

*Economic Plan Element*

**Township of Moorestown**  
**County of Burlington**

PLANNING BOARD OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MOORESTOWN  
NOVEMBER 12, 2009

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*Economic Plan Element*

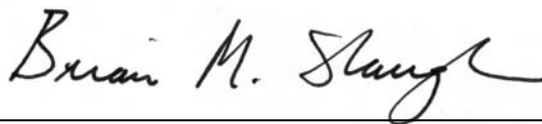
**Township of Moorestown  
County of Burlington**

Prepared pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28b(9)*,  
the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law

Adopted by the Moorestown Township Planning Board  
November 12, 2009

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A signed and sealed original is on file with the Township Clerk's office.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development Plan is an element of Moorestown's Master Plan - the primary policy document that identifies future goals for growth, preservation and development in the Township<sup>1</sup>. The document specializes as a guide for Moorestown Township's policy in shaping economic growth in the municipality. The Economic Development Plan emphasizes continued economic vitality for Moorestown and pro-actively focuses on supporting the local economy's ability to adapt to changing conditions. This Economic Development Plan links together the goals for the physical development of the municipality with economic policy and is intended to ensure continued prosperity within the capabilities of the local government to shape its own fiscal destiny. Moorestown is and will be affected by larger national and international forces beyond its control. The economic development policies in this document should be considered within the context of its place in the region and nation. An economic plan, however, can provide a framework for a coordinated effort to ease the effects of the business cycle on the residents and businesses of Moorestown.

## II. RELATIONSHIP TO THE MASTER PLAN

Following adoption of a Reexamination Report in July 2001, a completely revised and updated Master Plan was adopted on June 27, 2002. The 2002 Master Plan includes a statement of Goals and Objectives, the plan elements Conservation, Open Space and Recreation, Historic Preservation, Community Facilities, Circulation, and Land Use, a Town Center Sub-Element, and a land policy consistency statement. The Master Plan establishes specific policies, standards, and implementation strategies. The goals and objectives of the Master Plan were largely affirmed in the Reexamination Report adopted on June 26, 2008. The Economic Development Plan adds to these plan elements and should be viewed within the overall context of its goals and objectives, with the additional objectives in this document providing more specific implementation strategies.

## III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Moorestown is embedded in the Philadelphia metropolitan region but also occupies a key location along the important I-295/NJ Turnpike corridor that connects the region to New York City, a mere 80 miles away. As a result, Moorestown is a small part of two large overlapping metropolises which themselves are part of a larger conurbation from Washington, D.C. to Boston, Massachusetts. Moorestown thus has the opportunity for a much larger market than its population size of 20,000 people would suggest and is a significant asset to attract business to Moorestown.

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<sup>1</sup> - Economic plan elements are specifically authorized under *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(9)*. The Planning Board is being assisted in the creation of the document by the Moorestown Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC).



There is a legitimate role for the Township to play in economic development efforts aimed at increasing economic vitality and the overall quality of life for Moorestown residents, employers, and employees. A successful economic development program will produce results that can be measured by growth revenue to meet Township-wide services. The main point of the plan is that economic development should yield real net positive impacts on business and development growth, or at the very least, the potential for growth to produce economic opportunity and prosperity.

A prosperous local economy, an expanding tax base, and the creation of quality jobs, will fashion a positive balance of growth to maintain Moorestown's traditional physical character while generating adequate revenues for public services. Direct private investment and strategic public outlays in new projects, programs, and infrastructure is expected to create new wealth within Moorestown critical to the quality of life presently enjoyed by residents, business owners and employees.

This period of time is experiencing rapid technological change that correctly applied has brought numerous efficiencies in productivity and access to information to business, government and the home. In addition, higher levels of transparency in government are being demanded by the citizenry. By harnessing technological innovations, government can be more efficient and able to do more with less. For example, on-line retailers have developed sophisticated web based sales and tracking of merchandise. With user created access and passwords, the purchaser can decide which items to buy, pay for the items, and then track their packages through the shipping system. This is analogous to what happens when a person applies for a building permit. The permit is filled out and it wends its way from zoning to various officials, such as plumbing, fire code and public works. Some municipalities have taken an on-line retail approach and applied it to their permitting process. The objective is for business owners and homeowners to be able to see where their permit is and find out its final cost through a web based system.

### **Moorestown's Economic Goals**

Goals are integral parts to any Economic Development Plan. Goals state the specific outcomes an organization expects to accomplish in support of its vision and mission. The expectation is that each of the strategies and action items in this document will support achieving one or more of the goals. There are four goals for Moorestown:

- To stabilize municipal finances and provide adequate public services by encouraging appropriate economic development.
- To monitor economic conditions and respond to opportunities and threats as appropriate.
- To enhance key public and private economic assets.

- To strive to make the business environment dynamic, diverse, and thriving within the overall context of the land use policies of the Master Plan.

These four broad goals provide the framework for assessing and evaluating situations related to local and regional economic development, balancing the needs of the business and residential communities, evaluating the physical environment for commerce, and coordinating these actions to the benefit of Moorestown's economy.

To understand these concepts better, the goals are further discussed below.

***GOAL: To stabilize municipal finances and provide adequate public services by encouraging appropriate economic development***

Traditionally, municipalities in New Jersey have relied on a variety of revenue sources to fund municipal services. Prominent among them are intergovernmental transfers from the state and federal governments, gross receipts taxes from utilities and railroads, interest on investments, licenses and fees, court fines, and perhaps the best known, real estate property taxes. Additional sources of revenue found in other states, such as sales, occupational privilege, and personal property taxes, are not sources of revenue permitted by the state government.

Recent trends and new restrictions on municipalities have created a difficult climate for raising sufficient revenue to provide services at the local level. The State of New Jersey has traditionally provided a significant level of funding to local government through direct aid to municipalities, the creation of incentive programs, and grants. Much of this funding has evaporated as the state has struggled with its own budget problems, first to deal with an on-going structural deficit and second with falling revenues from income, sales and business taxes – the primary revenue sources for the state – due to the severe recession. Further, even if municipal officials felt compelled to increase the tax rate to maintain services, the state has imposed new restrictions<sup>2</sup> on the amount each municipality may increase its budget and has also imposed similar restrictions on school district budgets.

The goal is to create a “sustainable Moorestown” in the economic sense of a municipality that has stable finances and can provide needed services in concert with its civic organizations and business enterprises. A stronger focus on economic development to counterbalance negative trends and create a sustainable Moorestown is the primary goal of this document.

***GOAL: To monitor economic conditions and respond to opportunities and threats as appropriate.***

By building strategic relationships with the business community, the Township will be better positioned to proactively monitor the local and regional economy as it

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<sup>2</sup> - Limitations on municipal budgets were first imposed by the state in 1978.

affects Moorestown. To more effectively monitor current economic conditions locally and regionally, Township representatives will need to participate in industry alliances, seminars and workshops to stay abreast of best practices and innovations in economic development for the benefit of the public good. The principle of this goal is to identify impediments to local economic growth that can be resolved at local and county levels; to provide a forum for identifying opportunities and threats; and to garner reliable information about the region's business climate for effective local decision-making as well as business executives making relocation and expansion decisions.

***GOAL: Enhance key public and private economic assets.***

The key economic assets of the Township are its five economic activity centers (discussed below). Nearly all commercial and industrial activity generating revenue for the Township takes place in these centers which are comprised of both public and private assets. The private economic assets are the local serving and export-oriented<sup>3</sup> businesses that call Moorestown home, the talented local workforce, and Moorestown's service organizations, such as the Rotary, Moorestown Business Association and Moorestown Improvement Association among many others, the development and venture capital communities, and the real property that houses their operations.

Public economic assets include public resources such as Township staff, zoning, parking, public works infrastructure, library and other community facilities. The purpose of this goal is to ensure that the Township economic development is attuned to the needs of business owners in the economic activity centers. A recent example of public investment is the planned renovation and expansion of the municipal building not only for municipal services, but to relocate the Township library.

As Moorestown continues to build out and land resources dwindle, new opportunities for economic growth will require more intensive use of existing sites and a continual search for redevelopment prospects. Redevelopment should be viewed more expansively than land within an officially designated "area in need of redevelopment" as Moorestown has relatively few properties that may be considered blighted.

***GOAL: To strive to make the business environment dynamic, diverse, and thriving within the overall context of the land use policies of the Master Plan.***

Ensuring that Moorestown's business environment is dynamic, diverse, and competitive would be the culmination of successfully achieving the first three goals. Building internal and external strategic relationships, monitoring local and regional economic conditions, understanding strengths and weaknesses, responding to opportunities and threats, and enhancing key economic public and private assets will

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<sup>3</sup> - "Export" is used as an economic term which is the sale of goods and services outside of the local economy and which may or may not be international exports, the general meaning of the term.



achieve the desired outcome to maintain a thriving local economy and the Township's long term prosperity.

#### IV. MOORESTOWN TRENDS

The present recession and difficult municipal budget climate have focused attention on ensuring that local policy does not impede the ability of businesses to locate and expand in the Township. Addressing such impediments – balanced with the Township's quality of life goals in other parts of the Master Plan – will position Moorestown for the time when the economy expands again.

Moorestown has a well diversified commercial and industrial base thanks to the foresight of earlier municipal officials that set aside land zoned for those purposes that resulted in the creation of the Moorestown Mall and East Gate area, the northwest business parks and Lockheed-Martin. Consequently, Moorestown has become an employment center for the South Jersey region with three times as many jobs as there are residents in the workforce.

The Township has a strong real estate property base. Below is a table that compares the ten municipalities in Burlington County with the highest equalized assessed value. Equalized assessed value is a means of converting property assessments to full value and is used in translating the overall county tax rate to apply it to individual municipalities. Full value is the theoretical market value of real property. The ratios developed by the County Board of Taxation also permit the comparison of the real estate property tax base among municipalities. Moorestown's equalized assessed ratios were 1.0302 in 2008 and 1.0683 in 2009. Any ratio above 1.0 is indicative of assessments above the theoretical market value and is typical of municipalities that have undergone reassessment or revaluation. Moorestown underwent a revaluation in 2007 that is reflected in the 2008 calendar year.

**Table 1. 2008 Equalized Valuation for Ten Highest Burlington County Municipalities**

Municipality	Net Taxable Assessed Valuation *	Equal-ization Ratio	Equalized Net Taxable Assessed Valuation	Estimated Population, July 1, 2008	Value per Capita
Burlington Township	\$2,387,283,167	0.8424	\$2,833,906,893	21,312	\$132,972
Cinnaminson	1,963,893,100	0.9833	1,997,247,127	15,360	130,029
Delran	1,555,805,607	0.8356	1,861,902,354	16,791	110,887
Evesham	2,833,213,365	0.4770	5,939,650,660	45,306	131,101
Maple Shade	1,594,185,618	0.9595	1,661,475,371	19,154	86,743
Medford	1,778,342,279	0.5094	3,491,052,766	22,815	153,016
Moorestown	4,745,713,428	1.0302	4,606,594,281	19,509	236,127



Municipality	Net Taxable Assessed Valuation *	Equalization Ratio	Equalized Net Taxable Assessed Valuation	Estimated Population, July 1, 2008	Value per Capita
Mount Laurel	3,416,947,945	0.4910	6,959,160,784	39,182	177,611
Pemberton	878,895,819	0.5064	1,735,576,262	27,975	62,040
Willingboro	1,119,616,538	0.5175	2,163,510,218	36,530	59,226

\* - Includes utility valuations.

Source: NJ Department of Community Affairs, [http://www.state.nj.us/dca/lgs/taxes/o8\\_data/o8taxes.xls](http://www.state.nj.us/dca/lgs/taxes/o8_data/o8taxes.xls); population, <http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/dmograph/est/mcd/burest.htm>

Moorestown has the third highest taxable property valuation in Burlington County after Evesham and Mt. Laurel Townships. However, measured against population, Moorestown has the highest value in the County. Another factor to consider is the percentage of real estate property value that is attributable to residential values. Of the ten municipalities in the table, in 2008 Moorestown had the fourth best percentage (73.7%), after Maple Shade (59.9%), Mount Laurel (67.5%) and Burlington Township (70.5%). Cherry Hill has a comparable percentage, 72.1%, and Haddonfield, to which Moorestown is often compared, has a ratio at 89.0%<sup>4</sup>.

Moorestown has high residential values that contribute to its tax base and if one examines the two components of residential assessment, land and improvements, it becomes apparent that the Township has high land values compared to other municipalities. This is also a contributing factor to its non-residential tax base. High property values, however, can be a two-edged sword for owner-occupied households. While on average Moorestown homeowners own a valuable asset in their home, it is illiquid and does not produce income that can be used for the payment of real estate taxes.

While Moorestown is in a good position compared to other municipalities in Burlington County, the ratio of non-residential valuation to total taxable valuation has steadily eroded over time. The time period from 1995 to 2005 saw the largest increase in the construction of residences since the 1960's and outpaced the growth of non-residential development. Further, the value of residential development increased more rapidly than the value of commercial and industrial property. Consequently the share of residential taxable property to total taxable property has risen from 67.3% in 1998 to 74.1% today. This change has contributed to the rise in property taxes for homeowners as they have shouldered a larger share of the real estate property tax compared to non-residential development.

As noted in the discussion following the first goal of this document, the municipality has faced an unusual set of economic circumstances that is reflected in an even heavier reliance than usual on real estate property taxes to fund municipal services.

<sup>4</sup> - [http://www.state.nj.us/dca/lgs/taxes/o8\\_data/o8lirateables.xls](http://www.state.nj.us/dca/lgs/taxes/o8_data/o8lirateables.xls)



In the 2008 budget, real estate property taxes comprised 53.5% of the revenues of the total budget and 66.1% of the operating budget. In 2009, these increased to 66.2% and 86.4%, respectively. These facts emphasize the urgency of a coordinated approach to economic development with the municipality and the business community in Moorestown.

## **V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

While Moorestown continues to have a healthy economic base, it is in significant competition with other municipalities in South Jersey for commercial and industrial uses that balance the residential uses that occupy most of its land area. Further, suburbs that developed later than Moorestown, such as Mt. Laurel and Evesham Townships, have greater land resources. Moorestown's position in the economic pecking order will depend upon utilizing its resources better than its rivals and strengthening its competitive advantage. A means to do this is by analyzing economic development strategies that have been successful in other parts of the United States and adapting them to meet the Township's needs. The following provides an overview of identified best practices in business development and successful case studies. The strategies and tools discussed below can be implemented individually or incorporated into a broader economic development strategy. Some have been considered by Township officials previously but are included here to present a full range of possible actions.

The strategies that follow are listed from the least to the highest level of effort and government involvement in economic development. It is not intended as a set of recommendations but as a survey of economic development strategies.

### **Assessment of Land Market/Development Regulations**

The supply of commercially zoned land and the development ordinances that regulate commercial development have a significant effect on attracting and retaining businesses. Zoning and development regulations that encourage appropriate commercial development and expansion are critical to creating a climate conducive to economic development. However, the needs of the business community must be balanced with the community's overall vision for its commercial and residential neighborhoods.

A simple but important review of the municipality's zoning and land development regulations should be taken through an economic development viewpoint to assess both the availability of commercially or industrially zoned land and the feasibility to expand under existing development regulations. The permitted uses in each non-residential or mixed use zone should be reviewed to see if they are in "in sync" with the market demand for goods and services or need to be adjusted because of the creation of new uses not contemplated with the regulation was adopted. There are three categories to review, non-residential uses, residential uses, and open space/affordable housing.

LAND USE: NON-RESIDENTIAL

Land resources are increasingly scarce in Moorestown and opportunities for new non-residential taxable property on greenfield sites are lessening as land is developed. Preserving sites for new non-residential development based on the present zoning is an important component in reversing the trend of rising levels of residential property taxation. In addition, for redevelopment to be successful, greater use of a site is often needed to pay for the acquisition, demolition and construction, or rehabilitation expenses.

LAND USE: AGE-RESTRICTED HOUSING

Housing restricted by age and designed specifically for an older population provides an opportunity to reduce the cost effects on school district budgets. Age-restricted housing is permitted by two exemptions in the Federal Fair Housing Act for developments that are for those 55 years old or 62 years old and older. The distinction between the two exemptions is that the 55 year old and older category doesn't require any associated social or community services. Consequently, the type of housing is more similar to regular market housing. An example of 62 years old age-restricted housing is found in continuing care retirement communities that combine senior independent housing, assisted living and skilled nursing care.

This segment of the housing market has been overbuilt in the last 5 years to the extent where the state legislature passed a bill to allow the conversion of such projects to unrestricted housing. This is a temporary measure that will aid in a market correction of the housing sector. Eventually this market will return. There appears to be local demand judging by the high retirement population of Blason Woods, the Windrows, Tollgate and Moorfield where well-designed attached housing has attracted older Moorestown residents.

The 2002 Master Plan included recommendations for the development of selected areas for age-restricted development. Acting on these recommendations is the next step to be taken.

LAND USE: OPEN SPACE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

From a municipal policy perspective, land considered for open space acquisition and for affordable housing use should be taken from residential districts rather than non-residentially zoned property. Another strategy for affordable housing is to create it in mixed use districts which are most common in the town center and Lenola sections of Moorestown but which may also be suitable in other locations.

## **Business Roundtables**

Commercial interests located in Moorestown have divergent needs and markets. Some are primarily serving the local population, others are producing and distributing goods for the Philadelphia metropolitan region and yet others have a national or even international scope. The Moorestown Business Association's members are primarily establishments that provide goods and services to the general public, such as retailers and the medical and legal professions. Periodic business roundtables that include all of the sectors of Moorestown's economy, including the non-profit and governmental sectors, would provide once or twice a year gatherings for the exchange of ideas and contacts. Ideally, this could be an event that is staged by the business community itself rather than as a governmental function. It may also provide a means to create a mentorship for new businesses. For example, Lockheed-Martin has a company program aimed at assisting women and minority business enterprises that seek to work in the governmental contracting arena.

## **Redevelopment Area Designation**

A limited number of properties in the Township could be considered blighted and meet the criteria for designation as a redevelopment area. In New Jersey, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) is a strong approach to spur economic development. Several properties in one of the northwest industrial parks along New Albany Road have been identified by the EDAC as being potential candidates due to site contamination from past industrial activities. The provisions of the LRHL have been used around the State to turn long vacant or abandoned properties into tax paying ratables that are assets to their communities. With this enhanced municipality authority, however, comes a required planning process which must be completed before any redevelopment activity can proceed. The properties in question must first be shown to meet one of the eight redevelopment criteria in the law in order to be designated a redevelopment area. Then a redevelopment plan for the area must be prepared and adopted by the governing body. The redevelopment plan can supersede all existing zoning and development regulations and provides the municipality with considerable flexibility to chart out their vision for the subject properties. These tools also include payment in lieu of taxes and tax abatement provisions.

## **Business Retention Survey of Existing Businesses**

Retaining existing businesses is as important as attracting new commercial activity to the Township. Two-way communication about understanding the needs of the business community and a willingness on the part of the Township to be responsive to their concerns will be critical to economic development success. A cost effective way to engage business owners is through an annual survey. With the lower costs of dissemination through the municipality's website compared to traditional mail out and send back surveys, the EDAC or other designated entity, could undertake such a survey of business owners' views. In this manner, identifying existing problems,

hearing recommendations, or suggested improvements to municipal services can be made in concert with the development of programs and budgets, as appropriate.

### **Direct Business Marketing to Create Business Clusters**

Local governments can take a more direct approach to attracting prospective businesses using a targeted marketing campaign. A targeted marketing campaign directs promotional material at firms within a particular industry or economic sector that the municipality has identified as a future economic growth priority. Prior to the marketing initiative, the local government establishes its economic development objectives and identifies sectors that it would like to develop within the municipality. The municipality then targets its promotional materials to firms within the particular sector or industry of interest. A targeted marketing campaign may include the following direct marketing strategies:

- Brochures or pamphlets about the region's or local government's attractions to business and the specific industry or sector;
- Advertising in trade publications;
- Direct mail to specific industries or location consultants;
- Participation in industry trade shows;
- Telemarketing of potential businesses;
- Prospecting trips to certain areas of the country where potential new businesses are located;
- Seminars for prospective businesses; and
- Websites.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to these efforts, smaller businesses can take advantage of business development opportunities represented by larger firms in the town. For example, the local Lockheed-Martin plant participates in that corporation's Small Business Innovative Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programs. These programs are designed for smaller business to provide products and services under subcontract to Lockheed-Martin. Potentially a workshop to promote these programs could be held to provide information to smaller businesses interested in providing products and services to the corporation. With enough interest, a business cluster could be created focused on national defense and governmental services not just to supply Lockheed-Martin, but to the federal government directly.

### **Joint Marketing Ventures**

A joint marketing venture is a marketing campaign that showcases multiple businesses' products and services through combined advertisement or promotional campaign. In the context of local economic development, a joint marketing venture is typically located within a defined geographic area, includes the coordination of local businesses and is often part of a broader campaign organized by the local

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<sup>5</sup> Moore, Terry, Stuart Meck, and James Ebenhoh. *An Economic Development Toolbox: Strategies and Methods*. Chicago: American Planning Association, 2006.

government or business improvement district. Examples of a joint marketing venture include “Taste of Bethesda”, “First Friday Gallery Openings”, and “Restaurant Week”. Local governments often assume the role of a third party organizer of the joint marketing initiatives, as the campaigns increase the visibility of the municipality and present an image of a strong business community.

Organizing a joint marketing campaign may present challenges to the local government, as the municipality needs to caution itself against the appearance of favoritism or being caught in the middle of conflict between competitors. To avoid the pitfalls of a joint marketing initiative, local governments should implement the following strategies:

- Enter discussions with principals of a company rather than company representatives. This ensures that individuals in the room have the ultimate decision making power;
- Design proposed marketing ventures on the basis of needs, problems and opportunities of individual companies that were identified in third party interviews rather than basing them on a perceived common interests. This ensures that each company has an interest in being at the table;
- Present a full proposal for the marketing campaign rather than keeping the proposal vague. Companies will be able to make an informed decision about participation;
- Get a firm financial commitment that is realistic, and make sure that participants view the campaign as a value for the money that is committed; and,
- Allow the group of companies to select the range of complimentary products, rather than making the decision for them. Companies know what their bottom line can absorb.<sup>6</sup>

Joint Marketing Ventures will take a concentrated period of time to become properly established. This time fosters the development of a working relationship between local businesses, recognition of the branding campaign and the development of a proven track record.

### **Moorestown as a Brand**

Moorestown is well known in South Jersey primarily for its physical attractiveness and the strength of its school system, both from its academic and sports capabilities. The Township is less well known in the Pennsylvania suburbs but garners the occasional news story in the press, radio and television. In these locales and other parts of New Jersey, the Moorestown Mall is a prime component of name recognition in the same fashion that residents here have heard of the King of Prussia Mall or the Short Hills Mall. People from out of the region may only gain their impressions

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<sup>6</sup> - Blakely, Edward J. and Ted K. Bradshaw. *Planning Local Economic Development – Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publishers, 2002.

from traveling Rt. 38 past the Moorestown Mall. While Moorestown has a more attractive highway corridor than most due to the presence of Strawbridge Lake and the retention of a grassed median, it remains a highway corridor with ill-defined municipal boundaries. In New Jersey, the Township gets confused with Morristown in Morris County, because this northern municipality is often pronounced the same way despite its different spelling, and is a larger place. The Township received a windfall in name recognition in 2005 with being named the best place to live in America by Money magazine. However, such recognitions are often short-lived, for the next year there is a new set of winners and competing “best places” lists. Having a well-recognized name outside of its local region is a great aid in attracting new businesses. Companies thinking of locating to the Philadelphia region will send their representatives to places they have heard of first.

While it may seem odd to think of branding Moorestown, the fact of the matter is that perceptions about the municipality are formed all of the time for good or for ill. Positive publicity can be formed relatively inexpensively, though it takes a commitment from staff, a volunteer group, or individual with public relations experience. One of the recent consequences of the exponential increase in the forms of media through the internet is that the need for content is very high. Newspapers and to a lesser extent magazines have cut staff and are looking for good copy and photographs to use. With some knowledge of media contacts and several people to write occasional articles, Moorestown could expand the name recognition of the town and promote itself to the wider region. The first step would be to target the hospitality industry and the travel sections of newspapers just outside the region to promote day trips to the Township. As experience is gained, more distant media outlets could be used or engaged.

Like many municipalities, the Township has signs for identifying some of the town’s borders and for use as park signage. The Master Plan proposed creating a better system of signs to identify specific sites and locations, known as wayfinding. For instance, since Rt. 38 is a major regional artery, signage at the major cross streets, such as Moorestown-Mt. Laurel Road, S. Church Street, and Pleasant Valley Road, could literally point travelers in the right direction for the five economic activity centers in Moorestown. Once in the town center, for example, motorists could find more specific signs for the many institutions located there, from houses of worship, parking and the municipal complex, as well as specific commercial buildings. Tourism is an underdeveloped aspect of Moorestown’s economy, but by some measures is the largest economic sector in the world. Better signage would aid in the development of tourism, which in turn spreads a positive image of the Township to other regions.

### **Special Improvement District**

Special Improvement Districts (SID) are specific geographic areas in a municipality that are usually taxed to raise revenue that is in turn spent on physical, operational,



and promotional activities in the district. Explicitly allowed by state law<sup>7</sup>, a SID is created through the adoption of an ordinance by the governing body. Also known as Business Improvement Districts or Downtown Improvement Districts, SIDs allow for enhanced services and infrastructure and the comprehensive management of the area. SIDs are intended for downtown areas and commercial corridors and are typically used where there is a high concentration of retail shopping. While they are normally financed through an added assessment to all properties within the boundaries of the district, they can also be financed through the municipal budget and are also eligible for State grants. The central benefit of these districts is that they allow the many disparate business owners within a typical commercial area to function more like a shopping center or mall with a centralized management structure. Though more usually conceived for a downtown area, there is nothing in the legislation that would prevent its establishment for any of the five economic activity centers in the municipality.

Once a SID is created it provides a vehicle for the individual businesses within the district to organize as a single entity and raise funds for activities that supplement municipal services. Some examples of activities and services that SIDs provide include enhanced sidewalk clean-up and maintenance, installation of street furniture and streetscape amenities, targeted marketing of the district, planning of festivals and special events, provision of grants to building owners for façade improvements, and assistance with marketing vacant commercial space. Typically, a district management corporation is established with a full or part-time manager to oversee the day to day activities of the district. As most small business owners do not have enough time or resources to devote to SID activities, having an individual who is solely focused on these tasks is akin to having a general manager for the district, just like at a mall, who can monitor and respond to issues as they arise while also implementing long-term improvement programs. A SID was contemplated in the early stages of the plan for the physical improvements undertaken a few years ago for the town center but the governing body ultimately decided to fund the project through general municipal bonds.

A variant of the SID approach where there is a designated historic district is the creation of a non-profit “Main Street” organization under the guidelines of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The town center of Moorestown is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. A Main Street group often relies, at least initially, on volunteers to do the same marketing, special events planning, and grant acquisition activities of a SID. There is usually a Board of Directors made up of local business people and residents that oversees the activities of the organization. At the local level, this group typically pursues corporate sponsorships and donations in addition to grant funding in order to carry out programs. The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Program, along with a similar program administered here in New Jersey by the Department of Community Affairs, provide support and funding for main street improvement activities. In some instances, main

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<sup>7</sup> - *N.J.S.A. 40:56-65 et seq.*

street organizations hire full-time staff people and transition into full SIDs as they gain recognition and support in the community.

An example of the Main Street Program is in Mount Holly where an active downtown organization employs one full-time staff member and numerous volunteers who oversee a range of economic development and planning activities in the downtown area including organizing special events and festivals, sponsoring walking tours, and producing a newsletter and marketing materials. The organization also maintains a website that includes a business directory, community information, and a listing of available commercial properties.

Since the enactment of the law in 1984, New Jersey has seen the establishment of more than 90 SIDs throughout the State in communities of all sizes. Some examples include Cranford and New Brunswick in North Jersey and Haddon Township, Haddonfield Borough, and Collingswood in South Jersey.

### **Economic Development Coordinator**

As the economic development activities of a municipality become more developed and complex, many communities devote a part or full-time staff person to these tasks. Though given the present difficulties with the municipal budget, this will be exceptionally hard to implement, this individual can serve as the point person on all economic development activities in the community. While the EDAC, as a volunteer group, has completed an impressive array of work, a dedicated staff person could implement Township and EDAC recommendations on a daily basis. The EDAC recommends this action to the Township Council.

### **One-Stop Business Assistance Center**

A One-Stop Business Assistance Center is an information center established by the local government that serves as a gateway to the municipality for the business community. The Center is equipped with resources necessary for a new business interested in locating to the community. The information made available should include local economic indicators and labor market statistics, local development plans, an inventory of available land within the municipality, local building regulations, information on the permitting process, and information related to the fiscal implications of locating to the town. One-Stop Business Assistance Centers typically have a staff member or a person assigned to it as part of other duties, who serves as the key contact point between business and the local government.

One-Stop Business Assistance Center provides a number of benefits for both the business community and the municipality. They eliminate frustrating referrals between local governmental departments through the consolidation of information and resources. Also, the municipality presents a business friendly atmosphere, which promotes business confidence and alleviates concerns of dealing with bureaucratic red tape. Additionally, the Center provides the municipality with an opportunity to

gain statistics on the number of businesses, the nature of business in the municipality and the geographic breakdown of businesses. This information is critical to the development of economic development strategies and future marketing campaigns.

### **Small Business Development Centers and Incubators**

A small business development center is an evolution of the One-Stop Business Assistance Center. A business incubator is then an additional step beyond the small business development center. Whereas the One-Stop Center streamlines businesses' interaction with the local government, the small business development center provides new and small businesses with technical assistance, such as management training, counseling, and research services. The services offered by small business development centers vary, but may include training seminars and assistance on technology transfers, management, financing, marketing and workforce training. Some small business development centers establish mentoring programs between entrepreneurs and established or retired executives. Successful centers are often connected to appropriate educational institutions, such as a university business school, and advanced education and technical colleges. Rutgers Camden campus is home to a small business development center that serves Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Salem counties.

A business incubator is a tested strategy in fostering the development of fledgling businesses. A business incubator provides start up businesses with inexpensive and flexible physical space, which enables the businesses to add floor area as they grow. Additionally, business incubators provide client companies with shared business support services, such as a shared bookkeeper, administrative staff, mentoring and access to administrative equipment. Business incubators are typically developed around targeted industries in order to foster synergy between participating businesses. In the County, Burlington County Community College (BCC) operates both a High Technology Business Incubator and a Life Science Incubator. Each of the tenant companies has access to extensive resources, support in developing business and technology plans, and opportunities to exhibit at conferences and venture capital showcases. It is located next to BCC's Mt. Laurel campus.

Establishing a local business incubator has many benefits. Promising businesses are provided with the support necessary to get off the ground. The local economy benefits from the addition of new jobs and the prospect of retaining the developing businesses upon their transition out of the incubator. Moreover, many of the participating businesses in the incubator are creating new technologies within the incubator's targeted sector. This aids the municipality in developing a competitive advantage in the incubator's mission-oriented industries.

Both small business development centers and business incubators assist in business development and retention. The objectives of these two economic development concepts are:

- Encouraging new business starts within the community;
- Reducing the level of business failures;
- Improving the financial performance and growth rate of small business;
- Creating new employment opportunities at small businesses; and
- Raising the general level of technological innovation and productivity through the support of small entrepreneurs.<sup>8</sup>

Since none of the municipalities in Burlington County are really large enough to support their own business incubator or small business development center, having the County offer these services is a positive development. However, the Township and Moorestown business community could take a more formal role in connecting to BCC's various programs. For example, once business incubators reach a certain level of success, they are required to leave and find new space on their own. Most of the businesses in incubators seek flex space, which is a form of multi-tenanted industrial building where the interior can be arranged with more or less office space and warehousing/manufacturing. This type of space is abundant in Moorestown, but also widely available in other parts of the county and region. A more formal arrangement or more aggressive marketing to steer businesses leaving the incubator space to Moorestown business parks could be created. While new businesses are more prone to failure, those in the incubator space have had the benefit of professional business attention. Small businesses are the largest creator of new jobs in the economy and represent the largest potential for employment growth.

### Workforce Development

In New Jersey, workforce development programs are concentrated at the county and state level. This structure has come about because of the relatively low populations in municipalities which usually make such programs financially infeasible. Further, policies aimed at the larger population of a county can be handled more efficiently through a centralized office.

In Burlington County, BCC has an active role in workforce development as the educational equivalent of the business incubator concept noted above. BCC operates distance learning which earn students full credit without the need to attend classes. The college has also established an Institute for Professional Development that awards a technical certificate in a number of different areas, such as health care, information technology, human resources, and real estate. This part of the college also develops customized workforce training for companies to assist them in, for example, teaching their employees procedures on industrial hygiene or providing OSHA training. This can be a more cost effective approach than developing an in-house program. These programs could be advertised to the business community

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<sup>8</sup> - Blakely, Edward J. and Ted K. Bradshaw. *Planning Local Economic Development – Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publishers, 2002.

through the Township's website and community newsletter, local social organizations and through commercial landlords.

### **Community Development Bank and Tax Increment Financing**

Community development banks are regular lending institutions that create a business unit dedicated to fostering economic development. The development banks provide capital to emerging businesses and in exchange become stakeholders in the success or failure of the investments. Local governments can also set up a quasi-governmental entity to operate a community development bank that they capitalize, but this is typically reserved for only the largest municipalities.

Local governments have also dedicated a stream of financing to foster business development. This can take the form of a subsidized loan or performance grant program that is administered by the local government. The state legislature has also recently revamped the ability of municipalities to use tax increment financing for redevelopment purposes. Tax increment financing leverages the difference between property tax revenue before redevelopment with the higher assessments that come after the redevelopment has occurred. This difference can be used as a dedicated funding source for the issuance of infrastructure bonds, land acquisition, and other costs that are incurred in redeveloping property. The intent of the legislation is to make it easier for municipalities to use tax increment financing than the Revenue Allocation District law that it replaced.

Obviously, local governments that invest in new and emerging businesses must have the requisite experience. However in Moorestown, which has a high level of technical and financial expertise among its population, the necessary acumen could be found. A local, municipally sponsored, development bank run by a board of directors from the community could have a significant direct impact on economic development. Such a group could also be convened as the municipal liaison to the development bank business units within the normal lending community to provide a check and balance to the lending system.

An example of a community development bank established by the City of Akron (Ohio) created a partnership with the federal Small Business Administration and nine area banks to develop a subordinated loan and performance grant for small businesses within the City. If a business in Akron utilizes any SBA financial program with a participating bank, the City will contribute 15% equity at the outset of the project. The capital outlay by the City is limited to \$60,000. Additionally, the participating banks agree to offer the loans at prime rate. This provides businesses with up front equity, which reduces the risk to the participating lenders. The City of Akron forgives the loan over a five year period provided the business makes timely payment on its primary loan to the bank. The City of Akron couples its loan and grant program with technical assistance programming for small businesses.

## VI. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CENTERS

The Township of Moorestown is an attractive location for many businesses. Its five economic activity centers have attracted significant companies to the Township and have created a set of existing conditions that allow local firms to succeed and expand. Business-to-business sales, government contracting and regional shopping are major components of these conditions.

Moorestown has five concentrations of business activity: Northwest Business Parks, Lenola, Moorestown Mall/East Gate, Town Center, and Lockheed-Martin/Centerton. Each of these areas has its own opportunities and challenges for economic development. The areas are described in turn.

### Northwest Business Parks

The northwest business parks generally occupy the area between Lenola and Cinnaminson and from the Pennsauken Creek to both sides of N. Church Street above New Albany Road and south to Foster Avenue. This area was zoned for industrial purposes in anticipation of the construction of Rt. 90. Rt. 90 was planned in 1964 as the connecting highway between the Betsy Ross Bridge and I-295. Subsequently the portion between the bridge and Rt. 73 was constructed and the remainder abandoned, though right-of-way acquisition had occurred in Moorestown in the mid-1970's. Consequently, the planned bridge over the North Branch of Pennsauken Creek was not built that would have provided direct access to the state and regional highway network. Instead, trucks must traverse relatively narrow streets through residential neighborhoods in Lenola and Cinnaminson or N. Church Street. While a traffic solution is conceptually possible, it would involve unacceptably high costs in neighborhood or environmental impacts and be very expensive.

The effects of truck traffic can be traded off to some degree by an increase in passenger vehicle traffic. The flex space business parks have an interior partition wall that separates the office uses from the distribution or assembly uses. A lower truck use will mean that the space is used for office purposes rather than distribution or manufacturing. This increases passenger traffic. The Township has made some recent changes to the Specially Restricted Industrial district to restrict the time of truck use to the hours 6:00 am to 10:30 pm to avoid sleep disruptions but has also made other changes to streamline the processing of conditional use applications. The prior conditional use process, while thorough in the examination of potential impacts, also had the effect of making Moorestown less competitive with other nearby municipalities, such as Burlington Township, Mt. Laurel and Lumberton. This change occurred in November 2008. With the present economic recession, the regulatory framework has not been fully tested in the short time that it has been in effect. Accordingly, it should be revisited once business activity has picked up to ensure it is working as intended. Because of the conditional use process, Moorestown still has an extra step that most other municipalities do not have, which require only an administrative certificate of continuing occupancy permit. Any time

that the Township has a longer or more complicated process than other municipalities, a careful analysis of the benefits of the regulation needs to be undertaken. Such an analysis should show that it preserves a significant character of the town or that it promotes the quality of life for residents and that its benefit outweighs the competitive disadvantage.

In terms of municipal operations, once the conditional use approval has occurred, there still remains the coordination of other municipal and county agencies for board of health reviews and inspections, fire department inspection, and so forth. Tenants have at time found it to be a frustrating and long process until they can actually move in, or at least have a schedule of such reviews that is reliable so the business can plan and undertake their move. Coordination of departments and outside agencies is a common municipal problem. In municipalities that have specifically addressed the problem, a “one-stop office” or ombudsman has been created.

Additional uses in the business parks would expand the potential tenant base, for example adult day care, where employees could check on their parents or other people they care for during a lunch break and conveniently pick them up and drop them off. Some tenants would like to be able to have weekend sales events associated with their distribution facilities. Weekend sales would not interfere with the normal business activities of the park, a concern expressed by municipal officials when the idea of retail sales was first broached.

Lastly, the telecommunications infrastructure is underdeveloped to the business parks which have limited their attractiveness to larger users of such services.

### *Summary and Recommendations*

- Monitor the effectiveness of the new conditional use process. Consider an even more streamlined process.
- Review the procedures that occur after the initial zoning permit has been issued to improve coordination of municipal agencies.
- Consider additional allowed uses in the SRI to broaden its potential tenant base.
- Reexamine the possibility for retail sales limited in floor area and time of week.
- Develop an information booklet outlining the approval process for a new business to locate in Moorestown.

### **Lenola**

Lenola is centered on the intersections of Lenola Road, Camden Avenue and New Albany Road. The commercial portion of Lenola is found on both sides of Camden Avenue from the Maple Shade border east to Revere Avenue. The Lenola economic center is the smallest of the five centers in the Township and primarily serves the residential neighborhoods that surround it. A coordinated effort to analyze land use,

zoning and neighborhood concerns was first proposed in the 2002 Master Plan. The Township Council responded to the suggestions of the Master Plan by establishing the West Moorestown Task Force in April 2003. The Task Force reviewed not only the commercial center of West Moorestown, but also its residential neighborhoods and the northwest business parks and issued a final report in December 2004. From the study came recommendations for open space acquisition in Lenola's central business area, a three phase streetscape improvement program and improvements to county intersections on New Albany Road, Lenola Road and Camden Avenue. Improvements have been completed from Lenola Road at Camden Avenue and northward, which has aided in turning movements for trucks coming from the northwest business parks.

The Master Plan suggested that West Moorestown/Lenola would benefit from an area specific plan, possibly a redevelopment plan. An area specific plan has been developed first with streetscape suggestions prepared by the Township's landscape architect in the Task Force report and secondly through the creation of the Lenola Town Center ordinance in August 2008. The Lenola Town Center tailored the zoning districts to encourage the redevelopment of the commercial center to a more attractive, more pedestrian-oriented, place. The ordinance is a first step, but given the substantial number of automobile-oriented uses in the district, which include an underutilized strip shopping center, NAPA automobile parts, CITGO and Getty filling stations, car wash and two drive-thrus, conversion is likely to be spotty and take a long time, probably decades, without a lot by lot physical plan and even a redevelopment plan. The LTC also has an unusual number of vacant lots for a traditional shopping street. In theory, that should make redevelopment easier, but it is indicative of a lack of demand. Lenola residents are close to other neighborhood shopping at the edge of its area at Kings Highway and Lenola Road as well as a short distance to the regional shopping at the Moorestown Mall/East Gate. Additional retail will be difficult to establish without a higher population base; however, the LTC ordinance limits the ability to add more residents. Adding residents, however, was a strong point of contention in the public hearings on the ordinance.

Putting further pressure on businesses, the bridge replacement of Camden Avenue (Main Street in Maple Shade) over the Pennsauken Creek and Route 73 is slated to begin by 2010. If history is any guide, the lack of the bridge will reduce customer traffic significantly. The NJ Department of Transportation typically provides signage to direct motorists to open businesses, but does not provide direct payments for lost business to the establishment.

### *Summary and Recommendations*

- Revisit the zoning amendments in 2011 to determine whether the 2008 changes have had a positive effect.
- Develop plans for the pocket park on Camden Avenue.
- Assist businesses with promotions such as website links during the reconstruction of the Rt. 73 Bridge.



- Provide for the phased capital improvements recommended by the West Moorestown Task Force.
- Encourage the formation of a Lenola business group or encourage owners to join the Moorestown Business Association.

### **Moorestown Mall/East Gate**

This area has the highest concentration of retail activity and multi-tenanted office space in the Township. Geographically, it occupies the southwestern corner of the municipality bounded by Lenola Road, Kings Highway, and the Rt. 38 corridor from Church Street west to the Maple Shade border. It includes the Moorestown Mall, Kmart Plaza (1970) and portions of the East Gate Square shopping centers (1995-1998). The other part of this economic activity center is the East Gate Office complex located to the northeast of East Gate Square on the other side of the N. Branch of the Pennsauken Creek. While East Gate is used as shorthand, this area also includes the Moorestown Corporate Center.

The Moorestown Mall opened in September 1963; two years after the Cherry Hill Mall proved that indoor shopping centers in temperate climates would be accepted by customers. Its construction began a 35-year period of additional retail development culminating in the development of the last phase of the East Gate Square shopping center. It is the largest retail concentration in Burlington County and has a regional customer base. This regional retail center is in competition for consumer dollars with other retail centers and internet sales. Keeping abreast of new retail concepts and rapidly changing consumer tastes is a constant challenge for its owners and is particularly difficult with the present lack of financing available. A cautionary tale can be found in the story of the former Echelon Mall, once the second largest enclosed shopping center in South Jersey. Ten years ago Echelon Mall was operating normally but then the closing of an anchor store and the unsuccessful search for one to fill the space led to a vacancy rate of almost 75%. Its owner, which also owns the Moorestown and Cherry Hill Malls, eventually demolished half of the mall and is in the process of occupying that portion of the site with both unrestricted and age-restricted housing. It remains to be seen whether the project will be successful, though the area has an established apartment market. Renamed the Voorhees Town Center, it illustrates the need for flexibility and innovation in responding to new retail models and to capture customers.

Moorestown has a strong vested interest in maintaining the strength of the regional retail center. The mall property contributes the highest property taxes in the municipality, \$3.48 million, almost three times the amount paid by the second largest, Lockheed Martin (\$1.23 million). In the region, the Cherry Hill Mall has undergone a substantial overhaul with the replacement of an empty anchor store (Strawbridge's) with Nordstrom, the construction of a parking garage, the addition of pad sites facing the main highway and the construction of a restaurant row. To a degree, the mall has been turned inside out, allowing more direct access to stores and services instead of relying on the internal central corridor. Some of these same prescriptions have been

undertaken by the Moorestown Mall owner, such as pad site development and new exterior entrances.

One major factor that Moorestown lacks in attracting new business to its regional center is that it remains a dry town. When the issue of changing this longstanding prohibition was put to a voter referendum in 2007, however, it was defeated by a nearly two-thirds to one-third vote (4,202 against; 2,559 for). State law establishes the guidelines for referendum questions on this issue, including the manner in which the question is proposed and the period of time between similar referendums. But from an economic development standpoint, the development of new restaurants provides strong support to the Mall and by extension, the other secondary retail development surrounding it. All national chain restaurants that are not solely for the family trade will not locate a business where they cannot sell alcoholic beverages because it is the most profitable part of the meal. It is also hard to imagine epicurean cuisine without wine, for example. Patrons are drawn to the restaurants and following the meal, might go shopping or to a movie, all of which increase sales, which increases the rent that the owners can charge. In turn and in time these actions among others made by the owner make the property even more valuable, enhancing municipal revenues. It is a strong tool to prevent a catastrophic decline and shuttering – a “dead mall”.

Land can be zoned to allow restaurants with alcoholic beverage sales only in certain geographic locations. Land can also be zoned to prevent the establishment of retail alcoholic beverage stores and confine sales only to restaurants. Of the five economic activity centers, the Moorestown Mall/East Gate center is the only appropriate location for such restaurants because it has a regional retail focus, unlike the other centers in the municipality. Further, there are economic reasons why this is the only favorable location. Licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages are very expensive. Since new licenses are publicly bid by a municipality, public officials seek the highest prices for revenue purposes. In South Jersey, such licenses range from a minimum of \$500,000 to \$1 million and even more. The cost of such licenses precludes only but the most well capitalized restaurants from affording one. To pay for the license, the restaurant has to be in a high traffic area, a regional highway, to obtain the volume and customer draw to be successful. These economic facts mean that Main Street restaurants will not be able to afford the license for alcoholic beverage sales even if the zoning would permit them.

While the case for alcoholic beverage sales at the Mall is good from an economic development standpoint, it has to be balanced against the social values of the town’s citizens in a democratic forum.

The East Gate area is a one to three-story office park that also includes the Moorestown Corporate Center. There are at present limited vacancies in the park; however, some properties may have outlived their useful life because of the length of time that they have stood vacant. While redevelopment has started to occur, one of those was the conversion of a former GM training facility to a special needs school.

While an excellent facility and much needed in the community, the use is nonetheless tax exempt. In contrast, in Mt. Laurel just over the border with Moorestown and part of the same office complex, three properties on Fellowship Road were razed and new buildings constructed in their place. Though the differences in permitted uses are similar, Mt. Laurel's regulations allow for more of the lot to be developed with higher impervious and building coverage limits and also allow them to be taller. In Mt. Laurel's Specially Restricted Industrial and Industrial districts, which are comparable to Moorestown's Specially Restricted Industrial district, the height limits are 50 and 60 feet, respectively. Moorestown's limit is 45 feet. In Mt. Laurel's Major Commercial district, the height limit is 110 feet, which has facilitated that township's hotel development, which now numbers 20 buildings. In Moorestown, the comparable height limit is 45 feet in the SRC-1 and -2 districts. Consequently, building lots in Mt. Laurel are worth more to the development community.

At one point in the mid-1990's the Township considered a request to develop an extended stay hotel at the intersection of Nixon Drive and Rt. 38. A new product of the hotel industry, it was designed for people working on short contracts in the area or relocating here or temporarily staying in one spot before finding permanent residence. Now a known quantity, extended stay hotels are found throughout South Jersey, including next door Mt. Laurel. During that time, Mt. Laurel has become a hotel powerhouse in the region and good locations less available. Mt. Laurel has experienced a steady stream of the demolition and reconstruction of hotel sites. Hotels in the East Gate area are an additional use to consider, not only as a potential replacement for difficult to lease office buildings, but because recent legislation allows the imposition of a local hotel tax – one of the few taxes available to municipalities.

#### *Summary and Recommendations*

- Review the allowed uses in the SRC and SRC-1 districts for the potential to add hotels as allowed uses.
- Reexamine the bulk standards for development in the SRC-1 East Gate area as to their competitiveness with zoning regulations in nearby municipalities.
- Create the option for alcoholic beverage sales in the future, limited to this geographic area and restaurant use by utilizing and creating appropriate zoning in advance of any future Township referendum on this issue.
- Use any state financing tool to create incentives for owners to invest in continual upgrades to property.

#### **Town Center**

The center of Moorestown can be conceived as the area along Main Street from Camden Avenue to Schooley Street and including Second Street from N. Church Street to Chester Avenue. This is the civic heart of Moorestown as well, including the center of municipal government, many religious uses, Moorestown Friends School

and the quasi-public Community House. It is also the traditional retail center for the municipality and has the highest concentration of historic properties. Its importance to the community's identity is high and concerns over the direction of the town center have been at the forefront of municipal action over the past eight years. This has included substantial investment in public infrastructure, the development of a Town Center sub-element of the Master Plan to maintain and improve its character, a management plan created by the EDAC for retail development and a zoning amendment that places retail sales and services on first floors and relegates offices to second floors.

There has been a lot of success in these efforts as the downtown has few vacant properties. The replacement of offices with restaurants, for example, has enlivened the evening hours on weekends.

### *Summary and Recommendations*

- Develop real estate broker relationships and related business attraction efforts in order to maintain a full commercial occupancy rate.
- While focusing on independent businesses as the preferred tenants, determine whether appropriate regional or national brands would be interested in a Main Street location to achieve the optimum tenant mix. If there is no interest, determine what impediments exist.
- Continue to improve the pedestrian and motorist infrastructure as indicated in the Town Center sub-element of the Master Plan. These include creating municipal parking in the interior of the block in between Mill Street and Chester Avenue, north of Main Street; improve pedestrian walkways from the block interior to its exterior; and reconstruct the municipal parking lot on the south side of Second Street. The new Township government complex should be connected to Main Street via pedestrian walkways.
- Engage merchants as stakeholders in the development of improvements.
- Look for means to provide public restrooms for events.
- Continue the municipality's active participation in events, celebrations, task force(s), and forums, such as the Moorestown Business Association and non-profit organizations.
- Implement a new zoning restriction on institutional uses as recommended in the 2009 Reexamination Report.
- Consider removing parking requirements from the zoning ordinance for the core area of the town center.
- Reexamine density restrictions for small lots that would prevent the existing downtown to be rebuilt as it is today.
- Develop an information booklet outlining the approval process for a new business to locate in Moorestown.
- Develop a wayfinding system and informational kiosks.
- Allow small scale venues for overnight stays such as bed and breakfasts, and inns to supply a niche market not presently being tapped in South Jersey.

- Promote the town center as a tourist stop in conjunction with other destinations in the Philadelphia region.

### **Lockheed Martin/Young Avenue**

Lockheed Martin, as a key national defense and government services provider, is the largest employer in the municipality and the county, with facilities also in Mt. Laurel. Its main plant is located between Borton Landing Road, Marne Highway (CR. 537) and Westfield Road. It is the largest landowner in the municipality as well as the largest owner of farmland. The plant produces for several business units of the corporation, including Maritime Systems and Sensors, Information Systems and Global Services, and Technology Ventures, including recent efforts on focusing solar energy. As noted earlier, the benefit of the company in Moorestown is the potential to develop a business cluster of companies that can supply products or services to Lockheed Martin through their Small Business Innovative Research and Small Business Technology Transfer partnerships. The company also has a women and minority business enterprise program called Mentor Protégé to provide starting businesses with experienced advice.

From an educational standpoint the corporation, in other parts of the country, sponsors several programs one of which is called Engineering Shadowing where aspiring engineering students spend a day with employees. They also support math enrichment programs, science fairs and visit schools during career days. The company can be a source of internships for Moorestown college students interested in engineering and other related disciplines.

The planned, though not approved development, of an approximately 200,000 sf. medical facility on Young Avenue by Virtua Hospital would also provide a means of interesting students in the medical profession through similar types of career days as well as providing local jobs. In turn, the retail uses and the YMCA will also be supported by the employees of the facility.

### *Summary and Recommendations*

- Engage with Lockheed Martin's community outreach coordinator to develop educational opportunities for Moorestown students.
- Create a business roundtable for interested companies and individuals to learn about the process of selling products and services to Lockheed Martin.
- Over time develop a business cluster in the national defense and governmental services fields.

## VII. SUMMARY

There are many tools and techniques that may be used to promote economic development. The one main lesson that comes from successful economic development ventures is that it requires a long term view, persistence, and a moderate amount of funding to be effective. Moorestown has been successful within the level of effort that can be put forth with a volunteer organization which is due in no small part to its persistence.

In this document, a set of goals and objectives have been developed, a wide range of potential strategies have been discussed and finally the five economic activity centers of the Township have been described. With each economic activity center there is a set of recommendations that sets out possible future courses of action that will need to be considered in the appropriate context and implemented as necessary.