



# Hanover Township's Economic Renaissance

How strategic planning and marketing has helped create the "Hanover Avenue corridor"

By John L. Ferramosca, Deputy Mayor and Director of Planning, Hanover Township



Today, anyone traveling through what has been dubbed the "Hanover Avenue corridor" in the Cedar Knolls section of Hanover Township would bear witness to a revitalization underway that's restoring this once-blighted area. Twenty years ago this picture was markedly different: Shuttered industrial buildings, debris, and waste piled high in rear yards pock marked Hanover Avenue and underscored the need for major redevelopment and environmental clean-up from legacy industry. The corridor had been in decline for years, as industries took flight from the area, similar to the trend New Jersey as a whole was experiencing.

The challenge before the Hanover Township Planning Board was both daunting and clear—how could the board restore this badly blighted industrial corridor into one of economic vibrancy? The answer? By proactively employing strategic planning and leveraging economic development efforts.

## A Case for Action

The process of reinvention began with a comprehensive situation assessment of the corridor for each and every lot to determine the structural condition and environmental state of each facility. The Planning Board used a "Case for Action" approach, where each member was tasked with providing their own evaluation of the properties, along with supporting details on positive and negative impacts. Each of the 10 Planning Board members then presented their perspective on their assigned lots. Based upon this exchange of thoughts about the state of the parcels, the "Case for Action" or situation assessment of the corridor was developed.

After reaching consensus on the nature and extent of the blight, the Planning Board turned its focus to the desired future state. What could this corridor become, what would

Hanover Township

the ideal uses be, and how best to transition it into re-development? The Planning Board collectively believed that this well-travelled corridor serving Hanover, Morris Township, and Morris Plains was ideal for services and retail uses for the surrounding communities. With that vision in place, the Planning Board then assessed zoning ordinances to determine if the regulations supported the desired retail and services uses for this section of town. The Township's Planner, Blais Brancheau, worked with the board to create an update to the Master Plan, and thus began the process to rewrite the zoning regulations within the corridor.

From there, the Planning Board advanced the concept that large-scale retail was needed to attract top-quality stores and create an inviting streetscape for shoppers. With that in mind, the board proposed 10-acre-retail zoning with a principal building of 75,000 square feet of floor area to the Township Committee. The governing body, which supported the concept of attracting destination retail uses to the corridor, embraced the Planning Board's proposed zoning and quickly approved it.

**Pushing against a recession**

With the planning in place, the job for redevelopment was referred to the Township's Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) to support the marketing efforts of the envisioned corridor. Little did EDAC or the Planning Board know that the national and economic landscape was soon about to be severely shaken by the Great Recession starting in October 2008. Despite the strong headwinds of the recession, Hanover continued its marketing push and soon succeeded in attracting two major entities to the heart of the corridor: Novartis and ShopRite.

Novartis acquired an existing facility from a company called Dendreon and quickly upgraded the office/lab/manufacturing building Dendreon formerly had occupied. The Village Supermarkets-ShopRite group sought and received approval from the Planning Board to build an 85,000 square foot supermarket in a shopping center that would host additional stores and a

**Development in Local Government Hands**



**IDEA**

For Hanover Township, the reinvention of Hanover Avenue is a major boon on many levels.



**STRATEGY**

Bob Nardone, who served on both the Planning Board and EDAC throughout the initiative, sums it up best: "The Planning Board faced a difficult challenge for how to re-develop this corridor of town, which was in significant decline with many operations having closed for 20 years.



**TARGET**

Through well-considered planning, buy-in from the Township Committee, and drawing on the marketing expertise of the EDAC the target was to showcase potential retail opportunities.



**INVESTMENT**

Nardone added: "Together, we crafted a strategy for success that transformed a blighted corridor into one of economic strength."





**TRI-STATE SAFETY SOLUTIONS, LLC**  
 CONSULTING | LOSS CONTROL | TRAINING  
 P: 732-551-3833  
[www.tsss-nj.com](http://www.tsss-nj.com)

Heavy Equipment On-site / Hands-on Training  
 CDL pre-test training

Aerial Lift | Backhoes | Dozers | Excavators | Forklift | Graders | Loaders | Skid Steers

visit our website for a full list of services







Proud Veteran Owned Business

**Hanover Township**

bank. This new ShopRite raised the bar for retail in the area by providing experiential shopping, featuring a well-developed service deli, prepared meal offerings and service bars along the perimeter of the store complementing the traditional meat, produce, dairy, frozen food, and grocery departments.

With a solid base now realized and

using the “Rings of Success” formula popularized by Mayor Ron Francioli where “success breeds success,” EDAC continued its marketing efforts to attract top-quality retail uses. They set their sights on attracting a large box home improvement store to the corner of Hanover and Ridgedale Avenue to anchor this heavily travelled location.


However, the economic climate at the time and rise of internet shopping were curtailing the ability to draw large-scale retail. Despite these obstacles, the marketing efforts continued to attract quality ratables in addition to Novartis and ShopRite that are building on the economic vibrancy that has dramatically revitalized the Hanover corridor.

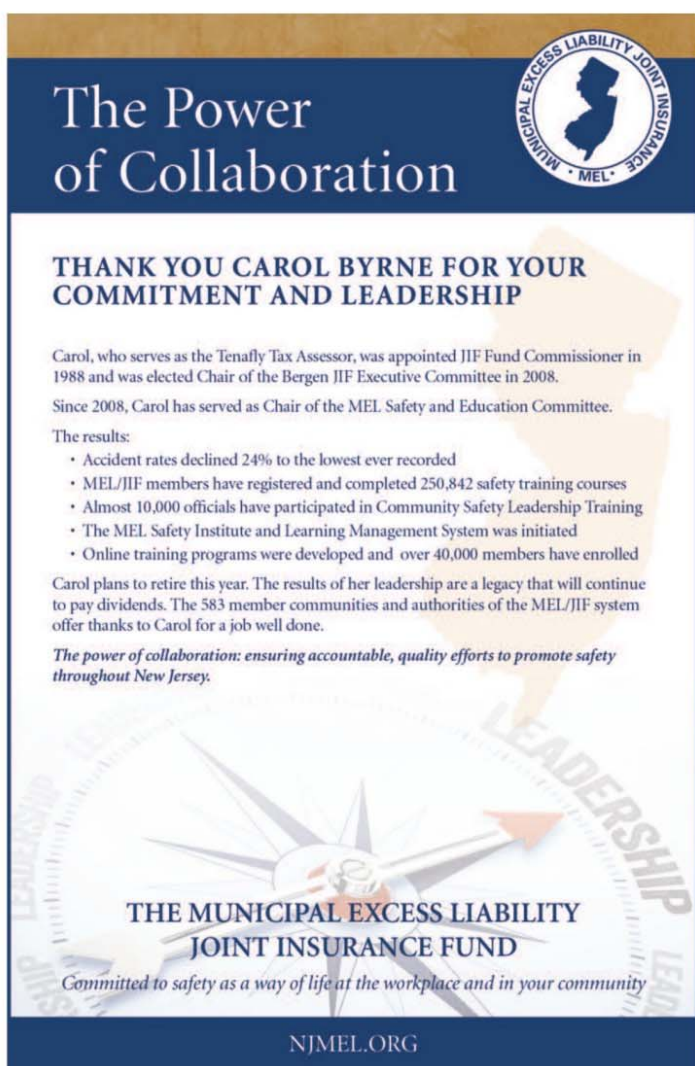
A soon-to-be shopping center containing TJ Maxx, Home Goods, Ulta, Quick Chek, AutoZone, MedExpress, Five Below, and other stores is under construction, and three other retail developments have recently been approved: a BJ’s center, a Lidl grocery store, and a smaller retail center.

**Impressive Metrics**

From blight to economic resurgence, the Hanover Avenue corridor currently provides amenities to the Hanover Township community along with strong ratables to support the tax base, benefits which will grow as development is completed. A case in point—the BJ’s center is an 18-acre site which will feature a BJ’s member club, including a tire center and gasoline station, along with two smaller retail buildings, with a total floor area of almost 118,000 square feet.

“The shopping center will be developed in three phases with the BJ’s development hopefully getting underway this year,” noted Mayor Francioli. He added, “The Planning Board approval has many conditional requirements to this approval such as installation of a traffic signal, which will serve the entrance to the shopping center and Mennen Arena, provide expanded lanes to facilitate traffic flow, enhanced landscape buffering along the sides and at the rear of the property, and an ongoing environmental cleanup initiative. All of these requirements will be met at no cost to our taxpayers.”

With the addition of the BJ’s shopping center and other retail space, the Hanover Avenue corridor will boast some impressive metrics. In addition to the major infrastructure improvements to facilitate traffic flow and the environmental cleanup of the area, the corridor will feature over 380,000 square feet of prime retail space and employ an estimated 350 to 400 persons. 



**The Power of Collaboration**

**THANK YOU CAROL BYRNE FOR YOUR COMMITMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

Carol, who serves as the Tenafly Tax Assessor, was appointed JIF Fund Commissioner in 1988 and was elected Chair of the Bergen JIF Executive Committee in 2008. Since 2008, Carol has served as Chair of the MEL Safety and Education Committee.

The results:

- Accident rates declined 24% to the lowest ever recorded
- MEL/JIF members have registered and completed 250,842 safety training courses
- Almost 10,000 officials have participated in Community Safety Leadership Training
- The MEL Safety Institute and Learning Management System was initiated
- Online training programs were developed and over 40,000 members have enrolled

Carol plans to retire this year. The results of her leadership are a legacy that will continue to pay dividends. The 583 member communities and authorities of the MEL/JIF system offer thanks to Carol for a job well done.

*The power of collaboration: ensuring accountable, quality efforts to promote safety throughout New Jersey.*

**THE MUNICIPAL EXCESS LIABILITY JOINT INSURANCE FUND**  
 Committed to safety as a way of life at the workplace and in your community

NJMEL.ORG