

OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Geographically, Frederick County is strategically placed in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States and along major North/South and East/West transportation routes. This is a valuable asset to companies serving the North American and European markets.

The County's location places its businesses halfway between the markets of the north and south, within a one-day haul of 50% of the U.S. population. Over 60% of the goods manufactured in the United States are distributed from the 750-mile (1,207 kilometers) area.

In addition to being half way between Boston and Atlanta, Winchester-Frederick County is well positioned equidistant between Los Angeles and London. For national and international companies, being in the Eastern Time Zone maximizes their hours of operations, which helps to improve efficiencies.

Excellent road, rail, inland ocean port and the Dulles World Cargo Center provide access to the major markets in North America, Latin America, and globally.

Interstate 81 runs directly through the County. Several major airports are within 100 miles of Frederick County, including Washington-Dulles International Airport (IAD), Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI), and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA). Frederick County is home to a growing regional general aviation airport. These assets support access to Frederick County's business development opportunities.

With the formation of the Washington-Baltimore Metropolitan Statistical Area after the 1990 US Census, the sixth largest USA market begins at the County Line. This close proximity to Washington D.C. also provides access to the unique opportunities associated with the Federal Government and the County's location is supportive of those policies established for purposes of Homeland Security.

In addition to the ideal geographic location of Frederick County, other significant strengths of the Frederick County market, particular to attracting new office and industrial development, include favorable tax rates, quality of life, numerous education options, nationally recognized healthcare provider, workforce, and a diverse current office and industrial community. Frederick County is currently the site of several government facilities, including, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Army Corps of Engineers, and a recently selected site for a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Records Storage facility.

Frederick County has a consistent and competitive real estate tax rate in comparison to neighboring communities. Supported by a proactive Economic Development Authority (EDA), the areas workforce has a high work ethic and a low turnover rate.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Current office and industrial operations within the Community provide for diversity in current business markets. The economic strength of the area is further enhanced by the fact that the area is not linked to one major industry or employer. There is a redundancy in resources offered at certain business parks.

FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE

Frederick County should focus on targeted office and industrial business development opportunities over the next twenty years (as outlined in the Introduction).

No business development marketing strategy will be effective if sufficient acreage has not been designated to accommodate desired business uses in suitable key locations. Area Plans should continue to identify and incorporate ample areas of business and industrial land use.

Frederick County supports green initiatives in the field of economic development. Viable development initiatives should be recognized and their implementation encouraged. Such an example is rail access and transportation which will become more valuable and expected in industrial settings due to desire to operate effectively and efficiently.

Frederick County should be proactive in ensuring the resources necessary for business development are planned for in a viable way and available to support identified office and industrial users.

With regards to water, waste water treatment, and electricity, manufacturers will require adequate supply and availability, but will also be interested in quality and service reliability. There is a finite capacity of these resources that must be managed accordingly.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The value of office and industrial business development to Frederick County is immeasurable. As part of the County's economic development effort, office and industrial growth is a key component for ensuring a broad selection of employment opportunities for the citizens of Frederick County.

The continuation of a low residential tax rate is a direct result of the expansion of the commercial and industrial tax. Currently commercial and industrial tax revenue accounts for approximately 13% of the County's tax base. The County's goal indicates this should be around 25% to ensure a balanced fiscal environment.

Tax revenue derived from the average single family residence is approximately fifty percent of the cost of service provided for that same residence. The County's fiscal survival is dependent upon recruiting office and industrial occupants which offset those residential costs.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Overall, a sound office and industrial business development strategy will result in the conservation of a variety of finite resources and promote a high quality of life for the citizens of Frederick County.

GOALS/STRATEGIES

GOAL: IDENTIFY AND RECOGNIZE AREAS IN THE COUNTY MOST STRATEGICALLY SUITED FOR OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIES:

- Complete review of area land use plans to ensure sufficient acreage is designated for office and industrial uses.
- All infrastructure, such as voice and data fiber, electric, water, wastewater and natural gas, should be extended to areas identified for office and industrial uses and non-rural residential areas.
- The rezoning process should be examined and streamlined as appropriate in order to encourage landowners of properties identified in Area Plans (see Appendix I) to proceed with rezoning.

GOAL: PROACTIVELY ATTRACT DESIRED BUSINESS ENTITIES

STRATEGIES:

- Review and revise the office and manufacturing zoning districts to further encourage development of targeted industries.
- Continue to examine and fund business location marketing studies that build or modify the current business base, to help the County forward its goal of increased income for its citizens and tax value for the County.

GOAL: CONSIDER REGULATIONS ENCOURAGING AND/OR REQUIRING SERVICE REDUNDANCY IN OFFICE & INDUSTRIAL AREAS

STRATEGIES:

- Create incentives for industrial site developers to implement service redundancy.