



# DOWNTOWN CAMDEN MASTER PLAN

The Downtown Camden Master Plan has been made possible through the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders committed to the revitalization and future of Camden. This initiative is cosponsored by Camden County and the Rowan University/Rutgers-Camden Board of Governors. Their shared vision and dedication have been instrumental in shaping this plan.

Additionally, Camden Community Partnership has provided management and coordination efforts to oversee the project and the City of Camden has supported this endeavor throughout its development.

The continued collaboration of these entities will be integral in bringing this vision to life, and their efforts will be a driving force behind the successful implementation of recommendations offered in this Plan.





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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

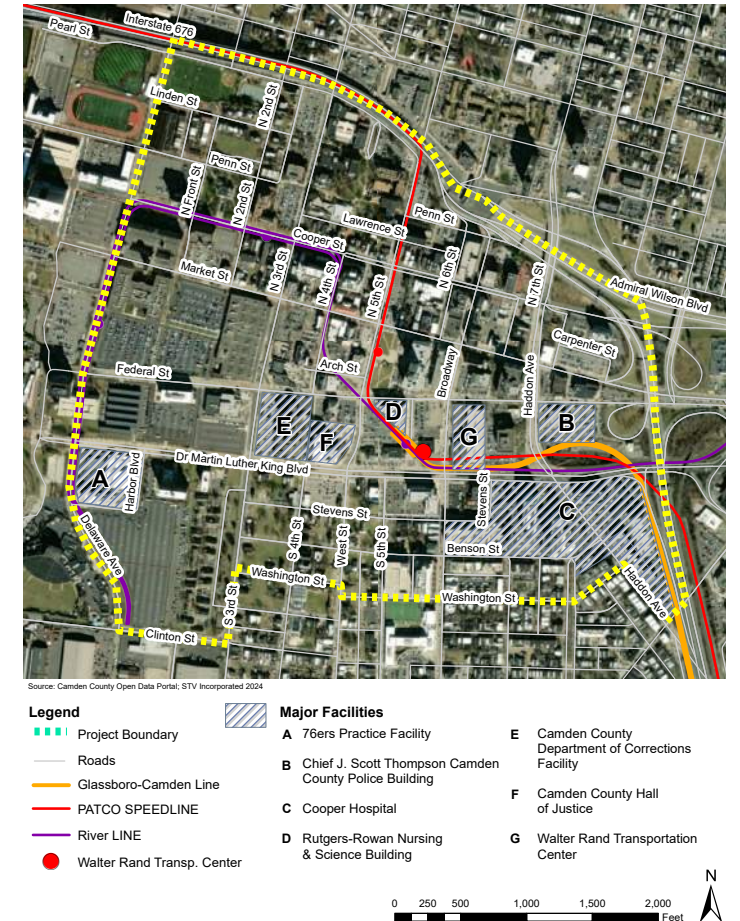
The Downtown Camden Master Plan, cosponsored by Camden County and the Rowan University/ Rutgers–Camden Board of Governors, managed by Camden Community Partnership, and supported by the City of Camden, aims to address the challenges faced in Downtown Camden, New Jersey by identifying opportunities to shape this area into a thriving community to live, work, and visit.

For the purpose of this Plan, the Study Area is bounded by Benjamin Franklin Bridge, Admiral Wilson Boulevard, and Interstate 676 to the north; Delaware Avenue to the west; Clinton Street, S. 3rd Street, Washington Street, and Haddon Avenue to the south; and Interstate 676 to the east.

The Plan was developed using a combination of detailed technical analyses and qualitative evaluations to create a comprehensive approach to revitalizing Downtown Camden. The planning process began with a review of existing neighborhood and area-specific plans. These collected plans formed a foundational basis for this Master Plan and helped to align recommendations with ongoing initiatives in the area.

Next, a review of the current state of Downtown Camden's infrastructure, covering water services, sewer systems, stormwater management, transit options, roadway conditions, and pedestrian/bicycle networks, was conducted. In conjunction with this effort, an evaluation of the current state of Downtown Camden's properties was also performed. This exercise focused on evaluating properties within the Study Area and used methods such as agency data collection, GIS mapping, desktop exercises, and on-the-ground surveys to assess property conditions, parking facilities, zoning classifications, and land use patterns. Understanding these aspects is crucial for identifying areas of improvement and opportunities for development and supports the Master Plan by ensuring that infrastructure and property conditions are considered in shaping future growth and redevelopment strategies.

To supplement results from these analyses, sociodemographic data was collected and was crucial to understand the community's composition and economic conditions to provide important context for final recommendations and proposed interventions. A market analysis complemented this information by identifying economic trends, investment opportunities, and potential growth sectors that could help drive redevelopment efforts. Based on results from these aforementioned exercises, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis helped to highlight Downtown Camden's existing assets, challenges, and strategic opportunities.














*The Study Area, shown above, was developed for this Downtown Camden Master Plan*

**VISION STATEMENT: PROMOTE DOWNTOWN CAMDEN AS A REGIONAL LEADER WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY BY LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT IS VIBRANT, SAFE, AND EQUITABLE FOR EVERYONE\***

*\*The Plan's purpose and recommendations are guided by a Vision Statement developed utilizing stakeholder and community input*

Stakeholder and public engagement activities were crucial throughout the development of the Plan’s overall recommendations. In total, three sets of stakeholder and public meetings were held in-person and virtually. To supplement these meetings, stakeholders participated in a Visioning Workshop towards the beginning of the project. Additionally, discussions with several stakeholders, including Lanning Square Neighborhood Group, Cooper Grant, The Michaels Organization, and others were held to further reflect the community’s needs. Input from these exercises was utilized to guide overall redevelopment recommendations and create a comprehensive and inclusive vision for the Plan.

Utilizing information obtained through these exercises, opportunities were identified for redevelopment and include the following:

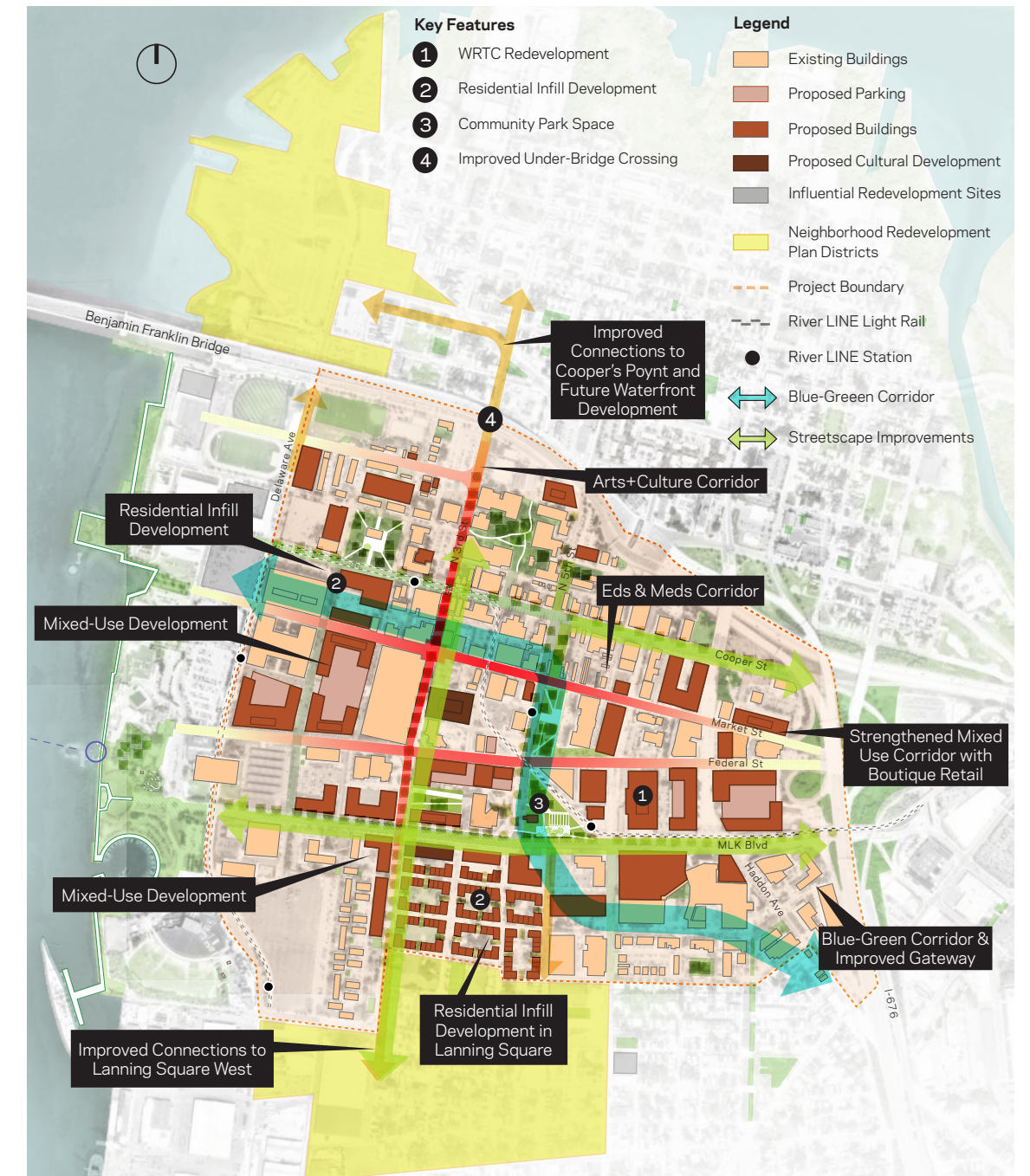
-  **Reconnect Streets:** Restore severed street connections by reconfiguring superblocks to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation
-  **Overcome Barriers:** Mitigate physical barriers that prevent residents from easily accessing the downtown, adjacent neighborhoods, and beyond
-  **Revitalize Gateways:** Enhance urban quality and experiences at northern, southern, and eastern gateways
-  **Activate Street Frontage:** Improve streetwalls and street frontage along MLK Boulevard, Federal Street, Delaware Avenue, and North 3rd Street
-  **Enhance Open Spaces:** Develop and expand limited open spaces and parks
-  **Reduce Impervious Surfaces:** Address the high impervious surface coverage to improve environmental sustainability
-  **Leverage Recent Investments:** Capitalize on recent and planned investments for further development opportunities
-  **Optimize Urban Grid:** Utilize the compact urban grid within a 10-minute walk of City Hall for mixed-use redevelopment and leverage connections to the Delaware River
-  **Maximize Sightlines:** Enhance sightlines to landmarks, including Camden City Hall, Center City Philadelphia Skyline, and the Philadelphia Waterfront
-  **Utilize Robust Transit Network:** Leverage the existing transit network for diverse transportation choices
-  **Promote Industry Clusters:** Capitalize on emerging industry clusters, such as “Eds and Meds” nodes and waterfront culture and entertainment nodes

The opportunities identified were utilized to develop the following recommendations that provide spatial and physical planning guidance for how to organize future redevelopment within the study area:

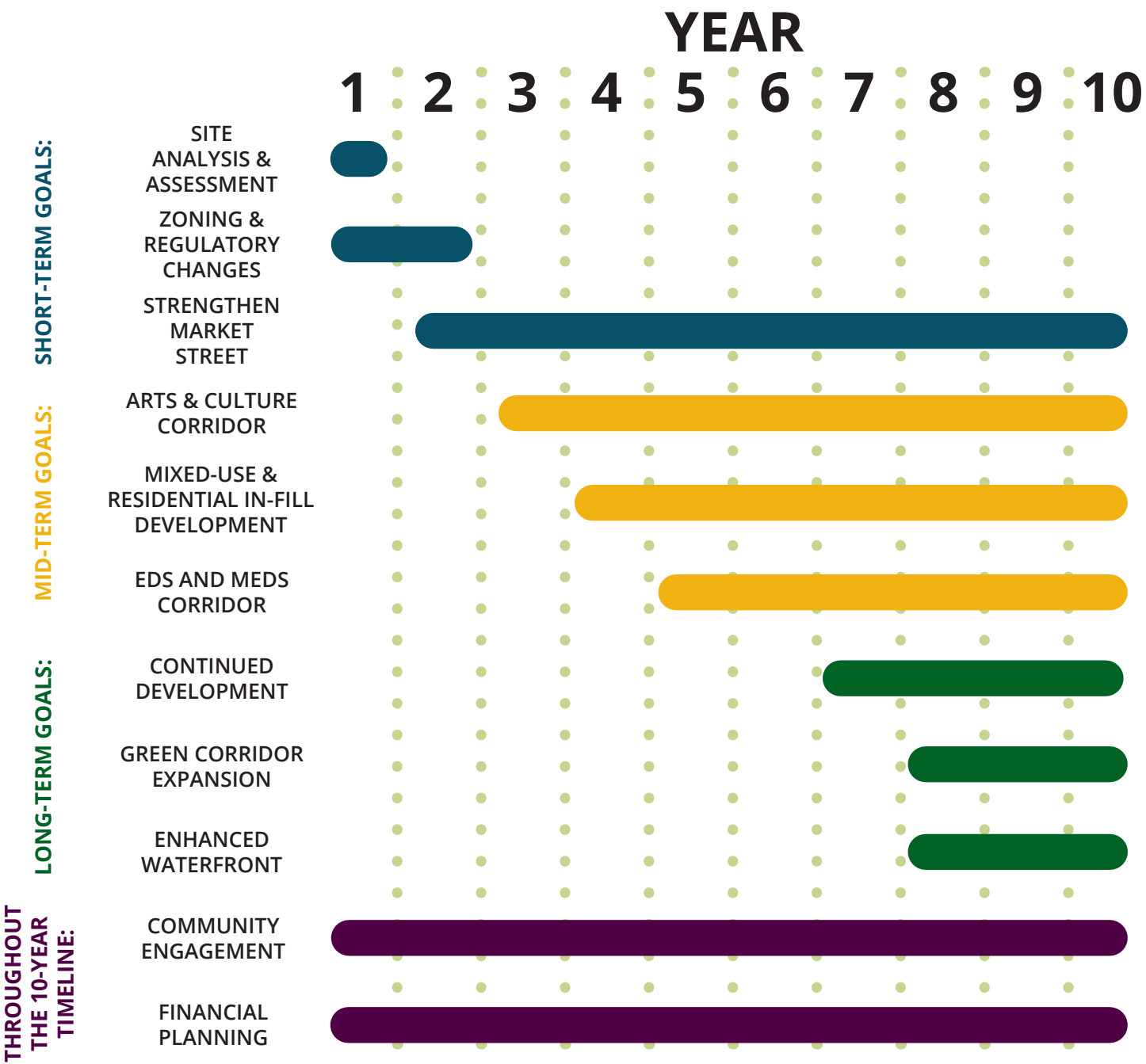
1. Strengthen the Market Street corridor
2. Fill urban voids
3. Reduce or consolidate large expanses of surface parking into shared use parking structures

4. Formalize an “Eds and Meds corridor” along N. 5th Street and Cooper Street
5. Continue enhancing waterfront permeability and walkability to and from Downtown Camden
6. Introduce “blue-green” corridors along streets prone to urban heat island effect and flooding risks
7. Expand the bicycle lane network
8. Establish an arts and culture corridor along 3rd Street

*The redevelopment plan, as shown to the right, identifies potential locations for new mixed-use development, shared parking structures, new open space, and street connection improvements*



To implement these redevelopment recommendations, a flexible, 10-year timeline is shown below:



The Downtown Camden Master Plan outlines a clear and actionable strategy to revitalize Downtown Camden by addressing decades of urban decay and economic decline. This Plan serves as a comprehensive framework focused on enhancing residents' quality of life, attracting investments and innovation.

It prioritizes and recommends key initiatives, such as improving infrastructure and expanding public spaces to create a vibrant and resilient downtown. The Plan, set forth in this document, sets a clear path forward for a sustainable future in Downtown Camden.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Purpose

In recent history, Downtown Camden, New Jersey has experienced a declining population and diminishing industrial activity. However, there is a notable resurgence of economic development in Camden’s landscape today as several substantial development projects are currently underway or in the planning stages. This trend has served as a catalyst to draw in residents, businesses, and developers to rejuvenate Downtown Camden.

As such, Camden County, in partnership with Rowan University/Rutgers–Camden Board of Governors, Camden Community Partnership, and the City of Camden sought to create the Downtown Camden Master Plan. This Plan will act as a roadmap that addresses the unique challenges and opportunities that Downtown Camden faces to guide development that enhances quality of life and paves the way for a better future in Camden.

## 1.2. Study Area

For the purpose of this Plan, the Study Area is bounded by Benjamin Franklin Bridge, Admiral Wilson Boulevard, and Interstate 676 to the north; Delaware Avenue to the west; Clinton Street, S. 3rd Street, Washington Street, and Haddon Avenue to the south; and Interstate 676 to the east.

The Influential Redevelopment Sites, shown in Figure 26, are key locations where planned redevelopment is expected to generate momentum for broader revitalization efforts in downtown Camden. While these areas are not directly within the master plan’s boundaries, they will create a ripple effect by attracting new investment, improving connectivity, and enhancing the overall appeal of the area. By introducing new developments, these areas will help drive economic activity and indirectly benefit the master plan area. Their redevelopment will complement the core study area by increasing foot traffic, expanding commercial opportunities, and strengthening the local real estate market.

Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan Districts, also shown in Figure 26, are other key areas where adopted neighborhood plans guide targeted revitalization efforts. These districts serve a similar purpose to the influential redevelopment sites by catalyzing investments, improving connectivity, and supporting broader community development goals. Although they are located outside of the core Study Area, their planned improvements are expected to generate complementary momentum.

Because of their potential to spur positive change, it is important to consider these areas as part of the broader planning framework for the master plan. Integrating their efforts with the master plan’s vision will support growth that is strategic and cohesive. The revitalization of these areas will also help bridge gaps between neighborhoods, making the entire area more accessible and attractive to residents, businesses, and visitors.

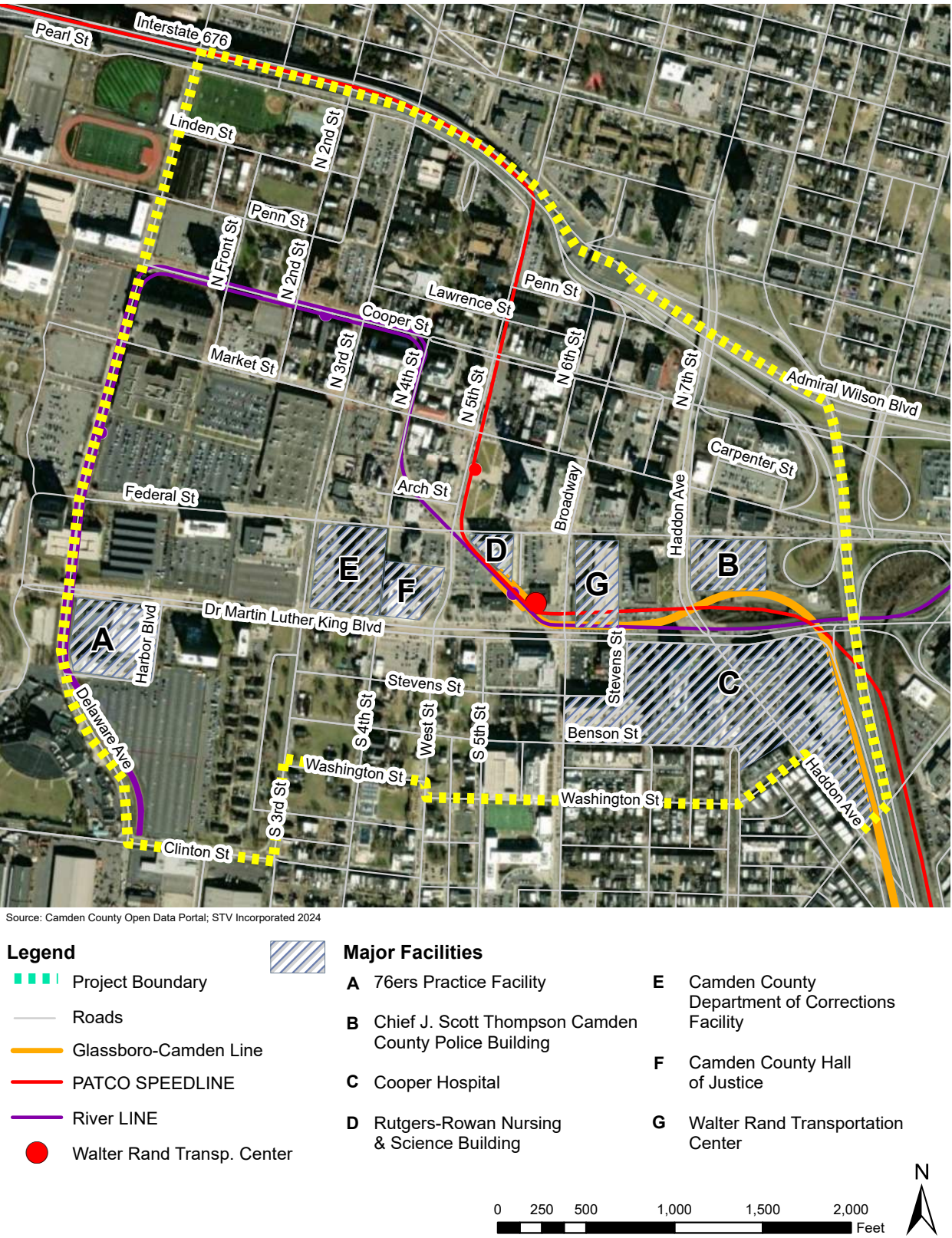


Figure 1. Downtown Camden Master Plan Project Location Map

Methodology

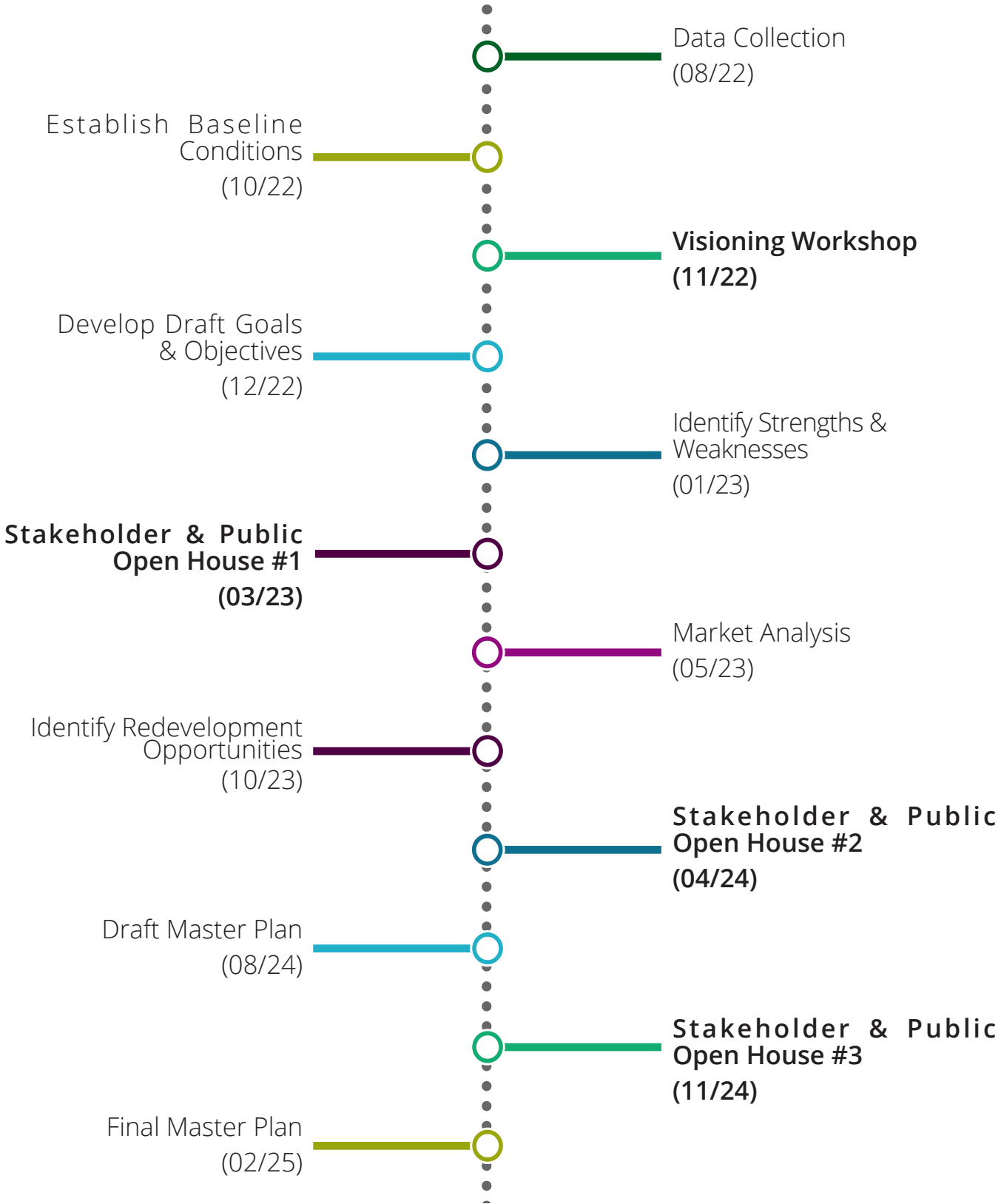
The methodology for the Downtown Camden Master Plan was developed to address the challenges in Downtown Camden through a structured and data-driven approach. It was used to create a plan that was comprehensive, actionable, and reflective of community needs. The methodology required the collective efforts of various key stakeholders and focused on six key points for success:

- Data Collection to Establish Baseline Conditions:** The Master Plan is based on a comprehensive and reliable foundation of information that involved extensive data collection to establish baseline conditions, including previous studies, demographics, economic, and spatial analyses. This baseline allowed for a clear understanding of current challenges and opportunities to form actionable and realistic recommendations.
- Goals and Objectives:** The development of the Master Plan was guided by clearly defined goals and objectives that were shaped through conversations with stakeholders that understand Downtown Camden’s unique context. These goals focused on enhancing economic growth, improving infrastructure, and improving safety and security in Downtown Camden.
- Market Analysis:** A detailed market analysis was conducted to identify the economic potential and viability of different areas and building uses within Downtown Camden. This analysis evaluated current market conditions, trends, and projections to recommend land uses that would complement existing businesses and residences for balanced and sustainable growth.
- Stakeholder and Public Outreach:** Extensive stakeholder and public outreach informed the Master Plan to involve the voices and interests of those most invested in Downtown Camden’s future. Information from these meetings was used to develop a comprehensive vision statement and a set of goals and objectives for the Plan. Through meetings, workshops, and opportunities for comment via the project’s website, the input of community members, business owners, and other key stakeholders was actively solicited and integrated into the Plan’s development.
- Soft Site Analysis:** The methodology also included a soft site analysis to identify underutilized or potentially redevelopable properties. This analysis helped prioritize sites with the highest potential for transformation to align redevelopment efforts and recommendations with market demand and community needs.
- Recommendations Framework:** The Plan culminated in the development of a long-term recommendations framework that provided consistent guidance for Downtown Camden’s revitalization. This framework laid out actionable steps for implementation to foster economic growth, infrastructure improvements, zoning changes, and community development initiatives. It was designed to be adaptable and flexible to allow for adjustments as new challenges and opportunities arise.

The end goal of this collaborative process was to provide Camden County and the City of Camden with an actionable roadmap to guide their ongoing development efforts.

1.3. Timeline

The development of the Downtown Camden Master Plan followed a structured timeline to support a methodical and organized approach to crafting the future vision of the Study Area. An overview of this timeline can be seen below:



## 2. HISTORY OF DOWNTOWN CAMDEN

Downtown Camden holds a rich history that spans centuries. It has evolved into a thriving industrial center and was nicknamed the “City Invincible” due to its rapid industrialization in the 19th century. Shipbuilding, manufacturing, and the arrival of the Camden and Amboy Railroad contributed to its growth, as well as companies including Campbell Soup.

The mid-20th century, however, brought deindustrialization, suburbanization, and racial tensions to Camden, which affected its reputation and discouraged investment. In recent years, efforts have been made to revitalize Downtown Camden through the development of the waterfront area. Additionally, educational institutions like Rutgers University–Camden and Cooper Medical School have worked to rejuvenate the area.

Downtown Camden has been the focus of urban redevelopment programs for nearly three decades. Urban renewal initiatives in the 1950s and 1960s isolated Downtown Camden from neighboring Philadelphia, making it a bypass for suburban commuters and creating a decaying downtown with few residents and little business activity. In 1994, the City of Camden was awarded a \$20.8 million federal grant as part of the federal Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Initiative, which aimed to help economically distressed communities through tax incentives and federal grants. Although the program officially expired in 2016, it spurred several other efforts dedicated to revitalization in Downtown Camden.

Several of these planning efforts have sought to balance Downtown Camden’s institutional anchors with one another as well as with surrounding developments. These plans have included the Cooper Grant & Central Waterfront Plan (2020), Federal and Market Streets Traffic Operational Improvements (2022), the Cooper’s Ferry Partnership Downtown Institutional Plan (2013), as well as others. The aforementioned initiatives focused on housing development, commercial corridor revitalization, walkability improvements, and open/green space preservation in and around Downtown Camden.

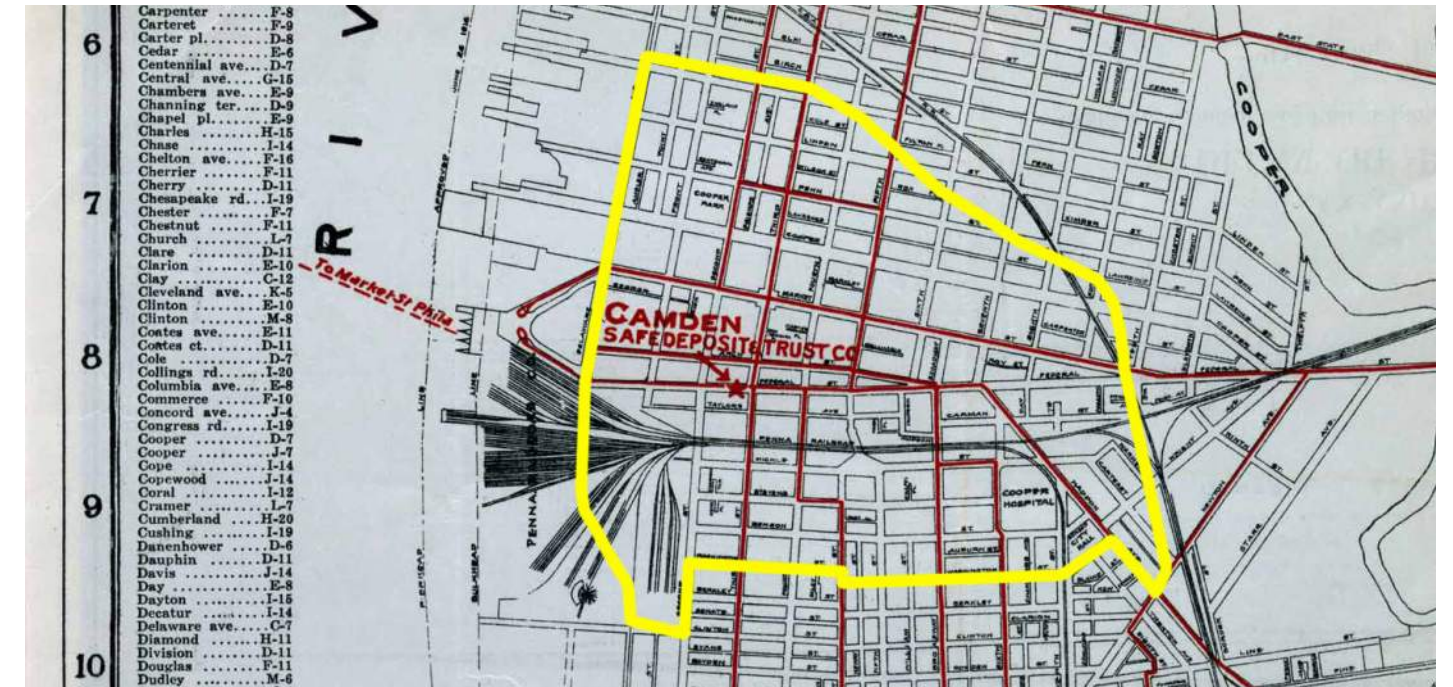


Figure 2. Downtown Camden Grid (1922)

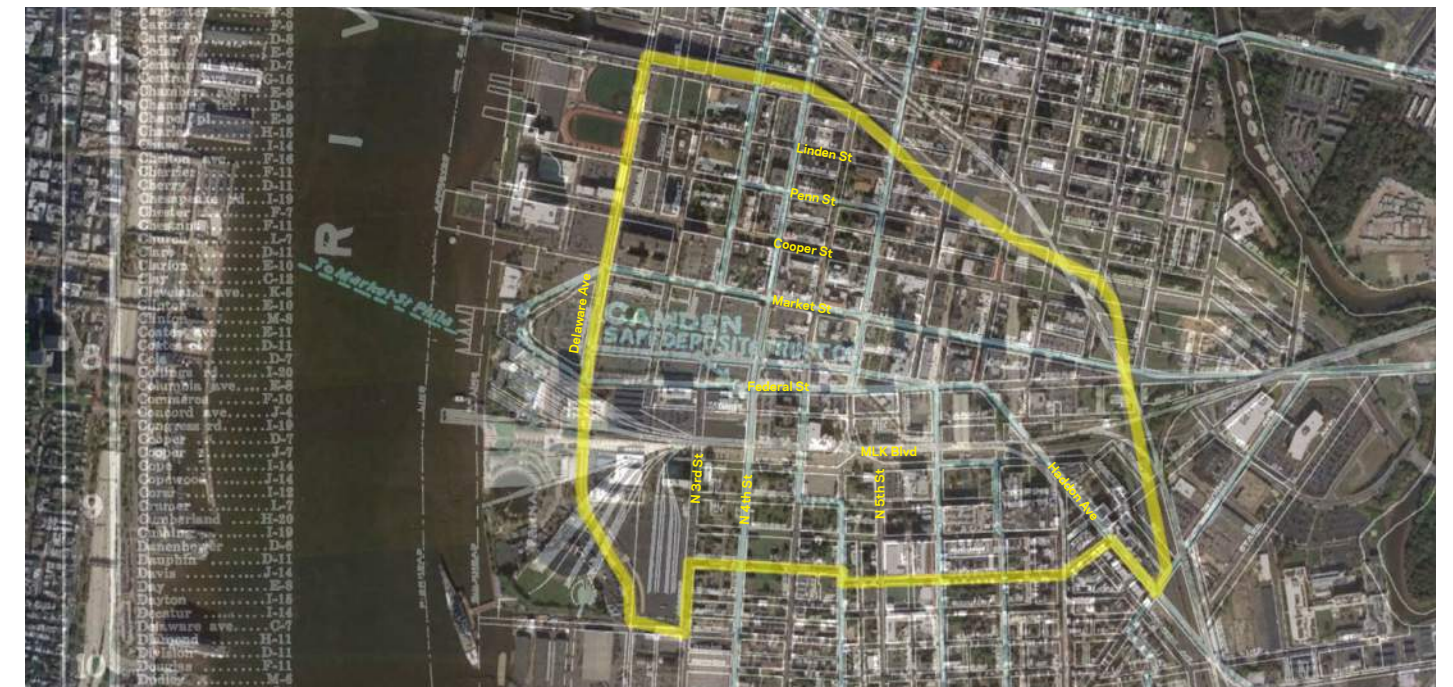


Figure 3. Downtown Camden Grid (Today)

# 3. REVIEW OF EXISTING STUDIES & PLANS

Camden Community Partnership, the City of Camden, and other organizations have previously undertaken significant planning efforts for the neighborhoods of Downtown Camden. Set forth in the table below is a comprehensive list of past studies for Downtown Camden including the sponsoring organization(s) and dates of production.

Table 1. Review of Existing Studies and Plans

Title	Prepared by	Date
Federal and Market Streets Traffic Operational Improvements	Camden County Department of Public Works	September 2022
2020 Downtown Development Map		2020
Cooper Grant & Central Waterfront Plan & Action Plan Update	Cooper's Ferry Partnership and the Cooper-Grant Neighborhood Association	July 2020
Positive Impacts of Investments in Camden, NJ on Social Determinants of Health	Rowan University/Rutgers-Camden Board of Governors and eConsult	January 2019
2018 DVRPC Camden Access Study	DVRPC	March 2018
Walter Rand Transportation Center Market Study Analysis	Camden County & DVRPC	2017
Camden Greenway Design Guide	Cooper's Ferry Partnership	2017
Economic Development and Professional Architectural Design for Walter Rand Transportation Center – Final Report	City of Camden Planning Board, Camden Department of Development & Planning, and Camden Division of Planning	March 2017
Rutgers 2030	Rutgers University	June 2015
Shaping Our Future – Rutgers University	Rutgers University – Camden	October 2014
Downtown Institutional Plan (DIP)	Cooper's Ferry Partnership	2013
Lanning Square Redevelopment Plan & Amendment	City of Camden Planning Board, Camden Department of Development & Planning, and Camden Division of Planning	March 2011
Cooper Plaza Redevelopment Plan	City of Camden, Planning Division	March 2005
Downtown Redevelopment Study & Plan	City of Camden, Planning Division	October 2004
Cuture Camden	City of Camden Planning Board	March 2002
Camden Interior Gateway Pattern Book	Cooper's Ferry Development Association	May 2000
Camden Rising - 21st Century Infrastructure Plan	Camden County	n.d.
Camden Smart Cities	City of Camden, Planning Division	n.d.
Health Sciences Campus Urban Planning & Design Concepts	Rowan University / Rutgers-Camden Board of Governors	n.d.

Key findings from this exercise are as follows:

- Focus on Urban Revitalization: Many studies emphasize the need for urban revitalization and development in Camden, particularly in the downtown area.
- Transportation Infrastructure: Several studies address transportation infrastructure, including traffic management, intersections, and mobility improvements. For example, the “Federal and Market Streets Traffic Operational Improvements” study focuses on improving traffic operations and multimodal mobility in Downtown Camden and highlighted transportation as a key concern.
- Institutional Presence: The importance of institutions like universities and medical centers in Camden’s growth and development is highlighted in studies such as “The Downtown Institutional Plan.”
- Community Engagement: Studies stress the importance of community-driven planning efforts and resident involvement in neighborhood revitalization.
- Long-Term Plans: Many plans span several years (often 25 or more) to execute proposed changes and improvements gradually. For example, the “Cooper Plaza Redevelopment Plan” spans 25 years to transform Cooper Plaza into a vibrant residential neighborhood.
- Mixed-Use Development: Plans promote mixed-use development, including residential, commercial, and institutional components.
- Economic Growth: The potential for economic growth and the attraction of investments are common themes in these studies, such as “The Downtown Institutional Plan.”
- Improvements in Public Safety: Several studies address public safety improvements, including changes in law enforcement and neighborhood quality of life, such as “The Positive Impacts of Investments in Camden, NJ on Social Determinants of Health.”
- Healthcare Access: Multiple studies, including “The Positive Impacts of Investments in Camden, NJ on Social Determinants of Health,” also highlight the importance of healthcare access and its impact on residents’ well-being.
- Environmental Considerations: Many plans consider the environmental impact of development projects, reflecting a broader concern for sustainability in Camden’s growth and revitalization efforts.

THE DOCUMENT REVIEW DESCRIBED ABOVE WAS A KEY FIRST STEP THAT PROVIDED THE PROJECT TEAM WITH A BASELINE OF INFORMATION FOR THE AREA.

## 4. CAMDEN TODAY

### 4.1. Current State of Downtown Camden Infrastructure

This section provides an overview of the existing infrastructure in Downtown Camden by focusing on essential services and systems that support the Study Area's growth potential. This section examines the state of water services, sewer systems, stormwater management, transit networks, roadways, and pedestrian/bicycle facilities. Understanding these components was important to evaluate their current effectiveness and inform the soft site analysis outlined later in this Plan.

#### 4.1.1. Water Services

American Water provides water services to specific areas west of the Cooper River in Camden under a contractual agreement and water supply arrangement. Downtown Camden's water supply has consistently met or exceeded lead sampling standards, ensuring the safety and quality of drinking water. The water utility conducts routine maintenance, such as annual water main flushing, which helps prevent the buildup of sediment and other contaminants in the water distribution system. These practices are crucial for maintaining the integrity of the water supply and monitoring for any potential issues, such as leaks or pipe degradation, to prevent disruptions.

#### 4.1.2. Sewer and Environmental Considerations

Downtown Camden's sewer system is predominantly a combined stormwater and sewer system, which means that stormwater and wastewater are carried through the same pipes. This aging infrastructure, much of which is past its useful life, poses challenges such as frequent overflows and increased maintenance needs. Despite these issues, the existing utilities are generally sufficient to support redevelopment efforts. New development presents an opportunity to improve the system by incorporating modern infrastructure upgrades and reducing the burden on the combined system to enhance the overall efficiency and reliability of Camden's sewer network.

Camden County's Stormwater Management and Resource Training (SMART) program emphasizes the integration of green infrastructure in development projects. This approach includes implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as rain gardens, permeable pavements, and green roofs, to manage stormwater more effectively and reduce runoff. These methods not only help control flooding but also improve water quality by filtering pollutants before they reach local waterways.

In alignment with these goals, a comprehensive stormwater pollution prevention plan is actively maintained to mitigate the impact of urban runoff. The Camden Collaborative Initiative (CCI) further enhances these efforts through a multi-agency partnership involving the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA), the City of Camden, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP).

#### 4.1.3. Transit

Downtown Camden features an existing, robust transit network that supports additional development. This network centers around the Walter Rand Transportation Center (WRTC), which acts as an important multimodal Transit Hub. Commuters rely on the services that converge at the WRTC, including NJ TRANSIT's River LINE, 24 NJ TRANSIT bus lines, the SJTA Pureland Shuttle, and the PATCO High-Speed Line, which connects Downtown Camden to Philadelphia. The RiverLink Ferry provides service from Philadelphia to Camden's waterfront.

Programs including Senior and Disability Services, Access Link, Municipal Transportation, PATCO Reduced Fare Program, and SEN-HAN Transit help improve transit accessibility for residents in Downtown Camden. Additionally, institutions, such as Rutgers University, offer shuttle services for students, faculty, and staff, further strengthening Downtown Camden's transit network.

#### 4.1.4. Roadway Network

The roadway network in Camden is composed of standard-width, 11-ft. lanes, with shoulder widths varying depending on the street. These roadways are integral to Downtown Camden's transportation infrastructure. Downtown Camden has undertaken various beautification projects along major roadways to not only improve the aesthetic appeal of Downtown Camden but also contribute to a safer and more inviting environment for pedestrians and cyclists. One issue noted in the area is the prevalence of illegal parking along MLK Boulevard and Cooper Street due to illegal parking during school drop-offs and pick-ups. This obstructs traffic flow and poses safety risks for pedestrians and drivers.



*Residential Roadway in Downtown Camden*

*Source: STV, 2023*

#### 4.1.5. Pedestrian/Bicycle Network

Several streets within Camden have been designated as bicycle-friendly, with marked bike lanes that promote safer cycling and encourage alternative transportation methods. However, the condition of sidewalks across Downtown Camden varies. While many sidewalks meet standard width requirements, some areas, particularly those with aging infrastructure, require improvements. Specifically, curb ramps at intersections might need replacement or renovation to improve ADA compliance and accessibility.

Downtown Camden's network of pedestrian facilities is supported by several initiatives and partnerships. For example, the GreenWays Program, Camden Community Partnership, and the Trust for Public Land, have been actively engaged in community outreach, planning, and implementation efforts to advance the development and utilization of riverfront trails and parks in Camden.

Within Downtown Camden, the Camden Central Waterfront Trail spans 1.31 miles and provides a scenic pathway for pedestrians. Additionally, bike lanes, including an unprotected one along MLK Boulevard from 3rd Street to Haddon Avenue for 0.5 miles, also contribute to Downtown Camden's bicycle-friendly infrastructure and promotes sustainable and active transportation options in the Study Area.



*Roadway with Bicycle Lane in Downtown Camden*

*Source: STV, 2023*

4.2. Current State of Downtown Camden Properties

A series of exercises were conducted to collect data and establish a baseline evaluation of the properties within the project boundaries, identifying areas for potential improvement. The parcel and land use analysis used the following methods:

- Evaluation Criteria: Criteria were created to assess properties based on current use, zoning, building type, and occupancy status to provide a framework for evaluation.
- Agency Information Collection: When available, evaluation criteria was collected from agencies including the City of Camden Code Enforcement Department, Camden County Improvement Authority, National and State registers of historic places, Rowan University/ Rutgers-Camden Board of Governors, and Camden Community Partnership to inform site assessments.
- Desktop Exercises: GIS mapping analysis and Google Earth examinations helped identify remaining evaluation criteria that were not accessible through existing agency data. This exercises acted as virtual site visits and were conducted to inspect property conditions and adjacent land uses.
- Windshield Survey: On-the-ground surveys provided real-time observations of property conditions and neighborhood characteristics including blight, vacancies, and yard conditions

The insights from these methods, which are described in more detail below, were used in the soft site analysis to identify strategic opportunities and constraints and guide recommendations for improvements.

4.2.1. Parking Facilities

A substantial amount of property in Downtown Camden is used for parking lots. Across the six Census Block Groups that make up the broader Study Area, more than 150 acres are devoted to parking uses. The area’s large institutional anchors require significant parking facilities, and many of these are surface parking surrounding campuses such as the Camden County Justice Complex, the 76ers Practice Facility, and development along the riverfront.

Underutilized parking lots provide a unique opportunity for reuse and revitalization in Downtown Camden. When these types of lots are adjacent to one another, there is the opportunity for strategic site consolidation and larger redevelopment.

Table 2. Downtown Camden Parking Facilities Information

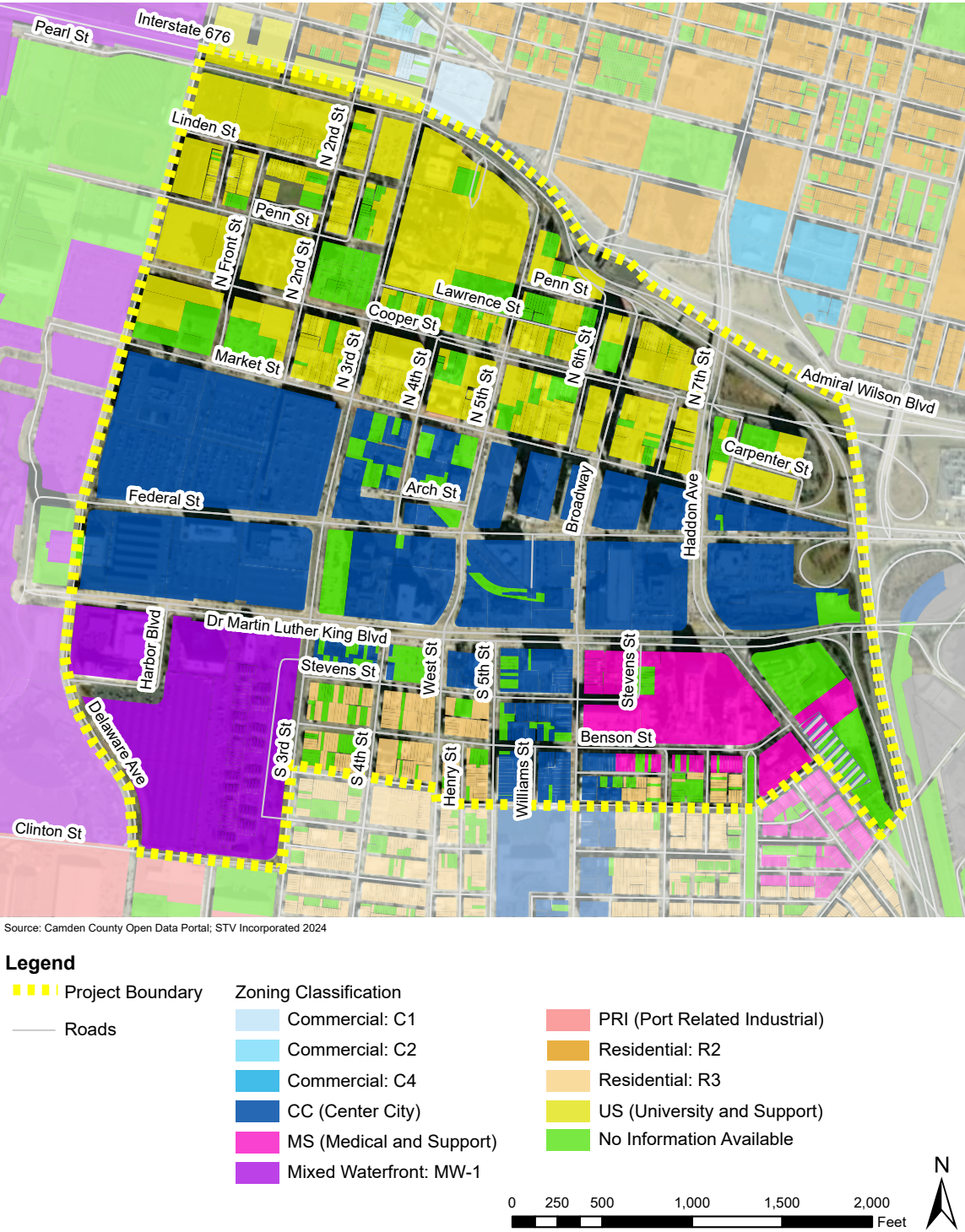
Block Group	Parking Lot Area (Acres)
340076103001	38.91
340076103002	27.60
340076103003	27.61
340076104001	2.83
340076104002	6.45
340076104003	55.21
Total Area	158.61



Parking Facilities in Downtown Camden  
Source: STV, 2023

4.2.2. Zoning

Using information collected from Camden County Open Data Portal, zoning characteristics of properties in the Study Area are displayed below. As shown, common zoning classifications in the Study Area include Mixed Waterfront (MW1), Center City (CC), and University and Support (US).



4.2.3. Land Use

Using the DVRPC Land Use 2023 dataset, the map showcases land use in the Study Area. This GIS analysis revealed that residential, institutional, and commercial uses are most common in the Study Area, with recreational spaces interspersed throughout. Notably, a significant portion of undeveloped land lies south of MLK Blvd, highlighting a contrast between the more densely developed areas to the north and the less developed areas to the south. The map provides a clear visual tool for understanding current land use and guiding future development.

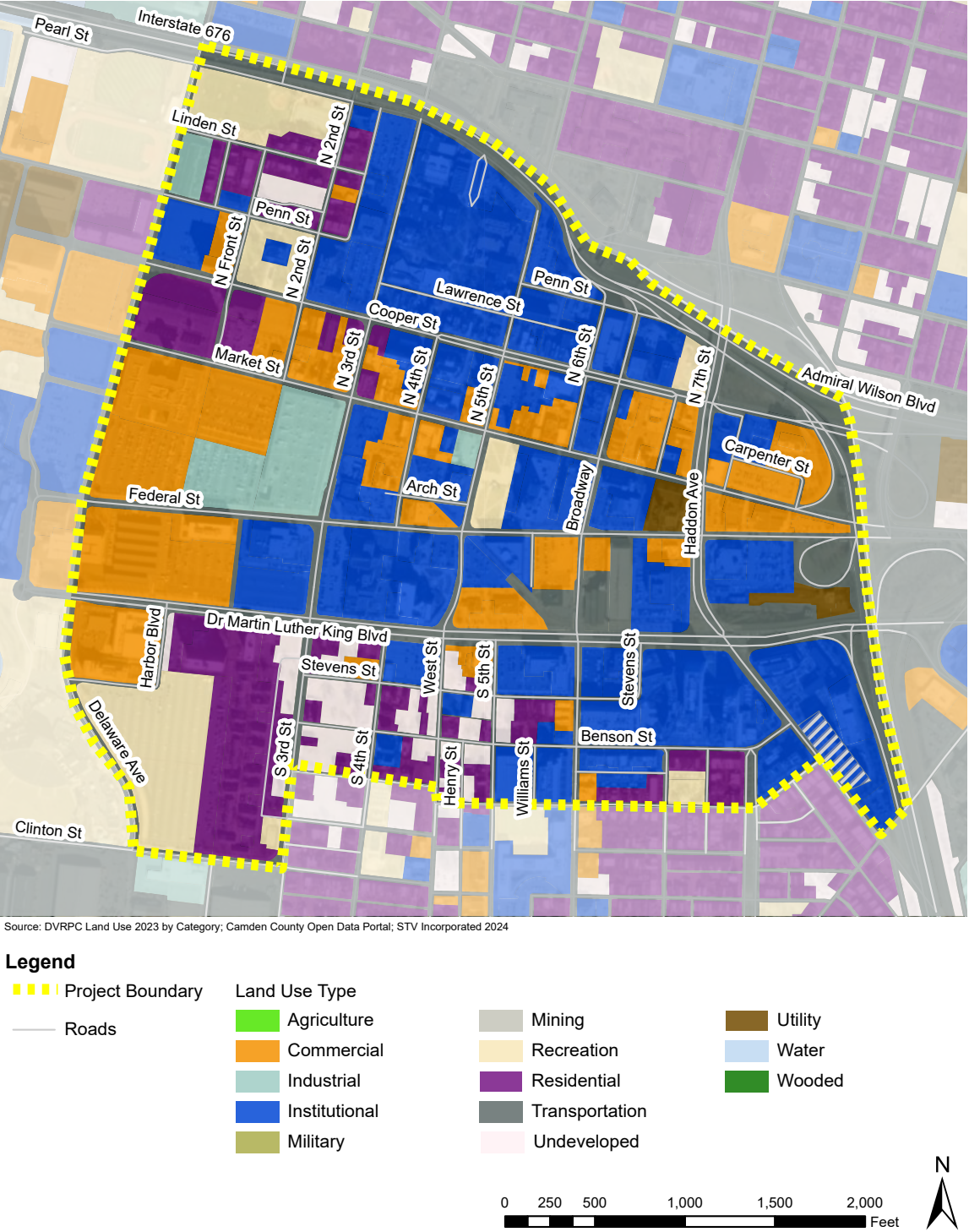


Figure 5. Downtown Camden Land Use Information

4.3. Downtown SWOT Analysis

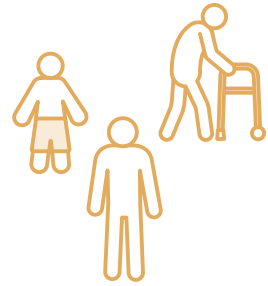
Data collected during the aforementioned exercises was utilized to inform a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. The SWOT analysis was conducted to develop a baseline of existing conditions and review data on the current status of Downtown Camden from two different perspectives: Internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats). The internal perspective relates to areas where Downtown Camden has some degree of control or influence to affect changes within. The external perspective relates to areas where Downtown Camden has no control or influence over changes made by outside forces. Downtown Camden needs to be aware of these outside influences as they can shape the future of the area.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safe neighborhoods and streets using technology</li><li>• Visible police presence and engagement with the community</li><li>• Proximity to employment, health care, and universities</li><li>• Access to multiple mass transit options at Walter Rand Transportation Center (WRTC)</li><li>• Growing cultural &amp; entertainment choices</li><li>• Recent successful redevelopment initiatives</li><li>• Growing Eds + Meds districts with opportunity for collaboration</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of public buy-in with local City initiatives</li><li>• Lack of funding for necessary projects</li><li>• Apathy regarding blight and other issues</li><li>• Lack of affective communication strategies</li><li>• Lack of food markets</li><li>• Lack of green space</li><li>• Underutilized assets</li><li>• Retail and restaurant choices</li><li>• Unoptimized transit options</li><li>• Lack of after-hours businesses</li><li>• Limited visibility of programing for homelessness (Camden County OEO, Camden Coalition)</li><li>• Walkability between waterfront and downtown</li><li>• Lack of connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods</li></ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leverage recent development to generate additional investment</li><li>• Strategically invest in infrastructure that will create neighborhood sustainability</li><li>• Maximize waterfront opportunities</li><li>• Housing affordability</li><li>• Educational choices</li><li>• Downtown retail, redevelopment, and infill growth utilizing multi-use development</li><li>• Multi-cultural forums for citizens and leadership</li><li>• Adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings/ surface lots</li><li>• Small business growth</li><li>• Increase connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists</li><li>• Alignment of job training with job opportunities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fiscal health</li><li>• Aging infrastructure (utilities &amp; roadway)</li><li>• Sub-standard housing / lack of home ownership</li><li>• Crime</li><li>• High percentage of rental housing</li><li>• Lack of additional cultural &amp; entertainment choices</li><li>• Lack of community cohesion</li><li>• Lack of diverse tax base</li><li>• Perception of traffic and lack of parking</li><li>• Speed of development approval process at the city and county level</li><li>• Lack of accountability for underutilized assets</li></ul>

## 4.4. Market Analysis

The market analysis conducted as part of this Master Plan is structured in two main parts: a socio-demographic overview using U.S. Census data from 2016 and 2020, and a real estate market overview assessing trends in inventory, vacancies, rents, and parcel data. The analysis aims to compare the economic conditions of Downtown Camden with the broader City through the use of a combination of demographic and real estate data along with qualitative research insights.

### 4.4.1. Summary of Socio-Demographic Analysis



#### 4.4.1.1. Population and Age

The Study Area in Camden had a 2020 population of 6,641, representing 9% of the City of Camden's 73,742 residents. Both areas experienced population declines from 2016 to 2020, with the Study Area seeing a sharper drop (-12%) compared to the City (-3%). The most notable population loss occurred among younger cohorts, particularly the 0-14 age group, which declined by 34.3%, while early adults (15-24 years) and elderly populations (65+ years) increased.

#### 4.4.1.2. Employment

Labor force participation is lower in the Study Area (48.4%) than in the City (55.4%). The Study Area's unemployment rate decreased significantly from 20.4% in 2016 to 10.3% in 2020, outpacing the City's decline. Downtown Camden's employment is primarily driven by health care and social assistance institutions (43.6%), public administration institutions (16.7%), and educational institutions (13.5%). Major employers in these sectors include Cooper University Health Care, Camden City Hall, Camden County Justice Complex, Rutgers Camden, Cooper Medical School, Rowan University, and Camden County College. Retail and industrial sectors are less prominent, making up less than 2% of overall employment.

Resident workers in the Study Area are primarily employed in the City (18.2%), followed by Philadelphia (8.9%), and Trenton (2.0%). However, most workers in the Study Area live in Philadelphia (10.6%), followed by the City (9.2%), then Sicklerville (3.4%). While there are many reasons why Camden residents have not seen increases in employment despite workforce development efforts such as the New Jersey Economic Opportunity Act, it is possible that the skill sets that are required for the specific jobs offered by companies taking benefits do not match the skill sets of the City's current labor force. Additionally, the City of Camden's labor force participation rate is quite low compared to those of other geographies.



#### 4.4.1.3. Educational Attainment

The Study Area has a higher concentration of individuals with some college education (39.6%) compared to the City (32.9%). However, 65.7% of the Study Area population does not have a degree beyond high school, reflecting a skills mismatch with the growing "Eds and Meds" sectors. High school graduation rates have improved, reaching nearly 70% by 2020.



#### 4.4.1.4. Race and Ethnicity

The Study Area is predominantly Black or African American (50.5%), although this population decreased by 8.8% from 2016 to 2020. The Hispanic or Latino population saw a substantial decrease of 25.9% over this same timeframe, while the mixed-race population increased by 42.4%. In the City, the Hispanic or Latino population slightly increased, suggesting that this population is leaving Downtown Camden for other parts of the City.

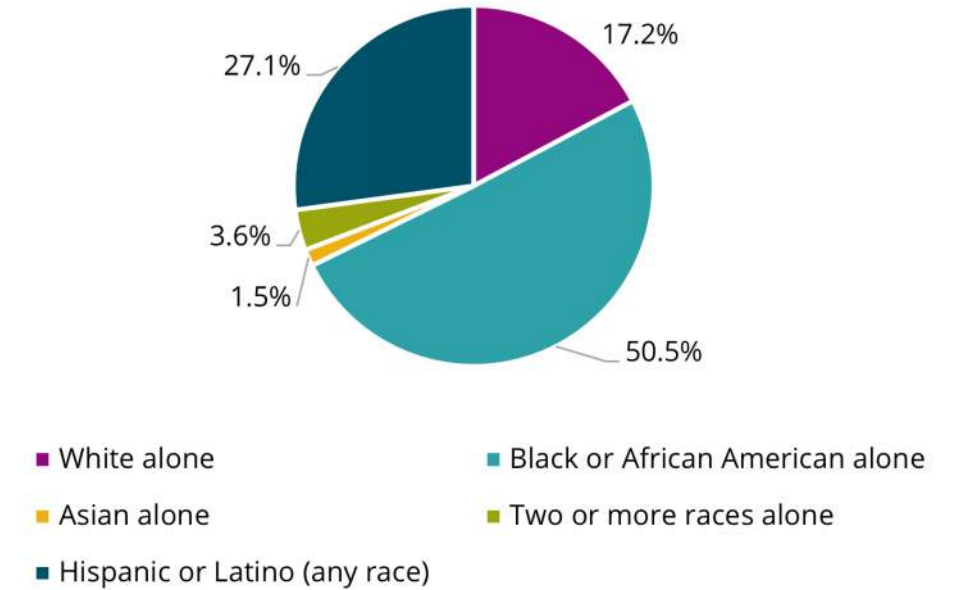


Figure 6. Downtown Camden Race & Ethnicity in 2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates 2012-2016; 2016-2020



#### 4.4.1.5. Household Size, Units, Income, & Poverty Status

Average household size decreased to 2.1 people in the Study Area and 2.8 in the City. Median household income in the Study Area rose by 12.6% from 2016 to 2020, reaching \$28,688, similar to the City's median. The income distribution shows a shift toward higher income brackets, though a majority of households still earn less than \$50,000 annually. The proportion of households in the Study Area above the poverty line rose from 50.4% in 2016 to 64.2% in 2020, indicating some economic improvement, although poverty remains a significant issue.

#### 4.4.1.6. Retail Gap

Retail development is constrained by low spending power and limited foot traffic in the Study Area. Identified gaps include automotive repair shops, liquor stores, beauty salons, and convenience stores, presenting investment opportunities. Retail space availability has decreased, with vacancy rates climbing due to factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and car-centric infrastructure, which hampers pedestrian accessibility.

4.4.2. Real Estate Market Analysis of Downtown Camden

4.4.2.1. Market Overview

In 2022, Downtown Camden had 3.2 million square feet (SF) of real estate, with Office spaces being the largest at 1.9 million SF (58.8%). Residential uses accounted for 21.5% (696,000 SF), Retail for 12.7% (409,000 SF), and Industrial for 7.0% (227,000 SF).

Office inventory grew by 4.1% from 2012 to 2022, while Residential, Retail, and Industrial inventories remained unchanged. Office spaces had the most vacancies in 2022 (106,000 SF), with an increase of 28,000 SF over the decade. Retail vacancies more than doubled, indicating declining demand, while Residential vacancies fell by 65.3%, showing increased demand, also reflected by the 46% of downtown institution employees who reported that they would consider relocating if quality housing were available.

4.4.2.2. Vacancy and Rent Trends

Office vacancy rates rose from 4.3% to 5.6%, and Retail from 3.0% to 6.2% between 2012 and 2022. Residential vacancy rates decreased from 7.2% to 2.5%. Office rents increased by 6.7%, and Residential rents rose by 40.3%, reflecting strong demand. Retail rents dropped by 13.3%, highlighting declining demand. Residential rents are relatively low, which supports housing affordability, and only two census block groups in Camden are considered unaffordable.

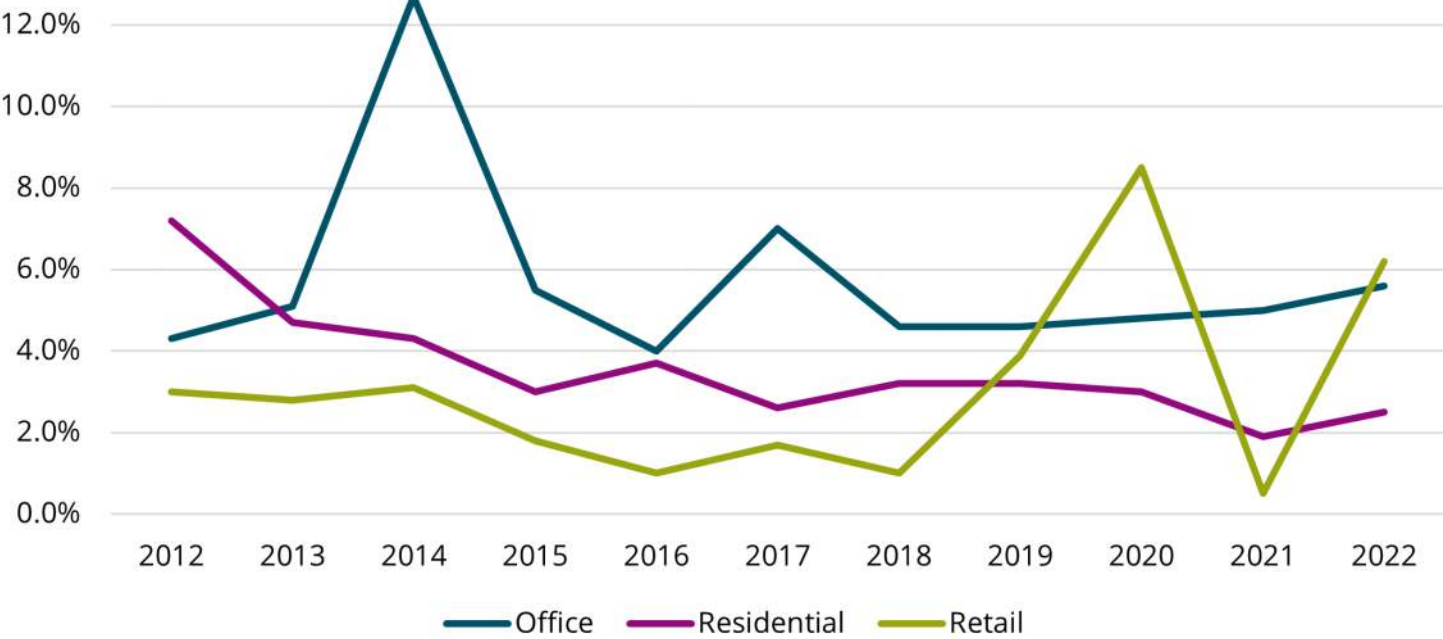


Figure 7. Downtown Camden Vacancy Rates Across Primary Uses (2012-2022)

Source: CoStar, 2023

4.4.2.3. Parcel Analysis

Public properties dominate lot space in Downtown Camden, accounting for about half of the 2.1 million SF. Residential uses have the most lots but comprise one of the smallest square footages, indicating small lot sizes. Public and school properties have a significant presence, with several large lots over 30,000 SF. Parking lots also occupy a substantial portion of the area.

4.4.2.4. Development Efforts and Opportunities

Camden has undergone redevelopment for decades, with various plans enhancing institutional anchors and expanding residential and commercial spaces. The development opportunities outlined below have been selected from interviews with stakeholders, the Camden Community Partnership’s 2018 Economic Development Map, and desktop research.

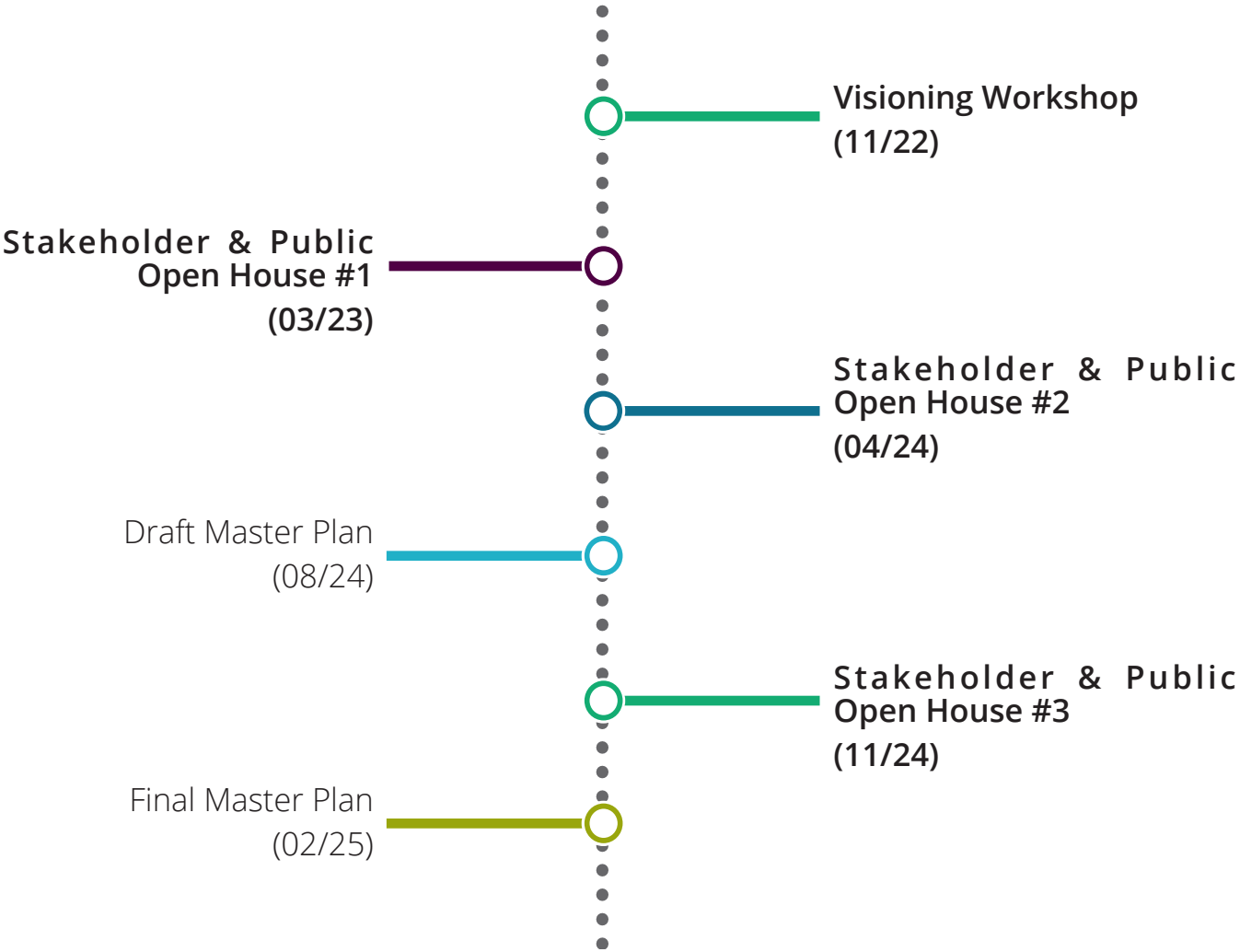
Table 3. Downtown Camden Parking Facilities Information

Residential	Demand for quality housing, both multifamily and single-family
	Build off existing multifamily developments close to the riverfront
	Conversion of vacant/abandoned buildings and infill on vacant/abandoned lots
Retail	Need for small retail spaces that are currently scarce within existing
	Demand for specialty shops (such as coffee shops or home goods stores)
	Pedestrianization and harmonization of campuses will create more foot traffic that supports greater retail development
Office	Tax breaks for companies that locate in Camden can incentivize new office development
Hospitality/Entertainment	Destination space along the river is attractive, but improving connectivity between Downtown Camden and the riverfront is necessary to allow the whole area to benefit from the riverfront activity
Institutional	Capital expansions at major institutions are ongoing, but harmonization of campuses with the existing streetscape and one another will improve connectivity and placemaking in Downtown Camden

# 5. STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder and public engagement activities were crucial throughout the development of the Plan’s overall recommendations. In total, three sets of stakeholder and public meetings were held in-person and virtually. To supplement these meetings, stakeholders participated in a Visioning Workshop towards the beginning of the project. Additionally, discussions with several stakeholders, including Lanning Square Neighborhood Group, Cooper Grant, The Michaels Organization and others were held to further reflect the community’s needs. Input from these exercises was utilized to guide overall redevelopment recommendations and create a comprehensive and inclusive vision for the Plan.

A timeline of the stakeholder and public engagement activities can be seen below:



Throughout the Plan’s development, a project website was launched to serve as a central point for information, updates, and engagement. The website included project details, meeting notices, meeting materials, and opportunities to leave feedback on the Plan throughout the course of the project.

The stakeholder Visioning Workshop was hosted on November 4, 2022, with a diverse cross-section of stakeholders from the Downtown Camden Study Area to discuss the master planning process. The purpose of the meeting was to develop draft vision statements, goals, and objectives to identify areas within downtown for redevelopment. The information from this workshop was used to develop a comprehensive vision statement and a set of goals and objectives that were shared with all stakeholders and the public for broader feedback throughout the master planning process.

The final set of goals and objectives are listed in section 7.1 of this Plan. The final vision statement developed during this process reads as follows:

***“Promote downtown Camden as a regional leader where people want to live, work, and play by leveraging opportunities to create growth and economic development that is vibrant, safe, and equitable for everyone.”***

After the Visioning Workshop, stakeholder and public meetings were conducted. The first meeting aimed to gather feedback on the baseline SWOT analysis, property inventory, and project goals and objectives. The second meeting presented initial Plan recommendations, while the third meeting focused on sharing the draft Master Plan for feedback and comments. These engagement activities were offered both in-person and virtually at crucial decision points in the projects. Roughly 100 public comments were received throughout the lifetime of this project. The comments have been summarized and attached to this Plan in Appendix A.



***Feedback from the Visioning Workshop was used to develop a comprehensive vision statement and a set of goals and objectives to guide the Plan.***

Source: STV, 2022

## 6. COMPARING CAMDEN

Downtown Camden's structural framework is similar to other successful riverfront cities, such as Providence, Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, Hoboken, and Pittsburgh. These cities demonstrate how urban design and geographic assets can be leveraged to transform a place into a thriving destination. Camden's similar scale and layout make it well-positioned for comparable success. The structural framework of Downtown Camden, or any city, refers to its foundational elements such as its street grid, building density, walkability, and accessibility. Camden possesses these attributes, which gives it a framework for redevelopment that mirrors the successes seen in other urban riverfront areas.

One of Camden's strongest assets is its proximity to the Delaware River, a feature it shares with cities like Providence and Pittsburgh, where waterfronts serve as key economic and cultural destinations. Providence's Waterplace Park and Pittsburgh's riverfront trail system demonstrate how rivers can become central to a city's identity and offer assets such as recreation, tourism, and quality-of-life enhancements. Similarly, Camden's riverfront location provides aesthetic value and opportunities for commercial and residential development.

Camden's walkable, concentrated downtown is another parallel to Hoboken and Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. Hoboken's dense, pedestrian-friendly layout and its location just across the Hudson River from New York City make it appealing to both residents and visitors. Likewise, Camden's compact scale and its connection to Philadelphia position it as an affordable, accessible alternative to the larger urban center. These similarities highlight Camden's potential to evolve into an economically vibrant downtown area.

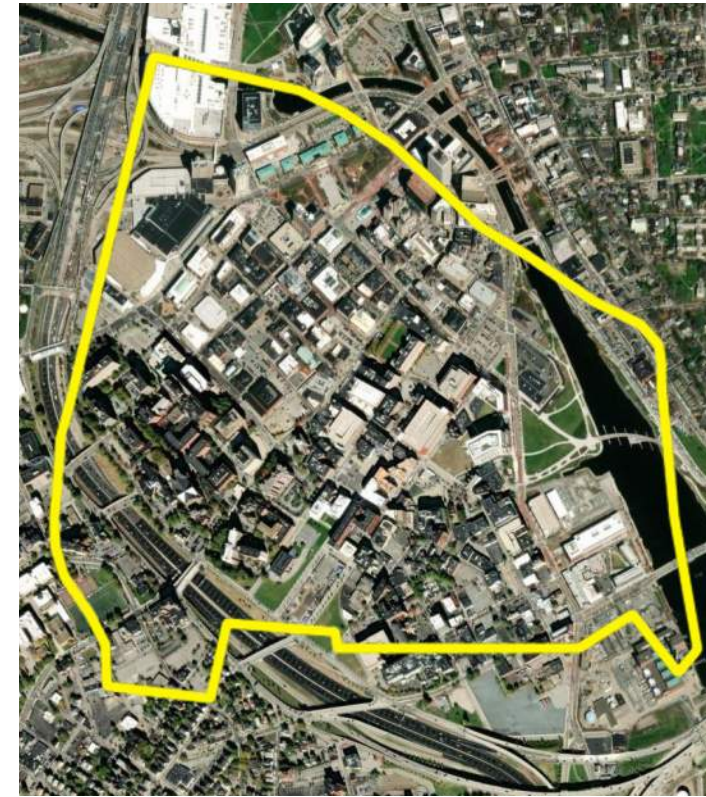


Figure 8. Downtown Camden Overlaid onto Providence



Figure 9. Downtown Camden Overlaid onto Rittenhouse



Figure 10. Downtown Camden Overlaid onto Hoboken



Figure 11. Downtown Camden Overlaid onto Pittsburgh

## 7. CONSTRAINTS & BARRIERS

### 7.1. Severed Street Connections

The Study Area's street grid has retained much of its original design for at least a century. However, several large public works and redevelopment projects have removed some street segments locally. The removal of these streets reduced the Study Area's street network redundancy and pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular permeability from neighborhoods to the north, south, and east.

The most notable interruptions in the Study Area's urban fabric include the following:

- Street connections between the Study Area and the Cooper's Poynt neighborhood to the north were interrupted by the construction of the Ben Franklin Bridge in the mid-1920s. These streets have either been removed from the grid, or rebuilt as bridge underpasses or pedestrian tunnels (e.g. N. 6th Street pedestrian tunnel).
- Several east-west streets at the eastern edge of the downtown Study Area were removed from the grid following the construction of I-676, US Route 30, and interchange ramps. This infrastructure substantially reduces local vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connections to the Study Area, and substantially limits access to and from the areas east of the Study Area.
- Street connections have been removed from the blocks bounded by Market Street to the north, Delaware Avenue to west, MLK Boulevard to the south, and N 3rd Street to the east – the area generally located near L3 Harris building, Camden Aerospace and Business Center, Cooper Health System buildings, and Camden County Prosecutor's Office. Removal of these public rights-of-way has reduced the walkability in this part of the Study Area – a critical area between Camden's central business district and its waterfront. The removal of these streets was likely intended to allow for the construction of large-footprint commercial buildings and their associated off-street surface parking space supply.

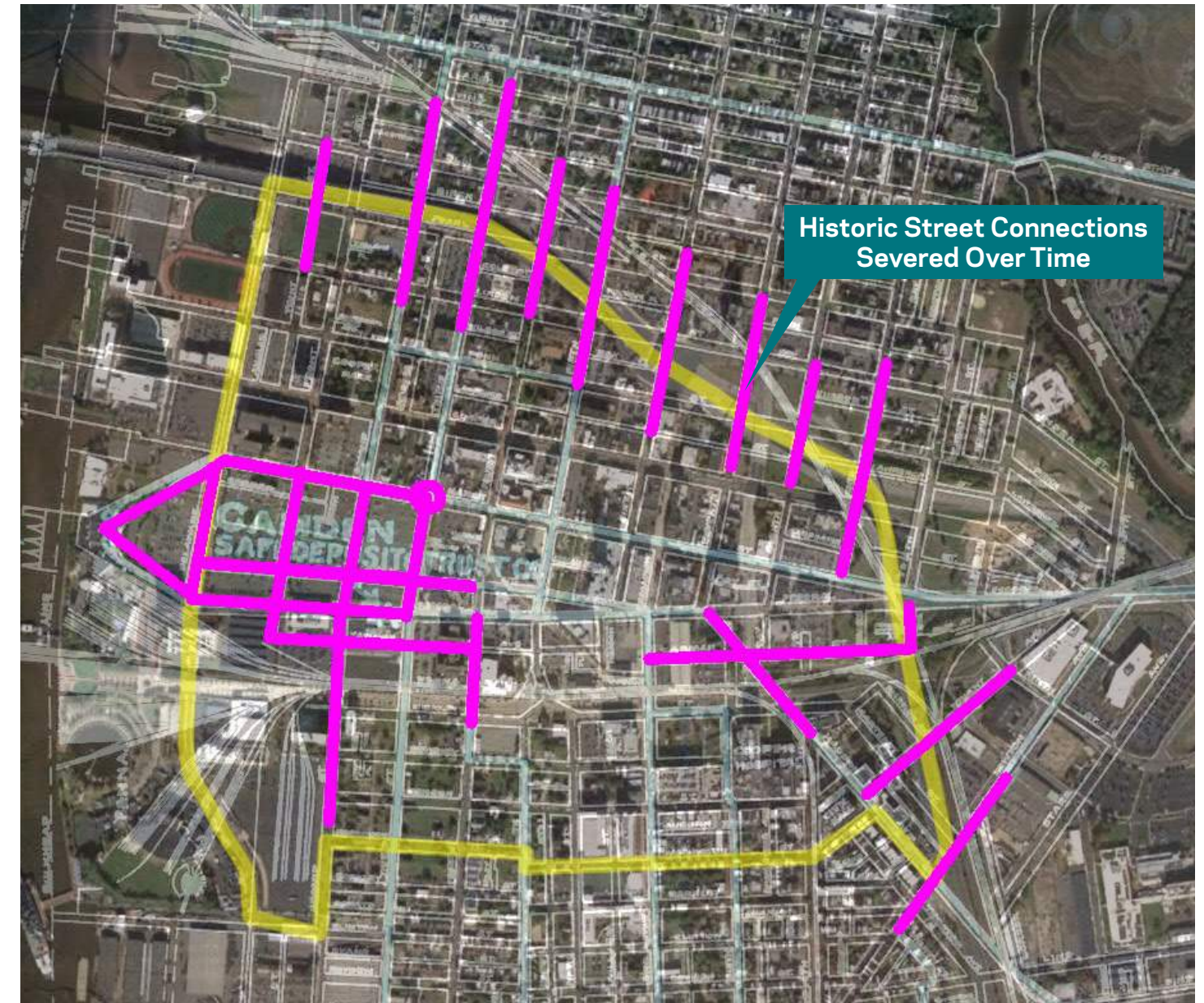


Figure 12. Downtown Camden Severed Street Connections

## 7.2. Physical and Visual Barriers

There are physical and visual barriers in the Study Area that contribute to the actual and perceived disconnectivity between neighborhoods. These include:

- Benjamin Franklin Bridge and Toll Plaza – auto-dominated physical barriers as well as visual barriers between the downtown Study Area and Cooper’s Poynt.
- MLK Boulevard – wide roadway, auto-dominated, and long pedestrian crossing distances between Lanning Square and the Downtown Camden central business district.
- I-676 and US Route 30 – auto-dominated with substantial barriers to pedestrian, bicycle, and micromobility access at the eastern edge of the Study Area.



Figure 13. Downtown Camden Physical and Visual Barriers

## 7.3. Superblocks

Superblocks are a type of city block much larger than a typical walkable city block. Over time, these superblocks have decreased walkability and permeability of the urban grid. Primarily located between the central business district and the Delaware Riverfront, some of these superblocks extend uninterrupted for as much as a quarter mile in length, such as along the south side of the Market Street corridor.



Figure 14. Downtown Camden Superblocks

## 7.4. Broken Streetwalls & Inactive Street Frontage

Streetwalls are formed by the ground floor of a building's frontage along the property line at the street edge. A streetwall edge optimally consists of continuous street frontage with active ground floor uses that activate and enhance the public realm. Strong, pedestrian-oriented streetwall edges contribute to the quality of the pedestrian experience, create a safe atmosphere, and help define urban identity and sense of place.

Except for Cooper Street and segments of Market Street, the Study Area has a considerable number of north-south and east-west streets that have inconsistent, blank, or non-existent streetwalls. The most notable streetwall interruptions are on MLK Boulevard, Federal Street, Delaware Avenue, and North 3rd Street.



Figure 15. Downtown Camden Broken Streetwalls & Inactive Street Frontage

## 7.5. Uncelebrated Gateways

A well-designed gateway establishes a sense of place and attracts tourism. It is an important urban design and wayfinding element for residents and visitors alike. Effective gateway treatments can be achieved through thoughtful landscape design, architecture, signage, public art, public open spaces, distinctive paving materials, and traffic calming improvements. Most primary streets entering the Study Area do not employ gateway design treatments. Rather, they prioritize vehicle throughput and do little to elevate the quality of the urban experience.

The following streets provide direct entry to the downtown Study Area for pedestrians and vehicles, but lack an urban quality and sense of arrival into the central business district:

- Northern Gateways:
  - Delaware Avenue
  - N. 3rd Street
  - Broadway and N. 6th Street off ramps
- Southern Gateways:
  - West Street
  - S. 5th Street
- Eastern Gateways:
  - Market Street
  - MLK Boulevard

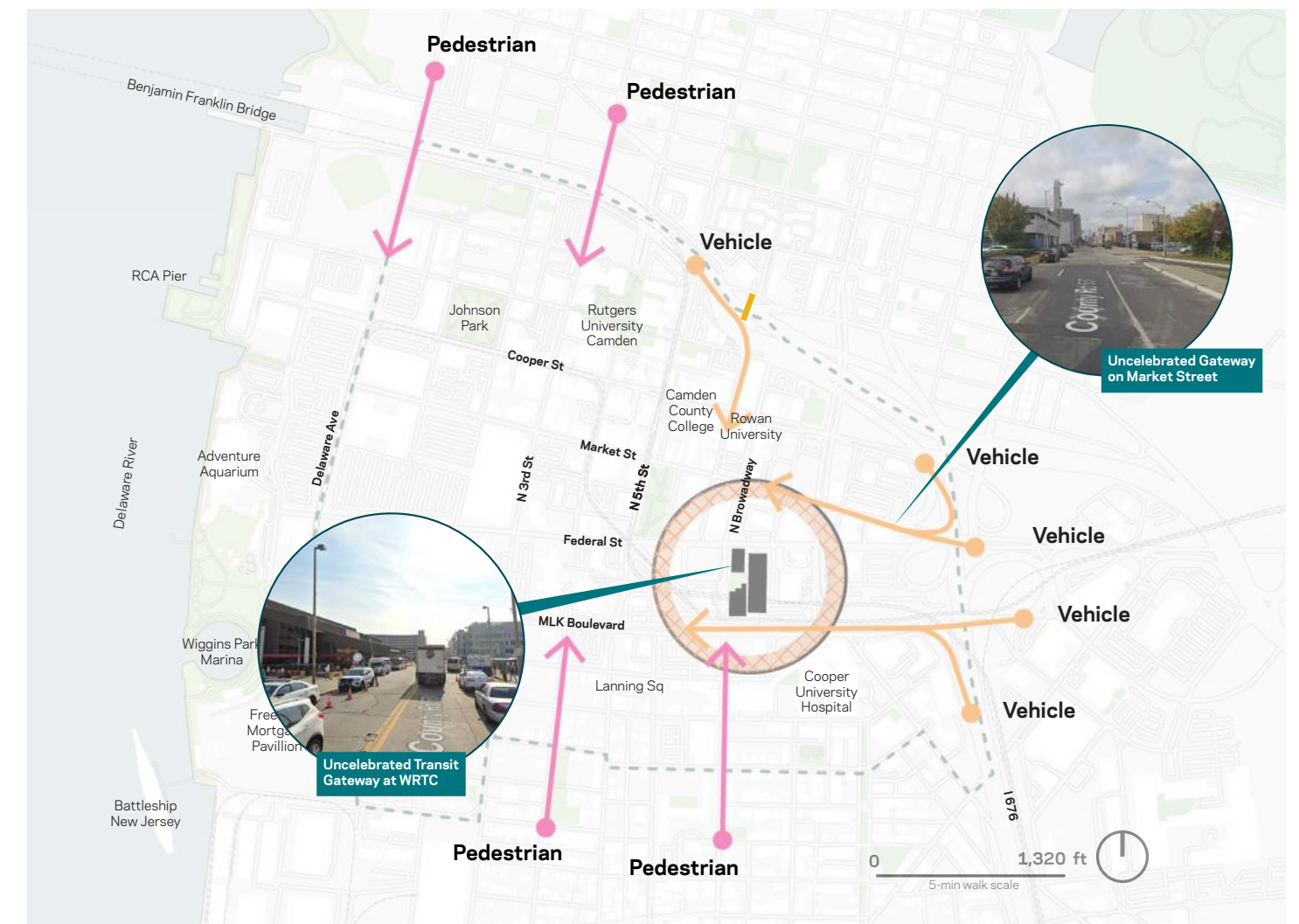


Figure 16. Downtown Camden Uncelebrated Gateways

## 7.6. Sparse Open Space & Excessive Impervious Surface Coverage

The Study Area contains a limited number of parks, public spaces, and centralized community greens. Most of the green space, including Johnson Park, Roosevelt Plaza Park, and Cooper Commons Park, is located on the north and south ends of the Study Area proximate to Camden's civic and institutional uses such as Camden City Hall, Rutgers University – Camden, Camden County College, Rowan University, and Cooper University Hospital. These green spaces are relatively small in comparison to the scale of the Study Area and are disconnected from one another.



Figure 17. Downtown Camden Sparse Open Space

The Study Area contains a high percentage of impervious surface - with approximately 90 percent of the Study Area's 325-acre land area occupied by buildings, asphalt, concrete, or other impervious material. Impervious surfaces prevent the ground from absorbing water in storm events, increasing flooding and the stormwater runoff that burdens and can overwhelm sewer systems. This, in combination with the lack of open space, green infrastructure, and low-lying land, presents challenges related to current and future climate vulnerability. For example, the 100-year and 500-year flood plains extend well east into the Study Area as far as S. 5th Street in Lanning Square and cover approximately one third of the Study Area. These floodplains already make the Study Area vulnerable to localized flooding during heavy storm events. When factoring in projected 2070 sea level rise, future flood risk is compounded, particularly along Delaware Avenue, S. 3rd Street, and S. 4th Street.

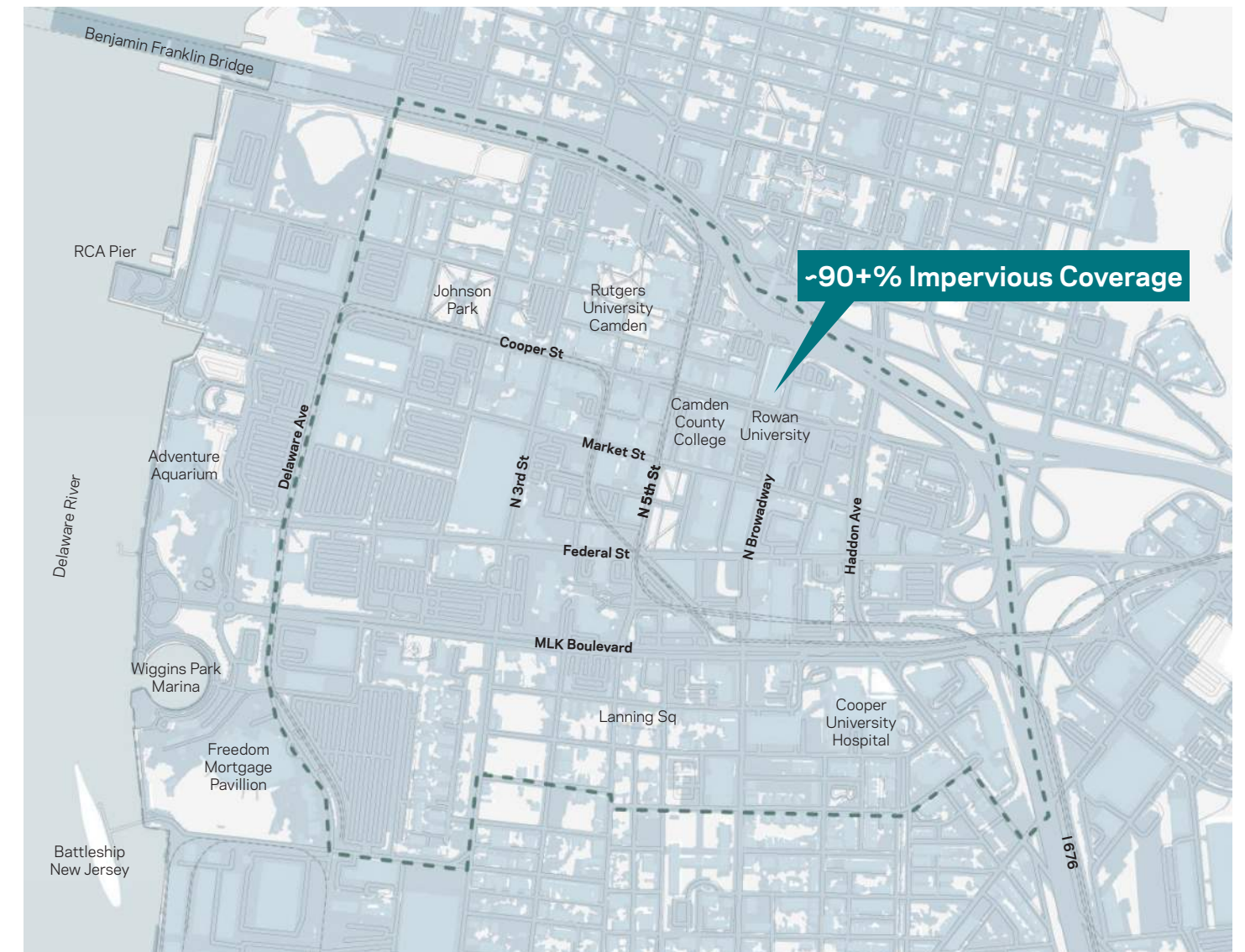


Figure 18. Downtown Camden Excessive Impervious Surface Coverage

# 8. REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## 8.1. Recent and Planned Investments

Over the last decade especially, the Study Area experienced considerable growth, with more planned in the coming years, including residential development, adaptive reuse, development of entertainment venues, transit infrastructure improvements, and institutional expansion. Recent and planned investments include the Rutgers Camden Athletic Complex, Michaels Organization Condominiums, 11 Cooper Apartments, the Victor, TRIAD and American Water Building, Hilton Garden Inn, 76ers Practice Facility, Rutgers Rowan Nursing and Science Building, RU-RC BOG Expansion, Cooper University Hospital Expansion, and Walter Rand Transportation Center Redevelopment.

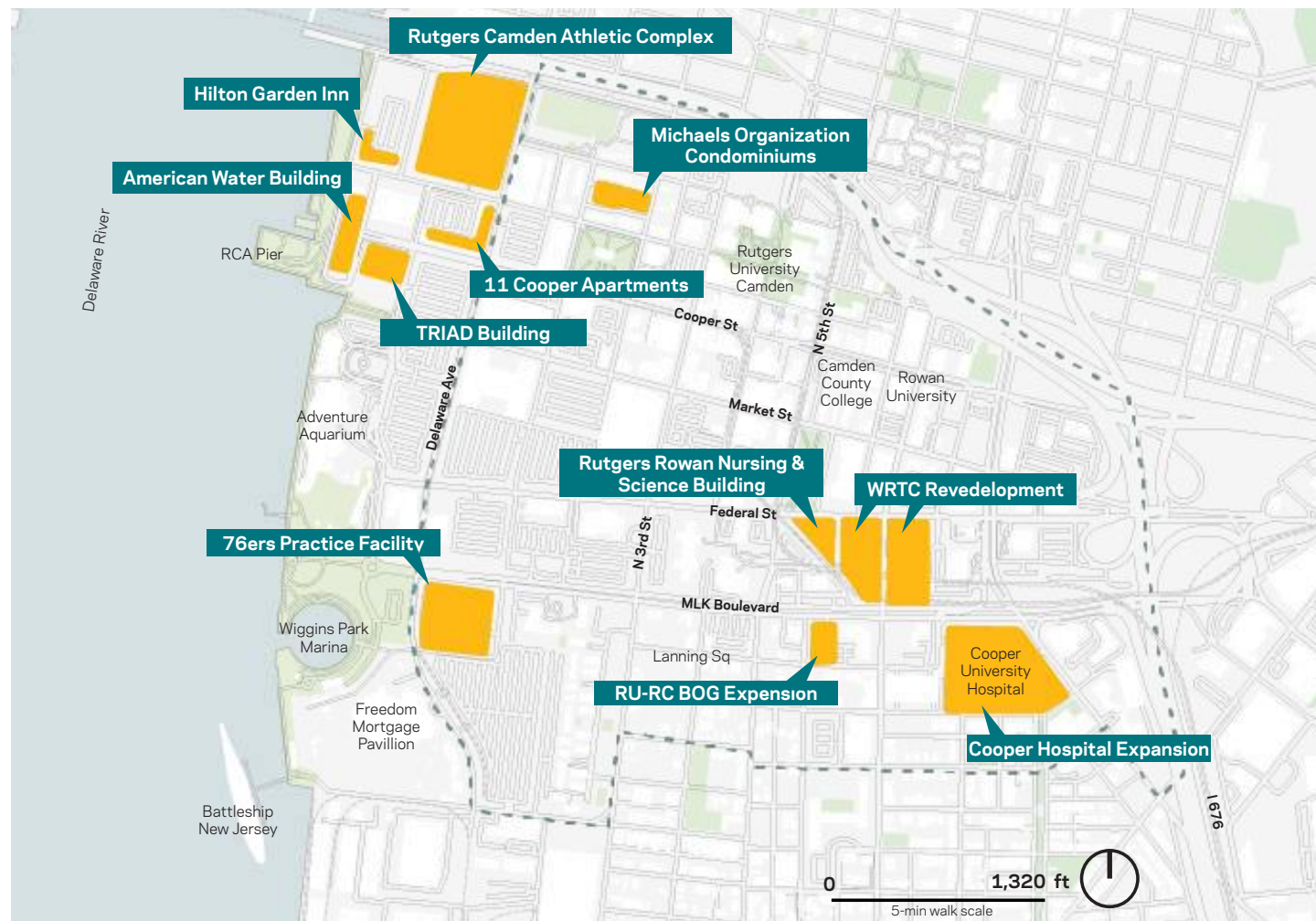


Figure 19. Downtown Camden Recent & Planned Developments

## 8.2. Compact Urban Grid

The Study Area contains a relatively compact central business district. Most of it is within a 10-minute walk from City Hall. Despite the removal of some historic street connections, the Study Area retains a walkable urban grid with optimal block sizes for future mixed-use redevelopment. In addition, the Study Area's main east-west corridors are strongly oriented to the waterfront, enabling sightlines and direct pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Delaware River.

Future redevelopment may unlock the opportunity to reintroduce the Study Area's historic street connections, which can help break down existing superblocks that have been created over time. This can further improve walkability, pedestrian comfort, bicycle access, micromobility, and sense of place.

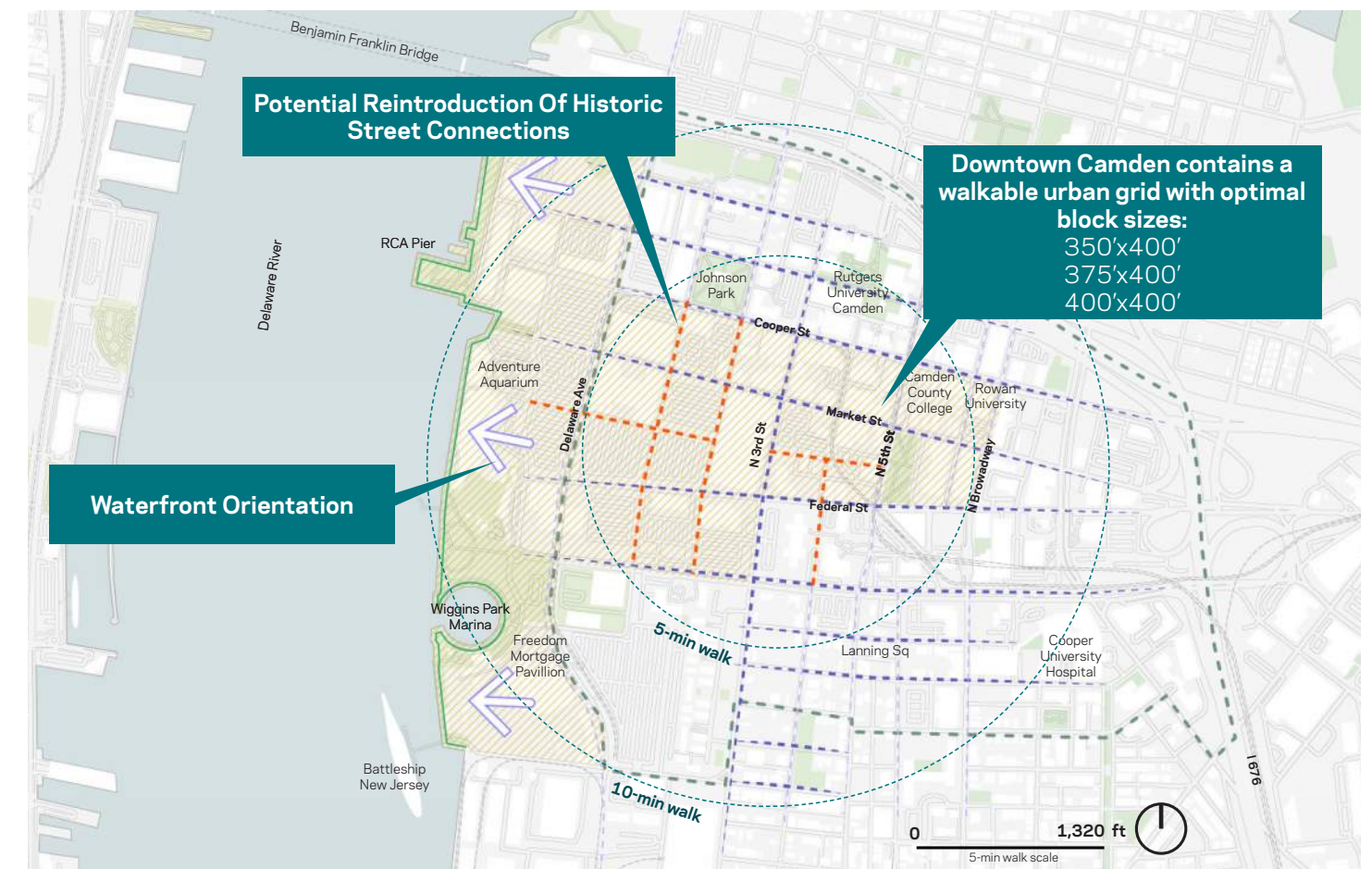


Figure 20. Downtown Camden Compact Urban Grid

### 8.3. Sightlines to Important Landmarks

Clear, unobstructed sightlines to important buildings, structures, and landmarks aid in intuitive wayfinding, help establish a sense of place and character, and strengthen urban identity. Due in part to its orientation to the Delaware Riverfront and civic buildings, the Study Area has uninterrupted views of important structures, historic buildings, and community assets.

Important sightlines in the Study Area include views to the Camden City Hall tower from the north, south, east, and west; Center City Philadelphia Skyline, Delaware River and riverfront park space from east-west oriented streets; and Philadelphia Waterfront, Nipper Building (The Victor), and Benjamin Franklin Bridge.

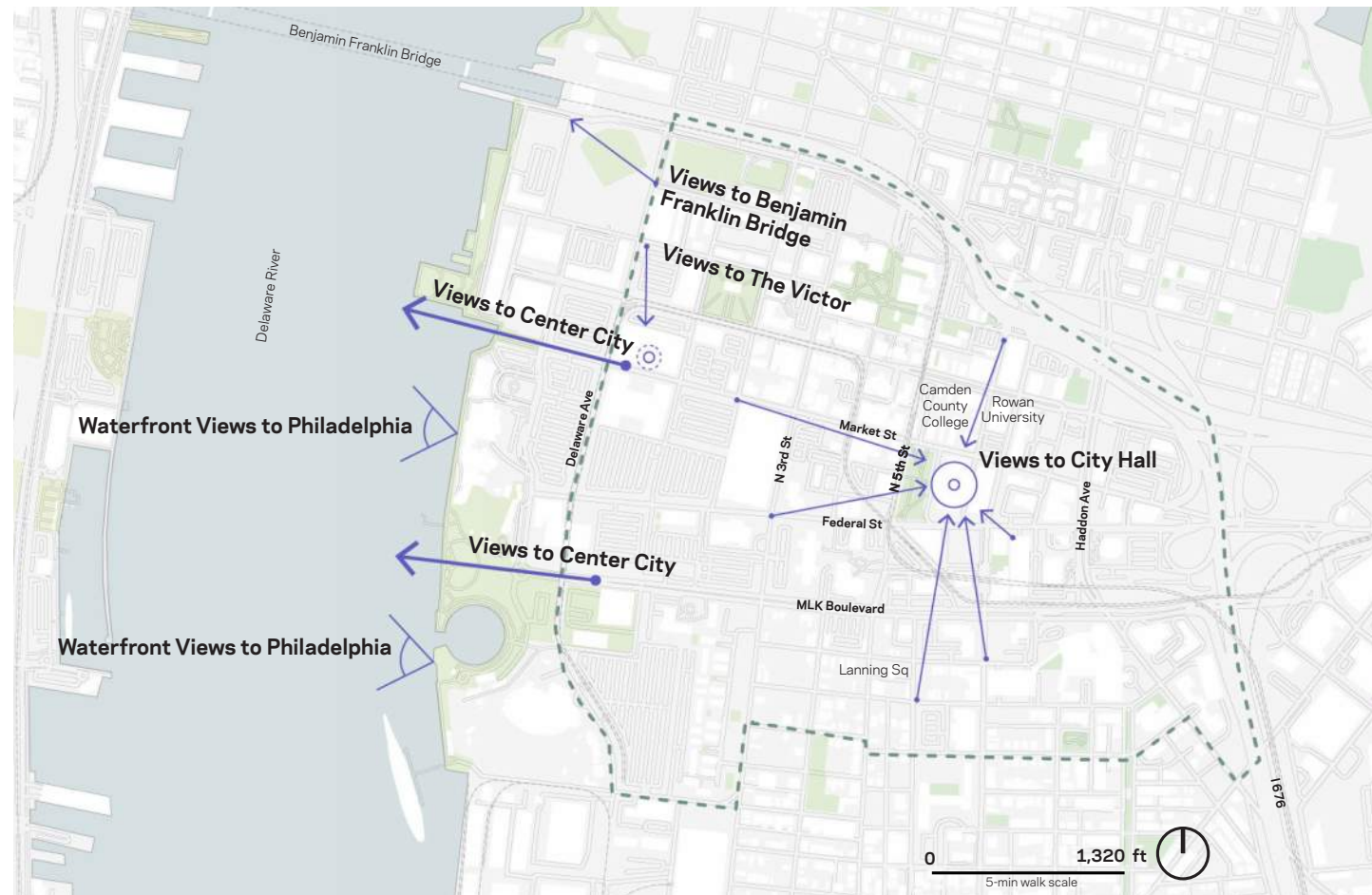


Figure 21. Downtown Camden Sightlines to Important Landmarks

### 8.4. Transit Rich

The Study Area has a robust transit network that provides multimodal transport choices for residents, visitors, downtown employees, and students. This transit network, including bus service, an intercity subway line, light rail, and ferry service, provides Downtown Camden with a considerable advantage in attracting future transit-oriented development. Combined with the Study Area's recent growth, its investment in the Delaware Riverfront, and adaptive reuse efforts, the Study Area is poised to capitalize on its transit infrastructure, particularly on the heels of the redevelopment of the Walter Rand Transportation Center. This robust transit network may also enable the reduction of surface parking in the Study Area.

Notable transit assets include:

- NJ TRANSIT bus service
- PATCO City Hall Station and Broadway Station, with direct rail access to Philadelphia
- NJ TRANSIT River LINE light rail
- Walter Rand Transportation Center
- RiverLink Ferry service to Philadelphia

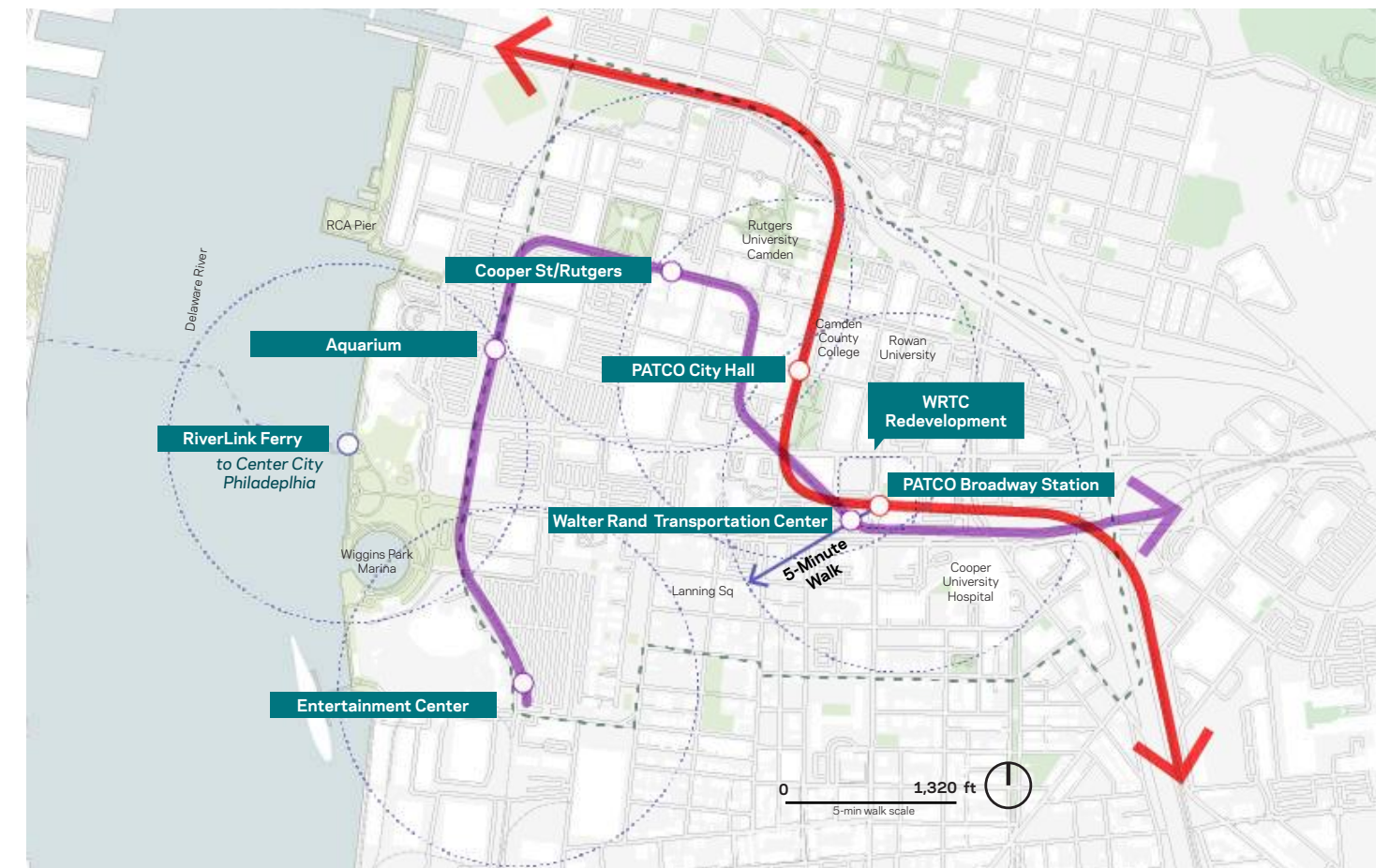


Figure 22. Downtown Camden Transit Assets

## 8.5. Emerging Nodes

Due in part to recent investment and institutional expansion in the Study Area, there are a series of “emerging nodes,” or industry clusters in the Study Area. These concentrations of development are located primarily at the eastern and western ends of Downtown Camden, and include the following:

- **Eds and Meds Nodes:** It is worth noting that the educational and healthcare/medical nodes, or “Eds and Meds” clusters, are coalescing at the eastern end of the Study Area. This condition provides an opportunity to explore how to better link and formalize connections between these complementary uses by leveraging existing and potential pedestrian corridors, streets, bike infrastructure, micro-mobility options, and green spaces.
- **Waterfront Culture and Entertainment Nodes:** There is a continuous pedestrian path system that links cultural, entertainment, and recreational uses along the Delaware Riverfront. These uses include Battleship New Jersey, Adventure Aquarium, Wiggins Park Marina, Freedom Mortgage Pavilion, RCA Pier, and recent Rutgers Athletic Field improvements. These assets are well-connected and help reinforce Downtown Camden’s orientation toward its waterfront.

The waterfront is one of Camden’s greatest assets and offers opportunities to improve tourism and community engagement. Strengthening this area through investments in infrastructure, public amenities, and events, works to create a destination that attracts visitors both regionally and beyond.

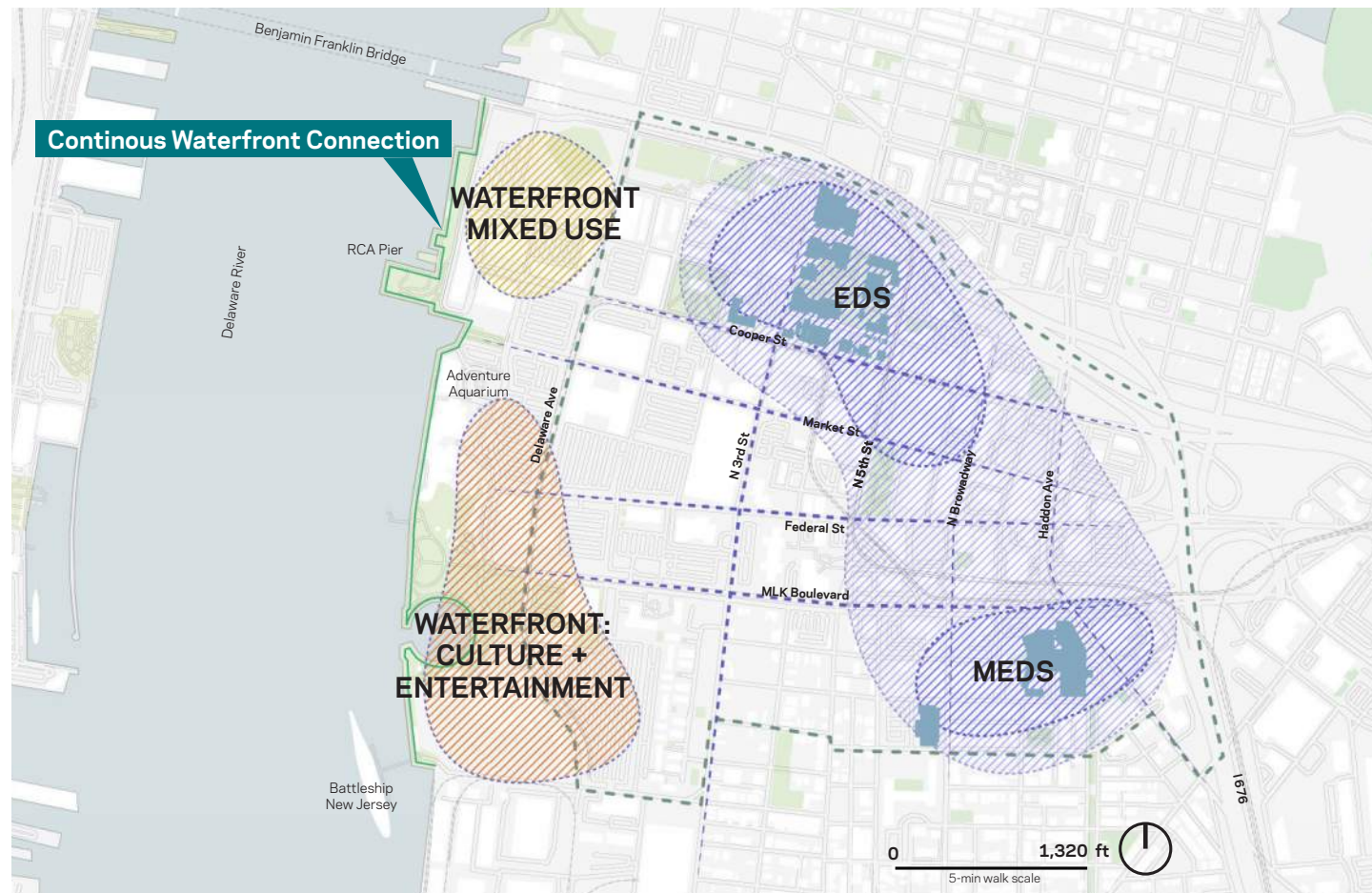


Figure 23. Downtown Camden Emerging Nodes

## 8.6. Soft Sites

For the purposes of this Master Plan, soft sites are defined as land that is vacant (i.e. unimproved), underutilized (i.e., developed with single-level, auto-oriented buildings, or surface parking lots), or contains a building(s) planned to be relocated (e.g., Camden Justice Complex). There are approximately 50 acres of soft sites in the Study Area, or about 15 percent of total land area. A high percentage of this land is devoted to surface parking lots for commercial and institutional uses. In addition, there are approximately 43 vacant residential parcels within the Lanning Square neighborhood, with lot sizes up to 5,000 sq. ft.

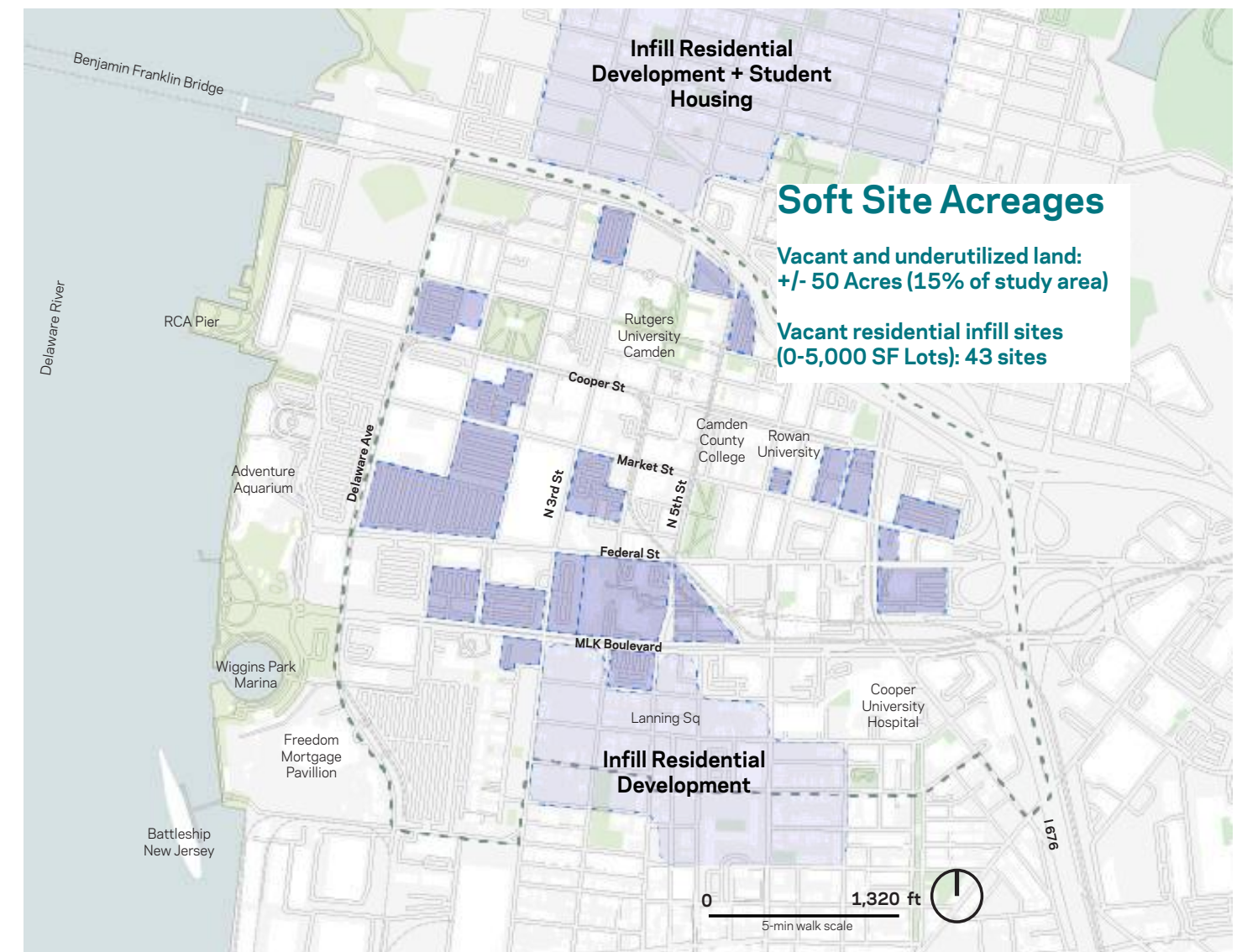


Figure 24. Downtown Camden Soft Sites

# 9. DOWNTOWN PLAN

## 9.1. Plan Goals and Objectives

Building upon the aforementioned exercises, a set of planning goals and objectives were formed to identify Camden’s current conditions and its goals for the future. The goals and objectives were developed to be actionable and achievable while also considering the downtown community’s desires over the lifespan of the Vision Statement. Ultimately, the goals and objectives drove the development of the overall planning process and are reflected in the Plan recommendations.

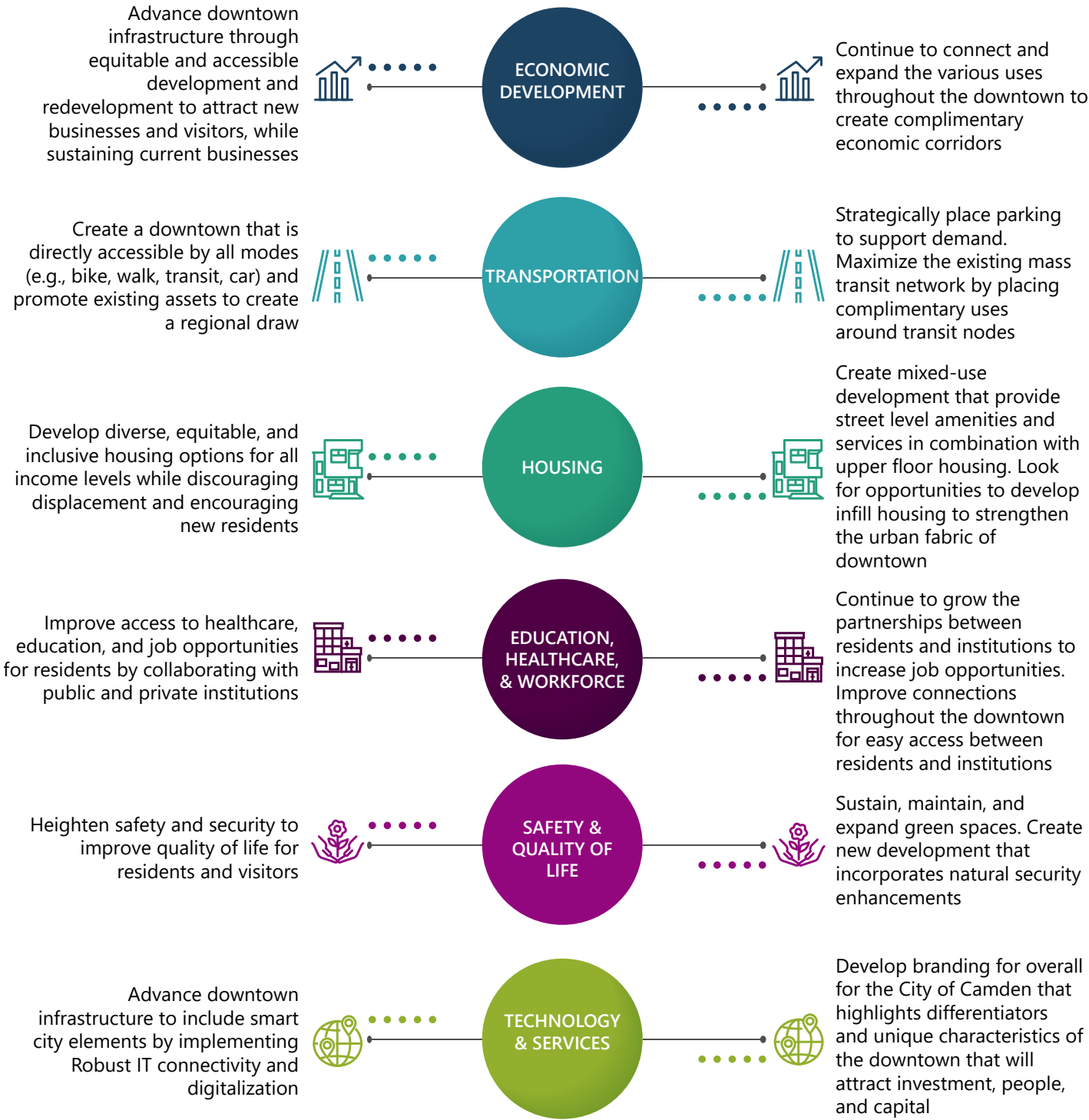
A central goal of the master plan is to prioritize spaces for residents, particularly younger people, by creating areas for recreational activities, educational programs, and community gatherings. Open spaces, recreational areas, youth centers, and other spaces are recommended to be integrated into new development to support growth, learning, and creativity. Goals and objectives outlined work to emphasize the importance of equitable access to these resources for all residents to grow Downtown Camden as a welcoming place for individuals and families.

The Plan also seeks to bolster downtown infrastructure through equitable and accessible development. Redevelopment efforts work to attract new businesses and sustain existing ones, contributing to a more robust local economy. To create a truly accessible downtown, multimodal transportation methods, including walking, biking, and public transit, should be prioritized.

Another key goal of the Plan is to incorporate diverse and equitable housing developments. Mixed-use developments are recommended to be leveraged to combine ground-level amenities with upper-floor housing. Additionally, infill projects will complement mixed-use developments by working to create a more cohesive community.

Safety and security are also a fundamental goal of the Plan to improve quality of life. Recommendations emphasize maintaining and expanding green spaces and integrating natural security features into new developments. Downtown infrastructure should also work to integrate smart city elements, including enhanced IT connectivity, digitalization, and branding efforts to highlight Camden’s unique characteristics.

By advancing these goals, Downtown Camden will evolve into a more dynamic, inclusive, and vibrant community that meets the needs of its residents, grows economic opportunity, and attracts visitors to enjoy its culture, businesses, waterfront, and other assets.



## 9.2. Redevelopment Framework Concepts

Based on the analysis of urban context, constraints, and redevelopment opportunities, the following high-level framework concepts were developed to provide some spatial and physical planning guidance for how to organize future redevelopment within the Study Area.

1. Strengthen the Market Street corridor and continue promoting it as Downtown Camden's central "community spine," focusing on small-scale retail shops and residential development.
2. Fill the observed gaps in the urban fabric between Camden's waterfront and its civic center by redeveloping vacant and underutilized "soft sites" with a mix of uses and active ground floors and reintroducing historic street connections to break down the scale of existing superblocks.
3. Reduce or consolidate large expanses of surface parking into shared use parking structures that serve existing commercial development and offer off-street parking for new development.
4. Formalize an "Eds & Meds corridor" between the medical industry cluster near MLK Boulevard and the educational cluster along Cooper Street.
5. Continue enhancing waterfront permeability and walkability to and from Downtown Camden.
6. Introduce "blue-green" corridors along streets prone to urban heat island effect and flooding risk through use of green infrastructure, tree plantings, and other green amenities.
7. Expand bicycle lane network to complement existing bicycle infrastructure along Cooper Street and MLK Boulevard to improve access to neighborhoods north and south of the Study Area.
8. Establish an arts and culture corridor along 3rd Street while allowing for better north-south connections to residential neighborhoods to the north and south of the Study Area.

Through thoughtful planning, inclusive policies, and strategic development, the Downtown Camden Master Plan aims to transform Downtown Camden into an 18-hour city - a place where activity continues beyond the typical workday and that offers entertainment and dining options into the evening. An 18-hour city bridges the gap between the energy of a 24-hour large urban center and the quieter pace of smaller cities to blend economic opportunity with livability. This vision includes mixed-use developments, pedestrian-friendly streets, cultural events, and public spaces that feel vibrant and inviting throughout the day and evening.

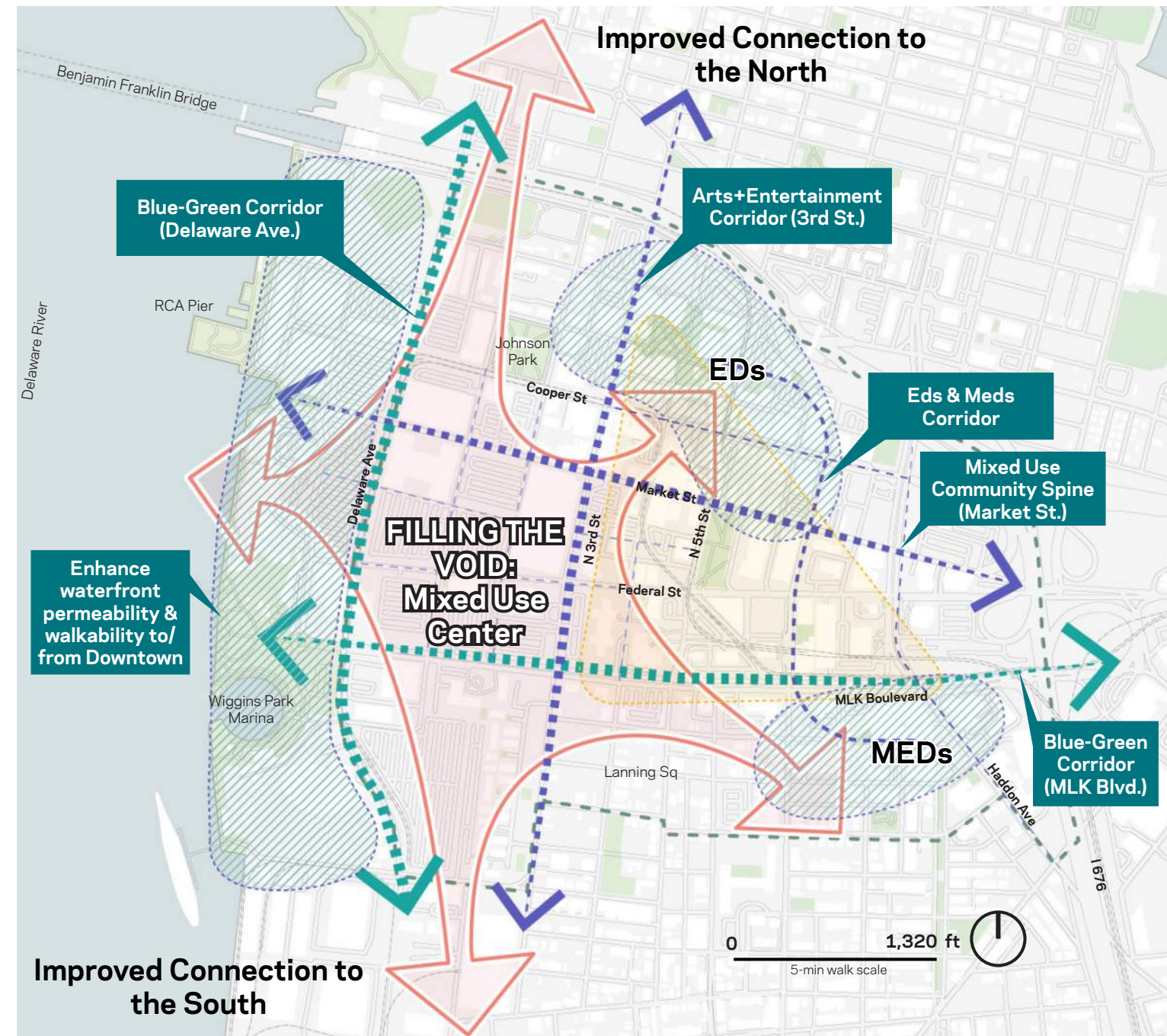


Figure 25. Downtown Camden Redevelopment Framework Concepts

### 9.3. Illustrative Redevelopment Plan

Based on the review of existing built conditions, potential soft sites, current and planned investment, emerging development nodes, and the framework concepts identified above, the most significant redevelopment potential in the Study Area should be focused on the primary east-west streets serving Camden's central business district and the Delaware Riverfront, including Market Street, Federal Street, and MLK Boulevard – between I-676 and Delaware Avenue.

In support of this redevelopment potential, opportunities should also be explored to improve street connections between the Study Area and residential neighborhoods north and south of the Study Area. This can be achieved through reintroduction of former streets as part of a redevelopment, streetscape beautification, green infrastructure, creation of new park spaces, and improvement of pedestrian crossings at key thresholds – including under the Benjamin Franklin Bridge and across MLK Boulevard.

The redevelopment plan identifies potential locations for new mixed-use development, shared parking structures, new open space, and street connection improvements. Key features of the redevelopment recommendations include:

- Mixed use development:
  - Market Street (strengthened mixed-use corridor with boutique retail on the ground floor and residential development above)
  - Federal Street (mixed use development sited primarily along the south side of the street)
  - MLK Boulevard (blue-green corridor and improved gateway to the Study Area, with mixed use development on the north and south sides of the street)
  - N. 3rd Street (new “arts and culture” corridor to celebrate Camden’s cultural heritage and to improve connections to Lanning Square and Cooper’s Poynt)
- Formalized green corridor along N. 5th Street and Cooper Street that serves as a formalized “Eds and Meds” Corridor
- New community green adjacent to Broadway Station
- Residential infill development in Lanning Square
- Reintroduction of N. Front Street between Market Street and MLK Boulevard, between N. 3rd Street and Delaware Avenue
- Improved under-bridge crossing space along N. 3rd Street to Cooper’s Poynt

#### 9.3.1. Conceptual Build Out Scenarios

Based on three theoretical development intensity scenarios appropriate for this context, the Study Area's 50 acres of soft sites have the physical site capacity to support between 1.1 and 4.4 million gross square feet of new development.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Build Out Scenarios:

- Low Development Intensity (.5 Floor Area Ratio): 1.1 million gross square feet
- Medium Development Intensity (1.0 Floor Area Ratio): 2.2 million gross square feet
- High Development Intensity (2.0 Floor Area Ratio): 4.4 million gross square feet

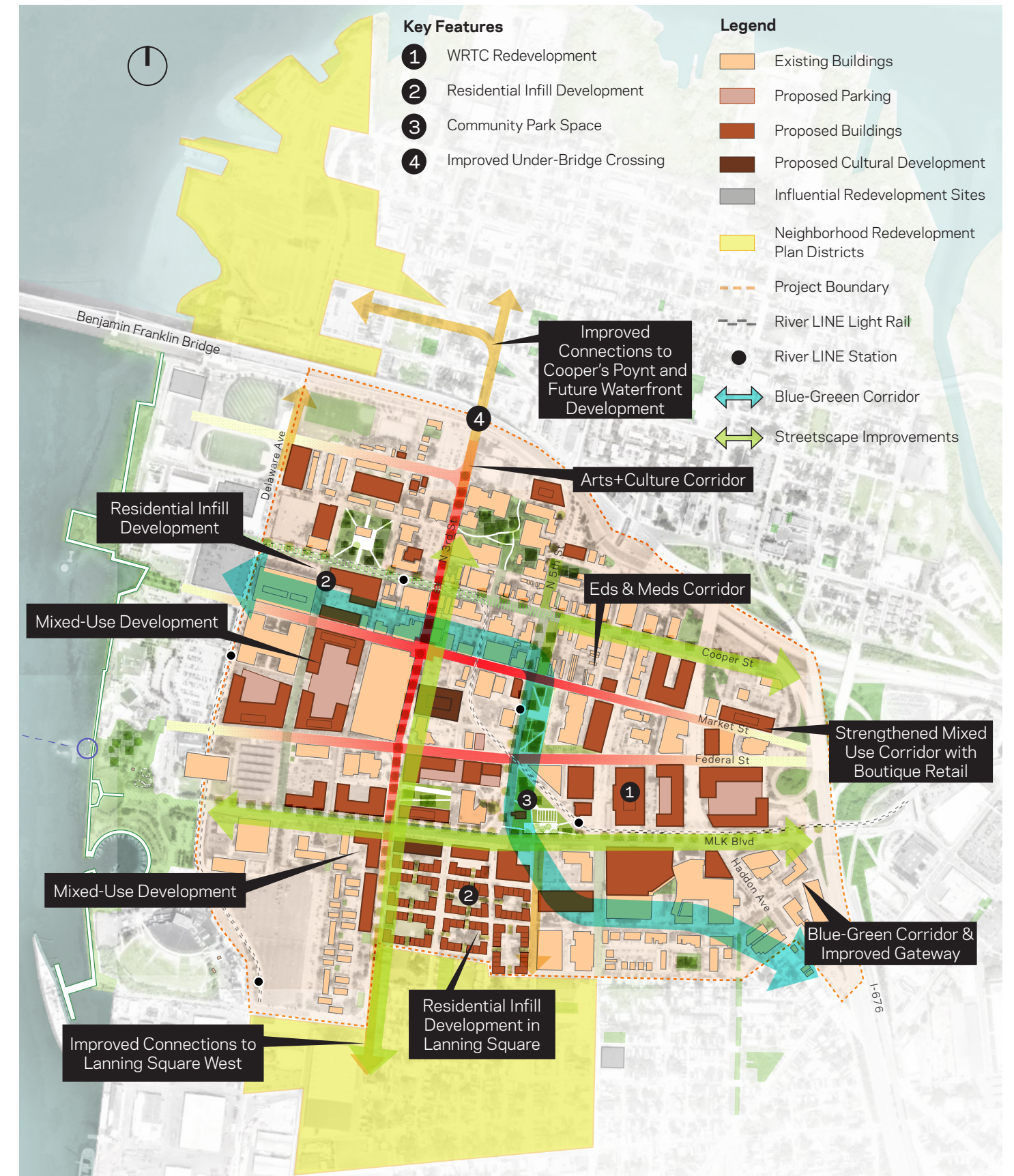


Figure 26. Downtown Camden Master Plan Illustrative Map

# 10. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan for the Downtown Camden Master Plan outlines the systematic approach to transform the identified redevelopment opportunities into reality. This comprehensive strategy focuses on urban renewal, community engagement, regulatory compliance, infrastructure development, economic growth, environmental sustainability, and continuous evaluation.

Short-Term Goals:

Site Analysis & Assessment (Year 1):

- Utilize soft site analysis to understand the current conditions and zoning regulations
- Identify owners of vacant or underutilized land for potential acquisition or partnerships

Zoning & Regulatory Changes (Year 1-2):

- Work with local government to update zoning regulations to encourage mixed-use development and streamline permitting processes for redevelopment projects

Strengthen Market Street (Year 2-10):

- Begin the transformation of Market St. into a central “community spine” with boutique retail shops and residential development
- Identify potential funding sources and partners for streetscape beautification

Mid-Term Goals:

Arts and Culture Corridor (Year 3-10):

- Establish the arts and culture corridor along 3rd St.
- Support cultural and entertainment businesses in the area

Mixed-Use & Residential In-Fill Development (Year 4-10):

- Focus on mixed-use & residential in-fill development along key streets, including Market St., Federal St., and MLK Blvd.
- Encourage developers to align with the Master Plan’s framework concepts

Eds and Meds Corridor (Year 5-10):

- Formalize the corridor connecting the medical industry cluster and educational institutions
- Implement green infrastructure and beautification along Cooper St.

Long-Term Goals:

Continued Development (Year 7-10):

- Continue to encourage mixed-use development and redevelop soft sites based on build-out scenarios
- Monitor progress and adjust strategies as needed

Green Corridor Expansion (Year 8-10):

- Expand green corridors to combat urban heat island effects and flooding risks
- Prioritize green infrastructure and tree plantings

Enhanced Waterfront (Year 8-10):

- Continue enhancing waterfront permeability and walkability
- Explore opportunities for recreational spaces and amenities

Throughout the 10-year timeline:

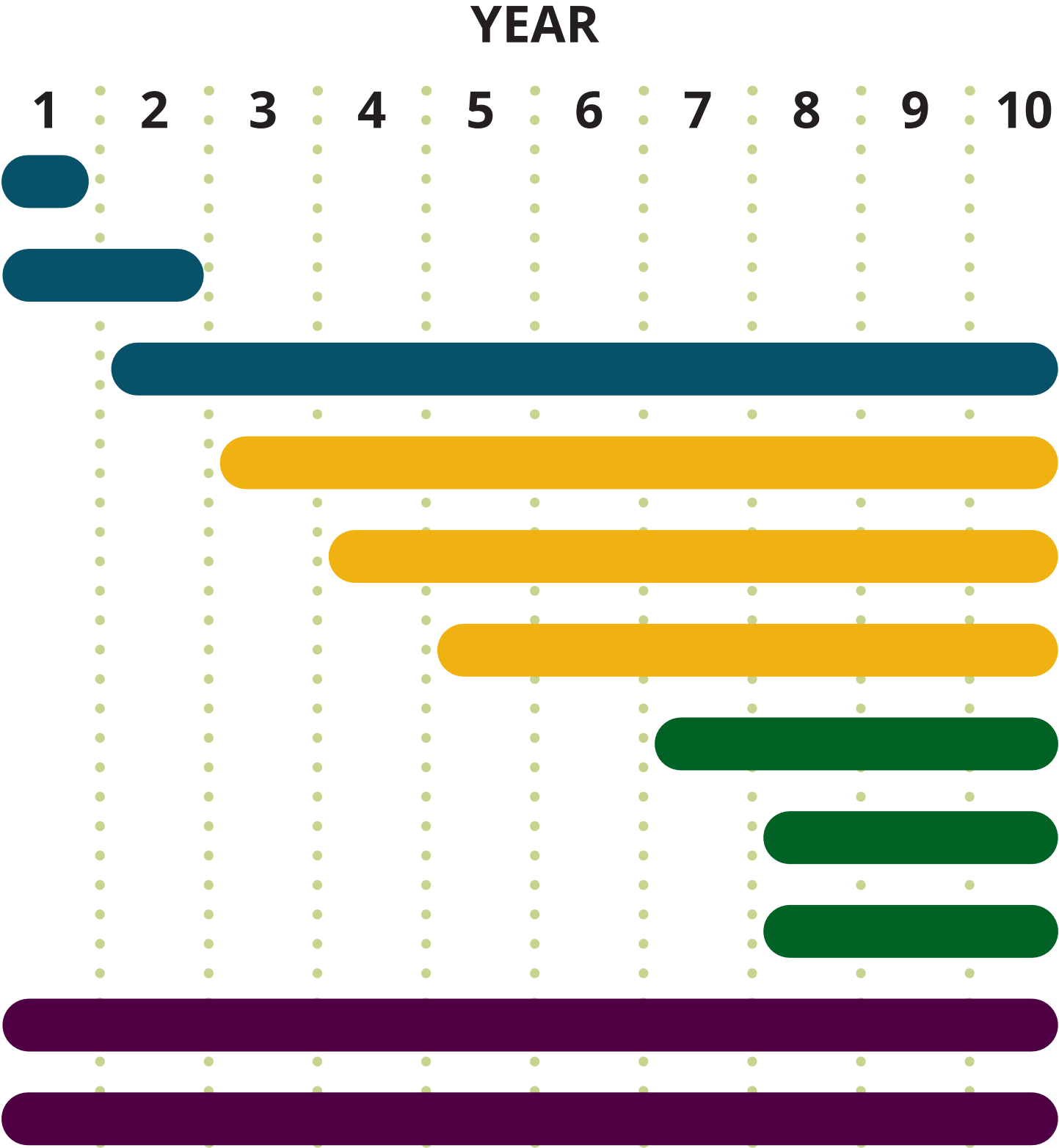
Community Engagement (Ongoing):

- Maintain an open dialogue with community stakeholders to address their needs and concerns
- Adapt the Plan based on evolving community feedback

Financial Planning (Ongoing):

- Continuously seek funding sources, grants, and private investments to support redevelopment initiatives
- Monitor the economic feasibility of the Plan’s build-out scenarios

Adhering to this plan will work to revitalize the downtown area, enhance the quality of life for residents, and attract investment and innovation. The timeline below provides a flexible framework to guide the redevelopment of soft sites within the Study Area over the next 10 years. It combines short-, mid-, and long-term goals to create a vibrant and sustainable urban environment while preserving the community’s character and history.



## 10.1. Development Considerations

As development continues to expand in Downtown Camden, careful planning and integration of innovative practices are required to align development goals with technological advancements, sustainability, and long-term community needs.

### 10.1.1. Integration of Technological Innovations

Incorporating smart technologies into new developments can enhance efficiency and improve residents' quality of life. Examples include:

- Incorporating smart water and energy systems to optimize resource use and reduce costs;
- Integrating electric vehicle charging stations and bike-sharing facilities; and
- Encouraging LEED-certified designs and the use of renewable energy systems (such as solar panels, geothermal heating, etc.) to reduce environmental impact and operating costs.

### 10.1.2. Human Capital and Community Integration

All development projects should prioritize community needs by aligning with the goals of the area's Human Capital Analysis and Plan. The Human Capital Analysis and Plan is required as part of the neighborhood development plan process and must be included as an appendix to the filed redevelopment or development plans for every neighborhood in Camden.

Redevelopment or development agreements for projects in neighborhoods with Human Capital Plans must include language regarding how the project assists in achieving the goals identified by the human capital analysis. This process, while important in achieving goals and objectives for the residents of Camden, may be challenging for developers to build into their projects. .

### 10.1.3. Sustainable & Resilient Development

Resiliency and sustainable development practices in urban areas, such as green infrastructure, renewable energy integration, and climate-resilient designs, play a critical role in reducing environmental impact and addressing future challenges.

Incorporating energy-efficient construction methods, using recycled or locally sourced materials, and implementing renewable energy systems like solar and wind can significantly decrease carbon emissions. Nature-based solutions, such as urban forests, green roofs, and stormwater management systems, can mitigate flooding, reduce heat islands, and support local ecosystems.

Mixed-use developments that emphasize walkability, biking infrastructure, and public transportation reduce dependency on vehicles while creating interconnected communities. Sustainable development also benefits from addressing affordability and equity. Projects are recommended to include affordable housing, local business opportunities, and access to essential services like healthcare and education.

### 10.1.4. Flexibility in Historic District Development

Given the restrictive nature of the Historic Overlay District, introducing adaptive reuse policies and easing visual design standards can enhance development opportunities while preserving Camden's historic character. Developers should also be incentivized to incorporate smart conservation practices, such as using modern materials that replicate historic aesthetics.

### 10.1.5. Collaborative Approach

It is recommended that developers collaborate with the Camden Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the Mayor's Business Growth Development Team (BGDT) to align projects with the City's broader economic development goals. Collaboration, such as workshops or roundtables with developers and city officials, can improve communication and reduce ambiguities in the approval process.

## 10.2. Policy & Governance

To sustain and enhance the current growth climate in Downtown Camden, it is essential to establish a governance framework that streamlines processes, minimizes delays, and encourages collaboration among all stakeholders.

### 10.2.1. Centralized Coordination

The Mayor's BGDT aims to serve as a comprehensive, single-entry point for developers to navigate zoning, land use, and permitting requirements. The BGDT's continued engagement with developers, municipal agencies, and the CRA is critical in supporting transparency and expediting the approval process.

Since the City of Camden requires either Planning Board and/or Zoning Board of Adjustment approval for all development site plans, the BGDT will be instrumental to help guide developers through the initial approval process as well as assist throughout the project lifecycle.

### 10.2.2. Streamlining Development Codes and Zoning Requirements

Current zoning regulations, including parking minimums, design standards, and the Historic Overlay District requirements, present significant hurdles for developers. Legislative amendments or overlay zones specifically tailored to facilitate development and redevelopment can reduce complexities. For instance, adopting flexible parking standards and revising restrictive historic preservation rules can enhance development feasibility.

### 10.2.3. Utility Approval Reform

Utility hookup processes currently require developers to obtain approvals from the City of Camden, CCMUA, and other agencies. This process is rigorous, multi-faceted, time-consuming, and potentially costly. Developers may be discouraged from investing in projects in Downtown Camden since they face a multitude of approvals and fees that can easily send their project off schedule and over budget. Consolidating the application process through the City Engineer, with support from the BGDT, can reduce delays.

### 10.2.4. Adaptive Reuse and Historic District Revisions

Historic Overlay District policies should balance preservation with economic growth by allowing adaptive reuse and incentivizing developers to integrate historic elements into their designs. This could mitigate the cost burden while maintaining the district's character.

### 10.2.5. Transparent and Regularly Updated Incentive Programs

Incentives, such as the Aspire Program and EDA Urban Growth Zones, must be promoted and communicated effectively. Regular updates and targeted outreach to developers about available funding opportunities can bridge financial gaps and help Camden remain competitive in attracting development.

## 11. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Downtown Camden Master Plan serves as a strategic roadmap for the revitalization of Camden by addressing the challenges posed by decades of urban decay and economic decline. By capitalizing on the resurgence of economic development, the Plan sets forth a comprehensive framework that leverages redevelopment opportunities. The proposed high-level concepts aim to transform and leverage key corridors, including the “Eds and Meds,” Market Street, Federal Street, and “Arts and Culture” corridors, introduce green spaces, and establish cultural and educational corridors in Downtown Camden. The implementation plan provides a systematic approach encompassing zoning changes, infrastructure development, and ongoing community engagement.

To support the Plan in remaining dynamic and responsive, a framework for monitoring and evaluation is recommended to track progress, measure outcomes, and guide future adjustments. By establishing clear evaluation benchmarks and continuously engaging with stakeholders, the Plan will stay relevant and effective as it evolves in response to new challenges and opportunities.

Ultimately, the Downtown Camden Master Plan is a living document designed to guide growth in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Through this comprehensive strategy, the Master Plan aspires to not only enhance the quality of life for residents but also attract investment and innovation, ultimately paving the way for a vibrant and sustainable future for Downtown Camden.



**THE DOWNTOWN CAMDEN  
MASTER PLAN SERVES AS A  
STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR  
THE REVITALIZATION OF  
DOWNTOWN CAMDEN**

# APPENDIX A: PUBLIC COMMENTS SUMMARY

Theme:	Comment Summaries:
Activities for Children	Recommendation to prioritize activities for children in the area.
Arts, Culture, and Tourism	Camden's Downtown revitalization should focus on integrating arts and culture, with opportunities for local artists to contribute to new buildings, murals, and public spaces. The Walter Rand Center could offer a space for performances and artistic expression.
	Dedicating part of the waterfront to arts, culture, and dining, like boat restaurants, could boost tourism and attract visitors. Strengthening marketing at locations like the South Jersey Port will support local businesses and create a more inviting atmosphere. The Downtown Camden Master Plan should prioritize arts and culture to foster sustainable growth and community identity.
Community Engagement, Communication, and Inclusion	Some residents feel excluded from the planning process, with decisions already made before they are invited to participate. Residents would like a more proactive approach to engage communities, including those in Lanning Square West, and for a clearer mechanism to include their input in shaping the master plan.
	Several residents did not receive information about the planning meetings, suggesting the creation of a communication committee and outreach efforts to ensure everyone is informed. Maps provided in the planning documents are also hard to read and need improvement.
	Questions were raised about how public input is tracked, who decides which comments are prioritized, and how those comments are incorporated into the master plan.
	Concerns about the lack of representation for certain communities (e.g., Lanning Square West) and institutions, like churches, in the planning process. There is also a need for outreach to residential stakeholders, such as those in large apartment complexes, and for more focused discussions on residential housing goals.
	Residents want clarity on the process, including when key documents (like the vision statement and project goals) will be available for review. There's also interest in understanding the next steps in the planning process and how new input from meetings will be integrated into the final plan.
Downtown Infrastructure and Walkability	Call to address large, unbroken blocks (e.g., near the Camden County office) and implement traffic calming measures to create more pedestrian-friendly spaces and improve traffic flow and improve walkability in Downtown Camden.
	Suggestions to enhance the transition between Gateway and Downtown, making it easier for employees (e.g., Campbell's and Subaru workers) to walk into downtown by improving walkable pathways.
	Concern about Market Street becoming a two-way, multi-lane road.
Economic Development and Local Business	Concerns about rising taxes and the impact of tax-free businesses on Camden residents, urging a focus on small and micro businesses. Recommendations for bringing government offices back downtown, extending business hours, and creating a special zone for restaurants with liquor licenses.
	The need for better representation of minority contractors, local businesses, and churches in the master plan, with calls for a communication committee and steering committee to ensure community voices are heard. Emphasis on local economic opportunities and job creation, especially for Camden residents.
	Questions about how zoning laws and bureaucratic red tape affect development, including the suggestion of creating a "one-stop shop" for permitting and addressing parking, food insecurity, and space for new businesses. The need to include mixed-use housing in all redevelopment plans.
	Desire for increased support for small and micro businesses, especially in terms of access to opportunities, resources, and funding. Suggestions for greater collaboration between the planning process and local entrepreneurs, such as food businesses and nonprofit organizations.
	Calls for a more comprehensive vision to attract tech startups, encourage innovation, and create a vibrant downtown. Recommendations for creating a tech/edutainment corridor near the transportation center, fostering entrepreneurship, and addressing bureaucratic inefficiencies to streamline the development process.

Housing and Development	Strong focus on mixed-use development and market-rate housing as critical to the downtown's success. Concerns about the lack of residential options in the core, especially market-rate housing. Recommendations include revising zoning to allow multi-family units in the downtown core, with particular attention to the Lanning Square area and existing vacant lots.
	Questions about the future of vacant houses, such as demolition plans and the redevelopment of the Camden County Jail. Interest in transforming underutilized properties, such as the Freedom Mortgage Pavilion, and repurposing spaces for community use.
	Acknowledgment of the need for affordable housing but also a push for market-rate options to prevent a homogeneous low-income housing market. Concerns about gentrification and displacement, and suggestions for tenant protections and community land trusts to mitigate these risks.
	Strong desire for more retail spaces, particularly on Market Street, to support the mixed-use development vision. Calls for a more balanced approach to retail, housing, and green space that prioritizes accessibility and vibrancy in the downtown area. Need for spaces like supermarkets and pharmacies as part of the plan.
	Requests for more public engagement and recognition of local businesses and residents, especially microbusinesses. Emphasis on incorporating community input to prevent displacement, and addressing the needs of marginalized communities in the planning process.
	Suggestions for streetscape improvements, such as visual cues to narrow one-way streets, and a concern about parking, particularly in relation to new housing developments. Calls for protecting Camden's historical buildings and addressing the city's parking challenges.
Master Plan Process	Concern about the disconnect between the waterfront and the downtown area, with a desire to better leverage the waterfront's potential to support downtown businesses and tourism. A call for development incentives that could attract developers and improve the area's aesthetic and functional connectivity.
	Questions about the boundaries in the Lanning Square West area, specifically whether they can be adjusted to extend to Line Street instead of Washington Street and Berkeley Street.
	Concerns about the lack of clear incentives in the master plan to attract developers and institutions. The importance of political will, citing successful examples like Collingswood, and the need to prioritize the retention of local institutions.
	Questions about the status of the previous Lanning Square and master plans, and the role of eminent domain in the new plan. Concerns about the continuity and updates in the current development plan, which appears similar to plans from 20-25 years ago.
	Suggestion to incorporate a SWOT analysis to leverage green infrastructure investments (e.g., pocket parks and greening) as part of addressing the city's stormwater issues.
Sustainability and Innovation	Question about whether the new master plan will incorporate content from the existing Cooper Grant Central Waterfront Neighborhood Plan (CGNA) and how it will affect the surrounding neighborhoods.
	Emphasis on increasing green space, expanding flood protection around the Delaware Riverfront, and addressing flooding issues with improved sewer systems. Additionally, tree canopy expansion, permeable pavement, and incentives for green roofs on new developments are recommended to enhance climate resilience.
Transportation and Connectivity	Suggestion to incorporate smart infrastructure such as sensors for traffic, waste management, and public Wi-Fi zones to modernize Camden's infrastructure and align with future development goals.
	Address concerns regarding heavy traffic at the amphitheater during concerts and the need for parking improvements, such as lowering meter rates and resolving residential parking issues. Suggestions include exploring small boat dock parking to accommodate waterfront venue traffic and short-term parking for post offices.
	Calls for the development of the Walter Rand Transportation Center (WRTC) to include office spaces, mixed-use retail, and eateries to enhance accessibility and support commuters. There is a push to integrate local transportation options like a trolley system for better mobility within Camden.
	Suggestions to improve walkability, particularly by extending street frontage along Market St. and incorporating plans to better connect key roads such as Third Street and Broadway. Emphasis on creating cohesive connections between neighborhoods, especially with the planned bridge to North Camden.
	Address concerns about the underutilization of Rutgers buildings and entrances, with a suggestion for greater involvement from the university in Camden's revitalization efforts, especially in improving the downtown area and maintaining its properties.
	Proposals to enhance neighborhood cohesion, including reviewing North Camden's 10-year plan and incorporating ideas such as bike rides or kayaking to connect different areas of the city. Consideration for future uses of the prison site, especially after the bridge to North Camden is completed.