



my
EAST CAMDEN
NEIGHBORHOOD
PLAN



Regional Plan Association



November 2021

Acknowledgements

PROJECT TEAM

SAINT JOSEPH'S CARPENTER SOCIETY

Enrique Rivera, PP, AICP, Director of Neighborhood Development

Pilar Hogan Closkey, PE, PP, AICP, Executive Director

Soley Berrios, Director of Community Impact

REGIONAL PLAN ASSOCIATION

Christina Kata, Special Projects Associate

Carlos Mandeville, Research Analyst

Nat Bottigheimer, NJ Director

Robert Freudenberg, Vice President, Energy & Environment

Dave Zackin, Creative Director

FUNDERS

NJ Department of Community Affairs via the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credits program

STEERING COMMITTEE

Marilyn Torres, Camden City Council

Meishka Mitchell PP, AICP, Camden Community Partnership

Doug Burns, Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority

Peter Kroll, Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority

Sgt. Dekel Levy, Camden County Police Department

Ofc. Lissandra Sime, Camden County Police Department

Ofc. Peter Macpherson, Camden County Police Department

Ofc. Luis Sanchez, Camden County Police Department

Chuck Valentine, Camden Housing Authority

Olivette Simpson, Camden Redevelopment Agency

Sulena Robinson-Rivera, Camden Redevelopment Agency

David Garrison, Cartun Hardware

Carrie Kitchen-Santiago, Cathedral Kitchen

Keith Walker, City of Camden, Department of Public Works

Candice Jefferson, City of Camden, Planning & Development

Edward C. Williams, PP, AICP, CSI, City of Camden,

Planning & Development

Michele Acevedo, Hispanic Family Center

Nicole Wismer, Hispanic Family Center

Raymond Lamboy, Latin American Economic

Development Association

Kristin Prinn, LUCY Outreach

Mildred Rojas, Mastery Charter Schools – East Camden Middle School

Maria Sharma, CRA Commissioner and City Committee Woman

Rudisha Okezie, NJ Conservation Foundation

Tim Brill, NJ Conservation Foundation

Anya Saretzky, Rails to Trails

Alesha Figueroa-Falcon, City Committee Woman

Carol Jones, East Camden Resident

Dwaine Williams, East Camden Resident

Esther Mercado Pitts, East Camden Resident

Felix Moulter, East Camden Resident

Joseph H. Walker, East Camden Resident

Juanita Pitts, East Camden Resident

Kirk Jones, East Camden Resident

Jeffrey Gottlieb, ResinTech

Michele Garcon, Rutgers University - Camden, Office of Civic Engagement

Margie Johnston, St. Joseph's Child Development Center

Reyna Perez, St. Joseph's Child Development Center

Caroline Gray, American Water

Kyle Orosz, St. Joseph's Pro-Cathedral School

Albert Vega, UrbanPromise

Lindsey Markelz, UrbanPromise

Nancy Nguyen, VietLead

Angela Randall, Volunteers of America

Jen Segelken, YMCA of Greater Philadelphia

Justin Spencer Linzie, YMCA of Greater Philadelphia

Maria Torres, East Camden Resident

Oswaldo Rodriguez, East Camden Resident



CONTENTS

Overview / 5

Purpose of a Neighborhood Plan / 7

Historical Overview & Existing Conditions / 11

Overarching Goals & Recommendations / 29

Increase Accessibility and Improve Physical Conditions / 29

Center Residents and Local Businesses in Economic Development Initiatives / 37

Improve Sustainability and Environmental Resiliency / 41

Support Arts, Culture, Community, and Health / 45

Enhance Communication and Collaboration / 51

Implementation / 55

Appendix A: Implementation Chart / 59

Appendix B: Neighborhood & Regional Assets / 67

More than 900 East Camden residents, workers, and stakeholders participated in the creation of this report.



Philadelphia

Pennsauken

Merchantville

**East
Camden**

Camden

Collingswood





Overview

East Camden is a vibrant community within Camden, NJ with a large population of both long-term residents and recent immigrants. The neighborhood itself is largely residential, with three commercial corridors and a small light industrial area. While it faces many of the challenges of Camden as a whole, particularly street and public space maintenance and employment opportunities, East Camden has many assets, and its residents are dedicated to engaging with the city and other stakeholders to take action and make investments that will make the neighborhood more welcoming, healthy, sustainable, and prosperous.

My East Camden is a resident-driven 10-year neighborhood plan that outlines the goals of the community and how residents and stakeholders would like to see it develop.

This report builds on the 2013 neighborhood plan¹ with a focus on specific recommendations, implementation strategies, and funding sources to make them a reality. At the heart of both the 2013 plan and 2021 update is the idea of “Cultivating Community” – building upon existing neighborhood assets and the creativity and values of East Camden residents to ensure an equitable, sustainable future.

St. Joseph’s Carpenter Society (SJCS) and Regional Plan Association (RPA) prepared this plan during the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly affected New Jersey and Camden in particular. In order to ensure that the recommendations accurately reflected the needs and wants of the community while maintaining health and safety precautions, the project team employed diverse engagement methods, including email outreach, online surveys, Zoom meetings and virtual open houses, flyers and postcards, socially-distant outdoor gatherings, and masked door-to-door surveying.

¹ Regional Plan Association, et al. “My East Camden.” (2013).

In response, East Camden stakeholders have framed a plan that increases accessibility and improves physical conditions; centers residents and local businesses in economic development initiatives; improves sustainability and environmental resiliency; supports arts, culture, community, and health; and increases communication and collaboration both within the neighborhood and with public and private entities. Many of the recommendations can be achieved in the short-term, while others will require long-term backing and continual effort.

Some of the major recommendations that residents and local stakeholders have prioritized include:

- ▶ Improve housing conditions through technical assistance and grant programs for homeowners and renters
- ▶ Support efforts by the city and local non-profits to identify, acquire, and renovate or demolish vacant properties
- ▶ Engage with existing large employers to do a needs assessment and develop training programs tailored to local employment needs
- ▶ Encourage development conditions for a more diverse array of businesses in existing commercial corridors
- ▶ Share information with residents on best methods to increase individual resiliency

- ▶ Address Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and stormwater flooding
- ▶ Improve park conditions and maintenance
- ▶ Coordinate with local community groups and institutions to offer programming in parks
- ▶ Encourage development of new mechanisms for government agencies to share information with residents, using the My East Camden Collaborative as coordinator
- ▶ Engage Camden County Police to encourage additional community dialogue and responsiveness in ways that make residents feel safe

This plan highlights the importance of investment in, and promotion of, a neighborhood coalition. While many residents and stakeholders are already very engaged in the neighborhood, they are not necessarily coordinated. As an immediate step after the publication of this neighborhood plan, it is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative, an entity made up of various stakeholders guided by a mission statement and partnership principles, coordinate efforts to quickly implement the recommendations that were indicated as high priorities by residents. Training residents in urban planning and civic engagement so that they are equipped with the tools to advocate for themselves and their community will also be important to accomplish plan recommendations.

OVERARCHING GOALS

- ▶ Increase Accessibility and Improve Physical Conditions
- ▶ Center Residents and Local Businesses in Economic Development Initiatives
- ▶ Improve Sustainability and Environmental Resiliency
- ▶ Support Arts, Culture, Community, and Health
- ▶ Enhance Communication and Collaboration





Purpose of a Neighborhood Plan

A neighborhood plan is a document that gathers insights and ideas from local stakeholders, such as residents, workers, students, and local businesses, to set out clear goals for how the neighborhood can and should improve.

Neighborhood plans usually include research on the current conditions of the area, answering questions like: who lives here? Where do these neighbors work? How many homes are here and how affordable are they? And what transportation do people use?

The *My East Camden* neighborhood plan builds off of the 2013 plan and reviews how the neighborhood has changed, focusing on factors such as population, jobs, housing, transportation, environment and vulnerability to climate change, among other issues. While organizations such as RPA can help gather some data on these issues, no one knows the neighborhood better than the individuals who live and work there. RPA, SJCS, and a Steering Committee composed of local stakeholders engaged in several outreach efforts through a variety of mediums in order to learn more about the neighborhood, identify the issues that residents cared about most, and work with residents to think of solutions that could help East Camden improve.

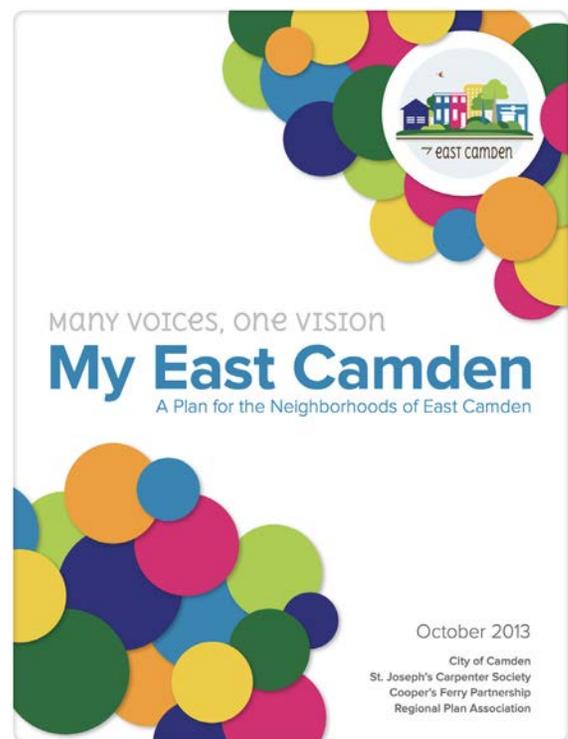
SJCS, the My East Camden Collaborative, and others will take this plan and work with the City of Camden and other public and private entities to identify and obtain funding for specific projects that can make this plan a reality.

GUIDING VALUES

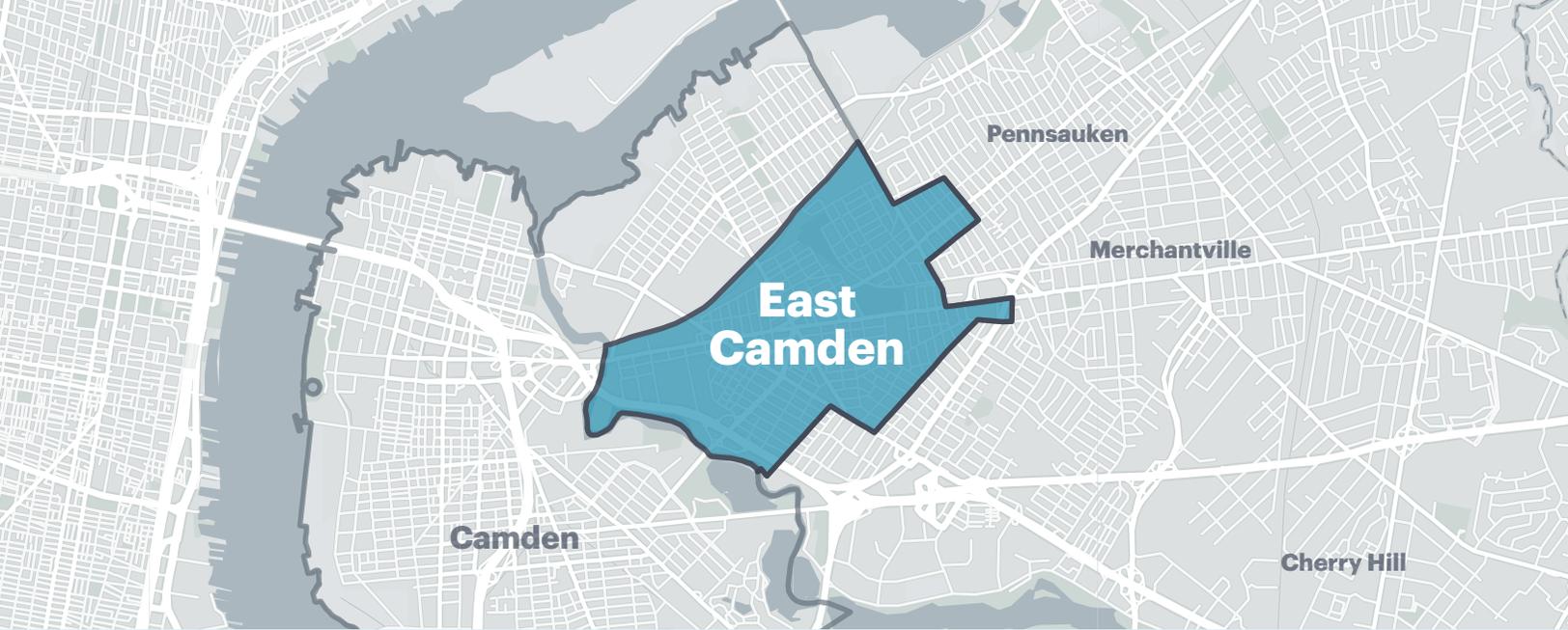
In creating this plan, RPA and SJCS drafted the recommendations with the Steering Committee to promote greater equity and prosperity, improve health, and secure a more sustainable environment for East Camden.

PREVIOUS PLANS

This project builds on the 2013 *My East Camden* plan, a 5-year neighborhood plan developed by St. Joseph's Carpenter Society, Camden Community Partnership, formerly known as Cooper's Ferry Partnership, and Regional Plan Association. A 20-member Steering Committee guided the 2013 plan, while the team engaged with several hundred residents and stakeholders through open houses, focus groups, comment booklets, a neighborhood survey, and a public presentation.

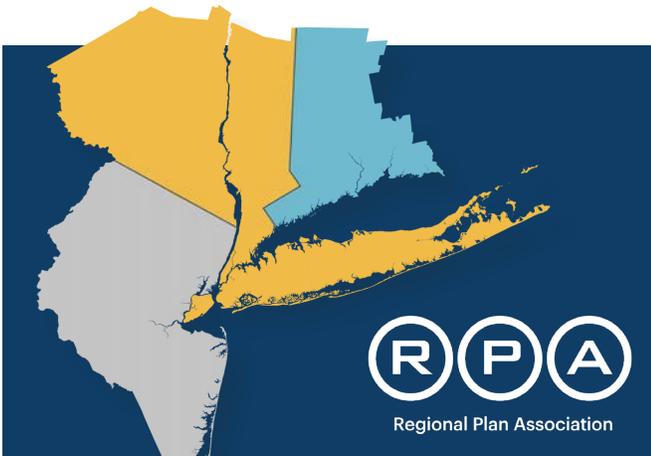


Earlier Camden neighborhood plans informed the 2013 plan, including the 2006 Marlton Redevelopment Plan, the 2005 Rosedale Redevelopment Plan, the 2003 East Camden Strategic Investment Plan, the 2002 FutureCAMDEN Master Plan, and the 1996 Stockton Redevelopment Plan.



STUDY AREA

East Camden is a neighborhood within the City of Camden, which is the seat of Camden County, New Jersey. The city is located in the southern half of New Jersey, across the Delaware River from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. East Camden is home to more than a quarter of the city's residents. It is a geographically distinct neighborhood, bounded by the Cooper River and infrastructure such as Route 30 and the Conrail rail lines. East Camden itself is divided into four sub-neighborhoods, indicated by Census tract: Dudley (6011.01), Rosedale (6011.02), Stockton (6012) and Marlton (6013). East Camden is largely residential, but it is also home to a light industrial zone at the edge of the neighborhood by the Cooper River as well as multiple distinct commercial corridors.



PROJECT PARTNERS

Saint Joseph's Carpenter Society (SJCS)² was the project executor, organizing the Steering Committee and helping to coordinate community engagement and outreach. SJCS strives to improve the quality of life of the people of Camden and its surrounding communities by promoting affordable housing and neighborhood development. Through their initiatives, including homeowner education, housing development, and community organizing, they encourage residents to take charge of their lives and become active community members. SJCS is regionally recognized as a leader in Camden's growth, and its efforts in housing and economic development have resulted in increased property values within a stable, mixed-income neighborhood. Strategic partnerships have helped SJCS expand educational and employment opportunities, grow Camden's housing market, improve public safety, strengthen commercial activity, and raise the aesthetic appeal of the neighborhood.

Regional Plan Association (RPA)³ is an independent non-profit organization that develops and promotes ideas to improve the economic health, environmental resiliency, and quality of life of the Connecticut-New Jersey-New York area. RPA conducts research on the environment, land use, and good governance, and advises cities, communities, and public agencies on urban

² St. Joseph's Carpenter Society. (Accessed June 2021).

³ Regional Plan Association. (Accessed June 2021).



Do you live or work in East Camden?
We want to hear from you!

St. Joseph's Carpenter Society and Regional Plan Association are working with residents to update the neighborhood plan. To suggest ideas for the neighborhood plan, please fill out this survey:

¿Vives o trabajas en East Camden?
Queremos oír de tí!

St. Joseph's Carpenter Society y Regional Plan Association están trabajando con los residentes para actualizar el plan del vecindario para East Camden. Para sugerir ideas para el plan del vecindario, complete esta encuesta.

Bạn sống hay làm việc ở East Camden?
Chúng tôi muốn nghe từ bạn!

St. Joseph's Carpenter Society và Regional Plan Association đang làm việc với cư dân để cập nhật quy hoạch khu vực lân cận. Để tìm hiểu thêm và để xuất ý tưởng cho quy hoạch vùng lân cận, vui lòng điền vào bản khảo sát này.



tinyurl.com/eastcamdensurvey

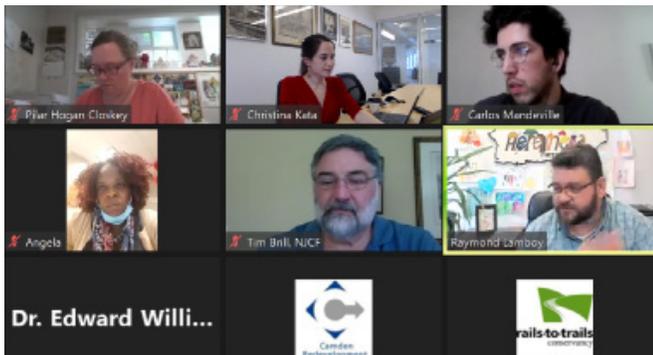
Questions? ¿Preguntas? Câu hỏi?
info@SJCS Camden.org | 856-966-8117 ext. 210




Fill out the survey and receive a \$10 gift card.
Completen la encuesta y recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de \$10.



<https://bit.ly/2SAa1lW>

planning issues. RPA has been active in the tri-state region for nearly a century, and some of the region's most significant public works, economic development initiatives, and open space projects have their roots in RPA ideas and initiatives.

RPA partnered with SJCS for the 2013 *My East Camden* neighborhood plan and was invited by SJCS to return for the 2021 plan. RPA helped coordinate Steering Committee meetings, engaged in community outreach, performed land use analyses and surveys of the area, and drafted recommendations informed by residents and implementation strategies.

PLANNING PROCESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This report was drafted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly affected New Jersey and Camden in particular. In order to ensure that plan recommendations accurately reflected the needs and wants of the community while maintaining health and safety precautions, the project team employed a multitude of engagement strategies.

SJCS assembled a Steering Committee of more than 50 individuals, including residents, businesses, municipal department leaders, county police, utilities, and local non-profits. During the course of the project, RPA and SJCS coordinated monthly virtual meetings on Zoom and engaged with the Committee over email, one-on-one phone calls, and, when vaccinations increased and cases dropped, masked outdoor meetings.

SJCS and RPA conducted surveys and several small group meetings with residents with differing ages and experiences. In 2019, SJCS surveyed 402 residents on neighborhood conditions. In March 2021, in coordination with Lifting Up Camden's Youth (LUCY) Outreach, SJCS met with two separate groups of youths. One group was made up of approximately 20 attendees between the ages of 10 to 14, while the second group was made up of approximately 14 slightly older teens. SJCS conducted a three-board activity, ("What are your favorite places in East Camden? What do you dislike about East Camden? If you had \$1,000,000 to spend in the neighborhood, what would you do?") and asked the older teens to fill out surveys created with RPA about their experiences in the neighborhood.

In early April 2021, RPA held three virtual open houses on Zoom to share more information about the neighborhood planning process and to solicit ideas. Information about the virtual open houses was shared in emails to the Steering Committee, SJCS's listserv, RPA's social media accounts, and institutions in the neighborhood. The virtual open houses were also advertised on Facebook and on flyers prepared in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, the three most commonly spoken languages in East Camden. The flyers were mailed to approximately 50 businesses and non-profits.

SJCS and RPA jointly prepared a survey, which was available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, asking individuals who lived, worked, or spent time in the neighborhood to report on their experiences. The survey was made available online and on paper forms. RPA shared the link to the online survey by email and by postcard with messages prepared in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese to the Steering Committee, as well as to non-profits and institutions such as the Boys and Girls Club of Camden County, the Camden County Library System, the Camden County Pop-Up Library, IMMSchools; environmental groups; medical institutions; religious institutions; large employers and long-time small businesses; public, private, and charter schools in the neighborhood; and nearby universities, including the Rutgers-Camden Office of Civic Engagement.

In addition to the approximately 60 complete online survey results, SJCS enlisted the support of door-to-door surveyors, who spoke with 200 residents over the course of a few weeks. 52% of the door-to-door surveys were completed in Spanish. The median age of door-to-door survey respondents was 39, with the youngest being 20 and the oldest being 79.

In May 2021, in coordination with a Cathedral Kitchen food distribution program, RPA and a representative of SJCS met outdoors with approximately 20 residents and asked them to share their ideas for projects or programs that they'd like to see in East Camden on a posterboard, which included prompts in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. During the same site visit, RPA visited and spoke with local businesses highlighted by residents in the surveys, including Millenium Skate World, and met with members of the Steering Committee and their neighbors outdoors.

RPA conducted a follow-up online survey in June 2021 asking residents and other local stakeholders to prioritize the goals as well as the recommendations under each goal. Around 400 responses were received. Prioritizations are indicated in the recommendations section as well as the implementation section later in the report. SJCS held additional listening sessions to gather feedback in August and September with Councilwoman Marilyn Torres and her constituents and the East Camden Advisory Committee. Residents were encouraged to pick up the plan from the SJCS office and drafts were shared with the Mayor, City of Camden Planning Board, and other City of Camden officials for their review.



5. East Camden has several parks and recreation areas, including Alberta Woods Park, Dudley Grange Park, and Ralph Williams Memorial Park. How often do you spend time at these parks or at other recreation areas?

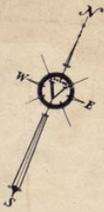
- Daily
- Weekly
- Once a month
- Once every few months
- Never

6. What are some things that you would change about the parks and recreation areas?

ENTIRELY WITHIN PHILADELPHIA URBANIZED AREA

CITY OF CAMDEN

1950 OFFICE MAP
OFFICE COPY
1950



BOUGH OF
DLYNNE



Historical Overview & Existing Conditions

A BRIEF HISTORY

We acknowledge that this land was once called Lenapehoking and originally home to the Lenni Lenape, who lived in this area for generations before their population was impacted by disease, famine, and war brought by colonialists.⁴ According to city and county records, Camden grew out of a settlement of Quaker residents and developed thanks to the creation of a ferry system on the Delaware River in the late 1600s. Camden was officially incorporated as a city in 1828 and grew rapidly due to the arrival of the Camden and Amboy Railroad, becoming a major manufacturing hub by the end of the century.⁵

East Camden itself was located in a separate township called Stockton, which was annexed into the city in the late 1800s. The rail system that connected Camden to other major northeast hubs, the electric trolley system that developed on Federal Street and Westfield Ave, and manufacturing opportunities in Camden and Philadelphia led to rapid residential growth in East Camden during the late 1800s and early 1900s.⁶ Major manufacturers in the area included Campbell's Soup Company, which launched as Anderson & Campbell in 1869.⁷

Camden's history lies not just in manufacturing, however. New Jersey was the last northern state to outlaw slavery,⁸ and for many years, Camden was home to a market that sold enslaved humans, which the city has marked in recent years with plaques and memorials.^{9,10} Compared to more northern New Jersey cities, Camden historically had a higher population of freed Black

residents, who developed community organizations, religious institutions, and sports teams by the mid 1800s.¹¹ By 1880, Camden was home to the state's largest Black population, and the population of Black residents grew during the Great Migration after World War I.¹² Today, approximately 27% of East Camden residents identify as Black (non-Hispanic) according to the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) and several residents who were interviewed reported that they and their families have lived in the neighborhood for generations.

Job opportunities in the late 1800s and early 1900s also drew many individuals from southern and eastern Europe, including Italian and Polish residents.^{13,14} Today, East Camden is home to individuals from many regions, countries, and ethnic backgrounds, including growing populations of Mexican, Dominican, Vietnamese, and Haitian-Creole residents. More than half of East Camden households speak Spanish, according to the 2019 ACS.

Like many manufacturing centers on the East Coast, Camden experienced economic decline beginning in the 1960s as factories moved production out of the city, and governmental housing policies encouraged white residents to move to the suburbs.¹⁵ Many white residents left Camden for segregated suburbs such as Cherry Hill,¹⁶ and according to Census records, the city's population dropped by a third between 1950 and 1980. Beyond large-scale housing projects, such as Westfield Towers and John F. Kennedy Towers, construction activity in East Camden slowed as the population declined and poverty levels increased, leading to deteriorating infrastructure and increasing vacancies.¹⁷ The

4 Herbert Kraft, *The Lenape-Delaware Indian Heritage*. (2001).

5 Camden County, "History." (Accessed May 2021).

6 Regional Plan Association, et al, "My East Camden." (2013).

7 Campbell Soup Company. "Campbell History." (Accessed May 2021).

8 Giles Wright, "Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History." (1988).

9 New York Times, "In Camden, a Memorial Marks Where Slaves Were Brought Ashore." (November 27, 2017)

10 Courier Post, "Sign marks third Camden site where slaves were bought and sold." (September 25, 2020).

11 Giles Wright, "Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History." (1988).

12 Giles Wright, "Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History." (1988).

13 Regional Plan Association, et al, "My East Camden." (2013).

14 Giles Wright, "Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History." (1988).

15 Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law*. (2017).

16 New York Times, "Camden: An Exodus of Whites." (June 25, 1972).

17 Regional Plan Association, et al, "My East Camden." (2013).

city sought bankruptcy in 1999,¹⁸ and eventually the city and the State of New Jersey agreed to an arrangement of state financial oversight in return for additional financial aid.¹⁹

In recent years, thanks to the resiliency of long-standing residents, support from new immigrants, and investment by local, state, and national groups, Camden has begun to recover. However, this recovery is fragile. While there has been more development, especially in the Downtown area and along the waterfront, the population of Camden continues to decline. And, while East Camden’s population was rebounding according to the 2013 plan,²⁰ it recently has shown a decrease in population. Residents and stakeholders alike will need to collaborate and implement strategies in order to build an East Camden in which new and current residents want to live, work, and spend time in.

EAST CAMDEN TODAY

East Camden is a vibrant community with a large population of both long-term residents and recent immigrants, many from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and Haiti. While it faces many of the challenges of Camden as a whole, particularly

¹⁸ New York Times, “Camden Seeks Bankruptcy Protection, Angering State Officials.” (July 20, 1999).
¹⁹ The Associated Press, “Camden and State Reach Fiscal Agreement.” (July 23, 1999)
²⁰ Regional Plan Association, et al, “My East Camden.” (2013)

street management, public space maintenance, and employment opportunities, its economy and household income are doing somewhat better than the city overall.

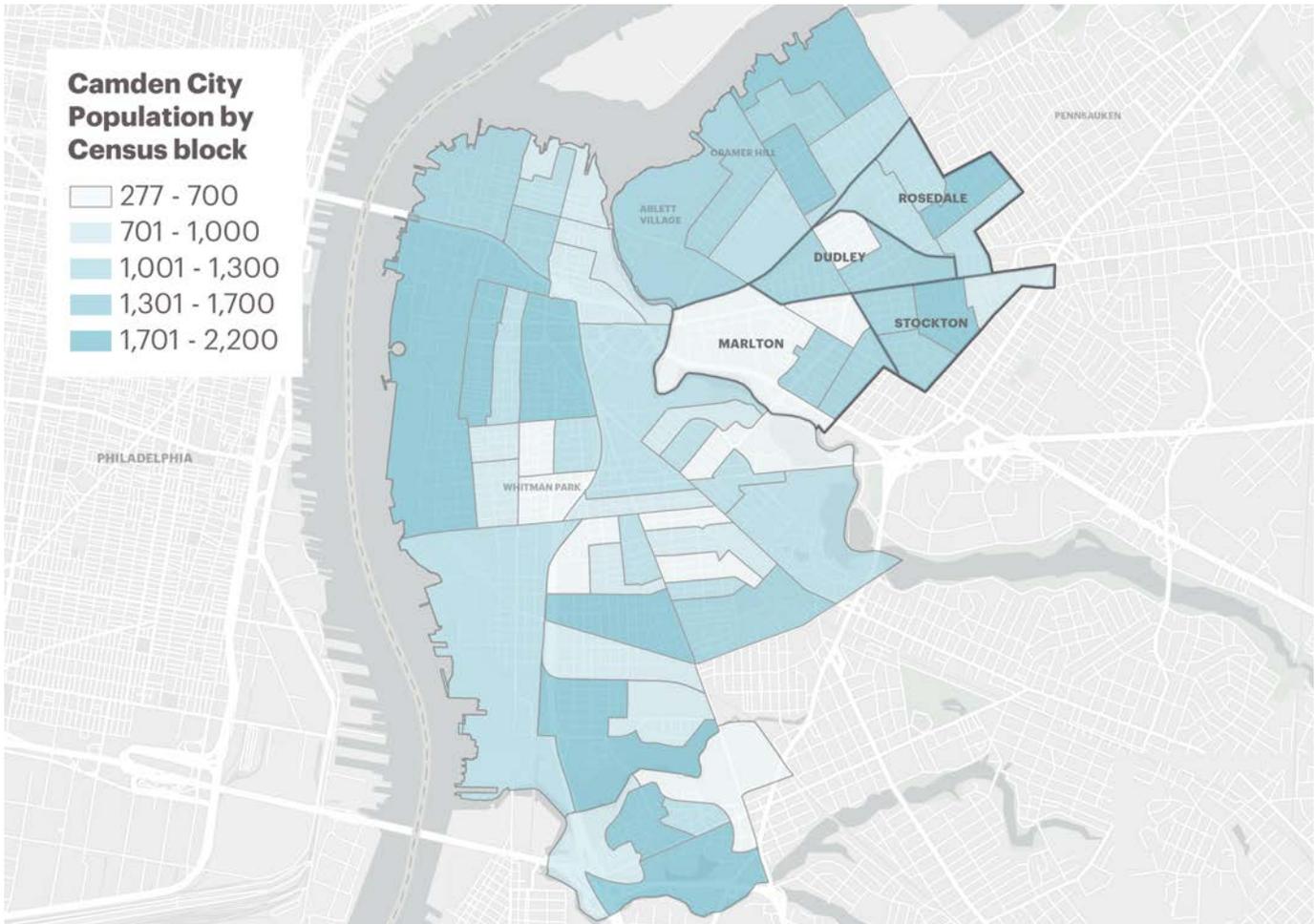
DEMOGRAPHICS

The following demographic analysis draws from the U.S. Census of 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 in addition to the most recent American Community Survey 5-year estimates for 2019.

Population and population density

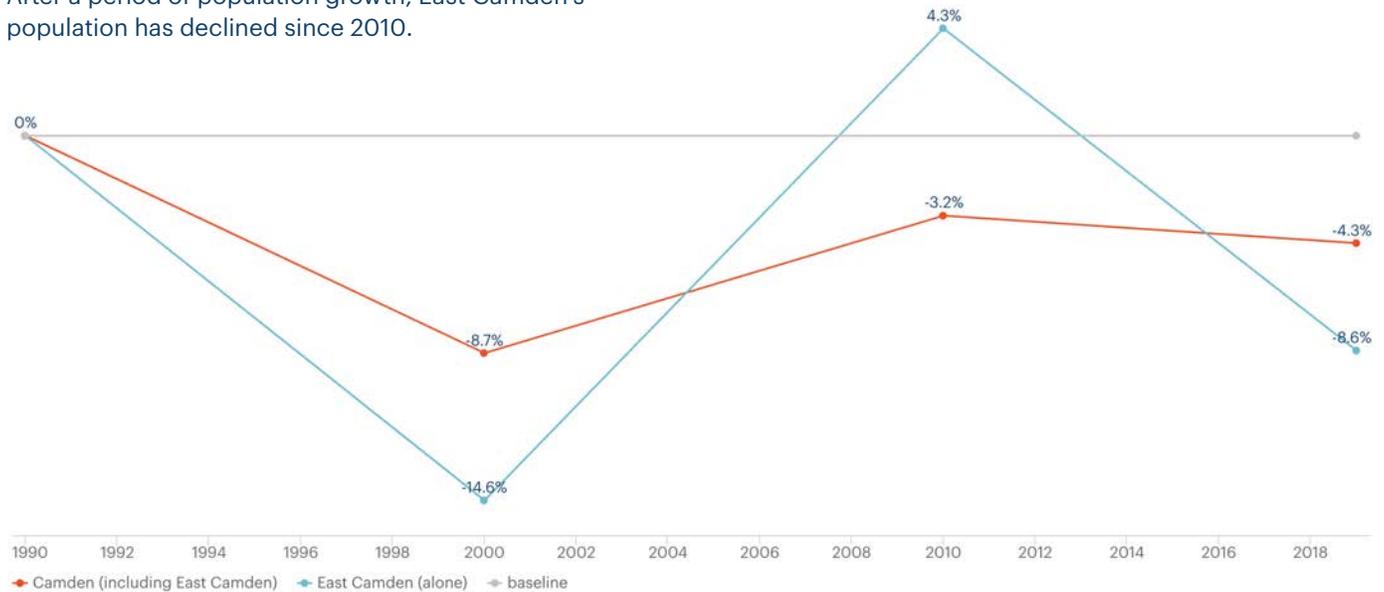
According to the 2019 ACS, the population of East Camden was estimated to be 18,898. The neighborhood population represents 25.5% of Camden’s total population, which was 74,002.

At the time of the 2013 *My East Camden* report, East Camden was experiencing a unique period of population growth, but the trend has since reversed. While Camden and East Camden grew in population between 1980 and 1990, the city and neighborhood saw a steep decline in population of 8.7% and 14.6% respectively during the 1990s. Camden’s population continued to decline from 79,904 to 77,344 in the 2000s, but East Camden’s population increased from 19,835 to 20,679 residents. The most recent development, according to the 2019 ACS 5-year



Population Growth Rate (2000-2019)

After a period of population growth, East Camden's population has declined since 2010.



data, is that East Camden's trend has since reversed, experiencing an 8.6% decline in population, while the city experienced a 4.3% decline. The reversal of a promising trend in population growth suggests that East Camden's population is more variable than the rest of the city, and could benefit from stabilizing investments in housing and jobs. East Camden's population density is an asset to promote stable growth.

Between 2010 and 2019, the population of East Camden aged, with gains for both men and women in the population over 50 years old. The population overall decreased, though, because of significant declines in the population under 18 and between 18 and 49 years old, which make up a vast majority of the neighborhood's residents. The population of men below 49 years old decreased at a higher rate than women under 49 years of age.

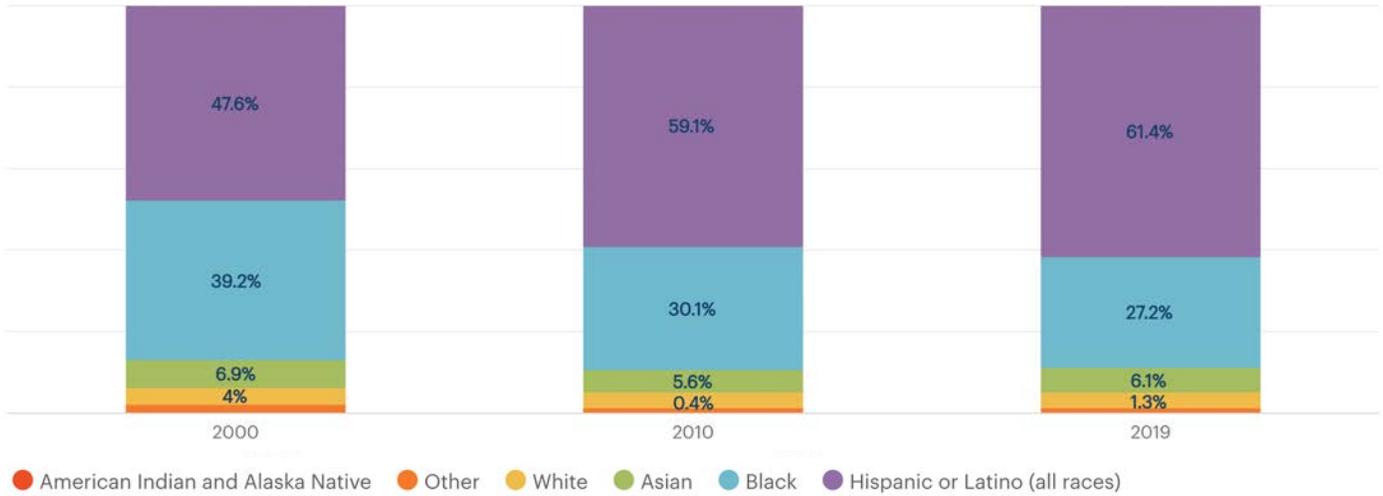
Age Structure in East Camden

East Camden has seen a steep decline of people under 49 and a small increase of people over 50.



Racial Breakdown of East Camden

The share of the Lation population in East Camden has grown since 2000.



Race and ethnicity

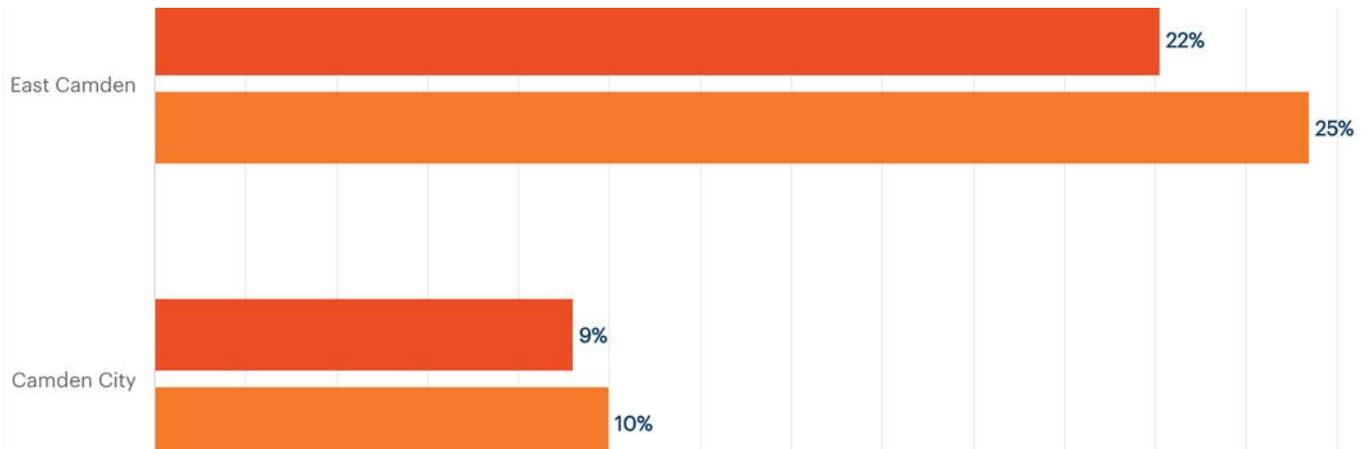
According to the 2019 ACS, East Camden has a population that is about 61% Hispanic or Latino (all races), 27% Black, 6% Asian, 4% white, and 2% other. East Camden remains a diverse neighborhood marked by increases in the Latino population and declines in the Black population.

The bar chart shows how the racial demographics have evolved in East Camden since 2000. The chart describes a 12% decline in the share of Black residents in the past 20 years, corresponding to a 13.8% increase in the share of Latino residents. The share of Asian residents declined overall during the 20 years, but has seen a 0.5% increase in their share of the population in the past 9 years. The share of white residents remained relatively consistent, only declining by 0.1% between 2000 and 2019.

East Camden in 2019 maintained a trend of an increasing share of residents being foreign-born. Between 2014 and 2019, the share of East Camden’s population that is foreign-born increased by 3.3% to 25.4%. This is more than double the share of foreign-born residents in Camden overall, 10% of whose population consists of foreign-born people. The increasing share of foreign-born people highlights the potential for East Camden to become an anchor of growth driven by immigration and investment in small business. However, feedback provided by community members suggested a diversity of modes of communication and community desires that together suggest a need for programs and policies that reach across constituencies to promote an integrated vision for the neighborhood.

Foreign-born Population in Camden and East Camden, 2014 and 2019

The share of East Camden's foreign-born population has grown in the past five years.



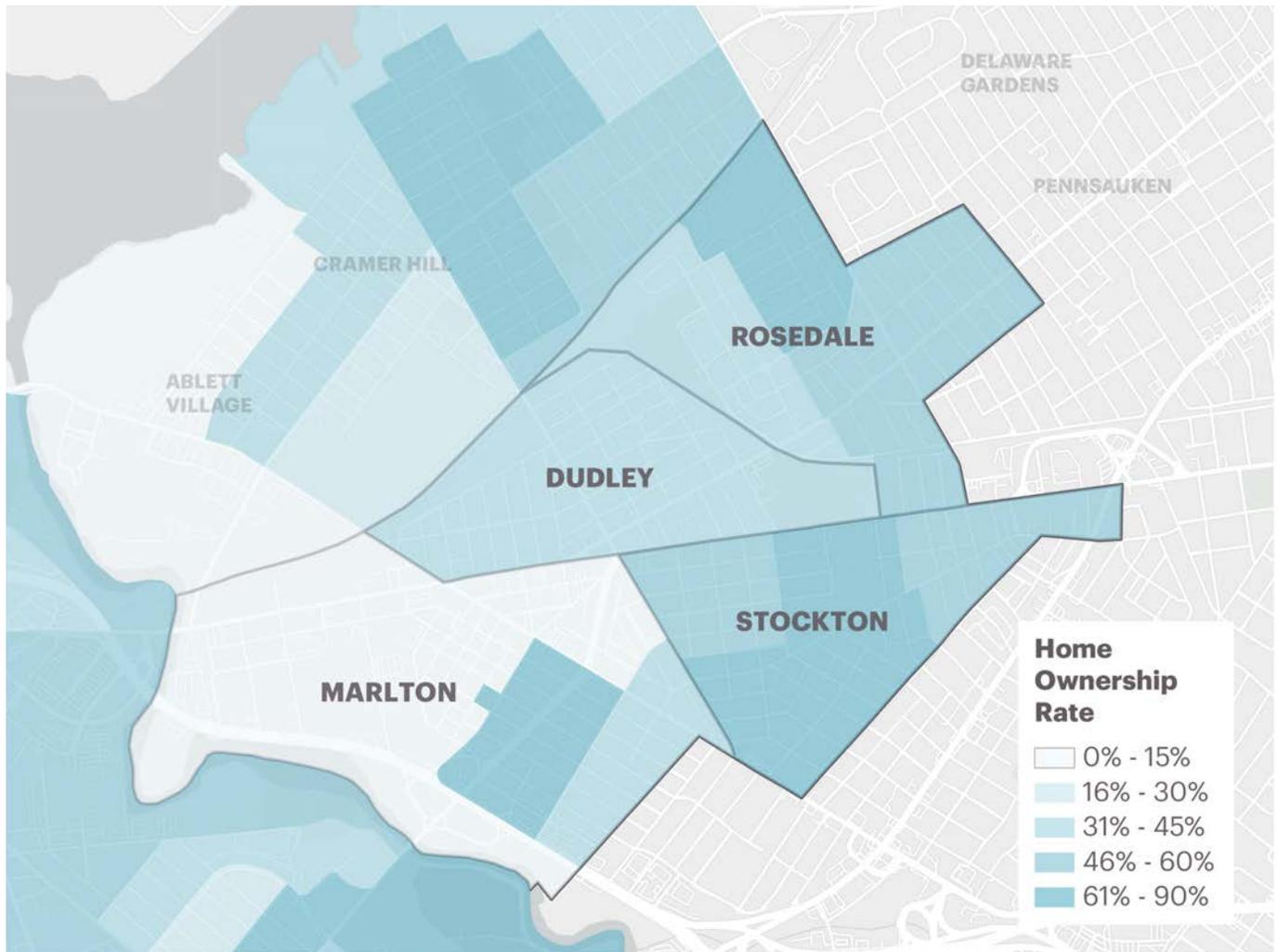
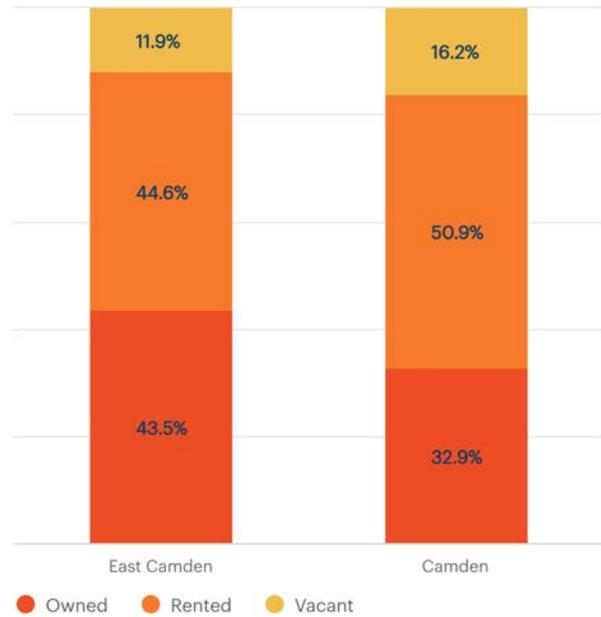
Housing and homeownership

East Camden has a total of 6,882 housing units, 44.6% of which are renter-occupied, 43.5% of which are owner-occupied, and 11.9% of which are vacant. The increase in vacancy rate from 8.8% in 2010 to 11.9% is likely attributable to the population decline the neighborhood experienced during this time period. Compared to Camden as a whole, East Camden has a higher rate of homeownership and a lower vacancy rate, which suggests that the neighborhood is more stable than other parts of Camden.

The homeownership rates for the neighborhood's occupied units shown in the map also reveal pockets of higher ownership throughout East Camden. The northern block group of Rosedale and parts of Stockton have some of the city's highest homeownership rates, ranging from 61% to 86%. Adjacent block groups have homeownership rates ranging from 33% to 49%.

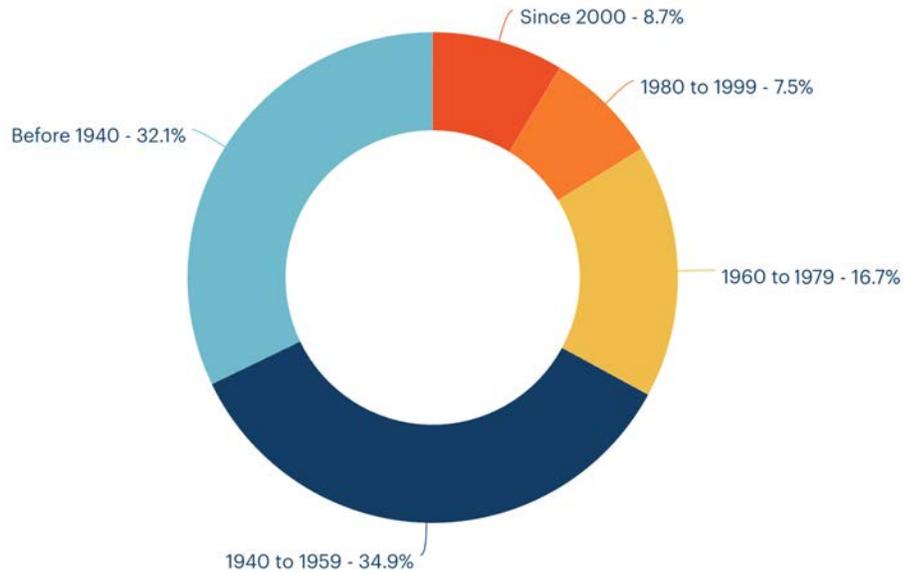
Another factor to consider is the state of the available housing stock. Less than 9% of housing units were built within the past 20 years; the majority of housing in the neighborhood is over 60 years old.

Housing Occupancy in Camden and East Camden



Date of Construction of Housing in East Camden

Most housing in East Camden was built before 1959



Housing cost and affordability

According to 2019 data, about 56% of renters in East Camden identify as burdened or severely burdened by their housing costs. This means that these renters spend over 30% of their income towards housing costs. This represents a decline from 2010, when over 60% of renters in East Camden reported being housing cost burdened.

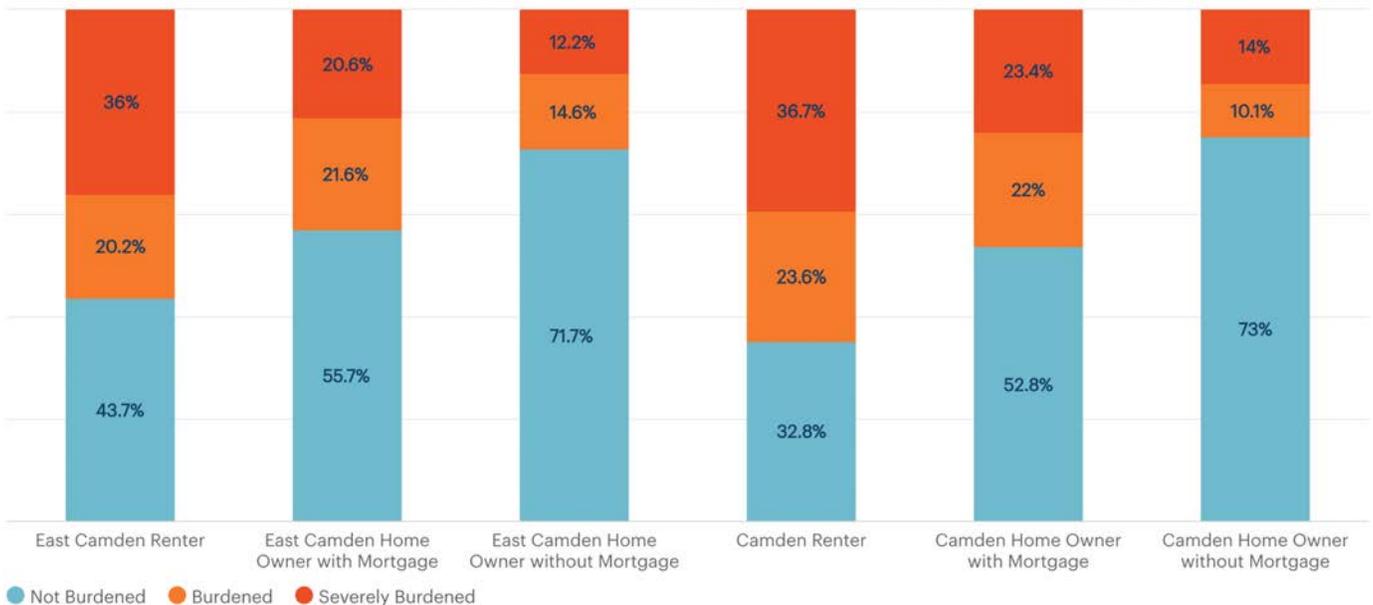
By comparison, Camden overall experiences a rent burden rate that is 4% greater than East Camden's - 60.2%. Homeowners experience lower rates of housing cost burden than renters do,

with 42.2% of homeowners *with* a mortgage, and 26.8% of owners *without* a mortgage reporting being housing cost burdened.

Survey results corroborate this data, showing that nearly half of respondents felt that the neighborhood was not very affordable or not affordable at all. Around a quarter of respondents report that they felt the neighborhood is very affordable. As housing stock revitalization programs advance, planners can monitor housing cost burden rates and ensure that housing affordability is increasing, particularly among renters.

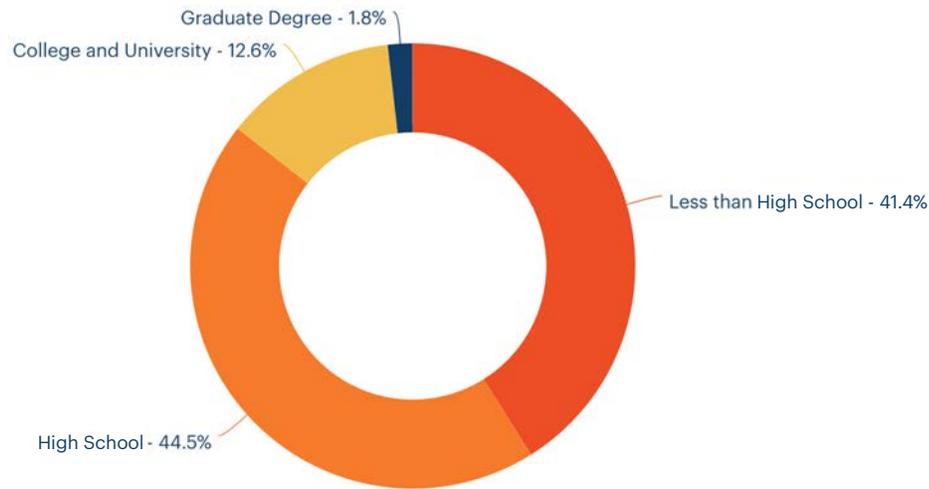
Housing Cost Burden in Camden and East Camden

More than half of renters in East Camden experience housing cost burdens with 36% of renters paying over 50% of their income to rent.



Educational Attainment in East Camden

More than 86% of adults in East Camden do not have a college degree.



Education and employment

The high school graduation rate for East Camden residents over 25 years old was 58.9% in 2019. Three-quarters of high school graduates did not go on to earn a higher degree; one fifth earned an associate's or bachelor's degree; and just 3% of East Camden's high school graduates earned a graduate degree. The high share of working aged people without a high school degree - over 40% in East Camden, compared to around 11% in the county as a whole - highlights a need for workforce development programs that offer pathways to education and career growth that are tailored to East Camden community needs.

Employment in Camden continues to recover from the recent pandemic-induced economic downturn. The unemployment rate rose from approximately 4% in March 2020 to above 15% in April 2020.²¹ Since then, the unemployment rate for Camden has decreased, to approximately 7% as of April 2021,²² though this rate does not capture many informally employed individuals and undocumented residents.²³

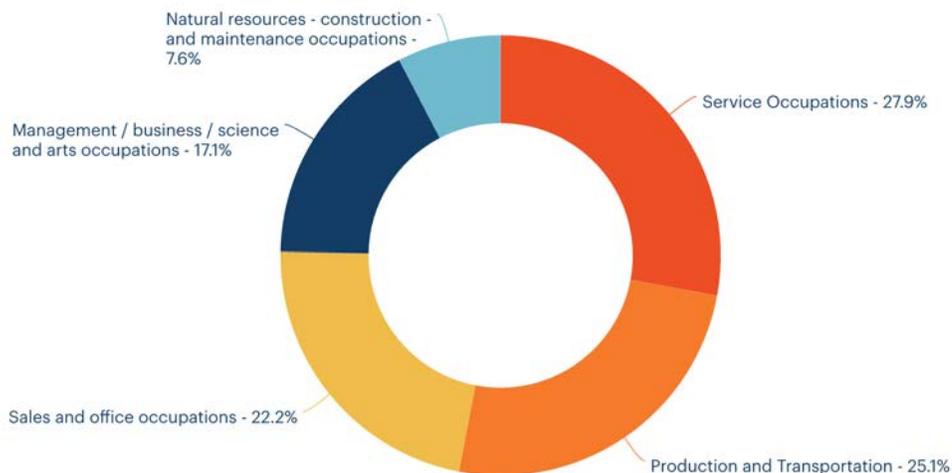
²¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (Accessed June 2021).

²² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Camden, NJ Economy at a Glance." (Accessed June 2021).

²³ Sophie Nieto-Munoz, "We are all in need of help." Undocumented immigrants seek \$989M addition for N.J. excluded worker fund." (June 5, 2021).

Occupations in East Camden

More than half of the 7,787 estimated jobs of East Camden residents are either in service or production and transportation.



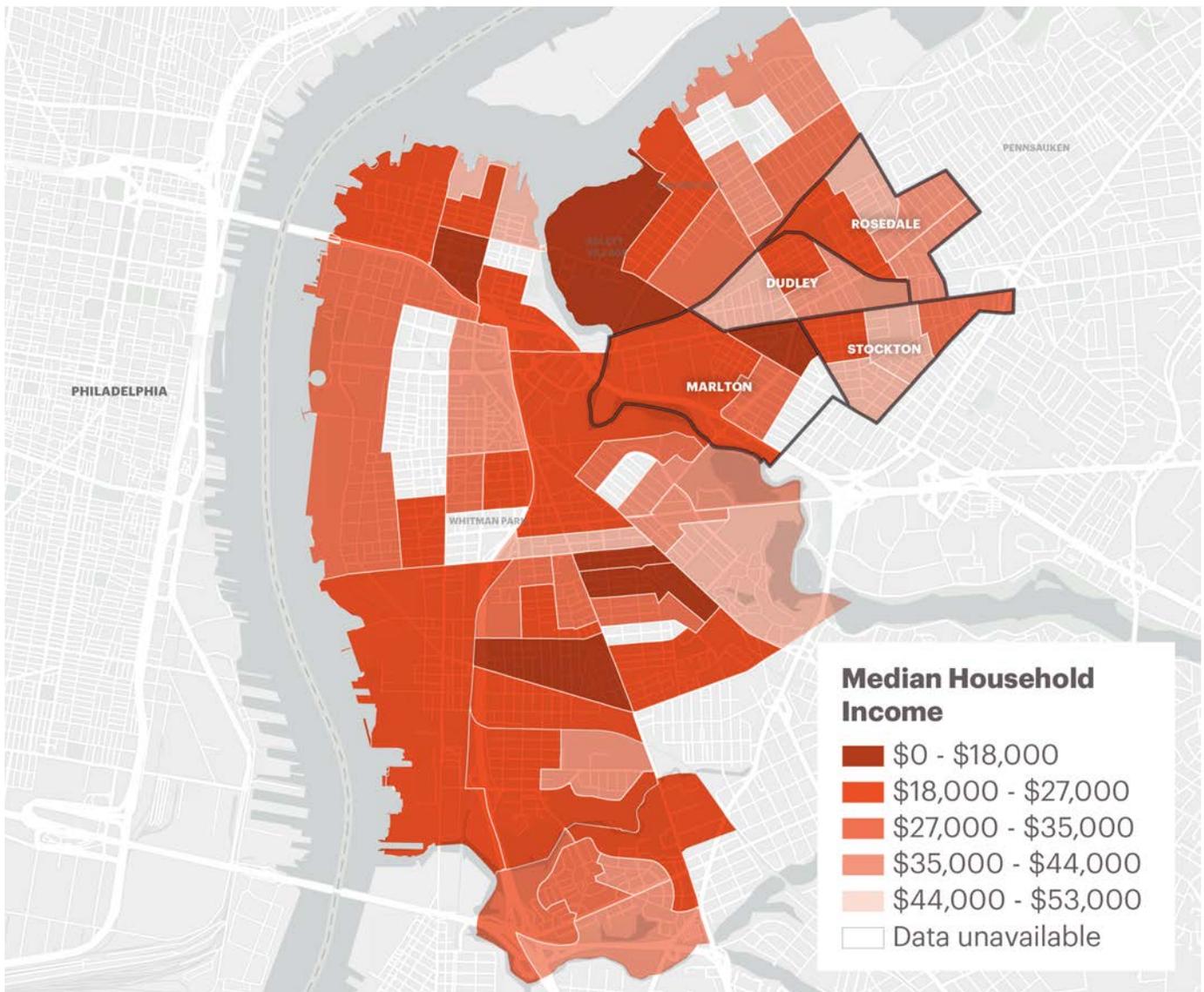
According to the 2019 ACS, the top industries for workers from East Camden are Education, Health Care, and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Art and Entertainment, and Manufacturing. The most common occupations include service occupations, production and transportation, sales and office, management business, and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations. East Camden can consider how land use decisions can promote a greater share of higher-earning occupations, especially those accessible to people without a college degree.

The economic picture presented by Census data is made clearer by community survey responses: approximately 90% of East Camden residents stated that finding a job in East Camden was very difficult or somewhat difficult, while just around 10% said it was easy or somewhat easy. Responding to a question about what types of jobs people would like to see in East Camden, survey respondents recommended more manufacturing, factory, and warehouse jobs. Respondents also shared their desire for more retail outlets in the neighborhood, both as an amenity and for

the employment opportunity. Others expressed a desire for more opportunities for cleaning, and more opportunities for office or professional jobs. The range of expectations suggests gaps between supply and demand at various skill levels for jobs in East Camden.

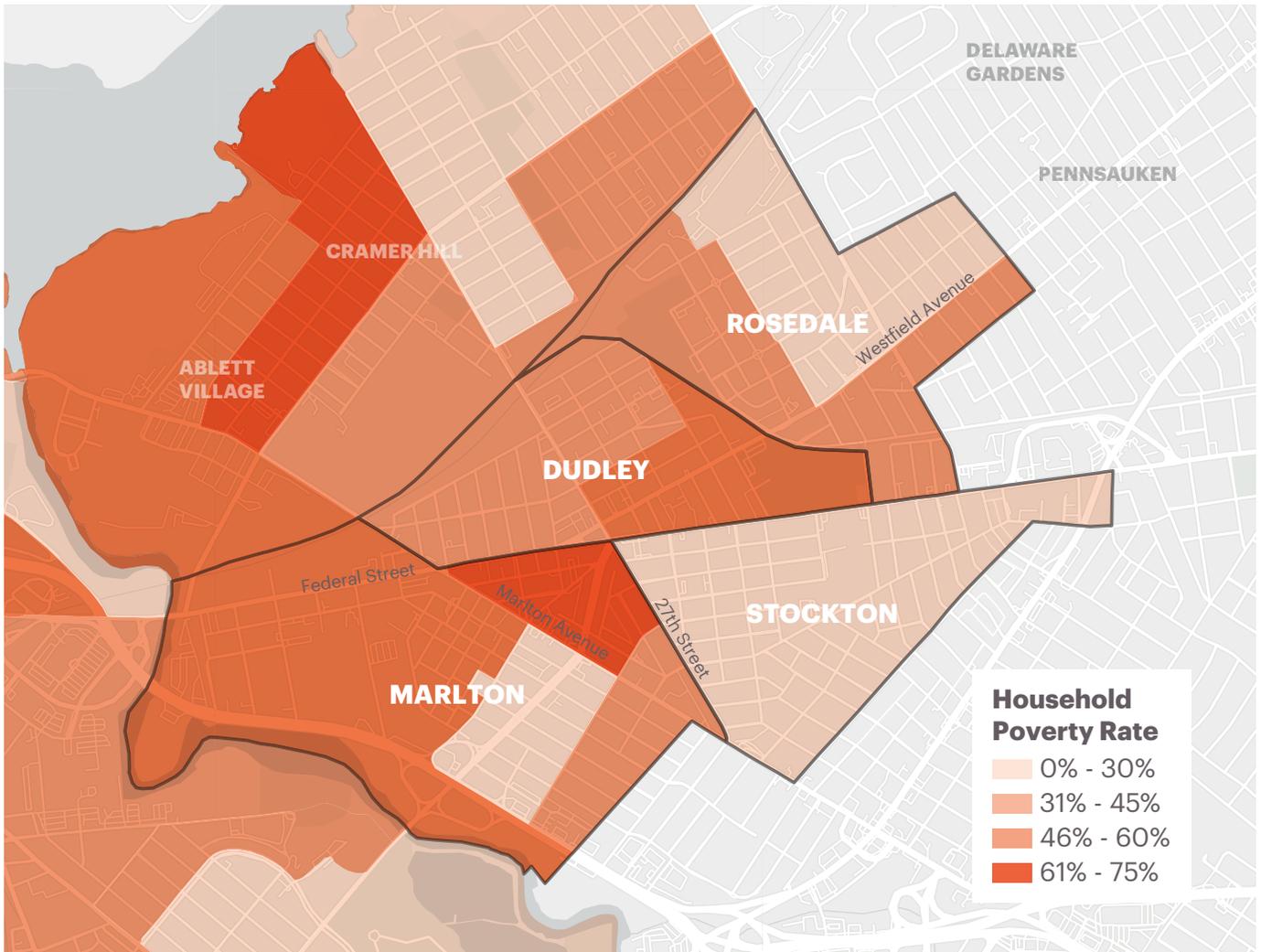
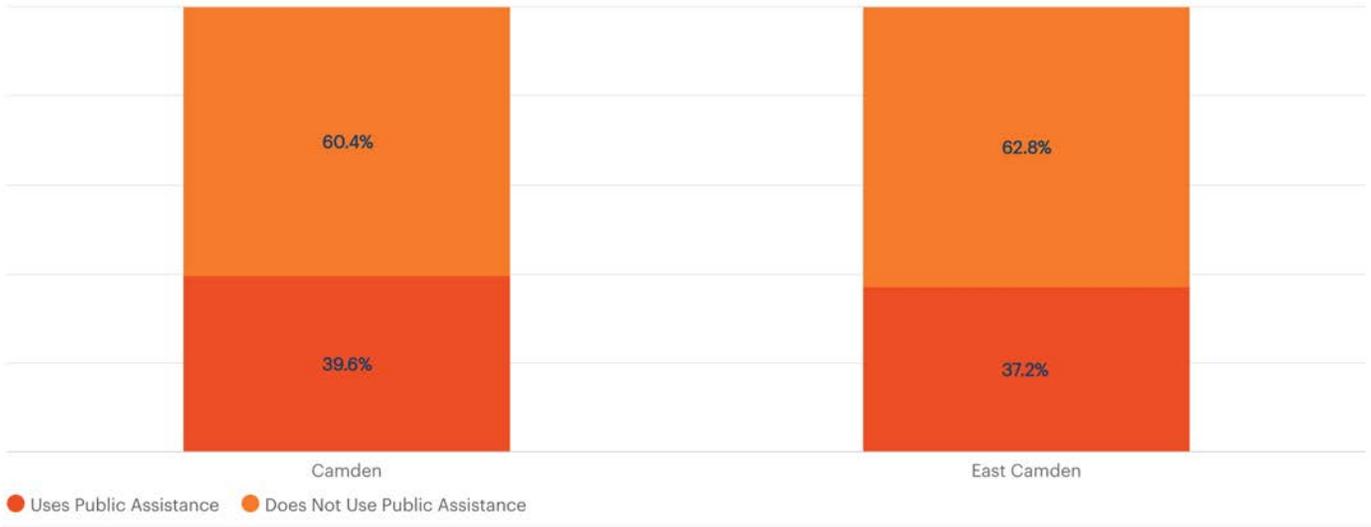
Income and poverty

The median block group in East Camden has a median household income of \$35,292, which is higher than the City’s median of \$30,531. This is significantly lower than the County’s median of \$73,281. Regarding poverty levels, 30.3% of East Camden households and 36.6% of the City’s households live in poverty, while only 12.4% of the County’s households experience poverty. Consistent with these data, 37% of East Camden residents say they rely on Public Assistance, compared to 40% for Camden overall. The high level of poverty, low median income, and low education rates relative to the County suggest the need for a neighborhood development plan that supports workforce development and job access needs.



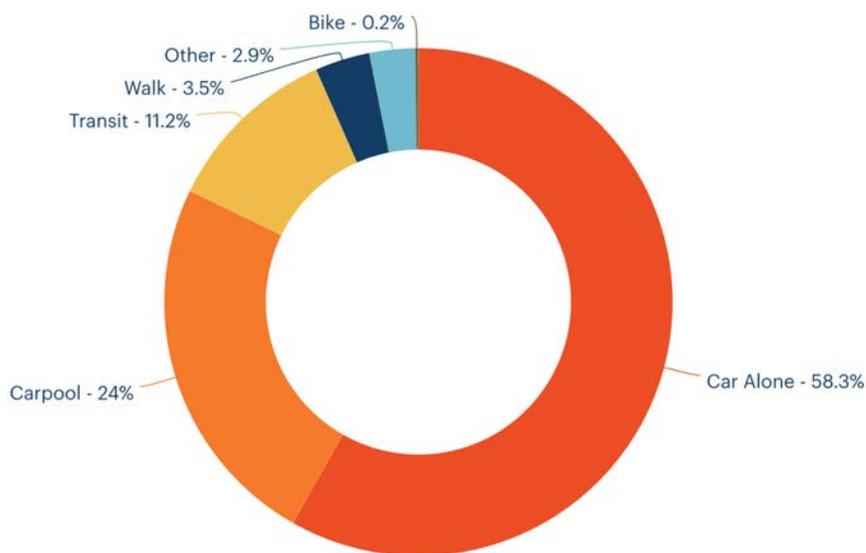
Public Assistance Use in East Camden and Camden

Public assistance use was lower in East Camden than the rest of the City before COVID.



Mode of Transportation in East Camden, 2019

The vast majority of people use a car to get to work.



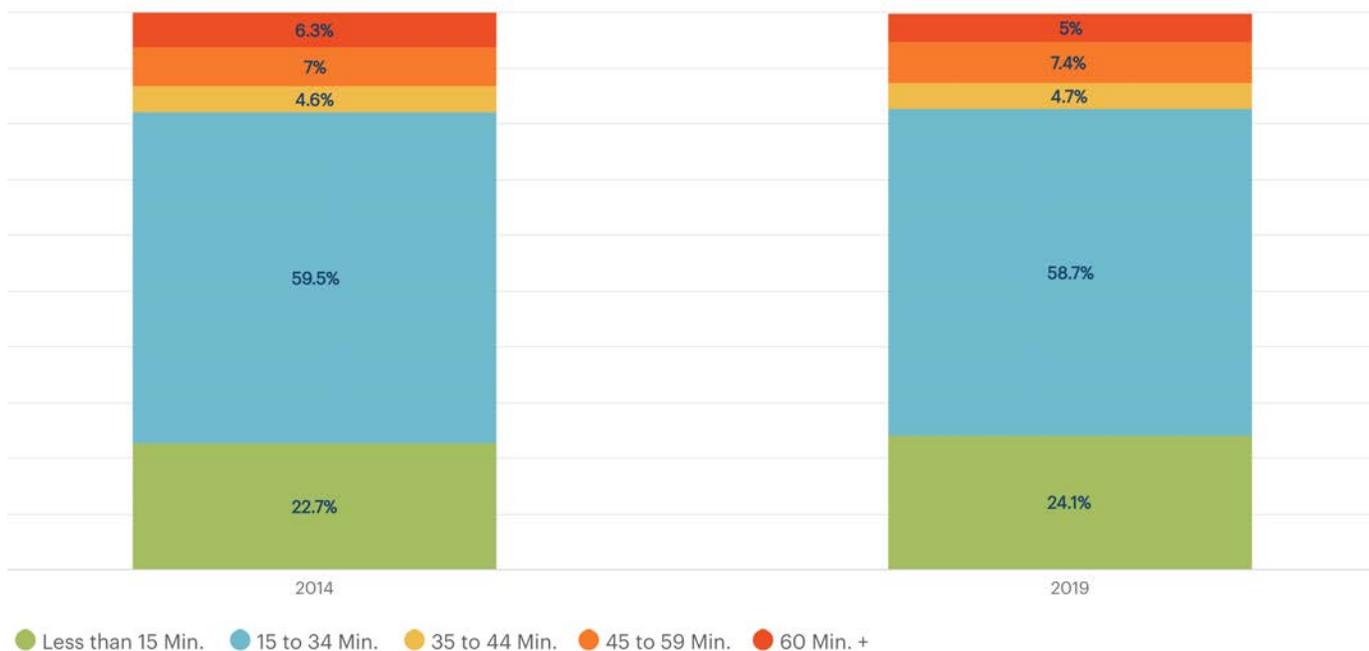
Vehicle ownership and commute to work

In 2019, 71.9% of households overall owned at least one car. Renter households have lower car ownership rates. Only 57.6% of renter-occupied households own cars. The ACS reports that 58.3% of workers commute by car alone, 24% commute by carpool, and only around 15% of people use transit, walk, or bike to work. Between 2014 and 2019, commute times for all commuters decreased, with the number of commuters traveling over an hour to work falling slightly and the number of workers traveling less

than 34 minutes increasing. Just over a third of survey respondents thought driving was very difficult or somewhat difficult in East Camden; about the same share of respondents report that they were very comfortable driving. The relatively low share of commuters using transit or bicycling to get to work suggests a need for more consistent transit service and design interventions to promote safe bicycling.

Commute Times in East Camden, 2014 and 2019

The share of shorter commutes has increased slightly alongside a decrease in 60+ minute commutes.



LAND USE AND ZONING

Drawing on the City of Camden’s land use data and a survey conducted in 2021 by St. Joseph’s Carpenter Society, this section assesses land use in East Camden. Overall, the data sketch a primarily residential neighborhood with commercial centers and corridors that has potential to grow into a more economically active and socially vibrant community.

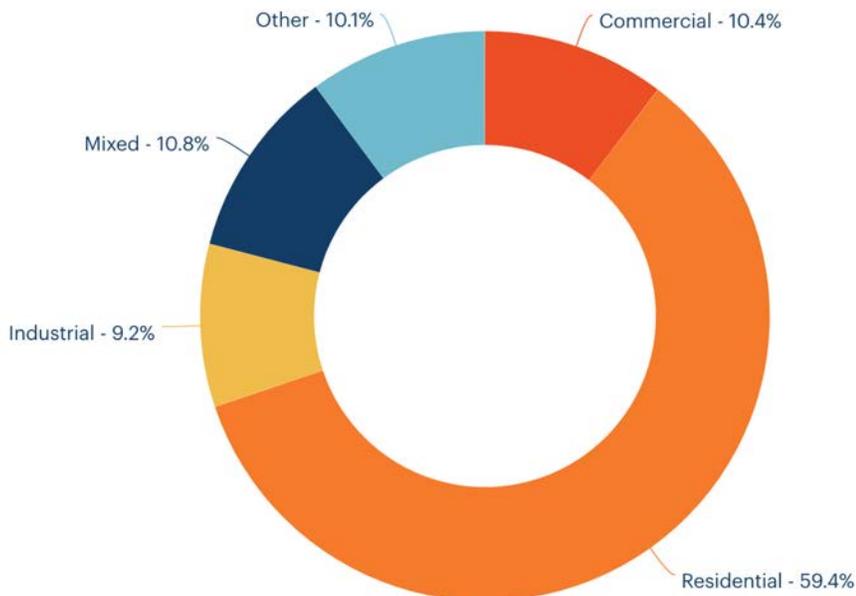
Existing land use and distribution of land uses

East Camden is predominantly residential but has a mix of land uses that can help promote a more connected community. Almost 60% of land in the neighborhood is residential, with the vast majority of land zoned under Camden’s R2 designation, which allows low-density single and multifamily housing. Slightly less than 10% of neighborhood land is zoned for industrial, a little more than 10% is zoned commercial, and another 10% is zoned for “mixed-use.” The remaining land is occupied by institutional and open space uses.

Most commercial uses are concentrated in the commercial corridors of Federal Street, Marlton Avenue, and Westfield Avenue. Industrial uses are located within mixed-use districts near the Cooper River and on the neighborhood’s edge near Pennsauken. East Camden has the opportunity to promote more combinations of retail, office, and industrial uses along key commercial corridors to help entice new industrial tenants, like recent arrival ResinTech, to the area.

East Camden Land Use Mix

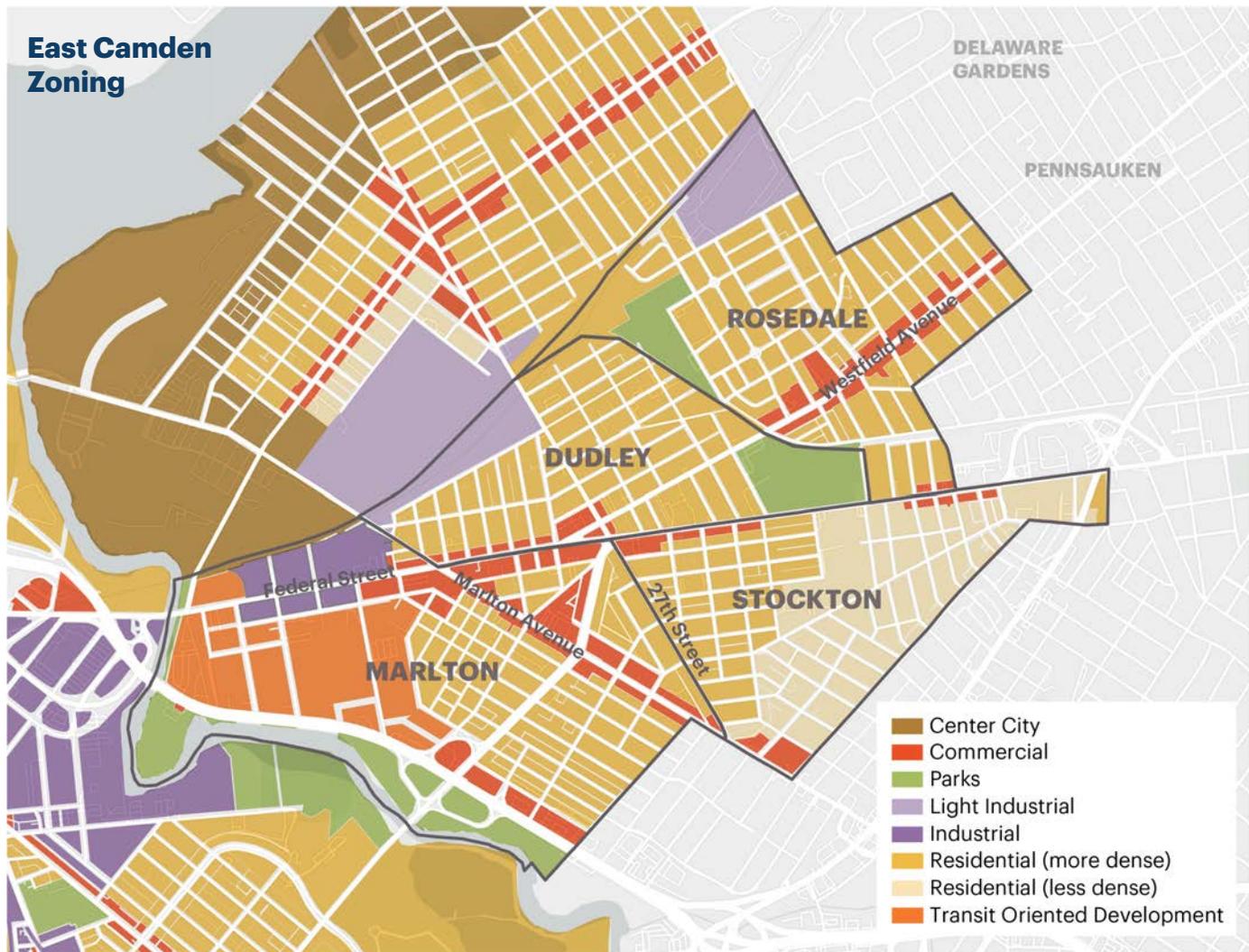
Residential is the most common land use by area in East Camden.



Building quality and vacancy

According to a survey conducted by SJCS in 2021, around 78% of the total 6282 lots in East Camden have buildings in good condition with no need of new repairs. 12.5% of buildings need minor repairs, 3.3% require at least one major repair, 3.5% require complete renovation, and 0.3% are dilapidated and not able to be repaired. Because there is a higher number of single-family homes than any other building type, single-family homes make up a vast majority of the building that need repairs or renovation due to building quality issues. Multiple family and commercial buildings represent the categories of buildings that also have a higher number of buildings that need repairs.

In East Camden, 15.7% of the parcels in the neighborhood are vacant lots, with close to half of these classified as empty lots. 35% of these lots are side yards, 12% are parking lots, and 4% are used as parks or open spaces. Around half a percent appeared to be dumping sites. 5.9% of buildings appear vacant with 70% of these being single-family homes. A key issue identified by community members was encouraging the development and use of vacant buildings and lots to prevent unwanted activity from taking hold in these spaces and to encourage local economic activity.



Zoning

Camden's zoning code maintains a separation of uses between residential, commercial, and industrial areas for most of the neighborhood. This can be positive when it comes to protecting residents from noxious uses, but can also prohibit walkable, integrated neighborhoods. While Camden developed a transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning designation which is employed in Marlton, anticipated outcomes have not yet been realized. Existing industrial uses in the neighborhood which are grandfathered in and slow demand for housing growth and investment complicate the achievement of TOD objectives. Rezoning commercial corridors could help strengthen investment in new housing and strengthen community connections.

Commercial services

East Camden has a bustling set of businesses and organizations that serve as the backbone of the neighborhood economy. We estimate that about 20% of local establishments are restaurants or other food businesses, 14% are grocery stores or convenience

stores, 12% fall into a general goods category, 8% are car-related, and just over 7% are hair and beauty businesses.²⁴ The neighborhood has only one bank and four medical service providers, which suggests that the neighborhood could benefit from further small business development.

Most businesses are concentrated along the commercial corridors of Federal Street, Marlton Avenue, and Westfield Avenue which create a main street environment. Over half of businesses within East Camden are located on these three streets. The intersection of Federal Street and Marlton Avenue remains the center of gravity for business activity in the neighborhood.

When asked about what shopping people need to leave East Camden to complete, half of respondents identified banking and slightly more than half said grocery shopping. Medicine and medical services also ranked high on the list, as well as entertainment.

²⁴ This data was gathered by RPA for outreach and engagement.

Code enforcement and public safety

Many of the quality of life concerns articulated by the residents of East Camden stem from code enforcement and maintenance concerns. Some of the most commonly cited quality of life issues included trash, pollution, and noise. Residents report that cars are frequently parked on sidewalks, ATVs are driven down residential roads, and litter is frequently left in parks and on sidewalks. More detailed survey responses and conversations with residents indicate dissatisfaction with responsiveness in terms of code enforcement. One resident shared that a neighbor ran a generator continuously for over a year, with multiple unsuccessful attempts to engage relevant agencies.

Other common quality of life concerns include public drug sales and use. Survey responses and conversations with East Camden residents indicate that some areas of the neighborhood make residents feel unsafe for these reasons. The most frequent places identified were Federal Street, neighborhood parks after dark, and some corner stores and alleys. Some respondents requested more substance abuse treatment programs in East Camden, as well as more social service and police support to discourage drug use in parks.

A smaller number of respondents indicated that violence was a significant concern. Often the residents who flagged “violence” in the survey also requested more security and a greater sense of safety and vigilance in East Camden’s public areas. Survey responses showed a slight geographic clustering, with residents living on Federal Street, Carman Street, Howell Street, N 24th Street, Clinton Street, as well as Garden Ave and Royal Ave reporting violence.

Neighborhood services

East Camden has a variety of neighborhood services ranging from youth services, food pantries, and childcare. The neighborhood has a rich network of religious institutions and housing organizations that foster community.

Community outreach identified a need for community centers that can bring local populations together and connect people to vital resources around language skills and workforce development. Some community members mentioned a need for information hubs, skill building, and community programming. Survey responses also identified a desire for community spaces and programming for both seniors and youth. For seniors, responses identified a need for a facility where seniors can convene. For youth, ideas included building a library, as well as youth-focused arts, culture, and sports. There was also a desire for more spaces for childcare, and space providing computers and wi-fi access.

Transportation Infrastructure

The rail lines and highways that divide East Camden from other parts of the city bring greater mobility but have been a longstanding source of pollution and noise within the neighborhood. Studies have shown that the presence of highways in communities can lead to higher asthma rates and other health impacts.²⁵ It has also been well established that transportation infrastructure like highways was commonly located in communities with high populations of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).²⁶ This plan recommends some strategies for mitigating the impacts of this transportation infrastructure in East Camden.

School System

The Camden City School District serves nearly 10,000 students from Pre-K to 12th grade. It is an SDA district whose financing and capital improvements are managed by the New Jersey Schools Development Authority.²⁷ The State of New Jersey took over the management of Camden City School District in 2013.²⁸ The superintendent is appointed by the New Jersey Department of Education, and the advisory board, which serves as a board of education, is appointed by the mayor of Camden.²⁹

In East Camden, public schools include Alfred Cramer College Preparatory Lab School; Octavius V. Catto Family School; Dr. Henry H. Davis Family School; Thomas H. Dudley Family School; and Woodrow Wilson High School. East Camden is also home to private schools, such as St. Joseph Pro-Cathedral School, and several charter schools, including Mastery Schools and Camden Charter Network. Camden has the highest percentage of students in charter schools of any major city in New Jersey. While increasing options for families, reports by New Jersey Policy Perspective found that, in part due to the hiring practices of charter schools, the population of Black educators in Camden has declined by a greater percentage than any other large city in New Jersey - a drop of 22% in 20 years.³⁰ Studies from a variety of institutions have underscored that having a racially and ethnically diverse teaching workforce is beneficial for students.^{31,32,33}

The Camden City School District saw improvements before the COVID-19 crisis - between 2013 and 2017, the dropout rate was cut in half, the graduation rate increased from 49% to 66%, and

25 American Lung Association, “Living Near Highways and Air Pollution.” (Accessed May 2021).
 26 NPR, “A Brief History Of How Racism Shaped Interstate Highways.” (April 7, 2021).
 27 State of New Jersey Schools Development Authority, “What We Do.” (Accessed May 2021).
 28 New York Times, “ON POLITICS; A Request From Camden: Take Our Schools, Please.” (March 29, 1998).
 29 City of Camden School District, “Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2018.” (Accessed May 2021).
 30 New Jersey Policy Perspective, “Camden Sheds Black Teachers at a Uniquely High Rate.” (May 25, 2021).
 31 Brookings, “The importance of a diverse teaching force.” (2017).
 32 REL Northwest, “Human Resources Practices for Recruiting, Selecting, and Retaining Teachers of Color.” (2018).
 33 Center for American Progress, “Increasing Teacher Diversity.” (2011).

suspensions among high school students dropped 89%.³⁴ It also recently constructed a new building to serve as a high school.³⁵ However, enrollment has been decreasing,³⁶ and several school buildings in recent years have closed or are in the process of closing, including the old Catto school and Dudley school. Members of the East Camden neighborhood plan Steering Committee shared concerns about having such large vacant buildings in their neighborhood, and urged consideration of ideas for reuse. Additionally, at Veterans Memorial School in the Cramer Hill neighborhood, in partnership with the Camden Education Association and the New Jersey Department of Education, the School District created a welcome center offering resources such as language assistance programs and adult literacy programs.³⁷ East Camden residents echoed the need for this kind of center in their neighborhood.

Camden County Police Department

In 2011, in response to elevated local concerns about the effectiveness of Camden City's police force, the City of Camden and the County of Camden announced a major reform: they would disband the municipal force and create a new county police force.³⁸ The Camden County Police Department launched in 2013 and underscored a new style of policing, one in which community engagement would be at its core.³⁹ Though labeled a county service, it does not patrol in other Camden County municipalities. In comparison to large New Jersey cities such as Paterson,⁴⁰ Camden saw a decline in violence in 2020 and reported its lowest crime rate in 50 years.⁴¹ Officials point to the CCPD engagement with the residents as a reason for the decline, including partnerships with local businesses⁴² and at food distribution events.⁴³ The CCPD has been upheld as a model for other municipalities across the country.^{44,45}

Survey responses and conversations with East Camden residents indicate that there is a desire for more visibility and presence from the CCPD in certain circumstances. Some residents observed that the CCPD is not as responsive to quality of life concerns, such as traffic violations, crashes, and nuisance violations, suggesting that there needs to be more centralized communication, or that perhaps other government agencies or

community groups could step in and work with the CCPD to fill gaps articulated by residents. As cities all over the United States weigh how to approach public safety and police presence in communities,⁴⁶ it is critical that the CCPD continue to listen to and follow the lead of residents of Camden in how and where police force is deployed in their neighborhoods, and what shape that takes.

City Services

The City of Camden is working with residents and leadership to evaluate the best methods for delivering needed services. Earlier this Spring, the City Council passed a resolution to study the current functionality of the finance department and whether it made sense for Camden County to assist with the management of the city's finances on a term-limited basis.⁴⁷ Throughout the community engagement process, residents flagged that they would like more communication with and responsiveness from city officials. Some residents of East Camden have articulated that they would like to see more traditional municipal functions being managed by the city, preferably by hiring local residents.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic struck Camden hard, and it has had a major and ongoing impact on the quality of lives of residents. Approximately a fifth of all Camden County cases, roughly 9,000, were reported in the City of Camden alone since the pandemic began in March 2020.⁴⁸ A study by Rutgers University found that Camden and its neighbor Pennsauken had much higher case rates and fatality rates than towns such as Collingswood or Haddon Heights.^{49,50} Residents had to face emotional, physical, and financial hardships, like job loss and managing the online school transition.

Many stakeholders - residents, businesses, non-profits, institutions, government agencies - helped Camden through the pandemic. In May 2021, the Governor's office flagged the city as a priority location given low vaccination rates compared to the rest of the county and state,⁵¹ and various institutions in Camden, including Cooper Hospital, CAMcare, Project HOPE, Salvation Army Kroc Center, and the school system have been collaborating on pop-up vaccine sites and conducting home visits.⁵² How East Camden rebounds from COVID will impact the neighborhood for years to come.

³⁴ Camden City School District, "Superintendent joins Rotary Club of Camden to Celebrate Students' Efforts to Turn Their Lives Around." (February 12, 2017).

³⁵ Tony Gallotto, "City, School, State Leaders Join Faith-Based Groups to Support Camden School Superintendent." (March 25, 2021).

³⁶ New Jersey Policy Perspective, "The 'Whitening' of Camden's Teachers." (February 11, 2021).

³⁷ Tony Gallotto, "City, School, State Leaders Join Faith-Based Groups to Support Camden School Superintendent." (March 25, 2021).

³⁸ Statehouse Bureau Staff, "Camden County to form regional police department." (August 2, 2011).

³⁹ Camden County Police Department, "What is Unity Policing?" (Accessed June 2021).

⁴⁰ Kristie Cattafi, "Paterson fatal shooting points to grim total for 2021; prosecutor asks public for help." (May 23, 2021).

⁴¹ P. Kenneth Burns, "Camden sees lowest crime level in more than 50 years." (January 9, 2021).

⁴² Noah Zucker, "Camden Police Partners with Local Roller Rink to Reward Good Deeds." (May 20, 2021).

⁴³ Tony Gallotto, "Camden Cops to Give Away Free Sundaes on Sunday." (May 23, 2021).

⁴⁴ Insider NJ, "Bramnick suggests nation follow Camden model of community policing." (June 3, 2020).

⁴⁵ NBC Philadelphia, "Camden's Community Policing Model Being Praised Amid Public Outcry in Other Places." (June 8, 2020).

⁴⁶ Cailin Crowe, "Mayors 'reimagining public safety and policing' in wake of recent violence." (May 21, 2021).

⁴⁷ Steven Rodas, "Camden City Council Explores Turning Over Finances to County." (March 11, 2021).

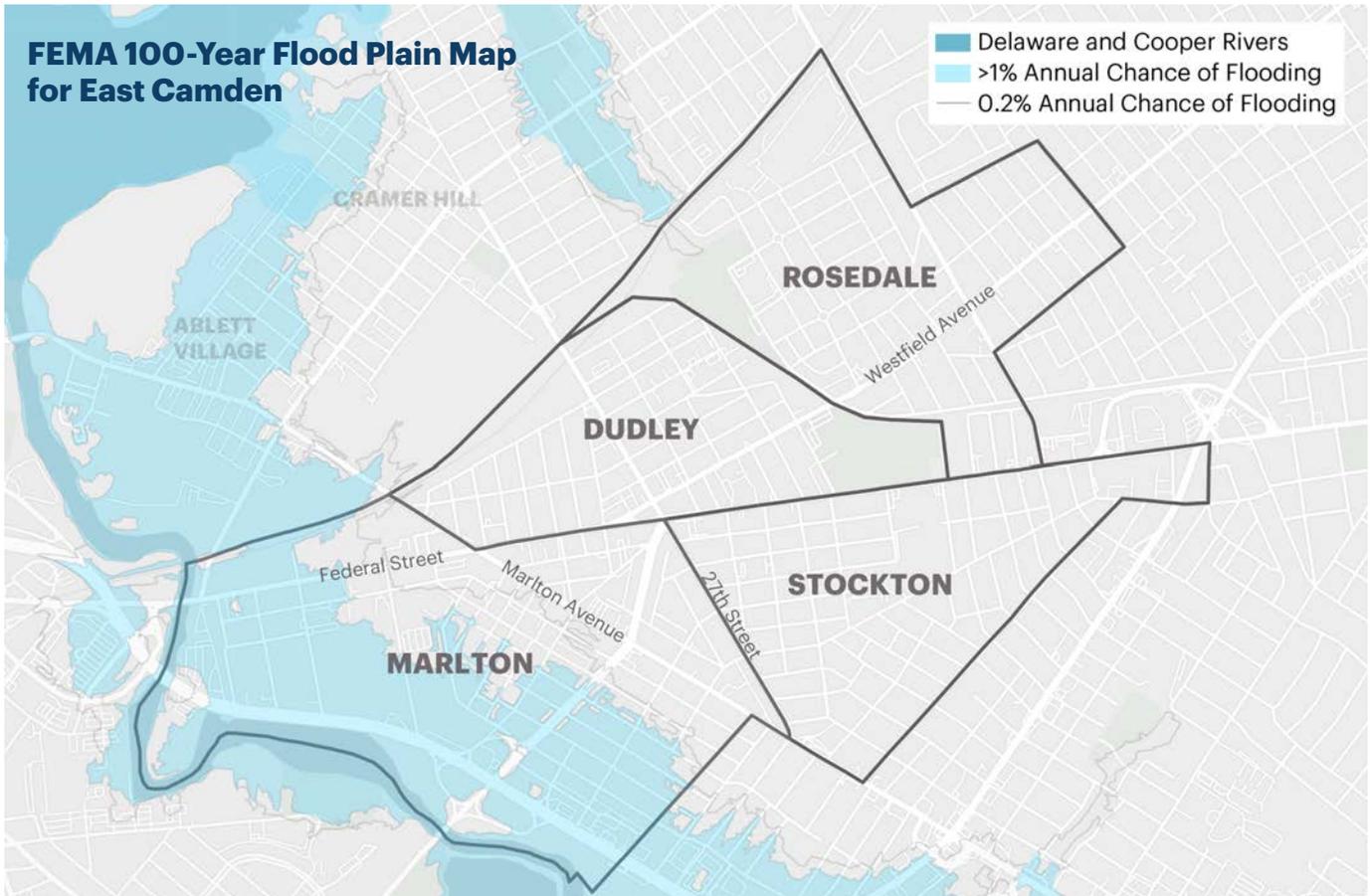
⁴⁸ NJ Department of Transportation, "New Jersey's Long-Range Transportation Plan, Urban Supplement Report, City of Camden." (2008).

⁴⁹ Sarah Allred, et al. "MUNICIPAL VARIATION IN COVID-19 CASE RATES IN NEW JERSEY." (April 5, 2021).

⁵⁰ Sarah Allred, et al. "Figures 2 and 3, Cumulative Cases." (April 5, 2021).

⁵¹ Karin Price Mueller, "These 16 N.J. towns have fewer than 40% of residents vaccinated, Murphy says." (May 3, 2021).

⁵² Steven Rodas, "Camden County Works to get Coronavirus Vaccines to Homebound." (March 11, 2021).



ENVIRONMENT, OPEN SPACE, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Public parks and open space facilities

East Camden has six public parks within its boundaries, which means there is a park within a quarter-mile walk of most of the neighborhood; however, most parks are underutilized due to maintenance issues and perceived safety issues, according to survey responses. Alberta Woods, Stockton Park, Ralph Williams Park, and Dudley Grange Park offer amenities like sports fields and courts, playgrounds, and areas to walk and bike, while others have fewer attractions.

In response to survey questions, approximately half of respondents stated that they never use parks and recreation areas in the neighborhood, and around 15% said that they use parks once a month. One in 16 indicated that they use parks and open spaces daily, and a similar number stated that they use local parks weekly. When asked to recommend improvements, respondents highlighted park maintenance, cleanliness, and eliminating drug use in parks. A few respondents mentioned the need for park remodeling, and several raised the need for community programming. These responses indicate a significant opportunity to improve parks to make them more inviting to community members and to promote health and well-being in the neighborhood.

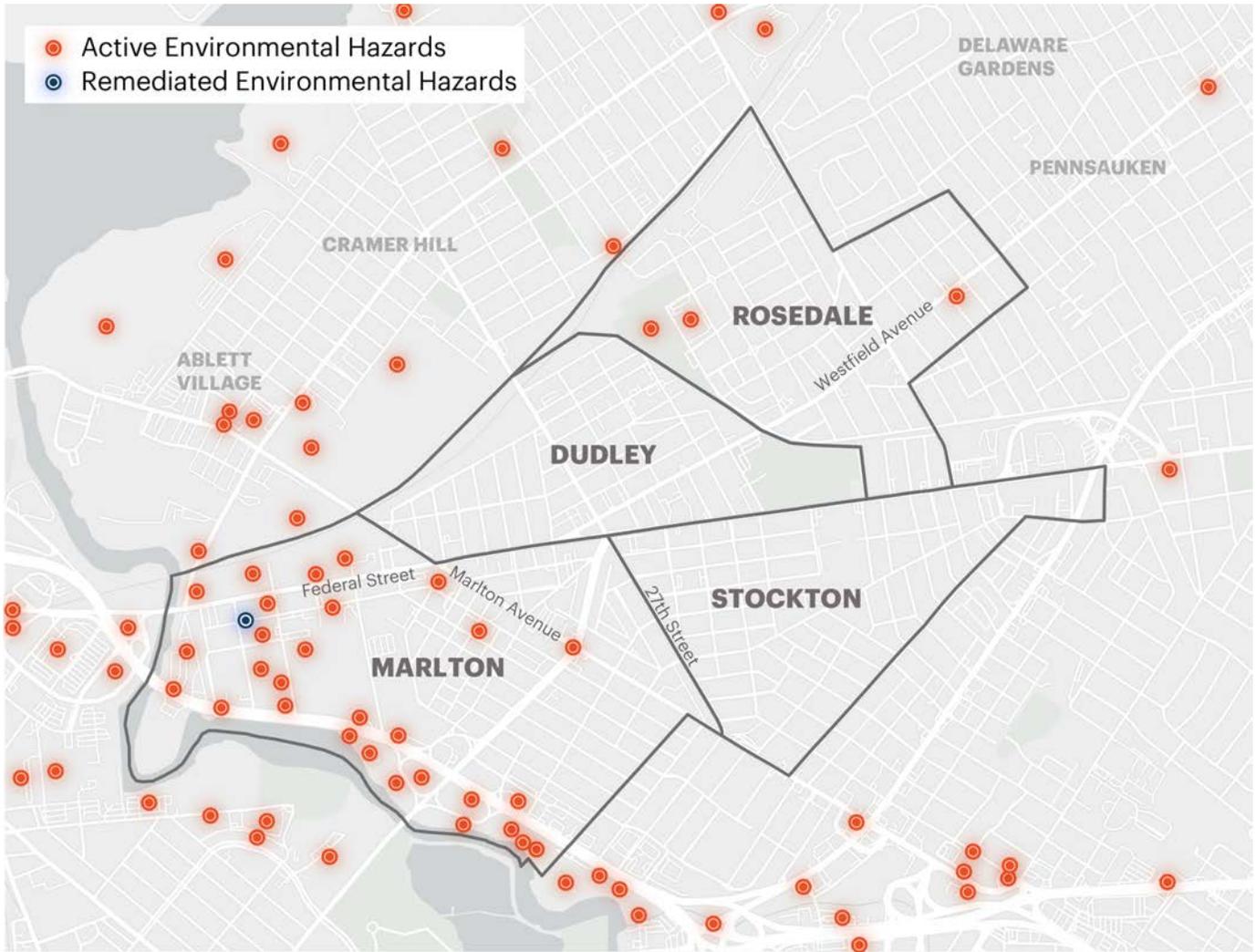
Flooding

Flooding and flood risk are a significant challenge for East Camden, especially Marlton, where 55% of the census tract is at risk of flooding in a 100-year flood. Another 14% of the surface area is located in areas at moderate risk of flooding. Dudley has a small sliver of this risk level that dips into Stockton Park but remains clear of any homes. Flooding affects the environment, and flood risk results in increased flood insurance rates that reduce household spending power. Additionally, according to research from CDM Smith, during heavy rain events East Camden experiences street flooding that is concentrated in Marlton, but that also occurs in Rosedale.

East Camden only has four rain gardens, a garden designed to capture significant amounts of storm water, in the neighborhood. Due to this and the low number of permeable surfaces, the neighborhood discharges excess storm water into the river. Expanding the number of rain gardens, especially in Marlton, could help mitigate some of these issues and promote a greener, more resilient neighborhood.

Wetlands and habitat

Wetlands exist along the Cooper River as part of Gateway Park. Healthy wetlands serve as an initial barrier to flooding, so efforts to improve ecosystem conditions in the river could be a vital component of a broader resiliency plan.



Source: NJ DEP, Known Contaminated Sites of New Jersey

Environmental contamination

East Camden has a concentration of known polluted sites along the Cooper River and in the industrial sections of Marlon as well as a few sites in Rosedale. As the City seeks to encourage development in Marlon, connecting to state and federal programs around remediation will be essential to making such projects viable and healthy in the long term.

Surface temperature

Anticipating a global climate in which extreme heat events will be increasingly common, the City will need to plan for cooler neighborhoods that can remain comfortable, safe, and resilient during heatwaves. According to USGS Surface Temperature data, Stockton faces acute surface temperature measurements compared with neighborhoods closer to the river. This is likely due to a higher rate of impervious surfaces, exposed blacktop, and a lack of tree cover. Investments to increase the tree canopy, prioritizing Stockton, but extending across the neighborhood could help mitigate the urban heat island.

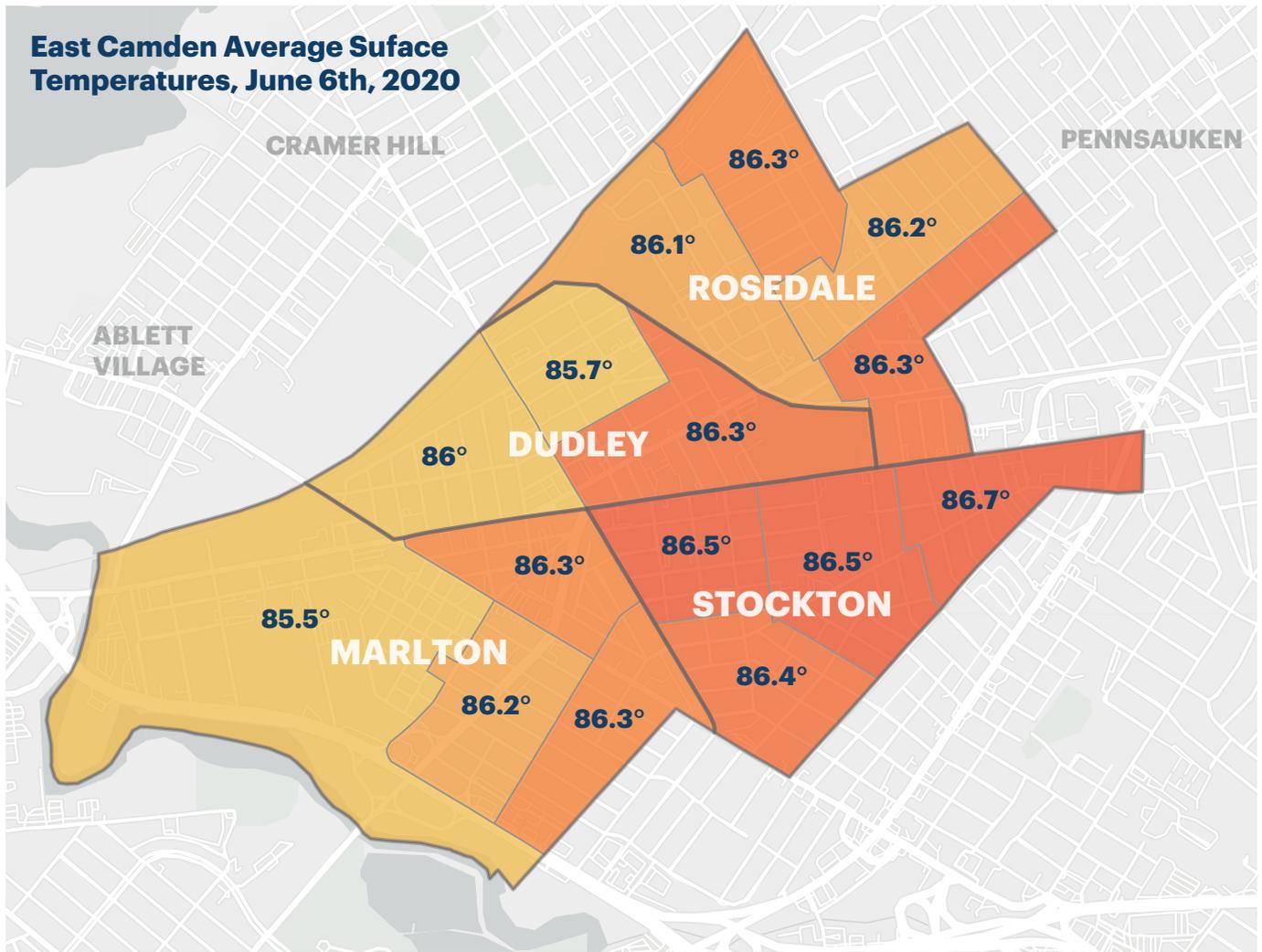
Utilities

In their survey responses, community members overwhelmingly identified increasing electricity costs and utility outages as the most visible climate change issues they experienced, with over 90% of respondents saying they experienced one or both. Individual conversations with residents revealed that electricity outages occur on a monthly or biweekly basis, which is disruptive to daily routines.

There are multiple utility aid programs available for residents of East Camden,⁵³ and coordinating with the local utility provider, PSE&G, to connect cost burdened neighbors to utility-support programs as well as investments in building retrofits can be an additional strategy for managing the long term effects of climate change.

However, given the COVID-19 moratorium on utility shut-downs, which was still in effect at the time of this report, and the details in surveys and conversations, the outages affecting residents are less likely to be due to failure to remit payment

⁵³ Noah Zucker, "Utility Aid Available in Camden with Shutdowns Returning on June 30." (May 24, 2021).



than possible issues with the physical infrastructure of the grid itself. In our recommendations, it is suggested that the City of Camden work with representatives of East Camden and PSE&G to identify solutions to the physical reliability of the grid that can be implemented in the short-term.

STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION

Roads and streetscape

East Camden has a mix of street types, including residential streets, minor collectors, and both minor and major arterial highways. The only major highway that runs through the neighborhood is U.S. Route 30, or Admiral Wilson Boulevard, which connects to Downtown Camden. The neighborhood is served principally by the Marlton Avenue, Westfield Avenue, Federal Street, Baird Boulevard, and 27th Street corridors. The Camden County Highway Plan identifies these roadways as being eligible for funding under the Highway Safety Improvement Program, as well as for pedestrian corridor and pedestrian intersection support.⁵⁴ These corridors could benefit from more comprehensive street design that could improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.

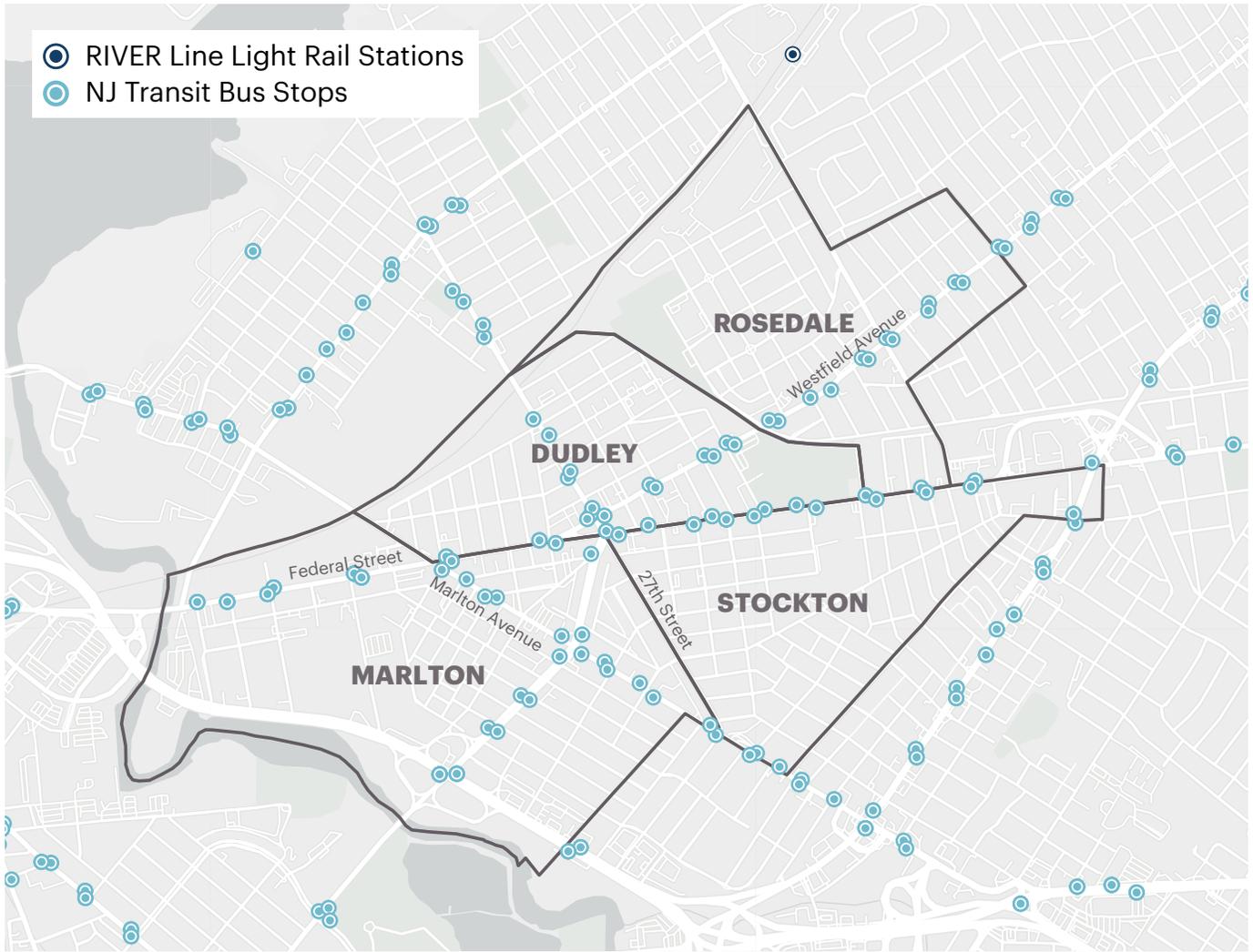
⁵⁴ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, "Camden County Highway Plan." (2015).

Survey responses and input from the Steering Committee emphasized poor road conditions as a major source of concern for East Camden residents. Specific roads highlighted multiple times in survey responses included Federal Street, Westfield Avenue, and 27th Street. The New Jersey Department of Transportation maintains data on the condition of pavement for which the Department has a funding role. In its 2018 report to the state legislature, NJ DOT identified 500 roadways statewide that the Department prioritized for improvement based on an assessment of pavement conditions and roadway use. None of the roads prioritized for improvement are located in East Camden or County roads.⁵⁵ Municipal aid programs may offer a more viable source of support for making progress on pavement conditions on County and City roads in East Camden.⁵⁶ The city has also been making progress on improving roads in other neighborhoods through funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ NJ Department of Transportation, "Report to the Governor and the Legislature on New Jersey's Roadway Pavement System." (December 2017).

⁵⁶ NJ Department of Transportation, "Municipal Aid." (Accessed June 2021).

⁵⁷ Noah Zucker, "Camden Officials Celebrate Completion of 2 City Road Infrastructure Projects." (June 21, 2021).



Public transportation

East Camden is primarily served by NJ Transit Buses that run along Federal Street, Westfield Avenue, Marlon Avenue, 27th Street, and Baird Boulevard. Lines 404, 405, 406, 452, and 460 serve the neighborhood. Most survey respondents find public transit very comfortable or somewhat comfortable to use, while approximately 45% of respondents said that transit was somewhat difficult or very difficult to use.

Camden is also served by a rapid transit line managed by PATCO which connects the city to Camden County suburbs as well as to Philadelphia, and by the River LINE light rail operated by NJ Transit which runs between Camden and Trenton. The closest River LINE station is the 36th Street Station just to the north of the neighborhood, though the train yards that it runs through borders the entire northern edge of the neighborhood.

The State of New Jersey has been making major investments in Camden’s transportation infrastructure, including a \$250 million investment in the Walter Rand Transportation Center.⁵⁸ Recently, NJ Transit announced that it will be bringing eight electric buses to Camden in Fall 2021 as part of a pilot program. NJ Transit also plans to update the Newton Avenue Bus Garage with electric vehicle charging stations.⁵⁹ These types of infrastructure investments were strongly supported by residents — more electric vehicle infrastructure was a specific recommendation shared by members of the East Camden neighborhood plan Steering Committee.

⁵⁸ NJ Transit, “Governor Murphy Announces \$250 Million Overhaul of the Walter Rand Transportation Center in Camden.” (February 17, 2021).
⁵⁹ TapInto Camden, “NJ Bringing Eight New Electric Buses to Camden This Fall.” (May 26, 2021).



Overarching Goals & Recommendations

The **My East Camden** neighborhood plan is divided into five overarching goals. Each goal has a list of recommendations and metrics that can be used to track progress during the plan period. Each recommendation has anticipated outcomes and metrics for evaluation. Implementation information is summarized at the end of the plan in a chart.

INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY AND IMPROVE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

East Camden, by some metrics, is relatively more stable than other sections of the city, but there are still a number of areas where improvements are necessary. These areas in need of improvement include blocks that contain stable housing stock and a few abandoned homes, roadways and sidewalks that are in need of complete reconstruction, and large areas with vacant and abandoned lots and/or buildings. The following recommendations seek to improve physical spaces and increase accessibility for residents to jobs and recreational areas. These recommendations will further strengthen the neighborhood and set the stage for future positive investment.

In a June 2021 survey, approximately 20% respondents indicated that this goal was the most important of the neighborhood plan, second in popularity to “Center Residents and Local Businesses in Economic Development Initiatives.”

Metrics that will be tracked over 10 years include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Increasing the homeownership rate in East Camden to 50%.
- ▶ Increasing the amount of affordable housing by 50 units.
- ▶ Reducing the number of vacant properties by 50%.
- ▶ Improving the conditions of 25% of sidewalks and roads in the neighborhood, particularly Federal Street, Westfield Ave, and 27th Street, as measured by resident surveys and feedback.
- ▶ Increasing the proportion of public transportation users to 20% and increasing the number of bicyclists, as measured by resident surveys and ACS data.

Increase homeownership and rental affordability and opportunities

The availability of well-designed affordable housing for all incomes, ages, races, and ethnicities is critical to a thriving community, and can provide economic and social benefits to neighborhoods. East Camden has a mix of single and multi-family homes, in addition to three public housing complexes. Several

survey respondents, when asked where they enjoyed spending time, indicated their homes or their friends’ homes in the neighborhood. But survey responses and ACS data revealed that housing affordability is a concern, and several residents remarked that they were concerned about individuals who are unhoused.

There are several strategies that are recommended that East Camden employ to increase housing opportunity and affordability in the neighborhood.

In the short-term, the My East Camden Collaborative can work with the city and other housing stakeholders to identify housing development opportunities in the neighborhood based on the findings of this neighborhood plan to anticipate future needs as the population and demographics change. This can include tracking housing trends with recent sales and developments, and assessing on a block-by-block basis whether multifamily properties or smaller-scale single-family properties may make sense in the neighborhood fabric.

The My East Camden Collaborative can also expand and support education programs for tenants, so that they are aware of their rights; for landlords, so that they are aware of their responsibilities; and for prospective homeowners about sustainable homeownership. The City of Camden currently has a Rent Control office which can mediate between landlords and tenants.⁶⁰ Camden can look to the example of Newark, which has a dedicated tenant legal services coordinator.⁶¹ The Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey launched a one-stop website, housinghelpnj.org, which includes information on housing rules, grants, legal assistance, and a hotline so that New Jersey residents can be connected with free legal aid and community mediators, including SJCS and other housing-focused organizations.⁶² Such programs can help residents make financial choices that make sense for themselves and their families, and help avoid predatory lenders and other concerns related to homeownership. East Camden organizations can help share information with residents about existing grant programs, and individual development accounts (IDAs) that aid residents with down payments and closing costs, such as those offered by NJ HFMA, the City of Camden, as well as regional banks and credit unions.⁶³ East Camden can also explore creating additional down payment and closing cost assistance programs as well.

As a mid-term objective, the Collaborative can work with the City of Camden and the State of New Jersey on increasing housing stock through infill developments and allowing more accessory dwelling units. This can be addressed after inventorying and addressing vacant properties, which is discussed elsewhere in the report. Infill buildings are constructed on vacant or underutilized properties, including the rehabilitation of dilapidated buildings, or between existing buildings. Smaller underutilized buildings and sites in residential areas of East Camden in particular can be prioritized for infill to create new units for renters and buyers. Additionally, East Camden can investigate partnering with anchor institutions or large corporations on supportive housing and workforce housing in the neighborhood.

Accessory dwelling units or ADUs are smaller secondary homes on the same lot as a primary dwelling. They can be built on single-family lots as attached or detached homes. Enabling the creation of ADUs could expand living spaces for families on the same lots, allowing seniors to age in place with their relatives or young adults to live with their parents in separate but nearby spaces and provide a means for secondary property income. Camden's zoning ordinances do not encourage the creation of ADUs.^{64,65} It is recommended that in the mid-term, the My East Camden Collaborative work with the City of Camden to develop an ADU ordinance that allows for greater flexibility for homeowners and ensures affordability. Organizations such as AARP have developed model ordinances and design guidelines for municipalities.⁶⁶

As a mid-term objective, the My East Camden Collaborative can work with the City, County, and social service providers to target assistance to unhoused residents. The City of Camden and the County recently received an influx of funding from US HUD's HOME Supplemental Aid Program, for example.⁶⁷ These types of services can include building supportive housing, providing critical mental health and substance abuse counseling, and working with local homeless service providers on a plan for the homeless in East Camden.

As investments and improvements are made to the neighborhood's housing stock, it is important to maintain a level of affordability for current residents so that they do not experience displacement. Inclusionary zoning ordinances are one tool that can be deployed, which Newark and Jersey City have recently passed.^{68,69} It is recommended that East Camden work with the City of Camden to ensure that new housing developments draw on Federal and State affordable housing incentives, like the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, to develop affordable, resident-focused housing.

Anticipated outcomes are increasing the homeownership rate in East Camden to 50% and increasing the amount of affordable housing by 50 units, as measured by ACS data and municipal data. An additional outcome is increasing the number of residents participating in homebuyer education and counseling programs coordinated by or affiliated with the My East Camden Collaborative, as measured by program attendance.

60 City of Camden, "Rent Control." (Accessed June 2021).

61 City of Newark, "Office of Tenant Legal Services." (Accessed June 2021).

62 Ashley Balcerzak, "New Jersey launches website, hotline for people who need housing assistance." (April 9, 2021).

63 New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, "Homebuyers." (Accessed June 2021).

64 City of Camden, "Article III, Zoning Districts, Rules and Regulations, Principal and Accessory Buildings." (Accessed June 2021).

65 City of Camden, "Article XXVIII, Exceptions and Supplemental Regulations, Accessory buildings, structures, uses, and height regulations." (Accessed June 2021).

66 AARP, "ADU Model State Act and Local Ordinance." (Accessed June 2021).

67 TapInto Camden, "Camden City, County Getting \$7.1M to Help the Homeless." (April 18, 2021).

68 City of Newark, "Mayor Baraka Hails Passage of Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance." (October 4, 2017).

69 Joshua Rosario, "Jersey City Council adopts inclusionary zoning law despite public call for stronger ordinance." (October 22, 2020).

Improve housing conditions through technical assistance and grant programs for homeowners and renters



Housing is an important contributor to health, wealth, and overall well-being. However, home repairs can be expensive or daunting for low-income homeowners or renters experiencing leaks, lead paint, mold, busted appliances, or broken doors or windows. In conversations with residents, people referenced an unofficial fee of sorts for contractors to come into Camden to perform work - some residents articulated a suggestion that some contractors, fearing crime and other conditions in the city, charge residents of East Camden higher quotes than they would in neighboring towns such as Pennsauken. Furthermore, many Camden residents simply do not have the ability to obtain a home repair loan nor do they have the capital to pay for the repairs themselves.

When surveyed in June 2021, residents and local stakeholders indicated that improving housing conditions through technical assistance and grant programs was the most important recommendation within the “Increase Accessibility and Improve Conditions” section, with approximately 28% of respondents selecting it as a top priority. It is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative help coordinate do-it-yourself (DIY) workshops with unions and home supply stores to help teach both homeowners and tenants some basic repair skills as well as help bolster the skills of local contractors or those interested in pursuing the field. Alternatively, it is also recommended to offer a workshop on hiring contractors when DIY is not appropriate.

The My East Camden Collaborative can also investigate supporting a rehabilitation program that provides grants, matching funds, funds through an IDA, or low-cost loans to allow residents to make home improvements or hire contractors. Improvements can increase energy efficiency and comfort, as well as address potential safety issues, including lead paint dangers. Programs could be funded by public and private institutions, or through donations of time and supplies by large retailers. Previous programs that have been attempted in the neighborhood can be audited for strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.

Additionally, the My East Camden Collaborative can explore a neighborhood-specific hotline or reporting structure for tenants with absentee landlords to obtain assistance, either through rent relief or to compel landlords to make repairs, or share information about existing programs, such as HCDN-NJ’s, housinghelpnj.org.

Anticipated outcomes include increasing the number of residents attending technical assistance programs coordinated or affiliated with the My East Camden Collaborative, as measured by attendance records and the creation of a neighborhood-specific hotline.

Support efforts by city and local non-profits to identify, acquire, and renovate or demolish vacant buildings



Vacant buildings can diminish the quality of life by encouraging nuisance crime, vandalism, or drug activity or by posing safety and fire hazards. Since 2013, East Camden has made progress in boarding vacant buildings, and the City has recently launched an initiative to demolish 300 vacant properties throughout Camden.⁷⁰ Approximately 16% of respondents in a recent survey indicated that addressing vacant buildings was a top priority.

Moving forward, it is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative work with stakeholders to acquire and repurpose buildings whenever feasible, in the interest of sustainability. When building conditions are dire and repurposing is determined unfeasible, then vacant buildings should be swiftly demolished. It is also recommended that the City of Camden streamline the process of acquiring vacant buildings and that the residents are provided with information on how to properly acquire vacant lots and abandoned properties.

⁷⁰ Noah Zucker, “Camden Begins Demolition of 300 Derelict Buildings.” (June 16, 2021).

The anticipated outcome is decreasing the number of vacant buildings in East Camden by 50%, as measured by building surveys and municipal data.

Allow for mixed-use zoning in parts of the industrial and commercial zones



Camden's zoning ordinance contains several mixed-use designations, such as "Mixed Waterfront" and "Transit Oriented", but it remains restrictive in allowing use mixing in other parts of the city.⁷¹ East Camden only has lots designated as TOD in Marlton, while the rest of the neighborhood is zoned as single-use. As businesses and industries evolve, there may be opportunities to implement residential spaces in certain areas of the neighborhood with no existing health and environmental concerns. Live-work spaces in the light industrial area or residential development with commercial ground floor spaces along key corridors are examples of what could be encouraged. Allowing for mixed-uses in some sections can create more units of housing and create more walkable, vibrant areas. For example, the City of Passaic recently changed its zoning code on its Main Street, encouraging smaller businesses to update their buildings and add residential units to the upper floors.⁷² It is recommended that the City work with East Camden stakeholders to evaluate whether similar changes to the zoning code make sense for the neighborhood and should be employed.

Anticipated outcomes are the increase of mixed-use zoning in East Camden and increasing the number of residential units in formerly single-use zones by 100, as measured by land use data and surveys.

Improve code enforcement and dialogue



Many of the quality of life concerns articulated by the residents of East Camden boiled down to code enforcement and maintenance. It was commented that it was difficult to get in touch with code enforcement officials, and that residents who do receive fines often don't have the ability or financial wherewithal to rectify the situation. Code enforcement is important to maintain quality of life but should not be excessively punitive or stifling. Rather than cracking down harshly, the City of Camden can work with the My East Camden Collaborative to manage and develop programs to better inform and create dialogue between code enforcement and residents.

Community planning group Hester Street Collaborative⁷³ developed a [toolkit](#) for communities to work with municipalities and service providers to develop and implement solutions in such a way that the collaborations are "institutionalized," and can survive transitions in leadership on both the municipal and non-profit side. It is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative engage with the City to discuss code enforcement strategies, like sharing a welcome packet with new residents discussing city codes and regular check-in's between the Collaborative and Camden's code enforcement team.

"Less loud music, trash, and drugs."

— **Worker in East Camden, Age 40**

Anticipated outcomes include greater transparency and satisfaction with code enforcement in East Camden, as measured by surveys conducted by the My East Camden Collaborative.

⁷¹ City of Camden, "Article III, Zoning Districts, Rules and Regulations." (Accessed June 2021).

⁷² Matt Fagan, "Main Attraction: Passaic apartments are part of plan for affordable downtown." (May 21, 2020).

⁷³ Hester Street Collaborative. "The Power & Proximity of Code Enforcement." (August 6, 2019).

Improve road conditions for all users



One of the most common quality of life concerns from residents was the condition of the roads in East Camden. Major corridors such as Federal Street, 27th Street, and Westfield Avenue were in poor condition and side streets were also in need of repaving. One resident remarked that it felt like it had been decades since 27th Street had been repaved. When asked which roads or areas could use improvement, some survey respondents wrote, “All of them.” Safety concerns were also raised about speeding cars and poorly configured intersections. Residents indicated that they also didn’t feel comfortable biking around the neighborhood, as designated lanes were few and far between, and there were no safe storage spaces for bikes. Specific intersections that were called out include the junctures where 27th Street, Baird Boulevard, Federal Street, and Westfield Avenue meet; Highland Avenue and Marlton Pike; 36th Street with Federal Street and Westfield Avenue; Baird Boulevard and Marlton Pike; the exit ramps of Admiral Wilson Boulevard, and the gateways into East Camden. Unfortunately, strictly repaving the roads in Camden is difficult as the utilities under the road are aging and need to be replaced as well. Multiple jurisdictions control the infrastructure under the roads. This coordination of utility replacement at the same time as a road is being reconstructed is capital intensive and leads to a piecemeal approach to fixing the roads.

There are several strategies to improve road conditions and create complete streets.⁷⁴ In the short term, the My East Camden Collaborative can work with the City of Camden and the County to develop a catalog and report of all street conditions, identify roads that are subject to high-speed drivers, and work on installing quick measures such as speed bumps and cameras at problem roads and intersections. Implementing low-speed limits and physical measures such as speed bumps, traffic signals and stop signs, improved pedestrian crosswalks and street markings, raised pedestrian islands, and medians can reduce speeds and save lives.⁷⁵ The My East Camden Collaborative can work with the City and County to identify corridors that should be redesigned according to complete streets standards to allow for the safer flow of traffic. Traffic calming can be implemented in major pedestrian areas, particularly by schools and parks, and also along the commercial corridors, particularly along Federal Street.

⁷⁴ Smart Growth America, “What are Complete Streets?” (Accessed June 2021).

⁷⁵ Katie Pyzyk, “Experts aim to dispel low-speed zone myths, a key hurdle to safer cities.” (May 21, 2021).

The Camden County Highway Plan identifies five East Camden roadways as being eligible for funding under the Highway Safety Improvement Program. These include Baird Boulevard, Marlton Pike, Federal Street, South 27th Street, and Westfield Avenue, all of which are identified as eligible for pedestrian corridor and pedestrian intersection support.⁷⁶ The plan also identifies portions of Highland Avenue, Federal Street, and Marlton Pike as experiencing elevated crash rates compared to other similar roads in the region. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) has \$4 million programmed annually for the HSIP program funding.⁷⁷

The County Plan also identifies segments of Federal Street and Baird Boulevard as being eligible for investment under the Regional Mobility Improvement Program.⁷⁸ East Camden Plan recommendations for improved streetscapes can track funding and design for any improvements contemplated under this program, as mobility improvements intended to reduce congestion on these roads may have implications for pedestrian safety, walkability, bikeability, and local retail.

Finally, the City could prioritize bicyclists in the redesign process to encourage more ridership. Bicycle usage has a number of benefits, including reduction of vehicular congestion and individual health benefits. While bicycle travel may not be the most frequently used means of transportation, proper accommodation of cyclists on major streets may encourage safer and more frequent use of bicycles.⁷⁹ Given that the neighborhood has several public parks and distinct commercial corridors near residential areas, it is well-positioned to be a bikeable neighborhood. But conditions limit residents’ comfort with traveling by bike. It is recommended that the City of Camden review the feasibility of physically separated bike lanes, which improve safety for bicyclists and reduce the chance of collisions with vehicles, with an eye towards roads around parks, schools, and leading to the commercial corridors. Residents also flagged that the neighborhood lacked safe storage spaces for bikes, so adding bike storage would help encourage new riders.

“Todos las calles estan malas.”

— **East Camden Resident, Age 32**

The anticipated outcomes are improving the conditions of 25% of the roads in the neighborhood, particularly Federal Street, Westfield Ave, and 27th Street, as measured by resident surveys and feedback, and increasing the percentage of residents who regularly bike in and around East Camden to 5%, as measured by surveys and ACS journey to work data.

⁷⁶ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, “Camden County Highway Plan,” page 17. (2015).

⁷⁷ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, “FY2020 Transportation Improvement Program for New Jersey (FY20-FY23).” (Accessed June 2021).

⁷⁸ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, “Camden County Highway Plan,” page 48-49. (2015).

⁷⁹ Regional Plan Association, “The Five Borough Bikeway.” (June 2020).

Improve sidewalk conditions



Investing in walkable neighborhoods can create healthier, more vibrant communities and lead to less vehicles on the road, resulting in less pollution and traffic congestion. Survey responses indicated that a significant number of residents felt that East Camden was not difficult to walk in and around. The proximity of East Camden's commercial corridors to its residential areas help in creating a walkable, dense neighborhood.

However, conversations with residents and survey respondents indicated that there was room for improvement, including sidewalk widening, repair, and more greening. In some residential areas, the sidewalks end randomly or are in poor physical state, posing safety concerns for pedestrians as well as obstacles for those with physical mobility issues. Where sidewalks exist in the industrial area, they are often in poor condition, though recent additions to the light industrial area such as ResinTech have improved nearby sidewalks. In conversations, company representatives reported that they are working with firms to help manage litter in the area and have been in touch with PSE&G to repair streetlights.

It is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative develop an inventory of sidewalks in need of repair as well as intersections that could use safety improvements such as near schools, bus stops, parks, and houses of worship. The Collaborative can also encourage large employers to "adopt" their local streets and sidewalks and help make investments in cleaning and beautifying, following the recent example of ResinTech. An additional short-term recommendation is the creation of volunteer block brigades to help keep sidewalks clean, encourage

snow removal, and to serve as a point of contact with the City in the event of more severe sanitation issues or debris. Such block brigades can foster greater civic engagement in East Camden.

The My East Camden Collaborative can work with the City of Camden and the County to widen and repair sidewalks to improve accessibility for residents with varying mobility needs and allocate space for greenery. This can be done at the same time as major utility projects or roadwork to save time and money.

The My East Camden Collaborative can also work with the City of Camden and the County to identify additional high-priority projects to seek funding for. For example, recently NJ DOT and DVRPC awarded the County \$1 million towards the cost of a pedestrian-bicycle bridge over the Cooper River, which will move pedestrians and bicyclists off of Admiral Wilson Blvd in East Camden and fill gaps in the County LINK trail.⁸⁰ NJ DOT also recently awarded 5 cities funds to improve pedestrian safety, including Passaic and Paterson.⁸¹ Organizations such as Safe Routes Partnership also offer funding and technical assistance to improve the pedestrian experience.⁸²

"If the government fixes the physical city, like the streets, sidewalks, lights, landscaping, the community will come together and make an impact."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 30**

The anticipated outcome is improving the conditions of 25% of the sidewalks in the neighborhood, particularly by schools, bus stops, parks, houses of worship, and in the three commercial corridors, as measured by resident surveys and feedback.

⁸⁰ TapInto Camden, "Camden County Gets \$1M Grant for LINK Trail Bridge." (May 12, 2021).

⁸¹ Matt Fagan, "5 Bergen, Passaic County towns get NJ DOT funds to improve pedestrian safety in downtowns." (May 18, 2021).

⁸² Safe Routes Partnership. (Accessed June 2021).

Work with NJ Transit and the City of Camden to improve public transit

Public transportation brings numerous benefits to communities, including less pollution and congestion from cars, as well as greater mobility options for those that lack access to a vehicle. Many essential or frontline workers in New Jersey depend on public transportation, and intrastate bus riders stayed or returned to NJ Transit sooner and in larger numbers than interstate bus riders or rail riders during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸³ East Camden is served by several public transportation options. Residents indicated in the most recent ACS data that they are more likely to drive than take public transportation, however, which was corroborated by survey responses and conversations.

The City and County can coordinate with NJ Transit representatives to assess existing bus routes and usage. They can explore whether bus frequency can be increased on certain routes, if new routes can be developed to connect residents with existing large employers, and if additional bus shelters can be constructed in the neighborhood. NJ Transit and the City can invest in making transit stops more welcoming, hospitable, and legible for users.

As a long-term priority, it is recommended that NJ Transit, the City, and large businesses explore the development of a light rail connection to the River LINE in the light industrial zone at Federal Street. Currently, the closest River LINE stop for East Camden residents is at 36th Street in Pennsauken, a location that is relatively disconnected from the neighborhood.⁸⁴

"Transportation for work, so that East Camden residents can get to their jobs."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 23**

The anticipated outcome is increasing the proportion of public transportation users to 20%, as measured by surveys and ACS journey to work data.

Improve utility infrastructure and reliability



In our survey, residents of East Camden identified increasing electricity costs and utility outages as the most visible climate change issue they experienced, with over 90% of respondents saying they experienced either or both. One-on-one conversations with residents revealed that electricity outages happen to them on a monthly or biweekly basis, which is incredibly disruptive to their daily routines.

Coordinating with the local electricity utility provider, PSE&G, to connect cost burdened neighbors to utility-support programs can be a strategy for managing the long-term effects of climate change. However, given the COVID-19 moratorium on utility shutdowns, which was still in effect at the time of this report, and the details in surveys and conversations, the outages affecting residents do not entirely appear to be because of a failure to remit payment by residents. Rather, these conversations suggest issues with the physical infrastructure of the grid and connections to the grid. It is recommended that Camden work with representatives of East Camden and PSE&G to identify solutions to the physical reliability of the grid that can be implemented in the short-term. Over the long-term, East Camden can explore the possibility of community-owned and managed cooperatives.⁸⁵

An additional issue of concern for residents included a lack of lighting in certain portions in the neighborhood. This contributes to a decreased sense of safety and can potentially encourage crime, as offenders are more likely to commit crimes in the dark. Residents and partners should conduct a street light inventory to determine areas where improvements are needed and work with PSE&G, the City of Camden, and partners to prioritize repairs in areas where there is greatest need.

The City of Camden, like many older cities in New Jersey, suffers from older lead pipe water lines to the street.⁸⁶ Whereas utility companies are replacing the utility-owned service lines, many issues with lead in water in Camden stem from the homeowner's responsibility to check and replace their service lines and internal plumbing. It is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative work with American Water, the City of Camden, and

⁸³ Regional Plan Association, "Better Service: Improving the Bus Network in New Jersey." (November 2020).

⁸⁴ NJ Transit, "River LINE." (Accessed June 2021).

⁸⁵ Down Bottom Farms Newark, "Newark Solar Power Community Meeting." (May 20, 2021).

⁸⁶ Michael Sol Warren, "Plan to replace every lead pipe in N.J. heads to Murphy's desk." (June 27, 2021).

partners to assist homeowners and landlords in East Camden with the testing and replacement of their service lines to ensure lead-free water.

In addition, the City of Camden continues to have areas where the sewer lines under the street are made of terracotta or similar materials, are a century old or more, and combine sewage with stormwater. This leads to sewer backups in the neighborhood. The My East Camden Collaborative should work with CCMUA and other partners to determine areas where sewer capacity is strained and mitigate those issues with green infrastructure in the short term (to reduce storm water) and replacement and separation of the sewer/stormwater lines in the long term, as this is a capital-intensive fix that would require street reconstruction as well.

The anticipated outcomes are decreasing the number of residents reporting issues with utility outages in East Camden by 30%, as measured by surveys of residents conducted by the My East Camden Collaborative, as well as reduction of street lights reported out by 10%, reduction of lead plumbing service lines by 10%, reduction of sewer backup incidents by 10%, as reported by utilities.

Improve digital infrastructure

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored our dependence on reliable and accessible digital infrastructure. According to the most recent ACS data, approximately 10% of residents in East Camden did not have a computer in their home before the pandemic and 15% did not have an internet subscription. The Camden City School District, realizing that many families in the school system did not have consistent access to high-speed

internet or computers,⁸⁷ provided students with laptops and wi-fi hotspots to ensure participation in virtual learning.⁸⁸ It is recommended that East Camden service providers and community organizations look into funding for computer and wi-fi hotspot lending programs for all residents in need, not just those participating in the school system. These lending programs could be managed through local non-profits, and supported by businesses donating equipment or through financing from private and public institutions. The City of Camden can also examine strategies for creating safe hotspots in public spaces for all residents to access.

Recently, Governor Phil Murphy highlighted that funding through the American Rescue Plan could help expand high-speed internet access for low-income communities, and noted that the New Jersey Legislature is weighing the creation of a Broadband Access Study Commission.⁸⁹ East Camden can work with the City of Camden to explore whether investments in a municipal broadband network can also be made.⁹⁰

Anticipated outcomes include the reduction of the proportion of East Camden residents reporting that they do not have access to an internet subscription to 5%, as measured by ACS data, and the creation and participation in computer and wi-fi hotspot lending programs for East Camden residents coordinated by or affiliated with the My East Camden Collaborative, as measured by the number of residents engaged in such programs.

⁸⁷ Steven Rodas, "When Classrooms Go Virtual: Persevering in Camden's Year of Remote Learning." (March 16, 2021).

⁸⁸ Tony Gallotto, "City, School, State Leaders Join Faith-Based Groups to Support Camden School Superintendent." (March 25, 2021).

⁸⁹ Office of the Governor of the State of New Jersey, "Governor Murphy, Congressman Gottheimer Highlight Nearly \$190 Million in American Rescue Plan Funding for Capital Projects Including Broadband Expansion in New Jersey." (May 21, 2021).

⁹⁰ Jon Reid, "Municipal Broadband War Reignited in Biden's Infrastructure Push." (April 1, 2021).

CENTER RESIDENTS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

One of East Camden's biggest strengths is its three commercial corridors that contain a variety of active retail stores, workforce development opportunities, restaurants, and other service-oriented shops. However, opportunity exists to reduce vacancies on the corridors, expand the market footprint of the individual shops, and provide greater employment opportunities. Recommendations listed below help increase the number of East Camden residents employed, increase foot traffic at the corridors, and make the corridor more inviting and vibrant for everyone.

Residents and local stakeholders surveyed indicated that this goal was the most critical of the five presented, with half of respondents ranking it as a top priority.

Metrics that will be tracked over 10 years will include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Increasing the number of locally-hired East Camden residents with wages that are on par with Camden County as a whole, as measured by resident surveys and ACS and Census data.
- ▶ Improving streetscapes and façades in the commercial corridors, as measured by surveys and feedback.
- ▶ The creation of one or more business associations and the number of active members.

Develop and support programs that teach residents business management and workforce development skills



A common suggestion from residents in surveys was the creation and support of workforce development and business management programs. There was a desire for programs that specialized in hard skills, such as accounting, construction, and home improvement, as well as soft skills, such as digital literacy and more general business management. Several residents suggested that teaching programs be geared towards youth, to help prepare them for the job market. Residents also suggested programs for people for whom English is a second language (ESL) and adults shifting careers or facing a changing job market.

Camden County manages career centers for adults and youths.⁹¹ The One-Stop Career Center offers robust online programming and has a physical office in nearby Cherry Hill, NJ. There are also a multitude of workforce development programs offered to East Camden residents currently, but these opportunities are not properly coordinated under one roof or marketed to the residents at large. The City and the My East Camden Collabora-

tive can coordinate and market available workforce development programs to residents, and create new programs that fill gaps in available programming. In the longer term, the My East Camden Collaborative should investigate whether a satellite office for the One-Stop Center can be opened in East Camden or if partners can provide the necessary workforce development programs that the One-Stop offers locally to East Camden residents. These programs include providing one-on-one career coaching, connections to training programs that lead to careers in demand, mock job interviews, resume building, supportive literacy programs, and exploration of temporary positions.

Additionally, the My East Camden Collaborative can create hard-skills training programs and internship opportunities that employ residents and recent immigrants, especially in the construction trades, green infrastructure, clerical work, and other programs that provide opportunity for community engagement, especially youth. Camden County can open a satellite career center in East Camden to support these efforts.

"Programs that help the youth for their future: counseling for the youth, jobs for the youth in the summer or other times of the year, any program that helps the youth look forward to continue to study for a better future."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 65**

Anticipated outcomes are increasing the number of residents participating in workforce development and business management programs coordinated or affiliated with the My East Camden Collaborative, as measured by attendance records, and the creation of a dedicated career center in East Camden.

⁹¹ Camden County, "One-Stop Career Center." (Accessed June 2021).

Engage with existing large employers to do a needs assessment and develop tailored training programs to encourage local hiring

In East Camden, most residents indicated that it was not easy to find work in the neighborhood. Survey responses coupled with ACS data demonstrated that a significant number of residents were either employed locally in low-wage positions or had longer commutes to more high-paying jobs. When surveyed, approximately 32% of respondents selected this recommendation as a top priority within the “Center Residents and Local Businesses in Economic Development Initiatives” section.

One solution that is already being employed in Camden to an extent is to work with large employers to do a needs assessment and develop targeted training programs for residents to encourage local hiring. Newark recently employed a similar model to great effect. The city developed an apprentice program with a local union that trained 50 Newark residents in lead pipe replacement. The city even covered the costs of transportation so that residents could access the training site. This partnership enabled Newark to simultaneously tackle its lead water crisis while providing valuable skills and jobs to residents.⁹²

Existing programs in Camden include the Camden Works program, which launched in 2019 and has helped place more than 400 residents in local businesses. Businesses that hired residents through the Camden Works program include Action-Pak Inc, American Water Company, CAMcare, the Camden County Police Department, Virtua, and the Watershed Alliance. Camden Works is a collaborative endeavor between Camden Community Partnership and several organizations, including Camden County and the Camden County Workforce Development Board.⁹³

Moving forward, the My East Camden Collaborative can collaborate with Camden Works to ensure that its residents have opportunities to participate in the program. A more mid-term objective would be for the Collaborative to develop closer partnerships with large employers and do periodic needs assessments and tailor training programs appropriately. Furthermore, the My East Camden Collaborative can also examine ways for youth to intern at their respective organizations.

"I wish there were more openings for people who would like to work in the community, either in local businesses (for a living wage) as well as in schools, parks, and non-profits dedicated to

⁹² Star-Ledger Editorial Board, "Newark teaches America a lesson on lead pipes – and hiring local | Editorial." (May 3, 2021).

⁹³ Tony Gallotto, "Camden Works Successfully Finds More Jobs for City Residents." (April 9, 2021).

housing and community development. I personally would love to work in East Camden because I love my community and people, but I have never heard of any job here that pays at least \$15 an hour."

— East Camden Resident, Age 22

Anticipated outcomes are increasing the number of locally-hired East Camden residents with wages that are on par with Camden County as a whole, as measured by resident surveys and ACS and Census data.

Encourage development conditions for a more diverse array of businesses in existing commercial corridors



East Camden is home to three distinct commercial corridors: Federal Street, Marlton Avenue, and Westfield Avenue. While the neighborhood benefits from the employment opportunities and economic production of these corridors, additional investment can help to make stronger, more complete commercial districts. Residents noted that there was a lack of diverse options even on Federal Street, which serves as a neighborhood main street.

To attract more foot traffic, support existing businesses, and encourage the development of additional businesses to currently empty storefronts, it is recommended that businesses and the My East Camden Collaborative conduct a market assessment to determine the market potential of East Camden’s commercial corridors. From there, the Collaborative can work with businesses to develop plans to increase market share and invest in street beautification and branding to draw more businesses and visitors for specialized shopping. This recommendation was the second-most popular in the “Center Residents and Local Businesses in Economic Development Initiatives” section, with approximately 20% of respondents selecting it as a top priority.

East Camden can take advantage of Camden’s Urban Enterprise Zone status and other programs to support existing local businesses and encourage a more diverse array of businesses in the commercial corridor.⁹⁴ The Urban Enterprise Zone program

⁹⁴ City of Camden, "Camden's UEZ Program Is Back." (June 2018).

(UEZ) is managed by New Jersey's Department of Community Affairs and aims to support designated urban communities via their commercial sectors. Businesses in Urban Enterprise Zones that participate in the program can charge half the standard sales tax rate on select items, receive tax credits for hiring full-time employees, and obtain tax exemptions on certain investments and capital purchases.⁹⁵ Other programs that could support new and diverse businesses are microlending programs, such as the pilot recently launched by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority.⁹⁶ Members of the *My East Camden* neighborhood plan Steering Committee highlighted microlending programs as a tool to consider employing in the neighborhood.

Additionally, the My East Camden Collaborative can coordinate its members to acquire vacant storefronts under the authority of a Community Land Trust or similarly functioning entity. This entity would be able to rent out space at lower rates to emerging businesses from a diversity of backgrounds to encourage a broader scope of local business development.

Private institutions have also stepped up to assist Camden businesses during the pandemic. For example, as part of Wells Fargo's "Open for Business Fund," Cooperative Business Assistance Corp (CBAC) was awarded half a million dollars in grant funds in order to be better able to provide low-cost loans and other technical assistance to businesses to help them stay open and maintain their hiring levels.⁹⁷ These programs and others can help existing and new businesses in the commercial corridors of East Camden.

"I'd love to have more restaurants."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 25**

"Mas tiendas de ropas y zapatos."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 50**

Anticipated outcomes are increasing the number and variety of commercial enterprises in East Camden's three corridors and reducing vacancies in the commercial corridors by 25%, as measured by surveys.

⁹⁵ State of New Jersey Department of Consumer Affairs, "Urban Enterprise Zone Program." (Accessed June 2021).

⁹⁶ Eric Strauss, "EDA creates \$2M microlending grant pilot program." (March 10, 2021).

⁹⁷ TapInto Camden, "\$500K Grant to Help Camden Businesses With Low-Cost Loans." (April 7, 2021).

Develop and support programs that allow businesses to make façade and streetscape improvements



Building and façade improvements can not only upgrade structures, but can help foster a more inviting and cohesive commercial area. Improving the visual appearance through plantings, repairs, and improved signage can lead to greater foot traffic and foster a perception of safety, creating a positive feedback loop that enhances the shopping experience.

Previously, the Camden Commercial Business Façade Improvement Program supported business owners and property owners to improve façades and building conditions. The program should be reinstated, or a new program can be developed, to help businesses improve local conditions. The program offered grants up to \$25,000 to address painting, lighting, limited landscaping and parking improvements, masonry repair, new or improved signage, window replacement, and others. In order to participate, businesses had to be a member of the Camden Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) program. Other programs and agencies, such as New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection, can also fund façade improvements.⁹⁸

Anticipated outcomes include improving streetscapes and façades in the commercial corridors, as measured by surveys and feedback.

⁹⁸ Noah Zucker, "Camden To Apply for \$500K Grant to Repair Historic RCA Building Façade." (May 19, 2021).

Create a business association for East Camden



Several organizations, including the Latin American Economic Development Association and the Camden County Chamber of Commerce, support East Camden's commercial corridors. In order to better share information and coordinate programs and events, it is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative look to support and expand business associations in the neighborhood. This could mean a neighborhood-wide business association or associations targeted to the three distinct commercial corridors. The Newark Regional Business Partnership may serve as a potential model.⁹⁹ Members of the East Camden neighborhood plan Steering Committee also shared that they are in the process of applying for the Main Street NJ program, which provides technical support and training for communities working to invest in historic commercial corridors.¹⁰⁰ Any associations should be created with an eye towards creating an inclusive environment for small business owners who may not typically get involved in such organizations.

Another function of an emerging business association would be to help market the commercial corridors of East Camden to a regional audience. The business association can develop a website and directory of businesses along with complementary marketing and branding to help showcase the existing and future businesses of East Camden to people throughout the region. The entity could also create programming to encourage a diverse group of people to enjoy the neighborhood's offerings, including new visitors who may not have patronized East Camden's businesses before.

"Create a business association for East Camden to highlight its existing business corridor."

— **Worker in East Camden, Age 34**

The anticipated outcome is the creation of one or more business associations, the effectiveness of which will be measured by the number of active members.

⁹⁹ Newark Regional Business Partnership. (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁰⁰ State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the Main Street New Jersey Program (MSNJ)." (Accessed June 2021).

Ensure that development in the light industrial area brings community benefits



Both in the 2013 and 2021 community engagement process, residents articulated the desire for the light industrial zone to stay as zoned and to encourage additional development in the area. Companies that have arrived more recently to the light industrial area include ResinTech, which manufactures ion exchange resins for water and wastewater treatment.¹⁰¹

In January 2021, Governor Phil Murphy signed into law the [New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020](#). One aspect of this law was to reform key elements of economic incentive programs led by the New Jersey Economic Development (NJ EDA). Programs established under the NJ ERA place new responsibilities on private recipients of state support to negotiate and document agreements with host communities regarding the specific community benefits that development projects will confer.

In anticipation of additional development in the light industrial area, which is recommended, the My East Camden Collaborative can develop a draft community benefits agreement. Specific benefits can include but are not limited to local hiring and training, noise mitigation, and streetscape maintenance and improvements. Representatives of businesses negotiating project support under NJ ERA-established programs can be encouraged to meet with East Camden representatives who can speak to potential linkages between proposed projects and East Camden recommendations.

"Trabajos de fabricas para mis nietos."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 79**

"We need a factory."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 31**

Anticipated outcomes are the creation of a draft community benefits agreement, as well as increased development in the light industrial area, as measured by the number of new businesses that are established there.

¹⁰¹ ResinTech, Inc. (Accessed June 2021).

As climate change becomes an everyday reality in East Camden, it is crucial for the neighborhood to identify areas where interventions can help promote a more resilient, adaptable, and healthy environment. The State of New Jersey has also recently altered the Municipal Land Use Law, and now requires master plans for cities to assess vulnerability to climate change and identify strategies to mitigate and adapt.¹ This section outlines steps that the neighborhood can take to achieve the goals of adaptation, sustainability, and resilience.

¹ Jon Hurdle, "Towns tasked with fighting climate-change impact." (June 11, 2021).

Metrics that will be tracked over 10 years will include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Reducing the number of inactive and remediated brownfields by 30%.
- ▶ Decreasing the number of Combined Sewer Overflows by 25%.
- ▶ Increasing the percentage of energy derived from renewables to 30%.
- ▶ Increasing the tree canopy in East Camden by 30%, with most efforts focused on the Stockton area.

Remediate and repurpose brownfields



East Camden is home to over 30 unremediated environmental hazard sites, primarily concentrated in the industrial sections of Marlton. As academics have emphasized in the fields of public health, environmental justice, and geography, exposure to environmental hazards can lead to adverse health impacts, like asthma or disproportionate rates of chronic disease.¹⁰² Putting time and resources into remediation efforts in the neighborhood can improve health, increase access to riverfront areas, and facilitate further growth of the TOD and light industrial zoned parts of the neighborhood. The My East Camden Collaborative can catalog these brownfields and work with the City and NJ DEP to remediate these brownfields for community, residential and/or employment center uses.

The process of remediating brownfield sites is currently governed by New Jersey's Site Remediation Reform Act which sets guidance for how NJ DEP works with site owners and remediation professionals. Recent legislation from the Murphy administration has lifted several regulatory hurdles for getting remediators approved. To help facilitate the process of remediation on key sites, the City can work with site owners, including leading the

process on city- or state-owned sites, to identify actionable strategies for funding remediation and promoting environmentally and economically beneficial uses on these sites.¹⁰³

Anticipated outcomes include reducing the number of inactive and unremediated brownfields by 30%, as measured by NJ DEP.

Address Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and stormwater flooding

East Camden is impacted by about six Combined Sewer Overflow outfalls along the Cooper River which emit around 137 MG/year of CSO volume.¹⁰⁴ These events pollute waterways and contaminate water, potentially leading to health impacts on the population. As climate change is predicted to increase the likelihood of more extreme meteorological events, it is important for the City and community to intervene to reduce the impacts of stormwater and localized flooding. Residents and local stakeholders agree - in our June survey, this was the second-most popular goal in the "Improve Sustainability and Environmental Resiliency" section, with 16% of respondents indicating it as a top priority.

Implementing green infrastructure is a way to help absorb excess storm water to prevent CSOs while promoting a healthier, more pleasant neighborhood environment. Interventions include rain barrels, rain gardens, green roofs, bioswales, and supporting wetlands. The State of New Jersey recently published a toolkit for municipalities to increase their resiliency to climate change, equitably adapt, and mitigate flooding.¹⁰⁵ NJ Future also established a Green Infrastructure Municipal Toolkit which helps identify sources of money for implementation.¹⁰⁶ Other resources include the recently published [Navigate the Flood](#) site by the University of Pennsylvania and the WaterNow alliance.

¹⁰² Chakraborty, Jayajit et al. "Disproportionate proximity to environmental health hazards: methods, models, and measurement." *American journal of public health* vol. 101 Suppl 1, Suppl 1 (2011): S27-36. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2010.300109

¹⁰³ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, "Site Remediation & Waste Management Program." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁰⁴ CCMUA Data, prepared by CDM Smith Consultants.

¹⁰⁵ Jon Hurdle, "Towns tasked with fighting climate-change impact." (June 11, 2021).

¹⁰⁶ New Jersey Green Infrastructure Municipal Toolkit. (Accessed June 2021).

In addition, the City can encourage efficient use of municipal resources by aligning efforts to address street conditions with green infrastructure investments.

East Camden can continue to engage in community-led efforts to promote sustainability to better identify high opportunity sites for green infrastructure implementation and to develop strategies for the management of accompanying trees and plant life in rain gardens and bioswales. Efforts should be focused on the Marlton area, as 55% of the census tract is at risk of flooding in a 100-year flood, and during heavy rain events, the area experiences street flooding. Expanding the number of rain gardens in Marlton could help mitigate some of these issues and promote a greener, more resilient neighborhood.

Anticipated outcomes include decreasing the number of CSOs by 25%, as measured by the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA).

Develop and support programs to improve household and commercial environmental resiliency and energy use



An essential step towards a more sustainable future requires making buildings energy efficient and more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The transition of the residential and commercial building stock necessitates incentives from State and Federal programs. The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities has compiled a list of resources for businesses to utilize to initiate the process of retrofitting buildings and making them more energy efficient.¹⁰⁷ East Camden can coordinate with local businesses and building owners to encourage the adoption of such programs to promote the transition. The City of Camden can also play an active role in encouraging a speedy approval process for building improvements that incorporate energy efficiency upgrades. East Camden can also prioritize energy efficiency and weatherization repairs in educational programs and/or grant assistance programs, as discussed earlier.

Our engagement efforts also elevated the issue of flood insurance affordability and increasing costs for repairs in flood zones. Because a number of homes, especially in Marlton, fall within FEMA's flood zones and the population is already cost burdened,

rates for flood insurance are high and put stress on households. The challenge with flood insurance assistance, however, is that there are relatively few avenues to access support for insurance or even hazard mitigation prior to severe events. Researchers have proposed developing a federal voucher program to support low income families in the highest risk zones (A and V).¹⁰⁸ Because the development and implementation of such a program falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government, Camden and its residents can call on their elected officials to advance legislation on this topic. The City could also encourage the State to research the feasibility of a local program that could serve as a stopgap. Tied in with these sorts of programs can be funding to help homeowners get funds for repairs and weatherization which are difficult to obtain due to the FEMA designation. Providing flexibility on other buckets of funding for housing rehabilitation will help homeowners in the flood zone adapt.

Anticipated outcomes include increased participation in household and commercial resiliency programs as well as reduction in electricity costs, as measured by surveys and utility reports.

Share information with residents on best methods to increase individual resiliency

Part of the process of adapting with climate change will be helping communities cope with its most harmful effects like severe storms and extreme heat. While most mitigation efforts should be addressed by local, state, and federal governments in partnership with communities, building owners, and businesses, the reality is that individuals will have to identify strategies for staying safe and healthy during stressful weather events. This can take a number of forms including managing energy efficiency within one's home, from better insulation to window replacements to painting roofs white,¹⁰⁹ accessing utility assistance programs, and connecting with community members to make sure people remain connected and accounted for during extreme weather events. To help facilitate the learning of home-based remedies and to connect the community, East Camden partners can promote awareness around the effects of climate change and what families can do to stay safe. This recommendation was chosen as the top priority within the "Improve Sustainability and Environmental Resiliency" section by 19% of respondents.

There are multiple utility aid programs available for residents of East Camden, including federal resources such as Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), state programs such as Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric (PAGE) and reductions on electricity and natural gas bills through the Universal Service Fund (USF), as well as assistance for low-income seniors and disabled residents.¹¹⁰ The 211 hotline and New Jersey's Department of Community Affairs online screening tool can help residents find programs that they are qualified for.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Carolyn Kousky, et al. "Addressing Affordability in the National Flood Insurance Program." (2014).

¹⁰⁹ Fred Pearce, "Urban Heat: Can White Roofs Help Cool World's Warming Cities?" (March 7, 2018).

¹¹⁰ Noah Zucker, "Utility Aid Available in Camden with Shutdowns Returning on June 30." (May 24, 2021).

¹¹¹ State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, "DCAid: Are you eligible?" (Accessed

¹⁰⁷ State of New Jersey, "Energy Efficiency Programs & Incentives." (Accessed June 2021).

"Proyectos de consciencia de ambiente y sembrar arboles."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 33**

Anticipated outcomes include increasing the knowledge of East Camden residents in methods to increase individual resiliency, as measured by surveys and questionnaires.

Increase renewable energy opportunities in East Camden

East Camden can also plan ahead to incorporate a robust expansion of renewable energy generation into community efforts to make a more resilient and affordable neighborhood. New Jersey's Clean Energy Program offers initial steps for registering for the Solar Renewable Energy Credit program, but it is unclear whether the State is offering incentives for its installation. The City could work with PSE&G to ensure that newly installed solar arrays by private homeowners and building owners are allowed to earn energy credits.

Another way to engage the community more broadly and to make solar energy more accessible is through community solar. Community solar refers to shared solar panels that people buy into to save money on their electric bills. This makes it possible for people in apartments or who cannot afford to install solar to take advantage of its energy production and cost savings. New Jersey recently established a Community Solar Energy Pilot Program to kick start efforts in communities, but the State should expand the program to reach more communities.¹¹² The My East Camden Neighborhood Collaborative can work with local officials to find suitable locations where a large-scale solar array can be installed and be used to offset some energy costs to homeowners. Neighboring Pennsauken implemented a solar array to power up to 400 homes.¹¹³

"This will put people who don't have jobs to work."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 24**

The anticipated outcome is increasing the percentage of energy used in East Camden derived from renewables to 30%, per utility reports and municipal data.

Encourage the development of infrastructure for electric vehicles

As the nation transitions away from fossil fuels, electrifying cars and buses will help achieve carbon emissions reductions.¹¹⁴ The transition from gas-powered cars will help reduce pollution in

June 2021).

¹¹² New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, "Community Solar." (Accessed June 2021).

¹¹³ Solar Landscape, "More than 400 Pennsauken Homes to be Powered by Community Solar." (May 4, 2021).

¹¹⁴ New York League of Conservation Voters, "The Public Health and Environmental

East Camden, too. While the EV movement is starting to pick up pace, programs to encourage both the installation of charging infrastructure and the purchase or leasing of electric vehicles will be vital in setting up the residents of East Camden to participate. Charge Up New Jersey is already providing up to \$5,000 dollars in incentives for individuals purchasing electric vehicles, among other programs and incentives provided by the state.¹¹⁵ The State is also developing programs to promote a widespread installation of charging sites to make it more accessible. The City can help facilitate the creation of more charging stations in Camden, while local residents can see if they qualify for New Jersey's programs to help this transition.

That being said, it is important to note that public transportation, especially if electrified, is still the most ecologically friendly form of motorized transportation and should be prioritized as an intervention to evolving transportation needs.

"Encouraging the development of new energy vehicles can improve air in our cities."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 31**

The anticipated outcome is the development of one or more electric vehicle charging stations in East Camden, measured by the number of sites.

Increase the tree canopy in East Camden



As extreme weather events become more common, investing in the built environment by creating a more expansive and connected tree canopy can provide multiple benefits for East Camden's residents. Better tree coverage can help reduce surface temperatures during the summer, capture rain water to lessen the burden on the storm water system, and filter air pollution and noise. However, historically, low-income communities have had less robust tree canopies than wealthier communities and also higher surface temperatures.¹¹⁶ An issue we also heard through our community engagement efforts was that a number of trees in the neighborhood appeared damaged and at risk of falling onto

Benefits of EV Adoption." (Accessed June 2021).

¹¹⁵ U.S. Department of Energy, Alternative Fuels Data Center, "New Jersey Laws and Incentives." (Accessed June 2021).

¹¹⁶ Adam Mahoney, "In America's cities, inequality is engrained in the trees." (May 5, 2021).

properties. To promote better tree coverage, East Camden can develop an inventory of trees to identify damaged trees and areas with less coverage. This inventory can translate into community-led efforts to plant trees, maintain those trees, and remove trees that can cause damage to property or curbs in the community. Working with organizations like the New Jersey Tree Foundation and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection,¹¹⁷ the community can work towards getting funding to support the planting and maintenance of the neighborhood's trees.

"More trees should be planted to prevent soil erosion."

— **Worker in East Camden, Age 35**

The anticipated outcome is increasing the tree canopy in East Camden by 30%, with most efforts focused on the Stockton area, as measured by satellite data and surface temperature data.

Increase the green barrier between the light industrial zone, rail lines, and residents



In the 2013 iteration of the *My East Camden* plan, we suggested creating a green buffer between the rail line and residential areas. We continue to urge the City and neighborhood organizations to explore strategies for creating a visual and sound barrier along the edge of Dudley and Rosedale to reduce the disturbance from rail traffic. As suggested before, the specific material of this barrier should be explored and negotiated, but creating a living wall with an earth core and vegetation growing on it would be

¹¹⁷ Urban & Community Forestry Program, "Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) Grant." (2017).

more sustainable and aesthetically pleasing than a concrete wall. Additionally, trees can be planted in other parts of the neighborhood to separate more disruptive uses from residential areas, like along Marlton Pike.

The anticipated outcome is an increase in a green buffer between the rail line and residential areas and along Marlton Pike, as measured by satellite imagery, and surveys of residents in regards to noise from this infrastructure.

Implement Camden Greenways and Circuit Trails through East Camden

Implementing greenways in parts of East Camden can help connect residents to parks and other parts of the neighborhood, while capturing stormwater. Though a longer-term investment, greenways can have many health and social benefits for residents, offering opportunities for exercise and recreation, as well as providing more chances for nature-based programming and activities. The Camden GreenWay currently runs south of the neighborhood, but the expansion to Gateway Park will help connect East Camden residents to a great resource for recreation and active transportation.¹¹⁸ East Camden can also support the completion of the planned and in process Circuit Trails that will create connections through Rosedale and towards Cramer Hill as well as completing connections along the Cooper River towards Downtown and North Camden.^{119,120}

Anticipated outcomes include the further development of the Camden GreenWay and Circuit trails, as measured by land use data, as well as increased use by residents, as measured by surveys.

¹¹⁸ New Jersey Conservation Foundation. "Camden GreenWay." (Accessed June 2021).

¹¹⁹ The Circuit Trails. "Camden County Action Team Burlington-Camden Trail." (January 27, 2021).

¹²⁰ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, "The Circuit Trails." (Accessed June 2021).

East Camden is home to a very diverse population that shows a strong sense of pride and culture. These recommendations seek to build upon existing assets in the neighborhood and foster more community cohesion with older and newer residents. New and existing civic spaces can serve as the focal point for residents to get together and improve their mental and physical health.

Create a community center for East Camden, using existing assets

One of the more popular suggestions from the Steering Committee and by residents was the creation of a community center open to all residents. Shared spaces can house a range of programming and activities. Such a center could help provide resources to and welcome new residents into the community, provide a physical location for community programs and non-profits, and serve as an anchor for the neighborhood. Residents would like to see a public pool for neighborhood families. Several residents indicated in surveys that they frequented the Salvation Army Kroc Center, which opened in 2014 outside of East Camden and is a multimillion dollar facility with recreational and athletic areas, a food pantry, a computer lab, and a library.¹²¹

In speaking with the Steering Committee and with residents, it became clear that East Camden had at its disposal several sites which can function as community centers. For example, LUCY Outreach, which engages with Camden youths, just broke ground on a 10,000 square-foot addition to its current building.¹²² Urban Promise owns Spirit Building, which provides recreational and other programs for Camden youth. SJCS itself is in possession of a large building on Federal Street which can be used as a center for homeowner and home improvement programs.

It is recommended that in the short-term, the My East Camden Collaborative do an inventory of existing underutilized assets owned by members of the Collaborative or closed school buildings and see which, if any, can be repurposed to function as community centers in the neighborhood.

"Growing up I loved going to the Boys and Girls Club, it brought out a creative side of me that I didn't realize was there... I want to give something similar to my community by utilizing the abandoned spaces we already have in the city and transforming it

¹²¹ Julia Terruso, "Kroc Center opens Saturday to serve Camden." (October 3, 2014).

¹²² Noah Zucker, "LUCY Breaks Ground on 10,000-Square-Foot Addition to Current Facility." (May 21, 2021).

Metrics that will be tracked over 10 years will include but are not limited to:

- ▶ The establishment of one or more community centers.
- ▶ Increasing park usage by residents by 50%, as measured by surveys.
- ▶ Decreasing the number of unprogrammed vacant lots by 30%.

into a studio. I think that will give people in East Camden a sense of pride, something they can feel good about, something they can say exists in their community."

— East Camden Resident, Age 22

The anticipated outcome is the establishment of one or more community centers and increased usage by residents, as measured by surveys and attendance records in programs housed at the centers.

Create a neighborhood library



East Camden currently lacks a local library branch. There are libraries in nearby Pennsauken and in downtown Camden, as well as located in the Rutgers-Camden campus. The Camden County Pop-Up Library, sponsored by the Subaru of America Foundation, has been filling the gap by providing free books to residents.¹²³ Steering Committee members recalled that, in years past, the city once had a robust library system with a branch in the Dudley area.

In surveys, residents requested a local library branch in their neighborhood and indicated this as a top priority for the "Support Arts, Culture, Community, and Health" section, with 15% choosing this as the most important recommendation. It is recommended that this be a long-term objective of the My East

¹²³ Steven Rodas, "Pop-Up Library Founder Wants to Help Camden Escape Into a Book." (May 7, 2020).

Camden Collaborative, as libraries can serve numerous benefits, from functioning as community centers, cooling areas, sources for digital access and digital literacy training, as well as literary programs, ESL programs, and GED courses. In the interim, schools and community non-profits can invest in public reading and study areas for residents.

"We need a library."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 33**

The anticipated outcome is the establishment of a local library, either formally part of the Camden County library system or a robust community library.

Improve park conditions and maintenance



Investing in parks means investing in a community's health, environmental resilience, and economy.¹²⁴ Studies have shown that residents who lived within a mile of a park were four times as likely to visit it at least once a week and had 38% more exercise sessions per week than those living further away.¹²⁵ In addition to offering formal recreational programming, parks and civic spaces can encourage exercise by simply being appealing destinations to which people can walk or bike to.¹²⁶ The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that chronic diseases such as heart disease, asthma, and obesity make communities more vulnerable to infections,¹²⁷ and extensive studies have shown that more green space in urban areas can lead to lower COVID-19 infection rates and less disparities in COVID-19 impacts between white and Black residents.¹²⁸

Park investments are a priority for East Camden residents, including the addition of a neighborhood pool. Improving park conditions and adding additional programming were some of the most popular recommendations in the "Support Arts, Culture, Community, and Health" section, with roughly 15% and 14% of respondents flagging maintenance and programming as top priorities, respectively. Park conditions in East Camden appear to have improved since the 2013 plan, including a robust makeover

at Alberta Woods Park and a new soccer pitch at Ralph Williams Memorial Park.¹²⁹ However, many residents indicated that they did not feel safe at the parks and had concerns about trash, upkeep, and facilities. In surveys and in conversations, residents requested enlarged and improved parks, particularly by McGuire Gardens, as well as more or improved playgrounds, basketball courts, soccer fields, and designated areas for young children and for adults. Conversations with City officials and stakeholders also mentioned the trouble that Woodrow Wilson High School has with having home contests with their tennis and baseball teams respectively, as the high school does not have a proper place for these sports to play on their campus. Conversations with residents also revealed that park use was limited because of a lack of public bathrooms in the area. The City of Camden is aware of the need for improvements to its parks, and organizations such as Trust for Public Land and Camden Community Partnership have collaborated with the city to produce reports such as the 2020 Parks and Open Space Plan.¹³⁰

It is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative launch a campaign to upgrade parks and green public spaces in the neighborhood, prioritizing Stockton Park, as this park contains all of the sports fields for the entire East Camden community. This would address safety and maintenance concerns while also improving health and quality of life, make the neighborhood more attractive to new residents and businesses, and help mitigate the effects of climate change in the long-term. The My East Camden Collaborative can work with nearby schools, businesses, houses of worship, and community groups to adopt responsibilities in the parks. These can include clean-up days and plantings, as well as reporting larger repairs or debris removal.

The My East Camden Collaborative can also work with the city on a stewardship and maintenance plan based on previously prepared documents, like the 2020 Parks and Open Space Plan. Additionally, East Camden can develop an annual report card to rate park conditions and ensure timely repairs, upgrades, and general maintenance. This type of campaign would have multiple benefits, can rally support among residents and stakeholders, and be manageable to implement within 2-4 years. Funding from private and public sources could assist with maintenance and capital improvements, including grants to hire local residents to assist with greening and maintenance, which could lead to economic benefits. The My East Camden Collaborative will need to be mindful that its efforts don't lead to "green gentrification," in which environmental improvements lead to rapidly rising housing prices and rent.¹³¹ This can be mitigated by taking steps to increase affordable housing opportunities and ensure greater protections for tenants while park improvements are taking place.

Anticipated outcomes include increasing the proportion of residents who feel satisfied with the maintenance and conditions of the parks, as measured by surveys and a Parks Report Card.

¹²⁴ City Parks Alliance, "CASE STUDIES: CITY PARKS – A SMART INVESTMENT FOR AMERICA'S HEALTH, ECONOMY & ENVIRONMENT." (Accessed June 2021).

¹²⁵ Deborah Cohen, et al. "Contribution of Public Parks to Physical Activity." (March 2007).

¹²⁶ Deborah Cohen, et al. "Contribution of Public Parks to Physical Activity." (March 2007).

¹²⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "COVID-19: People with Certain Medical Conditions." (Accessed June 2021).

¹²⁸ Yi Lu, et al. "Green spaces mitigate racial disparity of health: A higher ratio of green spaces indicates a lower racial disparity in SARS-CoV-2 infection rates in the USA." (Accessed June 2021).

¹²⁹ TapInto Camden, "Subaru Park Camden Mini-Pitch Opens In Time for Memorial Day Weekend." (May 26, 2021).

¹³⁰ Cooper's Ferry Partnership and Trust for Public Land, "The Camden Parks and Open Space Plan" (2020).

¹³¹ Jeremy Deaton, "The Curse of 'Green Gentrification'." (January 25, 2018).

Coordinate with local community groups and institutions to offer programming in parks

Better park facilities and more park use can translate into more activity and more people, which can lead to a greater perception of safety.¹³² One of the most popular resident requests was to have more programs and activities for all age groups, including art classes, fitness classes, and programs geared specifically for youths and for seniors. Parks can be used for community events, such as concerts, fairs, festivals, and sports games.

It is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative work with schools, businesses, and residents to develop robust seasonal park programming which could be then advertised to residents. This could take the shape of athletic leagues, exercise classes, art classes and exhibitions, and so forth. Schools, for example, can use nearby parks for outdoor interactive instruction. Youth groups can program recreational and entertainment activities at parks, like organized sports leagues. Conversations with local stakeholders and officials mentioned the possibility of utilizing parks and/or vacant lots for a neighborhood-wide yard sale or farmer's market. This type of programming allows local vendors to sell their wares, for families to gather, and encourages residents to purchase fresh produce. Such public programming is already taking place in some parks, especially along Camden's waterfront.¹³³ Public and private financing could support programs, including the National Endowment for the Arts and its Our Town program,¹³⁴ Bloomberg Philanthropies, National Recreation and Parks Association, and AARP. By strengthening the connections between parks and community organizations, a sense of park ownership can be developed.

"In the future, I'd love to see drive-in movie nights in the park, cultural events and parades, poetry houses like the Nuyorican Cafe in New York City, and community gardens that are open to the public so that they can eat healthy and have cleaner spaces."

— East Camden Resident, Age 22

Anticipated outcomes include increasing park usage by residents by 50%, as measured by surveys.

Transform vacant lots into opportunities



Vacant lots, depending on their size and condition, can be opportunities for residents to employ their creativity and create civic spaces. Left unattended, however, they can invite trash and illegal dumping. While East Camden has fewer vacancies than other sections of Camden, there are still places with vacant lots, such as in the Marlton industrial area and the Dudley/Eastside area.

The My East Camden Collaborative can develop a plan with the City based on SJCS's neighborhood parcel analysis to handle the vacant lots on a case by case basis. Vacant lots in primarily residential areas could have temporary uses, such as being the site of a community garden or a small parklet for programming. By programming the lots, they can increase the feeling of safety in the community. Funding from private and public institutions to provide stipends or grants for temporary uses of vacant lots could support this work.

The My East Camden Collaborative can also work with residents to "adopt" lots and keep them clean and maintained. Camden has an existing Adopt-A-Lot program, but at this time only property owners can apply and only for properties that are adjacent to their own, and usage is restricted to gardens.¹³⁵ The My East Camden coalition can work with Camden to determine if more flexibility could be introduced to the ordinance. Additionally, there is already a culture of residents and local non-profits repurposing vacant lots for community gardens in the city, which is discussed elsewhere in this report.

A permanent strategy for vacant lots is to prioritize them for development, such as residential infill where appropriate. It is recommended that large vacant lots in poor environmental condition that cannot safely be repurposed for recreation or housing be prioritized for redevelopment or for the siting of infrastructure, particularly in the commercial and industrial zones.

The anticipated outcome is decreasing the number of unprogrammed vacant lots by 30%, as measured by land use data and surveys of programs.

¹³² Sandra Lapham, et al. "How important is perception of safety to park use? A four-city survey." (June 25, 2015).

¹³³ TapInto Camden, "Sunset Jazz Series Will Return to Camden Waterfront This Summer." (May 18, 2021).

¹³⁴ National Endowment for the Arts, "Our Town." (Accessed June 2021).

¹³⁵ City of Camden, "Chapter 164, Adopt-a-Street and -Lot Program." (Accessed June 2021).

Support the local arts scene with partnerships and programs



Since the 2013 plan, residents in East Camden have stated they want the neighborhood to be identified and delineated by public art. Recently, Bloomberg Philanthropies partnered with the City of Camden, Camden Community Partnership, and the Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts on a 6-month public art exhibition on sites that were subject to frequent illegal dumping with the goal of discouraging polluting and reclaiming the environment through art.¹³⁶ In East Camden, the Phoenix Festival is located on the bridge leading into the neighborhood.¹³⁷

Residents also mentioned the creation of a cultural center that can be used for the display of art and for cultural programming. A regional example is the Taller Puertorriqueno in Philadelphia. With its art education programs, socially conscious art exhibitions, book readings, and events, Taller engages the public in dynamic discussions that stimulate the mind, create opportunities, and make connections between people and communities. This type of center can support the local arts economy, provide a cultural asset for East Camden, and also provide much needed art-based afterschool programming.¹³⁸

For East Camden, it is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative and the City seek additional public and private funding opportunities to support public art installations by local artists as well as programs to teach and create art for residents. Art classes, workshops, and festivals can take place in community centers, school buildings, or in parks, which several cities and counties in New Jersey have been employing to great effect, such as in Passaic County.¹³⁹ Other cities, such as Jersey City and Newark, have been combining art and food programming with large festivals.¹⁴⁰

"Necesitanos programas de arte para jovenes y ninos."

— East Camden Resident, Age 40

Anticipated outcomes include increasing the number of public art pieces in East Camden and the number and robustness of local art programs, as measured by participant data and surveys.

Encourage the development of and support existing family-friendly entertainment options



More entertainment options was one of the most popular requests of residents in terms of businesses or services that they wanted to see in the neighborhood. Several residents, particularly younger residents, expressed appreciation for existing entertainment venues, such as Millennium Skate World. Residents who offered more details in the surveys indicated that they would like to see more family-friendly entertainment options in the neighborhood, with common suggestions being a bowling alley, movie theater, and art centers.

It is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative work with the City of Camden to identify incentives and programs to support existing family-friendly entertainment options and encourage the development of additional ones.

"We need places for entertainment, like cinema or bowling."

— East Camden Resident, Age 46

The anticipated outcome is the creation of one or more additional entertainment options in East Camden, as measured by business surveys.

¹³⁶ A New View, "Camden: A Bloomberg Public Art Challenge Winner." (Accessed June 2021).

¹³⁷ A New View, "Map." (Accessed June 2021).

¹³⁸ Taller Puertorriqueno, "About us (Sobre nosotros)." (Accessed September 2021).

¹³⁹ Passaic County, "Art in the Park." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁴⁰ Newark Happening, "Murals, Market, Music." (Accessed June 2021).

Enable better access to healthy food



In Camden County, approximately 50,000 people were considered food insecure in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap study.¹⁴¹ The food insecurity rate in the county was approximately 10%. Food insecurity in Camden County and in Camden itself skyrocketed during the pandemic, with food banks reporting high demand.¹⁴²

There are multiple programs and services geared toward Camden and East Camden residents to reduce food insecurity, including Food Bucks.¹⁴³ However, according to residents, East Camden needs more robust access to healthy food options. Beyond Cousin's Supermarket, there are only small corner stores, and several survey respondents requested more fresh food and healthier food options at stores and restaurants.

In East Camden, it is recommended that the City develop a more centralized plan to encourage stores to stock healthier food options. Currently, there is a program that assists small local bodegas stock fresh food, with participation already from some East Camden bodegas. The My East Camden Collaborative or a newly created business association can publicize these opportunities.

The City of Camden can also look to expand supermarket zoning incentives, as employed in New York City, and allow more community gardens to be established by community members.¹⁴⁴ The Camden Children's Garden has a longstanding program to help develop and support community gardens,¹⁴⁵ there is history of residents transforming vacant lots into community gardens,¹⁴⁶ and in Parkside, the Roots to Prevention program is expanding urban farms.¹⁴⁷ East Camden itself is home to Resilient Roots Farm, an intergenerational farm that provides internships and is managed by VietLead.¹⁴⁸ The East Camden Collaborative can convene active community gardeners in the neighborhood with

gardeners in other neighborhoods to discuss best practices and determine how to create more and support additional community gardens.

The City can look to private and public funders to help support existing and develop additional farmers markets and connections with local community farms as well as larger farms in South Jersey and in Pennsylvania, as a longer term vision.¹⁴⁹

"I would like to see more health-conscious food in East Camden. I don't want to keep feeding into the lie that if I want organic, farm-fresh food, then I need to shop elsewhere."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 22**

Anticipated outcomes include decreasing the proportion of residents who report that they do not have easy access to healthy food by 50%, as measured by survey data.

Increase branding for East Camden neighborhood by leveraging existing cultural assets and launching placemaking events



East Camden has done an excellent job over the years of creating identifiers for the neighborhood, including welcome art, signs on lampposts, and a logo. To increase branding and visibility of East Camden as a neighborhood, it is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative, or a newly established business association, develop a plan to leverage and amplify East Camden's existing cultural assets. For example, Steering Committee members shared that, in years past, the City of Camden worked with businesses along Federal Street to do a holiday promotion, with stores open until late in the evening, family-friendly activities, and increased support from the municipality and the local police force.

¹⁴¹ Feeding America, "Food Insecurity in the United States." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁴² Anthony Bellano, "Coronavirus Increases Hunger." (September 2, 2020).

¹⁴³ Cooper Health Care, "Cooper Health Care Gets \$25,000 Grant from No Kid Hungry." (May 18, 2021).

¹⁴⁴ Billy Richling, "City Proposes Expanding Supermarket Zoning Incentive to More Neighborhoods, And It's About More Than Just Fresh Food." (May 21, 2021).

¹⁴⁵ Camden Children's Garden, "In the community." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁴⁶ Steven Rodas, "Lots Don't Stay Vacant in Camden Thanks to These Community Farmers." (June 25, 2020).

¹⁴⁷ Steven Rodas, "Board Takes Shape Around Organic Living, More Urban Farms in Camden." (February 18, 2020).

¹⁴⁸ VietLead, "Resilient Roots Farm." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁴⁹ Celeste Whittaker, "South Jersey farmers markets, popular in pandemic, gear up for new season." (April 21, 2021).

East Camden can also consider launching a restaurant week, working with local establishments to offer discounts to those who visit during a specific timeframe. East Camden is home to numerous restaurants that residents appreciate and enjoy. Particular favorites that appeared numerous times in surveys included Old San Juan Restaurant, Lupitas Mexican Restaurant and Pizzeria, and Freddy's. The Ironbound section of Newark is a model for this type of branding. The neighborhood has marketed its Brazilian, Portuguese, and Spanish restaurants well, and the neighborhood has become a draw for tourists both within and outside New Jersey.¹⁵⁰ The My East Camden Collaborative and Camden can engage in conversation with representatives from the City of Newark and its various organizations as well as other New Jersey cities to learn from their efforts. Other forms of amplifying local food options include food festivals, technical assistance to restaurateurs to open food stands at events, assisting with translating menus, helping restaurateurs increase their online presence, or offering coupons or gift cards to restaurants, among other things.

"I just like the area. I like the local restaurants, I like the walking distance to the Kroc Center."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 48**

Anticipated outcomes include greater visibility and awareness of the cultural assets of East Camden both within Camden and within the surrounding area, as measured by increase in foot traffic in the commercial corridors and surveys.

Determine future education needs in East Camden and review building use



In East Camden, there are several public schools, private schools, and charter schools. While the Camden City School District has made positive gains and investments in recent years, including constructing a new building to serve as a high school,¹⁵¹ enrollment has been decreasing.¹⁵² Several school buildings in recent years have closed or are in the process of closing, including the old Catto school and Dudley School. Members of the Steer-

ing Committee articulated concerns about having such large vacant buildings in their neighborhood, and urged the group to consider ideas for reuse.

It is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative review the recent audit conducted by the Camden City School District to determine the anticipated number of school-aged children in the neighborhood. Vacant or soon to be vacant education buildings can have community-driven plans for repurposing, either as centers, housing, or other spaces suitable for the neighborhood.

The anticipated outcome is that every closed or soon to be closed school building in East Camden should have a community-driven reuse plan, as measured by memorandums of understanding with the city and school district

Expand and improve access to medical services in East Camden

Both in 2013 and in 2021, when asked what types of businesses and services they would like to see more of in the neighborhood, residents highlighted medical services as a pressing need. While there is a CAMcare on Federal Street, which offers adult and pediatric services, as well as smaller medical offices, some residents indicated in the survey that they want to see a larger medical service provider, such as an urgent care center.

It is recommended that the City help coordinate community health care workers already active in East Camden and encourage the development of an urgent care center or a satellite hospital clinic, in addition to the services already provided by CamCARE, in one of the commercial corridors. The My East Camden Collaborative can also help connect residents and the unhoused population with medical and social service providers with the creation of a hotline, helpdesk or community health navigators. It is also recommended as a long-term objective that the city bolster medical services for residents' pets, which was also an articulated need in our survey. Currently, the neighborhood is occasionally served by a pop-up veterinary clinic.¹⁵³

"I hope medical treatment can be better."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 28**

Anticipated outcomes include increasing the number of medical facilities in East Camden by one or more, as measured by business surveys.

¹⁵⁰ Cynthia Correa, "A Guide to the Ironbound: Newark's Culinary Gem." (February 26, 2016).

¹⁵¹ Tony Gallotto, "City, School, State Leaders Join Faith-Based Groups to Support Camden School Superintendent." (March 25, 2021).

¹⁵² New Jersey Policy Perspective, "The 'Whitening' of Camden's Teachers." (February 11, 2021).

¹⁵³ TapInto Camden, "Mobile Veterinary Clinic Returns to Camden." (May 18, 2021).

In speaking with residents, it was determined that there is a lot happening in Camden, but the residents feel as if they are the last to know about what is taking place in the neighborhood. Residents also oftentimes feel powerless in making a difference. The following recommendations seek to increase collaboration between non-profits, service providers, residents, schools and City officials, and give residents the tools to properly advocate for positive change in their neighborhoods. A more informed and active neighborhood is a stronger neighborhood.

Metrics that will be tracked over 10 years will include but are not limited to:

- ▶ The publication and distribution of a welcome packet for East Camden residents, as measured by the number of residents that are mailed or emailed a copy.
- ▶ The activity of the My East Camden Collaborative, as measured by the number of active stakeholders, the number of regular meetings, and ultimately the number of recommendations enacted.

Invest and promote the My East Camden Collaborative



While there are several residents and stakeholders who are already very engaged in the neighborhood, they are not necessarily coordinated. There is an opportunity to strengthen neighborhood organization and create a more cohesive, involved, and civic-minded community. As an immediate step after the publication of this neighborhood plan, the My East Camden Collaborative, an entity made up of various stakeholders guided by a mission statement and partnership principles, should coordinate efforts to quickly implement the recommendations that were considered high priorities by residents.

The My East Camden Collaborative formed with support from the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation and is made up of neighborhood stakeholders including St. Joseph’s Carpenter Society, Camden Community Partnership (formerly known as Cooper’s Ferry Partnership), Cathedral Kitchen, Hispanic Family Center, LUCY Outreach, Urban Promise, VietLead, and the YMCA. The Collaborative is a partnership with a shared commitment to improve quality of life, celebrate cultural diversity, and empower residents in the neighborhoods of East Camden.

In addition to ensuring that the plan recommendations are implemented, the My East Camden Collaborative can coordinate and enhance communication between residents and between the neighborhood, social service providers, and govern-

ment agencies. The My East Camden Collaborative can also prepare materials for residents and coordinate programs and workshops, including programs in urban planning and community advocacy for individual residents. All this enables a positive feedback loop of more follow-through and greater accountability, and helps ensure that the implementation work survives beyond any one individual or organization.

Invitations to learn more and to participate in the Collaborative can be advertised at schools, businesses, houses of worship, and other local institutions and social service providers. Along with the core group of stakeholders participating in frequent meetings, there should be opportunities for engagement and dialogue with residents who may not be able to commit to joining the Collaborative but want to be kept aware of its work. In order to ensure representation and keep things coordinated and organized, subcommittees focused on specific areas of East Camden or task forces focused on specific issues can be created in time. In order to ensure long-term success with regards to the neighborhood plan, the Collaborative should designate a “backbone” organization to coordinate meetings, keep track of progress, and update the group on funding opportunities. SJCS, in some respects, has already been functioning as a sort of backbone organization during the creation of the East Camden neighborhood plan.

In terms of funding, several private foundations aside from Wells Fargo have supported neighborhood or city-coalition building efforts. These include the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and JPMorgan Chase Foundation, among others. The My East Camden Collaborative has a memorandum of understanding guiding how it approaches funding opportunities and other resources, and with additional funding and coordination, the Collaborative can start making the neighborhood plan a reality.

The anticipated outcome is the greater publicization of the My East Camden Collaborative with many of the plan recommendations implemented, as measured by the number of active stakeholders, the number of regular meetings, and ultimately the number of recommendations enacted.

Develop and share a welcome packet for new East Camden residents

One of the most popular recommendations that came out of discussions with the Steering Committee was the idea of a welcome packet for new residents. Many of the Steering Committee members, themselves longtime residents of the neighborhood, said that the sense of community dialogue and engagement had decreased, and that many new neighbors were unfamiliar with neighborhood amenities, government resources, local businesses, as well as city codes and guidelines regarding trash disposal and recycling.

It is recommended that a welcome packet for new and interested residents be one of the first projects that the My East Camden Collaborative tackle as a collective. The welcome packet can include information about amenities, guidelines, and contact information for services. It can be translated into the most commonly spoken languages at home, such as Spanish and Vietnamese, with the assistance of bilingual residents and, when necessary, outsourced translators. The welcome packet can be printed out and distributed to schools, social service providers, local businesses and houses of worship, and any newly developed community centers, as well as mailed directly to residents as part of another mailing, such as notices from utilities that serve the area. The welcome packet can also be hosted online on the My East Camden Collaborative website, should one be developed for the neighborhood and potentially evolve into a neighborhood hotline for ongoing issues.

The process of creating the welcome packet can be a good concrete first step in increasing collaboration between the My East Camden Collaborative, social service providers, and government agencies. Funding for the creation of the packet could come from public and private entities, or could be a shared expense between members of the Collaborative.

"Welcome wagon for new residents. Offer new to the neighborhood a packet with information about where their trash and recycling should be placed."

— East Camden Resident, Age 73

The anticipated outcome is the publication and circulation of a welcome packet for East Camden residents, as measured by the number of new and existing residents who receive a physical copy or are given information about it online.

Increase collaboration between the My East Camden Collaborative and existing social service providers



Neighborhood services and social service providers are critical to a healthy, thriving community. There are many social service providers in East Camden, from youth services to food distribution centers to houses of worship, including but not limited to Cathedral Kitchen, Hispanic Family Center, IMMschools, the Boys and Girls Club of Camden County, VietLead, UrbanPromise, and LUCY Outreach. However, from our engagement, it does not appear that residents are aware of all the resources at their disposal, are unsure how to access them, or have language and time constraints that prevent them from seeking assistance.

It is recommended that, shortly after the development and launch of the My East Camden Collaborative, the Collaborative can engage with existing social service providers to discuss how to best share information between them and the neighborhood and how best to communicate resources to residents including outreach to the unhoused population. This could take several forms, including resource fairs at housing developments, schools, and parks in East Camden, workshops in community centers, or advertising via newsletters or social media. Steering Committee members suggested creating a one-stop shop of sorts for new residents or for those who are English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. Several members of the East Camden neighborhood plan were also representatives of social service providers, and can help facilitate such a conversation between the Collaborative and their respective organizations. The East Camden Collaborative can also seek funding from government and private entities in order to increase financial resources for these social service providers.

"Ayuda para pagar biles y para personas mayores."

— East Camden Resident, Age 42

Anticipated outcomes include greater transparency and satisfaction with social service providers, as measured by resident surveys.

Encourage development of new mechanisms for government agencies to share information with residents, using the My East Camden Collaborative as coordinator

Conversations with residents in East Camden suggested that there was a need for more direct communication between government agencies and the neighborhood. Some residents remarked that it was difficult to get in touch with municipal or county officials to address quality of life concerns, such as road conditions or nuisance violations. Additionally, residents who are not as proficient in English or have time constraints due to work demands or familial responsibilities face greater obstacles in tracking down the right government official to help address their issue.

It is recommended that the Collaborative engage with City and County officials to discuss how to deepen lines of communication between them and the neighborhood. Of the recommendations presented in the “Enhance Communication and Collaboration” section, this was the most popular among residents and local stakeholders, with approximately a quarter of respondents selecting it as a top priority. This can take the form of more active engagement of the City and County on the Collaborative, regular meetings with elected officials or agency liaisons, or a hotline for East Camden residents staffed with translators. There were several members of the Camden City Government on the *My East Camden* neighborhood plan Steering Committee who can help facilitate a conversation. Regular coordination and deeper collaboration between government agencies and residents can help foster a sense of community cohesion, accountability, and trust.

Anticipated outcomes include greater transparency and satisfaction with government agencies that serve East Camden residents, as measured by surveys.

Engage Camden County Police to encourage additional community dialogue and responsiveness in ways that make residents feel safe

The Camden County Police Department launched in 2013 and underscored a new style of policing, one in which community engagement would be at the core.¹⁵⁴ As mentioned earlier in the report, the CCPD has been upheld as a model for other municipalities across the country.^{155,156}

Conversations with residents in East Camden and survey responses indicated, however, that there was a desire for more visibility and presence from the CCPD in certain circumstances.

Some residents remarked that the CCPD was not as responsive for quality of life concerns, such as traffic violations and accidents and nuisance violations, suggesting perhaps there needed to be more centralized communication or that other government agencies or community groups could step in and work with the CCPD to fill gaps articulated by residents.

It is recommended that the CCPD and the City of Camden discuss how to deepen lines of communication between the CCPD and the neighborhood. It is also recommended that the neighborhood, the CCPD, and the City of Camden discuss the lack of responsiveness and service gaps articulated by residents, and if some services can be filled by the CCPD, another government agency, or a local community group. This recommendation was the second-most popular in the “Enhance Communication and Collaboration” section. Approximately a fifth of respondents selected this as their top recommendation.

Examples of services that can be discussed include traffic enforcement and park security. Residents have raised that they are concerned by speeding cars in their neighborhoods. This could be addressed by greater police enforcement, but a different solution using alternative resources could be the installation of speed bumps and cameras at problem intersections, street redesigns, and other government entities being deployed to enforce traffic rules. In terms of parks, several cities have developed robust programming and night festivals in parks to encourage more active use by residents and discourage use by those publicly selling or consuming drugs, as was flagged by some East Camden residents in surveys.

Residents can also assist with enforcement against crimes that negatively impact the quality of life in their neighborhoods, such as illegal dumping, drug use, drug selling and distribution, graffiti, vandalism, and thefts. The CCPD uses technology to report and address crimes in Camden through the “STOPIt” app. The “STOPIt” app allows for residents to anonymously report crime and activity.¹⁵⁷ The “Camden Reports” app allows residents to anonymously report illegal dumping in the community.¹⁵⁸ However, many residents do not know these tools are available. It is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative work with the CCPD to support community outreach and workshops to promote the “STOPIt” and “Camden Reports” applications for smartphones and examine areas where cameras and other crime detection technology can be instituted. Other use of technology includes the installation of “Shot Spotter” sensors and “Eye in the Sky” cameras that allow for quicker response to violent crime. These sensors could be installed in high traffic areas and in public spaces within East Camden.

As violence was also indicated as a quality of life concern in the neighborhood by some residents, the My East Camden Collaborative can work with the City of Camden and the CCPD on engagement and mitigation strategies. Mediation programs,

¹⁵⁴ Camden County Police Department. (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁵⁵ Insider NJ, “Bramnick suggests nation follow Camden model of community policing.” (June 3, 2020).

¹⁵⁶ NBC Philadelphia, “Camden’s Community Policing Model Being Praised Amid Public Outcry in Other Places.” (June 8, 2020).

¹⁵⁷ Camden County. “Camden County PD Launching New STOPIt App for Texting Tips.” (April 18, 2019).

¹⁵⁸ Camden Reports. “About.” (Accessed September 2021).

whether organized by the East Camden Collaborative or facilitated by another third-party, can also be deployed to increase dialogue and deescalate disputes.

Camden has a lot to be proud of in how it has reimagined and reworked police engagement. It is recommended that this progress be leveraged with a high-visibility publicity campaign in East Camden that doesn't sidestep remaining issues but consolidates and improves on public safety gains while also highlighting the neighborhood's undersold assets.

As cities all over the United States weigh how to approach public safety and police presence in communities,¹⁵⁹ it is critical that the CCPD continue to listen to and follow the lead of residents of Camden in how and where police force is deployed in their neighborhoods, and what shape that takes.

Anticipated outcomes include greater transparency and satisfaction with the CCPD and greater awareness and deployment of technology to report and deter crime, as measure by resident surveys and reports from the CCPD.

Train residents on urban and civic issues to enable them to advocate on behalf of their communities

No one knows the neighborhood better than the residents who have lived and worked here. In East Camden, there was a dedicated group of residents who participated in Steering Committee meetings during the neighborhood planning process, some with urban planning backgrounds and AICP certification. However, many residents, in East Camden and in communities across the state, do not know the particulars about urban planning or how to navigate the framework set in place by municipalities and the state to enact changes to their built environment. Residents also have a hard time figuring out how to define a problem, developing and implementing solutions to the problem, and measuring its outcomes.

It is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative explore a training program for interested residents on urban planning topics such as zoning, land use, economic development programs, and how to submit public testimony and interface with government agencies. Residents could be empowered to invest in their communities themselves through real estate as well as learn to research ownership of a certain property, how to access City or Camden Redevelopment Agency owned properties, and what funding is available. The training program can explore leadership building, conflict resolution, project management, and policy issues that impact East Camden residents. This program can leverage the strengths of the community members, including multilingual abilities, large youth population who may

¹⁵⁹ Cailin Crowe, "Mayors 'reimagining public safety and policing' in wake of recent violence." (May 21, 2021).

have more time to engage than working adults, and in-depth knowledge of East Camden's history, institutions, organizations, and concerns. Through such a program, residents would be equipped with the tools to best advocate for themselves and their community and be better equipped to demand accountability and follow-through on projects. Trained community advocates can also help maintain an in-depth inventory of the programs and services available to East Camden residents, help update the East Camden Welcome Packet, initiate or support programs, and help coordinate regular East Camden neighborhood meetings or community building workshops. Trained residents can also implement or facilitate small-scale, resident-driven projects at the block level to address hyper local issues such as drug use, homelessness, loitering, littering, crime, blight or neighbor complaints. This training program would help make the planning and development process more inclusive, increase participation in local government, and help address inequities in land use.

The program can take several forms: a facilitator or trainer could be hired to meet with interested residents in open workshops, or the East Camden Collaborative can develop its own training program, leveraging the knowledge and experience of certified urban planners who already live and work in the community and were on the neighborhood plan Steering Committee.

There are several models that the East Camden Collaborative can look to. Desegregate Connecticut, a coalition launched in 2020 (and which RPA was the fiscal sponsor of), had volunteer urban planners and legal students lead workshops on what is zoning and how to submit public testimony.¹⁶⁰ WeACT for Environmental Justice, based in Harlem, NY, has an award-winning Environmental Health and Justice Leadership Training (EHJLT) program that equips residents with the tools needed to launch projects or campaigns.¹⁶¹ The American Heart Association's Voices for Health Kids fund supports a Community Advocates program run by DC Greens, which teaches residents about public speaking, public finances, giving public testimony, and advocating for their communities.¹⁶²

"Residents can participate in the development of the city."

— **East Camden Resident, Age 31**

Anticipated outcomes include increasing the number of residents who are knowledgeable on urban planning and civic issues, as measured by surveys as well as attendance records in programs coordinated or affiliated with the My East Camden Collaborative.

¹⁶⁰ DesegregateCT, "Events." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁶¹ WE ACT for Environmental Justice, "Environmental Health and Justice Leadership Training." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁶² Voices for Healthy Kids, "Community Program Teaches D.C. Residents How to Be Their Own Best Advocates." (Accessed June 2021).



Implementation

A critical challenge for every community plan is implementation. Many plan recommendations need the backing of multiple parties, and multiple parties may share responsibility for fulfilling plan objectives.

There are never enough resources, and organizational accountability for plan success can rarely be clearly established. It is also an inherent feature of community plans to be aspirational and to set goals that may take as long as a generation to achieve - and by the time those goals are achieved, new goals have arisen. In planning, as in sailing, you never arrive at the horizon.

That said, an audible theme of community input during the *My East Camden* plan update has been the critical importance of plan implementation. Many stakeholders did not know what had been completed or not from the first *My East Camden* plan, which highlights the need for community vigilance over plan progress and clear communication of successes and failures.

By documenting a community-driven set of plan priorities, the *My East Camden* plan update is in itself an important implementation step, because by its very existence and community-driven nature, it strengthens advocacy for community-set priorities. But more needs to be done. East Camden residents must continue to advocate for their vision, and sustain momentum over the next five, ten, twenty or thirty years to ensure a better future for East Camden. To achieve this vision, implementation will require continued cooperation and collaboration between all stakeholders – residents, businesses, community organizations, non-profits, educational institutions, religious institutions, government, and others.

In the short-term, the My East Camden Collaborative, as an entity made up of various stakeholders guided by a mission statement and partnership principles, can coordinate and enhance communication between residents and between the neighborhood, social service providers, and government agencies. The My East Camden Collaborative can also coordinate training programs in urban planning and community advocacy for individual residents. All this enables a positive feedback loop of more follow-through and greater accountability, and helps ensure that the implementation work survives beyond any one individual or organization.

While successful implementation of the *My East Camden* plan recommendations will require the engagement and advocacy of many stakeholders identified above, one single organization at a time should be tasked with regularly monitoring and communicating plan progress so that members of the community know what is “checked off” and determine which goals and recommendations are lagging. By regularly sharing plan progress updates, East Camden residents, businesses, non-profits, and community institutions can be galvanized to take needed steps.

A key implementation step that this plan recommends is that St. Joseph’s Carpenter Society work with the My East Camden Collaborative to create a living implementation plan tool to track, prioritize, and communicate plan progress, and that SJCS be responsible for regularly reporting back to the Collaborative and the broader community about progress being made on plan implementation. While SJCS will not be responsible for actions that need to be taken, it can assume responsibility for sharing information about steps taken to date, planned, in progress, and still remaining.

When reviewing plan recommendations, we suggest that the Collaborative weigh criteria such as the following:

- ▶ Which actions will address the top priorities of residents and local stakeholders?
- ▶ Which can be accomplished within a reasonable timeframe with existing or potential resources?
- ▶ Which will build on recent accomplishments, provide some early wins, and create momentum for the harder challenges?
- ▶ Which will require sustained effort over a long period of time, and how can this plan help create the capacity for that to happen?
- ▶ Overall, which actions will have the biggest impact in the neighborhood?

This plan also builds on the 2013 *My East Camden* neighborhood plan by providing a fuller and updated description of sources of support available to implement the updated plan.

FEDERAL

Noting the declining rank of the United States internationally in infrastructure investment, and the importance of revived government spending for jobs and national economic competitiveness, the Biden Administration proposed in Spring 2021 a 10-year, \$2.65 billion spending plan¹⁶³ that would accelerate spending on and investment across diverse infrastructure categories:

- ▶ Climate
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Health and Childcare
- ▶ Housing and Buildings
- ▶ Jobs and Economic Development
- ▶ Research and Development
- ▶ Manufacturing
- ▶ Clean Water
- ▶ Broadband

If the plan is enacted as proposed, and if New Jersey receives aid in proportion to its population, the American Jobs Plan would support new infrastructure spending in New Jersey. For example, New Jersey and Camden could stand to benefit from new funds being allocated to clean up Superfund sites and other contaminated sites, clean energy projects, Community Development Block Grants, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.¹⁶⁴

Program details will not be known until the plan is approved by Congress. East Camden should begin preparing to advocate to City and State representatives for projects and programs of great

est priority locally that are consistent with the *My East Camden* plan goals and the programs contained in the final version of the American Jobs Plan.

Other funding sources from the Federal government that could be or have been deployed in East Camden include EPA and its Environmental Justice program,¹⁶⁵ HUD and its various programs, such as Community Development Block Grant programs¹⁶⁶ and emergency housing vouchers to tackle the housing crisis,¹⁶⁷ DOT and its grant programs,¹⁶⁸ National Endowment for the Arts,¹⁶⁹ and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and its Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP), which provides funding to parks in urban areas, with a focus on low-income neighborhoods and those lacking outdoor recreation opportunities.¹⁷⁰

STATE

Between 2010 and 2017, the State of New Jersey awarded nearly \$2 billion in tax credits to businesses to move to Camden. These businesses included American Water, Holtec, the 76ers, and Subaru.¹⁷¹

In January 2021, Governor Phil Murphy signed into law the New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020.¹⁷² One aspect of this law was to reform key elements of economic incentive programs led by the New Jersey Economic Development (NJEDA), including creation of an Office of the Inspector General, appointment of a Chief Compliance Officer, and other reforms aimed at increasing transparency and accountability for the integrity of economic incentive programs.¹⁷³

Another aspect of the new law of particular relevance to the *My East Camden* plan are provisions that strengthen prevailing wage requirements, require community benefit agreements as part of the granting of economic development incentives, and - finally - vastly increased levels of economic incentive authorizations.

Programs established in the NJ ERA of particular relevance to East Camden include the following (for further program details, consult program descriptions available at njeda.com/economicrecoveryact/#Programs):

Community-Anchored Development Program - a program allowing anchor institutions to act as investors in targeted development projects for opportunity zones and to facilitate large-scale development projects with desirable employment and

¹⁶⁵ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Environmental Justice." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁶⁶ HUD Exchange, "CDBG: Community Development Block Grant Programs." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁶⁷ Noah Zucker, "Camden Receives 43 Housing Vouchers as Part of \$5 Billion HUD Homelessness Effort." (May 19, 2021).

¹⁶⁸ U.S. Department of Transportation, "Grants." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁶⁹ National Endowment for the Arts, "Grants." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁷⁰ City Parks Alliance, "Federal Funding for City Parks." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁷¹ Avalon Zoppo, "What \$260m in Tax Breaks Buys in Camden: Vast Holtec Tech Campus." (September 7, 2017).

¹⁷² State of New Jersey Economic Development Authority, "New Jersey Economic Recovery Act." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁷³ State of New Jersey Economic Development Authority, "Economic Recovery Act Programs." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁶³ The White House, "FACT SHEET: The American Jobs Plan." (March 31, 2021).

¹⁶⁴ Jonathan Salant, "These vital N.J. needs would get big bucks from Biden's new proposed budget." (April 10, 2021).

geographical characteristics that impact the broader community. State support can range from a floor of \$5 million up to a project ceiling of 40% of project costs or \$75 million.

Main Street Recovery Fund - a program providing economic and technical support to businesses with less than \$1 million in annual revenue and fewer than 10 full-time employees.

NJ Ignite - a program providing grants for collaborative workspaces that benefit early-stage innovation economy businesses that locate to New Jersey. Bonus support is available for workspaces that are located in an Opportunity Zone, affiliated with a hospital system or New Jersey university, support woman- or minority-owned businesses, or support the first presence of a foreign company entering into the United States.

Aspire - a gap financing program to support commercial, mixed-use, and residential real estate development projects in transit-oriented and priority growth areas in New Jersey. Projects receiving tax credit support must show that the proposed project is not economically feasible, or will generate below-market rates of return, without public support, and that a net positive benefit to the State will result. Aspire-funded projects must document local support via a letter of support from the local governing body and must have entered either a Community Benefits Agreement or a Redevelopment Agreement with the host municipality.

Brownfields Redevelopment Incentive - a program incentivizing environmental remediation, abatement, and demolition activities to allow for the redevelopment of brownfields sites for commercial, retail, or mixed-use development or expansion.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program is managed by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and targets neighborhood revitalization projects funded through tax incentives to businesses. Applicants, who must be non-profits, need to allocate at least 60% of the funds for housing and economic development. The remaining 40% of funds can be used for supportive services and other activities that promote neighborhood revitalization. Applicants can apply yearly by submitting projects from a resident-driven neighborhood plan.¹⁷⁴ The NJ DCA also has an office of Local Planning services which provides municipalities with technical assistance.¹⁷⁵

Other sources of funding and support on a state level include the New Jersey School Development Authority,¹⁷⁶ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, which includes the state's Urban Parks and Green Acres Programs,¹⁷⁷ and the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.¹⁷⁸

LOCAL/REGIONAL

There are many local and regional stakeholders that have worked in East Camden in the past who could help implement these recommendations. Briefly, they include government entities such as the City of Camden, the Housing Authority of the City of Camden, the Camden Redevelopment Agency, the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority, and Camden County. Camden County Open Space, Farmland, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund has also previously funded projects in the area. Another source of support is the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, as Camden is within its geographic territory.¹⁷⁹ Other local partners include Camden Community Partnership, formerly known as Cooper's Ferry Partnership, local houses of worship, and many additional organizations represented on the plan Steering Committee.

As cities across the United States allocate American Rescue Plan funds and prepare for additional potential federal support,¹⁸⁰ East Camden and the City of Camden can also engage with other former manufacturing-center municipalities to exchange notes on best practices and effective models, including cities such as Newark and Passaic in New Jersey as well as Detroit, where a partnership of various stakeholders has made great strides in bringing the city back.¹⁸¹ Such peer learning could be facilitated by networks, such as the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, as well as foundations.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

Programs established under the NJ ERA, described above, place new responsibilities on private recipients of state support to negotiate and document agreements with host communities regarding the specific community benefits that development projects will confer. As such, any project receiving support under NJ ERA may be a candidate for advancing one or more recommendations of the *My East Camden* neighborhood plan. Local officials who may serve as points of contact for such negotiations should be briefed on *My East Camden* plan recommendations, and representatives of businesses negotiating project support under NJ ERA-established programs should be encouraged to meet with East Camden representatives who can speak to potential linkages between proposed projects and *My East Camden* recommendations.

Other sources of support and funding for East Camden could come from national non-partisan organizations and advocacy networks, such as AARP,¹⁸² the American Heart Association's Voices for Healthy Kids program,¹⁸³ the National League of Cities,¹⁸⁴ the National Recreation and Parks Association,¹⁸⁵ National Association of City Transportation Officials

¹⁷⁴ State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, "Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC)." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁷⁵ State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, "Local Planning Services." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁷⁶ State of New Jersey Schools Development Authority. (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁷⁷ State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, "Grant and Loan Programs." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁷⁸ New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency. (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁷⁹ Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁸⁰ Maria Rachel, "Cities navigate how to maximize incoming American Rescue Plan funds." (May 18, 2021).

¹⁸¹ Rip Rapson, "Detroit Showed What 'Build Back Better' Can Look Like." (May 10, 2021).

¹⁸² AARP New Jersey. (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁸³ Voices for Healthy Kids, "Grant Opportunities." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁸⁴ National League of Cities. (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁸⁵ National Recreation and Parks Association. (Accessed June 2021).

(NACTO),¹⁸⁶ the Safe Routes Partnership,¹⁸⁷ and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which Camden is already registered with.¹⁸⁸ For example, recently NACTO, partnering with Bloomberg Philanthropies, has offered several rounds of funding to city transportation agencies to redesign their streets in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸⁹ Additionally, the Funders Network

¹⁸⁶ National Association of City Transportation Officials, "Programs." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁸⁷ Safe Routes Partnership. (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁸⁸ The U.S. Conference of Mayors, "Meet the Mayors." (Accessed June 2021).

¹⁸⁹ Cailin Crowe, "NACTO awards 10 cities with pandemic street design, recovery grants." (May 5, 2021).

Partners for Places program has offered support for stormwater mitigation and other sustainability initiatives led by municipalities for several years.¹⁹⁰

Support could also be derived from private foundations. Foundations that have been previously active in Camden include but are not limited to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Ford Foundation, Investors Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, TD Bank, and the Wells Fargo Foundation.

¹⁹⁰ Funders Network, "Partners for Places." (Accessed June 2021).

Appendix A: Implementation Chart

INCREASE ACCESS & IMPROVE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Potential Partners: City of Camden, Camden Redevelopment Agency, Camden County, My East Camden Collaborative, NJ Transit, NJ DOT, Housing Authority of the City of Camden

Recommendation and Subtasks	Timeline	Cost	Outcome	Evaluation	Funding Sources
Increase homeownership and rental affordability and opportunities					
1. Identify development opportunities	1-2 years	\$	Increased homeownership rate in East Camden to 50%, increased the amount of affordable housing by 50 units, and increased number of residents with homebuyer education and counseling	ACS data and municipal data, and program attendance records	US HUD; NJ DCA; NJ HMFA; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Educate residents on issues related to tenants' rights and responsibilities, financial capability, homebuyer education, and maintenance issues	3-4 years	\$\$			
3. Offer mediation between tenants and landlords	3-4 years	\$\$			
4. Educate and expand downpayment assistance programs	3-4 years	\$\$			
5. Zone for and incentivize accessory dwelling units	3-4 years	\$\$			
6. Work on issues related to the unhoused population	3-4 years	\$\$			
7. Employ inclusionary zoning for new housing developments to combat gentrification	5 or more years	\$			
8. Build new housing, both for rentals and homeownership	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
9. Rehabilitate existing buildings, both for rentals and homeownership	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
Improve housing conditions through technical assistance and grant programs for homeowners and renters (Priority Project)					
1. Educate residents with maintenance and repair skills	3-4 years	\$\$	Increased number of residents attending technical assistance programs coordinated or affiliated with the My East Camden Collaborative.	Attendance records and existence of hotline	NJ DCA; NJ HMFA; City of Camden; local businesses; private foundations
2. Offer low-cost loans, grants, or matching funds for home repairs and energy efficiency	3-4 years	\$\$			
3. Offer neighborhood-specific hotline	1-2 years	\$			
Support efforts by city and local non-profits to identify, acquire, and renovate or demolish vacant buildings (Priority Project)					
1. Prioritize vacant buildings for acquisition and rehabilitation	5 or more years	\$\$\$	Decreased number of vacant buildings in East Camden by 50%	Building surveys and municipal data	US HUD; NJ DCA; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Demolish vacant buildings that cannot be saved	3-4 years	\$\$\$			
3. Streamline process for of acquiring vacant buildings and lots and educate residents on process	3-4 years	\$			
Allow for mixed-use zoning in parts of the industrial and commercial zones					
1. Allow for mixed-use zoning especially in areas suitable for live-work or residential-commercial	3-4 years	\$\$	Increased mixed-use zoning in East Camden and increased number of residential units in formerly single-use zones by 100	Land use data and surveys	NJ DCA; NJ EDA; City of Camden
2. Work with residents to evaluate zoning changes in entire neighborhood	3-4 years	\$			
Improve code enforcement and dialogue					
1. Develop programs to better inform and create dialogue between code enforcement and residents	1-2 years	\$	Greater transparency and satisfaction with code enforcement in East Camden	Resident surveys	NJ DCA; City of Camden
2. Develop toolkit to work with City	1-2 years	\$			
3. Develop welcome packet	1-2 years	\$			

Recommendation and Subtasks	Timeline	Cost	Outcome	Evaluation	Funding Sources
Improve road conditions for all users					
1. Develop a catalog and report of all street conditions	1-2 years	\$	Improved conditions of 25% of the roads in the neighborhood, particularly Federal Street, Westfield Ave, and 27th Street, and increased percentage of residents who regularly bike in and around East Camden to 5%	Resident surveys and ACS data	US DOT; NJ DOT; NACTO; DVRPC; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Identify corridors to be redesigned according to Complete Streets	1-2 years	\$			
3. Install quick traffic calming measures at intersections near schools, parks, and commercial corridors	1-2 years	\$\$			
4. Pursue larger safety improvement funding for eligible roadways to improve mobility and pedestrian safety, reduce traffic and accidents, and improve streetscapes	3-4 years	\$\$\$			
5. Prioritize bicyclists in roadway redesign	3-4 years	\$\$			
6. Add opportunities for bike storage and locking	1-2 years	\$			
Improve sidewalk conditions					
1. Develop inventory of sidewalks that need improvement	1-2 years	\$	Improved conditions of 25% of the sidewalks in the neighborhood, particularly by schools, bus stops, parks, houses of worship, and in the three commercial corridors	Resident surveys	NJ DOT; Camden County; City of Camden; local businesses; private foundations
2. Encourage volunteer block brigades	1-2 years	\$			
3. Encourage large employers to "adopt" local streets and sidewalks	1-2 years	\$			
4. Improve trash and recycling pickup to reduce trash on sidewalks	1-2 years	\$\$			
5. Repair and widen sidewalks, particularly by schools, bus stops, parks, houses of worship, and in the three commercial corridors	3-4 years	\$\$			
6. Improve sidewalk greening	3-4 years	\$\$			
Work with NJ Transit and the City of Camden to improve public transit					
1. Work with NJ Transit to assess existing bus routes and usage	3-4 years	\$\$	Increased proportion of public transportation users to 20%	Resident surveys and ACS data	NJ DOT; Camden County; City of Camden
2. Increase the number of bus shelters	3-4 years	\$\$			
3. Explore the development of a light rail connection to the River Line in the light industrial zone at Federal Street	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
Improve utility infrastructure and reliability					
1. Connect cost burdened residents to utility-support programs	1-2 years	\$	Decreased number of residents reporting issues with utility outages in East Camden by 30% as well as reduction of street lights reported out by 10%, reduction of lead plumbing service lines by 10%, and reduction of sewer backup incidents by 10%.	Resident surveys and utility reports	NJ DCA; NJ DEP; Camden County; City of Camden; PSE&G; American Water; CCMUA
2. Conduct a street light inventory, and identify and implement solutions to the physical reliability of the grid to reduce power outages	3-4 years	\$\$			
3. Identify and implement solutions to the water and sewer service networks.	3-4 years	\$\$\$			
4. Explore possibility of community-owned and managed cooperatives, such as community solar	5 or more years	\$\$			
Improve digital infrastructure					
1. Pursue wi-fi hotspot lending programs	1-2 years	\$\$	Reduction of the proportion of East Camden residents reporting that they do not have access to an internet subscription to 5%, and the creation of computer and wi-fi hotspot lending programs for East Camden residents	ACS data and participant data	NJ DCA; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Identify strategies to implement safe hotspots in public spaces	1-2 years	\$\$			
3. Explore investments in municipal broadband network	5 or more years	\$\$\$			

CENTER RESIDENTS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Potential Partners: City of Camden, Camden Redevelopment Agency, Camden County, My East Camden Collaborative, NJ Tree Foundation, LAEDA, Camden Works, ResinTech, NJ American Water, Camden County Workforce Development Board, Camden County Chamber of Commerce, NJ BPU

Recommendation and Subtasks	Timeline	Cost	Outcome	Evaluation	Funding Sources
Develop and support programs that teach residents business management and workforce development skills					
1. Develop new workforce development and business management programs for residents	3-4 years	\$\$	Increased number of residents participating in workforce development and business management programs coordinated or affiliated with the My East Camden Collaborative, and creation of a dedicated career center in East Camden	Attendance records and surveys	NJ DCA; NJ EDA; Camden County; City of Camden; local employment training programs; private foundations
2. Coordinate and publicize already available workforce development programs to residents	1-2 years	\$			
3. Specialize workforce development programs for youth	3-4 years	\$\$			
4. Offer ESL classes	1-2 years	\$\$			
5. Work with Camden County to investigate opening a satellite career center in East Camden	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
Engage with existing large employers to do a needs assessment and develop tailored training programs to encourage local hiring (Priority Project)					
1. Work with large employers to complete a needs assessment and develop targeted training programs	3-4 years	\$	Increased number of locally-hired East Camden residents with wages that are on par with Camden County as a whole	Resident surveys and ACS and Census data	NJ EDA; Camden County; City of Camden; local employment training programs; local businesses; private foundations
2. Collaborate with Camden Works for opportunities to participate	1-2 years	\$			
3. Explore ways for youth to intern at My East Camden Collaboration organizations	1-2 years	\$			
Encourage development conditions for a more diverse array of businesses in existing commercial corridors (Priority Project)					
1. Conduct market assessment to determine market potential in commercial corridors	1-2 years	\$	Increased number and variety of commercial enterprises in East Camden's three commercial corridors, and reduce vacancies by 25%	Business survey	NJ DCA; NJ EDA; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Work with new and long-term businesses to develop business plans	1-2 years	\$			
3. Encourage more diverse array of businesses, focusing development in currently empty storefronts	3-4 years	\$\$			
4. Explore acquisition of vacant storefronts under a Community Land Trust or other entity	3-4 years	\$\$			
5. Create branding for East Camden commercial corridors	3-4 years	\$			
6. Encourage UEZ participation and microlending programs	3-4 years	\$			
7. Publicize and connect businesses to funding opportunities.	1-2 years	\$			
Develop and support programs that allow businesses to make façade and streetscape improvements					
1. Improve signage	1-2 years	\$\$	Improved streetscapes and façades in the commercial corridors	Surveys and feedback	NJ DCA; NJ DEP; NJ DOT; NJ EDA; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Improve lighting and landscaping for beautification	3-4 years	\$\$			
3. Improve façades and building conditions	5 or more years	\$\$			
4. Improve parking conditions	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
Create a business association for East Camden					
1. Sustain and expand business association(s) with an eye towards creating an inclusive environment	1-2 years	\$	Creation of one or more business associations	Number of active members	NJ DCA; NJ EDA; local businesses
2. Market to a regional audience	3-4 years	\$			
3. Develop website and directory for marketing	3-4 years	\$\$			
4. Create programming to encourage visitors and clientele	3-4 years	\$\$			
Ensure that development in the light industrial area brings community benefits					
1. Engage with large employers on issues related to community benefits agreements	3-4 years	\$	Creation of a draft community benefits agreement as well as increased development in the light industrial area	Number of new businesses in the light industrial area	NJ DCA; NJ EDA; Camden County; City of Camden
2. Encourage greater development in light industrial area	3-4 years	\$\$\$			

IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCY

Potential Partners: City of Camden, Camden Redevelopment Agency, Camden County, My East Camden Collaborative, CCMUA, Camden SMART Initiative, CCI, PSE&G, Rutgers University - Camden, NJ Tree Foundation, NJ American Water, Trust for Public Land, NJ Conservation Foundation, Rails to Trails

Recommendation and Subtasks	Timeline	Cost	Outcome	Evaluation	Funding Sources
Remediate and repurpose brownfields					
1. Catalog brownfields in East Camden	1-2 years	\$	Reduced the number of inactive and unremediated brownfields by 30%	NJ Department of Environmental Protection evaluation	US EPA; NJ DEP; Camden County; City of Camden
2. Identify actionable strategies for funding remediation and promote environmentally and economically beneficial uses on the sites	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
Address Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and stormwater flooding (Priority Project)					
1. Work with residents to identify high opportunity sites for green infrastructure investments	1-2 years	\$	Decreased the number of CSOs by 25%	Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA) evaluation	US EPA; NJ DEP; CCMUA; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Work with the City to implement green infrastructure investments, such as bioswales and rain gardens	1-2 years	\$\$			
3. Work with the City and other entities to make infrastructure investments to mitigate the impacts of stormwater and localized flooding, particularly in the Marlton area, and try to align with roadwork projects to make efficient use of resources	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
4. Provide resident options such as rain barrels and help develop residential rain gardens	1-2 years	\$\$			
Develop and support programs to improve household and commercial environmental resiliency and energy use					
1. Connect local businesses and building owners with existing programs to help them make buildings more energy efficient	1-2 years	\$	Increased participation in household and commercial resiliency programs as well as reduction in electricity costs	Surveys and utility reports	US EPA; NJ DCA; NJ DEP; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Work with the City of Camden to encourage a speedy approval process for energy-efficient building improvements	3-4 years	\$			
3. Educate on issues related to energy efficiency, weatherization, and flood insurance	1-2 years	\$			
4. Advocate for flood-insurance-related assistance	3-4 years	\$			
5. Offer low-cost loan and grant program to include flood-related repairs and weatherization	3-4 years	\$\$			
Share information with residents on best methods to increase individual resiliency (Priority Project)					
1. Offer education sessions for residents on identifying strategies for staying safe and healthy in weather events	1-2 years	\$	Increased the knowledge of East Camden residents in methods to increase individual resiliency	Resident surveys	NJ DCA; NJ DEP; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Promote education efforts on climate change, resiliency, and energy efficiency	1-2 years	\$			
3. Connect residents to existing resources for utility assistance	1-2 years	\$			
Increase renewable energy opportunities in East Camden					
1. Connect residents with existing state programs, such as the Solar Renewable Energy Credit program	1-2 years	\$	Increased the percentage of energy used in East Camden derived from renewables to 30%	Utility reports and municipal data	US EPA; NJ DEP; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Educate residents, businesses, and other East Camden entities about solar programs and other renewable energy programs	1-2 years	\$			
3. Encourage City to collaborate with PSE&G on renewable energy opportunities	3-4 years	\$			
4. Consider community solar programs	5 or more years	\$\$\$			

Recommendation and Subtasks	Timeline	Cost	Outcome	Evaluation	Funding Sources
Encourage the development of infrastructure for electric vehicles					
1. Identify sites for electric vehicle infrastructure with the City, County, and State	1-2 years	\$\$	Development of one or more electric vehicle charging stations in East Camden	Number of sites	US DOT; US EPA; NJ DEP; NJ DOT; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Increase awareness of electric vehicle incentive programs among residents	1-2 years	\$			
Increase the tree canopy in East Camden					
1. Develop inventory of trees to identify damaged trees and areas with less coverage	1-2 years	\$	Increased tree canopy in East Camden by 30%, with most efforts focused on the Stockton area	Satellite data and surface temperature data	NJ DEP; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Support planting of new trees, particularly in the Stockton area	1-2 years	\$\$			
3. Engage in removal and pruning of trees in poor condition	1-2 years	\$\$			
Increase the green barrier between the light industrial zone, rail lines, and residents					
1. Explore strategies to create a visual and sound barrier to reduce disturbance from rail traffic and then implement	3-4 years	\$\$	Increased green buffer between the rail line and residential areas and along Marlton Pike	Satellite data and resident surveys	NJ DEP; NJ DOT; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
Implement Camden GreenWay and Circuit Trails through East Camden					
1. Work with City, County, and local partners to advocate, support, and expand the Camden GreenWay and Circuit Trails through East Camden	5 or more years	\$\$\$	Further development of the Camden GreenWay and Circuit trails and increased use by residents	Land use data and resident surveys	NJ DEP; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations

SUPPORT ARTS, CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND HEALTH

Potential Partners: City of Camden, Camden Redevelopment Agency, Camden County, My East Camden Collaborative, Rutgers University - Camden, Campbell Soup, CamCare, Cooper Hospital, Trust for Public Land, NJ Tree Foundation

Recommendation and Subtasks	Timeline	Cost	Outcome	Evaluation	Funding Sources
Create a community center for East Camden, using existing assets					
1. Identify existing assets among My East Camden Collaborative that can serve as community center(s)	1-2 years	\$	Establishment of one or more community centers and increased usage by residents	Resident surveys and attendance records in programs housed at the centers	NJ DCA; NJEDA; City of Camden; members of the Collaborative; local businesses; private foundations
2. Program and publicize community center(s)	1-2 years	\$\$			
Create a neighborhood library					
1. Use existing community assets to create more public reading and study areas for residents	1-2 years	\$\$	Establishment of a local library, either formally part of the Camden County library system or a robust community library	Survey and lending records	NJ DCA; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Create and program a neighborhood library	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
Improve park conditions and maintenance (Priority Project)					
1. Launch a campaign to increase awareness and support for improving park conditions in East Camden	1-2 years	\$	Increased proportion of residents who feel satisfied with the maintenance and conditions of the parks	Resident surveys and Parks Report Card	Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and its Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership; National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA); NJ DCA; NJ DEP; Camden County; City of Camden; local businesses; private foundations
2. Improve lighting, trash upkeep, and maintenance at existing parks	1-2 years	\$\$			
3. Develop, implement, and share a parks report card	1-2 years	\$			
4. Create stewardship and maintenance plans for parks, encouraging local stakeholders to "adopt" parks	3-4 years	\$\$			
5. Enlarge and improve infrastructure at existing parks	3-4 years	\$\$\$			
6. Investigate funding programs to hire local residents to make capital improvements and help with greening and maintenance	3-4 years	\$\$			
7. Create smaller parks distributed throughout the neighborhood	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
Coordinate with local community groups and institutions to offer programming in parks (Priority Project)					
1. Work with schools, businesses, and residents to develop robust seasonal park programming	1-2 years	\$\$	Increased park usage by residents by 50%	Resident surveys	NEA; NRPA; NJ DCA; Camden County; City of Camden; local businesses; private foundations
2. Increase communications with residents about programming	1-2 years	\$			
Transform vacant lots into opportunities					
1. Review inventory of vacant lots and work with City to develop plan on case by case basis	1-2 years	\$	Decreased the number of unprogrammed vacant lots by 30%	Land use data and surveys of programs	Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and its Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership; NRPA; NJ DCA; NJ DEP; Camden County; City of Camden; local businesses; private foundations
2. For small vacant lots in primarily residential areas, program temporary community uses such as classes	1-2 years	\$			
3. Promote awareness of City's Adopt-a-Lot program and work with City to create more flexibility for uses	1-2 years	\$			
4. Promote community gardens in smaller vacant lots	1-2 years	\$\$			
5. Where possible, prioritize larger vacant lots for redevelopment	3-4 years	\$\$\$			
6. For large vacant lots in poor environmental condition that cannot be safely repurposed for recreation or housing, prioritize for the siting of infrastructure	5 or more years	\$\$\$			

Recommendation and Subtasks	Timeline	Cost	Outcome	Evaluation	Funding Sources
Support the local arts scene with partnerships and programs					
1. Support public art installation by local artists	3-4 years	\$\$\$	Increased number of public art pieces in East Camden and increased number and robustness of local art programs	Resident surveys and participant data	NEA; NJ DCA; Camden County; City of Camden; private foundations
2. Support programs to teach and create art for residents	1-2 years	\$\$			
3. Promote workshops and festivals in the community	3-4 years	\$\$			
Encourage the development of and support existing family-friendly entertainment options					
1. Connect existing entertainment options with programs to expand brand awareness and marketing	1-2 years	\$	Creation of one or more additional entertainment options in East Camden	Business survey	NJ DCA; NJ EDA; Camden County; City of Camden; local businesses
2. Seek more family-friendly entertainment options and encourage them to develop in neighborhood	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
Enable better access to healthy food					
1. Educate residents about existing programs to reduce food insecurity, such as the Food Bucks program	1-2 years	\$	Decreased proportion of residents who report that they do not have easy access to healthy food by 50%	Resident surveys	NJ DCA; Camden County; City of Camden; local businesses; private foundations
3. Develop a plan to stock healthier food in bodegas, supermarkets, and other sites	1-2 years	\$			
4. Expand supermarket zoning incentives	3-4 years	\$			
5. Support local community gardens and convene gardeners across neighborhoods to share best practices	3-4 years	\$\$			
6. Work with City and County to help support existing and develop additional farmers markets and connection with farms	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
Increase branding for East Camden neighborhood by leveraging existing cultural assets and launching placemaking events					
1. Identify existing cultural assets in East Camden	1-2 years	\$	Greater visibility and awareness of the cultural assets of East Camden both within Camden and within the surrounding area	Increase in foot traffic in the commercial corridors and surveys	NJ DCA; NJ EDA; City of Camden; local businesses; private foundations
2. Develop and leverage plan to brand and market existing cultural assets	3-4 years	\$			
3. Investigate launching a placemaking event, such as Restaurant Week	5 or more years	\$\$\$			
Determine future education needs in East Camden and review building use					
1. Identify vacant institutional buildings and determine reuse potential with residents, City, County, and State	3-4 years	\$	Every closed or soon to be closed school building in East Camden should have a community-driven reuse plan	Memorandums of understanding with the city and school district	NJ DCA; NJ SDA; Camden County; City of Camden
Expand and improve access to medical services in East Camden					
1. Investigate potential for larger-scale medical center or urgent care facility	5 or more years	\$\$\$	Increased the number of medical facilities in East Camden by one or more	Business survey	NJ DCA; NJ EDA; Camden County; City of Camden; local businesses; private foundations
2. Connect residents to medical and social services through a hotline, help desk or community health navigator	1-2 years	\$\$			
3. Offer veterinary support for residents' pets.	5 or more years	\$\$\$			

ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Potential Partners: City of Camden, Camden Redevelopment Agency, Camden County, Camden County Police Department, My East Camden Collaborative, LAEDA

Recommendation and Subtasks	Timeline	Cost	Outcome	Evaluation	Funding Sources
Invest and promote the My East Camden Collaborative					
1. Review neighborhood plan and implementation framework and begin launching quick, implementable recommendations	1-2 years	\$	Greater publicization of the Collaborative with many of the plan recommendations implemented	The number of active stakeholders, the number of regular meetings, and ultimately the number of recommendations enacted	NJ DCA; National League of Cities; members of the Collaborative; private foundations
2. Increase marketing of Collaborative to find new members	1-2 years	\$			
3. Increase funding of MECC	3-4 years	\$\$			
Develop and share a welcome packet for new East Camden residents					
1. Develop and share welcome packet that is translated into most commonly spoken languages with information about services and City codes, hosted online and distributed at community centers, houses of worship, and other locations	1-2 years	\$	Publication and circulation of a welcome packet for East Camden residents	The number of new and existing residents who receive a physical copy or are given information about it online	NJ DCA; members of the Collaborative; private foundations
Increase collaboration between the My East Camden Collaborative and existing social service providers					
1. Work with social service providers to catalog resources offered.	1-2 years	\$	Greater transparency and satisfaction with social service providers	Resident surveys	NJ DCA; Camden County; City of Camden; members of the Collaborative; private foundations
2. Disseminate information to residents online, and at community centers, houses of worship, and other locations	1-2 years	\$			
Encourage development of new mechanisms for government agencies to share information with residents (Priority Project)					
1. Meet with Government officials to discuss, develop, and strengthen mechanisms for officials to share information with residents and allow for dialogue	3-4 years	\$	Greater transparency and satisfaction with government agencies that serve East Camden residents	Resident surveys	NJ DCA; Camden County; City of Camden; members of the Collaborative; private foundations
Engage Camden County Police to encourage additional community dialogue and responsiveness in ways that make residents feel safe (Priority Project)					
1. Meet with Camden County Police to discuss how to best deepen the lines of communication between residents and police	1-2 years	\$	Greater transparency and satisfaction with the CCPD and greater awareness and deployment of technology to report and deter crime	Resident surveys and CCPD reports	NJ DCA; Camden County Police Department; City of Camden; members of the Collaborative; private foundations
2. Discuss lack of responsiveness and service gaps articulated by residents	1-2 years	\$			
3. Develop community-driven strategies to address speeding, drug use, violence, and the unhoused.	3-4 years	\$\$			
Train residents on urban and civic issues to enable them to advocate on behalf of their communities					
1. Develop resident training program and curriculum	3-4 years	\$\$	Increased number of residents who are knowledgeable on urban planning and civic issues	Resident surveys as well as attendance records in programs coordinated or affiliated with the My East Camden Collaborative	NJ DCA; members of the Collaborative; private foundations
2. Implement small-scale, resident-driven, block-level improvements and other opportunities for training graduates to make a difference in their neighborhood	3-4 years	\$\$			

Appendix B: Neighborhood & Regional Assets

MEDICAL

Cooper Hospital, 1 Cooper Plaza, Camden 08103
CamCare, 817 Federal Street, Camden 08103
CamCare, 2631 Federal Street, Camden 08105
Camden County Health Clinic, 2631 Federal St. Camden 08105
Project HOPE Clinic, 519 West Street, Camden 08103

TRANSPORTATION

NJ Transit Buses 404,405,406,452, and 460 - stops along Federal Street and Marlton Pike

EDUCATIONAL

McGraw Elementary School, 3051 Fremont Ave, Camden 08105
Thomas Dudley Elementary School, 27 Marlton Ave, Camden 08105
Cramer Elementary School, 2800 Mickle, Camden 08105
Henry H. Davis Elementary School, 3425 Cramer St., Camden 08105
Woodrow Wilson High School, 3100 Federal St., Camden 08105
Octavius Catto Community School, 3100 Westfield Ave, Camden 08105
St. Joseph's Early Childhood Development Center, 17 Church St, Camden 08105
Mastery School of East Camden, 3064 Stevens, Camden 08105
Camden Charter School Network, 879 Beideman Avenue, Camden 08105
Acelero Learning Center, 331 Grand Ave, Camden 08105
Yahweh Child Development Center, 3710 Federal Street, 08105
St. Joseph's Catholic School, 35 Church St. Camden 08105

St. John the Baptist Youth Center, 2939 Howell St. Camden 08105
Culinary Arts Job Training, Cathedral Kitchen, 1506 Federal St, Camden 08105
Soft Skills Training, Hispanic Family Center, 35-47 S. 29th St, Camden 08105
PathStone Rentry Program, 2700 Federal Street, Camden 08105

PARKS AND RECREATION

Dudley Grange Park, 3111 Federal St, Camden 08105
Stockton Park, 300 block of N. Dudley St, Camden 08105
Ralph Williams Park, 2741 Mitchell St. Camden 08105
Mickle - Eutaw Park, bewtween Eutaw St and Baird Blvd, Camden 08105
Alberta Woods Park, 3000 block of Fremont St, Camden 08105
Boys and Girls Club Recreational Center, 2 S. Dudley St, Camden 08105
Urban Promise Recreational Center, 25 N. 36th, Camden 08105
Millennium Skate World, 1900 Carman St. Camden 08105
Gateway Park at Cooper River, 1800 Block Admiral Wilson Blvd

COMMUNITY

Cathedral Kitchen Café, 1506 Federal St, Camden 08105
Cathedral Kitchen Soup Kitchen, 1514 Federal St. Camden 08105
VietLead Community Garden, Cramer and N. 29th, Camden 08105
Woodland Community Development Corporation Community Garden, 1500 Federal St, Camden
Woodland Community Development Corporation Headquarters, 1500 Federal St, Camden

Volunteers of America Center, 101 S. 17th, Camden 08105
Urban Promise Center, 25 N. 36th, Camden 08105
Hispanic Family Center Success Center, 35-47 S. 29th, Camden 08105
Hispanic Family Center Headquarters, 2700 Westfield Ave, Camden 08105
McGuire Gardens Community Center, 114 Boyd Camden 08105
Balwin's Run Community Center, 404 N. Dudley St. Camden 08105
NJ Covenant House Camden Headquarters, 2113 Federal St. Camden 08105
Lifting Up Camden Youth (LUCY), 3201 Federal St. Camden 08105
SJCS Maintenance Lab & Community Space, 2912 Federal St. Camden 08105

CELEBRATIONS

Annual Mexican Independence Day Festival, located on Federal and 24th
Annual Hispanic Family Center Health Fair, located at S. 28th St.
Annual Vietnamese Harvest Moon Festival, located at Dudley Grange Park
La Borinquena Festival, located at Dudley Grange Park

REGIONAL ASSETS

Dudley Grange Park Amphitheater, 3111 Federal St, Camden 08105
Cooper Hospital, 1 Cooper Plaza, Camden 08105
Stockton Park Stadium, 300 Block N. Dudley, Camden 08105
Campo Amistad Soccer Stadium, 2314 Carman St, Camden 08105



 my
EAST CAMDEN
NEIGHBORHOOD
PLAN



Questions? ¿Preguntas? Câu hỏi?
Email info@SJCS Camden.org or
call 856-966-8117 ext. 210