

Perth Amboy Transit Hub Plan



March 2024

City of Perth Amboy
Community Planning Assistance Program - APA-NJ
North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority



Perth Amboy Transit Hub Plan

- ❑ Review Past Planning Efforts and Background Information
- ❑ Update and Prioritize Goals and Objectives
- ❑ Gather Additional Public Input
- ❑ Develop and Update Recommendations
- ❑ Inform & Provide Background to Redevelopment Efforts



Informing the On-going Planning

The Perth Amboy Bay
City Transit District
Strategy (2013)

The Smith Street Central
Business District Study
(2013)

Creative Perth Amboy
(2015)

Perth Amboy Master Plan
Circulation Element
(2016)

Fink Park Vision Plan
(2022)

Housing Element and Fair
Share Plan - Draft Plan
(2020)

Green Infrastructure
Feasibility Study (2015)



**Transit
Hub Plan**

**Outreach and
Updates**

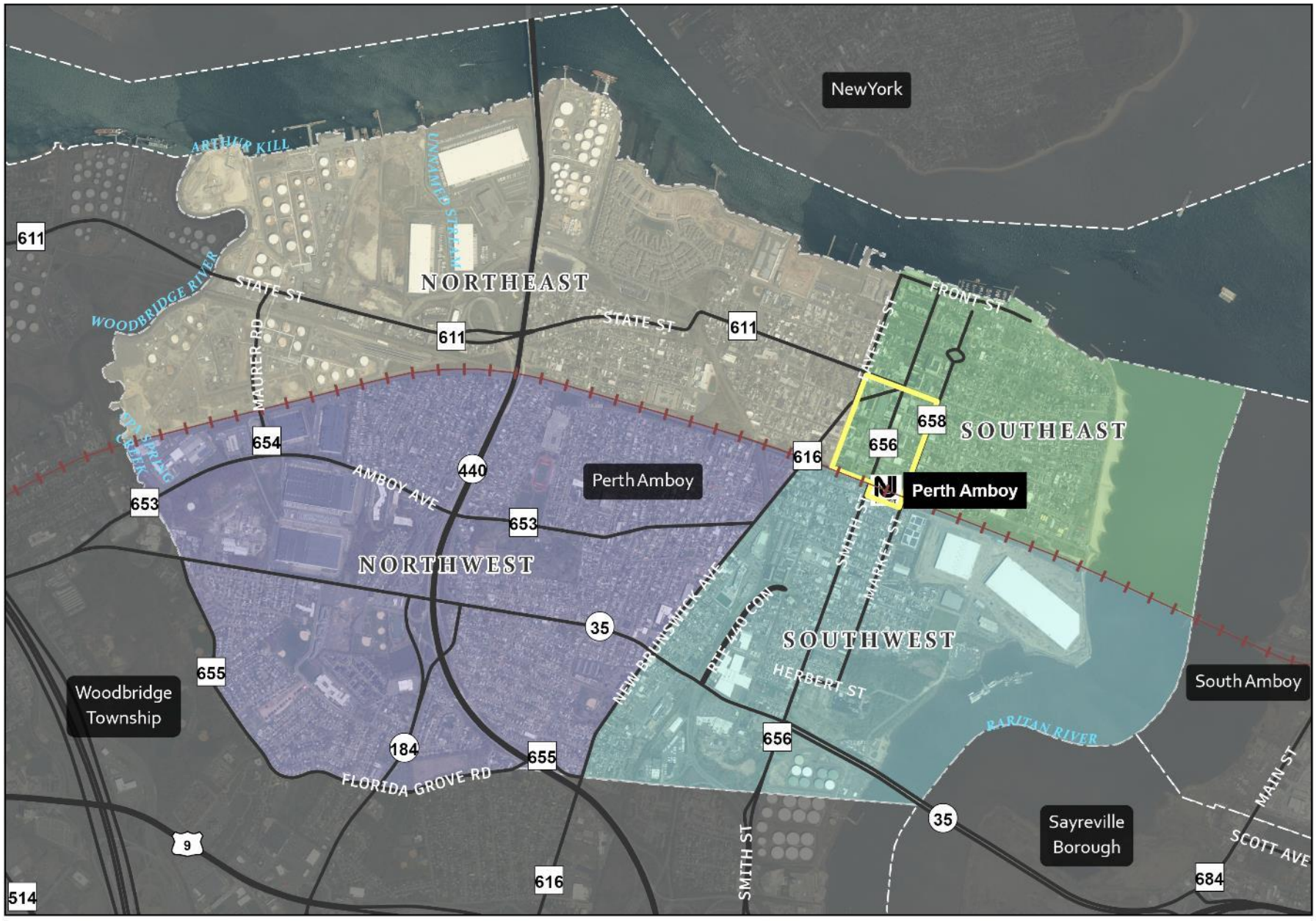


**Master Plan
Updates
&
Redevelopment
Planning**

Where are we today?

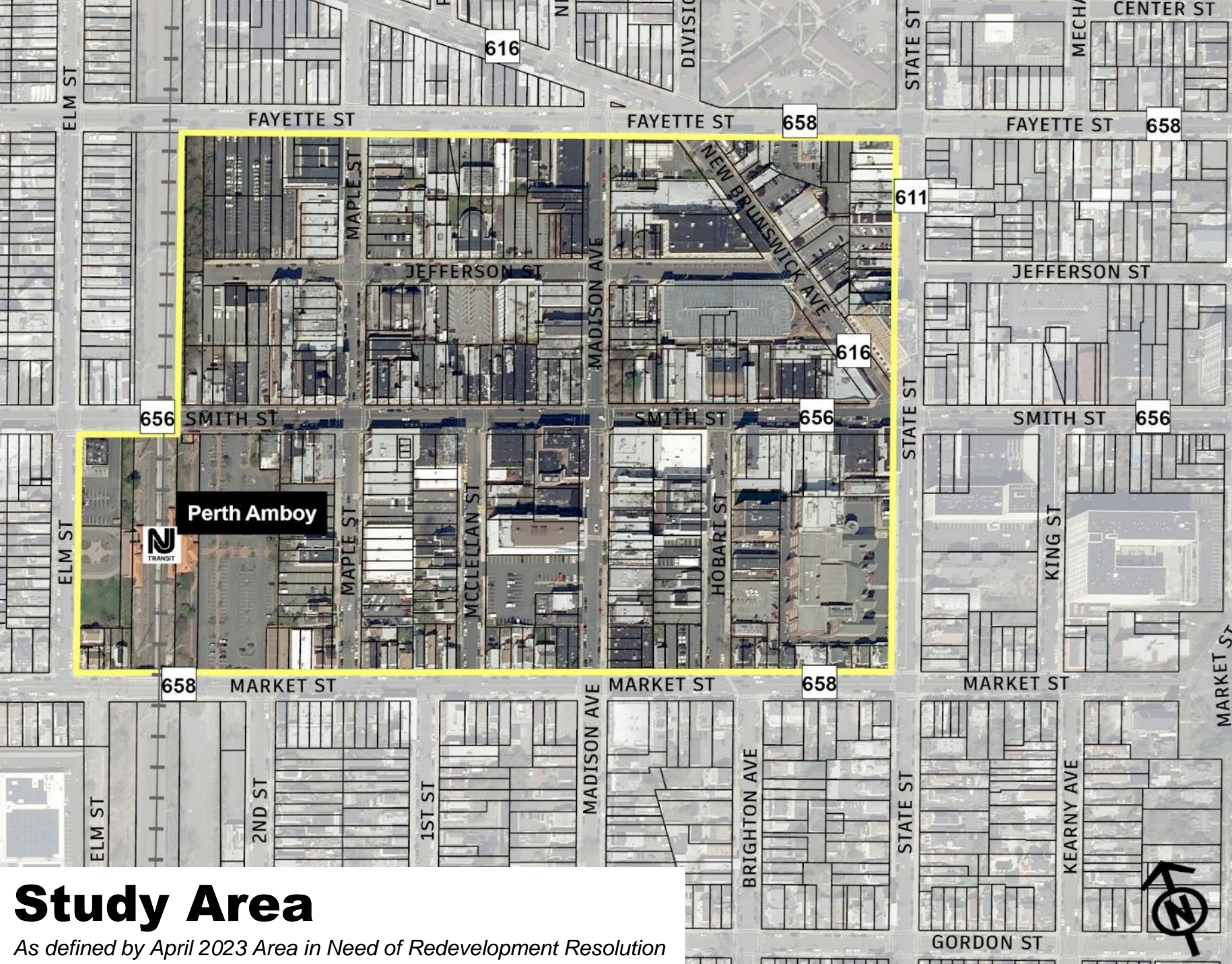
Assessment





Municipal boundaries	NJ Transit Rail Line	Quadrants	Northwest	Southwest
Study Area Boundaries	NJ Transit Stations	Northeast	Southeast	









Study Area

As defined by April 2023 Area in Need of Redevelopment Resolution





Legend

-  Public Buildings
-  Public Space
-  Street Frontage
-  Study Area

Site Analysis

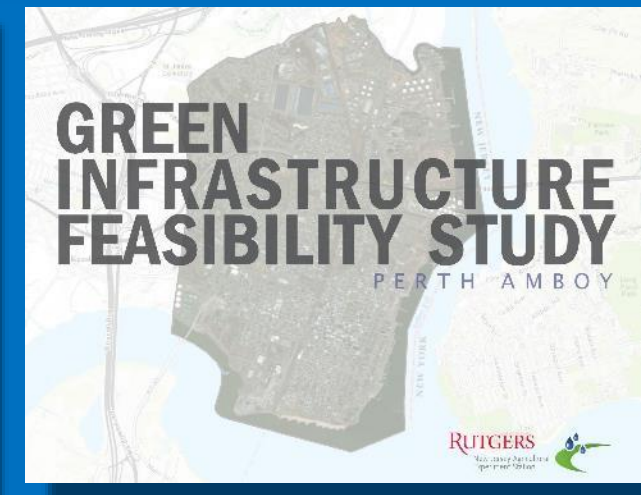
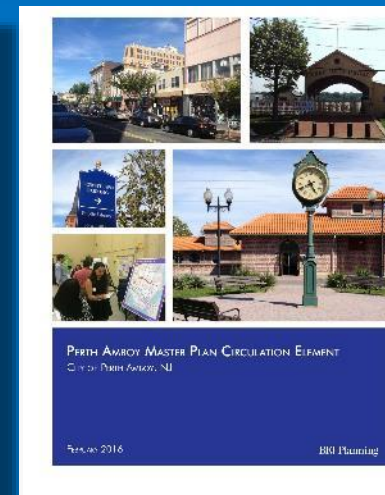
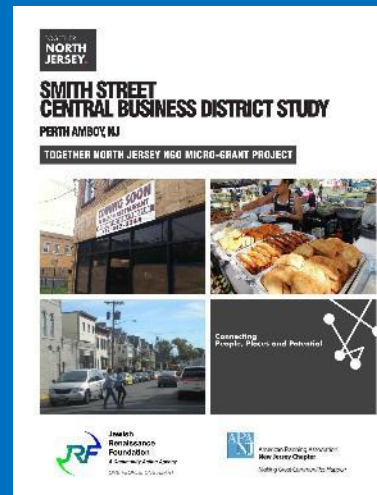
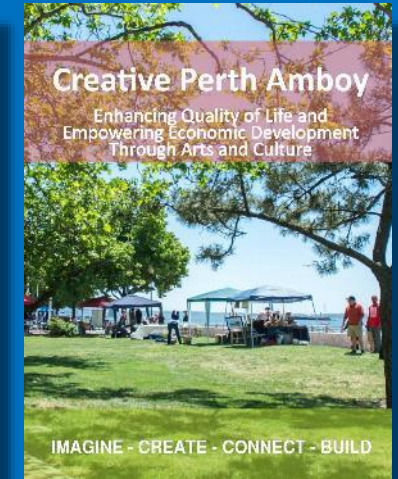
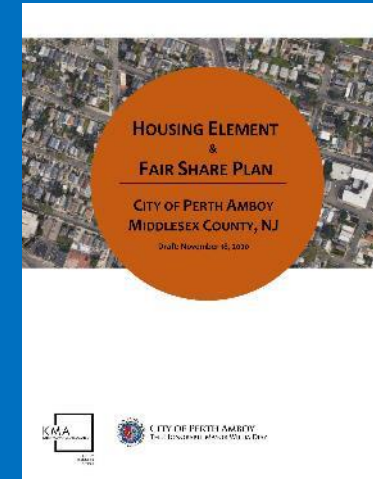
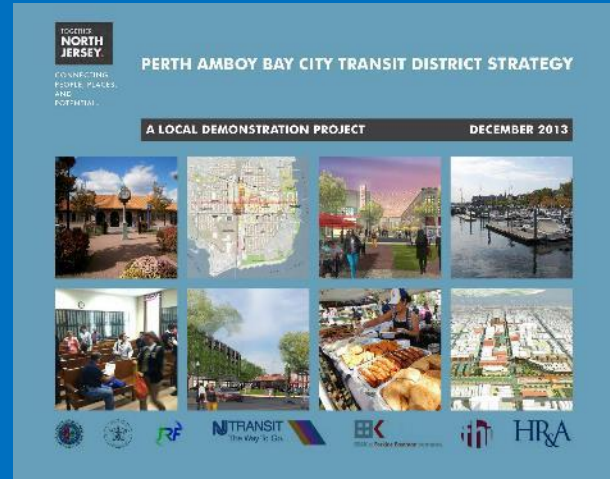
A group of approximately ten people are seated around a large, dark conference table in a meeting room. The room features large murals on the walls, including one of a hiker with a backpack and another of a group of people in historical attire. An American flag is visible on the left wall. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent yellow filter. The text "Where do we want to go?" is written in large, white, bold letters across the upper middle of the image.

Where do we want to go?

Priorities

Building on Existing Plans and Studies

- ❑ The Perth Amboy Bay City Transit District Strategy (2013)
- ❑ The Smith Street Central Business District Study (2013)
- ❑ Creative Perth Amboy (2015)
- ❑ Perth Amboy Master Plan Circulation Element (2016)
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- ❑ Housing Element and Fair Share Plan - Draft Plan (2020)
- ❑ Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study (2015)



Goal Prioritization

- ❑ Held Kickoff Meeting with City Staff and Professionals
- ❑ Identified Recommendations from Prior Studies
- ❑ Consolidated into series of Categories by topic:
 - *Transportation & Parking*
 - *Housing*
 - *Economic Development*
 - *Redevelopment & Zoning*
 - *Design & Preservation*



Transportation and Parking

- Make transportation connections easier and better integrate modes of transportation
- Re-examine parking priorities for site and locations for commuters, residents, and Smith Street shopping customers.
- Establish new north-south pedestrian connections to the Train Station.
- Modernize Parking Regulations and management
- Connect bike routes to regional greenways
- Connect the station area to the waterfront
- Implement traffic calming measures to restrict and/or slow traffic (particularly truck traffic) the “state of the art” in high-visibility, durable crosswalk markings.



Goal Prioritization



Introduce entertainment and culture into Downtown



Re-examine parking in Downtown



Update zoning for Downtown investment



Adaptively reuse upper levels of buildings



Develop design standards for Downtown



Improve pedestrian and transportation access

Online Survey

- ❑ Online Survey in English and Spanish conducted in Fall of 2023
- ❑ 20 Questions – a combination of multiple choice, commentary, and visuals
- ❑ Outreach and Survey Promotion at a few community events
- ❑ Can be an ongoing tool during the Redevelopment Process

PERTH AMBOY RESIDENTS & VISITORS: WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

RESIDENTES Y VISITANTES DE PERTH AMBOY: ¡NECESITAMOS SU OPINIÓN!

The City of Perth Amboy and the NJ Chapter of American Planning Association have launched a survey to gather feedback from the residents and visitors regarding the enhancement of Perth Amboy Downtown Shopping District and the Train Station area. As the New Jersey Transit, is about to complete a major upgrade to our local train station, this is the perfect time to collect the best ideas from the community to turn the vision into reality.

La ciudad de Perth Amboy y el Capitulo de Nueva Jersey de la Asociación Americana de Planificación, han lanzado una encuesta para recolectar comentarios de los residentes y visitantes sobre la mejora del Distrito Comercial de Perth Amboy y el área de la estación de tren. A medida que New Jersey Transit está a punto de completar una actualización importante a nuestra estación de tren local, este es el momento perfecto para recolectar las mejores ideas de la comunidad para convertir la visión en una realidad.

Go to tinyurl.com/padowntownsurvey or scan the QR code to complete the survey!
¡Visite la pagina tinyurl.com/padowntownspanol o escanee el código QR para completar la encuesta!

English Español

Questions? Contact
¿Preguntas? Comunicarse
OECD@perthamboynj.org

What Should Sidewalks in Downtown Perth Amboy Look Like?



1A Regular Street Trees and Planters



1B Sidewalk Displays and Signage



1C Landscaped Seating Areas



1D Brick Paver Accents



1E Awnings and Canopies for Shade



1F Outdoor Dining Areas

1

Perth Amboy Transit Hub PH1

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Perth Amboy Transit Hub Communit

Questions Responses 274 Settings

What type of events would you like to see in Downtown? (Select all that apply)

- Live music and performances
- Food festivals
- Farmer's market
- Other...

What public space improvements would you like to see Downtown? (Select all that apply)

- New pedestrian plaza at 5 corners/New Brunswick Avenue
- New park space over portion of Train Station Lot
- Improvements and new programming to Fink Park
- Parklets in on-street parking spots on Smith Street

What Should Redevelopment Look Like?



5A Transitional style with accent colors and materials



5B Modern style with varied materials and details



5C Historic/Traditional street façade with Modern style behind



5D Historic facades (adaptive reuse)



5E Modern style with more uniform façade with material accents



5F Traditional style with materials and detail accents

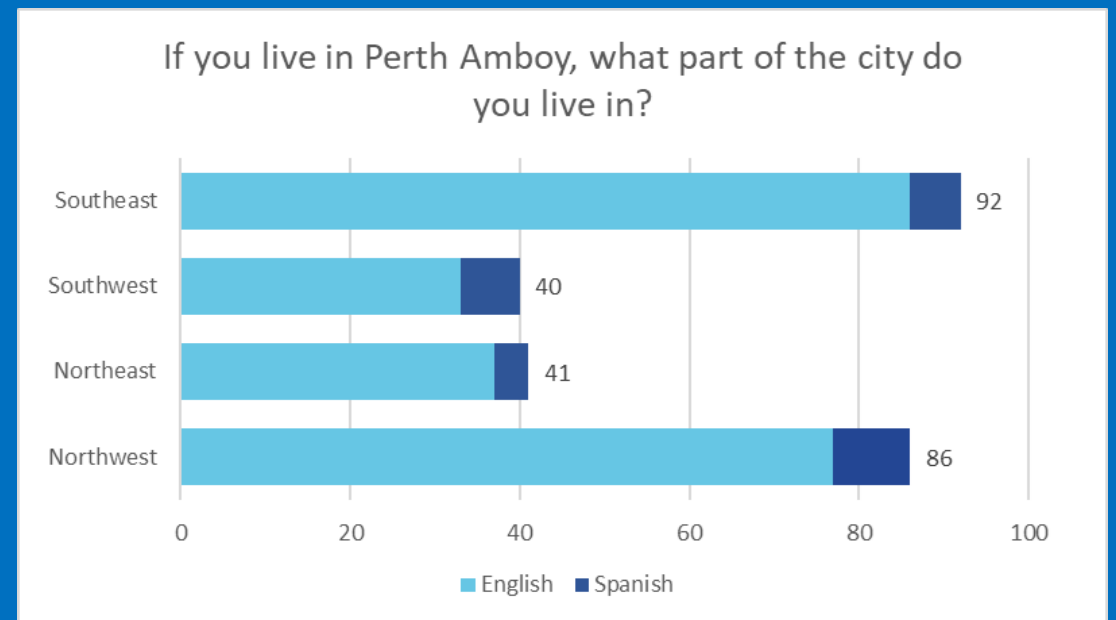
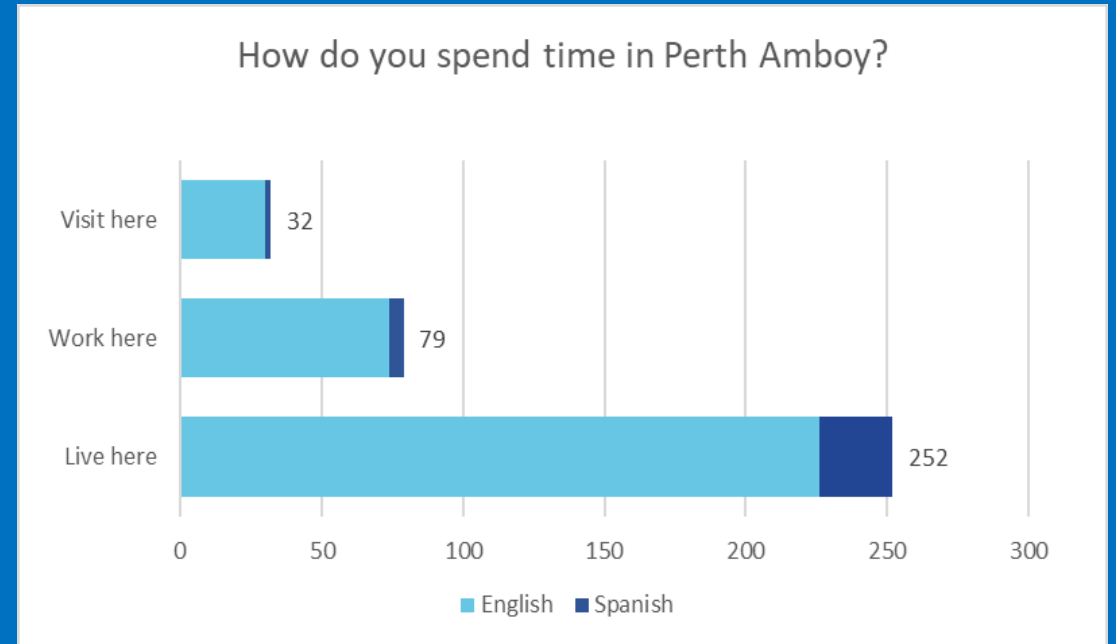
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Perth Amboy PH1 PH1

Online Survey

Response period	9/8/2023 to 12/3/2023
Spanish responses	27
English responses	272

“Circulating the train station can be tough due to lack of sidewalks or sidewalks in poor condition and the massive staircase to get to the platform (hampers accessibility and can be dangerous when wet/in the winter).” – Survey Response



Online Survey Key Takeaways

Public Space

- ❑ Support for downtown events like farmer's markets, food festivals, and live music.
- ❑ Support for street trees and planters
- ❑ Support for outdoor seating/dining areas
- ❑ Strong support for making it easier to visit the waterfront
- ❑ Support for creation of outdoor public space in the downtown, especially parks at five corners and the train station

Top Survey
Selection



Top Survey
Selection

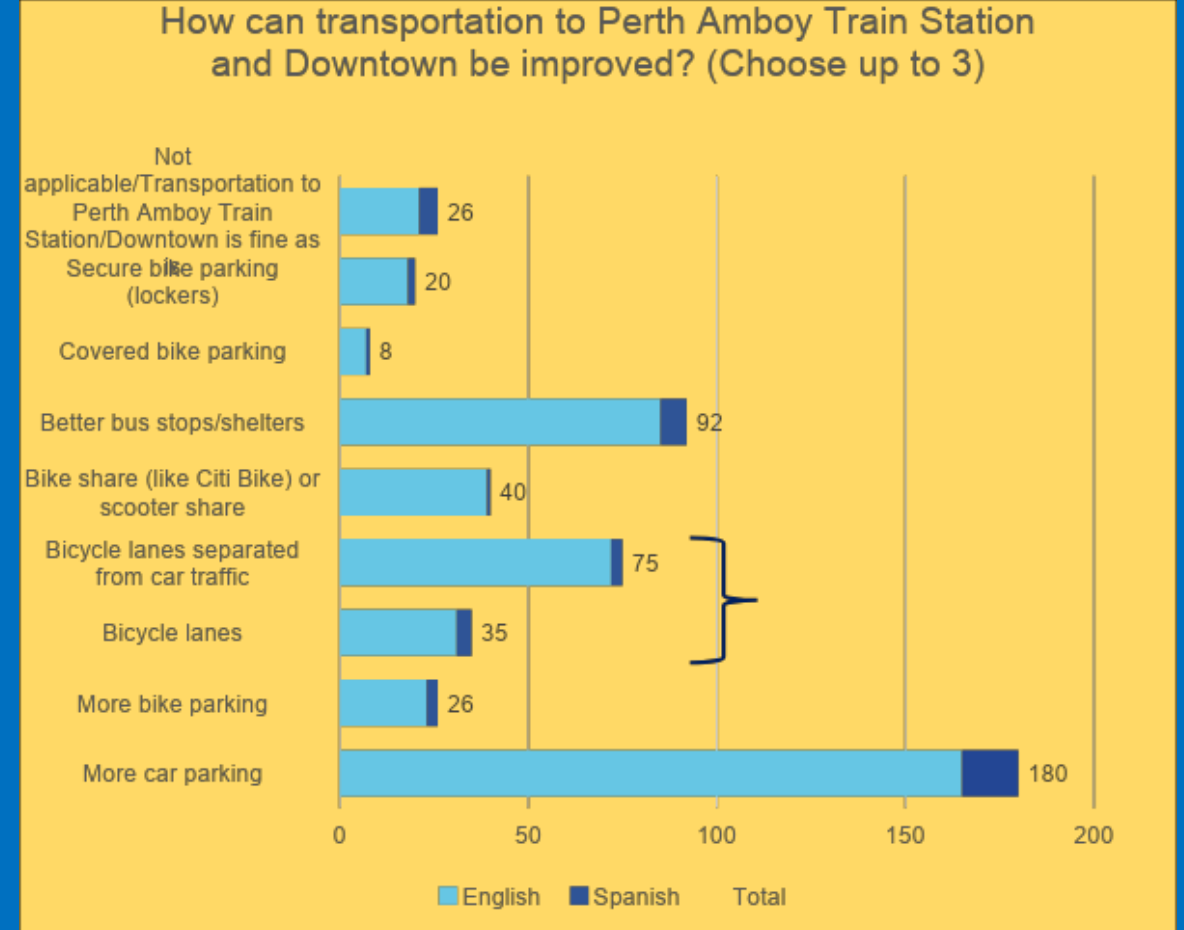


Online Survey

Key Takeaways

Pedestrian and Transportation Access

- ❑ Concern about drivers speeding and not yielding to pedestrians
- ❑ Concern that lack of bike lanes, speeding, and traffic congestion discourage bicycling
- ❑ Desire for better bus stops, shelters, & secure bike parking
- ❑ Desire for bicycle lanes



“Downtown needs bike lanes. Bike racks. Street parking spaces should be marked.” – Survey Response

Online Survey

Key Takeaways

Parking

- ❑ Most respondents park on the street
- ❑ Most respondents want more parking spaces
- ❑ Concern about drivers parking in no-parking zones and double parking

“Driving Smith Street is much like navigating a video games...the double-parked cars and distracted pedestrians are the obstacles.”

– Survey Response

“The bus sometimes does not come at all. Also the cars sometimes park in the spot of the bus stop.” – Survey Response

“Cars illegally parked on the yellow lines at intersections, obstructing visibility.” – Survey Response



Online Survey Key Takeaways

Zoning and Uses

- ❑ Support for existing businesses, but also strong desire for greater mix of business types
- ❑ Support for reuse of existing facades
- ❑ Support for reuse of upper stories for affordable housing or community organizations



“Our architecture and terra cotta is what makes this city unique and gives it its charm that out-of-towners come to the visit for. Don't turn it into a replica of every other downtown out there.”

– Survey Response

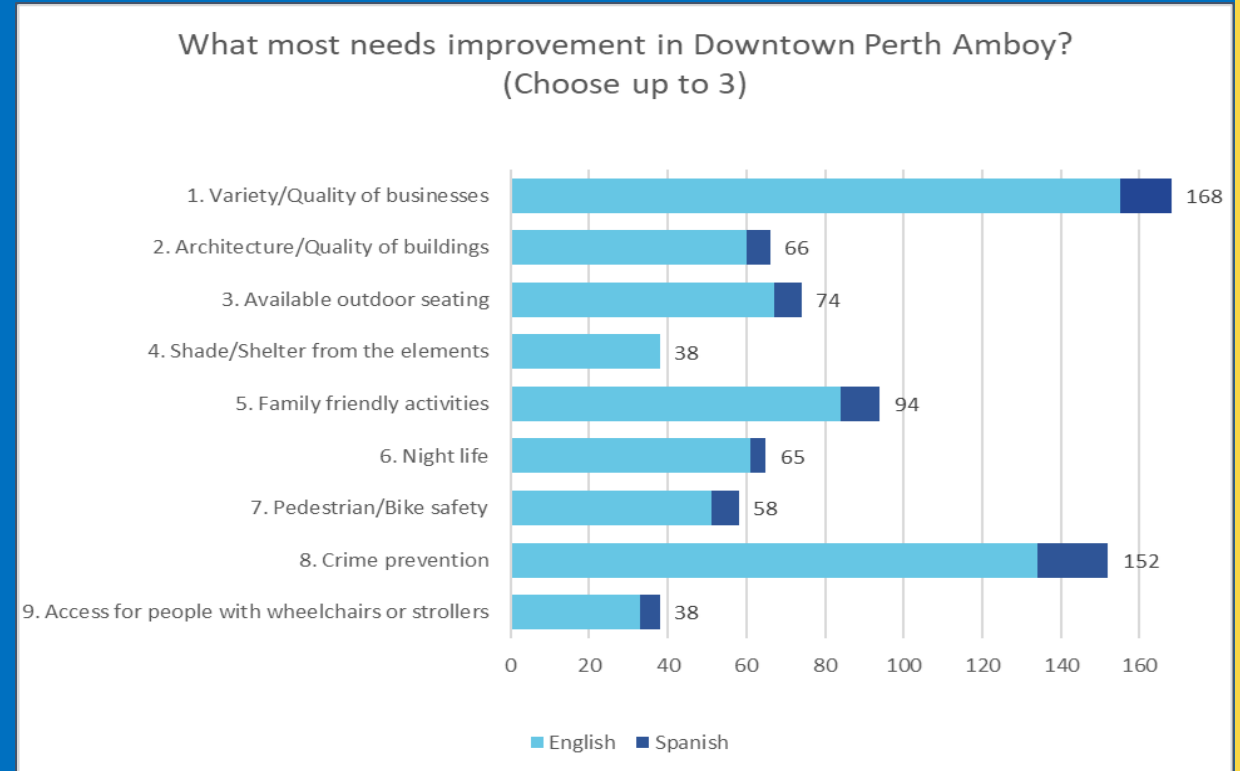
Online Survey

Key Takeaways

Other Concerns and Interests

- ❑ Concern about crime, homelessness, substance abuse
- ❑ Concern about trash and maintenance
- ❑ Desire to improve train station conditions to address cleanliness, vagrancy, and stairways

“A walkable city is a huge draw and is your connection between downtown and waterfront. Spend money downtown while making your way to relax and enjoy the waterfront and parks or vice versa.” – Survey Response



How do we get there?

Strategies



Key Recommendations

- ❑ Build upon Arts and Cultural Resources
- ❑ Parking Inventory and Analysis needed as part of Master Planning and Redevelopment efforts
- ❑ Use Rehabilitation Plan process to Preserve and Adaptively Reuse developed downtown blocks
- ❑ Use Redevelopment Plan to selectively infill and redevelop on vacant and underutilized lots
- ❑ Consider New Brunswick as a pedestrian-street and add new public space as part of redevelopment to anchor west end
- ❑ Incorporate new uses and design standards into Downtown

Framework Concept



- Legend
- Public Buildings
 - Public Space
 - Street Frontage
 - Study Area
 - Pedestrian Street
 - Contextual Infill
 - Redevelopment Areas
 - Future Public Space
 - Waterfront Connection
 - Streetscape Improvements



Culture & Entertainment

Strengthen Entertainment and Culture in Downtown to Attract more Visitors and Residents

- Family Friendly Activities
- Night Life
- Farmers' Market
- Food Festivals
- Live Music
- Create Public Space Downtown at 5 Corners and the Train Station



Culture & Entertainment

Continue and Expand Ethnic-Centric Events and Festivals

- ❑ Attract new visitors to Perth Amboy
- ❑ Entertain residents

Examples

Ironbound in Newark

Middle Eastern in Paterson

South Asian in Edison



Culture & Entertainment

- ❑ Encourage Entertainment Venues
- ❑ Plan for use of existing locations
- ❑ Coordinate with the high school and other local venues

Examples

New Brunswick

Carteret

Newark

Red Bank



Parking

Parking Inventory and Analysis needed as part of Master Planning and Redevelopment efforts

- ❑ Designing for more cars/parking leads to more traffic, less successful downtown
- ❑ Consider shared parking adjustments in Ordinance and Redevelopment Plans
- ❑ Seek RSIS waiver for area around station
- ❑ Payment in-lieu of non-residential parking - fund public parking infrastructure
- ❑ Blend parking into architecture and incentivize structured parking over surface lots
- ❑ Tiered Parking Rates for location and length



Mobility Traffic & Transit

- ❑ Install bus shelters at high-usage bus stops
- ❑ Prioritize enforcement of traffic and parking violations in the Downtown
- ❑ Improve maintenance and management of the train station in partnership with NJ TRANSIT
- ❑ Improve wayfinding to existing parking Downtown



Mobility Bikes & Micromobility

- ❑ Develop designated bicycle lanes, including to waterfront areas
- ❑ Adopt bicycle parking requirements into zoning and/or redevelopment plans
- ❑ Improve short-term and long-term bicycle parking at the train station and bus stops
- ❑ Develop regulations for e-bikes & e-scooters
- ❑ Require/incentivize bike rooms/storage in new development



Mobility

Pedestrian Safety

- ❑ Add traffic calming measures including speed cameras with added lights
- ❑ Explore sidewalk bump outs at corners & a mid-block crosswalk bump out on Smith Street
- ❑ Include more places for pedestrians to rest like benches and parklets
- ❑ Improve lighting on sidewalks, walkways, and parking areas



Public Spaces Recommendations

- ❑ Create spaces for social gathering & activity
- ❑ Use public space to create micromobility nodes
- ❑ Use streetscape design to mitigate traffic hazards
- ❑ Maintain and improve green infrastructure such as street trees and green vegetated stormwater drainage



Public Spaces Strategies

- ❑ Continue to investigate converting New Brunswick Ave to a plaza between Jefferson Street and Smith Street
- ❑ Use colored pavement and street art murals to enhance sense of place
- ❑ Utilize Fink Park for farmer markets, artist vendor booths, and performance space



Downtown Investment

Preserving Downtown

- ❑ Use Rehabilitation Plan to preserve and reuse
- ❑ Existing Architecture/Quality of Buildings consistently ranked high in survey
- ❑ Re-imagine upper floors in preserved & adaptive reuse buildings
- ❑ Establish a facade program to encourage restoration of storefronts and details & appropriate signage
- ❑ Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) design features for buildings and public spaces to increase visibility



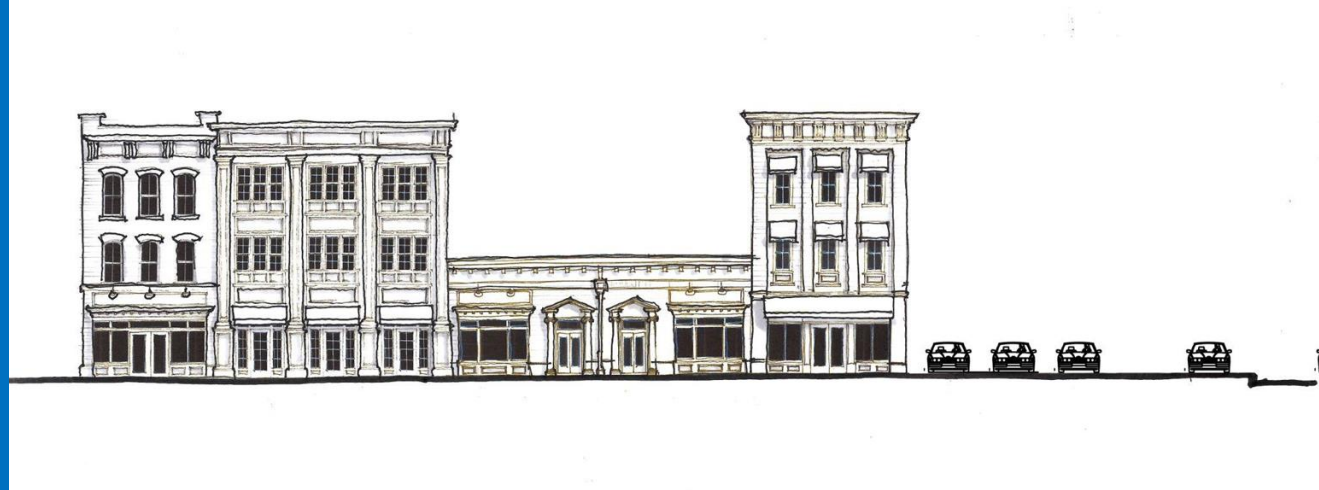
Top Survey Selection



Downtown Investment

Filling the Gaps

- ❑ Vacant lots
- ❑ Surface parking
- ❑ 1-story buildings



Downtown Investment

Filling the Gaps



Top Survey Selection

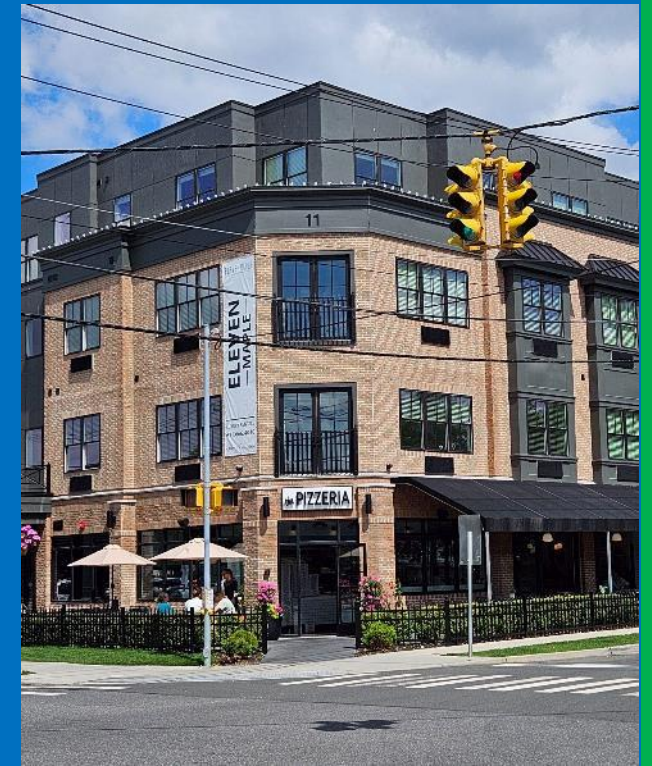


Strategies

Downtown Investment Redevelopment Sites

- ❑ 3-story and setback 4-story lofts for Infill sites and buildings
- ❑ Form-based Typologies for Infill building types
- ❑ 4-5 stories for Redevelopment sites
- ❑ Transitional and modern styles compatible with historic main street facades
- ❑ Design Standards in Zoning and Redevelopment Plans for facade design

Massing
Heights,
Façade Composition/Fenestration
Signage and Storefronts



Zoning & Redevelopment

Ordinance Recommendations

Consider some taller buildings to catalyze redevelopment

Consumer-facing uses on the ground floor (retail trade and services, restaurants, etc)

Workplaces, other services, and housing above

Make space for non-traditional downtown uses - entertainment, recreation



Zoning & Redevelopment

Recommended Permitted Uses

Housing (including all upper floors)

Flexible Workplaces (Offices, studios)

Child/Adult/Pet Care

Retail - daily needs, niche/luxury buys

Food/Drink - Bars, and restaurants

Assembly/Institutional

Indoor recreation and entertainment



Zoning & Redevelopment

Economic Feasibility

Reduced parking (prior slide)

Use typical affordable housing ratios (15%/20%)

Higher densities to make up for it

PILOTs / 5-yr abatement



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