

# Economic Development

2009

**What is the Economic Development Element?**

At the 1997 session, the General Assembly passed five pieces of legislation and budget initiatives known collectively as "Smart Growth." Maryland has adopted the principles of Smart Growth to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

The following Smart Growth principle relates to the Economic Development Element:

**Principle:** Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective

- To make infrastructure decisions that will result in fair, predictable, and cost-effective growth
- To create a fertile environment for innovative, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use projects that the private sector can support
- To educate the private sector on the benefits of Smart Growth

**Community Vision for Economic Development**

According to the 2008 Community Survey, Downtown Westminster is viewed as one of the greatest assets to the economic vitality of the City. Developing a Main Street where residents and visitors feel welcome during the day and at night, during the week and the weekend, is part of enhancing the overall image and identity of Downtown Westminster. Residents would like to see Downtown Westminster have a more active, vibrant, and inviting atmosphere.

Residents appreciate the City's efforts to revitalize Downtown Westminster and look forward to future enhancements. Residents would also like to see the City put more energy into supporting small businesses in Westminster. They recognize the importance of decreasing the turnover rate and increasing the success rate of current businesses.

There is a consensus among residents to increase the economic development efforts that encourage new businesses to open in Westminster, and the outreach to retain existing businesses

**State Planning Vision found in this Element**

**Economic Development** - Economic development that promotes employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State's natural resources, public services, and public facilities is encouraged

*Issues & Opportunities*

- Job Creation
- Attracting Businesses
- Retaining Existing Businesses
- Downtown Westminster
- Westminster Economy



## Part 1: Business Patterns

The City of Westminster has three distinct business areas within its corporate limits. These areas are Downtown Westminster, Maryland Route 140 (MD 140), and the Maryland Route 97 Technology Corridor (Map 9.1).

### Section 1: Downtown Westminster

Downtown Westminster is a traditional downtown setting that is built at a pedestrian scale. The majority of the business in Downtown Westminster occurs during daytime hours when employees who work in and around downtown are most likely to be present. The evening hours are generally restaurant and cultural activities.

The City of Westminster opened two new parking garages in September 2003, with a combined capacity of approximately 475 spaces. These garages provide parking in and around Downtown Westminster. The Longwell Avenue Parking Garage is located at the intersection of Longwell Avenue and Distillery Drive. The Westminster Square Municipal Parking Garage is located at the intersection of Maryland Route 27 (MD Route 27) and Green Street.

During the summer of 2002, in cooperation with the Governor's Office of Smart Growth, and the Maryland Departments of Transportation and Planning, the City identified the MD Route 27 Corridor as the primary "Gateway" to Downtown Westminster. The City has committed to redeveloping the MD Route 27 Corridor into an active, pedestrian-friendly, 18-hour community with an appropriate mixture of commercial/retail and residential uses. In 2004, The Mayor and Common Council adopted the Mixed Use Infill Zone that is designed to encourage the development and redevelopment of key parcels in the MD Route 27 Corridor and its immediate environs.

### Section 2: Maryland Route 140

The Maryland Route 140 (MD 140) corridor contains one regional enclosed shopping mall, a number of large big-box retail stores, in-line or strip retail shopping centers, fast food and chain restaurants, and offices. This area experiences significant commercial activity during both day and evening hours, including the weekends. MD 140 is a divided, multi-lane highway with good vehicular access. However, there are some traffic congestion problems during peak hours due to numerous access points along the highway and traffic signals at the major intersections.

## CHAPTER 9

**Part 1: Business Patterns**

**Part 2: Existing Economic Trends**

**Part 3: Westminster Labor Force**

**Part 4: Current Economic Activities**

**Part 5: Economic Development Partners**

**Part 6: Economic Development Strategies**

**Goals and Objectives**

### Section 3: Maryland Route 97

The Maryland Route 97 (MD 97) Technology Corridor contains five industrial and manufacturing centers. These centers include: Carroll County Commerce Center, Westminster Technology Park, West Branch Trade Center, Air Business Center and Meadow Branch Industrial Park. This area experiences significant commercial activity during the weekdays because most of the businesses are companies open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm. There are few service-oriented or retail-related businesses open for residents on the evenings or weekends. MD 97 is a two-lane road with poor vehicular access during peak travel hours.

Westminster has seen an increase in special exceptions requests to the Board of Zoning Appeals for office space in the Air Business Center. The Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission have assigned staff to conduct an industrial and commercial land use study to be completed by June 2010. The purpose of the study, in coordination with the development of an Economic Development Master Plan, is to determine the future key industries for Westminster and if Westminster will have the land capacity to accommodate these industries. The study would include an in-depth look at the economy of Westminster, as well as the local workforce. The City of Westminster may have to re-evaluate what industries are best suited for the future of Westminster. The City has a limited amount of water and a limited amount of vacant land, which means that businesses that use a minimum amount of land and/or water are attractive to the Westminster economy.

### Section 4: Types of Industries

U.S. Census data for the type of industries present in the Westminster area was organized by Zip code for 2000 and 2001 by the United States Bureau of the Census. A large part of the 21157 and 21158 Zip code areas extend beyond the City of Westminster's corporate limits. Some businesses are located outside of the City's boundary and do not contribute to the tax base. However, these businesses do serve to enhance the economy of the general Westminster area. All of the major industries in the 21157 and 21158 Zip code areas were represented during 2000 and 2001. Construction contained the largest number of businesses with approximately eighteen percent (18%) of all businesses. This industry was followed by retail trade with approximately fifteen percent (15%) of all businesses. (Table 5.1) summarizes the number of businesses by category within the 21157 and 21158 Zip code areas.

**Table 5.1. Westminster Area Business Patterns****(21157 & 21158 Zip Codes), 2000 – 2001 Comparison**

Industry	--- Number of Businesses ---			
11---- Forestry, fishing, hunting & agriculture	1	1	0	0.06%
21---- Mining	1	1	0	0.06%
22---- Utilities	1	1	0	0.06%
23---- Construction	304	299	-5	18.38%
31---- Manufacturing	52	54	2	3.32%
42---- Wholesale trade	62	59	-3	3.63%
44---- Retail trade	261	246	-15	15.12%
48---- Transportation & warehousing	49	42	-7	2.58%
51---- Information	18	19	1	1.17%
52---- Finance & insurance	80	78	-2	4.79%
53---- Real estate & rental & leasing	52	47	-5	2.89%
54---- Professional, scientific & technical services	163	164	1	10.08%
55---- Management of companies & enterprises	5	7	2	0.43%
56---- Admin, support, waste mgt, remediation serv.	85	96	11	5.90%
61---- Educational services	16	21	5	1.29%
62---- Health care and social assistance	191	191	0	11.74%
71---- Arts, entertainment & recreation	21	17	-4	1.04%
72---- Accommodation & food services	90	96	6	5.90%
81---- Other services	175	179	4	11.00%
95---- Auxiliaries	2	2	0	0.12%
99---- Unclassified establishments	16	7	-9	0.43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,645</b>	<b>1,627</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

## Section 5: Major Employers

The major employers in Westminster in 2009 included the Carroll County Government, McDaniel College, Marada Industries, Carroll Lutheran Village, Landmark Community Newspapers, and General Dynamics Robotic Systems (Table 5.2). In addition, other major employers in Carroll County that have some facilities located within Westminster are the Carroll County Board of Education, BB&T, S.H. Tevis and Son, Inc., and PNC Bank. Random House, Carroll Hospital Center, English American Tailoring, and Knorr Brake are located on the outskirts of the City.

**Table 9.2 Major Employers in Carroll County, 2009**

<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Product/Service Type</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>RFT</b>
<b>Carroll County Public Schools</b>	Education (K-12)	3,769	#
<b>Carroll Hospital Center</b>	Health Care	1,804	1,031
<b>Springfield Hospital Center</b>	Mental Health Services	833	810
<b>Random House</b>	Book Warehousing & Distribution	800	800
<b>EMA/Fairhaven</b>	Retirement / Assisted Living	700	#
<b>Carroll County Commissioners</b>	Local Government	656	#
<b>McDaniel College</b>	Higher Education (Private)	623	412
<b>Jos. A. Bank Clothiers</b>	Corporate HQ / Distribution	576	552
<b>Carroll Community College</b>	Higher Education (Public)	509	214
<b>General Dynamics Robotic Systems</b>	Technology Manufacturing	490	490
<b>Carroll Lutheran Village</b>	Retirement / Assisted Living	437	231
<b>Northrop Grumman</b>	Electronic Manufacturing / Testing	400	400
<b>English American Tailoring</b>	Clothing Manufacturer	385	#
<b>EVAPCO</b>	Cooling Equipment Manufacturer	377	377
<b>Marada Industries</b>	Automotive Component Manufacturer	270	150
<b>C.J. Miller, LLC</b>	Paving & Excavating Contractor	245	245
<b>S.H. Tevis / Modern Comfort</b>	Oil / Fuel, Heating & A/C	230	145
<b>PFG / Carroll County Foods</b>	Wholesale / Distribution	210	210
<b>Knorr Brake</b>	Railroad Brake Manufacturer	200	200
<b>Landmark Community Newspapers</b>	Publishing	185	165
<b>BB&amp;T</b>	Banking Services	174	139
<b>PNC Bank</b>	Banking Services	171	143
<b>Flowserve Corporation</b>	Industrial Pumping Equipment	169	169
<b>Long View Nursing Home</b>	Nursing / Assisted Living	166	133
<b>Lehigh Cement</b>	Portland Cement Manufacturer	165	165
<b>Solo Cup Corporation</b>	Warehousing & Distribution	150	#
<b>Black &amp; Decker</b>	Warehousing & Distribution	130	130
<b>Van Sant Plumbing &amp; Heating</b>	Plumbing / HVAC Contractor	110	#
<b>Taney Corporation</b>	Wood Products Manufacturer	100	100

Source: Carroll County Economic Development Department 2009

## Part 2: Existing Economic Development Trends

2009 has presented a challenging environment for retail development throughout the country. Many developers are either not getting interest from retailers, many of whom are shrinking their store base instead of expanding it, or are struggling to get financing for projects in light of the credit market lockdown. Unfortunately, smaller suburban residential towns, and outlying larger cities such as Westminster, are less able to withstand the loss of vital retail revenue and new job growth. It is uncertain if the current economy will continue to limit the amount of new development in the commercial districts of the City. The combination of limited demand for new development due to the current economy, and Westminster's limited amount of water to allocate for new development could result in slow growth for commercial development over the next several years.

The City of Westminster is taking advantage of the decrease in development pressure to plan appropriately for the future of quality development in Westminster. For example, the City is working on plans for making the community sustainable by developing "green" building standards and initiatives to promote conservation. In order to improve the design and character of the community, the City is creating a "Westminster Design Guidelines and Manual" for all new development. Finally, the City is following recent trends in commercial projects, such as destination centers, pedestrian-friendly developments, and mixed-use neighborhoods, in order to promote a more efficient use of the limited commercial land that remains in Westminster.

### Section 1: Downtown Westminster

#### *Main Street Maryland Community*

On April 30, 1999, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development designated the City of Westminster as a Main Street Maryland community. As a Main Street Maryland community, the City is committed to following the 5-Point Main Street Approach to downtown revitalization established by the National Main Street Center, a division of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The 5-Point Approach is a comprehensive downtown revitalization strategy based on 1) Design, 2) Economic Restructuring, 3) Organization, 4) Promotion, and 5) Clean, Safe and Green activities with efforts being implemented in unison. The State of Maryland, for its part, committed to provide technical assistance and training, along with a small Main Street Improvement Program grant annually, to assist Westminster in achieving success under the Main Street Approach.

Over the past 10 years, from May 1999 to June 2009, the Westminster Main Street Program has assisted in the opening of 69 new businesses and 10 business expansions. This undertaking has created a total of 255 new full-time and 41 new part-time jobs, with an additional \$13 million invested by the private sector and more than \$7 million by the public sector. Over 10,000 hours of volunteer work have been dedicated to the Main Street Program and its initiatives.

## *Downtown Revitalization*

One of the most important responsibilities of the Main Street Program is promoting Downtown revitalization. In 2002, the Mayor and Common Council, the Westminster Town Center Corporation, and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development initiated a façade improvement program to provide assistance to property owners. The Façade Improvement Program (FIP) is a dollar for dollar matching fund program to enhance individual commercial façades in the Westminster Main Street Program Area while creating a unique overall appearance Downtown. Designed as a five-year forgiveness loan, the FIP may provide up to \$15,000 for mid-block and \$20,000 for corner buildings for eligible façade improvement project costs on qualified properties. Items that can be funded include: exterior building renovation, exterior painting, signs, awning/canopies, exterior building lighting, door or window replacement, and masonry pointing. The FIP is funded, in part, through a State of Maryland Neighborhood Business Works grant.

Since its inception, 28 projects have been completed under the Downtown Westminster Façade Improvement Program, with two other projects still in progress. During the same time, an additional 36 “privately funded” façade renovations occurred. To date, the City has seen more than five dollars of private investment for every one dollar received through the FIP.

## **Section 2: Maryland Route 140**

The condition of commercial buildings varies widely throughout Westminster. Many of the structures located in the Maryland Route 140 (MD 140) corridor have been built in the last 15 to 20 years and are in good condition, although some of the shopping centers have a dated appearance. Westminster is developing design guidelines to promote improved design and architecture on all new development and redevelopment throughout the City, but specifically on MD 140. The design and architecture of MD 140 is important to the local economy because it is one of the main gateways into Westminster, and the City wants a good “first impression” that represents Westminster, not “Anytown, USA,” to welcome visitors.

There are many opportunities for redevelopment and infill along MD 140. Infill development, in its simplest form, is the development or redevelopment of land that has been bypassed, remains vacant, and/or is underutilized as a result of the continuing development process. Large scale parking lots are a perfect example of underutilized land along MD 140. In 2010, Westminster will develop a MD 140 Gateway Redevelopment and Infill Master Plan.

## **Section 3: Maryland Route 97**

In addition to the above referenced commercial areas, the City has a large industrial corridor located along Maryland Route 97(N). This corridor has a mixture of light manufacturing and office space.



*Transportation Infrastructure*

In 1999, the Maryland Department of Transportation removed the proposed Westminster by-pass from its Consolidated Transportation Plan. As a result, improvements must be made to MD Route 97 to ensure that land remains viable for industrial development in the future. The City is working with private developers and the State Highway Administration to improve MD Route 97. These improvements will consolidate access points, while also providing mainline widening where MD Route 97 is only a single lane. This aggressive plan also requires inter-parcel connections among the various industrial developments to better ensure that traffic along MD Route 97 flows in a safe and efficient manner.

*Westminster Technology Park*

Carroll County’s newest business park, the Westminster Technology Park, opened in 2008. The Westminster Technology Park is the product of the Carroll County Industrial Development Authority (IDA). The IDA purchased the 63-acre tract of land in 2001 to ensure the tract would be preserved for quality industrial development. The IDA formed a joint partnership with the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development to purchase the property. In 2006, the IDA became the sole owners of the property. The first building to locate in the Westminster Technology Park is a 40,000-square-foot facility for General Dynamics Robotic Systems.

**Part 3: Westminster Labor Force**

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 8,128 Westminster residents 16 years of age or older who were employed in the civilian labor force (Table 5.3). An additional 24 persons were in the armed forces. The number of unemployed persons in the civilian labor force was 458 for an unemployment rate of 3.60%. A breakdown of the statistics by gender revealed that the unemployment rate is somewhat higher for males (2.27%) than for females (1.33%). This discrepancy is partially the result of fewer females who were actively seeking employment in 2000.

**Table 9.3 Employment Status for Persons 16 Years and Older in Westminster, 2000**

Civilian Labor Force					
	In Armed Forces	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Not in Labor Force
<b>Male</b>	24	4,070	289	2.27%	1,741
<b>Female</b>	0	4,058	169	1.33%	2,847
<b>Total</b>	24	8,128	458	3.60%	4,588

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

An overwhelming majority (79.5%) of workers in the City of Westminster were classified as private wage and salary workers (Table 5.4). The next highest category is government workers (16.9%). Only 3.5% of the workers within the City of Westminster’s labor force were self-employed. Also available from the 2000 U.S. Census was data regarding the percentage of the labor force employed by each industry. Table 5.5 indicates that the largest percentage (24.0%) of persons worked within the Educational, Health and Social Services Industry, with 14.3% of the labor force in Retail Trade.

**Table 9.4 Class of Worker for Persons 16 Years and Older in Westminster, 2000**

Classification	Number Employed	Percent
Private Wage and Salary Workers	6,082	79.50%
Government Workers	1,289	16.90%
Self-Employed Workers	266	3.50%
Unpaid Family Workers	9	0.10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,646</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

**Table 9.5 Employed Persons 16 Years and Older by Industry in Westminster, 2000**

Industry	Number Employed	Percent
Ag., Forestry, Fishing & Hunting and Mining	23	0.3%
Construction	628	8.2%
Manufacturing	698	9.1%
Wholesale Trade	331	4.3%
Retail Trade	1,091	14.3%
Transportation and Warehousing and Utilities	160	2.1%
Information	364	4.8%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Rental and Leasing	616	8.1%
Professional, Scientific, Mgt, Admin., and Waste Mgt. Services	576	7.5%
Educational, Health and Social Services	1,836	24.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Rec., Accommodation and Food Services	389	5.1%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	478	6.3%
Public Administration	456	6.0%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Carroll County has a relatively high rate of commuters holding jobs in other jurisdictions within the region. The US Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey, estimated that 55% of Carroll County residents commute out of County for work. Only 45% of employed County residents work in the County, compared to 58% in Frederick County, 52% in both Baltimore and Harford Counties, and the state-wide average of 54%. In comparison, with a job per resident ratio of 0.47, Carroll County is well below the regional of 0.59 and state ratio of 0.62 (Source: Maryland Department of Planning, October 2005).

## Section 1: Community Income Levels

The median household income in the City of Westminster in 2000 was \$40,477 overall and \$50,879 for family households. The discrepancy between the median household income and the median household income for families is likely due to having two wage earners in a family household. In that regard, family households were concentrated in some of the higher income ranges, while non-family households displayed more concentration in the lower income ranges. Block group data from the 2000 U.S. Census (Table 5.6) indicates that poverty rates are greater in certain areas of Westminster. These areas include the parts of the City located between Main Street and Maryland Route 140, as well as the area between Liberty Street and Old Washington Road; over 10% of the population was below the poverty level.

**Table 9.6 City of Westminster Household Income, 2000**

Income Range	All Households	Family Households	Non-family Households
Less than \$10,000	441	133	308
\$10,000 to \$14,4999	457	179	278
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,041	477	564
\$25,000 to \$34,999	796	375	421
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,194	753	441
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,286	1,018	268
\$75,000 to \$99,999	594	508	86
\$100,000 to \$149,999	455	396	59
\$150,000 to \$199,999	58	58	0
\$200,000 or more	67	34	33

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

## Section 2: Community Vision of Jobs in Westminster

Over half of Westminster residents commute to jobs in other cities such as Frederick, Columbia, or Baltimore. What attracts residents to work outside of Westminster? The 2008 Westminster Community Survey found over 15% of residents rank Westminster as a below average or poor place to work. The availability of job opportunities was ranked below average or poor by almost 30% of survey respondents.

Residents would like to see more jobs beyond retail or restaurant establishments. There is a need for more high-paying jobs that require highly educated and/or experienced workers. Some residents would like to see more “high-tech” and professional white-collar jobs, while others want more skilled and career-driven blue-collar jobs. A lack of job opportunities threatens the future of Westminster for several reasons. Residents who currently live in Westminster may move away in the future to be closer to their jobs. Also, residents who are considering moving to Westminster may change their minds if they are unable to find a quality job in the City.

The availability of quality job opportunities shapes the overall economy of Westminster. Attracting the businesses, companies, and industries needed to bring more job opportunities will benefit Westminster's economy and stimulate the future successes of Westminster as a major city in Maryland. An increase in quality job opportunities would increase the opportunities for current residents and, in the future, attract new, highly educated, and skilled residents to Westminster. Maryland is home to some of the best colleges in the country. Westminster needs to find a way to draw from the pool of local and regional college graduates who enter the workforce every year. Westminster's first source of fresh young talent comes from McDaniel College and Carroll Community College. These college graduates need a reason to live and work in Westminster and continue to add to the value of the City. The question is what comes first, the potential employees or the potential jobs? Westminster needs to work from both sides to attract quality employers and quality employees.

## Part 4: Current Economic Activities

### Section 1: Westminster Office of Economic Development

The City of Westminster recognizes that the benefits of successful Economic Development efforts include increased revenues to offset the tax burden on residents, increased revenues to help fund community improvements such as parks or libraries and new businesses who pay more taxes than the services they require in return, unlike residential development. To coordinate and unify economic development activities, the City established the Office of Economic Development in 2002.

#### **The responsibilities of the Office of Economic Development are:**

- Serve as the City's point-of-contact for development and "Smart Growth" activities
- Support the Westminster Town Center Corporation (WTCC)
- Promote, implement and manage economic development grants, loans and incentive programs
- Serve as the City's liaison to business and property owners
- To manage the Downtown Westminster 's Main Street Program

#### **The on-going activities in the Office of Economic Development are:**

- Provide demographic and technical assistance to both potential and existing businesses
- Develop and maintain an inventory of commercial and industrial property
- Promote the City's economic assets by targeted outreach and marketing efforts

## Section 2: Downtown Parking Advisory Task Force

During 2002, The Mayor and Common Council formed a Downtown Parking Advisory Task Force to assess the parking situation at that time. This committee met regularly to discuss the level of parking that was available to each distinct section of Main Street. Ultimately, it was determined that the best way to ensure long-term parking patrons were using less desirable parking spaces was to offer financial incentives for the less desirable permit parking lots. As a result of this committee, The Mayor and Common Council also purchased new, digital parking meters and related enforcement equipment to better serve the short-term parking needs of all businesses in Downtown Westminster. The City staff plans to conduct a new parking study within the next year to determine the future of parking Downtown and consider opportunities for infill development on underutilized parking lots.

## Section 3: Sister City Program

Sister Cities International (SCI) is a nonprofit citizen diplomacy network that creates and strengthens partnerships between U.S. and international communities. SCI strives to build global cooperation at the municipal level, promote cultural understanding and stimulate economic development. SCI motivates and empowers private citizens, municipal officials and business leaders to conduct long-term sister city programs. Sister city programs should mutually benefit partnering communities.

The goals of Sister Cities International are to:

- **Develop** - municipal partnerships between U.S. cities, counties, and states and similar jurisdictions in other nations
- **Provide** - opportunities for city officials and citizens to experience and explore other cultures through long-term community partnerships
- **Create** - an atmosphere in which economic and community development can be implemented and strengthened
- **Stimulate** - environments through which communities will creatively solve problems together through cultural, educational, municipal, professional and technical exchanges and projects
- **Collaborate** - with organizations in the U.S. and other countries which share similar goals

In September 2002, former Westminster Mayor Kevin E. Dayhoff and Mayor Tõnis Kõiv of Paide, Estonia established a Sister City Program under the guidance of the Maryland Army National Guard. This partnership provides economic development opportunities for each municipality, as there are provisions within the declaration of understanding that outlines the exchange of goods and services by each municipality.

In 2004, Westminster and Paide, Estonia held a business leaders exchange. Five key business sectors represented Westminster and Carroll County to explore economic exchange possibilities with the Town of Paide, Estonia. The City also sponsors a business “swap” program that sends an individual business owner to similar businesses in Paide to trade industry ideas that could benefit the individual business in Westminster and Paide.

## *Cultural Connection*

Paide shares with the Westminster area an economy with a heavy emphasis on agriculture, a comparable population size, and a limestone-rich geography. In 2003, the partnership sponsored a benefit concert of the Estonian Television Girls Choir in Westminster. In return, Ms. Audrey Cimino and the Eric Byrd Trio traveled to Estonia to perform in the Paide Shanty Festival and the Haapsalu Sea Music Festival. In 2004, Carroll Community College received its first exchange student from Estonia. The Community Foundation of Carroll County also helped Paide set up a charitable community fund for its own county. In addition, Random House has provided a number of children's books and other books that were sent over to the sister city. The Children’s Chorus of Carroll County hosted *Sirjelind*, the Paide Girls' Choir, in 2005. Both choirs traveled and performed together in Baltimore, Annapolis, Ocean City, and Westminster. The cultural exchanges still continue.

## **Section 4: Westminster Town Center Plan**

In February of 2003, after a six month public planning process sponsored by the City of Westminster, MD Department of Transportation, MD Department of Planning, and the Governor’s Office of Smart Growth, the Westminster Town Center Plan was presented to The Mayor and Common Council. The Plan provided the City with an urban design and physical planning strategy to guide development initiatives of the private and public sectors within a three- to four-block radius of the intersection of Main Street and MD Route 27, primarily along the Main Street and Railroad Avenue/Liberty Street corridors. Through the use of seven major strategies, the goal of the plan is to provide Westminster residents, workers, and visitors with additional goods and services, attractions, visual appeal, and capacity to generate and maintain an increased level of infill and redevelopment activity in the Town Center, rather than at its periphery.

## **Part 5: Economic Development Partners**

### **Section 1: Carroll County Department of Economic Development**

The Carroll County Department of Economic Development provides business services such as site selection assistance, marketing, resident industry outreach, development of business and education partnership networks and facilitation among agencies and municipalities. The County also supports a number of economic development efforts in the City, including Small Business Development, Business

and Employment Resource Center, Carroll County Office of Tourism, Carroll County Manufacturing Consortium, and agricultural development support.

## *Small Business Development Center*

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is housed in the offices of the Carroll County Department of Economic Development. The SBDC is dedicated to helping prospective business owners establish businesses in Carroll County and current business owners to expand their businesses. The Center's confidential, no-cost, business consulting services and training programs help to develop and refine business plans, solve problems, find sources of capital, and develop strategies to support growth and profitability. The SBDC service areas are diverse and include marketing, management, finance, and business assistance. Assistance can be anything from problem-solving to loan packaging to business plan development.

## *Business & Employment Resource Center*

The Carroll County Business & Employment Resource Center (BERC) is a one-stop workforce development center dedicated to meeting the workforce needs of community residents and businesses in Carroll County. The BERC administers the Workforce Investment Act in Carroll County, and is dedicated to employment, training, and workforce development. The mission of the BERC is to develop a highly-effective workforce for new and existing businesses, to assist individuals in achieving employment, and to encourage lifelong learning. The BERC follows the vision to be the leading source of professional and responsive workforce development services to businesses and job seekers. Some of the key services of the BERC are to assist job seekers in finding access to current job listings, provide professional career counseling, and individual skill development. Workforce development is a vital element in successful economic development efforts in the City of Westminster.

## *Carroll County Office of Tourism*

The Carroll County Office of Tourism is a part of the Department of Economic Development. It provides marketing and promotional support to the City's tourist sites and special events, along with distribution assistance of City brochures to visitor centers throughout the State of Maryland. The Office of Tourism also staffs the Carroll County Visitor Center at 210 East Main Street in Downtown Westminster.

## *Carroll County Manufacturing Consortium*

The Carroll County Manufacturing Consortium (CCMC) was formed in May 2007 to address common industry and workforce challenges. Consortium members assist each other in collaborative training efforts, workforce development programs, and manufacturing business and marketing opportunities. The CCMC is supported by the Carroll County Department of Economic Development and Carroll Community College, as well as State and regional organizations including the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, the TIME Center, Community College of Baltimore County, the

Maryland Technology Extension Service, and Carroll County Public Schools. Manufacturing is a diverse and growing industry, and Westminster depends on collaborative efforts, such as the CCMC, to plan future economic development efforts to improve the City's manufacturing base.

## *Home Grown in Carroll County*

Carroll County Department of Economic Development offers Agricultural Development services to enable consumers and producers of farm goods to easily locate agricultural products, and to assist producers in marketing home grown products and explore new markets and opportunities. The economy of the Westminster area benefits from local successful farms that provide numerous agricultural products available in Carroll County. Residents and visitors are able to locate fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, meat, and horticultural operations. Potential and current agribusinesses are able to find outstanding livestock, horses, dairy cattle, grains, and forage products in Carroll County.

## **Section 2: Carroll County Chamber of Commerce**

The mission of the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) is to promote a sound economic environment in which the local business community can prosper. Founded in 1924, the Chamber has a current membership of over 500 member businesses. It is the oldest and largest business advocacy organization in Carroll County. The Chamber's legislative work, networking opportunities, training, and promotion of member businesses contribute to the economic health of the City of Westminster. The Carroll County Chamber of Commerce and Carroll Community College co-sponsor Leadership Carroll. Since its debut in 1990, Leadership Carroll has been the premier leadership development program in Carroll County. The purpose of Leadership Carroll is to provide existing and emerging leaders with a combination of leadership training and detailed knowledge of the community, including a description of the problems, opportunities, and issues facing our community.

## **Section 3: Industrial Development Authority**

The Carroll County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) was created in 1980 by the Carroll County Commissioners for the purpose of promoting and fostering economic development, encouraging industrial expansion, assisting in the retention of existing industry, and creating and sustaining employment. Current IDA projects include: the development of the Westminster Technology Park (63 acres); North Carroll Business Park (60 acres); Hampstead Industrial Park (10 acres), and investment in and State of Maryland loan administration of the Warfield Corporate Center in Sykesville.

## **Section 4: Local Non-Profit Economic Development Organizations**

As part of the economic development coordination and unification efforts, local non-profit economic development organizations consolidated into two entities in 2002: The Greater Westminster Development Corporation and The Westminster Town Center Corporation.



## *Greater Westminster Development Corporation*

Greater Westminster Development Corporation (GWDC) is a non-profit business development organization that focuses on business retention and recruitment as well as economic development activities within the greater Westminster business community. This organization is guided by a board of directors from the private sector. Special services include an inventory of downtown commercial buildings and development activities. The GWDC also serves as an economic development policy board to the City and as an advisory organization for the Downtown Westminster Main Street Program. The City Administrator of Economic Development sits on the GWDC Board.

## *Westminster Town Center Corporation*

The Westminster Town Center Corporation (WTCC) serves as the “bricks and mortar” community economic development corporation and promotes a real estate focus in Downtown Westminster. The City Administrator of Economic Development serves as the WTCC’s non-paid Executive Director.

## **Part 6: Economic Development Strategies**

The American Planning Association and the Economic Development Administration of U.S. Department of Commerce have partnered to offer critical and timely economic development tools and techniques to local and state governments. The following describe potential strategies the City of Westminster can use, either alone or with other institutions, to carry out the Westminster economic development vision:

- Coordinate economic development programs and support services
- Development incentives and financing
- Business attraction and retention
- Workforce education and training
- Land supply analysis for business growth
- Infrastructure investment
- Investment in quality of life factors conducive to business innovation
- Streamline the permit process

### **Strategy 1: Coordination of Programs and Support Services**

Intra-regional Coordination, which works at the very broadest level of coordination, is the effort to avoid competition among communities within a region. One component of intraregional coordination would be pooling resources to attract companies to the region. The motivating factor for this coordination is the recognition that job creation and retention have economic effects that spill over city boundaries. If a company comes to a city, for example, workers from nearby suburbs can benefit by commuting to those jobs. Businesses in the entire region would benefit from all workers spending some of their money in their home city or nearby, and from the new business making some of its purchases within the

region. The City of Westminster will continue to work with its local economic development partners, especially the Carroll County Department of Economic Development, to coordinate efforts to improve the local economy of Westminster.

## **Strategy 2: Business Development**

### *Business Skills and Management Training for Small Businesses*

Small business assistance centers provide accessible management training, counseling, consulting, and research services for small firms. Programs respond to the needs that individual businesses identify in the areas of technology transfer, management, financing, marketing, and workforce training. Another component is an annual or semi-annual business start-up fair where prospective entrepreneurs can meet with those who have experience launching a business or who can offer other useful support services. Westminster has benefited from the programs for small businesses and local residents that Carroll County has developed to support the Westminster local economy.

### *Business Incubator*

In this strategy, a public entity, or non-profit, acquires or constructs a building and provides, or arranges provision of, low-cost space and support services for start-up businesses in targeted industries, with graduation criteria. The goal of an incubator is not simply to provide low-cost space, but to provide shared support services smaller companies might not be able to afford on their own. Business incubators foster synergy through the communication and proximity of incubator tenants. The City of Westminster is studying incubator strategies from cities of comparable size to Westminster, to determine how a Westminster incubator program could be developed in the next five to ten years through community partnerships.

## **Strategy 3: Business Attraction & Retention**

In the future, Westminster will continue to employ a variety of business attraction and retention techniques:

### *Marketing to Attract Businesses*

Many marketing strategies employ the technique of targeting; identifying a group of firms the development organization wants to reach. Targeting usually focuses on sectors with growth potential, linkages to existing businesses in the area, and reasons to be attracted to the particular region or local government setting because of particular competitive factors. The direct marketing techniques employed as part of a business attraction strategy can take many forms:

- Brochures about the local government's attractions to business and industry
- Advertising in trade publications or generalized advertising supplements

- Maintenance of a publicly accessible database of available commercial and industrial property
- Direct mail to specific industries or consultants
- Participation in industry trade shows
- Seminars for prospective businesses

The Westminster Office of Economic Development currently coordinates direct marketing and will add new strategies during the development of the Westminster Economic Development Master Plan.

## *Business Retention*

Local governments can help retain businesses by reducing development or operation costs with financial incentives, waivers of fees or taxes, or in-kind services. Common techniques include:

- Surveys of local businesses to determine attitudes or plans for changes and expansions
- Periodic business roundtables or breakfasts
- Regular personal visits by local government officials to businesses
- Creation of teams of top local government managers to expedite responses to problems identified by local businesses
- Publication of newsletters to local businesses
- Active involvement by local government officials in business groups or organizations

The City of Westminster Office of Economic Development has a close working relationship with the Main Street business community. The Office of Economic Development will collaborate with its community partners to expand business retention strategies to the entire Westminster area.

## **Strategy 4: Workforce Education & Training**

Workforce training programs include customized instructional approaches based on firms' requirements. Local employment programs can provide training and personal skills development programs to help disadvantaged social groups gain employment or acquire necessary skills. Westminster is looking into providing an online system to supply job seekers with information about potential employers and public programs for skill development.

The Carroll County Public School system is a key player in the workforce education strategy by being responsible for primary and secondary education in the city. Other groups in the Westminster area can also play important roles, particularly for workforce training. The local community college system, local businesses, nonprofit workforce training groups, and economic development agencies can all use their resources to address workforce-training issues. A well-trained and well-educated workforce provides an incentive for industries or companies to locate in Westminster.

## Economic Development Element

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan presents strategies to encourage and direct the economic growth of Westminster to achieve a diversified and stable economy. The City of Westminster envisions a future where economic development will aid in creating jobs and income in the community and it will also help create an overall better quality of life for residents. The Economic Development Element promotes the economic success of residents and businesses in the Westminster area by encouraging the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services that are compatible with the small town character of Westminster

### Goals and Objectives

#### **Goal E1: Create and maintain an “Economic Development Master Plan” to assist existing local businesses and to attract industrial and commercial development**

**Objective 1:** Prepare background information that will provide an accurate picture of the current economic climate of the Westminster area

- a. Conduct a “Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats” analysis of the Westminster business environment
- b. Study economic development strategies of cities comparable in size to Westminster
- c. Identify missed opportunities and potential ‘best use’ of commercial properties, as well as selected public properties

**Objective 2:** Develop an “Economic Development Master Plan” that will contribute to the City’s quality of life and local economy

- a. Establish actions for supporting, promoting, and enhancing existing businesses
- b. Develop recommendations for attracting future investment into the City
- c. Formulate a sustainable strategy that contributes positively to the City’s tax base

**Goal E2: Support a diversified and stable economic environment that will enhance the standard of living of all citizens, and be compatible with the Municipal Growth Element**

**Objective 1:** Ensure that commercial and industrial activity is consistent with maintaining a high-quality built and a natural environment

- a. Direct expansion of existing businesses and/or development of new businesses in appropriate locations, in order to maximize the use of existing public services and infrastructure
- b. Encourage clustering of major commercial and industrial activities in locations that will minimize impacts to the natural environment and adjacent land uses while maintaining a walkable community
- c. Require that new development does not take place unless infrastructure is available to support it
- d. Develop incentives for businesses to use green building standards to limit their impact on the City's infrastructure and limited resources

**Objective 2:** Ensure the accessibility and availability of services and commodities that accommodate the needs and wants of Westminster residents

- a. Conduct a survey of residents to collect input on what goods and services are "missing" or need an increased presence in Westminster
- b. Prepare a "Needs-Based Analysis" of goods and services that remains current with the changing economic climate
- c. Create a list of desired businesses to submit to regional entrepreneurs and potential business owners on an annual basis
- d. Continue to support the creation of neighborhood commercial districts that are designed to serve residents within one mile or less

**Objective 3:** Support the retention and expansion of existing businesses, while exploring opportunities for new business development

- a. Create an environment which encourages entrepreneurs to engage in business and industrial activities
- b. Attract businesses that can be competitive in the Westminster area and will strengthen the economy by providing good wages and benefits

- c. Promote economic diversification to mitigate the impact of any significant economic downturns of existing business and industry

**Objective 4:** Partner with the Greater Westminster Development Corporation (GWDC), and other local organizations, to focus on business retention and recruitment, as well as economic development activities within the greater Westminster area

- a. Promote the GWDC as the lead organization for issues related to the Westminster area business community
- b. Support GWDC as a liaison between the City government and the Westminster area business owners
- c. Assist GWDC in providing an organizational framework to develop a shared economic vision, and to address appearance and marketing issues for Westminster area business owners

**Goal E3: Periodically review and update economic development strategies, policies, investments, and programs to respond to changing economic conditions and opportunities**

**Objective 1:** Identify issues and opportunities facing industry groups, key to the economic health of the area

- a. Survey local business owners annually to identify issues and opportunities
- b. Monitor trends, issues, and opportunities involving key industries in Westminster
- c. Support existing industry groups in order to retain businesses and increase employment

**Objective 2:** Study the economic conditions of Westminster to create a list of “Target Industries” that could be sustainable and successful within the City

- a. Maintain a “Targeted Industries List” and make it available to the public on the City Website and in the City Economic Development Office
- b. Market Westminster to the “Target Industries” through promotional materials and annual Economic Development meetings
- c. Review and update the list of targeted industry types annually

## **Goal E4: Support the expansion and enhancement of retail, entertainment, and mixed-use development in Downtown Westminster**

**Objective 1:** Foster the economic revitalization of Downtown Westminster

- a. Rezone properties that are designated within the Mixed Use Infill Zone
- b. Provide Downtown business owners with copies of the Community Vision Report that includes residents' comments and suggestions about improving Downtown
- c. Offer financial incentives to existing and/or new businesses to expand or renovate existing structures

**Objective 2:** Promote a mix of high-quality housing and business types necessary for an active, 18-hour Downtown Westminster

- a. Rezone key parcels to encourage greater mixed-use development opportunities
- a. Retain and attract major Downtown employers to serve as "anchor tenants" to bring in workers to Downtown during the traditional work week
- b. Retain and attract entertainment, civic, recreational, and cultural resources to serve as "anchor tenants" to bring area residents and visitors to Downtown during the evening and weekend hours
- c. Seek to attract higher-density housing Downtown to strengthen economic activity and market demand in the Downtown area during the evening and weekend hours

**Objective 3:** Encourage redevelopment of blighted and underused properties with strong potential for reuse as business development sites in Downtown Westminster

- a. Create an inventory of underutilized and vacant properties in Westminster
- b. Develop Infill and Redevelopment Design Guidelines
- c. Facilitate redevelopment involving larger or more complex projects by preparing an "Infill and Redevelopment Master Plan" for underutilized properties
- d. Meet with regional infill and redevelopment developers to present the "Infill and Redevelopment Master Plan" in order to stimulate interest and generate support for the implementation of the plan

**Objective 4:** Partner with the Main Street Committee to further enhance the economic vitality of Downtown Westminster

- a. Promote the Main Street Committee as representatives of the stakeholders and professionals that work to create and further the appeal of the Main Street community
- b. Support the Main Street Committee as the primary group to recommend strategies and goals for the revitalization of Downtown Westminster
- c. Work with the Main Street Committee to plan and promote community events which are to take place in Downtown Westminster

**Goal E5: Foster the competitive workforce needed for the future of Westminster's economy**

**Objective 1:** Expand employment opportunities and income-earning potential for residents by ensuring that employment opportunities are available

- a. Provide support services to recruit and serve major employers
- b. Direct the location of business and industry that will utilize the existing labor force and provide competitive salaries
- c. Encourage the development of employment opportunities that will maintain a qualified and competitively-compensated workforce
- d. Monitor underemployment and assist in reducing underemployment through recruitment of targeted industries that will utilize and train the local labor force

**Objective 2:** Retain and attract local college students as potential employees for local and future businesses

- a. Support linkages between McDaniel College and Carroll Community College with area employers that feature quality employment opportunities to retain students and program graduates
- b. Welcome and integrate students and faculty into the community and area businesses

**Objective 3:** Coordinate educational, vocational, and trade association technical training opportunities with the needs of new and existing employers

- a. Promote workforce development resources to train or retrain workers of specific employers or industry groups
- b. Work with the local colleges to continue to provide support and training networks for key industries in Westminster and Carroll County



**Objective 4:** Enhance and promote a high quality of life to attract potential businesses and employees to locate to Westminster

- a. Support investments in cultural amenities, quality neighborhoods, and community features important to attracting and retaining the diverse, skilled workforce
- b. Market Westminster throughout the region as an attractive city in which to live and work