

Somers Point Master Plan

Progress Report and Public Meeting

August 20, 2014

Master Plan Reexamination

- Municipal Land Use Law require that all municipalities reexamine their master plan every ten years. The last Somers Point Master Plan reexamination was in 2004.
- Sandy Funds are available for towns that lost more than \$1 million in ratables due to the Superstorm Sandy – Somers Point secured funding.

Master Plan Elements

- Master Plan Reexamination
- Land Use Element
- Open Space & Recreation Element
- Economic Development Element
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Element
- Community Facilities Element
- Capital Improvement Plan

Master Plan Reexamination

- MLUL requires that a Master Plan Reexamination include:
 - a. The major problems and objectives related to land development in 2004.
 - b. The extent to which these problems have been addressed.
 - c. The extent to which there has been significant changes in the City.
 - d. The specific changes recommended.

Planning Objectives in 2004

- Preserve the Bay Avenue Historic District
- Promote resort oriented housing, hotels and businesses.
- Establish a resort “feel”, where appropriate.
- Enhance cultural and artistic venues.
- Coordination the City’s redevelopment efforts with the Route 52 project.
- Evaluate the zoning along Route 9 in order to insure that traffic does not affect adjoining neighborhoods.

Changes Since 2004 Master Plan

- Impacts of Superstorm Sandy - new flood maps have been provided that effect future development in Somers Point
 - 218 properties added to the A zone, west of Route 9
 - 81 properties added to the A zone, along Bay Avenue
 - Nine properties added to the V zone on Broadway, 14 properties added along Bay Avenue and 3 properties added along Patcong Creek and Somers Point-Mays Landing Road
 - Some homes will need to elevate because they were substantially damage or to reduce flood insurance premiums
- Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014
 - 1,066 policies in Somers Point in 2014 (19 percent of the housing stock)
 - \$860,825 in insurance premiums paid
 - New flood maps may become effective in 2015

Changes Since 2004 Master Plan

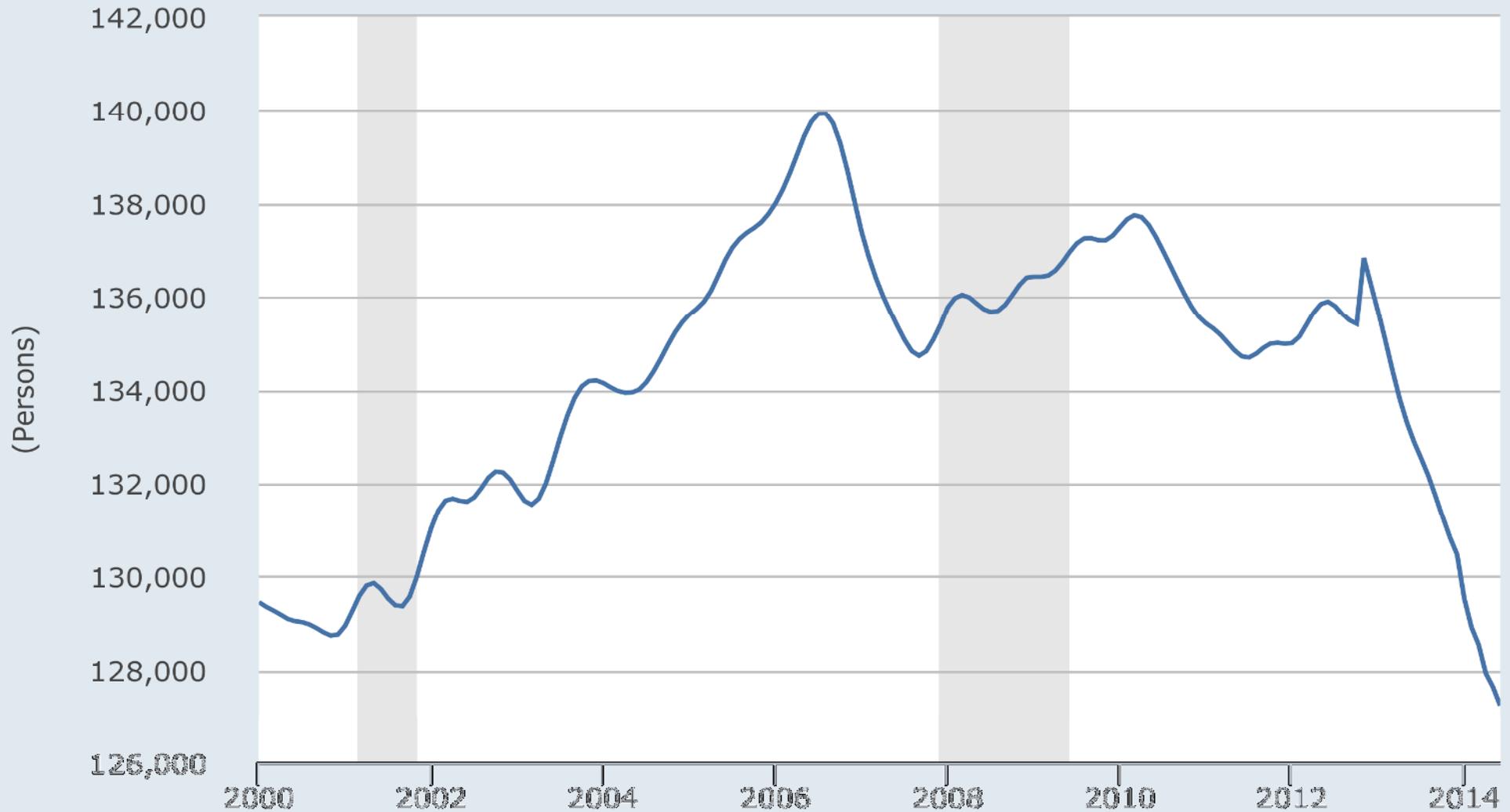
- Our regional and local economy has changed
 - New Jersey has only replaced 40 percent of the jobs lost from the recession
 - Atlantic County civilian labor force has dropped from a high of 140,000 in 2006 to 127,000 today
 - Unemployment
 - US and NJ unemployment - 6.3 percent
 - Atlantic & Cape May Counties - 11 percent
 - Wealth is migrating to the barrier island communities that are served by Somers Point merchants



Atlantic County Employment Trends



— Civilian Labor Force in Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ (MSA)



Source: U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Shaded areas indicate US recessions - 2014 research.stlouisfed.org

Somers Point Market Area

Table 4 – Somers Point Market Area

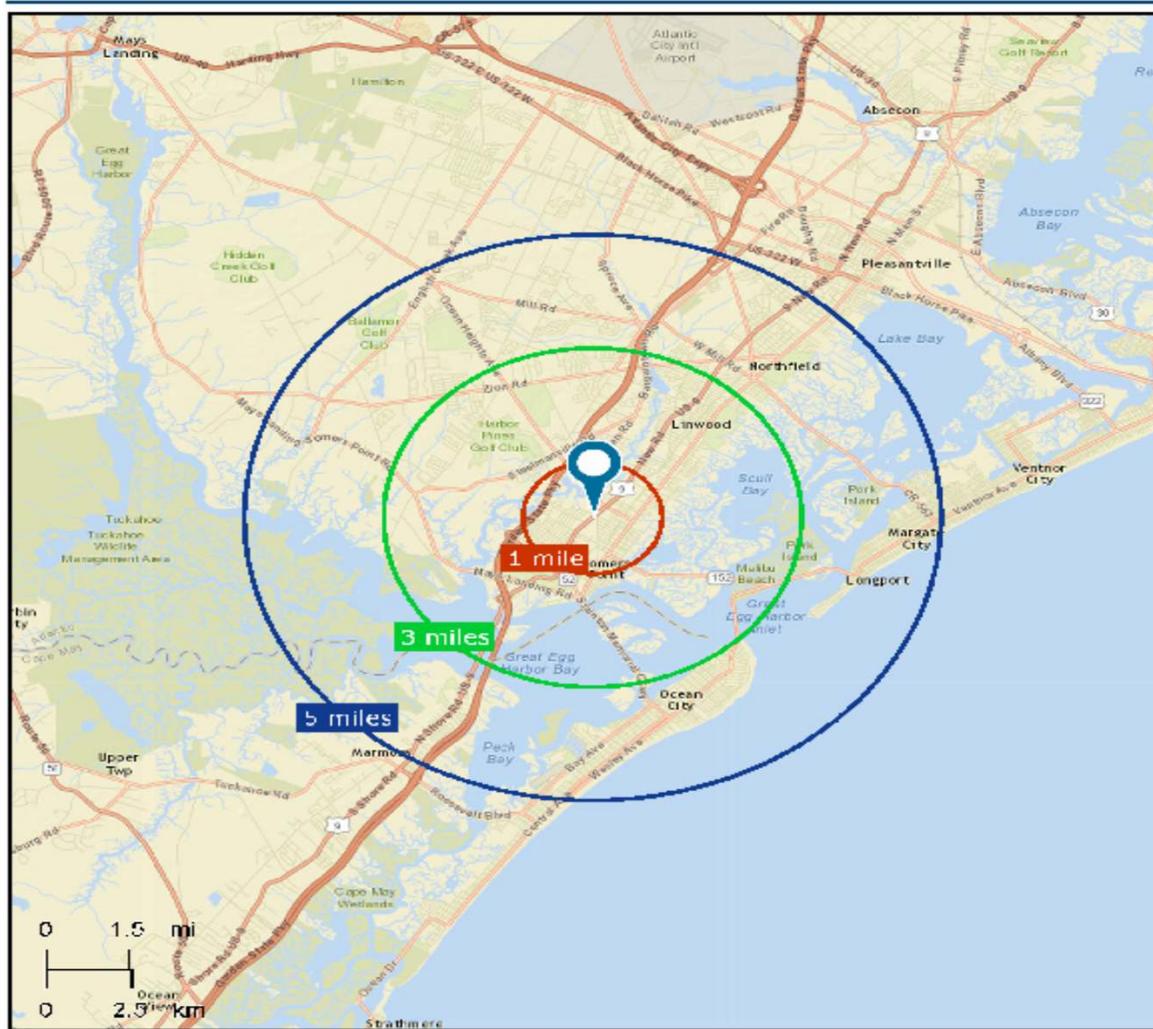
Community	Year Round Population	Seasonal Population	Median Hhld. Income	Median Family Income
Somers Point	10,795	10,795	\$47,312	\$51,489
Linwood	7,092	7,092	\$80,518	\$103,529
Longport	895	5,000	\$70,625	\$107,188
Margate	6,354	25,000	\$77,667	\$90,625
Ocean City	11,701	120,000	\$55,202	\$79,196
Upper Township	12,373	12,373	\$81,250	\$97,372
Southern Egg Harbor Twp.	20,000	20,000	\$69,754	\$78,259
Total/Average	69,210	200,260	\$67,689	\$81,758

Somers Point Market Area



esri

Market Area: K-Mart Center



June 24, 2014

Changes Since 2004 Master Plan

- **Somers Point Vision Plan, 2012**
 - Identifies the City as well positioned to participate in a vital seasonal market, which draws from a regional market of over 200,000 people during the summer months.
 - Presents a clear vision for Somers Point as a vibrant, waterfront community with better looking and more successful Route 9 commercial corridor, a broader array of recreational opportunities, an attractive and accessible waterfront, a livelier and more walker friendly Bay Avenue, and a homeowner friendly environment which encourages residents to stay and improve homes rather than to relocate.
- **Strategic Recovery Planning Report, 2014**
 - Provides recommendations for increased resiliency from future storm events including amending the floodplain management regulations to require 2 feet of freeboard for all new construction and substantial improvements.

Changes Since 2004 Master Plan

- **Community Rating System**
 - City applied in December 2013
 - Provides discounts on flood insurance for Somers Point residents
- **Atlantic 4 – All Hazards Plan, 2004**
 - Provides a blue print to address the City's vulnerability to natural hazards and will assist the City in qualifying for additional funding.

Recommendations

Bay Avenue Recommendations

- Enhance the Bayfront area to become a more vibrant, attractive, year-round destination with improved public access to the waterfront:
 - Branding the City as an active waterfront community and a must see tourist stop through extensive use of wayfinding signage and common design elements
 - Expand the pier at Higbee Avenue to provide for seasonal pop-up retail & dining options, water taxis and a transient marina;
 - Encourage additional dining, lodging, shopping and recreational uses
 - Improved pedestrian/bike access
 - Dredging to increase boating activity
 - Complete the Gateway Theater



Economic Development Recommendations

- Given the demographics and economics of the region two strategies has emerged:
 - Somers Point as a Regional Attraction
 - Increase reasons for the region to shop, recreate, dine and seek health care services in Somers Point
 - Encourage Additional Housing Options
 - Housing for Baby Boomers since they have equity and they are attracted to the Jersey Shore
 - Small boutique hotels near the waterfront
 - Upgraded and expanded marinas for both larger boats as well as transient slips.
 - Long stay hotels comparable to the Residence Inn within walking distance of Bay Avenue

Economic Development Incentives

- How do you make these changes happen – consider the following incentives:
 - New Jersey Economic Development Authority Incentives
 - Short Term Tax Abatement for Improvements Only
 - Transportation Enhancements
 - Zoning Code Revisions
 - Shop at Home Incentives
 - Infrastructure Enhancements
 - Expanded Events Schedule
 - Value Added Restaurant Options



Historic District Recommendations



- Develop design standards for the Historic District
- Explore the option of capping density
- Incorporate historic design elements into the interior design of the Gateway Theater

Bike & Pedestrian Recommendations

- As part of the Master Plan Process a Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan is being completed by Parsons Brinkerhoff
 - Take advantage of the new Route 52 and Garden State Parkway mixed use paths
 - Enhance walkability of Route 9 and Bay Avenue
 - Complete the Somers Point Bike Path
 - Provide safer access to schools and parks

Corridors

Public Safety

Corridors

Strengths

Common Streetscape Treatment



Common Streetscape Treatment



Common Streetscape Treatment



West Laurel Drive – Traffic Calming



Corridors

Issues

Sidewalk Gaps along Arterials



Sidewalk Gaps along Arterials



Sidewalk Gaps along Route 9



Sidewalk Gaps along Route 9



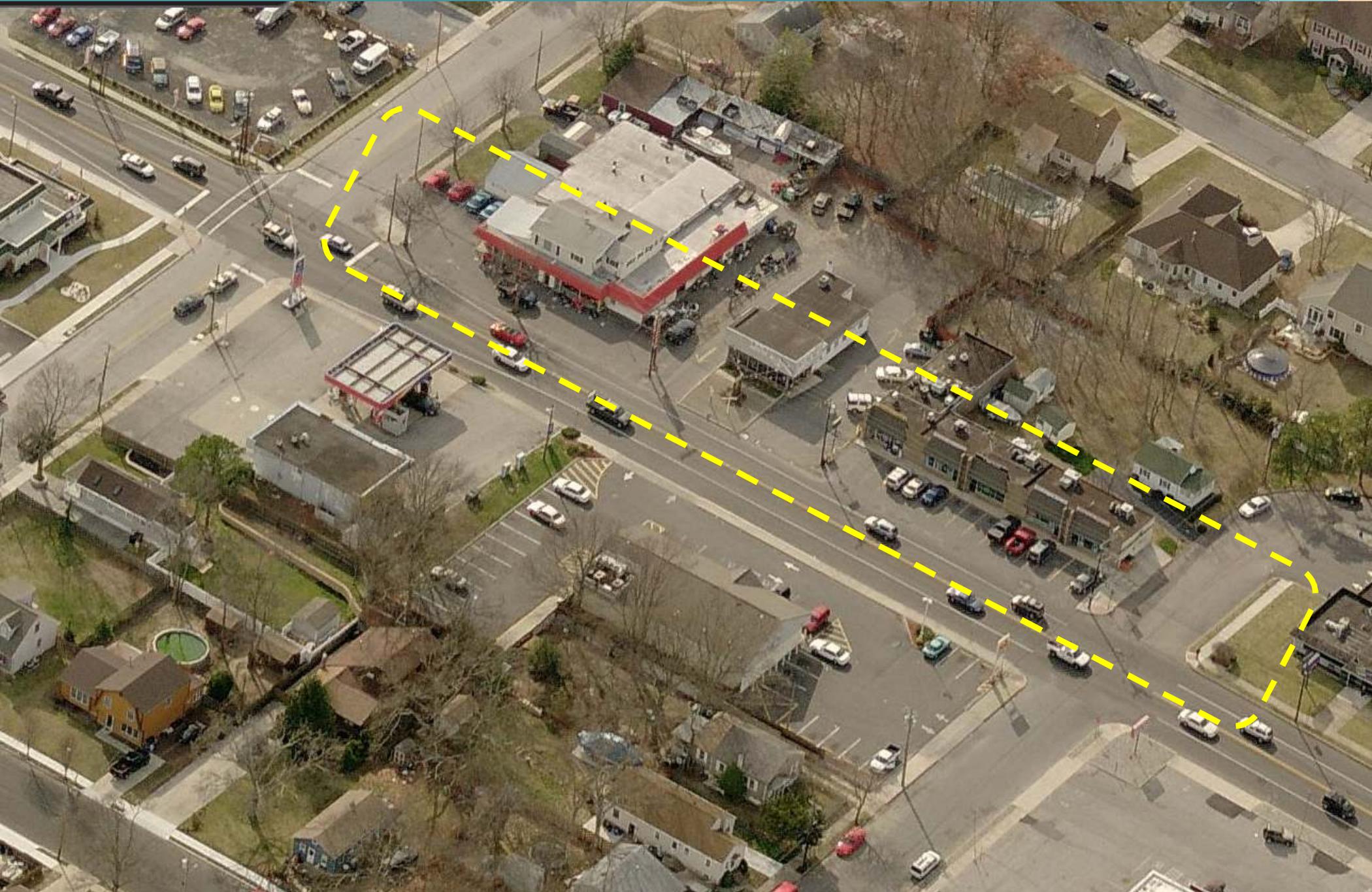
Sidewalk Gaps along Bethel Road



Rt 9 – Distance between Crossings



Access Control



Signalized Crossings

Updated Signals



Lack of Pedestrian Signals



Lack of Sidewalk Connectivity

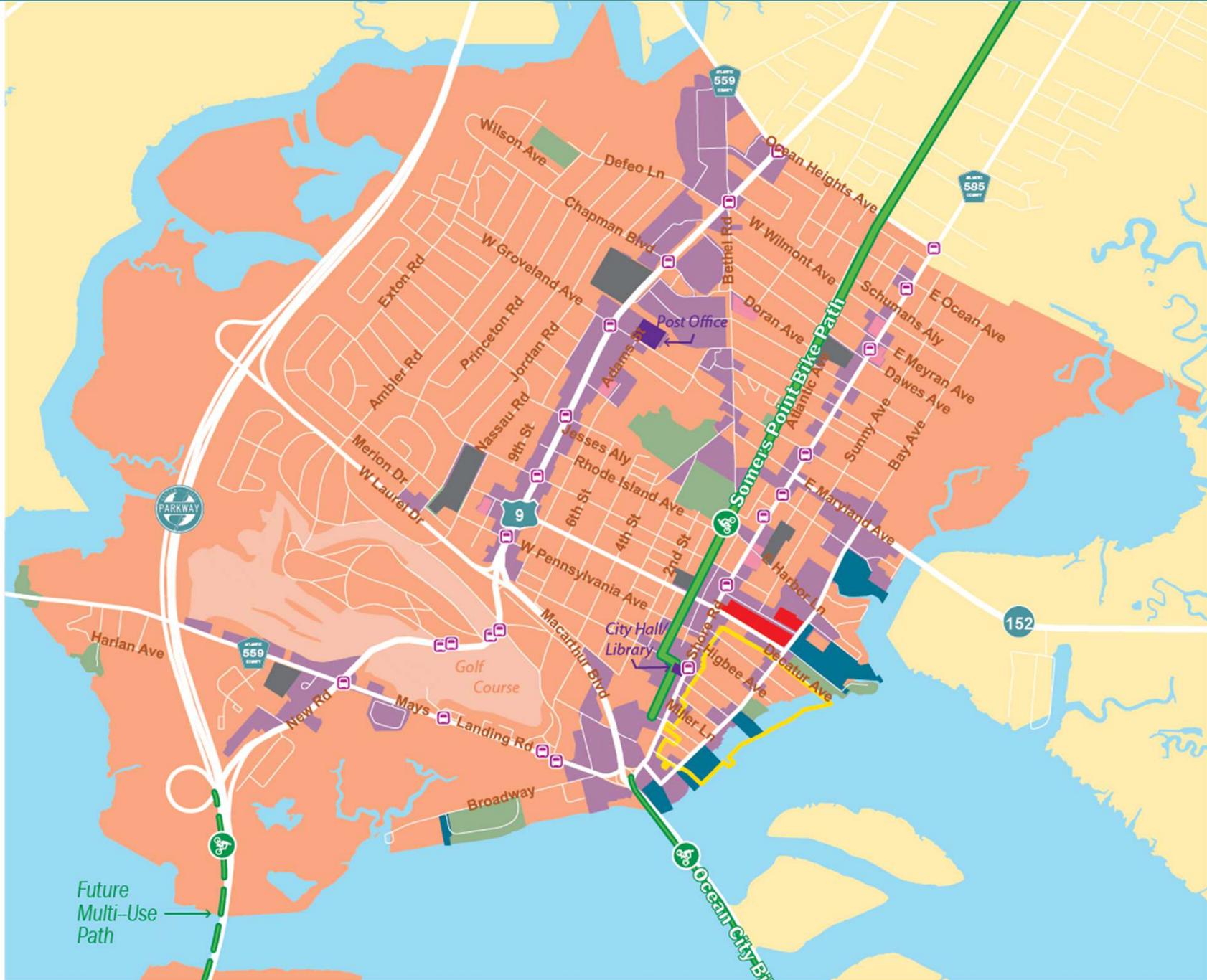


Lack of Sidewalk Connectivity



Off Road Paths

Existing Trail Network

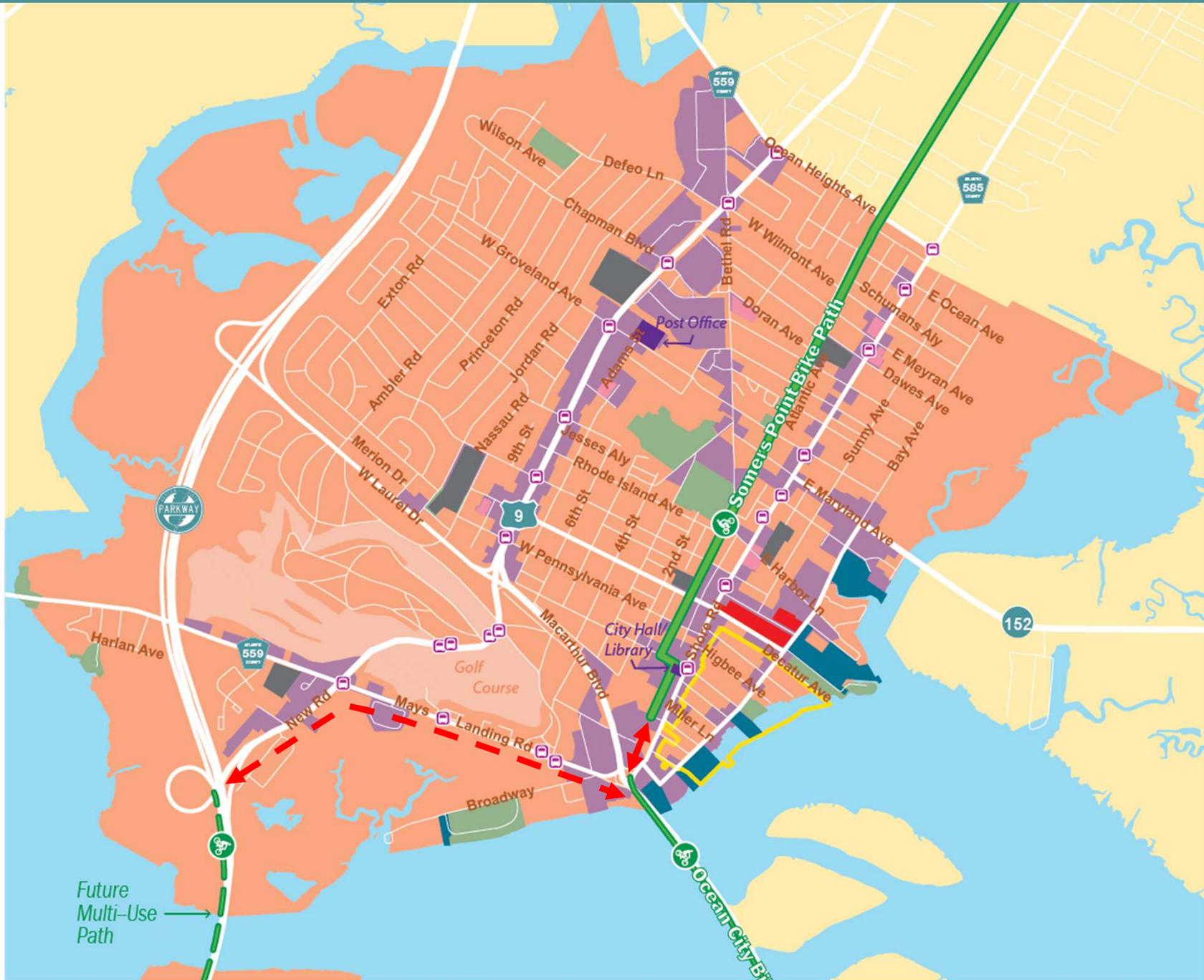


Connection to Garden State Parkway

- \$130 million Garden State Parkway Bridge with multi-use path



Trail Connections

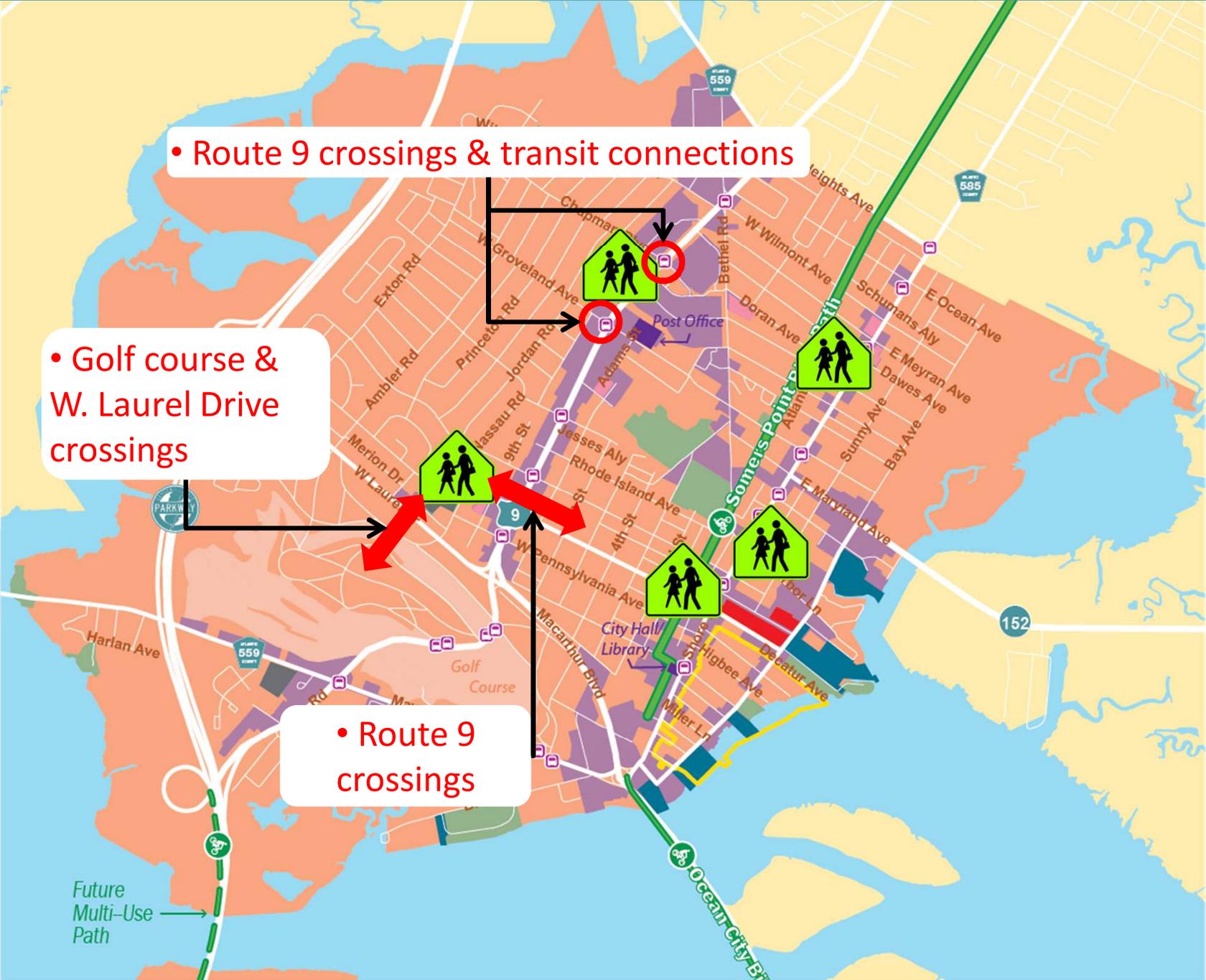


Somers Point Bike Path – Missing Link



School Access

School Access



Funding Options

Funding

- Superstorm Sandy and the Master Plan process has identified a variety of funding options for:
 - Post Sandy Planning
 - Transient Marina
 - Stormwater Infrastructure
 - Elevating structures
 - Dredging – USDOJ Grant
 - Coastal Protection – USDOJ Grant
 - Renovating Historic structures – Gateway
 - NJDOT Road & Bikeway Improvement



Master Plan Schedule

- June 18, 2014 Public Meeting
- August 20, 2014 Public Meeting
- Sept/October Prepare Draft Plan
- Nov/December Planning Board Plan Adoption
- Jan/March 2015 Implementation
 - Design Standards
 - Capital Improvements Plan
 - Regionalization/Shared Services Plan

Public Comments

- Sidewalk improvements on Bay Avenue
- Reduce speed limit on Bay Avenue
- Provide for wine sale rooms in restaurants
- Stormwater controls on Laurel Drive
- Study the impacts of dredging
- Preserve the Historic District

Ideas, Comments, etc.



SOMERS POINT

NEW JERSEY

*the shore starts here!*SM