

# WASHINGTON BOROUGH



## SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Washington Borough

Warren County, New Jersey

November 2024 | Adopted February 10, 2025

Prepared by

H|G|A

# Washington Borough Sustainable Economic Development Plan

Warren County, New Jersey

November 4, 2024

Adopted by the Land Use Board on February 10, 2025

Prepared By:



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The original of this report was signed and  
sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan S. Gruel', is written over a horizontal line.

Susan S. Gruel, P.P. #1955

*Contributing content by Hanah Davenport*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its early history, Washington Borough experienced rapid economic growth tied to its industry and regional connectivity, which spurred the development of its downtown area. Although the Borough's economic vibrancy has somewhat declined in recent decades due to changes in commuting and shopping trends, Downtown Washington has retained its strong business community, historic character, and pedestrian-centric design. Although the Borough's downtown and other commercial corridors have room for growth, Washington's economic base has a strong foundation built off of over a century of successful business, industry, and local support.

The Borough is in a unique position to leverage its many assets and areas of opportunity to pursue a sustainable, long-term economic vision for its downtown and other commercial corridors. The role of this Sustainable Economic Development Plan is to establish a basis for policies and actions that will promote future economic development in the Borough.

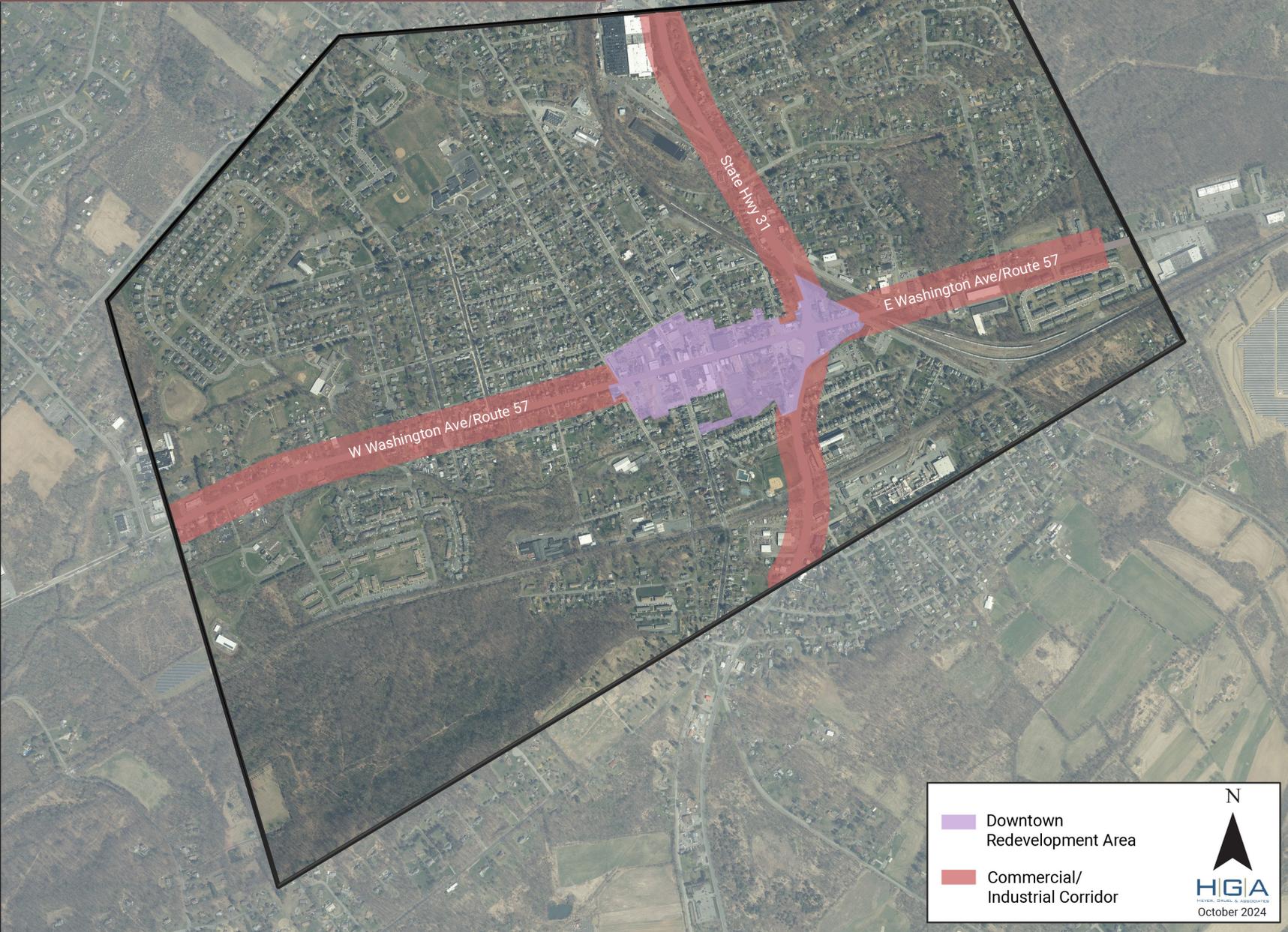
This Plan generally recommends a three-phase strategy designed to:

- **Phase I (1-5 Years):** Shift any negative perspectives of Downtown Washington through achievable and affordable actions, with an emphasis on branding, programming, and placemaking;
- **Phase II (5-10 Years):** Pursue long-term revitalization efforts that frame the Borough as a desirable place to live, work, and play; and
- **Phase III (10+ Years):** Invest in large-scale infrastructural improvements and ongoing economic and communal initiatives that promote self-sufficiency

Amongst other focuses, the Borough is prioritizing aesthetically cleaning up the Downtown, providing safe active transportation routes and crossings to connect the entirety of the Borough, and attracting beneficial and desired development that will foster the creation of public spaces, employment and workforce training opportunities, and the creative reuse of properties that adhere to comprehensive design guidelines and retain the Borough's historic character. This Plan outlines specific recommendations related to marketing and branding, community programming, business support, circulation and streetscape improvements, redevelopment and rehabilitation, and zoning, land use, and design standards.

This Plan outlines the Borough's existing conditions in terms of its demographics, workforce, prominent industries, and more. In addition, it considers Washington's physical development patterns, environmental characteristics, and public input. A review of prior Borough planning efforts, regional and state plans, best practices, and funding and resources have been provided. As a whole, this Plan aims to identify top employment sectors, top occupations, and emerging sectors, while tailoring specific recommendations to the unique assets, conditions, and desires of the Borough and its community.

# PLAN AREA BOUNDARIES + AERIAL



# INTRODUCTION

## Vision 2035

The year is 2035, and Downtown Washington is a thriving hub where residents of the Borough and the surrounding region come together to shop and dine throughout the day and evening, make a run to the grocery store or doctor's office, conduct work from a comfortable coworking space, visit the arcade or museum, or even attend a bicyclist meetup. The Downtown and other commercial corridors are pedestrian-centric, walkable, and lined with public spaces that welcome communal interaction. A diverse mix of commercial uses attracts families, young professionals, and seniors alike, and provides a destination to play, learn, and connect.

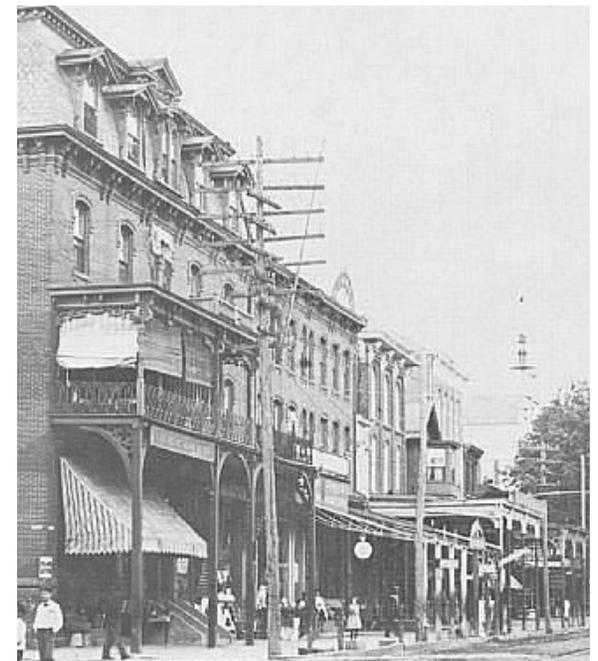
The business community is as diverse and vibrant as ever, with a comprehensive backing of local, regional, and statewide support tailored to local businesses. Entrepreneurs and small business owners have access to flexible spaces that give them the freedom to test and perfect their work in a low-risk environment. High school and college students from the local community are encouraged to participate in local training and apprenticeship programs, gaining vital career-readiness skills needed in an evolving and sustainable economic landscape.

Throughout the year, the Borough collaborates with the Business Improvement District and local artists to host a wide range of communal, educational, and cultural tourism events that are age-inclusive and activate the Borough

throughout the day and evening. These are centered around the Borough's unique history and character as well as its rich environmental resources. The Downtown is connected to all corners of the Borough via safe active transportation routes, including improved pedestrian crossings along Route 31. Art, historic signage, pedestrian infrastructure personalized to each business, and creative landscaping—including green infrastructure—line the streets of the downtown area and provide a unique sense of place. Regional multimodal infrastructure has been integrated into the Borough, providing a unique draw amongst the active transportation community.

Sustainable economic initiatives in the Borough have spurred an uptick in business growth that has reached well beyond the Downtown and has encouraged the expansion of other commercial corridors as well, including the corridor which is located along Route 57 to the east of the Downtown. Properties previously primed for redevelopment are in the process of transforming into community assets, including the properties located in the Downtown Gateways. Previously vacant and under-maintained facades have received needed aesthetic and structural improvements through business grants, window display programs, and ongoing revitalization efforts.

Visitors, residents, employers, and business owners alike choose to visit and invest in Washington Borough over other popular downtowns in the region due to the Borough's small-town charm, unique characteristics, and business-friendly environment. The Borough continues to work with the community, potential developers and employers, and networks such as the Main Street America program to further its efforts in strengthening its workforce and economy, with a sustainable future in mind.



*Historic Downtown Washington  
Source: Edsen Breyer's Postcard Museum<sup>1</sup>*

## Plan Goals

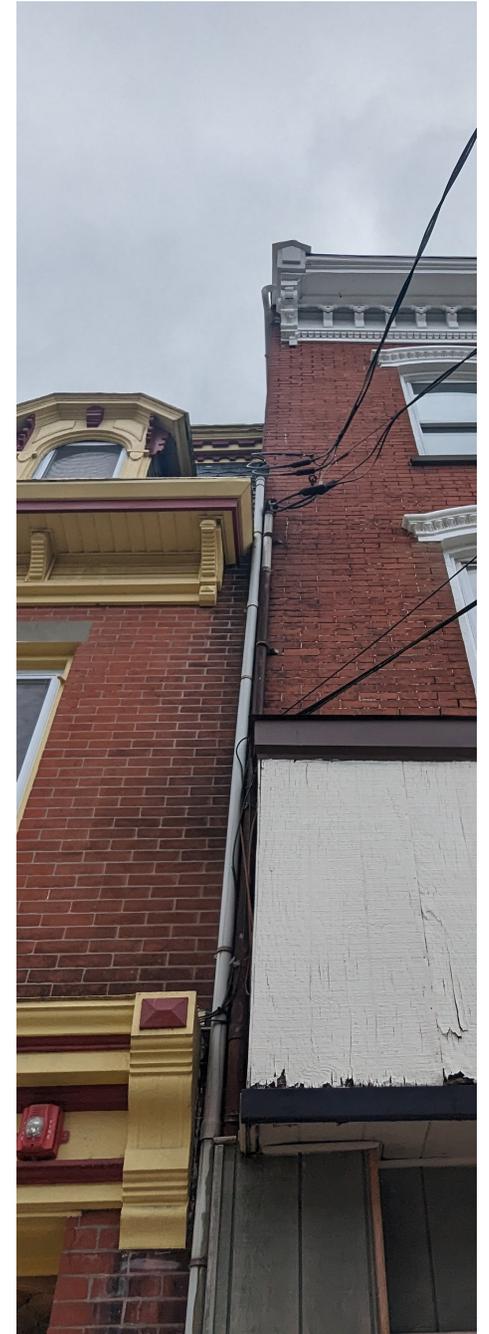
The goals of this Plan are to:

- Outline the Borough's key assets and strengths that can be leveraged to pique development investment and highlight available development opportunities, with an emphasis on desirable and beneficial uses.
- Attract a diversified mix of commercial uses to the Borough that align with the needs of the community and region, expand employment opportunities, and support the Borough's long-term economic health and character.
- Identify specific urban design, development, and programmatic opportunities to enhance and connect the Borough's commercial corridors, while leaning into Washington's unique historic character, cultural heritage, and environmental resources.
- Encourage prime opportunities for safe and effective active transportation routes, placemaking efforts, and business support to establish the Borough as a destination rather than a "pass-through" town and attract visitors.

## Plan Overview

This Sustainable Economic Development Plan broadly assesses trends within the Borough and the surrounding region as a whole and provides a comprehensive action plan designed to meet the economic goals of the Borough's leadership, residents, and business community by using a holistic approach. More specifically, the Plan includes:

- Inventory of existing conditions in the Borough, including land use, recent development trends, physical design, areas susceptible to change, and otherwise.
- Profile outlining current demographic and economic trends in Washington Borough and the region as a whole, including data on employment and wages, prominent industries, commuting patterns, and municipal financial trends.
- SOAR analysis looking at the Borough's Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results.
- Review of statewide, regional, and local plans, with a focus on highlighting overlapping goals, objectives, and initiatives. An additional review of marketing strategies and tools used in competitive downtowns has been included.
- Sustainable Economic Action Plan which offers a comprehensive and strategic approach to ensuring the future vitality and sustainability of the Borough's economic base, including an Action Matrix.
- Economic development best practices, pulling from current initiatives and design patterns found throughout the State.
- Potential funding and resources that can be leveraged to enhance the Borough's efforts in achieving the goals and objectives set forth in this Plan.



## PLAN OUTREACH

A variety of public outreach tactics were utilized to maximize community feedback throughout the preparation of this Plan. More specifically:

- A subcommittee comprised of local business leaders and owners, governing body officials, and Borough management was formed to provide on-the-ground knowledge of the Borough's existing conditions, identify potential stakeholders, and brainstorm recommendations for the plan as well as the plan preparation process.
- Two stakeholder interview groups—one consisting of Borough residents, landlords, and business owners, and the other consisting of Borough employees and officials—were identified. Each group was convened separately for a round table discussion regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of Washington's commercial corridors with a focus on the Downtown and adjacent areas.
- A public input meeting was held on the evening of June 27th in the Borough's Council Chambers. This meeting was used to answer questions about the SEDP and the plan preparation process and, more specifically, to document attendees' vision of the Borough's economic future. Conversation was focused on the downtown and adjacent areas. Marketing for the meeting was distributed by leadership at the Borough of Washington, the Washington Borough Business Improvement District, and subcommittee members. Residents, officials, business owners, and commercial tenants attended the meeting.
- A digital public input survey was launched on June 5, 2024 and remained open through July 15, 2024. The survey was posted to the Borough website, circulated by the Washington Borough Business Improvement District, and linked via QR code on the public input meeting flyer. Amongst other topics, the 21-question survey asked responders to identify the elements of the Downtown that attract or deter visitors, the types of uses and development that people would like to see more or less of in the Borough, and the overall public perception of the Downtown and adjacent areas. The survey received a total of 51 responses.

## Municipal Feedback

**Municipal stakeholders agreed that Washington Borough is more often treated as a “pass-through” rather than a destination. This is, at least in part, due to a handful of factors:**

- Downtown Washington is characterized by a prominence of daytime uses, with few businesses staying open past 6:00 pm on most evenings. As a result, the area is typically not activated in the evenings and does not attract visitors for occasions such as date night.
- Downtown Washington is bifurcated by State Route 57 and is separated from the eastern side of the Borough by State Route 31. The prominence of vehicles and lack of pedestrian-safe crossings limits foot traffic in the Downtown.



*Top: Municipal Interview Session  
Bottom: Resident Interview Session  
Bottom: Public Input Session*

- Downtown Washington does not have a clearly defined brand and identity, both in terms of its marketing materials and its offerings. The Borough has a rich history and culture that is not currently being leveraged through the Downtown’s physical form, branded events, walking tours, etc.
- The physical condition of the Downtown is a deterrence for potential visitors and tenants. There are a handful of vacant buildings and lots in the Downtown that have not been maintained properly by their respective owners and, as a result, portions of the Downtown are described as “unwelcoming” and “run down”. A handful of these vacancies occur at the “gateways” of the Downtown (i.e. the intersection of Route 31 + Route 57 and the intersection of N/S Lincoln Avenue + Route 57), creating a negative first impression of the Downtown.
- The conditions of existing buildings limit the types of uses that can be developed in the Downtown. More specifically, it appears that a common deterrent for potential restaurant tenants in the Downtown is the lack of available spaces with proper commercial kitchens. Another common deterrent for businesses that was noted was the price of commercial rent in the Borough.

**Municipal stakeholders identified the following types of uses as those currently with the most success or those with the greatest potential for success in Downtown:**

- *Uses that promote an active lifestyle:* Gibson’s Gym, for example, was repeatedly identified as a highly attractive and successful business in the Downtown not only due to its function in residents’ daily lives, but also because it offers childcare. The Esoteric Jiu Jitsu Academy was identified as a similarly successful use because it reportedly gives caregivers an opportunity to patronize the businesses Downtown while their children are taking classes.
- *Age-inclusive uses:* It was identified that a considerable portion of the Borough’s population either has children or is considered senior citizens. In planning for the future growth of the Downtown, it’s important to consider uses that would attract and adequately serve an inclusive range of ages. For example, uses such as indoor recreation or ice cream shops could benefit families, while compact, mixed-uses could benefit older citizens.
- *Uses that activate the Downtown in the evening:* Specifically, it was suggested that more full-service, sit-down restaurants for date nights, family celebrations, etc. would be an advantageous addition to the Downtown. Not only would such a use attract visitors, but it would promote the patronage of other local businesses as well and encourage evening activity.

## Public Feedback

**Between the resident/business owner stakeholder group interview and the public input meeting, members of the public came to a consensus on the following:**

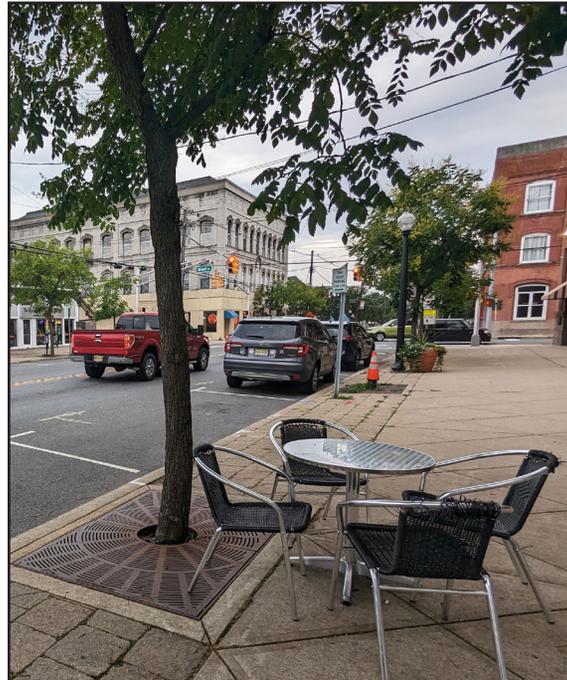
- One of the greatest weaknesses in the Downtown is the existing appearance of buildings. Aside from the vacant properties that need significant investment, it was identified that building elements such as canopies and exterior paint colors as well as ongoing issues such as graffiti should be addressed to create harmony. There was an agreement that tools should be put in place to ensure that property owners are held accountable for the aesthetic impact of their properties.
- The Borough’s number of vacant or underused properties within the Downtown and along the Route 31 and Route 57 corridors presents an opportunity. These properties—such as the former gas station on the southwest corner of the Route 31 and Route 57 intersection—have the potential to be redeveloped in a timely and effective manner to promote the Borough’s economic growth.
- In general, the public would like to see more: garbage cans and cigarette disposal containers; ADA accessible curb cuts; seating options, including public benches and outdoor dining; places for people to actively or passively gather, such as pollinator gardens or active multimodal paths; lighting; wayfinding;

bike infrastructure, including bike racks; cultural and historical acknowledgements; opportunities for food stands to set up in the public realm; and additional special evening events for a diverse age range, such as late-night events for adults or outdoor movie screenings for families. Further, it was agreed that the existing shade trees in the Downtown should be replaced with taller trees that don't block business signage.

- The public identified a desire to retain the Downtown's creative and unique character by allowing unique signage and sidewalk decorations that are specific to each business owner. This sense of individuality was noted in both the stakeholder interview and the public meeting as one of Downtown's strengths. Along these same lines, stakeholders agreed that they did not want to see large franchises in the Borough and would prefer the prominence of mom-and-pop shops.
- Local business representatives expressed the need for a "more welcoming" environment for business owners. More specifically, they expressed a desire for less fees and regulations regarding signage, murals, and outdoor seating, dining, and displays. In addition, it was agreed that informational materials, such as a comprehensive "how to" manual for new or expanding businesses to reference throughout the permitting process.
- Traffic adjustments were identified as a key need in the Downtown and adjacent areas. Specifically, (a) the Route 57 and Route 31 intersection and (b) the Route

57 and Washington Avenue intersection were identified as troublesome due to lack of pedestrian safety measures and the backup of traffic. A resident also noted that fast and loud freight traffic along Route 57 deters visitors from wanting to eat outside or stroll along the sidewalks.

- Some of the future uses suggested for the Downtown included a specialty food store, a small urgent care clinic, professional businesses that provide stable jobs and attract a diverse range of workers into the Borough, arts and heritage uses (such as a museum or arts center), and mixed-use buildings with residential units on upper floors.



*Sidewalk seating located on the sidewalk along West Washington Avenue*

## Survey Feedback

### Respondent Profile

Of the survey respondents who completed the survey, 41% were between the ages of 25 to 44, 49% were between the ages of 45 to 64, and 10% were aged 65 or older. Nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents reported living, working, or owning a property or business in the Borough for 20 years or more, while roughly 20% of respondents had done so for 10 to 20 years, 26% of respondents had done so for 5 to 10 years, and 31% had done so for 0 to 5 years. Approximately 28% of respondents operated a business in Washington Borough, of which 71% rented their space while the other 29% owned theirs.

### Downtown Visitation Habits

A majority (86%) of respondents reported that they visit Downtown Washington at least once a week, with 86% of respondents indicating they visit on both weekends and weekdays and 12% indicating visits on weekdays only. When asked to indicate their primary mode of transportation to Downtown Washington, three-quarters (75%) of respondents indicated they use a vehicle. Another 14% of respondents walk to the Downtown, while 12% use a combination of driving, walking, biking, and/or public transportation. According to 80% respondents, the most common reason for visiting Downtown Washington is its restaurants, bars, and cafes, followed by shopping (57%), events and entertainment (51%), work (35%), municipal services (29%), professional services (20%), visiting friends and family (20%), and personal services (18%).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economic History

Prior to being incorporated as its own municipality in 1868, the Borough of Washington was considered part of Washington Township for roughly two decades. The Borough exhibited a vibrant and flourishing economy throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century, much in part due to its proximity to major transportation routes, including: the Morris Canal, which was active between the years 1831 and 1924; the Easton-Washington Traction Company trolley line, which provided access from Washington to Phillipsburg in the early 20th century; the intersection of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad and the Morris and Essex Railroad, which shared a train station in the Borough until 1966; and the intersection of New Jersey Routes 31 and 57.

A multitude of industries blossomed in the Borough throughout its early history, including mechanic workshops, cabinetmakers, a tannery, wagon factories, a shoe factory, and a silk mill. Most notably, however, the Borough came to be known in the late 19th and early 20th century as a hub for the manufacture of organs, pianos, and melodeons. Musical instruments were so prominent in the Borough, in fact, that present-day Stewart Street was once referred to as Melodeon Street. The Borough provided an ideal location for organ production particularly due to the surrounding transportation network and the area's supply of walnut trees. John A. Smith is historically noted to be the first organ maker in the

Borough, establishing a shop around the year 1850. A later manufacturer, Daniel F. Beatty, is referred to as one of the first to sell instruments via the mail-order system and to utilize far-reaching advertising and mass mailings.

Washington Borough thrived as an economic hub for manufacturing, but also came to serve as an entertainment center for the region as well. The Washington Theater—once considered the “Showplace of Northwestern New Jersey”—was built in 1926 and provided a venue for silent movies and Vaudeville performances. Other prominent entertainment in the Borough throughout the years included the Daniel F. Beatty Opera House, which was located on the upper floor of the building located at 1 West Washington Avenue, and the Skalla Park and Amusement Pavilion which operated beginning in 1910 until it burned down in 1914.

The Borough's prominence as an economic center was both strengthened and threatened by the post-WWII rise of automobiles, which expanded resident access to the Lehigh Valley and the New York City metro area. As residents in the region gained easier access to distant economic hubs, the Borough's once-vibrant downtown began to decline. This was further exacerbated by a multitude of devastating fires that took place in the Borough in the early to late 20th century, most notably a 1962 fire that destroyed a considerable portion of Downtown Washington.



*Historic advert for Cornish & Co. Organs, manufactured in Washington / Source: Hidden New Jersey<sup>2</sup>*

Although the Borough has seen considerable shifts over the decades it continues to embrace its small-town character and roots, which it promotes through its “Hometown Friendly” slogan. In 2003 the Borough's governing body adopted a resolution establishing the Washington Borough Business Improvement District (“Washington BID”) as a self-governing nonprofit. The Washington BID represents over 150 businesses in the Borough, ranging from local restaurants and unique retail to professional and personal services, fitness and childcare, automotive shops, manufacturing, art studios, and grocery stores. In addition to marketing the businesses it represents and attracting new tenants, the Washington BID oversees a wide range of business resources and Downtown programming, including live events and beautification. The economic profile section of this Plan will provide further context regarding the industries that have become prominent in recent decades.

## Land Development Patterns

According to 2022 MOD-IV data, residential uses excluding apartments comprise just under half (45.8%) of the Borough’s land. The next most common uses are commercial property (9.7%), other exempt property (7.6%), and public property (6.7%). The other property classes collectively account for the remaining 30.2% of the Borough’s land.

## Recent Development

Washington Borough is nearly built out, which means that the majority of its future development will come in the way of redevelopment and infill projects. Some of the more recent non-residential projects to be constructed in the Borough include a CVS located at 160 East Washington Avenue, a Taco Bell located at 41 West Washington Avenue, and the Dank Poet Dispensary located at 245 East Washington Avenue which included the retrofit of an existing building.



CVS constructed at the corner of Routes 57 and 31



Historic building located at 2 W. Washington to be retrofitted for mixed use

Property Class	Property Class Description	Acres	Percentage
2	Residential	508.1	45.8%
4A	Commercial	107.4	9.7%
15F	Other Exempt	83.9	7.6%
15C	Pubic Property	74.0	6.7%
1	Vacant Land	63.9	5.8%
4C	Apartments	57.6	5.2%
4B	Industrial	52.5	4.7%
5A/B	Railroad	47.3	4.3%
3B	Qualified Farm	45.3	4.1%
15A	Public School	33.6	3.0%
15D	Church & Charitable	18.0	1.6%
15E	Cemetery	9.2	0.8%
3A	Regular Farm	6.6	0.6%
15B	Other School	1.2	0.1%
Total		1,108.5	100.0%

Source: 2022 MOD-IV Data

In the last decade, a handful of multifamily residential projects throughout the Borough have been in the works as well. These include:

- A 12-unit project at 35 Brown Street, which received land use board approval in October 2022 and was under construction as recently as August 2024;
- Two mixed-use projects in the Downtown Redevelopment Area, located at 1 and 2 West Washington, respectively. The proposed project for 1 West Washington received site plan approval in October 2022 for the conversion of the upper stories of the Stover Building from vacant office space to residential units, for a total of 20 units. The proposed project for 2 West Washington received site plan approval in September 2022 for the renovation of a 3-story building and the conversion of office space to residential units, for a total of 10 units. Both projects triggered the affordable set-aside requirement set forth in the Washington Downtown Redevelopment Plan, yielding 4 affordable units at 1 West Washington and 2 affordable units at 2 West Washington. Renovation work for both properties began in 2023, although work on the 1 West Washington project has been temporarily stalled while the Borough and redeveloper work on finalizing negotiations; and
- A mixed-use project referred to as the “Towne Center,” which is located at 27-33 West Washington Avenue in the Downtown Redevelopment Area. The proposed project received site plan approval in December 2013 as an inclusionary project with a 20% affordable set-aside, to yield a total of 10

affordable units. The project proposes to include up to five retail units on the ground floor and 50 total residential units throughout the remainder of the building. Although the property has been demolished, construction on the property has not yet begun.

The maps on the following pages illustrate the existing land uses and zoning districts present throughout the commercial corridors of the Plan Area (Map 2) as well as the existing ground floor land uses specifically within the Downtown Redevelopment Area (Map 3).

## Municipal Financial Trends

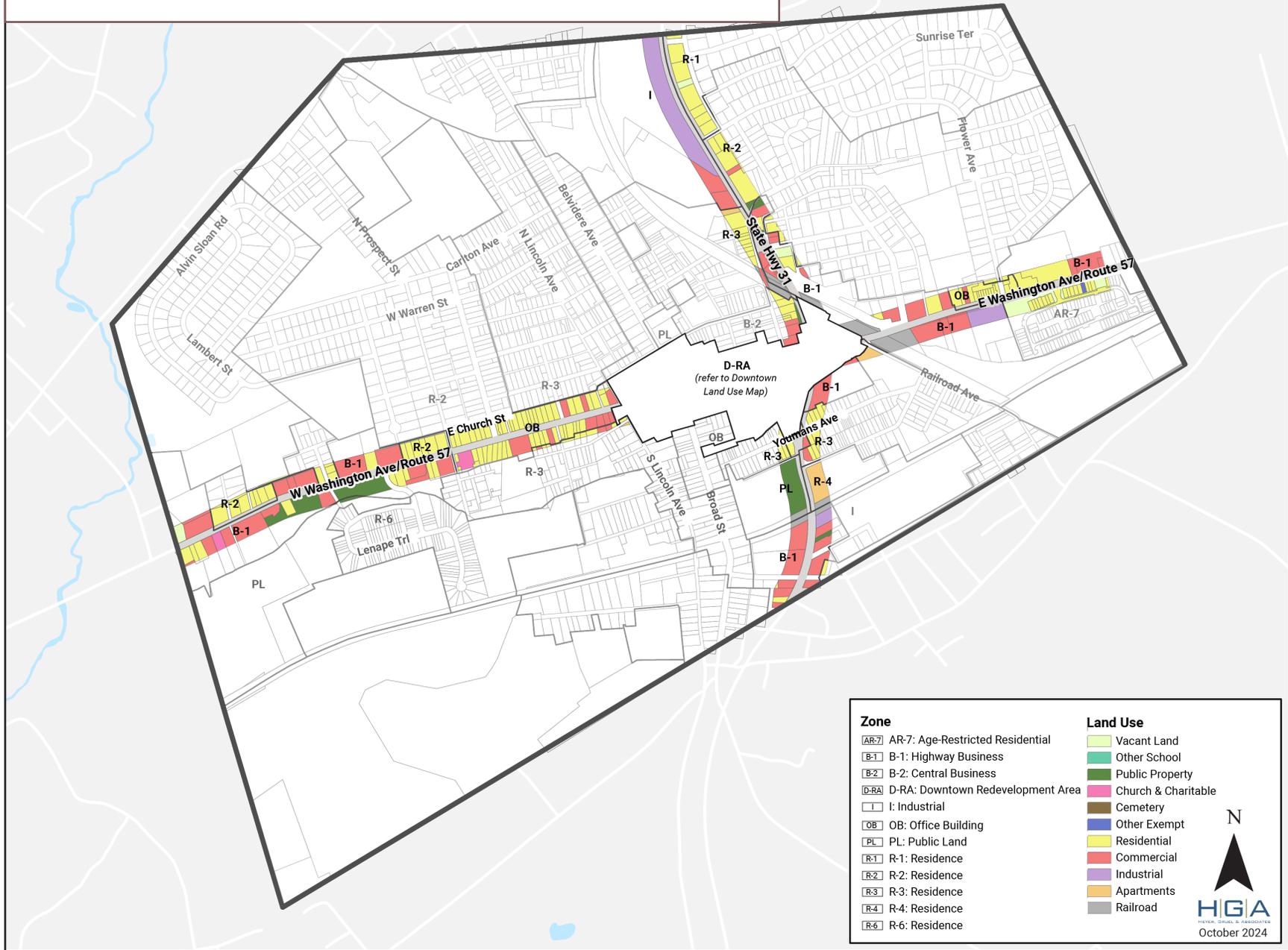
As of July 31, 2024, residential properties (except apartments) comprised 78.6% of the Borough’s tax base at 78.6%, while occupying roughly 88.6% of the Borough’s taxable parcels. Commercial properties, on the other hand, accounted for 12.3% of the Borough’s net taxable value, while only occupying 7.0% of the taxable parcels. This was followed by apartments, comprising 5.3% of the Borough’s tax base across only 0.8% of the Borough’s taxable parcels, and industrial properties, comprising 3.3% of the Borough’s tax base across only 0.6% of the Borough’s taxable parcels. On average, apartment properties in the Borough had the highest value per parcel at \$1,027,668.

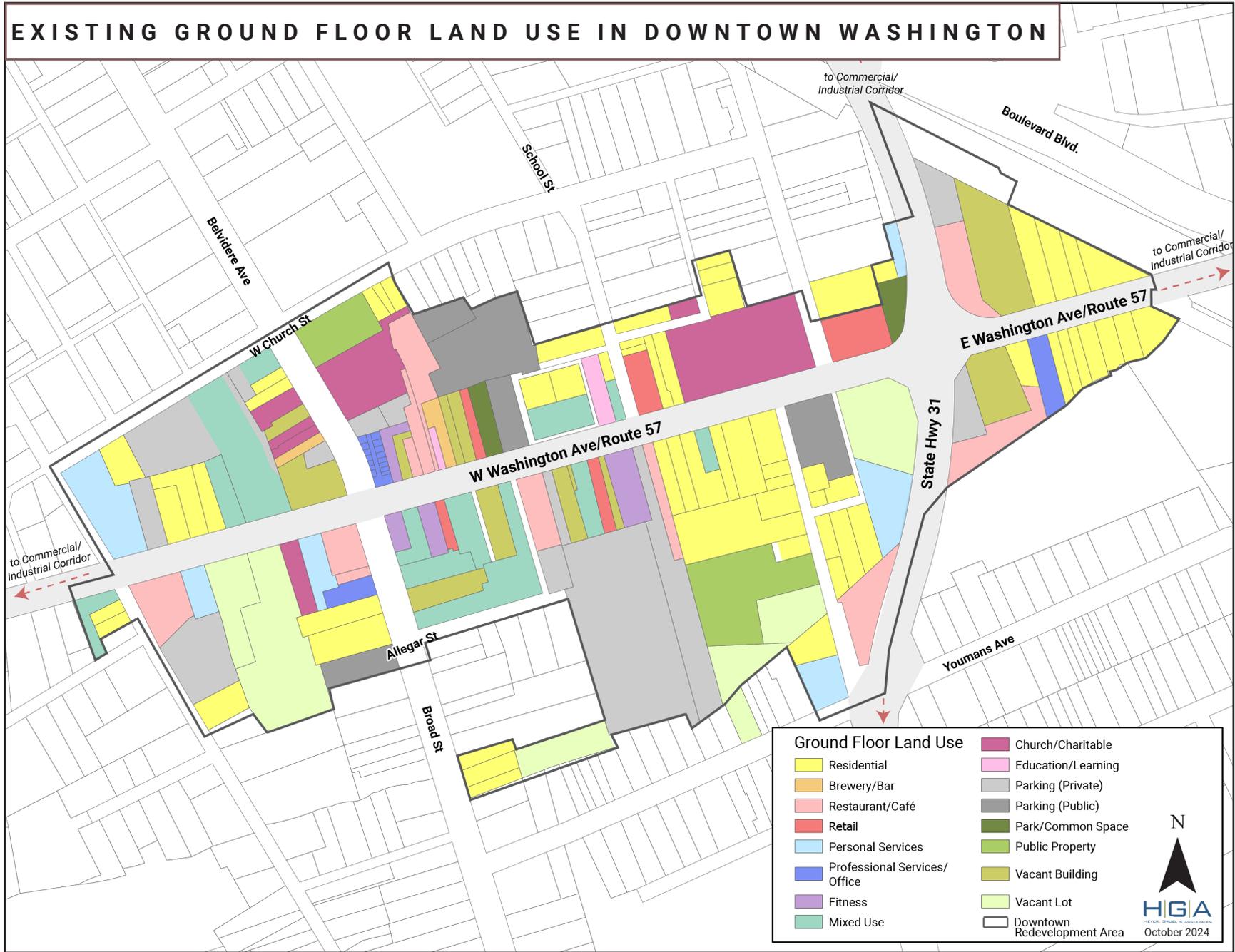
Over the last 5 years, the Borough has not seen any significant increases in tax rates, nor in market values. Market values, however, have continued to increase, as exemplified by the drop in equalized valuation ratios, which were: 72.76 in 2022; 66.22 in 2023; and 56.03 in 2024.



Top: The Rooted Lion storefront in Downtown  
Bottom: Historic signage near the Railroad Culvert on Route 57

EXISTING ZONING & LAND USE IN PLAN AREA





## Physical Design of Commercial Corridors

Throughout the preparation of this Plan, various site visits were conducted to inventory the existing physical conditions of Washington's commercial corridors and identify potential areas of improvement from a planning and design perspective. Below is a summary of the findings from these visits, organized by location within the Borough.

### Downtown Redevelopment Area

- Design Inconsistencies:** The use of design elements such as flags, planters, and signage used by businesses throughout the downtown does not imbue a strong sense of aesthetic coordination. For example, at the time of the site visits, some of the planters lining the sidewalk in front of businesses were planted with vibrant flowers, while others had a handful of small American flags stuck in the dirt in lieu of vegetation. While it is important to allow for unique displays across the various businesses in town, a stronger sense of harmony could visually benefit the Downtown.
- Lack of Screening:** Throughout the Downtown, there are various locations where alleys front primary roads, or the rears of buildings abut pedestrian walkways or parking areas. In these particular areas, there is no screening or barriers to visually separate the public from unsightly garbage can storage, exposed utilities, etc. These areas could benefit from proper screening requirements. Two prime examples of



*Top: Inconsistent design and use of sidewalk signage*

*Middle: Lack of alley screening in Downtown*

*Bottom: Inconsistent storefront design*

this include: the southern terminus for the crosswalk that connects Veteran's Park to the south side of Washington Avenue; and the private parking lot located at the corner of the Broad Street and Alleger Street intersection, where parking, loading zones, and primary entrances to buildings have no clear separation and circulation is unclear.

- Building Architecture:** Some buildings in Downtown Washington incorporate notable architectural elements such as cornices, ornamental rooflines, colorful facades, awnings, etc. These elements create visual interest but are not consistent throughout the area. Use of a form-based code could be useful in refining the architectural aesthetic of the Downtown.
- Inactive Storefronts:** A considerable number of ground-floor commercial spaces in the Downtown are presently vacant. In addition to this, during the site visits a ground-level, street-facing storefront was observed to have its blinds completely drawn and obstructing view into the businesses. Across urban planning, inactive and vacant storefronts are widely addressed as a component that creates a sense of "blight" and ultimately detracts from the vibrancy of an otherwise healthy commercial area. This can be met with tools such as façade transparency and storefront visibility requirements that mandate unobstructed views into storefronts, or storefront mural programs that utilize public art to disguise vacant storefronts.



Top: Alley from W. Washington Avenue to parking lot  
 Middle: Example of empty planters in Downtown  
 Bottom: Lack of landscaping and pedestrian safety measures along the sidewalk on Route 31

- Alley Circulation:** There is an alley located to the west of Veteran's Park that provides pedestrian access to the Downtown's central public parking lot from Washington Avenue. This path abuts the rear entrances of businesses in buildings that have rusted siding, are occasionally tagged with graffiti, are not properly lit, and have boarded windows on upper floors. Generally speaking the conditions of this alley do not create a sense of safety for pedestrians, although the area itself is recognized as being safe. Improvements could be made to this alley to help make it appear safer.

### Rt. 31 & 57 Commercial Corridors

- Lack of Landscaping:** There is little to no landscaping or trees lining the commercial corridor along Route 31. As a result, this corridor does not have adequate shade which limits walkability, and there are no vegetated buffers creating an extra layer of pedestrian safety between sidewalks and the busy street.
- Pedestrian Safety:** As a pedestrian navigating this corridor, some of the parking lots, sidewalks, and roadways appear to blend in specific areas where there is a lack of infrastructure or demarcations clearly indicating pedestrian paths. An example of this is the parking lot at Muheisen's Bagel and Deli, which does not have wheel stops or a curb located between its parking spaces and the sidewalk abutting Route 31. Development requirements could be put in place along this corridor to build pedestrian confidence and safety as the area undergoes future development.



Top: Vacant storefront in Downtown  
 Middle: Existing trash can along W. Washington Avenue  
 Bottom: Inadequate parking lot design allows for parked vehicles to block sidewalk along Route 31

# DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC PROFILE

## 2022 Demographic Profile



**Population**  
7,240 people



**Median Age**  
38.8 years



**Median Household Income**  
\$58,355



**Workforce**  
5,715 people



**Housing Units**  
3,119 units

### Population Growth

Washington Borough's population experienced an overall 64.2% growth over the last 90 years, with minor declines occurring only between 2000 and 2010 (-3.7%) and 2020 to 2022 (-0.8%). The Borough's largest growth occurred between 1950 to 1960 (19.2%), which mirrors growth trends at the County and State level during the same decade. The Borough also experienced a significant influx of residents (13.0%) between 2010 and 2020, far exceeding growth trends at the County and State level. This more recent increase in population could, at least in part, be due to the normalization of remote work environments. While there are no local or regional indicators that clearly explain this particular population increase in the Borough, it aligns with a national trend described by the USDA as "an upturn in rural population since 2011-12 [...] Since 2011, fewer people have been moving out of rural areas and more people have been moving in."<sup>3</sup>

The graph to the right (Figure 1) illustrates the shifts in the Borough's growth rate by decade in comparison to that of Warren County and New Jersey State between 1930 and 2022. As portrayed, the Borough experienced a significantly larger growth rate between 2010 and 2020 (13.0%) than the County (0.9%) or State (5.7%). Further, while the County and State experienced declines in growth rate from 1960-1970 to 1970-1980, the Borough's growth rate more than doubled during the same time frame (3.8% growth in 1960-1970 to 8.2% growth in 1970-1980). The Borough's more recent decline in growth rate between 2020 and 2022 is mirrored at the State level as well, while the County saw a minor increase in its growth rate. Ultimately, however, the three entities had comparable growth rates between 2020 and 2022: -0.8% at the Borough; 1.2% at the County; and -0.3% at the State.

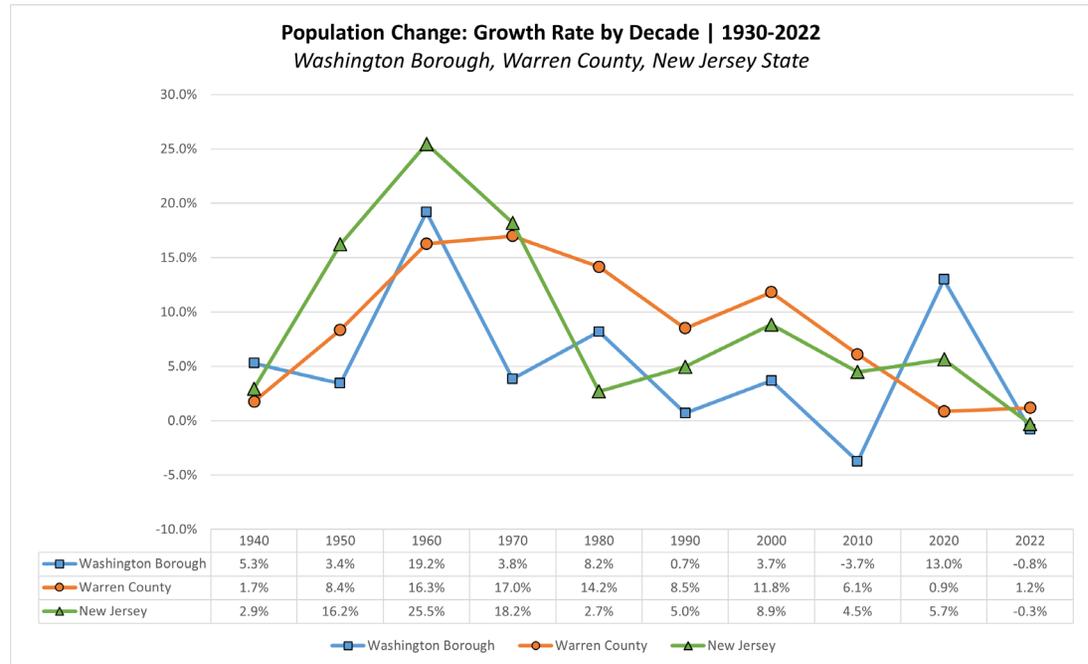


Figure 1: Growth Rate by Decade  
Source: 1930-2020 U.S. Decennial Census; 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2: Population Trends, 1930-2022 Washington Borough, Warren County, and New Jersey State									
Year	Washington Borough			Warren County			New Jersey State		
	Pop.	Change		Pop.	Change		Pop.	Change	
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
1930	4,410	-	-	49,319	-	-	4,041,334	-	-
1940	4,643	233	5.3%	50,181	862	1.7%	4,160,165	118,831	2.9%
1950	4,802	159	3.4%	54,374	4,193	8.4%	4,835,329	675,164	16.2%
1960	5,723	921	19.2%	63,220	8,846	16.3%	6,066,782	1,231,453	25.5%
1970	5,943	220	3.8%	73,960	10,740	17.0%	7,171,112	1,104,330	18.2%
1980	6,429	486	8.2%	84,429	10,469	14.2%	7,365,011	193,899	2.7%
1990	6,474	45	0.7%	91,607	7,178	8.5%	7,730,188	365,177	5.0%
2000	6,712	238	3.7%	102,437	10,830	11.8%	8,414,350	684,162	8.9%
2010	6,461	-251	-3.7%	108,692	6,255	6.1%	8,791,894	377,544	4.5%
2020	7,299	838	13.0%	109,632	940	0.9%	9,288,994	497,100	5.7%
2022	7,240	-59	-0.8%	110,926	1,294	1.2%	9,261,699	-27,295	-0.3%
<b>Total Change</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,830</b>	<b>64.2%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>61,607</b>	<b>124.9%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,220,365</b>	<b>129.2%</b>

Source: 1930-2020 U.S. Decennial Census; 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



The Borough Public Park and Pool (left) and the Public Library (right) are just two of the public facilities serving Washington Borough's community

## Age-Sex Shifts

In the ten-year period between 2012 and 2022, the Borough experienced a 18.4% increase in its male population and a 6.3% increase in its female population. Across the male, female, and total population alike, there was a significant decrease in the population aged 9 or younger, aged 35-39, and aged 85 or older. There were simultaneously significant increases in the population aged 65 to 69 and 80 to 84, indicating a growing senior population. This data also shows that the population aged 15 to 24 has shifted such that there were nearly four times as many males in this age range as there were females in 2022. Similarly, it shows that the female population aged 70 to 79 significantly outnumbered males in this age range in 2022.

In evaluating the portion of the population considered working age (ages 15-59 for these purposes), the data shows that the working population was roughly 53.6% male and 46.4% female in 2022 as compared to 46.8% male and 53.2% female in 2012. If this trend continues, it appears that the Borough’s workforce could be predominantly male in coming years.



Mixed use buildings with active ground floor uses present an example of the types of development that generally appeal to younger adult populations

Age Range	2012			2022			Change (%) 2012-2022		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Under 5 Years	167	290	457	137	261	398	-18.0%	-9.9%	-12.9%
5 to 9 Years	182	210	392	137	85	222	-24.7%	-59.4%	-43.3%
10 to 14 Years	277	339	616	256	535	791	-7.6%	57.9%	28.5%
15 to 19 Years	134	220	354	407	100	507	203.7%	-54.5%	43.2%
20 to 24 Years	265	150	415	414	101	515	56.2%	-32.7%	24.0%
25 to 29 Years	206	150	356	175	182	357	-15.0%	21.2%	0.2%
30 to 34 Years	149	290	439	284	285	569	90.6%	-1.7%	29.7%
35 to 39 Years	251	237	488	149	153	302	-40.6%	-35.6%	-38.2%
40 to 44 Years	230	353	583	141	394	535	-38.7%	11.7%	-8.2%
45 to 49 Years	325	265	590	398	249	647	22.5%	-6.2%	9.6%
50 to 54 Years	182	251	433	147	264	411	-19.2%	5.0%	-5.2%
55 to 59 Years	149	230	379	166	244	410	11.4%	5.9%	8.0%
60 to 64 Years	143	217	360	384	216	600	168.5%	-0.2%	66.9%
65 to 69 Years	107	63	170	155	207	362	44.9%	229.3%	113.1%
70 to 74 Years	146	63	209	93	167	260	-36.3%	165.7%	24.5%
75 to 79 Years	39	80	119	29	134	163	-25.6%	66.8%	36.6%
80 to 84 Years	12	14	26	52	99	151	333.3%	608.8%	481.5%
85 Years +	12	73	85	0	40	40	-100.0%	-45.5%	-53.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,976</b>	<b>3,495</b>	<b>6,471</b>	<b>3,524</b>	<b>3,716</b>	<b>7,240</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>

Source: 2012 and 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate Subjects Tables

In 2014, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development’s Division of Labor Market and Demographics Research published 20-year labor force projections by age and gender for each county in New Jersey (Table 4). This data projected that, by 2034, Warren County’s labor force would experience a 5.2% decrease in males and 8.1% decrease in females. It projected that the largest decreases would occur in the 45 to 54 age range with a 33.7% male decrease and 36.0% female decrease, and that the largest increase would occur in the 65+ age range with a 106.3% male increase and 127.3% female increase.

The latter projection is not entirely surprising, given trends at the national level. According to an article published by the US Census Bureau’s America Counts staff, “older adults are projected to outnumber children under age 18 for the first time in U.S. history by 2034.”<sup>4</sup> This also aligns with recent trends at the Borough level (Table 3), which show that the Borough’s population aged 60 to 84 grew significantly in the decade between 2012 and 2022.

### Race & Ethnicity

In 2022, Washington Borough’s population was predominantly White (80%), followed by “some other race” at 9%, “two or more races” at 6%, Black or African American at 4%, and Asian at 1% of the population. Roughly 12% of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino, while the remaining 88% of the population identified as Non-Hispanic or Latino. No residents in the Borough identified as “American Indian and Alaska Native” or “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander” in 2022.

Table 4: Projections of Labor Force by Sex and Age, 2014-2034 Warren County				
Age Group	Projected # Change 2014-2034		Projected % Change 2014-2034	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
16-24	-1,100	-900	-31.4%	-25.0%
25-34	1,100	1,000	22.0%	23.8%
35-44	200	-600	2.8%	-9.7%
45-54	-3,000	-2,700	-33.7%	-36.0%
55-64	-500	-500	-10.9%	-10.9%
65+	1,700	1,400	106.3%	127.3%
Total	-1,600	-2,200	-5.2%	-8.1%

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Labor Market & Demographics Research, August 2014

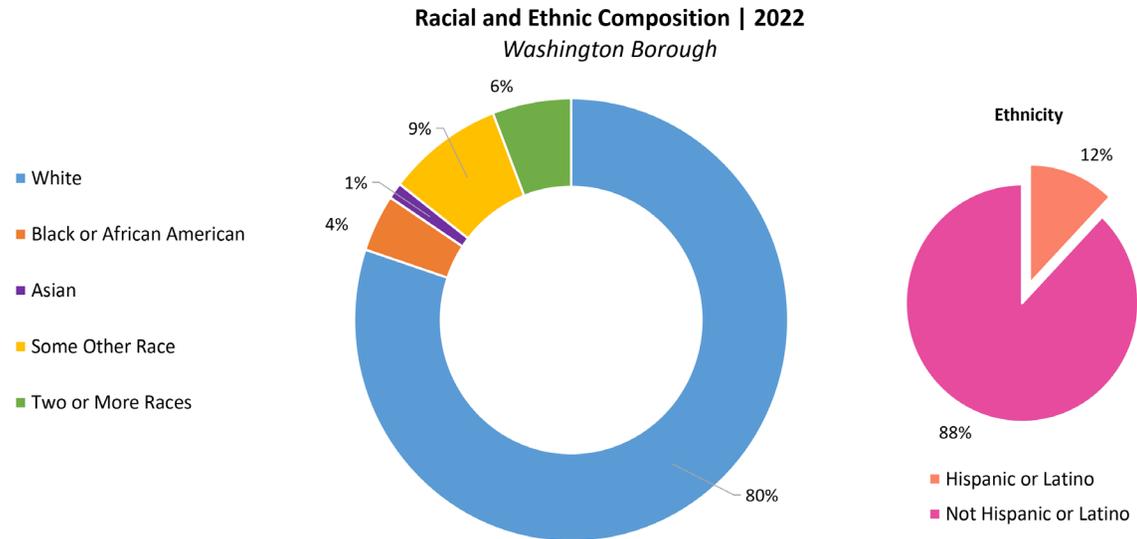


Figure 2: Race and Ethnicity  
Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Education

In evaluating the Borough’s population that fell between the ages 18 to 24 in 2022 (Figure 3), approximately 37.2% of such residents had obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher, as compared to just 29.7% at the County level and 18.9% at the State level. An estimated 63.5% of Borough residents in this age range completed at least some college.

Shifting the lens toward the population aged 25 or older in 2022 (Figure 4), however, a smaller percentage of Borough residents (24.8%) had obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher, as compared to 39.1% at the County level and 43.5% at the State level. Nearly half (49.6%) of the Borough residents in this age range completed at least some college.

This data suggests that, overall, younger segments of the Borough’s population have obtained higher levels of education as compared to older segments of the population. This is not entirely surprising, given that the nation as a whole has undergone a cultural shift since the mid to late 20th century emphasizing the pursuit of a college degree over a vocational degree. On a national scale, however, it is anticipated that younger generations will see a return to more blue-collar jobs over white-collar jobs in the coming decades due to factors such as the cost of college and a widened recognition of the value of trade jobs. It is possible that this trend may be experienced at the Borough level as well.

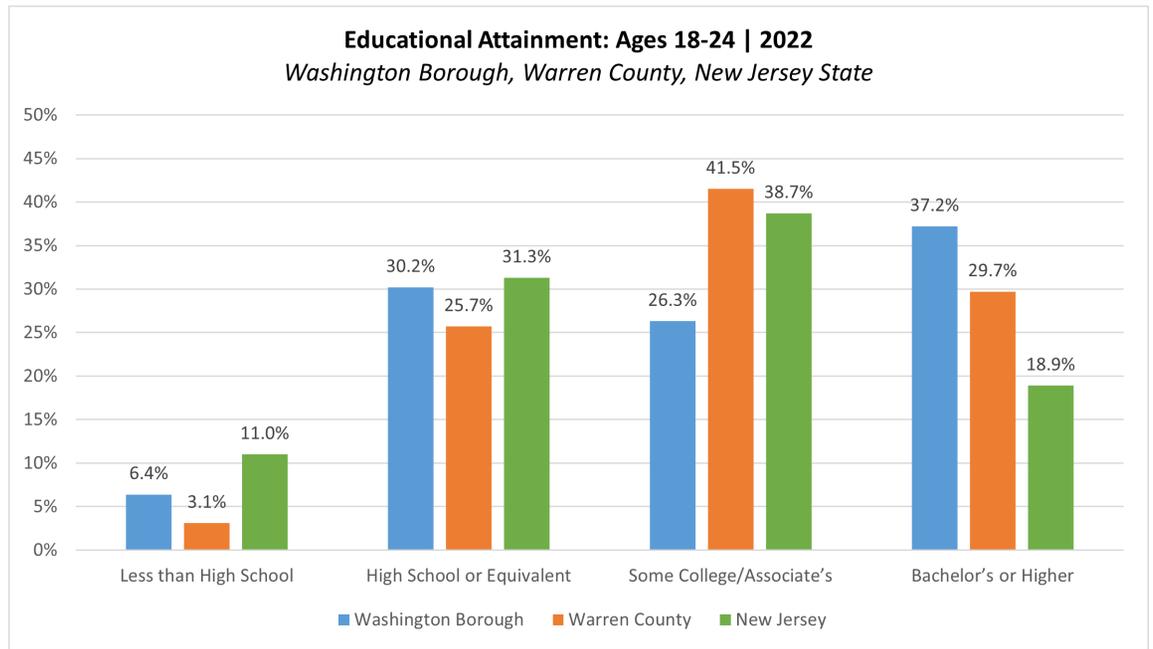


Figure 3: Educational Attainment Ages 18-24  
Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

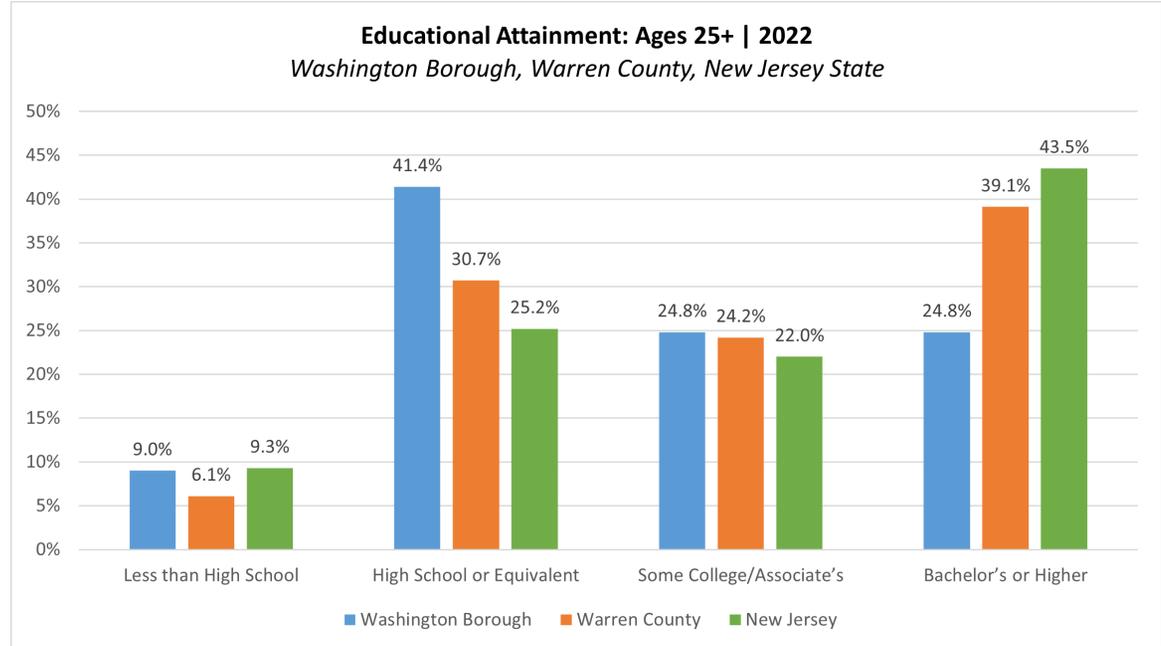


Figure 4: Educational Attainment Ages 25+  
Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 5 to the right summarizes the relationship between educational attainment and median income for populations aged 25 and above in 2022. At both the Borough and County level, residents whose highest educational attainment level was a high school degree or equivalent earned on average a higher income than those who had obtained some college or an associate’s degree. Borough residents who obtained a bachelor’s degree earned an income that was 38.3% greater than the Borough median, as compared to the County (21.7% greater than County median) and State (27.6% greater than State median). This data suggests that income levels in the Borough are not directly correlated with educational attainment, and that a resident does not necessarily need to obtain a secondary degree in order to earn a higher salary.

**Table 5: Median Earnings in Past 12 Months by Educational Attainment for Age 25+ with Earnings, 2022  
Washington Borough, Warren County, and New Jersey State**

Education Level	Washington Borough		Warren County		New Jersey	
	Median Earnings	Percent of Overall Median	Median Earnings	Percent of Overall Median	Median Earnings	Percent of Overall Median
Less than High School	\$35,000	69.9%	\$30,659	56.9%	\$31,962	53.1%
High School or Equivalent	\$45,625	91.1%	\$50,174	93.1%	\$40,193	66.8%
Some College/Associate’s	\$32,813	65.5%	\$44,711	82.9%	\$50,489	83.9%
Bachelor’s	\$69,258	138.3%	\$65,588	121.7%	\$76,725	127.6%
Graduate or Professional	--	--	\$76,518	141.9%	\$98,247	163.4%
<b>Median Earnings</b>	<b>\$50,085</b>		<b>\$53,912</b>		<b>\$60,145</b>	

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates  
 -- = Data Unavailable



Historical First National Bank sidewalk tiling outside in Washington Borough

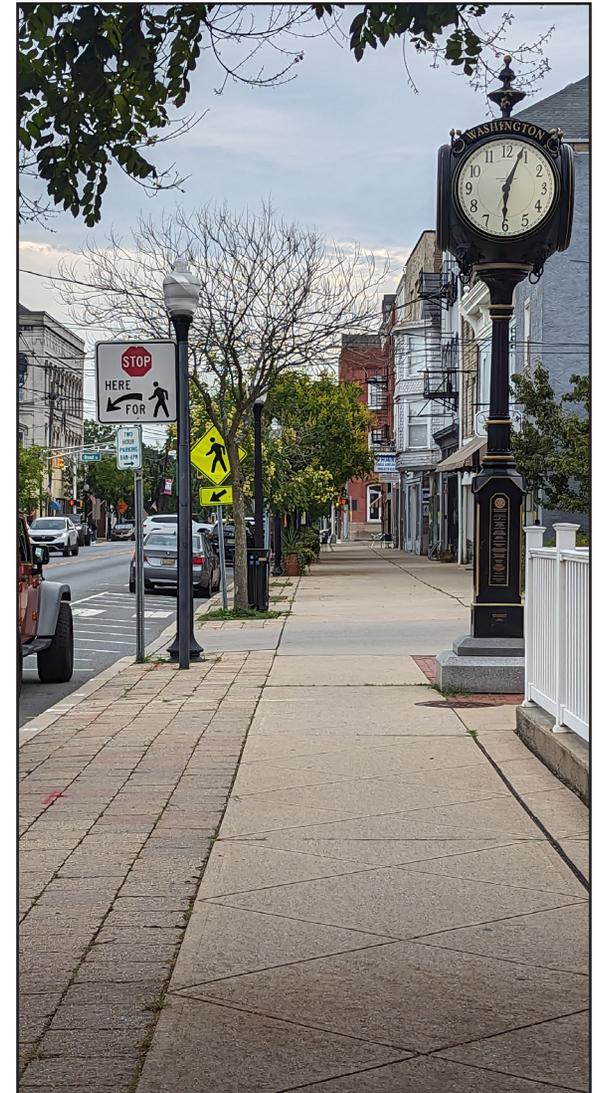
## Employment and Income

In 2022 the Borough of Washington had 5,715 residents aged 16 and older, the majority (67.0%) of which were in the civilian labor force. Of the 3,829 residents in the labor force, 94.6% were employed and 5.4% were unemployed. It is estimated that 1,886 of the Borough's residents aged 16 and older were not in the labor force in 2022. The Borough's labor force makeup was comparable to that of the County.

In the years between 2010 and 2023, Washington Borough experienced a 6.2% decrease in its annual unemployment rates, which was a greater change than that exhibited at the County (6.0% decrease) and State (5.3% decrease) level. As of 2023, however, the Borough had an annual unemployment rate of 4.5%, which was the 4th highest unemployment rate across Warren County's 22 municipalities. In the same year, Warren County ranked as number 8 out of 21 counties in the state for its unemployment level, indicating that it is faring well economically.

According to the most recent American Community Survey data from 2022, the median income for full-time, year-round workers in Washington Borough was \$58,355, which was marginally higher than the national median but lower than that of the County and State. Nearly half (46.9%) of the Borough's population earned between \$35,000 to \$74,999 annually. The data portrayed on Table 8 on the following page indicates that there is a rather even distribution across the salary ranges within the Borough, which suggests that Washington Borough's population is economically diverse.

As portrayed in the "Earnings by Gender for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers" graph on page 28, (Figure 5), nearly half (46.9%) of the male workforce earned \$75,000 or higher in 2022, while nearly half (45.2%) of the female workforce earned \$50,000 or higher. This indicates that the working male population in Washington Borough tends to earn more than its female counterpart. In fact, the graph illustrates that the female workforce skews to the left of the graph (lower incomes), while the male workforce skews to the right of the graph (higher incomes). American Community Survey data indicates that in 2022 the median income for full-time, year-round workers in Washington Borough was \$69,688 for males and \$47,580 for females. This reveals that, on average, males earned an income that was 46.5% higher than females in 2022.



*This image of Downtown Washington portrays how wide the sidewalks are, which is an important factor in designing walkable areas*

Table 6: Employment, 2022 Washington Borough and Warren County				
	Washington Borough		Warren County	
	Number	Percent of 16+ Pop.	Number	Percent of 16+ Pop.
Population 16 years and over	5,715	100.0%	91,512	100.0%
In Labor Force	3,829	67.0%	60,404	66.0%
Civilian Labor Force	3,829	67.0%	60,345	65.9%
Employed	3,621	63.4%	56,741	62.0%
Unemployed	208	3.6%	3,604	3.9%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	59	0.1%
Not In Labor Force	1,886	33.0%	31,108	34.0%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 7: Annual Unemployment Trends, 2010-2023 Washington Borough, Warren County, and New Jersey State					
Year	Washington Borough		Warren County		New Jersey
	Unemployment Rate	Ranking Across County <sup>1</sup>	Unemployment Rate	Ranking Across State <sup>2</sup>	Unemployment Rate
2010	10.7%	13	10.0%	12	9.7%
2011	8.5%	7	9.1%	9*	9.4%
2012	9.9%	18	8.8%	8*	9.4%
2013	7.8%	13	7.8%	8	8.4%
2014	6.9%	19	6.3%	8*	6.7%
2015	6.1%	19*	5.3%	8*	5.7%
2016	5.3%	19*	4.5%	9	4.9%
2017	5.1%	22	4.1%	9	4.5%
2018	4.6%	21*	3.7%	9*	4.0%
2019	4.1%	21	3.3%	10*	3.5%
2020	10.2%	21	8.2%	6	9.4%
2021	6.6%	19	5.9%	6*	6.7%
2022	4.2%	19*	3.6%	9	3.9%
2023	4.5%	19	4.0%	8	4.4%
<b>Change 2010-2023</b>	-6.2%	--	-6.0%	--	-5.3%

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, County Annual Averages 2010-2023 Chart

<sup>1</sup> Out of 22 municipalities, where 1 indicates the lowest unemployment rate and 22 indicates the highest

<sup>2</sup> Out of 21 counties, where 1 indicates the lowest unemployment rate and 21 indicates the highest

\* Tied with at least one other municipality or county

Table 8: Annual Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers, 2022 Washington Borough, Warren County, New Jersey State, and United States								
Salary Range	Washington Borough		Warren County		New Jersey		United States	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
\$1 to \$9,999	0	0.0%	382	0.9%	41,460	1.2%	1,936,199	1.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	40	1.7%	610	1.4%	46,743	1.4%	2,290,443	1.9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	123	5.1%	2,620	6.0%	162,319	4.7%	7,786,999	6.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	316	13.1%	3,745	8.6%	320,902	9.3%	14,711,112	12.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	455	18.9%	6,733	15.5%	531,747	15.4%	22,727,516	19.1%
\$50,000 to \$64,999	538	22.4%	7,100	16.4%	493,638	14.3%	19,627,941	16.5%
\$65,000 to \$74,999	135	5.6%	4,172	9.6%	251,878	7.3%	8,695,646	7.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	451	18.8%	8,094	18.7%	517,657	15.0%	15,667,893	13.1%
\$100,000 or more	347	14.4%	9,909	22.9%	1,079,426	31.3%	25,722,551	21.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,405</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>43,365</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,445,770</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>119,166,300</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Median Earnings</b>	<b>\$58,355</b>		<b>\$65,991</b>		<b>\$70,215</b>		<b>\$56,929</b>	

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

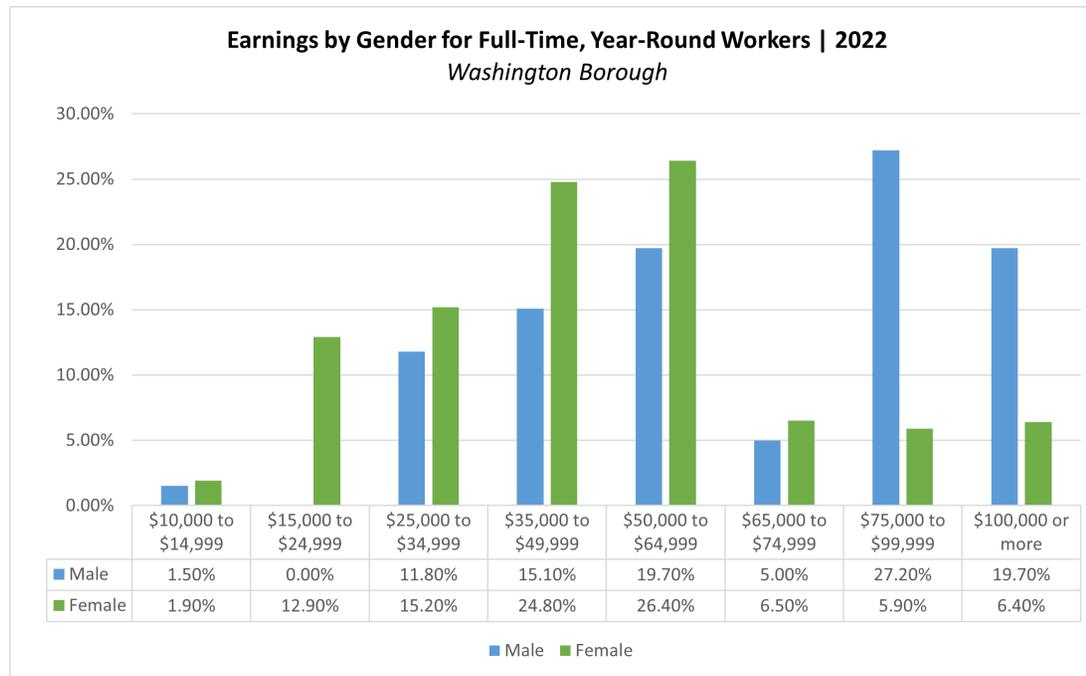


Figure 5: Earnings by Gender for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers  
Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 9 to the right displays data from the 2022 American Community Survey regarding income by gender and industry for the Borough’s entire workforce above the age of 16.<sup>1</sup> Of the five overarching industries reported, the greatest gender wage gap occurred in the “Management, Business, Science & Arts” industry, in which the reported median income for females (\$51,406) was just 54.9% of that reported for males (\$93,631). Across the sub-industries reported, an even more vast gender wage gap occurred in the “Sales and Related” industry, in which females (\$11,523) on average earned only 20% of the income earned by their male (\$57,755) counterparts.

On the other hand, this data shows that females in the “Production, Transportation and Material Moving” industry on average earned an income that was approximately 12.3% greater than the average income earned by a male in the same industry. This also occurred in several sub-industries, including “Material Moving” at 79.9% higher, “Office and Administrative Support” at 9.6% higher, and “Transportation” at 2.0% higher.

Because this data doesn’t separate out the earnings of workers who are part-time versus full-time or year-round versus seasonal, it’s possible that fluctuations in these factors could partially explain some of the gender wage gaps evident in this data.

<sup>1</sup> Note that this data does not differentiate incomes based on whether the positions are part-time versus full-time or seasonal versus year-round.

Table 9: Annual Earnings of Civilian Workers Age 16+ by Industry and Gender, 2022 Washington Borough				
Industry	Male Median Earnings	Female Median Earnings	Female Earnings as a % of Male Earnings	Total Median Income
<b>Management, Business, Science &amp; Arts</b>	<b>\$93,631</b>	<b>\$51,406</b>	<b>54.9%</b>	<b>\$75,102</b>
Management, Business, & Finance	\$93,869	\$52,125	55.5%	\$78,194
Computer, Engineering, & Science	\$131,116	--	--	\$131,116
Education, Legal, Commun. Services, Arts, & Media	\$59,080	\$48,438	82.0%	\$58,559
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	--	\$55,729	--	\$43,958
<b>Service</b>	<b>\$22,326</b>	<b>\$19,375</b>	<b>86.8%</b>	<b>\$21,528</b>
Healthcare Support	--	\$29,429	--	\$29,429
Protective Service	\$78,472	--	--	\$78,272
Food Preparation & Serving	--	\$13,973	--	\$7,165
Building/Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	\$20,139	--	--	\$20,451
<b>Sales &amp; Office</b>	<b>\$41,842</b>	<b>\$24,596</b>	<b>58.8%</b>	<b>\$28,950</b>
Sales & Related	\$57,755	\$11,523	20%	\$12,003
Office & Administrative Support	\$41,184	\$45,121	109.6%	\$41,741
<b>Natural Resources, Construction, &amp; Maintenance</b>	<b>\$57,321</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>\$57,321</b>
Construction & Extraction	\$59,375	--	--	\$59,375
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	\$50,000	--	--	\$50,000
<b>Production, Transportation, &amp; Material Moving</b>	<b>\$34,716</b>	<b>\$38,994</b>	<b>112.3%</b>	<b>\$37,689</b>
Production	\$80,699	\$38,171	47.3%	\$38,750
Transportation	\$36,176	\$36,912	102.0%	\$36,544
Material Moving	\$32,727	\$58,867	179.9%	\$34,716
<b>Median Annual Earnings (Across all Industries)</b>	<b>\$58,769</b>	<b>\$34,438</b>	<b>58.6%</b>	<b>\$44,059</b>

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

-- = Estimate could not be computed due to insufficient number of sample observations

## Commuting Patterns

A majority of the Borough's employed population worked outside of Washington in 2022, with roughly 51% of residents working in another municipality within Warren County, 42% of residents working in another County, and 7% of residents working in another State. A larger proportion of the Borough's female employed residents (9.9%) worked outside of the State as compared to the male employed population (4.8%). Of the Borough's employed population that worked in the State but outside of the Borough, females were more likely to work in Warren County than they were to in another County, while males were approximately split down the middle.

Interestingly, in 2022 approximately 20% of the Borough's population commuted over an hour to work while another 20% of residents had a commute of 10 minutes or less. Roughly 55% of females and 61% of males in the Borough traveled a minimum of 25 minutes to work. On average, males had a 38-minute commute, and females had a comparable 35-minute commute. The mean travel time to work for all residents in 2022 was nearly 37 minutes.

Work Location	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% of Males	Number	% of Females	Number	% of Total
<b>Total Number of Workers</b>	1,862	100.0%	1,556	100.0%	3,418	100.0%
<b>In Place of Residence</b>	527	28.3%	265	17.0%	793	23.2%
<b>Out of Place of Residence</b>	1,335	71.7%	1,291	83.0%	2,625	76.8%
<b>In State of Residence</b>	1,773	95.2%	1,402	90.1%	3,175	92.9%
In County of Residence	890	47.8%	851	54.7%	1,740	50.9%
Out of County of Residence	883	47.4%	551	35.4%	1,432	41.9%
<b>Out of State of Residence</b>	89	4.8%	154	9.9%	243	7.1%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

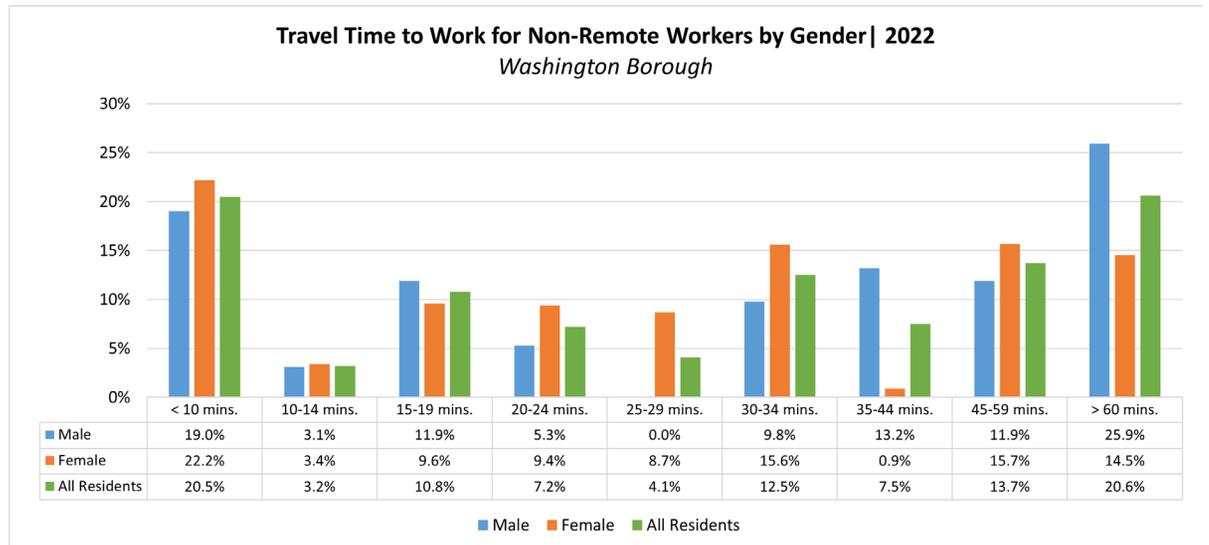


Figure 6: Travel Time to Work  
Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The US Census Bureau offers a tool called OnTheMap, which provides visualizations related to employment and commuting statistics in a given area. In the preparation of this Plan, this tool was used to create an Inflow/Outflow diagram of workers that commute into and out of the Borough. According to this data, in 2021 approximately 94% of the Borough's labor force commuted outside of the Borough for work, and nearly 88% of the labor force working within the Borough came from outside of the Borough. Only 200 people both lived and worked within Washington Borough. Of the workers evaluated for this analysis, approximately 34% worked in the Borough compared to 66% that worked outside of the Borough.

In 2022 the vast majority (70.6%) of Washington Borough's employed population commuted to work alone in a car, truck, or van, while 6.4% carpooled, 5.4% walked, 4.4% utilized public transportation, and 0.3% biked. This data indicates that males were more likely than females to carpool or walk to work, and females were more likely than males to utilize public transportation or bike to work. Roughly 12.9% of the Borough's employed population worked from home.

Approximately 6.7% of the Borough's population lacked access to a vehicle in 2022, with this occurring slightly higher for females (8.0%) than males (5.6%). Roughly one-quarter of the Borough's population had access to 1 vehicle, while roughly two-thirds of the population had access to a minimum of two vehicles. A considerably higher percentage of males (31.5%) had access to 3 or more vehicles as compared to females (23.1%).



Figure 7: Employment Inflow/Outflow Analysis  
Source: United States Bureau OnTheMap, accessed June 25, 2024

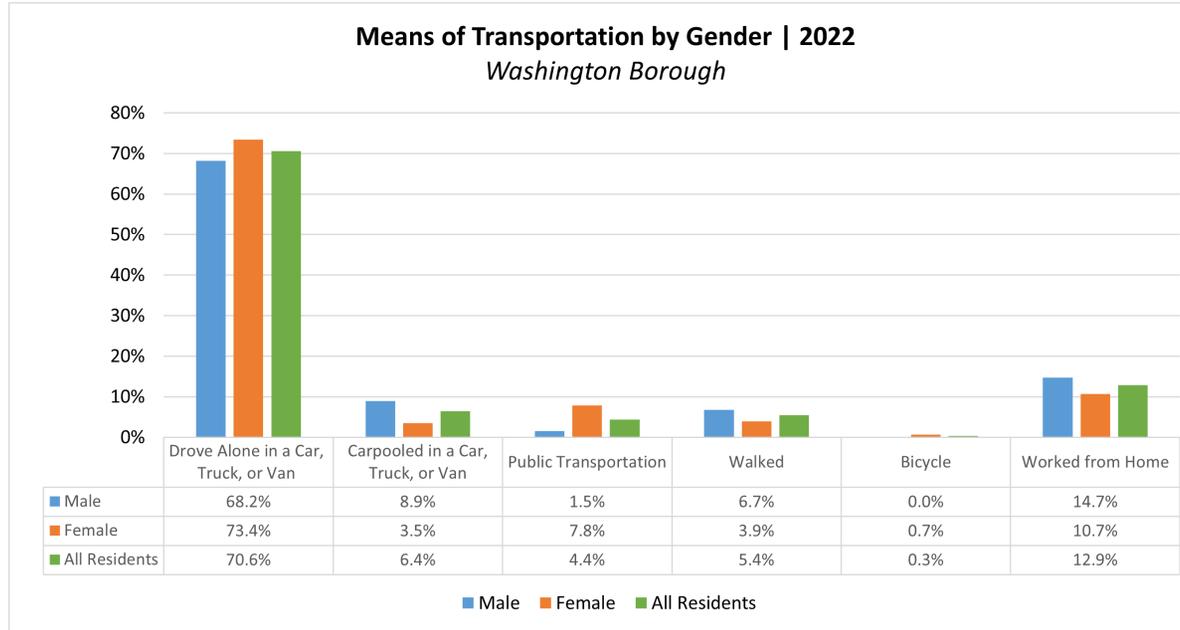


Figure 8: Means of Transportation  
Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

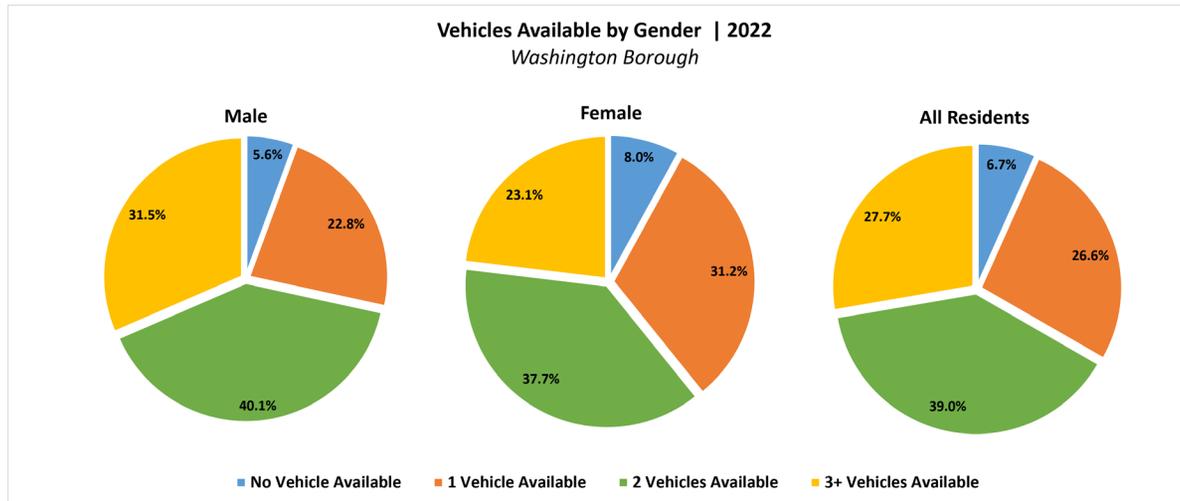


Figure 9: Access to Vehicles by Gender  
Source: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Tapestry Segmentation Analysis

The Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (Esri) offers a Tapestry Segmentation tool through Business Analyst, which analyzes demographic, socioeconomic, and lifestyle characteristics in a given geographic area to provide behavioral profiles of the population in consideration. Tapestry Segments are split into 14 LifeMode groups that categorize people based on common experiences, and each group is further broken out into several segments. Washington Borough's population exhibits behaviors aligned with three different segments, including Parks and Rec, City Lights, and Home Improvement; these segments represent 66.1%, 19.8%, and 14.1% of Borough residents, respectively, and are explained in more depth on the following page.

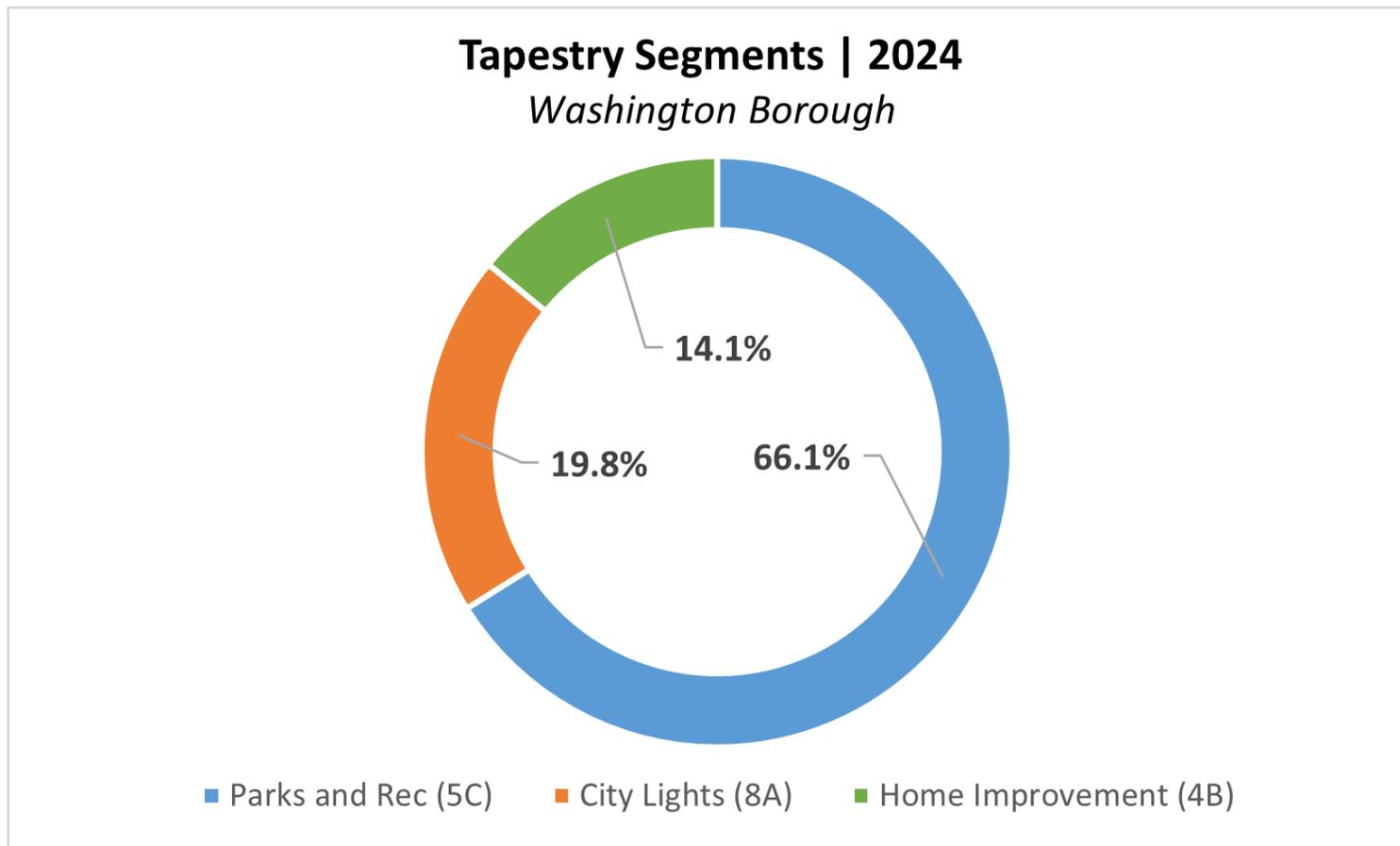


Figure 10: Tapestry Segmentation  
Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024



*A section of W. Washington Avenue in Downtown Washington, exemplifying the elements that create a walkable environment: pedestrian infrastructure, public seating, landscaping, and other elements of visual interest*

### LifeMode GenXurban: Parks and Rec (5C)

The GenXurban LifeMode is the second-largest tapestry group in the United States and is comprised primarily of Generation X married couples who have a small family and a mortgage. The Parks and Rec (5C) segment of this group accounts for two-thirds of the Borough's population at 66.1%. People in this segment are categorized as suburbanites who own modest homes with a median age of 40.9 years and an average household size of 2.51. About half of the national population in this segment is college educated and the segment as a whole has a diverse workforce. This segment is described as a "financially shrewd market" and people within it tend to factor cost, practicality, and convenience into their purchasing decisions. In general, residents in this segment value local parks and recreational activities and engage in active routines.

### LifeMode Middle Ground: City Lights (8A)

Residents that fall into the Middle Ground LifeMode are mostly those in their thirties that occupy a mix of housing typologies (single-family homes, town homes, multiunit dwellings), prefer modern over older technology, and are heavily reliant on the internet for entertainment. An estimated 19.8% of the Borough's population can be attributed to the City Lights (8A) segment in particular, which has a median age of 39.3 years and an average household size of 2.59. This segment is approximately half homeowners and half renters, and the average resident earns an income that is above average although they "lag" in net worth as compared to other segments. This segment is described as "price savvy" but willing to pay for trusted, quality brands. People in this segment tend to value nature, the environment, and a health-conscious lifestyle; these preferences are evident in their purchasing habits, too. As a whole, neighborhoods within this segment are considerably more diverse when compared to those typical of other segments.

### LifeMode Family Landscapes: Home Improvement (4B)

The Family Landscapes LifeMode group as a whole is described as "successful young families in their first homes" in suburban or semirural areas with a large labor force and low unemployment rate. The Home Improvement (4B) segment itself has a median age of 37.7 and an average household size of 2.88, and is characterized by married couples that prioritize home improvement projects. People within this segment are described as "cautious consumers [...] that protect their assets," and a majority of households have at least two workers that contribute to the household income. Because people in this segment are often on the go, eating out is a common occurrence. This segment is fluent in modern technology and tends to enjoy the convenience of working from home. An estimated 14.1% of the Borough's population can be attributed to this segment.

## Economic Profile

### Borough Workforce & Industry

Table 11 to the right summarizes annual municipal data provided by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (“New Jersey DLWD”). In 2022 the Health Care and Social Assistance sector accounted for the greatest private sector employment in the Borough, with the Manufacturing and Retail Trade sectors following closely behind. These three private sectors also accounted for the highest total industry wages in the Borough, with Manufacturing accounting for \$23,874,966 in employee wages, Retail Trade accounting for \$15,949,844, and Health Care and Social Assistance accounting for \$13,367,774. In terms of the average annual wage for individuals employed across these private sectors, the Management of Companies and Enterprises sector accounted for the highest average wage of \$128,883, with Manufacturing (\$82,068) and Finance and Insurance (\$66,362) following in second and third place.

In regard to public employment, Local Government accounted for both the highest average number of employees and the highest public sector wages as compared to Local Government Education, State Government, and Federal Government. Borough residents employed by the State Government, however, earned on average the highest annual wage across the public sector at \$98,470.

Table 11: Top Private and Public Industries and Annual Municipal Data by Sector, 2022 Washington Borough						
Private Sector	Avg. Employment		Industry Total Wages		Avg. Annual Wage	
	Number	Rank <sup>1</sup>	Number	Rank <sup>1</sup>	Number	Rank <sup>1</sup>
31 - Manufacturing	291	2	\$23,874,966	1	\$82,068	2
44 - Retail Trade	290	3	\$15,949,844	2	\$55,063	5
52 - Finance & Insurance	21	9	\$1,388,076	9	\$66,362	3
54 - Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	98	6	\$5,984,678	5	\$60,913	4
55 - Management of Companies & Enterprises	58	7	\$7,507,453	4	\$128,883	1
56 - Admin. & Support & Waste Management	47	8	\$2,348,262	8	\$49,699	6
62 - Health Care & Social Assistance	345	1	\$13,367,774	3	\$38,757	7
72 - Accommodation & Food Service	243	4	\$4,948,666	6	\$20,393	10
81 - Other Services (Except Public Admin.)	139	5	\$4,859,868	7	\$35,068	8
99 - Unclassified	17	10	\$494,724	10	\$28,960	9
Public Sector	Avg. Employment		Industry Total Wages		Avg. Annual Wage	
	Number	Rank <sup>2</sup>	Number	Rank <sup>2</sup>	Number	Rank <sup>2</sup>
Local Government	237	1	\$13,872,199	1	\$58,450	4
Local Government Education	200	2	\$12,312,356	2	\$61,459	3
State Government	6	4	\$615,439	4	\$98,470	1
Federal Government	25	3	\$1,720,183	3	\$69,737	2

Source: 2022 NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Annual Municipal Data by Sector

<sup>1</sup> Where 1 indicates the top-ranking private sector and 10 indicates the bottom-ranking private sector

<sup>2</sup> Where 1 indicates the top-ranking public sector and 4 indicates the bottom-ranking public sector

## Regional & National Employers Located in the Borough

**Albea** is an international company that manufactures tubes and packaging for cosmetics, personal care, medicine, and fragrance. Their Washington Borough warehouse (located at 191 Route 31) specializes in manufacturing tubes and is 1 of 34 industrial sites in Albea's network. While local information is not publicly available, Albea reports that it employs 12,500 people worldwide and accounted for \$1.3 billion in sales in 2023.

**New Jersey American Water Company ("NAWJC")**, a subsidiary of the national American Water company, received approval in 2023 to construct an operations center at 290 East Washington Avenue to serve as the administrative and operations headquarters for the company's regional public utility services. Aside from managing the daily operations of providing water and wastewater services to much of New Jersey, NJAWC oversees ongoing improvements to water infrastructure in its territories. For example, in 2022 NJAWC reportedly invested \$410,000 to replace roughly 1,080 feet of aging water infrastructure in Washington Borough.<sup>5</sup> The regional operations center is expected to have up to 20 on-site employees upon its completion.

**The Warren County Habitat for Humanity ("WCHFH")** community center is located in Downtown Washington at 31 Belvidere Avenue, with a Habitat for Humanity ReStore consignment shop located directly across the street at 30 Belvidere Avenue. Since its opening in April 2022, the WCHFH community center has provided

programming for senior citizens, veterans, and youth and worked to dedicate homes to families in need throughout the County. According to its 2022-2023 Annual Report, the WCHFH employed 15 affiliate and retail personnel and engaged 399 volunteers. It reports that the community center saw 5,300 community center program attendees during this time period.

## Average Cost to Rent in Borough versus Region

At the time of the writing of this report, LoopNet reported that the average commercial rent in the immediate area within and surrounding Washington Borough was \$22 per square foot as compared to an average cost of \$33 per square foot across Warren County. In looking at nearby municipalities, it appears that rents in the Borough are currently lower in comparison. The Hackettstown area, for example, has an average commercial rent of \$36 per square foot while the Phillipsburg area has an average cost of \$25 per square foot and the Flemington area has an average cost of \$38 per square foot.

## Prominent Regional Industry Sectors

According to County Business Pattern ("CPB") data, in the decade between 2011 and 2021 Warren County saw an overall 1.6% decrease in its employment across sectors included in the North American Industry Classification System ("NAICS"). The industries that saw the largest decline during this time included "Mining" (-79.12%), "Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation"

(-34.41%), and "Finance and Insurance" (-28.25%). On the other hand, the County saw significant employment increases across the "Information" (404.15%), "Management of Companies and Enterprises" (147.73%), and "Administrative and Support and Waste Management" (135.13%) industries.

County employment trends throughout this time were relatively aligned with both the State and Nation in the following industries: "Utilities", although the County saw a greater decrease than the State and Nation; "Wholesale Trade"; "Real Estate and Rental and Leasing"; "Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services"; "Administrative and Support and Waste Management"; "Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation"; and "Other Services (Except Public Administration)". This data is summarized in Table 12 on the following page.

As will be demonstrated in the following subsections of this Plan, NAICS employment data is a key component in understanding a region's strengths and industries of importance. Various economic evaluation tools were implemented in the preparation of this Plan to better understand what industries are doing particularly well in the region and offer potential growth opportunities.

NAICS Industry	Warren County			New Jersey			United States		
	2011	2021	Change (%)	2011	2021	Change (%)	2011	2021	Change (%)
11 - Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Agriculture Support	26	19	-26.92	1,832	1,033	-43.61	156,520	165,688	5.86
21 - Mining	91 <sup>1</sup>	19	-79.12	1,206	1,346	11.61%	651,204	474,877	-27.08
22 - Utilities	192	162	-15.63	18,639	18,214	-2.28	639,795	633,738	-0.95
23 - Construction	1,218	1,205	-1.07	127,730	157,962	23.67	5,190,921	7,062,022	36.05
31 - Manufacturing	3,701	3,955	6.86	234,139	210,468	-10.11	10,984,361	11,710,424	6.61
42 - Wholesale Trade	2,147	2,178	1.44	249,652	263,388	5.50	5,626,328	5,925,945	5.33
44 - Retail Trade	5,885	5,188	-11.84	434,372	440,147	1.33	14,698,563	15,530,630	5.66
48 - Transportation & Warehousing	725	562	-22.48	155,704	202,715	30.19	4,106,359	5,693,641	38.65
51 - Information	217	1,094	404.15	93,646	80,101	-14.46	3,121,317	3,414,629	9.40
52 - Finance & Insurance	616	442	-28.25	188,812	205,375	8.77	5,886,602	6,738,309	14.47
53 - Real Estate & Rental Leasing	160	179	11.88	55,286	59,068	6.84	1,917,640	2,180,602	13.71
54 - Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	921	1,005	9.12	316,803	317,495	0.22	7,929,910	9,531,475	20.20
55 - Management of Companies & Enterprises	44 <sup>1</sup>	109	147.73	127,459	114,827	-9.91	2,921,669	3,484,154	19.25
56 - Administrative & Support & Waste Management	760	1,787	135.13	265,808	359,208	35.14	9,389,950	12,509,600	33.22
61 - Educational Services	1,143 <sup>1</sup>	948	-17.06	95,866	102,475	6.89	3,386,047	3,488,028	3.01
62 - Health Care & Social Assistance	5,935	4,879	-17.79	535,404	588,444	9.91	18,059,112	20,681,593	14.52
71 - Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	433	284	-34.41	53,698	45,010	-16.18	2,003,129	1,858,669	-7.21
72 - Accommodations & Food Services	2,213	2,200	-0.59	276,848	264,523	-4.45	11,556,285	12,142,327	5.07
81 - Other Services (Except Public Administration)	1,465	1,230	-16.04	144,659	138,320	-4.38	5,181,801	5,105,104	-1.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,892</b>	<b>27,445</b>	<b>-1.60</b>	<b>3,377,563</b>	<b>3,570,119</b>	<b>5.70</b>	<b>113,407,513</b>	<b>128,331,455</b>	<b>13.16</b>

Source: 2011 and 2021 County Business Patterns (CBP) Data

<sup>1</sup> Estimated employment calculated by multiplying total number of establishments within that industry by the average employment per establishment size category (as determined by the United States Census Bureau).

## County Location Quotients

Location Quotients (“LQ”) are an economic analysis tool used to evaluate which industries within a region have a particular advantage over others, and specifically indicate which industries are considered “basic” versus “non-basic.” A LQ is calculated by dividing a region’s ratio of employment in a particular industry as compared to total employment in the region by the nation’s ratio of employment in a particular industry as compared to total employment in the nation. Industries with a LQ equal to 1.00 indicate a regional industry which is roughly on par with the nation in terms of employment percentage. Industries with a LQ less than 1.00 indicate a regional industry that has a smaller percentage of employees as compared to the nation, and those with a LQ above 1.00 indicate a regional industry that has a larger percentage of employees as compared to the nation.

Regional industries with a LQ above 1.0 are typically considered to be “basic” or “export” industries, or those which have an economic impact that extends beyond the region itself. In 2021, the basic industries in Warren County included: Utilities; Manufacturing; Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade; Information; Educational Services; Health Care and Social Assistance; and Other Services (Except Public Administration).

NAICS Industry	United States Employment		Warren County Employment			
	Employment	Industry Emp. / Total Emp.	Employment	Industry Emp. / Total Emp.	LQ <sup>1</sup>	Basic
11 - Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Agriculture Support	165,688	0.13	19	0.07	0.54	No
21 - Mining	474,877	0.37	19	0.07	0.19	No
22 - Utilities	633,738	0.49	162	0.59	1.20	Yes
23 - Construction	7,062,022	5.50	1,205	4.39	0.80	No
31 - Manufacturing	11,710,424	9.13	3,955	14.41	1.58	Yes
42 - Wholesale Trade	5,925,945	4.62	2,178	7.94	1.72	Yes
44 - Retail Trade	15,530,630	12.10	5,188	18.90	1.56	Yes
48 - Transportation & Warehousing	5,693,641	4.44	562	2.05	0.46	No
51 - Information	3,414,629	2.66	1,094	3.99	1.50	Yes
52 - Finance & Insurance	6,738,309	5.25	442	1.61	0.31	No
53 - Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	2,180,602	1.70	179	0.65	0.38	No
54 - Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	9,531,475	7.43	1,005	3.66	0.49	No
55 - Management of Companies & Enterprises	3,484,154	2.71	109	0.40	0.15	No
56 - Administrative & Support & Waste Management	12,509,600	9.75	1,787	6.51	0.67	No
61 - Educational Services	3,488,028	2.72	948	3.45	1.27	Yes
62 - Health Care & Social Assistance	20,681,593	16.12	4,879	17.78	1.10	Yes
71 - Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	1,858,669	1.45	284	1.03	0.71	No
72 - Accommodation & Food Services	12,142,327	9.46	2,200	8.02	0.85	No
81 - Other Services (Except Public Administration)	5,105,104	3.98	1,230	4.48	1.13	Yes
<b>Total</b>	<b>128,331,455</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>27,445</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>

Source: 2021 County Business Patterns (CBP) Data

<sup>1</sup> (County Industrial Employment/County Total Employment) ÷ (Nation Industrial Employment/Nation Total Employment)

## County Shift-Share Analysis

A shift-share analysis is an economic analysis tool that is used to explain the extent to which an industry's growth or decline in a particular region ("regional shift") can be attributed to overall national economic growth across all industries ("national share") and national economic growth within the industry itself ("industry mix").

Table 14: Shift-Share Analysis, 2021						
Warren County						
NAICS Industry	Shift Components		Shift-Share Analysis			
	National Industry Growth (2011-2021)	County Industry Growth (2011-2021)	National Share	Industry Mix	Regional Shift	Total 2021 Employment
11 - Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Agriculture Support	1.06	0.73	23	-2	-9	13
21 - Mining	0.73	0.21	80	-37	-47	-4
22 - Utilities	0.99	0.84	170	-27	-28	114
23 - Construction	1.36	0.99	1,076	279	-452	903
31 - Manufacturing	1.07	1.07	3,271	-242	9	3,038
42 - Wholesale Trade	1.05	1.01	1,897	-168	-83	1,646
44 - Retail Trade	1.06	0.88	5,201	-441	-1,030	3,729
48 - Transportation & Warehousing	1.39	0.78	641	185	-443	382
51 - Information	1.09	5.04	192	-8	857	1,040
52 - Finance & Insurance	1.14	0.72	544	8	-263	289
53 - Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1.14	1.12	141	1	-3	139
54 - Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	1.20	1.09	814	65	-102	777
55 - Management of Companies & Enterprises	1.19	2.48	39	3	57	98
56 - Administrative & Support & Waste Management	1.33	2.35	672	152	775	1,599
61 - Educational Services	1.03	0.83	1,010	-116	-229	665
62 - Health Care & Social Assistance	1.15	0.82	5,245	81	-1,918	3,408
71 - Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	0.93	0.66	383	-88	-118	177
72 - Accommodation & Food Services	1.05	0.99	1,956	-179	-125	1,651
81 - Other Services (Except Public Administration)	0.99	0.84	1,295	-214	-213	867
<b>Overall Change Across Industries (2011-2021)</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>0.98</b>	--	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	--	--	<b>24,648</b>	<b>-750</b>	<b>-3,367</b>	<b>20,531</b>

Source: 2021 County Business Patterns (CBP) Data

Looking at the “51 – Information” row in Table 15 on the preceding page, for example, it is shown that the Information industry had a national growth rate of 1.09 and a county growth rate of 5.04 in the 10-year period between 2011 and 2021. To interpret the “Shift-Share Analysis” portion of this row, it can be said that:

- An increase of 192 Information industry jobs within Warren County can be attributed to overall economic growth at the national level (“national share”);
- A decrease of 8 Information industry jobs within Warren County can be attributed to industry decline at the national level (“industry mix”); and
- An increase of 857 Information industry jobs can be attributed to economic growth at the regional level (“regional shift”).

This also reveals that the regional shift accounted for approximately 82% of employment across the Information industry in Warren County in 2021. The Information industry fared particularly well in Warren County between 2011 and 2021.

On the other hand, the data within the “21 – Mining” row on the table above can be summarized by saying that, although overall economic growth at the national level accounted for an increase of 80 mining jobs in Warren County, overall national Mining industry employment decline and general regional economic decline contributed to a loss of 84 Mining industry jobs in Warren County during the same period, resulting in a net decrease of 4 Mining jobs.

The shift-share analysis reveals that Warren County’s most competitive industries in 2021 were “Information”, “Management of Companies and Enterprises”, and “Administrative and Support and Waste Management”. In other words, the growth within these three industries in Warren County exceeded growth at the national level. With the exception of the “Manufacturing” industry, the remainder of the industries exhibited on this table experienced an employment decline within Warren County that can be attributed to the County’s overall economic performance.

### County Industry Clusters

The “Industry Clusters” graph (Figure 11) on the following page illustrates the overall performance of the various NAICS industries within Warren County. Industries that fall within the “Transitioning” sector are those with LQ’s below 1.0 that experienced a decline in employment in the 10-year period between 2011 and 2021. Industries that fall within the “Emerging” sector, although also having a LQ below 1.0, have experienced an increase in employment during this same period. In other words, “Emerging” industries are those that are on the rise in Warren County but don’t yet have a unique advantage in the County.

Industries that fall within the “Mature” sector are those with LQ’s above 1.0, meaning they have a unique advantage within the County. At the same time, however, these industries experienced an overall decrease in employment between 2011-2021. According to the New Jersey State Data Center’s Industry Projections for 2020-2030, in Warren County: the “Retail Trade” industry is

expected to see an overall 7.6% decrease over the ten year period with a -0.8% annual growth rate; the “Health Care and Social Assistance” industry is expected to see an overall 6.0% increase over the ten year period with a 0.6% annual growth rate; the “Educational Services” industry is expected to see an overall 2.5% increase over the ten year period with a 0.3% annual growth rate; and the “Other Services (excluding Public Administration)” industry is expected to see an overall change of 13.3% over the ten year period with a 1.3% annual growth rate.

Industries that fall within the “Star” sector are those that both have LQ’s above 1.0 and experienced an increase in employment between 2011 and 2021. These are industries that have a unique advantage within the County and are expected to grow if industry employment trends remain steady. According to the New Jersey State Data Center’s Industry Projections for 2020-2030, in Warren County: the “Information” industry is expected to see an overall 6.8% decrease over the ten year period with a -0.7% annual growth rate; the “Manufacturing” industry is expected to see an overall 11.3% decrease over the ten year period with a -1.2% annual growth rate; and the “Wholesale Trade” industry is expected to see an overall 11.5% increase over the ten year period with a 1.1 annual growth rate.

The size of each cluster in Figure 11 is directly correlated with each industry’s employment as compared to overall county employment across all sectors. In other words, clusters with smaller radii indicate industries that had a lower number of employees whereas clusters with larger radii have a higher number of employees.

This figure shows that “Wholesale Trade”, “Manufacturing”, and “Information” are growing and regionally advantageous industries within Warren County. Of these three industries, “Manufacturing” contributed the most employees to the total employee pool in Warren County in 2021. Furthermore, this figure indicates that in 2021 the “Retail Trade” and “Health Care and Social Assistance” industries had an advantage in the County and also had some of the largest employee pools across the County.

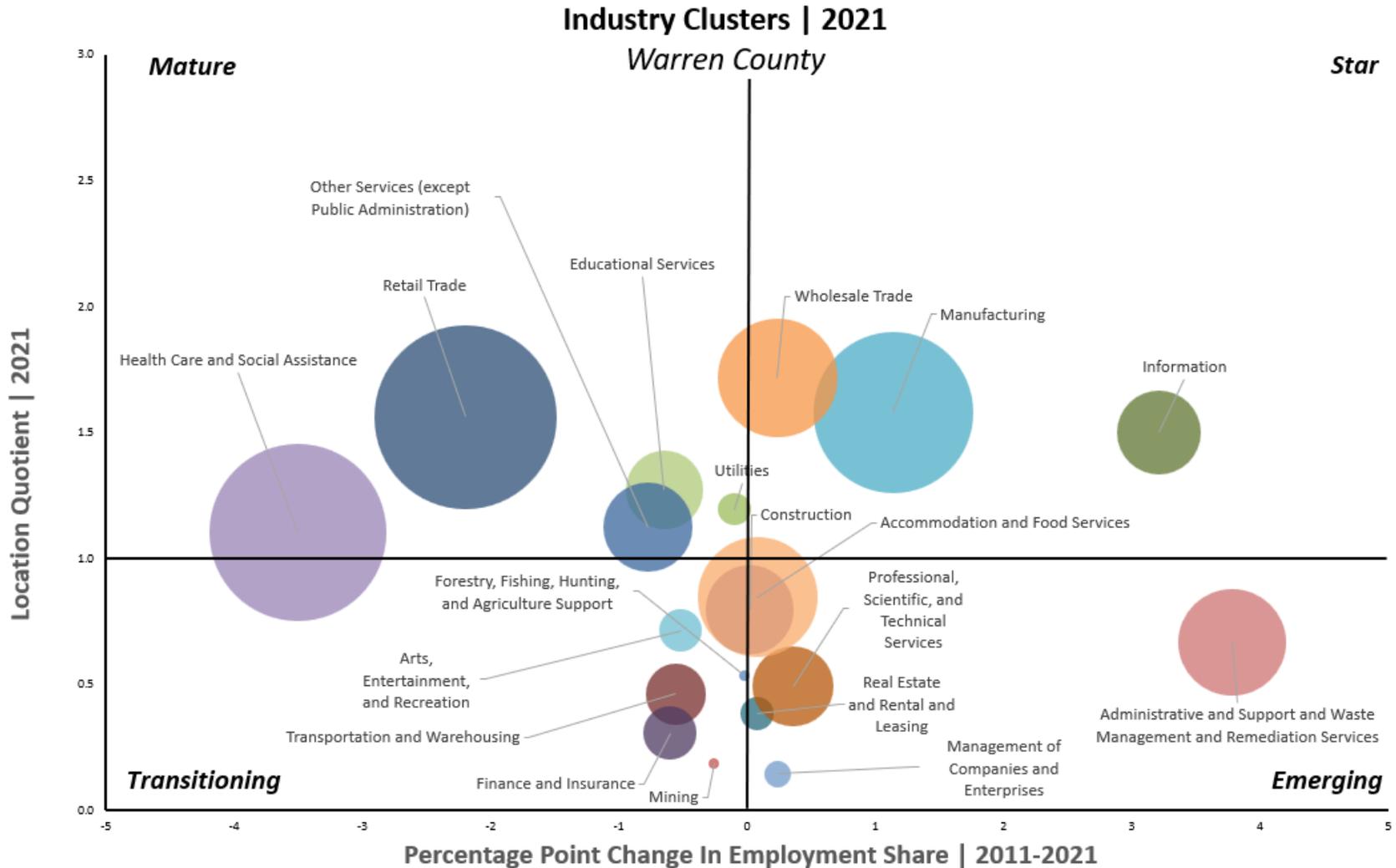


Figure 11: County Industry Clusters  
Source: 2021 County Business Patterns (CPB) Data

## County and State Business Ownership

In 2012 the New Jersey DLWD compiled survey data focused on local business ownership at the County and State level. At the time, Warren County's local businesses were roughly: twice as likely to be owned by a male than a female; 11 times more likely to be owned by a White resident than a resident of any other race; and 12 times more likely to be owned by a non-Hispanic resident than a Hispanic resident. Data at the State level indicated that New Jersey as a whole had a slightly more diverse local business owner population as compared to the County, but the predominant demographic across this community was also White, non-Hispanic Males.

According to the survey data, Black or African American residents at both the County and State level experienced the greatest gap between business ownership and population composition. For example, within Warren County Black or African American residents accounted for 3.9% of the population but just 1.2% of local business owners. Similarly, Black or African American residents accounted for 13.6% of the State population but only 8.0% of the State's business owner community. The data shows similar disparities in regard to Hispanic residents and female residents.

Table 15: Total Population and Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, and Race, 2012						
Warren County and New Jersey State						
Gender, Ethnicity, and Race	Warren County			New Jersey State		
	Business Ownership		Population	Business Ownership		Population
	Number of Firms	Percent of Firms	Percent of Population	Number of Firms	Percent of Firms	Percent of Population
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	2,395	29.4%	51.4%	252,944	31.9%	51.3%
Male	4,930	60.5%	48.6%	464,592	58.7%	48.7%
Equally Male/Female	546	6.7%	--	59,473	7.5%	--
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Hispanic	361	4.4%	7.7%	93,336	11.8%	18.5%
Non-Hispanic	7,476	91.7%	92.3%	680,131	85.9%	81.5%
<b>Race</b>						
White	7,201	88.4%	89.0%	601,275	75.9%	68.9%
Black and African American	96	1.2%	3.9%	63,686	8.0%	13.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native	28	0.3%	0.2%	3,503	0.4%	0.2%
Asian	386	4.7%	2.5%	81,898	10.3%	8.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0.0%	892	0.1%	0.0%
Some Other Race	199	2.4%	3.0%	34,381	4.3%	5.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,149</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>792,088</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>--</b>

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2012 Survey of Business Owners – Warren County and New Jersey; 2012 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

## Anticipated County Trends

In 2007, the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) released a report titled “Warren County Freight Profile,” which documented projected industry, employment, and freight growth in the County between the years 2010 and 2040. The report projected that overall non-farm employment would grow from 37,300 to 46,600 (25% increase) during this time frame, specifically projecting freight-intensive industries to experience 19% growth and non-freight-intensive industries to experience 29% growth.<sup>2</sup> It further projected that the professional services industry was expected to have the

<sup>2</sup> According to the report, freight-intensive industries include: retail trade; agriculture, FFH, mining, and construction; transportation, warehousing, and utilities; chemical; wholesale trade; fabricated metal; machinery; computers and electronics; and other nondurable and specified. Other industries include: professional services; federal and state government; F.I.R.E.; and information.

highest employment growth (+ 5,400 jobs), while the production of non-durable goods industry was expected have the lowest employment growth (-300 jobs).

In terms of freight growth, the report projected a 22% increase in the overall commodity flows into and out of Warren County, growing from 10.3 million tons in 2010 to 12.5 million tons in 2040. As a result of this, the report projects an increase in traffic along the County’s highway network and specifically notes that NJ Routes 31 and 57 (amongst other national, state, and county roads) could experience an increase in truck traffic of 100 to 500 trucks per day during this period. Considering that these state roads are main thoroughfares in the Borough, it will be important to consider these potential impacts as the Borough continues to plan for its future.

## Current and Projected New Jersey Jobs in Demand

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development’s Division of Economic and Demographic Research released its most recent Labor Market Information Update in June 2024. This report provides a comprehensive look at the State’s economic health, and reports on employment change, unemployment levels and labor force by County, and key industries amongst other topics. It specifically reports on the top 10 occupational listings of “Real Time Jobs in Demand” in the state based on the number of job postings and number of employees in that occupation. Table 16 below summarizes the most recent data, which shows that registered nurses, retail salespersons, and application software developers are three of the most in-demand occupations currently.

Rank	Occupation Title	Number of Job Postings 2024	Number of Employees 2022
1	Registered Nurses	8,135	78,340
2	Retail Salespersons	4,498	104,660
3	Software Developers, Applications	3,484	54,920
4	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2,451	27,720
5	Customer Service Representatives	2,180	62,490
6	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,030	89,210
7	Medical and Health Services Managers	2,028	16,490
8	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1,973	54,360
9	Licensed Practical and Licenses Vocational Nurses	1,945	16,220
10	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	1,914	35,440

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Division of Economic & Demographic Research, Information Update for April 2014 (Prepared June 2024)

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Work Force Development also provides a Labor Demand Occupations List, which serves as a tool for evaluating which occupations are expected to have the most growth and job openings in the State. Based on 2020 employment data and projected employment change between the years 2018 and 2028, the list identifies the occupations shown on Table 17 as those with the greatest and least predicted growth through 2028.

Based on this data, it was projected that Solar Photovoltaic Installer jobs would see the greatest increase (47.4%) in the decade between 2018 and 2028, while Computer Network Support Specialists on the other side of the spectrum would see the least growth (-0.2%). Overall, this list displays a diverse range of occupations in terms of minimum education requirements and average salary. This information is useful in not only identifying potentially advantageous workforce development opportunities that can benefit individual workers, but also in steering local and regional economies towards lucrative industries.

Table 17: Occupations with Greatest and Least Projected Growth, 2018-2028					
New Jersey State					
Occupation	2018-2028 Projected Change	Minimum Education	Annual Job Openings	2020 Employment	2020 Average Salary
Solar Photovoltaic Installers	47.4%	High School Diploma	160	1,370	\$49,730
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	39.6%	High School Diploma	10,760	56,630	\$28,860
Physician Assistants	32.2%	Master's Degree	290	2,350	\$131,210
Nurse Practitioners	28.2%	Master's Degree	560	5,800	\$130,890
Massage Therapists	27.7%	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award	670	2,440	\$46,280
Speech-Language Pathologists	23.6%	Master's Degree	560	5,020	\$100,330
Phlebotomists	22.6%	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award	710	5,630	\$39,220
Information Security Analysts	22.4%	Bachelor's Degree	360	4,000	\$123,280
Respiratory Therapists	21.9%	Associate's Degree	270	4,120	\$74,710
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	21.3%	Associate's Degree	250	2,550	\$81,840
Computer Network Support Specialists	-0.2%	Associate's Degree	520	5,090	\$89,760
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	-0.2%	Bachelor's Degree	880	10,380	\$103,030
Customer Service Representatives	-2.5%	High School Diploma	9,030	64,900	\$42,460
Computer Network Architects	-2.5%	Bachelor's Degree	340	5,150	\$126,340
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	-2.6%	Some College or No Degree	5,280	39,140	\$48,200
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	-3.1%	High School Diploma	4,160	24,570	\$57,280
Retail Salespersons	-3.5%	No Formal Education Required	18,520	98,690	\$32,470
Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	-3.5%	High School Diploma	380	4,410	\$55,630
Correctional Officers and Jailers	-7.6%	High School Diploma	880	9,740	\$71,810
Computer Programmers	-11.7%	Bachelor's Degree	580	7,120	\$92,980

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Demand Occupations List

## Competitor Markets

### Hackettstown, NJ

Hackettstown, which falls within Warren County, is located northeast of Washington Borough by approximately 11.5 miles. Some of its more notable features include the Mars Chocolate North America factory, Stephens State Park Campground, Centenary University, and Hackettstown Riverfront Park which abuts the scenic Musconetcong River. Hackettstown's Main Street is situated along US Route 46 and offers upscale sit-down restaurants across a variety of cuisines, two breweries that have a regional draw, a handful of educational and experiential art centers and studios, and a mix of shopping and services.

The Hackettstown Business Improvement District manages a year-round schedule of events, many of which activate the downtown through 9:00 or 10:00 in the evening. In addition, the BID offers "BID bucks" which act as a gift certificate across all BID-represented businesses.

*Key takeaways: large institutions/outdoor uses; events/uses that activate downtown in evening; arts*



Street festival in Downtown Hackettstown  
Source: WRNJ Radio<sup>6</sup>

### Clinton, NJ

Clinton is located in Hunterdon County approximately 10.5 miles southeast of Washington Borough along Route 31. Characterized by its historical mill—which now houses the Hunterdon Art Museum—along the Raritan River, Clinton is well known for its quaint downtown, Victorian era architecture, and connections to regional recreational paths such as the Landsdown Trail. Clinton's downtown offers a variety of shopping, dining, and cultural experiences. It also offers a comprehensive schedule of outdoors community events throughout the year that activate the downtown from morning to night.

The Guild of Clinton, which operates similarly to a business improvement district, annually distributes 5,000 professionally designed brochures highlighting member businesses and yearly events.

*Key takeaways: natural/cultural draws; quaint; diversity of shops/dining/event; programmatic; marketing*



Aerial of Downtown Clinton  
Source: Explore Hunterdon<sup>7</sup>

### Easton, PA

Easton is located in Pennsylvania directly across the Delaware River from Phillipsburg and is approximately 14 miles southeast of Washington Borough. It is the county seat of Northampton County in Pennsylvania and, as such, has a significant regional draw. In addition to being home to institutions and attractions including Lafayette College, the State Theatre for the Performing Arts, and the Crayola Experience, Easton has a lively historic downtown with horse-drawn carriages, a wide variety of shops and dining, and events such as the Easton Pub Crawl and historic house tours. The Simon Silk Mill in Easton is a great example of historical rehabilitation for mixed-used development.

Downtown Easton is represented by a number of economic organizations, including the Easton Business Association which offers business networking events and ribbon cuttings. Another organization, the Easton Main Street Initiative, offers downtown gift cards and maintains an online database of available commercial properties. Further, the Greater Easton Development Partnership manages the Easton Public Market ("EPM"), which is a community-supported market that features farm stands, food vendors, and a demonstration kitchen. The vision of the EPM is to support regional food culture and drive the local economy.

*Key takeaways: diverse and family-friendly attractions; historic district and activities; creative uses*



*An example of business signage in Downtown Washington*

## Summary of Profile

The Borough's recent population growth aligns with national trends pointing toward an uptick in rural populations over the last decade, which may at least partially be due to advances in technology that enable remote working environments as well as a desire to live more rurally. As the largest generation in America—the Baby Boomers—begin aging out of the work force, 20-year projections anticipate that the labor force in Warren County as a whole will experience a net decrease through the year 2034. The Borough has experienced a decrease in unemployment over the last decade, suggesting a motivation amongst its labor force to be employed. Over 23% of the Borough's labor force commutes outside of the Borough for work, with the average commute time being 37 minutes. This reveals that there is potential opportunity for the Borough to retain its labor force locally, if the right employment opportunities are presented.

Data indicates that the Borough's young adult population (ages 18 to 24) has obtained higher levels of education as compared to older segments of the Borough's population and has done so at rates higher than the County and State. With this in mind, it will be important to attract and retain employers in the Borough that encourage younger members of the workforce to stay in the Borough, thereby increasing the likelihood of keeping their dollar local as well. It's worth noting that the Borough anticipates that at least two mixed use developments will be underway beginning in 2025, which are expected to further contribute to the Borough's growing young adult population.

In considering potential job markets for upcoming generations of the workforce, it will be wise to strike a balance of employment opportunities that require various levels and types of training, particularly emphasizing a balance of technical training and college-educated career paths. Additionally, it will be prudent to plan for diverse and desirable uses in the Borough that will help retain these populations as they age and begin families of their own. While young professionals and other segments of younger generations may appreciate opportunities to enjoy upscale dining, shows and performances, and other evening-centric activities, as these populations age their interests may turn to a more diverse array of uses such as coffee shops, ice cream parlors, arcades, and other family-friendly settings.

In the coming years, the Borough should consider facilitating employment opportunities within innovative industries, such as clean energy, as well as entrepreneurial sectors. Current industries that are faring particularly well in the Borough and County include Manufacturing (Borough), Management of Companies and Enterprises (Borough and County), Health Care and Social Assistance (Borough), Administrative and Support and Waste Management (County), and Information (County). The Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Information, Retail Trade, and Health Care and Social Assistance industries are proven to have a particular advantage in the County and also account for large employment pools.

At the State level, the top five jobs in terms of projected growth through the year 2028 include those in the clean energy and health care sectors, specifically: Solar Photovoltaic Installers; Home Health and Personal Care Aides; Physician Assistants; Nurse Practitioners; and Massage Therapists. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the jobs with the greatest anticipated decrease in growth include: Computer Programmers; Correctional Officers and Jailers; Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders; Retail Salespersons; and Retail Supervisors. These projections offer insight into the sectors and job types that should be pursued or avoided when considering future employment opportunities in the Borough.

Local business ownership in the County is less diverse than that the State, with non-Hispanic White males being the predominant race, gender, and ethnic characteristics of the County. There are disparities in who owns local businesses, with a particularly noticeable gap for Black/African American residents which occurs at both the County and State level. Career training and other job resources should be considered to close this gap and encourage a more diverse and inclusive business owner community.

The Borough can learn from its competitor markets in the region, particularly evaluating the successful characteristics and marketing strategies found in these successful downtowns that create cohesion, retain business owners and employers, and encourage continuous regional visitation. Some of the marketing strategies used in these towns that the Borough can consider are district-wide gift certificate programs (such as the BID Bucks in Hackettstown), promotional videos, or interactive parking maps. The Borough can also benefit from leaning into and enhancing its existing historic architecture, quaint and walkable character, proximity to natural resources that promote active uses, and community-driven events. The Borough should consider incorporating additional creative uses, diversifying its retail and dining options, and expanding its events to serve a broader range of ages.



*Historic James Campbell House site*

# SOAR ANALYSIS

A SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results) analysis is an action-oriented model that offers an alternative to the familiar SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. By focusing on aspirations and results instead of threats and weaknesses, the SOAR model provides a positive, planning-centric approach to helping an entity achieve the best version of itself. The results and aspirations incorporated into this model can be used as a tool for tracking progress.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to regional transportation network</li> <li>• Strong BID and local business community</li> <li>• Designated as Highlands Center with adequate utility systems and capacity</li> <li>• Compact and walkable downtown</li> <li>• Network of unique communal areas, natural features, and green spaces</li> <li>• Rich historic character and architecture</li> <li>• Precedent of hosting successful community events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various sites prime for redevelopment</li> <li>• Potential to incorporate new uses that allow residents to obtain their needs within the Borough</li> <li>• Large corporations in Borough (Albea, NJAWC, Habitat for Humanity) create potential partners for workforce training opportunities</li> <li>• Regional multi-modal networks</li> <li>• Rebranding and marketing tailored to the unique offerings and character of the Borough</li> <li>• Utilize art and wayfinding to highlight unique businesses and identify historic/cultural markings throughout the Borough</li> </ul>
ASPIRATIONS	RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a downtown that is vibrant, welcoming, and modern, with offerings that meet the needs of all age groups through day and evening offerings</li> <li>• Create a path that promotes active transportation and provides access to community spaces, retail/dining, residential neighborhoods, and utilizes signage to highlight environmental assets and historic locations throughout the Borough</li> <li>• Enhance the Borough’s commercial corridors through desired development, strengthened design standards, and the redevelopment of aging and underutilized properties</li> <li>• Establish the Borough as a regional destination instead of a “pass through” town while retaining and leveraging its small-town character and charm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The transformation of vacant/abandoned buildings and properties into vibrant spaces that enhance the character of the Borough and provide modern, updated spaces for new businesses</li> <li>• Memorable and welcoming “gateways” into the Downtown</li> <li>• Multi-modal paths surpass barriers and provide Borough-wide connections to shopping and dining, healthcare, recreation and entertainment, and everyday needs</li> <li>• Increased diversity in the type of businesses operating in the Borough</li> <li>• Greater draw from the region and a strengthened level of patronage from Borough residents</li> </ul>

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

To ensure that the recommendations of this Plan are in alignment with current best practices as well as the ongoing economic efforts of local, regional, and state agencies, a number of relevant plans and documents were reviewed throughout the preparation process. The most relevant goals, objectives, and strategies from such plans are outlined in the subsections below.

### Borough Plans

#### 2022 Master Plan Reexamination Report

The Borough's most recent Master Plan Reexamination Report was adopted in 2022 as a review and evaluation of the local Master Plan and Development Regulations to determine the need for updates and revisions. The 2022 Reexamination Report references the following goal from a prior Reexamination Report adopted in 2007, identifying it as still relevant to the overarching goals of the Borough: "the need to maintain a strong business center by improving the downtown area." Further, it specifically recommends that the Borough adopt a Sustainable Economic Development Plan Element to support the efforts of the Washington BID and serve as a proactive tool to establish a foundation for long-term economic viability in the Borough. Lastly, the Reexamination Report recommends that the Borough consider pursuing Area in Need of Redevelopment or Rehabilitation opportunities along the Route 57 and Route 31 corridors "as a means to stimulate economic activities and attract new businesses."

#### 2022 Amended Washington Borough Downtown Redevelopment Plan

In 2022 the Borough adopted an amended Downtown Redevelopment Plan, providing updates to the original adopted in 2009. It outlines a set of principles, goals, and objectives, the most relevant of which are listed below:

- **Principle 1:** The Downtown will provide an experience of shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.
- **Principle 4:** The Redevelopment Area will be a vibrant, well-maintained, safe, clean, and attractive place that is both functional and convenient to the public. Entrances, open spaces, and architecture will coordinate with the pedestrian circulation system.
- **Principle 5:** The Redevelopment Area will be friendly to the needs of pedestrians while providing convenient access to those who take advantage of public transportation, bicycles, and motor vehicles.
- **Land Use and Design Goal 1:** Provide incentives to update commercial space in the Redevelopment Area through new construction, rehabilitation, and/or redevelopment.
- **Land Use and Design Goal 2:** Ensure that new commercial space caters to consumer needs not yet met by existing viable businesses.
- **Land Use and Design Goal 5:** Develop direct access to the Shabbecong Creek while utilizing the area adjacent to this creek for public open space and resiliency.
- **Land Use and Design Goal 7:** Use zoning and design standards to reinforce pedestrian-scaled storefront design.
- **Vehicular Circulation Goal 1:** Reduce the negative impacts of vehicular traffic on the pedestrian environment to the extent possible.
- **Vehicular Circulation Goal 3:** Incorporate traffic calming measures on Route 57 and its intersection with Route 31.
- **Historic Preservation Goal 3:** Maintain, enhance, and preserve the quaint, historic character of the Downtown and ensure that the new infill development is consistent with the historic nature of older buildings.

## 2023 Highlands Center Plan

In support of its Highlands conformance goals, Washington Borough adopted a Highlands Center Plan in 2023. This plan provides a set of recommended actions that the Borough should undertake to become a conforming Highlands Center. The most relevant objectives from the plan are listed below:

- Encourage usable outdoor space as part of development projects.
- Determine whether a Borough-wide multi-use bicycle/pedestrian path, connecting neighborhoods with local services, is appropriate and achievable.
- Determine whether the existing pedestrian crosswalks within the Borough’s downtown need additional signage or notification to vehicles, and/or safety improvements. Specifically, the pedestrian crossing at Route 31 and Washington Avenue should be analyzed and the pedestrian crossing should be improved.
- Develop stricter property and building maintenance codes to ensure that buildings and properties do not negatively impact neighbors.
- Work with the business owners within the downtown to ensure that the placement of outdoor amenities does not interfere with pedestrian circulation.
- Provide public access to the Shabbecong Creek and reduce impervious coverage and run off in areas adjacent to the creek.
- Identify areas along the Route 31 corridors and Washington Avenue to potentially designate as “Areas in Need of Redevelopment” in order to transform dilapidated structures into viable projects.



*Monuments located outside of Borough Hall*

## County and Regional Plans

### 2005 Warren County Strategic Growth Plan

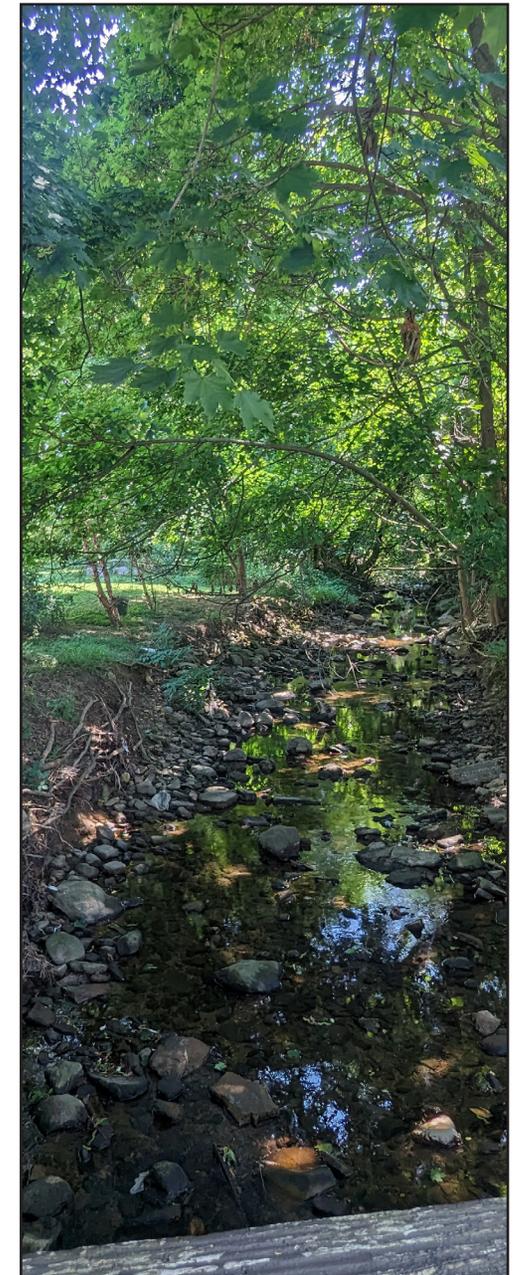
The Warren County Strategic Growth Plan was developed to guide the policy, transportation investment, and growth planning efforts of municipalities in Warren County. It sets forth twelve overarching goals and relevant indicators for measuring progress. The most relevant of these goals include those below:

- **Goal 1:** Preserve and enhance rural character as well as agricultural, natural, environmental, historic, and open space resources and provide incentives to achieve this goal.
- **Goal 2:** Focus growth in existing centers and provide financial incentives to local government, school districts, and developers to achieve this goal.
- **Goal 4:** Maintain and improve the existing transportation system to provide safe and efficient mobility and access.
- **Goal 5:** Provide safe and efficient alternative modes of transportation to reduce auto dependence.
- **Goal 7:** Encourage desirable development that provides local employment opportunities in existing centers.
- **Goal 8:** Increase educational and cultural opportunities.

### 2008 Highlands Regional Master Plan

The Highlands Regional Master Plan sets forth a vision for the seven counties that fall within the Highlands Region, including Warren County. The plan provides an extensive list of interrelated goals, objectives, and policies, the most relevant of which are listed below:

- **Goal 4A:** Protect and preserve the historic, cultural, and archaeological resources of the Highlands Region.
- **Policy 5A3:** Improve public safety through implementation of traffic calming measures in areas with high pedestrian activity.
- **Policy 5A4:** Provide safe and efficient pedestrian connections including features such as sidewalks, proper lighting, signage, shelters, and green street initiatives consistent with the NJDOT's Pedestrian Safety Initiative.
- **Objective 5C4a:** Increase tourism opportunities through innovative multi-modal transportation measures and accessible transit schedules.
- **Objective 5C4b:** Support regional tourism economy through enhanced street furnishings, directional signage, and Highlands Region tourism information.
- **Goal 5E:** Promote land use patterns that support a balance of jobs to housing as a means of reducing average trip lengths.



*A portion of the Shabbecong Creek that runs through Washington Borough*

- **Policy 5E3:** Promote land use patterns which facilitate the use of alternative modes of transportation including walking and the use of bicycles.
- **Objective 6H5a:** Create communities of place with a mix of uses which promote multipurpose trips through proximity of neighborhood retail, commercial, and entertainment uses to residential land uses that create communities that are largely self-sufficient regarding daily needs.
- **Objective 6K1b:** Encourage and support the use of planning and financing tools that are available through state agencies and programs for appropriate redevelopment.
- **Objective 6N5b:** Local development regulations and guidelines that advocate for mixed use development and redevelopment where appropriate.
- **Objective 6N5d:** Increased opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle networks, including sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, and supportive facilities such as bike racks.
- **Policy 8A1:** Maintain and expand the existing job and economic base by promoting appropriate, sustainable, and environmentally compatible economic development throughout the Highlands Region.
- **Goal 8C3:** Promote public and private tourism attractions in the Highlands Region through the marketing of natural resources, the arts, cultural, historic, scenic, agricultural, and recreational resources, urban amenities, and accommodations.

## 2015 North Jersey Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The North Jersey Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was published in collaboration between Together New Jersey (TNJ) and the New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). This plan considers a regional approach to sustainable development across thirteen counties in North Jersey, including Warren County. The four focus areas of the plan are to: support the growth of Regional Innovation Clusters; enhance North Jersey's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem; build on the region's infrastructure assets; and align workforce training with industry needs.

The plan outlines a variety of strategies, the most relevant of which are listed below:

- **Focus Area 1 | Strategy 5:** Create program(s) in the region to connect small business to growth and business development opportunities, with a focus on Regional Innovation Clusters.
- **Focus Area 1 | Strategy 3:** Explore types of shared workspaces and connect them to economic development and finance programs by: encouraging the inclusion of shared workspaces in the redevelopment of urban and suburban office buildings into mixed-use developments; market redevelopment sites to private firms that develop/manage shared workspaces; and explore opportunities to include shared workspaces in new public facilities such as government buildings and libraries.



*Karen Nash Memorial Butterfly Garden at Memorial Elementary School*

- **Focus Area 3 | Strategy 1:** Provide incentives packages targeted at job creation and private-sector investment in underutilized land ripe for mixed-use development.
- **Focus Area 3 | Strategy 5:** Enhance the promotion of arts and cultural tourism in the region.
- **Focus Area 4 | Strategy 2:** Create occupational and soft skills training programs to help remove employment barriers for underrepresented populations.
- **Focus Area 4 | Strategy 3:** Identify career pathway initiatives and other similar training programs to help incumbent workers transition to living-wage occupations.
- **Focus Area 4 | Strategy 4:** Create/facilitate the development of a regional apprenticeship program for non-college-bound students.
- **Focus Area 4 | Strategy 5:** Raise awareness of opportunities in skilled trades and other traditional vocational and technical programs.

## 2022 Highlands Economic Sustainability Plan

The Highlands Economic Sustainability Plan was developed with the goal to guide the Region's economic future through compatible and complimentary tools that protect and enhance natural resources in the Highlands. The plan is driven by 5 overarching goals and relevant strategies, the most relevant of which are listed below:

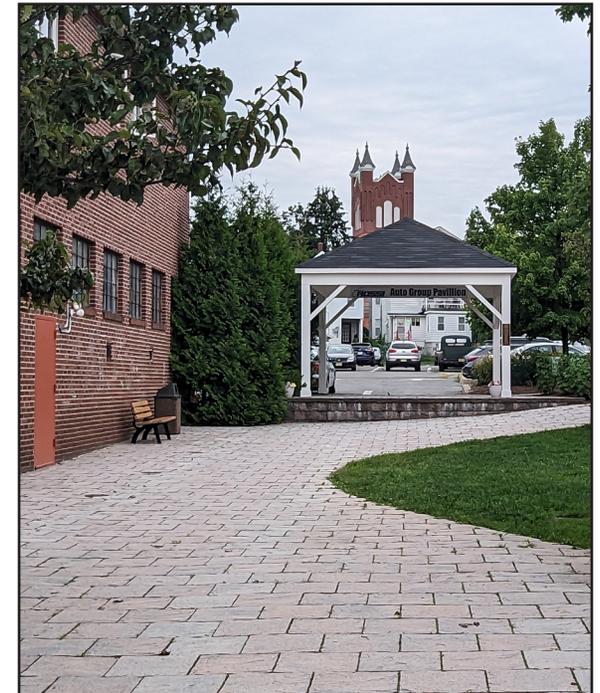
- **Strategy 1.E:** Collaborate with eco-tourism and heritage tourism efforts to promote value of natural and cultural resources in these sectors.
- **Strategy 2.A:** Promote and market livability and job opportunities to demographics that are lacking in the region.
- **Strategy 2.F:** Use common themes and unique identifiers to integrate elements of placemaking into (re)development through the region.
- **Strategy 2.G:** Focus development and redevelopment in designated centers and aging real estate assets like strip malls where infrastructure already exists.
- **Strategy 5.B:** Partner with local organizations to support small businesses.
- **Strategy 5.C:** Pursue market opportunities identified for target industries, including: specialized manufacturing; biotechnology and life science; tourism and recreation; finance and insurance; food production; and corporate offices.



*A historical monument located in Downtown Washington dates back to 1915, exemplifying its historic character*



*The locally-owned Buttzville Brewing Company attracts a regional audience into Downtown Washington*



*Veteran's Park in the center of Downtown Washington often serves as a gathering space for the community*

## State Plans

### 2018 The State of Innovation: Building a Stronger and Fairer Economy in New Jersey

The Building a Stronger and Fairer Economy in New Jersey report was released in 2018 and identifies five overarching goals with the intent of reestablishing an inclusive economy that benefits all New Jerseyans, including:

- Driving faster job growth [...] by fostering a better, more supportive business climate.
- Achieving faster median wage growth than all Northeast peer states.
- Creating the most diverse innovation ecosystem in the nation and doubling venture capital investment in the state.
- Closing the racial and gender wage and employment gaps.
- Encouraging thriving and inclusive New Jersey urban centers and downtowns, with a focus on reducing poverty.

This report outlines a number of potential tools and programs that can be leveraged to support the established priorities and goals. Those that are most relevant to Washington Borough include:

- Utilizing a combination of NJ Aspire (a place-based gap financing program), Brownfields programs, and state historic preservation tax credit programs.
- The New Jersey Innovation Evergreen Fund, which will establish partnerships with the private sector to raise and co-invest funds in New Jersey-based startups.
- The launch of a new state-wide small business lending programs to support the small business community.

### 2021 New Jersey Economic Recovery Act

The New Jersey Economic Recovery Act (“ERA”) was signed into law on January 7, 2021 by Governor Murphy. The goal of the ERA is to address ongoing economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and build a strong and inclusive economy. It provides for a \$14 billion package of tax incentive, financing, and grant programs with a goal to:

- Incentivize job creation and capital investment (tax credits);
- Support and strengthen New Jersey’s innovation economy (investment tools);
- Strengthen New Jersey’s communities through means including the revitalization of brownfields and the preservation of historic properties (tax credits);
- Support small businesses, including those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (financial resources); and
- Support new supermarkets and health food retailers in food desert communities.



*Vegetated planters are placed throughout the Downtown to provide visual interest*



## SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

### Phase I: Laying the Groundwork through Small "Wins" - 1 to 5 years

**Primary Goal: Shift perception of the Downtown through quick, achievable, affordable actions that position the Downtown as a vibrant and inclusive destination.**

As made evident through public input, one of the Borough's most notable challenges with its Downtown at this time is the perception that it is not a destination, but rather a pass-through town. Many residents and business owners who participated in the public outreach process indicated that, although the Downtown has a strong network of local businesses, residents of the Borough and other towns in the region tend to gravitate towards more developed downtowns such as those in Phillipsburg and Hackettstown. Some of the main reasons attributed to this dynamic included the number of vacant and/or poorly maintained buildings in the Downtown, a limited selection of communal gathering spaces, and a need for expanded activities and uses to activate the downtown throughout all times of the day and evening.

Although there are larger issues that will eventually need to be addressed to achieve a sustainable position for the Downtown, it is critical that the Borough make efforts in the interim to shift this perception of Downtown Washington by implementing short-term, high-impact solutions. In fact, according to the Main Street program, one of the eight principles guiding successful downtown revitalization programs is that "small projects make a big difference."<sup>8</sup> This Plan recommends that the Borough pursue a combination of the following tactics and tools under this initial phase.

- Undergo a comprehensive rebranding effort for the Downtown, emphasizing defining characteristics such as the Borough's small-town charm and thriving local business community. Branding should focus on a regional draw, and may include materials such as promotional videos, banners, a new logo and slogan, social media templates, etc. Additionally, the Borough can work to develop programs that incentivize local spending, such as Hackettstown's "BID Bucks" program.
  - This effort should be preceded by a collaborative effort between Borough management, the Business Improvement District, and local business owners to co-author a "Statement of Principles" that centers the support of local ownership, which should set the foundation for any future rebranding.
- Expand existing community programming to include diverse events and gatherings to activate the Downtown at different times of day and evening. This should include activities that are family-friendly, as well as those that cater to young adults and aging populations. The Borough should specifically create events that are unique to its history, such as a melodeon festival, Victorian-era home tours, a summer musical series that pays homage to the Daniel F. Beatty opera house, etc.
- Pursue an Area in Need of Rehabilitation designation for the entirety of the Borough outside of the Downtown Redevelopment Area. These designations benefit property owners through tax abatements, which can be leveraged to upgrade neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

- Revitalize the Downtown corridor from the bottom up by engaging local residents in collaborative processes such as artist-led mural design and painting community workshops. These types of projects not only have a lasting physical impact, but also foster a sense of ownership and pride amongst the community. See “Best Practices” subsection below regarding “Camden Is” project by Erik James Montgomery.
- Pursue regional marketing efforts with other Downtowns in the County to garner visibility for local businesses at a larger scale. See “Best Practices” subsection below regarding Hunterdon County Beer Trail Maps.
- Incorporate new and improved pedestrian-scale amenities, including wayfinding signage, benches, and trashcans. Partner with local college and high school art programs to personalize these amenities with painted designs that reflect the Borough’s history, culture, and/or diverse range of local businesses.
- Implement programs that activate occupied and vacant storefront windows to create a more vibrant and visually consistent frontage along Washington Avenue. This can include a vacant storefront program that installs artistic or historic murals in unoccupied storefront windows to temporarily clean up abandoned buildings, as well as seasonal window design competitions for occupied units. In the case of property owners who do not permit a permanent mural to be painted on their building, alternative temporary

mural installation methods may be explored. See “Best Practices” subsection below regarding Haddonfield storefront activation.

- Pursue additional regional and state-wide funding and resources to strengthen the façade grant program and business support offered by the Washington Borough Business Improvement District. The Borough may consider pursuing opportunities to provide tools such as lease support for local business owners.
- Work collaboratively with the Business Improvement District to develop a comprehensive “how to” manual for people looking to create a new or expand an existing business in the Borough’s commercial corridors. This should incorporate and expand upon existing resources compiled by the Business Improvement District.
- Prepare comprehensive revisions to the Borough Zoning and Land Development Ordinance with a focus on design standards to allow local businesses and property owners to more easily effectuate the desired vision for Downtown Washington. The current sign ordinance, for example, regulates murals as signage, which restricts the ability for property owners to implement the goal of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan to incorporate more public art downtown. Other topics that should be evaluated include, but are not limited to, (a) implementing tools that more strictly regulate the appearance of vacant and abandoned buildings in the downtown, and (b) implementing design standards in the downtown that maintain a standardized

appearance while also allowing for unique storefront designs. See “Best Practices” subsection below regarding Main Street Medford Signage.

- Similarly, the Borough should revise regulations set forth in the Ordinance and Downtown Redevelopment Plan to target specific desired design standards and targeted uses for the Downtown Area. Specifically, any changes should emphasize strengthened form-based standards at the gateways into the Downtown area, and the Downtown Redevelopment Plan may be amended to regulate the construction of specific uses on targeted properties.



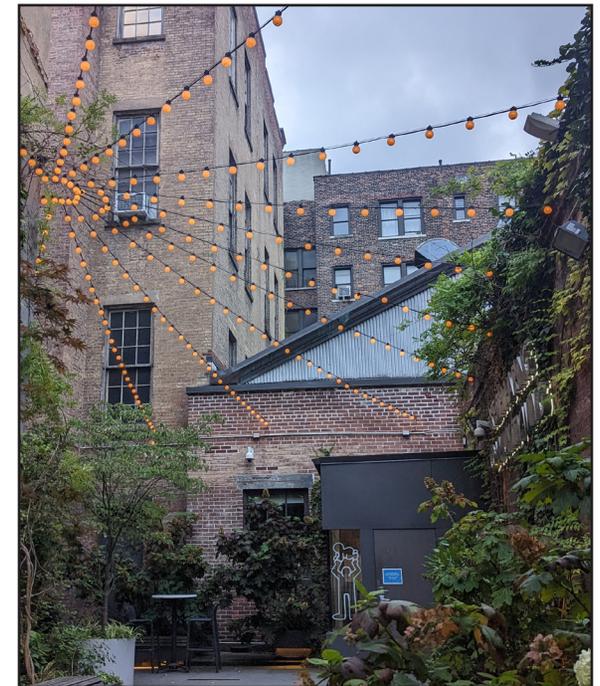
*An example of effective wayfinding signage illustrating public parking locations in Haddonfield, NJ*

- Compile a package of regional and state-wide resources to incentivize development and create marketing materials to pique the interest of reputable developers.
- Partner with the local school district to provide pop-up opportunities for students to develop career-readiness and entrepreneurship skills, while simultaneously activating underused spaces in the Downtown. For example, the Borough could host a quarterly fair in Veteran's Park, in which students work together with peers, teachers, and other school staff to prepare and sell handmade goods to the community for a day. See "Best Practices" subsection regarding the Sayreville Bombers Beyond Café.
- Strengthen the Borough's evening appeal through simple tactics, such as adding string lights along Main Street. Not only would this provide visual interest and promote safety downtown, but it would also help disguise the existing power lines that are strung across Washington Avenue.
  - On a similar note, according to local business owners, the Borough does not currently have the foot traffic to sustain regular evening hours at most restaurants and shops. It is important to have evening dining options available for residents and visitors wanting to attend events in the Borough. That said, during this phase, the Borough should pursue opportunities to feature local food trucks or food carts in the park in tandem with special events. This simultaneously meets the needs of visitors, ensures that money is being spent within the community, and builds the Borough's reputation as a night-time destination, which in turn will set a foundation for local businesses to sustain expanded hours of operation in the future.

- Incorporate Borough-wide green infrastructure, such as rain gardens, green roofs and green parking lots, and bioswales in appropriate and high-impact locations. Areas that are susceptible to repeated flooding should be prioritized, as well as those that are in proximity to commercial and residential uses where the co-benefits of green infrastructure (i.e. clean air, beautification, shade, etc.) can be maximized. One such area to consider, for example, is the paved parking area located between the Shabbecong Creek and the existing businesses on the south side of Washington Avenue; there is a large parking area here that could benefit from green infrastructure.



*An example of a bioswale built into a bump-out, illustrating the usefulness of locating green infrastructure in spaces that typically go unused otherwise.*



*An example of outdoor string lighting that serves both a functional and decorative role in a courtyard in Brooklyn*



## Phase II: Expanding the Role of Downtown through Strategic Revitalization - 5 to 10 years

**Primary Goal: Pursue long-term revitalization through physical improvements, permanent programming, and collaborative partnerships that benefit current residents and attract future residents, too.**

Once the Borough has reestablished its reputation as a place to shop, play, and gather, and has garnered consistent visitation from residents, regional communities, and business and property owners, attention should be focused on long-term revitalization. Efforts should be made to expand the Borough's employment opportunities, attract desired investment to strengthen the Borough's tax base, and lay the groundwork for strategic redevelopment opportunities that meet the community's needs. While continuing to pursue improvements that encourage leisure, focus should be put towards emphasizing the Borough as a place to live, work, and meet the day-to-day needs of current and future residents as well. The tools and actions recommended for Phase II, below, require concerted effort from local government, and are centered on achieving long-term sustainability by implementing physical improvements throughout the Borough.

- Implement a tree replacement plan in the Downtown, with a focus on removing the existing Bradford Pear trees and planting street trees that provide ample shade, thus increasing walkability, and are sufficiently tall as to not block business signage. Additionally, shade trees should be provided along Route 31, both in and around the Downtown Redevelopment Area, to promote active transportation to these commercial corridors from other areas of the Borough.
- Leverage the incentives package created in Phase I to begin pursuing partnerships with credible and interested developers. As identified during the public outreach process, some of the key uses that are desirable for the community at this time include: a small healthcare use, such as an urgent care; a specialized food store that offers community programming such as cooking classes or demonstrations; family-friendly indoor entertainment, such as an arcade; artistic and historic spaces, such as a Borough museum, a children's "hands on" museum, and art galleries; and sit-down restaurants with full commercial kitchens. Development and private-public partnerships that would yield benefits such as high-paying jobs, community career training programs, or new community spaces should be prioritized. See the "Targeted Sites for Redevelopment" section and "Best Practice" subsection below regarding the NJAWC Hopeworks Partnership.
- Install interactive, playful pedestrian infrastructure in strategic locations, such as outdoor workout equipment near the Shabbecong Creek or interactive art along the sidewalks on Washington Avenue to encourage active transportation, education, and play appropriate for all ages. See "Best Practices" subsection below regarding Interactive Art.
- Integrate commissioned, permanent public art that highlights the character of the Borough's history, residents, and business community, with a focus on enhancing the gateways into the Downtown.
- Explore permanent/ongoing options for historic, environmental, and cultural tourism in the Borough, such as: guided hikes, educational programs, or bird watching programs in the Shabbecong Mountain Preserve or along the Morris Canal; seasonal walking tours centered on the history of the Borough, such as historic paranormal tours in the fall; or an annual festival paying homage to the historic Skalla Park and Amusement Pavilion.

- Work with the County and State to evaluate, identify, and implement any feasible opportunities to reroute freight traffic around Downtown Washington, in order to help preserve the quaint character and walkability of the area while also improving vehicular circulation. Simultaneously, work towards implementing small-scale safety measures that improve existing pedestrian and bicyclist circulation, such as high visibility crosswalks with flashing signals and protected bike lanes, particularly along Washington Avenue.
  - Along the same lines, discussions with the County and State centered around the safety and maintenance of the existing railroad culverts should be pursued. As they exist, the right of way below the railroad overpasses are unwelcoming for pedestrians and bicyclists due to a lack of: cleanliness, pedestrian safety measures, lighting, etc. Residents to the east of Route 31 and some residents to the north of Route 57 must pass through these culverts to access downtown, which is inhibiting for many. Additionally, these culverts are located in proximity to the downtown gateways and create a negative appearance for residents and visitors alike. Direct discussions with Norfolk Southern have not proved successful in the past, and it is clear that leveraging conversations with the County and State in these efforts will be critical.
- Pursue opportunities to provide affordable or subsidized start-up spaces for entrepreneurs and local business owners. Spaces such as an open market with vendor areas that allow for organic community building and the sharing of knowledge and best practices should be considered.



*Entrance to Skalla Park, Washington, N. J.*  
 Historic photo of the entrance to the Skalla Park and Amusement Pavilion located in the Borough in the early twentieth century / Source: Washington Historical Society of Warren County<sup>9</sup>



An art installation in Birmingham, Alabama that exemplifies how artistic lighting can be used to create safety and visual interest in transitional spaces, such as underpasses and culverts / Source: Bill FitzGibbons<sup>10</sup>



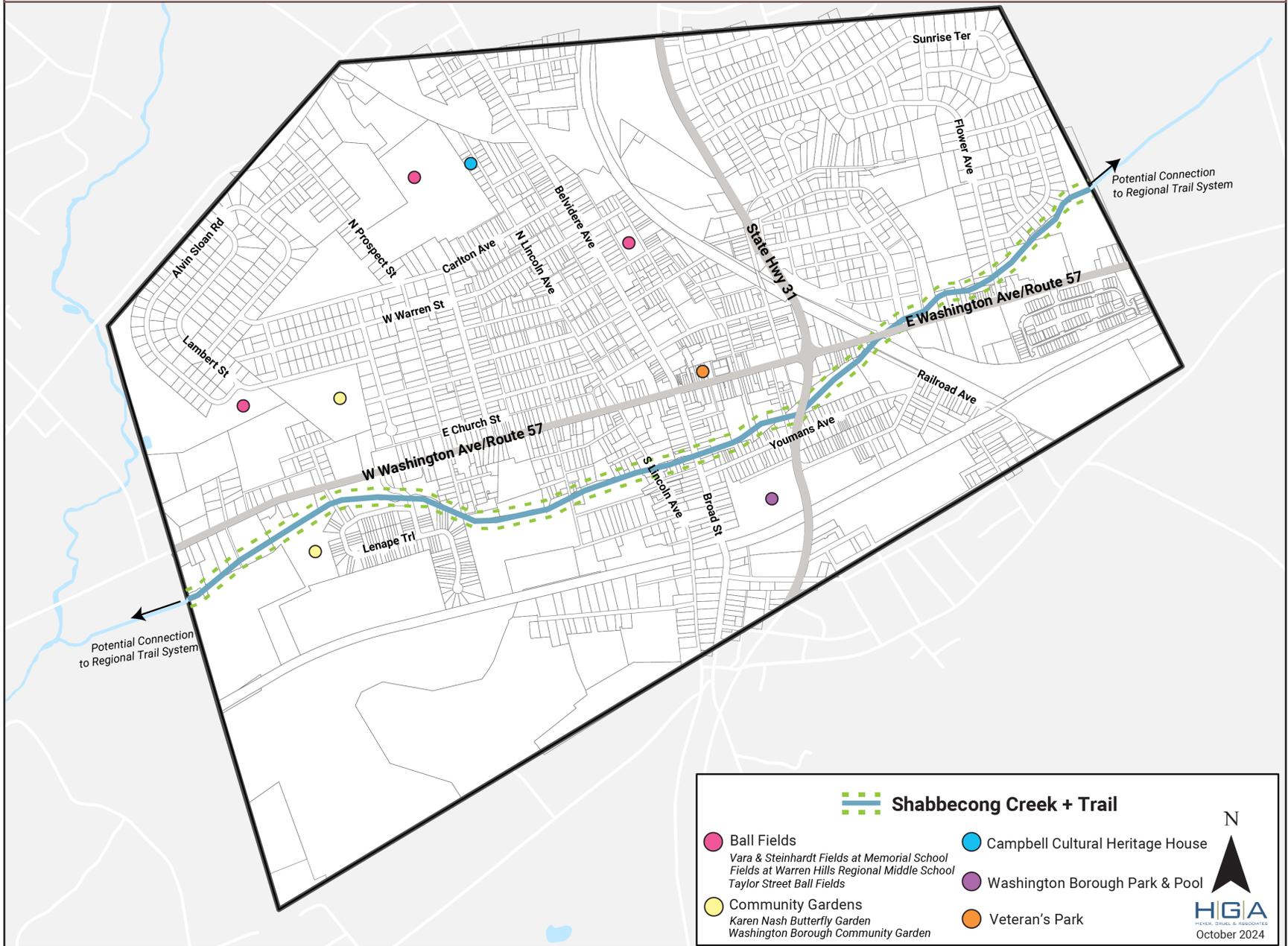
## Phase III: Sustaining a Vibrant Future for Years to Come - 10 + Years

**Primary Goal: Implement key infrastructure improvements and sustain previous/ongoing efforts to ensure the Borough is fueled by relevant industries, a thriving labor force, and a high quality of life for all community members.**

In this final phase, the key focus is sustainable actions rooted in consistent leadership, partnerships, and investment in large-scale infrastructure improvements that both connect the Borough in both physical and perceived ways. The Borough should strive for a sense of economic self-sufficiency, in the sense that residents should feel that they have the ability to work, shop, live, and play in their own community if they so choose, and that the dollar remains local. The infrastructure improvements proposed in this phase will occur on a larger scale than those implemented previously and will emphasize connecting the Borough regionally.

- Undergo a community-driven process to map out a multi-modal trail connecting Downtown Washington with local treasures as well as regional path networks, such as those in Hunterdon County (see Map 4 below). The community should help identify strategic stops along the path, which should be historical, cultural, or environmentally important resources. Informational signage and public art should be integrated along the path.
  - Some of the local treasures identified during the public outreach process include: the Shabbecong Mountain Preserve; Borough Park; Campbell Cultural Heritage House; Karen Nash Butterfly Garden; Morris Canal; Veteran's Park; Shabbecong Creek Park; and the Washington Borough Community Garden. An additional property that should be considered is the existing 16-acre parcel along Railroad Avenue in the southeast corner of the Borough that was purchased and preserved using Green Acres funding; this would be an ideal location for recreational trails and uses in the Borough.
- Pursue needed improvements to infrastructurally create a welcoming gateway into the downtown at the intersection of Route 31 and Route 57. The Borough should consider working with the owners of existing properties at this intersection—specifically those of the Washington Theatre and Washington Diner—to revitalize and activate this gateway. See “Targeted Sites for Redevelopment” section below for more information.
- Work with the State to implement infrastructure improvements at the intersection of Routes 57 and 31 to create a safer crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists. Additional signaled pedestrian and bicyclist crossing locations should be considered along the stretch of Route 31 between this intersection and Upper Park Drive to the South as well, to better connect residents on the eastern side of town with commercial activity and recreational opportunities on the other side of Route 31.
  - Additionally, efforts should be made to create a safer and more welcoming environment for active transportation between the downtown and commercial properties to the east of the Norfolk South Railroad culvert where businesses such as Arctic Foods and Dank Poet are located. Additional pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure such as high-visibility crosswalks, lighting and signage consistent with the downtown, and shade trees should be provided to connect these commercial corridors in both a physical and perceived sense. These efforts should be focused on expanding the commercial corridor and encouraging new commercial development in prime locations surrounding the downtown.

# POTENTIAL SHABBECONG CREEK TRAIL & EXISTING COMMUNITY RESOURCES



- Continue to evaluate strategic locations for new or enhanced public spaces, such as plazas, butterfly gardens, and communal outdoor eating areas to create accessible “third spaces” for residents and visitors. These improvements should be pursued through grants funds as well as public-private partnerships, as available.
- As the Borough’s economic position evolves over the years, it should consider becoming a member of a nationally recognized network that supports small town commercial corridors. The Borough may consider, for example, pursuing the steps necessary to become an affiliated or accredited community through the Main Street America Program. Communities recognized at these designations are required to meet a minimum threshold of requirements regarding leadership, budgeting and funding, and engagement and, in turn, receive access to a national network of thought leaders, funding, and award programs. Engaging in such a program could help ensure that as the Borough’s leadership shifts in the future, its economic goals and achievements remain consistent.
  - The State of New Jersey operates its own Main Street America Coordinating Program, called Main Street New Jersey (MSNJ). Similarly, municipalities that qualify under this program are eligible for grant funding, technical assistance, and training in downtown revitalization and management.



*The Washington Borough Community Garden provides a integral space for collective efforts and communal gathering*



*An example of a crosswalk installed with a pedestrian signal to promote safe crossings / Source: Malee Yang<sup>11</sup>*

## Action Matrix

The recommended action matrix below categorizes the actions set forth in Phase I, II, and III above by primary focus, and identifies key stakeholders that will be integral in ensuring the successful implementation of such.

Recommended Actions Matrix				
Branding, Marketing, & Leadership				
Action	Phase			Key Stakeholders
	I	II	III	
Comprehensive Rebranding	x			Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Business Improvement District, Business Owners/Tenants, Residents, Branding Consultant
Regional Marketing	x			Borough Administration, Business Improvement District, Business Owners, Municipalities with Common Marketing Interests
Statement of Principles	x			Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Business Improvement District, Business Owners/Tenants, Residents, Consultant
Historic, Environmental, and Cultural Tourism Opportunities		x		Borough Administration, Business Improvement District, Borough Green Team, Washington Historical Society, Highlands Council
Pursue Designation/Membership in National, State, or Regional Downtown Programs (ex: Main Street America)			x	Borough Officials/Administration
Community Building & Business Support				
Action	Phase			Key Stakeholders
	I	II	III	
Expanded Community Programming (with emphasis on expanded timing and Borough history/culture)	x			Borough Administration, Business Improvement District
Community-Centric Art Initiatives (i.e. painted benches, murals, etc.)	x			Borough Administration, Business Improvement District, Washington Historical Society, Business Owners/Tenants, Residents, Artists
Comprehensive Business "How To" Manual	x			Borough Administration, Business Improvement District, Business Owners/Tenants, Business Consultant
Strengthen Façade Improvement Program (and pursue additional business support opportunities such as lease assistance)	x			Borough Officials/Administration, Business Improvement District, Business Tenants/Owners, State and Regional Economic Agencies
Youth Opportunities/School Partnerships (to activate public spaces downtown)	x			Borough Administration, Business Improvement District, Schools, Youth Programs, Students
Food Truck/Outdoor Vendor Opportunities	x			Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Business Improvement District, Business Tenants/Owners
Start-Up Spaces for Entrepreneurs and Business Owners		x		Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Business Improvement District, Business Tenants/Owners, State and Regional Economic Agencies, Developers

Circulation & Streetscape Improvements				
Action	Phase			Key Stakeholders
	I	II	III	
Necessary Upgrades to Pedestrian Infrastructure/Amenities (lighting, wayfinding signage, trash cans, etc.)	x			Borough Officials/Administration, Business Improvement District, Business Tenants/ Owners, Artists, NJTPA
Incorporate Green Infrastructure	x			Borough Administration, Business Improvement District, Borough Green Team, Highlands Council, Engineering/Planning Consultant
Tree Replacement Program		x		Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Business Improvement District, Borough Green Team, Engineering/Planning Consultant
Interactive/Playful Pedestrian Infrastructure (workout equipment, educational signs, etc.)		x		Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Business Improvement District, Washington Historical Society
Public Art Program (with an emphasis on downtown gateways)		x		Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Business Improvement District, Washington Historical Society, Business Tenants/Owners, Residents, Artists
Explore Opportunities to Reroute Freight Traffic Away from Downtown		x		Borough Officials/Administration, Warren County, NJDOT, NJTPA
Implement Pedestrian/Bicyclist Safety Measures (flashing signals at crosswalks, bike lanes, etc.)		x		Borough Officials/Administration, NJDOT, Engineering/Planning Consultant, NJTPA
Pursue Discussions with County Regarding Railroad Culvert Maintenance and Safety		x		Borough Officials/Administration, Warren County, NJDOT, Railroad Companies
Multimodal Recreational Trail			x	Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Borough Green Team, Highlands Council, Neighboring Municipalities, Residents, Engineering/Planning Consultant, NJTPA
Pedestrian Improvements at Route 57/31 and Along Route 31 (to connect east side of Borough with commercial activity and promote additional commerce east of the railroad tracks)			x	Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, NJDOT, Borough Green Team, Business Tenants/Owners, Residents, Developers, Engineering/Planning Consultant, NJTPA
Zoning, Land Use, & Design Standards				
Action	Phase			Key Stakeholders
	I	II	III	
Ordinance Revisions	x			Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Engineering/Planning Consultant
Design Standards	x			Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Business Improvement District, Planning Consultant

Revitalization, Redevelopment, & Rehabilitation				
Action	Phase			Key Stakeholders
	I	II	III	
Storefront Activation Programs (vacant and occupied)	x			Borough Administration, Business Improvement District, Washington Historical Society, Property Owners, Business Tenants/Owners, Residents, Artists
Pursue Area in Need of Rehabilitation Designation throughout Borough	x			Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Property Owners, Business Tenants/Owners, Residents, Planning Consultant
Compile Package of Resources to Incentivize Development and Rehabilitation	x			Borough Officials/Administration, Business Improvement District, State and Regional Economic Agencies, Planning Consultant
Pursue Desired Development and Infrastructure Improvements (with an emphasis on desired uses, public spaces, community training, jobs, etc.)		x	x	Borough Officials/Administration, State and Regional Economic Agencies, Developers, Employers, Property Owners, Business Tenants/Owners, Residents
Create Public “Third Spaces” for Residents and Visitors (outdoor eating spaces, butterfly gardens, plazas, etc.)			x	Borough Officials/Administration, Land Use Board, Business Improvement District, Washington Historical Society, Borough Green Team, Property Owners, Business Tenants/Owners, Residents, Developers

## Targeted Sites for Redevelopment

The Borough has a number of sites that, upon preliminary observation, show characteristics that suggest they could potentially benefit from redevelopment or rehabilitation. The particular sites identified below have been categorized by this Plan as “targeted sites for redevelopment” due to their redevelopment and rehabilitation potential, strategic location, and their suspected ability to help the Borough strengthen its commercial corridors and achieve its economic goals. These sites have been separated out by those located near the downtown gateways at the intersections of (a) Route 57 and Route 31 and (b) Route 57 and North/South Lincoln Avenue, and those located elsewhere.

### Downtown Gateway Properties

**143-153 East Washington Avenue (Block 81, Lot 8)** is located in the Washington Downtown Redevelopment Area on the southwest corner of the intersection at Route 57 and Route 31. The property was previously developed with a gas station, which has since been demolished and the property remains undeveloped. It is recommended that the Borough pursue redevelopment opportunities on this property that reflect one or more of the desired uses identified earlier in this Plan. Emphasis should be placed on ensuring that any new development adheres closely to the design standards and vision set forth in the Washington Downtown Redevelopment Plan, with an overarching goal of creating pedestrian-scaled activity at the street level and creating a welcoming, publicly accessible streetscape.

**165 East Washington Avenue (Block 80, Lot 2) and 6 Route 31 (Block 80, Lots 1, 1.01, & 2.01)** are located in the Washington Downtown Redevelopment Area on the southeast corner of the intersection at Route 57 and Route 31, and are developed with the vacant historic Washington Theatre and the Washington Diner, respectively. The Washington Theatre has been in a state of disrepair since the late 1990s, while the Washington Diner is currently operational. Due to the configuration of the developments, the parking area for the Diner directly abuts Route 57 and Route 31, which actively does not align with the goals and design standards set forth in the Washington Downtown Redevelopment Plan. This Plan recommends that the Borough consider both sites for potential redevelopment opportunities, especially those that would create public space and activate the corner as part of an inviting and vibrant Downtown Gateway.

### Other Properties

**33 West Washington Avenue (Block 95, Lots 3 & 4)** is located in the Downtown Redevelopment Area and was previously granted approval in 2013 for the construction of a mixed-use development with storefronts on the ground floor with residential above (including affordable units), referred to as the “Towne Center” project. The property remains to be developed, as the project has stalled with the developer. It is recommended that the Borough continue pursuing discussions and negotiations with



Top: Historic Washington Theatre  
 Middle: Washington Diner parking lot  
 Bottom: Property slated for “Towne Center” development

the current property owner regarding its development. This property would be ideal for a compact, mixed-use development similar to what was previously approved, with a focus on providing ground floor space with the capacity for at least one commercial kitchen and a mix of market-rate and affordable housing units on the upper floors. A ground-floor coworking space could also be a beneficial use on this property. Further, outdoor space fronting Route 57 should be reserved for a plaza to support outdoor dining, landscaping, and public seating amongst other elements.

**125 Taylor Street (Block 35, Lot 15)** is located in the northern portion of the Borough and is developed with an abandoned factory, previously known as the Vikon Tile Factory. This property has frontage on Taylor Street, which is primarily residential in nature. Otherwise, it is surrounded by factory uses to the north and northwest. It is recommended that the Borough consider pursuing the redevelopment of this site, with emphasis on a use that would not exacerbate traffic in the area. Incorporating a passive recreational use on this property could be beneficial for the Borough, particularly as it begins identifying potential sites to connect via a multimodal recreational path. Although a recreational area is not necessarily economic in use, it can provide an additional reason for visitors to come to the Borough and, as a result, patronize businesses in the nearby Downtown.

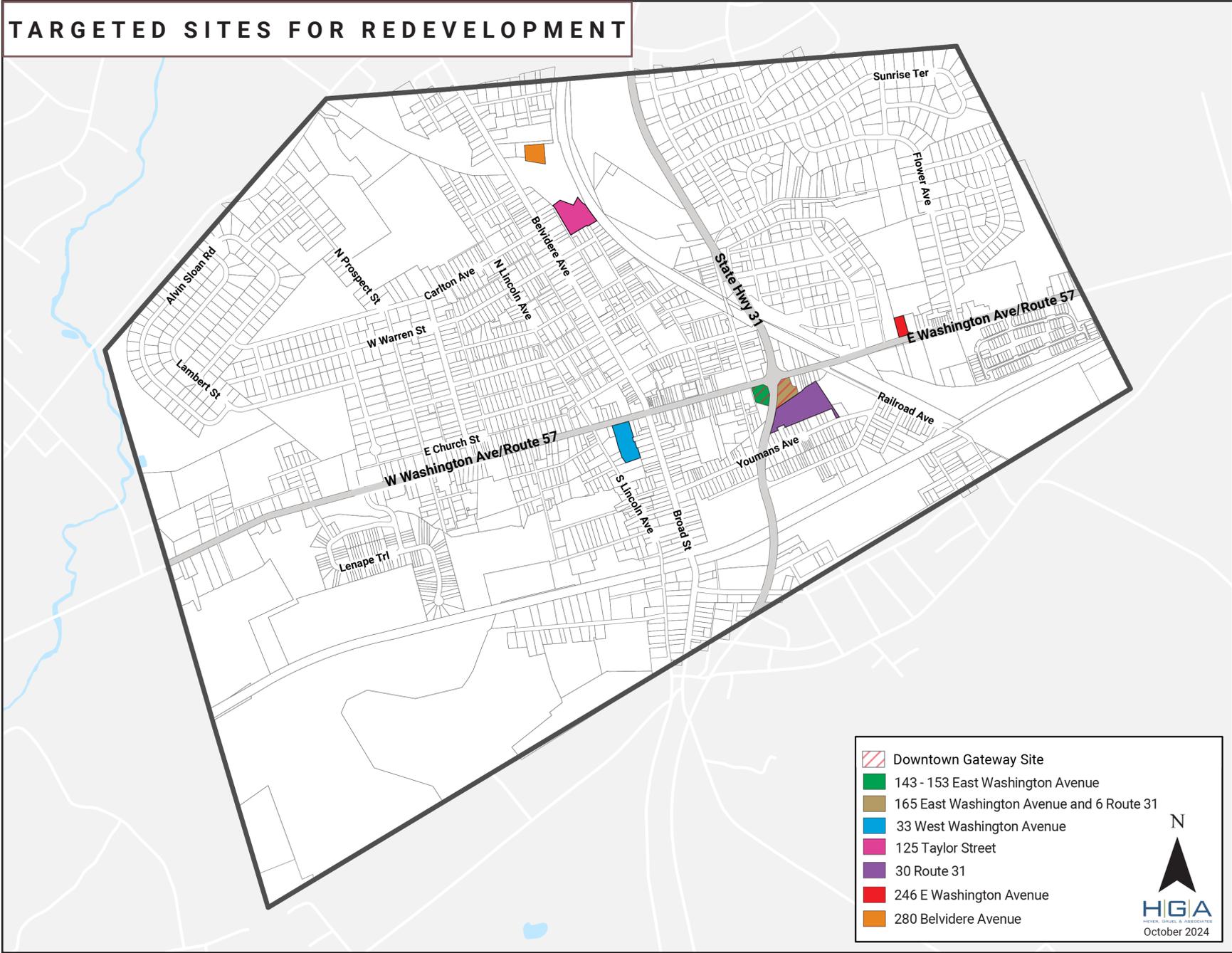
**280 Belvidere Avenue (Block 35, Lot 45)** is located just north of the Vikon Tile Factory property mentioned above and was previously home to the Turbine Alloy Corporation. While the property has been sitting vacant for over 30 years, the Borough passed a resolution in September 2002 instituting an In Rem Foreclosure action on the property for a lapse in property tax payments. In the time since, there appears to have been no efforts to redevelop the site ever after the roof of the building on the property collapsed in the early 2000's. The site has been identified as a site with active contamination and could benefit from remediation and redevelopment efforts that activate the site with a desired and appropriate use.

**30 Route 31 (Block 80, Lot 13)**, which was most recently developed as a Family Dollar site, is a vacant property located just outside of the Washington Downtown Redevelopment Area. The property is developed with an existing commercial building and a spacious paved parking area that appears to presently be used for vehicular storage. Due to the size of the property and existing building, this property would be ideal for a food store use, such as a specialty grocer. Any redevelopment on this property should be associated with sustainable practices such as green infrastructure, enhanced landscaping, and pedestrian circulation improvements.

**246 E Washington Avenue (Block 70, Lot 1)** is located east of the railroad culvert that separates portions of the Borough from Downtown Washington. The property is developed with an abandoned building that appears to be in a state of significant disrepair and is directly across the street from viable businesses that were opened in recent years. It is recommended that the Borough pursue redevelopment opportunities for this property, emphasizing a commercial use that is desired by the community and is complimentary to other specialty businesses in the area.



Top: Vacant Previous Family Dollar site  
Bottom: Abandoned Vikon Tile Factory / Source: NJ.com<sup>12</sup>



## Best Practices

### Hunterdon County Beer Trail

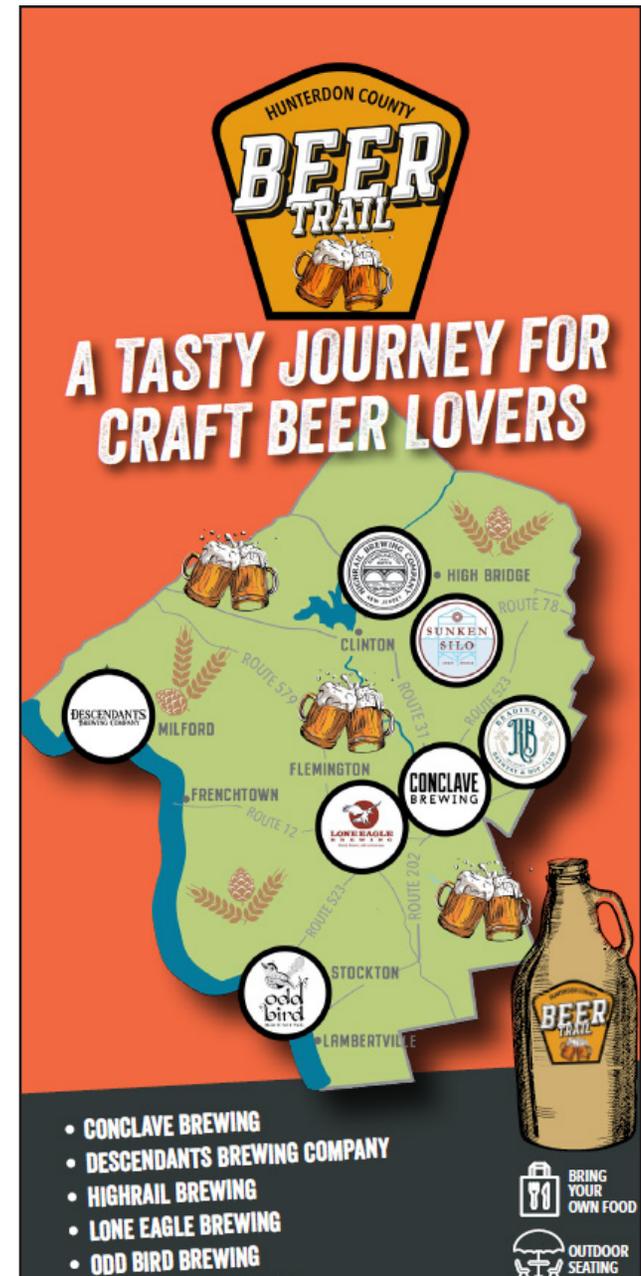
Hunterdon County maintains a dedicated website and map of eight of the County's breweries, which it refers to as the "Hunterdon Beer Trail." The County offers seasonal brewery passports, which incentivize patrons to visit each brewery location by a certain date in order to receive a prize. This endeavor provides a great example of the possibilities that regional marketing provides. Because these brewery locations are spread out throughout the County, the passport provides destinations for patrons to visit in towns that they may otherwise not travel to. In theory, this fosters further economic activity in the areas surrounding the breweries.

### New Jersey American Water Company Hopeworks Partnership

For nearly a decade, the New Jersey American Water Company (NJAWC) has partnered with the workforce training organization Hopeworks to provide young adults with training on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) projects. A vast majority of the participants in this program went on to obtain a college degree and secure permanent careers in the field, including some who now are employed with NJAWC. This program provides a prime example of the benefits that private companies can bring to the general workforce through career-readiness programs. In thinking about future developments in Washington, the Borough should prioritize organizations that are willing to provide programs similarly designed to provide training and employment opportunities within the community.

### Sayreville Bombers Beyond Cafe

The Borough of Sayreville's (Middlesex County) School District formed its "Bombers Beyond" career-readiness program in 2019 for young adult students with disabilities who are transitioning out of high school. In January 2023, the District subsequently opened its pupil-run Bombers Beyond Café location in an available commercial unit along the Borough's Main Street to provide program participants with life skills, work experience, and job readiness within their community. This program provides a prime example of the types of partnerships that can potentially be established between the Borough, Business Improvement District, school district, and other youth programs to activate underutilized commercial units or public spaces for permanent or temporary programs that allow students to gain career and entrepreneurial skills.



*Hunterdon County Beer Trail Promotional Materials  
Source: Explore Hunterdon<sup>13</sup>*

## Main Street Medford Signage

Throughout the public outreach process of this Plan, business owners in Washington Borough expressed a desire to retain a sense of uniqueness and personalization in their signage, outdoor displays, etc. as compared to a totally uniform approach. Businesses along Main Street in Medford (Burlington County) provide a prime example of how this uniqueness can be achieved on a business-to-business basis while also working within consistent design parameters. In the example photo below, the pet shop “Pride Paws” has a bone-shaped hanging sign, a bone-shaped bench, and a small doghouse with a dog water bowl. While these pedestrian amenities are unique to the business, they also reflect the general design of other amenities in the area. For example, many of the stores in this area have hanging, wooden decorative signs in lieu of wall signs or window signs.

## Haddonfield Storefront Activation

The Borough of Haddonfield’s (Camden County) business improvement district is managed by Partnership for Haddonfield (PFH). PFH encourages active storefront designs through the implementation of themed window display contests throughout the year. Residents and business patrons are encouraged to vote for their favorite display, with the possibility of winning a prize in return. Not only does this initiative create a vibrant and pedestrian-centric streetscape, but it also encourages people to visit the downtown area and support local businesses.



Left: Pride Paws pet shop on Main Street in Medford, NJ provides an example of customized signage and pedestrian amenities

Right: Duffy's Fine Chocolate in Haddonfield, NJ participates in the Borough's seasonal window display contest in 2023 / Source: Downtown Haddonfield<sup>14</sup>

## "Camden is... Bright Not Blight" Civic Art Project

In 2020, the City of Camden (Camden County) received funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies as a recipient of the Public Art Challenge grant. As a result, Camden-based photographer Erik James Montgomery was one of eight artists selected by the City to lead a public art project with the goal of transforming illegal dump sites in the Camden through the use of creative placemaking. In his project "Camden Is... Bright Not Blight," Montgomery photographed 100 Camden residents and asked them to complete the phrase "Camden Is...". These portraits and phrases were then printed as 30" x 40" banners and hung on vacant properties. Throughout the process, Montgomery implemented community-centric practices that represented and engaged residents. This project is a prime example of the power of community-led civic art projects, and the powerful impact they can have in both visually transforming a community and giving residents a sense of engagement and representation in the process.

## Interactive Public Art

Interactive public art is a great tool for engaging pedestrians, encouraging play, and providing educational opportunities. An example of interactive public art is Jenny Kendler's Sculpture--->Garden, which is a biodegradable sculpture project intended to decompose overtime and seed the land upon which it is placed. This project provides viewers with a demonstration of the power of the elements and the cycle of nature. Because it is time-based, the piece is constantly devolving and provides viewers with a fresh perspective of the sculpture upon each visit. A public art project such as this encourages repeat visitors and provides educational and environmental value. Another example that is more direct in its interactivity is Alfons Van Leggelo's Dance Chimes, a movement-based musical artwork. The piece, which is installed at ground level, is activated when someone steps or jumps on the tiles and, as a result, sounds musical bells built into the artwork. This piece is designed to foster movement evoke a sense of play and wonder. Hundreds of Dance Chimes pieces have been installed around the world, including at Little Island in Manhattan, NY.



One of Erik James Montgomery's "Camden Is... Bright Not Blight" project installations  
Source: Erik James Montgomery Foundation<sup>15</sup>



Left: Jenny Kendler's Sculpture--->Garden / Source: Jenny Kendler<sup>16</sup>  
Right: Alfons Van Leggelo's Dance Chimes / Source: Alfons Van Leggelo<sup>17</sup>

## Programs, Funding, & Incentives

The list below represents resources that could be potentially leveraged by the Borough or its business community as it works towards the goals and actions set forth in this Plan. As the Borough pursues various actions in this Plan, it should consider the applicability of the resources presented below.

### National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town Grant Program

The NEA Our Town Grant program provides project-based funding to local governments in partnership with a nonprofit organization for the purpose of implementing arts and culture projects that strengthen communities. In the past, this grant program has been awarded to applicants addressing a wide range of focus areas, including health and well-being, transportation and infrastructure, public space design, and climate-related challenges, amongst others. The NEA maintains a webpage dedicated to the grant program, and offers annual cycles of the grant.

### New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA) Main Street New Jersey (MSNJ) Program

As mentioned earlier in this Plan, the NJDCA manages a certified state coordinating program of the National Trust's National Main Street Center, referred to as Main Street New Jersey (MSNJ). Under this program, qualified municipalities that undergo the application process and are recognized as a designated Main Street are exposed to free training opportunities, technical assistance, professional consultation, architectural design services, grant opportunities, and so on. For example, in the summer of 2024, designated Main Street Districts were eligible for MSNJ Transformation Grants to fund projects of up to \$150,000 regarding storefront and façade improvements, streetscape improvements, courtyard and alleyway improvements, public art, placemaking, operational assistance, and marketing assistance. Washington Borough could benefit both in the short and long term by becoming designated under this program.

### New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Local Aid Resource Center

The NJDOT Local Aid Resource Center is an online resource that outlines a wide range of funding for local municipalities to pursue transportation-related projects, including: the Local Aid Infrastructure Fund, which provides funding to address emergency improvements such as guide rail replacements; Municipal Aid Program, which offers competitive funding for projects such as bikeways, pedestrian safety, and quality of life initiatives related to beautification, environmental mitigation, economic development, and historic preservation; and the Bikeway Grant Program, which provides funding to create new bikeways or bike lanes, implement bikeway safety measures, connect bikeways to regional systems, and more.



Top: Iconic Washington Diner sign  
Bottom: Church in Downtown Washington

## New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Grants, Financing, and Incentives

The NJEDA offers a wide range of grant funding at both the municipal and business level. Some of the particular resources that may be useful for the Borough and its business community include: the Local Property Acquisition Grant Program, which provides municipalities with grant funding to acquire property in order to facilitate and enable future redevelopment as part of local economic development priorities; Small Business Improvement Grant, which provides businesses with reimbursements of up to \$50,000 for costs associated with building improvements; New Jersey Asset Activation Planning Grant, which provides public, private, and non-profit entities with funding to pursue projects that activate under-utilized public assets; the Emerging Developers Grant Program, which supports up to 50% of pre-development soft costs for development entities with a limited portfolio of commercial/mixed-use projects; NJ Ignite, which provides emerging businesses with rent support grants of up to 6 months.

Additionally, the NJEDA offers a wide range of financing and incentive programs, including: the Angel Investor Tax Credit Program, which provides refundable tax credits against New Jersey corporation business or gross income tax for a qualified investment in an emerging technology business in New Jersey; the NJ CoVest Fund, which provides seed funding for technology and life science companies in New Jersey; the NJ Accelerate program, which actively encourages New Jersey entrepreneurs to participate in high-quality accelerator programs; the New Jersey Clean Energy Loans program, which provides loans to support clean energy projects pursued by small businesses and start-ups; and the Historic Property Reinvestment Program, which provides tax credits to support the rehabilitation of identified historic properties. These programs could potentially be leveraged by companies and investors to spur new development in the Borough centered around job creation in emerging fields, as well as the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of historic properties that retain the Borough's historic character.

The NJEDA website includes a comprehensive list of active grant, financing, and incentive programs, which expand far beyond those listed here.

## New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Programs

The NJDEP offers a range of environmental-focused funding programs. One of these is the NJ Trails Program, which is a subset of the State's Green Acres Program but provides funding that is specifically tailored to the creation, maintenance, or activation of recreational trails. This program may be beneficial for the Borough if and when it begins to pursue the implementation of a multimodal path connecting the downtown with the Borough's key sites as well as the region as a whole.



Top: Downtown Denville is a Main Street New Jersey Accredited Community / Source: Downtown Denville<sup>18</sup>  
Bottom: The Frelinghuysen Forest Preserve in Warren County received NJ Trails funding in 2015 / Source: Frelinghuysen Township<sup>19</sup>

## North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) Municipal Programs

NJTPA provides a diverse selection of resources for municipalities including free technical assistance, federal grant application assistance, materials, etc. In particular, the Borough could potentially benefit from NJTPA's following programs: Complete Streets Technical Assistance, which can address actions such as bicycle assessments, demonstration projects, and conceptual renderings visualizing improvements; Complete Streets Demonstration Library, which lends out materials for demonstrations of safety, placemaking, and traffic calming features; Planning for Emerging Centers technical assistance, which can help a municipality analyze and plan for multimodal transportation; and Vibrant Places Program, which provides technical assistance for placemaking projects rooted in arts, culture, and community assets to strengthen the local economy. NJTPA maintains a page on its website that outlines these programs.

## UCEDC Resources for Small Business

UCEDC is a nonprofit organization that serves the entire State of New Jersey through the provision of loans, training, and other resources for small business owners throughout the state. The Borough should consider educating local businesses about these available resources.

## United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Business Programs

The USDA offers a range of rural development business programs that the Borough may qualify for, including: the Rural Business Development Grant, which provides technical assistance and training for small rural businesses; the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant, which funds rural projects through local utility organizations and uses the utility organizations as an intermediary to pass funds onto local businesses with the goal of creating and retaining employment in the area; the Strategic Economic and Community Development Program, which provides funds to support projects that implement strategic community investment plans; and more. The USDA maintains a comprehensive list on its website of current opportunities.

## Warren County Resources

Warren County offers a handful of supportive funds for its municipalities. One of these programs, the Open Space Recreation, Farmland, and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, offers funding to municipalities within the County to pursue projects related to the acquisition and maintenance of land for recreation and conservation purposes as well as the acquisition and preservation of historic properties, structures, facilities sites, areas, and objects. Additionally, the County offers a County History Partnership Program (CHPP) Grant, which supports existing

and emerging history organizations—like the Washington Historical Society—to support historical efforts. The County maintains pages on its website dedicated to presenting information on these programs, including the application process and the committee that oversees it. The Borough could potentially leverage these funds to support efforts to create a multimodal path, preserve any historic structures in need of attention, and implement historic signage or other related historic efforts throughout the Borough.

## Workforce Development Board of Northwest New Jersey (WDBNNJ) Resources

The WDBNNJ is a regional entity that works across Morris, Sussex, and Warren Counties to develop strategic workforce plans that address the talent needs of the region. In addition to offering resources such as job search assistance and training development to jobseekers, WDBNNJ also offers business funding, employment training opportunities, and apprenticeship programs. As the Borough experiences redevelopment, a focus should be placed on attracting and retaining business and uses that will generate jobs; the Borough may work with local employers to encourage utilization of the resources provided by the WDBNNJ.

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