OUR JERSEY CITY

MASTER PLAN VISION
OUR JERSEY CITY

ADOPTED 2021
A Look at Recent Changes
Planning for Our Future
Blueprint for Growth
Jersey City at a Glance
Jersey City Timeline

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Our Scope + Process
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Connectivity + Mobility
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I know what you’re thinking, “Another Master Plan? Another plan?! Why?” You are not alone. Jersey City residents have been asking this same question for at least the last 75 years. In fact, residents have been saying they want the same things for over a 100 years. More parks, better public transit, better streetscapes, and better access to housing.

**Jersey City Master Plan, 1951:**
“Why a new plan if the old ones contain an ample backlog of worthy projects still to be accomplished? What meaning is to be drawn from the fact that measures appropriate a third of a century ago are also appropriate today? Are we to conclude that basically the city is little different, merely older and more worn? **Wherein is this present plan different?**”

**Jersey City Master Plan, 1920:**
“The necessity for a preconceived plan of development anticipating and providing for future growth and expansion of their cities has early been recognized by European and other countries. American cities, on the other hand, have only recently come to a realization that a rational plan of development is necessary for the healthy growth and welfare of the community. As a rule accommodations and facilities have been provided as they became necessary and then sufficient in extent only to serve the immediate need and no more… The existing shortage of houses throughout the country has become a very serious condition… Jersey City needs more Parks and Playgrounds… there was a regrettable lack of transportation facilities, particularly between the northern and southern limits of the City, due to its group development.”

*(The Jersey City Development Plan)*

**Jersey City Master Plan, 1912:**
“We believe that most of the city planning so far undertaken in America has miscarried and failed of accomplishment because it was not done logically or scientifically… In the downtown, congested sections (of Jersey City) there are areas built up solidly with five and six story brick tenements… conditions in these tenements are most unhealthful and most unsafe… There are various sections in the older parts of the city that are most unsanitary and uneconomically developed… Play space for the children and the youth of the city is quite inadequate and very poorly distributed… Architecturally, Jersey City has little to be proud of… Jersey City has very little in the way of civic decoration. The result is a sordidness which proves quite depressing. Everywhere the streets are cluttered up with poles and wires of various sorts which give a very scrappy appearance to the city…”

*(Report of Suggested Plan of Procedure for City Plan Commission City of Jersey City)*

While it seems like the City has been growing at an unprecedented rate and many fear the impacts of increased density are surpassing our infrastructure’s capacity, in reality we still fall short of the City’s historic population high. In fact, in 1930 Jersey City’s population was 316,715, and 299,017 in 1950. The largest loss of population occurred between 1970 and 1980 when the city lost 36,000 people, but it is clear that as early as 1950 decline was happening. These declines have been well documented to be the result of Federal programs financing white flight and red lining practices. Moreover, cities became less industrialized, simultaneously losing jobs while inheriting a legacy of super fund sites in some of our lowest income neighborhoods. Trolleys were replaced with buses, and abandoned railroad tracks replaced with elevated major highways making inner city transit even more difficult. In 2020 the population of Jersey City was 292,449 people. It took Jersey City 70 years to undo the damage caused by urban renewal.
However, this glimpse into our modern history captures only a small part of Jersey City’s story. Around 1630, Michael Pauw from Amsterdam purchased what is now known as Hudson County from the original inhabitants, the Lenni Lenape. Pauw will eventually name this land Pavonia, the Latinized name of his own, and the town would include Paulus Hook and Van Vorst. Various history books then tells us the names of the first white inhabitants in Paulus Hook, Van Vorst, and Communipaw – all places that were renamed by the settlers from their original Lenape names. The most famous settlement, Bergen, was Jersey City’s “first” real settlement, and is an area still celebrated and recognized as that today. The story about the Bergen settlement we don’t normally tell is why or how the settlers choose those 14 acres of land. In 1641, a colonist was believed to be killed by one of the indigenous members, and in an act of retaliation, tribe members were ambushed and massacred at their encampment at what is now the area of Pine Street and Johnston Avenue. A peace treaty was later signed, but an incident in 1655 where a farmer shot an indigenous girl for stealing peaches, restarted the attacks from both the Lenape and settlers. The Council representing the settlers then forbid any more homes or settlements to be built unless they constructed a fortified village on a spot that could easily be defended. The land chosen was used by the Lenni Lanape as a field for growing maize. The settlers razed the field and built what we now know as Bergen Square.

Nearly 300 years later (1964), not far from the indigenous encampment at Johnston and Pine, this area would become Jersey City’s predominantly black neighborhood. After an incident of police brutality, almost 1,000 people protested and rioted demanding that the City leaders address a long history of disenfranchisement through creating affordable housing, improving recreational facilities, hiring more black police officers, and providing more job opportunities. The Mayor at the time responded by saying that the City did not have the resources due to years of shrinking industry and railroads, and the exodus of middle-class residents to the suburbs.

In revisiting this pattern of history, I come back to the same question we asked ourselves as a City in 1951 - **Wherein is this present plan different?**

It is easy to romanticize our city’s past, and even easier to say “Things were better then.” We cannot do that. If we do that, we are actively ignoring the truth of thousands of people who have lived here. For hundreds of years we have contributed to systemic racism, destabilizing neighborhoods, redlining, exclusionary housing, and segregation. Let this Master Plan mark the start of City Planning’s commitment to creating communities that are diverse, livable, and accessible. A commitment to celebrating the forgotten histories of people who have lived on this land as long as and even longer than we have. A commitment to promoting development while addressing displacement. A commitment to championing environmental justice, housing affordability, resiliency, and solutions for climate change. We cannot do this work alone, it must be done in collaboration and partnership with affected communities through rebuilding trust and creating an environment of transparency. We must create a new plan together for OUR Jersey City.
PROJECT TEAM

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Department of Housing, Economic Development, and Commerce (HEDC)

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THE MASTER PLAN WILL PROVIDE A STRATEGIC VISION AND FRAMEWORK TO PROMOTE A CONNECTED, PROSPEROUS, EQUITABLE, AND RESILIENT JERSEY CITY OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS.
Jersey City has become a global destination. A City of diversity and multi-generational roots.
A City of diversity and multi-generational roots

Hurricane Sandy was a wake-up call for our City

Hurricane Sandy hits Jersey City

Loews Theater Under refurbishment

Berry Lane Park Opens

Whitlock Mills Opens

Jersey City has become a regional economic engine

A LOOK AT RECENT CHANGES
The Master Plan Vision works to frame city-wide, mid-scale, and neighborhood level goals that embed the needs of today’s community in a plan for a stronger Jersey City in years to come. The Vision looks at various initiatives and planning documents from recent years while responding to the analysis and feedback of the recent Land Use and Open Space Element updates. By looking at the City’s numerous plans wholistically, the Vision has identified a set of shared goals and guiding principles for all planning efforts, which have been organized into four thematic lenses. These lenses help to identify overlap across goals while also unifying priorities of various agencies and departments as we build towards our future.

A Connected Jersey City
Jersey City will continue to provide strong links throughout the community, supporting all forms of mobility, prioritizing walking, bicycling, and transit.

A Prosperous Jersey City
Jersey City will continue to be one of the region’s most dynamic urban economies, where families, businesses, and neighborhoods thrive by providing a high quality of life with an abundance of opportunities to live, work, and play.

An Equitable Jersey City
Jersey City welcomes residents of all ages, backgrounds, and economic levels and will have an inclusive and equitable economy, housing, open space, and social services.

A Resilient Jersey City
Jersey City will continue to be a sustainable City and a leader in the fight against climate change through water management, brownfield remediation, and reducing the Environmental Vulnerability Index for neighborhoods across the City.
DECREASE AUTOMOBILE DEPENDENCY
By expanding transit diversity, access, and range across all wards

PROMOTE A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY
By retaining small business + adapting the industrial base to stay competitive

PRIORITIZE SOCIALLY VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES
By increasing affordable housing options and investing in under-served neighborhoods

MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS
By upgrading utilities and expanding green infrastructure for higher run-off capacity

ACCOMMODATE POPULATION GROWTH
By upgrading facilities + leveraging development for community benefit

ADAPT FOR INCREASED RESILIENCY
By retrofitting facilities + the existing building stock for protection from flood events

PRIORITIZE INNER-CITY CONNECTIVITY
By improving routes and efficiency between wards, parks, facilities, and shopping

ESTABLISH 15-MINUTE NEIGHBORHOODS
By strengthening access to essential services within neighborhood cores

PLAN FOR CITY-WIDE SUSTAINABILITY
By producing renewable energy, reducing carbon footprint, + training a greener workforce

PURSUE REGIONAL CONNECTIONS
By expanding bike, rail, and waterways connections that can connect JC to adjacent towns

EMBED FLEXIBILITY IN RETAIL + OFFICE
By adapting big-box structures to restore the urban grid + create walkable retail cores

INCREASE FLEXIBILITY IN PROGRAMMING
By making sure open spaces can serve multiple uses in a single footprint
A Master Plan is a “blueprint” for a municipality. It is a document that outlines a community’s vision for the future, and documents the goals, objectives, issues and recommendations of the community at that point in time.

In New Jersey, a Master Plan must include a Land Use and Housing Element that must be reexamined every 10 years. These Elements are then used as a guide to making policy decisions, examples of which are outlined on the following page.

Our Master Plan has multiple functions.

The City uses the Master Plan to identify priorities and policy direction in the next 20 years.

Other State, County, and Local government agencies use the Master Plan to understand Jersey City’s priorities and to coordinate projects.

Businesses, investors, and other organizations use the Master Plan to understand where the City will invest its resources.
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
The recommendations of the Master Plan can be used as a framework for distribution of community and social programs, such as CBDG Funds, Open Space grants, or recreational programming.

- Residents can use the Master Plan as a way to hold their elected representatives and other City officials accountable in resource distribution and decision-making.

MASTER PLAN IN ACTION

PUBLIC POLICY
The recommendations of the Master Plan help unify and streamline policy decisions for the next decade. The Master Plan lays out priorities (such as climate change and social equity) that help to anchor decision-making across agencies and local government to ensure strategic, integrated growth.

- Any potential changes to the City’s rezoning will involve additional community engagement and opportunities for public comment prior to adoption through City Council.

LAND USE POLICY:
The recommendations of the Master Plan can be used to guide changes to the Zoning Ordinance and Redevelopment Areas throughout the City.

- Each year, the budget is approved by City Council. Residents are able to review the proposed budget and provide public comment prior to the Council vote.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT:
The recommendations of the Master Plan can be used as a tool for setting the City’s budget and allocating investments across departments for operations and improvements.

- The Master Plan lays out priorities (such as climate change and social equity) that help to anchor decision-making across agencies and local government to ensure strategic, integrated growth.

- Each year, the budget is approved by City Council. Residents are able to review the proposed budget and provide public comment prior to the Council vote.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
The recommendations of the Master Plan can be used as a framework for distribution of community and social programs, such as CBDG Funds, Open Space grants, or recreational programming.

- Residents can use the Master Plan as a way to hold their elected representatives and other City officials accountable in resource distribution and decision-making.
A “city of neighborhoods,” Jersey City is divided both historically and geographically into six large districts known as wards: Greenville (A), West Side/Marion (B), Journal Square (C), The Heights (D), Downtown (E), and Bergen-Lafayette (F). Each of these neighborhoods has evolved and developed in different ways over time and each brings a unique character and identity to the City as a whole.

Since 2000, our City has seen significant population growth and a substantial change in building stock and the overall built environment. An influx of investment in Newport, Downtown and Journal Square has since expanded to include redevelopment across all neighborhoods of the City. Our population (292,449 as of the 2020 census) is quickly approaching its 1930 peak of 316,715. Additionally, Jersey City is recognized as the most ethnically diverse city in the nation. The 2020 Census has also revealed that Jersey City is the third most dense city in America (with a population over 100k). From 2010-2020, Jersey City increased density (people per square mile) more than any other major US City.

Like other cities around the world, we are also experiencing huge demands for growth and grappling with ways to address these issues alongside the impact of climate change and technological advances that are changing the way we live our daily lives. Jersey City demonstrates how physical growth has a ripple effect on other aspects of urban life such as the economy, mobility, resiliency and social justice.
SINCE THE LAST MASTER PLAN, JERSEY CITY HAS...

**GROWN IN POPULATION AND DENSITY**

**HIGHEST**
- Diversity rate in the country
- 42% of residents are foreign born

**EXPANDED REGIONAL AND CITYWIDE TRANSIT SYSTEMS**
- 50% of residents use public transit across the region

**BECOME INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

**PROJECTED INCREASE**
- 62% of 36% in population by 2040

**WITH**
- 40% of City’s land area in the FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area

**DENSITY**
- 292,449 Jersey City residents as of 2020
- Greater increase than any other US city 2010-2020

Data Source: Land Use Element, Existing Conditions Report
### JERSEY CITY TIMELINE

#### UNDERSTANDING THE PAST TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

The strategies and recommendations put forward in our Master Plan aim to provide a roadmap for our future. Like any journey, in order to figure out how to get where we want to be, we need to know where we are starting from and how we got here in the first place. Our team examined the ways that our city has evolved over the last four decades and explored the causes that drove those changes. From national and global forces including technological developments, economic shifts, and changing climate conditions, to city-wide adoption of policies and programs, updates to zoning codes, and the development of new parks and transit facilities, the influences that have shaped our city are as diverse, complex, and interconnected as the people who live here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2003</th>
<th>PATH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two years after 9/11, Exchange Place Station and a temporary World Trade Center Terminal opened and service to both destinations is restored.</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>1980-2000</th>
<th>OUR RE-EMERGENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Transport</td>
<td></td>
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Mid Twentieth Century

Jersey City was the only one of the state’s six largest cities to gain both in population and employment during the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2000-2007</th>
<th>DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Inner Migration</td>
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</table>

Residents begin getting priced out of downtown, which creates an influx to nearby Journal Square, The Heights, McGinley Square, Greenville, and Lincoln Park.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Economic Engine</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With a close proximity to Wall Street, Jersey City shifts to having more Class A office spaces in the growing downtown area after 9/11.</td>
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### HBLR Opening

The Hudson–Bergen Light Rail opened to the public. Office market begins to boom.

### September 11

Ferries provided by the New York Waterway at the Paulus Hook Station dominate transportation after 9/11.

### Brownfield Remediation

Liberty Harbor North and Liberty State Park Liberty National Golf Course begin development with aim to remediate brownfield sites.
Due to the national housing crisis, young families who would typically move to the suburbs began staying in Jersey City, resulting in shifting demographics.

2010

Diverse Economy
An array of Filipino-owned businesses can be found in the West Side neighborhood of Jersey City. India Square becomes home to the highest concentration of Indian Americans.

2012

Hurricane Sandy
The PATH station at Exchange Place suffered major damage after floodwaters as high as eight feet submerged the tunnels; it was closed for several weeks and required $300 million in repairs.

2016

Legacy Projects
Projects like the Sixth Street Embankment and Bergen Arches spawn the development of community advocacy groups.

Berry Lane Park
The new $38 million Berry Lane Park is located along Garfield Avenue in the northern section of Bergen-Lafayette.

Increased Transit Frequency
Service on the Newark–World Trade Center and Journal Square–33rd Street lines increase 10 percent for rush hours.

2016–Today

Community Driven Development
Increase in City-wide negotiations, including leveraging development for community benefits and amenities through private funding, such as the Coles Street Park.

2020

Adaptive Reuse
Retrofitting of dilapidated or vacant buildings such as the Mana Contemporary and 21 Caven Point supports a more resilient and diversified economy, capitalizing on the City’s existing fabric.
OUR JERSEY CITY - JERSEY CITY MASTER PLAN VISION

OUR MASTER PLAN

APPROACH

The Master Plan is one of the most fundamental building blocks of our quality of life in Jersey City. It serves as a blueprint to guide future growth, transformation, and development. Created with our community and for our community, it will shape OUR City today and in the future!

OUR Master Plan strives to portray a collective, community-driven vision for the future of our city.

Introduction

Jersey City is our home. This is where we live, we work, we raise our families, spend time with our friends, and celebrate the milestones in our lives. As each of us has grown and changed over the years, so has the city around us. Jersey City today is not the same place that it was twenty years ago and is not the same as it will be in another twenty years. The mission that lies ahead is to envision what we want our city to be in the future and to chart a course for how we achieve these goals.

Each of us will envision the future of our city differently. Our needs, desires, priorities and preferences are not identical to those of our friends and neighbors, and we embrace our diversity as an essential characteristic of our community. While we may not always agree on the finer points, we do share core values that unite our visions and guide us as we take steps towards building our future together. We want our city to be a safe and healthy place for everyone to live, regardless of race, gender, age, or income. We want our city to be prosperous, to attract new businesses, provide jobs, and offer equitable opportunities for growth. We want our city to be easy and convenient to get around with pedestrian- and bike-friendly streets, accessible transit, and connections to regional networks. We want our city to have ample green spaces and natural environments and to be sustainable as we face a changing climate.

The vision set forth in our Master Plan is of a city that embodies our shared values and responsibilities. As we move forward, this vision will serve as a beacon to help us navigate, to adjust and adapt to changes outside of our control, and to course-correct along the way. Jersey City is already a place we are proud to call home, but together we dream of ways our city can grow, thrive, and evolve to better meet the ever-changing needs of our diverse community. OUR Master Plan will help us turn our dreams into reality.
OUR MASTER PLAN APPROACH

Development Patterns

- Corridors
- Commercial Core
- Legacy Neighborhoods
- Neighborhood Centers
- Low-density Residential
- Transit Nodes
- Large Format Retail
- Industrial Areas
- Interstitial Spaces
- Legacy Infrastructure
- Planned Waterfront Developments

Other Areas
- Adaptive Reuse
- Areas in Transition
- Mid & High density Housing
- Highway Commercial
- Community Services

Image courtesy of: MUD Workshop
OUR Master Plan Vision takes all of Jersey City’s element plans to establish a common thread and vision while the Open Space and Land Use Element are simultaneously being updated for the first time since 2000. The Land Use Element focuses on zoning and urban design, while the Open Space Element focuses on parks, community spaces and wellness. The Vision weaves all of the focal points of the element plans together into four lenses: Mobility and Connectivity; Economic Opportunity; Social Equity; and Climate Resiliency.
PLANNING FOR THE PEOPLE OF JERSEY CITY

2020 was a pivotal year for cultural conversation and reflection. The United States saw a nation-wide demand for a shift in placing social equity at the front of urbanism. The intensified call for equity has motivated our staff to examine the ways in which we engage all residents, and how to close gaps in the participation, representation, and consideration of traditionally underrepresented voices.

As the most diverse city in the country, it is critical that our Jersey City Master Plan embed the priorities of our residents across the entire spectrum of the City, building a vision for the future that is as diverse and robust as the communities it will impact in years to come.

Goals and strategies for future growth:

- Prioritize the needs and ideas of current residents.
- Advocate for future development to prioritize a diverse and affordable housing stock.
- Encourage more equitable distribution of the City’s resources and capital.
- Frame growth to allow for multi-generational and multi-cultural communities to thrive.
- Emphasize essential services and the importance of universal access to basic amenities.
- Reconcile barriers to equity, whether physical, economic, or social in nature.
TRANSFORMING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Master Plans call for a level of change to what exists today and envision what could be in the future. Jersey City has experienced significant growth since the 2000 Master Plan, and continues to see intense development pressure city-wide.

That growth can sometimes result in land use patterns that de-prioritize context and the pedestrian experience. Our Jersey City Master Plan looks to ensure that future development is better integrated into already thriving communities.

Priorities and opportunities for improving the built environment:

- Adapt aging and legacy infrastructure in a creative and sometimes unprecedented manner.
- Reduce vehicular dependency to promote and strengthen neighborhood cores.
- Rectify zoning that isn’t working to better align future implementation with the realities on the ground.
- Address opportunities across all neighborhood scales, whether they involve a singular streetscape, a local transit node, or a multi-block transformation.
- Balance vertical growth and intensification with amenity-rich open space and quality public realm.
OUR CITY AS THE BEST CITY

Traditional Master Plans call for a 10-year outlook focused on land-use decisions and can often be bogged down by legalities and economic limitations. Our Jersey City Master Plan looks to dream bigger and set forth a long-term vision that extends beyond land-use policy to inform decision-making at all levels and branches of City policy.

By embedding the voices of today’s residents and stakeholders, we hope to position OUR Master Plan as a roadmap for strategic growth, and to identify critical avenues for the future success of Jersey City. Whether goals and strategies concern local, regional, or state entities, OUR Master Plan underscores Jersey City’s importance within New Jersey and the New York City Metro.

Key platforms to establish Jersey City as a leader and model for urban policy and form:

- Place climate change + adaptation at the forefront of decision making, capital investment, and implementation strategies.

- Solidify access to a healthy lifestyle and associated resources/amenities as a universal reality for all residents.

- Ensure growth leverages economic trends to give the City and its residents the best opportunities for personal and collective success.

- Support the expansion and enhancement of neighborhood centers and their unique character – “we are not a bedroom community, we are a vibrant home and destination.”

- Amplify community advocacy for transformative projects (the Bergen Arches, the Hackensack Riverfront, the Sixth Street Embankment, Morris Canal Greenway and protected bike lanes).
KEEP LEARNING

OUR Master Plan had the unique experience of imagining a long-term future during a period in which it was hard to understand what the next day, week, or month would bring. Working under the context of the COVID-19 pandemic required our team to shift work-flows, and to allow the process to be highly malleable. Though the pandemic was challenging for all professionally and personally, it forced our staff, our elected representatives, and our residents alike to examine our everyday perspective of what a city is, what a city can be, and what a city should be.

During the 18 month process, we learned:

- Equitable access to open space is one of the most significant quality-of-life factors for urban environments.

- It is paramount for Jersey City to adapt/maintain a “Enhance Every Square Inch” perspective to reimagine the potential of what streets, plazas, sidewalks, open space and vacant land can bring to the vibrancy of the City.

- The concept of “space” should be flexible and dynamic: Open Space vs. Personal Space and Public Space vs. Private Space.

- A truly transit-rich city must be multi-modal, providing comprehensive and safe options for getting from point A to B.

- Virtual engagement can open up access by eliminating barriers to participation (child-care needs, commuting costs/conflicts, size limitations of rooms/structures, physical accessibility to facilities/transit).

- Marginalized populations can become even more disengaged if outreach strategies don’t balance virtual meetings with in-person participation opportunities (barriers to technology and internet access, generational-gaps in comfort with technology).

- Planning cannot work without strong community partnerships. Our community leaders were pivotal in increasing participation and awareness in the Jersey City Master Plan process.

- Empathy is a powerful and critical planning tool.
KEY OBJECTIVES

THE LENSES GUIDE DECISION MAKING

OUR vision identifies goals and benchmarks of growth that aim to foster civic unity, economic opportunity, resiliency and adaptability through the built and social environment. This vision builds on the distinct and eclectic character of our City’s many neighborhoods while leveraging creative and flexible planning to shape a livable Jersey City. This Process will apply design-based thinking and data-driven analysis to strengthen decision-making, future planning, and local policy.

AMPLIFY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Adopt strategic land use policies to enhance and guide economic opportunities and diversity of industry across the city.

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS + MOBILITY

Expand and improve local and regional connections across transportation modes to increase access to essential services, parks, and community facilities.
The team identified lenses that frame city-wide, mid-scale, and neighborhood-level interventions.

**Prioritize Climate Resiliency**

Ensure a future that addresses how Jersey City’s infrastructure can absorb, adapt, and improve the sustainability for future climate change.

**Emphasize Social Equity**

Promote a commitment to fairness, justice, and equality in the formulation of public policy and distribution of public services.
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

The OURJC team quickly adapted to new protocols for community engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team immediately restructured the engagement process to include virtual meetings via Zoom and continued to offer a variety of ways to participate to be as inclusive as possible. Outreach and engagement efforts included Zoom meetings with breakout rooms for small-group discussions, interactive digital surveys, an active social media campaign, pre-recorded “micro meetings” hosted online, posted flyers, mailed postcards and socially-distanced in-person events held outdoors.

OUR Master Plan team received feedback that their outreach methods were successful in reaching a wide range of residents who may not have been able to participate in certain events due to time constraints or lack of childcare. These online tools provide opportunities for people to participate at their convenience, over an extended period of time. In-person events and traditional handouts, while challenging during the pandemic, offer community members who struggle to access or use digital technology the chance to let their voice be heard. All in all, the results from the amended engagement program due to Covid-19 were wholistic and represented as many voices as were expected pre-Covid. This was a huge learning and growth experience for all, and it is expected to permanently change the way public engagement is conducted in the future.
**Socially Distanced In-person Public Workshop**

1. Situated on 44' x 46' lot
2. 30" x 40" Boards
3. Double-sided Boards
4. Table for hand sanitizer, hard copies, etc.
5. Tables 8' minimum apart from each other

**Engagement Strategy**

- Virtual Public Meeting Live Poll
- Virtual Public Workshop I
- Virtual Sticky Note Exercise to Mimic In-Person Feedback Sessions
ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

The OUR Master Plan team worked with residents, local agencies, and community leaders to craft a vision for our future. Robust public outreach ensures that proposed strategies address the social, economic, and environmental needs of those that live, work, and visit the City. During this major update, the Land Use and Open Space Elements teams conducted stakeholder engagement with the Technical Advisory Committees (TAC) and The City Council and Constituency Representatives (CCR). Throughout the process, the Elements incorporated meaningful community feedback to ensure the plan elements are driven by the needs and aspirations of the community. Partnerships with other municipal stakeholders include the Municipal Utilities Authority, Recreation Department, Jersey City Free Public Library, Department of Public Works, and Architecture Department.

THE NEEDS SURVEY

A Needs Survey was conducted to gauge public input and participation that was open from June 2020 to January 2021. This was extremely important to get a baseline of the current needs and opinions of the community. It consisted of the Visioning Survey, the Open Space Survey and the Neighborhoods Survey, each included a questionnaire along with interactive maps that allowed for open ended answers. The surveys were made available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Hindi, and Tagalog. Feedback from the surveys shaped the long-term goals and priorities for the City, and informed the selection of neighborhoods for the Small Area Vision Plans.

2020

Master Plan Kickoff
Stakeholder Engagement
Survey Launch
Virtual Public Workshop I
In-person Public Workshop

6,315 RESPONSES ACROSS 3 SURVEYS
OCT 2020
239 ATTENDEES OVER 2 DAYS
OCT 2020
41 ATTENDEES IN 3 SESSIONS

How should Jersey City promote and improve access, mobility, and overall circulation at the local and regional level?

How will Jersey City prepare and adapt for climate change impacts?

How can Jersey City promote fairness, justice, and equality through policy?
How will Jersey City's existing and potential economic growth create equitable growth amongst long time residents as well as new residents?

OUTREACH EFFORTS

- Extended response period: June 2020-January 2021
- Translated Surveys available in Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, and Tagalog
- City Staff distributed flyers and advertised through Heights community groups at the Day of the Dead Parade, food pantry distribution at St. John’s Church, and “pop-ins” on community group virtual meetings.
- City Staff sent email blasts to neighborhood associations, the City Planning and Transportation, and Master Plan email listservs.
- City staff also posted flyers downtown, Morris Canal, West Side and Greenville neighborhoods to promote the survey and the initial engagement meetings.
- Posts were made on community boards at grocery stores, coffee shops, a community center, and senior housing buildings.
- Commercial District Services SID distributed flyers and surveys to businesses.
- The Riverview Neighborhood Association, Councilwomen Ridley’s and Prinz-Arey’s offices and other community advocates distributed flyers and surveys.

2021

- Stakeholder Engagement II
- Virtual Public Workshop II
- Small Area Vision Plan Charrettes
- Public Comment for Draft Plans

MAY 2021
- 239 ATTENDEES OVER 2 DAYS

JUNE/JULY 2021
- 300+ ATTENDEES IN ON-DEMAND WORKSHOPS
- 125+ PARTICIPANTS FOR VIRTUAL CHARRETTES
- ACROSS THE 3 SMALL AREAS

JUNE 2021
- 10 POP-UP EVENTS/
  Kid’s Bike Ride, Musical Evenings, Lincoln Park Farmer’s Market, JSQ Market, Riverview Farmer’s Market, Grove Street Farmer’s Market, JCPD Rock the Block Pop-Ups, and Arlington Park Food Distribution
WHAT WE HEARD

HOW CAN WE CREATE A MORE CONNECTED JERSEY CITY?

Community members walk, bike, and use their own vehicle to get around Jersey City; however, it is difficult to access a local park, community facility, or grocery store without car.

Safety remains a concern for walking and biking across the city. In many cases, the bike infrastructure, such as bike parking and protected bike lanes are inconsistent and there is not a cohesive network for residents to utilize.

“It would be nice to have improvements to pedestrian and running paths across the city with distinct bike paths.”

-Jersey City Resident via Online Survey

The city needs to prioritize safe streets beyond downtown. In short, we need a more pedestrian friendly city, there are a lot of hardships if you don’t have access to a car.”

-Jersey City Resident via Public Workshop II

HOW CAN WE CREATE A MORE PROSPEROUS JERSEY CITY?

There was a general consensus that neighborhoods do not have a diverse mix of retail and housing stock within the City, particularly in Morris Canal, Bergen-Lafayette, and Journal Square; where there is a need for more grocery stores and mixed housing typologies within their respective neighborhoods.

“I’m most excited about new trails for jogging, walking, and biking”

-Jersey City Resident via Online Survey

“We would like to see smaller restaurants, bars, and coffee shops at the neighborhood scale.”

-Jersey City Resident via Public Workshop II

I would love to see more creative commercial uses, including entertainment, arts, and film within the community.”

-Jersey City Resident via Public Workshop I

“It would be great to see diverse restaurants and other commercial uses within walking distance.”

-Jersey City Resident via In-person Event
HOW CAN WE CREATE A MORE **EQUITABLE** JERSEY CITY?

Jersey City is known as one of the most diverse cities in the country, contributing to the overall diversity index distributed throughout neighborhoods. Unfortunately, economic and housing growth has not been shared equally throughout the City, thus, the Master Plan vision aims to focus on specific communities to expand access to affordable housing, jobs, programs, and amenities.

“We should give families a chance to grow together with more **outdoor activities** throughout our community.”

- Jersey City Resident via Online Survey

“There’s definitely a need for more **affordable housing** and overall better access to parks and open spaces.”

- Jersey City Resident via Online Survey

“**We would love to hear about and see more activities for all weather conditions** and seasons.”

- Jersey City Resident via Public Workshop I

HOW CAN WE CREATE A MORE **RESILIENT** JERSEY CITY?

Through community input, residents expressed that resiliency should be at the forefront of the Master Planning Vision to ensure a safe and sustainable future.

There is a need for the City to **invest** and **upgrade our infrastructure** across the region, which would help mitigate adverse climate effects.

Create **pollinator and wildlife habitat spaces** to support birds, bees, etc that are also teaching zones for the children and public.”

- Jersey City Resident via In-person Event

“**The City should invest** and **protect land** for environmental and ecological benefits for the future of our community.”

- Jersey City Resident via Online Survey

Climate change has become a reality, thus, more **street trees**, remediation effort, and education is needed throughout the City.”

- Jersey City Resident via In-person Event
The Master Plan team identified **four key lenses** that guide the vision and recommendations of the Jersey City Master Plan, and frame city-wide, mid-scale, and neighborhood-level interventions. The lenses also address overlaps between the Elements to unify goals across the entire Master Plan.

Each of these lenses are interwoven with the others, taking components from both the Land Use and Open Space Elements. For example, Connectivity and Mobility addresses transportation realities along with future trail and open space opportunities. Economic Opportunity is discussed in reference to both housing and job trends while overlaying access to open space and community facilities through the Social Equity lens. Finally, Climate Resiliency is seen as a city-wide principle to create a more sustainable and resilient Jersey City.

### A Connected Jersey City

Jersey City will continue to provide strong links throughout the community, supporting all forms of mobility, prioritizing walking, bicycling, and transit.

### A Prosperous Jersey City

Jersey City will continue to be one of the region’s most dynamic urban economies, where families, businesses, and neighborhoods thrive by providing a high quality of life with an abundance of opportunities to live, work, and play.

### An Equitable Jersey City

Jersey City welcomes residents of all ages, backgrounds, and economic levels and will have an inclusive and equitable economy, housing, open space, and social services.

### A Resilient Jersey City

Jersey City will continue to be a sustainable City and a leader in the fight against climate change through water management, brownfield remediation, and reducing the Environmental Vulnerability Index for neighborhoods across the City.
The Lenses identify common themes and objectives of various Master Plan Elements and policy initiatives

- Make our City more transit friendly
- Prioritize reinvestment in environmental Justice Communities
- Connect our parks and neighborhood
- Accommodate a diversity of uses and needs beyond recreation
- Improve access between Jersey City and the greater region
- Accommodate population growth and address changing needs
- Promote the development of a diversified economy
- Expand City-wide green infrastructure and stormwater management
- Enhance our residential neighborhoods
- Protect & restore environmental assets and plan for sustainability
- Celebrate and beautify the public realm
- Improve climate mitigation efforts
- Provide flexibility that allows large format retail & offices to adapt
OUR VISION FRAMEWORK

PREVIOUS PLANNING ELEMENTS

STEP I: Identify goals & recommendations
STEP II: Consolidate similar goals & recommendations

INPUTS

PLANNING ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS & GOALS
In Jersey City, OUR Master Plan includes the Land Use Element, the Open Space Element, + Community Facilities Plan, the Housing Element and a number of additional Element Plans where an extensive list can be reviewed in the office of City Planning.

The Master Plan process began by sorting all the previously adopted plans and elements through the lenses that guide our vision. These lenses were curated by the team, consolidating similar and overlapping goals to prioritize and summarize key recommendations to highlight the Master Plan vision.

**What is a lens?**

The Master Plan identified four broad priorities as a framework to guide our vision—connectivity and mobility, economic opportunity, social equity, and climate resiliency. These lenses continue to reflect Jersey City’s planning efforts to a great degree; organizing, consolidating, filtering, and prioritizing goals and recommendations set forth from the previous planning elements.
The Jersey City Master Plan lenses each contain a set of goals, each with a set of recommendations set forth to achieve those goals. Additionally, an implementation framework is visualized in the format of a timeline to depict the process over the next 20 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LENSES</th>
<th>GOALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONNECTIVITY + MOBILITY</td>
<td>Decrease Automobile Dependency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prioritize Connectivity Between Neighborhoods</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pursue Strategic Regional Connections</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY</td>
<td>Promote the Development of a Diversified Economy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Establish 15-Minute Cities at Neighborhood Cores</td>
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<td>Embed Flexibility to Allow Retail + Office to Adapt</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCIAL EQUITY</td>
<td>Prioritize Reinvestment in Socially Vulnerable Communities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increase Flexibility of Programmable Space</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Accommodate Population Growth + Changing Needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLIMATE RESILIENCY</td>
<td>Mitigate Impacts of Climate Change</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adapt the City for Increased Resilience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Plan for Sustainability</td>
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## RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand alternative modes of transportation</td>
<td>Invest in placemaking at transit nodes</td>
<td>Recommendation to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve connections between parks, open spaces + community facilities</td>
<td>Establish city-wide greenway network</td>
<td>Reclaim infrastructure to fill gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop bus rapid transit (BRT) network with region-wide linkages</td>
<td>Continue advocacy for investment in regional greenways</td>
<td>Plan for the expansion of water transit systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retrofit community facilities as resiliency hubs</td>
<td>Preserve + adapt the city’s industrial base</td>
<td>Enhance economic opportunities along regional corridors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen localized access to essential services</td>
<td>Celebrate + beautify public realm</td>
<td>Recognize + promote richness of historic assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore + establish the grid</td>
<td>Repurpose + reuse existing structures</td>
<td>Increase walkability in large-footprint retail districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a balanced housing supply</td>
<td>Close infrastructure gaps in underserved neighborhoods</td>
<td>Expand access to city programs for low-income households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt open spaces to be multipurpose in design</td>
<td>Expand Parks’ role beyond recreation</td>
<td>Diversify permitted uses to increase site programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade + improve community facilities</td>
<td>Tie future private development to expanded public amenities</td>
<td>Use crowd-sourced data to “truth” capital project needs and priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement infrastructure upgrade + maintenance plan</td>
<td>Expand green infrastructure + stormwater management in city-owned spaces</td>
<td>Re-examine zoning to strengthen resiliency within private property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retrofit community facilities as resiliency hubs</td>
<td>Retrofit the existing building stock in vulnerable areas</td>
<td>Partner regionally to coordinate infrastructure investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate municipal leadership in production and use of renewable energy</td>
<td>Expand and create training programs to ensure a diverse, skilled, clean energy work force</td>
<td>Improve carbon capture and reduce heat island effect throughout the city</td>
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CONNECTIONS AND MOBILITY

Jersey City will continue to provide strong links throughout the community, supporting all forms of mobility, and encouraging walking, bicycling, and future transit.

1. Decrease Automobile Dependency

2. Prioritize Connectivity Between Neighborhoods

3. Pursue Strategic Regional Connections
GOAL 1: Decrease Automobile Dependency

Despite the fact that many residents of Jersey City have excellent access to public transportation, other areas have fewer transit options, and residents in these neighborhoods still largely depend on a car to access jobs, goods, and services. The reliance on cars for local trips increases traffic congestion throughout the City while also allocating much of the City’s physical footprint to the experience of the driver rather than that of the pedestrian or cyclist. There remains the need for investment in systems and infrastructure that provide safer, more convenient options for non-vehicular transportation throughout the City to better connect neighborhoods to open spaces and key activity nodes such as schools, regional stations, and shopping.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. EXPAND ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Jersey City supports a number of programs to keep people traveling throughout the City without having to get into their cars. The Citi Bike bike-share system continues to expand, including the recent launch of a unified program between Jersey City and Hoboken. In addition, the recently implemented Via service provides subsidized access citywide, filling in the gaps of the existing transit network, with an emphasis on serving lower-income residents and areas with less access to transit, such as Greenville and the Heights. The City should continue to support tech-enabled shared transportation providers, otherwise known as “microtransit.” In addition, other opportunities to reduce vehicular use should be explored, such as bus rapid transit systems, aerial trams, etc. By strengthening these programs and the connections between them, residents may find it easier to start using existing transportation services that are an alternative to the individual automobile.

B. INVEST IN PLACEMAKING AT TRANSIT NODES

Most Hudson Bergen Lightrail station areas have some form of infrastructure at or around the station that supports more than one mode of transportation e.g. bus stop, PATH, bike racks, parking lots etc. Some stations, particularly the ones that are located at the peripheries, like Richard and Danforth Streets, are not easily accessible or well-integrated with the surrounding neighborhoods. In order to improve the appeal of the station areas, the City should partner with key agencies and stakeholders to program and retrofit stations so that these areas are multifunctional in purpose and provide several amenities at each location.

STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED TO IMPROVE TRANSIT STATION AREAS:

- Allow space for small commercial uses like concession kiosks or vendor stands
- Expand temporary/flex programs like food trucks at peak hours
- Add digital real time schedules visible from the street and an information wall with maps that show how HBLR stations are connected with the City’s transit network key local destinations
- Improve entry plazas with public art, seating and landscaping.
- Open up plazas and integrate with adjacent public realm emphasizing safety
C. ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY

In recent years the City has allocated substantial resources to improve the bike network and improve pedestrian safety at street crossings. The Circulation Element, the Vision Zero Action Plan, the JC Walks Pedestrian Enhancement Plan, and the Let’s Ride JC Bicycle Master Plan outline multiple strategies for expanding the bike network and reclaiming the street for cyclists and pedestrians alike. To further meet the goals of these plans the City should continue their investment in a continuous bike network and bicycle storage infrastructure, and pedestrian safety measures.

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR BIKE/PED SAFETY:

- Provide a comprehensive city-wide network of dedicated protected bike lanes
- Improve connectivity between neighborhoods for bicyclists and provide bicycle network linkages to all surrounding municipalities.
- Provide recreational bike routes through parks and open space with a robust set of bicycle system amenities to support bicycle usage.
- Utilize new development as an opportunity to correct mistakes of the past, by requiring improvements to the streetscape which increase safety and facilitates circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists, and localized transit improvements.
- Reconnect areas separated by elevated highway and utility infrastructure or superblock development.
- Create mid-block crossings and corner curb bump-outs where needed with clear, bright road markers and lighting, to shorten crossing distances and allow pedestrians to be seen more easily by cars.
Jersey City is one of the state’s largest hubs for regional transportation and holds a pivotal role in East-west connections from other parts of New Jersey to the New York City Metro area. However, infrastructure investment and implementation has long prioritized the goals of the larger region, and many gaps still exist today in regards to connectivity within Jersey City’s core. For example, there are limited continuous networks that allow a resident to travel from Greenville to the Heights in a safe, direct, and efficient manner. Providing safe and convenient local connections from neighborhood to neighborhood and to larger public amenities is crucial to for Jersey City to evolve as a model mid-size City.

**D. IMPROVE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKS, OPEN SPACES, + COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

While the City does have a wide variety of parks, the amount, quality, and access to those parks is unevenly distributed. The Master Plan seeks to strengthen the important link between quality-of-life and park/recreational access. Access should be balanced between large, amenity-rich legacy parks and smaller neighborhood-oriented spaces such as playgrounds or pocket plazas. Connectivity can be improved through physical infrastructure such as new or improved sidewalks, and through a unified wayfinding system that makes increases visibility and awareness of amenities and facilities.
E. ESTABLISH CITY-WIDE GREENWAY NETWORK

The emerging greenways network has the potential to greatly improve city-wide connectivity between and among Jersey City’s parks and open space system, neighborhoods, and public destinations. The alignments of many of these proposed greenways are oriented towards the City’s waterfronts, with gaps in east-west connections to better integrate lower-density neighborhoods with commercial centers and recreational amenities. The City should look to expand the planned networks to increase inner-city connections between the I-78 Turnpike Extension and Route 440. Additionally, better non-vehicular North-South connections are needed between the Heights and southern neighborhoods so that access to key destinations such as Central Avenue Business District or the Pershing Field Recreation Center are not car-dependent.

F. RECLAIM LEGACY INFRASTRUCTURE TO FILL GAPS

In recent years and decades the City has seen a rise in public advocacy for reclaiming legacy infrastructure for public use and enjoyment. The Sixth Street Embankment and the Bergen Arches are key examples of abandoned infrastructure that maintain a significant physical presence in the City’s built environment but remain unutilized for public purpose. The City should continue to partner with community stakeholders such as the Embankment Coalition, the Bergen Arches Preservation Coalition, and other local organizations to advance the visioning for these projects in the near-term. Visioning should include a framework for integration of multi-modal and accessible networks, open space in the form of recreational amenities and conservation, and strategic commercial/retail opportunities. The City should also work with private and public agencies to streamline jurisdictional barriers in order to establish, strengthen, and expand bike/ped connections under large infrastructure such as elevated highways and bridges.
GOAL 3: 
Pursue Strategic Regional Connections

Existing connections between Jersey City and other parts of the county and tri-state area have primarily utilized passenger rail or local bus systems. As density increases and urban metros grow throughout Northeast New Jersey, the City should support the expansion of regional connectivity through alternative modes of transit, such as ferry or bus rapid transit networks. These alternative systems will require coordination with numerous stakeholders and agencies to ensure new networks are strategic in both funding and footprint.

A. DEVELOP BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT) NETWORK WITH REGION-WIDE LINKAGES

The City should leverage partnerships with NJTPA, NJ Transit, and Hudson County to expand the previously studied BRT concept for Jersey City and other Hudson County municipalities, with the ultimate goal of upgrading existing service and provide a BRT corridor from Hudson County to Port Authority Midtown Bus Terminal. In Jersey City, the proportion of commuters using public transit is highly concentrated around fixed-rail systems such as PATH and HBLR, while areas served only by bus routes have much lower percentages of public transit commuters. Bus rapid transit merges the advantages of fixed rail, such as speed, visibility, and predictability, with the cost advantages of bus services. Corridor-based bus rapid transit has much lower capital costs than fixed rail services while providing many of same advantages. Future implementation of this system along the JFK Corridor should receive priority for additional feasibility study and funding opportunities.
B. CONTINUE ADVOCACY FOR INVESTMENT IN REGIONAL GREENWAYS

There are several active projects and proposals for regional greenways that run throughout Jersey City. From waterfront connections along the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway and the Hackensack Riverwalk, to envisioned intercity linkages such as the Morris Canal Greenway and the Hudson Essex Greenway, Jersey City plays a pivotal geographic role in regional networks rooted in bicycle and pedestrian movement. The City should prioritize working with adjacent stakeholders to ensure these networks are cohesive across municipal boundaries, and to be strategic about maximizing funding to merge and optimize local greenway routes that may overlap or run in close proximity of one another.

C. PLAN FOR THE EXPANSION OF WATER TRANSIT SYSTEMS

In recent years the NYC Metro has expanded the ferry system substantially, including adding a new dock at Jersey City’s Harborside while also increasing service on the Paulus Hook line. Passenger Ferry has helped the region to increase capacity while establishing new and often more direct connections to Manhattan and other parts of the New York Harbor. In 2021, Hudson County worked with NJTPA to conduct a feasibility study of a ferry system on the Hackensack River, with a potential terminal at the future Bayfront development. Jersey City should continue to develop the Bayfront waterfront with the vision of a regional ferry connection, and should plan for efficient connections from the Hackensack Waterfront to the extended HBLR stop at the north end of the Bayfront neighborhood.
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Jersey City will continue to be one of the region’s most dynamic urban economies, where families, businesses, and neighborhoods thrive by providing a high quality of life with an abundance of opportunities to live, work, and play.

1. Promote Development of a Diversified Economy

2. Establish a 15-Minute City at Neighborhood Cores

3. Embed Flexibility to Allows Retail & Offices to Adapt
GOAL 1: Promote Development of a Diversified Economy

Jersey City has experienced broad-based economic growth since 1980, accompanied by employment and income gains and significant commercial redevelopment. At the time of the Master Plan update in 2000, the City was in the midst of a period of strong economic growth. The development surge that grew through the early- and mid-2000s slowed significantly during the Great Recession of 2008-2009; however, the City has rebounded with a stronger housing market, a robust development pipeline, and significant employment gains. As both the global and local market evolve, economic activity sees significant shifts towards e-commerce models and an increased demand for delivery services and ghost-commercial operations. The City must respond thoughtfully in coming years to incentivize and support local businesses through market shifts while considering the impacts of these changes on the built environment, large-footprint industries, and core commercial districts.

A. RETAIN AND ATTRACT SMALL BUSINESSES

In 2017, there were 4,967 businesses in Jersey City. The vast majority of businesses are small; 85% of businesses in the City have fewer than 20 employees, suggesting that despite their size these businesses play a large part in Jersey City’s economy. Smaller businesses are at a higher risk (compared with larger businesses) to economic stress, such as what was seen during Hurricane Sandy and what is being experienced currently with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to for Jersey City to support and encourage the development of small business, including minority and women-owned businesses and disadvantaged business enterprises. The City should look at strategies that will reduce barriers in order to retain existing small businesses and attract new small businesses. Local businesses and entrepreneurs need to be supported through clear, predictable, and transparent regulations, and the local economic model should highlight opportunities for training and skill development in businesses of all scales.
B. PRESERVE + ADAPT THE CITY’S INDUSTRIAL BASE

The City should retain existing industrial users and recruit viable commercial and industrial users to preserve the industrial base. The Global Container Terminal at Greenville Yard, for example, is a major driver of economic activity. Land use policies should provide for sufficient land-side facilities in port areas to serve port growth and generate port-oriented development (e.g., adequate rail service, road connections and storage). The City should also continue efforts to leverage shifts in modern industry to a tech-driven market, and should integrate the visions of projects like SciTech Scity and JCHA AeroFarms with new policies, such as the Cannabis Ordinance, that will allow Jersey City to capitalize on new and growing sectors. New warehousing and logistics uses – which are in high demand as users are priced out of Brooklyn and Queens – should be located near the port areas and highway interchanges. Adaptive Reuse of underutilized or vacated industrial areas should continue trends in marrying job creation with retail expansion and placemaking as has been seen in Canal Crossing with 902 Brewing Company, Corgi Distillery, and the Cinelease film studio.

C. ENHANCE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ALONG REGIONAL CORRIDORS

Regional Corridors connect Jersey City with neighboring municipalities and for the most part function as auto-oriented throughways across the City. They run across the City in north-south (e.g. Kennedy Boulevard) or east-west (e.g. Communipaw Avenue) directions and are much longer local routes compared with other roadways. As primary local routes to the City’s core, Regional Corridors are a visitor’s introduction to Jersey City. The City should adapt Regional Corridors to create opportunities to develop nodes of activity and services. As some existing commercial cores - Journal Square, Newark Ave Ped Mall, and Exchange Place - become saturated, development pressures will shift elsewhere, and Regional Corridors have the necessary infrastructure, location advantage and connectivity to support higher-density developments and anchor retail business and commercial space.
GOAL 2: Establish a 15-Minute City at Neighborhood Cores

The need for all residents to have convenient access to neighborhood commercial amenities was a consistent theme that emerged from the public outreach activities. While most neighborhoods in Jersey City are within close proximity to a smaller commercial district, it was commonly pointed out that commercial areas outside of downtown lack a spectrum of necessary businesses to keep residents in close proximity to essential services. The 15-minute City model emphasizes the importance of orienting most human needs within a 15-minute walk, or 5-minute bike ride, of an amenity-rich neighborhood core. This concept addresses a scale of urban geography that is often overlooked in traditional planning models – the scale that exists between a person’s immediate street/neighborhood and the overall city they live in. Jersey City can look to this model to fill gaps in existing commercial districts and expand services to areas that currently lack access to everyday needs.

A. STRENGTHEN LOCALIZED ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Residents expressed support for a wider diversity in businesses with significant interest in quality food options such as healthy-oriented grocery stores, salad restaurant/healthy lunch options, cafés, and neighborhood coffee places. Additionally, the community expressed a lack of access to necessary businesses and facilities such as banks and libraries outside of Jersey City’s commercial cores and downtown. Commercial zoning a Redevelopment in Wards A, B, F, and D should incentivize necessary services like grocery stores within walking distance of higher density.

B. CELEBRATE + BEAUTIFY PUBLIC REALM

Jersey City’s public realm provides an opportunity to celebrate the diversity of its residents and the richness of its arts, historic districts, and cultural offerings. In survey responses residents noted the need for streets to feel safer and cleaner in order to improve their neighborhoods. Stronger streetscape, landscape, lighting and signage regulations can help to improve the public realm and establish a consistent treatment from neighborhood to neighborhood. Special Improvement Districts can serve as key partners for establishing neighborhood identity and filling gaps in planting and/or maintenance issues within the streetscape. The City should strengthen and enforce design and quality standards for the public realm consistently across all wards to promote walkability, safety, and successful retail districts.

C. RECOGNIZE + PROMOTE RICHNESS OF HISTORIC ASSETS

The 2015 Historic Preservation Element notes that, at the time of the 2000 Master Plan, fears of historic designation leading to gentrification were a major barrier to preservation efforts outside of the downtown area. While gentrification does remain a concern that needs to be addressed in any new or expanded historic district, neighborhoods are increasingly seeing the benefits of historic designation. The designation of the West Bergen-East Lincoln Park Historic District reflects a recognition of both greater desire for official historic preservation and the need to respond to the threat of inappropriate renovations, teardowns, and incompatible new construction outside of the downtown. The City should proceed with Ward-based historic surveys and should ensure historic preservation staff work closely with planning staff to rectify tension between new and amended zoning regulations and preservation of the City’s historic integrity.
Recommended Zoning Changes

- **Historic Zoning Recommendations**
- **Recommended New Local Historic Districts**

**National Register of Historic Places**
- Individual Landmark
- Historic District

**New Jersey Register of Historic Places**
- Individual Landmark
- Historic District

**Jersey City Municipal Register of Historic Places**
- Individual Landmark
- Historic District

### Analyze edges of the H district, look to eliminate split-zoned lots

- **West Bergen-East Lincoln Park Historic District**
- **Bergen Hill Historic District**
- **Communipaw-Lafayette Historic District**
- **Hamilton Park Historic District**
- **Van Vorst Park Historic District**
- **Harsimus Cove Historic District**
- **Paulus Hook Historic District**
- **Sherman Place Historic District**

### Image courtesy of: MUD Workshop
GOAL 3: Embed Flexibility to Allow Retail + Office to Adapt

Over the last few years, the retail marketplace has accelerated its shift from traditional brick-and-mortar stores to online shopping, a trend exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In Jersey City, this shift becomes most relevant in big box retail districts, such as the Newport Centre Mall in Downtown, and the Hudson Mall and Stadium Plaza areas along Route 440. Given their size and scale of operations, it is prudent for the City to work with owners of large-format retail properties to plan for their short- and long-term future, to ensure that these areas continue to thrive as active, community-serving uses. In addition, longer-term planning should explore opportunities to establish and strengthen physical connections between large-format areas and surrounding neighborhoods and streets.

A. RESTORE + ESTABLISH THE GRID

Characterized by large floorplates, surface parking lots and other car-oriented infrastructure, big-box retail and malls often occupy multiple City blocks and reroute circulation to efficiently serve their retail establishments. This breaks up the City’s traditional street grid and direct connections to and between destinations. Any future modifications to the layout of large-format retail areas should respond to the existing context, with a goal to better integrate these sites with the surrounding neighborhoods and respond to the scale of adjacent blocks. Large retail environments should also re-orient to external frontages to emphasize connections to public space to capitalize on an activated street life.
B. REPURPOSE + REUSE EXISTING STRUCTURES

As the retail marketplace shifts to online shopping/delivery services and experiential retail, customers are seeking immersive and shareable experiences when visiting physical retail locations. In the coming years, this will require large format retail stores and malls to adapt and transform into places that people can engage with and want to spend time at. The City should work with property owners to be flexible in permitted uses within these districts so that zoning allows retail environments to respond quickly to the needs of the market, which are likely to evolve from uses and design standards of traditional big-box environments.

C. INCREASE WALKABILITY IN LARGE-FOOTPRINT RETAIL DISTRICTS

Any future development on these sites should consider ways in which the roadways can be transformed to provide more opportunities to serve auto, pedestrian, and bike movements equally and safely. Similarly, upgrades should prioritize pedestrian and streetscape improvements and strengthen pedestrian connections while improving street vitality through active programming that engages the surrounding neighborhoods.
SOCIAL EQUITY

Jersey City will have an inclusive and equitable economy, housing, open space, and social services for a City that welcomes residents of all ages, backgrounds, and economic levels.

1. Prioritize Reinvestment in Socially Vulnerable Communities
   
2. Increase Flexibility of Programmable Space
   
3. Accommodate Population Growth & Changing Needs
SOCIAL EQUITY

JERSEY CITY VISION

Image courtesy of: Jennifer Brown

Berry Lane Park
Image courtesy of: Jennifer Brown
GOAL 1:
Prioritize Reinvestment in Socially Vulnerable Communities

Jersey City has been one of the most popular municipalities in the region for families and individuals to live, grow, and prosper. It has been recognized as one of the state’s fastest growing municipalities, a trend which is likely to continue into the next decade with more high-end residential developments and private investment. Construction of new apartments is booming but cannot keep up with demand. As development pressure rises outside of downtown, the market will continue to see increased housing costs throughout the City. The City should strengthen policy and zoning regulations to place affordability at the forefront of future development and growth, particularly in areas where development pressure sees a direct overlap with Socially Vulnerable populations. With said growth, zoning and redevelopment should leverage private investment to place equal importance on investment in public amenities and resources and ensure the City’s growing population has adequate and equitable access to open space, community facilities, transit, etc.

A. CREATE A BALANCED HOUSING SUPPLY

As of October 2020, according to Zillow, a popular real estate listing website, Jersey City has a median home value of $545,000, which is higher than both the state and county. All six wards experienced a gradual increase in median home value since 2013 after the financial crisis of 2008. While the increase in housing costs is good news for homeowners, it has also raised the cost of living for many residents. The majority of housing units in Jersey City are renter-occupied (71%). Currently, the City’s housing cost-burdened owners and renters (those who spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing) represent 42% of the total population. The City should continue to advance and support programs that create a diversity of housing options so that residents are not priced out of Jersey City, and should continue to advance the goals of the Housing Element, with priority on adoption of an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance (IZO) that will directly translate to an increase of affordable units in built projects.

Image source: Jersey City Housing Element Update, 2019
B. CLOSE INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS IN UNDERSERVED NEIGHBORHOODS

In recent planning efforts, the City has worked to leverage development in order to bring needed resources to underserved communities. There are 16 new open space projects underway on properties that previously were not public park spaces. Several of these new investments will help to close park access gaps around the City. An additional 14 existing parks are earmarked for planned improvements. The City should continue to partner with private and public entities to expedite the creation of new open space and improvement of existing, outdated facilities. These efforts should extend beyond parks and open space to leverage other City-owned sites such as libraries, police, and fire properties to adopt a more holistic approach towards maximizing community resources.

C. EXPAND ACCESS TO CITY PROGRAMS FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSING

While the City has made significant progress in expanding the open space network over recent years, gaps in non-recreation based public programs still exist. Future efforts to expand public programs should explore methods of sharing indoor space with schools for after school programs or to provide more space for learning. There are precedents for this type of land acquisition framework, such as the Trust for Public Land’s Green Acres Program which turns school parking lots into outdoor learning labs and playspaces. Other strategies should look to provide services for seniors and community organizations, including partnerships with residential developers to fund and maintain privately built community spaces that are open to public use. The Open Space Element identifies potential strategies include solidifying partnerships to expand city capacity, budget and resources, offering services and amenities where people need them, and championing public health and community wellness.
GOAL 2: Increase Flexibility of Programmable Space

The availability and quality of parks and open spaces are inextricably tied to residents’ quality-of-life and general principles of social equity in urban environments. Like many cities throughout the US, Jersey City gained a deeper understanding of the importance of parks in equity throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. While increasing the number of parks throughout the City should remain a priority, land is a finite resource and creative and nontraditional strategies are needed that go beyond purchasing property to increase the usefulness of the space that the City currently has. Thoughtful design and programming will allow open spaces to be multifunctional in nature and cater to a larger audience. The City should look at its open space resources strategically to adapt the “Enhance Every Square Inch” approach when retrofitting parks and plazas to maximize usefulness of space where residents need it most.

A. ADAPT OPEN SPACES TO BE MULTIPURPOSE IN DESIGN

In Jersey City, parks, open spaces and community facilities come in many shapes and sizes, from small neighborhood parks and plazas to large open spaces. These different scales and types of open spaces and facilities contribute to many different types of public assets throughout the City. The City should look to maximize park’s programming by understanding that open spaces do not need to be exclusively passive or active in programming, and amenities don’t need to be singular in application. Design standards for parks can ensure large and small areas integrate multi-use spaces and courts, balance active recreation with natural landscaping and conservation areas, and increase accessibility to and within open spaces.

- **Invest in habitat restoration**
  Deploy an Urban Forests program that helps develop a tree succession plan for parks with older trees.

- **Increase Park Accessibility**
  Conduct an analysis of ADA accessibility in parks and community facilities. Prioritize interventions in the most neediest of areas.

- **Accommodate diverse uses and needs**
  Create multi-use spaces that allow for flexibility - these spaces should include access to electrical/water hookup and movable furniture.
B. EXPAND PARKS’ ROLE BEYOND RECREATION

While active recreation facilities and programs are key to capturing a myriad of users, park infrastructure should enable other inclusive and dynamic uses and activities relating to social equity, resiliency, and climate adaptability. Natural design features, such as community gardens, can encourage outdoor activities, local pride and intergenerational projects, especially in culturally diverse neighborhoods where open space often hosts cultural events and celebrations. The Master Plan recommends equitable distribution of community gardens in underserved areas, taking care to include ADA accessible elements like raised beds. Furthermore, parks and open spaces offer an opportunity to reduce impervious surfaces throughout our community to alleviate urban heat island and reduce flooding, impacts of which are exacerbated in low-income neighborhoods.

C. DIVERSIFY PERMITTED USES TO INCREASE SITE PROGRAMMING

The City should adapt current zoning regulations to increase permitted uses within parks and open spaces where appropriate. Several redevelopment plans currently allow for construction of 1-story commercial facilities in neighborhood or waterfront parks to accommodate potential retail vendors that partner logically with open space operations. Plans can also use design standards to create weather-safe temporary operations in pavilions or rentable kiosks to accommodate event such as farmers/artists markets, food truck festivals, and food pantry distribution. The City should continue to embed flexibility in parks and plazas to bridge gaps related to services or public programs in underserved communities.
Since the 2000 Master Plan, the City has experienced tremendous growth in the form of general increased population, intense densification in specific areas such as Downtown and Journal Square, and significant infill throughout the built environment. Further densification of numerous neighborhoods is likely to create shifts in community needs, from programming of public space to parking policies and curb management strategies. Moving forward, the city needs to take a holistic approach to accommodating recent and future growth to ensure amenities, utilities, and transit capacity grow at an adequate rate to support new and projected populations.

A. UPGRADE + IMPROVE COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities (parks, schools, libraries, community centers, police, fire, etc.) serve the medical, safety, educational, religious, and other social needs of the residents in throughout the City. The quality of community facilities and infrastructure in Jersey City contributes significantly to general quality of life, making strategic planning for these facilities critical to address population growth and changing needs. In general, there is a need to provide a balance of City-wide community facilities that are accessible from every neighborhood. The Master Plan identified 28 civic or community serving facilities that serve residents in specific ways, but could provide more public health benefits and community development benefits to residents and visitors alike. To improve access, priority should be placed on implementing the Libraries Master Plan and opening up residual space on police and fire properties for broader uses, such as community events.

B. TIE FUTURE PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT TO EXPANDED PUBLIC AMENITIES

In recent years, Planning has worked throughout the City to leverage development in order to bring needed resources to underserved communities. The recently opened Coles Street Park serves as a good example for utilizing zoning as a tool to implement new parks and open space in an underserved area. Similar strategies have been adopted in Lafayette Park RDP, Bates Street RDP, and Jersey Ave Light Rail RDP. The City should continue to use redevelopment and zoning as a mechanism for balancing increased density with the demand for publicly accessible open space, expanded transit access, and integrated affordable housing.
C. USE CROWD-SOURCED DATA TO “TRUTH” CAPITAL PROJECT NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

The City has developed several mechanisms for residents to report problems related to maintenance and management of their neighborhoods. The “See-Click-Fix” tool allows the community to report issues with potholes, sidewalk safety, street trees, lighting, and on-street parking to help address quality-of-life matters. The Municipal Utility Authority provides a “Report An Issue” tool for sewer and water utility problems. The City is also developing a similar tool for resident-reported flooding issues during and after intense storms. Creating platforms for residents to provide data points will bring efficiency to the City’s process of addressing needs across a large geography, independent of population density. Layering-in community reported data can allow the City to better identify repeat problem areas or areas of high impact/need to guide investment and prioritize maintenance and upgrades to roads, sewer systems, and park infrastructure needs across all neighborhoods.
Jersey City will continue to be a sustainable city and a leader in the fight against climate change through water management, brownfield remediation, and reducing the environmental vulnerability index for neighborhoods across the City.

1. **Mitigate Impacts of Climate Change**

2. **Adapt the City for Increased Resilience**

3. **Plan for Sustainability**
GOAL 1:
Mitigate Impacts of Climate Change

Climate Change manifests in a variety of ways; the City has experienced extreme impacts such as flooding as a result of unprecedented rain in 2021’s Hurricane Ida, or the substantial power outages caused by devastating winds during 2020’s Tropical Storm Isaias. As climate change becomes more tangible in the day-to-day lives of Jersey City residents, it is imperative that the City progress efforts to mitigate the impacts of increasingly frequent storms. Addressing these changes also includes upgrading day-to-day capacity in line with population growth and new construction.

A. IMPLEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE + MAINTENANCE PLAN

Water supply and sewage treatment infrastructure represents large investments of public resources in construction, operation, and maintenance. Jersey City has a well-developed system that provides service to every corner of the City, as well as to some neighboring areas. The City and has invested in water treatment and sewage treatment facilities capable of handling much larger volumes than presently exist. However, the fact that Jersey City has a combined sanitary/stormwater sewer system with nearly two-dozen outfalls (CSO’s), which when combined with aging infrastructure and increasingly intense storms, leads to the system reaching capacity and experiencing overflow events and localized flooding. The system is continually in need of re-investment, especially in light of recent population growth. The Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, whose service area includes Jersey City, has submitted a Long-Term Control Plan to plan and provide new utility infrastructure to serve population growth. Strategies include enlargement and replacement of pipes, storage tanks, and related infrastructure to improve capacity and reduce infrastructure problems. In general, planned growth should be prioritized in areas where there is existing infrastructure or areas near transit stops, where densification is supported and system upgrades will yield high impact.
B. EXPAND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE + STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IN CITY-OWNED SPACES

Community Facilities and Parks can help manage Jersey City’s stormwater by implementing green infrastructure systems. These systems can be deployed at various scales throughout the open space network. Buildings can be adapted to include green roofs, and stormwater collection barrels, while parks can be designed to flood and alleviate pressure on the system during major storms. The Grand Jersey Redevelopment Plan calls for private development to include a large capacity stormwater storage system that will result in slow, controlled release when the system has capacity for discharge. The City should increase capital investment to integrate green infrastructure into public spaces while requiring or incentivizing supplementary Stormwater infrastructure in new development.

C. RE-EXAMINE ZONING TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENCY WITHIN PRIVATE PROPERTY

A review of available aerial photography of Low Density Residential Zones reveals that there is a disproportionately small land area that is pervious or under green cover. This is likely an unintended consequence of the lenient curb cut and parking regulations, as well as leaving rear and front yards uses mostly undefined. As a result, there is a high incidence of cases where lot coverage exceeds the defined maximum of 85%, and individual lots are entirely paved. When aggregated over a block, neighborhood, and the City, this has significant negative impacts including increased volumes of stormwater runoff, increased urban heat capture, and distressed microclimates. In keeping with the guidelines outlined in the 2019 Resilient Jersey City Plan, the City should consider defining a minimum standard for pervious surfaces on each lot.
GOAL 2: Adapt the City for Increased Resilience

Resiliency, by definition, is marked by the capacity to recover quickly or bounce back from a difficult circumstance. Jersey City has experienced these challenges through Superstorm Sandy and several other storms.

A. RETROFIT COMMUNITY FACILITIES AS RESILIENCY HUBS

In order to increase climate preparedness, the City must accept that a degree of climate impacts are inevitable, and part of being resilient is living with and through the changes we are experiencing. One effective way to help residents “weather the storm” is to maximize response resources strategically by designating resiliency centers throughout the City, particularly in socially vulnerable neighborhoods. These spaces should offer emergency response information and resources with translation services as needed. Designated resiliency centers should be publicly accessible in the case of an emergency and include “generator power... warming stations, charging stations, emergency communications, potable water, emergency refrigerators for medical supplies, food donations, etc.” Where publicly owned, these spaces should serve as community gathering or community arts locations outside of emergency situations.

B. RETROFIT THE EXISTING BUILDING STOCK IN VULNERABLE AREAS

In addition to requiring resiliency measures in new construction, the City needs to address the vulnerability of the existing building stock, as many properties in Wards E, F, A, and B experienced substantial flooding during 2012’s Superstorm Sandy. This becomes increasingly challenging in Ward E where many of the buildings within the floodplain are also located within the City’s largest historic district. Planning and Historic Preservation staff need to work closely with one another in ongoing resiliency efforts to rectify the tension of preserving the City’s historic character and integrity with the realities of re-occurring flooding at the waterfront and other physically vulnerable districts. Zoning regulations should be revised to include specific standards for resiliency measures throughout the H District. Similarly, the Flood Overlay Zone could be amended to incentivize resilient retrofits to existing buildings in the floodplain.

C. PARTNER REGIONALLY TO COORDINATE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The Resilient Jersey City Summary and Adaptation Master Plan outline potential alignments for large flood protection infrastructure throughout the City. Currently, Jersey City is also part of an ongoing effort led by NJDEP to look at resiliency at the regional level and streamline resiliency efforts, minimize redundancy in systems, and share cost-burden of solutions across multiple adjacent municipalities. Jersey City sits within the Northeastern New Jersey region and is working with Newark, Hoboken, and Bayonne to develop a collective approach to resiliency and adaptation. The City should continue to leverage key partnerships while ensuring the local goals of the City’s plans are upheld and improved through a coordinated approach at climate change adaptation.
GOAL 3: Plan for Sustainability

Jersey City has recently placed high priority in increasing sustainability efforts and becoming a regional leader in the fight to protect the environment. A vast majority of residents agreed that climate change is happening right now (86 percent of survey Climate Action respondents) and that it poses a serious threat to people around the world (96 percent). Jersey City has tremendous potential as a regional leader to address the intergenerational concerns that the global climate crisis poses. Recently, the City adopted its first Climate Action Energy Plan, which gives our community a framework to document, coordinate, measure, and adapt efforts moving forward. By creating a clear course of action, residents and City agencies alike can have a role in creating and achieving climate and sustainability goals.

A. DEMONSTRATE MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP IN PRODUCTION AND USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

The City can set an example for private property owners and developers through its own operations. By 2030, municipal operations will be fueled by 100% clean energy and at least 80% should be from renewable sources. One way to increase the amount of renewable energy that the City uses is by installing solar panels on municipal buildings and municipal property (such as parking lots). Zoning regulations should be revised to require EV-ready parking configurations in zones with parking requirements and promote EV-based car-share programs in privately operated parking systems.

“\’d like to see better real-time metering technology and hourly pricing, as well as information on when the grid is using the most clean power.”
B. EXPAND AND CREATE TRAINING PROGRAMS TO ENSURE A DIVERSE, SKILLED, CLEAN ENERGY WORKFORCE

In order to prepare for a greener future, the City should not only invest in green technology, but should simultaneously hone the local labor force with the skills to operate and manage the cleaner systems we plan to implement. The City should prioritize coordination with contractors, unions, trade schools, and the local community college to develop clean energy workforce opportunities and training programs within the next 3-5 years.

C. IMPROVE CARBON CAPTURE AND REDUCE HEAT ISLAND EFFECT THROUGHOUT THE CITY

Unfortunately, for a number of years Jersey City has actually been seeing a net loss in the trees along its streets. However, the City is finally reversing this trend with over twice as many trees being planted than removed in 2019-2020. In order to reap the many benefits of urban trees, Jersey City should continue ramping up tree plantings with the goal of increasing the total number of street trees by 20% within the next ten years. Tree plantings should be prioritized in neighborhoods with low tree coverage and those disproportionately affected by the urban heat island effect. The Forestry Standards should be regularly updated to reflect best practices and offer flexibility in implementation to maximize tree counts in new development.