



keeping hoboken vital

**"White Paper" Outlining Issues and Opportunities
for the Business Community
City of Hoboken, New Jersey**

Prepared for the Hoboken Chamber of Commerce

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January 2018

introduction

Overview

The City of Hoboken offers the amenities of a city and the convenience of a location just outside New York City as well as small-town atmosphere. At just over a mile square in area, bounded by the Hudson River, railroad tracks and the Palisades, Hoboken has its own distinctive character.

The business community has been growing in Hoboken for some time. From storefronts in new mixed-use buildings to repurposed industrial space to new corporate office buildings and university facilities, the City has been adding jobs.

At the same time, there are concerns about turnover of storefronts, particularly on Washington Street, Hoboken's main commercial corridor, and the homogenization of its businesses. Competition from other locations both urban and suburban, as well as online retailing, has increased in recent years. City Hall's focus on other issues has left business owners feeling that their concerns are not being heard.

This "white paper" has been prepared for the Hoboken Chamber of Commerce (the "Chamber") as a way to identify issues and opportunities affecting the business community, and the City as a whole. It sets forth some of the Chamber's recommendations for planning, transportation and development that should be considered as it prepares a

reexamination¹ of its Master Plan. It also suggests changes to benefit businesses, as well as the broader Hoboken community.

Context

The Hoboken Master Plan was last comprehensively updated in 2004, with a reexamination report adopted in 2011. Since then there have been many changes at the local, state and national levels which have had — and will have — impacts on the City’s planning efforts. These include:

- Changes in the market and demand for retail and office space
- The continued decline of manufacturing in built-up places like Hoboken
- Increases in the City’s overall and daytime populations
- Changes in parking supply and management
- Inaction by City government on various initiatives that would benefit local businesses

There is a new Mayor and administration in 2018.

A thorough review of economic issues impacting businesses and recommendations for policy changes on behalf of the business community is warranted as the City of Hoboken is undertaking updates to its Master Plan through the preparation of a reexamination report.

The report analyzes economic and market conditions in Hoboken, as they relate to the business community. The term “business community” includes a range of stakeholders, such as:

- Store owners
- Restaurant and bar owners
- Corporations and other companies with

offices in Hoboken

- Banks and financial institutions
- Other business owners
- Landlords and other property owners
- Stevens Institute of Technology
- Other educational facilities
- Hoboken University Medical Center
- Arts organizations
- Other institutions
- Transportation providers
- Employees of all of the above

This report addresses topics including planning, zoning, economic development, market conditions and transportation, as determined in consultation with Chamber leadership, in order to formulate a statement of the Chamber’s positions on various issues.

Process

The Chamber retained a planning and real estate consultant, Phillips Preiss Grygiel LLC, to prepare this document. The consultant worked with the Chamber to gather input from the business community and others for this document. The outreach has included two Chamber “breakfast roundtable” meetings open to Chamber members as well as the public, a meeting with the Chamber’s Board of Directors, emails and discussions with Chamber members and a survey of the business community. This survey was sent to representatives of the business community. Anonymous excerpts of some survey responses are included in this document. The consultant also gathered and analyzed data, and attended a business community focus group meeting as part of the initial outreach for the Hoboken Master Plan reexamination report.

1. The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 mandates that a municipality’s governing body shall, at least every ten years, provide for a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations by the planning board, which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination.

2 summary of recommendations

The primary recommendations of this report are as follows:

Overall

- Urge the City of Hoboken's government to undertake inclusive master plan outreach process which includes the business community as a meaningful stakeholder
- Continue to work with the business community after the process is completed

City Government Actions

- Consider creating a permanent City government liaison for the business community and/or a City Economic Development office
- Streamline the development approval and permitting processes
- Explore the creation of one or more special improvement districts
- Learn from other successful cities and emulate best practices
- Improve Hoboken's marketing and tourism efforts
- Create and promote a "brand" for Hoboken

Transportation and Parking

- Provide for a balanced transportation system that recognizes a need for cars and trucks, as well as pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users
- Rationalize parking strategies
- Complete the work on Washington Street as soon as possible
- Adjust the redesign of Observer Highway to better serve all transportation modes
- Better connect the waterfront and Hoboken Terminal area to the rest of the city

Land Use and Zoning

- Provide a comprehensive, more predictable framework for development
- Update or overhaul the City's Zoning Ordinance and other development regulations
- Ensure the definitions of and regulations for retail and other commercial uses are broad enough to allow for current trends and changes in the retail environment
- Provide for more experiential retail, recreation and entertainment uses and range of food and drink options
- Promote office and business service uses to serve growing daytime population
- Allow for an appropriate mix of uses in new development

3 existing plans and policies

Policy Documents

The City of Hoboken's most recent full Master Plan was adopted by the Hoboken Planning Board on April 28, 2004. This document was prepared through a two-year process that had extensive community involvement. The 2004 Master Plan includes over 200 recommendations across a swath of topic areas. The Planning Board undertook a reexamination of the Master Plan in 2010 and adopted it on March 16, 2011. Municipalities are required to reexamine their master plan every 10 years, although they may be adopted sooner than that. As noted, the Planning Board has started the process of reexamining its master plan with the goal of completing the reexamination in the spring of 2018.

Regulatory Documents

The primary tool for regulating development in Hoboken is its zoning ordinance. While this document has been updated periodically, it is based on an ordinance adopted decades ago. A comprehensive overhaul of the zoning ordinance, called a unified land development ordinance, was prepared following the adoption of the 2004 Master Plan. However, this new document was not adopted by the City Council. Some minor changes have been made since then, and others have been proposed, including currently for business areas and for Stevens Institute of Technology.

Significant portions of the City are not subject to the regulations of the Zoning Ordinance, as they are within the jurisdiction of redevelopment plans. These include older ones that are completed (e.g. Southern Waterfront, for the area between First Street, Sinatra Drive, Fourth Street and River Street) and others which are partially implemented (Western Edge) or not at all (Hoboken Yards). A redevelopment plan may be prepared for an area designated as an area in need of redevelopment and/or rehabilitation pursuant to the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. There are often benefits to both the municipality and property owners from utilizing redevelopment plans. However, given their focused nature, they do not always result in appropriate comprehensive planning.

4 demographic and market data

Overview

Hoboken's population exceeded 50,000 in 2010, up from 38,577 in 2000 – a nearly 30 percent increase. There has been an estimated additional increase of 8.7 percent from 2010 to 2016, to a population of 54,379 per the United States Census Bureau. But this figure is still well below the City's population 100 years earlier, as Hoboken's highest decennial census population was over 70,000 in 1910. Some other notable trends and considerations include that the size of households is much smaller, income levels are much higher and daytime population is significantly increasing.

Population

The City of Hoboken's residential population has been growing steadily since reaching a decennial census low of 33,397 in 1990. There was a significant increase from 1990 to 2000, and an even greater one from 2000 to 2010. Growth has been slower since then. (All figures from the United States Census Bureau.) Hoboken's largest population age cohort is 25 to 34 year olds, which accounted for nearly two-fifths of the entire population as of 2015. The second largest is 35 to 44 years, followed by 45 to 54, 20 to 24, and under 5 years. It is notable that the cohort with largest percentage increase in population is the under 5 age category, which tripled from 2000 to 2015. Other significant

CITY OF HOBOKEN POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2000, 2010 AND 2015

	Number			Change		
	2000	2010	2015	2000-10	2000-15	2010-15
Under 5 years	1,232	3,075	3,768	150%	206%	23%
5 to 9 years	1,124	1,416	1,746	26%	55%	23%
10 to 14 years	1,041	916	893	-12%	-14%	-3%
15 to 19 years	1,356	1,583	1,688	17%	24%	7%
20 to 24 years	5,190	4,441	4,127	-14%	-20%	-7%
25 to 34 years	14,604	18,287	20,287	25%	39%	11%
35 to 44 years	5,344	8,064	9,437	51%	77%	17%
45 to 54 years	3,129	3,454	4,325	10%	38%	25%
55 to 59 years	1,126	1,821	1,599	62%	42%	-12%
60 to 64 years	947	1,202	1,466	27%	55%	22%
65 to 74 years	1,757	1,519	1,655	-14%	-6%	9%
75 to 84 years	1,334	1,140	1,076	-15%	-19%	-6%
85 years and over	392	466	385	19%	-2%	-17%

Source: United States Census Bureau

increases during this period include the 5 to 9, 25 to 34, 45 to 54, 55 to 59 and 60 to 64 age categories.

The median age in Hoboken rose from 30.4 in 2000 to 31.1 in 2010, and was estimated to be 31.3 in 2015. The retiree and elderly population is decreasing, unlike trends elsewhere in New Jersey. However, there is an increasing proportion of people in Hoboken who will be reaching retirement age over the next 10 years. One other notable trend relates to public school enrollment, which has been growing in lower grades in recent years.

Employment/Day-time Population

Despite the City's growing population, unemployment has stayed relatively level between 4 and 4.5 percent. The number of jobs in Hoboken has grown by 34% the over past decade, from 14,929 jobs in 2004 to 19,976 jobs in 2014 – meaning there are nearly 5,000 more people working in Hoboken. In addition, 4.2 percent (1,446) of workers 16 years and over worked at home in 2015, compared to 3.2 percent (907) in 2010. This jump is signif-

icant considering this cohort only increased from 2.8 percent in 2000 to 3.2 percent in 2010. Factor in the number of students at Stevens Institute of Technology (over 6,000 full- and part-time as of fall 2015), with enrollment projected to increase by over 25 percent in the next decade, and it is clear that there is a sizable and growing daytime population in Hoboken.

Yet most of the employed population living in Hoboken works outside the City, and the proportion of people living in Hoboken and working elsewhere has steadily increased since 2002. As of 2014, 29,611 residents commuted elsewhere for work, while 17,620 people commuted to Hoboken to work. By comparison, 2,356 jobs in Hoboken were filled by residents of Hoboken. Therefore most employees within Hoboken live elsewhere – a trend that has increased over time.

Income

Residential income levels are high in Hoboken. Of the 24,579 total households in Hoboken as of 2015, the majority (58.5%) have a

household income of more than \$100,000 per year. The City's median household income in 2015 was \$114,381, and mean household income was \$151,023.

Business Profile

According to the 2012 Economic Census by the United States Census Bureau, there was a total of 5,945 firms in Hoboken, with total sales/revenues of over \$3.8 billion. Information services brought in the most sales at \$869,144,000, followed by Finance and Insurance, Retail Trade, and Wholesale Trade. Employment numbers were spread pretty evenly across multiple different sectors:

- Educational Services (13.5%)
- Accommodation and Food Services (11.6%)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (11.3%)
- Information (11.2%)
- Administrative & Support (10.3%)
- Waste & Remediation Services (10.3%)
- Transportation and Warehousing (10.1%)

According to 2012 Economic Census most of firms fall within three categories:

- Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (25.2%)
- Real Estate and Rental Housing (17.3%)
- Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (12.9%)

The types of firms that grew the most in Hoboken between 2007 and 2012 are as follows:

- Healthcare and Social Assistance (+89.2%)
- Educational Services (+88.6%)
- Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (+86.7%)
- Real Estate and Rental Housing (+34.4%)
- Information (+19.5%)

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the categories of firms that decreased in Hoboken between 2007 and 2012 were Transportation and Warehousing (-44.7%) and Construction (-18%).

Other Factors

Beyond the data, there are some factors to consider that are more difficult to quantify – notably, the different groups within Hoboken's population. These have varied spending patterns and buying power, and represent different markets. For some time there has been a divide between “born and raised” and “new” residents. A more relevant distinction may be between long-term (born and raised as well as those who put down roots) and more transient (college, post-college and other young adults) residents. Other cohorts include empty nesters and/or retirees, families with young children and workers. There is overlap between some of these groups, but they do represent different markets for businesses. Similarly, the hospitality industry caters to varied visitors. These include overnight hotel guests, restaurant and bar patrons and tourists.

Between increases in resident and worker populations and visitors, overall retail buying power should be increasing. But the changing demographics may be impacting what types of stores and services are available and who they are catering to. More upscale business may be targeting a higher-income market, but rising rents are among the factors displacing businesses that serving a broader market. Higher-income households also may be spending less within Hoboken, while online retailing is challenging most stores. Businesses may not be evolving to serve the increasing daytime population, including workers, students and families. It is also notable that much of the City's growth is occurring in areas away from lower Wash-

ington Street and Hoboken Terminal in the western and northern portions of the City. There are some businesses moving into these areas, which may help with convenience, but may make residents of these areas less likely to patronize businesses on Washington Street and more established areas.

5 opportunities

Hoboken has many assets that can help it remain vital as it and the world around it evolve. These include location, transportation, reputation and population. The City also has a number of strong institutions. These include Stevens Institute of Technology and Hoboken University Medical Center, as well as the office sector, small businesses, the hospitality industry and a major New Jersey Transit hub.

In particular, Hoboken has a solid base in some of the fields that are doing well and offer continued opportunities. These include three H's:

- **Health care:** Hoboken University Medical Center, as well as numerous smaller health care practitioners and related businesses around the city, which provide convenient jobs and services
- **Higher education:** Stevens Institute of Technology, a longtime anchor of the City, is continuing to evolve, expand and support related businesses
- **Hospitality:** the W Hotel, a potential new hotel behind the main Post Office and a unique concentration of restaurants and bars

With regard to all three of these, Hoboken is well-positioned moving forward. For example, **Stevens Institute of Technology** is one of largest employers and economic engines in the City. Stevens had over 1,100 employees

as of 2015, with an increase projected as its enrollment grows, and generates significant spending from its students, employees and visitors. But Hoboken cannot just sit back and leave things as they are. There is a need to remain vigilant of threats and opportunities, and plan accordingly, as discussed below.

Another opportunity is the **Hoboken Terminal area**. This transportation hub is responsible for significant direct and indirect employment. It is used by thousands of transit riders per day, both Hoboken residents as well as those from elsewhere passing through on their way to waterfront offices or other locations in the City. A recent private-sector initiative is the creation of an emerging “Railhead District” of Terminal-area businesses. The City has also invested somewhat in the area through the installation of wayfinding signage and other measures, and a redevelopment plan for this area has been in the works for some time.

But this area is still not seamlessly connected to the rest of the City. Among the barriers are active bus lanes and the taxi stand on the north side of the Terminal. Warrington Plaza located between the Terminal and the waterfront walkway has been taken over by NJ Transit for parking and other purposes, despite being listed in the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Open Space database. This area that is supposed to be dedicated to public use has been fenced off with a guardhouse and “temporary” chain link fencing. The result is an uninviting pedestrian connection to the waterfront and rest of the City from Hoboken Terminal. For the business community, this is a missed opportunity to encourage station users and others to come outside the Terminal, and potentially patronize City businesses.

One of the gems of Hoboken is **Washington Street**. It has been nationally recognized by the American Planning Association as a “Great Street.” It generally remains vital, due to its established character and design. But it is evolving as the retail world shifts, and ongoing construction work on the street has been problematic for businesses.

There are **other business districts** in Hoboken, particularly along First Street and along and in the vicinity of Fourteenth Street, as well as in scattered other locations.

The growth in **daytime population** in Hoboken described above, inclusive of not just office workers, but those who work at home, stay at home parents, and the like, presents an opportunity for businesses beyond just evenings and weekends. This population provides increased spending power, and a demand for different types of stores and services. Similar, the evolution of the population now and in coming years, such as increases in students and retirees, can benefit the business community. These shifts are important as Hoboken’s economy has largely transitioned away from traditional manufacturing to smaller scale/artisan manufacturing (“maker” space) and other uses, and moved towards a knowledge- and creativity-based economy.

Lastly, a seismic shift has occurred in the **office market**. Formerly dominant suburban office markets have been suffering. In outlying counties in New Jersey and elsewhere, distressed assets of single-tenant fortresses off highways in remote areas are being reimaged as demand has collapsed for such facilities. Hoboken is actually ahead of this trend, as it provides office space in a walkable location near transit with shops and services nearby.

6 issues and obstacles

A major challenge to stores in Hoboken and elsewhere is the changing nature of retail. The growth of online shopping and shifting buying habits in general have made for challenging time for all retailers, as evidenced by the demise of many once powerful chains. But at the local level in Hoboken, there are additional problems, as increasing rents due to rising real estate values in general conflicts with a difficult retail environment. This mismatch between expectations and reality (i.e. what landlords believe is an appropriate rent versus what many tenants are able to pay) should be considered by the City as it evaluates what are appropriate uses in retail areas.

Hoboken also has a mismatch between buying power and spending habits. The increases in resident and worker populations discussed above should lead to more money being spent within the City. Yet due to broader trends, notably the dramatic shift to online shopping, as well as the lack of large, auto-friendly retail locations in Hoboken and rising rents has meant retail supply has not grown. Those businesses that can locate in Hoboken may only serve a limited part of population, while keeping out those that could address community needs and attract local spending.

The business community pays a higher proportion of taxes than residential properties. According to Hoboken's 2016 municipal budget, there are 1,007 nonresidential (i.e.

commercial, industrial and institutional) parcels in Hoboken, which is equal to just over six percent of all parcels in the City. However, nonresidential uses paid over 17 percent of property tax revenues in Hoboken. When calculated as tax revenue per acre, residential properties pay on average \$13,308 per acre of land, while the figure is \$58,736 for non-residential – or over four times as much.

Existing zoning is in many instances out of line with market realities. As a result, applications that would seem to be straightforward and heard by the Planning Board instead are within the jurisdiction of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The change shifts the burden of proof to the applicant, meaning the case is more difficult from the start. Whether by accident or design, the development application process is made tougher. There is further concern that with the Master Plan being updated, the Board may be even more reluctant to approve applications.

A similar issue is that the City's redevelopment plans also are not always realistic. In both cases, a fear of more residential development seems to be driving planning decisions. Yet in reality, not all locations in Hoboken are viable for retail or office use, and many are not for industrial. If the objective is to actually spur redevelopment, there is a need to allow for reasonable mixed-use development.

Hoboken is also facing increased competition from other places. Notably, the formal "redevelopment" process is being utilized all over the state now. It is no longer just Hoboken, Jersey City, Newark and more urban areas using this tool. Numerous smaller cities, suburban towns and even formerly rural townships are taking advantage of redevelopment's benefits: greater control over form and timing of development, bonding, financing and sometimes eminent domain. Ironi-

cally, many suburban areas are seeking to replicate what has been the norm in Hoboken for decades: mixed-use, multistory walkable developments.

7 detailed recommendations

Overall

The primary short-term objective is for the City of Hoboken's government to undertake an inclusive master plan outreach process which includes the business community as a meaningful stakeholder, and to continue to work with the business community after the process is completed.

It is important for the City to do it right as it updates the Master Plan. The 2011 Master Plan Reexamination Report was prepared in order to address a statutory requirement to reexamine the master plan at least every six years (the law has changed so the requirement is now every 10 years). The 2011 Reexamination continued certain recommendations of the 2004 Master Plan while changing direction on others. Yet the comprehensive rezoning effort languished, and over time a detailed plan for entire the City has given way to localized redevelopment efforts. There is nothing inherently wrong with that – some sites and areas in fact warrant more in-depth attention. But these efforts should be part of a broader plan prepared with the meaningful input of stakeholders, including the business community. After all, the business community helps keep Hoboken the vital place it is by providing goods, services, employment and revenues.

City Government Actions

- **Consider creating a permanent City government liaison for the business community and/or a City economic development office.** One of the top concerns cited by the business community in the process of preparing this document is the lack of support from City Hall. A number of survey respondents mentioned a need for there to be a point of contact in City government for businesses. An economic development office also could help attract and retain businesses as well as help with marketing and promotion.
- **Streamline the development approval and permitting processes.** Closely related is the difficulty cited by business owners and others when looking to open or expand. For those who must appear before City boards and commissions, a lengthy, uncertain approval process is often required. This issue also contributes to the high cost of running a business in Hoboken relates to this issue, which makes it harder for small and/or locally owned enterprises compete with corporate tenants.
- **Explore the creation of one or more special improvement districts.** A special improvement district (SID) is an entity funded by businesses within the district that assists with downtown marketing and management. Its functions can range from providing additional trash collection and security to creating special events to attract visitors to an area. Creating an entity such as a SID can help ensure the long-term viability of the commercial sector, although with the benefits of a SID comes extra costs. However, SIDs have been effective in a number of urban areas and elsewhere in New Jersey and should be considered for Hoboken.
- **Learn from other successful cities and emulate best practices.** Hoboken can be insular at times. Places such as Charleston and Pittsburgh were mentioned as examples for reinventing themselves and becoming popular destinations. Jersey City was also cited for its efforts in recent years, and it along with Bayonne, Harrison and Newark are competing with Hoboken for businesses and residents. Another trend in recent years has seen a number of suburbs and small cities replicating many features that make Hoboken desirable. These include South Orange (e.g. mixed-use, transit-oriented development; new hotel and beer garden; downtown special events; focus on historic preservation) and neighboring Maplewood; Cranford; Morristown; Rahway; and Red Bank.
- **Improve Hoboken's marketing and tourism efforts.** Hoboken does not appear to have a comprehensive marketing strategy. Better promotion by the City and links to the Chamber of Commerce and other members of the business community would help. Promoting tourism would help bring new customers to the City, which benefits residents by increasing the likelihood of success of a variety of businesses. The 2004 Master Plan promoted the provision of overnight accommodations, including business hotels within walking distance of Hoboken Terminal, extended stay hotels north of Fourteenth Street, and bed and breakfasts in a limited area close to the Terminal in accordance with certain regula-

tions. In the 13 years since then, only one such facility has opened, the W Hotel.

- **Create and promote a “brand” for Hoboken.** A related effort is to determine how to better communicate what Hoboken is, and to utilize this branding in advertising and marketing for the City and its businesses.
- **Support the efforts of Stevens Institute of Technology, and benefit more fully from its presence and contributions.** Stevens’ students, employees and visitors represent a substantial market for Hoboken businesses. More could be done to support the university and its spin-off enterprises.
- **Provide technical assistance and grants for storefront and building facade improvements.** Municipal assistance for small businesses is a useful tool utilized in a number of successful business districts, and could make it easier for stores, restaurants and other commercial enterprises help address planning and historic preservation objectives.

Transportation and Parking

- **Provide for a balanced transportation system that recognizes a need for cars and trucks, as well as pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.** Despite Hoboken’s transit accessibility and the significant amount of pedestrian and bicycle trips, some workers, residents and visitors still need cars. Congestion at gateways to the City is a regular occurrence. There are changes being made to some circulation patterns, but more that could be done, particularly on Observer Highway as discussed in more detail below. The scope and location of bicycle lanes should be evaluated, as these may not be necessary in all locations where they are currently. Another concern raised by many is with bumpouts at intersections. While pedestrian safety is important, streets still need to be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles, trucks and buses.
- **Rationalize parking strategies.** Parking has been one of the most contentious topics for both residents and the business community for a number of years now. It is recognized that there is limited land in Hoboken and there is no solution to parking that would make all users happy. However, improving retail area parking would benefit residents who want to patronize local businesses as well as the businesses themselves. The 2004 Master Plan recommendation to provide convenient spaces for retail customers, with short-term parking at meters and long-term parking in nearby off-street spaces remains valid. Other Master Plan recommendations that should be implemented include improving parking signage to inform visitors from the time they arrive in the City where public parking is located through unified “trailblazing” signs, and to create a system that informs drivers where parking spaces are available. An interactive system could alert drivers entering the City where parking spaces currently are available.
- **Complete the work on Washington Street as soon as possible.** The disruption caused

by major repair work along Washington Street has affected businesses along its length. Anything that can be done to hasten its completion — and to better mitigate negative impacts in the meantime — would help.

- **Adjust the redesign of Observer Highway to better serve all transportation modes.** The 2004 Master Plan which noted that a redesigned Observer Highway “has the potential to be a defining gateway to Hoboken” and includes the following principles to guide any improvements made to Observer Highway:
 - o Improve its appearance to make it a more attractive gateway to Hoboken
 - o Improve pedestrian safety while still accommodating high volumes of traffic
 - o Create a bicycle path and/or bicycle lanes in the right-of-way
 - o Provide a significant tree canopy
 - o Maintain the existing number of resident parking spaces, and consider adding spaces on the north side of the street, which would be more convenient for residents

The redesign implemented unfortunately accomplishes only two of these — providing a bicycle path and resident parking, including on the north side — while missing out on the overall intention of this recommendation. The street’s current design does nothing to improve the appearance of this road, did not add any trees and most importantly, does less to accommodate vehicle traffic. In the absence of other substantial changes being made to the road network in southwest Hoboken, Observer Highway will continue to be the primary vehicular entrance to the Terminal area, waterfront and Washington Street. Simply reducing the number of travel lanes and adding traffic signals does not change the fact that there are residents, workers and visitors that want or need to drive into these parts of Hoboken. Changes should be made to better address the above objectives.

- **Better connect the waterfront and Hoboken Terminal area to the rest of the city.** The 2004 Master Plan recommends making Hoboken Terminal more of a destination for residents and visitors, and increasing economic activity in the Terminal and vicinity. Large scale redevelopment at the Terminal and on the railyards has not occurred yet, but may in coming years. While the waterfront has seen extensive development in the past decade, little has been done to improve connections between the Terminal and southern waterfront and the rest of the City. One important step would be to reclaim Warrington Plaza on the north side of the Terminal as public open space.
- **Provide more loading zones.** These are needed in both business and residential areas, as home delivery becomes more frequent whether for home businesses or shopping. It may be possible to provide additional loading zones deliveries, which may be limited to certain hours. The provision of such spaces should not significantly impact existing on-street parking.
- **Improve transit options.** Providing more convenient transit within the City would benefit residents as well as businesses, as it may make it easier for customers to get to stores and restaurants as well as for employees to get to work. A new light rail station uptown also would help improve transportation in the City and encourage economic development in the City’s northwest corner. Improved bus service should also be promoted.

Land Use and Zoning

- **Provide a comprehensive, more predictable framework for development.** The development approval process in Hoboken has become more reliant on the discretion of the City's Zoning Board of Adjustment than on zoning in recent years due to the outdated nature of Hoboken's development regulations. Even limited zoning changes to help spur business development, such as for First, Fourteenth and Washington Streets as recommended in the 2004 Master Plan were only introduced earlier this year, 13 years after being proposed – and have yet to be adopted. The adoption of an updated Master Plan may help by providing the incentive to finally overhaul the Zoning Ordinance (see below).
- **Update or overhaul the City's Zoning Ordinance and other development regulations.** A citywide rezoning has not been completed in decades, despite Master Plan recommendations and efforts by prior administrations to complete this task. A complete overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance is needed to make it more user friendly and bring it up to current standards. Consideration should be given to making zoning regulations more permissive to encourage business creation and retention. Specific recommendations include the following:
 - o Ensure the definitions of and regulations for retail and other commercial uses are broad enough to allow for current trends and changes in the retail environment, and allow commercial uses in more locations.
 - o Provide for more experiential retail, recreation and entertainment uses and range of food and drink options, including larger scale uses, such as recreation and entertainment.
- **Promote office and business service uses to serve growing daytime population.** There is a growing market for retailers, restaurants, service providers and other commercial enterprises as discussed above.
- **Allow for an appropriate mix of uses in new development.** While there is a fear of additional residential development due to perceived impacts, the issue may be more of unbalanced development. New development that provides more jobs and services provided within the City could provide less need for residents to travel for work, shopping or services, which could reduce traffic impacts. The reality is residential also often subsidizes the commercial component of mixed-use development.
- **Permit additional overnight accommodations, including smaller scale, and meeting, conference and special event spaces.** Bringing additional visitors to Hoboken would benefit the City and its residents as well as businesses as described above. The City should allow and encourage the development of places for people to visit and to stay.

Appendix

selected quotes from business survey

The Hoboken Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey of the business community. This survey was sent by electronic mail to a targeted group of representatives of the business community. Below are anonymous excerpts of some of the responses to this survey.

Are you considering expanding your business's physical location? If so, are you considering expanding in Hoboken or moving out of Hoboken?

- I am considering moving out of Hoboken to expand. Expensive to get more space. Employees more plentiful elsewhere
- I am considering moving out of Hoboken to expand. This town does not support small business

Are there types of businesses that you would like to see established in Hoboken (i.e. businesses that are not available today and that you need to go outside of Hoboken to access)?

More professional firms ... larger law firms, larger IT firms, private equity, etc. This is critical to the high class, sophisticated image that Hoboken is building. Can't give that up to Jersey City, Princeton, etc.

What type of support does your business need from the City of Hoboken?

You could advertise this town actually has small businesses. Most people think it's just a place where there are way too many strollers and bars

What are the advantages of locating your business in Hoboken?

Name recognition. Every Client or future employee knows where it is.

Please briefly explain what has been your experience operating a business in Hoboken.

If city hall would support local business instead of constantly harassing us it would be easier to run a local business

What, if anything, would you change about Hoboken?

Simplification of rules and procedures for opening businesses. I hope for a more business friendly local government that works with the community rather than in opposition to it.

What suggestions do you have to improve streetscapes where businesses are located?

Not to block businesses with trees so you can see what stores are there. The front of the business needs to be visible from the street so people driving by can come in and shop.

What, if anything, could Hoboken do to become more business friendly?

- Acknowledge the tax value that businesses represent (which reduce taxes to residents).
- Promote local businesses with internet and email blasts.
- Make parking signs to encourage patrons to find affordable parking quickly.
- Feature professional businesses in town on City Website.
- There are several Hoboken companies that have substantial national businesses. Several residents might apply for positions at these companies if they knew these companies exist.
- Hoboken could treat everyone equally. The businesses connected to city hall get preferential treatment.
- I would have an individual available in city hall to assist prospective business owners and retailers navigate the regulatory maze. The city council should amend the zoning regulations to comply with the master plan and to make it easier to establish a business in Hoboken.
- Create economic development office
- Reduce regulations
- Have someone in City Hall to work with new people looking to open a business.
- Do something about variance and planning processes.

