



Source: Albemarle County Community Development 2011

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### GOAL:

**Albemarle's economy will be diverse, strong, and sustainable, and retain and benefit County citizens, existing businesses, and new local ventures.**

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## VISION:

*Albemarle County envisions a community with abundant natural, rural, historic, and scenic resources • healthy ecosystems • active and vibrant development areas • a physical environment that supports healthy lifestyles • a thriving economy • and exceptional educational opportunity for present and future generations.*

### **Relationship to the Vision**

*Albemarle County is a great place to live and do business. Albemarle recognizes the critical vibrancy and stability created by a thriving business sector, and works to support the success of existing businesses and new enterprises that provide employment advancement, capital investment, and workforce opportunities across a broad spectrum. The County's diverse economy helps fund an excellent educational system. Its rural heritage, scenic beauty, and natural and historic resources make it an attractive place for agriculture, forestry, and agritourism. New business, residential and industrial growth is directed to the Development Areas where investment in infrastructure has been made, and mixed-use communities help promote healthy lifestyles. The County continues to improve its economy by helping businesses grow and by retaining the distinctive character of both the Rural Area and the Development Areas.*

## Economic Development

### **Introduction**

The County's economic development activities are intended to provide local citizens with an improved standard of living and enhanced quality of life. By creating and sustaining a high quality, diversified economic environment, residents can enjoy improved job opportunities, competitive wages, and workforce development opportunities, as well as a wide variety of business and commercial services.

The County's commitment to education, infrastructure, and natural resource protection form the cornerstone of Albemarle's quality of life and its business growth. The County strives to manage growth in a manner that best uses its infrastructure dollars and protects and preserves both the area's abundant natural resources and industries that depend on those natural resources. Albemarle's commitment to economic development is accomplished along with and within the framework of the rest of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Being the home of a highly regarded university, the County and the City of Charlottesville have an above-average labor force participation rate and an above-average number of part-time workers. The University of Virginia (UVA) is a strong employer which offers great potential for both associated scientific research and development and entrepreneurial spin-off. The County's economic development efforts recognize and leverage the entrepreneurial energy and start-up possibilities incubated by UVA. The long-term positive relationship between the County and UVA enables the two entities to work in close partnership to maximize commercialization and technology transfer opportunities. Other major employers continue to provide employment stability and diversity.

The County recognizes its role as a driver in the regional economy because of the number of jobs associated with UVA, the defense industry, and the financial sector. Along with the City of Charlottesville, the County is a member of the Central

Virginia Partnership for Economic Development and sees the economic objectives of other localities in the region as complementary to, not competitive with, the County.

As part of its efforts to grow the economy, the County will continue to work with residents, new enterprises, and firms seeking to expand their businesses. In particular, the County intends to focus efforts on strengthening identified target industry clusters that support or enhance the economic strengths of the County, as well as have the best outlook for success. The County's economic development approach steers energy and resources towards enterprises in the industry clusters that have been identified as most likely to succeed based on the County's assets. These industry clusters are Bioscience and Medical Devices, Business & Financial Services, Information Technology and Defense Security, and Agribusiness/Food Processing.

**Objective 1: Promote economic development activities that help build on the County's assets while recognizing distinctions between expectations for the Development Areas and the Rural Area.**

Albemarle County's vision for the future includes a thriving economy along with other key features. A healthy and growing economy is important to ensure vibrant Development Areas as well as active agricultural and forestal activities. Preserved natural, scenic and historic areas help promote tourism.

The County's many assets include its natural and historic resources, schools, businesses and industry, homes, recreational programs, and especially its people. One of the ways in which the County helps businesses to succeed is designating areas for employment and providing infrastructure to support new business growth. In 2010, the County adopted an Economic Vitality Action Plan that has been the guide for strategic actions to help grow its economy. The Action Plan recently evolved into an Economic Development Program that will work together with other County activities to simulate and maintain Albemarle's healthy economy.

**Strategy 1a:** Promote new employment activities in the Development Areas and encourage developers of commercial and industrial projects to incorporate the Neighborhood Model principles.

The Development Areas are intended to be dynamic, vital areas for residents to live, work, and play. They are supported by roads, utilities, sidewalks, and transit which can enhance business growth. [The Neighborhood Model](#) principles are intended to help create a positive economic climate that supports active commercial and employment areas, environmentally friendly businesses, professional offices, restaurants, and entertainment uses. Employment areas and commercial centers should be located close enough to residents so that they can walk or bicycle to work and for recreation. The Neighborhood Model also encourages new development that provides housing, support services, and multimodal transportation options for County residents. Living and working in close proximity benefits employers and employees. Compact mixed-use areas are usually preferred to large single-use "campus-style" employment areas.

**Livability Project**

Charlottesville and Albemarle County recognize the necessity of vibrant regional economic relationships and will work together toward a strong, diversified economy creating stability and opportunities for advancement in our communities.

*In collaboration with the City, the County should:*

- Continue to coordinate staff efforts to support regional economic development, including collaboration with the University of Virginia.
- Improve opportunities for employment centers that are connected to community amenities, housing, and services in the City and in the County's Development Areas.
- Coordinate with education partners – elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as PVCC and CATEC – to provide training for locally based jobs.
- Support a range of businesses in identified target industry areas (bioscience & medical, business & financial, information technology & defense, and agribusiness).
- Encourage land use practices and policies that promote vibrancy in the local economy through cultural industries, including heritage tourism, entertainment, agritourism, local food, art, and entertainment.
- Improve opportunities for entrance and re-entry into, and advancement within the workforce by encouraging a diversity of training and placement programs designed to help all citizens, regardless of education or income, secure and retain jobs in our community.
- Identify opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurship and develop policies that encourage innovation.

**Strategy 1b:** Promote agriculture, forestry, and agribusiness enterprises in the Rural Area that help support the Rural Area goals for a strong agricultural and forestal economy.

The Rural Area plays a key role in maintaining a diverse agricultural and forestal economy. Locally produced agricultural products include beef, pork, chicken, freshwater shrimp and duck. As described in the [Rural Area Chapter](#), farming also includes hay and grain production, raising flowers for sale, and tree farming. Albemarle is known for its apple and peach orchards, but raspberries, strawberries, pears, and plums are also raised in the County. Other products include mushroom production, goat milk and goat milk products, herbs and herb teas, eggs, and honey, as well as many others. In years past, agricultural production has required large tracts of land, but many of the County's specialty products can be grown on smaller tracts.

**Strategy 1c:** Promote tourism that helps preserve scenic, historic, and natural resources.

Tourism brings visitors to enjoy the County's scenic rural landscapes and also to spend money in the County. Rural Area businesses that showcase the County's rich and diverse rural, agrarian, and historical resources provide sustainable economic development opportunities. In so doing, these businesses also help preserve, protect, and in some cases restore the Rural Area characteristics that make Albemarle County a desirable destination. Tourism and agribusiness opportunities are discussed in more detail in the [Rural Area Chapter of this Plan](#). Recent State legislation has made large gatherings for commercial events possible at farm breweries and other bona fide agricultural operations. Events can help promote tourism and provide for enjoyment of scenic and natural resources; however, the County needs to ensure that the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Rural Area are protected when large events occur.

**Strategy 1d:** Promote a balance of jobs to housing.

Jobs and housing have a strong relationship in a community. ([For information on housing, see Chapter 9.](#)) Ideally, the number of houses in the locality is sufficient to provide housing for the number of employed individuals in that locality. Workers need to be able to find housing at prices, sizes, and locations that enable them to live in the area in which they work. A generally accepted target range for the jobs to housing ratio is 1.3 jobs per house to 1.7 jobs per house. At the end of June 2013, this ratio was 1.23 jobs per house. Provision of additional jobs would help to create a better jobs-housing balance for the community. The provision of affordable housing within or close to the major employers is also needed to help provide this balance.

**Strategy 1e:** Encourage all businesses to adopt environmentally sustainable business practices.

Natural resource protection and conservation, including improving water quality, preserving water quantity, and reducing air pollution are established Albemarle County priorities. Encouraging sustainable business practices helps to further these priorities. The County is a sponsor of the [Better Business Challenge](#), a friendly competition among local businesses to integrate sustainable initiatives into day-to-day business. The challenge centers on sustainability goals in the areas of Energy, Transportation, Water, Waste, Purchasing, and Leadership.



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Because so many of the County's businesses depend on the scenic and natural resources of the County, preservation of those resources helps create a sustainable economy.

**Objective 2: Create a broader economic development program to assist the County in its endeavors to stimulate job creation, capital investments, and tax revenues.**

As an outgrowth of the 2004 Crozet Master Plan, Albemarle County hired its first business development professional in 2006 to help assist in business expansion efforts throughout the County. The role of that individual increased when the County adopted its Economic Vitality Action Plan in 2010. The County created an Office of Community and Business Partnerships to carry out the Action Plan. Since that time, staff has worked diligently to support existing and expanding businesses, collaborate with other communities and the State, promote and assist in entrepreneurship activities, and help promote workforce development. The actions that were part of the Economic Vitality Action Plan were completed in 2013, and the completed plan can be seen in the [Reference Documents](#).

Recently, it has become essential to create a broader more encompassing economic development program. This program will provide for a higher level of support and assistance for existing business retention and expansion and will be able to devote considerable assistance to new business startups. It is intended to help with workforce development, support agribusiness, and deal with business attraction. These activities will help Albemarle's economy grow and stay strong.

**Strategy 2a:** Support efforts of the recently hired Economic Development Director to help expand the County's existing economic development program.

Part of a successful Economic Development office includes having a Director and staff support to help achieve the County's economic development goals. The Director is expected to help the County focus and direct all economic development efforts of the office. An important first step will be for the new Director will be a review of this Chapter in the Comprehensive Plan to make recommendations for any needed changes for helping the County achieve its goals. In addition to the other strategies identified in this Plan, the Director will also need to help establish reasonable measures for success, if those measures are not already contained in the Plan. The Economic Development Director will lead efforts formerly undertaken by the County's Office of Community and Business Partnerships.

**Strategy 2b:** Continue to provide support to the business community and assistance for business retention and expansion.

For the last nine years, the County's Office of Community and Business Partnerships has provided support to the business community through an open door policy of communication and through the exchange of information and concerns. It has served a vital role in helping local businesses to expand, assisting new target industries to locate in Albemarle County, providing agricultural assistance and promoting tourism development. Some of the work has included discussions with the business community about improvements to the County's development review process and procedures. Other activities have included business roundtables on issues affecting local industry. For example, the County was able to hold seminars to help farm winery owners understand State and local regulations that can enhance their business opportunities. Additional efforts have included providing information on grants and loans for businesses. The County's Economic Development Program should continue these activities.

**Strategy 2c:** Monitor results of implementation of the County’s Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan in relation to education, housing, day care, transportation, and other areas to determine if barriers experienced by the local work force, particularly those with the greatest needs are being addressed.

Encouraging the growth of jobs that will provide employment for Albemarle County residents is an essential part of the County’s economic development efforts. In addition to career-ladder professional jobs, support jobs will be generated by the target industries. Workers in support jobs often have greater needs for affordable housing, day care, and transportation than workers in professional positions. The County’s efforts should include helping to address barriers to education, housing, day care, and transportation.

**Objective 3: Provide diversified economic opportunities that benefit County citizens and existing businesses by basing policy decisions on efforts that support and enhance the strengths of the County.**

A diverse economy is one that has a broad range of business activities, offers a wide range of job opportunities across the full spectrum of skill levels, and helps to provide a stable tax base. To do this, the County promotes selected target industries based on available workforce, alignment with community preferences, and growth potential as well as strong multiplier effects that create jobs across a broad spectrum of skill sets.

The selected target industries are:

- *Bioscience and Medical Devices*
- *Business & Financial Services*
- *Information Technology and Defense & Security*
- *Agribusiness and Food Processing*

Complementary targets are:

- *Health Services*
- *Arts, Design, and Sports & Media*

The following strategies outline some of the ways in which the County can help to diversify the economy through assistance to target industries.

**Strategy 3a:** Continue to use the 2012 Target Industry Study to guide decisions for economic development.

In conjunction with the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (formerly known as the Thomas Jefferson Partnership for Economic Development), the County conducted a study on the businesses and industries that best match and reflect the County’s strengths. These businesses and industries were identified as being able to provide the largest range of employment opportunities to local citizens. They are the specific businesses for which assistance is provided and priority is given in review of development proposals and decision-making for rezoning and special use permits. These target industries provide a spectrum of jobs across all skill sets, education levels, and incomes. They also create a multiplier effect that boosts job creation across the local economy including support services. A copy of the [Target Industry Study](#) may be found in the Reference Documents.

**Strategy 3b:** Continue to provide assistance to target industries and businesses that provide jobs in bioscience and medical devices.

Employers and entrepreneurs in bioscience and medical devices have unique opportunities for relationships with UVA and similar research and development firms. These industries can take advantage of the education and skills of many of Albemarle County's residents. Typically, the industries are high-tech, clean, and high paying. The County should continue to provide business assistance on available sites and other opportunities for this target industry and encourage a mixed-use setting where appropriate.

**Strategy 3c:** Continue to provide assistance to target industries in business and financial services, especially with information on location opportunities.

Business and financial services firms are also important to the region and provide jobs requiring a range of skill sets. Typically, these businesses can find locations on commercially zoned properties and in mixed-use areas. They can be major employers that help create active neighborhood centers. Business and financial uses can easily be made compatible with nearby residential uses. As part of its economic development assistance program, County staff should continue to provide information on areas with the appropriate zoning or where vacant buildings exist that can support new business and financial service opportunities.

**Strategy 3d:** Continue to provide assistance to target industries providing jobs in the arts, design, sports, and media.

The arts, design, sports, and media employers are complementary industry clusters identified in the Target Industry Study. Businesses and industries in this cluster provide jobs in specialized sectors that use the skills of many area residents. County economic development staff should continue to provide information on ways these companies can successfully locate and operate in Albemarle County.

**Strategy 3e:** Continue to provide assistance to target industries and businesses that provide jobs in information technology.

Information technology jobs can take advantage of the education and skills of many of Albemarle County's residents. Typically, these businesses are high-tech, clean, and high paying. County economic development staff should provide business assistance on available sites and other opportunities for this target industry and encourage them to locate in a mixed-use setting where appropriate.

**Strategy 3f:** Work directly with federal officials to encourage military base location and expansion that is consistent with County policies.

Rivanna Station is a federal research installation located in the Places29 Area north of the Rivanna River adjacent to Route 29 North. It is an important center that is poised to grow as military operations are decentralized from the Washington, D.C. area. Support for this key economic driver is important for local as well as national interest. Ongoing dialogue with officials at Rivanna Station and with Fort Belvoir Army Base, which oversees the Rivanna Station, will ensure that national security interests are protected and help increase the ease with which new development occurs for Rivanna Station.

**Strategy 3g:** Continue to provide support and assistance to local businesses where agriculture is a main component.

Cattle raising, dairy farming, and orchard production are dominant agricultural activities in the County, along with tree farming for timber production. The equine industry is another important part of the rural economy, with Albemarle County ranking among the top six localities in terms of job creation, value-added impacts, and total sales, according to a March 2011 Weldon Cooper Study of the “Economic Impacts of the Horse Industry in Virginia.” However, two of the fastest growing sectors in agriculture are farm wineries and specialty crop production. The number of farm wineries grew from 9 to 31 over a few short years, and almost two dozen specialty crops are grown or produced in the County

Support from the County has been important to the success of many of these smaller agricultural enterprises. Continued support and assistance should be provided.

**Strategy 3h:** Establish a proactive rural support program that provides assistance to the local agricultural community and that includes an ongoing dialogue with farm industry stakeholders.

For over nine years, the Comprehensive Plan has contained a strategy to create a rural support program to help connect farmers with technical resources, such as those provided by Piedmont Virginia Community College, the Piedmont Environmental Council, and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS). To date, such a program has not received funding. Because of the importance of agriculture to the County’s economy, such a program should be established. In addition to existing farmers, services from a rural support program could be provided to landowners interested in leasing farm land. Another aspect of this program would be participation in or commissioning of a study on the impact of agriculture to Albemarle County’s economy. It is important to understand what role agribusiness plays in the County’s economy in order to determine how this economic sector may be best supported, encouraged, and promoted. The activities of this program will need to be coordinated with the Economic Development Director and staff involved in Rural Area activities recommended in the [Rural Area Chapter](#).

**Strategy 3i:** Acknowledge and support the work of companies that help achieve sustainability goals for the County.

The County endeavors to achieve sustainability in many of its practices—from encouraging land developers to preserve environmental resources to reducing energy usage in County office buildings and vehicles. As seen in [Chapter 12](#), the County is committed to addressing environmental responsibility in the design and development of government facilities and in creating facilities that protect ecosystems, enhance biodiversity, improve air and water quality, reduce solid waste, and conserve natural resources. Existing employers and new businesses and industry that have this same commitment and practices should be recognized and supported by the County.

**Objective 4: Ensure that there is sufficient land to accommodate future business and industrial growth, and plan for infrastructure to serve employment areas where these businesses are located.**

One of the obligations of localities during the development of a comprehensive plan is to ensure that sufficient land area is available for future commercial and industrial growth. Properties for business and

industrial growth need to be identified and utilized for employment activities. It is also important to factor in growth opportunities from redevelopment of existing underutilized parcels.

**Strategy 4a:** Provide a strategic assessment of properties available for existing business expansion, start-up industries, and desirable locations for target industries. Continue to assess the quality of the areas designated for business and industry to ensure that there is land for business and industrial growth with parcels of suitable size, topography, location, and infrastructure.

As part of the background work for this Comprehensive Plan update, an analysis of land area available for industrial and office/R&D/flex/light industrial uses was completed, which can be found in the [Reference Documents](#). The analysis showed that overall acreage is sufficient for future needs, but much of the available land is in small parcels and lacks the needed roads and utilities to be marketable to new and expanding target industries. Additional work is needed to develop a list of available properties and to ensure that parcels are large enough for targeted businesses and are in advantageous locations. Consideration should be given to investing in infrastructure to serve industrially zoned vacant parcels. More information on this strategy may be found in the [Development Areas Chapter](#).

**Strategy 4b:** Encourage development of business and industrial uses in the Development Areas on appropriately zoned land and consider proactively rezoning land to allow for light industrial uses that have been identified on master plans.

Business and industrial development on vacant parcels within the Development Areas, either in nonresidential or mixed-use areas, makes employment opportunities more accessible to a larger number of residents, helping to reduce transportation costs and commute times. The County could assist in providing future opportunities by studying locations of vacant land and identifying ways to make those locations more suitable or desirable for business and industry. In recent years, the County has been working to expand opportunities for industrial development. Initially the County focused on zoning text amendments to broaden opportunities for industrial uses in industrial and commercial zoning districts. Currently, the County is considering proactively rezoning property. Having properly zoned land that aligns with Comprehensive Plan land use designations allows for a faster, easier location process for new businesses and industries, creating a more desirable climate for business recruitment. Rezoning areas that have been identified as desirable locations for new businesses and industries will help ensure that new development adheres to County priorities and policies. Where development would take place on undeveloped infill sites, it will be important to work with nearby and adjoining property owners to ensure compatibility. More information on promoting compatibility with infill development may be found in the [Development Areas Chapter](#).

**Strategy 4c:** Explore opportunities to assist with redevelopment of underutilized commercial and industrial zoned properties.

Redevelopment is an important part of the County's [Neighborhood Model](#) to help make the Development Areas more attractive and inviting. As indicated in the [Development Areas Chapter](#), the County should look for ways to encourage and assist property owners in achieving greater utility from already zoned properties or properties designated for commercial or industrial use. Techniques could include developing incentives for redevelopment to help create jobs and accessible centers for employment. Most of these properties have infrastructure in place to support enhanced use as well as to reduce pressure to expand the Development Areas boundaries into the Rural Area. Underperforming

shopping centers are specific sites where redevelopment to support light industrial activities could benefit office, research and development, and very light industrial uses.

## **Objective 5: Continue to work with regional economic development partners to improve the County's economy.**

For the past several years, Albemarle County has participated in the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (The Partnership) and has worked with the City of Charlottesville, UVA, and the State to find ways to enhance the local economy. As part of the Livability Project, the City and County affirmed the importance of regional cooperation by recommending joint goals for economic development. The following strategies outline how regional cooperation activities will help reinforce the County's economic development activities:

**Strategy 5a:** Retain membership in the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development and maintain cooperation with the City of Charlottesville, the TJPDC, and other jurisdictions in the region, UVA, and PVCC, along with State partners such as the Virginia Economic Development Partnership.

The County joined regional economic development efforts in 2008 to begin working on ways to promote economic development cooperatively and proactively. Aspects of that cooperation have included and need to continue to include:

- Developing a coordinated economic data base;
- Continuing discussion among the TJPDC jurisdictions about working and shopping patterns, wage levels, job stability, workforce development needs, housing affordability, public services, tax burdens, and other topics which relate to local and regional economic development policy;
- Distributing information about development opportunities in the region to those who request it;
- Promoting regional workforce 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;
- Continuing initiatives such as the high school technology tour;
- Developing regional transportation initiatives (trails, rail, road, transit, and air travel);
- Developing public-public partnerships to achieve shared goals;
- Providing community education on the benefits and needs for economic development; and
- Exploring cross-jurisdictional infrastructure and regional investment.

These activities often can be more effectively on a regional basis than when attempted separately by each jurisdiction.

**Strategy 5b:** Continue to work with UVA and the City to promote entrepreneurial talent and research and development, encourage redevelopment of properties that can provide employment opportunities in the community, and promote context sensitive design.

The Three-Party Agreement, explained in the [Introduction to this Plan](#), provides the parameters for consideration of impacts to all three entities when planning for facilities and economic development. In recent years, research and development activities from UVA have produced new businesses and light industry which provides for economic growth in the City, County, and region. Through a variety of initiatives and partnerships, the three entities can help to promote entrepreneurial talent. The UVA Foundation owns properties in the County and the City that could be developed or redeveloped to enhance employment opportunities for the community. Such development or redevelopment should be done to complement nearby and surrounding properties. By participating in mutual consultation on regional development projects along shared borders or on projects of significance to more than one locality, there is a greater chance of regional economic success while maintaining established high environmental quality standards.

## **Objective 6: Increase local business development opportunities, including support for entrepreneurial and startup businesses.**

The County values its local businesses and industries and recognizes that job growth occurs more often with existing firms than with new firms that might move to the County, and with small startup businesses with potential for expansion and growth. For that reason, many of the County's efforts are aimed at helping local business and industry and encouraging local startups that bring strength and diversity to the economic landscape.

**Strategy 6a:** Continue to make data on County plans, zoning, sites, and policies available on request.

To assist businesses in their development activities, the County should continue to make information on zoning, sites, and policies available. In addition, when providing information and support to relocating businesses, the County can convey the importance of maintaining the characteristics of Albemarle that make it an attractive place to live and work.

It is also important to remember that the purpose of the economic development program is to provide Albemarle residents with an improved standard of living, improved job and wage opportunities, and workforce development opportunities, rather than to seek to stimulate further population growth. Monitoring economic development activities and reporting on them to the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, County residents, and others can help ensure that decisions related to the County's economic development are made in an informed manner. Reporting on the volume of activities and how they fit with the goals, objectives, and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan also helps the County measure success.

**Strategy 6b:** Continue to evaluate the fiscal impacts of new business and industrial development as one indicator of positive economic development, along with other considerations, such as environmental impacts, traffic impacts, and standard of living impacts.

In most cases, the residential property tax does not cover the costs of services for residents. However, commercial and industrial taxes help to compensate for the difference, and these taxes help to pay for services and facilities that improve the quality of life for residents. For that reason, many localities

place a high value on any new business or industry locating or expanding in their community, no matter what impact a new business may have. In Albemarle County, though, new business and industrial growth must be compatible with the other goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Strategy 6c:** Continue to improve the County’s application and approval processes to improve efficiency without sacrificing standards of quality.

The County’s zoning and subdivision regulations help to ensure that new development is in keeping with policies of the Comprehensive Plan and other standards of development. Providing an effective and efficient review and approval process for business and industrial related development adds to the County’s “business friendly” atmosphere. Over the past several years, Albemarle has worked on ways to reduce the complexity of the process without sacrificing quality. These activities should continue to help provide for efficiency of County services.

**Strategy 6d:** Continue to support and coordinate with other organizations that assist new small, locally owned, local agricultural businesses, minority businesses and micro-enterprises in their start-up and early operation efforts.

Several organizations exist in the community that help new business startup and begin operation. Some of these organizations are s the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and the Community Investment Collaborative (CIC).By partnering and working with these and other organizations, the County can expand and enhance its support for and promotion of new businesses.

**Strategy 6e:** Explore opportunities to create appropriate incentives that address the needs of the County’s target industries as well as emerging entrepreneurial enterprises.

The County currently offers several incentives for target industries, such as a local matching grant fund that is closely aligned with the Governor’s Opportunity Fund, as well as “Fast Track Review” and “Single Point of Contact” for qualifying projects. Additional incentive programs may be important in assisting smaller sized technology industries or University-based commercialization of research. Incentives can also support other targets, such as agribusiness, by addressing ancillary businesses such as tourism.

## **Objective 7: Increase workforce development to further career-ladder opportunities and higher wages.**

The County’s resident workforce benefits when local industry and workforce training providers are aligned. To date, the County has been proactive in helping to match skill sets of residents to jobs, especially with employers the County has assisted. This work is done to help provide greater upward mobility for existing and future workers. The following strategies will help continue this important activity in business development.

**Strategy 7a:** Increase support for initiatives that foster career planning, decision making, and workplace readiness skills for the K-12 population, as well as continuing education and training programs to prepare the local workforce for the demands of current and future employers.

County staff should continue to work with workforce training providers through continuous feedback from business roundtables, special research projects and on-going “Business First” existing business

owner dialogue. Other training programs include the Virginia Jobs Investment Program and the Piedmont Workforce Network.

**Strategy 7b:** Continue to use information gathering strategies to help identify employer needs and workforce training needs.

The County regularly collects data on employer needs and workforce training needs. County staff should continue to connect employers with workforce training resources, and will continue to share macro trends with the area's workforce training providers.