



HUNTERDON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Hunterdon County, New Jersey

December 2014



Disclaimer

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	9
Introduction	11
Vision & Mission Statements.	12
Key Findings.	15
SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats)	21
Goals and Objectives.	23
Vital Projects	24
Recommendations & Conclusions	27
 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	 33
CEDS and USEDA Background	35
Eligibility and Reasoning	36
CEDS Committees and Process	37
National and Regional Context and Themes	38
 Community and Private Sector Participation	 39
Public Participation	41
Minority and Under-Represented Groups.	46
Stakeholder Meetings	47
Executive and Strategy Committee Meetings.	51

Table of Contents (contd.)

Current Conditions	55
Geography	58
Development Patterns	59
Population	60
Economic Development	61
Industry	62
Workforce	63
Transportation	64
Infrastructure	65
Real Estate	66
Environment	70
Background Tours and Studies	73
Background Tours and Studies Overview	75
Background Study Key Points	77
Past, Present, Future Economic Development Investments in the Region	95
Action Plan	97
Capitalizing on Unique Assets	100
SWOT Analysis	101
Goals and Objectives	106
Strategic Investment Projects	107
Definitions, Acronyms, Abbreviations and Distinctions	109
Performance Measures	123
Coordination and Consistency	137
Regional Connections, Implementation, and Next Steps	143
Bibliography	149

Table of Contents (contd.)

Appendices	153
A: CEDS Resolution and Committee Member Roster	157
B: CEDS Process	159
C: Results from RVCC and Chamber of Commerce Surveys.	163
D: Technical Reports	190
Case Studies	
Socio-Economic Trends Analysis	
Labor and Industry Trends Analysis	
Workforce/Labor Market Trends Analysis	
Industry Cluster Analysis	
Real Estate Trends Analysis	
Infrastructure Analysis	
List of Figures	
Figure 1: Hunterdon County Map	58
Figure 2: Annualized Percent Change, Total Population	60
Figure 3: Top Industries by Employment, Hunterdon County	62
Figure 4: Total Employment & Unemployment Rate, Hunterdon County	63
Figure 5: Hunterdon County Major Roadways & Active Rail Lines.	64
Figure 6: Hunterdon County Water Service Areas.	65
Figure 7: Median Home Sale Price Per SF	66
Figure 8: Median Asking Residential Rent Price Per SF.	66
Figure 9: Office Vacancy Rate trends & Forecasts	67
Figure 10: Central New Jersey Metro Area (“Metro”)	67
Figure 11: Hunterdon County Retail Business Mix	68
Figure 12: Industrial Market Statistics, 2Q 2013.	69
Figure 13: Highlands Region of Hunterdon County.	70



Executive Summary



Introduction

In 2013, the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders saw both the need and the opportunity to join Together North Jersey to forge a partnership and create a comprehensive economic development plan. Hunterdon County was at an economic crossroads and the decision was made to begin an extensive research and outreach project to plan the County's economic future. This ultimately led to the creation of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which was developed to guide Hunterdon County in regaining and maintaining economic prosperity. This document will serve as a blueprint for creating economic growth and job creation.

Once approved, this CEDS will become a roadmap for the County's future. It creates concrete goals and objectives and actionable projects, and ensures coordination and consistency with regional priorities and other established land use plans. It allows residents of Hunterdon County to understand current conditions in the context of national and regional trends in order to best prepare for the future. Acceptance of this document by the United States Economic Development Administration (USEDA) will also make Hunterdon County eligible for federal funding opportunities for infrastructure projects and economic development initiatives.

Background research, community outreach and participation and quantitative analysis laid the foundation of this plan. Its year-long production has been collaborative, involving input from local residents, stakeholders, local officials, and experts in the fields of planning and economic development. Input was gathered through a public website, extensive interviews and focus groups, multiple surveys, and committee meetings.

The CEDS provides a strong foundation for infrastructure, technology, transportation, housing, planning, programs and projects for future prosperity. It also contains steps for getting there and the partners to help in the process. While there are County plans for open space and farmland preservation, parks and transportation, this is an economic development plan and that shall remain the focus of this report. The architects of this CEDS vow not to fall victim to a conceit that infers the County knows the future and can command it from this current vantage point. The County will remain nimble to the changes it faces, keeping the ultimate goal ever in sight: a thriving economy, an uncommon lifestyle, affordable housing and promising jobs for all who choose to live, work and play in Hunterdon County.



Photos:
http://www.livinginmedia.com/article/day_tripper_frenchtown.html

Vision for Hunterdon County

Hunterdon County, New Jersey is a wonderful place to live, work and visit. Its scenic rural character, working farms, nationally recognized healthcare, recreational offerings and commitment to small business success, along with its arts, cultural and historic attractions combine with quaint town centers to create a vital economy and uncommon quality of life.

CEDS Mission Statement

The Hunterdon County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is the intentional, collaborative and sustained action of policy makers and stakeholders to promote an exceptional standard of living and economic health that continually affects desired changes in the regional economy, attracts and retains business, benefits residents, supports infrastructure and planned development, and maintains affordability.

The vision statement is a representation of how residents would like to continue to experience Hunterdon County in the next ten to twenty years. The County views lifestyle as an attractor for residents and the commitment to lifestyle as a pipeline and economic driver for tourism, recreation, jobs and public sector investment.

The mission statement establishes the specific purpose of the CEDS in reaching that vision and guiding the overall direction of the goals, objectives, and projects developed herein.

CEDS Timeline

A public presentation was held on October 6, 2014. The Board of Chosen Freeholders will authorize submission of the CEDS to USEDA in December 2014. Implementation is expected to begin in early 2015. (See Timeline **Appendix B**)



View of the Delaware River

Executive Summary

The Hunterdon County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), presented herein, is the product of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders' decision to commission a comprehensive analysis of the region's current economic conditions. It is a strategic roadmap for the future, offering practical guidance on how the County can proceed with confidence further into the twenty-first century. The Hunterdon County CEDS was created, essentially, to answer a series of substantive questions:

- What are, and will continue to be, the County's economic strengths and assets?
- How can the County's identified strengths and assets be further enhanced to stimulate business and job growth?
- What are the County's current economic liabilities?
- How can the County's identified liabilities be mitigated, in both the near- and long-term?
- What best practices can Hunterdon County emulate?
- What existing actors and entities within the County should be leveraged to help implement recommended strategies?
- What are the intended goals and outcomes of participation in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy? Why now?

These questions may seem simple; however, answering them and communicating what those answers mean for the County's future required a deliberate and inclusive process. This commitment was fulfilled by a year's worth of quantitative and qualitative analysis including site visits, review of existing planning documents, interviews, focus groups, public input meetings, including under-served representatives, surveys, and a website to promote public comment.



March 27, 2014 Public Meeting at the Flemington Historic Courthouse

Executive Summary (contd.)

Key stakeholders, with a variety of economic, educational, healthcare, tourism and agricultural interests in Hunterdon County, participated in Executive and Strategy Committees to guide the CEDS process. The Committees authored both the vision and mission statements thereby demonstrating their commitment to bringing this plan to fruition.

Key findings were compiled into a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, the cornerstone of this CEDS:

Strengths indicate economic elements on which the County should capitalize,

Weaknesses establish current economic gaps/deficiencies,

Opportunities represent potential actions which take advantage of identified strengths while mitigating weaknesses.

Threats distinguish those economic related issues which could adversely impact the County's economic competitiveness if not addressed.

The SWOT table and brief overview is included and further developed within the Action Plan.

The SWOT analysis also serves as a reminder of Hunterdon County's existing unique assets – its verdant open spaces, exemplary education system, nationally recognized health care system and superlative quality of life, all within reasonable commuting distance to Philadelphia and New York—placing those intrinsic advantages at the forefront of the County's plan for prosperity.



October 6, 2014, Public Presentation

Key Findings

The following pages show snapshots of key findings.

***Key research findings** show main points from the background research and quantitative analysis.*

***Key outreach findings** show main points that were uncovered or underscored through interviews, meetings, surveys, and general public input.*

Real Estate Trends

As with many areas of the state and nation, the demographic profile of Hunterdon County is fast changing. There are a growing number of non-family households and older age cohorts in the County, which has important implications for housing demand (e.g., declining demand for traditional single-family, detached housing units). For example, empty nesters (typically householders whose children have left home) are a growing market segment that has demonstrated a preference for smaller and more affordable units as they retire and approach fixed incomes. Empty nester residents will continue to drive demand for multi-family residential (for rent and sale) units, notwithstanding relatively flat population and household growth. These age groups tend to prefer smaller housing units with walkable access to amenities, jobs, and entertainment. Should Hunterdon County's municipalities not take near-term action to address the current and increasing drop off in demand for their stock of large, single-family, detached housing units (comprising the vast majority of housing stock within the County), the long-term economic and fiscal consequences to a number of Hunterdon County's communities could be dire.

The office market in Hunterdon County is contending with a relatively high vacancy rate among traditional professional office buildings. County and municipal officials will need to recognize that long-term, vacant office buildings will not only cause a drag on property tax revenues (as the value of these buildings plummets, absent a rental stream), but they are obvious signs of declining economic fortunes within traditional office industries and give pause to private investment which might otherwise occur nearby.

Consequently, new local zoning ordinances should be considered for the repurposing of office buildings which are considered physically or economically obsolescent by office industry standards (e.g., in modern finishes or building equipment, or distant from transportation and amenities). Interestingly, there is a growing trend for adaptively re-using obsolescent office buildings into multi-family rental apartments, having ground floor commercial services (restaurant, dry cleaner, day care, etc.), the type of land use which happens to be seeing increasing demand by young professionals and empty nesters alike. Thus, vacant or under-utilized properties which are negatively impacting the municipal ratable base may now present new opportunities for economic revitalization.

Key Findings

Socioeconomic Trends

A rising share of upper-income households in Hunterdon County likely contributes to high discretionary spending, which greatly exceeds the national average. These household residents include professionals working in such industries as, healthcare, scientific and technical services, many of whom choose to live and work within the County (see Labor & Industry Trend Analysis found in Appendix D).

Although Hunterdon's households tend not to spend a great deal of their discretionary income locally (save for expenditures on personal services, sundries and certain dining establishments), this trend typically bodes well for growth in retail and service-related sectors, and is significant for specialty retailers and higher-end dining establishments (particularly those specializing in the farm-to-table movement), a number of which are already established and doing well in Hunterdon County's river communities and town centers.

Local entertainment and festivals, sponsored by local theater companies, galleries and historic organizations need to be organized and coordinated to maximize marketing and economic benefits to the County. As these types of retail businesses are strong generators of job opportunities, it behooves the County's municipalities to ensure that their local zoning and regulatory environment is not unduly burdensome on this business sector to avoid disinvestment.

Labor Trends

The County's relatively high cost of living increasingly challenges low- and moderate-income workers to live within a reasonable commute time to their jobs. Hunterdon County's relatively high housing costs and near non-existent public transit system will, ultimately, place upward pressure on local wage rates in order for businesses to recruit and retain quality employees – further challenging area businesses to stay competitive. The high cost of living may also force employers to choose between raising wage rates across the board to recruit and retain needed workers, relocating the business to a lower cost location outside of Hunterdon County (likely reducing a local community's real property tax revenue over the long-term) or, in a worst case scenario, closing the business.

Failing to address the high cost of living in Hunterdon County—through a combination of land-use zoning to allow lower cost, higher density housing where it makes most sense and the introduction of affordably priced transit options—will, most likely, undermine most other economic development efforts within the County, over the long-term.

Perhaps as no other issue, Hunterdon County's cost of living will be a challenge to both employer and employee.

Key Findings

Industry Trends

Healthcare is projected to be one of the largest growing sectors in Hunterdon County. The Hunterdon Healthcare System is the County's largest employer, employing approximately 2,400 individuals. The System hires about 400 new employees per year, which is anticipated to grow under the projected plan for the organization.

Many physicians are employees of the hospital as are their in-office staffs and others focused on population health. These are high paying professional jobs. Healthcare services resulting from direct care typically require trained, educated staff, many of whom can begin their extensive training through Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) and, perhaps, Polytech. Most new jobs will require advanced college training.

The System conservatively projects concurrent growth in physician sub-specialties, state-of-the-art procedures, sub-acute providers, home care, lab, imaging and supportive modalities.

The projected goal for the System is geared to reduce costs and maintain sustainability and growth into the future thereby serving as a major economic driver for Hunterdon County.

Infrastructure Challenges

Infrastructure (including transportation, broadband, water, sewer, and electric) is a key determinant of Hunterdon County's capacity for future economic viability, growth, and private investment. Recognizing that Hunterdon County is, principally, a rural county characterized by low density development, it faces economic difficulties in providing the infrastructure needed to support business development. In today's technology age, broadband coverage and internet speed are critical to new and expanding businesses and are especially important to attract niche and small businesses. This CEDS should be fully leveraged in order to secure whatever state and federal infrastructure funding the County may be eligible to receive. Infrastructure gaps will need to be addressed if future economic viability is to be supported in Hunterdon County.



Key Findings

Zoning Challenges

The retail brick-and-mortar landscape will continue to evolve with national trends, such as the closing of big box stores nationally and regionally, due to online commerce. Consequently, Hunterdon County municipalities must begin reviewing current retail zoning in anticipation of private investment desiring higher and better uses for declining retail properties. There are now, and will be well into the future, a number of retail strip and community shopping center properties which will be economically viable only as mixed-use development properties (e.g., housing and office, in addition to retail space). However, it is likely that many local commercial zoning ordinances currently prohibit such mixed-use development opportunities, as these ordinances were developed in a time when land use separation was the convention. In order to avoid the large scale blighting influences that empty or half-empty retail centers can become for communities, it behooves local planning officials and governing bodies to rethink current land use policies with an eye towards fostering mixes of land-uses which are financially viable and respond to market needs and conditions.

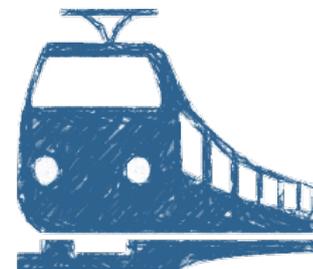
There are a number of small warehouses and flex space buildings (buildings that typically combine office space with light manufacturing and/or warehouse) in Hunterdon County. There are expansion opportunities to meet the growing markets in western New Jersey and the Delaware Water Gap region of Pennsylvania.

Hunterdon County municipalities will want to ensure that a sufficient amount of existing light industrial space remains in place and viable (e.g., that roadway infrastructure and adequate utility systems are maintained and/or upgraded). Fewer businesses will be interested in such contested space, thus placing downward pressure on sale prices and rents. **Furthermore, local zoning should not permit encroachment of residential uses (irrespective of the zoning densities considered) near industrial uses, as this typically results in long-term land use battles and a resultant loss in a commercial or industrial ratable value.**

Finally, while Hunterdon County is not likely to see a significant uptick in manufacturing activity over the next five- to ten years, there are a number of viable small (fewer than 50 employees) advanced manufacturing operations which will likely grow within the County. Ensuring that these high value job creators remain in Hunterdon County will require local zoning which accommodates this industry's needs, including a permitting process which is clearly stated, fair and expedient in processing. Absent such a local zoning process, local municipalities will find they are at a disadvantage to other communities aggressively courting these high value businesses.

Municipalities that fall within the Highlands Master Plan Preservation Areas face an even greater economic challenge. Local zoning must conform to the Highlands regulations which further constrains development and/or re-development options and opportunities within this region of the County.





Workforce and Training

- Small labor pool from which to hire
- Lack of certain high quality jobs and jobs that attract younger people

Transportation, Utilities, Infrastructure

- Transportation access and mobility are major weakness; lack of public transportation
- Infrastructure controls in Highlands Preservation Areas

Lack of transportation options is viewed as one of Hunterdon County's main weaknesses. This also adds to a high cost of living.

Other

- Loss of large employers
- Reusing/repurposing vacant and underutilized space
- High cost of living
- Need to make connections, work together

Key Outreach Findings

Tourism, Recreation, Agriculture

- Agriculture industry has been in decline
- There are many tourism and recreational resources, but county lacks marketing

Housing

- Lack of housing diversity (smaller, multi-family units)
- Lack of affordable housing
- Potential for high vacancy rates for single-family housing



Policy

- Overly stringent development approval process
- High state taxes
- Home rule makes it difficult to get things done

Loss of large employers in the County (such as Merck) is a major threat to the County. In addition to loss of jobs and ratables, large office parks will be left vacant.

The single-family housing model may go into decline as baby boomers age out of their homes. Smaller and more affordable units are needed for the elderly, young professionals, and those who prefer less space.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis on the following page provides the basis for the CEDS goals, objectives, and projects.

Strengths Hunterdon County is a wealthy county with a highly educated and well trained workforce that serves to attract business investment. The superior public school system, community college and career academy reinforce Hunterdon County's image as a county with a high quality of life. The high quality of life is further supported by national recognition as the healthiest County in New Jersey and one of the healthiest in the nation for children.

Hunterdon County's active farming communities provide access to fresh, local produce. It is home to an abundance of recreational amenities for the enjoyment of both visitors and residents. Hunterdon County's unique cultural and historical assets, combined with its rural beauty and architecture, have long been a magnet for visitors and residents alike.

Opportunities The Opportunities outlined in this report provide a strong foundation upon which to build. Expansion of current educational opportunities through the community college and career academy can help ensure that sufficient training and workforce preparation will be available.

Marketing and promoting the County's unique rural environment will meet the growing desire for outdoor recreational activities. The County's agricultural benefits will help capitalize on the national trend for locally grown produce.

Revitalization of downtown communities combined with ample repurposing and redevelopment will meet the growing demand for compact, walkable communities.

Weaknesses There is currently no one organization that promotes and supports planned economic development for the County as a whole or for municipalities who request it.

Hunterdon County remains car-dependent. Minimal inter- and intra-county mass transit connectivity options have major impacts on both existing businesses and enterprises looking for new locations.

There is a large discrepancy between the growing demand for smaller, more affordable housing and the current supply.

A rural county characterized by low density development, Hunterdon County faces challenges in providing adequate infrastructure to support necessary business development.

Threats The national trend of major corporate partners relocating from rural environments to urban settings, thereby locating where the labor force chooses to live, calls for re-examination of current land use policies. The County population is aging and many of the jobs that are desirable to younger, millennial workers are in relatively short supply. Both of these demographic groups will find challenges in locating adequate housing options.

The high cost of living combined with the lack of amenities makes the County an unattainable place for many lower wage earners to work and live, in addition to first time homeowners and younger families.

The Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) obligations were designed to address the lack of workforce/affordable housing, but within the rural areas they should focus in town centers and areas with adequate infrastructure. The assigned COAH obligations conflict with the goals stated in the County's Master Plan supporting rural preservation and housing densities only where infrastructure exists.

Fifteen municipalities are bound by the Highlands Act, which restricts how land can be developed within these areas and can limit economic development opportunities.

S

High median income
 High education levels
 Highly trained labor force
 Tourism draws (river communities, wineries, historic villages, specialty agriculture, exotic livestock)
 Established cultural and artistic landscape
 High quality of life including K-12 education, Community College, Career Academy, and nationally recognized healthcare
 Advantageous location with respect to market size/potential
 Viable, multi-generational agricultural economy
 Rural quality
 Established equine industry
 Recreational resources including state, county, and municipal parks, trails and waterways

Bedroom community; residents tend not to spend locally
 Lack of established dedicated economic development support
 Some town centers have declined and are struggling
 Lack of manufacturing/blue collar labor force
 Minimal transportation connectivity
 Limited water and sewer infrastructure
 Cumbersome regulatory processes, fees, and taxes
 Lack of branding and marketing
 Lack of smaller/affordable/rental housing
 Lack of social amenities for adults and young adults
 Lack of bilingual assistance

W

Hunterdon County

Fill vacant industrial, retail, and office space and seek opportunities for repurposing/redevelopment as appropriate
 Higher education expansion through collaboration with RVCC, Polytech, and state educational institutions
 Revitalization potential for historic downtowns
 Chance to capitalize on land use for higher density opportunities and to create and nurture walkable communities
 Promotion of recreational and tourism opportunities
 Opportunity for national or regional recreational events
 There is room for economic collaboration among river towns
 Market opportunities for farm stands, farm-to-table dining, organic farming, exotic animals
 More potential to leverage regional cooperation
 Develop next generation of leaders for programs, organizations, and government

Negative attitudes towards development and redevelopment
 Large businesses leaving the county
 Aging population leads to shifting housing demand, support service needs, and labor market
 Lack of jobs that attract younger people
 High cost of living will exclude certain demographic groups
 Lack of new families and children
 Strong marketing and promotion of surrounding recreational activities
 Deep-rooted, restrictive, and cumbersome zoning board beliefs and practices
 Required COAH obligations would strain the rural environment and its limited infrastructure
 Highlands regulations present additional challenges to economic development

T

O

A number of goals and objectives, listed here, were developed using the SWOT analysis as a guide.

Goals

Foster planned economic development

Establish the County's role in facilitating public/private partnerships to enhance economic development

Channel growth and development in the County in an efficient, context-sensitive manner

Provide adequate investment for infrastructure

Invest in and implement adequate transportation options for residents and businesses

Maintain a high quality of life

Objectives

Create a supportive environment to foster entrepreneurship, encourage business development, and maintain a competent, diverse and flexible workforce
 Ensure that sufficient technical training and workforce preparation is available and coordinate with the needs of businesses

Create Public/Private reciprocal agreements, commitments and involvement to ensure outcome expectations

Develop and support the growing specialized agriculture industry

Develop and support the tourism industry

Develop the collective impact of Hospitality/Retail/Entertainment and Recreation Industries

Promote "Healthiest County" status

Provide investment strategies, structure, operations planning and resources to promote job growth and business opportunities

Repurpose existing underutilized commercial and industrial properties
 Create revitalized and vibrant communities by focusing development in town centers and for transit-oriented development (TOD)

Support housing variety and density in centers that seek redevelopment/revitalization

Encourage broadband service providers to make broadband service available to all town centers and areas containing clusters of commercial establishments

Ensure the reliability and redundancy of County utilities and energy infrastructure

Provide efficient use of existing roadway/highway corridors and town center transportation resources for the movement of goods, services, and people
 Increase inter- and intra-County public transit service; increase awareness of available services
 Implement bicycle and pedestrian improvements on roads that can accommodate them and where they are needed

Support and develop Hunterdon County's arts, cultural, recreational, and historic assets
 Promote a culture of life-long learning among County residents, workers, and employers
 Increase the number of local and regional visitors to County parks and open space amenities

Vital Projects

Vital Projects were selected from the Strategic Investment Project List found in the Action Plan and identified based on highest impact and ease of implementation

GOAL: Foster planned economic development

- Create an organizational structure for the CEDS initiative whose function is to lead economic development and implement the CEDS
- Work with local municipalities to identify funding opportunities, to encourage legislative activities and to remove legislative barrier to regionally significant projects
- Advocate for streamlining of state and local regulatory requirements; reduce red tape associated with commercial development or redevelopment; support efforts that will reduce tax burden
- Establish an annual County Convention for education of the County, municipalities and residents, implementing a structured approach to sharing of information, toolbox ordinances, etc.
- Direct Greater Raritan Workforce Investment Board (GRWIB) to expand and promote its workforce development resources
- Support updating of New Jersey Right to Farm legislation to readdress allowable activities responding to today's economic environment
- Promote expansion of wineries and complementary farms and businesses
- Support the HC Chamber of Commerce as the State's Destination Marketing Organization to coordinate and market Hunterdon County through public/private partnerships and further support the tourism industry

GOAL: Establish the County's role in facilitating public/private partnerships to enhance economic development

- While no vital projects were developed under this goal, facilitating these partnerships will allow the County to creatively develop and finance economic development initiatives at every level.

GOAL: Channel growth and development in the County in an efficient, context-sensitive manner

- Create and maintain a countywide property GIS database containing identified underutilized commercial and industrial properties. Measure vacancy and ratable value trends (improvement value) for said properties by consulting with local brokers and municipal real property tax assessors. Include information on square footage, frontage, zoning, utilities
- Undertake analysis of options to maximize the redevelopment, reuse, or repurposing of the Merck property
- Promote flexible zoning and other incentives to facilitate conversion/redevelopment of vacant buildings for new or mixed uses
- Complete an analysis of potential transit-oriented development (TOD) sites in Hunterdon County
- Support shared services through professional resources, assist in reviewing municipal zoning codes where density can be supported
- Inform, encourage, and where appropriate, incentivize local planning and zoning boards regarding the benefits and importance of housing density and its relationship to economic revitalization

Vital Projects (continued)

GOAL: Provide adequate investment for infrastructure

Support high speed internet access in identified technology corridors as well as town centers

Work with energy providers to provide redundancy in concentrated areas of housing and business (electric, gas, phone, renewable)

GOAL: Invest in and implement adequate transportation options for residents and businesses

Implement complete interchanges on Interstate 78 (*i.e.*, Exit 20-Cokesbury Road)

Address congestion on Route 31 (and effects of lane changes of traffic) - complete dual lane Route 31

Implement recommendations of Route 202 Corridor Assessment & Multi-Modal Plan-2009; including accommodations for transit, pedestrians, bicycles

Work with and coordinate with NJ Transit and private carriers to implement public bus routes and to service inter- and intra-county needs

Adopt and implement a countywide Complete Streets policy; encourage and facilitate the adoption of municipal Complete Streets policies as appropriate

GOAL: Maintain a high quality of life

Hire a Cultural & Heritage Executive Director and Arts Coordinator to promote, facilitate, and coordinate venues, artists, and historical events to promote Hunterdon County

Brand Hunterdon County as an historic, arts, tourism, recreation, and farming county that can identify, build, and capitalize on facilities for events promoting Hunterdon County's history and unique assets, and draw visitors to the County

Support Hunterdon County's core towns by considering designation as official arts/historic districts and commissioning a study and promotion of access and parking in these centers of arts and historic resources

Create a 4-year career academy based on current trends and business needs

Create, draft and adopt a strategic master plan for County parks and open space

Vital Projects

The Vital Projects listed on the previous pages were selected from the Strategic Investment Project list contained in the Action Plan. The Vital Projects have a direct connection to the issues identified within the SWOT table, taking advantage of Strengths and Opportunities to address Weaknesses and Threats.. Examples of this connectivity are illustrated below:

Weaknesses/Threats	Vital Project
Lack of established dedicated economic development support	Create an organizational structure for CEDS implementation
Challenging regulatory environment; local zoning boards; COAH; Highlands	Advocate for streamlining state and local regulations; support shared municipal services; support updating New Jersey’s Right to Farm legislation
Lack of smaller/affordable/rental housing; aging population that leads to shifts in you housing demand; lack of new families and children; high cost of living; repurpose existing vacant properties	Develop county-wide GIS data base of commercial properties; promote flexible zoning and other incentives to facilitate conversion/redevelopment of vacant buildings; undertake analysis of options to maximize the redevelopment, reuse, or repurposing
Large businesses leaving county; lack of jobs that attract young workers	Create a 4-year career academy based on current trends and business needs; direct the Greater Raritan WIB to expand and promote its workforce development resources
Limited water, sewer, and other infrastructure	Support high speed internet access in technology corridors; work with energy providers to provide redundancy
Minimal public transit, leading to difficulty attracting younger residents or employees, especially for lower wage jobs	Conduct analysis of TOD opportunities; implement recommendations of the Route 202 Corridor & Assessment Plan (2009); work with and coordinate with NJ Transit and private carriers to implement public bus routes
Lack of branding and marketing; strong marketing of recreational activities of surrounding counties	Support Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce as the State’s Destination Marketing organization; support expansion of wineries and complementary businesses; brand Hunterdon County; develop Hunterdon County Strategic Parks and Open Space Plan

Recommendations

The recommendations in this report are conclusions drawn logically from the study's findings, answering the question, "What now?" These recommendations (shown **bolded**) are intended as a guideline for the County's next steps toward achieving future economic vitality.

Included in the recommendations are brief descriptions of the probable consequences of *not* applying the recommended courses of action. Some of the key recommendations in this report are as follows:

Repurposing vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial properties to provide additional housing (affordability) and jobs (ratables).

Challenge: Empty corporate campuses are not likely to be refilled by large employers, as the trend has shifted away from this corporate model.

Consequence: Leaving these properties as they stand undermines the creation of well-paying jobs and socio-economic vitality.

Vacant, underutilized commercial properties cannot meet the demands of the next generation of professional workers and early stage families for both jobs and housing.

Challenge: Current conditions do not address the need for an increased variety of housing options (cheaper, smaller, denser) or increase professional job opportunities.

Consequence: Failure to adjust to this new market condition will result in an inability to attract younger professional workers, early stage families, and those currently unable to relocate to Hunterdon County, given the high cost of living and lack of professional job opportunities.

Hunterdon County's municipalities will be well positioned to achieve greater economic competitiveness if they act on this recommendation sooner rather than later.

Recommendations

Implement transportation projects leading to the provision of public transit, addressing affordability challenges and automobile-dependency.

Challenge: Young professionals are looking for walkable communities and transportation amenities that reduce automobile dependency.

Consequence: These groups are less likely to relocate to the area, reducing the market for the County's single-family residential housing stock, leading to lower property values and attendant real property tax revenues.

Improved public transportation access will meet the need of lower wage workers as well as help attract and retain younger residents and families, improving the County's economic diversity and vitality.

Create a friendlier business environment through the provision of quality and adequate capacity infrastructure (water/sewer/broadband/electric redundancy) and workforce training, ensuring a healthier Hunterdon County labor supply.

Challenge: Limited infrastructure results in reduced opportunities and economic development.

Consequence: Developers will be less likely to build and new businesses will be less likely to locate within the County creating an expensive opportunity cost to local municipalities.

Challenge: Businesses seek to locate where there is an adequate workforce and labor supply

Consequence: Without adequate education and training, local workforce will be unprepared to meet the future job requirements.

Challenge: Coordinating trade schools to educate a workforce that not only repairs and maintains, but responds to research and development needs of the future.

Consequence: Overcrowding and underfunding of technical education prevent the adequate flow of trained workers for current and future business needs.

Fostering a more attractive business environment for current and prospective businesses, developers and employers will enhance the county's economic competitiveness.

Recommendations

Channel development to appropriate areas, focusing on “centers of development,” maintaining and improving Hunterdon County’s current quality of life and rural atmosphere.

Challenge: Redevelopment of town centers and the addition of cultural amenities serve as an attractor to millennial professionals.

Consequence: Lack of investment in town centers will result in vacant storefronts and declining town centers. Continued development of the rural landscape will negatively affect the County’s quality of life.

Consequence: Decline or loss of cultural activities will negatively affect the tourism industry and quality of life for residents.

It is important to assure that the projects in this report are local, regional and market-focused to meet the demands of the future economic landscape.

Encourage collaboration and cross-education, communication, and sharing of information within the County and between municipalities creating a collective impact.

Challenge: As a home rule state, municipalities tend to operate in isolation, creating redundancies and/or lack of attention to vital projects

Consequence: This CEDS plan can fall short of its full potential for collective impact.

While it is clear that some municipalities will choose and experience greater economic growth and investment sooner than others, it is likely that all municipalities will benefit from a spirit of joint municipal cooperation.

Foster local economic development by enhancing the tourism industry in Hunterdon County through its cultural, recreational, historic, and agricultural assets.

Challenge: Lack of funding and organizational collaboration among stakeholders limits successful marketing opportunities of local events, festivals, and community activities.

Consequence: Localized events will continue to draw local attendance and offer little benefit to adjacent centers of commerce or other on-going local activities.

Hunterdon County’s core brand is based on its agricultural, recreational, cultural and historic resource offerings. These amenities will continue to be a critical draw for new tourism industry dollars, residents and private businesses which promote the County and place high value on rural assets.

Ensuring continued investment in these resources (inclusive of their coordinated marketing) is a sound investment in the County’s long-term economic vitality.

Conclusions

Hunterdon County and its 26 municipal partners are at a crossroads; each must choose which road to take. One road leads to business as usual, one road leads to moderate change, and one road leads to a paradigm shift in how the County and its municipalities envision their economic future. The role of government in a free market economy must remain in the forefront. Private sector partnerships require attention in this long term commitment to Hunterdon County's economic future.

This extensive process and resultant report highlights the many strengths and opportunities for Hunterdon County. It also makes clear the challenges the County faces as it moves towards developing future economic viability. Hunterdon County has a highly educated, professional workforce, a growing healthcare system and abundant recreation and rural amenities. Coincidentally, the County also faces a shortage of affordable housing, a high cost of living and projected loss of professional, high paying jobs.

Hunterdon County and its municipal partners must create a friendlier business environment for its private sector investors so that business leaders and developers cease to look toward neighboring counties for opportunities to invest. Businesses will require improved infrastructure with adequate capacity and they will look for a municipal regulatory process and work force that is consistent with those needs.

The County's educational programs must be responsive to business employment needs and capable of adapting nimbly as these needs evolve and change over time. Tomorrow's generation must have the tools that allow them to afford to live and work in Hunterdon County.

Each municipality must examine its planning, zoning and land use patterns and channel development to where it is appropriate. Creative Placemaking is one example of a revitalization tool available to create well designed neighborhoods, streets and public spaces that become valued destinations. This document suggests that town centers offer a preferred location for repurposing because of existing infrastructure and diverse housing opportunities. As exemplified in this CEDS plan, corporate campuses and strip malls provide logical opportunities for multi-use repurposing and redevelopment to meet future business, employment and housing needs.

Transportation alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle are limited. Investment in public transportation, complete streets, and improved multi-modal connectivity will begin to meet the needs of lower wage workers as well as help attract and retain younger residents and families improving the County's economic diversity and vitality.

Conclusions (contd.)

An enhanced tourism industry will help foster local economic development by capitalizing on existing cultural, recreational, historic and agricultural assets. If funded and organized accordingly, the County's potential for tourism dollars from agriculture, its culture and heritage bounty and year-round local events can foster revitalization of downtowns, renew interest in agricultural industries and extend the benefits of the region to an expanded audience. The Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce, the designated Destination Marketing Organization for this region, will assist in this important effort.

No matter which road is chosen, by the County or each municipality, each must remember that they are all in this together and the success of one will contribute to the success of all. Working together in a collaborative effort will best ensure a sustainable, healthy economic future for Hunterdon County, its municipal partners, its local businesses and residents.

As a County, home rule and legislative limitations must be acknowledged; partnerships are critical to the success of many of the recommendations contained in this report. However, this extensive, collaborative planning process is evidence that a uniquely different group of people can work together productively to reach a common goal.

Next Steps

The County has already begun the process of designing the initial steps toward implementation of some of the vital projects identified in this report. This is an on-going, ever-modifying role that must be fostered by the County and implemented through municipal and private partners. The County will continue to drive this process forward toward implementation as this report moves through the USEDA approval process, which may take 6-12 months, focusing on those projects identified with the highest economic impact.

Strategic Committee members will continue to be engaged. Quarterly meetings will begin in 2015 to initiate and track the implementation progress. Subject matter experts will be asked to guide specific projects through implementation.

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders and Planning Services Division look to its municipal, business, and community stakeholders to assist in its implementation and on-going assessment. It is clear that there is a dedicated, committed bank of leaders available and willing to join together to carry forward these recommendations. This leadership has the capacity to overcome hurdles and help move the County toward a more prosperous, economically sustainable future.



Hunterdon County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



CEDS and USED A Background

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a five-year plan required by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (USED A) for consideration to receive certain types of funding. The Public Works and Economic Development Act requires completion of a CEDS in order to apply for investment assistance under the Public Works or Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. A CEDS is also a prerequisite for USED A designation as an Economic Development District (EDD). A CEDS is an economic roadmap demonstrating that local stakeholders have created a strategic plan for economic growth and development, and are ready to capitalize on USED A funding in a coordinated and targeted manner.

Created to comply with the requirements set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations (13 C.F.R § 303.7), this CEDS meets the technical requirements, summarized below.

Technical Requirements:

- Formation of a Strategy Committee
- Background discussion of current economic conditions
- Analysis of economic problems and opportunities
- List of goals and objectives
- Discussion of community and private sector participation
- Description of strategic projects, programs, and activities
- Plan of action implementing the goals and objectives
- List of performance measures



“A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. The CEDS should analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives...”

Eligibility and Reasoning

According to 13 C.F.R § 301.3, USEDA determines regional eligibility for Public Works or Economic Adjustment Assistance based on the unemployment rate, per capita income, or a special need in the region in which the project will be located.

Although median household income is high in Hunterdon County, this is a double-edged sword. Employment growth is projected to be greatest in low-wage occupations, and workers in these occupations are effectively excluded from living in Hunterdon County due to the very high cost of living. A notable dearth of infrastructure, and public transportation in particular, make it difficult for low-wage workers to reach places of employment in Hunterdon County.

A number of trends are cause for concern for the future economic health of Hunterdon County. The County demonstrates special need based on the extraordinarily high cost of living, severe lack of infrastructure and transportation, large differential in household income levels throughout the County, and loss of large employers. For these reasons, and as discussed further throughout the report, Hunterdon County is in need of assistance for structured economic development.

Although recent data show the unemployment rate in Hunterdon County to be lower than that of New Jersey, these data do not yet reflect the changes that will occur after Hunterdon County loses one of its largest employers. The loss of Merck will likely negatively impact both the unemployment rate and the County tax base. Additionally, parts of the County are currently experiencing high unemployment rates of up to 14.7 percent, higher than the unemployment rates in the surrounding Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and State of New Jersey.

In late 2012, Merck, one of Hunterdon County's largest employers, announced plans to relocate its world headquarters from Hunterdon County. Merck is a top County taxpayer, and the move will result in the loss of about 2,000 jobs from the County¹ and will leave behind one million square feet of office space. This move is a critical issue for Hunterdon County, and is compounded by a number of similarly empty or underutilized properties throughout the County that have remained vacant or severely underutilized.

1: http://www.lehighvalleylive.com/breaking-news/index.ssf/2012/10/merck_headquarters_move_nj.html

CEDS Committees and Process

To engage key stakeholders and ensure guidance and stewardship of the CEDS document, two advisory committees were created, a Strategy Committee and a smaller Executive Committee. A committee roster can be found in **Appendix A**.

As per CEDS guidance, the **Strategy Committee** must embody the main economic interests of the region, and include a majority membership of private sector representatives. The Strategy Committee should also include public officials, community leaders, representatives of workforce development boards, representatives of institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals.



Hunterdon County CEDS Committee Meeting

Members of the Strategy and Executive Committees were selected to ensure diversity and meet the required USEDA criteria. Participants were asked to join the committees based on their business experience, their role in the community, and the diverse groups they represent.

The role of the Hunterdon County CEDS **Executive Committee** was defined as follows:

- Review economic development priorities and recommendations presented by the consultant team;
- Prioritize all projects proposed for USEDA grant assistance and included within the CEDS;
- Establish a process for coordinating and integrating the CEDS with the State's economic priorities;
- Maintain an ongoing involvement with the CEDS process; and
- Build collaboration in the region by opening communication between stakeholder groups

The committees met numerous times to discuss findings and to provide input (see Appendix B for a complete list of meeting dates). Three working sessions were held in which members crafted vision and mission statements, defined goals and objectives, and suggested and vetted individual projects. Additional detail on these meetings is provided in the **Community and Private Sector Participation** chapter.

As this project moves forward, the Executive Committee will meet quarterly and lead implementation and monitoring efforts.

National and Regional Context and Themes

This CEDS was completed in the context of a number of regional and national trends occurring in New Jersey and the United States. A number of the findings concerning Hunterdon County (discussed further in the report) reflect these trends discussed below.

- **The “Great Recession.”** Generally considered to have lasted from 2007 to 2009, this economic slowdown saw the housing market crash and much growth and development come to a halt.
- **Flat population growth.** A number of news outlets (*USA Today*, *The Guardian*, *Huffington Post*) have reported the declining growth of the United States population. US population growth is at the lowest rate since the Great Depression.
- **Rise in non-family households and solo living.** Pew Research reported in 2011 that the marriage rate in the United States had reached an all-time low. The median age at first marriage has also steadily increased since 1960.
- **Growth in healthcare and social assistance.** The United States Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that healthcare-related occupations and industries are projected to add the most new jobs country-wide between 2012 and 2022.
- **Obsolescent office space.** A changing economy, technological advances, and younger workers’ desire to live in urban locations has left many large corporate centers vacant. In *Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2013*, PwC and the Urban Land Institute note a “contraction in [office] space use and chronically high [office] vacancies” (56). The report also cautions that “‘severely handicapped’ suburban office space remains ‘a trap’” as “Generation Y [millennials] resists working in isolated office-park campuses” (57).





Community and Private Sector Participation

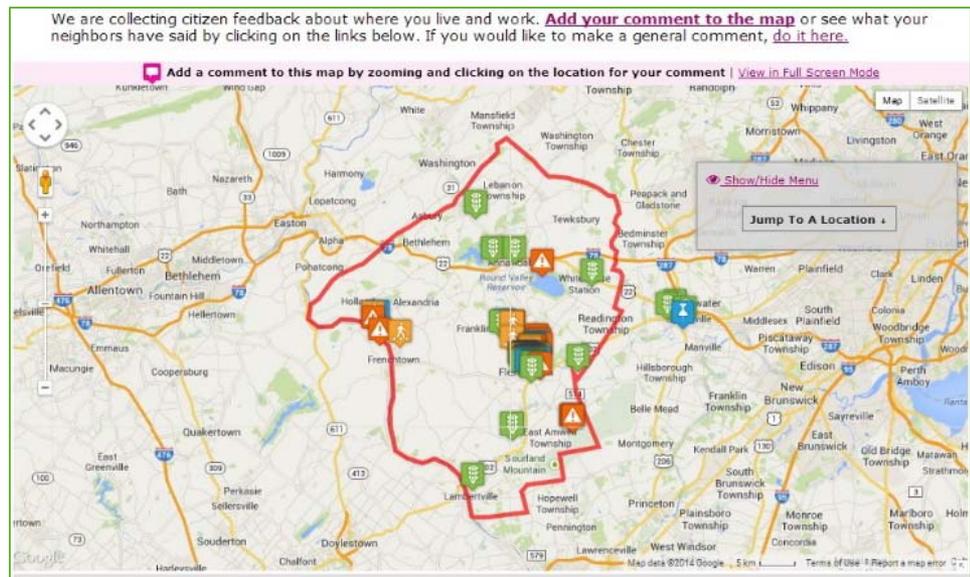
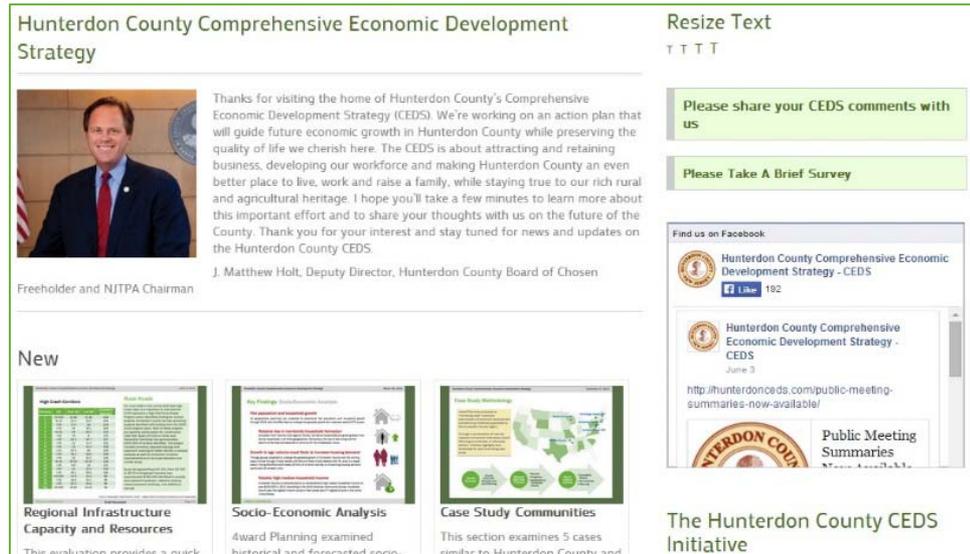


Public Participation: CEDS Website

This CEDS was informed by input from the public and a diverse range of targeted stakeholders. Methods of outreach included a public website, surveys developed for Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) and the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, public meetings, and Strategy and Executive Committee meetings.

Website

Hunterdon County hosted an interactive website to accompany the CEDS report and consolidate project materials, track goals and objectives, and communicate implementation strategies. With over 3,200 unique visits, the website and interactive materials were utilized to engage stakeholders and refine the collective vision through social media, mapping, surveys, and opportunities to provide comment. The website also functions as a living document of the plan, permitting County stakeholders to track implementation. The website will continue to be updated as projects are implemented.



Screenshot of Hunterdon County CEDS Website
 Screenshot of Community Remarks Application
 Source: HunterdonCEDS.com

Public Participation: CEDS Website

Key components of the website are:

- Interactive asset map*: Enabled people to add comments to specific locations in Hunterdon County quickly and easily
- Social media*: A CEDS Facebook site was updated with the latest news and content posted to the site on a continuous basis
- Plan tracking and implementation*: The website will feature the final plan in electronic format and link to real-time implementation reports.

A number of Hunterdon County residents left comments and feedback through the interactive asset map on the CEDS website. Topics of comment included “Bicycling/Streetscape/Pedestrian Opportunity,” “Important Site/Location,” “Redevelopment/Development Opportunity,” and “Transportation Improvement.”

Commenters made a variety of suggestions, such as capitalizing on recreational opportunities in the County, as well as holding additional events, such as racing and track cycling. A bicycle tour of Hunterdon County was also suggested as a way of drawing visitors. People also mentioned assets, including those of historic significance, that could benefit from maintenance and upkeep.

Commenters also noted that they would like to have a movie theater in the area, as well as a bowling alley, suggesting a current lack in social amenities.

A number of comments were also provided regarding transportation. Commenters suggested additional stops (in Flemington) for express buses to New York, coordination of traffic signals to ease congestion, and uniform standards for LINK buses and taxis. Introduction of additional transportation methods, such as shuttles and trolleys, were also suggested.

Public Participation: Surveys

“Overall I think this County has a healthy environment, but this County should have more job opportunities for people to stay in County”

“I’ve been a resident of Hunterdon County for over 30 years. With the rising costs of living and the high taxes in Hunterdon County, other counties are of interest.”

To gather input from its younger residents, Hunterdon County coordinated and distributed a survey to County residents attending Raritan Valley Community College. A survey was also distributed by the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce to gather input from the business community. Detailed survey results are given in **Appendix C**.

Raritan Valley Community College Student Survey Summary

Two-hundred forty-four students participated in the RVCC survey, which was distributed online in early 2014. The majority of participants were under 23 years of age, although a sizeable amount (approximately 32 percent) were 30 or older. The vast majority of participants (over 84 percent) live alone or with family members. As is consistent with the nature of Hunterdon County, approximately 91 percent of survey participants’ primary means of transportation is driving their own vehicle. One respondent traveled primarily by walking and one utilizes the LINK bus.

The greatest amount of respondents (about 42 percent) said that they do not know or are not sure what they expect to do for work after graduation. The second highest amount (21 percent) expect to work at a large corporation, while only about six percent expect to be self-employed or own their own business.

Students’ feelings on remaining in Hunterdon County are of particular interest as retention of younger residents is a County goal. Approximately 46 percent of students plan to remain in or return to Hunterdon County, while only about 14 percent do not plan to do so. This leaves approximately 41 percent of respondents who are “not sure” if they will live in Hunterdon County after finishing school. Primary factors that will influence their decisions to remain in the County include the cost of living and job opportunities.

Public Participation: Surveys

“Hunterdon County is home to me...Due to how expensive it is to live in Hunterdon County, both my parents moved to Warren County. I wish it was more affordable because I am most likely going to have to do the same. There are just no affordable rentals or homes for sale...”

“Hunterdon County has enough areas to sustain agriculture but also develop downtowns, transportation, tourism, etc., by identifying which towns would support various industries.”

The greatest number of respondents say their ideal housing type is a small single family home. While the second highest amount would prefer to live in a large single family home, a sizeable amount (about 21 percent) would prefer to live in an apartment, with another 18 percent preferring a condo or townhouse. The majority of survey respondents do *not* prefer to live in a large single family home. Respondents generally say that Hunterdon County provides a good quality of life, and “some” or “few” social activities. They would like to see additional outdoor/adventure activities and special events and festivals, while “additional retail opportunities” was ranked as least important.

Regarding quality of life issues, various respondents noted their appreciation of the peaceful, natural environment of parts of the County, but that the County is too expensive and lacks social amenities such as bars. Also noted was a lack of local activities for children and teenagers. The cost of living is also a major concern, with one respondent noting that the rising taxes and cost of living might lead him/her to consider living elsewhere, and another commented that living here is “way too expensive for people my age.”

Chamber of Commerce Survey

The Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce hosted a members meeting on April 30, 2014 to introduce the CEDS project and gather input from the business community. A survey was given to attendees (and also made available on the Chamber of Commerce and CEDS websites), who were asked to discuss issues and opportunities in the County, as well as suggest future priorities. Notable opportunities listed include marketing and capitalizing on existing infrastructure and space. A number of concerns were also voiced, including the loss of large employers, the overly onerous level of regulation, the lack and quality of infrastructure, need for clearer development guidelines and better public transportation, high housing costs and cost of living, and lack of jobs in the area. Survey participants also provided a number of suggestions, including downtown revitalization (mainly in Flemington), attraction of young professionals, making it more affordable to live and do business in the County, implementing additional transportation to New York City and other centers, and providing incentives to businesses to move into vacant buildings.

Public Participation: Interviews and Focus Groups

The consultant team conducted a number of interviews with individual stakeholders (e.g., local business representatives, higher-education officials, government leaders, and civic group leaders) as well as focus groups during the period of December 2013 through July 2014. Each interviewee offered his or her perspective regarding prospective development and expansion activities, business development opportunities, existing regulatory challenges, perspectives on the available labor force, and the County's competitive disadvantages and advantages. A complete summary of interviews is provided in **Appendix B**.

Approximately 50 people participated in individual interviews or as members of focus groups. Focus group topics included Economic Development, Education, Utilities and Infrastructure, Hospitality and Tourism, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Social Services, Diversity and Aging, and Large Corporations.

Interviews formed the basis of many of the recommendations of this CEDS document. Key points arose in multiple interviews and focus groups, providing verification of findings of the many quantitative analyses.

Key issues identified throughout the interviews include the following:

- Lack of infrastructure and transportation options
- Lack of housing diversity and affordable housing
- Good quality of life is an asset that should be maintained
- The need to address issues resulting from the loss of large employers
- Varying municipality attitudes towards development
- Lack of support for economic and workforce development
- Necessity of reusing and repurposing vacant and underutilized space
- Decline of the agriculture industry
- Lack of depth of the labor pool
- Lack of high-skill jobs in the area
- Overly stringent development approval process
- Lack of marketing of the County
- Lack of connections between various tourist destinations
- Lack of recreational opportunities for children
- Limited places for socializing
- Aging population of the County
- Major opportunities for increased tourism

Public Participation: Minority & Under-Represented Groups

Outreach to minority and under-represented groups was done for various populations, including the younger demographic (as this population has been declining in Hunterdon County), the elderly population (a vulnerable group), and the Latino population.

One of Hunterdon County's primary goals is to be a wonderful place to live for all populations. CEDS projects that will further this goal for vulnerable populations include expansion of public transit and various modes of transportation, addition of affordable housing, and emphasis on workforce training.

There is a notable Latino population making up six percent of Hunterdon County's residents. There was outreach to the Latino population through churches and informal networks, as well as a Hunterdon County-hosted Diversity and Aging Focus Group that was held on July 23, 2014. Youth outreach was done mainly through outreach at Raritan Valley Community College, including the survey that was distributed online.

Participants in the Diversity and Aging Focus Group included Hunterdon County YMCA, Hunterdon Helpline, Hunterdon Medical Center (Center for Healthy Aging), St. Magdalen Church, Hunterdon County Human Services Department, and Hunterdon County Senior Services.

Increased educational opportunities at convenient locations and times, in addition to bi-lingual assistance for non-English speaking residents is an important issue that must be addressed to allow these residents to fully participate.

Discussion focused on identifying issues facing this segment of the County's population and how the County CEDS might provide recommendations and solutions to address some of these economic challenges.

Key issues identified by the Diversity and Aging Focus Group include:

- Increase education of minority population regarding biking and pedestrian safety rules
- Additional literacy services are needed
- Education campaign regarding local transportation resources
- Identify local resource contacts for Hispanic population
- Promote "Cultural Competency" training
- Local zoning limits economic viable housing opportunities
- Housing opportunities are limited for seniors who want to stay in their homes
- LINK services are necessary for senior population and expansion should be explored

It was the consensus of the committee that more effort is needed to assess and identify the potential collective impact of working together on issues of mutual need.

Findings and notes from the meeting are provided in **Appendix B.**

Stakeholder Meetings

In addition to interviews and focus groups, meetings were held to educate stakeholders about the CEDS and to gather input. The Strategy and Executive Committees also met a number of times to stay apprised of findings and to craft the vision, goals, and objectives of the County.

Meetings were held on the following dates:

Feb 10, 2014:	Executive Committee Meeting
Feb 11, 2014:	Municipal Roundtable Meeting
Mar 20, 2014:	Executive Committee Meeting
Mar 26, 2014:	Frenchtown Public Meeting/River Towns
Mar 27, 2014:	Flemington Public Meeting /Town Centers
Apr 2, 2014:	Readington Public Meeting/Corporate Campuses
Apr 22, 2014:	Strategy and Executive Committee Meeting
Apr 30, 2014:	Chamber of Commerce Meeting
May 5, 2014:	Municipal/Developers Forum
May 13, 2014:	Executive Committee Meeting
May 28, 2014:	Strategy and Executive Committee Meeting
June 25, 2014:	Strategy and Executive Committee Meeting
July 23, 2014:	Minority & Under-Represented Focus Group
Sep 15, 2014:	Strategy and Executive Committee Meeting
Oct 6, 2014:	Public Presentation

Brief meeting descriptions are provided on the following pages. Meeting agendas, as well as additional meetings notes, where appropriate, are provided in **Appendix B**.

Methodology

All meetings began with a project summary and relevant findings to date. A dot-mocracy exercise was used to prioritize projects, all participants were asked to identify issues under various topics and then voted with dots to identify the most important issues. This information was then tabulated and used to create the vital projects list. Meetings were structured to ensure all voices were heard and the information gained would contribute to the final report. Complete results of the dot-mocracy exercises can be found in **Appendix B**.

Focused Stakeholder Meetings

Municipal Roundtable

The first **municipal roundtable** was held on February 11, 2014, and allowed the consultant team, Hunterdon County Planning Department staff, local officials, and planning board members to meet and discuss the CEDS initiative. The purpose of the CEDS and background information were shared, as were USEDA's technical requirements. Participants then discussed project updates and preliminary findings of socio-economic, labor and industry, and workforce and labor market findings analyses. The consultant team then answered questions posed by meeting participants.

Chamber of Commerce Meeting with Business Members

The Hunterdon County **Chamber of Commerce** held a breakfast meeting on April 30, 2014 to engage the local business community and share findings as well as to solicit input. The Chamber explained the background of the CEDS and shared initial background findings with local business owners. Additionally, a survey was distributed (as discussed above) that gave participants time to reflect on the findings, respond to questions, and provide input and suggestions.

Municipal Meeting with Developers

Another municipal roundtable was held on May 5, 2014 as a **Developer's Forum**. This meeting was attended by municipal stakeholders including mayors, planning and zoning board members, and local planning professionals, investors and developers. Participants discussed the current state of the commercial and housing development and redevelopment markets within Hunterdon County with a panel of real estate developers.

General takeaways from the meeting are that municipalities need a vision and must be knowledgeable concerning local market conditions. Developers and municipalities should work together, as developers need support from local governments to complete projects. It was recommended that discussion of projects with officials and the public should be held in informal town meetings in a relaxed environment prior to public hearings. Project reviews do not have to be a contentious process, and concerns can be worked out if both sides are flexible. All participants shared a new understanding of both sides of the development issue and an interest in Hunterdon County's future.



May 5, Developer's Forum

Public Stakeholder Meetings

Three public meetings were held to engage residents of Hunterdon County. Evening meetings were held on March 26, March 27, and April 2, 2014. The first meeting was held in Frenchtown, and focused on economic growth in the river communities (Frenchtown, Milford, Stockton, and Lambertville) that share a bond as scenic towns along the Delaware River. These towns are encouraged to collaborate to expand tourism. The second meeting, held in Flemington, focused on Hunterdon County's town centers. Although Hunterdon County has a strong rural history, town centers are important locations for tourism, commerce, housing, and employment. The final meeting was held in Readington, the location of the Merck property. This meeting focused on the County's business corridors, the loss of large employers and redevelopment of large corporate campuses.

After relevant findings were shared at the meetings, attendees were invited to participate in "dot-mocracy" exercises in which they prioritized issues of importance. Participants suggested issues under various topic headings (for example, transportation, housing, and workforce/industry). Then, all attendees were asked to prioritize the issues by assigning dots to issues of greatest importance. Responses were tallied. Complete results of the dot-mocracy exercises can be found in **Appendix B**.

Frenchtown Public Meeting – River Communities

This meeting, held on March 26, 2014, addressed issues related to Hunterdon County's "river town" communities along the Delaware River. These communities are tourist destinations, and have the potential to become greater draws to visitors and residents alike, especially if marketing is coordinated. Audience members emphasized that the communities are more than tourist destinations and that they also offer business opportunities and a high quality of life for residents.

Additional topics of discussion included:

- the potential to repurpose a number of existing buildings,
- the influence of the farm-to-table movement,
- the need for better marketing, and the need for additional, coordinated methods of transportation.

High-priority dot-mocracy issues included:

- more shuttle service and parking,
- more affordable housing,
- identification of industries to attract,
- influence and support of legislative changes for utilities and infrastructure,
- tourism relating to farms and parks, and
- the establishment of a tourism board.



March 26, Frenchtown Public Meeting

Public Stakeholder Meetings

Flemington Public Meeting – Town Centers

The Flemington public meeting, held on March 27, 2014, focused on Hunterdon County's town centers. Attendees discussed how to bring a younger demographic to Hunterdon County through methods such as providing affordable housing and a diversity of housing options, and creating additional social "third places," or social surroundings where people spend time other than work or home, such as coffee shops, main streets, and restaurants. Additionally, participants discussed how to revitalize town centers that currently lack vibrancy, especially after businesses close on evenings and weekends. Transportation was also discussed, and it was suggested that bus service (more flexible, cheaper, and easier to implement than rail) be brought to these areas. Lastly, there was discussion of how to increase and leverage cultural and heritage tourism, as there are many historic sites in Hunterdon County's town centers.

Priorities from the dot-mocracy exercise included coordination of transportation between jobs and housing, increasing housing density, maintaining an adequate green space to housing ratio, ensuring adequate sewer capacity, town center access, pedestrian safety, marketing of the County and its assets, bus routes, innovative parking solutions, rail, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, entertainment venues, and youth-oriented activities.

Readington Public Meeting – Corporate Campuses

The public meeting in Readington was held on April 2, 2014, and focused on Hunterdon County's corporate campuses. There was discussion on handling large corporations relocating outside of the County (including Merck, currently located in Readington) and what to do with vacancies left behind. Attendees discussed the importance of proper zoning and a well-defined regulatory process for developers. Transportation issues were also discussed, including rail access to Somerville, and implementation of a full interchange along Interstate 78 at Cokesbury Road in Lebanon Borough.

Dot-mocracy priorities include expanded park-and-ride lots, implementation of complete interchanges, increased bus service, housing in older rail towns, adaptive reuse, zoning for mixed use, consistent leadership, creating a welcoming environment for developers, expansion of Hunterdon County Polytech Career & Technical School and Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC), and increased opportunities for vocational and technical training.



April 2, Readington Public Meeting

Executive and Strategy Committee Meetings

The Hunterdon County CEDS Executive and Strategy Committees (a full roster of members can be found in **Appendix A**) met routinely to discuss findings and develop recommendations. Meeting dates and descriptions are provided below and on the following pages.

Executive Committee Meeting, February 10, 2014

This initial meeting provided an opportunity for the Executive Committee to meet the consultant team and learn about the CEDS background and process. The consultant team discussed the purpose and role of the committee and the project timeline. Initial findings were also presented on topics including socio-economic, labor and industry, workforce and labor market, and industry cluster trends. Committee members then had a chance to ask questions, and next steps were discussed.

Executive Committee Meeting, March 20, 2014

This committee meeting began with a consultant presentation of additional key findings relating to real estate and infrastructure trends. Additionally, the consultant introduced the preliminary SWOT analysis for the County. Participants discussed emerging strategic recommendations, which included fostering public transit, ensuring adequate infrastructure in urbanized areas of the County, being proactive in repurposing vacant commercial properties, promoting the County's recreational and cultural assets, and creating additional workforce housing through smart land use and policy education.

The committee then began discussion of Hunterdon County's vision statement. The consultant posed various questions to facilitate development of the vision statement, such as what Hunterdon County's goals and objectives are, where the County wants to be in ten to twenty years, which resources are lacking, and the County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Hunterdon County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy March 20, 2014

Emerging Strategic Recommendations

- Foster More Public Transit
- Ensure Adequate Infrastructure in County's Urban Areas
- Be Proactive in Repurposing Large Commercial Properties that are Vacant
- Better Promote and Coordinate Hunterdon's Recreational and Cultural Assets to the Outside Region
- Facilitate More Workforce Housing through Smart Land-Use and Policy Education

4WARD PLANNING INC.

Hunterdon County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy March 20, 2014

Visioning Session

What are the goals and objectives of Hunterdon County? Where do we want to be in the next 10-20 years?

Consider Hunterdon County's resources, or resources that are lacking

Consider strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats (SWOT)

Consider development patterns that you would like to see

Goals should be realistic and limited in number

Vision, goals and objectives should provide a framework for decision making and serve as basis of action plan

Topics to consider: transportation, infrastructure (electricity, water, sewer, broadband), workforce development, natural resources, real estate, housing, marketing, local taxes and regulations, agriculture

4WARD PLANNING INC.

Screen shots from March 20th meeting presentation

Executive and Strategy Committee Meetings

Strategy and Executive Committee Meeting, April 22, 2014

At this meeting, the consultant shared feedback from the public meetings with the Strategy and Executive Committees. Members discussed several alternatives for the vision statement. The consultant team explained the CEDS funding process, including funding sources and types of projects supported.

Additionally, there was discussion of how to ensure that a representative population is involved in the creation of the CEDS. Discussion of project criteria and the characteristics of good projects were also outlined. Attendees discussed the various roles in assuring that projects are completed, and potential difficulties in implementing projects were discussed, as was the importance of educating local officials and planners about these issues. Committee members also discussed the importance of involving young people in the CEDS process. A strategy for how to move forward with implementing projects was discussed.

Executive Committee Meeting (work session #1), May 13, 2014

This working session began with continued discussion of Hunterdon County's vision statement. Various suggestions regarding the vision statement included establishing Hunterdon County as a center of business innovation, emphasizing resiliency, honoring history while looking to the future, making Hunterdon County a center of lifestyle business, and maintaining focus on the importance of town centers.

Next, members made suggestions on the draft goals and objectives. Committee members discussed the role that tourism and farming should play in the CEDS, how to best discuss and implement housing density in the County. The importance of infrastructure redundancy and special requirements of the Highlands region were also discussed. The committee decided to add a goal relating to coordination and collaboration between municipalities and between municipalities and the County. There was discussion as to what the County's role could and should be in working with municipalities to promote regional planning. Some committee members noted that they would like to see the County be a stronger advocate for its municipalities.

Executive and Strategy Committee Meetings

*Strategy and Executive Committee Meeting (work session #2),
May 28, 2014*

This meeting consisted of discussion of Hunterdon County's CEDS goals and objectives. Topics of discussion included the number of goals and objectives that should be included in the document, time frames for projects, and the type of individual projects that should be included in the project matrix.

Committee members discussed how many goals and objectives to include in the CEDS. Some people believed that there were too many topics, and that focus should instead remain on a few key goals. Others wanted to see a more comprehensive set of goals and objectives. It was noted that while there are diverse goals and objectives, there are a number of overlaps and tie-ins between them such that individual projects may address multiple goals at once.

*Strategy and Executive Committee Meeting (work session #3),
June 25, 2014*

This third working session consisted of break out sessions. Committee members divided into three groups, each of which discussed two goals and their underlying objectives and projects. Draft Strategic Investment Project grids were provided to all members in advance so that they were prepared to discuss additional project suggestions or changes that should be made to the project list.

Committee members made a number of suggestions which were added to the CEDS goals and objectives as well as the Strategic Investment Project grid.

Strategy and Executive Committee Meeting, September 15, 2014

This meeting provided a chance for committee members and staffers to discuss the draft CEDS document. Prior to the meeting, the report was sent to all committee members for review. Several questions were also included to guide members in their reading and review, pertaining to the readability and flow of the document as well as whether any key points were missing.

All members shared their comments on the draft document, which provided opportunity for further discussion. Comments were noted, and addressed where appropriate.

In addition to the public, Executive and Strategy Committee meetings, County Planning staff, Freeholder Liaisons and NJTPA representatives held by-weekly conference calls with the consultant staff. There were many internal staff meetings to refine materials and start "next steps" in the planning process.



Current Conditions



Current Conditions in Hunterdon County

The following section contains brief descriptions of current conditions in Hunterdon County. In-depth technical analyses are in **Appendix D**, including socio-economic, labor and industry, workforce and labor market, industry cluster, real estate, and infrastructure trends reports.



The Red Mill Museum, Clinton, NJ

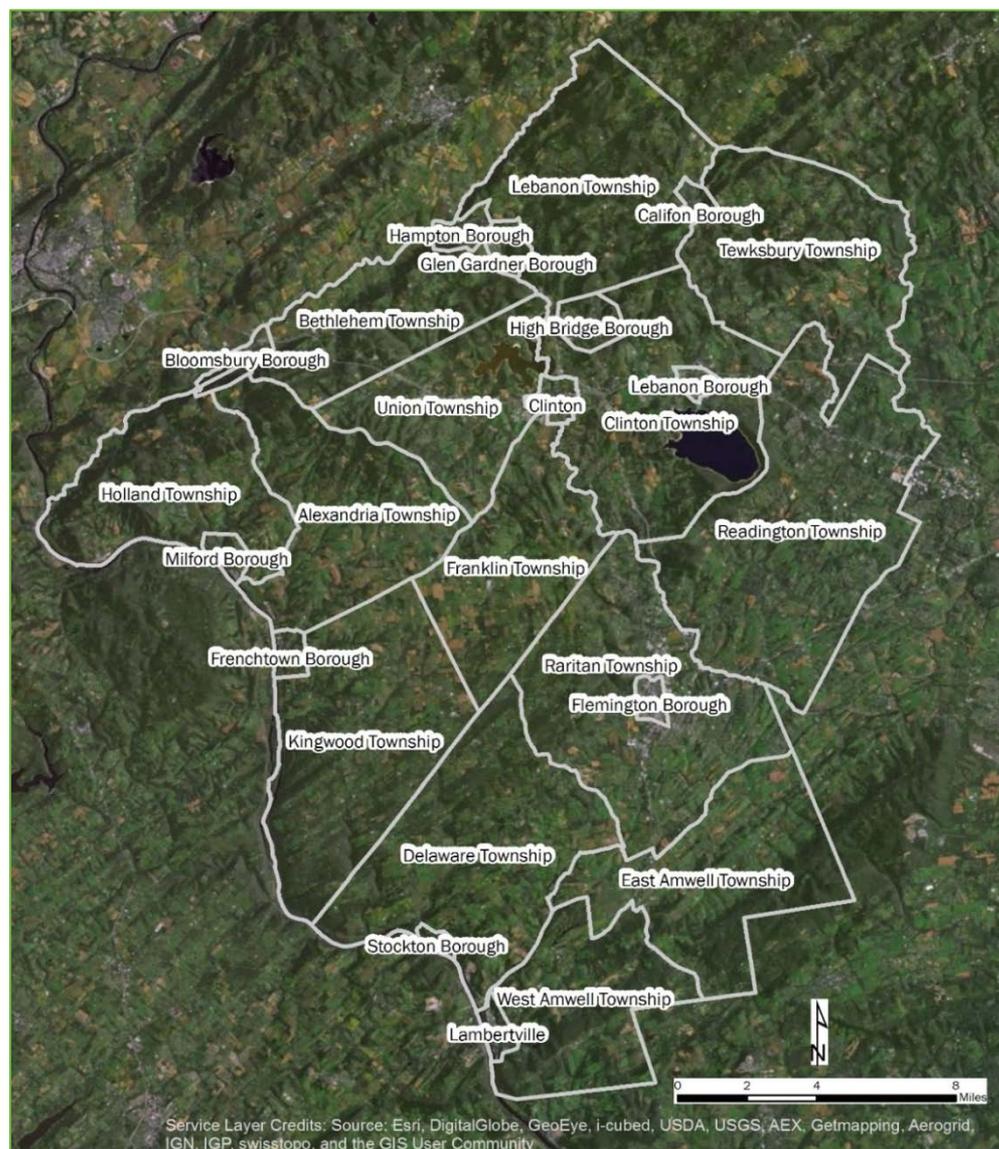
Photo: <http://www.hunterdoncountywebsite.com/images/Hunterdon-County.jpg>

Geography

According to the 2010 Census, Hunterdon County covers 437.44 square miles; 427.82 square miles (97.8 percent) of this is land, while 9.62 square miles (2.2 percent) is water. Hunterdon County is bordered by Warren and Morris Counties to the north and northeast, Somerset County to the east, Mercer County to the southeast, and the Delaware and Musconetcong Rivers and Bucks County, Pennsylvania to the west. Hunterdon County is composed of 26 municipalities, shown in the map at right.

The County has a varied landscape, including forests, grasslands, wetlands, and streams. The Highlands Region (both planning and preservation areas) covers one-third of Hunterdon County, mainly in the northern section of the County. This area is subject to stringent environmental controls that limit growth and development. The remaining portion of the County is part of the Piedmont Region, which contains grasslands, forests, the Sourland Mountains, river bluffs, and prime agricultural soil. Hunterdon County encompasses four watershed management areas (WMAs), the North and South Branch, Central Delaware, and small portions of the Upper Delaware and Millstone WMAs.

Figure 1: Hunterdon County Map



Source: U.S. Census; Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan (2007)

Development Patterns

According to the 2007 Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan, settlements in Hunterdon County began as small boroughs and towns. Currently, town centers exist in Flemington (the County seat), Bloomsbury Borough, Califon, Clinton Town, Glen Gardner, Hampton Borough, High Bridge, Frenchtown, City of Lambertville, Lebanon Borough, and Whitehouse Station. After World War II, highway improvements and increased sewer capacity encouraged growth beyond these communities, especially in Raritan Township and along

Interstate 78 and US Route 22. Residential development in the County mainly consists of large single-family homes on sizable lots, typically three to 15 acres.

In the 1980s, Hunterdon County experienced a considerable amount of nonresidential development, mostly coinciding with the completion of Interstate 78, which provided the County with a direct link to the Newark and New York metro areas. Companies such as Exxon-Mobil, Foster-Wheeler, and Merck built offices in the

County. Many corporate offices are located along highways, often on large, open campuses. Commercial development in Hunterdon County mainly consists of corporate office buildings, hotels, big box retailers, smaller retailers, and other office space.

In the face of development pressure, land preservation has remained a priority in Hunterdon County. Outside of town centers, much of the County remains rural or semi-rural. As of 2013, the Hunterdon County Planning Board estimates that nearly 50 percent of Hunterdon County's land base (about 138,000 acres) was classified as either farm or farm qualified parcels, with over 30,000 acres of that land permanently preserved for farming through the farmland preservation programs set up by the State Agriculture Retention and Development Act.



Merck office in Readington

Photo: philly.com

Population

According to Esri (Environmental Systems Research Institute, the premier supplier of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software internationally) forecasts utilizing U.S. Census Bureau data, the estimated 2013 population of Hunterdon County is 126,250, a decline from the 2010 population of 128,349. Growth in population and household formation has remained relatively flat in recent years, and is projected to remain so into the near future. Despite flat population growth locally and regionally, Hunterdon County has demonstrated relatively strong growth in non-family households.

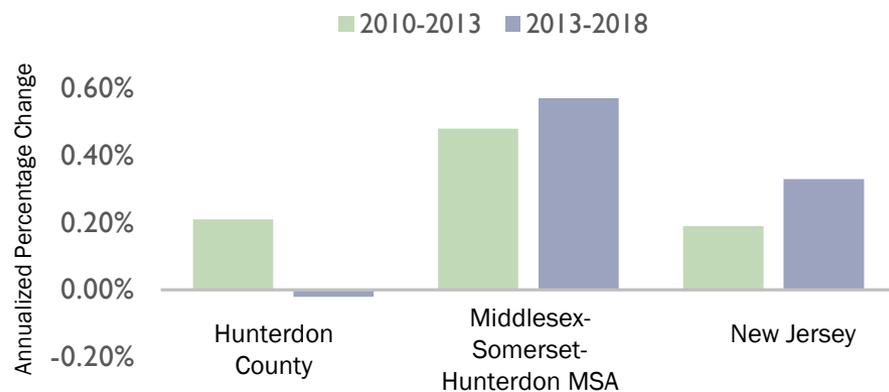
Much of Hunterdon County is characterized by low population density, with most census tracts exhibiting densities below 600 people per square mile (for comparison, the population density of New Jersey is 1,205 people per square mile). However, locations including Flemington and Lambertville maintain much higher densities of approximately 4,400 and 3,300 people per square mile, respectively.

At annualized rates, the number of children under 14 and adults between 35 and 44 have been consistently declining in Hunterdon County since 2000. By contrast, all age cohorts 55 years of age and older have been growing since 1990. This trend is expected to continue through 2018. Over the next five years, persons in Hunterdon County within the 65 to 74 age group are projected to increase at approximately four percent per year. In 2010 and 2013, the dominant age cohort in Hunterdon County was 45 to 54, although this group is expected to be surpassed by the 55 to 64 cohort by 2018, consistent with an aging baby boomer population. In every age cohort between 55 and 74, Hunterdon County is forecasted to outpace New Jersey and the United States in total percentage growth between 2010 and 2018, reflecting a growing and aging baby boomer population.

Hunterdon County has historically been a wealthy county, with a forecasted 2013 median household income of over \$103,000. Income is unevenly distributed throughout the County, however, with the more densely populated County seat, Flemington, having the lowest annual median household income at \$48,000.

Over the next five years, the white population of Hunterdon County is expected to decline while the percentage share of all other racial groups is expected to increase by greater than 15 percent. The growth in Latino population is also projected to increase at a rate of just under 25 percent.

Figure 2: Annualized Percentage Change, Total Population



Source: US Census Bureau; Esri; 4ward Planning Inc., 2013

Economic Development

While the economic development framework in Hunterdon County is limited, several municipal economic development organizations are involved in the economic health of their municipalities. The Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce supports economic growth in the County. While there was at one time a Hunterdon Economic Partnership dedicated to economic development, that organization is no longer in existence.

A business improvement district (BID) was created in March 2011 in the Borough of Flemington. The purpose of the BID is to “protect and improve the economic potential of each and every business that chooses to locate in Flemington. The Business Improvement District promotes



Street fair on Flemington Main Street

Flemington as a place to experience its history, culture, art, shops and restaurants.”

Additionally, the Greater Raritan Workforce Investment Board (GRWIB) provides service to Hunterdon and Somerset Counties charged with providing resources for employers to sustain their businesses, employees to better their career prospects, and for the unemployed to find jobs. The GRWIB plans a One Stop Career Center in Flemington to improve activity and results in Hunterdon County.



Hopewell Valley Community Bank Grand Opening

Source: <http://www.downtownflemington.com/>
Photos: <http://www.downtownflemington.com/pub/gen/pictures>

Industry

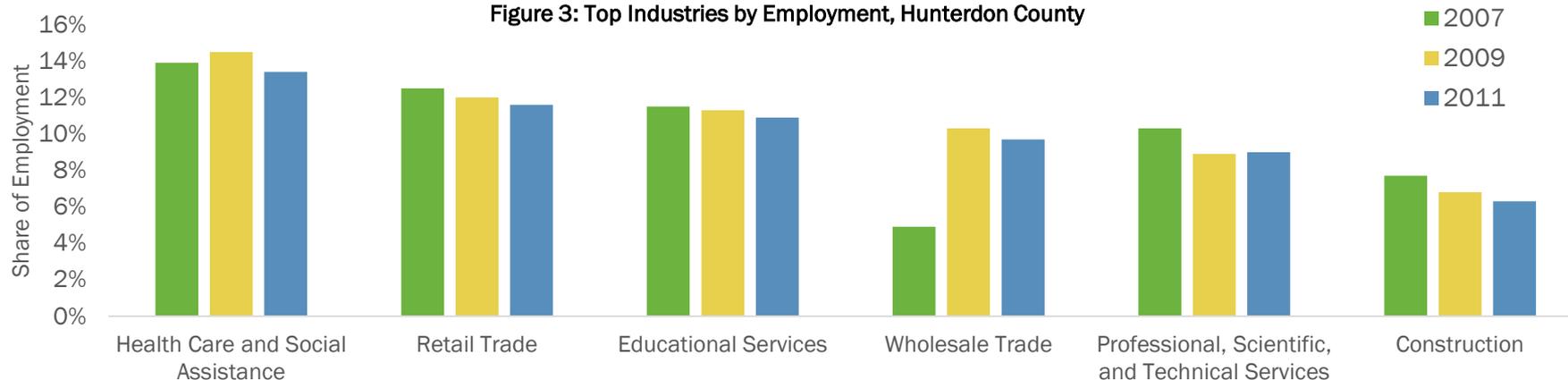
According to 2013 data provided by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, New Jersey has seven industry clusters including Bio/Pharmaceuticals and Life Sciences; Transportation; Logistics; Distribution; Financial Services; Advanced Manufacturing; Health Care; Technology; and Leisure, Hospitality and Retail.

Hunterdon County’s economy is comprised of a number of industries, the more notable of which include retail trade and healthcare. Within Hunterdon County, the insurance carrier sector was the top industry by total output, labor income, and total value added in 2011. Wholesale trade businesses and retail non-stores (direct and electronic sales) are the next strongest sectors, although they contributed less than half as much total value added as compared to the insurance sector.

One trend identified in the County is the projected growth in lower wage industry employment—the retail trade, healthcare and social assistance, and food and beverage industries in particular. Already the largest industry by employment in Hunterdon County, Health Care and Social Assistance is expected to further expand through 2020. Over the next ten years and beyond, Hunterdon County will see significant growth in industry sectors which principally rely upon lower wage occupations.

While agriculture is not one of Hunterdon County’s top industries by employment or value added, it is an industry with unique history and importance to Hunterdon County and the County’s brand. The industry is additionally valuable from environmental and social standpoints, due to the many benefits associated with access to locally grown and produced food. Specialty farms also provide opportunities for agritourism.

Figure 3: Top Industries by Employment, Hunterdon County



Source: US Census Bureau; Esri; 4ward Planning Inc., 2013

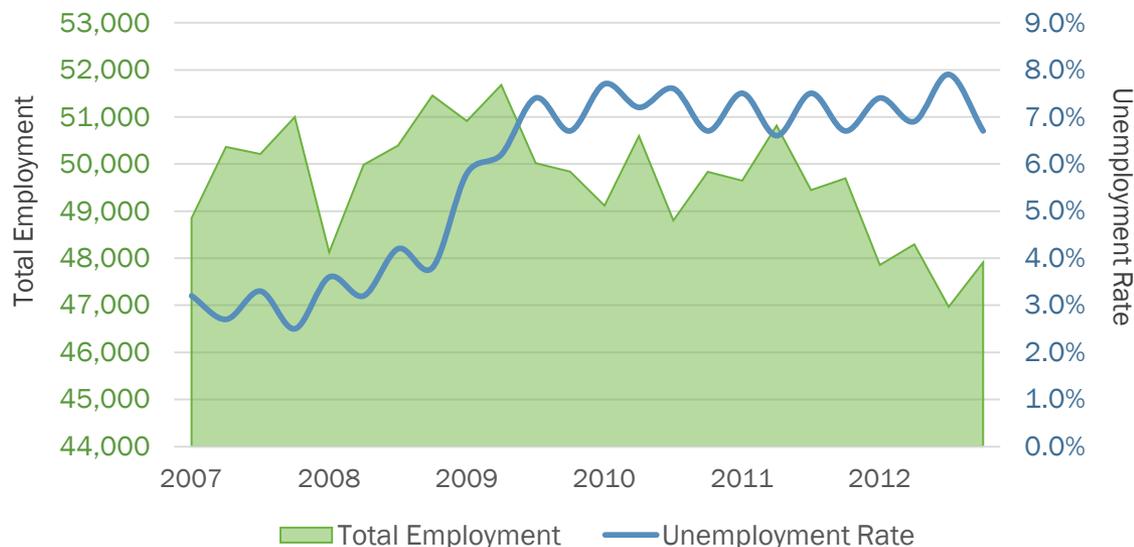
Workforce

While the Great Recession took its toll on employment, Hunterdon County fares relatively well when its unemployment rate and percentage job losses are compared to those of New Jersey. In comparison to the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), Hunterdon County has consistently exhibited a lower unemployment rate over the past ten years. Hunterdon County’s ability to weather the Great Recession better than other counties in the state and nationally has much to do with its relatively large share of highly educated workers – a demographic which fared best during the economic downturn.

Nearly half of Hunterdon County’s population age 25 and over possess a Bachelor’s degree or higher, outperforming New Jersey and the MSA. Higher concentrations of well-educated workers serve to attract business investment seeking to leverage that educated talent, either through selling services or employing their labor.

Job growth within Hunterdon County industries will principally come as a result of replacing retiring workers as opposed to the creation of new positions. Replacement openings will be particularly significant within the food preparation, retail, and administrative support occupations. The coming trend suggests that Hunterdon County’s industries are relatively mature and not

Figure 4: Total Employment and Unemployment Rate, Hunterdon County



fast-growth job generators. The exception to this trend is the health care industry, which continues to grow and expand in the County.

Many higher wage industries in Hunterdon County, as nationally, are facing an exodus of their most skilled workers, as many baby boomers prepare to retire over the next ten years. This is particularly true of the skilled trades industries, such as construction, manufacturing, and wholesale trade. Projected labor trends suggest that over the same period of time, there will not be an equivalent number of younger workers to replace those either retiring or those who will be promoted to replace retirees.

Source: US Census Bureau, NJLWD; 4ward Planning Inc., 2013

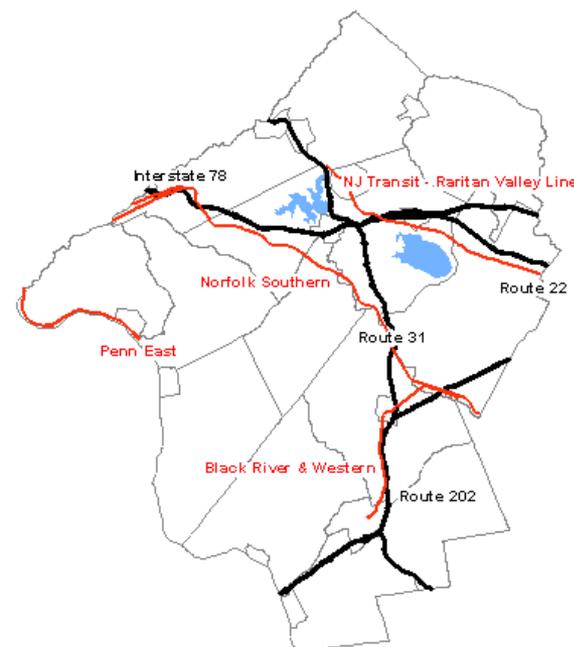
Transportation

According to Hunterdon County's 2008 Transportation Plan, there are about 103 miles of state highways in Hunterdon County, 240 miles of public roads under County jurisdiction, and 1,100 miles of local roads under municipal jurisdiction that mainly serve residential and rural areas. Major roads that traverse the County include state routes 12, 29, 31, 173, and 179; U.S. Routes 22 and 202; and Interstate 78.

Commuter rail service, though limited, exists in the northern part of the County. Service from Newark Penn Station is provided to High Bridge, Annandale, Lebanon, and Whitehouse Station on the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line. As of March 2014, a one-seat ride to New York City was initiated on the Raritan Valley Line, meaning that commuters no longer have to transfer in Newark. These trains run on weekdays during off-peak hours, and are a first step in improved transit service between Hunterdon County and New York City.

The LINK, the County's para-transit bus service, is managed by the County's Department of Human Services and operates an on-demand response service during weekdays and fixed-route service in Flemington all days except Sunday. Additionally, Trans-Bridge, a private bus operator based in PA, provides service to New York City that originates in Pennsylvania. There are no NJ Transit buses operating in Hunterdon County. There are currently five commuter park and ride lots serving these bus transportation routes, in addition to parking areas at the four rail stations.

Figure 5: Hunterdon County Major Roadways and Active Rail Lines



A small number of Hunterdon County workers (fewer than two out of every 100 workers, as opposed to nearly 11 out of every 100 workers statewide) commute via some form of public transit, likely a result of the limited transit options available within Hunterdon County.

Although cycling has not traditionally been a primary mode of transportation in the County, there are a number of recreational cycling destinations within the County as well as bike lanes and paths, both currently in place and proposed.

Source: Hunterdon County 2008 Transportation Plan

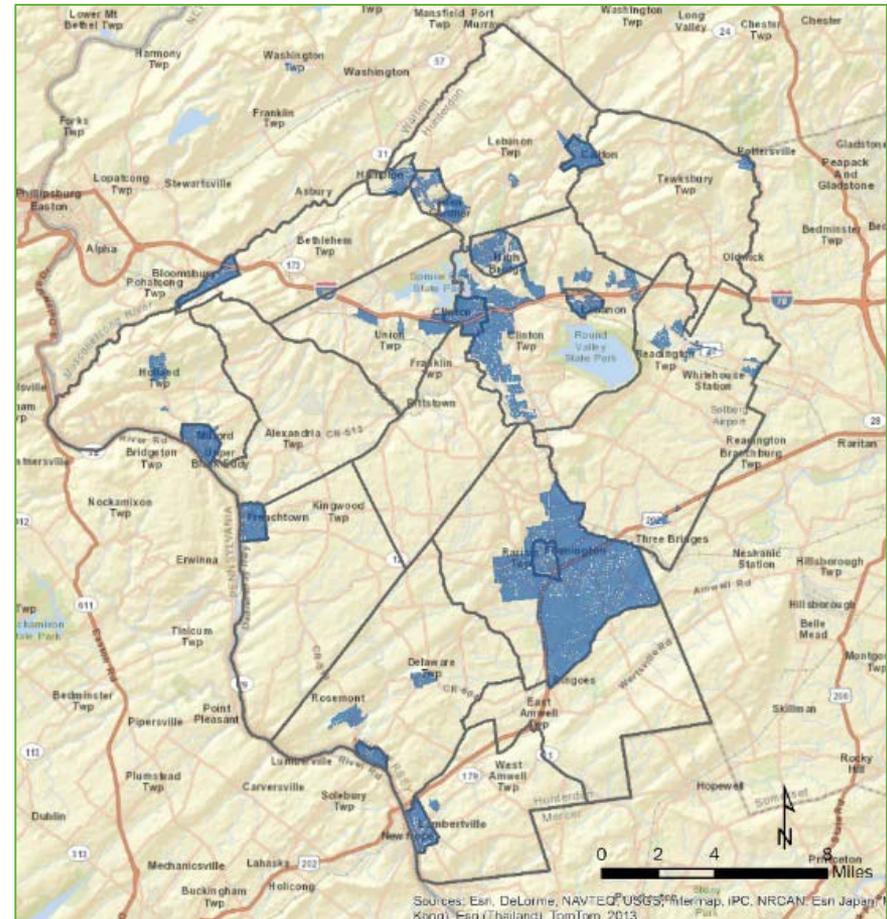
Infrastructure

According to Hunterdon County's Growth Management Plan, over 70 percent of Hunterdon County's households use individual wells to obtain water. Major water suppliers providing service in the County include, Aqua America, New Jersey American Water, and United Water. Though they supply water mainly to residents of other counties, the Round Valley and Spruce Run reservoirs are important resources located in Hunterdon County, with capacities of 55 and 11 billion gallons, respectively.

A majority of Hunterdon County residents rely on septic systems. A number of municipal officials have noted that the lack of sewer service impedes development. Hunterdon County recently adopted an updated Future Wastewater Service Area map. The update reflects exclusions of some environmentally-sensitive areas from the sewer service area, as well as removal and inclusion of certain areas from the sewer service area based on local planning objectives. The main sewerage authorities in Hunterdon County are the Town of Clinton Sewerage Authority, Delaware Township Municipal Utilities Authority, Flemington Borough, Frenchtown Borough Sewage Treatment Plant, Lambertville Sewerage Authority, Milford Sewer Utility, Raritan Township Municipal Utilities Authority, and Readington/Lebanon Sewerage Authority.

The majority of municipalities in Hunterdon County (15 of 26) fall within the New Jersey Highlands Region (discussed in the **Environment** section), which is governed by strict environmental rules that limit infrastructure and development in the area. As such, growth will be limited in the Highlands region.

Figure 6: Hunterdon County Water Service Areas



The availability of high-speed internet service is crucial to Hunterdon County's economic viability. While parts of Hunterdon County are serviced by multiple broadband providers, Hunterdon County has fewer broadband providers than more densely populated counties to its east and south.

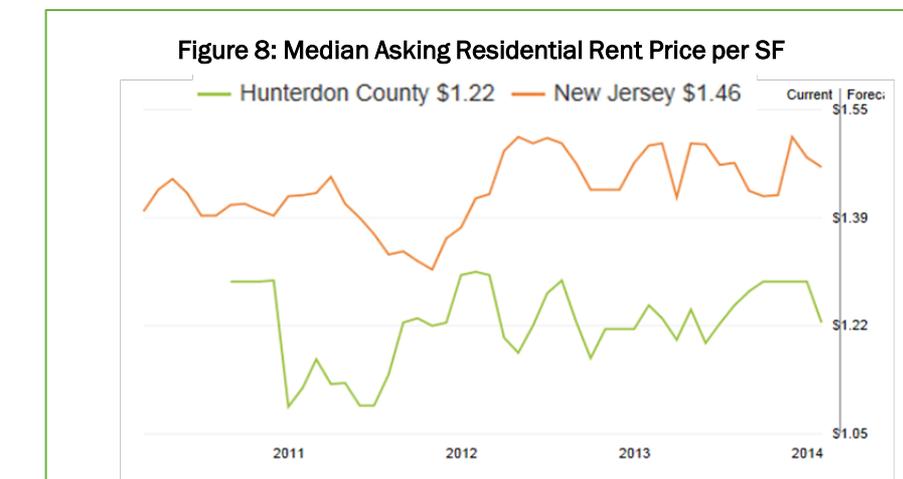
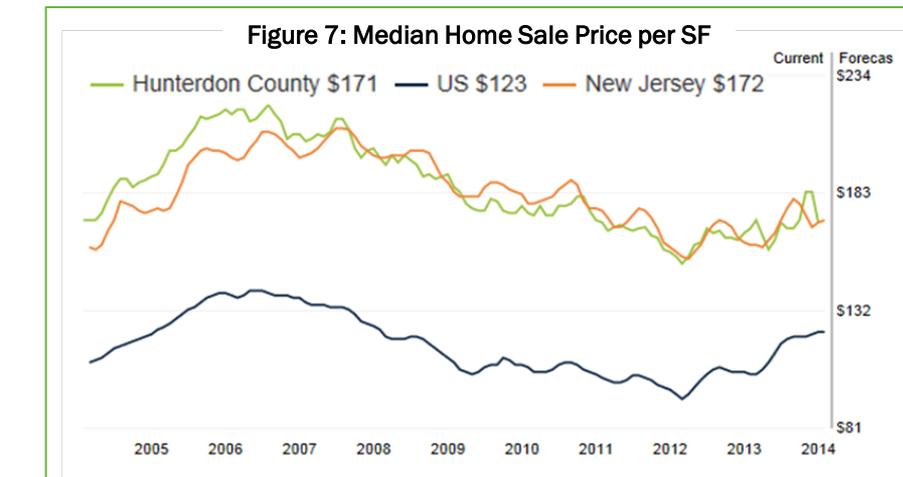
Source: 2007 Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan, State of New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection; Hunterdon County GIS

Real Estate: Residential

Overall, Hunterdon County’s For Sale and Rental residential markets appear to be rebounding from the lows experienced during the Great Recession. Reis, a real estate analysis company, projects that both *asked* and *effective rents* within the Central New Jersey apartment market (located adjacent to Hunterdon County) will continue to grow by 11.6 and 10.4 percent respectively over the next four years, a continued sign of a strong apartment market and subsequent demand for new inventory. While Hunterdon County is part of the Central New Jersey apartment market, it is recognized that Hunterdon does not have the capacity to satisfy the growing demand for new apartments.

Hunterdon County’s single family residential market appears to be rebounding from the recent economic downturn, as reflected in rising median home sale and rental prices. With permitting still relatively low, excess supply is being absorbed and is setting the stage for a continued recovery. Although demand for housing will be supported by low mortgage rates and projected job growth, the large inventory of existing single family homes will work to subdue price increases over the next couple of years. Low mortgage rates, demographic changes (e.g. rising share of upper-income households, etc.) and employment growth may contribute to a rebounding single-family ownership housing market in Hunterdon County in the near term.

As a result of the economic downturn and relatively strong growth in non-family households, a growing share of adults are choosing to rent rather than own their homes and, as a consequence, are driving rental vacancies lower and rents higher. Reis predicts that the neighboring Central New Jersey apartment market will remain tight in the years ahead. Given the projected growth in lower wage



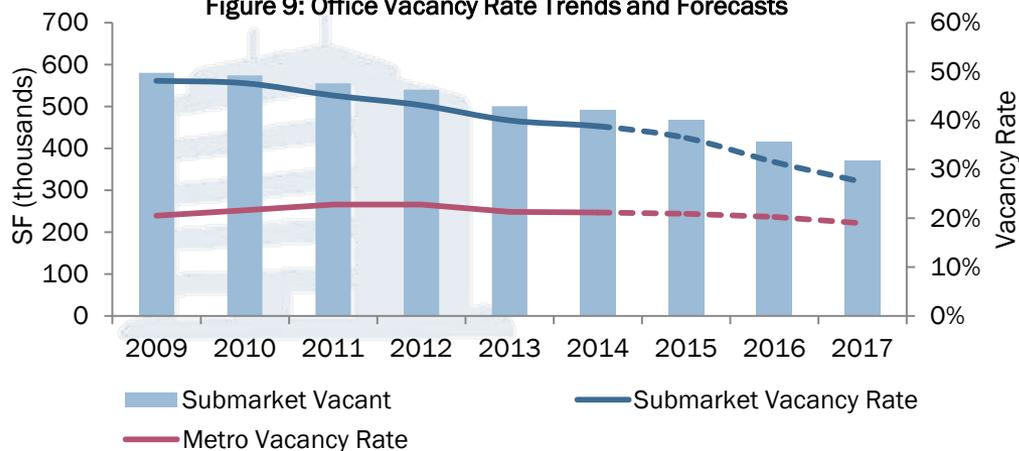
industry employment, Hunterdon County has the opportunity to capture a large portion of the existing pent up and future demand for workforce rental housing – one- and two-bedroom units, in particular, if it recognizes and reacts according to these market predictions. Further, the health of the County’s economy will greatly depend upon the affordability, quality, and supply of workforce rental housing stock.

Source: Zillow

Real Estate: Office

Hunterdon County (equivalent to the Hunterdon Submarket) had approximately 1.25 million square feet of office space as of third quarter 2013 and is expected to have an additional 93,000 square feet available by 2017. In 2009, the vacancy rate for all office properties in the Hunterdon County was just over 48 percent. By 2013, the office vacancy rate within the Submarket declined to 40 percent. By 2017, Reis projects that office vacancy rates within the Submarket (27.4 percent) will be just over eight points higher than average vacancy rates within the Central New Jersey Metro Area (Metro area) (19.0 percent), indicating a strengthening office market within Hunterdon County. Both the Submarket and the Metro area will continue to absorb office space at an increasing rate through 2017, although the rate of absorption as a percentage of occupied office space is expected to be greater within the Hunterdon Submarket.

Figure 9: Office Vacancy Rate Trends and Forecasts



The glut of office space which exists in Hunterdon County is likely to remain a challenge. While medical office space enjoys reasonably strong demand, based on the expansion of ambulatory medical services tied to an aging population and a community healthcare strategy spawned by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the vast majority of vacant office space in Hunterdon County is conventional corporate office space (glass and steel buildings, mostly built in the 1980s and 1990s). The oversupply of office space suggests that there need be little if any new zoning in Hunterdon County to accommodate office space use, except in special cases (such as where a mixed-use development is being contemplated, adjacent to other commercial services).

Figure 10: Central New Jersey Metro (“Metro”)

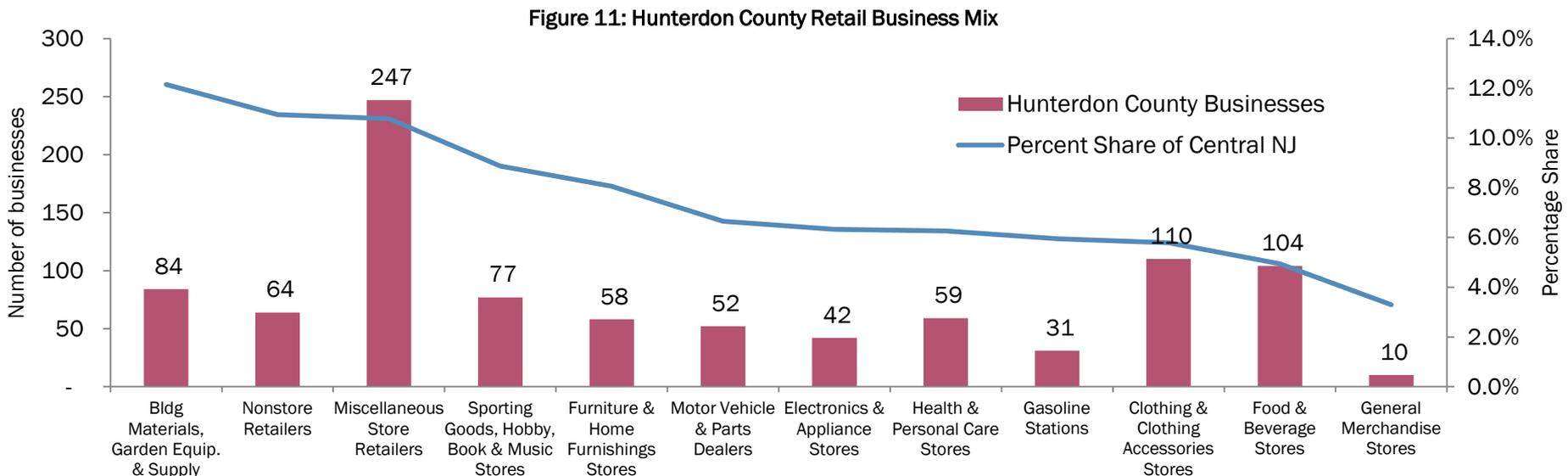


Source: REIS; Bing Maps 4ward Planning Inc., 2013

Real Estate: Retail

Hunterdon County’s existing and prospective retail growth will continue to concentrate along major roadways and intersections (e.g. Flemington Borough, and Raritan and Clinton Townships) in order to best compete with regional retailers. In November 2013, the asking rent for retail space in the metro area was \$30 per square foot, representing a 7.1 percent year-over-year increase. For the same period, average rents in the state were \$18 per square foot, a 1.6 percent decrease from the previous year. Although retail rents are increasing in the metro area, average rents and vacancies in Hunterdon County remain lower than in the metro area and adjacent counties, suggesting a relatively stable market currently.

New Jersey’s attractiveness as a retail market has made it more resilient than most major markets in the nation. However, according to The Goldstein Group, a commercial real estate brokerage firm, the Northern and Central New Jersey retail real estate market is still a “tenants’ market” with opportunistic retailers leasing at attractive rental rates and strategic locations along roadways and near population clusters by taking advantage of weak retail market conditions. As the national and regional brick-and-mortar market segment continues to struggle (due to the lingering effects of the Great Recession, significant demographic shifts, and the continued prominence of on-line shopping) more retail centers in Hunterdon County may struggle.



Source: Esri forecast for 2012; 4ward Planning Inc., 2013

Real Estate: Industrial

In the second quarter of 2013, there was just under 6.2 million total square feet of industrial space within Hunterdon County. Compared to adjacent counties, Hunterdon County had the highest vacancy rate (28.5 percent) and lowest average triple net lease rate (\$3.56) (a triple net lease is a lease agreement where the tenant or lessee agrees to pay all real estate taxes, building insurance, and maintenance in addition to any normal fees that are expected under the agreement (rent, utilities, etc.)). In October 2013, the average asking sale price for industrial properties within Hunterdon County ranged widely, from \$17 per square foot for manufacturing space to \$188 per square foot for industrial condo space.

Located adjacent to the Northern and Central New Jersey markets, over 83 percent of the available industrial building space for lease in Hunterdon County is characteristic of warehouse, with average asking prices of \$12.40 per square foot per year. While E-Commerce is expected to be a major driver of warehouse demand as well as new development for distribution facilities within the Central New Jersey market, buildings in ancillary markets like Hunterdon County (not located along the Turnpike Corridor) will need to remain aggressively priced in order to be attractive to buyers – that is, to compensate for the fact that the north-south arterial options within the County are inferior to those offered by the New Jersey Turnpike.

Figure 12: Industrial Market Statistics, 2Q 2013

	Total SF	Total Vacant Available SF	Total Vacant Available %	Total net Absorption*	Leasing Activity	SF Under Construction	Total Average Triple Net Lease Rate
Morris County	39,155,321	3,587,641	9.2%	790,552	5,092,463	31,000	\$5.54
Mercer County	29,267,324	3,791,824	13.0%	67,358	763,630	0	\$3.67
Somerset County	27,311,688	1,559,731	5.7%	235,544	279,486	0	\$4.52
Hunterdon County	6,196,365	1,767,038	28.5%	72,815	22,000	0	\$3.56
Warren County	6,122,373	981,022	16.0%	(51,843)	14,400	0	\$3.93
NJ Overall	626,325,798	49,567,346	7.9%	650,996	12,315,343	2,109,808	\$5.15

Source: NAI James E. Hanson, Market Report: Northern NJ, 2Q 2013.

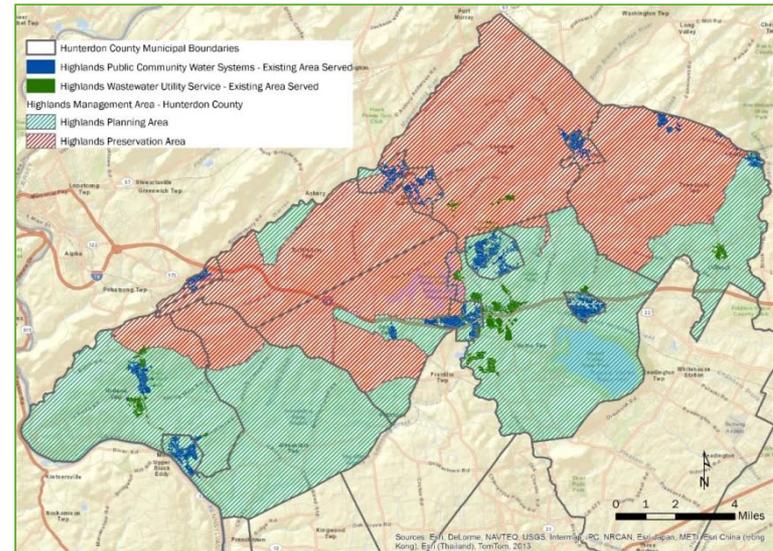
*Net Absorption is the net change in occupied space in a given market between the current measurement period and the last measurement period. Net absorption can be either positive or negative and must include decreases as well as increases in inventory levels.

Environment

Hunterdon County is primarily rural and semi-rural, and protection of natural resources and land (including woodlands, mature trees, and vegetation) is an important County goal. To date, the County has preserved over 360 farms and 30,000 acres with its Farmland Preservation program and over 8,000 acres of County parkland. As is encouraged by the New Jersey Draft State Plan, development in Hunterdon County should be targeted in specific centers and away from areas that have been targeted for preservation. According to the 2007 Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan, the natural environment of Hunterdon County will dictate how development occurs in the County. It is a goal of the County to minimize environmental damage and ensure sustainability.

The majority of municipalities in Hunterdon County (15 of 26) fall within the New Jersey Highlands Region. This region is governed by strict environmental rules that recognize the critical environmental and aesthetic value of the area. According to the Highlands Master Plan, adopted in 2008, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act was enacted by the State Legislature of New Jersey to protect, enhance, and restore Highlands natural resources, and, in particular, water resources. The Highlands Act “seeks to protect the Region’s public trust resources through a ‘comprehensive approach,’ including the immediate imposition of stringent water and natural resource standards in the Preservation Area [and] a reorganization of land use powers to emphasize regional planning for the entire Highlands Region...”

Figure 13: the Highlands Region of Hunterdon County



While conformance to the Highlands Act is voluntary for land within the Planning Area, it is mandatory for land within the Preservation Area.

Nearly all Hunterdon County municipalities that fall within the Highlands Region have adopted Highlands Master Plan Elements. Alexandria’s plan element, characteristic of those of other municipalities, acknowledges that “it is the overarching policy of this Plan to ensure that development of the Highlands Preservation Area does not exceed the available environmental and infrastructural capacity to support it.” It is recognized that the Highlands regulations, meant to protect the environment, will severely limit economic development opportunities.

Source: New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (NJ Highlands Council)

Environment (continued)

Five Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) cleanup sites exist in Hunterdon County, including Crown Vantage Landfill (Alexandria), Curtis Specialty Papers (Milford and Alexandria), De Rewal Chemical Company (Kingwood), Myers Property (Franklin), and El Paso Energy Corporation (Flemington). The first four sites listed are National Priorities List sites, and the last site is part of the RCRA (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act) Corrective Action Program.

As per the EPA website, the National Priorities List (NPL) is the “list of national priorities among the known releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants throughout the United States and its territories. The NPL is intended primarily to guide the EPA in determining which sites warrant further investigation.” The RCRA Corrective Action Program, “run by EPA and 43 authorized states and territories, works with facilities that have treated, stored, or disposed of hazardous wastes (TSDs) to protect public health and the environment by investigating and cleaning up hazardous releases to soil, ground water, surface water, and air at their facilities.”

Development that could otherwise occur on these sites is currently impeded due to contamination. Remediation of these sites will provide additional opportunities for Hunterdon County’s economic growth, as well as benefit the natural environment.



Curtis Specialty Papers Superfund Site

Source: <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/index.htm>;
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/hazard/correctiveaction/index.htm>;

Photo: <http://www.lehighvalleylive.com>



Background Tours and Studies



Background Tours and Studies Overview

Preparation of this report was informed by a number of background reports pertaining to Hunterdon County as well as County tours and site visits.

Several background tours of Hunterdon County were conducted by the project team, local representatives and interested stakeholders, with visits to key sites including town centers and rural areas, emerging redevelopment and mixed-use sites, vacant corporate offices, retail centers, tourist attractions, important transportation corridors and transit stops, industrial sites, and parks and other recreational amenities.



Liberty Village Premium Outlets

Planning reports and studies were reviewed at the beginning of the CEDS process so as to capitalize on prior findings, learn more details about the County and its municipalities, and set the stage to build on previous work. Key points from background reports that are relevant to the CEDS (with a focus on economic development) are summarized on the following pages.

Background reports examined include:

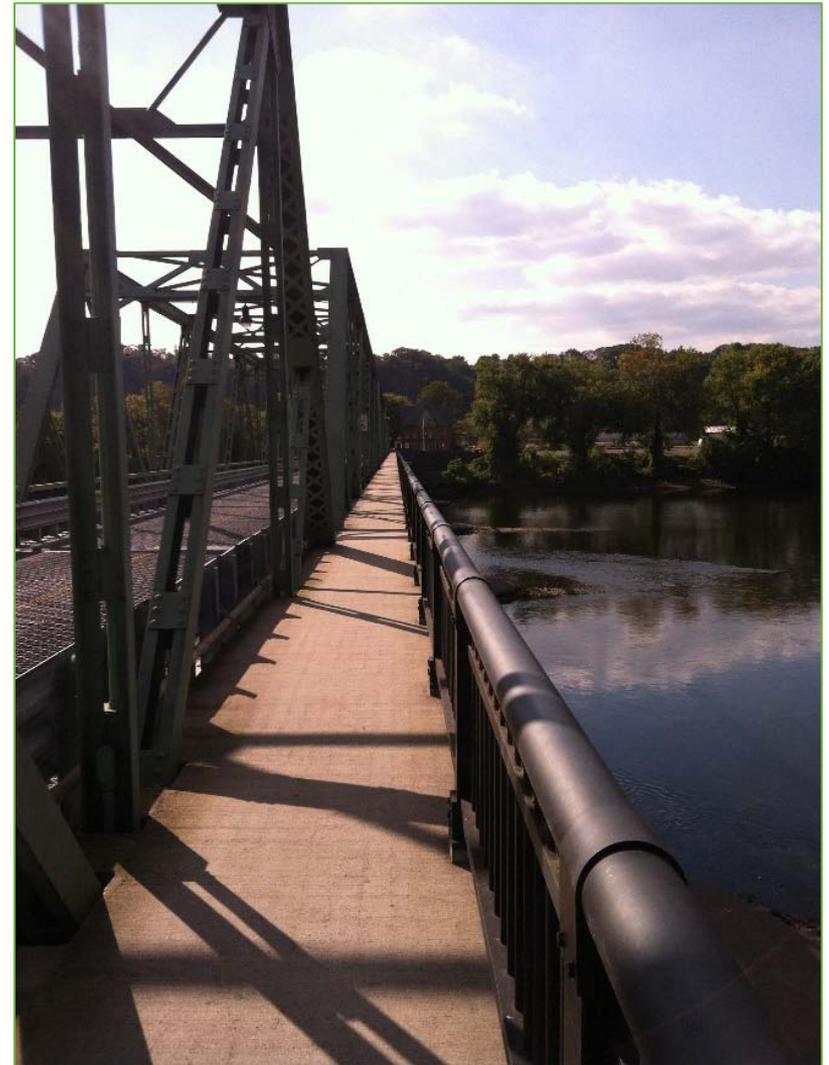
- 2007 Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan
- Hunterdon County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan (2008)
- Hunterdon County 2008 Transportation Plan
- Coordinated County Human Services Transportation Plan, Hunterdon County (2007)
- Leadership Hunterdon 2013 Class White Papers
- Highlands Regional Master Plan (2008)
- Municipal Master Plans (elements relating to economic development) and Highlands Master Plan elements
- Route 202 Corridor Assessment and Multi-Modal Mobility Plan (2009)
- I-78 Corridor Transit Study (2008)
- Together 202: Reimagining Complete Communities Along a Connecting Corridor (2013)

Tours of Hunterdon County

Planners from Hunterdon County met with the consultant team on two tours of Hunterdon County, conducted on September 30 and October 2, 2013. Freeholders John King and Matthew Holt accompanied the tours, providing valuable insight and background on Hunterdon County. Additionally, the group met with Freeholder Director Rob Walton in Hampton Borough.

The group toured a number of sites, focusing on areas of economic importance. All parts of the County were visited, however, to provide a proper understanding of the different municipal typologies in the County, including rural and semi-rural. The tours presented the diversity of land use types in the County.

Examples of sites visited include commercial and industrial sites, both active and vacant, as well as redevelopment sites. Important transportation corridors were highlighted, as were active and dormant rail lines. The group visited recreational sites, parks, and agricultural sites. Attention was given to the river communities and town centers, as well as rural and historic hamlets. The tour visited shopping centers, restaurants, inns, and various tourist attractions. Large office and business sites were also visited.



View Across the Delaware River

Background Study Key Points

2007 Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan



According to Hunterdon County's 2007 Growth Management Plan, Hunterdon County's vision includes protection of land and natural resources, and open space and farmland preservation. New development will be limited to protect the natural resource network and to maintain the rural/semi-rural landscape and economy of the County. Development will be directed away from preservation areas, and small-scale commercial development will be directed to existing towns and villages, with a few new commercial districts along highway corridors. There will be less automobile dependency, and the importance of smart growth is emphasized.

Hunterdon County's suburban land development patterns result from its location in the New Jersey Wealth Belt, local zoning that favored large lots, advances in telecommunications, the "ratable chase," and declining interest in living in town centers.

The Plan emphasizes Hunterdon County's commitment to sustaining its agriculture industry, which accounts for approximately 50 percent of the County's land. Farmland

is permanently preserved through Hunterdon County's Farmland Preservation Program with funding from the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program. Agriculture has declined since the 1950s due to competition from large agri-business farms, increased expenses, and high taxes. Few farmers in Hunterdon County rely on agriculture as a primary income source, and hobby farms and part-time farmers are common. New Jersey is one of most expensive places to farm in the country, and farm income has been relatively low while farm production costs continue to be high.

There are high-tech growth corridors close to Hunterdon County's eastern boundary on I-287 and Route 1, which have been targeted for clusters of biotech and medical research facilities. High-tech capabilities (including internet and teleconferencing) and home offices will be important in the County's economic development. Twelve municipalities within Hunterdon County have "main streets" which serve an economic function.

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

2007 Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan (contd.)

Historically, the unemployment rate in Hunterdon County has been relatively low when compared to State levels. Income levels have risen significantly over the last decade, as a high percentage of residents are highly-skilled professionals.

While there is need to be wary of the ratables chase, there are also legitimate economic reasons for promoting nonresidential uses, which provide local employment and diversification of the local economy. Municipalities should explore and adopt land use policies that preserve community character while also developing strategies to accommodate economic development.

The Plan recommends that municipalities pay attention to the following for economic growth:

- Agricultural markets (consider agriculture zoning)
- Changing demands of retail businesses; do not over-zone for commercial uses. Use flexible zoning and other incentives to facilitate the conversion and redevelopment of vacant buildings for new or mixed uses

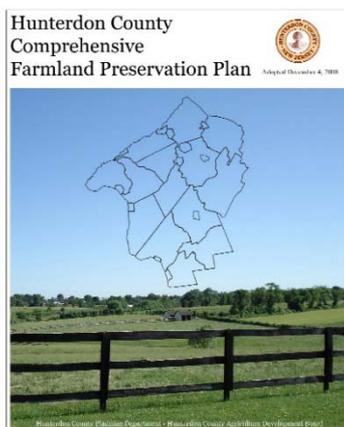
- Avoid single-use buildings, limit commercial development to targeted, concentrated areas
- Evaluate nonresidential zoning for negative consequences of the ratables chase; engage in comprehensive, long-term planning for regional issues like traffic, shared parking, and streetscapes

Economic development strategies provided in the Plan include:

- Main Street New Jersey as an alternative to suburban style commercial development
- All municipality master plans should contain economic development elements

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Hunterdon County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan (2008)



Hunterdon County's Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan supports the County's desire to preserve the rural character of the County despite development pressure and the decline of full time farmers.

According to the Plan, benefits of preserving farmland include:

- Farmland is a non-renewable natural resource
- Locally-grown foods are generally healthier and more convenient
- Property tax benefits
- Maintains clean air, generates little traffic, provides for groundwater recharge
- Can contribute to eco-tourism
- Contributes to rural quality of life

As of this 2008 Plan, Hunterdon County had 127,043 acres of farmland (13.6 percent of New Jersey's total farmland). Agriculture in Hunterdon County is diverse, including hay, feed corn, horses, cattle, sheep, nurseries, grapes, and specialty crops and animals.

The Plan encourages partnership with the Jersey Fresh program and Jersey Grown, who promote use of food grown in New Jersey, and

the Farm Link Program, a resource and referral center for new farmers and farmers looking for resources and opportunities.

Agritourism is encouraged, given the close proximity to Philadelphia and New York City. Examples of agritourism sites are farm museums, local farms, and vineyards. There are four community farmers markets (located in Flemington, High Bridge, and Sergeantsville); community markets could expand based on proximity to large economic markets.

Over the past decades, businesses locating in Hunterdon County have tended to be non-agricultural. Municipalities should take steps to attract businesses that use local agriculture products.

The Plan recommends safety net uses for local agricultural products, such as selling over-produced produce to the New Jersey Department of Corrections, and new use agriculture, which uses traditional crops and livestock for purposes other than food (e.g., medicinal plants, bio-diesel fuel).

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Hunterdon County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan (2008) (contd.)

Agriculture-related businesses include input suppliers and services (there are very few farm equipment dealers within Hunterdon County), farm machinery repairs, and product distributors and processors (there is no major grain processing in Hunterdon County).

As per the Plan, anticipated trends in agriculture include the following:

- Continuation towards smaller, more intensive use farms
- Innovative marketing
- Continued importance of part-time farmers and small farms
- Profits may increase as agriculture enters new phase towards smaller, more intensive farming and high value crops

Flexible land use regulations (ordinances and policies supporting agriculture) are essential, including streamlining the review process, giving farmers flexibility, and provision of agricultural labor housing.

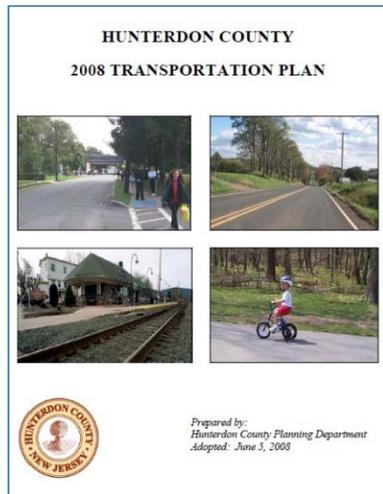
Hunterdon County organizations that support agriculture include the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce, Hunterdon

County Agriculture Development Board (CADB), Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension Service, Hunterdon County Soil Conservation District, and municipal agriculture boards.

Ongoing agricultural needs include technical support, easing of federal and state government burdens, and industry support at a basic level as interest in farming as an occupation has slowed.

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Hunterdon County 2008 Transportation Plan



The Hunterdon County Transportation Plan, adopted in 2008, stresses a smart growth approach that considers all modes of travel, including walking, bicycling, automobile, and mass transit.

- Green roadway design
- Expanding the transportation open space network
- Land use planning for interchange activity centers

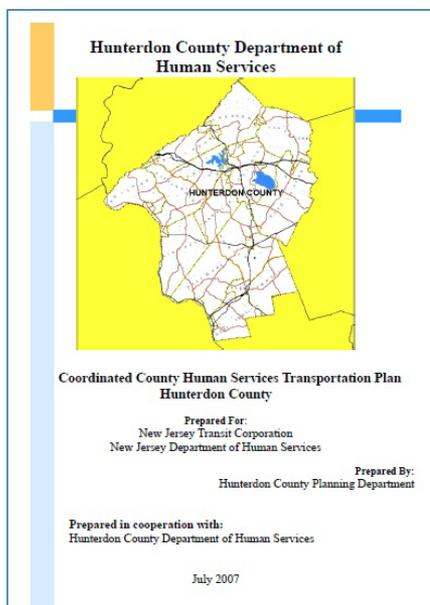
Of note, the Plan states that “although the automobile will continue to be the principal mode of transportation in Hunterdon County, people must become less dependent on their cars” (Hunterdon County Transportation Plan, 62).

Plan strategies and recommendations include:

- Transit oriented development (TOD)
- Traffic calming
- Enhancing the public transportation network
- Revising the County Capital Improvement Program
- Expanding non-vehicular circulation
- Public participation and outreach
- Improving communication and coordination between governmental entities
- Developing and participating in transportation demand management efforts and strategies

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Coordinated County Human Services Transportation Plan Hunterdon County (2007)



This report, prepared by the Hunterdon County Planning Department in cooperation with the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services, provides extensive background on the LINK Transportation Service, which provides both fixed route and demand response transportation service in Hunterdon County.

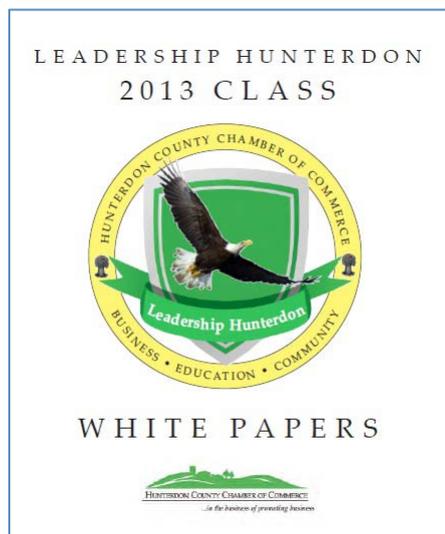
- Find solutions to capacity/operational issues
 - During certain peak times
 - Address facility constraints

Recommendations and priorities from the Plan include:

- Education and outreach
 - More in depth education of how to use LINK system
 - Increase awareness campaign to demystify the LINK
 - Educate policy makers on operation and challenges of the LINK system
- Out of County travel
 - Emphasis on adjoining counties for employment, medical, and/or recreational travel
 - Coordinate with other County para-transit services; need to overcome various operational, procedural, and regulatory obstacles

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Leadership Hunterdon 2013 Class White Papers



Leadership Hunterdon is sponsored by the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce, its Board of Trustees, representing volunteer, non-profit and County agencies, who work with select individuals with a desire to learn about Hunterdon County and to become its future leaders.

The over-arching goal of Leadership Hunterdon is to teach and develop its participants into future leaders who will work for the betterment of Hunterdon County. Since 2011, various Leadership Hunterdon teams have prepared White Papers on critical issues in Hunterdon County. The following notes are taken from the 2013 Leadership Hunterdon Class White Papers.

Team Clinton (infrastructure)

- There is need for a comprehensive strategy regarding infrastructure
- Workplace accessibility is vital
- Providing transit is difficult in the County due to lack of density and distances traveled
- A cooperative between the Chamber of Commerce, government entities, and private enterprises should be explored

- Tourism could be an ideal platform for promoting and expanding transportation services
- Lack of public sewer network is a roadblock to economic development
- Establishes a goal of 100 percent high-speed internet access in the County
- County should engage in mixed-use development and redevelopment

Team Flemington (industry sectors and workforce development)

- The business climate in Hunterdon County is stagnant and lacks significant growth
- High rental prices are a barrier to entry for new businesses
- There have been changes to the manufacturing field due to technological advances
- Financial firms and the healthcare industry have been growing rapidly
- Alignment of supply and demand sides of the workforce market is vital
- Emphasizes importance of soft skills

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Leadership Hunterdon 2013 Class White Papers (contd.)

Team Flemington (continued)

- Strengths of Hunterdon County include location, good schools, highly educated workforce, access to recreation and healthcare
- Weaknesses include lack of public transportation and affordable housing, mismatch between job locations and affordable housing

Team Frenchtown (business retention, expansion, recruitment, and attraction)

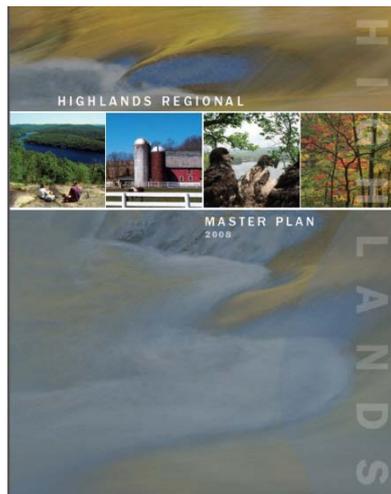
- Weaknesses of Hunterdon County include businesses struggling due to recession, downtown vacancies, a difficult and unfriendly permit process, high property taxes, lack of town center unification, resistance to change
- Economic development opportunities include the Flemington BID, new businesses moving in (such as Costco), conversion of industrial sites to residential, expansion of current businesses, sites with redevelopment potential

Team Lambertville (tourism)

- Tourism, New Jersey's second largest industry sector, provides positive economic and quality of life contributions
- A "great need exists to join together various groups, both civic and private, who collectively can promote the vibrant and diverse landscape of Hunterdon County"
- A significant challenge to tourism is the lack of unification in the County. Tourism efforts need to be linked. Hiring a tourism coordinator is recommended
- Economic benefits of tourism include jobs, increased spending, and economic diversification

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Highlands Regional Master Plan (2008)



As per the Highlands Regional Master Plan, the Highlands Region is a significant east coast green belt that is protected for its natural beauty and environmental significance. The Highlands Act “establishes natural resource protection as the fundamental goal for the Highlands Region” (Highlands Regional Master Plan, 2007).

The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act designated specific areas within the Highlands Region as Preservation Areas (where municipal conformance is required) and Planning Areas (where municipal conformance is voluntary).

As implementation of the Highlands Act will affect and constrain the fiscal and economic situations of member communities, a variety of methods are discussed to encourage a healthy fiscal environment including Property Tax Stabilization, Incentive Planning Aid, Regional Master Plan Compliance Aid, a Legal Aid, and Other State Aid. Additionally, regional development may still occur in the Highlands Region by taking advantage of opportunities associated with development and/or redevelopment of brownfields and

grayfields, transit villages, downtowns, and existing centers. A Highlands Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program exists for landowners to transfer the development potential of land that has been targeted for preservation to areas that are more appropriate for development.

Sustainable economic development is a priority; economic growth will be accommodated in a sustainable manner, and may include such non-development activities as business retention, expansion, and tourism opportunities. There may also be redevelopment of underutilized areas, development in areas without environmental constraints, infill, and brownfields redevelopment.

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Delaware Township Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan (amended 2011) economic element

Delaware Township supports economic development initiatives suggested by the NJ Department of Agriculture, including support for the ornamental horticulture, field crop and forage crop, organic, equine, and agritourism industries. Support can be provided through methods such as ensuring plant and horse health, supporting organic production and marketing, supporting green energy, promoting cost-sharing, and expanding roadside programs.

Delaware Township has had success with Community Farmers Markets (including those in Sergeantsville and other small farm stands) as well as a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program started in 2010.

Plan recommendations include streamlining permitting and applications, provision of further funding and help from the township, and implementation of flexible land use regulations.

East Amwell Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan (2010) economic element

According to the economic element of the East Amwell Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan, field and forage crops are the dominant agricultural use in East Amwell. These supply the large equine and smaller livestock sectors. Vineyards, ornamental horticulture, organics, livestock, and poultry are also important.

Agricultural support recommendations in East Amwell Township include:

- Allowing microbreweries on farms
- Allowing sale of a wide variety of products in farm markets along highway
- Adoption of a strong right to farm ordinance

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Flemington State Agency Opportunities and Constraints Analysis (2010)

This analysis emphasizes the importance of Flemington's historical character for fostering economic growth. Flemington can address its need to grow its economic base through redevelopment of the former Union Hotel, which was declared an Area in Need of Redevelopment in 2010. The desire to return passenger rail to Flemington is another key component of the plan to revitalize Flemington.

Redevelopment potential is being explored on other properties, such as the Agway and Flemington Cut Glass properties. Future commercial development in Flemington is expected to occur mainly from redevelopment.

Master Plan of the Borough of Flemington (2010)

The Master Plan of the Borough of Flemington contains a number of goals related to economic development, including the following:

- Encourage community and economic development
- Integrate residential and commercial segments
- Strengthen and enhance the commercial sector with emphasis on attracting specialty retail and restaurants, and encourage redevelopment of underutilized properties, especially within the Downtown Business District
- Encourage a redevelopment solution for the Union Hotel property

- Reinforce the center around the core business district along Main Street and adjacent areas, improve the Liberty Village area, and improve the gateway at the northern end where Main Street meets Walter Foran Boulevard and Park Avenue

Additionally, redevelopment has occurred in Flemington, and may serve as a model for other areas in Hunterdon County wishing to redevelop.

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Report of the Frenchtown Downtown Revitalization and Planning Committee (2012)

The Frenchtown Downtown Revitalization and Planning Committee was tasked with fostering the economic vitality of Frenchtown. Specific responsibilities of the Committee include creation of a business development plan; encouragement of cooperative business practices; streetscape, parking, building, sign design, and lighting improvements; marketing, advertising and promotions; downtown management, and the use of the NJ Special Improvement District statutes. The key recommendation of this report is the creation of an Economic Development Commission.

Other recommendations from the report include:

- Create a Business Improvement District
- Improve streetscape and signage
- Develop and expand connecting trail systems
- Build a coherent branding and advertising program
- Redevelop Kerr's Hatchery/Warehouse site
- Establish an Arts and Community Center
- Encourage and strengthen building upkeep in the downtown
- Improve parking
- Build the new Riverbank Park
- Encourage Shale Cliff development
- Establish a visitors center

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Sustainable Economic Development Plan for High Bridge (2011)

This economic development plan notes that while High Bridge has a small downtown, the municipality is mainly composed of single-family homes. As a mostly residential borough, there is interest in home-based businesses.

High Bridge has at times struggled with vacancies downtown. Existing retail opportunity gaps that fit the character of the borough and could fill vacancies include optical goods, personal care and jewelry, book stores, and full-service restaurants.

Economic development issues include:

- Lack of retail diversity
- Limited ratables
- Vacancies
- Limited water and sewer capacity
- Run-down image and appearance of downtown

Raritan Township Master Plan (2008)

Although the Raritan Township Master Plan does not include an economic element, several points are relevant to the goals of this CEDS. Limiting growth is a major priority, as is reducing new single-family

Economic development goals include:

- Accommodate economic growth in a sustainable manner
- Support existing businesses and attract new, complimentary businesses
- Enhance appearance of downtown area
- Diversify economy by using existing assets to transform borough into destination for cultural/heritage tourism and outdoor recreation tourism
- Market High Bridge in a coordinated manner

residential development. There is also a desire to make existing and future commercial areas more pedestrian friendly. Preservation of open space, historic sites, and farmland is also prioritized.

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

City of Lambertville Master Plan Re-Examination Report (2009)

According to the Lambertville Master Plan Re-examination, there has been high demand for downtown commercial store space. The high cost of renting has resulted in internal subdivision of larger stores.

There has been redevelopment in the city, including former industrial properties (the Old Trenton Cracker factory into offices, a micro-brewery, and fitness center; the Lambertville House as a hotel; the Diamond Silver factory as offices) and rehabilitation and new construction in the case of the Riverwalk complex. A Redevelopment Plan was also adopted for Connaught Hill and the former Lambertville High School.

Route 29, the only federally designated scenic byway in New Jersey, runs through Lambertville. There are a number of historic sites, which also draw tourists. Additionally, a designated Scenic River, the (Lower) Delaware River, runs through Lambertville. The report notes that the “economy of the Lambertville downtown district is critical to the fiscal health of the community. As a community of fine arts and antiques, the downtown merchants rely heavily upon the tourist industry” (City of Lambertville Master Plan Re-Examination Report, 11).

As much of Lambertville is already built out, future growth and development will occur on a smaller scale, and mostly as infill.

Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan for Township of Readington (2009)

This plan provides agricultural industry retention, expansion, and recruitment strategies. Many of the economic development recommendations and concerns are similar to those in the Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan. Additional agricultural development

strategies focus on fee simple farmland preservation efforts, agritourism, community gardens, horse trails, specialty crops, and Christmas trees.

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

West Amwell Township Comprehensive Master Plan (2012) economic element

West Amwell is one of the most rural communities in New Jersey, though the Master Plan acknowledges that farming does not contribute heavily to the economy. There is also a fair amount of home-based businesses, which is viewed positively.

Policy recommendations from the Plan include:

- Build the West Amwell brand as a desirable location for self-reliant families who value privacy
- Encourage local public schools to regionalize
- Limit local government services to efficiently address public safety and health

- Encourage minor subdivision of large properties to create estate lots and small farms
- Encourage development of the Connaught Hill area
- Continue to investigate opportunities on municipal property for revenue improvement
- Relax home based business ordinance for larger lots
- Consider shared police force and court
- Encourage development of Route 31 commercial district
- Reduce debt
- Encourage equestrian farms

Together 202 (2013)

The Together 202 report focuses on creating mobility choices and utilizing a corridor approach to planning for US Route 202. The report considers land use types including edges, centers, crossroads, rural, and parkway. The portion focusing on “edges” looks at those areas of already developed communities as places that should be more complete through proper

land use and transportation planning. Specific transportation recommendations such as bus service and walkable and bikeable connections to more dense areas were identified. The report also looked at improving capacity and congestion at major crossroad intersections, but also indicated that bicycle and pedestrian improvements should be included on these projects.

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

Route 202 Corridor Assessment and Multi-Modal Mobility Plan (2009)

The Route 202 Corridor Assessment is a comprehensive planning document that considers transportation issues and opportunities along the 202 Corridor in both Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. The Corridor Assessment is in-depth as relates to transportation improvements.

The Route 202 Corridor Assessment focuses on traffic improvements, transit strategies, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and smart growth along the corridor. The report is informed by public workshops and steering committee meetings as well as surveys of commuters and employers. The following strategies were developed as part of this study to enhance the corridors:

- **Traffic Improvements:** The Assessment developed a series of concept plans to improve traffic flow along the corridor and eliminate unsignalized median breaks.
- **Pedestrian and bicycle facilities:** The Assessment focused on upgrades to pedestrian and bicycle treatments at busy intersections along the corridor.

- **Transit:** The overall strategy included a phased approach to improving inter-County transit opportunities. The report also looked at ways to improve continuity along existing systems as well as strategies to reduce passenger car trips (park & ride, bus, travel demand management).

Lastly, the Assessment looks at smart growth concepts to aid in reducing vehicle trips along the corridor during peak hours. The Plan created an implementation matrix of short-, medium- and long-term recommended improvements.

Background Study Key Points (contd.)

I-78 Corridor Transit Study (2008)

The I-78 Corridor Transit Study, referenced in NJTPA's Regional Transportation Plan, *Transportation Choices 2030*, identifies transit improvements that would relieve congestion along the already crowded corridor. This comprehensive study evaluated current transit services and facilities and provided future strategies to decrease commuters and freight from driving along I-78.

Proposed enhancements to the existing service included the possibility of extending passenger rail service to Phillipsburg and

potentially Pennsylvania. There were also several express and shuttle bus services recommended to reduce demand on already congested corridors. Additionally, the report made recommendations for the creation or enhancement of Transit Hubs and Park and Ride facilities. Capacity improvements to the mainline corridor were also recommended along with the implementation of travel demand management activities to reduce peak hour traffic flows.

Past, present, and future economic development investments

New Jersey EDA Projects in Hunterdon County

A list of past, present, and future economic development investments in Hunterdon County is required in this CEDS. Although the County has had relatively few projects supported by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, projects funded since 2006 are listed below.

Year	Project Name	Municipality	Project Type	Estimated New Jobs	Program Type	EDA Financing	Total public/private investment
2006	Digital Arts Imaging, LLC	Flemington Borough	SV	3	BGF	\$ 33,749	\$ 183,000
2006	The Acorn Montessori School, Inc.	Clinton Twp	NP	2	SAB	\$ 2,480,000	\$ 4,560,000
2007	NovaDel Pharma Inc.	Raritan Twp	TC	15	BEP	\$ 212,250	\$ 2,500,000
2007	Skyview Farms, LLC	Frenchtown Borough	MF	0	BGF	\$ 36,952	\$ 166,404
2008	Borough of High Bridge (Komeline Sanderson)	High Bridge Borough	SR	0	HSM	\$ 92,460	\$ 92,960
2008	Township of East Amwell (Meszaros Auto Wrecking)	East Amwell Twp	SR	0	HSM	\$ 202,444	\$ 202,944
2008	H.K. Buzby and Sons, Inc.	Lebanon Borough	MF	3	SLP	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 6,580,000
2009	BGA Properties, LLC and Magna-Power Electronics	Flemington Borough	MF	25	BGF	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 2,026,250
2009	Crown Veterinary Specialists, LLC	Lebanon Borough	SV	30	DIR	\$ 300,000	\$ 3,737,375
2009	RHB Acquistion LLC	Lambertville City	MF	2	DIR	\$ 250,000	\$ 252,800
2010	Mechanical Precision, Inc.	Flemington Borough	MF	0	BGF	\$ 45,000	\$ 182,875
2010	The Chubb Corporation	Readington	OF	0	STX	\$ 28,956,550	\$ 442,621,550
2011	RMF Sales Associates Limited Liability Company Inc.	Flemington Borough	SV	0	BGF	\$ 54,000	\$ 273,175
2012	Young Men's Christian Association of Hunterdon County	Various locations	NP	4	SAB	\$ 4,400,000	\$ 6,040,000
2013	Agnes Scholink	Raritan Twp	SR	0	HSR	\$ 5,311	\$ 21,744

Project Type

SV = services
 SR = site remediation
 NP = not-for-profit
 TC = technology
 MF = manufacturing
 OF = office

Program Type

BGF = NJ Business Growth Fund
 SAB = Stand Alone Bond
 BEP = Business Employment Incentive Program
 HSM = Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund - Municipal
 SLP = Statewide Loan Pool for Businesses
 DIR = Direct Loan
 STX = Sales and Use Tax Exemption
 HSR = Hazardous Site Remediation - Commercial

Source: NJ EDA



Action Plan



CEDS Action Plan

The following action plan was developed to guide implementation of projects in Hunterdon County that will capitalize on USEDA funding.

Key stakeholders with economic interests in Hunterdon County were involved in the process of creating the CEDS. Two CEDS Committees, an Executive Committee and a Strategy Committee, were formed to help guide the CEDS process. Additional input was solicited using a number of methods, including public engagement meetings, interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, surveys, and a website allowing public comment.

Vision and mission statements were developed by the CEDS committees to guide the overall direction of the goals, objectives, and projects. The Hunterdon County vision and mission statements were developed over a nine-month series of meetings composed of a consistent group of stakeholders with diverse opinions and visions for the County. The vision statement is a distillation of what they would like to see the County be in the next ten to twenty years. The vision and mission of the CEDS guide the overall direction of the goals, objectives, and projects articulated in the CEDS, and lays out a roadmap in general terms for reaching that vision.

Next, an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) was performed based on findings from County tours, careful review of background reports, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, quantitative analyses, and public input.

Based on the background research and input that formed the SWOT analysis, the Committees then developed six overarching goals for the County CEDS, which are each supported by a number of measurable objectives.

Finally, a number of projects were identified, vetted, and prioritized (through designation of “vital” projects) in order to fulfill these objectives. A grid of strategic investment projects, along with potential partners, timeline, impact, and ease of implementation, forms the basis of the CEDS plan. Partner organizations (and potential sources of funding for the projects) are a key component of the project list.

The project grid is followed by a variety of performance measures that will be tracked in order to monitor County progress. Lastly, consideration is given to coordination and consistency with other plans.

Capitalizing on Unique Assets

Hunterdon County plans to capitalize on its unique assets as a means of bolstering economic development.

For example, agriculture is part of Hunterdon County's brand, and is a unique industry in the area that has been traditionally viewed as a part of the landscape. With the recent rise of the farm-to-table movement, Hunterdon County's farms are poised to capitalize on the renewed interest in local eating. The farm-to-table movement emphasizes locally-grown foods, and encourages development of local, niche, small-scale farms, many of which exist in Hunterdon County. The National Restaurant Association report *What's Hot in 2014 Culinary Forecast* lists the number one trend as "locally sourced meats and seafood," number two as "locally grown produce," number six as "hyper-local sourcing (e.g. restaurant gardens)," and number ten as "farm/estate branded items." Also popular is organic produce, and many consumers will pay a premium for locally-produced, organic products.

At the crossroads of tourism and agriculture is agritourism. Agritourism includes activities such as behind-the-scenes tours, "pick-your-own" activities, and overnight trips for those who want to spend time on a working farm. Wineries provide additional agritourism opportunities. Located close to both Philadelphia and New York City, Hunterdon County is ideally located to draw urbanites looking for a rural change of pace. Agriculture is but one example of the County's unique assets with economic potential.

Hunterdon County also plans to capitalize on unique tourist sites and historic town settings. In particular, the wealth of sites of historic importance in Hunterdon County should be leveraged to draw people to the area, who will stay in local hotels and eat in local restaurants. The New Jersey Historic Trust reports that travel and tourism is the third largest private sector employer in the state of New Jersey. A 2009 report cited in the study mentions that 78 percent of U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and heritage activities while traveling. According to the Historical Marker database, there are 158 historic markers in Hunterdon County, making the area a draw for those interested in cultural and heritage tourism.

Other examples of the County's unique assets are its high quality education system as well as an expanding nationally-recognized healthcare system. Its river-front communities and recreational parks, trails and bicycling opportunities capitalize on a healthy lifestyle desired by the next generation of professionals.



Snyder Research and Extension Farm near Pittstown

Photo: <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/centers/quickinfo.asp?Snyder>

Sources: <http://www.restaurant.org/News-Research/News/What-s-Hot-in-2014-culinary-forecast-confirms-sour>; njht.org; hmdb.org

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High median income
 High education levels
 Highly trained labor force
 Tourism draws (river communities, wineries, historic villages, specialty agriculture, exotic livestock)
 Established cultural and artistic landscape
 High quality of life including K-12 education, Community College, Career Academy, and nationally recognized healthcare
 Advantageous location with respect to market size/potential
 Viable, multi-generational agricultural economy
 Rural quality
 Established equine industry
 Recreational resources including state, county, and municipal parks, trails and waterways

W

Bedroom community; residents tend not to spend locally
 Lack of established dedicated economic development support
 Some town centers have declined and are struggling
 Lack of manufacturing/blue collar labor force
 Minimal transportation connectivity
 Limited water and sewer infrastructure
 Cumbersome regulatory processes, fees, and taxes
 Lack of branding and marketing
 Lack of smaller/affordable/rental housing
 Lack of social amenities for adults and young adults
 Lack of bilingual assistance

Hunterdon County

Fill vacant industrial, retail, and office space and seek opportunities for repurposing/redevelopment as appropriate
 Higher education expansion through collaboration with RVCC, Polytech, and state educational institutions
 Revitalization potential for historic downtowns
 Chance to capitalize on land use for higher density opportunities and to create and nurture walkable communities
 Promotion of recreational and tourism opportunities
 Opportunity for national or regional recreational events
 There is room for economic collaboration among river towns
 Market opportunities for farm stands, farm-to-table dining, organic farming, exotic animals
 More potential to leverage regional cooperation
 Develop next generation of leaders for programs, organizations, and government

Negative attitudes towards development and redevelopment
 Large businesses leaving the county
 Aging population leads to shifting housing demand, support service needs, and labor market
 Lack of jobs that attract younger people
 High cost of living will exclude certain demographic groups
 Lack of new families and children
 Strong marketing and promotion of surrounding recreational activities
 Deep-rooted, restrictive, and cumbersome zoning board beliefs and practices
 Required COAH obligations would strain the rural environment and its limited infrastructure
 Highlands regulations present additional challenges to economic development

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SWOT Analysis: Strengths

High median income

Hunterdon County is historically wealthy, with a 2013 median household income of over \$103,000. A rising share of upper-income households in Hunterdon County likely contributes to high discretionary spending which bodes well for growth in retail and service-related sectors.

High education levels

Nearly half of Hunterdon County's population age 25 and over possess a Bachelor's degree or higher, outperforming New Jersey. Higher concentrations of well-educated residents attract business investment seeking to leverage that educated talent, either through selling services or employing their labor.

Highly trained labor force

Hunterdon County contains a large proportion of skilled workers, the result of a worker population with high levels of educational training and work experience.

Tourism draws (river communities, wineries, historic villages, specialty agriculture, exotic livestock)

Hunterdon County offers a plethora of tourist and recreational options, taking advantage of the unique recreational, cultural, and historical assets in the County. This unique combination of recreational and cultural and heritage assets has helped establish tourism as an important driver of the County's economy.

Established cultural and artistic landscape

The rural beauty of Hunterdon County has long been a magnet for artists, and the preservation of a major part of its core historical culture and architecture combines to create a desirable environment for both visitors and residents.

High quality of life including K-12 education, Community College, Career Academy & nationally recognized healthcare

For many reasons, Hunterdon County is a desirable place to live. The superior public school systems within the County as well as its healthcare system help reinforce the image of the County as having a high quality of life.

Advantageous location with respect to market size/potential

Hunterdon County's location within New Jersey's "Wealth Belt" and its relatively close proximity to two major urban centers (New York City and Philadelphia), in addition to its rural heritage, create various economic advantages, especially for the tourism industry.

Viable, multi-generational agricultural economy

Hunterdon County is committed to sustaining its agriculture industry. Agriculture accounts for 50 percent of the County's land with over 30,000 acres of permanently preserved farmland.

Rural quality

With a beautiful rural landscape comprised of rolling hills, working farms, and attractive historical hamlets, Hunterdon County provides an attractive location for a young, highly-skilled workforce that is heavily vested in an active outdoor lifestyle.

Established equine industry

Hunterdon County had 1,110 equine-related farms in operation in 2007, more than any other county in the state. The equine industry not only helps preserve the rural landscape, but the growing equine industry within the County creates jobs through the expansion of ancillary supporting businesses.

Recreational resources including state, county, and municipal parks, trails, and waterways

An abundance of recreational amenities exist in the County for the enjoyment of both visitors and residents.

SWOT Analysis: Weaknesses

Bedroom community; residents tend not to spend locally

Fostering more local businesses will provide opportunities for people to work locally, which will also increase the money spent in the local economy.

Lack of established governmental economic development support

Although there are several organizations within the County actively working to promote economic development, there is currently no county-oriented governmental entity whose only task is to promote the economic health of Hunterdon County.

Some town centers have declined and are struggling

Highway improvements and increased sewer capacity over the past 40 years have encouraged growth in areas surrounding town centers that were previously greenfields. This has led to a deterioration of the economic vibrancy and viability of some of the County's historical downtown areas.

Lack of manufacturing/blue collar labor force

Finding manufacturing and blue collar labor within the County is a challenge. This workforce tends to be older, and younger hires lack basic math, reading, and computer skills.

Minimal transportation connectivity

Hunterdon County remains car-dependent. Minimal inter and intra-county mass transit connectivity options such as buses, shuttles, and other services can have major impacts on both existing businesses and enterprises looking for new locations.

Limited water and sewer infrastructure

A rural county characterized by low density development, Hunterdon County faces difficulties in providing the infrastructure needed to support business development. A number of municipal officials have noted that the lack of sewer service is a barrier to development.

Cumbersome regulatory processes, fees, and taxes

From a business developer's perspective, high initial upfront fees can be a hindrance to development within the County. Streamlining the application process, even on a preliminary basis, dramatically decreases upfront costs. The additional costs of redeveloping an existing property can be significant to a municipality or township due to resources already in play.

Lack of branding and marketing

There is not currently an organized effort by any county governmental entities or private firms to attract businesses and tourists by using marketing techniques such as developing a consistent brand for the County that would emphasize its unique assets.

Lack of smaller/affordable/rental housing

There is a large discrepancy between the growing demand for smaller and more affordable housing and the current supply. Both young professionals who would like to move to Hunterdon County and empty nester retirees who would prefer to stay in the County cannot afford to do so due to the lack of affordable housing.

Lack of social amenities for adults and young adults

There are currently no public movie theatres in operation in the County. Other traditional recreational and entertainment options for both older adults and "millennials" (33 and younger) are limited within certain areas of the County. There are also limited transit access options for people to visit community, arts, cultural, and recreational resources.

Lack of bilingual assistance

Over the next five years, the Latino population is projected to grow by 25%; the 2010 Census reports 6,722 persons of Hispanic or Latino origin. Assuming that the majority of this growing population will also be working in Hunterdon County, education and assistance to improve bilingual skills will be a crucial need within the workplace.

SWOT Analysis: Opportunities

Fill vacant, industrial, retail, and office space and seek opportunities for repurposing/redeveloped as appropriate

With a 2013 vacancy rate of 40 percent for office space, 7 percent for retail, and 29 percent for industrial space adding up to approximately 3 million square feet of vacant space within the County, there is plenty of opportunity for conversion into the types of spaces that are in demand within the region. Flexible zoning and other incentives can be used to facilitate conversion and redevelopment of obsolete and vacant buildings for new or mixed uses.

Higher education expansion through collaboration with RVCC, Polytech, and state educational institutions

Expansion of our current educational institutions, such as satellite campuses, can help ensure that sufficient training and workforce preparation will be available for Hunterdon County's current and future workforce.

Revitalization potential for historic downtowns

Historic downtown areas such as those in Clinton, Flemington, and Hampton Borough were the backbone of county life since the 1700s. In the last 20-30 years, historic downtowns have suffered economically due to the sprawl patterns of development that have surrounded them. There is tremendous opportunity for a rebirth within these downtowns due to increased demand for walkable downtown areas.

Chance to capitalize on land use for higher density opportunities and to create and nurture walkable communities

Although the County is characterized by low population density, historical downtown locations such as Lambertville and Flemington contain much higher densities offering potential opportunities for infill and redevelopment as well as expansion of walking and biking options for both workers and residents.

Promote recreational and tourism opportunities

Hunterdon County contains a multitude of multimodal options for both recreational and transport purposes. As the County is well known for its beautiful vistas and rural roads, it has potential for an expanded network of dedicated walking and biking paths for both downtown residents and visitors.

Opportunity for national or regional recreational events

Tourism could be greatly increased (for example, in historic town centers and niche farms). The successful expansion of tourism in the County cannot rely solely on promotion at the municipal level, but will also depend on regional cooperation amongst a varied collection of partners.

There is room for economic collaboration among river towns

The County's historical towns that line the Delaware River (Lambertville, Stockton, Frenchtown, and Milford) are currently tourist draws to different degrees. All of these historical communities share the same asset – the Delaware River. These towns cannot operate in isolation but must work together to realize their full economic potential.

Market opportunities for farm stands, farm-to-table dining, organic farming, exotic animals

With over 390 active farms and 30,000 acres of farmland, Hunterdon County maintains a viable agricultural economy. The County has great potential to take advantage of the ever growing demand by consumers, both nationally and regionally, for purchasing food at farm stands and restaurants that is grown locally.

More potential to leverage regional cooperation

There are many opportunities within the County to form regional public-private partnerships as well as establish formal cooperative agreements between municipalities to do joint marketing, mutual support, and advocacy to promote business opportunities.

Develop next generation of leaders for programs, organizations, and government

There is a wealth of institutional knowledge of the County that can be shared and passed on to future leaders.

SWOT Analysis: Threats

Negative attitudes towards development and redevelopment

One of the major concerns of municipal governments and residents in the County is that additional development will raise taxes due to a burden on the local schools. However, many county schools are currently under capacity due to a decline of households with school age children. In addition, an emphasis on focusing development in and around downtown areas will still retain the rural environment that many County residents want to maintain.

Large businesses leaving the County

The impending exit of Merck from the County reflects a national trend of large businesses leaving corporate campus environments for urban settings. There needs to be a retrofit of these office spaces to make these facilities more attractive to the millennial workforce. Municipal and County officials will need to contemplate land-use policies which permit adaptive reuse of office space.

Aging population leads to shifting housing demand, support service needs, and labor market

In the next five years there will be a significant increase in the County of the population aged 55 and older. There is currently a shortage of the type of housing (smaller dwellings in downtown areas) that will be needed to serve this demographic group. Large numbers of jobs will also be vacated due to an aging workforce.

Lack of jobs that attract younger people

Types of jobs that are desirable to younger millennial workers (including high-tech industry jobs as well as those that are located in less formal office spaces and urban locations) are in relatively short supply within the County.

High cost of living will exclude certain demographic groups

The high cost of living in the County combined with the lack of certain amenities (affordable, dense housing and public transportation) make the County an unattainable place for many lower wage earners to work and live in.

Lack of new families and children

High priced housing development is the norm and has been so in recent years. The lack of stable, affordable housing hurts families, the municipalities they desire to live in, and the County's economy. Municipalities have compounded the problem through zoning ordinances and property tax increases, which have priced out first time homeowners and younger families.

Strong marketing and promotion of surrounding recreational activities

Regional marketing organizations such as the Poconos Mountains Visitors Bureau and the Bucks County Conference and Visitors Bureau have been successful in getting the word out concerning their recreational assets.

Deep-rooted zoning board beliefs and practices

Zoning boards within the County's municipalities (as well as municipalities throughout the state) tend to stress development in greenfields and along highway corridors. This development philosophy runs counter to the prevailing demand for mixed use developments in walkable communities.

Required COAH obligations would strain the rural environment and its limited infrastructure

The latest proposed Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) requirements would require additional affordable housing in rural areas that do not have the infrastructure available to handle this additional development. COAH's proposed requirements also conflict with the goals stated in the County's Master Plan supporting rural preservation and housing densities only where infrastructure exists.

Highlands regulations limit economic development opportunities

Although the Highlands Regional Master Plan allows for some economic development in areas with existing infrastructure, opportunities for economic growth in the remaining rural areas are severely limited.

A number of goals and objectives, listed here, were developed using the SWOT analysis as a guide.

Goals

Foster planned economic development

Establish the County's role in facilitating public/private partnerships to enhance economic development

Channel growth and development in the County in an efficient, context-sensitive manner

Provide adequate investment for infrastructure

Invest in and implement adequate transportation options for residents and businesses

Maintain a high quality of life

Objectives

Create a supportive environment to foster entrepreneurship, encourage business development, and maintain a competent, diverse and flexible workforce

Ensure that sufficient technical training and workforce preparation is available and coordinate with the needs of businesses

Create a Public/Private reciprocal agreements, commitments and involvement to ensure outcome expectations

Develop and support the growing specialized agriculture industry

Develop and support the tourism industry

Develop the collective impact of Hospitality/Retail/Entertainment and Recreation Industries

Promote "healthiest County" status

Provide investment strategies, structure, operations planning and resources to promote job growth and business opportunities

Repurpose existing underutilized commercial and industrial properties

Create revitalized and vibrant communities by focusing development in town centers and for transit-oriented development (TOD)

Support housing variety and density in centers that seek redevelopment/revitalization

Encourage broadband service providers to make broadband service available to all town centers and areas containing clusters of commercial establishments

Ensure the reliability and redundancy of County utilities and energy infrastructure

Provide efficient use of existing roadway/highway corridors and town center transportation resources for the movement of goods, services, and people

Increase inter- and intra-County public transit service; increase awareness of available services

Implement bicycle and pedestrian improvements on roads that can accommodate them and where they are needed

Support and develop Hunterdon County's arts, cultural, recreational, and historic assets

Promote a culture of life-long learning among County residents, workers, and employers

Increase the number of local and regional visitors to County parks and open space amenities

Strategic Investment Projects

The terms at right are defined to allow the reader to understand the intent and purpose of their meaning and use within the following matrices.

Vital projects that have been prioritized by the CEDS Committee are highlighted throughout the project matrix in **bold**.

The projects in the following grids are steps for implementing measurable County objectives, which support the County’s six broad goals.

*Projections of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs created (identified in the matrix under “Timeline/FTE”) and private investment anticipated (shown in the matrix under Impact/Investment) on pages 111-122 are estimates based on input from CEDS Committee volunteers who are local professionals. The information has not been independently verified and is provided for informational purposes only. Although every reasonable effort is made to present current and accurate information, the County of Hunterdon makes no guarantees of any kind and as such, this information should not be used for any other purpose.

<u>Goals:</u>	Broad, overarching statements of what the County would like to achieve. Goals are qualitative in nature and as such not necessarily measurable.
<u>Objectives:</u>	Quantitative in nature, objectives are measurable statements that support the achievement of goals.
<u>Projects:</u>	Specific actions taken to carry out the objectives.
<u>Project Description:</u>	A description and explanation of the specific actions to be carried out.
<u>Potential Partners:</u>	A list of agencies and organizations that may serve as partners on a project. These potential partners are not obligated to participate in any way, they are simply agencies that might provide help and/or funding in the future.
<u>Timeline:</u>	The general time range for project completion; short-term objectives should be accomplished within the next 2 years, medium-term objectives within 2-5 years, and long-term objectives beyond 5 years.
<u>Impact:</u>	A general description of the magnitude of effect the project will have. Some projects tie in to multiple overarching goals and themes and as such will have a greater impact on the County’s economy.
<u>Ease of Implementation:</u>	A qualitative description of the ease and likelihood of project implementation based on factors such as political will, funding, and physical constraints.

List of acronyms, abbreviations and distinctions

BOCF: Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders

CADB: Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board

DMO: Destination Marketing Organization

GRWIB: Greater Raritan Workforce Investment Board

HART: (Hunterdon Area Rural Transit) - HART Commuter Information Services
Transportation Management Authority

HCCC: Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce

HHC: Hunterdon Health Care

HUD: United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

MSA: Metropolitan Statistical Area

NJBAC: New Jersey Business Action Center

NJDCA: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

NJDEP: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

NJDOL: New Jersey Department of Labor

NJDOT: New Jersey Department of Transportation

NJEDA: New Jersey Economic Development Authority

NJHMFA: New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency

NJRA: New Jersey Redevelopment Authority

NJTPA: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

NOFA: Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey

POLYTECH: Hunterdon County Polytech Career and Technical School

RCRA: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

RVCC: Raritan Valley Community College

TDM: Travel Demand Management

TOD: Transit Oriented Development

Recreational opportunities relate to open space and outdoor activities

Entertainment relates to restaurants, cultural and heritage, etc.

Farm references the farm industry

Farming references attractions/agritourism

Cycling for recreational purposes versus

Bicycling as a means of transportation

Familiarity “Fam” Tour: State organized tours of specific areas to attract tourism (Business to Business activity)

Goal: Foster planned economic development

*see page 109

Objective: Create a supportive environment to foster entrepreneurship, encourage business development, and maintain a competent, diverse and flexible workforce

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline / FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of implementation</i>
1 Create an organizational structure for the CEDS initiative whose function is to lead economic development and implement the CEDS	Hunterdon County; HCCC; local municipalities	Short	High	Moderate
2 Work with local municipalities to identify funding opportunities, to encourage legislative activities and to remove legislative barriers to regionally significant projects	NJ Office of Planning Advocacy; Hunterdon County; local municipalities	Short	High	Moderate
3 Create a coordinated, measured business mentoring program (part educational, part practical) for local businesses.	HCCC; RVCC; Polytech; local schools; institutions of higher education, Healthcare Centers; Hunterdon County; GRWIB	Short 25	Medium \$500,000	Easy-Moderate
4 Implement a comprehensive <i>Buy Local</i> campaign to support local businesses	Local municipalities and businesses; Hunterdon County	Short 10-20	Medium \$250,000	Easy
5 Using a commercially available business data list, maintain an inventory of all classes of businesses (e.g., by NAICS code), their locations, and estimated employment levels. Evaluate annually.	HCCC; Hunterdon County	Short	Medium	Moderate
6 Create a mechanism to understand and measure the ongoing needs of the workforce and establish a multi-year strategy to address those needs	Hunterdon County; RVCC; HCCC; GRWIB	Short-Medium 2-5	Medium \$50,000	Moderate
7 Expand or create business development courses or seminars focused on helping small local businesses grow	RVCC; GRWIB; HCCC Foundation	Medium 5-10	Medium \$250-500,000	Moderate-Difficult
8 Analyze existing business sectors and develop strategies to promote various sectors; seek to cross promote sectors where feasible, with an emphasis on small business	Municipalities; HCCC; Chamber Radio; Hunterdon County website	Short-Long 2-5	Medium \$500-2,000	Moderate

Objective: Create Public/Private reciprocal agreements, commitments and involvement to ensure outcome expectations

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of implementation</i>
1 Advocate for streamlining of state and local regulatory requirements; reduce red tape associated with commercial development or redevelopment; support efforts that will reduce tax burden	Hunterdon County Planning Department; local municipalities (zoning and planning boards, town councils)	Short – Long	High	Difficult
2 Establish an annual County Convention for education of the County, municipalities, and residents, implementing a structured approach to sharing of information, toolbox ordinances, etc.	Local municipalities; business leaders and organizations; Hunterdon County; developers; HCCC; HCCC Foundation	Short – Long	High	Moderate
3 Create and implement marketing to attract businesses that may be interested in locating in Hunterdon County	Choose NJ; HCCC; Flemington BID; Chamber of Commerce Radio; Rutgers; MBA program	Short 10-15	Medium \$150-500,000	Moderate
4 Ensure that zoning conducive to business is in place (commercial, industrial, mixed-use, etc.)	Local municipalities and zoning boards	Medium	High	Moderate-Difficult
5 Create an ongoing structured approach to education: liaisons between each municipality and the County, ongoing education (breakfast talks, roundtables, etc.)	Local municipalities; business leaders and organizations; Hunterdon County; developers	Short	High	Easy
6 Coordinate and facilitate public-private partnerships to support businesses that correspond to regional marketplace needs	Hunterdon County; local businesses; HCCC	Short	High	Easy

Goal: Foster planned economic development (cont.)

*see page 109

Objective: Ensure that sufficient technical training and workforce preparation is available and coordinate with the needs of businesses

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of implementation</i>
1 Direct GRWIB to expand and promote its workforce development resources	GRWIB; Hunterdon County	Short	Medium	Easy
2 Coordinate polls and employer needs surveys to compile information regarding County businesses to determine workforce needs	GRWIB; RVCC; Polytech, HMC; Hunterdon County; HCCC; HCCC Foundation	Short	Medium	Easy
3 Monitor market focused needs are met through formal education and programs	RVCC; Polytech; Hunterdon County; HCCC Foundation; HHC	Long	High	Moderate

Objective: Develop and support the growing specialized Agriculture Industry

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of implementation</i>
1 Support updating of NJ Right to Farm legislation to readdress allowable activities responding to today's economic environment	CADB; Hunterdon County; NJ Dept. of Agriculture; Rutgers Extension Services	Short	Low	Difficult
2 Promote expansion of wineries and complementary farms and businesses (cheese, meat, honey, other food, rare animal farms)	CADB; Hunterdon County; NJ Dept. of Agriculture; local businesses; Rutgers Extension Services	Short 20-25	Medium \$50-75,000	Easy
3 Promote Hunterdon County's unique agricultural assets as year-round attractions	NJ Dept. of Agriculture; Jersey Fresh; Hunterdon County; local municipalities; CADB; HCCC/DMO; Rutgers Extension Services; 4-H	Short 5-10	Low \$100- 250,000	Easy
4 Create and maintain database of agricultural businesses and contacts and develop a mechanism for ascertaining support needs	CADB; Hunterdon County; local municipalities; HCCC/DMO	Short	Medium	Easy
5 Promote the slow food, farm-to-table and farm-to-school movements and use of local farm products	CADB; Jersey Fresh; HCCC/DMO; municipalities; private farm stands; local grocery stores	Medium	Medium	Easy
6 Promote and organize farmers markets, CSAs, niche organic farms, and unique farms in Hunterdon County; expand roadside market programs and evaluate growth potential	HCCC/DMO; CADB; local municipalities; Jersey Fresh; Hunterdon land trust; NOFA; individual farm businesses	Medium	High	Moderate
7 Evaluate the development of a large regional culinary school with restaurant for niche farm-to-table cooking, natural foods, etc.	Establish culinary institute partnership; Jersey Fresh; Polytech; HCCC/DMO; private industry	Long	Med-High \$30-50,000	Difficult

Goal: Foster planned economic development (cont.)

*See page 109

Objective: Develop and support the Tourism Industry

	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of implementation</i>
1	Support the HC Chamber of Commerce as the State's Destination Marketing Organization to coordinate and market Hunterdon County through public/private partnerships and further support the tourist industry	NJ Division of Travel and Tourism; HCCC/DMO; NJ Travel Industry Association; public-private partnership; municipal collective impact	Medium-Long	High	Moderate
2	Develop a consistent brand for Hunterdon County for marketing purposes	Hunterdon County; private firms; municipalities; HCCC	Short	Med-High \$25,000	Moderate-Difficult
3	Create a clearinghouse/calendar of all local activities (an easily searchable, indexed, categorized menu of activities and events in the area)	Local businesses; Hunterdon County; HCCC; Chamber Radio; HC C&HC; Flemington BID	Short	Medium	Easy
4	Import "name brand" activities to the area to highlight existing facilities	local businesses; Flemington BID; County-wide museums; associations; private sponsors	Medium	Medium	Moderate
5	Coordinate marketing of historic sites in the County	HC C&HC; NJ Historic Preservation Office; HCCC; Flemington BID	Medium	Medium	Easy
6	Establish programs or create consistent marketing/resources for agritourism (summer camps, weekends on a working farm, "pick your own" opportunities, familiarity tours)	Local municipalities; local businesses; NJ State Travel & Tourism; restaurants; Hunterdon County	Short - Long	Med-High \$50-75,000	Moderate
7	Address parks/recreation/tourism needs to be coordinated with parks and open space plan	Local municipalities; local businesses; POSAC	Short-Medium	Medium	Moderate
8	Introduce new destination events to draw in residents and visitors	Hunterdon County, local river municipalities; grants; HCCC/DMO; NJ Fam Tours	Medium	High	Moderate
9	Promote the town centers and river communities collectively tourism and recreation; convene meetings which lead to a formal, non-binding Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) setting forth roles, responsibilities, and funding requirements	Local river municipalities; local businesses; NJ Fam Tours; HCCC/DMO	Short- Med	Med - High \$50,000	Moderate
10	Increase coordination between municipalities to create synergies between locations and events	Hunterdon County, municipal elected officials; associations; private partnerships	Short - Medium	Medium - High	Moderate

Goal: Foster planned economic development (cont.)

*See page 109

Objective: Develop and educate those involved in the Trade Industries

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of implementation</i>
1 Establish training programs consistent with meeting the local and regional trade industries needs (i.e., plumbing, electrical, construction, green industries, etc.)	RVCC; HCCC Foundation; Polytech; Private industries	Long	Moderate -High	Moderate
2 Establish a process that assures the collective impact of programs to needs (i.e., apprenticeships, internships; etc.)	Private industry; RVCC; HCCC Foundation GRWIB; Polytech; High schools	Long	Moderate	Moderate

Objective: Develop the collective impact of the Hospitality/Retail/Entertainment and Recreation industries

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of implementation</i>
1 Attracting, supporting and training entrepreneurial efforts in these industries for skilled professionals	Hunterdon County Polytech; high schools; local municipalities; HCCC; associations	Long	Medium	Moderate
2 Internal and external coordination and marketing of inter-connectedness of municipalities, attractions and recreational activities	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; businesses; attractions;	Long	Medium - High	Moderate - Difficult

Objective: Promote "Healthiest County" status

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of implementation</i>
1 Promote national recognition of Hunterdon Medical Center Family Practice Residency & Model Healthcare Practices to attract employees and collateral businesses, services	NJ & National healthcare media; real estate companies; HCCC, Hunterdon County Chamber Radio, satellite municipalities; Hunterdon County Partnership for Health; HPR Safe Coalition; Hunterdon County OEM	Short-Long 100	Medium \$25- 500,000	Easy

Goal: Establish the County’s role in facilitating public/private partnerships to enhance economic development

*See Page 109

Objective: Provide investment strategies, structure, operations planning and resources to promote job growth and business opportunities

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of implementation</i>
1 Create a clearinghouse online for sharing information for cost-effective, efficient and measureable activities	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; HCCC	Short	Medium	Easy
2 Hold ongoing meetings and information sessions to support collaboration to keep municipalities current regarding planning issues, legislation, regulations, zoning, application process, etc.	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; Hunterdon County Convention; HC Planning Board; Shared Services; SWAC	Long	Medium	Easy
3 Support the County’s shared services initiative to increase cooperation and collaboration between and among the County and its municipal partners.	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; non-profit organizations; private industry organizations	Long	Medium	Moderate
4 Meet the USEDA performance measures, consistent with CEDS implementation, particularly in job employment and retention rates, training and private sector investment.	Hunterdon County; GRWIB; HCCC Foundation; RVCC; Polytech;	Long	Med - High	Moderate
5 Create a County-sponsored CEDS Compliant Community Program to encourage and motivate municipal support and participation in the County CEDS project objectives.	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; HCCC;	Medium	Medium \$15-20,000	Moderate

Goal: Channel growth & development in the County in an efficient, context-sensitive manner *See Page 109

Objective: Repurpose existing underutilized commercial and industrial properties

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1 Create and maintain a countywide property GIS database containing identified underutilized commercial and industrial properties. Measure vacancy & ratable value trends (improvement value) for said properties by consulting with local brokers & municipal real property tax assessors. Include information on square footage, frontage, zoning, utilities	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; local brokers and tax assessors; Rutgers; HCCC	Short- Long \$150,000	Med - High 2-10	Moderate
2 Undertake analysis of options to maximize the redevelopment, reuse, or repurposing of the Merck property	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; private businesses; NJRA; NJEDA; NJHMFA; HUD; HCCC Foundation	Med- Long	High \$75- 150,000	Difficult
3 Conduct and implement redevelopment projects for vacant or underutilized commercial, industrial, office, and retail sites, including mixed use projects where appropriate	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; HUD; NJRA; NJEDA; NJHMFA; HCCC Foundation	Medium- Long	High	Difficult
4 Study and evaluate feasibility of Research and Development Corridor opportunities	Hunterdon County; municipalities; HCCC	Short-Med	High \$75,000	Moderate

Objective: Create revitalized and vibrant communities by focusing development in town centers and transit oriented development (TOD) areas

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1 Promote flexible zoning and other incentives to facilitate conversion/ redevelopment of vacant buildings for new or mixed uses	Local municipalities; Hunterdon County	Short- Medium	High	Moderate- Difficult
2 Complete an analysis of potential transit oriented development (TOD) sites in Hunterdon County	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; NJTPA; HART	Short	Medium \$50-75,000	Easy
3 Using County GIS parcel data layers, municipal assessor data, and annual building permit data, evaluate the scale and type of development/redevelopment occurring in the County's town centers relative to other geographic locations in the County.	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; NJDCA; NJDEP	Short	Medium	Easy
4 Implement façade and streetscape improvements	Main Street New Jersey/USA; Business Improvement Districts; citizen groups and other municipalities	Short 25-50	High \$2.5M-7.5M	Easy
5 Fill existing retail vacancies and revitalize downtown shopping districts within town centers	Business Improvement Districts; local municipalities; local real estate brokers; local businesses; local business associations, guilds, and chambers of commerce	Medium- Long	High	Difficult
6 Designate potential locations for transit villages in Hunterdon County	NJDOT; Hunterdon County; local municipalities	Short	Medium	Moderate
7 Install wayfinding signage	Local municipalities; Hunterdon County	Short- Med 10-15	Low \$250-500,000	Moderate

Goal: Channel growth and development in the County in an efficient, context-sensitive manner (cont.)

*See Page 109

Objective: Support housing density in centers that seek redevelopment/revitalization

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1 Support shared services through professional resources, assist in reviewing municipal zoning codes where density can be supported	Hunterdon County; DPW; SWAC; HCCC; local municipalities; NJDCA	Medium	Medium	Moderate
2 Inform, encourage, and where appropriate, incentivize local planning and zoning boards regarding the benefits and importance of housing density and its relationship to economic revitalization	Hunterdon County; municipalities	Short	High	Easy - Difficult (depending on municipality)
3 Create and measure a public information campaign to educate residents as to the importance and purpose of preservation areas versus growth areas (Priority Preservation Investment and Priority Growth Investment Areas as per the New Jersey Draft State Plan)	Hunterdon County; local municipalities	Short	Low \$50-100,000	Easy
4 Evaluate and monitor development trends in growth areas as per the New Jersey Draft State Plan	Hunterdon County; local municipalities	Medium	Medium	Moderate-Difficult
5 Support and encourage the development of affordable housing opportunities in town centers and areas with adequate infrastructure.	Hunterdon County; Council on Affordable Housing (COAH); local municipalities; housing advocate groups	Medium	High	Moderate-Difficult
6 Work with the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to identify options for reassigning affordable housing obligations from rural environments to town centers or areas with adequate infrastructure.	Hunterdon County; COAH; local municipalities; housing advocate groups	Long	High	Difficult

Goal: Provide adequate investment for infrastructure

*See Page 109

Objective: Encourage broadband service providers to make broadband service available to all town centers and areas containing current or future potential clusters of commercial establishments

	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1	Support high speed internet access in identified technology corridors as well as town centers	Connecting NJ/State Broadband Initiative; County utilities/infrastructure	Short-Medium	High	Moderate
2	Conduct a cost/benefit/needs analysis of developing a tech corridor within the County or single town	NJ Energy Council; Hunterdon County; municipalities; HCCC Foundation	Medium	Medium \$50-75,000	Medium
3	Apply for broadband grants to expand broadband connectivity and higher speed Internet access	Connecting NJ/State Broadband Initiative; Community Connect; Farmbill Broadband Program	Short	Medium-High	Medium
4	Ensure that data related to broadband service is correct and updated	Connecting NJ/State Broadband Initiative; Hunterdon County	Short	Low	Easy
5	Annually, utilize GIS mapping and data provided by area broadband service providers to evaluate the coverage areas around the County, with particular focus paid to town centers and business clusters.	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; local businesses	Short	Medium	Easy
6	Ensure job training and job growth opportunities are consistent with future infrastructure	RVCC; Polytech; HCCC; HCCC Foundation; HMC	Short-Long	Medium - High	Moderate to Difficult

Objective: Ensure the reliability and redundancy of County utilities and energy infrastructure

	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1	Work with energy suppliers to provide redundancy in concentrated areas of housing and business (electric, gas, phone, renewables)	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; electricity providers	Medium	High	Moderate
2	Analyze potential obsolete facilities and operations to meet future CEDS requirements	Hunterdon County Housing; municipalities; public utilities	Long	Med - High \$50-75,000	Moderate - Difficult

Goal: Invest in & implement adequate transportation options for residents & businesses

*See Page 109

Objective: Provide efficient use of existing roadway/highway corridors and town center transportation resources for the movement of goods, services, and people

	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1	Implement complete interchanges on Interstate 78 (i.e., Exit 20-Cokesbury Road)	NJDOT; local municipalities	Long	High \$40M	Difficult
2	Address congestion on Route 31 (and effects of lane changes of traffic) - complete dual lane Route 31	NJDOT; Hunterdon County; local municipalities	Long	High \$11M	Difficult
3	Implement recommendations of Route 202 Corridor Assessment & Multi-Modal Plan-2009; including accommodations for transit, pedestrians, bicycles	Raritan Township; NJDOT; Hunterdon County; HART	Medium	Med \$1M-5M	Moderate
4	Expand park-and-ride capacity where possible; explore opportunities for leasing parking spaces/"Share a Lot" facilities	NJDOT; HART	Long	Medium	Moderate
5	Engage private sector to increase worksite transportation demand management (TDM) strategies (i.e., ridesharing, telework, compressed work week)	HART; HCCC; NJ Transit; LINK	Short	Low	Easy
6	Continue to support and promote ride-sharing and carpooling	HART; Hunterdon County; corporate partners	Short	Low	Easy
7	Implement Complete Streets strategies to allow for greater mobility	HART; local municipalities; NJDOT; Hunterdon County	Short	Medium	Moderate
8	Evaluate truck traffic and facilities along major highway corridors	NJDOT	Short	Low - Med \$50-75,000	Easy

Objective: Increase inter- and intra-county public transit service; increase awareness of available services

	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1	Work with and coordinate with NJ Transit and private carriers to implement public bus routes and to service inter- and intra- County needs	NJ Transit; Hunterdon County; private carriers; HART; RVCC; Polytech; town centers	Short-Long	Medium	Moderate
2	Explore opportunities to expand/modify LINK bus routes - to accommodate shift workers, connect with other transit service	Hunterdon County; HART; private carriers; local industries and businesses; NJTransit	Short	High	Difficult
3	Evaluate paratransit and public transit services offered through Hunterdon County LINK; seek opportunities to modify LINK bus routes as appropriate to accommodate shift workers, aging residents and social connections with other transit services	Hunterdon County; HART; private carriers; local industries and businesses; NJTransit	Short	High	Difficult
4	Seek opportunities to increase awareness of LINK services via additional printed materials, signage, community outreach/events, online information and transit training, such as workshops on "How to Use the LINK"	Hunterdon County; HART	Short	Low	Easy
5	Develop a cost/benefit needs analysis in Hunterdon County to justify requests for expansion of public transit facilities and services	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; HART	Short	High \$500,000	Moderate
6	Provide more in-depth education of how to use LINK for users, case workers, and client advocates; increase awareness of LINK	HART; Hunterdon County Dept. of Human Services	Short	Medium	Easy
7	Determine and match service needs at the four Hunterdon County Raritan Valley Line stns	NJTransit	Short- Med	Medium	Moderate
8	Advocate for additional Raritan Valley Line one-seat ride options	NJTransit; Raritan Valley Rail Coalition	Medium	Medium	Moderate
9	Advocate for rail service from Flemington to connect with NJ Transit rail	NJTransit; Flemington BID; HART	Medium	High	Difficult
10	Implement shuttle service between Flemington and Somerville Train Station	NJTransit; Flemington BID; Hunterdon & Somerset Counties	Medium 50	High \$32M	Difficult
11	Advocate for a transportation system that accommodates all people; both the public and special needs populations (paratransit)	NJTransit; NJDOT; HART; Hunterdon County LINK	Medium	High	Moderate
12	Explore abandoned rail lines for potential reactivation or use as multi-use corridors	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; NJDOT; other rail companies owning right-of-ways	Short	Low	Easy

Goal: Invest in and implement adequate transportation options for residents and businesses (cont.)

*See Page 109

Objective: Implement bicycle and pedestrian improvements on roads that can accommodate them and where they are needed

	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1	Adopt and implement a countywide Complete Streets policy; encourage and facilitate the adoption of municipal Complete Streets policies as appropriate	HART; NJDOT; local municipalities; Hunterdon County	Medium	High	Moderate
2	Encourage pedestrian connectivity between activity centers; promote inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian elements in municipal Master Plans	HART; local municipalities; NJDOT	Medium	Medium	Moderate
3	Implement recommendations of prior studies and plans (i.e. Hunterdon County Bicycle/Pedestrian Element--2001; County Road Bicycle Facility Assessment--1997; HART Flemington-Raritan Bicycle/Pedestrian Connectivity Analysis--2011, and others)	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; HART; NJDOT; NJTPA	Medium-Long	High	Difficult
4	Promote "Share the Road" Culture through education and awareness campaigns to facilitate bicycle/pedestrian activity and ensure safety	HART; businesses; municipalities; sports organizations	Medium	Low-Medium	Moderate

Goal: Maintain a high quality of life in Hunterdon County

*See Page 109

Objective: Support and develop Hunterdon County's arts, cultural, recreational, and historic assets

	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1	Hire a Cultural & Heritage Executive Director and Arts Coordinator to promote, facilitate, and coordinate venues, artists, and historical events to promote Hunterdon County	Hunterdon County; NJ State Council on the Arts; HCCC	Short 2	Medium	Easy
2	Brand Hunterdon County as an historic, arts, tourism, recreation, and farming County that can identify, build, and capitalize on facilities for events promoting its history and unique assets and draw visitors to the County	NJ Division of Travel and Tourism; NJ Travel Industry Association; local businesses and venues; NJ State Council on the Arts; HCCC; Hunterdon County Historical Society; Flemington BID; town centers; collaborative organizations	Medium	Low	Moderate
3	Support Hunterdon County's towns by considering designation, such as official arts/historic districts and commissioning the study and promotion of access and parking in these centers	Flemington BID; local municipalities; HCCC; Hunterdon County Historical Society; HCC&HC	Medium	High \$50-75,000	Moderate
4	Identify opportunities for collective impact for historic tours and coordinate/create connections between various historic sites	Hunterdon County; NJ Historic Preservation Office; NJ Division of Travel and Tourism; NJ Travel Industry Association; local venues; Hunterdon County Historical Society; HCCC/DMO; HCC&HC	Short	Low	Easy
5	Develop funding and mechanisms for maintenance and repair of historic facilities	NJ Historic Preservation Office; Hunterdon County; local historic venues; Hunterdon County Historical Society; grants	Medium	Low	Moderate
6	Identify and establish a priority list of historic, arts, and cultural sites and centers for promotion and funding	Hunterdon County; NJ Historic Preservation Office; NJ Division of Travel and Tourism; NJ Travel Industry Association; local venues; Hunterdon County Historical Society; HCCC; 300 Committee	Short	Medium	Easy
7	Create annual coordinated Familiarity Tours of Hunterdon County	NJ State Travel & Tourism; Hunterdon County; municipal/tourism businesses; restaurants; HCCC/DMO	Short	Low \$5,000	Easy
8	Establish an anchor site in the County as a draw for visitors	Hunterdon County; HCCC; NJ Division of Travel and Tourism; NJ Travel Industry Association; private companies	Medium-Long	High	Difficult
9	Create a phone app of points of interest in Hunterdon County	Hunterdon County Historical Society; HCC&HC; local venues	Short	Medium \$1000-2500	Easy

Objective: Promote a culture of life-long learning among County residents, workers, and employers

	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1	Create a 4-year career academy based on current trends and business needs	RVCC; Polytech; Hunterdon County; HCCC	Long 20-25	High \$22M	Moderate
2	Form collective impact partnerships and work with other institutions to develop and establish a common agenda in areas of economic well-being, job fulfillment, and career opportunities	Polytech; local educational institutions; Hunterdon Medical Center; HCCC; GRWIB	Medium	High	Moderate
3	Create a significant physical presence for RVCC in Hunterdon County in the form of a satellite campus	RVCC; Hunterdon County; local municipalities; BOCF	Medium 10-15	High \$2.5M	Moderate
4	Match or create educational programs that relate to Hunterdon County's identified industry clusters	HCCC; GRWIB; RVCC; Polytech; other institutions of higher education; Hunterdon Medical Center	Medium	High	Moderate

Goal: Maintain a high quality of life in Hunterdon County (cont.)

*See page 109

Objective: Increase the number of local and regional visitors to County parks and open space amenities

<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Potential Partners</i>	<i>Timeline/ FTE*</i>	<i>Impact/ Investment*</i>	<i>Ease of Implementation</i>
1 Create, draft, and adopt a strategic master plan for County parks and open space	HC Div. of Parks and Recreation; Hunterdon County; POSAC	Short	High \$50-75,000	Easy
2 Locate opportunities for increased bicycle and pedestrian facilities within and connecting parks and open space	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy; HC Div. of Parks and Recreation; NJTPA; NJ Transit; Raritan Valley Rail Coalition	Short	Low	Easy
3 Develop an annual survey of park visitors to increase visitorship. Develop short annual survey to learn of frequency of visits and additional patronage, if any	HC Dept. of Parks and Recreation; Hunterdon County	Short	Low \$10-15,000	Easy
4 Conduct an inventory of existing nature trails and refurbish/build new paths	HC Div. of Parks and Recreation; Hunterdon County; local municipalities; POSAC; private partnerships; grants	Short- Med	Low \$10-15,000	Easy
5 Create and promote additional water based activities at Round Valley, Spruce Run, Raritan River, and Delaware River	HC Div. of Parks and Recreation; local municipalities; private businesses; POSAC; private partnerships	Medium	Medium \$25-50,000	Moderate
6 Develop events focused on the amateur and professional athletics that bring people to Hunterdon County's park system or town centers	HC Div. of Parks and Recreation; local municipalities; POSAC; athletic associations	Medium	Low	Moderate
7 Pursue opportunities to enroll scenic County roads into the Scenic Byways program and support municipal efforts to pursue Scenic Byway designations, as appropriate	HC Div. of Parks and Recreation; Hunterdon County; local municipalities; dedicated societies and associations	Medium	Low	Easy
8 Create dedicated walking and biking paths that connect town centers with points of interest for tourism, major residential areas, and significant nature sites	Hunterdon County; HC Div. of Parks and Recreation; POSAC; dedicated societies and associations	Med- Long	Medium \$25-50,000	Moderate
9 Commission a feasibility study for a recreational equine facility	CADB; equine associations (New Jersey Horse Council; Alexandria Equestrian Association; New Jersey Professional Horsemen's Association; New Jersey Horse Show Association)	Short	Low \$100,000	Easy
10 Commission a feasibility study of expanding or creating additional golf courses	Local businesses; HCCC	Short	Low \$75-100,000	Easy
11 Create a splash & spray pool at a local County park	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; private builders	Medium 5	Low \$300,000	Easy
12 Ensure development balances with rural/farm/open space landscape	Hunterdon County; local municipalities; CADB	Short-Long	High	Easy-Moderate

Performance Measures

Performance Measures

USED A requires the following performance measures (at a minimum) to be included in annual CEDS performance reports:

- Number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS
- Number and types of investments undertaken in the region
- Number of jobs retained in the region
- Amount of private-sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS
- Changes in the economic conditions of the region

As required, metrics for the first four bullet points will be recorded and reported annually. An example template is provided below. The last bullet point can be satisfied through a number of performance metrics that measure general economic progress in Hunterdon County. Sample tables for tracking these metrics are provided on the following pages. Trend data is included where it is available.

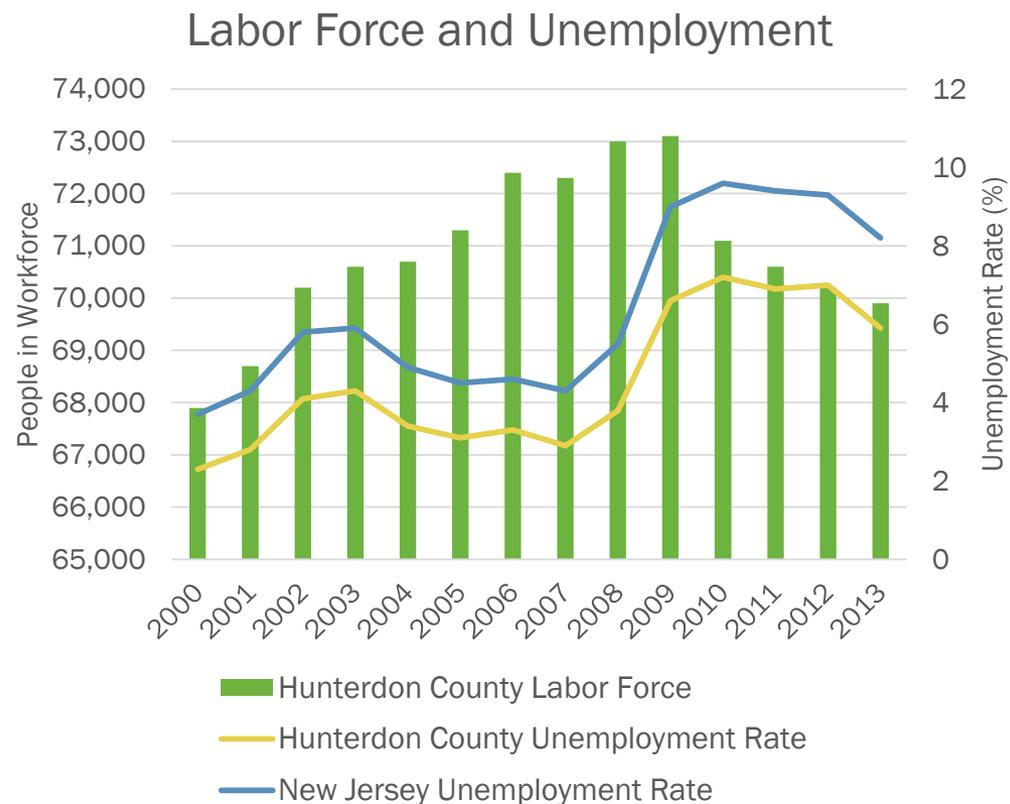
In addition to these larger-scale metrics, qualitative data and implementation of individual projects tell an important part of the story. For example, the hiring of specific personnel, coordination of specific events, formation of new public-private partnerships, and reuse or repurposing of specific vacant or underutilized properties are all important markers of Hunterdon County’s economic growth. Individual projects such as these will be tracked as they are implemented.

Performance Metrics Template	
Number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS	
Number and types of investments undertaken in the region	
Number of jobs retained in the region	
Amount of private-sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS	

Labor Force and Unemployment

Employment is a key measure of economic health. Labor force participation and unemployment rates provide a general indication of the health of Hunterdon County’s economy.

	Hunterdon County Labor Force	Hunterdon County Unemployment Rate	New Jersey Unemployment Rate
2000	67,900	2.3	3.7
2001	68,700	2.8	4.3
2002	70,200	4.1	5.8
2003	70,600	4.3	5.9
2004	70,700	3.4	4.9
2005	71,300	3.1	4.5
2006	72,400	3.3	4.6
2007	72,300	2.9	4.3
2008	73,000	3.8	5.5
2009	73,100	6.6	9.0
2010	71,100	7.2	9.6
2011	70,600	6.9	9.4
2012	70,200	7.0	9.3
2013	69,900	5.9	8.2
2014			
2015			
2016			
2017			
2018			
2019			
2020			

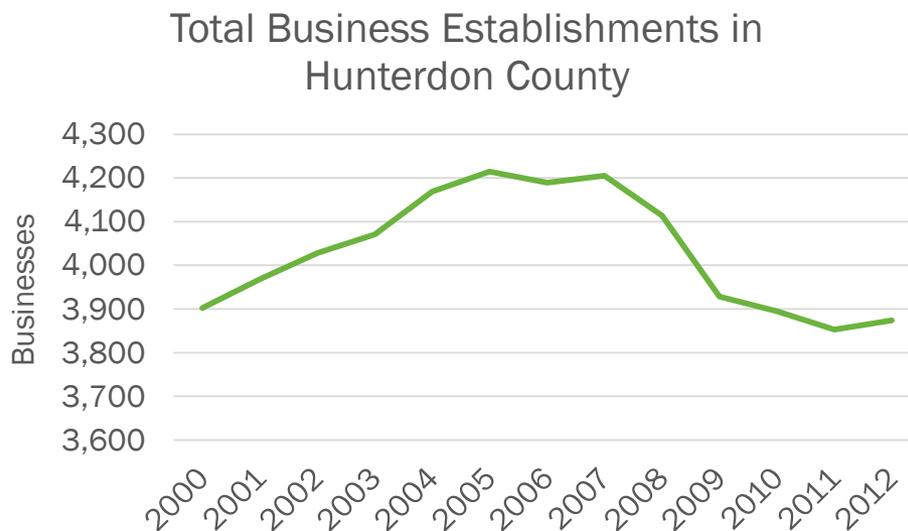


Source: State of New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Labor Force Estimates

Business Creation and Activity

The number of business establishments in the County is one measure of a friendly business environment and whether businesses are being retained.

	Total Business Establishments in Hunterdon County	Total Business Establishments in New Jersey
2000	3,902	233,559
2001	3,968	234,558
2002	4,028	237,505
2003	4,071	237,842
2004	4,169	240,539
2005	4,215	242,128
2006	4,189	243,055
2007	4,205	243,350
2008	4,114	238,440
2009	3,928	231,186
2010	3,895	228,937
2011	3,853	226,878
2012	3,874	228,289
2013		
2014		
2015		
2016		
2017		
2018		
2019		
2020		

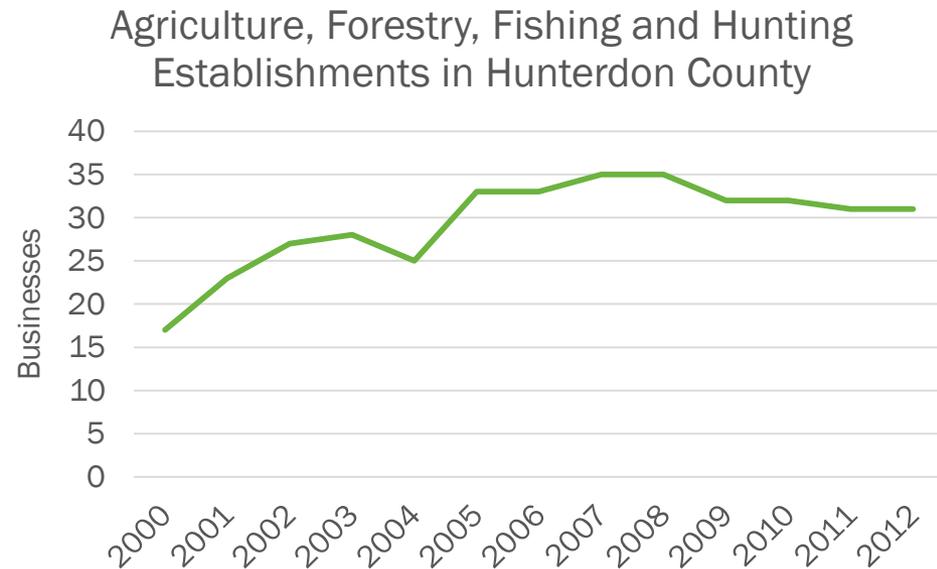


Source: 2012 County Business Patterns (NAICS) from censtats.census.gov

Business Creation and Activity (cont.)

Business creation metrics can also measure specific industries that will be targeted by the CEDS (agriculture; arts, culture, entertainment; tourism)

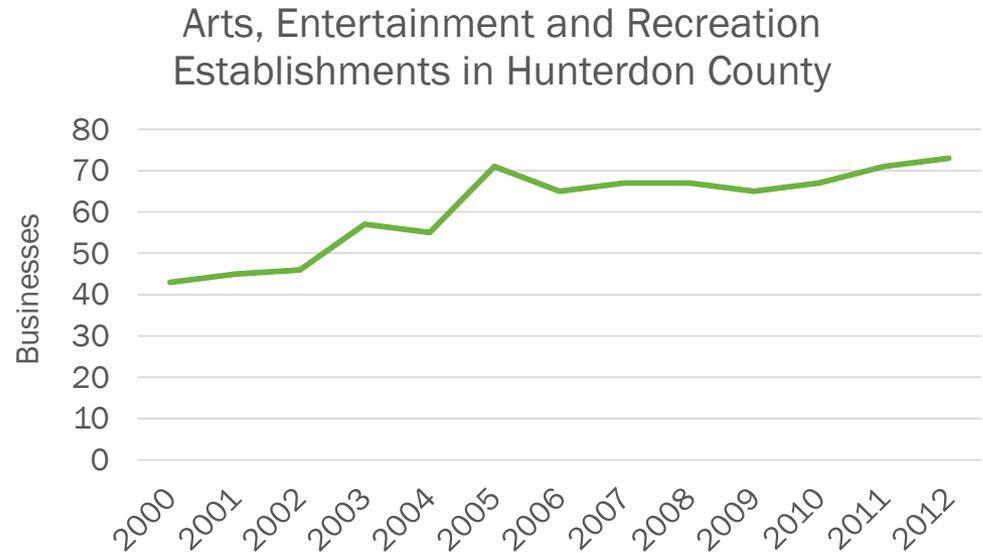
	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting Establishments Hunterdon County	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting Establishments New Jersey
2000	17	216
2001	23	247
2002	27	259
2003	28	268
2004	25	249
2005	33	243
2006	33	232
2007	35	245
2008	35	230
2009	32	221
2010	32	224
2011	31	221
2012	31	226
2013		
2014		
2015		
2016		
2017		
2018		
2019		
2020		



Source: 2012 County Business Patterns (NAICS) from censtats.census.gov

Business Creation and Activity (cont.)

	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Establishments Hunterdon County	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Establishments New Jersey
2000	43	2,964
2001	45	3,077
2002	46	3,188
2003	57	3,360
2004	55	3,500
2005	71	3,601
2006	65	3,575
2007	67	3,587
2008	67	3,523
2009	65	3,460
2010	67	3,418
2011	71	3,426
2012	73	3,451
2013		
2014		
2015		
2016		
2017		
2018		
2019		
2020		



Source: 2012 County Business Patterns (NAICS) from censtats.census.gov

Business Creation and Activity (cont.)

	Accommodation and Food Services Establishments Hunterdon County	Accommodation and Food Services Establishments New Jersey
2000	233	16,443
2001	227	16,725
2002	215	17,484
2003	236	18,083
2004	255	18,500
2005	275	18,872
2006	269	18,881
2007	284	19,345
2008	285	19,421
2009	282	19,195
2010	298	19,543
2011	293	19,606
2012	311	20,089
2013		
2014		
2015		
2016		
2017		
2018		
2019		
2020		



Source: 2012 County Business Patterns (NAICS) from censtats.census.gov

Building Permits

Both building permitting activity and the location of development are important metrics of growth and development in the County. Here, total housing permitting metrics are displayed for general context.

	Permits for Housing Units Hunterdon County	Permits for Housing Units New Jersey
2000	626	34,585
2001	837	28,267
2002	597	30,441
2003	797	32,984
2004	650	35,936
2005	472	38,588
2006	427	34,323
2007	182	25,389
2008	119	18,369
2009	226	12,421
2010	97	13,535
2011	74	12,952
2012	91	17,939
2013	76	24,185
2014		
2015		
2016		
2017		
2018		
2019		
2020		



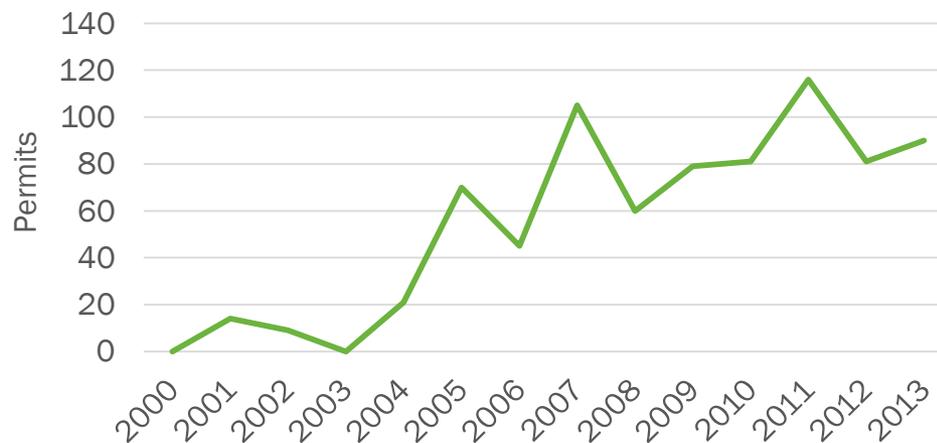
Source: Residential Housing Units Authorized By Building Permits from New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Building Permits (cont.)

Multi-family housing permits can be an indicator of housing diversity and affordability.

	Multi-family Housing Permits Hunterdon County	Multi-family Housing Permits New Jersey
2000	0	9,325
2001	14	6,764
2002	9	8,062
2003	0	10,821
2004	21	13,507
2005	70	16,324
2006	45	17,210
2007	105	12,323
2008	60	9,194
2009	79	5,210
2010	81	6,157
2011	116	6,477
2012	81	10,660
2013	90	13,822
2014		
2015		
2016		
2017		
2018		
2019		
2020		

Multi-family Housing Permits in Hunterdon County

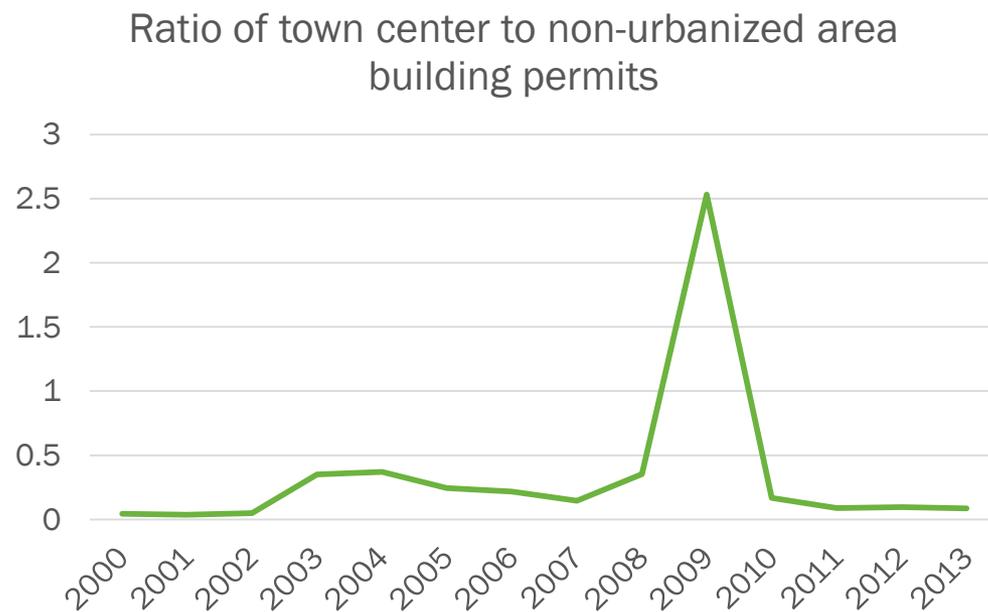


Source: Residential Housing Units Authorized By Building Permits from New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Building Permits (cont.)

The location of building relates to context-sensitive land use, as properly channeled development should concentrate in town centers.

	Building Permits in Town Centers		Building Permits in Non-Urbanized Areas
2000	26	2000	600
2001	30	2001	807
2002	28	2002	569
2003	207	2003	590
2004	176	2004	474
2005	93	2005	379
2006	76	2006	351
2007	23	2007	159
2008	31	2008	88
2009	162	2009	64
2010	14	2010	83
2011	6	2011	68
2012	8	2012	83
2013	6	2013	70
2014		2014	
2015		2015	
2016		2016	
2017		2017	
2018		2018	
2019		2019	
2020		2020	



Source: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

Education

These metrics measure whether residents are taking advantage of educational opportunities. The numbers provided are individual registrations in the following types of courses: Customized Training, Trades and Careers Training, Professional Enrichment courses/certificates, Small Business Development Center Programs, and Allied Health Programs.

Enrollment in Continuing Education and Workforce Training Courses		Polytech High School Enrollment		Polytech Adult Enrollment	
2010	2,073	2000-01	405	2000-01	728
2011	2,643	2001-02	407	2001-02	680
2012	1,196	2002-03	426	2002-03	675
2013	1,320	2003-04	394	2003-04	660
2014		2004-05	436	2005 - 06	622
2015		2005-06	450	2006 - 07	689
2016		2006-07	447	2007 - 08	600
2017		2007-08	393	2008 - 09	715
2018		2008-09	437	2009 - 10	610
2019		2009-10	466	2010 - 11	545
2020		2010-11	465	2011 - 12	501
		2011-12	402	2012 - 13	515
		2012-13	403	2013 - 14	574
		2013-14	460	2014-15	
		2014-15	520*	2015-16	
		2015-16		2016-17	
		2016-17		2017-18	
		2017-18		2018-19	
		2018-19		2019-20	
		2019-20			

* Expected enrollment

Source: Kim Metz, Hunterdon County Polytech

Additional Performance Measures

Although historical data does not exist for all of the following, additional measures could be tracked as relates to progress in Hunterdon County, including transit ridership, installation of bike lanes, broadband coverage, commercial vacancy rates, blackouts and brownouts, and visits to local parks and cultural sites.

Coordination and Consistency

North Jersey Regional Plan for Sustainable Development



TOGETHER
NORTH
JERSEY.

Together North Jersey, the organization providing funding for this report, aims to prepare a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD) that will create a vision and blueprint for the northern New Jersey region, as well as coordinate existing state, regional, and local plans. A number of Hunterdon County's goals and objectives are consistent with regional goals and objectives. Regional objectives that mirror or overlap Hunterdon County's objectives are listed below.

- Improve access to community, arts, cultural and recreational resources (e.g. theaters, museums, libraries, senior centers, youth activities, and parks)
 - Maintain and improve the quality of schools
 - Maintain or expand vibrant downtowns and “main streets”
 - Create safe, stable, resilient neighborhoods with high-quality housing options affordable to a range of incomes
- Preserve and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods and communities
 - Ensure infrastructure (transportation, utilities, and communications) is in good repair, can support economic development and is resilient to extreme weather
 - Make it easier and safer to walk, bike and take transit
 - Support small businesses and entrepreneurship
 - Ensure the region's workforce has the training and skills needed to support current and future industry needs
 - Foster collaboration among levels of government and provide a regional framework for making decisions about growth and investment
 - Connect where people live with where they need to go
 - Create inclusive, mixed-income neighborhoods

Source: Together North Jersey: http://togethernorthjersey.com/?page_id=20342

Together North Jersey Regional CEDS

Concurrent to the development of this CEDS, a regional CEDS is being created for counties of northern New Jersey, of which Hunterdon is a part. The Hunterdon CEDS consultant team participated in a number of teleconferences and meetings with the regional CEDS consultant team (TIP Strategies) to ensure consistency between the two CEDS documents. As of the writing of this report, the regional CEDS is still in draft form.

Although still in draft form, many of the high-level focus areas and strategies of the regional CEDS relate to those of this CEDS. For example, this CEDS promotes coordination between communities, as does the regional CEDS, particularly through actions such as establishment of a North Jersey Economic Development District and hosting of annual North Jersey CEO roundtables. Shared services agreements are also emphasized in both documents. Additionally, the regional CEDS aims to foster entrepreneurship, as does this CEDS. Both emphasize the importance of technical assistance and provision of resources for new businesses. Redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land is another key goal of both

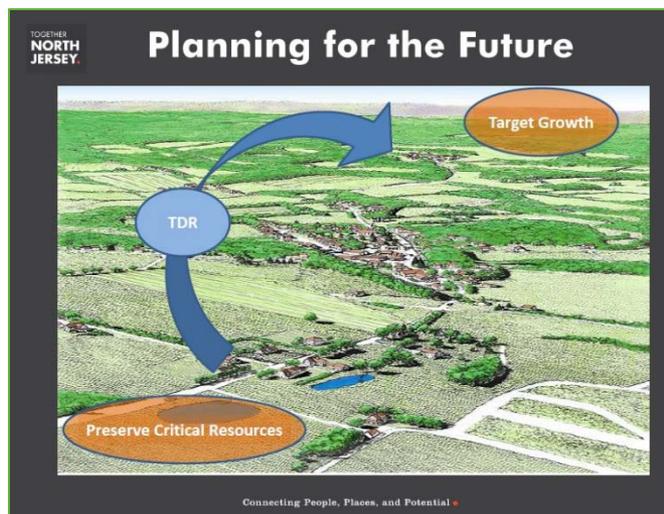
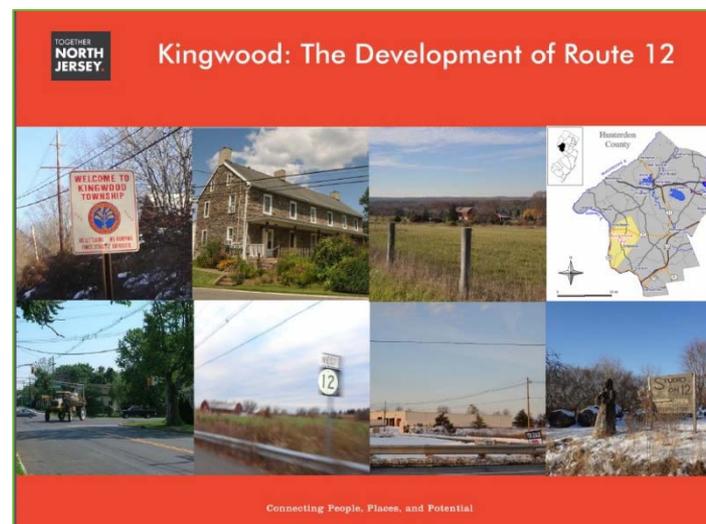
documents, as is strengthening tourism. Both CEDS reports also emphasize the importance of creating a demand-driven workforce development system that aligns with employer needs. Through continued communication and coordination, these two CEDS reports will complement each other and strengthen the economy in Hunterdon County and the northern New Jersey region.

Kingwood Development of Route 12 Local Demonstration Project

A Together North Jersey Local Demonstration Project (LDP) located in Hunterdon County, the Kingwood Development of Route 12, was recently completed in the Township of Kingwood.

The focus of this project is the creation of a Transfer Plan Element and market analysis for Kingwood to use in a proposed Transfer of Development Rights Program, the goal of which is to preserve resources while targeting growth elsewhere.

Another goal of the project is to improve transit along the corridor due to additional ridership demand that has resulted from new population growth along Route 12. Lastly, the program aims to serve as a model for programs that may be developed in similar places.



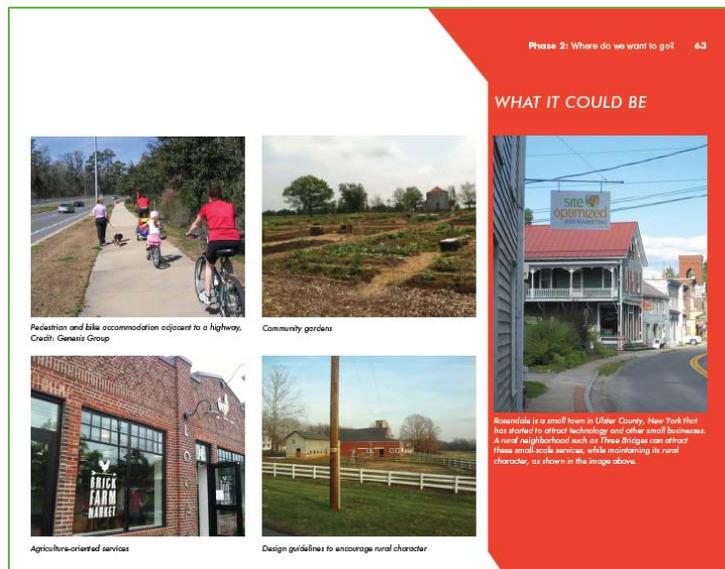
The goals of the Kingwood LDP align with the goals of this CEDS; both plans recommend channeling growth and development to designated areas while preserving resources outside of these growth areas. Both projects are also steps towards improving access to transit.

Source: *Kingwood: The Development of Route 12* presentation

Together 202 Local Demonstration Project

The *Together 202: Reimagining Complete Communities Along a Connecting Corridor LDP*, completed in 2013, makes recommendations for the Route 202 corridor in Somerset and Hunterdon Counties.

A number of goals were established through this project, including creation of additional connections to surrounding areas, creation of additional mobility choices, provision of additional uses and programming to make surrounding neighborhoods into complete places, making decisions as a corridor, and ensuring an economically competitive, strategically collaborative corridor.



These goals align with the goals of this CEDS, which also calls for expanded mobility and access, place making, and regional collaboration. The LDP supports and feeds into the goals of this County CEDS.

Source: *Together 202: Reimagining Complete Communities Along a Connecting Corridor* report, Fall 2013

Regional Connections, Implementation, and Next Steps

Recommendations

Throughout this CEDS report, a number of recommendations are made to enhance the economic viability of Hunterdon County. The overarching purpose of the project is for Hunterdon County to submit this report to the United States Economic Development Administration (USEDA), and then capitalize on funding opportunities that become available when the CEDS is accepted. The key recommendations in this report are as follows:

- **Repurpose vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial properties, as this will provide additional housing (affordability) and jobs (ratables).** Empty corporate campuses are not likely to be refilled by large employers, as the trend has shifted away from this corporate model. Therefore, leaving these properties as they now stand undermines the creation of good paying jobs and socio-economic vitality that functioning commercial properties deliver. Additionally, an increased variety of housing options (cheaper, smaller, denser), which the repurposing of a number of vacant or soon to be vacant properties could provide, will do much to attract younger professional workers, early stage families, and those currently unable to relocate to Hunterdon County, given the relatively high cost of living.
- **Implement transportation projects leading to the provision of public transit, addressing affordability challenges and automobile-dependency.** Improved public transportation access will help attract and retain younger residents, workers, and families (cohorts which have been identified as being in relative decline, numbers wise), improving the county's economic diversity and vitality. Additionally, provision of public transportation addresses equity concerns for those who cannot afford automobiles.
- **Create a friendlier business environment through the provision of quality and adequate capacity infrastructure (water/sewer/broadband/electric redundancy/transportation) and workforce training, ensuring a healthier Hunterdon County labor supply.** Doing so will help foster a more attractive business environment for current and prospective developers and employers. If left unaddressed, developers will be less likely to build, and new businesses will be less likely to locate within the county – a quite expensive opportunity cost to local municipalities.
- **Channel development only to appropriate areas, focusing on “centers of development,” maintain and improving Hunterdon County’s current quality of life and rural atmosphere.** This can be accomplished through redevelopment of existing underutilized and vacant properties, many of which exist in communities having water, sewer and power utilities present.

Regional Connections, Implementation, and Next Steps

- **Encourage collaboration and cross-education, communication, and sharing of information within the county and between municipalities, increasing efficient, clear exchanges and minimizing redundancy and misunderstanding.** The county will reach its intended economic destination more quickly and efficiently if all of its 26 municipalities row in the same direction. While some municipalities will experience greater economic growth than others, or experience economic investment sooner than others, it must be clear that all boats (municipalities) will likely rise under a spirit of joint municipal cooperation.

The Hunterdon County CEDS Executive and Strategy Committees will be responsible for stewardship of this plan. The county planning staff, and county and municipal planning boards as well as the Board of Chosen Freeholders will all have responsibility in seeing that the recommendations are implemented. Funding will be sought from a variety of public and private sources as appropriate to the action, including the USEDPA, USDOT, New Jersey state resources as well as a number other of public and private partners. Specific recommended resources for actions can be found in the action plan section of this CEDS document. There are a number of potential partner organizations, including:

- Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board
- Greater Raritan Workforce Investment Board
- Hunterdon Area Rural Transit - HART Commuter Information Services Transportation Management Authority
- Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce
- Hunterdon Health Care

- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- New Jersey Business Action Center
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
- New Jersey Department of Labor
- New Jersey Department of Transportation
- New Jersey Economic Development Authority
- New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency
- New Jersey Redevelopment Authority
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey
- Hunterdon County Polytech Career and Technical School
- Raritan Valley Community College

Inclusion and Engagement of Under-Represented Communities

One of Hunterdon County's primary goals is to be a wonderful place to live for all populations. A primary goal of the CEDS is to make Hunterdon County more affordable, thus helping traditionally under-represented groups such as low-wage workers. Outreach to minority and under-represented groups was done for various populations, including the younger demographic (as this population is in decline in Hunterdon County), the elderly population (a vulnerable group), the low-wage workforce (another vulnerable group), and the Latino population (a minority group).

Regional Connections, Implementation, and Next Steps

- Public outreach efforts and methods
 - Focus groups were held, including one on social services (including representatives from United Way of Hunterdon County, Hunterdon Prevention Resources, and the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services) and one on diversity and aging (including representatives from Hunterdon County YMCA, Hunterdon Medical Center – Center on Aging, St. Magdalen Church, Hunterdon Helpline, and Hunterdon County Senior Services)
 - Additionally, an interview with Tara Shepherd of HART Commuter Information Services provided additional information on public transportation and affordability
 - There was outreach to the Latino population through churches and informal networks
 - Youth outreach was done mainly through outreach at Raritan Valley Community College, including a survey that was distributed online
 - Four public presentations and forums were held throughout the CEDS development process
- Consideration and inclusion of data about under-represented communities

Data examined and included to in the report relating to under-represented communities includes data on age distribution, ethnicity, racial composition and forecasted changes, household income and income distribution, unemployment and poverty, and low wage occupation growth.

How do recommendations fit into the RPSD/regional context

Support of regional planning: This CEDS falls in line with many regional priorities and aligns with the goals (currently in draft form) of the North Jersey Regional CEDS. Regional objectives that mirror or overlap Hunterdon County’s objectives are listed below.

- Improve access to community, arts, cultural and recreational resources (e.g. theaters, museums, libraries, senior centers, youth activities, and parks)
- Maintain and improve the quality of schools
- Maintain or expand vibrant downtowns and “main streets”
- Create safe, stable, resilient neighborhoods with high-quality housing options affordable to a range of incomes
- Preserve and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods and communities
- Ensure infrastructure (transportation, utilities, and communications) is in good repair, can support economic development and is resilient to extreme weather
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Regional Connections, Implementation, and Next Steps

Concurrent to the development of this CEDS, a regional CEDS is being created for counties of northern New Jersey, of which Hunterdon is a part. The Hunterdon CEDS consultant team participated in a number of teleconferences and meetings with the regional CEDS consultant team (TIP Strategies) to ensure consistency between the two CEDS documents. As of the writing of this report, the regional CEDS is still in draft form. Although still in draft form, many of the high-level focus areas and strategies of the regional CEDS relate to those of this CEDS. For example, this CEDS promotes coordination between communities, as does the regional CEDS, particularly through actions such as establishment of a North Jersey Economic Development District and hosting of annual North Jersey CEO roundtables. Shared services agreements are also emphasized in both documents. Additionally, the regional CEDS aims to foster entrepreneurship, as does this CEDS. Both emphasize the importance of technical assistance and provision of resources for new businesses. Redevelopment of vacant and underutilized land is another key goal of both documents, as is strengthening tourism. Both CEDS reports also emphasize the importance of creating a demand-driven workforce development system that aligns with employer needs. Through continued communication and coordination, these two CEDS reports will complement each other and strengthen the economy in Hunterdon County and the northern New Jersey region.

In addition, two other Together North Jersey initiatives have been completed in Hunterdon County that are coordinated with the Hunterdon County CEDS. A Local Demonstration Project (LDP), the Kingwood Development of Route 12, was recently completed in the Township of Kingwood. The focus of this project is the creation

of a Transfer Plan Element and market analysis for Kingwood to use in a proposed Transfer of Development Rights Program, the goal of which is to preserve resources while targeting growth elsewhere. Another goal of the project is to improve transit along the corridor due to additional ridership demand that has resulted from new population growth along Route 12. Lastly, the program aims to serve as a model for programs that may be developed in similar places. The goals of the Kingwood LDP align with the goals of this CEDS in that both plans recommend channeling growth and development to designated areas while preserving resources outside of these growth areas. Both projects are also recommending steps towards improving access to transit.

The *Together 202: Reimagining Complete Communities Along a Connecting Corridor* LDP, completed in 2013, makes recommendations for the Route 202 corridor in Somerset and Hunterdon Counties. A number of goals were established through this project, including creation of additional connections to surrounding areas, creation of additional mobility choices, provision of additional uses and programming to make surrounding neighborhoods into complete places, making decisions as a corridor, and ensuring an economically competitive, strategically collaborative corridor. These goals align with the goals of this CEDS, which also calls for expanded mobility and access, place making, and regional collaboration. The LDP supports and feeds into the goals of this county CEDS.

Regional Connections, Implementation, and Next Steps

Place-type recommendations:

As Hunterdon County is a mainly rural/semi-rural county, many of the recommendations will be appropriate for rural areas. There are, however, parts of the county that are suburban in nature, as well as urbanized town centers. Recommendations related to these areas will be appropriate for suburban and urban place types.

Transferability:

This effort can be duplicated across the region. Other counties and regions can look to this CEDS project as a model.

RPSD Topics:

As this is an economic development project, many of the recommendations fall within the “economic competitiveness and workforce development” umbrella. However, there is crossover into categories of livability, environment, and society and community.

Recommendations fall under the following topics:

- Repurpose vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial properties, as this will provide additional housing (affordability) and jobs (ratables): LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN; HOUSING
- Implement transportation projects leading to the provision of public transit, addressing affordability challenges and automobile-dependency: TRANSPORTATION
- Create a friendlier business environment through the provision of quality and adequate capacity infrastructure (water/sewer/broadband/electric redundancy/transportation) and workforce training, ensuring a healthier Hunterdon County labor supply: WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS & TRAINING; BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT & ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT
- Channel development only to appropriate areas, focusing on “centers of development,” maintain and improving Hunterdon County’s current quality of life and rural atmosphere: LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN; NATURAL LANDS
- Foster local economic development by attracting more tourism to Hunterdon County’s cultural, recreational, historic, and agricultural assets: ASSET-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; ARTS & CULTURE
- Encourage collaboration and cross-education, communication, and sharing of information within the county and between municipalities, increasing efficient, clear exchanges and minimizing redundancy and misunderstanding: N/A



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