



# **TARGET BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ANALYSIS**

## **PHASE TWO REPORT**

### **SITE SELECTION AND EVALUATION**

**PREPARED FOR**

**The Sussex County  
Vision 2020 Economic Strategy Committee**

**PREPARED BY**

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**SEPTEMBER 2007**

## **SITE IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Industries of Interest**

Research and analysis from the preceding section of this report and from the Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) have identified a number of target businesses and industries for Sussex County. The SGP recognizes that though the County is fortunate to have a strong recreation and tourism industry as its economic core or base, but notes that the County's economy cannot rely upon this industry for long-term economic sustainability, family-supporting jobs, and economic diversity and strength. The target industries identified earlier are ones that can capitalize upon the County's strengths and assets, such as labor force, proximity to markets, and quality of life. The focal point of the economic development effort then is the retention, attraction and development of "clean" and "high tech" industries that would create more and better jobs for County residents in businesses that could capitalize upon the County's high quality of life and excellent labor force. This includes a range of businesses and industries including Professional and Technical Services, Business Services, and "high tech" Manufacturing.

Identifying potential sites for these industries consists of finding the set of sites at the intersection of those that meet industry needs and those that are the focal points of the County's definition of economic development areas as spelled out in the Strategic Growth Plan. The key factors for a "high technology manufacturing" site are summarized in a publication prepared by the New York Empire State Development Corporation in March of 2006, included as Appendix E. The key criteria are:



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- ▶ **appropriate size** – 25 acres of developable land outside a flood plain. This will support a 250,000 square foot building assuming a 25 percent land coverage. Space should be available for expansion as well.
- ▶ **available** – site should be properly zoned, infrastructure served, environmentally sound, and on the market, that is, “shovel ready”
- ▶ **transportation access** – Interstate or major highway access necessary (20 mile maximum distance, 5 miles preferred), dual access to site; rail access desirable; airport access and air freight required; if use water-based shipping, should be within 240 miles of a port
- ▶ **utilities** - industrial level electric service with dual feed/dual substation preferred; natural gas available; municipal water and sewer with industrial waste treatment capacity preferred; T-1 telecommunications service at a minimum
- ▶ **topography** – preferably flat, regularly shaped site configuration, outside FEMA floodplains and few, if any, wetlands; highway visibility a plus
- ▶ **support services and facilities** – varies, but includes computer and communications specialists, temporary staffing services, machine shops, maintenance services
- ▶ **labor** - adequate supply, appropriately trained
- ▶ **surroundings** – attractive appearance, properly buffered, not close to rail yards, landfills, sewage lagoons or the like.

This roster covers the key site descriptors for locating a high tech manufacturing facility. There are two points that bear special emphasis:

**1) a site should be available and “shovel ready”** - that is, even if a site is properly located and zoned, the issues of pricing, permitting, and infrastructure availability can make a site impractical for development in a reasonable period of time (often defined as ready for occupancy within twelve months of acquisition of the site).

**2) a site must be developable** – constraints such as wetlands, rail yards, at-grade crossings, or access issues can reduce a ten-acre site to five very quickly. Also, there are current and adjacent use considerations. In some areas, residential uses have over time encroached upon industrial uses. In other cases, neighborhoods have developed adjacent industrial sites, and, the site, while zoned for industrial uses, are not available in a practical sense.

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The site requirements for both the high tech manufacturing and service sector industries are similar in many respects. The core requirements for the service sector businesses consist of an educated workforce, the availability of state-of-the-art communications infrastructure, adequate utilities, and attractive and reasonably priced space. The manufacturing sector industries also require an educated workforce, a modern communications infrastructure, and a strong utilities infrastructure, as well as proximity to markets and transportation infrastructure.

It should be noted that there are some differences between the service sector build out characteristics and those of manufacturing projects. Modern manufacturing typically seeks an open, one story structure with bays and docks for receiving and shipping materials; this means that a manufacturing operation will typically need a good-sized site for development to accommodate the structure itself and the attendant truck parking and loading areas. If other functions, such as Research and Development, administration, or sales are located in the building, a multi-story structure may be appropriate. Also, some types of manufacturing may be able to use a multi-story facility.

However, office buildings can be, and typically are, multi-story, thus requiring a smaller "footprint", though allowance must be made for parking and access. This is to say that locating a site for an office building may not require the acreage that locating a manufacturing operation would.

American Planning Association figures for employment by land/building type indicate that manufacturing operations typically require 600 sq. ft. of space per employee, while office operations require approximately 335 sq. ft. per employee, though this number appears to be declining.



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Additional information on site requirements and standards for developable and "shovel ready" sites is provided in the Virginia Economic Development Partnership publication, "Right Now" Sites Program Manual", which is included as Appendix F.

Preferred Locations

The SGP recommends focusing economic development into or adjacent to the Town Centers and the designated Job Creation Centers. These are the areas (Landscapes) best suited for economic growth on the basis of location near key industry requirements, away from residential or scenic landscapes, and in areas that can support relatively dense development.

The Job Creation Centers are intended to create employment and opportunities for reverse commuting, while providing a location to develop businesses that call upon the County's strengths and, at the same time, are locations that take advantage of existing or planned infrastructure and available labor. In addition the Job Creation Centers focus business/industrial development on areas that possess "substantial water availability" (SGP, 66) and emphasize environmental considerations and review. Also, the SGP discourages business or industrial development in isolated situations or directly along highways (SGP, 20-2.1).

The Traditional Town Center is to be the focal point of the majority of development. Capitalizing upon existing infrastructure, and the presence of labor and amenities, the Town Center becomes an excellent location for expanding or new businesses and for economic revitalization in some instances. Sites in the Town Center are very likely to be smaller ones that may be a logical and appropriate location for a multi-story office building, but not for a manufacturing operation both for space and traffic considerations. The Town Centers represent redevelopment opportunities as a number of them currently have moderate-sized

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vacant or underutilized buildings including older retail outlets, such as former grocery or discount stores. These “shells” or “boxes” offer opportunities for office or mixed-use redevelopment.

Conversely, the Job Creation Centers, with larger tracts of land, may prove better suited for manufacturing, or for a “campus style” office complex. That is, they represent “Greenfields” development opportunities for the County.

The County has recently updated its wastewater map, indicating those areas currently served as well as those for which service is anticipated. Since water and sewerage are key drivers in the development process, particular attention should be paid to sites or locations that are most likely to receive sewer service in the foreseeable future.

**THE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS**

Criteria

One of the objectives of this study is to identify the areas and sites around the County that represent the best opportunities to foster the growth of the selected target industries. The Vision 2020 Committee wished to employ the County’s GIS program to the fullest extent possible in identifying available sites that meet industry needs and offer the greatest immediate potential for development.

A preliminary identification of sites was made using the “Select by Attributes” function of the GIS system. The first task was to identify the industrially- and commercially-zoned lands, as these could be developed for these uses without delay or debate over the intended use. Though each municipality has its own definition of these uses, the County developed a generalized category or definition of each that includes all appropriate uses.



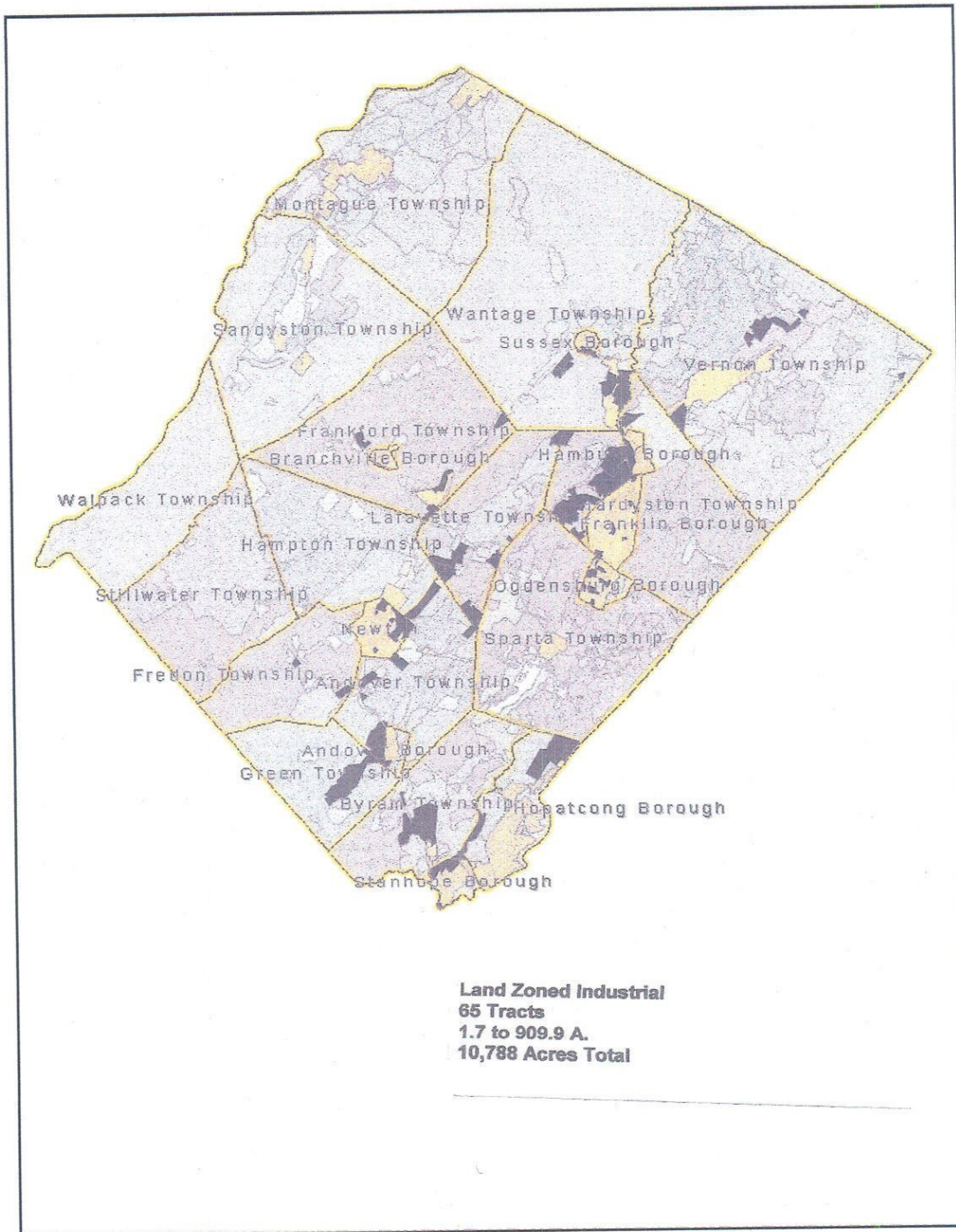
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Industrially-zoned land consisted of 65 tracts ranging from 1.7 to 909 acres; the total amount of industrial land amounted to 10,788 acres. The commercially-zoned land totaled 18,017 acres in 219 tracts ranging from 0.007 acres to 2,180 acres. While the industrially-zoned land is clustered in or near the Town Centers for the most part, the commercially-zoned parcels almost outline the highway system with clusters in the Town Centers. The program identified the industrially-zoned and the commercially-zoned land (shown in black) on the maps on the following two pages.

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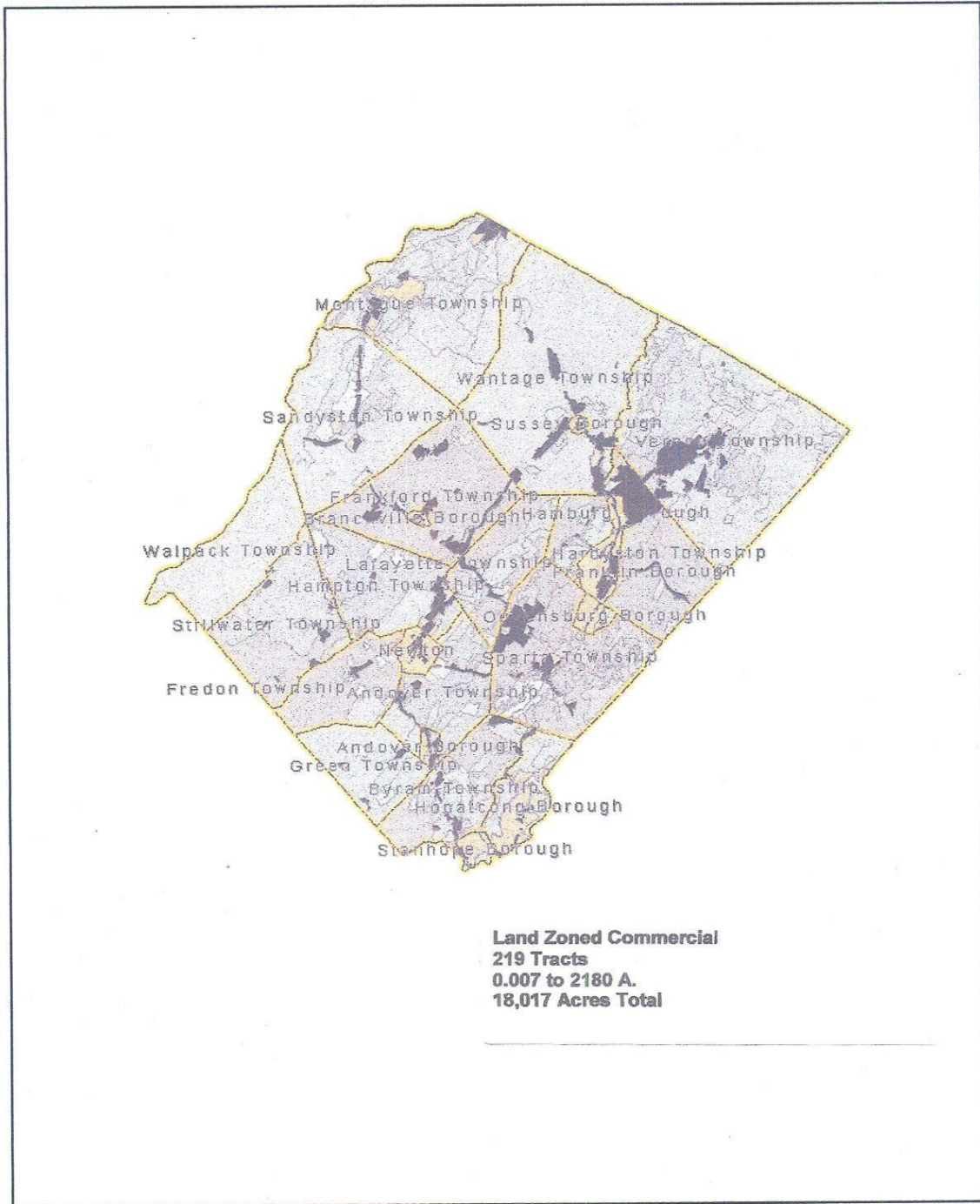
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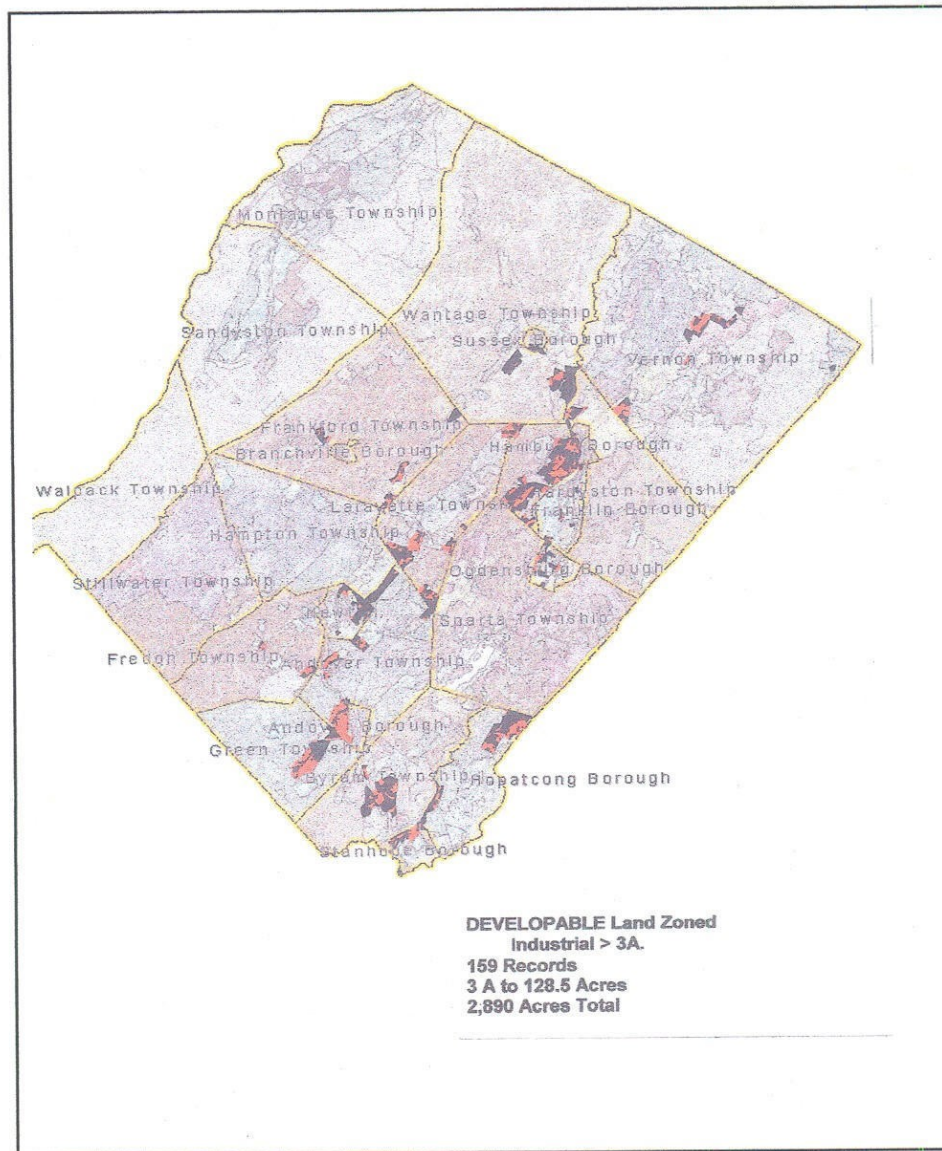
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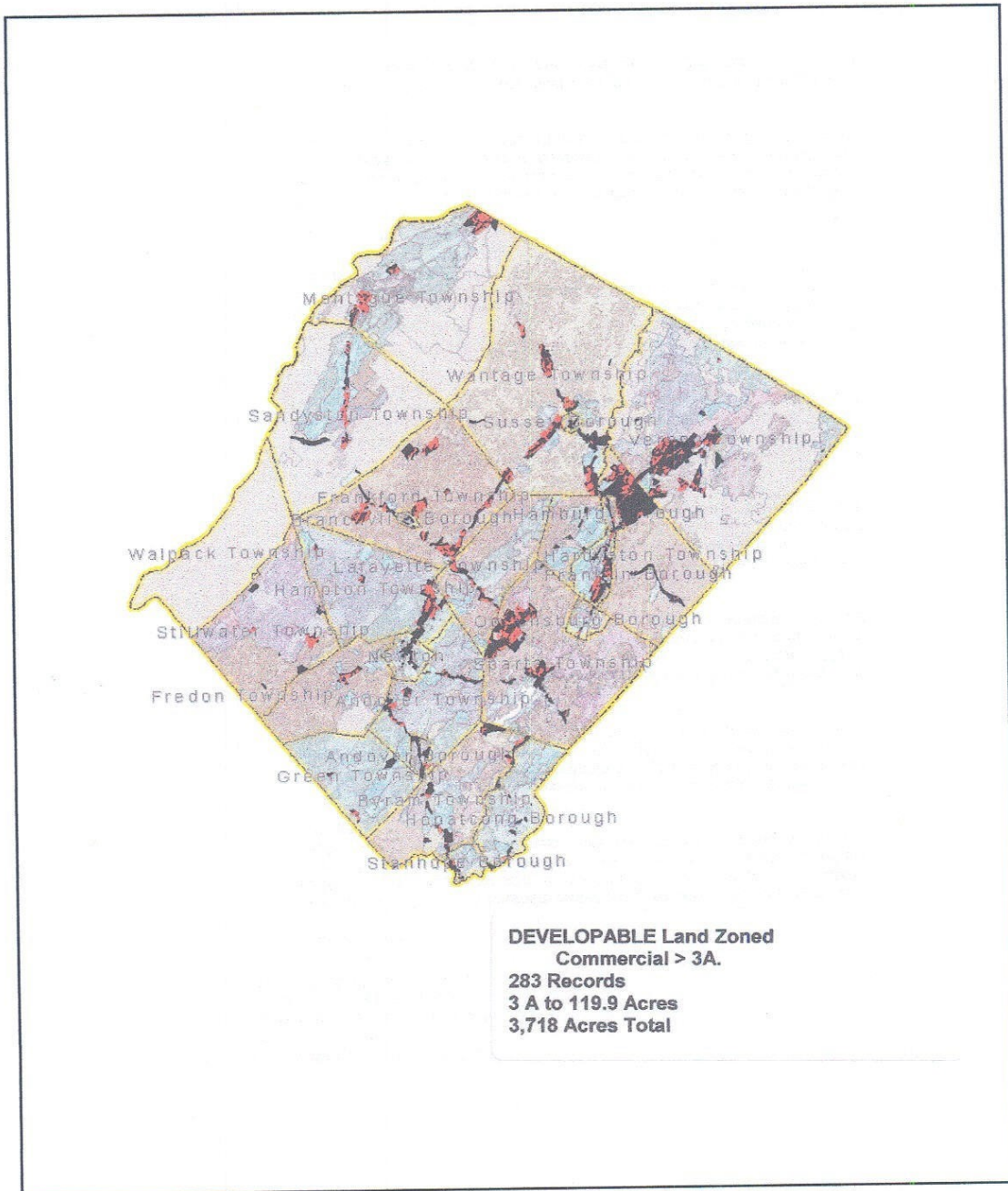
However, this process includes parcels that are occupied or built out in some cases. In order to identify parcels that offer development potential the system was asked to identify “developable” lands – that is, those not already occupied or built upon. Furthermore, the system was asked to identify those sites greater than three acres, as this was deemed a minimum size necessary to construct a new building for a new firm. The results are shown on the two maps shown below. The “developable” lands are shown in red within the black areas.





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The number industrially-zoned tracts increased to 159 as undeveloped parts of tracts were included. Despite the increased number of tracts, the total acreage declined to 2,890 and the size ranged from the minimum three acres to 128.5

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acres. The commercially-zoned tracts increased from 219 to 283, but the total acreage dropped to 3,718 acres and the largest tract was 119.9 acres.

Though this preliminary analysis provided a good starting point, it was deemed suspect for several reasons. The data supporting the “developable” definition was not complete or accurate, and there were overlaps between the desired uses and residential areas in some cases.

To achieve a more accurate analysis, the Vision 2020 Committee, the consultant and the GIS Department defined the criteria described below.

- Developable properties – i.e., vacant properties
- 5 acres or larger
- Located in a Town Center or Job Creation Center
- Zoned for industrial or commercial use
- Served by water and sewer
- Level topography

Given the complexity of the task, the GIS Department was asked to develop the means to search the database for these sites.

Some additional criteria, such as single ownership, location close to a highway, a location not in or near a residential area, and not near a school were recommended, but not considered mandatory for this project.

The basic criteria items for the second iteration are discussed below:

Though recommended as a primary screen, the **“developable land” map layer was not used** for this screening for several reasons. As noted earlier, its accuracy was being assessed as well as its concurrence with more recent data. Secondly, the definition “developable land” has some conflicts with the other criteria posed in this screening. Also, the “developable land” designation would include any parcel which it touched; that is, if the developable designation lapped



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into a parcel that was already developed or which had environmental issues, that parcel would be included in the results, though it realistically did not belong on the list. Thus, this definition was not included in the screen.

The upshot of this, however, is that the roster of sites contains many sites that are already developed. This flaw can be overcome by incorporating additional data from other sources, notably tax assessor data, or by an update of the "developable lands" data set in the GIS system. Neither of these options was readily accomplished at the time of this study.

**The 5 Acre lot criterion** was selected arbitrarily. The figure is below the size noted in the New York and Virginia publications, but reflects the realities of site location in Sussex County, where topography and compatibility issues limit potential uses. The underlying rationale was to identify potential the County's ability to meet a demand for sites for larger scale projects, such as a large manufacturing operation or an office park. Assuming that approximately one-half of a given lot is actually buildable (allowing for access, parking, screening, drainage, wetlands, etc.), a structure of about 110,000 square feet could be placed on such a lot. There are many smaller parcels across the County that are zoned for industrial and commercial uses and they can be the location for any number of manufacturing or office establishments. The philosophy here is that the Vision 2020 Committee and the Economic Development Partnership can focus on the development of larger projects on these larger sites, while the municipalities can be aware of the sites of all sizes in their jurisdiction and focus on the development or expansion of individual firms or facilities in appropriate areas.

**The Town Center or Job Creation Center location criterion** is important for several reasons. Not only does this focus development in the areas most appropriate for growth, but it places potential development near highways and

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labor supply. At the same time this focus serves to eliminate the development of highway and isolated site projects.

**Zoning for Commercial or Industrial Use** is a basic requirement. The County GIS database has reduced the welter of commercial and industrial designations and descriptions to the two categories in order to simplify the screening process. The system of designation appears to work well for the purposes of this study. Only a few sites that do not jibe with the broad designation appear in the roster of 103 parcels.

**The criterion for the sewer service area** is that there is a physical connection to a waste water facility. Development follows sewer lines, so this aspect of the selection (and development) process is very important, as the SGP notes on several occasions. This is also an important consideration in the definition of a "project ready" site, which will be discussed later. The sites on the roster are sewer served.

**The topography criterion** was defined as a slope of less than 8 percent. The idea is that such a site would require only minimal site preparation. The impact of running the screen with a higher slope will have to be tested to determine how many additional parcels might appear.

Results

The first run of the screening model produced a list of about 140 properties. It was quickly noted that the list was flawed. Though the list contained many developed parcels, a more serious issue was that it contained a significant number of residential tracts. The reason for this was the presence of overlaps in the data which caused the system to include residential tracts that overlapped with commercial or industrially zoned areas. However, this problem was



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corrected as a part of a system upgrade, and a corrected list became available about two weeks prior to the April Committee meeting.

**The revised list contained 103 sites that met the criteria described above.** This roster is attached to this report. However, because it was known that some of these sites were developed, it was necessary to review the roster in detail. To determine the identity of what are referred to as the "star sites", this list was reviewed in three stages. The list with some notes appears as Appendix G.

First, the sites were matched to the County GIS data on a parcel by parcel basis. Though this study is not intended to collect detailed data on each site, this process showed the presence of any structure on the site as well as identifying the ownership of the site.

Several points emerged from this review. A handful of sites that are not industrial or commercial appear on the roster, though the problem may lie in the definitions or even data entry about those sites. Also, there are three sites that appear on the roster that are zoned for commercial or industrial, but are not in (though beside) Town Centers or Job Creation Centers. These are minor issues and can likely be corrected without difficulty.

A more significant concern is that a number of sites on the roster are municipally or state owned. In several cases these sites are attractive, but the question of availability must be raised.

Also, a number of sites could not be located on the map, and some that are likely sites had no information available in the database. This may be in part because of repeated subdivision of some areas or simply that data was not available or entered for a particular site. This does not appear to be a significant problem.

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A second level of review was the use of Google Earth aerials to view the sites. Though it was sometimes difficult to confirm the exact boundaries of a given site, this process was very useful in identifying the development of a site and in assessing the uses and surroundings of a site. This task also eased the on-site review of each of the screened sites.

Site visits were conducted to each of the selected sites over the course of two weekends. This visit confirmed the uses of and conditions at each site and provided better insight into potential development options, as well as some idea of traffic flows, the neighborhood characteristics, and proximity to amenities and other features.

The bottom line to this screening process is that of the 103 sites that emerged only eleven proved to be "star sites". Five of the sites are in Andover Borough, four are in Newton, and there is one site each in Sussex and Stanhope. A brief analysis of each of the sites or clusters of sites follows.

Of the five sites in **Andover Borough**, three lie side by side on Tranquility Road and are zoned as IP, Industrial Park. On the northern end of the Borough, there are two sites on either side of Route 206. There is a sixth parcel in Andover that came through the screening; it is an irregularly shaped parcel further south on Route 206 with a commercial development on the highway frontage.

The four sites in **Newton** are located in the northern part of the Town along the commercially developed section west of Route 206.

The site in **Sussex** is a tract of approximately 30 acres located behind the fire station on Route 636 in the southwestern quadrant of the Borough.



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The **Stanhope** site is a six acre tract in an industrial area on Furnace Road. There is an existing structure which appears to be a house converted to an office use. This site offers redevelopment potential for industrial uses.

In the course of conducting the site visits, a number of additional properties were observed, some of which could be considered for development.

- ↳ In **Franklin** there are a number of parcels owned by a quarry operation.
- ↳ There are sites in **Sparta** near Routes 15 and 181 that are open and apparently available.
- ↳ A number of sites in **Vernon** appear to be more likely to be developed for commercial purposes, given the nature of the existing development.
- ↳ There are six sites in **Montague** that came through the screening. Three sites are on Route 23 near the New York border. The two 5-acre tracts on Clove Road do not appear to have office or industrial potential. The 40 acre parcel on Clove Road is owned by the Township.
- ↳ In **Frankford** the site of the baseball stadium came through the screening process, and is not a viable development site. However, there are two tracts to the north of the stadium along Route 565 that would seem to offer development potential, though they are not on the list. The two sites did not make it through the screen because they do not have sewer service.

The Committee did not deem the second round screening successful for several reasons. First, because the screen did not include a mechanism to eliminate developed or occupied sites, many of the sites on the roster were not available for development or even redevelopment – they are the site of on-going businesses. Second, because the definition included Town Center or Employment Center designation and the water and sewer service requirement, potential sites were excluded. In the context of Sussex County, these criteria, important as they are, are too stringent and the universe of sites that emerged contained only one “star site” and two “maybes” on the basis of the given criteria.

Related to that, though not something the screening process could have detected, was the fact that many sites were eliminated by the group “for cause”.



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For example, some of the sites are state-owned, which means that they are not available for development as a practical matter. Alternatively, some parcels were known **not** to be on the market now, nor likely to be on the market in the foreseeable future. Also, some parcels are located in municipalities that do not want or are not interested in development. These are issues that no database screen could easily determine. These considerations reflect the difficulty of the identification process.

The Committee review of the second round of sites produced a listing of additional sites for scrutiny as well as a revision of the screening criteria. The group centered on the two issues noted above – the designation of sites in the Town or Job Creation Centers and the provision of water and sewer. Members of the group felt that these items eliminated the possibility of including many sites and that the screen should be “relaxed” to include sites that were within some distance of an existing center, the rationale being that water and sewer service could be provided from an existing system, or that one could be developed. It was also noted that the screening system needed to have some means of identifying undeveloped land.

Several suggestions for additional sites were provided by members of the group. Each was identified and visited by the consultant. The additional sites are:

- ↳ **Frankford** – land north of Ross’s Corner along routes 206, 15, and 565. These are lands noted by the consultant earlier and are currently zoned for Light Industrial use
- ↳ **Sparta** – lands on both sides of Route 15 between Houses Corner Road and White Lake Road. These lands are near the existing Job Creation Center and have rail access
- ↳ **Green Township** – large tracts of land zoned agriculture-Industrial between Route 517 and Whitehall Road. They are currently being farmed, and are distant from existing water and sewer service.
- ↳ **Lafayette Township** – lands at the intersection of Route 94 and Sunset Inn Road were recommended



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- ↳ **Wantage** – The Ames Rubber site of Route 565 about one-half Mile north of Route 23
- ↳ **Byram** – The Wild West City area

These sites were included in the overall inventory of sites that was being developed, though in some cases specific site information (Block and Lot) was not available.

The County GIS Department revised the screening model in light of the new criteria including:

- Zoned commercial or industrial
- Equal to or greater than 5 acres
- Not open space or farmland preserved
- No slopes greater than 20%
- No river/stream/wetland issues
- Not within the Highlands Planning or Preservation area
- Contain "barren land" - i.e., undeveloped

**This third screening identified 56 tracts**, shown in the spreadsheet in Appendix H. It appears that two of the listings are duplicates (Frankford Block 1, Lot 2, and Wantage Block 3, Lot 2.01), and one tract in Lafayette has no block and Lot number, though it is probably associated with the limestone quarry sites. Two sites, one in Andover and one in Newton, could not be located on a map from the Block and Lot data. The latter are noted in italics for the apparent duplicate.

There are only seven overlaps between the second round screen and this review. This is due to the fact that the first list contained many parcels with some degree of development. It should be noted that these overlaps occur in Newton and Hampton and in several instances the properties appear to be occupied. These are highlighted in the roster.

Finally, though the screen was established at the five acre minimum, the criteria for a high tech manufacturing operation include a twenty-five acre minimum

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parcel. Though tracts of this size can be obtained with land assembly, it is usually easier to have parcels of this size already available. Appendix I shows the results of the third round screening sorted by parcel size. There are a number of tracts that are in excess of this minimum and some of the smaller tracts are close to the key sites in the Andover Township and Wantage areas in particular.

Though most of these sites are within two miles of existing Town Centers (and thus theoretically water and sewer service) several are beyond this measure, and others may well be beyond this limit when considering the actual routing of this service. Parcels that are clearly beyond the limit are highlighted in red on the roster. Also highlighted in red is the one state-owned parcel that emerged and the MUA site in Lafayette.

**High Potential Areas**

However, four high potential development areas emerged from this analysis because of the amount of proximate land and the proximity of the sites to Town Centers.

The first area lies between Sussex Borough and Hamburg along Route 23 in Wantage Township. Most of the parcels are on the west side of the highway, have good street access and are zoned for Light Industrial or Highway Commercial use. A map and aerial photos in Appendix J highlight these parcels.

The second area lies to the west of Andover Borough and is referred to as the Miller Sheep Ranch, though one parcel in the area is owned by another entity. Again, the sites, outlined on a map in Appendix J, appear developable and are close to water and sewer.



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The Sparta sites recommended by the group did not appear on this roster, but appear to be a third, high prospect area, close to the Job Creation Center and existing industrial development. The area includes several large tracts which would make land assembly easier. Though no specific parcels were suggested for the Sunset Inn Road/Route 94 area, this too would be an excellent project site. An overview of the parcels indicates that there are several large tracts and a "For Sale" sign was observed on one of the tracts in the course of site inspection. Maps and aerial photos of these two areas follow in Appendix J.

Fourth, the area in Frankford that lies north of the baseball stadium emerged as a high potential area. Aerial photos and a map of the area appear in Appendix I.

**ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION AND RESOLUTION**

Several issues emerged from the development of this identification process.

First, the process did not yield any "star sites" for immediate development. Many of the identified sites lacked appropriate infrastructure and thus could not meet the criteria for near-term development. A variety of other factors eliminated other potential sites. Some were not on the market and apparently, from anecdotal information, not likely to be on the market. Still others were in municipalities that have little expressed interest in development and thus, not likely to receive support if selected. Thus, the County at present lacks the sites that it needs to immediately begin recruiting firms to "Greenfield" sites. Redevelopment of sites in the Town Centers thus becomes the initial focus of development and recruitment activities.

Second, in the course of the research, it was noted that much of the land in the Job Creation Centers did not make it through the screening process because

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these sites did not possess sewer connections. Some of the sites in the Job Creation Center landscape that did come through the screening are of dubious value for industrial or office development because of existing uses – residential for the most part, though other uses were noted both in the zoning and ownership data, and by inspection. Thus, the present Job Creation Centers should be evaluated as to their efficacy for job creation. Some of these areas may need to be reclassified and other areas re-designated as Job Creation Centers providing a clear, viable targets for development activity.

In particular we recommend:

- 1) expanding the Center that is the core of the Sparta Industrial Park;
- 2) assessing the areas in Andover Township to the west of the Borough, as well as tracts along the northern part of Route 209 in the Borough;
- 3) evaluating the parcels in Frankford Township that lie north of the baseball stadium and east of the Fairgrounds; and
- 4) considering the tracts in Wantage Township along Route 23 between Sussex and Hamburg.

This in turn raises the point, made in the SGP and here, that development follows water and sewer. The initial efforts to identify “star sites” failed in large part because water and sewer served sites did not turn up in the process because, outside the Town Centers these sites do not exist. Thus, the County and the municipalities have the opportunity to lead or direct industrial and office development by extending sewer and water service. The Frankford site mentioned above is an excellent example of this, though the Sparta and Wantage areas noted above are similar. The targeted inclusion of water, sewer and road improvements in both municipal and County Capital Improvement Plans provides the means to direct development for both economic development and planning purposes.

We also recommend a review of the gravel pits, quarries and other sites in the County that are in need of some degree of reclamation. Some of these sites in



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need of reclamation are in or close to Town Centers and thus possess infrastructure or the ability to quickly obtain water and sewer in particular. So long as they are developed in depth (as opposed to strip development along a highway), they may provide excellent sites for office or even manufacturing operations, considering their current use, zoning, and surrounding uses.

Going one step further is the creation of areas with “project ready” sites. A “project ready” site is defined as “...land that can be ready for construction to begin within six months, meaning that some basic infrastructure needs to be provided before construction starts and/or building permits can be obtained within six months.” This definition comes from the Oregon Industrial Lands Task Force Study, a multi-year intensive study of land use designation and preservation. It sums up the requirements succinctly and notes that both infrastructure and permitting procedures are in place. Indeed, obtaining the necessary environmental permits is generally deemed one of the most positive actions a municipality or County can do to further development, and as an aside, direct development.

In some areas of the country the development process is further expedited with the creation of “virtual buildings”. These pre-permitted computer generated models of building designs aid the developer in the review process and expedite the receipt of development permits so that construction can quickly begin on infrastructure served sites. The overall size, building footprint, and number of persons working in the structure can be described even as the interior design and layout can remain for the developer and tenant to work out.

A related issue is that of actual site availability. The Oregon study mentioned above defines an available site as one being “in the right place at the right price”. That is, the site is properly zoned, in a “good” location for the intended use, and on the market at a reasonable price. Some of the sites reviewed for this study do

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have “For Sale” signs and others are likely on the market through brokers, though without signage. However, the issue of actual availability and of assembly of parcels remains a question for many of the sites reviewed. The issue of state or municipal ownership also can raise questions for developers who need to move quickly to acquire and develop a site. Protracted negotiations or a bid process can easily reduce the viability of a site in the eyes of a prospect.

There is no easy solution to this problem, but it may behoove the Economic Development Partnership or some other entity to acquire or option tracts near high potential sites in order to expedite development. The County and the municipalities should work with local or regional developers to assemble and prepare sites.

The screening system used in this study and based upon the County’s GIS program has some flaws, but these can be corrected and additional screening elements included. The elimination of developed sites is the first order of business. However, it should be noted that in some instance it may be desirable to include developed sites, such as quarries, or tracts in redevelopment areas as these sites may offer opportunities for better for more productive use or revitalization. Also, the model can be adapted so that users can identify the size of parcel for which the wish to search or specify specific municipalities or areas of the County they wish to search.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The results of this preliminary identification of larger sites are very informative and useful, not only for the “star sites” it revealed, but for the issues it raised as well. The County has a number of potential sites for larger-scale office or industrial development, most notably in the Andover Township, Wantage, Sparta and Frankford areas. Further, there appear to be available sites in the Sparta



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industrial park, which is a Job Creation Center. Also, there may well be “developed” sites, such as the quarry in Franklin/Ogdensburg and the Stanhope site that offer development potential, as well as redevelopment potential in Newton, Franklin, and perhaps Hamburg. Further investigation is necessary on an area by area or site by site basis.

Indeed, this is one of the key points that emerged from this process. Sites must be visited and assessed on an individual basis and the “tale” behind the site known in order to develop a game plan for development. The screening process is a useful tool for narrowing the universe of possible sites, but it is not an infallible means to identify potential sites in a rapidly changing environment.

The inability to immediately identify “star sites” suggests that the economic development entity should immediately begin working with the municipalities, the County, property owners, and developers to those assemble and improve sites or areas that lend themselves to the desired types of development. The general locations are noted in the preceding analysis and the general criteria or needs of the desired industries have also been identified. Though the details of the process will vary with each site, the initial steps for site preparation (land assembly, infrastructure, zoning) should be started.

Available sites (on the market, in the right location, at the right price) or high potential areas should be identified and turned into “project ready” sites so that a developer has no reservation about committing to a project. The County has many assets for businesses and developers, but the development or relocation or expansion decision should be made as easy as possible from site availability to permitting to construction through hiring. This will entail thought, planning and coordination, but will be well worth the effort (if not actually imperative) in the current, difficult, real estate market in the western Interstate 80 corridor. These issues will be the center of the following part of this report.