

Proposed Recommendations

I. Inward

- a. Engage an outside strategic growth consultant to create a 5, 10, and 15 year strategic growth plan with timetables and deliverables.
 1. Investigate the price, time frame, and any grants that may be out there to utilize for this cost.
 2. Analyze the County's current business recruitment process and retention process to be managed by statistics in terms of lead generation, leads that have been closed, and existing business check in's.
 3. The contact point should be made up of a committee consisting ideally of a county commissioner, representative from the chamber of commerce, ED from two major municipalities of Cumberland and Frostburg, as well as a representative from Allegany College of Maryland, Frostburg State University, and Center for Career & Technical Education (formerly known as VoTech). Additional appointments from the business community at the Commission's discrepancy.
 4. Example of Economic Development Consultant:
<http://silverlodeconsulting.com/services/site-selection-and-location-analysis>. These consultants are expensive and will need multiple partner funding to attract a top tier consultant.
- b. County representation in the non-profit corporation 501-C3-CEDC
- c. Identify proven models for streamlining or simplifying the permit process, and revise current process.
 1. Example: MD DLLR Online Licensing Applications, PENNDOT Highway Occupancy Application <http://www.penndot.gov/Doing-Business/Permits/HighwayOccupancyPermits/Pages/default.aspx#.VjJp-7erRp8>
- d. Develop a permitting flow chart that shows all required permitting steps (including estimated timelines) in one uniform document (ex. Bedford County, PA). This document should be made available online and should be distributed with initial information packets to prospective businesses.
 1. Example: Bedford County, PA
<http://www.bedfordcountypa.org/Planning.html>
- e. The development of regional internship and state apprenticeship programs across all business sectors (from welding to Information Technology). From high school to the graduate level have information available for all students. This should be coordinated by a central body and allow students and businesses a "one stop" experience.
- f. Consider opening the Opportunity Scholarships up to specific majors not offered at Allegany College of Maryland and Frostburg State University. Also, consider attracting another higher education institution. This allows for the creation of a more diverse workforce and can address gaps in potential workforce needs.
- g. Allegany College of Maryland Workforce Development staff should be at the table during all meetings with perspective businesses looking to locate or relocate in Allegany

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County. This procedure has proven successful in the past and should be re-implemented in the present.

- h. Continually evaluate the development process for increased efficiencies, and immediately evaluate and respond to internal and external feedback in an effort to improve existing procedures.
- i. Reinforce a positive “customer service” attitude at all levels of County government through training and internal policies. Instill "buy-in" from all county departments of their responsibility to assist new and existing businesses locate, expand, and prosper. The success (or failure) of a new project or expansion is directly influenced by the assistance received by the county departments it touches.
 - i. Example: Addressed at the state level through the recommendations of the "Augustine Commission Report”
- j. Completion of the new Allegany High school project.

II. Outward

- a. Establish a permitting “advocate” or “concierge” to guide business owners and prospective business thru the permitting process. This “advocate” would act as an intermediary between applicants and SHA, MDE, DNR, & the local municipalities. A concerted effort should exhibit to build personal relationships and open lines of communication between the “advocate” and the various parties at SHA, MDE, etc.
- b. Consistently pursue Work force development with AC/Frostburg/Center for Career and Technical Institution.
 - 1. Such as Pharmacy Technician program’s to attract Pharma companies
 - 2. Stronger information technology programs to attract a stronger presence from IBM and additional Technology companies being able to supply interns and employees.
 - 3. Support FSU collaboration with Peak Harvest to create cannabis education tracks.
 - 4. ACM could have an opportunity to create specific cannabis certifications in conjunction with Peak Harvest.
 - 5. Support Nurse Practitioner, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Language Pathology Programs added to Frostburg or ACM. We have a large need existing here in the tristate area for this.
 - 6. *There are 40 slots per year in each of these respective fields. Generally over 2,000 applicants apply to fill 40 slots. There is a need.
- c. Explore opportunities to create regulatory uniformity between Allegany County and local municipalities and aggressively work with willing municipalities to implement coordinated procedures.
- d. Clear and easy to follow paths need to be established by local institutions to direct students on how to further their education. For example if a student takes certification courses at the Center for IT Excellence and wishes to earn a degree after their certifications. A defined path on how to accomplish this should be made available to the student. This should include different financial aid sources and student support services.

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- e. Partner with the Maryland Extension to identify and leverage experimental or Agribusiness opportunities in Maryland to relocate operations to Allegany County.
- f. Additional support for county/regional mechatronics and robotics clubs or programs. Consideration of advocacy for the development of educational programming to further the skill development of those interested in these aforementioned fields.
- g. Establish a permitting “advocate” or “concierge” to guide business owners and prospective business thru the permitting process. This “advocate” would act as an intermediary between applicants and SHA, MDE, DNR, & the local municipalities. A concerted effort should exhibit to build personal relationships and open lines of communication between the “advocate” and the various parties at SHA, MDE, etc.
- h. Open up the Potomac River to Float-This has drastically increased tourism at the Youghiogheny River.
- i. Please support and utilize all local and state wide relationships to lobby/advocate for some production plants such as an Under Armor plant in Western MD.
- j. Support a Veterans Nursing Home if it can become a reality from the study being completed.
- k. Explore a partnership with CACIF to develop an “Allegany Ambassadors” program. Purpose of the program would be to provide County staff with a resource of local business contacts that can assist in the recruiting process. Ambassador program should include all aspects of the business community;
 - 1. Financial
 - 2. Real Estate
 - 3. Education
 - 4. Workforce Development/Extended Learning
 - 5. Healthcare
 - 6. Construction
 - 7. Business representatives should be focused on presenting a positive message that conveys the benefits and advantages of being located in Allegany County.

III. Ask's

- a. County/municipality strategic land acquisition for growth to increase the tax base referring mainly to. To add ready and available options for relocating businesses.
 - 1. Frostburg-Exit 34 Jenkins Farm, Winter Farm
 - 2. Cumberland- Across from CSX in South Cumberland-Acquire as many homes, buildings, and property as possible to create additional contiguous industry park in conjunction with the City of Cumberland and the CEDC.
 - 3. Markwood property- out on 220
 - 4. Scout and Development of new industrial parks
 - 5. Land on Haystack Mountain

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- b. Increase the county Economic Development spending from 1% to 1.5% allowing an additional \$250,000 to create more aggressive and strategic recruiting, planning, and incentives to attract more business.
- c. Appoint annually a local business advisory council to review current competitive incentives as well as provide business intelligence and guidance as requested from the commission.
- d. Initiate conversations with the Maryland Board of Regents for Higher Education to consider the exploration and development of a curriculum to rejuvenate Agricultural Science programs in the county. Consideration on advocating for an Agricultural Science major at Frostburg State University. Currently students in Maryland can only access this major at University of Maryland- College Park and a minor at the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore. We lose local students interested in Agricultural Science to West Virginia University.
- e. Initiate conversations with community partners for the creation of a formal mentorship program for individuals interested in becoming entrepreneurs. This is critical in moving ideas from concept to market. Individuals maybe great at inventing or creating things, but may have no clue on how to start, run or maintain a successful business.
- f. Development of a “soft skills” curriculum for students and perspective employees. One of the biggest complaints from local employers is that our workforce struggles with showing up for work on time, interpersonal relationships and a general work ethic. Consideration should be given to establishing a program similar to the “Dream Factory” established by the company Southwire in Carrollton, Georgia. There is potential for this program to be replicated here with a current business.
- g. Lobby to cut MD’s corporate tax rate down from the high 7%.
- h. Lobby for tax free zones for areas that are facing population and economic decline such as Allegany County similar to the NY model and what Senator Edwards has proposed.
- i. Review all current incentives to move business to Allegany County and see what we can do in addition to the current incentives at the county and municipal levels.
- j. Lastly, form a county/municipal committee/organization that meets quarterly to work together strategically to grow all of Allegany County (Not 1 municipality over the other.)
- k. Appoint annually a local business advisory council to review current competitive incentives as well as provide business intelligence and guidance as requested from the commission.
- l. Increase the county Economic Development spending from 1% to 1.5% allowing an additional \$250,000 to create more aggressive recruiting, planning, and incentives to attract more business.