

WAYNESBORO VIRGINIA

Economic Development

STRATEGIC PLAN

Executive Summary
Preliminary Report July 27, 2011

Building for the Future

Economic Development Strategic Plan

Building for the Future



VISION

The purpose of the Waynesboro Virginia Office of Economic Development is to stimulate the local economy through the creation of primary employment, capital investment, and increased travel (tourist) activity. We will be known by our integrity and the professional manner in which we handle issues. Our goal is to be responsive to our clients' needs and effectively enhance their successes.

The office's actions in concert with other regional and state partners will promote wealth-building, create a pro-business environment, and improve the quality of life of our citizens.



MISSION

To promote the City of Waynesboro Virginia as a preferred location for economic growth by providing leadership in the community and region, collaboration among public and private partners, and distinctive marketing programs designed to accelerate the growth of capital investment, job creation, and increased tax revenue.



GOALS

1. Establish and market Waynesboro as a preferred location for business growth.

- a. Initiate a review of the current "brand" (hospitality in the valley); modify or create "brand" – including logo, tag line, and or slogan – to best describe the unique selling features of business to business; business to consumer; and distinctive opportunities and locations within the City (downtown, parks, etc).
- b. Develop a comprehensive economic development website with pertinent information and data for business attraction, business retention, and business start up.
- c. Develop and produce quality economic development marketing materials including brochures, fact sheets, and advertisements.
- d. Create and implement an annual Tourism (business to consumer) marketing plan in concert with regional partners and activities. Draft to be completed in December, final in June for a July FY.
- e. Create and implement an annual Economic Development (Business to Business) marketing plan. Draft to be completed in December, final in June for a July FY.

2. Create a business climate in which existing businesses are globally competitive and new businesses can be attracted and supported.

- a. Review current incentive programs, including enterprise zone (boundaries and local incentives), business attraction, and business retention.
- b. Review with the City zoning, planning, and building departments to understand requirements and restrictions and to create an understandable timeline and possible streamlining.
- c. Create a pathway for entrepreneurship. Investigate start-up assistance currently available; review financing; angel networks; networks of assistance; etc.
- d. Continue / expand business visitation program.
- e. Develop new tools and resources.

3. Create and sustain economic prosperity through collaborative partnerships, with federal, state, and local public and private agencies; local and regional commercial real estate brokers and developers; and local property owners.

- a. Create an online database of City wide existing / available real estate.
- b. Create a system of interaction with area real estate professionals and local property owners.
- c. Coordinate marketing opportunities and when appropriate, cooperatively market the area and share resources.
- d. Take advantage of grant opportunities.

4. Plan and develop business parks and buildings for existing and new businesses to locate and expand.

- a. Develop and aggressively market City owned industrial space.
- b. Work with private property owners to improve, maximize potential, and market their site, building, or complex.

5. Establish Waynesboro as a regional tourist destination taking full advantage of the natural and historic resources of the Shenandoah Valley.

- a. Improve the overall "visitor experience" by expanding our volunteer network, availability, and resources.
- b. Create a welcoming Visitor Information Center (s) – evaluate long term location (s).
- c. Examine possible future 'destination' activities or locations, such as outdoor recreation, cultural activities and venues, and group tours and packages.

6. Develop a highly skilled workforce fully capable of contributing to employer needs in a technology driven 21st Century business / industry environment.

- a. Work and coordinate with Virginia Department of Business Assistance, BRCC, JMU, and others to catalog and market workforce development needs and resources.
- b. Evaluate skills of current workforce and identify 'skill gaps' with future workforce needs – address with training and secondary education.
- c. Work with the Waynesboro Public Schools and other organizations to develop courses, career coaching, and skills to prepare for future workforces including manufacturing and other trades.

7. Create a rich and inviting central business district characterized by unique shops, specialty restaurants, a full range of cultural resources and events, and a range of housing options appealing to young professionals and engaged older adults.

- a. Support the Redevelopment Housing Authority, other City Departments, and the WDDI in the execution of the recently (June 2011) awarded Community Development Block Grant, and the Streetscape, and Greenway projects.
- b. Work with property owners to improve, maximize potential, and market their site, building, or complex (same as 4-b above).
- c. Engage appropriate industry and support services to locate and operate in the Central Business District.



BACKGROUND

In late 2010, it was determined that an Economic Development strategic plan was critical to the long term success of the city. A task force, comprised of members of City Council, the EDA, and City Staff, was created to draft a plan. A Strategic Plan process was developed with a goal of publishing the plan in summer of 2011.



METHODOLOGY

Community and historical input was deemed critical to the success and acceptance of the plan. The task force also recognized that, while it was the desire to complete the process internally, some facets of the project might require outside expertise. In early 2011 an RFP was distributed to Site Location Consultants and the firm of Moran Stahl and Boyer (MSB) was selected to present an Economic Development 101 seminar, hold interviews of community, business, and government leaders, and provide a draft report. A five phase project was initiated, including planning, assessment, analysis, priorities, and publishing.



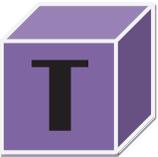
ASSESSMENT

During 1Q and 2Q of 2011 the task force conducted the assessment and analysis phases. The work included reviewing over a dozen reports, plans, and visioning reports; MSB held over 30 interviews, and the creation of seven specialized subject task forces charged with developing detailed action plans. Subjects studied were Cultural, Downtown, Education / Workforce Development, Manufacturing, Real Estate, Small Business, and Travel / Tourism. Key findings include:

- City strengths include access to markets, work ethic, proximity to universities, and a variety of recreational activities; while weaknesses include labor skills for new jobs, small business development opportunities, and lack of interest / training for manufacturing jobs;
- Threats to our economy (long term situations that we need to mitigate) include traffic issues at Town Center, gateways to the City, expansion of retail in neighboring municipalities.

Statistical data included:

- Four year college attainment % is increasing but lower than state and US average.
- Percent population over 65 is higher than US average.
- Population is growing, but at a slower rate than US and previous decade.
- City revenue source: M&T tax declining; real property, hotel, and meals tax increasing.
- Percent employment has shifted from “manufacturing” base to “wholesale / retail” base.



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