



The Franklin County Strategic Plan For Economic Development



A Research Triangle Region Community

Executive Summary

The purpose of The Franklin County Strategic Plan for Economic Development is to provide strategic direction, priorities and concrete goals and objectives for The Board of County Commissioners, County Manager, and County Departments. A Board retreat was held in collaboration with many stakeholders on January 20 and January 21, 2010. From this retreat all parties developed a collaborative plan and map for economic development in Franklin County.

The Franklin County plan is a multifaceted comprehensive approach in two chief ways:

1. The plan was created by The Board of Commissioners with input and engagement from many different important stakeholders working together to create common economic development goals. These key stakeholders participated in the creation of this plan and have agreed to participate in its implementation. These stakeholders include:
 - The County Manager
 - The Economic Development Commission
 - Public Utilities Department
 - Planning and Inspections Department
 - Finance Department
 - Tax Department
 - Municipalities
 - Franklin County Schools
 - Louisburg College
 - Vance-Granville Community College
 - Greater Franklin Chamber of Commerce
 - The Research Triangle Regional Partnership(RTRP)
2. The document also addresses a multifaceted approach to economic development. It focuses on business recruitment, business retention and expansion, and entrepreneurship and business creation.

The Franklin County Strategic Plan for Economic Development is focused on the following six goals. The goals are not listed in order of priority.

1. Develop sufficient infrastructure and capacity to support desired development.
1. Promote business friendly environment.
2. Collaborate to enhance and develop product. (The particular buildings and sites that meet business operational requirements)
3. Consistent collaboration with municipalities.
4. Improve quality of life by creating opportunities that encourage people to work, live and play in Franklin County.
5. Strengthen Franklin County's image and marketing efforts.

There are objectives that support each goal by providing specific and measurable direction on how the goal will be met. This strategic plan focuses on 2010-2011. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed and evaluated by the County Manager and the Commissioners at least twice a year with the first review due by September, 2010. The Plan may also be revised as needed.

The Franklin County Strategic Plan for Economic Development is a collaborative effort of The Board of Commissioners and many stakeholders on behalf of the citizens of Franklin County.

External and Internal Analysis

In order to develop effective economic goals, the Board of Commissioners and stakeholders completed an assessment of Franklin County and factors that affect Franklin County. An External and Internal Analysis (SWOT) served as this assessment.

External Analysis

Opportunities for Franklin County government

What are some key attributes of Franklin County?

- Franklin County serves as the Headquarters location for several global companies such as: Novozymes, Xerium and K-Flex. Other State or Regional Headquarters in Franklin County include: TTI Wireless, CDM, Southern Lithoplate, Majestic Marble, Southeastern Emergency Equipment, Welsh Packaging.
- Regional airport
- Close to Raleigh/Durham International Airport
- Close to medical centers
- Branding and collaboration with the Research Triangle Region
- Combination of rural/small town life adjacent to urban areas
- A variety of recreational opportunities
- A river with potential for more utilization for recreation and economic development
- Great climate
- Vance-Granville Community College
- Louisburg College
- Commitment to first class educational facilities
- Current low construction rates
- Agri-tourism
- Skilled labor force

Threats/Challenges for Franklin County government

What are some factors that could prevent Franklin County from meeting its goals?

- Sewer and water capacity challenges
- Air quality
- Desire to have company executives/senior management establish residences within Franklin County allowing them to be more engaged in the community
- People living in Franklin County but spending much of their money outside Franklin County
- People leaving for college and never returning to Franklin County
- Tar/Pamlico watershed restrictions
- Lack of broadband in some areas

- Challenge of connecting the educational system to the modern market
- Challenge of maintaining a reasonable tax rate
- Proximity to urban areas can lead to “urban-like” problems
- Increasing amount of gang violence

Internal Analysis

Strengths of Franklin County Government

What are some of the county’s strengths?

- Progressive Board of County Commissioners
- Professional and responsive county staff
- Developer friendly
- Strong relationship between Board of County Commissioners and Franklin County Schools
- Effective collaborative relationships with state, regional and local economic development partners

Areas of improvement for Franklin County Government

What are the areas of improvement needed for Franklin County?

- Rapid growth patterns in Franklin county
- Government offices are not centrally located
- Franklin County not connected on one Information Technology network
- Prospective businesses currently do not have a one stop for items such as permitting, and information
- Insufficient staffing
- Lack of consistent collaboration between Franklin County and municipalities
- Challenge to maintain, create and improve product

Priorities for Economic Development Created by Stakeholders

Priorities were set by the Board of Commissioners and stakeholders. These priorities serve as a foundation for the goals in this plan. The priorities are not in order of importance as all play a role and are interconnected.

1. What are the priorities for business recruitment?
 - a. Improve infrastructure and find funding for infrastructure (includes water/sewer, roads, medical, airport, schools, broadband and other)
 - b. Study, enhance and improve available land, structures, product and zoning
 - c. Promote positive image of Franklin County/revise/develop website; promote objective coverage of the county
 - d. Continue to develop an educated adaptable workforce with incentives for workforce to stay in Franklin County
 - e. Improve quality of life
 - f. Maintain business friendly environment
 - g. Study most effective incentives to recruit and maintain businesses

2. What are the priorities for business retention and expansion?
 - a. Infrastructure (same as item 1.a.)
 - b. Identify grant opportunities
 - c. Continue to communicate well with existing businesses
 - d. Maintain or reduce operational costs for businesses/work with municipalities on this priority
 - e. Continue to support business incentives as appropriate

3. What are the priorities for entrepreneurship and business creation?
 - a. Infrastructure (same as item 1.a.)
 - b. Establish venture capital start up funds
 - c. Parallel paths of businesses
 - d. Partner with small businesses
 - e. Develop Incubator

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives are not listed in order of priority as all are important and interrelated.

Goal 1: Develop sufficient infrastructure and capacity to support desired growth

Objective 1A: The UAC (Utility Advisory Committee) will establish a preliminary water/sewer allocation for economic development by May 3, 2010.

Objective 1B: The Franklin County Manager will develop a capital improvement plan outlining requested projects. The plan will be presented to the Commissioners for approval and funding by February, 2011.

Objective 1C: The Public Utilities Director with assistance from the directors of The Economic Development Commission (EDC) and Planning and Inspections will identify water and sewer improvement needs based on The Comprehensive Development Plan by the end of the fourth quarter, 2010.

Objective 1D: The EDC Director with assistance from other county departments such as Information Technology (IT) will work on expanding broadband in conjunction with public/private partnership. (Ongoing)

Objective 1E: The Citizen's Advisory Committee will continue to work toward securing funding for 4-Lane US HWY 401 (Ongoing)

Objective 1F: The Franklin County Board of Commissioners will support the Franklin County School's Capital Improvement Plan. (Ongoing)

Objective 1G: The EDC will continue to partner with educational institutions to continue to develop a skilled workforce. (Ongoing)

Goal 2: Promote business friendly environment

Objective 2A: The Planning and Inspections Director will submit a list of priorities covering ways to improve efficiencies in permitting system by May 31, 2010.

Objective 2B: The IT Director will develop a plan to unify communication systems. The IT Director will review funding status by June 2010.

Objective 2C: The EDC Director will study incentives necessary and encourage municipalities to participate and consider incentive discussions. (Ongoing)

Objective 2D: The EDC Director in collaboration with town leaders, Planning and Inspections, Tax Department, Utilities Department and IT will

develop a process to gather information regarding prospective and/or new business clients by July 30, 2010.

Objective 2E: The EDC Director with assistance from county staff will identify grants and resources needed for economic development. (Ongoing)

Objective 2F: The EDC will collaborate with the Farm Preservation team from Cooperative Extension to support their efforts with economic development. (Ongoing)

Goal 3: Collaborate to enhance and develop product.

Objective 3A: The EDC will continue shell building program in collaboration with necessary partners/allies. The EDC Director will complete a progress report including options by July 2010.

Objective 3B The EDC will collaborate with municipalities in maintaining and improving product. The EDC Director will complete a progress report including options by July 2010.

Objective: 3C: The EDC Director will collaborate with property owners to continue Certified Site Program. (Ongoing)

Objective 4D: The EDC Director will collaborate with the Airport Commission to market and maximize opportunities to utilize the Airport as an economic development asset. (Ongoing)

Goal 4: Consistent collaboration with municipalities

Objective 4A: The Franklin County Manager will host an initial meeting with all Town Managers by March 15, 2010 to determine key issues on which to collaborate and to develop a schedule for regular meetings between the Town Managers and the County Manager.

Goal 5: Improve quality of life

Objective 5A: The EDC Director will continue to market existing opportunities/assets to the public in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Development Authority (TDA) and others as appropriate.

Objective 5B: The IT Director will ensure that there is an up to date calendar of Franklin County events on the Franklin County website. (Ongoing)

Objective 5C: The Planning and Inspections Director and The Recreation Board will evaluate the Recreation in lieu of funding and make any suggested changes by the end of 2011.

Objective 5D: The Parks and Recreation Board with assistance from The Board of County Commissioners and county staff will promote recreation and leisure opportunities in Franklin County. (Ongoing).

Objective 5E: The Parks and Recreation Department, TDA and Tar River Land Conservancy will evaluate how the Tar River can be better utilized for recreation and economic development by July 2010.

Goal 6: Strengthen Franklin County's image and marketing

Objective 6A: The Finance Director, IT Director and Existing Industry Coordinator will oversee an analysis and redesign of the County's website exploring content management systems which will allow departmental updating. A review of the recommendations for the initial design will be presented to The Board of County Commissioners by August 1, 2010. Updates and improvements will then be ongoing.

Objective 6B: The EDC, in collaboration with the Research Triangle Regional Partnership and other appropriate staff, partners and allies will develop a marketing plan to promote Franklin County by May 1, 2010.