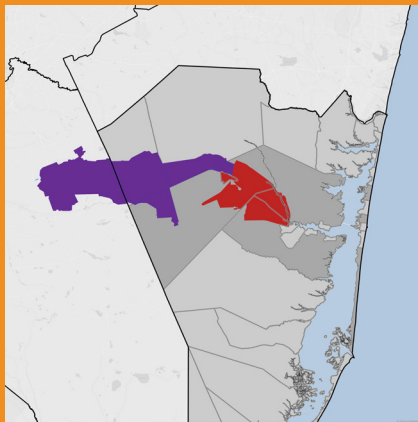


# ROUTE 37 ECONOMIC CORRIDOR VISION PLAN

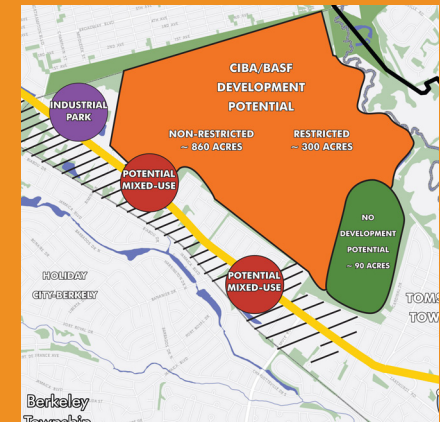
Toms River Township • Manchester Township • Berkeley Township • Lakehurst Borough • Ocean County

MAY 2015

## A LOCAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT



**MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIPS  
LEVERAGE ASSETS FOR  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
REALIGN DEVELOPMENT  
PATTERNS  
IMPROVE MOBILITY**



## PROJECT PARTNERS



Toms River Township



Manchester Township



Berkeley Township



Lakehurst Borough



Ocean County

## PROJECT TEAM

NJ TRANSIT

Looney Ricks Kiss

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

4Ward Planning

Mercer Planning Associates

## CONTRIBUTORS

Barnegat Bay Partnership

Friends of Navy Lakehurst

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst

Monmouth Ocean Development Council

NAVAIR

New Jersey State Office for Planning Advocacy

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

Northern Ocean Habitat for Humanity

O.C.E.A.N. Inc.

Ocean County Business Development & Tourism

Ocean County Board of Realtors

Ocean County College

Ocean County-Toms River Chamber of Commerce

Ocean Ride

Ocean County Vocational Technical Schools

Toms River Business Improvement District

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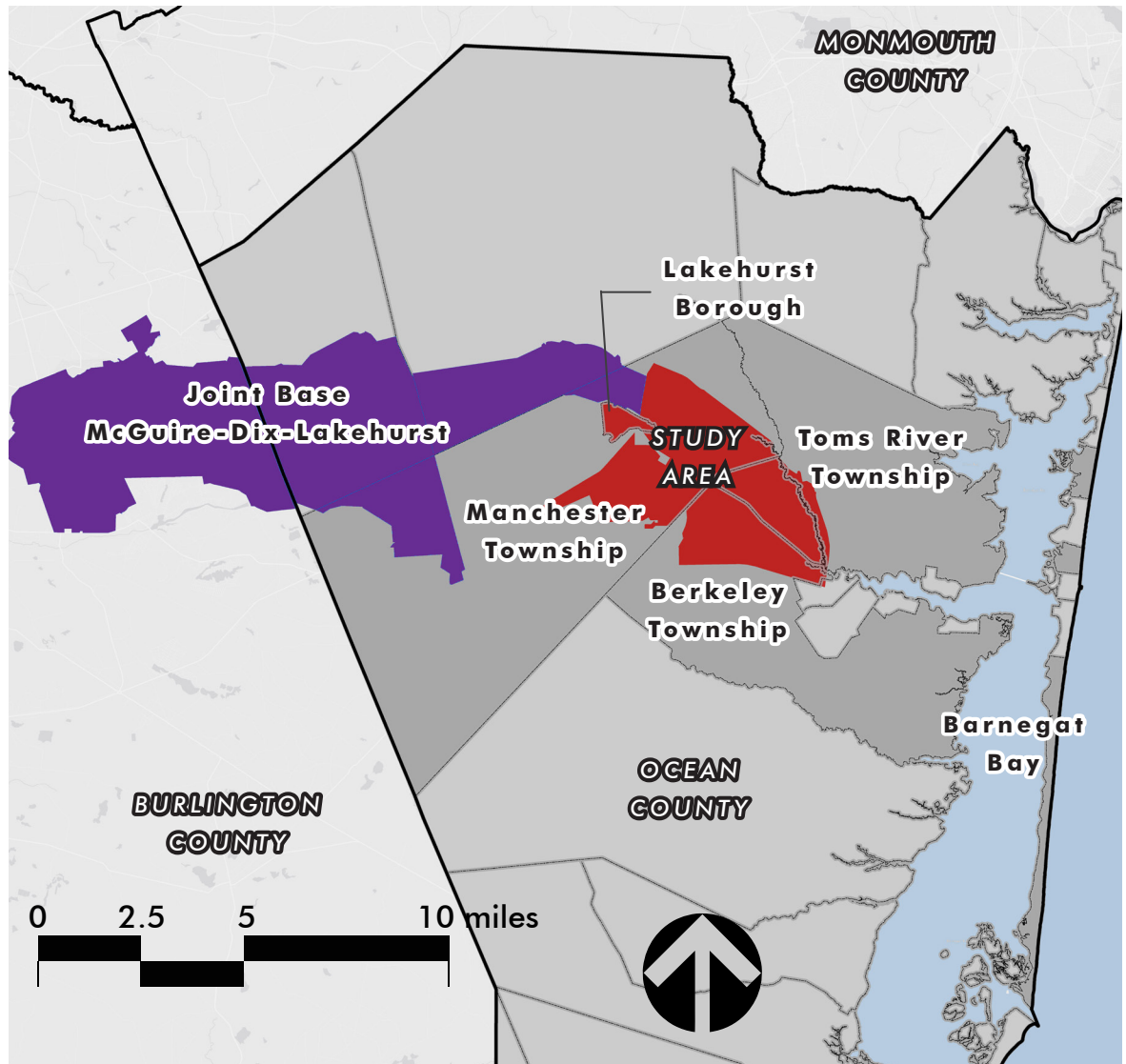
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan seeks to create an economic development corridor between Toms River Township and the Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (Joint Base). The study area is centered on NJ State Route 37 from the Garden State Parkway westward to the Joint Base and includes portions of Toms River Township, Berkeley Township, Lakehurst Borough, and Manchester Township. The focus of the Vision Plan is to better utilize existing assets and link technology-oriented employment and mixed use development to improve the corridor.

Residents in the study area commute north for higher paying jobs and the County as a whole lacks job opportunities that provide livable wages. Commuters primarily drive north via the Parkway and bus routes are available to commuters that travel north from the Toms River Bus Terminal and Lakewood Township, but there are very limited transit options within the County and the study area in particular.

The predominant form of housing in the study area is older senior communities which have seen high vacancy rates. There are very few other housing options and the reliance on automobiles of residents of the municipalities in the study area makes housing less affordable due to the added cost of commuting by car. The impact of Super Storm Sandy has intensified the need for more resilient housing options and a diversified economy. Toms River Township and Berkeley Township are waterfront communities that rely



The Study Area includes sections of four Ocean County municipalities within the half-mile wide corridor centered on Route 37

heavily on secondary home owners and tourism.

The former Ciba Geigy (now BASF) site is the largest opportunity site in the corridor and has great potential to link existing business facilities to existing residential areas. The corridor also has another large opportunity site at the Heritage Minerals site in Manchester and a thriving medical cluster around the Community Medical Center hospital and light industrial facilities with room for expansion.

The Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan project goals include:

- Encourage municipal partnerships to treat the



*NJ State Route 37 is currently a very auto-oriented corridor with strip development lining its frontages.*

corridor in a regional context

- Leverage assets such as the Joint Base/ Quality Assurance Lab in Manchester and Lakewood’s international trade designation for economic development within the corridor
- Identify uses and concepts for underutilized assets within the corridor
- Explore how municipal partnerships can realign development patterns in support of enhanced transit service

The Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan, through economic development strategies, seeks to tie all the regional assets together and explore how the municipalities and County can realign development patterns and change local land use policies to support an economic corridor. The



*The Plan envisions a high-tech corridor that better utilizes existing assets and links technology-oriented employment and mixed use development .*

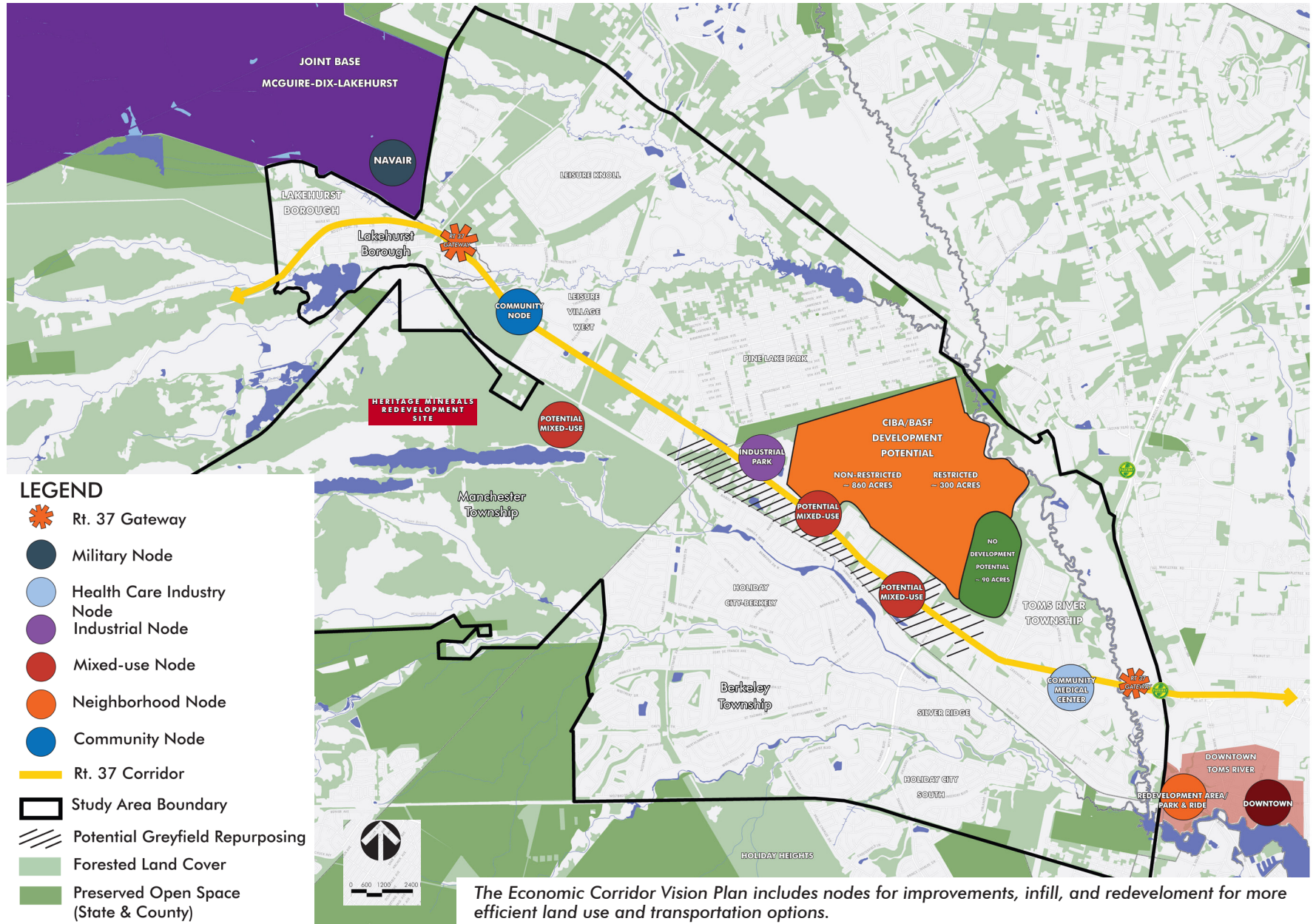
vision for the corridor includes recommendations for improvement in a range of areas.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

A key first step to advancing any economic development is establishing a corridor economic development committee (EDC) to ensure stewardship of this plan, as well as consistency and accountability. The strategy includes focusing on growing labor sectors such as technology development, green industry and healthcare, and repurposing the corridor’s commercial centers for limited retail and mixed use opportunities. Some of the economic development recommendations include:

- Retail repurposing and greyfield redevelopment
- Supporting infill and redevelopment in Downtown Toms River
- Advocating for the Joint Base (retaining and expanding its mission)
- Creating a tech hub and incubator in the corridor
- Developing facilities for clean energy and green infrastructure
- Expanding the medical clustering to include health and wellness
- Exploring hotel, conference, and other hospitality facilities for business travel and year-round eco-tourism

4 ROUTE 37 ECONOMIC CORRIDOR VISION PLAN



**EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Bringing higher paying jobs as well as increased opportunity for career advancement is a major goal of this plan. Engineering and R&D are thriving fields that provide higher wages and career advancement opportunities. A technology incubator site could help address the lack of skilled jobs and career paths in the Study Area. Some of the education and workforce development recommendations include:

- Exploring possible satellite campus locations to target higher-wage, growing workforce opportunities in engineering and R&D



*The parallel rail right-of-way to the south of Rt. 37 is a great opportunity for an enhanced transportation corridor.*

- Using specialized training options to customize program for health, green industry, and tech training
- Creating a business incubator site that incorporates satellite campus and high-tech office
- Expanding life-long learning programs and access to training for seniors

**MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS**

The existing rail right-of-way that runs parallel to Rt. 37 just to the south is a great opportunity for an enhanced transportation corridor. There is an existing spur that services the CIBA site and could be reactivated for freight with rail links to the Joint Base, Lakewood Industrial Park, and points north. The same right-of-way could include trails and a dedicated transit corridor that could start as bus rapid transit (BRT) and have the flexibility to change to other modes if the service demands ever warrant it.

The plan also looks at recommendations for combining local senior community shuttles, a regional bike network, and access management along Rt. 37.

**HOUSING**

With a large rent-burdened population lacking affordable housing options, more housing is needed in the area. Increased density and supply of a greater variety of housing types can help ease that burden. Some of the housing strategies include:

- Creating more diversity of housing types, particularly workforce housing & mixed use, active centers that include housing

- Studing the feasibility of changes to age-restrictions in senior community, including a healthcare worker exception
- Promoting the infill and redevelopment of housing in Downtown Toms River

**LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT**

Based on this vision and any Master Plan updates, local municipalities should begin thinking about how current zoning must evolve to re-envision the corridor into a mixed-use economic district. Land use considerations should include strategic locations for development nodes and clusters, specific design requirements for high-tech industry and mixed use development, and the balancing of redevelopment with additional open space preservation, all of which are critical for creating this vision.

Land use and environment recommendations include:

- Balancing redevelopment with open space preservation
- Identifying locations for mixed-use nodes
- Developing a “Sustainable Corridor” district with green tech and infrastructure
- Adopting Master Plan updates for the towns and county consistent with the Rt. 37 Vision
- Creating corridor zoning including overlays and form-based design standards

## 6 ROUTE 37 ECONOMIC CORRIDOR VISION PLAN

### IMPLEMENTATION

In order to make the improvements in the Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan, the local communities and partners need to take a series of short, medium and long-term actions. A Planning and Implementation Agenda (PIA) is included to indicate these actions developed during the evolution of this and other planning initiatives over the last several years. The agenda recognizes that successful implementation of plans requires strong local support and action, as well as assistance from Ocean County and the State of New Jersey.

A summary of the PIA table is provided on this page. The full Planning Implementation Agenda with detailed steps, potential funding and partners can be found as an attachment to this report and in Appendix A.

	Short Term 3-12 Months	Medium Term 12-24 Months	Long Term 24+ Months
<b>General Corridor Land Use Programming and Policies</b>			
Inventory existing commercial and office space		●	
Explore Corridor-wide Façade & Landscape Improvement Program for aging properties		●	
Update Master Plans for each town & County with RT. 37 Corridor in mind			●
Explore Corridor zoning standards for each town			●
Develop a Sustainable Corridor with green tech, infrastructure, & industry employers			●
Identify locations for desirable high density, mixed-use nodes along the corridor		●	
<b>General Corridor Economic Development Strategies</b>			
Create a standing corridor economic development committee	●		
Advocate for Joint Base and supportive industry		●	
Explore "greyfield" redevelopment for repurposed mixed use properties		●	
Expand medical clustering opportunities and revisit zoning around hospitals			●
Explore market interest in green technologies campus			●
Target hotel and convention facility to serve Joint Base business and regional tourism			●
Develop an eco-tourism and "gateway" to Pinelands and the Shore plan			●
<b>Housing</b>			
Provide more workforce housing		●	
Create diversity of housing types		●	
Study feasibility of changes to age-restrictions (age limit, health care workers, etc.)			●
Explore artist housing for Downtown Toms River		●	
<b>Transportation and Mobility</b>			
Study shared parking, curb cut consolidations, and access management	●		
Study feasibility of consolidating senior community private shuttles		●	
Study greenway connecting Barnegat Branch Trail to Rt. 37, Downtown and riverfront areas			●
Study multimodal road/trail along rail right of way into Downtown			●
Develop alternate bike network for corridor and region		●	
<b>Education and Workforce Development</b>			
Develop OCC specialized training for health, green industry, and tech training		●	
Explore possible satellite campuses for opportunities in engineering and R&D			●
Study a business incubator site that incorporates satellite campus and high-tech office			●
Expand life-long learning programs and access to training for seniors	●		
<b>CIBA/BASF Site</b>			
Engage CIBA to discuss tax appeal situation & removal of Super Fund designation	●		
Engage DEP for site remediation & prep		●	
Conduct detailed market analysis for potential users			●
Explore reactivation of rail spur to CIBA			●
Create Redevelopment Plan for property			●
Explore portion of site for wildlife refuge			●



## TOGETHER NORTH JERSEY

TOGETHER NORTH JERSEY is an unprecedented planning initiative for the 13-county North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority region of New Jersey.

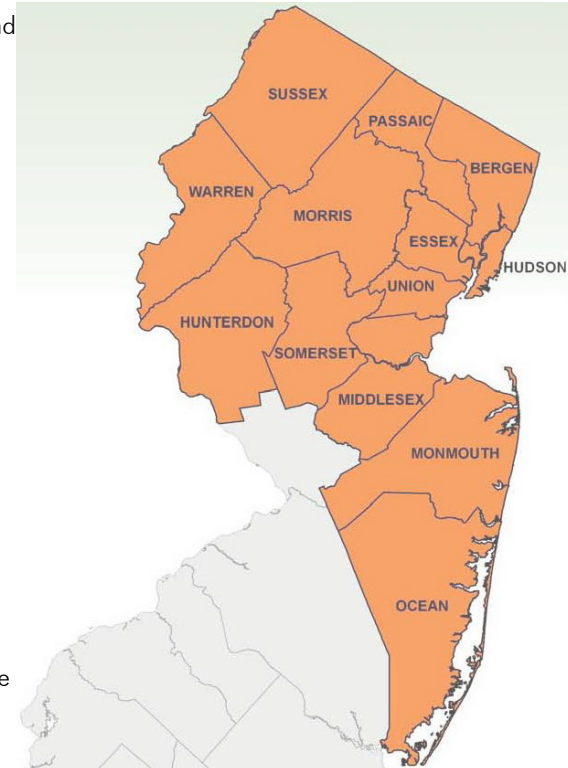
In November 2011, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded TOGETHER NORTH JERSEY (aka North Jersey Sustainable Communities Consortium) a \$5 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The grant is matched with an additional \$5 million in leveraged funds from project partners. Grant funds have been used to implement the Local Demonstration Project (LDP) Program, develop a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD) for the 13-county planning region, and provide technical assistance and offer education opportunities that build the capacity of jurisdictions, organizations and the public to advance sustainability projects and initiatives.

The plan is both “place-based” and “issue-based” and uses sustainability, transit system connectivity and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) as the central framework for integrating plans, regulations, investments and incentive programs at all levels of government to improve economic and environmental conditions, while promoting regional equity and resource efficiency. The outcome of plan implementation will be a more sustainable future for the region that invests in existing communities where housing, jobs, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities are made more easily accessible.

Through open forums TOGETHER NORTH JERSEY and its members have created a comprehensive and balanced plan that invests in the region’s existing communities where housing, jobs, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities are made more easily accessible to most residents without having to drive to them.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 13 County Governments in the NJTPA Region
- Edward J. Bloustein School for Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority {NJTPA}
- NJ TRANSIT
- NJ Office of Planning Advocacy (NJOPA)
- Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey (HCDN- NJ)
- Sustainability Institute/Sustainable Jersey at The College of New Jersey
- NJ Future
- Building One New Jersey
- PlanSmart NJ
- Regional Plan Association (RPA)



*The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under an award with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government.*

## ABOUT THE LOCAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROGRAM

The Local Demonstration Project (LDP) Program seeks to advance specific projects, initiatives, and other investments for local communities to achieve short-term, implementable projects which are consistent with the RPSD goals and program outcomes.

The LDP Program provides technical assistance for strategic planning studies focused on designated areas or corridors associated with established or anticipated transit services and/or facilities. Eligible LDP projects will be sponsored by municipalities, counties, non-governmental organizations, community development corporations, and other interested organizations.

These demonstration projects help to identify partnering opportunities, milestones, and potential funding sources and serve as a model for future initiatives.

Please visit [togethemothjersey.com](http://togethemothjersey.com) to learn more.

### 12 KEY ISSUES

The range of issues faced by the communities within the Region in positioning themselves for a more sustainable future is broad. The Local Demonstration Project program as a whole will attempt to engage all of the major policy issues that have been identified in recent years, as seen in the adjacent diagram.

Each project of the LDP program will address Land Use and Transportation at its core and will identify several primary issues as the project's focus.



## PHASE 1:

WHERE ARE WE NOW?  
WHERE ARE WE HEADED?



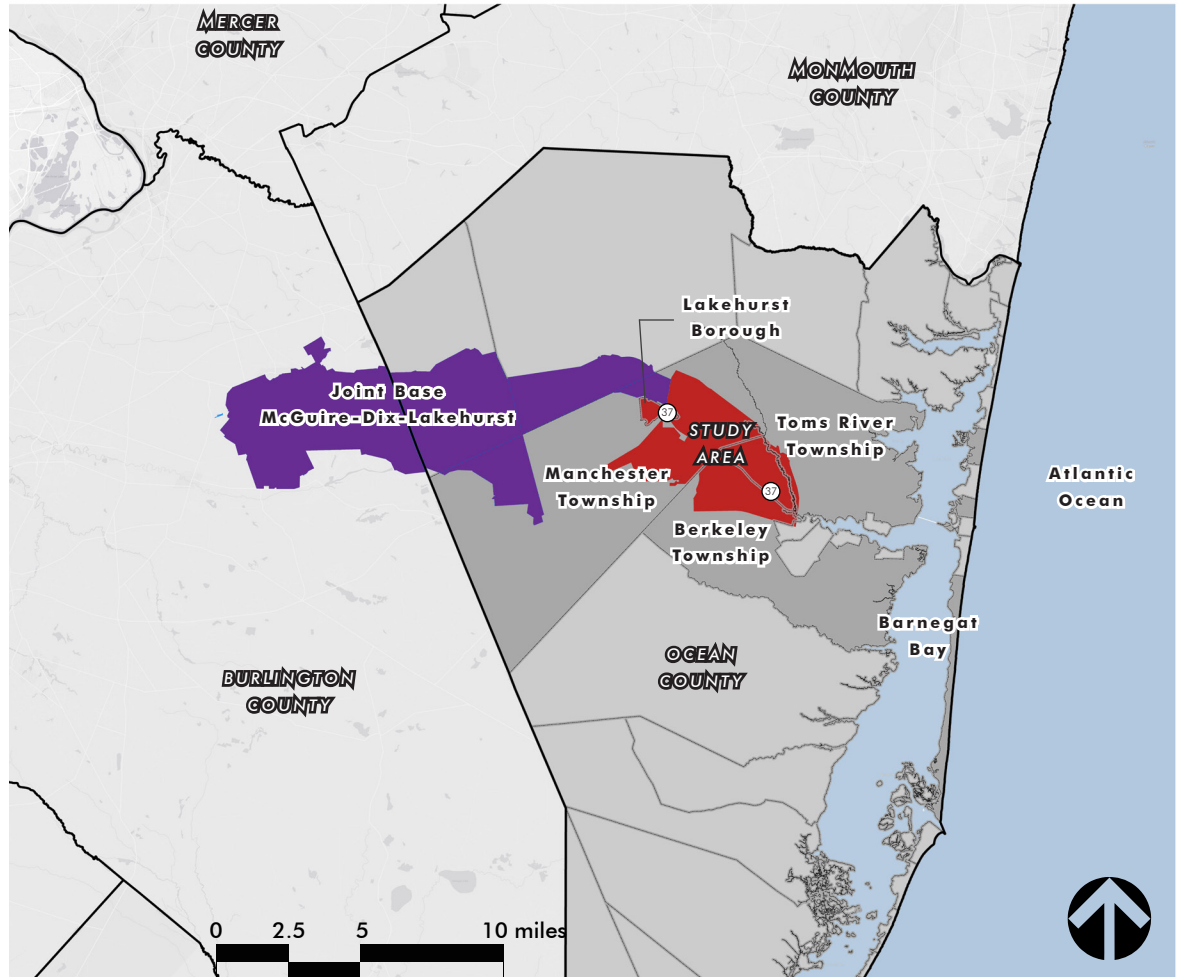
## INTRODUCTION

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

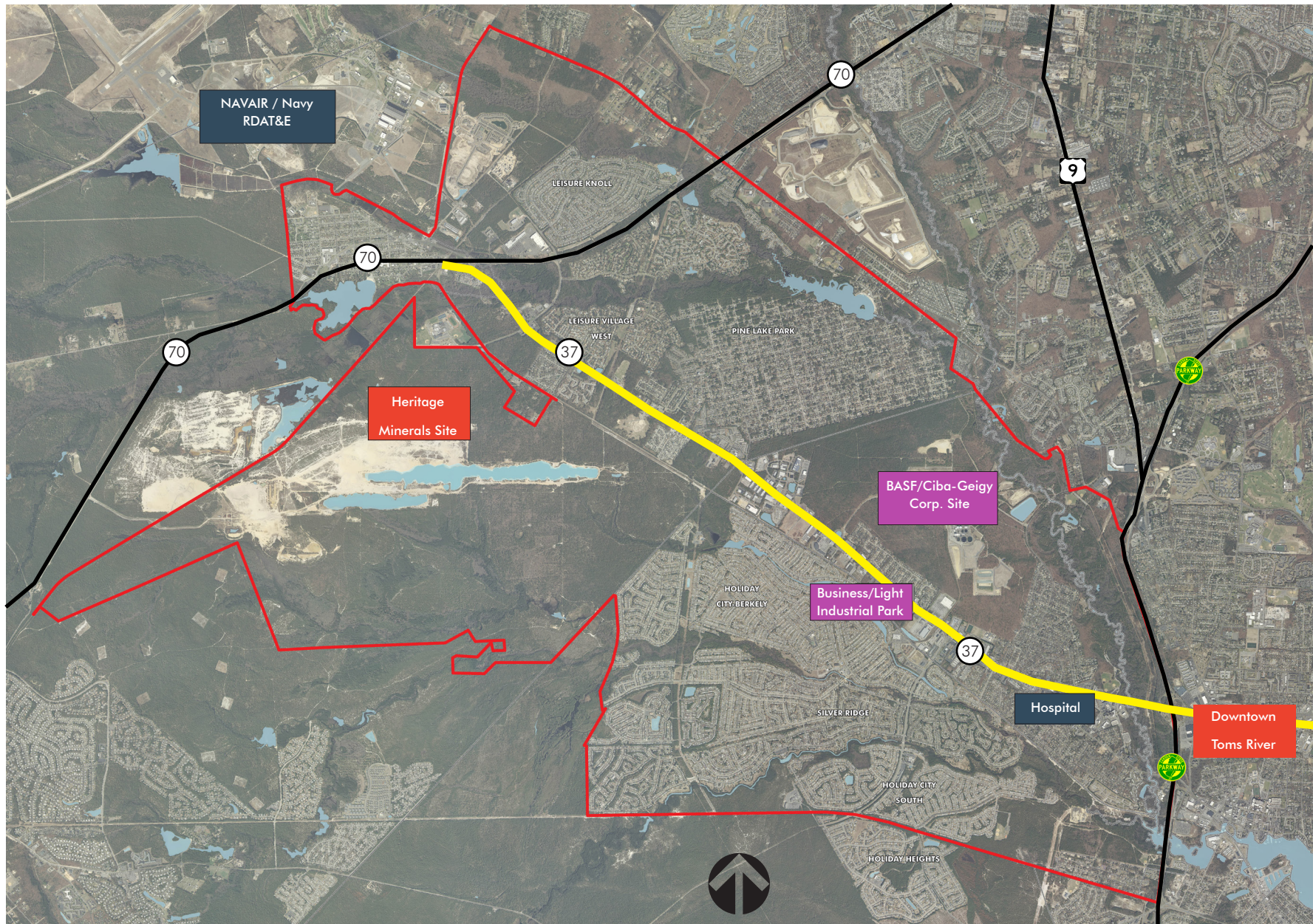
This project is a Local Demonstration Project (LDP), part of a larger regional planning initiative, crafting the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, which Together North Jersey has launched pursuant to HUD's Sustainable Communities program. This LDP is being sponsored locally by the Township of Toms River with support from Manchester Township, Berkeley Township, Lakehurst Borough, and Ocean County. NJ TRANSIT, a member of Together North Jersey, is providing one of its teams of on-call "Transit Friendly Planning" consultants for technical assistance for this project.

The LDP program is designed to create "on-the-ground" success stories and will be an important component of creating a supportive implementation framework and informing the development of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD).

The Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan seeks to tie regional assets together in order to promote economic development. It also explores how the region can coordinate to realign development patterns and change local land use policies to support enhanced transit service along the Route 37 Corridor, and between the corridor and higher paying jobs in the New York City area.



*The Study Area includes sections of four Ocean County municipalities within the half-mile wide corridor centered on Route 37*



## **BUILDING ON EXISTING PLANS AND STUDIES**

### **PROJECT GOALS**

Working with input from the project Steering Committee, the following project goals were identified:

- Encourage municipal partnerships to treat the corridor in a regional context
- Leverage assets such as the Joint Base/Quality Assurance Lab in Manchester and Lakewood’s international trade designation for economic development within the corridor
- Identify uses and concepts for underutilized assets within the corridor
- Explore how municipal partnerships can realign development patterns in support of enhanced transit service

### **STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION**

The Study Area for LDP #13: Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan focuses on the four municipalities within the half-mile wide corridor centered on Route 37, the six-mile highway section between the Garden State Parkway and Lakehurst Borough. Although the corridor contains several key regional assets, including the Joint Base/Quality Assurance Lab, the communities are characterized by high unemployment and a reliance on automobiles.

The following list of documents was reviewed as part of the background baseline to gain insights into previous research and outreach efforts:

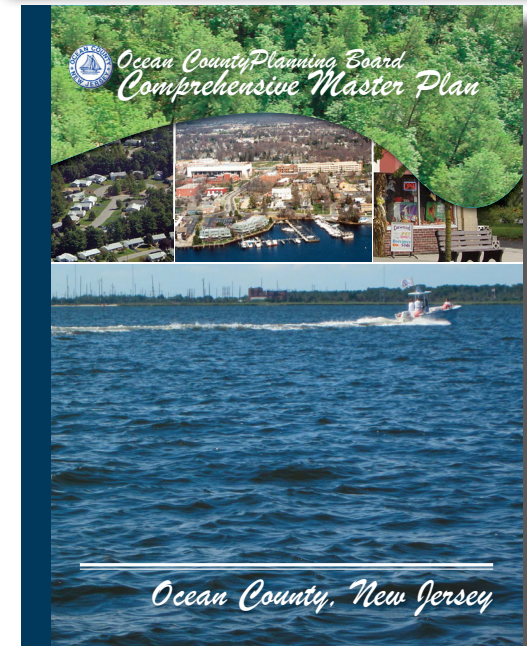
- New Jersey State Strategic Plan (2012)
- Township of Toms River 2014 Capital Plan and Budget
- Township of Toms River 2014 Action Plan
- American Planning Association New Jersey Chapter 2014 Real Estate Forecast
- Berkeley Township Environmental Resource Inventory (2012)
- Berkeley Township Land Use and Circulation Plan Elements (2009)
- Berkeley Township Master Plan (1997)
- Borough of Lakehurst Master Plan Re-examination (2008)
- Joint Base Land Use Study
- Economic Health of Ocean County (2011)
- EPA Third Five-Year Review Report for Ciba-Geigy Chemical Corporation Superfund Site (2013)
- Ocean County Action Plan (2014)
- Ocean County Comprehensive Master Plan (2012)
- Township of Manchester Master Plan (2011)
- Long-Term Economic Monitoring Program Fact Book (2013)

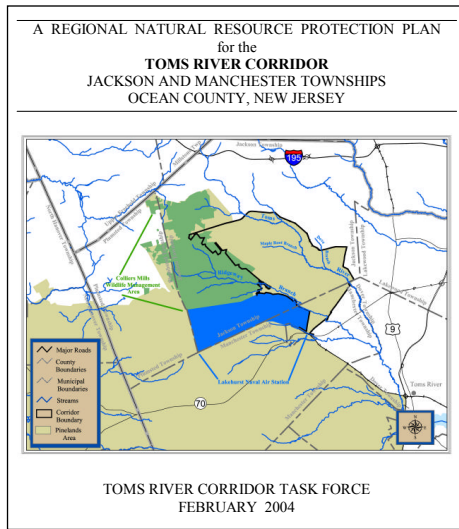
### **MASTER PLAN**

#### **TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER Ocean County, New Jersey**

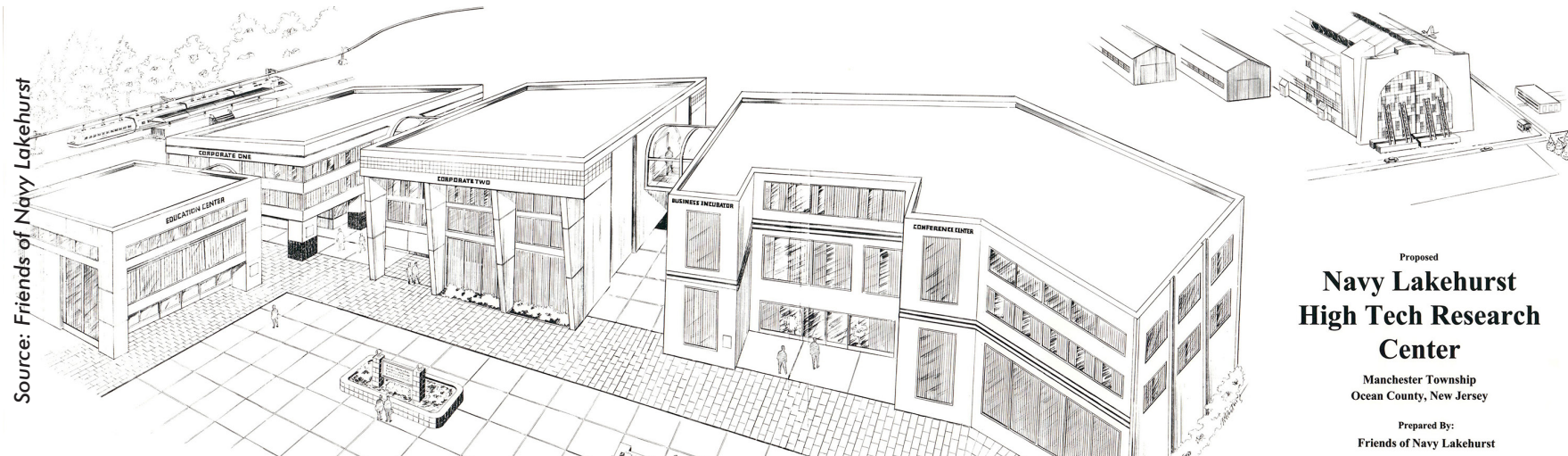


Manchester Township Municipal Building  
1 Colonial Drive





- Township of Toms River Redevelopment Plan for Phase I Downtown Waterfront Redevelopment Area
- Ocean County Department of Planning Joint Land Use Study (2009)
- Route 9 Corridor Master Plan (2009)
- Rutgers-Bloustein Toms River Redevelopment Studio Report (2013)
- Toms River Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Summary Report (2011)
- Governor’s Executive Order No. 134 (2013)
- Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst: America’s Premier Joint War Fighting Base
- Friends of Navy Lakehurst: Proposed Navy Lakehurst Hightech Research Center
- New Jersey Military Base Enhancement
- Coalitions Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and Pictatinny Arsenal: Leveraging Federal Employment for Economic Development, Revenue and Job Growth for New Jersey
- Ratio of Federal Dollars Received to Federal Dollars Sent to Washington, D.C. by State (2009)
- Rutgers’s Report: New Jersey’s Military and Coast Guard Facilities: Economic Contribution to the State Economy (2013)
- New Jersey Council on Armed Forces and Veteran’s Affairs: The Importance of Protecting New Jersey’s Military Missions (2013)
- Ocean County Adults 65 Years and Over Below Elder Index



Source: Friends of Navy Lakehurst

Proposed  
**Navy Lakehurst  
 High Tech Research  
 Center**  
 Manchester Township  
 Ocean County, New Jersey  
 Prepared By:  
 Friends of Navy Lakehurst

Friends of Navy Lakehurst: Rendering of proposed Navy Lakehurst High Tech Research Center, including tech development and satellite college campus

EXISTING CONDITIONS



There is a growing medical cluster around Community Medical Center



Entrance to Ciba-Geigy site, currently closed for on-going environmental remediation work.



There are limited sidewalks along Rt. 37 often close to fast moving traffic



Rail right-of-way runs underneath the Garden State Parkway linking the corridor to Downtown



Toms River Park and Ride Regional Bus Terminal





Existing Rail ROW Parallel to Route 37



Northampton Business Park is a thriving light industrial park in the center of the Route 37 area.



There is little pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity along Rt. 37. Where sidewalks exist, they are continuously broken by large drive entrances



Typical senior housing in the corridor



There are many vacant parcels marketing their development potential.



Off-track betting is one of the newer uses to occupy former retail centers.

## BASELINE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

The Route 37 Study Area, as well as the 20-minute Drive Contour from the center of the corridor (representing the likely primary market area for area consumers and prospective new and relocating businesses) and the Monmouth-Ocean Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) are all expected to experience modest population and household growth through 2018. However, some Census Block Groups within the study area are expected to undergo rapid population growth, and others to lose population. For example, the population in the northern section of the study area in Manchester Township is expected to increase by 3.48 percent per year, while population in a section of Lakehurst is anticipated to decline by 0.7 percent per year. Although population densities vary widely among Census Block Groups in the Route 37 Study Area, most census tracts have a population density of over 2,000 people per square mile; in comparison, the population density for New Jersey is only 1,205 people per square mile.

Consistent with national and regional trends, non-family households are growing faster than family households in all three geographies. As a percentage of total households, the share of single-person households in Ocean County has risen slightly over the last two decades, representing almost three out of 10 households in 2010. The Route 37 Study Area demonstrated a lower percentage of single parent households, multi-generational households, and unmarried

partners in 2010 compared to the 20-minute Drive Contour and the MSA. The majority of households in all three study areas do not have children. Approximately 77 percent of housing units within the Route 37 Study Area are owner-occupied, which exceeds ownership rates of the 20-minute Drive Contour and MSA, and the vacancy rate (10 percent) is lower in the study area than the other geographies.

Residents 65 and older dominate the population in the Route 37 Study Area, and older empty nesters (65 to 74) are forecasted to undergo the greatest growth in Ocean County by 2018, while those aged 35 to 54 are expected to decline. The aging population has implications for

housing demand, as empty nesters and retirees choose to downsize to smaller units. The aging population may additionally create additional demand for transportation infrastructure for those who choose not to drive.

Population by Geography

	2010	2013	2018	Net Change (2013-2018)
Rt. 37 Study Area	43,212	43,314	43,892	578
20-min Drive Contour	340,749	344,302	351,565	7,263
MSA	1,206,947	1,215,099	1,230,309	15,210

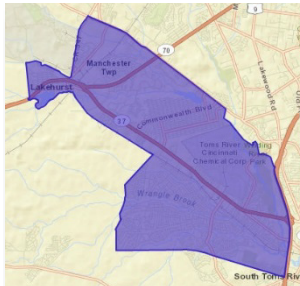
Annualized Percentage Change, Total Population



Source: US Census Bureau; Esri; 4ward Planning Inc., 2014

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS ANALYSIS STUDY AREAS - 2013 SUMMARY

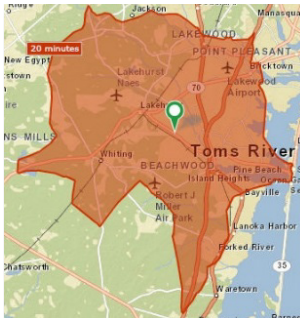
### ROUTE 37 CORRIDOR STUDY AREA



Population:	43,314
Total Households:	21,728
Median Age:	63.6
Median Household Income:	\$37,002
Percent of Household Incomes >\$75,000:	20.2%
Percent Owner-Occupied Housing:	76.9%

In 2012 the percentage of Ocean County residents 25 years and older possessing a bachelor's degree or higher is significantly lower than the percentage of similarly degreed persons living in the MSA or New Jersey. This low educational attainment can be linked to lower income, as people with less education may face limited job options, and those with lower income may be less able to afford higher education.

### 20-MINUTE DRIVE CONTOUR



Population:	344,302
Total Households:	129,995
Median Age:	42.5
Median Household Income:	\$52,520
Percent of Household Incomes >\$75,000:	35.8%
Percent Owner-Occupied Housing:	69.3%

Consumer spending levels in the Route 37 Study Area are far below the national average in a select set of discretionary spending categories, including groceries, dining out, housing, apparel and services, transportation, travel, healthcare, entertainment and recreation, personal care, and education. This trend may be troubling for service and retail-related businesses. In addition, at \$37,000, the Study Area median household income is just over half that of the MSA, which exceeds \$70,000.

The Route 37 Study Area is currently over 80 percent white. However, the racial composition is expected to change through 2018, as the white population is projected to decline while the percentage share of all other racial groups is anticipated to increase. Latinos/Hispanics of any race are forecasted to lead with an increase of just over 23 percent, which will likely drive further demand for larger residential units (four or five bedroom), as these groups tend to exhibit a higher propensity for multigenerational living.

### MONMOUTH & OCEAN MSA



Population:	1,215,099
Total Households:	454,301
Median Age:	42.6
Median Household Income:	\$70,373
Percent of Household Incomes >\$75,000:	47.8%
Percent Owner-Occupied Housing:	64.1%

Source: US Census Bureau; Esri; 4ward Planning Inc., 2014

**ELDER-INDEX**

Twenty-five percent of all seniors in New Jersey rely on social security as their only income. The Elder Index is a measure of income that older adults require to maintain their independence in the community and meet their daily costs of living statewide, including affordable and appropriate housing and health care. The NJ Elder Economic Index shows that 250,000 seniors over the age of 65 in New Jersey (42% of single and elderly couples living in the community do not have the money to cover their basic costs. This group is made up of 64% women.

The most costly portion of a senior’s monthly

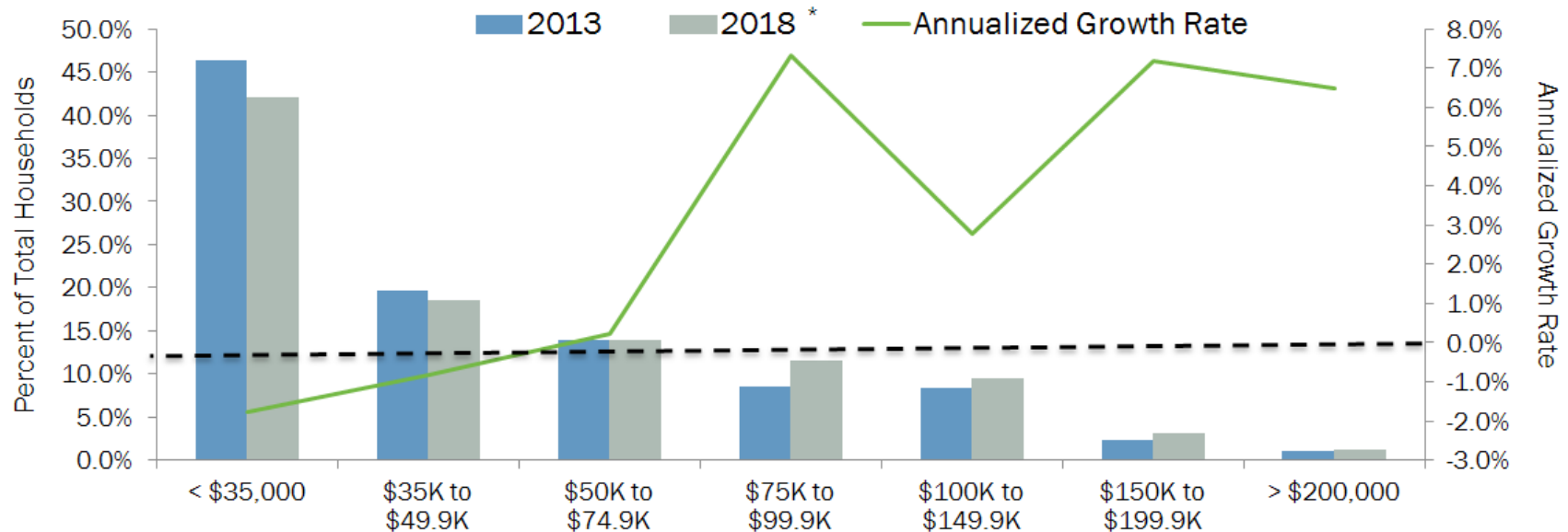
expenses is their housing. More than 46% of their income must go towards their housing, taxes and utilities. This highlights the need for more affordable housing. About 40% of adults 65 and older living in Ocean County are below the Elder Index. Almost 55% of elder adults have incomes below the elder index, while about 28% of elder couples have incomes below the elder index.

**LABOR AND INDUSTRY TRENDS ANALYSIS**

The Great Recession had an enormous impact on the number of total primary jobs within the Monmouth-Ocean County MSA, with losses of

nearly three percent of the full-time workforce (equivalent to over 10,000 jobs) between 2007 and 2009. Although primary jobs did grow between 2009 and 2011, a considerable gap remains relative to pre-crisis levels. In 2013, high unemployment began to trend downwards, but some of this is attributable to a declining labor force rather than job creation. The closure of Fort Monmouth also had an impact on jobs in the area.

In both the MSA and New Jersey, workers 55 and older performed significantly better than young workers (29 and younger) in the wake of the economic downturn. A relatively strong rise

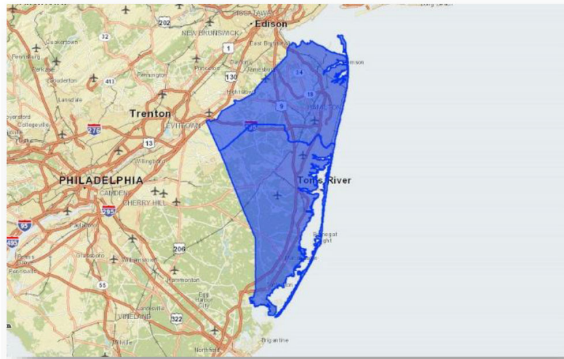


\* Indicates nominal values

Sources: US Census Bureau; Esri; 4ward Planning Inc., 2014

## Labor and Industry Trends Analysis – Key Metrics as of Q2 2013

Monmouth-Ocean County MSA



Total Employment: 390,210

Top Three Industries by Employment:  
Health Care and Social Assistance  
Retail Trade  
Educational Services

Unemployment Rate: 8.0%

New Jersey



Total Employment: 3,758,510

Top Three Industries by Employment:  
Health Care and Social Assistance  
Retail Trade  
Educational Services

Unemployment Rate: 8.4%

in the share of workers 55 and older in the MSA suggests that many companies valued experience and productivity over youth and potentially lower payroll costs.

Between 2007 and 2012, industries with consistently positive annual net job flows in the Monmouth-Ocean County MSA were Health Care and Social Assistance; Accommodation and Food Services; and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation. Three industries (Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Educational Services) combined for over 45 percent of total primary employment in 2011. All of these industries are service oriented and locally serving.

Of the six largest employment sectors, Professional and Technical Services is the only sector categorized as a traded industry, suggesting it tends to serve markets outside of the labor area. Additionally, according to derived location quotients, the MSA has a relative advantage for the Art, Entertainment, and Recreation industries, as well as Utilities, Retail Trade, and Health Care and Social Assistance.

Interestingly, over the next decade, employment opportunities in the Monmouth-Ocean MSA will principally come from replacement openings as opposed to new job creation. This reflects an aging and retiring workforce coupled with cautious hiring practices. Replacement openings will be particularly significant within the food preparation, retail, and administrative support

occupations.

According to data provided by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Health Care and Social Assistance is projected to provide the greatest number of new jobs between 2010 and 2020 in the MSA. Although most other industries are expected to grow over the next decade, Manufacturing, Information, and Government are forecasted to decline.

The occupational groups projected to add the most jobs between 2010 and 2020, such as Office and Administrative Support, Personal Care and Services, Sales, and Food Preparation and Serving Occupations, are all generally characterized by relatively low wages that often do not provide a living wage for a single parent

with one child.

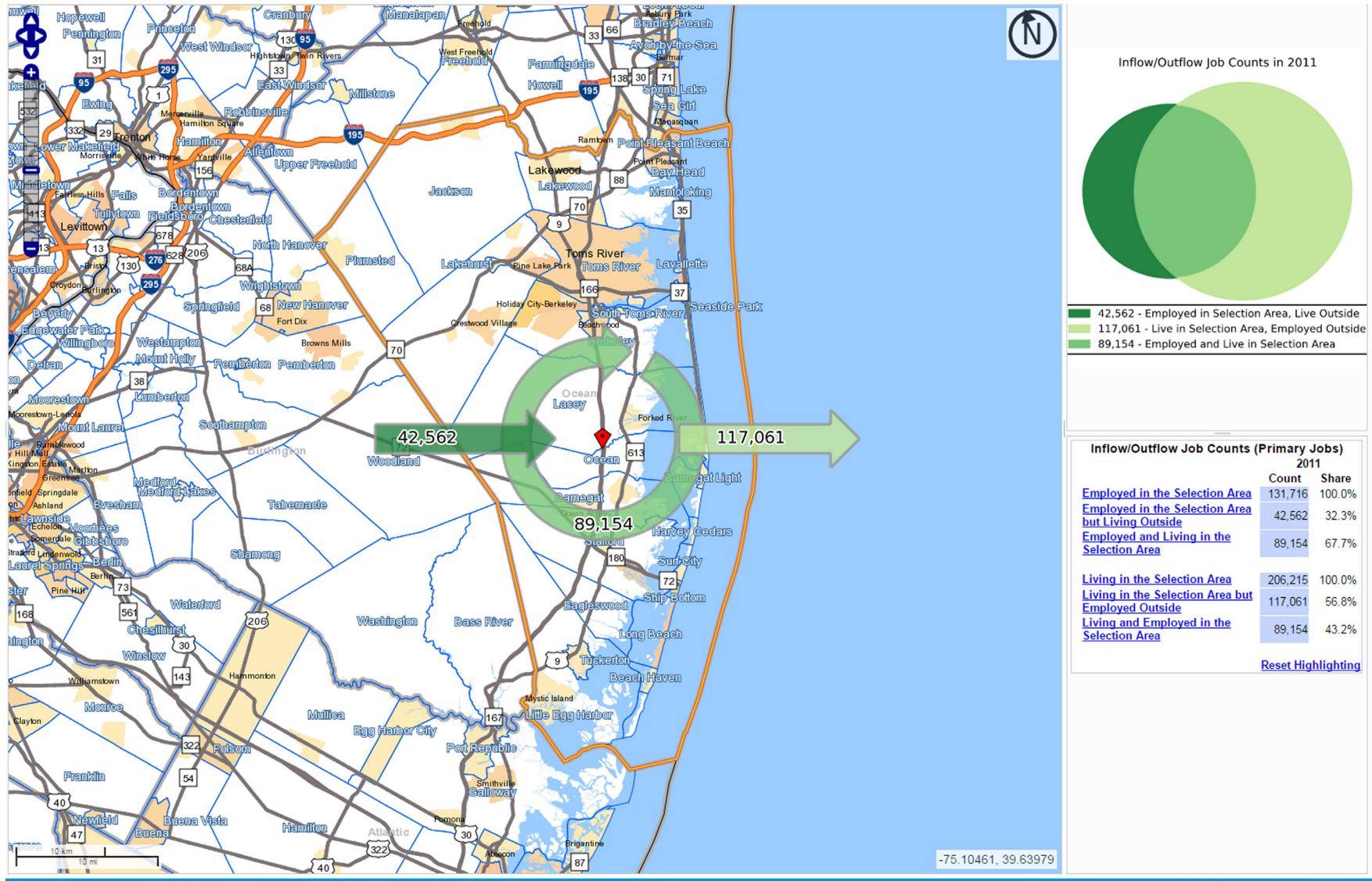
Additionally over the next decade employment opportunities could come on the Joint Base if there is growth in the base's mission.

Moving forward, the Monmouth-Ocean County MSA will need to confront the following issues through improved training and skills development:

- An aging workforce with few replacements in the near-term
- Employment growth concentrated within lower-wage industry sector



*A Medical cluster has been developing around the Community Medical Center along Rt. 37.*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, OnTheMap.census.gov

**STATE PLAN INDUSTRY CLUSTERS**

According to the New Jersey State Strategic Plan, job retention and creation efforts can be strengthened by focusing on regional strategies through the cultivation of a new industry cluster-based development strategy. Firms tend to be more successful when they group together geographically due to information spillovers, local non-traded inputs, and a skilled local labor pool. The following industries were identified in the State Strategic Plan as growth opportunities for New Jersey:

- Green Economy – New Jersey is ranked second in the country for installed solar and is recognized as a leader in offshore wind.
- Tourism Industry – Tourism accounts for 8.8% of the State GDP and is the third largest industry in the state.
- Food Production and Processing – New Jersey is home to more than 10,000 farmers who produce products valued at \$1 billion per year. More than half of the State’s unrestricted open space is owned and operated by farmers, who wish to continue the industry if it remains economically viable for future generations.

**LIVING-WAGE EMPLOYMENT**

In many American communities, families working in low-wage jobs make insufficient income to live near where they work, given the local cost of living. A “living wage” job allows the earner to afford the actual necessities of life for a household—adjusted for the typical monthly costs of housing, healthcare, childcare, and transportation within a community. Calculating a living wage for a specific community requires estimating the local cost of living based on typical demographics, household expenses, and wages.

The annual income range (which varies based on the number of dependents) necessary for a full-time single-wage earner to make a living wage in Ocean County and afford the necessities of life for his/her household ranges from \$22,304 to \$71,558. For example, a single-wage earner with no dependents would need to earn \$22,304 annually, while a single-wage earner supporting three children would need to earn \$71,558 per year. Just over \$21 (\$44,119 annually) is considered to be the living wage required for a full-time single-wage earner to support a family of four (two adults and two children). This is significantly higher than what the same wage earner would need to make to be above the federal poverty rate (\$10.60 or \$22,048 annually), or would make working a full-time minimum-wage job (\$7.25 or \$15,080 annually).

The Living Wage Calculator is a website developed and maintained by Dr. Amy K. Glasmeier at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The Living Wage Calculator shows the differences between minimum wages and minimum living wages across eight different household scenarios (from single adult to two adults and three children living in the same household). The data incorporated in the calculator is from a variety of sources. All occupations have annual mean employee pay that meets the living wage (\$10.72) required for a single earner household to be self-supporting.

However, as the number of dependents and household expenses increase, the required living wage increases as well. The following professions have annual mean employee pay that meet the living wage (\$21.21) required for a single earner to support a family of four (two adults and two children) in Ocean County:

- Computer and Mathematical (\$43.35)
- Legal (\$49.40)
- Management (\$65.19)
- Business and Financial Operations (\$37.07)
- Architecture and Engineering (\$40.12)
- Healthcare Practitioner and Technical (\$41.39)
- Construction and Extraction (\$26.78)
- Education Training and Library (\$27.61)



- Life, Physical and Social Sciences (\$35.55)
- Installation, Maintenance and Repair (\$24.21)
- Community and Social Services (\$25.88)
- Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media (\$26.08)
- Sales and Related (\$20.50)
- Transportation and Material Moving (\$15.65)
- Production (\$16.90)
- Office and Administrative Support (\$18.02)
- Farming, Fishing and Forestry (\$13.81)
- Personal Care and Services (\$14.11)
- Healthcare Support (\$14.20)
- Food Preparation and Serving Related (\$11.53)
- Security Guards (\$13.46)
- Building, Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance (\$13.72)

According to the Living Wage Calculator, the following professions have annual mean employee pay below what is considered to be the living wage (\$21.21) required to support a family of four (two adults and two children) in Ocean County:



**MILITARY INSTALLATION ASSESSMENT**

Adjacent to the Route 37 Economic Corridor Study Area is the Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (Joint Base), an active military installation. The Joint Base is the only tri-service joint base in the nation, with active duty, reserve and guard services members from the United States Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

The base spans more than 20 miles (42,000 acres) east to west and is bordered by Ocean and Burlington Counties. It is the largest employer in Southern New Jersey and the second largest employer in the state. By hosting more than 80 mission partners, the installation supports a population of about 42,000, and about 4,000 facilities with an estimated value of \$8.1 billion.

The Naval Air Station Lakehurst makes up the eastern end of the Joint Base and is the home of NAVAIR and the Navy’s at-sea aircraft launch and recovery technology, engineering and life cycle support. It also serves in this capacity for the Marine Corps and for some NATO allies. NAVAIR Lakehurst provides aircraft carrier aviation support systems to the fleet including catapults, arresting gear, visual landing aids, weapons handling equipment, and other aircraft servicing and maintenance equipment.

The Lakehurst portion of Joint Base MDL is comprised of 7,430 acres and over 3,000 employees. It is the largest Naval Aviation facility

in the Northeast and the largest employer in Ocean County.

Most of the people working on the Lakehurst portion of the base are civilians, including highly trained technicians, scientists, engineers and skilled trade workers. Only about 20% of personnel at the Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst live on base. The average age of both white and blue collar employees is about 47 and average salary is \$98,000. The base had been adding about 55-80 jobs a year. That rate is projected to continue, but there may be a downturn in 2016. Most companies and suppliers that Lakehurst uses are from outside of the State.

**BRAC**

Although the Joint Base is a major employer in the state, it is in jeopardy. The US Defense Department Defense budgeted that a Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) be setup for 2017.

Other states have invested millions into protecting their military installations, and without state support the base could close in the 2017 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Military bases will need to be recognized as an economic development opportunity, with state level support for military base retention and growth.

According to a 2013 Rutgers’s University

report, “New Jersey’s Military and Coast Guard Facilities: Economic Contribution to the State Economy,” the military presence in New Jersey has declined in recent decades, yet the bases continue to contribute substantially to the state economy.

For example, in 2012 the Federal government spent about \$5 billion within New Jersey, which generated over 45,600 jobs that pay \$2.6 billion and add about \$3.8 billion of wealth to New Jersey residents. The \$4.8 billion in federal spending annually for military installations in New Jersey results in \$9.6 billion in new business revenues, with about \$6.5 billion being wealth added in the form of GDP by the state.

Of the GDP total, over \$4.0 billion is in the form of labor income that support about 73,000 jobs. In 2013, the New Jersey Council on Armed Forces and Veteran’s Affairs released a report on the importance of protecting New Jersey’s military missions. BRAC and the assigning of missions and funds to bases outside of the state have eroded New Jersey’s military missions. In 2005, BRAC closed New Jersey’s Fort Monmouth, which had contributed 22,500 jobs statewide, with a total of \$2.5 billion in economic impact.

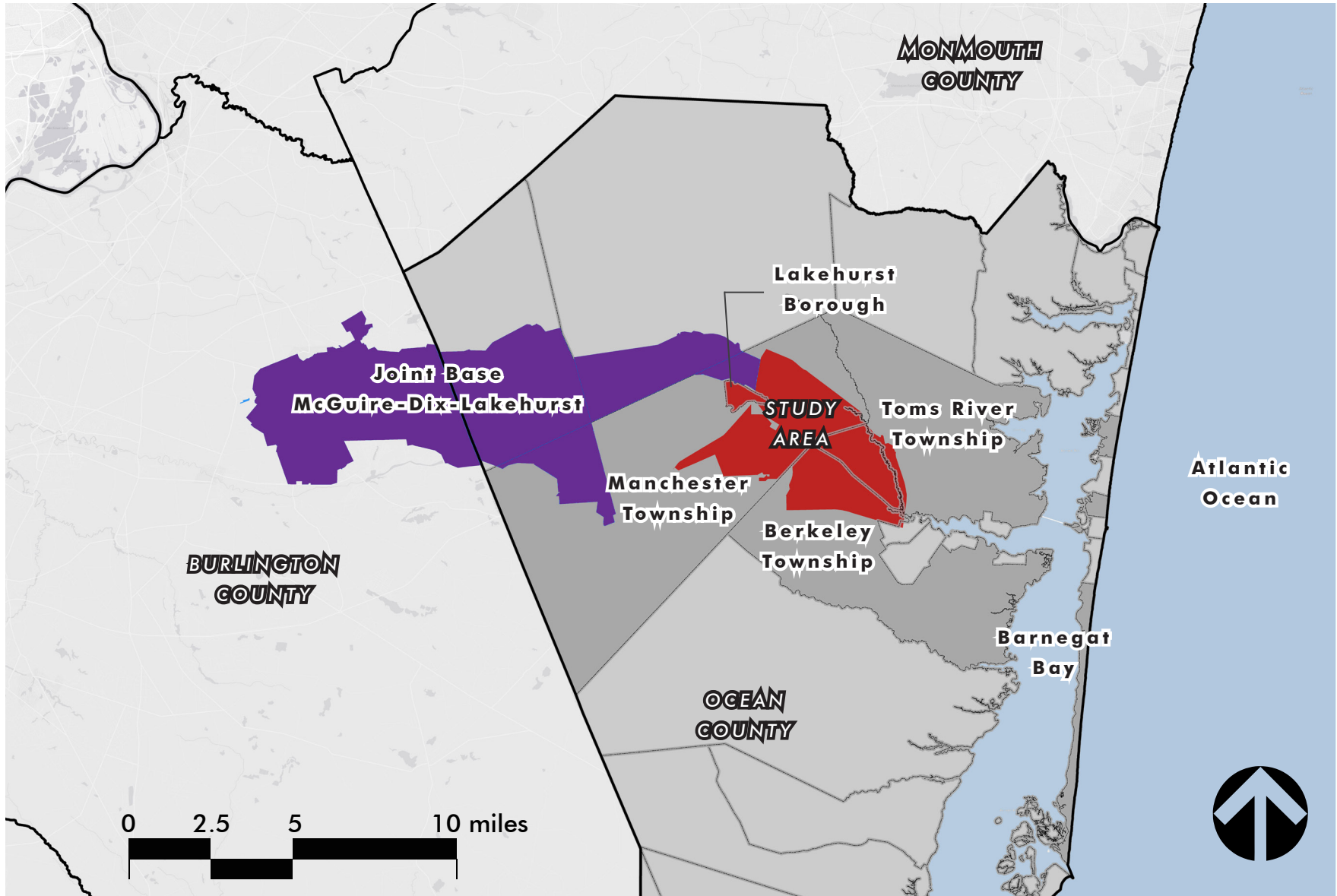
New Jersey’s military installations are joint and transformational with high military value. In New Jersey, they have access to a talented workforce and high interdependence with industry. The report recommends the State of New Jersey

create a Federal Advisory Board to preserve, support, and expand military installations.

This would develop and help implement a comprehensive plan to preserve and expand capabilities of installations with the goal of creating new jobs and expanded missions. Before the report was released Governor Chris Christie issued Executive Order No. 134 on June 13, 2013 ordering the creation of a new, “New Jersey Military Installation Growth and Development Task Force.”



*Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (Joint Base) is the only tri-service joint base in the nation, with active duty, reserve and guard services members from all branches of the military*



The Joint Base extends across Burlington and Ocean Counties - the Study Area is its eastern gateway

## MOBILITY ASSESSMENT

### BUS AND SHUTTLE ACCESS

The study area is currently served by commuter bus, circulator bus, and shuttle services.

#### **Ocean Ride Service**

Ocean Ride Service is a great service for seniors and those that are physically handicapped, but is not intend to provide regular transit. Funding is limited and those funds are utilized to assist the most vulnerable populations.

Ocean County operates three fixed bus routes that serve the Route 37 Study Area: Ocean Ride Route 10, Ocean Ride Route 1, and Ocean Ride Route 2. Riders are able to get on or off Ocean Ride at any point along the routes by signaling the driver (where roadway conditions permit), and the buses are wheelchair accessible. The fare is \$2 a ride for adults and \$1 for seniors, college students and children.

In addition to the fixed bus routes, Ocean Ride provides door-to-door service to seniors (60 and over) and persons with disabilities, primarily for routine medical appointments. Riders schedule pick-ups ahead of time via telephone and reservations can be made up to four weeks in advance.

### **New Jersey Transit Buses**

While there are no New Jersey Transit bus routes operating in the study area, there are connections to NJ Transit Bus Routes 67 (Toms River to Newark) and 137 (Toms River to New York) at the Ocean County Mall, Ocean County Government Complex, and the Toms River Park and Ride, all of which are accessible via Ocean Ride Route 10. At the Park and Ride, riders can also transfer to NJ Transit Routes 319 (seasonal, New York to Cape May via Wildwood and Atlantic City) and 559 (Atlantic City to Lakewood).

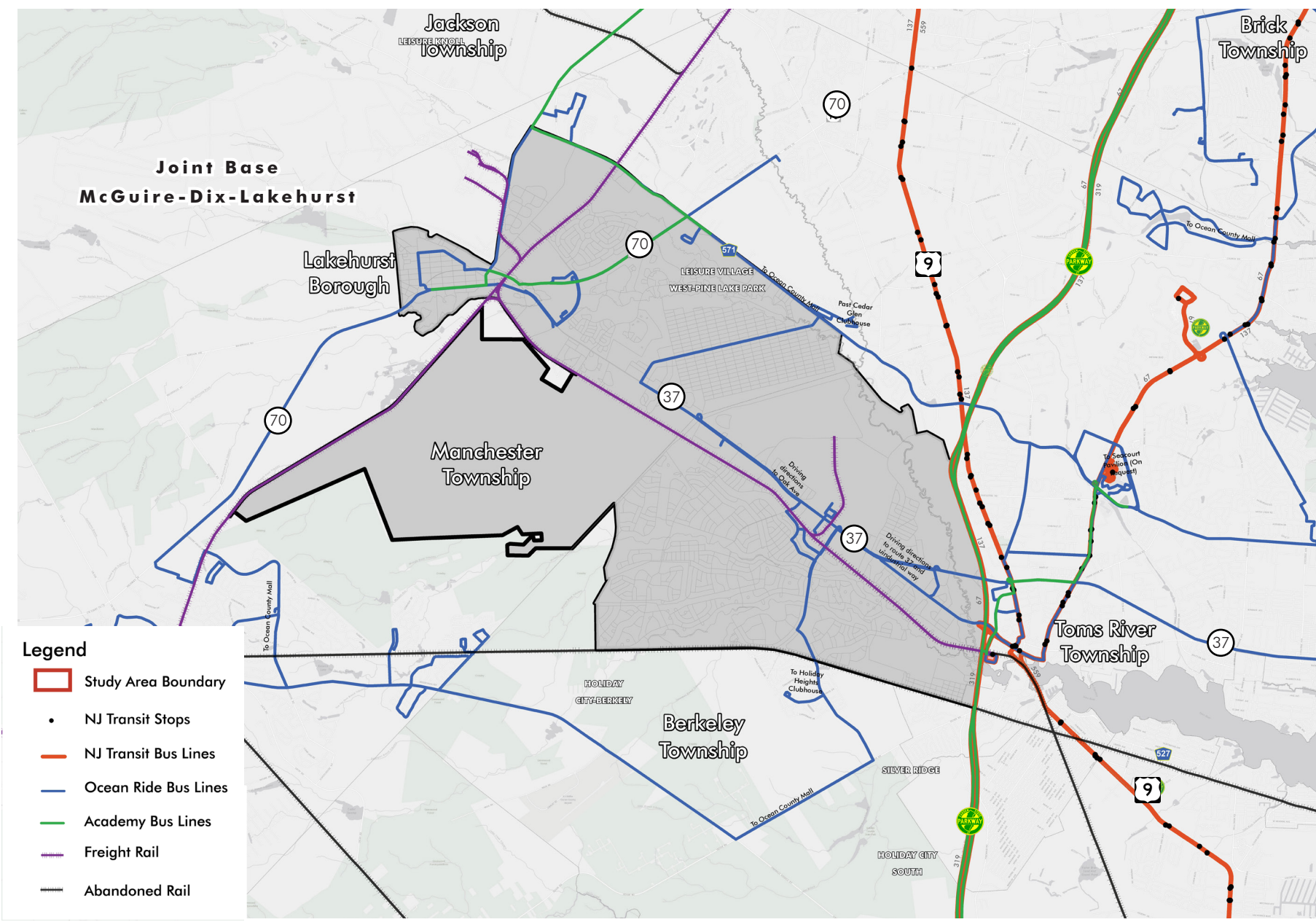
The Toms River Bus Terminal provides service to New York City and a few other North Jersey locations and Atlantic City.



Passengers waiting for OceanRide at the Walmart on Rt. 37



Toms River Park and Ride facility is served by NJ Transit bus routes 67, 137, 319, and 559



- Legend**
- Study Area Boundary
  - NJ Transit Stops
  - NJ Transit Bus Lines
  - Ocean Ride Bus Lines
  - Academy Bus Lines
  - Freight Rail
  - Abandoned Rail

**Academy (Private Bus)**

The Academy private bus company operates weekday commuter service to New York. Although none of these lines have a stop within the study area, there are two lines with stops just outside the study area, including the Lakehurst-Manchester-Jackson line and the Forked River-Toms River-Brick Township-Parkway line.

**Senior Shuttles**

The Toms River Senior Center on Garfield Avenue offers limited shuttle service to seniors 60 and older that live within Toms River Township. The center has one 18-person capacity bus and one 9-person capacity van that regularly transport seniors to the Senior Center, grocery stores, and doctor’s appointments. The Senior Center noted that spots tend to fill up right away.

Manchester’s Senior Services Department provides transportation for residents 60 years+ to medical and dental facilities located in Manchester, Lakehurst, Whiting, Brick, Lakewood, Silverton and Toms River. Appointments must be between specified times.

Holiday City, Leisure Village West, and Leisure Knoll offer private bus service for their residents.

**RAILROAD RIGHTS-OF-WAY (ROW)**

**Toms River Branch**

This ROW runs east-west about a block south of and approximately parallel to Route 37, extending across the study area between Lakehurst at its western end and the Toms River and Barnegat ROW in Holiday City Berkeley at its eastern end. It is an at-risk ROW, meaning that it has not been through the U.S. Department of Transportation, Surface Transportation Board’s (STB) Abandonment Process, is owned by freight or passenger railroad companies, and has been out of service (not had traffic) for two or more years. Conrail owns a portion of the ROW from Lakehurst past Germania Station (Ciba-Geigy Crossing) to the Parkway and to the river. East of the study area, the portion between the Park and Ride and South Main Street in South Toms River is owned by Toms River and is planned as a walk and bike connection to downtown Toms River and the Ocean County Barnegat Branch bike trail.

According to an NJ TRANSIT study, the Toms River Branch ROW contains the potential site that would be most suitable for a train storage yard for any of the three proposed Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (MOM) rail passenger service alternatives. Preserving a means of access to the site is viewed as critically important for any potential future MOM service.

**Toms River and Barnegat**

This ROW begins at the eastern end of the Toms River Branch ROW and runs southeast across the study area. It is abandoned, and due to its abandonment, this ROW is not considered to have significant potential for future transit use.

**Southern Secondary**

This at-risk ROW, owned by NJ Transit, forms the western boundary of the study area. It runs north-south and the portion south of Lakehurst is being used for sand mining operations and freight service. North of Lakehurst, a section runs to Red Bank. Starting in 1996, NJ Transit began



*Passengers boarding Ocean Ride*

evaluating the possibility of using portions of this ROW to expand passenger service from Lakehurst to New York Penn Station. Three primary alignments were analyzed:

- Lakehurst to Red Bank
- Lakehurst to Matawan
- Lakehurst to Monmouth Junction

### **Philadelphia and Long Branch**

This abandoned ROW forms the southern boundary of the study area. Because it is abandoned, it is not considered to have significant potential for future transit use. This ROW may ultimately form the northern leg (from

Whiting to South Toms River) of a large “triangle” of three connected trails. However, the ROW no longer exists east of the study area from South Toms River to Pine Beach.

### **TRAILS**

#### **Ocean County Barnegat Branch Trail**

This rail-trail in Ocean County is intended to be 15.6 miles long and run from Barnegat Township north to Toms River Township. Currently, 9 miles of the trail are complete. The existing trail runs from Barnegat to Beachwood, with two gaps in portions of Lacey and Berkeley Townships. Beachwood Borough already maintains a one mile stretch of trail west of Berkeley. Options

are under consideration for the remaining small section in South Toms River since it is in private ownership.

There is a plan to extend the trail west into the study area along the Toms River Barnegat ROW, from South Main Street in South Toms River to the Park & Ride in Toms River. This would create a walk and bike connection between downtown Toms River and the Ocean County Barnegat Branch bike trail.

#### **Golden Triangle Trail**

The Golden Triangle Trail is planned as a network of three trails. The Barnegat Branch trail forms the eastern leg. The second (western) leg would run along the former Tuckerton Railroad from Whiting southeast to Tuckerton Junction. The third leg, the north leg, would run from Whiting in the west to South Toms River in the east using the Philadelphia and Long Branch ROW, which forms the southern boundary of the study area. There is also interest in extending the ‘northern leg’ further east. However, the portion of the ROW between South Toms River and Pine Beach, immediately east of the study area, no longer exists. There is a one mile section of trail constructed in Pine Beach Borough. Further east, many portions of the ROW have been lost until the Good Luck Point section in Berkeley Township, which goes through protected lands.



*The Toms River Branch ROW runs east-west parallel to Route 37, extending across the entire study from Lakehurst to the Park and Ride lot in Downtown Toms River.*

## PLANNING AND ZONING ASSESSMENT

The study area spans four municipalities: Toms River Township; Manchester Township; Berkeley Township; and Lakehurst Borough.

### PLANNING

The following subsection highlights relevant information supporting the goals of the Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan from the master plans of Ocean County and the municipalities of the study area:

- Ocean County Master Plan
- Toms River Master Plan
- Township of Manchester Master Plan
- Berkeley Township Land Use and Circulation Elements

### OCEAN COUNTY MASTER PLAN

The Ocean County Comprehensive Master Plan was adopted on December 21, 2011. The county is one of four coastal New Jersey counties, has the longest stretch of coastal beaches, and includes 33 municipalities. The county is about 60 miles south of New York City and about 50 miles east of Philadelphia. Although influenced by these cities, the County is moving toward a more independent identity, with increasing employment and educational opportunities. Over much of the last four decades, Ocean

County was the fastest growing county in the State, growing 1,644% from 1930 to 2010. Over 23% of Ocean County’s 2010 population is 65 and older. Many of the seniors in Ocean County are concentrated in Berkeley Township. Toms River has the second highest population in the County, Manchester has the fifth, and Berkeley has the sixth.

### ***Economic Planning & Workforce Development***

Ocean County gained more than 65,000 new residents from 2000 to 2010. The County’s largest and fastest growing age group is 25-44 year-olds, which will increase the demand for high-salary jobs. The second and third largest age groups are 45-64 year-olds and 65 and older, which will also grow in size, resulting in greater demand for health care. However, Ocean County has the second lowest weekly wage rate in the state and the highest commuter rate, which is due to the insufficient number of higher skilled jobs at the local level.

The Ocean County Master Plan identifies the Route 37 Corridor as a prime location for the development of a federal technology corridor, in support of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Engineering and research jobs on the Lakehurst portion of the base currently pay an average salary of \$98,000, which makes Lakehurst one

of the highest paying employment clusters in the county. Opportunities for federal contractors working with the base, should be encouraged on the corridor to provide additional higher wage jobs.

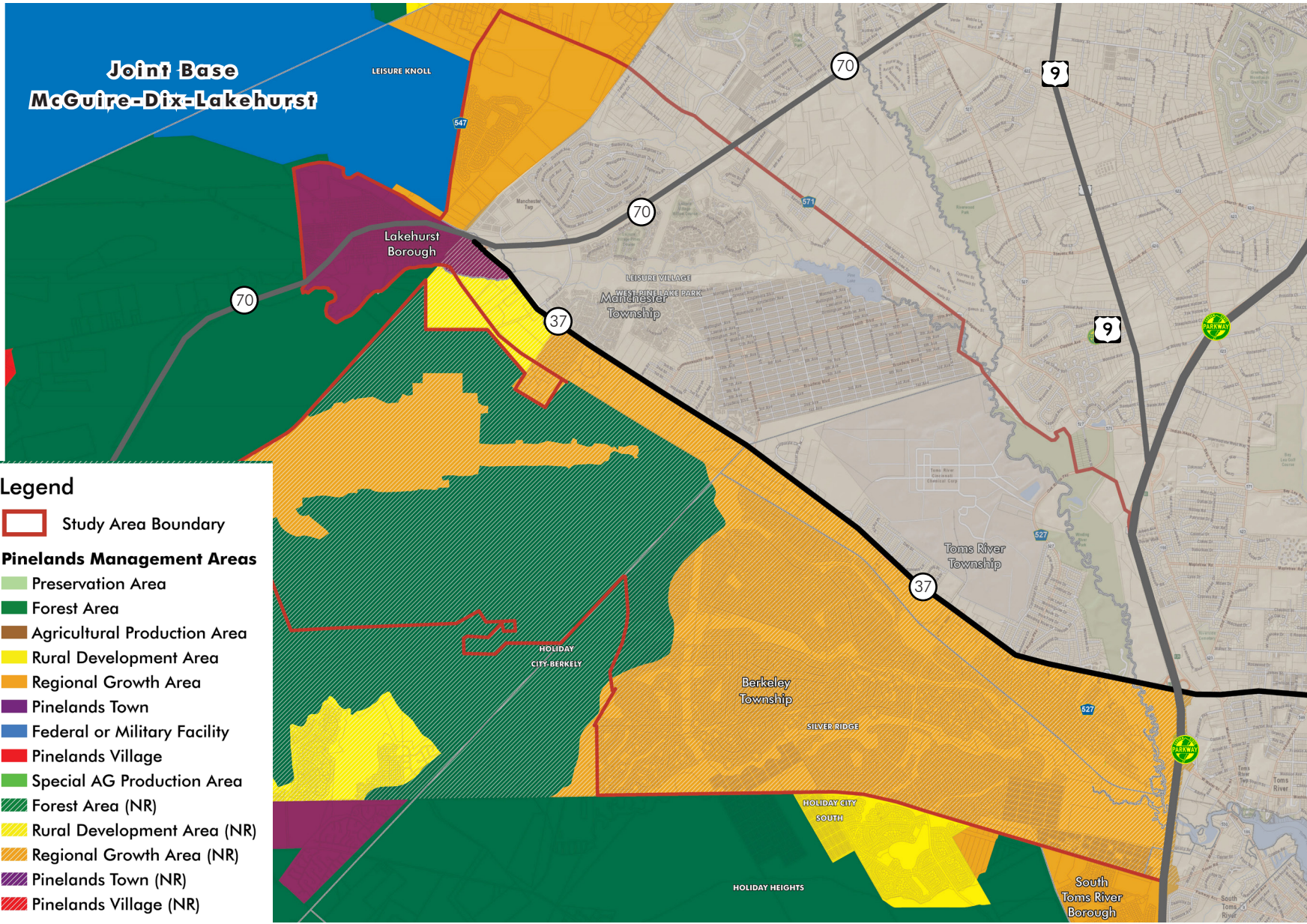
The plan also recommends a regional approach to determining the future use of the 1,200 acre BASF / Ciba property, which is located in close proximity to the Garden State Parkway and has direct rail access.

Currently, Ocean County has partnered with NJIT’s Defense Procurement Technical Assistance Center (DPTAC) in Newark to establish the “Doing Business with the Military” seminars to train local businesses on the federal procurement process. A satellite DPTAC office could be established in the County for onsite assistance to federal contractors.

### ***Transportation and Mobility***

The Garden State Parkway (GSP) is the major north-south arterial roadway in Ocean County, extending 40 miles from Brick Township to Little Egg Harbor Township. It provides connections to the state’s major east-west arterials including Interstates 195 and 287, the NJ Turnpike and the Atlantic City Expressway. However, the GSP requires all north bound truck traffic to exit onto Route 18 at Exit 105. This is a key challenge for economic development and local trucking-based





**Legend**

- Study Area Boundary
- Pinelands Management Areas**
- Preservation Area
- Forest Area
- Agricultural Production Area
- Rural Development Area
- Regional Growth Area
- Pinelands Town
- Federal or Military Facility
- Pinelands Village
- Special AG Production Area
- Forest Area (NR)
- Rural Development Area (NR)
- Regional Growth Area (NR)
- Pinelands Town (NR)
- Pinelands Village (NR)

Pinelands Management Areas

businesses. Industrial and other trucking-based industries tend to locate in those parts west closer to Burlington County, partially because of Route 295 and the NJ Turnpike. Lack of commercial and freight access is a challenge to economic development in the corridor. Route 70 and county highways serving the area are limited in their capacity to provide effective access to Philadelphia and North Jersey.

The average travel time to work according to the 2006-2008 CTPP survey is 31 minutes, reflecting the high number of commuters out of Ocean County and the limited transportation alternatives available to residents. Additional transportation modes will be pursued as noted elsewhere in this report. Physical design standards can also improve connections between residences and employment areas, and thereby improve traffic flow. Some options available are:

- Complete Streets Policy
- Walkable Communities, Safe Routes to Schools, Safe Routes to Transit, Transit Villages and Rails-to-Trails.
- Improvements in signage and design standards at gateways into downtowns or other clustered development to provide better awareness of pedestrian movements and slower traffic volumes.

All transportation projects should take into consideration:

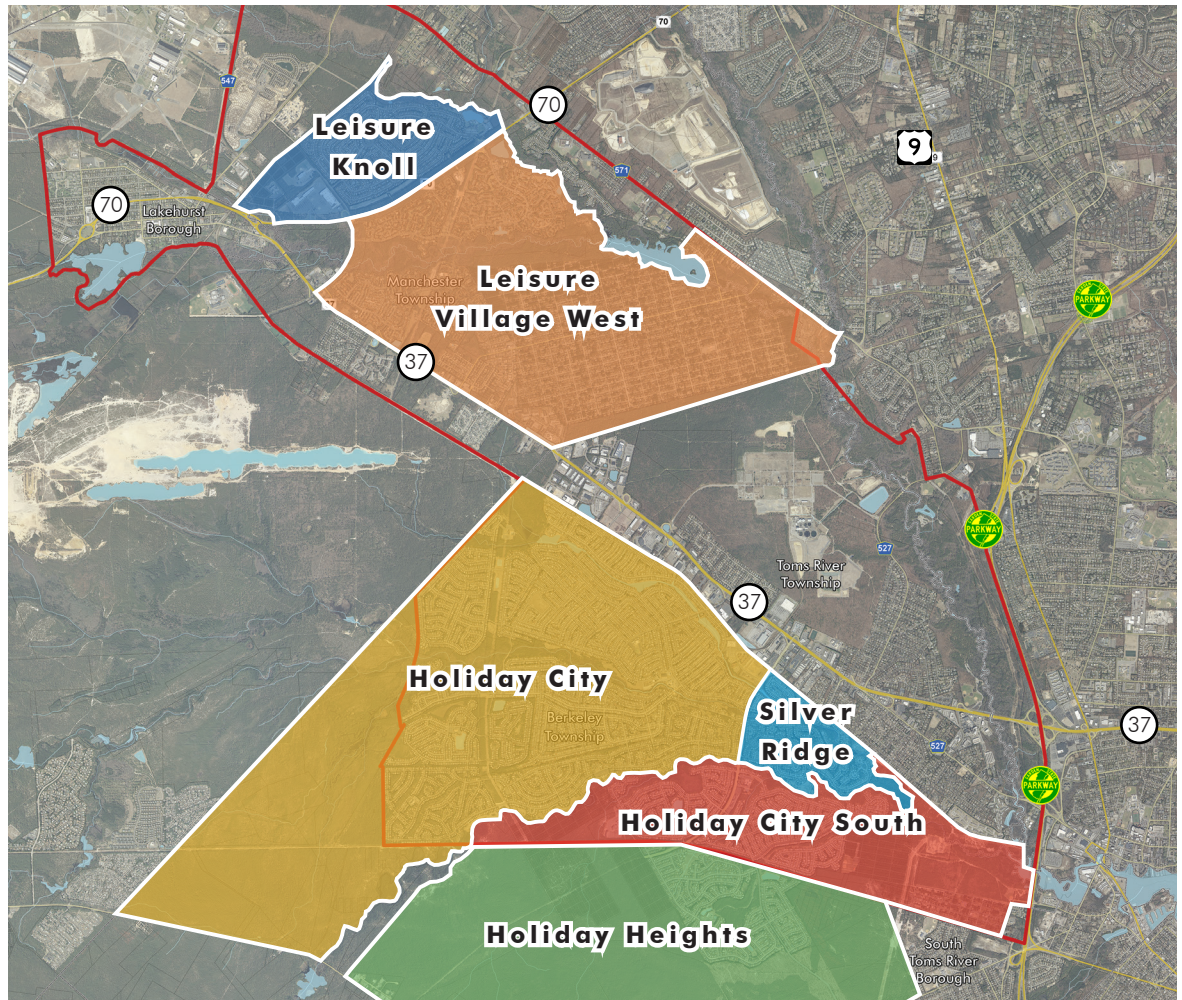
- Integration with surrounding land uses to ease congestion
- Smart growth principals such as walkability and form-based codes

- Systems connectivity, such as bike paths and bus stops to and from key destinations, such as rail
- Goods movement through truck routing to lease local impacts while supporting industry
- Environmental considerations and lowering

greenhouse gas emissions

**Adult Communities**

More than one fifth of the County’s population is 65 and older and there are 90 adult communities in the County, which contain about 65,000



A substantial portion of the Study Area and environs includes senior retirement villages.



dwelling units. Manchester Township has the most adult communities in Ocean County, and Berkeley Township has the largest adult community of Holiday City. There is currently more supply than demand for this housing type.

### **Affordable Housing**

Most affordable housing is provided through the 1985 NJ Fair Housing Act which sets “fair share” obligations for each municipality. The housing obligations must be included in a housing element of municipal master plans. Toms River has had one of the highest fair share obligations due to its high growth rate, and has provided thousands of low to moderate income housing units.

Local housing authorities have the powers designated in New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. These generally include: plan, construct, and operate housing communities; distribute housing choice vouchers, mortgage assistance, and other financing; and provide emergency housing. Ocean County has three public housing authorities: Lakewood Housing Authority, Brick Housing Authority and Berkeley Housing Authority. As of 2010, these authorities and other programs had a combined total of 7,637 individuals on their existing waiting lists. However, as of 2010, there were only 606 assisted housing units in the County.

While market rate housing is generally more affordable in Ocean County relative to other regions in the Together North Jersey region, the lack of affordable housing choices that are further inland and mass transportation alternatives are also problems. The reliance of automobiles of residents of the municipalities in the study area makes housing less affordable overall due to the added cost of commuting by car.

Additional affordable housing options in the area include mobile home and manufactured home communities.

### **Design**

In Ocean County, large scale retail sites currently lack design improvements, such as larger walkways with pedestrian scale lighting, benches and seating areas, bike facilities and modern bus shelters. The plan also recommends that county municipalities should consider multiple story buildings, which provide opportunities to incorporate mixed uses, such as residential, office and retail. Furthermore, pedestrian and bicycle needs should also be considered in the design of sidewalks, paths, signage, seating, lighting and bike parking areas.

### **TOMS RIVER MASTER PLAN**

The Toms River Master Plan was adopted in October 2006 (when the township was still

officially named the Township of Dover) and was last updated in May 2009. Major goals of the Master Plan include preserving remaining open space, particularly waterways, and focusing on revitalizing Historic Downtown Toms River. The Township also identified creating a more unified design theme for the Township that would better link the downtown with the rest of the Township as a goal.

Specifically related to the portion of Toms River located within the study area, the Master Plan addresses the following:

### **Route 37**

The Master Plan identifies as a goal to “coordinate with NJDOT and neighboring municipalities to identify strategic improvements and long-term solutions that coordinate traffic flow with land use, particularly along heavily traveled roads such as...Route 37”. The Plan notes that while the Route 37 corridor is almost entirely developed with both small and large scale commercial uses, many businesses are run-down, poorly maintained, or not developed to their full potential, presenting many opportunities for infill development and redevelopment along the corridor.

The Master Plan also expressed concern about non-residential uses along the Route 37 corridor encroaching into ‘viable’ residential

neighborhoods. Finally, the Master Plan set as a goal improving public transportation throughout the Township, which is viewed as critical to serve the large senior citizen population. The Master Plan recommended several zoning changes along Route 37 in the study area, most of which have since been put into effect.

Other recommendations related to the Route 37 corridor include:

- Improve traffic flow.

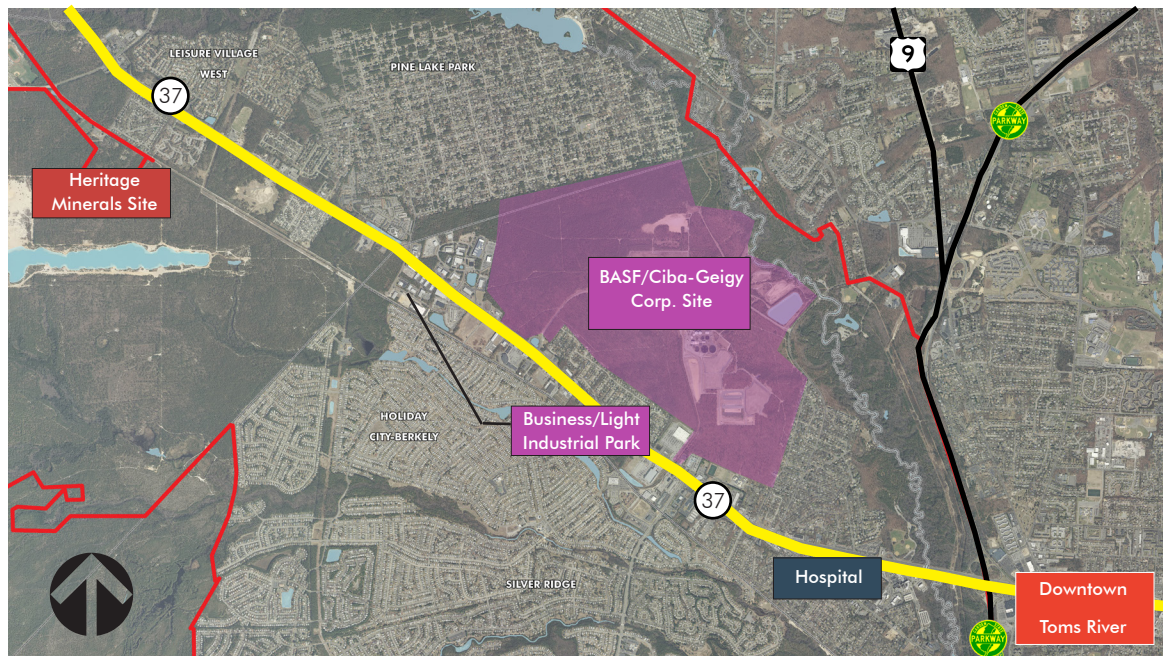
- Encourage the further development and use of mass transit and provide better information on available transit service.
- Promote the introduction of rail passenger service to Ocean County through connection to the Northeast Corridor at Monmouth Junction.
- Require sidewalks and curbing in all new construction and renovation projects on public streets. In addition, the Master Plan indicates a desire to develop biking and walking trails and greenways throughout the Township.

## TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER MASTER PLAN

Originally adopted in 1993, the Township of Manchester Master Plan was last revised on December 5, 2011. At 82.5 square miles, Manchester Township has the second largest land area in Ocean County. About 73 percent of the Township is regulated by the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, which limits future development.

As of 2010, Manchester Township has the highest median age in New Jersey, 65 years old. The town is also characterized by a comparatively lower household income due to the high level of retired persons. Developing vacant land in the Route 571 Ridgeway area and the large contiguous tracts of land south of Route 37 could significantly increase the town’s population. However, the full impact of new development will depend on the type of development, economic factors, water and sewer allocation and environmental issues.

The Heritage Minerals property is the largest undeveloped land on the eastern end of the corridor. In 2014, Manchester Township formally declared this property as an “Area in Need of Redevelopment”. Currently, the site has approvals for over 2,000 Age-Restricted Residential Units. However, due to changing market conditions and a desire for more mixed use development, the developer and the town have reached an



## 36 ROUTE 37 ECONOMIC CORRIDOR VISION PLAN

agreement in principle to pursue a mixed-use town center development with a variety of housing stock.

As plans are currently in the conceptual phase, there is a unique opportunity to integrate the goals of the Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan into many aspects of the development. The Standing Implementation Committee for this plan should closely coordinate with the developer and the Township of Manchester to ensure that there are adequate multi-modal connections to Route 37 and the parallel rail right-of-way.

Because many aspects of the previous approved development have changed, the developer will need to secure a number of regulatory approvals and amendments. These steps have been initiated and would continue during the early implementation phase of the Route 37 Economic Corridor Plan.

### **Open Space and Recreation**

The central goals of Manchester Township's Open Space and Recreation Vision are listed below:

- Permanently preserve at least 10,000 acres of open space
- Create open space buffers (or greenways) around existing development to preserve scenic landscape features, prevent urban sprawl and provide passive recreation opportunities
- Construct a community center (or two smaller centers) to hold local events and provide an

indoor recreation space, and construct at least three additional sports fields on Township owned property

- Require recreation facilities as necessary improvements associated with residential subdivisions
- Work with the Pinelands and County to preserve a system of greenway links to public parks and Township heritage sites
- Transform the former New Jersey Southern Branch railroad right-of-way into a bicycle and pedestrian trail

### **BERKELEY TOWNSHIP LAND USE AND CIRCULATION ELEMENTS**

Berkeley Township is a suburban coastal community with approximately 35 miles of

shoreline, with about 10 miles of oceanfront, 18 miles of bay frontage and 7 miles of creek, stream and river frontage. About 19,500 acres in Berkeley are within the Pinelands National Reserve and about 10,310 acres fall under the Pinelands Commission. The housing stock is predominately single-family homes with a number of housing developments on lagoons. There are a significant number of second homes that are utilized during the summer.

The Township has three distinct areas:

- The Pinelands
- The Eastern Mainland
- The Barrier Island



*With few exceptions, zoning ordinances in the study area do not accommodate mixed uses creating a sprawling development pattern.*

## Vision 2020

By year 2020, the Township aims to be a comfortable mix of quality residential neighborhoods with convenient shopping and employment opportunities, defined by an extensive open space system. The Township plans to reverse the trend towards sprawl by adopting more progressive planning practices like retrofitting strip-type development into concentrated mixed-use alternatives, promoting infill development, developing a defined Town Center and maximizing circulation and mobility options. Berkeley's goals deal mostly with creating a more compact town developed to the human scale in order to create a place that is more accessible and accommodating for a diverse set of lifestyles and age groups. The town would also like to provide additional transportation modes, such as public transportation, bikeways and pedestrian ways, and a comprehensive open space system with opportunities for passive and active recreation.



*The master plans call for some mixed use development including infill and the retrofit of existing strip centers.*

## ZONING

Current zoning ordinances of the municipalities in the study area support low density development with relatively uniform land uses. Toms River Township and Berkeley Township are impacted by CAFRA. Toms River Township and Berkeley both have barrier island communities, bay communities, and inland communities. CAFRA regulations are the main hurdle in developing the Toms River Route 37 section. The 1999 Coastal Designated Centers were set to expire December 15, 2014. DEP took action to extend the existing rules without change for a seven-year term, but has yet to act upon the proposed substantive changes to the Coastal regulations published June 2, 2014. Toms River does not have substantive certification from the state.

Portions of Manchester and Berkeley are in Pinelands Regional Growth Areas and Preservation Areas. Toms River Township does have a small area that lies in the Pinelands jurisdiction that lies outside of the study area. There are some growth permitted, but much of the zoning is directed at conserving open spaces and limiting the density of development. A vast majority of the study area is zoned to accommodate age-restricted housing, and as a result a large proportion of the area is developed as retirement communities.

There are a few zoning ordinances that are different than the typical zoning patterns of the area. Manchester Township has passed a Town Center ordinance (TC Town Center) that aims to "create a cohesive environment...with a strong visual identity, physically linked by pedestrian

connections, plazas, or other amenities, and related by a single theme". Berkeley Township has a Redevelopment Plan zone that supports single-family affordable housing.

Toms River Industrial Zone contains the Ciba-Geigy site. There are many allowed (industrial) uses in this zone: research and testing laboratories, manufacturing and fabrication, food and beverage processing and packaging, warehousing, wholesaling and distribution facilities, contractor supply yards, bulk storage of fuel, vehicle repair garages, public buildings, public utilities, private clubs, hotels or motels containing 100+ units, child-care centers, offices, medical and dental clinics, and adult-care centers. Retail and restaurant uses are permitted only on properties with frontage on Route 37 (except where they primarily serve workers, such as office cafeterias). However, development in this zone is confined to a relatively low density.

With few exceptions, zoning ordinances in the study area do not accommodate a mixture of commercial and residential uses on smaller parcels. This type of zoning creates a sprawling development pattern that promotes the automobile at the expense of the pedestrian and cyclist. Reflecting on the highlighted goals of the master plans stated in the previous section that seek to enhance the pedestrian and cyclists experience, create town centers and encourage well-designed mixed-use developments, the character of current zoning practices is inadequate.

**BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST MASTER PLAN REXAMINATION**

The Borough of Lakehurst prepared a Master Plan Rexamination in 2008 of the 2002 Master Plan Update. Lakehurst is located at the convergence of two major highways, routes 70 & 37 west.

Only 7% of the Borough is developed as commercial and industrial uses, comprising only 15.7% of total tax ratables in the Borough, and only forty (40) acres. Publicly held lands make up the largest segment of land use in the Borough, over 230 acres. Of the 70 plus acres of privately owned vacant lands in the Borough more than 80% of that acreage is environmentally constrained land. Approximately 26% of the Borough is residential comprised of single and two family homes.

Objectives and Specific Plans within the 2008 Master Plan Rexamination related to the Rt 37 Corridor are listed below:

Objectives from Master Plan:

- To provide the opportunity for new business and industrial areas advantageously situated in relation to local and regional circulation systems.
- Encourage appropriate development of the Lakehurst Circle and the Route 37 and Route 70 highway corridors, the gateways to Lakehurst.

Specific Plans to encourage private re-investment in the Borough’s commercial and residential neighborhoods:

- The Borough wants to continue to support and encourage their vision of a “Transit Village.” The Borough plans on preparing a preliminary plan for application to NJ Transit for designation as a Transit Village.
- To add a Redevelopment Overlay Zone onto Block 23, Lot 1.01, previously utilized by the Borough as a Landfill, and adopt a Redevelopment Plan for that lot.
- Rezone parcels located along Routes 37 & 70 from R-2 residential to B-2 Highway



**PHASE 2:**  
WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?



## REAL ESTATE MARKET TRENDS AND SUPPLY/DEMAND ANALYSIS

### OFFICE MARKET TRENDS

Along the Route 37 corridor new office space development will come from medical office space demand, which is experiencing the fastest growth among all office segments nationally, due to an aging population. However, almost half of the new office space demand along the corridor over the next five to 10 years could be met by the approximately 22,500 square feet of office space currently available for sale, or 65,000 square feet available for lease. Therefore, strategies must be developed for adaptively reusing office space throughout Ocean County for in-demand office uses before pushing new speculative office space. However, further analysis is necessary to determine if certain buildings need to be demolished to make reuse economically feasible.

From 2009 to 2013, effective office rents in Ocean County increased by four percent, and they are projected to increase by 19 percent over the next five years. However, as of May 2014, the average rent for available office space within the study area was lower than that within the larger Ocean County submarket, suggesting a lower premium for office space within the Study Area.

### RETAIL MARKET TRENDS

The Route 37 Study Area is almost fully developed. Along Route 37 there are major shopping centers, big retailers, and chain stores; and small shops and boutiques can be found in Toms River. However, a number of retail stores are observed to be physically and/or economically obsolescent. Therefore, new demand for retail services will principally be for the replacement of older-format stores, as the

area can only support a limited amount of new retail space.

Non-family and older empty nesters are becoming the largest patrons of local retail stores along Route 37. Research suggests senior households typically spend less on certain retail categories than younger households due to lifestyle needs, healthcare costs, and fixed income streams. Also, a shortage of affordably priced



OFFICE SUBMARKET

multifamily housing and limited living wage employment opportunities necessary to attract younger households may cause the corridor to experience increasing vacancies in larger retail categories, such as clothing and furniture. An inventory of retail centers most likely to become economically obsolescent over the next five years is highly recommended for all municipal planning departments in the Study Area.

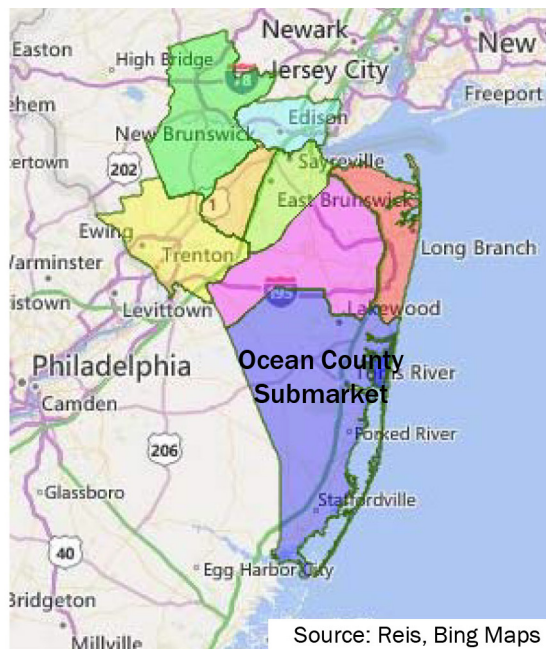
According to May 2014 data from Loopnet.com, the average asking price for available community retail space within the study area (under \$10) was lower than that within the larger Ocean County submarket (over \$20), suggesting a lower premium for retail space within the study area. Also, older centers with vacant anchors and in-line shops are likely in need of major renovations in order to remain competitive. Moreover, in May 2014 there were only two retail properties for

sale in the Study Area, one in Berkeley Township and one in Lakehurst Borough, with an average asking price of \$315k per acre as of May 2014.

On average, households within the Route 37 Study Area spend only 71 percent of what the New York metropolitan areas (Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area, or PMA) households spend and 80 percent of what Monmouth and Ocean County (Metropolitan Statistical Area or MSA) households spend annually on local retail goods and services. However, the trend varies across retail categories. While study area households spend 11 percent less within clothing and accessory stores, they spend six percent more in other general merchandise stores.

The study area, PMA and MSA all experienced an overall “leakage: of retail sales, according to 2013 ESRI, suggesting that existing residents are leaving each trade area to purchase retail goods and services elsewhere. Specifically within the Route 37 Study Area, 19 percent of household demand for retail goods and services is purchased outside of the study area.

By 2024, under a flat growth assumption, the study area will continue to be undersupplied in most retail goods and services. The only retail subcategories with sufficient demand to support



Source: Reis, Bing Maps



## RETAIL SUBMARKET

the development of new retail stores are full-services and limited-service eating places, grocery stores, health and personal care stores, and clothing stores. However, new retail development along the Route 37 corridor should be initiated with caution due to the lingering effects of the economic downturn, significant demographic shifts, and the growing prominence of on-line shopping.

The study area municipalities should consider adapting current retail zoning to re-envision existing greyfields into mixed-use development properties. Although proposed mixed-use development has increased within Ocean County in recent years, there has been no new mixed-use development proposed within the Study Area towns Lakehurst Borough, Berkeley Township and Toms River Township.

**INDUSTRIAL MARKET TRENDS**

According to the Ocean County Department of Planning, the number of square feet of industrial space in the development pipeline within Ocean County has fluctuated widely over the past decade, remaining relatively flat in recent years. Furthermore, only seven percent of the total industrial space proposed for Ocean County in 2013 was located within the Study Area.

Research and Development (R&D) and flex

industrial buildings are growing in popularity due to their ability to support a hybrid of office, manufacturing and warehouse space in a single location.

By 2018, an additional 175,000 square feet of R&D is predicted in Ocean County and vacancy rates are predicted to decline to less than six percent, which is a sign of a strengthening R&D market submarket. According to May 2014 data from Loopnet.com, the average rental price for available R&D space within the study area was lower than within the larger Ocean County submarket, suggesting a lower premium for R&D space within the study area.

The Economic Planning and Workforce Development chapter of the Ocean County Master Plan recognizes that highway corridors like Route 37 have potential to accommodate new green technology businesses or other growth industries looking for warehouse and manufacturing space with highway and freight access. These industries have potential to provide new living wage job opportunities, help meet the local demand for affordable workforce housing, and bring additional tax revenue locally. These sites, along with the Ocean County College Campus and the old Ciba-Geigy property in Toms River, provide opportunities to create satellite educational campus locations for New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), Rutgers,

Stevens Institute or other colleges/universities necessary to prepare local residents for existing and new higher-wage job opportunities. However, the hurdles to redeveloping of industrial sites are local politics and existing zoning.

Developing the 600 acres of clean land on the Ciba-Geigy site provide an opportunity to bring additional jobs and property tax revenue into the



**R&D SUBMARKET**

Source: Reis, Bing Maps



area. The property is located on Route 37, is in close proximity to the Garden State Parkway and has direct Conrail access connecting Toms River to points north via Lakehurst. The freight access can accommodate the transportation of materials to and from the Lakewood Industrial Park, and nearby warehouse and manufacturing space would allow start-up and relocating companies to save costs and time on goods shipment. Therefore, the study area municipalities should consider evolving current industrial zoning to

ensure that existing industrial opportunity sites can be repurposed sufficiently in order to attract new green technology businesses or other growth industries. Also, in order to prevent future legal and political issues, industrially zoned properties should be designated in areas far from residential development.

R&D space requirements will expand substantially if base growth initiatives succeed. Also, the creation of a Joint Land Use (JLU) initiative should be explored. In a JLU agreement, a corporate entity constructs commercial facilities on leased government land. The lease cost is minimal and there are no property tax requirements. The space can be leased commercially or to the government at minimal cost. In the event new mission is brought to the base, this can be housed in JLU leased space until the government allocated funds are available for on base facilities. This approach could allow the corridor to be more competitive and responsive in attracting new mission to the Joint Base.



*Rt. 37 has warehouse and manufacturing space that could allow start-up and relocating companies space to expand within the corridor.*

## FOCUS GROUPS & STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The Project Team conducted nine focus group workshops as part of the community outreach component of the Plan. These meetings allowed participants to offer economic development, mobility, education, housing, and environmental goals and objectives while sharing their respective experiences in the corridor. Participants filled out a short survey form and were engaged in a round-table discussion about issues and ideas for the Study Area.

The focus group sessions included:

### July 14th

Seniors  
Manufacturers and Industry  
Business Community

### July 15th

Education and Workforce Development  
Housing  
Environment

### July 17th

Transportation  
Healthcare

### July 22th

NAVAIR

A detailed summary and the full results of the focus group sessions and outreach events can be found in Appendix C.



CONNECTING PEOPLE, PLACES, AND POTENTIAL.

ROUTE 37 ECONOMIC CORRIDOR VISION PLAN  
Toms River Township; Manchester Township; Berkeley Township; & Lakehurst Borough, Ocean County

**GIVE US YOUR IDEAS.**

**WE NEED YOUR INPUT!**

### FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

**JULY 14TH**  
**SENIORS, 10 - 11:30 AM**  
TOMS RIVER SENIOR CENTER  
652 GARFIELD AVE.  
TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY

**MANUFACTURING/INDUSTRY & TOURISM, 2:30- 4PM**  
HIRSHBLOND ROOM  
TOMS RIVER TOWN HALL

**BUSINESS COMMUNITY, 4:30-6PM**  
HIRSHBLOND ROOM  
TOMS RIVER TOWN HALL

TOMS RIVER TOWN HALL IS LOCATED AT  
33 WASHINGTON STREET  
TOMS RIVER, NEW JERSEY

PARKING IS AVAILABLE AT THE PARKING GARAGE BEHIND THE TOWN HALL

**JULY 15TH**  
**EDUCATION/WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, 10:30-NOON**  
LOMELL ROOM  
TOMS RIVER TOWN HALL

**HOUSING, 12:30-2PM**  
LOMELL ROOM  
TOMS RIVER TOWN HALL

**ENVIRONMENT, 2:30-4PM**  
LOMELL ROOM  
TOMS RIVER TOWN HALL

**JULY 17TH**  
**TRANSPORTATION, 10:30 - NOON**  
HOME TOWN DAIRY ROOM, OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY  
101 WASHINGTON STREET, TOMS RIVER, NJ

**HEALTH CARE, 12:30 - 2:00PM**  
HOME TOWN DAIRY ROOM, OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY  
101 WASHINGTON STREET, TOMS RIVER, NJ

The RT. 37 ECONOMIC CORRIDOR VISION PLAN is a collaborative effort to pursue recommendations for a nearly six-mile long corridor through four municipalities. The communities along the corridor include Toms River Township, Manchester Township, Berkeley Township and Lakehurst Borough. These targeted focus groups are needed to help assess local and regional economic, housing, transportation, and environmental assets and to help identify potential opportunities and constraints within the corridor. These focus groups also help build local partnerships and collaborations between concerned citizens, community leaders, government agencies, the business community and non-profit groups along the way.

This project is a Local Demonstration Project (LDP), part of a larger regional planning initiative, crafting the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, which Together North Jersey has launched pursuant to HUD's Sustainable Communities program. NJ TRANSIT, a member of the Together North Jersey, is providing one of its teams of on-call "Transit Friendly Planning" consultants for technical assistance for this project. Together North Jersey is a collaborative planning initiative currently underway in the 13-county North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority region of New Jersey.

[www.togethernorthjersey.com](http://www.togethernorthjersey.com)



*Business Community Focus Group*



*Transportation Focus Group*



*Environment Focus Group*

### Key Takeaways - Focus Groups

- Upgrade/repurpose obsolete commercial properties for mixed use development that includes housing
- Advocate for Joint Base & supportive industry and fight BRAC
- Use rail right-of-way as freight and/or transit corridor
- Create more diversity of housing types, particularly workforce housing & mixed use
- Balance redevelopment with opportunities for habitat restoration & preservation
- Target hotel and convention facility to serve Joint Base business and regional tourism
- Create eco-tourism “gateway” to Pinelands and the Shore
- Study consolidating senior community private shuttles
- Explore possible satellite campus locations to target higher-wage, growing workforce opportunities in engineering/R&D
- Use specialized training options to customize program for health, green industry, and tech training

## OPEN HOUSE AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### OPEN HOUSE WORKSHOP

An evening Open House Workshop was held at the main branch of the Ocean County Library in Downtown Toms River on July 30, 2014. The event was advertised with flyers, email distribution lists, postings on local websites and Facebook pages, and with a formal Together North Jersey media release through Rutgers University.

The workshop was an open house format where participants could drop-in any time between 5:00 pm and 8:00 pm to visit various exhibits structured by topic. At this meeting, the Project Team provided a general overview including the project goals and schedule, and information about the project implementation process. Participants were then asked to move around to topic-stations. Members of the Project Team were available at each station to discuss concerns, challenges, and priorities for the Study Area.

Workshop attendees were encouraged to provide input on issues and priorities by submitting survey forms as well as providing input at the stations which included:

**Meet & Greet** - Participants reviewed the Rt. 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan Goals and received information about the project and the Study Area.

**Economic Development**- Project team members asked participants to share their experiences with access to employment within the region, thoughts on what sort of growth should occur in the Corridor and their access to goods and other basic services.

**Mobility** - Participants were encouraged to share their experiences with safety and traffic concerns along the Corridor and other ideas for improved transit and transportation

**Housing** – Project team members shared some thoughts on strategies for housing in the Corridor and discussed with participants what sorts of housing needs they see for the area



CONNECTING PEOPLE, PLACES, AND POTENTIAL.

### RT. 37 ECONOMIC CORRIDOR VISION PLAN

Toms River Township; Manchester Township; Berkeley Township; & Lakehurst Borough, Ocean County

**GIVE US YOUR IDEAS.**

**WE NEED YOUR INPUT!**

#### OPEN HOUSE WORKSHOP

Drop in Any Time Between

**5:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
THURSDAY, JULY 31, 2014**

**MANCINI HALL  
Ocean County Library  
101 Washington St.  
Toms River, NJ 08753**

*Parking in rear (municipal parking deck) or on local streets.*



#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The ROUTE 37 ECONOMIC CORRIDOR VISION PLAN is a collaborative effort to pursue recommendations for a nearly six mile long corridor through four municipalities. The vision plan will assess local and regional economic, housing, transportation, and environmental assets and identify potential opportunities and constraints within the corridor.

The workshop is structured as a “drop-in” open house where the community-at-large can come at their convenience. At this meeting, the Project Team will provide a general project overview including the project goals and information about the Study Area. The workshop will allow participants to give the Project Team their thoughts and ideas for the Study Area. Participants can move around to various stations structured by topic including:

- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Housing
- Environment and Resiliency

*This project is a Local Demonstration Project (LDP), part of a larger regional planning initiative, crafting the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, which Together North Jersey has launched pursuant to HUD’s Sustainable Communities program. Together North Jersey is a collaborative planning initiative currently underway in the 13-county North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority region of New Jersey.*





Economic Development station at the Open House



Transportation station at the Open House

**Environmental & Open Space** - Participants were asked to share their ideas for improving environmental quality and sustainable infrastructure, as well as access to parks and open space in the region.

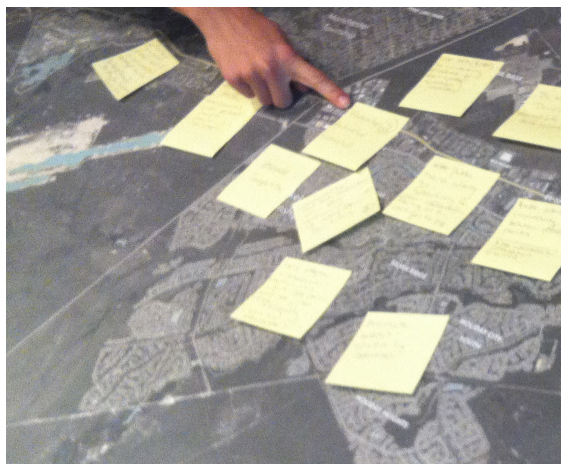
**Give Us Your Best Ideas** - Participants at the final station were encouraged to place Post-it notes on the large aerial photo with their best ideas and feedback for improving economic opportunities, as well as their opinions on mobility, housing, environment and education.

### **NJ STATE ICE CREAM FESTIVAL**

The project team hosted an information table with project information sheets, flyers, surveys and poster-size maps for the 12th annual NJ State Ice Cream Festival held in downtown Toms River. The event brought in more than 8,000 attendees to downtown Toms River, many of whom live or shop within the study area.

The information table was conveniently located in the heart of the activity of the festival among the tasting booths. While attendees waited in line for their ice cream, they had the opportunity to learn about the Rt. 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan and receive an invitation to attend the public open house.

The full results of all the outreach are included in Appendix C.



Participants making Post-it note comments



Project information table at the Ice Cream Festival



CONNECTING  
PEOPLE, PLACES,  
AND POTENTIAL.

**PHASE 3:**  
HOW DO WE GET THERE?



## RECOMMENDATIONS OVERVIEW

The Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan, through economic development strategies, seeks to tie all the regional assets together and explore how the municipalities and County can realign development patterns and change local land use policies to support an economic corridor. The Vision Plan includes recommendations for:

- Economic Development
- Education & Workforce Development
- Transportation & Mobility
- Housing
- Land Use & Environment

The following section outlines the planning and implementation recommendations developed during the evolution of the Vision Plan. A summary of the Planning Implementation Agenda (PIA) can be found at the end of this section. The full PIA with detailed steps, potential funding and partners can be found in Appendix A.

### INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP

USEPA's Region 2 Brownfields Program has partnered with the New Jersey Business Action Center's Office for Planning Advocacy, NJDEP, and the Center for Creative Land Recycling to form the Interagency Working Group (IAWG). The IAWG is comprised of a diverse group of

experienced state and federal agencies whose mission is to support New Jersey's brownfields redevelopment policies and the USEPA's Brownfields Economic Development Initiative. Using a proactive and problem solving team approach, the IAWG offers assistance, guidance and resources to municipalities and any of their redevelopment partners as the municipality navigates the complex road to brownfield redevelopment.

In June 2014, officials from Toms River Township made a presentation on the CIBA/BASF site and the Downtown Redevelopment areas to a meeting of IAWG. After the presentation, representatives of various state and Federal agencies offered ideas and opportunities for technical and financial assistance to the Township. Feedback from

that meeting was included in the Vision Plan recommendations.

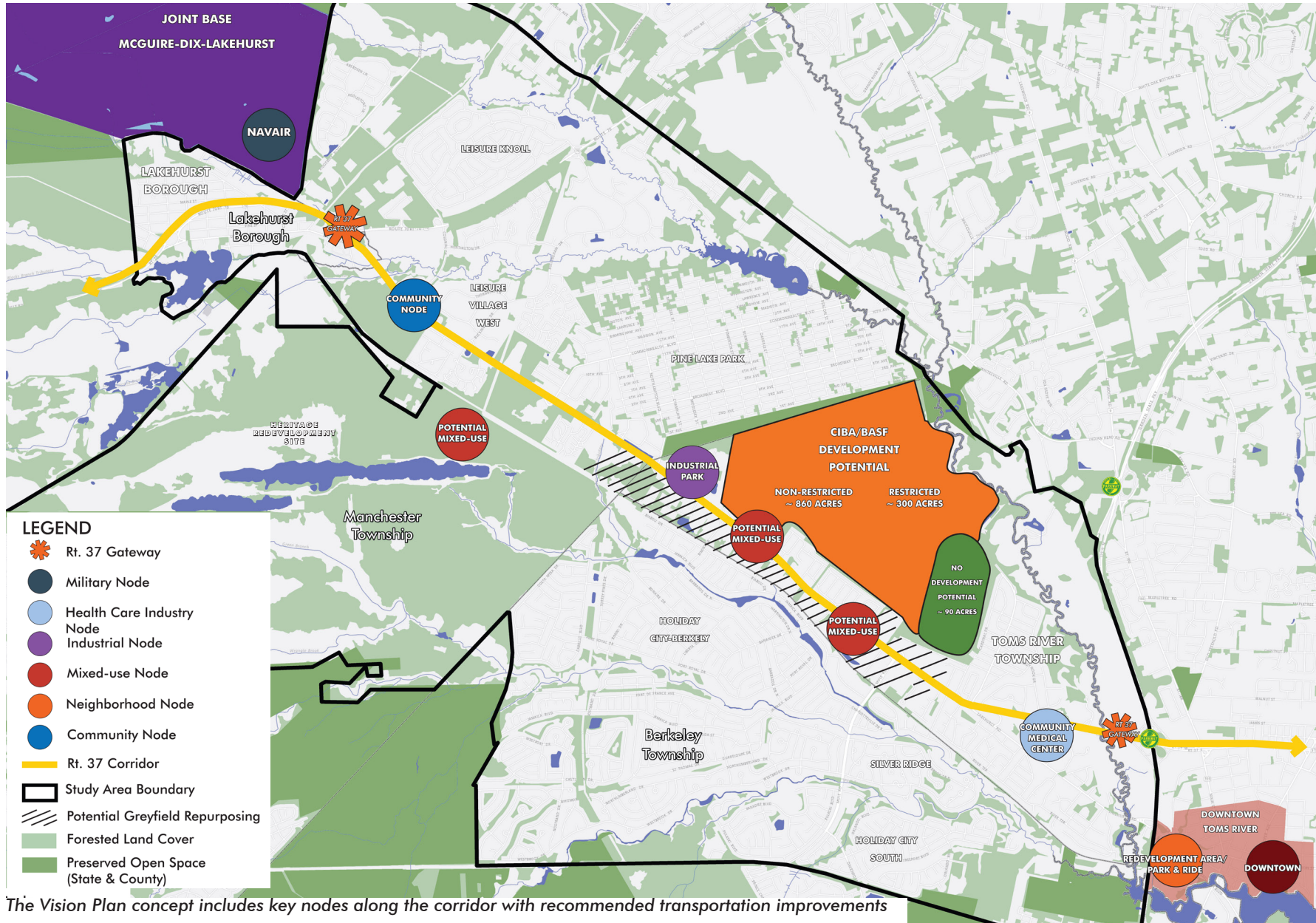
### WALK, TALK AND ACT

On July 31, 2014, the Project Team facilitated a State Agency "Walk, Talk and Act" event in the Study Area. The presentation and roundtable discussion was held at the Ocean County Library in Toms River, and the event included a bus tour of the Study Area.

Attendees included the Steering Committee and representatives of various state agencies, Ocean County, and North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority. The "Walk, Talk, and Act" tour presented an opportunity to share key challenges and recommendations with the group and to seek input on potential partnering and funding opportunities.



*The State Agency "Walk, Talk, and Act" tour included a presentation and roundtable discussion sharing key challenges and recommendations with the group and seeking input on potential partnering and funding opportunities.*



The Vision Plan concept includes key nodes along the corridor with recommended transportation improvements

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

### MIXED USE, GREYFIELD & RETAIL REPURPOSING

#### CORRIDOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

A key first step to advancing development is establishing a corridor economic development committee (EDC) to address the current gap in economic development leadership in the Route 37 Study Area. This overarching organization could build off of the Rt. 37 Steering Committee and would ensure stewardship of this plan, as well as consistency and accountability.

Additionally, as the study area traverses multiple jurisdictions, coordination at a higher, regional level is needed. An EDC would also serve to bring together representatives of various groups, including those interested in workforce development as well as local business and industry leaders.

#### MARKET ANALYSIS

A market analysis will provide information for the best use for repurposed buildings. The Study Area currently faces a leakage of retail sales, which suggests that existing residents are leaving the area to purchase retail goods and services elsewhere. Specifically within the Route 37 Study Area, 19 percent of household demand for retail goods and services is purchased outside of the study area.

While this leakage suggests a need for additional goods and services in the study area, the evolving retail landscape and the lingering effects of the recession and Hurricane Sandy may make new development tenuous. For the greatest chance of

success, further study is needed to properly target which goods and services are most needed.

#### ZONING FOR MIXED-USE

Zoning in the study area generally does not typically accommodate mixed use development, as many zoning codes were crafted in a time when land-use separation was convention. Mixed-use development can help address problems related to sprawl and automobile dependency, as people can live closer (generally within walking distance) to the goods and services they need on a regular basis. Due to these benefits associated with mixed



*Outdoor dining in a new mixed use project in Princeton, NJ*



*The local communities should explore zoning policies with an eye towards expanding mixed-use and multi-family residential opportunities to create active places both in downtown areas and in highway corridor redevelopment/repurposing. This example is of a mixed-use project in a suburban highway corridor outside of Atlanta.*

use zoning, local and county planning officials should rethink current zoning policies with an eye towards fostering mixed-use, multi-family residential, and small-service retail.

**REPURPOSE OBSOLETE PROPERTIES FOR MIXED USE**

There are now, and will be well into the future, a number of strip and community shopping center properties within the study area which will only be economically viable as mixed-use development properties. In order to avoid the large-scale blighting influences that empty or half-empty retail centers can become for communities, local municipalities should begin thinking about how these existing greyfields (including underperforming or closed large-format retail centers) should be redeveloped.

Municipal planning departments should inventory retail centers that are likely to become

economically obsolescent over the next five years in order to be ahead of the curve. There are a number of retail stores observed to be physically and/or economically obsolescent, or not developed to their full potential, presenting opportunities for redevelopment along the corridor.

Older centers with vacant anchors and in-line shops are likely in need of major renovations in order to remain competitive in today’s retail environment. Much of the commercial retail strip along Route 37 exists as a blight on the corridor.

**DOWNTOWN TOMS RIVER SUPPORT**

A redevelopment study has already been completed and incorporated into Toms River Township’s Master Plan. There should be continued support for this plan and the efforts of Downtown Toms River BID to program. Toms

River should take advantage of the work that has already been done, and continue with steps to revitalize downtown.

There is some additional housing being developed in the Downtown area and this should be supplemented to help activate the core area. Arts, cultural, and dining options, including nights and weekends, can help to capture Ocean County customers who otherwise drive to locations in Monmouth County for those draws.

Toms River Township is in the process of retaining a consulting firm to develop a Neighborhood Circulation Plan for the Downtown Toms River Redevelopment Area. The study will take 6 months to complete and is being funded by Post Sandy Planning Grants provided by the Department of Community Affairs. Outcomes from the study will further develop the draft redevelopment plan that has been proposed by the Toms River Business Improvement District.

- Create a standing Corridor Economic Development Committee
- Reexamine zoning for mixed-use and small-service retail
- Encourage the upgrade/repurpose obsolete commercial properties for mixed use development
- Conduct market analysis for Downtown and Corridor



*Older centers with vacant spaces can use some renovations and quality architectural and landscape updates to remain competitive in today’s retail environment.*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

### JOINT BASE SUPPORT, TECHNOLOGY & GREEN INDUSTRY

#### JOINT BASE ADVOCACY

The Joint Base is a primary economic driver in the area, offering job security and high wages. As mentioned in Section 1 of this report, however, the Joint Base is vulnerable to being closed in 2017 through BRAC. The Joint Base provides many economic benefits; for example, it is the second largest employer in the state and it creates opportunity for additional economic development. The Joint Base should be leveraged for additional economic development, and be valued and protected as an asset.

The presentation, “New Jersey Military Base Enhancement Coalitions Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and Pictatinny Arsenal: Leveraging Federal Employment for Economic Development, Revenue and Job Growth for New Jersey,” highlights that military bases in New Jersey are both an economic development opportunity and challenge. The report recommends support of the following military economic development goals:

- Diversify, educate and anchor all missions
- Bring tri-service, high-value missions to New Jersey bases with associated contractor support within the state
- Educate high school and college students with tools to support federal defense infrastructure

Recommended studies include:

- Joint Base Air Space Study
- Mission Risk Analysis (update monthly)
- Mission Opportunity Analysis (update monthly)
- Economic Impact Analysis for Each Mission Opportunity

#### TECH HUB FOR JOINT BASE

Due to the proximity of the Joint Base and relationship with NAVAIR, the Study Area is a good location for a manufacturing hub that could

capitalize on synergies that result when businesses are clustered. Manufacturing jobs are coming into greater demand, especially as the aging manufacturing workforce creates a need for replacement workers.

The NAVAIR facility is a world leader in aircraft launch, recovery, and support equipment. Creating a corridor or a campus that can develop and provide strategic services will help to grow the overall mission of the base and protect it from BRAC.

A Tech Hub with some key R&D facilities could support mission expansion which might include



*A tech incubator campus with an educational component can develop and provide strategic services that support the Joint Base.*



tri-service mobilization and deployment, joint technology for aviation ground support equipment, expeditionary airfield technology, and tri-service unmanned vehicle technology.

### **“GREEN TECH” CAMPUS**

The Ocean County Master Plan recognizes that alternative or green energy is one of the fastest growing industries in the economy, and the county wants to work with partners to advance development of green technology clean energy. Potential partners include NJIT, Rutgers, Stevens Institute of Technology, Ocean County College, Kean University, and New Jersey Natural Gas.

Areas of focus with potential for new green technology facilities and businesses include locations such as highway corridors like Route 37, existing industrial parks like the Lakewood Industrial Park or Toms River Corporate Park, the Ciba-Geigy site, the Ocean County College



*Clean energy systems can provide job opportunities for those working with green technology.*

Campus, or the Joint Base.

Funding is potentially available through the Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI), a statewide job development strategy that focuses on green occupations. Ocean County has pursued REDI grant funding for career training, education, and networking and contact services. Also, the county could look to federal government support, which has created grants to assist states, local governments, and the private sector to develop green technology and infrastructure.

There needs to be further study of the feasibility and market for this industry. The study should identify all the needs of this industry and focus areas within the green industry and R&D. Local municipalities can utilize that study to ensure that proper zoning is in place for a successful green technology campus.

### **CLEAN ENERGY & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

According to the Ocean County Master Plan, Ocean County was the first county in New Jersey to create an Energy Master Plan for its facilities. As sites are repurposed, there is opportunity to incorporate clean energy systems and green infrastructure.

As a region that suffered the devastating effects of Hurricane Sandy, resiliency should be a cornerstone in the thinking of the infrastructure regardless of the development type or use. The incorporation

of clean energy systems will benefit the community from an environmental standpoint, as well as provide job opportunities for those working in green technology.

Funding may be available from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA) Clean Energy Solutions (CES) program. This program provides low interest funding for businesses to incorporate clean and renewable energy solutions, manufacture clean energy products, or implement new green technology through workshops offered by the One-Stop System and at the Business Resource Center in Toms River. Additionally, the New Jersey Clean Energy Program (NJCEP) provides financial incentives, programs, and services which may benefit local municipalities and businesses.

- Advocate for Joint Base & supportive industry
- Create a Ciba-Geigy/BASF Redevelopment Plan
- Explore options for the reactivation of rail spur
- Encourage the development a “Green Tech” campus with focus on Clean Energy and Sustainable Technology
- Explore manufacturing hub to service and support Joint Base, NAVAIR
- Incorporate Clean Energy components to repurposed sites

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITE: CIBA-GEIGY/BASF

### CIBA/BASF REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Ciba-Geigy site is a major opportunity for redevelopment. Redeveloping the clean land on site provides an opportunity to bring additional jobs and property tax revenue into the area. Freight access and service at sites like Ciba-Geigy could accommodate the transportation of materials to and from the Joint-Base and the Lakewood Industrial Park. Having warehouse and manufacturing space nearby would also allow start-up and relocating companies to save costs and time on goods shipment.

Ongoing remediation is taking place in areas that faced contamination. Redevelopment could occur by separating out remediated areas, contamination areas, and clean areas that could qualify to be parkland.

A number of uses for the site have been suggested in various plans and focus groups. Some potential uses for the site include a satellite college campus, a site for light manufacturing, a mixed-use, mixed-generation, and mixed-income complex with a “downtown feel,” a potential site for a sports team or outlet shopping, a walkable transit village that connects to downtown and parks, a spa and fitness center, or a site for green technology and manufacturing. These concepts would need a real estate analysis for feasibility.

### Resolve tax appeal situation

BASF is currently in an appeal with Toms River Township on their taxes for the CIBA

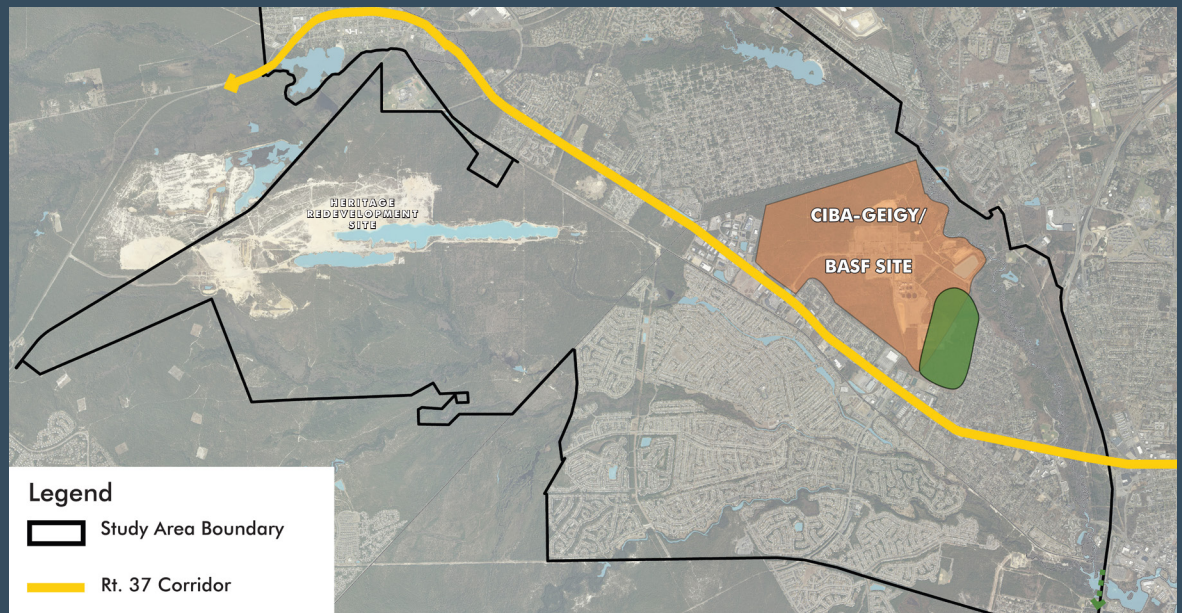
property. The dispute has caused advancing any redevelopment efforts on the property to be at a standstill.

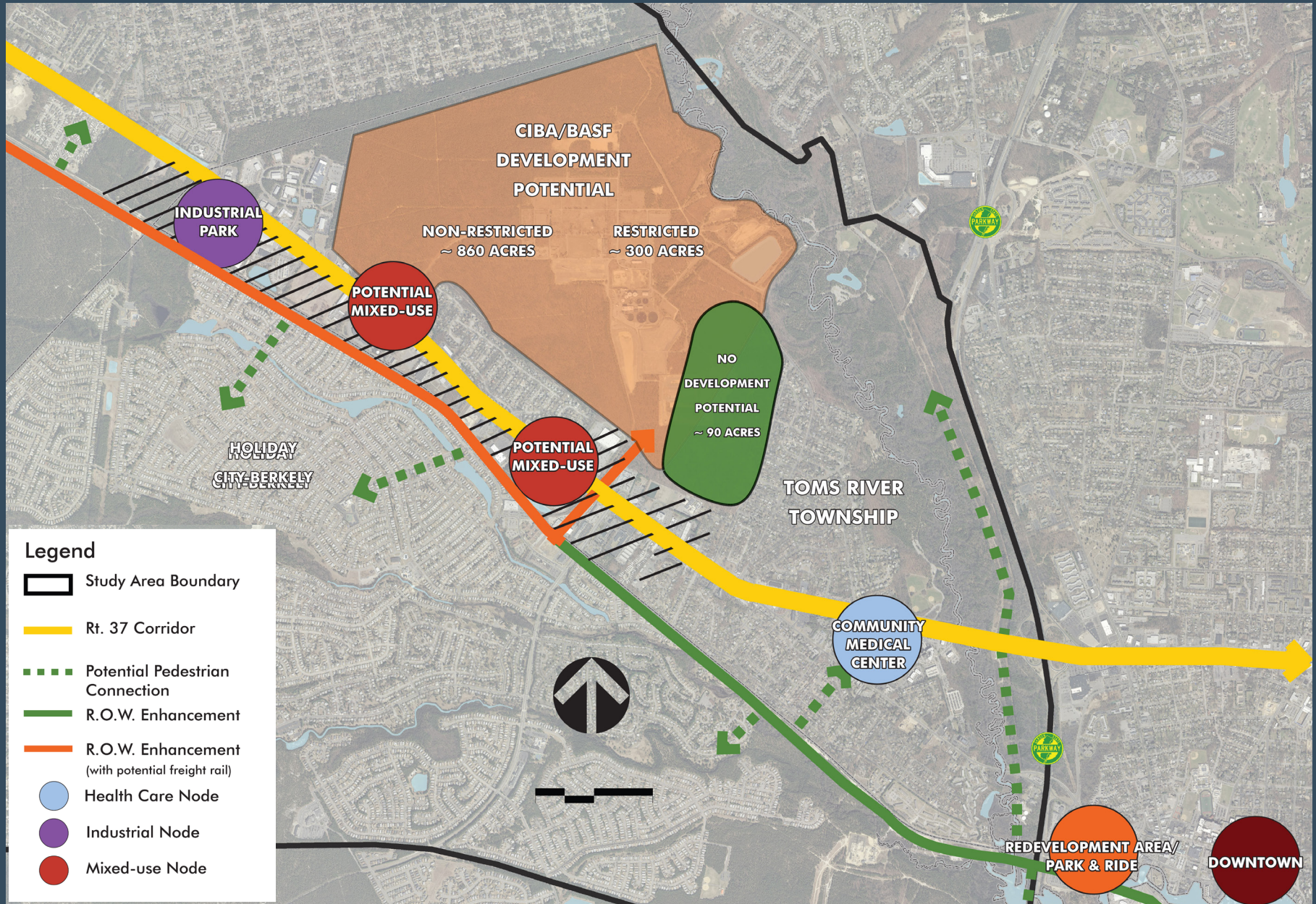
### Removal of Super Fund designation

The Super Fund designation of the property has had a substantial impact on its perception in the region and in the marketplace. One of the key ways of improving the marketing of the property is to have the designation removed. There is a process for partial delisting if some portion of the property meets the requirements for delisting with

the USEPA.

The Cell 1 area is under the purview of NJDEP, not USEPA’s Superfund program, and has always been a regulated landfill permitted under state regulations. Cell 1 has been subdivided out and the remainder of the property has development potential, some with restrictions and some without. The land owner has to take initiative to get any portion delisted, so once the tax appeal is resolved, BASF should work with the Township’s support to formally apply to get the delisting.





**Market analysis for potential users**

A more detailed market analysis should be conducted to provide information as to the best set of uses for the CIBA site in the current market. The primary objective is to gain a very detailed understanding of local supply, demand, occupancy and pricing factors for a broad range of land uses within the primary market area, specifically for the CIBA site.

The study should examine competitive supply within the primary market area (existing and proposed) for a range of potential land uses and identify prospective opportunities and challenges for each of these uses on the property.

Quantitative analysis should also be supplemented with active broker interviews, in order to “ground truth” data findings.

**Explore reactivation of rail spur to CIBA**

The Toms River Branch is an at-risk ROW and has been out of service (not had traffic) for two or more years. The portion of this ROW from Lakehurst (Ciba-Geigy Crossing) is owned by Conrail. The potential of the at-risk ROW to be re-purposed for other mobility uses and connections as one of many attributes of the CIBA site and the Rte 37 Corridor that needs further study. With the potential for rail, the CIBA site could be very suitable for light industrial, R&D Flex space and the new type of multi-level warehousing.

Norfolk Southern, who shares the rail network

assets with Conrail in th area, has a technical assistance group that can help design an industrial park or facility at no cost to the local communities. They study layouts for different types of industry. From the rail operator’s perspective, having control is the biggest obstacle to reinstating freight traffic. Having an existing rail spur already in place increases the property’s marketability and the potential for a well-connected redevelopment.

**Create Redevelopment Plan**

A formal redevelopment plan, prepared by the Planning Board and adopted by ordinance by the Township Council, allows for a master plan and the required zoning/design standards. The plan should include, among other things, proposed land uses and development program, building requirements, and design standards.



*With an existing rail spur ROW, there may be ways to reactivate to offer opportunites for a high-tech mixed use redevelopment on the CIBA site.*



By adopting a formal plan, Toms River gains certain powers to affect redevelopment including ability to establish a detailed program and craft specific design standards that can dictate architectural and public space details far beyond traditional zoning standards. Having a clear plan in place also makes the property more attractive to potential developers since the plan and requirements are very clear.

The plan should include a combination of the various economic development strategies in the Vision Plan including a mixed use core and a Tech Hub/Green Technology Campus among other uses. The images in this section illustrate the architectural and landscape character of the high-tech vision for the Corridor and could be the basis for some of the design standards in a redevelopment plan.



*Some potential uses for the site include a satellite college campus, a site for small manufacturing, and mixed-use complex.*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: HOSPITALITY, HEALTHCARE & WELLNESS

### MEDICAL OFFICE

Available office space should be inventoried and matched to existing demand. However, the office space currently available may not match the type of office space that is in demand. Over half of all existing office space in the Study Area was built during the 1980s, and no new office space has entered the submarket since 2005. As the office stock is aging, a detailed inventory is recommended to determine if certain office spaces need to be demolished in order to make reuse of the parcels more economically feasible.

New office space development will, by and large, come from medical office space demand, which is experiencing the fastest growth among all office segments nationally, and is attributable to an aging population and the rapid expansion of outpatient healthcare services. A further clustering of medical related facilities around the hospital is recommended, particularly if they continue to be tied to the senior communities and balanced with wellness facilities.

### FITNESS AND WELLNESS

Healthcare is a key industry that could be expanded through programs focusing on wellness and fitness. These programs could be associated with local hospitals that have interest in internal wellbeing and wellness programs. Wellness providers offer programs and facilities for the entire community, including people of all ages. Fitness centers can also be built into medical

facilities, and be open to patients undergoing rehabilitation, employees, and the public.

### “GATEWAY” TO THE PINELANDS & ECO-TOURISM

Tourism has the potential to bring some economic benefits to the Corridor. While most of the focus of the region’s tourism is geared towards the Jersey Shore, there are other tourism and hospitality opportunities for the Study Area to develop. These could help satisfy a business travel need for the base, but might also include ecotourism



*Fitness centers can also be built into medical facilities, and include rehabilitation. Wellness programs offer programs and facilities for the entire community. These images are from a wellness-themed redevelopment in Jackson, TN where housing, medical, healthcare, and community uses are brought together.*

and health and wellness facilities. The Study Area should capitalize on its prime location by serving as a landing point for this tourism. Tourists introduce money to the local economy, and eco-tourism and recreation related employment opportunities will expand.

Concentrated development in a node in the Study Area is necessary to properly absorb and capture the impacts of growth and the development of these expanding tourist industries in a manner that is consistent with the goals of Ocean County, the State Plan, and the Pinelands. This strategy will best ensure that the surrounding environs are preserved to maintain the natural features that can be an attraction.

Inside the Study Area, the Heritage Minerals site

can be an eco-destination. Miles of path and trails are proposed through the forested areas and around the lakes. An eco-education center is also proposed for the public to learn more about the wildlife and habitats in the region.

Within a short distance from the Study Area exists a wide variety of inland recreational and agricultural attractions. Nearby parks and recreational resources include:

- New Jersey Pinelands and various state parks and trails
- Winding River Park
- Barnegat Branch Trail
- Double Trouble State Park & Historic Village

- Cedar Creek
- Forest Resource Education Center

### **HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER**

The Joint-Base draws substantial business travel and many consultants and contract workers use hotels in Monmouth County or the western side of the base because there is more activity and options for dining and entertainment, particularly in locations that are in walking distance.

The Study Area should target a destination hotel to service existing and future tourism and business needs for the base and local business travel, as well as for small conferences, banquets, and events. A hotel facility in the Corridor could also include a health & wellness theme and draw on a larger hospitality and tourism business year-round.

- Inventory of existing office space
- Encourage medical clustering in zoning and redevelopment with a focus on fitness and wellness
- Target hotel and convention facility to serve Joint Base business and regional tourism
- Explore ways to create eco-tourism “gateway” to Pinelands and the Shore



*The Study Area should take advantage of its location as a gateway to the Pinelands as a landing point for recreational tourism. New paths and boardwalks could connect new development and existing neighborhoods to natural areas such as parts of the Pinelands or Winding River Park.*

## EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### SATELLITE ENGINEERING COLLEGE CAMPUS

Bringing higher paying jobs as well as increased opportunity for career advancement is a major goal of this plan. Engineering and R&D are thriving fields that provide higher wages and career advancement opportunities. Flex and R&D industrial buildings are growing in popularity because of their ability to support a hybrid of office, manufacturing, and warehouse space in a single location.

Although no additional R&D space has been completed within the submarket in recent years, REIS projects that, by 2018, an additional 175,000 square feet will be built and vacancy rates will decline to less than six percent - a sign of a strengthening R&D submarket environment.

The Ocean County College (OCC) Campus, Ciba-Geigy site, or area adjacent to the Joint Base serve as possible satellite campus locations for NJIT, Rutgers, Stevens Institute, or other engineering colleges/universities necessary to target higher-wage, growing workforce opportunities in engineering and research and development initiatives, providing degree programs to base and contractor employees. This will also help to also replace the aging civilian workforce at the Joint Base.

### SPECIALIZED TRAINING FOR HEALTH, GREEN INDUSTRY, AND TECHNOLOGY

As the Study Area is characterized by high unemployment, it should look to OCC for workforce training opportunities. Ocean County College provides free training to area employers. As the Study Area plans to focus on health, green industry, and technology, OCC should be a key partner in providing training and education.

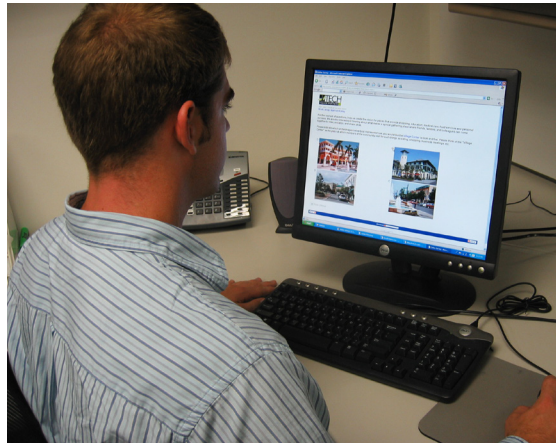
Lakehurst has their own internal training and vocation-technical school on base. Currently if a particular skill set is needed, they fly professors in from across the country, but could look to develop programs locally in partnerships with higher education providers. The base should continue to work with local schools to market their engineering

needs and assist with expertise and funding for class projects to help them solve engineering problems.

### BUSINESS INCUBATOR SITE WITH HIGH-TECH OFFICE

An incubator site could help address the lack of skilled jobs and career paths in the Study Area. Currently, many area residents must commute north due to lack of sufficient jobs in the local economy.

The Joint Base plan recommends facilitation or creation and management of incubator spaces for high-priority industries. Additionally, the Ocean County Master Plan recognizes that "Ocean County should assist in the identification of both



*Education in the Study Area should be geared to training for engineering and R&D jobs that provide higher wages and career advancement opportunities.*





*The Vision Plan recommends facilitation or creation and management of incubator spaces for high-priority industries. This is part of a corporate campus in Memphis, TN.*



*A campus setting could include satellite campus spaces and programs that provide consulting services, financing programs, business training and international trade assistance. Education can be integrated into mixed use settings like this example from Karlsruhe, Germany.*

green technology and federal procurement incubator programs, which would provide office space, commercial/retail support, and network opportunities for start-up businesses. The programs could also provide consulting services, financing programs, business training and international trade assistance.”

### **LIFE-LONG LEARNING PROGRAMS**

The Study Area is characterized by a large senior population. Some of these seniors may desire to continue working, but may need training in rapidly developing technologies and changes to the workplace. As mentioned in Section 1 of this report, the Toms River Master Plan calls for providing additional jobs and activities for the large local senior and professional populations. Training programs could help orient seniors to new job opportunities.

- Explore possible satellite campus locations to target higher-wage, growing workforce opportunities in engineering and R&D
- Use OCC specialized training options to customize programs for health, green industry, and tech training
- Explore a business incubator site that incorporates satellite campus and high-tech offices
- Expand life-long learning programs and access to training for seniors

## MOBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The creation of a more diverse economy with a dedicated transit corridor and commercial rail will create more opportunities to attract the targeted industries to the Rt. 37 Corridor and offer much more flexibility in housing options.

With compact development nodes, there is potential to create Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) with a diverse mix of housing including affordable and workforce units. A key benefit to TOD is that it is flexible and can be developed in multiple types and scales. After housing, transportation is the second largest cost of living for American households. Therefore, living in a location with convenient access to transit and more opportunities for walking and biking to daily services and employment, reduces the amount of household income expended on transportation.

### MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR

The existing Toms River Branch rail right-of-way that runs parallel to Rt. 37 just to the south is a great opportunity for an enhanced transportation corridor. There is an existing spur that services the CIBA site and could be reactivated for freight with rail links to the Joint Base, Lakewood Industrial Park, and points north.

The same right-of-way could include trails and a dedicated transit corridor that could start as bus rapid transit (BRT) and have the flexibility to change to other modes if the service demands ever warrant it. Planning for transit, including BRT, must first involve changes to land use in the

Corridor. Clusters of higher densities of housing, employment, and destination areas have to be “seeded” along Rt. 37 and the parallel ROW in order for enhanced transit service to be able to be implemented. The development of an enhanced transit corridor is a long-term goal and will require careful planning and coordination.

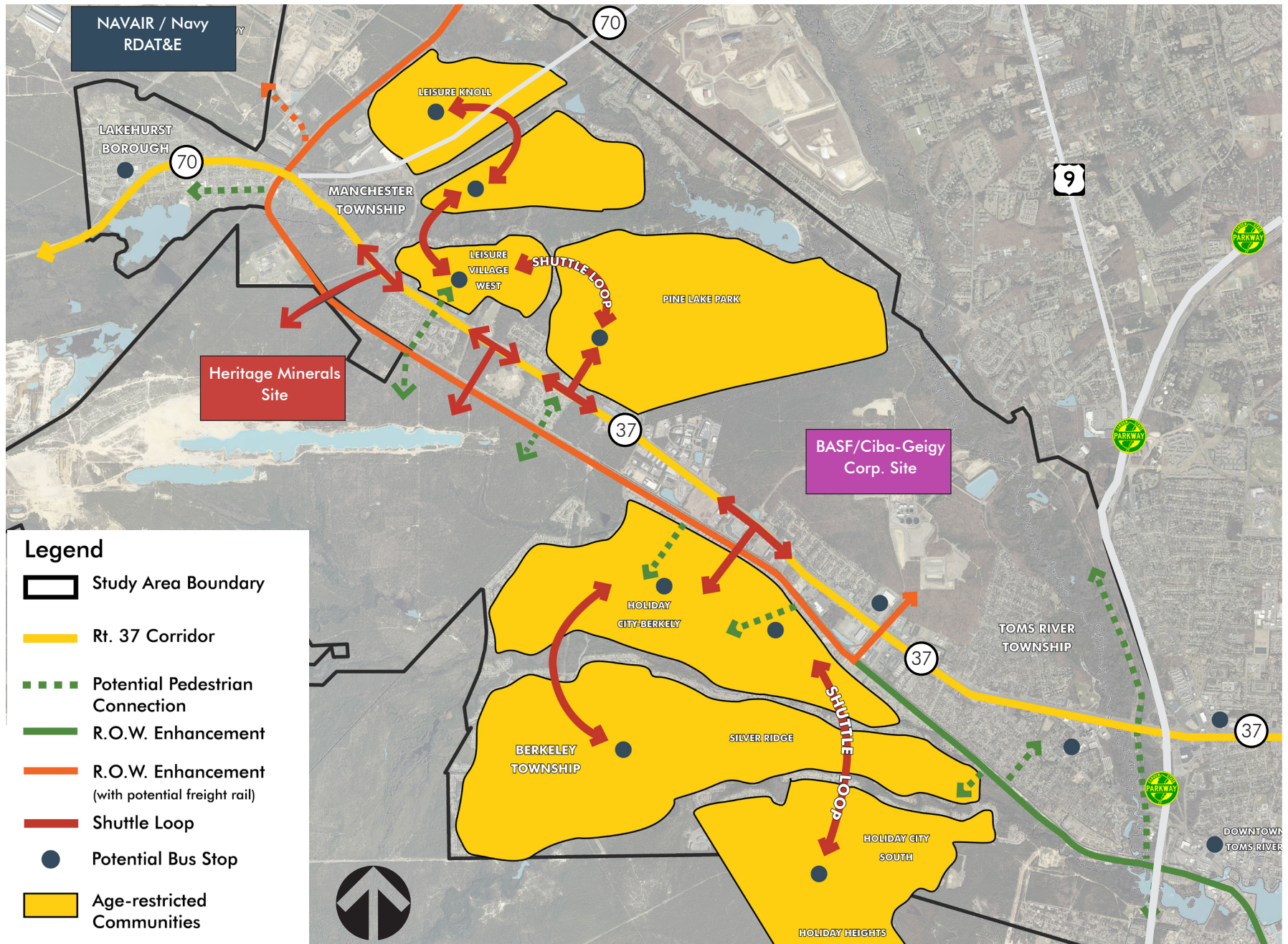
Trade-offs between reactivating freight rail vs. the development of a multi-modal corridor for portions of the right-of-way need to be carefully weighed by the local communities. Freight rail does not easily

mix with other modes in a ROW of this size for safety and logistical reasons.









The Orange Line in Los Angeles is a great example of an off-road BRT corridor with high-tech buses and facilities. The line, which is operated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, is branded as a signature bus service and an extension of the region’s rail network. The route follows part of a Southern Pacific former passenger rail right-of-way, similar to the right-of-way paralleling Rt. 37. It also



*The Orange Line in Los Angeles is a great example of an off-road BRT corridor with high-tech buses and facilities. Along the right side of the image, a multi-function pedestrian and bike path system runs in the right-of-way.*



**Legend**

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Rt. 37 Corridor
-  Potential Pedestrian Connection
-  R.O.W. Enhancement
-  R.O.W. Enhancement (with potential freight rail)
-  Shuttle Loop
-  Potential Bus Stop
-  Age-restricted Communities



features a multi-function pedestrian and bike path system in its right-of-way.

If the rail reactivates as freight there should be further study into excursion rail opportunities. There are a number of commercial rail lines in the state that offer speciality passenger rail service. These are typically very limited in schedule and are usually oriented around historic excursion trips and tourism-based service.

**SENIOR COMMUNITY SHUTTLES**

Most of the age-restricted senior communities in the study area offer private bus service for their residents. They all have their own routes and limited schedules. One of the suggestions from the focus group session with seniors was pooling the resources of the various communities and the municipally-run shuttles to consolidate routes and offer more regular routes and services. If portions of the parallel right-of-way were to be dedicated to transit, a consolidated shuttle might be able to make use of transit-exclusive lanes improving timing and schedules.

Increased shuttle frequency and route expansion will to capture travel needs to medical facilities, shopping, schools and jobs. Any shuttle routing options would require detailed feasibility study before considering expansion or consolidating any shuttles. The timeframe for this phasing would be highly dependent upon funding availability. Some of the goals of an improved local shuttle service may include:

- Serve existing and new mixed use, employment, and community-oriented nodes throughout the corridor

- Provide for efficient transfers between the NJ TRANSIT and Academy buses and among the OceanRide and other shuttle routes
- Be shorter, to improve frequency and provide more direct service
- Integrate with other transportation improvements and redevelopment planned in the study area
- Be identifiable through coordinated and branded signage, scheduling, marketing and permanent shelters

**CORRIDOR BICYCLE NETWORK & COMPLETE STREETS**

The public input did indicate there is interest in expanding the trail network, including the creation of designated and clearly-marked bike lanes and routes connecting the Rt. 37 Corridor to the Shore area and to the Pinelands. Links could connect local destinations such as parks, schools, and transit facilities with a bikeway system.

The network could use the right-of-way parallel to Rt. 37 as the main spine and cross connect to local routes and some of the regional trail systems like the Barnegat Branch Trail, without having to risk riding in heavy traffic. Ideally these routes would have a hierarchy and could be a combination of lanes, sharrows, and off-street trails.

If this portion of Rt. 37 continues to have adequate road capacity as new development and transportation options come on-line, the highway itself may be a candidate for a Complete Streets road diet. Complete Streets are streets designed for all users, all modes, and all ability levels and



*The parallel right-of-way could become a multi-modal corridor with trails and a dedicated transitway that could start as BRT and have the flexibility to change to other modes if the service demands ever warrant it. All of these possibilities depend upon the density and mix of new land uses. Without implementing the land use recommendations outlined in Economic Corridor Vision Plan, this progression of transit use will not occur. Trade-offs between reactivating freight rail vs. the development of a multmodal corridor need to be carefully weighed by the local communities.*

is something the NJ Department of Transportation is looking at in a number of highway corridors throughout the state. They balance the needs of drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles, emergency responders, and goods movement based on the roadway context.

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) has published an Urban Street Design Guide to focus on the design of city streets and public spaces, sensitive to all user types.



Expanded shuttle routes should capture travel needs to medical facilities, shopping, schools and jobs.



A regional bike network would build off existing/planned trails and would have a combination of new dedicated bike lanes, sharrows, and off-street trails. These bottom images are from Ocean City, NJ where a complete network has been developed.

The NACTO guide emphasizes street design in a Complete Streets context with sets of design goals, parameters, and tools for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and transit alike.

With a new clustering of mixed use nodes and an existing right-of-way of over 100' in many places, there may be opportunities in the long-term to safely incorporate dedicated bicycle, transit, and pedestrian facilities to increase the livability of the Corridor.

### ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND SHARED PARKING

The current commercial strip development with separate driveways for each business or commercial center forces even short trips onto Rt. 37, thereby reducing safety and increasing traffic congestion. A supporting network of unified property access and circulation systems and provisions for shared parking can encourage the series of compact nodes concept for the Corridor



allowing for more short-term connectivity and mobility options.

Interconnected properties support alternative modes of transportation and provide alternatives for bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers. Fewer curb cuts onto Rt. 37 also help to promote the long-term possibilities of a road diet/Complete Streets transformation of the highway.

Shared parking is a key component in the creation of sustainable, high quality, mixed use nodes. The Corridor needs to be viewed as an interrelated set of uses, instead of the assemblage of single-use areas that has been typical of conventional suburban development. Some of the benefits resulting from shared parking include efficient parking by eliminating underutilized parking areas, the cost associated with those unused spaces, and the allowance for the development of other non parking functions such as open space.

- Study the feasibility of consolidating senior community private shuttles
- Study multimodal road/ trail along rail right of way to Downtown
- Explore options to develop alternate bike network for corridor and region
- Study shared parking, parking connections/curb cut consolidations and access management
- Connect Barnegat Branch Trail to Rt. 37 Corridor, Downtown, parks and riverfront areas

## HOUSING

The Study Area has seen relatively strong growth in non-family households (typically, these are small one- and two-person households which opt to rent, rather than own homes), suggesting a demand for rental housing units, which are relatively few, currently.

Many focus group participants noted the need for greater housing diversity. Housing is generally expensive, and there is a large rent-burdened population in the area. With a large lower-wage workforce, workforce housing is essential so that these people may live close to their jobs, and ensures that local businesses maintain a labor pool.

The Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan also seeks to improve affordability of housing choices and economic opportunities overall. Economic development is comprehensive and needs to include a diversity of housing choices, particularly those in mixed use settings and those that are better suited to transit, which helps affordability by lessening commuting costs. Considerations of veterans, individuals with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups should be considered when exploring future housing options.

### MIXED USE CENTERS WITH HOUSING

With a large rent-burdened population lacking affordable housing options, more housing is needed in the area. Increased density and supply of housing should help ease that burden. Mixed use development has a greater ability to accommodate mixed income housing because of additional vibrancy, the concept of “eyes on the street” security, and a better overall community

aesthetic. Additionally, mixed use development will reduce automobile dependency, which is an important goal for the area.

Housing is a natural option when looking to be more efficient with land and resources by creating multi-story, mixed use buildings, as opposed to single-story strip commercial. Retrofitting and rehabilitating commercial centers should be encouraged to include more mixed use opportunities, including housing, and should be incentivized to have flexibility to add other uses over time.

Ownership and existing uses are often the biggest

challenges that limit the potential for mixed use projects. In locations where the surrounding land use is already developed, one of the greatest challenges is assembling land in sufficient quantity and configuration for cost-effective development.

This severely limits affordability, as well as the ability to create a continuous, walkable, pedestrian-friendly environment punctuated by public space and an overall sense of place. Identifying key nodes and concentrating mixed use density in those areas allows development to be compact, helps to make transit more efficient and allows preservation of other portions of the Corridor.



*Mixed use development with housing can be integrated with some of the envisioned high-tech medical and employment clusters on repurposed commercial properties along Rt. 37. This example in Keller, TX introduced modern multifamily housing into a suburban core area.*

A mixed-use Town Center village is planned on the Heritage Minerals site. It is envisioned as a walkable Town Center with restaurants and shops on the first floor, and apartments, veterans housing & medical offices on the second/ third floors. Plans also include waterfront and neighborhood parks, local arts and cultural attractions.

A traditional village-style neighborhood is planned to surround the Town Center with single-family homes, townhomes and condominiums. The Town Center will be connected to neighborhoods and the Rt 37 corridor via bicycle paths, parks and roads.

Anticipated uses surrounding the Town Center include townhomes, market-rate single family homes, age-targeted single-family homes and some age-restricted single-family homes, providing a wide variety of housing options for the region.



There is a need for greater housing diversity overall in the Study Area, including alternate housing types, such as downtown lofts, mixed use apartments, townhouses, and smaller lot single family homes.

**SENIOR COMMUNITIES**

There is a glut of age-restricted housing in the study area, and changes will need to be considered long-term to make these communities more sustainable. Generally the occupancy rates of these neighborhoods are on the decline. There was an uptick in occupancy as Hurricane Sandy-affected residents sought affordable options, but the trend is likely to return as many entering into the senior housing market are looking for more modern communities or places that have a diversity of ages and activities, such as downtowns.

Some of the communities have looked at reducing the age requirements to deal with increasing vacancies. This is something other communities in the corridor should continue as a short-term means of helping the occupancy issues.

As there is also a lack of affordable and workforce housing, it has been suggested that some of the vacant age-restricted units could be occupied by local healthcare workers, young professionals, and



others needing workforce housing. Habitat for Humanity has successfully rehabilitated a number of restricted senior communities in other parts of the country for purposes of creating workforce housing, and it may be a strategy that could be considered with the local chapter and other housing providers in the long-term for portions of the retirement communities.

Any change needs to be explored, with significant changes to surrounding uses and transportation options occurring first. It should be noted that a decrease in the aged-restricted housing may have a significant impact on traffic along Rt. 37.

**DOWNTOWN HOUSING**

Downtown Toms River is encouraging residential development with several project in the works and redevelopment plans, which will offer some additional housing choices for students and employees of the Rt. 37 Corridor. As the central “place” in the area, more housing is key to help grow downtown businesses and build upon all the community facilities already in place. New loft apartments and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings appeal to a broad range of homebuyers and renters.

- Identify opportunities to create more diversity of housing types, particularly workforce housing & mixed use
- Explore zoning and redevelopment options for more mixed use, active centers that include housing
- Study feasibility of changes to age-restrictions

## LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT

### BALANCE REDEVELOPMENT WITH PRESERVATION

Along with infill and redevelopment in the corridor, there are also opportunities for habitat restoration/ preservation/ wildlife refuge. With portions of the Study Area touching CAFRA and Pinelands areas, it is critical to design in a sensitive way and provide places for additional preservation areas.

Given the market analysis, there is not substantial new retail coming to the region and therefore development can be done in a compact way that protects more natural areas. There are already large contiguous areas of open space in and around the Study Area. These areas include parks, preserved lands and environmentally-constrained areas. With the existing and proposed trail network, including using portions of some of the rights-of-way, the developed nodes in the Corridor can be well-connected to each other and to preserved areas.

NJDEP's Green Acres program provides grants and loans for land acquisition for preservation purposes and for green space development. As a highly populated area, the Study Area could be eligible for a 25% grant/75% loan for park development purposes and a 50% grant/50% loan for land acquisition. If there are some areas that can be dedicated for preservation, the State might be interested in it for wildlife reservation refuge.

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Rt. 37 along with economic development and mobility improvements has the potential to

become a leading "Sustainable Corridor" district with green tech and industries supported by green infrastructure. As a region recovering from Hurricane Sandy, resiliency should be a cornerstone in the thinking of the future infrastructure.

New developments should consider pursuing LEED certified buildings and sites. New and existing buildings should explore green roofs and solar panels to further reduce impact on climate. There are some solar arrays in the corridor and this type of clean energy is something that can be expanded further.

Green infrastructure can both reduce peak flows of stormwater during storm events and improve water quality before it enters the storm sewer system and watersheds. Improvements to existing properties including streets, driveways, parking areas and open spaces can include rain gardens, vegetated swales and median planting strips in order to collect and filter stormwater. Additional trees that can intercept rainfall are also vital for air quality and public health by filtering air pollution and lessening the urban heat island effect.

### CORRIDOR ZONING STANDARDS AND REDEVELOPMENT

Based on this vision and any Master Plan updates, local municipalities should begin thinking about how current zoning must evolve to re-envision the corridor into a mixed-use economic district. A few key zoning considerations should include additional locations for mixed use development, specific design requirements for bulk standards and more detail on open space preservation,

access management and parking, all of which are critical for this create this type of corridor.

### Overlay Zoning and Form-Based Codes

Overlay zoning is a regulatory tool that creates specialized standards, placed over existing zones to protect a specific resource or guide development within a special area. Regulations or incentives are attached to the overlay district. This can be useful in creating certain districts or zones in the corridor. Since the corridor extends across multiple municipalities, it also allows the towns to develop some consistent standards with the assistance from the County without having to completely change the individual zones in each town to match. For the Rt. 37 Corridor, standards should seek to foster mixed use nodes and high-tech employment centers.



*Given the Study Area's proximity to the Pinelands and CAFRA zones, green infrastructure should be explored that can provide additional open space and improve water quality.*



An alternative to using an overlay would be adopting design-oriented guidelines or a form-based code. A form-based code is a land development regulation using physical form and integrated building typologies rather than strict separation of uses as the organizing principle for land development and improvements. A form-based code lays the foundation for future improvements, ensuring design quality and a respect for the character and scale of a community. It is often adopted as a graphic-based, user-friendly companion to the zoning ordinance and/or land development regulations. Appropriate lot, building, and street typologies can be applied for the various districts or development nodes in the Corridor.

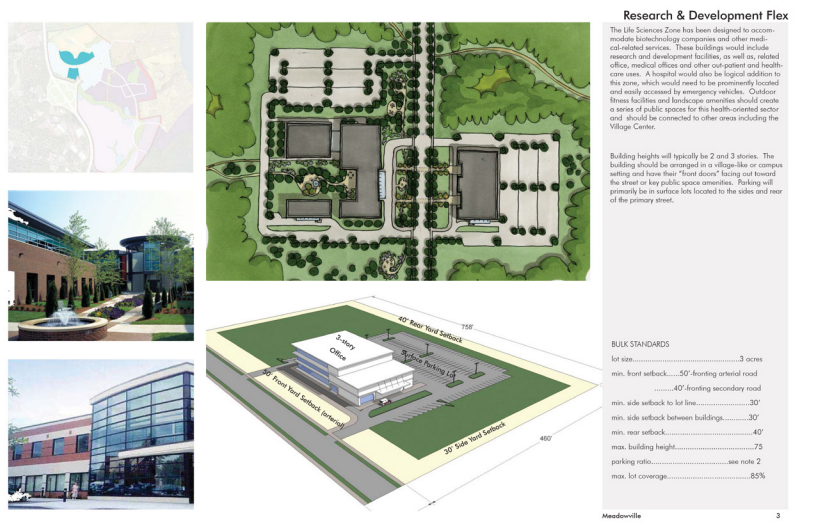
### Redevelopment

In order to implement the vision, either zoning amendments will be required or the municipalities can create Redevelopment Plans for some of the key sites, such as CIBA-Geigy and Heritage Minerals. By adopting a formal plan, a municipality gains certain powers to affect redevelopment including ability to establish a detailed program and craft specific design standards that can dictate architectural and public space details far beyond traditional zoning standards. A Redevelopment plan should include, among other things, proposed land uses and development programs, building requirements, and design standards.

### FACADE AND LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

To promote physical and economic revitalization of obsolete and aging properties, a Façade and Landscape Enhancement Program should also be considered. The program, which could be sponsored by the Ocean County-Toms River Chamber of Commerce, would allow willing landlords to work with local architects and designers to improve their property. Currently the Toms River Business Improvement District (BID) has a façade program for BID properties only. The Township itself does not have a facade program.

Retrofits and upgrade assistance are particularly needed in locations where environmental restrictions limit the ability for expansion and new development. This program could be for design services only or could even be expanded to work with a grant program.



A form-based code is a land development regulation using physical form and integrated building typologies. This example of form-based bulk and design standards is from a mixed use technology park in Chesterfield County, VA.

- Façade and landscape improvement program for aging properties
- Master Plan updates for towns and county
- Corridor zoning standards for each town
- Identify locations for mixed-use nodes
- Develop a "Sustainable Corridor" district with green tech and industries
- Develop green infrastructure & balance redevelopment with opportunities for habitat restoration/ preservation/ wildlife refuge

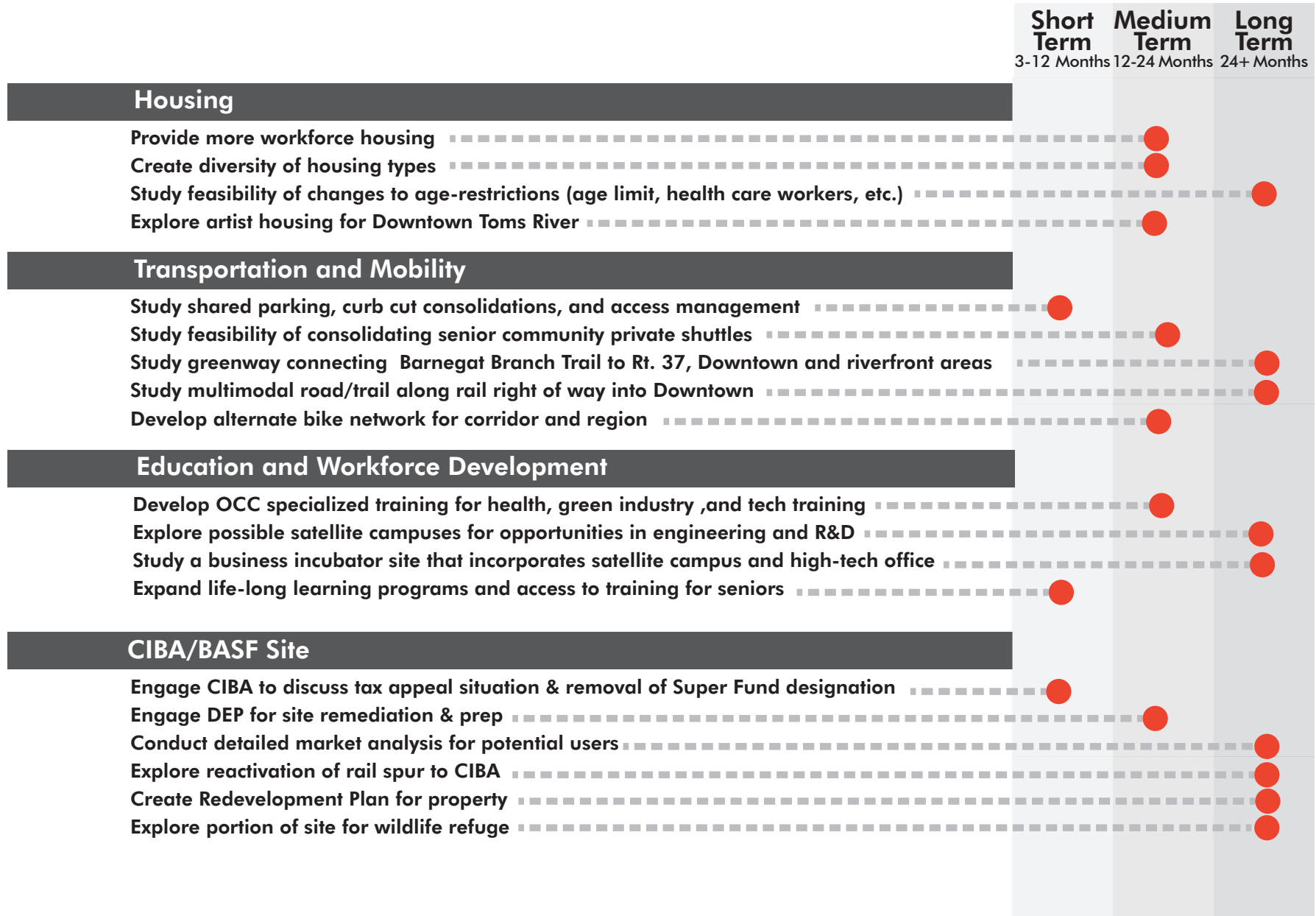
## IMPLEMENTATION & PIA SUMMARY TABLE

A clear implementation plan is required to tie all the regional assets together and explore how the municipalities and County can realign development patterns and change local land use policies to support an economic corridor.

In order to make the improvements in the Route 37 Economic Corridor Vision Plan, Toms River, Manchester, Berkeley, and Lakehurst all need to take a series of short, medium and long-term actions. The following table summarizes the Plan Implementation Agenda (PIA).

The agenda recognizes that successful implementation of plans requires strong local support and action, as well as assistance from Ocean County and the State of New Jersey. The full PIA with detailed steps, potential funding and partners can be found in Appendix A.

	Short Term 3-12 Months	Medium Term 12-24 Months	Long Term 24+ Months
<b>General Corridor Land Use Programming and Policies</b>			
Inventory existing commercial and office space		●	
Explore Corridor-wide Façade & Landscape Improvement Program for aging properties		●	
Update Master Plans for each town & County with RT. 37 Corridor in mind			●
Explore Corridor zoning standards for each town			●
Develop a Sustainable Corridor with green tech, infrastructure, & industry employers			●
Identify locations for desirable high density, mixed-use nodes along the corridor		●	
<b>General Corridor Economic Development Strategies</b>			
Create a standing corridor economic development committee	●		
Advocate for Joint Base and supportive industry		●	
Explore "greyfield" redevelopment for repurposed mixed use properties		●	
Expand medical clustering opportunities and revisit zoning around hospitals			●
Explore market interest in green technologies campus			●
Target hotel and convention facility to serve Joint Base business and regional tourism			●
Develop an eco-tourism and "gateway" to Pinelands and the Shore plan			●



<b>SHORT: 3-6 months</b>
<b>MEDIUM: 6-18 months</b>
<b>LONG: 18-36 months</b>

Priority	Program/Improvement/Activity	Detail	Target Date	Lead Organization	Possible Funding Sources	Partners & Collaborators
<b>1. General Corridor Land Use Programming and Policies</b>	<b>Inventory of existing commercial space</b>	Determine if certain office spaces need to be demolished in order to make reuse of the parcel more economically feasible Identify retail centers most likely to become economically obsolescent in the next 5 years	Medium	Ocean County Department of Business Development & Tourism	NJ Economic Development Authority: Grow New Jersey program	Ocean County Planning Department, Local Governing Bodies, Local Environmental Commissions
	<b>Corridor-wide Façade and Landscape Improvement Program for aging properties</b>	Review each town's policy and current ability to service Determine funding structure as well as eligibility criteria and requirements Standardize/formalize design guidelines and criteria for the Study Area Standardize/formalize application process and design assistance Allocate funds to qualified organizations	Medium	Local Planning Boards		Ocean County Planning Department, Local Governing Bodies, Local Environmental Commissions
	<b>Master Plan update for each town &amp; Ocean County</b>	Study LDP recommendations and current Master Plans for each town Formally adopt LDP recommendations as part of Master Plan Re-examinations Create Regional Planning Board to do long-range planning and offer zoning recommendations that coordinate efforts of municipalities in corridor study area	Medium	Local and County Planning Boards		Local Governing Bodies, Local Planning Boards, OCPD
	<b>Corridor Zoning Standards for each town</b>	Study LDP recommendations, current zoning, and possibly any updated Master Plan Re-examinations (from LDP recommendations) for each town and formally adopt unified zoning standards to achieve a corridor-wide zoning plan.	Long	Local Planning Boards		Ocean County Planning Department, Local Governing Bodies
	<b>Develop a Sustainable Corridor with green tech and infrastructure, green industry employers, consolidated development with strategic open space, etc.</b>		Long	Standing Corridor Economic Development Committee	EPA Area Wide Planning Grants	NAVAIR, Ocean County Department of Tourism and Business Development, Joint Base Local Business Advisory Team, Friends of Navy Lakehurst, NJ Board of Public Utilities, OCPD
	<b>Balance development with preservation &amp; wildlife refuge</b>	Explore setting aside pristine portions of the corridor as a wildlife refuge to protect portions of the site from development	Short	Toms River Environmental Commission	NJDEP Green Acres	NJDEP, Barnget Bay Partnership, Pinelands Commission
	<b>Redevelopment Plan for CIBA/BASF Property</b>	Resolve tax appeal situation Engage DEP for site remediation & prep Removal of Super Fund designation Explore reactivation of rail spur to CIBA	Medium	Toms River Planning Board	NJ Economic Development Authority: Grow New Jersey program National Association of Local Environmental Professionals Conference "opportunity show"	NJ Economic Development Authority, Ocean County Planning Department, Toms River Environmental Commission

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Priority	Program/Improvement/Activity	Detail	Target Date	Lead Organization	Possible Funding Sources	Partners & Collaborators
<b>2. General Corridor Economic Development Strategies</b>	<b>Creating a standing corridor economic development committee</b>	Meeting among workforce development, local business and industry leaders within the community and corridor	Short	Ocean County-Toms River Chamber of Commerce		Ocean County Community College, Ocean County Department of Tourism and Business Development, Toms River Business Improvement District, Ocean County Vocational Technical School, Monmouth Ocean Development Council, Southern New Jersey Development Council
	<b>Advocate for Joint Base and supportive industry</b>	Evaluate market and incentives for construction of corporate, high tech research and educational facilities near Route 547, under an Enhanced Use Lease with the Department of Defense	Medium	Ocean County Department of Business Development & Tourism	EPA Area Wide Planning Grants.	NAVAIR, Ocean County Department of Tourism and Business Development, Joint Base Local Business Advisory Team, Friends of Navy Lakehurst, Monmouth Ocean Development Council, Southern New Jersey Development Council, NJ Defense Enhancement Coalition, NJ Military Installation Growth & Development Task Force
	<b>Greyfield Redevelopment for repurposed mixed use properties</b>		Medium	Local Planning Boards		Ocean County Planning Department, Local Governing Bodies, Local Environmental Commissions
	<b>Expand Medical Clustering</b>		Long	Local Planning Boards		Community Medical Centers, Ocean County Planning Department, Local Governing Bodies, Local Environmental Commissions, Ocean County-Toms River Chamber of Commerce, NJ Department of Labor
	<b>Green Technologies Campus</b>		Long	Monmouth Ocean Development Council	Department of Commerce Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership	Ocean County Department of Business Development & Tourism, Ocean County-Toms River Chamber of Commerce, Southern New Jersey Development Council, NJ Department of Labor, Joint Base Local Business Advisory Team
	<b>Explore creating manufacturing hub to help service and support the Joint Base, particularly NAVAIR.</b>		Long	Ocean County Workforce Investment Board	DOD Office of Economic Adjustment	Joint Base/NAVAIR, DOD Office of Economic Adjustment, US Economic Development Administration, NJ Economic Development Authority, Friends of Navy Lakehurst
	<b>Develop "ReShoring" Strategy</b>	Help manufacturers and suppliers recognize the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of both offshoring and reshoring by sourcing decisions that reduce their total cost of ownership of parts and tooling, improve their balance sheet and make product innovation more effective.	Long	Monmouth Ocean Development Council		Ocean County Department of Business Development & Tourism, Ocean County-Toms River Chamber of Commerce, Southern New Jersey Development Council, NJ Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce
	<b>Market Analysis for Downtown</b>		Medium	Toms River Business Improvement District	NJ Economic Development Authority: Economic Adjustment Program or Economic Redevelopment Growth Program	
	<b>Creative Placemaking and Downtown Arts</b>		Short	Toms River Business Improvement District	NJ Department of State, State Arts Council	NJ Department of State, State Arts Council, Toms River Township Planning Department, Toms River Business Improvement District, Ocean County-Toms River Chamber of Commerce
	<b>Target hotel and convention facility</b>	Target a Destination hotel to service existing and future tourism and business needs	Long	Ocean County Department of Business Development & Tourism		NJ Division of Travel and Tourism, NJ Ocean County-Toms River Chamber of Commerce, Monmouth Ocean Development Council, Southern New Jersey Development Council, Jersey Shore Convention & Visitors Bureau

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3. Housing	Provide more workforce housing and diversity of housing types		Medium	Ocean County Board of Social Services	US HUD CDGB Ocean County HOME funds for Affordable Housing NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency: Low Income Housing Tax Credit US HUD Section 202 Sandy Rebuild Funds NJ Redevelopment Authority: New Market Tax Credit	NJHMFA, NJ Redevelopment Authority, Northern Ocean Habitat for Humanity, O.C.E.A.N, Homes for All, Local Housing Authorities, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Local Governing Bodies/ Planning Boards
	Study feasibility of changes to age-restrictions (change in age limit, provide exception for health care worker housing, etc.)		Long	Local Planning Boards		NJ Department of Community Affairs, Local age-restricted communities, Local housing authorities, Ocean County Senior Services
	Explore Artist Housing for Downtown	Advance plan for artisan housing and formalize plan Explore the variety of options for redevelopment and financing Prepare/Adopt Zoning Revisions and Design Guidelines Develop a qualified list of artists Formalize a placement and assistance program	Medium		Federal Community Development Block Grant Program Low-income housing tax credits NJDCA HOME Housing Production Investment Fund HUD Challenge Grant	NJ Department of Community Affairs, State Arts Council, Toms River Township Planning Department, Toms River Business Improvement District, US Department of Housing and Urban Development
4. Mobility	Study shared parking, parking connections/curb cut consolidations, and access management		Short	NJ Department of Transportation		NJTPA, Local municipalities, Greater Mercer TMA, Ocean County Planning Department, Ocean County Transportation Department
	Study feasibility of consolidating senior community private shuttles into regular defined routes		Short	Ocean County Senior Services	NJ Department of Transportation: Community Transportation Assistance Program	NJTPA, Greater Mercer TMA, Ocean County Planning Department, Ocean County Transportation Department, Local senior communities and shuttle providers
	Study multimodal road/trail along rail right of way into Downtown	Study the feasibility of using existing rail ROW as an additional multi-modal access road, pedestrian trail, or reactivation of freight rail with trails. Trails would connect to the downtown and the Barnegat Branch Trail.	Medium	Ocean County Planning Department	Rails-to-Trails Program	NJTPA, Ocean County Department of Parks and Recreation, Ocean County Department of Transportation, Ocean County Department of Planning, Ocean County Engineering, NJ Transit, NJ Board of Public Utilities, Pinelands Commission
	Explore reactivation of rail spur to CIBA	Explore the possibility of reactivating the freight rail spur to serve or market any potential industry to the site	Medium	Toms River Township		Norfolk Southern Corp., NJTPA, NJDOT, Ocean County Department of Transportation, Ocean County Department of Planning
	Extension of County Route 527	Evaluate potential extension of County Route 527 through BASF property for an additional connection to Highway 37 in the vicinity of St Catherine Boulevard	Long	Ocean County Department of Engineering		County Planning Department, Toms River Governing Body
	Greenway connections to Rt. 37 and riverfront areas		Long	Toms River Planning Department	NJDEP Brownfields Office, Recreation and Conservation Grant	NJDEP, Toms River Township Planning Department, Toms River Business Improvement District, Ocean County-Toms River Chamber of Commerce, Toms River Environmental Commission
5. Education and Workforce	Use OCC specialized training options to customize programs for health, green industry and tech training		Short	Ocean County Community College	U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Innovation Fund Grants Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grants Program	NJ Department of Labor, Ocean County Workforce Investment Board, Ocean County Vocational Technical Schools, proposed standing corridor economic development committee
	Create a business incubator site that incorporates satellite campus and high-tech office		Long	Ocean County Community College	U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Innovation Fund Grants	Ocean County Workforce Investment Board, NJIT, Rowan University, Ocean County Community College, Ocean County Vocational Technical Schools, NJ Office of Secretary of Higher Education