



CHAPTER 11

Goal 7: To Promote Economic Development

Successful efforts to attract and retain businesses in the Freedom community depend largely upon the county's ability to compete for commerce and industry at a regional level, as well as ensuring that suitable land is available and easily accessible. Communities around the country are realizing the importance of economic development for a vital economy. In addition to providing jobs for the residents of the community, economic development in the form of industry and neighborhood businesses contributes to the jurisdiction's tax base, the gross revenues provided by property tax that serve as a base for setting the budget and providing services.

In general, business and industry typically costs the jurisdiction less in public services than do residential uses. Commercial and industrial uses average roughly 56 cents worth of services for each property tax dollar contributed, while residential uses consume well over a dollar in services for each property tax dollar contributed. Therefore, increasing the percentage of the jurisdiction's tax base that can be attributed to commercial and industrial uses increases the amount of tax revenue available to pay for services for all segments of the community. Business and industry also create opportunities for local citizens to work in the community where they live, eliminating lengthy commutes. Along with the benefits of new industrial and commercial development, however, are potential impacts of higher local traffic volumes on the existing state and county roadway network.

A. Existing Economic Development in Freedom

Due to the fact that Freedom is largely unincorporated, the majority of economic development activities promoting Freedom occur at the county level. The Carroll County Department of Economic Development has a professional staff whose collective responsibility is the promotion of Carroll County as an ideal location for prospective industries and businesses. The Economic Development Department maintains an inventory of existing sites in and around the Freedom area for marketing purposes. The inventory contains extensive information on each site, such as the availability of public water and sewer, roadway access, zoning, etc., as well as aerial photographs of the potential sites. Staff travels with prospective business representatives to the site locations to provide the prospect with current information and a field inspection prior to an investment decision being made. Previous county marketing efforts have successfully attracted several large industrial concerns including London Fog, DAL Tile, and Northrup Grumman. Commercial interest in the Freedom community has also been escalating over the last few years, as evidenced by the recent investments in the area by Wal-Mart, Safeway Food, Food Lion, and several well-established banking institutions.

On a local level, the South Carroll Business Association, formed in January of 1995, is a non-profit group of local merchants interested in working cooperatively toward a more prosperous community. When this plan was drafted, the association had over 170 members representing



many facets of the local economy in Freedom. The association worked closely with county and state representatives recently on a streetscaping plan for the MD 26 corridor. That plan envisions a retail corridor that is attractively landscaped as a means of softening the image of the MD 26 corridor. The association works toward an atmosphere of mutual benefit for the member merchants, thereby providing support for the recruitment and retention of new and existing businesses in Freedom.

B. Recommendations to Promote Economic Development

Although existing economic development and marketing efforts have been successful in the past, the following recommendations are made to improve upon past successes and to assist in countywide efforts to attract and retain quality industry and business to the community.

Comprehensively review all proposed commercial and industrial rezonings for consistency with the plan

- To achieve the desired balance between the expansion of industrial and commercial development opportunity and sensible and complementary economic development planning, it is strongly recommended that future zoning decisions regarding commercial and industrial development take the following items into account:
 - the education and income level of those who will work in the development versus the education and income level of local residents
 - costs for public facility and infrastructure improvements brought about by the proposed development (i.e., roadway improvements, water/sewer plant expansions, etc.)
 - fire, emergency services, and police protection impacts
 - adjacent property usage and zoning
 - citizen participation

Promote the “revitalization” of the MD 26 corridor

- One of the principal concerns raised by local residents during the community visioning sessions and the subsequent citizen survey was the lack of a sense of place in the area and the relationship of MD 26 to the community. MD 26 is becoming exactly what the 1977 Freedom Comprehensive AMini@ Plan had not intended -- a crowded state road with no access control for sprawling vehicle-oriented retail centers. While the intention of the 1977 Freedom Comprehensive AMini@ Plan was correct, the lack of implementation measures and controls in the zoning ordinance creates the need for a new commitment within the 2001 Plan to achieve what the 1977 Freedom Comprehensive AMini@ Plan did not. Part of the revitalization of this corridor includes the Boulevard District recommendation covered in Chapter 5.

Expand industrial land inventory in Freedom

- Existing industrial land in the Freedom community is located primarily in three locations: at the MD 26 and MD 32 intersection in Eldersburg; at the MD 32 and Raincliffe Road in Sykesville; and at the intersection of MD 26 and MD 97 on the western boundary of the

area. Of the three locations, the expansion of the existing industrial park along MD 26 at the Central Maryland Distribution Center is recommended. An additional 75 acres at this location creates an opportunity to capitalize on an already successful industrial initiative.

Adopt an Employment Campus zoning district

- The current zoning ordinance does not include exclusive categories that promote employment opportunities for residents in the area. The creation of a new “Employment Campus” zoning district would assist in the enhancement of economic development.

Designate the Springfield State Hospital Complex as an Employment Campus Overlay

- The countywide Master Plan recommends the creation of a new business and office zoning classification that could create additional employment opportunities in the Freedom area. The Springfield Complex could be one possible site for an Employment Campus.

Develop an economic development strategy for Freedom

- Currently, the county does not have economic development plans specific to each CPA that include goals and implementation measures. Business leaders and the citizens of Freedom need to come together to develop recommendations for job creation and the possibility of forward funding infrastructure that could assist the area in achieving economic self sufficiency.

C. Fiscal Impacts

The fiscal impacts of the successful implementation of the recommendations contained in this chapter could be considerable. Increasing the amount of land available for local retail, commercial, and industrial activities, the creation of a Boulevard District, and the expansion of the Central Maryland Distribution Center have a positive fiscal impact on the county in general and on the Freedom community in particular. While forward funding for some necessary infrastructure projects to attract investors, such as road building or water and sewer provisions, may cost the county in the near term, the long-term benefits should negate any short-term capital costs.