

June 9th, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Matt Holt, Freeholder
Jmholt@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Hunterdon Freeholders Approve Commercial Corridors Land Analysis

Taking the county's economic development strategy another step forward, Hunterdon County's Board of Freeholders this week approved a Hunterdon County Corridors Parcels Study which will evaluate properties along state and county roadways so that more information is available for future land management decisions.

Freeholder Matt Holt, the Board's Economic Development liaison, commented that the timing is perfect for this evaluation. "This study will focus on future opportunity," stated Holt. "Given the disruption of the local economy by the pandemic and the most recent NJDEP decision limiting economic development near county waterways, it could not come at a more opportune time."

The \$29,500 project contract was awarded to Hunterdon-based real estate company Rv3 Solutions.

According to Economic Development Director Marc Saluk, Rv3's analysis will help determine whether specific properties are suitable for commercial projects that could return ratable value to municipalities.

Holt added that, "the county's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), approved in 2014, highlighted the need to focus on ratable opportunities to help reduce the property tax burden on Hunterdon residents."

Freeholder John E. Lanza, the Board's liaison for the Department of Planning and Land Use, added, "The County also has an Open Space Strategic Plan that was adopted in 2018 and sets a course to preserve 4000 more acres of open space, in addition to the County's current 8000 acre inventory."

Some of our municipalities, however, continue to seek property ratable growth where appropriate – that is entirely a municipal decision. To do this, many of our communities work with the economic development office to seek locations for potential incoming projects, or expansion projects for our current corporate citizens.

Lanza continued, "As we look to Hunterdon County's future – the need for jobs, the steep economic recovery climb our businesses face caused by the state shutdown, and the need for careful enhancement of the tax base should and will be balanced with the need to protect our environment through land preservation.

This study will greatly aid that process by ensuring all parties are working with more complete information when selecting appropriate project locations."

According to Saluk, the results will aid his office's work with municipalities when they jointly vet proposed projects from potential incoming companies, as well as assist expansion of existing county business.

Saluk emphasized that the study's results carry no obligation for towns to use in future land management decisions, and does not represent a plan of action or a roadmap for communities. However, it may be very helpful when the county and towns are approached by developers.

The Hunterdon County Corridors Parcels Study will be underway immediately and is slated to be completed in October of this year.