

# 8 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

## A. INTRODUCTION

The Implementation Strategy Chapter is the culmination of the work presented in the previous analyses. Ultimately, the following narrative details recommendations for Shenandoah County and its public and private implementation partners to consider as it advances county-wide economic development efforts. This work comes from the comprehensive engagement and outreach effort defined by the current economic development staff, which included a community outreach effort, the stakeholder engagement effort, the empirical analysis, and collaboration with County staff and the Working Group. It is RKG Associates' position that the vision, goals, and subsequent implementation recommendations accurately reflect the aspirations and input provided by the community, the realistic opportunities to advance the County's economic development goals, and the efforts necessary to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the County's invested resources.

This chapter is not intended to supplant continued discussion, engagement, and analysis by—and on behalf of—the County to establish annual economic development business plans. Rather, this document is a guide that future decisions should reference to ensure consistency and compatibility. The contents of this chapter should lay the foundation for the County's leadership and professional staff to guide economic development efforts and investments over the next 5 to 10 years. Some of the actions included are recommended to be acted upon immediately. Others will require these early items to be realized and/or require greater staffing/funding to be realized. Regardless, the overarching intent of this chapter is to inform current and future implementation efforts on both HOW they could possibly be implemented and WHY those recommendations have been made.

RKG Associates encourages the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors to accept and adopt this plan.

## B. BUILDING FOR SUCCESS

It is important to note that implementing a strategic economic development plan requires substantial outreach and education. Equally important to proactively marketing the community to existing and prospective business, is the role of marketing and outreach within our own community. This includes outreach towards the public, partnering organizations, and to local decision makers. Simply put, RKG Associates and the Working Group want to make sure the County is properly engaging its economic development effort in the most effective and efficient way.

- *Implementation is a process and not an event*  
One of the more common challenges communities have when implementing their first strategic plan is to establish unrealistic expectations in terms of the timing and scale of results. In truth, much of the initial actions will be focused on adopting and changing policies, establishing new programs and initiatives, and collecting and tabulating the data necessary to be successful. Providing the education on how these efforts unfold is critical to being able to stay the course as many of these efforts may take time before their impact can be fully realized.

- **Be creative and flexible when implementing**  
The strategic economic development plan is not intended to be a literal guide for the County to follow. The concepts and strategies provided by RKG Associates are best practices at achieving the vision defined by the Working Group. Given the long-term timeframe of several of these recommendations, several factors relevant to Shenandoah County may (and most likely will) change over time. Market conditions and access to resources will adjust over time, requiring the County to find an alternative approach to reach the stated vision. To this point, this document should be viewed as guidelines and not prescriptive edicts.
  
- **Being proactive can provide greater opportunities**  
Some communities consider economic development implementation as a reaction to demands from the marketplace and not proactively pursuing the vision established by processes such as these. Getting ahead of the investment market provides several benefits. Most notably, engaging with business prospects or property owners before there is an established plan can lead to more creative solutions that meet the needs of both the public and private partners. This is particularly critical for Shenandoah County, as many opportunity sites are located within local municipalities, that have land use controls. At the very least, the coordination effort will provide all partners with a greater understanding of the economic development vision and can create strategies to enact that vision prior to finalizing any investments.
  
- **Coordination is critical**  
Shenandoah County has limited staff and financial resources to achieve all the goals laid out in this document. However, there are several key implementation and investment partners that already focus on many of these opportunities (i.e. Shenandoah Valley Partnership, Lord Fairfax Community College...). The County needs build the relationships with each of those partners to leverage their expertise and resources to assist the community in obtaining its goals. In other words, there is no reason for Shenandoah County to ‘reinvent the wheel.’ More long-term, the County should also consider how to better leverage a public-public (i.e. with the Towns) or public-public-private partnership (with the Towns and private entities), where these strategic partners co-invest and co-manage implementation, further leveraging county resources.

## **C. MISSION STATEMENT**

Before any community can formulate a strategic action plan, it must first agree upon its desired outcomes. As part of the SEDP process, RKG and County staff collaborated with several members of the Shenandoah County community through a Working Group to discuss and define goals for economic development within Shenandoah County. Feedback gathered at the Working Group meetings—combined with input provided by the County’s Board of Supervisors, dozens of interviews with municipal leaders, business owners, citizens, and implementation partners—helped define the vision that underpins every recommendation included in the SEDP Implementation Matrix:

*A comprehensive and collaborative partnership among all public and private local, regional, and statewide economic development entities to provide current and future Shenandoah County businesses an environment to thrive and grow; and to ensure current and future County residents with the opportunity to benefit from economic growth through personal gain and enhanced quality of life.*

## **D. GOALS**

The economic development goals detailed in this section reflect the input and engagement of the Working Group, County staff, the Board of Supervisors, and dozens of county residents, municipal

leaders, and business owners. These goals were parsed into three categories: Process Goals, Implementation Goals, and Outcome Goals. The process goals reflect the Working Group's desire to ensure that all specific recommendations included in this plan have been well thought, are consistent with the vision, and provide a 'road map' that maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the County's investments in economic development. The implementation goals detail the general outcomes that the Working Group believes all economic development efforts should target. The outcome goals reflect the Working Group's desired results from the pursuit of the process and implementation goals and/or the execution of the implementation strategies. The following goals are presented in no particular order, as the Working Group did not specify any single goal was more important than the others.

## 1. Process Goals

- Provide the community with a better understanding of Economic Development processes and information so that they can make informed economic development decisions  
At a base level, the Working Group wanted to ensure that any decisions that the County makes to pursue economic development are based in fact. The previous chapters in this strategic plan are intended to provide the "business case" for the recommendations in this implementation strategy.
- 'Right-size' economic development efforts based on reasonable market, financial and capacity levels  
The Working Group noted early in this process that the vision and goals that Shenandoah County has for economic development exceed the capacity of the resources committed to pursuing economic development. Simply put, the County is not providing enough technical capacity and financial support for the County to achieve high levels of success in each of the action areas. This SEDP provides guidance on what efforts can be reasonably undertaken with the current staffing and financial investments and is broken into recommendations for future efforts based on incremental budgeting and staffing.
- Prioritize community investments over time to achieve objectives  
Like the previous goal, the Working Group recognizes the need to prioritize those efforts to be undertaken as well as phasing efforts based on resource investment and availability. The Working Group has provided a recommendation on where the County's economic efforts should be focused until additional staff and resources are committed to expand the County's efforts. This prioritization is confirmed in the proposed timeline within the companion implementation matrix at the end of this chapter.
- Identify specific economic development growth areas and define the type of growth envisioned  
The SEDP process revealed that location-based economic development efforts need to respect current and historic development patterns in Shenandoah County community. Chapter 6-Site Analysis detailed RKG Associates' empirical analysis of all parcels in Shenandoah County for their potential and appropriateness to accommodate new growth. The Working Group used this data to make specific recommendations of where the County's economic development efforts should focus growth/activity.

## 2. Implementation Goals

- Improve the county's competitiveness to retain and attract new business investment  
Business retention, expansion, and recruitment is the foundation of all economic development strategies. The Working Group recognizes that the primary objective for the County's efforts is to create an environment that allows existing businesses to thrive and attracts new companies to benefit from a strong market climate.

- *Improve the county's fiscal position through new investment*  
The Working Group recognized that strengthening the County's fiscal position by diversifying its tax base is a goal of practically all residents. Specifically, the Working Group emphasized that a successful economic development initiative will help relieve the financial burden of running the government
- *Create the workforce that supports existing and targeted industries*  
The Working Group has identified the need to have a workforce properly trained for the existing and planned jobs in the County. Ultimately, companies (whether existing or new) cannot succeed without a labor force that is capable and competent in their core mission. That said, the Working Group also has established this goal to give existing and future residents of Shenandoah County the opportunity to participate in any new economic growth by having the skills to potentially improve their employment and quality of life.
- *Define a balance between jobs and housing to accommodate job growth*  
The analysis revealed that Shenandoah County does not have an abundant, readily-available labor force. The Working Group recognized that part of attracting new jobs and increasing the County's fiscal health will be ensuring there is a sufficient labor force to help existing companies sustain/grow and attract new companies. The economic development plan encourages the County to ensure future growth includes housing development at price points obtainable by the County's working population while also strategizing around workforce attraction and retention.
- *Preserve the quality of life for current and future residents*  
The Working Group recognizes that future economic development growth should balance with the community's desire to maintain the existing high quality of life. Recommendations in the implementation matrix were crafted to maximize the community benefits of job creation and investment while minimizing impact on existing resources and adding to the community's quality of life
- *Enhance collaboration with regional/statewide economic development partners*  
The Working Group recognizes that several economic development functions (i.e. workforce development) are already being implemented and managed by local and regional partners in both the public and private sectors and encourages the County to maintain its fiscal stewardship by not recreating these efforts. The Implementation Matrix identifies those areas where the County can build its relationships with these partners to strengthen local economic development efforts while minimizing the reliance on additional County staff or financial resources to be committed.

### **3. Outcome Goals**

- *Increased median income*  
The Working Group recognizes that economic growth without benefit to existing workers and residents creates a dichotomy in the local marketplace. To this point, the Group recommends the County's economic development efforts seek to increase median incomes within the County. This includes both attracting and retaining jobs that pay above the current median in the County as well as create workforce development and upward mobility opportunities for existing County workers to advance their careers with their existing respective employers.
- *Diversify and expand tax base*  
The risks communities face when they are overly dependent on a single industry or small group of industries is well documented. The most popular example is the impact to the City of Detroit after the automotive industry substantially contracted in that region. The Working Group knows

that Shenandoah County's economic base is relatively small, and therefore concentrated in a handful of specific agricultural and industrial sectors. The Group encourages the County to build upon these clusters while seeking to expand the economic activity through attracting new industry sectors to the County.

- Improve business and employment opportunities  
Economic development is not just about attracting new companies and working with existing companies to stay and grow. It also is about creating a business climate where businesses and the community are partners in sustaining and expanding the profitability of companies and the employment opportunities offered. The Working Group recognizes the efforts the County and the Towns have employed to date to build a positive business climate and has endorsed the recommendations in the Implementation Matrix to expand and enhance these efforts to further improve the local market climate.

RKG Associates used this vision statement and these goals as a guide to formulate the recommendations that are detailed in the following Priority Actions section and the companion Implementation Matrix.

## E. PRIORITY EFFORTS

RKG Associates, the County economic development staff, and the Working Group worked together over several meetings to review the draft implementation strategy and framework. The economic development goals were further categorized as 'primary actions' and 'support efforts.' Primary actions focus on direct engagement with businesses, property owners, and implementation partners to further the creation of economic and fiscal growth for the County. **Primary actions include business retention and expansion, workforce development, and site development.** The support efforts involve the actions that Shenandoah County must implement to make the primary actions successful. Support efforts include communication and coordination efforts with implementation partners and enacting the policies and regulations to enhance the local business climate.

RKG, staff, and the Working Group reached consensus that current economic development staffing and investment levels did not allow the County to effectively pursue all the primary actions simultaneously. In short, the recommended strategy is for the County to focus proactive efforts on specific actions; proactively pursuing additional actions as the financial and staff resources are made available. The following prioritization reflects the consensus of the involved parties:

### 1. Primary Actions

- [1a] Business Retention and Expansion  
The Working Group prioritized business retention and expansion (BRE) as the most important effort for the County to pursue. At a base level, the Working Group believes that helping businesses that already have made an investment in the County is a strong marketing tool for any prospects considering Shenandoah County. More strategically, the Working Group recognizes that the financial cost to the local community of helping an existing business grow generally is less than the cost of attracting a new company into that local community. Focusing on making existing businesses strong and in a position to expand will benefit the County's fiscal strength while indirectly strengthening the local marketplace for recruitment efforts.
- [1b] Workforce Development (Partners)  
The Working Group considers workforce development as equally important to BRE efforts. That said, the Working Group also recognizes that several entities within the County and the region actively implement workforce development efforts. Lord Fairfax Community College, through its Workforce Solutions, manages most of the regional workforce and labor force development

programs through various partnerships. The Shenandoah County Public Schools 2018-2024 Strategic Plan identifies several school-to-work initiatives, including the resources offered at Triplett Tech. The Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board operates three Virginia Career Works Centers. Finally, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership has recently enhanced its efforts in workforce development. To these points, the Working Group recognizes that the County's economic development staff should focus as a conduit to connect businesses and individuals to existing resource providers, using its BRE efforts and business roundtable engagement to identify needs and connect providers.

▪ [2] Asset Development

Asset development includes the preparation and marketing of development-ready sites and **modern** buildings within the County. The market analysis has shown that communities within the Shenandoah Valley have created a market environment for speculative development that balances risk and reward for investors have seen substantially greater development and investment activity. **The County's current land assets generally are not 'build-ready,' and many of the available existing building assets are not desirable due to functional obsolescence.** The Working Group believes the County should consider the capital investment to improve the development-readiness of the most marketable properties in the County. That said, this effort will require a more substantial capital investment and public-private partnerships for parcels privately owned.

▪ [3] Entrepreneurial Development

Entrepreneurial development includes all efforts related to helping an individual or group of individuals take an idea for a business and action that idea. Currently, the Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center (in Harrisonburg) and Lord Fairfax Small Business Development in Middletown are the closest resources for Shenandoah County residents to garner support. **The Working Group recommends the County partner with the Towns to create a coordinated, but locally operated entrepreneurial and small business development program.** Entrepreneurial development was ranked below BRE and workforce development because of its strong potential to attract entrepreneurs and small businesses from the larger regional centers (i.e. Washington DC, Baltimore, Richmond...) that can service their clients from Shenandoah County while taking advantage of the high quality of life and lifestyle amenities the County has to offer.

▪ [4] Business Recruitment

Business recruitment ranked last of the primary actions for two reasons. First, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership has an extensive, proactive business recruitment effort that includes Shenandoah County. The Working Group believes that the County should first focus investment in areas where the County has no representation. Second, Business recruitment will be hindered until the County has stronger assets in place to accommodate new businesses. The County's existing vacant building stock is older and lacks the amenities and scale generally sought in today's marketplace. The County's land assets are generally in an unprepared state, that will require substantial time and financial resources to prepare before new buildings can be built. To this point, the Working Group recommends the County address the asset needs before investing substantial resources in proactive recruitment. In the interim, the County's economic development staff should support the Shenandoah Valley Partnership (and other statewide and regional economic development efforts) as necessary until staffing and resources are made available.

## 2. Support Efforts

The Working Group recognized that establishing the proper framework for the primary actions to be effective and efficient is a fundamental need. To this point, the Working Group recommends that staff time and funding be made available to prioritize each of the three support efforts:

- [1] Organization and Communication  
The organization and communication effort covers all of the necessary internal and partner outreach efforts for the County economic development staff to leverage their time and resources. This includes coordination meetings with the municipalities and regional implementation partners, direct communication with the existing business community, and relationship building with local and regional partners including real estate and site selection efforts. Within economic development, it is imperative to build relationships in order to build partnerships. RKG learned through this effort that some relationships are strong, and others are inconsistent. The relationships with the municipalities may be the most important initial efforts, given their land use and utility control in the most desirable areas.
- [1] Community Outreach  
Many economic development decisions require elected leaders to support the use of resources to succeed. Having community support (or at least minimizing community opposition) is a critical component of having a successful economic development effort. The Working Group encourages the County to implement a series of community engagement efforts to increase Shenandoah County residents' understanding of what 'economic development' actually is, why economic development efforts are necessary, and how economic development investment benefits them and the entire community. This effort is particularly important in Shenandoah County around land use issues. It is well documented that there are a diverse set of opinions on land use locally. The Working Group want to ensure community support/opposition to a development initiative is informed by facts, and not misinformation.
- [1] Toolbox Development  
The Implementation Matrix includes several recommendations on how Shenandoah County can refine its policies and regulations to create a stronger business and investment climate. These recommendations address both County and municipal opportunities, particularly around land use, financial investment and taxation. Ultimately, the Working Group encourages all jurisdictions in the County to determine their development vision and establish/refine the tools available to meet that vision. Creating a more consistent and predictable investment and business operating climate will improve the County's opportunities to preserve existing business, encourage them to expand, and attract new investment.

## 3. Interim Activities

It is very important for RKG Associates to note that supportive, reactive efforts will occur in each of the primary actions even if direct funding and staffing are not currently available. As noted above, the County economic development staff will coordinate with the Shenandoah Valley Partnership on recruitment efforts, relying on SVP to represent the County until such time as County staff involvement is appropriate. Similarly, the County staff will assist an entrepreneur who approaches the County with any needs, bringing in the Small Business Development Center for resources not currently offered locally. Finally, many of the support efforts detailed in the Implementation Matrix will be applicable across several and/or all the primary action areas. For example, the creation of target industry marketing collateral will benefit the County's BRE efforts as well as SVP's recruitment efforts.

Conversely, there are recommendations in each of the primary action categories and the support effort categories that will require greater investment/staffing to implement. For example, the business

retention and expansion efforts will be somewhat limited due to available staffing to meet the goal of communicating with every business in the County at least once every three years. Simply put, that goal will require more staff-hours than currently available. Similar situations exist in each of the other categories. The following section will discuss those actions to be undertaken immediately and those that will require greater staff/resources to implement.

## **F. PRIMARY ACTION PRIORITY TASKS**

### **1. Business Recruitment, Retention, and Expansion**

***Cosponsor the annual business survey with the Chamber of Commerce*** - The first step towards improving the County's relationships with existing businesses and building a proactive business retention and expansion (BRE) program should be the creation and implementation of a business needs survey. The survey is a cost-efficient way for the County to gather information on market challenges, opportunities and needs of County businesses quickly. Questions should cover topics such as workforce needs/challenges, market growth opportunities, competition challenges, location/physical needs, etc. The County can use the responses in four primary ways. First, programs and policies can be created to address challenges/opportunities identified by several businesses. Second, trends/issues in a given industry or area can be identified and mitigated through collaboration with key stakeholders. Third, individual responses can be used to ensure site visits are targeted to those businesses that have the greater opportunities to grow/are at risk of downsizing/closing. Finally, survey findings can be tracked over time to identify market trends and fine tune programs based on the current and projected economic climate.

As awareness of the survey grows, it can be expanded to serve as a comprehensive approach to identify workforce, market, regulatory, and growth needs of the County's business base. At that time, the results collected from this effort can guide any changes to existing business outreach approach and help define economic development policy focus for Shenandoah County.

The County could partner with the Chamber of Commerce to market and administer the survey. This collaboration would benefit both the County and the Chamber. The County would get access to the Chamber's business contacts and mitigate some of the costs of the survey while the Chamber can increase awareness of the organization and refine its mission based on documented business needs in Shenandoah County.

***Build industry roundtables in several different market areas*** – An industry “roundtable” should be created for each and any industry group within the County that cares to participate in programs and services offered by the Tourism and Economic Development Department. These informal groups should consist of between eight and twenty representatives from the specific industry group, members of the County staff, and other local/regional implementation partners, as necessary. A few roundtables already exist in Shenandoah County (i.e. tourism) and should be continued in this new focus.

These groups should meet on a regular basis (typically quarterly) to discuss issues related to the ability to do business in Shenandoah County, provide feedback on the results of the business survey and how to action the findings identified therein, and provide feedback on proposed policy/investment strategies that could impact these sectors. The County staff also should use this opportunity to disseminate information about current projects and programs being developed and/or revamped, including how these changes will influence the group.

Simply put, this forum allows local businesses to participate in the economic development process, to learn of current events, and to provide feedback on additional efforts that may be undertaken. While all industries should be encouraged to form roundtables, the Working Group recommends the County prioritize the development of roundtables in the following categories:

- Manufacturing/Production
- Remote Business Services/Telecommuting
- IT & Communication
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Agribusiness

The roundtables are a pivotal step in collecting data outside of the business survey and site visits. These groups should be used to generate initial concept and policy ideas as they relate to workforce and entrepreneurial development programs, financial and regulatory incentives, and market and asset development. The business survey tool should be vetted each year through the relevant focus group to ensure relevance and buy-in.

**Enhance Outreach Efforts to Existing Businesses** – The County staff already have a modest outreach effort to meet with local businesses. However, current resources have limited this initiative. The Working Group recommends the County provide the resources to enhance this initiative to be more proactive in engaging existing businesses, expand the number and type of businesses engaged, and develop a detailed tracking strategy to inventory responses and identify policy opportunities. As noted, the business survey will provide the County with real-time business needs and challenges based on responses. This information can help the County staff determine a comprehensive outreach strategy. The County should establish a target number of visits to be completed each year, building as more resources become available. Coordination with regional (i.e. Shenandoah County Partnership) and local (i.e. Lord Fairfax Community College) is essential as well. The intent should be to avoid repetitive or duplicative visits to businesses.

## 2. Workforce Development

**Strengthen the relationship between the regional workforce, education providers, and County businesses** – The Shenandoah Valley already has very strong education provider engagement in workforce and job skill development. Lord Fairfax Community College (and its various provider offerings), Shenandoah County Public Schools, Shenandoah Valley Region Career Works, and other workforce/training partners have created a strong foundation for Shenandoah County businesses and residents. However, it was reported to RKG Associates that awareness of the depth and breadth of programs is not absolute in the County. Further, there is limited connection between provided programs and actual local business needs.

To this point, the County's Tourism and Economic Development Department should play an advisory and coordination role for workforce development. At a base level, the County staff can raise awareness of existing programs to businesses and residents through a more proactive marketing and outreach campaign (including bringing materials on site visits). More strategically, there is an opportunity for the County to develop into a liaison between County businesses and these providers through their outreach and data collection efforts. Establishing an education/workforce roundtable would provide the platform for regular engagement and progress meetings with business leaders and the provider community.

## 3. Asset Development

**Work with 'priority site' property owners to connect their investment strategies with the County's asset marketing efforts** – The Working Group recognizes that to preserve, expand, and grow the business base within Shenandoah County, there needs to be sufficient and price appropriate real estate assets to house those businesses. The initial assessments of the City's real estate market and potential opportunity sites was completed as part of this analysis (chapters 4 and 6). However, more specific data collection and dissemination will be required to maximize the City's potential in attracting new investment into the building supply.

IT is RKG Associates' understanding that the County already maintains a database of all properties currently listed for sale or lease. This information is critical, but only a first step in building a priority-site marketing campaign.

The next step is for the County's economic development staff to initiate (or continue) to reach out to each property owner to determine their ability/willingness to be considered as part of an assemblage/reinvestment effort. Those areas where enough properties are willing to consider being included are then ranked based on several factors, which may include catalytic potential, location, and cost. Chapter 6 details the initial analysis into determining the highest potential opportunity sites in the County. This list should serve as a jump-off point for owner outreach. The initial outreach is only the first step in the process to develop trust and buy-in from property owners. Consistent outreach will be necessary for both those property owners who are engaged in reinvestment efforts (to provide updates and retain their interest) as well as those initially uninterested (to establish trust and track any changes in investment strategy).

From this ongoing effort, the County can create and maintain a property assemblage book. The assemblage book should be the guide that the County uses to engage with prospects and market the County. While the property inventory should include all sites, the assemblage book is the "highlight" properties to be marketed to investors seeking opportunities. The book should provide information on all the properties as well as the development vision for that area. The assemblage book can serve as a "playbook" for any landbank strategy, with the Towns and County working cooperatively to acquire key pieces as they become available on the market.

**Create investment strategy to develop two pad-ready sites** – The 'just-in-time' concept of manufacturing has become equally relevant in economic development. Most prospects value having land and building assets readily available to minimize relocation timing. As noted earlier in this report, the County has not reached its potential in recruitment due to a lack of ready, high-quality land and building supply. The Working Group recognizes that investing in land and building assets is the most cost-intensive part of economic development. However, it also is a necessity to maximize growth potential and expand the primary employment base. Recommendations to expand inventory include:

The most cost-effective way to reduce build time for a prospect is to maintain 'shovel-ready' pad sites. Simply put, these are development sites where all the earthwork (i.e. grading) and utility installation is complete. These sites effectively are prepared so that building construction can occur immediately. Having available pad sites also benefits those prospects that want to build their own facility to specification. To control costs and minimize the amount of "internal competition" within the County, the Working Group recommends the County consider a public-private or public-public partnership to make two of the Tier 2 or Tier 3 sites meet the Tier 5 requirements under the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP).

#### **4. Entrepreneurial Development**

**Implement a more proactive entrepreneurial development program** – There is an opportunity for the County to fund and support additional services for small businesses and entrepreneurs to flourish in Shenandoah County. The Working Group recognizes the value of these services, and recommends that some effort be put into developing relationships with local, regional, and state partners to build a Shenandoah County-focused presence.

One initial opportunity is to create do-it-yourself (DIY) materials for basic entrepreneurial concepts (i.e. how to write a business plan, how to patent your idea...). These materials can be created through collecting data from national organizations such as the Small Business Administration (SBA) and providing them to local entrepreneurs. The County also could sponsor (or co-sponsor) a robust and frequent business startup lecture series for potential entrepreneurs in Shenandoah County. This concept would be to bring in lecturers in specific fields and/or experts on certain aspects of entrepreneurial development

to offer insight to local residents/entrepreneurs. The County also can engage with existing entrepreneurial programs to increase their marketing presence in the County, such as The Gauntlet ([www.theadvancementfoundation.org](http://www.theadvancementfoundation.org)) program for Virginia entrepreneurs.

## 5. Business Recruitment

**Create industry-specific marketing materials** – The Working Group encourages the County to create more comprehensive print and digital marketing materials. Most notably, industry-specific materials should be part of this strategy so that targeted recruitment efforts can focus on those programs/offers that are relevant to the prospect. It is important to note that while having marketing materials is a minimum benchmark for disseminating information, keeping those materials current is the true benchmark. This is particularly important for Internet-based materials, as having inaccurate/out-of-date data sources can harm the community's potential for a prospect before ever learning about the opportunity. Specific recommendations include:

- **Quality of Life Sheet** – The quality of life brochure should focus on the intangibles of living and working in Shenandoah County, highlighting the various technology, workforce, cost of living, and social amenities of the area. The content should emphasize factors such as school performance, cultural assets, proximity to road and rail transportation, access to the regional markets, and quality/variety of leisure activities. This material is particularly valuable in the professional services recruitment and entrepreneurial development.
- **Target Industry Materials** – Industry-specific marketing materials for each of the target industries is important for disseminating specific data that is valuable to your target industries. Each document should be customized based on the cluster (see Chapter 7). The documents should highlight information including employment and establishment growth data, regional wage rates, current businesses operating in the area, competitive advantages of operating locally, unique incentives available (where applicable) and local business contacts (ambassadors).
- **Incentive Sheet** – A series of incentive documents should be created that detail all local, state and federal incentive programs available for businesses locating in Shenandoah County. Each incentive sheet should focus on those programs relevant to the industry group being targeted. Prospective businesses can use this document to gauge the financial benefits to doing business, and existing businesses may be alerted to incentive programs they were unaware of, therefore helping to ensure their continued presence. In the Toolbox Development section, providing formulaic incentives (i.e. land costs, tax abatements) will enable prospects to gauge the community's competitiveness.
- **Business Testimonial Book** – RKG Associates' efforts for this analysis has revealed several compelling "success stories" of existing businesses succeeding in Shenandoah County. However, these experiences are not chronicled or readily available to use in marketing. The Working Group recommends crafting a business testimonials book with written statements from existing industry leaders on topics ranging from quality of life, business climate, market performance, and personal preference to do business locally. Getting input from companies that have chosen and thrive locally is valuable to industry recruitment. Individual testimonies of leaders from business in the target industries should also be included in the target industry brochures.
- **Property Assemblage Book** – As noted earlier, a property assemblage book highlights those land assets available for companies to locate/acquire. Creating an assemblage book is recommended to be part of the physical asset inventory detailed earlier in this document. The assemblage book should only highlight those assets where the property owners are engaged and supportive of the County marketing their land. The book should focus on the top (5-10) properties available. The land assets should be ranked based on several factors, which may

include catalytic potential, location, and cost. The book should provide information on all the properties as well as the community's development vision for that area.

**Increase Shenandoah County's presence in business recruitment through strategic networking and data collection practices** – The County's current investment levels in economic development do not allow existing staff to adequately pursue all the goals identified in this effort simultaneously. Given this limitation, the Working Group recommends that the County's staff focus on working with regional and statewide partners (such as the Shenandoah Valley Partnership) to market the County externally until the assets and finances become available for the County to pursue external recruitment directly.

## **G. SUPPORT EFFORT PRIORITY TASKS**

### **1. Organization and Communication**

**Fund economic development commensurate with outcome expectations** – The Working Group recognizes that funding is critical to a successful economic development effort. Simply put, the goals detailed in this strategy will require a level of funding above current investments to be able to effectively pursue each action. RKG Associates estimates it will cost between \$400,000 and \$600,000 annually to operate the staff and materials necessary to fully engage this strategy. Without these, the pace and scale of implementation will need to follow the prioritization detailed earlier in this strategy until the full resources are made available.

### **2. Community Outreach**

**Activate the Shenandoah County citizens to assist in implementation** – One way for the County to augment its financial and staff investment in economic development is to engage its citizens in the process. The County's economic development staff should seek to build volunteer capacity to assist in implementation. More specifically, there are a few strategic areas where citizen volunteers can play important roles in expanding the Tourism and Economic Development Department's capacity. The following recommendations focus on those specific areas.

- **Community advocates** – There has not been much effort in engaging residents about the opportunities/challenges of implementing an economic development program to date. Given the challenge of reaching all the different community groups (and economic development perspectives in Shenandoah County), the Working Group recommends a select group of interested citizens assist in engaging local civic organizations (i.e. homeowner associations, social clubs...). Ideally, the community advocates would be individuals with strong ties and broad recognition within either an area of the County or with a civic group. Individuals selected to be advocates should be familiar with the County's economic development efforts, can discuss and explain economic development concepts, and be well spoken. Most importantly, the advocates must be available to assist in outreach to various community (i.e. congregations) and civic (i.e. neighborhood groups) entities. The advocate effort is intended to build community-wide awareness of the benefits and challenges of implementing an economic development strategy at the local level without requiring a staff large enough to provide individual attention to every citizen.
- **Business ambassadors** – The ambassador program is a collection of business and industry leaders that provide support to the economic development entity's staff for industry recruitment and retention. Although these individuals will have no formal authority within the recruitment process, they provide a 'real life' vantage point for prospects about doing business in Shenandoah County. Their most important function is to provide a business perspective for prospects interested in locating/expanding within the County. Utilizing business leaders in the recruitment

process legitimizes the recruitment effort through testimonials while leveraging the staff's time and effort. It is important that ambassadors be well informed, well-spoken, and respected within their industry. In other words, the most effective ambassadors may not be from the largest businesses. The County should identify ambassadors from each of the major industry sectors to ensure appropriate coverage regardless of the prospect.

- **Mentors** – A business development mentorship program pairs successful entrepreneurs with individuals with a business concept, but limited resources or understanding of starting, operating, and growing a business. These programs provide local entrepreneur's access to someone who has 'been there' within their industry, adding confidence in the advice and direction provided. Having a local mentor also provides stability, as the relationship created can carry forward after the program has served its purpose. The participant typically signs an agreement to operate for a certain period within the boundaries of the program (the county in this case) or pays a mentorship fee. Given the large and growing retirement-age population in Shenandoah County, the County can tap into the local knowledge base to find volunteer mentors. It is recommended that the County utilize a training program for its mentors to ensure consistent and successful efforts (i.e. the Mentor-Protégé Program through the Small Business Administration or SCORE).

***Implement a proactive community engagement and education initiative*** – Community awareness and support is a critical component of implementation. Simply put, the amount of financial and political support for economic development is influenced by the willingness of residents to endorse local action. Past actions (that occurred before initiating this effort) indicate there is not widespread understanding of economic development initiatives in Shenandoah County, why it is important for future sustainability, and what needs to be done to achieve the stated vision. Increased awareness and education about economic development can only benefit the County's implementation in building sustainable and strategic relationships with all local stakeholders.

- **Publish community eNewsletters** –The Working Group recommends County staff create regular eNewsletters that highlight the actions and successes of local economic development effort. This newsletter should vary slightly from one sent to stakeholders, partners, and prospects, presenting the data in less industry-focused language. The Working Group and RKG Associates encourage the inclusion of small educational components/editorials to the newsletter that better explains the more technical content presented. One potential addition could be a "Director's Notes" that highlights a relevant piece of the newsletter within context of why it is important and the benefits created by that effort/success. Creating a method for residents to sign up for this eNewsletter through a dedicated economic development website is recommended.
- **Host community update meetings** – RKG Associates observed that the County has not provided regular community updates beyond Supervisor meetings and workshops. This disconnect enables naysayers to "define the reality" of the County's economic development efforts. The Working Group recommends County engage the Community Advocates to meet with citizen and civic groups to provide annual updates on the actions of the organization and the benefits being generated for the community. This effort can dovetail into a staff-led town hall presentation/discussion to be held at different locations throughout the County, enabling community members to hear about economic development efforts and ask questions/give feedback. The town hall event is more formal, focusing on the "state of economic development" within Shenandoah County.

### 3. Toolbox Development

***Build a more consistent and predictable review and approval process*** – The development approval process provides predictability and consistency for existing and prospective businesses alike. Given that most of the County’s economic development activity will occur within town boundaries, Shenandoah County has a specific challenge of not controlling the regulatory environment of its primary assets. Further, each Town has its own review processes and requirements. In addition to the regulatory constraints, the process oftentimes is a long and arduous exercise. While the Working Group recognizes the value and importance of the development process in ensuring new investment meets the vision of the community and the sovereignty of each Town to set policies, it has identified some areas where the County and Towns can work together to create greater predictability and consistency for County-based economic development projects.

- ***Maximum Review Periods*** – The Working Group recommends the Towns and County attempt to establish a consistent maximum review period for project submissions. This will ensure each opportunity site has the same potential for attracting investment.
- ***Concurrent Review*** – Similar to review periods, the Working Group recommends all jurisdictions create a concurrent review process for economic development projects. Simply put, concurrent review requires the relevant review entities to address a proposal simultaneously rather than consecutively. This will reduce the overall review process.
- ***Expedited Review*** – Projects that meet a specific scale or goal threshold should be provided with an expedited review process, further reducing the time for approval. The criteria for this incentive needs to be adopted throughout the County to ensure timely delivery.

***Hire a development ombudsman to assist prospects through review processes*** – The development ombudsman position is focused on providing property owners and investors technical and process-oriented assistance when going through the development process. Whether it is a rezoning or variance request, the ombudsman program is intended to assist applicants in effectively and efficiently navigating the relevant County/Town process. The position has two priorities. First, the ombudsman must be familiar with all procedures and expectations in each jurisdiction and be able to advise applicants on how to ensure a complete application package. Second, the ombudsman must be able to collaborate with industry professionals (i.e. engineers) to provide advisory services when it comes to technical needs. It is envisioned that this assistance will be advisory in nature, and not provide technical requirements to the applicant. RKG Associates envisions the ombudsman position be joint funded by the County and the individual Towns.

## H. IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The following implementation matrix presents the full range of objectives and corresponding action items for the County’s consideration. As noted, this matrix should serve as a reference document as the economic development staff craft their annual business plan. The time lines, estimated costing, and implementation partners for each action item identified in the matrix reflects RKG Associates professional recommendation guided by input from County staff and the Working Group. The Tourism and Economic Development Department’s annual business plan should be structured to advance the vision and goals established through this effort but prioritized and scaled based on the available staffing and capital resources available at that time. The final timing, focus, and potential costs for each action item should be refined by staff and/or the responsible implementation partner when implementation occurs.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated Cost
		Public/NP	Private	'19	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
<b>BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION</b>										
<b>Objective #1</b>	<b>Create a more comprehensive business contact list to ensure retention and expansion efforts reach all County businesses</b>									
	Action 1: Work with municipal staff to create a comprehensive business contact list	SC, SM								A
	Action 2: Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce on their contact list	SC	CC							A
	Action 3: Create a business licensing process for unincorporated Shenandoah County collect information relevant to building a more comprehensive business contact list (i.e. mandatory fill-in items on the application)	SC, SM								B
	Action 4: Coordinate with municipalities to gather contact information for area employers based on current business licenses.	SC, SM								A
	Action 5: Implement volunteer walks, having 5-10 volunteers canvas employment centers and commercial corridors not included in towns to gather contact information. This will require substantial advertisement	SC, SM, CC	N, I							B
<b>Objective #2</b>	<b>Cosponsor the annual business survey with the Chamber of Commerce</b>									
	Action 1: Establish a fixed date (i.e. week) that the survey will be released. This should be consistent year over year. Recommend the Fall or Winter do to agricultural work seasons	SC, CC	I							A
	Action 2: Work with the Chamber and industry roundtables to refine questions and expand awareness of the survey each year	SC, CC	I							A
	Action 3: Invest in marketing and outreach at least 2 months prior to the release of the survey each year	SC, CC								B
	Action 4: Share general results of the survey with roundtables, partner organizations, and the community through the quarterly newsletter	SC, CC								A
	Action 5: Use results of survey to prioritize retention/expansion visits for the year	SC	I							A
	Action 6: Work with respective roundtables about industry-specific findings from survey to determine annual action items	SC,CC	I							A
	Action 7: Retain all survey results to create a longitudinal assessment tool that can help local economic development efforts become more predictive than reactive to changing market climates	SC								A
<b>Objective #3</b>	<b>Build industry roundtables in a number of different market areas</b>									
	Action 1: Create an industry roundtable for every key market sector within the County including [1] Manufacturing/Production; [2] Remote Business Services; [3] IT & Communication; [4] Hospitality & Tourism; [5] Agribusiness;	SC	I							A
	Action 2: Make sure all partner organizations have representation on roundtables that crossover missions	SC, VP, GO								A
	Action 3: Meet each roundtable quarterly or semiannually as necessary, with one meeting targeted immediately after the release of the business survey results	SC	I							B
	Action 4: Use roundtable meeting to discuss: [1] market climate; [2] regulatory issues; [3] growth opportunities; [4] implementation coordination; [5] workforce development	SC, VP, GO	I							A
	Action 5: Use feedback from roundtables to help set annual economic development business plan	SC								A

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated
		Public/NP	Private	'19	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Cost
<b>BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION</b>										
<b>Objective #4</b>	<b>Enhance outreach efforts to existing businesses</b>									
Action 1:	Use the comprehensive business list to identify new companies to visit and track past visit efforts. Do not concentrate on the same businesses year over year	SC								A
Action 2:	Establish quotas for number of monthly visits, starting with five (5) per month, expanding as more staff is hired. The goal is to reach every business at least once every two years	SC								A
Action 3:	Use business survey results to prioritize outreach efforts	SC	I							A
Action 4:	Maintain database of visited businesses to track frequency and results of the visit	SC								A
Action 5:	Activate ambassadors to assist in outreach, providing them training on questions to ask and how to track the conversation	SC	I, N							A
Action 6:	Engage implementation partners (i.e. Lord Fairfax CC, SCPS, SVP, VEDP, and SVWDB) as necessary depending on the need/responses from the business	SC, PS, VP, LF, WF, GO	I							A
Action 7:	Create a direct "help line" initiative on the economic development website that allows businesses to connect to an economic development staff member for assistance	SC								Included in web design
<b>Objective #5</b>	<b>Expand marketing strategies for tourism-service businesses</b>									
Action 1:	Continue to enhance working relationships with all tourism destinations within Shenandoah County	SC	I							A
Action 2:	Implement the County's branding strategy	SC								C
Action 3:	Finalize and implement the Tourism Zone designations	SC								A
Action 4:	Work with the municipalities to invest more of the local transient occupancy tax revenue to implementing tourism marketing and outreach efforts	SC, SM								A
Action 5:	Build more 'extend your stay' programs around theme-based multi-destination itineraries	SC	I							A
Action 6:	Create strategic cross-marketing efforts connecting tourism destinations, lodging facilities, and dining facilities	SC	I							A
Action 7:	Recruitment of special events to attract groups to the area. Examples include Bike Virginia, BMW Riders Association, etc.	SC	I							A
<b>BUSINESS RECRUITMENT</b>										
<b>Objective #1</b>	<b>Finalize and prioritize target industry clusters</b>									
Action 1:	Adopt prioritized list of target industry clusters. Recommended clusters are [1] Manufacturing/Production; [2] Remote Business Services; [3] IT & Communication; [4] Hospitality & Tourism; [5] Agribusiness; [6] Entrepreneurial Development	SC								A
Action 2:	Create target industry sector-specific website posting all relevant data and recruitment information for each sector	SC								Included in web design
Action 3:	Advertise the County's target industries to local, regional, and statewide partners	SC, VP, GO, VA								A
Action 4:	Reaffirm target industry clusters annually, providing updates to partners as necessary	SC, VP, GO, VA	C							A

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated	
		Public/NP	Private	'19	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Cost	
<b>BUSINESS RECRUITMENT</b>											
<b>Objective #2</b>	<b>Create industry-specific marketing materials</b>										
Action 1:	Create a 'Market Fundamentals' cut sheet that details specific market advantages of Shenandoah County (i.e. proximity to DC, Baltimore for remote service businesses)	SC									C
Action 2:	Create an 'Infrastructure' cut sheet that details the availability and capacity of utilities including (but not limited to) [1] water and sewer; [2] power (electricity, oil, natural gas); and [3] telecommunications	SC, UT									Included in above
Action 3:	Create an 'Incentives' cut sheet that details any local, state, or federal incentives available to businesses in that industry cluster as well as the parameters to access those incentives	SC, SM, VA									Included in above
Action 4:	Create a 'quality of life' cut sheet that details the housing, entertainment, recreation, and other amenities available in and around Shenandoah County	SC, SM									Included in above
Action 5:	Create a 'testimonial' booklet with first-hand experiences of existing business leaders within Shenandoah County, preferably within the target industry cluster	SC	I								Included in above
Action 6:	Develop a target industry cluster component on the economic development website that has digital versions of all marketing collateral	SC	C								Included in web design
<b>Objective #3</b>	<b>Develop a proactive recruitment effort within the Manufacturing and Production industry cluster</b>										
Action 1:	Work with industry roundtable members to identify existing vertical and horizontal supply chain businesses to engage about potential relocation/expansion in Shenandoah County	SC, VP	I								A
Action 2:	Use a business database vendor (i.e. Dun & Bradstreet or EMSI) to identify potential target businesses to actively contact and recruit to Shenandoah County	SC	C								B
Action 3:	Create a 'tip line' for citizens to call/Email/text ideas on business recruitment and any leads they may have on businesses that would relocate to the County	SC	N								A
Action 4:	Attend coordinated meetings with SVP, Go Virginia, and VEDP to discuss opportunities/prospects (SEE OBJECTIVE 4)	SC, VP, GO, VA									A
Action 5:	Join an advanced manufacturing trade organization (i.e. MDMA), exhibiting at an annual trade show and potentially advertising in their national publications	SC									A
Action 6:	Attend at least one (1) target industry business recruitment trip sponsored by a regional or statewide partner in each target industry cluster annually, increasing as budget becomes available	SC, VP, VA									C
Action 7:	Repeat this process for each additional target industry cluster that Shenandoah County invests staff and financial resources to actively pursue	SC, VP, GP, VA	I, C, N								C
<b>Objective #4</b>	<b>Develop a proactive recruitment effort within the Remote Business Services industry cluster</b>										
Action 1:	Work with industry roundtable members to identify existing industry relationships to engage about potential relocation to Shenandoah County	SC, VP	I								A
Action 2:	Use a business database vendor (i.e. Dun & Bradstreet or EMSI) to identify potential target businesses to actively contact and recruit to Shenandoah County	SC, VP	C								B
Action 3:	Create a 'tip line' for citizens to call/Email/text ideas on business recruitment and any leads they may have on businesses that would relocate to the County	SC	N								A
Action 4:	Implement a proactive outreach initiative to 5-10 businesses each quarter, sending marketing materials and implementing follow-up phone calls with economic development staff/ambassadors	SC									A
Action 5:	Work with municipalities to create a county-municipal funded rehabilitation program to convert unused upper-level space in downtowns for office and/or live-work space	SC, SM	O								E

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated	
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<b>BUSINESS RECRUITMENT</b>											
<b>Objective #5</b>	<b>Implement a more proactive entrepreneurial development program</b>										
	Action 1: Work with partners to develop DIY materials for basic entrepreneurial concepts (i.e. how to write a business plan, how to patent your idea...)	SC, VP	N								B
	Action 2: Provide a robust and frequent business startup lecture series for potential entrepreneurs in Shenandoah County	SC, LF	C								B
	Action 3: Establish an entrepreneur program that enrolls five (5) new businesses each year; expanding as demand and resources allow	SC, SM	I								C
	Action 4: Establish the local mentorship program that ties local retirees/business leaders to entrepreneurs based on experience and interest using a model similar to SCORE or the SBA mentorship program	SC	N, I								A
	Action 5: Advertise and participate in entrepreneurial programs such as The Gauntlet (www.theadvancementfoundation.org) program for Virginia entrepreneurs	SC	I, N								A
<b>Objective #6</b>	<b>Increase Shenandoah County's presence in business recruitment through strategic networking and data collecting practices</b>										
	Action 1: Maintain a database of all prospect interaction, tracking success rates and inventorying noted shortcomings from prospects that locate elsewhere	SC									A
	Action 2: Add all site selectors to the economic development newsletter distribution list	SC									A
	Action 3: Work with regional partners to build relationships with site selectors in target industry sectors	SC, VP, GO, VA	I, R								A
	Action 4: Host semiannual business recruitment summits with Shenandoah municipalities and regional partners to discuss potential opportunities and challenges	SC, VP, GO, VA	C, R, I								B
<b>Objective #7</b>	<b>Co-host regional business recruitment visits with local and regional partners within target industry clusters</b>										
	Action 1: Coordinate with site selectors, SVP, Go Virginia, and VEDP to identify two (2) to three (3) business prospects that would benefit from seeing Shenandoah County first hand	SC, VP, GO, VA	I								A
	Action 2: Co-host one (1) 2-3 day marketing trip with SVP/Go Virginia for prospects each year to include a mixture of information sharing, networking and social activities, increasing the frequency as budget becomes available	SC, VA, GO, VP									D
	Action 3: Give priority to prospects that already have business relationships in Shenandoah Valley, being strategic about which prospects are invited to attend together	SC									A
	Action 4: Integrate industry ambassadors into the program and activity calendar	SC	I								A
<b>ASSET DEVELOPMENT</b>											
<b>Objective #1</b>	<b>Create investment strategy to develop two (2) pad-ready sites</b>										
	Action 1: Work with local and state entities to develop a funding plan to create one (1) 10-acre and one (1) 25-acre pad	SC, VA	O, F, I								G
	Action 2: Consider a cost-revenue agreement between the Towns and County on investment	SC, SB									A
	Action 3: First option recommended to be a public-public partnership with the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) on their properties in the North Shenandoah Business Park	SC, SB, ID									A
	Action 4: Other alternatives include the IDA site in Mount Jackson and the parcel located on the southeast quadrant of the Toms Brook interchange on I-81	SC, MJ, ID	O								A

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated Cost	
		Public/NP	Private	'19	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
<b>ASSET DEVELOPMENT</b>											
<b>Objective #2</b>	<b>Enhance and market the County's comprehensive property and asset database</b>										
	Action 1: Inventory all existing vacant commercial and industrial land and buildings	SC	O	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	A
	Action 3: Connect with all property owners to detail price, availability, and vision for those asset; include in online listings	SC	O	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	A
	Action 2: Work with VEDP to feature our sites on the state website and our local website using a web-based database.	SC, VP, VA, GO	C	█							Included in web design
	Action 4: Create an 'open source' database for property owners and brokers to submit new assets and changes to existing listings	SC	C, I, R	█							Included in web design
	Action 5: Update listed properties every 3 months to ensure that listings are current with the latest details.	SC, VP, VA, GO	O, R	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	A
	Action 6: Maintain regular communication with property owners to ensure occupied/developed land is removed	SC	O, R	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	A
<b>Objective #3</b>	<b>Work with 'priority site' property owners to connect their investment strategies with the County's asset marketing efforts</b>										
	Action 1: Priority site recommendation includes [1] Northern Shenandoah Business Park (NSBP); [2] SE quadrant of Toms Brook I-81 interchange; [3] Woodstock Interstate Property 1; [4] IDA Site #1 (Mount Jackson); and [5] Turkey Knob Site	SC	O, R	█							A
	Action 2: Outreach to property owners during planning efforts to understand existing investment priorities	SC	O, R	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	A
	Action 3: Continue dialogue with owners, particularly catalytic parcels, on a regular basis to track changing strategies and create new opportunities	SC, SM	O, R	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	A
	Action 4: Create a catalyst sites prospectus, defining property ownership, implementation concepts, and available incentives to help bring the vision to fruition	SC			█	█	█	█	█	█	B
	Action 5: Consider public-private partnership investment strategy to create additional pad-ready sites once the first two are successful	SC, VA	I, O, F		█	█	█	█	█	█	G
<b>Objective #4</b>	<b>Identify future potential economic development sites</b>										
	Action 1: Utilize implementation plan analysis to score potential future economic development sites; updating as necessary based on ownership changes and/or future infrastructure investments	SC			█						A
	Action 2: Identify future growth areas within the county and towns for potential industrial and commercial zoning.	SC			█						A
	Action 3: Outreach to property owners during planning efforts to understand existing investment priorities	SC	O, R		█	█	█	█	█	█	A
	Action 4: Engage with municipalities on economic development vision for identified sites	SC, SB, WS, MJ, NM			█	█	█	█	█	█	A
	Action 5: Consider zoning and/or regulatory changes to enable economic development investment based on community engagement	SC, SB, WS, MJ, NM	O			█	█	█	█	█	A

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated Cost	
		Public/NP	Private	'19	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
<b>ASSET DEVELOPMENT</b>											
<b>Objective #5</b>	<b>Explore economic development opportunities in outlying/remote areas of County</b>										
Action 1:	Engage the greater communities outlying/remote areas of the county in to complete an economic development SWOT analysis for the greater their communities. Community organizations, such as Ruritan Clubs may be of assistance	SC	O, R								A
Action 2:	Develop strategies to pursue opportunities or to address weaknesses/threats for outlying/remote communities	SC, VP	R								A
Action 3:	Explore the potential of a small-scale (approximately 10-25 room) ultra-luxury inn similar to the Salamander or the Inn in Little Washington or other small-scale high-end accommodations in the remote/outlying communities	SC	O, R, C								C
Action 4:	If the "Inn" concept appears to be feasible; work with interested parties to complete feasibility work, find a suitable site and help market to regional investors	SC, VP	R								A
<b>Objective #6</b>	<b>Consider a public-private partnership to develop a speculative manufacturing/production facility or virtual building</b>										
Action 1:	Identify a willing partner to create public-private investment strategy, with priority going to sites already identified	SC, VP	O, I, F								G
Action 2:	Create a joint revenue sharing agreement based on levels of public investment; focused on creating competitive return for the private investor while establishing parameters for return of some/all of the public investment	SC, ID	O, I, F								A
Action 3:	Engage with state; local utilities; and financial institutions to create debt financing strategy	SC, VA, UT	F								A
<b>Objective #7</b>	<b>Establish an Agriculture Development Working Group</b>										
Action 1:	Evaluate the feasibility and community wide benefit of constructing a commercial kitchen to facilitate value added processing of agriculture products	SC, AE	C, O								C
Action 2:	Evaluate the feasibility and community wide benefit of locating food processors in Shenandoah County (or in the region) to improve the markets for agriculture products	SC, AE	C, O								C
Action 3:	Evaluate the feasibility and community wide benefit of creating a investment-focused agribusiness cooperative for the potential ideas from Action #1 and #2 above	SC, AE	C								A
Action 4:	Work with economic development staff to identify appropriate locations for the businesses above	SC	O								A
<b>WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT</b>											
<b>Objective #1</b>	<b>Strengthen the relationship between the regional workforce, education providers, regional Workforce Development Board and the County's businesses</b>										
Action 1:	Analyze the feedback from the business survey to identify trends/emerging needs	SC	I								A
Action 2:	Engage with the Community Colleges, SCPS, SVWDB and other workforce development entities to share results of survey and strategize on any programmatic changes/additional needs	SC, LF, WF, PS									A
Action 3:	Meet annually with SCPS on the functionality and successes of training programs in the County school system; providing a joint-released progress report	SC, PS									A

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated	
		Public/NP	Private	'19	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Cost	
<b>WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT</b>											
<b>Objective #2</b>	<b>Create unified marketing materials that highlight local, regional, and statewide workforce and education training programs available to residents, businesses, and prospects</b>										
Action 1:	Publish and market all existing local, regional, and statewide workforce training and education programs available to County businesses and residents	SC, PS, LF, WF									A
Action 2:	Build a workforce and education section on the economic development website dedicated to marketing and advertising these offerings, providing customized information based industry sector and/or business size	SC	C								Included in web design
Action 3:	Develop industry-specific printed materials detailing the programs available, how to qualify for those programs, and the financial/implementation benefits of each	SC	C								B
Action 4:	Develop marketing and outreach materials targeted to residents that inventory all workforce programs available, and how those programs correspond with local job availability	SC	C								B
<b>TOOLBOX DEVELOPMENT</b>											
<b>Objective #1</b>	<b>Build more consistent and predictable review and approval processes</b>										
Action 1:	Work with municipalities and impacted agencies to create consistent review processes throughout the County (i.e. maximum review periods)	SC, SM									A
Action 2:	Consider administrative approvals for projects that fall below a defined threshold (i.e. rehabilitation applications)	SC, SM									A
Action 3:	Incorporate concurrent review for all real estate development applications that require multiple department reviews	SC, SM									A
Action 4:	Hire a development ombudsman to learn each development process in the County to work with any real estate investor throughout the County;	SC, SM									D
<b>Objective #2</b>	<b>Create a site prospectus book</b>										
Action 1:	Create marketing materials for each priority site/building available in the County	SC	O, R								C
Action 2:	Provide information about site acquisition as well as the defined County/municipal vision for the site	SC, SM									Included in above
Action 3:	Include information on all incentives available for the project based on land use	SC									Included in above
Action 4:	Work with governing body to ensure zoning is compatible with vision	SC, SM									Included in above
Action 5:	Include a digital version of the prospectus book on the economic development webpage to augment the state listings	SC	C								Included in above

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated
		Public/NP	Private	'19	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Cost
<b>TOOLBOX DEVELOPMENT</b>										
<b>Objective #3</b>	<b>Develop formulaic incentive schedule for County-funded incentive programs</b>									
Action 1:	Create a defined threshold for County financial incentives, focusing on [1] net new jobs created, [2] net new property value, [3] location of investment, [4] industry sector.	SC								G
Action 2:	Provide a sliding scale incentive threshold that increases the County's participation level based on capital investment/net number of jobs, location in priority investment areas, and businesses that fall within the County's target industry sectors	SC								A
Action 3:	Create incentive bonuses for companies that meet minimum performance levels (will require monitoring) including [1] above average wage thresholds (by industry), [2] hiring of County residents, and [3] investment in workforce programs	SC								A
Action 4:	Consider claw back provisions in all incentive packages to ensure compliance with stated agreements	SC								A
Action 5:	Augment statewide incentives (i.e. the job tax credit program) with local resources in target industries and priority investment areas	SC								E
Action 6:	Tie any incentives to businesses with less than five (5) employees to participating in the County's entrepreneurial program	SC								A
<b>Objective #4</b>	<b>Create an Economic Development Investment Fund as a long-term investment strategy for capital project needs</b>									
Action 1:	Define a funding program that brings together County and municipal participation. Recommendation of a dedicated real property tax millage	SC								G
Action 2:	Define the potential uses of the annual contributions to [1] site development; [2] land acquisition; [3] speculative building development; and [4] infrastructure investment costs related to specific economic development projects	SC								A
Action 3:	Enable the use of the resources as either a direct-pay approach or the ability to bond the revenue stream	SC								A
<b>COMMUNITY OUTREACH</b>										
<b>Objective #1</b>	<b>Implement a proactive community engagement and education initiative</b>									
Action 1:	Hold an annual town hall meeting open to the public (and televised) to discuss accomplishments and ongoing efforts for the previous/upcoming year	SC	N							A
Action 2:	Implement the resident survey completed for the SEDP update each year. Use the results to determine panelist discussions/employment center outreach meetings	SC	N							A
Action 3:	Develop a 3-part 'Economic Development 101' series in partnership with SCPS that informs viewers of [1] What is economic development?; [2] How is it implemented; and [3] What are the costs and benefits?	SC, PS								b
Action 4:	Hold a community outreach meeting annually in each municipality (and the Basye area) to engage business leaders and residents on economic development issues, opportunities, and challenges those areas are facing	SC	N							A
Action 5:	Host one (1) to two (2) expert panelist discussions on topics of economic development each year. These discussions should address specific market/location opportunities and challenges facing Shenandoah County businesses	SC	C, I, R							B
Action 6:	Provide an online tool for citizens and groups to submit questions, provide feedback on content, or request meetings	SC	C							A

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated Cost	
		Public/NP	Private	'19	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
<b>COMMUNITY OUTREACH</b>											
<b>Objective #2</b>	<b>Establish a regular monthly newsletter focusing on recent, current, and future economic development activities</b>										
Action 1:	Highlight recent economic development activity and successes, maintaining a 'running tally' dashboard of accomplishments for the year	SC									A
Action 2:	Publish regular opinion editorials from economic development staff, partner organizations, or invited guests focused on topics that influence (or are influenced by) economic development	SC, VP, GO, VA									A
Action 3:	Implement, monitor, and report the results of opinion polls and business surveys through the newsletter	SC									A
Action 4:	Highlight a different County businesses (preferably from the target industries) in each newsletter	SC	I								A
Action 5:	Target writing two (2) or three (3) industry/market white papers each year focused on educating local businesses and residents about current or impending market shifts and how they will impact Shenandoah County	SC	I								A
<b>Objective #3</b>	<b>Create a performance dashboard to better engage County leadership</b>										
Action 1:	Establish a formal economic development dashboard to track performance across each of these topic areas: [1] retention, [2] recruitment, [3] entrepreneurial development, [4] workforce development, [5] fiscal sustainability	SC									A
Action 2:	Retention metrics should include: [1] site visits performed, [2] ombudsman assists, [3] jobs retained/expanded, [4] capital investment, [5] network event attendance, [6] prospect contacts	SC									A
Action 3:	Recruitment metrics should include: [1] number of prospects, [2] successful projects, [3] total jobs created, [4] average annual wage, [5] total capital investment, [6] debrief highlights from lost opportunities	SC									A
Action 4:	Entrepreneurial metrics should include: [1] enrollment inquiries, [2] business enrollment, [3] graduations, [4] jobs created, [5] debrief on businesses leaving the program	SC									A
Action 5:	Workforce metrics should include: [1] programs offered, [2] program applications and enrollment, [3] internships, apprenticeships, and employment placements, [4] businesses assisted, [5] business inquiries	SC									A
Action 6:	Fiscal sustainability metrics should include: [1] number of incentives, [2] value of incentives, [3] jobs created/preserved from incentives, [4] capital investment creates, [5] new tax revenues, [6] other benefits (i.e. infrastructure investments)	SC									A
Action 7:	Provide regular updates to the County elected leadership. Recommend quarterly	SC									A
<b>Objective #4</b>	<b>Improve awareness and relationships with the business and economic development community</b>										
Action 1:	Enhance and expand relationships with site selectors by hosting an annual networking event within Shenandoah County	SC, VP, GO, VA	R								B
Action 2:	Cohost a networking/marketing event annually with the Chamber of Commerce and the Shenandoah Valley Partnership	SC, VP, GO, VA	R, I, C								B
Action 3:	Host quarterly/semi-annual networking event for local business leaders, focusing on specific industry sectors for each event	SC	I								B
Action 4:	Hold one (1) or two (2) lecture/guest speaker events; bringing in regional/national industry leaders to discuss sector/market trends. This can be co-hosted with regional partners	SC	I, C								B
Action 5:	Partner with the Chamber's Economic Development Council to host a "State of the County" event for business leaders to discuss activities over the past year, successes, opportunities, and share the business plan for the next year	SC	I								A
Action 6:	Create a 'Lessons Learned' report every year that details the successes and opportunities to share with the site selector and investor contacts	SC									A

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated Cost
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<b>COMMUNITY OUTREACH</b>										
<b>Objective #5</b>	<b>Improve electronic and social media presence and activity</b>									
Action 1:	Implement the web-based recommendations laid out in the other sections of this implementation matrix (i.e. locally managed site database) and populate the economic development website accordingly	SC	C	■						C
Action 2:	Ensure all active links and materials are current and functional at least once a month	SC	C	■	■	■	■	■	■	Included in wed design
Action 3:	Create on-site content for new tabs named "What We Do", "How We Do It", and "Why We Do It"	SC	C	■						Included in wed design
Action 4:	Create a citizens section on the website with access to educational information, the annual survey and results information, contact information for the community liaison, and the newsletter registration	SC	C	■						Included in wed design
Action 5:	Increase activity across all social media platforms (i.e. LinkedIn, Instagram...) to no less than once a week	SC		■	■	■	■	■	■	A
Action 6:	Create more consistent press releases, opinion editorials, and local media articles to no less than once per month	SC		■	■	■	■	■	■	A
<b>ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNICATION</b>										
<b>Objective #1</b>	<b>Enhance strategic relationships with local, regional, and statewide implementation partners</b>									
Action 1:	Create an understanding of economic development roles for the County and each municipality for economic development, focusing County efforts on target industry recruitment and retention	SC, SM		■	■	■	■	■	■	A
Action 2:	Hold quarterly meetings with municipal representatives to discuss and update on economic development activity/needs	SC, SM		■	■	■	■	■	■	A
Action 3:	Attend quarterly/semi-annual strategic meeting schedule with regional and statewide partners including: the Shenandoah Valley Partnership; Go Virginia; and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership	SC, VP, GO, VA		■	■	■	■	■	■	A
Action 4:	Create a semiannual coordination meeting schedule with representatives from Frederick County, the City of Winchester, Rockingham County, and the City of Winchester; inviting the state and regional partners	SC, VP, GO, VA		■	■	■	■	■	■	A
Action 5:	Provide semi-annual reports to regional and statewide partners on activity and successes (can also serve as part of communication with the County)	SC, VP, GO, VA		■	■	■	■	■	■	A
Action 6:	Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce to define their role in economic development efforts as a partner and liaison between the business community and the County's economic development effort	SC, CC		■	■	■	■	■	■	A
<b>Objective #2</b>	<b>Fund economic development commensurate with outcome expectations</b>									
Action 1:	Right-size' implementation expectations to current funding and staffing levels; focusing on [1] retention and expansion efforts, [2] tourism development; [3] workforce liaison; and [4] leverage regional efforts for business recruitment	SC	N, I, O	■						A
Action 2:	Increase funding to accommodate more proactive entrepreneurial development efforts; enabling the hiring of a small business development specialist	SC, SM			■					A
Action 3:	Increase funding to accommodate more proactive asset development; enabling public private partnerships for pad ready site development, speculative building development, and asset management	SC, SM				■				A
Action 4:	Increase funding to accommodate more proactive business recruitment efforts; enabling the hiring of an economic development manager	SC, SM					■			G

SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA Strategic Economic Development Plan Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing (Year)						Estimated Cost
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<b>ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNICATION</b>										
<b>Objective #3</b>	<b>Engage with the private sector to explore the potential for a public-private partnership economic development entity</b>									
	Action 1: Increase participation on economic development events and programming	SC	I, O, F, R							A
	Action 2: Build partnerships with businesses/property owners to further economic development projects	SC	I, O, F, R							A
	Action 3: Engage business leaders to invest in the County's economic development efforts	SC	I, O, F, R							A
	Action 4: Establish a public-private economic development organization to jointly lead economic development efforts	SC	I, O, F, R							A
<b>Objective #4</b>	<b>Activate engaged Shenandoah County citizens in community outreach and implementation</b>									
	Action 1: Recruit and train two (2) community advocates each year to be vocal supporters of economic development, having them prepared to lead public discussions on economic development in general or on specific issues	SC	N							A
	Action 2: Identify and train at least one (1) business ambassadors for each of the target industry sectors to assist the economic development staff in retention and recruitment visits	SC	I							A
	Action 3: Develop a formal business mentor program, starting with at least two (2) mentors available in each of the County's commission districts or by business sector using a recognized mentorship training program such as SCORE	SC	I, N							C

**LEGEND**

**Implementation Leaders**

Public:

- SC - Shenandoah County
- PS - Shenandoah County Public Schools
- EB - Town of Edinburg
- MJ - Town of Mount Jackson
- NM - Town of New Market
- SB - Town of Strasburg
- TB = Town of Toms Brook
- WS - Town of Woodstock
- SM - All Shenandoah County Municipalities
- VA - Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Partners:

- CC - Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce
- ED - Virginia Economic Development Partnership
- GO - Go Virginia Region 8
- ID - Industrial Development Authority
- LF - Lord Fairfax Community College
- UT - Local Utilities
- VP - Shenandoah Valley Partnership
- WF - Workforce Partners

Private

- C - Consultant
- F - Financial Institutions
- I - Industry Leaders
- N - Neighborhood Residents
- O - Property Owners
- R - Realtors/Brokers

**Cost Estimate Legend:**

- A - Under \$1,000
- B - \$1,000 to \$10,000
- C - \$10,000 to \$50,000
- D - \$50,000 to \$100,000
- E - \$100,000 to \$250,000
- F - \$250,000 to \$500,000
- G - Over \$500,000

-  Action
-  Implementation