

Economy

Because of its strategic location, the Frederick County-Winchester area has been a center of commerce and transportation since the eighteenth century. In the County, major roads linking us with the Washington metropolitan area meet major roads traveling north and south in the Shenandoah Valley. These advantages help to sustain economic growth in our community.

Economic growth is one of the forces that can both drive other types of growth in any community as well as provide the revenues which offset residential growth. In order to plan for growth and development in Frederick County, it is important to examine economic trends. It is particularly important to coordinate economic development policy with other planning policies.

The City of Winchester and Frederick County together comprise a single, unified economic area. Economic growth in the City of Winchester certainly has an effect on growth in the County. Therefore, the City and County have developed a cooperative approach to economic development.

Winchester-Frederick County
Economic Development Commission

In 1982, the Winchester-Frederick County Economic Development Commission was created by joint resolution of the City of Winchester and the Frederick County governing bodies. The Commission is composed of representatives from the County and the City, along with representation from local industry. The Economic Development Commission's mission is: to create a desirable balance of value in the form of increased tax revenues to the City of Winchester and the County of Frederick and the towns within, income to its citizens, and an environment which facilitates profit for the business community. The Economic Development Commission is charged with fostering an efficient and cooperative effort toward economic development for the Winchester-Frederick County area. The Commission maintains an office and employs a director whose responsibility is the coordination of efforts to develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy for the community. Revised annually, the 1999-2000 strategy addresses three program areas: Existing Industry Development, Business Attraction, and Travel.

Winchester-Frederick County Economic Development Strategy:
Current Program Areas, Missions & Objectives

1. Existing Industry Development

Mission:

To create an effective business environment which fosters the growth and prosperity of existing industries and to communicate the availability of supporting resources.

Objectives:

1. To assist in the maintenance of a fully trained, competent workforce
2. To assist in increasing demand for local products and services.
3. To help reduce the cost of business in order to increase profits and promote growth.
4. To assist with regulatory requirements.
5. To increase public awareness of the economic impact of the community's industrial base.
6. To assist existing industries remain competitive by increasing productivity measures.

2. Travel

Mission:

To develop a comprehensive plan to attract visitors with benefit to the community.

Objectives:

1. To increase the number of visitors to the community:
 - *Leisure/group travelers*
 - *Conventions*
 - *Business travelers*

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2. To increase the average length of stay.
3. To increase expenditures made.
4. To improve the infrastructure which supports the travel effort.

3. Business Attraction

Mission:

To conduct a coordinated program to target and attract compatible business and industry to Winchester-Frederick County.

Objectives:

1. To balance the proportion of commercial and industrial real estate tax base for both the City and the County.
2. To create jobs, especially those which are compatible with existing industry needs.
3. To impact the quality of life through increased income.
4. To diversify the type of business in the economic base to provide stabilization and a broader selection of employment opportunities for community citizens.
5. To increase worker skills to remain competitive as a business location.
6. To build on the existing industry and business base by attracting new companies which provide services and products needed by the base.

Multiple activities have been identified in support of these objectives along with impact measures to assess the effectiveness of each program.

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Economic Policy

The policies in this section are intended to describe a general economic development policy which supports orderly economic growth in Frederick County. Economic development policies need to be coordinated with other types of planning policy. The primary economic issues identified include:

Issues

- *Rates of economic growth*
- *The location of available sites for business and industrial expansion*
- *The maintenance and expansion of the local tax base*
- *Encouraging new types of economic activity*
- *The need to provide special support for agriculture*

The proposed economic policies for the county are as follows:

GOAL: Support a Business Climate Conducive to Economic Activity and Orderly Economic Growth.

Strategies

1. Consider the goals and strategies adopted by the Winchester-Frederick County Economic Development Commission in land use decisions and program development.
2. Continue to work with the Economic Development Commission and with existing business and industry to evaluate and improve economic development strategies.
3. Provide a diversity of locations for business and industry.
4. Provide business and industrial locations that are attractive and compatible with surrounding uses and sites.

Implementation Methods

1. Obtain information from existing business and industry concerning economic development. Enlist their assistance on a continuous basis to identify opportunities for economic development, to take advantage of the opportunities, to identify strengths and weaknesses in the local

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economy, and work to improve any weaknesses.

2. Continue to monitor and update regulations to insure a diversity of sites and locations for business and industrial use.
3. Insure that industrial and business sites are provided with sufficient facilities and good access to avoid congestion and to efficiently provide necessary services.
4. Review ordinances to insure that business and industrial sites are compatible with surrounding areas, and that sufficient standards exist to insure quality development.
5. Continue to provide staff and other forms of support to the Frederick County-Winchester Economic Development Commission

GOAL: Provide Support to Agriculture as a Major Industry in the County.

Strategies

1. Promote Frederick County as a location for agricultural activities and include agriculture in economic development strategies.
2. Encourage businesses and activities that support agriculture.
3. Promote the participation of youth in the agricultural community and support agricultural education.
4. Examine the opportunity for agricultural manufacturing within the RA zone to encourage value added activities.

Implementation Methods

1. Work with local farmers, agricultural organizations, and agricultural related businesses to develop economic development strategies in relation to agriculture. Emphasis should be placed on developing markets for local agricultural products.
2. Evaluate the uses allowed in the agricultural zoning districts and other districts to insure that a full range of agricultural activities are permitted.

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GOAL: Provide Support to Travel and Tourist Related Activities.

Strategies

1. Promote activities which will encourage tourism, including the preservation of historic sites and scenic vistas.

Implementation Methods

1. Review ordinances and policies to promote the preservation of historic sites and scenic vistas.
2. Review ordinances to provide appropriate sites for travel and tourist related businesses.
3. Promote activities that will encourage tourism.

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