

**Queen Anne's County**  
**Economic Development Commission**  
**Ten-Year Strategic Plan**

Launch Date: January 2015

**Facilitated by:**

**BEACON**  
Business Economic and Community Outreach Network  
At Salisbury University

## MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

### Mission

The Queen Anne's County Economic Development Commission's mission is to collaborate with all of our stakeholders from the private, public, and non-profit sectors to pursue economically and environmentally sustainable and balanced growth opportunities for business, tourism, and agriculture.

### Vision

Queen Anne's County Economic Development Commission envisions an economically and demographically vibrant community, full of promise for current and future residents and businesses, yet uncompromisingly dedicated to the preservation of the County's environment, heritage, and rich culture.

### Values

The Queen Anne's County Economic Development Commission is committed to supporting:

- **Residents** - We value our residents' endeavors to seek a balance between "Living, Working, and Playing."
- **Businesses** - We are committed to growing our business base.
- **Tourism** - We seek to build-on our distinct focus on tourism.
- **Agriculture** - We support our 1000 + farms, enhancing their economic value.
- **Infrastructure** – We endeavor to build and maintain our infrastructure to support new, existing, and virtual businesses.
- **Education** - We seek high quality education at all levels for all our residents.
- **Environment** - We protect our open green spaces and our waterways.
- **Landscapes** - We value and support productive, working landscapes.
- **Demographic Diversity** - We value our residents of all ages and all backgrounds.
- **Quality of Life** - We cherish our heritage and culture.
- **Philanthropy** - We rely on and support our local nonprofit organizations.

## **STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS**

The Queen Anne’s County Economic Development Commission (**EDC**) retained the Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network (**BEACON**) of the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University to conduct a comprehensive survey of our key stakeholders from all of our County’s economic activity sectors. Using the data, information, and other findings from this comprehensive survey, we conducted a strategic planning retreat with a large number of opinion leaders from our private, public, and nonprofit sectors. These endeavors enabled the EDC to enumerate the following key factors that frame the County’s economy:

### **Strengths**

Queen Anne’s County enjoys a great number of strengths. The most important ones that impact the local economy are:

- Geographic Location
- A Sense of Community
- Quality of Life
- The County’s Waterways
- Eastern Shore Values
- The County’s Public Education System
- The Region’s Institutions of Higher Education
- Our Workforce

### **Weaknesses**

Like all jurisdictions, Queen Anne’s County must deal with a number of weaknesses. The most critical ones that impact the local economy are:

- The High Median Age of the County’s Workforce
- Competition for the County’s Workforce from Nearby Metropolitan Areas with Higher Wages
- Limited Availability of Affordable and Workforce Housing
- Economic “Leakage” of a Portion of the County’s Residents’ Incomes to the Localities where they Work
- Limited Resources to Enhance the County’s Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Transportation, Broadband)
- Occasional Tensions between Local, State, and Federal Visions for Public Policy

## **Opportunities**

Queen Anne's County has many opportunities that can contribute to the success, sustainability and development of the County. The ones with the highest potential for supporting the County's economic development efforts are:

- Growing Interest in Agricultural Sciences and Agriculture Related Businesses
- The Need for New Business Parks (i.e. Near the 301/304 Intersection)
- The Improving Conditions for Small-Scale Manufacturing
- Potential for Locating Satellite Offices for Larger Corporations from Outside the County
- The Growing Collaboration between the County's Businesses and Chesapeake College
- Job Creation for County Residents at All Levels
- The Opportunity to Extend the Economic Impact of Tourism Year-Round
- Chesapeake College Becoming a Major Resource for Expanding the Health Care Sector
- Potential for a Standalone Surgical Center at the Medical Park/ER (near Nesbitt Road)
- The Need for Assisted Living Care and Transitional Care to Serve our Aging Population
- Using Signage on High Traffic Highways to Attract and Engage Travelers

## **Threats**

No jurisdiction operates in an environment free of threats. The key threats to the County's economy are:

- Regulatory Burdens on Businesses
- The Threat of Not Being Able to Keep-up and Enhance the County's Infrastructure
- Business and Economic Competition from the Region
- Lack of Economic Diversification

## **DRIVING STRATEGIES**

Using the linkages between the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats presented above, the Queen Anne's County Economic Development Commission has developed a number of driving strategies in support of the County's mission and vision. These strategies will drive the business and economic development activities of the Queen Anne's County Economic Development Commission for the next five years.

### **Driving Strategy 1: Building Economic Clusters**

The Economic Development Commission will focus on building and maintaining the following economic activity clusters (in alphabetical order):

- Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Food Science
- Health Care
- Small-Scale Manufacturing
- Technology
- Tourism (especially in Kent Narrows)

In implementing this strategy, the ECDC will seek to enhance complementary, value-added, and allied industry groupings. Over time, and where appropriate, the EDC will seek international outreach to further enhance these clusters. As a supporting strategy, the EDC will work towards a business environment with streamlined regulations and permitting processes to encourage the recruitment and retention of businesses.

### **Driving Strategy 2: Supporting Education and Workforce Development**

The Economic Development Commission will work with the County's educational institutions to enhance the quality of the County's workforce by:

- Supporting linkages between the K-12 Public Education System, the region's institutions of higher education, and county businesses to enhance college and career readiness;
- Supporting the drive for more four-year and graduate programs in our regional institutions of higher education;
- Supporting business outreach to all of educational institutions, including the growth of after school job programs, apprenticeships, internships, etc.;
- Enhancing vocational training to support employers' needs.

### **Driving Strategy 3: Enhancing Infrastructure**

The Economic Development Commission will enhance the County's infrastructure by:

- Supporting water-sewer infrastructure investments;
- Supporting the maintenance and growth of the County's transportation infrastructure;
- Supporting the growth of a fair and affordable broadband infrastructure.

#### **Driving Strategy 4: Showcase the County's Location to Further Enhance our Economy**

The Economic Development Commission will promote the County's ideal location on the rural Eastern Shore of Maryland, with close proximity to major metropolitan areas, by:

- Building a Business Park near the 301/304 intersection;
- Exploring new business models for the County's business parks to support health care as well as agricultural and food science industries;
- Seeking the establishment of satellite offices for large corporations from the metropolitan areas;
- Facilitating the creation of new businesses and the expansion of existing ones that are complementary to the County's economic activity clusters listed in Driving Strategy 1;
- Enhancing signage on the County's highways;
- Supporting business and economic development driven by the region's institutions of higher education;
- Targeting the surrounding metropolitan areas for some of the County's business and economic development promotional activities, including the engagement of a regional or national business development agency (i.e. WEDA - World Economic Development Alliance).

#### **Driving Strategy 5: Growing the County's Affordable and Workforce Housing Stock**

The Economic Development Commission will view a robust Affordable and Workforce Housing Stock not only as a way to enhance the County's workforce development activities, but as an economic development opportunity as well. In particular, the EDC will:

- Help develop and support a Smart Growth strategy for affordable and workforce housing that clusters multi-family developments where the necessary infrastructure already exists or is planned.
- Seek and support public policies that facilitate and provide financial and fiscal incentives for affordable and workforce housing, including Public-Private Partnerships, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Transferrable Development Rights (TDR), and incentives for Moderately-Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU);
- Support an ongoing community dialog about growing the County's affordable and workforce housing in harmony with the principles of Smart Growth.

## **Driving Strategy 6: Enhancing our Quality-of-Life**

The Economic Development Commission acknowledges that the uniqueness of the County's geography and the beauty of the region's natural resources are critical to the quality-of-life of the county residents. The EDC further acknowledges that a high quality-of-life enhances a locality's economic development activities. In order to maintain and increase this quality-of-life, the EDC will:

- Maintain and improve the quality of the County's natural resources;
- Support the best practices in applying Smart Growth principles throughout the County;
- Protect and preserve the County's agricultural heritage;
- Employ the best science and know-how to grow agriculture in an environmentally responsible way;
- Address the County's traffic and roadway issues;
- Invest in the County's towns, consistent with Smart Growth principles;
- Utilize the County's demographic diversity to create economic opportunities, including generational linkages for keeping our youth in the County while accessing the wisdom of our more experienced residents;
- Support an ongoing community dialog on Sustainable Economic Development.

### **THE PATH FORWARD**

For the implementation of this plan the Queen Anne's County Economic Development Commission will rely on various entities and organizations throughout the County, from all sectors of our community. Where necessary, new workgroups, committees, and task forces will be created to accomplish the objectives listed in this plan. These groups will be flexible, agile, and ready, willing, and able to exploit business and economic development opportunities. They will seek and judiciously deploy the resources needed to achieve the goals of this plan.