

ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION PLAN

Introduction

The City of Danville has a very robust economic development program utilizing its own Economic Development staff supported by the work of the Danville Chamber of Commerce and the staff and resources provided through the Commonwealth of Virginia, most notably, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission. The City is also a partner in the West Piedmont Economic Development District, a regional body economic development coordination body required as a condition for receiving U.S. Economic Development Administration funding.

While success has been hard to come by during the recent poor economy, Danville has continued to build the foundations for future growth. Announcements made during the writing of this Comprehensive Plan and as highlighted in the Background section of this Plan give clear evidence that the City's economic development efforts are beginning to pay off.

As affirmation of these efforts, the Economic Development goal utilized in this Comprehensive Plan is as follows:

Economic Development Goal: Support and promote the City's existing economic base while actively recruiting other economic development opportunities in the areas of basic industry; advanced manufacturing; technology; sustainable/green energy, automotive, and aerospace research, development, and production; and tourism in order to strengthen and expand the economy.

Policies / Objectives

The policies/objectives established in support of this goal are:

- Actively market the City as a viable location for business expansion and relocation in light of its position as a manufacturing center, its location at the intersection of US 58 and US 29, its central location within the two states of North Carolina/Virginia, and its proximity to the Research Triangle and Piedmont Triad regions of North Carolina.
- Develop the plans, infrastructure, sites, and facilities needed within the established industrial parks and the Berry Hill Regional Mega Park in order to successfully compete for the relocation and expansion of existing local and regional businesses and those from beyond Danville and to prepare space for new business and industry "birthed" in Danville, Pittsylvania County, and the West Piedmont Economic Development District.
- Support and incentivize the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of structures in The River District Danville, the Tobacco Warehouse District, and the other older commercial and industrial areas within the City in order to provide sites and facilities attractive to cutting-edge business and industry that prefer an urban setting.
- Support original research and development of new products and technologies in conjunction with the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, the Sustainable Energy Technology Center, and the Center for Applied High Performance Computing and assisting successful endeavors in their transition to full-scale production.
- Partner with local and regional educational institutions to provide the training, basic education, and higher education needed to sustain the skilled workforce desired by the City's



existing and future commercial, retail, and industrial businesses.

- Provide support and incentives in cooperation with regional and state partners for the creation of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses that enable the City to compete for jobs on a national and international level.

Existing Economic Development Initiatives

The City and its economic development partners currently provide the following facilities, educational support, services, and incentives:

Business Parks

- Cyberpark, a 330 acre technology park.
- Airside Industrial Park with 83 remaining developable acres.
- Cane Creek Centre with 455 remaining developable acres.
- Riverview Industrial Park with 65 remaining developable acres.
- The Berry Hill Regional Mega Park, a 3,700 acre site jointly sponsored by the City and Pittsylvania County.

Research, Advanced Education, and Workforce Training

- Danville Community College
- Averett University
- National College
- The Regional Center for Advanced Technology and Training
- The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research
- The Sustainable Energy Technology Center
- The Center for Applied High Performance Computing

Business Assistance

- Well-designed and user friendly website resources at discoverdanville.com

- Dan River Business Development Center
- A Business Incubator in the Business Development Center

Local Incentives in the Enterprise Zones

- The City has two state recognized enterprise zones – Enterprise Zone (including larger tracts and business parks) & Urban Enterprise Zone (including central City tracts and the Cyber Park).
- Job Grants ranging from \$100 per new job for jobs paying more than \$9 per hour up to \$500 per new job for jobs paying more than \$40 per hour.
- An exemption from City permit fees.
- A 50% rebate of Machinery and Tools Tax for new investment.
- Reimbursement of water and sewer connection fees.
- Access to state incentives for businesses locating to an Enterprise Zone including Real Property Investment Grants, Wage-Based Job Creation Grants, and the Governor’s Opportunity Fund.

Other Incentives

- A Real Estate Abatement Program that provides a fifteen-year phased real estate exemption for improvements to buildings more than 50 years old that increase a building’s value by at least 25%. Buildings must be located within the City’s state and federally designated historic districts (Downtown, Tobacco Warehouse District, North Danville, Mill, Old West End, and Holbrook-Ross).
- The City is a federally recognized HUB Zone (Historically Underutilized Business Zone Empowerment Contracting Program). Businesses in HUB Zones are given preference on federal contracts.

Support and Market Research for Targeted Industries

- Aerospace
- Automotive
- Back Office
- Food & Beverage
- Pharmaceutical/Life Sciences
- Plastics/Polymers

Additional Initiatives

Danville’s economic development initiatives are to be commended. The follow additional initiatives are put forward as a means of building even more on the City’s growing success:

- **Implement the Danville River District Redevelopment Plan** – The Danville River District Redevelopment Plan outlines a comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of the River District, which includes the Tobacco Warehouse and Downtown Districts. The Plan is comprised of two main sections, an economic analysis and urban design analysis. The City should actively pursue and prioritize the implementation of this plan as a key to the economic development of the District and the entire city.
- **Become a Virginia Main Street designee** – Including the historic downtown district of the River District as a Virginia Main Street will give the City access to a range of economic development resources specifically geared to spur business growth in traditional commercial districts. These resources will complement the extensive physical improvements already made to the streetscape and right-of-way.
- **Enhanced Use of Redevelopment Tools** – Danville and the Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority should



utilize all of the tools available to them through the Code of Virginia including the adoption and implementation of conservation and redevelopment plans, use of spot blight abatement, and strict building code enforcement in order to improve the built environment of the City and create a more positive atmosphere for economic development.

- **Expansion of the Real Estate Tax Abatement Program –** The existing Real Estate Tax Abatement Program could be expanded to include additional targeted neighborhoods or be made citywide. Additionally, the age requirement could be changed to buildings no less than 20 or 25 years old (the Code of Virginia allows buildings no less than 15 years old), making more buildings eligible for the program and spurring additional investment in the City’s built environment.
- **Discourage Additional Retail Development on Vacant Land / Encourage Office/Retail Development that Utilizes Existing Buildings –** While property rights, local and state law, and this Comprehensive Plan require that Danville process zoning applications and special use permits for new retail development in an acceptable and lawful fashion, the City should not encourage additional retail on vacant land. The City should encourage redevelopment by utilizing its incentives to support the rehabilitation of existing space and the adaptive reuse of buildings appropriate for retail and office development.
- **Adopt a “Sufficiently Adequate” Ordinance –** This kind of ordinance requires developers to fund public facilities sufficiently adequate to serve the needs of new residential, commercial, and industrial development except where incentives are warranted in keeping with established community and economic development goals and policies. While the City would likely incentivize any project with a

significant economic development impact, such an ordinance would provide a means whereby smaller, less sustainable projects of limited impact could be discouraged.

