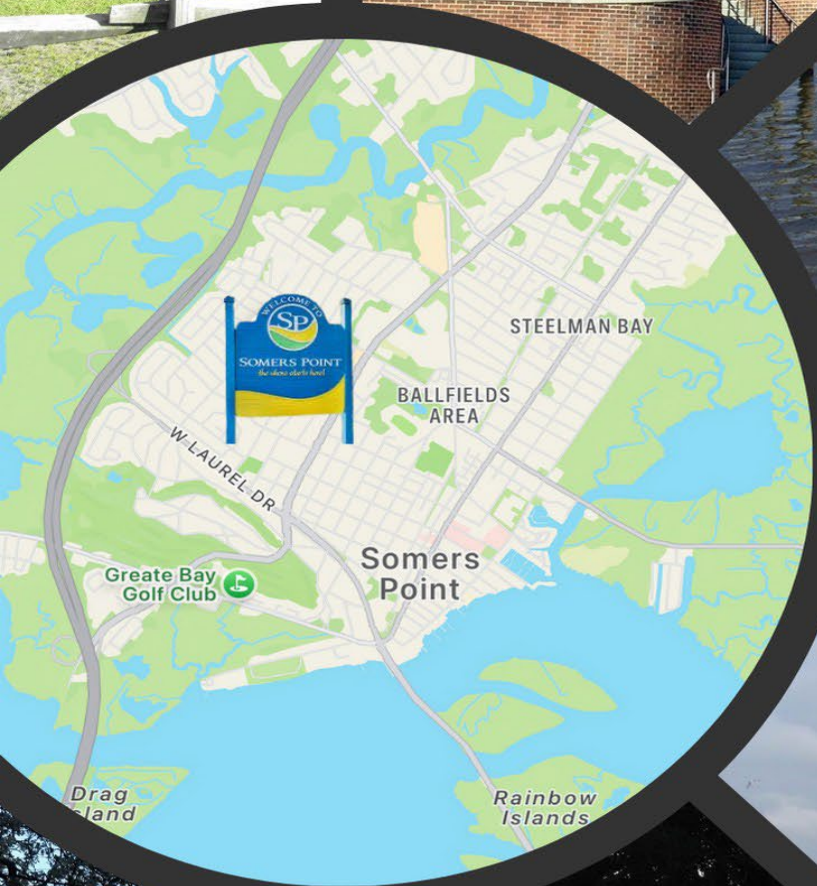




**SOMERS POINT**  
NEW JERSEY  
*the shore starts here!*



# **2025 Master Plan Reexamination Report May 2025**





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**James M. Rutala, PP/AICP  
Rutala Associates, LLC**

**The original of this document has been signed and sealed pursuant to N.J.A.C. 13:41-1.3**

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Special thanks to Ginny Swift, a member of the Somers Point Arts Commission, for providing the artwork for the cover of this document.

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## 1. Introduction

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that each municipality in New Jersey undertake a periodic review and reexamination of its local Master Plan and municipal development regulations at least every 10 years in order to determine the need for updates and revisions. This report constitutes the Master Plan Reexamination Report for the City of Somers Point as required by the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89).

### 40:55D-89. Periodic Examination

The governing body shall, at least every 10 years, provide for a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations by the planning board, which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination, a copy of which report, and resolution shall be sent to the county planning board. A notice that the report and resolution have been prepared shall be sent to the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality, who may, on behalf of the governing body of the municipality, request a copy of the report and resolution. A reexamination shall be completed at least once every 10 years from the previous reexamination.

This reexamination of the City of Somers Point Master Plan conforms to the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law and addresses the requirements of N.J.S. 40:55D-89 by including the following:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- c. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for such plans or regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county, and municipal policies and objectives.
- d. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
- e. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1, et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and

recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

This Master Plan Reexamination Report serves as the required 10-year Reexamination for the 2014 Reexamination, which was adopted in January 2015.

Before embarking on the statutorily required elements of the Master Plan Reexamination, it is informative to present a brief overview of the conditions that were current in 2014, when the Master Plan was written, in comparison to the conditions since that point in time. The most recent available data on demographic, economic, and land use conditions is provided by the U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. The information will be presented before addressing the five required elements of a Reexamination Report.

## **2. General Municipal Goals**

The Municipal Land Use Law, enacted by the State Legislature on January 14, 1976, empowers municipal governments with the right to control the physical development of the lands within their bounds. N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2 of the Municipal Land Use Law, as amended, lists 16 general goals regarding the local planning process, which are as follows:

- (a) To encourage municipal action to guide the appropriate use or development of all lands in this state in a manner that will promote the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare;
- (b) To secure safety from fire, flood, panic, and other natural and man-made disasters;
- (c) To provide adequate light, air, and open space;
- (d) To ensure that the development of individual municipalities does not conflict with the development and general welfare of neighboring municipalities, the county, and the state as a whole;
- (e) To promote the establishment of appropriate population densities and concentrations that will contribute to the well-being of people, neighborhoods, communities and regions, and the preservation of the environment;
- (f) To encourage the appropriate and efficient expenditure of public funds by the coordination of public development with land use policies;
- (g) To provide sufficient space in appropriate locations for a variety of agricultural, residential, recreational, commercial and industrial uses, and open space, both public and private, according to their respective environmental requirements in order to meet the needs of all New Jersey citizens;
- (h) To encourage the location and design of transportation routes that will promote the free flow of traffic while discouraging location of such facilities and routes that result in congestion or blight;
- (i) To promote a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques and good civic design and arrangements;

(j) To promote the conservation of historic sites and districts, open space, energy resources, and valuable natural resources in the state and to prevent urban sprawl and degradation of the environment through improper use of land;

(k) To encourage planned unit developments that incorporate the best features of design and relate the type, design, and layout of residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational development to the particular site;

(l) To encourage senior citizen community housing construction;

(m) To encourage coordination of the various public and private procedures and activities shaping land development with a view toward lessening the cost of such development and to the more efficiently using land;

(n) To promote utilization of renewable energy sources;

(o) To promote the maximum practicable recovery and recycling of recyclable materials from municipal solid waste through the use of planning practices designed to incorporate the State Recycling Plan goals and to complement municipal recycling programs; and

(p) To give municipalities the flexibility to offer alternatives to traditional development, through the use of equitable and effective planning tools including clustering, transferring development rights, and lot-size averaging in order to concentrate development in areas where growth can best be accommodated and maximized while preserving agricultural lands, open space, and historic sites.

### **3. Background**

Somers Point is located on Great Egg Harbor Bay and is approximately four square miles in land area and 1.1 square miles of water area. The city is bounded by Egg Harbor Township to the east and west and Linwood City to the north, while the bay borders the City to the south.

Somers Point is the oldest settlement in Atlantic County, dating back to 1693 and originally known as Somerset Plantation. Somers Mansion, built in 1725, now houses the Atlantic County Historical Society museum and is the oldest intact building in Atlantic County.

Surrounded by water on three sides, Somers Point has always had a strong maritime connection. The original connection between Somers Point and Beesley's Point was a ferry established in 1693, not too far from where the current Garden State Parkway Bridge is today. There has been a strong connection to the U.S. Navy since the Second Battle of Tripoli Harbor in 1804 when Master Commandant Richard Somers, great grandson of the founders of Somers Point, attempted to explode a vessel and create enough havoc to end the hostilities. Somers has a monument in his honor in Annapolis at the Naval Academy and in Somers Point next to the City Library on Shore Road.

Somers Point has a long and rich history that predates the birth of the United States of America. Its location on the water continues to influence the culture and economy of the city. Somers Point is



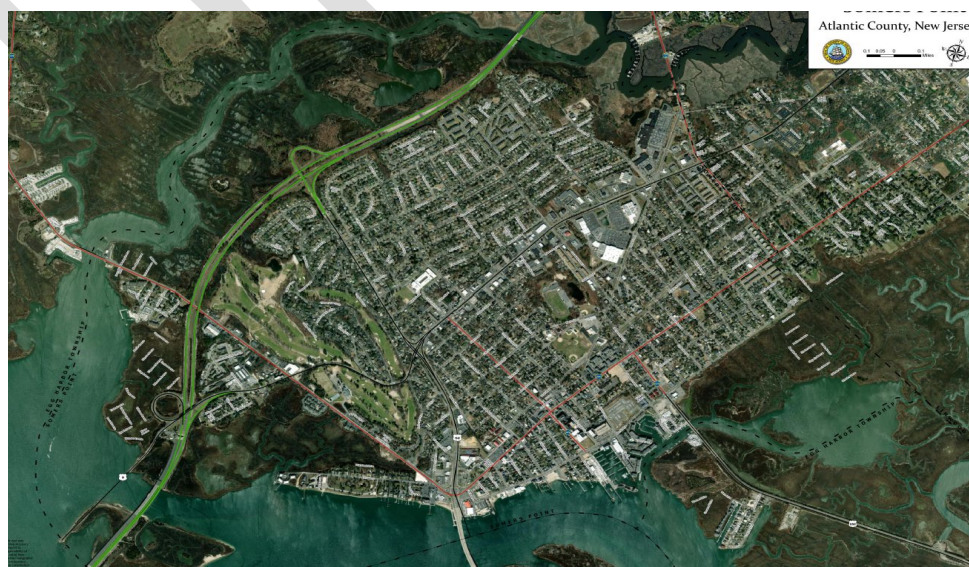
known for its marinas, boating, and fine restaurants. The city celebrates the bay with numerous events throughout the year such as Bayfest, Somers Point Crabbing Tournament, and the Somers Point Beach Concert Series.

The city's location on the bay has not come without a price. There have been many natural disasters, such as hurricanes and nor'easters, that have significantly affected New Jersey's coasts. Of the many natural hazard events to receive federal declaration, eight of the most recent events have occurred in a five-year period, from 2007 to 2012.

The city is served by major transportation routes, including the Garden State Parkway. Significant north-south routes are Route 9 and Shore Road. Important east-west streets include Ocean Heights Avenue, MacArthur Boulevard, and Somers Point-Mays Landing Road. The commercial establishments in Somers Point serve the surrounding communities and are primarily concentrated on Route 9, MacArthur Boulevard, Shore Road, and Bay Avenue. Two bridges join Somers Point to Cape May County on its southerly border; they are the Garden State Parkway Bridge and the newly constructed Route 52 Causeway into Ocean City.

Somers Point is primarily a residential community with a relatively large proportion of its residents employed in Somers Point and neighboring communities. Shore Memorial Hospital, a modern 380-bed medical facility, is Somers Point's largest employer, providing 1,400 jobs. Because of Somers Point's location on the Great Egg Harbor Bay, it is known for its marinas, boating, and numerous fine restaurants. Somers Point also has a vast variety of small and large businesses located throughout the community, including many medical professional offices as a result of the location of Shore Medical Center. Figure 1 provides an aerial overview of the City. The city is approximately 10 miles southwest of Atlantic City and 60 miles southeast of Philadelphia.

**Figure1 – Aerial Photograph of Somers Point, NJ**



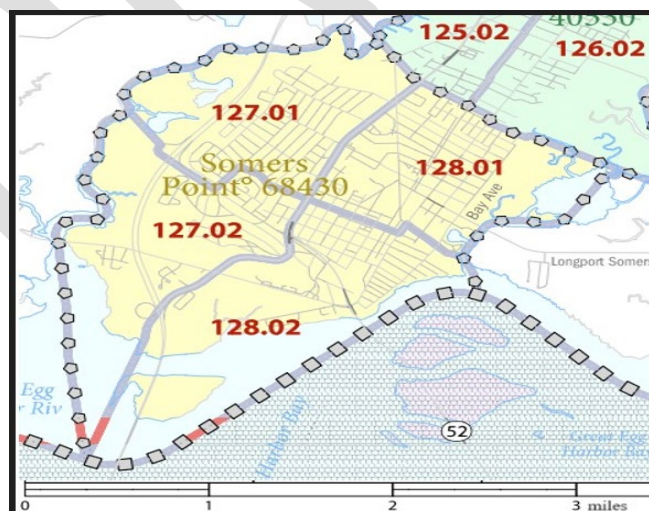
#### 4. Demographic Characteristics

The 2020 U.S. Census reports that Somers Point has a population of 10,469 persons. This is a decrease of 326 persons or 3 percent from the 2010 population. While Atlantic County experienced a slight loss in population from 2010 to 2020, many of the communities along the coast experienced a population decrease during this time period. The seasonal population of Somers Point is estimated to grow to 32,675.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2 - Population Trends 1930 to 2020						
Somers Point			Percent	Atlantic County		
Year	Population	Number change		Population	Number Change	Percent
1940	1,992	-81	-3.9	124,066	-757	-0.6
1950	2,480	488	24.4	132,399	8,333	6.7
1960	4,504	2,024	81.6	160,880	28,481	21.5
1970	7,919	3,415	75.8	175,043	14,163	8.8
1980	10,330	2,411	30.4	194,119	19,076	10.8
1990	11,216	886	8.5	224,327	30,208	15.5
2000	11,616	398	3.4	252,552	28,225	12.5
2010	10,795	-819	-7.0	274,549	21,997	8.7
2020	10,469	-326	-3.0	274,534	-15	0.0

Between 2020 and 2022, the Census figures indicate a growth in population to 10,482. All the surrounding communities have witnessed a population decline in the past decade.

**Figure 3: Somers Point Census Tracts. Source: U.S. Census Bureau**



<sup>1</sup> South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization



**Figure 4: 2012 & 2022 Total Population for Somers Point, component Census Tracts, and Atlantic County, New Jersey, & the United States**

	<b>2012 Population</b>	<b>2022 Population</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Somers Point	10,853	10,482	-371	-3.4%
Ocean City	11,790	11,260	-530	-4.5%
Longport	979	776	-203	-20.7%
Margate	6,459	5,331	-1,128	-17.5%
Linwood	7,109	6,952	-157	-2.2%
Atlantic County	274,402	274,339	-63	0.0%
New Jersey	8,793,888	9,249,063	+455,175	+5.2%
United States	309,138,711	331,097,593	+21,958,882	+7.1%
Census Tract 127.01	3,466	3,314	-152	-4.4%
Census Tract 127.02	1,679	1,645	-34	-2.0%
Census Tract 128.01	3,763	3,888	+125	+3.3%
Census Tract 128.02	1,945	1,635	-310	-15.9%

All of the census tracts in Somers Point witnessed a population decline except the Northeast Neighborhood (Census Tract 128.01), which is generally bounded by Connecticut Avenue to the south, Route 9 to the west, the Linwood border to the north, and the bay to the east.

**Figure 5: Somers Point Population By Race & Ethnicity, 2012 & 2022**

	Somers Point 2012		Somers Point 2022		Change
	Population	% of Total	Population	% of Total	
Total	10,853		10,482		
Non-Hispanic White	8,034	74.0%	7,450	71.1%	-3.0%
Black or African American alone	1,437	13.2%	1,117	10.7%	-2.6%
Hispanic White	506	4.7%	449	4.3%	-0.4%
Asian alone	361	3.3%	410	3.9%	0.6%
Some other race alone	347	3.2%	197	1.9%	-1.3%
Two or more races	167	1.5%	843	8.0%	6.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1	0.0%	16	0.2%	0.1%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	0.0%
Non-white Hispanic (overlaps Black, Asian, Some Other Race, Two or more races, etc.)	728	6.7%	998	9.5%	2.8%

The population decline is largest for the school age cohort of 5 to 9 years, with 401 less children. This adds to the declining enrollment in the Somers Point Schools. The cohorts from age 5 to 18, the school age portion of the population, dropped 65 percent from 2012 to 2022.

**Table 6: Somers Point Population by Age Group, 2012 & 2022**

	Somers Point, 2012		Somers Point, 2022		Change
	Population	% of Total	Population	% of Total	
Under 5 years	736	6.8%	798	7.6%	+62
5 to 9 years	736	6.8%	335	3.2%	-401
10 to 14 years	705	6.5%	638	6.1%	-67
15 to 17 years	543	5.0%	324	3.1%	-219
18 and 19 years	210	1.9%	50	0.5%	-160
20 to 24 years	513	4.7%	785	7.5%	+272
25 to 29 years	483	4.5%	807	7.7%	+324
30 to 34 years	789	7.3%	429	4.1%	-360
35 to 39 years	710	6.5%	572	5.5%	-138
40 to 44 years	630	5.8%	587	5.6%	-43
45 to 49 years	676	6.2%	797	7.6%	+121
50 to 54 years	1,189	11.0%	706	6.7%	-483
55 to 59 years	689	6.3%	669	6.4%	-20
60 to 64 years	590	5.4%	989	9.4%	+399
65 to 69 years	541	5.0%	675	6.4%	+134
70 to 74 years	373	3.4%	448	4.3%	+75
75 to 79 years	269	2.5%	416	4.0%	+147
80 to 84 years	244	2.2%	283	2.7%	+39
85 years and over	227	2.1%	174	1.7%	-53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,853</b>		<b>10,482</b>		<b>-371</b>

**Figure 7: Somers Point Below 18, 65 and Above, and Male and Female populations, and Total Population, for 2012 & 2022**

	2012 Population	% of Total	2022 Population	% of Total	Change	% Change
Below 18	2,720	25.1%	2,095	20.0%	-625	-23.0%
65 & above	1,654	15.2%	1,996	19.0%	+342	+20.7%
Male	5,221	48.1%	5,090	48.6%	-131	-2.5%
Female	5,632	51.9%	5,392	51.4%	-240	-4.3%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>10,853</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10,482</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-371</b>	<b>-3.4%</b>

The school age population in Somers Point has dropped 23 percent in the last decade, and the senior population has grown almost 21 percent. This data indicates the continued decline of school children and growth in retired residents.

The Somers Point School District enrollment shows a continued decrease from 2018 to 2021, and then a stabilization for 2022 to 2024. More than a twenty percent decrease occurred from 2018 to 2025.

**Figure 8: Somers Point School District Student Enrollment by Grade from 2018-19 through 2024-25**

GRADE	19-18	20-19	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25
PK	74	74	80	83	95	104	95
K	79	52	59	69	72	58	72
1	101	90	73	70	62	64	62
2	83	99	70	65	59	56	59
3	98	81	70	67	50	60	50
4	80	98	92	89	65	64	65
5	81	78	78	69	62	61	62
6	82	82	96	86	61	91	61
7	86	81	77	76	90	64	90
8	94	90	80	80	63	82	63
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>679</b>

**Figure 9: Percentage of the Population below the Poverty Level for Somers Point, Census Tracts, and related geographies, 2012 & 2022**

	2012 Poverty Rate	2022 Poverty Rate	Change
Somers Point	14.1%	11.3%	-2.8%
Ocean City	6.9%	10.3%	+3.4%
Longport	4.3%	5.9%	+1.6%
Margate	9.8%	5.4%	-4.4%
Linwood	3.2%	2.9%	-0.3%
Atlantic County	12.8%	13.0%	+0.3%
New Jersey	9.9%	9.7%	-0.2%
United States	14.9%	12.5%	-2.3%
Census Tract 127.01	11.7%	11.3%	-0.4%
Census Tract 127.02	12.4%	6.9%	-5.6%
Census Tract 128.01	20.6%	21.5%	+0.9%
Census Tract 128.02	7.2%	11.9%	4+.7%



The poverty rate in Somers Point is less than that of Atlantic County, and the rate for Somers Point dropped from 14.1 percent in 2012 to 11.3 percent in 2022.

The increase in median income levels in Somers Point exceeds that of Atlantic County and the State of New Jersey, an indication of the City's strong economy. The surrounding communities that shop and dine in Somers Point have witnessed even higher increase in median income than Somers Point.

**Figure 10: Median Income for Somers Point, component Census Tracts, and related geographies, 2012 & 2022**

	2012 Median income	2022 Median income	Change	% Change
Somers Point	\$49,607	\$68,262	+\$18,655	+37.6%
Ocean City	56,463	98,576	+42,113	+42.3%
Longport	71,136	101,250	+30,114	+74.6%
Margate	66,444	112,661	+46,217	+69.6%
Linwood	86,492	133,487	+46,995	+54.3%
Atlantic County	54,559	73,113	+18,554	+34.0%
New Jersey	71,637	97,126	+25,489	+35.6%
United States	53,046	75,149	+22,103	+41.7%
Census Tract 127.01	58,375	79,904	+21,529	+36.9%
Census Tract 127.02	48,060	66,007	+17,947	+37.3%
Census Tract 128.01	38,945	52,000	+13,055	+33.5%
Census Tract 128.02	70,536	73,438	+2,902	+4.1%

Median household income in Somers Point is \$68,262. In 2022, the place with the highest median household income in Somers Point was Census Tract 127.01, with a value of \$79,904, followed by Census Tract 128.02 and Census Tract 127.02, with respective values of \$73,438 and \$66,007.

The percentage of residents with a college degree or higher is growing in Somers Point, from 23 percent in 2012 to 28 percent in 2022.

**Figure 11: Percentage of the Population having earned a Bachelors degree or higher for Somers Point, component Census Tracts, and related geographies, 2012 & 2022**

	2012			2022			Change
	Population Aged 25 and over	Portion with Bachelors degree or higher	% with Bachelors degree or higher	Population Aged 25 and over	Portion with Bachelors degree or higher	% with Bachelors degree or higher	
Somers Point	7,410	1,696	22.9%	7,552	2,084	27.6%	4.7%
Ocean City	8,981		46.60%	8,971	4,926	54.90%	8.30%
Longport	864		47%	715	357	49.90%	2.90%
Margate	5,155		44.80%	4,150	2,341	56.40%	11.60%
Linwood	5,015		48%	5,015	2,888	57.60%	9.60%
Atlantic County	185,318	44,642	24.1%	191,583	57,631	30.1%	6.0%
New Jersey	5,969,516	2,112,098	35.4%	6,427,003	2,715,568	42.3%	6.9%
United States	204,336,017	58,205,022	28.5%	226,600,992	77,751,347	34.3%	5.8%
Census Tract 127.01	2,342	428	18.3%	2,431	729	30.0%	11.7%
Census Tract 127.02	1,223	291	23.8%	1,271	352	27.7%	3.9%
Census Tract 128.01	2,386	534	22.4%	2,533	573	22.6%	0.2%
Census Tract 128.02	1,459	443	30.4%	1,317	430	32.6%	2.3%

While the homeownership rates in all the surrounding communities are increasing, this rate dropped in Somers Point from 58 percent in 2012 to 53 percent in 2022.

**Figure 12: 2012 & 2022 Total and Owner-occupied Households and Rate of Home Ownership for Somers Point, component Census Tracts, and related geographies**

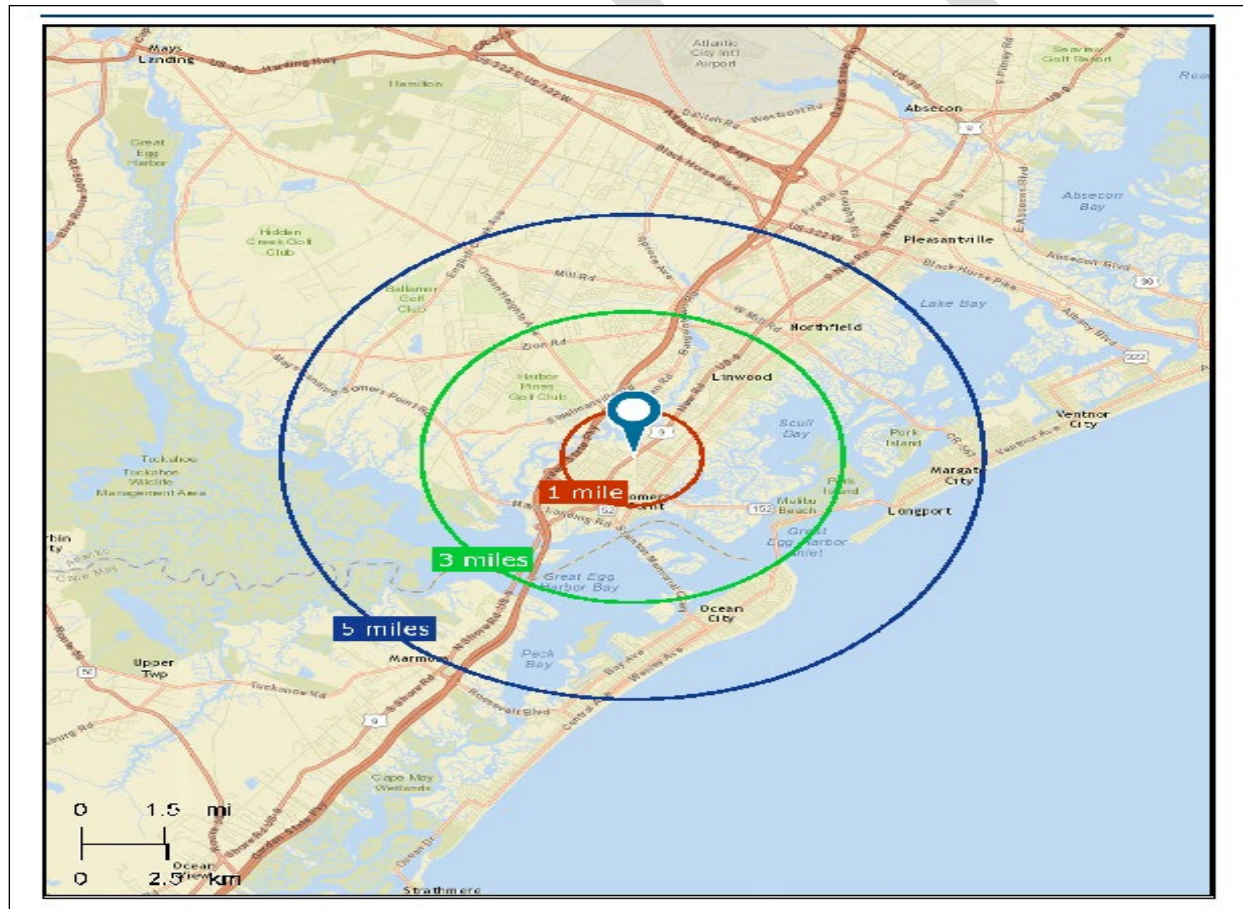
	2012			2022			Change
	Households	Owner-occupied	Homeownership rate	Households	Owner-occupied	Homeownership rate	
Somers Point	4,620	2,700	58.4%	4,650	2,449	52.7%	-5.8%
Ocean City	5,809	3,696	63.60%	5,521	3,980	72.10%	8.50%
Longport	522	470	90%	436	394	90.40%	0.40%
Margate	3,094	2,444	79%	2,584	2,319	89.70%	10.70%
Linwood	2,597	2,301	88.60%	2,655	2,394	90.20%	1.60%
Atlantic County	101,018	70,312	69.6%	106,640	72,378	67.9%	-1.7%
New Jersey	3,186,878	2,108,166	66.2%	3,438,162	2,195,831	63.9%	-2.3%
United States	115,226,802	75,484,661	65.5%	125,736,353	81,497,760	64.8%	-0.7%
Census Tract 127.01	1,286	821	63.8%	1529	769	50.3%	-13.5%
Census Tract 127.02	763	461	60.4%	661	395	59.8%	-0.7%
Census Tract 128.01	1,743	837	48.0%	1668	704	42.2%	-5.8%
Census Tract 128.02	828	581	70.2%	792	581	73.4%	3.2%

The median property value in Somers Point was \$250,800 in 2022, which is 0.89 times smaller than the national average of \$281,900. Between 2021 and 2022, the median property value increased from \$229,200 to \$250,800, a 9.42 percent increase.

According to Realty Trac, real estate market trends reflect that there have been 182 transactions in 2014 in Somers Point. The median value for residential home transactions that occurred over the previous year is \$409,000. In 2024, Somers Point had 27 properties in foreclosure, 1 bank-owned property, 0 properties headed for auction, and 22 properties for sale.<sup>2</sup>

In 2024, the economy of Somers Point employed 7,953 people in a total of 538 businesses, which equates to a very high employee to population ratio of 77.<sup>3</sup> The largest industries in Somers Point are Health Services (3,513), Bars & Restaurants (926), Other Services (641), Food Stores (514), Educational Institutions & Libraries (394), and Miscellaneous Retail (302).

One way to better assess both the market potential as well as the relative position of Somers Point versus its neighbors is to delineate the marketplace by distance rather than political jurisdiction.



**Figure 13: Somers Point Market Area**

<sup>2</sup> RealtyTrac, [www.realtytrac.com/market-trends/somers-point\).-nj](http://www.realtytrac.com/market-trends/somers-point).-nj)

<sup>3</sup> ESRI, Somers Point Business Summary, 2024



This can be done by concentric circles of varying distances from a fixed point, illustrated in Figure 13 below as being distances of 1, 3, and 5 miles from the Somers Point Plaza Shopping Center.

The population in the 1-mile radius is estimated to be 10,000, and the population within the 5-mile radius is substantially greater at 70,000 people on a year-round basis. The regional year-round population increases to more than 200,000 during the summer season. The corresponding regional median family income average is \$81,758, a very large difference that can be exploited by businesses in the City. Figure 8 provides a detailed breakdown of population and income.

As noted by the data above, Somers Point has a tourist related economy. A total of 88 percent of the businesses are in the retail or service sectors. The six communities that Somers Point businesses serve primarily include Linwood, Egg Harbor Township, Longport, Margate, Ocean City, and Upper Township. Together, with Somers Point included, this region represents almost 25 billion in ratables in 2024.<sup>4</sup>

One particularly strong employment sector is the health service industry, bolstered by the presence of Shore Medical Center. Of the 7,953 people employed by businesses in Somers Point, 3,513 were engaged in health services. This is almost half of the employees in the city, an important data point to consider when planning the future of Somers Point.

Placer.ai was used to generate foot traffic analytics for Somers Point. This tool provides businesses and civic stakeholders with insights into visitation patterns, visitor behavior, and preferences.<sup>5</sup> The City of Somers Point attracts 1.4 million visitors annually, each making on average 7 to 8 visits to the city. Not surprisingly, a large portion of these visitors are from the greater Philadelphia market. Their list of favorite places to visit include the Ocean Heights Plaza and Circle Liquor; their #1 attraction is the Ocean City beaches.

## **5. Review of Current Planning Documents**

The Somers Point Planning Board adopted what was called the “Development Plan” in 1979, which included an analysis of the previous background studies performed in 1973 and provided an update of those reports. The 1979 Plan included a Land Use Element, a Circulation Element, and a Community Facilities Element.

Subsequently, the Planning Board adopted a Land Use Element in 1990 and 1993; a Housing Element in 1998, 2005, and 2018; and Master Plan Reexaminations in 1989, 1998, 2004, and 2014.

In addition, the following plans were completed:

- Somers Point Vision Plan, 2012
- Strategic Recovery Planning Report, 2014
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Study, 2014

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<sup>4</sup> Atlantic County & Cape May County Board of Taxation, 2024

<sup>5</sup> [www.placer.ai](http://www.placer.ai)

- Master Plan Reexamination, 2015

#### **Master Plan Land Use Element Update, 1990**

The 1990 Master Plan Land Use Element Update identified the City as a developed residential community and endorsed the same goals and objectives that were established in the 1979 Master Plan. This Report affirmed many of the goals and objectives from the 1979 Master Plan. The 1990 Plan recommended:

- The creation of the Somers Point Historic District – The Somers Point Historic District was proposed to consist of three zoning districts: the Historic Village Commercial, the Historic Village Residential, and the Historic Village Waterfront.
- Modification of the Planned Industrial District, providing an opportunity for flexible multi-tenant industrial mixed land use including office, light manufacturing, and warehousing.
- The creation of a Bayfront District provides the opportunity for mixed use residential/marina land use, with particular emphasis on marina and waterfront design standards.

#### **Master Plan Reexamination Report, 1998**

The 1998 Reexamination Report listed the following three new areas of concern for which recommendations were made:

- Historic preservation;
- Recreation/open space and environmental concerns, including public access to the waterfront; and
- Residential and non-residential land uses.

The goals provided in the 1998 Reexamination Report include:

1. The residential character of the City should continue to be enhanced.
2. The maritime heritage of the City, combined with the continued vigilance for historic preservation, should continue to be enhanced.
3. Open space and natural resources are to be conserved and expanded where appropriate.
4. The City shall adopt policies and implement strategies to solve circulation issues including enhancing parking, preventing traffic congestion, and providing for safe and efficient pedestrian movement and traffic flow, especially in the Bayfront area.
5. The issues involving Shore Medical Center and its zoning must be resolved.

#### **Master Plan Reexamination Report, 2004**

The 2004 Reexamination Report built on the objectives and goals identified in the 1989 and 1998 Reexaminations and further modified the goals of the 1979 Master Plan by revising the first goal to state, “the residential and commercial mix of the City should be enhanced.” The following objectives were included in the 2004 Reexamination:

- Preserve the Bay Avenue historic district and respect its significance in relationship to development in the district and the adjacent area;
- Promote resort-oriented housing, hotels, and businesses;
- Establish a resort destination “feel” where appropriate;
- Enhance cultural and artistic venues;
- Continue to coordinate the City’s redevelopment efforts with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Route 52 improvement project; and
- The zoning along Route 9 should be evaluated utilizing strategic planning in order to ensure that the associated traffic and circulation impacts do not negatively affect the City and the adjoining residential neighborhoods.

### **Master Plan Reexamination Report, 2014**

The 2014 Reexamination Report was a robust master planning effort funded by State grants to support Post-Superstorm Sandy planning efforts. This planning effort included land use, economic development, open space and recreation, and community facilities elements.

## **Section A - The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.**

### **1. Regional Economy Changes**

Atlantic County has lost 22,400 jobs since 2006, a 14.5 percent decrease. The total jobs in Atlantic County have stabilized since 2021, a sign that the region has recovered from the economic impacts of COVID-19.<sup>6</sup> While the countywide economy has slowed, the tourism sector which impacts Somers Point has grown in part due to the second home real estate boom caused by COVID-19. New buyers from North Jersey and New York have entered the Jersey Shore market, resulting in more demand and higher real estate values. As the communities of Ventnor, Margate, Longport, and Ocean City continue to transition to second home communities, the demand for goods and services in the Somers Point market continues to grow. Somers Point benefits from both the robust Atlantic County and Cape May County tourism markets, with revenues in 2023 of \$8.097 billion and \$7.714 billion, respectively.

### **2. Local Demographic and Economic Changes**

While the regional economy is slowing, the Somers Point economy is growing once again due to the significant wealth that has migrated to the barrier island communities that are served by Somers Point.

Population in Somers Point was declining since the 2000 Census, but population growth has been realized since 2020. In 2024, the economy of Somers Point employed 7,953 people in 538 businesses. The employee to population ratio is very high at 77.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Federal Reserve Economic Data, All Employees: Atlantic County

<sup>7</sup> ESRI Data, Business Summary



Somers Point ranks fifth in the list of the most affordable coastal towns in New Jersey for homebuyers with an average value of \$387,788 in 2024, according to the Zillow Home Value Index. Starting from \$194,937 in 2014 and \$201,214 in 2019, Somers Point has demonstrated remarkable stability followed by explosive growth, with a 98.93% increase over ten years and an impressive 92.72% jump in the past five years – the second-highest short-term growth rate among all towns analyzed. Somers Point’s combination of waterfront dining, marinas, and proximity to ocean beaches makes it an increasingly popular choice for coastal living.<sup>8</sup>

### **3. Traffic Congestion**

Somers Point’s economy is heavily influenced by tourism, particularly during the summer season when visitors to the Jersey Shore pass through or stay in the city. Route 9, MacArthur Boulevard, and the Garden State Parkway provide critical access routes, funneling significant traffic through the area. Daily traffic counts on these major arteries exceed 30,000 vehicles during peak summer months, offering strong visibility for businesses. However, this also leads to congestion and parking challenges, which can hinder accessibility to local establishments. Traffic problems on Route 9 continue to be an issue, as they have been for many years. New development in the Route 9 Corridor has added congestion on the highway and placed pressure on alternate routes in attempts to avoid Route 9.

### **4. Parking Restrictions**

Parking continues to be a challenge in the Bay Avenue area during the summer months. Intercept parking with shuttle service may provide a solution.

### **5. Redevelopment**

Redevelopment of other locations in the City is an ongoing area of study that will be largely dependent on development potential and market interest. A few successful redevelopments are underway. Two existing redevelopment areas are key sites that hold much promise for the City – the Central Bay Avenue/Shore Road Redevelopment Area and Mac’s Shore Redevelopment Plan.

### **6. Parks and Recreation**

Providing high quality recreation was identified as an area of particular interest, and the City has moved to make improvements to the Bike Path and add an inclusive playground at John F. Kennedy Park. This plan will make additional recommendations.

### **7. Single Family Home Ownership**

As is clear from the data, Somers Point is transitioning to a second home community. Nevertheless, there is a community interest in providing single family homes and increasing homeownership in the City.

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<sup>8</sup> Zillow Home Value Index 2024, [www.homestratosphere.com/affordable-coastal-towns-new-jersey/](https://www.homestratosphere.com/affordable-coastal-towns-new-jersey/)

## **Section B – The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.**

The City has made progress in addressing many of the problems and objectives identified in the 1979 Master Plan and the Reexamination Reports from 1989, 1998, 2004, and 2014. Many of the problems, challenges, and objectives identified in previous planning studies still need to be addressed. Outlined below is a summary of the problems and objectives that remain valid since the last reexamination.

### **Land Use Element**

According to the U.S. Census, the City has 5,730 housing units with 51 percent being owner-occupied. The City remains a desirable residential community. The 1979 Master Plan and 2014 Reexamination both indicate the continuing need to enhance the residential character of the City while respecting the traditional village character of much of the City.

### **Economic Development Element**

The City continues to actively address economic development issues. The City has used a formal redevelopment process to drive economic development and more recently developed a plan to address economic development. The plan also identifies the following needs:

- A working waterfront that includes maritime businesses that provide moorings, sales, and servicing;
- Recreational-related businesses;
- Dining and restaurant uses; and,
- Lodging.

The Route 9 commercial corridor continues to warrant additional study and improvement. Both the 2012 Vision Plan and the 2014 Reexamination Plan point out the need for additional controls that regulate the appearance of this commercial corridor.

The Plan recommends that the City promote mixed-use development in all commercial areas and provide a livelier, more pedestrian-friendly Bay Avenue. The most attractive site for this type of development are the vacant parcels bounded by Bay Avenue, Harbor Lane, Sunny Avenue, and Pleasant Avenue.

Specific objectives that remain from the 1979 Master Plan and 2014 Reexamination include the following:

- Provide for a mix of land uses that accommodate a range of services for City residents and the region;
- Expand opportunities for pedestrian access, recreational opportunities, and economic development;
- Develop additional resort-oriented housing and businesses;
- Enhance and develop cultural and artistic venues;
- Focus on redevelopment opportunities now that the Route 52 improvements are complete;

- Develop appropriate zoning along the Route 9 commercial areas that balance the intensity of land use with traffic and circulation concerns; and
- Develop appropriate regulations to address aesthetic concerns in all commercial zones.

### **Circulation Element**

Reducing traffic congestion, improving the road network, enhancing pedestrian safety, and providing additional pedestrian and bicycle linkages throughout the City remain objectives of the City's Master Plan. Since the 2014 Reexamination Report, a plan for pedestrian safety improvements along Shore Road and Laurel Drive have been developed and are being implemented. The State is planning to make improvements in the section of Route 9, north of Chapman Boulevard. Improvements are planned at the Groveland Avenue/Route 9 intersection in conjunction with development at that location.

### **Open Space and Recreation Element**

The City continues to look for opportunities to improve and expand its recreation facilities and open space inventory. Improving public access to the bayfront and providing bike path connections to the regional network continue to be works in progress. Specific objectives that remain from the 1979 Master Plan and 2004 Reexamination include the following:

- Retain and protect diverse recreational opportunities.
- Protect open spaces and natural areas.
- Enhance pedestrian and bicycle movements throughout the City.
- Improve public access to the waterfront.
- Expand opportunities for pedestrian access, recreation, and economic development.

The 2014 Reexamination Report identified the following actions that the City has taken since adoption of the 2004 Reexamination that contribute, directly or indirectly, to addressing flood hazards:

- The Somers Point Bike Path was extended to Route 52.
- Bike racks and bike repair stations were added to the Somers Point Bike Path as well as other enhancements.

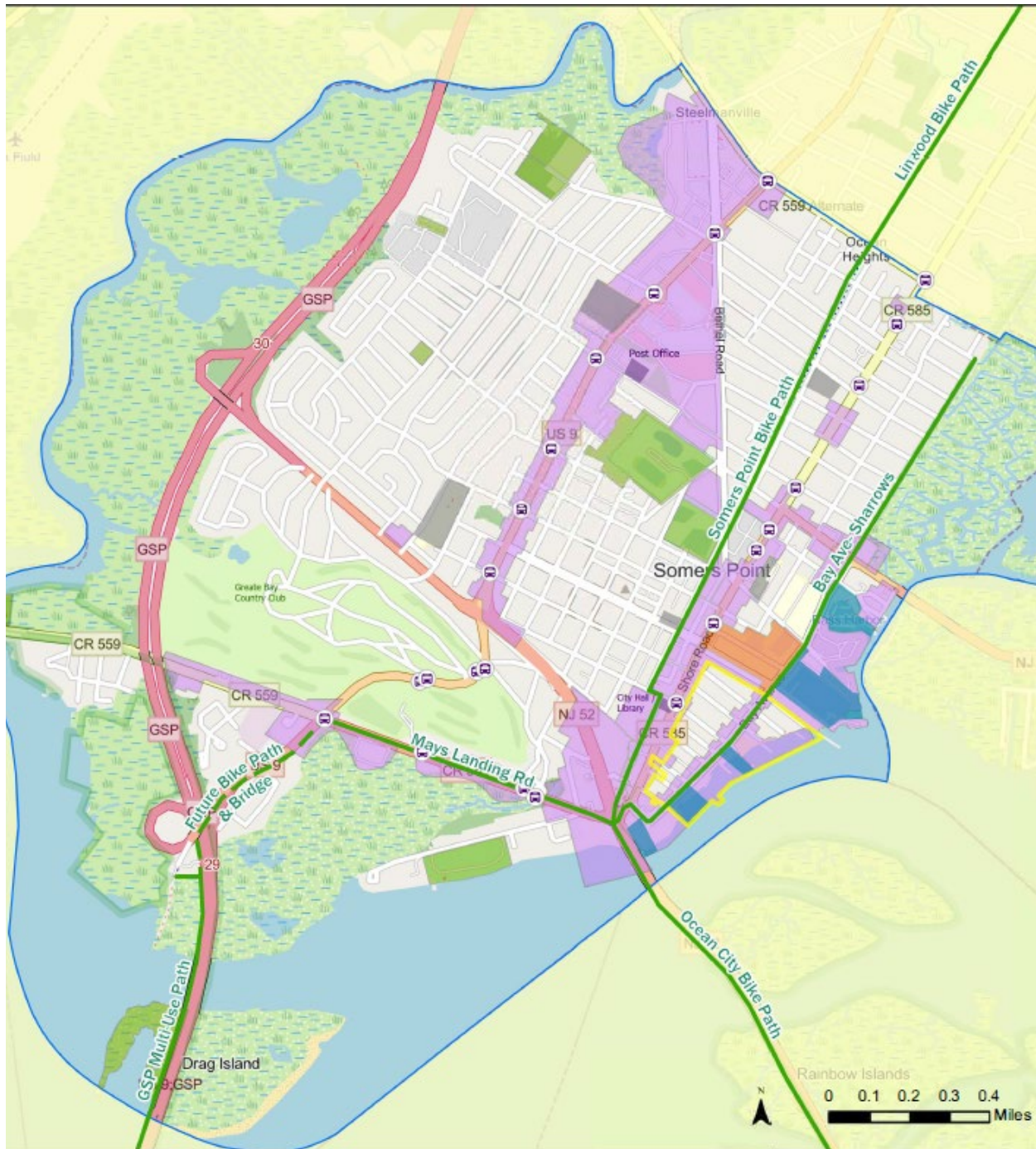
### **Housing Element**

The Housing Element that was revised in 2018. In early 2024, State legislation was signed to return the oversight of municipal affordable housing obligations to the State. Municipalities are required to prepare a revised housing plan.

### **Community Facilities Element**

The City continues to upgrade community facilities as funding becomes available. The community facilities recommendations from the 2014 Reexamination Report include completing restoration of Gateway Theater. This project is complete.





### Points of Interest

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Bus stops         | Municipal Building |
| Bike Path         | School             |
| Future Bike Path  | Commercial Area    |
| Historic District | Hospital           |
| Marina            | Park               |

## Somers Point Bike Paths

Sources: City of Somers Point, NJG/N, Open Street Map, Esri.

### Historic Preservation Element

Preservation and promotion of the City's maritime heritage continues to be a community objective. Opportunities exist for restoration and rehabilitation of historic properties. However, balancing preservation goals with the need for development and redevelopment in the historic district remains a concern. The Master Plan Historic District Element was adopted by the Planning Board in 2010, and this Element remains in effect.

### **Development Regulations**

The 2014 Reexamination Report provides a comprehensive review of recommended changes to the City's development regulations. These recommendations are presented in five categories:

1. **Design Guidelines**

The Report recommended design standards and signage recommendations for nonresidential zones on the Route 9 and Bay Avenue commercial corridors. Design standards to promote consistent front yard setbacks in the Historic District were also suggested, as well as signs and banners.

2. **Resiliency/Sustainability**

The Report recommended that the City expedite certification under FEMA's Community Rating System, which has been accomplished. The State is proposing significant changes in the Flood Protection Rules which will be addressed later in this Report.

3. **Parking**

Parking or the lack of parking has been an ongoing problem and is discussed in both the 1979 Master Plan and 2014 Reexamination. The 2004 Reexamination lists the following parking problem areas: Bay Avenue, Shore Road, the municipal parking lot on Bay Avenue, and Annie Avenue and satellite parking. The 2014 Reexamination Report recommends that a comprehensive parking strategy be developed and implemented, continued expansion of bicycle and pedestrian connections – making the City more walkable, and reduction of the parking standards for offices and banks.

4. **Redevelopment**

A continuing objective from 2014 is the continued use of redevelopment areas to encourage ratable expansion and appropriate development.

5. **Community Design**

The 2014 Reexamination Report recommends that design standards be developed and used to promote attractive neighborhoods and business areas. Compatible building designs in terms of building massing, material, and character should be required. Standards that address architecture as well as site design, landscaping, buffering, and parking lot design should be incorporated into the City's zoning.

## 6. Changes/Projects Recently Implemented

A partial list of changes/project implemented since the 2014 Master Plan Reexamination was completed include:

- a. The Somers Point Bike Path was widened and improved.
- b. Shore Road pedestrian safety improvement fully funded.
- c. Bay Avenue decorative lighting replaced from Gull Avenue to New Jersey Avenue.
- d. The City secured compliance with FEMA's Community Rating System resulting in flood insurance discounts.
- e. Transient marina constructed.
- f. Gateway Theater restored.
- g. Laurel Drive pedestrian improvements fully funded.
- h. Sidewalks installed on Route 9 from Somers Point-Mays Landing Road to Laurel Drive.
- i. Northside Neighborhood Action Plan completed as a prerequisite of securing Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit funding.
- j. Somers Mason improvements.
- k. Secured FEMA funding for several resiliency projects.

**Section C – The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials and changes in State, county, and municipal policies and objectives.**

### **Impacts of Superstorm Sandy**

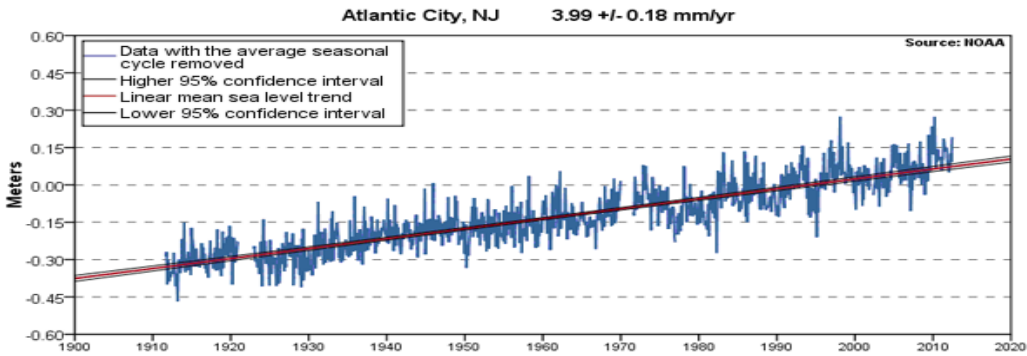
Since the 2014 Reexamination Report, the community has had a heightened awareness of flooding from hurricanes such as Superstorm Sandy as well as from rising sea levels. New flood maps have been issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and new data on sea-level rise has become available. The City will need to develop additional planning strategies and regulations to address flooding and environmental concerns due to rising sea levels.

The historical rate of sea level rise along the New Jersey coast over the past half-century was 0.14 inches per year, while predicted future rates are expected to increase to 0.5 inches per year. This means that by 2050, sea level is expected to rise by approximately 1 foot, and by 2100, sea level is projected to rise about 3 feet along the Jersey Shore (Figure 14).

In 2015, the Preliminary Work Map (Figure 15) was proposed by the FEMA that shows the “A” zones are expanding, placing more of the City in a high-risk category. A total of 182 properties would be added to the “A” zone. Also, a new “V” zone is recommended on Broadway Avenue, which will impact nine properties, and on Bay Avenue. These maps have not been adopted and are being revised by FEMA.

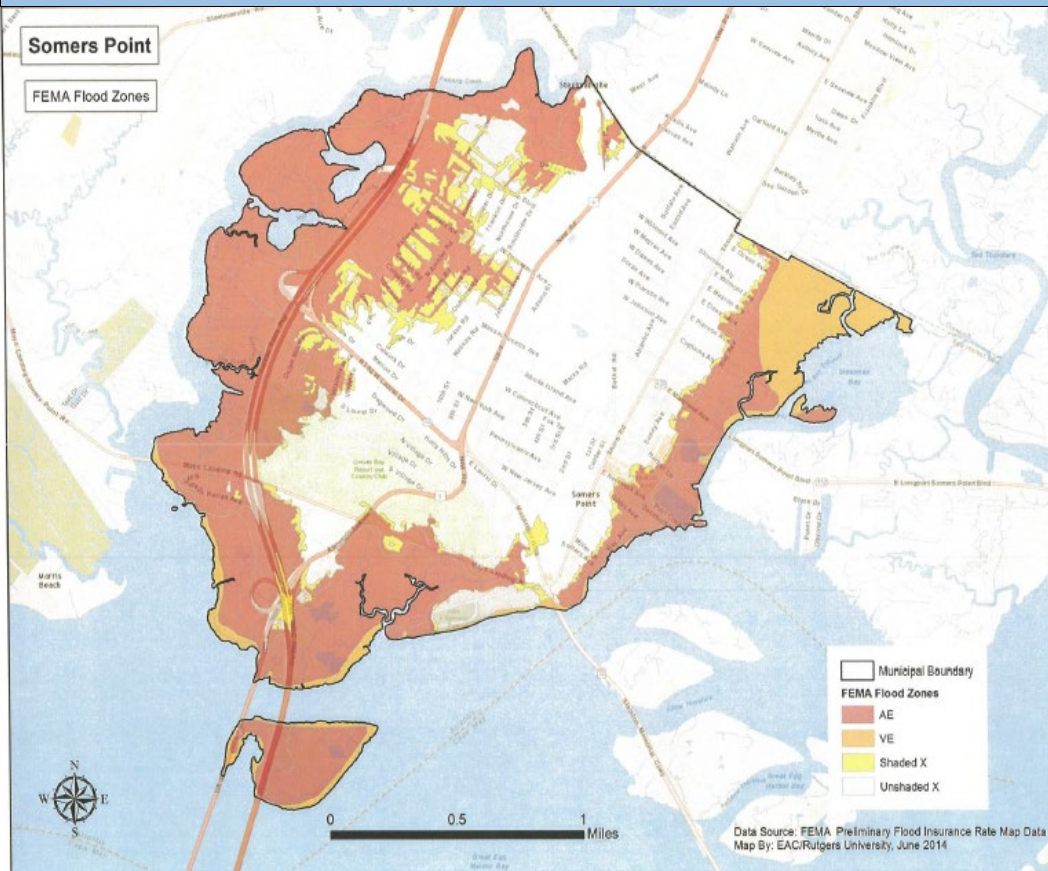


**Figure 14 – Historic Rate of Sea Level Rise along the New Jersey Coast**



Source: [www.njfloodmapper.com](http://www.njfloodmapper.com)

**Figure 15 – Preliminary FEMA Flood Zones**



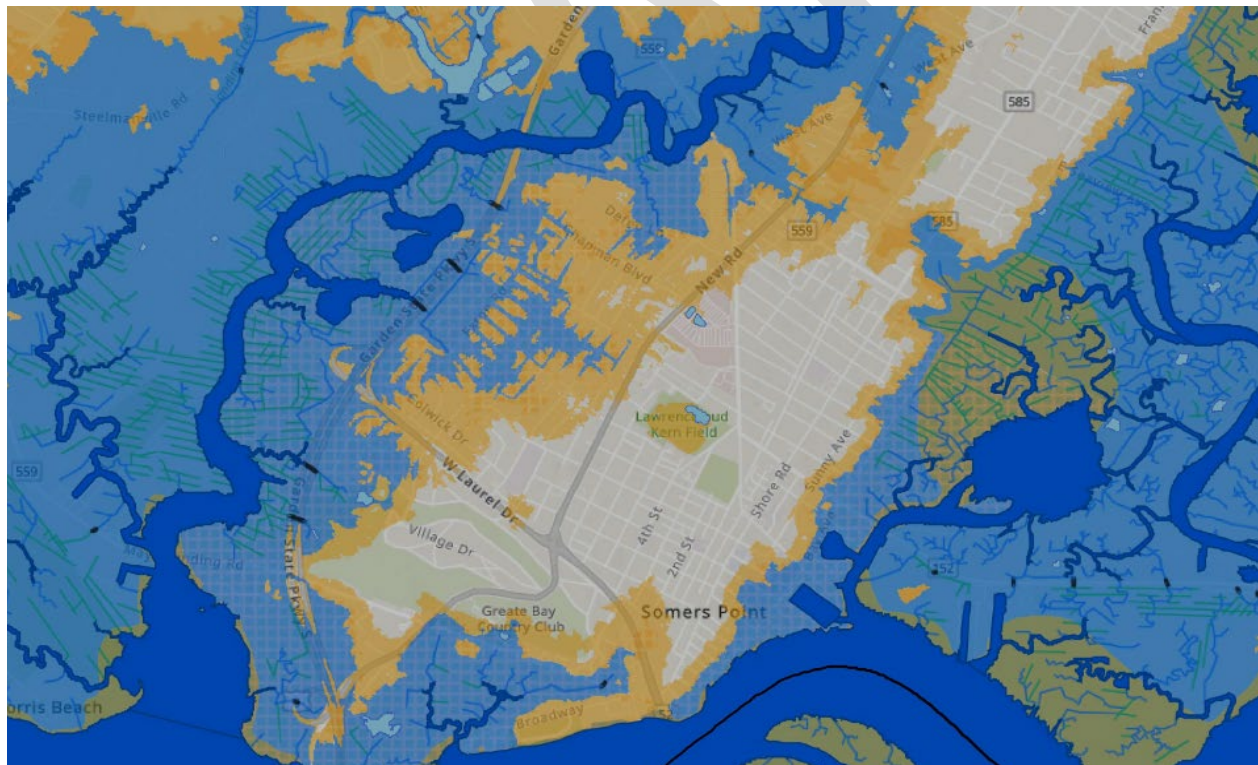


## New Jersey PACT REAL Regulations

In 2020, the New Jersey department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) launched NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats (NJ PACT), a regulatory reform effort to avoid, mitigate, and adapt the state to the effects of climate change. In addition to monitoring and aggressively reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and other climate pollutants, NJ PACT notably includes modifying land use regulations to incorporate climate change considerations. At its base level, climate change is a real estate issue, and so land use measures to adapt to climate change are by the NJDEP called Resilient Environments and Landscape (REAL).<sup>9</sup>

Citing a Rutgers University Science and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) Report that indicates a 50% probability that sea level rise will exceed 3.3 feet and a 17% probability that sea level rise will exceed 5.1 feet by 2100, assuming “moderate emissions,” NJDEP is poised to establish a new regulatory area known as the Inundation Risk Zone (IRZ). This zone consists of currently dry land that the State expects to be inundated by tidal waters daily or permanently by 2100. The IRZ is proposed to encompass all land that lies below the IRZ elevation, which is calculated by adding five feet to the elevation of the mean higher high water (MHHW). Development within the IRZ will be subject to more protective standards than the remainder of the floodplain beyond it. The expanded floodplain to be regulated is shown in yellow on Figure 16 below.

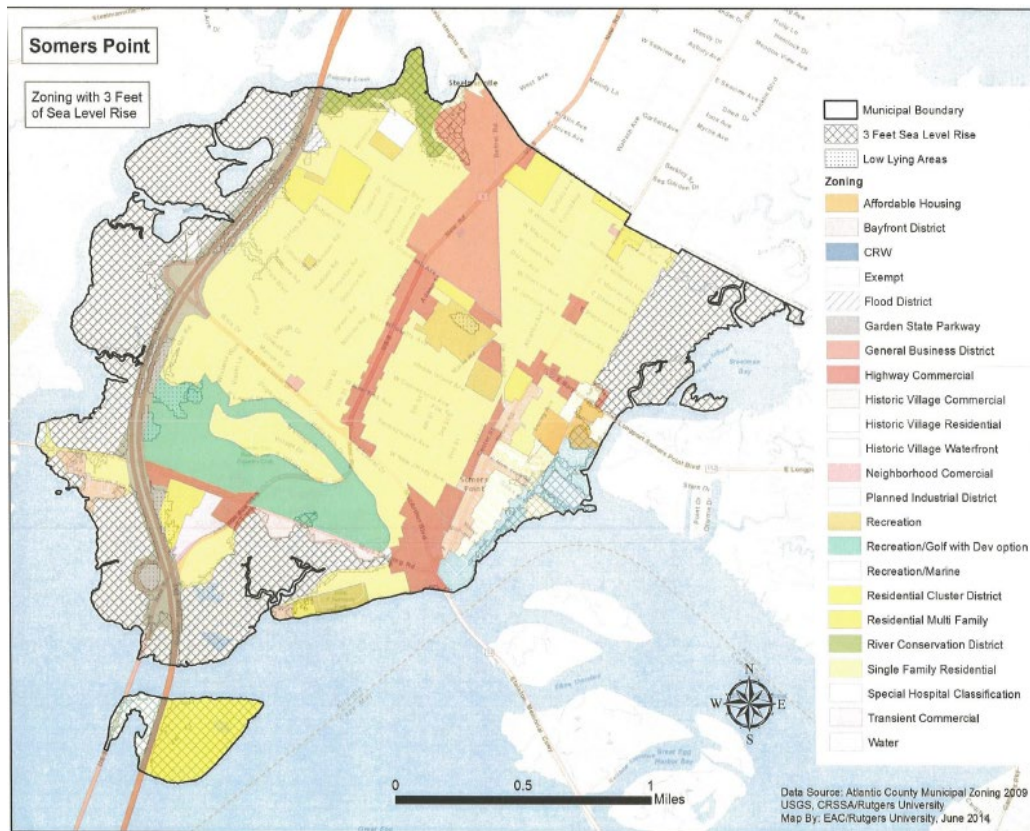
**Figure 16 – Somers Point Existing and NJDEP Proposed Floodplain**



<sup>9</sup> New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, [www.dep.nj.gov/njpact/](http://www.dep.nj.gov/njpact/)

New buildings within the IRZ would require the developer to establish a hardship exception, in which the applicant must demonstrate that there is no other reasonable use for the site and that preventing construction of a new building would constitute an exceptional and undue hardship. As part of this process, the applicant must provide an “Owner-Certified Climate Risk Assessment” that acknowledges the flooding risks linked to development. A recorded Deed Notice will be required.

**Figure 17 – Zoning with Three Foot of Sea Level Rise**



Under the IRZ rules, new buildings must be elevated to the new six feet above based flood elevation, four feet above Somers Point’s current standards. The impact of these regulations on the master planning effort is significant.

- New development in the expanded floodplain will be restricted and more expensive, given the new flood elevation or dry flood proofing requirements.
- Property owners in the expanded floodplain will be required to secure flood insurance if they have a mortgage.
- Setbacks, heights, and other design standards will have to be evaluated for new development given the new State regulations.
- These regulations and added costs will drive up the cost of living in the expanded floodplain, making the area less affordable.

A recent study indicates that the IRZ in Somers Point will regulate 1,032 acres. The City has a total land area of 2,518 acres; hence, 41 percent of the City will be regulated.<sup>10</sup>

### **USACE Back Bay Study**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District, issuing the New Jersey Back Bays (NJBB) Supplemental Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement and appendices in December 2024. The draft report outlines an updated plan, which includes the elevation of approximately 6,400 residential structures; floodproofing 279 critical infrastructure facilities (police, fire, ambulance, hospitals); and the implementation of nature-based solutions (NBS) (using dredged material to enhance 217 acres of salt marsh habitat vulnerable to sea level change at 7 locations in the back bay area). If a home is in the 5-year floodplain and if the elevation of the lowest floor of living space is below the level of inundation of a 5-year event, it would qualify this program. Part of Somers Point is in the 5-year floodplain. Public hearings are being held on this Report and then it will be submitted to Congress of funding consideration.

### **Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014**

This law provides for the gradual increase of flood insurance rates until the premiums reach full-risk rates. With limited exceptions, flood insurance premiums cannot increase more than 18 percent annually. The exceptions may see increases up to 25 percent annually until they reach full-risk rate and include:

- Older non-primary residences insured with subsidized rates;
- Severe Repetitive Loss Properties insured with subsidized rates; and
- Buildings that have been substantially damaged or improved and built before the local adoption of a Flood Insurance Rate Map (known as Pre-FIRM properties).

In 2020, FEMA data showed that there were 501 NFIP flood insurance policies in effect in Somers Point, a significant drop from the 1,066 NFIP policies in 2012.

### **National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System**

In 2017, the City joined the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS). The City achieved a Class 6 designation, resulting in a 20 percent discount for property owners with NFIP flood insurance.

### **Atlantic County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan**

In 2022, Somers Point participated in the update of the Atlantic County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies hazards that threaten the County and ways to reduce future damages associated with these hazards. The Somers Point Annex of the Plan details the following projects:

- Construct shorelines along Bay Avenue, Somers Point-Mays Landing Road, and properties adjacent to the Parkway.

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<sup>10</sup> New Jersey PACT REAL Proposal Review, The Lomax Consulting Group, 2024



- Raise the height of existing bulkheads along Bay Avenue.
- Install School House Pump Station, Yale Boulevard Pump Station and Generator, and Gulph Mills Pump Station and Generator.
- Upgrade/retrofit undersized stormwater systems on Atlantic Avenue from Groveland to Wilmont, Bethel Road/Route 9 intersection, Jordon Road, Defeo Lane, Osborne Road, Princeton Road, Haddon Road, and Amber Road, then parallel along Dartmouth Road and perpendicular across Exton Road.
- Address the flooding that occurs along Bucknell Road North and around the block to Bucknell Road South due to tidal issues.
- Address the flooding that occurs along Amber Road from Yale Boulevard to Bala Drive due to tidal issues.
- Address the flooding that occurs along Exton Road from Cornell Road to Bala Dive due to tidal issues.
- Address pipe that runs perpendicular through Wisteria Walk across Laurel Drive that floods due to tidal and rainwater that cannot drain.
- Address a section of Somers Point-Mays Landing Road that runs along the marsh and Patcong Creek that floods the intersection of Horter Avenue to Cliveden Avenue and Woodlawn Avenue and beyond to the bridge to Egg Harbor Township.
- Acquisition of three properties on Jordon Road, Block 1129, Lots 24 and 25; Block 1127, Lot 9.
- Continue to apply for FEMA funding to elevate homes.

### **State Highway Projects**

The State is planning several projects in Somers Point that will impact transportation in years to come.

1. Route 9, Chapman Boulevard to Ocean Heights Avenue – This project includes full reconstruction of Route 9, including sidewalks in areas where none exist. The State has started preliminary engineering. With the current schedule, NJDOT anticipates preliminary engineering to finish by Fall 2026 and final design phase by Spring 2029. The project is slated for construction to start in Summer 2029.
2. Route 9 – Garden State Parkway Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge Connection – This project will include reconstruction of the intersection of Route 9 and Somers Point-Mays Landing Road, a bike path on the east side of Route 9, and a bridge connecting to the Garden State Parkway multi-use path over the Great Egg Harbor River. This project is also in the preliminary design phase. Timing will depend on the extent of right-of-way that is needed.
3. Interchange 29 Completion – in an effort to reduce traffic on Laurel Drive, the New Jersey Highway Authority has included a \$15 million project to provide a full interchange. This project will take four years to complete once design commences.



**Figure 18: Concept Plan for Interchange 29 Improvements**



### **Affordable Housing Policy**

The regulation and administration of affordable housing changed in 2024. State legislation was signed to return the oversight of municipal affordable housing obligations to the State. Municipalities are required to prepare a revised housing plan.

### **Residential Site Improvement Standards**

The Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) establish statewide requirements for improvements made in connection with residential development, including streets and parking, water supply, sanitary sewers, and stormwater management. The latest regulation can be found at N.J.A.C. 5:21et seq., effective on November 2, 2020.

### **Municipal Stormwater Management**

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has adopted a change to the permit structure under the MS4 program. Previously the NJDEP identified two tiers of permitting for municipalities, Tier A and Tier B. Tier A Municipalities are located within the more urbanized regions of the state or along or near the Atlantic coast, while Tier B Municipalities tend to be located in more rural and non-coastal areas. All municipalities in New Jersey are considered either Tier A or Tier B. However, given the ongoing impacts of climate change, stormwater discharges, impacts to water quality, and other associated public health and safety issues, NJDEP is reassigning Tier B municipalities to Tier A municipalities to strengthen regulatory requirements related to stormwater, flooding, and development in floodplains.

## **Wild and Scenic River Designation**

In 1992, Congress passed Public Law 102-536, which designated segments of the Great Egg Harbor River and its tributaries as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The National Park Service, through the Secretary of the Interior, was given responsibility for “managing the river segments through cooperative agreements with the political jurisdictions within which such segments pass . . . except that publicly-owned lands within the boundaries of such segments shall continue to be managed by the agency having jurisdiction over such lands.”

The Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River passes through, or along, twelve communities located in four counties in the State of New Jersey, including the City of Somers Point. The areas encompassed by the Great Egg Harbor River designation include the Patcong Creek, which forms the western boundary of Somers Point. Somers Point has 3.69 miles of water frontage along Patcong Creek and the Great Egg Harbor River. Somers Point has adjusted its Master Plan to address resource protection needs for the designated river corridor.<sup>11</sup>

## **Proposed New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan**

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan outlines a comprehensive vision for the state’s growth, focusing on fostering sustainable, equitable, and resilient communities by 2050. Under the State Plan Policy Map, Somers Point is categorized under the Environmentally Sensitive / Barrier Islands Planning Area (PA5B). This designation emphasizes safeguarding the unique ecological and community character of New Jersey’s environmentally sensitive coastal areas and barrier islands.

## **Section D – The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.**

The following recommendations are a result of recent changes in the City and the desire to find new development and redevelopment opportunities that meet the needs of the residents, while maintaining the treasured characteristics the City has become known for and that residents cherish. The following have been developed as part of the 2025 Master Plan Reexamination Process:

### **1. Land Use Element Revisions**

- a. R-1 Single Family District – The R-1 zone is the City’s primary residential district, and the zone represents the largest zoned area in the City. This zone permits single family homes on lots of 7,500 square feet and is scattered throughout the City. The purpose of the R-1 District is to permit residential development within the City of Somers Point with sufficient controls to protect natural resources. Density is limited to 5.8 dwelling units per acre. The R-1 zone permits professional offices as a conditional use

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<sup>11</sup> National Park Service, Comprehensive Management Plan for the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River, May 2000.

on all lots fronting on Shore Road between Ocean Heights Avenue and the northerly right-of-way line of Goll Avenue.

A 2024 review of the lots bounded by Shore Road, Ocean Avenue, Bay Avenue, and Maryland Avenue show that nearly half (46.6 percent) are below 7,500 square feet, and a little over half (54.9 percent) have lot widths below the required 70 feet. Of the 123 lots in this area that are non-conforming, 65 lots are below 7,500 sf, 36 lots are below 6,000 sf, and 22 lots are below 5,000 sf.

Recommendation - Analyze the R-1 Zone to determine if a section of this zone should be rezoned to provide for small lots. The R-1 Zone currently requires 7,500-square-foot lots, and several variances have been granted to allow small lots due to the existing lot limitations. Another option is to introduce floor area ratio (FAR) requirements in the zone. Also, prohibit fencing over four feet in any designated front/side yard within the R-1 Residential Zone without vegetative screening.

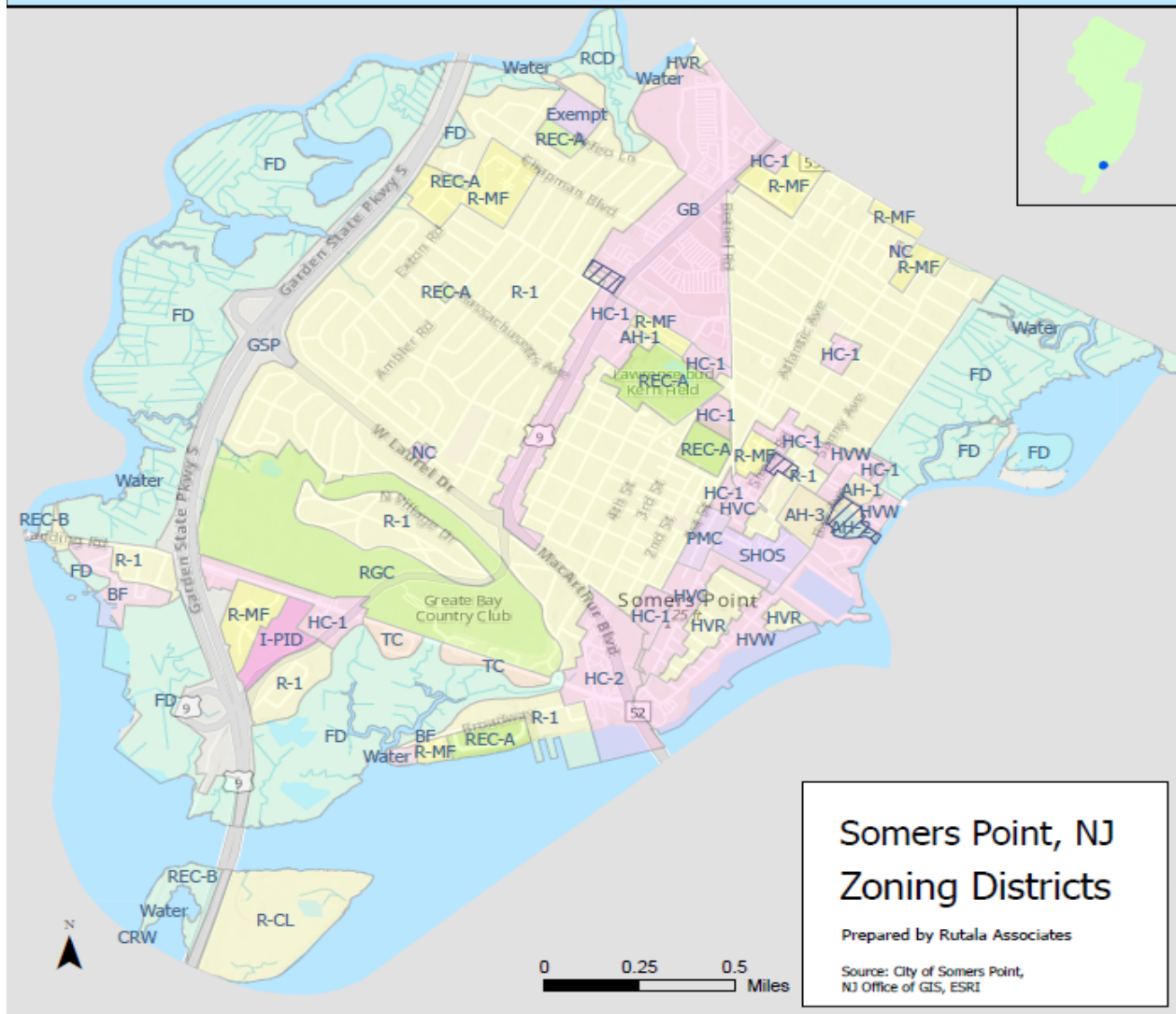
- b. R-MF Residential Multifamily District – The purpose of the Residential Multifamily District is to permit residential development of higher densities consistent with existing developmental patterns within the City of Somers Point. Permitted uses include garden apartments, townhouses, and two-family dwellings on three-acre lots or larger. Density is limited to 12 units per net residential acre. There are five R-MF locations scattered throughout the City.

Recommendation - Lands bounded by Cooper Drive, Hamilton Avenue, Groveland Avenue, and Chapman Boulevard should not be rezoned from R-1 to R-MF (multifamily residential).

- c. HC-1 Highway Commercial District – The purpose of the Highway Commercial-1 District is to encourage major commercial concentration with easy highway access. Permitted uses include retail stores and service establishments; fully enclosed restaurants and drinking establishments; general business and professional offices; banks; personal services; minor repair operations for televisions, radios, watches, shoes and appliances; gasoline service stations; and public buildings operated by the City of Somers Point. Fast-food restaurants are permitted as a conditional use. A minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet is required.

Recommendation - Mixed-use development be permitted in the HC-1 zone. Design standards should be developed for nonresidential zones, with particular focus on the Route 9 commercial corridor. Consideration should be given to providing an incentive to property owners who share parking and provide cross-access easements. The zoning at the intersection of Maryland Avenue and Bay Avenue should be changed to HC-1.

# Somers Point Zoning



## Legend

Redevelopment Area

### Zoning Districts

AH-1: Affordable Housing - One

AH-1: Single Family Residential

AH-2: Affordable Housing - Two

AH-3: Affordable Housing - Three

BF: Bay Front District

CRW: Conservational Recreational Wetlands

Exempt: Exempted City Owned

FD: Flood District

GB: General Business

GSP: Garden State Parkway

HC-1: Highway Commercial - One

HC-2: Highway Commercial - Two

HVC: Historic Village Commercial

HVR: Historic Village Residential

HVW: Historic Village Waterfront

I-PID: Planned Industrial District

NC: Neighborhood Commercial

PMC: Professional Medical Commercial District

R-1: Single Family Residential

R-CL: Residential Cluster

R-MF: Residential Multi Family

RCD: River Conservation District

REC-A: Recreational Land

REC-B: Recreational Land - Marine

RGC: Recreational Golf Course

SHOS: Special Hospital

TC: Transient Commercial

Water: Drag Channel/Great Egg Harbor Bay

Water: Great Egg Harbor Bay

Water: Patcong Creek

Water: Steelman Bay



- d. HC-2 Highway Commercial District – The purpose of the HC-2 District is to encourage major commercial concentration with easy highway access. Permitted uses include those permitted in the HC-1 district as well as motels and methadone clinics. Minimum lot size is 15,000 square feet.

Recommendation - Mixed-use development be permitted in the HC-2 zone. Design standards should be developed for nonresidential zones, with particular focus on the Route 9 commercial corridor. Consideration should be given to providing an incentive to property owners who share parking and provide cross-access easements.

- e. NC-2 Neighborhood Commercial District – The purpose of the NC-1 District is to encourage the establishment of essential service facilities in neighborhood areas. Permitted uses include essential service establishments, including, but not limited to, grocery stores, delicatessens, convenience stores, and pizza shops. Minimum lot size is 15,000 square feet.

Recommendation - Mixed-use development be permitted in the NC-2 District.

- f. BF Bay Front District – The purpose of this district is to preserve the unique natural resources of the area and to encourage development that is compatible with these resources and surrounding uses, providing for a mixture of residential, retail, commercial, and water- and non-water-related recreational uses and facilities as an integral part of the overall developmental picture of the district. Permitted uses include boat sales and rentals, boat storage and maintenance, boat dockage facilities and boat launch and fishing piers, fully-enclosed water-related service and/or recreational establishments, all existing residential uses present at the time of passage of this chapter, single-family detached dwellings, single-family attached condominiums, and general business offices and professional offices. Lot sizes vary depending on uses.

Recommendation - Lodging be evaluated as a potential use in this Zoning District.

- g. All Historic Districts – The purpose of the Somers Point Historic Districts is to acknowledge the special and unique character of Somers Point's bayfront and riverfront village areas, which consist of the HVC, HVR, and HVW zones. These districts include the residential and nonresidential land uses representing the community's growth and change during the nineteenth century, when maritime businesses and activities were an important part of the City's economy. The intent of all standards and guidelines in the Somers Point Historic District is to safeguard the heritage of the city by preserving that part of the City which reflects elements of its cultural, social, economic, and architectural history and to promote the use of the

historic area for the education, pleasure and welfare of the City's citizens and its visitors.

Renovation projects should proceed, without review, by the Historic Preservation Commission in the following limited circumstances so long as they are in concert with the surrounding neighborhood:

1. Re-roofing of residential structures;
2. Repair or replacement of wood fences in rear and side-yards of residences within the proper setback of the front dwelling;
3. Concrete flatwork containing no imprints, colors, or curbs;
4. Siding on residential housing so long as the horizontal façade of dwellings remains unchanged in design;
5. Minor repairs estimated to be less than \$1,000 due to storm damage, weather, or infestation so long as the design of the original structure remains unchanged;
6. Decks and porches that are not visible from the street and are in concert with the surrounding neighborhood; and
7. Repair of the front porches and steps so long as they maintain the original design, size, and shape.

Recommendation – Amend the City's Historic District ordinances to provide a clear framework to gauge whether or not new construction is "in concert with the surrounding neighborhood" §114-98(C). Establish design guidelines to guide development in the Historic District to maintain the streetscape and character of the neighborhoods. The guidelines should be in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which should be the controlling regulation for any work on a historic home.

- h. HVC Historic Village Commercial District – Permitted uses in the HVC zone include: retail stores and service establishments, but not including convenience-type stores; fully enclosed restaurants and drinking establishments; general business and professional offices; banks; personal service establishments; minor repair operations for televisions, radios, watches, shoes, and appliances; public buildings operated by the City of Somers Point; theaters, museums, art galleries and similar uses; all existing residential uses present at the time of passage of this chapter; and off-street parking lots and parking garages. Conditional uses include residential flats on the second floor above permitted nonresidential uses.

Recommendation – The present sign regulations refer applicants in the HVC zone to the HC-1 zone and those in the HVW zone to HC-2 zone for sign regulations. These standards do not properly serve the Historic District, and sign regulations unique to the Historic District should be created. Residential lot sizes and lot dimensions

should be evaluated, as many of the lots in this zone are substandard and nonconforming, making it difficult for homeowners to make improvements to their homes.

- i. HVR Historic Village Residential District – Permitted uses in the HVR District include all uses permitted in the R-1 Single-Family Residential District. Conditional uses include tourist/guest houses.

Recommendation - In order to protect the residential character of the City's historic district, a cap on the maximum building size or a maximum floor area ratio is recommended to ensure that future development in historic districts is compatible with existing development. Residential lot sizes and lot dimensions should be evaluated as many of the lots are substandard and nonconforming, making it difficult for homeowners to make improvements to their homes.

- j. HVW Historic Village Waterfront District – Permitted uses in the HVW zone include: all permitted uses as defined in the Village Residential zone; boat sales and rentals; boat storage and maintenance; boat dockage facilities and fishing piers; fully-enclosed water-related service and/or recreational establishments; restaurants and drinking establishments; theaters, small retail shops, and stores, but not including convenience-type stores; general business offices and professional offices; all existing residential uses present at the time of passage of this chapter; and off-street parking lots and parking garages. Conditional uses are tourist/guest houses and residential flats situated on the second floor above permitted nonresidential uses.

Recommendation - Permitting lodging in the marina districts should be evaluated. Residential lot sizes and lot dimensions should be evaluated as many of the lots are substandard and nonconforming, making it difficult for homeowners to make improvements to their homes.

- k. Design Guidelines

1. Design standards and signage recommendations should be developed for nonresidential zones with particular focus on the Route 9 and Bay Avenue commercial corridors. Design standards should be tailored to the character of each commercial zone.
2. Consider design standards that will promote consistent front yard setbacks in the Historic District.
3. Ordinance sections dealing with signs and banners should be revised. Temporary signs should be permitted for a period not to exceed 60 days. Promotional events including grand openings should not be permitted to exceed 60 days. There

should be no pennants or tinsel. Promotional materials and signs of any nature should be attached to utility poles or support wires. All such signs and banners should be kept in good condition and should be removed if torn, tattered, frayed or faded. Sign regulations should discourage some of the promotional displays so that they are not continuous and prohibit other promotional displays that are tacky. Precise language for signage changes should be discussed in more detail and a recommendation made to City Council for necessary development regulation changes.

j. Resiliency/Sustainability

1. Continue to pursue FEMA and I-Bank funding for stormwater/resiliency improvements.
2. Ensure that the public is aware of any changes in FEMA's flood maps as they are updated and any FEMA flood map changes that will in revisions to building requirements.
3. Amend the bulkhead height design requirements to elevation eight, or to a new standard set by ordinance and recommended by the City Engineer.
4. Maintain certification under the FEMA's Community Rating System to provide flood insurance discounts to property owners in Somers Point.
5. The guidelines prepared to assist property owners in the Historic District to elevate their homes and to ensure that new development is consistent with the fabric of the Historic District should continue to be implemented.
6. Amend zoning and development regulations to require all new or expanded single-family dwellings that do not otherwise require site plan or subdivision approval to undergo a stormwater review process.
7. To address issues that occurred during the derecho, it is recommended that the tree maintenance ordinance be carefully reviewed. Potential changes would be to require all contractors performing tree trimming and cutting within the city limits maintain minimum liability and workers compensation insurance, provide written estimates to property owners and include provisions for license suspension and revocation provisions.
8. Consideration should be given to requiring an elevation certification prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy when a property is sold. This will provide important information to the buyer, ensure compliance with local ordinances and

assist the City in obtaining a higher flood insurance discount for its property owners through FEMA's Community Rating System.

9. Require digital as-built drawings for all stormwater systems for new development as part of site plan approval so that this information can be incorporated into the City's stormwater mapping system. Also digital site plans and subdivisions should be required.
10. Monitor and stay actively engaged in the activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection as they work to increase the flood zone, height requirements, and development restrictions. These potential changes can have a profound impact on land use in Somers Point.

k. Parking

1. A comprehensive parking strategy should be developed and implemented. There is a shortage of parking during the summer months, especially in the Bay Avenue Business District. The parking study should determine the extent of the critical need and how best to address this need and include transit service from remote parking lots.
2. The relationship between the City's commercial corridors and residential neighborhoods can be cemented by linking residential neighborhoods to commercial corridors via vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian connections. Shared parking and access in commercial corridors should be investigated as a way to increase the convenience of visiting adjacent properties, reducing traffic on our streets and increasing the total available parking.
3. The parking standards for offices and banks in the HC-1 and GB zones should be reduced from 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet to 4 spaces per 1000 square feet. This is consistent with the current standards used in the industry and will provide for additional open space and a reduction of impervious surfaces.

- l. Require sidewalks/curbing at all new construction/redevelopment sites.
- m. Require a Phase 1 Environmental Assessment for all site plans and subdivision applications where there has been a history of industrial use and/or contamination.
- n. Assist property owners to apply for NJDEP brownfields funding to study and/or remediate contaminated, underperforming/distressed commercial sites.



- o. Ensure reasonable public access to the waterfront is provided at all new/redeveloped commercial sites adjacent to tidal waters.
- p. Incorporate Green Design Criteria into the City's Construction Codes.
- q. Emphasize use of living shorelines to stabilize tidal waterfront areas where possible.
- r. Prohibit the erection of billboards to achieve the City's substantial interest in historic preservation, traffic safety, and aesthetics. This action will guard against the deterioration of the City's character and concern for public safety.
- s. Continue to use redevelopment plans and other planning and financial tools to improve key properties throughout the City.
- t. Pursue Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credits to implement the Northeast Neighborhood Action Plan. This neighborhood is generally the area north of Connecticut Avenue and west of Route 9.

## 2. Economic Development Element Revisions

- a. Regional Tourism Marketing – Collaborate with surrounding communities to leverage the robust \$15 billion Atlantic County and Cape May County tourism economy through regional marketing and promotions.
- b. Destination Marketing – To capitalize on its strengths, Somers Point could enhance its identity as a premier waterfront destination, not just a pass-through for beachgoers. This could be achieved through targeted marketing campaigns promoting the city's unique attractions, such as its marinas, dining options, historic sites, and recreational activities. Seasonal events, such as waterfront festivals, concerts, tours of the historic Bayfront District, and outdoor markets could also attract more visitors and improve the local economy.
- c. Prioritize Bay Avenue Improvements – The City should continue to prioritize the Bay Avenue area, given its tremendous potential. The 2012 Vision Plan states that:

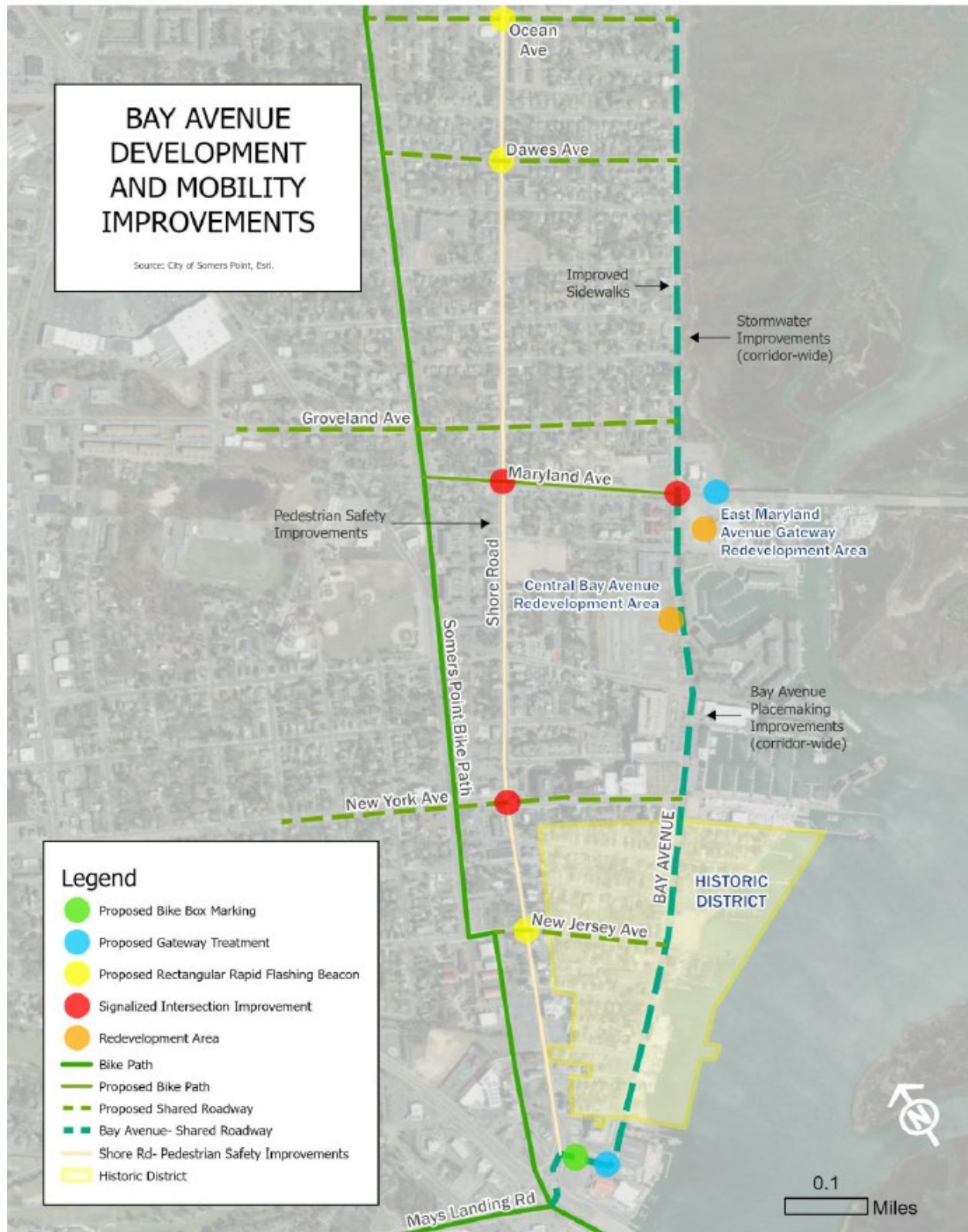
*"Someday...a Bay Avenue that is a great walkable street (will connect) active seasonal and year-round mixed-use retail, residential, restaurant, outdoor dining, amusement, arts, and entertainment."*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Somers Point Vision Plan, 2012, Brown & Keener.

This remains to be the vision for Bay Avenue.

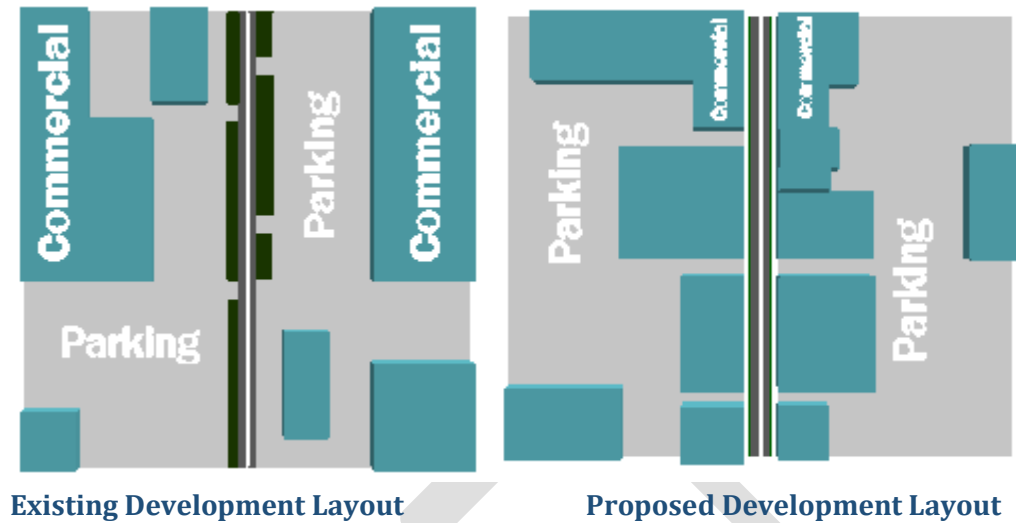
1. Bay Avenue Vision Plan – This Plan will develop specific standards and guidelines for future development and improvements along Bay Avenue from Gull Avenue to Maryland Avenue. This Plan will focus on Bay Avenue and the adjoining neighborhood. The existing land uses, zoning, real estate market, blocks & parcel sizes, parking, and flood characteristics will be analyzed. A design plan and guidelines will be established with input from the residents and businesses.
  2. The redevelopment of the Shore Medical Center tract is a critical element. This site can accommodate a mixed-use development that includes specialty retail, galleries, eateries, residential, and other uses that will encourage a more walkable Bay Avenue.
  3. Develop a walking district in the Bayfront District, The continuation of the streetscaping efforts along Bay Avenue is critical to this area's success. Improvements should prioritize making the street more walkable and providing visual excitement along Bay Avenue and the neighborhood.
  4. Continue resiliency efforts along the Bay Avenue waterfront. Bay Avenue is the most vulnerable area in the City, and efforts should be made to elevate and replace the bulkheads and install pump stations.
  5. Continue efforts to permit and implement periodic dredging along the Bayfront.
  6. Adequate parking on Bay Avenue continues to be a challenge during the high season since it often spills into the adjoining residential areas and local streets. This issue will only get more serious as this area continues to attract visitors. A continuous shuttle system, akin to what many of the beach front communities have, should be explored. Potential intercept lots and the shuttle cost should be determined.
  7. Encourage water taxi service – A water taxi to and from Ocean City, Longport, Margate, Upper Township, and Atlantic City can provide easy access for locals and visitors who want to visit Somers Point for the day or evening.
  8. Work with property owners on Bay Avenue with underutilized or inconsistent uses to see these sites development in a way that enhances the Bay Avenue District.
- d. Continue to Partnership with Shore Medical Center – The Medical Center is the largest employer in the City with over 1,300 full-time equivalent employees. The Medical Center and associated facilities represent almost half of the employment in Somers Point. The City should continue to work closely with the Medical Center to address future needs and to plan for the development of vacant properties that they own.



- e. Route 9 Corridor Enhancements – The City should work to transition Route 9 from a strip commercial corridor to a more attractive, walkable mixed-use district.
1. The redevelopment of vacant and abandoned properties needs to be addressed. The City should work to help these properties to redevelop.
  2. An analysis of the Route 9 properties from Laurel Drive and Connecticut Avenue to consider rezoning this area for mixed use development.
  3. Since Route 9 is a State Highway, the City should collaborate with the State to encourage the installation of sidewalks, reducing the speed limit, ADA ramps, improved signage, highly visible crosswalks, lighting, and sign synchronization.
  4. A walkable street is created through the design of the public realm, including the sidewalks. It also requires good spatial proportion defined by the buildings facing it. Buildings along a street serve as the walls to the “outdoor room,” providing enclosure, definition, and visual interest to both pedestrians and motorists. When buildings are set back from the street, behind parking lots for example, the street ceases to be a defined space, which is one reason why many commercial streets with this character are not comfortable for or used by pedestrians. The following guidelines are intended to create a street that excels at providing comfortable and convenient pedestrian access to local businesses and a common civic realm for Somers Point’s residents and visitors.
    - i. Institute a long-term redevelopment strategy for the Route 9 area to encourage development closer to the street with parking in the rear of the properties, as depicted in Figure 18 below.
    - ii. Revise zoning to reduce setbacks and pull buildings up to the sidewalk.
    - iii. Develop design standards to encourage internal circulation, minimize driveway openings through shared access, shared parking, and cross-access easements.
    - iv. Enhance streetscape with consistent treatment throughout the Route 9 Corridor — wider sidewalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, and street furniture.
    - v. Require no side yard setbacks, except those required to meet the current local fire code.
    - vi. Sustainable commerce: Encourage projects to incorporate elements that promote goods and services purchased from/produced in the local community so as to enhance the social-commercial fabric of the community.
    - vii. Permit mixed use development in the HC-1 zone.



**Figure 19: Long Term Redevelopment Strategy for Route 9**



f. Streetscape and Design Guidelines

It is recommended that streetscape and design guidelines be established for the major business districts of Somers Point – particularly Bay Avenue and Route 9.

The City has put in place the basic street design on Bay Avenue. Pedestrian level decorative lighting, street trees and crosswalks already exist and are in good condition. These improvements should be augmented with additional crosswalks at key intersections, traffic calming features including bump outs and decorative crosswalks, bike racks, trash and recycling containers and other amenities.

Likewise, MacArthur Boulevard has a good foundation with the recently completed Route 52 Causeway improvements. New walkways and decorative lighting creates a sense of place and are well designed and complimented by natural landscaping. Additions suggested are bike racks, trash containers and trash and recycling containers. An important feature that should be included in the MacArthur Boulevard Streetscape is wayfinding signage. Since this connector conveys traffic from the Parkway to Ocean City it is imperative that this opportunity is taken to explain to visitors all that Somers Point has to offer. The wayfinding signage should make travelers aware of the Route 9 Business District, Somers Mansion and other historic features, and the Bay Avenue experience.

Route 9 presents the biggest challenge. This State Highway was originally designed to convey traffic along the coast from Cape May to New York. With the construction of the Garden State Parkway, the function of this roadway changed forever but many of the old design features remain. Sidewalks should be separated from the curb by a grass strip to enhance the pedestrian experience and provide a safer walkway. The

entire length of Route 9 should have sidewalks on both sides. Crosswalks are needed to access the school near Connecticut Avenue and to promote safe crossing. Crosswalk, pedestrian signage and push pads must be included at all signalized intersections. Bike racks and trash and recycling containers should be added. Site design should encourage landscaped frontage and parking in the rear of the property to promote a more attractive streetscape.

- g. It is recommended that a Creative Placemaking Plan be developed. A Creative Placemaking Plan is a method to bring together the various aspects of sustainability, specifically focusing on artists, historical societies, cultural groups, musicians, theater, and more. The Creative Placemaking Plan document strategically integrates the creative community into the community as a whole, developed with public input. The plan starts with developing a Creative Assets Inventory — a culmination of all individual artists, arts groups, and galleries, including the Theater Collaborative of South Jersey, the Atlantic County Historical Society, the Somers Point Historical Society, Economic Development Advisory Board, the Somers Point Business Association, the Arts Commission, the Recreation Commission, the Historic Preservation Commission, the Green Team, and more. Integrating these individuals and separate groups into a single plan for the future sets the common goal of improving the quality of life in Somers Point.
- h. Encourage additional living options for seniors and other empty nesters. The baby boomer generation continues to retire, and this can provide a significant market for Somers Point given the services and attractions provided.
- i. Provide mid-term living arrangements such as hotels/motels, timeshares, marinas, and transient docks for those wishing to stay in town for a few days to a few weeks. These opportunities could include small boutique hotels near the waterfront and upgraded and expanded marinas for both larger boats as well as transient slips.
- j. Wayfinding – Millions of tourists pass by through the City annually on their way to Margate, Longport, Ocean City, and points south. The City's goal is to provide for a wayfinding system that will promote the business districts and points of interest. All of the signage will be branded, easy to read, provide a consistent message, and be professionally designed and well maintained (Figure 19).

**Figure 20 – Illustration of Wayfinding Signage**



Source: Somers Point Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

- k. Build on the success of existing special events such as the Bayfest, Beach Concert Series, and Good Old Days by developing additional events throughout the year. City Council has adopted an Ordinance to change the Economic Development Advisory (EDAC) Commission's mission statement and encourage city event organizers to participate in city-wide branding efforts. It is recommended that the Economic Development Advisory Commission serve as a clearing house for any event planned in the City. All proposals should be submitted to the EDAC for review and approval. The EDAC should ensure that events are properly planned, and that the City brand is promoted and included in all advertisements. The EDAC should evaluate each event after it occurs to consider what can be done to improve the experience. An expanded

monthly event schedule should be implemented. Below is an example of what the annual events calendar could include:

April – Bayfest  
May – Boat & Car Show  
June – Crab Feast  
July – Kick-off of Summer Beach Concert Series  
August – Wine Fest  
September – Good Old Day's Festival  
October – Oktoberfest/Rocktoberfest  
November - HarborFest  
December – Holiday Parades

- I. Eco-tourism Growth – Eco-tourism presents an economic development opportunity in Somers Point is to promote its unique environment. The Wild and Scenic Rivers designation of the Great Egg Harbor River can also be used to promote eco-tourism. Wild and Scenic Rivers hold significant economic value, contributing to local economies through recreation, tourism, property values, and supporting industries while also providing ecological benefits that underpin economic stability.

### 3. Transportation Element Revisions

- a. Continue to pursue funding for pedestrian sidewalk connections, crosswalks, and additional parking to serve the Dawes Avenue School. Consistently designed continental crosswalks should be employed throughout the City to increase the crosswalk visibility and increase pedestrian safety, as shown in Figure 20. High-visibility crosswalks have

**Figure 21: Continental Crosswalks**



been shown to increase motorist yielding and channelization of pedestrians. The Federal Highway Administration has concluded that high-visibility crosswalks have a positive effect on pedestrian and driver behavior.



- b. Coordinate with the Somers Point Business Association to encourage local businesses to provide bike racks at their locations.
- c. Continue to work with the County to install pedestrian safety improvements on Shore Road.
- d. Collaborate with NJ Transit to add bus shelters at appropriate locations to encourage greater use of mass transit service.
- e. Continue to work with NJDOT to expedite completion of the bike bridge to connect Route 9 with the Garden State Parkway.
- f. Work with NJDOT to conduct a speed study to evaluate the creation of a consistent 35 mph speed limit through the entire Route 9 corridor. This change would require a speed reduction from 45 mph to 35 mph between the Garden State Parkway (MP 32.22) and Somers Point-Mays Landing Road (MP 32.64) and a speed reduction from 40 mph to 35 mph between NJ Route 52 (MP 33.23) and Ocean Heights Avenue (MP 34.57). A 35 mph speed limit would be supportive of the surrounding land use context, which includes the busy commercial zone north of NJ Route 52. The standard 35 mph speed limit would also set consistent driver expectations along the corridor and create a less stressful environment for bicyclists and pedestrians. The speed limit change should be discussed with the City of Linwood to extend the 35 mph zone farther north. The change in speed limit should be supported by a targeted education and enforcement campaign to make drivers aware of the changes.
- g. Coordinate with NJDOT and Atlantic County to synchronize traffic signal timing along Route 9, Route 52, and Somers Point-Mays Landing Road to alleviate gridlock conditions during peak summer travel times.
- h. Install additional street lighting along Bay Avenue, north of Maryland Avenue.
- i. Complete certification as a Bicycle Friendly Community.<sup>13</sup> There are currently 480 Bicycle Friendly Communities nationwide. This program sets standards and guides progress for improving biking throughout the community.

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<sup>13</sup> The League of American Bicyclists, [www.bikeleague.org/bfa/community/](http://www.bikeleague.org/bfa/community/)

#### 4. Open Space and Recreation Element Revisions

- a. Complete a Community Forestry Management Plan and maintain accreditation with the New Jersey Urban and Community Forestry Program. A Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP) is an essential guide to successfully achieving a healthy and safe community forest. By developing and implementing a management plan for a town's shade trees, the town's tree program becomes more proactive and efficient. A plan can lead to decreased tree maintenance and removal costs, shorter response time to citizen requests for work, and a decrease in hazardous tree situations.
- b. Complete an inventory of trees within the public rights-of-way, and prepare a plan for preservation, maintenance, and replacement.
- c. Create a concept plan for a passive, wooded open space park at the City-owned parcels along DeFeo Lane inclusive of Block 524, Lot 12 and Block 525, Lots 1 and 2.01. Incorporate parking and marsh edge environmental education walking trail.
- d. Investigate the potential for partnering with the Great Egg Harbor River Council and NJDEP to create a kayak launch site along the Great Egg Harbor River at the access to the Old Beesley's Point Bridge.
- e. Implement the Kern Field master plan to consider including frisbee golf, paddle ball courts, track improvements, basketball courts, playground, new football scoreboard, snack stand improvements, and walking paths. Conduct an analysis and water quality testing of the pond at Kern Field to determine the potential for its use for low impact public recreation, including fishing, birding, kayaking, etc.
- f. Continue to improve the Somers Point Bike Path with train station renovations, interpretive signage, parking near Dawes Avenue School, bike racks, and exercise stations. A memorial tree planting program along the Bike Path could be initiated by the Green Team and Environmental Commission.
- g. Improve William Morrow Municipal Beach Park with shade areas, playground improvements, and comfort station renovations.
- h. Continue to pursue funding to build pedestrian and bicycle access to Drag Island and improve this area for birding, fishing, and passive recreation.
- i. Improve the transient marina on Higbee Avenue. Dredging needs to be prioritized along with the implementation of a boater's app, signage, moorings, and a weather station.

- j. Complete the Inclusive Playground planned for JFK Park.
- k. Complete an updated Natural Resource Inventory. The current Natural Resource Inventory was completed in 1996.<sup>14</sup>
- l. Continue to implement the Bay Avenue Development and Mobility Improvements described in the 2014 Bicycling and Pedestrian Study, which includes gateway treatment at the Maryland Avenue entrance, living shoreline on Bay Avenue north of Maryland Avenue, and Bay Avenue Placemaking Improvements. Shared lane markings on Bay Avenue and pedestrian safety improvement on Shore Road have already been included. Shared lane markings should be painted on the entirety of Goll Avenue (shown in the photo). The roadway consists of two, 15-foot lanes with no parking and a low speed limit of 25 mph. Shared-lane markings would indicate a clear connection between the marked bike route on Bay Avenue to the Ocean City Bike Path on the NJ Route 52 Memorial Causeway.
- m. Become an official Tree City.<sup>15</sup> This designation means joining a well-recognized nationwide network of municipal leaders, putting tree standards in place and involving and educating citizens about the importance of trees.
- n. Conservation and maintenance of the marsh area surrounding Somers Point is a key element to reducing flooding. The use of thin layer placement of dredge material to



<sup>14</sup> Amy S. Greene Environmental Consultants, Inc. A Natural Resource Inventory of the City of Somers Point, December 19, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Arbor Day Foundation, [www.arborday.org/our-work/tree-city-usa](http://www.arborday.org/our-work/tree-city-usa)

stabilize and restore wetlands has advanced significantly and should be considered to address the sinking tidal marshes.

- o. Funding for removal of abandoned/derelict boats has been a long standing issue. NJ Senate Bill 1354 would appropriate \$25 million in grants to municipalities to help with removing abandoned boats. The City should support this legislation.
- p. Prevention and removal of marine debris can be significant issues after major storms. An Emergency Debris Management Plan should be prepared in anticipation of these inevitable events.<sup>16</sup>

## **5. Housing Element Revisions**

- a. The City of Somers Point has agreed to participate in the fourth round of the affordable housing program. For the fourth round, the City has a present need of 27 units and a prospective need of 31 units. An affordable housing plan must be adopted to comply with the State's requirements.

## **6. Public Facilities Element Revisions**

- a. Maximize the potential use of solar energy on City-owned structures and open space areas. A power purchase agreement or net metering agreement would allow the City to enjoy the cost savings of solar with no cost to the City.
- b. Consider options to upgrade or relocate City Hall. The existing building is undersized and not properly designed for today's services. The first step would be to conduct a space study to gain an understanding of area needed for City services.
- c. Encourage the reuse of the New York Avenue School for a commercial, an Arts Center, or a non-school related public use.
- d. Support the School District in their efforts to become a National Blue Ribbon School. This designation honors high-performing schools and schools that are making great strides in closing achievement gaps.<sup>17</sup>
- e. Support joint use and shared services agreements between the School District and the City of Somers Point and nearby school districts.

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<sup>16</sup> State of New Jersey Emergency Debris Generating Event Planning and Management Toolkit, 2022, [www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/toolkit.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/toolkit.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> National Blue Ribbon Schools, [www.nationalblueribbonschools.ed.gov](http://www.nationalblueribbonschools.ed.gov)



- f. Consider option to relocate the Public Works Complex to better utilize this centrally located site.
- g. Energy Savings Improvement Plan - The City and the School District should jointly consider an Energy Savings Improvement Program to upgrade all public buildings with more energy efficient lighting and HVAC systems. This Program was designed by the NJBPU and the New Jersey legislature to allow school districts and towns to complete needed energy efficiency improvements funded by the future energy savings.
- h. Community Center Site - The City should consider reserving adequate space for a community center. The community center is envisioned to include meeting rooms, a gym for sports and large assemblies, and possible space for a relocated library. The ideal sites are in the vicinity of the athletic fields at Fehrle and Kern Fields or along the Somers Point Bike Path.
- i. LED Street Lights - The conversion of streetlights from high pressure sodium or metal halide fixtures to light-emitting diode (LED) lighting can result in a 50 to 60 percent savings in electric. In addition to the electric savings, LED fixtures last up to 15 years – three times the life of current technologies; reduced glare; and the whiter light that enhances safety. Atlantic City Electric owns most of the streetlights in Somers Point and they are starting to offer programs that provide for conversion to LED. The LED conversion can be paid for by the energy savings over time. It is recommended that the City consider this alternative.

## **7. Recycling Element Revisions**

- a. Establish a residential E-waste drop off program aimed at recycling electronic products and removing them from the waste stream.

**Section E – The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.**

On October 23, 2014, the City Council authorized the Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if the entire City of Somers Point qualifies as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation pursuant to the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (hereinafter "LRHL"), NJSA 40A:12A-1, et. seq via Resolution No. 183 of 2014. Thereafter, the Planning Board

reviewed Resolution No. 183 of 2014 and a report entitled “City-Wide Rehabilitation Study and Report” prepared by Rutala Associates, LLC. The Planning Board determined that a majority of the City’s water and sewer infrastructure is at least 50 years old and is in need of repair or substantial maintenance and recommended the City Council designate the City as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation pursuant to the LRHL. On November 20, 2014, the City Council approved Resolution No. 186 of 2014, which designated the entire City of Somers Point an Area in Need of Rehabilitation. City Council is the Redevelopment Agency and they evaluate Redevelopment Plan initiated by property owners.

#### **1. Central Bay Avenue/Shore Road Redevelopment Plan**

This redevelopment area contains approximately 46 acres and is bounded by East Maryland Avenue to the north, Bay Avenue to the east, Gibbs Avenue to the south, and the City’s bikeway to the west. This redevelopment area also includes Shore Medical Center. The plan has undergone some modifications since it was originally adopted. The plan seeks to revitalize the Central Bay Avenue/Shore Road area in order to create a vibrant, engaging mixed-use community and to plan for the needs of Shore Medical Center within the context of the City’s redevelopment policies. The Plan includes a large vacant parcel bounded by Bay Avenue, Harbor Lane, Sunny Avenue, and Pleasant Avenue. The successes and failures of this Plan will be evaluated as part of the modifications to the redevelopment plan as necessary and appropriate.

#### **2. Mac’s Shore Redevelopment Plan**

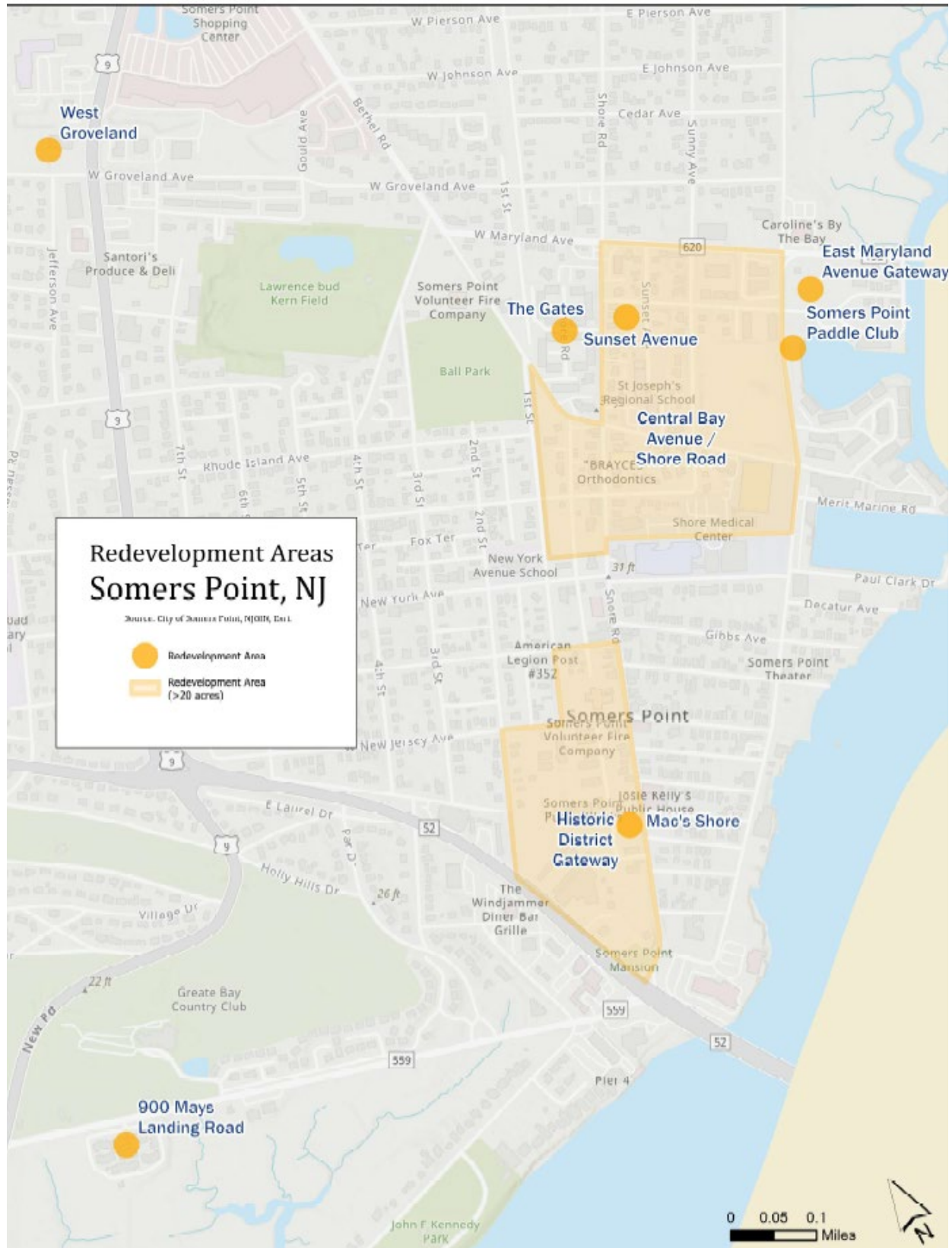
The Mac’s Shore Redevelopment Plan contains two lots located on the southbound side of Shore Road. The lots contain approximately 30,000 square feet in area and include Block 1714, Lots 1 and 2. The plan was prepared in 2005 and seeks to revitalize Mac’s Shore area in order to create an upscale residential development and to provide adequate parking for existing uses along Shore Road. The successes and failures of this Plan will be evaluated as part of the modifications to the redevelopment plan as necessary and appropriate.

#### **3. Historic District Gateway Redevelopment Plan**

The Historic District Gateway Redevelopment Plan contains approximately 22 acres and is bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue to the north, Shore Road to the east, MacArthur Boulevard to the south, and First and Second Streets to the west. The plan seeks to revitalize the Historic District Gateway area in order to create an enticing mixed-use gateway into the City and to capitalize on the existing historic facilities in the area. The successes and failures of this Plan will be evaluated as part of the modifications to the redevelopment plan as necessary and appropriate.

#### **4. East Maryland Avenue Gateway Redevelopment Plan**

This Plan contains approximately 5.9 acres and is bounded by Maryland Avenue to the north, the bay to the east, and south and Bay Avenue to the west. The overall vision for the East Maryland Avenue Gateway Redevelopment Area is to provide for either a mix of uses, or a single use, which will complement and support the existing marina and the surrounding area. This site has been approved for Salt House, a 24 unit single family home development with nine affordable units.



## **5. Somers Point Paddle Club Redevelopment Plan**

The Project Area will encompass the corner of Block 1211, Lot 2 adjacent to the intersection of Bay Avenue and Pleasant Avenue. The parcel is approximately 0.75 acres of the total lot. The Project Area at the intersection of Bay Avenue and Pleasant Avenue.

## **7. 900 Mays Landing Road Redevelopment Plan**

The Project Area includes one parcel, Lot 3 of Block 2020, located at 900 Mays Landing Road. The property encompasses 4.42 acres, according to the tax card, and is located along the south side of Mays Landing Road (Atlantic County Route 559), roughly 400 feet east of its intersection with Atkinson Avenue (US Highway 9). The Project Area is currently developed with a Sonesta ES Suites hotel, which was constructed in 1988, and is currently owned by AVIA NJ Mays Landing, LLC, according to online tax records. This Plan has been approved for 116 market rate apartments with a minimum of 17 (15 percent) affordable units. This redevelopment project is underway.

## **7. West Groveland Redevelopment Plan**

The Project Area is an approximately 2.5 acre area at the northwest corner of Route 9 and West Groveland Avenue. Provco Partners was selected as the redeveloper; an Aldi Grocery Store has been approved for this site. This redevelopment project is underway.

## **8. The Gates Redevelopment Plan**

The Gates is a multifamily housing development located on Shore Road. The property is described on the City's tax maps as Block 1114; Lots 3, 4.01, 4.03, and 4.04. This development has been renovated and rebranded, resulting in an improved quality of life for the residents by removing conditions that have a blighted influence on surrounding properties, enhancing aesthetics, providing a sense of place, and stabilizing property values. This project is complete.

## **9. Sunset Avenue Redevelopment Plan**

The Sunset Avenue Redevelopment Plan Area is comprised of five lots, totaling approximately 1.7 acres, and is on the corner of Shore Road and Pleasant Ave. It is bisected by Sunset Avenue, as shown on the Aerial Map and Tax Map figures below. The area is located to the south of the Bayview Court Apartment Complex, located across Shore Road, and includes Block 1214; Lots 9, 10, 11, 12, and 16. The Plan includes off-street parking and attached single family homes. This project is complete.

## **Implementation**

The City of Somers Point is unique in that it established a Master Plan Steering Committee in 2015 to continuously track the progress being made to implement the Master Plan. This Committee meets monthly and includes the Mayor, City Council members, Business Administrator, Chief Financial Officer, City Engineer, City Solicitor, City Planner, the Planning Board Chairperson, and representatives of various City committees.



Many of the recommendations included in this Master Plan Reexamination will require outside funding, some of the funding options available include:

1. **NJEDA Main Street Acquisition Support Grant** – The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) offers a grant to reimburse an eligible small business for closing costs related to a New Jersey commercial property that the business will purchase to operate from. Maximum of \$50,000 grant per small business location. The small business must be the applicant for this grant and occupy at least 1,000 square feet of total usable square footage of the building purchased. All loans must have been closed in an arm's length commercial transaction with a conventional lender.
2. **NJEDA Small Business Improvement Grant** - The Small Business Improvement Grant offers reimbursement for costs associated with making building improvements or purchasing new furniture, fixtures and equipment. 50 percent of the eligible costs up to \$50,000 for small businesses and nonprofits.
3. **NJEDA Small Business Lease Grant** - The Small Business Lease Grant supports the growth and success of small businesses and non-profits by providing grant funding to cover a portion of lease payments for businesses and non-profits leasing new or additional space. 20% of total annual lease payment.
4. **NJEDA CAFE Tax Credit Program** - The Cultural Arts Facilities Expansion (CAFE) Program will provide tax credits through a competitive process to cultural arts institutions to build or renovate facilities, including aquariums, historical societies, libraries, galleries, museums, performing arts centers, or other eligible cultural or arts facilities. Eligible awardees will receive tax credits covering 100 percent of eligible project costs, up to \$75 million.
5. **NJEDA Historic Properties Tax Credit Program** - The Historic Property Reinvestment Program offers tax credits for renovating qualified properties. For historic properties, the tax credit covers up to 50% of rehabilitation costs, with a cap of \$8 million. Additionally, the NJEDA dedicated up to 50% of the yearly tax credits to facade rehabilitation projects. These projects focus on repairing the exterior of buildings, with a tax credit covering 50% of the costs, up to \$4 million. Eligible work includes fixing walls, windows, doors, and other external features.
6. **NJEDA Brownfields Redevelopment Incentive Program** - a \$50 million per year project-based tax credit. The program provides a one-time transferrable tax credit to incentivize environmental remediation, abatement, and demolition activities that will allow for the redevelopment of brownfields sites for commercial, retail, or mixed-use development or expansion.
7. **NJEDA Hazard Discharge Site Remediation Fund (HDSRF)** - Businesses operating in New Jersey, individuals, or municipalities that are required to, or volunteer to, perform remediation

and/or cleanup of contaminated and underutilized sites may be eligible to secure financing through loans and/or grants. The HDSRF is administered through a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the NJEDA. The DEP evaluates an applicant's preliminary eligibility requirements, the technical merits of the proposed project, and the estimated project costs. Upon DEP approval, the NJEDA evaluates an applicant's financial status, determines grant and/or loan eligibility, and awards funding.

- 8. NJDCA Neighborhood Revitalization Program** - The Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC) provides business entities a 100 percent tax credit for funds provided to nonprofit entities carrying out comprehensive revitalization plans. Nonprofit entities must use at least 60% of the tax credit funds for housing and economic development; the remaining funds may be used for supportive services and other activities that promote neighborhood revitalization. This funding is being pursued for the Northeast Neighborhood, the only neighborhood in Somers Point that qualifies for this program.
- 9. NJDCA Shared Services Grants** - The Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) Grants provide direct support to advance the efforts of Shared Services in all local governments. Sharing services offers numerous benefits for participating communities. LEAP affords an unprecedented opportunity to incentivize shared services implementation across New Jersey's local government entities, advancing the mission of the Shared Services Program. LEAP facilitates exploring and establishing shared services. LEAP provides counties, municipalities, school districts, commissions, authorities and fire districts assistance for the study or implementation of promising shared services projects undertaken pursuant to the Uniform Shared Service and Consolidation Act. The program is available to all New Jersey local government units. Grants are available for studies and implementation.
- 10. NJ Division of Tourism Cooperative Marketing Grant Program** -Funding will be provided to promote and market specific tourism opportunities in New Jersey. The Cooperative Marketing Grant Program is open to any New Jersey organization that can demonstrate a significant interest in the New Jersey tourism industry. Organizations must show a match of 25% from partners or sponsors that are Non-State funding sources. State funds awarded for the Cooperative Marketing Grant plus the non-state match must be spent on your marketing program. The match cannot be in-kind, cash on hand or bartered services.
- 11. T-Mobile Hometown Grants** - For communities with populations of 50,000 or less, this program provides flexible grants of up to \$50,000 to help build stronger, more prosperous towns and communities. From placemaking to enhancing public tech infrastructure to creating new recreational trails and restoring historic landmarks, these grants are transforming communities.
- 12. USA Today** - A Community Thrives empowers communities to take on local challenges and share the issues important to them around education, wellness, and culture on a national platform. USA

Today does more than just provide grant money to local organizations. They promote ideas and communities.

**13. Geraldine Dodge Foundation** - The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation supports arts, education, environment, informed communities, and poetry to connect communities and influences social change to achieve an equitable New Jersey.

**14. New Jersey Community Capital** - New Jersey Community Capital is a non-profit community development financial institution that provides innovative financing and technical assistance to foster the creation of quality homes, educational facilities, and employment opportunities in underserved communities of New Jersey.

**15. Bank Contributions** - The Community Reinvestment Act or “CRA” is a federal regulation that was first passed in 1977. It is designed to encourage insured financial institutions (i.e., banks) to help meet the credit and community development needs of all income levels in the communities where they operate. The CRA requires banks to demonstrate their performance in meeting the needs of everyone in their community. All banks are periodically evaluated by their federal banking regulator to ensure that their lending is meeting the needs and is inclusive of all income levels in their markets. Larger banks must also show how they support their communities through community development services and qualified investments. Non-profit organizations are important partners in bank community development. Non-profits understand the areas of need in a community and are on the front line of meeting those needs through their own programs and services. Banks often partner with and support local non-profits as part of their overall CRA strategy. The following banks are located in the Somers Point area and assist non-profits.

**OceanFirst Foundation** - OceanFirst Foundation provides grants that help families, organizations, schools, and communities in southern New Jersey. The project must fit within their four core priority areas: Health and Wellness, Housing, Improving Quality of Life, and Youth Development and Education.

**Wells Fargo Bank** - Wells Fargo is committed to helping communities thrive, with financially resilient families, vibrant small businesses and affordable places to call home. Their grantmaking focuses on opportunities that align with our strategic funding priorities: financial mobility, housing access and affordability, and small business growth.

**TD Charitable Foundation** - Since 2002, the TD Charitable Foundation has contributed over \$318 million to nonprofit organizations, fulfilling its mission to support, respect and improve the quality of life in the diverse communities we serve.

- **Community Sponsorship** - Sometimes, communities and the non-profits that serve them need a onetime boost to reach a specific goal or they want to offer an educational or entertainment series that enriches their neighborhood and expands their community's connections. From

Maine to Florida, TD Bank sponsors events, programs, projects, and activities that make a positive local impact, investing in the places and people.

- Housing for Everyone Competition
- Non-profit Resource Training Fund - Non-profit organizations are often the backbone of a community, providing necessary services like job placement, meal delivery and training that would not be available otherwise. Their employees, who are dedicated to their organization's mission, can spend long hours performing a variety of tasks, sometimes reaching outside of their own professional knowledge and experiences. Through the Non-Profit Resource Training Fund, eligible community-based organizations can receive grants of up to \$1,000 for employees to attend approved classes and receive the education they need to help themselves and their programs succeed.

**PNC Bank** - The PNC Foundation's priority is to form partnerships with community-based nonprofit organizations in order to enhance educational opportunities, with an emphasis on early childhood education, and to promote the growth of communities through economic development initiatives.

**Bank of America Charitable Foundation** - In 2025, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation will fund:

- Basic Needs and Income Creation
- Stable Housing and Empowering Communities

**Fulton Forward Foundation** - The Fulton Forward Foundation is an independent, non-profit private foundation. The Foundation will provide financial impact gifts of \$20,000 or more to 501(c)3 community organizations that share Fulton's vision of advancing economic empowerment, particularly in underserved communities. The Impact Grant request must align with one or more of the following:

- Affordable Housing & Home Ownership
- Job Training & Workforce Development
- Financial Education & Economic Empowerment