

# Sustainable Economic Development Plan

*Borough of High Bridge  
Hunterdon County, New Jersey*

*Adopted: October 27, 2011*

*Prepared by:*

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## Acknowledgements

The Sustainable Economic Development Plan project would not have been possible without the financial support of the New Jersey Highlands Council, the support of Mayor Mark Desire and the ongoing assistance of Borough Administrator, Douglas Walker.

We would also like to thank those representatives who participated from the following organizations and committees:

- Borough Council
- Planning Board
- Economic Development Committee
- High Bridge Business Association
- Environmental Committee
- Cultural and Heritage Committee
- High Bridge Women's Group

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### *GRANT*

The Borough of High Bridge was awarded a \$20,850 grant from the New Jersey Highlands Council to complete a Sustainable Economic Development Plan Element. An Economic Development Plan is one of the optional elements within a Master Plan, which can be broadly described as a plan with efforts and activities that improve general economic health. This type of plan can include activities aimed at increasing the local tax base and providing new employment opportunities. Efforts within an Economic Development Plan can include downtown revitalization and tourism.

### *WHY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NOW?*

In much of New Jersey the economic growth prior to 2008 made economic development success seem continual, to the point where it had become assumed and taken for granted. While High Bridge has always seemed to struggle to fill its storefronts, the current economic climate looks quite different than it did a decade ago – making economic development in High Bridge even more challenging. Proactive economic development is now essential. It is important to pull together an economic plan now, while the economy is down, so that as things begin to turn around High Bridge is prepared and has a plan ready to implement. Having a prepared plan is especially vital for when State and Federal grants become available.

### *WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?*

Sustainable economic development is the promotion of economic activity that imports financial capital into a community while sustaining natural, historic and social assets. It is a prosperous economy that can persist over the long term. The challenge of sustainable economic development is balance between capitalizing upon and protection of community assets (i.e. natural and historic). Sustainable economic development's cornerstone is maintaining basic assets, such as natural setting, historic resources, cultural heritage and social institutions, which aligns with High Bridge's principles. As a quintessential small town, it is imperative that new economic development respects High Bridge's history, scale and character. It is for this reason that the economic development plan uses the concept of sustainability.

### *COMMUNITY PROFILE*

The Borough of High Bridge is located in the northern portion of Hunterdon County along the South Branch of the Raritan River and contains approximately 2.4 square miles. The Borough is located just one mile east of State Route 31 (SR-31) and roughly two miles north of Interstate 78 (I-78). It is bordered by Lebanon and Clinton Townships.

Considered by the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan as an Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area, portions of the Borough are served by public sewer and water, but limited sewer capacity remains. High Bridge is characterized by a small downtown with a variety of historic buildings surrounded by

*Sustainable Economic Development Plan*



predominately single-family homes. Out of the 1,571 total parcels in High Bridge, 85.5% are residential. Another 1.8% of parcels are commercial uses and 0.4% of parcels are industrial uses.

Amenities within High Bridge include the High Bridge Hills Golf Course, Solitude House Museum, hundreds of acres of open space, from Borough-owned tracts to portions of Voorhees State Park and the Ken Lockwood Gorge. Additionally, High Bridge is the western terminus of New Jersey Transit's Raritan Valley Line. Passengers can take the train to the Newark Penn Station and transfer onto either the Northeast Corridor or North Jersey Coast Line, both of which travel to New York Penn Station.

High Bridge is a small town with excellent regional accessibility. It is no surprise the Borough ranked #81 in New Jersey Monthly's 2010 Best Places to Live. While the Borough has many assets, there is room for improvement and the need for a coordinated plan of action with regards to economic development. The downtown has four vacant store fronts; the scenic and historical aspects of the Borough are undercapitalized and not part of a coordinated action plan. Additionally, High Bridge and the Town of Clinton are the only downtowns along CR-513 within the Highlands Planning Area in Hunterdon County that have the infrastructure, public transportation and mix of residential, civic, commercial and recreation uses to support sustained and vibrant economic development.



## CHAPTER 2: PROCESS

Essential to the success of the project was creating a process that would engage the public through a variety of tools and mediums. The following is a brief summary of the project's four phased process.



### ***PHASE 1 – EXISTING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS***

The first phase analyzed existing economic conditions within High Bridge. This established where the Borough is currently, which is the first step in creating a strategy for the High Bridge's Sustainable Economic Development Plan.

These existing economic conditions were discussed in the November 10, 2010 Existing Conditions Report. The report covers the topics of demographics, existing land use, existing zoning, organizations and events that support economic development and market potential in High Bridge.

### ***PHASE 2 – SURVEYS & OUTREACH***

The second phase prepared and distributed two surveys – a Business Owner Survey and Customer Survey. The surveys contained 16 questions each. On November 1, 2010 both surveys went live on the internet and were available for 17 days.

A link was posted on the Borough's homepage and a blast email was sent to over 700 residents notifying them of the Customer Survey. The High Bridge Business Association sent the Business Owner Survey link to its members. An announcement was also made at the November 11, 2010 economic workshop regarding the online surveys. This publicity resulted in 91 respondents for the Customer Survey and 7 respondents for the Business Owner Survey.

The results of the surveys were tallied and placed on the Borough's website.

### ***PHASE 3 – SWOT ANALYSIS***

The third phase looked at the Borough's economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) through a public workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to gain valuable information from participants through carefully crafted questions and exercises. The breakout sessions focused on topics such as economic assets and challenges, biggest economic competitors, downtown appearance and economic diversity.

The workshop was held on November 11, 2010 and had approximately 40 participants. Following the workshop, the data



that was gathered through the three breakout sessions was analyzed and used to:

- Assist in determining High Bridge's economic goals
- Review and establish Borough assets to build upon
- Overcome existing challenges that are impeding economic success

#### ***PHASE 4 – DRAFT PLAN***

The final phase culminates with the creation of a draft Sustainable Economic Development Plan Element - this report. This document presents the project process (Chapter 2), a summary of existing demographic conditions within the Borough (Chapter 3), existing land use and zoning (Chapter 4 and 5), economic organizations (Chapter 6), market potential (Chapter 7), the results of the surveys and workshop (Chapter 8) and the economic findings and resulting economic goals (Chapter 9). The remaining chapters (Chapter 10 – 15) detail the strategies, which will assist in meeting the goals. Finally, a detailed action plan is presented in Chapter 16.



## CHAPTER 3: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This chapter details the demographic data for population, employment, workplaces and housing within the Borough of High Bridge. Where 2010 Census data is available, it is included in this chapter of the report. Otherwise, 2010 estimates were utilized, which were provided from The Nielsen Company.

### *POPULATION*

As of the 2010 Census, High Bridge's population was 3,648 persons, which represented a net decrease of 128 persons since the 2000 Census (3,776 persons). Approximately 19.35% of the Borough's population is school-age children (ages 5 to 17). Just over 8.0% of the Borough's population is age 65 or older. The largest age cohort is the 45 to 54 age range with 19.46% of the Borough's population. The median age of a Borough resident is 39.9 according to the 2010 Census.

2010 Population by Age		
Age Range	Number	Percentage
Age 0 - 4	251	6.88
Age 5 - 9	235	6.44
Age 10 - 14	257	7.04
Age 15 - 19	214	5.87
Age 20 - 24	178	4.88
Age 25 - 34	423	11.60
Age 35 - 44	599	16.42
Age 45 - 54	710	19.46
Age 55 - 64	467	12.80
Age 65 - 74	217	5.95
Age 75 and over	97	2.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,648</b>	<b>100.0</b>

High Bridge has 1,418 households in 2010 according to the Census. The average household size in High Bridge is 2.57 persons. Examining households by household size, the data shows that 33.5% of households within the Borough are 2-persons households. The second highest household size is a 1-person household with 22.9% or 342 households.

It should be noted that 35.3% or 501 households within High Bridge have one or more children under age 18 in the home. Conversely, 64.7% or 917 households in the Borough have no children under age 18 living in the home.





2010 Households by Household Size		
Household	Number	Percentage
1-person	325	22.9
2-person	475	33.5
3-person	264	18.6
4-person	236	16.6
5-person	84	5.9
6-person	22	1.6
7 or more person	12	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,418</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As for educational attainment for those over age 25 living within High Bridge, 52.6% have a post-secondary degree. Of this total, 30.9% of residents over age 25 have a bachelor's degree, 11.9% have a master's degree and 1.5% have a doctorate's degree. Only 4.8% of High Bridge's population over age 25 does not have at least a high school diploma.

2010 Estimated Population Age 25+ by Educational Attainment		
Level of Educational Attainment	Number	Percentage
Less than 9th grade	30	1.2
Some High School, no diploma	94	3.6
High School Graduate (or GED)	616	23.9
Some College, no degree	480	18.6
Associate Degree	158	6.1
Bachelor's Degree	797	30.9
Master's Degree	308	11.9
Professional School Degree	57	2.2
Doctorate Degree	40	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Regarding household income, the estimated 2010 average household income in High Bridge is \$100,539. The estimated 2010 median household income is \$86,966. Analyzing the data, it shows that the largest income range for High Bridge is the \$75,000 to \$99,999 bracket with 23.5% or 350 households.





2010 Estimated Households by Household Income		
Income	Number	Percentage
Less than \$15,000	48	3.2
\$15,000 - \$24,999	53	3.6
\$25,000 - \$34,999	76	5.1
\$35,000 - \$49,999	148	9.9
\$50,000 - \$74,999	252	16.9
\$75,000 - \$99,999	350	23.5
\$100,000 - \$124,999	218	14.6
\$125,000 - \$149,999	140	9.4
\$150,000 - \$199,999	110	7.4
\$200,000 - \$499,999	86	5.8
\$500,000 and more	8	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,489</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## EMPLOYMENT

In the Borough of High Bridge there are an estimated 2,234 (74.6%) residents over age 16 that are employed. Only 133 or 4.4% of the population over age 16 are unemployed. A total of 627 persons over age 16 or 20.9% are not in the labor force.

2010 Estimated Population Age 16+ by Employment Status		
Status	Number	Percentage
In Armed Forces	2	0.1
Civilian - Employed	2,234	74.6
Civilian - Unemployed	133	4.4
Not in Labor Force	627	20.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,996</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Of the estimated employed civilian population over age 16, 73.8% work for for-profit private companies. A total of 8.8% work for local government and 2.8% work for state government. Only 5.6% of High Bridge's employed civilian population is self-employed.

2010 Estimated Civilian Employed Population 16+ Class of Worker		
Worker Type	Number	Percentage
For-Profit Private	1,685	73.8
Non-Profit Private	158	6.9
Local Government	200	8.8
State Government	65	2.8
Federal Government	47	2.1
Self-Emp	127	5.6
Unpaid Family	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,282</b>	<b>100.0</b>

2010 Estimated Civilian Employed Population 16+ by Occupation		
Occupation	Number	Percentage
Architect/Engineer	59	2.6
Arts/Entertain/Sports	62	2.7
Building Grounds Maint.	20	0.9
Business/Financial Ops.	176	7.7
Community/Soc. Svcs.	17	0.7
Computer/Mathematical	88	3.9
Construction/Extraction	104	4.6
Edu./Training/Library	158	6.9
Farm/Fish/Forestry	0	0.0
Food Prep/Serving	174	7.6
Health Practitioner/Tec.	86	3.8
Healthcare Support	33	1.4
Maintenance Repair	72	3.2
Legal	23	1.0
Life/Phys./Soc Science	60	2.6
Management	240	10.5
Office/Admin. Support	328	14.4
Production	47	2.1
Protective Svcs.	61	2.7
Sales/Related	334	14.6
Personal Care/Svc.	77	3.4
Transportation/Moving	65	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,284</b>	<b>100.1</b>

Finally, there is data on the occupation of employed civilian workers living in the Borough (see the table to the left). The largest proportion of employed civilian workers is in sales; this represents 14.6% or 334 workers. Next, is office/administrative support workers with 14.4% or 328 employed civilians. Workers in management constitute 10.5% of employed civilians in High Bridge.

### **WORKPLACES**

All workplace data is 2009 data provided by the Nielsen Company. This data was obtained using a radius method – a one mile radius from 30 Center Street, High Bridge. While the one mile (catchment area) radius encompasses the entire Borough, it should be noted that it does overlap partially with a few parcels in Lebanon and Clinton Townships.

As of 2009, the catchment area has a total of 154 establishments. Of this total, 134 are private and 20 are government or non-profit. The 134 private establishments within the catchment area employ 751 workers, while the 20 government and non-profit entities employ 258 workers. Looking at employees by sector, the table below shows that the service sector employs the most workers within the catchment area (37.8%). In second place is the manufacturing section with 25.8% of workers in the catchment area.

### 2009 Establishments by Sector Within the Catchment Area

Sector	Number	Percentage
Agriculture	5	3.2
Mining	1	0.6
Construction	22	14.3
Manufacturing	9	5.8
Transportation, Comm., Public Utilities	7	4.5
Wholesale Trade	7	4.5
Retail	25	16.2
Finance	11	7.1
Service	60	39.0
Public Administration	7	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 2009 Number of Employees by Sector Within the Catchment Area

Sector	Number	Percentage
Agriculture	7	0.7
Mining	15	1.5
Construction	72	7.1
Manufacturing	260	25.8
Transportation, Comm., Public Utilities	37	3.7
Wholesale Trade	42	4.2
Retail	105	10.4
Finance	43	4.3
Service	381	37.8
Public Administration	47	4.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,009</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As for the average number of employees per establishment, this varies from a high of 29 average employees per manufacturing establishment to a low 1 average employee per agriculture establishment. See the table on the following page for details on each sector.



### 2009 Average Number of Employees per Establishment by Sector Within the Catchment Area

Sector	Avg. # of Employees per Establishment
Agriculture	1
Mining	15
Construction	3
Manufacturing	29
Transportation, Comm., Public Utilities	5
Wholesale Trade	6
Retail	4
Finance	4
Service	6
Public Administration	7

Data is also provided on the type of retail stores that exist within the catchment area. Of the total 25 retail stores, there are a total of 9 eating and drinking places that employ a total of 76 workers. Additionally, there are 9 miscellaneous retail stores, which only employ 14 workers. There are also three building and garden supply stores, two gas stations, one apparel/accessory store and one home furnishings store within the catchment area.

### 2009 Retail Stores Breakout for the Catchment Area

Types of Retail Stores	# of Establishments	Total # of Employees
Building Matls and Garden Supply	3	5
General Merchandise Stores	0	0
Food Stores	0	0
Auto Dealers and Gas Stations	2	7
Apparel and Accessory Stores	1	1
Home Furniture, Furnishings	1	2
Eating and Drinking Places	9	76
Miscellaneous Retail Stores	9	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>105</b>

Financial establishments can be broken into five categories. There are three banks that employ 15 workers within the catchment area. Additionally, there are three insurance agencies that employ 19 workers. See the table below for all category details.

### 2009 Financial Establishments Breakout for the Catchment Area

Types of Financial Establishments	# of Establishments	Total # of Employees
Bank, Savings and Lending Instit.	3	15
Security and Commodity Brokers	2	3
Insurance Carriers and Agencies	3	19
Real Estate	3	6
Trusts, Holdings and Other Invest.	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>43</b>

As for service establishments within the catchment area, there are a total of 14 personal service businesses and 16 business service establishments. These two categories employ a total of 110 workers. However, the four education service establishments (schools) employ a total of 185 workers. Finally, there are 17 miscellaneous and membership organizations that employ 56 workers within the catchment area.

2009 Service Establishments Breakout for the Catchment Area		
Types of Service Establishments	# of Establishments	Total # of Employees
Hotel and Other Lodging	0	0
Personal Services	14	25
Business Services	16	85
Motion Picture and Amusement	5	20
Health Services	1	3
Legal Services	1	2
Educational Services	4	185
Social Services	2	5
Misc. and Membership Orgs	17	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>381</b>

Finally, it should be noted that there are four storefronts in two buildings that are vacant within the downtown area. Unfortunately, the building located at 15 Main Street, which contains three of the four storefronts, is currently in the foreclosure process.

## ***HOUSING***

There are 1,418 occupied homes within High Bridge according to the 2010 Census. Of this total, 83.7% of homes are owner occupied and 16.3% are renter occupied. There are a total of 63 vacant homes according to the 2010 Census, which means the Borough has a total of 1,481 homes within its boundaries.

As High Bridge is an older community, many of its homes are considered historic (over 50 years old). A total of 31.1% or 478 homes were built prior to 1938. Conversely, only 2.4% or 37 homes were built after 2000.

The type of housing unit in High Bridge is overwhelming single-family detached, as shown on the following page, which comprises 77.8% of all housing units within the Borough. The table also reflects the very few multi-family units (apartments) that exist in High Bridge.

As for home values, the estimated median home value for owner occupied houses is \$258,591. The majority of owner occupied homes (45.2%) are valued between \$200,000 and \$299,999. The second largest value range for owner occupied homes is \$300,000 to \$399,999. Less than 1.0% of owner occupied homes within High Bridge are valued at more than \$750,000. Finally, it should be noted that no homes within the Borough are valued at less than \$79,999.

### 2010 Estimated Housing Units by Unit Type

Unit Type	Number	Percentage
1 Unit Attached	142	9.2
1 Unit Detached	1,197	77.8
2 Units	109	7.1
3 or 4 Units	41	2.7
5 to 19 Units	32	2.1
20 to 49 Units	0	0.0
50 or More Units	1	0.1
Mobile Home or Trailer	17	1.1
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,539</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 2010 Estimated All Owner-Occupied Housing Values

Value	Number	Percentage
Less than \$20,000	0	0.0
\$20,000 - \$39,999	0	0.0
\$40,000 - \$59,999	0	0.0
\$60,000 - \$79,999	0	0.0
\$80,000 - \$99,999	7	0.5
\$100,000 - \$149,999	92	7.2
\$150,000 - \$199,999	202	15.7
\$200,000 - \$299,999	581	45.2
\$300,000 - \$399,999	302	23.5
\$400,000 - \$499,999	52	4.0
\$500,000 - \$749,999	38	3.0
\$750,000 - \$999,999	4	0.3
\$1,000,000 or more	5	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,283</b>	<b>99.9</b>

## CHAPTER 4: EXISTING LAND USE

High Bridge is characterized by a compact downtown area, which is surrounded by residential neighborhoods. The edges of the municipality are defined by larger lots that are either preserved, farmland or residential in use. Throughout the Borough are sizeable pieces of preserved land held by state, county or local entities.

The Borough of High Bridge is almost completely built out. Few vacant and developable properties remain within the Borough. This means, over time, redevelopment will occur to reuse parcels or oversized lots that are currently underutilized. High Bridge welcomes redevelopment that is sensitive to its size, historical background, and character, which is capable of being accommodated by existing utility capacity.

The table on the following page shows land use and total value according to tax classification. There are a total of 1,571 tax parcels within the Borough, which have a total value (land and building) of \$411,425,100. Residential uses constitute 85.5% of parcels within the Borough, but only 953 acres. Meanwhile, public properties compose only a mere 4.4% of all parcels, but 35% of the Borough's total acreage.<sup>1</sup>

As for residential land uses, the majority (77.8%) are single-family detached homes. Only 9.2% of homes are single-family attached and 7.1% of homes are duplexes (two units in one structure).

It should be noted that many of the buildings in the downtown are mixed-use buildings with commercial or office on the first floor and

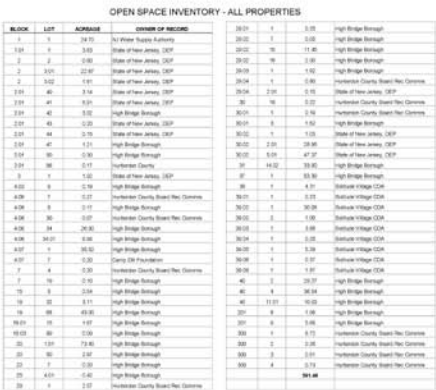
apartments above. However, this does not show up in the tax data, as buildings are only classified according to their primary use.

While the table to the right is useful, it does not show the spatial distribution of land use within the Borough. The map on the following page shows the spatial distribution of open space – both passive and active within the Borough. Additionally, it is easy to see the residential subdivisions within the municipality's borders.

2010 Existing Land Use and Value		
Classification	Number of Parcels	Total Value
Vacant	79	\$2,183,000
Residential	1,343	\$354,269,800
Farm (Regular)	3	\$1,084,200
Farm (Qualified)	8	\$14,200
Commercial	29	\$11,947,800
Industrial	7	\$7,338,600
Apartment	1	\$509,600
Railroad	11	\$0
Public Utility	1	\$0
School	3	\$6,181,500
Public Property	69	\$23,413,900
Charitable	11	\$4,206,700
Miscellaneous	6	\$275,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,571</b>	<b>\$411,425,100</b>

Data from Borough of High Bridge Tax Office, received on October 12, 2010.





## CHAPTER 5: EXISTING ZONING

At the present, High Bridge has eight zoning districts that regulate land use, of which, four are residential zones:

- R-1, minimum lot size 105,000 square feet
- R-2, minimum lot size 65,000 square feet
- R-3, minimum lot size 15,000 square feet
- R-4, minimum lot size 7,500 square feet

The four non-residential zones include:

- DB (Downtown Business)
- C (Commercial)
- ROM (Research/Office/Manufacturing)
- G (Permanently Preserved Open Space)

The Zoning Map on the following page shows the locations of the aforementioned districts. As previously mentioned, the Borough is almost built-out. Future development is likely to be in the form of redevelopment of existing commercial and industrial properties as well as infill of under-utilized parcels.

Future economic development will likely be focused within the DB, C and ROM districts, which are the existing non-residential zones. However, there is potential for economic development in the residential zones in the form of home occupations. Therefore, the remainder of this section evaluates the existing zoning, permitted uses and bulk and development standards that may deter potential development and/or redevelopment.

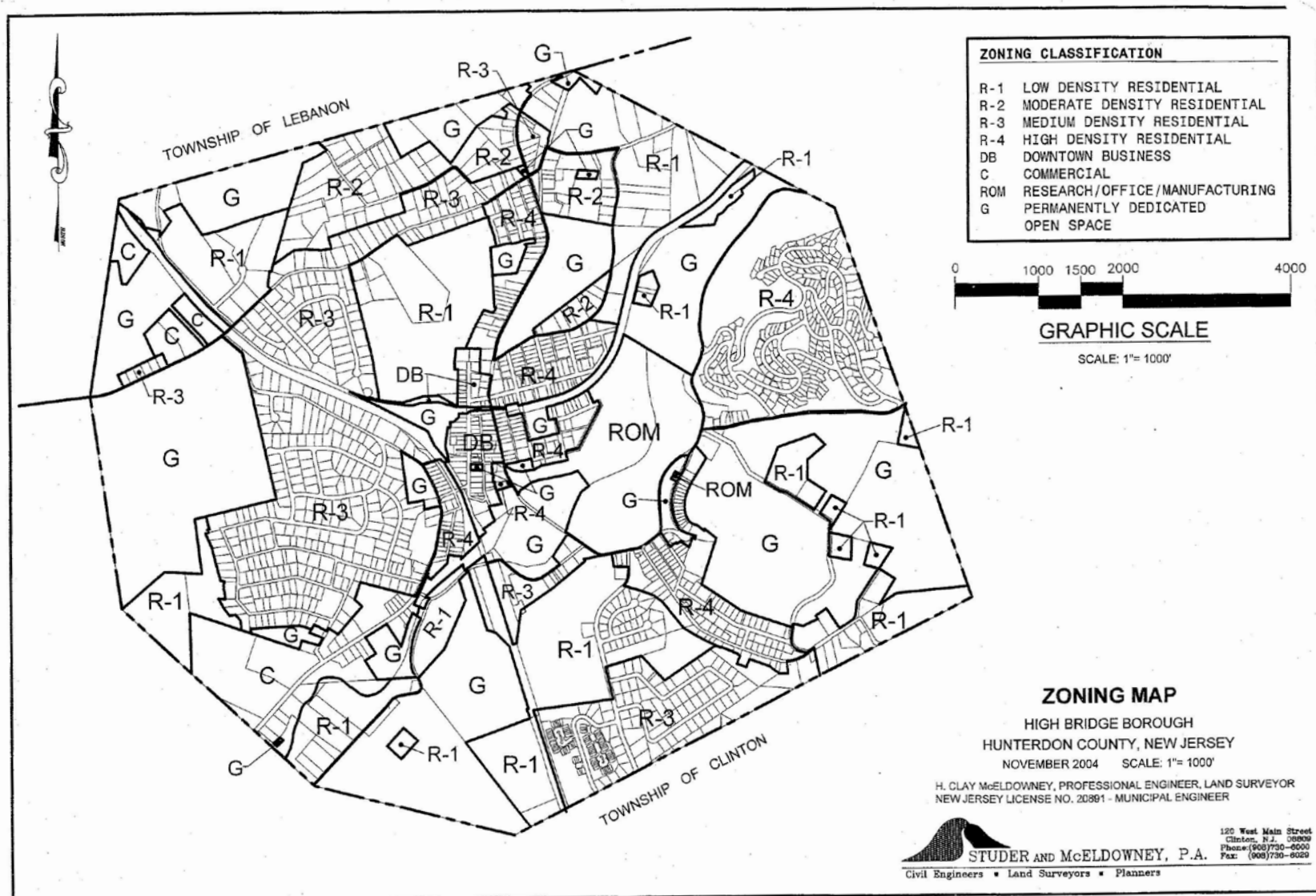
## ZONING EVALUATION

### *Residential Zones*

The R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-4 Zones permit home occupations on a residential lot as an accessory use. Conditions include:

- No more than 1 non-resident employee may be employed on the premises
- No more than 1/3 the area of one habitable floor of the principal building shall be used for the home occupation
- No sign to advertise the business will be permitted
- Occupation shall be conducted entirely within either:
  - The principal building
  - An accessory building
- No occupational sounds shall be audible outside the building
- No article shall be offered for sale on the premises
- No medical, dental, beauty salon, manufacturing, kennels, raising of animals for commercial purposes, automobile repair or bodywork is permitted
- The home occupation use shall not reduce the parking and yard requirements of the home
- No alterations to the home are permitted that would preclude or hinder the reconversion to a 100% residential use
- No clients or customers are permitted to visit the home on a regular basis





Many municipalities struggle over how to control home occupations. Typically there is concern over noise, parking and quality of life issues. However, the Borough's non-residential areas are essentially built out and therefore there is limited opportunity for new economic growth within High Bridge. This is where home occupations can be a benefit to the Borough.

In reviewing the conditions for home occupations, there are some concerns. By not permitting any signage the Borough is making it difficult for potential clients to find the home occupation or for any type of on-site advertisement to occur. While the intent is understood, the Borough may want to reconsider this condition. Secondly, by only allowing one non-resident employee the Borough is limiting the home occupations potential business expansion. Finally, it is unclear what is meant by the phrase "on a regular basis" where the conditions states "no clients or customers are permitted to visit the home on a regular basis".

The R-1 and R-2 zones allow for bed and breakfast (B&B) lodging as a conditional use. Conditions include:

- Minimum lot area of 2.4 acres for the first two guest rooms and an additional acre for every 2 rooms thereafter
- Only residences that existed as of the adoption of the Ordinance can have a B&B
- Board of Health approval is required
- Parking must be provided at the rate of one space for each guest room

To date, no homeowners have taken advantage of this opportunity. The conditions associated with a B&B do not seem unreasonable or prohibitive.

### *Downtown Business Zone*

The DB Zone is located along Main Street from the train station to Main Street's terminus just north of Liberty Street. The DB Zone extends eastward to Mill Street.

The DB Zone permits the following principal uses:

- Merchant shops and point-of-sale establishments
- Restaurants and taverns
- Museums, art galleries and libraries
- Child-care centers
- Parks, playgrounds, municipal buildings
- Upper floor residential units
- Bed and breakfast lodging





Permitted conditional uses:

- Churches
- Public utility uses
- Farm stands and farmer's market
- Wireless telecommunications equipment and facilities
- Affordable age-restricted housing

Note that no goods or materials shall be stored or displayed out-of-doors, except as provided in Section 301.O. However, when one refers to Section 301.O. it discusses conditions with regard to Agricultural activities. The Borough should amend the code to address the conditions for goods or materials displayed outside.

The DB Zone's bulk standards are quite generous. The minimum lot size is 5,000 square feet with a 50 foot frontage width required. There is no minimum front yard requirement and side yards are only required where the DB Zone abuts the R-4 Zone. Maximum lot coverage is 85% and the maximum height is 3 stories and 40 feet. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 50%.

It should be noted that the maximum height of 3 stories and 40 feet will only produce 3 story buildings with flat roofs or very shallow pitched roofs, which is not characteristic of the downtown area. The majority of buildings have a pitched roof. This would force land owners who want to construct a three story building to top it with a flat roof.

Additionally, the FAR limitation of 50% only permits a 5,000 square foot lot to have only 2,500 square feet of building floor space. Therefore, a three story building would only be able to have a footprint of 833 square feet (50 foot wide by 16.6 feet deep).

### *Commercial Zone*

Within High Bridge there are four C Zones, which are located:

- Along CR-513 from the Borough's border with Clinton Township to Arch Street
- Along Cregar Road (two sites)
- On the northwestern border of the municipality with Lebanon Township

The C Zone permits the following principal uses:

- Manufacturing, repair, processing, producing, service, assembly or fabricating operations
- Offices
- Banks or other financial institutions
- Horticulture operations limited to commercial greenhouses
- Parks, playgrounds, municipal buildings
- Child-care centers

Permitted conditional uses include:

- Farm stands and farmer's market
- Clubs, lodges and fraternal organizations
- Service stations
- Automobile dealerships
- Schools
- Public utility uses
- Wireless telecommunications equipment and facilities



The bulk standards in the C Zone require a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet with a minimum frontage width of 140 feet. A maximum of 70% lot coverage is permitted. Building height may be a maximum of 3 stories and 30 feet. The maximum FAR is 35%.

Analyzing the bulk standards, one can easily see that if a property owner wants to build a three story building, it will not be able to have a pitched roof unless the third story is constructed under a mansard roof. Additionally, the principal permitted use list is quite limited, especially for the section of the C Zone that is bisected by CR-513, which has high traffic volumes that could support retail uses.

### *Research/Office/Manufacturing Zone*

There are two ROM Zones within High Bridge, the largest is located along Washington Avenue and was formerly known as the Taylor-Wharton site. The second is zone is quite small and located along Tisco Avenue.

The ROM Zone permits the following principal uses:

- Manufacturing of light machinery
- Fabrication of metal products including foundry
- Food and associated industries
- Laboratories
- Warehousing of goods and materials
- Office complexes
- Child-care centers



Permitted conditional uses:

- Planned industrial parks
- Public utility uses
- Wireless telecommunications equipment and facilities

There are no known issues with the permitted uses or development standards within the ROM zone.



## CHAPTER 6: ORGANIZATIONS & EVENTS

There are four main organizations that support economic development and the overall enhancement of the Borough within High Bridge. These entities include the Economic Development Committee (EDC), Cultural and Heritage Committee, Environmental Commission and High Bridge Business Association (HBBA). The following sections detail these entities functions, powers, duties and economic-related goals and projects.

### ORGANIZATIONS

#### *Economic Development Committee*

Established in 1994, the Economic Development Committee (EDC) was tasked with promoting business retention and expansion, acting as a resource for new businesses, improving the Borough's tax ratable base and developing a database of available property.

The seven member committee meets once a month. Past projects of the EDC include the Farmer's Market, Tour of High Bridge bike race and the creation of the Borough's website. Additionally, the EDC has worked over the years to improve the appearance of Main Street.

In the spring of 2010 the EDC conducted a seven question survey of residents regarding their patronage of local businesses and their feelings regarding Main Street. The questions were:

- How often do you patronize High Bridge businesses?
- What businesses do you most frequent (in most to least frequented order)?
- What businesses or services would you patronize if they were available in High Bridge?
- What do you like best about our Main Street?
- What do you like least about Main Street?
- How would you rate our Main Street compared to the Main Streets of other towns?
- Please feel free to include any additional comments or ideas you would like us to consider.

A total of 38 people answered the survey. The survey revealed that the top three most frequented businesses in High Bridge were Riverside Liquors, Gronsky's and Casa Maya. The majority of respondents indicated that they would patronize a bakery if it existed in the Borough. Parking was the least liked aspect of the downtown area. Finally, 47% of respondents said that downtown High Bridge is worse than other downtowns. However, 30% rated the Borough's downtown as the same as other downtowns.<sup>2</sup>

Current EDC projects include the establishment of a Redevelopment Entity, addressing the parking issues along Main Street and other initiatives to draw new businesses to High Bridge.

#### *Cultural & Heritage Committee*

The Cultural and Heritage Committee is tasked with advising the Borough Council on the cultural and historical needs of High Bridge. Duties include the development of programs to promote interest and participation in and understanding of local history. Powers





include establishing a museum and cultural programs, undertaking historical research, publishing report and directories and promoting the Borough through various media.

The seven member committee meets once a month.

The 2010 goals and objectives for the Cultural and Heritage Committee are as follows:

- Continue to Organize Annual Borough-wide Cultural & Historic Events
  - Pooch Parade
  - Movies in the Commons Summer Series
  - Memorial & Veteran's Day Ceremonies
  - Summer Concert Series
  - Pumpkin & Gingerbread Displays
  - Facilitate Borough Event Days
- Promote High Bridge Heritage Awareness
  - Petition County to obtain more Town Historic Markers.
  - Continue looking into obtaining historic home markers
  - Continue to look for cultural and historical grants
  - Oral History Project “stories of the past”, purchase digital voice recorder for Oral Histories
  - Submit oral history stories for newsletter articles, place oral history stories on webpage, provide CD of oral histories for Borough library
  - Continue to work with Scout Project as they arise
  - Investigate showcasing local artists: music, art, etc.
- Promote Cultural and Heritage Public Awareness

- Caretakers of Borough Hall outside bulletin board
- Cultural and Heritage webpage & newsletter updates

Events that are sponsored by the Cultural and Heritage Committee include the Memorial Day Ceremony, Pooch Parade, Movies in the Commons, Saturday Concert Series in the Commons and Veteran’s Day Ceremony. These events draw visitors to the Borough and support the local businesses.

Future planned Cultural and Heritage Committee projects that support economic development include:

- Planning a walking tour of historic places in the Borough
- Creating a self-guiding brochure
- Placing historic markers at sites throughout the Borough
- Running a historic tour
- Organizing local musical groups for free concerts<sup>3</sup>

### *Environmental Commission*

The Environmental Commission in High Bridge was established to protect, develop and use the natural resources within the Borough. The commission has 7 members and meets once a month.

While not directly related to economic development, many of the projects on the Environment Commissions’ project list can have the potential to enhance the Borough and attract shoppers and tourists. The Environmental Commissions project list is as follows (note that some of these projects are currently in progress):

- Trails



- Trail connecting Springside to Solitude House to TISCO property to Columbia Trail (UFHA received grant in 2008)
  - Trail markers for Solitude Museum path
  - Trails around Solitude House
- Commons Area
  - More benches and picnic tables are needed
  - Create a wildflower garden along the driveway
  - Create a quiet garden area around the gazebo by planting small shrubs and perennials
- Union Forge Park
  - Continue planting around the gazebo
  - Continue planting by the monument
- Mini Sitting Parks
  - Identify small Borough-owned spots where a small sitting park could be created
- Open Space
  - Plant a Borough pumpkin patch
  - Grow a corn maze
- Falls Area
  - Fix up the area as a park
  - Cleanup the trails that lead to the falls
  - Create a sitting area off the Columbia Trail to view the river / falls
- Campground
  - Study done on where to create a campground
- Riding Stables
  - Research turning Springside into a community riding stable<sup>4</sup>

### *High Bridge Business Association*

Established in 2006, the High Bridge Business Association's (HBBA) mission is to improve High Bridge and its businesses through a cohesive network of business owners and managers. Duties of the HBBA include:

- Working to make High Bridge one of the most business-friendly environments in Hunterdon County.
- Sponsoring community events for the Borough to foster a greater sense of community.
- Working with the Borough government for the betterment of High Bridge's business community.
- Supporting each other as resources for our businesses by sharing the knowledge and experience we have as business owners and managers.
- Assisting our member businesses in obtaining bulk-discounts and other member benefits.<sup>5</sup>

Currently, HBBA has thirty members who meet once a month. The HBBA hosts three large events each year in High Bridge – the Community Day Parade in September, the Soap Box Derby in June and the Christmas Tree Lighting in December.

### *EVENTS*

For purposes of a concise report, the seven largest events are detailed. Over the past five years a variety of events have occurred within High Bridge to both attract visitors and promote the community.



### *Tour of High Bridge Bike Race*

The Annual Tour of High Bridge has been held since 1999. The race is held every June and is a US Cycling Federation sanctioned event. The race draws professional racers from all over the world. In addition to the race there are games for children as well as food. Racing begins at noon and ends at 6PM.

Last year there were 186 cyclists and over 300 spectators at the annual race.<sup>6</sup>

### *High Bridge Open Air Market*

Every Saturday from June through October the High Bridge Open Air Market is held. This weekly event is held in the Riverside Liquors parking lot. Typically, six to ten vendors display their wares and draw an average crowd of 75 to 100 persons.<sup>7</sup>

### *Pooch Parade*

This year marked the 17<sup>th</sup> annual High Bridge Pooch Parade, which is sponsored by the Cultural and Heritage Committee. A total of 49 dogs entered the event, drawing contestants from Hunterdon and Warren County, as well as Pennsylvania.

### *Movies in the Commons*

This event is sponsored by the Cultural and Heritage Committee. Four movie nights are offered free of charge during the summer. These movies bring out a number of families each night.

### *High Bridge Concert Series*

These concerts are held on designated Saturdays in the spring and fall and are sponsored by the Cultural and Heritage Committee. Held in the Commons, the music starts at 7PM and goes until 9PM. These events draw roughly 150 persons each night.<sup>8</sup>

### *High Bridge Community Day*

Each September the High Bridge Borough Police Department sponsors Community Day at Union Forge Park. Events include musical entertainment, food, rides, games and a parade. The event draws roughly 500 residents.

### *Soap Box Derby*

Started in 2008, the Soap Box Derby is sponsored by the High Bridge Business Association. This annual event occurs in June on Main Street. In 2010, the Soap Box Derby drew 32 children from five counties and approximately 1,000 spectators.



## CHAPTER 7: HIGH BRIDGE'S MARKET POTENTIAL

This section analyzes not only the market potential within High Bridge, but also the market potential of surrounding area. The analysis has been conducted in three radius rings, with the center at 30 Center Street, High Bridge. (See the map to the right.) The first radius ring is one mile, which encompasses all of High Bridge and a few properties along the municipality's borders. The second radius ring is three miles, which encompasses almost all of Clinton Town, portions of Bethlehem, Union, Lebanon and Clinton Township. The third radius ring is five miles. This area stretches north along CR-513 and encompasses the majority of the Borough of Califon; along SR-31 the five mile radius includes all of Glen Gardener Borough and the majority of Hampton Borough. Eastward, the five mile radius includes all of Lebanon Borough and a portion of Tewksbury Township.

The remainder of this chapter examines socio-economic characteristics of and the market potential within the five mile radius surrounding High Bridge. It should be noted that the data presented in this section is estimated by Nielsen Claritas – it is not as exact as Census data.

### ***SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS***

Within the one mile radius (High Bridge) there are an estimated 3,848 persons as of 2010. The three mile radius area has a total of



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15,282 persons, while the five mile radius area has a total of 35,658 persons. This translates to 1,489 households within a one mile radius, 5,556 households within a three mile radius and 12,817 households within a five mile radius.

The estimated 2010 average household size is 2.55 for the five mile radius area, which is the same as High Bridge's average household

size. Within the five mile radius, 57.0% of households are one-person or two-person, while 34.8% are 3-person or 4-person. Within the overall 5 mile radius, 64.2% of households have no children under the age of 18 in them, which means that they are more likely to have more disposable income. In the same area 35.8% of households do have one or more children in them under the age of 18.

The 2010 estimated data shows the financial facts for households within the three different radii. As the chart below shows, the average household income and median household income increase with the larger radii.

2010 Estimated Financial Facts			
	0-1 Mile Radius 1	0-3 Mile Radius 2	0-5 Mile Radius 3
Average Household Income	\$100,539	\$126,386	\$127,730
Median Household Income	\$86,966	\$99,404	\$100,635
Per Capita Income	\$39,286	\$46,480	\$46,415

### *Household Typologies*

Data for this section was gathered from The Nielsen Company, who maintains databases on various demographic characteristics. One of these databases is called PRIZM™. PRIZM™ classifies every United States household into one of 66 consumer segments based on the household's purchasing preferences.

The 66 segments are numbered according to socioeconomic rank (which takes into account characteristics such as income, education, occupation and home value) and are grouped into 11 life stage groups and 14 social groups. Social groups are based on urbanization and socioeconomic rank. Life stage groups are based on age, socioeconomic rank, and the presence of children at home. These descriptive household typologies can be used to help assess likely retail/commercial purchasing power and needs. As the table below shows of the 66 potential segments, the five mile radius area includes only 16 segments.

2010 Household Typologies 0-5 Miles Radius 3		
Typology	Number	Percentage
Country Squires	2,742	21.4
Big Fish, Small Pond	2,319	18.1
God's Country	4,444	34.7
Fast-Track Families	262	2.0
Greenbelt Sports	1,477	11.5
Country Casuals	262	2.0
Traditional Times	377	2.9
New Homesteaders	265	2.1
Big Sky Families	2	0.0
Simple Pleasures	29	0.2
Red, White and Blues	405	3.2
Heartlanders	80	0.6
Young and Rustic	36	0.3
Kid Country, USA	73	0.6
Golden Ponds	40	0.3
Old Milltowns	5	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,818</b>	<b>99.9</b>

A short description of each one of these household typologies follows. The typologies are grouped according to affluence, starting with the most affluent first. For purposes of a concise report, descriptions of household typologies with less than 1.0% are not included.

### **“Country Squires”**

“Country Squire” households compose 21.4% of the 5 mile radius area. These are the wealthy residents, who live on large properties. “Country Squires” enjoy country club sports like golf, tennis, and swimming as well as skiing, boating, and biking. These households are considered upscale middle aged with children.

### **“Big Fish, Small Pond”**

These households are older, upper-class, college-educated professionals, and are often among the leading citizens of their small-town communities. These upscale, empty-nesting couples enjoy the trappings of success, including belonging to country clubs, maintaining large investment portfolios, and spending freely on computer technology. These households are considered upscale older without children. “Big Fish, Small Pond” households comprise 18.1% of all households within a five mile radius.

### **“God’s Country”**

This household typology includes upscale couples in spacious homes. Typically college educated; these Americans try to maintain a balanced lifestyle between high power jobs and laid back leisure. These households typically include those ages 35 to 54 without children. This household typology constitutes the majority of households within the five mile radius, 34.7% or 4,444 households.

### **“Fast-Track Families”**

With their upscale incomes, numerous children, and spacious homes, “Fast-Track Families” are in their prime acquisition years. These middle-aged parents have the disposable income and

educated sensibility to want the best for their children. They buy the latest technology with impunity: new computers, DVD players, home theater systems, and video games.

#### **“Country Casuals”**

There's a laid-back atmosphere in “Country Casual” households, which are a collection of older, upscale households that have started to empty-nest. Most households boast two earners who have well-paying management jobs or own small businesses. Today these Baby-Boom couples have the disposable income to enjoy traveling, owning timeshares, and going out to eat. Typical age of this household is 45 to 64.

#### **“Greenbelt Sports”**

A segment of upscale exurban couples, the “Greenbelt Sports” household typology is known for its active lifestyle. Most of these middle-aged residents are married, college-educated, and own new homes. Even a few segments have higher rates for pursuing outdoor activities such as skiing, canoeing, backpacking, boating, and mountain biking. These households typically do not have children and are under age 55.

#### **“Traditional Times”**

The “Traditional Times” household is the kind of lifestyle where small-town couples nearing retirement are beginning to enjoy their first empty-nest years. Typically in their fifties and sixties, these upper-middle-class Americans pursue a kind of granola-and-grits lifestyle. On their coffee tables are magazines with titles like

Country Living and Country Home. But they're big travelers, especially in recreational vehicles and campers.

#### **“New Homesteaders”**

This household typology includes young, upper-middle-class families living in small rustic places filled with new ranches and Cape Cods. With decent-paying jobs in white and blue-collar industries, these dual income couples have fashioned comfortable, child-centered lifestyles; their driveways are filled with campers and powerboats, their family rooms with PlayStations and Game Boys. These households have parents between the ages of 25 and 44 with children.

#### **“Red, White and Blues”**

This household typology includes middle-aged, high school educated, lower-middle class households, which are transitioning from blue-collar jobs to the service industry. These households do not have children and are under age 55.

### ***CONSUMER SPENDING PATTERNS***

During the course of 2010, High Bridge residents spent an estimated \$93,789,000 on consumer expenditures, such as food, healthcare, utilities, house mortgage, personal care, entertainment, travel, car expenses and apparel. Comparatively, the five mile radius area spent on estimated \$91,711,000 during the course of 2010.<sup>9</sup>

In 2010 each household within High Bridge (Radius 1) spent an average of \$62,988 on consumer expenditures. This includes an





average of \$1,269 on alcohol and \$3,763 on food away from home (i.e. restaurants). Each household spent an average of \$2,932 on travel and \$2,046 on sports and recreation activities.<sup>10</sup> See the chart on the following page for the main consumer expenditure categories.

It should be noted that consumer expenditures are different than consumer retail expenditures. Consumer expenditures includes non-retail categories like travel, entertainment, health care services, housing expenses (i.e. repair and utility expenses) and day care, which is why the average household expenditures are greater under consumer expenditures than consumer retail expenditures.

Comparing High Bridge (Radius 1) to the five mile radius area (Radius 3), the data readily shows that the households in the greater five mile area spend more on average per household in every category but personal care and smoking products. See the charts above for a comparison.<sup>11</sup>

The chart on this page and page 30 shows that there is a large amount of money being spent, both by High Bridge households and households within a five mile radius. The bigger question now is, where is this money is being spent? The next section answers this inquiry.

2010 Annual Estimated Consumer Expenditures 0-1 Mile Radius 1	
Expenditure Category	Average Expenditures per Household
Food at Home	\$6,679
Food Away from Home	\$3,763
Alcohol	\$1,269
Day Care, Education, Contributions	\$5,499
Healthcare	\$5,194
Household Furnishings & Appliances	\$3,507
Housing Related & Personal	\$9,535
Personal Care & Smoking Products	\$2,453
Pet Expenses	\$683
Sports & Entertainment	\$7,389
Transportation & Auto Expenses	\$11,747
Apparel	\$5,198

2010 Annual Estimated Consumer Expenditures 0-5 Miles Radius 3	
Expenditure Category	Average Expenditures per Household
Food at Home	\$6,900
Food Away from Home	\$4,012
Alcohol	\$1,397
Day Care, Education, Contributions	\$7,135
Healthcare	\$5,750
Household Furnishings & Appliances	\$4,052
Housing Related & Personal	\$10,442
Personal Care & Smoking Products	\$2,335
Pet Expenses	\$764
Sports & Entertainment	\$8,840
Transportation & Auto Expenses	\$13,610
Apparel	\$5,971

### ***RETAIL MARKET POTENTIAL***

To understand High Bridge's market potential, one needs to know two things: what the consumer retail demand (expenditures) is and what is the market retail supply (existing stores' sales). This type of analysis is also known as an "opportunity gap". Data has been gathered by The Nielsen Company for 2010 and is produced in the

following tables, first for High Bridge (Radius 1) and then for the five mile radius area (Radius 3).

It should be noted that within the tables the heading consumer expenditures means what households within that particular radius spent on retail goods and retail sales is defined as what retailers' sales were for the same year. The opportunity gap shows the amount of consumer retail spending dollars leaving the radius area and being spent elsewhere. Therefore, black numbers in the opportunity gap column indicates that there is room for growth within this retail market sector in High Bridge.

#### ***High Bridge***

High Bridge's households spend an estimated \$68,456,204 on retail goods annually and High Bridge's businesses experience annual retail sales of \$12,018,134. Therefore, a total of \$56,438,070 consumer retail dollars leave High Bridge and are spent elsewhere on an annual basis.<sup>12</sup> This means that four times the amount of money that is spent in High Bridge is spent outside of it. No community ever captures 100% of its households' consumer retail dollars spent, especially when there are malls to buy clothes in and large grocery stores to do your one stop shopping. Nonetheless, there is definitely room for growth in capturing just High Bridge households' consumer retail dollars.

The tables to the right and on the following page reveal that there are only two categories in which High Bridge does not have any gap for retail economic growth (other motor vehicle dealers and beer/wine/liquor). There are, of course, retail stores that are not compatible with the character of High Bridge and are not encouraged; for example, car dealers or big box retail stores of any kind.

There are large opportunity gaps in the retail sectors of optical goods, personal care and jewelry, which could fit within High Bridge's downtown character. Large gaps exist for the sectors of sporting goods, book stores and full-service restaurants. Most interesting is the \$1.9 million opportunity gap for full-service restaurants. This should be a segment that High Bridge focuses their recruiting efforts on.

Retail Opportunity Gap 0-1 Mile Radius 1			
Retail Stores	Consumer Expenditures	Retail Sales	Opportunity Gap
<b>Motor Vehicle &amp; Parts Dealers</b>	\$11,668,605	\$1,510,371	\$10,158,234
Automotive Dealers	\$10,272,050	\$478,562	\$9,793,488
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$366,200	\$954,194	<b>-\$587,994</b>
Automotive Parts/Accsrs, Tire	\$1,030,355	\$77,615	\$952,740
<b>Furniture &amp; Home Furnishings</b>	\$1,650,348	\$0	\$1,650,348
Furniture	\$915,768	\$0	\$915,768
Home Furnishing	\$734,580	\$0	\$734,580
<b>Electronics &amp; Appliance</b>	\$1,701,201	\$388,538	\$1,312,663
Appliances, TVs, Electronics	\$1,276,234	\$300,516	\$975,718
Computer & Software	\$339,873	\$88,022	\$251,851
Camera & Photographic Equipment	\$85,094	\$0	\$85,094
<b>Building Material, Garden Equip</b>	\$7,470,125	\$2,001,664	\$5,468,461
Building Material & Supplies	\$6,900,201	\$1,976,295	\$4,923,906
Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies	\$569,924	\$25,369	\$544,555
<b>Food &amp; Beverage</b>	\$8,737,109	\$595,221	\$8,141,888
Grocery	\$7,901,293	\$0	\$7,901,293
Specialty Food	\$271,814	\$8,255	\$263,559
Beer, Wine & Liquor	\$564,002	\$586,967	<b>-\$22,965</b>
<b>Health &amp; Personal Care</b>	\$3,296,011	\$94,855	\$3,201,156
Pharmancies & Drug	\$2,818,711	\$90,997	\$2,727,714
Cosmetics, Beauty, Perfume	\$112,645	\$0	\$112,645
Optical Goods	\$157,651	\$1,979	\$155,672
Other Health & Personal Care	\$207,005	\$1,878	\$205,127
<b>Gasoline Stations</b>	\$5,559,209	\$2,396,773	\$3,162,436
<b>Clothing &amp; Clothing Accessories</b>	\$3,562,327	\$232,300	\$3,330,027
Clothing	\$2,547,227	\$72,855	\$2,474,372
Shoe	\$444,358	\$0	\$444,358
Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods	\$570,742	\$159,445	\$411,297

Retail Opportunity Gap, Continued			
0-1 Mile Radius 1			
Retail Stores	Consumer Expenditures	Retail Sales	Opportunity Gap
<b>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music</b>	1,453,077	144,500	1,308,577
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Mus. Inst.	998,068	144,500	853,568
<i>Sporting Goods</i>	528,400	9,351	519,049
<i>Hobby, Toys and Games</i>	303,529	135,149	168,380
<i>Sew/Needlework/Piece Goods</i>	70,726	0	70,726
<i>Musical Instrument and Supplies</i>	95,413	0	95,413
Book, Periodical & Music	455,008	0	455,008
<i>Book Stores &amp; News Dealers</i>	316,649	0	316,649
<i>Prerecorded Tapes, CDs, Records</i>	138,360	0	138,360
<b>General Merchandise</b>	9,242,372	0	9,242,372
Other General Merchandise	4,649,392	0	4,649,392
<b>Miscellaneous Store Retailers</b>	1,840,498	383,035	1,457,463
Florists	145,277	97,342	47,935
Office Supplies, Stationery, Gifts	762,903	172,227	590,676
<i>Office Supplies and Stationery</i>	440,927	0	440,927
<i>Gift, Novelty and Souvenir</i>	321,977	172,227	149,750
Used Merchandise	166,509	113,467	53,042
Other Miscellaneous	765,808	0	765,808
<b>Non-Store Retailers</b>	4,734,833	0	4,734,833
<b>Foodservice &amp; Drinking Places</b>	7,540,490	4,270,877	3,269,613
Full-Service Restaurants	3,403,548	1,480,515	1,923,033
Limited-Service Eating Places	3,177,395	2,773,112	404,283
Special Foodservices	622,381	0	622,381
Drinking Places -Alcoholic Bev.	337,167	17,251	319,916

### Five Mile Radius

Households in the five mile radius area spend a total of \$651,370,797 on retail goods annually, but the retail businesses within this same area only see \$382,369,500 annually in sales. This means that over \$269 million dollars leave the five mile radius area and are spent elsewhere on an annual basis.<sup>13</sup>

This report is not suggesting that High Bridge can capture all \$269 million that leaves the five mile radius area, but it has the potential to capture some of those dollars that are leaving the area. Even if the Borough could capture a mere 1% (\$2.7 million) of the \$269 million that leaves the area, it would have a tremendous positive impact on the Borough.

Within the five mile radius there are only eight retail sectors that are oversupplied and have no opportunity gap (colored red). These sectors include other motor vehicle dealers, special foods, beer/wine/liquor, gasoline stations, sew/needlework/piece goods, florists and office supplies/stationary/gifts.

Once again the retail sectors with large opportunity gaps include optical goods, other health and personal care, jewelry, sporting goods, book stores, full-service restaurants and limited service eating places. There is approximately a \$1.3 million retail opportunity gap for optical goods and a \$1.4 million retail opportunity gap for other health and personal care items. There is almost a \$3 million retail opportunity gap for books. Limited-service eating places have a \$15.2 million retail opportunity gap.

Retail Opportunity Gap 0-5 Mile Radius 3			
Retail Stores	Consumer Expenditures	Retail Sales	Opportunity Gap
<b>Motor Vehicle &amp; Parts Dealers</b>	\$117,292,450	\$95,484,266	\$21,808,184
Automotive Dealers	\$99,978,562	\$81,052,971	\$18,925,591
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$7,557,711	\$8,255,535	-\$697,824
Automotive Parts/Accsrs, Tire	\$9,756,177	\$6,175,760	\$3,580,417
<b>Furniture &amp; Home Furnishings</b>	\$16,880,945	\$2,791,095	\$14,089,850
Furniture	\$9,650,433	\$403,121	\$9,247,312
Home Furnishing	\$7,230,512	\$2,387,975	\$4,842,537
<b>Electronics &amp; Appliance</b>	\$16,602,474	\$8,050,789	\$8,551,685
Appliances, TVs, Electronics	\$12,521,236	\$7,299,353	\$5,221,883
Computer & Software	\$3,268,852	\$651,834	\$2,617,018
Camera & Photographic Equipment	\$812,386	\$99,602	\$712,784
<b>Building Material, Garden Equip</b>	\$72,899,748	\$36,795,369	\$36,104,379
Building Material & Supplies	\$66,988,353	\$34,720,161	\$32,268,192
Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies	\$5,911,395	\$2,075,208	\$3,836,187
<b>Food &amp; Beverage</b>	\$78,359,748	\$50,535,102	\$27,824,646
Grocery	\$70,651,627	\$39,223,132	\$31,428,495
Specialty Food	\$2,419,385	\$3,493,284	-\$1,073,899
Beer, Wine & Liquor	\$5,288,736	\$7,818,686	-\$2,529,950
<b>Health &amp; Personal Care</b>	\$31,092,360	\$10,718,708	\$20,373,652
Pharmacies & Drug	\$26,576,455	\$9,863,918	\$16,712,537
Cosmetics, Beauty, Perfume	\$1,070,154	\$100,880	\$969,274
Optical Goods	\$1,499,959	\$222,068	\$1,277,891
Other Health & Personal Care	\$1,945,793	\$531,842	\$1,413,951
<b>Gasoline Stations</b>	\$49,461,545	\$86,107,459	-\$36,645,914
<b>Clothing &amp; Clothing Accessories</b>	\$35,376,772	\$7,407,653	\$27,969,119
Clothing	\$24,801,596	\$4,675,106	\$20,126,490
Shoe	\$4,189,958	\$855,932	\$3,334,026
Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods	\$6,385,218	\$1,876,615	\$4,508,603

Retail Opportunity Gap, Continued 0-5 Mile Radius 3			
Retail Stores	Consumer Expenditures	Retail Sales	Opportunity Gap
<b>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music</b>	\$14,591,274	\$8,124,823	\$6,466,451
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Mus. Inst.	\$10,031,236	\$7,883,009	\$2,148,227
<i>Sporting Goods</i>	\$5,458,137	\$4,439,864	\$1,018,273
<i>Hobby, Toys and Games</i>	\$2,868,268	\$1,325,072	\$1,543,196
<i>Sew/Needlework/Piece Goods</i>	\$679,493	\$1,186,662	-\$507,169
<i>Musical Instrument and Supplies</i>	\$1,025,338	\$931,411	\$93,927
Book, Periodical & Music	\$4,560,038	\$241,814	\$4,318,224
<i>Book Stores &amp; News Dealers</i>	\$3,121,534	\$132,048	\$2,989,486
<i>Prerecorded Tapes, CDs, Records</i>	\$1,438,504	\$109,766	\$1,328,738
<b>General Merchandise</b>	\$87,073,582	\$3,335,222	\$83,738,360
Other General Merchandise	\$42,782,334	\$3,144,141	\$39,638,193
<b>Miscellaneous Store Retailers</b>	\$17,304,872	\$11,155,308	\$6,149,564
Florists	\$1,403,765	\$2,122,959	-\$719,194
Office Supplies, Stationery, Gifts	\$7,338,556	\$8,253,218	-\$914,662
<i>Office Supplies and Stationery</i>	\$4,246,056	\$5,455,320	-\$1,209,264
<i>Gift, Novelty and Souvenir</i>	\$3,092,500	\$2,797,898	\$294,602
Used Merchandise	\$1,649,414	\$779,131	\$870,283
Other Miscellaneous	\$6,913,137	\$0	\$6,913,137
<b>Non-Store Retailers</b>	\$45,568,069	\$18,816,994	\$26,751,075
<b>Foodservice &amp; Drinking Places</b>	\$68,866,959	\$43,046,710	\$25,820,249
Full-Service Restaurants	\$31,180,621	\$22,464,888	\$8,715,733
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$28,902,906	\$13,726,388	\$15,176,518
Special Foodservices	\$5,676,970	\$5,050,888	\$626,082
Drinking Places -Alcoholic Bev.	\$3,106,462	\$1,804,547	\$1,301,915

## CONCLUSION

Economic growth for High Bridge is possible. Regarding retail goods, each household in High Bridge spent an average of \$45,974

during 2010. The 12,817 households within a five mile radius of the downtown spend an average of \$50,820 annually on retail goods. When one begins to multiply these average retail expenditures by the total number of households, it is easy to see that there is a **large** amount of money being spent by households that are located five miles or less from downtown High Bridge.

The retail market potential analysis revealed that \$56 million consumer retail dollars left High Bridge (in just one year) and a hefty \$269 million left surrounding five mile radius area. There are a number of underserved retail sectors for both High Bridge households and for those households within a five mile radius from the downtown.

Here lies the opportunity for High Bridge to seek out merchants and entrepreneurs of these underserved retail sectors and attract them to the Borough. Their potential customers are down the street, just across the municipal border or a short drive away.

## CHAPTER 8: RESULTS

The results of the various tools used during the process helped to shape the economic development plan. The ensuing information also provided the basis for the goals, indicators and actions. The following sections summarize the survey and workshop results. The entirety of the survey results report is located in the Appendix of this report.

### *SURVEY RESULTS*

Two surveys were composed to gather data, a Business Owner Survey and a Customer Survey. Both surveys consisted of 16 questions covering various economic topics.

The questionnaires were online for 17 days and generated a total of 98 responses (91 Customer Survey and 7 Business Owner Survey). The results were tallied by Fluid Surveys – an online survey management company.

#### *Business Owner Survey Results*

It should be noted that due to the poor response (7 respondents) the Business Owner Survey results should not be interpreted to be a representation of the thoughts and opinions of the High Bridge business community.

The overall demographics of the business owner respondents:

- 57% lease their space
- 4 of the 7 businesses employ 3 or more persons

- 4 of the 7 businesses have been in business in High Bridge for 5 or more years
- 5 of the 7 business have less than 25 customers/clients a week

Question #10 asked the respondents to name three advantages they associate with doing business in High Bridge. Responses included:

- Comparatively low rents
- Main Street address
- Sense of community
- Centrally located in high-income region
- Low operational costs
- Sense of supportive business community
- Easy to advertise in small community

Question #11 asked respondents to name three disadvantages to doing business in High Bridge. Responses included:

- High taxes
- Downtown's run-down image
- Limited downtown foot traffic
- Main Street vacancies
- Lack of business diversity

When asked what businesses should be recruited to High Bridge, respondents said:

- Bakery (3)
- Restaurants (3)
- Arts





- Retailers complimentary to upscale dining
- Gift stores
- Convenience store
- Hardware store
- Coffee Shop
- Knitting store
- Butcher

### *Customer Survey Results*

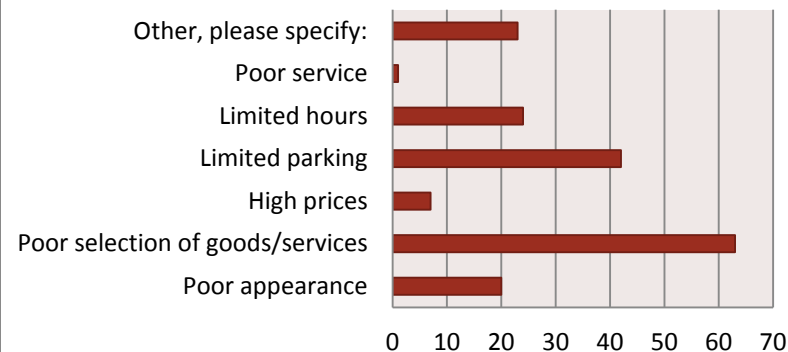
The Customer Survey generated 91 responses. When asked what activities respondents do in High Bridge 43% stated recreation and only 27% said shopping. Only 41% of respondents patronize High Bridge businesses on a weekly basis.

When asked what the advantages of shopping in High Bridge are, 24% of respondents stated it is the convenient location and 19% said it is the friendly service. When asked what the disadvantages are to shopping in High Bridge, 35% said poor selection of goods/service and 23% stated limited parking. Note that only 4% said high prices are a disadvantage.

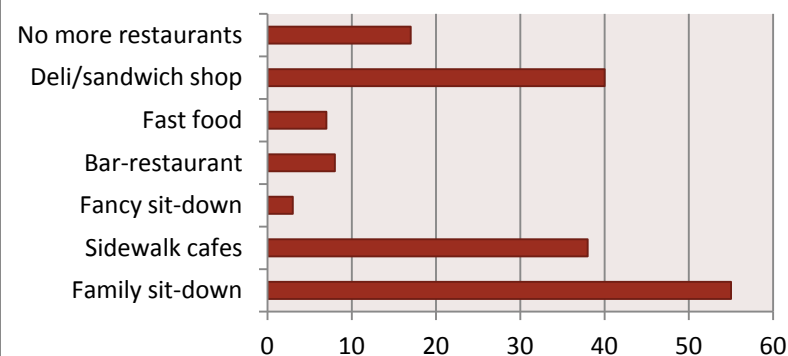
Question #8 asked residents if more restaurants are needed within the Borough. Only 10% of respondents said that no more restaurants are needed within High Bridge. A total of 33% of respondents desire a family sit-down restaurant, 24% would like a deli/sandwich shop and 23% desire a sidewalk café.

It should be noted that many participants noted in their comments that Circa is too expensive for families and Mrs. Riley's is not family-

### **What are the major disadvantages of shopping or doing personal errands within High Bridge?**



### **Do you think more restaurants are needed in High Bridge? If so, what type?**



oriented. Hence the overwhelming response for a family sit-down restaurant.

Question #10 asked participants what types of stores are needed and would they patronize if they existed in High Bridge. The majority of respondents said bakery (22%). Gifts and cards received the second largest number of votes (13%).

When asked what merchants can do to improve their stores, 23% of respondents said improve store appearance. Improve selection came in second place with 20%. A total of 16% said merchants should expand store hours.

Question #13 asked respondents what one thing should be kept the same about the downtown. Overwhelming, 46% said the small

town feel/charm. Restaurants were second, with 15% of respondents. Conversely, when asked what they would change about the downtown the majority (31%) of respondents stated the number of stores/variety of stores. A total of 26% of respondents stated that they would change the parking issues and 18% said they would improve the buildings/general appearance of the downtown.

### **WORKSHOP RESULTS**

Held on November 11, 2010, the workshop drew approximately 40 participants from various boards and committees in the Borough as well as many interested residents and business owners. The workshop had three breakout sessions – question and answer (Q&A), mapping and economic diversity.

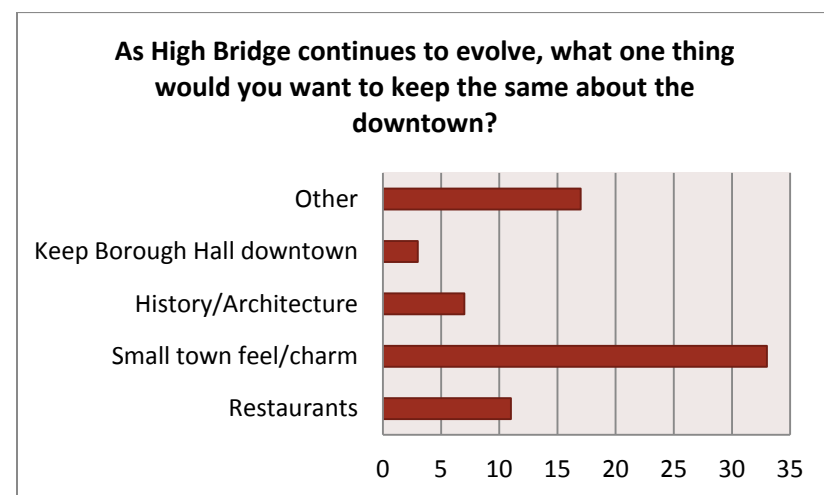
### **Q&A Results**

The Q&A session had a total of four questions. The first question asked participants to list High Bridge's economic assets, challenges and least known asset on a sheet of paper. Afterwards each table was asked to compile the individual answers onto one sheet of chart paper and rank the assets and challenges.

Following the workshop, each table's results were combined into a master list. Assets included:

- Outdoor recreation
- Main Street
- Underutilized industrial space
- Quaintness/charm
- School system

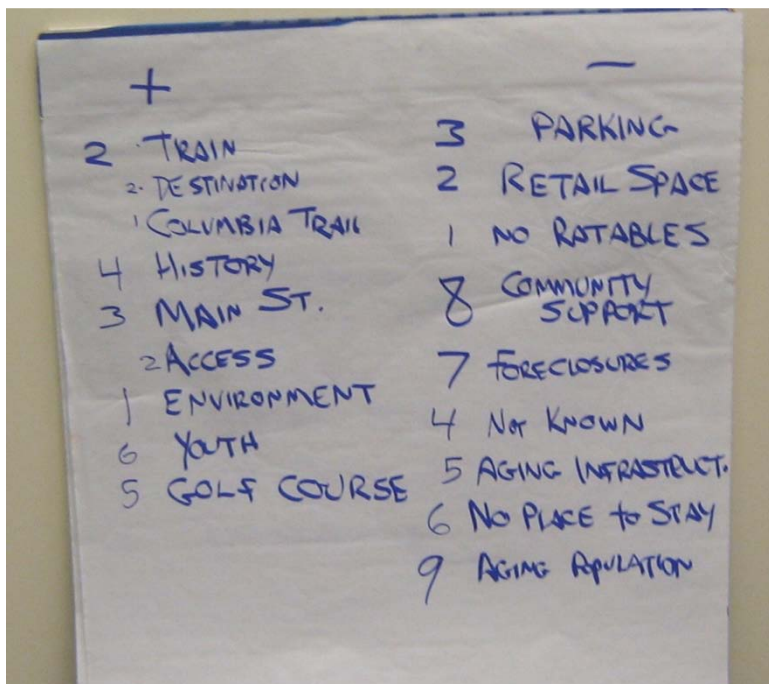
*Sustainable Economic Development Plan*



- Proximity to highways
- Family-based community
- Train
- Area wealth
- Open space
- Safe

Challenges indicated by the participants included:

- Lack of retail diversity
- Parking
- Drawing outside shoppers



- Accessibility
- Taxes
- Debt load
- Lack of ratables
- Limited water/sewer capacity
- Rundown downtown buildings
- Empty storefronts
- Proximity to big box stores

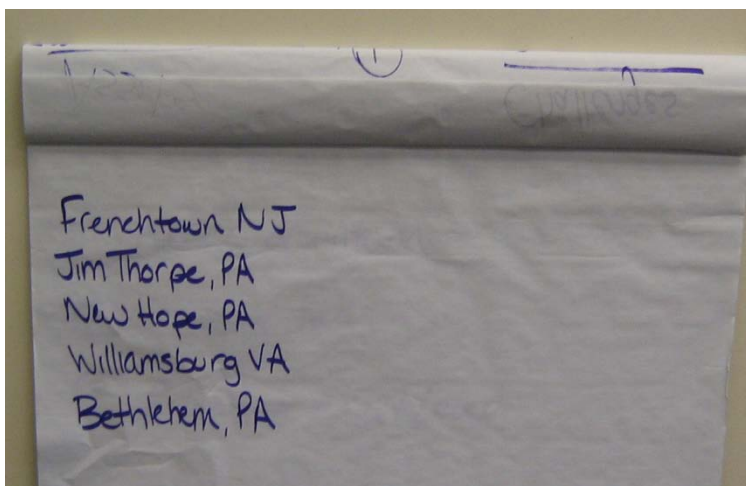
The second question asked each participant to list High Bridge's biggest economic competitor, what that competitor has that High Bridge doesn't and what High Bridge has that the competitor doesn't. Each participant shared their answers with the entire group and a short discussion ensued.

Following the workshop, each participant's answer for biggest competitor was tallied. Out of the participants, 71% said Clinton, 5% said Flemington, 18% said big box stores (i.e. Wal-mart, Shoprite, etc.), 3% said internet and 3% said Pennsylvania. As for what High Bridge has that the competition doesn't, answers included:

- Flexibility (i.e. in prices, variety, etc.)
- Outdoor spaces
- Charm
- Train station
- Golf course
- Character
- Personal attention
- Scenic beauty

The third question asked participants what downtown High Bridge should emulate and why. The top three answers were Jim Thorpe, PA, Lambertville/New Hope and Frenchtown. Reasons why included:

- Diverse businesses
- Outdoor recreation options
- Charming
- Draws people with restaurants and arts
- Lodging options
- Similar combination of green space and retail
- Similar to High Bridge with County Road bisecting downtown area (Frenchtown)

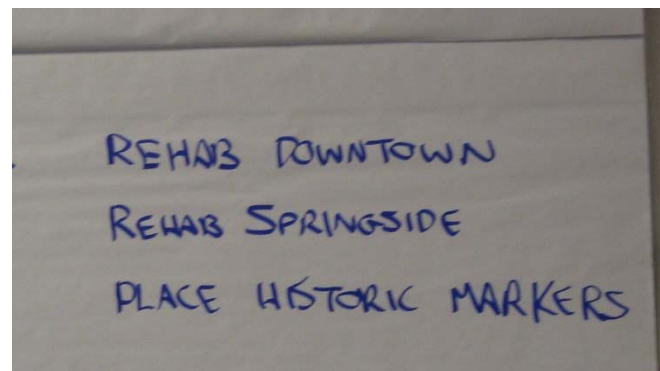


The last question in the Q&A session asked participants to prioritize a list of ongoing initiatives in High Bridge. After individually

answering, each table was asked to reach a consensus on what the top three economic initiatives should be in the Borough.

Following the workshop, a master list was compiled:

- Rehabilitate the downtown
- Upgrade the Falls area
- Remediate Exact Tool
- Redevelop the downtown area
- Rehabilitate Springside Farm to become a Riding Stable
- Place historic markers
- Establish redevelopment zones
- Develop a comprehensive open space plan



### *Mapping Results*

The second breakout session was a mapping exercise that provided each table with a bird's eye view of the downtown area. Each participant was given three yellow dots that they could use to indicate buildings that were in need of a "facelift". The results of all four groups were compiled and are shown on page 41. The former

florist shop (to the left of Mrs. Riley's) received the most dots (19). In second place is the large red brick building next to the Laundromat with 16 dots. Tied for third place with 11 dots each is the private residence just north of Village Studio Photography and the gray building on the northeast corner of the intersection of Main Street and McDonald Street.

### *Economic Diversity Results*

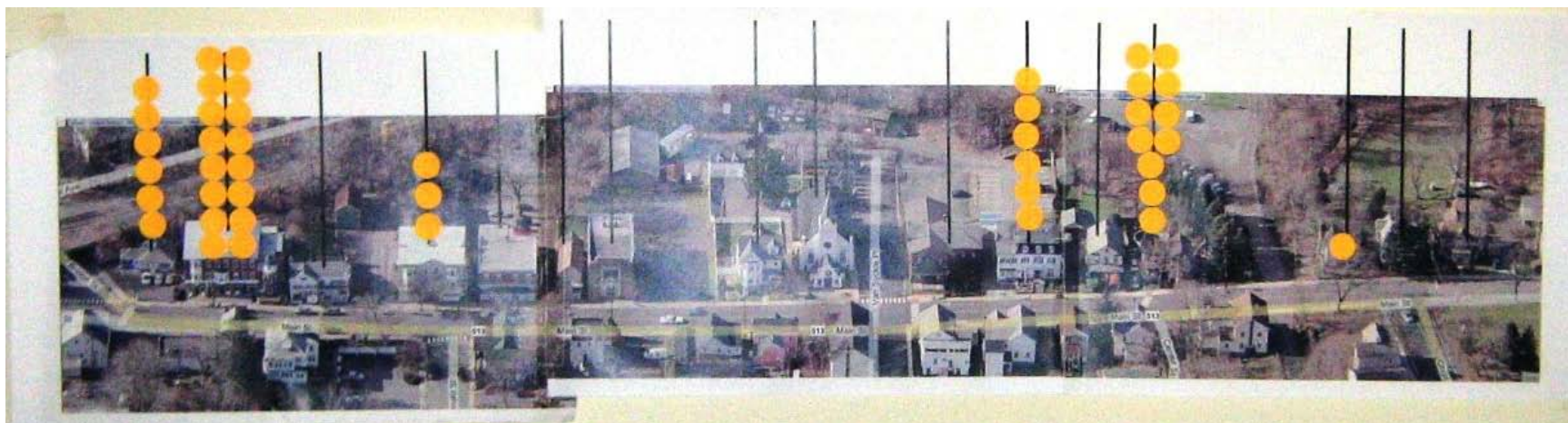
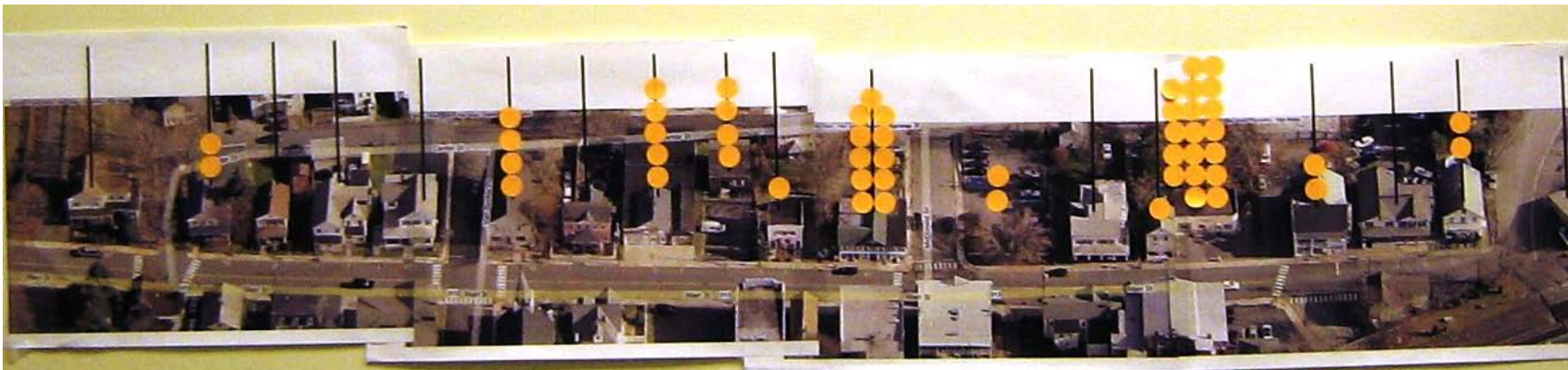
The final exercise asked participants to utilize existing Borough assets to diversity High Bridge's economy. Each table was given a map and a list of ideas. The directions were to select three existing assets within the Borough and brainstorm as a table ways to transform these assets into economic generators that would act as destinations. Ideas included:

- Transforming a portion of the TISCO property to a dog park
- Converting Springside Farm into a riding stable
- Transforming Springside Farm into a history living farm
- Utilizing the Greystone House and Nassau Manor for historic tours
- Converting a portion of the TISCO property into a recreation facility
- Transforming Solitude House & Annex into an event facility
- Utilizing Solitude Dam as a hydro-electric generating exhibit
- Creating mountain bike trails on the Pfauth property
- Constructing a private clubhouse at the golf course
- Building a reception facility at the golf club

- Using the TISCO property to develop an arts center







## CHAPTER 9: FINDINGS & GOALS

This chapter summarizes the findings yielded by the study process and states the goals for future economic development in High Bridge.

### *FINDINGS*

The project's objective was to create an economic plan to address High Bridge's economic challenges and enhance its existing economic assets as well as to guide future economic planning. Information received from the online surveys and the exercises completed during the workshop were also used in the creation of the goals.

What then did we learn? Residents consider High Bridge to be an optimal location – proximate to transit and highways. They feel that the Borough has a good open space system and a variety of outdoor activities. They consider High Bridge to be family-friendly and community-oriented. The public believes the schools system is an asset. People feel safe in High Bridge.

Residents like the charm and small town feel of High Bridge. The Borough's history and historic places are considered assets and should be protected and enhanced.

However, residents are not pleased with the lack of retail diversity and the limited ratables. They are concerned about the vacancies in the downtown (three of which are in foreclosure). The limited capacity of the Borough's water and sewer systems are also recognized as a challenge. Finally, residents are concerned with the

appearance of the downtown, specifically some of the less maintained buildings.

The majority of data received from the public falls into one of five categories – demographic and socio-economic, general master planning issues, open space and recreation, business retention/attraction and areas of economic potential. Therefore, the findings have been classified according to the category they most relate to.

### *Demographic & Socio-Economic*

The background research revealed that High Bridge is located in an affluent area. Findings included:

- Each High Bridge household spends an estimated average of \$45,974 annually on retail goods
- The 12,817 households within a five mile radius of High Bridge spend an estimated average of \$50,820 annually on retail goods
- An estimated \$56 million in consumer retail dollars leaves High Bridge annually
- Approximately \$269 million in consumer retail dollars departs the five mile radius every year
- There are a number of underserved retail segments both for High Bridge households and households within a five mile area, segments include:
  - Optical goods
  - Sporting goods
  - Jewelry/luggage



- Hobby, toys, games
- Personal care
- Book stores
- Full-service restaurants
- Limited-service restaurants

### *General Master Planning Issues*

The process uncovered the fact that there are conflicting opinions on the topic of parking. Some residents say there isn't enough; others say there is plenty, just poor signage.

Secondly, a review of the zoning ordinance revealed some key findings:

- Some of the conditions for home occupation are prohibitive
- The FAR and maximum building height should be reviewed for the DB Zone
- The maximum building height should be reviewed for the C Zone

### *Open Space & Recreation*

Throughout the process, residents repeatedly stated that open space and recreation are key components of the municipality. One reason why open space is so important is the fact that it consumes 35% of High Bridge's land area. Findings included:

- Utilizing existing Borough-owned open space properties to:

- Offer additional amenities and recreational activities to Borough residents and also to attract visitors
- Preserve existing buildings through adaptive reuse
- Diversify High Bridge's economy
- Directional signage is needed to identify parks, trails, etc.
- Capitalizing on the recreation theme and marketing High Bridge as a recreation destination (hiking, biking, fishing, etc.)



### *Business Retention/Attraction*

During the outreach phases, residents reiterated the need for and importance of a strong and varied business community in the downtown area. Findings include:





- Attract new businesses to fill Main Street vacancies
- Expand variety of goods sold in downtown
- Capitalize on the “locational convenience” factor
- Diversify the type of businesses in the downtown to complement existing businesses and/or assets (i.e. open space)
- Enhance marketing campaign to support existing and new businesses

### *Areas of Economic Potential*

The background research and outreach mechanisms produced a large quantity of ideas with regard to economic development. Residents were eager to share their ideas for economic potential. First and foremost, the background research revealed that High Bridge is located in a wealthy region, where households spend an estimated annual average of \$71,133 on consumer expenditures. Moreover, the data shows that there are dozens of retail segments that households spend their money on, but these segments do not exist within High Bridge or the five mile radius area. Therefore, households travel elsewhere to buy said retail goods.

Secondly, there are regional attractions located within or adjacent to the Borough that draw hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. These include:

- Voorhees State Park - 188,000+ annual tourists
- High Bridge Hills Golf Course - 8,000 annual guests
- Ken Lockwood Gorge - thousands of annual visitors
- Columbia Trail - 100,000 to 125,000 annual visitors

Therefore, over 300,000 people travel to the area annually. The ability to draw in even just 1% of these visitors into High Bridge for a slice of pizza, gallon of gas or a bottle of wine could have a positive impact on High Bridge’s economy.

Other findings for areas of economic potential included:

- Existing Borough historic assets, which are underutilized and could become revenue generators or tourist attractions
- Residents feel that more restaurants are needed in High Bridge
- People feel that the Columbia Trail, open spaces and recreational activities within High Bridge are unknown or little known to outsiders and should be emphasized moving forward



## GOALS

The findings have produced five overall goals to guide High Bridge's economic development initiatives.

1. **Accommodate economic growth in a sustainable manner, taking careful advantage of the unique historic and natural resources within High Bridge.**
2. **Support existing businesses and attract new, complimentary businesses.**
3. **Enhance the appearance of the downtown area and the CR-513 corridor.**
4. **Diversify High Bridge's economy by utilizing existing assets to transform the Borough into a destination for cultural/heritage tourism and outdoor recreation.**
5. **Market High Bridge in a coordinated manner.**

These goals serve to guide future economic planning. Chapters 10 through 15 provide strategies, programs and activities to meet the five goals of this plan.



## CHAPTER 10: SUSTAINABILITY

***Goal #1 Accommodate economic growth in a sustainable manner, taking careful advantage of the unique historic and natural resources within High Bridge.***

This chapter examines five strategies to meet Goal #1 – LEED certification, SITES rating, National Association of Home Builders Green Building Guidelines, potential redevelopment sites and adaptive reuse of historic structures.

### ***LEED***

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (hereinafter “LEED”) is a recognized green building certification rating system. LEED provides third-party verification that a new or renovated building was designed and built using strategies and materials to lower a building’s environmental footprint. LEED was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council and is a “voluntary certification program that can be applied to any building type and any building lifecycle phase”.<sup>14</sup> The ranking system looks at nine key areas:

- Sustainable sites
- Water efficiency
- Energy and atmosphere
- Materials and resources
- Indoor environmental quality
- Locations and linkages
- Awareness and educations

- Innovation in design
- Regional priority

LEED provides “building owners and operators a concise framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions”.<sup>15</sup>

LEED applies to all building types – commercial as well as residential. It also works throughout the building lifecycle, from design to construction to ongoing operations to retrofit. There are four levels of LEED accreditation: certified, silver, gold and platinum. The Borough encourages new non-residential buildings and major non-residential renovations to seek LEED certification.

### ***SUSTAINABLE SITES INITIATIVE***

The Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES™) is an effort by the American Society of Landscape Architects to create voluntary national guidelines and performance benchmarks for sustainable land design, construction and maintenance practices. The purpose of SITES is to “promote sustainable land development and management practices that can apply to sites **with** and **without** buildings including, but not limited to the following:

- Open spaces such as local, state and national parks, conservation easements and buffer zones and transportation rights-of-way.
- Sites with buildings including industrial, retail and office parks, military complexes, airports, botanical gardens,



streetscapes and plazas, residential and commercial developments and public and private campuses”.<sup>16</sup>

This is what makes SITES different from LEED; SITES deals with parcels that do not have buildings on them, whereas LEED only deals with building construction occurring on a property.

The SITES rating system is based on a total of 250 points. In order to be SITES recognized a project must achieve at least 100 points or 40% of the total points. There are four levels of SITES ranking that range from one star to four stars. Prerequisites and potential credits are organized into nine sections, which are:

- Site Selection
- Pre-Design Assessment and Planning
- Site Design—Water
- Site Design—Soil and Vegetation
- Site Design—Materials Selection
- Site Design—Human Health and Well-Being
- Construction
- Operations and Maintenance
- Monitoring and Innovation<sup>17</sup>

The Borough encourages new non-residential buildings and major non-building related projects to refer to the SITES prerequisites and credits for sustainable ideas.

### ***NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS GREEN BUILDING GUIDELINES***

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Green Building Guidelines differs from LEED in that it only focuses on residential buildings. NAHB offers educational resources, green standards and green building advocacy. The NAHB rating system can be “used for rating new and remodeled single- and multi-family buildings as well as residential subdivisions”.<sup>18</sup> Residential buildings are awarded points based on six categories:

- Lot design, preparation, development
- Resource efficiency
- Energy efficiency
- Water efficiency
- Indoor environmental quality
- Operation, maintenance and building owner education

Residential buildings can receive one of four certifications including bronze, silver, gold and emerald. Points for these certifications range from 222 to 697.

The Borough encourages developers or homeowners who are building new or remodeling residences to consider the NAHB Green Building Guidelines in their work efforts.

### ***POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SITES***

Potential redevelopment sites within High Bridge could include brownfields and/or grayfields. Brownfields (typically abandoned or underutilized industrial sites with environmental contamination) are





an opportunity for economic development and may simultaneously serve to improve the environmental condition of the surrounding area. Grayfields are industrial sites or old retail buildings surrounded by a sea of asphalt, which are typically economically outdated or failing. Grayfields can also be redeveloped to provide for new economic opportunities within a municipality.

There is only one potential redevelopment site within the Borough of High Bridge. However, the Borough is not opposed to private redevelopment (initiated by the property owner) that is sensitive to the site's size, historical background, and character, which is also capable of being accommodated by existing utility capacity.

Block 24, Lot 16, known as the Exact Tool site, is the only potential redevelopment site within High Bridge. The property is currently being remediated. In July of 2010 a Feasibility Study was completed through funding from the Highlands Council to determine what type of redevelopment would be possible on the Exact Tool site and how much development could be accommodated due to utility constraints, environmental conditions, etc.

The Feasibility Study analysis included six sections:

- Site description
- Site history
- Site zoning
- Existing infrastructure capacity
- Market assessment
- Conceptual development scenarios
- Future value

The Feasibility Report was an important first step in analyzing Exact Tool's development potential, however, it is imperative that remediation of the affected area is completed. Until the remediation process is finished, the redevelopment of Exact Tool will not be able to occur.



### ***ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES***

A structure is typically considered to be historic if it is 50 years or older and has some redeeming architectural characteristics. This means that any building constructed prior to 1961 could be a historic structure. According to the 2000 Census, there are 683 homes or 48% of the Borough's housing stock meets the first qualifier of being a potential historic structure. This does not include the many non-residential buildings that are also over 50 years old in the municipality.

According to the New Jersey State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO), only the High Bridge Reformed Church is on both the National and State Registers. Solitude House and Taylor Iron and Steel Company are the only structures that have received a certificate of eligibility from the State, which means that they meet the requirements to be listed on the State Register. Finally, SHPO's list indicates there is a High Bridge Historic District, which encompasses the structures along Academy, Center, Church, Main, Mill, New, Prospect, Seal, Taylor, Thomas and West Main Streets, Mine Road and Fairview and Mountain Avenues.<sup>19</sup>

Adaptive reuse is a process that adapts buildings for new uses while retaining their historic and/or unique architectural details. Many historic structures outlive their original purpose, often due to the quality of building materials that were used.

Adaptive reuse should have minimal impact on the historic significance of the building. The most successful adaptive reuse projects are those that best respect and retain the building's historic qualities while making the building compatible for a contemporary use. Many times adaptive reuse is the only way a historic structure will be properly cared for, because simply declaring a building historic, purchasing the structure and letting it sit idle is not healthy for a structure.

The Borough should encourage property owners of historic structures (officially designated or not) to reuse buildings. Additionally, High Bridge should analyze Borough-owned structures for their potential for adaptive reuse.

Benefits of adaptive reuse can be classified into categories: environmental, social and economic. Environmental benefits include reusing already developed land and through adaptation, requiring less building materials as opposed to building a new structure. Social benefits include preserving historically-significant buildings for future generations. Economic benefits include utilizing existing infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.) surrounding the building and financial savings from not demolishing the building.

For a discussion of cultural/heritage tourism, which involves historic structures, see Chapter 14.



## CHAPTER 11: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

***Goal #2 Support existing businesses and attract new, complimentary businesses.***

To advance Goal #2, a business development plan is essential. Business retention and expansion, business attraction and entrepreneurial development are the three strategies that constitute business development.

Presently, High Bridge's Economic Development Committee is tasked with promoting business retention and expansion as well as acting as a resource for new businesses. Their website offers helpful links to small business owners.

### ***EXISTING BUSINESS BASE***

To begin to formulate strategies for business development, it is imperative to understand High Bridge's existing business base. This data was included in the November 10, 2010 Existing Conditions Report and is summarized in Chapter 4.

This information shows that High Bridge's business strengthens include Custom Alloy (largest private employer in the Borough), a diverse representation of business sectors and a high percentage of private business establishments. Meanwhile, the Borough's business weaknesses include a lack of retail store diversity and the fact that the second largest business sector (retail) employs only 10% of workers.

### ***Business Clusters***

In recent years the concept of business clusters has become standard. Examples of places with clusters include:

- Lambertville, NJ – antiques and art
- Somerville, NJ – restaurants
- Westfield, NJ – apparel and accessories
- New Brunswick, NJ – restaurants and entertainment
- Chester, NJ – boutique stores
- Englewood, NJ - furniture

The concept of clustering consists of geographically grouping business for improved efficiency, competitiveness and/or marketing. Clustering creates a critical mass, which produces a gravitational force that draws people to said location.

After reviewing the existing business base data, existing clusters can be seen. These include eating and drinking places, personal services and business services. These clusters should be strengthened and enhanced. As for a future business cluster, it should center on the recreational opportunities that abound in High Bridge.

Note that the concept of clustering is not meant to rid High Bridge of other types of businesses. It is only intended to focus High Bridge's future efforts of business attraction and entrepreneurship.

### ***RETENTION & EXPANSION***

First and foremost, is keeping existing businesses in High Bridge. Business retention and expansion is meant to support the Borough's existing businesses and prevent them from going out of business. These existing businesses form the foundation of High Bridge's

*Sustainable Economic Development Plan*





employment opportunities and assist in stabilizing the tax base. Moreover, it is easier to attract new businesses if existing businesses are expanding and staying in the Borough.

“There are essentially two ways a community can assist its existing firms. The first is to provide direct assistance through management training, workforce development programs and access to capital. The second way to assist existing businesses is to deal with external barriers to business growth including overly restrictive regulatory processes, availability of space to expand, transportation and other infrastructure needs and quality of life amenities in the community”.<sup>20</sup>

Recommended programs and activities include:

- Continuing business visitation program
- Existing space inventory
- Business and development seminars
- Business appreciation events
- Networking opportunities
- Business associations

The following sections elaborate upon each of the recommended programs and activities.

### *Continuing Business Visitation Program*

Continuing business visitation programs are typically run by a municipality’s local economic development committee or business association. This type of program sends out a committee member to each business at least two times a year to discuss business issues

and concerns and future plans for expansion. This type of program encourages direct and frank dialogue. Moreover, it includes the ability to identify and work with at-risk businesses early on.

This program makes businesses aware that they are a valued part of the community. It establishes an ongoing communication process. Finally, the continuing business visitation program indicates the willingness of the EDC to work with businesses and solve their problems or assist with their growth.

*King George County, Virginia’s Business Visitation Program provides an online form that businesses can fill out between visits to share comment and concerns.*

*This form can be found at:*

*<http://www.king-george.va.us/economic-development/programs-and-resources/business-visitation-program.php>*

### *Existing Space Inventory*

According to the EDC’s website it is responsible for developing a database of available property in High Bridge. This responsibility should also include a database of available storefronts in the Borough. For example, all vacancies should be listed and should include the following information at a minimum:

- Address

- Square footage available
- Rent
- Photographs of building exterior (and interior if possible)

This information should be shared with local real estate brokers as well as the HCCC.

### *Business and Development Seminars*

The Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce (HCCC) presently offers business and professional development seminars. These include quarterly policy and issue briefings and tele-classes on specific subjects.<sup>21</sup> The EDC should work with the HCCC to promote these events and inform Borough business owners of these educational opportunities.

### *Business Appreciation Events*

Some municipalities hold special business appreciation events, where they recognize new businesses, businesses that have expanded their workforce or select a business of the year. Business appreciation shows companies that they are a valued asset of the community.

In High Bridge, it is recommended that the Borough recognize a business or businesses at the High Bridge Community Day. This could be as simple as giving a paper certificate to the business or businesses.

### *Networking Opportunities*

The HCCC and HBBA both act as a networking organizations, which is one of the many benefits of these organizations. New businesses should be notified of these organizations and their benefits.

### *Business Associations*

Within the State of New Jersey there are a number of business associations. For purposes of a concise report we have only included three. First, there is the local business association, the HBBA, which was started in 2006. The HBBA has approximately 30 members. At the County level there is the HCCC, which offers many more programs and events compared to the HBBA. The HCCC has more than 500 members. Finally, at the State level, there is the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce (NJCC). The NJCC works to link New Jersey's local and regional chambers of commerce on important issues.

### *ATTRACTION*

Business attraction is needed to draw new businesses to fill vacancies within the Borough. Attraction activities are designed to encourage businesses that are expanding or planning to relocate to choose High Bridge. "New businesses enhance and diversify the economic base and improve the quality of life".<sup>22</sup>

However, every community is in the ratables chase and attracting new businesses is very competitive. Therefore, it is important for High Bridge to determine the businesses that are the most compatible with High Bridge's character and have a market

potential (refer to Chapter 7 in the Existing Conditions report). Once these business segments are identified, the recommended programs and activities for attraction include:

- Promotional program
- Website
- High Bridge Economic Profile

The following sections provide details on each of the aforementioned programs and activities.

### *Promotional Program*

Promotion of High Bridge is key to attracting businesses. While High Bridge may be proximate to SR-31 and I-78, it is not well known, especially outside of Hunterdon County. Therefore, advertising of the Borough and its assets are essential. Promotional programs can range from simple to complex and from cheap to expensive.

It is recommended that after the Borough has determined the business segments it wants to target, direct mailings or phone calls should be placed to prospective businesses. Additionally, the Borough should coordinate with HBBA and HCCC to solicit businesses.

### *Website*

A comprehensive website should be crafted that acts as a one stop location for existing businesses and potential new businesses. This website should contain at a minimum:

- Existing space inventory

- Economic profile discussed below
- Information for small businesses
- Links to the HCCC's and HBBA's websites

See Chapter 11 for a detailed discussion of this strategy.

### *High Bridge Economic Profile*

When searching for a location, companies take a number of factors into consideration. Many communities prepare an economic summary, which can be sent to companies, posted on a website, etc. The summary provides concise, valuable information to these prospective businesses.

It is recommended that the Borough prepare a "High Bridge Economic Profile" that contains the following information:

- Locational advantages (i.e. train, proximity to SR-31 and I-78)
- Existing businesses
- Available land and buildings
- Market potential
- Quality of life facts (crime rate, schools, recreation amenities)
- Workforce data
- Knowledge resources (nearby educational institutions)
- Business resources (HBBA, HCCC, etc.)

Once completed, this profile should be placed on the Borough's website as well as any economic development website, such as the EDC's, HBBA's and/or HCCC's.



## ***ENTREPRENEURSHIP***

The third strategy of business development is entrepreneurship within the Borough. “Failure rates are high for start-up businesses. Typically, only four of ten business start-ups survive the first five years. As a result, building an effective support system for small and emerging businesses is important”.<sup>23</sup> While start-up businesses are risky, they provide a potential outlet for economic growth in High Bridge, as they typically require little space to begin. These start-ups could be in the form of home occupations and small storefronts.

Programs and activities to encourage entrepreneurship within High Bridge include:

- Reviewing and refining the home occupation conditions
- Business and development seminars
- Overhead assistance program
- Networking opportunities
- Business associations

The issues with home occupations conditions are discussed in Chapter 8. As for business and development seminars, networking opportunities and business associations see the previous section on business retention and expansion.

### ***Overhead Assistance Program***

Overhead assistance program typically help cut down the costs of operating the business. This is also known as operating expenses, which include rent, utilities, advertising and supplies.

Overhead assistance programs can range from advertising grants to shared services to low rent incubator spaces. For example, Mt. Holly, NJ provides a grant of \$2,000 to new businesses to market and advertise. The funding comes from the municipality’s UEZ program.<sup>24</sup> One development in the town of Mashpee, MA provides incubator spaces for start-up businesses. These spaces are approximately 400 square feet.

The Borough should look into the potential for advertising grants or provide a resource center that lists cheap advertising outlets. For example, the HBBA allows member businesses to include an advertisement for free in its monthly e-letter.

Secondly, High Bridge should commence a study for potential incubator spaces. For example, the train station building is not presently being used. However, the site has contamination issues. New Jersey Transit should be contacted to see what their plans are regarding environmental mediation. Other buildings on Borough-owned property, like the TISCO building, Springside Farm buildings, etc. could also be used as incubator spaces for start-up businesses.



## CHAPTER 12: OTHER STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES

***Goal #2 Support existing businesses and attract new, complimentary businesses.***

This chapter outlines two additional strategies to support businesses within High Bridge – business-friendly zoning and economic-friendly organizations.

### ***ZONING STANDARDS***

As mentioned previously, a further review and refinement of the Borough's zoning ordinance should be completed by the Planning Board. Specifically, the ten plus conditions for home occupations in the R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-4 Zones should be evaluated to balance the positive and potential negative impacts of home occupations. This type of use is important and could benefit High Bridge, as the Borough's non-residential zones are essentially built out, which limits new economic growth within High Bridge.

Secondly, the FAR and maximum building height should be reviewed for the DB Zone. In the DB Zone the maximum permitted height of three stories and 40 feet will only produce 3 story buildings with flat roofs or very shallow pitched roofs, which is not characteristic of the downtown area. This would force property owners who want to redevelop their land to construct a three story building with a flat or shallow pitched roof. Also, the DB Zone's FAR is capped at 50%,

which would permit a 5,000 square foot lot to construct 2,500 square feet of building floor space. Therefore, a three story building would only be able to have a footprint of 833 square feet (50' by 16.6'). The FAR discourages property owners from redeveloping their property as it limits the lot's potential.

Thirdly, the Planning Board should review the C Zone, specifically, the maximum building height of three stories and 30 feet. By capping the building height at 30 feet the Borough makes it quite difficult for a land owner to construct a three story building. Finally, the principal permitted use list is quite limited, especially for the section of the C Zone that is bisected by CR-513, which has high traffic volumes that could support retail and/or office uses. Presently, there are a number of homes along CR-513, which could be eventually sold and/or converted to another use.



### ***ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITHIN HIGH BRIDGE***

As noted in Chapter 6, the Borough of High Bridge has four main organizations that support economic development. These entities include the Economic Development Committee, Cultural and Heritage Committee, Environmental Commission and High Bridge Business Association (HBBA).

After reviewing the committees' websites and speaking with committee members, it seems that there is some overlap of efforts within the Borough. Moreover, there is a need for greater coordination between committees as many of these organizations have similar ideas, plans that are related or projects that could enhance one another.

The Borough should review and refine responsibilities of these organizations to ensure that duplication of efforts is not occurring, especially since all these organizations are composed of volunteers who wear many hats within the Borough. It is recommended that these organizations meet at least once a year to coordinate and keep one another informed of ongoing projects.

*It is highly recommended that High Bridge's economic organizations check out University of Maryland's website: <http://www.community-wealth.org/>. This website's goal is to provide a comprehensive resource center on state-of-the-art strategies for democratic, community-based economic development. The website offers a variety of toolboxes, articles and a blog. This website has innovative ideas for entrepreneurs and small businesses.*



## CHAPTER 13: AESTHETIC ENHANCEMENT

### ***Goal #3 Enhance the appearance of the downtown area and the CR 513 corridor.***

This chapter examines three strategies to enhance the appearance of the Borough. Approaches include a downtown revitalization plan, way-finding signage system and gateway installation.

#### ***DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN***

The Borough of High Bridge has been steadily upgrading the downtown's appearance over the past four years. In 2008 the pocket park at the corner of McDonald Street and Main Street was completed with seating areas. Then in 2009 new sidewalks were installed from the train station to St. Joseph's Church. At the end of 2009 new street lights and trash cans were installed along Main Street, these were paid for through a grant from NJDOT. In 2010, the HBBA provided funds for the installation of bicycle racks.

While the Borough has been diligently enhancing the appearance of Main Street in conjunction with Hunterdon County, they only have control over the public realm – the 45 feet of public right-of-way that includes the roadbed and sidewalks. Presently, there is no formal downtown revitalization plan. However, the survey and workshop results reveal that residents are unhappy with the appearance of the downtown area. Note that there is a misconception that the entire downtown is unattractive, when it is really a few dilapidated buildings that are pulling down Main

Street's appearance. (See page 23, which shows the results of the mapping exercise.)

This report recommends options to incentivize property owners to upgrade the appearance of their properties, these choices fall into three categories: private, public and public/private partnership.

#### ***Private Revitalization***

Under the category of private revitalization there is the option of a façade grant program. Many small towns raise money through business organizations, Urban Enterprise Zones (UEZ), economic development committees, etc. and provide matching grants to businesses and property owners within the downtown area to rehabilitate storefront façades. For example, Mt. Holly's UEZ offers its downtown businesses a dollar for dollar match up to \$12,000 to upgrade the building façade.<sup>25</sup>

#### ***Public Revitalization***

A façade grant program is also an option under public revitalization, where public funds (typically tax dollars) are used to assist property owners in the revitalization of their buildings. One example of this can be found in Gloucester Township, NJ, which created a façade improvement grant program to provide 50% of the cost of an approved project up to a maximum grant of \$15,000. The purpose of the program is to provide for building improvements that contribute to the physical, economic and aesthetic enhancement of the downtown area.<sup>26</sup>





*“Through the Façade Improvement Grant Program, the Township seeks to help businesses improve the attractiveness of properties, and thereby work to achieve the Township’s goal of eliminating conditions that have a negative impact on economic growth.”*

*~ Gloucester Township, NJ*

The second option under public revitalization is tax abatement, where the Borough would grant an abatement of taxes on the improvements made to the building for a period of five years. In order to implement this option, the Borough would first need to go through the process of designating the downtown area as an “area in need of rehabilitation”, which would then allow for the five year tax abatements to be granted. Under this scenario the Borough does not lose any tax money, as the improvements create new tax money and no taxpayer dollars are spent.

### *Public/Private Partnership Revitalization*

Under a public/private partnership the Borough would work with another entity (i.e. High Bridge Business Association, etc.). This partnership could provide grants to the business community, with each partner contributing funds. The partnership could also work together to provide tax abatement through the Borough, while the private partner could provide a grant for the façade renovation or

the services of an architect for either a reduced fee or for free. There are a number of potential options under the umbrella of public/private partnership.

Regardless of which incentive program is selected, the top five buildings shown on page 23 should be targeted first, as these are the downtown’s top priorities for revitalization.

### **WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE**

The purpose of way-finding signage is to assist in orienting people as to where they are relative to particular destinations. Way-finding signage educates visitors about parking locations, municipal buildings, trails, open space areas and historical places. Many municipalities are using way-finding signage as a marketing and branding element. Some places also offer large maps of the downtown area with locations of shops, services, etc. (Examples are shown on page 39.)

It is recommended that High Bridge undertake a comprehensive way-finding signage study to determine needs and issues related to this topic. Way-finding signage has the ability to increase tourism and business revenues by improving awareness of commercial and recreational areas and encouraging exploration of the Borough. For example, out-of-town golfers at High Bridge Hills Golf Course may not realize they are just over a mile away from downtown High Bridge’s eateries.

Way-finding signage may also eliminate the perceived parking problem by directing drivers to off-street lots that are less visible from Main Street. For example, visitors to downtown High Bridge



are unlikely to realize that there is a parking lot behind Borough Hall.

Large maps of the downtown may be worthwhile at the entrance to Columbia Trail or in the Commons' parking lot. If train service were to be made available on the weekends, then a map would also be recommended near the train station.



### **GATEWAYS**

A gateway is a point of entrance. Many municipalities are installing gateways along the major roadways that cross their border. These gateways vary from signs to archways to landscaped areas. Gateways provide a sense of arrival and also signify that the driver is entering a special place.

Major gateways should be installed along CR-513, both at the Clinton Township and Lebanon Township border. A third major gateway should be installed along Cregar Road, which is a main access point from SR-31. (Examples of gateway signage and treatment are shown to the right.)

Minor gateways should be installed in one place – on Dewey Avenue at the Clinton Township border.

Finally, a gateway should be installed on Bridge Street heading east at the train station underpass. Currently, there is a sign that hangs from the train trestle, but otherwise this area is quite unappealing looking. It is recommended that the Borough work with the County as well as New Jersey Transit to aesthetically enhance this area. Perhaps a local artist could be contacted to paint a mural on the walls of the underpass to enhance this drab entrance to the downtown. The mural could reflect the Borough's history, historic events or prominent citizens.



## CHAPTER 14: TOURISM PLAN

***Goal #4 Diversify High Bridge's economy by utilizing existing assets to transform the Borough into a destination for cultural/heritage tourism and outdoor recreation tourism.***

High Bridge's downtown is essentially built-out. The ROM Zone is home to Custom Alloy. The fact of the matter is, unless redevelopment occurs in the downtown, High Bridge cannot expand the downtown area. Secondly, there are no new industrial opportunities outside of Custom Alloy, as there is no other industrially-zoned land. Therefore, it is imperative that High Bridge focus its economic efforts on diversifying the Borough's economy and ensuring its future sustainability.

Other than the non-residential zones, High Bridge has the residential and open space zones. Economic development within the residential zones is limited to home occupations, which was discussed in Chapter 8. This leaves the areas of the Borough zoned open space.

A total of 35% of the Borough's land is open space (public property), the majority of which is preserved land owned by the Borough, County and/or State. These preserved lands offer scenic vistas, recreational opportunities and historical places. Therefore, in order to meet Goal #4, this plan looks outside the commercial and industrial areas to the Borough's preserved lands for economic opportunities.

## *SUSTAINABLE TOURISM*

As discussed in Chapter 1 this plan attempts to capitalize on the Borough's historic, cultural and natural resources without compromising these assets that are central to High Bridge's identity, history and quality of life. As a result, sustainable tourism has been selected to diversify High Bridge's economy. Sustainable tourism is an economic industry that is committed to making a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to generate future employment for local people and bring tourism dollars into the local economy.<sup>27</sup>

There are many types of sustainable tourism. It can include cultural/heritage, agricultural, culinary, nature, etc. Positive impacts of sustainable tourism can include:

- Protecting historical resources
- Preserving Borough history
- Using existing community assets
- Maintaining and enhancing Borough's character
- Drawing visitors into the Borough
- Increasing spending within the downtown

The Existing Conditions report revealed that there is a market for tourism-related activities, as High Bridge households spend an estimated \$3,763 on food away from home, \$2,046 on sports and recreation activities and \$2,932 on travel annually. Households within a five mile radius spend an estimated \$4,012 on food away from home, \$2,528 on sports and recreation activities and \$3,584 on travel annually.





Therefore, the remainder of this chapter focuses on strategies for two types of sustainable tourism – cultural/heritage and outdoor recreation.

### ***CULTURAL/HERITAGE TOURISM PLAN***

Cultural/heritage tourism involves traveling to experience places, artifacts and activities that represent stories and people of the past. It can involve visiting historical or industrial sites. The overall purpose is to gain an understanding and/or appreciation of the past.

Some local examples of cultural/heritage tourism include Morristown's self-guided historic building tour, which can be downloaded from the internet. Stockton's Prallsville Mill is a complex with a history mill, housing and outbuildings that also function as event spaces and an art gallery. Finally, there is Fosterfield's Living Historical Farm in Morris Township. Owned by the County, this historic farm has a visitor's center, museum, live demonstrations and craft, antique and art shows periodically.

The remainder of this section provides strategies to transform High Bridge into a cultural/heritage destination.

### ***Cultural Corridor & Heritage Trails***

Cultural corridor and heritage trails are historic and cultural sites that are typically linked together by a marked route. These trails can be self-guided in nature and are inexpensive outings for families. They allow for people to move at their own pace and spend as little or much time as they please. As the Borough has a plethora of historic and cultural sites, more than one self-guided

trail is possible. Due to the Borough's rich industrial history, one self-guided trail (which would have to be by car) could focus on the former Taylor-Wharton site, worker housing, executive mansions, etc. Eventually, an industrial museum could be developed with historic photographs, etc. Another trail could focus on the historic homes and structures in the downtown area.

The Cultural and Heritage Committee should work to develop self-guided trail brochures and also to make these brochures available on the internet.

*An indispensable resource as the Borough moves forward in its cultural/heritage tourism plan is <http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/index.html>. This website contains a wealth of information on funding sources, tips on interpretive planning and creative ideas for historic sites.*

### ***Historic Markers***

Historic markers should be ultimately placed in front of every historic building and site in the Borough. This would help orient tourists who attempt self-guided historic tours.

### *Site Feasibility Studies*

High Bridge's most prominent Borough-owned cultural/heritage assets include:

- Solitude House and Annex
- TISCO property
- Springside Farm

Presently, Solitude House functions as a museum, open some Sundays from 12 to 4PM. The house contains furnishings and artifacts from the 1700's. The Borough is currently seeking a federal grant to for historic site management. Also on the Solitude House property is the Annex, which is supposed to have been a supply store during the 1700's. Currently, the Annex is closed to visitors.

The TISCO property consists of 28 acres, which are bounded by the South Branch of the Raritan to the southeast. The property includes two buildings. Both buildings are closed to visitors.

Located in the southeast corner of the Borough, Springside Farm encompasses 36 acres. Until the 1950's, it was an active dairy farm. The property has three buildings on it, which include a house, barn and storage buildings. Presently, these buildings are closed to the public.

These three Borough-owned cultural/heritage resources have the potential to be transformed into a variety of tourism-generating spaces. However, a site feasibility study must first be conducted. This study would:

- Research any deed restrictions that might limit activities on the properties

- Inspect existing building conditions and determine potential for adaptive reuse

Once the site feasibility study is completed, then a cultural/heritage development plan could be prepared and implemented.

Some potential cultural/heritage ideas include (note that these ideas depend on the results of the site feasibility study) transforming Springside Farm into a living historical farm, which could be done in conjunction with a riding stable. Depending on the conditions of the buildings at Springside Farm, they could be converted into entrepreneurial incubator spaces, event spaces or even a B&B.



The TISCO site could be transformed into a passive recreation area with trails along the South Branch of the Raritan and fishing spots. The buildings could be converted into an industrial museum, event facilities or entrepreneurial incubator spaces.

Solitude House and Annex could be enhanced with trails and a seating area at the falls. The Annex could be transformed into a living history space.

These cultural/heritage ideas are only a few of the potential initiatives that could occur on these sites. However, site feasibility studies must first be conducted and should be a joint effort of the Borough Council and the Cultural and Heritage Committee.

### *Comprehensive Website*

As previously mentioned in Chapter 7 and further detailed in Chapter 11, a comprehensive website should be developed to market the Borough and inform potential visitors of High Bridge's cultural and heritage sites.

### *Augment*

Building upon the strategies for cultural/heritage tourism, the Borough should investigate potential sites for a B&B. During the workshop, many participants mentioned that it is a drawback to visitors that there is no where to stay within High Bridge. The Borough's ordinance permits B&B's in the R-1, R-2 and DB Zones.

## *OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN*

Outdoor recreation tourism involves traveling to experience nature and/or participate in active or passive recreational activities.

Outdoor recreation tourism can include biking, fishing, hiking, golfing, camping, swimming, canoeing, bird watching, snow shoeing and cross country skiing. This type of tourism fosters a greater appreciation for our natural habitats.

Some local examples of outdoor recreation tourism include High Bridge's own Columbia Trail, which draws 100,000 to 125,000 annual visitors. Voorhees State Park offers hiking and biking trails, camping facilities, hunting facilities, picnicking areas, a playground and an exercise course. This park experiences more than 188,000 tourists each year.

The remainder of this section provides strategies to transform High Bridge into an outdoor recreation destination.

### *Biking*

High Bridge is the trailhead for the Columbia Trail; however, it is easy to miss this regional attraction. To drivers passing through High Bridge, the Columbia Trail is easy to miss. First and foremost, signs should be installed on both sides of Main Street to identify the trail and the parking lot. On the trail side of Main Street this could include an archway that has an identification sign and some plantings to really draw attention to this valuable Borough asset. Additionally, the way-finding system discussed in Chapter 9 should include the Columbia Trail.



High Bridge should work with the County (owner of the trail) and the Jersey Off-Road Bicycle Association (JORBA) to promote the Columbia Trail and any other future biking trails in High Bridge (i.e. the mountain bike trail system being considered on the former Pfauth Farm).

### *Hiking*

Currently, hiking in High Bridge is limited to the Columbia Trail and the Nassau Trail located off of Nassau Road. The Nassau Trail is relatively unknown and lacks signage. Signage should be installed. High Bridge should work with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference (<http://www.nynjtc.org/>), New Jersey Hiking (<http://www.njhiking.com/nj-hikes.php>) and New Jersey Trails (<http://njtrails.org/index.php>) to get these trails on their respective



websites and market High Bridge as an outdoor recreation destination.

### *Fishing*

The South Branch of the Raritan River snakes through High Bridge and provides an abundant population of trout. During the spring, one can typically spot one or more anglers on a weekday in the river around Arch Street. The Borough should work with local angler clubs and other state fishing organizations publicize this asset.

### *Golfing*

High Bridge Hills Golf Club straddles the border of High Bridge and Clinton Township. The golf course is owned by the Borough and operated by Billy Casper Golf. The golf course attracts roughly 8,000 golfers a year, who play approximately 30,000 rounds of golf annually.<sup>28</sup> The golf club offers a small pro-shop, bar and grill..

Suggestions that were voiced during the community outreach included an expansion of the facility to include a club house with a gym and/or indoor pool and an event facility. While these are nice ideas, there is limited physical room for additional facilities.

The Borough should examine what, if any, additional amenities or new buildings could be included at High Bridge Hills Golf Club.

### *Link*

Existing open spaces should be linked with a network of trails that respect natural habitats. Residents and tourists need a way to get

to recreation destinations and between them. For example, one idea mentioned during the process was the creation of a trail that would link Solitude House and Springside Farm.

Existing trails include Columbia Trail, Nassau Trail and Iron Workers Trail. Future trails should link Solitude House and Springside Farm, TISCO buildings and Union Forge Park and also create a linear trail along the South Branch of the Raritan.

### *Interpretive Signage*

Select trails should have interpretive signage installed along them that identifies plant species, historic locations and/or events, etc. For example, along the Columbia Trail there is an interpretive sign that explains the train crash of 1885 when Engine #112 plummeted 60 feet down into the South Branch of the Raritan.<sup>29</sup> Another example of interpretive signs can be found at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morristown, which has small signs along its paths with plant names.

### *Augment*

At Commons parking lot the Borough should consider a portable bathroom, as there are no facilities along the Columbia Trail. Also, the Borough may want to consider permitting a refreshment cart on the weekends at the Commons to sell snacks and drinks to trail users.

The EDC should work to solicit a bike shop and/or a sports and recreation equipment retailer to the downtown due to the plethora of recreational opportunities.



## CHAPTER 15: MARKETING

### Goal #5 Market High Bridge in a coordinated manner.

During the community outreach, residents reiterated that store hours are limited in downtown and/or uncoordinated, many Borough assets are unknown and there is little foot traffic within the downtown. To overcome these challenges, High Bridge must think and operate in a coordinated manner and work with business owners to expand store hours, advertise the Borough's historic and recreation assets and encourage cross marketing efforts.

The subsequent sections discuss the strategies to achieve Goal #5 and market the Borough in a coordinated manner.

#### *COORDINATED STORE HOURS*

If the downtown truly wants to flourish, there must be a concentrated effort focused at getting the majority of retail businesses to coordinate their store hours. "As with many traditional downtown business districts that are comprised of independently owned businesses, their biggest challenge or weaknesses is not being open when the consumer or visitor is available or wanting to come downtown to shop, stroll and visit."<sup>30</sup>

The average person works during the day and does their shopping at night or on the weekends. Therefore, stores should expand their hours during the week and also be open on the weekends.

Actions that other communities have taken include an "Open Sunday Campaign" and "First Friday" events.

An "Open Sunday Campaign" asks businesses to commit to being open on Sundays from (at least) 11AM to 3PM from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Businesses sign an agreement that they will commit to this four month initial trial period. Simultaneously, the municipality advertises that the downtown is open on Sundays and plans events to attract consumers to the area on Sundays.

The City of Bethlehem, PA holds a "First Friday" event once a month. On the first Friday of every month the retailers stay open late and hold special sales to draw shoppers into the downtown on a Friday night. Many of Bethlehem's eateries also have special promotions on these first Fridays.

It is recommended that the Borough begin the groundwork now to have an "Open Sunday Campaign" in 2011. If there is a lack of stores opens on Saturdays, then the Borough should expand the program to an "Open on Weekends Campaign". (See the sub-heading "12 Month Calendar of Events" on page 48 for events to attract customers to High Bridge.)

#### *CONSISTENT PROMOTION*

It is critical for High Bridge to have an on-going calendar of events, a one-stop website and an aggressive promotion and advertisement campaign. These three strategies are targeted at informing and attracting shoppers and visitors to High Bridge.

### 12 Month Calendar of Events

While High Bridge draws many visitors with its main events, they are mostly clustered into a few months of the year (June, September and December). There are not enough regularly scheduled events to keep a steady stream of people coming to High Bridge as shown in the calendar to the right.

People need an incentive to come to High Bridge. The bike race and soap box derby prove this with the hundreds of spectators they draw each year. By building on the Borough's existing events, a series of other events need to be added to create a reason for people to come to High Bridge. It is recommended that the Borough begin with four new events for the first year (this can include small events). Ideas include:

#### Sunday events

Sunday events work in conjunction with the "Open Sunday Campaign" mentioned above. These types of events could include demonstrations – cooking, crafting, wine pairing, photography tips, etc. Other events can include street entertainment, which could be a clown, musicians, artists, etc.

#### High Bridge History (or Heritage) Day

One great example of a history/heritage day is Belvidere's Victorian Days held every September. This two day event draws thousands to the small town of Belvidere for crafts, arts, music, home tours, street performers, re-enactors and food.<sup>31</sup>

Existing High Bridge Event Calendar

January	February	March
April	May	June
Easter Egg Hunt		Tour of HB Bike Race Soap Box Derby Pooch Parade HB Open Air Market Movies in the Commons
July	August	September
HB Open Air Market Movies in the Commons	HB Open Air Market	HB Community Day HB Concert Series HB Open Air Market
October	November	December
HB Open Air Market	Veteran's Day Ceremony	Tree Lighting Cookies with Santa

A High Bridge History Day would coordinate with the tourism plan laid out in Chapter 10. This event could be held in the spring or fall (April or October) and could offer visitors historical tours, re-enactors, food and music. This event could be held at Solitude House, TISCO or Springside Farm.

### **Taste of .....**

Food events are growing rapidly in the United States. Taste of .... festivals are exploding around the country – Taste of Arlington, Taste of Tribeca and Taste of Chicago are just a few. These events bring together local restaurants and wineries for a unique culinary experience. Typically held in the street or a park, these events sell tickets, where the proceeds typically go back into the community.

High Bridge’s version of this festival could include restaurants from surrounding municipalities or the entire county.

### **Customer Appreciation Days**

Some municipalities coordinate with their businesses to offer customer appreciation days a few times a year with special sales, events and/or door prizes. A well marketed customer appreciation day can draw in hundreds of shoppers.

### *Comprehensive Website*

As mentioned in Chapter 7 and Chapter 10, a comprehensive website that is a one stop resource should be created. This website should include information for visitors and prospective businesses. In today’s era, the internet is the way people obtain information on goods, services, destinations, etc. It is critical that High Bridge create a comprehensive webpage to provide information to potential shoppers, visitors and businesses.

The website should include special pages on High Bridge’s history, recreational opportunities, open space areas and an interactive map.

Some excellent examples include Princeton’s and Somerville’s websites. Princeton’s website (<http://www.visitprinceton.org/>) has links to events, restaurants, historic sites, etc. The website has a clean layout and is easy to navigate. The website boasts stunning pictures of the Borough, events and historic places. Somerville’s website (<http://findsomerville.com/>) includes a downtown savings link, a page on the Town’s history and an extensive calendar of events. Both of these websites are high-quality examples to emulate.

Finally, the Borough should reach out to the HCCC, who manages the website <http://www.hunterdontourism.org/>. This website lists things to do, events and recreational activities within Hunterdon County. However, a quick scan of the website shows only the High Bridge Hills Golf Course as a destination in High Bridge. Otherwise, there is no mention of all the other great assets in High Bridge. This should be remedied.

### *Creative Promotions & Advertising*

While individual businesses marketing themselves are a good thing, High Bridge needs to promote the entire Borough. An aggressive advertising campaign is needed to increase awareness of High Bridge as a destination to shoppers, investors, residents and visitors. Advertising can occur during events and through the comprehensive website, but it is needed elsewhere. The Borough should develop

programs with local advertising mediums (newspaper, Borough newsletter, etc.) to cluster their advertisements on the same page with a heading promoting the Borough. For example, a quarterly insert in the Hunterdon Democrat could combine advertising and upcoming events on one page.

Promotions can attract or draw visitors and shoppers into High Bridge or stop people passing through on CR-513. Potential promotions could include working with local businesses to offer mid-week lunch specials, customer appreciation days, etc.

### **WINDOW DISPLAYS**

People like to window shop. Thousands of people flock every year to New York City to see the window displays on Fifth Avenue.

Window displays are what usually draw customers into a store.

Therefore, it is important that High Bridge's businesses – even those selling a service – have attractive window displays that are eye-catching. These window displays do not have to be expensive and should be changed at least four times a year.

To encourage business owners and inspire creativity, it is recommended that the Borough offer an incentive. Some incentive examples include:

- Handing out award certificates for best holiday display window at beginning of the holiday season
- Awarding an annual cash prize to the best window display
- Presenting quarterly awards (certificates, gift baskets, gift certificates) to the business with the best window display

This incentive program could be administered by the EDC.



### **CROSS MARKETING**

Cross marketing is the partnership of two or more companies or municipalities who agree to market one another. For example, Casa Maya and Riverside Liquors could partner – as Casa Maya is a BYOB.



Collaborative marketing initiatives and partnerships should be coordinated and encouraged by the EDC. Additionally, these partnerships should look beyond High Bridge's borders. For example, the party store in the Borough may want to look into partnering with the bakery in Clinton.

The EDC should reach out to the Townships of Lebanon and Clinton as well as the Town of Clinton's business association guild and their respective businesses to see if the municipalities or their businesses would be willing to cross market. This would not only benefit High Bridge, but also the Town of Clinton and the Townships of Lebanon and Clinton. One example would be cross marketing of the photographer in High Bridge and the frame shop in the Town of Clinton.

The Borough should also reach out to nearby regional attractions (i.e. Voorhees State Park, Ken Lockwood Gorge) to draw visitors into High Bridge. For example, when the observatory at Voorhees State Park has an event, Borough businesses should coordinate their hours or hold a theme day to attract these tourists.

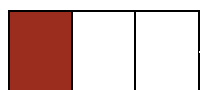


## CHAPTER 16: NEXT STEPS

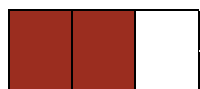
Where does High Bridge go from here? Goals have been determined and strategies have been discussed, but how does the Borough get from the present to its desired future economic vision? This chapter prioritizes the 40 + strategies and actions, which were discussed in Chapter 10 through 15. Also, the responsible entity for implementing each strategy/action is listed.

This chapter also establishes indicators to measure progress toward the goals and enable High Bridge to track the direction and effectiveness of strategies/actions toward achieving its goals.

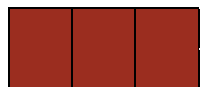
The following matrix shows all the action items, the associated goal or goals it furthers as well as their timeframe for completion. There are four timeframes:



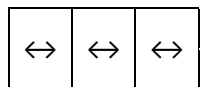
Short: 0-2 years



Medium: 3-5 years



Long: 6+ years



Ongoing

The matrix also shows the responsible entity as well any associated indicators.

This plan should be evaluated annually by the Planning Board and EDC to ensure that progress is being made and actions are being implemented.



Goal	Action Item	Time Frame			Responsible Entity	Indicator
1	Encourage new buildings or significant building rehabilitations to gain LEED certification.	↔	↔	↔	Planning Board	Number of new LEED certified buildings.
1	Encourage new non-residential buildings and major non-building related projects to refer to the SITES prerequisites and credits for sustainable ideas.	↔	↔	↔	Planning Board	Number of new projects using SITES prerequisites.
1	Encourage developers of homeowners who are building new or remodeling residences to consider the NAHB Green Building Guidelines in their work efforts.	↔	↔	↔	Planning Board	Number of new NAHB Green certified homes.
1	Work with the Highlands Council and Exact Tool's owner to move the property through the cleanup & redevelopment process.	↔	↔	↔	Borough Administrator, Borough Council & Planning Board	Redevelopment of Exact Tool.
2	Implement a Continuing Business Visitation Program.				EDC	
2	Develop an Existing Space Inventory.				EDC	
2	Work with the HCCC to inform local businesses of HCCC's business and development seminars.	↔	↔	↔	EDC	
2	Business appreciation - recognize a business or businesses at High Bridge Community Day.	↔	↔	↔	Borough Council	Number of businesses recognized.
2	Reach out to new businesses and notify them of the HCCA and HBBA and their respective benefits.	↔	↔	↔	EDC	
2	Implement a new business promotional program.	↔	↔	↔	EDC	Number of vacancies in the downtown.
2, 4 & 5	Create a comprehensive website for residents, visitors and prospective businesses as a one-stop information center.				EDC	
2	Prepare a "High Bridge Economic Profile".				EDC	

2	Research the potential for advertising grants for entrepreneurs.				Borough Council & EDC	
2	Provide a resource center that lists cheap advertising outlets.				EDC	
2	Commence a study for potential incubator spaces for entrepreneurs.				Borough Council	Number of incubator spaces created.
2	Review and refine the Borough's zoning ordinance.				Planning Board	
2	Review and refine responsibilities of the four main organizations that support economic development in High Bridge.				Borough Council	
2	Hold at least one annual coordination meeting of the four economic development organizations.	↔	↔	↔	EDC, C&H Com., Environmental Com.	
3	Continue to enhance Main Street's aesthetic appearance.	↔	↔	↔	Borough Council	Upgrades to Main Street.
3	Implement a private façade grant program.				EDC	Number of buildings with improved facades.
3	Undertake a study to determine if the downtown area is an "area in need of rehabilitation".				Borough Council & Planning Board	
3	Implement the 5 year tax abatement program (only after the downtown area is deemed an "area in need of rehabilitation").				Borough Council	
3	Undertake a comprehensive way-finding signage study to determine needs.				Borough Council	
3, 4	Install way-finding signage.				Borough Council	Number of new way-finding signs installed.



3	Install gateways at major entrances into the Borough.				Borough Council	Number of new gateways installed.
3	Work with the County and NJT to upgrade the train station underpass on Bridge Street.				Borough Council	
4	Develop self-guided trail brochures.				C&H Committee	
4	Install historic markers.				C&H Committee	Number of historic markers installed.
4	Complete site feasibility studies for Solitude House & Annex, TISCO property and Springside Farms.				Borough Council & C&H Committee	
4	Prepare and implement development plans for aforementioned properties based on site feasibility study results.				Borough Council	Number of new cultural/heritage tourism attractions.
4	Investigate potential sites for a B&B.				EDC	
4	Work with the County and Jersey Off-Road Bicycle Association to promote High Bridge's biking trails.	↔	↔	↔	Recreation Committee	Number of bike trail users.
4	Work with the NY-NJ Trail Conference, NJ Hiking and NJ Trails groups to promote High Bridge's trails and market the Borough.	↔	↔	↔	Recreation Committee	
4	Work with local angler clubs and State fishing organizations to promote the Borough's fishing opportunities.	↔	↔	↔	Recreation Committee	
4	Examine the High Bridge Hills Golf Club to see if any additional amenities or new buildings could be added.				Borough Council	
4	Link existing open spaces with a network of trails.				Environmental Committee	Number of new trails.
4	Install interpretive signage along select trails.				C&H Committee	Number of new signs.



4	Evaluate the installation of a portable bathroom and refreshment cart at the Commons for trail users.				Borough Council	Additional facilities at Commons.
5	Coordinate and expand store hours.				EDC	Number of businesses with extended hours.
5	Implement an "Open Sunday Campaign".				EDC	Number of businesses open on Sunday.
5	Create at least four new events to draw people into High Bridge.				Borough Council, EDC, C&H Comm.	Number of new events in 2011.
5	Implement an aggressive advertising campaign to increase awareness of High Bridge as a destination.				EDC	Increased traffic counts on CR-513.
5	Implement a window display incentive program.				EDC	
5	Encourage and coordinate collaborative marketing initiatives and partnerships.	↔	↔	↔	EDC	
5	Reach out to the Townships of Lebanon and Clinton as well as the Town of Clinton's business association guild to see if the municipalities or their businesses would be willing to cross market.	↔	↔	↔	EDC	
5	Reach out to and coordinate with nearby regional attractions to draw visitors into High Bridge.	↔	↔	↔	EDC	Increased traffic counts on CR-513.





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<sup>1</sup> Email from Douglas Walker on November 1, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> High Bridge Economic Development Committee, 2010 Resident Survey Data Report, dated September 7, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.highbridge.org/cultural\\_heritage\\_committee.html](http://www.highbridge.org/cultural_heritage_committee.html).

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.highbridge.org/environmental\\_commission.html](http://www.highbridge.org/environmental_commission.html).

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.hbbusiness.org/HBBA\\_Web/OurMission.htm](http://www.hbbusiness.org/HBBA_Web/OurMission.htm).

<sup>6</sup> Email from Douglas Walker on November 1, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> The Nielsen Company. Consumer Spending Patterns. Site Report. Prepared on Monday, October 11, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> The Nielsen Company. RMP Opportunity Gap – Retail Stores. Site Report. Prepared on Monday, October 11, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1989>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1988>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.sustainablesites.org/about/>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.sustainablesites.org/report/Guidelines%20and%20Performance%20Benchmarks\\_2009.pdf](http://www.sustainablesites.org/report/Guidelines%20and%20Performance%20Benchmarks_2009.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.nahbgreen.org/AboutNAHBGreen/default.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/1identify/lists/hunterdon.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> A Guide to Preparing the Economic Development Element of a Comprehensive Plan, prepared by Wisconsin Economic Development Institute, Inc., August 2003.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.hunterdon-chamber.org/services.asp?service=Member%20Benefits>

<sup>22</sup> A Guide to Preparing the Economic Development Element of a Comprehensive Plan, prepared by Wisconsin Economic Development Institute, Inc., August 2003, page 27.

<sup>23</sup> A Guide to Preparing the Economic Development Element of a Comprehensive Plan, prepared by Wisconsin Economic Development Institute, Inc., August 2003, page 29.

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.mountholly.info/uez\\_advert.php](http://www.mountholly.info/uez_advert.php)

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.mountholly.info/uez\\_facade.php](http://www.mountholly.info/uez_facade.php)



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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.glotwp.com/news/announcements/facade.html>

<sup>27</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable\\_tourism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_tourism)

<sup>28</sup> Email dated November 5, 2010 from **Brian O'Hare**, Vice President of Operations at Billy Casper Golf.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/depts/parks/guides/ColumbiaTrail.htm#about>

<sup>30</sup> Downtown Marysville Marketing Plan, prepared by L.L. Consulting, May 2006, page 37.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.belviderenj.com/2010eventscalendar.html>



# Sustainable Economic Development Plan: Survey Results

*Borough of High Bridge  
Hunterdon County, New Jersey*

*November 18, 2010*

*Prepared by:*

*Darlene A. Jay, PP, AICP & John A. Madden, PP, AICP*



Acknowledgements

Highlands Council  
Mr. Mark Desire, Mayor of High Bridge  
Mr. Douglas Walker, Administrator of High Bridge

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Phase 2 of the process to create High Bridge's Sustainable Economic Development Plan Element included the preparation of two surveys – a Business Owner Survey and Customer Survey. The surveys contained 16 questions each and were reviewed and approved by the Borough Administrator, Mr. Douglas Walker, before being placed on the internet.

On November 1, 2010 both surveys went live on the internet. A link was posted on the Borough's homepage and a blast email was sent to over 700 residents notifying them of the Customer Survey. The High Bridge Business Association sent the Business Owner Survey link to its members. An announcement was also made at the November 11, 2010 economic workshop regarding the online surveys.

Both questionnaires were available for 17 days. The Customer Survey had 91 respondents and the Business Owner Survey had 7 responses.

### Questions

Questions on the Business Owner Survey were as follows:

1. What is the nature of your business?
2. What hours is your business open Monday – Friday?
3. What hours is your business open Saturday and Sunday?
4. Do you own or lease the building you are located in?
5. How many employees, including yourself, do you employ?
6. How long have you been operating this business in High Bridge?

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BOARD**


**BOROUGH-WIDE LEAF PICK UP- OCTOBER 12 THROUGH DECEMBER 3**

**BRUSH PICK UP WEEK OF NOVEMBER 22**

**YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED! HIGH BRIDGE TO CREATE AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**WE WANT YOUR IDEAS ON THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN HIGH BRIDGE. THE BOROUGH HAS BEEN AWARDED A GRANT TO CREATE A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND WE NEED YOUR HELP. JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF BRAINSTORMING AND STRATEGIZING TO CREATE A PLAN FOR OUR DOWNTOWN'S ECONOMIC FUTURE ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2010 AT 7PM AT THE HB FIREHOUSE.**

**CLICK HERE TO TAKE A SURVEY TO HELP WITH THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH BRIDGE**



**The Promise of Tomorrow with the Dignity of Yesterday.**

Located in the rolling hills of Northern Hunterdon County, Western New Jersey, High Bridge is quintessentially small town America. Situated midway between New York City and Philadelphia, it is most easily found travelling on Route 78, exit 17, between the Round Valley and Spruce Run Reservoirs. Easily accessible to major roadways including Routes 78, 22, 287, 80, and 31, our Borough offers scenic natural beauty including the Ken Lockwood Gorge as the State's pre of High Bridge lies within Voorhees State Park that includes t



**TOP 100 TOWNS BEST PLACES TO LIVE**

METHODOLOGY: In compiling New Jersey's Planning Institute ranked 100 municipalities: population growth, school performance, and pro municipalities!

A host of recreational facilities are available for parents and t soccer, football, lacrosse, golfing and baseball, not to mention Patriots Path, the State's longest mountain biking and jogging associated with big cities, economic opportunities for the ind educational system, which boasts the highest test scores in t New York Times are other attributes recognized by visitors. A metropolitan New York and Philadelphia.

7. How would you characterize your current business activity level?
8. On average how many customers/clients do you have per week?
9. Where do the majority of your customers/clients come from?
10. Name three advantages or strengths you associate with doing business in High Bridge?

11. What are three challenges you associate with doing business in High Bridge?
12. Select all of the following activities that have a positive impact on your business in terms of foot traffic, sales, etc.
13. Would you be interested in a cooperative business marketing effort to attract customers/clients to High Bridge?
14. What business do you think should be recruited to High Bridge to improve its attractiveness to shoppers?
15. How would you rate High Bridge for the following?

Questions on the Customer Survey were as follows:

1. What activities do you do in High Bridge?
2. How often, on average, do you patronize High Bridge businesses?
3. What are the major advantages of shopping in High Bridge?
4. What are the major disadvantages of shopping or doing personal errands within High Bridge?
5. When you want to eat out, do you typically.....
6. When you want to spend an evening out of the house, do you typically.....
7. If you spend an evening outside of High Bridge, what activities do you do?
8. Do you think more restaurants are needed in High Bridge? If so, what type?
9. What do you think draws shoppers to High Bridge?
10. What types of stores do you think are needed and would you patronize in High Bridge if they existed?
11. What kind of leisure/entertainment services would you patronize in High Bridge if they existed? (i.e. yoga/pilates, art galleries, live music, etc.)

12. What can High Bridge's merchants do to improve their stores?
13. As High Bridge continues to evolve, what one thing would you want to keep the same about the Borough's downtown area?
14. Conversely, if you could change one thing about High Bridge's downtown, what would it be?
15. What do you think is High Bridge's unknown or little known asset that should be emphasized to attract tourists, shoppers, etc.?
16. How would you rate High Bridge for the following?

Customer Survey

0%

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important in guiding High Bridge's future planning efforts for the Borough's overall economic health.

YOU, THE CONSUMER.

**1. What activities do you do in High Bridge? (Mark all that apply.)**

☐ Shopping  
☐ Business/Work  
☐ Recreation  
☐ Other, please specify:

**2. How often, on average, do you patronize High Bridge businesses?**

☐ Never  
☐ Monthly  
☐ Weekly  
☐ Daily

**3. What are the major advantages of shopping in High Bridge? (Select all that apply.)**

☐ Convenient location  
☐ Fair prices  
☐ Friendly service  
☐ Less traffic and crowds  
☐ Within walking distance  
☐ Know the store employees  
☐ Other, please specify:



## Chapter 2: The Results

This chapter presents the results of both surveys. However, it should be noted that due to the poor response (7 respondents) the Business Owner Survey results should not be interpreted to be a representation of the thoughts and opinions of the High Bridge business community.

The results are presented as raw data, except in two cases. The first instance is where respondents were allowed to enter answers for “other”. “Other” answers are summarized under each table. The second occurrence is where respondents of the Customer Survey were given an open-ended question that allowed them to enter their own answer. For example, “What do you think draws shoppers to High Bridge? ”. In these cases, similar responses were grouped (i.e. charm and quaintness) and responses with less than two votes were grouped together under the classification of “other”.

### *Business Owner Survey Results*

As there were only seven responses for this survey, all open-ended answers are included in the tables.

Q1. What is the nature of your business?		
	Number	Percentage
Restaurant	0	0%
Retail	1	14%
Service (salon, dance studio, construction, etc.)	0	0%
Professional (architect, lawyer, etc.)	3	43%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	0	0%
Other, please specify:	3	43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>

“Other” answers included, but were not limited to: realtor, non-profit and solar.

Q2. What hours is your business open Monday - Friday?
By appointment
By appointment
10AM to 10PM
8:30am - 8:30pm (in Clinton)
Regular business hours do not include weekdays
8AM-6PM
9AM to 6PM

**Q3. What hours is your business open Saturday and Sunday?**

closed
by appointment
10-10.....12-8
9am-6pm(in Clinton)
Sundays 2-4pm at minimum
closed

**Q4. Do you own or lease the building you are located in?**

	Number	Percentage
Own	3	43%
Lease	4	57%
Total	7	100%

**Q5. How many employees, including yourself, do you employ?**

	Number	Percentage
1	3	43%
2	0	0%
3	1	14%
4	2	29%
Other, please specify:	1	14%
Total	7	100%

“Other” answers included, but were not limited to: no employees, but volunteers.

**Q6. How long have you been operating this business in High Bridge?**

	Number	Percentage
Less than 1 year	2	29%
1 - 4 years	1	14%
5 - 9 years	2	29%
10 + years	2	29%
Total	7	101%

**Q7. How would you characterize your current business activity level?**

	Number	Percentage
Business is rapidly expanding.	1	14%
Business is moderately increasing.	3	43%
Business is fairly steady.	2	29%
Business is declining.	1	14%
Total	7	100%

Q8. On average how many customers/clients do you have per week?		
	Number	Percentage
Less than 25	5	71%
25 -75	1	14%
76 - 150	0	0%
151 +	1	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>99%</b>

Q9. Where do the majority of your customers/clients come from?		
	Number	Percentage
High Bridge	0	0%
High Bridge - Clinton - Annandale - Lebanon	1	14%
Hunterdon County	3	43%
Tourists	1	14%
Internet	0	0%
Other, please specify:	2	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>

“Other” answers included, but were not limited to: all of New Jersey and tri-state region.

Q10. Name 3 advantages or strengths you associate with doing business in High Bridge.		
Close to home	Small town, easy to advertise	Rents are less expensive than surrounding areas (but increasing)
engagement with community	comparatively low cost of doing business due to low rents	Main Street address
Local.. small town	none	-
good community spirit	opportunity to know neighbors/customers	-
300 year history	Abundance of open space	Historical Structures, natural features
sense of community	keeping things local (providing jobs)	It's a great place!!!
Centrally located in a high-income region	Relatively low operational costs	Sense of Supportive Business Community

**Q11. What are 3 challenges you associate with doing business in High Bridge?**

High Bridge's image as run-down	High taxes turning into increasing rents	Vandals, bad press for High Bridge from crimes
too little business activity on Main Street	too little variety of business activity	Main Street looks and feels like a business district in decline
high taxes	Customer base wants the cheapest they can find	off the beaten path
higher property taxes than competing towns	-	-
Challenging dealing with Borough government	identity...why is High Bridge special	remoteness
not a lot of foot traffic	not considered by some as a place to 'spend a night'	trying to continue to have a strong business segment (shops closing down)
The general current economy is rough, and high bridge's economy doing no better	Challenging to support a Main Street that has so many vacancies	I perceive that the area outside the village of HB is a bit clueless or unsupportive of High Bridge based businesses

**Q12. Select all of the following activities that have a positive impact on your business in terms of foot traffic, sales, etc.**

	Number	Percentage
Community Day	3	27%
Soap Box Derby	3	27%
Tour of High Bridge Race	1	9%
Pooch Parade	0	0%
Movies in the Commons	2	18%
Summer Concerts	1	9%
Open Air Market	1	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q13. Would you be interested in a cooperative business marketing effort to attract customers/clients to High Bridge?**

Yes	7	100%
No	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q14. What businesses do you think should be recruited to High Bridge to improve its attractiveness to shoppers?**

bakery	restaurants	restaurants
arts oriented for feeling of creativity and vitality	retailers who's hours are well suited to compliment the three sit down restaurants,	retailers who's upscale product line compliments upscale dining at Circa and upscale wine at Riverside Wines & Liquors
Eating establishments	gift stores	caterers
convenience / hardware stores	small department store	bakery
Bakery/Coffee Shop (open late)	Hallmark Store (gifts/cards)	Knitting Store
Butcher	Convenience Store	-

**Q15. What 3 things would help attract customers/clients to High Bridge?**

improved buildings	lower taxes	a more focused EDC
Arts	Music	Variety, "uniqueness" unavailable in national chains
clean	safe	friendly
lower taxes	parking on only one side of Main St.	beautification of Main Street
better business signage	better promotion through the county	Partner up with Clinton for an event held in High Bridge
more store fronts	continue sponsoring events/press releases	-
A less vacant Main Street	More 'Festivals' like the ones Circa holds	-

**Q16. How would you rate High Bridge for the following?**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Attractiveness of downtown area	0 (0%)	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	1 (14%)
Overall Borough cleanliness	4 (57%)	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)
Convenience of parking in downtown	0 (0%)	2 (29%)	5 (71%)	0 (0%)
Shopping hours	1 (14%)	2 (29%)	4 (57%)	0 (0%)
Friendliness of salespeople	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Safety	4 (57%)	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)
Special events	2 (29%)	5 (71%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Variety of goods/services	0 (0%)	2 (29%)	2 (29%)	3 (43%)
Places to eat	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)
Borough/business cooperation	1 (14%)	4 (57%)	0 (0%)	2 (29%)
High Bridge Business Association effectiveness	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)

**Customer Survey Results**

The following tables present the results of the customer survey. This information will be useful in crafting the final Sustainable Economic Development Plan.

**Q1. What activities do you do in High Bridge?  
(Mark all that apply.)**

	Number	Percentage
Shopping	42	27%
Business/Work	16	10%
Recreation	68	43%
Other, please specify:	31	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100%</b>

“Other” answers included, but were not limited to: dine, live, hair cut and library.

**Q2. How often, on average, do you patronize High Bridge businesses?**

	Number	Percentage
Never	9	10%
Monthly	40	44%
Weekly	37	41%
Daily	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>



Q3. What are the major advantages of shopping in High Bridge? (Select all that apply.)		
	Number	Percentage
Convenient location	57	24%
Fair prices	20	8%
Friendly service	44	19%
Less traffic and crowds	36	15%
Within walking distance	30	13%
Know the store employees	37	16%
Other, please specify:	12	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>100%</b>

“Other” answers included, but were not limited to: small town feel, do not shop in the downtown and there aren’t any stores in the downtown.

Q4. What are the major disadvantages of shopping or doing personal errands within High Bridge? (Select all that apply.)		
	Number	Percentage
Poor appearance	20	11%
Poor selection of goods/services	63	35%
High prices	7	4%
Limited parking	42	23%
Limited hours	24	13%
Poor service	1	1%
Other, please specify:	23	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100%</b>

“Other” answers included, but were not limited to: not enough businesses, poor parking, no place to shop and limited variety.

Q5. When you want to eat out, do you typically.....		
	Number	Percentage
Eat at a restaurant within High Bridge?	18	20%
Eat at a restaurant outside of High Bridge?	72	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Q6. When you want to spend an evening out of the house, do you typically.....**

	Number	Percentage
Spend it within High Bridge?	16	18%
Spend it outside of High Bridge?	74	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q7. If you spend an evening outside of High Bridge, what activities do you do? (Select all that apply.)**

	Number	Percentage
Dining	80	27%
Shopping	74	25%
Movies	65	22%
Theater	38	13%
Concert	33	11%
Other, please specify:	9	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>100%</b>

“Other” answers included, but were not limited to: visiting friends, observatory, coffee house and New York City.

**Q8. Do you think more restaurants are needed in High Bridge? If so, what type?**

	Number	Percentage
Family sit-down	55	33%
Sidewalk cafes	38	23%
Fancy sit-down	3	2%
Bar-restaurant	8	5%
Fast food	7	4%
Deli/sandwich shop	40	24%
No more restaurants are needed.	17	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q9. What do you think draws shoppers to High Bridge?**

	Number	Percentage
Nothing	18	26%
Other	4	6%
Restaurants/Liquor Store	14	20%
Columbia Trail	8	12%
History	1	1%
Proximity/Convenience	15	22%
Specialty Stores	4	6%
Charm/Quaintness	5	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q10. What types of stores do you think are needed and would you patronize in High Bridge if they existed?**

	Number	Percentage
Antiques	24	7%
Books	40	12%
Art Galleries	13	4%
Gifts & Cards	45	13%
Pet Supplies	20	6%
Sporting Goods	22	7%
Consignment/Used	30	9%
Toys & Hobbies	19	6%
Bakery	73	22%
Other, please specify:	51	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>100%</b>

“Other” answers included, but were not limited to: restaurant, gym, dry cleaner, convenience store, apparel, coffee shop, bike shop and pharmacy.

**Q11. What kind of leisure/entertainment services would you patronize in High Bridge if they existed? (i.e. yoga/pilates, art galleries, live music, etc.)**

	Number	Percentage
Gym/Yoga/Dance Studio	6	9%
Theatre	5	7%
Movies	13	19%
Live Music	22	31%
Galleries/Art Studio	8	11%
Other	16	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q12. What can High Bridge's merchants do to improve their stores? (Select all that apply.)**

	Number	Percentage
Improve store appearance	45	23%
Improve customer service	7	4%
Promotions/advertise	29	15%
Lower prices/sales	16	8%
Expand store hours	31	16%
Improve selection	38	20%
Other, please specify:	28	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100%</b>

“Other” answers included, but were not limited to: need more businesses, need more parking, stores open at the same time and bring something into the Borough that no other place has.

Q13. As High Bridge continues to evolve, what one thing would you want to keep the same about the Borough's downtown area?		
	Number	Percentage
Restaurants	11	15%
Small town feel/charm	33	46%
History/Architecture	7	10%
Keep Borough Hall downtown	3	4%
Other	17	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100%</b>

Q14. Conversely, if you could change one thing about High Bridge's downtown, what would it be?		
	Number	Percentage
Parking Issues	21	26%
Improve buildings/general appearance	14	18%
Number of stores/variety of stores	25	31%
Nothing	2	3%
Other	18	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100%</b>

Q15. What do you think is High Bridge's unknown or little known asset that should be emphasized to attract tourists, shoppers, etc.?		
	Number	Percentage
Columbia Trail	27	37%
History	12	16%
Open Space/Recreation Opportunities	15	21%
Downtown	6	8%
Nothing	2	3%
Other	11	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>63%</b>

Q16. How would you rate High Bridge for the following?				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Attractiveness of downtown	3 (3%)	29 (32%)	46 (51%)	13 (14%)
Overall Borough cleanliness	16 (18%)	50 (55%)	22 (24%)	3 (3%)
Convenience of parking in downtown	6 (7%)	16 (18%)	42 (46%)	27 (30%)
Safety	30 (33%)	45 (49%)	14 (15%)	2 (2%)
Special events	24 (26%)	39 (43%)	27 (30%)	1 (1%)
Variety of goods/services	1 (1%)	8 (9%)	26 (29%)	56 (62%)
Places to eat	7 (8%)	42 (46%)	34 (37%)	8 (9%)