

Small city south of Atlanta lands \$475M Target distribution center

[Zachary Hansen](#)



A tiny town in Henry County looking for a large corporate investment hit a bullseye.

Hampton leaders signed a deal this week to bring a massive [Target distribution center](#) to the city of roughly 8,300 residents about 30 miles south of Atlanta. Dubbed "Project Archer," the retailer plans to build a 1.4 million-square-foot fulfillment center on a 173-acre site along Lower Wooley Road.

The \$475 million project, when complete next year, will immediately make Target the city's largest employer. City leaders said they hope the jobs act as a catalyst for a city missing out on metro Atlanta's

development boom.



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"The city of Hampton recognized that it needed to simply evolve or die," said City Manager Alex Cohilas said. "It's laid stagnant for decades."

The [Hampton Development Authority](#) signed a memorandum of understanding during a meeting Tuesday to finalize the project's terms. Target will employ at least 750 workers while meeting minimum salary requirements. The city will provide nearly \$19.3 million in property-tax savings to the company over the next decade.

It's the development authority's first transaction since it was created in 2021, according to Mayor Ann Tarpley. She and other city leaders said the distribution center is the result of a yearslong effort to grow the city's commercial base and attract retailers.

Mayor Pro Tem Marty Meeks said the city, located in the shadow of Atlanta Motor Speedway along I-75, has lacked a grocery store since he was a kid in the 1960s. He said Target's investment could help elevate the city in the eyes of a grocer.

"The ones that made the attempt just didn't have the clientele and they didn't last," Meeks said.

He said the last time a large employer came to Hampton was utility company Southern States [at the dawn of World War II](#). It and the Federal Aviation Administration are the city's current top employers with a few hundred workers apiece, but Target's commitment easily surpasses both.



Credit: City of Hampton

Cohilas said Hampton began [annexing thousands of acres](#) of undeveloped land in recent years to try to woo industrial projects. Since 2019, the city has [doubled its footprint](#) to roughly 10 square miles. He said that will allow the city to get a say in what's developed in its orbit.

"We did not want to become voiceless victims of growth and the growth decisions made by others," he said. "We wanted to control our destiny."

In 2020, Hampton went through a state infrastructure review called a [Development of Regional Impact](#) for nearly 550 acres it amassed along Woolsey Road and Ga. 20. Target is building its distribution center on a

portion of that site, which city leaders say has the capability of housing about 5 million square feet of industrial space and 300 apartments.

Warehouse projects have faced pushback from Henry County leaders, who say they pop up across Atlanta's Southside like mushrooms after a spring shower. The county commission [has considered issuing a moratorium](#) on such facilities in recent years, but it's never pulled the trigger.

Cohilas said Hampton's situation isn't comparable, since Target's site is along a designated industrial corridor in an area that needs investment.

"(The county) has different challenges which led to their decisions," he said. "Those challenges don't exist in the city of Hampton."

[Panattoni Development](#) is building the distribution center, and while Target is only required to employ 750, city officials expect the facility to need about 1,200 workers when operating at max capacity. Despite the tax abatement, the city expects the project to generate nearly \$55 million in new tax revenue for the city, county and its school district over the next decade.