

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
POLICY
ADOPTED MARCH 1, 1995
Updated 2008**

**COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
1996-2016**

Corrected Version, November 5, 2008

NOTE: This document was obtained by Charlottesville Tomorrow during the November 5, 2008 meeting of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors. This corrected version is different from the version provided to the Board in their meeting materials and reflects the latest recommendations from the Planning Commission.

Table of Contents

The Policy.....	1
Objective I.....	1
Objective II.....	3
Objective III.....	3
Objective IV.....	4
Objective V.....	4
Objective VI.....	5
Priority Action Measures.....	5
Analysis & Findings.....	7
Attachments.....	13

THE POLICY:

The purpose of this economic development policy is, first and foremost, to provide the local citizenry an improved standard of living and enhanced quality of life. Economic growth and vitality are required to sustain and enhance the human economic, cultural, and natural characteristics of our community. By creating and sustaining a high quality, diversified economic environment, citizens will enjoy improved job opportunities, competitive wages, work force development opportunities and a diversified tax base. Within well defined development areas, we will seek to designate opportunity sites to address future growth needs in a manner that will add to the strength of our community. We will engage with our resident and new enterprises seeking to expand their businesses. We will work to find appropriate development areas sites to accommodate this positive growth within the context of the Master Planning process and the Comprehensive Plan. We will work with resident and new agricultural enterprises to, in an environmentally sustainable manner; maximize their productivity and tourism opportunities as a part of our overall strategy to preserve the rich agrarian tradition and texture of our rural areas. We recognize our position, along with the City of Charlottesville, as the center of the regional economy. We recognize the economic objectives of other localities in the region, while renewing our commitment to our own economic development within the framework of our growth management objectives.

Note: "Business" and "industry" are intended to be inclusive and interchangeable terms, meaning the commercial production and sale of goods or services.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES:

GOAL: Maintain a strong and sustainable economy: 1) benefiting County citizens and existing businesses and providing diversified economic opportunities; 2) supportive of the County's Growth Management Policy and consistent with the other Comprehensive Plan goals; and, 3) taking into consideration the greater Charlottesville Metropolitan region.

OBJECTIVE I: Base economic development policy on planning efforts which support and enhance the strengths of the County.

STRATEGIES:

1. Protect through diligent growth management efforts the County's distinctive natural and man-made qualities to maintain its attractiveness as a place to live and work.
2. Maintain the relationship of high quality schools and public services and an outstanding level of natural and cultural amenities to positive economic development, and maintain these attributes.
3. Increase the promotion of tourism focused on the rural, agrarian, and historical resources of the County, and which does not threaten or compromise those resources and to be consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

4. Increase the promotion of local agricultural industry consistent with the goals, objectives and implementation strategies of the Comprehensive Plan, more specifically by
 - Increasing support to local agricultural infrastructure such local food networks and programs. (The agricultural infrastructure provides markets and supplies to farmers and significant economic activity to Albemarle County as a whole.)
 - Establishing a proactive rural-support program that provides assistance to the local agricultural community, and that includes an on-going dialogue with farm-industry stakeholders.
 - Supporting recruiting of new farmers by connecting those farmers with technical resources such as the Farm Bureau, PVCC and VA Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and incorporating outreach and education in public school programs.
 - Addressing the Comprehensive Plan, Rural Area Chapter recommendations for economic vitality.
5. Recognize that the University of Virginia can provide important resources for business and industry and work with the University and its associated entities to take advantage of opportunities to benefit from this resource in innovative ways.
6. Maintain a contact point for information about the County, including the Business Development Facilitator who serves as the County's principal liaison with the business community for the purpose of encouraging development and businesses consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.
7. Increase planning for the special needs, and utilize the talents, of the growing retired population attracted to this area, including "encore-career" seekers, a term used to describe work in the second half of life that combines continued income, greater meaning and social impact.
8. Increase support to initiatives that support employment of the local labor force, rather than heavy reliance on relocated workers.
9. Encourage all ~~commercial~~ businesses to adopt environmentally sustainable measures. Discourage business and industry which is not environmentally sustainable or friendly (such as high water users, polluters).
10. Increase diversity in business and industry which will accommodate a variety of skill/educational levels and provide for a diversified tax base.
11. Maintain data on County plans, zoning, sites, and policies, and make these available on request. Monitor and report to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors about the volume of economic development activity and how that activity is fitting with the Goals, Objectives and Strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.

OBJECTIVE II: Plan for land and infrastructure to accommodate future business and industrial growth.

STRATEGIES:

1. Assess the quality of areas designated for business and industry through analysis of the site size variety, topography, location, and availability of infrastructure in such areas, and compile an inventory of actual, useable land.
2. Designate areas for office, commercial and industrial development within the designated development areas that meet the development standards of the Comprehensive Plan and will provide sufficient land to meet community needs through the next Comprehensive Plan revision. ~~Provide enough land to allow flexibility and choice without inviting sprawl or detracting from infill opportunities in areas designated in the Plan.~~
3. Utilize the rezoning process and associated proffer allowances to address needs brought about by new development and to provide the community with assurances about future development activities.
4. Encourage infill development of business and industrial uses in areas ~~appropriately~~ designated in the Land Use Plan, including consideration of proactively rezoning land as needs are identified through Master Plans and other efforts. Initiate zoning text amendments that further enable business and industrial uses of the appropriate zoning districts.
5. Maintain review of current infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, and community facilities) programs to determine their capacity to support business and industrial development of designated areas. Identify infrastructure improvements that better enable business and industrial development.
6. Continue to work with property owners in designated Development Areas to identify infrastructure needs, and promote good planning for development of such areas consistent with County growth management strategies.

OBJECTIVE III: Recognize the County's place in the regional economy.

STRATEGIES:

1. Maintain cooperation with the City of Charlottesville, TJPDC, Thomas Jefferson Partnership for Economic Development (TJPED), other jurisdictions in the region, the University of Virginia, and Piedmont Virginia Community College for:
 - Development of a coordinated economic data base.
 - Continuing discussion among the TJPDC jurisdictions about working and shopping patterns, wage levels, job stability, work force development needs,

housing affordability, public services, tax burdens, and other topics which relate to the purposes of local and regional economic development policy;

- Distribution of information about development opportunities in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) to those who request it;
 - Regional work force development;
 - Addressing linkages between housing and wages;
 - Evaluating local, regional, statewide, national, and worldwide economic trends to determine the current and future economic stability of, and growth opportunities for, different types of business and industry.
 - Initiatives such as the high school technology tour.
2. Support mutual consultation on regional development projects along shared borders, and/or on projects of significance to more than one locality, possibly through a "Memorandum of Understanding."
 3. Measure our accomplishments in economic development against the strategic questions posed in the Community Vision Statement regarding economic opportunity (~~page 3 of the "Natural Resources and Cultural Assets" section of the Comprehensive Plan~~).

OBJECTIVE IV: Consider fiscal impact as one indicator of positive economic development, along with environmental impact and standard of living impact.

STRATEGIES:

1. Maintain evaluation of the fiscal impacts of new business/industrial development.
2. Recognize that County residents place importance on job opportunities and economic growth, but not at the expense of the protection and preservation of water quality and quantity, natural resources, farmland, historic areas, and open space.
3. Recognize that the purpose of this economic development policy is to provide the local citizenry an improved standard of living, improved job and wage opportunities, and work force development opportunities, rather than to seek to stimulate further population growth.
4. Recognize, identify and quantify new benefits and costs (for business and citizens) imposed by any proposed ordinance or policy change on business prior to taking action on said policy or ordinance.

OBJECTIVE V: Increase local business development opportunities.

STRATEGIES:

1. Maintain support to existing businesses and industries through an open door policy of communication, and exchange of information and concerns.

2. Increase support to and coordination with existing entities that assist new small, locally-owned, and minority businesses and micro-enterprises in their start-up and early operation efforts.
3. Where and when possible examine options to help create a local business incubator resource, or equivalent resource, to encourage both work force development and local entrepreneurship. Business incubators are programs designed to accelerate the successful development of entrepreneurial companies through an array of business support resources and services, developed and orchestrated by incubator management and offered both in the incubator and through its network of contacts.

OBJECTIVE VI: Increase work force development opportunities.

STRATEGIES:

1. Recognize that the most fundamentally sound work force is one that has basic education and good work habits.
 - Increase support for initiatives that foster career-planning, decision-making and workplace readiness skills for the K-12 population, such as; and as measured by the number of participants in career-education activities.
 - Increase support for testing facilities to support residents seeking apprenticeship, industry licensure or certifications for high-demand and career-ladder jobs. Target populations would include disadvantaged, lower-income and “encore-career” seekers served by the VA Employment Commission.
 - Promote employee certification and licensure to the business community.
2. Encourage and support continuing educational and training programs to prepare the local work force for the skill demands of current and future employers, including appropriate work habits and life skills.
 - Increase support (purchase of books, etc.) for Albemarle County residents to attend pre-employment training at career centers to include topics such as time-management, stress-management and customer service.
 - Increase support for continuing education and training programs, ideally targeting incumbent-worker, career-ladder training.
3. Increase the use of information gathering strategies such as,
 - a. A regional, baseline workforce study to define and benchmark underemployment and “not-in-the-labor force” needs as well as employer needs
 - b. Use entrepreneur software to help identify workforce training needs
4. Monitor performance of the County’s Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan (education, housing, day care, transportation, etc.) to address barriers experienced by the local work force, particularly those with greatest needs.

Priority Action Measures:

To address issues identified in the 2007 updated data, the Policy’s short-term priorities include the following strategies:

- Objective I. Strategy 4. Increasing the promotion of local agricultural industry consistent with the goals, objectives and implementation strategies of the Comprehensive Plan, such as the purchase of local products ~~increasing support to the “Buy Fresh, Buy Local”~~, establishing a proactive rural-support program and continuing an on-going dialogue with farm-industry stakeholders.
- Objective II. Strategy 4. Encourage infill development of business and industrial uses in areas appropriately designated in the Land Use Plan, including consideration of proactively rezoning land as needs are identified through Master Plans and other efforts. Initiate zoning text amendments that further enable business and industrial uses of the appropriate zoning districts.
- Objective VI. Strategy 3. Increase the use of information gathering strategies such as:
 - A regional, baseline workforce study to define and benchmark the needs of “underemployed” and those not in the labor force (as defined by the VA Employment Commission) as well as employer needs.
 - Use entrepreneur software to identify workforce training needs and promote workforce training opportunities.