



Community Insights™

REVITALIZATION INITIATIVES (Revised)

HACKETTSTOWN

May 31, 2008

Precepts that will drive all initiatives:

1. We have consensus: 93% of all survey respondents said that we need to make changes in Hackettstown.
2. The preference is for Hackettstown to become a shopping district and/or a leisure-college district; retail categories recruited should conform these preferences.
3. We need to create a comfortable environment on Main Street that will encourage shoppers to walk, browse-shop, dine, socialize, and generally spend longer amounts of time when visiting the corridor.
4. We need to achieve a balance between the need for historic preservation, and the need for revitalized commerce.
5. Hackettstown needs to become a college town, with college-oriented retail.

Revitalization Initiatives – We recommend the following initiatives:

1. Activate a committee to be known as the “Hackettstown Revitalization Committee” (HRC), involving the core stakeholder groups, and meet at least monthly to facilitate the revitalization initiatives, identify and assess opportunities, and develop and implement strategies to overcome obstacles. [COMPLETED]
2. RETENTION: Revise existing zoning codes to provide an enforceable design standard for commercial properties on Mountain Avenue that addresses permitted principal uses, facades, lighting, signage, and outdoor displays.
3. (*NOW Called 3a*) RETENTION: Determine the most effective way for enhancing the enforcement of existing zoning codes in order to ensure compliance of the commercial properties on Main Street with a focus on permitted principal uses, facades, lighting, signage, window displays, and other retail-related issues.

(*NOW Called 3b*) RETENTION: Revise existing zoning codes to provide an enforceable design standard for commercial properties on Main Street that addresses permitted principal uses, facades, lighting, signage, window displays, outdoor displays, outdoor dining, and sidewalks.
4. RETENTION: Provide for the retention or subsidization of a professional window dresser/visual merchandiser to offer their services to participating Hackettstown retailers.



5. RETENTION: Create a pilot program for evening shopping that will identify one night per month that stores shall remain open during a standard set of hours; facilitate this with marketing, and possibly combine with events.
6. RETENTION: Create a “lights on at night” program that will keep retail window displays lighted in the evening, after closing hours, in order to better activate and promote the Main Street corridor.
7. RETENTION: Design and place gateway, access, and wayfinding signage to direct consumers into the Mountain Avenue and Main Street shopping corridors; to parking within the Main Street corridor; to individual shops and restaurants within the Main Street corridor, as well as signage to denote the historic district.
8. RETENTION: Work with legislators and NJ Transit officials to petition for more frequent train service to Hackettstown, and to explore the possibility of creating a transit village near or around the train station location and along Main Street.
9. RETENTION: Manage parking by creating and enforcing a parking program that will explore, among other things, “stacked” or other systems to maximize parking efficiency, remote parking for merchants and their employees, and special loading/parking zones for specific users (such as 15 minute parking for take-out food stores). Develop and implement efforts to grow awareness of free parking within the downtown area.
10. RETENTION: Explore the feasibility of expanding the service of the current Route 973 bus route, as well as creating a town-wide trolley system (with greater range and frequency than the 973 bus route) that will deliver shoppers and college students from remote parking areas, and convey them at low or no-cost to several destinations within the shopping corridors; consider subsidizing this system with grant revenue from NJ Transit, and advertising revenue from Hackettstown merchants that advertise on video screens that will play on the trolleys.
11. RETENTION: To encourage shoppers to browse-shop and linger on Main Street, explore the possibilities of replacing parking on one side of Main Street with remote parking; repairing and widening sidewalks on Main Street; creating sidewalk dining opportunities on Main Street; improving streetscapes and pedestrian amenities on Main Street (benches, planters, bike racks, etc.); and improving pedestrian lighting.
12. RETENTION: Explore the feasibility of creating a town square or other similar public space along Main Street that will facilitate the hosting of public events, outdoor markets, public social gatherings, and generally increase the utility of Main Street as a gathering place for residents.
13. RETENTION: Create cooperative marketing programs to expand upon work already done by Hackettstown BID, and provide merchants with, among other things: a “bounce-back” coupon program, cross-selling opportunities, expansion of the Centenary Debit Card program, creation of “Freshman Survival Kits,” capturing more seasonal selling opportunities, and expanding the enrollment of participating retailers.



14. RETENTION: Seek to combine redevelopment opportunities with initiatives to increase participation of Centenary College in the downtown corridor, including creation of student housing, classroom space, or other college-oriented facilities on Main Street; combine this with other initiatives designed to help Centenary College use its campus space more efficiently, in order to facilitate their growth, thereby expanding the potential shopper base for Hackettstown.
15. RETENTION: Create more housing opportunities downtown in response to the high level of survey respondents, particularly Centenary students that expressed a high level of interest in residing in downtown Hackettstown.
16. RETENTION: We should make a deliberate effort to create a college-town atmosphere throughout both Hackettstown shopping corridors, to match retail types, marketing efforts, events, appearance, and special initiatives to embrace and celebrate the town's relationship with the college.
17. RETENTION: We should plan targeted marketing campaigns to increase the presence of employees of major employers of the community (such as Mars Foods, the Hackettstown Regional Medical Center, and Centenary College) in ever-expanding retailing opportunities, from lunch programs to dinner programs, to shopping discounts, to special events planned for those employees.
18. RETENTION: Capture a greater share of trade area spending, and grow the size of our trade area, by a combination of targeted marketing programs that begin with existing retailers, and expand in scope and target market as Hackettstown recruits additional retailers.
19. RECRUITMENT: Focus the revitalization effort on recruiting restaurants and eateries within the following categories: casual upscale dining, fast food, seafood, taverns and pubs, steakhouses, and coffee shops.
20. RECRUITMENT: Focus the revitalization effort on recruiting retailers within the following categories: books, clothing, footwear, electronics, arts & crafts, gifts, housewares, and home goods.
21. RECRUITMENT: Focus the revitalization effort focus on the siting and recruitment of a grocery store.
22. RECRUITMENT: Match retail prospects of the recommended retail categories with the appropriate shopping corridor; i.e., the supermarket, fast food restaurants, and other auto-oriented commerce should be planned for Mountain Avenue; card and gift stores, sit-down restaurants, and other browse-walkable retail should be planned for Main Street.
23. RECRUITMENT: Capitalize on available redevelopment opportunities and insure that they are designed as mixed use projects that will allow the town to introduce more (and better) retail space at grade, combined with residential or office space above.
24. RETENTION: Explore opportunities to update the town website to include more "one-stop" forms and information and co-ordinate information and links between the town website and other appropriate organizations.