



# Economic Development Strategic Plan Cumberland County 2020-2030



# President's Message

Strategic Planning is an intense and challenging exercise under normal conditions; when that process and proposed direction is interrupted by a global pandemic, planning practice takes on a whole new meaning. As challenging as setting a path forward may be during the uncertainty of widespread Covid-19 virus, the universal pause provided time to consider what to keep from the past and what to aspire to in the future; what we should "go back to" and how we should change; how to once again recover from disruption and this time build a path forward, using innovation and technology as guideposts.

From crisis comes change, and Cumberland County, like the nation, was forced to embrace change. To remain competitive, businesses, industries, government and education had to be creative, use innovative thinking and new technology platforms, redefine products, process and delivery, and limit bureaucracy. Digital technology became a common language. These changes, forced upon us but gradually embraced, give reason to be optimistic about the five goals of this plan. Overall, they urge the County to move forward in a manner that adopts innovative thinking for ongoing challenges, reinforces existing industry clusters, makes connectivity a baseline opportunity for everyone, and realigns our workforce for shifting market demands.

Over the next ten years, Cumberland County must remain inventive to be competitive and drive our economy in a new direction. We have an unprecedented opportunity to not simply hit the pause button and plug existing gaps, but to permanently change the economic foundation of the County in a way that limits our future vulnerability. This plan encourages us- residents, businesses, and institutions - to think differently about Cumberland County so in ten years we are telling a different story of assets, growth, and diversity instead of our current polished narrative on distress.

Albert Einstein said "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." Those words are the basis for this plan and a Cumberland County future that rests on an economic foundation based on innovation and creative thinking.

*Jerry Velazquez*  
President/CEO

# Acknowledgements

## WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Bert Lopez	Dave Johnson
Sandy Forosisky	Kevin Gibala
Tony Stanzone	Ed Geletka
John Ruga	Ed Roth
Paul Ritter	Jim Economy
Wade Sjogren	Michael Tarr
John Knoop II	Ben Robinson
Bruce Riley	Dave Robbins
Jane Jannarone	Todd Gordon
Christy DiLeonardo	Pete Morano
John DiAngelo	Ean Johnson
Dr. Dina Rossi	Michelle Griscom
Dr. Fred Keating	Stephen Williams
Darlene Barber	Susan Gogan
Jim Quinn	Marianne Lods
Kimberly Wood	Mayor A. Fanucci
Jody Hirata	Kevin Rabago
Stan Field	Samantha Silvers
Matt Pisarski	Heather Santoro
Allison Spinelli	Dawn Hunter
Dr. Patty Claghorn	Jerry Covella
Sam Pipitone III	Russ Swanson
Nick Catalana	Ethan Byler
Will Guccio	Jim Piccone
Peter Kaprielyan	

## CONSULTANT TEAM

Ninigret Partners  
Interface Studio, LLC

## THE AUTHORITY TEAM:

Jerry Velazquez  
Jeannine MacDonald  
Kim Ayres



# Table of Contents

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Why Think Differently About Economic Development? .....	1
A New Economic Model: An Innovation-Driven Economy .....	2
Where Cumberland County Stands Today .....	4
Demographic Trends .....	6
Economic Trends .....	7
Public Engagement .....	16

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations .....	19
Implementation .....	20
Goal 1: Provide competitive economic infrastructure .....	22
Goal 2: Develop a stronger economy .....	26
Goal 3: Be the best version of ourselves .....	32
Goal 4: Create and support an innovation culture .....	38
Goal 5: Lead with strong governance and management .....	42



# INTRODUCTION

“We can’t just continue on with business as usual,  
we have to embrace innovation.”

## Why Think Differently About Economic Development?

The Cumberland County Improvement Authority has developed a regional growth and innovation strategy for Cumberland County encompassing the next decade, 2020-2030. It is based on the ever-changing dynamics of the regional economy, our existing assets, and future opportunities to be shaped by innovative thinking, investment, and technology.

This plan pushes all fourteen communities in Cumberland County to slowly but deliberately "think differently" about economic development and pathways to sustainable economic growth and prosperity. Increasing the capacity of businesses and people in the region will result from embracing an expanded role in the greater southern New Jersey region, nurturing and attracting talent, and harnessing technology to lead us into the next wave of development known as the digital or knowledge-based economy.

A forward-looking plan must embrace the reality that the County narrative must change in order to succeed in the global, talent-driven and connected 21st century economy. It will take a collaborative effort to enhance the County’s collective skill level, with leading-edge anchor institutions in health care, industry and education serving as strategic partners. This level of coordination and cooperation is nothing new- our communities have always demonstrated an ability to implement public-private partnerships, persevere against economic fluctuations, and attract investment. We must now make a similar commitment to a game-changing vision for our future.

Over the next decade, Cumberland County can develop the ecosystem to support innovation, entrepreneurialism, and technology that can push us past our historical cycles of growth and decline. Our regional economy is at a pivotal point. Even with our current assets and initiatives, the speed of technological advancement in our country and beyond requires Cumberland County to embrace a new

way of approaching economic development. Rather than rely on our history as an industrial age production center, this plan recommends moving forward for the next generation as an area reinvented and reinvigorated by an innovation-driven development strategy connecting us to a larger regional growth network.

Economic development must move past a strict focus on regional competition for job creation, business recruitment with financial incentives, and an expectation that residents will follow

the jobs. As the economy shifts, we must think regionally and collaboratively, and offer the necessary education and workforce services for our resident talent to remain local because they are linked to new opportunities.

This action plan is as much a workplan as it is a community-driven vision. In this vision of Cumberland County 2020-2030, legacy industries will progress by incorporating automation and smart technology.

Connections to our downtowns and assets such as arts, culture, and open space will help attract

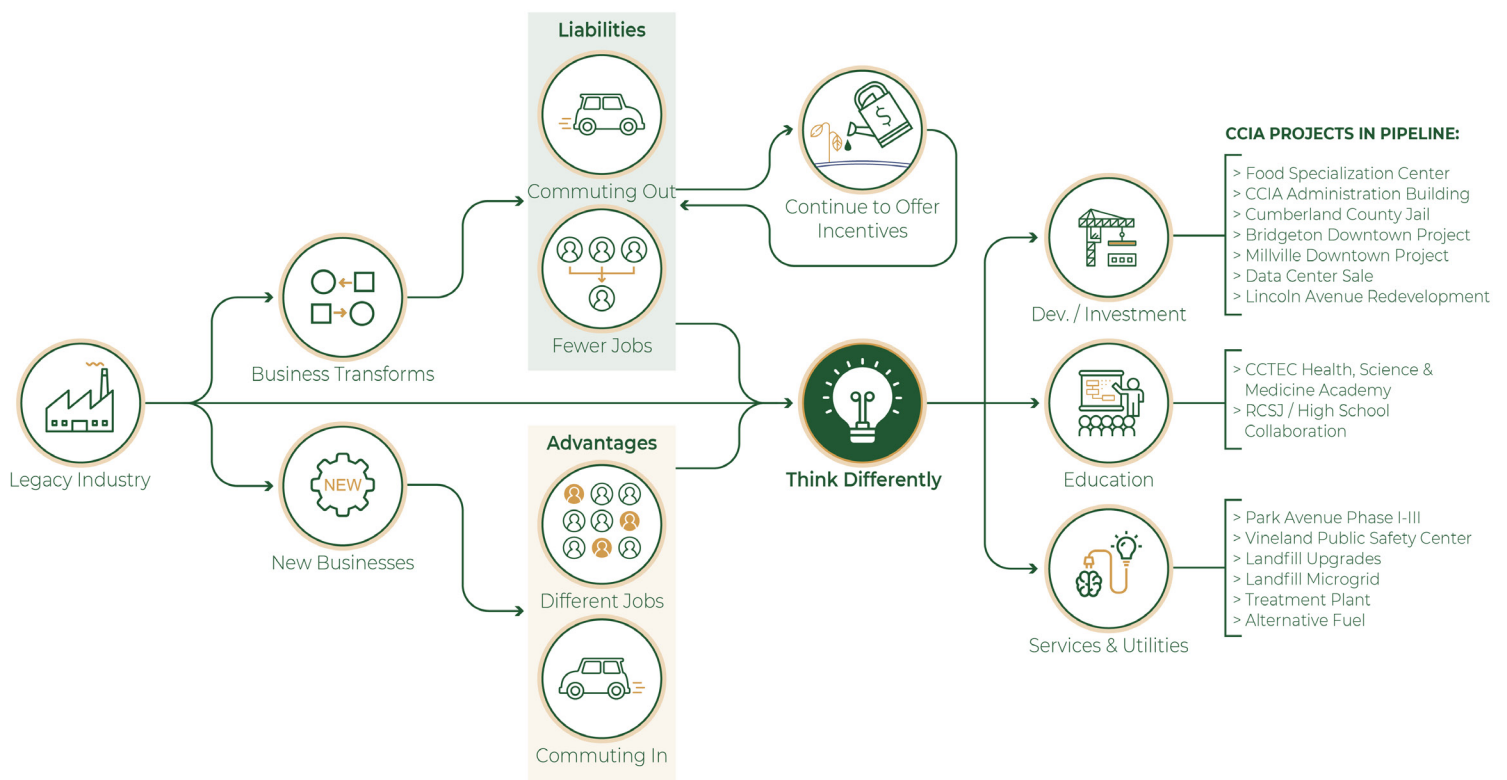


Diagram illustrating old and more innovative ways to think of economic development. Old models of economic development were based around luring companies with generous incentive packages, whereas Cumberland County has the ability to coordinate a targeted series of investments to grow and retain talent from within.



new talent and retain existing businesses. Institutions in health care and education will be key factors in successfully advancing this new narrative of economic growth, sustainability, and bridging gaps between business and education. We can leverage the region's unique strengths and take advantage of its emerging opportunities. We can combine our existing assets of incentives, location, educational facilities, amenities and workforce with the development of industry clusters, hubs of innovation, and new business attraction.

### **A NEW ECONOMIC MODEL: AN INNOVATION-DRIVEN ECONOMY**

Cumberland's economic foundation was built on industry, particularly manufacturing. The County grew as a manufacturing center and a food, textile and glass production capital. But today's global economy is fundamentally different, moving from industrial and service positions to a more knowledge-based underpinning for processes, products, and services. Now is the time to leverage existing energy and align our efforts through a comprehensive set of strategies.

Through this plan, Cumberland County identifies ways it can transition its economy to a 21st century paradigm and lead our region through the headwinds of the next economy into a competitive position. That transition requires a new way of thinking about our region, our economy, and our workforce. It also requires capitalizing on new educational resources and opportunities

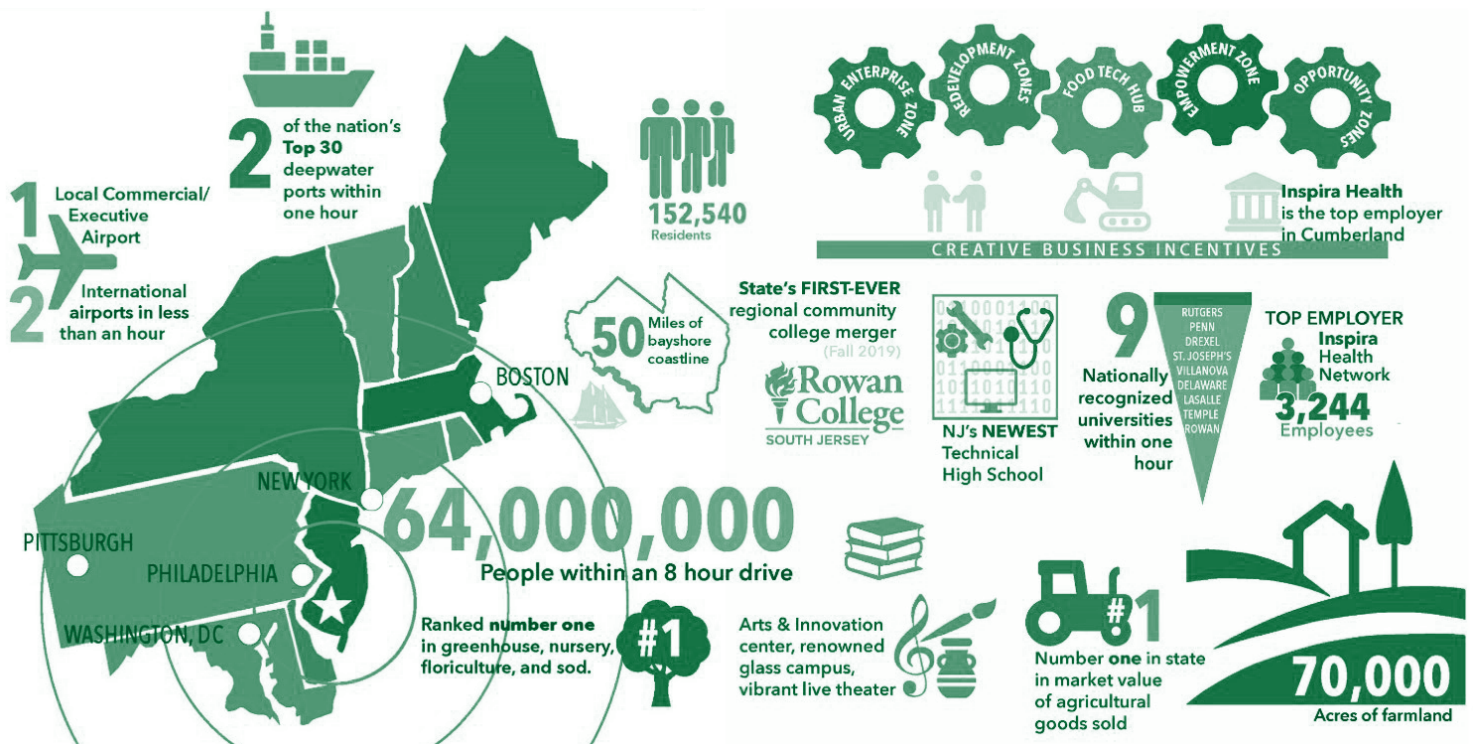
from workforce development to stacked employment credentials to baccalaureate degrees- resources and opportunities that can fuel the attraction and retaining of talent and businesses. It includes providing direct pathways to employment and training and developing a talent pipeline for skilled trades.

Innovation and inventive thinking are the lifeblood of any healthy economy. The ability to create better or more effective products, services, processes or ideas that are accepted by markets is the best indicator of an economy's strength. This plan is based on the premise that it is vital for the County to accelerate innovation development and technology transfer to create an environment for economic growth. This plan also reflects the goal of educating, training and upskilling workers with 21st century skill sets that match the emerging jobs of growth industries, providing direct links between residents and family-sustaining employment.

Business models are shifting dramatically and Cumberland has to move from its distress narrative to one of reinvention. The story of our region, told internally and externally, lacks a progressive and positive message which can be generated as we build on recent successes. There are existing and emerging developments that can help create a positive account of the County's economy. These projects and developments affirm that the strategies proposed in this plan can be successful in Cumberland County.

# Where Cumberland County Stands Today

Cumberland County has a number of key assets upon which to build. Our county has the most productive agricultural sector in the state. It's strategic location is within a workday's drive of 64 million people. It has a burgeoning med and eds economic sector and significant investments have been made in new educational assets and partnerships.



Strengths and assets by the numbers. Source: The Authority

“Agriculture and food are why we have a dynamic food processing, trucking, and cold storage industry in the County – The food industry remains a major driver for growth.”

**Creating innovation is not the same as capturing its economic benefit.**



Impossible Burger got its start with a residency at the Food Innovation Center at Rutgers University in Cumberland County, but moved to a large-scale manufacturing center in Oakland, CA after their first two years in business.

Photo courtesy of: <https://agfundernews.com/impossible-foods-closes-bumper-500m-funding-round-dominated-by-asian-investors.html>



# Demographic Trends



**DECLINING POPULATION:** Since 2010, the County’s population has decreased by nearly 3,000 residents (from 156,898 in 2010 to 153,990 in 2019), a 1.9% decline, and is projected to continue declining modestly through 2024. In comparison, the State’s population has gradually increased during the same period by roughly 1.3%.



**MIXED EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT:** Cumberland County has a mixed record on college level educational attainment compared to the State. Cumberland County has a lower percentage of residents with bachelor degrees (14.7% in 2018) compared to the State (38.9% in 2018). However, Community College graduation rates, and the percentage of residents holding an Associate’s degree are bright spots for the County in educational attainment (39.4% in the County, 62.1% in the State in 2018).

Increasing educational partnerships between Cumberland County College, Rowan University, and Inspira are increasing educational assets that can help County residents climb the ladder of opportunity.

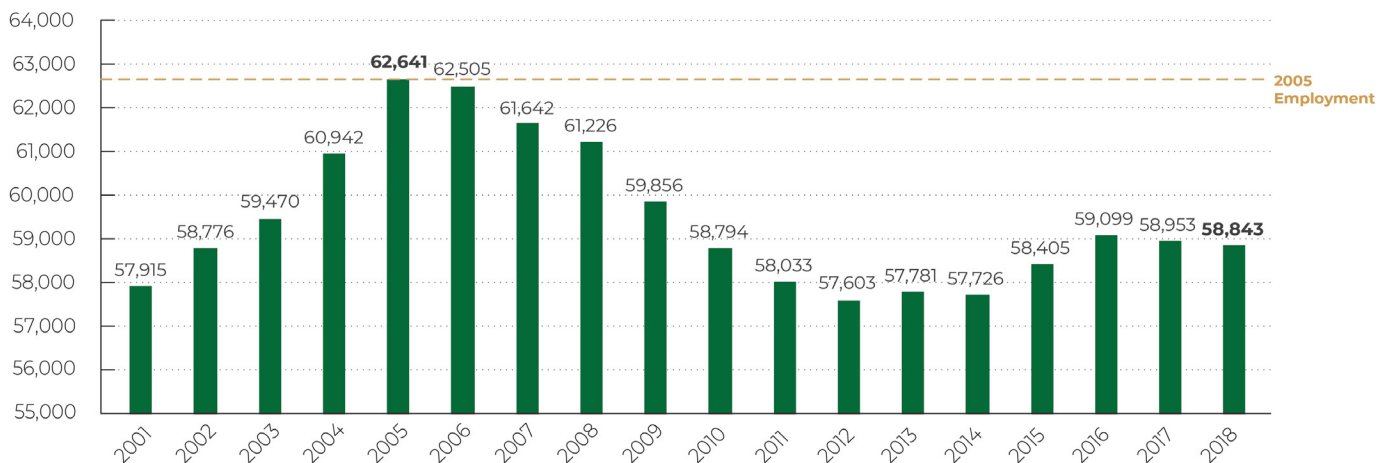
“We need equitable opportunities in education and employment training.”

# Economic Trends

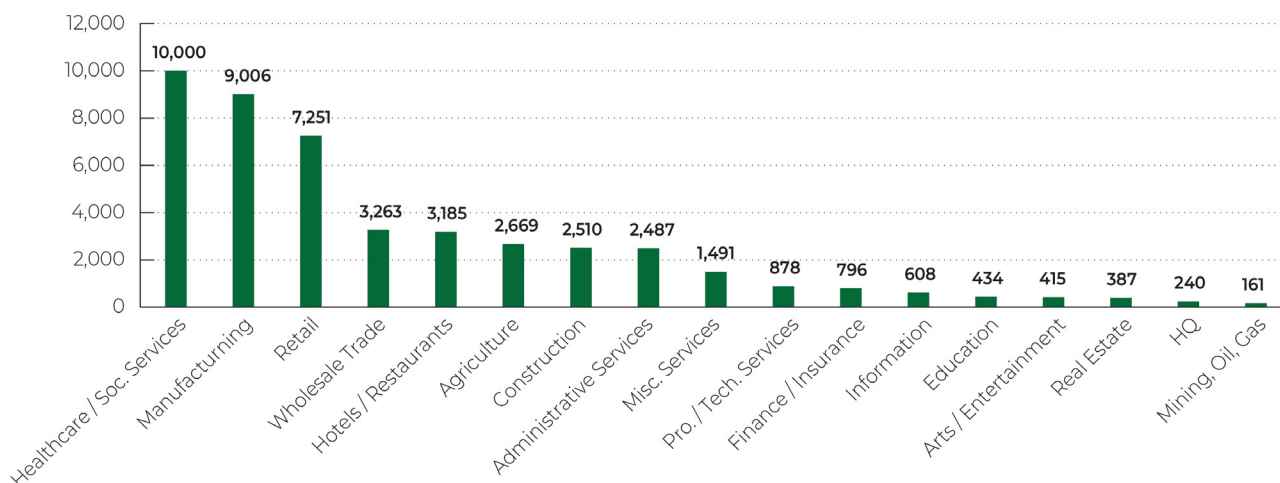
## EMPLOYMENT SNAPSHOT

Employment has not fully recovered from the Great Recession. County employment dipped significantly during and immediately after the recession (2012). While employment has recovered from the dip, the County is still more than 3,700 jobs or 6% below its 2005 peak.

Forms of self-employment represent almost 20% of wage and salary employment. Cumberland County had faster wage employment growth pre-2008, but has recently begin to lag the State.



2018 Cumberland County wage & salary employment. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

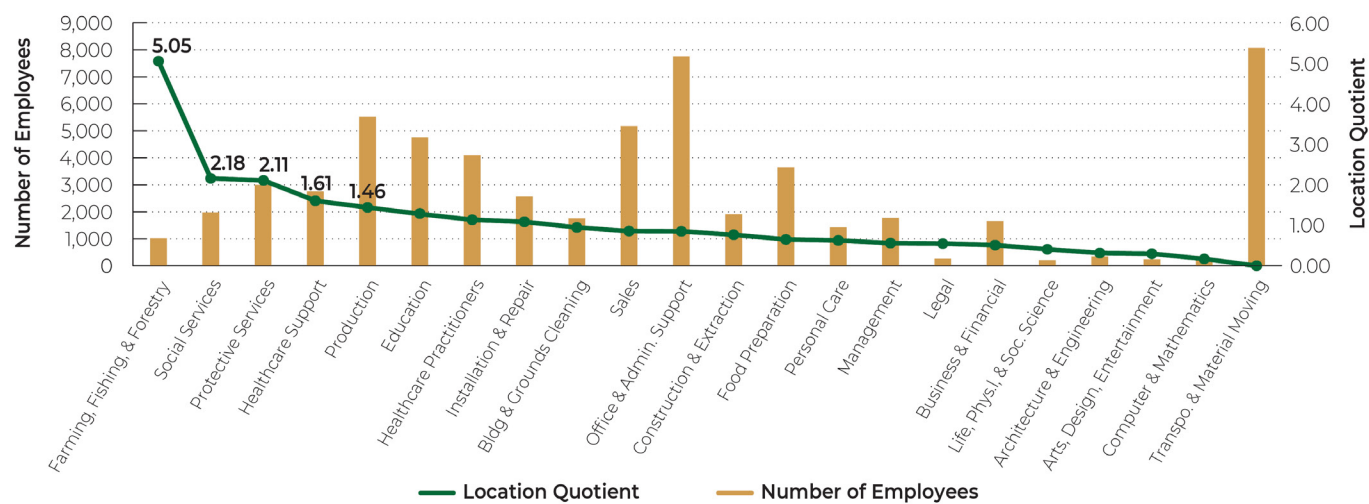


2018 private employment by sector (team estimates another 10-11k self-employed jobs in the County).

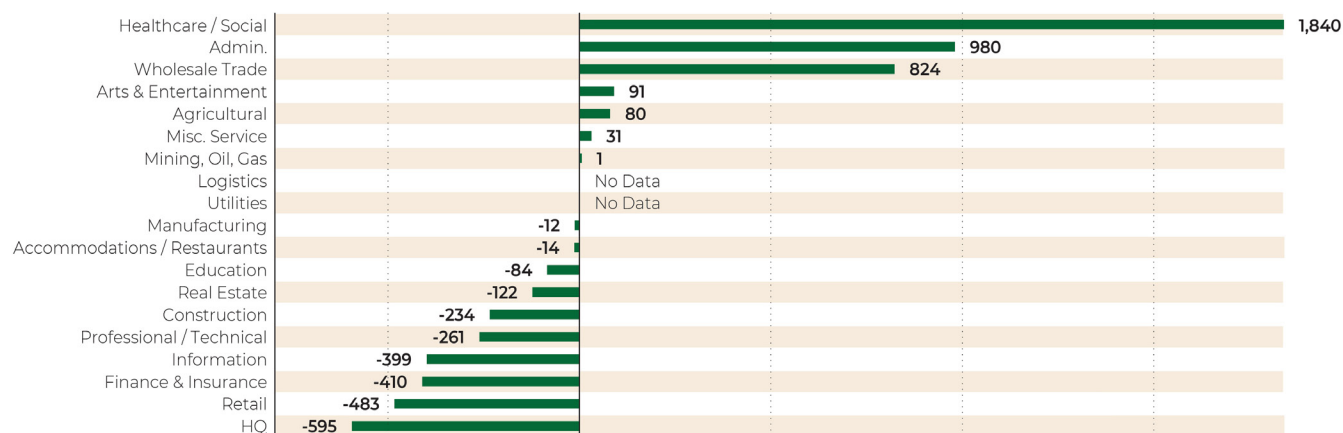
INDUSTRY SECTORS

This data is somewhat correlated with sectors that grew in employment in Cumberland County, with health and social services increasing by 1,840 jobs, administration increasing by 980, and wholesale trade increasing by 824.

While back office, logistics, and education industry sectors represent the most occupations in the County, production, social services, and farming have the highest concentrations of talent.



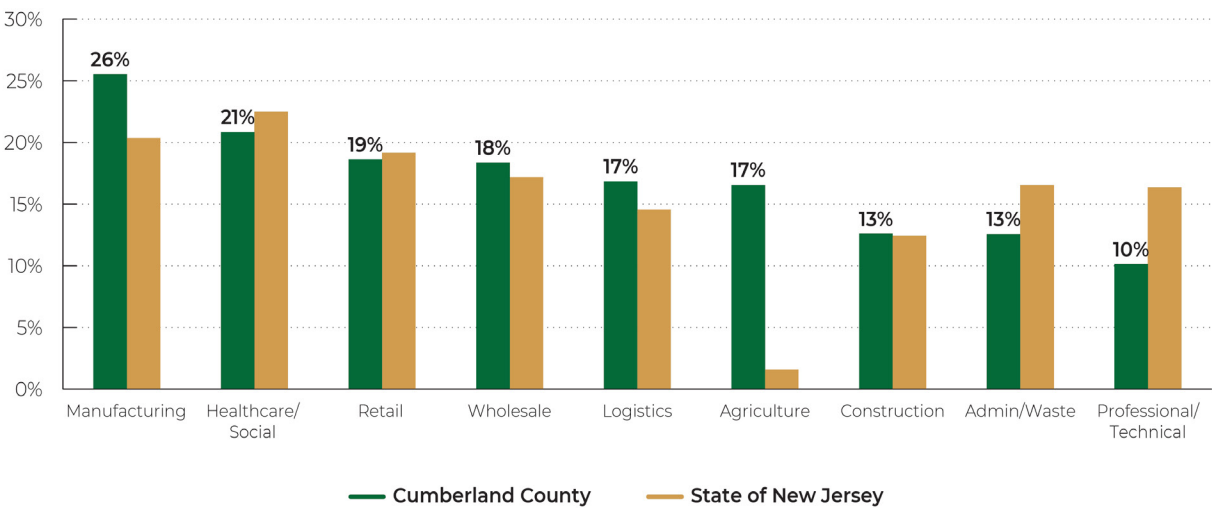
2018 Employee Estimates by Occupation. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employee Estimates by Occupation, US Location Quotient = 1.00. Concentration as measured by location quotient is based on the relative amount of the workforce in that occupational field compared to the nation as a whole.



2008-2018 Employment Change by Industry. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

AGE OF WORKFORCE

With respect to the age of the workforce in comparison to the State, Cumberland County stands out in having a substantially older manufacturing workforce. Nearly half of the County’s manufacturing workforce is over 45, and 26% are 55 or older.



2018 Age of Workforce 55+. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

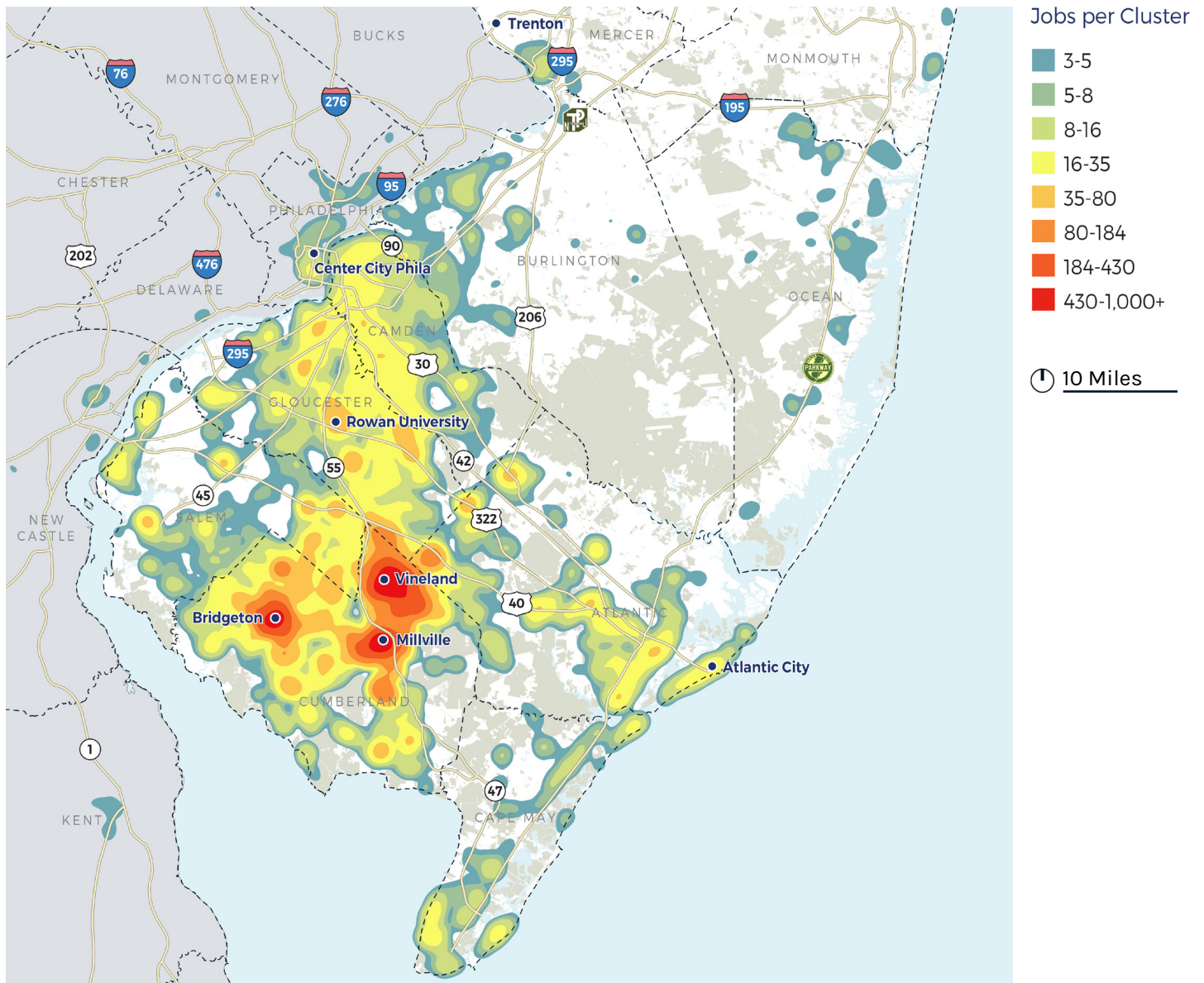
## COMMUTING PATTERNS

While the number of primary jobs have increased from 74,642 to 80,850 between 2002-2017, commuting patterns are becoming more spread out throughout the region.

Fewer people are living and working in the County (representing a 4,636 decline from 34,256 to 29,620, or a 13.5 percentage point drop)

More people are commuting into the County for work (representing a 5,970 increase from 17,071 to 23,041, or a 35 percentage point increase)

More residents are commuting out of the County for work (representing a 4,874 increase from 23,315 to 28,189, or a 20.9 percentage point increase)



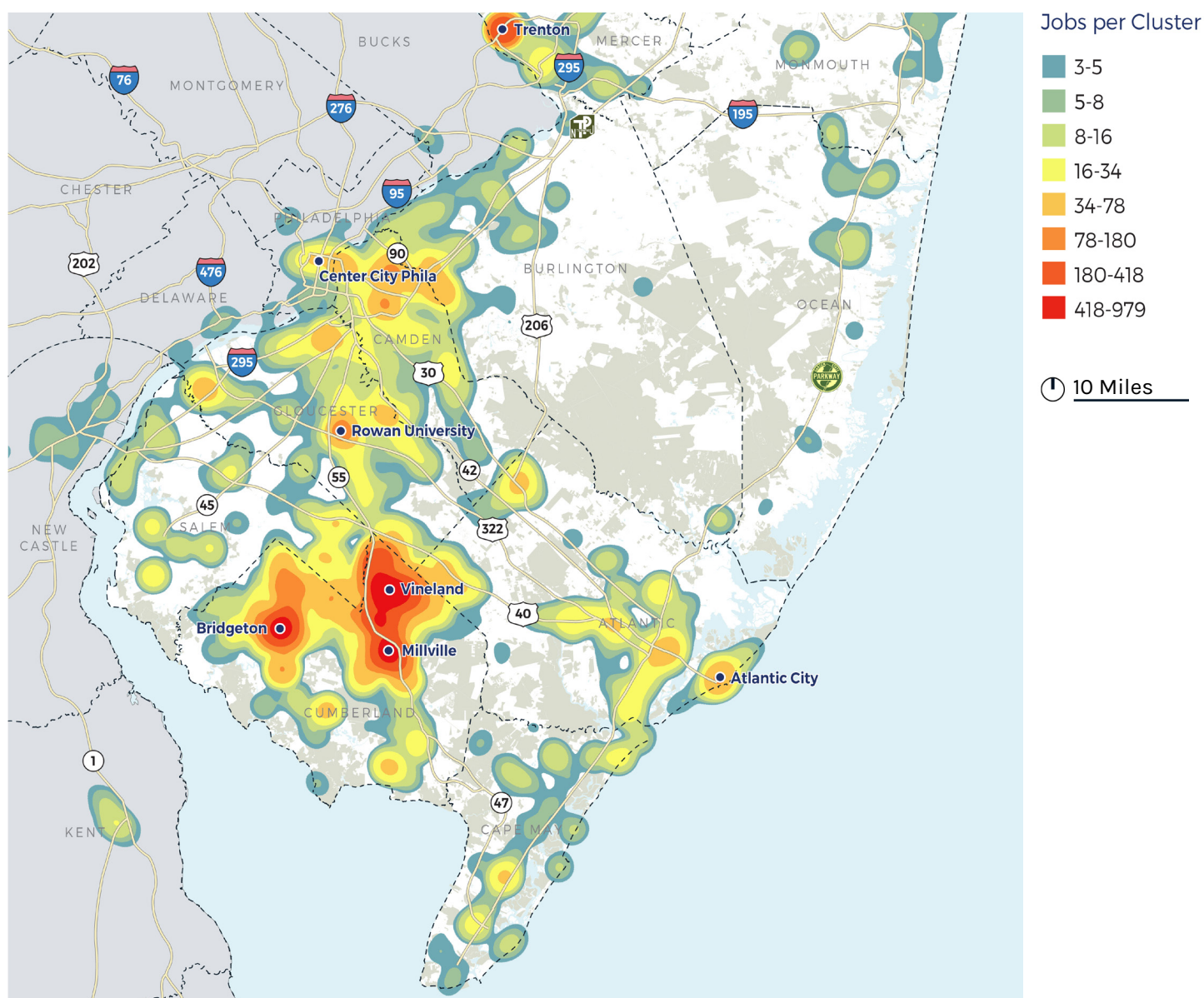
**2017 Where People Employed in the County Live.** US Census Bureau. OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics.



Residents are also traveling farther to get to their jobs (2002-2017). Fewer people are commuting less than 10 miles (representing a 4,819 decrease from 30,465 to 25,646, or a 15.8 percentage point decline). About the same number of people are commuting within 10 to 24 miles. of their home.

More people are commuting 25 to 50 miles (representing a 1,627 increase from 8,570 to 10,197, or a 19 percentage point increase)

The greatest increase was seen in the number of people commuting 50 miles or more (representing a 3,418 increase from 6,988 to 10,406, or a 48.9 percentage point increase).



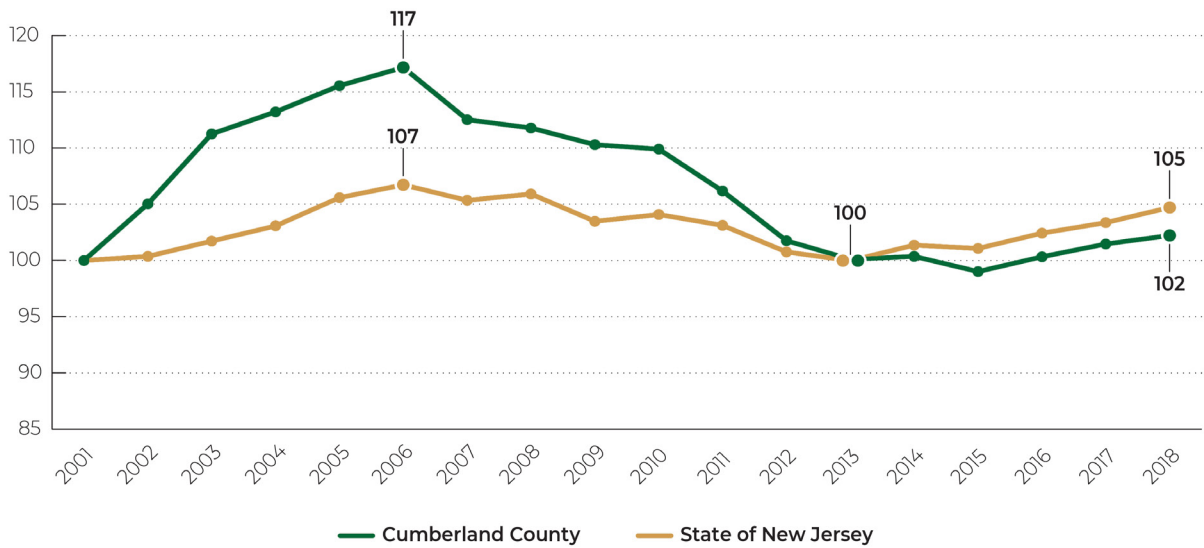
**2017 Where County Residents Work.** US Census Bureau. OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics.

BUSINESS GROWTH TRENDS

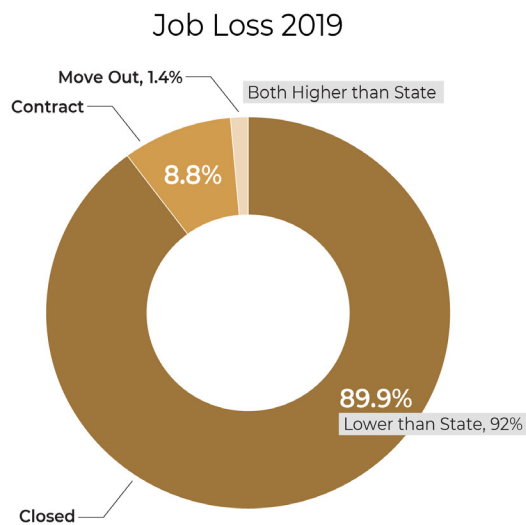
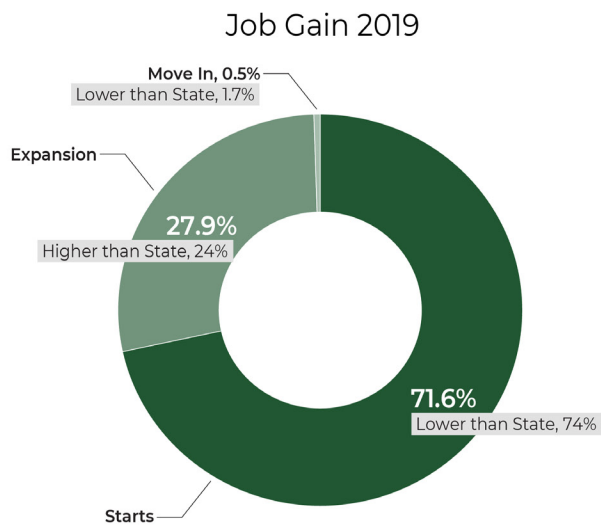
After 8 years of losing establishments, Cumberland County started to slowly gain businesses in 2016 but still has fewer establishments than in 2002. Of Cumberland County’s 14 municipalities, only Hopewell is home to companies who have received Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) funding. In the past few years, establishment growth has started to lag behind the State. However, and

more importantly, the mix of businesses in the County are changing which has implications for the workforce.

From 2008-2018, the health and social services sector grew by 190 establishments, far outpacing education (9) and administration (20). The top 3 sharpest declines in establishments were in construction, pro/tech, and retail.



County establishments are growing again after an 8-year decline, but growth still lags behind the State. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Most new jobs in the County come from new establishments. Youreconomy.org, UWISCONSIN Business Dynamics Research Consortium.



## A VARIETY OF LIFESTYLES

Cumberland County provides a variety of lifestyle options. In an era when lifestyle choices influence where talent chooses to live, the diversity of options is a critical advantage for the County. Its cities offer a walkable urban environment without the crowding and density of larger cities.

Suburban lifestyle opportunities exist across the County allowing residents access to the Greater Philadelphia market. Moreover, Cumberland County also has housing options for those seeking a rural environment with over 40 miles of coast line along Delaware Bay.

Given Cumberland County's proximity to a number of major metro areas, maintaining this diversity of high quality lifestyle options is a priority.



Bayside



Rural



Suburban



Downtown

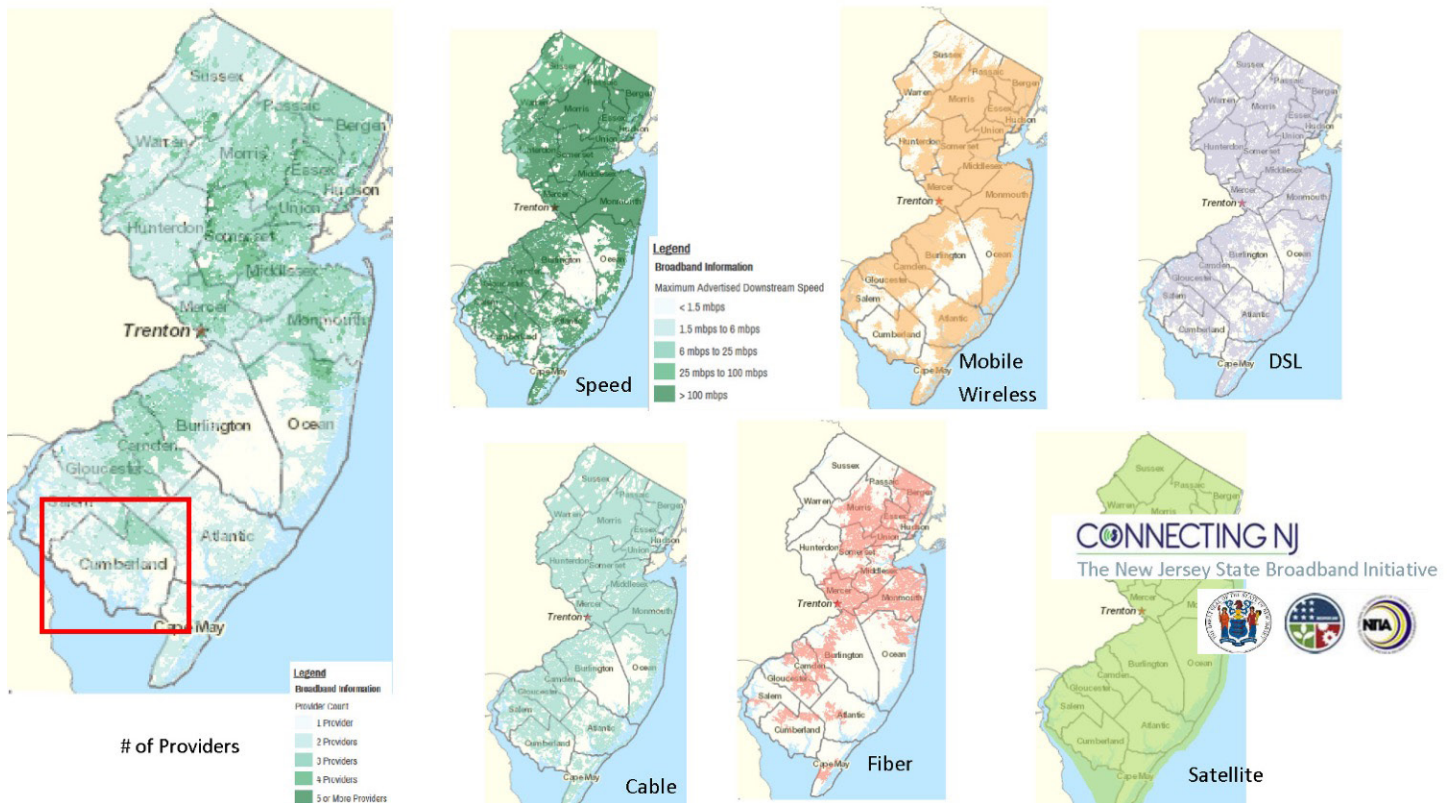
“There seems to be a migration underway from major urban areas such as NYC to rural areas, especially hometowns... Perhaps Cumberland County can take advantage of this migration more explicitly.”

Image sources: commercialflip.com, moveto.com, Tim Kiser, The Authority

## BROADBAND ACCESS

For Cumberland County to fully take advantage of its lifestyle options, digital connectivity is key. COVID 19 has highlighted broadband access as a key educational equity issue given the lack of access to broadband across the County.

According to BestNeighborhood.com, only 10% of the county has access to fiber and 90% has access to cable internet. Neighboring counties (Gloucester and Salem) have higher levels of coverage and offer faster speeds.



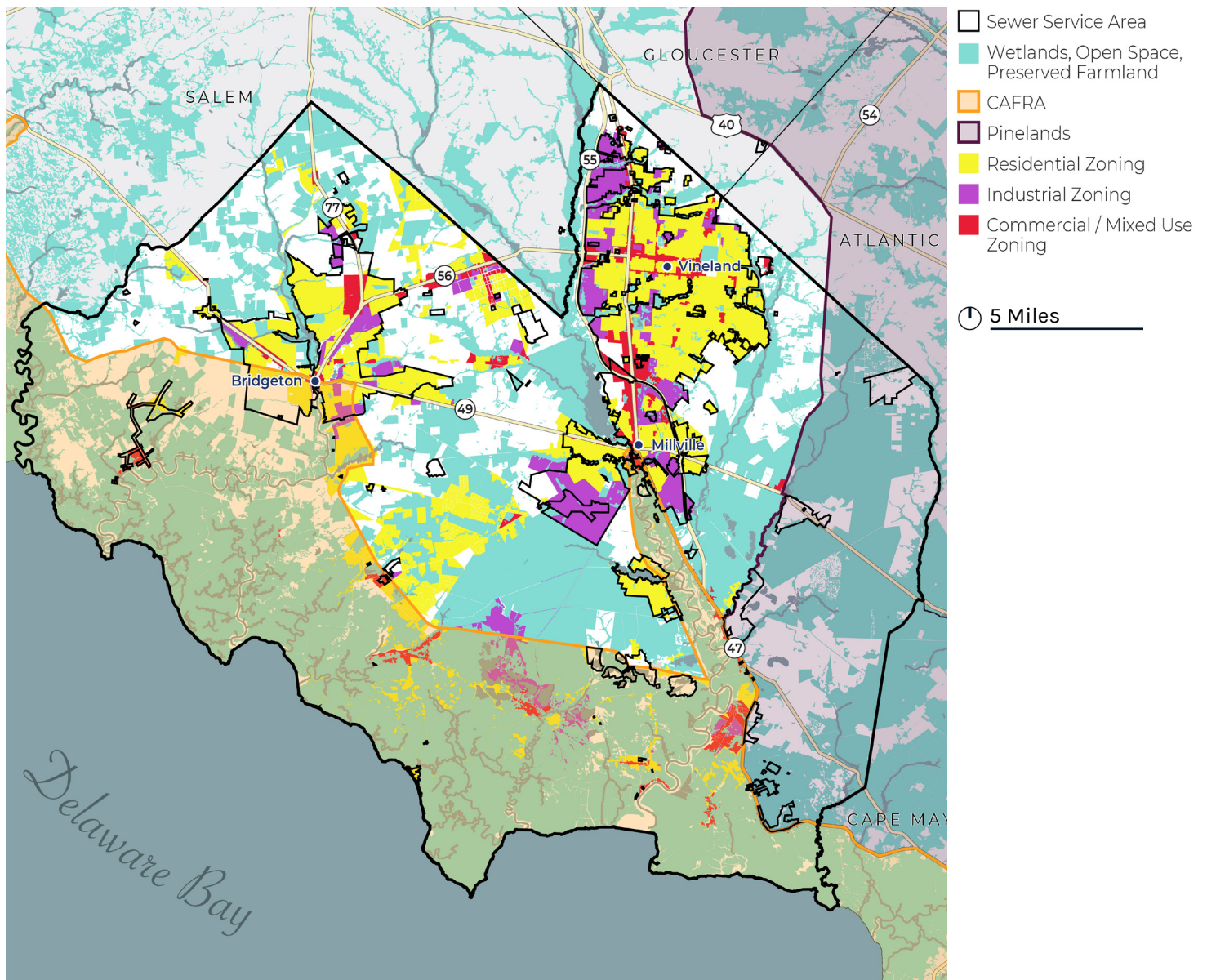
Map of Statewide Broadband Access by Type. Connecting NJ, The New Jersey State Broadband Initiative.



## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the size of the County, significant opportunities for development are limited in much of Cumberland County due to environmental and growth restrictions. Approximately two-thirds of the County's 500 square miles are designated for preservation or open space.

As a result, Cumberland County needs to carefully manage its land resources and promote infill redevelopment whenever possible to remain economically vibrant.



Developable & Undevelopable Land. NJGIN, NJDEP, Cumberland County.

# Public Engagement

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

A series of one-on-one stakeholder interviews were conducted in the first half of 2020 to learn about the key issues and opportunities facing the County, as well as to better understand the work of key organizations and businesses in the County.

## WORKSHOP #1

The first stakeholder workshop was held in July 2020 via Zoom. The purpose of the workshop was to review the strengths & weaknesses analysis, discuss and prioritize key issues facing the County, and begin to brainstorm possible strategies and action steps.

## 1. Brainstorm [https://bit.ly/cumberland\\_brainstorm](https://bit.ly/cumberland_brainstorm)

**How should we address these key issues? Please be as specific as you can!**

Use the thumbs up / down to mark suggestions you like or dislike, and tell us what you are interested in or concerned about for each option in the comments.

1. Where are there actionable opportunities to **drive and support innovation** in the County's economy?

2. What **infrastructure/technology investments** are needed to ensure the County remains competitive?

3. What does "**being the best version of itself**" mean for Cumberland County? What makes the County a **great place to live**, and where should we focus to make it **even better**?

4. Are there economic **strengths we should double-down on** going forward?

5. What is "**needed to play**" and what is "**needed to win**" from an economic development perspective? Where can CCIA best support creating or enhancing "the needed"?

What did we miss?

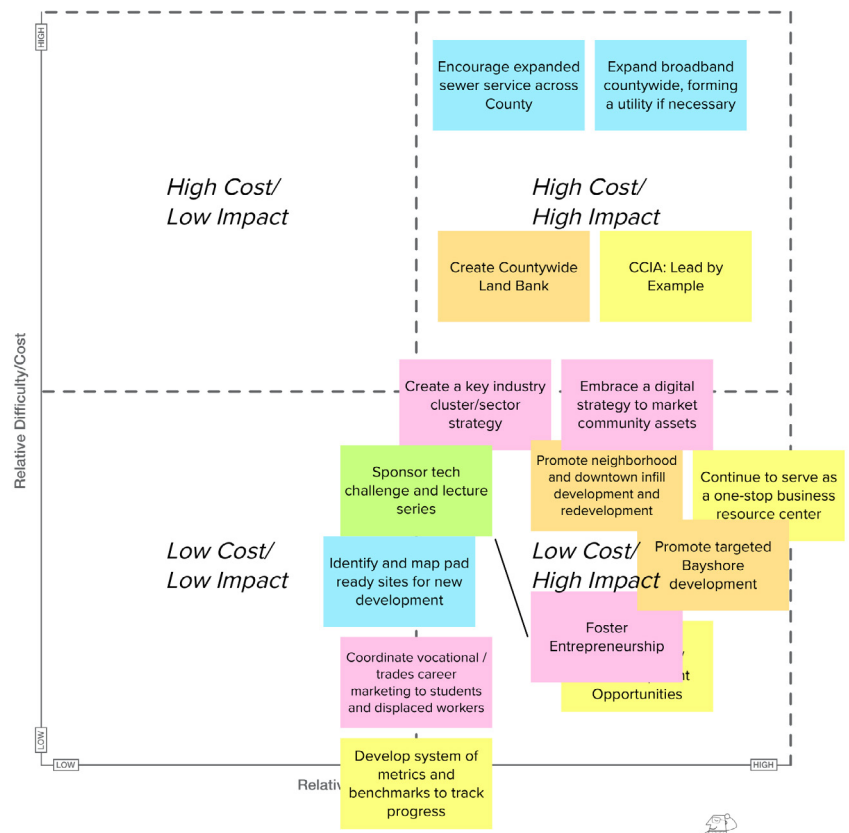
How to use this tool:

1. Give a thumbs up / down to indicate how you feel about the importance of a given question
2. Add comments about how to address these questions, and please be as specific as possible!
3. What are we missing that isn't covered in these categories?

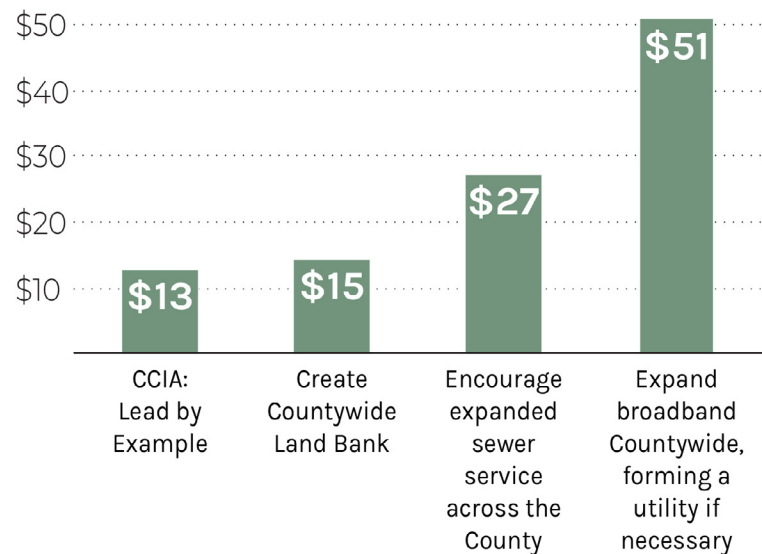
Brainstorming exercise from Workshop #1. Participants were asked to provide a thumbs up or thumbs down to indicate how important they felt an issues was, to add their comments on how to address these issues, and to provide ideas for any topics that are important but missing from this list.

## WORKSHOP #2

The second stakeholder workshop was held at the end of September 2020 via Zoom. The purpose of this workshop was to review the proposed goals, strategies, and action steps, and to evaluate the anticipated level of cost and impact for each strategy.

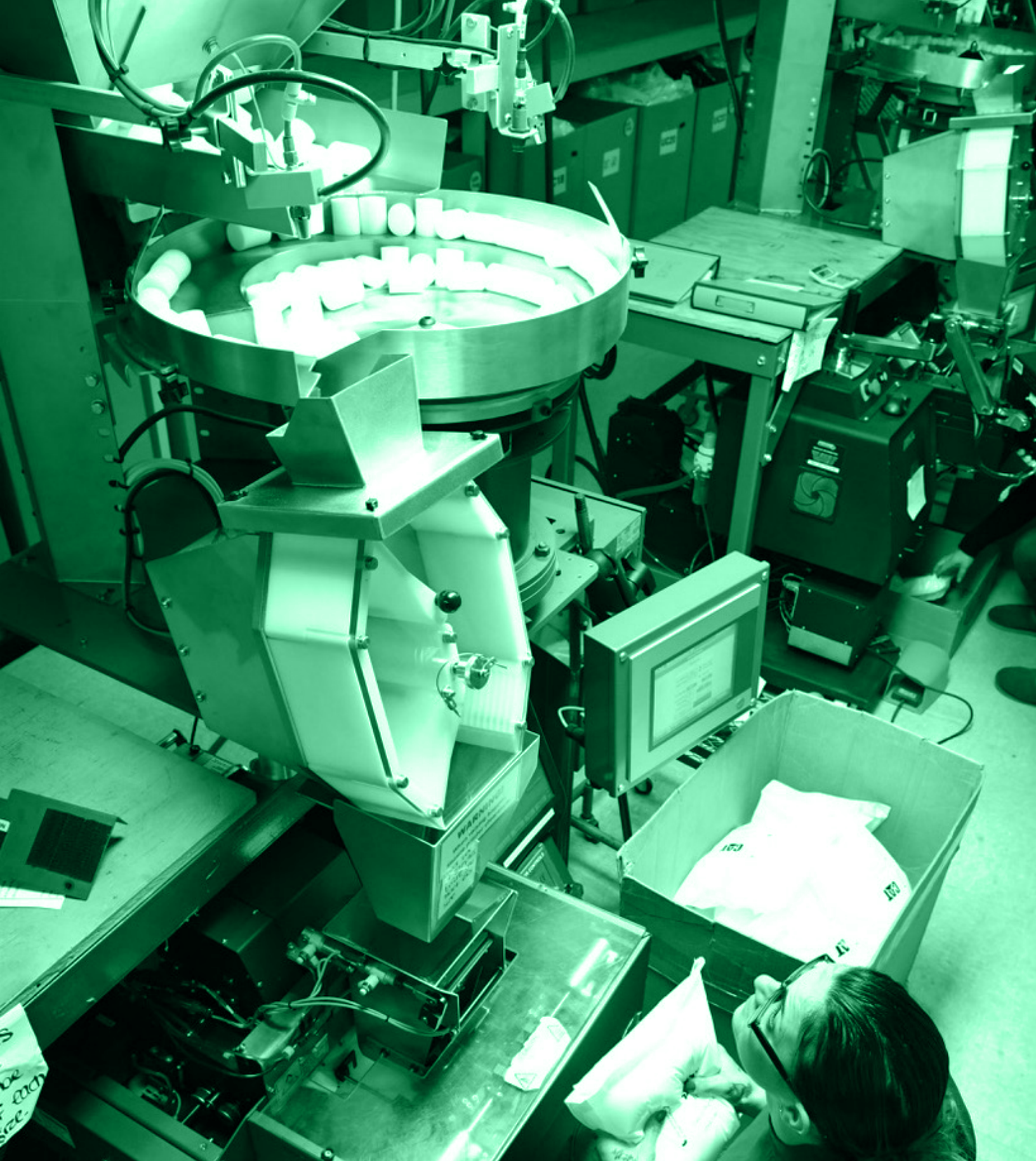


Cost and impact exercise from Workshop #2. Participants were asked to collaboratively rank each strategy by its anticipated cost and impact.



Budget prioritization exercise from Workshop #2. Participants were asked to allocate how they would spend \$100 of fake money to implement each of the high impact, high cost strategies from the cost and impact exercise.





**RECOMMENDATIONS**

# Recommendations

## BUILDING ON WORK IN PROGRESS

The Authority's mix of current projects are well-suited to support the County's key industry sectors and opportunities for growth, including in agriculture, eds/meds, and government. Innovative projects to support existing areas of strength (such as The Food Specialization Center), as well as projects that grow emerging industries that increase the County's competitiveness (such as XConnectDC) represent opportunities for innovative economic development in the County supported by The Authority.

## CHARTING THE COURSE FORWARD

The recommendations that follow are meant to guide the next set of investments and initiatives to foster economic development in Cumberland County. These recommendations were derived from a careful analysis of existing conditions, numerous interviews with stakeholders from across the County, two public workshops, and several work sessions with leadership at The Authority.

## SHARED SERVICES SAVINGS

Realized County Savings/CCIA Contribution	County
Economic Development: Administration, Marketing, Public Relations/Conferences, and General Expenses	\$ 641,403
Cumberland County College	\$ 950,984
Deerfield Township Host Community Benefit	\$ 585,000
County Contribution	\$ 605,114
Rental Savings/Lease Properties	\$ 183,426
Fleet Maintenance	\$ 335,675
Health Department Contribution	\$ 136,500
Trash Removal/Derelict Building/Impound Lot Rental (estimated)	\$ 96,600
78-80 Atlantic Street Parking Lot	\$ 24,000
<b>Total County Benefit</b>	<b>\$ 3,558,702</b>



# Implementation

Because this plan is intended to be used as a guide to focus The Authority's investments and initiatives, the planning team screened the recommendations through three lenses to understand The Authority's ability to implement each recommendation.

The three screens include things that The Authority can directly control through their actions, things that The Authority can influence but rely on local partners to make happen, and things The Authority can highlight as important issues or considerations, but that they have little ability to influence.



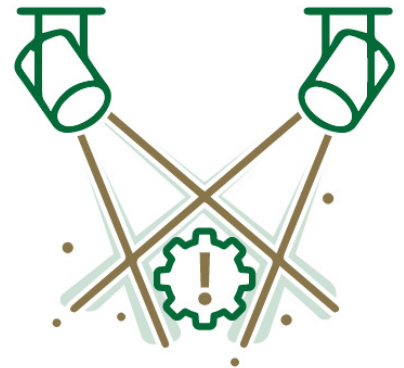
## CONTROL

I can do it



## INFLUENCE

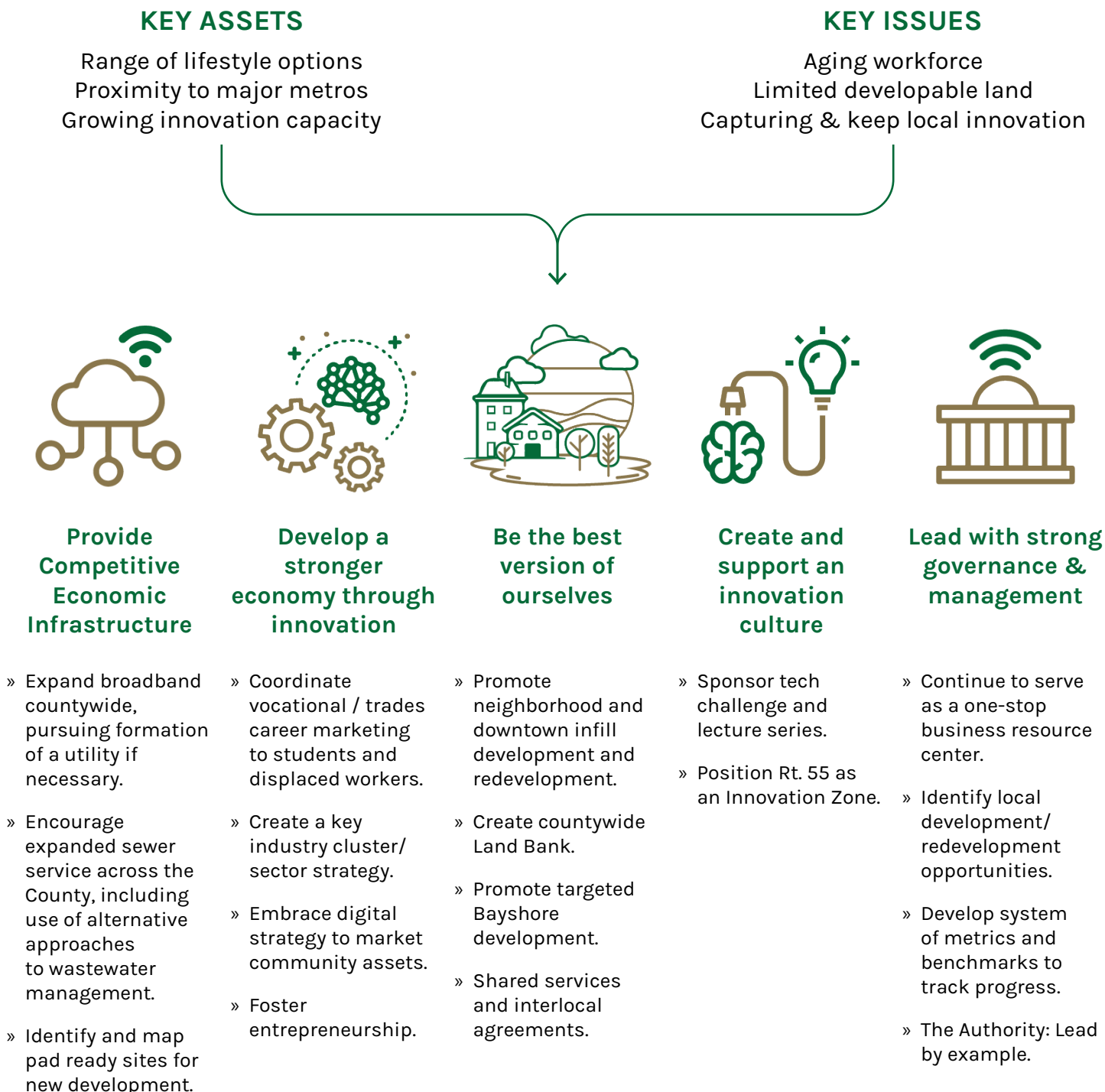
I can help make  
it happen



## HIGHLIGHT

It needs to be on agenda but  
I have limited control

The recommendations are framed by an understanding of Cumberland County’s key assets, issues, and potential. Each of the recommended goals and strategies include a rationale, a set of specific actions or next steps, and examples and resources of best practices in communities facing similar issues and opportunities.





**Provide competitive economic infrastructure**  
that is more than just roads and utilities.

It includes the right types of locations with the right types of buildings and communication networks that allow businesses to function and grow, improving economic opportunity for residents.



Provide Competitive Economic Infrastructure

**Expand broadband countywide, pursuing formation of a utility if necessary.**

---

## RATIONALE

- » COVID demonstrates need for broadband capacity as an equity issue.
  - » I3Connect estimates nearly 13,000 or 25% of County households do not have broadband access in any form.
- » Expanded broadband capacity helps Cumberland County to be more viable as a WFH location, expanding its economic opportunities by attracting new residents and talent, allowing local companies access to specialized workers from across the country without requiring relocation.
- » Expanded broadband networks will support implementation of Manufacturing 4.0 and smart farm / smart community technologies.
- » Accessible broadband improves quality of life for residents in rural locations.

## SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Map broadband availability across the County using FCC Form 477 as a starting point. It is updated 2x a year but lags by approximately 1 year.
- » Investigate feasibility of a publicly owned, cooperative model, or public private partnership to expand broadband (wire and wireless).
- » Seek grant opportunities through Federal Department of Agriculture and US Economic Development Administration for potential use of COVID funds to build out network.
- » Expand 5G coverage in areas of the County where fiber is already available.

## EXAMPLES / RESOURCES

---



Muninetworks website provides a single source of information for different approaches to developing community broadband networks:

[www.muninetworks.org/](http://www.muninetworks.org/)



USDA ReConnect grant/loan program:

[www.usda.gov/reconnect](http://www.usda.gov/reconnect)



Provide Competitive Economic Infrastructure

**Encourage expanded sewer service across County including use of alternative approaches to wastewater management.**

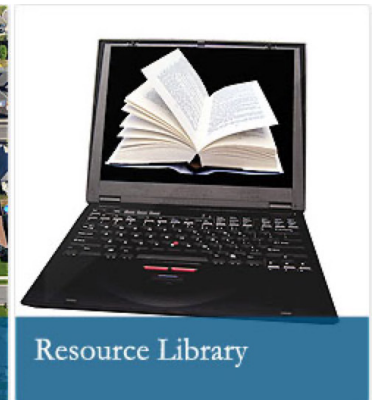
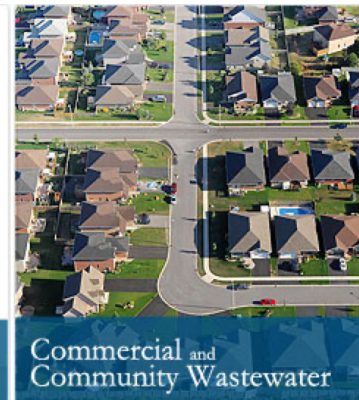
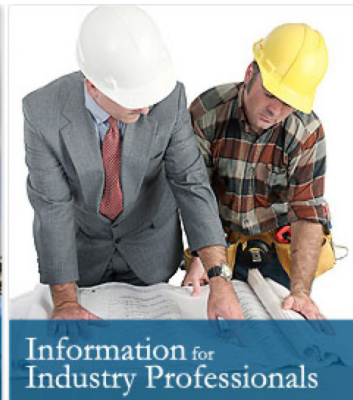
## RATIONALE

- » Wastewater management is critical for continued strategic development of the County.
- » However, traditional sewer technology can be expensive to construct and the restricted development nature of significant portions of the County create challenges to provide needed densities to cover the cost of traditional sewer systems.
- » A range of technologies are now available to allow for the management and treatment of gray water and black water beyond traditional septic systems to support spot development.
  - » This approach allows for managed development approach in environmentally sensitive and conservation areas.

## SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Finalize sewer service mapping with NJDEP.
- » Host conference on alternative forms of wastewater treatment and management.
- » Explore whether a financing model similar to PACE for clean energy can be applied for deployment of decentralized systems.

## EXAMPLES / RESOURCES



The National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association has information on different options for onsite and decentralized wastewater systems:

<http://www.nowra.org>



Provide Competitive Economic Infrastructure

## Identify and map pad ready sites for new development.

### RATIONALE

- » Time to market is a key competitive issue for companies, particularly for tech and manufacturing firms.
- » Therefore time to "plug-in" can be a critical advantage for communities with ready to go sites.
- » Pad ready sites are a "needed to play" for a competitive attraction and retention program and to reduce upfront development risk.
- » Our research did not find a single source either at the state level or the County to help identify pad ready sites for economic development.
- » There is existing rail infrastructure in place and in good condition but it is underutilized.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Create a task force with economic development, key commercial brokers, and planning officials to identify parcels.
- » Identify key criteria such as cleared land, infrastructure, rail, broadband, proximity to highway.
- » Sort and map available land. Commit to a process for working with municipalities and local partners to obtain, provide, and update data.
- » Consider using OmniTrax as one possible model for marketing certified sites (<https://omnitrax.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WW-Marketing-10-sites.pdf>).
- » Highlight specific state and federal development incentives for sites such as Opportunity Zones, UEZ, and Empowerment Zones.

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES



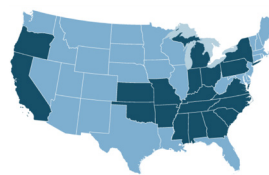
Site Selectors  
Guild Podcast:  
The Importance  
of Pad Ready  
Sites in Economic  
Development  
[bit.ly/2TbJSxo](https://bit.ly/2TbJSxo)



Westmoreland  
County, PA Pad  
Ready Sites:  
[bit.ly/2HoGAoj](https://bit.ly/2HoGAoj)



Wisconsin Certified  
Sites Program:  
[bit.ly/3mayXAx](https://bit.ly/3mayXAx)



National directory of  
certified sites:  
[bit.ly/3md4d1Z](https://bit.ly/3md4d1Z)



Tennessee Dept.  
Economic and  
Community Dev.  
Certified sites page:  
[bit.ly/2IPoYSN](https://bit.ly/2IPoYSN)





**Develop a stronger economy** through quality jobs from new business creation attracted to the skilled workforce in Cumberland County and level of support and innovation for existing business and industry.





Develop a stronger economy through innovation

## Coordinate vocational / trades career marketing to students and displaced workers.

### RATIONALE

- » Interviews and research suggested that a number of skilled trade jobs were going unfilled in the County.
- » A common belief was the lack of appeal of these jobs because they are seen as "inferior" which requires a marketing campaign to reposition these jobs.
- » The age of the workforce in several key sectors suggests additional need to fill these jobs over the next 10 to 15 years.
- » Many young people are unaware of the career and earning potential of jobs in the trades which may require a focus on additional information exchange and marketing about these opportunities.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Organize a working group of key sector leaders, workforce training providers to create a marketing program that utilizes the right digital media channels.
- » Work with school districts and trade associations to make sure trades are represented at career days or special assemblies beginning at the middle school level.
- » Highlight student success at Cumberland County Technology Education Center (CCTEC) and countywide high schools as part of the County's marketing efforts.

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES



Michigan "Going Pro" skilled trade jobs marketing campaign and training initiative:  
[puremi.ch/35mKlx6](http://puremi.ch/35mKlx6)



SkillsUSA Competitions – there is a New Jersey chapter:  
[bit.ly/31rHgJG](http://bit.ly/31rHgJG)



National Association of Manufacturers Manufacturing Day  
[bit.ly/34jTeOq](http://bit.ly/34jTeOq)



Develop a stronger economy through innovation

## Create a key industry cluster/sector strategy.

### RATIONALE

- » Cumberland County has several key industries such as agri/food and advanced manufacturing which spans across several industry and product groups.
- » The US Cluster Mapping Project (<http://clustermapping.us/>) identified 2 trade clusters for Cumberland County that have high degree of specialization compared to the country – these include distribution and ecommerce and "fired materials" (last updated 2018).
- » A comprehensive cluster strategy should be created that includes:
  - » Innovation strategy that supports creation of tech and capturing of tech that is created.
  - » Workforce development programs to keep it competitive from a talent perspective.
  - » Economic infrastructure (buildings / utilities) to enable.
  - » Supply chain and logistics to support it.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Build on and/or Form Industry Sector Groups that can advise on key needs of these clusters.
- » Agri / Food
  - » Continue creation of facilities to capture companies that emerge or want to relocate / expand locally.
  - » Model new business support system after an accelerator to help these companies through their launch and post product development phase.
  - » Build the Center for Smart Food Manufacturing with linkage to career pathways development.
- » Advanced Manufacturing
  - » Create a definition for Advanced Manufacturing and size its impact on Cumberland County.
  - » Examine workforce preparation options and advance stackable credentials program for manufacturing tech with input from Rowan College SJ, CCTEC and Workforce Development Board.

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES

Madison, WI's regional agriculture, food & beverage industry cluster analysis

[bit.ly/387EHr6](http://bit.ly/387EHr6)

NJEDA programs & resources to support NJ's Advanced Manufacturing Sector

[bit.ly/2HWMVr4](http://bit.ly/2HWMVr4)

Bluegrass Economic Advancement Movement (BEAM) exports initiative

[bit.ly/385Vo6f](http://bit.ly/385Vo6f)





Cumberland County's agricultural industry is a unique strength with potential for further growth and development.

Credit: Craig Terry



Develop a stronger economy through innovation

**Embrace a digital strategy to market community assets.**

---

## RATIONALE

If we are to change the narrative of Cumberland County, then we must do a better job of selling our assets through digital platforms. We have focused on our distress for too long- to be competitive we must find ways of shining light on our assets- ways that have a meaningful impact on the greatest number of people.

Increasingly, CEO's are doing their own research and making relocation decisions through digital channels. We have an opportunity to capture their attention and pitch our positives directly to the decision-makers.

A digital strategy will also spread awareness within the County of The Authority's role, projects, and progress.

## SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Respond to leads and Requests for Proposals with digital proposals that highlight expertise.
- » Drive targeted, relevant traffic to The Authority website with positive and consistent social media posts and eblasts, making it a single source online resource tool for businesses.
- » Embed key information and community mapping from statewide sites on The Authority's website to enhance information on regional assets.
- » Utilize lead software to target relevant prospects, analyze data and raise community profile.
- » Reestablish and reinvigorate relationships with public and private regional and state economic development agencies to generate knowledge of potential expansions.

## EXAMPLES / RESOURCES

---



NJ Community Capital; CHOOSE NJ, NJ Business Assistance Center, NJEDA

[bit.ly/3enyCYx](https://bit.ly/3enyCYx)



Kennewick, WA Economic Development Marketing Plan 2019-2020

[bit.ly/34U57KO](https://bit.ly/34U57KO)



eImpact develops data dashboards to help communities see a live snapshot of their key metrics

[bit.ly/3lrW89y](https://bit.ly/3lrW89y)





Provide Competitive Economic Infrastructure

## Foster Entrepreneurship.

---

### RATIONALE

Small businesses create the majority of new jobs in the country and support for entrepreneurs will provide new skilled positions;

- » New businesses generated 72% of the job gains in the County in 2019 – a lower rate than the state overall (74%).
- » Venture Forward estimates the Vineland – Bridgeton Millville metro area generates 2.4 new ventures per 100 people compared to 3.9/100 people nationally.

An ecosystem of support is needed to encourage and sustain entrepreneurs as they advance through the creative and development process.

Good way to attract young professionals looking for benefits of rural environment but short distance from urban amenities.

The County and region have a number of emerging assets that can be utilized to support growth in entrepreneurship. Among these include:

- » Rowan University Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship: [https://business.rowan.edu/centers\\_of\\_excellence1/cie/index.html](https://business.rowan.edu/centers_of_excellence1/cie/index.html).
- » Rowan College of SJ Manufacturing Innovation Learning Lab: <https://www.rcsj.edu>.
- » Inspira Innovation Lab at South Jersey Technology Park: <https://www.inspirahealthnetwork.org/innovation-center>.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Explore with Rowan College of South Jersey how to best connect with the resources and assets of Rowan University that can help local businesses innovate.
- » Create mentorship, networking, and internship opportunities for existing entrepreneurs and artists.
- » Identify potential local and regional training and financial resources for entrepreneurs.
- » Facilitate development of incubator and/or accelerator space..

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES

---

Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities' Economic & Community Engagement initiatives

[bit.ly/2l0kb0B](https://bit.ly/2l0kb0B)

Michigan State University's Center for Community & Economic Development

[ced.msu.edu](https://ced.msu.edu)

The Startup Hub is a physical hub for the Greater Green Bay entrepreneurial ecosystem

[thestartuphub.org](https://thestartuphub.org)





**Be the best version of ourselves.**

Enhance our communities & neighborhoods through high quality development and amenities.



Be the best version of ourselves

## Promote neighborhood and downtown infill development and redevelopment.

---

### RATIONALE

- » Despite its geographic size Cumberland County has limited land available for development, approximately 66% of the land is subject to some form of conservation or development limitation.
- » The County's cities offer the potential for walkability but none of the cities have Walk Scores or Bike Scores over 50.
- » The commercial corridors offer a mix of amenities but are challenged because of the changes to shopping patterns accelerated by COVID-19.
- » There are an abundance of vacant lots and underutilized sites within the urban areas of the County.
- » Creating a "sense of place" can help attract and retain talent.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Promote and encourage small scale development including partnerships with smaller nonprofit organizations to combine homeowner rehab and new construction.
- » promote and leverage The Authority's expertise in redevelopment and ability to enter into shared services agreements to assemble projects and financing in redevelopment areas.
- » Engage downtown organizations on development tools, training, and niche markets that will give them a competitive advantage and attract young professionals.
- » Use Cumberland County's Empowerment Zones CDFI designation to create innovative gap financing opportunities for small scale projects.
- » Evaluate new types of flexible zoning and permitting techniques that spur economic development, such as "pink zoning" or mix tape zoning or "lean urbanism" techniques.
- » Create models of development templates that can receive "by right" approvals to support scattered site housing redevelopment

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES

---

Lean Urbanism is small-scale, incremental community-building initiative working to lower the barriers to community-building and local development.

[leanurbanism.org](http://leanurbanism.org)

Guidance for individual homeowners on how to fix up their properties and improve their neighborhoods in Chattanooga, TN.

[mychatthouse.com](http://mychatthouse.com)

Initiative helping locals strengthen their neighborhoods through small-scale real estate projects.

[bit.ly/2HTMwpl](https://bit.ly/2HTMwpl)



Cumberland County's three cities offer advantageous opportunities for economic development & redevelopment. Walkable development / redevelopment in these cities can provide a complement to County's rural landscapes.



Be the best version of ourselves

## Create Countywide Land Bank.

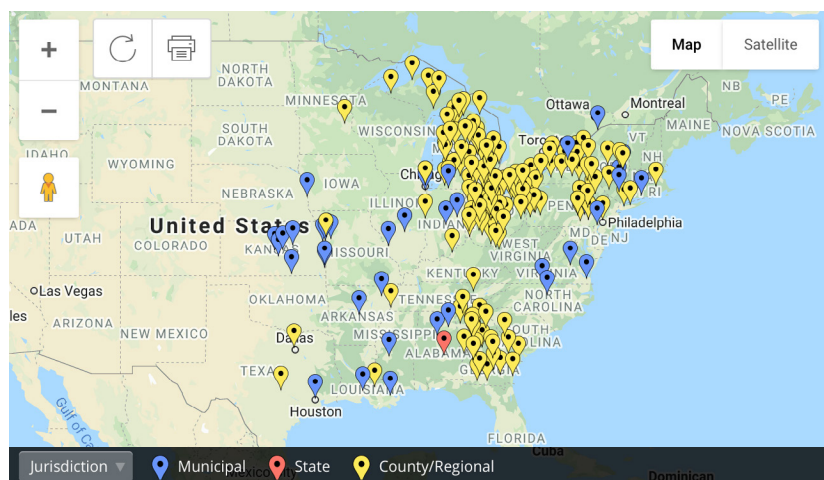
### RATIONALE

- » C\_P.L. 2019 enabled Improvement Authorities to act as a Land Bank for multiple municipalities subject to a Shared Services Agreement.
- » Land Banks offer the ability to clear title on property, assemble property to create larger parcels more amenable to development, & coupled with a development entity redevelop property.
- » There is a substantial amount of potential land in Cumberland County that could be eligible for land bank activity.
  - » According to ATTOM Data Solutions thru Q1 2020 Cumberland County had the highest rate of foreclosure filings in the US at 1 / 180 homes (<https://dsnews.com/daily-dose/07-13-2020/most-vulnerable-housing-markets-clustered-on-the-east-coast>).
  - » HUD.Com identified 2,925 tax lien sales (<https://www.hud.com/hud-homes/cumberland-county-nj>).
  - » Nine identified federal brownfield sites exist in the County (check this number).
- » Given the limited developable land in Cumberland County maximizing redevelopment and reuse of existing sites is critical.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Finalize list of potential land bank eligible parcels including vacant land.
- » Develop a draft land bank plan and shared services agreement that includes land disposition process and distribution of proceeds from any activity.

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES



Center for Community Progress' National Map of Land Banks & Land Banking Programs

[bit.ly/3oWCHbg](https://bit.ly/3oWCHbg)

#### Additional Land Banks & Resources:

Land Bank in Hamilton County, OH within a community and economic development agency

[bit.ly/3jUgsPk](https://bit.ly/3jUgsPk)

Guidance on how to fund Land Banks from Shelterforce

[bit.ly/3oMEJue](https://bit.ly/3oMEJue)

Genesee County, MI Land Bank

[thelandbank.org](https://thelandbank.org)





Be the best version of ourselves

## Promote targeted Bayshore development.

### RATIONALE

- » The Bayshore may represent an opportunity for targeted eco-friendly development/ redevelopment that can enhance the quality of life and amenity mix for residents of Cumberland County.
- » It can also create an opportunity for enhanced tourism.
- » However, the need for resiliency as well as protection of key natural resources as well as maintaining the essential nature of the Bayshore need to be important planning considerations.
- » The Bayshore Council has identified a number of critical actions needed to promote economic development and resilience for the Bayshore region of New Jersey, many of which are echoed in the Cumberland County analysis.
- » Leverage the recently approved wastewater treatment facility.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Facilitate and help secure financial and technical resources for infrastructure, storm protection and business development.
- » Create a development plan for those areas endorsed by the local communities.
- » Support viability of existing marine-based businesses.

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES

New Jersey Delaware Bayshore Council 2019 Report to the Governor & NJ Legislature

[bit.ly/34SyYTM](https://bit.ly/34SyYTM)

Coastal Resilience Assessment of the Delaware Bay and Coastal Watersheds

[bit.ly/3emh1QM](https://bit.ly/3emh1QM)

Compact Urbanism & Coastal Resilience

[bit.ly/366GQRk](https://bit.ly/366GQRk)



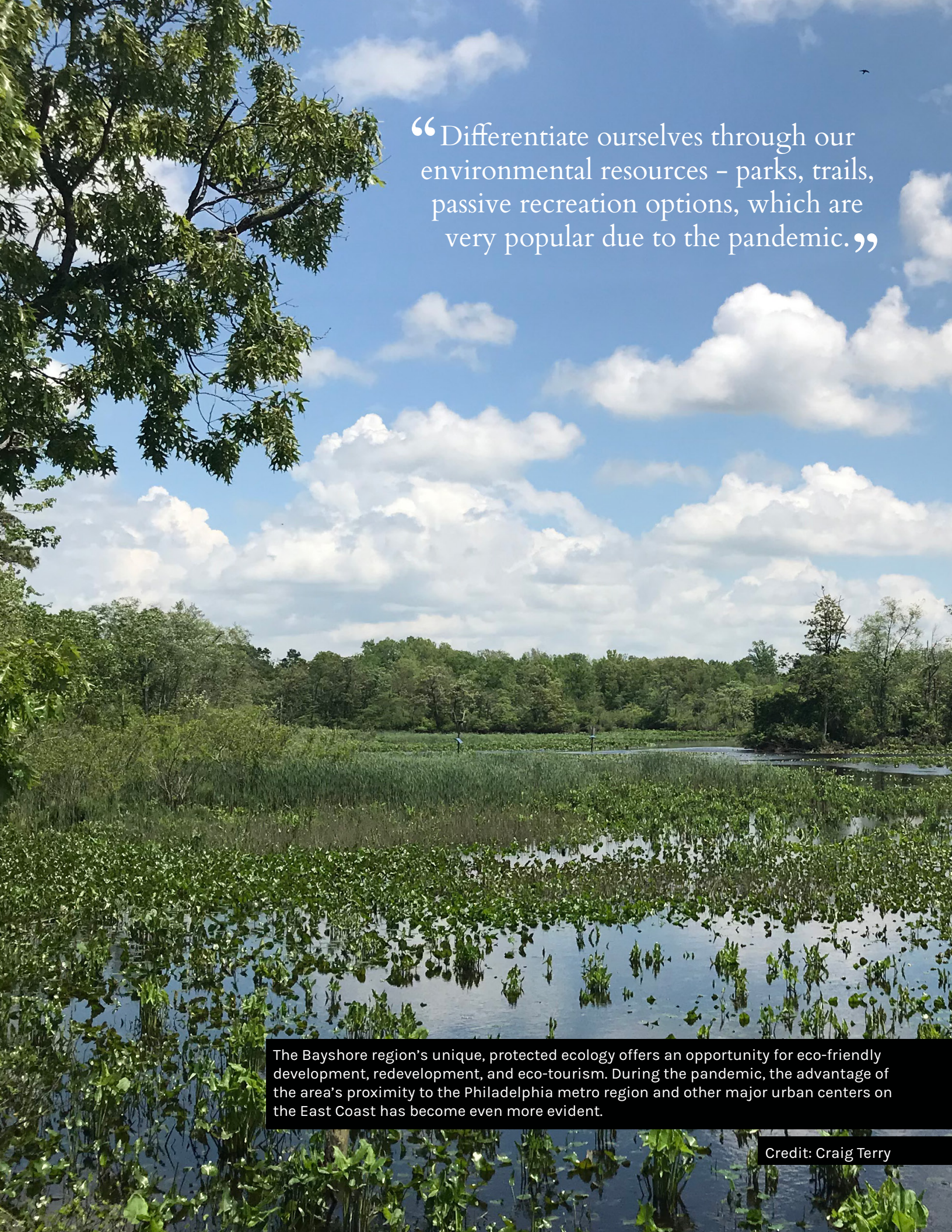
New Jersey  
**Delaware Bayshore Council**  
2019 Report to the Governor & NJ Legislature  
Released December 2019



*AJR25: A Joint Resolution signed by the Governor recognizes the Delaware Bayshore as a region of special significance in NJ. By virtue of this resolution, NJ's Delaware Bayshore Council is urged by the State of New Jersey to report to the Governor and the Legislature detailing various threats to the Delaware Bayshore's cultural, ecological, economic, historical and recreational resources, and to make policy recommendations, including any proposed legislation, on how the State could design programs or direct resources to help address these threats.*

The Delaware Bayshore Council 2019 Report to the Governor & NJ Legislature details a series of recommendations for economic development in the bayshore region while protecting and conserving the natural environment.





“Differentiate ourselves through our environmental resources – parks, trails, passive recreation options, which are very popular due to the pandemic.”

The Bayshore region's unique, protected ecology offers an opportunity for eco-friendly development, redevelopment, and eco-tourism. During the pandemic, the advantage of the area's proximity to the Philadelphia metro region and other major urban centers on the East Coast has become even more evident.

Credit: Craig Terry





**Create and support an innovation culture  
across the County.**



Create and support an innovation culture

## Sponsor tech challenge and lecture series.

### RATIONALE

- » Challenges are used by a number of communities to both highlight technology and entrepreneurship but also serve as part of brand building exercise.
- » Several different approaches to this including:
  - » Bake-offs / "Shark Tanks" / pitch contests.
  - » Community problem solving hackathons.
- » It can also be focused on specific age groups such as high school or middle school students.
- » Lecture series can be modeled after the Venture Cafe model used by CIC.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Identify lead organization (The Authority)
- » Raise a fund to award prize money / sponsor event (\$10k-20k).
- » Link entrepreneurs with existing innovation-based institutions and industries such as Inspira, Rowan University, Rutgers Food Innovation Center and The Authority Food Specialization Center.
- » Partner with EDO's to provide Start up business training at The Authority.
- » Expand opportunities created by the data center, artificial intelligence, and digital media.

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES



Northern Michigan Pitch Night

#### Pitch Nights / Hackathons / Challenges:

Northern Michigan Pitch Night Competitions by the Northern Lakes Economic Alliance

[bit.ly/34VumfX](http://bit.ly/34VumfX)

USDA "Apps for Ag" Hackathon competition to address common agricultural issues

[bit.ly/3mQZovE](http://bit.ly/3mQZovE)

New Jersey's statewide robotics program, First Tech Challenge

[bit.ly/3mNBRLR](http://bit.ly/3mNBRLR)



Venture Cafe Cambridge

#### Lecture Series / Entrepreneurial Community Building:

Community of entrepreneurs, funders, and innovators that meet every Thursday in Cambridge, MA

[bit.ly/3jXal7k](http://bit.ly/3jXal7k)



Create and support an innovation culture

## Position Rt. 55 as an Innovation Zone.

### RATIONALE

- » The location of several key institutional assets along the County's key corridor provides an opportunity to position the County has an innovation center.
- » Capitalize on the establishment of a formal relationship with Rowan University through RCSJ merger to expand resources available to business community by exploring partnerships opportunities with RCSJ.
- » Ongoing innovation and growth in medical technology and residency program at Inspira Health Network.
- » Development of the Mechatronics Innovation Learning Lab at RCSJ.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Develop a brand for the corridor that leverages the shared location of RCSJ, CCTEC and Inspira to encourage and foster innovation in education, business and training and to attract new students and businesses.
- » Evaluate development options and land use along corridor and support efforts that promote physical connectivity and linkages to the resources and research capacity of the institutions.
- » Market the corridor as a concentration of innovation becomes established.

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES



The Cleveland Health-Tech Corridor (HTC) offers companies in the health and technology sector a variety of services and networking opportunities to help small businesses expand and thrive.

[bit.ly/2H1iWhy](https://bit.ly/2H1iWhy)

Iowa's Cultivation Corridor works to spur innovation and accelerate growth in the agbioscience, biorenewables, biotech and advanced manufacturing industries.

[bit.ly/3lrlzHc](https://bit.ly/3lrlzHc)

The 33 Smart Mobility Corridor is home to one of the largest concentrations of manufacturers, R&D firms, and logistics companies in Ohio, and focuses on the automobile sector.

[33smartcorridor.com](https://33smartcorridor.com)

The Greater San Marcos Partnership (GSMP) fosters sustainable and economic development in the Greater San Marcos region of Texas, focused on promotion, job growth, and tapping into local talent.

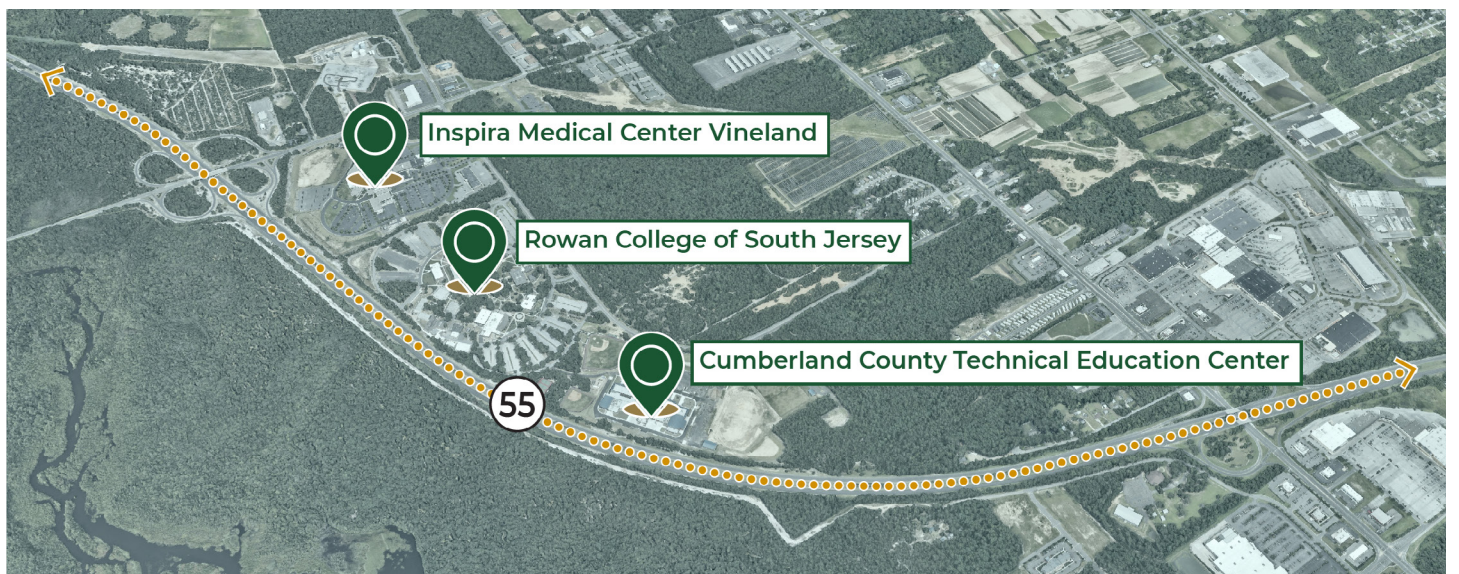
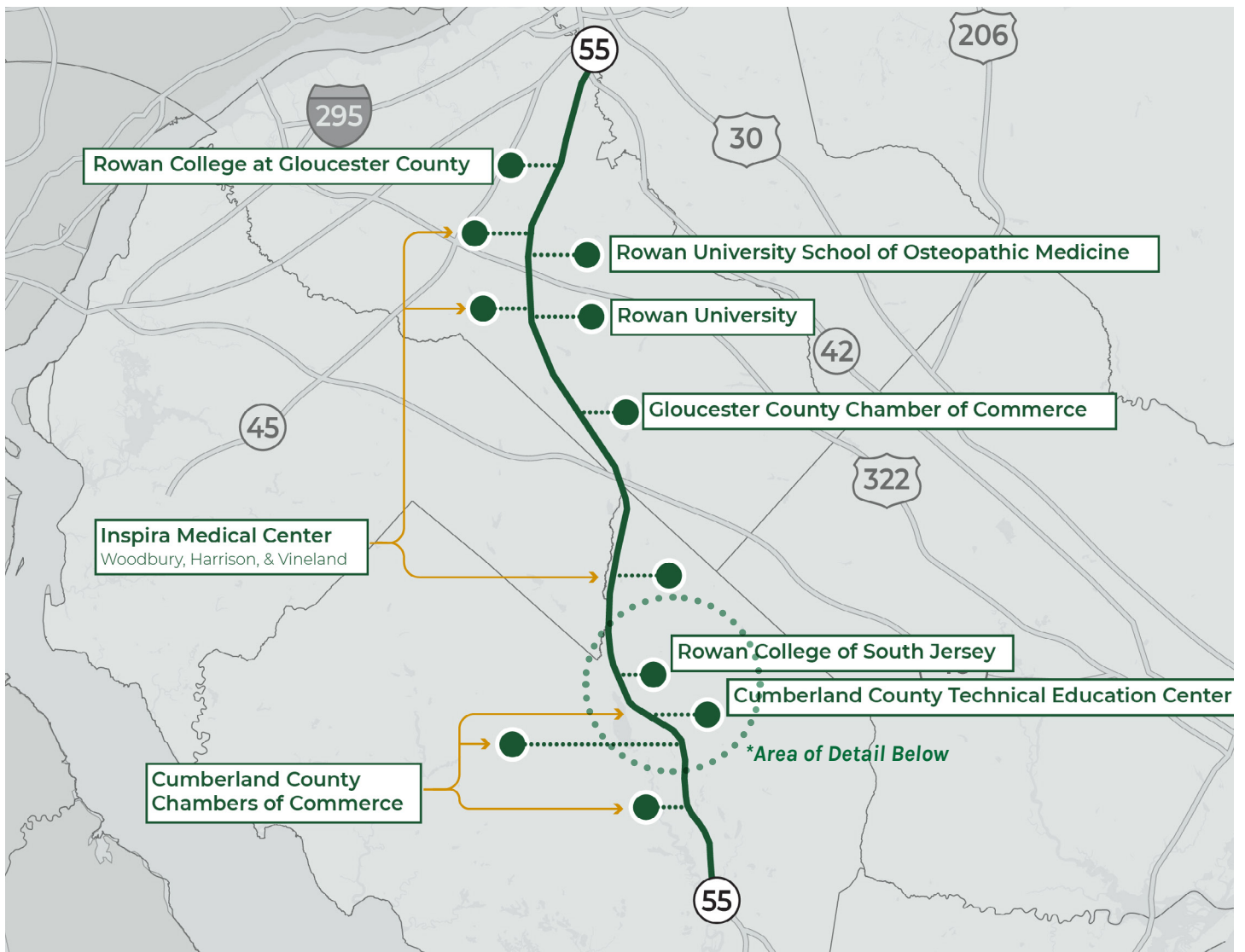
[greatersanmarcostx.com](https://greatersanmarcostx.com)



Rowan's Mechatronics Innovation Learning Lab (MILL) will consist of state-of-the-art training equipment, featuring a small-drone obstacle course, a robotics, automation, and manufacturing training area, a high-def CAD/CAM computer lab, and a dedicated server room.

[bit.ly/3poMIDK](https://bit.ly/3poMIDK)





The Route 55 corridor spans multiple counties in South Jersey, and connects a series of educational, medical, and economic development institutions. In the City of Vineland, a cluster of educational and medical institutions presents an opportunity for a localized innovation cluster.



**Lead with strong governance and management  
of our public sector.**



Lead with strong governance and management

**Continue to serve as a one-stop business resource center.**

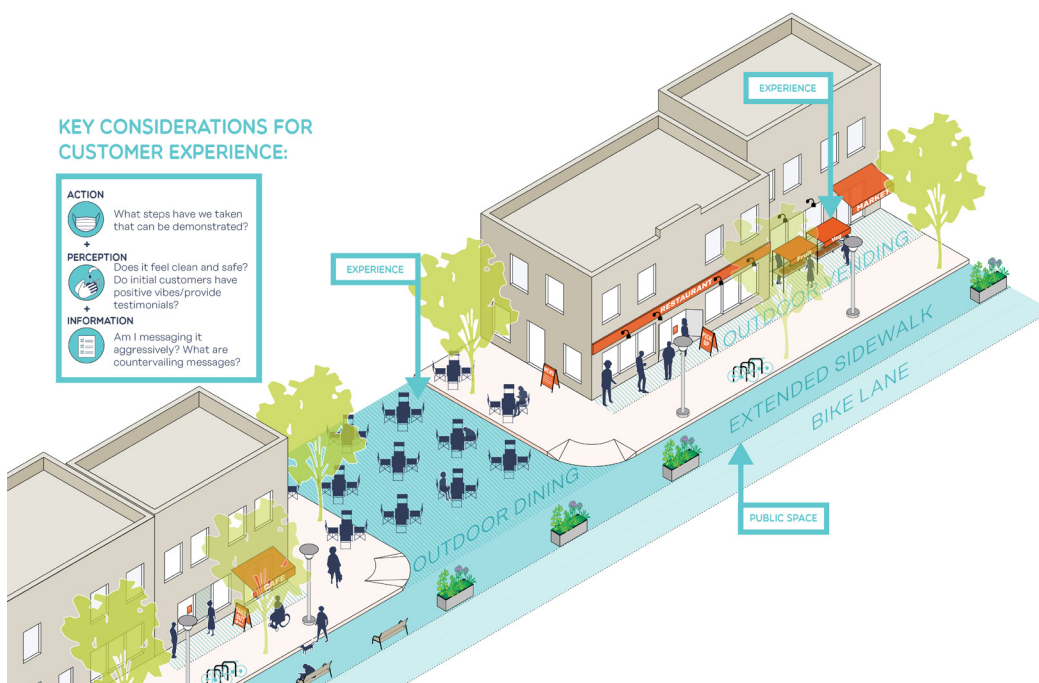
## RATIONALE

The need for a one stop resource center for business assistance became evident during the early months of the Covid-19 crisis; The Authority filled that void by assembling key players at the local, state and federal level, providing a direct source of information and utilizing business and organizational partners to distribute accurate information.

## SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Monitor vacancy levels and health of County's commercial business corridors.
  - » Identify where restaurant infrastructure is already in place but vacant.
- » Consider options to preserve and / or relaunch cultural assets of the County with a sustainable model going forward.
- » Continuously update website to provide latest information and references.

## EXAMPLES / RESOURCES



Restart, Reset, Retool, Refill outlines strategies that public and private sector partners can implement to support small business recovery during COVID-19.

Restart, Reset, Retool, Refill  
- a guide for small business  
recovery during COVID-19

[bit.ly/3jWwW9D](https://bit.ly/3jWwW9D)

COVID-19 Business Resource  
Center guidance and grants  
by industry

[covid19.helloalice.com](https://covid19.helloalice.com)

COVID-19 resources  
& information for the  
museum field

[bit.ly/3kVXTLR](https://bit.ly/3kVXTLR)





Lead with strong governance and management

## Identify Local Development/Redevelopment Opportunities.

### RATIONALE

Clear development standards, with a user-friendly process and reasonable timeframe is a critical component in the decision-making process for future development; in fact, it can make up for other deficiencies or less than ideal conditions or costs.

The Authority, by enabling statute, is authorized as a redevelopment entity with both development and financing powers. In addition, the staff has expertise in development finance, construction management, engineering, and architecture.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Encourage designation of Redevelopment Areas and Areas in Need of Rehabilitation under state statute in order to take advantage of all planning tools and financing modes.
- » Seek opportunities to assist private partners to collaborate in projects with community redevelopment benefits, including nonprofit organizations.
- » Replicate development model used to create redevelopment opportunities in the heart of Bridgeton and Millville's downtown, with site remediation, assembly and financing.
- » Use shared service agreements to provide countywide services, project management, information sharing, and for redevelopment initiatives that may be too expensive to do individually but generate public benefit such as land banks, foreclosure tracking, etc.

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES



**South Vineland Industrial Park:** The Authority assisted the City of Vineland to purchase 300 acres to be developed as a new industrial park and is participating in a redesign of the County roadways. The park immediately secured one large purchaser, Northeast Precast, that has a three stage development plan of \$45 million with over 400 jobs projected.



**Bridgeton Downtown Project:** The Bridgeton Downtown office building is a 30,000 SQFT multi-tenant facility that when completed in 2021 will house administrative offices for the CompleteCare Health Network, as well as health care services and a pharmacy. The site is located within the City's Historic District, so the design of the building has been sensitive to the size and scale of the historic properties nearby.





Lead with strong governance and management

## Develop system of metrics and benchmarks to track progress.

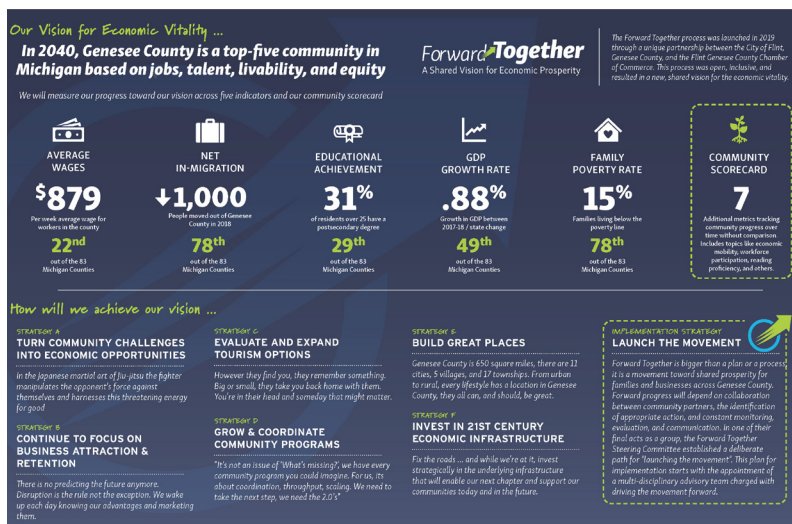
### RATIONALE

- » Knowing if the proposed strategies are effective requires tracking progress.
- » Key issues to developing a system of metrics is ensuring that they are balanced i.e., not all economic performance, and have line of sight to the goals.
- » It is also critical to determine if peer communities should be included as well as aspirational geographies.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Have economic development advisory board identify key criteria for "dashboard".
  - » Broad performance indicators or program indicators?
  - » Compare to other communities?
  - » Ease of data collection.
  - » Balance between economic and quality of life ?
- » Identify peer communities if necessary.
- » Look at the role of Smart Communities approaches that can support the agricultural and Bayshore.

### EXAMPLES / RESOURCES



#### Additional metrics & benchmarks examples:

The Greater Louisville Project provides research and data to catalyze civic action for long-term progress.

[greaterlouisvilleproject.org](http://greaterlouisvilleproject.org)

The Upjohn Institute and The Center for the Study of Rural Indiana have developed economic development benchmarking suggestions.

[bit.ly/3oR0pFz](http://bit.ly/3oR0pFz)

The book Smart Communities by Suzanne Morse outlines how local leaders can use strategic thinking to benefit their communities.

[smartcommunities.typepad.com](http://smartcommunities.typepad.com)

Genesee County's most recent economic development plan includes a set of metrics to help monitor progress towards achieving the Plan's vision for economic development.

[forwardtogethergenesee.org](http://forwardtogethergenesee.org)



Lead with strong governance and management

## The Authority: Lead by example.

### RATIONALE

As the lead economic development agency for the County, encouraging businesses to innovate through this plan, The Authority must lead through its own innovative practices and partnerships.

### SPECIFIC ACTIONS / KEY NEXT STEPS

- » Permit multiple alternative work modalities and use virtual platforms.
- » Integrate technology into development and solid waste operations.
- » Maintain an easily accessible and frequently updated website.
- » Digitally showcase the County's assets and focus on the County's positive storylines and accomplishments.
- » Rebrand The Authority with a more private sector identity to demonstrate the agency is nimble, adaptive, and business-like.



Completion Date: 2020  
Project Cost: \$9,000,000  
Project Location: Deerfield Township  
Construction-related Jobs: 80  
Construction Job Impact: \$3,314,588  
**TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT: \$13,500,000**

**The Authority Microgrid:** The entire landfill operation, including the adjoining administration building, is being powered by renewable energy produced from a conversion of the landfill's methane gas to energy project. Three landfill gas-fueled engines are combined with standby generators to provide primary and critical power needs. This provides a long term, sustainable solution to the local community, and makes the Cumberland County's landfill operation a unique model for other public and private landfill operations. Additionally, the heat created from the engines is used to evaporate residual water from the treatment plant, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating the need to haul off site in tankers. The equipment for the Microgrid and related projects totals \$9 million.



The Food Specialization Center is an example of work the County has implemented to support businesses to innovate.



Completion Date: 2020  
 Project Cost: \$2,246,548  
 Project Location: Deerfield Township  
 Construction-related Jobs: 22  
 Construction Job Impact: \$836,483  
 Efficiencies and Ancillary Benefits: \$5,950,000  
**TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT: \$13,500,000**

**The Authority Leachate Treatment Facility:** The \$2.2 million project allows the Cumberland County Improvement Authority to purify the landfill’s leachate on-site. The leachate treatment facility constructed at the Cumberland County Solid Waste Complex is one-of-a-kind in New Jersey because it has a direct discharge permit. The treatment facility consists of a combination of ultra-filtration and reverse osmosis systems used to decontaminate leachate – the liquid sludge that results from rainwater and other liquids filtering through the landfill. The leachate must be collected and treated. The leachate processing facility eliminates the need to transport the leachate to an alternative site for processing and discharge, decreasing ongoing processing costs of approximately \$850,000 per year at the facility.

Prepared by:

**Ninigret** | Partners

**\_INTERFACE STUDIO LLC**