



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN
2013-2015

*Front Royal-Warren County Virginia
Working Summary*

March 2014

Front Royal-Warren County
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document offers a summary of economic development achievements, identifies specific types of business and industry the community seeks for continued investment, and lists results to date. This document also includes a separate section on the Avtex (Royal Phoenix) project.

The Plan is intended to be a flexible and living document designed to adapt quickly to market trends and conditions.

TARGETED COMPANIES

Manufacturing: The EDA will target its recruitment efforts toward high paying, capital intensive, value-added manufacturing and assembly firms. Examples of manufacturers targeted include plastics, machinery, machine shops, computer, electronic components, electrical equipment, appliances, transportation equipment, and vehicle manufacturing and components.

Food Preparation/Packaging/Distribution: Warren County is emerging as a magnet for food preparation, assembly, packaging and distribution. Baugh NE Cooperative (SYSCO Foods) distribution center and the Interbake biscuit bakery and packaging plant have established large centers and have employed more than 500 people at the two facilities in Warren County. EDA has received a number of requests from food processing, packaging and distribution companies. It continues to work with several of those inquiring.

Technology: The targeted companies include biotechnology, electronics, computers, software, and telecommunications, computer-integrated manufacturing, materials design, information services and data processing, and support and transaction activities associated with finance, insurance, and real estate.

The challenges in this area are ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is deployed to serve the needs of IT companies and the needs of their employees when they leave the office environment to continue their work from home.

Bio-Medical Technology: As the Valley Health System expands, ancillary technologies are emerging in the Northern Shenandoah Valley that serves the bio-medical business sector. Those occupations include: medical records processing, insurance forms processing, testing laboratories, physical therapy support, dialysis support, etc. Warren County's Project Lead the Way is moving forward on providing educational components in the high schools that support these emerging occupations. In its work on Community Entrepreneurialism, the EDA intends to work in concert with the public school system and Project Lead the Way in this educational endeavor.

Health and Wellness: In conjunction with the bio-medical technology, the hospital expansion, and the growing medical industry, the EDA intends to work with the Town and County in exploring options involving health and wellness within the community. With the hospital's plans to build a new state-of-the-art facility along the Leach Run Parkway, the EDA feels confident that

the Happy Creek area would be best suited for the creation of a health and wellness area within the community.

According to the study conducted by the EDA in May 2012, the healthcare industry is projected to be the fastest growing industry within the Northern Shenandoah Valley Region. With that information the EDA sees fit to include those areas of healthcare as part of our recruitment efforts. Such businesses could include educational facilities that focus on healthy living, nursing, hands on wellness training, physical therapy, mental health, athletic training, dentistry, and multiple other activities within the area.

Distribution and Logistics: EDA will pursue distribution companies that offer living wages and employee benefits packages. Distribution centers will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The **Expansion of the Panama Canal (Third Set of Locks Project)** will double the capacity of the Panama Canal by 2014. The expansion will be greater than at any time since the canal's construction. The project will create a new lane of traffic along the Canal by constructing a new set of locks. With this expansion, warehousing and distribution points will be in high demand and competition for those contracts will undoubtedly affect distribution hubs and the Inland Port railway system, such as those housed in Warren County.

Hospitality: The hospitality industry was another sector of business that was identified in the May 2012 report as a growing industry within our region. Trying to capture the billions of dollars of revenue generated by tourism each year the EDA will seek hospitality services and investment that complement industrial activity and tourism trends. Those targeted include branded hotels and motels, branded restaurant franchises, full-service restaurants, and retail trades such as electronics, clothing, grocery, and general merchandise. EDA will continue to assist developers in implementing their recruitment strategies.

Most hospitality companies determine site selection based upon: median income levels, population counts, and traffic counts. The Front Royal-Warren County community has now attracted large, national retail and foods chains. Others will follow. EDA's role is to assist in attracting viable hospitality companies and to provide all the necessary data for an efficient and uncomplicated construction and start-up process in Warren County.

Additional Selected Industries: In addition to the above, companies and industries will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

VISION

The goal of the governing bodies of Front Royal and Warren County is to make the community a desirable, prosperous and healthy place to live, work, raise a family, play, shop and visit.

GUIDING OBJECTIVE

The Economic Development Authority will sustain a business climate that results in the creation of 300 new jobs in 2013-2015. This document is designed to guide that process.

KEY RESULT AREAS

The key components of this Plan will address specific strategies to recruit investment by the following business sectors and expand existing business.

Medium/Light Industry

Distribution

Information Technology and Telecommunications

Bio-Medical Technologies

Commerce/Service/Retail

Hospitality and Tourism

Selected institutional/

Governmental agencies

RECRUITMENT

To guide the business recruitment efforts, the aforementioned business classifications are identified as those determined to be compatible with the resources of the community. The EDA will review recruitment at every opportunity.

CONCLUSION

The Economic Development Authority will work with both elected bodies in determining economic development goals and objectives for the community. EDA Staff will conduct recruitment activities and will assemble demographic data, infrastructure recommendations, workforce support mechanisms, marketing and business retention programs and public relations and community education programs to support these goals and objectives. EDA will update the Warren County Supervisors and Front Royal Town Council on a regular basis.

INDUSTRY

JOB CREATION AND JOB RETENTION GOALS

- To continue to recruit and facilitate growth of existing value-added, capital intensive industrial firms that offer wage and benefit packages at levels competitive with those of higher paying jobs outside of the community.
- To work with the County in securing additional acreage in the 522N Industrial Corridor to expand industrial portfolio for interested companies that continue to inquire about locating facilities and creating jobs in Warren County.
- To encourage businesses to provide high paying and challenging employment opportunities for Warren County's citizens.
- To support existing business and industry in efforts to retain jobs.
- ✓ **EDA assisted four large industries with the Virginia Jobs Investment Program, administered by the Virginia Department of Business Assistance, retraining a total of 1,030 employees. The State's JIP program is designed to offset recruitment and training costs for companies that are creating new jobs or implementing technological upgrades. Dulles Industries will utilize the program, as well.**

Between 2010 and 2012, the Economic Development Authority recruited and assisted businesses in the creation of 400+ new jobs, including labor expansions at existing facilities.

RELATED OBJECTIVES

- To create a minimum of 200 new manufacturing positions either from the existing industrial base or recruited companies that pay a minimum of \$15.00 per hour and offer a benefit package equal to at least 25 percent of the base wage rate.
- ✓ **Ninety-five new manufacturing jobs have been created since 2013, including Dominion Power and Dulles Industries.**
- ✓ **In January 2014, Dulles Industries took occupancy of the old North American Housing facility on Strasburg Road in Warren County. They are completing renovations and will begin well-drilling equipment manufacturing and maintenance operations in April 2014. They project to create 35 new manufacturing jobs at start up, and an additional 15 new manufacturing jobs within one year.**

Background: July 2002: Baugh Northeast Cooperative (Sysco Corporation) announced the acquisition of a 140-acre parcel in the Industrial Corridor for the initial development of a

797,000 s.f. \$53 million capital investment in a food products distribution facility and refrigerated warehouse with initial job creation of 388 jobs.

2003: Interchange completed its facility, hired: 12; 2004 Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, hired: 20; 2004 New Breed moved into old Pen Tab facility, hired 110; 2005 InterBake bought Bering Facility, hired 325; 2008 Atlantic Skyline built 80,000 sf facility, hired 25 (will lease a portion of the facility).

2010: Rappahannock Electric CoOp purchased a 30,000 s.f. building at Kelley Industrial Park, created 72 jobs, and invested \$10 million.

Upon completion, the Regional Jail will employ 125-150 full-time employees.

Upon completion in 2014, Dominion Power will employ 40+ full time employees.

Total new industrial/manufacturing positions since 2002: 1,095.

Note: in 2012-2014, the construction of the Dominion Power Electric Plant in Kelley Industrial Park has employed an estimated 1600 workers and infused the local economy with an estimated \$500 million in purchase of local goods and services. Those construction jobs are diminishing as Dominion nears its start up date of December 2014.

- **Distribution and Logistics:** EDA will pursue distribution companies that offer living wages and employee benefits packages. Distribution centers will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- **Alternative Energy/Green Technology:** With a nationwide push to promote clean and environmentally friendly industry, the EDA will pursue and encourage the development of companies that offer a variety of alternative methods for energy, waste, and healthy working environments. The EDA will pursue those alternative energy companies that create high-paying jobs, large tax investments, and support other areas of growth and business within the community.

INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL

- Facilitate deployment of all appropriate utilities in identified industrial areas including telecom, water, sanitary sewer, storm-water, and natural gas.
- Work with electricity providers to increase capacity in order to accommodate data processing centers for potential recruitment.

EDA initiated discussion on building Leach Run Parkway connector road from John Marshall Highway across Happy Creek Road to Shenandoah Shores Road. EDA coordinated County, Town and VDOT in this initiative and led the negotiations with property owners to begin the purchase and design phase of the project.

- ✓ **The Engineering design for Leach Run Parkway is complete (See Appendix A).**
- ✓ **The “Public Impact” meeting was conducted in March 2014.**

- ✓ **RFP for Construction will be issued in May 2014.**

In 2009, EDA initiated discussion and partnerships with Town, EDA and FMC Corporation on building a connector road from Kendrick Lane to Kerfoot Avenue at the east end of the Royal Phoenix site. Discussions have stalled.

- **EDA is initiating discussion with both Town and County officials on the feasibility of creating a “Western Bypass” roadway connecting western portions of the County for traffic management and egress to the Avtex site.**
- **EDA has approached the Town leadership about several technology/industrial prospects that have requested redundancy on electric provision for sites located in the Town.**
- ✓ **EDA completed a pad site design/layout for Lot 6 at Stephens Industrial Park and delivered to its Board of Directors. (See Appendix B.)**

RELATED OBJECTIVES

- Work with Shenandoah Gas to perform a deployment threshold study to determine the number of potential customers and usage that would be necessary to deploy natural gas service to Front Royal and the Avtex redevelopment site.

As recently as 2012, representatives of Shenandoah Gas informed the EDA that there is no interest in deploying natural gas across the Shenandoah River.

- Work with the Town of Front Royal to increase water treatment capacity to 7.5 million gallons per day. Also, encourage the extension of the water distribution system to close the loop as necessary to increase water pressure to meet the Factory Mutual Fire Suppression Standard.

The Town of Front Royal has completed upgrading capacity from 3.0 mgd to 6 mgd.

EDA initiated contact with the State Department of Environmental Quality in an effort to find additional financing opportunities for the upgrades to the Town’s water system required by the Chesapeake Bay Initiative. EDA referred those contacts to the Town Manager.

EDA effectively negotiated water and sewer contracts in the 522N Industrial Corridor that benefit both the Town and the industries involved.

- To recruit and facilitate growth of existing capital-intensive industrial firms to invest a minimum of \$200 million of taxable assets.
- ✓ **2014: Dominion Power projected completion date: December 2014 with an estimated \$1.1 billion investment.**

July 2002: Northeast Cooperative (Sysco Corporation) announced the acquisition of a 140-acre parcel in the Industrial Corridor for the initial development of a 797,000 s.f. \$53 million capital

investment in a food products distribution facility and refrigerated warehouse with initial job creation of 388 jobs.

2004: dataDisc, \$1mm investment; Brotherhood of RR Signalmen, Shenandoah Shores Road: \$3mm investment; LeHew LLC, Kelley Park, \$2.5mm investment; 2005: Interbake Foods, Stephens Industrial Park: \$13mm investment; 2008 Equibrand, Happy Creek Park: \$2.5mm investment; Atlantic Skyline, Stephens Industrial Park: \$12mm investment.

2010: Rappahannock Electric CoOp, Kelley Industrial Park: \$10mm investment.

Total Industrial Investment since 2002: \$1.201 billion.

BUSINESS CLIMATE GOALS

- To nurture a pro-business climate that supports conducting business in Front Royal and Warren County as efficient and cost effective.
- ✓ **EDA participates in the Business Development Review Committee, which meets once a month and includes County Building Inspections, Planning & Zoning Officials, Health Department Officials, EDA Staff, and Town Planning & Zoning Officials. Owners/Operators of emerging businesses meet with these officials to discuss plans and avoid complications in the permitting/zoning/occupancy process. This project has been very well received.**
- ✓ **EDA receives copies of all new business license applications from the Town Business Office, and mails out a package of information on how to start a business. EDA is working on a similar arrangement with County Commissioner of Revenue's Office.**
- ✓ **EDA's web site includes a direct link to the State's "One Stop Shop" for business creation as well as volumes of information on creating and conducting business in Front Royal-Warren County, Virginia. EDA recently received a compliment on how easy it is to navigate the web site.**
- ✓ **EDA prepared the language for "Enhancement Zones" and "Tourism Zones" that would incentivize businesses to improve/enhance their buildings, properties, etc. and/or to participate in Tourism-related activities and improvements. This language was delivered to Town Council in 2010. (See Appendix C.)**
- To sustain a healthy business culture that encourages the expansion of the existing business base.
- To maintain the inherent beauty of the community promoting economic development opportunities.

- To nurture productive interface between local education and training providers and the business community to ensure that training programs prepare workers for the evolving needs of business.
- ✓ **EDA has worked with several industries in securing training grants through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program.**
- **EDA hosted a presentation by the U.S. Department of Labor on creating internships through a DOL partnership/resource program. Attendance by industrial sector was impressive. No further activity on this project.**
- The EDA will continue to work to establish several components of the “Community Entrepreneurialism” initiative, including: completing a “Regional Jobs Assessment Report,” that will define regional skill sets and job needs for each jurisdiction in the region; regional or local incubator(s) that will support emerging small businesses; and Student Entrepreneurship that will integrate entrepreneurial education in middle and high schools.
 - ✓ **EDA completed its “Regional Jobs Assessment Report,” through a partnership with the Byrd School of Business at Shenandoah University. It is available on EDA’s web site: www.wceda.com, “Resources.”**
 - ❖ **Through considerable research, the incubator program has been suspended. It was determined that most municipalities that host an incubator find the expense to be exorbitant and difficult to reconcile. Many communities opt for and support college/university-based housing of business incubators.**
 - **EDA is currently working with the Chamber of Commerce’s Education Committee on determining the feasibility of instituting an entrepreneurship curriculum in the Warren County School System.**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Work with the Town of Front Royal and County of Warren to establish and approve new workforce housing subdivisions consistent with the Town of Front Royal and Warren County Comprehensive Plans that offer a diverse range of housing type and price.**
 - **EDA is currently working with two developers interested in providing workforce housing.**

New housing subdivisions are emerging slowly through careful planning and zoning. In 2008, EDA assisted in conducting a middle-income housing survey of hospital, school, Sheriff’s office and police department staff that was designed to determine need and income levels.

- **Encourage the Town of Front to accelerate the expansion schedule of upgrades to treatment and distribution capacity of the sanitary sewer and water systems.**

Upgrades to increased capacities are underway.

- Encourage the Town of Front Royal and County of Warren to establish a cooperative and reasonable approach to the delivery of sanitary sewer and water utilities to the community, including business and industry.
- Encourage the Town of Front Royal and County of Warren to create and maintain pro-business procedures and high level of customer service in all areas of their operations, particularly in permitting, planning and zoning.
- ✓ **The County created the Business Development Review Committee. Town Planning/Zoning officials now participate.**

ACTION ITEMS

- The EDA will continue ongoing updates to its Marketing Plan to identify and address both the unique resources of the community and the unique recruitment objectives in order to differentiate Front Royal-Warren County from other communities.
- **EDA continues to update its Marketing Plan and is currently working on a Facebook ad campaign that will reach a wide, targeted market at a nominal cost.**
- The EDA will assist in the development of workforce housing to accommodate the growing numbers of employees seeking affordable, diversified, local housing options.
- **EDA is currently working with two developers interested in providing workforce housing.**
- The EDA will work with Town and County officials and Regional Planning Commission in determining transportation priorities to serve industrial and business parks and residents and commuters, as well.
- **Leach Run Parkway project is well underway; engineering design has been completed; property negotiations are in process; public impact meeting has been held; RFPs will be issued in May 2014.**
- **Kendrick Lane/Kerfoot Avenue Connector Road is still in discussion by Town officials.**

EDA has met with Town Planning Director and Director of the Regional Planning Commission to design comprehensive transportation priorities for approval and presentation to Virginia Department of Transportation.

EDA initiated and conducted relevant negotiations on two major transportation projects: Leach Run Parkway, connecting John Marshall Highway and Shenandoah Shores Road; and the Kerfoot Avenue connector road connecting Kendrick Lane and Kerfoot Avenue at the east end of the Royal Phoenix site.

- EDA leads the Leach Run Parkway project process and works in concert with the engineers, County and Town officials.
- EDA initiated the Kerfoot Avenue-Kendrick Lane connector road project which is currently stalled at the Town level.
- EDA will initiate discussion with Town and County about constructing a “Western Bypass” roadway.
- The EDA will work with the Regional Planning Commission in its effort to design a regional marketing initiative that will provide more resources to the Region for economic development.
- EDA initiated the regional discussion and participated in the organization of a “Regional Summit,” designed to unify the counties/towns in the Northern Shenandoah Valley in an initiative to serve the collective. The Regional Summit was very well attended and received. Progress on a Regional Initiative is slow at this point.
- The EDA will work to recruit centers of higher learning.
- EDA has developed a very good working relationship with the Byrd School of Business at Shenandoah University, its Dean and its Intern Program. EDA has made contact with officials at the George Mason Enterprise Center in Loudoun, Virginia. EDA has begun a relationship with George Mason University’s Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation in Front Royal through the Chamber of Commerce’s Education Committee.
- The EDA will work with the Commonwealth to expand the boundaries and the timeline of the Cedarville Enterprise Zone.
 - ✓ *The Cedarville Enterprise Zone expansion was approved in November 2012, increasing the Zone by 825.5 additional acres. EDA has inquired about extending the timeline for benefits and was asked to bring the issue for review with each new prospect.*
 - ❖ **The 20-year long State and County sponsored Cedarville Enterprise Zone program will expire in December 2015.**
- The EDA will work closely with all local and regional workforce training programs, such as the Small Business Development Center, Workforce Investment Board, and Workforce Services Department of Lord Fairfax Community College, in the ongoing professional development of Warren County’s workforce.

EDA has formed a close partnership with the Warren County School System and the Lord Fairfax Community College to support programs for high school students that will enhance those skills required to succeed in the local workforce. The EDA will work with future remote learning centers (to be located in Front Royal), and will work with the Smithsonian

Conservation Biological Institute on educating local talent and on recruiting or creating viable entrepreneurial, supporting industries.

- **EDA serves on the Chamber's Education Committee along with the Operations Admin Manager of the Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation.**

The EDA offers an annual scholarship to one graduating senior from Warren County High School and one graduating senior from Skyline High School who will pursue a business career at a Virginia college or university. EDA also offers a scholarship to help offset the costs of supplies and/or equipment.

EDA is working with local high schools on their "student entrepreneurship" classes that promote and educate young people on how to become an entrepreneur.

EDA staff served on the committee to review the school systems' new comprehensive plan. EDA staff conducted "student interviews" teaching students the art of the job interview process.

EDA is host to the Local Economy and Government Day for the Chamber's annual Youth Leadership and Adult Leadership programs.

- ❖ **In 2013, the Chamber discontinued its Youth Leadership program.**
- **The EDA will establish a proactive business retention program that meets regularly with existing businesses and works to maintain a business climate that promotes continued investment and job growth.**
- **EDA serves on the Business Development Review Committee; serves on the Chamber's Small Business Committee that offers informational programs and takes regular surveys of business needs; meets regularly with industrial leaders in the 522N Corridor.**

Staff had hosted the Downtown Property Owners' Association committee, but attendance fell off in 2009. In 2009, EDA staff recommended that the downtown property owners create a professional, commercial property owners' association and provided a template of a successful commercial POA in Monterrey, California for reference.

- ❖ **EDA is currently serving on the Main Street Committee of the Chamber that intends to address some of these issues.**
- **EDA hosts quarterly luncheon meetings with the Plant Managers in the Industrial Corridor. These are well-received confidential meetings that address their very unique concerns.**

In 2012, the EDA made contact with the owners of the Afton Inn and forwarded that information to the Town Manager.

- EDA has recently made contact with the owners of the Afton Inn. The Town and EDA have signed a Memorandum of Agreement swapping ownership of the Town Hall to the EDA. The EDA is working with Afton Inn, LLC on a Land Exchange agreement that would allow the EDA to swap Town Hall for the Afton Inn for marketing and development (on behalf of the Town). Afton Inn, LLC will develop the property in accordance with Town Code and restrictive covenants. This is in process.

The Chamber's Small Business Committee is active and productive. EDA Staff serves on this committee and reports regularly to their Boards of Directors. This committee organizes lunch-time quick education seminars; social media seminars; Trade Fest; Entrepreneur Café and other business-oriented educational offerings.

- ✓ In October 2013, EDA helped organize the "Entrepreneur Café," at TradeFest. The Café hosted 50 attendees and three competitors for a winning prize valued at ~ \$2,000. EDA secured the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Miles Davis, Dean of the Byrd School of Business at Shenandoah University. It was a very successful event.

The EDA administers the Rural Business Enterprise Loan Program, which is a low-interest, subordinated debt program providing gap funding for Warren County businesses seeking to start up or expand. This program has provided more than \$1.6 million in start-up and expansion loans for 47 downtown businesses since 1997.

- In 2013, EDA made 5 small business loans from its Rural Business Enterprise Loan Program totaling \$52,000.

EDA staff continues to pursue federal and state grant opportunities to re-infuse this program.

- ✓ In 2013, EDA was awarded \$500,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the Intermediary Relending Program. This is another revolving loan program targeted to larger companies requiring greater sums borrowed at 1%, loaned to larger companies, and collected and repaid by EDA. EDA awaits settlement and disbursement of funds.

The EDA is researching the viability of small business incubator program that will provide office space, furniture, wired and wireless internet access, copy/fax machine, fully equipped kitchen, and a conference room for one monthly fee. In addition, the professional counseling services of SCORE volunteers will be provided to assist the entrepreneur in developing business plans, market analyses, financial systems, etc.

- ❖ Through considerable research, site visits, conferences, etc., the incubator program has been suspended. It was determined that most municipalities that host an incubator find the costs to be exorbitant and difficult to recover and/or reconcile. Many communities opt for and support college/university-based housing of business incubators.
- ✓ The EDA has initiated and completed a research project conducted by Shenandoah University Byrd School of Business interns, the "Regional Jobs Assessment Report," overseen by Dr. Miles Davis of Byrd School of Business, Shenandoah University, Mr.

Len Capelli, formerly with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Ms. Martha Shickle, Executive Director of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Planning Commission, Ms. Jennifer McDonald, Executive Director of the Economic Development Authority and Ms. Marla Taylor Jones, Director of Marketing and Business Development of the Economic Development Authority. The purpose of the Report is to determine unemployment numbers and skill sets for each jurisdiction in the Region and to assess what types of jobs would put the greatest number of people back to work.

- ✓ In addition, the EDA, in partnership with the Byrd School of Business intern program completed the Retail Study for Front Royal and Warren County that assembles comparables from two other Mid-Atlantic communities on viable retail/commercial businesses sited in areas with similar transportation and income characteristics.
- ✓ The “Front Royal-Warren County Virginia Retail Study” was delivered to Town Council and County Supervisors and is currently available on EDA’s web site, www.wceda.com, “Resources.”
 - ❖ *After ten very active years, the Technology Consortium discontinued its meetings and now certain members serve in an advisory capacity to the County’s broadband and cellular deployment project. At seventy-eight percent coverage, Warren County is among a few counties that have achieved greater than 50% broadband coverage ratios. Through a broadband consultant, the County is currently assessing the intention of local providers to continue expansion and/or the associated costs of deploying outside of the local providers resources. (See Attachment D.)*

The Industrial Roundtable meets quarterly and includes the participation of major industrial corridor companies, such as Toray, Family Dollar, DuPont, Ferguson Enterprises, SYSCO, Interchange, Via Satellite, Rappahannock Electric CoOp, Dominion Power and the Virginia Inland Port. The Roundtable discusses issues unique to existing industry sustainability, growth and prosperity.

- ✓ The Industrial Roundtable recently took a tour of the new Regional Jail facility sited adjacent to the industrial plants in the 522N Corridor.

The Business Development Review Committee meets monthly and includes participation from the Town, County, EDA, health department, Rappahannock Electric, and VDOT. The committee discusses potential prospects and the process and efficiencies for starting a business in Warren County/Front Royal.

- The EDA will identify supporting industries best suited for the community and launch targeted recruitment efforts.
- ✓ EDA staff, in partnership with Shenandoah University’s Byrd School of Business, engaged an intern to collect data on appropriate retail/commercial businesses that can be supported both in the Town and in the County in the long-term based upon local demographics and traffic counts. Report is published and available on EDA’s web

site: www.wceda.com, "Resources."

- ✓ EDA is designing a Facebook ad that will target a wide audience for a nominal cost.
- EDA will work with the SRI cluster analysis in refinement of targeted recruitment activities in support of existing industry.

EDA staff has met with representative from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership who has offered assistance in gathering data for targeted recruitment in these areas.

- EDA will work with the Town on recruitment of those businesses identified by Town leadership as meeting its visioning criteria.
- ✓ In May 2013, EDA engaged the services of Pennoni & Associates engineering firm to study and create a commercial overlay of the Southwest Royal Avenue Gateway. It was presented to Town Council at that time. (See Appendix E.) Still await final "visioning statement" from Town leadership.
- As Business Parks are developed, whether by private or public entities, the EDA will encourage the developer to integrate hiking, biking, and other appropriate recreational activities into the design.

County and Town are currently working on a hiking trail (The Royal Shenandoah Greenway) that will connect downtown Front Royal with the National Park, the river's edge, Luray Boat Landing, and the Conservancy Park at Avtex. The Royal Shenandoah Greenway will offer 4.3 miles of trails when completed. A hiking trail has now been incorporated into the Front Royal Golf Club, located in the 522N Corridor.

The Conservancy Park at Avtex remains one of the guiding designs for the business park and will establish a large walking park intended, eventually, to connect with the Luray Avenue park trail.

- The EDA will encourage existing industrial firms to identify appropriate suppliers and customers that would enhance existing businesses in Warren County. Recruitment efforts will focus on those industries.

EDA will work with the NSVRC and with business committees on collecting data to support this initiative.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The ability to accommodate the unique needs of information technology and telecommunications requirements will set communities apart in the recruitment area. Among highly competitive communities, broadband has become recognized as an essential utility and catalyst in transforming the local economy.

Broadband Access Goal

- **To make certain that affordable broadband telecom infrastructure is deployed in business location areas and residential neighborhoods using technology that positions Warren County as a competitive choice.**

Today, approximately 78% of Warren County (and all of Front Royal) are served with DSL and cable Internet. The Town of Front Royal completed its fiber network connecting all the departments of the local Town government. Century Link, in cooperation with Warren County Administrator, has completed deployment of DSL to all neighborhoods agreed upon between the two entities. Comcast has provided cable broadband to the Happy Creek Technology Park.

Shentel has completed tower construction for cell coverage in several “dark” sectors of the county. Warren County Public School system has built a state-of-the-art interactive technology platform for its classrooms and labs, and has completed a new fiber connection between all county schools.

Downtown Front Royal hosts a wireless network that serves many of the local cafes, and businesses there. And, there are three “Technology Zones” designated in the Town of Front Royal that offer incentives to technology firms locating there.

- ✓ **EDA and members of its Technology Consortium served on an advisory committee for the County that hired a consultant to evaluate needs/costs/resources/timelines for full deployment of broadband throughout the County. Currently, County leadership is assessing the ability of local providers to continue expansion and/or the associated costs of deploying outside of the local providers’ service area.**

Broadband Access Specific Objectives:

- **To continue to secure affordable, broadband Internet access to all business parks in Front Royal and Warren County. To continue to secure cellular coverage throughout the entirety of Warren County.**
- *In 2010 deployment of cable internet was completed by Comcast to all properties in Happy Creek Technology Park creating redundancy for data movement and storage and making it a true “technology park.”*

The EDA has worked closely with Sprint/Century Link, Comcast, Shentel, and various wireless providers to successfully deploy DSL and wireless broadband service to the Happy Creek Technology Park. DSL, T-1 and fiber service is currently available to the Avtex Business Park area.

Sprint (now Century Link) installed a fiber backbone along the 522N Corridor that provides high-speed internet service to all businesses and residences in that area.

Cellular coverage in Front Royal and Warren County continues to expand. Shentel has completed construction of a cell tower on Wakeman Mill Road (serving the fish hatchery, western county, Fork District).

- To secure affordable, broadband Internet access to subdivisions in the northeastern portion of Warren County and all subdivisions with fifty or more homes in the County.

Century Link (nee Sprint) completed work with the County Administrator in deployment of high-speed internet to neighborhoods in Shenandoah 1&2, High Ridge, Linden, Blue Mountain, Skyline Estates, Cabin-in-the-Woods, Dungadin, Limeton and more recently Browntown.

JOB CREATION GOALS

- To establish Warren County as a competitive alternative to the Washington Metropolitan area as a site for information technology company investments.
- To assist businesses in creating IT jobs and to reduce the time on the highways for Warren County commuters.
- To create a diverse economic base in Warren County that offers a variety of information technology and telecom employment opportunities.

JOB CREATION OBJECTIVES:

- To recruit a variety of IT companies that will create 100 new technology jobs by December 30, 2015.
- ❖ **In 2013, the EDA worked with an R&D prospect that was very interested in the Happy Creek Technology Park and Avtex site. Warren County made the short list for the project, but ultimately was not chosen due to reasons beyond EDA's control.**
- To recruit new IT companies to the Happy Creek Technology Zone.
- To recruit new IT companies to the Front Royal Technology Zone.
- ❖ **EDA Staff has learned that technology companies, and often R&D companies, require redundant broadband as well as redundant electricity provision. These types of companies also look for thriving cultural centers and outdoor recreational opportunities. There is some work to do to expand infrastructure that will attract these higher-paying companies.**

In 2009, EDA staff aggressively pursued two large IT companies. One chose to locate in North Carolina due to its inability to agree upon incentives offered by the State. The other company located in the "beltway" area of Northern Virginia, Fairfax County for its proximity to federal governmental agencies.

The Happy Creek Technology Park is currently home to one technology company: Visionary Optics. EDA will continue to focus recruitment opportunities there for technology businesses.

Recruitment of more sophisticated technology companies and jobs requires more than space and affordability; it requires a "culture." That "culture," is now emerging in our downtown

community: wireless cafes, finer dining experiences, wine and cheese shops, art walks, wide range of outdoor activities and new housing subdivisions. As this culture continues to emerge, recruitment of technology companies will become more likely. The availability of high-speed internet in residential areas is a critical component of the technology “culture” that will attract high-tech businesses and professionals.

In 2003, the EDA engaged The Pathfinders to perform a comprehensive skills and commuter information survey of Warren County residents. These results are no longer considered current and viable data. EDA compiled much of this data in 2012 in the “Regional Jobs Assessment Report”.

ACTION ITEMS:

- EDA will work with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Planning District Commission to update commuting pattern study and use information in marketing materials.
- ✓ EDA’s “Regional Jobs Assessment Report, 2012” updated commuter patterns for the Northern Shenandoah Valley, including Warren County.

Commuting patterns are part of the data provided in the Pathfinders Workforce Study.

- EDA will continue to convene its technology group with members to include business leaders and telecom providers.

The Technology Consortium was formed in Spring 2002 and included 50 technology professionals who live and/or work in Warren County. Regular meetings of the Consortium were discontinued in 2011 as the County hired a consultant to assess need and opportunity for completing broadband deployment. Members of the Consortium served in an advisory capacity to this project. Parts of the final report are attached here as Attachment D.

- EDA will perform a telecom capacity and deployment study that identifies the needs of evolving IT companies and predicts deployments needs.

EDA and members of its Technology Consortium serve on the program management team with the County Administrator and County Grants Coordinator that secured a \$25,000 Community Development Block Grant to collect and analyze this data.

- EDA will assist telecom providers in performing threshold studies to identify potential customers for affordable broadband connectivity.

EDA is working with the County on this project. (See note above.)

- EDA will research and identify Warren County’s technology skilled labor force.

The EDA will engage a firm to update data on a comprehensive skills and commuter information survey of Warren County residents.

- ✓ **EDA completed a “Regional Jobs Assessment Report” that has clearly defined these sectors.**
- **EDA will utilize the existing SRI cluster analysis to identify those firms that can maximize and leverage local strengths and resources.**
- **EDA will utilize SRI’s industry cluster analysis to identify those firms that can maximize and leverage local strengths and resources.**
- **EDA will continue to refine the unique incentives offered by its Technology Zones targeted to IT firms.**

The EDA, in conjunction with Town and County governments, has created three technology zones and one enterprise zone that provide unique incentives for IT firms. All of these zones have shown activity in pursuit and deliverance of incentives.

- ✓ **In February 2014, EDA approved Technology Zone benefits for a downtown videographer’s company. Recommendations have been sent to Town/County for approval of benefits.**

The EDA maintains a database on its web site that defines all available industrial, commercial, retail and technology-fitted space as data is made available by attendant brokers.

In April of 2010, amendments to the Downtown (Front Royal) Technology Zone were established to decrease the qualifying thresholds for small technology businesses locating there. The amendments were analyzed by the Technology Consortium and recommended to the Town and County governing bodies in an effort to keep the incentives in line with the types of businesses seeking a viable downtown in which to conduct business.

- **As the EDA develops industrial parks and buildings, conduit and other infrastructure will be installed during construction to accommodate telecom infrastructure innovations.**

In 2009-2010, the EDA installed Comcast cable and high-speed internet throughout its Happy Creek Technology Park. There are currently two providers of high-speed internet at the Park enabling redundancy to those companies requiring data download/upload, security and back-up systemization.

- **EDA is currently reviewing bandwidth infrastructure within the Town and County.**
- **EDA will establish and maintain proactive partnerships with local colleges and universities.**

EDA enjoys an ongoing relationship with Lord Fairfax Community College, the Small Business Development Center and the Workforce Solutions office. JMU conducts a professional development distance learning center at Skyline High School for Warren County teachers.

For the past three years, the EDA has partnered with Shenandoah University in its day-long business symposium addressing economy and business. These symposia are very well attended and well received.

EDA has partnered with Shenandoah University on its regional jobs assessment report and has completed the process of partnering on a retail study for the community.

COMMERCE, SERVICE, & RETAIL

RECRUITMENT GOAL

- To encourage and accommodate a diverse mix of retail and service business investments that provide Warren County residents a broad variety of service and product options and that increases the business tax base.
 - ✓ EDA has been actively involved in the recruitment of: Marriott Courtyard, Choceet's Chocolates, Popeye's, Zinga Frozen Yogurt, Downhome Comfort Bakery, The Rusty Den, Dairy Queen, Chick-fil-a, and Aldi.

OBJECTIVES

- To work with the Town and County in their identification of retail and service companies whose investment threshold criteria match local demographics.
 - ✓ EDA published its "Retail Study" in June 2013 defining those businesses that the community (both Town and County) can realistically support based upon demographics and traffic counts.
 - ✓ EDA engaged Pennoni & Associates engineering firm to design a "commercial overlay" for the Southwest Royal Avenue Gateway Corridor. This information was created to assist the Town in its "visioning" process.

The EDA worked closely with the developers of the Hampton Inn that opened in July 2002.

EDA assembled (for the developers) properties and compiled all relevant data and zoning information for those properties deemed appropriate for retail development in the 522N Corridor. There are approximately 40 new retail, food service, banks, and big box stores located in those two retail centers, with tax revenues being realized by Town and County governments. Crooked Run II (another retail center) is slated for construction in 2015.

- Proactively maintain an outreach program to property owners, developers, and brokers to make certain that all appropriate sites are listed on the EDA web database.

EDA will refine its communication with brokers, property owners, and developers on inquiries for commercial and industrial space. EDA will use this system to post site and building listing updates.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage the Town of Front Royal and County of Warren to sustain a pro-business philosophy and a high level of customer service in all segments of their operations, particularly in permitting, planning and zoning.

ACTION ITEMS

- The EDA will encourage businesses to employ Warren County residents.
- ✓ **EDA has worked closely with Zachry Construction and Dominion Power in hiring locally as often as possible. This partnership has worked very well to the benefit of the community.**
- The EDA will identify regionally based retail companies and encourage the establishment of a Front Royal location.
- ✓ **EDA has identified and communicated with a number of commercial/retail companies and has assisted nine new businesses in locating in Front Royal/Warren County.**
- The EDA will maintain close working relationships with property owners, developers, and brokers to keep list of available sites current.

The EDA has refined its prospect inquiry broadcast system to alert brokers, property owners, and developers to inquiries for commercial and industrial space. The system is also used to request sites and building listing updates.

EDA is ramping up its networking and marketing tools, participation in regional marketing efforts, and communication with synergistic agencies.

- EDA will work with the Town or County planning offices to facilitate or assist in the creation of site design and layout plans that will illustrate how sites are best suited for projects.
- ✓ **EDA contracted with Pennoni & Associates to engineer an infrastructure design for the 162 acres at Avtex that are approved for redevelopment**
- ✓ **EDA partnered with Pennoni & Associated to engineer a commercial/retail overly design for the Southwest Royal Avenue Gateway in the Town to assist with “visioning” process.**
- The EDA will link the EDA web page to the Town of Front Royal and County of Warren Zoning Ordinance and regulatory web pages.

- ✓ **The EDA's web site has undergone updates and refinement with links to the Town of Front Royal, County of Warren, Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Virginia Department of Business Assistance.**

EDA designed a "Business License" Flow Chart and disseminated copies to Town and County for business customers.

Both entities have published easy-to-navigate web sites with online codes, ordinances and planning/zoning regulations. The newly updated EDA web site provides links to these sites.

HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

GOALS

- **Create a business environment that encourages a diverse mix of restaurant and hotel options for local residents, business, and tourist related travelers.**
- ✓ **EDA assisted in the location of Marriott/Courtyard hotel; Blue Wing Frog restaurant and carry-out; Zinga Frozen Yogurt; Chokeet's Candy Store; IHOP; to Front Royal/Warren County.**
- **EDA is an active participant in the Chamber's Tourism Committee which met last year and participated in Tourism Charet with the VA Tourism Corporation. This exercise helped delineate our tourism assets and marketing needs. EDA will continue as an active participant in this Committee.**
 - ✓ **In 2010, EDA presented to Town Council language for establishing "Tourism Zones" incentive program designed to help businesses plan and market more effectively to the tourism component of customers. There is no activity on this incentive to date.**

EDA located "Joe's Steakhouse," an upscale dining establish that invested more than \$1 million in renovations and creation of 50+ new jobs.

J's Gourmet has expanded into fine dining opportunities with the opening of "Apartment 2G;" it and Soul Mountain, which has been in operation for four years, were celebrated in Winchester's "Taste of the Town." Establishment of the Daily Grind and the Lucky Star on Main Street; Establishment of The South Street Grille; Hampton Inn was completed in 2002.

The Holiday Inn, a 124-room hotel with 26 suites, conference facilities for 400 and 5 meeting rooms; spa, Houlihan's restaurant; TGI Friday's; Applebee's; Cracker Barrel; Panda Express; Lido's; Starbucks; Los Potrillos Checkers; Mikado, Fosters Grille, McAlisters, Tropical Smoothie, are all located and conducting business on the 340/522N Commercial sector.

Meals tax was voted in for Warren County in 2004, Industrial Bonds were issued; in 2007 a new high school was built; the Junior High School was renovated into a second high school; the former High School was renovated into the Warren County Middle School; the middle school was renovated into Warren County offices housing Meals on Wheels, Department of Social Services, Health Department and others. Bing Crosby Stadium was renovated and enlarged; construction was completed on the Samuels Public Library's new location.

- **Create a variety of functional and attractive public access points to the Shenandoah River with adequate parking and amenities.**

Luray Avenue Boat Landing and picnic area were completed in 2009. Both the Luray Avenue site and the Front Royal Golf Club provide walking trails and river access.

Andy Guest State Park offers Shenandoah River access points. Part of the Avtex Conservancy Park vision is to redevelop the Luray Avenue river access; upon completion, the Avtex Conservancy Park will provide several river point accesses.

- **The EDA will continue to work cooperatively with Town and County in implementing hospitality/tourism recruitment strategies, in improving its Gateways and in supporting tourism initiatives.**
- ✓ **EDA recently entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Town of Front Royal that would give ownership of the Town Hall to the EDA. The EDA would then swap the Town Hall for the Afton Inn (at Main Street and Royal Avenue) according to a land exchange agreement between the EDA and Afton Inn, LLC and begin marketing the property to potential developers. Town Hall ownership would transfer to the Afton Inn, LLC for retail/commercial development per Town Code and restrictive covenants.**

EDA Staff served on a Town Tourism Committee created to explore the Virginia Main Street Program and the Community's readiness to apply for and invest in the application process. The conclusion of the Committee is that the Downtown Front Royal organization is not prepared to fulfill the objectives of the program at this time. It was recommended that more organization was required to meet these objectives, and that the Committee will assist in the application preparation process.

OBJECTIVES

- **The EDA will encourage the development of various public access points to the Shenandoah River.**

The Front Royal Golf Club (a 9-hole, community golf range owned and operated by Warren County Parks and Recreation) provides access to the Shenandoah River. The Front Royal Dog Park was built adjacent to the Luray Avenue Landing, creating two newly upgraded river access points. Rockland Park planning is underway.

The comprehensive design for the Conservancy Park at Avtex was developed nearly ten years ago, and has proposed various public access points to the Shenandoah River.

- EDA Staff will explore opportunities to develop an engineering plan for the Conservancy Park.
- ✓ In 2013, EDA was awarded a \$50,000 Brownfields Assistance Grant by the VA Department of Environmental Quality and Economic Development Partnership. With those funds, EDA contracted with Pennoni & Associates who performed an engineering study and design for future infrastructure deployment at the Business Park side of the site.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The EDA will request that the County government fully fund the operations of the EDA and request that the Town and County continue to jointly fund the capital expenditures according to the current funding formula in order to effectively implement recruitment of service and hospitality businesses.
 - ✓ In FY 2013-14, the Town discontinued funding EDA and the County assumed 100% of the Town's funding. The County currently funds 25% of EDA's Operating Budget.

ACTION ITEMS

- The EDA will prepare and maintain a database of all appropriately sited, zoned, and serviced sites.
 - ✓ The database is active and updated on a regular basis.

With the development of Riverton Commons and Crooked Run retail centers, many franchises have located in North Warren County.

The EDA will continue its partnership with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission and will work to obtain a current traffic study, and completed its "Retail Study" in June 2013.

- The EDA will highlight the natural beauty of the area in marketing materials.
 - ✓ All of EDA's marketing materials, both hard copy and digital, include visuals that point up the intrinsic beauty of Front Royal and Warren County. Additionally, they promote availability of canoeing, hiking, biking, camping and other outdoor activities.

AVTEX REDEVELOPMENT

The Avtex Redevelopment Project is complex and involves aspects of all key result areas that the EDA has determined that the project be addressed separately. Many of the identified business types will

be targeted for recruitment to the site when developed. It is being designed as a mixed-use commercial, light industrial, recreational, conservancy, and office site.

GOALS

- To redevelop the former Avtex site into a multi-use site that includes a competitive business park, alternative energy companies, recreational parks, public Shenandoah River access and competition level soccer fields.
- **EDA is currently working with FMC Corporation to organize a “Community Event” to celebrate the remediation of the business park portion of the site. Included in the event are invitations to known brownfields developers. EDA staff will design a formal marketing packet targeted to those developers that will be disseminated at the event.**

EDA has revamped the marketing materials for that parcel. EDA continues to research companies with experience in brown field and superfund development; most of the developable parcels are slated to be signed off on by FMC and EPA in 2013.

Five out of seven soccer fields have been constructed on land donated to the County by the EDA. They are in operation now. A refreshment stand has been constructed there, as well. In addition, a 15,000 square foot skate board park was constructed there and opened to the public on June 5, 2010.

- To finalize a “mixed use” zoning ordinance with the Town.
- To recruit a diverse base of companies to the business park that pay a minimum of \$15 per hour and offer a benefit package equal to at least 25 percent of the base wage rate.
- **The Easements (or Restrictive Covenants) are near finalization by DOJ with sign-off from all essential parties and stakeholders. Once the Easements are finalized and EDA has knowledge of restricted uses at the site, Staff will move forward in aggressive marketing mode.**
- To research the viability of alternative energy companies that will promote a healthy environment on the once contaminated site. These companies should be considered an important component of the redevelopment efforts in order to ensure the safe and clean future of the site, and will offer high paying jobs and tax investment.
- To develop the site where the business park, soccer fields, river access, hiking trails, and are fully integrated so residents and employees can experience all aspects of the project.
- **In process and ongoing.**

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

- Work to fully lease the Avtex Administration Building at Kendrick Lane.
- ✓ **All available space is fully leased.**

Rehabilitation of the Avtex Administration building is complete, and EDA offices were moved in May 2003. EDA currently has solid, reliable tenants in Space A; in November, 2011, a 15-year lease was executed and the tenants now occupy Space E.

- Work with County officials in completion of the two remaining soccer fields to be constructed.

Construction of five soccer fields was completed in 2005, and they have been in use by local soccer league since then.

- Continue to work with the Congressional delegation to secure the abatement and remediation.
- **EDA is currently working with stakeholders and EPA in amending the restrictive covenants imposed on the Avtex Site in order to lift limitations on development and establish realistic industrial/commercial development options for the Economic Development Authority.**

Congressman Frank Wolf, Senator John Warner and Senator George Allen played a critical role in obtaining additional federal funds as remediation efforts there are finalized.

Work is complete on the clean-up activities; one sector of the site is now being re-inhabited with butterflies, salamanders, deer, voles and other species.

In early 2010, Congressman Wolf called a meeting of EDA, FMC remediation team and Town officials to discuss the status of remediation efforts, any obstacles and how to bridge those gaps. He and his staff have requested regular updates on the status of the site.

- ❖ **Due to redistricting that affected Warren County, its new Congressional official is Congressman Bob Goodlatte. Congressman Goodlatte has been briefed on the Avtex Site project and is an enthusiastic advocate for the community.**
- Work with County Parks & Recreation on establishing hiking trail designs and river access at the Conservancy Park.
- Work with the County on securing funding for Conservancy Park trails.

BROADLY DEFINED MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES AND TOWN/COUNTY COLLABORATIONS:

- Encourage Town officials to design a commercial/retail/industrial “vision” for the Town of Front Royal. EDA will work with the Town to recruit appropriate businesses once that “vision” has been completed and/or approved.
- ❖ **The Town’s “visioning” project is in process and ongoing. EDA provided language on incentive zones to the Town leadership. EDA provided a commercial overlay for the Southwest Royal Avenue gateway sector. EDA provided Town Council with a copy of its 2013 “Retail Study.”**
- Work with Town on applying for Community Development Block Grant from Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for deployment of infrastructure at the Royal Phoenix site.
- ✓ **EDA provided all of the relevant information on CDBG process to Town Manager and encouraged application. No word on this project.**
- Work with County officials to identify land parcels that are suitable for industrial development, and to assess the need for existing space and construct buildings appropriate for industrial use in preparation for Panama Canal expansion and related distribution opportunities.
- **This process is underway and ongoing.**
- Work with Town and County officials on the development of workforce housing.
 - **Currently in process.**
- Work with Town and County officials on developing business/manufacturing incubator(s) in the community or in the region.
- ❖ **Project has been suspended.**

ATTACHMENT A: ENGINEERING DESIGN FOR LEACH RUN PARKWAY

ATTACHMENT B: PAD SITE DESIGN, LOT 6, STEPHENS INDUSTRIAL PARK

ATTACHMENT C: PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR TOWN INCENTIVE ZONES

ATTACHMENT D: PORTIONS OF WARREN COUNTY TECHNOLOGY REPORT, 2013

ATTACHMENT E: COMMERCIAL OVERLAY SOUTHWEST ROYAL AVENUE GATEWAY