



Improving One Community at a Time

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Visioning Process Key to Gloucester County's Future



To assist Gloucester County in responding to the tremendous growth the county has experienced in the last 30 years, DVRPC awarded the Gloucester County Planning Department a \$125,000 TCDI grant to complete and update the County Master Plan – *A Vision for the New Millennium* (herein referred to as Millennium Plan). The Millennium Plan will provide a Unified Land Use and Circulation Element that balances travel, directs investments, and conserves natural resources for future generations and recognizes the basic connection between land use and circulation as integral to future development.

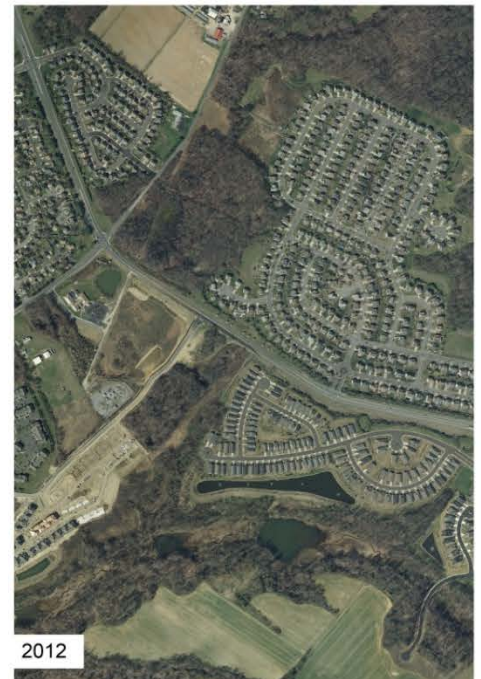
Located on the southern edge of the DVRPC region, Gloucester County includes 24 municipalities with an approximate population of 288,000, an increase of 30% since 1980. By 2010, Gloucester County had approximately 68,308 acres of developed land, an increase of over 50% since 1980, which puts a tremendous strain on the existing transportation network. The Millennium Plan will provide a new direction for future growth that will better coordinate land use planning with transportation infrastructure.

The development of the Millennium Plan was kicked off with a thorough visioning process by County officials and DVRPC staff. Extensive outreach and marketing was used to promote *gc2040*, the online public survey for residents, businesses, visitors, and other interested stakeholders. While the online survey was used to gauge opinions, County officials and DVRPC staff also met with over 40 different stakeholder groups attending various municipal and county events. *gc2040* advertisements were placed on various websites, and highlighted in several newsletters. Open for over 8 weeks, the *gc2040* survey garnered over 2,000 responses. Survey topics included geographic location, land development patterns, housing density and type, infrastructure improvements, farmland and open space, and future transit options. The online survey results will be compiled to develop a vision statement, which will be part of the next phase of public outreach and plan development.

Woolwich Township



1980



2012

Shown above are aeriels of Woolwich Township from 1980 and 2012. Illustrated is the sprawl type of development that has occurred throughout Gloucester County. This new visioning process and Master Plan update will ensure a more sustainable development pattern for the county. *Photo Source: DVRPC 1980, NJOIT, 2012.*

SPOTLIGHT ON GLASSBORO

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Located at the corner of Whitney Avenue and Oakwood Avenue, Glassboro’s historic train station is a landmark property serving as an entryway to the downtown business center. Completed in 1860, the railroad moved manufacturing products, particularly glassware, between Glassboro and Millville, New Jersey. The popularity of rail travel increased and eventually the line was bought by the Pennsylvania Railroad System, which increased the radius of places that Glassborites were able to reach.

The 1,300 square foot train station building had been vacant since 1971 and fallen into a state of disrepair. In 2004, DVRPC awarded Glassboro a TCDI grant for \$100,000 to perform building analysis and conceptual design of the train station. The analysis was done by the team of DPK/AIA, Urban Engineers, and Envision Consultants. A final report was released in 2006 that included a cost estimate for each of the critical, noncritical, and life safety repairs. While new rail service is under study by DRPA to Glassboro from Camden, this stop will not be used as an operational part of the new proposed railway. To provide the welcoming entryway the Borough would like to provide, the station will be used as a welcome center, town museum, and public meeting space.

The Glassboro Historic Commission, Glassboro Economic Development Office, and the Greater Glassboro Group have joined forces to ensure that the site is renovated and the landmark preserved.



Before photo of the Glassboro Train Station. Photo credit: Tim Hawk/South Jersey Times.



After photo of the Historic Glassboro Train Station. Source: DVRPC, 2015.

Goals & Recommendations

Restoration experts conducted a thorough analysis of the existing interior and exterior structure. Recommendations fell into three categories based on the timeframe: life safety (immediate repairs), critical repairs (referring to the stabilization of the building), and noncritical repairs (referring to the function of the building). All structural recommendations were based on the project’s goals:

- ◆ Keep historical value while staying consistent with original materials from the 1880’s;
- ◆ Bring the station up to date with current building codes and ADA compliance; and
- ◆ Boost the area’s economy by helping raise property values and adding another destination for visitors.

Implementation

In 2010, Glassboro received a \$1.1 million grant from the Transportation Enhancement Program to complete the exterior renovation of the train station. Construction was delayed but the restoration was completed in 2013.

Glassboro’s historic train station was the only New Jersey site awarded a 2014 Preservation Achievement Grand Jury Award from the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia. The Alliance’s Achievement Awards celebrates organizations, businesses, and projects that exemplify outstanding achievement in preserving our region’s historic assets.

SPOTLIGHT ON PITMAN

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | REVITALIZATION



Rendering of Holly Avenue and the proposed rail station with improved pedestrian access. Source: Uptown Pitman Revitalization Plan.

Located 17 miles southeast of Philadelphia and one mile north of Rowan University in Glassboro, Pitman has seen signs of renewed interest and development through the opening of some new businesses in recent years. This is a reflection of the larger nationwide trend of reinvestment in traditional core areas – but even so

Pitman continues to struggle to rejuvenate its central business district. With support of a \$75,000 TCDI grant, Land Dimensions, with assistance from the Borough, developed the *Uptown Pitman Revitalization Plan*, which recommends land use, economic development, and marketing strategies. The target area of this report is the physical and commercial center of Pitman, bounded by the properties fronting on Broadway,



Rendering of new marketing brand for downtown Pitman used on wayfinding signs. Source: W Design, 2010.

Holly, Commerce, and W. Jersey Avenues. The strategies include building façade improvements along Holly Avenue, streetscape and pedestrian improvements, enhanced recreational opportunities,

improved access and circulation, planning for future rail service, and developing a marketing strategy. Secondary to the *Uptown Pitman Revitalization Plan*, the Borough worked with a professional marketing agency to develop a new brand for the downtown. Extensive outreach was provided through public meetings and surveys. The brand chosen, *Uptown Pitman*, reflects the architecture of the downtown district as well as the personality of Pitman residents. It strives to build on Pitman’s historic nature, showcase the eateries in the downtown, position Pitman as a go-to destination, and preserve Pitman’s current retailers while reaching out to new markets.

SPOTLIGHT ON SWEDESBORO

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | MARKETING

In 2010, the Borough of Swedesboro received a \$50,000 TCDI grant to undertake a marketing strategy for the downtown business district. Developed by Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), the strategy outlines ways to bring more desired business to the borough while keeping its historic context. Built into the marketing strategy is a circulation



Quaint signage is visible in front of businesses along Kings Highway in downtown Swedesboro. Source: DVRPC, 2006.

plan for parking as well as future bike and car share opportunities for residents commuting to Philadelphia or nearby. Swedesboro is small in size, but approximately 12,840 employees work within 3 miles of the downtown. The marketing strategy recommends focusing on this daytime population in and around the downtown as well as the student population at nearby Rowan University, as they are only 20 minutes away. To gauge the opinions of shoppers and residents, SAG conducted a survey to evaluate the types of activities residents wanted to see in the downtown. The results indicated that Swedesboro should be more family-oriented, offer more Saturday morning errand-type services, have more outdoor gathering and dining spaces, bring in more upscale shops, and create a 24-hour environment. The strategy also highlighted opportunity areas for the borough to create outdoor dining spaces. Some vacant spaces are available in the downtown that could

support additional residences, retail, and office space.



Open space next to Restaurant Tavro 13 is an opportunity to add outdoor dining space to downtown Swedesboro. Source: Central Downtown Business Strategy, SAG, 2013.

HOW DVRPC PROMOTES LIVABILITY



Classic Towns of Greater Philadelphia

Classic Towns is a cooperative marketing program that promotes 18 older communities as wonderful places to live, work, play, and visit. These are communities with vibrant residential neighborhoods, diverse architecture, bustling business and entertainment districts, and remarkable recreational opportunities. The Classic Towns marketing strategy includes online marketing techniques such as Google ad words (search engine optimization), Google remarketing, click-through advertisements, email marketing, social media, and online contests to engage potential homebuyers to the Greater Philadelphia region. Over 150 neighborhoods or communities are eligible for the Classic Towns marketing program based on DVRPC's Transit Score, a function of the densities of population, employment, and carless households. The program welcomes new communities on a rolling basis. Visit www.classictowns.org for additional information.



"Oxford Diner in Pink" by Dan C. won first prize in the 2015 #iloveclassictowns photo contest, which ran from February 14 – April 6. Over 550 photos were submitted via social media.

Strategies for Older Suburbs Roundtable Series



This Roundtable Series is designed by and for Greater Philadelphia's community and economic development professionals. It provides participants the opportunity to share challenges, bring good ideas, and brainstorm answers to tough questions and issues facing their communities. The Roundtable is an in-person forum that harnesses the experience of our participants to improve Greater Philadelphia's great places. Previous topics have included cooperative marketing, municipal website creation, creating a Merchants' Association, effective signage for downtowns, social media, engaging local businesses, and diversifying funding sources. To read more about these topics or learn about future roundtables, visit www.dvrpc.org/LandUse/SOS.

Municipal Outreach Program

The goal of DVRPC's Municipal Outreach program is to better equip municipalities to implement *Connections 2040 Plan for Greater Philadelphia*, DVRPC's long-range plan for a sustainable future, through smart growth plans and policies. DVRPC prepares a variety of educational materials and trainings on topics related to smart growth, transit-oriented development, and sustainable zoning, and offers technical assistance and opportunities to connect with outside partners. Visit www.dvrpc.org/MunicipalOutreach for additional information.



The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is dedicated to uniting the region's elected officials, planning professionals, and the public with a common vision of making a great region even greater. Shaping the way we live, work, play, DVRPC builds consensus on improving transportation, promoting smart growth, protecting the environment, and enhancing the economy. We serve a diverse region of nine counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer in New Jersey. DVRPC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Greater Philadelphia Region — leading the way to a better future.

DVRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. DVRPC's website (www.dvrpc.org) may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats, if requested. For more information, please call (215) 238-2871.

Abstract: *Improving One Community at a Time* is a newsletter that highlights DVRPC's livability grant program, the Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI). Each newsletter provides information on how DVRPC's investment has impacted the region and reviews a specific county and project.

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