

# FLEMINGTON COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

*Funded by the NJEDA  
Opportunity Zone  
Challenge Grant*

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*November, 2021*



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# Overview and project goals

## Overview

This planning project was funded through an Opportunity Zone Challenge Grant issued by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority to a local partnership comprised of the Flemington Community Partnership, Borough of Flemington, Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce, and Hunterdon County Economic Development.

Stantec's Urban Places were hired to lead the community engagement and planning efforts in collaboration with the local partnership.

## Project goals

The project goals include:

- Implementation focus with early wins
- Promote Flemington to the regional and national development community
- Provide a framework for new development, revitalization, and investment to maximize community benefit and economic development impact





# Key metrics for success

## Bustling “Main Streets”

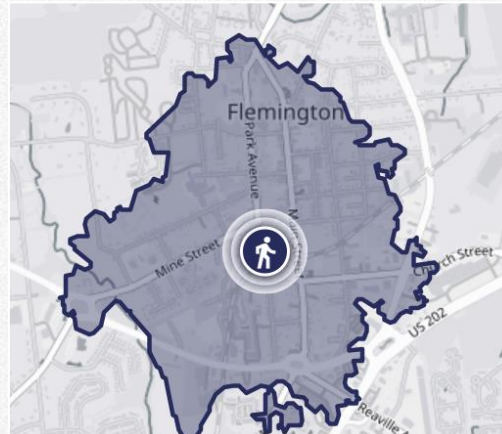
Our key metric for long-term economic revitalization success is a lively, bustling “Main Street” environment within each of Flemington’s primary retail and activity corridors.

## “The complete, 15-minute neighborhood”

According to StrongTowns, “a 15-minute neighborhood is a neighborhood in which you can access all of your most basic, day-to-day needs within a 15-minute walk of your home... ‘Can you get to a cafe, a grocery store, a park and a library in just a 15 minute walk from your home?’”

Flemington Borough is small and compact enough that almost every household is within a 15-minute walk from the Main Street, Stangl Road, and Highway Circles retail corridors.

We would consider Flemington’s neighborhood revitalization initiative a success once these corridors provide the full range of amenities, conveniences, and services that comprise a “complete, 15-minute community.”



Area within 15-minute walk of Main Street and Fulper Road



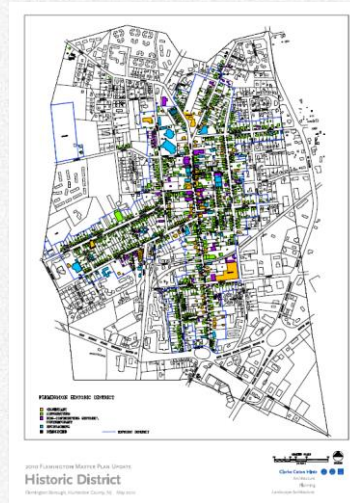
**01**

# **Previous plans and our assessment**



# Previous plans

*We reviewed past plans completed over the past decade, gathering key themes and assessing the discourse for expressed consensus between efforts that we can build on during the Community Action Plan process.*



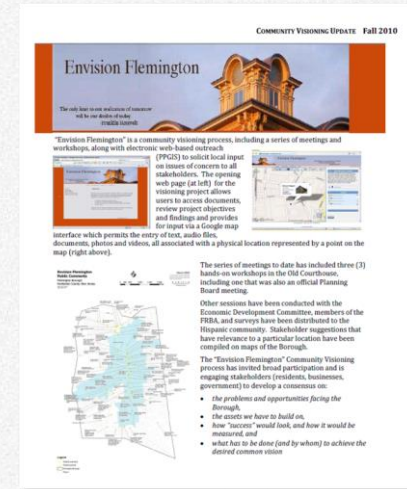
## Master Plan (2010)

Completed every 10 years, the Master Plan represents the Borough's official vision and priorities for the coming decade.

Key themes:

- Foster growth and manage change
- Reinforce historic character
- Build green
- Expand arts and culture

*Key takeaway: Framed the community's values and core priorities regarding growth*



## Envision Flemington (2010)

A supplement to the Master Plan, this effort provided a deeper dive on development and the infrastructure needed to support it.

Key themes:

- Revitalize downtown
- Guide new development
- Improve mobility

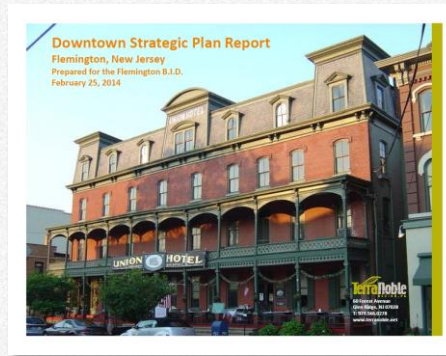
*Key takeaway: Emphasized the need to improve infrastructure and mobility in correspondence with growth and development impacts.*



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# Previous plans

*After their completion, these two plans were adopted by Borough Council to formally incorporate them into the governing Master Plan.*



## Downtown Strategic Plan Report (2014)

Terra Noble's plan focused on how strategic redevelopment can catalyze downtown revitalization.

Key themes:

- Bring downtown to life
- Introduce new housing and mixed-use development

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*Key takeaway: Set a target of 900-1,100 new housing units through redevelopment of many of the Borough's vacant and outmoded sites.*

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## Branding, Development, and Marketing Action Plan (2015)

Roger Brooks' report provides a broad range of placemaking strategies to build on what makes the Flemington community special.

Key themes:

- Showcase downtown
- Attract more visitors and residents
- Make Flemington cool again!

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*Key takeaway: The key to Flemington's success are bustling main streets, unique retail experiences, and creating a sense of authentic culture.*

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# Our assessment: Housing as catalyst for economic revitalization

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*A critical mass of new housing will unlock downtown's potential as a unique destination for more visitors and new residents to bring jobs and attractions.*

*In our experience and according to consultation with retail consultants in similar places, 1,000 new housing units generally represents a tipping point for invigorating walkable neighborhoods.*

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## The key metric for success

The past decade of planning has seen consistency regarding vision, goals, and priorities. Planning recommendations, however, have not found enough traction yet because they require a larger core market to achieve them.

*Across all previous plans, a lively and bustling "Main Street" retail and cultural environment appears the top metric for successful economic revitalization.*

Based on our experience in similar places, knowledge of today's emerging real estate market trends, and assessment of Flemington, we recommend introducing 1,000 new multifamily housing units over the next 10 years within walking distance of Main Street and Stangl Road. This infusion of people and investment will add the critical mass necessary to bring these retail corridors back to life and, more broadly, catalyze Flemington's economic renaissance.

## Questions for analysis

This conclusion introduces the following questions which we will address in our analysis:

- Does this assessment align with the vision and priorities expressed by the community today?
- What can the market bear relative to what is required to achieve the community's vision?
- There are numerous sites that can accommodate substantial new development but is there space for enough density to achieve the community's vision without compromising Flemington's unique architectural character?



**02**

# **Community engagement summary**



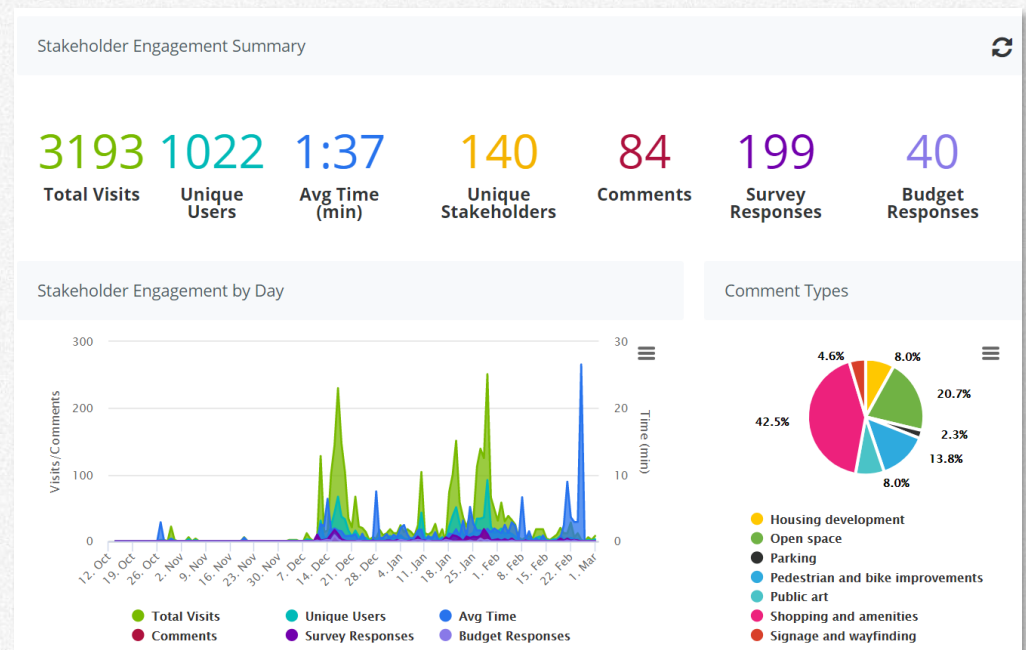
# Inviting the community to the process

*This planning process garnered as much engagement and participation as similar efforts in cities many times Flemington's size.*

## A multi-channel approach to engagement

This planning process included a variety of opportunities for the community to stay involved and share their voice, including:

- Dozens of interviews via video conference with Borough leadership, business owners, property owners, local developers, community groups, and other stakeholders.
- Several virtual public meetings attracting over 100 participants for presentations summarizing analysis and emerging recommendations so far, followed by lively discussion.
- A project website hosting surveys and an interactive map that accumulated hundreds of ideas, suggestions, and insights.





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## Selected comments from the conversation

*Full compilation of community comments  
attached to this plan document.*

*Shops, places to eat (breakfast, brunch, lunch and dinner) with outdoor seating options, nice bar to gather and socialize.*

*Improving main street by getting more businesses open and have less empty buildings*

*More alluring walkways that lead pedestrians from main street to Stangl road. Like having antique streetlights, decorations, etc.*

*Wider sidewalks and more shops in between [Main and Stangl] to draw people back and forth.*

*The Love Flemington signs are wonderful. Continue this theme and expand them with high quality signs.*

*I think if you follow the same business approach as Princeton and combined it with the historical allure of New Hope, you'll definitely make an impact*





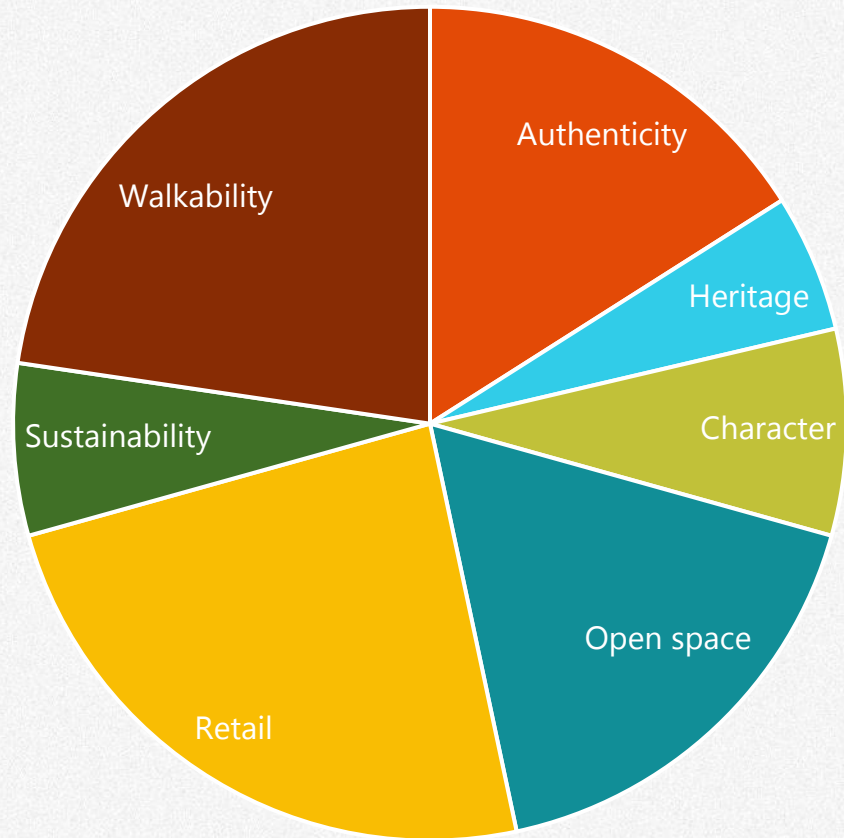


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## Top priorities:

**Retail, walkability,  
authenticity, and  
open space deemed  
most important.**

*Generated by the  
community's survey responses  
on the project website, this  
graph indicates how  
respondents weighed the  
relative importance of  
different potential priorities  
for Flemington.*





# Shared community vision statement

The planning team distilled community input, ideas, and stated priorities into this vision statement:

*Building on its historic character and innovation heritage, Flemington will become renowned in the region for its distinctive, walkable neighborhoods; unique, local retail, arts, and culture; and a diverse, welcoming community.*





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# Community goals

*Building on the vision statement, we've distilled community feedback into the following goals for Flemington:*

## Development

### Housing

Add diverse housing choices and introduce a critical mass of new units within a short walk to the core.

### Equity

Maintain housing affordability and promote an inclusive local community and economy.

### Retail

Improve retail corridor cohesiveness and promote local entrepreneurship.

### Sustainability

Grow greener through sustainable development practices and policies.

## Connectivity

### Walkability

Expand pedestrian connectivity and update local wayfinding.

### Transit

Advocate for expanded transit connections to other parts of the County and region.

### Open space

Establish a central square or park for gatherings and activities.

## Placemaking

### Character

Visibly and dynamically express what makes Flemington unique.

### Heritage

Reinforce Flemington's historic character while enabling new types of development.

### Diversity

Reflect Flemington's ethnic and cultural diversity in the public realm.

### Authenticity

Become a self-sufficient "place", not just a destination for visitors.

**03**

# **National trends and local analysis**



# National trends

*The following section summarizes contemporary trends in demographics, employment, and economic development that inform our assessment that approximately 1,000 new housing units within walking distance of downtown districts is the most potent way to advance Flemington's revitalization goals.*

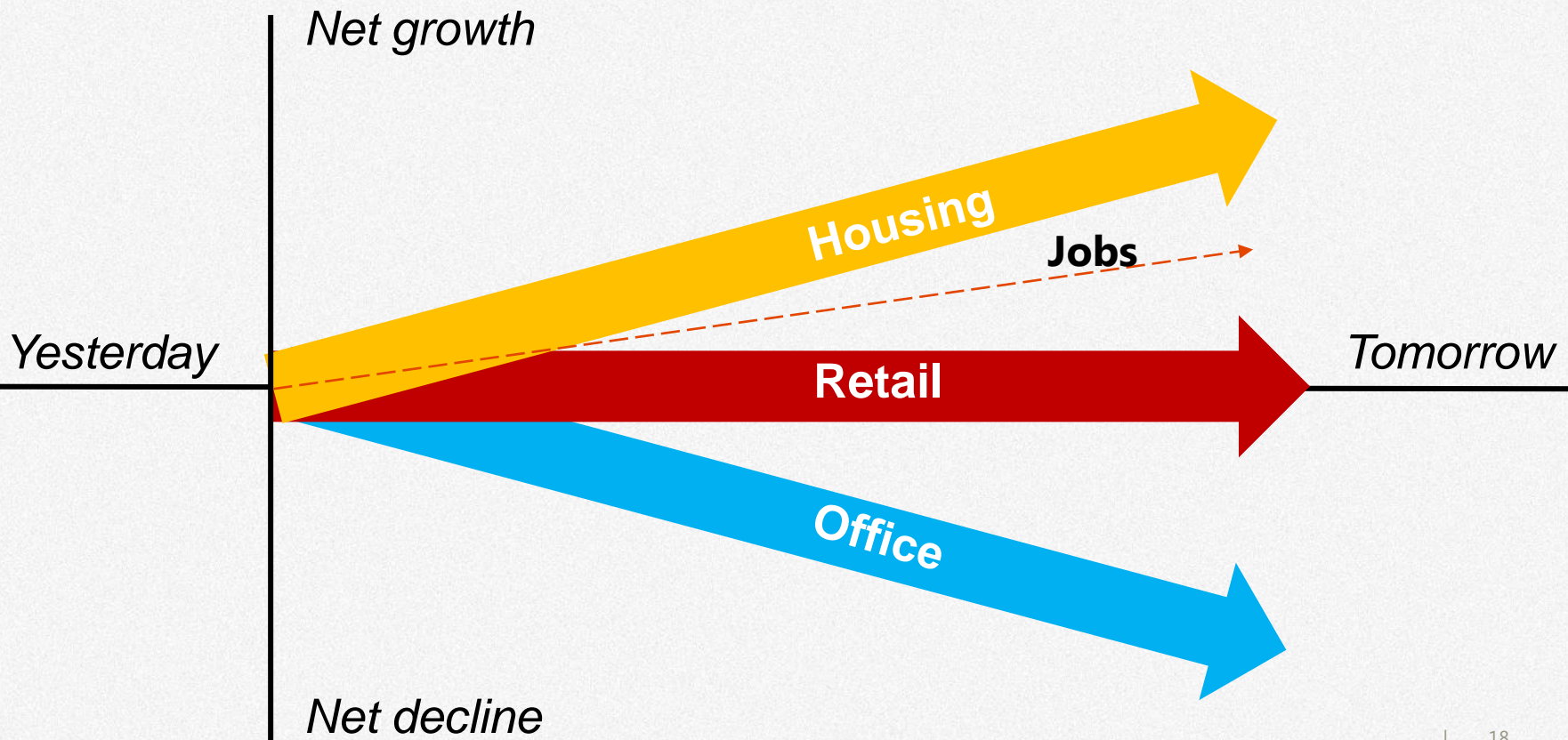




# National trends: Housing as economic development

*Regional and national trends indicate economic development growth is increasingly driven by housing production*

Especially since the COVID-19 pandemic and its work from home revolution, job growth has been increasingly decoupled from office space production. Retail growth has been stalled for years, especially due to online commerce and then further impacted by the pandemic.

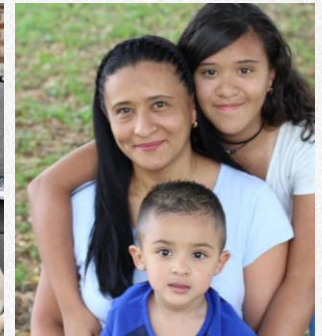




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## National trends: Prevailing demographics favor multifamily housing in walkable places

Most of today's (and tomorrow's) net new household growth is among singles and couples, be they empty nest boomers or pre-child Millennials and younger adults. These cohorts are overwhelmingly attracted to compact housing options in walkable, amenity rich environments such as downtowns in cities, towns, and suburbs.



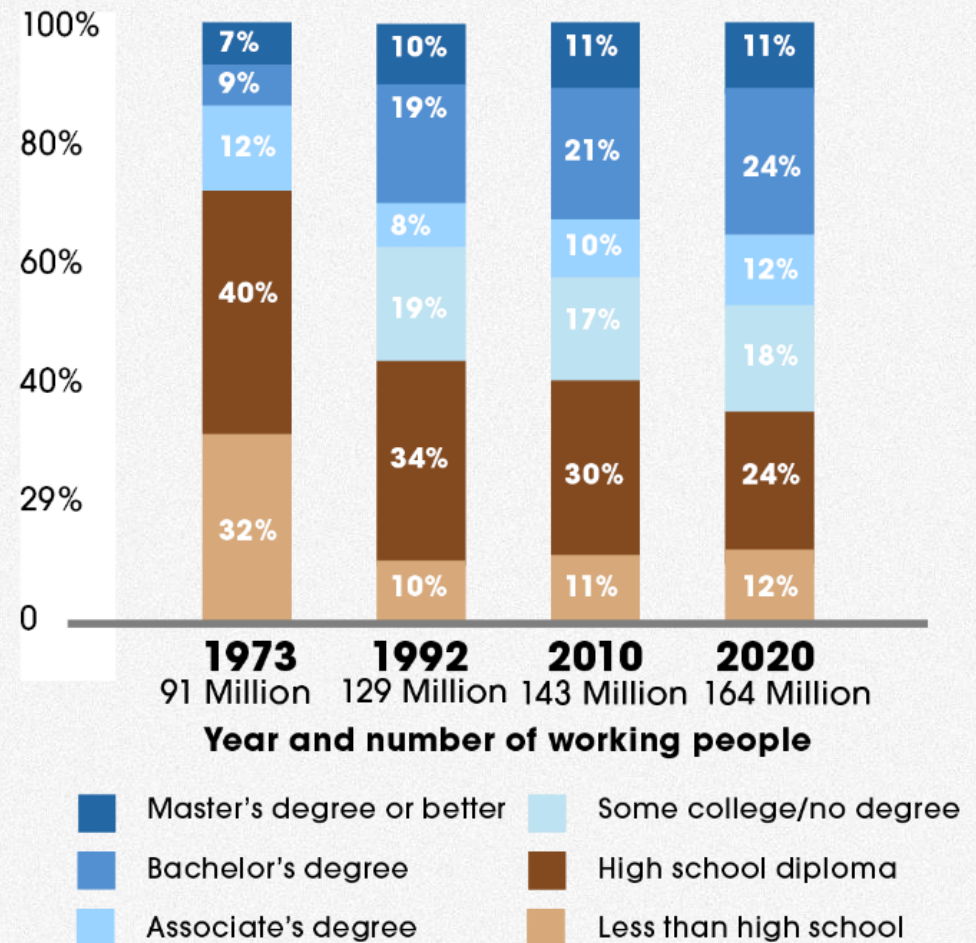


# National trends: Attracting jobs requires attracting educated talent

Going forward, economic growth is about talent—90%+ of net new jobs today require some higher education—creating a significant knowledge worker shortage across the developed world—already reducing US GDP by 2-3%

Therefore, communities interested in creating jobs need to focus on producing and/or attracting an educated workforce.

**Educational demand for jobs, various years**





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## National trends:

# Today's workforce chooses where to live over where to work – and employers follow

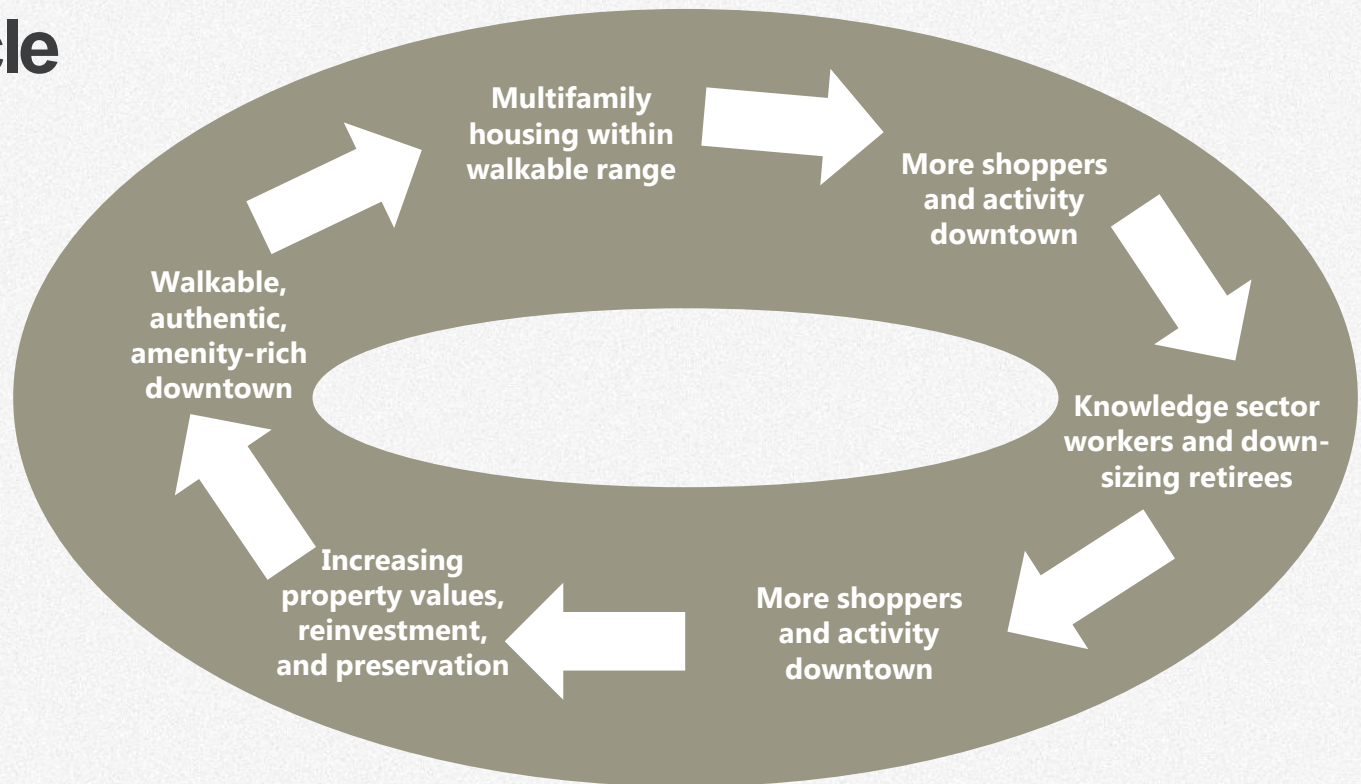
Increasingly, young knowledge sector workers make locational decisions based on quality of life rather than access to jobs. In other words, they move to where they want to live and then find a job from there (or bring their remote job with them). In response – and given the emerging shortage of knowledge workers nationwide – employers often follow the workforce, bringing jobs to the communities where workers choose to live.



# National trends: Downtown revitalization can compound in a virtuous cycle

Downtown revitalization follows a virtuous cycle whereby a critical mass of walkability and amenities attract residents, employees, and other shoppers who in turn support more walkable amenities.

Additionally, a recent study found communities add five new service sector jobs for each knowledge sector job created.





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# National trends: Conclusions

## The key trends shaping downtown places today

The following trends each offer lessons for Flemington's revitalization:

- Housing as economic development
- Prevailing demographics favor multifamily housing in walkable places
- Attracting jobs requires attracting educated talent
- Today's workforce chooses where to live over where to work – and employers follow
- Downtown revitalization can compound in a virtuous cycle

## Housing as the common denominator

The single most powerful way to tap these five trends is to concentrate housing options that appeal to the trend-driving agents within a walkable core and intermixed with amenities that support their preferred lifestyles.

## Foster a "complete community"

A critical mass of new housing is the catalyst for a durable, "complete community" that includes both a base of locally invested residents and the retail, cultural, and arts amenities they are attracted by and in turn support.

Furthermore, substantial new economic investment can help support adding and promoting cultural diversity for a more representative and inclusive within the community.

This critical mass of housing and amenities should be concentrated within walking distance, otherwise known as the "15-minute neighborhood."



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# Local analysis

## Our assessment

Based on our experience in similar places, knowledge of the key trends shaping downtown places, and assessment of Flemington, we recommend introducing 1,000 new multifamily housing units over the next 10 years within walking distance of Main Street and Stangl Road. This infusion of people and investment will add the critical mass necessary to bring these retail corridors back to life and, more broadly, catalyze Flemington's economic renaissance.

## Testing the assumptions

Our analysis answers the following threshold questions to test our assessment's viability:

- Does this assessment align with the vision and priorities expressed by the community today?
- What can the market bear relative to what is required to achieve the community's vision?
- There are numerous sites that can accommodate substantial new development but is there space for enough density to achieve the community's vision without compromising Flemington's unique architectural character or overwhelming local infrastructure?



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## Local analysis:

# Does housing support the community vision?

Does our assessment align with the vision and priorities expressed by the community today?

Yes. Adding 1,000 units of new housing in the form of mixed-use development within walkable distance of Main Street and Stangl Road would drive the sort of change fully consistent with the community's vision and priorities.

Based on the community's input, this development would be welcome assuming it represents smart and responsible growth standards and meets conditions such as:

- Design that respects Flemington's heritage by "fitting in" with architectural and neighborhood contexts
- Managing traffic and infrastructure impacts
- Contributes to community vitality and sustainability goals
- Represents a net positive fiscal impact relative to ratables and required public co-investment

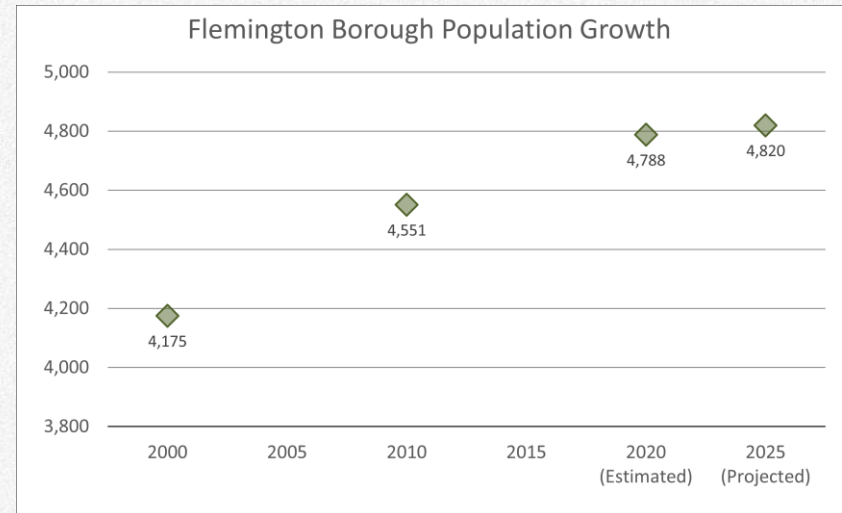
# Local analysis:

## Is this development achievable in today's market?

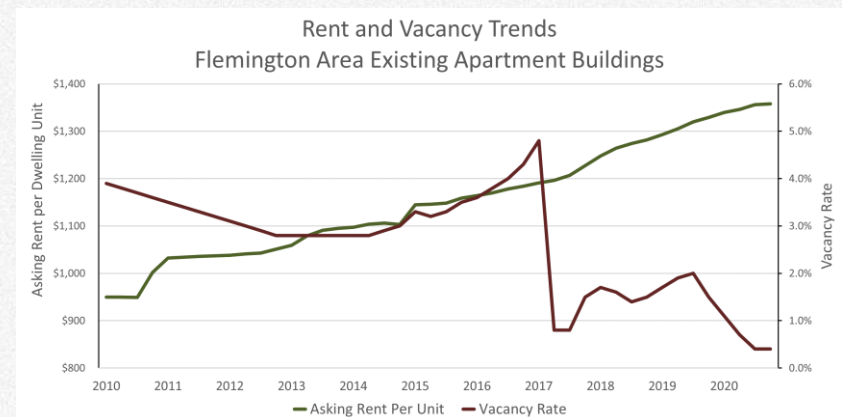
### What can the market bear relative to what is required to achieve the community's vision?

Flemington's population growth has seemingly leveled off over the past decade. Because we know it remains a popular place to live and we have not heard report of any measurable exodus, we consider this slowing growth rate an indication that Flemington's housing market is tightening and, if new units were introduced, population growth would continue and fill them.

Increasing housing rental rates and declining vacancy rates also point to a strengthening multifamily market which could support more development.



*Population growth has leveled off not because of lack of demand – instead, this trend reflects diminishing supply and shrinking household size, both factors that would call for more housing production.*



*Increasing rents and decreasing vacancy both indicate tightening supply and an opportunity to add new housing units.*

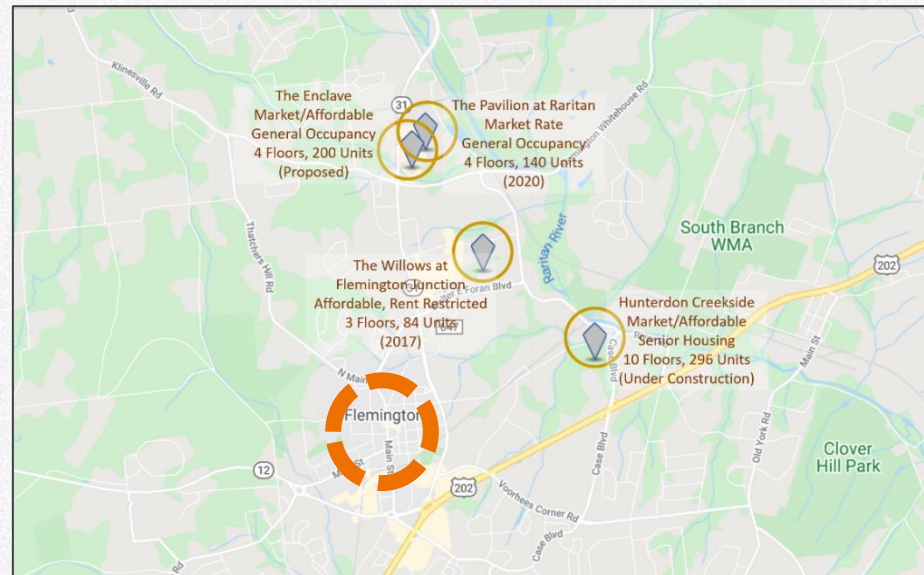
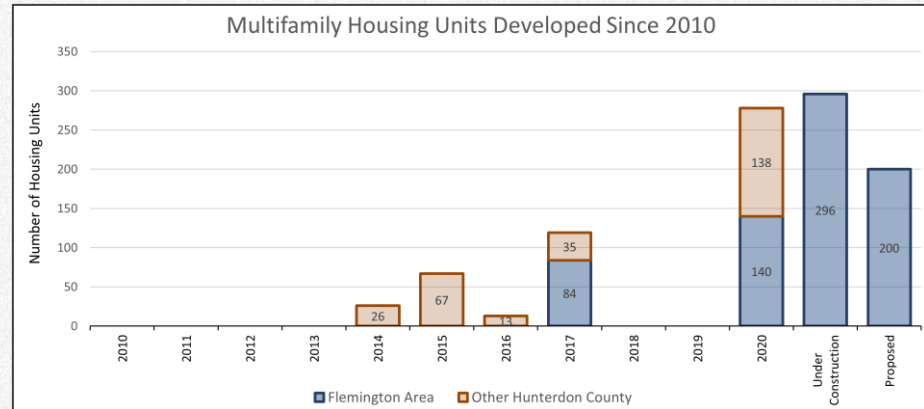


# Local analysis:

## Is this development achievable in today's market?

Across the area surrounding Flemington Borough, several hundred new housing units are either recently completed or in the pipeline, indicating developers have determined new multifamily construction is financially feasible and a positive investment.

However, most of this new development is located in suburban parts of Raritan Township. Given demographic shifts and workforce lifestyle trends favoring more walkable, amenity-rich downtown and neighborhood environments, it follows that new development located within Flemington (and specifically within a short walk of Stangl Road and Main Street) would likely out-compete the more car-oriented options outside the Borough for prospective residents.



In fact, rents within the Borough would likely exceed those on the periphery, making developments within Flemington more financially attractive to investors than those outside.

*Walkable proximity to Flemington Borough's downtown amenities could be a differentiator in the real estate market.*



# Local analysis: Housing market analysis findings

As an early implementation outcome of this plan's recommendations, the Opportunity Zone Grant Committee hired nationally recognized housing market experts Zimmerman Volk Associates (ZVA) to conduct an analysis of residential market potential in order to test this plan's hypothesis that 1,000 new housing units over 10 years is achievable in today's market and would have the intended impact of revitalizing downtown Flemington.

ZVA's report confirmed the market potential for 545 to 760 units in 5 years which would set development on pace to exceed our 1,000-unit target over 10 years.

The report also echo's this plan's assertion that new multifamily housing would make downtown a more vibrant place and increase housing choices for new and existing residents.

*Full ZVA report attached to this plan document.*

## AN ANALYSIS OF RESIDENTIAL MARKET POTENTIAL



### Downtown Flemington Borough of Flemington

### Flemington After Five Years

545 to 760 new housing units  
in Downtown and neighborhoods.

More vibrant Downtown.

New apartments for all ages.

New family ownership housing.

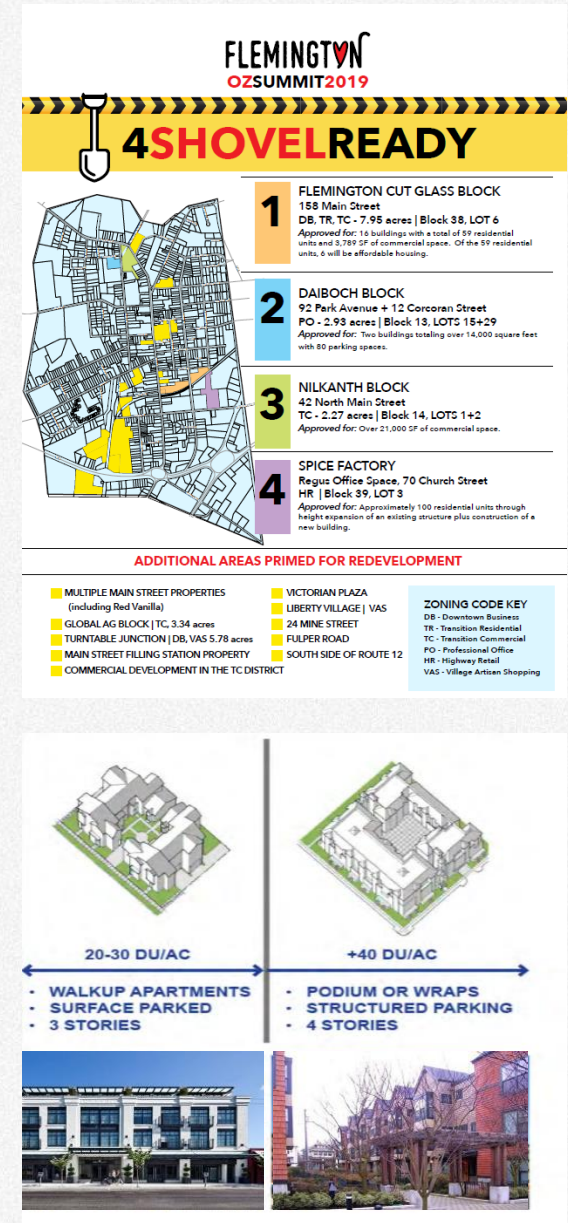


# Local analysis: Is there room to accommodate this development?

*There are numerous sites that can accommodate substantial new development but is there space for enough density to achieve the community's vision without compromising Flemington's unique architectural character?*

Based on recent inventories of available parcels such as during the Opportunity Zone Summit in 2019, Flemington includes over 40 acres of redevelopable land within a short walk of Main Street and Stangl Road. Given typical mixed-use redevelopment in today's market creates about 30-40 units per acre, the Borough could accommodate 1,200 to 1,600 new housing units on currently available parcels.

Given our recommended target of 1,000 units over the next 10 years, this means there should be ample available land left over even once the goal is reached for complementary uses such as cultural space, civic facilities, and other commercial development. Additionally, it is likely many future mixed-use developments will include one or more of these complementary uses within their footprints themselves.





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# Local analysis:

## Is there room to accommodate this development?

### Relationship to the historic context

Flemington is well known for its historic buildings and architectural heritage. New development would have to complement or reinforce this historic context and avoid conflicting in massing or style.

Though it requires deliberate regulations and careful design to get right, new development can be crafted to fit into historic neighborhood environments like Flemington's – and there are examples in cities and towns across the country. Especially when guided by specially tailored design guidelines, new development can find a harmonious place in Flemington's architectural landscape.

Fortunately, many of Flemington's largest development sites are not nestled in the Borough's most historic areas – for example, Liberty Village and Cut Glass reside on edges rather than in the cores of their respective neighborhoods, making it easier to transition between new and old architecture.

**Additionally, new real estate investment in Flemington will help indirectly underwrite renovation and restoration of other historic properties by bolstering local property values.**

### Incorporating public places, green spaces, and public art

Because there is more land available in Flemington than would be required to accommodate anticipated new housing development, some of these sites could accommodate new green open spaces.

New developments should also include public space within and/or around their footprints, especially when larger in overall scale.

Additionally, new developments could be leveraged to enhance existing open spaces through fees and negotiated contributions when possible.

Trees, percent for public art...



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## Local analysis: Can Flemington's local infrastructure and services handle this much new development?

*How would substantial new development impact local infrastructure and service capacity, such as regarding water, traffic, police, schools, etc. and can significant constraints be feasibly overcome?*

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Interviews with local officials and engineers suggest most of the Borough's infrastructure and services could support the recommended new housing development, for example:

- Sewer and stormwater systems have ample capacity at the Boroughwide scale.
- School enrollment in Flemington has been declining for the past decade, so additional students would not require new facilities (also, multifamily housing often includes fewer families with school aged children than other types of housing).
- Recent traffic volumes suggest new units would not compromise transportation networks. We expect historical peak traffic generation such as during Liberty Village's most active years will not be matched again in the foreseeable future, even with this new development.

However, even if Borough infrastructure has sufficient capacity at the system level, individual projects might need to address localized constraints such as by increasing pipe diameter at connection points or re-engineering an adjacent intersection for increased traffic flow.



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## **Local analysis:** **Can Flemington's local infrastructure and services handle this much new development?**

Additionally, some infrastructure and services are closer to capacity and might require supplemental investment or funding to accommodate substantial new development, for example:

- The water supply could serve some new development but will need expansion before all recommended housing can be built. Because it takes several years to fund, design, permit, and construct a new well, it might make sense to plan for such an investment soon. The Borough is currently permitting two new wells to support the Courthouse Square development (with some capacity remaining for some future development). This proactive approach should extend beyond these initial wells toward subsequent water supply investments that support additional development.
- The Police Department will likely require a few more officers to support added population and buildings.

Overall, the Borough's infrastructure and services should be able to accommodate substantial new development with good planning and some strategic capital investments, especially regarding water supply. To ease the burden on the tax base, we recommend including these considerations in negotiations with prospective developers to obtain their financial support in the process, perhaps in exchange for density bonuses or other incentives.



# Local analysis: Conclusion

*A critical mass of walkable housing development is an effective and achievable catalytic revitalization strategy for Flemington.*



Tested against national demographic and economic trends, local market dynamics, and an assessment of Flemington's real estate and infrastructure capacity, we believe a target of 1,000 new housing units built within walking distance of the Main Street and Stangl Road corridors is achievable and will most effectively promote the community's vision for the future.

Does housing development support the community vision? – YES

Is this development achievable in today's market? – YES

Is there room to accommodate enough development? – YES

Can Flemington's local infrastructure and services handle this much new development? – YES



**04**

# **Implementation and recommendations**



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# Implementation

## Focused on implementation

The following recommendations are organized in terms of the aspects of the vision they address, including Development, Connectivity, and Placemaking. Each recommendation has been shaped through the course of the planning process's analysis and engagement to make a meaningful impact toward realizing the community's vision across these topics.

Emphasizing clear action steps ready for implementation in the near-term, recommendations are generally limited to strategies achievable within the next few years and led by a single entity or small group of managers.

## "Early wins"

Establishing implementation momentum early can be essential to the success of planning efforts like this one. As such, the recommendations that follow include several that are achievable within months and without major funding or complication.

For example, FCP has budget in hand to execute recommendations such as updating wayfinding signage, creating demonstration projects and open spaces that realize parts of the cohesive corridor, and catalyzing programming and placemaking in other strategic locations.

## Laying a foundation for the Master Plan

Led by the Planning Board, Flemington will be updating its Master Plan starting in 2022. Through the course of producing this Community Action Plan, we have regularly coordinated with the Planning Board to understand how the Master Plan process will unfold and where this plan can support that subsequent effort.

For example, to the extent this plan has established consensus on a vision for downtown Flemington and catalytic projects and ideas to focus on, the Master Plan can shift emphasis and resources from laying groundwork to elaborating tangible strategies and implementation steps.



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# Critical strategy: Housing development



**Implementation success:  
Housing market potential  
study complete**

## **Housing is the most potent revitalization tool**

As described in the analysis and other parts of this plan, introducing a critical mass of housing within walking distance of the Main Street and Stangl Road corridors is the most powerful way to support existing local businesses and generally catalyze more retail, cultural, and placemaking activity and investment downtown. New housing adds the “neighbors” necessary to bolster the downtown economy.

We recommend targeting 1,000 new units over the next 10 years with an emphasis on multifamily housing types preferred by the fastest growing segments of the population.

## **Focus on large, available sites near Main and Stangl corridors**

Flemington has several outmoded or vacant sites within a short walk of the Main Street and/or Stangl Road corridors.

Priority candidates for mixed-use and multifamily development include:

- Liberty Village
- Cut Glass
- Agway

Additionally, these areas include numerous locations for infill multifamily and townhouse development that would supplement larger projects.

## **Commission a housing study to help calibrate new development**

This planning process dovetails with an external housing study to verify the strength of the market in Flemington. While we are confident in our assessment, developers and lenders often look for a more formal assessment to base investment decisions on.

Additionally, this housing study will parse the potential market by product type and absorption rate, helping developers design projects to best meet demand. This breakdown might also encourage more projects sooner if it reveals that the market can absorb more units of a given type than past experiences might suggest.



# Critical strategy: Cohesive corridor

Several recommendations coalesce along a corridor of opportunity connecting Stangl Road with Main Street alongside many of Flemington's most impactful future development sites.

Components of this "cohesive corridor" include:

- **Continuous pedestrian pathway** from Route 12 to Broad Street and beyond.
- **Potential redevelopment** of Liberty Village, Cut Glass, Turntable Junction and other sites.
- **Temporary and long-term public spaces** for events, festivals, recreation, and other programming.
- **Placemaking enhancements along Main Street** connecting the pedestrian path to the Courthouse area.

*Full cohesive corridor study attached to this plan document.*





# Critical strategy: Cohesive corridor

Though the complete, contiguous pedestrian path and possible rail trail are likely longer-term ambitions that will require property negotiation and substantial funding, the corridor concept includes opportunities for near-term implementation of segments and spaces that will establish momentum for the project.

## Pop-up park at Central and Stangl

Introduce a strong pedestrian link between Stangl and Turntable Junction along with programmable space for markets other events.

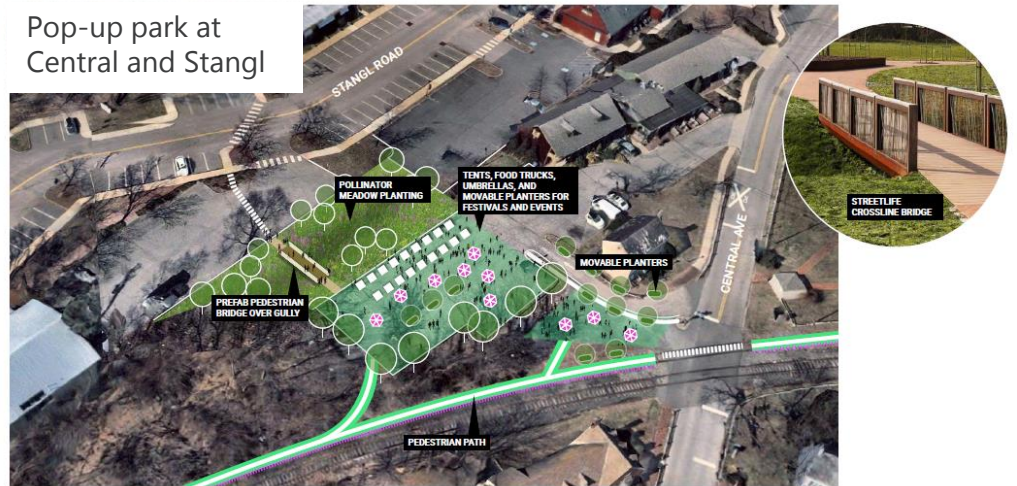
## Gateway interventions at Fulper and Main

Create a mural crosswalk at this gateway intersection, reorient parking on Fulper to allow a sidewalk, and consider pop-up event space on the Cut Glass site.

## Improvements along Mine and Church at intersections with Main Street

Treat these parallel connecting streets with planters and related elements that strengthen the sense they connect important places.

Pop-up park at Central and Stangl



Gateway interventions at Fulper and Main





# Implementation matrix

	Recommendation	Timing
Development	Promote available development sites to the broader developer community.	Ongoing
	Improve stakeholder communications	Ongoing
	Create development process “guidebook”	2022
	Update zoning to reflect current development priorities	Ongoing
	Mitigate hurdles to business formation and development	Ongoing
	Continue proactively planning well development	Ongoing
	Pursue EPA brownfields grant funding	Ongoing
	Establish program to activate underutilized sites	Ongoing
	Develop community design standards	2022
	Establish economic development committee	2022
	Maintain list of desired community facilities and amenities	Ongoing
	Establish a “live / work / play” in Flemington campaign	Ongoing
Connectivity	Create a cohesive corridor connecting Stangl and Main areas	Ongoing
	Create a festival open space	2022 and beyond
	Perform a walk/bike audit	2022
	Conduct a parking study focused on existing supply utilization	2022
Placemaking	Promote diversity in local leadership and cultural programming	Ongoing
	Install gateways at downtown entrances	Ongoing
	Update wayfinding signage and branding	2022
	Develop a public art program based local entrepreneurship, craft, and arts heritage	Ongoing
	Establish district identities for Flemington’s retail corridors	Ongoing



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## Development:

# Promote available development sites to the broader developer community



### Implementation successes:

- Courthouse Square
- Agway redevelopment
- 144 Main Street

#### Summary

Continue to promote Flemington's development sites to regional and national developers with an emphasis on Opportunity Zone investors.

Focus promotion on the sites where near-term redevelopment is most impactful and realistic, such as the Liberty Village and Cut Glass sites.

By attracting more widespread developer attention, the community will have more choices in partners for key sites and more leverage to negotiate outcomes that promote local goals and priorities.

#### Next steps

Establish a preferred outcome for key development sites and document to support communication with interested developers.

Participate in state-sponsored opportunity zone programs and other economic development events, including as presenter or panelist whenever possible.

Continue networking with regional and national developers to promote Flemington's larger opportunity sites.

#### Timeframe

Ongoing.



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## Development:

# Improve stakeholder communications



FCP has invested in a new data and communications system and additional staff support to improve stakeholder communication.

### Summary

Develop an improved system for communication and coordination among local businesses and other stakeholders.

Distribute information regarding issues that might impact business operations, neighborhood access, and other day-to-day activities.

Share information about opportunities and events that businesses and other stakeholders might be able to take advantage of or otherwise benefit from.

Include a focus on construction impacts management during periods of development activity.

### Next steps

Develop an improved contact list of relevant downtown stakeholders, including property owners, business proprietors, property managers, etc.

Establish a communications methodology utilizing digital means like email, twitter, etc.

Define and document the types of activities and events that warrant notice.

Designate a task force to manage communications, including regular meetings to coordinate on possible notifications.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.



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# Development:

## Create development process “guidebook”

### Summary

To encourage new real estate investment by helping streamline the regulatory process, summarize the local development approvals process in a "guidebook" that clearly documents the sequence of steps necessary to proceed from initial concept to shovel-ready site plan.

As applicable, note available tools and resources available to facilitate successful projects in the Borough.

Focus on typical projects that do not incur special circumstances such as Area in Need of Redevelopment designation.

Build on the collaboration established during the Opportunity Zone summit and related planning activities.

### Next steps

Summarize and compile current approvals and permitting processes into a single reference document tailored for the development community.

Periodically review the guidebook with representatives from key permitting stakeholders, such as Planning Board, engineering, fire department, etc. Update and republish the guidebook when needed.

Designate an easily accessible location to obtain the guidebook in digital and print formats.

### Timeframe

2022.



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## Development:

# Update zoning to reflect current development priorities



**Zoning assessment complete (see attached addendum).**

### Summary

Assess the zoning ordinance for inconsistencies between existing designations and land uses that might better reflect viable investment opportunities and community priorities. Revise the ordinance as needed to improve this alignment. Consider adding overall use flexibility and increasing density allowances to enable creative solutions and higher-value development. Support live-work and other hybrid or emerging uses as permitted uses. Consider how the ordinance can reflect COVID-related impacts on retail and office.

### Next steps

Advance recommendations during the upcoming Master Plan process.

Pursue formal changes to the ordinance as the Master Plan is finalized.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.

**Community feedback:** Zoning is prohibitive in this area.



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# Development:

## Mitigate hurdles to business formation and development

**Community feedback:** Zoning is prohibitive in this area and there is not enough support for businesses. It is difficult to operate here with current regulations and permit rules.

### Summary

On an ongoing basis, identify and establish creative approaches to accommodating innovative and emerging industries such as those which might require regulatory workarounds to locate in Flemington. This effort should include advocacy by elected officials where state laws impede the economic development impact these types of businesses might contribute. Place-based marketing efforts could also promote the Borough as welcoming to these progressive businesses searching for a place to locate.

### Next steps

Conduct a survey or audit comparing emerging opportunities against the current regulatory framework to identify impediments.

Prioritize opportunities and begin efforts to mitigate impediments starting with those that would have the highest economic development impact if overcome.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.



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## Development:

# Continue proactively planning well development



Planning and grant application have begun.

### Summary

The Borough's limited water supply is the most significant constraint limiting future housing and other development within the Borough over the coming decade.

A new well requires years to design, permit, finance, and construct – much longer than a typical housing development project requires to complete. The Borough is currently permitting two new wells to accommodate Courthouse Square and perhaps one more development. That proactive approach should continue so additional wells are brought online to support additional demand from subsequent development.

While the Borough should self-fund the initial stages (planning, design, permitting) to allow a more immediate start, developers of large sites could be asked to contribute to construction costs during late, more costly stages.

### Next steps

Determine additional well capacity needed to accommodate anticipated new development over the next decade.

Identify candidate site(s) for well location.

Assess cost and feasibility for each candidate site and finalize a preferred location.

Budget public funding to perform design and permitting for the well and begin these processes independent of developer contributions.

Negotiate with prospective developers of large sites (such as those designated Areas in Need of Redevelopment) for contributions to defray construction costs.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.



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## Development: Pursue EPA brownfields grant funding



EPA grant pursuit in  
process.

### Summary

Apply for EPA Brownfields Assessment funding to study and potentially de-risk Flemington's major development sites. This EPA program supports area-wide planning, phase 1 and 2 assessments, and other preliminary remediation activities. Avoid conflicting with development projects already in process

### Next step(s)

Issue RFP to procure consultant support for grant writing and subsequent planning and engineering should Flemington receive funding.

Define goals and representative properties and/or areas for grant focus. Engage relevant landowners and other stakeholders as applicable to foster collaboration and transparency.

Complete EPA grant application with consultant support.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.



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## Development:

# Establish program to activate underutilized sites

**Community feedback:** We need to develop properties in town like Agway area and Liberty Village.

### Summary

Establish a program enliven vacant and underutilized sites that are negatively impacting adjacent properties such as by depressing economic value or discouraging business activity.

Strategies could include imposing requirements for temporary programming allowances on vacant parcels or rotating art installations in unused retail frontages.

### Next step(s)

Consult with counsel to identify an enabling legal mechanism.

Inventory vacant and outmoded sites, highlighting those in locations with highest visual and experiential impact on commercial corridors and public spaces.

Develop a menu of strategies to enliven sites of different types and on different timeframes.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.



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# Development:

## Develop community design standards

**Community feedback:** Flemington is known as Historic Flemington for a reason, we have the 2nd largest historic district in New Jersey behind Cape May. Most of the Borough is in the historic district and its potential as an attraction has not been fully utilized in my opinion.

### Summary

Develop design standards for new development that enable increased density while ensuring new buildings complement or reinforce (and do not detract from) existing historic architectural fabric. Focus on urban design concerns at the block and neighborhood scale (rather than architectural style), directing how development should interface with its context in terms of massing, scale, and program but not aesthetic appearance. Rather than prescribing exact dimensional requirements, use example imagery to illustrate preferred design approaches.

### Next step(s)

Establish community design priorities during the upcoming Master Plan process.

Translate priorities into illustrated design standards document for formal adoption as part of the Master Plan and/or zoning ordinance.

### Timeframe

2022.



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# Development:

## Establish economic development committee

### Summary

Modeled after the Opportunity Zone Partnership committee, establish an economic development committee that meets regularly to coordinate Borough strategies and initiatives. The committee might include the Mayor, Council President, Planning Board Chair, FCP Director, Chamber of Commerce, and EDC.

### Next step(s)

Finalize the list of committee members.

Hold an inaugural meeting to define committee protocols and member responsibilities.

### Timeframe

2022.



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## Development:

# Maintain list of desired community facilities and amenities

### Initial ideas:

- Open green space
- Park on Main Street
- Public art
- Enhanced gateways
- Cohesive corridor
- Outdoor event space
- Community meeting space
- Black box theater space
- Food market
- More attractions and destinations

### Summary

Establish and regularly maintain a list of facilities, amenities, and public improvements sought by the community as a reference to inform planning, grant writing efforts, and other implementation opportunities that emerge from time to time. Emphasize an equitable variety of priorities in terms of community groups served and geographic distribution across the Borough.

### Next step(s)

Draft an initial list that represents known community needs and priorities.

Emphasize achievable ideas and concepts.

Highlight items that might be most appropriate to couple with Liberty Village and other near-term development opportunities.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.



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## Development:

# Establish a “live / work / play” in Flemington campaign

**Community feedback:** We need to focus on being more than an events destination and focus on being a community.

### Summary

Expand “Visit/shop Flemington” to include “Live in Flemington” so messaging extends beyond just the visitor market but also targets potential new residents and businesses.

Consider encouraging new “live-work” housing production among the Borough’s economic development priorities.

### Next step(s)

Review current marketing campaigns and identify opportunities to add “live in Flemington” to messaging.

Identify local “champions” to feature in messaging as models for the types of residents and entrepreneurs the campaign would seek to attract.

Coordinate with Planning Board on how “live-work” development typologies might translate into the Master Plan and zoning ordinance revisions.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.



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# Connectivity:

## Create a cohesive corridor connecting Stangl and Main areas



**Implementation success:**  
NPP grant awarded to fund placemaking

### Summary

Establish a visual, physical, and symbolic connection between Stangl Road and Main Street that utilizes existing and new pedestrian linkages as well as segments along or adjacent to the railroad.

Though a dedicated bike and pedestrian path may be the corridor's eventual centerpiece, the project should incorporate a variety of installations, interventions, and connections that range from pedestrian infrastructure to public art to event and programming facilities.

### Next step(s)

Pilot the concept with temporarily installations such as painted crosswalks at key intersections, unique planters demarcating the corridor, and new pedestrian links such as between Church and Stangl.

Advance conversations with stakeholders such as adjacent property owners and the railroad owner to establish options for long-term path.

Prioritize further planning and design for upcoming Master Plan process.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.

**Community feedback:** I am really excited about the trail plans, UPGRADING the turntable into a small park.



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# Connectivity:

## Create a festival open space

### Summary

Develop a programmable open space for festivals, performances, and other local and destination events.

Consider a short-term location at an underutilized site in a central location as an interim venue until a more permanent site is developed. The Main Street side of the Cut Glass site could provide a short-term location pending upgrades such as rubble removal, an extra soil layer, landscaping, fencing, and electrical service.

### Next step(s)

Identify one or more short-term candidates and develop design plans and cost estimates, moving forward with the most promising option for implementation in 2022.

Develop priorities for the long-term space and work with future developers of large sites to incorporate concepts into their plans, perhaps as part of Area in Need of Redevelopment and PILOT planning and negotiations.

### Timeframe

2022 and beyond.



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# Connectivity:

## Perform a walk/bike audit

**Community feedback:** Add a traffic signal or stop sign at Main Street and Mine Street. It's difficult to navigate that crossing while walking.

### Summary

Building on recent improvements such as the Main Street streetscape, assess the Borough's walkability, ADA accessibility, and cycling facilities including sidewalks, paths, crosswalks, and ramps with an emphasis on reinforcing primary pedestrian corridors within and connectivity between major centers of activity (such as Main Street and Stangl Road). Utilize an audit methodology that can be conducted by volunteers.

### Next step(s)

Organize an audit committee, recruit volunteers, and conduct the audit Borough-wide or subarea by subarea.

Pursue grants focused on walkability and accessibility from organizations such as AARP to fund improvements where deficiencies are identified.

### Timeframe

2022.

**Community feedback:** Add better more inviting sidewalks with planters, pavers, cute lamp posts. Add bike lanes.



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## Connectivity:

# Conduct a parking study focused on existing supply utilization

**Community feedback:** Designate central parking locations with clear signage where visitors could easily find parking and signage would be there directing folks to different destinations.

### Summary

While the local parking supply is generally adequate, it is often considered difficult to find and use easily and efficiently.

Conduct or assign funding to commission a parking study emphasizing goals such as improving wayfinding, visibility and access.

Consider shared parking strategies to extend the existing parking supply, especially if new businesses and development start to strain the inventory.

### Next step(s)

Assess if funding is available to commission a consultant-led parking study or if the discussion should start as part of the Master Plan process.

If consultant-led, develop a scope and RFP informed by studies in similar places, especially those where shared parking strategies were emphasized (instead of focusing on new parking supply production).

### Timeframe

2022.



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# Placemaking:

## Promote diversity in local leadership and cultural programming

### Summary

Building on success of programming such as Salsa Night, extend the Hispanic community's visibility and presence within the life and culture of downtown.

More broadly, extend cultural programming to reflect Flemington's full diversity.

Promote incorporating more Hispanic, indigenous, and people of color into local organizations, merchant groups, boards, and other leadership groups.

### Next step(s)

Establish a standing meeting with representatives and leaders from the local community that reflects all of Flemington's diverse ethnic and cultural heritages. Focus the agenda on extending inclusivity and diversifying representation in local leadership and business groups.

As ideas take shape, spin off committees and task managers as appropriate to implement results from the committee's collaboration.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.



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# Placemaking:

## Install gateways at downtown entrances



**Implementation success:**  
NPP grant awarded to fund placemaking such as gateways

### Summary

Reinforce a sense of "arrival" to downtown's signature shopping and cultural activity areas with gateway installations at their primary entrances.

Consider a range of possible gateway installation approaches, from vertical structures and monument signage to more unique and creative formats involving more artistic expression and dynamic or interactive features.

### Next step(s)

Identify gateway locations and prioritize most impactful one or two to start with.

Issue a call for proposals from designers and artists to generate a range of ideas and options.

Pursue grants (or other funding) to commission and implement preferred gateway concepts.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.

**Community feedback:** How can we make a more visually pleasing welcome to Main Street?



# Placemaking:

## Update wayfinding signage and branding



### Summary

Flemington's current wayfinding signage focuses on attractions that no longer exist or drive major visitation, such as Flemington Furs and Liberty Village.

Existing signage should be updated with destinations most relevant to today's visitors.

Wayfinding should focus on districts like Stangl Road and Main Street, not specific businesses.

New signage graphics could include an updated style and branding.

### Next step(s)

Research availability of grant funding to support wayfinding programs.

Inventory and map existing wayfinding signs.

Develop a list of destinations relevant to today's visitors.

Commission a graphic designer to update signage appearance and produce revised package of signs. Apply new graphics to existing signs and consider adding new signs if popular routes are not covered.

Coordinate wayfinding and branding with downtown gateway installations.

### Timeframe

2022.

**Community feedback:** Make all signs standardized, more visible and historic looking. Place informational signs on Main Street and at Historic Buildings.



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## Placemaking:

# Develop a public art program based local entrepreneurship, craft, and arts heritage

**Community feedback:** Tap into Flemington as a destination for unique craftsmanship and the arts.

### Summary

Establish a program to support arts entrepreneurs by sponsoring installations, providing workspace, and other visible promotions.

Emphasize creative works and activities that enliven public spaces and reinforce Flemington's image as a progressive arts and culture destination.

Consider financial drivers such as "1% for the arts" development fees.

### Next step(s)

Review precedents from similar places across the country and draft a plan that selects the most applicable ideas for Flemington.

Develop a funding mechanism that creates a reliable and sufficient stream of resources.

Shortlist locations for the first round of implementation, including a variety of site types such as vacant storefronts, open spaces, sidewalks, etc.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.



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# Placemaking:

## Establish district identities for Flemington's retail corridors

**Community feedback:** Right now, our thing is "Historic Downtown Flemington" and honestly that's not very exciting.

### Summary

Develop identities for each of the Borough's three primary retail corridors: Main Street, Stangl Road, and the highway shopping area.

Each should be distinct and shaped by what makes each corridor unique, but the collection should maintain some thematic cohesion to help them reinforce each other.

### Next step(s)

Building on initial feedback from the Community Action Plan engagement process, develop preliminary concepts for new district identities.

Consider establishing one or more task forces to advance identity development and formalization.

As identity concepts emerge, consider hiring a consultant to develop branding, marketing, and other supporting resources.

### Timeframe

Ongoing.



# FLEMINGTON COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

*Funded by the NJEDA  
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