



The Greater Meadowlands Region

In a brief snapshot, the Greater Meadowlands has a population of over 968,000, and an employment base of 450,605 employees within over 43,000 establishments. There are 20 colleges and universities in the Greater Meadowlands, and over 40 million square feet in office and industrial space. Leading sectors by jobs include retail, manufacturing, professional and technical services and education. Tourism is growing notably as an economic sector. Impact data from 2014 present shows that visitors to the Meadowlands spent \$456 million, supported 10,700 jobs, and paid \$233 million in state taxes. Indirect income from the tourism industry was estimated at \$131 million. With American Dream, those numbers will grow exponentially. As a measure of the economic significance of the Greater Meadowlands, total private sector wages for 2015 amounted to \$26.3 billion. These 32 municipalities generated 11.5% of total wages statewide.

The Vision Plan

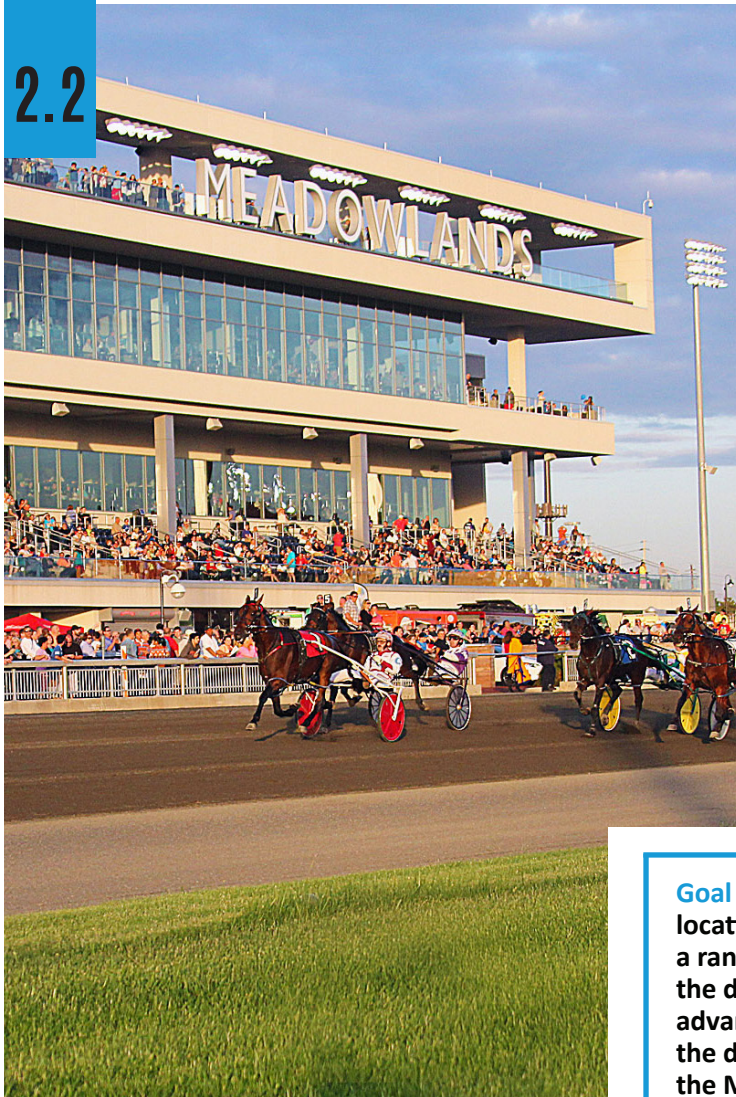
The Vision Plan is not a Master Plan, with its typical host of sector analyses of existing conditions and proposals. We believe the NJSEA should reassert its regional comprehensive planning mandate, and we offer this Vision Plan as a basis for a re-examined and updated Master Plan for the Meadowlands. The Vision Plan provides a new roadmap for the development of a Master Plan. It delivers a set of goals, objectives and strategies that emerge from a comprehensive view of the region and can be used to establish and drive both short and long-term priorities.

The Vision Plan and its specific goals and objectives were informed by many meetings with stakeholders in the District: business and education leaders, NJSEA staff, local mayors, land use attorneys and others. These stakeholders articulated issues of concern that would either constrain or promote economic growth and suggested objectives and ideas to deal with challenges or capitalize on the Meadowlands' unique opportunities for growth.

The focus of our Plan is economic development, in the broadest sense: development strategies that foster business, generate jobs and improve access, but that also recognize that the quality

of life for our residents and employees and the conservation of the natural environment are essential building blocks for a successful, thriving region.

This Executive Summary focuses on Priority Actions to address the challenges of the region and support its burgeoning economic development. These initiatives, if accomplished, will serve as the foundation for longer-term strategies to achieve the potential of the region. Implementation, in most cases, will be the responsibility of governmental agencies, but the MRC, as a business organization, will continue our advocacy and support. Case studies of successful economic development initiatives around the country are predominantly driven by public private collaborative efforts. The MRC, on behalf of its membership and business stakeholder's pledges to assist in leading such a collaborative initiative to achieve the goals of this Vision Plan. The Comprehensive Vision Plan 2040 document provides further details and background, incorporating a full set of goals, objectives and implementation strategies.



PRIORITY ACTIONS

Priority 1- Re-purpose the NJSEA as a “Next Generation” regional planning authority

Since its inception in the early 70’s, the NJ Meadowlands Commission (now the NJSEA) has many significant success stories of economic development initiatives and environmental reclamation of tainted land. It was for many years a model agency that took the lead on bold initiatives. The NJMC Master Plan of 2004 was intended to be reviewed by 2009 and updated according to economic times. That review and update never occurred. In 2015, the Legislature merged the NJ Meadowlands Commission into the NJ Sports & Exposition Authority combining the missions of both into one entity. The NJSEA also has had significant success in developing facilities that brought much notoriety to NJ. However, today, this combined entity requires a “Next Generation” mission to utilize its bonding, planning/regulatory authority and oversight to leverage and enhance both economic opportunities and quality of life issues in the Greater Meadowlands.

Driver: Economic Development Planning

Goal – Promote a diversified economy that capitalizes on the location and assets of the Meadowlands, providing jobs for a range of skill levels in the regional workforce that support the development of new businesses built on innovation and advanced technology as well as the traditional industries of the district. Economic development programs should leverage the Meadowlands area’s unique advantages of access to the metropolitan New York market area, global trade, ports and multimodal infrastructure and skilled labor force, to create an environment for business attraction and retention.

- Study market trends for and feasibility of a new convention center at the Sports Complex
- Identify needs and improve access, flood control and other necessary infrastructure to support and improve older industrial areas
- Revise land use regulations to provide for flexible zoning controls to foster modernization of industrial areas
- Undertake updated studies to ascertain current trends in business markets and employment, and support emerging sectors
- Develop a Regional Economic Development Strategy in the context of an updated Master Plan in collaboration with pertinent agencies and organizations
- Identify funding sources to support continuing rebuilding, renovations and remobilization of facilities and businesses impacted by Superstorm Sandy



REALIZING THE VISION PLAN

It is evident that many initiatives, particularly those involving infrastructure, carry considerable costs. Some may require creative funding solutions including public private partnerships. However, not acting on these improvements will carry a cost to the region in terms of lost economic opportunity.

Targeted investment in infrastructure and modernized development policy will foster growth in both traditional and emerging industries and increase property values. Industrial and warehouse growth will be supported by better access and active flood control systems. New trends, such as e-commerce and destination tourism, will benefit from trans-Hudson improvements and intra-Meadowlands connections, as well as a strong Meadowlands brand and identity. Such efforts will also leverage the profound economic impacts expected with American Dream, and enhance the demand for development sites and redevelopment areas.

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