

Morris Township EDAC Strategic Plan

Presented to the Township Committee

July 17, 2019

Preface: The Strategic Plan Should

- Incorporate Morris Township's Master Plan and EDAC's Ordinance
- Recognize the conflict between "growth" and maintaining the preservation of large-lot single-family character of our community, and restricting further commercial development
 - *More Growth = More People*
- Acknowledge that currently the community is healthy from a fiscal and economic standpoint, but recognize challenges that need addressed to remain in this condition
- Focus on three underpinning themes to remain consistent in approach
 - Consistent, clear, transparent communication with all stakeholders
 - Leverage data and technology to understand our past decisions and build out our business case for suggestions
 - Focus on future needs of an evolving community
- Create a framework for a healthy dialogue on how to plan for the future, engage relevant stakeholders, and leverage the expertise of local partners

Master Plan Goals: Are there conflicts with growth and development?

- Goal 1: Preservation of the residential character of the community
- Goal 4: Maintenance of existing commercial areas and restriction on new commercial development

Summary of EDAC's Responsibilities

- A. **Monitor current state of economy & Explore** ways to stimulate growth and Development
- B. **Promoting and seeking businesses**
- C. Create a positive business environment, **Develop a strategic plan consistent with Master Plan and Make recommendations for changing Master Plan**
- D. Determine new modes of transit or more efficient transportation infrastructure
- E. **Consulting/communicating with Township Committee, Planning Board & Board of Adjustment concerning land use issues that impact development, growth and consumer convenience. This may include recommendations on land use and zoning that could impact economic growth**
- F. **Designing marketing material that promote the economic and business location advantages, land development opportunities and/or property leasing availability within the Township that make it a desirable place to locate**
- G. Identify/classify all improved and unimproved commercial/industrial lands
- H. **Create information guide to assist businesses interested in relocating to Morris Township**
- I. **Assisting Township's Department of Administration in the research and preparation of applications for grants or funding which fosters economic growth**
- J. Other tasks assigned by governing body
- K. Prepare annual report

Master Plan recognizes trends that challenge Morris Township's future

- Housing preferences (from Master Plan page 45)
 - Baby boomers and millennials housing preferences moving from large single-lot developments. Looking for access to public transit and a “have a more communal feel” including sidewalks and easy drive or walk to shopping and other services.
- Exodus of Major Corporations and Businesses (Master Plan page 45)
 - “Suburban corporate headquarters campuses epitomized corporate America in the last quarter of the 20th century.”
 - “many companies are discovering the drawbacks associated with hard-to-get-to headquarters which limit the talent pool ...”
 - “Another trend working against the traditional corporate campus is the decentralization of many companies that once concentrated large numbers of workers at a single location... .”
 - “As a result, with few exceptions, corporate workforces have been contracting rather than expanding. This makes it difficult for existing corporate office parks to find new occupants for complexes built to the specifications of a single company. For many companies, it is also now more efficient and inexpensive to tenant space in new buildings built by others rather than invest money retrofitting older buildings.”

Other Trends to Monitor

- Aging population
- Exodus from NJ?
- Outsourcing of white collar jobs
- Move towards shared office space ... WeWorks
- Fast growth sectors of the economy

Vision & Mission: “Promote the Present, Anticipate the Future”

- Vision Statement:
“Helping to ensure that Morris Township remains a vibrant and thriving multi-generational community”
- Mission Statement: *“Promote the Present, Anticipate the Future”*
 - Promote Morris Township to home-buyers and businesses by a constant 360 degree analysis of our community and its surroundings
 - Anticipate what actions are needed to maintain the competitive advantage in attracting employers and new residents to our community

EDAC's Objectives and Targets: Measurement and timeframe for success?

- Maintain a high occupancy rate in commercial offices
- Improve Morris Township's brand as a place live, work, play and visit
- Keep the Township ahead of tomorrow in terms of evolving demand for commercial office space and residential living
- Leverage infrastructure technology to assist current residents and anticipate future needs
- Reduce traffic issues

EDAC's Strategies: Communicate, Improve Data and Research

- Market Morris Township to individuals and businesses
- Improve communication between
 - EDAC and the Township Committee, Planning Board, and Board of Adjustment
 - EDAC and other Township Committees and Boards
 - EDAC and Morris County EDC

.... To define overlapping interests and prioritize goals to ensure they are tangible and achievable
- Collect and collate metrics to understand problems and progress
 - Evaluate data at hand
 - Define additional data that collection requirements and methods across employers and workforces, both economic and quality of life
 - Share high level analysis and trends with Morris Township residents to put them in the know
- Research what it takes to stay competitive
 - What conditions attract new employers?
 - Are the trends in millennial housing demand permanent?
 - What are the industries of the future?
 - Which larger secular trends can we address?
 - Can we improve traffic situation?

Action Plans: What are we going to do?

- We Must:
 - Create a consistent framework for outreach to businesses and owners of commercial real estate
 - Partner with other committees and board to identify synergistic efforts and regularly communicate updates to them
 - Data collection and analysis
- We Could:
 - Research and advise on innovative approaches to redeveloping outdated and underutilized commercial spaces – Co-working spaces and Surban concepts
 - Identify and target 21st century growth industries
 - Create a brand for Morris Township
 - Collaborate with other committees and organizations to help create integrated historical experience
 - Explore programs to build out electric vehicle charging stations
 - Help research innovative ideas to reduce traffic issues

Action Plans: Possible actions that are aligned to MP goals

This portfolio is offered with the expectation that it will be refined and prioritized by the entire EDAC membership

Goals from original MP	EDAC actions to consider
Preserve...open space character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain as a high priority, an integrating QoL goal
Minimize...detrimental impact of pollution/noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in electric vehicle charging infrastructure at municipal/HOA/ corporate vehicle locations • Revisit cycling safety, arterial road width, quality of pavement in collaboration with Morristown
Preserve and enhance historic and recreational sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an integrated “historic experience” for residents and visitors, linking Township, Morristown and other nearby historic sites
Multi family in carefully selected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mt Laurel decisions and development have largely charted this course.
Maintain existing commercial but restrict new development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a Surban blueprint, deploy as space utilization / change presents future opportunities • Identify potential co-work and startup incubation commercial space • Target 21st century growth industries for relocation
Through and local traffic separated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop accurate data modeling correlating office space occupancy to work-day traffic growth, avoiding/improving upon current traffic • Evaluate multiple Transportation (Driving) Demand Management (TDM) programs • Lead regional effort on large scale traffic solutions (e.g. Route 24/Columbia/Park)

We Must: Consistently outreach to businesses, property owners and tenants

Draft EDAC narrative

As it currently stands Morris Township has very low commercial vacancy rate but this cannot be relied upon to the future state.

- A concerted effort to build relationship with the following should be pursued to understand currents, future expectations and anticipate change industry trends:
 - Asset Owners
 - Current Tenants
 - Property Managers
 - Leasing Agents/Brokers
- As workplace needs continue to change and a new generation of worker will be occupying the spaces, the Township needs to proactively support these needs and understand total impact

We must undertake a separate outreach to local business owners

Potential EDAC actions:

- Create regular points of contacts with:
 - Local business owners to understand needs and concerns
 - Commercial property owners and tenants
- Create better information guide for Morris Township highlighting:
 - Excellent schools
 - Open spaces
 - Access to public transit
 - Historic significance of the Township
 - Access to state of the art Medical Care

We Must: Develop accurate data modeling

Additional Township Partners

- Township Committee
- Planning Board
- Board of Adjustment

Draft EDAC narrative

In a relatively short term view of development, most components (e.g. roads, office space, population) are relatively fixed. But in longer term views, as each component / variable “flexes”, understanding interactions and planning implications in a reliable, quantitative model can be valuable.

Much academic and consulting work is already being done in urban planning models. This can guide development thinking on critical interactions:

- How does office space planning impact automobile traffic?
- How does cycling safety impact automobile traffic?
- How far / how much time will an office worker travel for a mid-day retail transaction?
- What is the tolerance for satellite parking impacts on commute times?

By investing some effort in accurate modeling alternatives, the Township can base future development decisions on a strong foundation of data.

Potential EDAC actions.

- Gain insight and further understanding of existing academic models
- Interact with current Township employers on any internal Future of Work planning efforts underway in their firms
- Develop a list of key topics to be addressed and / or planning questions to answer in any model application

Additional inputs:

Examples of data modeling and tools from multiple sources:

<https://ui.kpf.com/smarter-city>

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90233731/a-new-use-for-google-maps-calculating-a-citys-carbon-footprint>

<https://www.here.com/products/mapping>

We Could: Explore a Surban Concept

Draft EDAC narrative

“Surban”, net, is a suburban area that has an urban feel, highlighted but not limited to walkability to great retail environments from a house or apartment.

There is a growing list of example Surban success municipalities that may be useful for Township leaders and planners to reference.

While previous versions of the Township Master Plan note that the open space/zoning/density “character” of the Township is largely established, an EDAC action to articulate a “blueprint” of how the Township might apply Surban principles to future development and building change is an opportunity.

EDAC and Township leaders may also begin to envision future Surban sites based on current zoning and occupancy across the Township.

Additional Township Partners

- Planning Board
- Board of Adjustment
- Township Committee

Potential EDAC actions

- Develop a “short list” of potential locations in the Township suited for long-term Surban transitions
- Articulate the Township’s vision of an ideal Surban community environment, and reference this in future development and zoning decisions
- Identify the strong Surban characteristics (referencing additional inputs / POVs) already present in the Township

Additional inputs:

Surban POV article from Reonomy commercial real estate data source
<https://www.reonomy.com/blog/post/surban-areas-bringing-suburban-and-urban-areas-together-19.pdf>

BigShiftAhead article with Surban definitions

<https://www.bigshiftsahead.com/surban.1080/21650020.2014.955210>

We Could: Identify potential co-work and startup incubation space

Draft EDAC narrative

As knowledge-based work, the flexibility and risk of the gig economy, and the pace of corporate growth, change and restructuring have all grown, the need for co-working space has risen. These spaces / facilities, at their best, supply the professional office environment, connectivity, amenities, and access to suburban / urban services, needed by workers / professionals in this evolving economy.

Coworking space tends to draw tenants primarily from individual contributors, entrepreneurs, and very small businesses. This tends to be the opposite end of the scale continuum from, for instance, an F1000 employer. In more developed co-working environments, interaction between co-work space and nearby traditional corporate tenancy is beginning to occur, allowing corporate tenants to use co-work space as a hedge against churn and change in their real estate requirements.

As EDAC examines commercial occupancy within the Township, identifying potential / priority for co working locations may help raise occupancy rates across the portfolio.

Potential EDAC actions:

- Interact with / Interview active co working entrepreneurs in the Morris County area. Learn what is driving the success of specific space / offices active in 2019
- Interact with Township residents in communication / sharing sessions on this topic. Find out more about coworking trends within the Township's current population.
- Review the commercial real estate portfolio for high potential co-work sites
- Consider transportation linkages to retail services valued by potential co workers

Additional inputs:

Articles and research abound. Here is one sample:

<https://coworkingmag.com/blog/coworking-trends-futuristic-spaces/>

Additional Partners

- WeWork
- Regus
- Silverman Group, Jersey City

We Could: Create a Brand for Morris Township?

Draft EDAC narrative

There are many residents and business owners that are unaware that they live in Morris Township and there is much confusion resulting from the lack of a Morris Township Mailing address

Very few people say they live in Morris Township

We share a school district with Morristown, which adds to the confusion

Additional Township Partners

- Township Committee
- Historic Committee

Potential EDAC actions:

Explore whether our future depends upon creating a separate identity from Morristown, or focusing on the great advantages of living and working in Southeast Morris County. Is having Morristown as the "donut hole" of Morris Township a cost or benefit?

Additional inputs:

We Could: Create an integrated historic experience

Draft EDAC narrative

The Township sits at a geographic and historic crossroads that may be the source of Economic Development opportunity. The Jockey Hollow NHP, adjacent to the Township, is one of the leading historic experiences for the American Revolution (anywhere). The MP references many additional historic resources within the Township.

Other areas of the country have established precedent by building visitor experiences and economic development focused on unique, local industry and history. Examples include:

- (Louisville), KY Bourbon Trail
- Vicksburg, MS
- High Point, NC

A concerted effort to build a Township/Morristown experience / trail / itinerary may be an opportunity for the Township / Morristown to work closely with local business leaders (e.g. hotels, restaurants, unique retail, etc.) that may be motivated to build out the experience.

Additional Partners

- Morristown Historical Society
- Washington's HQ Museum
- MT Historic Preservation Comm.

Potential EDAC actions:

- Test / identify interest from in-Township business leaders
- Outreach toward tourism and Morristown colleagues
- Ideation re focus area / tag lines
- Creation of a multi-skilled working group to develop content components
- Identify particular events (Thanksgiving, St. Patrick's Day, Half Marathons) to focus efforts on swell of visitors

Additional inputs:

Kentucky Bourbon Trail site:

<https://kybourbontrail.com/about/>

Visit Vicksburg, MS site

<https://visitvicksburg.com/>

High Point, NC

<https://www.highpoint.org/itineraries>

We Could: Target 21st Century Growth Industries

Additional Partners

- Township Committee
- Planning Board
- Board of Adjustment

Draft EDAC narrative

Predicting the exact industries that will accelerate in coming decades is a difficult task. Directionally, EDAC can initiate steps that will make it more likely to identify these industries over time, as well as understand the local business and quality of life features that can make Morris Township attractive to leaders and colleagues in these industries.

In addition to focusing on sectors, EDAC can also gain insight from research into the Future of Work, a broad topic attempting to identify how Artificial Intelligence, large-scale (“Big”) Data Analysis, physical environments, transit systems, communications, etc. are likely to impact future employment experiences.

Potential EDAC actions:

- Establish industry sector – specific strengths / depth that currently exist in the Township, perhaps including:
 - Pharma
 - Telecommunications
 - Health Care Networks
 - Financial Services
- Interact with these local sector leaders to gain their view of trends driving the next 10-20 years regarding sectors, growth and the Future of Work
- Connect with local / regional advanced academic leaders (e.g. Rutgers, Princeton, FDU, Drew, St. E, etc.) to gain a similar perspective from their research
- Customize elements of the EDAC strategic plan to attract targeted industries for the future

Additional inputs:

Articles and research abound. Here are samples:

<https://careers.workopolis.com/advice/the-10-fastest-growing-industries-of-the-future/>

<https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/new-report-says-these-are-10-best-industries-to-start-a-business-in-if-you-want-to-get-rich.html>

We Could: Explore electric vehicle charging programs

Additional Partners

- Electrify America
- ChargePoint
- SemaConnect

Draft EDAC narrative

Infrastructure for EV use continues to evolve, and while best practices are emerging, there is not yet irrefutable statistical outcomes that correlate available charging infrastructure to local EV market share of vehicles on the road.

The Township has an opportunity to leverage case study, think tank and experience data that exists and choose/customize an electric vehicle charging approach that integrates both municipal and private sector investments.

The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) published a major study in 2017. Key conclusions included:

- The leading electric vehicle markets/countries/states have 3-10x as many public charge points per capita as average markets
- Consumer incentives, vehicle policy, and consumer awareness campaigns are also key components of electric vehicle market development

Potential EDAC actions:

- Raise possibility of collaboration on EV charging with in-Township employers and their proprietary parking facilities
- Interact with Township residents and regular workday commuters currently using EV and PHEV vehicles to document their needs and ideas for intra-day charging
- Develop a plan to begin to approach the 3x factor above average charge points per capita

Additional inputs:

ICCT study:

https://www.theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/EV-charging-best-practices_ICCT-white-paper_04102017_vF.pdf

Medical Center EV charging program:

https://bnmc.org/app/uploads/2012/03/Buffalo-Niagara-Medical-Campus-Electric-Vehicle-Charging-Stations-FAQs_krb.pdf

State of NJ:

<https://www.drivegreen.nj.gov/charging.html>

We Could: Revisit cycling safety, arterial road width, quality of pavement

Draft EDAC narrative

There is significant debate from other municipal, transit, traffic and roadway efforts regarding the best tactics for integrating and encouraging safe cycling alternatives as part of a local transportation plan.

- There is little to no debate re the health/fitness and potential emissions reduction benefits of enabling cycling in town, high density and arterial traffic corridors
- Currently, there is good reason for cyclists and non-cyclists to see a level of safety risk regarding cycling on roadways in many towns and cities
- Low stress cycling roadways tend to attract more cyclists

By collecting additional data and studying results from other municipal efforts, EDAC can help make positive recommendations toward this action. This is also a topic likely to benefit from open communication forums with residents, cyclists, non cyclists, and motorists in the Township / Morristown area.

Potential EDAC actions:

- Debrief with Morristown leaders on success and lessons learned of the share-the-road signage and on-pavement markings in Morristown
- “Lift” attractive components of Bicycle Plans from other successful municipal efforts and apply selectively/sensibly to a draft plan for Morris Township
- Designate a specific Morris Township arterial road for pavement improvement and chosen lane marking approach

Additional inputs:

A Federal Highway Administration document on bike lane marking
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/PED_BIKE/univcourse/pdf/swless19.pdf

An academic study on six European city cycling infrastructures
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21650020.2014.955210>

Portland, OR 2030 cycling Master Plan
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/44597?a=379130>

We Could: Evaluate multiple TDM programs

Additional Partners

- Planning Board
- Traffic Committee
- Morris County EDC

Draft EDAC narrative

Several regions of the United States pursue Traffic Demand Management programs, often aimed at reducing the “free parking” incentives associated with proprietary lots at large suburban campuses.

The highly generalized approach of these programs is to provide substitutes and alternatives to “free parking” to help members of the workforce rely less on solo automobile round trip commutes. Example techniques include:

- “Cashing out” daily parking privileges, e.g. paying workforce colleagues to NOT park on the campus (and repurposing space on the campus for more productive use)
- Providing increased, safe, parking for bicycles with shower / locker / changing facilities
- Establishing a local / regional network of shuttles connecting transportation satellite points with high density employment and / or Surban centers

Potential EDAC actions:

- Interact with current Township employers to gain their insight and interest level in being part of a TDM program
- Solicit best practices and lessons learned from other regional programs
- Consider a modest pilot at The Township Building (cycling, changing, etc.)

Additional inputs:

Mobility Lab article:

<https://mobilitylab.org/about-us/what-is-tdm/>

Eastern MA / Boston TDM program and guidelines:

<https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/parking-and-transportation-demand-management/>

Streetlight Data:

<https://www.streetlightdata.com/transportation-demand-management-a-real-world-use-case>

We Could: Lead regional effort on traffic solutions

Additional Partners

- Planning Board
- Traffic Committee
- Morris County EDC

Draft EDAC narrative

Research and specialist opinion reinforces that most regional traffic challenges are the result of planning and development decisions over the past 50 years or more (in many / all parts of the United States and much of the world). A number of these planning decisions emphasized automobile as the sole/primary source of transportation, and de-emphasized, bypassed or displaced other alternatives. Decisions to build plans with a significant share of housing in low density lot zoning is a primary example, as is the relatively recent, in historical terms, increase in distance between residential, occupational, and commercial/retail locations.

It is difficult to undo many of these decisions.

However, it may be possible to address specific points of concern, and optimize future development and zoning decisions, in cooperation with neighboring municipalities, county and state agencies.

Potential EDAC actions:

- Identify potential high priority traffic improvements (e.g. Park Ave. / Columbia Rd. / Rte 24 corridor, others)
- Initiate planning outreach to other municipalities / agencies
- Gradually build consensus and improvement when specific opportunities and funding emerge

Additional inputs:

Examples and POV re traffic challenges:

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2019/03/20/stop-trying-to-solve-traffic-and-start-building-great-places/>

<http://fourthplan.org/action/highway-congestion>

<https://www.mdpi.com/2413-8851/3/1/18/htm>