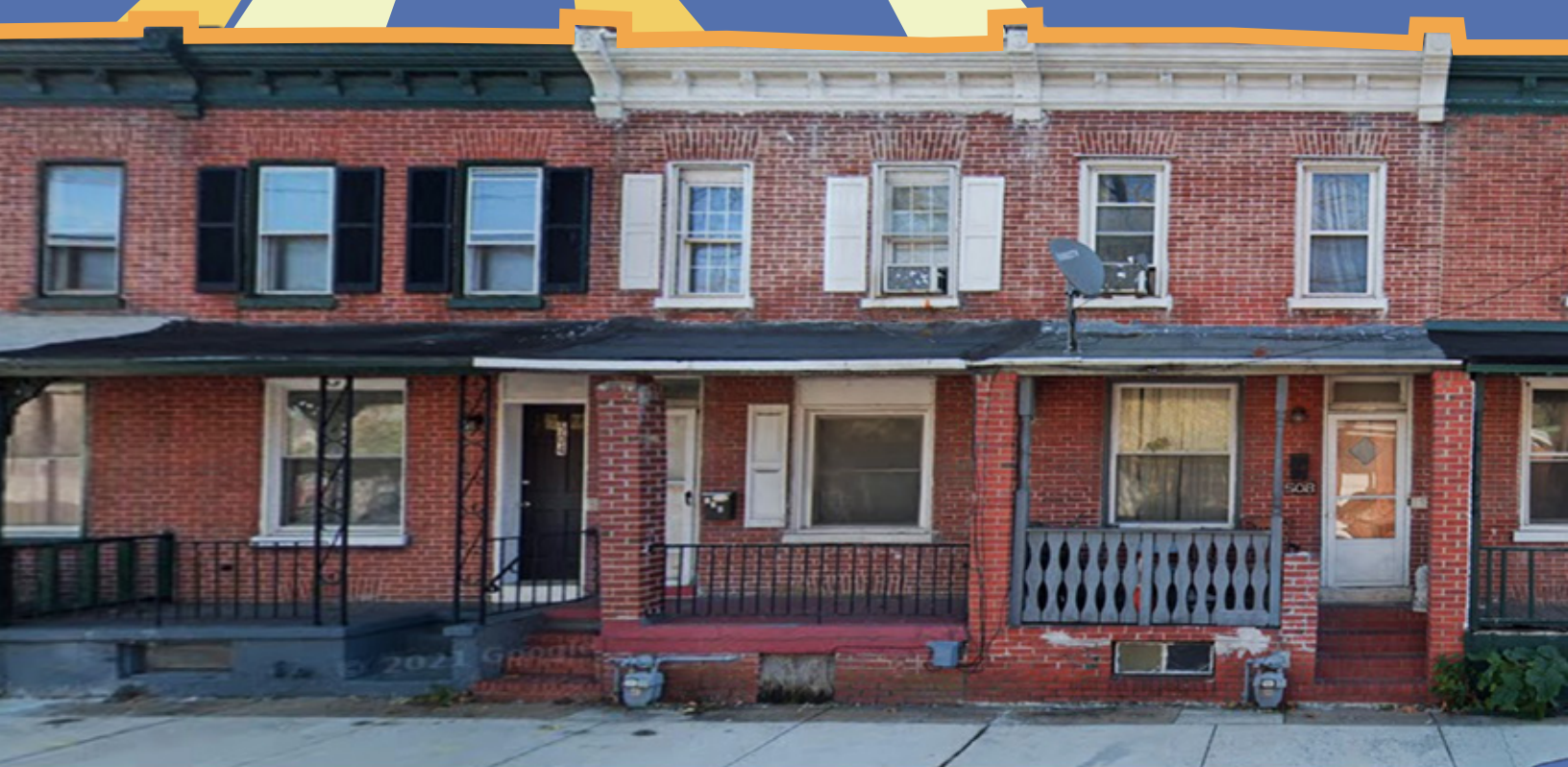


# THE SOUTHBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

**October 2021**



**Healthy Communities Delaware**  
*alignment. investment. impact.*



**SOUTH BRIDGE**  
CIVIC ASSOCIATION

**South Wilmington**  
PLANNING NETWORK



**ASAKURA  
ROBINSON**









September 27, 2021

**SWPN CORE GROUP**

**Brittany Salen, Co-Chair**  
Executive Director  
Environmental Justice Initiative

**William Swiatek, Co-Chair**  
Principal Planner  
Wilmington Area Planning Council

**Michelle Harlee,**  
4th District City Councilmember  
City of Wilmington

**Rysheema Dixon**  
At-Large City Councilmember  
City of Wilmington

**Diana Dixon,**  
Vice President  
Southbridge Civic Association

**Daymon Bagwell,**  
Treasurer  
Southbridge Civic Association

**Travis Smith, Sr.,**  
President  
Southbridge Connects

**Alison Windle,**  
Executive Director  
Neighborhood House

**Victor Perez,**  
Associate Professor  
University of Delaware

**Marie Reed,**  
Past President  
Southbridge Civic Association

**Ella Edwards,**  
Health Promotion Advocate  
Henrietta Johnson Medical Center

**John Harrod**  
Director  
DuPont Envir. Education Center

**Russ Zerbo**  
Advocate  
Clean Air Council

**Kate Dupont Phillips**  
Executive Director  
Healthy Communities Delaware

**RE: Letter of Support for the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP)**

The Southbridge Civic Association (SBCA) and South Wilmington Planning Network (SWPN) are pleased to endorse the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP). The SNAP is the culmination of a year-long community-driven planning process undertaken by the SBCA, the SWPN, and project consultant Asakura Robinson with funding support from Healthy Communities Delaware.

The SNAP updates the 2006 South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan, which has served Southbridge well for many years, and builds off the high-level recommendations found in Wilmington's 2028 Comprehensive Plan. Key recommendations have been made in the areas of: community empowerment, economic revitalization, youth and education, affordable living, better health, improved mobility and resilience to climate change.


We are confident that the SNAP provides Southbridge residents, allies, and local government a blueprint for achieving community revitalization. This new blueprint is particularly timely for Southbridge, given widening socio-economic and racial disparities across Wilmington. The time to equitably invest in Southbridge is now. The SBCA and SWPN are committed to advocating for and supporting the implementation of the SNAP, in partnership with the freshly invigorated Southbridge Community Development Corporation (Southbridge CDC).

The SBCA and SWPN would like to thank the countless contributors to the SNAP, in particular: the entire project Steering Committee for their dedication and hard work, especially during this trying pandemic year; the Healthy Communities Delaware team for their amazing support and flexibility; the team at Asakura Robinson for their passion, insight, and willingness to see the project through to completion; all of the stakeholders -- business people and local officials -- who provided their time, expertise and advice; and, especially, the residents of Southbridge for sharing their experiences, hopes, and visions for a better tomorrow.

If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas, please reach out:

[SouthWilmingtonPlanningNetwork@gmail.com](mailto:SouthWilmingtonPlanningNetwork@gmail.com)

Sincerely,

  
Richard King  
President, Southbridge Civic Association

  
Diana Dixon  
Vice President, Southbridge Civic Association

  
Britt Salen  
Co-Chair, South Wilmington Planning Network

  
Bill Swiatek  
Co-Chair, South Wilmington Planning Network





# Thank you to our Steering Committee!



| Committee Member       | Affiliation  |
|------------------------|--|
| Richard King           | President, Southbridge Civic Association                     |
| Diana Dixon            | Vice President, Southbridge Civic Association                |
| Bill Swiatek           | SWPN, Co-chair & WILMAPCO                                    |
| Brittany Salen         | SWPN, Co-chair   |
| Cornelius Johnson Jr.  | Resident Leader  |
| Cynthia Faulkner       | Resident Leader  |
| Daymon Bagwell         | Southbridge Civic Association                                |
| Ella Edwards           | Henrietta Johnson Medical Center                             |
| Ellie Ezekiel          | Delaware Nature Society                                      |
| Haneef Salaam          | Southbridge Civic Association                                |
| Hanifa Shabazz         | Resident Leader  |
| Jennifer Adkins        | American Rivers  |
| Kate DuPont Phillips   | Healthy Communities Delaware                                 |
| Kristen Thornton       | Delaware Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) |
| Marie Reed             | Resident Leader  |
| Matt Harris            | City of Wilmington, Department of Planning                   |
| Michelle Harlee        | 4th District Council Member, City Council                    |
| Rev Provey Powell, Jr. | Mt Joy United Methodist Church                               |
| Rysheema Dixon         | Council Member At-Large, City Council                        |
| Thomas Gash            | Southbridge Civic Association                                |
| Travis Smith           | Southbridge Civic Association                                |
| Victor Perez           | University of Delaware, Department of Sociology              |

*Special thank you to Ta'Tra Bradshaw for her photography. The photographs in this report were provided by Ta'Tra Bradshaw unless otherwise noted. You can visit [www.strikinglyoddmmedia.com](http://www.strikinglyoddmmedia.com) to see more of her work and to book appointments.*





## **CONTACT**

612 Andrew Higgins Drive, Suite 2007  
New Orleans, LA 70130

**MAYU TAKEDA**

(303) 907-0827

[mayu@asakurarobinson.com](mailto:mayu@asakurarobinson.com)



# Contents

Thank you to our Steering Committee!

## **Executive Summary**

v  
**1**

## **What is the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan?**

**6**

Introduction

7

Area History and Past Planning

13

## **Foundations of Community Well-Being**

**18**

Foundations of Community Well-Being

19

## **Resident Leadership and Engagement**

**28**

Resident Leadership and Engagement

29

## **Community Benefits Demands**

**40**

Why a Community Benefits Agreement?

41

Southbridge Community Benefits Demands

43

## **Action Plan**

**50**

Equitable Development for Southbridge

51

The Action Plan

55

Action Items

57

## **Appendix**

**98**

Appendix A: COVID Action Plan

99

Appendix B: The Foundations of Wellness existing conditions report

103

Appendix C: The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan Questionnaire

187

Appendix D: The case for spending American Rescue Plan Act funds in Southbridge

189



# Executive Summary

## **The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan is a blueprint for equitable growth in South Wilmington.**

The Neighborhood Action Plan is a result of months of coordination and collaboration between the Southbridge Civic Association, the South Wilmington Planning Network, and Healthy Communities Delaware to ensure that Southbridge and the longtime residents of the historic African American community are able to grow and thrive alongside the rest of the city, and in particular, Riverfront East and other areas eyed for public and private investment. The plan is an update to the 2006 South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan (also known as the Special Area Management Plan or SAMP Plan), and it builds upon the Wilmington 2028 Comprehensive Plan.

Southbridge faces multiple challenges, including high rates of poverty, high levels of pollution, flooding, and lack of investment. The plan makes recommendations to address them while also uplifting and strengthening the assets in the community. The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan identifies Action Items, the organizations and people who should implement them, and where applicable, sources of funding. The recommendations are based on extensive community stakeholder engagement through two surveys, door-to-door visits, phone interviews, and public workshops with residents of Southbridge.

It should be noted that the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan explicitly calls for a community benefits agreement (CBA) between residents of Southbridge and developers in South Wilmington. Development initiatives in Wilmington have been successful at working with developers to inject funding and resources to bring more housing and commercial spaces. Now is the time for a discussion about equitable development, and a CBA can be a pathway to more equitable development and a balanced approach to injecting taxpayer support into revitalization. This is especially true as developers receive public funding and take advantage of South Wilmington's status as an "Opportunity Zone," designated as such due to the socioeconomic status of the Southbridge community.

# Southbridge Residents' Bill of Rights

for a Healthy and Prosperous  
Neighborhood

In Southbridge, we believe in:

## COMMUNITY CONTROL

Southbridge residents must have a say in development that impacts their communities

## AFFORDABLE LIVING+ QUALITY COMMUNITIES

Southbridge residents must be able to have a high quality of life and be able to afford living in the area without being vulnerable to environmental pollution or crime

## ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Economic development must benefit Southbridge residents and local entrepreneurs

## RESILIENCE TO SHOCKS + STRESSORS

Southbridge must be equipped with resources to handle shocks and stressors, including sea level rise, flooding, and other impacts of climate change

## EQUITABLE ACCESS

Southbridge residents must be physically and socially connected to resources and amenities in and around their neighborhood

**The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan is based on a core set of values, or Bill of Rights, that will guide the Action Items. This Bill of Rights is based on months of input at community meetings, interviews, and other public engagement events.**



# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION ITEMS:

Past planning efforts have led to the Southbridge Wetland Park, a Revitalization Plan for Barbara Hicks Park, a streetscape program, and better transportation connections on A Street between Southbridge and the Riverfront. The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan will build on these efforts so that residents and other stakeholders can make sure that Southbridge continues to be a thriving neighborhood.

## Community Empowerment

**These Action Items hold the key to the funding and implementation to other Action Items.**

- Strengthen the Southbridge CDC to manage, implement, and advocate for the plan and monitor progress and agreements
- Sign a community benefits agreement (CBA) to bring tangible benefits from new developments in South Wilmington
- Invest in local leadership and advocacy capacity
- Establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District encompassing South Wilmington to reinvest into Southbridge

## Economic Revitalization

**These Action Items will target resources towards the economic revitalization of Southbridge.**

- Reactivate Southbridge as a Main Street America Affiliate and hire a full-time staffer from Southbridge to implement the recommendations on revitalizing the commercial core of Southbridge
- Create an active Merchants Association that can coordinate marketing, programming, project coordination, maintenance and public safety, and public placemaking and art
- Create a jobs referral program through an agreement with riverfront employers

## Youth and Education

**These Action Items will ensure youth in Southbridge have a place to play and learn in the community.**

- Hire a full-time staffer who will serve as the Community Education Ambassador
- Provide more youth programming within the neighborhood
- Study the feasibility of bringing an independent charter school and other educational resource supports to Southbridge





## **Affordable Living**

These Action Items will ensure that Southbridge residents are able to continue to live in the community.

- Provide funds to the Southbridge Community Development Corporation (CDC) to develop affordable housing and other housing supports
- Require that housing built in certain areas of the riverfront have 20% of units allocated for affordable housing
- Connect residents homebuyer resources and financial literacy programs
- Establish a framework for community-driven development in South Wilmington

## **Better Health**

These Action Items will improve health outcomes for Southbridge residents.

- Partner with the Wilmington Community Advisory Council (WCAC) to implement evidence-based community violence intervention programs in Southbridge
- Advocate for DNREC to consider a cumulative impact assessment when considering permits from potentially polluting industries
- Amend zoning to shift the waterfront of Southbridge away from heavy industry

## **Improved Mobility**

These Action Items will make it easier for Southbridge residents to access amenities in Wilmington while enhancing safety from speeding cars and trucks.

- Extend the planned free shuttle from the train station to South Market Street to Southbridge
- Reduce traffic speeds and direct truck traffic away from Southbridge
- Create branded gateways

## **Resilience to Climate Change**

These Action Items will make enhance the preparedness of Southbridge residents for flooding, sea level rise, and rising temperatures associated with climate change.

- Use impact fees on new developments to invest in infrastructure in Southbridge
- Enhance the community's social and physical preparedness for flood events and sea level rise

**And more! See the "Action Plan" section of this report for the full list of recommendations.**







01



# **What is the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan?**

# Introduction

**Southbridge is a neighborhood that takes pride in its rich history of civic engagement, community unity, and unique culture. It is a community anchored by institutions including Neighborhood House, a multi-purpose community center; Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, a community health center started at the heart of the Civil Rights Movement; its houses of worship; and most crucially, its people.**

In 2006, the South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan was created to “Reconcile and unite the existing neighborhood with proposed development, so as to create a South Wilmington that is richer socially as well as physically.”<sup>1</sup>

Fifteen years later in 2021, much has happened to alter the social and physical well-being of South Wilmington and the neighborhood of Southbridge. The South Wilmington Planning Network and Southbridge Civic Association have worked with numerous agencies and residents and leaders to advance many recommendations from the 2006 Plan. These include: streetscape projects, better pedestrian and bike connections to the Riverfront, a community and youth garden, a farmer’s market, community events, revitalization work at Barbara Hicks Park, and, most impactful, the Southbridge Wilmington Wetland Park.

**“Create a Central Park located to the immediate west of Southbridge. Use this park as the lungs of the neighborhood. Its wetlands should be cleaned up and improved for flood retention. Traverse the park with trails, linking active recreation facilities.”**

---

<sup>1</sup> South Wilmington SAMP Neighborhood Plan Work Group, “South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan,” June 2006, [http://www.wilmapco.org/Southbridge/files/SAMPFinalDraft\\_Jun06.pdf](http://www.wilmapco.org/Southbridge/files/SAMPFinalDraft_Jun06.pdf)

**Recommendation from the 2006 South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan**

GREENVILLE

# REGIONAL CONTEXT









BELLEFONTE

EDGEMOOR

ELSMERE

NEWPORT

WILMINGTON  
MANOR

-  Southbridge
-  Study Area Boundary
-  South Wilmington
-  Water
-  Park or Greenspace
-  Highway
-  Road
-  Railroad

Downtown  
Wilmington

Wetlands Park  
(planned)

Eden  
Park

Christina River

Delaware River



Sources: US Census Bureau shapefiles; South  
Wilmington Planning Network; New Castle  
County GIS Open Data; Delaware FirstMap Data



A photograph of children playing in a park, overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. In the foreground, a child is hula-hooping. Other children are visible in the background near a swing set. The text is centered and reads: 

**Southbridge is  
a neighborhood  
that takes pride in  
its rich history of  
civic engagement,  
community unity,  
and unique culture.**

The implementation of these components of the 2006 Plan have occurred in tandem with development along the Riverfront. Christina Landing town homes and high-rise apartments have brought new residents to South Wilmington, and the Christina Crossing retail center brought with it a 70,000 square foot ShopRite grocery store. These developments, along with the recent construction of the Christina River Bridge are bringing with it a renewed interest in development in South Wilmington.

The construction of the Southbridge Wetland Park and the development of the ShopRite grocery store both speak to the power of planning and the importance of ideas generated and put forth by documents such as a neighborhood plan. Given the weight and potential of plans, the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan sought to maximize resident input and follow a set of guiding principles, which have been crystallized in the Southbridge Residents' Bill of Rights.

**“With the construction of the Christina River Bridge which will open hopefully in early 2020, we see now this side of the river — the east bank— [as] sort of the next frontier of riverfront development.”**

**Megan McGlinchey, Executive Director of the Riverfront Development Corporation<sup>1</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> Sophia Schmidt, Delaware Public Media, “South Wilmington residents wonder what 'next frontier' of riverfront development will bring,” Feb 14, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3qDkBLi>

## **A note about data for South Wilmington vs. Southbridge:**

Some of the data that we used in this report came from the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau publishes data on things like income levels, how much rent people pay, and many other community characteristics. Unfortunately, the data published by the Census Bureau lumps Southbridge with the rest of South Wilmington, including Christina Landing. Because Christina Landing is a new higher-income apartment building, it skews data related to Southbridge in terms of poverty, unemployment, housing costs, and mobility. We are unable to separate Southbridge from the rest of South Wilmington. Therefore, some of the data we present in this report may strike you as surprising, or even inaccurate for Southbridge.

We'll try to make things as clear as possible by labeling our findings as being for “South Wilmington” (includes Southbridge and Christina Landing) when we use Census data. We'll also let you know when our data is specific to Southbridge.

## **The Southbridge Residents' Bill of Rights for a Healthy and Prosperous Neighborhood**

The Southbridge Residents' Bill of Rights was created based on months of conversations with residents of the community. It is a document which guides the entire Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan, and is based on five core pillars:

- Community Control
- Affordable Living and Quality Communities
- Economic Empowerment
- Resilience to Shocks and Stressors
- Equitable Access

A more detailed description of the pillars can be seen in the poster graphic in the Executive Summary at the beginning of this report. The Bill of Rights was distributed to the community in door-to-door engagement, multiple presentations, and at the Southbridge Community BBQ in June 2021.





# Area History and Past Planning

Southbridge is a historic African-American neighborhood with roots that extend from the abolitionist movement to civic involvement, religious participation, and Black political leadership. Southbridge has a rich history and represents an important part of Wilmington's identity and history.

Historical patterns of development included agriculture, industrial, and residential uses. Industry — including iron mills, coal yards, and tanneries — was located primarily on the south side near the Market Street and Third Street bridges. Initial residential development was situated along Heald Street and clustered along with A, B, and C streets.<sup>1</sup> In the marshy center of the neighborhood, there were about 10 flower farms.<sup>2</sup>

The neighborhood street plan, laid out in a grid pattern for future development, was never realized due to the marshy terrain.<sup>3</sup> The lower-lying south side of the neighborhood has experienced periodic inundation—90% of it is within the 100-year floodplain.<sup>4</sup>

In 1880, Southbridge was home to 1,883 people in 374 households. African-Americans made up about 20% of the population and Whites made up about 66% of the population.<sup>5</sup> Most of the African-Americans lived on the west side of Southbridge, while Whites settled in the center of the neighborhood.

---

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Johnathan Lerner, Landscape Architecture Magazine, August 2017, [http://www.penpowerpublishing.com/uploads/1/0/5/0/10500378/lam\\_08aug2017\\_f1-delaware\\_restoration.pdf](http://www.penpowerpublishing.com/uploads/1/0/5/0/10500378/lam_08aug2017_f1-delaware_restoration.pdf).

5 University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, "Southbridge: An Historic Context for a Neighborhood in Wilmington, Delaware, 1870-1996". October 1996, <https://swpndotorg.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/southbridge-historical-context-ud-1996.pdf>.

By 1900, the population of Southbridge had grown to 2,887 people and the African-American population had grown to 671, but only made up 23% of the population.<sup>6</sup> The African-American population continued to grow in the neighborhood and swelled in the 1920s and after WWII.

## A SHIFTING COMMUNITY

Looking at data between 2010 and 2019, a shift is beginning to occur in South Wilmington, as the population of residents identifying as White has increased by 42% (from 317 in 2010 to 451 in 2019) and residents identifying as Black decreased by 4% (from 1,557 in 2010 to 1,497 in 2019).<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, income levels appear to have also shifted in South Wilmington between 2010 and 2019. Low-income households drastically fell as a share of the population in the area, while households with mid- to high-incomes increased significantly.<sup>8</sup>

---

6 Ibid.

7 US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, "B02001: Race," 2010 and 2019 5-year estimates.

8 US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, "S1901: Income in the Past 12 Months," 2010 and 2019 5-year estimates.





*Mt. Joy United Methodist Church, Source: Consultant Team*

## Historic Neighborhood Institutions:

### **Henrietta Johnson Medical Center:**

Henrietta Johnson Medical Center (HJMC) is part of a national network of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) delivering quality, comprehensive health services to America's medically underserved communities. HJMC offers comprehensive family health services, from prenatal and adolescent care to adult and geriatric medicine. They also provide dental and behavioral health services.

### **Neighborhood House:**

Neighborhood House, Inc. is a multi-purpose non-profit community center located in South Wilmington and Middletown. Founded in 1927 on a foundation of Christian principles, Neighborhood House provides transformational programs that positively impact low to moderate-income individuals, families, and Communities.

### **Mt. Joy United Methodist Church:**

Mt. Joy United Methodist Church has been serving the Southbridge community for over 100 years. The Church is a central organizing hub for community fellowship, outreach initiatives, and service.



*Neighborhood House, Source: Consultant Team*



The change in income levels may be due to several potential causes: the residents of South Wilmington may have experienced an increase in income over the 9-year period, or higher-income residents may be moving to the area while lower-income residents are leaving South Wilmington. The latter is the most likely explanation, given the development of Christina Landing, which drew a higher-income population, as well as the sharp drop in Black incomes in the past two decades (See "Foundations of Community Well-Being" for more on this topic).

## HISTORY OF PLANNING IN SOUTHBRIDGE AND WILMINGTON

In the past 15 years, there have been several planning efforts to bring forth a unified vision for South Wilmington, and citywide plans have specifically addressed Southbridge and South Wilmington.

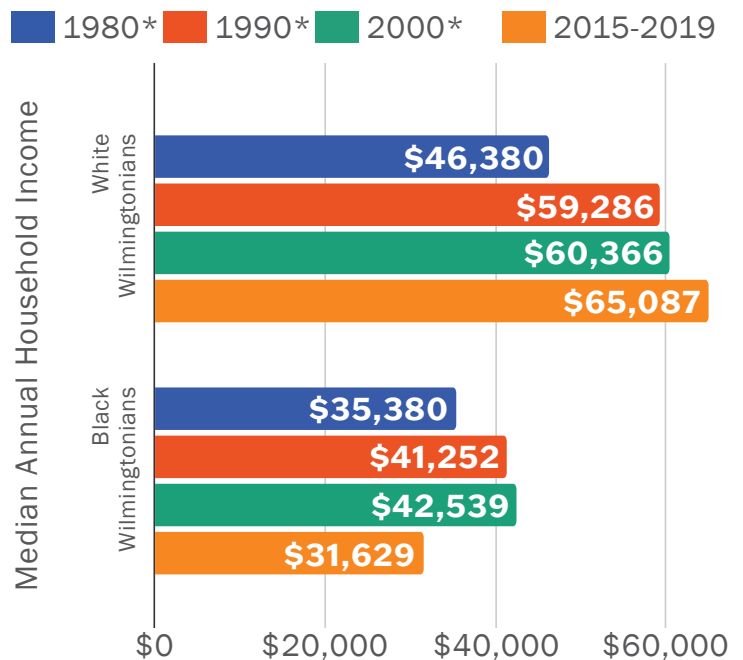
A number of projects conceived through the planning process have come to fruition, illustrating the power in the process in bringing positive change to the community.

The Southbridge Wetland Park, a response to both the need to plan for current flooding in the Southbridge and climate change, was brought about through the Neighborhood Planning process outlining a desire for a "Central Park."

Transportation improvements have also been successfully implemented in Southbridge, with the addition of active transportation improvements such as the A Street Multiuse Pathway, connecting Southbridge to the Riverfront.

The positive history of translating planning to on the ground projects presents a strong precedent for successful future planning.

## The Growing Racial Economic Divide



\* 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars

Source: US Census Bureau, data for Wilmington

## PROJECT TIMELINE

### Phase 1: Understand (Jan-Apr)

- Existing Conditions Report (Foundations of Wellness)
- Workshops with the SC and public
- Interviews
- Survey on Existing Conditions

### Phase 2: Envision (Apr-Jun)

- Working Group Meetings
- Draft recommendations and Action Items
- Mission and Vision Statements (Bill of Rights)
- Questionnaire on Priority Actions

### Phase 3: Act (Jun-Sep)

- Final Prioritized Recommendations and Action Items
- Workshops with the SC and public











# 02



## **Foundations of Community Well-Being**

# Foundations of Community Well-Being

In order for Southbridge residents to achieve health, well-being, and restorative economic growth for new and long-time community members, an understanding of the challenges currently facing the community. To build a strong foundation, the neighborhood planning process needs to better understand the interconnected elements of housing, public health, education, environmental justice, transportation infrastructure, and entrepreneurship that constitute a base for equitable growth.

## SOCIAL COHESION

One of the great assets of the Southbridge community is its community bonds and network. Building upon its legacy as a long-standing community with a history of organizing, Southbridge has a robust and active Civic Association.

Southbridge's socially cohesive spaces include:

- Nearly 20 churches illustrate religious institutions as a significant socially cohesive mechanism in Southbridge. Shared faith is found to produce positive mental health outcomes from its structure, exposure to similar-minded people, mindfulness practices, and more.
- Parks have the potential to strengthen social cohesion, and subsequently health, of Southbridge residents with an incoming 20- acre Wetland Park that will open this year; this will join Southbridge's current seven parks.



*Community BBQ, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw*

# COMMUNITY ASSETS





## LAND USE AND ZONING

The Southbridge neighborhood sits in close proximity to the Christina River, with a long history of heavy industrial uses over the city's history. A majority of land in the study area is zoned for industrial use that surrounds the residential core of Southbridge. Contamination from both past and current industrial use is associated with a range of serious health conditions. About 17% of the land is vacant, which presents both challenges to health and wellness but also opportunities for new and beneficial development.

## RESIDENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

According to 2015-2019 estimates, South Wilmington had a poverty rate of 32%, much higher than the 22% observed for the city of Wilmington and significantly higher than New Castle County, which had a poverty rate of 7%.<sup>1</sup>

With the spike in unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the poverty rate may have been increased. It should also be noted that the 32% poverty rate is inclusive of all of South Wilmington, including Christina Landing. If data were isolated for Southbridge, it is likely higher.

The difference in economic conditions between White and Black residents is also illustrated through data for the city, seen at the charts on the right. While household income increased for both White and Black residents between 1980 and 2000, Black residents saw a significant decline in income by 2019, while White residents continued to see an increase.<sup>2</sup>

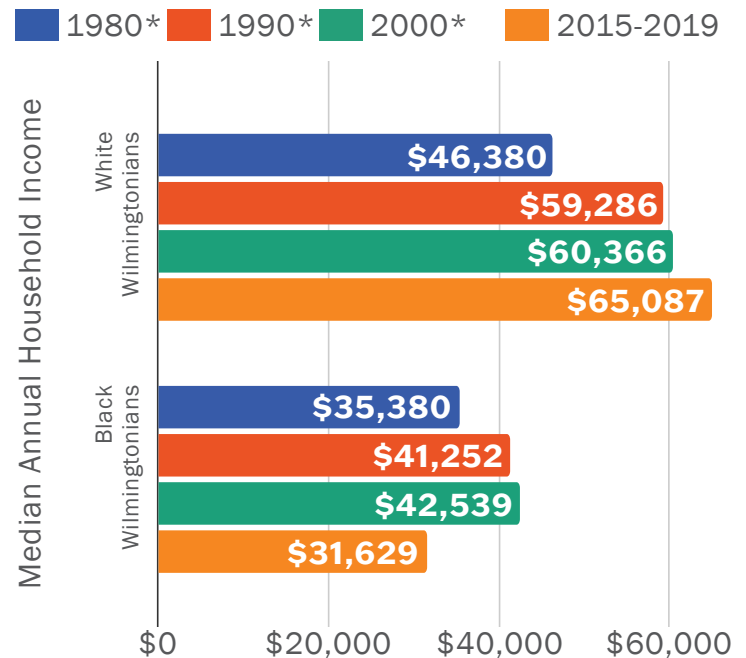
<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year data for Census Tract 19.02 in New Castle County, DE, Wilmington, DE and New Castle County, DE

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year data for Wilmington, DE

### Land Use by Category

| Category                       | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Industrial                     | 43%        |
| Vacant                         | 17%        |
| Park/Open Space                | 10%        |
| Commercial                     | 8%         |
| Infrastructure                 | 8%         |
| Institutional/Public Uses      | 6%         |
| Low-Medium Density Residential | 6%         |
| Parking                        | 2%         |
| Mixed Use                      | <1%        |

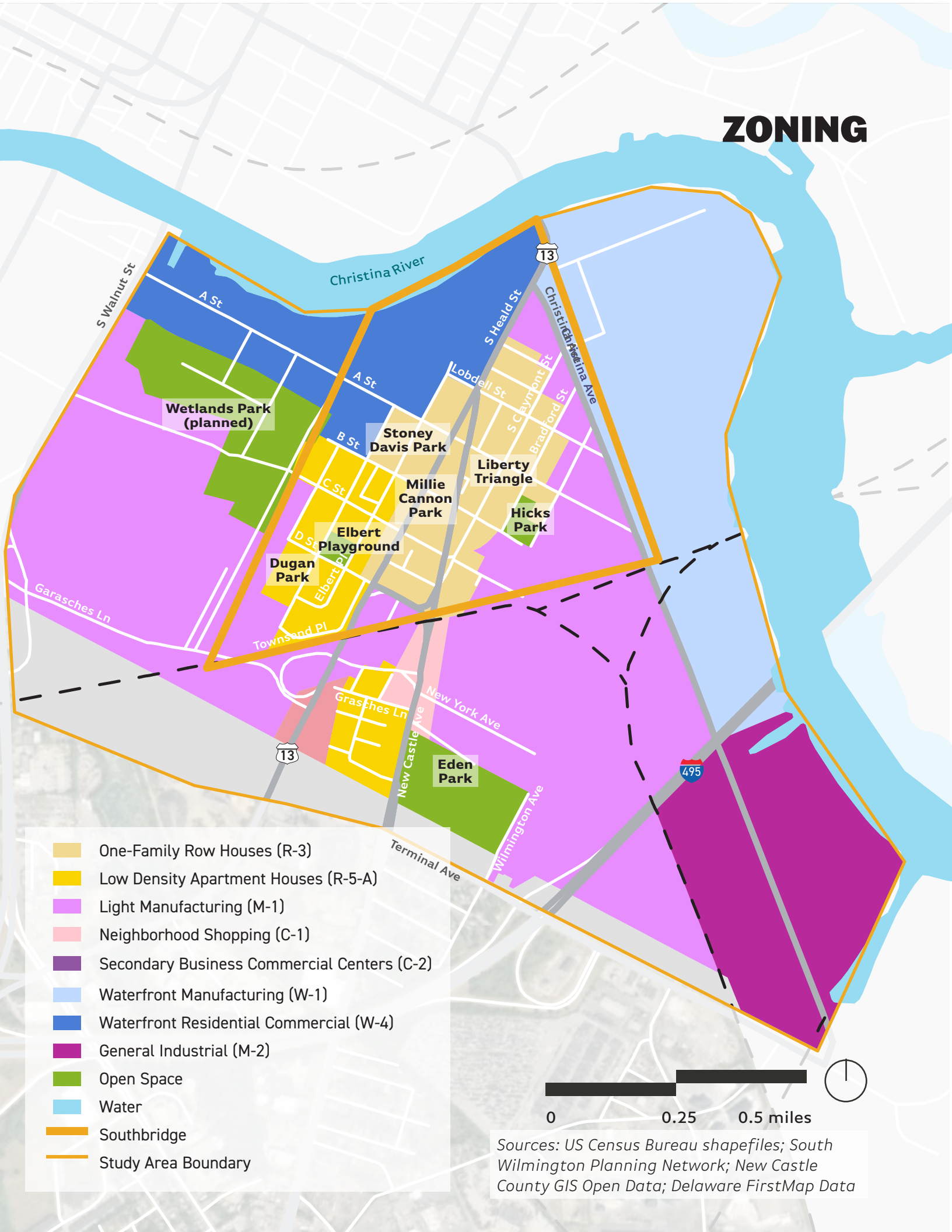
### The Growing Racial Economic Divide



\* 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars

Source: US Census Bureau, data for Wilmington

# ZONING



- One-Family Row Houses (R-3)
- Low Density Apartment Houses (R-5-A)
- Light Manufacturing (M-1)
- Neighborhood Shopping (C-1)
- Secondary Business Commercial Centers (C-2)
- Waterfront Manufacturing (W-1)
- Waterfront Residential Commercial (W-4)
- General Industrial (M-2)
- Open Space
- Water
- Southbridge
- Study Area Boundary

0 0.25 0.5 miles

Sources: US Census Bureau shapefiles; South Wilmington Planning Network; New Castle County GIS Open Data; Delaware FirstMap Data



## HOUSING

Although there has been an increase in homeowners in South Wilmington, the Southbridge neighborhood has lower rates of homeownership than Wilmington as a whole, and most residents are renters.

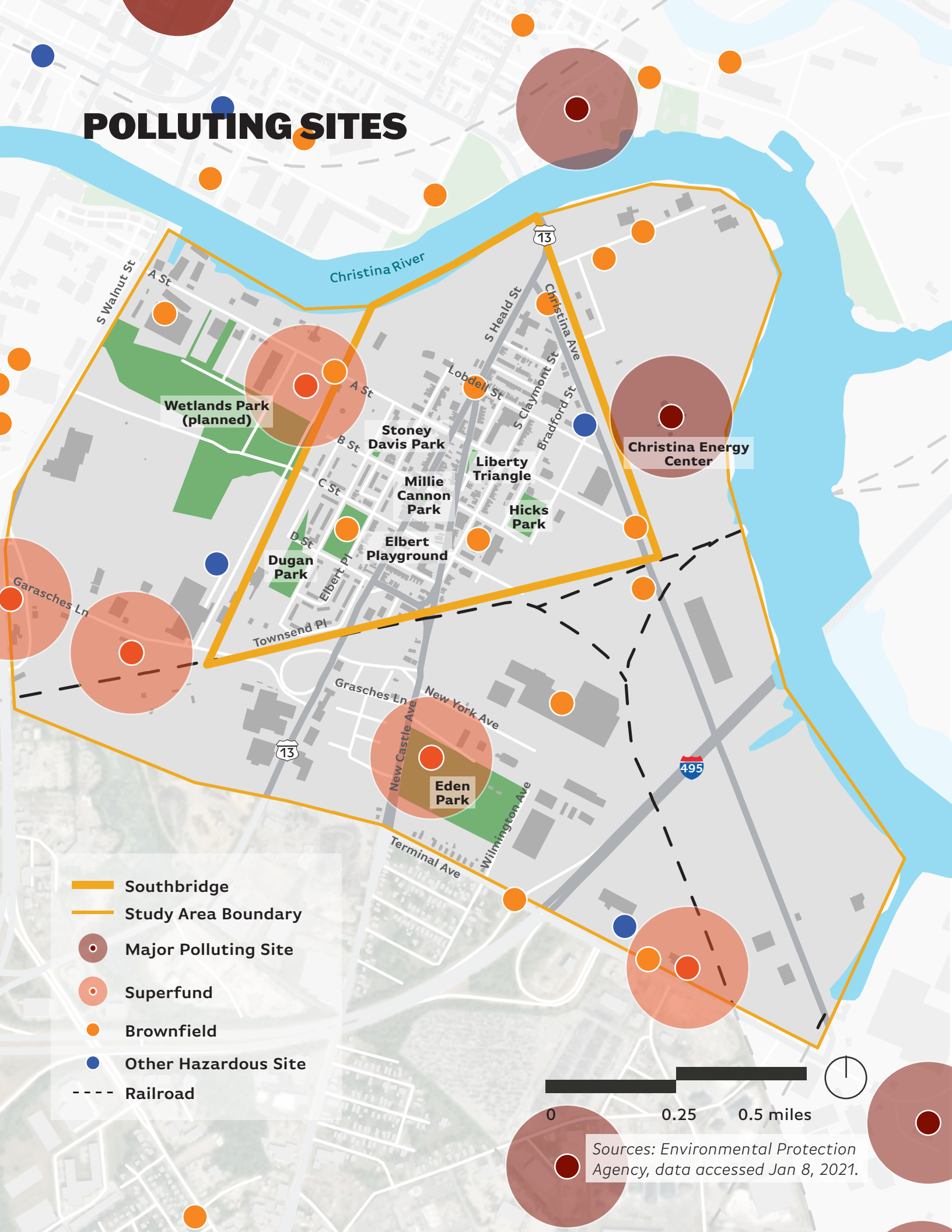
Housing affordability continues to be a growing concern for renters and owners because of the pandemic and its effect on the economy and employment. Although the Biden Administration has extended the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's nationwide eviction moratorium for counties experiencing high levels of community transmission of COVID-10 until October 3, 2021, many renters have already lost their homes or remain at risk of losing their homes due to their inability to pay.

## HEALTH CONDITIONS + COVID IMPACTS

Southbridge is overburdened by environmental harms and risks present in the community. Based on available data, South Wilmington and Wilmington have a higher prevalence of negative health conditions compared to New Castle County as a whole. High rates of disease and illness imply that foundations of health and wellness are built on shaky ground.

Student mental health and safety is a growing concern as the pandemic has brought new conditions (i.e., losing family members and other loved ones, income loss, abusive/toxic home environments) that hinder mental wellbeing and socio-emotional development.

# POLLUTING SITES



Sources: Environmental Protection Agency, data accessed Jan 8, 2021.



# SEA LEVEL RISE AND FLOODING

According to a report released in 2017 by the Delaware Geological Survey and Delaware Department of Natural Resources, in the 80 years between 2020 and 2100, there is an 87% chance that there will be a 2 foot rise in sea level in Delaware, a 25% of a 4 foot rise, and a 3% chance of a 6 foot rise.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Wetland Park that is under construction is designed to mitigate the flooding, the park will be underwater if there is a 4 foot-rise in sea level (25% chance of occurring by 2100). The park and other recent infrastructure improvements will not be enough to protect Southbridge from major flooding, especially without the completion of the Southbridge Wetland Park. Even with the completion of construction, the City of Wilmington has yet to separate the sewage and stormwater lines in Southbridge, which is necessary for a functioning Wetland Park.

Climate change is expected to negatively impact community health in a multitude of ways.

According to research by Victor Perez (a member of this Neighborhood Action Plan’s Steering Committee) and Jennifer Egan, the industrial legacy of Southbridge has left contaminants that are associated with neurodevelopmental issues, cancer, reproductive effects, and problems of the nervous system.<sup>4</sup>

The environmental issues associated with existing brownfields may worsen the issue of environmental contamination and health hazards in the community due to flooding. Additional work is needed to raise awareness of the dual threats of toxic pollution and sea-level rise.

## Sea Level Rise and Flooding in the Study Area

| Sea Level Rise | Chance of Happening | % of Study Area Under Water |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 feet         | 87%                 | 5%                          |
| 4 feet         | 25%                 | 26%                         |
| 6 feet         | 3%                  | 38%                         |

Source: Delaware Sea-Level Rise Technical Committee, Delaware Geological Survey, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

3 Delaware Sea-Level Rise Technical Committee, Delaware Geological Survey, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, “Recommendation of Sea-Level Rise Planning Scenarios for Delaware: Technical Report,” November 2017, <https://bit.ly/3iBt6DV>

4 Victor W. Perez and Jennifer Egan, “Knowledge and Concern for Sea-Level Rise in an Urban Environmental Justice Community,” Sociological Forum, 2016, DOI: 10.1111/socf.12278.

GREENVILLE

# FLOOD RISK IN WILMINGTON

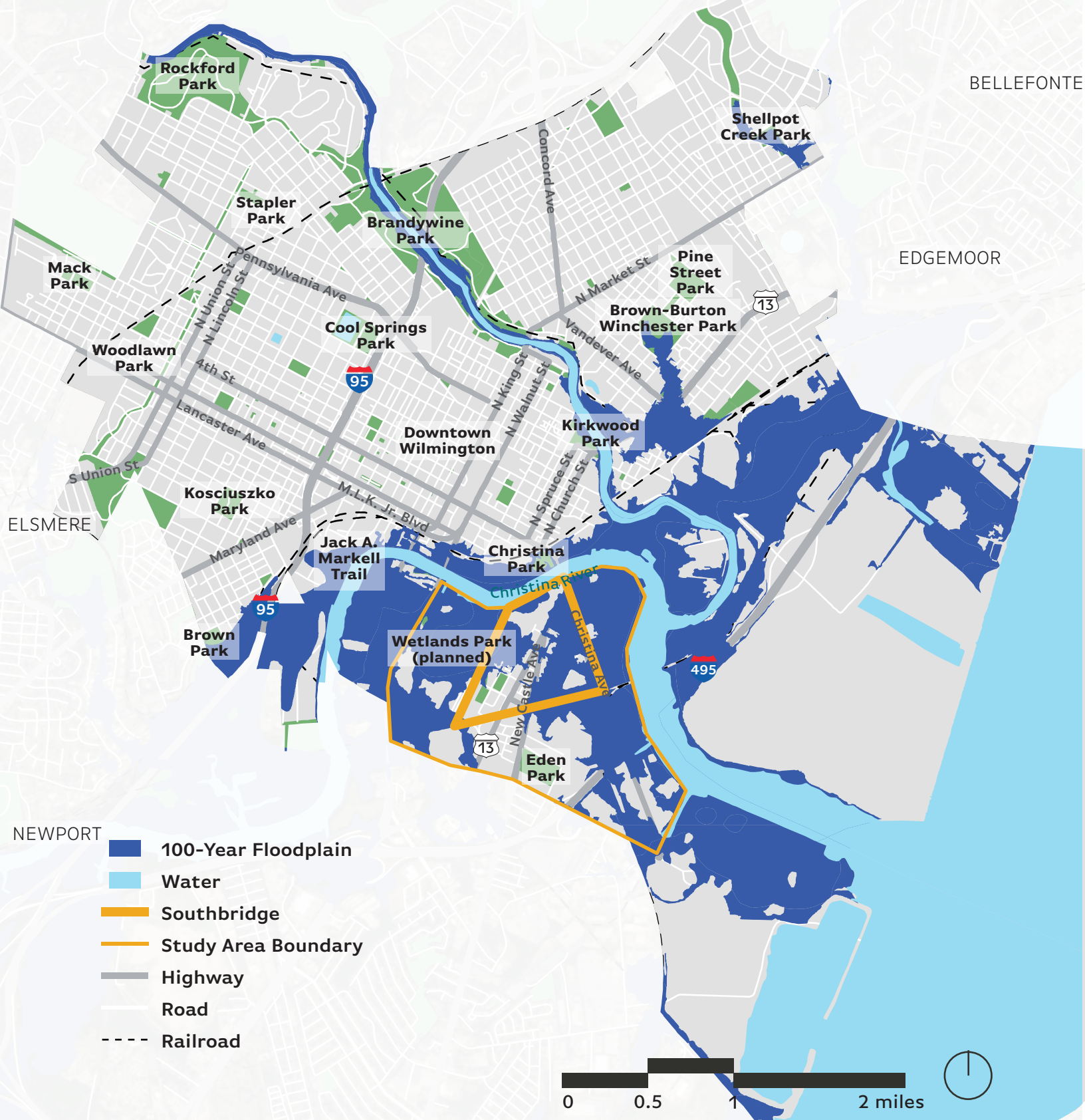
BELLEFONTE

EDGEMOOR

ELSMERE

NEWPORT

WILMINGTON  
MANOR



Sources: US Census Bureau shapefiles; South Wilmington Planning Network; New Castle County GIS Open Data; Delaware FirstMap Data; FEMA Flood Map Service Center





# 03



## **Resident Leadership and Engagement**



# Resident Leadership and Engagement



*Steering Committee Meeting 4, Source: Consultant Team*

## Working with Community Leaders

The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan was driven by the leadership of the Steering Committee, comprised of members of the Southbridge Civic Association, the South Wilmington Planning Network, and other resident leaders.

The Steering Committee members not only attended meetings, they also promoted the events, provided feedback on next-steps and this report, and even went from door to door within the community to collect survey data.

Additionally, residents leaders, including Teen Executives from The Warehouse, were integral in getting a robust set of results from both the Survey and Questionnaire.

**A genuine and thorough public engagement process helped ensure that the Neighborhood Plan reflects the values, needs, and expectations of residents, business owners, and other key community members of the Southbridge Neighborhood.**

The Project team ensured this by holding the following engagement events and meetings:

- **Kick Off Workshop | December 8, 2020:** The Project Team and Steering Committee members met to discuss the project's scope, planning process, and timeline. The project team also reviewed potential branding concepts for the project and discussed opportunities and challenges facing the project.
- **Stakeholder Interviews | December 2020:** The consultant team held interviews with each Steering Committee member and other identified stakeholders to get detailed insight regarding the Southbridge community, including the needs created by COVID-19 and needs pre-dating the pandemic.
- **Steering Committee Meeting 1 | January 12, 2021:** The Steering Committee was an integral part of the planning process. The first Steering Committee meeting identified the goals of the Steering Committee for the Neighborhood Plan and began drafting Mission and Vision Statements for the plan. The Project Team also presented and discussed initial findings in existing conditions research, and verified and confirmed these findings.

- Public Workshop 1 | February 16, 2021:** The first Public Workshop formally introduced the Southbridge community to the Neighborhood Plan process, and generated excitement about the project. The Project Team presented the draft Mission and Vision statements and findings from Steering Committee interviews and the Southbridge Foundations of Wellness Report. The Project Team also used this workshop to gather feedback and initiate public discussion and idea-sharing, including key issues and themes central to residents' concerns, their vision and goals, and things to build upon in the Southbridge neighborhood. Residents' also expressed interest in providing survey and data collection support.
- Steering Committee Meeting 2 | March 01, 2021:** During the second Steering Committee Meeting, the Consultant Team provided project updates and reviewed the updated Mission and Vision statement and findings from the Southbridge Foundations of Wellness Report. The Consultant Team also discussed the tentative work plan for the Community Priorities Survey.
- Steering Committee Meeting 3 | March 29, 2021:** The Consultant Team provided updates on the project and had an in-depth discussion on Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) and the South Market Street Master Plan.
- Community Priorities Survey 1 | April - May 2021:** With the support of the Steering Committee and Client Team, the Consultant Team developed a community priorities survey. The survey consisted of two parts—Part I (shorter version) and Part II (longer version)—asked questions related to Wellness (including impacts of COVID-19), Economic Challenges, Housing, Transportation, and more general questions about people's connections to Southbridge. The Consultant Team also formed



*Community BBQ, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw*



*Community BBQ, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw*

## Lessons Learned

Survey 1 was administered by resident leaders who went door-to-door, as well as through an online form. Here are some lessons learned:

- In-person surveys were much more successful
- Part 1 (26 questions) and Part 2 (35 questions) of Survey 1 were both too long
- Once surveys were left with residents, many did not receive a stamped envelope to return the survey, which made it difficult to collect results





Community BBQ, Source: Consultant Team



Neighborhood Walking Tour: Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, Source: Consultant Team



Community member Wayne Marshall, Source: Consultant Team

the Southbridge Engagement Team, consisting of residents and stakeholders who were compensated for their participation in administering the survey.

- Steering Committee Meeting 4 | June 7, 2021:** The fourth Steering Committee Meeting took place during the project's site visit. The Consultant Team shared updates on the project timeline and events planned for the week of the site visit. The Consultants also shared new findings for how the Civic Association and Client Team can use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to help implement recommendations and action steps in the Final Plan.
- Neighborhood Plan Questionnaire | June 2021:** The Project Team identified questions for the Final Plan Questionnaire. This questionnaire included 5 questions, however, the main focus of the questionnaire was to have residents (1) prioritize recommendations for the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan; and (2) prioritize asks for a Southbridge CBA. Moreover, the Project Team also informed residents of The South Market Street and Riverfront East developments in South Wilmington and asked for signatures to support a CBA between Southbridge and developers of the South Market Street Master Plan and Riverfront East developments.
- Walking Tour | June 8, 2021:** During the project's site visit, residents and stakeholders led the Project Team on a walking tour of the neighborhood. Participants made stops at key sites throughout the neighborhood and residents and stakeholders shared relevant information on those sites. Key sites that participants visited included:
  - Neighborhood House
  - Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
  - Wilmington Housing Authority
  - Southbridge Wetland Park

- Mt. Joy United Methodist Church
- Carry My Own Weight
- Winston Truitt Park
- Wilmington Fire Department Headquarters
- Former Elbert-Palmer Elementary School
- Barbara Hicks Park
- **Community BBQ | June 10, 2021:** The Project Team hosted a Community BBQ during the site visit. At this Community BBQ, the Consultant Team shared informational boards updating attendees on the project and project findings, collected more responses to the Questionnaire, and signatures on the petition. Attendees were also able to get information on job opportunities and training at local businesses and organizations. The BBQ also had free food and music by a local DJ, DJ TyTheFuture, for attendees to enjoy.
- **Draft Plan Walk-Through | August 23, 2021:** Community Leaders and Steering Committee had a walk-through of the Draft Plan to provide final comments.
- **Public Workshop 2 | September 21, 2021:** During the final Public Workshop, the Consultant Team will present the final prioritized recommendations and actions steps.
- **Steering Committee Meeting 5 | September 28, 2021:** During the final Steering Committee meeting, the Consultant Team will present the final plan and close out the project.



*Steering Committee Member Daymon Bagwell, Source: Consultant Team*



*Walking Tour: Neighborhood Churches, Source: Consultant Team*





*Project Site Visit, Source: Consultant Team*



*Project Site Visit, Source: Consultant Team*



*A yard sign for a CBA at Winston Truitt Park, Source: Consultant Team*

## ORGANIZING FOR A COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT (CBA)

During the neighborhood planning process, the Consultant Team was made aware of the South Market Street Master Plan and the Riverfront East Development by the Riverfront Development Corporation (an organization established and funded by the State of Delaware).

Development in South Wilmington has the potential to significantly impact the existing and historic African-American community. While Riverfront East has the potential to provide a boost to tax revenue, jobs and housing in the City, it is also important that steps be taken immediately to boost the existing community, prevent the pricing out of residents, and to ensure that they are partners in and benefit from development in and adjacent to their community.

Through a separate grant from the Division of Public Health, the Consultant Team took on additional community organizing efforts for the purpose of developing an equitable community benefits agreement (CBA) and provided technical assistance and support to the community, including support in the development of organizational capacity to manage anti-displacement programs through the end of June 2021.

Key steps that the project team took to ensure that these new findings were captured in the neighborhood plan include:

- Coordinating with the Civic Association and SWPN to write a letter (sent from the Civic Association) to the Riverfront Development Corporation (RDC) asking for increased transparency, ability to review the final South Market Street Master Plan, and to allow the Civic Association to appoint a new board member to the RDC.

- Coordinating with resident representatives on a meeting with the Mayor to discuss community needs and providing resident representatives with talking points for that meeting.
- Providing talking points for resident representatives to present at the Finance & Economic Development Committee Meeting to provide public comment on the City's need to invest in Southbridge using American Rescue Plan funds.
- Coordinating a CBA Coalition and hosting meetings between residents, the Civic Association, and potential partners
- Creation of CBA-related informational materials, including:
  - Questionnaire for prioritizing CBA provisions;
  - Petition in support of the CBA and the Southbridge Residents' Bill of Rights;
  - Poster and yard sign in support of a CBA for Southbridge;
  - Project one-pager;
  - Bill of Rights handout;
  - Flyer and social media graphic for Community BBQ
- Drafting a letter for the Southbridge Civic Association to send/e-mail to other civic associations in Wilmington about supporting CBAs.
- Coordinating meetings with council members and other stakeholders about the CBA.

#### **Tangible Outcomes:**

- 150 signatures collected for the Petition
- 100 Yard Signs distributed
- 72 Questionnaires filled out

#### **Next Steps:**

- Organize residents through the Southbridge Community Development Corporation and Civic Association
- Meet with BPG to begin drafting the CBA



*Community BBQ, Source: Consultant Team*



*Steering Committee Member Ms. Diana Dixon and a family member, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw*



## THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan Questionnaire (see Appendix) was administered the week of June 7th through one-on-one door-knocking and at the Southbridge Community BBQ. The short survey, involving two questions about the Neighborhood Action Plan, a sign up for the Civic Association updates, and a set of demographic questions, was filled out by 75 community stakeholders. The results, seen in the following page, were used to prioritize and craft recommendations for the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan, including items for a potential Riverfront Community Benefits Agreement.

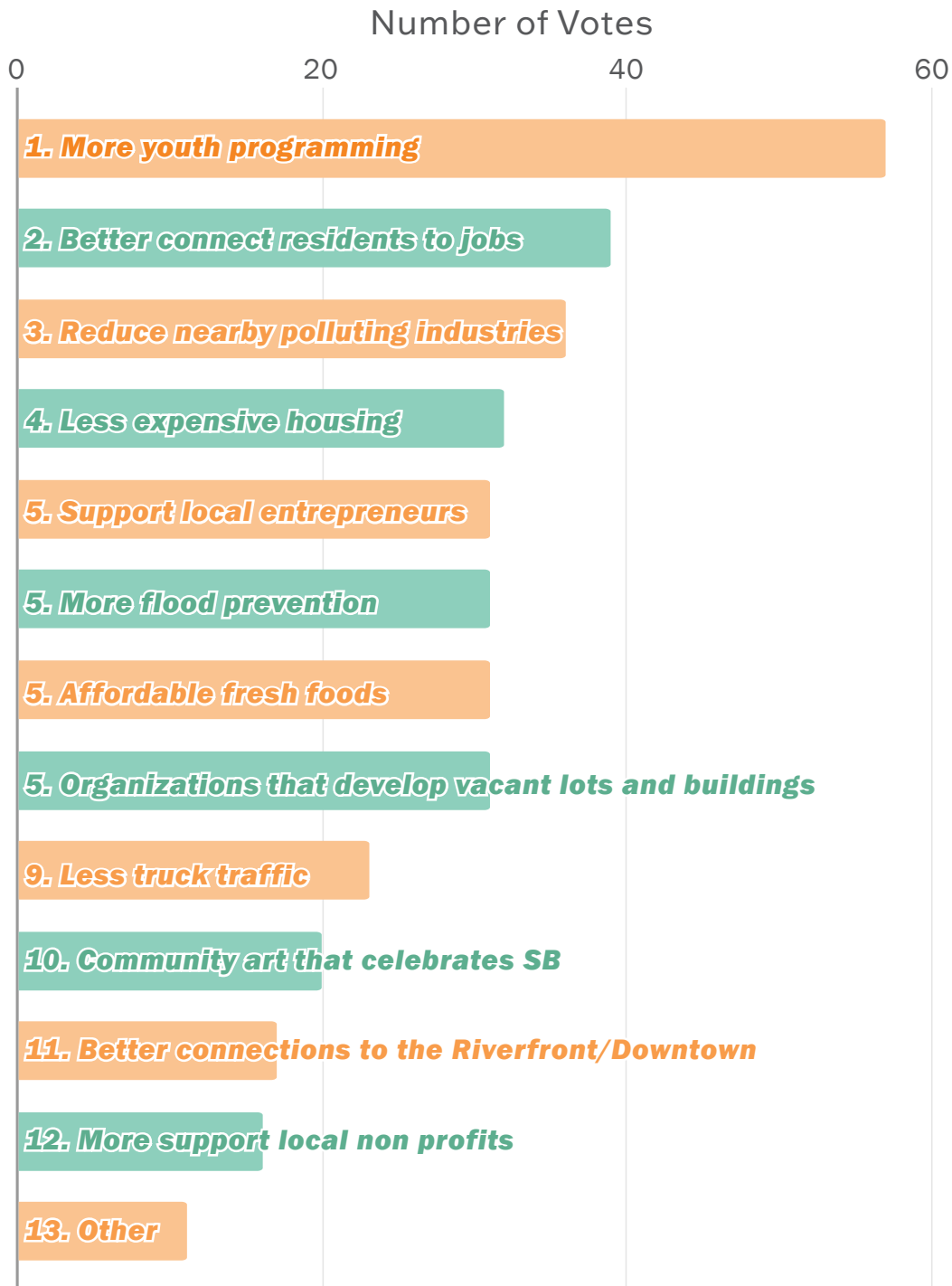


*Southbridge Community BBQ, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw*



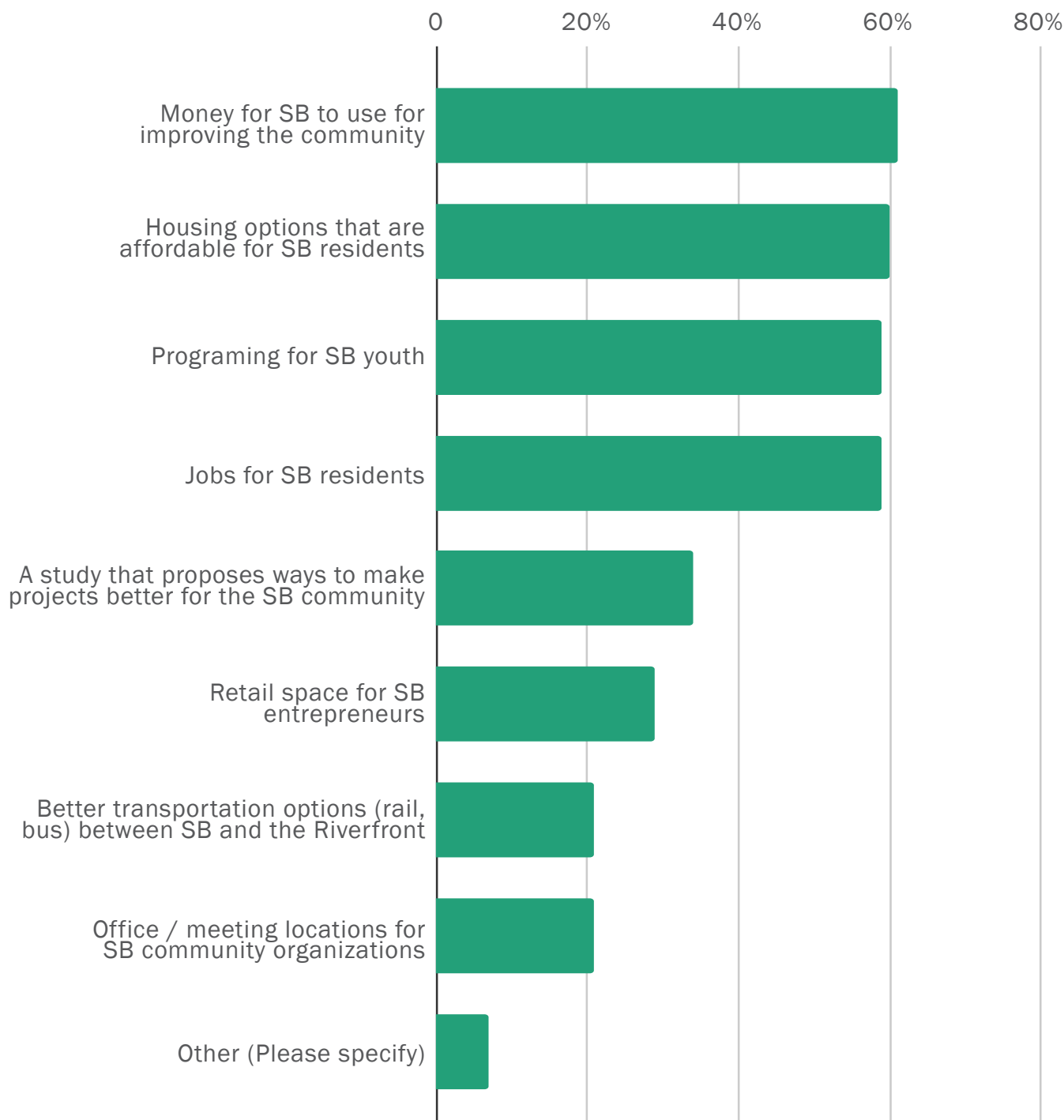
*Youth conducting in-person surveys, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw*

**Q1. These are recommendations that may be in the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan. (Please select the 5 most important)**





**Q2. These are topic areas that may be covered by a CBA with developers in South Wilmington. (Please select the 5 most important)**









04



# Community Benefits Demands



# Why a Community Benefits Agreement?

## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT?

**A Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) is a tool that can be utilized through a public-private partnership to ensure that new development can better support existing and future community needs, through a contract between a developer and community-based organization.**

Developed through sustained community organizing, these agreements work to ensure that existing residents reap the benefits of new private sector development. Agreements can be wide-ranging to include benefits such as the inclusion of affordable units in new housing, parks or community facilities or minimums for local hires. The goal is to create a more equitable development model that addresses the power dynamic between communities and developers, and brings the residents in a new relationship with land use development in their communities.<sup>1</sup>

The Southbridge community has been working collectively to address the pervasive historic and present disinvestment and environmental degradation they face from planning and land use development. As new private sector development is again coming to Wilmington, there is the potential for an increase in adjacent land values, gentrification and displacement of a historic African American community.

---

<sup>1</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation, Community Benefits Agreements: The Power, Practice, and Promise of a Responsible Redevelopment Tool, January 2, 2007, Community Benefits Agreements: - The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Communities around the country are utilizing community benefits agreements to fund infrastructure improvements and programs in areas experiencing new development.

The Lower Hill District in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania created a Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan, developed to address community concerns regarding the redevelopment of a 28 acre site in the district.<sup>2</sup> The agreement created a tax financing area to fund work in 6 focus areas: Minority & Women Business Enterprise Inclusion, Workforce Development, Job Inclusion, and Local Hiring, Housing Inclusion and Home Ownership, Wealth Building Initiatives, Coordinated Community Development Strategies, and Cultural & Community Legacy Initiatives.

Southbridge residents, through the leadership of the Southbridge Civic Association and a community development corporation, should continue to demand that economic development and incentives for developers be tied to the wellbeing of all residents, regardless of income or race.

In the past, Southbridge was involved in a CBA with an incoming compost facility. Although at first the community was not in support what they saw as a garbage dump in their backyard, through conversation with faculty at the University of Delaware, political leaders and community based non profit organizations, the Southbridge community formed a CBA with Peninsula Compost in 2008. The community benefits included: 20% local hiring requirement and minority hiring requirement,

---

<sup>2</sup> Lower Hill Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP) | Hill Community Development Corp

the creation of a 24-hour community hot line for residents to file complaints against any element of the construction process, a ban on construction trucks using local residential roads, funding for a job training program, requirement to employ only local contractors and a neighborhood parking lot.<sup>3</sup>

Although initially the community experience with the development was positive, over time the facility continued to emit uncontrolled odors and other violations, and was ordered to close by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control in 2015.<sup>4</sup> Currently Southbridge is facing a new development and has the opportunity to build upon a constellation of community organizations to form a new Community Benefits Agreement with the Riverfront East developers

---

3 Daniel J. LaSalle, Summary and Index of Community Benefit Agreements. CBA Symposium, "Win-Win-Win: The Advantages of CBA's for the Community, Developers, and You!", The Public Law Center, May 10, 2011, Summary and Index of Community Benefit Agreements

4 Allan Gerlat, Agency Orders Peninsula Compost to Close Delaware Recycling Unit, Oct 22, 2014 Agency Orders Peninsula Compost to Close Delaware Recycling Unit

## South Market Street and Riverfront East: a Historic Opportunity for Equitable Development

The Riverfront East development along South Market Street is slated to inject nearly \$100 million in public funds with \$60 million already allocated from the State of Delaware. Buccini/Pollin Group and Cedar Realty Trust are positioned to make millions of dollars in profits.

There are currently no requirements attached for developers benefitting from public investments in the South Market Street area and Riverfront East.

The South Market Street Master Plan for Riverfront East was developed without public input, and unveiled on May 14th, 2021. Upon requests for a meeting and a copy of the master plan, the completed master plan was presented by they Riverfront Development Corporation (RDC) at a Southbridge Civic Association meeting in July 2021. There are currently no opportunities for residents to provide input on the completed Master Plan and future developments.



Southbridge Community BBQ, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw



# Southbridge Community Benefits Demands

The Southbridge community is looking to ensure that the large-scale Riverfront East development has a positive effect on the well-being of residents. Due to the lack of community input into the plan, a CBA could build in a guarantee of housing affordability, as well as programming and amenities for residents.<sup>1</sup> A Southbridge Community Benefits Agreement Could Involve the Following Topics:

- Jobs for Southbridge residents
- Retail space for Southbridge entrepreneurs
- Housing options that are affordable for Southbridge residents
- Better transportation options (trail, bus) between Southbridge and the Riverfront
- Office and meeting spaces for Southbridge community organizations
- Programming for Southbridge youth
- Money for Southbridge to use for improving the community
- A study that proposes ways to make their projects better for the Southbridge community



*Youth conducting in-person surveys, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw*

The Community Benefits Demands are based upon a door-to-door Questionnaire administered in Southbridge. These community demands will establish a framework to assure new development will provide benefits to existing residents.

BPG has publicly stated that they are "working with community leaders to establish community benefit agreements" and that "having plopped down planning for things like this could be a disaster" (Michael Hare, executive vice president for development at BPG and former deputy director of the riverfront Development Corporation).<sup>2</sup> Southbridge must be at the table to ensure that the community's needs and demands are met.

---

<sup>1</sup> Summary and Index of Community Benefits Agreements. This Summary and Index of Community Benefits Agreements was prepared for a CBA Symposium held on May 10, 2011, entitled "Win-Win-Win: The Advantages of CBA's for the Community, Developers, and You!" We gratefully acknowledge the work of Daniel J. LaSalle, © 2011 The Public Law Center. Accessed from Summary and Index of Community Benefit Agreements. Agency Orders Peninsula Compost to Close Delaware Recycling Unit

---

<sup>2</sup> Amanda Fries, Delaware News Journal, "Hundreds of millions in tax dollars built Wilmington's Riverfront, was it worth it?," Aug 3, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3srK3FD>

## THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS DEMANDS

**We envision a Community Benefits Agreement between a newly formed Southbridge Community and the City of Wilmington to fund the following programs:**

| Community Benefit Demand  | The “Why”  |
|---|--|
| Contribute \$10 million to the Wilmington Anti Displacement Fund.   | The Wilmington Anti Displacement Fund will be used to pay for home repair programs, neighborhood programming, health-supportive services, and other critical resources for residents impacted by development.  |
| Conduct an environmental and housing impact study on the South Market Street Master Plan.   | For any development project with significant public investment and the potential to reshape an environmental justice community that has faced continuous flooding, the City and State should require the developers to conduct an impact assessment of the projects on the environment and housing costs for the surrounding communities. The study should identify pathways to mitigate the harmful impacts and ways to maximize the benefits from the development. |
| Provide an annual contribution of \$100,000 to establish, staff, and maintain a Referral System that will provide a pool of qualified applicants from the Southbridge neighborhood for the First Source Hiring Program. | A Referral System will connect jobs in the new developments along South Market Street and Riverfront East to workers in Southbridge. The \$100,000 should be provided to an organization such as a community development corporation that can staff and manage the system.   |



| Community Benefit Demand   | The “Why”   |
|--|---|
| <p>Establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District encompassing South Wilmington (including Southbridge and the study area of the South Market Street Master Plan) with 80 percent of the funds being invested into the Anti Displacement Fund.</p> | <p>A TIF district is a financing mechanism that enables a local government to capture new tax revenues generated in a designated area and reinvest them in that area to fund improvements. TIFs help to pay for infrastructure improvements (streets, sewers, parking lots) in the area near a new development. TIFs may also be used to acquire land, demolish and rehab buildings, cleaning up contaminated areas (“brownfields”), or funding job training programs.</p> <p>A TIF covering all of South Wilmington should be created that will finance the Anti Displacement Fund to address and mitigate displacement and gentrification. A TIF was used in the Lower Hill Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP) in the Lower Hill community in Pittsburgh, PA to fund the Reinvestment Fund.</p> <p>The Fund will be used to pay for home repair programs, neighborhood programming including at the Southbridge Wetland Park and a youth garden, and other critical resources for Wilmingtonians.</p> |

| Community Benefit Demand   | The “Why”  |
|--|--|
| <p>Work with identified evidence-based programs that offer the cultural restoration benefits to the positive growth and development of youth, such the Boys and Girls Club of Delaware and the Warehouse, to establish a youth program at the former Elbert Palmer Elementary School or other sites within the neighborhood.</p> | <p>“More youth programming” was the #1 response provided by respondents to the Questionnaire when asked what their most important priorities were for the Neighborhood Plan and the #3 top response when asked what their priorities were for the CBA. The former elementary school is perceived by many in the community as a sign of disinvestment from the City. In addition to the jobs training program that the Port of Wilmington has promised to bring, the City should work with the Boys and Girls Club to provide a safe and communal space for teenaged residents of Southbridge.</p> <p>Funds for the program can be based on a community benefits agreement (CBA) between developers and the community or other sources.</p> <p>The American Rescue Plan Act allows for expenditure of funds for “Evidence-based educational services and practices to address the academic needs of students, including tutoring, summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs” in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.</p> |
| <p>Allocate 25% of retail space rented below market to Black or Hispanic owned-businesses.</p>   | <p>The new developments should realize community development goals by supporting local minority-owned businesses.</p>  |



| Community Benefit Demand   | The “Why”  |
|--|--|
| <p>Provide funds to a community development corporation (CDC) operating within Southbridge to develop affordable housing, provide housing vouchers, residential counseling, housing navigation assistance, and home renovations and repairs.</p>   | <p>Housing that is affordable was one of the top choices for respondents of the Questionnaire when asked what their priorities were for both the Neighborhood Action Plan as well the Community Benefits Agreement. Respondents also wrote in the response that they would like to see more renovation grants. The City of Wilmington should either work with an existing CDC or establish a CDC that has assistance with housing as an explicit function of the organization.</p>         |
| <p>Ensure that 20% of all newly built residential complexes with 10 or more units in the Riverfront (those areas zoned W-4 in South Wilmington) are affordable for households making 30% or less of area median family income as defined by HUD with priority given to applicants who previously lived in or currently live in Southbridge. At least 30% of these affordable units should have 2 or more bedrooms.</p> | <p>In 2019, residents making below \$21,650 in the area was considered by the federal government to be “extremely low” income. Providing housing opportunities for low-income residents is critical to ensuring desegregation of housing in Wilmington and equitable access to opportunities along the riverfront.</p>   |
| <p>Provide funds to connect renters in Southbridge, especially those living in public housing, to homebuyer education and financial literacy courses with partners such as the YWCA, the Delaware Community Reinvestment Action Council, Habitat for Humanity, and the Delaware Financial Literacy Institute.</p>  | <p>Housing that is affordable was one of the top choices for respondents of the Questionnaire when asked what their priorities were for both the Neighborhood Action Plan as well the Community Benefits Agreement. The City of Wilmington should either work with an existing CDC or establish a CDC that has assistance with housing as an explicit function of the organization. Sources of funding for the programs can come from the Anti Displacement Fund as funded by the CBA.</p> |

| Community Benefit Demand  | The “Why”  |
|---|--|
| <p>Provide low rent or free office and meeting spaces for community organizations.</p>  | <p>Southbridge should be able to access new spaces where their organizations can gather and host community events, particularly where these new spaces are being developed adjacent to the neighborhood.</p>   |
| <p>Provide youth programming at Chase Fieldhouse to serve Southbridge youth. Partner with Delaware Blue Coats to have Southbridge youth attend games for free, participate in youth leagues for free, and have programming free of charge for residents of Southbridge.</p> | <p>BPG Sports has a clear Vision: “To build strong bonds of tomorrow with the best facilities of today while enhancing and revitalizing our communities.” A strong bond with the Southbridge community will be crucial for community support of future development by BPG. BPG has been aided by at least \$6 million in public funds to develop the 76ers Fieldhouse and Chase Fieldhouse, while only paying \$1,094 a month to lease property from the Riverfront Development Corporation.</p> |
| <p>Require engaging with the Southbridge CDC and Southbridge Civic Association to gain letters of support from these organizations for new developments.</p>  | <p>Engaging with community members before moving ahead with development is key to ensure that Southbridge is not left behind in the development process. The CBA should build in a mechanism requiring future developments to work with local communities to ensure the development has a positive impact on the neighborhood.</p>   |





# 05



## Action Plan

# Equitable Development for Southbridge

The Southbridge neighborhood, although rich with history and community energy, continues to grapple with ongoing challenges. These challenges include disinvestment, barriers to generational wealth, and environmental justice issues, all of which affect the community's socio-economic status and well-being.

The economic growth surrounding the neighborhood has not extended to Southbridge, and residents continue to face barriers to living-wage employment and educational opportunities.

Some of the available data illustrates the growing inequities. Despite an increase in high wage jobs in Wilmington, particularly along the Riverfront, there has been a parallel increase in poverty city-wide. While White incomes in Wilmington increased in the last 20 years, Black incomes decreased by 26%.<sup>1</sup> In South Wilmington, poverty increased by 55% between 2010-2014 and 2015-2019.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, residents face barriers to educational access. Elbert-Palmer Elementary School closed in 2019, and there is a dearth of programming for teens in Southbridge. Educational opportunity is an important pathway to generational wealth, and it should be a key consideration when considering future development.



*\*Data from US Census Bureau, using 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars; based on median income by race*



<sup>1</sup> Data from US Census Bureau, using 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars; based on median income by race.

<sup>2</sup> Data from the American Community Survey 2010-2014 and 2015-2019.

## EQUITY IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development efforts should carefully consider what tangible benefits Southbridge residents will receive, and what, if any, negative impacts may be brought about as a result of development.

Past successful planning efforts have brought tangible benefits such as the ShopRite in South Wilmington and the Southbridge Wetland Park. The next iteration of planning and development should consider the quality jobs and accessibility of amenities for longtime and existing residents to ensure that the benefits of development continue to benefit and support the growth of all Wilmingtonians.

South Wilmington's status as an Opportunity Zone made it particularly vulnerable to economic development efforts that can lead to inequitable outcomes. In areas designated as Opportunity Zones, developers are able to extract incentives and subsidies while providing little in terms of accessible and affordable amenities for longtime residents.

Opportunity Zones were meant to “spur economic growth and job creation in low-income communities while providing tax benefits to investors” by identifying areas of low-income.<sup>3</sup>

However, they have come under scrutiny in recent years for providing a windfall for developers while doing little to benefit low-income residents. Residents are often pushed out of their homes as the area becomes more desirable and less affordable.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> IRS, “Opportunity Zones,” access July 29, 2021, <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/businesses/opportunity-zones>

<sup>4</sup> New York Times, “How a Trump Tax Break to Help Poor Communities Became a Windfall for the Rich,” Aug 31, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/31/business/tax-opportunity-zones.html>

## Past Developments in South Wilmington:

### Chase Fieldhouse<sup>1</sup>

- \$6 million in State and City funding invested into the project, including a \$1 million grant from the City of Wilmington, a \$3 million grant from the State of Delaware, and a \$2 million grant for infrastructure improvements from the Department of Transportation
- Buccini/Pollin Group (developer) pays \$1,094 per month to use 9 acres of land for 99 years
- No guarantees of jobs, free or affordable programming for Wilmington residents, or public access to the facility

### Christina Landing<sup>2</sup>

- \$25 million in State and City funding invested into the project, including \$8.5 million for the reconstruction of A Street, \$6.5 million for the parking garage, \$2.3 million for a bulkhead along the river, \$4.1 million for a Riverwalk and park between the river and town homes, \$2 million for environmental cleanup, \$1.4 million for new streets and sidewalks, and \$500,000 for water and sewer lines
- No guarantees of units affordable to Wilmington residents, jobs, or access to amenities

<sup>1</sup> The News Journal, Christina Jedra, “Delaware taxpayers contribute millions to Buccini/Pollin's 76ers Fieldhouse: The city and state are guaranteed little in exchange for their investment,” Aug 9, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3vekybw>; citing John Rago, the mayor's chief of staff for policy and communications and the governor's communications director Jonathan Starkey

<sup>2</sup> The News Journal, Karl Baker, “Legal fight continues over who is responsible for rotting support beams at Christina Landing townhomes,” Dec 11, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3vfVtgb>



# WHAT CAN EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT LOOK LIKE IN SOUTHBRIDGE?

Planning through an equitable development lens recognizes the historic damage that planning has caused to neighborhoods of color, while advocating for future growth and development that ensures residents' human rights to quality education, safe and affordable housing, efficient transportation, freedom from pollution, economic opportunity and mitigation from the effects of climate change.

In practice, equitable development is a set of processes and outcomes that advance opportunities, choices and access for communities.<sup>5</sup> To be accountable to disinvested communities, a planning process must include a transparent and interactive method of communication and engagement, addressing and disrupting the traditional power dynamics.

---

<sup>5</sup> University of Pennsylvania Department of City and Regional Planning, Brian Agness, Meg Dahlgren, Ellie Devyatkin, Eileen Divringi, Ryan Debold, Daniel Farina, Jake Freedman, Kevin Hunter, Thomson Kao, Will Morgan, Amy Verbofsky, and Daniel Wolf. Spring 2014. Small Legacy Cities, Equity and a Changing Economy.

## Equitable Development IS:

- Intentional policies, projects, and programs that **address wealth inequalities** across Wilmington.
- An approach that **prioritizes youth in Southbridge** to ensure a healthy and prosperous future for the neighborhood.
- Reinvestment of proceeds from development into Southbridge to ensure all residents of South Wilmington are able to **build generational wealth**.
- **Based on public input and engagement of residents** who will be impacted.

## Equitable Development IS NOT:

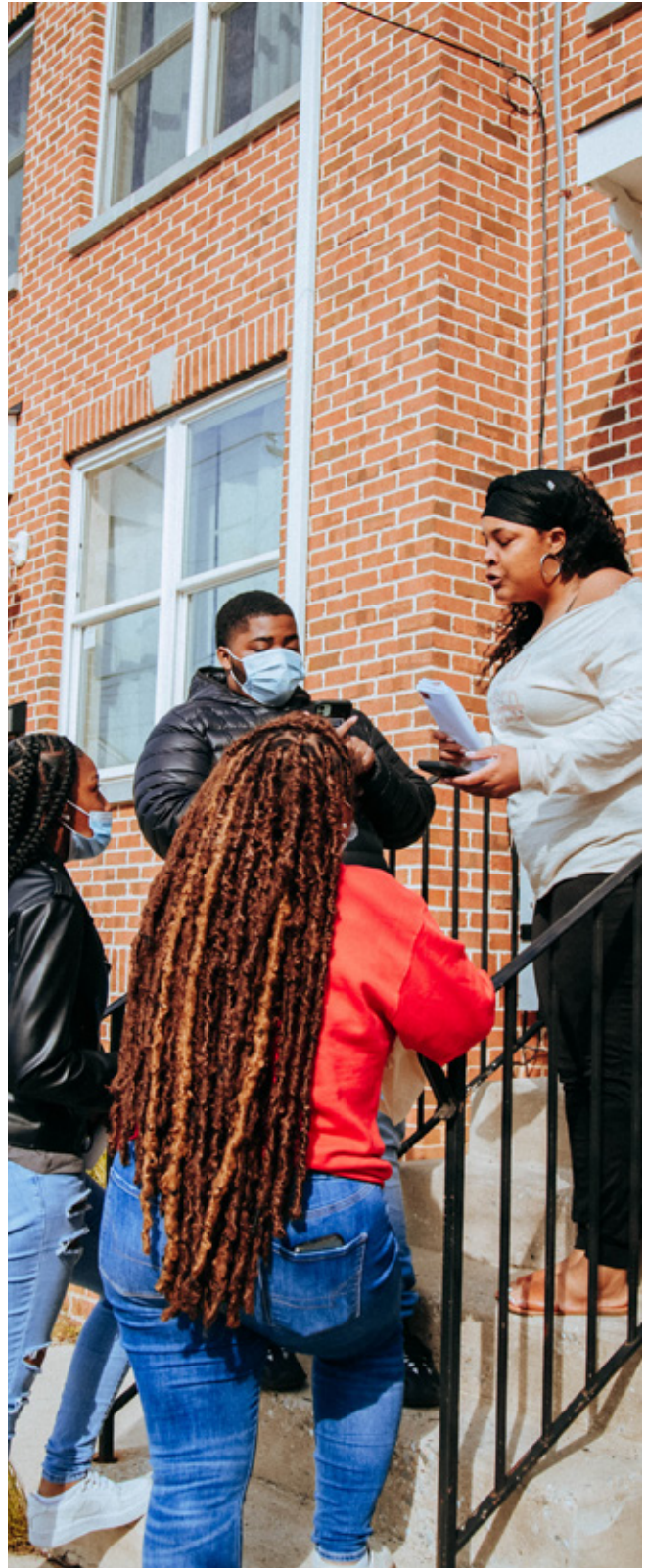
- A **“trickle-down” approach** based on the belief that development automatically leads to generational wealth for Southbridge residents.
- **Growth without protection against gentrification and displacement** of existing residents through increased rents, higher property taxes, and unsustainable cost of living.
- A **developer-first approach** that provides economic incentives for developers without asking them to provide benefits to existing communities.

In addition to the Residents' Bill of Rights, a good starting point for discussion on equitable development is the 2017 One City Plan.<sup>6</sup> It looked at equitable planning through a framework of Human, Physical, Economic, and Political capital. The plan identified goals that the City of Wilmington can undertake in order to build wealth and well-being through equitable development:

- **GOAL 1:** Wilmington will have an inclusive, transparent, and accountable public sector.
- **GOAL 2:** Wilmington will more equitably leverage its capital to benefit all Wilmingtonians.
- **GOAL 3:** Public Transportation will be affordable, reliable, and accessible for all Wilmingtonians.
- **GOAL 4:** Wilmingtonians of all income levels will have access to affordable housing options.
- **GOAL 5:** Provide Wilmingtonians with equitable access to quality education and training to promote economic opportunity and mobility.
- **GOAL 6:** Wilmington will create tailored educational plans for each neighborhood.

---

<sup>6</sup> University of Pennsylvania School of Design, Libby Bland, Eleanor Fisher, Sarah Halle, Dan Reyes, Yuting Sun, and Bowie Xia, 2017, One City : Economic and Racial Equity in Wilmington, Delaware.



*Teens discussing the plan with a resident, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw*

# The Action Plan

The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan is made up of Action Items which fit into 6 broad categories:

- **Community Empowerment:** These Action Items hold the key to the funding and implementation to other Action Items.
- **Economic Revitalization:** These Action Items will target resources towards the economic revitalization of Southbridge.
- **Youth and Education:** These Action Items will ensure youth in Southbridge have a place to play and learn in the community.
- **Affordable Living:** These Action Items will ensure that Southbridge residents are able to continue to live in the community.
- **Better Health:** These Action Items will improve health outcomes for Southbridge residents.

- **Improved Mobility:** These Action Items will make it easier for Southbridge residents to access amenities in Wilmington while enhancing safety from speeding cars and trucks.
- **Resilience to Climate Change:** These Action Items will make enhance the preparedness of Southbridge residents for flooding, sea level rise, and rising temperatures associated with climate change.

The categories were created and updated based on conversations with community stakeholders, community questionnaires, and a public workshop. Each Action Item will be accompanied by potential funding sources, the "Why" or reason for taking the action, and the "Who" or the actors responsible for completing the Action Item.

## Funding Sources

The funding sources identified in this report are not meant to be exhaustive. However, the Action Plan points four key streams of funding using the icons listed below.



ARPA

### American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)

Provides funding to city, county, and state governments for recovery from COVID-19



ARPA/QCT

### ARPA / QCT

Funding within ARPA that is designated for use in areas "hardest hit" by COVID-19



CBA

### Community Benefits Agreement (CBA)

An agreement between the Southbridge community and developers that will bring tangible community benefits as a result of developments in the area.



NPC

### Neighborhood Planning Council

A grant program of the City of Wilmington to develop and implement capital projects to improve neighborhoods.



Other

### Other Funding Sources







# Action Items

## COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (CE)

**These Action Items hold the key to the funding and implementation to other Action Items.**

**Action Item CE 01: Strengthen the Southbridge CDC so that it can take on Action Items related to developing land in Southbridge for community, affordable housing, advocating for Southbridge, and other needs. If necessary, they can also contract with the City to administer the Anti Displacement Fund in Southbridge and the Route 9 Corridor.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



Other

### WHY

Community development corporations (CDCs) are 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations that are created to support and revitalize communities, especially those that are impoverished or struggling. CDCs often deal with the development of affordable housing. They can also be involved in a wide range of community services that meet local needs such as education, job training, healthcare, commercial development, and other social programs. A CDC for Southbridge can also manage, implement, and monitor future CBAs for the neighborhood.

### WHO

CDC, Civic Association

**Action Item CE 02: Separate out Southbridge as its own Census Tract, separate from Christina Landing and the developments that are anticipated around South Market Street and South Walnut Street. Redraw the Census Block Group boundaries to separate Southbridge from Christina Landing and the developments that are anticipated around South Market Street and South Walnut Street. SWPN should reach out to Ron Holmes at New Castle County (Ron.Holmes@newcastlede.gov) in November of 2022 with maps and an explanation for the need for the new boundaries. Part of the explanation should show and demonstrate changes within the Census Tract between 2000, 2010, and 2020. New Castle County will then request a modification to the boundaries in January 2023.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



Other

### WHY

Because Christina Landing is an apartment building that has brought in residents of higher incomes, it skews data related to Southbridge and is not representative of what Southbridge is actually experiencing in terms of poverty, unemployment, housing costs, and mobility. Southbridge may not be able to access government funds, foundation grants, and other resources because it is included in the same Census Tract and Block Group as Christina Landing. The separation of Southbridge as its own Census Tract will be crucial, as federal funding is often tied to incomes and poverty levels at the census tract level (e.g., HUD's designated Qualified Census Tracts).

### WHO

SWPN, New Castle County, Census Bureau



**Action Item CE 03: Sign a community benefits agreement with developers. Form a CBA Working Group within the community development corporation and reach out to developers including BPG to begin discussions. Build in robust monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.**



**WHY**

Many of the recommendations are based on a successful agreement between the developers and the community of Southbridge. Southbridge residents, through the leadership of the Civic Association, should continue to demand that economic development and incentives for developers be tied to the wellbeing of all residents, regardless of income or race. BPG has publicly stated that they are "working with community leaders to establish community benefit agreements" and that "having plopped down planning for things like this could be a disaster" (Michael Hare, executive vice president for development at BPG and former deputy director of the riverfront Development Corporation). Southbridge must be at the table to ensure that the community's needs and demands are met.

**WHO**

Southbridge CDC; Southbridge Civic Association; Mayor's Office; RDC; developers/Buccini Pollin Group

**Action Item CE 04: Continue to monitor Amtrak's NEC FUTURE, which is proposing new routes for high-speed rail. The "alternative" route uses the freight line in Southbridge, which would significantly and negatively impact the neighborhood. The Southbridge Civic Association, Southbridge CDC, and SWPN should work with the City of Wilmington and WILMAPCO and engage Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).**



**WHY**

The United States Department of Transportation and the FRA are responsible for ensuring that Federal funds being used for projects such as NEC FUTURE do not violate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Cutting through an Environmental Justice community that is predominantly African American raises serious concerns regarding Title VI violations and may be a "disparate impact discrimination, where a neutral policy or practice has the effect of disproportionately excluding or adversely affecting minority beneficiaries or other protected individuals and the recipient's practice lacks a substantial legitimate justification" (From the website of the Federal Railroad Administration). WILMAPCO has written a letter voicing concern about the project's impact on Southbridge.

**WHO**

Southbridge Civic Association, Southbridge CDC, SWPN, WILMAPCO, City of Wilmington, Amtrak, Federal Railroad Administration Office of Civil Rights

**Action Item CE 05: Establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District encompassing South Wilmington (including Southbridge and the study area of the South Market Street Master Plan) with 80 percent of the funds being invested into the Anti Displacement Fund.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



Other

**WHY**

A TIF district is a financing mechanism that enables a local government to capture new tax revenues generated in a designated area and reinvest them in that area to fund improvements. TIFs help to pay for infrastructure improvements (streets, sewers, parking lots) in the area near a new development. TIFs may also be used to acquire land, demolish and rehab buildings, cleaning up contaminated areas (“brownfields”), or funding job training programs.

A TIF covering all of South Wilmington should be created that will finance the Anti Displacement Fund to address and mitigate displacement and gentrification. A TIF was used in the Lower Hill Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan (CCIP) in the Lower Hill community in Pittsburgh, PA to fund the Reinvestment Fund.

The Fund will be used to pay for home repair programs, neighborhood programming including at the Southbridge Wetland Park and a youth garden, and other critical resources for Wilmingtonians.

**WHO**

City of Wilmington, City Council, Civic Association, Community development corporation

**Action Item CE 06: Conduct an environmental and housing impact study on the South Market Street Master Plan.**



**WHY**

For any development project with significant public investment and the potential to reshape an environmental justice community that has faced continuous flooding, the City and State should require the developers to conduct an impact assessment of the projects on the environment and housing costs for the surrounding communities. The study should identify pathways to mitigate the harmful impacts and ways to maximize the benefits from the development.

**WHO**

Developers, City of Wilmington, Civic Association, Southbridge CBA Working Group

**Action Item CE 07: The community development corporation work with the Southbridge Civic Association, Neighborhood House, the Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, and the South Wilmington Planning Network to facilitate implementation and community outreach. Start by having a monthly roundtable of Southbridge stakeholders.**



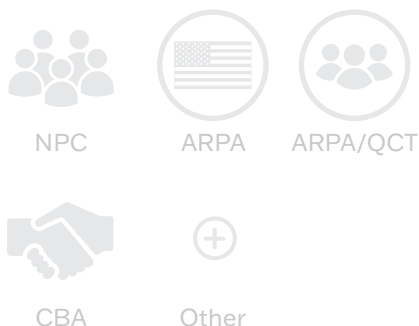
**WHY**

There is a need to establish a strong working group that can ask for and implement necessary measures from the City of Wilmington and other stakeholders who have the funding and capacity to bring appropriate programs and resources to Southbridge.

**WHO**

Community development corporation, Southbridge Civic Association, Neighborhood House, Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, South Wilmington Planning Network

**Action Item CE 08: Working groups continue through the community development corporation, in coordination with the Southbridge Civic Association and the Merchant Association, to implement and advocate for the plan.**



**WHY**

There is a need to establish a strong working group that can ask for and implement necessary measures from the City of Wilmington and other stakeholders who have the funding and capacity to bring appropriate programs and resources to Southbridge.

**WHO**

Community development corporation, Southbridge Civic Association, Southbridge Merchants Association, Neighborhood House, Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, South Wilmington Planning Network



**Action Item 09: Invest in the local civic leadership development through trainings on organizing, conducting meetings and outreach, collecting representative feedback, delegation, and involvement of more residents, conflict resolution, working with agencies and governments, among others.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

Southbridge residents are organizing and advocating for their needs through the Southbridge Civic Association. In order to maximize effectiveness, resident leaders should get training and resources.



CBA



Other

**WHO**

Southbridge Civic Association

**Action Item CE 10: The Southbridge Civic Association should widen its membership and board to include renters, youth, and public housing residents.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

The Southbridge Civic Association must be representative of all Southbridge residents. This will ensure that the community's voice is heard in future planning efforts and with implementing necessary measures.



CBA



Other

**WHO**

Civic Association

**Action Item CE 11: Invite the Mayor's Office to standing meetings with the Civic Association and ask them for status updates around Action Items to be implemented by the City as well as upcoming agenda items (including public hearings on zoning variances) that are pertinent to South Wilmington.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

The Southbridge Civic Association must work with local representative to ensure that the community's voice is heard in future planning efforts and in implementing necessary measures.



CBA



Other

**WHO**

Southbridge Civic Association; Mayor's Office

**Action Item CE 12: Coordinate with other CDCs, civic associations, community coalitions, and nonprofits (e.g., the Rt. 9/13 All Civics, the Route 9 Master Plan's Health Subcommittee) to coordinate and strengthen advocacy efforts.**



**WHY**

Community development corporations (CDCs) are 501(c) (3) non-profit organizations that are created to support and revitalize communities. CDCs often deal with the development of affordable housing. They can also be involved in a wide range of community services that meet local needs such as education, job training, healthcare, commercial development, and other social programs. A CDC for Southbridge can also manage, implement, and monitor future CBAs for the neighborhood. Connecting with other CDCs will help to build a supportive and cohesive network for advocacy efforts.

**WHO**

CDC, Civic Association, Local CDCs

**Action Item CE 13: Continue to maintain an open line of communication with the City of Wilmington to make the case that economic recovery in Wilmington should be inclusive of Southbridge, an area with documented structural inequities and under-investment.**



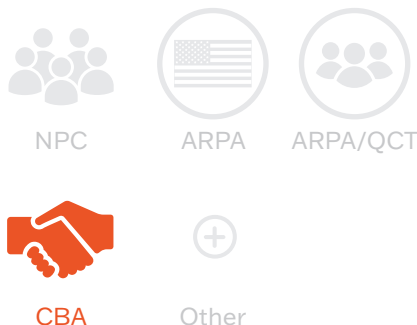
**WHY**

Invest in economic recoveries across Wilmington should be done in a way that addresses historic inequities, and Southbridge, where over 30% of households have incomes below poverty and has been impacted by industrial pollution, should receive a close look as a focus of economic recovery efforts.

**WHO**

Southbridge Civic, Association, South Wilmington Planning Network, CDC

**Action Item CE 14: Request low rent or free office and meeting spaces for community organizations.**



**WHY**

Southbridge should be able to access new spaces where their organizations can gather and host community events, particularly where these new spaces are being developed adjacent to the neighborhood.

**WHO**

Southbridge Civic Association, Southbridge CDC

**Action Item CE 15: Connect local nonprofit partners to the Land Bank to identify a suitable site for land reuse towards activities such as a community garden, gathering space, and other uses.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



Other

**WHY**

About 17% of land in Southbridge is vacant. This action item will place existing vacant land back into use, while transforming it into a community asset. The Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank has an Urban Garden Lease Program where residents interested in starting a community garden can lease a Land Bank (WNCLB) vacant lot.

**WHO**

Southbridge Civic Association, Local nonprofits, Southbridge CDC, WNCLB

**Action Item CE 16: Update the Land Bank's \$1 leasing program for community groups to allow for transition to ownership. Provide grants or loans for demolition of existing structures.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



Other

**WHY**

About 17% of land in Southbridge is vacant. This action item will place existing vacant land back into use, while transforming it into a community asset. The Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank has an Urban Garden Lease Program where residents interested in starting a community garden can lease a WNCLB vacant lot.

**WHO**

Civic Association, Land Bank





# ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION (ER)


These Action Items will target resources towards the economic revitalization of Southbridge.


**Action Item ER 01: Reactivate Southbridge as a Main Street America Affiliate (formally a Delaware Commercial District Affiliate) by establishing a board or steering committee and creating a strategic plan for the Southbridge Main Street.** The members of the board should include a variety of stakeholders, including residents and business owners of Southbridge. This action can be taken through a local nonprofit, such as the Southbridge Community Development Corporation (CDC), which can convene the board and create a strategic plan for the Main Street.


FUNDING SOURCE

  
ARPA

  
ARPA/QCT

  
CBA

  
NPC

  
Other

WHY


A Main Street on Southbridge can bring commercial activity and help organize residents and business owners towards a cohesive strategy. Main Street should be run through an organization such as a CDC with support from full-time staffers to ensure continuity, as the board and Merchants Association will be volunteer-run. A strategic plan will provide the "business plan" for the Main Street.


WHO


Southbridge CDC, Southbridge Civic Association, DelBiz on Main


**Action Item ER 02: Hire a full-time staffer at the Southbridge Community Development Corporation who will bring the Main Street to life and assist with implementing the Referral System for the First Source Hiring Program for job seekers in the area. The staffer should be a resident of Southbridge and will ensure that entrepreneurs in the area are able to access resources such as grants and loans, trainings, leases, and other services.**


FUNDING SOURCE

  
ARPA

  
ARPA/QCT

  
CBA

  
NPC

  
Other

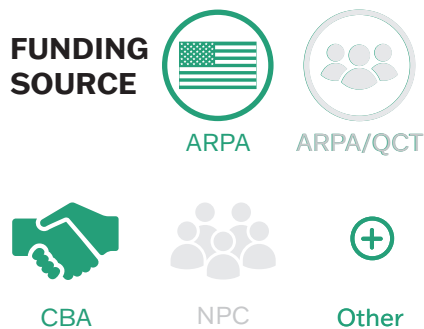
WHY

A full-time staffer dedicated to economic revitalization of Southbridge will be vital to make sure the recommendations are implemented. The staffer will coordinate and facilitate the Merchants Association and assist residents using the jobs Referral System and those seeking small business resources. Examples of resources that can be accessed include the EDGE Grants and RUN-DE Loans with the State of Delaware's Division of Small Business; a microloan program with the Wilmington Economic Development Corporation (WEDCO); concierge or triage services, microloans, and other support services provided by the City of Wilmington Office of Economic Development (call 311 and request to connect with the Office of Economic Development); loans and trainings with True Access Capital (302-652-6774) and (continued on next page)

the Small Business Development Corporation (302-831-1555); and the Launcher Entrepreneurship Program at West End Neighborhood House (302-265-0061).

**WHO**  
Southbridge CDC

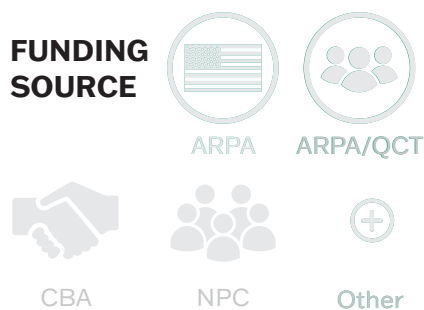
**Action Item ER 03: Establish, staff, and maintain a Referral System that will provide a pool of qualified applicants from the Southbridge neighborhood for a First Source Hiring Program.**



**WHY**  
A Referral System will connect jobs in the new developments along South Market Street and Riverfront East to workers in Southbridge. Should a CBA be signed, \$100,000 should be provided to the Southbridge CDC to staff and manage the system.  
Working with unemployed workers is an eligible use of ARPA funding.

**WHO**  
Parties of the CBA (developer, Civic Association) and an organization such as a CDC that can staff and manage the Referral System.

**Action Item ER 04: Partner with the Equitable Wilmington Collaborative to expand the program to South Wilmington.**



**WHY**  
Equitable Wilmington offers lending resources and technical assistance for transformative projects such as building affordable housing and community facilities and supporting small businesses in key neighborhoods. However, the program is currently limited to non-profit and for-profit businesses and developers in Wilmington's West, East and Northeast neighborhoods.

**WHO**  
Southbridge CDC

**Action Item ER 05: Through the Main Street program and under the banner of a community development corporation, create an active Merchants Association that can coordinate marketing, programming, project coordination, maintenance and public safety, and public placemaking and art.**

Projects for the Main Street Merchants Association can include:

- Creating a map of the district with local businesses identified
- Creating and running a website and social media account for the Southbridge

### Main Street

- Integrating local businesses into Southbridge Weekend and other events in the community
- Pooling resources for coordinated maintenance and landscaping for the commercial corridor
- Installing public art such as murals and statues
- Establish a style guide for the Main Street, including for storefront facades



### WHY

In addition to the Civic Association led by residents, a Merchants Association will be key to move forward the commercial recommendations of the Neighborhood Action Plan. The Southbridge CDC can provide staff to support the merchant leaders and also funnel resources towards businesses in the area. With an established commercial facade guide, business and property owners can reach out to the City of Wilmington Economic Development Office (call 311 and ask for the Office of Economic Development) to get assistance with facade improvements, such as painting and awnings.

### WHO

Area business owners; Southbridge CDC

**Action Item ER 06: Coordinate with the Delaware CBA Coalition on a Port CBA and work with Gulftainer to implement promised jobs training programs, bring a Del One Credit Union and computer training classes, and investing in beautifying the areas surrounding the building of the former Elbert-Palmer School. Start by inviting Gulftainer to the Civic Association's monthly meeting to present on their progress at the Elbert-Palmer site, and about future plans at the site.**



### WHY






The site of the former Elbert-Palmer Elementary School was leased to Gulftainer on the understanding that they would provide amenities for the community. Although the delay is understandable due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the promised programming should be delivered as soon as possible. The building is perceived negatively by the community, stemming from the closure of the community's only school, and seen as a site for crime.

### WHO






Southbridge Civic Association, Delaware CBA Coalition, Gulftainer, Christina School District, City of Wilmington, Council Member Michelle Harlee








**Action Item ER 07: Establish the Southbridge Main Street's branding, and use it on public wayfinding and communication materials (e.g., social media, newsletters, emails, etc.). Communicate to the public that the Main Street is being formed by placing and maintaining banners on pedestrian level streetlights being pursued by the Southbridge Streetscape Project that are consistent with the Southbridge Main Street branding along New Castle Ave.**

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>   |  |  | <b>WHY</b><br>It is vital to use consistent branding to develop the "look and feel" of the Southbridge Main Street and give a sense that the Main Street is forming in a visible and real way. |
|   | ARPA  | ARPA/QCT  |  |
|  |  |  | <b>WHO</b><br>Merchants Association, Civic Association, community development corporation  |
|   | CBA   | NPC   |  |

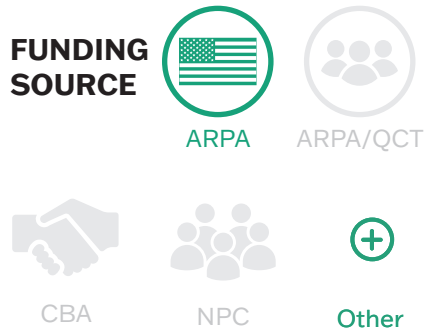
**Action Item ER 08: Change the zoning in the core of Southbridge to C-1 Neighborhood Shopping to facilitate commercial developments along New Castle Ave and Heald St.**

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>   |   |   | <b>WHY</b><br>The core of Southbridge along New Castle Ave and Heald St are currently designated as R-3, which means most commercial uses are not allowable by-right. C-1 allows for a mix of uses, including residential uses, retail, laundromat, bank, and restaurant. This change in designation will remove a barrier to business creation in Southbridge. |
|   | ARPA  | ARPA/QCT  |   |
|  |  |  | <b>WHO</b><br>City of Wilmington  |
|   | CBA   | NPC   |   |

**Action Item ER 09: Encourage DNREC to further incentivize Brownfield redevelopment in South Wilmington by providing benefits for developers who gain a letter of support from the Southbridge Civic Association and Southbridge CDC.**

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>   |  |  | <b>WHY</b><br>Building on brownfield development that's already happening in the community, this requirement would create a measure of community buy-in before developments while also incentivizing redevelopment of Brownfields. |
|   | ARPA  | ARPA/QCT  |  |
|  |  |  | <b>WHO</b><br>DNREC, Southbridge Civic Association, Southbridge CDC, developers  |
|   | CBA   | NPC   |  |

**Action Item ER 10: Work with the Adult Education Division (AED) of the New Castle County Vocational Technical School District to place Southbridge residents in the Apprenticeship Program. Provide scholarships for students facing financial hardships and cannot pay the \$150 administrative fee.**



**WHY**

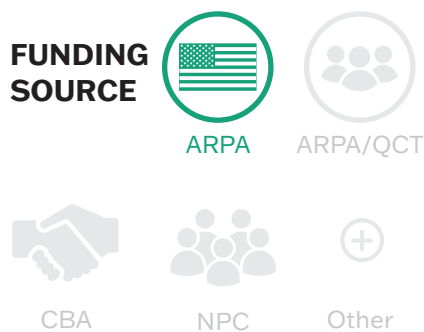
Working with unemployed workers, including "workers unemployed due to the pandemic or the resulting recession, or who were already unemployed when the pandemic began and remain so due to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic" is an eligible use of ARPA funding.

AED should use ARPA and other sources of funding to provide additional scholarships and conduct outreach to unemployed residents in Southbridge.

**WHO**

AED; Civic Association

**Action Item ER 11: Work with Zip Code Wilmington to place Southbridge residents in their computer science bootcamp program.**



**WHY**

Working with unemployed workers, including "workers unemployed due to the pandemic or the resulting recession, or who were already unemployed when the pandemic began and remain so due to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic" is an eligible use of ARPA funding.

Zip Code Wilmington should use ARPA and other sources of funding to provide additional scholarships and conduct outreach to unemployed residents in Southbridge.

**WHO**

Zip Code Wilmington; Civic Association

**Action Item ER 12: Work with TechImpact to place Southbridge residents in their free IT training program.**



**WHY**

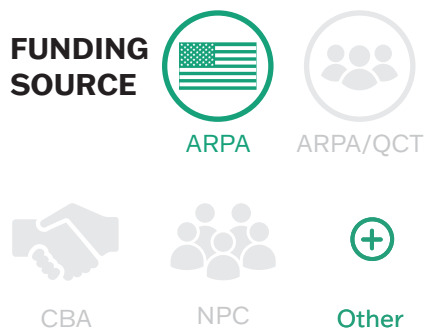
Working with unemployed workers, including "workers unemployed due to the pandemic or the resulting recession, or who were already unemployed when the pandemic began and remain so due to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic" is an eligible use of ARPA funding.

TechImpact should use ARPA and other sources of funding to provide additional programming and conduct outreach to unemployed residents in Southbridge.

**WHO**

TechImpact; Civic Association

**Action Item ER 13: Work with the Delaware Center for Horticulture to expand the Branches to Chances program and create an aquaponics and vertical farming jobs training program in Southbridge.**



**WHY**

Working with unemployed workers, including "workers unemployed due to the pandemic or the resulting recession, or who were already unemployed when the pandemic began and remain so due to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic" is an eligible use of ARPA funding.

Aquaponics and vertical farming will be appropriate for the area due to soil toxicity, pollutants, and flooding, which make farming difficult otherwise.

**WHO**

Delaware Center for Horticulture

**Action Item ER 14: In riverfront developments in South Wilmington, allocate 25% of retail space to rent out at below market rents to Black or Hispanic owned-businesses.**



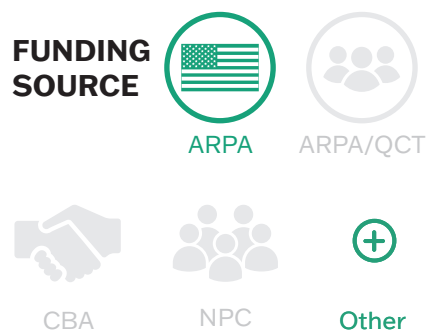
**WHY**

The new developments should realize community development goals by supporting local minority-owned businesses.

**WHO**

Developers who sign on the CBA

**Action Item ER 15: Develop policy to invest in green jobs by working with the Nature Society, the Delaware Center for Horticulture, and other organizations with training programs.**



**WHY**

Expanding green jobs will help the city achieve climate goals while expanding employment options. Working with unemployed workers, including "workers unemployed due to the pandemic or the resulting recession, or who were already unemployed when the pandemic began and remain so due to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic" is an eligible use of ARPA funding.

**WHO**

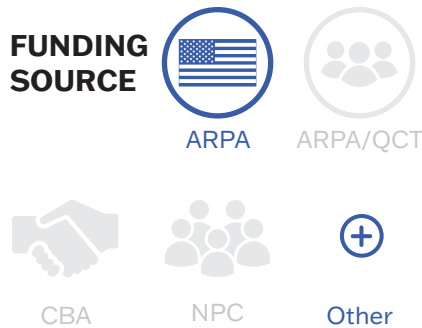
Southbridge CDC



## YOUTH AND EDUCATION (YE)

These Action Items will ensure youth in Southbridge have a place to play and learn in the community.

**Action Item YE 01: Hire a full-time staffer at the Southbridge Community Development Corporation or Neighborhood House who will serve as the Community Education Ambassador. They will get the word out about existing programs and pull initiatives and resources together for Southbridge youth.**



### WHY

Southbridge youth need an advocate who will make sure existing resources are available to them, and that additional, targeted programming is brought into the community for Southbridge youth. Currently, Neighborhood House offers programming for teens in the community, but many are not aware of them. Bringing together stakeholders and programming for youth should be staffed by a full-time professional, as this is a priority for many residents in Southbridge.

### WHO

Southbridge CDC, Neighborhood House

**Action Item YE 02: Work with identified evidence-based programs that offer the cultural restoration benefits to the positive growth and development of youth, such the Boys and Girls Club of Delaware and The Warehouse, to establish a youth program at the former Elbert-Palmer Elementary School or other sites within the neighborhood.**



### WHY

"More youth programming" was the #1 response provided by respondents to the Questionnaire when asked what their most important priorities were for the Neighborhood Plan and the #3 top response when asked what their priorities were for the CBA. The former elementary school is perceived by many in the community as a sign of disinvestment from the City. In addition to the jobs training program that the Port of Wilmington has promised to bring, the City should work with the Boys and Girls Club, The Warehouse, or other programs to provide a safe and communal space for teenaged residents of Southbridge. Funds for the program can be based on a community benefits agreement (CBA) between developers and the community. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allows for expenditure of funds for "evidence-based educational services and practices to address the academic needs of students, including tutoring, summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

### WHO

Christina School District; Boys & Girls Club of Wilmington; The Warehouse

**Action Item YE 03: Partner with Buccini/Pollin Group and BPG Sports to provide youth programming at Chase Fieldhouse to serve Southbridge youth. Partner with Delaware Blue Coats to have Southbridge youth attend games for free, participate in youth leagues for free, and have programming free of charge for residents of Southbridge.**



#### WHY

BPG Sports has a clear Vision: "To build strong bonds of tomorrow with the best facilities of today while enhancing and revitalizing our communities." A strong bond with the Southbridge community will be crucial for community support of future development by BPG. BPG has been aided by at least \$6 million in public funds to develop the 76ers Fieldhouse and Chase Fieldhouse, while only paying \$1,094 a month to lease property from the Riverfront Development Corporation. BPG has sent tickets to Neighborhood House, and the program should be formalized through a CBA and ensure that the benefits are clearly communicated and shared with across the neighborhood.

#### WHO

BPG, Delaware Blue Coats, Southbridge Civic Association, Neighborhood House

**Action Item YE 04: Study the feasibility of bringing an independent charter school and other educational resource supports to Southbridge. Use funds from the Tax Increment Financing District (discussed in Short-Term and Urgent Steps for Implementation) to finance the study and supportive programming. If a school is established in South Wilmington but not in Southbridge, children of Southbridge should receive priority for enrollment.**



#### WHY

Residents view education as one of the top priorities for Southbridge. The closure of Elbert-Palmer Elementary School is seen as a devastating sign of loss and disinvestment in the future of the community. A study should examine and devise a phased plan to bring back an educational institution in the community and deeply engage the community in the process.

#### WHO

Southbridge CDC; Southbridge Civic Association; Delaware Department of Education

**Action Item YE 05: Neighborhood House, Delaware Nature Society Trail Ambassadors, and the Delaware Center for Horticulture should work on programming for youth and a "Friends of Southbridge Wetland Park" group at the Southbridge Wetland Park.**



**WHY**

The programming and design of spaces at the Southbridge Wetland Park should be explicitly for Southbridge residents. Ownership of the space can be cultivated through programming for youth and other residents.

**WHO**

Neighborhood House, Delaware Nature Society Delaware Center for Horticulture

**Action Item YE 06: Work with Neighborhood House and the Delaware STEM Council on connections to other STEAM or performing arts magnet programs to connect Southbridge youth to these opportunities. Offer Southbridge youth preferred admission to STEM programs.**



**WHY**

Throughout the project's phases, residents and stakeholders have expressed wanting more programming and fun activities for youth in Southbridge. When asked to select the five most important recommendations for the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan, residents prioritized "More Youth Programming". The Delaware STEM Council was created to evaluate the state of STEM education in local schools and recommend ways to improve it.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allows for expenditure of funds for "evidence-based educational services and practices to address the academic needs of students, including tutoring, summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

The Southbridge Civic Association should work with the Delaware STEM Council to identify gaps in programming for Southbridge youth. Access to these opportunities will provide opportunities for youth interested in pursuing jobs or education in STEM fields.

**WHO**

Neighborhood House, Civic Association, Southbridge CDC



**Action Item YE 07: Invest in improvements to Elbert Playground with input from residents in surrounding housing units.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



Other

**WHY**

The park is an important amenity for the western side of the Southbridge neighborhood. Additionally, there are concerns by residents in the area that the Wilmington Housing Authority homes will be razed to make room for new development. Investment in Elbert Playground can be a first step towards communicating public investment for existing residents.

**WHO**

4th District Neighborhood Planning Council; Council Member Michelle Harlee; Southbridge Civic Association; SWPN; WHA

**Action Item YE 08: Fund improvements to Hicks Park, including the resurfacing of the basketball court, to make it a space for youth in Southbridge. Resurface the tennis court and provide supportive programming and equipment.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



Other

**WHY**

The park is an important amenity for the eastern side of the Southbridge neighborhood. Residents expressed a desire to keep the tennis courts at Hicks Park.

**WHO**

4th District Neighborhood Planning Council; Council Member Michelle Harlee; Southbridge Civic Association; SWPN

## AFFORDABLE LIVING (AL)

These Action Items will ensure that Southbridge residents are able to continue to live in the community.

**Action Item AL 01: Build on Neighborhood House's HUD Certified Housing Counseling Program and provide funds to the Southbridge Community Development Corporation (CDC) to develop affordable housing, provide housing vouchers, residential counseling, housing navigation assistance, and home renovations and repairs.**



### WHY

Housing that is affordable was one of the top choices for respondents of the Questionnaire when asked what their priorities were for both the Neighborhood Action Plan as well the Community Benefits Agreement. Respondents also wrote in the response that they would like to see more renovation grants.

There are existing programs at Neighborhood House that more residents should take advantage of, and Southbridge CDC can provide additional supports through development of affordable housing.

Sources of funding for the programs can come from the City of Wilmington, the Anti Displacement Fund as funded by the CBA, the establishment of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District or the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The American Rescue Plan Act allows for expenditure of funds for "Housing vouchers, residential counseling, or housing navigation assistance" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

### WHO

Neighborhood House, Southbridge CDC

**Action Item AL 02: Ensure that 20% of all newly built residential complexes with 10 or more units in the Riverfront (those areas zoned W-4 in South Wilmington) are affordable for households making 30% or less of area median family income as defined by HUD with priority given to applicants who previously lived in or currently live in Southbridge. At least 30% of these affordable units should have 2 or more bedrooms.**








### WHY

In 2019, residents making below \$21,650 in the area was considered by the federal government to be "extremely low" income. Providing housing opportunities for low-income residents is critical to ensuring desegregation of housing in Wilmington and equitable access to opportunities along the riverfront.






### WHO

Southbridge CDC, Developers (BPG or other)

**Action Item AL 03: Amend the zoning code to establish a requirement for permanently affordable housing units with a 20% affordability requirement within areas zoned W-4 (Waterfront Residential Commercial) in the city of Wilmington.**

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>   |  |  | <b>WHY</b><br>The City of Wilmington should amend the existing zoning code to attach affordability requirements to ensure that new developments serve existing residents in addition to new residents attracted to the city by the development. Ensuring affordability is key to making sure that all residents can benefit from growth. |
|   | ARPA  | ARPA/QCT  |  |
|  |  |  | <b>WHO</b><br>City of Wilmington   |
| CBA   | NPC   | Other   |  |

**Action Item AL 04: Connect renters in Southbridge, especially those living in public housing, to homebuyer education and financial literacy courses with partners such as Neighborhood House, the YWCA, the Delaware Community Reinvestment Action Council, Habitat for Humanity, and the Delaware Financial Literacy Institute.**

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>   |   |   | <b>WHY</b><br>Housing that is affordable was one of the top choices for respondents of the Questionnaire when asked what their priorities were for both the Neighborhood Action Plan as well the Community Benefits Agreement.<br>Sources of funding for the programs can come from the City of Wilmington, the Anti Displacement Fund as funded by the CBA, or the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).<br>The American Rescue Plan Act allows for expenditure of funds for "Housing vouchers, residential counseling, or housing navigation assistance" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. |
|   | ARPA  | ARPA/QCT  |   |
|  |  |  | <b>WHO</b><br>Neighborhood House, Civic Association, Wilmington Housing Authority, Neighborhood House, Southbridge CDC  |
| CBA   | NPC   | Other   |   |



**Action Item AL 05: Neighborhood House will assist residents with applications to participate in JumpStart Wilmington, which trains residents to become developers of their own neighborhood.**



**WHY**

JumpStart Wilmington was launched to help Wilmington residents to become developers of their own neighborhood through quality, community-focused real estate development training and financing options.

Increasing local developer capacity and knowledge about real estate and community development is the key to ensuring that future development activities are equitable and benefit Southbridge residents.

Currently, there is a perceived barrier to entry to the program due to its lengthy application. Neighborhood House can funnel more residents into the program by assisting with their applications.

**WHO**

Neighborhood House, Southbridge Civic Association, JumpStart Wilmington

**Action Item AL 06: Through the Southbridge CDC, collectively acquire and develop land in Southbridge in ways that benefit the community as a whole. Connect local nonprofit partners to the Land Bank to identify a suitable site for land reuse towards activities such as a community garden, gathering space, and other uses. Explore the option of creating a community land trust.**



**WHY**

There is a growing movement to empower community members to collectively invest, either through a community development corporation (CDC), community land trust, or through a community investment trust model that empowers communities to determine the direction of their economic recovery.

**WHO**

Southbridge CDC, Southbridge Civic Association, Wilmington Land Bank

**Action Item AL 07: Improve communication between the Southbridge Civic Association and Wilmington Land Bank -- invite Land Bank staff to the Civic Association meetings so residents can engage with the Land Bank about properties in the neighborhood. Create an inventory of properties that are owned by local residents vs. what is owned by investors who do not live in Wilmington. If they are local, give them resources to get up to code.**



#### WHY

The new blight bill went into effect July 2021 -- if there is a property owned by someone who does not live in Southbridge who is not taking care of the property, the City can begin the process of enforcement, and if property continues to be neglected, processed towards becoming City inventory. Communication between Land Bank and residents will be key to flag those properties.

#### WHO

Civic Association, Land Bank, Southbridge CDC

**Action Item AL 08: Provide grants or forgivable loans to low-income residents so they can buy a \$1 home from the Land Bank.**



#### WHY

The Land Bank currently requires residents to show they have all funds to refurbish the home before they can buy it for \$1. Traditional lenders do not provide loans for the program because the homes are in bad condition, and the loan itself requires a down payment. ARPA allows for expenditure of funds for "housing development to increase supply of affordable and high-quality living units" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

#### WHO

Land Bank, City of Wilmington, Southbridge CDC

**Action Item AL 09: Provide low-interest loans for low-income landlords, homeowners, and home buyers.**

**FUNDING  
SOURCE**



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



NPC



Other

**WHY**

Low-interest loans for low-income landlords, homeowners, and home buyers will provide financing to help pay for repair and maintenance costs, emergency assistance, and down payment assistance. Given the economic impact of COVID and the increase in people who have lost their jobs, it is essential to offer financial assistance to low-income landlords, homeowners, and home buyers.

**WHO**

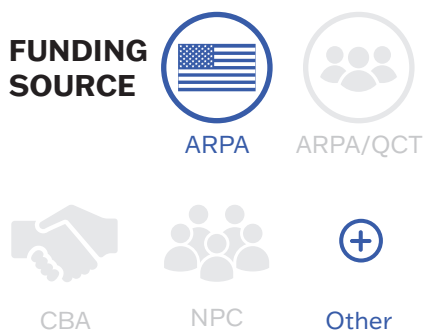
Land Bank, City



## BETTER HEALTH (BH)

These Action Items will improve health outcomes for Southbridge residents.

**Action Item BH 01: Coordinate with Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, Neighborhood House, the State of Delaware and the Wilmington COVID-19 Community Mobilization Group to execute an awareness campaign around vaccines and provide opportunities for residents to ask questions about the vaccine.**



### WHY

Education on the COVID-19 vaccine and information on where to get it will be especially important if there will be different vaccines every year. The Civic Association can work to engage community members of all ages to develop a more effective campaign.

### WHO

Southbridge Civic Association, Christina Care, Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, Neighborhood House

**Action Item BH 02: Partner with the Wilmington Community Advisory Council (WCAC) to implement evidence-based community violence intervention programs in Southbridge to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence.**



### WHY



Wilmington experienced a 50% surge in gun violence in 2020 amid the pandemic. Southbridge has seen an increase in shootings, with 4 shootings in 2020 compared to 2 in 2019, and there have already been 4 shooting incidents in 2021 as of July 15, 2021. ARPA allows for expenditure of funds for "evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.




### WHO

City of Wilmington; Southbridge Civic Association; Wilmington Community Advisory Council (WCAC)

**Action Item BH 03: Advocate for DNREC to consider a cumulative impact assessment when considering permits from potentially polluting industries.**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

 ARPA  ARPA/QCT



 CBA  NPC  Other




**WHY**  
Heavy industry in Wilmington City Council passed a resolution 2019 urging DNREC to use cumulative impact assessments, but the recommendation has not been implemented. Southbridge has been a site for industrial development in ways that are incompatible with the residential uses, and they have borne the brunt of environmental contamination. A cumulative impact assessment would take into consideration the impact of all activities within a community before issuing a permit.

**WHO**  
DNREC, City of Wilmington

**Action Item BH 04: Amend zoning to reflect the future land use map from Wilmington 2028: A Comprehensive Plan for Our City and Communities, which designates the waterfront of Southbridge as Waterfront Mixed Commercial / Light Manufacturing. This land use category is for uses "appropriate for location adjacent to residential neighborhoods," and has "special setback and design requirements special setback and design requirements to ensure room for the development of flood control measures and public access to the waterfront.**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

 ARPA  ARPA/QCT



 CBA  NPC  Other




**WHY**  
Heavy industry in Southbridge is affecting physical and mental wellbeing through pollution and trucking. Transitioning uses away from heavy industry and towards uses that are more appropriate for a residential area enhances wellness as well as providing opportunities for community-oriented waterfront development.

**WHO**  
City of Wilmington, Department of Planning and Development, City Council

**Action Item BH 05: Train, hire, and deploy Community Health Workers (CHWs).**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

 ARPA  ARPA/QCT

 CBA  NPC  Other

**WHY**  
"Funding community health workers to help community members access health services and services to address the social determinants of health" is an eligible use of ARPA funds if applied within a Qualifying Census Tract (QCT) or to other populations, households, or geographic areas that are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

**WHO**  
Henrietta Johnson Medical Center; Christina Care; Delaware Division of Public Health

**Action Item BH 06: Work with Neighborhood House and Christina Care to expand their food access programs to provide free low-cost fruits and vegetables for residents.**

**FUNDING SOURCE**



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



NPC



Other

**WHY**

Southbridge residents currently have limited access to fresh foods in their neighborhood, and low-income households face food insecurity due to lack of affordability. Neighborhood House should work to expand communications about their existing programs so more residents are able to access them.

**WHO**

Neighborhood House, Christina Care, Henrietta Johnson Medical Center

**Action Item BH 07: Partner with Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, Christina Care, and other medical providers to increase access to online medical care, including mental health care.**

**FUNDING SOURCE**



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



NPC



Other

**WHY**

Access to virtual healthcare providers can reduce barriers to healthcare for Southbridge residents, and ARPA funds can be used to invest in broadband infrastructure. The Treasury's interim rule allows for local jurisdictions to providing funding for covering "Expenses for establishing and operating public telemedicine capabilities for COVID-19-related treatment."

**WHO**

City of Wilmington, Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, Christina Care



## IMPROVED MOBILITY (IM)

**These Action Items will make it easier for Southbridge residents to access amenities in Wilmington while enhancing safety from speeding cars and trucks.**

**Action Item IM 01: Coordinate with DART to enhance transit access to jobs and healthy foods. Begin by extending the planned shuttle route between the train station and South Market Street to Southbridge.** Stops should include the Wilmington Transit Center, the Delaware Technical Community College Wilmington Campus, Rt 9 Library/Rose Hill Community Center, and Neighborhood House or Henrietta Johnson Medical Center. Support the service being provided free of charge for all users.

### FUNDING SOURCE



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



NPC



Other

### WHY

The shuttle will provide free transportation for Southbridge residents to access the riverfront developments along South Market as well as amenities across the river, including the Transit Center. Advocacy may be required to insure that the shuttle services is free.

### WHO

DART; Riverfront Development Corporation

**Action Item IM 02: Conduct a road diet analysis to study improvements that would reduce speeds and improve safety—while still maintaining good traffic flow—through Southbridge.**

### FUNDING SOURCE



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



NPC



Other






### WHY

The streets of Southbridge are heavily trafficked by cars and trucks traveling at speeds well over the limit. A road diet can reduce speeds and emphasize the pedestrian and residential nature of the area. A recent DART grant submission has requested this study.






### WHO

WILMAPCO; City of Wilmington

**Action Item IM 03: In coordination with the Southbridge Main Street and WILMAPCO, update the 2008 Southbridge Circulation Study.** The study should reduce, slow, and restrict (where possible) thru truck traffic in the Southbridge core and divert traffic to Christina Avenue. It should examine a road diet, D Street sweep removal, truck reduction options, and consider the impact of the changes suggested by the South Market Street Master Plan to provide stronger traffic calming effects in Southbridge.

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>   |  |  | <b>WHY</b><br>New Castle Avenue and Heald Street are being used as truck routes and a throughway despite it running through the heart of the Southbridge neighborhood. A road diet will be integral to slowing down automobile speeds and making the area safer for residents to walk and use other modes of transportation while enticing drivers to stop and shop in Southbridge. Additionally, the South Market Street Master Plan has recommended traffic-calming measures in South Wilmington and may impact Southbridge, and changes in traffic patterns in both the western and eastern sides of South Wilmington should be analyzed. |
|   | ARPA  | ARPA/QCT  |  |
|  |  |  | <b>WHO</b><br>WILMAPCO; City of Wilmington   |
| CBA   | NPC   | Other   |  |

**Action Item IM 04: Create a branded neighborhood gateway and high-quality walkways that improve the bike and pedestrian access at the new Heald Street Bridge at D Street, and at the triangular intersection of New Castle Avenue, Heald Street, and A Street at the northern gateway into Southbridge.** This effort should work through the Main Street Program and build off the Southbridge Streetscape Project. Coordinate with DelDOT on the design of the new Heald Street Bridge at D Street. The design should include place making features and help beautify a gateway into Southbridge.

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>   |  |  | <b>WHY</b><br>A branded neighborhood gateway will provide a sense of arrival and build community pride. Reduce the bridge from 2 lanes in each direction to one and create a larger separated space for bicycling and walking into the neighborhood. |
|   | ARPA  | ARPA/QCT  |  |
|  |  |  | <b>WHO</b><br>DelDOT; Merchants Association, Civic Association, community development corporation  |
| CBA   | NPC   | Other   |  |

**Action Item IM 05: Continue to develop a series of pedestrian and bike priority streets and make targeted investments in ensuring that sidewalks are ADA compliant and supportive of local businesses on S Heald St, New Castle Ave, and A Street.**



**WHY**

A priority network of walkable pedestrian streets will prioritize economic development opportunities within the community and provide needed access to shops and services. These routes must be fully ADA compliant, with wide, shaded walkways, and without cars parked on sidewalks. Space near businesses should be prioritized for sidewalk cafes or other outdoor amenity spaces.

NOTE: As part of Phase 3 of the Transportation Alternatives Project (TAP) project, a bike lane is being investigated for Claymont Street, which runs parallel to New Castle Avenue..

**WHO**

DeIDOT (TAP program)

**Action Item IM 06: Extend New Sweden Street to Church Street, with a focus on multi-modal access.**



**WHY**

An extension of New Sweden Street to Church Street will provide additional access between the waterfront, Market Street, the pedestrian bridge across the Christina River and the community. Develop the street with a multimodal path that prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

**WHO**

City of Wilmington, DeIDOT

**Action Item IM 07: Improve sidewalks and bike linkages on the Heald Street Bridge over the Christina River.**



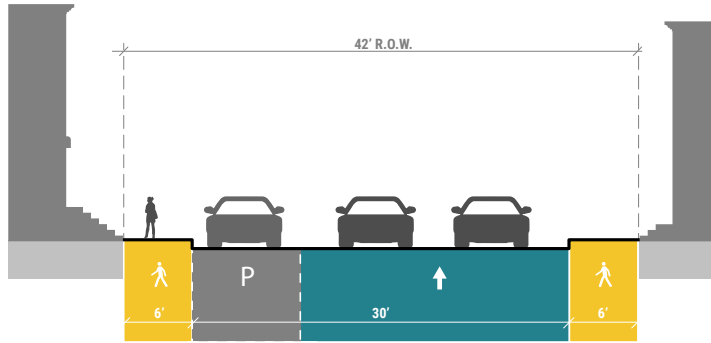
**WHY**

Due to the closing of Elbert-Palmer, students from Southbridge are now crossing the river to attend the Bancroft School. In order to facilitate a safe commute for the children, the Heald Street Bridge should be improved to increase pedestrian visibility and bikeability.

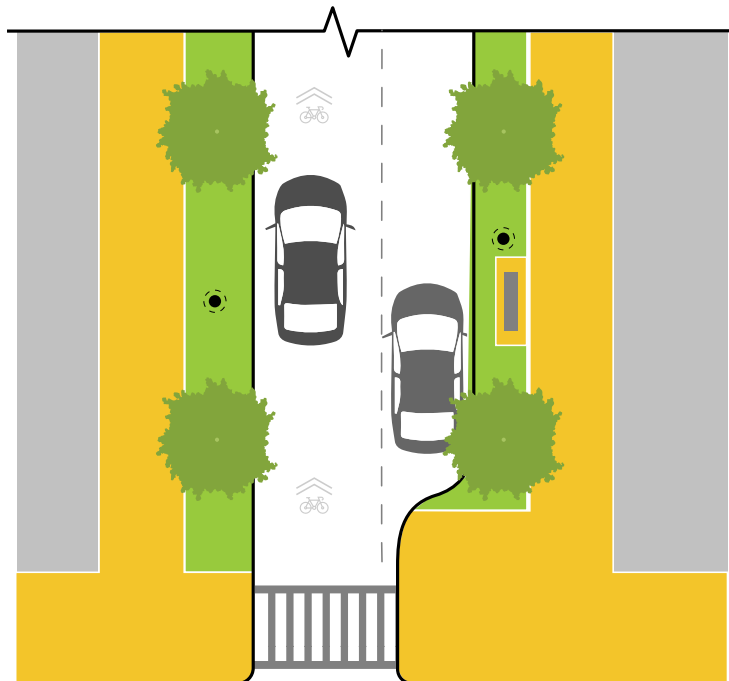
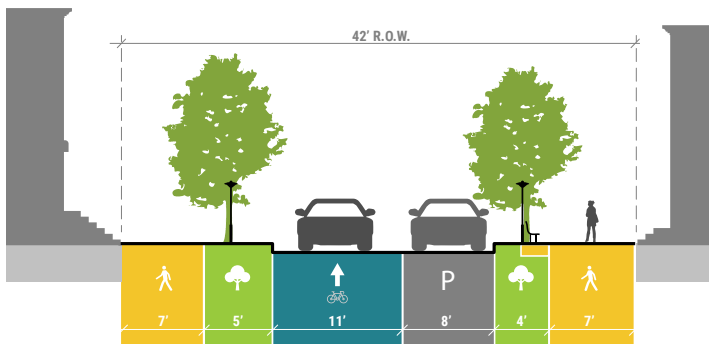
**WHO**

DeIDOT; WILMAPCO





Existing

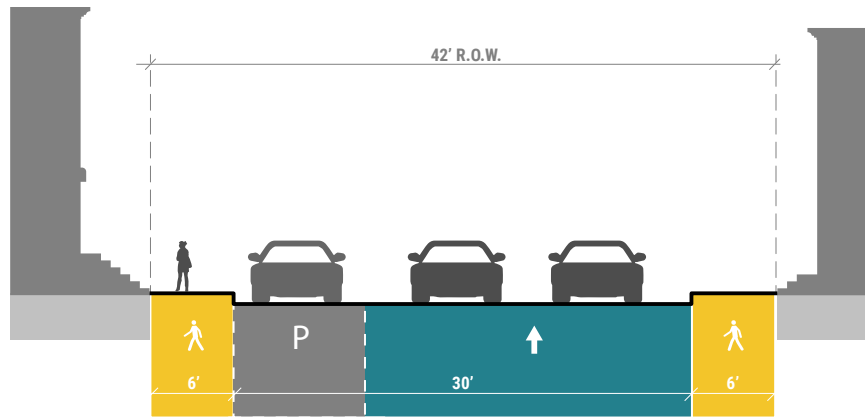


Proposed

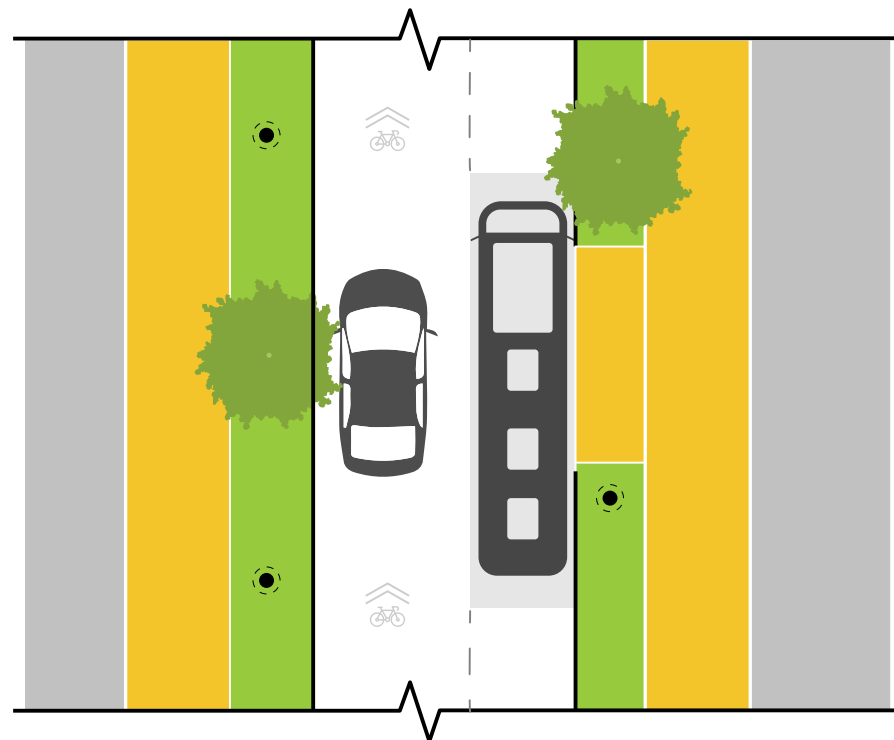
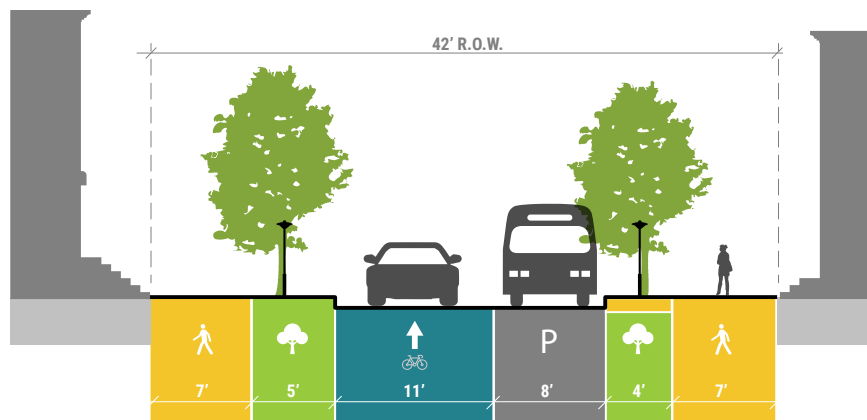
## Potential Concepts for New Castle Avenue:

- Widened sidewalks to encourage pedestrian activities and commercial uses
- Green space and street trees to discourage parking on sidewalks
- Smaller caliper trunks on street trees and higher canopy will still allow good visibility while discouraging parking on sidewalks. Will also create more comfort through shade and reduce urban heat island effects in the neighborhood.
- Narrowed crossings to support slower auto speeds and prioritize pedestrians

NOTE: As part of Phase 3 of the Transportation Alternatives Project (TAP) project, a bike lane is being investigated for Claymont Street, which runs parallel to New Castle Avenue.





Existing



Proposed




**Action Item IM 08: Improve the pedestrian and bike linkages between the core of Southbridge and Eden Park.**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

 ARPA  ARPA/QCT



**WHY**  
Eden Park is going through improvements, and improvements to infrastructure linking the park to Southbridge would facilitate greater use of the park.

**WHO**  
DeIDOT; WILMAPCO

 CBA  NPC  Other




**Action Item IM 09: Investigate and invest in a Healthy Street Loop, as suggested in a June 2020 SWPN letter to the City of Wilmington, which closes B Street and half of A Street to thru traffic on certain days of the week as a walking/biking loop.**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

 ARPA  ARPA/QCT



**WHY**  
A Healthy Street Loop would increase opportunities for physical activities by creating spaces for walking and biking within the community.

**WHO**  
WILMAPCO; SWPN; City of Wilmington; Council Member Michelle Harlee; University of Delaware Living Lab Research Group

 CBA  NPC  Other




**Action Item IM 10: Take advantage of Urban Bike Project's Earn-a-Bike Program to organize a neighborhood bike ride and connect residents with a bike. Develop program opportunities for youth to learn about bicycling, bike repair and give them opportunities to earn a bike through volunteer hours.**

**FUNDING SOURCE**

 ARPA  ARPA/QCT






**WHY**  
UBP's program provides real world skills through the bike repair programs and provide youth with greater independence through biking. It can also increase comfort levels and familiarity with biking for youth in the neighborhood.

**WHO**  
Neighborhood House; Urban Bike Project; Council Member Michelle Harlee






 CBA  NPC  Other








**Action Item IM 11: Building on the 2016 Wilmington Bikeshare Feasibility Study, expand access from Southbridge to other parts of the city by bringing a bike share program and provide subsidized bike share options and adaptive bikes.**

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>   |  |  | <b>WHY</b><br>Bikeshare can expand bike access in an affordable way and increase job access for residents. Adaptive bikes can expand access to people who do not comfortable biking in a traditional bike and people with disabilities. |
|   | ARPA  | ARPA/QCT  |   |
|  |  |  | <b>WHO</b><br>Wilmington Bicycle Advisory Committee (WBAC), also known as Bike Wilmington   |
|   | CBA   | NPC   |   |

**Action Item IM 12: Locate and connect community gardens, gathering spaces, and parks, strategically, reutilizing vacant land to create walkable destinations within Southbridge.**

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>   |    |    | <b>WHY</b><br>Vacant land can be a community amenity if utilized for gardens, beautification projects, and green infrastructure (e.g., rain gardens). A network of such spaces throughout the community provide access to healthy food and creates walkable destinations in the community. |
|   | ARPA  | ARPA/QCT  |  |
|  |  |  | <b>WHO</b><br>Southbridge CDC; Land Bank   |
|   | CBA   | NPC   |  |

**Action Item IM 13: The City's Department of Planning should work with the owners of the former Diamond Oil site to ensure there is public access to the waterfront and to ensure that the site is used in a way that adds to the community's neighborhood feel.**

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>   |  |  | <b>WHY</b><br>Given the large scale of the site and its location on the waterfront, it has the potential to begin transitioning the Southbridge waterfront towards more community-oriented uses and an active waterfront walkway. |
|   | ARPA  | ARPA/QCT  |   |
|  |  |  | <b>WHO</b><br>City of Wilmington Department of Planning, Southbridge Civic Association, SWPN, site owners.  |
|   | CBA   | NPC   |   |

## RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE (RCC)

**These Action Items will make enhance the preparedness of Southbridge residents for flooding, sea level rise, and rising temperatures associated with climate change.**

**Action Item RCC 01: SWPN, SBCA, Delaware Nature Society, and DNREC coordinate to ensure there is funding for the separation of the stormwater pipes and the sewer pipes through DNREC's Clean Water Initiative for Underserved Communities, Delaware Nature Society's Celan Water Campaign, and other federal, state, and local funding mechanisms.**



### WHY

The separation of the stormwater and sewer pipes is critical to the function of the Southbridge Wetland Park and to the reduction of flooding in the neighborhood. Currently, the project has been delayed due to lack of available funds.



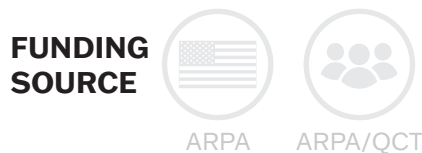
### WHO

SWPN, SBCA, Delaware Nature Society, DNREC

**Action Item RCC 02: Pass an ordinance for an additional impact fee attached to new developments in South Wilmington for their monthly water/sewer/stormwater bill to fund the following items:**

- The separation of the sewer and stormwater lines
- The maintenance of green infrastructure in Southbridge
- Shoreline protection that will be needed in the future in South Wilmington
- A flood insurance trust fund that can offset the cost of flood insurance in Southbridge
- Other measures that can assist the City towards participating in FEMA's Community Rating System to lower the cost of flood insurance premiums for Southbridge residents.

The impact fee would be imposed on private developers by the City of Wilmington to pay for supporting public infrastructure.



### WHY

An impact fee is a one-time fee imposed on new developments by local governments to offset the cost of new developments. New developments and new residents increase the demands for and pressure on infrastructure, such as water and sewer lines, roads, parks, schools, and other services. Some units also will receive public dollars to subsidize their development, creating a trade-off between investments in existing communities and newer ones.

Impact fees can be used to pay for capital expenditures:



- The sewer and drainage lines must be separated to allow the Wetland Park to function as designed and reduce flooding in Southbridge and South Wilmington.

- Rain gardens reduce flooding but currently do not have an entity or funding source for maintenance and upkeep.
- Shoreline protection, such as bulkheads and floodwalls, will be critical to prevent flooding in Southbridge and the rest of South Wilmington.
- High flood insurance premiums can be a barrier to homeownership or even push residents out of homes in Southbridge. An impact fee would offset the increase in impervious surfaces from the new developments and can be reinvested into a fund for residents to use to pay for part of their flood insurance.

#### WHO

City Council; Public Works; City of Wilmington; New Castle County; State of Delaware

**Action Item RCC 03: Work with DNREC, DeIDOT, New Castle County, and the City of Wilmington to pursue funding available to "disadvantaged communities" (DAC) as designated by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) within the Executive Office of the President.** The designation is still being determined, but DACs will receive at least 40% of the benefits of Build Back Better Agenda investments on infrastructure, clean energy, and other climate-related programs.



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



Other

#### WHY

There is a high likelihood that Southbridge and other environmental justice (EJ) communities will be designated as a DAC. Local advocacy should take place to ensure that Southbridge is primed to receive funds to complete the Southbridge Wetland Park, separate the sewage and stormwater lines, and make other improvements to increase the community's resilience against flooding and climate change.

#### WHO

Southbridge CDC; DNREC; DeIDOT; New Castle County; City of Wilmington

**Action Item RCC 04: Participate in FEMA's Community Rating System to lower flood insurance premiums.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT



CBA



Other

#### WHY

Wilmington has yet to participate in the program, which could reduce premiums for its residents between 5% and 45% depending on the flood prevention measures which are put in place.

#### WHO

FEMA, Public Works, City of Wilmington



**Action Item RCC 05: Implement strategies such as living shorelines, bulkheads, and floodwalls along vulnerable areas; continue working with state and Federal governments to further study these improvements and evaluate sewer system upgrades. The strategies should be implemented for both the western and eastern sides of South Wilmington (e.g., Southbridge).**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

#### WHY

These strategies can mitigate impacts from sea level rise in low-lying communities

#### WHO

City of Wilmington



CBA



Other

**Action Item RCC 06: Implement an Emergency Alert system that alerts residents via text, email, phone call, and an app. Residents will be alerted in real-time regarding events such as flash floods and lifting of ordinances to park on sidewalks, medians, and parking lots of public facilities.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

#### WHY

Residents in Southbridge are exposed to frequent flooding, including the submerging of vehicles, which leads to significant financial burdens. A timely alert system is crucial to protect residents and their properties.

#### WHO

City of Wilmington, Office of Emergency Management



CBA



Other

**Action Item RCC 07: Work with the Office of Emergency Management and provide continual education about climate disaster preparedness and how to prepare for the recovery process, including documentation needed for assistance programs.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

#### WHY

Given the area's vulnerability to flooding and sea level rise, the community of Southbridge should be provided with all available resources to prepare for future weather events.

#### WHO

Southbridge Civic Association, Office of Emergency Management



CBA



Other

**Action Item RCC 08: Promote and enhance access to community resources including cooling centers, warning tools such as flashing lights on flooded roads, and education on climate risk.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

Community resources are important to increase resiliency in the everyday lives of residents

**WHO**

City of Wilmington



CBA



Other

**Action Item RCC 09: Identify critical roads at risk for future flooding and develop mitigation strategies. This will involve working collaboratively with key partners at the state and regional level to ensure climate change risks are incorporated into long-term planning efforts.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

Proactively identifying at-risk roads can mitigate future transportation challenges related to flooding.

**WHO**

City of Wilmington



CBA



Other

**Action Item RCC 10: Action Item: Along with traffic calming measures such as bump outs and curb extensions, install and maintain green infrastructure with water-absorbing plants and trees. Installation should be by DeIDOT and maintenance should be coordinated by the Southbridge CDC.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

As traffic calming measures are implemented, leverage the wider sidewalks to create flood mitigation and resilience measures.

**WHO**

DeIDOT, Department of Public Works, Southbridge CDC



CBA



Other

**Action Item RCC 11: Target investments in gray infrastructure including pop up-sizing and pump station upgrades to areas that will be most impacted by sea level rise.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

Updated gray infrastructure can prevent localized flooding during storm events.

**WHO**

City of Wilmington



CBA



Other

**Action Item RCC 12: Incentivize the installation of rain gardens, with a focus on the eastern part of the neighborhood (around Bradford Street) that does not directly benefit from the Southbridge Wetland Park.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

A targeted approach is necessary to better control floods in the neighborhood.

**WHO**

City of Wilmington



CBA



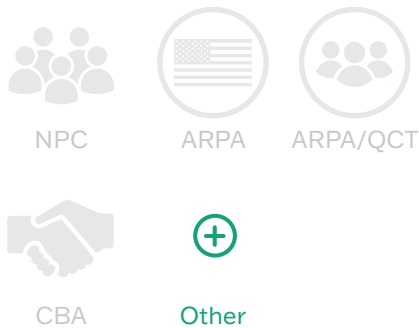
Other



**Action Item RCC 13: Action Item: Work with the Urban Forestry Office of the Department of Public Works to select and specify appropriate trees to plant in Southbridge. Trees should be of a species that does not obstruct sight lines (should have a thin trunk, high canopies) and does not disrupt sidewalks and sewer and water lines.**

Once species are identified, increase tree plantings and tree canopies in Southbridge. Organize residents by block and request trees for the entire block. The City has a budget allotment for the planting, removal, and replanting of trees in accordance with the City's tree ordinance.

Residents can individually call the Public Works (DPW) Call Center at (302) 576-3878 or organize as blocks to request multiple trees for multiple properties as once. Upon calling, the request will be assigned a service number that can be tracked. Please note that the DPW does not handle backyard trees.



#### WHY

Trees are green infrastructure that can absorb stormwater, reduce temperatures on hot summer days, and remove air pollutants. Distribution of trees across communities is a racial equity issue, as communities that were redlined in the 1930s have fewer trees and have higher recorded temperatures.

#### WHO

Southbridge Civic Association, Urban Forestry Office of Department of Public Works

**Action Item RCC 14: Work with the Urban Forestry Office at Department of Public Works and the Trail Ambassadors of the Delaware Nature Society to increase community awareness about the importance of maintenance of trees as well as the impact of trees on health equity and mitigating heat island effects and pollution.**



#### WHY

Resident buy-in as well as awareness about the need to properly maintain trees is critical to increase the tree canopy in the community. The Southbridge Civic Association should work with the City to increase awareness about the benefits of trees in the community, as well as the equity implications tied to the issue.

#### WHO

Southbridge Civic Association, Urban Forestry Office of Department of Public Works, Delaware Center for Horticulture

**Action Item RCC 15: Use the DNREC fines levelled against local industries for removal or trimming of overgrown trees on private properties. To report overgrown trees in public streets, you can call the Public Works Call Center at (302) 576-3878.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

Overgrown trees on private properties are lifting sidewalks and growing into the residents' water and sewer systems. The overgrowth also harbors mosquitoes and intrusive growth in alleyways and empty lots.



CBA



Other

**WHO**

Southbridge Civic Association, DNREC

**Action Item RCC 16: Expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure by installing charging stations in public locations and workplaces, while also promoting electric vehicle charging in dense residential areas.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

Electric vehicles are important to reduce emissions and expanding EV facilities will promote their use.



CBA



Other

**WHO**

Public Works, City of Wilmington

**Action Item RCC 17: Enhance resiliency of food systems through promoting urban agriculture.**



NPC



ARPA



ARPA/QCT

**WHY**

A diversity of food options including urban agriculture increases resilience in the face of food system disruptions.



CBA



Other

**WHO**

City of Wilmington





# 07



## Appendix

# Appendix A: COVID Action Plan

Memo: prepared by Asakura Robinson, June 29, 2021

## Memo purpose:

- Provide context and data on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Southbridge community.
- Provide a set of concrete recommended action steps, along with justifications on why those actions should be taken

## Context:

**Southbridge is a neighborhood that takes pride in its rich history of civic engagement, community unity, and unique culture. It is a community anchored by institutions including Neighborhood House, a multi-purpose community center; Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, a community health center incepted at the heart of the Civil Rights Movement; its houses of worship; and most crucially, its people.**

Economic conditions, specifically, poverty and unemployment, are the base foundation for wellbeing. If a person is in poverty or doesn't have a job, that can make it very difficult to access high-quality healthcare, food, housing, and other elements of life that lead to good health and wellbeing.

South Wilmington has higher rates of poverty, with 31% of households being in poverty, compared to 22% in Wilmington and 7% in New Castle County. The 31% for is for all of South Wilmington, so if we were able to isolate the data for just Southbridge, this figure may be even higher. Additionally, the estimates are based on 2015-2019 data, which does not reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying economic shocks.

## POVERTY AND LACK OF INSURANCE

|           | South Wilmington | Wilmington | County |
|-----------|------------------|------------|--------|
| Poverty   | 31%              | 22%        | 7%     |
| Uninsured | 17%              | 20%        | 13%    |

*Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year data for Census Tract 19.02 in New Castle County, DE, Wilmington, DE and New Castle County, DE*

In 2019, an estimated 17%, or 1 in 6 residents, of South Wilmington did not have health insurance. Since then, with the COVID-19 pandemic and massive spike in unemployment that occurred with it in 2020, many more people may have lost health insurance tied to their jobs, and access to affordable and quality care may have been placed further out of reach for many residents in Southbridge.

## SURVEY ON COVID-19

In April to June of 2021, Southbridge residents were invited to fill out a survey on their needs and perceptions of their community. 49 survey responses were received.

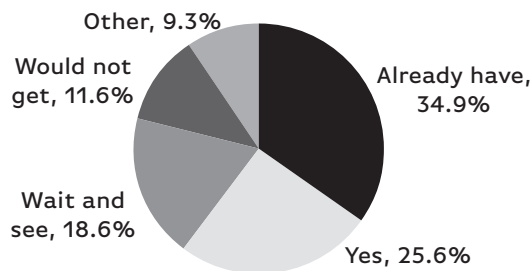
## Key Findings:

- When asked if they felt as though they had access to all of the services they needed (e.g. rental assistance, access to food, child care, other daily needs) since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 69% responded that they did have access to all needed services, and 31% responded that they did not.
- When asked if they felt as though their

community has what they need to protect themselves from exposure to the COVID-19 virus, 60% said they did have what they needed, and 40% said they did not.

- Reasons for saying they did not have what they needed included the difficulty of getting vaccinated, lack of information regarding available resources, and lack of adherence to guidelines regarding masks and social distancing by other community members.
- When asked if they would get the COVID-19 vaccine if it became available, 30% said they would not get it or wait and see what other people do. 35% said they have already received the vaccine, and 26% said they would get it if it was available.

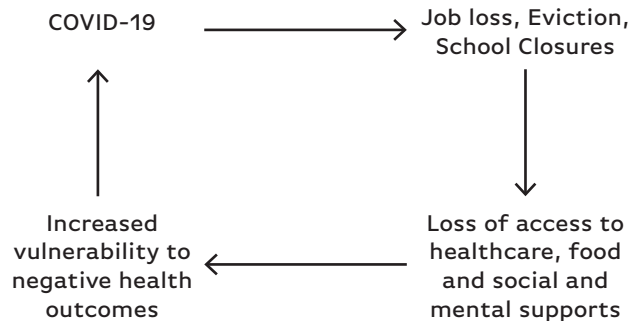
Q7. If a COVID-19 vaccine were to become available to you, would you get it?



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed social and economic inequalities that are impacting health outcomes. In the past year and a half, we have seen a negative cycle of COVID-19 negatively impacting foundations of health like job and education access, and those crumbling foundations leading to negative health outcomes, including outcomes related to COVID-19. When thinking about ways to improve wellbeing and health through the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan, we will need to take into account these co-dependencies.

## COVID-19'S IMPACT ON HEALTH OUTCOMES



Community BBQ, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw

| <b>Category</b>         | <b>Action</b>   | <b>The "Why"</b>   |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Coordinate and Execute  | Work with the Southbridge Civic Association, Neighborhood House, the Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, and the South Wilmington Planning Network to facilitate recovery efforts and community outreach. Start by having a monthly roundtable of Southbridge stakeholders  | There is a need to establish a strong working group that can ask for and implement necessary measures from the City of Wilmington and other stakeholders who have the funding and capacity to bring appropriate programs and resources to Southbridge.   |
|                         | Continue to maintain an open line of communication with the City of Wilmington to make the case that economic recovery in Wilmington should be inclusive of Southbridge, an area with documented structural inequities and under investment   | Invest in economic recoveries across Wilmington should be done in a way that addresses historic inequities, and Southbridge, where over 30% of households have incomes below poverty and has been impacted by industrial pollution, should receive a close look as a focus of economic recovery efforts.                   |
| Increase Access to Care | Partner with Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, Christina Care, and other medical providers to train, hire, and deploy Community Health Workers.   | Community Health Workers who are members of the Southbridge community can make care more accessible and provide information that would otherwise not be available in a culturally competent way.   |
|                         | Plan and execute an education campaign around vaccines and provide opportunities for residents to ask questions about the vaccine.  | Education on the COVID-19 vaccine and information on where to get it will be especially important if there will be different vaccines every year.  |
|                         | Partner with Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, Christina Care, and other medical providers to increase access to online medical care, including mental health care.   | Access to virtual healthcare providers can reduce barriers to healthcare for Southbridge residents   |
| Address Root Causes     | Explicitly tie COVID-19 recovery with economic recovery by investing in improvements to commercial corridors, home improvement and rent assistance, job training, youth programming, and local businesses.  | Make sure residents, local organizations, businesses, and youth are able to access the resources needed to grow positively and recover fully from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.   |
|                         | Amend zoning to reflect the future land use map from Wilmington 2028: A Comprehensive Plan for Our City and Communities, which designates the waterfront of Southbridge as Waterfront Mixed Commercial / Light Manufacturing. This land use category is for uses "appropriate for location adjacent to residential neighborhoods," and has "special setback and design requirements special setback and design requirements to ensure room for the development of flood control measures and public access to the waterfront. | Heavy industry in Southbridge is affecting physical and mental wellbeing through pollution and trucking. Transitioning uses away from heavy industry and towards uses that are more appropriate for a residential area enhances wellness as well as providing opportunities for community-oriented waterfront development. |



| <b>Category</b>           | <b>Action</b>   | <b>The "Why"</b>   |
|---------------------------|---|--|
|                           | Support community efforts to collectively acquire and develop land in Southbridge in ways that benefit the community as a whole. Connect local nonprofit partners to the Land Bank to identify a suitable site for land reuse towards activities such as a community garden, gathering space, and other uses. | There is a growing movement to empower community members to collectively invest, either through a community development corporation (CDC) or through a community investment trust model that empowers communities to determine the direction of their economic recovery. |
| Improve Physical Wellness | Invest in a Healthy Street Loop, as suggested in a June 2020 SWPN letter to the City of Wilmington, which closes B Street and half of A Street to thru traffic on certain days of the week as a walking/biking loop.  | Increase opportunities for physical activities by creating spaces for walking and biking within the community.   |
|                           | Fund improvements to Hicks Park, including the resurfacing of the basketball court, to make it a space for youth in Southbridge   | The park is an important amenity for the eastern side of the Southbridge neighborhood  |
|                           | Invest in improvements to Elbert Playground with input from residents in surrounding housing units.   | The park is an important amenity for the western side of the Southbridge neighborhood  |
|                           | Work with Christina Care to expand their Food Rx program to provide free low-cost fruits and vegetables for residents.  | Southbridge residents currently have limited access to fresh foods in their neighborhood, and low-income households face food insecurity due to lack of affordability.   |



# **Appendix B: The Foundations of Wellness existing conditions report**



# Foundations of Wellness Report

The Southbridge Neighborhood Plan

Drafted February 23, 2021



**Healthy Communities Delaware**  
*alignment. investment. impact.*



**South Wilmington**  
PLANNING NETWORK



**ASAKURA  
ROBINSON**



ASAKURA  
ROBINSON

## **CONTACT**

612 Andrew Higgins Blvd., Suite 2007  
New Orleans, LA 70130

**MAYU TAKEDA**

(504) 656-9129

[mayu@asakurarobinson.com](mailto:mayu@asakurarobinson.com)



# Contents

## **Southbridge in Context 107**

Introduction 109

Southbridge History 113

A shifting community 115

Moving forward in 2021 119

## **Prior Planning ..... 121**

Prior Planning 123

## **Health and COVID-19 ... 131**

Social Determinants of Health 133

Resident Economic Conditions 137

Housing 139

Internet and Computer Access 143

Education Access 147

Transportation Access 149

Health Conditions 157

Employment Opportunities 161

Impacts of Social Distancing 165

Social Cohesion 167

Land Use and Zoning 170

Sea Level Rise and Flooding 175

## **Equitable Development 181**



# **Southbridge in Context**



# Introduction

Southbridge is a neighborhood that takes pride in its rich history of civic engagement, community unity, and unique culture. It is a community anchored by institutions including Neighborhood House, a multi-purpose community center; Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, a community health center incepted at the heart of the Civil Rights Movement; its houses of worship; and most crucially, its people.

In 2006, the South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan was created to “Reconcile and unite the existing neighborhood with proposed development, so as to create a South Wilmington that is richer socially as well as physically.”

Fifteen years later in 2021, much has happened to alter the social and physical wellbeing of South Wilmington and the neighborhood of Southbridge. The City is in the process of constructing the very Southbridge Wetland Park that was envisioned by the 2006 Neighborhood Plan, and better pedestrian connections are being funded between Southbridge and the Riverfront, another recommendation of the 2006 Plan.

**“Create a Central Park located to the immediate west of Southbridge. Use this park as the lungs of the neighborhood. Its wetlands should be cleaned up and improved for flood retention. Traverse the park with trails, linking active recreation facilities.”**

**Recommendation from the 2006 South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan**



A photograph of a park scene with children playing on a swing set and hula hoops. The image is covered with a semi-transparent green filter. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**Southbridge is  
a neighborhood  
that takes pride in  
its rich history of  
civic engagement,  
community unity,  
and unique culture.**



GREENVILLE

# REGIONAL CONTEXT

BELLEFONTE

EDGEMOOR

ELSMERE

NEWPORT

WILMINGTON  
MANOR



The implementation of these components of the 2006 Plan have occurred in tandem with development along the Riverfront. Christina Landing town homes and high-rise apartments have brought new residents to South Wilmington, and the Christina Crossing retail center brought with it a 70,000 square foot ShopRite grocery store. These developments, along with the recent construction of the Christina River Bridge are bringing with it a renewed interest in development in South Wilmington.

**“With the construction of the Christina River Bridge which will open hopefully in early 2020, we see now this side of the river — the east bank— [as] sort of the next frontier of riverfront development.”**

**Megan McGlinchey, Executive Director of the Riverfront Development Corporation<sup>1</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> Sophia Schmidt, Delaware Public Media, “South Wilmington residents wonder what 'next frontier' of riverfront development will bring,” Feb 14, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3qDkBLi>

# Southbridge History

Southbridge is a historic African-American neighborhood with roots that extend from the abolitionist movement to civic involvement, religious participation, and Black political leadership. Southbridge has a rich history and represents an important part of Wilmington's identity and history.<sup>4</sup> In 1880, Southbridge was home to 1,883 people in 374 households. African-Americans made up about 20% of the population and Whites made up about 66% of the population. Most of the African-Americans lived on the west side of Southbridge, while Whites settled in the center of the neighborhood.<sup>5</sup> By 1900, the population of Southbridge had grown to 2,887 people and the African-American population had grown to 671, but only made up 23% of the population.<sup>6</sup> The African-American population continued to grow in the neighborhood and swelled in the 1920s and after WWII.



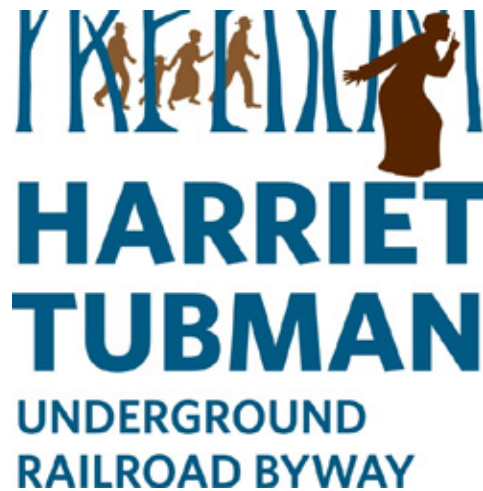
Source: Delaware Public Media, 2015

<sup>4</sup> University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, "Southbridge: An Historic Context for a Neighborhood in Wilmington, Delaware, 1870-1996". October 1996, <https://swpndotorg.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/southbridge-historical-context-ud-1996.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Historical patterns of development include agriculture, industrial, and residential uses. Industry, including iron mills, coal yards, and tanneries, was located primarily on the south side near the Market Street and Third Street bridges. Initial residential development was situated along Heald Street and clustered along A, B, and C streets.<sup>7</sup> In the marshy center of the neighborhood, there were about 10 flower farms.<sup>8</sup> The neighborhood street plan, laid out in a grid pattern for future development, was never realized due to the marshy terrain.<sup>9</sup> The lower-lying south side of the neighborhood has experienced periodic inundation—90% of it is within the 100-year floodplain.<sup>10</sup>



Source: Delaware Department of Transportation, 2021

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Lerner, Landscape Architecture Magazine, August 2017, [http://www.penpowerpublishing.com/uploads/1/0/5/0/10500378/lam\\_08aug2017\\_f1-delaware\\_restoration.pdf](http://www.penpowerpublishing.com/uploads/1/0/5/0/10500378/lam_08aug2017_f1-delaware_restoration.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> University of Delaware Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, "Southbridge: An Historic Context for a Neighborhood in Wilmington, Delaware, 1870-1996". October 1996, <https://swpndotorg.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/southbridge-historical-context-ud-1996.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Lerner, Landscape Architecture Magazine, August 2017, [http://www.penpowerpublishing.com/uploads/1/0/5/0/10500378/lam\\_08aug2017\\_f1-delaware\\_restoration.pdf](http://www.penpowerpublishing.com/uploads/1/0/5/0/10500378/lam_08aug2017_f1-delaware_restoration.pdf).



# Historic Neighborhood Institutions

## Henrietta Johnson Medical Center

Henrietta Johnson Medical Center (HJMC) is part of a national network of federally funded Community Health Centers (CHCs) delivering quality, comprehensive health services to America's medically underserved communities. In an era of escalating health care costs, CHCs like HJMC have been recognized as cost effective and a necessary alternative to emergency room primary healthcare services.

*Source: Delaware Online: The News Journal*

## Neighborhood House

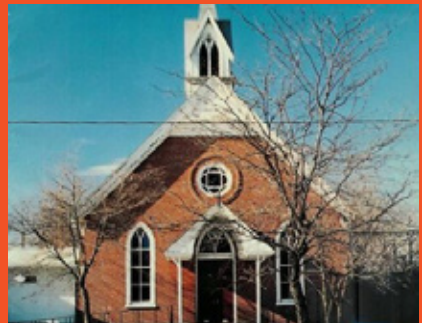
Neighborhood House, Inc. is a multi-purpose non-profit community center located in South Wilmington and Middletown. Founded in 1927 on a foundation of Christian principles, Neighborhood House provides transformational programs that positively impacts low to moderate-income individuals, families, and communities.



*Source: Delaware Public Media, 2019*

## Mt. Joy United Methodist Church

Mt. Joy United Methodist Church has been serving the Southbridge community for over 100 years. The Church is a central organizing hub for community fellowship, outreach initiatives, and service.



*Source: Mt. Joy United Methodist Church (Facebook Page), 2021*

# A shifting community

Looking at data between 2010 and 2019, a shift is beginning to occur in South Wilmington, as the population of residents identifying as White has increased by 42% (from 317 in 2010 to 451 in 2019) and residents identifying as Black decreased by 4% (from 1,557 in 2010 to 1,497 in 2019).<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, income levels appear to have also shifted in South Wilmington between 2010 and 2019. While 50% of households in South Wilmington were in the “Extremely Low Income” category (defined as making between 0% and 30% of the Median Family Income for the area), by 2019 that proportion had fallen to 31%.<sup>3</sup>

## Race in South Wilmington

|       | 2010  | 2019  | Count Change | Percent Change |
|-------|-------|-------|--------------|----------------|
| Black | 1,557 | 1,497 | -59          | -4%            |
| White | 317   | 451   | +134         | +42%           |



of South  
Wilmington  
Residents are  
People of Color

Compared to  
43% for all of  
New Castle  
County

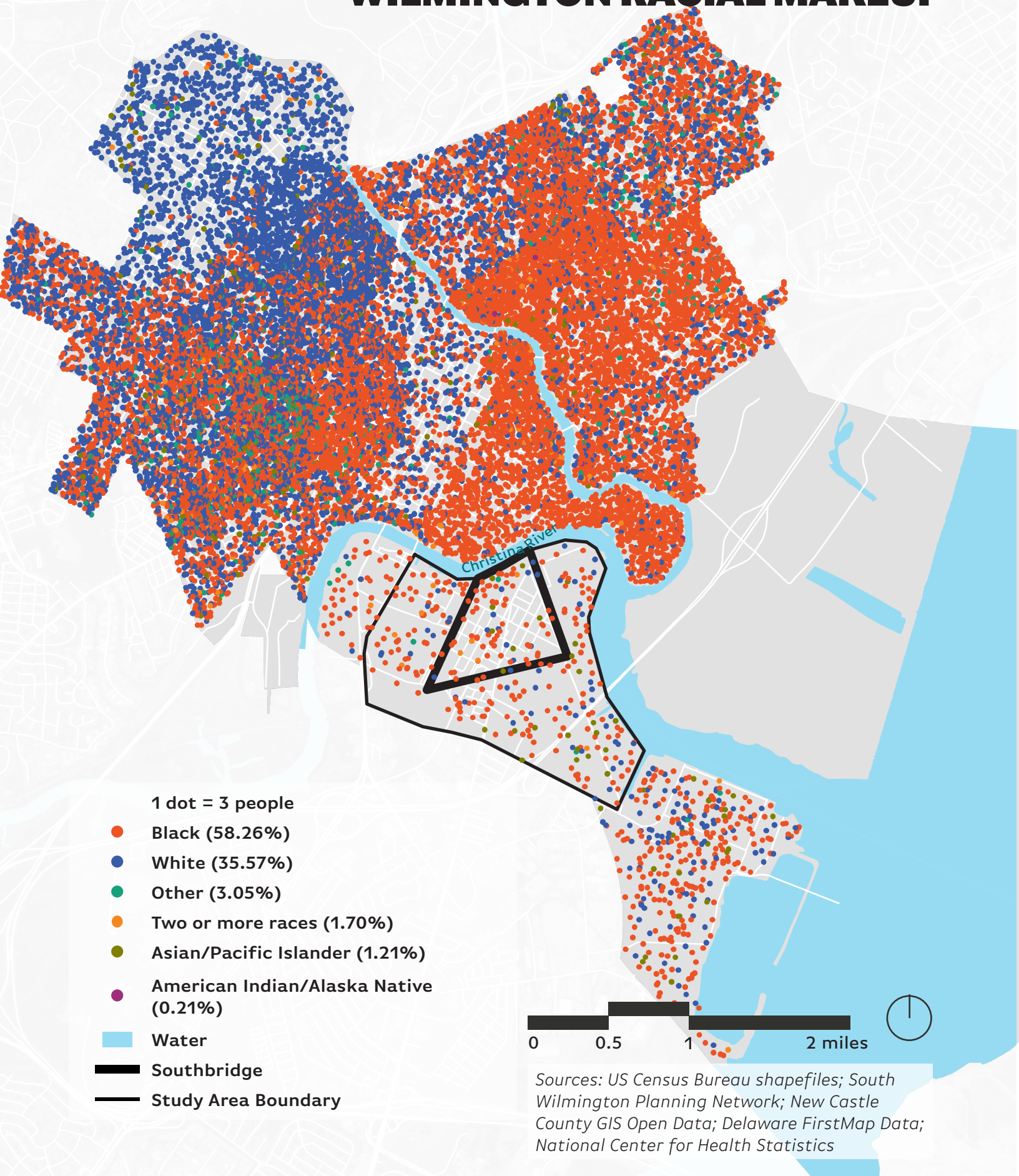
*Image Source: Ketut Subiyanto, Pexels*

*Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year data for Census Tract 19.02 in New Castle County, DE*

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, “B02001: Race,” 2010 and 2019 5-year estimates.

<sup>3</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, “S1901: Income in the Past 12 Months,” 2010 and 2019 5-year estimates.

# WILMINGTON RACIAL MAKEUP



In fact, the number of households with Extremely Low Income and Very Low Income fell by 42% and 45%, respectively. Conversely, the number of households with Middle Income and Mid- to High-Income increased by over 100% and 67%, respectively.

The change in income levels may be due to several potential causes: the residents of South Wilmington may have experienced an increase in income over the 9-year period, or higher-income residents may be moving to the area while lower-income residents are leaving South Wilmington.

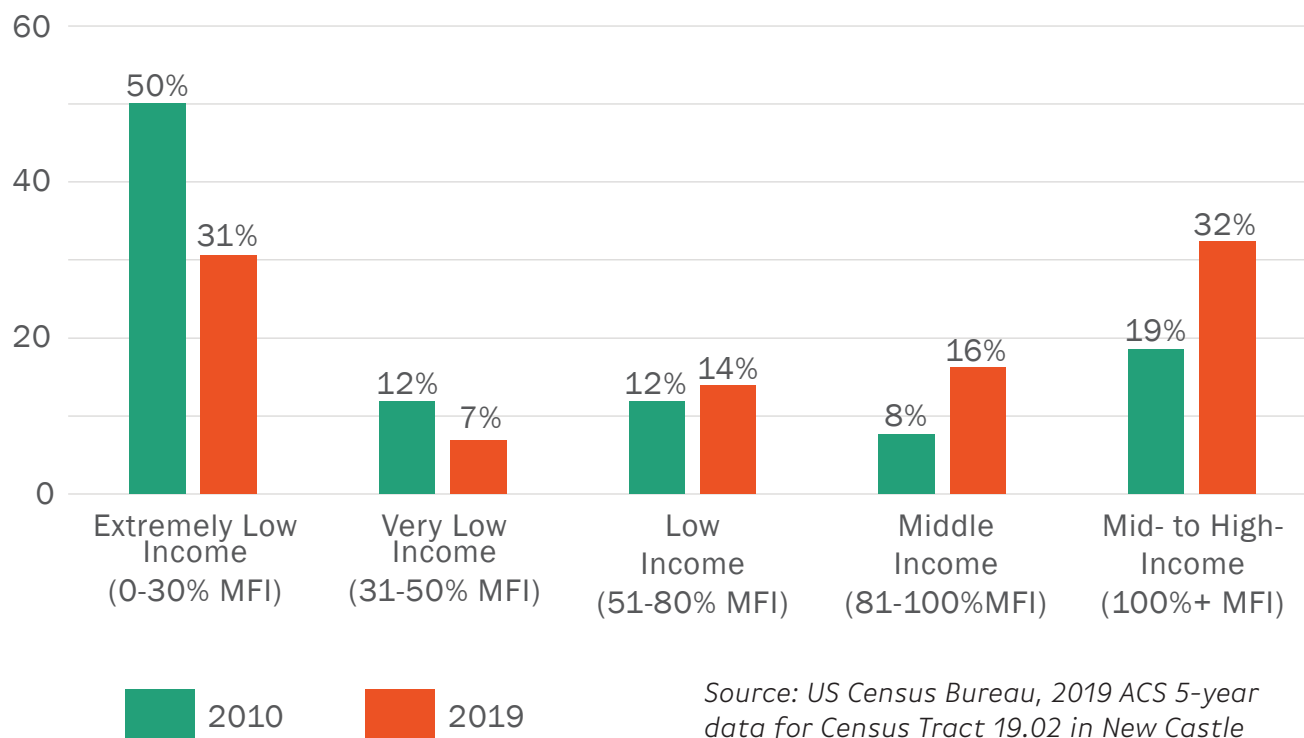
## **FY 2019 Income Levels for 2-person families in the Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington area**

| <b>Income Level</b>  | <b>South Wilmington</b> |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Extremely Low        | \$0 - \$21,650          |
| Very Low             | \$21,651 - \$36,050     |
| Low                  | \$36,051 - \$57,700     |
| Middle               | \$57,701 - \$72,167     |
| Upper-Middle to High | \$72,168+               |

*Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year data for Census Tract 19.02 in New Castle County, DE*

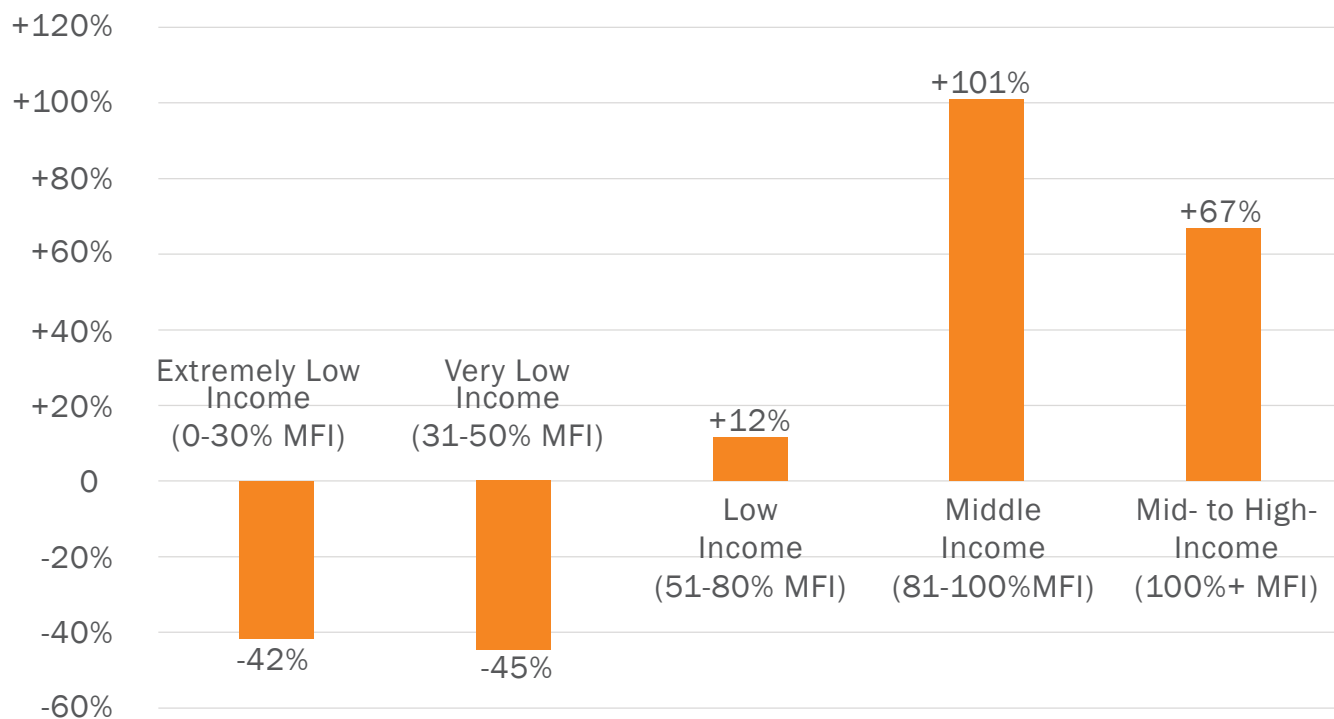


## South Wilmington income levels, 2010-2019



Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year data for Census Tract 19.02 in New Castle County, DE

## Percent change in income levels, 2010-2019



Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year data for Census Tract 19.02 in New Castle County, DE

# Moving forward in 2021

The 2021 Southbridge Neighborhood Plan is an update to the 2006 South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan. The Plan's orientation towards Southbridge is intentional, as we will center our recommendations and priorities on the historic neighborhood. As South Wilmington is transformed by riverfront and commercial developments to its west, the neighborhood of Southbridge may face pressures of gentrification and displacement that will compound the communities' challenges, including flooding and environmental contamination.

This "Foundations of Wellness Report" is a summation of where Southbridge is now, and it will serve as a map that identifies and paves the pathways towards our goals and desired outcomes for Southbridge.

## What is a neighborhood plan?

A neighborhood plan is a document that outlines key priorities for the future of the neighborhood. Each priority will be linked to coordinated actions by different stakeholders with the aim of achieving specific and measurable objectives to be accomplished.

In order to have a successful neighborhood plan, the planning process must get buy-in from the community, especially the residents of the neighborhood. The residents' input and buy-in are crucial because they are often the ones who will advocate and lobby for the plan to be implemented and hold stakeholders accountable. The plan must also engage and collaborate with stakeholders whose actions and support are necessary to implement the plan's suggested actions.

# SOUTHBRIDGE



- Water
- Park or Greenspace
- Southbridge
- Study Area Boundary
- Highway
- Road
- Railroad



Sources: US Census Bureau shapefiles; South Wilmington Planning Network; New Castle County GIS Open Data; Delaware FirstMap Data

The image features a solid blue background with two horizontal orange bars. One bar is located at the top, and the other is at the bottom. The text 'Prior Planning' is centered in the middle of the blue area.

**Prior**

**Planning**

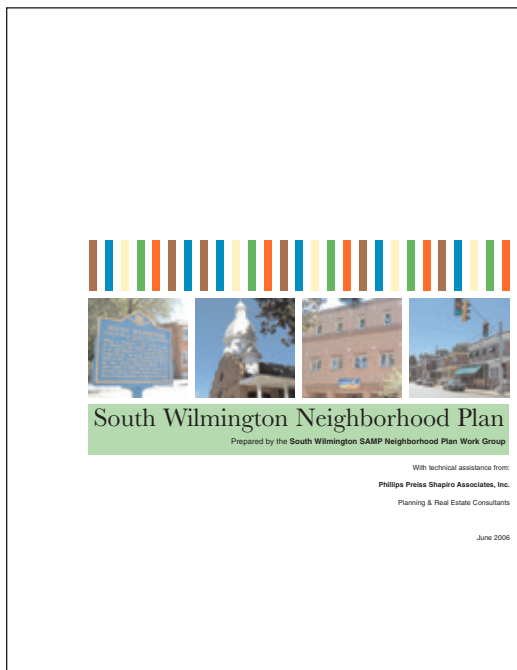




# Prior Planning

In the past 15 years, there have been several planning efforts to bring forth a unified vision for South Wilmington, and citywide plans have specifically addressed Southbridge and South Wilmington. The following section summarizes the Key Takeaways and Key Recommendations for each plan as they apply to the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan.

## South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan (2006)



South Wilmington SAMP Neighborhood Plan Work Group and Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc., "South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan," June 2006, [bit.ly/3twXeWb](http://bit.ly/3twXeWb)

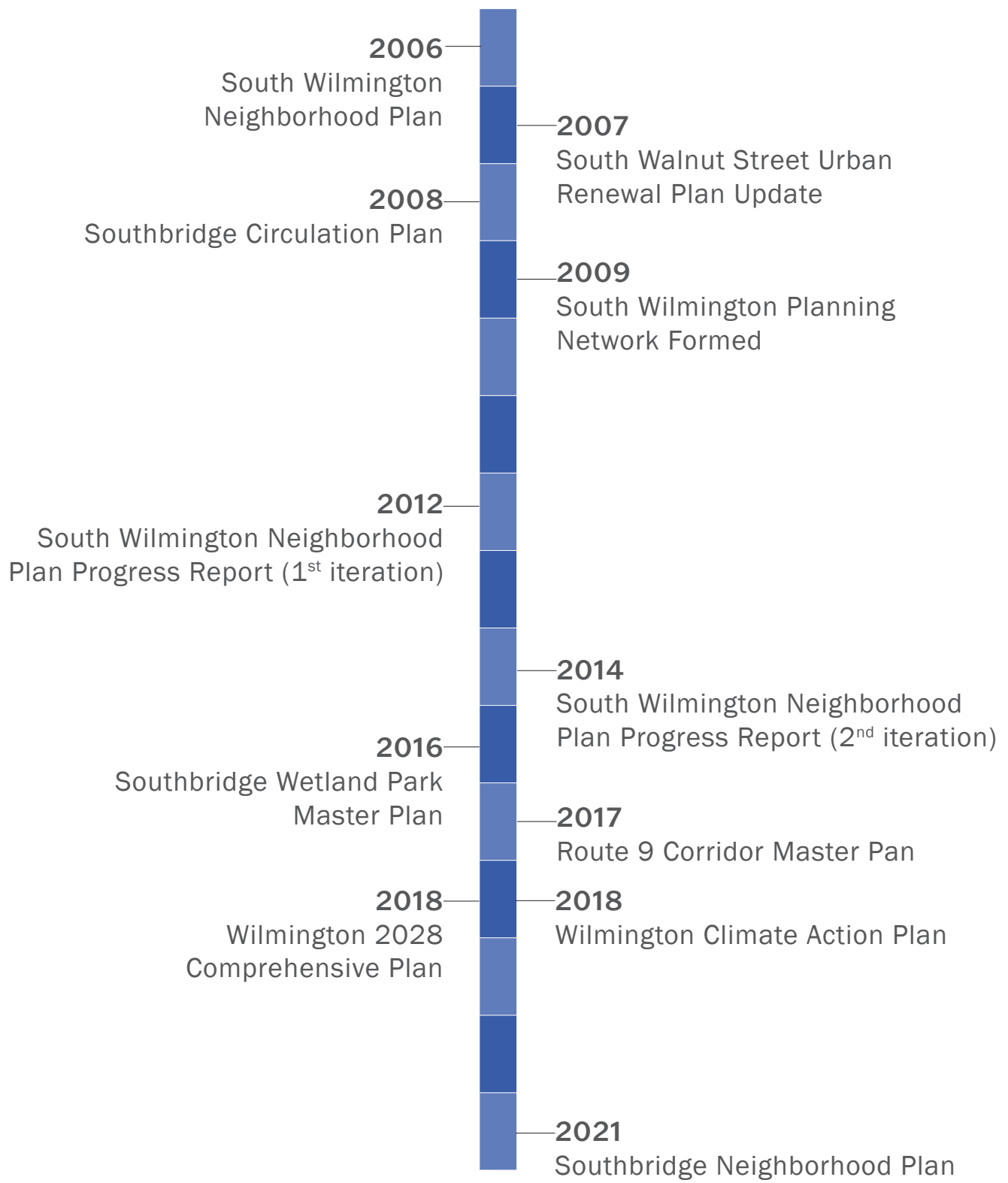
### Key Takeaways

- Acknowledges a fear that Southbridge will be overwhelmed by new development happening in South Wilmington and its character threatened by the displacement of residents and other effects of increased investment in the area.
- Highlights concepts that build on the existing strengths and assets in Southbridge, including creating a central park, creating a small "Main Street", and establishing anti-displacement and inclusionary zoning legislation.
- Southbridge is facing challenges and environmental justice issues around brownfields, flooding, preservation, and gentrification.

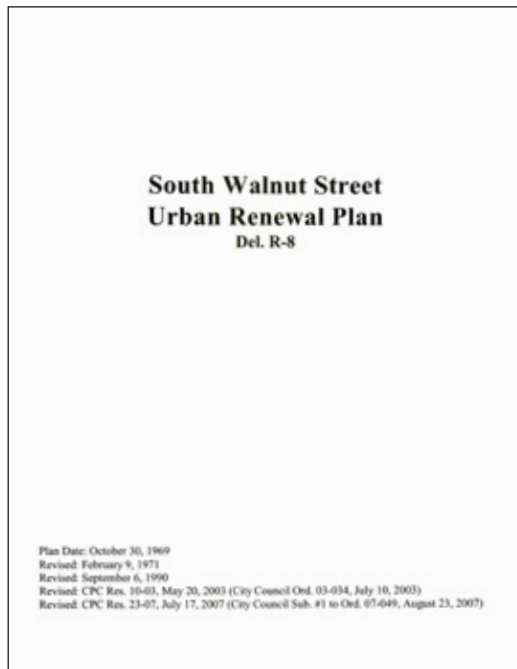
### Key Recommendations

- Create a community-controlled revolving fund.
- Enact inclusionary zoning for Southbridge.
- Create South Wilmington destinations in and adjoining the Southbridge core.
- Negotiate a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with new developers.
- Create a Central Park located to the immediate west of Southbridge.
- Explore a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to help pay for the park and a Park Improvement District (PID) for its continued upkeep/programming.
- Focus transit transfers at the A Street/Heald Street business district.
- Create gateway features that enhance approaches to the neighborhood

## Prior planning in the past 15 years



## South Walnut Street Urban Renewal Plan (2007)



City of Wilmington, Riverfront Development Corporation of Delaware, "South Walnut Street Urban Renewal Plan," July 2007, [bit.ly/2LhvrHV](https://bit.ly/2LhvrHV)

### Key Takeaways

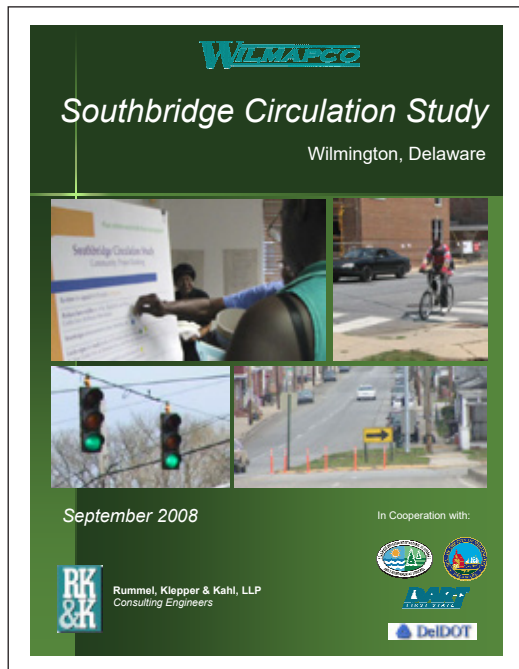
- Renewal actions include rehabilitation, conservation, clearance and redevelopment for commercial, residential and mixed uses, including light industrial.
- Predominant land use in the redevelopment area is commercial, including auto-related uses. Industrial uses are scattered, primarily along the riverfront and rail tracks. The other major land use is undeveloped land and wetlands.

### Key Recommendations

- Rezone M-1 Zoning (light manufacturing) to W-4 (Waterfront Residential and Commercial District).
- Provide a continuous riverfront park and trail along the entire length of the Christina River within the URP area.
- Rezone areas between and along Market and Walnut Streets as predominantly mixed-use development.
- A proposed traffic circle or other new intersection on Market and Walnut Streets, and DuPont Highway and Garasches Lane.
- Encourage design, construction, and operation of development sites that meet the criteria for a LEED certified rating.



# Southbridge Circulation Plan (2008)



WILMAPCO, Rummel, Klepper & Kahl, LLP,  
"Southbridge Circulation Study," September 2008,  
[bit.ly/3atpBM9](https://bit.ly/3atpBM9)

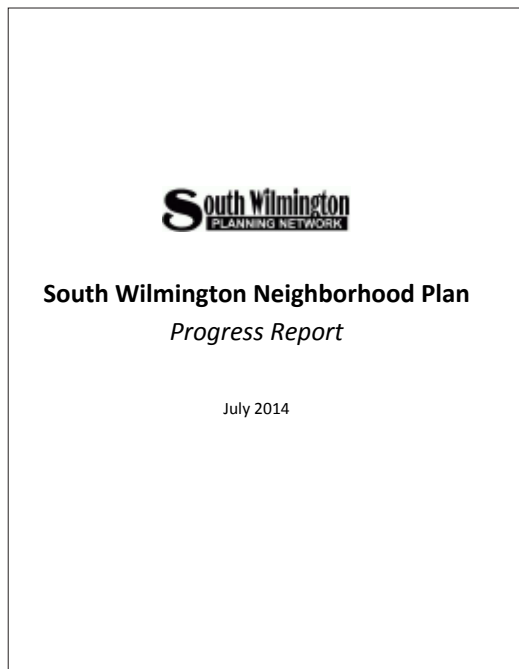
## Key Takeaways

- Southbridge residents identified major transportation concerns, including (1) heavy truck traffic; (2) speeding cars; (3) accessibility and connectivity to public transit; (4) unsatisfactory infrastructure (like sidewalks, etc.).

## Key Recommendations

- Streetscape enhancements and traffic-calming measures should be pursued on New Castle Avenue, South Heald Street (U.S. 13), and A Street.
- Construction of a bypass to divert trucks around the Southbridge core.
- Retiming traffic signals to a 25 mph progression.
- Reroute Bus Route 17 to the new ShopRite and the Salvation Army sites; Reroute Bus Route 8 to pass through the Southbridge core; and add additional bus shelters.
- Secure funding to improve sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle lanes and paths, etc.

## Progress Report on the 2006 Neighborhood Plan (2014)



South Wilmington Planning Network, "South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan Progress Report," July 2014, [bit.ly/2MzhVzZ](http://bit.ly/2MzhVzZ)

### Key Takeaways

- The South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan had a total of 48 recommendations.
- 64% of the recommendations from the 2006 Neighborhood Plan have seen either full or partial progress, while the other 35% saw no progress.
- The Housing Affordability, Maintenance and Development area has the most recommendations with no progress. Parks, Open Space and Environmental Quality and Transportation Improvement has made considerable progress.

### Key Recommendations

- Neighborhood Plan recommendations that have not progressed, but should still be pursued, should be taken up as projects by the South Wilmington Planning Network (SWPN).

| Category   | # of Recommendations | No Progress | Some Progress | Recommendations Fulfilled |
|--|----------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Housing Affordability, Maintenance, and Development  | 14                   | 10 (72%)    | 2 (14%)       | 2 (14%)                   |
| Parks, Open Space, and Environmental Quality         | 11                   | 1 (9%)      | 2 (18%)       | 8 (72%)                   |
| Retail Development, Employment and Community Service | 16                   | 5 (31%)     | 5 (31%)       | 6 (38%)                   |
| Transportation Improvement                           | 7                    | 1 (15%)     | 0 (0%)        | 6 (85%)                   |
| Total  | 48                   | 17 (35%)    | 9 (18%)       | 22 (46%)                  |

## South Wilmington Wetlands Park Master Plan (2016)



City of Wilmington, Delaware, "Wetlands Project Update," December 20, 2016, [bit.ly/3pHYeUS](https://bit.ly/3pHYeUS)

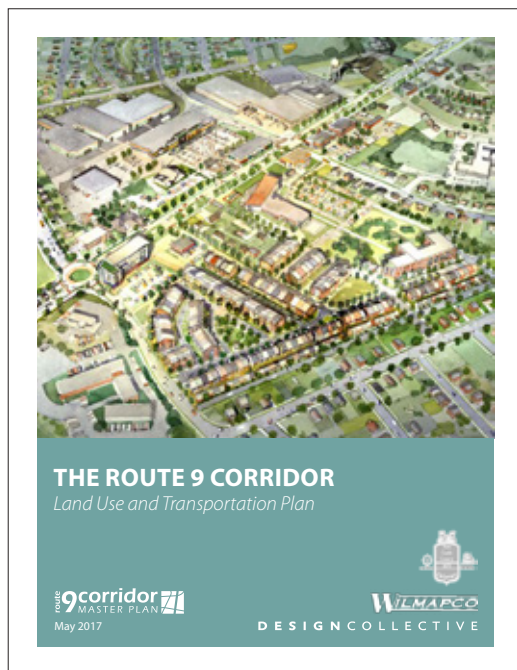
### Key Takeaways

- The Wetlands Park can serve as an opportunity to enhance economic development, provide jobs to residents, eliminate one of the largest brownfields in the city, and increase the property tax base.
- The project is expected to reach final completion in summer of 2021.

### Key Recommendations

- Mitigate flooding.
- Improve water quality.
- Restore a low functioning tidal wetland.
- Clean up a brownfield.
- Create a safe and attractive wetlands park.
- Reduce mosquito breeding grounds.

## Route 9 Corridor Master Plan (2017)



WILMAPCO, Design Collective, RCLCO, Toole Design Group, "Route 9 Corridor Master Plan," May 2017, [bit.ly/3toqqhR](https://bit.ly/3toqqhR)

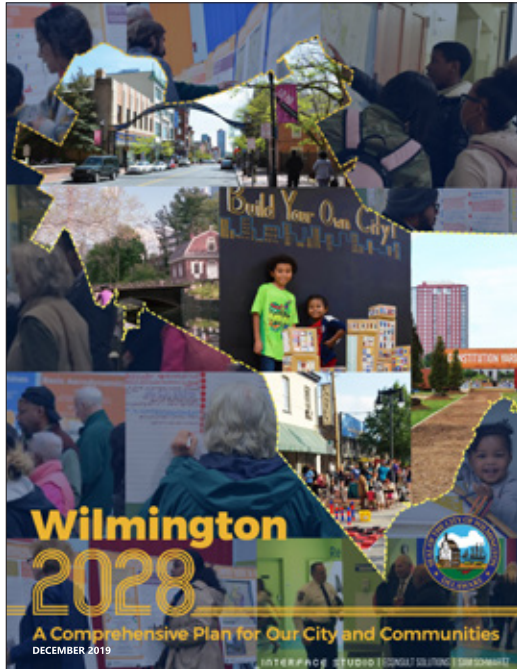
### Key Takeaways

- The community identified priority needs, including enhancing existing community amenities, maintaining affordable housing, reducing environmental and health burdens of industry, and showcasing the area's rich history.

### Key Recommendations

- Improve connectivity.
- Establish potential Innovation District near New Castle and Hillview Ave. – District includes for-sale and rental townhomes, senior housing, and office, retail, and hotel spaces.
- Update, expand, and improve transportation network – including sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, bus shelters, lighting, and streetscape.
- Intersection redesign at Terminal and New Castle Ave.; Rogers Rd. and New Castle Ave., and a Memorial Drive road diet.

# Wilmington 2028 Comprehensive Plan (2018)



City of Wilmington, Delaware, "Wilmington 2028: A Comprehensive Plan for Our City and Communities," December 2019, [bit.ly/3roTlk9](https://bit.ly/3roTlk9)

## Key Takeaways

- South Wilmington residents surveyed said they most valued community safety, local business, and sense of community.
- Residents asked to choose their top 3 priorities said they saw as most important improved public safety (47%), followed by improved job opportunities (33%), downtown revitalization (31%), better sidewalks and safer streets (29%), and new and expanded youth programs (23%).

## Key Recommendations

- Encourage mixed use, infill, redevelopment in key areas.
- Stabilize vacant properties.
- Evaluate former school buildings for redevelopment.
- Position and promote the Commerce Street/ South Waterfront and Garasches Lane as economic opportunities with blue collar jobs.
- Emphasize A Street as a neighborhood connector.
- Limit truck traffic.
- Emphasize wetland park trails as alternative bike and walking routes.
- Make the community more resilient to sea level rise and flooding.



# Climate Justice: For a Prosperous & Sustainable Wilmington (2018 Climate Action Plan)



Erika Furlong & Delaware Nature Society, "Climate Justice: For a Prosperous & Sustainable Wilmington," 2018, [bit.ly/363TmBR](https://bit.ly/363TmBR)

## Key Takeaways

- The majority of Southbridge will be permanently submerged for at least a portion of each day if worldwide greenhouse gas emission rates continue on their current track.
- Southbridge has one of the highest concentrations of businesses in the state that are at risk of being flooded due to sea level rise.
- High rates of soil contamination and overflowing sewage is leading to toxic runoff that are detrimental to residents' health.
- The recent investment in tide gates and the development of the Wetland Park will not be enough to protect Southbridge from being flooded in the next few decades.

## Key Recommendations

- Address flooding in Southbridge by engineering a solution or developing a relocation plan for residents.
- City and South Wilmington Planning Network work together to reach out to the community to get buy in and feedback on potential solutions.
- Establish building codes and incentives to develop outside of floodplains.
- Coordinate with state and federal partners to protect investments and transportation infrastructure.

**Health and**

**COVID-19**



# Social Determinants of Health

As mentioned earlier, a neighborhood plan is a document that outlines key priorities for the future of the neighborhood. One of the main goals of this planning process is to improve health and wellness for residents of the Southbridge neighborhood.

When thinking about health and wellness, it's helpful to think about it as a building that depends on a strong and stable foundation. At the foundation are things like quality education, safe and affordable housing, access to healthcare, and employment opportunities, all of which determine wellness outcomes in important ways.<sup>11</sup>

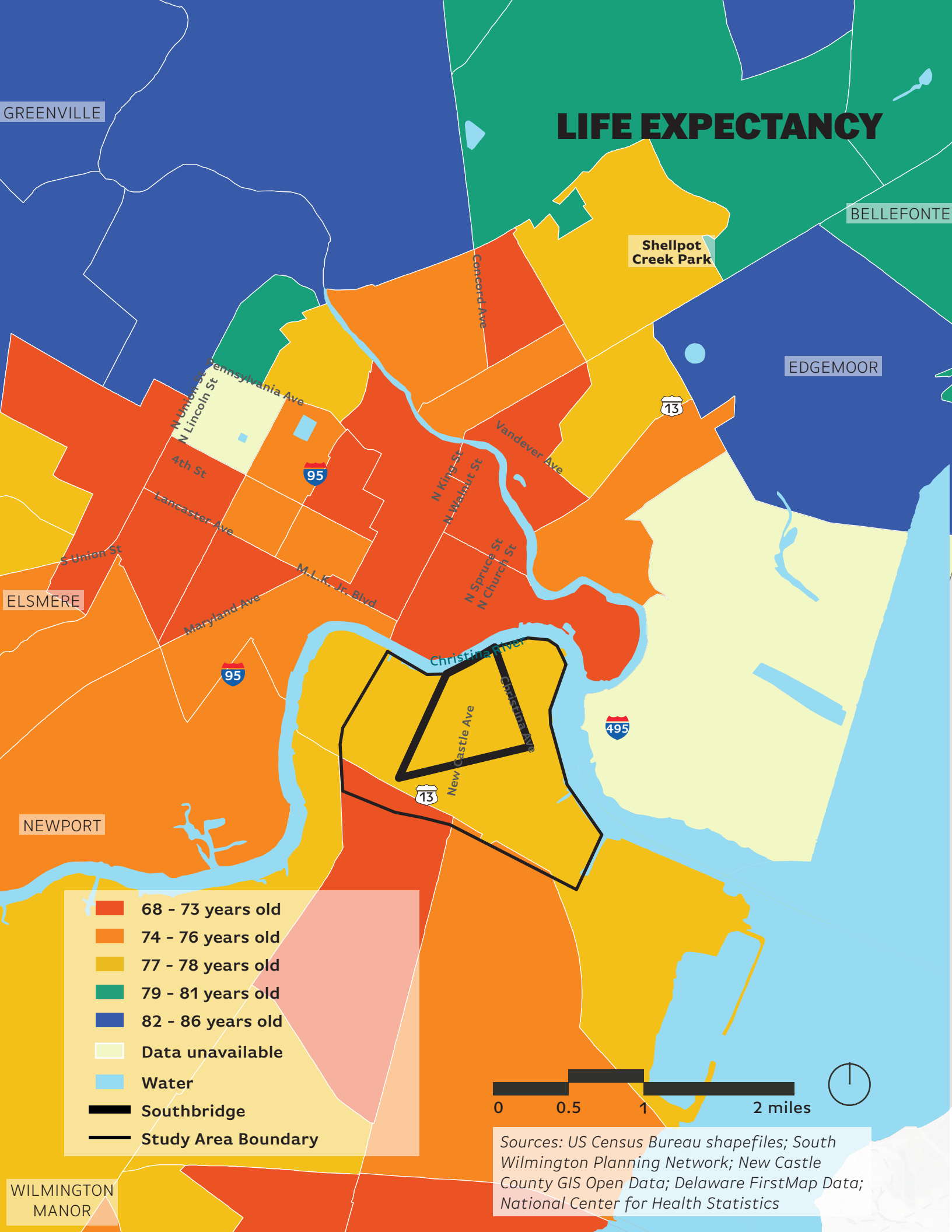
## Foundations of health and wellbeing



---

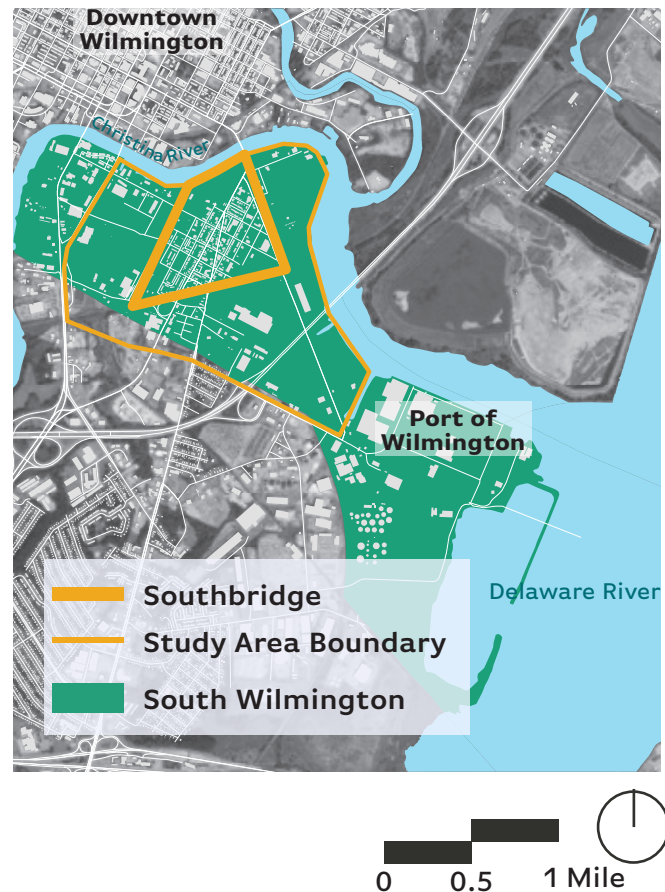
<sup>11</sup> Paraphrased from FrameWorks Institute's "Foundation of Community Health" Toolkit, Aug 6, 2019, <http://bit.ly/3979nJb>



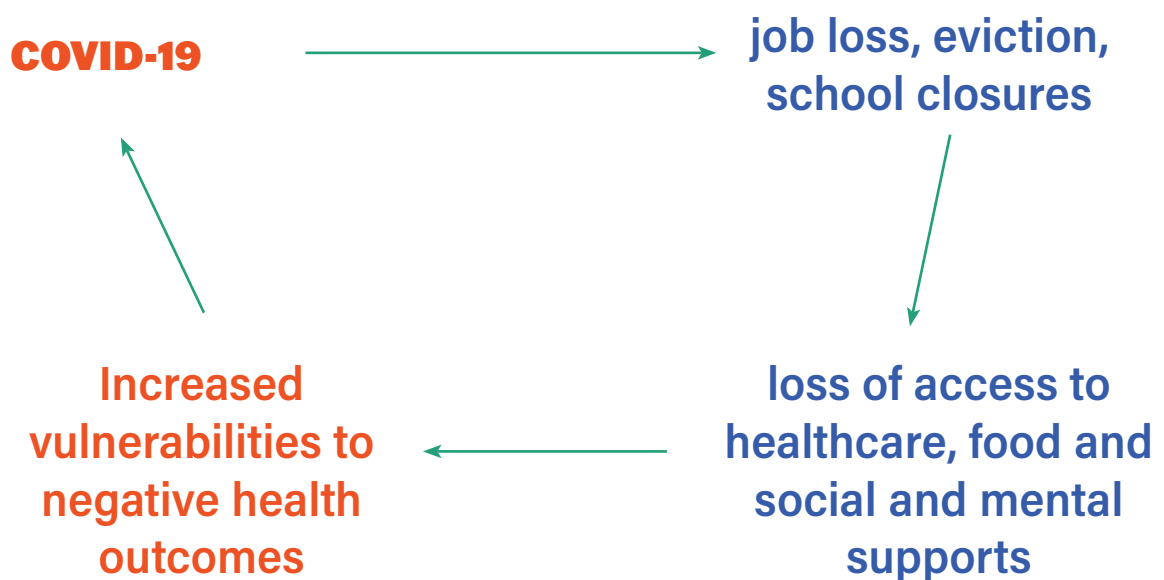


## South Wilmington vs. Southbridge

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed social and economic inequalities that are impacting health outcomes. In the past year we have seen a negative cycle of COVID-19 negatively impacting foundations of health like job and education access, and those crumbling foundations leading to negative health outcomes, including outcomes related to COVID-19. When thinking about ways to improve wellbeing and health through the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan, we will need to take into account these co-dependencies.



## COVID-19's impact on health outcomes



## Using data to guide the way

Just as a GPS guides people by visualizing and navigating complex terrain, data can guide us to show us where we are and the pathways towards where we want to be.<sup>12</sup>

In the following sections, we will use data to illustrate where Southbridge is, and what this means for the future of where we want to be.

In the process, we will identify any cracks in our “foundation” of Health and Wellness, and identify how the Neighborhood Plan could work to strengthen and repair those components.

### A note about data for South Wilmington vs. Southbridge

Some of the data that we used in this report came from the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau publishes data on things like income levels, how much rent people pay, and many other community characteristics.

Unfortunately, the data published by the Census Bureau lumps together Southbridge with the rest of South Wilmington, including Christina Landing and other areas that have a very different physical and demographic characteristic from Southbridge.

Because the data is lumped together, we are unable to separate out Southbridge from the rest of South Wilmington. Therefore, some of the data we present in this report may strike you as surprising, or even inaccurate for Southbridge.

We'll try to make things as clear as possible by labeling our findings as being for “South Wilmington” (includes Southbridge and Christina Landing) when we use Census data. We'll also let you know when our data is specific to Southbridge.

Additionally, for data that is truly important for understanding Southbridge, the planning team may work to create our own dataset for the neighborhood through a community survey, which will be distributed later in the planning process.

---

<sup>12</sup> Paraphrased from FrameWorks Institute's “GPS Navigation” Toolkit, Aug 6, 2019, <http://bit.ly/3o6jx0A>

# Resident Economic Conditions

Economic conditions, specifically, poverty and unemployment, are the base foundation for wellbeing. If a person is in poverty or doesn't have a job, that can make it very difficult to access high-quality healthcare, food, housing, and other elements of life that lead to good health and wellbeing.

South Wilmington has higher rates of poverty, with 31% of households being in poverty, compared to 22% in Wilmington and 7% in New Castle County.<sup>13</sup>

The 31% for is for all of South Wilmington, so if we were able to isolate the data for just Southbridge, this figure may be even higher.

In 2019, an estimated 17%, or 1 in 6 residents, of South Wilmington did not have health insurance.<sup>14</sup> Since then, with the COVID-19 pandemic and massive spike in unemployment that occurred with it in 2020, many more people may have lost health insurance tied to their jobs, and access to affordable and quality care may have been placed further out of reach for many residents in Southbridge.

## Poverty and lack of insurance

|           | South Wilmington | Wilmington | County |
|-----------|------------------|------------|--------|
| Poverty   | 31%              | 22%        | 7%     |
| Uninsured | 17%              | 20%        | 13%    |

Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-year data for Census Tract 19.02 in New Castle County, DE, Wilmington, DE and New Castle County, DE

## Unemployment as of November 2020

|                   | Wilmington | County | Delaware |
|-------------------|------------|--------|----------|
| Unemployment rate | 8.7%       | 4.8%   | 5.1%     |

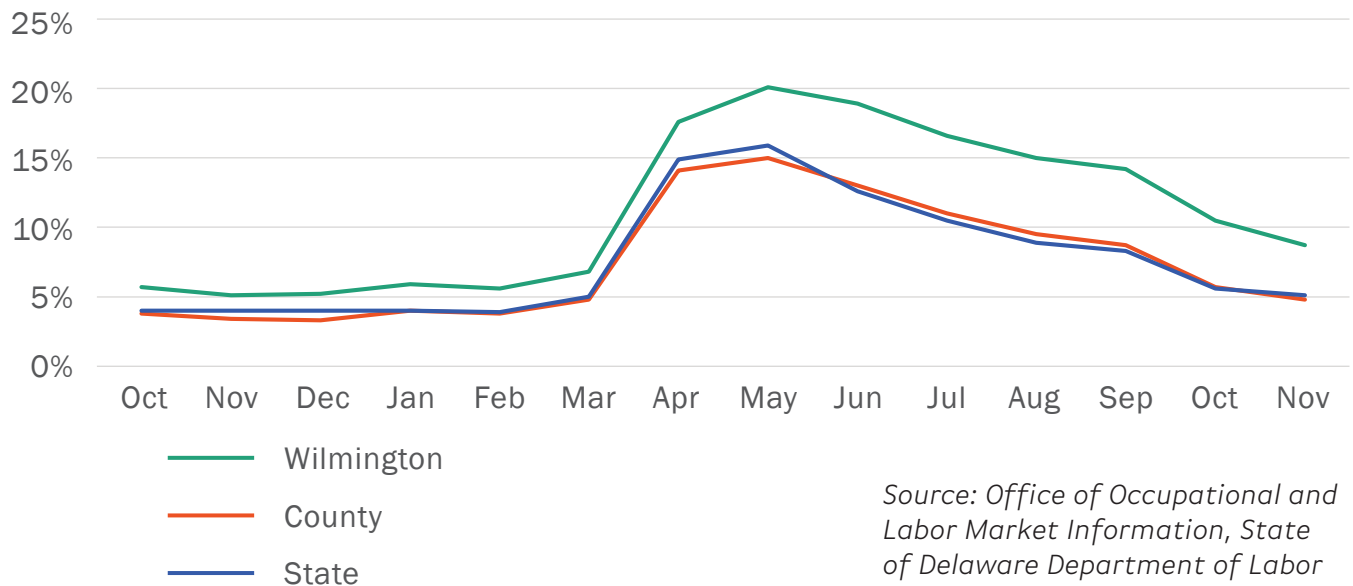
Source: Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information, State of Delaware Department of Labor

<sup>13</sup> US Census Bureau, American Communities Survey, 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates, "S1702: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months of Families," <https://bit.ly/3nrxOWj>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



## Unemployment rate, Oct 2019 - Nov 2020



### Where we are:

South Wilmington has high rates of poverty compared to Wilmington and New Castle County, as well as high rates of people without access to insurance. With the spike in unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people in poverty and without insurance may have increased. These factors can significantly impact health and wellness by reducing access to other things like high-quality healthcare, time for leisure and exercise, fresh and healthy foods, and stable housing.

### Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:

- In the long term, how can we improve income levels of residents who are living in Southbridge now?
- In the short term, how can current residents who are low-income and uninsured access the care and opportunities they need now?

# Housing

Homes that are safe, quality, and affordable are vital to an individual's wellbeing. Deficiencies in safe, quality, and affordable homes can correlate to deficiencies in community health, wellness, and education and economic structure. To meet the diverse needs of residents, communities should have a mix of housing options available, including costs, types (apartments, single family, multifamily) of homes, and housing tenure (renter or owner-occupied units).

A majority of residents (63.7%) in South Wilmington are renters, compared to the city where about 56.6% of residents are renters. South Wilmington has also seen an increase in homeownership between 2010 and 2019, where about 36.3% of residents are now homeowners.

The median home value in South Wilmington is \$184,100. In Southbridge home values range between \$20,000 - \$86,000 and at Christina Landing, home values range between \$100,000 - \$300,000. Although the total number of housing units in South Wilmington has increased by about 48 units between 2010 and 2019, the area has experienced some decline in the total number of occupied units and an increase in the total number of vacant units (see Table "Housing Gaps in South Wilmington"). This could mean that some households may have been displaced between 2010 and 2019. Nonetheless, the homeowner vacancy rate declined between 2010 and 2019, while the rental vacancy rate has remained consistent. This could raise questions on affordability and availability of the type of rental

## Housing Gaps in South Wilmington

|                        | 2010  | 2019  | 2010-2019 Difference |
|------------------------|-------|-------|----------------------|
| Total housing units    | 1,134 | 1,182 | 48                   |
| Occupied housing units | 911   | 870   | - 41                 |
| Vacant housing units   | 223   | 312   | + 89                 |
| Homeowner vacancy rate | 15.8  | 7.6   | - 8.2                |
| Rental vacancy rate    | 15.3  | 15.5  | - 0.2                |

Source US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, "Table DB04 Selected Housing Characteristics", 2010 and 2019 5-year estimates data

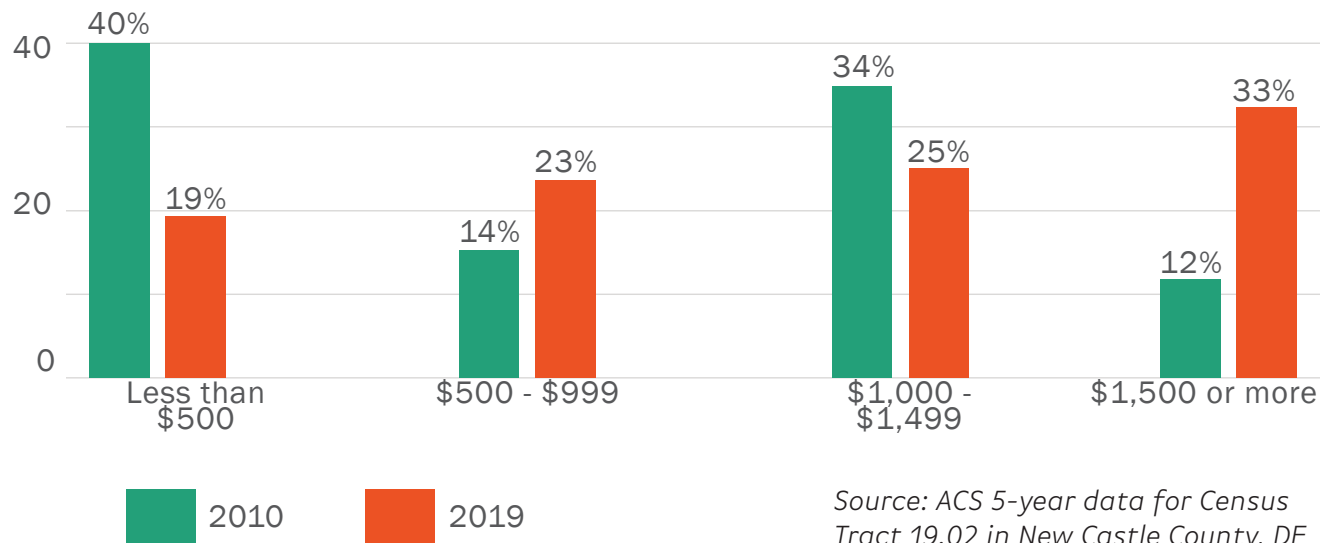


B St and Heald St. Source: South Wilmington Planning Network



Heald St and A St. Source: South Wilmington Planning Network

## South Wilmington Rents Over Time



## Housing Affordability Across the Wilmington Region

|  | 2010             |                    | 2019             |                    |
|--|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
|  | South Wilmington | City of Wilmington | South Wilmington | City of Wilmington |
| Residents paying more than 30% of income on rent | 53.00%           | 55.90%             | 49.80%           | 52.20%             |

Source US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, "Table DB04 Selected Housing Characteristics", 2010 and 2019 5-year estimates data

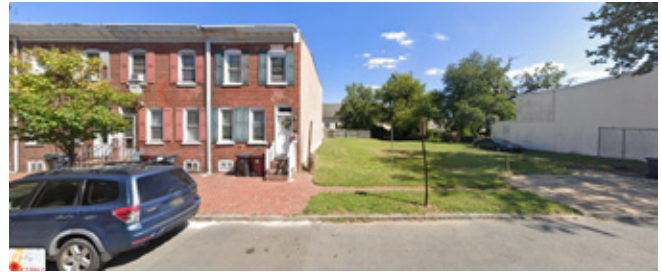
housing needed by residents. Further research and feedback will need to be collected to determine if residents feel they have all the resources they need to afford to live in their homes, and if they feel that Southbridge has a diverse housing stock available.

Rental rates have been increasing in South Wilmington, and today we see a spike in the percentage of residents paying \$1,500 or more in rent. In terms of affordability, about 49.8% of residents are cost-burdened, or using more than 30% of their income to pay for rent (see Table "Housing Affordability Across the Wilmington Region").

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed lives in 2020 and has presented a myriad of challenges for homeowners, renters, and landlords. States and the federal government have responded to widespread unemployment and increased eviction risks with measures to keep people in their homes.<sup>15</sup> As pandemic shutdowns spread in March of 2020, courts began issuing emergency orders that halted eviction filings, delayed eviction hearings, and barred enforcement of post-judgment orders that would compel people to leave their homes, all to prevent massive housing destabilization and increased homelessness amid a public health emergency.<sup>16</sup> Although the nation is still in the midst of the COVID-19 at the time of writing, it has undoubtedly impacted housing for residents for Southbridge and the topic of housing will require targeted recommendations.

---

15 Erika Rickard & Qudsiya Naqui, PEW Charitable Trust, "Pandemic-Driven Economic Slowdown Puts Renters at Risk of Housing Loss", December 2020, [https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2020/12/07/pandemic-driven-economic-slowdown-puts-renters-at-risk-of-housing-loss?utm\\_campaign=2020-12-16+Rundown+-+opt-in+promo&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Pew](https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2020/12/07/pandemic-driven-economic-slowdown-puts-renters-at-risk-of-housing-loss?utm_campaign=2020-12-16+Rundown+-+opt-in+promo&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Pew).  
16 Ibid.



*Multifamily housing and lot. Source: Google*



*Small multifamily housing. Source: Zillow*



*Multifamily housing. Source: South Wilmington Planning Network*



*Row houses. Source: Zillow*



*Lobdell St. Source: South Wilmington Planning Network*



## Where we are:

- There has been an increase in homeowners in South Wilmington; however most residents are renters.
- About 74% of housing units are occupied, while rental vacancy rates have remained consistent (15.3% - 15.5%) between 2010 and 2019.
- Although President Biden has extended the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s nationwide eviction moratorium through March 2021, many renters have already lost their homes or remain at risk of losing their homes due to their inability to pay. Housing affordability continues to be a growing concern for renters and owners because of the pandemic and its effect on the economy and employment.

## Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:

- What impacts have COVID-19 had on income levels and housing availability, affordability, values, and occupancy/vacancy rates?
- How can homes be better protected from flooding? What impact could it have on flood insurance?
- Does the existing housing typology meet the needs of Southbridge residents (renters and owners)?
- What levels of affordability do we want for homes in Southbridge?
- How can we work around high up-front costs for home rehabilitation and construction?

# Internet and Computer Access

At-home internet access has become vital for work from home, virtual schooling, and telehealth access – all vital components to the foundation of health and wellness. South Wilmington residents’ rate of internet and computer access is relatively higher than Wilmington overall. South Wilmington households’ access to a computer, including a smartphone, is 90%, compared to 85% of Wilmington overall. South Wilmington exhibits 19% of households with no internet access compared to 27% of Wilmington’s overall households without internet access. This figure may be even higher if households for Southbridge were isolated from the dataset.

The state and city governments prioritized internet access as an especially critical need during the COVID pandemic. Governor Carney announced \$20 million in the Cares Act Funds to increase broadband infrastructure in Delaware (Delaware News 2020).<sup>17</sup> Hotspots were installed throughout Delaware and Wilmington, but few of these hotspots were implemented in Southbridge (Delaware News Journal 2020).<sup>18</sup>

Delaware school districts initially operated hybrid in-person and virtual learning, but spikes in COVID-19 cases led to temporary virtual-only learning. This shift further increased the dependence on household internet and computer access (Delaware News Journal 2020).<sup>19</sup> The pandemic also produced health implications from limited in-person appointment capabilities or telehealth access. The Delaware Health & Social Services’s (DHSS) Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) addressed potential coverage issues by expanding telehealth eligibility to increase Medicaid telehealth coverage in March 2020, although internet and computer access remain an issue (Delaware Health and Social Services 2020).<sup>20</sup>

---

17 “Governor Carney Announces \$20 Million for Broadband Infrastructure.” State of Delaware News, 24 Aug. 2020, news.delaware.gov/2020/08/24/governor-carney-announces-20-million-for-broadband-infrastructure/.

18 Kuang, Jeanne. “To Help Students Learning Remotely, Wilmington Sets up Internet Hot Spots during Pandemic.” The News Journal, Delaware News Journal, 22 Apr. 2020, www.delawareonline.com/story/news/2020/04/22/wilmington-sets-up-internet-hotspots-students/3003044001/

---

19 Alamdari, Natalia, and Jeff Neiburg. “More School Districts to Go Fully Virtual after Delaware’s Latest COVID-19 Advisory.” The News Journal, Delaware News Journal, 4 Dec. 2020, www.delawareonline.com/story/news/education/2020/12/03/apoquinimink-red-clay-brandywine-school-district-go-virtual-after-delaware-covid-19-school-remote/3819246001/.

20 The State of Delaware. “Division of Medicaid & Medical Assistance COVID-19 Information Page.” COVID-19 Information - Delaware Health and Social Services - State of Delaware, 2020, dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dmma/covid19.html.

## Low cost or free internet services

| Service               | Description   | Cost         |
|-----------------------|---|--------------|
| Comcast Service Areas | Comcast Internet Essentials available for qualifying families | \$9.95/month |
| Delaware WiFi Map     | Connect with the best WiFi hotspots in Delaware               | Free         |
| Public Libraries      | Access wireless in Delaware public library parking lots       | Free         |

*Source: Delaware Department of Education*

## Internet access for households

|  | South<br>Wilmington | Wilmington |
|--|---------------------|------------|
| Has computer,<br>including smartphone    | 90.2%               | 84.8%      |
| Has smartphone only                      | 17.1%               | 18.8%      |
| Has no computer,<br>including smartphone | 9.8%                | 15.2%      |
| Has broadband                            | 80.7%               | 72.8%      |
| Has no internet                          | 19.3%               | 26.9%      |

Source: ACS 5-year data for  
Wilmington in New Castle County, DE

## Access for households making less than \$20,000 per year

|  | South<br>Wilmington | Wilmington |
|--|---------------------|------------|
| Households making<br>less than \$20,000                        | 28.9%               | 25.4%      |
| Of households making<br>less than \$20,000:<br>Has broadband   | 66.5%               | 54.7%      |
| Of households making<br>less than \$20,000:<br>Has no Internet | 44.7%               | 33.5%      |

Source: ACS 5-year data for  
Wilmington in New Castle County, DE



## **Where we are:**

- South Wilmington internet and computer access is higher than Wilmington, but Southbridge's internet access compared to Wilmington is unknown.
- Limited internet access may hinder access to telehealth appointments and social connections to friends and family; inability to work from home or attend school virtually may heighten stress and anxiety.
- The state and City of Wilmington responded to internet access needs by installing wifi hotspots, but few of these hotspots are in Southbridge.
- Telehealth eligibility has increased to allow residents to continue accessing healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:**

- Where can we install wifi hotspots in Southbridge to improve internet access to households?
- In the long term, how can we increase computer access for student learning?
- How can we improve telehealth access for children and adults who endure additional challenges from quarantine conditions?

# Education Access

Southbridge's only elementary school, Elbert-Palmer Elementary School, closed in April 2019 prior to the pandemic (WDEL 101.7 FM 2019).<sup>21</sup> Students were transferred to The Bancroft School, located one mile north of Elbert-Palmer Elementary School over the Christina River. Research has shown that pre-COVID school closures can significantly hinder student attendance and increase suspension days; the further the travel distance to the school, the more absence and suspension days.<sup>22</sup> A study of Chicago Public School District school closures found that children lost a major source of stability and disrupted relationships among parents, guardians, and school staff. Students already attending the incoming schools were also found to have lower test scores.<sup>23</sup> This does not account for the health implications of school closures and disruptions associated with the pandemic.

Schools' inability to fully operate in-person heightened physical and mental health consequences for youth. Children's food insecurity grew exponentially at the beginning of the pandemic due to losing access to meals in school settings. Schools and local non-profits have responded by offering packaged meals at drop-off locations throughout Southbridge. Over 50 schools in the 19801 zip code area continue to operate these Student Nutrition Sites, and families can pick up meals at any of the meal sites throughout the state (Delaware Department of Education 2021).<sup>24</sup>

The pandemic brought new and exacerbated mental health concerns for students, teachers, and staff: isolation, loss of loved ones, income loss, eviction, and abusive/toxic home environments. Kristin Dwyer, Director of Legislation at Delaware State Education Association, implored education stakeholders to understand how student mental health could hinder their capacity to learn: "There's a concern amongst specialists that districts will not give them the time to really focus on the mental health of the children, rather there will be such pressure on curriculum, getting students learning again, that our specialists feel like they may not be in a place to learn mentally" (Delaware State News 2020).<sup>25</sup> Students with existing mental health challenges prior to the pandemic, such as depression or substance use, lost routine associated with school and potential support systems housed within school systems.<sup>26</sup> Children with special needs, including those on the autism spectrum for instance, would be greatly impacted by the loss of routine as well. Teacher and school staff is also a major concern given The pandemic increased teacher and staff responsibilities, causing potential consequences to their health; a new expectation evolved to manage many new pandemic-related conditions with little attention to how teachers and staff could maintain their own self-care and mental health.

---

21 Irizarry, Joe. "VIDEO: School's out for Longer than Summer for 2 Wilmington Schools in Christina School District." WDEL 101.7 FM, 12 June 2019, [www.wdel.com/news/video-schools-out-for-longer-than-summer-for-2-wilmington-schools-in-christina-school-district/article\\_c2433364-8c90-11e9-9668-4f83c5cfb5b6.html](http://www.wdel.com/news/video-schools-out-for-longer-than-summer-for-2-wilmington-schools-in-christina-school-district/article_c2433364-8c90-11e9-9668-4f83c5cfb5b6.html).

22 Steinberg, Matthew P., and John M. MacDonald. "The effects of closing urban schools on students' academic and behavioral outcomes: Evidence from Philadelphia." *Economics of Education Review* 69 (2019): 25-60

23 Olson, Annika. "Psychological Impact of School Closings Will Be Large." *UT News*, 4 Nov. 2019, [news.utexas.edu/2019/11/04/psychological-impact-of-school-closings-will-be-large/](http://news.utexas.edu/2019/11/04/psychological-impact-of-school-closings-will-be-large/).

24 Student Meal Sites / Meal Location List, Delaware Department of Education, 2021, [www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/611](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/611).

---

25 Schultz, Brooke. "Group Examines Mental Health Issues upon Schools Reopening." *Delaware State News*, 3 June 2020, [delawarestatenews.net/coronavirus/group-examines-mental-health-issues-upon-schools-reopening/](http://delawarestatenews.net/coronavirus/group-examines-mental-health-issues-upon-schools-reopening/).

26 Lee, Joyce. "Mental health effects of school closures during COVID-19." *The Lancet. Child & adolescent health* vol. 4,6 (2020): 421. doi:10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30109-7

To address some of the above mentioned concerns, a Health and Wellness working group of state education, psychology, and other medical professionals was established in May 2020. The group were tasked with crafting a framework to allow schools to (Delaware State News 2020):

1. Function remotely or in-person
2. Protect the physical and mental health of students, staff, and faculty.

Some of the group's recommendations included a crisis support team, staff mental health readiness intakes, availability of self-care resources, a mental health liaison, and more.

## Where we are:

- Food insecurity grew during the pandemic, particularly for children who lost meals in school settings. Schools and local nonprofits offered support by offering packaging meals at drop-off locations throughout Southbridge.
- Student mental health and safety is a growing concern as the pandemic has brought new conditions (i.e., losing family members and other loved ones, income loss, abusive/toxic home environments) that hinder mental wellbeing and socio-emotional development.
- The health of teachers and staff is also a concern in managing these new conditions while maintaining self-care.

## Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:

- How can Southbridge maintain food security to address student and household hunger?
- How can children who are enduring heightened abuse and violence at home receive support and safety?
- What DE Health and Wellness working group recommendations were implemented at Southbridge residents' schools? How can they be implemented to improve health and wellness for students, teachers, and staff.

# Transportation Access

Active transportation and public transit access have many health benefits for communities by connecting people to resources such as jobs, food, health care, and other daily needs. Biking and walking are both forms of active transportation that promote healthy physical movement and active lifestyles, and every trip begins and ends with either walking or rolling using a mobility device whether it's traveling from one's doorstep to the bus stop or from a garage to a private vehicle. Without active transportation and public transit opportunities, individuals and families who do not have access to private vehicles may not be able to access resources to fulfill their everyday needs, and without access to parks and gym facilities, opportunities for physical activity may be limited.

Southbridge shows a critical need of physical activity opportunities to improve health outcomes. Poor physical health was found for 26% of South Wilmington residents before COVID-19, in comparison to 21% of New Castle County's total residents.<sup>27</sup> South Wilmington also showed that 36% of residents reported physical inactivity for the past 30 days prior to COVID-19, with 71% of residents identified as obese.<sup>28</sup> Both of these conditions were higher for Southbridge residents than New Castle County overall, and the pandemic has likely increased poor opportunities and health outcomes.

Southbridge is served by tight-knit street grid with major thoroughfares connecting the study area to the rest of Wilmington via four water crossing connections, including the Senator John E. Reilly Bridge (Market Street), Leo J. Dugan Sr. Bridge (Walnut Street), William J. Winchester Bridge (E 4th Street), and the Christina River (I-495) Bridge with a fifth connection just outside the study area to the west via the newly constructed New Sweden Street Bridge. All of these bridges, with the exception of the interstate, are accessible by bicycle and walking. New Sweden Street Bridge provides the most

<sup>27</sup> PolicyMap, "Community Health Report, 10003001902 (Census Tract)," Accessed Feb 11, 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

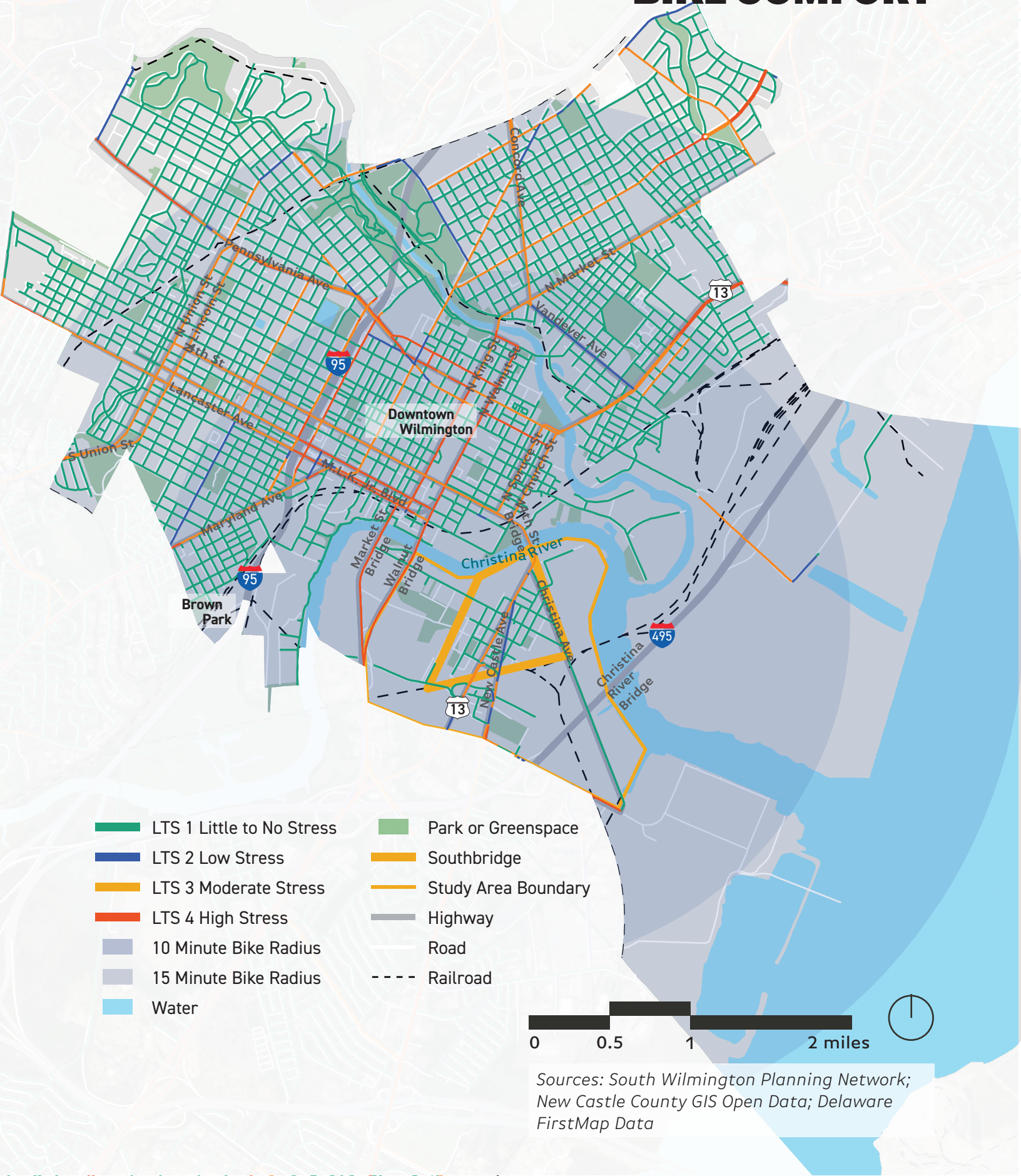
comfortable facility with a completely separated shared bike and walkway. The Market and Walnut Street bridges provide the lowest possible bike comfort score (4 out of 4 for stress level for bike riders) while E 4th Street provides more comfort relative to the former with a score of 3 out of 4. Through the Delaware Department of Transportation's (DelDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), the first phase of the Southbridge Streetscape Improvements project was completed ten years ago, with the second phase of improvements scheduled to be completed in Fall 2021. The third and final phase

| Level of Traffic Stress | Description   | Example  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1                       | Safe for children to use; Usually completely separated from auto traffic  |  Photo by Bob Patten |
| 2                       | Tolerated by most mainstream adult populations of cyclists; Roads with low volume and low speed auto traffic      |                     |
| 3                       | Tolerated by riders who are enthused and confident; Heavy traffic with separated bike facility                    |                     |
| 4                       | Only tolerated by strong and fearless riders; cyclists must interact with high volumes or speeds of auto traffic. |                     |

Source: *Blueprint for a Bicycle-Friendly Delaware: A Statewide Policy Plan*, DelDOT (2018).

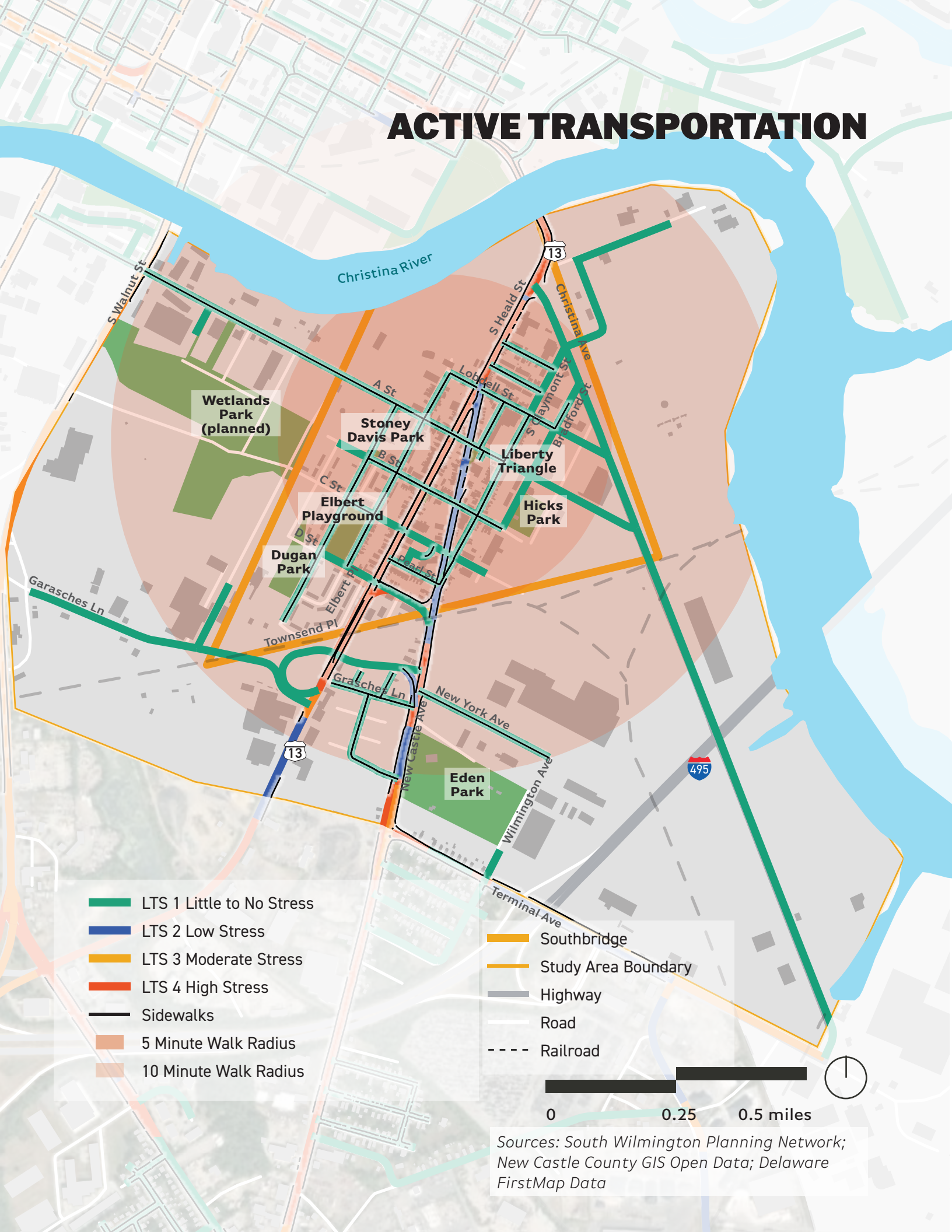


# BIKE COMFORT





# ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION



of streetscape improvements will be explored in 2021, extending Phase II traffic calming and streetscape enhancements recommended in the Southbridge Circulation Study. These Phase II and Phase III improvements include traffic calming and streetscape enhancements such as decorative lighting, curb bumpouts, and replacement of sidewalk along streets including A Street, New Castle Avenue, and Heald Street. Construction will begin on the A Street Sidepath project in early 2021, which will improve connections to the western bridges.

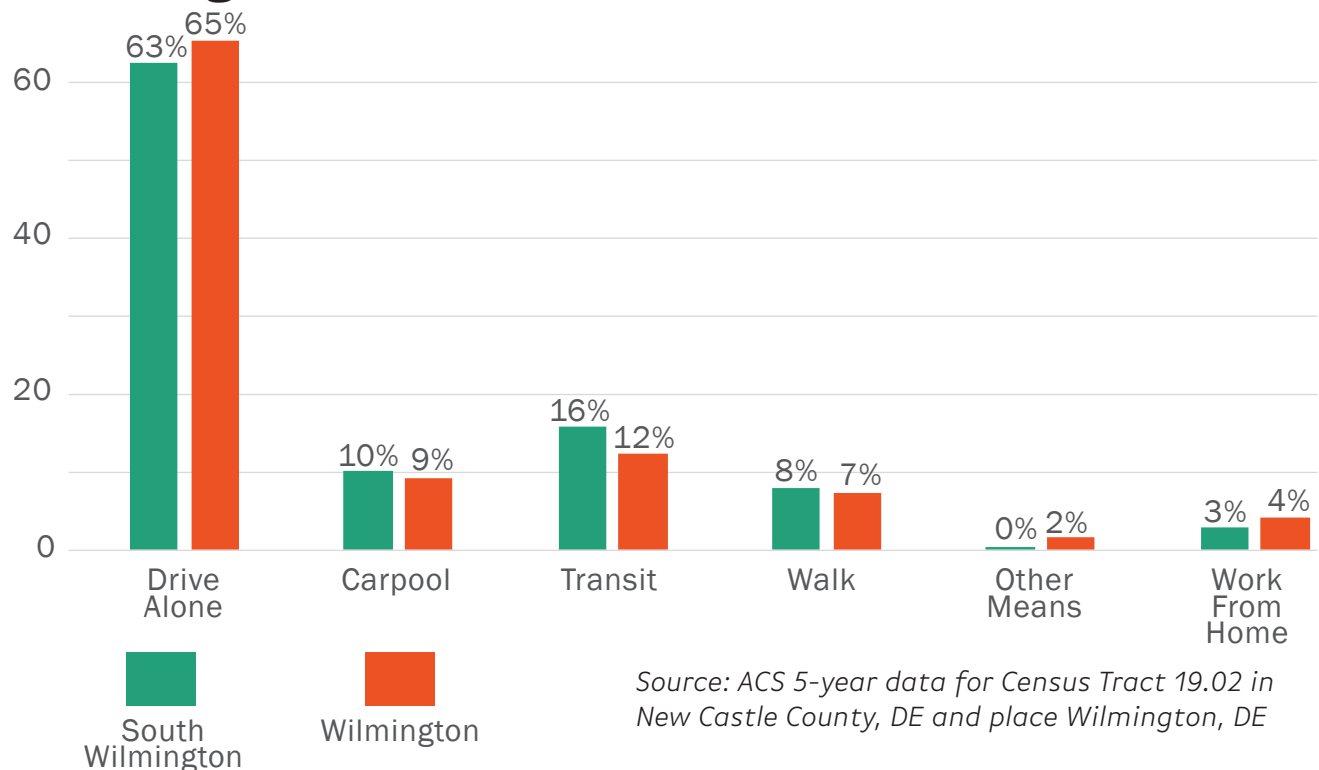
Especially as many segments of the City's planned and proposed on- and off-street cycling infrastructure network will be constructed after the summer of 2021, Level of Traffic Street (LTS) scores are helpful for delineating specific street characteristics that contribute to or detract from the comfort of people biking along a particular segment.

LTS scores of 1 are the most comfortable segments usually separated from traffic and are suitable for all ages and abilities while an LTS score of 4 indicates a busy, stressful segment not suitable for the vast majority of people on bikes except for the most "strong and fearless" cyclists, according to the methodology developed by the City of Portland's Bureau of Transportation.<sup>29</sup>

Most of the street grid in Wilmington has an LTS score of 1, indicating that much of the city's existing street network is presently bike-friendly to a wide range of people on bikes across age and ability. The same is true of the Southbridge area and core study area with the exception of S Heald Street (LTS 4) and New Castle Avenue (LTS 2-4). All of Wilmington is bikeable within 30 minutes, or six miles, from the approximate centroid of the core study area, while the entire Southbridge study area is bikeable from the core area in under 10 minutes or less.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/158497>

## Commuting Characteristics



In general, there are existing sidewalks on at least one side of most of the streets within the core study area. The entire core study area is walkable within a time period of 5 minutes (¼ mile) or less and the larger study area is walkable within 10 minutes (½ mile) from the centroid of the core study area.

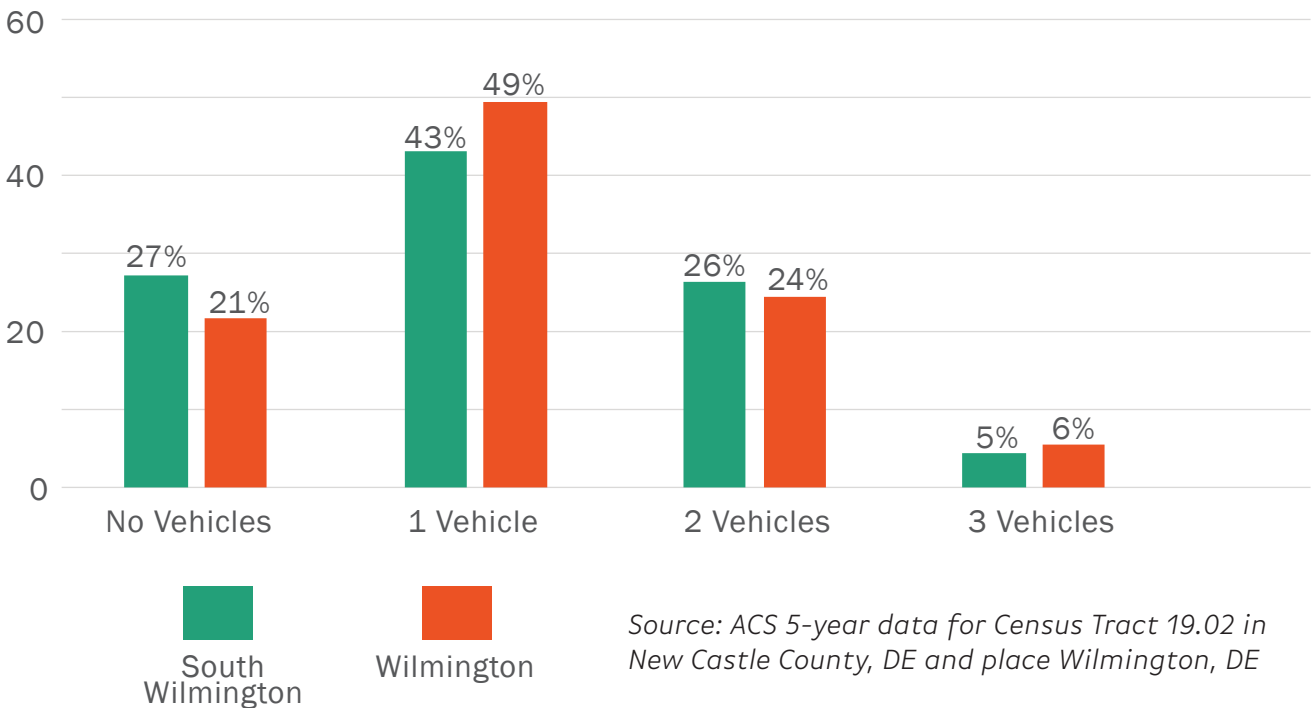
However, the presence of sidewalks does not mean that walking radii based on time or distance are reliable measures of walksheds alone: quality of sidewalk pavement, ADA accessibility, and sidewalks free from obstructions are important for people walking and/or using mobility devices, particularly wheelchairs.

Due to the historical development of many older towns and cities in dense areas along the eastern coastline, many streets are too narrow to accommodate all modern preferences for space utilization, motivating users to repurpose limited space for unintended uses. Specifically, many people park their private vehicles directly on or straddling sidewalks, especially near businesses. Commuting and vehicle access characteristics

of residents of the Southbridge Census Tract are similar to those of the City of Wilmington as a whole. According to the 2019 5-Year American Community Survey Selected Economic Characteristics, a majority of employed South Wilmington residents drive to work alone (63%) compared to 65% of employed Wilmington residents who commute to work via driving alone. South Wilmington residents do carpool and walk at slightly higher percentages than Wilmington residents as a whole and have a greater share of transit users (16%) compared to the city (12%).

Higher transit use among South Wilmington residents may also be due to vehicle access characteristics. Half of Wilmington households (49%) have access to at least one vehicle while nearly one-third (31%) have access to two or more vehicles; 80% of Wilmington households have access to at least one vehicle compared to 73% of South Wilmington households.

## Vehicle Access by Household





# TRANSIT+RIDERSHIP



# REGIONAL TRANSIT





Transit is an important mode for Southbridge residents who do not have access to a vehicle to travel longer distances than are typical or appropriate for biking and walking trips, yet weekday ridership at bus stops within the Southbridge study area show lower ridership compared to the system network as a whole.

While all of the existing bus stops in the study area are accessible by the sidewalk network, the frequency of weekday routes may not serve job centers and/or operating during expanded working hours for workers with less traditional schedules, such as those employed in the service industry or the Port.

## Where we are:

- The Southbridge study area features a walkable, bikeable street grid although major destinations within the study area along S Heald Street and New Castle Avenue are less comfortable for people biking along these busier corridors and present challenges for pedestrians where sidewalks are obstructed by parked vehicles.
- Active transportation to outside of the study area may be discouraged by low comfort streets.
- Transit access is important for Southbridge residents who have both less access to vehicles and higher transit ridership compared to the city as a whole.

## Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:

- How can we reallocate street space for physically distant physical activity, such as walking and biking, and connect places?
- What do we need to know to better understand on-street parking demand and off-street parking availability to discourage parking on sidewalks?
- How do we prioritize walking and biking along existing bridges to the rest of Wilmington?
- What is the state of truck traffic in Southbridge?

# Health Conditions

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), adults of any age are at increased risk of becoming severely ill with COVID-19 if they have other pre-existing health conditions, including but not limited to cancer, COPD, heart conditions, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.<sup>30</sup> Increasingly, evidence is emerging that people with asthma, high blood pressure, or type 1 diabetes and people who are overweight might be at increased risk of becoming severely ill from COVID-19 as well.<sup>31</sup> This means that areas with higher rates of the above conditions are at higher risk of being severely impacted by COVID-19 and also have lower levels of health and wellness.

Looking at the rates of these health conditions in the communities can point us towards changes we can make through the master plan. For example, COPD and asthma are connected to a community's air quality, while high rates of obesity, high blood pressure, heart conditions, diabetes, and cholesterol may indicate the need for a community environment that has active and safe ways for people to walk, bike, and play.

A 2019 WILMAPCO study on the region's social determinants of health found that the Southbridge area scored within a range of 10-12 for potential public health concern, emphasizing the east of South Heald Street as having the highest levels of concern.<sup>32</sup> The scores were determined from eight factors: poverty rate, high school graduation rate, minority segregation<sup>33</sup>, employment rate, homeownership rate, household tenure, single parent households, USDA food desert status.

South Wilmington was deemed a Medically Underserved Area by the Health Resources and

Services Administration.<sup>34</sup> The designation identified South Wilmington as an area with too few primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty, and/or a high elderly population; it acknowledges that a specific group is underserved, such as due to economic, cultural, or linguistic barriers to primary medical care.

Southbridge is overburdened by environmental harms and risks due to industrial uses in the area. Christina Energy Center, a power plant located along Christina Avenue on the eastern edge of Southbridge, is designated as a "major discharger" of air pollutants by the EPA.<sup>35</sup> <sup>36</sup> Residents have pointed to the presence of coarse airborne dust, which is most likely the result of residential areas being located next to industrial uses.<sup>37</sup>

Within the Southbridge study area, there are four identified Superfund sites, which are abandoned sites where hazardous waste is located, possibly affecting local ecosystems or people.<sup>38</sup> There are at least 10 brownfields that have been identified by the EPA, which are sites with potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant, as well as other hazardous sites which dot the neighborhood.

According to a 2017 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists, within a one mile radius of Southbridge is 48 brownfield sites, "more than half of all brownfields in Delaware."<sup>39</sup>

---

34 PolicyMap, "Community Health Report for 10003001902 (Census Tract)," Accessed Feb 11, 2021.

35 EPA, "EPA FRS Facilities State Single File CSV Download, Geospatial Data," updated Jan 6, 2021, <http://bit.ly/3sJf15n>

36 EPA, "FRS Environmental Interest Types," Jun 7, 2013, <http://bit.ly/2Y1fGrc>

37 Delaware Public Media, "State collects more data on dust problem in Eden Park," Nov 1, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2NIHoNw>.

38 Ibid.

39 Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists, "Environmental Justice for Delaware Mitigating Toxic Pollution in New Castle County Communities," October 2017, <https://bit.ly/2NttR6u>

---

30 CDC, "People with Certain Medical Conditions," Updated Dec 29, 2020, <http://bit.ly/3agxztX>

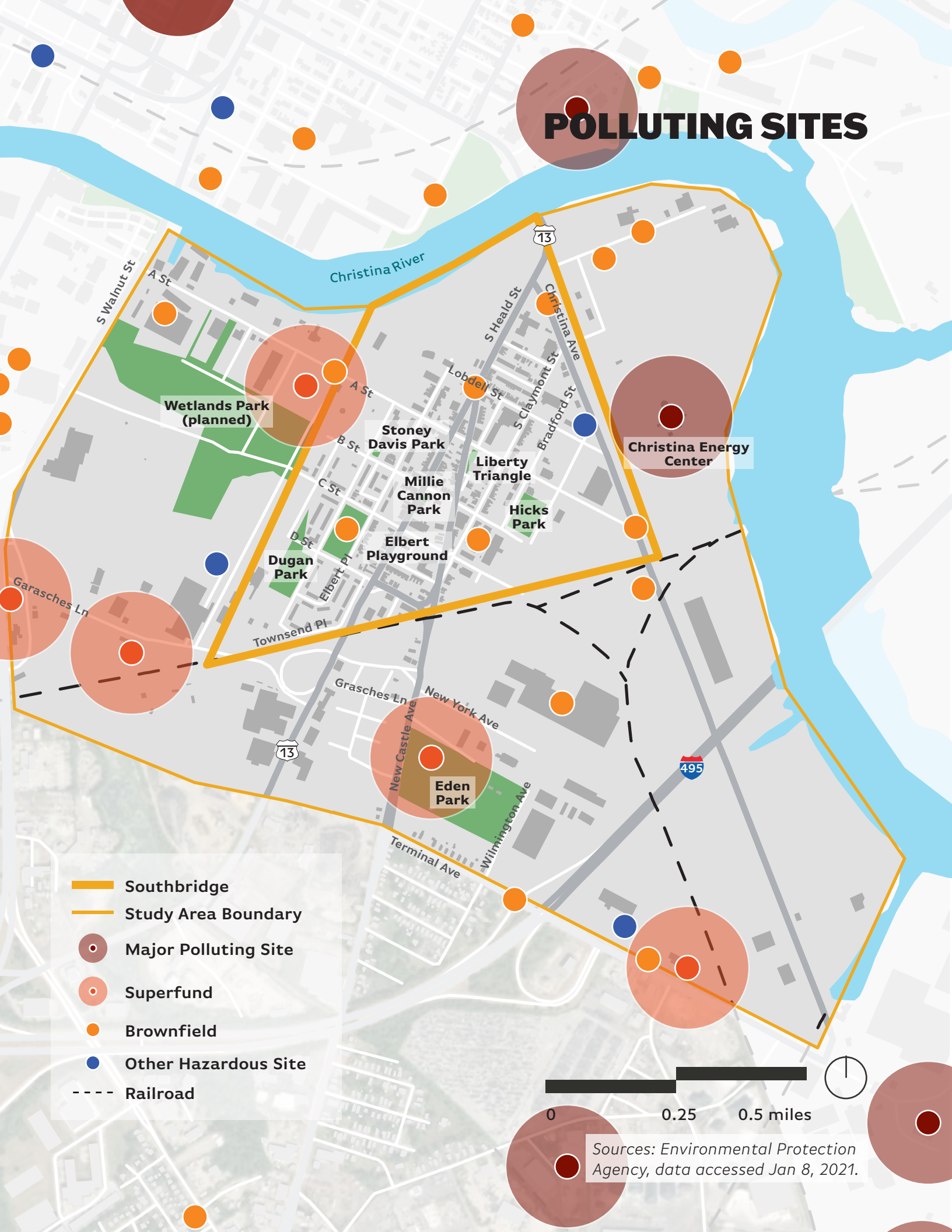
31 Ibid.

32 WILMAPCO, "WILMAPCO Data Report: Social Determinants of Health," Apr 2019, <https://bit.ly/2NEAeDS>

33 Residents that do not identify as non-Hispanic, White



# POLLUTING SITES



Sources: Environmental Protection Agency, data accessed Jan 8, 2021.

These factors would indicate that Southbridge would have high rates of negative health conditions like cancer, COPD, asthma, and other conditions mentioned above. However, here again, our analysis is limited by the fact that the available data is for South Wilmington rather than Southbridge.

Poor mental health similarly illustrated a higher rate for South Wilmington than New Castle County. Nearly 23% of South Wilmington adults report poor mental health due to stress, depression, and problems with emotions. New Castle County, in comparison, reported 19% of adults with poor mental health.<sup>40</sup>

40 PolicyMap, "Community Health Report, 10003001902 (Census Tract)," Accessed Feb 11, 2021.

Based on available data, South Wilmington and Wilmington as a whole have higher rates of negative health conditions compared to New Castle County.<sup>41 42</sup> If we were able to zoom into data for Southbridge alone, these rates may reflect the environmental conditions of the neighborhood. However, the comparatively high rates of negative health conditions in South Wilmington and Wilmington points to vulnerability to COVID-19 and a shaky foundation for health and wellbeing in the communities within Wilmington.

41 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 500 Cities: Census Tract-level Data (GIS Friendly Format), 2019 release, <https://bit.ly/3nAXypT>

42 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Places: Local Data for Better Health, County Data 2020 release, <https://bit.ly/3nrXPoC>

## Comorbidities

|                              | South Wilmington | Wilmington | County |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------|--------|
| Asthma                       | 12.0%            | 12.1%      | 9.4%   |
| COPD                         | 6.6%             | 8.2%       | 5.9%   |
| Smoking                      | 21.6%            | 22.9%      | 18.4%  |
| Cancer excluding skin cancer | 4.4%             | 5.7%       | 6.2%   |
| Obesity                      | 39.0%            | 39.8%      | 33.2%  |
| High blood pressure          | 36.5%            | 40.2%      | 32.5%  |
| Coronary heart disease       | 4.8%             | 6.4%       | 5.2%   |
| Diabetes                     | 11.9%            | 14.2%      | 10.1%  |
| High cholesterol             | 32.2%            | 28.9%      | 28.8%  |

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 500 Cities. 2019 release.

## **Where we are:**

Southbridge is overburdened by environmental harms and risk present in the community. Based on available data, South Wilmington and Wilmington higher prevalence for negative health conditions compared to New Castle County as a whole. High rates of disease and illness implies that foundations of health and wellness are built on shaky ground.

## **Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:**

- What things in the neighborhood and built environment of Southbridge are exposing residents to risk factors?
- How can we improve things like air and water quality?
- How can we create a built environment that promotes health and wellness?

# Employment Opportunities

Jobs in 2020 had an especially large impact on wellness. They impacted our ability to socially distance ourselves from others while earning an income; they impacted our ability to access health insurance; they determined whether we could pay our rents or mortgages on time, buy healthy food, afford childcare, and many of the essential goods and services we need to survive.

It is difficult to figure out whether those who are currently employed have jobs that would allow them to socially distance. The largest employer in Wilmington is the Port, followed by correctional facilities and retail and wholesale suppliers.<sup>43</sup> Comparatively, the largest employer in South Wilmington is retail and wholesale suppliers, public administration, and medical facilities.<sup>44</sup>

As of November 2020, 8.7% of Wilmington residents were unemployed.<sup>45</sup> The need for job opportunities for Southbridge residents has been a consistent part of conversations around equitable development in South Wilmington, and the lack of job opportunities has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, residents advocated for local hiring during the construction of a riverfront apartment building on A Street, and in 2018, residents pushed for a similar deal during the permitting process of a slag grinding facility.<sup>46,47</sup> Both times, the companies behind the developments did not sign a community benefits agreement.

---

<sup>43</sup> Infogroup and Esri. Esri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2020. Infogroup Business Locations (October 2020).

<sup>44</sup> Infogroup and Esri. Esri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2020. Infogroup Business Locations (October 2020).

<sup>45</sup> Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information, State of Delaware Department of Labor, <http://bit.ly/2KuPba0>

<sup>46</sup> Delaware Public Media, “South Wilmington residents wonder what ‘next frontier’ of riverfront development will bring,” Feb 14, 2020, <http://bit.ly/3qDkBLi>

<sup>47</sup> The News Journal, Jeanne Kuang “In Wilmington’s Southbridge, talk of new industry turns to jobs, community benefits,” Dec 17, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2Y1NEMp>

Currently in Southbridge, there are several businesses catering to local residents, including Carry My Own Weight, a clothing company with a large social media presence, Boney’s Barbershop, KNF Market Store and 3 C’s Food Market, both corner stores, Dugan’s Liquor Store, and several day care facilities.

Other businesses that are not necessarily geared towards Southbridge residents but nevertheless may provide job opportunities include Dr. Mini Bike & Mr. Go Kart, a small engine repair shop for go karts and mini bikes, Fibre Processing Corporation, a futon and mattress manufacturer, Consolidated LLC, a fabrication and construction company, Diamond Chemical & Supply Company, which produces cleaning products, the Delaware Humane Association, and others, many of them in wholesale and manufacturing.

Data for Wilmington indicates that very few people who live in Wilmington are actually employed within the city boundaries. In order to get a clearer picture of job opportunities and job characteristics for Southbridge residents, a more detailed survey may be necessary.



## Largest Employers in Wilmington

| Category                            | Employees |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Public Administration: Port         | 1,500     |
| Public Administration: Correctional | 339       |
| Retail and Wholesale                | 322       |
| Other Public Administration         | 311       |
| Manufacturing                       | 192       |

## Largest Employers in South Wilmington

| Category              | Employees |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Public Administration | 335       |
| Retail and Wholesale  | 251       |
| Medical               | 141       |
| Manufacturing         | 136       |
| Day Care              | 81        |

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Business Locator, Wilmington, 2020 forecasts.

## Non-Governmental Employers in South Wilmington

|                             | Employees |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Henrietta Johnson Medical   | 45        |
| Neighborhood House          | 41        |
| Fibre Processing Corp       | 40        |
| Consolidated LLC            | 30        |
| Diamond Chemical & Supply   | 26        |
| Fresenius Medical Care      | 25        |
| Delaware Humane Association | 25        |
| Flooring Solutions Inc      | 20        |
| Atlantic Landscape Co       | 20        |
| Chop Tank Excavation        | 16        |

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Business Locator, Wilmington, 2020 forecasts.



Carry My Own Weight located at 411 New Castle Ave (image source Google Maps)



Consolidated LLC at 1216 D St (image source Google Maps)

## **Where we are:**

COVID-19 has created an unstable employment environment, while new developments have brought little in terms job benefits for local residents. A localized survey will be required to disaggregate South Wilmington data to get a clearer picture of Southbridge to determine the current state of employment opportunities for residents.

## **Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:**

- How can we make sure employers in Southbridge are bringing jobs and other benefits for residents?
- What job opportunities are missing in the neighborhood?

# Impacts of Social Distancing

Studies from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada point to the negative impacts of COVID-19, specifically social distancing policies, on mental health, wellbeing, and social cohesion. While economic and physical health concerns due to COVID-19 could play a larger role in exacerbating mental health conditions, social distancing is also a factor.<sup>48</sup> Social distancing and isolation have been found to worsen mental wellbeing by exacerbating conditions such as depression and anxiety,<sup>49</sup> and feelings of confusion, anger, isolation and loneliness.<sup>50</sup> The negative effects on mental wellbeing can be felt after a short time.<sup>51</sup>

Certain populations are at a higher risk for negative mental health impacts, including women, particularly women with children; people with low incomes; healthcare and other frontline workers; people with pre-existing mental health conditions; and older people. People with low incomes are more likely to live in crowded or poor-quality housing, and being confined to these conditions can negatively impact mental well-being. Women and children are more likely to have experienced violence including domestic violence and sexual abuse during social distancing and shutdowns, which can have adverse mental health effects.<sup>52</sup>

School and childcare closures as well as other disruptions due to social distancing can lead to adverse mental health impacts in babies, children, and young adults. School provides children and young adults not only with education but with a source of structure and routine, a venue for social interaction, and a place of safety. The loss of these spaces and resources can negatively impact mental wellbeing, and can put some children at increased risk for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) depending on their family situation. Children from low-income families are more likely to experience adverse mental health effects from social distancing and shutdown measures.<sup>53</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a decline in perceptions of social cohesion at the neighborhood level, according to a study from the UK. People of color, people living in disadvantaged neighborhoods, and people with lower levels of formal education experienced greater perceived declines in social cohesion.<sup>54</sup> Given that social cohesion is positively associated with physical and mental health and health behaviors,<sup>55</sup> it is important to find ways to support social cohesion while maintaining social distancing as necessary.

---

48 Predictors of mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic in the US: Role of economic concerns, health worries and social distancing (2020) <http://bit.ly/3c9DukS>

49 Mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: Effects of stay-at-home policies, social distancing behavior, and social resources (2020) <http://bit.ly/3oj11IK>.

50 A Health Impact Assessment of the 'Staying at Home and Social Distancing Policy' in Wales in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (2020) <https://bit.ly/3iJfMm>

51 The Psychological Impact of COVID-19 in Canada: Effects of Social Isolation During the Initial Response (2020) <https://bit.ly/39iINle>

52 A Health Impact Assessment of the 'Staying at Home and Social Distancing Policy' in Wales in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (2020) <https://bit.ly/3iJfMm>

---

53 Ibid.

54 Coming together or coming apart? Changes in social cohesion during the Covid-19 pandemic in England <https://bit.ly/3c9Y5Wk>

55 The Psychological Impact of COVID-19 in Canada: Effects of Social Isolation During the Initial Response (2020) <https://bit.ly/39iINle>



## **Where we are:**

Southbridge has a higher percentage of low income households than the surrounding city of Wilmington, and a significant portion of residents work in industries that may not allow for social distancing (see “Largest Employers in Wilmington” and “Largest Employers in South Wilmington” tables on page 52). Low-income residents and frontline workers are both at higher risk for negative mental health impacts due to COVID-19.

## **Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:**

- How can institutions such as churches and civic organizations be supported to continue offering means of safe social connection for the duration of the pandemic?
- How can these organizations that contribute to social connection be supported to survive through the pandemic and resume normal activities once it is safe to do so?
- How can public spaces be designed to facilitate socially distant social interaction for all ages?

# Social Cohesion

Socially cohesive environments and conditions can improve the mental health and wellbeing outcomes for Southbridge residents. Research shows that social cohesion, the sense of belonging and connectedness in a community is shown to have a positive impact on mental health (Kingsbury et al. 2018).<sup>56</sup> Southbridge has 17 churches within its boundary. Churches remain active in Delaware during the pandemic. A local minister sued the state on the grounds that churches, particularly Black churches, were limited in financial resources to facilitate online worship (WSJ 2020).<sup>57</sup> Governor Carney agreed to consider churches and religious institutions neutrally with regard to emergency state orders on the grounds of dropping the lawsuit. In-person limitations exist, however, on how they may operate for safety.

Parks also act as socially cohesive spaces where residents can mingle and promote safe, socially-distanced interactions.<sup>58</sup> Southbridge has at least 7 parks in its boundary, with the 20-acre Southbridge Wetland Park expected to open in the Summer 2021. Five civic organizations based in Southbridge work to promote community development endeavors that would also nurture social cohesion: youth development, early childhood education, crisis services, housing, and poverty.

56 Kingsbury M, Clayborne Z, Colman I, Kirkbride JB. The protective effect of neighbourhood social cohesion on adolescent mental health following stressful life events. *Psychol Med.* 2020;50(8):1292-1299. doi:10.1017/S0033291719001235

57 The Editorial Board. "Opinion | Covid and the Church in Delaware." *The Wall Street Journal*, Dow Jones & Company, 12 Nov. 2020, [www.wsj.com/articles/covid-and-the-church-in-delaware-11605223486](http://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-and-the-church-in-delaware-11605223486).

58 Jennings V, Bamkole O. The Relationship between Social Cohesion and Urban Green Space: An Avenue for Health Promotion. *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2019;16(3):452. Published 2019 Feb 4. doi:10.3390/ijerph16030452

| Place Name                               | Type               |
|--|--------------------|
| Ark Learning Center                      | Childcare          |
| Creative Learning Child Care             | Childcare          |
| Yolanda's LiL Helper's                   | Childcare          |
| Church of the Living Word                | Church             |
| D'Ashley's church                        | Church             |
| Ezion Fair Church                        | Church             |
| The First State Church of Christ         | Church             |
| Gospel Time Church of God in Christ      | Church             |
| Greater Deliverance Temple               | Church             |
| Harrison Memorial Baptist Church         | Church             |
| House of God Church                      | Church             |
| Iglesia de Dios Linaje Escogido          | Church             |
| Love Fellowship                          | Church             |
| Ministerio Tabernaculo De Transformacion | Church             |
| Mt Joy United Methodist Church           | Church             |
| New Calvary Baptist Church               | Church             |
| New Covenant Christian Church            | Church             |
| New Life Baptist Church                  | Church             |
| PDH Ministries                           | Church             |
| River of Life Church                     | Church             |
| Shiloh Apostolic Church                  | Church             |
| A Copeland Foundation Inc                | Civic organization |
| Communities in Schools - Wilmington      | Civic organization |
| Junior Achievement of Delaware           | Civic organization |
| Neighborhood House                       | Civic organization |
| 76ers Fieldhouse Powered by BPG Sports   | Event venue        |
| The Catch                                | Event venue        |
| Dugan Park                               | Park               |
| Eden Park                                | Park               |
| Elbert Playground                        | Park               |
| Hicks Park                               | Park               |
| Liberty Triangle                         | Park               |
| Millie Cannon Park                       | Park               |
| Stoney Davis Park                        | Park               |

# COMMUNITY ASSETS



## Where we are:

Southbridge socially-cohesive spaces include:

- Nearly 20 churches that illustrate religious institutions as a significant socially cohesive mechanism in Southbridge. A shared faith is found to produce positive mental health outcomes from its structure, exposure to similar-minded people, mindfulness practices, and more.
- Parks have the potential to strengthen social cohesion, and subsequently health, of Southbridge residents with an incoming 20-acre Wetland Park that will open this year; this will join Southbridge's current seven parks.

## Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:

- Given COVID limitations, have churches' been able to continue services (i.e., maintain socially cohesive and mental health benefits)?
- Where are opportunities to improve social cohesion through additional amenities in Southbridge?
- Does the main business district area offer safe, gathering spaces to implement socially cohesive spaces and programming (e.g., creative placemaking, play streets, streetscape, parklets, etc. for their health benefits)?



# Land Use and Zoning

A majority of the study area is zoned for manufacturing (light manufacturing and waterfront manufacturing) and industrial (general industrial), much of it surrounding residentially zoned areas of Southbridge. The Southbridge 2028 Comprehensive Plan updated the Future Land Use map to change the area northeast of Southbridge along the Christina River from "Manufacturing" to "Mixed Commercial/Light Manufacturing." The zoning map, however, has yet to update to reflect these changes (i.e., W-1 to W-2 or W-3), as shown on the next page.

The change seeks to mitigate health hazards associated with the heavy manufacturing currently in the area. The health implications of manufacturing, combined with the flooding that washes debris into the community, are potentially highly negative. According to research by Victor Perez (a member of this Neighborhood Plan's Steering Committee) and Jennifer Egan, the industrial legacy of Southbridge has left contaminants that are associated with neurodevelopmental issues, cancer, reproductive effects, and problems of the nervous system.<sup>59</sup>

Vacant land exists in areas zoned as waterfront residential/commercial, light manufacturing, and low-density residential housing. Vacant and abandoned lots have been associated with negative effects on community well-being, physical health, and mental health, and according to one survey in Philadelphia, they are often "overshadowing positive aspects of the community, contributing to fractures between neighbors, attracting crime, and making residents fearful."<sup>60</sup>

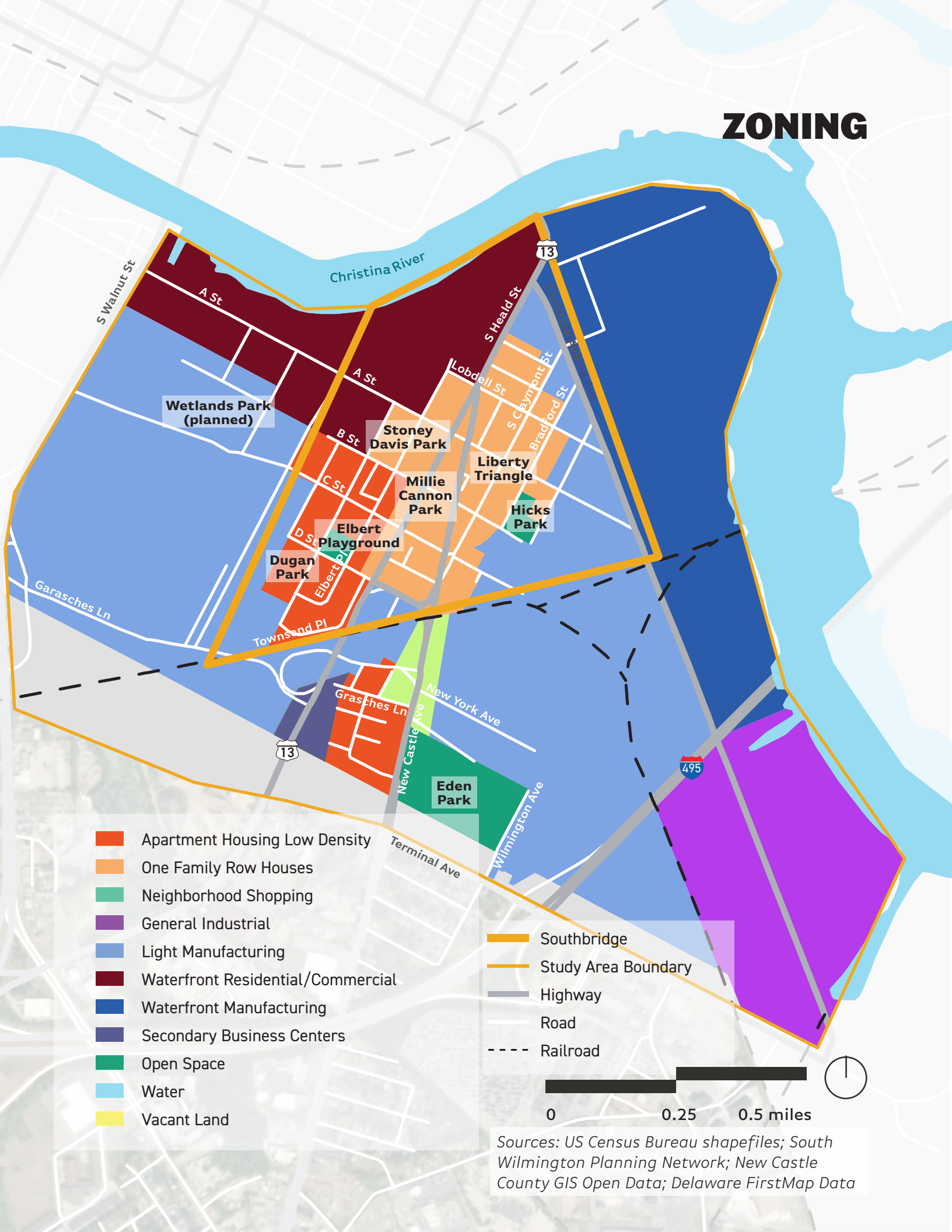
<sup>59</sup> Victor W. Perez and Jennifer Egan, "Knowledge and Concern for Sea-Level Rise in an Urban Environmental Justice Community," *Sociological Forum*, 2016, DOI: 10.1111/socf.12278.

<sup>60</sup> Eugenia Garvin, Charles Branas, Shimrit Keddem, Jeffrey Sellman, and Carolyn Cannuscio, "More Than Just An Eyesore: Local Insights And Solutions on Vacant Land And Urban Health," *J Urban Health*. 2013 Jun; 90(3): 412–426. Published online 2012 Nov 28. doi: 10.1007/s11524-012-9782-7. <https://bit.ly/3qNOSXQ>

## Land Use by Category

| Category                       | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Industrial                     | 43%        |
| Vacant                         | 17%        |
| Park/Open Space                | 10%        |
| Commercial                     | 8%         |
| Infrastructure                 | 8%         |
| Institutional/Public Uses      | 6%         |
| Low-Medium Density Residential | 6%         |
| Parking                        | 2%         |
| Mixed Use                      | <1%        |

# ZONING



# VACANT LAND



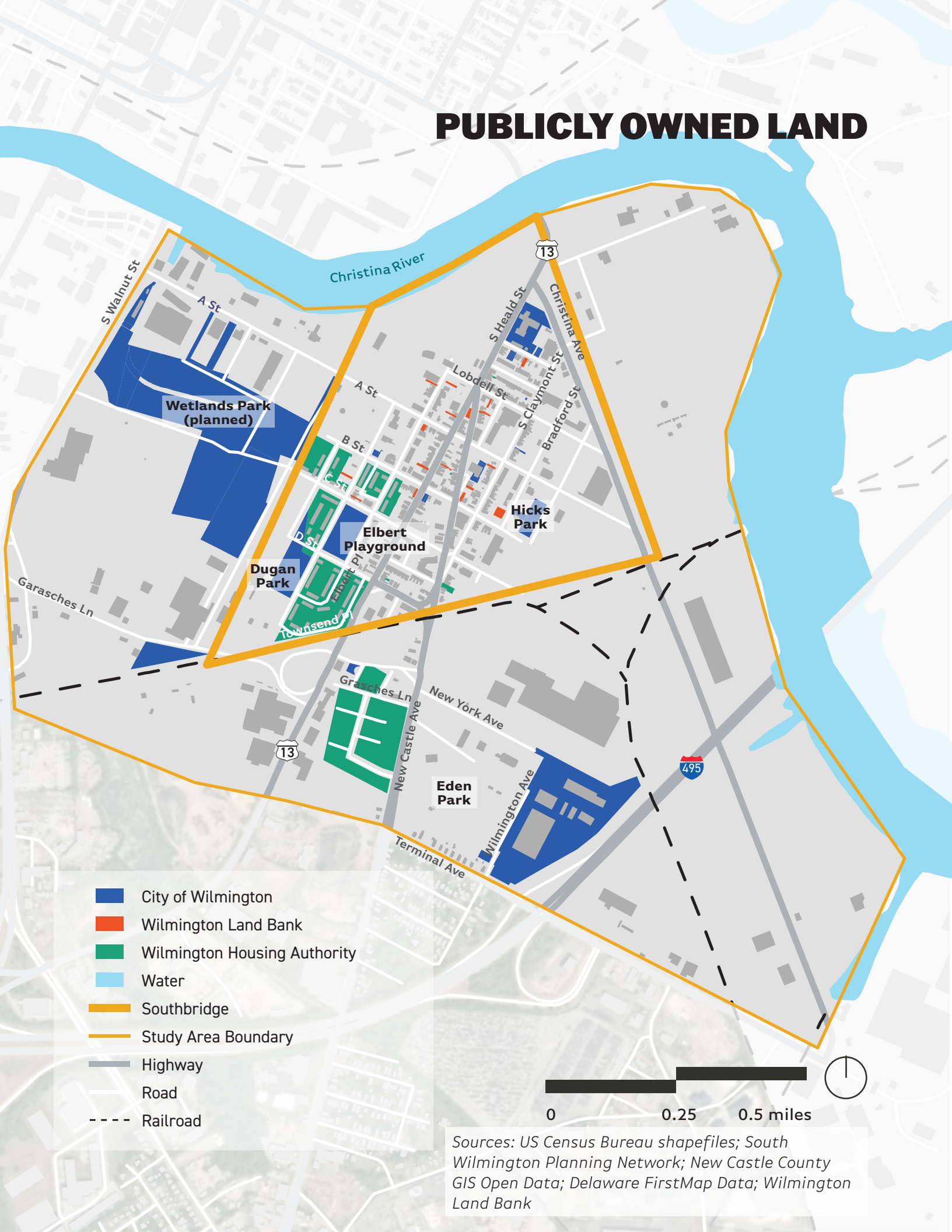
- Vacant Land
- Park or Greenspace
- Water
- Southbridge
- Study Area Boundary
- Highway
- Road
- Railroad

0 0.25 0.5 miles

Sources: US Census Bureau shapefiles; South  
Wilmington Planning Network; New Castle  
County GIS Open Data; Delaware FirstMap Data



# PUBLICLY OWNED LAND



Sources: US Census Bureau shapefiles; South Wilmington Planning Network; New Castle County GIS Open Data; Delaware FirstMap Data; Wilmington Land Bank



These areas may be opportunities for future development, particularly if they are publicly-owned sites. Residents have expressed wanting more recreational spaces for the youth, like a dirt bike park. Further research and feedback should be collected to determine the feasibility of using this vacant land and the types of development that will make the most sense for residents.

## **Where we are:**

- A majority of land in the study area is used for industrial uses that surround the residential core of Southbridge. Contamination from industry is associated with a range of negative health conditions.
- About 17% of land is vacant, which presents challenges to wellness but also opportunities for new and beneficial development.

## **Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:**

- How can we make sure that residents of Southbridge are protected from harmful impacts of industrial uses?
- What are some ways to repurpose or redevelop vacant land into useful and needed development?
- How do zoning changes and recommendations from the South Walnut Street Urban Renewal Plan fit into what residents see in the future for Southbridge?

# Sea Level Rise and Flooding

According to the Climate Justice report by the Delaware Nature Society, Southbridge faces flooding due to “pernicious combination of high tides and stormwater overflows (caused by undersized infrastructure).”<sup>61</sup> 64% of the study area is in a 100-year flood plain, making it one of the most vulnerable communities to flooding in Wilmington.<sup>62</sup>

The same report stated that, while the new Wetland Park will reduce flooding by “eliminating combined sewer overflows and restoring acres of wetland to help absorb stormwater run-off,” neither the park nor the recent investments in tide gates, sewer clean outs and ditch maintenance “will be enough to protect Southbridge from the risk of inundation within the next few decades.”<sup>63</sup>

## Sea Level Rise and Flooding in the Study Area

| Sea Level Rise | Percent of Study Area Under Water |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2 feet         | 5%                                |
| 4 feet         | 26%                               |
| 6 feet         | 38%                               |

61 Erika Furlong and Delaware Nature Society, “Climate Justice: For a Prosperous & Sustainable Wilmington,” 2018, <https://31m5q6px0ll2vdjyqian81tx-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/DelNature-Climate-Justice-for-a-Prosperous-Sustainable-Wilmington-Final-Report.pdf>

62 FEMA Flood Map Service Center, “NFHL Data-County” for the City of Wilmington, <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/resources/contact#>

63 Furlong and Delaware Nature Society, 2018.

The Climate Justice report suggests relocation as an option for Southbridge residents if a solution cannot be engineered.

In addition to accounting for flooding caused by weather events, any planning effort in South Wilmington should take into account the sea level rise that is projected to happen in the area.

According to a report released in 2017 by the Delaware Geological Survey and Delaware Department of Natural Resources, in the 80 years between 2020 and 2100, there is an 87% chance that there will be a 2 foot rise in sea level in Delaware, a 25% of a 4 foot rise, and a 3% chance of a 6 foot rise.<sup>64</sup>

Even with a 2 foot rise in sea level, parts of South Wilmington will be submerged, particularly along the Christina River and along the railroad tracks from the river to New Castle Avenue.

A 4 foot rise will result in the complete inundation of A Street and the future Wetland Park, areas surrounding Garasches Lane, and much of the area east of Heald Street.

A 6 foot rise in sea level will result in nearly 40% of the study area being under water.

64 Delaware Sea-Level Rise Technical Committee, Delaware Geological Survey, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, “Recommendation of Sea-Level Rise Planning Scenarios for Delaware: Technical Report,” November 2017, <https://bit.ly/3iBt6DV>

# FLOOD RISK IN SOUTHBRIDGE



Sources: US Census Bureau shapefiles; South Wilmington Planning Network; New Castle County GIS Open Data; Delaware FirstMap Data; FEMA Flood Map Service Center

GREENVILLE

# FLOOD RISK IN WILMINGTON

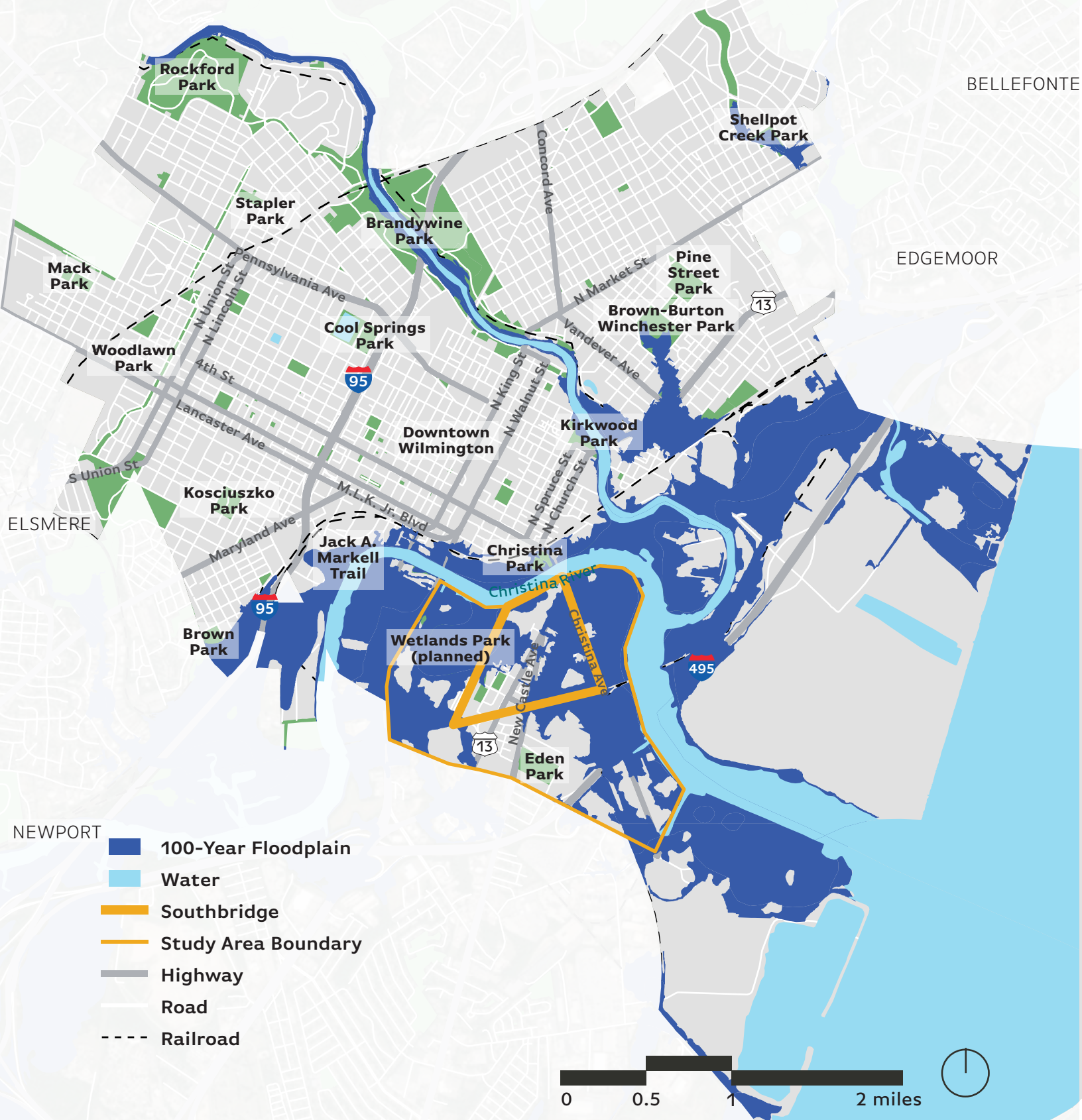
BELLEFONTE

EDGEMOOR

ELSMERE

NEWPORT

WILMINGTON  
MANOR



Sources: US Census Bureau shapefiles; South Wilmington Planning Network; New Castle County GIS Open Data; Delaware FirstMap Data; FEMA Flood Map Service Center



# SEA LEVEL RISE



- 2 ft sea level rise (87% chance by 2100)
- 4 ft sea level rise (25% chance by 2100)
- 6 ft sea level rise (3% chance by 2100)
- Southbridge
- Study Area Boundary
- Highway
- Road
- Railroad

0 0.25 0.5 miles

Sources: US Census Bureau shapefiles; South Wilmington Planning Network; New Castle County GIS Open Data; Delaware FirstMap Data; The Delaware Geological Survey

The negative health implications of climate change has been extensively documented, as was summarized by Wilmington's 2018 Action Plan:<sup>65</sup>

- Climate change will decrease air quality, leading to worsening of respiratory illnesses and cancer.
- Flooding associated with climate change will increase contaminant and pathogen exposure, especially in Southbridge, where the community is already heavily exposed to pollutants.
- Frequent extreme heat will worsen cardiac and respiratory illnesses, vector-borne diseases (e.g., Lyme disease, West Nile virus), and conflict and violence.
- Climate change-related events will lead to post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and other psychological distress.

Flooding, which is already a frequent occurrence in Southbridge, is an urgent problem due to the existing contaminants in the community.<sup>66</sup>

As discussed in the earlier section about Land Use, the industrial legacy of Southbridge has left contaminants that are associated with neurodevelopmental issues, cancer, reproductive effects, and problems of the nervous system.<sup>67</sup> These factors are potentially compounded with flooding, which could wash debris into the surrounding community, and even into the basement of homes.

In the same study by Perez and Egan, a survey of residents showed that over 60% of respondents were greatly concerned about the effects of toxic pollution on air, soil, and water quality; more than half of respondents reported that “a great deal” of the soil and waters are polluted, and nearly half reported the same for the air and drinking water. 75% of respondents said that sea level rise was a “very serious” to “extremely serious” problem for Southbridge.<sup>68</sup>

These results indicate a broad agreement within the community for the need to address the double threat of pollution and sea level rise.

---

65 Erika Furlong and Delaware Nature Society, “Climate Justice: For a Prosperous & Sustainable Wilmington (2018 Climate Action Plan),” 2018, <https://bit.ly/363TmBR>

66 Natasja Sheriff, Al Jazeera America, “Rising seas overwhelm Delaware tide gates,” Oct 16, 2015, <http://bit.ly/3qEPkaE>

67 Victor W. Perez and Jennifer Egan, “Knowledge and Concern for Sea-Level Rise in an Urban Environmental Justice Community,” *Sociological Forum*, 2016, DOI: 10.1111/socf.12278.

---

68 Ibid.

## Where we are:

- Southbridge faces frequent flooding due to undersized infrastructure in the short-term and submersion of up to 40% of the neighborhood by 2100 due to sea level rise.
- The Wetland Park will be underwater if there will be a 4 foot-rise in sea level (25% chance of occurring by 2100), and the park and other recent infrastructure improvements will not be enough to protect Southbridge from flooding.
- Flooding in Southbridge may compound the issue of environmental contamination and health hazards in the community, while climate change is also expected to negatively impact community health.
- The community perceives the threats of toxic pollution and sea level rise, indicating a need and readiness to advocate for much needed change.

## Things to consider for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan:

- How can we continue to reduce or prevent flooding in Southbridge?
- How do residents feel about a potential relocation plan?
- How can we work with industry and regulators to make sure flooding doesn't lead to toxic substances being spread about the community?
- How can we prepare for the health and social consequences that are expected from climate change and flooding?
- Where can we install rain gardens and other infrastructure to reduce flooding?



**Equitable**

**Development**





# Equitable Development

How can we leverage the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan to strengthen our foundations of health and wellness? This requires framing our planning process in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and examining the accompanying high rates of unemployment and reduced wellness, and other existing “cracks” in the foundation of health and wellness that we identified in this report.

A thoughtful planning process that seeks to bring equitable health and wellness benefits to Southbridge should avoid development and growth for the sake of development and growth in South Wilmington.

The Neighborhood Plan should guide stakeholders, serving as a map and compass towards greater health and wellness for the communities of Southbridge while doing our best to avoid the pitfalls of growth like gentrification or the creation of places that are not for the people currently living in Southbridge.

A neighborhood plan can make a series of recommendations, but because there are limited available resources and funds to turn those recommendations into reality, we will need to identify the most urgent needs and align them with short- and long-term goals.

The Steering Committee for the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan consists of residents, representatives of local institutions such as the Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, the City of Wilmington, and other stakeholders. You can see the full list of the Steering Committee members at the end of this document, in “Appendix A - Steering Committee.”

## Foundations of health and wellbeing



Based on one-on-one interviews with members of the Steering Committee between December 2020 and January 2021, the following assets, priorities, and challenges were identified:

### **What people love about Southbridge:**

- Strong sense of community and identity
- Southbridge Wetland Park
- Neighborhood House
- Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
- Mt Joy United Methodist Church
- Low crime rate

### **Top priorities to address through the Neighborhood Plan:**

- Leverage the changes happening in South Wilmington (riverfront developments, wetlands park, development on vacant land) to benefit the Southbridge community.
- Keep homes and cost of living affordable for people who live in Southbridge now.
- Increase locally-owned small business so

the community can take charge of economic development in Southbridge and South Wilmington.

- Improve the ability to access amenities through walking and biking.
- Make Southbridge more resilient to flooding and sea level rise.

### **Biggest Challenges Facing Southbridge**

- Flooding, sea level rise
- Getting everyone to the table and on the same page
- Perceptions of crime

These assets, priorities, and challenges will frame the Southbridge Neighborhood Plan, and the planning team will continue to engage the communities of Southbridge to verify and update them in the coming months.

## **A Neighborhood Plan can make recommendations around:**

- Attracting the kinds of businesses and institutions we want to see more of (grocery stores, clinics, civic centers, etc.)
- Providing a feasible path to affordable homeownership
- Stabilizing rent prices
- Creating jobs for neighborhood residents
- Retaining existing businesses and jobs
- Implementing designs and programs that reflect the people, history, and culture of Southbridge
- Enhancing walkability and active transport





**This Page  
Intentionally Left  
Blank**

# Appendix C: The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan Questionnaire

The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan is a partnership with the Southbridge Civic Association, the South Wilmington Planning Network (SWPN), and Healthy Communities Delaware.

This questionnaire will help prioritize the recommendations for the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan and a potential Community Benefits Agreement with developers in South Wilmington. This survey should take less than 5 minutes

## 1. These are recommendations that may be in the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan. Please select the 5 most important:

- ☐ More youth programming
- ☐ Better connect residents to jobs
- ☐ Supporting local entrepreneurs
- ☐ Less expensive housing
- ☐ Less truck traffic
- ☐ More affordable fresh foods
- ☐ Reduce nearby polluting industries
- ☐ Better connections to the Riverfront and Downtown
- ☐ More flood prevention

- ☐ More support to local non profits
- ☐ Community art that celebrates Southbridge
- ☐ An organizations that can develop vacant lots and buildings
- ☐ Other (please specify):

## 2. These are topic areas that may be covered by a Community Benefits Agreement with developers in South Wilmington. Please select the 5 most important:

- ☐ Jobs for Southbridge residents
- ☐ Retail space for Southbridge entrepreneurs
- ☐ Housing options that are affordable for Southbridge residents
- ☐ Better transportation options (trail, bus) between Southbridge and the Riverfront
- ☐ Office and meeting spaces for Southbridge community organizations
- ☐ Programming for Southbridge youth
- ☐ Money for Southbridge to use for improving the community
- ☐ A study that proposes ways to make their projects better for the Southbridge community
- ☐ Other (please specify):

**3. Which would you like to receive updates on? Select all that apply.**

☐ The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan (including the Community Benefits Agreement)

☐ The Southbridge Civic Association

Please provide your contact information:

**4. Demographic questions (all questions are optional and only meant to provide a sense of who we have been able get responses from):**

**a) What is your gender identity?**

☐ Man

☐ Woman

☐ Prefer to self-describe (please specify):

**b) What is your race? (Select all that apply)**

☐ Asian American

☐ Black or African American

☐ Native American or Alaska Native

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ White American, European American, or Middle Eastern American

☐ Two or more races

☐ Other (please specify):

**c) Are you Hispanic or Latino?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

**d) What is your age?**

☐ Under 18

☐ 18-34

☐ 35-49

☐ 50-64

☐ 65+

**e) Do you rent or own the house you live in?**

☐ Rent

☐ Own

**f) What is your household income? (Check one)**

☐ \$0

☐ \$1 to \$9,999

☐ \$10,000 to \$24,999

☐ \$25,000 to \$49,999

☐ \$50,000 to \$74,999

☐ \$75,000 to \$99,999

☐ \$100,000 to 149,999

☐ \$150,000 and greater

☐ Prefer not to answer

# Appendix D: The case for spending American Rescue Plan Act funds in Southbridge

## INTRODUCTION

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) was introduced to Congress on February 24th, 2021 by Rep. John Yarmuth. The law was signed into effect on March 11, 2021.<sup>1</sup> ARPA is designed to give support to state, local, and tribal governments in dealing with the impact of COVID-19. The U.S. Department of the Treasury (“Treasury”) provided an Interim Final Rule (IFR) with additional guidance and clarity on how jurisdictions could use the funds allocated to them. Governments at various levels are expected to develop implementable plans on how to use the ARPA funds to spur an equitable economic recovery from the pandemic.

The IFR states that “certain types of services... are eligible uses when provided in a Qualified Census Tract (QCT), [or] to families living in QCTs.”<sup>2</sup> According to the City of Wilmington, these services include affordable housing development; services to address homelessness; housing vouchers; enhanced learning services; and high quality childcare.<sup>3</sup>

1 Yarmuth, John A. “Text - H.R.1319 - 117th CONGRESS (2021-2022): AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN Act of 2021.” Congress.gov, March 11, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bills/117/congress/house-bills/1319/text>.

2 Department of the Treasury, Interim Final Rule for 31 CFR Part 35, RIN 1505-AC77, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/FRF-Interim-Final-Rule.pdf>

3 City of Wilmington Finance & Economic Development Committee, “Regulation and Guidance for the American Rescue Plan Act” (presentation), May 25, 2021.

The IFR also states that jurisdictions may provide these services to non-qualifying census tracts if they are able to “support their determination that the pandemic resulted in disproportionate public health or economic outcomes to the specific populations, households, or geographic areas to be served.”<sup>4</sup>

This memo is intended to provide guidance on and support for the use of ARPA funds in the Southbridge neighborhood, which lies within Census Tract 19.02 of Wilmington, New Castle County in the State of Delaware. Census Tract 19.02, which had a poverty rate of 32 percent in the 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates by the Census Bureau,<sup>5</sup> is not a “Qualifying Census Tract” (QCT) for 2021, which means that it must go through an additional documentation process to prove the need for certain uses of ARPA.

The suggested use of the funds in the Southbridge community will be based on the Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP), which was drafted in October of 2021 by the Southbridge Civic Association, the South Wilmington Planning Network, and Healthy Communities Delaware, with

4 Department of the Treasury, Interim Final Rule for 31 CFR Part 35, RIN 1505-AC77, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/FRF-Interim-Final-Rule.pdf>

5 US Census, “S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months,” 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, <https://bit.ly/2VX26YF>



support from Asakura Robinson. The SNAP can be accessed at [swpn.org](http://swpn.org), and it outlines recommendations for neighborhood revitalization and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including suggested uses for ARPA funds.

Using data at the city, county, state, and national levels, we will demonstrate that Southbridge is a community that has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 pandemic, and make the case that the City of Wilmington, New Castle County, and the State of Delaware should allocate funding to address needs within the community.

It should be noted that the presence of Christina Landing, a luxury housing development on the Wilmington waterfront that is approximately a half-mile from the core of historic Southbridge, skews the data for Census Tract 19.02 towards a higher income and lower levels of poverty. The Census Bureau publishes data on income levels, housing cost, and many other community characteristics. Unfortunately, the data published by the Census Bureau lumps Southbridge into a single census tract with the rest of South Wilmington, including Christina Landing, a relatively new high-rise apartment complex that has drawn in higher-income residents. According to a scan on Zillow in September 2021, the average home sale price in Christina Landing was around \$300,000 compared to \$100,000 or less in Southbridge. Because the data for Southbridge and Christina Landing are lumped together, we are unable to separate out Southbridge from the rest of South Wilmington, and may have led to the census tract being disqualified as QCT.

## **SOUTH WILMINGTON (CENSUS TRACT 19.02) AND SOUTHBRIDGE**



As a result, Southbridge is often designated as an area of “Low Priority” for public assistance, most evident in the COVID-19 recovery efforts. According to data released by the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH), Census Tract 19.02 is designated as being a low priority for vaccine outreach due to relatively higher rates of vaccinations within the tract, which is likely due to the presence of Christina Landing.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, according to researchers at Delaware State University, Black Delawareans are more likely to be vaccine hesitant, and Delawareans in underserved communities are less likely to be vaccinated.<sup>7</sup> Data specific to Southbridge show that as of October

<sup>6</sup> Vaccine Equity Map by Wilmington’s COVID-19 Community Response Group, created with data from the Division of Public Health, accessed Aug 18, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3iU5Gv7>

<sup>7</sup> Sharron Xuaren Wang, PhD, et al, “COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy in Delaware’s Underserved Communities,” *Dela J Public Health*. 2021 Sep 27;7(4):168-175. doi: 10.32481/djph.2021.09.022

# ESTABLISHING THE CASE FOR SOUTHBRIDGE USING THE CITY OF WILMINGTON'S FOUR STEP ANALYSIS

1. Identify the harmful effect of COVID-19 the activity will address.
2. Assess the causal or compounding connection.
3. Assess for disproportionate impact on distressed sectors or populations.
4. Determine how to prove the expense produces the expected outcome.”<sup>8</sup>

191 The Southbridge Neighborhood Action Plan

Below, we conducted the 4 step analysis to justify the use of ARPA funds in Southbridge to fund initiatives to address the harmful effect of COVID in four topics: Education, Health, Violence, and Housing.

## EDUCATION

The harmful effect of COVID-19 is on students' educational outcomes.

COVID-19 has had a clear and negative effect on educational outcomes, especially for children of low-income households. As schools were shut down for long periods and children were expected to receive online instruction, it highlighted the unequal access to Wi-Fi and computers, leading to learning loss for children in lower income and under-resourced communities. A staggering 59 percent of parents with lower incomes surveyed across the country at the onset of the pandemic in April of 2020 indicated that their children would “likely face at least one of three digital obstacles asked about,” which were children needing to do their schoolwork on a cellphone; having to use publicly available Wi-Fi due to lack of a reliable connection at home; and not being able to complete their schoolwork due to not having access to a computer in the house.<sup>11</sup>

11 Emily Vogels, “59% of U.S. parents with lower incomes say their child may face digital obstacles in schoolwork,” Pew Research Center, September 10, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/09/10/59-of-u-s-parents-with-lower-incomes-say-their-child-may-face-digital-obstacles-in-schoolwork/>

Besides the clear connection between COVID-19 and remote learning and resultant educational disparities outlined above, research shows that learning loss due to COVID-19, especially in STEM, has been especially acute for children in low-income communities. Research shows that students may have lost a full year of math learning, with losses particularly pronounced for students from low-income households.<sup>12</sup> Another report estimated that students gained a third to a half of what they would have learned in math classes relative to a normal school year, and this impact was, again, disproportionately seen among students from low-income households, with these students falling behind nearly a full year in their math skills.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, according to a report released by the U.S. Department of Education students of color felt the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as 20 percent of children who lost a parent to COVID-19 through early 2021 were Black, despite making up only 14 percent of all children in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Black students are also likely to face greater educational barriers, as 10 percent of Black households lacked consistent computer access, compared to only 6.7 percent of White households.<sup>15</sup>

As stated earlier, Southbridge, which is located in Census Tract 19.02, had an estimated poverty rate of 32 percent in 2019, and the population is at least 70 percent Black.<sup>16,17</sup> This last figure likely exceeds 90%

<sup>12</sup> Susan Rotermund and Amy Burke (citing other research), "Online Education in STEM and Impact of COVID-19," July 2021, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20211/online-education-in-stem-and-impact-of-covid-19>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Education, "Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students," June 2021, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> US Census, "S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months," 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, <https://bit.ly/2VX26YF>

<sup>17</sup> US Census, "B02001: Race," 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, [https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=race&g=1400000US10003001902&tid=ACSDT5Y2019)

according to block level data in the 2010 Census, the latest available at that low level of geography. In Census Tract 19.02, a third (33.5 percent) of households making less than \$20,000 does not have access to an Internet subscription.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, 16.1 percent of Black households in CT 19.02 do not have an Internet subscription, while zero percent of White households do not have one.<sup>19</sup> In CT 19.02, 11.8 percent of Black households do not have access to a computer, including a smartphone, and zero percent of White households do not have a computer.<sup>20</sup>

Based on the evidence cited above, there is a clear and established disproportionately negative impact of COVID-19 on education for populations in Southbridge, including for achievement in STEM, and especially for Black and low-income students.

#### **Step 4: Determine how to prove the expense produces the expected outcome**

Although the specifics of the programming and documentation of results may change based on the selected implementing agent, we outline some options below:

B02001&hidePreview=true

<sup>18</sup> US Census, "S2801: TYPES OF COMPUTERS AND INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS," 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=internet&g=1400000US10003001902&tid=ACSST5Y2019.S2801>

<sup>19</sup> US Census, "S2802: TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS," 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=internet&g=1400000US10003001902&tid=ACSST5Y2019.S2802>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid



*Community BBQ, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw*



| Expense  | ARPA Enabling Language  | Implementing Partners   | Documentation  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Work with identified evidence-based programs that offer the cultural restoration benefits to the positive growth and development of youth, such the Boys and Girls Club of Delaware and The Warehouse, to establish or expand youth programs a youth program at the former Elbert-Palmer Elementary School or other sites within the neighborhood. | The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allows for expenditure of funds for "evidence-based educational services and practices to address the academic needs of students, including tutoring, summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. <sup>1</sup>  | Christina School District; Boys & Girls Club of Wilmington; The Warehouse; Neighborhood House | The program should collect and provide data on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count and demographics of students impacted</li> <li>• Wi-Fi and computer access at home</li> <li>• Wi-Fi and computer access at the program</li> <li>• Student achievement before and after enrollment into the program</li> </ul> |
| Work with Neighborhood House and the Delaware STEM Council on connections to other STEAM or performing arts magnet programs to connect Southbridge youth to these opportunities. Offer Southbridge youth preferred admission to STEM programs.   | The Delaware STEM Council was created to evaluate the state of STEM education in local schools and recommend ways to improve it. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allows for expenditure of funds for "evidence-based educational services and practices to address the academic needs of students, including tutoring, summer, afterschool, and other extended learning and enrichment programs" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. <sup>2</sup> | Neighborhood House; Civic Association; Southbridge CDC  | The program should collect and provide data on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count and demographic of students impacted</li> <li>• Wi-Fi and computer access at home</li> <li>• Wi-Fi and computer access at the program</li> <li>• Student achievement before and after enrollment into the program</li> </ul>  |

<sup>1</sup> Page 40 of Department of the Treasury, Interim Final Rule for 31 CFR Part 35, RIN 1505-AC77, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/FRF-Interim-Final-Rule.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

## HEALTH

### Step 1: Identify the Harmful Effect of COVID-19

The harmful effect of COVID-19 is on health

outcomes.

### Step 2: Assess the causal or compounding connection

COVID-19 has had a clear and negative effect



on health, especially for Black and low-income communities. Using hospitalization as an indicator of severe cases of COVID-19, rates for hospitalization were more than three times higher for Black Americans compared to White Americans.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, Black Americans are at heightened risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to income disparity and disparities in access to jobs that offer the possibility of telework.<sup>22</sup>

### Step 3: Assess for disproportionate impact on distressed sectors or populations.

Research by scholars at Delaware State University found that Black Delawareans are more likely to be vaccine hesitant and that Delawareans in underserved communities are less likely to be vaccinated.<sup>23</sup> The hesitancy of Black residents is reflected in vaccination rates, as seen in the table below, where Black residents are underrepresented in the proportion of vaccinated residents.

21 Gail Denise Hughes et. Al, "The Impact of Health Disparities on COVID-19 Outcomes: Early Findings from a High-Income Country and Two Middle-Income Countries," J Racial Ethn Health Disparities. 2021 Mar 8 : 1–8. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7938881/>

22 Ibid

23 Sharron Xuaren Wang, PhD, et Al, "COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy in Delaware's Underserved Communities," Dela J Public Health. 2021 Sep 27;7(4):168-175. doi: 10.32481/djph.2021.09.022.

| Geography         | % of residents who are Black | % of all residents vaccinated who are Black |
|-------------------|------------------------------|---|
| State of Delaware | 22%                          | 16.1%                                       |
| New Castle County | 25%                          | 18.5%                                       |
| Zip Code 19801    | 75%                          | 50.9%                                       |

Black Americans account for a disproportionate share of COVID-19 cases and deaths, and in Delaware, Black residents were also shown to have lower rates of testing.<sup>24</sup> An initiative by the ChristinaCare

24 Marshala Lee, MD, MPH, et Al, "Addressing COVID-19 Health Disparities Through Community Engagement," Dela J Public Health. 2020 Jul; 6(2): 88–90. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/>

Value Institute and the Office of Health Equity of the Delaware Department of Public Health to develop "an effective community engagement plan to reach local African American communities who were at higher risk for contracting COVID-19" found a need for "more accurate and culturally tailored COVID-19 educational materials, access to testing, and access to safety supplies."<sup>25</sup> The group recommended providing adequate training and support for faith leaders and shop owners to serve a role similar to community health workers to increase access to service and information in a culturally responsive manner. Additionally, Black Delawareans have a higher case per capita, with 9,531 cases per 100,000 people, while White Delawareans have a case per capita of 7,163 cases per 100,000 people.<sup>26</sup>

As stated earlier, the population of Southbridge is at least 70 percent Black (likely a higher percentage if Census data was able to isolate the neighborhood from the rest of South Wilmington)<sup>27</sup>. Based on the evidence cited above, there is a clear and established disproportionately negative impact of COVID-19 on health outcomes for populations in Southbridge.

### Step 4: Determine how to prove the expense produces the expected outcome

Although the specifics of the programming and documentation of results may change based on the selected implementing agent, we outline some options below:

[articles/PMC8389831/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8389831/)

25 Ibid

26 The COVID Tracking Project, citing data from the State of Delaware, last updated March 6, 2021, <https://covidtracking.com/data/state/delaware>

27 US Census, "B02001: Race," 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=race&g=1400000US10003001902&tid=ACSDT5Y2019.B02001&hidePreview=true>

| Expense  | ARPA Enabling Language   | Implementing Partners  | Documentation   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Train, hire, and deploy Community Health Workers (CHWs) by providing adequate training and resources for local community leaders, including faith leaders and shop owners. | "Funding community health workers to help community members access health services and services to address the social determinants of health" is an eligible use of ARPA funds if applied within a Qualifying Census Tract (QCT) or to other populations, households, or geographic areas that are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. <sup>1</sup> | Henrietta Johnson Medical Center; Christina Care; Delaware Division of Public Health | The program should collect and provide data on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of CHWs trained</li> <li>• Number of community members reached</li> <li>• Number of community members vaccinated through outreach of CHWs</li> <li>• Vaccination rates before and after deployment of CHWs</li> <li>• Residents connected to health services through CHWs</li> <li>• Residents connected to social services through CHWs</li> </ul> |

1 Page 22 of Department of the Treasury, Interim Final Rule for 31 CFR Part 35, RIN 1505-AC77, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/FRF-Interim-Final-Rule.pdf>

## VIOLENCE

### Step 1: Identify the Harmful Effect of COVID-19

The harmful effect of COVID-19 is on violence in the community.

### Step 2: Assess the causal or compounding connection

Studies comparing the impact of COVID-19 on trends in violence have found that violent crime—specifically, gun-related incidents—increased in communities across the country since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>28</sup> One study found that gun assaults in March 2020 (the declaration of emergencies due to COVID-19) through the end of the year, the average city gun assault rate increased by 7.4

28 Mason Sutherland et. Al, "Gun violence during COVID-19 pandemic: Paradoxical trends in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and Baltimore," the American Journal of Emergency Medicine, VOLUME 39, P225-226, JANUARY 01, 2021, [https://www.ajemjournal.com/article/S0735-6757\(20\)30344-2/fulltext](https://www.ajemjournal.com/article/S0735-6757(20)30344-2/fulltext)

percent over the same period in 2019.

Wilmington experienced a 50 percent surge in gun violence in 2020 amid the pandemic.<sup>29</sup> Southbridge has seen an increase in shootings, with 4 shootings in 2020 compared to 2 in 2019, and there have already been 4 shooting incidents in 2021 as of July 15, 2021.<sup>30</sup>

Although it is not possible to attribute the cause, unemployment, increased alcohol consumption, and increased firearm purchases have been cited as potential reasons for the increase in gun-related incidents during the pandemic.<sup>31</sup>

29 Mark Eichmann, "Wilmington shootings up 50% in 2020, case clearance drops amid pandemic," Feb 2, 2021, WHYY, <https://whyy.org/articles/wilmington-shootings-up-50-in-2020-case-clearance-drops-amid-pandemic/>

30 City of Wilmington via CrimeMapping, "COMPSTAT REPORTS AND CRIME MAPPING," Accessed July 2021, <https://www.wilmingtonde.gov/government/public-safety/wilmington-police-department/compstat-reports>

31 Ibid

### Step 3: Assess for disproportionate impact on distressed sectors or populations.

Gun violence disproportionately impacts young Black men. One study comparing Black men and White men aged 10 to 34 found that in a single year, Black men experienced homicide rates almost 12 times that of White men.<sup>32</sup> Black men are disproportionately impacted by firearm homicides in Delaware, making up 87 percent of all victims of gun violence.<sup>33</sup>

Southbridge has a population that is at least 70 percent Black (likely a higher percentage if Census data was able to

32 Sheats, K. J., Irving, S. M., Mercy, J. A., Simon, T. R., Crosby, A. E., Ford, D. C., et al. Morgan, R. E. (2018, October). Violence-related disparities experienced by black youth and young adults: Opportunities for prevention. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 55(4), 462–469. 10.1016/j.amepre.2018.05.017  
33 The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, “Delaware Gun Deaths: 2019,” <https://efsgv.org/state/delaware/>

isolate the neighborhood from the rest of South Wilmington), and the community has seen a doubling of the number of homicides between 2019 and 2020<sup>34,35</sup> Based on the evidence cited above, Southbridge has been disproportionately and negatively impacted by COVID-19 and as a result, the community has experienced increased gun violence.

### Step 4: Determine how to prove the expense produces the expected outcome

Although the specifics of the programming and documentation of results may change based on the selected implementing agent, we outline some options below:

34 US Census, “B02001: Race,” 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=race&g=1400000US10003001902&tid=ACSDT5Y2019.B02001&hidePreview=true>  
35 City of Wilmington via CrimeMapping, “COMPSTAT REPORTS AND CRIME MAPPING,” Accessed July 2021, <https://www.wilmingtonde.gov/government/public-safety/wilmington-police-department/compstat-reports>

| Expense   | ARPA Enabling Language  | Implementing Partners   | Documentation  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Wilmington Community Advisory Council (WCAC) to implement evidence-based community violence intervention programs in Southbridge to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence. | ARPA allows for expenditure of funds for “evidence-based community violence intervention programs to prevent violence and mitigate the increase in violence during the pandemic” in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. <sup>1</sup> | Southbridge Civic Association; Wilmington Community Advisory Council (WCAC) | The program should collect and provide data on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of individuals enrolled in the program</li><li>• Incidences and rates of gun violence in the area</li></ul> |

1 Page 23 of Department of the Treasury, Interim Final Rule for 31 CFR Part 35, RIN 1505-AC77, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/FRF-Interim-Final-Rule.pdf>

## HOUSING

### Step 1: Identify the Harmful Effect of COVID-19

The harmful effect of COVID-19 is on housing in the community.

### Step 2: Assess the causal or compounding connection

COVID-19 and the associated economic downturn have negatively impacted housing security for Southbridge residents. In 2020, the United States was possibly facing the most severe housing crisis in history due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with 30 to 40 million people potentially at risk of eviction.<sup>36</sup>

36 Emily Benfer et al, “The COVID-19 Eviction Crisis: an Estimated 30-40 Million People in America Are at Risk,” Aspen Institute, August 7, 2020, <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/>

As millions lost their jobs and ability to pay for housing during the pandemic, the United States had been experiencing a severe shortage of affordable housing units even before the pandemic. In South Wilmington, nearly half of renters in 2019 were paying beyond their means for housing, defined as using more than 30 percent of their income on rent (a figure that would likely be higher if data specific to Southbridge were available).<sup>37</sup> Since then, with the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying loss of income, this figure may have drastically increased.

### Step 3: Assess for disproportionate impact on distressed sectors or populations.

In June of 2020, 3 months into the pandemic, 53.6 percent of Black Americans reported a loss of employment income since March of 2020, compared to 42.7 percent of White Americans.<sup>38</sup> This disparity was even wider in Delaware, where 51.9 percent of Black Delawareans reported a loss of income and 35.4 percent of White Delawareans did the same.<sup>39</sup>

In the same period, 27.1 percent of Black Americans had not paid or deferred their last rent payment, while 11.9 percent of White Americans had done the same.<sup>40</sup> Similar disparities were seen at the state level, as 24.3 percent of Black Delawareans and 16.5 percent of White Delawareans had not paid or deferred their last rent payment.<sup>41</sup>

the-covid-19-eviction-crisis-an-estimated-30-40-million-people-in-america-are-at-risk/

37 US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, "Table DB04 Selected Housing Characteristics", 2019 5-year estimates data.

38 United States Census, "Week 5 Household Pulse Survey: May 28 - June 2," Employment Table 1. Experienced and Expected Loss of Employment Income, by Select Characteristics: Delaware, June 10, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/demo/hhp/hhp5.html>

39 Ibid

40 United States Census, "Week 5 Household Pulse Survey: May 28 - June 2," Housing Table 1b. Last Month's Payment Status for Renter-Occupied Housing Units, by Select Characteristics: Delaware, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/demo/hhp/hhp5.html>

41 Ibid

By September of 2021, these disparities have persisted, with 22.2 percent of Black Americans and 12.1 percent of White Americans reporting lost income and 26.8 percent of Black Delawareans and 12.1 percent White Delawareans reporting lost income.<sup>42</sup>

Particularly troubling is the high rate of Black residents who have not caught up on their rent payments: 21.9 percent of Black Americans and a staggering 46.1 percent of Black Delawareans.<sup>43</sup> This means that nearly half of all Black residents of the state who rent their homes are behind on rent.

42 United States Census, "Week 38 Household Pulse Survey: September 15 - September 27," Employment Table 1. Experienced Loss of Employment Income, by Select Characteristics: Delaware, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp38.html>

43 United States Census, "Week 38 Household Pulse Survey: September 15 - September 27," Housing Table 1b. Last Month's Payment Status for Renter-Occupied Housing Units, by Select Characteristics: Delaware, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp38.html>

|               | <b>Black Renters behind on rent payment</b> | <b>White Renters behind on rent payment</b> | <b>Black Home-owners behind on mortgage</b> | <b>White Home-owners behind on mortgage</b> |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 21.9%                                       | 8.6%  | 8.6%  | 3.4%  |
| Delaware      | 46.1%                                       | 9.8%  | 13.1%                                       | 1.3%  |

Source: Census, "Week 38 Household Pulse Survey: September 15 - September 27," Housing Tables 1a and 1b, released October 2021

A majority of residents in South Wilmington are renters (63.7 percent) and Southbridge has a population that is at least 70 percent Black (likely a higher percentage if Census data was able to isolate the neighborhood from the rest of South Wilmington)<sup>44, 45</sup> Based

44 Source US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, "Table DB04 Selected Housing Characteristics", 2019 5-year estimates data

45 US Census, "B02001: Race," 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=>



on the evidence cited above, Southbridge has been disproportionately negatively impacted by COVID-19 and as a result, there has been increased housing insecurity in the community.

#### Step 4: Determine how to prove the expense produces the expected outcome

Although the specifics of the programming and documentation of results may change based on the selected implementing agent, we outline some options below:



Community BBQ, Source: Ta'Tra Bradshaw

race&g=1400000US10003001902&tid=ACSDT5Y2019.  
B02001&hidePreview=true

| Expense   | ARPA Enabling Language   | Implementing Partners  | Documentation   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Build on Neighborhood House's HUD Certified Housing Counseling Program and provide funds to the Southbridge Community Development Corporation (CDC) to develop affordable housing, provide housing vouchers, residential counseling, housing navigation assistance, and home renovations and repairs.         | The American Rescue Plan Act allows for expenditure of funds for "Housing vouchers, residential counseling, or housing navigation assistance" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. <sup>1</sup> | Neighborhood House, Southbridge CDC  | The program should collect and provide data on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of households assisted</li> <li>The number of households that went from being behind on housing payments (rent, mortgage, other) to being housing secure (caught up on payments)</li> </ul> |
| Connect renters in Southbridge, especially those living in public housing, to homebuyer education and financial literacy courses with partners such as Neighborhood House, the YWCA, the Delaware Community Reinvestment Action Council, Habitat for Humanity, and the Delaware Financial Literacy Institute. | The American Rescue Plan Act allows for expenditure of funds for "Housing vouchers, residential counseling, or housing navigation assistance" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. <sup>2</sup> | Neighborhood House, Civic Association, Wilmington Housing Authority, Southbridge CDC | The program should collect and provide data on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of households assisted</li> <li>Number of households that have transitioned to homeownership</li> </ul>   |

<sup>1</sup> Page 39 of Department of the Treasury, Interim Final Rule for 31 CFR Part 35, RIN 1505-AC77, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/FRF-Interim-Final-Rule.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

| Expense  | ARPA Enabling Language   | Implementing Partners                          | Documentation   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Provide grants or forgivable loans to low-income residents so they can buy a \$1 home from the Land Bank | The American Rescue Plan Act allows for expenditure of funds for "Housing vouchers, residential counseling, or housing navigation assistance" in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. <sup>3</sup> | Land Bank, City of Wilmington, Southbridge CDC | The program should collect and provide data on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of households assisted</li> <li>• Number of completed projects</li> </ul> |

3 Ibid

## CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and reinforced educational, health, safety and housing disparities across race and income across the country, a trend that holds true across the State of Delaware and Census Tract 19.02 in New Castle County. The American Rescue Plan Act was intended to spur an equitable economic recovery from the pandemic, and in Wilmington, New Castle County, and the State of Delaware, this will require intentional investments in Southbridge, a neighborhood that is predominantly Black and of low income. Only by thoughtful and evidence-based policy making can Southbridge improve its educational, health, safety, and housing outcomes, which were disproportionately negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## APPENDIX: SOUTHBRIDGE'S STATUS AS A QUALIFIED CENSUS TRACT IN 2021

Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) are designated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to determine areas of

high-need for the development of affordable housing. QCTs are designated based on the "most recent year for which census data are available on household income in such tract, either 50 percent or more of the households in the tract have an income which is less than 60 percent of the AMI or the tract's poverty rate is at least 25 percent."<sup>46</sup>

An area's designation as a QCT is crucial in the context of ARPA because ARPA presumes that "certain types of services, when provided within Qualified Census Tracts, are eligible uses of ARPA funds."<sup>47</sup> These services include: affordable housing; services to help with homelessness; housing vouchers; residential counseling; housing navigation help; learning services such as pre-kindergarten; and childcare.<sup>48</sup>

New Castle County Census Tract 19.02 has a poverty rate of 32 percent, which is well beyond the 25 percent standard set by HUD. However, HUD also set forth guidance that "[a]ll designated QCTs in a single metropolitan area or nonmetropolitan area (taken together)

46 Federal Register for the Dept of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Vol. 85, No. 186, Thursday, Sep 24, 2020, Notices, [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/Datasets/qct/QCTDDA2021\\_Notice.pdf](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/Datasets/qct/QCTDDA2021_Notice.pdf)

47 City of Wilmington Finance & Economic Development Committee, "Regulation and Guidance for the American Rescue Plan Act" (presentation), May 25, 2021.

48 Ibid

may not contain more than 20 percent of the population of that metropolitan or nonmetropolitan area.”<sup>49</sup>

Because Wilmington has so many census tracts with high poverty rates and low incomes which meet the definition of a QCT, HUD used a ranking system to eliminate some census tracts from the QCT list. South Wilmington (Census Tract 19.02) was eliminated in this process from the list of QCTs in 2021.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, Federal Register (footnote 6)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, Federal Register (footnote 6)

