

# PLAN ENDORSEMENT – MUNICIPAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Borough of Bound Brook Somerset County, New Jersey



Prepared for the Borough of Bound Brook in Accordance with the  
New Jersey State Planning Commission Administrative Regulations (N.J.A.C. 5:85 et  
seq.)

Adopted by the Borough of Bound Brook on March 8, 2022

The original of this report was signed and sealed on March 4, 2022 in accordance with  
Chapter 41 of Title 13 of the New Jersey State Board of Professional Planners

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## 1. Introduction

The Borough of Bound Brook has a long history of involvement with the New Jersey state planning process. It was designated by the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) in 2000 as a joint town center with South Bound Brook, a sister community located to the South of Bound Brook directly across the Raritan River.

Things have changed significantly in Bound Brook since the Borough received center designation. The US Army Corps of Engineers completed the Green Brook Flood Control Project, which secured Bound Brook from periodic flooding and culminated with the removal of all of the downtown from the designated 100-year floodplain.

This major infrastructure investment, coupled with a substantially overhauled planning and zoning frameworks, has led to considerable developer interest in building multi-family housing in and around the downtown, as well as elsewhere in the Borough. Numerous projects have been completed, are under construction or are in the development pipeline. The Borough is growing and will continue to grow, following strict smart growth protocols that are entirely consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

With Center Designations lapsing, the Borough wishes to maintain its partnership with the SPC, state agencies and Somerset County, and have the SPC formally recognize its efforts through the plan endorsement process.

The entire Borough is mapped as Planning Area 1 – Metropolitan Planning Area. As a practical matter, those low-lying lands along the Raritan River that are not protected by levees should probably be mapped as Planning Area 5 – Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area. Similarly, a large undeveloped Borough-owned parcel located on the West side of the Middle Brook should similarly be mapped PA5. Otherwise, the mapping is appropriate and the Borough does not wish to change it, nor does it wish to change the center boundary.

In 2017, the Bound Brook Planning Board adopted a Master Plan Reexamination Report, prepared by Carlos Rodrigues, FAICP / PP, of Design Solutions, LLC, dated 6/8/2017. It was adopted on that same day, and memorialized by Resolution 2017-10 on 6/22/2017. While not a full Master Plan, the 2017 Reexamination Report provides a comprehensive picture of the Borough, from a land use, housing, environmental, transportation, population, economic base and other relevant planning-related topics, well beyond the scope of conventional Reexamination Reports.

The 2017 Reexamination Report also included an extensive public consultation effort, through an on-line survey in both English and Spanish. The results of that public engagement process are included as an appendix to the report.

The 2017 Reexamination Report contained extensive recommendations regarding needed changes to the Borough's land use and zoning frameworks. Most of those changes have been implemented. However, the 2017 Reexamination Report did not provide definitive guidance as to certain areas of the Borough, suggesting the need for further study and analysis.

The 2017 Reexamination Report, along with all other planning- and redevelopment-related documents and maps are posted to the Borough's website and available here: <https://boundbrook-nj.org/13038-2/>

The 2017 Reexamination Report also describes the history of past planning efforts in Bound Brook, beginning with the first zoning code, adopted in 1921, and the first Master Plan, adopted in 1932.

Subsequently, the Bound Brook Planning Board adopted, on 5/24/2018, a new Statement of Goals and Objectives, an action memorialized by resolution at a hearing on 6/14/2018; as well as a new Land Use Plan element of the Master Plan, adopted on 2/28/2019, and memorialized by resolution at a hearing on 3/28/2019. Both the Statement of Goals and Objectives, which is dated 6/5/2018, and the Land Use Plan, which is dated 2/5/2019 were prepared by Carlos Rodrigues, FAICP / PP, of Design Solutions, LLC.

The Statement of Goals and Objectives is entirely consistent with the goals, objectives and policies found in the 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), as well as with the goals, objectives and policies found in the Somerset County Strategic Plan.

The 2019 Land Use Plan element provided more definitive guidance regarding those areas where the 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Report remained inconclusive.

In addition, and around the same time, the Borough of Bound Brook designated two new areas as “Areas in Need of Redevelopment”, as well as the Borough’s first “Area in Need of Rehabilitation”. These designations are authorized under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. Additional designations have been effectuated since then. Redevelopment plans have been adopted for all areas deemed in need of redevelopment, but not yet for the area in need of rehabilitation.

Generally speaking the Borough will be looking for technical and financial assistance from various state agencies with respect to a number of items on the Borough’s planning agenda:

- Implementation of pedestrian and bicycle counter-measures (traffic calming) for the South Main Street / Main Street / Talmage Avenue corridors, identified in a 2019 audit sponsored by the NJTPA and NJDOT, and an earlier study by the Voorhees Transportation Center of modes of access to school by the student population.
- Implementation of a greenway along the Middle Brook, Raritan River and Bound Brook frontages. The greenway would be partially built on publicly-owned lands, as well as lands owned by New Jersey American Water and a decommissioned CSX / Conrail right-of-way.
- Enhancements to the existing kayak / canoe launching facility located on NJ American Water land under the Queen’s Anne bridge.
- Streetscape improvements and pedestrian counter measures along the Union Avenue / NJ State Route 28 corridor.
- Environmental remediation of contaminated lands, primarily but not exclusively along both active and inactive railroad rights-of-way.
- Assistance with the rehabilitation of deteriorated and non-code compliant housing stock.
- Implementation of a complete streets approach throughout the Borough.
- Enhancements to various parks, including the undeveloped and largely inaccessible Middle Brook preserve.

- Enhancements to various historic structures, including the Brook Theatre and the Bound Brook Train Station.
- Implementation of a “quiet zone” solution to the two existing grade crossing of NJ Transit’s Raritan Valley line, including the possible relocation of one of the existing grade crossings.
- Place-making and public art interventions in strategic locations.
- Street closures at strategic locations, to create new public plazas for pedestrians.
- Implementation of a wayfinding program in and around the downtown and in the Union Avenue corridor. The NJTPA funded a study that was completed by the Voorhees Transportation Center in 2019.



## **2. Existing Conditions / Opportunities and Challenges**

### **2.1 Location and Regional Context**

Bound Brook is a Somerset County municipality of 1.7 square miles (1.66 land plus .03 water), located on the Northern bank of the Raritan River. To the West it is separated from the adjacent town of Bridgewater by the Middle Brook. To the East, it is separated from the adjacent Middlesex Borough by the Green Brook, into which flows the Bound Brook (also referred to as the Boundary Brook). Bridgewater is also the adjacent municipality to the North, on the other side of NJ Route 22. South Bound Brook is the neighboring town on the South side of the Raritan River.

I-287 runs immediately West of the Borough; US Route 22 runs immediately North, separating a small portion of the Borough. NJ Route 28 bisects the Borough. In the Southern part of the Borough, between Main Street and the Raritan River, is located an active passenger rail line (NJ Transit's Raritan Valley line), and both active and inactive freight lines (CSX / Conrail). The NJ Transit line has two active grade crossings in the downtown. The CSX / Conrail freight line has an active grade crossing on South Main Street near the Queen's Bridge.

The Borough is strategically positioned with respect to a number of employment centers. In addition to the Newark and New York City job markets, the Borough is proximate to the New Brunswick "eds and meds" job market, as well as the I-287 corridor, to the North.

### **2.2 Background**

Bound Brook is an old and established community. Much of the town is consolidated, from a land use perspective, and unlikely to change in noticeable ways. This is particularly true for the various single-family detached and attached residential neighborhoods.

However other parts of town are susceptible to change, through redevelopment or other mechanisms, and that change, if properly guided, will be beneficial and make for a more vibrant town.

The area where change has focused in recent years is the area along the Main Street / Talmage Avenue corridors, which is governed by the Redevelopment Plans for Areas 1 and 2. Redevelopment projects in that area consist of new, five- or six-story mixed-use buildings with ground floor commercial and upper-story residential, that are replacing older, single-story, often commercial buildings of limited value and interest, but also infilling surface parking lots and other under-utilized spaces.

Redevelopment along the Main Street / Talmage Avenue corridors is on-going, and is moving West, as well as North, to include several adjacent blocks.

Redevelopment is also anticipated in a limited area located to the South of the railroad tracks, but protected by the flood control devices. That relatively small area currently houses the Borough's last remaining industrial activities. A portion of this area was a Superfund site, which has been remediated but is still being monitored.

The area along the Union Avenue / NJ Route 28 corridor has also seen some activity and will likely see additional activity in the future, with smaller-scale (ie three story) mixed-use buildings with ground floor commercial and upper floor residential. Over time, it is hoped that this corridor will lose some of the auto-

centric features that it currently exhibits and will function more like a second Main Street for the neighborhoods located immediately to the North and South.

Redevelopment in other built-up portions of the Borough is not impossible, but it will be limited to specific sites and specific locations where the context is appropriate.

Change elsewhere in the Borough will not take the form of conventional redevelopment, but rather of enhancements to open space and natural habitats. This is particularly true for the area between the railroad rights-of-way and the Raritan riverfront, where the proposed greenway would run. There, intensive and targeted habitat restoration efforts should take place, with other passive recreation activities also a possibility. These environmental enhancement efforts could be coupled with a sculpture park for over-sized installations and create a regional draw for an area that is currently very hard to access.

### 2.3 Inventory of Key Characteristics

#### Current Population and Trends

Please refer to Section 3 of the 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Report.

In addition, given the availability of the results from the 2020 Census, the information provided in the 2017 Reexamination can be updated with the following information:

Table 1: Population from 1970 to 2020

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Bound Brook	10,450	9,710	9,487	10,155	10,402	11,988
Somerset County	198,706	203,129	240,279	297,490	323,444	314,122
State of New Jersey	7,171,112	7,365,011	7,730,188	8,414,350	8,791,894	9,288,994

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and 2020: DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

Table 2: Population Change Between Decades, 1970-2020

	Population Change		Population Change		Population Change		Population Change		Population Change	
	1970-1980		1980-1990		1990-2000		2000-2010		2010-2020	
Bound Brook	-740	-7.1%	-223	-2.3%	668	7.0%	247	2.4%	1,586	15.2%
Somerset County	4,423	2.2%	37,150	18.3%	57,211	23.8%	25,954	8.7%	-9,322	-2.9%
State of New Jersey	193,899	2.7%	365,177	5.0%	684,162	8.9%	377,544	4.5%	497,100	5.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and 2020: DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)

The population of Bound Brook declined between 1970 and 1990, and grew very little between 2000 and 2010 (hurricane Floyd), but has grown since 2010 -- a 15% increase. Comparatively, the County had significant growth in the 1980s and 1990s and showed a population decrease of 2.9% between 2010 and 2020. The State has shown consistent steady growth averaging 6% over the same decades.

Bound Brook is the third densest town in Somerset County, behind only North Plainfield and South Bound Brook – see table 3.

Table 3: Population Density, 2020

	Population	Area in Sq. Mi.	Land Area in Sq. Mi.	Density (per sq. mi.)
Bound Brook	11,988	1.69	1.66	7,222
Bridgewater	45,977	32.51	32.04	1,435
North Plainfield	22,808	2.81	2.79	8,175
South Bound Brook	4,863	0.75	0.66	7,368
Middlesex Borough, Middlesex County	14,636	3.54	3.52	4,158
Somerset County	345,361	304.86	301.81	1,144
State of New Jersey	9,288,994	8,722.58	7,354.22	1,263
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2020: DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171)				

Table 4: Age and Sex in Bound Brook, 2019

	Males		Females	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
85 years and over	124	2.5	99	1.9
80 to 84 years	47	0.9	134	2.5
75 to 79 years	51	1.0	73	1.4
70 to 74 years	123	2.5	74	1.4
65 to 69 years	135	2.7	186	3.5
60 to 64 years	175	3.5	268	5.1
55 to 59 years	405	8.1	266	5.0
50 to 54 years	316	6.3	406	7.7
45 to 49 years	224	4.5	259	4.9
40 to 44 years	356	7.1	467	8.8
35 to 39 years	501	10.0	237	4.5
30 to 34 years	500	10.0	530	10.0
25 to 29 years	419	8.4	357	6.7
20 to 24 years	318	6.4	419	7.9
15 to 19 years	337	6.8	302	5.7
10 to 14 years	228	4.6	337	6.4

5 to 9 years	423	8.5	518	9.8
Under 5 years	306	6.1	368	6.9
Source: 2019 American Community Survey; S0101   Age and Sex				

Table 5: Median Age and Ratio of Males to Females, 2019

	Bound Brook	Somerset County	New Jersey	United States
Median Age (years)	34.1	42.2	40.2	38.5
Males Per 100 Females	94.1	96.8	95.7	97.0
Source: 2019 American Community Survey; S0101   Age and Sex				

With a median age of 34.1 years, the population of Bound Brook is considerably younger than the County (42.2 years), the State (40.2 years) and the United States as a whole (38.5 years). The Borough has a lower ratio of males to females than the County, the State and the United States.

Table 6: Race, 2010 and 2020

	Bound Brook				Somerset County				State of New Jersey			
	2010		2020		2010		2020		2010		2020	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
One Race	9,996	96.1	9,924	82.8	315,211	97.5	314,122	91.0	8,551,591	97.3	8,385,500	90.3
White	7,253	69.7	4,299	35.9	226,608	70.1	185,499	53.7	6,029,248	68.6	5,112,280	55.0
Black or African American	597	5.7	1,071	8.9	28,943	8.9	31,842	9.2	1,204,826	13.7	1,219,770	13.1
American Indian or Alaska Native	56	0.5	176	1.5	556	0.2	1,520	0.4	29,026	0.3	51,186	0.6
Asian	267	2.6	489	4.1	45,650	14.1	67,309	19.5	725,726	8.3	950,090	10.2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5	0.0	4	0.0	94	0.0	98	0.0	3,043	0.0	3,533	0.0
Some Other Race	1,818	17.5	3,885	32.4	13,360	4.1	27,854	8.1	559,722	6.4	1,048,641	11.3
Two or More Races	406	3.9	2,064	17.2	8,233	2.5	31,239	9.0	240,303	2.7	903,494	9.7
TOTAL	10,402	100.0	11,988	100.0	323,444	100.0	345,361	100.0	8,791,894	100.0	9,288,994	100.0

Bound Brook has a substantial Hispanic or Latino population – almost 50% -- considerably higher than the county and double the Hispanic or Latino share of New Jersey’s population – see table 7. Between 2010 and 2020, the Hispanic or Latino population has grown in each of those three jurisdictions.

Bound Brook also has a very substantial population that are not naturalized citizens of the United States – see table 10.

Table 7: Hispanic or Latino Population, 2010 and 2020

	Bound Brook				Somerset County				New Jersey			
	2010		2020		2010		2020		2010		2020	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Hispanic or Latino	5,062	48.7	6,374	53.2	42,091	13.0	57,379	16.6	1,555,144	17.7	2,002,575	21.6
Not Hispanic or Latino	5,340	51.3	5,614	46.8	281,353	87.0	287,982	83.4	7,236,750	82.3	7,286,419	78.4
TOTAL	10,402	100.0	11,988	100.0	323,444	100.0	345,361	100.0	8,791,894	100.0	9,288,994	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2010 & 2020: DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171); P2 | Hispanic or Latino, and Not Hispanic or Latino By Race

Table 8: Change in Select Characteristics of Bound Brook, 2014-2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total population	10,515	10,512	10,510	10,328	10,288
Median Age (years)	35.1	34.3	35.1	35.5	34.1
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	42.6%	48.5%	52.2%	54.4%	52.3%
Not Hispanic or Latino	57.4%	51.5%	47.8%	45.6%	47.7%

Source: American Community Survey; S0101 | Age and Sex & DP05 Demographic and Housing Estimates

Table 9: Place of Birth and World Region of Birth of Foreign Born, 2019

		Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population		10,288	100.0	328,934	100.0	8,882,190	100.0
Native		6,949	67.5	242,983	73.9	6,807,504	76.6
Foreign Born		3,339	32.5	85,951	26.1	2,074,686	23.4
	Europe	187	5.6	12,245	14.2	288,463	13.9
	Asia	306	9.2	42,330	49.2	664,979	32.1
	Africa	32	1.0	3,602	4.2	126,732	6.1
	Oceania	13	0.4	209	0.2	3,381	0.2
	Latin America	2,801	83.9	26,920	31.3	972,611	46.9
	Northern America	0	0	645	0.8	18,520	0.9
Source: 2019 American Community Survey; DP02   Selected Social Characteristics in the US							

Table 10: U.S. Citizenship Status, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Foreign Born	3,339	100.0	85,951	100.0	2,074,686	100.0
Naturalized U.S. citizen	1,369	41.0	54,517	63.4	1,212,002	58.4
Not a U.S. citizen	1,970	59.0	31,434	36.6	862,684	41.6
Source:	2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP02   Selected Social Characteristics in the US					

The population of Bound Brook is considerably less educated than the county, as well as the state – see table 11.

Table 11: Educational Attainment, 2019

		Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 25 years and over		6,732		230,443		6,191,229	
	Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	519	7.7	7,663	3.3	287,999	4.7
	9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma	607	9.0	5,107	2.2	311,620	5.0
	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	2,608	38.7	47,188	20.5	1,666,321	26.9
	Some college, no degree	1,029	15.3	27,784	12.1	974,540	15.7
	Associate's degree	543	8.1	13,753	6.0	398,984	6.4
	Bachelor's degree	817	12.1	71,900	31.2	1,555,781	25.1
	Graduate or professional degree	609	9.0	57,048	24.8	995,984	16.1
	High school graduate or higher	5,606	83.3	217,673	94.5	5,591,610	90.3
	Bachelor's degree or higher	1,426	21.2	128,948	56.0	2,551,765	41.2

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP02 | Selected Social Characteristics in the US

Table 12: Disability Status of the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population, 2019

		Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population		10,288		325,834		8,775,976	
	With a disability	831	8.1	23,388	7.2	903,359	10.3

Source: 2019 American Community Survey; DP02 | Selected Social Characteristics in the US

Table 13: Computers and Internet Use, 2019

		Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Households		3,504		122,606		3,286,264	
	With a computer	3,316	94.6	118,933	97.0	3,077,331	93.6
	With a broadband internet subscription	3,093	88.3	115,869	94.5	2,937,191	89.4

Source: 2019 American Community Survey; DP02 | Selected Social Characteristics in the US

Finally, Bound Brook’s labor force is concentrated in the service, sales, construction and transportation industries, and not so much in administrative and managerial positions – see tables 14 and 15.

Table 14: Occupation, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	5,582		175,521		4,496,699	
Management, business, science and arts occupations	1,625	29.1	98,982	56.4	2,018,069	44.9
Service occupations	1,238	22.2	21,699	12.4	715,596	15.9
Sales and office occupations	1,134	20.3	30,990	17.7	918,830	20.4
Natural resources, construction and maintenance occupations	648	11.6	9,564	5.4	328,125	7.3
Production, transportation and material moving occupations	937	16.8	14,286	8.1	516,079	11.5

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP03 | Selected Economic Characteristics

Table 15: Industry, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	5,582		175,521		4,496,699	
Agriculture, forestry and hunting, and mining	20	0.4	569	0.3	15,873	0.4
Construction	472	8.5	7,826	4.5	283,676	6.3
Manufacturing	781	14.0	24,081	13.7	359,650	8.0
Wholesale trade	205	3.7	5,539	3.2	143,970	3.2
Retail trade	536	9.6	17,517	10.0	462,786	10.3
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	600	10.7	8,372	4.8	298,291	6.6
Information	57	1.0	7,110	4.1	106,001	2.4
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	254	4.6	18,980	10.8	386,688	8.6
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	680	12.2	25,493	14.5	614,332	13.7
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	834	14.9	36,807	21.0	1,092,195	24.3
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	690	12.4	12,128	6.9	358,343	8.0
Other services, except public administration	367	6.6	7,079	4.0	186,454	4.1
Public administration	86	1.5	4,020	2.3	188,440	4.2

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP03 | Selected Economic Characteristics

### Housing and Economic Trends

Please refer to Sections 4 and 5 of the 2017 [Master Plan Reexamination Report](#). In addition, the tables below provide an updated picture of housing and economic trends, based on the 2020 Census.



Bound Brook has a higher percentage of its population in the labor force than the county or the state as a whole – see table 16 – however it is less well compensated – see table 17.

Table 16: Employment Status, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 16 years and over	7,963		267,440		7,168,432	
In labor force	5,738	72.1	184,469	69.0	4,731,226	66.0
Civilian labor force	5,738	72.1	184,307	68.9	4,717,175	65.8
Employed	5,582	70.1	175,521	65.6	4,496,699	62.7
Unemployed	156	2.0	8,786	3.3	220,476	3.1
Armed Forces	0	0.0	162	0.1	14,051	0.2
Not in labor force	2,225	27.9	82,971	31.0	2,437,206	34.0
Civilian labor force	5,738		184,307		4,717,175	
Percent unemployed		2.7		4.8		4.7

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP03 | Selected Economic Characteristics

Table 17: Income in the Past 12 Months, 2019

	Borough of Bound Brook	Somerset County	New Jersey
Median Household Income	\$70,540	\$111,587	\$85,751

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; S2503 | Financial Characteristics

The number of commercial establishments has been increasing very slowly, however, the number of employees has increased.

Table 18: Employment in Bound Brook, 2014-2019 (08805)

Year	No. of Establishments	Change Each Year from Previous Year (Percent)	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)	Change Each Year from Previous Year (Percent)	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Payroll (\$1,000)	Change Each Year from Previous Year (Percent)	Number of Employees	Change Each Year from Previous Year (Percent)
2014	313	--	147,080	--	33,252	--	3,840	
2015	315	0.6	160,902	9.4	34,072	2.5	3,900	1.6
2016	326	3.5	174,835	8.7	37,633	10.5	4,443	13.9
2017	331	1.5	205,588	17.6	45,211	20.1	4,774	7.4
2018	332	0.3	190,544	-7.3	44,404	-1.8	4,483	-6.1
2019	320	-3.6	193,278	1.4	45,538	2.6	4,927	9.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Zip Code Business Patterns | CB1900CBP/CB1800CBP/CB1700ZBP/CB1600ZBP/CB1500ZBP/CB1400ZBP/ | All Sectors: County Business Patterns, including Zip Code Business Patterns

Manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and professional, scientific and technical services all lost establishments between 2017 and 2019, however real estate, rental and leasing, as well as educational services and health care increased the number of establishments – see table 19.

Table 19: Change in Industry in Bound Brook, 2017-2019

Industry Code Description	All Establishments 2017	All Establishments 2019	Change Between 1997 and 2019 (Percent)
23 Construction	33	31	-6.1
31-33 Manufacturing	10	8	-20.0
42 Wholesale trade	12	13	8.3
44-45 Retail trade	41	39	-4.9
48-49 Transportation and warehousing	22	20	-9.1
52 Finance and insurance	14	15	7.1
53 Real estate, rental and leasing	10	11	10.0
54 Professional, scientific and technical services	33	27	-18.2
56 Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	29	24	-17.2
61 Educational service	5	6	20.0
62 Health care and social assistance	38	43	13.2
72 Accommodation and food services	33	35	6.1
81 Other services (except public administration)	47	44	-6.4
Number of Establishments	331	320	-3.3
Source: <a href="https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=zip%20code%20business%20patterns&amp;g=8610000US08805&amp;tid=CBP2019.CB1900CBP">https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=zip%20code%20business%20patterns&amp;g=8610000US08805&amp;tid=CBP2019.CB1900CBP</a>			

With respect to housing, very few units were built in Bound Brook between 2000 and 2013, however that number has picked up since then, and will continue to grow, given the number of multi-family buildings under construction or in the development pipeline.

Thirty percent of the Brough’s building stock was built before 1939, and another 31% was built between 1940 and 1959 – see table 20.

Table 20: Year Structure Built, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total housing units	4,118	100.0	127,526	100.0	3,641,854	100.0
Built 2014 or later	463	11.2	3,732	2.9	105,455	2.9
Built 2010 or 2013	101	2.5	2,140	1.7	61,943	1.7
Built 2000 to 2009	43	1.0	12,902	10.1	323,354	8.9
Built 1990 to 1999	207	5.0	21,351	16.7	347,551	9.5
Built 1980 to 1989	221	5.4	25,366	19.9	434,094	11.9
Built 1970 to 1979	276	6.7	11,845	9.3	460,618	12.6
Built 1960 to 1969	296	7.2	15,346	12.0	472,383	13.0
Built 1950 to 1959	677	16.4	14,091	11.0	527,033	14.5
Built 1940 to 1949	595	14.4	6,507	5.1	251,000	6.9
Built 1939 or earlier	1,239	30.1	14,246	11.2	658,423	18.1

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04 | Selected Housing Characteristics

Single-family detached housing is the largest category in the Borough, with 40% of the housing stock – see table 21. Buildings with 20+ apartments account for 15% of the housing stock. However, that too will change in the near future, as virtually all projects in the pipeline are larger than that.

Table 21: Units in Structure, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total housing units	4,118	100.0	127,526	100.0	3,641,854	100.0
1, detached	1,667	40.5	77,981	61.1	1,933,898	53.1
1, attached	324	7.9	16,872	13.2	354,386	9.7
2 apartments	619	15.0	4,236	3.3	313,537	8.6
3 or 4 apartments	664	16.1	5,362	4.2	222,902	6.1
5 to 9 apartments	135	3.3	6,847	5.4	173,592	4.8
10 to 19 apartments	92	2.2	5,168	4.1	171,485	4.7
20 or more apartments	617	15.0	10,819	8.5	435,762	12.0
Mobile home	0	0.0	241	0.2	35,245	1.0
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1,047	0.0

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04 | Selected Housing Characteristics

Table 22: Number of Bedrooms, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total housing units	4,118	100.0	127,526	100.0	3,641,854	100.0
No bedroom	41	1.0	1,323	1.0	107,685	3.0
1 bedroom	830	20.2	12,232	9.6	508,769	14.0
2 bedrooms	1,516	36.8	33,180	26.0	926,496	25.4
3 bedrooms	1,286	31.2	33,448	26.2	1,169,699	32.1
4 bedrooms	404	9.8	35,879	28.1	715,757	19.7
5 or more bedrooms	41	1.0	11,464	9.0	213,448	5.9

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04 | Selected Housing Characteristics

Housing with a limited number of bedrooms is the norm in the Borough, with 57% of the housing stock having two or less bedrooms.

Table 23: House Heating Fuel, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied housing units	3,504	100.0	122,606	100.0	3,286,264	100.0
Utility gas	2,819	80.5	99,303	81.0	2,474,295	75.3
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	13	0.4	1,529	1.2	71,419	2.2
Electricity	507	14.5	13,008	10.6	448,114	13.6
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	101	2.9	7,254	5.9	241,742	7.4
Coal or coke	0	0.0	0	0.0	1,220	0.0
All other fuels	7	0.2	799	0.7	28,975	0.9
No fuel used	57	1.6	713	0.6	20,499	0.6

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04 | Selected Housing Characteristics

Bound Brook is on par with the county and the state in terms of the percentage of the occupied housing stock lacking complete plumbing, complete kitchen facilities or telephone service – see table 24.

Table 24: Selected Housing Characteristics, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied housing units	3,504	100.0	122,606	100.0	3,286,264	100.0
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	0	0	75	0.1	8,839	0.3
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	30	0.9	802	0.7	26,742	0.8
Lacking telephone service	86	2.5	761	0.6	28,084	0.9

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04 | Selected Housing Characteristics

Bound Brook has a considerably higher vacancy rate than the county or the state, which contributes in part towards its greater affordability – see table 25.

Table 25: Housing Occupancy and Housing Tenure, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total housing units	4,118	100.0	127,526	100.0	3,641,854	
Occupied housing units	3,504	85.1	122,606	96.1	3,286,264	90.2
Vacant housing units	614	14.9	4,920	3.9	355,590	9.8
Homeowner vacancy rate		4.8		1.5		1.4
Rental vacancy rate		7.5		0.4		4.2
Owner-occupied units	1,716	49.0	91,514	74.6	2,081,798	63.3

Renter-occupied units	1,788	51.0	31,092	25.4	1,204,466	36.7
Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04   Selected Housing Characteristics						

Table 26: Year Householder Moved into Unit, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied housing units	3,504		122,606		3,286,264	
Moved in 2017 or later	405	11.6	24,509	20.0	774,796	23.6
Moved in 2015 to 2016	722	20.6	14,373	11.7	394,205	12.0
Moved in 2010 to 2014	996	28.4	21,907	17.9	517,290	15.7
Moved in 2000 to 2009	712	20.3	29,072	23.7	723,361	22.0
Moved in 1990 to 1999	247	7.0	18,219	14.9	422,094	12.8
Moved in 1989 or earlier	422	12.0	14,526	11.8	454,518	13.8
Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04   Selected Housing Characteristics						

Household size in the Borough is on par with the county and state averages – see table 27.

Table 27: Household Size, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied housing units	3,504		122,606		3,286,264	
1 person household	916	26.1	28,528	23.3	867,529	26.4
2 person household	1,024	29.2	37,108	30.3	1,039,490	31.6
3 person household	600	17.1	24,650	20.1	560,339	17.1
4 or more person household	964	27.5	32,310	26.4	818,906	24.9
Average household size	2.92			2.65		2.65
Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; S2501   Occupancy Characteristics & S1101   Households and Families						

Family households as a percentage of all households in the Borough is also on par with the county and the state, however the percentage of non-married households (both male householder and female householder) is considerably higher – see table 28.

The median value of owner-occupied units in the borough is considerably lower than county and state averages, which provides a further indication of the borough’s housing affordability relative to the surrounding region – see table 29.

Table 28: Occupancy Characteristics, 2015-2019 Estimates

		Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Family Households		2,374	67.8	88,540	72.2	2,241,555	68.2
	Married couple	1,508	43.0	72,685	59.3	1,667,463	50.7
	Male householder, no spouse present	296	8.4	4,048	3.3	164,798	5.0
	Female householder, no spouse present	570	16.3	11,807	9.6	402,294	12.5
Non-Family Households		1,130	32.3	34,066	27.8	1,044,709	31.8
	Householder living alone	916	26.1	28,538	23.3	867,529	26.4
	Householder not living alone	214	6.1	5,528	4.5	177,180	5.4

Source: 2015-2019 5-Year American Community Survey; S2501 | Occupancy Characteristics

Table 29: Value of Owner-Occupied Units, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner-occupied units	1,716	100.0	91,514	100.0	2,081,798	100.0
Less than \$50,000	11	0.6	490	0.5	44,012	2.1
\$50,000 to \$99,999	7	0.4	665	0.7	52,518	2.5
\$100,00 to \$149,999	63	3.7	1,214	1.3	99,937	4.8
\$150,000 to \$199,999	136	7.9	3,514	3.8	186,855	9.0
\$200,000 to \$299,999	895	52.2	15,787	17.3	442,111	21.2
\$300,000 to \$499,999	558	32.5	32,314	35.3	724,826	34.8
\$500,000 to \$999,999	42	2.4	32,753	35.8	455,676	21.9
\$1,000,000 or more	4	0.2	4,777	5.2	75,863	3.6
Median (dollars)	273,700		440,800		348,800	

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04 | Selected Housing Characteristics

Another indication of the Borough’s relative housing affordability is that the median value of owner-occupied housing has fallen in three of the four years from 2015 to 2019, unlike the county and the state, where it has increased every year – see table 30.

Monthly owner costs for housing units with a mortgage are considerably less in the Borough than in the county or state – see table 31.

Average gross rent in the Borough is considerably less than the county average, but not the state average – see table 32. This is another indication of the Borough’s relative housing affordability in a very affluent and expensive part of New Jersey.

Table 30: Change in Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units, 2015-2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2019	\$273,700	-1.0	\$440,800	1.0	\$348,800	1.5
2018	\$276,500	2.0	\$436,600	2.9	\$344,000	2.8
2017	\$270,900	-1.7	\$424,900	0.4	\$334,900	2.1
2016	\$275,700	-1.3	\$422,800	0.6	\$328,200	1.7
2015	\$279,200	--	\$420,400	--	\$322,600	--

Source: 2015-2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04 | Selected Housing Characteristics

Table 31: Selected Monthly Owner Costs, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Housing units with a mortgage	1,245	100.0	61,371	100.0	1,366,281	100.0
Less than \$500	0	0.0	59	0.1	4,462	0.3
\$500 to \$999	0	0.0	1,277	2.1	37,858	2.8
\$1,000 to \$1,499	184	14.8	2,557	4.2	139,461	10.2
\$1,500 to \$1,999	316	25.4	9,450	15.4	268,929	19.7
\$2,000 to \$2,499	289	23.2	12,616	20.6	281,139	20.6
\$2,500 to \$2,999	237	19.0	10,641	17.3	215,253	15.8
\$3,000 or more	219	17.6	24,771	40.4	419,179	30.7
Median (dollars)	2,212		2,722		2,413	
Housing units without a mortgage	471	100.0	30,143	100.0	715,517	100.0
Less than \$250	0	0.0	793	2.6	18,085	2.5
\$250 to \$399	0	0.0	142	0.5	19,838	2.8
\$400 to \$599	8	1.7	749	2.5	49,532	6.9
\$600 to \$799	87	18.5	1,418	4.7	101,560	14.2
\$800 to \$999	157	33.3	6,408	21.3	140,838	19.7
\$1,000 or more	219	46.5	20,633	68.5	385,664	53.9
Median (dollars)	983		1,163		1,043	

Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04 | Select Housing Characteristics

Table 32: Gross Rent, 2019

	Bound Brook		Somerset County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied units paying rent	1,727	100.0	-	-	1,171,177	100.0
Less than \$500	31	1.8	-	-	91,319	7.8
\$500 to \$999	66	3.8	-	-	172,896	14.8
\$1,000 to \$1,499	878	50.8	-	-	432,860	37.0
\$1,500 to \$1,999	569	32.9	-	-	274,871	23.5
\$2,000 to \$2,499	127	7.4	-	-	107,953	9.2
\$2,500 to \$2,999	45	2.6	-	-	47,576	4.1
\$3,000 or more	11	0.6	-	-	43,702	3.7
Median (dollars)	1,443		1,633		1,376	

No rent paid	61	-	33,289
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Source: 2019 5-Year American Community Survey; DP04 | Selected Housing Characteristics

Table 33: Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months, 2019

	Bound Brook	Percent	Somerset County	Percent	New Jersey	
Occupied Housing units	3,504		122,606		3,286,264	
Owner-occupied units	1,716		91,514		2,081,798	
Less than \$20,000	59	3.4	2,022	2.2	91,290	4.4
Less than 20%	0	0.0	78	0.1	2,898	0.1
20-29%	0	0.0	0	0.0	2,429	0.1
30% or more	59	3.4	1,944	2.1	85,963	4.1
\$20,000-\$34,999	102	5.9	4,281	4.7	138,475	6.7
Less than 20%	0	0.0	0	0.0	8,728	0.4
20-29%	5	0.3	35	0.0	15,081	0.7
30% or more	97	5.7	4,246	4.6	114,666	5.5
\$35,000-\$49,999	156	9.1	5,415	5.9	141,390	6.8
Less than 20%	9	0.5	91	0.1	15,869	0.8
20-29%	38	2.2	1,976	2.2	32,953	1.6
30% or more	109	6.4	3,348	3.7	92,568	4.4
\$50,000-\$74,999	304	17.7	10,348	11.3	274,593	13.2
Less than 20%	34	2.0	2,264	2.5	71,762	3.4
20-29%	38	2.2	2,703	3.0	73,038	3.5
30% or more	232	13.5	5,381	5.9	129,793	6.2
\$75,000 or more	1,084	63.2	68,872	75.3	1,427,729	68.5
Less than 20%	642	37.4	43,407	47.4	875,971	42.1
20-29%	353	20.6	16,644	18.2	374,273	18.0
30% or more	89	5.3	8,821	9.6	176,485	8.5
Renter-occupied units	1,788		31,092		1,204,466	
Less than \$20,000	273	15.3	3,779	12.2	206,375	17.1
Less than 20%	0	0.0	0	0.0	6,000	0.5
20-29%	12	0.7	75	0.2	24,858	2.1
30% or more	261	14.6	3,704	11.9	175,517	14.6
\$20,000-\$34,999	212	11.9	2,800	9.0	177,971	14.8
Less than 20%	0	0.0	244	0.8	8,905	0.7
20-29%	0	0.0	119	0.4	11,747	1.0
30% or more	212	11.9	2,437	7.8	157,319	13.1
\$35,000-\$49,999	294	16.4	3,173	10.2	150,832	12.5
Less than 20%	0	0.0	44	0.1	6,919	0.6
20-29%	10	0.6	305	1.0	29,715	2.5
30% or more	284	15.9	2,824	9.1	114,198	9.5
\$50,000-\$74,999	501	28.0	6,037	19.4	213,058	17.7
Less than 20%	12	0.7	354	1.1	28,114	2.3
20-29%	240	13.4	2,763	8.9	98,915	8.3
30% or more	249	13.9	2,920	9.4	86,029	7.1
\$75,000 or more	427	23.9	13,803	44.4	398,497	33.1
Less than 20%	230	12.9	7,029	22.6	244,999	20.3
20-29%	138	7.7	5,631	18.1	125,210	10.4
30% or more	59	3.3	1,143	3.7	28,288	2.3



### Environmental Justice Considerations

The New Jersey Environmental Justice Law (N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157) defines “overburdened communities” as those Census Blocks in which a significant percentage of the population is either “low income”, “minority” or has “limited proficiency in English”.

Bound Brook has five Census Blocks: 340350511001, 340350511002, 340350512001, 340350512002 and 340350512003.

All five Census Blocks have one or more of the attributes identified in the law: Census Block 340350511001 is considered “low income” and “minority”; the other four Census Blocks are considered “minority”.

As such, all five Census Blocks are identified as “overburdened communities”, from an environmental justice perspective.

However, this will have limited, or no practical consequences for the Borough, as to our knowledge no facilities regulated under the Environmental Justice Law – which would trigger an Environmental Justice review under the law and subsequent regulations -- are not present in Bound Brook. As such, the Environmental Justice law, at this time, is not applicable in the Borough.

### Available Public Facilities and Services

Please refer to Section 2.9 of the 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Report.

### Transportation / Circulation and Goods Movement

Please refer to Section 2.6 of the 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Report.

### Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Please refer to Section 2.5 of the 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Report.

### Vulnerability to Climate Change and / or Sea Level Rise

The Borough is vulnerable to climate change like everywhere else on the planet. Storm events, for example, now occur with increasing frequency and intensity, but there is little or nothing the Borough can do to address these global conditions directly. A more compact development footprint that, with the appropriate infrastructure will foster a culture of walking and biking – in lieu of the current auto-dependent default – will help lower greenhouse gas emissions and thus make a positive contribution to address these problems. The Borough’s planning documents are designed to facilitate this outcome.

With respect to sea level rise, the Borough is not a coastal community and therefore not directly at risk from this phenomenon. The flood control system is working. Unless the level of the waters in the Raritan River rise significantly and permanently, the Borough should be well protected from floods.

### Resiliency Planning Efforts

The Borough's latest planning documents predate the change in the MLUL that now require a resiliency element. The Borough did participate in Somerset County's hazard mitigation planning efforts. The chapter on Bound Brook from the 2019 HMP can be accessed here:

<https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/home/showpublisheddocument/34334/637002572212200000>

Section 9.5.6.2 of this report identifies the following hazard vulnerabilities in the Borough:

"It is estimated that in the Borough of Bound Brook, 1,724 residents live within the 1% annual chance flood area (NFIP Special Flood Hazard Area). A total of \$273,093,000 (16.1%) of the municipality's general building stock replacement cost value (structure and contents) is located within the 1% annual chance flood area. This has been markedly reduced since the 2014 HMP due to the USACE Green Brook Flood Damage Reduction Project.

There are 323 NFIP policies in the community and there are 193 policies located within the 1% annual chance flood area. FEMA has identified 465 Repetitive Loss (RL) properties including 28 Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) properties in the municipality.

HAZUS-MH estimates that for a 1% annual chance flood, \$26,900,000 (1.58%) of the municipality's general building stock replacement cost value (structure and contents) will be damaged, 300 households may be displaced, 180 people may seek short-term sheltering, and an estimated 3,829 tons of debris could be generated." (page 9.5-20)

## **2.4 Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Areas**

As previously mentioned, there are three designated areas in need of redevelopment in the Borough: areas 1, 2 and 3. Areas 1 and 2 are subdivided into sub-areas, with sub-area specific development controls. All three are condemnation redevelopment areas and have adopted redevelopment plans. Area 3 is built-out, but may see additional redevelopment interest in the future, as part of it is aging.

There is also one area in need of rehabilitation – the West Main Street rehabilitation area. A redevelopment plan for this area has not yet been adopted.

Redevelopment Area 1 is an expansive redevelopment area that includes most of the Borough's downtown, as well as lands to the south of the downtown, between the NJ Transit Raritan Valley line right-of-way and the old Port Reading Secondary railroad right-of-way.

The Borough recently designated additional properties to the west of Redevelopment Sub-Area 1.2 as an "area in need of redevelopment – non-condemnation". Only one property is likely to be redeveloped in a conventional sense. The other properties are publicly owned – by either the Borough, the Middlesex County Utilities Authority or the US Army Corps of Engineers – and are used for recreational or infrastructure purposes. These properties are not developable in a conventional sense. In addition to their current

functions, there may be opportunities for additional recreational uses, both active and passive, as well as landscape restoration and habitat restoration for those parcels subject to restrictive environmental limitations.

Redevelopment Sub-Area 1.4 largely coincides with the Mixed-Use 5 (MU-5) land use designation, and with the Business-Residential (B-R) zoning designation. The zoning for Sub-Area 1.4 largely defers to the B-R zoning, with some important exceptions. The B-R district contains several zoning overlays, namely the Main Street overlay, the Arts District overlay and the Downtown Residential overlay.

There is considerable activity in the Main Street zoning overlay, with several large redevelopment projects under construction, and others in the pipeline.

There has been considerably less interest, on the other hand, in redeveloping properties in the areas covered by the Arts District and Downtown Residential overlays, and the incentives offered in the Arts District for redevelopment projects that include arts-related activities have not been effective. The bulk standards for this area were reexamined and modified, and a large transformative project was recently approved.

The Redevelopment Plan for Area 2 was originally adopted in 2000, but it was substantially overhauled in 2009, when six Sub-Areas were created – Sub-Areas 2.1 through 2.6.

Since 2009, the Plans for Sub-Areas 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 have been amended a number of times. There is evidence of developer interest and a number of redevelopment projects are underway. In 2021, the Plan was again amended. The number of sub-areas was reduced from 6 to 3, and the zoning was substantially overhauled. This has spurred developer interest and there are now projects in the pipeline for this previously neglected area. Sub-areas 2.2 and 2.3 have a 20% affordable housing requirement.

Redevelopment Area 3 is largely built out with an older commercial area, on the corner of West Union Avenue and Tea Street, and a more recent multi-family residential area located to the north of the commercial area, between Tea Street and the Middle Brook. The older commercial area is included in the Mixed-Use 1 (MU-1) designation.

## **2.5 Status of Planning**

As previously mentioned, the Borough’s planning documents are of a high quality, and are recent and up-to-date.

A Downtown Urban Design Plan was adopted as an element of the Borough’s Master Plan in 2011. The urban design plan put into place a framework for redevelopment in and around the downtown, anticipating the completion of the USACE Green Brook Flood Control project. This plan provided the impetus for the comprehensive re-zoning of the downtown, in 2014, as well as for the total overhaul of the redevelopment plans that govern the downtown.

In the mid-1800s, construction of both passenger and freight rail lines through Bound Brook’s southern section effectively eliminated safe and convenient access between the downtown and the Raritan River. That disconnect continues to this day.

The Borough’s planning documents recognize this challenge and have sought to find feasible solutions. The 2010 Downtown Urban Design Plan, in addition to laying out a framework for downtown redevelopment, also emphasized the need for better connections between the North side and the South side of the tracks;

for a strategy to reopen access to the Raritan River from the downtown; and for better linkages between the existing, and future, parks and open space.

This plan also anticipated a pedestrian and bicycle greenway running along the Raritan riverfront on lands owned by New Jersey American Water and a decommissioned freight railroad right-of-way owned by Conrail / CSX.

In 2014, the Bound Brook Planning Board adopted, again as part of the Borough's Master Plan, the Riverfront Access for Pedestrians and Bicyclists, a more refined plan to reconnect the community to the Raritan River and establish a network of walking/bicycling trails in the lands along the borough's southern border, adjacent to the river.

The plan lays out a system of off-road trails on lands owned by Conrail, NJ-American Water (NJAW), and Pfizer, as well as lands associated with flood control structures (levees) built by the US Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Green Brook Flood Control Project. The trails encompass:

- existing dirt 'desire paths' worn through the years by unauthorized off-road recreational vehicles,
- asphalt paths atop the flood control levees,
- an unused freight line segment from which the tracks were long ago removed,
- an abandoned railroad truss, and
- a utility service road leading to land under the Queens Bridge. This area is the only public access point to the Raritan River and now serves as a kayak/canoe put-in.

The plan incorporates the Old Stone Bridge, a significant historic feature from the Revolutionary War near the Queens Bridge, and the land around it, to be preserved as a small park. Somerset County is actively pursuing this initiative, and is negotiating with the property owners for the acquisition of those lands.

The proposed network of off-road trails and water access connects with local on-road bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and would tie into existing regional networks including Somerset County's Raritan River Greenway, the East Coast Greenway, the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park towpaths, the Cape May-High Point Trail, and the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail.

Fig 2. Trail Segment Key Map



In 2017, a steering committee of Borough officials, staff and professionals, along with representatives of Somerset County and large landowners in the project area (NJ American Water, Pfizer) – and with the assistance of a facilitator from the US Park Service -- began to implement aspects of the Plan, and to develop a strategic plan for longer-term implementation. Most elements of the trail system will require significant collaboration with non-local institutions such as Conrail, which operates active freight rail lines in the trail area, NJ Transit, which operates the Raritan Valley passenger rail line, the US Army Corps of Engineers / New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, as well as partnerships with Pfizer and with NJAW.

In the summer of 2017, NJAW signed an access agreement with the Borough to allow a public kayak/canoe input area on their property under the Queens Bridge. This access point is a keystone of the Riverfront Access Plan project, and a very welcome start to implementation. An adjacent location for a public kayak/canoe storage facility has also been secured and is expected to become available in 2022. The Borough has also initiated efforts to purchase lands adjacent to the southern levees, which it hopes will facilitate public use of the levee paths, a critical element of the trail system.

Pfizer is an important neighbor and player in Bound Brook’s river trail project, as it owns a triangular shaped parcel of floodplain at the western extent of the proposed trail system. Bound Brook’s Riverfront Access Plan envisions a nature trail on this land, a loop segment reserved for hiking, birding, fishing and nature appreciation. The sensitive riparian nature of the parcel would preclude anything but very low-impact trail development, likely following the existing dirt desire paths. This land is not developed or identified as in need of remediation, but is within the USEPA-defined Superfund Site located adjacent to Bound Brook in Bridgewater. In order to include trail segments on the parcel, Bound Brook will need to enter into an access agreement with Pfizer, or obtain title to the land.

Restoring community access to the riverfront is a complex, challenging and exciting project for Bound Brook, likely to be achieved in phases and steps over a number of years. The steering committee, with technical assistance from the National Park Service, completed a strategic plan for implementation in 2018. However,

the committee has already taken action on several fronts and will continue to build community engagement and work with partners to move the project forward this year.

A key component of this proposed greenway and riverfront access initiative is securing a 10-foot wide public access easement from Conrail for the unused railroad right-of-way that is closest to the river – the old Port Reading Secondary. The right-of-way is over 100 feet wide. There is an active freight line on the portion of the right-of-way that is furthest from the river, with a grade crossing at South Main Street. However, the lower portion of the right-of-way has not been used in many years, and the “track and tie” were removed long ago.

The Borough would like Conrail to either sell this 10-foot wide right-of-way, or reach some other accommodation that allows the Borough to undertake the needed improvements to the trail and eventually have it open to the public during daylight hours. The Borough has successfully contacted the Conrail offices in Philadelphia – and the Borough planner met with the Conrail real estate administrator and jointly walked the entire right-of-way.

The creation of this riverfront greenway is a long-term priority for the Borough, and the Borough would like assistance from the relevant State Agencies.

With respect to other Borough planning documents, Master Plan Reexamination Reports were adopted by the Planning Board in 2017 and 2019. A new Land Use Element and Statement of Goals and Objectives were also adopted in 2019. All are directly consistent with the smart growth principles and policies embodied in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.



Canoe and kayak put-in inauguration in May of 2018.

Following the 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Report, the Borough enacted a number of its recommendations regarding re-zoning of certain districts. The previous single-use framework was modified in a number of locations and replaced with a mixed-use framework. The industrial designation, which applied to all areas South of the downtown, was dramatically shrunk, and replaced with a new Open Space-Civic designation – which applies to parks and schools, as well as lands that are environmentally sensitive. Railroad rights-of-way were zoned as such: railroad. Other alterations also took place.

With respect to redevelopment, there are currently three designated “areas in need of redevelopment” in the Borough: areas 1, 2 and 3. Area 1 is subdivided into six distinct sub-areas, with distinct development controls. Area 2 is subdivided into three distinct sub-areas, also with different development controls. Area 3 is essentially built out, with a shopping center and a multi-family housing development, although the aging shopping center may, in the future, also be a target for further redevelopment.

The area covered by the redevelopment plans is governed by land use regulations embedded in the plans, although in some cases those regulations refer back to the underlying zoning. The zoning for Area 3 was actually adopted as part of the Borough’s Land Use Regulations. The zoning for Areas 1 and 2 was not, although the B-R district, which governs most of the downtown, applies to a substantial portion of Area 1 and a smaller portion of Area 2. That zoning is also current, as is the zoning for the Western half of the Union Avenue corridor. The zoning for certain other districts has been tweaked, but not everywhere, and certain

standards – for example for parking – for areas outside the designated redevelopment areas should be brought up-to-date.

The Borough is in the process of hiring a consultant to assist the Planning Board in developing a circulation plan element for the Master Plan. The emphasis of the circulation plan element will be not on motor vehicle circulation, but rather on facilitating pedestrian, bicycle and transit use, through the comprehensive application of a complete street strategy, as well as pedestrian counter measures, where warranted.



Bound Brook Boat Club on the banks of the Raritan River at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century



### **3. Community Vision and Public Participation**

Please refer to Appendix A of the 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Report, which included a substantial effort to engage the community in planning-related issues, through an on-line community survey in both English and Spanish. The results of that effort are posted to the Borough's website and are available at the link provided earlier in this report.

An earlier visioning and community participation effort took place as part of the work on the Downtown Urban Design Plan, with a well-attended design workshop staged at the historic Brook Theatre. That event is documented in the Downtown Urban Design Plan, which is also available through the Borough's website.

### **4. Recent and Upcoming Development Activities**

Table 34 summarizes the status of redevelopment projects in the Borough, both underway and in the pipeline.

These projects are located either in the downtown or its immediate vicinity, or along the Union Avenue corridor. They are all entirely consistent with the State Plan's smart growth policies.

### **5. Statement of Planning Coordination**

Bound Brook has worked closely with Somerset County on all county-initiated planning activities, including the Somerset County Investment Framework, the Supporting Priority Investment in Somerset County, the Somerset County Hazard Mitigation Plan and other similar initiatives.

Given the Borough's geographic characteristics – it is surrounded on three sides by bodies of water – and to the north, it is separated from the adjacent municipality (Bridgewater) by US Route 22 – there is very limited interaction in terms of land use issues between the Borough and its neighbors.

Bound Brook is a compact, walkable town that is quite different and distinct from its neighbors. It is entirely appropriate for the land use framework to reflect this, and therefore the planning and zoning schemes adopted for the Borough are very different from the ones adopted by its neighbors.

The Borough does host the South Bound Brook high school population, as South Bound Brook does not have a high school.

### **6. State Programs, Grants and Capital Projects**

By far the most important infrastructure project in the Borough's recent history was the completion of the US Army Corps of Engineer's Green Brook Flood Control Project, which involved building a series of levees, flood walls and overtopping areas to effectively remove the lower parts of the Borough from the flood hazard areas.

That project also involved significant improvements to the Borough's stormwater sewer system, again in the low-lying areas.

The Borough has secured a grant to upgrade the historic train station, and another grant from the USDOT (administered by the NJDOT) to close off a portion of Hamilton Street in front of the historic Brook Theatre to

vehicles, thereby creating a new pedestrian plaza. The engineering for that project has been completed and is under NJDOT review.

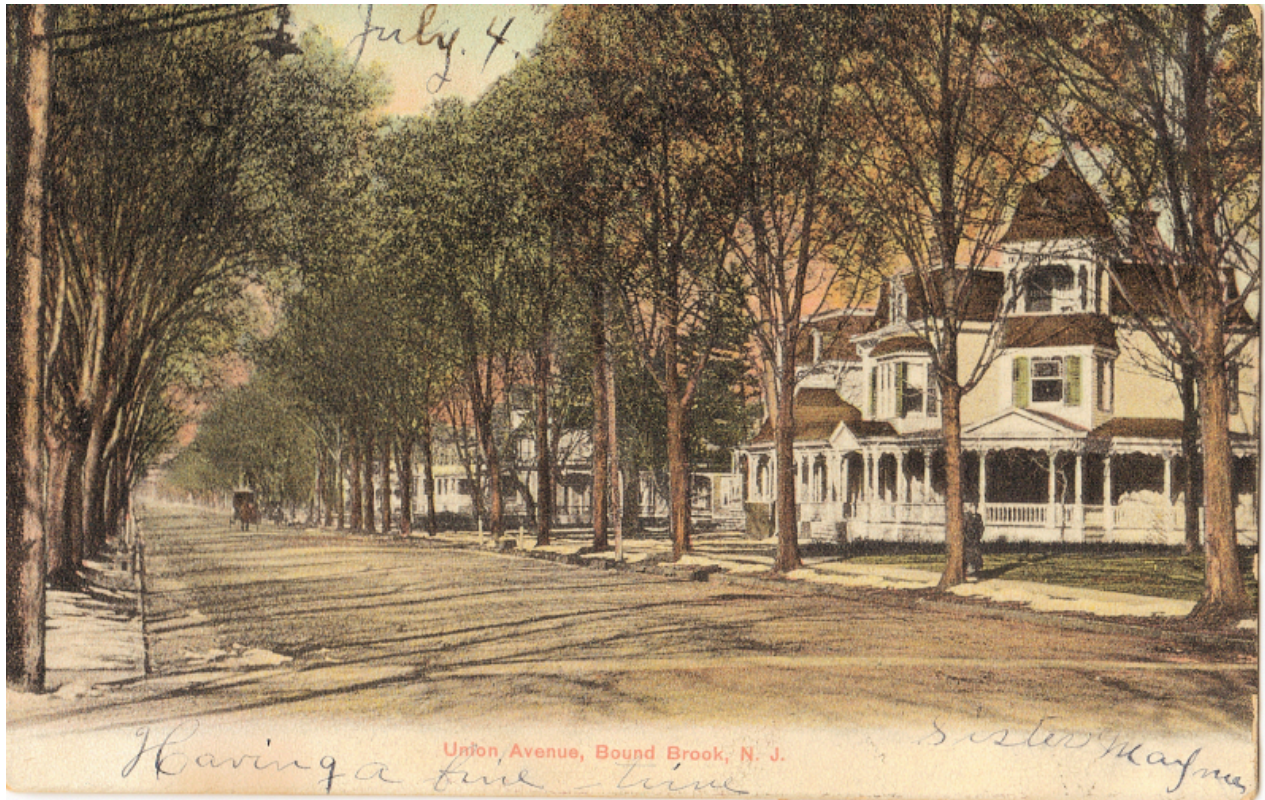
**Table 34: Current Status of Real Estate Development Projects in Bound Brook**

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Development Program</b>	<b>Status</b>
Meridia Main Station	532 E. Main St	240 apartments	Built and occupied
Queens Gate	675 Tea Street	144 apartments	Built and occupied
Ridge 1	215 E. Second St	34 apartments	Built and occupied
Ridge 2	203-209 E. Second St	42 apartments	Under construction
The Vibe	7-15 W. Main St	63 apartments + retail	Built and occupied
Reynolds 2	17-19 Main St	28 apartments + retail	Under construction
REVO	E. Main St + Bolmer Blvd	105 apartments	Under construction
Talmage Commons	118 Talmage Av.	106 apartments + retail	Approved
Meridia Self Storage	69 S. Main St	58,000 sq ft	Under construction
Meridia 10	405 E. Main St	338 apartments + retail	Conceptual
Redwood	18 Hamilton St	143 apartments + retail	Approved
Redwood 2	110-116 Hamilton St	TBD - rehab	Conceptual
Urban Developers	W. Main St + Drake St.	84 apartments + retail + office	Approved
Everett Investments	543 E. Main St	4 apartments	Under construction
Patriot Village	S. Main St	608 apartments + office	Conceptual
BuyRite Licquors	260 Union Av	9 apartments + retail	Under construction
The Hopkinson	26 W. Main St	64 apartments + retail	Under construction
Allure at Vosseller	516 Vosseller Av	40 apartments	PB review
Meridia 300	300-306 E. Main St	60 apartments + retail	Under construction
Meridia 1	1 E. Main St	75 apartments + retail	Under construction
DeMattheis	127 Talmage	49 apartments + retail	PB Review
DeMattheis	336 Talmage	51 apartments	PB review
Source: Bound Brook Code Compliance and Land Use Board			

The Borough will be seeking funding to overhaul Van Horne Plaza, in front of the train station, which currently is mostly parking. The Borough hired the Olin Studio – a well-respected landscape architecture firm,

to develop a conceptual design, as well as a budget, for converting the “plaza” into a pedestrian precinct, available for multiple types of events, along with one block of Hamilton Street, in front of the Brooke theatre. That design is posted on the Borough’s website. The Borough has secured Federal funding, through the NJDOT, to implement phase 1 of this plan – the Hamilton Street portion.

NJDOT hired a consultant some time ago to investigate improvements to the Union Avenue corridor. That work is apparently underway.



Union Avenue (NJ Route 28) in 1906.

The Borough hired an engineering firm to develop plans for the two grade crossings of the NJ Transit Raritan Valley line, with a view towards implementing a “quiet zone” through the downtown. That work was completed some time ago and the Borough is seeking funding to implement it.

With assistance from Somerset County and the NJTPA, a pedestrian and bicycle audit was undertaken 3 years ago of the Talmage Avenue / Main Street / South Main Street corridors. That audit resulted in a series of proposed improvements, which the Borough will be seeking funding for in the future.

The Borough will also, at some point in the future, be seeking funding for the proposed greenway along the Raritan riverfront. That is a long-term project.

Finally, as part of its planning agenda, the Borough will also be seeking funding to improve various passive open space resources, including North Park, Middle Brook preserve and an area adjacent to the proposed Raritan riverfront greenway, South of the levees. These improvements will involve reforestation and habitat enhancement, and may be coupled with outdoor public art displays. There is also the intention to open a visitor center at the trail head to the proposed greenway, to be located at the Western end of West Main Street, with access from Talmage Avenue. The Borough is actively negotiating the acquisition of this property.

## **7. Sustainability / Resiliency Statement**

As previously mentioned, the completion of the Green Brook Flood Control Project was a critical step in guaranteeing that the lower lying portions of the Borough are not subject to periodic flooding. Those areas that are still vulnerable to flooding are not developed, are not zoned for development, and are, for the most part, publicly-owned.

The Borough's land use policies focus on reducing carbon emissions from mobile sources, by creating and reinforcing a pedestrian, bicycle and transit-friendly land use pattern. The corollary to this are future efforts to re-forestate publicly-owned lands, which can perform as enhanced carbon sinks, as well as habitat restoration efforts on passive open space.

The Borough has also encouraged the creation of community gardens, both on public lands and as part of private redevelopment projects, and will continue to explore opportunities to do so in the future.

Finally, the Borough has been active in promoting EV charging stations, both as part of the public right-of-way, and as a requirement in private parking garages built as part of redevelopment projects.

## **8. Consistency Section**

Please refer to chapter 6 of the 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Report.

## **9. Mapping**

Please refer to the map section of the 2017 Master Plan Reexamination Report.

## **10. State Agency Actions / Assistance / Expected Benefits**

Please refer to section 6 of this Municipal Self-Assessment Report.

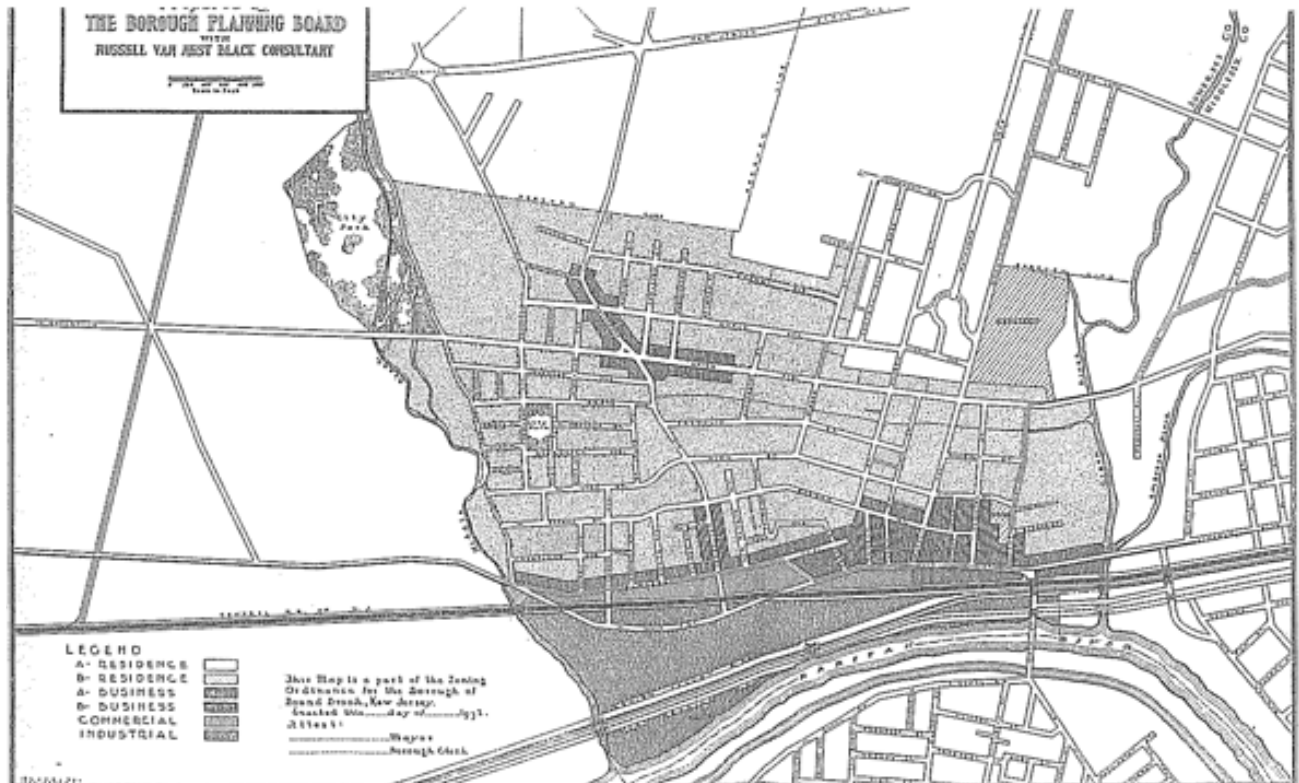
## **11. Conclusions**

Bound Brook has been an enthusiastic long-time participant in New Jersey's state planning process. The Borough embraced the center designation process early on, as well as the transit village program. The Borough is proud of its excellent working relationship with Somerset County, and has received numerous awards from the County for its planning efforts.

The Borough has a comprehensive planning agenda – clearly spelled out in its planning documents -- and over the last 10 years has substantially overhauled and modernized its planning and zoning framework. While this task is not finalized – planning is after all an on-going process that seeks to find appropriate responses to a continuously changing landscape and circumstances – the Borough is very proud of the work it has accomplished on the planning front in the last 10 years, which is yielding very tangible results, in the form of numerous redevelopment projects that uniformly qualify as smart growth projects.

But not every redevelopment project is about replacing the old with the new. The Borough has also used its powers under the redevelopment statute to landmark certain iconic historic buildings, and to protect them from unwanted demolition or wanton change.

Planning is never done – it is an on-going activity – and the Borough will continue to improve its planning agenda, within its means, as time goes on. But there is no question that as it stands, the Borough’s planning agenda is worthy of receiving plan endorsement from the State Planning Commission.



The Land Use Plan map from the Borough’s first Master Plan, prepared by Russel Van Nest Black in 1932. There were two residential designations, two business designations, a commercial and an industrial designation.

