

*Pittsgrove Township*  
*Economic Development Committee*

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

***Introduction***

Rising property taxes and increasing residential growth that threatens the rural character of Pittsgrove Township are currently the top concerns of township residents. Each of these concerns can have significant adverse effects, both financially and on quality of life issues. In response to these concerns, the Township Committee has identified two methods to moderate these effects: farmland preservation and managed economic development. While the Township Committee is increasing its efforts to preserve farmland in Pittsgrove, it has also adopted a proactive approach to economic development in Pittsgrove in order to guide that development in a way that benefits the township financially and, most importantly, reflects the desire of our community to preserve its rural character.

In support of this new proactive approach, the Township Committee tasked the Economic Development Committee to focus its efforts on identifying, investigating, and recommending to the Township Committee economic growth initiatives that will improve the tax base in the township without measurably increasing service costs. To facilitate these new efforts, the Economic Development Committee was tasked to draft an economic development plan.

***Purpose***

This plan outlines the vision, focus, and goals for beneficial economic development within Pittsgrove Township. It is intended to facilitate the efforts of the EDC to identify specific development initiatives that will add quality ratables in the township. It is also intended to help the EDC identify the tools, resources, and partnerships that will enable successful implementation of these initiatives.

***Vision for Economic Development***

Through a proactive approach, Pittsgrove Township will experience economic development that:

- Preserves the township's rural character residents value so strongly;
- Reduces the portion of taxes from residential use;
- Is limited to low impact development, which does not adversely affect traffic, environmental, or social conditions, or create hardships for nearby residents;
- Targets only established commercial areas and does not pressure expansion of the commercial zoning;
- Improves existing areas making them more attractive to new businesses;
- Avoids conditions that encourage sprawl and increased housing development;
- Highlights, wherever possible, our most important community asset, which is agriculture;
- Is consistent with the township's Master Plan.

### ***Primary Focus Statement***

The primary focus of the plan is on attracting new businesses and expanding existing businesses in the Landis Avenue area because of its commercial zoning, a desirable proximity to Route 55, its abundance of developable land, and its need for revitalization.

### ***Goals***

The following goals, and their associated supporting details, were established to guide EDC efforts to identify, investigate, and recommend to the Township Committee specific economic growth initiatives that will improve the tax base in the township without measurably increasing service costs. They support the plan's purpose and vision and have been grouped into related areas for organizational purposes.

#### **Infrastructure:**

1. Identify suitable business types. Research to include the following:
  - a. Agribusiness: services, processing, nurseries, garden centers
  - b. Other: warehousing, distribution, assisted living, medical suites
  - c. Businesses that are not expected to demand municipal water and sewer later.
2. Identify available land suitable for development.
  - a. Maintain a list for potential new businesses, and for realtors, and developers.
  - b. Investigate *brownfields* redevelopment
3. Understand on-site water supply and sewage treatment facilities including their types, capacities, costs, and the businesses that can use them.
4. Identify all possible municipal cost loads created by development:
  - a. Per Master Plan (IX-15), commercial/industrial development helps taxes, but incurs municipal costs for safety and court system.

#### **Incentives:**

5. Identify and evaluate economic and service incentives that will attract new businesses and encourage expansion of existing businesses. Incentives to be reviewed include:
  - a. Tax abatement
  - b. Rebate or reduction of fees and charges
  - c. Snow removal
  - d. In-kind assistance (staff time)
  - e. Planning process facilitation
  - f. Information resource regarding land, region, industry etc.
6. Develop and maintain a list of resources for new and expanding businesses.
  - a. Funding - federal and state grants and loans, local bank support
  - b. Economic development related – County, regional, and state
  - c. Business practices
  - d. Legal

7. Coordinate with Township Committee to clean up commercial areas making them more attractive to new businesses.
  - a. Coordination with area businesses
  - b. Zoning enforcement

Coordination:

8. Build relationships with developers, realtors, and government officials.
  - a. "Get the word out" on limited/targeted growth
  - b. Interview developers and realtors
  - c. Get project ideas
  - d. Establish connections
9. Establish liaisons to development related committees and departments within the township:
  - a. Planning/Zoning Board
  - b. Agriculture/Open Space Committee
  - c. Public Works
10. Improve coordination with the Planning/Zoning Board:
  - a. Understand Board's processes and requirements to know our limits when dealing with new businesses
  - b. Provide guidance to Board regarding economic development goals
  - c. At board's request, review issues before the board and provide comment regarding their economic development aspects
  - d. With Board's notification, meet with new and expanding businesses to review financial and managerial competencies

General:

11. Identify educational opportunities for committee members.
  - a. Grant Writing; Economic Development Principles; New Jersey Development Issues
12. Amend Rt. 40 zoning ordinance per section IX-22 of Master Plan.
  - a. Creates incentives to consolidate lots of 1 acre or less into larger lots for a more concentrated "Commercial Node."

***Evaluating the Success of the Plan***

The intended results of this plan are specific development initiatives that will add quality ratables in the township. It remains useful until either all the goals are achieved, or it is determined that a sufficient number of initiatives are not being identified, or the economic environment of the township becomes so altered that it is necessary to construct a new plan.

Elements of this plan will be reviewed regularly at EDC meetings. Progress toward achieving each of the goals will be measured and tracked through progress reports to the township committee. Questions generated during the process of completing this plan and any resulting plan changes will also be reported.

Ultimately, the success of the plan will be evaluated based on the number of successfully completed development initiatives and their effect on the residential tax rate.