



City of Long Branch Urban Enterprise Zone



Preliminary Five-Year Zone Development Plan

November 2025

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Prepared for:

**City of Long Branch
Urban Enterprise Zone**



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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and all of the Long Branch business owners, City employees, residents, community leaders, and religious leaders who shared their voice to support this plan.

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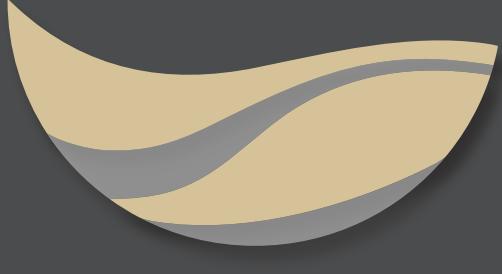
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Introduction & Purpose



The **LONG BRANCH URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONE (UEZ / LB UEZ)** was incorporated in 1994 and spans nearly the entire City limits, ranging from Atlantic Avenue in North Long Branch to Lincoln Avenue in the southernmost Elberon section. The 741-acre UEZ area represents the diversity of the City, including the Lower and Upper Broadway business corridors, beachfront areas such as Pier Village, the historic West End neighborhood, and blocks surrounding Long Branch's NJ Transit rail station and Monmouth Medical Center. As of 2025, the Long Branch UEZ program includes 85 active member businesses. The UEZ is projected to generate roughly \$1 million in program dollars annually.

1.1 Intent and Purpose of the Plan

This report presents a comprehensive 5-Year Zone Development Plan for the Long Branch UEZ in accordance with the 2021 UEZ Reform Bill, providing both an analytical snapshot of current conditions and a strategic framework for economic development over the next half-decade. This includes a description of the regional context; the socioeconomic conditions within the UEZ; the process of plan development; previous UEZ accomplishments; the new vision and goals of the UEZ plan; and proposed initiatives, funding mechanisms and partners, and implementation measures to effectuate the stated UEZ goals, as detailed in the following chapters:

Chapter 1 sets forth the **purpose and history of the UEZ, its geographic setting, and the community process** through which the plan was developed, including outreach to the City's businesses, minority groups, and other stakeholders. **Chapter 2 provides a detailed community profile**, examining the UEZ and the City's physical, demographic, and socio-economic landscape, both over time and in comparison to regional and statewide conditions. It documents key business nodes with the City and land use conditions, while analyzing demographic indicators such as population, income, poverty rates, education, housing stock, workforce characteristics, and comparative benchmarks that define Long Branch's market and social conditions.

Building on this foundation, **Chapter 3 provides a district-level diagnostic assessment** that evaluates the market, business, physical, and administrative environments shaping the performance of five key nodes within the UEZ. **Chapter 4 summarizes the achievements of the UEZ to date**, including completed projects and measurable benefits generated program, and provides proposed changes to the UEZ's boundaries for targeted economic growth. **Chapter 5 defines a economic vision for the next five years**, articulating goals, objectives, and proposed major initiatives, while aligning these local priorities with county, regional, and state programs. Finally, **Chapter 6 outlines the implementation framework** for the five-year UEZ vision, including proposed partnerships, funding strategies, governance structures, and performance metrics.

1.2 UEZ Program History

New Jersey's Urban Enterprise Zone program was initially enacted in 1983. At the time, many of the State's urbanized areas were reeling from the loss of stable manufacturing jobs and steep population declines indicative of the ongoing shift towards suburban growth. The UEZ Program's charter is to foster an economic climate that revitalizes designated urban communities and stimulates their growth by encouraging businesses to develop and create private sector jobs through public and private investment. The UEZ Program provides a variety of incentives to certified businesses in designated UEZ areas, such as sales tax exemptions on certain qualified businesses purchases, while also benefiting consumers through a 50% sales tax reduction. Each municipality was also provided with **Zone Assistance Fund (ZAF)** allocations comprised of a portion of the sales taxes collected within the UEZ, which enables municipalities to pursue projects that encourage investment and further economic development interests in the designated UEZ.

The program continued uninterrupted for nearly three decades, growing to 32 participating zones in 37 municipalities, until Governor Christie signed legislation eliminated ZAFs in 2011. Without this dedicated funding source, municipalities were unable to undertake projects to support UEZ businesses as envisioned by the original bill. Following a decade-long hiatus, then-Acting Governor Sheila Oliver signed into law the **Urban Enterprise Zone Reform Bill** in August 2021 (P.L. 2021, c.197), which restored funding to Zone municipalities through the appropriation of ZAFs and provided a number of other reforms to eligibility and spending criteria. The new legislation reauthorized all active zones for a period of 10 years and required municipalities to develop and adopt 5-year zone development plans.

As defined in the UEZ Reform Bill, proposals within the five-year ZDP may include:

- Utilizing the powers conferred on the municipality by law for the purpose of stimulating investments and economic development of the zones;
- Utilizing State assistance through the provisions of P.L.1983, c.303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) relating to State tax benefits and enterprise zone assistance funds;
- Securing the involvement in, and commitment to, zone economic development by private entities, including zone neighborhood associations, and voluntary community organizations supported by residents and businesses in the zone;
- Utilizing the powers conferred by law to revise municipal planning and zoning ordinances and other land use regulations as they pertain to the zone in order to enhance the attraction of the zone to prospective developers;
- Increasing the availability and efficiency of support services, public and private, generally used by and necessary to the efficient functioning of commercial and industrial facilities in the area, and the extent to which the increase or improvement is to be provided and financed by the municipal government or by other entities.

Funding for UEZ initiatives is project-specific, with applications required for “allowable expenditures.” The program places limits on certain categories of spending, capping administrative costs at 10% and public safety expenditures at 25%. Specifically, the recommendations outlined in this UEZ plan outline projects which are consistent with the qualified assistance fund expenditures as required by statute.

UEZ QUALIFIED ZONE ASSISTANCE FUND EXPENDITURES:

1. Construction projects improving, altering, or repairing the real property of a qualified business located in an enterprise zone;
2. Full or part time economic and community development positions in the municipality, other governmental or not-for-profit organization, or marketing;
3. Loans, grants, and guarantees to businesses;
4. Payroll expenses, personnel, services, and equipment purchases primarily for the provision of law enforcement, fire protection, or emergency medical services within commercial and transportation corridors located exclusively in an enterprise zone;
5. Planning and other professional services related to economic and community development;
6. Cleaning and maintenance of commercial and transportation corridors;
7. Improvement of public infrastructure in a commercial or transportation corridor;
8. Improvement of public infrastructure related to a commercial, industrial, mixed use, or multi-family residential property;
9. Employment and training programs;
10. Events to support and draw activity into the enterprise zone, including fairs, festivals, and concerts

The UEZ Authority established within the Department of Community Affairs is tasked with evaluating the local use of ZAFs, review and approval of 5-Year Zone Development Plans such as this one, and preparing annual summary report of each designated UEZ. The Zone Development Plan be prepared every 5 years through the eventual expiration of the UEZ program in order to maintain eligibility for ZAF allocations.

FIGURE 1.1 | REGIONAL CONTEXT
CITY OF LONG BRANCH URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONE



1.3 Regional and Local Setting

The City of Long Branch is situated along the Atlantic Ocean in Monmouth County, located centrally between New York City and the stretch of the Jersey Shore which continues further south. The City is bordered by Monmouth Beach and Oceanport to the north; West Long Branch and Eatontown to the west, and Ocean Township to the south. Long Branch encompasses approximately 5 square miles in area, including over 2 miles of beachfront along the Atlantic Ocean. The City's location in Monmouth County is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

The Long Branch UEZ ranges from Atlantic Avenue in the north to Elberon in the south, including the Lower and Upper Broadway districts, commercial development along Joline Avenue (NJ-36), the Long Branch and Monmouth Medical Center, the West End neighborhood, and the Oceanfront. The existing boundaries are shown in **Figure 1.2**.

The UEZ area contains two NJ Transit commuter rail stations, which provide regional access between New York City and Bay Head, NJ. The UEZ also contains roadways which serve as high traffic connectors throughout Monmouth County, including Joline Avenue (N.J. 36) and Ocean Boulevard (C.R. 57). Additional County/State roadways within the City include Atlantic Avenue (C.R. 29), Florence Avenue (C.R. 33), Cedar Avenue (C.R. 25), and Norwood Avenue (N.J. 71). Broadway and a portion of Brighton Avenue also serve as major commercial corridors in Long Branch. NJ Transit Bus service within the city exists primarily along Norwood Avenue and Broadway, with connection to the Long Branch Train Station, and provides access to Red Bank and Asbury Park.

The Garden State Parkway (GSP) provides the main regional highway access. Long Branch is served primarily by Exit 105, providing direct access to eastbound NJ-36 (Joline Avenue). Route 36 also links Long Branch north to Monmouth Beach, Sea Bright, and the Bayshore communities, and connects to NJ-18 and NJ-35 providing access to points west. Regional transportation networks are shown in **Figure 1.3**.

FIGURE 1.2 | UEZ LOCATION & BOUNDARIES

CITY OF LONG BRANCH URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONE

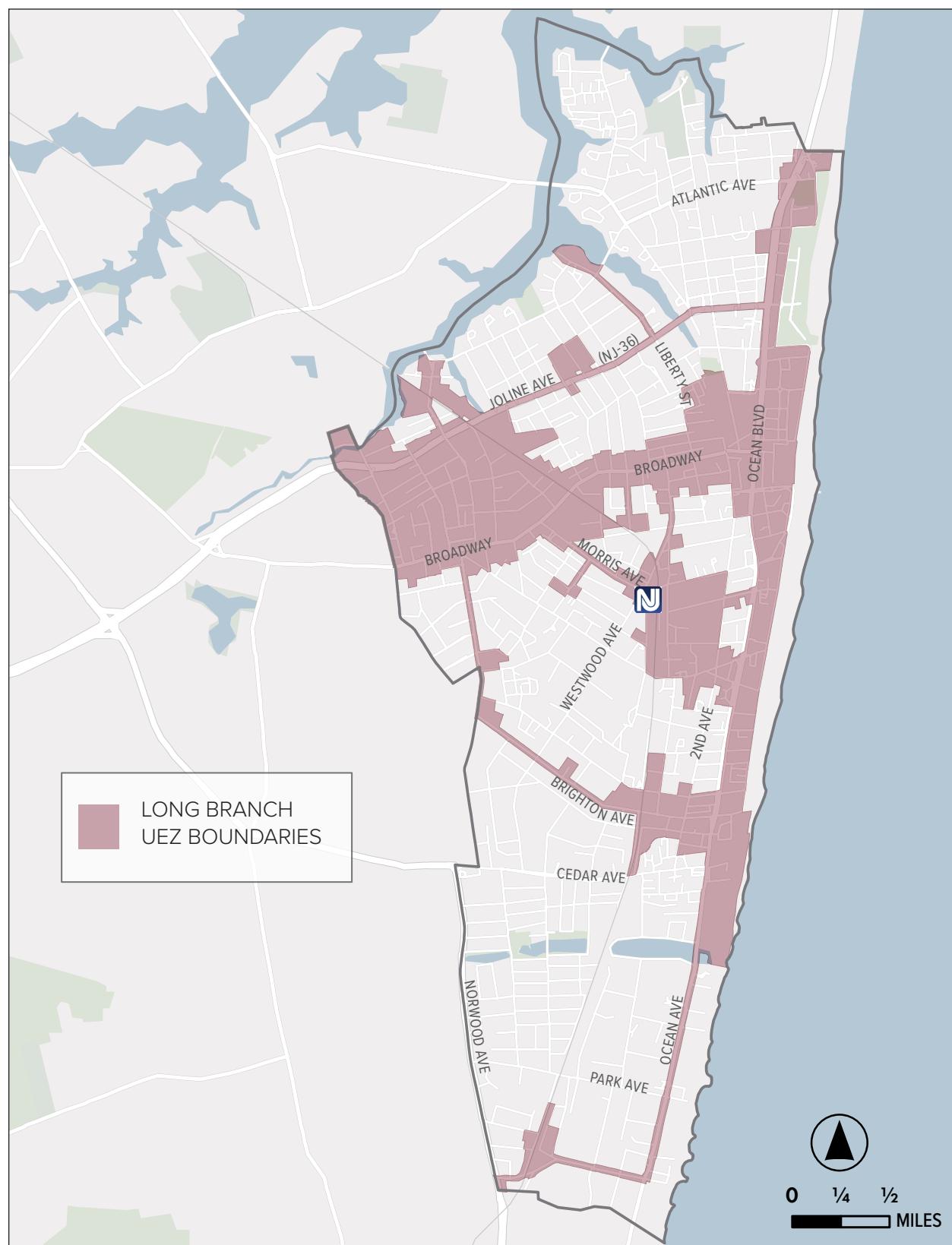
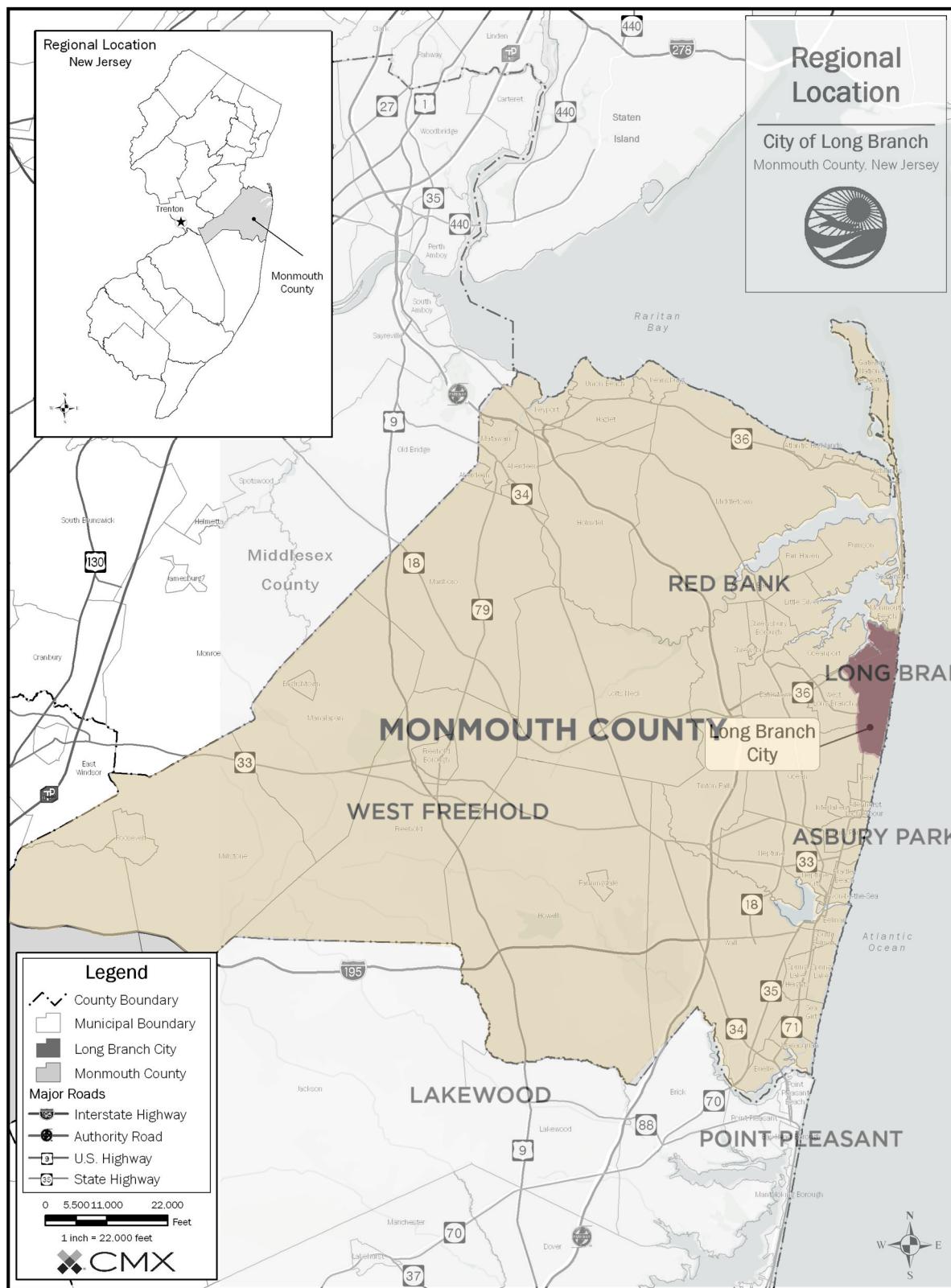


FIGURE 1.3 | REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

CITY OF LONG BRANCH URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONE



Source: City of Long Branch Master Plan; Streetsense

1.4 Plan Development Process

Following approval from the State, the City of Long Branch authorized Phillips Preiss and Street-sense (a/k/a the “Consulting Team”) to prepare the Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) 5-Year Plan April 2025. The consulting team undertook background research and data collection between May and June 2025 to establish a foundation for the planning process.

The first phase of the process culminated in a two-day stakeholder workshop and site visit that were held on June 25 and 26, 2025. The consulting team and City staff met with a series of five (5) groups in an open roundtable format to discuss. The workshop included a series of five round-tables and focus groups with a broad cross-section of community voices, including UEZ members, City staff, business owners, and community organizations.

Overview of Stakeholder Roundtables:

- UEZ Board Members
- Greater Long Branch Chamber of Commerce Officers
- Chamber of Commerce Business Members
- Business owner representatives from major districts (e.g., West End, Upper Broadway, Lower Broadway)
- Mexican, Brazilian, and Central American business owners
- Religious congregation leaders
- Brookdale Community College
- Community & non-profit organizations based in the UEZ area
- Long Branch Mayor & Administration
- Long Branch City Staff & Departments:
 - *Police and EMS*
 - *Planning & Engineering*
 - *Health Department*
 - *Programs & Special Events*
 - *Construction & Buildings*
 - *Tax Assessor*
- Long Branch City Authorities and Boards
 - *Long Branch Sewerage Authority*
 - *Zoning Board & Planning Board*
 - *Green Team*
 - *Free Public Library*

The second day of the site visit also featured a community tour with City officials, UEZ representatives, and local business owners to observe conditions and opportunities first-hand. As part of the site visit, the Consulting Team undertook “door-to-door” visits of selected businesses within the UEZ boundary, particularly within West End, Upper Broadway, and Lower Broadway. The visits and conversations were organized as open-ended discussions, with the consulting team assessing not only the built environment, but working to understand the fundamental business conditions affecting new and existing businesses in the UEZ area.

In addition to these sessions, the consulting team conducted individual interviews and follow-up conversations with key stakeholders, as well as additional site visits throughout the summer to refine the analysis and confirm findings. Ongoing engagement with the UEZ staff representatives ensured that the plan's recommendations were informed by local priorities and aligned with the City's economic development goals.



SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT THEMES

Assets	Challenges	Opportunities
CULTURAL DIVERSITY & ENTREPRENEURSHIP	COORDINATION GAPS BETWEEN ENTITIES	STREAMLINE UEZ PROCESSES
ECONOMIC & INSTITUTIONAL ANCHORS	LOW UEZ AWARENESS & PARTICIPATION	MICROLOANS/SECOND GENERATION FUNDING
CITY EVENTS & STAFF RESOURCES	SAFETY & INFRASTRUCTURE	DISTRICT BRANDING & VISIBILITY
PUBLIC SAFETY INVESTMENTS	TRUST/LANGUAGE BARRIERS	EDUCATION & WORKFORCE TRAINING
UNIQUE DISTRICTS WITH CHARACTER	RISK OF SEASONAL MARKET	COLLABORATE & COMMUNICATE

ASSETS

Cultural Diversity and Entrepreneurship

Long Branch has a strong mix of old and new businesses, including Hispanic, Brazilian, and Jewish communities, that is unique in the region and particularly among Monmouth County shore communities.

Economic and Institutional Anchors

Monmouth University, Monmouth Medical Center, Monmouth Park, and the planned Netflix studio provide steady economic activity and potential for future employment and growth.

City Events and Staff Resources

The popularity of events like West End concerts, car shows, and Uptown Fest to attract regional visitors and foot traffic. The City has staff availability to support business programs and partnerships across apartments.

Public Safety Investments

Perception of safety is improving, in part due to UEZ-funded officer vehicles, security cameras, and drone programs.

Walkable districts with local character

Not everywhere in the City is seasonal; West End and Uptown both have “village” environments that appeal to both residents and visitors.

CHALLENGES

Coordination Gaps

Business owners especially noted that the UEZ, Chamber of Commerce, and City can be siloed, which minimizes effective outreach for events or business support.

Low UEZ Participation

Some businesses are not familiar with UEZ or its benefits, while annual State financial reporting and recertification requirements discourage membership.

Trust & Access Barriers

Limited multilingual communication and mistrust of some government processes discourage some small and minority-owned businesses from enrolling or staying in the program.

Public Safety & Infrastructure

Business owners and residents both noted parking (reality or perception), lighting, and traffic safety issues along key corridors. Speeding, sidewalk cycling, and lack of police foot patrols were mentioned in particular.

Seasonal Community

High risk/high reward nature of a beach community; fears of uneven sales and foot traffic.

OPPORTUNITIES

Streamline UEZ Processes

City could provide a “liaison” for all UEZ communications, from understanding the benefits of the program to completing recertification.

Microloans & Second-Generation Funds

Additional financial tools to allow the UEZ to assist tenants with property improvements or acquisition and guarantee funding no matter political future.

District Branding and Visibility.

Unified signage, wayfinding, and marketing campaigns would highlight Long Branch’s diversity and strengthen its image as a vibrant, year-round destination.

Education & Workforce Partnerships

Collaborate with Brookdale College, Housing Authority, Free Public Library for ESL, GED, and/or trade training

Collaborate and Communicate

Increase collaboration among the UEZ, Chamber, and City to improve marketing, event coordination, and business engagement (in multi languages).

This diversity of stakeholder feedback invaluable informed the consulting team's review and recommendations that are set forth in the remainder of this plan.

2

Community Profile

THE CITY OF LONG BRANCH

earned its reputation as a prominent regional anchor and tourist attraction at the Jersey Shore in the early 1800s. Visitors from New York City and Philadelphia mingled with local families and multiple U.S. presidents who summered in Long Branch as they relaxed at the seashore, took accommodations at the City's grand hotels, and enjoyed races at Monmouth Park.

Long Branch's oceanfront development soon expanded to compete with neighboring shore towns, including piers for both transportation and amusement in the 1870s, followed by a boardwalk promenade circa 1900. At the same time, a bustling downtown had formed along Broadway, which served as the commercial and cultural hub of Long Branch, featuring hotels, entertainment venues, and retailers, including a diverse array of family-owned businesses. By the first decades of the twentieth century, the City was established as both a thriving seasonal resort and year-round residential community.

Post-World War II, changing migration patterns, increased regional competition, and racial and social tensions led to periods of economic decline and disinvestment, particularly in the City's business districts. In the advent of the automobile age, the Garden State Parkway was extended to the area in 1954 and brought easy regional highway access that heightened competition among Jersey Shore towns.

The enclosed Monmouth Mall opened in nearby Eatontown in 1960, portending an exodus of businesses from Long Branch to more suburban areas. As vacancies grew and buildings deteriorated, fires periodically ravaged buildings downtown, culminating in the 1987 fire that destroyed the historic (and recently renovated) Amusement Pier. Numerous properties along the oceanfront and Broadway were condemned, demolished, or fell into a state of disrepair, effectively stripping the City of its commercial vibrancy and economic base.

For the past 30 years, the City has initiated comprehensive redevelopment and planning efforts to re-envision Long Branch – to not only leverage its strength as a shore town, but also establish itself as a year-round residential community and regional destination. After a few false starts in the 1990s, the earliest successful initiatives were tied to the oceanfront, including the development of Pier Village as a high-end residential and retail hub, along with a new resort hotel and new beachfront condominium residences. As oceanfront development thrives, the City is now seeks to enhance, stabilize, and revitalize its business districts; new redevelopment plans are underway for Lower Broadway, while partnerships with NJ Transit are anticipated to result in a new mixed-use village and enhanced infrastructure. West End, a historic arts enclave, thrives as a crossroads between local and summer visitors.

TAKEAWAY:

Long Branch in 2025 is a city that is poised to benefit from for innovative local strategies to supplement the strong foundation of the current economic resurgence. The Long Branch Urban Enterprise Zone has, and will continue to be, utilized as a tool to support this growth, encouraging economic development which can support local business owners while also promoting the City and its business districts to regional markets.

2.1 Built Environment

As part of the plan development process, the consulting team undertook an analysis of land use, zoning, and development trends, as well as relevant demographic data on population, age, race and ethnicity, language, education, income, housing, development trends, employment, and crime.

KEY BUSINESS DISTRICTS & NODES

The UEZ area contains a variety of land uses, spanning across the City's core commercial corridors, oceanfront areas, and distinct neighborhoods.

Starting at the City's northwestern border, the UEZ encompasses Joline Avenue (State Route 36), which provides access to the Garden State Parkway to the west.

Businesses along Joline Avenue include auto-oriented commercial and industrial establishments and strip commercial development. More intense commercial and industrial uses are present to the north, near the intersection of Joline Avenue, Branchport Avenue and the railroad tracks, as well as strip commercial development further north along Liberty Street.

The northernmost portion of the UEZ extends east towards Ocean Boulevard and north to Atlantic Avenue and the Monmouth Beach border, where restaurants and retail uses are located within the Ursula Plaza strip shopping center and further east along the oceanfront.

Much of the Long Branch UEZ is centered along the Broadway corridor from the West Long Branch border east to Ocean Boulevard. This two-mile stretch is the historic central business district and “gateway” to Long Branch. Starting at the western boundary,

The corridor is divided by the NJ Transit rail line into **Upper & Lower Broadway**.

Upper Broadway is characterized by low-rise commercial development, including residential-to-office conversions, before transitioning to a denser, neighborhood-scale local commercial district at Norwood Avenue. These blocks generally consist of small-scale retail or commercial uses at street level, with upper-floor residential uses.

Many of the businesses along Upper Broadway cater to Latino and Brazilian communities within the City and wider region, including restaurants, retailers, and personal and financial services. In addition, the City is stewarding the ongoing adaptive reuse of two former bank buildings on the corridor as the Long Branch Arts & Culture Center (founded in 2021) and a future municipal court and office

building, respectively.

Crossing the railroad tracks, the City Hall complex – including the newly renovated historic Long Branch Free Public Library – demarcates the beginning of **Lower Broadway**. This portion is characterized by a traditional downtown setting with two- to three-story mixed-use buildings containing ground-floor retail and upper-floor office or residential uses.

The Lower Broadway commercial environment is characterized by a range of businesses both old and new, including restaurants, home décor and security establishments, corner stores, and retail service establishments. Several light industrial and fabrication uses also remain in the area to the north of Broadway.

To the south, the UEZ extends to cover the Long Branch train station area, including the regional employment anchor of Monmouth Medical Center. While the station is a hub for regional commuting, the area lacks true “transit-oriented development” at present; retail is generally limited to local, service-oriented uses geared towards hospital employees and commuters. However, as discussed later in the plan, this is an area in transition, where major station improvements, private redevelopment, and public investment are underway in an effort to capitalize on its central location and transit connections.

Much of the eastern boundary of the UEZ lies along the oceanfront area, which includes a mix of older and newer residential development at a variety of densities (1-4 family, townhouses, and multi-family); hotels and resorts; food and drink establishments and other retail storefronts; and surface parking areas. Notable destinations within this area or its vicinity include Seven Presidents Skatepark and

Oceanfront Park, Ocean Place Resort & Spa, and the mixed-use center in Pier Village.

Portions of the West End neighborhood also lie within proximity of the oceanfront, where development is comprised of a number of food and drink establishments and commercial retail and professional/office uses along Brighton Avenue. A variety of housing types also exist within this area, with development further west along Brighton Avenue being primarily lower density in character. West End Park lies along Brighton Avenue as well.

The “spider legs” of the existing UEZ continue further south along Ocean Avenue before culminating at Elberon Train Station. Development along Ocean Avenue in this area is largely low-density residential, consisting of numerous large lot single-family dwellings, along with recreational beach clubs. Development surrounding Elberon Station is generally comprised of neighborhood commercial uses, low-density housing, and surface parking for the train station. The Elberon Branch library and Elberon Fire Station are also located in this area.

EXISTING ZONING

The UEZ contains a number of zoning districts and redevelopment areas which reflect the variety of existing land uses.

The Oceanfront area contains multiple zoning districts starting at the northern point and continuing south: the RC-1 Beachfront Mixed and C-3 Neighborhood Commercial Districts which encompass smaller areas of commercial development along Atlantic Avenue and Ocean Boulevard North; the Beach Front North/South, Hotel Campus, and Pier Village

Center Redevelopment Areas; and the C-3 West End Design Overlay/C-4 Resort Commercial Districts within the vicinity of the West End neighborhood. The spider leg of the UEZ which continues south along Ocean Avenue borders the R-1 One-Family Residential District, and finishes at the Elberon Train Station, which lies within the C-3 Neighborhood Commercial District.

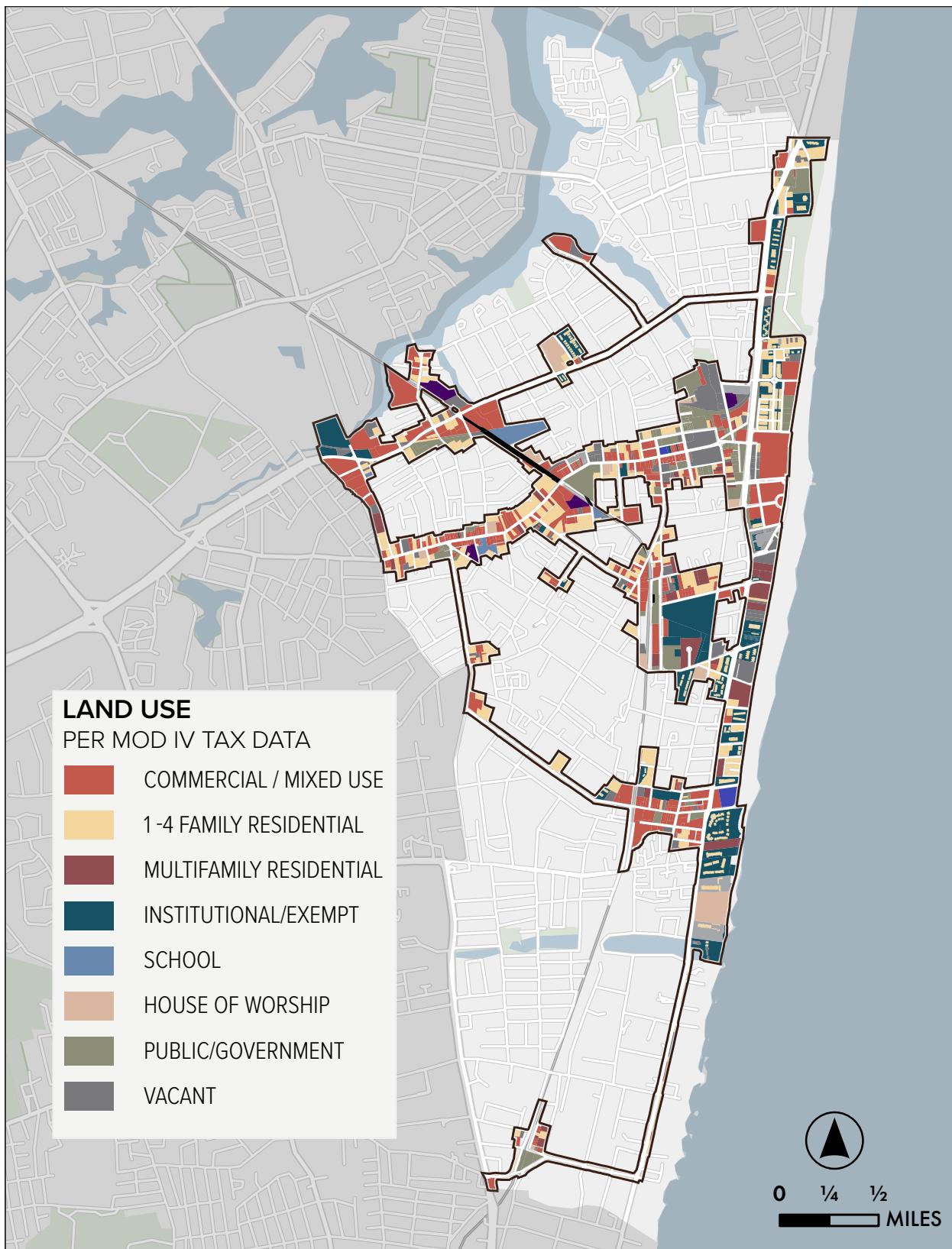
Further inland, zoning districts along Joline Avenue are comprised of the MB Manufacturing/Business District, the I Industrial District, and the R-4 One Family Residential District and R-5 One-Four Family/Townhouse Residential District. Small pockets of commercial uses along Branchport Avenue and Liberty Street to the north of Joline Avenue lie within the C-3 Neighborhood Commercial and RC-2 RiverFront Residential/Commercial Districts, respectively.

The lower half of Broadway falls within the Lower Broadway Corridor and Broadway Gateway Redevelopment Areas, which also include certain site specific redevelopment areas (Broadway and Second Avenue & Broadway & Sixth Avenue). Continuing further west, the Upper Broadway Corridor largely lies within the C-1 Central Commercial and C-2 Professional Office/Related Services Districts (with the exception of a small portion within the Industrial District), and a portion of Upper Broadway falls within the 410 Broadway-425 Morris Redevelopment Area.

The UEZ area surrounding the Long Branch Train Station is located within the Transit Village, which consists of several sub-districts, including the Mixed-Use Core; Medical Village; and Residential Districts. Smaller spider leg portions of the UEZ in this area also lie within the C-3 Neighborhood Commercial District.

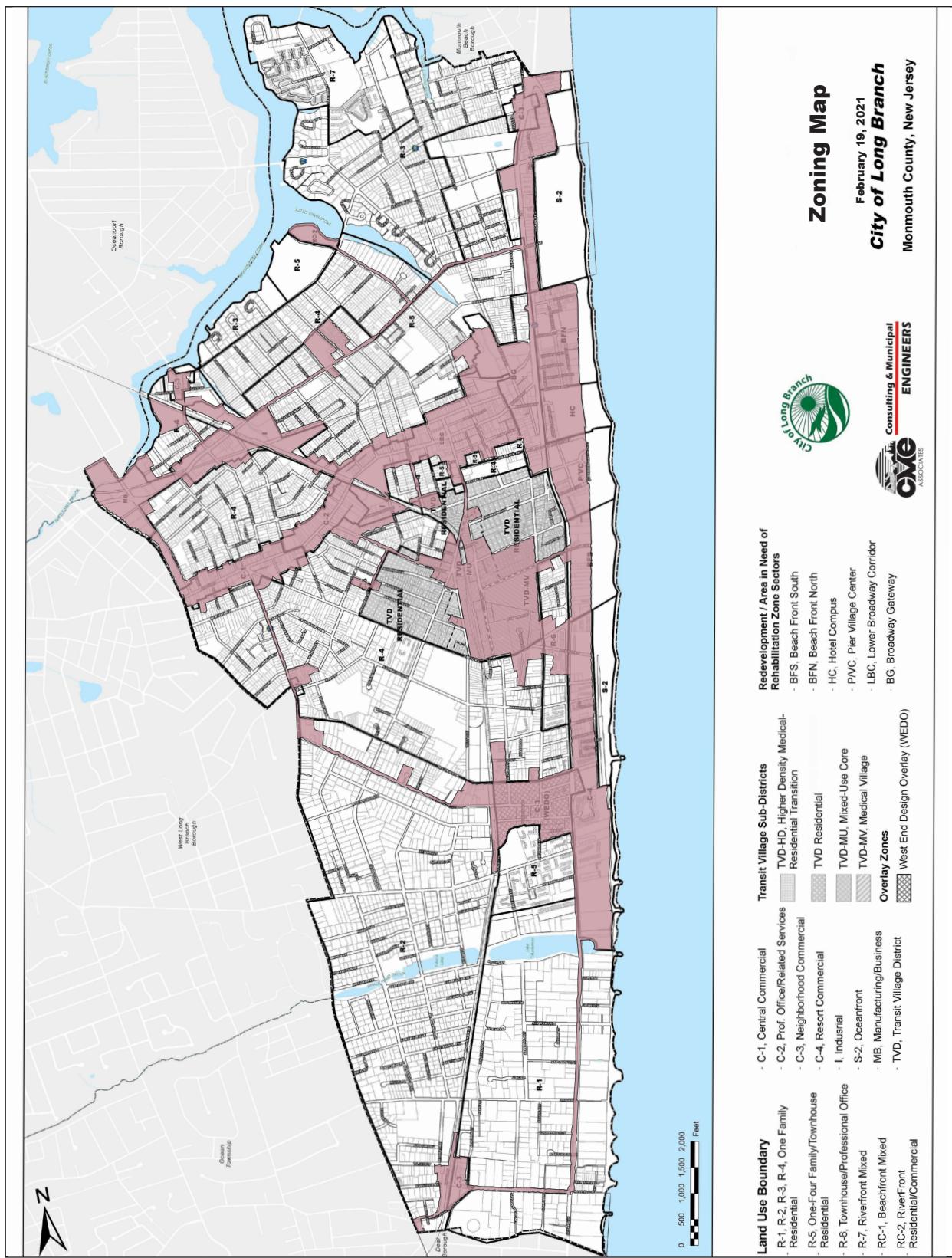
MAP 2.1 | EXISTING LAND USE

CITY OF LONG BRANCH URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONE



MAP 2.2 | EXISTING ZONING

CITY OF LONG BRANCH URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONE



2.2 Demographic Characteristics

As part of the plan development process, the consulting team undertook an analysis of relevant data on demographics such as population, age, race and ethnicity, language, education, income, housing, development trends, employment, and crime. Where available, data is presented at up to four geographic levels: the UEZ, the City of Long Branch, Monmouth County, and New Jersey, in order to provide both conclusions specific to the UEZ and comparative insights across the four areas.

Where comparative data is available only through 2022, the findings are intended to provide insights across the three geographic areas that serve to situate Long Branch and the UEZ within the broader regional context.

POPULATION & AGE

The official recorded population of Long Branch and the UEZ area have increased, but remained relatively stable. The official recorded population counts as seen in Table 1 show a moderate but steady population increase in Long Branch of 6.6% between 2010 and 2023, which is higher than growth within Monmouth County as a whole, but closer to New Jersey statewide. However, it is likely that the City's population is higher than the official Census enumeration, though the exact numbers are unclear. As noted on the following page, certain population groups with a presence in Long Branch are among those likely to be under counted by the national Census.

TABLE 2.1: TOTAL POPULATION, 2010-2023

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	2010	2023	% CHANGE
			2010 - 2023
Long Branch UEZ	6,230	7,224	16.0%
Long Branch	30,717	32,745	6.6%
Monmouth County	630,366	643,615	2.1%
New Jersey	8,791,894	9,267,014	5.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 & 2020 Decennial Census & ACS 5-Year Estimates; ESRI

On a national level, Census population data is used to apportion fair representation in Congress and the Electoral College and guide the allocation of billions of dollars of federal funds.

HARD-TO-COUNT POPULATIONS IN THE DECENTNIAL CENSUS

The U.S. Census Bureau describes certain groups of people that are historically less responsive and prone to undercounts or overcounts under the umbrella of “Hard-to-Count” populations. A Census Bureau analysis identified a number of undercounted population groups that comprise a high proportion of Long Branch’s population.

Persistently undercounted Census population groups (1990 to 2020) include:

- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Some Other Race
- Renters of housing
- Young Children (Ages 0 – 4)

Hard-to-count populations are less specifically defined, but include non-English speakers, low-income populations, undocumented immigrants, and people with disabilities.

It is also historically challenging to accurately count college students, whether living in households or in group quarters (i.e., dorms). Seasonal residents are intended to be counted at their “usual residence,” which is not synonymous with “legal residence” and can lead to under- or double-counting.

The 2020 Census was also conducted during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated existing enumeration issues and created new challenges related to migration and social distancing.

Undercounts can result in disproportionate losses of both to state and local governments. In the context of the State’s UEZ Program, data from the decennial census and the American Community Survey is analyzed by the Department of Community Affairs to calculate the Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI), which is a collection of indicators measuring social, economic, physical, and fiscal conditions in municipalities. A municipality’s MRI score, in turn, accounts for part of the weighted formula that is used to proportionally allocate Zone Assistance Funds.

That said, the issue of undercounting is not unique to Long Branch among UEZ municipalities, which are typically home to higher proportions of hard-to-count populations than the state overall, and other components of the UEZ funding formula are not reliant on Census data. The City and UEZ are aware of the discrepancies between “official” versus actual City population and will continue to monitor this to ensure equity for Long Branch residents and businesses.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Long Branch’s population has grown modestly but steadily since 2010, though likely undercounted in recent official Census data, an issue that can affect both political representation and UEZ funding allocations.
- Long Branch’s population skews significantly younger than that of Monmouth County, with a median age of 35.4 versus 43.3 that reflects a larger share of residents aged 15-44 who may benefit from UEZ programs like workforce development.

POPULATION DENSITY

UEZ municipalities in New Jersey tend to be older, denser cities and inner ring suburbs; Long Branch is no exception. The UEZ area has a density of approximately 6,233 persons per square mile, which is consistent with the City as a whole and median UEZ municipalities as calculated by DCA. These densities are significantly higher than that of Monmouth County and the State as a whole. Higher population density reflects the UEZ and City's compact built environment for an increased proximity of workers, customers, and potential business owners who can benefit from UEZ activities.

TABLE 2.2: POPULATION DENSITY COMPARISON

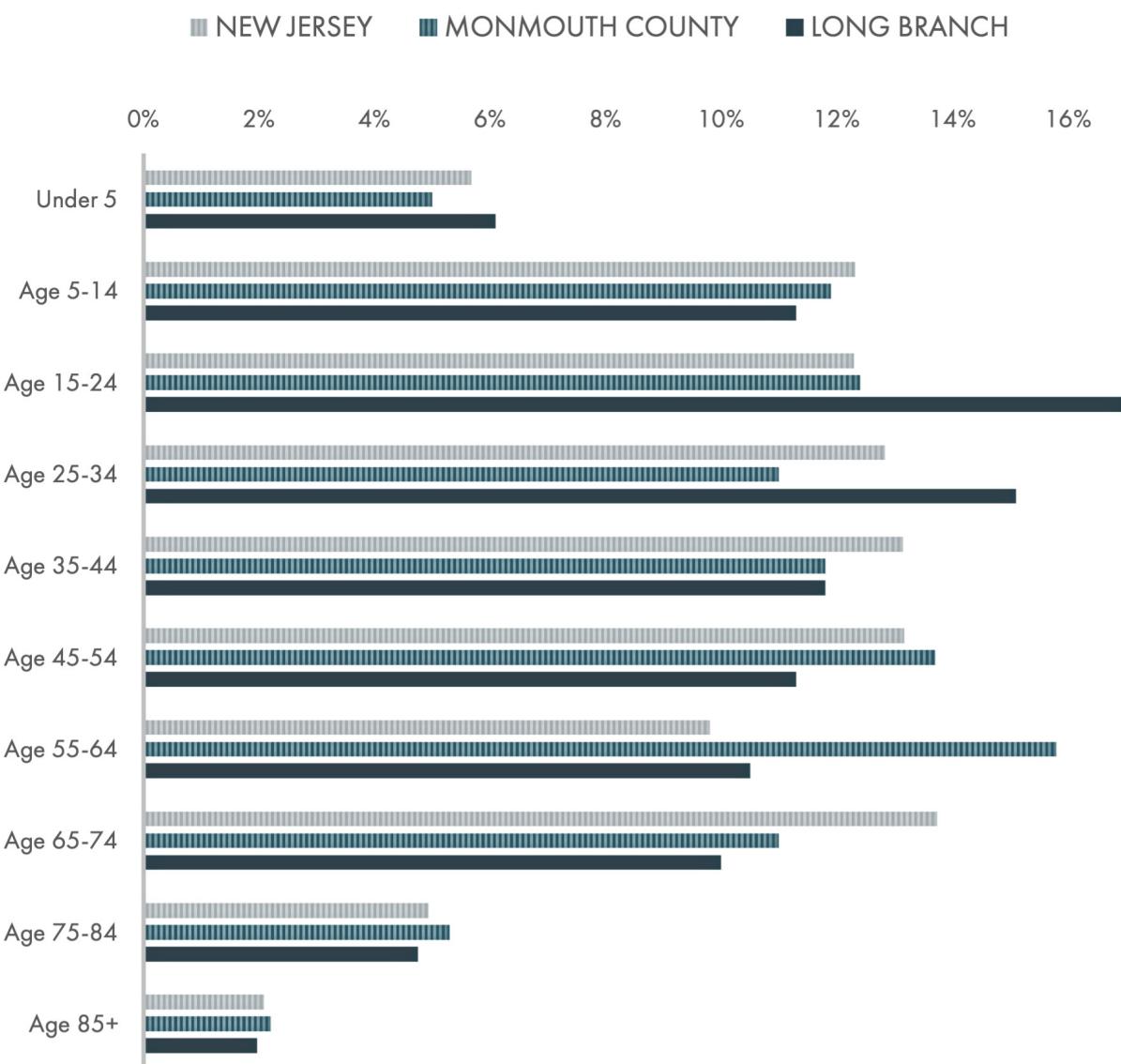
GEOGRAPHIC AREA	Population Density		
	Population (2023)	Area (Sq. Mi.)	(Persons per Sq. Mi.)
Long Branch UEZ	7,224	1.16	6,233
Long Branch	32,745	5.10	6,421
Monmouth County	643,615	468.2	1,375
New Jersey	9,267,014	7,355	1,260
UEZ Municipality Average	59,802	10	6,041

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates; ESRI; NJ Department of Community Affairs

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age distribution of the population of the City of Long Branch skews notably younger than Monmouth County and New Jersey as a whole. As of 2023, the largest age group share was 15-24 (17%) in Long Branch, compared 12.4% in Monmouth County and 12.3% statewide. In general, Long Branch has proportionately more residents in the entire 15-44 demographic, where Monmouth County and New Jersey skew to the 55-74 range. With respect to population change between 2010 and 2023, the population of both the City and County is aging as part of the overall “graying” of the American population. However, Long Branch’s relative youth is apparent in the median ages in each geography: **35.4 years in Long Branch, 43.3 years in Monmouth County, and 40.0 years in New Jersey, as of 2023.** The age distribution is shown on Chart 2.3. The impacts of Long Branch’s age distribution on UEZ programs and economic development are discussed further in Part III of this chapter.

FIGURE 2.3: POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY AGE, 2023

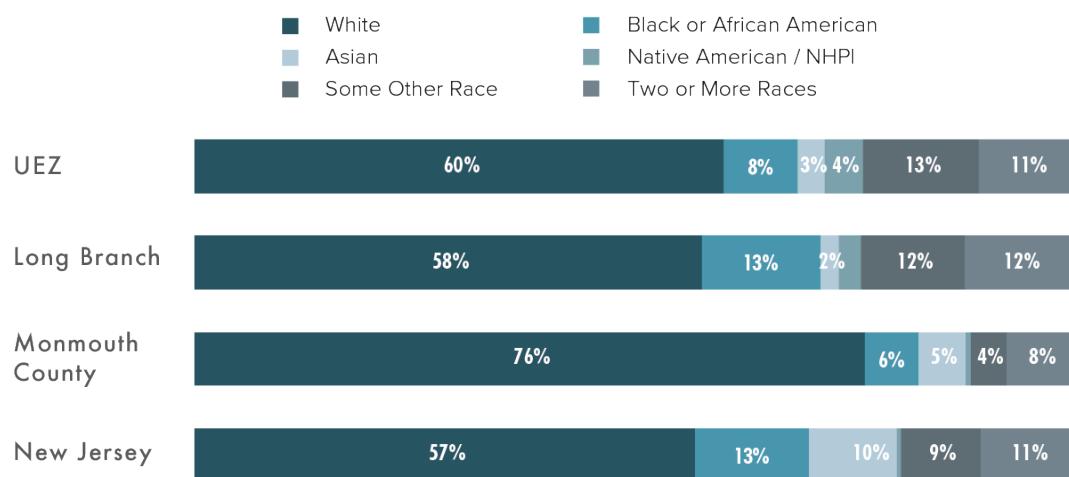


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table B01001)

RACE, ETHNICITY & LANGUAGE

Long Branch's racial and ethnic diversity is notable when compared to surrounding municipalities in Monmouth County, though the race and ethnic makeup of the UEZ is reflective of that of the City as the whole.

FIGURE 2.4: RACE, 2023 (Excluding Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity)

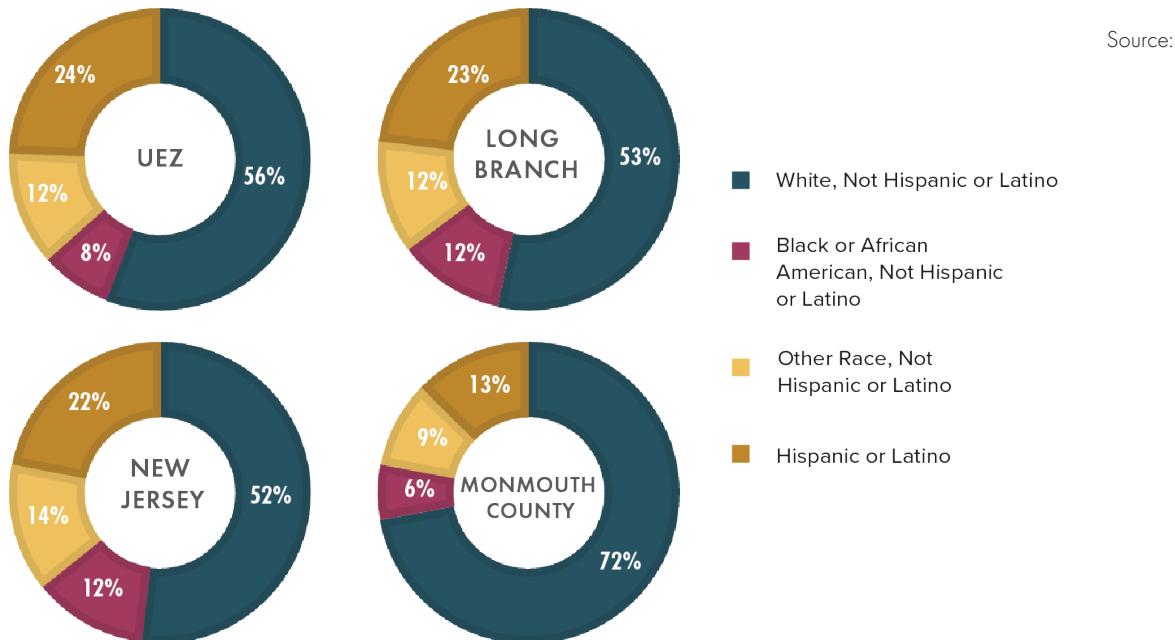


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table B03002)

The majority of the population in all geographies identified as White alone, ranging from ±60% in the UEZ, City, and State to ±75% in Monmouth County. Black or African-American residents are underrepresented in the UEZ area as compared to the City as a whole (7.6% vs 11.5%), but remains consistent with State figures (±12%). Long Branch has a lower share of Asian residents (+2% of the population) in comparison to the County and State (5% and 10%, respectively). Long Branch does exhibit a higher concentration of residents identifying as "Some Other Race" or Two or More Races, which account for ±24% of the UEZ population versus ±19 percent in the City, 12% in the County, and 20% in the State.

As expected, this is a reflection of the proportion of Hispanic and Latino ethnicity in the City as well. The U.S. Census categorizes race separately from Hispanic or Latino identity. Respondents are asked to identify their race (e.g., White, Black or African American, Asian, or "Some Other Race") in one question, while another question asks all respondents whether or not they identify as Hispanic or Latino. The resulting data is intended to serve as an ethnicity "overlay" in addition to the respondent's identified race. However, this system cannot always reflect the nuance of racial and ethnic identity, and many Hispanic and Latino respondents who prefer not to identify as White or Black select "Some Other Race."

FIGURE 2.5: RACE & ETHNICITY, 2023



Regarding Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, the UEZ and the City were again generally consistent with one another; as of the 2023 ACS five-year estimate, approximately 24% of UEZ and City residents identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race. This is double Monmouth County's proportion of 13% and similar to the statewide share.

As shown in Table 2.5, the City's Hispanic and Latino population is unique in the area due to its concentration of Mexican and Central American residents that have settled in the City since 2000. In 2023, approximately 1,396 residents (4.3%) identified as Central American, in comparison to 1.3% in Monmouth County and 2.9% statewide. In addition, Long Branch also has established populations of Puerto Rican and Dominican heritage, reflecting the most common Hispanic roots in the State and County.

TABLE 2.6: TOP 5 CITED HISPANIC AND LATINO ROOTS, 2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table B03001)

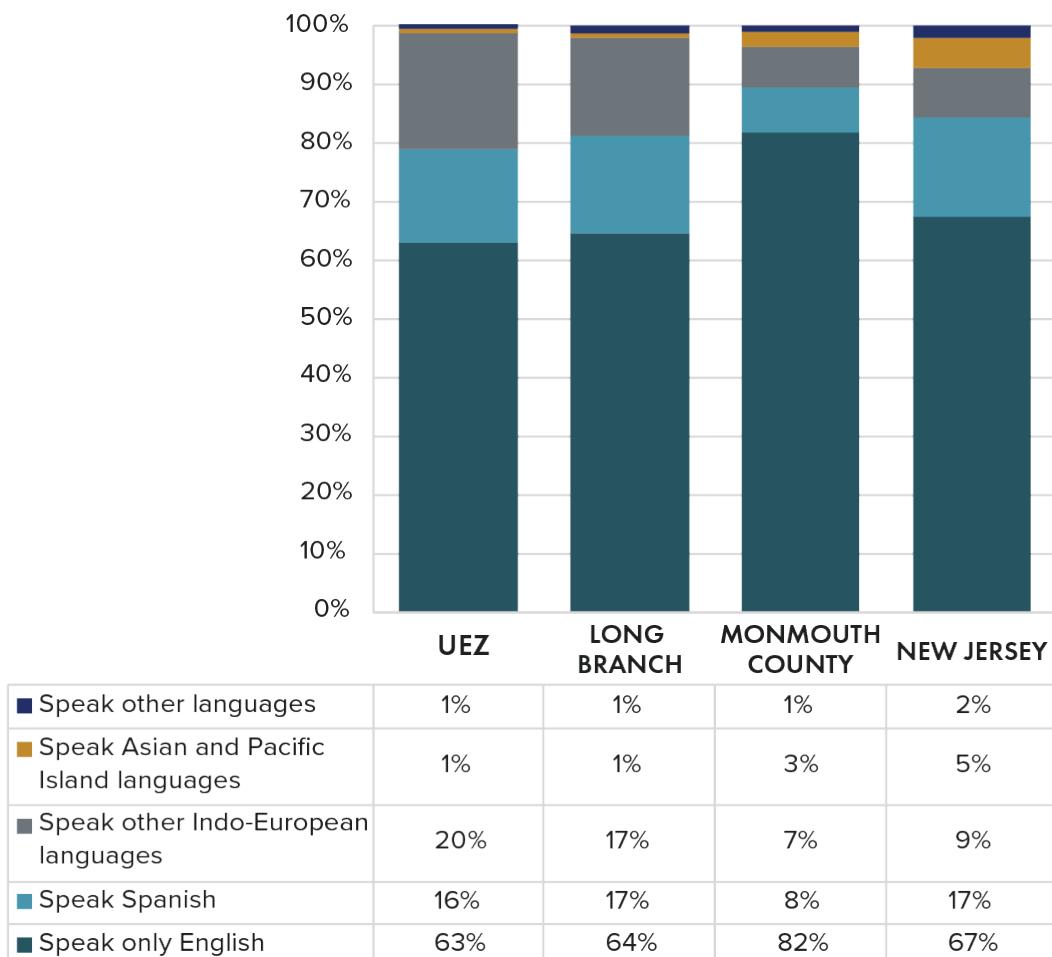
Long Branch	Monmouth County	New Jersey	
Mexican	8.7%	Puerto Rican	3.7%
Puerto Rican	6.0%	Mexican	3.4%
Salvadoran	2.2%	Dominican Republic	0.8%
Guatemalan	1.7%	Cuban	0.7%
Dominican Republic	1.0%	Colombian	0.7%

LANGUAGE & ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

The UEZ and the City generally exhibited similar population characteristics with respect to language spoken at home, for those aged 5 years or older. As of 2023, ±64% residents of both UEZ and the City spoke only English at home, compared with 82% in Monmouth County, though closer to the State share of 67%

Of non-English languages spoken at home, Spanish was specifically noted by approximately 17% of residents of the UEZ, the City, and New Jersey. This is more than double Monmouth County's share of 8% Spanish spoken at home. Notably, another 20% of UEZ residents and 17% of City residents spoke other Indo-European languages at home, versus 7% in the County and 9% in the State. This large share is likely attributable to Portuguese speakers; as of 2023, Portugal and Brazil were identified as the place of birth for 45% of the City's foreign-born population.

FIGURE 2.7: LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME, POPULATION AGE 5+, 2023



TAKEAWAYS:

- Long Branch and its Urban Enterprise Zone are among the most racially and ethnically diverse areas in Monmouth County. The City's cultural mix is evident in its business districts, cultural institutions and community groups, all of which create opportunities for local enterprises to serve both residents and visitors from across the region.
- Long Branch in 2023 contained a notably higher share of multilingual population compared to Monmouth County. Approximately 17% of the population spoke Spanish and 17% spoke another Indo-European language (i.e., Portuguese). This linguistic diversity is unique in the area and presents both opportunities and challenges for growth within the UEZ. from UEZ programs like workforce development.

2.3 Social & Economic Characteristics

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment levels within the City and the UEZ (as measured in the population aged 25 and over) closely reflective of another, but exhibit notable differences from the County and the State. Per 2023 ACS Five-Year Estimates, ±84% of the populations of both the UEZ and City of Long Branch hold at least a high school diploma or equivalent. While this is lower than Monmouth County (94%) and New Jersey (91%), it is on par with other UEZ municipalities; per DCA's UEZ Economic Indicator Base, the average and median for UEZ municipalities are 82.3% and 84.6%, respectively.

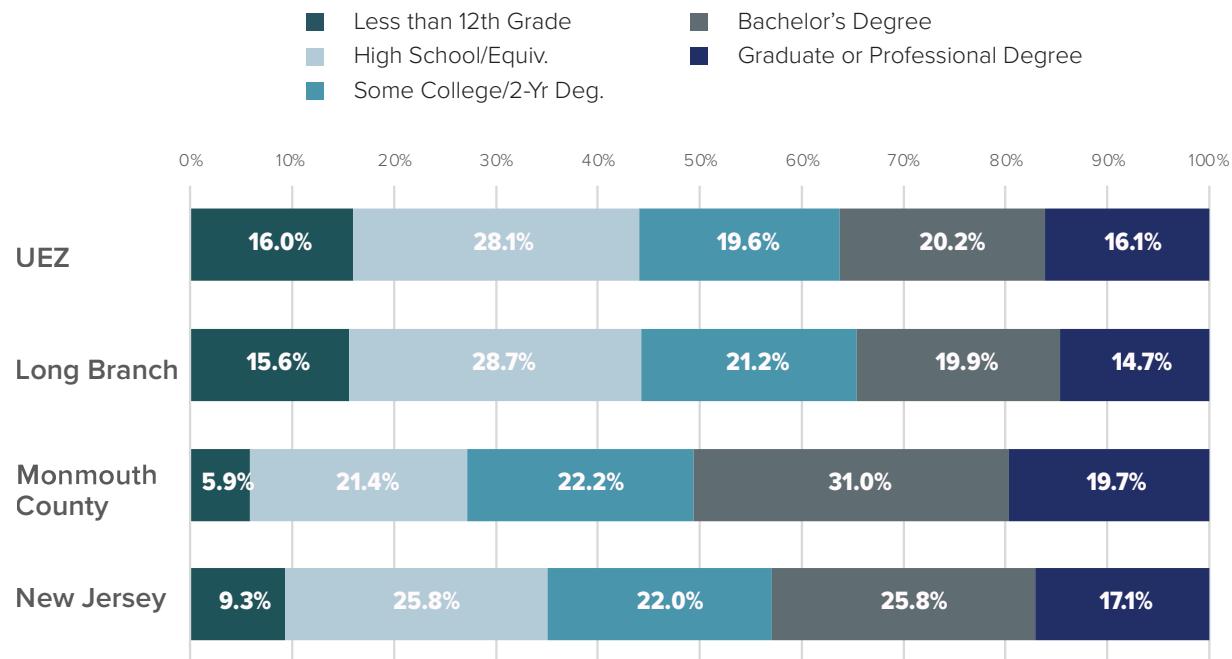
Approximately 35% of City and UEZ residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher, which is substantially lower than Monmouth County's ±51%, but higher than among UEZ municipalities, which average ±25% bachelor's degree attainment. In contrast, a higher share of Long Branch residents have not completed 9th grade (if over age 25) or do not attend school (if aged 16 to 19) than in New Jersey as a whole or in comparison to other UEZ municipalities: nearly 8% of Long Branch residents over 25 report less than a 9th grade education, and 8.1% of 16 to 19 year olds reported no attendance at school. A summary table providing comparison to UEZ municipalities is shown in Table 2.8. A detailed breakdown of educational attainment is shown in Figure 2.9.

There is a distinctive gap in educational attainment in Long Branch, particularly as compared to other UEZ municipalities. At the upper end, the share of residents with bachelor's degrees is one-third higher than the average UEZ municipality; at the low end, high school drop-out rates and lack of high school education are higher among Long Branch residents. While there is nuance in how education is measured and reported (i.e., among recent immigrants), the UEZ vision should consider how to reach these cohorts via job training and adult education partnerships, particularly in light of the City's young median population.

FIGURE 2.8: UEZ Summary Educational Attainment, 2023

	Long Branch	New Jersey	UEZ Municipality Median
% of pop. age 25 and older with HS degree or higher	84.4%	90.7%	84.6%
Population Age 16–19 Not Enrolled in School and Without a HS Diploma	8.1%	2.4%	3.2%
% of pop. age 25 and older with bachelor's degree or higher	34.6%	42.9%	22.9%

FIGURE 2.9: Educational Attainment, 2023



TAKEAWAYS:

- There is a distinctive gap in educational attainment in Long Branch, particularly as compared to other UEZ municipalities. At the upper end, the share of residents with bachelor's degrees is one-third higher than the average UEZ municipality; at the low end, high school drop-out rates and lack of high school education are higher among Long Branch residents. While there is nuance in how education is measured and reported (i.e., among recent immigrants), the UEZ vision should consider how to reach these cohorts via job training and adult education partnerships, particularly in light of the City's young median population

INCOME & POVERTY

Both the UEZ and the City of Long Branch exhibited more varied distributions of household income across multiple income brackets, contrasted to the County.

Long Branch is characterized by varied income distribution, with more lower-income households and fewer at the highest tier. Household income levels in the UEZ and the City of Long Branch are notably lower than in Monmouth County, though there are variations between income brackets. The median household income in the UEZ area was \$72,888 per 2023 data, which is nearly identical to Long Branch's \$73,381; however, both are lower than the \$101,050 statewide median income and particularly the \$122,727 median in Monmouth County.

FIGURE 2.10: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2023

	UEZ	Long Branch	Monmouth County	New Jersey	UEZ Median
Median Household Income	\$ 106,057	\$ 103,733	\$ 168,016	\$ 140,299	\$ 67,139
Average Household Income	\$ 72,888	\$ 73,381	\$ 122,727	\$ 101,050	\$ 101,050

Monmouth County's high median income is in part attributable to its large proportion of high earners. Per 2023 data, over 41% of Monmouth County households had an income of \$150,000 or more and 27.7% earned \$200,000 or more. However, the proportion of households earning between \$75,000 and \$199,999 in Long Branch (37%) was more even in comparison with the County and the State (both 41%).

FIGURE 2.11: POVERTY RATE FOR SELECTED POPULATIONS, 2023

Population Group	UEZ	Long Branch	Monmouth County	New Jersey
All Persons Below Poverty Level	15.80%	16.20%	6.40%	9.80%
Under 18 Years	-	4.60%	1.50%	2.90%
Age 60 and Over	-	3.20%	1.80%	2.10%

That said, there is also a higher proportion of households in Long Branch earning within the lowest income brackets and living below the poverty threshold. About 16% of City residents live below the poverty line, which is more than double the County's rate of 6.4% and higher than the State rate of 9.8%. In the City, poverty most impacts children under 18, with 4.6% of Long Branch youth below the poverty threshold compared to 3% statewide. Older adults (defined as over 60) are affected at a rate of 3.15%, versus 1.8% in Monmouth County and 2.1% statewide. These figures suggest a continuing economic divide, where upper-middle and lowest-income households are most visibly present in the City.

Household incomes in Long Branch remain more closely aligned with UEZ communities across the State than the City's ultra-wealthy neighbors in Monmouth County. The City's location within the "wealth belt" of coastal Monmouth County provides opportunities for businesses to court new markets, while UEZ investment local employment and workforce training may uplift households experiencing poverty.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Household incomes in Long Branch remain more closely aligned with UEZ communities across the State than the City's ultra-wealthy neighbors in Monmouth County. The City's location within the "wealth belt" of coastal Monmouth County provides opportunities for businesses to court new markets, while UEZ investment local employment and workforce training may uplift households experiencing poverty.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS & AFFORDABILITY

Housing stock within Long Branch and the UEZ reflects the City's historic urban/resort character, with visible traces of both its earliest development patterns and most recent redevelopment activity. As of 2023, roughly 59% of occupied units in the UEZ were renter-occupied, compared with 49% citywide, 35% statewide, and 23% in Monmouth County. Owner-occupied units account for just over one-fifth of the housing stock. The vacancy rate (20%) remains higher than both the City (15%) and the County (7%), but has declined since 2010 as reinvestment and new multifamily construction have expanded the supply of occupied units. The City's presence as a resort community may also result in undercounting or off-season adjustments to vacancies.

A large portion of the UEZ and the City's housing stock was constructed prior to 1950, at 24 percent and 27 percent, respectively, whereas only 18 percent of the County's housing stock was constructed during the same time period. This reflects the historic nature of Long Branch, with strong roots to development associated with its traditional commercial core along Broadway and its surrounding areas, some of which remains relevant today. However, the City and UEZ area have also experienced a substantial increase in total housing units since 2010, attributed to recent multi-family redevelopment.

FIGURE 2.12: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS SUMMARY TABLE, 2023

	UEZ	Long Branch	Monmouth County	New Jersey
Total Housing Units	4,165	15,029	268,751	3,788,000
Housing Tenure & Status				
Occupied Units	80%	87%	93%	92%
Owner-Occupied	26%	41%	75%	64%
Renter-Occupied	74%	59%	25%	36%
Vacant Units	20%	14%	7%	8%
Housing Type (Structure)				
Single-Family Detached	17%	35%	67%	53%
Multi-Family (20+ units)	44%	26%	9%	12%
Age of Housing Stock				
Built Pre-1940	18.9%	24.1%	13.4%	17.5%
Median Home Value	\$489,500	\$461,500	\$519,500	\$401,700
Median Gross Rent	\$1,880	\$1,940	\$1,670	\$1,680
Housing Cost Burden (≥30% of Income)	49% renters / 41% owners	52% renters / 44% owners	52% renters / 28% owners	50% renters / 33% owners

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The housing values across all geographic areas analyzed vary with respect both low and high ends of the market. The median home value in the UEZ (\$489,500) is comparable to Long Branch overall (\$461,500) and lower than Monmouth County (\$519,500), though well above the state-wide median (\$401,700). Rental housing shows a similar degree of variation. The median gross rent (\$1,880) closely mirrors the City (\$1,940) but exceeds both County (\$1,670) and State (\$1,680) averages. This pattern reflects strong demand for rental housing near the waterfront, which is exacerbated by the competition for seasonal and second-home rentals.

Affordability challenges are exemplified by the fact that half of renter households (49% to 52%) in all geographies allocate 30 percent or more of their income toward housing. In Long Branch, one in three renters (32%) are severely cost-burdened, spending more than half their income on rent. Housing costs in the UEZ reflect both progress and pressure: values have risen with new investment, yet affordability remains constrained for many renters.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Long Branch's diverse real estate and housing market includes newly built, high-value oceanfront condos exist in the vicinity alongside long-established neighborhoods that provide regional opportunities for unique housing stock.

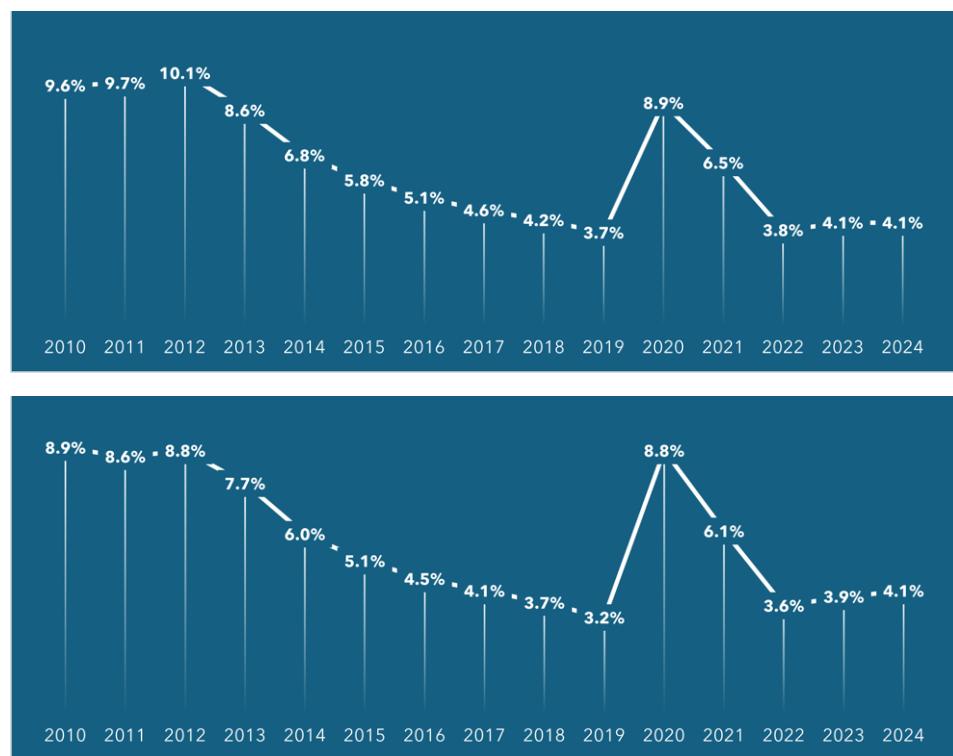
WORKFORCE & EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

As of 2024, the City of Long Branch contained a population age 16 and older of 25,806, of which 16,853 were within the labor force, all of whom were in the civilian labor force. Of this group, approximately 93% were employed and 7% were unemployed. Within the County, of the civilian labor force of 350,176, almost 95% were employed and 5% were unemployed, indicating a slightly lower level of unemployment within the region as compared to the City.

HISTORIC UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

As documented by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the City of Long Branch has seen variations in its unemployment rate over the past decade plus. There was a steady decline in unemployment from 2012 onwards, reflecting the economic rebound from the 2008 Great Recession. This pattern continued until 2020, where there was a steep increase in the City's unemployment rate, attributed to the sudden impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This spike in unemployment declined to just under 4 percent in 2022.

FIGURE 2.13: LONG BRANCH & MONMOUTH COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 2010-2024



EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY SECTOR

In 2023, Long Branch's employment profile reflected both its local service economy and regional health and education anchors. The largest industry for City residents was Health Care and Social Assistance (19%), followed by Construction (16%), Professional and Management Services (15%), and Retail Trade (14%). These figures place Long Branch above the County and State averages in construction, retail, and hospitality-related employment, underscoring its strong blue-collar and service base.

Monmouth County and New Jersey show a more diversified employment mix, with higher shares in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services and Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate—sectors tied to higher-skill, white-collar jobs. Long Branch's relatively smaller presence in these industries suggests fewer opportunities in knowledge-based fields and a stronger reliance on hands-on and customer-facing work.

Overall, the City's economy is driven by construction, education and health services, retail, and tourism-related sectors, with comparatively less participation in advanced professional and technical occupations. These trends highlight both the City's economic strengths and the importance of workforce development and industry diversification to expand access to higher-wage employment.

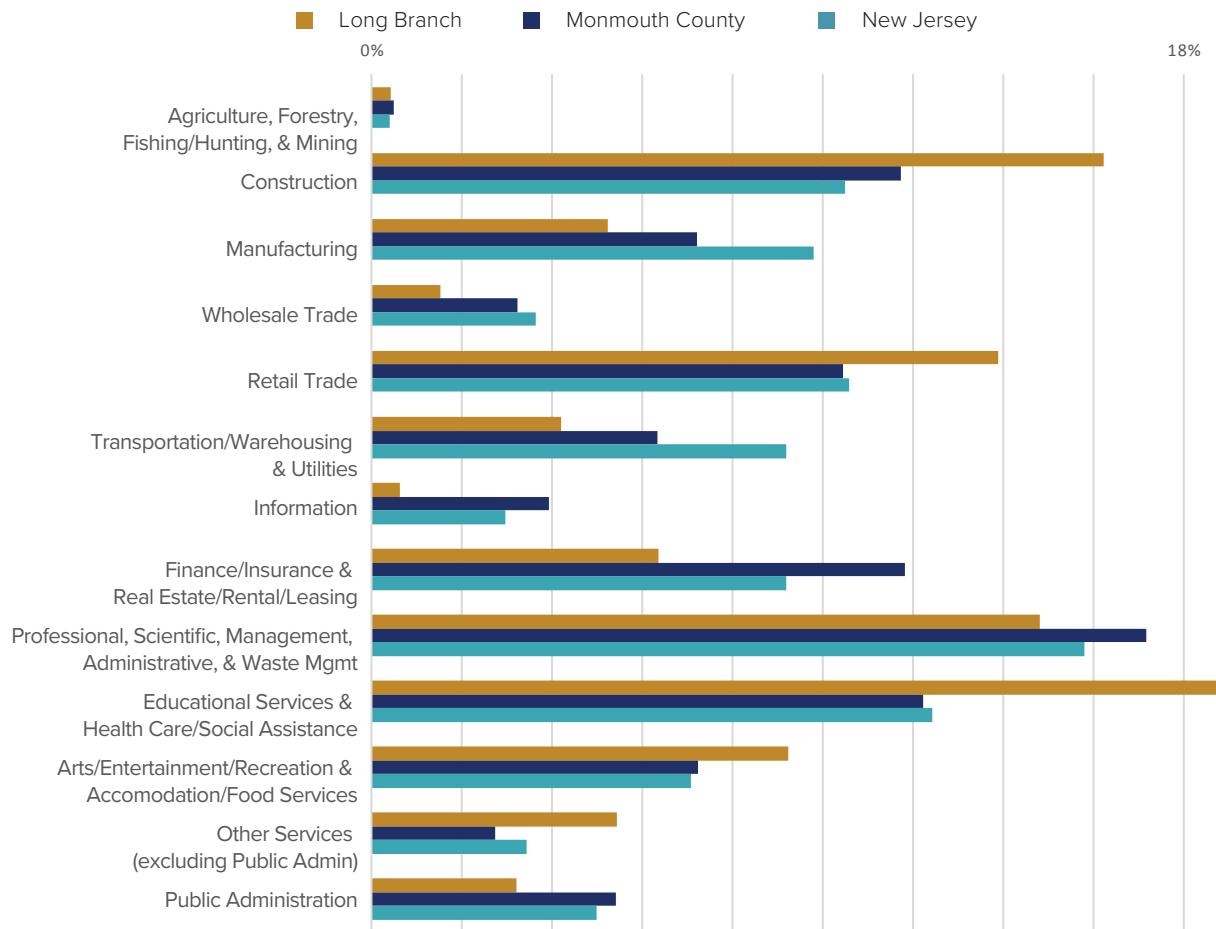
The construction industry employs 16.2% of the local workforce—well above county and state averages—driven by sustained investment in residential and commercial projects. Similarly, educational and health services (18.8%) represent the largest single employment category, consistent with regional institutional anchors and healthcare facilities.

Compared with Monmouth County and New Jersey, Long Branch shows lower representation in finance, information, and transportation-related sectors, but higher shares in retail, hospitality, and other local services, illustrating its dual role as both a year-round residential center and a visitor-serving economy.

TAKEAWAYS:

- **UEZ & Long Branch Employment by Industry): Health Care and Social Assistance was the dominant sector of employment in the City of Long Branch in 2022 (largely attributed to the Monmouth Medical Center), and Accommodation and Food Services also played a vital role in the local economy in 2022. There was also a noted decrease in employment in professional sectors such as finance, real estate, arts, and scientific and technical fields, indicating a need to stimulate employment opportunities in these areas.**

FIGURE 2.14: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY SECTOR, 2023



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT

2024 Population sourced by ESRI provided additional insight with respect to the population trends related to employment within the areas of analysis. ESRI measured a datapoint referred to as daytime population, which includes workers (civilians, non-military employed at work, and armed forces personnel age 16+) and residents (population age 0-15, unemployed adults, those not in the labor force, and employed civilians temporarily not working). Accordingly, the UEZ daytime population was 11,515, the City was 29,846, and the County was 619,836. Of the total daytime population in the UEZ, nearly 68% were workers, which was significantly higher than the City (±44 percent) and the County (±50 percent). Furthermore, the UEZ contained the highest total daytime population density (population per square mile) at approximately 9,940, whereas the City only held ±5,820 people/sq mi, and the County was far lower at 1,320 people/sq mile. These datapoints suggest the UEZ receives a much greater proportion of workforce population during the daytime which may travel in from surrounding areas.

CRIME

ESRI provides crime indexes which provide an understanding of the relative risk of all crime and specific types of crime within a region, relative to the national level.

The index is modeled utilizing data from the FBI Uniform Crime Report and demographic data from the Census and Applied Geographic Solutions. **Values below 100 are considered below the average level of crime risk compared to the country as whole, and values above 100 are considered at above average risk of crime compared to the Country.**

In 2024, the UEZ was assigned a crime risk level of 99, although this was still below the national level of crime risk. The level of crime risk in the City was lower at 87.

This information can be especially helpful in informing strategies to mitigate such activity and understanding how and where safety measures can be taken to improve the overall comfort of residents, workers, and visitors within the UEZ.

MUNICIPAL REVITALIZATION INDEX

The Municipal Revitalization index or MRI (formerly referred to as the Municipal Distress Index) is a tool developed by the DCA used to assess the relative socioeconomic indicators of distress for each municipality in the state. The DCA appears to have modified their methodology over the course of the UEZ program, resulting in differing scores/results between reports. As the DCA has not released accompanying methodology reports with the more recent analyses, it is not possible to make out the specific adjustments or rationale associated with the latest data.

As of the 2023 MRI, the City of Long Branch was calculated to have an MRI score of 4.95, where an index score of 0 corresponds to the state average. The City's overall MRI rank including all municipalities was 75, where 565 represents the least distressed community.

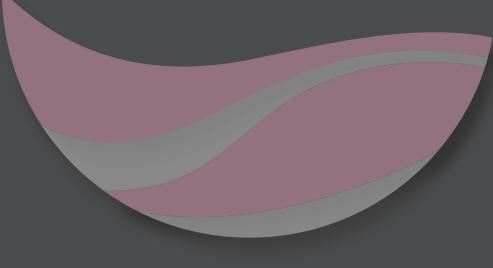
Of the specific indicators enumerated in the 2023 analysis, Long Branch ranked higher relative to all other municipalities in the state for non-seasonal housing vacancy rate (158th).

Additionally, the City ranked especially high for households on SNAP food stamps assistance (67th); poverty rate (28th); median household income (71st); and educational attainment of a high school diploma or higher (41st).

This indicates specific observed factors which indicate vulnerabilities of the overall population. The 2023 MRI index can help inform targeted strategies to aid the population within the UEZ and the City as whole.

3

UEZ Diagnostic Assessment



LONG BRANCH'S COMMERCIAL ECOSYSTEM IS DEFINED by contrasts: a diverse, lower-income resident base alongside higher-income seasonal and regional visitors; vibrant destination districts at the waterfront paired with underperforming gateway corridors inland; and strong entrepreneurial activity that is often hampered by limited administrative capacity and uneven physical conditions. These dynamics create both challenges and opportunities for the City and the UEZ program as they plan for the next five years.

The consulting team undertook a diagnostic assessment of the UEZ's key business districts to understand these dynamics and how the UEZ program can effectively target investment to strengthen the City's commercial landscape over the next five years. The diagnostic assessment revealed four overarching insights:

1

Long Branch's audiences are **diverse and segmented**, with residents seeking affordability and everyday services, visitors and students seeking dining and entertainment, and seasonal populations driving demand for premium experiences. **No single district can serve all these groups, making clear the need for a hierarchy of place where each district plays a distinct role.**

2

While West End and Pier Village perform strongly as destinations, **Upper and Lower Broadway—the City's most visible gateways—require significant reinvestment to match their importance.** Their physical condition and tenant mix not only affect local access to goods and services but also shape external perceptions of Long Branch as a whole.

3

The physical environment remains uneven across districts. Deferred maintenance and weak storefronts undermine Broadway's potential, while West End and Pier Village demonstrate how coordinated management and modest upkeep can deliver best-in-class experiences. Improvements in wayfinding, signage, and multimodal access—particularly cycling—are needed citywide.

4

Administrative capacity is a critical factor in sustaining progress. **Stronger interdepartments, tri-lingual service delivery, sustainable funding streams, and consistent district stewardship** will be essential to ensure that UEZ resources are deployed effectively and equitably.

Together, these findings point to a strategy that balances **targeted reinvestment in key gateway corridors** with the continued **management and maintenance of already strong districts**, underpinned by **enhanced administrative systems** that can sustain success over the long term.

3.1 Approach & Methodology

To inform the completion of the UEZ 5-Year Zone Development Plan, the consultant team began with a diagnostic assessment of current conditions. This approach recognizes that commercial districts function as living ecosystems—each shaped by the interplay of markets, businesses, the physical environment, and the administrative systems that sustain them. Just as a healthy ecosystem requires balance across multiple interdependent parts, a successful retail environment depends not only on the presence of customers and businesses, but also on the quality of the spaces where transactions occur and the organizational capacity that maintains them.

Grounding the work in this framework, the team conducted a two-day site visit and stakeholder discussions, then focused research and analysis into four key areas: the Market Environment, the Business Environment, the Physical Environment, and Administrative Capacity. Together, these dimensions capture the essential conditions that determine whether Long Branch's commercial districts can adapt, compete, and thrive in a rapidly changing retail landscape.

The research questions that guided the analysis included the following:

MARKET ENVIRONMENT

- What are the different types of customers within the Long Branch market?
- To what degree are Long Branch's retail nodes powered by local, regional, or seasonal audiences?
- Are there opportunities to strengthen these retail nodes to better meet the needs of these customers?

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

- Where are clusters of existing retail activity? Where are clusters of UEZ businesses?
- What are the identities of the unique districts & how do they inform the current retail mix?
- How can the UEZ program help business owners better meet the needs of their existing customer base and grow their audiences?

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- How are customers experiencing the City's retail nodes? Do they feel comfortable and safe?
- Are there any pain points or areas of friction that prevent customers from convenient, repeat patronage of Long Branch businesses?

ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

- What are current pain points in deploying UEZ resources effectively to the Long Branch business community?

3.2 Diagnostic Findings

MARKET ENVIRONMENT

Long Branch is defined by a diverse customer base that includes residents, regional visitors, university students and a seasonal population. Each group has distinct price points, preferences, and behaviors as follows:

RESIDENTS

Long Branch is home to a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse resident base which stands out when compared to Monmouth County. More than half of residents identify as Hispanic/Latino or Brazilian/Portuguese, with 15% of households speaking Spanish at home.

Additionally, income levels of residents widely vary. As compared to Monmouth County, 59% of households earn less than \$75k per year, compared to 31% for the County. This stronger concentration of lower household incomes leads to the need for accessible and affordable price points throughout the City.

As compared to Monmouth County, Long Branch is younger, with a lower median age and larger shares of Gen Alpha, Gen Z, and Millennials. This younger population, further bolstered by a sizable nearby student presence, drives demand for affordable food, beverage, and entertainment options, and represents a customer base that is highly influenced by social media and online visibility. Districts and businesses that cater to this group will benefit from embracing digital platforms and targeted marketing to raise awareness and build loyalty.

FIGURE 3.1: HISPANIC/LATINO & PORTUGUESE SPEAKING POPULATION

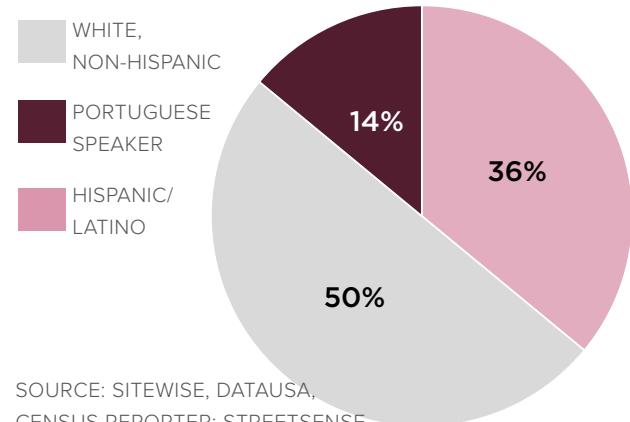
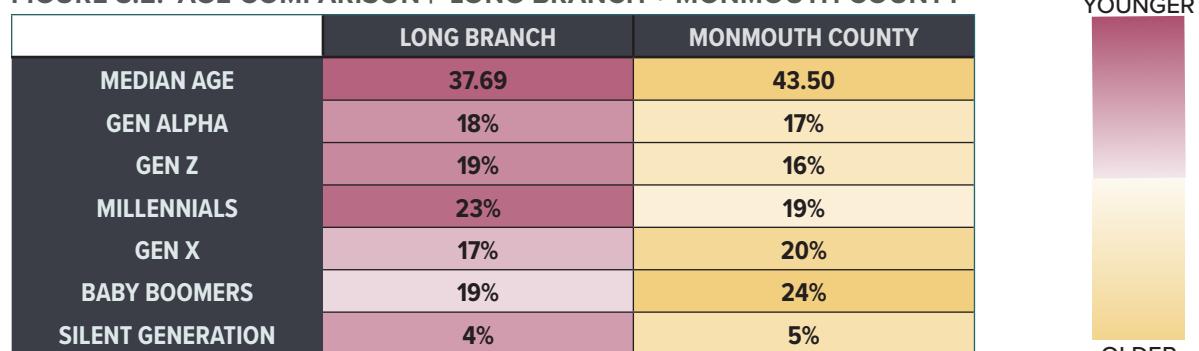


FIGURE 3.2: AGE COMPARISON | LONG BRANCH + MONMOUTH COUNTY



SOURCE: ESRI Business Analyst, US News and World Report; Streetsense, 2025

REGIONAL VISITORS

Long Branch is a popular beach town within the County, and as such, it pulls from wealthier environs and can sustain higher-end offerings, particularly in the vicinity of the oceanfront, which is Long Branch's strongest value proposition for visitors from the region.

At the high end, out-of-market visitors exceed the statewide median income, driving demand for leisure, entertainment, and premium retail, particularly in Pier Village and West End. As beach-front, seasonal destinations, these districts must deliver best-in-class experiences, since customers with ample alternatives will only return if Long Branch consistently performs at the highest standard. In addition to daytrippers and residents of nearby towns, there are two other distinct populations present in Long Branch:

Seasonal Population

Long Branch attracts a substantial seasonal population during the summer, with the city's base of 31,475 residents swelling to more than 35,000. These seasonal and out-of-market visitors concentrate their activity in Pier Village and the West End, where businesses see visitation nearly double in July and August compared to the winter months.



University Population

Although not reflected in Long Branch's official population totals, Monmouth University's nearly 5,000 students represent an additional Gen Z audience with distinct spending habits. About 70 percent live on campus while the remainder live off campus, creating consistent demand for affordable dining, entertainment, and services that cater to younger consumers.



In summary, Long Branch's diverse audiences make it difficult for any single commercial district to serve all customers, particularly in leisure categories such as dining and entertainment. Each district must balance two distinct markets. Local residents earn significantly less than the state median, underscoring the need for affordable, accessible retail and dining that meet everyday needs. Employees fall in the middle of the income spectrum, generating steady daytime demand for quick-service food and convenience offerings.

FIGURE 3.3: DEMOGRAPHIC QUICK LOOK / LONG BRANCH + MONMOUTH COUNTY

	LONG BRANCH	MONMOUTH COUNTY
POPULATION	31,475	642,283
HOUSEHOLDS	12,422	245,895
RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS	62%	27%
AVG HH INCOME	\$106,378	\$171,757
MED HH INCOME	\$75,830	\$122,439
BACHELORS DEGREE OR HIGHER	35%	51%
AVG # OF VEHICLES PER HOUSEHOLD	1.4	1.9
PERCENT HISPANIC/LATINO OR NON-WHITE	57%	27%

SOURCE: Sitewise; Streetsense

Upper and Lower Broadway are squarely focused on serving local residents with limited spending power, reinforcing the importance of affordability. At the same time, these districts, particularly Upper Broadway, are also drawing regional visitors seeking ethnic specialty goods, services, and food—particularly from Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking businesses—creating an additional opportunity to strengthen their cultural niche.

At the high end, out-of-market visitors exceed the statewide median income, driving demand for leisure, entertainment, and premium retail, particularly in **Pier Village and the West End**. As beachfront, seasonal destinations, these districts must deliver best-in-class experiences, since customers with ample alternatives will only return if Long Branch consistently performs at the highest standard.

FIGURE 3.4: MEDIAN HH INCOME BY USER

SOURCE: PlacerAI (2023); Streetsense

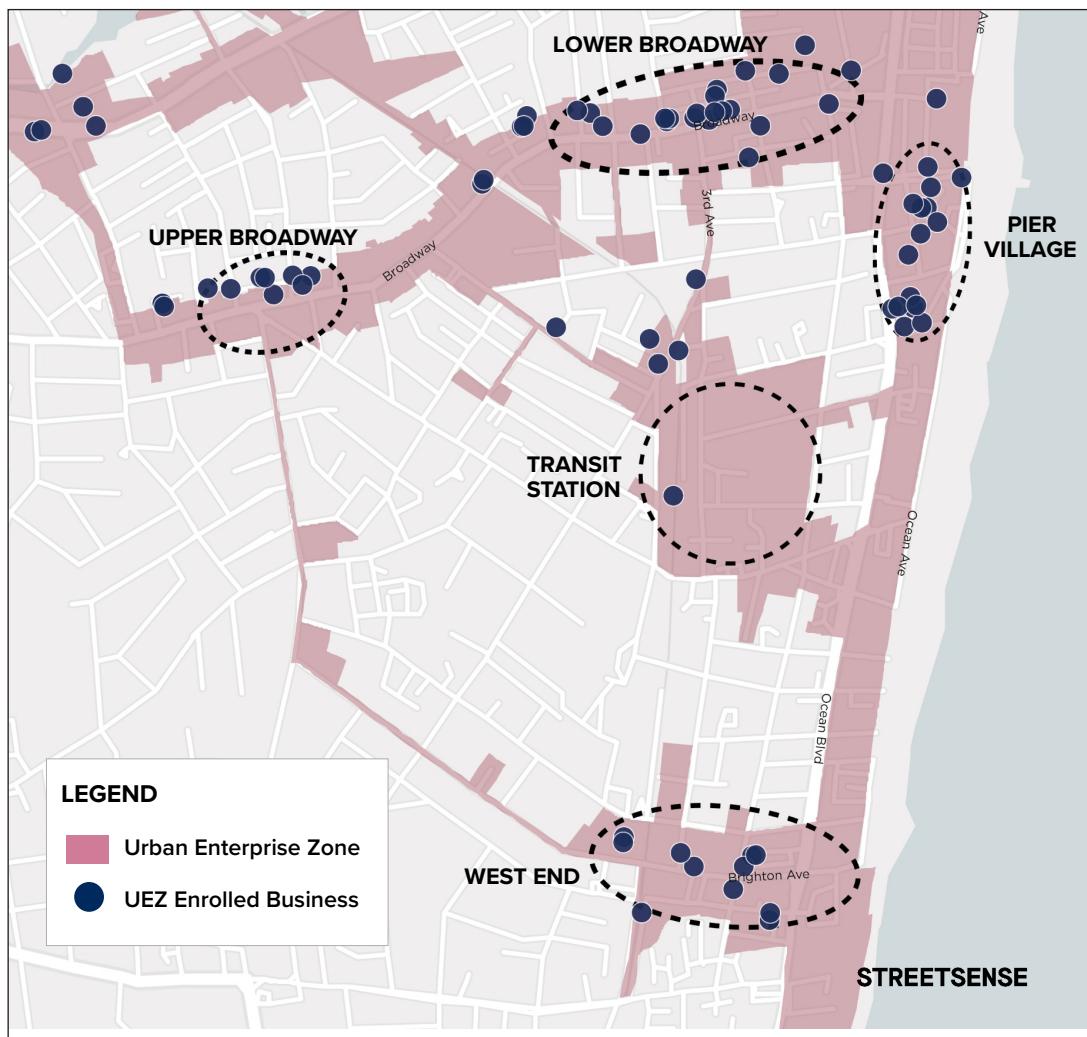


BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Utilizing UEZ enrollment data, PlacerAI, stakeholder engagement, and fieldwork, the diagnostic identified five major commercial districts within Long Branch:

- *Upper Broadway (Uptown)*
- *Lower Broadway*
- *Pier Village*
- *Transit Station*
- *West End*

FIGURE 3.5: COMMERCIAL NODES IN LONG BRANCH UEZ



DESTINATION DISTRICTS

These districts are characterized by larger trade areas and are typically dominated by F&B and entertainment, with a few novel GAFO offerings. In Long Branch, Pier Village, and West End, both fall into this category, though they still serve different audiences. Pier Village is a destination for visitors, whereas West End is a destination for locals. Both areas attract higher-income, out-of-market customers. With higher price points and more competitive options, businesses in these districts must consistently deliver best-in-class experiences to retain customers. These districts also command higher rents, reflecting their value, sales potential, and pedestrian volumes. Importantly, their foot traffic levels meet the site selection criteria for national tenants, making them viable locations for chain retailers.



CATEGORY	GLOSSARY: RETAIL ECONOMICS	EXAMPLES
F&B Food & Beverage Establishments associated with eating and drinking outside of the home.	Restaurants Coffee shops & cafes Bars Breweries Ice-cream shops	
NG&S Neighborhood Goods and Services Establishments that cater to local residents and/or employees for daily errands and personal services	Grocery stores Barbershops & salons Dry cleaners & laundromats Drugstores Pet salons Hardware stores	
GAFO General Apparel, Furnishings & Others Stores that sell merchandise normally sold in a department store.	General Merchandise Clothing and clothing accessories Furniture and home furnishings Electronics and appliance Sporting goods, books, music	

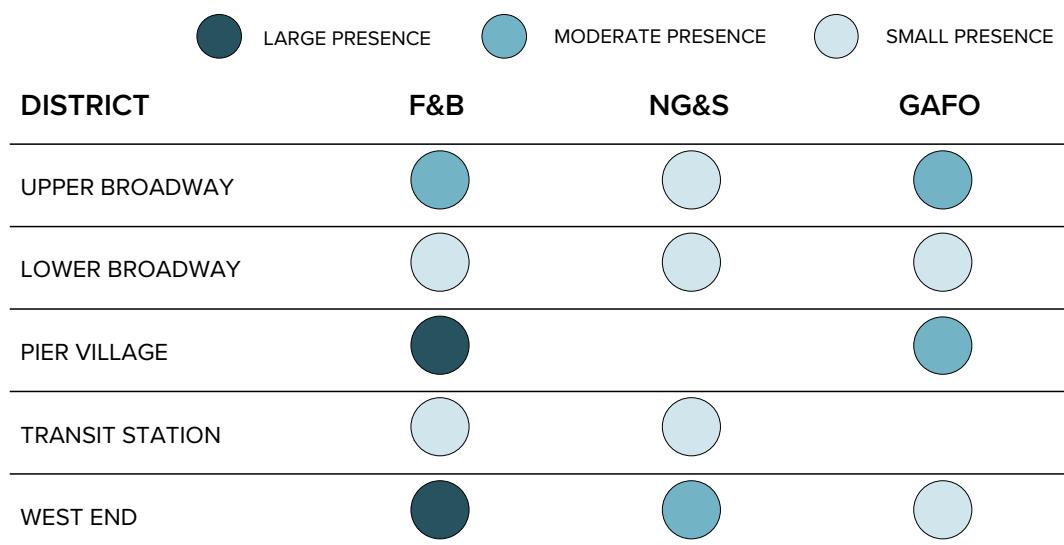
NEIGHBORHOOD- AND COMMUNITY-SERVING DISTRICTS

In contrast, neighborhood- and community-serving districts draw customers who are looking for neighborhood goods and services – notably more local trade areas and depend heavily on repeat users. In Long Branch, Upper Broadway and Lower Broadway fall into this classification. These districts cater to customers at affordable and moderate price points, aligning with the income profile of local Long Branch residents. However, Upper Broadway also serves as a regional draw for Latino, Brazilian and Portuguese residents in the region.

Lower Broadway is further characterized by the presence of community and institutional anchors, including Brookdale Community College, the Portuguese Club of Long Branch, City Hall, the Public Library, and the New Jersey Repertory Company.



FIGURE 3.6: RETAIL MIX IN UEZ DISTRICT

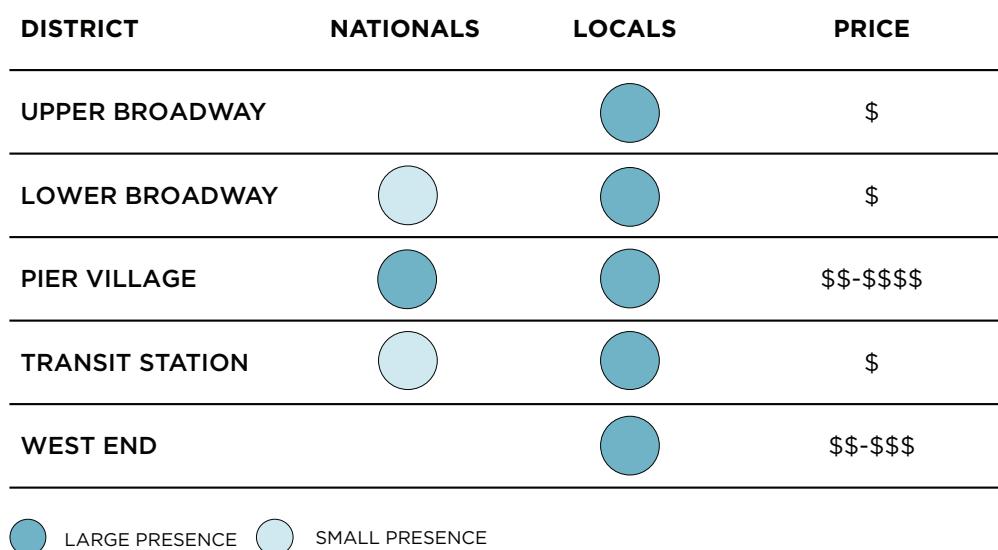


TRANSIT DISTRICT

The Transit Station can be classified as a neighborhood-serving district, though it is currently in transition with a very small retail footprint – about 15 retail businesses- five of which are food & beverage businesses meeting the needs of residents and Monmouth Medical employees. The incoming influx of new residential and a possible shift in the employee base at Monmouth Medical will likely change the retail needs and patterns in the district, creating new opportunities for businesses in the future.



FIGURE 3.7: CHAIN VS. LOCAL RETAIL



BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT – KEY TAKEAWAYS

Investments in Long Branch's commercial environments must recognize each district's role within **the hierarchy of place**.

Neighborhood-serving districts need to be convenient, accessible, and visible. Every investment should advance the ability of local residents to easily patronize businesses. Heavy marketing is less critical; what matters most is maintaining a clean, safe, and welcoming environment. **Convenience will always be prioritized.**

In the case of Broadway, its role extends beyond neighborhood shopping. **Broadway is Long Branch's front door:** its appearance directly influences whether visitors, residents, and businesses see Long Branch as welcoming and investable. Moreover, Broadway's unique ability to draw Latino, Brazilian, and Portuguese communities from across Monmouth County underscores the importance of investing in the quality of this environment.

By contrast, destination districts exist in a far more competitive marketplace. Customers who visit Pier Village or the West End are weighing these options against many others across the region. To succeed, **these districts must deliver best-in-class experiences where every detail matters.** The look and feel of the environment—from the arrival and departure experience to the condition of street furniture, landscaping, and brick pavers—contributes directly to whether customers choose to return. **In these districts, aesthetics, design quality, and maintenance are not secondary concerns; they are central to competitiveness.**

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

To understand the impact of the physical environment on Long Branch's commercial districts, the analysis focused on the public realm, private realm, and accessibility. The public realm includes sidewalks, street amenities, pedestrian lighting, wayfinding and signage, and roads. These spaces fall under the control and maintenance of the City and are the most eligible for UEZ resources. The private realm includes windows, outdoor displays and dining, awnings and facades, signage, and lighting. These assets are owned and maintained by private individuals or businesses. While UEZ resources can be applied here as well, there are greater obstacles to distributing public funds for private improvements. Accessibility is another area where UEZ investment is more likely, since it falls within the public realm. It reflects the utility of a district as a location where people can arrive, patronize local businesses, move through, and leave with minimal friction.

UPPER BROADWAY

Upper Broadway benefits from a strong historic fabric and comfortable pedestrian scale. Smaller storefronts in older buildings also contribute to opportunities for lower cost spaces that create opportunities for entrepreneurship. Wide sidewalks present opportunities for amenities such as outdoor dining, plantings, bike racks, and pedestrian-scale lighting. In some cases, businesses are already doing this. But in others, deferred maintenance such as dirty sidewalks, worn awnings, and weeds detracts from its appeal and can give customers pause.

In this district, ethnic businesses are embracing colorful facades, signage, and plantings, adding vibrancy at the storefront level. However, alleys and rear parking connections could be improved to enhance connectivity and visibility. Additionally, the district is highly walkable but lacks sufficient bike infrastructure, a critical issue given many lower-income residents rely on cycling. Multiple bikers were witnessed riding on the sidewalk for their safety to avoid the busy street. Overall, the district has good "bones," but requires investment in both cosmetic and capital improvements to strengthen its identity and address safety perceptions.



CITY OF LONG BRANCH URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONE
PRELIMINARY FIVE-YEAR ZONE DEVELOPMENT PLAN



LOWER BROADWAY

Lower Broadway presents a divided environment. On the south side, historic detailing and active storefronts create a charming downtown atmosphere, while murals and banners enliven alleyways leading to parking. In contrast, the north side is dominated by blank walls, large lots such as McDonald's, and inactive facades, making the corridor feel barren, unsafe, and disconnected. Sidewalks are wide and in fair condition but lack amenities such as lighting, benches, and plantings that would improve comfort and safety. Accessibility is strong for pedestrians, but like Upper Broadway, bike infrastructure is limited. Improvements to storefronts, targeted infill, and streetscape enhancements are needed to realize the district's potential as a vibrant community anchor.



WEST END

West End is the strongest physical environment among Long Branch's districts, with a lively, walkable "village" character. Wide sidewalks host outdoor dining, street trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting that create an inviting atmosphere. Businesses take advantage of signage and A-frames to capture attention, contributing to a vibrant and active streetscape. The public realm is generally in good condition, with only minor maintenance needs such as brick repair and street furniture replacement required (trash cans, news boxes, etc.).

Seasonal programming in West End Park further animates the district and fosters community gathering, particularly in the summer. Weaknesses stem primarily from vacant lots that interrupt the commercial fabric, but overall, the district requires only a "manage and maintain" strategy to sustain its success and remain best-in-class.



PIER VILLAGE

Pier Village stands apart due to its single-ownership structure, which enables consistent investment and stewardship of both the public and private realms. The wide boardwalk and curbless street designs create a comfortable and layered pedestrian environment, accommodating outdoor dining, seating, and landscaping. Storefronts are highly visible and benefit from cohesive yet diverse signage, including blade signs, banners, and A-frames, which draw pedestrian attention and reinforce a sense of place. The area's accessibility is strong, with design features that promote pedestrian comfort and multimodal use. As a result, Pier Village requires little additional capital investment and instead serves as a best-practice model for how coordinated management can elevate the physical environment citywide.



TRANSIT STATION

The Transit Station area is currently an underwhelming gateway to Long Branch. While it is a key point of arrival, the district lacks placemaking elements, wayfinding signage, and a sense of arrival that would guide visitors toward Broadway or the beach. The retail footprint is limited, and existing businesses would benefit from cosmetic storefront improvements to engage customers more effectively. Public realm amenities are minimal, and there is little in the way of signage, lighting, or branding. The area is walkable but feels disjointed, missing opportunities to connect to nearby assets. With residential growth underway, City investment in the new wellness center, and potential changes at Monmouth Medical Center, physical improvements and placemaking investments here could significantly elevate the district's role in welcoming visitors and serving residents.

In 2023, NJ Transit received \$13.2 million in federal funding to improve access and safety at Long Branch Station. The project will remove an at-grade rail crossing and construct a pedestrian tunnel, creating direct access to the station from both the east and west sides and replacing a portion of parking with a green, ADA-accessible plaza. These improvements will enhance connectivity between neighborhoods, support walking and biking, and strengthen equitable access to transit. The design incorporates green space, public art, and a community plaza that reflects local culture, while also generating good-paying union jobs and workforce development opportunities for underrepresented groups.



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT – KEY TAKEAWAYS

The district report card highlights where Long Branch's commercial areas excel and where they fall short.

DISTRICT	PRIVATE REALM	PUBLIC REALM	ACCESSIBILITY
UPPER BROADWAY	B	C	B
LOWER BROADWAY	B-	B-	B
PIER VILLAGE	A	A	A
TRANSIT STATION	C	B	A-
WEST END	A	B+	A

- **West End and Pier Village perform strongly**, primarily requiring small investments, maintenance, and management to sustain their high-quality for a discerning customer base.
- Transit Station lags in private realm and placemaking but **improving access and wayfinding** can strengthen its role as a gateway.
- The greatest need lies in Upper and Lower Broadway, where deferred maintenance, weak storefronts, and underwhelming public realm conditions **undermine the districts' potential as vibrant gateways**.

Administrative Capacity

Just as the retail districts within Long Branch have adapted to meet the needs of multiple audiences, the City of Long Branch and the UEZ program must also be flexible to best serve their community. Strengthening administrative capacity, namely the resources, organizations and “behind-the-scenes” tools and partnerships necessary for resilient UEZ investment, is critical to the success of this plan.

There is a strong need for intermediaries between the city and the business districts. These intermediaries – which might be a Business Improvement District (BID), Chamber, or Tourism organization - can act as stewards to more effectively manage and market districts. They can also help to efficiently distribute funds and programming dollars to business owners and vendors (including those who may not have Social Security numbers). Additionally, there is clear need for tri-lingual (English, Spanish, Portuguese) city services to serve the non-English speaking community within Long Branch.

In addition, there is a need for expanded summer patrol resources in West End, as well as sustainable funding mechanisms to support programming beyond the eventual sunset of the UEZ program.

ADMINISTRATIVE TAKEAWAYS

Building administrative capacity is not simply about staffing, it is about creating systems that are resilient, sustainable, and inclusive.

To strengthen administrative capacity, several priorities must be addressed.

- An intermediary organization is needed to serve as a bridge between the City and its business districts, providing stewardship and ensuring more effective management and resource distribution.
- Expanding city services to include English, Spanish, and Portuguese is critical to reach Long Branch’s diverse community.
- At the same time, new strategies are required to engage property owners who may resist improvements, as their buy-in is essential for storefront and district upgrades.

DIAGNOSTIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

Invest in the physical environment to improve perception of traffic and public safety.

PUBLIC REALM:

- Incorporate placemaking efforts through light touches – not huge investments or capital projects..
- Improve wayfinding and enhance alley connections to parking lots across all districts.
- Improve multimodal accessibility and infrastructure to connect business districts and improve the retail experience
- Implement additional passive & active surveillance strategies.

PRIVATE REALM

- Address deferred maintenance of buildings and storefronts.
- Assist businesses with non-capital improvements to storefronts such as branded A-frame signs, flowerpots, and best practices for storefront merchandising.
- Execute a manage & maintain strategy for the West End to ensure the district is best-in-class.
- Invest in physical improvements and soap & water strategies for both Upper & Lower Broadway to make physical environment's feel more welcoming
- Unify efforts and accessibility to the train station within the Transit Village

Build awareness of districts & drive sales for businesses.

- Cultivate strong district identities through enhanced marketing & branding efforts- expand upon social media initiatives.
- Partner with existing City and community organizations and leaders to improve outreach.
- Target districts with lower retail visibility and implement creative strategies to activate underutilized areas.

Focus on building sustainable, resilient, and inclusive programs + partnerships.

- Strengthen capacity for partnership between the City, UEZ, Chamber, and business community.
- Support programs that can generate second-generation funding sources for the UEZ.
- Build a convincing case for the UEZ that helps grow membership.
- Prioritize business and workforce development by leveraging Long Branch's advantageous resources and characteristics.

4

UEZ Milestones & Accomplishments



Since the designation of the Urban Enterprise Zone in 1984, the City has funded a variety of infrastructure, beautification, marketing and other programs through UEZ funding. The Five-Year Plan seeks to build on the legacy of transformative UEZ project in the City of Long Branch that have promoted businesses, propelled private redevelopment, and improved quality of life.

4.1 Summary of Recent UEZ Projects

Since the reinstatement of Zone Assistance Funds (ZAFs) in FY2022, the Long Branch Urban Enterprise Zone has received approximately \$2 million in allocations to support selected projects. As shown in Table 4.1 below, the initiatives included administrative operations, safety and security, marketing, infrastructure, and planning services.

TABLE 4.1: LONG BRANCH UEZ PROJECTS SINCE 2022

Fiscal Year	Project / Program	UEZ (ZAF)	Municipal	Other	Total Cost
2022	UEZ Administrative Budget FY22	\$41,937			
2023	UEZ Administrative Budget FY23	\$84,113			\$84,113
2023	Marketing Project 2023	\$227,500			
2023	Infrastructure – Russell Court Parking Lot Phase 1 (West)	\$407,800	—	\$21,000	\$428,800
2024	UEZ Administrative Budget FY24	\$84,000	\$51,000	\$60,404	\$195,404
2024	Infrastructure – Russell Court Parking Lot Phase 2 (East)	\$280,000	—	—	\$280,000
2024	Marketing Project 2024	\$135,000	—	\$100,000	\$235,000
2024	Security Project - Public Safety Acquisition & Upgrades	\$200,000		\$200,000	
2024	Redevelopment Handbook Redesign Project	\$47,500	\$47,500		\$95,000
2025	Administrative Budget FY25	\$90,980	\$70,189	\$45,896	\$207,065
2025	Beautification Project - Streetscape Improvements	\$168,000			
2025	Five-Year Zone Development Plan	\$120,000			

Allocations are typically made available in August and need to be spent within two years of the announcement. For each allocation, a maximum of 10% of the total allocation can be spent on administrative costs and a maximum of 25% of the total allocation can be spent on public safety costs. Every 5 years, a zone must complete a five-year plan and is restricted to 10% of a year's allocation, or \$125,000. Any projects submitted to the Urban Enterprise Zone Authority need to have the end goal of creating jobs and being located within the Long Branch UEZ.

FIGURE 4.2 | SELECTED UEZ PROJECTS

CITY OF LONG BRANCH URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONE



Concerts are supported in part through UEZ marketing funds and take place in UEZ-funded bandshells at West End Park and Third Avenue in Lower Broadway.



Recent improvements to the Russell Court West Parking Lots near Upper Broadway included milling and repaving, new curbing, striping, and landscaping. Below left, 2022; below right, 2025.



**Brookdale College on Broadway
Community Room (2nd Floor)
December 20, 2023 8:30am**

CITY WIDE BUSINESS MEETING

Learn about updates around the City of Long Branch, and share your concerns!

**CITY MERCHANTS,
BUSINESSES AND GENERAL
PUBLIC INVITED!**

For All Questions:
732-923-2042



City of Long Branch

Hosted by Brookdale Community College and the Office of Community and Economic Development

Quarterly city-wide business meetings provide opportunities for networking, face-to-face meetings with City officials, and general updates.

**Brookdale College on Broadway
Community Room (2nd Floor)
June 18th, 2025 8:30am**

CITY WIDE BUSINESS MEETING

Learn about updates around the City of Long Branch, and share your concerns!

**CITY MERCHANTS,
BUSINESSES AND
GENERAL PUBLIC
INVITED!**

For All Questions:
732-923-2043



City of Long Branch

Hosted by Brookdale Community College and the Office of Community and Economic Development

The City of Long Branch was officially designated a UEZ in 1994, and some programs that were originally established in the 1990s and 2000s are no longer active, but their results are lasting and serve to grow the Five-Year Vision set forth in the following sections.

TABLE 4.3: Previous UEZ Projects (Pre-2010)

Former Project Type	Purpose
Broadway Business Development	Attract new business for Broadway and market other UEZ Projects
UEZ Sidewalk Cleaner	Provide for a machine and laborer to clean sidewalks
West End Sidewalk Replacement	Construct new sidewalks on West End Court
Parking Lot Improvements	Supports upgrades to City-owned parking lots
Façade Improvement Program	Provide matching funds to business owners to improve building facades
Beautification Projects	Support the installation of banners, planters and signage for business owners

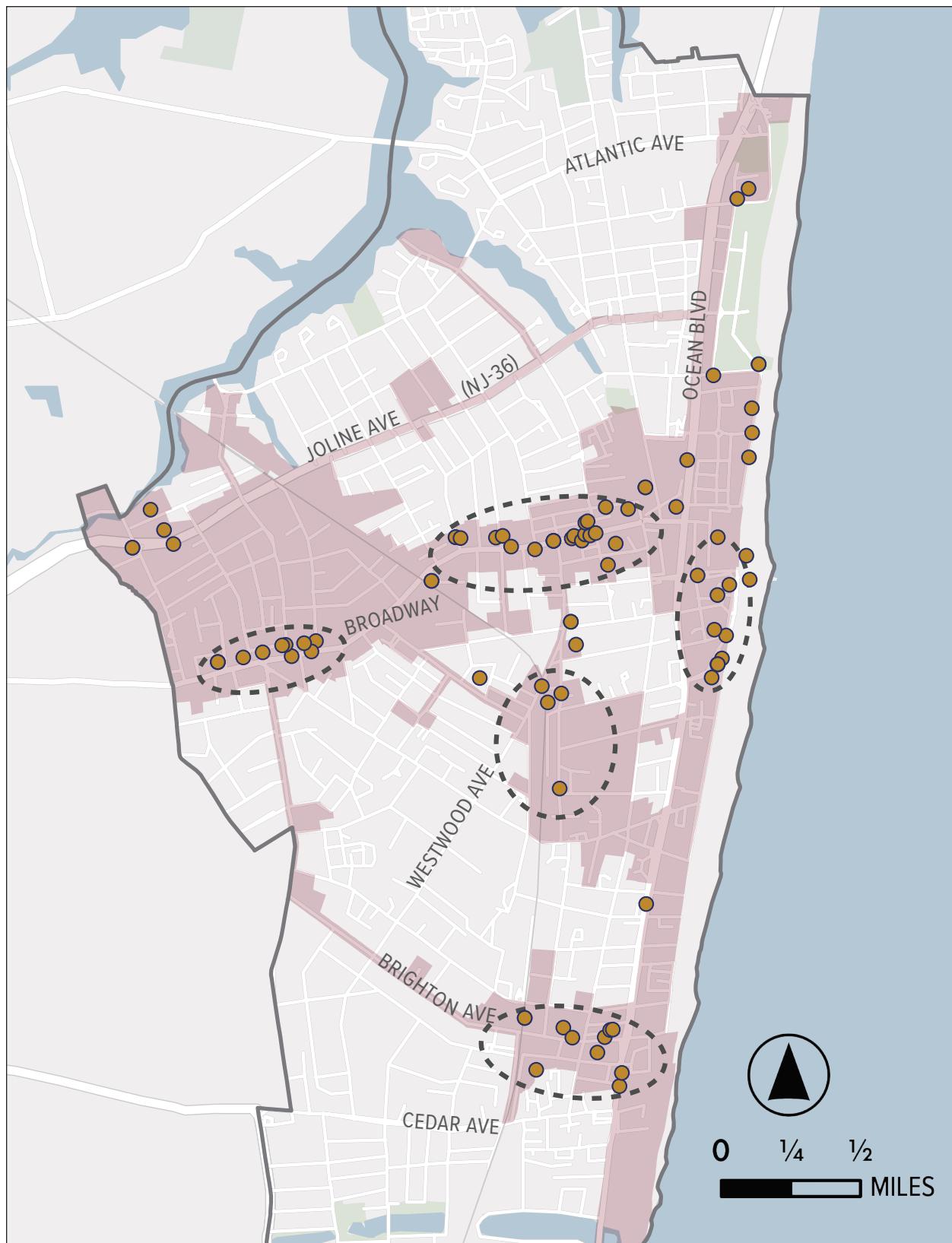
Source: City of Long Branch Master Plans, HUD CAPER reporting

4.2 Summary of Zone Benefits

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) currently oversees the UEZ Program statewide. The present administration has reinstated and revitalized the program, restoring funding to participating municipalities and enabling new investment in business development, infrastructure improvements, and local economic growth.

At present, there are 85 member businesses in the Long Branch UEZ, which are shown in Figure 4.4. One of the goals of the Five-Year UEZ Plan is to expand and increase the number of member businesses through outreach, technical assistance, and promotion of UEZ benefits. There are approximately 500 businesses located within the existing UEZ area, and the City seeks to encourage membership consisting of a diversity of industries, locations, and backgrounds.

FIGURE 4.4| UEZ BUSINESSES, 2025
CITY OF LONG BRANCH URBAN ENTERPRISE ZONE

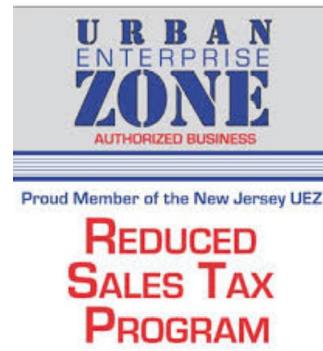


BUSINESS CERTIFICATION

Businesses located in designated zones may continue to apply for certification to access these incentives and participate in ongoing revitalization efforts. To participate and benefit from the program, a business must first become UEZ certified. Certification is available to businesses that meet the following criteria:

- Located within the designated Urban Enterprise Zone
- Registered as a business in the State of New Jersey
- Possess a valid State Business Registration Certificate
- Maintain tax compliance with the New Jersey Division of Taxation

Applications are completed online through the DCA's system. During the certification process, local UEZ staff are available to provide assistance. Once certified, businesses gain access to exclusive tax exemptions and financial incentives.



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Registered UEZ businesses in Long Branch are entitled to a variety of significant benefits designed to reduce operating costs and promote business expansion:

- Reduced Sales Tax: Currently 3.3125%, compared to the statewide rate of 6.625%
- Tax-Free Purchases: On certain capital equipment, facility expansions, and property upgrades (up to \$100,000)
- Financial assistance through agencies such as the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA)
- Subsidized Unemployment Insurance for employees earning less than \$4,500 per quarter
- Energy Sales Tax Exemption for qualified manufacturing firms with at least 250 employees
- Tax Credits: Up to \$1,500 per new permanent full-time employee, or up to 8% Corporate Business Tax credit on eligible investments
- Municipal support through local ZAF-funded programs and improvement initiatives

Reduced sales tax is a result of the **UEZ Sales Tax Act**, which allows registered UEZ businesses to charge customers half of the standard NJ sales tax rate. This is an attractive feature for a variety of businesses, not just traditional retailers and is an important driver of UEZ membership.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

As noted, Long Branch has been a UEZ municipality since 1994, which coincided with the beginning of targeted redevelopment within the City. As noted in the DCA's **2019 New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Program Assessment**, UEZ funds have been leveraged as part of the City's economic changes since then.

Specifically, the Assessment notes that Long Branch utilized approximately **\$6 million in UEZ funds** in the 1990s and 2000s for planning and development initiatives that significantly transformed the city's business landscape. **These strategic investments helped leverage over \$1.2 billion in private redevelopment projects** in conjunction with the Oceanfront-Broadway Redevelopment Plan. Notable projects include:

- Beachfront North: Condominiums and townhouse
- Pier Village Phases I–III: A major mixed-use development featuring apartments and diverse retail spaces
- Beachfront South: Residential towers overlooking the Atlantic Ocean
- Hotel Campus: Wave Resort, a hospitality-centered development.

More recently, the City has utilized UEZ funding to overhaul redevelopment plans for the Lower Broadway area to facilitate additional private improvements.



5

UEZ Five-Year Vision

Guiding Principles

1

Maintain secure, welcoming, & attractive public spaces and streetscapes to support business district success.

2

Provide convenient, safe, & accessible transportation networks to and within the City's business districts.

3

Streamline UEZ operations & ensure the long-term stability of the City's business districts.

4

Recruit and sustain UEZ businesses through targeted marketing, outreach, & event planning strategies.

5

Establish Long Branch as a model for sustainable infrastructure.

6

Promote entrepreneurship, job growth, and economic development for the City's diverse communities.

Recommendations At-a-Glance





1

Maintain secure, welcoming, & attractive public spaces and streetscapes to support business district success.

Best-in-class pedestrian environment: lighting, sidewalk repairs, outdoor dining

"Soap and water" strategies: low-cost, high-impact improvements

Safety & Security: Cameras, emergency stations

Activate parks and open space to attract additional activity.

Fund & encourage small aesthetic improvements

1A. OFFER A BEST-IN-CLASS PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

Pedestrian comfort and a visually appealing streetscape are critical to encouraging visitors to spend time within commercial districts. Streetscape strategies should be tailored to the conditions of each district: Pier Village has a private steward and West End primarily requires ongoing maintenance, while Upper and Lower Broadway corridors are primed for more substantial investment. Improvements should contribute to a continuous, cohesive pedestrian environment rather than disjointed or isolated enhancements. Recommended streetscape improvements include the following:

- Install **pedestrian-scale lighting** throughout all business districts to enhance comfort and safety, with a focus on transit stops and areas with limited visibility.
- Upgrade **street furniture** such as benches, creative seating, and refuse and recycling containers to encourage people to spend more time in the district.
- Repair and upgrade sidewalks to ensure a **continuous, ADA-accessible pedestrian network**, consistent with the 2023 Complete Streets Implementation Plan.
- Plant **shade trees** at appropriate intervals along commercial corridors to enhance aesthetics and provide protection from heat.
- Encourage **outdoor dining** where sidewalk width allows, following the example of Brighton Ave in West End, where private activity spills invitingly into the public realm.

1B. EMPLOY “SOAP & WATER” STRATEGIES

Ongoing stewardship is essential to the vibrancy and success of the City’s business districts and directly shapes visitors’ first impressions.

Regular maintenance initiatives such as street cleaning, community clean-up days, sidewalk and façade powerwashing, and the repair or repainting of deteriorated buildings, can greatly improve the overall appearance and appeal of commercial areas. These efforts foster a more welcoming and dynamic environment within the UEZ, particularly along Lower and Upper Broadway, and strengthen the district’s overall image and economic vitality.



1C. SAFETY & SECURITY

Continue Safety and Monitoring Improvements

The Long Branch Police Department has recently expanded its **network of security cameras**, which have proven effective in reducing nuisance activity and crime and improving overall public safety. For instance, new cameras installed along Lower Broadway near a liquor store and bus stop significantly reduced loitering and improved comfort for nearby businesses and pedestrians, when coupled with increased enforcement activity. The UEZ should **continue identifying areas within business districts where similar safety measures such as strategic camera placement, lighting upgrades, and increased visibility** can further deter nuisance activity and promote a secure, welcoming environment to support active and thriving commercial districts.

Implement Interactive Safety Stations

A comprehensive public safety system can include illuminated emergency call stations, which are freestanding kiosks marked by visible lighting that provide a direct communication link to emergency dispatch, located throughout the City's business districts. The system provides a sense of security through lighting and immediate access to assistance, especially in nightlife districts, transit stops and parking lots. Safety stations could also incorporate digital displays for community announcements, marketing messages, or public service information.

Evaluate the expansion of seasonal law enforcement.

Supplemental law enforcement is tied to the seasonal increase in population and tourism associated with shore towns such as Long Branch. The City should coordinate with the appropriate authority to expand existing law enforcement/patrol services to downtown business district areas such as Upper/Lower Broadway, West End, and the Long Branch Train Station. Although these areas may not receive as much foot traffic as a destination such as Pier Village, they are still proximate to the oceanfront and contain attractions which can promote tourism. When combined with upcoming redevelopment and an increasing population, these areas would be appropriate for supplemental seasonal law enforcement deployment.

BELOW: CITYPOST INTERACTIVE KIOSK IN JERSEY CITY



1D. ACTIVATE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

There are several neighborhood parks throughout the City's business district that can play an important role in attracting activity and supporting nearby businesses. To maximize their use, these spaces should be enhanced with interactive and inviting features such as public art, play and game areas, mini libraries, decorative lighting, and distinctive seating. West End Park offers a strong precedent with its walking paths, tot lot, and seating areas. Other parks, such as Third Avenue Park and Jerry Morgan Park, could be further activated through installations like community game tables, multi-age play structures, and gathering areas that encourage daily use. Wayfinding elements should also guide visitors toward these parks, particularly those not visible from main corridors. By creating engaging public spaces, the City can increase the time residents and visitors spend within business districts, strengthening both community life and local commerce. The more time that residents and visitors spend in a business district, the more likely they are to patronize its businesses.

1E. FUND & ENCOURAGE SMALL AESTHETIC IMPROVEMENTS

Because UEZ-funded building improvements typically require property owner approval, tenant businesses often face limitations in making upgrades. The City should explore alternative avenues for business owners to enhance their storefronts and operations that do not require owner consent, such as adding planters, seasonal decor, upgraded signage and branding, outdoor seating, window displays, and façade lighting, in order to improve visibility and functionality, attract customers, and contribute to a more vibrant streetscape.



2

Provide safe, accessible, and convenient transportation networks to and within the City's business districts.

Traffic calming & pedestrian safety strategies

Shuttle between key business districts

Bicycle infrastructure & safety enforcement

Station area focus

Wayfinding & directional management

2A. TRAFFIC CALMING & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Traffic congestion, speeding, and reckless driving were consistently identified as concerns during stakeholder outreach. The UEZ should coordinate with LBPD, Monmouth County and NJDOT to implement a range of traffic calming measures where pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular activity are most concentrated. Creating a safer and more comfortable pedestrian environment is conducive to increased foot traffic and greater support of local businesses.

Priority locations for interventions should align with those delineated in the 2023 Complete Streets Implementation Plan, focusing on corridors with higher crash frequencies such as Joline Avenue, Upper and Lower Broadway, Bath Avenue, Brighton Avenue (east of the rail line), and Ocean Boulevard.

Recommended interventions include:

- **Speed reducers** such as speed humps and chicanes to physically slow vehicles and enhance pedestrian safety through visual interest.
- **High-visibility crosswalks** at all intersections, including raised treatments where possible, ensuring continuous pedestrian access, low-speed movements, and driver yielding at uncontrolled crossings.
- **Mid-block crossings** with signage, raised treatments, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) where pedestrians frequently cross.

- **Curb extensions and daylighting** to shorten crossing distances, improve visibility, and calm traffic; temporary materials like bollards or planters can be used as cost-effective pilots.
- **Leading pedestrian intervals** at signalized intersections give a 3- to 7-second grace period that allow pedestrians to enter the crosswalk before turning vehicles proceed, which increases pedestrian visibility, reduces likelihood of crashes, and ensures that vehicles yield prior to completing their turning movements.
- **Assess potential signalization** and geometric realignment to improve safety, traffic flow, and pedestrian access. Priority locations include Sixth Avenue & Slocum Place, Rockwell Avenue & Fourth Avenue, Seventh Avenue & the City Hall Complex driveway, and additional sites identified in the 2023 Complete Streets Implementation Plan such as North and South Bath Avenue and Norwood Avenue/Bath Avenue/Broadway.

Many of these measures can be introduced through short-term, low-cost tactical urbanism projects that start as pilot projects and inform long-term implementation.

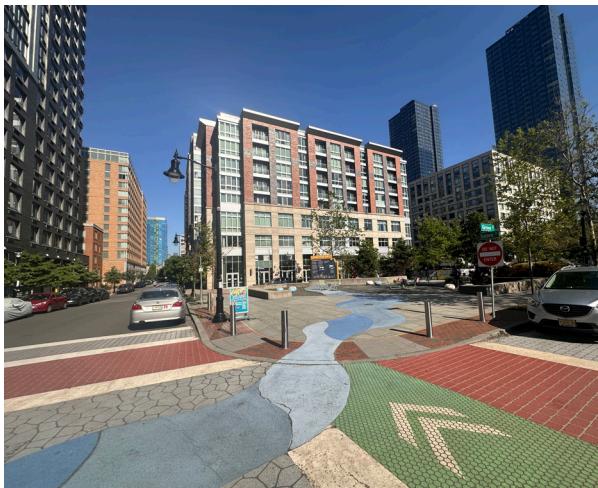
SPOTLIGHT: CURB EXTENSIONS AND DAYLIGHTING

Curb extensions reduce excess intersection width by extending the sidewalk into the parking lane, which shortens pedestrian crossing distances, improves visibility, and slows vehicular speeds.

These can initially be installed using low-cost materials, like colorful pavement markings, bollards, planters, or cones, as part of a tactical urbanism approach that enhances both safety and aesthetics.

Permanent curb extensions can be designed with mountable curbs to maintain emergency vehicle access while discouraging regular vehicular encroachment.

Curb extensions should be implemented in conjunction with “daylighting” measures at intersections, which prohibit parking near corners to preserve clear sight lines for drivers and pedestrians. Together, these improvements can significantly improve safety and comfort, particularly at T-intersections and other areas with irregular geometry and limited visibility.



2B. SHUTTLE PROGRAM PILOT

The UEZ encompasses a range of business environments but often lacks convenient or intuitive car-free connections between. A dedicated shuttle or microtransit program would link these key districts, improving access for residents, visitors, and workers while supporting local commerce and tourism.

For example, FeelGood Shuttles operates free-to-use, electric, sponsor-funded microtransit in nearby communities like Asbury Park, Belmar, Bradley Beach, Avon-by-the-Sea, and Ocean Grove. These are advertising-supported, short-distance shuttles that enhance mobility, sustainability, and community branding throughout the City.

2C. BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE & SAFETY ENFORCEMENT

The City should work to implement the *Complete Streets Policy and 2023 Implementation Plan* to create a cohesive bicycle network throughout the UEZ. As identified in the Implementation Plan, most major corridors are appropriate for shared lane “sharrow” markings, while dedicated bike lanes along wider rights-of-way such as along Ocean Boulevard should feature clear striping and separation from vehicular traffic where feasible.

All bike infrastructure should include high-visibility signage and should be coupled with enhanced enforcement for both motorists and bicyclists to ensure safe and lawful road sharing. Short- and long-term bicycle parking can be installed throughout business districts, parks, and civic sites, using angled or alternative rack configurations in areas with limited sidewalk width to maximize accessibility.

2D. TRANSIT & STATION AREA IMPROVEMENTS

Leverage Transit Village Designation to improve station areas.

The City of Long Branch was designated as an NJ Transit Village in 2016, meaning that the City has been deemed to have demonstrated substantial commitment to the revitalization of areas surrounding transit stations through compact, mixed-use development. This designation provides the City with priority access to funding and technical assistance from State agencies, including NJDOT. Recent and ongoing NJ Transit investments, such as the Long Branch Station pedestrian tunnel, improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and new community spaces, as well as upgrades to parking and accessibility at the Elberon Station, present opportunities for the UEZ to coordinate and expand these efforts.

The City should continue to leverage Transit Village resources and UEZ funding to pursue station-area improvements such as enhanced platforms, upgraded waiting areas, ADA and pedestrian infrastructure, expanded bicycle amenities, and improved lighting. Placemaking initiatives, including green space and public art installations –such as converting existing fencing into community art or promoting local businesses and events – can further transform both stations into safe, vibrant transit hubs that connect residents and visitors to surrounding business districts and strengthen the overall vitality of UEZ businesses.

Upgrade Existing Bus Stops

The majority of bus stops within the LB UEZ area lack adequate amenities such as seating, shelters, and lighting, discouraging public transit use and raising safety concerns. All stops should be upgraded with shelters, seating, and pedestrian-scale lighting to enhance comfort and safety. Existing shelters should be maintained or improved, and new ones added where needed.

Shelters can also serve as multi-purpose streetscape features, integrating art, advertising, wayfinding, solar panels, or bike racks. The City should seek NJ Transit funding for these improvements and allocate UEZ funding for maintenance or explore maintenance partnerships, including advertising-based agreements.

Create a mobility hub and micromobility stations.

The City should consider establishing a mobility hub at the Long Branch Train Station, as recommended by the Monmouth County PATHS Plan, to strengthen connections between the station and business districts. This can include facilities for buses, rideshares, bike racks, and shared e-bike or scooter stations.

Micromobility stations can also be located in commercial areas and at parks and other civic destinations to encourage multimodal travel between districts. Where space is constrained with narrow sidewalks or rights-of-way, stations can be located in parking areas or near bus stops. The program would likely be implemented first as a pilot in partnership with a private company such as Veo or Lime, preferably as a docking system to assist with distribution and organization.

2E. WAYFINDING & DIRECTIONAL MANAGEMENT

Create a wayfinding program within and between business districts.

A core strength of the LBUEZ is its diversity in retail and number of core business districts, but not all districts are intuitively connected. Wayfinding can inform residents and visitors of other nearby destinations, potentially increasing foot traffic and commercial activity to benefit businesses throughout the City. Wayfinding signs should be installed at key locations in each district including at civic anchors, parks, transit stations, and other neighborhood gateways. Additionally, wayfinding signage should also provide approximate walking/biking distances to LBUEZ destinations, encouraging interaction between all districts.

Employ parking management strategies.

Public parking remains underutilized due to lack of signage to direct patrons toward parking areas. Best practices for parking wayfinding include:

- Signage should clearly distinguish between short-term on-street parking (30 minutes or less) and long-term off-street parking for more efficient parking management.
- Signage should be frequently located in all commercial districts to communicate to residents and visitors regarding where and when on-street parking/off-street parking facilities are operated (such as times of day and pricing).
- Signage should be provided within lots to clearly indicate whether public parking is permitted, using clear and visible markers to avoid confusion or misinformation.



ABOVE AND BELOW: CITY-SPECIFIC MULTI-PURPOSE WAYFINDING EXAMPLES.

Images by Corbin Design



Cedar Rapids City Wayfinding Signs

corbindesign 01

3

Streamline UEZ operations and ensure the long-term stability of the City's business districts.

Unified outreach between UEZ, Chamber, City Departments

Second generation funding through revolving loans

Examine BID/SID Feasibility

Fund "UEZ Liaison" as new paid position.

Multilingual communication

3A. UNIFIED OUTREACH BETWEEN UEZ, CHAMBER, & CITY DEPARTMENTS

The City, the Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED), and the Greater Long Branch Chamber of Commerce each provide a diverse array of programming and resources for their community, these efforts should be coordinated under a unified strategy to maximize impact.

Adopt a Collaborative Strategy to Promote Long Branch Businesses

While Long Branch offers a wide range of programs and resources, these efforts could be more effectively leveraged through improved coordination among City and business entities.

Currently, only a small percentage of eligible businesses participate in the UEZ; unified strategy can increase awareness of UEZ benefits and encourage participation. Joint planning between these entities can ensure that events, marketing, and business assistance programs complement one another. For example, businesses should be mutually incentivized to join both the UEZ and the Chamber of Commerce to receive the monetary benefits of the UEZ along with the marketing and networking advantages of the Chamber.

Unified messaging and outreach, including co-branded materials, co-sponsorships, and coordinated social media, would support increased UEZ visibility to boost membership and foster greater participation across districts. Coordinated efforts can also boost attendance and visibility for citywide business events.

Embed UEZ Outreach in Administrative Processes.

UEZ outreach and promotion should be embedded in routine administrative processes, such as development reviews, business licensing, and permitting. Applicants should be informed about the benefits of UEZ participation and encouraged to join during these interactions. Promotion of the UEZ and its benefits should be incorporated into as many administrative touchpoints as is feasible, where it can be communicated to applicants how the UEZ can improve their business operations and ultimately their bottom line. These administrative forms and documents should be multilingual to allow for diverse business enrollment.

3B. SECURE SECOND-GENERATION FUNDING THROUGH REVOLVING LOANS

To sustain investment within the LBUEZ, the City should establish a revolving microloan fund using **“first-generation” and “second-generation” UEZ funds**. “First generation” funds are defined as those provided to a municipality as part of the initial allocation by the State, whereas “second generation” funds are those retained by the municipality as a result of the repayment of loans issued using first generation funds.

Second-generation funding is created through the City offering low-interest, short-term loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs for capital improvements, façade upgrades, or start-up costs. In turn, loan repayments are reinvested back into the fund to create a self-sustaining cycle of financing. The revolving funding source would also allow for proceeds from the sale of UEZ-funded property or equipment to be reused for future projects.

Implementation could include:

- Tiered eligibility (e.g., up to \$15,000 for start-ups, \$50,000 for expansions).
- Lower interest rates, with repayments to be made at frequent intervals over fixed shorter-term periods to enable the successful repayment of loans by individuals/businesses, thereby increasing the fluidity of funds available
- Financial literacy and business planning workshops to ensure responsible borrowing.
- Ongoing mentorship through the UEZ or business advisors.
- Public promotion of success stories to inspire participation.

In Long Branch, the microloan fund could prioritize small businesses that often face barriers to traditional financing. Partnerships with regional entities such as the Monmouth County Economic Development Office, NJEDA, or community-based lenders like Renaissance Economic Development Corporation or UCEDC could strengthen underwriting, technical support, and outreach.

In essence, revolving microloan fund would amplify the impact of initial UEZ monies to create a continuous reinvestment engine for the UEZ by stimulating entrepreneurship, strengthening small businesses, and empowering local job creation without dependence on new state allocations.

3C. PROVIDE CONSISTENT MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATION

Long Branch’s cultural and linguistic diversity is one of its greatest strengths. To ensure equitable access to UEZ resources, all documentation, outreach materials, and digital content should be consistently available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. This includes:

- Applications, forms, and checklists.
- Website content and promotional materials.
- Outreach events, workshops, and communications.

A multilingual approach not only broadens participation but also strengthens trust and engagement with underrepresented business owners, particularly in Upper and Lower Broadway.

3D. UNDERTAKE A BID/SID FEASIBILITY STUDY

To further strengthen the long-term stability of key business districts, the City should explore the formation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), also known as Special Improvement Districts (SIDs). These entities are enabled by municipal ordinance to leverage financial assessments within a specific district, which then enables participating businesses to collectively fund enhancements such as beautification projects, marketing campaigns, maintenance, and event programming. These locally managed entities act as stewards for each district, ensuring continued investment and identity-building beyond UEZ funding allocations and timelines.

The UEZ should support SID feasibility studies for West End and Upper/Lower Broadway to ensure that a SID is appropriate for each business district. UEZ funding could support the initial planning and outreach process to engage local stakeholders, assess organizational capacity, and gauge support for district-based management and funding models that align with each area's character and needs. If feasible, BIDs/SIDs would provide a self-sufficient manner of funding improvements to the public and private realm and ultimately strengthen the economic and employment climate.

3E. CONSIDER FUNDING A DEDICATED UEZ LIAISON AS NEW PAID POSITION.

Creating a dedicated UEZ Liaison position would streamline business enrollment, improve communication, and simplify the administrative process for participants. The Liaison could assist with expediting applications, provide technical and financial guidance, and coordinate multilingual communication.

Key responsibilities would include:

- Assisting applicants with UEZ enrollment, certification, and reporting.
- Providing multilingual support (English, Spanish, Portuguese).
- Conducting regular check-ins with participating businesses.
- Offering technical or financial guidance or connecting owners with professionals (e.g., CPAs or digital assistance).
- Maintaining an accessible online resource hub.

This position would help streamline operations, build trust, and encourage more businesses to join and remain active in the UEZ.

4

Recruit & sustain UEZ businesses through targeted marketing, outreach, and event planning strategies.

Distinct UEZ /District identities

UEZ website as a centralized, multilingual information hub

Target community events towards select districts

Open communication lines with UEZ member businesses

Workshops and networking sessions for members and curious businesses

4A. CULTIVATE AND PROMOTE DISTINCT UEZ & DISTRICT IDENTITIES

Long Branch is unique in that it features multiple different retail environments with attractions and customer bases of their own. While each district is well-known to its customer base, there is not always crossover between districts, especially among seasonal versus year-round markets. Branding and marketing efforts should be targeted to individual corridors and districts to strengthen their existing identities to, while marketing each area to a broader base of potential customers. Two district examples:

- **West End** is a walkable, village-like neighborhood with a creative heritage, offering boutique retail, restaurants, and services in a relaxed environment, with the capacity to host events and festivals. Its customer base, while already broad amongst locals, students, and some seasonal visitors, can be expanded through branding and improved physical connections throughout the commercial environment.
- **Upper Broadway** is part of the City's traditional downtown and is host to a culturally diverse neighborhood retail base that serves as a regional destination for Central and South American immigrants. Notably, there is a vibrant food scene that has strong Hispanic (e.g., Mexican and Salvadoran), Brazilian, and Portuguese influences. This identity can be enhanced through events like restaurant weeks, cultural festivals, music performances, and multilingual promotion.

In terms of physical identification, gateways such as archways, monuments, or public art at key entry points can help signal arrival and foster a sense of place. Banners, lighting, cultural decorations, and coordinated storefront signage can all contribute to a cohesive and welcoming look. UEZ marketing should focus on branding and signage that is consistent in quality across districts to strengthen their cross marketing potential.

4B. MAINTAIN OPEN COMMUNICATION LINES WITH UEZ MEMBER BUSINESSES.

Stakeholder outreach highlighted a sense of lack of institutional/government trust among immigrant and multilingual communities, which has limited their involvement in City events and programs. There are added challenges for undocumented residents due to the requirement to share official documents and forms with the City, which further discourages their participation. Other business owners are hesitant to seek UEZ certification, which requires sharing additional financial information with the State.

To bridge this gap and increase UEZ participation, the following strategies should be part of UEZ marketing and business development goals:

- Implement targeted communication strategies to **build relationships and trust** with underrepresented communities and increase UEZ participation.
- Collaborate with **local organizations and community leaders** to communicate UEZ benefits to residents and business owners who may be hesitant to engage directly with government programs.
- Engage respected community stakeholders from each major business district to foster a comfortable, collaborative environment that encourages broader participation.
- Include testimonials from existing UEZ businesses in promotional materials to highlight success stories and demonstrate the tangible advantages of program participation.

This approach can help bridge gaps in communication, foster trust, and ensure all business owners have access to UEZ resources and programs.

4C. REVAMP LONG BRANCH UEZ WEBSITE INTO A CENTRALIZED, MULTILINGUAL INFORMATION HUB.

The current City UEZ webpage has been updated recently to provide broader information about the State and local programs, but lacks comprehensive, accessible guidance. The UEZ website could be reconfigured as a portal for UEZ applications, contact information, and promotion. For example. Step-by-step instructions and forms should be presented in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, along with links to local business resources, an event calendar, etc. UEZ marketing allocation can be used to contract with a profession to create a visually appealing, user-friendly design,

This upgraded platform should also highlight upcoming workshops, community events, and programs that support small businesses and economic development.

4D. TARGET COMMUNITY EVENTS IN BUSINESS DISTRICTS IN NEED OF GREATER VISIBILITY.

Long Branch already hosts a robust calendar of community events, including movie nights, concerts, and festivals. However, these are often concentrated near the waterfront and West End, leaving other districts with fewer opportunities for exposure.

To better balance activity:

- Use open streets events and temporary pedestrian plazas to activate streets such as Upper and Lower Broadway and West End.
- Repurpose underutilized spaces, such as the former Santander Bank parking lot, for pop-up markets, cultural festivals, and outdoor community uses.
- Collaborate with the Long Branch Arts and Cultural Center to host events celebrating local Hispanic/Latino, Portuguese, Brazilian, and Italian cultures, and showcase local artists and entrepreneurs.
- Incorporate event programming into new developments around the Train Station, such as the future Health, Wellness, and Technology Center, to establish a strong community identity for the area

4E. HOLD WORKSHOPS AND NETWORKING SESSIONS FOR UEZ MEMBERS AND CURIOUS BUSINESSES

The City should build on its strong foundation of community engagement by organizing workshops, business networking sessions, and training programs for existing and prospective UEZ members. These events could cover topics such as:

- Business registration and UEZ certification.
- Marketing, branding, and social media strategies.
- Access to funding or grant opportunities.
- Peer-to-peer networking among business owners across districts.

Additionally, the City and partner organizations (such as the Chamber of Commerce and Arts & Cultural Center) should coordinate social media campaigns to cross-promote events and spotlight individual businesses. Joint posts and multilingual outreach can boost awareness, encourage collaboration, and help the UEZ reach a wider audience.

5

Establish Long Branch as a model for sustainable infrastructure.

Incentivize green infrastructure

Expand tree canopy coverage

Prioritize solar renewable energy facilities.

5A. INCENTIVIZE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

In the context of an urban, oceanfront environment, green infrastructure should be encouraged and incentivized through policy and programmatic means. Features to highlight include shade trees, rain gardens, planter boxes, bioswales and other vegetated systems that absorb stormwater runoff. Contexts for installation include traffic medians, pedestrian walkway buffers and within curb extensions at intersections. Public and private parking areas with excess pavement can be retrofitted by incorporating permeable pavement in addition to plantings.

In addition to the enhanced stormwater management, green infrastructure produces tangible benefits related to improved air and water quality, wildlife habitat, and protection from extreme heat. There are also socioeconomic benefits to the City and its business districts through an enhanced sense of vibrancy and enjoyment of physical spaces. The City should encourage property and business owners to incorporate green infrastructure improvements into their sites, especially as part of UEZ-funded initiatives.

5B. EXPAND TREE CANOPY COVERAGE

Urban areas are more likely to retain heat due to higher concentrations of pavement and concrete and low tree/shading coverage, creating an urban heat island effect. This is heightened in neighborhoods with limited tree cover and open space. Despite the presence of the beachfront nearby, Long Branch has also lost 10% of its tree canopy since 2010 per the 2023 Forest Management Plan. According to the Long Branch Barriers to Mobility County Plan, the area between NJ-36 (Joline Avenue) and Broadway is one of the most vulnerable in the County with regard to the impacts of the urban heat island effect. To mitigate these effects, tree planting and canopy extension/ restoration should be prioritized, particularly on streets and corridors with high impervious coverage. Tree cover can play a vital role in addressing water, air quality, and public health concerns while improving comfort and neighborhood appearance.

5C. PRIORITIZE SOLAR RENEWABLE ENERGY FACILITIES

The City should pursue solar renewable energy installation at municipal buildings and public parking lots, and encourage business owners to implement solar facilities as well, particularly as part of UEZ projects. Solar arrays can reduce electrical costs, support EV charging stations, and provide shaded parking. Rooftop solar arrays on flat roofs can be raised structures, allowing the area beneath to double as shaded roof gardens or multi-function venues. Solar carports or parking canopies over existing parking lots help keep cars dry in inclement weather, provide security from sun and hail damage, and keep cars and the tarmac cooler in the summer. Central civic locations such as City Hall, the Library, other municipal buildings, and all public parking areas should be considered for solar installations. UEZ funds may also be allocated toward business owners seeking to make solar related improvements to their buildings.

6

Promote entrepreneurship, job growth, and economic development for the City's diverse communities.

Enhanced technical assistance services

Job training partnerships

Business and kitchen incubators

Short-term internship program

Multilingual, multifocal business development sessions

6A. OFFER ENHANCED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

UEZ funds should be allocated to assist businesses in adopting best practices as well as incorporating new technologies into their business structures to best serve their client bases. This can include the development of company websites, facilitating e-commerce, assisting with social media strategy, and incorporating point-of-sales systems.

Broader technical assistance services can help local entrepreneurs strengthen and expand their operations through one-on-one consulting or mentorship, connection with professional services, grant and loan navigation, and training on marketing, accounting, or compliance requirements. The UEZ program should collaborate with local institutions such as Brookdale Community College, the NJ Small Business Development Center, the State Business Action Center, and other government and nonprofit partners.

6B. EXPLORE JOB TRAINING IN COLLABORATION WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Cooperative programs with Brookdale Community College and other local institutions should be pursued to share resources and expand access to practical, career-oriented training that can benefit both Brookdale students and community members. UEZ funds can be used to sponsor could sponsor residents who are seeking to enroll in available courses and relevant job training programs, with the potential for additional classroom space provided at City facilities such as the Free Public Library.

As there are time and financial barriers to pursuing four-year degrees, this training should prioritize shorter-term vocational programs that will allow quicker entry into the workforce in fields such as construction, electric, plumbing, and culinary arts. These efforts to develop short-term, attainable skills should be coordinated with new incubator spaces to encourage entrepreneurship.

6C. ENCOURAGE BUSINESS AND KITCHEN INCUBATOR SPACES

Establish business incubator, maker space, and kitchen incubator facilities to support local entrepreneurs and community members. The purpose of these facilities is to provide affordable access to resources that may be otherwise constrained by finances or space, such as shared kitchens, technology, and creative tools, while also offering start-up assistance and opportunities for collaboration. Incubators can host programs, workshops, and pop-up exhibitions that can foster entrepreneurship, encourage skill-building, and strengthen grassroots economic development. Potential locations include municipal buildings, the new Santander building, or public library branches

6D. SPONSOR A SHORT-TERM INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Operating and overhead costs can overwhelm locally owned business, preventing them hiring the necessary staff to support their operations. UEZ funds can be allocated to aid these businesses with paid short-term interns, while also providing real-world experience for students and young adults.

6E. HOLD MULTILINGUAL, MULTIFOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

The LBUEZ has previously hosted business fairs which provide information about starting a business and how to remain operational and successful. While instructive and helpful, these seminars have been held only in English, precluding many existing and aspiring business owners in the LBUEZ from participating. The City should collaborate with local businesses and organizations to hold periodic informational multilingual business development sessions which can inform business owners and entrepreneurs of key strategies to get a business off the ground, along with how to approach and resolve ensuing challenges during operation. This need not be limited to a lecture format, and could also be broken down to provide focused support and advice which addresses the specific situations of attendees, such as through business development plans with phased goals and alternatives.

5-Year Vision: *Planning Context*

This 5-Year Zone Development Plan is consistent with local planning goals and objectives of the City of Long Branch.

MASTER PLANS

The 1995 Oceanfront Master Plan recognized the initial challenges which faced the City and oceanfront area specifically, and the central theme of the plan and its recommendations was to increase the overall value of the waterfront area and transform it into a safe, year-round destination for residents and visitors through well-balanced mixed use development, to be achieved through appropriate built density. Since then, the City adopted a comprehensive Master Plan in 2009 which was last reexamined in 2020.

2009 MASTER PLAN

This comprehensive document set forth a number of goals that remain valid and are advanced by this UEZ Plan, as follows:

- Provide a healthy balance of land uses that preserves the residential character of the neighborhoods while providing convenient commercial and retail opportunities to acquire goods, services and employment.
- Provide for attractive and easily accessible commercial uses and districts that will support quality business enterprises and contribute to the City's economic base.

- Provide for environment that is conducive to private sector job retention and growth at all skill levels and for all citizens.
- Maximize circulation and mobility options for local and regional trips and link residential areas, commercial districts and community facilities through an attractive, free flowing circulation system.
- Encourage and support policies and actions to reduce the introduction of harmful greenhouse gases by deducing sprawl and encouraging green buildings, promoting alternate means of transportation including walking, biking and public transit and preserving open space and wetlands.

The 2009 Master Plan discussed the City's UEZ program and completed and ongoing efforts. Many of the projected projects were related to the redevelopment of the City's oceanfront areas and Broadway. While much of the oceanfront area has redeveloped significantly, other UEZ projects discussed in the 2009 Master Plan remain relevant today, such as streetscape improvements, facade upgrades, safety/security enhancements, community events, and business development.

2020 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION

The Reexamination also delineated several policy objectives which were deemed of the utmost importance to the future vision of the City of Long Branch. The UEZ Plan is intended to further several of these objectives:

Land Use

- Improve the appearance of the gateway areas into the City, including: Broadway, Joline Avenue, Ocean Avenue, Branchport Avenue and the Elberon and Long Branch Train Stations.
- Create public art spaces and place-making throughout the city to promote the arts, culture, diversity and history of Long Branch.

Transportation & Circulation

- Create north-south and east-west bike paths with bike lanes and interpretive signage established throughout the City.
- Promote the installation of bicycle-friendly infrastructure on private and public lands.
- Address pedestrian infrastructure issues on City sidewalks and roadways.
- Address the roadway, parking and other transportation infrastructure needed to handle summer peak periods with a goal of minimizing traffic and other nuisances related to increased traffic and roadway/parking facility usage.
- Ensure and promote accessibility in all venues.
- Identify areas where vehicular speeding occurs and implement traffic calming

mechanisms in key areas.

Community Facilities and Utilities

- Promote the enhancement of the existing recreational and community facilities.
- Provide additional landscaping on City properties, recreational facilities, rights-of-way.
- Explore grant opportunities as well as public-private agreements to provide additional recreational and community facilities for the City.

Economic Development

- Promote healthy and vibrant commercial districts for employment, eating and shopping opportunities.
- Continue to build upon the Sustainable Jersey Bronze certification received in 2019 by advancing additional environmental initiatives of benefit to the City.

REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Much of the redevelopment seen today in Long Branch has been spurred by comprehensive planning efforts which largely began with the transition into the 21st century, providing an overall vision to reestablish the City as a year-round destination by leveraging its oceanfront areas and growing its commercial districts.

The City has since amended and created new redevelopment plans which have continued to target and revitalize underutilized areas and properties, most recently including the ongoing overhaul of its redevelopment regulations for Lower Broadway and the Broadway Gateway. The creation of high-quality business districts which contribute to the City's economic base has been a consistent theme in the City's redevelopment efforts.

OCEANFRONT-BROADWAY REDEVELOPMENT AREA

Following the adoption of the 1995 Oceanfront Master Plan, the City adopted the Oceanfront-Broadway Redevelopment Plan in 1996, which acknowledged its presence within the LBUEZ and the variety of financial incentives that exist as a result.

This Redevelopment Plan originally established 5 different sectors, designated as Beachfront South, Beachfront North, Hotel Campus, Pier/Village Center, and the Broadway Gateway. The Lower Broadway Corridor was subsequently added to the Redevelopment Plan in 2002 via the Broadway Redevelopment Plan. Each Redevelopment Area included an accompanying Design Guideline

Handbook which enumerated specific goals and objectives for the respective area, several of which remain effective today.

In 2012, the City designated a majority of the properties in the Lower Broadway Corridor as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation, where powers of eminent domain and long-term tax abatement may not be exercised. The City then incorporated amendments to the Oceanfront-Broadway Redevelopment Plan in 2016, which ultimately lead to the 2025 update to the Redevelopment Plan.

2025 Update

The 2025 update provides a regulatory overhaul of the Lower Broadway Corridor & Broadway Gateway Sectors to establish a modern, cohesive vision for Long Branch's historic main street.

This 5-Year UEZ Plan will advances several goals of the **2025 Update to the Oceanfront-Broadway Redevelopment Plan**, as follows:

- Reestablish the identity of Long Branch as a multifaceted community for residence, work and leisure, in a framework of both historic legacy and citizen consensus.
- Provide a healthy balance of land uses that preserves the residential character of the neighborhoods while providing convenient commercial and retail opportunities to acquire goods, services and employment.
- Strengthen retail trade and City revenues by increasing year-round population by creating housing types that will attract a diversified market, primarily of small households.

- Provide for attractive and easily accessible commercial uses and districts that will support quality business enterprises and contribute to the City's economic base and attract retail and service enterprises to provide more commercial choices for residents and visitors.
- Improve public facilities in commercial areas, at the beachfront and along various City streets, and facilitate pedestrian movement among residences, commercial areas and the beachfront.
- Attract more retail and service enterprises which will provide more commercial choices for residents and visitors.
- Provide for environment that is conducive to private sector job retention and growth at all skill levels to increase employment opportunities for residents, stabilize taxes and increase maintenance and amenities as part of a better quality of life.

SITE-SPECIFIC REDEVELOPMENT

Several site-specific Redevelopment Plans have also been adopted within the City in the past five year. The 2023 **Broadway and Second Avenue Redevelopment Plan** and the 2024 **Broadway and Sixth Avenue Redevelopment Plan** both envision mixed-use development which can revitalize long-standing vacant properties in the City.

The **410 Broadway and 425 Morris Avenue Redevelopment Area** (adopted in 2022) is located along Upper Broadway and also lies within the LBUEZ. The 410 Broadway/425

Morris Avenue Redevelopment Plan required the adaptive reuse of historic structures, while also providing multi-family housing and public space.

The 2023 **Bath Avenue and Third Avenue Redevelopment Plan** is also located within the LBUEZ, and contemplates the redevelopment of a Monmouth Medical Center building as an assisted living facility, along with surrounding mixed-use and complementary commercial development, as well as the maintenance of existing residential dwellings for Monmouth Medical Center employees.

This 5-Year Zone development plan acknowledges these relevant redevelopment planning efforts and seeks to plan for long-term capital improvements and investments which support anticipated redevelopment.

OTHER LOCAL PLANNING EFFORTS

2023 CITY OF LONG BRANCH COMPLETE STREETS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Following the adoption of a Complete Streets Policy and Policy Guide, this analysis included a bicycle compatibility assessment, sidewalk inventory and assessment, bicycle and pedestrian crash analysis, and intersection assessments. This resulted in a host of recommendations for sidewalk improvements and bicycle facilities along identified priority corridors, geometric adjustments for specific intersections, and various traffic calming strategies to be implemented throughout the City. The Implementation Plan also provides various strategies to facilitate the implemen-

tation of these recommendations, including coordination, planning, education, and funding sources. This UEZ plan aims to actualize these recommendations and is consistent with the purposes of the Implementation Plan.

COUNTY PLANNING EFFORTS

Monmouth County's current Master Plan was adopted in 2016. The **Monmouth County Master Plan** designates Long Branch as a "Priority Growth Reinvestment Area/Site Overlay (PG-RAS)." These are defined as "(a)reas or sites located within the Priority Growth Investment Area where more intense or significant development, redevelopment, revitalization, and hazard mitigation investments are highly encouraged." This UEZ Plan is consistent with the goals and principles of the Monmouth County Master Plan.

STATE PLANNING EFFORTS

The **New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP)** was originally adopted in 1992. A revised version of the plan was adopted by the State Planning Commission in 2001. While required by the State Planning Act to be revised and re-adopted every three years, the SDRP has only been readopted once during the 32 years since its original adoption. A new State Strategic Plan (SSP) was proposed in 2011 as the revision to the 2001 SDRP, but it has not been advanced in recent years. The State Office of Planning Advocacy started the process of preparing a new State Plan in 2023 and the State Planning Commission has been engaging with stakeholders.

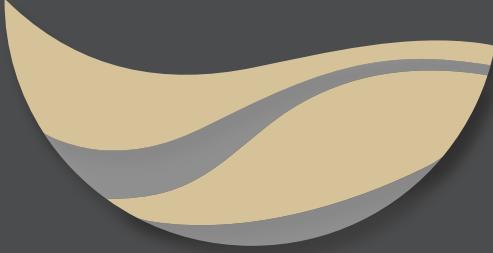
As part of the update process, the State Planning Commission approved the Preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan on December 4, 2024, and is now undertaking the Cross-Acceptance process (i.e. review of the plan at the county level).

The Long Branch Urban Enterprise Zone is located within the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1). For the Metropolitan Planning Area, the State Plan has four major aims: (1) to provide for much of the state's future redevelopment; (2) to revitalize cities and towns and promote growth in compact forms; (3) to stabilize older suburbs and redesign areas of sprawl; and (4) to protect the character of existing stable communities.

This UEZ Plan is consistent with the goals of the SDRP for the Metropolitan Planning Area, and furthers the revitalization of the UEZ and City of Long Branch through a variety of strategies. These include the enhancement of existing commercial cores; development of local businesses; promotion of multimodal transportation which curbs sprawl and environmental impacts; advancement of sustainability initiatives; and efficient use of scarce land resources.

6

Implementation Framework



The following section provides the proposed implementation scheme for the vision and guiding principles for the UEZ as set forth in Chapter 5. This section frames each recommendation in terms of its respective priority, timeline, potential partners, funding mechanisms, and which UEZ Qualified Assistance Funding Category (QAF) it falls within.

1 Maintain secure, welcoming, and attractive public spaces and streetscapes to support business district success.

	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Partners	Potential Funding	QAF Category
A	Best-in-class pedestrian environment: lighting, sidewalk repairs, outdoor dining	High	Long-Term	Business owners, Developers, NJDOT, Monmouth County	NJTPA, SS4A, NJ DOT, Main Street NJ, CDBG, Safe Routes to School	6, 7/8
B	Incorporate “soap and water” strategies to improve the overall appearance of the public and private realms.	High	Short-Term	Targeted nonprofits, local businesses	UEZ, Main Street NJ, NJ Clean Communities	1, 6, 7/8
C	Safety & Security	High	Short-Term & Long-Term	City Police Department	UEZ, City, NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness	4
D	Activate parks and open space to attract additional activity.	Medium	Long-Term	City staff, events, local artists & musicians	UEZ, NJCC, Main Street NJ, Project for Public Spaces	7/8, 10
E	Fund & encourage small aesthetic improvements	Medium	Short-Term & Long-Term	Business owners	UEZ, NJ EDA Main Street	3, 8

2 Provide safe, accessible, and convenient transportation networks to and within the City's business districts.

Recommendation		Priority	Timeline	Partners	Potential Funding	QAF Category
A	Traffic Calming & Pedestrian Safety strategies	High	Short-Term & Long-Term	NJ DOT, NJTPA	UEZ, Safe Streets & Roads (SS4A) for All FHWA Program, Safe Routes to School, NJ DOT, NJTPA, CDBG, Federal DOT Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) program	7/8
B	Station area improvements & micromobility	Medium	Long-Term	NJ Transit, Lyft/Uber, Micromobility Provider	UEZ, NJ Transit, NJDOT Community Capital (NJCC), UEZ, NJTPA, SS4A, CDBG, NJ DEP E-Mobility	6, 7/8
C	Bicycle infrastructure & safety enforcement	Medium	Long-Term	NJ DOT, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA)	UEZ, Safe Streets & Roads (SS4A) for All FHWA Program, Safe Routes to School, NJ DOT, NJTPA, CDBG, Federal DOT Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) program	7/8
D	Shuttle program between key business districts.	Medium	Long-Term	Sponsored Shuttle Provider	UEZ, NJ DOT, NJTPA	5, 7
E	Wayfinding & directional management	High	Short-Term & Long-Term	Branding consultants, LBPD, NJDOT	UEZ, NJ Main Street, NJTPA, NJDOT	7/8

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3 Streamline UEZ operations and ensure the long-term stability of the City's business districts.

	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Partners	Potential Funding	QAF Category
A	Unified outreach between UEZ, Chamber, City Departments	High	Short-Term & Long-Term	Chamber of Commerce	UEZ, City	5
B	Fund "UEZ Liaison" as new paid position.	Medium	Long-Term	N/A	UEZ	2, 5
C	Multilingual communication	High	Short-Term & Long-Term	Neighborhood organizations, stakeholders	UEZ, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	2, 5
D	Revolving Microloans Program	High	Long-Term	Community Development Banking Organizations	UEZ	3
E	BID/SID Feasibility	Medium	Long-Term	Neighborhood groups, Chamber of Commerce, local business owners	UEZ, SID assessments, Main Street NJ	5

4 Recruit & sustain UEZ businesses through targeted marketing, outreach, and event planning strategies.

	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Partners	Potential Funding	QAF Category
A	Distinct UEZ / District identities	Medium	Long-Term	Neighborhood organizations, Branding consultants	UEZ, Main Street NJ, Visit NJ, Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP)	2, 5
B	Open communication lines with UEZ member businesses	High	Short-Term & Long-Term	Neighborhood organizations, other community stakeholders	UEZ, City	5, 10
C	Revamp Long Branch UEZ website into a centralized, multilingual information hub.	Medium	Short-Term	Local businesses, Chamber of Commerce	UEZ, City	2, 5
D	Target community events towards select districts	Low	Long-Term	Local businesses, Neighborhood organizations	UEZ, SS4A, Levitt Foundation, NJTPA, NJ DOT	7/8, 10
E	Workshops and networking sessions for UEZ members and curious businesses	Medium	Long-Term	Local businesses, NJ Small Business Development Center	UEZ, CDBG, NJ EDA Accelerate	5, 9, 10

5 Establish the Long Branch UEZ as a model for sustainability.

Recommendation		Priority	Timeline	Partners	Potential Funding	QAF Category
A	Incorporate green infrastructure techniques.	High	Short-Term & Long-Term	Developers, Long Branch Green Team	UEZ, NJ EDA C-PACE	1, 3, 7/8
B	Expand tree canopy coverage	Medium	Short-Term & Long-Term	Long Branch Green Team, Nonprofit organizations	UEZ, NJ DEP Natural Climate Solutions	7/8
C	Prioritize solar renewable energy facilities.	Low	Long-Term	Developers	UEZ, CDBG, NJ EDA C-PACE	1, 3, 7/8

6 Promote entrepreneurship, job growth, and economic development for the City's diverse communities.

Recommendation		Priority	Timeline	Partners	Potential Funding	QAF Category
A	Enhanced technical assistance services	High	Short-Term & Long-Term	Local businesses, NJ Small Business Development Center	UEZ, CDBG, NJ EDA Main Street	3, 9
B	Job training in collaboration with Partner organizations	Medium	Long-Term	Brookdale Community College, Monmouth County Vocational School District, Work Opportunity Center (The Arc of Monmouth)	UEZ, NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development, NJ EDA Apprenticeship Training Centers Construction Grant Program	9
C	Business and kitchen incubators	Medium	Long-Term	Local businesses, Brookdale, Monmouth University	UEZ, NJ EDA Apprenticeship Training Centers Construction Grant Program	5, 9
D	Short-term internship program	Low	Long-Term	Local businesses, Brookdale, Monmouth University, Monmouth County Vocational School District	UEZ, CDBG, NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development	3, 9
E	Multilingual, multifocus business development sessions	Medium	Short-Term & Long-Term	Local businesses, community stakeholders, NJ Small Business Development Center	UEZ, CDBG, NJ EDA Accelerate	5, 9, 10