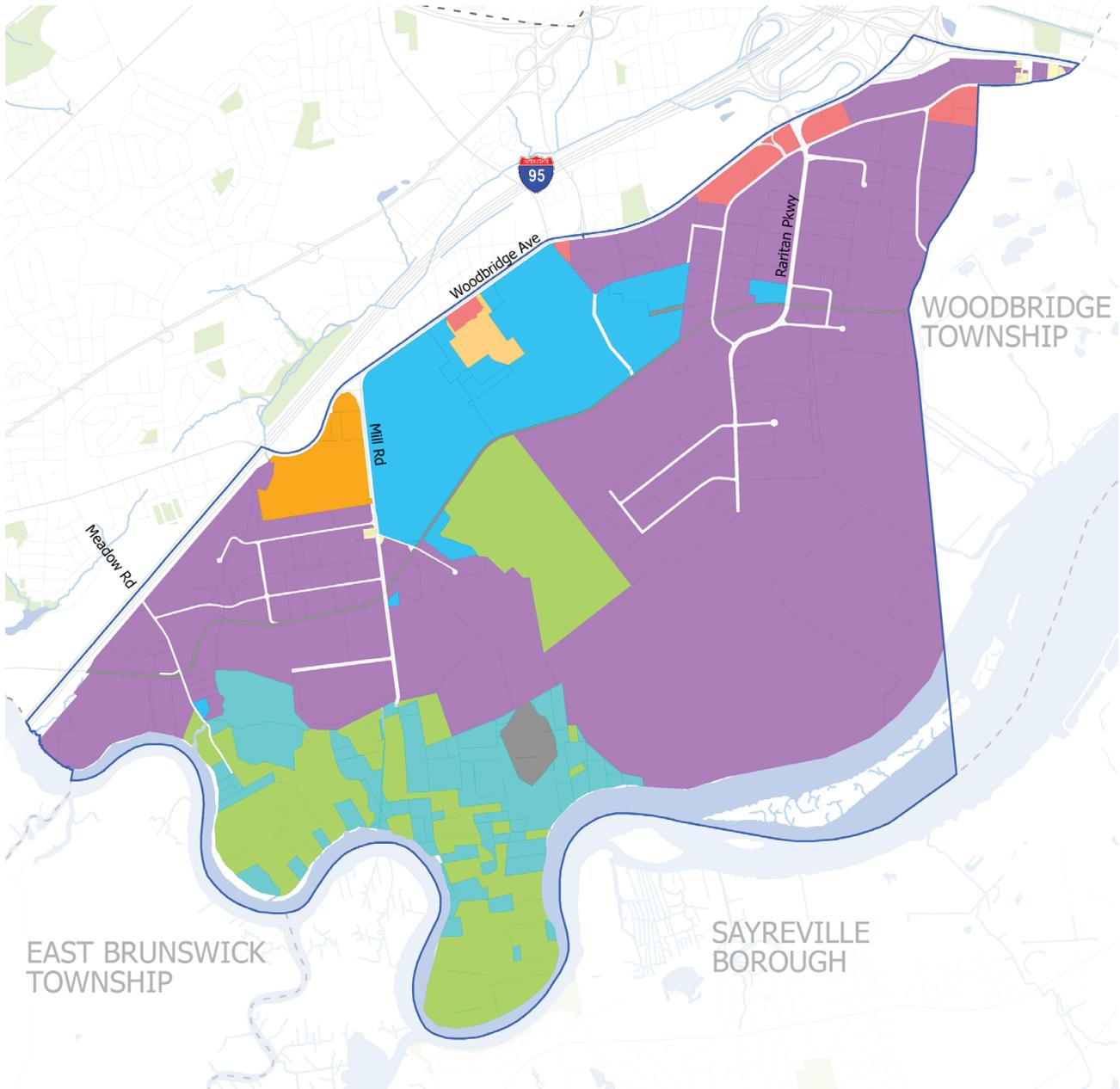


Figure 56: Future Land Use Map







Land Use

 Single Family Residential	 Parks and Open Space
 Townhouse / Condominium	 Transportation and Utilities
 Multi-Family Residential	 Recommended Redevelopment Area
 Commercial	 Waterfront Conservation
 Industrial	
 Institutional	

0 0.5 1 Miles 

areas, and even as necessary to the proper functioning of neighborhoods. While the Land Use Plan shows current public and nonprofit uses such as places of worship and governmental facilities, a residential designation is not intended to preclude the future location of such uses, as may be appropriate and allowable by zoning.

1. Single-Family Residential (yellow)

The single-family residential land use category makes up most of the residential neighborhoods in Edison and corresponds to the four single-family zoning districts: R-A-A, R-A, R-BB, and R-B. However, portions of these zones that have developed under Planned Residential Development (PRD) or Planned Unit Development (PUD) options—both of which allow for attached dwellings—are not included in the single-family residential designation.

The primary zoning recommendation in the single-family residential designation is to consider either a new zoning district to encompass existing parcels in the R-B district that don't meet minimum lot size requirements and/or include two-family homes, or to adjust the use and bulk requirements for the R-B district to accommodate such uses.

2. Townhouse/Condominium (light orange)

This land use category corresponds to the portions of single-family zones that have been indicated as PRD, PUD, or "th" designations, for townhouse development (usually clustered), as part of planned residential development. These areas are largely built-out, with little remaining opportunity in Edison for large-scale planned development. As noted elsewhere in this Master Plan, the Township could consider consolidating its townhouse zoning districts, based on density, for clarity and ease of use.

3. Multi-Family Residential (orange)

The multi-family residential category corresponds to the Township's existing apartment developments, covered by the L-R zoning district, as well as other multi-family complexes that may have been developed via zoning use variance.

This Land Use Plan does not encourage development of new multi-family uses through expansion of the L-R zone, but simply recognizes existing conditions. It is envisioned that future multi-family development will generally occur through use of the redevelopment/rehabilitation tool and/or as part of implementing the Township's fair share affordable housing obligations. This Plan expressly discourages the development of multi-family housing within land use categories that are focused on single-family housing.

COMMERCIAL

Commercial uses are found throughout Edison and in different contexts, ranging from large-scale office complexes, hotels, and shopping malls; to auto-oriented retail and service corridors; to smaller nodes that may serve the surrounding neighborhoods. Most of these uses correspond to the Township's business zones (L-B, G-B, G-BH, P-B, O-S, O-S-1, and O-S-2) but some are found in industrial or residential zones. Because of the widely scattered nature of commercial uses and the wide range of their density, all such uses have been grouped into one category.

Future commercial land uses are largely governed by existing zoning. However, this Master Plan recommends a comprehensive review of the business zones to ensure that they more accurately match current and desired future conditions. For example, the zoning provisions for a business node serving a localized area should not be the same as for a large-scale shopping mall or major commercial corridor (e.g. Route 1 or Route 27) – but in many cases, such areas are within the same district.

Other recommendations regarding commercial uses may be implemented through redevelopment designation or through specialized mixed-use or transit-oriented zoning, as discussed below.

INDUSTRIAL

The Land Use Plan designates all industrial uses into a single land use category. However, it is recognized that varying scales of industrial development exist in Edison. Current zoning (L-R, RRRD, R-I, R-I-1, and ROL) generally supports light industrial/warehousing uses, but the footprint, height, and surrounding context (i.e., standalone buildings or industrial parks) may differ, even within the same zoning district. This Master Plan recommends rezoning key areas to maintain a light industrial focus and reduce the potential for new, large-scale warehouses. These changes involve reducing the overall size of the L-I district and rezoning some industrial areas that are developed with consumer-oriented commercial uses to better match their use. In addition, changes are proposed to certain industrial zoning definitions to more clearly limit intensive fulfillment centers.

PUBLIC AND NONPROFIT

This designation encompasses broad areas of the Township that are characterized by environmentally sensitive features (wetlands and large wooded areas), much of which are either owned by public or nonprofit entities. The category also identifies existing public and nonprofit uses, including municipal facilities, schools, utilities, public or private open space, and nonprofit uses such as houses of worship. It is important to note that this category relates to public and nonprofit use, not ownership. For example, as noted above, there are nonprofit-owned group homes located throughout residential neighborhoods in Edison, but these are indistinguishable from the single-family homes that surround them; therefore they have been designated as residential.

The Recreation/Open Space category, shown in green, has two categories: parks and open space and private recreation. The parks and open space category (shown in light green) is intended to promote the maintenance and operation of property as public parkland, as a preserve for wildlife/natural habitat areas, or as community-owned open space related to a cluster-type development. Activities that could adversely affect

the environment should be limited, and opportunities provided for observation and enjoyment of flora and fauna. Outdoor commercial and non-commercial recreation, including activities such as horseback riding, hiking and nature trails, camping, and related activities should be encouraged for this area, but residential and commercial uses should not be permitted.

The private recreation category (dark green) corresponds to three locations in Edison: the Plainfield Country Club, Metuchen Golf & Country Club, and the Inman Sports Complex (including both the driving range and sports complex as well as the Garden State Tennis Center). This designation reflects the current usage of these properties which is anticipated and recommended to continue. However, it is recognized that, as privately owned sites, the future use is subject to change based on different ownership. If the recreational use of these properties ceases operation, the future land use should be consistent with the adjacent/surrounding residential uses. For the Inman complex, this is likely single-family residential; however, for the two golf courses, given the size of land, a planned development could be considered as a way to preserve open space. Any such change from recreational to residential land use would require a zoning change.

The Public/Nonprofit category, shown in blue, identifies existing municipal, educational, or nonprofit uses. In the event that such uses change in the future – for example, a church or a school closes – the use should revert to that of the general surrounding area. In most cases, this would be residential at a density as indicated on the Land Use Plan. The future location of public/nonprofit uses shall be allowed as permitted by existing zoning regulations; schools, houses or worship, and similar uses are typically conditional uses in many zoning districts.

TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

This category, shown in gray, denotes land use parcels that are used for water, sewer, or power infrastructure; as well as railroad, road, or power line rights-of-way. The Land Use Plan recognizes and supports these existing uses, which are necessary to the function of Edison (and in some cases serve the wider region). As

discussed earlier in this Master Plan, the primary land use recommendation regarding this category pertains to unused or underused rights-of-way that may be considered for passive recreational use that connects parks and open spaces throughout the Township. Such uses would require coordination with the relevant utility provider to ensure safety, access, and similar issues are addressed.

AGRICULTURE

There are two remaining agricultural uses in the Township, the Petti Horse Farm at the end of Petti Lane in North Edison, and Barton Nurseries on New Durham Road near Talmadge Road. This Land Use Plan supports the continued agricultural use of these properties; however, if this use is discontinued, the Township will need to consider appropriate future uses. The Petti Horse Farm property should be considered for open space, given its proximity to Woodland Avenue Park, Stevens Wildlife Preserve, the Pettifarm open space. Thus, it is ideal for expansion and connection of Edison's open space network in this portion of the Township. The Barton Nurseries property is adjacent to residential, commercial, and industrial uses; therefore, its appropriate future re-use is less clear. Given that this Master Plan does not generally support expansion of industrial zoning and the existing nearby retail and services, the ideal scenario is likely a planned, mixed-use development with potential commercial uses fronting on New Durham road and residential (single-family, townhouse, or small multifamily use).

It is important to note that any reuse of Edison's agricultural properties would require significant study and engagement with the community, as well as rezoning of affected properties.

SPECIALIZED USES

The Land Use Plan recognizes several specialized areas in Edison that warrant a non-conventional zoning approach: the area around the Edison train station, the vicinity of Middlesex College, environmentally constrained

properties along the Raritan River, and those areas that have either been designated as redevelopment areas or have the potential for such designation.

1. Edison Transit District

As noted earlier in this Master Plan and described more fully in the recommended zoning changes below, the areas surrounding the Edison Train Station represent an underutilized asset for the Township, which could be leveraged to expand housing opportunities, grow the tax base, and support existing businesses, consistent with the State's planning goals for transit-oriented development (TOD).

The State's residential site improvement standards (RSIS) provide for the designation of special planning area standards, which permit municipalities to adopt land use regulations that would supersede the RSIS. Two new TOD zoning districts are proposed. South of the railroad tracks, given the proximity to established low-density neighborhoods, the zoning should consider residential density consistent with the existing townhouse districts in Edison (generally 12-15 units per acre). North of the tracks, in the underutilized Camp Kilmer area, a broader range of residential uses – as well as commercial and educational uses – could be considered. The recommended maximum residential density in this area is 20-25 units per acre, the same as the L-R district and the affordable housing zones.

2. College Overlay Zone

Middlesex College has undergone significant growth and changes in recent years and has plans for a major capital investment plan that includes new recreational and cultural uses as well as college-related functions. These plans create an opportunity to consider the desired future land uses in the immediate vicinity of the college. There is an area along Woodbridge Avenue directly across from the college, between the NJ Turnpike/Vista Drive and Clausen Road, consisting of scattered commercial uses along Woodbridge Avenue and a single-family neighborhood along the side streets. This area is currently zoned R-B, and is envisioned as remaining low-density residential in nature. However, given the

proximity to the college and the age/condition of some buildings in the area, the Township should consider establishing an overlay zone for the area that permits a range of uses complementary to higher education and consistent with a residential scale. These could include school administration/office buildings, faculty and student housing, and small commercial uses along Woodbridge Avenue.

It is important to note that nothing in this Land Use Plan is intended to force the wholesale change of this area from residential to non-residential. The overlay zone designation would simply recognize that additional, college-related uses, could be appropriate as Middlesex College continues to evolve and grow over the long-term.

3. Existing Redevelopment Areas

At the time of this document, the Township's Governing Body has utilized the criteria under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) to designate several sites in need of redevelopment:

Exxon Plant/Lukoil Redevelopment Area

Designated in 2018, this area was redeveloped as a 900,000-square-foot Amazon fulfillment center. Although redevelopment has largely occurred, it is recommended that the redevelopment designation remain in place until the related road infrastructure improvements have occurred. Once these are complete, the Township could consider rezoning the property to an industrial or commercial use.

720 Route 1 Redevelopment Area

This area was also designated in 2018 and has been redeveloped with an auto dealership and fast food restaurant. Given the completion of redevelopment, it is recommended that the area be rezoned as commercial.

1015 Route 1 Redevelopment District

The site of the former Ford assembly plant was designated as an overlay redevelopment district in 2017 and has since been developed with various commercial uses. However, as discussed below, this Master Plan recommends creation of a new redevelopment plan to

facilitate a comprehensive mixed-use area that provides for pedestrian connectivity and links with current and future Township open space.

Commercial Corridor Overlay District

This district encompasses the Amboy Avenue corridor in Clara Barton and incorporates all of the AAR district as well as the G-B zoned Tano Mall shopping center. This Master Plan recommends the replacement of the AAR district with a new area in need of rehabilitation, rather than an overlay district. Thus, this redevelopment designation would be removed, and the Tano Mall site would revert to its underlying commercial zoning, while the remainder of the Amboy Avenue corridor would be a standalone rehabilitation area subject to a new redevelopment plan.

In addition to the above, several individual properties along Route 27 in the vicinity of Plainfield Avenue have been designated as areas in need of redevelopment. However, these are not contiguous, and their designation does not serve to facilitate a holistic revitalization of this important corridor. As described earlier, this Master Plan recommends designation of a larger redevelopment area that does not necessarily include land condemnation.

4. Potential New Redevelopment/ Rehabilitation Areas

In addition to the above, the Land Use Plan also identifies several areas for consideration as new redevelopment designations. These are shown on the map and detailed further in the recommended zoning changes.

5. Waterfront Conservation

There are scattered parcels along and near the Raritan River waterfront that are privately owned and zoned RRRD but, given environmental constraints, small size, and lack of road frontage, are not likely to be developable. Many adjacent areas are publicly owned and thus zoned OSCR-C. The Waterfront Conservation designation, shown in teal, recognizes the limitation on development potential, balanced with private ownership. While nothing in this Master Plan is intended to prevent zoning-compliant development that could occur on

these parcels, it is recommended that – over the longer-term – the Township look to acquire these designated parcels to protect important environmental assets, create a cohesive open space area along the Raritan River, provide for additional recreational opportunities, and recognize the long-term impacts of sea level rise. Parcels that are isolated and/or surrounding by OSCRD-zoned lands should be prioritized. With a sufficient contiguous area along the waterfront that is zoned for open space, Edison could consider creation of a large regional preserve, either under public ownership or transferred to a nonprofit partner.

PROPOSED ZONING MAP CHANGES

In large part, this Master Plan recommends maintaining Edison's existing zoning districts, with some modifications to area, bulk, use, and parking provisions to address specific planning issues. However, as illustrated on Figure 57 and listed below, there are some instances where a map change is warranted:

General:

- For zoning districts that are part of the Township's regulations but not mapped, either formally designate these zones on the map or, if no longer applicable, remove them from the regulations.
- Address mismatches between existing/preferred uses and zoning district:
 - Block 182-A, Lots 4A, 5, and 7Y should be changed from R-B to GB-H (Route 1 and Lambert Street – near Old Post Road).
 - Block 546-K, Lot 3 should be changed from R-A to O-S (1790 Oak Tree Road).
 - Block 4-A, Lots 22 and 23 should be changed from P-B to GB.
 - The zoning for the area fronting Oak Tree Road between Wood Avenue and Meridian Road should be changed from OS to GB.
 - The zoning for the area fronting James Street between JFK Hospital and Mundy Avenue should be changed from R-BB to OS.
 - Block 593, Lots 1.C1 and 1.C4 should be changed from R-I to O-S or similar (3880 Park Avenue).
 - Block 649, Lots 11, 12, and 13 should be changed from O-S-2 to P-B, G-B, or L-B and studied for potential redevelopment designation (226 Route 27).
 - Block 227, Lot 22 should be changed from RB to O-S or similar (2729 Woodbridge Avenue).
 - Block 266, Lots 48.02, 3.01, and 3.02 should be changed from R-B and L-R to G-BH

Residential Zones:

- Consider either creation of a new zoning district to encompass nonconforming properties in the R-B district that don't meet the minimum lot size requirements and/or include two-family homes, or adjust the use and bulk requirements of the R-B zone to accommodate them and reduce or eliminate the need for variances. If a new zoning district were created, a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet could be considered.

Business/Commercial Zones:

- Undertake a comprehensive review of business and commercial zones to ensure that they more accurately match the existing and future conditions. Business areas within neighborhoods that serve a local market should not have the same zoning as large-scale shopping areas along major highways.

Industrial Zones:

- Explore reducing the LI district to encompass its current locations generally south of I-287 and east of the NJ Turnpike, along the river between the Turnpike and Route 1, and along Talmadge Road west of the NJ Transit railroad tracks. Previously zoned L-I areas – including along I-287 in the Clara Barton neighborhood, along Routes 1 and 27, and in the Camp Kilmer area – should be rezoned either R-I or R-I-I, or potentially designated as a redevelopment area.
- Consider rezoning areas that are currently zoned industrial (L-I, R-I, or R-I-I) but that are consumer-oriented commercial uses to an OS zone.

Parks and Open Space:

- Incorporate any open space properties listed on the ROSI, as well as schools, municipal, County, or State facilities, into the Open Space/Recreation Conservation (OSR-C) zone.

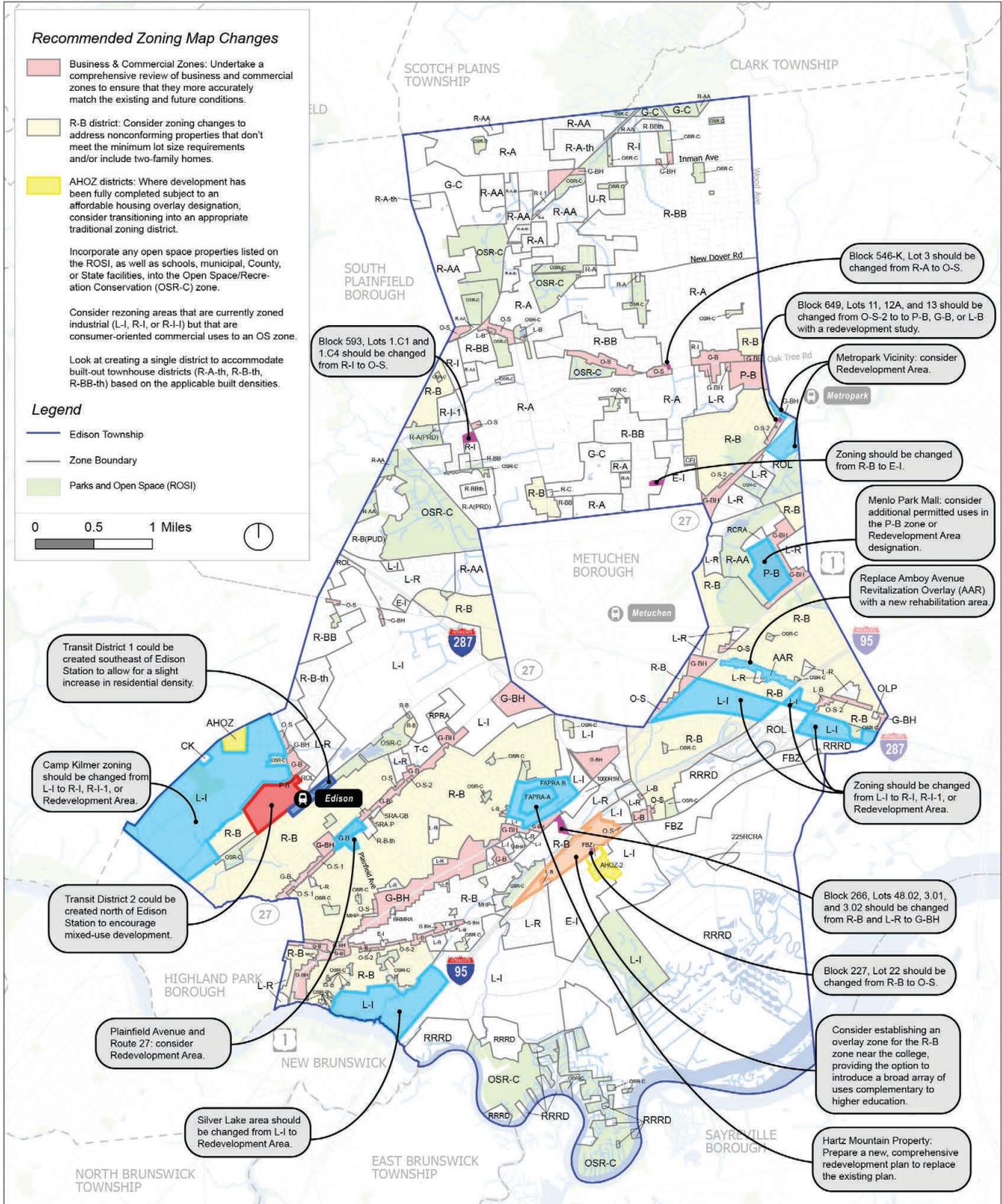


Figure 57: Recommended Zoning Map Changes

Affordable Housing:

- Where development has been fully completed subject to an affordable housing overlay designation, consider transitioning into an appropriate traditional zoning district, based on applicable density.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD):

- Consider creation of two TOD districts around the Edison train station, to facilitate residential and mixed-use development at a scale that balances density appropriate to a TOD area with preservation of established residential neighborhoods.
 - Transit District 1, south of the tracks generally between Papianni Park and Rutgers Street, could permit residential development ranging from single-family homes to small multifamily buildings of up to 4 units. A maximum residential density of 12-15 units per acre, the same density as the existing townhouse zones, could be appropriate.
 - Transit District 2, north of the tracks in the Camp Kilmer area, could permit multifamily apartments, senior housing, and townhouses as well as commercial and educational uses. A maximum residential density of 20-25 units per acre, the same as the L-R and affordable housing zones, could be appropriate.

Menlo Park Mall:

- Consider either introducing new permitted uses into the PB zone, or designating the property as a redevelopment area to work with the property owner on new infill development that is at a scale appropriate to the nearby residential areas and that incorporates strong design and multimodal connections.

Middlesex College Area:

- Consider establishing an overlay zone for the R-B zone near the college, providing the option to introduce a broad array of uses complementary to higher education.

Redevelopment Areas:

- In addition to designated redevelopment areas, the Township should consider the following areas either for amended or new redevelopment designations:
 - Camp Kilmer Area: (Generally west of the NJ Transit railroad tracks and south of Plainfield Avenue, outside of TOD designated area)
 - Plainfield Avenue and Route 27: (Area currently zoned G-B along Route 27 between Division Street and Sheppard Place)
 - Amboy Avenue in the Clara Barton Area: (Replacement of the Amboy Avenue Revitalization (AAR) overlay district with a new rehabilitation area)
 - Hartz Mountain Property: (preparation of new, comprehensive redevelopment plan to replace existing plan)
 - Metropark Vicinity: (Wood Avenue and Thornall Street and 226 Route 27)
 - Raritan Riverfront: (Area between Route 1 and Silver Lake Avenue)
- Explore preparation of a scattered-site redevelopment plan and identify designated areas on the Zoning Map.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

The Municipal Land Use Law (“MLUL”) was updated on February 4, 2021 through an amendment to Section 19 of P.L. 1975, c291 (C40:55D-28) NJ Law Title 40 “Municipalities and Counties,” Section 40:55D Part 28 “Preparation, Content and Modification,” which pertains to the preparation, contents and modification of Master Plans. This amendment requires that a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment be completed as part of the preparation of a land use plan element of a municipal master plan in accordance with NJSA 40:55D-28.b.(2)(h). The analysis is designed to identify key hazard-related risk factors, areas subject to potential impacts, and the development of policies and strategies for mitigation of potential impacts, preparedness, post-disaster recovery, and resilient planning and design. The criteria from the MLUL, which are set forth at NJSA 40:55D-28.b.(2)(h), are included below.

(h) A climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment which shall

- (i) Analyze current and future threats to, and vulnerabilities of, the municipality associated with climate change-related natural hazards, including, but not limited to increased temperatures, drought, flooding, hurricanes, and sea-level rise;*
- (ii) Include a build-out analysis of future residential, commercial, industrial, and other development in the municipality, and an assessment of the threats and vulnerabilities identified in subparagraph (i) of this subparagraph related to that development;*
- (iii) Identify critical facilities, utilities, roadways, and other infrastructure that is necessary for evacuation purposes and for sustaining quality of life during a natural disaster, to be maintained at all times in an operational state;*
- (iv) Analyze the potential impact of natural hazards on relevant components and elements of the master plan;*

- (v) Provide strategies and design standards that may be implemented to reduce or avoid risks associated with natural hazards;*
- (vi) Include a specific policy statement on the consistency, coordination, and integration of the climate-change-related hazard vulnerability assessment with any existing or proposed natural hazard mitigation plan, floodplain management plan, comprehensive emergency management plan, emergency response plan, post-disaster recovery plan, or capital improvement plan; and*
- (vii) Rely on the most recent natural hazard projections and best available science provided by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.”*

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

As noted in the 2022 Middlesex County Hazard Mitigation Plan, vulnerable populations include those groups that may require special assistance, considerations, accommodation or other needs during emergency events to facilitate their effective and safe compliance with emergency instructions. This includes individuals needing mobility assistance (strollers, wheelchairs, etc.), those with financial needs (cannot afford hotel rooms, food, necessities, during evacuation periods, etc.), those requiring translation or interpretation services to understand emergency information (non-English-speaking populations, deaf and hard of hearing), legal minors, people with cognitive impairments or specialized medical needs (electric dependent equipment, refrigerated medications, use of personal assistants for routine and basic care, medical transportation needs, etc.), and populations with social disadvantages or other needs that may require unique considerations during emergency events.

Earlier in this Master Plan, Figure 5 maps areas of Edison according to the Centers for Disease Controls (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index, which considers factors

such as poverty status, lack of vehicle status, crowded housing, unemployment, and minority status, to help local officials identify communities that may need additional support in preparing for and recovering from disasters. More specifically, as part of the County’s Hazard Mitigation Plan, Edison officials identified a number of vulnerable areas and/or developments, including long-term care and hospital facilities; apartment complexes with limited access, a high concentration of non-English speakers, special needs populations, and low-income residents without private transportation; mobile home communities; and residential developments that are at risk of frequent flooding.

IDENTIFICATION OF HAZARDS

Table 17 identifies climate change-related hazards that are present in Edison, as provided in the 2022 Middlesex County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Water-Related Hazards

Edison has exposure to inland flooding events from extreme weather, such as hurricanes and powerful storms, which can cause its waterbodies to swell substantially and flood adjacent low-lying areas. Local flooding from severe rainfall events can also occur. In this case, the water drains from slopes within the same catchment area and accumulates in low-lying areas if insufficient drainage conditions exist. As a result, local stormwater management systems (if they exist) can be overwhelmed during severe rainfall events and create localized flooding conditions. Edison’s significant amount of impervious coverage increases this risk.

SFHAs within Edison include areas A and AE, defined by a 1% annual chance of flooding, or the 100-year floodplain. These areas, totaling 2,719 acres or 14% of the Township’s total land area, are found along the Raritan River, Bound Brook, Mill Book, Silver Lake, Ambrose Brook,

Table 17: Summary of Edison’s Climate Change-Related Hazards and Impacts

Primary Climate Change Interaction	Natural Hazard	Other Interactions	Potential Climate Change Impacts
Changes in Precipitation	Drought		Less rainfall can prompt droughts; both possess negative impacts on agricultural output.
	Flooding	Dam/Levee Failure	Increased rainfall will cause more floods that can overtop dams and break levees.
	Geologic	Power Failure	Increased rainfall can lead to soil saturation, which catalyzes landslides. Landslides can damage existing power and fuel infrastructure.
Sea Level Rise	Flooding		Exacerbated by sea level rise, events like coastal floods, hurricanes, and nor’easters can all overburden and damage existing engineering and utility infrastructure.
	Hurricanes, Nor’easter	Power Failure	
Extreme Temperature	Drought, Wildfire		Increased heat can kill trees and accumulate masses of flammable dry wood or brush. This can cause wildfires or brushfires to burn longer and with more intensity.
		Power Failure	Electricity use for air conditioning may strain power grids leading to outages.
Non-Climate Influenced Hazards	Earthquake	Power Failure	There are no established connections between climate change and the likelihood of this hazard.

Source: Middlesex County Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2022

South Branch Rahway River, Coppermine Brook, and Robinson's Branch and tributaries. Specific structures or developments at risk in this floodplain include:

- Valley Manor Apartments
- Edison Village/Blueberry Village
- Homes within the area bounded by the NJ Turnpike, Main Street, Route 1, and Dorothy Avenue
- Timberline Drive townhomes
- Homes west of Farmhaven Avenue and homes and shops along Wood Avenue
- Greenfield Gardens Apartments and commercial office buildings along Thornall Street

The Township also contains areas within Flood Zone X, which represents a 0.2% chance of annual flooding, or the 500-year floodplain, and encompasses an additional 434 acres or 2.2% of Edison's land area. Specific structures or developments at risk in this expanded floodplain include:

- Industrial buildings in Raritan Center
- Edison Glen Terrace Apartments and nearby commercial properties
- Leslie Street between Washington and Lexington Avenues
- Heatherwood Villas apartments and the Progress Street industrial park
- Homes and apartments near the Barnes Preserve and Bound Brook
- Industrial facilities along National Road

There are no areas in Edison categorized as VE, areas along coasts with additional hazards due to storm-induced velocity wave action.

The Township has a few properties that are exposed to current high tide flooding (approximately 2 feet above mean higher high water (MHHW)), all of which are industrial. Increasing to 12 feet above MHHW, increases the number of properties at risk to 79 properties, mostly industrial. These at-risk areas include Valley Manor Apartments, the Raritan River Boat Club, residential

structures on the downslope side of Whitman Place, and the waste treatment facility immediately south of the Kin-Buc landfill mound.

Edison has been a member of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) since 1982, although the Township does not currently participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) program. As of September 2019, FEMA calculated that 9.3% of structures whose parcels were within the effective SFHA held federal flood insurance. NFIP statistics indicate that, as of December 2020, federal flood insurance policies were in effect on 245 properties in Edison. Between 1978 and 2020, there have been a total of 155 NFIP insurance claims in the Township, with a total claims value of about \$8.6 million.

The NFIP characterizes properties that had had multiple flood claims as either Repetitive Loss or Severe Repetitive Loss properties, depending on how many flood insurance claims they have generated. Edison has 14 Repetitive Loss properties and does not have any Severe Repetitive Loss properties, as shown in the table on the next page.

It should be noted that NFIP claims are not a direct or completely accurate proxy for flood risk in a community. The data does not include flood damages to structures that had no flood insurance. Also, in some cases, structures or contents may have been underinsured. The NFIP claims data also does not include any damages to public facilities, which may be insured via other means (such as self-insurance or non-FEMA policies); such damages may also be addressed through other federal programs such as FEMA's Public Assistance Program.

Extreme Heat-Related Hazards

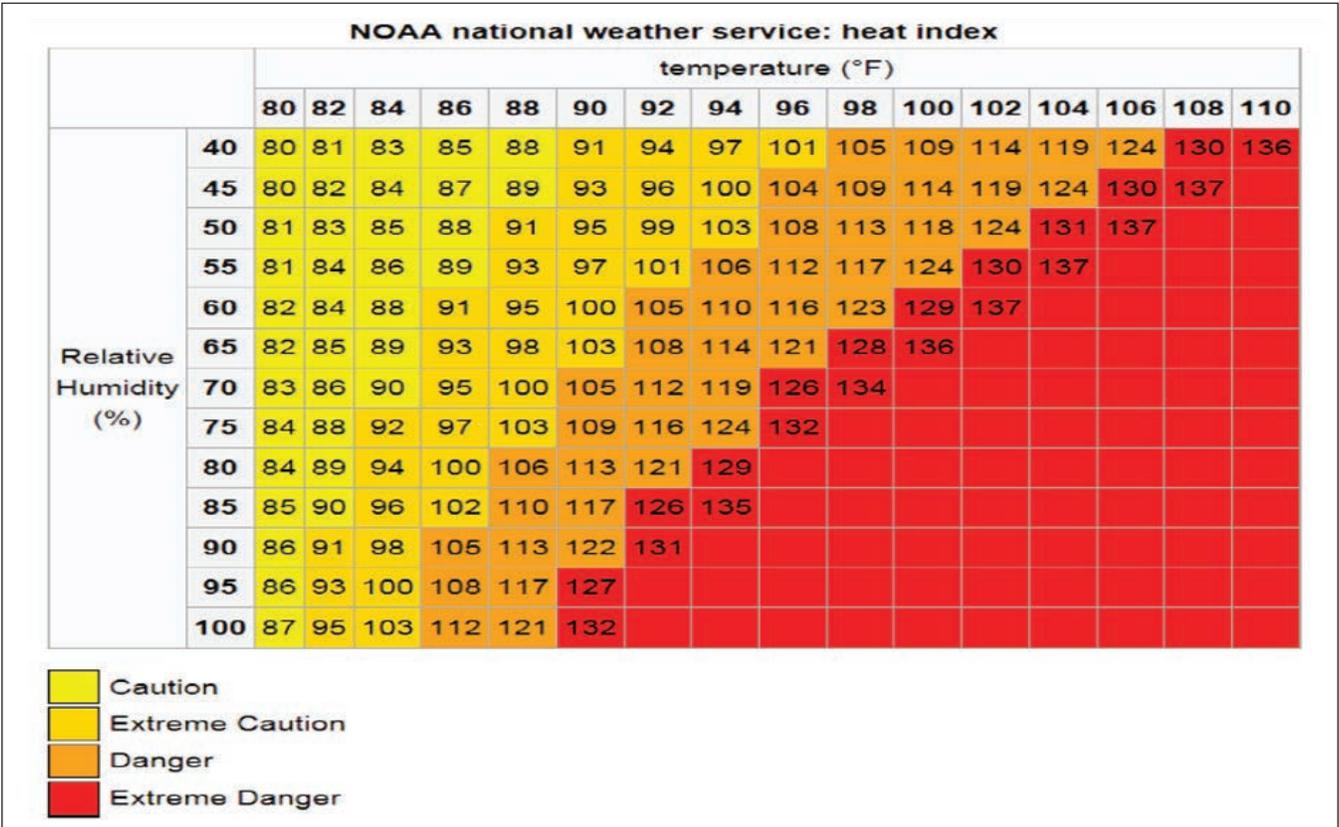
Another climate change-related natural hazard, which has garnered increasing attention in recent years, is extreme heat and the steady increase in average annual temperature. Extreme heat is typically characterized as a condition where temperatures stay 10 degrees or more above a region's average high temperature for a consistent, extended period of time. These higher temperatures can cause hyperthermia and even death.

In addition, extreme heat strains local power systems due to increased use of air conditioning systems, which can cause power outages.

As is the case throughout the region, Edison is susceptible both to extreme heat and high humidity, the combined effects of which can magnify the health risks, as shown in the following image.

The Township is projected to continue to be at risk of extreme heat and average temperature increases. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has noted that the average global temperature in July 2019 was 1.71° F above the 20th century average of 60.4° F. For New Jersey, according to the Sustainable Jersey Climate Change Adaptation Task Force (2013), by 2050, the average temperature is projected to increase by 3-5 degrees above the existing statewide baseline.

Like much of the northeastern U.S., Edison is also susceptible to short-term droughts. Because the Township is relatively built-out, typical impacts from drought, such as crop failure and increased risk of wildfire, are likely to be less pronounced; however, acute impacts to community parks and private landscaping, as well as potential wildfires on smaller patches of vegetated areas, do pose some risk. Anticipated future higher temperatures would worsen short-term drought conditions, but water supply shortages would be unlikely to occur during a short-term drought.



Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

BUILD OUT ANALYSIS

Overview and Methodology

In accordance with the MLUL requirements, the build-out analysis is focused on areas that are prone to impacts from flooding as it pertains to projected future development, as these areas exhibit a higher level of vulnerability and risk. For Edison, the area studied includes all lots that intersect FEMA's SFHAs (including areas of moderate and high risk) and the storm surge area of a Category 4 hurricane. Although there may be many other areas in the Township that are subject to development or redevelopment, these were not included in the build-out analysis because they are not considered at substantial risk from climate change impacts.

Properties with single-family use or zoning were eliminated from further study, as they are unlikely to change significantly and would be subject to applicable flood regulations that limit residential development in the floodplain. Parks and open spaces on the Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI), publicly owned parcels, and designated historic sites and districts were also removed from the build-out analysis, as they are unlikely to see additional residential, commercial, or industrial square footage.

Lots were then screened for their buildability considering environmental constraints. In addition to the floodplain and storm surge factors, environmental constraints for this analysis include sea level rise, wetlands, riparian areas, habitats of threatened and endangered species, and steep slopes (20% or higher). These environmental constraints and known contaminated sites, are illustrated in Figure 53 on page 136. Other environmental areas that could be considered in this exercise are New Jersey C-1 Streams and Natural Heritage Areas, neither of which are present in Edison. Lots that have more than half (50%) of their land constrained by at least one of these factors were screened out of further study as they should not be considered readily developable beyond their current state.

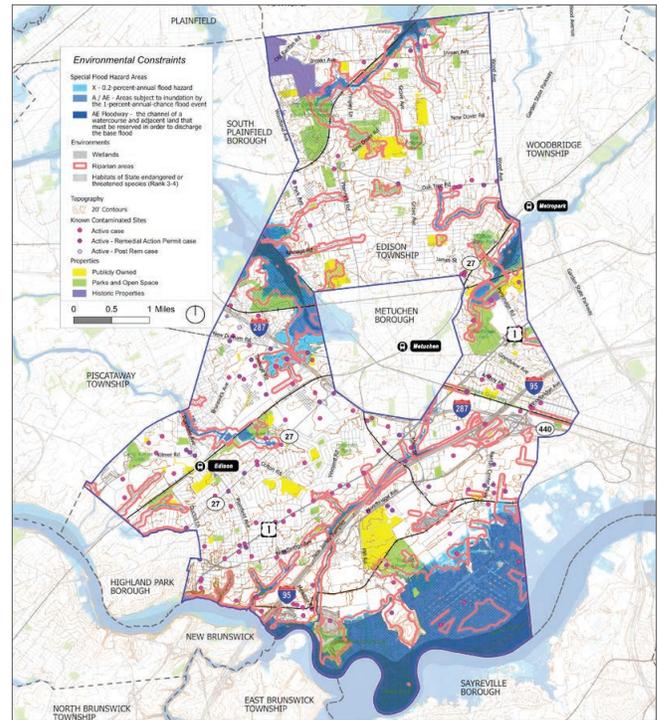


Figure 58: Environmental Constraints

Source: USGS, NOAA, Middlesex County, NJDEP, NJDOT, NJGIS, BFJ Planning

Next, the existing development conditions of the site were evaluated. The footprint and number of stories of existing buildings were compared to allowable dimensional zoning regulations such as floor area ratio (FAR), lot coverage, and number of stories allowed. When FAR was already met or exceeded, lots were removed from further build-out analysis. For special zones in Edison that require a planned development (PUD, PDR, townhouse residential zones, and former Urban Renewal zones) it was assumed that existing development is built out. In industrial parks in the light industrial (L-I) and Raritan River Revitalization District (RRRD), buildings that appeared to be part of the Heller or Raritan Industrial Parks with existing development were screened as they are hard sites unlikely to change. Oddly shaped lots on which only a small portion of development could be added were also eliminated for their lack of potential.

This process yielded 15 properties that could see additional development but have some environmental vulnerabilities to consider. Figure 59 depicts the location of these properties, along with environmental constraints, including flood hazard zones, category 4

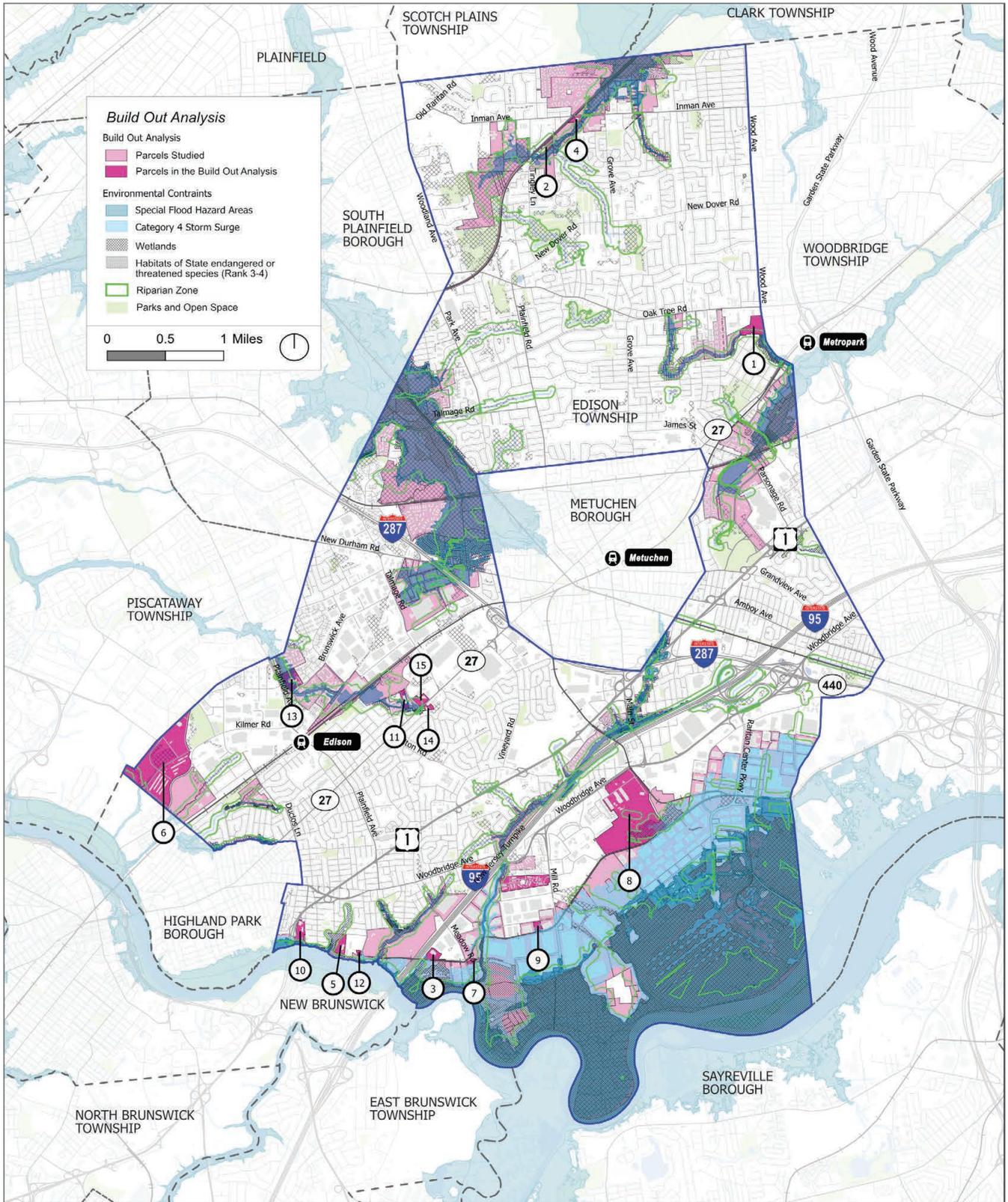


Figure 59: Climate Vulnerability Build-out Analysis

hurricane storm surge area, riparian zones, wetlands, and habitats of State endangered or threatened species. Table 18 corresponds to the ID numbers labeled on Map 59 and referenced in the text below.

The remaining 15 parcels were studied further for their build-out potential. In a few instances, where it seemed apparent that neighboring lots are owned by the same party, those lots were combined and analyzed as a larger plot. Existing FAR was subtracted from allowable FAR to determine how much additional floor area could be built as-of-right on the parcel. Next, environmentally constrained areas were subtracted from the total land area of the parcel to understand how much of the area on the property could be developed. The buildable square footage was then adjusted by this limitation.

On some lots, it is possible that existing buildings could be demolished and replaced. If the buildings lie in environmentally constrained areas, in a floodplain for example, a new building could not be constructed on the same footprint and would be confined to unconstrained parts of the lot. Possible build-out for this scenario is also estimated.

Combined, these 15 properties comprise approximately 348 acres and are located primarily in south Edison. If these properties were further developed to their allowable potential, they could contain approximately 6.6 million square feet of additional development, comprised of 132,000 square feet of residential floor area, 4,59,000 square feet of commercial floor area, and 6 million square feet of industrial floor area. If the sites

Table 18: Climate Vulnerability Build-out Analysis

ID#	Block	Lot	Land Use	Zone	Max FAR	Max Coverage Percentage	Lot Area (ac)	Total Build out to max FAR (sf)	Environmentally Constrained Areas (%)	Potential additional square footage	Known Contaminated Site?
1	643.DD	38	Commercial	P-B	0.6	20%	14.7	383,209	46%	383,209	N
2	427	21.D + 22	Commercial	R-I-1	0.4	30%	7.3	127,891	74%	80,630	N
3	366.A	14	Industrial	L-I	0.5	50%	6.3	137,572	21%	91,942	N
4	431	1.A1	Commercial	G-BH	0.25	25%	2.8	30,592	33%	15,908	N
5	340	1.07	Industrial	L-I	0.5	50%	8.6	186,914	20%	118,016	N
6	3	7	Institutional	L-I	0.5	50%	135.8	2,958,782	24%	2,571,896	Y
7	376	2.B1	Commercial	L-I	0.5	50%	2.7	58,314	56%	58,314	Y
8	396	6	Institutional	L-I	0.5	50%	157.4	3,427,842	28%	3,021,588	N
9	375.EE	28	Vacant Land	L-I	0.5	50%	3.5	76,147	39%	76,147	N
10	302.A	3	Commercial	G-BH	0.25	25%	8.2	89,794	40%	23,522	Y
11	117	51.A	Industrial	L-R	0.4	20%	4.5	77,550	66%	-	Y
12	340	2.A	Vacant Land	L-I	0.5	50%	1.0	21,919	45%	21,919	N
13	4	2.R3	Institutional	L-R	0.4	20%	13.3	232,247	74%	131,988	N
14	1130	12, 13, 15.B, 15.C, 16, 18	Commercial	G-B	0.25	25%	4.3	47,196	15%	25,630	Y
15	123	11.B	Commercial	T-C	0.35	25%	5.4	82,189	46%	10,744	N

Table 19: Potential Development and Redevelopment

	If existing buildings remained:	If lots were redeveloped:	Difference
Total Square Feet (SF)	6,631,452	6,644,159	12,707
Residential Units	43	408	365
Residential SF	131,988	209,539	77,551
Commercial SF	459,013	459,013	0
Industrial SF	6,040,451	5,975,608	-64,843

were completely redeveloped, the result would be largely the same, with about 77,500 square feet of additional residential floor area added.

It is important to note that this build-out analysis is based on existing zoning, to provide a reasonable estimate of the net development yield for the area under consideration. If the Township were to enact zoning amendments or amend or adopt new redevelopment plans, if new trends emerged in the market, or if other market or regulatory changes should occur, it may change the net development yield in the build-out analysis study area.

In addition, as noted above, the build-out analysis for purposes of the Climate Change & Vulnerability Assessment only address areas that are within SFHAs or Category 4 storm surge areas. All of Edison, the region, and the state are subject to macro-level impacts from climate change that should be considered in future development and redevelopment. These include extreme heat and localized flooding from heavy storms. This Master Plan incorporates a number of policies and recommendations to address resiliency throughout Edison, including regulatory changes and capital investment to improve stormwater management and actions to reduce impervious coverage.

Residential

Two of properties in the build-out analysis are in the L-R residential zone. With a maximum of 23 units per acre when building 3-story multi-family buildings in this zoning district, there could be about 408 additional residential units developed in the build-out area if existing buildings were replaced, or 43 additional residential units if existing

buildings remain. This drastic difference in number is due to the fact that a vacant industrial building exists on a residentially zoned property (#11) and already exceeds the maximum coverage area for the zone. Thus, if that building remained, no additional development could be built on the site. However, it is likely that a developer would demolish that building to build multifamily housing. The second lot located in a residential zone is the JFK Hartwyck Estate Rehab Center (#13). It is unlikely that this building would be demolished; however, the site could be further developed with the addition of multifamily housing.

Both of these lots have several environmental constraints, including substantial wetland, floodplain, and threatened and endangered species habitat areas. In addition, property #11 has an active remediation case for known contamination from its former use by the Academy Die Casting and Planting Co. Should residential development occur on either tract, all applicable environmental and land use regulations should be adhered to in order to ensure that all of the residential units are sufficiently separated from the flood hazard areas and any associated environmental constraints so as ensure the safety of the residents and the conservation of the environmental resources on these tracts.

Commercial

There are five commercially zoned properties (P-B, G-B, G-BH, and T-C) subject to further build-out. The largest of these is an approximately 14-acre property on Wood Avenue (#1) zoned P-B. This property is currently vacant and could see 383,000 square feet of commercial development. There is sufficient land area outside of

environmentally constrained areas on which this full build-out could occur. A riparian area is found on a portion of the southern side of the lot.

Other commercial properties that have varying development scenarios:

The CVS property on Inman Avenue (#4), has a triangle-shaped undeveloped area at the back of the lot. While this area is not environmentally constrained, it is adjacent to a park and Edison could consider preserving this as open space.

The Honda dealership on Route 1 (#10), is not built out, with some 1-2 story buildings and large parking areas. It is unlikely that additional commercial development will occur on this site in the near term; however there is ample space to accommodate additional built square footage. This site is an active known contaminated site. The southern portion of the lot is adjacent to the Raritan River, in the floodplain, vulnerable to storm surges, and has steep slopes and endangered or threatened species habitat. This portion of the lot should remain undeveloped and protected.

The Reydel Volkswagen dealership across from Municipal Boulevard on Route 27 (#14) has a small building with a large parking lot. While unlikely this site would develop further given its current use, there is ample space in the parking area to accommodate additional commercial square footage. This is an active, known contaminated site, and about 15% of the property falls in the floodplain or abuts wetlands.

The Edison Square commercial complex on Municipal Boulevard and Route 27 (#15) has room to add additional commercial square footage. This edge of this site just barely touches the floodplain.

Industrial

There are eight properties on industrially zoned parcels (L-I and R-I-1) that are subject to additional build-out. By far, the two largest industrial sites are the 157-acre U.S. EPA property on Woodbridge Road (#8), and the 136-acre Rutgers University Camp Kilmer and Preserve property (#6). While both of these properties are technically publicly owned, by the federal government and the

State, respectively, they have major development potential based on their zoning and are both impacted by environmental conditions.

Edison should consider negotiating a right to first offer provision with the Federal government for the EPA site. The southern portion of this property has some areas with steep slopes, wetlands, and a portion vulnerable to storm surge. However, the majority of this lot is unaffected by environmental features, and the small amount of existing development leaves ample space for additional development.

Edison should work closely with Rutgers University to understand their future plans for their property in Edison and consider rezoning the Rutgers Preserve as Open Space. This property is also within the eligible Camp Kilmer Historic District and may contain historic buildings that should be evaluated. The barracks are an active known contaminated site. Edison may also want to discuss the zoning of the remainder of this land to accommodate additional educational or university related uses. The preserve area and the area between Kilmer Road, Postal Plaza, and Road 3 contain wetlands and should be protected.

Two other industrial properties are vacant (#9 and #12) and could be more likely to see development in the near future. About 39% of #9 (in Heller Industrial Park) is vulnerable to storm surge. Edison should consider restricting new development on this site. #12 is burdened with some steep slopes, but is a developable site with only 1% of its small land area within the path of a storm surge. It is adjacent to two other vacant properties on Glendale Road, which the Township has recently considered for alternative (non-industrial uses).

#3 is an oddly shaped lot at the end of Midvale Road and backed by I-95. The southwest corner of the property near the Turnpike contains wetlands and is vulnerable to storm surge. However, this property could potentially be built out more. An application to expand the existing warehouse was pending as of May 2023.

#5, 75 Glendale Avenue, is a Light-Industrial zoned property located at the end of Glendale Avenue and abuts publicly owned land in the Raritan Ravine and adjacent to

the Raritan River. This site has a relatively small building with a large parking and outdoor storage area. The west and southern edges of the property have steep slopes and threatened or endangered species habitats.

#7 is located at 327 Meadow Road in Edison and is used as a private recycling facility. There is an active contaminated site on this property. There are no buildings, only some shipping containers, trucks, and dirt piles.

Critical Facilities

In the context of the Land Use Plan and Climate Change & Vulnerability Assessment, critical facilities include uses that are necessary for evacuation purposes and for sustaining quality-of-life during a natural disaster, which are to be maintained at all times in an operational state. Examples include police stations; fire stations; first aid and rescue facilities; public buildings such as the Municipal Building and public works facilities; and quasi-public and private facilities such as schools and telecommunications towers and equipment. Key critical facilities within Edison are depicted on the Critical Facilities Map. Of these, several power plants or electrical substations are within or in close proximity to 100- or 500-year floodplains. The Township should continue to coordinate closely with relevant utility providers to facilitate efforts to make these systems resilient to flooding events, including elevating critical infrastructure as needed. In addition, several gas stations are within or near floodplain areas. Although these facilities are subject to short-term flooding impacts, there are numerous gas stations located outside of the floodplain along key corridors such as Routes 1 and 27. Finally, there are many storm drains within floodplain areas, as may be expected, given that these drains discharge into waterways. Given that Edison has a separate sanitary and stormwater sewer system, the Township does not experience combined sewer overflow issues that communities with older, combined systems face. As noted elsewhere in this Master Plan, the Township is implementing significant capital improvements for both its sanitary and stormwater sewer systems to enhance resiliency and address overall capital needs.

CLIMATE CHANGE & VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

As determined in the build-out analysis, Edison is a built-out community with limited vacant land in flood-prone areas. Most development that could occur would happen on already developed parcels. If sites identified as vulnerable in the build-out analysis were to be redeveloped, there is an opportunity to construct buildings that are resilient to flooding and respectful of fragile natural habitats. Redevelopment in low-lying areas should comprise of flood-proofed buildings which may be raised above the flood line to protect the public and property.

This Master Plan proposes several land use changes in areas that have the potential for vulnerability to climate change as described above. The Camp Kilmer area is proposed for consideration of a new transit-oriented development (TOD) zone that would facilitate the development of new uses – such as residential, retail, hotels, restaurants, and schools and dormitories – that would benefit from proximity to the Edison Train Station. While the area proposed for consideration as a new TOD district does not appear to be located in a flood-prone area, this is a fairly low-lying area that may require additional stormwater management infrastructure for future development.

Similarly, a TOD district is proposed for consideration along Thornall Street and Wood Avenue, which are within walking distance of the Metropark station and contain a number of underutilized properties. However, the rear portion of sites along Thornall Street are subject to flooding from a tributary to the South Branch Rahway River, while much of the Edison side of Wood Avenue is vulnerable to flooding from the Coppermine Brook. As both of these corridors are fully developed, future redevelopment could present an opportunity to improve their long-term resiliency. For Thornall Street, in particular, existing office buildings are within the 100-year floodplain, but future redevelopment could position buildings closer to the road and out of the flood-affected areas.

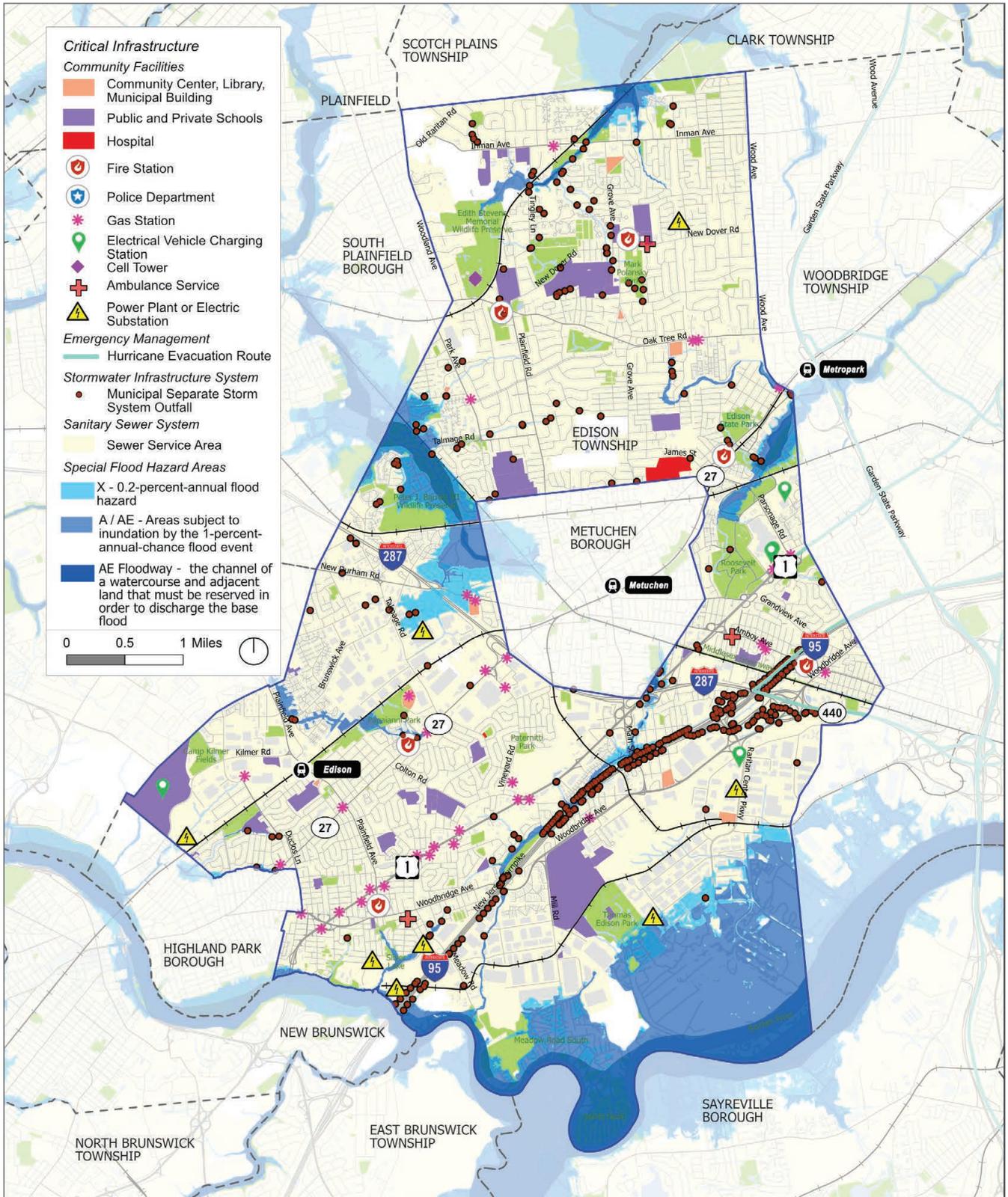


Figure 6o: Critical Infrastructure

Lastly, this Plan proposes revitalization of the Raritan River waterfront with new, water-related uses, such as marinas, hotels, residential uses, and public walkways. The area of focus for waterfront revitalization is generally between Route 1 and Silver Lake Avenue. Portions of this area directly adjacent to the Raritan River and Silver Lake and its tributaries are within the 100-year floodplain. Future development can avoid these vulnerable areas, and can also present the opportunity to locate existing buildings out of the floodplain. In addition, infrastructure improvements including stormwater management improvements are proposed, which could address localized storm-related flooding.

Because each of these land use changes are proposed to be implemented utilizing the redevelopment tool, Edison has an opportunity to consider future revitalization in a holistic manner that can address the mitigation of existing vulnerabilities and adaptation to future risk. In addition, given evolving building regulations at the state level, future redevelopment is likely to be implemented to be more resilient overall to the impacts of future climate change.

More broadly, a key recommendation of this Master Plan is for Edison to implement significant improvements to its stormwater management system, in recognition of the age of its system, the fact that many portions of the Township were built without any stormwater infrastructure, and Edison's significant amount of impervious coverage. These improvements – as well as

increased landscaping and green space along commercial corridors – should significantly lessen vulnerability to localized storm flooding.

Extreme heat will remain a major hazard for Edison and the larger region, and there are steps the Township should take to mitigate this issue. This Master Plan recommends improving the extent and health of the tree canopy, and implementation of an Impervious Coverage Reduction Action Plan to decrease paved surfaces by at least 10% in each of the nine subwatersheds, or about 693 total acres. Such measures, if successful, would address vulnerability to the Urban Heat Island Effect. In addition, as part of its disaster preparedness efforts, the Township should identify and publicize the locations of cooling and warming centers during extreme heat and cold events, both of which are expected to become more frequent and intense due to climate change. Finally, Edison should work with the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and utility providers to ensure that current and future residential cooling services can be fully supported by the local electrical infrastructure, particularly as more demands are placed on this infrastructure with greater electrification of buildings and automobile infrastructure (e.g. EV charging stations).

9/ IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Having an adopted Master Plan is a critical public policy tool, but it is not sufficient on its own to make change or preservation happen – the Plan must be realized. There are six critical methods that Edison will follow to ensure that this Plan is implemented. It is recognized that, given financial constraints that may affect the Township as well as other municipalities, implementation of this Plan is dependent on availability of funding and other economic factors.

Policy/Regulation. This typically involves amendments to Township code. Zoning is the most familiar tool used to implement a plan. The Township would need to amend certain elements of its zoning code to implement Plan recommendations.

Regional Advocacy. Some recommendations in this Plan may extend beyond Edison’s borders, or are outside of the Township’s direct jurisdiction, such as issues involving county and state roads. These may involve advocating and coordinating with other municipalities, Middlesex County, and the State.

Capital Programming. Another key tool is incorporation of the Plan recommendations into Edison’s capital improvement program (CIP). The ways that Edison spends public revenue for public improvements – road construction and repair, major equipment purchases, improvements to municipal facilities, and new or upgraded parks and recreational facilities – and the standards to which they are built have a major effect on the Township’s function and image.

A CIP is a management and fiscal planning tool. Capital projects are scheduled on a multi-year basis, with each succeeding year seeing the completion of a project, or a phase of a long-term project, as a future year is added.

New projects are proposed as others earlier in the cycle reach completion. This rolling approach enables municipalities to plan for and remain current with necessary infrastructure improvements and other large, non-operational needs, so that long-range planning aspects can be achieved with predictable steps over time. The municipality knows its capital commitments for at least five years into the future. It can thus plan financing in an orderly way and stabilize the tax rate structure by spreading improvement costs systematically over a period of years. In addition, public input into the planning process continues, past the Master Plan’s adoption, as capital budgets are heard publicly. The organized public expenditures on improvements sends a positive signal to private businesses and property owners, allowing them to plan their investment knowing that the Township is also planning responsibly.

Grants and Third-Party Partnerships. Edison will continue seeking grant funding for planning and capital projects and will also engage with third-party nonprofit organizations and corporate partners, to meet long-term objectives such as the development of affordable housing.

Program/Study. Certain Master Plan recommendations require more analysis. Detailed implementation measures can only be crafted through this additional study. For example, the Plan recommends that the Township undertake several updates of individual Master Plan Elements, particularly a new Circulation Element. These updates would likely entail formation of a special committee with representatives from the Planning Board, Township staff, relevant boards or committees, and County or State agencies as needed, as well as engagement of a consultant.

Continuing Planning. There are two key aspects to continuing planning. The first is the Township government's sustained work with State agencies, authorities and other municipalities on issues that extend across borders. These groups include NJ DOT, Middlesex County, agencies and adjacent municipalities. As these entities plan, Edison makes clear its concerns and preferences. With an adopted Master Plan, the Township's position is on record and must be considered.

The second aspect concerns development applications before the land use boards, primarily the Planning and Zoning Boards. While the Master Plan cannot contemplate every potential policy decision and may be silent on some issues, its overall vision and policy directives guide the Township's policies, and the actions of its land use boards must be consistent with the Plan.

ACTION AGENDA

In order to implement the various recommendations contained in this Master Plan, the following Action Agenda is proposed, which outlines key actions, the general timeframe for action, and the primary responsible entity for implementation.

The primary responsible entity, by the nature of its mission and authority, is the logical party to oversee implementation of each particular proposal. Some proposals will involve multiple entities, including State agencies. The nature of activity required of the primary responsible entity will vary depending on the type of recommendation. Some activities involve budget commitments and capital expenses, while others entail advocacy and promotion, and some call for administrative action.

Partners are those entities that would collaborate on a particular item. For example, while Township Council is the responsible party for zoning changes, the Department of Planning and Engineering is likely to be the agency that prepares zoning analysis and recommendations for consideration.

The Difficulty field generally categorizes the type of barriers to implementation:

- * Relatively easy actions that can be conducted immediately. This could include changes to local ordinances, partnerships, and small budget expenditures. It also includes activities or policies already in place that should be continued.

** Actions that require further study potentially with an relatively simple regulatory change or projects that involve continued coordination with a partner.

*** Actions that require study with follow-up capital improvements or a more complicated regulatory change. One example is the creation and adoption of a redevelopment plan.

**** These actions have at least one of the following: High cost item, requires coordination or approval of multiple partners, and/or has other constraints or contingencies

***** These actions have at more than one of the following: High cost item, requires coordination or approval of multiple partners, and/or has other constraints or contingencies. These items may also include long term capital projects such as upgrades to Township-wide infrastructure.

The implementation schedule is presented as a "To Do" list, to help the Township review progress on a regular basis. It also allows for convenient updating of the list as items are completed, priorities change or new items are proposed.

A: Traffic Circulation and Mobility

A.1: Develop a new Circulation Master Plan Element

Would provide a deeper analysis of roadway network with a prioritization of policies and infrastructure upgrades and improvements to improve safety and efficiency of circulation network for all users. The following could be included in this Element or as stand-alone projects:

- Reduce and rationalize traffic speed limits
- Improve pedestrian safety along key corridors (Plainfield Avenue, Oak Tree Road, Route 1 and Route 27)
- Consider potential corridors for a “road diet”
- Install lighting and roadway reflectors

Type	Responsible	Partners	Difficulty
Policy/Regulation; Program/Study	Planning Board	DPW, Department of Planning and Engineering	***

A.2: Adopt a Complete Streets Policy

Establish regulation affirming that Edison will plan, design, and maintain streets so they are safe for all users of all ages and abilities.

Type	Responsible	Partners	Difficulty
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	*

A.3: Update Sidewalk Improvement Plan

Develop a plan (or update existing plan) that would inventory sidewalks by documenting conditions, establishing priorities for new sidewalks or repair, and developing programmatic recommendations fill in gaps in the network. This effort could be pursued together with the new Circulation Element, or could be undertaken as a separate project.

Type	Responsible	Partners	Difficulty
Program/Study	Department of Planning and Engineering		***

A.4: Pursue Safe Routes to Schools and Safe Streets and Roads studies and grant applications

These federal programs provide funding to support action plans that address roadway safety issues in a community.

Type	Responsible	Partners	Difficulty
Program/Study; Grant Application	Department of Planning and Engineering or Edison BOE	DPW, Township Council, Board of Education	**

A.5: Study bike connection to Rutgers University

Work with Rutgers University to build bicycle connections from the Livingston Campus to the Edison Train Station and Route 1.

Type	Responsible	Partners	Difficulty
Program/Study	Department of Planning and Engineering	Open Space Committee	***

B: Public Transit

B.1: Advocate to NJ Transit for improved bus service

Work with NJ Transit to get more bus routes in the Township, both to Edison Station and to shopping areas within the Township.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Regional Advocacy	NJDOT	Township Council, Middlesex County	****

B.2: Revisit Edison Light Transit (shuttle)

Shuttle would provide service between residential complexes, the train station, and potentially shopping areas.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Capital Programming	Township Council	DPW	****

B.3: Encourage park-and-ride facilities

Pursue shared-use agreements with uses such as theaters and shopping malls.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Partnership	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering, Middlesex County	*

C: Residential Neighborhoods and Quality of Life

C.1: Zoning Changes

Consider the following zoning changes discussed in the Land Use Plan:

- Bulk provisions to appropriately control the scale of new homes
- New zoning district to encompass nonconforming properties in the R-B and reduce variance requests
- Code updates to regulate short-term rentals
- Code updates to preserve and enhance residential buffers

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	*

D: Affordable Housing

D.1: Continue to implement the Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan

The Township should continue to be proactive in meeting its affordable housing obligations, by facilitating a range of housing options including apartments, townhomes, and public housing as well as single-family homes. Strategies that Edison should explore include:

- Inclusionary development (requiring affordable set-asides)
- Market-to-Affordable Programs
- Maintenance of affordable housing stock
- Public-private partnerships
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering, Edison Housing Authority	****

D.2: Work with the Edison Housing Authority to upgrade existing facilities and better connect them with the community

The Township should be an engaged partner with the Housing Authority on its plans to revitalize its properties. The Authority is pursuing U.S. HUD Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) funding, which allows public housing agencies to leverage public and private debt and equity in order to reinvest in the public housing stock. Edison could also consider rezoning public housing sites to an affordable housing overlay zone, both to recognize the existing sites and to ensure that future redevelopment includes the continued provision of affordable units. This new overlay could require a set-aside of affordable units for new development, in exchange for building at a height and/or density greater than permitted by the underlying zoning.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Housing Authority	Township Council, Department of Planning and Engineering	****

E: Transit-Oriented Development

E.1: Establish TOD zoning at Edison Station (2 different districts)

Explore a mixed-use revitalization of the station area with zoning changes that promote public space improvements and connections to the train station, and economic development through the introduction of new businesses. The north side and south sides of the station should be treated differently, as the north side's industrial context can accommodate more development than the southern side.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	***

E.2: Consider redevelopment designation for Metropark vicinity			
Consider redevelopment tool to help revitalize areas within walking distance to station (i.e. along Thornall Street and Wood Avenue).			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	***

E.3: Explore Transit Village designation within Edison			
Transit Village designation opens up eligibility for a number of State grants. It requires municipalities to demonstrate a commitment to revitalize and redevelop transportation hubs into mixed-use neighborhoods with a strong residential component. The TOD projects above should be completed first before pursuing this action.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	**

F: Amboy Avenue

F.1: Consider replacement of the AAR district with a new rehabilitation area			
Revise zoning designation to balance revitalization goals with the existing context. It may include reducing permitted heights to 3 stories.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	***

F.2: Explore strategies to secure public parking			
Accessible parking is needed to support existing businesses and revitalization efforts. There are opportunities to incorporate a public lot between 4th Street and 7th Street, where there are several underutilized properties.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Capital Programming	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering, DPW	*****

F.3: Explore a pedestrian & bicycle link along Liddle Avenue (private road)			
Investigate the potential to acquire the Liddle Avenue (private road) right-of-way, which is privately owned, to create a key pedestrian and bicycle link to the greenway as well as enhance the overall Amboy Avenue corridor. This recommendation could dovetail with the creation of a public parking lot.			

F.3: Explore a pedestrian & bicycle link along Liddle Avenue (private road)			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study, Capital Pro-ject	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	***

G: Commercial Corridors and Areas

G.1: Develop design guidelines for commercial corridors			
Develop a handbook to incorporate into zoning code which defines desirable qualities of architecture, building layout, site design, and public realm spaces for commercial corridors.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study, Poli-cy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	**

G.2: Consider new redevelopment designation Plainfield Avenue and Route 27			
A redevelopment designation and plan are appropriate for this location, encompassing the area currently zoned G-B along Route 27 between Division Street and Sheppard Place, to facilitate a comprehensive planning process that could include changes to permitted uses as well as sidewalk improvements and other infrastructure upgrades.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	***

G.3: Undertake a comprehensive zoning review of business and commercial zones			
Consider rezoning areas that are currently zoned industrial (L-I, R-I, or R-I-I) but that are consumer-oriented commercial uses to an OS zone. This assessment should also look at signage, performance, noise and lighting standards.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study, Policy/Regulation	Department of Planning and Engineering		**

H: Industrial Areas

H.1: Clarify definitions for warehousing, distribution, and fulfillment			
Existing zoning definitions were developed in a different era and do not reflect the current market trends and scale of development. Reconsider which of these uses should be permitted in each commercial or industrial zoning district. The Township should closely monitor these developments and consider revising its code and/or planning policies according to best practices established by the State Planning Commission.			

H.1: Clarify definitions for warehousing, distribution, and fulfillment			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	**

H.2: Reduce the amount of land area zoned for intensive industrial uses			
Consider reducing the LI district in some areas where intensive industrial uses are not desired. They could transition to R-I or R-I-1, a new zone or sub-zone, or potentially be designated as a redevelopment or rehabilitation area			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	**

H.3: Consider rezoning or redevelopment designation for Camp Kilmer Area			
Beyond the areas discussed above for TOD zoning, the Township should explore a redevelopment designation. A redevelopment should address the appropriate mix of uses and area, height, and bulk standards, as well as potential infrastructure improvements and introduction of community amenities such as new or upgraded recreational facilities and possibly a new school facility.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	**

I: Other Commercial Areas

I.1: Revisit redevelopment plan for Hartz Mountain Property			
Work with developer to revise redevelopment plan to encourage more cohesive entertainment district. Revisions would identify pedestrian/bike connections, community-oriented amenities, and locations for enhanced wayfinding, lighting, and other things to help distinguish the district and create a sense of place.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering, Property Owner	***

I.2: Consider redevelopment designation and plan for Menlo Park Mall			
Work with property owner to explore new zoning that gives flexibility in introducing new uses and repurposing space. Ensure that pedestrian connections are maintained or created with introduction of new uses.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>

I.2: Consider redevelopment designation and plan for Menlo Park Mall			
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering, Property Owner	***

J: Middlesex College

J.1: Collaborate with college to plan for shared use of arts and recreation space and ensure protection of quality-of-life in nearby neighborhoods			
Middlesex College has embarked on a major capital investment plan to introduce recreational, cultural, workforce development, and educational amenities to its campus. There is an opportunity to collaborate use of this space to maximize its utility and help to bridge connections between the community and the college. The Township should be an engaged partner in this plan, to ensure mitigation of potential impacts to adjacent roadways and neighborhoods.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Partnership	Township Council and Middlesex College	Department of Planning and Engineering	***

J.2: Consider an overlay zone for R-B district near the college			
The R-B-zoned area adjacent to the college east of the Turnpike, is primarily small single- and two-family homes, and in the short-term, it is likely to remain so. In the long term, as the college continues to grow, it could be evaluated for the introduction of college-related uses such as school administration facilities, faculty and student housing, and amenities that serve these uses.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council and Middlesex College	Department of Planning and Engineering	***

K: Open Space, Recreation, and Trails

K.1: Update the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)			
Review OSRP on an annual basis in consultation with the Open Space Committee to determine short- and long-term priorities and strategies. The OSRP update should be a collaborative effort of relevant commissions, committees, nonprofits, departments, and the public. A key task for the OSRP would be to update the ROSI. The OSRP should also identify funding sources for acquisition, maintenance, and improvements including funding sources such as the Middlesex County Open Space Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, NJDEP Green Acres grants, Environmental Infrastructure Trust (EIT), and the NJ State Urban Parks Program.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study	Department of Planning and Engineering	DPW, Recreation Department	***

K.2: Develop a Comprehensive Trail Plan

The Township should develop its own plan which examines both regional connections as well as more local locations which would provide alternative transportation routes between neighborhoods and parks. This could be done separately or as part of the OSRP. This plan should examine the following opportunities:

- Study use of underutilized rail spurs and space under transmission lines for local connections
- Extension of the East Coast Greenway and improving local connections to the Greenway, including creation of a link between the Greenway and Roosevelt Park, expansion of the Greenway at the Barnes Preserve, exploration of acquiring Liddle Avenue (private road) for a Greenway link, and improving wayfinding signage for the Greenway.
- Introduction of public access easement requirements along Raritan River
- Kayak trails (i.e. through Edmonds Creek)
- Development of a trail along Route 1 in the PSE&G-owned rights-of-way.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study	Department of Planning and Engineering	DPW, Recreation Department	***

K.3: Open Space Zoning Changes

Identify opportunities to bring open space properties into the OSR-C district, such as open space properties listed on the ROSI, as well as schools, municipal, County, or State facilities.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	*

L: Raritan River**L.1: Consider redevelopment designation for Raritan riverfront**

The waterfront area between Route 1 and Silver Lake Avenue has significant revitalization potential, but is constrained by physical conditions. It would benefit from redevelopment designation and preparation of a redevelopment plan addressing allowable uses, public improvement, and strong waterfront design.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	***

L.2: Develop a network of waterfront walkways

In tandem with redevelopment planning, investigate requiring properties abutting the river include maximum practical provision for public access. The town should also identify and pursue available state, federal, and county funding sources to facilitate planning and construction of walkway elements.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study, Capital Project	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	***

M: Community Facilities

M.1: Address short-term space needs for the Police, Fire, and DPW Departments

Each of these departments has identified critical improvements that can and should be implemented in the short-term, including upgrades to garages, expansion of storage space, purchase of more garbage trucks, and improvements to fire houses.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study, Capital Programming	Township Council	Police, Fire, and DPW Departments	**

M.2: Develop a Community Facilities Plan Element

There is a need to evaluate future needs and assess the potential use of various municipally owned sites. This plan should address the need for a community facility in South and West Edison. It should also assess facility and programming needs at existing community centers and libraries. The Element would include the following components:

- Assess the potential for a new community center to serve residents in the southern and western portions of Edison.
- Continue to improve facilities and programming at the Minnie B. Veal Community Center and the Senior Center.
- Support the library's strategic plan and invest in the expansion of library facilities.
- Explore the future use of municipally owned sites including the Stelton School and the Truman Building in the Camp Kilmer area.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study, Capital Programming	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	**

M.3: Work with the Board of Education on a School Facilities Master Plan Element

This would include a public outreach process and in-depth study of the school district's needs and priorities. The school district and the Township should discuss opportunities for new facilities that could accommodate future population growth, such as land the district owns near Thomas Edison Middle School and vacant or underutilized light industrial properties that may become available.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study	Edison Township School District	Township Council, Department of Planning and Engineering	**

M.4: Develop an online tool for communication of public information and events

There is a need for a central website or a mobile application (such as Notify Me or Nixle) which posts information about things happening in Town. This would help the government to communicate directly with residents who sign up to receive notification on emergencies, road closures, meeting agendas, events (sponsored by the Township, schools, or other groups), and Town initiatives. The current use of the Nixle system could be expanded to include a broader array of notifications, or a new tool could be developed.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Capital Programming	Township Council		***

N: Historic and Cultural Resources

N.1: Staff and support the Historic Preservation Commission

The Township should ensure that the HPC is fully appointed, in accordance with the Township ordinance requirement of seven members and two alternates, appointed by the Mayor. In addition, the code requires that a vacancy be filled within 60 days.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Partnership	Township Council, Historic Preservation Commission		*

N.2: Update the Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan

Development of this Element would help guide land-use decisions and provide the basis for ordinances addressing historic preservation issues. This Element is a good first step in introducing historic preservation concepts into local regulations and policies. The Element could include the following:

- Identify more historic sites and districts to nominate at the State and National levels and formally designate on the local register.
- Explore the potential for a local museum to house historical artifacts.
- Assess the steps to pursue designation as a Certified Local Government through New Jersey's State Historic Preservation Office

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study	Planning Board, Historic Preservation Commission		**

N.3: Strengthen the programming and visibility of arts-related and cultural activities.

Promote historic tourism through wayfinding and signage for historic and cultural assets, improve pedestrian connections between important destinations, and increase marketing efforts. This also includes support for the Cultural Arts Committee to develop programs and partnerships.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Partnership	Township Council	Cultural Arts Committee, Middlesex College, others	*

N.4: Zoning Changes

The following actions could be considered to protect and enhance the visual and aesthetic character, historic character, diversity, continuity, and visual interest of the Township

- Revise Historic Preservation Ordinance for clarity and to comply with Certified Local Government guidelines.
- Develop historic design guidelines to be incorporated into zoning code.
- Consider adopting a demolition ordinance.
- Promote adaptive reuse.
- Permit a wide range of arts-related uses throughout commercial/industrial areas and take advantage of redevelopment opportunities to expand arts space.

N.4: Zoning Changes			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	*

O: Infrastructure

O.1: Continue to identify opportunities to broaden access to high-speed internet			
The Township should continue to support the building out of new infrastructure which will provide more options and give residents the freedom to fairly choose the right service provider for their families.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Partnership	Township Council		*

O.2: Support efforts to maintain and upgrade water, stormwater, and sewer infrastructure			
This includes support for the implementation of long-term capital plans. In the short term, digitized maps showing location and condition of infrastructure is needed to better plan improvements. The Township also needs to continue to coordinate with water utilities to ensure safe drinking water.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Capital Programing	DPW	Township Council	*****

O.3: Preserve and expand the tree canopy and reduce impervious coverage			
This recommendation includes a variety of actions which could be done together or as stand-alone projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and maintain tree inventory. • Adopt a tree ordinance • Implement recommendations of the Rutgers Impervious Cover Assessment and create a Reduction Action Plan. • Revise stormwater control regulations • Limit impervious coverage in the zoning code 			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study; Policy/Regulation	DPW	Township Council, Department of Planning and Engineering	** *

P: Sustainability

P.1: Modify the Township Code to encourage circular waste management and eliminate overall waste.

The Township can pursue a variety of actions to reduce the amount of waste we generate, including:

- Revise code provisions for composting, which is currently not permitted.
- Provide compost bins and/or educational programs on home composting.
- Increase frequency of recycling pickup
- Implement plans for a dedicated recycling center.
- Conduct an educational campaign for recycling
- Explore additional measures to advance plastic waste reduction and increase plastics recycling
- Embrace the State's community solar program and pursue opportunities for additional solar installations

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Regulation, Partnerships, Capital Project	Township Council, DPW	Department of Planning and Engineering	***

P.2: Promote Renewable Energy Sources.

The Township should continue embracing sustainable energy sources such as solar, wind, and innovative practices like recapturing methane gases from landfills and waste. Potential projects to pursue include:

- Installing renewable energy and heating sources at publicly owned facilities.
- Identifying barriers in the zoning or building code to implement these facilities.
- Providing EV charging stations in public spaces.
- Updating zoning code to incorporate the State's EV charging regulations.
- Investigating the feasibility of implementing landfill gas-to-energy projects at its four other landfills

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Regulation, Partnerships, Capital Project	Township Council, DPW	Department of Planning and Engineering	****

P.3: Add Sustainable Construction and Design Standards to Edison's Code.

Continue to support and facilitate the Environmental Commission's efforts to promote sustainable construction methods, including consideration for adding green building standards to the code and providing incentives for sustainable construction processes. The Township can consult green building standards, including the U.S. Green Building Council LEED Standards and the National Association of Homebuilders Green Building Initiative.

<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	*

P.4: Improve Public Health and the Quality of Life Through Sustainability Practices.

This recommendation includes the following actions:

- Continue to work to replace lead pipes in the water infrastructure, provide access to grants for lead paint removal, and educate the public about the dangers of lead.
- Add additional year-round public recreational facilities.
- Provide healthy food options through community gardens and educational campaigns.
- Develop complete streets to make public areas safer and friendly to walk and bike.

P.4: Improve Public Health and the Quality of Life Through Sustainability Practices.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Regulation, Partnerships, Capital Project	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering, DPW, Recreation Department	***

Q: Other Zoning Changes

Q.1: Consider preparation of a scattered-site redevelopment plan			
This plan could group similar sites under similar use and bulk standard frameworks, utilize similar design guidelines, etc., while still offering the opportunity to create separate subsections for unique sites that require special use, bulk, and design requirements/standards:			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	**

Q.2: Create and maintain a map of all redevelopment and rehabilitation areas			
This would be a user-friendly tool that where boundaries are clear and respective plans are readily accessible. Several options exist for the user interface for the map, ranging from creation of a simple PDF map for easy viewing, download, and email distribution to interested developers, to creation of a GIS map layer placed on the zoning map. The GIS option would enable areas in need of redevelopment and/or rehabilitation to be linked to their respective studies and/or plans, all of which could be accessible via the Township's website.			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Program/Study	Department of Planning and Engineering		**

Q.3: Develop a new Circulation Master Plan Element			
The following are clean-up actions geared toward general land use planning policy and ordinance amendments as well as other land use issues not covered above. They could be pursued together or as stand-alone projects.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address mismatches between existing or preferred use and zoning. • Consider streamlining similar districts, transitioning redevelopment areas and affordable housing zones into traditional zoning. • For zoning districts that are part of the Township's regulations but not mapped, either formally designate these zones on the map or, if no longer applicable, remove them from the regulations. 			
<i>Type</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Policy/Regulation	Township Council	Department of Planning and Engineering	**