

General Development Plan 2008

Background Report on Economic Development and Revitalization



March 2008

I. Introduction

Anne Arundel County's economy is one of the strongest in Maryland. This vibrant economy is driven by the following combination of elements:

- A diverse, world class business community with strong emphasis on technology that interacts with regional, national, and global markets;
- Excellent transportation connections to regional, national, and global markets;
- A world class workforce of highly educated and highly skilled people; and
- The Chesapeake Bay shoreline, Historic Annapolis, the Naval Academy and many scenic waterfront areas that make Anne Arundel County an attractive location for residents and visitors alike.

In 2007, Anne Arundel County Government received its first Triple-A bond rating in history. The rating reflects the County's strong economic base and its above-average wealth statistics. Ensuring that Anne Arundel County's strong business climate continues and that the county remains a leader in all respects is a priority.

II. Employment Characteristics and Trends

One indicator of the County's strong economy is the amount of job growth experienced over the past two decades. The County has consistently been gaining an average of 5,000 new jobs per year. Between 1990 and 2000 employment in the County grew by 18 percent from approximately 252,000 jobs to nearly 298,000 jobs, representing one of the strongest job growth rates in the Baltimore region. The County gained an additional 21,000 jobs between 2000 and 2005, and Countywide employment is forecast to reach 460,000 by the year 2035.

Current employment in Anne Arundel County is distributed over a wide range of industrial sectors. Sectors such as Aerospace/Defense, Scientific & Technical, Health Care, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Support Services and Construction have led business growth in the County since the year 2000. The technology sector, for example, grew by 11 percent between 2000 and 2005 and employs over 18,000 people. This sector which includes computer engineering, software engineering, electrical engineering, and life sciences, will continue to grow along with other technology-driven industry due to the location of Fort Meade, the National Security Agency (NSA), and the many defense contractors located in the County.

In fact, national defense and intelligence industries comprise the major employers in Anne Arundel County. Fort George G. Meade represents the county's largest employer with over 42,000 jobs. While the primary function at Fort Meade is Department of Defense intelligence training, there are also over 78 tenant organizations at the military base including NSA.

Innovation and entrepreneurship in the County are fueled by the presence of NSA as well as over 145 defense contractors. Anne Arundel County is home to 8 out of the top 10

defense contractors in the nation. For example, Northrop Grumman has located its electronic systems headquarters in Linthicum. Its primary initiatives include defense electronics, precision weapons, and air and space management systems. There are currently 7,500 employees here with more growth expected. These major defense contractors as well as young start-ups continue to provide new or improved solutions to the technology needs of the federal government.

State and County governments comprise the second largest employment group in the County. Anne Arundel County Public Schools system is the second largest employer in the County with 14,310 employees including full, part-time and contractual positions. BWI Airport employs over 10,600 employees, and Maryland State employees and Anne Arundel County government employees (other than Public Schools) combined account for nearly 13,000 jobs.

In addition to Northrop Grumman, other major private sector employers in the County include Southwest Airlines (3,200 jobs), Anne Arundel Medical Center (2,800 jobs), Baltimore Washington Medical Center (2,500 jobs), Computer Sciences Corporation (1,800 jobs), and ARINC (1,300 jobs).

III. Federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Initiative

The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) resulted in decisions whereby a number of military positions are planning for relocation to the Fort George G. Meade military base in Anne Arundel County. It is anticipated that this relocation effort will bring both additional jobs and households to the County as well as to the region in general.

It is estimated that 22,000 new jobs will locate in Anne Arundel County as a direct result of BRAC: 5,695 new defense positions; 4,000 new jobs due to expansion of the National Security Agency; 10,000 new jobs to be located at a planned secured office complex to be developed under an Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) on the Fort Meade base; and 2,000 additional jobs attributed to government contractors or other service providers who will locate in the County as a result of the base realignment. Most of this job relocation and expansion will occur within the next five years, or by the year 2012 to 2014 timeframe. Many of these jobs are expected to be highly paid positions in information technology and related fields.



The expansion inside the Fort Meade base includes the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) which is scheduled to break ground for its new office in the spring of 2008, as well as the Defense Media/Media Publications Office, the Department of Adjudication, and the Office of Hearing and Appeals. In addition over 1.75 million

square feet of office space is proposed under the EUL, and nearly 7.0 million square feet is planned within the nearby Odenton Town Center that will assist in accommodating contractors who locate in the county to be near the government agencies on Fort Meade. This growth could result in an additional 4,500 households in Anne Arundel County.

IV. Targeted Growth Areas for Economic Development

The County's comprehensive plans, together with its designated Priority Funding Areas, work jointly to direct the majority of commercial and industrial growth to targeted growth areas and corridors as well as to designated town centers. The County's primary growth areas are described below.

BWI Airport Business District and Vicinity

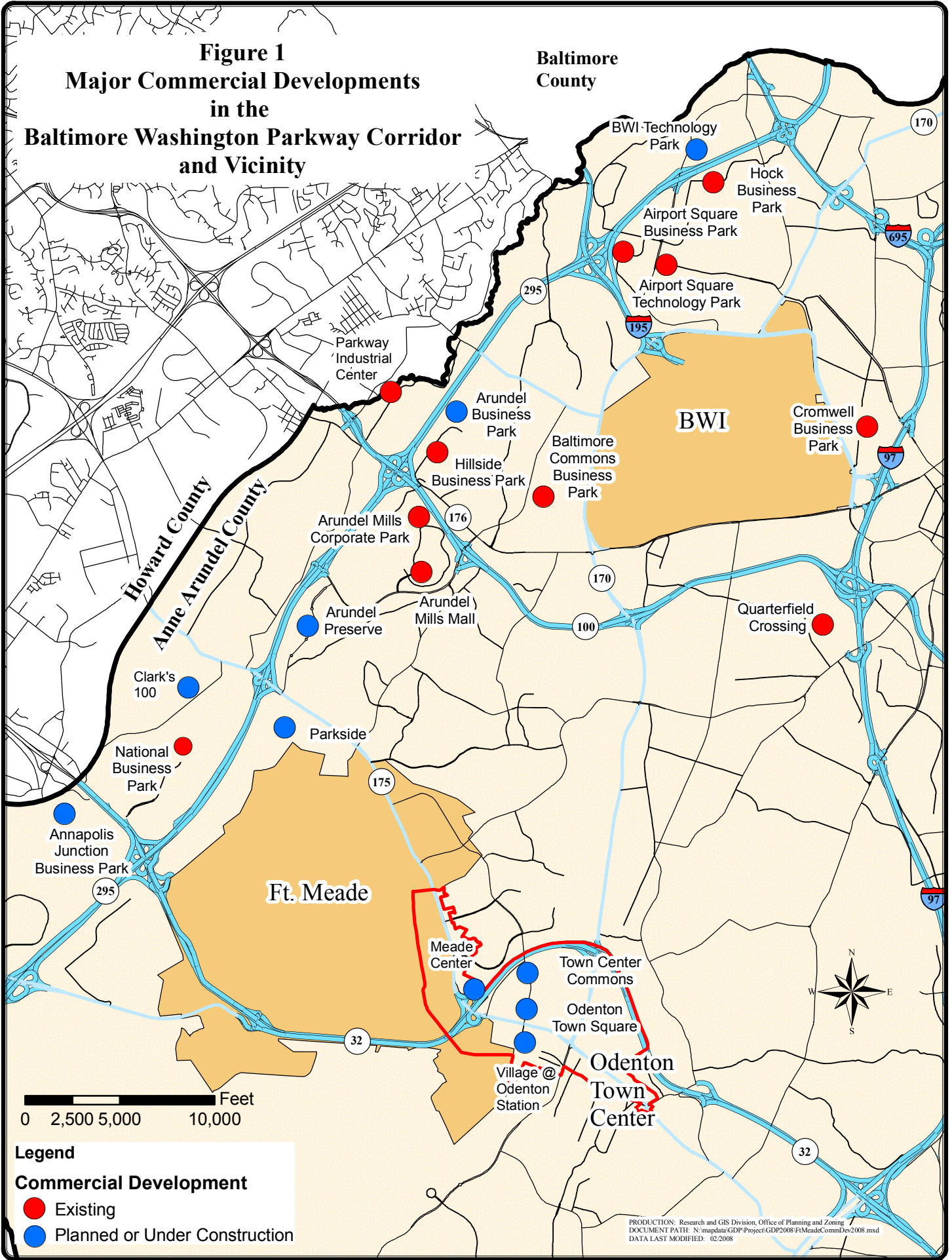


Many employers and industries have been attracted to Northern Anne Arundel County over the past few decades due to its status as an important East Coast transportation hub. The Baltimore Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) was ranked 26th among North American airports in 2005 with over 20.1 million passengers. The airport serves as a hub for Southwest Airlines, one of the nation's leading carriers. The BWI Rail Station is one of Amtrak's busiest and offers rail access to points north and south along the East Coast. In addition, MARC commuter trains serve as links to both Baltimore and Washington D.C. The nearby Port of Baltimore is the nation's 8th largest port based on value of cargo.

The airport and environs provide a strategic location for a variety of national and international firms, including Northrop Grumman Corporation. As seen in Figure 1, major businesses and technology parks have been developing fairly rapidly in the area over the past two decades, particularly along the Nursery Road corridor in Linthicum and west of the airport in Hanover. These include the Hock Business Park, Airport Square Technology Park, Cromwell Business Park, and Baltimore Commons Business Park. Other significant projects underway include the BWI Technology Park that will include nearly 600,000 SF of retail, flex and office space when completed, and the Preston Gateway Corporate Park in Hanover to include over one million SF of industrial space. Many of these office parks are occupied by defense-related contractors and support services that desire to locate near BWI Airport.



Figure 1
Major Commercial Developments
in the
Baltimore Washington Parkway Corridor
and Vicinity



0 2,500 5,000 10,000 Feet

- Legend**
- Commercial Development**
- Existing
 - Planned or Under Construction

PRODUCTION: Research and GIS Division, Office of Planning and Zoning
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The presence of BWI Airport has also attracted many national hotel chains to the area. There are as many as 40 hotels in close proximity to BWI, and at least five have been completed since 2006 including the Hilton Baltimore BWI Airport hotel, the Sheraton Baltimore Washington Airport Hotel, Staybridge Suites, and Towne Place Suites. Several other hotels are currently in the planning stages. The Crosswinds Resort is a planned mixed use project located within the Airport Square Technology Park that is to include an indoor aquatics center, five hotels, a conference center, and various retail uses. The nearby Hilton BWI has plans to expand to a second hotel combined with office and retail space.

Another potential mixed use project known as the BWI Town Center is in its early planning stages. A consortium of developers is working together to acquire properties west of the airport along Ridge Road and near the BWI Amtrak station. Concepts currently under consideration include a combination of office space, retail services, hotels, and possibly a residential component.



It is anticipated that Aerospace/Defense and Scientific & Technology companies will continue to locate in this area in the coming years. To this end, an important planning objective in the County is to promote a supporting business climate with adequate infrastructure, attractive surroundings, and

access to services. The BWI/Linthicum Small Area Plan in particular speaks to this objective and recommends that the County strive to attract high-quality businesses and technology parks to the BWI vicinity that will provide high-paying employment opportunities and will be designed in an attractive setting that includes open spaces, community spaces, and auxiliary commercial and retail uses to serve employers as well as local resident needs.

Baltimore Washington Parkway Corridor

Over the past several years the Baltimore Washington Parkway has been developing into the County's technology corridor. Many high-technology companies have chosen to locate along this corridor due to its good highway access, its strategic location between Baltimore and Washington, its proximity to the BWI Airport and major federal facilities such as Fort Meade, and the availability of developable land.

Two major development projects have served as catalysts to growth along the technology corridor: Arundel Mills Mall, a regional shopping complex with 1.4 million SF of retail space; and the National Business Park with over 1.9 million SF of Class A office space. National Business Park is home to



numerous defense contractors including Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Computer Sciences Corporation, Booz Allen Hamilton, General Dynamics Corporation, and L-3 Communications Holdings. Major commercial office developments currently underway include Arundel Mills Corporate Park, home to General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems division as well as office, hotel and retail space. A primary tenant in the completed office park will be Baltimore Washington Medical Center with offices for primary care, specialty medical practices, and an ambulatory surgery center. Other major developments include an expansion of National Business Park; the new Annapolis Junction Business Park that will include over 2 million SF of office and retail space; and redevelopment plans for the Laurel Racetrack to include a new clubhouse, hotel, and retail and office space. In all, approximately 15 million square feet of commercial and office space is planned and in the pipeline in western Anne Arundel County, including the Trammel Crow Enhanced Use Lease at Fort Meade.



In addition to these important commercial office projects, there are three large scale mixed use projects planned along the BW Parkway corridor. Arundel Preserve, currently under construction, is a 270-acre office, retail, hotel, and residential mixed use development located along the Parkway north of MD 175. Across MD 175, the Parkside mixed use project is planned to include over 1,000 residential units as well as office and retail space. West of the Parkway, another mixed use site known as Clarks 100 is planned to include an expansion of the National Business Park. Many of these developers have extensive reach for tenants and the ability to attract nationally recognized businesses and employers to the area.

Odenton Town Center

Odenton has been targeted as a mixed use town center in the County's comprehensive plans for many years. Its location at approximately equal distances from Baltimore, Washington and Annapolis, as well as being located along the MARC commuter rail, makes it a prime location for a West County activity center. The Town Center includes over 1,600 acres centered around the Odenton MARC station and located just east of Fort Meade along MD 32. The overall concept has been to develop a transit-oriented center with a compact, mixed use urban core designed so that jobs, housing, shopping and other services are within walking distance of each other.

In 2004 the County adopted an updated and enhanced Odenton Town Center Master Plan to guide development of the town center. The Master Plan provides a significant new level of planning guidance compared to previous plans. The Plan established seven new mixed use zoning sub-areas as well as regulatory blocks that govern development criteria such as permitted uses, bulk regulations and densities. It also includes functional planning controls as well as design standards for such features as architecture, open space, activity areas, parking and landscaping.

Implementation of the Odenton Town Center Plan is an economic development priority for the County. Since adoption of the master plan, major development projects in the planning stages include Odenton Town Square, a 24-acre transit-oriented mixed use project; the Odenton Health and Technology Center; the Village at Odenton Station; and redevelopment of the Nevamar property, home of a former industrial plant.

With the planned expansion of Fort Meade under the BRAC initiative and the increasing number of federal contractors locating near Fort Meade and NSA, it is an opportune time to move forward with development of the Odenton Town Center. The Office of Planning and Zoning together with Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation are taking the lead in promoting and facilitating development in the town center to help it reach its potential. The creation of a special funding mechanism is being explored to provide the financing needed to build the necessary infrastructure. Adequate infrastructure is of primary importance to allow accelerated, comprehensive development of the town center to occur within the time frame of the approaching market demand.

Parole Town Center

The Parole Town Center is the County's activity center serving central and southern Anne Arundel County. The Parole Growth Management Area (PGMA) encompasses 1,500 acres just west of the City of Annapolis and includes the Westfield Annapolis Mall and the Anne Arundel Medical Center; several business parks along Bestgate Road and Jennifer Road; the Annapolis Harbor Center, Festival at Riva, and Forest Plaza shopping centers; and several office complexes along Riva Road.

The Parole Urban Design Concept Plan has guided development in the Parole Town Center since 1994. Although much of the town center is already developed, the area continues to grow, adding new businesses, hotels and residential uses. Redevelopment projects are planned as well including the recent expansion of the Westfield



Annapolis Mall. The most significant project underway is the Annapolis Towne Centre at Parole, a first class mixed-use redevelopment project at the site of the former Parole Plaza. When completed it will include 675,000 SF of retail space, 92,000 SF of office space, and 900 residential units as well as a 200-room hotel.

Glen Burnie Town Center

The Glen Burnie Town Center is the oldest of the County's designated town centers and represents one of the County's most successful redevelopment projects. The town center is approximately 44 acres in size and originally developed as a local activity center at the intersection of Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard and Crain Highway.

The town center was designated as an Urban Renewal Area in the 1980s and has since undergone substantial revitalization. Efforts of local business and community leaders, supported by major investment by the County and State, have resulted in a major upgrade of Glen Burnie's commercial core. Over \$24 million in public investment has resulted in more than \$25 million in private investment. The vibrant, mixed-use Town Center today includes the State multipurpose center, the North County campus of Anne Arundel Community College, a municipal parking garage, new retail facilities including a 38,000 SF grocery store, market-rate and senior housing complexes, offices and restaurants.

Most recently, the County and State have partnered to implement the Glen Burnie Gateways project with funding through the State's Neighborhood Conservation Program. This project will focus on streetscape improvements along Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard leading into the town center.

While the five targeted growth areas described above include many of the County's major employers and commercial developments, there are numerous other local commercial hubs and activity centers that are important at the community and neighborhood level and contribute in large part to local quality of life. Several of these were identified through the Small Area Plan process as important areas for improvements, and the County has recently funded an Urban Design Studies capital program to develop concept plans to improve these areas. Preservation, enhancement, and revitalization of these hubs and centers is also an important economic development goal in the County.

V. Current Goals and Strategies for Economic Development

The 1997 General Development Plan states that a "healthy economy is essential to the continued growth and development of the County. This would provide the fiscal strength to provide services desired by existing and future residents."

The 1997 Plan predicted that the economic and population growth rate over the next twenty years would be slower than in the boom years of the 1980's. It suggested that the County designate sufficient strategically located land for economic expansion to take advantage of market demands. The County should also provide assurances to the business community that the kinds of infrastructure investments necessary to promote a viable economy are planned and that an implementation strategy is followed.

The primary economic development goal of the 1997 Plan was to:

"Maintain a favorable climate to retain and attract diverse business and industry to provide jobs, income and tax base, to achieve sustained and diversified growth, and to allow the County to meet the needs of its citizens."

Policy recommendations to help achieve this goal included:

- expansion of industrial and business growth by combining public and private resources;
- location of industry, commerce and housing with best access to employees, customers and suppliers;
- direction of economic development efforts to designated areas of the County;
- retention and expansion of existing businesses through financial assistance training and tax incentives;
- streamlining of the development permit process; and
- pursuit of Federal and State funding for revitalization.

Through a multi-faceted implementation program as further described in the following section, the County has accomplished many of these recommendations. These accomplishments include the attraction of many first class businesses and office parks to the County as described previously, the adoption of new Mixed Use zoning categories, the creation of a commercial revitalization program including the designation of specific revitalization corridors, the development of a tax incentive program for revitalization in designated areas, development of urban design concept plans for targeted areas through the Small Area Plan process, adoption of a new Odenton Town Center Master Plan, the creation of small business development and workforce development programs, and participation in State-funded programs such as the Neighborhood Conservation Program.

The various programs and initiatives used to implement these strategies are discussed in more detail in the following section.

VI. Economic Development Program Implementation

The County's overall economic development program consists of several main components that collectively serve to accomplish its goals and objectives. The major program components are described below.

Industry Targets

The County has identified a select set of industry targets toward which its marketing efforts will be concentrated. These targets were selected based on their compatibility with County attributes, their potential for retaining, expanding and attracting new operations, and the outlook for the industry. While the County will continue to attract and support other industries as well, the selection of targets will allow the County to best leverage its strengths. These industry targets include:

- Aerospace/Defense
- Science & Technology
- Professional and technical services
- Health Care
- Manufacturing
- Construction



The pursuit of these targets must be supported with industry knowledge, very crucial strategies, policy improvements where needed, and relationship building with firms in the industry. The goal is to diversify the County's economy so that it is not overly dependent on a limited number of industries for growth.

Business Financing Assistance

Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC) operates two loan programs that provide direct financial assistance to businesses. The Arundel Business Loan Fund (ABL) provides loans to a maximum of \$300,000 to new and expanding businesses in the County. The loans are guaranteed through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and can be used for capital, equipment, or other improvements. The ABL Fund has provided over \$9.5 million in financing to 81 businesses over the last ten years.

AAEDC also provides county financial incentive for extraordinary economic-development opportunities through the Incentive Loan Program. This loan provides a local match focused primarily on projects involving proposed State incentives from the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development.

AAEDC also recently created a Business Corridor Investment Loan Program (BCILP) which offers zero interest loans of up to \$35,000 to qualified business owners for improvements including building exterior renovations, landscaping or other site improvements, and interior improvements. Four areas in the County have been designated for pilot programs including the Ritchie Highway corridor in Brooklyn Park, the Glen Burnie Town Center, the Mountain Road corridor in Pasadena, and the West Street Revitalization District in Annapolis. Since the program's inception in May 2007, BCILP has assisted three businesses and provided \$60,000 in financing.

AAEDC also partners with the State Departments of Business and Economic Development (DBED) and Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to provide local business financing alternatives.

Brownfields Program

Brownfields are industrial or commercial properties that are either abandoned or underutilized and are located in urban or suburban areas. They are often abandoned or underutilized due to concerns about cleanup costs and liability issues. The Brownfield redevelopment process allows underutilized, previously developed sites to be put back on the tax rolls, thereby diverting new development from greenfields. Redevelopment of these underutilized properties helps to direct new growth to areas where public infrastructure is already in place, increases the tax base and creates new job opportunities. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) offers financial incentives to property owners to encourage the redevelopment and reuse of contaminated and potentially contaminated properties. This program can be used to leverage private sector investment to accomplish needed environmental clean up while adding environmentally clean industrial and commercial uses to its land and tax bases. In addition, AAEDC

assists clients in obtaining Smart Growth Certification and supporting conditional grant funding from the State for Phase I and II environmental assessments. In turn these sites may take advantage of tax credits for any new investments made to the site.

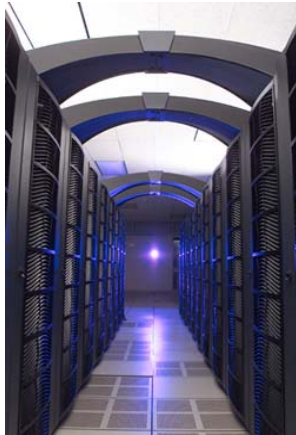
Workforce Development

AAEDC works in partnership with Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC) and Anne Arundel Community College's Center for Workforce Solutions to provide a link between workforce development and economic development. AAEDC manages a Business Outreach Program through which it works with County employers to identify workforce needs and issues. AAWDC conducts recruitment fairs and job placement services to assist in industry-specific recruitment needs. In addition, AAEDC's Workforce Training Partnership provides grants to eligible companies for technical training and skills development with assistance from the Center for Workforce Solutions.

Small Business Development

In Anne Arundel County, 98% of the businesses are considered small businesses, with fewer than 100 employees. The Small Business Resource Center located within AAEDC counsels an average of 50 small business entrepreneurs each month. Through AAEDC's Arundel Business Loan Fund, \$728,000 in approved SBA guaranteed loans went to support five small businesses in the County during the current fiscal year. AAEDC will continue to provide services that help small businesses grow and prosper.

Technology Development



The Chesapeake Innovation Center (CIC) is Anne Arundel County's first Homeland Security-focused business incubator. The CIC connects major users of security technology with small companies and early stage technologies at the forefront of innovation. Since the CIC was launched in 2003, five member companies have graduated and over 120 entrepreneurs have participated in the CIC's technology matchmaking program, TechBridge. A new international affiliate program attracted five companies from Finland interested in learning how to do business with homeland and national security companies in the United States. CIC supporting partners include Northrop Grumman, ARINC, NSA, Boeing, and Athlone Global.

Commercial Revitalization

The 1997 GDP recommended the development of a program of incentives for the redevelopment of existing commercial sites. Over the past ten years the County has initiated a variety of programs and incentives to address the needs of the County's older commercial areas. Using these programs, many vacant or underutilized commercial properties, including Burwood Plaza, the former Hechinger's site and the Glen Burnie Mall, have been successfully redeveloped.

There are four State designated revitalization areas in Anne Arundel County: Brooklyn Park, Glen Burnie, Odenton and Deale. The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Neighborhood Business Works Program provides flexible gap financing to small businesses starting up or expanding in these areas. Loans and grants range from \$25,000 to \$500,000 up to 50% of the total project cost. These areas also qualify for priority consideration when applying for assistance through various other state programs to enhance community revitalization efforts.

There are also sixteen County designated Commercial Revitalization areas generally located in the northern and western parts of the County. The County's Commercial Revitalization program provides property tax credits for up to five years equal to the incremental increase in real property tax assessment for improvements of at least \$50,000. Types of uses permitted in these areas have been expanded to give more flexibility in redevelopment. These areas may also qualify for multiple liquor licenses to attract nationally known chains as a tool to reinvigorate these areas.

Arts & Entertainment Districts

The Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development has established an Arts and Entertainment District revitalization program as a way to stimulate the economy and promote redevelopment in targeted areas. Under this program, local jurisdictions can apply for state designation for Arts and Entertainment Districts within their boundaries. The benefits offered to designated districts include property tax credits for renovation of buildings that create live-work space for artists or space for arts and entertainment enterprises, income tax deductions for income derived from artistic work sold by qualifying residing artists, and other tax exemptions.

The County is interested in applying for an Arts and Entertainment District designation for an area in Brooklyn Park. If successful, this will serve to enhance current revitalization efforts in the Brooklyn Park area by creating an Arts and Entertainment district that will encourage new investment in the area, support the Chesapeake Arts Center, and lead to new affordable housing and business opportunities. The district would be aimed at developing new artist live-work space, creating new investment in workforce housing, attracting new arts and entertainment businesses and supporting the growth of the Chesapeake Arts Center.

Agricultural Development

Anne Arundel County promotes and maintains agriculture as a viable sector of the County's economy. To supplement the County's Agricultural Preservation Programs operated under the Department of Recreation and Parks, AAEDC is working with an Agricultural Development Advisory Committee, the local Soil Conservation District, the University of Maryland's Cooperative Extension Service, the Anne Arundel County Farm Bureau, and other



partners to develop outreach programs and assist local farmers. Efforts have included outreach materials to promote local farmers' markets, developing strategies to establish niche markets with new agricultural products, assistance to farmers in applying for grant funds, and development of programs to support the agricultural community and agribusiness.

Tourism Development

Tourism is one of Anne Arundel County's most vital economic engines, generating millions of dollars in consumer spending and tax revenues for the local budget.

Anne Arundel County leads all other Maryland counties in travel-generated expenditures. According to a recent Global Insight study, nearly six million visitors to Anne Arundel County left behind more than \$1.8 billion in new revenues in 2006. This figure accounts for 17% of the State of Maryland's total visitor expenditures.

Of the \$1.8 billion tourism dollars spent in Anne Arundel County, \$1.1 billion went to transportation; \$222.6 million was spent on food and beverages; and \$143 million covered lodging costs. Visitors spent \$108.7 million in entertainment and \$183.4 million while shopping. Miscellaneous expenditures accounted for another \$32.1 million.



Travel expenditures in Anne Arundel County generated \$644.7 million in payroll income for jobs directly related to tourism and another \$210.3 million for jobs indirectly impacted by tourism.

The travel industry generates \$65.9 million in tourism tax and supports 41,000 direct and indirect jobs. Jobs directly related to tourism account for 12% of Anne Arundel County's total employment.

Jobs indirectly related to tourism account for another 5.5% percent of the county's employment.

There are two organizations that contribute to the successful tourism industry in Anne Arundel County. The Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Conference and Visitors Bureau in partnership with AAEDC promote tourism throughout the county. Four Rivers: the Heritage Area of Annapolis, London Town and South County, is part of the Maryland Heritage Areas Program. The Heritage Area is located on the eastern edge of the County on the Chesapeake Bay's western shore. As an economic development tool, Four Rivers develops and supports activities that combine tourism and small business development with education, historic preservation, cultural and natural resource conservation, and recreation in a strategic effort to enhance the community's economy and culture. Four Rivers has brought over \$1.7 million in fully matched grants and low interest loans into the community, leveraging more than \$6 million in projects thereby contributing to the County's economic success.

As seen, there are a variety of programs and initiatives available to attract and sustain economic development in the county. The County's comprehensive plans such as the General Development Plan, Town Center Plans, Small Area Plans, and Transit Development Plans must work collaboratively to establish the County's overall economic development policies and guidelines that can be implemented through these various economic development programs and initiatives.

VII. Conclusions and Future Needs

Much has been done over the past ten years to accomplish the Economic Development goals of the 1997 General Development Plan. The County retains a strong economic base and the outlook for the future remains positive, in spite of the current nationwide economic downturn. Future needs that have been identified and that will be further considered in the 2008 General Development Plan include the following:

- Creation of more opportunities to combine public and private resources, particularly in relation to providing adequate infrastructure such as utilities and roads;
- Improvements to better streamline the development approval process;
- Expansion of workforce training opportunities to meet future industry needs, especially in the technology field;
- Increased opportunities for revitalization of older commercial areas through new or enhanced incentive programs; and
- Innovative reuse of older and under-utilized commercial and industrial buildings.

In addition, the County needs to assess the long-term fiscal stability of its current and planned land use patterns and to determine whether its economic base needs to be expanded to ensure a stable fiscal base in the future. This assessment is being undertaken through a Countywide fiscal impact analysis which will be completed in conjunction with the 2008 General Development Plan update.

