

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

Economic development policies can strengthen a community through the expansion of its tax and employment base, which allows the community to support a higher quality of life for its residents by providing jobs and improving public services, such as parks, schools, libraries, sewer and water services, police, fire, garbage and other governmental services. Economic development policies should balance the need for economic vitality with other master plan goals and policies, such as stability, environmental protection and preservation of the Township's character. While Hamilton's economy is diverse and built on a strong foundation, the Township and the local business community cannot afford to be complacent. Instead they must continue to ensure the Township is conducive to economic growth, innovation and prosperity and markets itself accordingly. This Element of the Master Plan will guide land use decisions to provide sustained and balanced economic development throughout Hamilton Township.

The key to Hamilton's economic prosperity lies in its strategic advantages: central location within a populous state, an educated workforce, a higher than median income residential base, a superior regional transportation network, a high quality of life offered to its residents and the availability of convenient public and private services. Centrally located between New York and Philadelphia, Hamilton is a prime location for businesses at the intersection of three major markets: Suburban Manhattan-New England, the Delaware Valley Region, and the Boston-Washington corridor. Additionally, at a local scale, the Township benefits greatly from its proximity to the Trenton and Princeton market areas. The Township's distinction is that it offers a more diverse array of properties, goods and services at a higher price point than Trenton; however, prices are generally below the competition in the Princeton market.

The Township's high quality of life makes it attractive to businesses, providing employees an attractive place to live in proximity to work and allowing for conveniences during the workday. The Township's varied housing stock and choice of neighborhoods offers housing to employees at all incomes and lifestyles. Additionally, the Township's educational, recreational and cultural offerings add to the quality of life.

The Hamilton "Interstate Highway Complex" has afforded the Township an enviable advantage over other municipalities in attracting new business. Hamilton's road network offers superior access to the rest of the county, state and east coast markets. Major roadways in Hamilton include:

- The New Jersey Turnpike
- Interstates 295 and 195
- U.S. Highways 130 and 206
- State Highways 129 and 33

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

In addition to these major regional roadways in the Township, there are additional regional arteries just outside of the Township which are easily accessible. These include U.S. Highway 1, Interstate 95 and State Highway 31.

Hamilton is home to a state-of-the-art commuter rail station for NJ Transit, Hamilton Train Station. This station, situated near the I-295/Sloan Avenue Interchange is filling the growing demand for additional commuter facilities serving travelers along the northeast corridor line. Also, NJ Transit operates numerous bus lines in the Township and Mercer County operates a bus line along the Route 130 corridor.

Goals & Objectives

- Goal 1. Promote a strong and sustainable economic development climate in order to provide employment, a positive tax base, convenience and quality public services and facilities for residents and businesses.
- Objective 1.a Promote infill development and redevelopment opportunities.
 - Objective 1.b Support the provision of incubators for small or modest retail, office and industrial uses.
 - Objective 1.c Promote tourism and recreation related to the Township's shopping, dining and arts and culture uses.
 - Objective 1.d Maximize assistance and cooperation with other public and private sector economic development partners, such as but not limited to regional education institutions, the Mercer County and New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton Partnership and the Economic Development Commission.
 - Objective 1.e Support a diversity of retail, office and industrial uses in the Township in order to encourage well-balanced and sustainable economic development.
 - Objective 1.f Improve accessibility and transportation linkages to facilitate access to places of employment in the Township.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

- Goal 2. Encourage the development of retail, office and industrial areas, consistent with the Master Plan.
- Objective 3.a Incentivize development and redevelopment on designated large vacant or underutilized sites by permitting mixed use development.
 - Objective 3.b Remove and/or reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers to new retail, office and industrial development which is consistent with the Master Plan.
 - Objective 3.c Promote existing business retention and expansion.
 - Objective 1.d Maintain the Township’s principal commercial corridors as viable linear retail and office districts with a diversity of businesses, adequate parking, coordinated signage and attractive streetscape.
 - Objective 1.e Identify and enhance existing pedestrian-oriented neighborhood scale commercial districts.
- Goal 3. Ensure that the Township’s infrastructure can support the existing and potential retail, office and industrial users.
- Objective 1.a Roads, stormwater management and sewer and water plans should be consistent with the development capacity of the Township’s residential retail, office and industrial areas.
 - Objective 1.b Coordinate with Mercer County and the State of New Jersey to ensure that all areas intended for retail, office and industrial growth are within the designated sewer service areas.
 - Objective 1.c Encourage telecommunications companies to offer broadband internet to all of Hamilton Township.

Past Economic Development Activities

The Township has a history of promoting economic development opportunities. The Township routinely works cooperatively with organizations whose mission is consistent with the Township’s economic development goals, such as the Hamilton Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce.

Page 3 | May 6, 2011 Draft

Please note that the final draft and adopted versions of this document will be reformatted to provide a more pleasing appearance and to incorporate maps, graphics and photographs.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

Additionally, the Hamilton Township Economic Development Advisory Commission plays a positive role in advancing economic development efforts.

The Township regularly hosts events aimed at promoting a sustainable business climate by fostering relationships between itself and business owners and between business owners. A sample of these events include *A Taste of Hamilton*, which promotes Hamilton restaurants, and the Economic Development Awards Dinner.

The Township held two events in the last year which highlight its economic development efforts. The first was the *Hamilton 2020 Symposium* on August 6, 2010, and the second was the *Opportunity is Knocking in Hamilton Township* bus tour on September 15, 2010. These types of innovative outreach efforts are helpful in distinguishing Hamilton Township from the region.

Hamilton 2020 Symposium

On August 6, 2010, the *Hamilton 2020 Symposium* was hosted by the Township in conjunction with the Hamilton Partnership. This event was a nearly four hour session analyzing the characteristics of Route 33 business corridor and identifying ways to improve it.

As part of the Symposium, the corridor was split into four zones based on location and shared characteristics. During the event attendees, who consisted of property owners, business owners as well as residents, split into four breakout groups – one group for each corridor zone. Each group discussed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relevant to each zone. After completion of the breakout group discussions, all of the groups reconvened and a representative of each group presented their findings to the attendees. The result of the event was a compilation of improvements – both physical and policy – that would enhance the business climate along Route 33 and encourage development and redevelopment in a manner that would benefit the nearby business owners and the Township as a whole. Detailed results of this event are discussed later in this Element, as well as in the Land Use Element of the Master Plan.

Opportunity is Knocking in Hamilton Township Bus Tour

On September 15, 2010 the Office of the Mayor and the Economic Development Advisory Commission held a daylong event where developers were invited to learn about the Township and tour sites available for commercial development. The purpose was to promote the benefits of operating a business in Hamilton and expand the exposure of development opportunities which are

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

available. The well-attended event successfully showcased many of the available properties in Hamilton Township’s commercial districts.

Existing Conditions

At over 40 square miles, Hamilton Township is one of the largest municipalities in the State. It is also one of the most populous, having the largest population in Mercer County and being the eighth most populated municipality in New Jersey.

Demographic Characteristics

The population of Hamilton Township grew rapidly, more than doubling, between 1940 and 1970. The Township experienced the greatest rate of growth between 1950 and 1960 when its population grew by 58% from 41,156 to 65,035 residents; this was the strongest growth rate since 1930 or before of not just Hamilton, but also Mercer County and New Jersey. Following the 1950’s, the rate of population increase in Hamilton Township steadily declined. Population growth in Hamilton Township reached a low in the decade between 1990 and 2000 with an increase of less than 1,000 persons. In recent years, from 2000 through 2010, population grew in Hamilton by only 1% while it grew in Mercer County and New Jersey by 4% each.

The slow growth rate in the Township over the past 20 years reflects both local trends (the Township is approaching build-out of its residential land areas) and national trends (average household size has been shrinking during this period).

Population Growth 1930-2010

	Hamilton Township		Mercer County		New Jersey	
	Persons	% Change	Persons	% Change	Persons	% Change
1930	27,121		187,143		4,041,334	
1940	30,219	11%	197,318	5%	4,160,165	3%
1950	41,156	36%	229,781	16%	4,835,329	16%
1960	65,035	58%	266,392	16%	6,066,782	25%
1970	79,609	22%	304,116	14%	7,171,112	18%
1980	82,801	4%	307,863	1%	7,365,011	3%
1990	86,553	5%	325,824	6%	7,730,188	5%

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

	Hamilton Township		Mercer County		New Jersey	
2000	87,254	1%	350,761	8%	8,414,350	9%
2010	88,464	1%	366,513	4%	8,791,894	4%

Source: US Census, 1930-2000; 2009 US Census Annual Population Estimate

Despite minor population growth the most recent decade, Hamilton Township experienced significant swings in population throughout the age groups. The Township experienced a small decrease in the number and the percent of residents less than 14 years of age. However, from 2000 through 2009 the number and percent of residents aged 15 through 24 years increased dramatically at 25%. The age groups, 25 through 44 decreased by 17% and those 65 through 74 decreased by 6%. The largest increase in a population group, as a percent of the whole, was those aged 55 through 64; this age group increased by 35%. This change is likely due to not just an aging population but also to senior housing opportunities constructed in the Township during this time. Consistent with these changes in the age groups, the Township's median age increased from 36 to 40 from 2000 through 2009.

Age Distribution, 1990 – 2009

Age Group	1990	Percent	2000	Percent	Percent Change (1990-2000)	2009	Percent Change (2000-2009)
Under 5	5,280	6.1%	4,937	5.7%	-.40%	4,807	-2.63%
5-14	10,450	12.1%	11,613	13.3%	1.2%	11,277	-2.89%
15-24	10,640	12.3%	9,644	11.0%	-1.3%	12,055	25.00%
25-34	14,701	17.0%	11,062	12.7%	-4.3%	10,339	-6.54%
35-44	14,190	16.4%	15,300	17.5%	1.1%	12,741	-16.73%
45-54	9,582	11.1%	13,014	14.9%	3.8%	14,162	8.82%
55-64	8,761	10.1%	8,095	9.3%	-.8%	10,947	35.23%
65-74	8,178	9.4%	6,825	7.8%	-1.6%	6,409	-6.10%
75+	4,769	5.5%	6,766	7.8%	2.3%	7,030	3.90%
Total	86,553		87,254			89,767	
Median Age			36			40	

Source: 1990 and 2000 US Census

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

The Township's population is well educated. Within the Township, 6% of the population 25 years and older have attained a Master's degree and 19% have attained a Bachelors degree, 9% have attained an Associate's degree.

Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Older

	Hamilton Township	Mercer County	New Jersey
No schooling completed	1.26%	0.98%	0.89%
Nursery to 4th grade	0.38%	0.68%	0.84%
5th and 6th grade	1.20%	1.73%	1.60%
7th and 8th grade	2.18%	2.34%	2.24%
9th grade	1.25%	1.67%	1.40%
10th grade	2.05%	2.30%	2.06%
11th grade	2.22%	2.31%	2.09%
12th grade, no diploma	2.06%	2.11%	2.04%
High school graduate, GED, or alternative	33.03%	24.90%	29.90%
Some college, less than 1 year	6.89%	5.27%	5.29%
Some college, 1 or more years, no degree	12.60%	10.99%	11.33%
Associate's degree	8.50%	6.13%	6.16%
Bachelor's degree	18.74%	20.59%	21.48%
Master's degree	6.05%	11.95%	8.97%
Professional school degree	0.93%	2.59%	2.42%
Doctorate degree	0.67%	3.48%	1.27%

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey. Table B15002

At approximately \$72,000, the Township's median household income is higher than that of the County and the State.

Household Income

	Hamilton Township	Mercer County	New Jersey
Less than \$10,000	1.60%	5.70%	5.40%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.80%	4.30%	4.00%

Page 7 | May 6, 2011 Draft

Please note that the final draft and adopted versions of this document will be reformatted to provide a more pleasing appearance and to incorporate maps, graphics and photographs.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

	Hamilton Township	Mercer County	New Jersey
\$15,000 to \$19,999	3.40%	3.80%	4.00%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	4.10%	3.80%	3.90%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	4.50%	3.90%	4.00%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	4.90%	3.80%	3.90%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	4.00%	3.40%	3.80%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	3.20%	3.20%	4.00%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	4.60%	3.70%	3.60%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	7.70%	7.00%	7.40%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	10.40%	9.20%	9.70%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	16.10%	13.40%	13.70%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	11.20%	9.90%	10.40%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	9.20%	7.30%	6.90%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7.70%	8.10%	7.50%
\$200,000 or more	3.80%	9.60%	7.90%
Total:	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Median Household Income	\$72,052	\$71,767	\$68,981

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey. Table B19001

Consistent with the Township's median household income, the Township's poverty level of 4.5% is significantly lower than the County's at 9.4% and the State's at 8.8%.

Poverty Levels

	Hamilton Township	Mercer County	New Jersey
Population Below Poverty Level	4.5%	9.4%	8.8%

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey. Table B17001

Additionally, the Township's crime rates are below those for the County and the State. The crime rate in Hamilton Township is 21.3 incidents per 1,000 residents whereas the crime rate for the County is 25.3 and the State is 23.9.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

Crime Rates

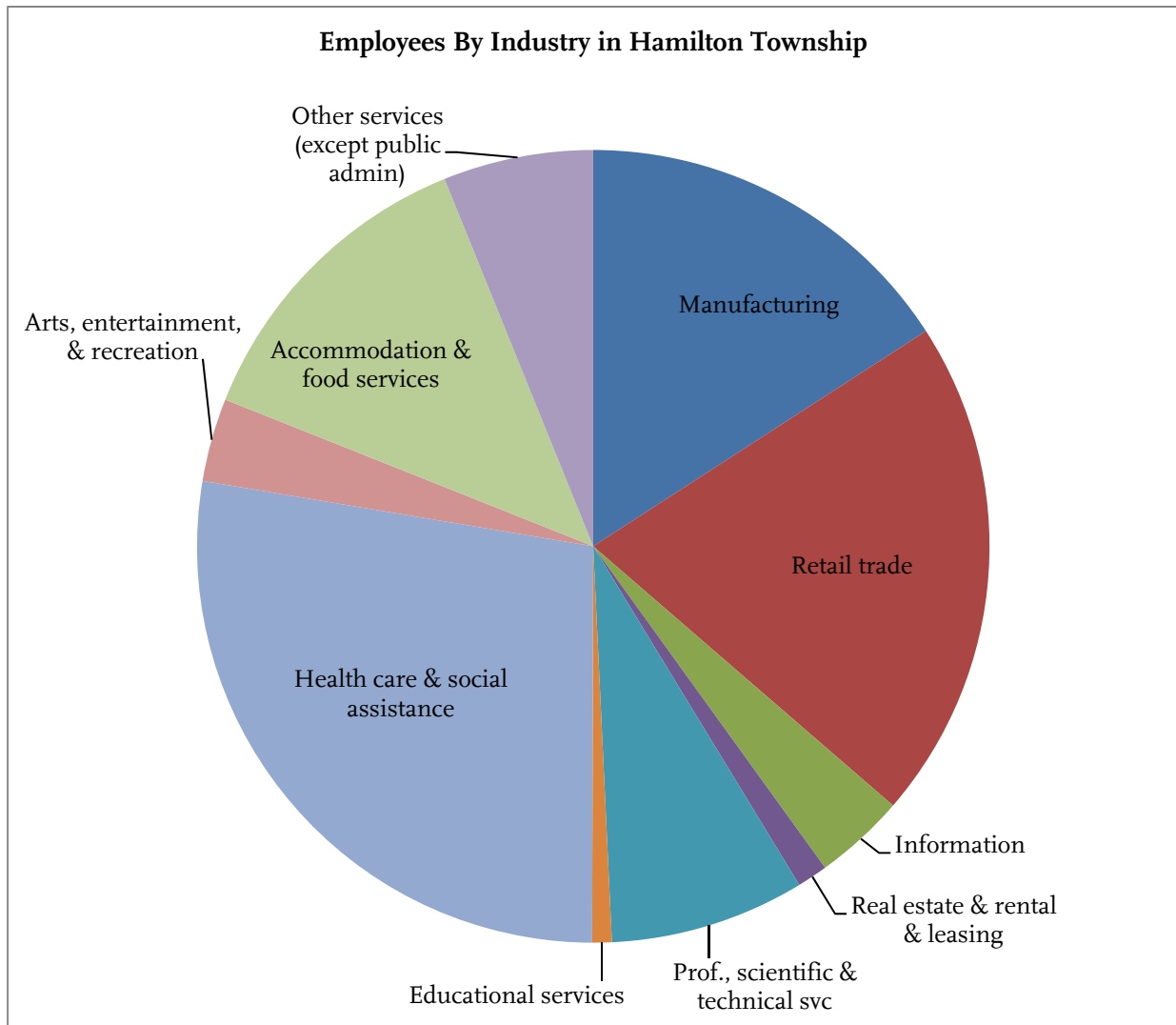
	Hamilton Township	Mercer County	New Jersey
Crime Rate per 1,000 Residents	21.3	25.3	23.9
Violent Crime Rate	2.3	4.4	3.1
Nonviolent Crime Rate	19.0	20.9	20.9

Source: New Jersey State Police 2009 Uniform Crime Report

Employment & Industry Characteristics

There are a substantial number of jobs located in Hamilton Township. The 2007 New Jersey Economic Census indicates that there were 29,488 jobs in the Township, an increase of 3,529 jobs from 2002. It is also noteworthy that during this time the Township gained 235 business establishments ranging from retail trade to health care. In fact, the Township gained establishments in the majority of industries tracked by the Economic Census. The most significant gains were in the accommodation and food service sector where there was an increase of 44 establishments. The only industry to lose establishments was manufacturing; however, as shown in the following tables, this industry gained 1,167 employees during this time. When reviewing these figures, it is important to note that the Nation's recession began in December 2007.

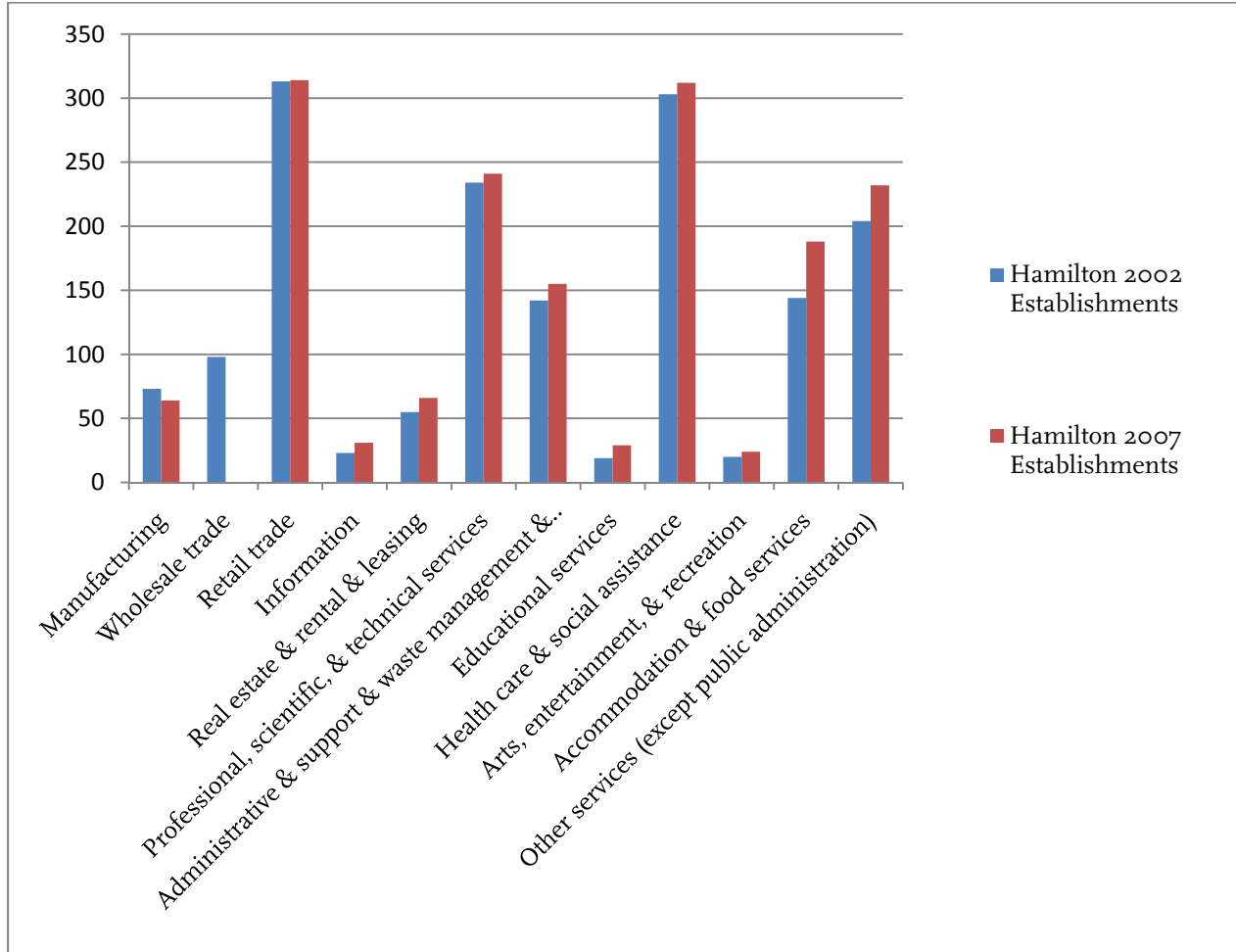
Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011



Source: 2007 US Economic Census. Note that incomplete information was provided for educational services, indicating there were between 100 and 249 employees in this industry. The chart above reflects the average of these two figures (175). Additionally, inadequate information was provided for wholesale trade and as a result, this industry is not included in the chart

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

2002-2007 Number of Business Establishments in Hamilton Township



Source: 2002 and 2007 US Economic Census. Note that complete and comparable information was not provided for Wholesale Trade.

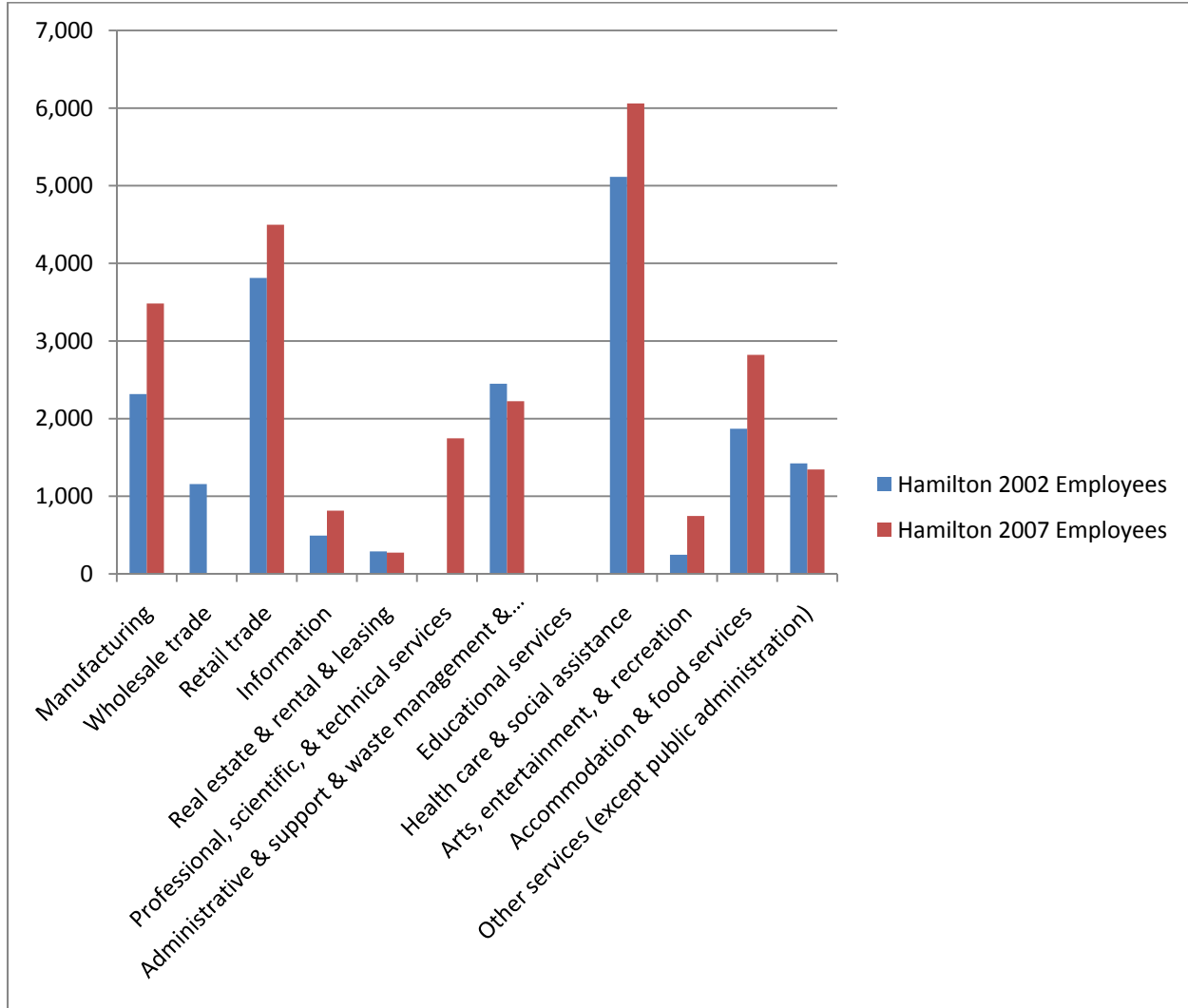
Similarly, the Township gained employees in the majority of industries. The most significant gains were in the manufacturing, with an increase of 1,167 employees, accommodation and food services with an increase of 951 employees, health care and social assistance with an increase of 946 employees and retail with an increase of 686 employees. Many of these additional jobs were likely created in and around the Route 130 corridor which experienced significant development during this period with uses such as shopping centers, offices, and a hotel. Despite these very significant gains, there were three industries that lost employees – administrative support and waste management, which lost 225 employees, other services which lost 78 employees and the real estate industry that lost a minor number of 16 employees.

Page 11 | May 6, 2011 Draft

Please note that the final draft and adopted versions of this document will be reformatted to provide a more pleasing appearance and to incorporate maps, graphics and photographs.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

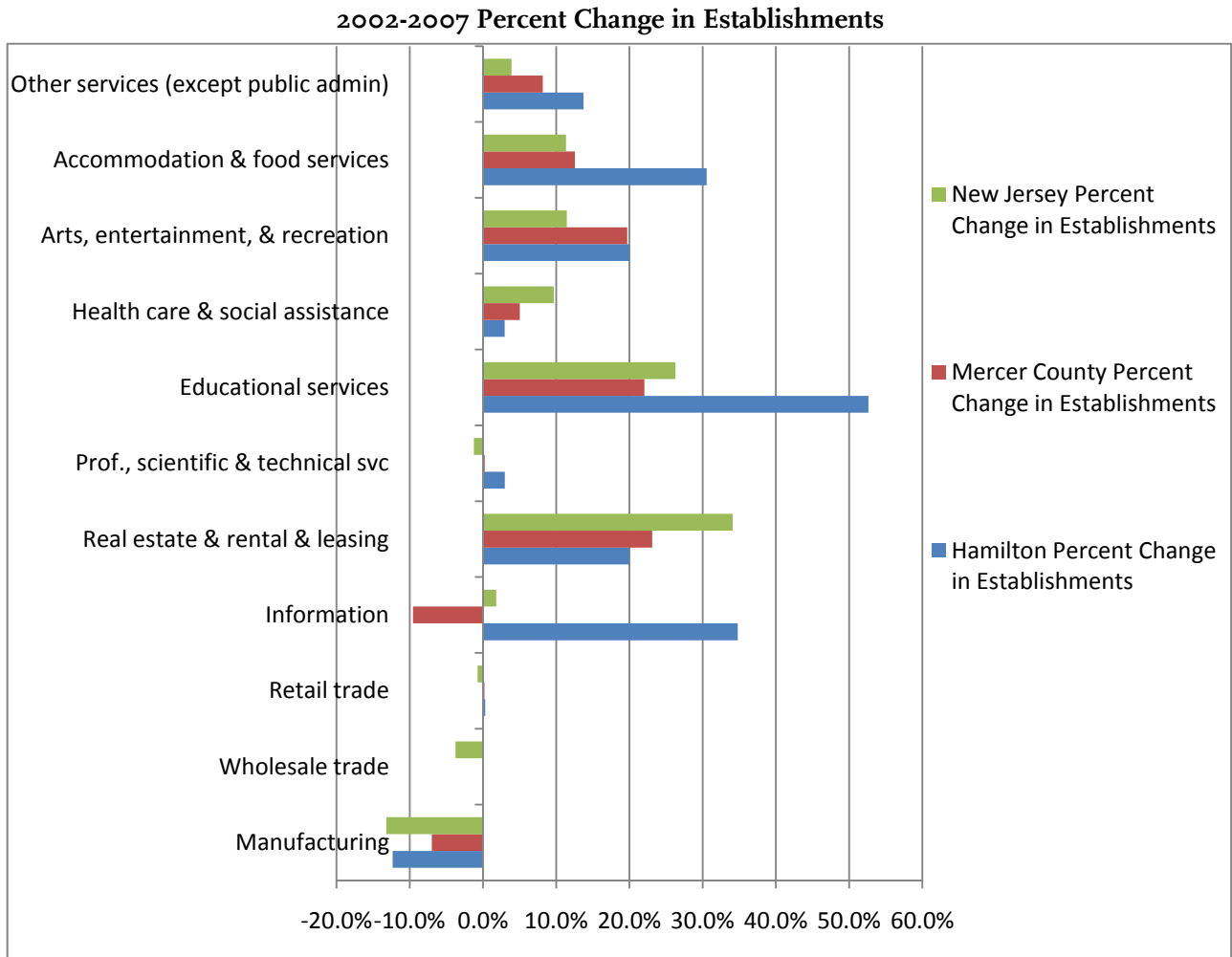
2002-2007 Number of Employees in Hamilton Township



Source: 2002 and 2007 US Economic Census. Note that complete and comparable information was not provided for wholesale trade, professional, scientific and technical services or educational services.

As compared to the County and the State, the industries and the employees in Hamilton Township fared well during the 2002 through 2007 period. As seen in the following tables, Hamilton had stronger growth in several industries as compared to the County and State, including the accommodation and food service, and arts, entertainment and recreation.

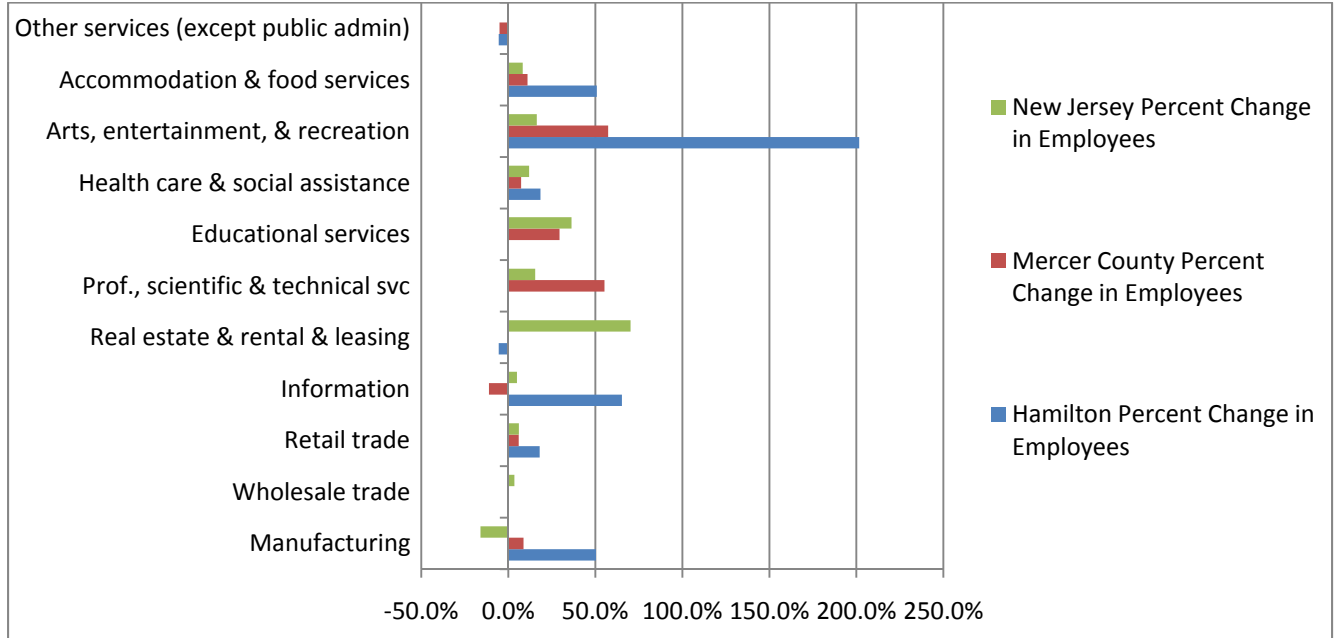
Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011



Source: 2002 and 2007 US Economic Census. Note that complete and comparable information was not provided for wholesale trade, professional, scientific and technical services or educational services.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

2002-2007 Percent Change in Employees



Source: 2002 and 2007 US Economic Census. Note that complete and comparable information was not provided for wholesale trade, real estate rental and leasing, professional, scientific and technical services or educational services.

Like all municipalities throughout the state, Hamilton Township has seen an increase in commercial vacancy over the last few years. These vacancies are not confined to one section of the Township, nor one industrial sector. However, it is noteworthy that the Township’s vacancy rate did not increase substantially. The vacancy rate over the last several years peaked in the third quarter of 2006 at 19.7%, where as the rate in the second quarter of 2010 was 18.4%. Notwithstanding this spike, rates have slowly increased since the second quarter of 2008 when the rate was 14.5%. There are a few key properties in the Township that have a significant contribution to the real and perceived vacancy rate; these include shopping centers which are entirely or nearly entirely vacant, such as the Suburban Plaza center on Route 33, just east of the intersection with Sculptors Way and the Cost Cutters and ShopRite centers on Whitehorse Mercerville Road, just south of the intersection with Klockner Road.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

Sustainable Economic Growth

The Township can achieve sustainable economic growth over the long term with supportive land use policies that encourage commercial development without unnecessary regulatory barriers, create opportunities for goods and services in demand and does so in a manner that is complementary to the existing or emerging character of the area. As discussed, the Township is well positioned for economic growth due to its excellent accessibility, educated workforce, quality of life and well established economic activity centers.

The Township has several identifiable economic activity centers ranging from retail and services intended for nearby neighborhoods to retail, office and industrial uses which serve the needs of the region. The Township's diversity of regional and local retail, office and industrial development that result from the Township's substantial population and regional accessibility as well as historic development patterns that complemented Trenton's former status as a major industrial center in the State.

Supporting redevelopment of brownfields and other underutilized sites encourages sustainable economic growth. Many industrial and commercial sites now sit idle or abandoned, draining surrounding neighborhoods of vitality and generating little in the way of tax revenues. Fearful of costly cleanup, owners often choose not to sell their properties and those properties sit idle for years. The Township can encourage the redevelopment of these sites with marketing efforts and incentivized zoning. In the past few years the Township has been taking such steps – including but not limited to the Arts and Culture Overlay district and the *Opportunity is Knocking in Hamilton Township* bus tour. This Master Plan Element offers new ideas for incentivizing redevelopment of many of these sites.

Industrial & Manufacturing Districts

Despite troubles in the nation's industrial and manufacturing sectors, Hamilton Township continues to have a strong industrial and manufacturing base. The majority of the Township's industrial and manufacturing properties are located at the northwestern portion of the Township, along East State Street, East State Street Extension and Sculptors Way. This corridor includes a variety of uses including a FedEx distribution facility, asphalt paving company, lumber yard, construction company specializing in heavy construction projects, such as those for highways and bridges, and a manufacturer of pool liners and covers. While there are also industrial zoning districts surrounding the train station and Quakerbridge Road, the majority of these areas have actually been developed with other uses – largely office – and, in some cases pursuant to a Redevelopment Plan rather than the underlying industrial zoning. Another significant manufacturing area is Duck Island, along the

Page 15 | May 6, 2011 Draft

Please note that the final draft and adopted versions of this document will be reformatted to provide a more pleasing appearance and to incorporate maps, graphics and photographs.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

Delaware River. This area hosts the PSE&G coal-fired power plant as well as other industrial uses involving petroleum products. The Township has one additional industrial area in Yardville off of South Broad Street, which hosts a building supply use. Lastly, there are multiple industrial uses along Cabot Drive, located just north of Route 130, in the Research and Development (RD) district.

The Township should continue to support these industrial areas with zoning standards which are appropriate for such uses and which insulate surrounding non-industrial uses, particularly residential, from the negative impacts of heavy industrial development, such as noise and smell. Additionally, the Township should review the list of permitted uses and the associated definitions in the Industrial (I) and Manufacturing (MFG) districts to provide additional clarity and eliminate inconsistencies and overlap among the various uses permitted in the districts. The list of permitted and conditionally permitted uses and their respective definitions for the Industrial (I) and Manufacturing (MFG) zone districts should be reviewed with the intention of realigning the uses into coherent districts, organized according to their impact on adjacent properties and the Township's infrastructure while providing expanded opportunities for employment and economic development. Another benefit from such an examination is that it would support a more focused branding campaign – allowing the Township to market uses of a similar nature as a method of attracting similar and complementary uses.

Office Districts

The Township has a strong office sector with many buildings occupied by professional offices, medical offices and research and development offices. While there are offices scattered throughout the Township's commercial districts, there are strong concentrations along the Whitehorse Mercerville Road corridor, as well as north of the Route 130 corridor, which extends along the Kuser Road corridor. A smaller concentration of office uses is located along Quakerbridge Road.

These office concentrations along Quakerbridge Road and Whitehorse Mercerville Road are primarily within the Research Engineering and Office (REO) district while the office uses along Kuser Road and in proximity to the northwest portion of the Route 130 corridor are in the Research and Development (RD) district. The Township's regional access, large population and the presence of large employers which spur supporting businesses contributes to the success of these areas.

Whitehorse Mercerville Road Corridor

In the center of the Township is the Whitehorse Mercerville Road office corridor. As mentioned, this area has significant lands in the REO district; however, it also hosts the town center in the

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

Government Services Center (GSC) district which includes the police station and library. Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital located along Klockner Road is not only a major employer in the area but also draws medical and health offices to the area. Recently, there has been medical and health related offices constructed across the road from the Town Center lands. These complementary uses not only make Hamilton Township attractive to the Hospital but also provide enhanced medical services to the Township's residents.

Kuser Road / Route 130 Corridors

The Township has recently been named as the home for Genesis Biotechnology Group – a consortium of biotechnology companies. Genesis has been purchasing developed and undeveloped land in the Township in an effort to provide space for its companies. Several of the buildings along Kuser Road and Black Forest Road are occupied by biotechnology companies associated with the Genesis Biotechnology Group and additional properties along Kuser Road and Cabot Drive have been identified as locations for additional development. The build out associated with Genesis will have a significant positive impact on the tax base and job base in Hamilton Township – in fact Genesis is likely to be one of or the largest employer in the Township. The zoning in these areas are consistent with the research, development and office uses of the biotechnology companies. As part of their effort to make Hamilton their home, Genesis has identified a 50 acre tract at Klockner and Kuser Road as a location where they would like mixed use zoning in order to facilitate development that would serve as a town center for their employees.

With the hospital and the expanded presence of biotechnology companies, Hamilton Township is cementing its place in New Jersey as a hub of medical technology. This is consistent with the changes in the health care and social assistance industry identified by the 2002 and 2007 US Economic Census. In this time period, there was an increase of nine establishments, a modest figure; however, the number of employees in this industry increased by approximately 200%, by nearly 500 employees. Consistent with a projected growth rate of nearly 15% for the education and health services industry sector, it is anticipated that the next Economic Census will show further growth in this industry¹. The Township is well positioned for this growth as the areas in proximity to Robert Wood Johnson Hospital along Klockner Road and the cluster of Genesis Biotechnology Companies in the vicinity of Kuser Road offer undeveloped land with limited environmental constraints and access to public water and sewer. The Township's marketing efforts for this section

¹ *Industry and Occupational Projections for New Jersey 2008-2018*, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Labor Market and Demographic Research, September 2010.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

of the Township should target the medical and biotechnology fields in order to take advantage of the projected growth in the industry.

Retail Districts

The Township has the greatest number of retail concentrations. The Township has three retail zone districts, the Highway Commercial (HC), Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and the Community Commercial (CC) districts; however, the commercial corridors are almost exclusively in the Highway Commercial district.

Route 33 Corridor

Route 33 is the Township's longest retail corridor and is oriented primarily to local shoppers. The character of Route 33 varies significantly with portions having a suburban character where large stores are located behind parking areas and other areas having a traditional character where smaller multi-story buildings are located close to the street with parking at the rear. This corridor was the subject of a day-long event, *Hamilton 2020 Symposium*, held by Hamilton Township and the Hamilton Partnership, a local business advocacy organization.

Hamilton 2020 Symposium

On August 6, 2010, the *Hamilton 2020 Symposium* was hosted by the Township in conjunction with the Hamilton Partnership. This event was a nearly four hour session on the characteristics and ways to for improve the Route 33 corridor. The result was several ideas for how to improve the business climate, aesthetics and function of Route 33. As part of the Symposium, the characteristics of the corridor were analyzed and the corridor was split into four zones based on location and shared characteristics. They are as follows:

- Zone A (Arts and Culture District). Zone A extends from the Township's border with Trenton to the Route 295 overpass and includes such prominent places as the Arts and Culture Overlay District, the Suburban Plaza shopping center and the Army Reserve Center.
- Zone B (Westbound District). Zone B extends from the Route 295 overpass to Mercerville-Whitehorse Road and includes such prominent places as Mercerville and CVS.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

- Zone C (Central District). Zone C extends from Mercerville-Whitehorse Road to Yardville-Hamilton Square Road and includes such prominent places as the Hamilton Shopping Center, vacant car dealerships and Acme shopping center.
- Zone D (Eastbound District). Zone D extends from Yardville-Hamilton Square Road to the border with Robbinsville Township and includes such prominent uses as the Forest Glen shopping center and Golden Crest offices.

There were several ideas shared by all or multiple groups. One common idea was that mixed use buildings, with second story residential, would be beneficial for revitalizing certain areas, increasing the customer base and providing additional income to property owners. Additionally, multiple groups spoke of the need for an improved streetscape – one that would be more accessible and friendly to pedestrians and would also be more aesthetically pleasing. A summary of the findings for each zone follows:

Zone A – Arts & Culture District

Strengths

- Access and capacity of roads
- Proximity to train station and bus lines
- Uniqueness (Grounds For Sculpture)
- Historic (NJ Fairgrounds)
- Municipal Building
- NJ Transit bus lines
- Public space (active and passive)
- Inexpensive property

Weaknesses

- Crime/Security
- Accidents (Interstate 295 exit) and speed
- Lack of venues for performances
- Low density
- Appearance – industrial in nature
- Vacancy of Suburban Plaza

Opportunities

- Suburban Plaza redevelopment as a mixed use town center: retail, office and residential
- Expansion of Grounds For Sculpture
- Children’s entertainment/museum use
- Vintage carnival ride or arcade to relate to historic Fairgrounds
- Hotel
- Incubate new businesses in inexpensive properties

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

- Complete Interstate 295 access to Route 33 (cloverleaf)

Threats

- Crime
- Continuing vacancies at Suburban Plaza

Zone B – Westbound District

Strengths

- Traffic – slow speeds (due to congestion) allow motorists to see stores
- Potential for improvement
- Business variety
- Generational ownership
- Sense of community (Mercerville Merchants Assoc., Mercerville Community Assoc.)
- Walkability
- Building scale, style and appearance (two story, at sidewalk)

Weakness

- Traffic configuration –dangerous traffic light at Route 33 and Nottingham Way
- Speed of vehicles
- Lack of enforcement for speeding and other traffic laws

Opportunities

- Better traffic flow
- Streetscape improvements
- New businesses
- Easements – open easements to provide improved parking and access at rear of buildings
- Second story residential (mixed use)
- More customers, income for property owners
- Branding the area to increase its profile in the community and marketability

Threats

- Impact of the national and regional economy
- Crime
- Neglect of area

Other thoughts and ideas

- The zoning ordinance should be amended to permit mixed use with second story residential uses
- The Township should encourage or require rear shared parking and access
- The Township should provide information on resources – grants, technical assistance and other resources – that could help residents, community groups and the Township improve the area.
- The group felt that their neighborhood / business district included the area along Nottingham Way to Five points. This is the Mercerville area.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

Zone C – Central District

Strengths

- Slow speed on Route 33
- Overall density – consumer population
- Diversity of properties / lot sizes / redevelopment (car dealerships)
- Easily recognizable landmarks
- Full service corridor
- Access to Route 130 and Interstate 295 (north and south)
- Completion of Estates Boulevard connection

Weaknesses / Threats

- Financing for larger projects, as opposed to smaller projects
- Widening of Route 33
- Other regional retail venues
- High taxes

Opportunities

- Car dealership franchise opportunities
- Planning for growth during the recession
- Bus park and ride
- Shuttle
- Destination shopping
- Transition uses

Other Thoughts and Ideas

- Revisit zoning regulations
- An infrastructure capacity analysis should be conducted (stormwater, sewer, etc.)
- Branding of Route 33 “Biz” should define the Route 33 corridor

Zone D – Eastbound District

Strengths

- Limited vacancies
- Less traffic congestion
- Good business mix
- Access to parking
- Newer (modern) construction
- Benefits from proximity of Robbinsville Town Center
- Appealing to the eye

Weaknesses

- Inconsistent curbing and sidewalks
- Lack of decorative lighting along Route 33
- Traffic signals are a weakness to businesses

Page 21 | May 6, 2011 Draft

Please note that the final draft and adopted versions of this document will be reformatted to provide a more pleasing appearance and to incorporate maps, graphics and photographs.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

- Undeveloped properties are unappealing
- Number of residential uses pose a challenge to businesses
- Not pedestrian friendly

Opportunities

- Improve pedestrian access
- Promote activities (other than Septemberfest)
- Reestablish business group in area
- Turn weaknesses into strengths
- Create more identity when entering Hamilton

Threats

- Route 33 realignment will divert traffic from businesses
- Widening Route 33, particularly if dividers are used
- Economy
- Need for variances

Other Thoughts and Ideas

- Valuable existing and potential uses for the area include the following:
 - “Mom and pop” shops
 - Unique shops
 - “Well known” business
 - Entertainment use (movie theater)
 - Retail
- Make new projects appealing to the eye
- Infrastructure improvements are needed
- Landscaping improvements are needed

As a result of this event, there were three sites identified as having a particularly negative influence on the Route 33 corridor and in need of improvement – these include the Suburban Plaza site, at the intersection of Route 33 and Sculptors Way on Block 1589, Lots 165, 167 and 168, and the two vacant car dealerships at the intersection of Route 33 and Whitehorse-Hamilton Square Road on Block 1835, Lot 2 and Block 1946, Lots 4 and 5. All sites consist of vacated or, in the case of Suburban Plaza, largely unoccupied commercial lots whose existing buildings are inconsistent with modern commercial establishments and in need of redevelopment. The Symposium attendees proposed mixed use with residential units above commercial development as appropriate for these sites. The attendees also concluded that much of the Mercerville section of Route 33, the south side of Route 33 from its intersections with Nottingham Way to Saybrook Avenue, is also appropriate for mixed use. These changes will advance a neighborhood-scaled and pedestrian oriented character. Additionally, the inclusion of residential use will support the commercial uses below and will contribute to the vitality of the commercial district. As such, the attendees suggested that the Township consider Master Plan and zone changes to accomplish these changes along the corridor.

Page 22 | May 6, 2011 Draft

Please note that the final draft and adopted versions of this document will be reformatted to provide a more pleasing appearance and to incorporate maps, graphics and photographs.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

Route 130 Corridor

The northbound side of the corridor consists largely of regional retail uses, the largest of which is the Hamilton Marketplace development. This section of the Township serves the local area; however, it also draws significant numbers of shoppers from the Mercer County and Burlington County region. This is due to the regional nature of the retail stores, several of which exceed 100,000 square feet each, and the nearby access to Interstates 295 and 195. As a result, this area serves as a regional destination. This commercial area is within the Research Development (RD) zone district; however, the retail development took advantage of the Planned Commercial Development (PCD) overlay which permits large shopping centers.

This corridor will likely continue to develop with regional retail uses on the southbound side. In the last few years the zoning has been adjusted on two tracts in order to facilitate the development of large scale shopping centers. The PCD overlay district was added to the tract north of Kuser Road along Route 130 in order to expand the zoning options from Research Development (RD) district uses to retail, the same zoning which facilitated the development of the Hamilton Marketplace development.

Additionally, the zoning on the tract on the southbound side of Route 130, adjacent to Route 156 was recently amended to better facilitate regional retail development. Critical road improvements will occur as a result of this development. The developer is obligated to construct a master plan road which will connect Route 130 with Cabot Drive. The improvement, which includes a traffic light and jughandle at Route 130, will provide southbound traffic access to development along the northbound side of Route 130, without having to travel on Route 156 through Yardville. Furthermore, it will provide a connection from this part of Route 130 to Yardville Hamilton Square Road and Klockner Road. Accordingly, traffic flow through Yardville will be alleviated, vehicle access to the northbound side of Route 130 will be improved and motorists will have an alternative to travelling on Route 130 to reach Yardville Hamilton Square Road and Klockner Road from this area of the Township. As a consequence of this improved circulation, the marketability of commercial properties along Route 130 west of Klockner Road will be enhanced.

Sloan Avenue Corridor

The northernmost retail corridor in Hamilton is along Sloan Avenue. This area, between the railroad tracks and Quakerbridge Road, enjoys excellent regional and local access. It includes the Congoleum plant and the movie theater on either side of the interchange and a shopping center east toward Quakerbridge Road. In recognition of the retail nature of the theater site and to facilitate commercial mixed use development and redevelopment, it's recommended that the theater and Congoleum sites

Page 23 | May 6, 2011 Draft

Please note that the final draft and adopted versions of this document will be reformatted to provide a more pleasing appearance and to incorporate maps, graphics and photographs.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

be designated as a mixed use zone district. This change will also encourage a new use on the Congoleum site, which will be vacated in a few years, that is more complementary to the Hamilton Train Station across Sloan Avenue.

Traditional Commercial Corridors

The Township has a number of traditional commercial corridors – for example South Broad Street, Greenwood Avenue, Olden Avenue and Route 33 in Mercerville. Important shared characteristics of all of these corridors are that they are oriented toward local needs and are pedestrian friendly. They all include sidewalks and ample connections to the surrounding residential neighborhood. This traditional pedestrian friendly character is what differentiates these corridors from many of the Township’s other commercial corridors and contributes to their success in attracting shoppers from the nearby area. Consistent with the neighborhoods which they serve, the majority of their buildings are older than those found along other commercial corridors, such as Route 33 and Route 130. This is also evident from the traditional building patterns with a grid street system, many older buildings located close to the street and the presence of multi-story buildings. These corridors best represent the traditional “Main Street” found in older communities throughout the state.

These corridors cannot compete with the vehicular accessibility, including parking availability, of Route 33 and Route 130. Instead, the strength of these corridors comes from their convenience of being within walking distance of neighborhoods and their pleasing “downtown” character that comes as a result of interesting architecture, interesting streetscape and inherent walkability.

Retail Nodes

In addition to these primary corridors, the Township has a variety of small retail nodes that are intended to serve the surrounding residential neighborhoods. These nodes are most often in the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and the Community Commercial (CC) district; however, some of the larger areas are within the Highway Commercial (HC) districts and the General Commercial (GC). For example, there are such retail nodes along Olden Avenue and Hamilton Avenue which include all three of the Township’s retail zone districts.

Art & Culture District

Art and culture can positively contribute to a community in a variety of ways, including economic, aesthetic, educational and by enhancing civic pride. In order to capture these benefits the Township

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

created an Arts and Culture Overlay district in 2009 that includes the nonresidential districts (Industrial, Highway Commercial, Community Commercial and General Commercial) generally stretching from the Hamilton Train Station in the north to the Mill One site to the south in the Bromley neighborhood at the South. Fortunately, the Township has existing art and culture assets upon which it can build this promotion. The primary asset is the Grounds For Sculpture, a renowned art facility that features an outdoor sculpture garden with associated galleria, studios, education and entertainment facilities. The Grounds For Sculpture is already successful at promoting the arts in the surrounding area, primarily with sculpture placements along East State Street and on the NJ Transit Hamilton Station property. These art placements not only increase public awareness of the facility but also beautify the area. Additionally, the Grounds For Sculpture, and the Township, enjoy excellent vehicular and mass transit access via the NJ Transit Northeast Corridor line, Interstate 295 and State Highway Route 33.

The promotion of arts and culture can have a positive economic impact since the arts and culture is a magnet for local and regional tourism. Township businesses, such as restaurants and hotels, prosper when in proximity to arts and culture destinations. Nationally, arts and culture spending increased 24% between 2000 and 2005². The promotion of arts and culture in Hamilton Township will support existing businesses and the creation of new ventures. These new art and culture organizations will bring jobs as well as investment to the Township. Increasing the presence of art and culture amenities in a community can also result in a positive increase in property values, including residential property values, as the area becomes more desirable to live, work and play³. Art and culture can be a major source of aesthetic improvement and civic pride. This will likely be particularly so in the Overlay District since many parts of the District consist of underutilized properties that are in need of repair. The overlay district provides additional development options, beyond what is permitted in the underlying zoning. It further promotes investment by providing density bonuses where an art or culture use is incorporated in the development or redevelopment. It is anticipated that as arts and culture organizations expand their presence in the District that the buildings on these underutilized properties will be improved or replaced. Furthermore, the presence of public art in the District will continue, at a minimum, with the placement of additional sculpture pieces. These art installations add visual interest to an area, are a tourism draw and serve as a source of civic pride.

² Americans for the Arts. “*Arts and Economic Prosperity III. The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and their Audiences Summary.*”

³ Sheppard, Stephen; Oehler, Kay; Benjamin, Blair. “*Buying into Bohemia: the Impact of Cultural Amenities on Property Values.*” Center for Creative Community Development.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

Physical Infrastructure

One of the most important roles the Township can play in economic development is ensuring that the physical infrastructure can support its economic development goals. This physical infrastructure includes roads, water infrastructure and sewer infrastructure; it additionally, includes working with those agencies who provide services and infrastructure – such as NJ Transit, which operates the Hamilton Train Station and most bus routes, and Verizon, which offers broadband internet access – to encourage them to provide the best service possible.

The Township has been working with Mercer County on the development of the Wastewater Management Plan to ensure that all areas intended for economic growth are served by public sewer. This type of infrastructure is key to maintaining the development intensities in areas such as the Route 130 corridor which are consistent with the zoning, character of the area and economic development goals.

Road infrastructure is another key component to advancing economic development goals. Businesses must receive goods as well as consumers in a convenient and efficient manner or they risk losing their competitive advantage. The importance of road infrastructure is highlighted by Master Plan Road and traffic light which will be installed at the western portion of Route 130, near Route 156. As discussed previously, these road improvements will provide improved and more convenient access to properties on the northbound side of Route 130, as well as surrounding roads.

Business Incubation

Business incubation, critical to economic development for its support of start-up businesses, is encouraged in Hamilton Township. Often, business incubators provide professional, technological and financial advice and assistance and are specific to a particular field i.e. technology or medical related. The Township should encourage business incubators in locations where the character of the area is consistent with the particular field which the incubator serves.

Another method of business incubation is home occupations. A home occupation is often the first step in a new business – particularly in the case of professional offices, such as lawyers and accountants. When properly regulated with controls such as (but not limited to) type of business, lighting, parking and signage, home occupations can serve an important role in business incubation without detracting from the surrounding neighborhood. The Township currently permits home occupations as a conditional use in all residential zones. A few of the relevant conditions are only residents may be employed by the business and the business does not exceed 25% of the gross floor area of the home (excluding garage); additional conditions address hours of operation, deliveries and

Page 26 | May 6, 2011 Draft

Please note that the final draft and adopted versions of this document will be reformatted to provide a more pleasing appearance and to incorporate maps, graphics and photographs.

Draft
Economic Development Plan Element
May 6, 2011

noise. The Township should consider updating this section to permit a limited number of non-resident employees; however, this expansion should be coupled with parking requirements and restrictions on the type of business permitted to be operated as a home occupation.

Implementation Plan

The following action items are recommended for implementation of the Economic Development Element of the Master Plan.

1. Rezone portions of Route 33 consistent with the recommendations from the Hamilton 2020 Symposium.
2. Support the Township's economic activity centers through branding efforts that highlight their particular strengths and zoning that complements their needs and location in the Township.
3. Continue to ensure that the Township's physical infrastructure is capable of accommodating its economic development goals.
4. Encourage the redevelopment of brownfields and underutilized sites through marketing and/or rezoning as appropriate.
5. Facilitate development of business incubation in the Township and update the home occupation provisions of the zoning ordinance.
6. Review the list of permitted uses in the Industrial (I) and Manufacturing (MFG) districts to provide additional clarity and ensure the uses are permitted in appropriate locations.