"My East Camden" is a resident-driven 10-year neighborhood plan that outlines the goals of the community and how residents and stakeholders would like to see it develop.

The report builds on the 2013 neighborhood plan with a focus on specific recommendations, implementation strategies, and funding sources to make them a reality. At the heart of both the 2013 plan and 2021 update is the idea of "Cultivating Community" – building upon existing neighborhood assets and the creativity and values of East Camden residents to ensure an equitable, sustainable future.

St. Joseph’s Carpenter Society (SJCS) and Regional Plan Association (RPA) prepared this plan during the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly affected NJ and Camden in particular.

Read the full report at sjcscamden.org

OVERARCHING GOALS

- Increase Accessibility and Improve Physical Conditions
- Center Residents and Local Businesses in Economic Development Initiatives
- Improve Sustainability and Environmental Resiliency
- Support Arts, Culture, Community, and Health
- Enhance Communication and Collaboration
In order to ensure that the recommendations accurately reflected the needs and wants of the community while maintaining health and safety precautions, the project team employed diverse engagement methods, including email outreach, online surveys, Zoom meetings and virtual open houses, flyers and postcards, socially-distant outdoor gatherings, and masked door-to-door surveying.

In response, East Camden stakeholders have framed a plan that increases accessibility and improves physical conditions; centers residents and local businesses in economic development initiatives; improves sustainability and environmental resiliency; supports arts, culture, community, and health; and increases communication and collaboration both within the neighborhood and with public and private entities. Many of the recommendations can be achieved in the short-term, while others will require long-term backing and continual effort.

This plan highlights the importance of investment in, and promotion of, a neighborhood coalition. While many residents and stakeholders are already very engaged in the neighborhood, they are not necessarily coordinated. As an immediate step after the publication of this neighborhood plan, it is recommended that the My East Camden Collaborative, an entity made up of various stakeholders guided by a mission statement and partnership principles, coordinate efforts to quickly implement the recommendations that were indicated as high priorities by residents. Training residents in urban planning and civic engagement so that they are equipped with the tools to advocate for themselves and their community will also be important to accomplish plan recommendations.

Some of the major recommendations that residents and local stakeholders have prioritized include:

- Improve housing conditions through technical assistance and grant programs for homeowners and renters
- Support efforts by the city and local non-profits to identify, acquire, and renovate or demolish vacant properties
- Engage with existing large employers to do a needs assessment and develop training programs tailored to local employment needs
- Encourage development conditions for a more diverse array of businesses in existing commercial corridors
- Share information with residents on best methods to increase individual resiliency
- Address Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and stormwater flooding
- Improve park conditions and maintenance
- Coordinate with local community groups and institutions to offer programming in parks
- Encourage development of new mechanisms for government agencies to share information with residents, using the My East Camden Collaborative as coordinator
- Engage Camden County Police to encourage additional community dialogue and responsiveness in ways that make residents feel safe