



TOWNSHIP OF TOMS RIVER

MASTER PLAN ECONOMIC PLAN ELEMENT

Township of Toms River
Ocean County, NJ

ADOPTED: May 17, 2017

Prepared by:

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ECONOMIC PLAN ELEMENT

Although it is an optional Master Plan Element, the MLUL stipulates that any Economic Plan Element included as part of a comprehensive master plan should consider all aspects of economic development and sustained economic vitality. The Economic Plan Element should include a comparison of the types of employment expected to be provided by the economic development to be promoted with the characteristics of the labor pool resident in the municipality and nearby areas; and an analysis of the stability and diversity of the economic development to be promoted.

This Economic Plan Element evaluates the economic, employment and income trends and projections in the municipality comparatively with those of Ocean County and the State of New Jersey. The strengths and weaknesses of the local economy are then evaluated, in order to identify areas in need of improved land use development, traffic patterns, infrastructure and recreation in order to maintain and enhance the stability and diversity of the Township's economic structure. This economic plan identifies strategies and recommendations on how the community can improve its capacity to grow and develop economically, socially, educationally and culturally.

Labor Force

Ocean County has the second highest job deficit in the state. In September of 2015 according to the New Jersey Department of Labor there were 265,400 Ocean County residents in the labor force as compared to 137,523 employed by the private sector jobs located in the county. This equates to a deficit of 127,877 jobs that are not provided by the private sector in Ocean County. A large amount of Ocean County residents must commute outside of Ocean County to seek employment. Hudson County is the only county in New Jersey that has a higher private sector job deficit.

Ocean County has the third lowest ratio of private sector jobs to labor force. Ocean County's rate in 2015 was 0.52, while New Jersey's was 0.75. Only Sussex and Warren County had lower rates. In addition, Ocean County has the second lowest weekly private sector wage rate. The average weekly wage rate for the private sector in Ocean County is \$720, while New Jersey's average weekly wage rate for the private sector is \$1102. This is a difference of \$382 per week. Only Cape May County has a lower weekly rate than Ocean County.

The NJ Department of Labor maintains labor force data for municipalities however the most current data is from 2013. In 2013, Toms River Township's weekly private wage was slightly higher than Ocean County's wage rate at \$759, however much lower than New Jersey's average weekly rate of \$1135. The low private sector weekly wage rate can be attributed to the fact that retail trade is the second leading industry for Toms River Township. In addition, Toms River Township has many tourist related jobs that also tend to pay a lower wage rate.

TABLE 1: Labor Force and Private Sector Job Comparison - 2015					
Region	September 2015 Labor Force	September 2015 Private Sector Jobs	Jobs/Labor Force	Job Deficit	Private Sector Employee Wage (weekly)
Atlantic	126,700	106,274	0.84	20,426	\$750
Bergen	480,200	399,466	0.83	80,734	\$1,138
Burlington	230,800	171,587	0.74	59,213	\$ 980
Camden	253,400	168,489	0.66	84,911	\$ 910
Cape May	51,900	38,562	0.74	13,338	\$ 593
Cumberland	66,600	48,320	0.73	18,280	\$764
Essex	370,800	262,398	0.71	108,402	\$1,130
Gloucester	148,500	84,331	0.57	64,169	\$ 801
Hudson	358,500	207,155	0.58	151,345	\$1,283
Hunterdon	65,400	39,483	0.60	25,917	\$1,071
Mercer	197,200	172,437	0.87	24,763	\$1,190
Middlesex	437,700	352,158	0.80	85,542	\$1,127
Monmouth	328,700	222,586	0.68	106,114	\$913
Morris	260,200	257,522	0.99	2,678	\$1,394
Ocean	265,400	137,523	0.52	127,877	\$720
Passaic	246,200	136,776	0.56	109,424	\$906
Salem	31,000	17,103	0.55	13,897	\$1,044
Somerset	172,600	165,816	0.96	6,784	\$ 1,468
Sussex	76,400	31,714	0.42	44,686	\$743
Union	276,300	186,502	0.67	89,798	\$1,190
Warren	56,900	28,570	0.50	28,330	\$896
New Jersey	4,501,500	3,355,452	0.75	1,146,048	\$ 1,102
Toms River Labor Force and Private Sector Job Comparison - 2013*					
	Labor Force	Private Sector Jobs	Jobs/Labor Force	Job Deficit	Private Sector Employee Wage (weekly)
Toms River	48,327	31,885	0.66	16,442	\$759
Ocean County	266,800	126,844	0.48	139,956	\$714
New Jersey	4528500	3,234,796	0.71	1,293,704	\$1,135

Source:

Annual Labor Force

NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Employment & Wages, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, BLS Quarterly Report for New Jersey & 21 Counties, third quarter, September 2015

Private Sector Job & Wages

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Estimates, New Jersey Department of Labor, NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Estimates, Unemployment Rates & Labor Force Estimates, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Office of Research & Information, Economic & Demographic Research, Bureau of Labor Force Statistics, NJ Labor Force Estimates for 2015 by Area, 2015 Benchmark (not seasonally adjusted), April 15, 2016

*2013 Weekly Rate and Private Sector Employment

Annual Municipal Sector Data -2013, Average Annual Employees for private sector jobs and Average Annual Weekly wage.

*2013 Labor Force

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Estimates, New Jersey Department of Labor, Labor Force Estimates by Area, 2013 NJ Annual Average Labor Force. For Ocean County & State: NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Employment & Wages, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, Summary Report for New Jersey & Ocean County, 2013.

Prepared by: Toms River Division of Community Development, May 16, 2016

OCEAN COUNTY ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Ocean County is a less prosperous area in terms of employment than much of New Jersey (see Table 1). It is the County with one of the lowest percentage of population in the labor force (it was the lowest in 2006 and has overtaken Sussex and Warren counties over the past 10 years). The per capita family income in Ocean County was thirteenth in the state in 2000 with a per capita income of \$23,054 versus the New Jersey average of \$27,006. A number of summertime resort communities occupy the County of Ocean and the population and economic prosperity in these communities is largely dependent on premier summertime weather. Additionally, a number of senior communities exist in Ocean County that may account for the low percentage of resident employment in Ocean County.

According to the 2000 United States Census, the unemployment rate in Ocean County was 5.2%, slightly lower than the State rate of 5.3%. However, the New Jersey Department of Labor estimated both of those percentages have improved to 4.9% and 4.8% respectively by 2004. Similar to New Jersey, management and sale occupations are the largest employment industries in Ocean County, but management and service occupations saw the most growth during the decade from 1990-2000.

Another factor in the labor supply is the mobility of the labor force and commuting patterns. Journey-to-work data from the 2000 census shows that approximately forty-two percent (42.3%) of the Ocean County working population commutes to another county for work. Therefore, the County depends heavily on private transportation for mobility. In going to work in 2000 only 1.9% of the residents took mass transit to work and 10.5% traveled in carpools. This journey-to-work pattern increases reliance on the crowded highway system and it demonstrates the need to attract major employers to Ocean County to provide shorter trip distances to work. Current demographic data indicates that this trend is still valid.

OCEAN COUNTY INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

The New Jersey Department of Labor estimates Ocean County's occupational employment to increase from 155,250 in 2002 to 181,800 by 2012. The 2002 estimated occupational employment in Ocean County made up 3.7 percent of the estimated occupational employment in the entire State of New Jersey. By 2012, that number is expected to increase slightly to 3.8 percent.

Employment growth is projected to occur in both the goods-producing and service-producing sectors, though greater growth is expected in the service-producing sector. The fastest growing industry in the goods-producing sector is expected in construction, while the fastest growth in the service-producing sector is expected in the healthcare

and social assistance industry. Professional and technical services are also expected to have rapid growth through 2012. Manufacturing of goods; transportation and warehousing services; utilities and information services are all expected to decline. A decline in employment of the federal government industry is also expected, though an increase in overall government employment is anticipated. The largest decline in service producing industries is expected in the transportation and warehousing service sector.

OCEAN COUNTY OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS

From 2002 to 2012, Ocean County should expect to see an increase in employment for all occupational groups except production occupations, which are expected to decrease by 1.9%. The largest increase is expected in professional and related occupations. Construction and extraction occupations, and service occupations are also anticipated to have substantial growth, as depicted in **Table 7**.

Table 7
Estimated and Projected Ocean County Employment

Occupation	2002	2012	% Change
Management, business and finance	9,650	11,400	18.4
Professional and related	28,900	36,250	25.5
Service	36,700	44,450	21.1
Sales and related	21,750	24,900	14.7
Office and administrative support	28,600	31,200	9.1
Construction and extraction	8,850	11,000	24.6
Installation, maintenance and repair	6,200	7,050	13.1
Production	5,350	5,250	-1.9
Transportation and material moving	9,250	10,250	10.5
Total, all occupations	155,250	181,800	17.1

*Source: NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development
September 2005*

TOWNSHIP OF TOMS RIVER

Historically, Toms River's proximity to the Toms River, Barnegat Bay and Atlantic Ocean has helped the Township develop as a natural center for commerce. Downtown Toms River served as a regional trade center throughout the 18th, 19th and early part of the 20th century. In recent times however, Downtown Toms River has served more as a civic center for the Ocean County and municipal offices. Professional uses, specifically law offices and medical offices, also are abundant in the Downtown area and near the Community Medical Center. Route 37 is almost entirely comprised of retail use. Major retail can also be found at the corner of Hooper Avenue and North Bay Avenue where the Ocean County Mall and Sea Court Pavilion are located. Smaller retail locations are found in centers throughout the Township and along Route 9.

Household and Employment Forecasting:

Toms River Household and Employment Projections					
	Existing		Projected		
Year	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
Households (TR Projected- straight line projection)	31674	34770	38158	41875	45955
Households (NJTPA Projected)	31674	34770			45280
Employment (TR Projected – straight line projection)	43521	43574	43575	43576	43577
Employment (NJTPA Projected)	43521	43574			52200

The Township utilized a flat growth projection based on the difference between the 2000 and 2010 Census to estimate the household and employment growth of Toms River Township. The flat growth rate and the NJTPA projections are similar. It should be noted that the average household growth rate did not take into account the population growth. Should the population decline in accordance with the Survival Method model, the number of households could decline. Employment trends may not be as impacted by the population growth, due to the fact that the 2000 employment numbers and the 2010 employment numbers were similar despite a population growth. This is attributed to the fact that the unemployment rate in 2000 was lower than in 2010.

Housing Projections			
	2010 (Units)	2030 (Units)	2010-2030 (units)
Downtown Regional Center	4142	4847	705
Ortley Beach Center	2658	2686	28
North Beach Center	4127	4127	0
Industrial Center	0	0	0
Route 9 Highway Core	1112	2363	1251
Route 70 Highway Core	780	909	129
Route 37 East Highway Core	26	26	0
Route 37 West Highway Core	47	134	87
Fischer Boulevard	262	262	0
Hooper Avenue	732	872	140
Balance of Township	29448	29528	80
Total:	43334	45754	2420
Source: Toms River Township staff utilizing development approvals, aerials, and 2010 Census data, and proposed developments			
Note: 2030 unit count includes units currently under construction			

It is anticipated that 3,388 new households will have to be accommodated for the year 2020 and a total of 7,105 new households in 2030 utilizing a straight line projection. The Township has projected a total of 2,420 housing units will be constructed by the year 2030. It should be noted that the projection does not include any housing potential for the Ciba Geigy Site or the Route 37 (Coates Pointe) redevelopment sites which are anticipated to produce some housing unit developments. It is unknown how many housing units will be developed at both of these locations. It should also be noted that

the anticipated housing unit potential for 2030 includes large sites under construction, with site plan approval, or in the concept stage. Infill development and housing units created through small lot subdivisions were not calculated in the projection count. Therefore the projected number should be considered a conservative number. A total of 4,685 households will have to be absorbed by other communities.

EXISTING LAND USES

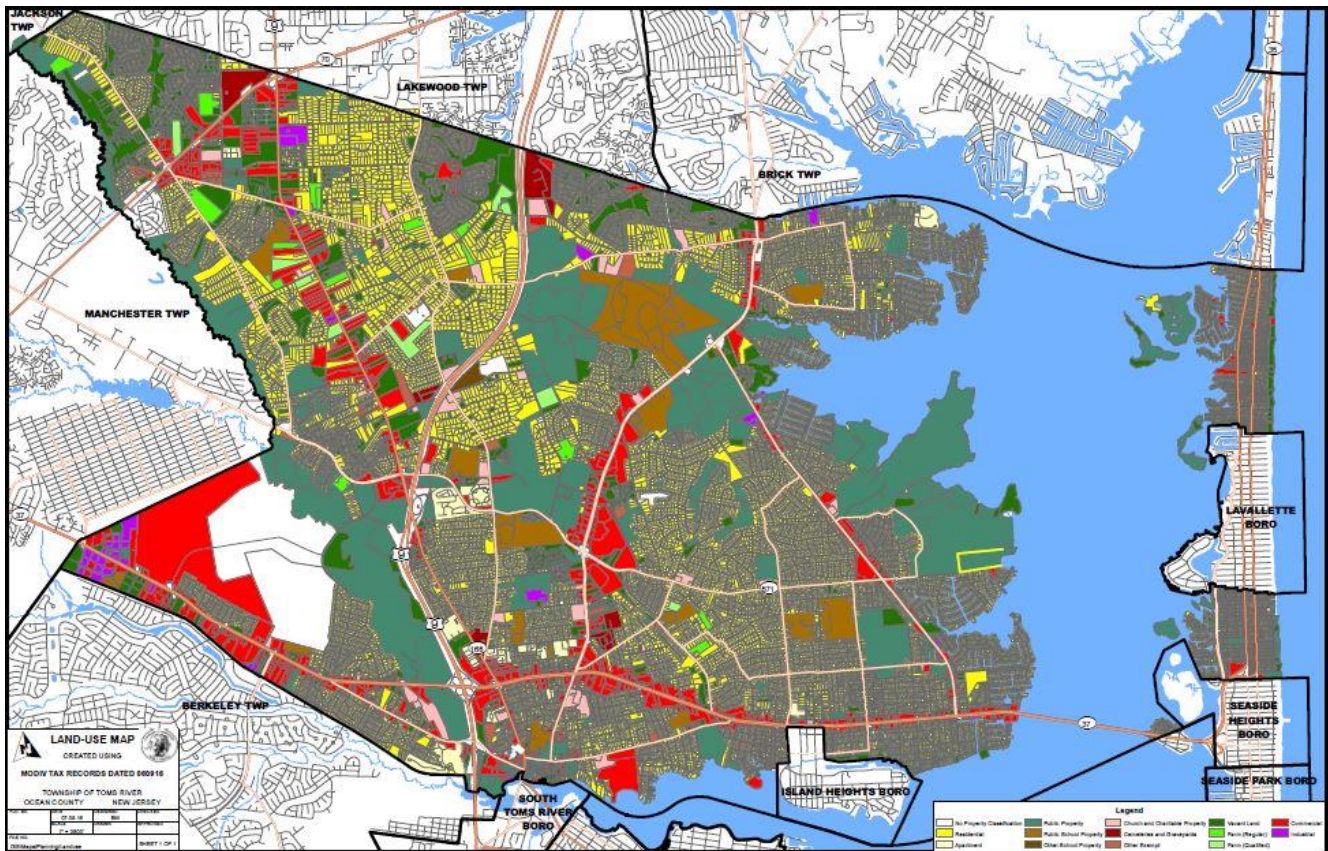


Figure 1: Preliminary Existing Land Use Map: Source MODIV Data

The Township is predominantly built out, mostly with single family dwellings. The former Ciba Geigy property has the most vacant land available in the Township. The Township has 6 commercial corridors located on the mainland: Route 37 West, Route 37 East, Fischer Boulevard, Hooper Avenue, Route 70 and Route 9. The active industrial zone is located on Route 37 adjacent to the Manchester Border and former Ciba Geigy property. Preserved land is mostly located adjacent to the Barnegat Bay, the Toms River, and Ocean County College.

Economic Trends in Toms River Township

The citizens of Toms River are employed by a variety of different industries. The educational, health and social service industries employ the largest percentage of Toms River Township residents, followed by the retail trade industry. The Saint Barnabas Healthcare System and Toms River Regional School District, both centered in Toms River Township, are respectively the largest and fourth largest employers in Ocean County. Additionally, the businesses along Route 37 and on Hooper Avenue may account for the large percentage of Toms River residents employed in retail trade.

Table 8 depicts all of the industries that employ Toms River Township residents as compiled in the 2010 Census and as previously shown in the 2006 Master Plan based on the 2000 Census.

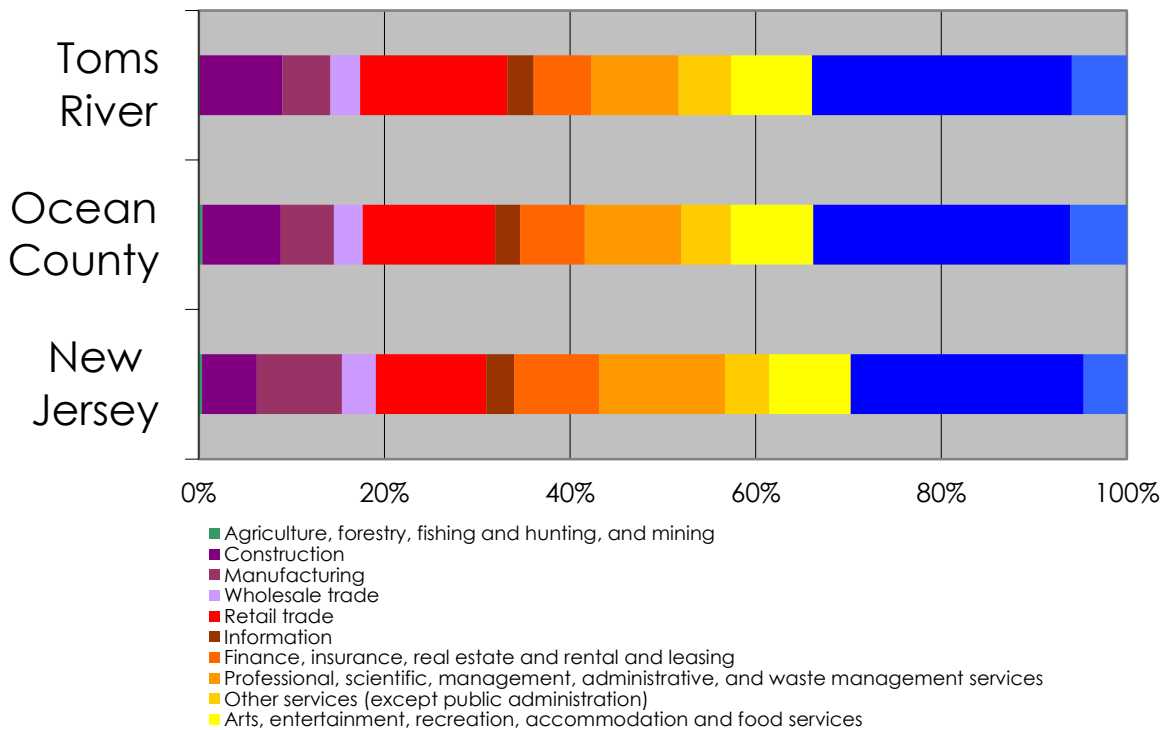
**Table 8
Industry of Employed Residents 16 Years and Older – 2010 Census Compared to 2000 Census**

Industry (2010)	New Jersey	Ocean County	Toms River
Total:	4,235,089	242,930	44,217
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	13,701	852	49
Construction	235,821	19373	3770
Manufacturing	366,432	13144	2198
Wholesale trade	145,450	7068	1360
Retail trade	474,440	32766	6723
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	242,152	13760	1796
Information	121,100	6179	1208
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	365,497	15959	2624
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	540,734	23777	3999
Educational, health and social services	1,002,887	63402	11877
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	350,495	20364	3701
Other services (except public administration)	190,576	12261	2399
Public administration	185,804	14025	2513

Industry (2000)	Number Employed	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	75	0.2
Construction	3,239	7.8
Manufacturing	2,896	7.0
Wholesale trade	1,316	3.2
Retail trade	6,485	15.6
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	2,130	5.1
Information	1,394	3.4
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	3,023	7.3
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	4,004	9.6
Educational, health and social services	9,756	23.5
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	3,120	7.5
Other services (except public administration)	1,647	4.0
Public administration	2,461	5.9
Totals	41,546	100.1

A comparison of the two time periods shows that the Township added 2,671 jobs between 2000 and 2010, despite the “Great Recession” that bottomed out in 2008. While there were declines in manufacturing, agriculture, and several other categories, the big gains were made during that 10 year period in the educational, health and social services category and the other services category.

Workers by Industry



Toms River’s leading economic industry group is educational services, health care and social services with approximately 27% of the jobs being classified under this category. Toms River Township is home to Ocean County College, Kean at Ocean County College, the Toms River Regional School System, Community Medical Hospital, HealthSouth Garden State Rehabilitation Hospital, Shoreline Behavior Health, Children’s Specialized Hospital, and the Ocean County Government complex. The Ocean County Government Complex includes the Ocean County Board of Social Services, Ocean County Health Services and other social assistance programs. Toms River Township is home to Sunrise Detox, New Hope Crossroads Addiction Center, and Ocean Medical Services. Toms River Township has a higher percentage of educational services, health care and social services compared to Ocean County and New Jersey. However, this industry is still the leading industry for Ocean County and New Jersey.

Toms River’s second leading industry is retail trade with approximately 15% of the jobs being classified in this sector. This industry tends to have low paying wages. The Township is home to the Ocean County Mall, Seacourt Pavilion, and many other shopping centers. Toms River has a higher percentage of jobs that are in the retail trade industry compared to Ocean County and New Jersey.

Income

Toms River Township has a median household income of \$72,939 which is much higher than Ocean County’s median household income of \$61,839 and in line with New Jersey’s median Household income of \$72,062. The Township’s per capita Income of \$35,759 is slightly less than New Jersey’s per capita income of \$36,359 and higher than Ocean County’s per capita income of \$30,951. Toms River Township’s Poverty Rate of

		Community Demographics ¹		
		Muni	County	New Jersey
Land Area (sq mi)		41.81	640.84	7,417
Population		91,239	576,567	8,791,894
Households		34,760	221,111	3,214,360
Average Household Size		2.58	2.58	2.68
Housing Units		43,334	278,052	3,553,562
Home Ownership Rate		82.2%	81.1%	65.4%
Vacancy Rate		19.8%	20.5%	9.5%
Median Household Income		\$72,939	\$61,839	\$72,062
Per Capita Income		\$35,759	\$30,951	\$36,359
Poverty Rate		26.8%	27.4%	30.4%
Unemployment Rate		5.6%	5.9%	6.4%

26.8% is slightly less than Ocean County’s poverty rate of 27.4% and lower than New Jersey’s poverty rate of 30.4% according to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates. Toms River Township’s unemployment rate of 5.6% is lower

¹ Source: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010 Census Summary File 1 (Toms River Township, Ocean County & New Jersey), American Fact Finder

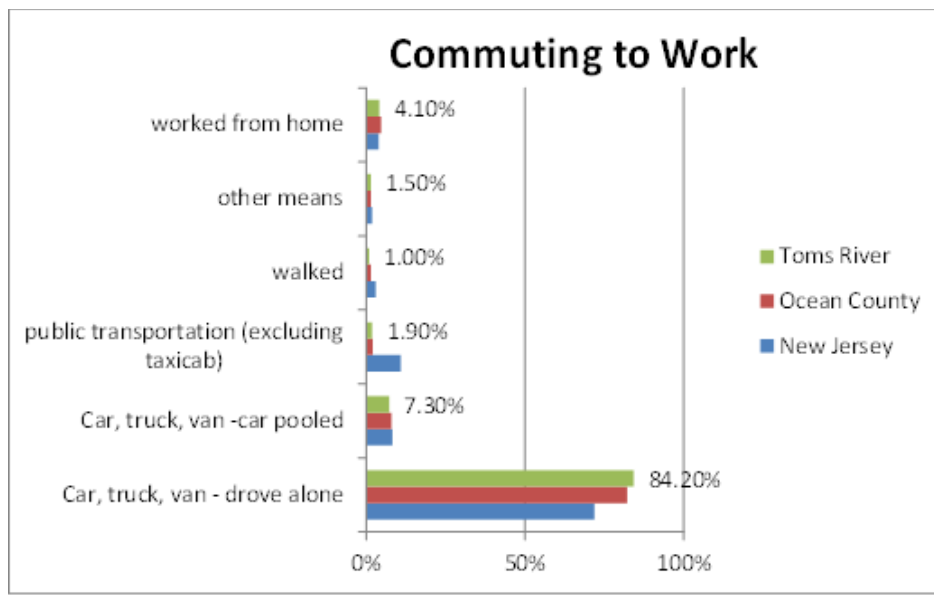
Selected Economic Characteristics 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (Toms River, Ocean & New Jersey), American Fact Finder

Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (Toms River, Ocean & New Jersey), American Fact Finder

than Ocean County's rate of 5.9% and New Jersey's rate of 6.4% according to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

Commuting To Work

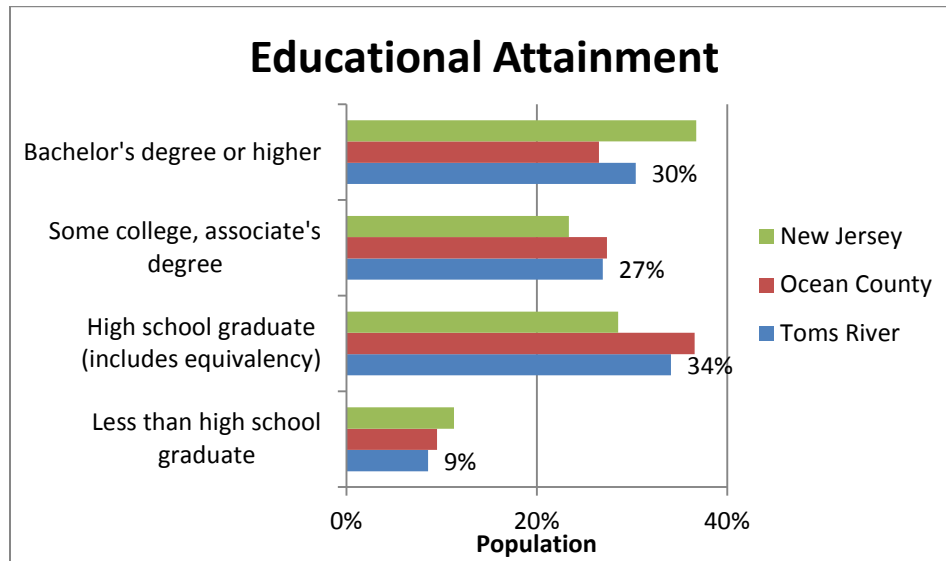
Toms River Township has a higher commuting by vehicle alone rate than New Jersey and slightly higher than Ocean County's rate. Approximately 84% of Toms River Township's 42,999 commuters travel alone by car, truck, and van. Slightly more than 7% car pool to work which is slightly less than New Jersey's rate and approximately 2% utilize public transportation. The public transportation rate is much lower than New Jersey's rate of 10.9%, however this could be due to the fact that Toms River Township has limited public transportation options.



Source: Selected Economic Characteristics 2010-2014 American Community 5-year Survey

Educational Attainment

Toms River Township's populations aged 25 years or older have earned more Bachelor's degrees than Ocean County's population, but less than the State of New Jersey's equivalent population. Only 9% of Toms River Township eligible residents have attained less than a high school degree, which is lower than Ocean County and New Jersey. Toms River and Ocean County populations have more residents with some college, associate's degree than New Jersey. This can be attributed to the fact that Ocean County College is located in Toms River Township. In addition, Ocean County and Toms River Township's leading employment sectors (particularly health) in most cases only require associates degrees. It should be noted that Ocean County College has partnered with Kean University to provide a four year bachelor's degree. It is anticipated that the percentage of residents with bachelor's degrees will increase.



Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, U.S. Census

**Key Findings:
A Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses**

The already populous Toms River Township is growing and will continue to expand steadily over the next 25 years. The North Jersey Transportation Authority projects a population of 112,720 by the year 2030. North Dover still has vacant land but new residential developments are already proposed and approved in that section of the municipality.

The population increase will present a variety of challenges and benefits for the Township. Increased residents in Toms River will put a strain on existing infrastructure and community facilities. However, the need for improved and expanded facilities will also create new jobs for incoming residents. Additionally, the increased population will provide increased patronage to local businesses.

One of the largest age groups in Toms River Township is senior citizens aged 55 and older. This age group made up over a quarter of the population at the time of the 2000 census. With a number of age-restricted communities recommended in the Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, and permitted under current zoning, it is anticipated that the senior population in Toms River will continue to grow. A large senior population presents the need for a myriad of healthcare and transportation services. Traditionally, many retired seniors have not worked, but the increased cost of living in New Jersey is causing many seniors to come out of retirement and head back to work, either part-time or full-time, adding to the size of the labor force. Those seniors who have financially stable retirement funds can have a positive impact on the economy by patronizing local businesses and volunteering their time to local organizations.

As its population has grown, Toms River Township has become more diverse. In particular, the Township has seen a substantial increase in the Hispanic population reflecting trends throughout the county and the state. While 54.7% of this population speaks English very well according to the US Census, 5.3% do not speak English at all. Therefore, there are a number of challenges brought to the community including the need for Spanish-speaking personnel in emergency services. Additionally, the labor force will grow and become more diverse, and the township's retail industry can also be expected to respond as a business community to meet the cultural needs of the Hispanic segment of the population.

The educational attainment of Toms River Township residents has been on the increase. The majority of the population aged 25 and older has received the equivalent of a high school education or higher. Improvements in educational attainment in recent years should serve as an attraction to major employers, especially those offering professional and managerial positions. Since over 40 percent of the County labor force works outside the County, efforts should continue to be made to increase employment opportunities in the northern part of the County where the population is concentrated. This has the added benefit of reducing reliance on the already overcrowded regional road system as a means of getting to work, as evidenced by the fact that approximately 84% of Toms River Township's 42,999 commuters travel alone by car, truck, and van.

The majority of housing in Toms River was constructed prior to 1980. However, the total number of new housing units in the municipality has been increasing at a faster rate than the county and the state. The United States Census reported that approximately 16 percent of the housing units in Toms River were constructed during the decade between 1990 and 2000, while those numbers in the state and county were 10.5 percent and 15.9 percent respectively. Housing in Toms River is mostly single-family and owner-occupied.

Additionally, the percent of vacant housing units in the township substantially decreased from 1990 to 2000 from approximately 9% of the total housing units in 1990 to approximately 7% of the total housing units in 2000. Vacancy rates for the housing stock in the Township are higher than one would generally associate with a community made up primarily of single family dwellings. A certain number of vacant units is needed in order to allow for turnover and provide opportunities for new families to move into the community. The normal vacancy rate for sales housing is between one and two percent while the rental housing market generally functions most effectively with a vacancy rate of four to five percent. The higher vacancy rate in the Township, however, may not signal anything more than the fact that there are year-round (i.e. heated) housing units that are not occupied by permanent residents at the time of the Census. A smaller impact is likely from the completed but unsold segment of the new housing market. The expanding housing stock can be considered an indicator of strength for Toms River's economy. Owner-occupied units are characterized by lower turnover in occupancy, while the construction of new and rehabilitation of older homes will fuel the already expanding construction industry.

Both the county and the municipality have experienced a surge in management and service occupation, while sales occupations have also remained strong. Farming and production occupations have remained low or declined. These facts further illustrate the need for additional white-collar jobs within the Township of Toms River.

The Township's community facilities, natural and recreational resources are key strengths of the municipality. The Saint Barnabas Community Health Center located near Downtown Toms River is a major hospital. Its continued expansion reflects the growing needs of the region's aging population and serves the regional population as well. The hospital will continue to provide jobs for the area's professionals. The low crime rate combined with a high quality regional school district will continue to attract families to the area as well. The ample natural resources are inviting and close enough to attract tourists from New York and Pennsylvania, while remaining a weekend resort for many New Jersey residents. The popular parks, including Winding River Park and Cattus Island Park, attract many local residents as well as those of neighboring municipalities. Although a number of museums already exist in downtown Toms River and the Ocean County performing arts center has a good reputation, the township's cultural resources have become substantially expanded with the completion of the Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts at Ocean County College that has attracted local as well as nationally renowned artists. The Township is also home to the Pine Belt Arena that was constructed in 2003 and at one point was utilized for both local and nationally renowned artists. The Pine Belt Arena is currently underutilized as a arts and cultural venue, due to the limited events hosted at the arena. Efforts should be made to encourage the scheduling of more events. The Cultural Arts Element of this 2017 Master Plan expands on the many other cultural initiatives that have taken place since the last (2006) Master Plan.

A major weakness in the Township's economy is the public transportation system. Although there is regional bus service that transports riders to and from Toms River, there is limited local transportation for residents within the municipality. Improved local public transportation, including paratransit (jitneys and shuttles) would greatly enhance to local economy, as it would provide residents without private automobiles especially seniors to be more mobile and contributing to the local economy.

Recommendations for Sustainability & Resiliency²

The five objectives and four recommendations for sustainable/resilient economic development in the 2006 Master Plan discussed above remain valid. Given the changes in assumptions and the planning studies completed since 2006, the following new objectives and recommendations are suggested to enhance community economic resiliency and sustainability:

1. Implement recommendations and conduct recommended studies provided in the Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan related to sustainability/resiliency, stated as the following:
 - Inventory existing commercial and office space;
 - Develop a Sustainable Corridor with green tech, infrastructure, and industry employers;
 - Explore "greyfield" redevelopment for repurposed mixed use properties;
 - Explore market interest in green technologies campus;
 - Develop an eco-tourism and "gateway" to Pinelands and the Shore Plan;
 - Provide more workforce housing;
 - Create diversity of housing types;
 - Study feasibility of changes to age-restrictions in vacant age-restricted housing;
 - Study greenway connecting Barnegat Branch Trail to Rt. 37, Downtown, and riverfront;
 - Study multimodal road/trail along rail right of way into Downtown;
 - Develop Ocean County College specialized training for health, green industry, and tech;
 - Conduct detailed market analysis for potential users of the CIBA/BASF site;
 - Create a Redevelopment Plan for the property; and
 - Explore a portion of the CIBA/BASF site for wildlife refuge.

2. Perform a similar visioning process as the Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan for the other corridors that are proposed for core designation in the Smart Growth Plan, including Route 70, Route 9, Fischer Boulevard, and Hooper Avenue to further diversify the local economy and promote anti-sprawl, infill development.

² Sustainability and Resiliency Master Plan Update, Heyer, Gruel & Associates, October 2016.

3. Implement economic development strategies relevant to economic sustainability in Toms River included in Ocean County's 2011 Comprehensive Plan, including:
 - Further diversify the education opportunities at high schools, vocational technical schools and colleges. Provide more job training and incorporation of more four-year degree options.
 - Green technology facilities should be located along highway corridors or within one of the existing industrial parks, such as the one located off of Route 37 in Toms River to provide services such as manufacturing and supplying products used to treat deteriorated ecosystems, solar panels, wind turbines, building materials and other new technologies.
 - A portion of the Route 37 corridor in Toms River should be considered as a "federal technology corridor" due to its close proximity to the Lakehurst Annex of the Joint Maguire Base. Specifically, the Ciba-Geigy property, a 1,200 acre property, should be considered to be reused and repurposed as a site for a Federal Technology Corridor.
 - Implement the Ocean County Barnegat Branch Trail, which will eventually extend from downtown Toms River to the historic town of Barnegat, promoting connections between recreation and commercial centers.
 - Toms River and South Toms River should form a partnership to redevelop and promote the riverfront area with business and recreational uses that enhance the area as a regional attraction.

4. Capitalize on the growth of green and sustainable industries such as green energy technology, eco-tourism, health care, and food production and processing, and develop these within the Township.

5. Prioritize the redevelopment of the Ciba-Geigy site as a mixed-use economic center.

6. Make the provision of workforce and affordable housing in mixed-used areas near growing employment centers, such as the Route 37 corridor, a priority.

7. Work with Ocean County to preserve remaining farmland in the Township to continue this industry and support connections between local food production and food consumption, especially those properties targeted for preservation within the County Agricultural Development Area (food production and processing has been identified by the State as a potential growth sector).

8. Institute a Buy Local Program to incentivize shopping locally and a Green Business Recognition Program to highlight the efforts of businesses that use sustainable sourcing, purchasing, recycling, or other sustainable practices (both programs are action items eligible for Sustainable Jersey points). Brick Township's Buy Local program serves as an example that Toms River could emulate and adjust to its own needs.

9. Study the potential for developing a micro-grid system that can service downtown Toms River with power in the event of a long-term outage to avoid economic losses (see the Energy Conservation Element, Section C for a description of the micro-grid system).

Other Recommendations and Strategies:

The following recommendations and strategies from the 2006 Master Plan remain valid and are restated/updated as follows:

Revitalize existing local businesses.

1. *Establish a Downtown façade grant program* designed to help smaller businesses with façade and sign improvements. The Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) can implement such a program.
2. *Create additional Special/Business Improvement Districts (SID/BID).* Additional Improvement districts should be considered in areas along Route 37 to rehabilitate existing businesses and upgrade areas through coordinated improvements.
3. *Enforce property maintenance standards.* There are a number of rundown commercial properties throughout the Township that have either been abandoned or are just poorly maintained. These sites become an eyesore to the community and neighboring businesses as well. The Township should consider hiring additional code enforcement officials to better enforce property maintenance standards. A pending ordinance strengthening the ordinance regarding “Continued Certificate of Occupancy” (CCO) should help to increase the level of inspections within the Township.

Maintain and attract job-generating businesses

1. *Implement a mercantile license policy.* A mercantile license is a good way to keep track of local businesses. It can help eliminate illegal businesses and construction without permits. Such a license would require every new or relocating business to fill out a brief form that would include general details about the business. A nominal fee could also be charged. In addition to helping learn more about new businesses developing in the Township, a mercantile license can be utilized to create a database of businesses for members of the public and businesses to utilize.
2. *Capitalize on existing economic clusters.* An economic cluster is a group of related industries located within proximity to each other that require similar training, supplies, and financing. Such economic clusters generally have regional connections though service functions and support are locally centered in the cluster. The following economic clusters exist in the Township of Toms River and capitalizing on them will help sustain the existing businesses and attract jobs to the municipality.

Healthcare and medical services are represented by the Saint Barnabas Community Medical Center and a variety of medical-related businesses in the surrounding area that support the hospital.

Higher education facilities include Ocean County College and Ocean County Vocational Post Secondary School.

Cultural, entertainment and tourist attractions in Toms River are grouped in a number of areas including Downtown Toms River, Pine Belt Arena, and the barrier island.

Government and private office support are also centered in Downtown Toms River.

Route 37 is an existing retail corridor.

3. *Encourage new nodes and centers.* The Township should identify new areas for mixed use centers that include a variety of commercial uses that incorporate or are in close proximity to residential uses.
4. *Promote the establishment of additional restaurants.* One complaint that was continually expressed during the Townships visioning process was the overcrowding of existing restaurants. Long waits for good food has become expected at local restaurants and has even deterred residents from patronizing local dining establishments to either stay at home or seek more distant restaurants with lesser waits. There is clearly a need for additional restaurants.
5. *Promote commercial development along Route 37, Route 9 and Hooper Avenue Corridors.* Develop gateways to these areas and improved traffic flow and transportation.
6. *Provide jobs/activities for large senior and professional populations.* Toms River Township has a substantial number of senior and professional residents. Therefore, a variety of jobs that these populations can support should be developed within the Township to encourage the residents who live in Toms River to also work in Toms River.
7. *Plan for future development in the Township's existing and proposed industrial parks.* The Township should support the expansion of the existing Toms River Industrial Park along Route 37 and the eventual redevelopment of the Ciba Geigy property.

Support the growth of the health service industry while protecting viable residential neighborhoods.

1. *Promote the maintenance and expansion of the existing Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas HealthHealthcare Facility.* Future improvements and growth of the medical center and surrounding support businesses should be coordinated with the Township and local residents to ensure a balance between the expanding medical facilities and the residential neighborhoods surrounding the hospital.

2. *Encourage “spin-off” industries and services located within proximity of the medical center.* The healthcare center provides invaluable services and jobs to the Toms River population. Likewise it attracts smaller businesses and services needed for support of the hospital like medical equipment suppliers, pharmacists, testing labs, medical offices and medical educational facilities. Areas within proximity of the hospital should be dedicated for such uses. However, such businesses should not interfere with established residential neighborhoods. Additional areas throughout the Township should also be considered for such uses. The development of a medical support center in a less intruding section of the municipality would still provide nearby services while preserving existing residences. Once additional medical centers are established, shuttle services between different healthcare centers throughout the Township should be considered.

Utilize the abundant natural resources to enhance the local economy

1. *Improve access to beaches and other waterfront areas.* Better public accessibility to Toms River’s water resources will promote tourism. Adequate parking is also a key element in providing better access to the waterfront areas.
2. *Develop biking and walking trails and greenways throughout the Township.* Greenways provide excellent opportunities for linking communities to the municipality’s resources and amenities. Improving pedestrian and bike trails to connect the Township’s park system with existing neighborhoods and the downtown will aid the overall economy.

Capitalize on Downtown Toms River’s location and designation as the County seat to become a regional center.

1. *Expand the downtown historic and waterfront districts as a tourist and entertainment destination.* This footprint for tourism, entertainment, culture and recreational facilities already exists in Downtown Toms River. The Cultural Arts Element and Historic Preservation Element, as well as the Land Use Plan Element all encourage the development of cultural heritage tourism as a strategy to brand Downtown Toms River as a destination for visitors.
2. *Rezone areas in the downtown in accordance with the Downtown Toms River Vision Plan and Master Plan.* The proposed Waterfront Redevelopment District promotes multi-tenant shopping centers, multifamily residential developments and ground floor commercial uses in the downtown waterfront district. The draft Waterfront Redevelopment Area Phase 1 Redevelopment Plan should be updated with the findings of the Downtown Waterfront Neighborhood Circulation Plan and adopted so that redevelopment of key parcels can be promoted. The Washington Street Overlay District would preserve the existing setbacks and land densities while promoting landscaping and restaurants in order to maintain the existing historic nature of Downtown Washington Street.

3. *Provide adequate parking in the downtown area.* Sufficient parking in the downtown area is vital to attract new merchants, shoppers and visitors and to maintain the existing viable businesses in the area.

Make use of the Township's Educational services

1. *Toms River Regional School District.* As the fourth largest employer in the county, the school district already fuels the Township's economy. With the history of expanding school enrollments, it will be important to continue to provide quality education with sufficient resources and facilities to Toms River students. The maintained reputation of the Toms River School District is a strong link to the economy as it creates both jobs and educational services.
2. *Continue coordination with Ocean County College to provide services and jobs to Toms River Township residents.* Ocean County College provides a range of services to the municipality. In addition to the educational services provided, the College's performing arts center provides entertainment for the general public. Additionally, the school works in cooperation with Ocean County and the Toms River Regional School District to offer a variety of summer programs for area youths.

Invest in the existing neighborhoods throughout Toms River

1. *Examine the vitality and health of existing neighborhoods.* An assessment of the existing Toms River neighborhoods can be utilized to categorize neighborhoods into those in need of preservation, redevelopment, stabilization and reinvestment. Once the neighborhoods have been categorized, they can be targeted for upgrades and improvements such as recreational amenities and be more thoroughly monitored for property maintenance violations. Neighborhoods with vacant and underutilized housing can be considered for new uses such as mixed-use centers.
2. *Enhance and preserve historic neighborhoods.* Well-maintained historic houses in connection with strong community associations and thriving shopping districts offer a high quality of life for residents and are a major source of retaining and attracting residents to Toms River.

Improve and expand public transportation services

1. *Develop better highway access.* Additional ingress and egress from the Garden State Parkway will help improve the local economy.
2. *Improve local public transportation.* Public transportation on the local level in Toms River Township is virtually non-existent. The need for public transportation is apparent. Although the local senior center provides limited transportation for its members, the center noted that lack of transportation for the senior residents as their biggest obstacle. There are simply not enough drivers or busses to transport all of the seniors to places they need to be. Therefore, the senior

center has been forced to prioritize those seniors who have greater needs for transportation and the center is able to provide transportation only for those in need of medical services who have reserved weeks in advance. Improved public transportation is essential for the safety and continued involvement of seniors in the community. Options, including shuttles and jitneys should continue to be developed for all residents in order to diminish reliance on the automobile. The Waterfront Redevelopment District's redevelopment plans should promote the use of the Toms River Bus Depot and options for redeveloping the existing parking area at the Bus Station into a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) through the consolidation of parking into a deck and the introduction of multifamily residential development with pedestrian and bicycle connections to the rest of the Downtown.

3. Collaborate with State and County agencies to expand commercial vehicle transportation options. This could entail improving access to existing highways, permitting commercial vehicle utilization of the Garden State Parkway to NJ Turnpike access, and utilization of existing rail lines for freight rail.

Advance Redevelopment Area Designations and Redevelopment Plans

1. Finalize, update and adopt redevelopment plan for Downtown Waterfront Redevelopment Area, inclusive of a Transit-Oriented Development at the Toms River Bus Depot as part of a Transit Village Designation from the NJDOT.
2. Develop a redevelopment plan for the Coates Pointe Redevelopment Area using Coates Pointe Vision Plan, prepared by the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy as a reference.
3. Advance redevelopment process for Ciba Geigy Redevelopment Area once current tax appeal litigation is settled.
4. Pursue rehabilitation area designation and redevelopment plan development for portions of Downtown not included in Waterfront Redevelopment Area to enable customized design standards and potential five-year property tax incentives to encourage investment in rehabilitation of buildings.
5. Investigate additional rehabilitation or redevelopment area designations in association with economic development initiatives within the highway corridors in the Township.

Investigate Eligibility for Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDs)

1. Investigate eligibility for funding to prepare a CEDs specific to Toms River Township in alignment with the Together North Jersey (TNJ) Regional CEDs that included Ocean County.

Implement Toms River-Lakehurst Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan

1. Continue to implement recommendations for economic development along the Route 37 corridor within Toms River (see Appendix A: Economic Development - Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan).
2. Investigate an interlocal service agreement with Manchester Township to extend the Route 37 Core and Route 70 Core in the Township's Plan Endorsement Petition through Manchester to the Lakehurst Circle.

Implement Recommendations for Cultural-Heritage Tourism described in the Historic Preservation and Cultural Arts Plan Elements of the Master Plan.

1. Nurture grass roots organizations and public sector initiatives to develop arts and cultural opportunities and events in coordination with the promotion of Downtown Toms River's historic resources.
2. Use cultural and heritage tourism as a vehicle for encouraging lodging, travel and restaurant services in the Downtown, with linkages to similar redevelopment initiatives in South Toms River and the Ortleigh Beach section of the Township on the barrier island.

APPENDIX A

**Toms River-Lakehurst Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan:
*“Economic Development: Mixed Use, Greyfield & Retail Repurposing”***