

STRATEGIC PLAN TO FACILITATE THE ECONOMIC SUCCESS OF FAIRFAX COUNTY - 2014

*DRAFT DOCUMENT UNDER DEVELOPMENT. ILLUSTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR REVISED
EAC PLAN. ACTION STEPS AND INDICATORS AND/OR METRICS FOR EACH
VISION/GOAL STATEMENT TO BE INCLUDED IN FINAL DOCUMENT.*

Section 1

1. Overarching Vision
 - Board of Supervisors Priorities
 - County Vision
 - Four Fundamentals for Economic Success:
 1. People
 2. Places
 3. Employment
 4. Governance

Section 2 (to be developed)

1. Catalog of Current Cross Agency Initiatives

Section 3 (to be developed)

1. 3-5 Year Action Plan

Overarching Vision

No community has a preordained right to prosperity. Prosperity can only be achieved and sustained when a community's citizens, businesses and government work in concert for everyone's benefit. Fairfax County has achieved an exceptionally strong local economy and high quality of life through its focus on, among other things, the economic development efforts of both the public and private sectors. Fairfax County's sustained efforts have resulted in the County being in the position of having the largest and strongest local economy in the Washington Metropolitan area and one of the strongest in the nation. This is evidenced by a high quality of life, a strong local employment base, competitive tax rates, nationally recognized schools and governance, and a preeminent economic development program. However, Fairfax County's exceptional economic performance in the past does not guarantee its future success.

In the challenging and changing economic climate of the 21st century, Fairfax County cannot rest on its previous achievements. Success in the 21st century will require different goals, strategies, and approaches. The County must work deliberately to maintain, diversify, and enhance our strong and vital community in order to sustain and grow our economic prosperity. The framework is in place for such efforts.

The Board of Supervisors has adopted a set of Priorities, as set forth below:

By **engaging** our residents and businesses in the process of addressing these challenging times, **protecting investment** in our **most critical priorities**, and by **maintaining strong responsible fiscal stewardship**, we must ensure:



A Quality Educational System Education is Fairfax County's highest priority. We will continue the investment needed to protect and enhance this primary community asset. Our children are our greatest resource. Because of our excellent schools, businesses are eager to locate here and our children are able to find good jobs. A well-educated constituency is best able to put back into their community.



Safe Streets and Neighborhoods Fairfax County is the safest community of our size in the U.S. We will continue to invest in public safety to respond to emergency situations, as well as efforts to prevent and intervene in destructive behaviors, such as gang activity and substance abuse.



A Clean, Sustainable Environment Fairfax County will continue to protect our drinking water, air quality, stream valleys and tree canopy through responsible environmental regulations and practices. We will continue to take a lead in initiatives to address energy efficiency and sustainability and to preserve and protect open space for our residents to enjoy.



Livable, Caring and Affordable Communities As Fairfax County continues to grow we will do so in ways that address environmental and mobility challenges. We will encourage housing that is affordable to our children, seniors and members of our workforce. We will provide compassionate and efficient services to members of our community who are in need. We will continue to protect and support our stable lower density neighborhoods. We will encourage and support participation in community organizations and other activities that address community needs and opportunities.



A Vibrant Economy Fairfax County has a well-earned reputation as a business-friendly community. We will vigorously pursue economic development and revitalization opportunities. We will support the business community and encourage this healthy partnership. We will continue to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of our corporate neighbors in the areas of workforce development and availability, affordable housing, regulation and taxation.



Efficient Transportation Network Fairfax County makes it a priority to connect people and places. We will continue to plan for and invest in transportation improvements to include comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian initiatives, bus and para transit, road and intersection improvements and expansion of Metrorail and VRE.



Recreational and Cultural Opportunities A desirable community is one where there is a lot going on that residents can enjoy. Fairfax County will continue to provide for athletic, artistic, intellectual and recreational activities, in our communities, parks, libraries and schools.



Taxes that are Affordable The property tax is Fairfax County's primary source of revenue to provide services. We will ensure that taxes are affordable for our residents and businesses, and we will seek ways to diversify County revenues in order to make our tax base more equitable. We will ensure that County programs and services are efficient, effective, cost effective and well run.

Reflecting the Board's Priorities, Fairfax County's Vision is:

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County by:



Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities

The needs of a diverse and growing community are met through innovative public and private services, community partnerships and volunteer opportunities. As a result, residents feel safe and secure, capable of accessing the range of services and opportunities they need, and are willing and able to give back to their community.



Building Livable Spaces

Together, we encourage distinctive "built environments" that create a sense of place, reflect the character, history and natural environment of the community, and take a variety of forms -- from identifiable neighborhoods, to main streets, to town centers. As a result, people throughout the community feel they have unique and desirable places to live, work, shop, play and connect with others.



Connecting People and Places

Transportation, technology and information effectively and efficiently connect people and ideas. As a result, people feel a part of their community and have the ability to access places and resources in a timely, safe and convenient manner.



Maintaining Healthy Economies

Investments in the workforce, jobs, and community infrastructure and institutions support a diverse and thriving economy. As a result, individuals are able to meet their needs and have the opportunity to grow and develop their talent and income according to their potential.



Practicing Environmental Stewardship

Local government, industry and residents seek ways to use all resources wisely and to protect and enhance the County's natural environment and open space. As a result, residents feel good about their quality of life and embrace environmental stewardship as a personal and shared responsibility.



Creating a Culture of Engagement

Individuals enhance community life by participating in and supporting civic groups, discussion groups, public-private partnerships and other activities that seek to understand and address community needs and opportunities. As a result, residents feel that they can make a difference and work in partnership with others to understand and address pressing public issues.



Exercising Corporate Stewardship

Fairfax County government is accessible, responsible and accountable. As a result, actions are responsive, providing superior customer service and reflecting sound management of County resources and assets.

To achieve the Board Priorities and County Vision, a strong economy is necessary.

A strong economy underpins many of the priorities and objectives identified above. To that end, the Board of Supervisors established an Economic Advisory Committee (EAC) to provide policy level recommendations on matters related to the development and expansion of the County's economy. The EAC developed a strategic plan, *Fairfax County: Preserving our Quality of Life Requires Maintaining a Strong Economy* ("Plan"), in 2011. That Plan provides the blueprint for achieving an economically strong and sustainable Fairfax. While a number of efforts called for in the 2011 Plan have been implemented or are on-going, it is time to review that work, update it as necessary and develop an Action Plan to guide our efforts. What follows is a Vision of an economically strong Fairfax County, as well as goals, actions and metrics to achieve and sustain that vision.

In order to further implement the Plan's vision of an economically strong and sustainable Fairfax, we will focus on four fundamentals: People, Places, Employment and Governance.

Each of the four areas contains a vision of what we aspire to, and the related goals from the 2011 Plan. An action plan will be developed for each of the four areas to implement the vision and goals.

People:

We will attract and retain the best educated workforce in the country. We will be a magnet for the creative class. Our system of education will be of the highest quality from pre-school through post-secondary and continuing learning programs in order to attract and serve all people and businesses and to provide for a skilled workforce and opportunities at all levels. We will have a variety of housing opportunities available to those looking to live in the County and will encourage people to both live and work here. We will recognize and support the diversity of the County's populations, neighborhoods and business communities. We will have a full spectrum of cultural, art and institutional opportunities that support a diverse community and foster social interaction.

To achieve that vision, Fairfax County should:



Help prepare, attract, and retain a **skilled and competitive workforce**. Our high-quality education systems must be sustained and supported. Our students need to be prepared for the high-wage, high-demand jobs in science, technology, and engineering; for the "creative class" jobs and for entrepreneurial endeavors; and for high skill jobs at all job levels that are critical to our current competitive business environment. Delivering a continuous supply of job-ready applicants depends on an integrated system that includes public schools, job training associations, community colleges, and institutions of higher education. The County will encourage the creation of partnerships among the County, the school system, businesses, charitable organizations, and higher educational institutions to align workforce development efforts to the skill needs of targeted industries.



Have **available and affordable housing**. The County will encourage all who want to live in Fairfax to be able to do so, and should encourage public and private actions that support the County's workforce housing policies and the provision of a full spectrum of housing opportunities, most notably those in mixed-use areas and accessible to multiple modes of transport.



Continue to value and support the provision of a broad array of **cultural and recreational opportunities** to enhance the lives of residents and to build community amongst its diverse populations. The availability of strong, dynamic, and diverse cultural and recreational opportunities provides economic, social, and educational benefits and opportunities.



*Continue to attract a **diverse population**. Our County's demographic and cultural diversity is one of our strengths. The County will implement policies that support and protect our existing population, including those who are over 50, and that attract future employees and residents.*

Actions:

TBD – forthcoming

Metrics/Indicators:

TBD - forthcoming

Places:

We will focus on building sustainable places that are destinations of choice for the best educated and creative workforce in the country, major companies and innovative, new businesses alike, and tourists from around the country and the globe. We will focus our growth in activity centers that facilitate efficient delivery of services and protect existing residential neighborhoods. We will protect the environment by preserving air and water quality, minimizing energy use, and having a broad range of open space and recreational amenities to support the needs of our residents and employees. We will have high quality, well maintained infrastructure and multi-modal transportation systems to support the demands of present and future growth. We will provide a full spectrum of art, cultural, and institutional uses and a built environment that is a national model reflecting the highest quality of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design – creating places where people want to be.

To achieve that vision, Fairfax County should:



Have a 21st Century **infrastructure**. The quality and availability of our infrastructure is integral to the County's success in attracting people and employment opportunities. The County will implement policies that support necessary infrastructure improvements to maintain and/or enhance levels of service, so that it will remain an attractive and competitive location.



Acknowledge that **redevelopment** has unique challenges and requires new approaches. A significant portion the County's new development will be redevelopment of existing uses, embedded within existing communities. The County will develop policies and processes to facilitate new investment while retaining important community values. The County will continue to support public/private partnerships that further targeted development opportunities and provide benefits to communities.



Ensure a vibrant and successful **retail sector**. As the County's population is projected to increase, retail opportunities need to be provided to support that growth and reflect the significant role that retail plays in local communities and the County's overall economy.



Provide opportunities for **industrial** and other emerging uses. Businesses and employment activities are dynamic; the County will develop flexible policies that support innovative employment activities in strategic locations.

Actions:

TBD – forthcoming

Metrics/Indicators:

TBD - forthcoming

Employment:

We will maintain a prosperous economic climate with increasingly varied employment opportunities. In order to achieve this we will continuously develop and pursue a broad range of actions aimed at enhancing our long-term competitive position in the region, nationally and internationally. We will encourage the retention and expansion of existing employers, aggressively seek to incubate and grow new businesses, and attract new employers to the County.

To achieve that vision, Fairfax County should:



Adopt policies conducive to **attracting and retaining business**. The County will continue to maintain and enhance its diverse economy with an eye on its long-term economic health. The County should attract a wide range of funding opportunities, including venture capital, angel investors, and federal sources that support new and emerging businesses and technologies. The County will diversify the economy by continuing to support existing and targeted emerging industries and encourage efforts of local educational institutions to “spin-off” businesses. County agencies will work collaboratively on strategies geared to the evolving requirements of existing and targeted industries and to support business incubator and accelerator efforts.



Achieve a proper **balance between job and housing** growth. Growth in new workers at all income levels must be matched with a sufficient stock of housing and housing types, and such housing choices need to be located convenient to places of employment.



Promote policies which protect and enhance **Dulles International Airport (IAD)**. IAD is an important contributor to the economic vitality of Fairfax County and the National Capital Area. Business and industry is attracted to those locations that have good global access, and IAD provides excellent connectivity to the nation and the world.



Grow as a tourist destination. **Tourism** is an economic engine which supports domestic and international trade, as well as retail and service sectors. Tourism results in beneficial direct impacts (for example, dollars spent on hotel rooms by the visitors) and indirect or induced impacts (dollars spent throughout the community with visitors' dollars that are received).

Actions:

TBD – forthcoming

Metrics/Indicators:

TBD - forthcoming

Governance:

We will foster a vibrant culture of civic engagement and collaboration. We will have policies and processes that anticipate and accommodate market conditions, future innovations, changing demographics, and new opportunities and technologies. We will provide a responsive and collaborative development review process, including a regulatory framework that encourages business development, retention and expansion and that accommodates economic development opportunities. We will have a safe environment which includes state-of-the-art public safety services including police, fire protection, emergency medical services, and health facilities. We will nurture strong inter-governmental relationships among local, regional, state, and federal governments as well as other local agencies and authorities.

To achieve that vision, Fairfax County should:



Take into account the effects on the County's economy when making **financial decisions**. Evaluation should include the balance among the financial health of the County, cumulative debt, the current target of achieving 25 percent of the tax base in commercial uses, and the goals of this Plan when making financial decisions such as tax levels and fee rates.



Engage in an ongoing review of its **regulatory processes**. A continual emphasis should focus on providing a customer service-oriented process; expediting the process; making the process more predictable; increasing flexibility where appropriate; making timeframes and costs more predictable; more sensitive to market conditions; and, more urban.



Ensure that **land use policies** are targeted and align with the goals in the Plan. Development policies should provide for future housing, public facilities, parks, and other amenities which contribute to the County's high quality of life, and are responsive to market demands.



*Continue a leadership role in **regional efforts**. As one of the largest jurisdictions in the National Capital Area and participant in the Greater Washington 2050 Compact, Fairfax County will continue to promote regional solutions to future challenges in transportation planning, environmental regulations, and other areas of mutual benefit—with the understanding that the future of Fairfax County is intertwined with other communities in Northern Virginia, suburban Maryland, and the District of Columbia.*



Create **organizational capacity** and support **coordinated leadership** to further our economic success. The work of the Economic Development Authority, Fairfax County agencies, private sector businesses and foundations, and public and private educational institutions should be coordinated and complementary so that common goals can be achieved. A key element to this outcome is a unified and galvanizing mission that guides all aspects of economic development.



Improve **communications** to adapt to changing methods and technologies connecting people and communities. Innovative methods to receive input from, and provide information to, existing and prospective residents, employers and visitors, should be explored. Integral to our methods should be integrated programs that brand, promote, and market the unique elements of, and envisioned future for, Fairfax County. Methods to improve communication and collaboration internal to Fairfax County should also be pursued.

Actions:

TBD – forthcoming

Metrics/Indicators:

TBD - forthcoming