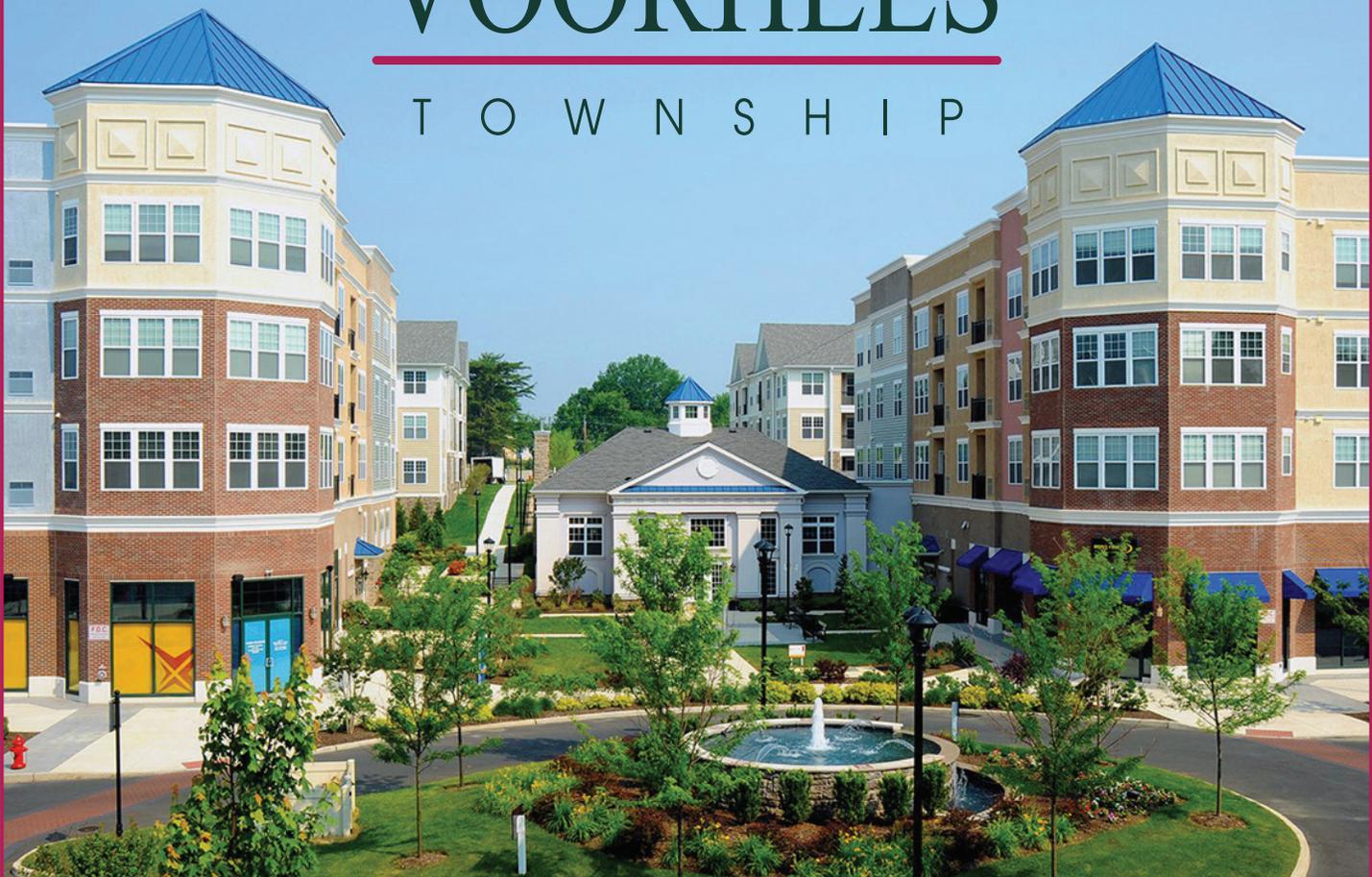


# VOORHEES

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T O W N S H I P



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

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# INTRODUCTION

This is an Economic Development Master Plan Analysis. Two other deliverables are being submitted along with this report:

- (1) Economic Development Opportunities Analysis**
- (2) Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) assessment of the Township**

This Plan is founded on the information obtained through interviews with employers and key-influencers in Voorhees as well as throughout Camden County, and State government, in addition to a review of key statistical and other secondary-source information.

The results of this research provided critical information leading to an understanding of:

- **Marketable strengths that can be capitalized upon**
- **Product deficiencies that can be corrected cost-effectively**
- **Development opportunities**
- **Issues having an impact on the community's or region's economic development future**
- **Obstacles to development**

Research for Voorhees's Economic Development Master Plan included:

- **Initial Project Alignment, Organizational and Background Research (Task 1)**
- **An Economic Base Analysis including a detailed statistical profile (part of Task 2)**
- **A detailed Community Business Climate Analysis (Task 3)**

In addition, an Economic Development Opportunities Analysis (frequently called a Target Industry Analysis) was prepared as Task 4 of this project.

Following this research, the Economic Development Strategy was compiled as Part I of this Master Plan. The Strategy contains 8 initiatives to be pursued by the Township. These initiatives will provide Voorhees with the greatest impact and return on its investment. The initiatives are not presented in any order of priority, and should be determined by the Township and its advisors.

The 8 initiatives are built upon important items on which the Township or other agencies are already working, such as:

- **Continuing efforts to improve Downtown Voorhees, including real estate development, merchant recruitment, niche retail development, promotions and marketing, and parking**
- **Improvements to train service into Voorhees as well as the train station area**
- **Transportation improvements through an updated Transportation Plan**
- **Streamlined code enforcement**

Part II of this Master Plan contains a Vision Statement and Goals developed by the team using input received from stakeholders during the research conducted for Tasks 1-3. This vision and goals serve as a guiding foundation for the Township's economic development program over the next 10 years.

Also in Part II is an Implementation or Action Plan. This Action Plan pinpoints specific steps for the Township, its partners, and stakeholders to take in order to implement each of the 11 initiatives of the Economic Development Strategy. The Action Plan also includes, for each initiative:

- **a schedule for implementation**
- **identified agencies or individuals responsible for the implementation**
- **the resources needed**
- **performance measures to gauge the Township's success in meeting the Plan's goals**

Exhibit 2 contains a summary of the schedule for each of the major action steps in the Action Plan and recognizes that because of the existing work responsibilities of the Township's staff and economic development allies; some flexibility is necessary in working new projects into the schedule.

# ECONOMIC STRATEGY INITIATIVES

#	SHORT NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
1	<b>Voorhees EDC</b>	<p>Voorhees Economic Development Committee (VEDC)</p> <p>A public/private partnership with broad representation from all institutions that have an impact on the Township’s economic development opportunities</p> <p>Voorhees Economic Development program. Efforts of this team should focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Business Retention and Expansion that includes all size companies</b></li> <li>• <b>Product development, such as seeing that adequate real estate inventory in Voorhees and nearby business site areas are “shovel-ready” and competitively priced; promotional literature is developed; supporting databases are complete and up-to-date on sites regarding labor force, incentives, taxation, employer lists</b></li> <li>• <b>Marketing and pro-active business attraction including maintenance of an effective Economic development portion of the townships website with links to other area agencies and services.</b></li> </ul>
2	<b>Available Real Estate Inventory</b>	<p>Create and maintain an Available Real Estate Inventory specific to properties within the township limits, with a dedicated section for Downtown. Aspects of this initiative include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Creation of a standardized format for all listed properties</b></li> <li>• <b>Improvement of communications channels with brokers and property owners to maximize available information</b></li> <li>• <b>Inclusion of this inventory on the Township’s economic development website</b></li> </ul>
3	<b>Department of Planning and Development Repositioning</b>	<p>Reposition the Township’s Department of Community &amp; Economic Development to emphasize its economic development mission with expanded use of the Voorhees Network and leadership in the Voorhees Development Committee. Elements of this Initiative include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Continuation of a focus on Downtown development and promotion</b></li> <li>• <b>More systematic, Township-wide business retention and expansion efforts, including small employers and employers outside of the downtown</b></li> <li>• <b>Maintenance of a steady communication stream with all employers in the Township on trends, events, and updates</b></li> <li>• <b>A visitation and relationship-building program to Township employers</b></li> <li>• <b>Development, through the private sector, of a business park on newly annexed land</b></li> </ul>

## ECONOMIC STRATEGY INITIATIVES

#	SHORT NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
3	<b>Department of Planning and Development Repositioning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with owners of vacant buildings to prepare their buildings and sites for market needs</li> <li>• Developing new marketing material and redeveloping the Township's website for economic-development uses (see Initiative #2)</li> <li>• Working with the Department of Development and Planning to emphasize the importance of redevelopment &amp; rehabilitation</li> <li>• Updating the Township map to show all redevelopment and rehabilitation areas</li> <li>• Developing a scripted video prospect tour</li> <li>• Expand the existing "Buy Local" Shop Voorhees program to encourage local residents to shop locally</li> </ul>
4	<b>Create a Voorhees Brand</b>	Brand Voorhees as a regional Medical hub and create a related marketing program.
5	<b>Cost-of-Doing Business Analysis</b>	<p>Prepare an analysis of the cost-of-doing-business in Voorhees versus other competing locations including an electric-cost comparison model of Voorhees, and other communities. Components should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor costs</li> <li>• Real estate costs</li> <li>• Construction costs</li> <li>• Taxes</li> <li>• Incentives to reduce costs</li> </ul>
6	<b>Permit and Approval Review and Improvement</b>	Continue the process of improving the Township's business climate and/or the perception of the Township's business-friendliness by taking actions necessary to identify and correct problems in the Township's regulations and procedures.
7	<b>Economic Diversification Land</b>	<p>Identify land in the Township with development or redevelopment potential for industrial, office and R&amp;D operations, especially those within the Task 4 Target Industries, and take appropriate actions with the owners to make those sites shovel-ready as demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of the land on the market at a reasonable price</li> <li>• Appropriate zoning</li> <li>• Land characteristics that facilitate development</li> </ul>
8	<b>Target Industry Recruitment</b>	Develop, fund and implement aggressive and effective business attraction, retention/expansion, and startup programs for targeted industries identified in Task 4 of this project to diversify and strengthen the Township's economic base. This would include investigation into the feasibility of a general business incubator.

# VISION STATEMENT AND GOALS

## Economic Development Vision Statement

In 2020, Voorhees will have a diversified economy providing well-paying jobs for workers from a multi-county area. Downtown Voorhees and its shopping and entertainment opportunities will be a destination for residents and area visitors, as well as a sought-after business location. Voorhees' economic sector will be a key component of its highly desirable quality of life.

## Economic Development Goals

A strategic plan allows us to provide a realistic, workable framework that is built upon a foundation of constant improvement. Built into the plan are milestones that will help us in gauging our progress. It provides a process of improving the Township's business climate and the perception of the Township's business-friendliness by taking actions necessary to identify and correct problems in the Township's regulations and procedures, and to communicate improvements effectively.

The unifying theme of the Township's economic development program, as reflected in the Economic Development Master Plan, is to create and sustain a multi-faceted economic base that includes research and development, medical-oriented and other office operations, retail and services, and entertainment types of uses that will find Voorhees an attractive location. This will be accomplished through a combination of:

- Existing business outreach and assistance for retention and expansion
- Entrepreneurship and small business development
- Sustainable downtown physical and economic vitality
- Community development and redevelopment

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## INITIATIVE #1: VOORHEES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### RELATED GOALS

- Diversified Business Attraction
- Existing Business Outreach and Assistance for Retention and Expansion
- Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development
- Sustainable Downtown Physical and Economic Vitality
- Community Development and Redevelopment

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Voorhees is blessed with many outstanding organizations whose activities include the promotion of economic development in the Township or a broader area that includes the Township. Many areas with similar multi-agency programs are focusing on improving their productivity and cost-effectiveness by establishing more formalized structures to coordinate efforts. The structure that will be best for Voorhees must be developed by the participants.

The Township of Voorhees has coordinated its effort to establish a Voorhees Economic Development Committee (VEDC), in the form of a public/private partnership with broad representation from all institutions that have an impact on the Township’s economic development opportunities. The exact structure conforms to the needs and desires of the member organizations. Efforts of this team focus on:

- Establishing a clearly defined mission and service-delivery structure that assures that all functions of a full-service economic development program are adequately met most efficiently and cost-effectively.
- Business Retention and Expansion that includes all sizes and types of companies.
- Product development, such as seeing that adequate real estate inventory in Voorhees and nearby areas of Camden County exists and business sites are “shovel-ready” and competitively priced; promotional literature is developed; supporting databases are complete and up-to-date on sites, labor force, incentives, taxation, employer lists, and on utility availability, quality, and cost.
- Marketing and pro-active business attraction including effective marketing of the Township.
- Directing economic-development services in the Voorhees area in cooperation with other economic development agencies and area stakeholders.

### MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
1. Township Director of Community & Economic Development, with counsel from Voorhees township stakeholders to identify all agencies that should be part of this Initiative.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
2. Prepare a detailed Purpose Statement that explains the need for this new structure and primary benefits.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
3. Host an organizational meeting to discuss the creation of such an entity and explore options, impediments, concerns, and other important issues.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2017

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE (CONT'D)

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
4. Prepare a detailed analysis of what services are currently being provided by area organizations to identify areas of gaps and duplications, related issues, and desired service improvements.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2017
5. Undertake research to identify other places that have undertaken a similar initiative, obtain information on possible organizational forms and “lessons learned” from these efforts.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
6. Identify areas in need of redevelopment and/or rehabilitations.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
7. Come to agreement on the type of organization or relationship that will best meet the needs of Voorhees and its allies.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
8. Take actions necessary to implement that agreement (may include such items as articles in Committee, bylaws, etc.).	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2017
9. Conduct a detailed performance evaluation of the new entity and make adjustments as necessary.	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtrs. 2017 and annually

## RESPONSIBILITY

PRIMARY:	SUPPORT:
<p><b>INITIATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Economic &amp; Community Development</li> </ul> <p><b>IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Economic Development</li> <li>• Camden County</li> <li>• Voorhees Economic Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other agencies or organizations active in economic development in and near Voorhees</li> </ul>

## RESOURCES NEEDED

	ITEM	AMOUNT	POSSIBLE SOURCES
<b>FUNDING:</b>	Funding to operate the department	Undetermined	Township Budget
<b>OTHER:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant staff time to manage the effort, with volunteer assistance</li> <li>• Participation of all allies</li> </ul>		

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Purpose Statement written 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2017
- Organizational meeting held to discuss the need for this initiative and related issues 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2017
- Research on possible structures completed 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2017
- First Annual Performance Review completed 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2017

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## INITIATIVE #2: AVAILABLE REAL ESTATE INVENTORY

### RELATED GOALS

- Existing Available Commercial Real Estate Inventory
- Existing Available Retail Real Estate Inventory
- Current Zoning

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Available real estate is usually the second most important factor (after availability of needed labor skills) for locating a business. Currently there is no centralized real estate inventory on available land and buildings in Voorhees for business locations. The Township is currently dependent on property owners or brokers remembering and/or being willing to provide listing information as properties become available, and notifying the Township when property is taken off the market. This pertains both to downtown Voorhees, where the list of available properties is fairly accurate, and for the remainder of the Township.

Voorhees should create and maintain an Available Real Estate Inventory specific to properties within the township limits, with a dedicated section for Downtown. Aspects of this initiative include:

- Creation of a standardized format for all listed properties.
- Improvement of communications channels with brokers and property owners to maximize available information.
- Inclusion of this inventory on the Township's economic development website, using a GIS database delivery system supplemented by a community database conforming to IEDC data guidelines, such as is provided by Location One.
- Sharing of information with DEDD, Camden County, and other allies.

### MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
1. Assign a person to be in charge of this Initiative.	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
2. Develop a contact list of commercial and industrial real estate brokers and property owners from whom information on available properties is desired.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
3. Develop a contact list of organizations and individuals (e.g., Camden County) with whom the real estate inventory will be shared.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
4. Develop a draft real estate inventory template form showing all information to be collected and included in the inventory.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
5. Consult with a advertising and marketing firm.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2017

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE (CONT'D)

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
6. Host a meeting of real estate brokers and owners and distribute the draft real estate inventory template form for feedback on information requested in the template. For brokers/owners unable to attend this meeting, provide the draft template electronically and request feedback. Ask all participating brokers/owners for recommendations on others from whom information should be sought or with whom it should be shared.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
7. Make any necessary revisions to the template.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2017
8. Distribute the revised template to the list of brokers and owners and obtain information on available sites and buildings.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2017
9. Distribute a monthly checklist of available properties to brokers and owners to solicit updates for the list (both properties to be added and those to be removed).	Monthly
10. Maintain the inventory in an accurate fashion on the website and share it with all allies.	Ongoing

## RESPONSIBILITY

PRIMARY:	SUPPORT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Community &amp; Economic Development</li> <li>• Person appointed to oversee this initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real estate brokers and owners</li> <li>• Economic development allies</li> </ul>

## RESOURCES NEEDED

	ITEM	AMOUNT	POSSIBLE SOURCES
<b>FUNDING:</b>	Integrated free GIS-enhanced building site and community information delivery platform, from the Greater Philadelphia Chamber with database conforming to IEDC standards	Undetermined	Township Budget
<b>OTHER:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time to establish and maintain the inventory</li> </ul>		

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Draft real estate data collection template developed 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2017
- 75% of invited brokers and owners attend meeting held by township to explain this Initiative and how it can be of use to the brokers/owners
- Final real estate data collection template distributed to brokers and owners 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2017
- Inventory updated monthly
- First prospect location attributable to this inventory occurs 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2017

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## INITIATIVE #3: DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPOSITIONING

### RELATED GOALS

- Diversified Business Attraction
- Existing Business Outreach and Assistance for Retention and Expansion
- Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development
- Sustainable Downtown Physical and Economic Vitality
- Community Development and Redevelopment

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This Initiative is a companion to Initiative #1, but differs in that this Initiative focuses internally on things the Township should be doing, while Initiative #1 focuses on a multi-organizational partnership. If Initiative #1 does not occur, all the elements listed below become the responsibility of the Township.

Over the past several years, the Township has been engaged in restructuring its Community & Economic Development efforts to operate more effectively and efficiently. This process should continue with the intent of repositioning the Township's Department of Community & Economic Development to emphasize its economic development mission, and with expanded use of the Voorhees Network and leadership in the Voorhees Economic Development Committee (see Initiative #1). Elements of this Initiative include and must be coordinated with Initiative #1 to assure the most cost-effective and efficient accomplishment of:

- Continuation of the Township's focus on Downtown development and promotion.
- More systematic, Township-wide business retention and expansion efforts, including small employers and employers outside of the downtown, especially those within the targeted industry sectors.
- Maintenance of a steady communication stream with all employers in the Township on trends, events, and updates on Township policies that affect them.
- Development, through the private sector, of the downtown area.
- Working with owners of vacant properties to prepare their buildings and sites to meet market needs, including redeveloping or converting properties to other uses.
- Developing new marketing material and a portion of the Township's website for economic-development uses.

### MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
1. Establish Township working team to oversee this effort.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2017
2. Prioritize the potential elements listed above and select those to be addressed immediately.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2017
3. Take actions necessary to implement highest priority items.	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2017 - 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2018

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE (CONT'D)

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
4. As a new Voorhees effort is created, segment work areas into those that make most sense for the Township to do and those that should be undertaken by the broader effort.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2018
5. Undertake improvement efforts as necessary.	Ongoing as needed

## RESPONSIBILITY

PRIMARY:	SUPPORT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Economic &amp; Community Development</li> </ul>	

## RESOURCES NEEDED

	ITEM	AMOUNT	POSSIBLE SOURCES
<b>FUNDING:</b>	Hiring PR or advertising firm to help with tag line and video development  Development of promotional material, branding, modest Public Relations effort	\$20,000	Township Budget

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Tag line and logo completed and approved by stakeholders and Township Council by March 2017
- Marketing strategy developed by March 2017
- Marketing materials developed by April 2017
- Promotional campaign begins May 2017 with email to site selectors

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## INITIATIVE #4: CREATE A VOORHEES BRAND

### RELATED GOALS

- Live, Work and Shop Voorhees
- Business Outreach to promote Shop Voorhees
- Residential outreach to promote Live-Work-Shop Voorhees
- Community Development of Brand

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Township of Voorhees lacks a general economic development “brand”, although it has recently developed a new brand for the downtown area. Voorhees has not translated into a recognizable and widely appreciated brand image.

Voorhees has the opportunity to brand itself as a regional medical innovation hub and to create and fund a related marketing program to attract more medical/Medical-driven and innovative companies to the Township. This would build upon the presence of Virtua, and many medical-oriented businesses.

## MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
1. Township Administrator and Director of Community & Economic Development, with counsel from its solicitor and stakeholders meet to craft a draft brand for the Township that identifies it as a regional medical hub, including a tag line (Medical Mile) or positioning statement that corresponds to the image. The tag line should be unique, convey the desired image of Voorhees as a Medical center, and be geo-specific or have a geographic reference. Avoid over-used or trite tag lines.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
2. Assure that the Township has the substance to support its image, including website, promotional materials, available sites and buildings, and public school system characteristics.	Ongoing
3. Develop a marketing program that contains the brand image, including hard- copy promotional material, video and website content. Conform to DEDD strategy as much as possible.	1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2018 and Ongoing
4. Send email to site consultants announcing new brand and background on Voorhees’ medical advantages, kickoff promotional campaign; possibly including a public relations effort; send press release to economic development publications.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2018

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## INITIATIVE #5: COST-OF-DOING BUSINESS ANALYSIS

### RELATED GOALS

Prepare an analysis of the cost-of-doing-business in Voorhees versus other competing locations including an electric-cost comparison model of Voorhees, and other communities.

Components should include:

- Labor costs
- Real estate costs
- Construction costs
- Taxes
- Incentives to reduce costs Background

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

One of the most important decisions for a business is the location. Today, with the aid of computers, potential sites can be scientifically evaluated before you invest. Specific trade and zip code areas may be defined for both demographic data and lifestyle characteristics. This can give some comfort that the location selected will be in an area that conforms to the standards to meet a preferred customer profile.

- Is the site centrally located to reach my market?
- What is the transportation availability and what are the rates?
- What is the housing availability for managers and workers?
- What environmental factors (schools, cultural, community atmosphere) might be attractive to the business and employees?
- Is quality labor available in close proximity to site? Is public transportation available?
- Is parking space available and adequate?
- Is the facility easily accessible?
- Will crime insurance be prohibitively expensive?
- Is the location convenient to where you live?

### MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
1. From the EDC, create individual advisory groups for each of the Township's targeted advantages.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2017
2. Township to advise on advantages of selecting Voorhees over surrounding townships. These groups should also serve as advisor as why Voorhees is an attractive environment for moving a business to Voorhees.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2017
3. Using the material provided in the target profiles, advice from the advisory councils and area developers, as to the advantages to select Voorhees.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2017

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## INITIATIVE #6: PERMIT AND APPROVAL REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT

### RELATED GOALS

- Streamline permitting an approval process
- Create a “business friendly” environment

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Increasingly across the country, communities are focusing on streamlining their development permit and approval regulations and expediting their permit and approval process as a business incentive designed to demonstrate a desirable business climate.

Voorhees has made strides to streamline the Township’s permit-and-approval process, including the in Committee of the Code Enforcement and Property Maintenance office within the Community & Economic Development Department, publication of the Township’s “Red Tape Tips” booklet, use of a fast-track application-processing model with simultaneous processing (rather than sequential) of a single plan by all applicable Township agencies, and current development of a Code Enforcement Procedures Manual. However, not everyone in the development community is aware of these improvements or believes the system is working optimally. Continuation of these efforts, and better public information about them, is necessary.

All Township staff who come in contact with the development process must understand that they are part of the Township’s economic development team and the culture of the Township’s regulatory bureaucracy must be perceived as being ‘results’-oriented rather than ‘process’-oriented.

### MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
1. Director of Community & Economic Development and Township Administrator establish an effective structure and process for continuation of the Township’s Permit and Approval Process improvement and publicly communicate those efforts.	1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017
2. Research the other Township’s in the area that have made similar efforts to improve and streamline their development permit and approval process and identify approaches that could be replicated by Voorhees.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2017

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

<b>MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE (CONT'D)</b>			
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>		<b>SCHEDULE</b>	
3. Communicate changes in regulations and the development process to appropriate departments, to the Township's development community, and to the public.		As Needed	
4. Prepare a Development Process flowchart for inclusion in the Township's new Code Enforcement Procedures Manual and make it available on the Township economic development website.		To coincide with development of the Manual	
5. Communicate the availability of the Code Enforcement Procedures Manual to the Township's development community and general public.		When Manual is available for distribution	
6. Continue efforts to improve the Township's permit and approval process as necessary.		Ongoing	
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>			
<b>PRIMARY:</b>		<b>SUPPORT:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Community &amp; Economic Development</li> <li>• Township Administrator</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All relevant Township Departments, and boards</li> <li>• Invited business community representatives</li> </ul>	
<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>			
	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>POSSIBLE SOURCES</b>
<b>FUNDING:</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>OTHER:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time to manage and participate in the process</li> <li>• Committee member time if appropriate</li> <li>• Time of invited business community participants when invited</li> </ul>		

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## INITIATIVE #7: ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION LAND

### RELATED GOALS

- Create listing of existing development sites and areas within Voorhees that can be developed/redeveloped.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Voorhees currently has very little land and very few available buildings to support future economic growth and diversification. Voorhees’s future development should support a diversified economic base, as well as meet the needs both of those businesses who prefer to lease space as well as those who prefer to own.

The Township should identify land in or adjacent to the Township with development or redevelopment / rehabilitation potential, especially those within the Task 4 Target areas, and take appropriate actions with the owners to make those sites shovel-ready as demonstrated by completing and documenting the following:

- Site control and availability of the land on the market at a reasonable price.
- Appropriate zoning.
- Phase 1 environmental assessment.
- All owners identified and agree to sale.
- Easements and rights of way delineated and described.
- Land characteristics that facilitate development.
- Photographs of site from different angles.
- Current and former uses of the site.

### MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
1. Prepare a master list of properties in Voorhees suitable for business development or redevelopment.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2017
2. Complete a site assessment form for each identified property. Identify any site weaknesses that make it less than fully shovel-ready, and a plan and schedule to work with the owner(s) to make the property shovel ready.	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2017 - 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2018
3. If an identified property is not actively on the market, discuss its availability with the property owner.	2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtrs. 2018

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE (CONT'D)

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
4. For improvements that should be made by the property owner (e.g., lack of a Phase 1 environmental assessment or wetlands mapping, need for selective demolition), work with the owner to establish and implement a plan for correcting deficiencies.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2018
5. For improvements that can and should be made by the Township (e.g., necessary zoning change, inadequate road access or utilities), include the cost of such improvements in the Township's Capital Improvement Plan and Budget.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2018
6. Undertake site and infrastructure improvements as necessary.	As Needed
7. Assure that all shovel-ready sites are included in the Township's Available Real Estate Inventory (see Initiative #3), are marketed on the Township's economic development website.	3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Qtrs. 2018 and Ongoing

## RESPONSIBILITY

PRIMARY:	SUPPORT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Economic &amp; Community Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property Owners</li> <li>• Zoning Commission</li> <li>• Township Public Works Departments</li> </ul>

## RESOURCES NEEDED

	ITEM	AMOUNT	POSSIBLE SOURCES
<b>FUNDING:</b>	Property Improvements	Unknown at this time	Township Budget Infrastructure grants
<b>OTHER:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time to identify and evaluate sites, plan necessary improvements, negotiate with property owners, market sites</li> </ul>		

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- List of potential development sites identified by 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2017
- Improvements necessary to make sites shovel ready begun 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2017 (or earlier if possible)
- Marketing of available sites begun 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2018 and ongoing

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

## INITIATIVE #8: TARGET INDUSTRY RECRUITMENT

### RELATED GOALS

- Market to top 50 developers in the nation

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As with most communities, particularly in the current sluggish economy, Voorhees's resources for economic development marketing are limited. Many communities have found it effective to focus their marketing efforts toward a limited number of clusters, or operational types that have been identified as those that offer the best economic development opportunities, including tax-revenue enhancement and absorption of existing real estate, based upon their blend of locational assets. The Township must now develop, fund, and implement aggressive and effective business attraction, retention/expansion, and startup programs for those targeted industries to strengthen the Township's economic base. This would include investigation into the feasibility of a general business incubator to support entrepreneurship in the target industries.

### MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND SCHEDULE

ACTION STEPS	SCHEDULE
1. From the EDC, create individual advisory groups for each of the Township's four target industries.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2017 - 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2018
2. Each group should act as a resource to the Township to advise on policies and actions for the Township to follow as well as on marketing positions to take; to provide industry contacts for direct mail and other marketing efforts; to promote the Township and meet with prospects visiting the Township. These groups should also serve as Advisors regarding real estate and infrastructure-development needs, development and maintenance of industry-attractive operating environments (and also serve as advisors to the state for development of industry-attractive regulatory environments); development of relationships, and advisor on industry trends.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2017 - 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2018
3. Using the material provided in the target profiles, advice from the advisory councils and area developers, identify sites in the Township best suited to the target industries, development of new sites and buildings suited to the target industries.	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2017 - 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2018
4. Consult with a consulting firm to do a feasibility study for development of a rehabilitation sector.	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2017 - 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2018
5. Using the information from the target advisory councils, craft target-specific information on the Township's website and development of marketing messages and promotion that would get attention from companies within the target industries.	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtrs. 2018

# FUNCTIONS OF THE FULL SERVICE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In a full-service Economic Development Department (EDD), programs and services generally fall into seven major categories (exclusive of general administrative requirements). These are:

1. **RESEARCH AND INFORMATION**
2. **MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS**
3. **FINANCING AND INCENTIVES**
4. **TRAINING**
5. **SITE LOCATION ASSISTANCE**
6. **MARKET DEVELOPMENT**
7. **STRATEGIC AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING**

**RESEARCH AND INFORMATION** - The research and information role includes the possible acquisition of private land for the purposes of developing as open space for passive recreation. The research and information function supports many of the others discussed below. Available information must include both specific communities and the surrounding region.

**MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS** - Marketing and promotions includes both internal and external communications designed to inform others about the EDD's service territory and why it is a good location in which to live, work and operate a business. This role also highlights the EDD and its services. Internal marketing may also provide information on the economic development process in general. Marketing activities can be targeted at all types of economic activity, or can be of a more general and educational nature.

**FINANCING AND INCENTIVES** - Financing and incentives programs include the provision of funding vehicles or other forms of cash and non-cash assistance from governmental entities in the form of tax incentives through PILOTS, conventional and other sources. Businesses frequently require or desire sources of start-up, working capital, fixed-asset, emergency or other financing. Voorhees Township would be working with state and local entities like the CCIA to assist in these areas. Incentives are very fluid and wide-ranging, changing constantly as the state and communities create new programs in an attempt to gain a competitive edge. This is a primary area where role of the public and not-for-profit sectors' is to leverage targeted resources to obtain private-sector investment.

**TRAINING** - Training and human-resource programming has two primary components. The first is to assure that available training programs are providing the work force and management skills necessary for today's and tomorrow's jobs and companies. The second component is a broader human-resource focus dealing with employee needs such as day-care, public transportation and affordable housing, all of which can have important impacts on a community's or region's work force.

**SITE LOCATION ASSISTANCE** - Site location and infrastructure assistance historically has meant the provision of information on available land and buildings in the community and the transportation and utility infrastructure that serves them. This may be as simple as information on paper or in the computer, or may include site tours, assistance in finding architects and engineers, representation at planning and zoning or other regulatory meetings, and similar services.

**MARKET DEVELOPMENT** - The designation of a rehabilitation and redevelopment area for the adaptive reuse of older facilities will be required, as we work on the creation of other real estate development efforts, including the funding or installation of support infrastructure.

## VOORHEES ACTION STEPS SCHEDULE

INITIATIVE # 1: VOORHEES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	YEAR											
	2017				2018				2019			
	QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER			
ACTION STEPS	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Township Administrator and Director of Economic & Community Development, with counsel from Voorhees Network and other stakeholders, identify all agencies that should be part of this Initiative.		X	X									
2. Prepare a detailed Purpose Statement that explains the need for this new structure and primary benefits that will accrue to participants.		X	X									
3. Host an organizational meeting to discuss the creation of such an entity and explore options, impediments, concerns, and other important issues.			X	X								
4. Prepare a detailed analysis of what services are currently being provided by area organizations to identify areas of gaps and duplications, related issues, and desired service improvements.			X	X								
5. Undertake research to identify other places that have undertaken a similar initiative, obtain information on possible organizational forms, and “lessons learned” from these efforts.		X	X									
6. Identify areas in need of redevelopment and/or rehabilitations.					X	X						
7. Come to agreement on the type of organization that will best meet the needs of Voorhees.						X	X					
8. Take actions necessary to implement that agreement (may include such items as articles in Committee, bylaws, etc.).						X	X					
9. Conduct a detailed performance evaluation of the new entity and make adjustments as necessary.	X	X										

## VOORHEES ACTION STEPS SCHEDULE

INITIATIVE # 2: AVAILABLE REAL ESTATE INVENTORY	YEAR											
	2017				2018				2019			
	QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Assign a person to be in charge of this Initiative.	X	X										
2. Develop a contact list of commercial and industrial real estate brokers and property owners from whom information on available properties is desired.		X	X									
3. Develop a contact list of organizations and individuals with whom the real estate inventory will be shared.		X	X									
4. Develop a draft real estate inventory template form showing all information to be collected and included in the inventory.		X	X									
5. Consult with an advertising and marketing firm.		X										
6. Host a meeting of real estate brokers and owners and distribute the draft real estate inventory template form for feedback on information requested in the template. For brokers/owners unable to attend this meeting, provide the draft template electronically and request feedback. Ask all participating brokers/owners for recommendations on others from whom information should be sought or with whom it should be shared.		X	X									
7. Make any necessary revisions to the template.			X	X								
8. Distribute the revised template to the list of brokers and owners and obtain information on available sites and buildings.			X	X								
9. Distribute a monthly checklist of available properties to brokers and owners monthly to solicit updates for the list (both properties to be added and those to be removed).				X	X							
10. Maintain the inventory in an accurate fashion on the website and share it with all allies.				X	X							

## VOORHEES ACTION STEPS SCHEDULE

INITIATIVE # 3: DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	YEAR											
	2017				2018				2019			
	QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER			
ACTION STEPS	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Establish Township working team to oversee this effort.			X	X								
2. Prioritize the potential elements listed above and select those to be addressed immediately.			X	X								
3. Take actions necessary to implement highest priority items.				X	X							
4. As a new Voorhees effort is created, segment work areas into those that make most sense for the Township to do and those that should be undertaken by the broader effort.						X	X	X				
5. Undertake improvement efforts as necessary.						X						

## VOORHEES ACTION STEPS SCHEDULE

INITIATIVE # 4: CREATE A VOORHEES BRAND	YEAR											
	2017				2018				2019			
	QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER			
ACTION STEPS	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Township Administrator and Director of Community & Economic Development, with counsel from its solicitor and stakeholders meet to craft a draft brand for the Township that identifies it as a regional medical hub, including a tag line (Medical Mile) or positioning statement that corresponds to the image. The tag line should be unique, convey the desired image of Voorhees as a Medical center, and be geo-specific or have a geographic reference. Avoid over-used or trite tag lines.		X	X									
2. Assure that the Township has the substance to support its image, including website, promotional materials, available sites and buildings and public school system characteristics.				X								
3. Develop a marketing program that contains the brand image, including hard-copy promotional material, video and website content. Conform to DEDD strategy as much as possible.					X	X	X					
4. Send email to site consultants announcing new brand and background on Voorhees' medical advantages, kickoff promotional campaign; possibly including a public relations effort; send press release to economic development publications.						X	X					

## VOORHEES ACTION STEPS SCHEDULE

INITIATIVE # 5: COST-OF-DOING BUSINESS ANALYSIS	YEAR											
	2017				2018				2019			
	QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER			
ACTION STEPS	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. From the EDC, create individual advisory groups for each of the Township's targeted advantages.			X									
2. Township to advise on advantages of selecting Voorhees over surrounding townships.			X									
3. Using the material provided in the target profiles, advice from the advisory councils and area developers, as to the advantages to select Voorhees.			X	X								

# VOORHEES ACTION STEPS SCHEDULE

INITIATIVE # 6: CREATE A VOORHEES BRAND	YEAR											
	2017				2018				2019			
	QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER			
ACTION STEPS	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Director of Community & Economic Development and Township Administrator establish an effective structure and process for continuation of the Township's Permit and Approval Process improvement and publicly communicate those efforts.	X	X	X									
2. Research the other Township's in the area that have made similar efforts to improve and streamline their development permit and approval process and identify approaches that could be replicated by Voorhees.		X	X									
3. Communicate changes in regulations and the development process to appropriate agencies and departments, to the Township's development community, and to the public.				X	X							
4. Prepare a Development Process flowchart for inclusion in the Township's new Code Enforcement Procedures Manual and make it available on the Township economic development website.				X								
5. Communicate the availability of the Code Enforcement Procedures Manual to the Township's development community and general public.				X	X							
6. Continue efforts to improve the Township's permit and approval process as necessary.					X							

## VOORHEES ACTION STEPS SCHEDULE

INITIATIVE # 7: ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION LAND	YEAR											
	2017				2018				2019			
	QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER			
ACTION STEPS	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Prepare a master list of properties in Voorhees suitable for business development or redevelopment.			X	X								
2. Complete a site assessment form for each identified property. Identify any site weaknesses that make it less than fully shovel-ready, and a plan and schedule to work with the owner(s) to make the property shovel ready.				X	X							
3. If an identified property is not actively on the market, discuss its availability with the property owner.						X	X					
4. For improvements that should be made by the property owner (e.g., lack of a Phase 1 environmental assessment or wetlands mapping, need for selective demolition), work with the owner to establish and implement a plan for correcting deficiencies.							X	X				
5. For improvements that can and should be made by the Township (e.g., necessary zoning change, inadequate road access or utilities), include the cost of such improvements in the Township's Capital Improvement Plan and Budget.							X	X				
6. Undertake site and infrastructure improvements as necessary.								X				
7. Assure that all shovel-ready sites are included in the Township's Available Real Estate Inventory and are marketed on the Township's economic development website.								X	X			

## VOORHEES ACTION STEPS SCHEDULE

INITIATIVE # 8: TARGET INDUSTRY RECRUITMENT	YEAR											
	2017				2018				2019			
	QUARTER				QUARTER				QUARTER			
ACTION STEPS	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. From the EDC, create individual advisory groups for each of the Township's four target industries.			X	X	X							
2. Each group should act as a resource to the Township to advise on policies and actions for the Township to follow as well as on marketing positions to take; to provide industry contacts for direct mail and other marketing efforts; to promote the Township and meet with prospects visiting the Township. These groups should also serve as Advisors regarding real estate and infrastructure-development needs, development and maintenance of industry-attractive operating environments (and also serve as advisors to the state for development of industry-attractive regulatory environments); development of relationships, and advisor on industry trends.			X	X	X							
3. Using the material provided in the target profiles, advice from the advisory councils and area developers, identify sites in the Township best suited to the target industries, and development of new sites and buildings suited to the target industries.				X	X							
4. Consult with a consulting firm to do a feasibility study for development of a rehabilitation sector.				X	X							
5. Using the information from the target advisory councils, craft target-specific information on the Township's website and development of marketing messages and promotion that would get attention from companies within the target industries.					X	X						



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development Plan (EDP) for the Township of Voorhees consists of six documents:

1. **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis**
2. **Target Industry Analysis: Administrative Services**
3. **Target Industry Analysis: Information Medical-Computer Systems Design and Related Services**
4. **Target Industry Analysis: Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services**
5. **Target Industry Analysis: Research and Development Centers**
6. **Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan**

The EDP is founded on the information obtained through interviews with employers and key-influencers in Voorhees as well as throughout Camden County, and State government, in addition to a review of key statistical and other secondary-source information, and the responses received from a survey of Township employers.

The results of this research provided critical information leading to an understanding of the Township's:

- **Marketable strengths that can be capitalized upon**
- **Product deficiencies that can be corrected cost-effectively**
- **Development opportunities**
- **Issues having an impact on its and the region's economic development future**
- **Obstacles to development**

The gathered information also provided a strong background understanding of Voorhees as an "economic development product" and of the strengths and opportunities, deficiencies and obstacles, and issues that will shape the Township's economic development future. The results of the research on these issues are provided in the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis report.

The research further pointed to four industries for targeted attraction and local development efforts by the Township. These targets, profiled in the four submitted target reports, were selected as those industries and business operations that offer the best attraction and development opportunities for the Township within the industrial, office, and technical business sectors.

The SWOT analysis and the targeted industries provided the foundation for development of a vision statement and overarching goals for the Township's economic development over the next 10 years. Once these were completed, an economic development strategy consisting of eight initiatives to be pursued by the Township was crafted. These initiatives address ways the Township can enhance its economic development with the greatest positive impact and return on its investment. An action plan was subsequently created containing an implementation program for each of the eight initiatives. The vision statement, economic development goals, the strategy and the action plan were included in the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

The Voorhees Township's 5th largest township in Camden County offers employers many opportunities as a location for a variety of facilities across industry lines, but its greatest opportunities are offered to Medical-based operations in the fields of engineering; mathematics; advanced materials, energy and bioscience research and development; information Medical services; manufacturing; and financial services.

The Township also is a perfect location for operations requiring superb access to a large regional market, and for firms seeking immediate access to a high-performing, young, talented, and well-educated workforce with strong Medical-focused skills. Some of the principal assets offered by the Township include:

- An excellent central location within the middle-Atlantic States. The Township is in the Philadelphia-Camden-metro area with a 2009 population of 5,850,000. It is 15 miles from Philadelphia and 90 miles from New York. There is direct train service to all of these cities, and there are international hub airports at nearby Philadelphia. Voorhees is directly served by route I-295; the New Jersey north/south interstate backbone.
- A labor market of almost 635,000, supported by solid, measured population growth that exceeds the national average. Within this labor pool is significant knowledge capital.
- A young Township population, driven by the large base of undergraduate and graduate students at the Rutgers University, Rowan University, Cooper Medical School, Kennedy Medical School, and Camden County College. The Township's median age is well below the national norm.
- A highly educated Township population, with over half of the residents having at least a four-year college degree, more than twice the U.S. average; and a well-educated population within the Township's principal labor shed, with almost 29% of the adult residents having four years of college or more.
- A middle-to-upper-income household profile.
- A diversified county employment base, with particular depth in healthcare, finance and insurance, and professional and scientific services.
- Location in a county with employment clusters in business and financial services as well as Medical (life sciences) fields. Voorhees services two Medical schools within 10 miles and has 6 nationally recognized medical hospitals within 10 miles.
- Location in a county with a broad and diverse occupational depth, including 13 defined occupational clusters, of which the top four are:
  - o Mathematics, statistics, data, and accounting (including financial specialties)
  - o Natural sciences and environmental management
  - o Information Medical
  - o A collection of Medical-based knowledge clusters, including a variety of engineering disciplines.
- High labor quality.
- Satisfactory-to-good availability of many key skills across industry lines.
- Location in the New York-to-Philadelphia pharmaceutical belt, providing ideal access to industry skills, major companies, industry-focused universities, and the National Cancer Institutes in New Brunswick, NJ (73 miles to the North via I-95). The Township's labor shed includes the southern portions of Philadelphia, home of a large technical and professional population.

- A welcoming and nurturing environment that has attracted an international professional and academic community.
- A strong medical resource base and operating environment that includes Cooper Medical School, and Rowan/ Kennedy Medical School. Meanwhile, several highly regarded Medical-based firms are either headquartered in Voorhees, or have major operations in or proximate to the Township.
- Several area colleges and universities, with numerous degrees awarded in multiple technical and business-oriented disciplines. Rutgers University, one of the area's larger universities, is a state-assisted, public governed institution. Its professors are free to consult and partner with area companies. The University's Office of Economic Innovation and Partnerships seeks to establish the University as a renowned center for innovation, invention, entrepreneurship, partnering, and economic development. The office serves as a gateway for outside entities to access the university's assets, including patents.
- Very good quality of life, including a moderate cost of living compared to the Philadelphia - New York corridor, and offers excellent healthcare facilities.
- An attractive and growing downtown.
- An attractive business-operating environment that includes a pro-business state. Voorhees small size allows legislative action to be taken faster than in larger state counties frequently burdened by political gridlock.
- More than adequate water, sewer, telecom, natural gas, and electric cap township. Voorhees is well served with a full network of utility and telecommunications services, and the township has enough water and sewer cap township to adequately meet future opportunities.
- Moderate real estate taxes.
- A reasonable inventory of available warehouse space for a wide size range.
- A Downtown Voorhees Partnership website that provides a good listing of available space in the downtown area.

Voorhees, however, has some economic development challenges that need to be addressed if the Township is to realize its full economic potential. These include:

- Over the past several years, Camden County's employment base has been concentrating into fewer sectors; losing economic diversity.
- Employment in the county has been stable for the past five years. The number of county employers is growing, but these employers are, on average, having fewer employees.
- County manufacturing employment is becoming concentrated into fewer sectors.
- Voorhees employers report that labor availability is tight in three key occupations: management, mechanical engineers, and financial analysts.
- Small biotech firms' ability to hire is dependent on the actions of larger area pharmaceutical companies. When these larger firms are hiring, smaller firms have recruiting difficulties, and are subject to a loss of employees to the larger firms; however, when these larger firms experience layoffs of employees, a rich pool of talent becomes available.
- The Township has limited control over two major issues affecting its future:
  - o The public school system
  - o Mixed reviews on the Township's permit-and-approval process.
- Traffic congestion is created in the Township because of small intersections at major roadways.
- Passenger-rail service into Voorhees is currently limited.

## Conclusions

From these findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

- Voorhees’s technical base balances the financial services base of Philadelphia, giving Camden City a foundation for solid future economic development.
- The County is going through a transition in which employment in manufacturing and other sectors is declining.
  - The employment base is concentrating into healthcare, education, and finance. Employment and the number of establishments in these sectors (except for healthcare) are growing faster than the national average.
  - The Township has an excellent foundation to diversify its economy more definitively into high-Medical sectors.
- Because of the Township’s many assets, it has the destiny to be a regional economic-development leader, and it should assume that role. A new, broader vision of the Township matching this destiny is needed.
- Among the Township’s economic-development influencers, Virtua Hospital, in particular needs to recognize its role in the Township’s and the area’s economic development, and act in concert with the Township in proportion to its significant impact.
- The Township’s role as an economic-development leader in the county and state must be better defined and communicated. Economic development must be understood to include much more than retail-related functions and downtown vibrancy.
- A stronger Township economic-development team is required, with an expanded program, possibly in conjunction with other area economic-development agencies, including:
  - Business Retention and Expansion that includes all-size companies.
  - Product development, such as: existence of an adequate real estate inventory; business sites that are “shovel-ready” and competitively priced; development of promotional literature; and completion and updates of supporting databases, labor force, incentives, taxation, employer lists, and information on utility availability, quality, and cost.
  - Marketing and pro-active business attraction, including maintenance of an effective website.
- Continued efforts to improve the Township’s permit-and-approval process and to promote those improvements are necessary.
- Strong attention to the Township’s Downtown must continue.
- The current study to resolve downtown traffic and parking issues is important, since improved traffic flow and parking opportunities are necessary.
- Improved passenger-rail connections or service via NJ Transit, and PATCO would have a significant positive impact on the Township.
- A more efficient system for collecting and providing up-to-date, complete, and accurate information on available properties is needed as part of Voorhees’ economic-development efforts.
- Most future property-tax growth will come from redevelopment or annexed properties, because Voorhees is largely built out.
- The Township’s trail network and park system not only contribute to the Township’s quality of life, but could also provide a focus for related business-development opportunities.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered for consideration by the Township:

1. Create a public/private partnership with the Voorhees Business Association and Chamber of Commerce, Camden County, and all other agencies or organizations active in economic development. One possible form of such a partnership is an Economic Development Committee. This organization could be charged with implementing the recommendations emanating from this study and implementing the strategic plan.
2. Refocus and expand the Township's Department of Community & Economic Development to include:
  - a. Continuation of the focus on Downtown development and promotion.
  - b. More systematic Township-wide business retention and expansion efforts, including small employers and employers outside of the downtown.
  - c. Maintenance of a steady communication stream with all employers in the Township on trends, events, and updates.
  - d. A visitation and relationship-building program to Township employers.
  - e. Development, through the private sector, of a business park in newly annexed land.
  - f. Investigation, over the long-term, into development of business relationships with the county in which the Township has an equity partnership. Alternatively, the partnership could be with other members of the area's economic development community. State legislative approval probably would be needed to realize this goal. Tax revenue, leases, and other income received would be shared by the partners in relationship to the equity held.
  - g. Working with owners of vacant buildings to prepare their buildings and sites for market needs.
  - h. Developing new marketing material and redeveloping the Township's website for economic development uses.
  - i. Conducting an economic-development educational program for Township staff and Board & Committee members.
  - j. Developing a scripted prospect video tour.
  - k. Expand a broader "Buy Local" Shop Voorhees program to support merchants.
3. Include Voorhees Network members as volunteers in implementing some of the elements of the expanded Township's and community's economic-development program, such as in outreach to employers.
4. Develop, with DEDD, a consolidated, up-to-date, real estate database that includes property information and community data.
5. Create a vision of the Township's role as a regional Medical and innovation hub. Develop a Voorhees brand. Expand economic-development services beyond the Township limits.
6. Expand the current attraction program for niche retailers.
7. Initiate significant improvements to the portion of the Township's website devoted to economic development to meet the needs of business attraction, expansion, retention, and entrepreneurial development.
8. Continue exploration of options for additional Downtown parking.
9. Prepare an electric-cost-comparison model of Voorhees. This may be a portion of a larger comparative cost analysis of doing business in Voorhees versus other locations.

## TARGET INDUSTRIES/OPPORTUNITIES

There are four industrial/office sectors identified as offering the best opportunities for the Township's business attraction and development program. This selection is based upon the unique blend of assets and industry locational needs and trends within the Township. These industries and their subsectors are:

1. Entertainment

- Offer young adult entertainment including Indoor golf, indoor electric go-carts, Movie theaters, etc.

2. Administrative and Customer Services

3. Information Medical/Computer Systems Design and Related Services

- Custom Computer Programming Services

4. Food / liquor

- Additional restaurants

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

### Vision Statement and Development Goals

The following vision was developed using input received from stakeholders and employers during the research conducted for the SWOT report analysis. This vision and the related goals serve as a guiding foundation for the Township's economic development program over the next 10 years.

The unifying theme of the Township's economic development program is to create and sustain a multi-faceted economic base that includes research and development, Medical-oriented and other manufacturing, office operations, retail and services, and other types of uses that may find Voorhees an attractive location. This will be accomplished through a combination of the following goals:

1. Entertainment industry business attraction
2. Existing business outreach and assistance for retention and expansion
3. Entrepreneurship and small-business development
4. Sustainable downtown physical and economic vitality
5. Community development and redevelopment

## Strategy Plan

The Strategic Plan is to build upon the findings from the SWOT Assessment, the Target Opportunities/Industries Analysis, and on some important items on which the Township or other agencies are already working, such as:

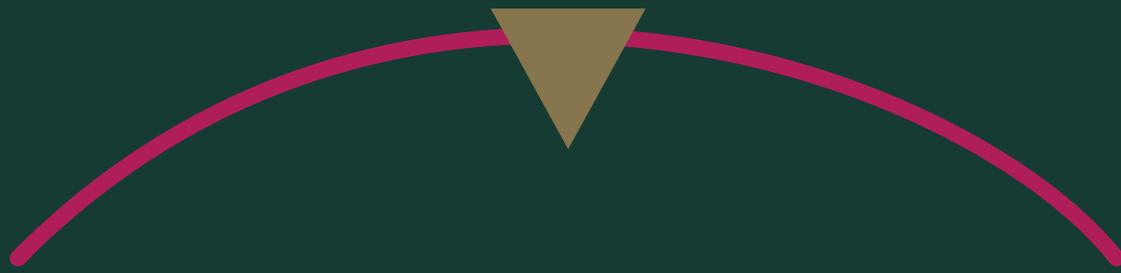
- **Niche retail development (young adult entertainment)**
- **promotions and marketing**
- **transportation to and from Ashland train station to the Voorhees Town Center**
- **transportation/pedestrian improvements throughout the Voorhees Town Center**
- **streamlined code enforcement**

The Initiatives are:

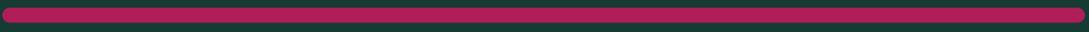
1. Utilize the Voorhees Economic Development Committee (EDC), in the form of a public/private partnership with broad representation from all institutions that have an impact on the Township's economic development opportunities. This committee would serve as the keystone to the Voorhees Economic Development program.
2. Create and maintain an Available Real Estate Inventory specific to properties within the township limits, with a dedicated section for Downtown.
3. Reposition the Township's Department of Community & Economic Development to emphasize its economic development mission with expanded use of the Voorhees Network and leadership in the Voorhees Development Committee.
4. Brand Voorhees as a regional medical hub, great place to raise children due to its national recognized schools, superior sports fields and programs and use the newly create 501 c 3 to help fund a related marketing and citizens programs.
5. Design a cost-of-Doing Business Analysis that compares Voorhees to other competing locations using an electric-cost comparison model of Voorhees and other communities.
6. Prepare a streamlined approach to the Township's Permit and Approval Process including participation from the business community that facilitates communication, input and recommendations for improvements to the process.
7. Identify land in the Township with development or redevelopment potential for industrial, office, and R&D operations, especially those within the four target industries, and take appropriate actions with the owners to make those sites shovel-ready.
8. Create a Target Industry Advisory Group act as a resource to the Township to advise on policies and actions for the Township.

## Action Plan

The Action Plan pinpoints specific steps for the Township, its partners and stakeholders to take for implementation of each of the seven initiatives of the Strategy Plan. The Action Plan includes, for each initiative, a schedule for implementation, identifies agencies or individuals to be responsible for implementation, the resources needed, and performance measures to gauge the Townships' success in meeting the Plan's goals. The Action Plan also provides supplemental information to assist the Township in beginning implementation.



VOORHEES



T O W N S H I P