

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

Leverage existing assets and positioning the region for sustainable long-term growth

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

The Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission, through its 1970 Master Plan, set the blueprint for regional planning, land use and growth in the Meadowlands District, while also overseeing environmental reclamation. The Legislature back then found the Meadowlands to be "a land resource of incalculable opportunity for new jobs, homes and recreational sites" whose comprehensive development, due to their strategic location in the heart of a vast metropolitan area with urgent needs for more space for industrial, commercial, residential, and public recreational and other uses, could no longer be deferred". We believe this regional approach by a governmental agency fostered incredible investment and economic vitality over the years. Now that the Legislature has combined the HMDC into the NJSEA, it is time to revitalize the District's mandate for economic development planning and continued orderly development and redevelopment. This planning effort must take into account the broader Meadowlands Region which is larger than the 14 municipalities in its original mandate. The NJSEA should become a "next generation agency" that defines and leverages the innovative economic opportunities that will lead to a sustaining economy and prosperous communities through the year 2040. An essential step in the evolution should be updating the NJSEA's zoning and redevelopment regulations to provide flexibility for current market requirements, building criteria and promotion of innovative development.

Priority 2: Advance and Implement Key Mobility & Infrastructure Projects & Quality of Life Initiatives

Transportation is the backbone of economic growth, providing access to jobs and goods movement. Critical trans-Hudson projects such as Gateway should be affirmatively supported, with funding for the elements most beneficial to New Jersey, including the Bergen Loop. The state should advocate for an Amtrak stop at Secaucus Junction helping to create additional linkages and reducing the burden and capacity issues at other regional stations. Innovative projects to improve intra-Jersey travel and first/last mile connectivity should be examined and implemented, including the Bergen Bus Rapid Transit pilot route and new shuttle systems linking Greater Meadowlands communities. The Meadowlands Transportation Planning Board should be reconstituted, and a Regional Transportation Task Force consisting of public and private stakeholders should be established to insure governmental agency collaboration and to identify innovative short and long-term mobility initiatives. There needs to be a continued focus on water, sewer, telecommunications and energy infrastructure as well as coordinated efforts on resiliency initiatives such as Rebuild By Design Meadowlands, in order to provide greater certainty that these issues are being addressed. Outdoor recreation, walking/bike paths and parks should have a renewed focus to maintain quality of life.

Priority 3 : Establish Destination & Tourism Promotion as an Economic Development Tool

American Dream Meadowlands is an example of enormous investment in our region. Other significant projects include the MetLife Stadium, the new Meadowlands Race Track, and the many hotels and destination related assets that have been built in recent years. These facilities, as well as other private investment, must be leveraged to produce the greatest economic impact possible for job and revenue growth in the coming years. A market study should be commissioned to research the impact of a potential convention center at the Meadowlands Sports & Entertainment Complex. Tourism, regional branding and destination marketing of the Meadowlands should be supported with a permanent funding source directed by a non-government and certified Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). A way-finding and gateway signage review should be coordinated with NJDOT, County and local officials to provide strong identification of destination assets in the region.

The destination promotion efforts, infrastructure investments and regulatory modernization proposed herein will create an environment fostering business retention, expansion and attraction.