## Diverse Downtowns

75 of the region’s downtowns were analyzed, and each were assigned a Diversity Score and a Pandemic Impact Score on scales of 1—100, with one being the most diverse and least impacted.

This effort found that more diverse downtowns were generally less impacted by the economic shutdown related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All 75 of the downtowns that were analyzed are listed, along with their Pandemic Impact Scores, in order from most to least diverse.

### Disclaimer:
This is an analysis of visits to and trade areas of the region's downtowns. However, it is not an economic impact analysis. Retail sales were not part of this body of work.
Characteristics that reduced the pandemic’s impact:

Downtowns with the following characteristics were generally less impacted by the pandemic than their peers.

**Development**
Recent mixed-use, residential, and retail developments within the downtowns increased diversity as well as resiliency.

**Diversity**
Downtowns with diverse built environments, demographics, local economies, mix of uses, and transportation options, were less impacted.

**People**
Diverse and permanent residential populations located within the downtowns provided retailers with customers even as people stayed close to home.

**Trails**
Existing Circuit Trails connected downtowns with open space and enabled alternative modes of transportation.

**Walkability**
Historic downtowns with more pedestrian-friendly built environments had greater resiliency.
Characteristics that **exacerbated** the pandemic’s impact:

Downtowns that lacked the characteristics found to reduce the pandemic’s impact, or that were more greatly defined by the following characteristics, were generally more impacted by the pandemic than their peers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cars</strong></td>
<td>Auto-oriented downtowns with lower Walk Scores and more cars per household were more impacted by the pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colleges</strong></td>
<td>Downtowns that are overly-reliant on these anchor institutions were less resilient during the pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goods &amp; Services</strong></td>
<td>As the share of Neighborhood Goods &amp; Services (NGS) retailers increased in a downtown, so did the pandemic’s impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transit</strong></td>
<td>The pandemic significantly reduced transit ridership, and this impact had a ripple effect in transit-oriented downtowns.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vacancy</strong></td>
<td>The pandemic had a greater impact as downtown vacancy rates increased.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Diverse Downtowns | Burlington City, NJ

For the 75 downtowns analyzed, each were assigned a Diversity Score and a Pandemic Impact Score on scales of 1—100, with one being the most diverse and least impacted. The more diverse downtowns were generally less impacted by the pandemic.

Burlington’s downtown has a walkable and historic built environment, with a diverse residential population. There are also a number of civic, cultural, and office uses, which add to the downtown’s overall diversity. This is why Burlington is considered to be one of the most diverse downtowns in the region, and it earned a Diversity Score of 28.

Despite its overall diversity, Burlington’s downtown has one of the highest vacancy rates in the region, and the retail use makes up a relatively small share of the downtown’s mix of uses. These characteristics most likely exacerbated the pandemic’s impact, which is why Burlington received a Pandemic Impact Score of 48.
Downtown Typologies

Nine downtown typologies were identified and the average Pandemic Impact Score was determined for each: Brewery (45), Circuit (48), Classic (46), College (50), Core (43), Expanding (42), Historic (47), Opportunity (45), and Transit-Oriented (50).

In general, more typologies equated to a lower Pandemic Impact Score. Burlington is considered to be six typologies: Brewery, Circuit (although the trail is not existing), Expanding, Historic, Opportunity and Transit-Oriented.

Of note, Circuit downtowns that have not yet built their trails had an average score of 53 compared to 48 for those with existing trails. Although Burlington is considered Expanding, the development is currently under construction, which most likely did not benefit the downtown during the pandemic.
Downtown Population

A negative correlation between the estimated population of the region's downtowns and the Pandemic Impact Score was identified. In other words, the larger the downtown population, the smaller the impact.

In 2019, Burlington’s downtown population was estimated to be 316, which is higher than the average for all downtowns (165 residents) and nearly equal to the average for the least impacted downtowns (326 residents).

Burlington’s downtown population is relatively diverse with regards to demographics, with the White, Black, and Hispanic populations accounting for 33%, 55%, and 9% respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Downtown</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BURLINGTON</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52ND STREET</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRISTOL</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOYLESTOWN</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HADDONFIELD</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARRISON (MULLICA HILL)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW HOPE</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRINCETON</td>
<td>782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUAKERTOWN</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPPER DARBY</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST CHESTER</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL DOWNTOWNS</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: BUXTON CO.
Retail only accounts for 33% of the uses in Burlington's downtown, which is the lowest share in the region. The average for all downtowns was 57% and 60% for the least impacted downtowns.

Additionally, in the least impacted downtowns, Food & Beverage (FB) retailers made up a much larger share at 30%, and General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings & Other (GAFO) made up a smaller share at 38%. In general, as the share of each of these increased, the Pandemic Impact Score decreased.

Conversely, Neighborhood Goods & Services (NGS) retailers made up a smaller share at 30%, and Burlington’s vacancy rate is one of the highest in the region. On average as a downtown's share of NGS retailers and vacancy rate increased, so did the Pandemic Impact Score.
Visits to Downtown

Geolocated, deidentified cellphone location data was analyzed to determine the pandemic’s impact on visits to the region’s downtowns and their trade areas. Visits to Burlington were as follows:

- **Pre-Pandemic**
  - Delaware: 0.0%
  - Maryland: 0.0%
  - New Jersey: 87.7%
  - New York: 0.0%
  - Pennsylvania: 12.3%

- **Shutdown | March 13 - June 15, 2020**
  - Delaware: 0.0%
  - Maryland: 0.0%
  - New Jersey: 89.5%
  - New York: 0.0%
  - Pennsylvania: 10.5%

- **Reopening | June 16 - October 31, 2020**
  - Delaware: 0.0%
  - Maryland: 0.0%
  - New Jersey: 89.5%
  - New York: 0.0%
  - Pennsylvania: 10.5%
Pre-pandemic, the majority of visitors to Burlington's downtown came from Burlington, Camden, and Mercer Counties in New Jersey, and somewhat from lower Bucks and Philadelphia Counties in Pennsylvania. During the pandemic, most visits came from the areas immediately surrounding the downtown, as well as from the cities of Camden and Trenton.

Between August 2018 and March 2020, 8,328 people visited the downtown. This was just shy of the average of 8,800 for all of the downtowns.

During the shutdown (March 13 - June 15) there were 493 visits to Burlington, and during the reopening period (June 16 - October 31) there were 675 visits.
During the economic shutdown, there were 493 visits to Burlington compared to 2,216 visits during the same period in 2019. This equated to a 78% reduction.

The average number of visits during the shutdown period was 439 compared to 2,450 visits during the same period in 2019, which equated to an average reduction of 81%.

Gloucester City’s downtown had the smallest reduction in visits at 66%, and the average for the least impacted downtowns was 81%.

Source: Buxton Co.
Visits to Burlington increased by 37% during the reopening period to a total of 675 visits, which was 78% fewer than the 3,000 visits that occurred during the same period in 2019.

On average, visits increased by 62% for all downtowns, to approximately 700 visits, and by 91% for the least impacted downtowns, to approximately 1,700 visits.

New Hope observed the greatest increase at 215%, with more than 2,800 visits during that time.
Trade Area Recovery
(Drive Time in Minutes)

Burlington’s pre-pandemic trade area was a 33 minute drive time, which shrank by 18% during the shutdown to 27 minutes. During reopening, the trade area recovered by 3% to 28 minutes.

The average pre-pandemic trade area was 31 minutes, with a 23% reduction during the shutdown down to 24 minutes. The average recovery was 10% to 27 minutes.

At 69 minutes, New Hope was the only downtown with a trade area that extended beyond an hour. It was also the only downtown to have a larger trade area during reopening (72 minutes) than it did pre-pandemic.

SOURCE: BUXTON CO.