

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## *Vision for Ewing...*

The Township has been hard at work since I've taken office in 2011 improving the conditions that attract economic development in order to stabilize our tax ratable base. We have taken the time to plan and we are now seeing the fruits of our labor. I hope to bring you all up to speed on some of what is going on through this newsletter.

There is a Proverb that states, " For without Vision the people will perish." I have come to understand this quote to have many applications, but most importantly, it applies to our community. In our everyday lives, we plan for our families future well being, often times adjusting our plans to meet daily needs. We look forward so that we can have a chance to succeed in creating a better situation for our children than we had. Even before taking office, I laid out a very specific vision for how I saw this Township moving forward, and with the public's support all along the way, we are seeing success. We laid the groundwork so that the market can respond knowing the Township has a vision and the desire to be a true partner creating it.

The market seeks predictability and for years the Township had no concrete plan to show how it viewed itself. Our planning has set the stage for a new and improved way of doing business in Ewing Township. With an emphasis on partnering with County, State, and Transit Agencies, the idea is to not only increase the ratable base, but improve market conditions and develop a sustainable local economy for Ewing Township that recognizes regional and global opportunities in order to;

- Raise the overall standard of living,
- Improve the area's economic conditions,
- Create new opportunities for jobs and economic growth,

Its been hard work, but a job I have thoroughly enjoyed. As always, I am available should you have any thoughts on how to improve our community. We're all in this together!!

Sincerely, *Bert*

### **For More Information Contact:**

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## *General Motors / Naval Base Development*

The Township is moving full steam ahead on realizing our collective vision for a new town center. With an agreement signed with a developer as a result of a RFP process for the GM side (Lennar), and the Naval Base toward the end of negotiations with its owner, Ewing is well on its way. All told, the project will yield around 350,000 square feet of commercial space with approximately 1,000 housing units, not inclusive of Birmingham Gardens with could likely yield another 50,000+/- commercial space.

As discussed through the many open public forums, every successful Center includes housing which makes it vibrant and economically viable. With so many other places offering the same kind of retail experiences all across the region, the Ewing Town Center will distinguish itself by reestablishing our community's character as a regional hub - similar to the role GM itself played as an industrial job center. This will not be just another shopping center, or characterless office park, it will be architecturally significant while providing the market with a product and atmosphere only similarly seen in places like Princeton, Haddonfield, Newtown, and recently Robinsville. While it will take time to gel and mature as most of great places do, the Township has taken a critical step forward.

From the Township's budget perspective, we are slated to see upwards of \$4 million in tax revenue from the GM side alone. Today, the GM site generates only \$48,000. Through a redevelopment agreement, the Township will ensure the school system remains whole, but most of this revenue will come directly to the Township. This revenue will not only stabilize our budget, but will provide us the opportunity to fund park upgrades as well as transportation improvements, including bicycle and pedestrian improvements while ensuring the school system remains whole.

All along the way, the Township has continuously worked with, and gained valuable input from the Ewing School's Superintendent's Office, State of NJ Brownfield Task Force, Department of Environmental Protection, MidJersey Chamber of Commerce, and the D&R Canal Commission amongst other key stakeholders such community leaders in economic development and real estate. This involvement leads to solid partnerships that will bring us to success.

Make no mistake, there will be impacts on the Township through this project, both fiscally and socially. So far we have had to address school impacts, storm water, traffic, state affordable housing obligations, and of course environmental. On the schools side several analyzes have indicated the project could likely yield upwards of 170 school children. Working with Ewing Schools, we have come to understand that capacity exists to handle this load which will be dispersed over the elementary, middle and high schools. As the project will be constructed in phases and take up to 8 years to fully complete, the Township will continue to work tirelessly to ensure at the end of the day we are able to adjust to any situation that comes before us.

The first phase of a what will likely be a 6 phase build-out is slated for the Summer of 2015. The developer is currently working closely with the Department of Environmental Protection to ensure all safeguards are met and exceeded and the Township should be seeing the final proposed site plan for the site within the coming months for Planning Board approval. After years of community surveys, discussions, open houses, vision plans and coordination, we are finally moving forward.



*Artist Rendering of the Ewing Town Center along Parkway Avenue*

# Economic Development

## More than Just GM

The market can be touch and go at times, but the traffic on Olden Avenue still drives investor decision-making. Our Redevelopment Agency has been hard at work promoting the Avenue, working with business owners and new investors alike. Their efforts can be seen all along the Avenue.

In a few short years, the Township has seen over 20+ new businesses and property improvements and expansions. While some have taken up vacant space in shopping centers like Ultimate Grill & Pizza, The Weave Shop, and The Law Offices of Eric Bradford, others like the Senior Star Adult Day Care and Two Peters Diner have been welcome additions to the Business Community. We have also implemented a facade improvement program that has helped implement signage and landscaping improvements to RE Michaels, and Welco Gas. Contact ETRA for more details on how you can gain access to this program.

Davis Hyundai will also be investing in their property along with Coleman Subaru. Walgreens and Sonic will become new additions beginning with construction on Olden in coming months as they seek Planning Board approval next month.

Despite the County's decision to reconstruct the bridge over the Shabakunk, Olden Avenue still remains open for business. Thankfully, we were able to work with the County to reduce its completion date by 30 days. The alternative of keeping one lane open on the bridge would have significantly added to the cost of the project as well as taking roughly 300 days to complete versus the anticipated 125 days.

Campus Town is also well underway with a Panero Bread and Barnes & Noble as part of a project that includes student housing. The addition of these units will assuredly take some of the pressure off our residential neighborhoods. To this end, our highly successful Town Gown Committee continues working to improve relations with TCNJ.

Last but surely not least, has been the success of landing 800 jobs in Church & Dwight. With expansion of Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Cenlar, 150k SF of medical office space approved on Scotch Road, one can easily see that Ewing Township is open for business.

## GM and Naval Site Development More than just Bricks

The GM and Naval Sites development will be more than just a project that will yield a tax rateable, they will transform Ewing into a 21st Century destination. In order to do that, many issues needed to be resolved and accounted for. Issues such as traffic and open space have turned into unique opportunities as the Township sought to leverage all our existing resources to make this project truly special.



Taking advantage of past planning efforts that called for additional roadway connections, as well as taking into account the fantastic assets the Township boasts and one can begin seeing the opportunities to enhance the entire area are right in front of us. Assets like the Ewing Community Center, West End Soccer Fields, Suburban Square, Marrazo's Shopping Center, Freddie's Tavern and the West Trenton Neighborhood, Trenton-Mercer Airport @ Ewing, the WT Rail Station, the Katzenbach School, TCNJ, and the rest of our great community, are all pieces to a great puzzle we are working to assemble. To that end, The Township will continue working with the County to make bicycle and pedestrian improvements to all surrounding roadways as well as diffuse additional traffic flows by not only creating a walkable development but making additional connections through a Bear Tavern Road connector and finishing Scotch Road and Silvia Street. We will also be making needed improvements to the intersections of Bear Tavern and West Upper Ferry Road, Scotch Road, and likely Lower Ferry Road as well.



Implementation will continue to be difficult work, but our Team has experience working on projects of this magnitude. Working hand in hand with the County and Federal Aviation Administration, more economic development opportunities will become available through our planning efforts in the West Trenton area. So not only was the traffic generated by the GM and Navy developments considered, but also how we set ourselves up for future development opportunities as well.

This is truly an exciting time to be a resident of Ewing Township. Whether you choose to move into the Town Center or merely take advantage of its proximity, one thing is for sure, this will be something special for generations to come. We continue working with the railroad on reinstating rail service to New York along the West Trenton line. But to create a Transit Village, one needs connections. To this end we are working to set the table by creating pedestrian and bicycle connections that will enhance our neighborhoods ability to access the development, mass transit opportunities both existing and proposed, as well as the enhancement of our existing parks and open spaces like the Ewing Community Center, West End Soccer Fields, and John Watson Park and TCNJ.

But that is not the end for opportunity. We have also been in conversation with Suburban Square, Birmingham Plaza, and Marrazo's Center owners for infill growth opportunities that work in concert with the proposed development of GM. So more to come to ensure this project is as transformative as we believe in can be.



Lastly, GM itself will also include additional open spaces with a new Town Green and a passive park along the Gold Run Creek that could include a dog run, playgrounds, and walking trails. With so many fantastic attributes in the works, we are truly excited by the opportunities.

