

The Revitalization of Downtown Liberty Market Research Study

Prepared for:

Liberty Main Street Revitalization
Committee

Liberty Chamber of Commerce

THE HUDSON GROUP, LLC

Consultants

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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



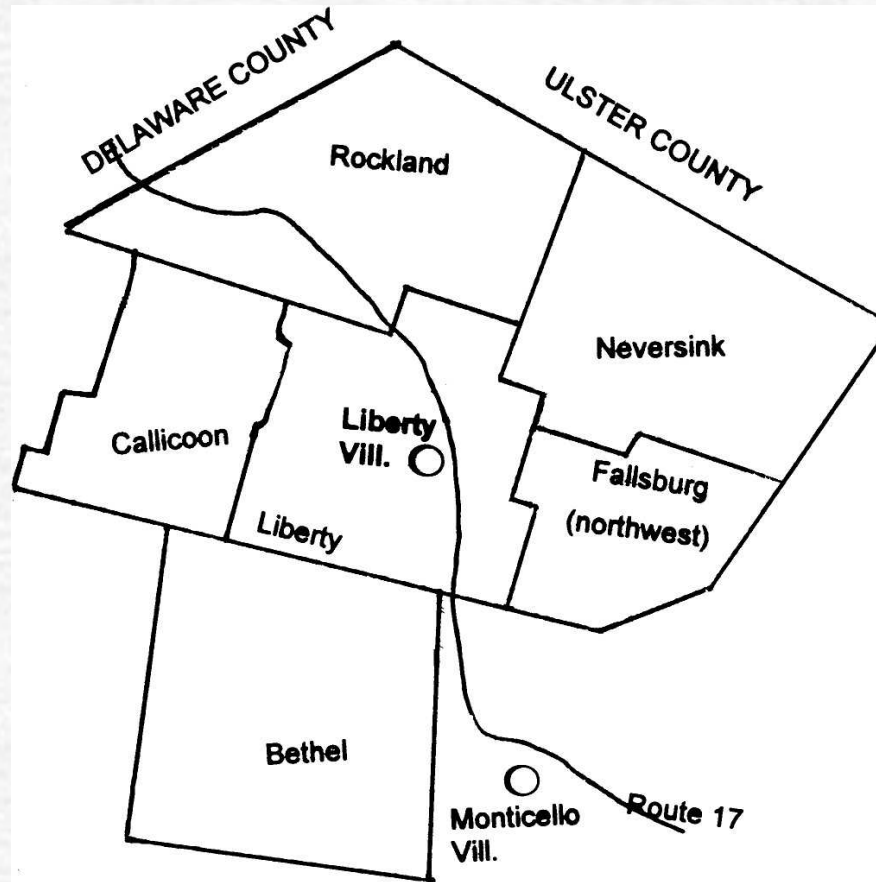
Sense of Momentum

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

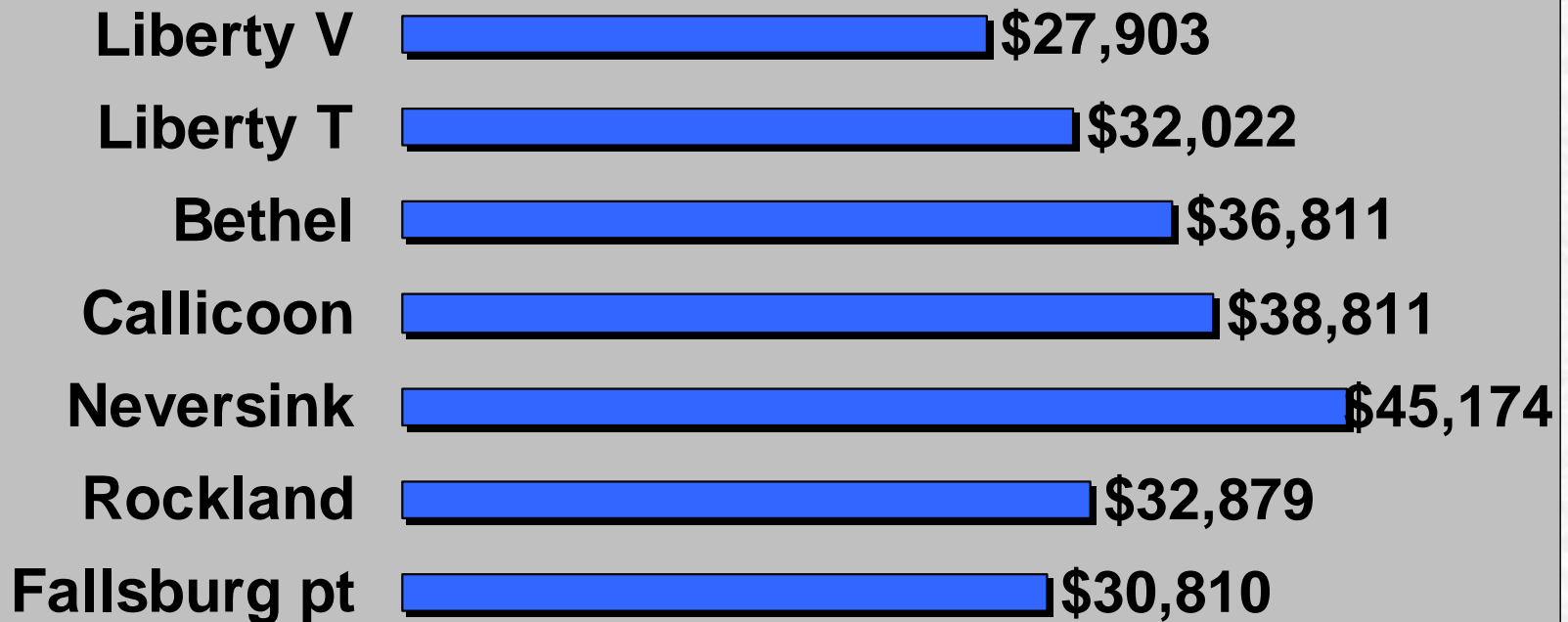
- 31,000 people in 11,000 households

Second homes/seasonal – 6,000 households

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

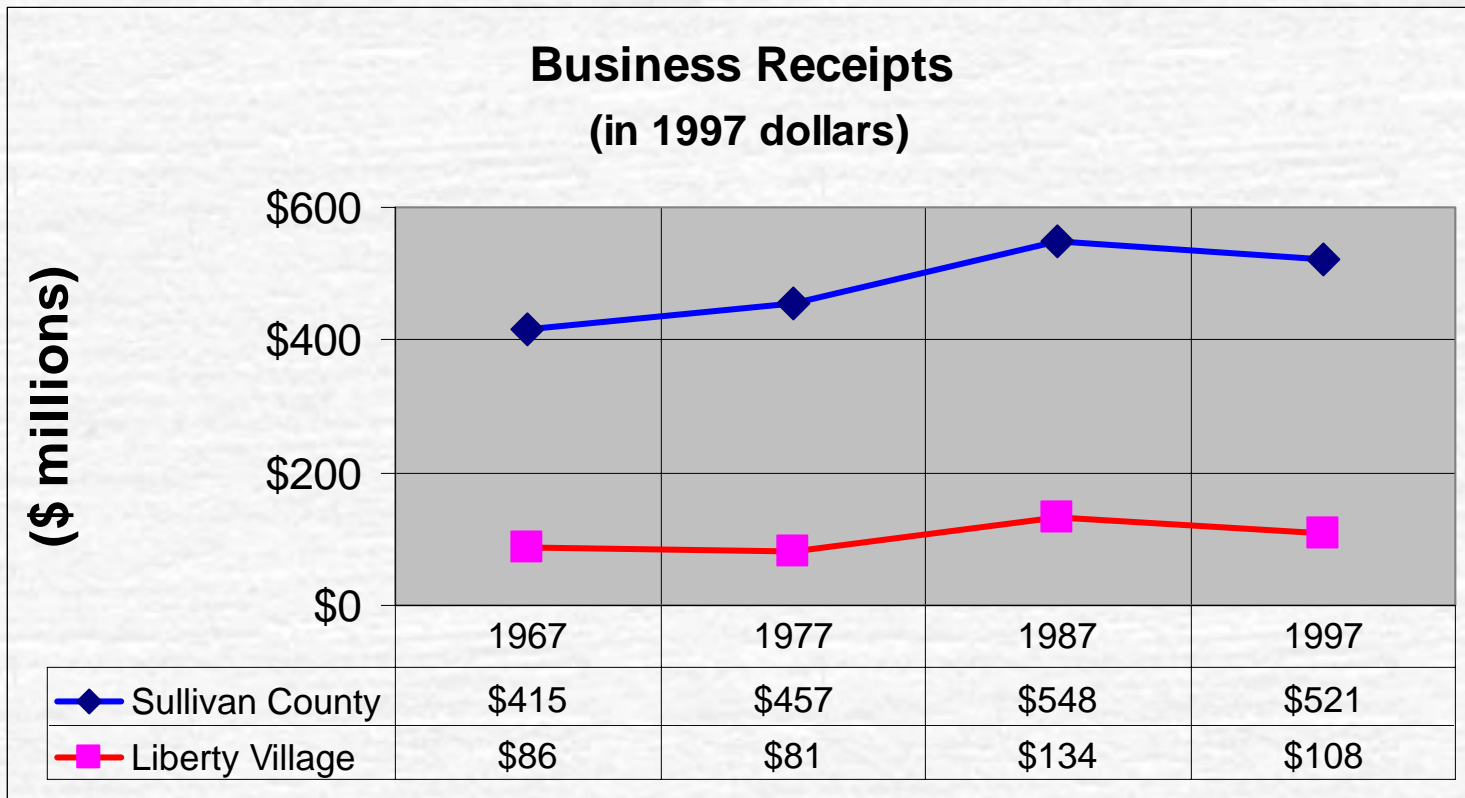
Liberty Trading Area

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 21st Century American Village. A combination of:

- The mid 20th 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

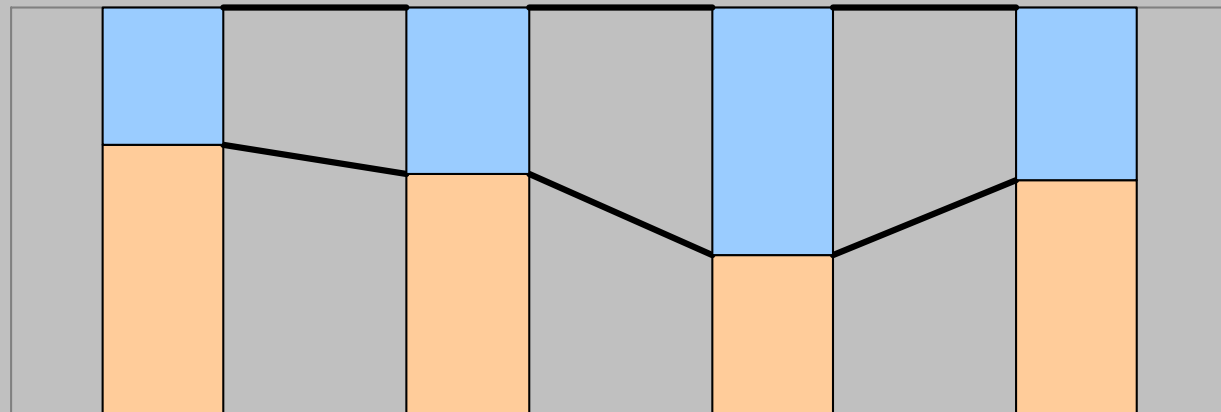
Not Seasonal: 33%

Peak in Summer: 61%

Lease premises: 60%

Own premises: 40%

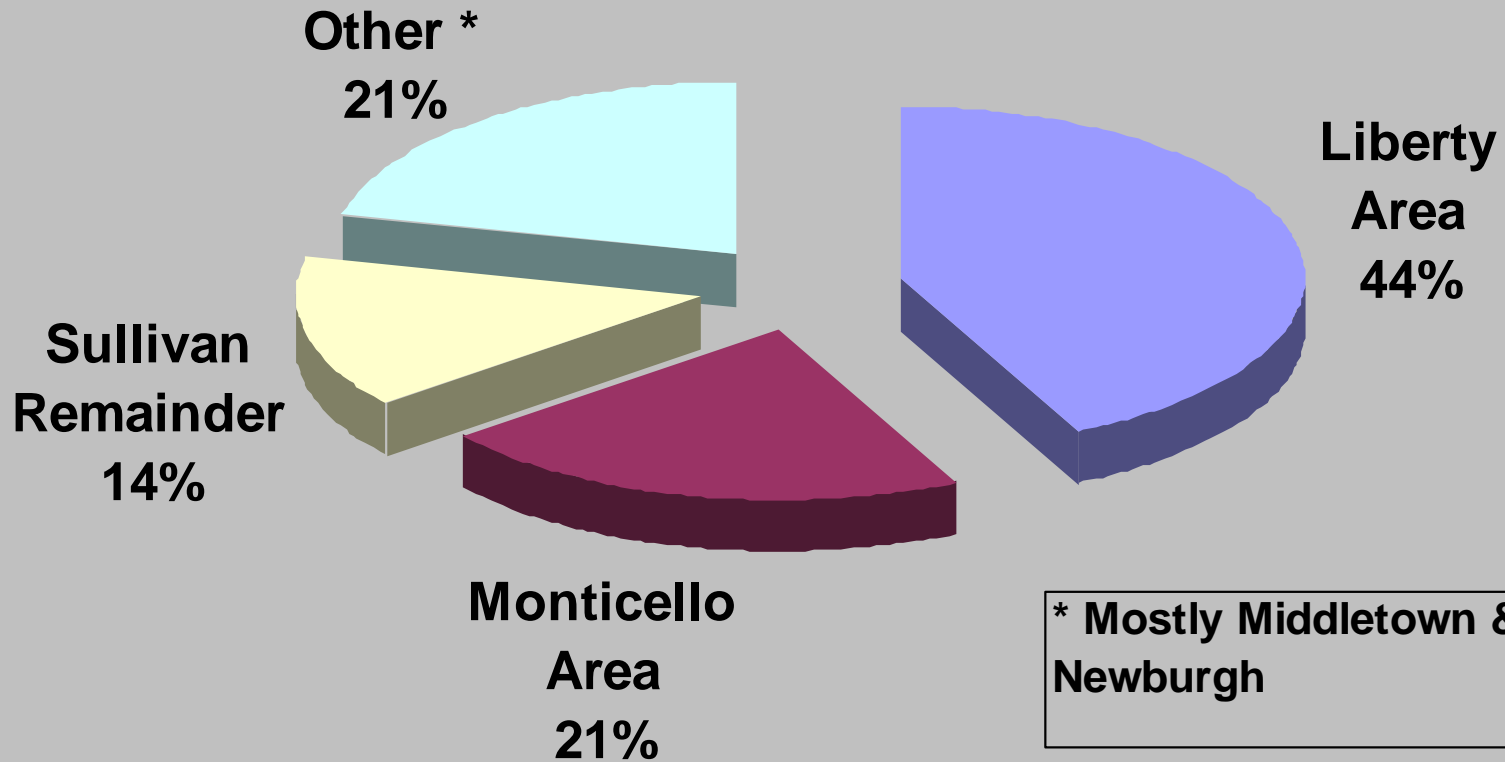
Liberty Village Business Counts



| | 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 | | |

2nd 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