



Studio Summary

This studio partnered with the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership, South River Green Team, and the Middlesex County Office of Planning to create detailed documentation of demographics, health, housing security, and water infrastructure in South River in preparation for the NJDEP Resilience Grant. Special attention was paid to South River's Census Tract 69, where life expectancy is the lowest in Middlesex County. Research was designed to support South River's participation in the NJDEP grant, future resilience in the face of extreme weather events, and future grant seeking.

With the goal of equitable health outcomes in resilience planning, our team researched and addressed linkages between public health, water issues, and housing security in South River. The team identified three categories of issues South River must address moving forward: regional planning, design, and community development. Importantly, the issues are multidimensional and require partnerships across sectors. Below is a short list of the issues discussed in the final report.

REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES

- Flooding and stormwater management, especially with regard to future development
- Engagement of multiple cultural groups in municipal planning decisions
- The need to consider equity for all South River residents when making planning decisions
- "Bluelining", in which loans are refused to buyers investing in flood-susceptible areas

DESIGN ISSUES

- Future uses for South River's bought-out Blue Acres lots
- Waterfront revitalization, considering regional landscapes beyond South River's borders
- Significant impervious cover along the South River waterfront

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- Engaging and effectively communicating with the diverse populations in South River
- The need for cultural and financial equity in policy decisions

The studio team included several proposals, interventions, and next steps to address these issues. Recommendations fall into three overarching themes: the advancement of health equity and equitable health outcomes for all South River residents; raising awareness of flood risk, gentrification, and trends in lending; and community engagement. In the Interventions and Student Proposals chapter of the final report, draft proposals are shared by the students of the studio team. These recommendations are informed by the data collected during our semester of study, and the team encourages future actions to be similarly informed by this work.

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