



Executive Summary

What will it take to restore economic vitality to the retail corridors of Gloucester City? We believe that the steps outlined in this report are practical measures that will revitalize the retail corridor, and restore the prominence of Gloucester City as an urban commercial center of New Jersey.

Our analysis looked at three distinct economic corridors within Gloucester City: the Broadway retail corridor, the Route 130 retail corridor, and the King Street retail corridor. Although each of these corridors offers a unique blend of characteristics and attributes, they share common challenges ranging from under-utilization of their retail assets, to a worn and tired appearance, and limited amenities.

Over the past seven months, we've used our Community Insights™ program to conduct a comprehensive analysis and assessment of each of three retail corridors. Our goal was to bring clear definition to the problems and opportunities and create a marketing focus for the city.

In conducting our analysis and assessment, we strived to give the community a complete and honest view of what Gloucester City is all about, from the lack of an appropriate retail mix, to the lingering social problems, and opportunities for economic growth and prosperity. In reaching our findings, and formulating our conclusions, we accessed a broad-range of information. For example, our analysis included in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, the assessment and evaluation of more than 150 commercial properties and retail businesses, interviews with more than 60 retailers, and primary research surveys of nearly 460 shoppers, residents and visitors.

We took all what we learned from consumers, retailers and stakeholders and merged it with economic and empirical data to develop recommendations for revitalizing the community and stimulating economic growth within the retail corridors. Our recommendations are specific to each corridor and are designed to create retail synergies based upon the unique qualities and opportunities available on each corridor.

The Broadway retail corridor will function most effectively by focusing on the everyday commerce needs of the residents of the community. We recommend the merchandising mix focus on neighborhood retail stores such as eating and drinking places, beauty and personal care, a supermarket, specialty foods, and health and medical services. We further recommend enhancing amenities in the area to include a town square where residents can relax and visit with neighbors while shopping, visiting the post office or just running errands. We believe these recommendations will help to re-establish Broadway as the center of the community and a place that local residents can truly call their own.

Our recommendations for Route 130 corridor recognize the abundance of vehicular traffic on Route 130 and other nearby highways, the opportunity to provide regional retail goods and services as a way to attract those motorists into the community, and the possibility of using wayfinding to redirect them to the King Street retail corridor. Our recommendations include regional and convenience retail offerings such as automotive-related and home-and-garden-related uses, home furnishings and design décor, and even a movie theater.



With respect to King Street, we believe that its natural features and amenities are unequalled in any other area of the community as well as most areas of the region. We further believe that the unique combination of the waterfront, park, marina, restaurants, shops and open space provide the necessary foundation for creating a festival retail and entertainment destination. We recommend expanding the King Street retail corridor to include access to Freedom Pier and to extend the retail corridor south along Water Street and Jersey Avenue to create a memorable and desirable destination for local residents and regional visitors alike. Moreover, we recommend capitalizing upon the area's concentration of Irish ancestry to create an Irish-themed village that will create a truly unique point of differentiation for the corridor.

The recommended retail mix for this corridor includes places to eat and drink, with an emphasis on outdoor dining and sidewalk cafes, and an eclectic mix of specialty food and specialty retail stores, mingled with outdoor activities and events, live performing arts venues, nightclubs and comedy clubs. The area will be anchored by a community and recreation center, in the former Coast Guard facility, along with additional amenities including bike and walking paths, skating rinks, benches, and enhanced lighting.

Bringing this concept to reality will require more than just an active retail recruitment effort. It will require open communications and a cooperative effort on the part of government, retailers, property owners and residents. During the course of our analysis and assessment we have been told repeatedly of the less than harmonious relationship between the various segments of the local society. Yet despite this discord, we have also heard of the dreams and hopes that everyone shares for restoring Gloucester City to its former economic commitment. Our hope is that this document can serve to chart the course for that economic rebirth.