

# The Revitalization of Downtown Liberty Market Research Study

Prepared for:

Liberty Main Street Revitalization  
Committee

Liberty Chamber of Commerce

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**Appel Research, LLC**

# The Hudson Group Assignment

- Determine who potential customers are.
- Determine what they want.
- Make recommendations on how to meet customer demand.

# What's Been Going on in Liberty

Grassroots effort to revitalize:

- ☞ Façade painting
- ☞ Landscaping
- ☞ Parking access

Infrastructure improvement recommendations:

- ☞ Streetscape
- ☞ Traffic Flow



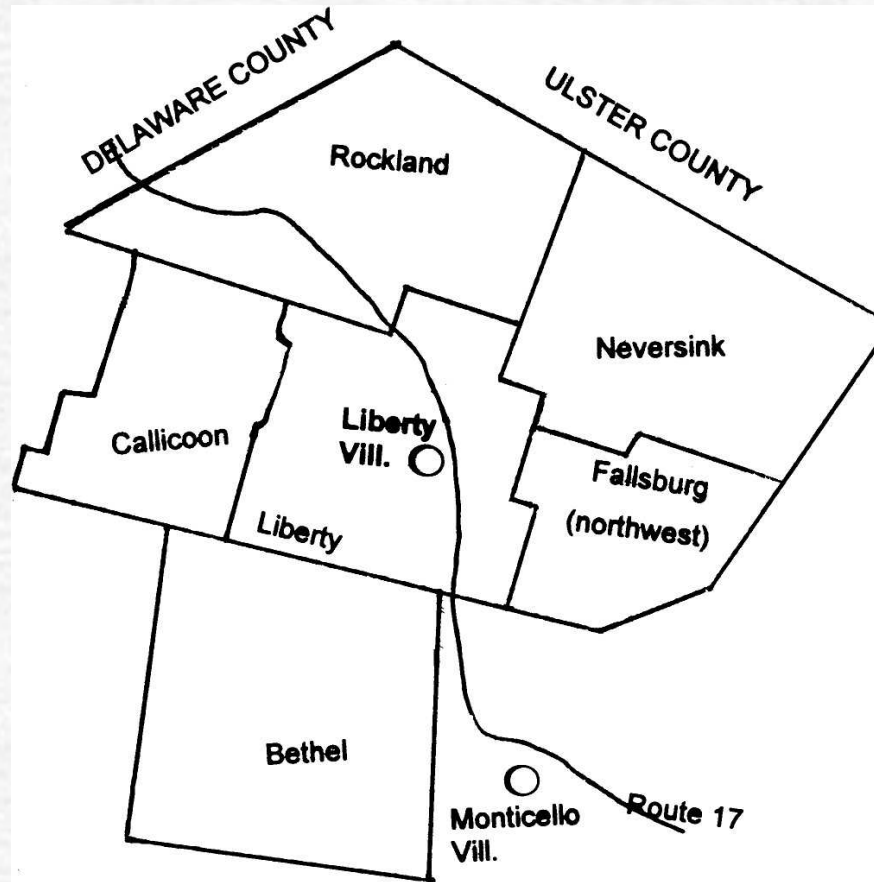
## Sense of Momentum

# Our findings and recommendations come from:

- Economic and demographic analysis and literature review
- Gap analysis of purchases vs business receipts
- Four surveys
  - Focus group of people active in revitalization
  - Survey of downtown businesses
  - Survey of residents within the Liberty Trading Area
  - In-depth interviews with second-home owners

# What is the Liberty Trading Area?

Defined by historic patterns and within a 30 minute drive.



# About the Population

## Permanent residents

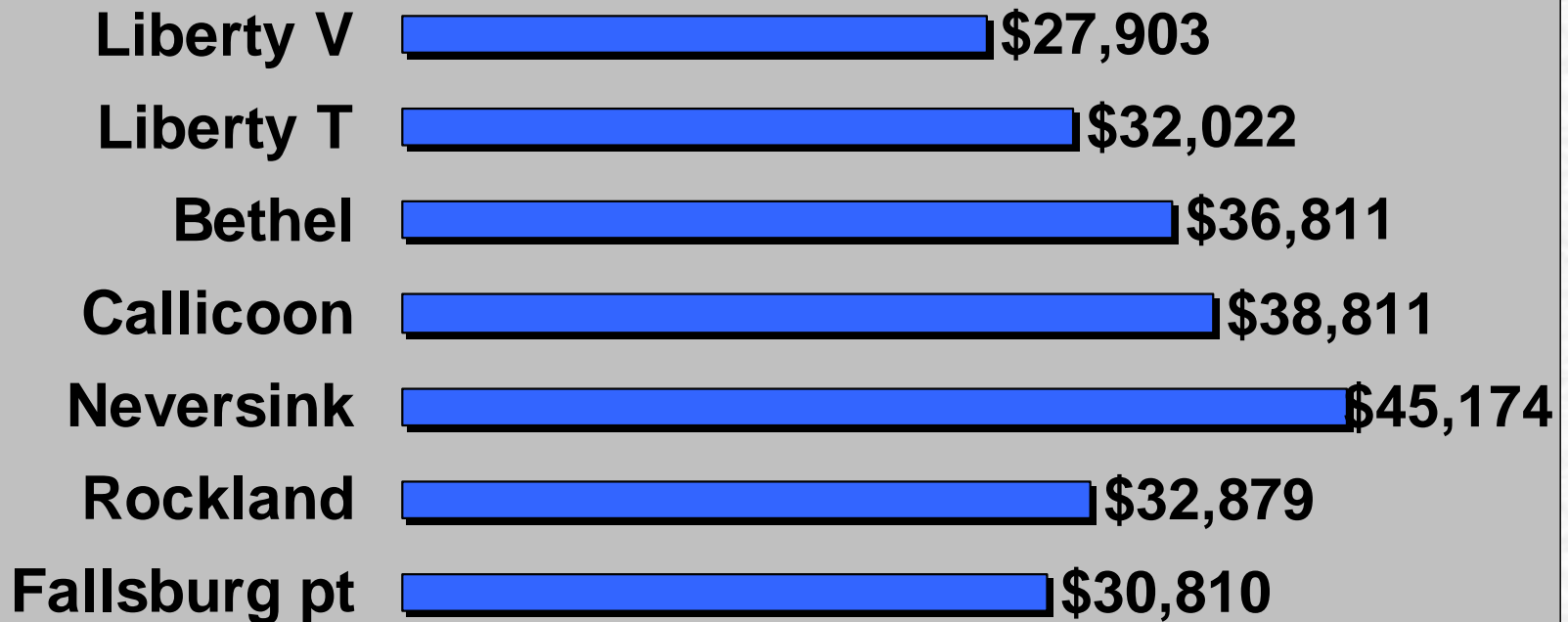
- 31,000 people in 11,000 households

## Second homes/seasonal – 6,000 households

- Up to 27,000 people on peak summer weekends and growing.
- 25% have median incomes above \$100,000

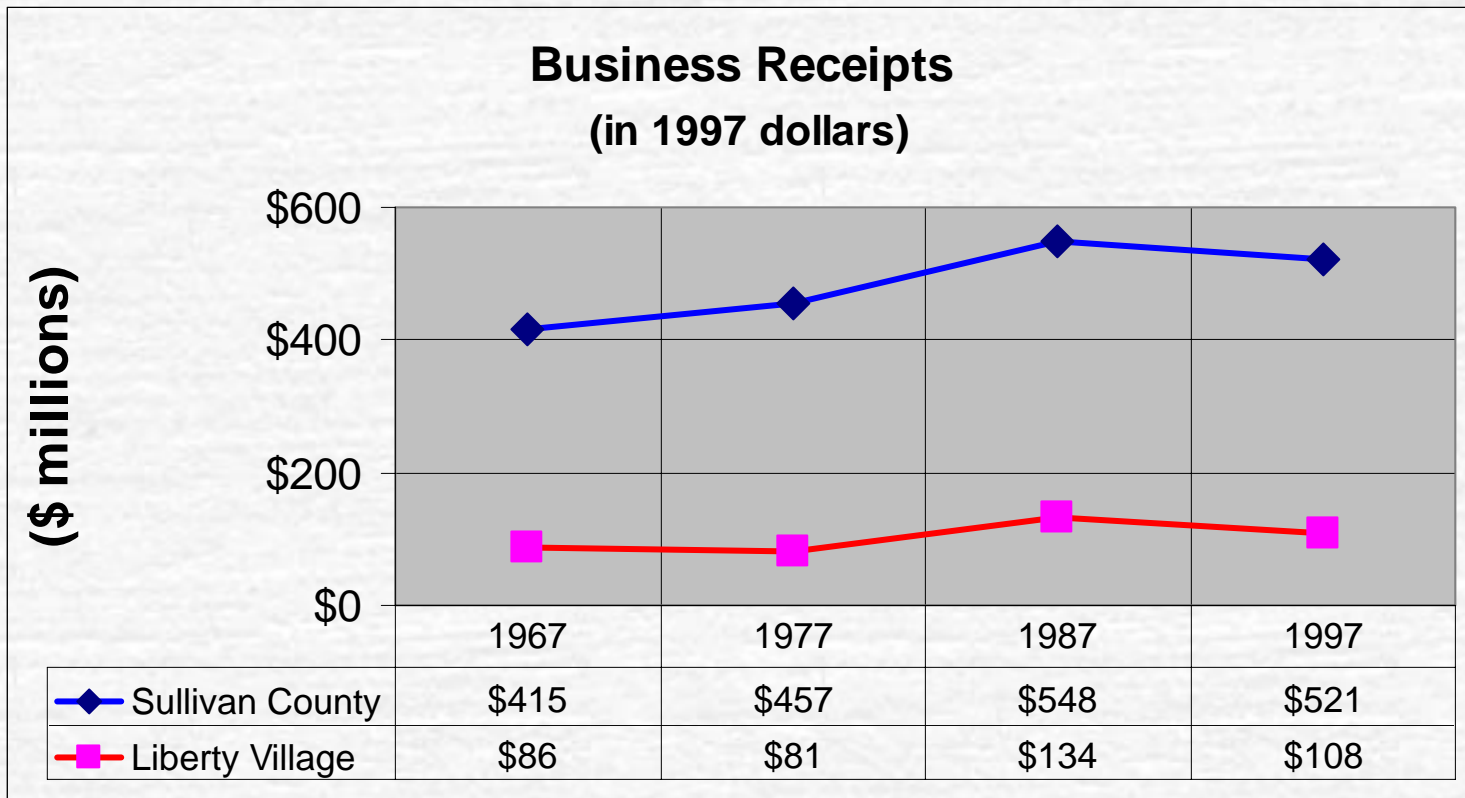
# Liberty Trading Area

## Median Household Income (Permanent Residents)



# Business Receipts

Liberty and Sullivan County are still recovering from long term declines in the resort industry.





# Gap Analysis

Measures household spending in a trading area, compared to business sales and receipts.

Largest outflow of spending:

- ☞ Food away from home
- ☞ Apparel and footwear
- ☞ Electronic and household equipment
- ☞ Furniture and household furnishings

# What should Liberty Be Known For?

A 21<sup>st</sup> Century American Village. A combination of:

- The mid 20<sup>th</sup> century middle-class, mid-western ideal.
- Overlaid with the virtues and edges of eclectic modern diversity.

## Good shopping

- ☞ Hassle-free
- ☞ Niche stores not found in malls

## Vibrant Community

- ☞ Diverse
- ☞ Fun
- ☞ Friendly
- ☞ Artistic

# About Downtown Businesses

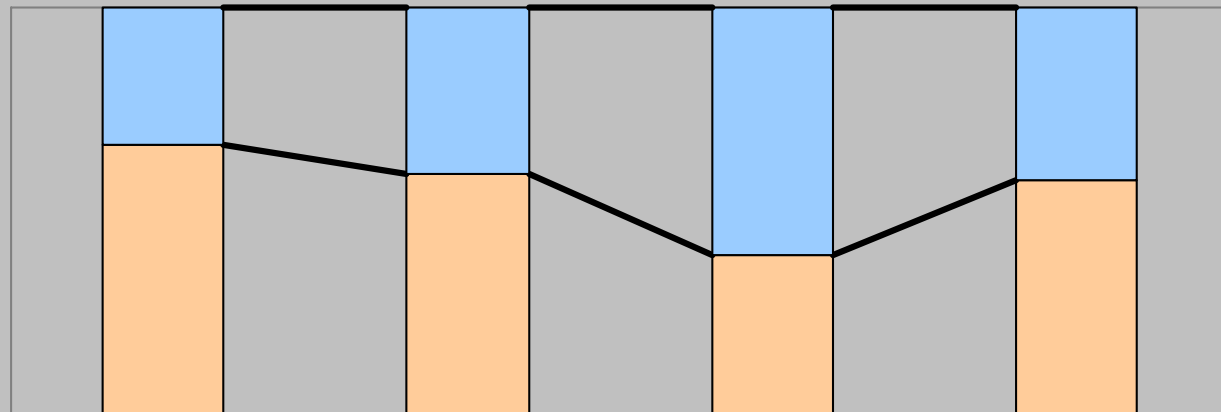
Not Seasonal: 33%

Peak in Summer: 61%

Lease premises: 60%

Own premises: 40%

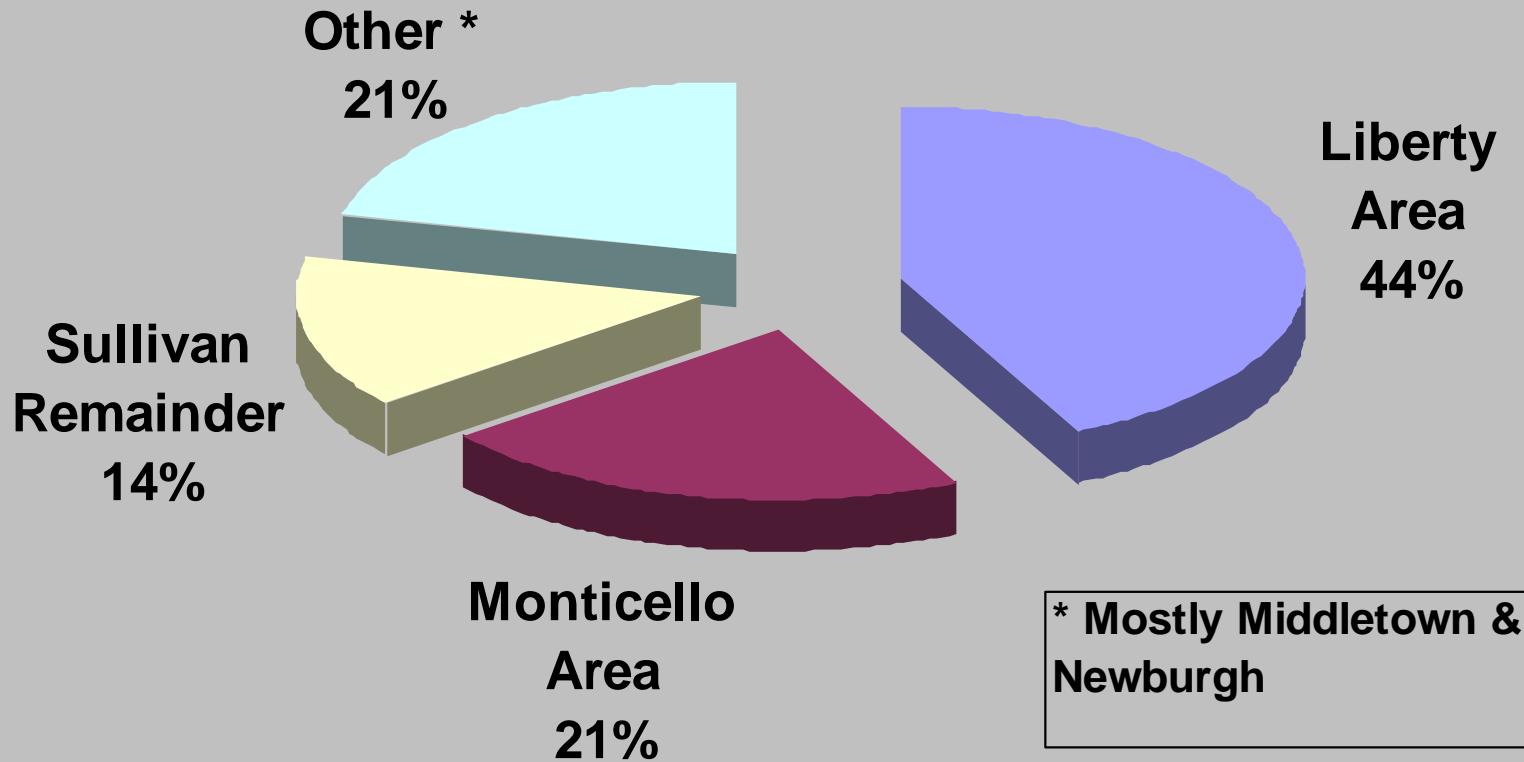
## Liberty Village Business Counts



	Retail	Restaurants	Personal Serv / Repair	Other
■ Main St. Area	18	9	14	73
■ Rest of Village	35	13	9	98

# Purchases

Where do Liberty Trading Area residents shop?



Higher income households are more likely to shop further away.

# What can we do to revitalize downtown Liberty?

Start with physical improvements – From focus group and downtown business survey

- ✓ Buildings – especially exteriors.
- ✓ Parking
- ✓ Cleanliness
- ✓ New Sidewalks
- ✓ Better Lighting
- ✓ Enforce no-loitering rules (downtown businesses)

# Residents want many of the same things.

## First Tier

Ease of Parking

36%

Security

34%

## Second Tier

Overall atmosphere or ambiance

25%

Physical appearance of Main Street

23%

Right mix of retail shops

20%

## Third Tier

Hours that shops and restaurants are open

14%

Kinds of eating and drinking places

12%

## Fourth Tier

Going to a doctor, lawyer, or insurance agent, location of banks, post office, barber, beauty salon, nail shops

# What businesses or services is it essential for Downtown Liberty to Have?

## Highest Rated Group:

Focus Group (importance)	Downtown Businesses (importance)	Residents (would patronize)
Good diner	Bakery	Bakery
Discount shoe store	Recreation equipment	Kosher deli
Family entertainment center		Ice cream parlor
Better hardware and stationary stores		

2<sup>nd</sup> Homeowners want interesting stores and upscale restaurants

# What businesses or services is it essential for Downtown Liberty to have?

## Next Highest Rated Group:

Focus Group (importance)	Downtown Businesses (importance)	Residents (would patronize)
Clothes	Conference center	Clothing
Bike shop	Kosher deli	Footwear
Sporting goods/ outdoors	Ice cream parlor	Recreation
Theatre	Upscale restaurant	
Cafe	Live band entertainment	
Shoes	Family entertainment	



# What businesses or services is it essential for Downtown Liberty to Have?

Lowest Rated – Appeals to visitors, not residents:

Focus Group (importance)	Downtown Businesses (importance)	Residents (would patronize)
Gifts	Candy shop	Coffee house
Antiques	Antiques	Antiques
Niche shops		
Cultural and arts center		
Conference center		

# Where are we now / What can we hope for?

## Focus Group – Optimistic

(10 to 1 scale, 10 is best)

- ☛ Current rating = 4.1
- ☛ If everything suggested is done = 8.5

## Downtown business owners and managers – mild improvement

(6 to 1 scale, 6 is best)

- ☛ If all good changes were made = 3.9  
*(Good news – no one's or two's)*

# Tourism Opportunities

Typical summer weekend day – leisure travelers on Route 17:

- ☛ Monticello interchanges: 28,000
- ☛ Passing Liberty: 10,000

Number of people who come annually into Sullivan County as leisure travelers:

*One million people*

# Purposes for Traveling to Sullivan County

- Outdoor recreation – hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, bicycling, skiing, snowmobiling.
- Cultural and historic attractions
- Special events – festivals, farmers, farmers market.
- Seasonal / second homes

# New Developments

- ☛ Gambling and casinos
- ☛ Bethel Performing Arts Center
- ☛ Interstate 86
- ☛ Grossinger's redevelopment possibilities

# Recommended Businesses for Downtown & Route 52 Corridor

## Good Bets:

- Full service and mid-level restaurants
- Other food purveyors – bakery, gourmet foods, high-end takeouts, ice cream
- Gifts, novelties, antiques (aimed at seasonals, tourists).
- Specialty sporting goods, outdoor recreation equipment, clothing, and footwear

# Recommended Businesses for Downtown & Route 52 Corridor

## Risky Bets:

- ☛ Consumer entertainment – electronics / computer store (emphasizing product sales, as well as repair)
- ☛ Family clothing, shoe store

# Downtown Revitalization Elements

- Improve the physical infrastructure & quality of life in Downtown Liberty – public/private investment
  - Fix streets
  - Restore buildings
  - Better signage
- Strengthen and diversify existing businesses & recruit new business investment
- Expand cultural attractions & special events
- Market downtown Liberty to:
  - Full time and seasonal residents
  - Travelers & tourists
  - Outside entrepreneurs & investors



# Immediate Steps

- Energize and organize Main Street businesses
- Establish a formal partnership with the Village government.
- Activate the dormant Local Development Corporation (LDC)
- Investigate funding sources to support improvements
- Improve code enforcement

# A COOP \$

**A = Accountability**

**C = Commitment**

**O = Organization**

**OP = Operating Plan**

**\$ = Money**