

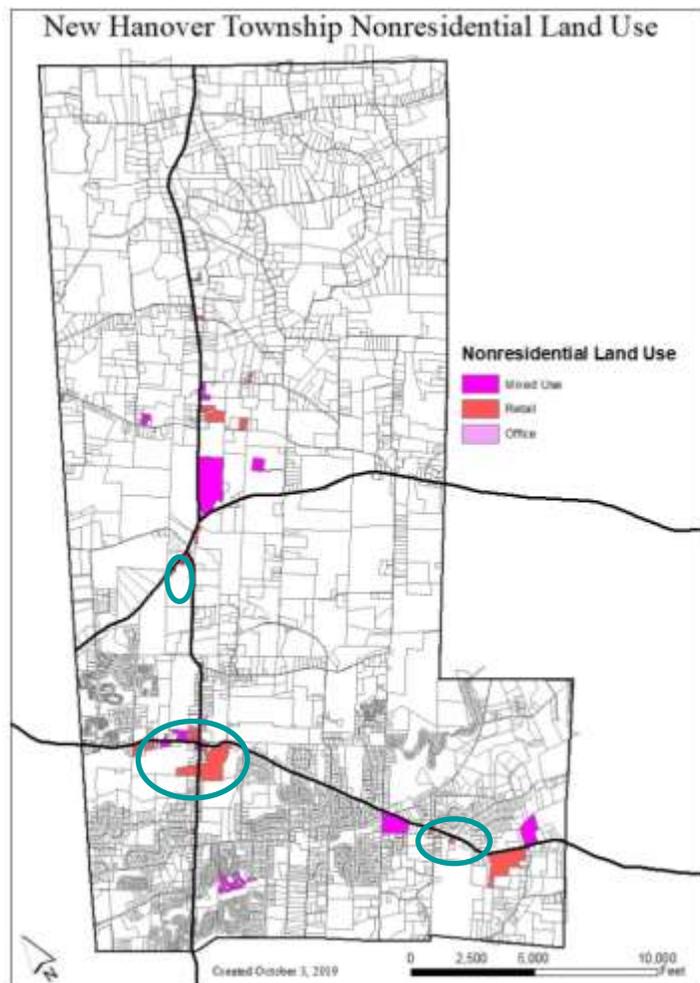
Background Data Report – Economic Development

New Hanover Township is primarily a bedroom community, with very little land used for nonresidential purposes, and very few areas that are zoned to allow nonresidential uses. Residents primarily have to travel to communities outside the township to complete their shopping and errands. With very few opportunities for shopping and dining, residents must travel by car to get to commercial destinations, which adds traffic on the roadways and can contribute to area congestion. The township also misses out on potential revenue from commercial activities, and retail market analyses indicate the township generates a great amount of unmet demand for goods and services that is not serviced within the township. While some community members have expressed a desire to maintain the existing use mix in the township, other residents have expressed interest in establishing a greater diversity of local destinations, especially more upscale sit-down restaurants and coffee shops/bakeries. The development of the Town Center would add greater variety to the commercial mix, but outside of this project, commercial uses are more limited in their developable area, and may require changes to zoning or zoning districts to facilitate future nonresidential growth. Please review the provided data and consider the questions and prompts provided in the “Key Takeaways” section.

Nonresidential Uses

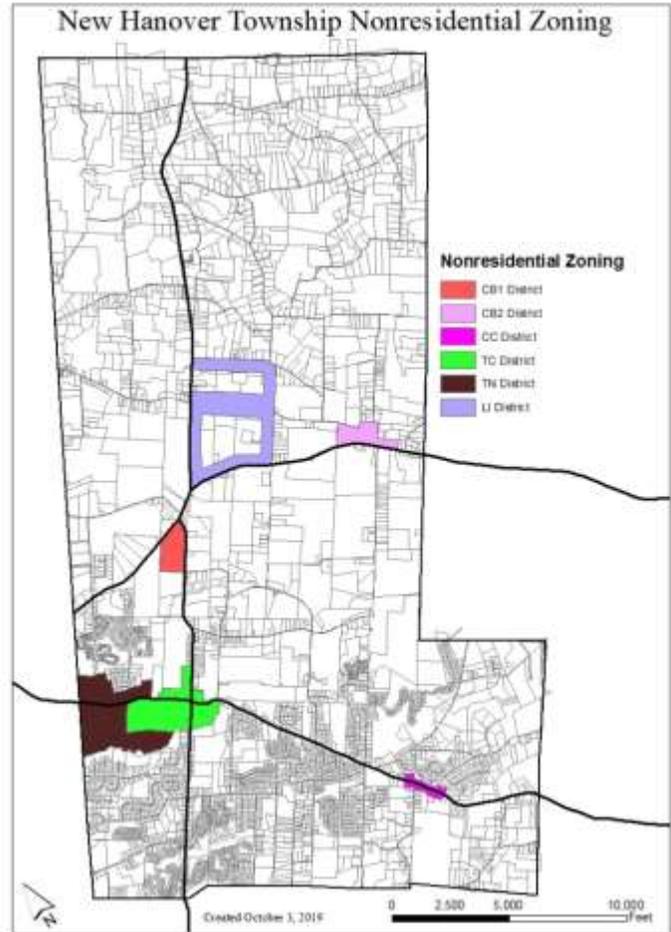
The majority of nonresidential uses in the township are standalone buildings, either located on individual properties, or clustered adjacent to each other, such as Freed’s Super Market/Swamp Door/Our Place. There are three multi-unit nonresidential developments: Hanover Court Shopping Center (built in 1995), Halteman Office Center (1804-1810 Swamp Pike, built between 2002-2008), and Park Suites (built in 2011). These latter two primarily house medical offices and financial offices. In total, less than 2% of the township’s total land area is used for office, retail, or mixed-use purposes.

The PMRPC Comprehensive Plan identifies three areas for primary growth (indicated at right): the intersection of Swamp Pike and N. Charlotte Street, the southeast corner of the intersection at 73 and N. Charlotte Street, and the intersection of Swamp Pike and Sanatoga Road.



Zoning for Non-Residential Uses

Only a few zoning districts allow commercial, office, and retail uses by-right, and these are limited in size and scope. Zoning for commercial uses in the township is primarily concentrated along four key roadways: PA Route 663, PA Route 73, Swamp Pike, and Hoffmansville Road. Other zoning districts also permit these uses by either conditional use or special exception, which creates additional cost and time for developers to pursue these uses. In some zoning districts, like the CC District, all of the zoned properties are already developed, and some of them are residential, so it is unlikely that there will be much expansion, redevelopment, or new development of these properties in the near future, therefore limiting any new businesses from establishing in that district. The most permissive districts for commercial uses are the TC and the CB-1 Districts. There is available developable land in the CB-1 District with no active developments under review while the majority of the TC District is already spoken for in terms of retail and residential mix thanks to the Town Center project currently under review.



In all of the residential districts, the zoning permits “accessory home occupation” which does allow private residential homes to be used for low-impact home businesses such as professional offices, in-home day care, home crafts, and repair shops. Residents are required to apply for a zoning permit for these uses, but they may not show up as mixed-use in the land use categories in our mapping information.

Nonresidential Growth

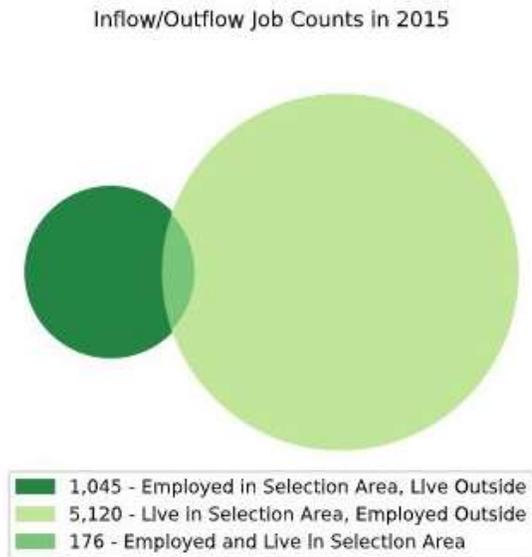
The Land Use Assumptions report projected an estimated growth of 95,454 square feet of new nonresidential development by 2030, the majority of which would come from the Town Center project. This estimate is based on DVRPC’s employment forecasts for the township and commercial development activity under review. This estimate is broken down into office space (18,088 square feet) and general commercial/retail (77,366 square feet). In addition to the Town Center project, other redevelopment potential in the TC District exists at the northwestern corner of N. Charlotte Street/Swamp Pike where there is a large auto-oriented repair shop and abandoned gas station. The other three corners of the intersection have been recently improved, with a CVS Pharmacy, Wawa, and bank. The developments

on the south side of Swamp Pike incorporated streetscaping elements such as grass verges, wide sidewalks, and landscaping, but currently have limited areas into which they can connect.

Employment and Labor

Residential Labor

Approximately 71% of the township’s population over the age of 16 participates in the workforce, and there is low unemployment (3%). The median household income and mean household income (\$89,653 and \$102, 697, respectively) are comparable to the county as a whole. Residents in the township are primarily employed in educational/health services, retail trade, manufacturing, and professional/technical services, and commute to these jobs outside of the township. A much greater percentage of residents commute elsewhere to work than commute from elsewhere to the township for work. The majority of residents commute to either Philadelphia, King of Prussia, or Pottstown Borough for work, but many other local employment centers within Montgomery County are represented in the commuting spread of residents.



Township Employment

Workers commuting into the township for work are primarily coming from Pottstown Borough, Gilbertsville CDP¹, and Sanatoga CDP. The top three sectors of employment for jobs located in the township are in educational services, retail trade, and construction. DVRPC estimates that the number of jobs in the township will increase by 495 employees by 2045. Some of that increase will be met by the development of the Town Center, but other nonresidential developments will also be responsible for this increase in employment. The majority of existing jobs are located in the southwest area of the township near Swamp Pike where the multi-tenant office buildings are located, and the middle school. The major employment concentration off of Big Road is attributed to New Hanover Elementary School.

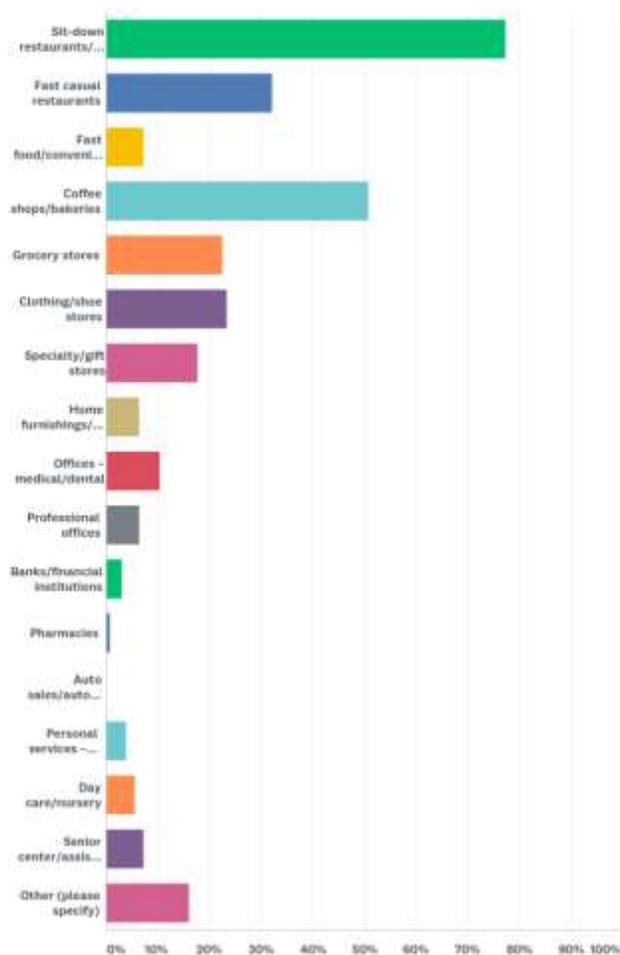
Retail Market Analysis

Because the township has limited shopping and dining opportunities, the majority of households must complete their errands in communities outside the township. There are many options for shopping, including the large big-box shopping centers on Route 100, Pottstown Borough, the Limerick Shopping Center, and Providence Town Center in Collegeville. Grocery stores in Douglass Township, Green Lane, and Lower Pottsgrove likely service the majority of residents in addition to Freed’s grocery store in New Hanover. A retail market analysis can show where there is “leakage” and “surplus” in a given community to demonstrate un- and under-tapped retail opportunities. Because there are so few businesses

¹ A census designated place is a concentration of population identified by the United States Census Bureau for statistical purposes. CDPs are delineated for each decennial census as the statistical counterparts of incorporated places, such as cities, towns, and villages.

servicing the shopping retail environment, many of these industry groups show a leakage factor of 100 – meaning no spending in these categories is being captured in the market, because they just don’t exist in the township. Overall, the leakage factor for total food and drink is 28.9 and the leakage factor for total retail is 72.4, which indicates that food and drink industries are more strongly represented in the township. Based on the community survey results so far, the majority of residents have expressed a desire to see a greater variety of sit-down restaurants, coffee shops/bakeries, and fast casual restaurants in the township, rather than other retail opportunities. 61% of respondents indicated they would support or strongly support the development of a greater diversity of businesses in the township, while almost 22% said they would not support or strongly not support business development (13% alone said strongly not support), and just over 17% were neutral. This represents an interesting blend of residents who either feel they would like to see more amenities in the township versus residents who feel they want to preserve a more rural/bedroom community. Individual comments have suggested that respondents feel there is enough opportunity for commercial areas in the surrounding areas without bringing greater intensity of development into the township.

Q17 What types of restaurants, retail, services, and businesses would be most valuable to meet your household's needs and interests? Select up to five.



Key Takeaways

Economic Development

Balancing the need for growth versus the need for preservation of land uses and community character will continue to be a challenge for the township, as development pressures have resulted in the construction of hundreds of new housing units and attracting hundreds of new residents. These new residents may be bringing with them a stronger desire to see more convenient shopping, dining, and employment opportunities located closer to them, and the township could benefit from collecting revenue from local businesses. Based on current zoning, opportunities for new business development may be limited.

- Is there a desire to pursue greater/more flexible opportunities for infill development in selected and appropriate areas? If so, what considerations should be given to modifying existing zoning districts, either in terms of permitted land uses or district boundaries?
- Will the Town Center project fulfill demands for greater business and shopping opportunities, or should consideration be given for more village-style commercial growth in other areas of the township?
- Is there interest or need in pursuing a more managed economic development strategy?
- What business sectors do you envision as being needed or wanted in the township? What are these businesses, and what kinds of building/land/access needs do they require? Are there properties available that could meet those business needs?

Regional Opportunities

The PMRPC Comprehensive Plan from 2015 recommends the following economic priority for the township: “Existing commercial and retail gaps in the more rural portions of New Hanover provide the opportunity for expansion of retail to serve the municipal population as well as draw others to the area. The report recommends that New Hanover capitalize on its rural landscape to develop recreational opportunities that can further draw outsiders to the area and help support the expansion of commercial activity. Agri-tourism activity and additional recreation amenities could help create a unique niche for this part of the region.”

- How do you see this call to action fit in with the other goals we’ve discussed regarding open space management?
 - Recreational opportunities could be represented in continuous access, or through the use of recreation areas for larger tournaments that occur less frequently but bring in large crowds. Is there a preference or desire one way or another?
- How do you envision this priority being pursued? Public efforts by the township, private investment, or a blend of public/private partnerships?
- What kind of retail in the rural areas would be most suitable for the local population and the region as a whole?
 - Could this retail development support recreational activities in the Green Lane region? For example, outdoor equipment for camping, water sports, etc.?