

## 7. Projects and Implementation

### 7.1 Overview

In the course of the project the team including the County staff, consultants, citizens and members of the Steering Committee proposed projects to address the County's goals and objectives for economic development (Exhibit 2-1). The Steering Committee then evaluated the proposed projects relative to the County's needs and available resources and ranked them in priority form.

Exhibit 7-1 summarizes the Committee's conclusions on this matter. The Exhibit shows the ranking of the projects in terms of relative importance. While there are several projects ranked close to each other the overall distribution is sufficiently wide to show clear priorities.

Exhibit 7-1

#### Steering Committee Priority Economic Development Projects

Project	A	B
	Total Score	Average Score
Vocational Training Program Upgrade	124	8.26
Sewer Extension: Route 29 South	121	8.06
Business Recruitment and Promotion: Travel, Web site, etc.	115	7.66
Airport Park	114	7.60
Business Incubator	110	7.33
Revolving Loan Fund (Business/Agriculture)	108	7.20
Entrepreneurial Development Program	101	6.73
Dearing Ford (Communications Improvements)	100	6.66
Agricultural Land Planning Initiative	100	6.66
Commerce Park	97	6.46
Brookneal Ind. Park Improvments	97	6.46
Agricultural Incubator	95	6.33
Downtown Revitalization	92	6.13
Tourism Project Development	86	6.14
Agro-tourism Development	82	5.46
Agricultural Marketing	81	5.40
Farm Partnership Program: Strategic Alliances	80	5.71

Source: Thomas Point Associates, Inc.

Subsequent to the Steering Committee's review the CEDS team identified two other projects for implementation: a program for small and minority business development, and a preliminary identification of sites suitable for large-scale industrial development. The Committee assigned priorities to these two projects in a separate evaluation process.

In the following section we discuss these projects individually.

## **7.2 Project Recommendations**

### **Vocational Training Program Upgrade**

#### ***Background:***

The County is fortunate to have one of the few vocational technical high schools in the Lynchburg region. The school is well-situated in the center of the County, on Route 29. With special attention from the central staff of the School Board, there have been staff and curriculum changes in recent years that seem to be yielding benefits. The registration has grown from 180 students three years ago to 230 last year and 255 in the current year. The school added programs and a new guidance counselor, and there are plans to add new programs in computer repair and criminal justice.

#### ***Recommendation:***

It is recommended that DED work with the School Board to evaluate concepts for improvement of the Center and translate them, wherever possible, into actions that will support the CEDS. The potential actions that deserve attention are the following:

- Change the image of the program in the eyes of students and parents from college-default option to skilled career choice.
- Evaluate existing curriculum to see if it is meeting the needs of existing business, adjust curriculum if necessary by discontinuing any programs that are not benefiting needed work force skills, adding programs where necessary and incorporating appropriate technology and equipment to meet today's needs.
- Adjust the apprenticeship program to address the concerns of businesses that it may not be meeting their needs; the issue is that students trained as apprentices move away or take a job elsewhere after companies make the training investment.
- Consider an annual "career day" related to targeted skills and training.
- Strengthen connections with CVCC, which is constructing a new \$10.5 million "Technology Building" that will house special equipment for training in electronics, heating, welding and machinery, exactly the areas in which Campbell County is targeting future job expansion. There are much broader opportunities for dual enrolment in County schools and the Community College.
- Develop mechanisms to connect high school students with companies in the area needing the skills that are coming out of the Vo-Tech School.
- Improve the appearance of the existing facility, possibly involving entry, signage, landscaping and façade, as well as other elements, to present an upgraded image.

This is a high-priority action for short to midterm implementation. The School Board will need to estimate costs associated with implementation and seek grant funding or business partnerships as additional revenue sources. DED and the School Board will have responsibility for implementation.

### **Sewer Extension: Route 29 South**

#### ***Background:***

The Route 29 corridor offers the best prospects for the County in terms of job development, at least in the foreseeable future. Other roads and parts of the County have long-term potential as well but the Route 29 corridor is at the center of the link between Danville and Lynchburg, and the much more extended corridor north through

Charlottesville to northern Virginia and Washington D.C. The County has taken steps to focus development on this corridor and mitigate infrastructure costs and traffic dangers associated with sprawl or haphazard development.

The key to the realization of development opportunities on a large portion of the road is the extension of sewer service south from Route 24 to Altavista. The County has already constructed water lines in this area. The construction of the sewer connection will make it possible for the County to undertake development of a Commerce Park on the Winston property. It will also enable private owners to develop other properties along the Route for more intensive commercial uses. New commercial development in this area will pay for the sewer system and will make it possible for the County to provide public services at a high level without unduly increasing the residential tax burden.

***Recommendation:***

Campbell County Staff completed a feasibility study in 1998 on the potential for running a sewer line into Altavista. The study identified a projected route using gravity flow, following a corridor down the Otter River and serving the western side of the Rt. 29 watershed area/drainage basin. At least 63,000 linear feet of sewer line will be required. There has been no work done to determine the additional support structures necessary for the sewer line. The cost of installation is likely to range from \$36 to \$40 per foot. Total costs will range from \$2.3 million and could exceed \$2.5 million if pump stations are necessary. DED along with the Public Works Department would have the lead responsibility for implementation.

**A County Marketing Program**

***Background:***

The primary theme of this strategy is that Campbell County should concentrate on retaining and expanding the industries that are already present in the County. This focus makes the most sense since it has the best chance of success and is the most cost effective. It also facilitates the attraction of new companies in the core sectors for which we have targeted resources: fabricated metals, industrial machinery and plastics. And it in no way precludes the County from attracting new companies in other industry sectors.

***Recommendation:***

The strategy calls for a significant three-year investment in marketing the County as a business location. The principal recommendations relate to the following activities:

- Create an independent County web site for the specific economic development purpose: the internet has become the primary source of information in the economic development field. The County's economic information on its web site now just barely meets an acceptable standard. In Section 6, we identify the various actions that DED should take to upgrade this source.
- Create business networks for marketing and training: since businesses in the County are the focus of the strategy, it will be important that the County bring business leaders together to discuss issues of common concern and opportunities for growth and business development. The role of the County in this respect will be the enhancement of networking opportunities to benefit all parties.

- Market the County to targeted prospects, using leads and appropriate contact management software: The County needs good leads and the software to manage the coordination of interest. This will mean development of leads from the business networks and the purchase of leads in the target sectors from companies that have and sell that information. While this will be a significant cost, it is essential that DED pursue new companies in connection with this strategy.
- Communicate with businesses in the County and other interested parties: we recommend a quarterly newsletter directed primarily to companies in Campbell County but also for distribution to site selectors and recent or promising contacts. The theme should be the progress that the County is making in the implementation of its economic development strategy.

The marketing program is a top priority for implementation over the next two to three years. The estimated cost is \$119,000 per year. DED should have full responsibility for implementation.

### **Airport Park**

#### ***Background:***

The County has been working with the City of Lynchburg for several years to jointly develop industrial land at the southern corner of the airport on land that the City and County own. This concept of a “regional industrial park” is new in the region and will require a cooperative effort between the City and the County. The Airport is an excellent location for both the City and the County and industrial development in this location will take advantage of the transportation advantages.

#### ***Recommendation:***

The County should vigorously pursue discussions with the City of Lynchburg to move this project ahead. It is a top priority. The County prepared cost estimates in 1998. At the time, projected costs for roads and infrastructure were \$3,055, 000. The cost of site preparation was estimated at \$2.2 million for all 8 sites, at \$15,000 per acre. The County and the City should create an organization with a distinct identity to jointly administer this park, possibly under the aegis of the Region 2000 Regional Commission, or in some other form. DED and the County Executive should take the lead on this effort

### **Business Incubator**

#### ***Background:***

There is a business incubator in the City of Lynchburg (“The Lynchburg Business Center”). Campbell County is about to begin a study of the feasibility of development of an industrial business incubator that would be located within the County. The Winston property is one of the sites that the consultant will evaluate. DED has entered a contract with the Economic Development Adjustment Center (“EDAC”) of Virginia Polytechnic Institute to prepare this evaluation. EDAC will begin in August 2003 and complete the project in February 2004. In addition to overall feasibility the characteristics of the facility to be evaluated are the following:

- Cost
- Location
- Size

The Region 2000 Technology Council is also trying to start an incubator, and it may be possible to link the development of the Region 2000 facility with a Campbell County incubator. The County has initiated discussions with the Council to review this opportunity. The Community College is also setting up an “Entrepreneurial Incubator Program” to address the special needs of entrepreneurs, and it may be possible to merge or otherwise link this effort with the EDAC study.

***Recommendation:***

This is a top priority. DED has the lead role in moving ahead with this project. The cost of development will be a significant challenge, assuming that the feasibility study comes to a conclusion. Preliminary consideration for the Incubator facility suggests that at least 40,000 square feet is the minimum facility size. The cost estimate of \$5 million represents a 50,000 square foot facility with a development cost of \$100 per square foot; the EDAC study will provide a more reliable estimate.

***Revolving Loan Fund (Business/Agriculture)***

***Background:***

There are many lending sources available to businesses that need to borrow capital for continuing operation and expansion. These include federal programs such as the Small Business Administration (SBA) and State programs. However, there are occasional situations where the County itself could make loans for specific purposes that directly support its economic development goals and objectives. For example, it could target funds to assist companies in target industry sectors. Funding to establish an agricultural economic development loan fund could, very likely, be obtained through the USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program. This would be one method of directing funds to assist companies in target industry sectors and should be a long-term priority.

***Recommendation:***

The business survey did not indicate that the availability of finance was a significant problem for County business and we recommend that the revolving loan fund take a low-priority rank. At this point County staff does not have the time or banking expertise to run a program of this nature and it is unlikely that it will in the foreseeable future. If the County proceeds to implement the RLF concept DED should contract with a local financial institution to administer it. Funding to establish an agricultural economic development loan fund could, very likely, be obtained through the USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program. This represents a long-term priority.

***Entrepreneurial Development Program***

***Background:***

There is recognition in Campbell County and throughout the region that entrepreneurship should play a significant role in the regional economy and the public sector can play a bigger role in fostering entrepreneurial skills. To this end the Community College is designing a series of non-credit courses on starting a business. It is also considering the creation of a special fund to finance businesses that high school students start. There are various ways in which DED can work with the Community College and other institutions to foster even greater levels of entrepreneurial development.

***Recommendation:***

There are several ways in which the County will support entrepreneurial development:

- Provide special assistance for entrepreneurs in the proposed business incubator.
- Create an “entrepreneur of the year award” for a Campbell County business.
- Dedicate special resources to MBE/WBE entrepreneurs.
- Work with the School Board and Community College to develop special training around the entrepreneurial theme.

***Dearing Ford Industrial Park Improvements***

***Background:***

This industrial property features complete infrastructure except for fiber optic cable. Installation would require undergrounding over a distance of one mile at an estimated cost of \$40,000. However, it is likely that a new plant at this location would use a T- 1 copper connection or wireless access rather than fiber optics.

***Recommendation:***

It is premature to take action on this matter until a plant location provides direction about the nature of the actual need. DED should take the lead in continuing to market the property and evaluate the stated needs of potential prospects.

***Agricultural Land Planning Initiative:***

***Background:***

Farmland should be protected as an economic asset. However, protection needs to be accomplished in a manner that does not destroy the basis of the farm’s ability to borrow and capitalize operations. This demands new approaches to agricultural use planning, including consideration of programs to purchase or lease development rights, conservation subdivision concepts and transfer of density rights (TDR) programs. The principal challenges are to simplify the procedures and create incentives.

***Recommendation:***

Campbell County should, as a long-term priority, consider developing a simplified land use planning program that provides for transfer, purchase or lease of development rights and employs conservation design practices are also worthy of pursuit. The County will, at a minimum, need to severely limit spot zoning to make such programs work on an equitable basis. This task should be the responsible of the Community Development Department. Funding for the planning work will have to come from the County itself but funding for purchase of development rights, if later undertaken, could come from a variety of sources including the State and Federal government, conservancy groups and, in the case of TDR, through the private market.

***Commerce Park***

***Background:***

Campbell County has good sites that are suitable for industrial and commercial development. It also offers existing industrial buildings, in Altavista and Brookneal that could be suitable for certain kinds of companies. However, on the primary transportation corridor and the center of development attention now and in the foreseeable future, the Route 29 corridor, there is no present focus of development.

The County owns the 300-acre Winston property and intends to develop a 75-acre portion for small businesses. Master planning for this planned Commerce Park is underway. It is expected that the access road will be in place in summer 2004 and site preparation may begin at that time.

***Recommendation:***

Principal costs associated with development of the business park portion (excluding costs for site pad preparation) of this site are the following:

Median cross-over on U.S. Route 29:	\$62,500
Water lines and industrial road:	\$492,000 (Phase I: 2,050 linear feet)
	\$363,000 (Phase II: 1,500 linear feet)

**Brookneal Industrial Park Improvements**

***Background:***

The County owns the 20-acre industrial park north of the Thomasville Plant in Brookneal. While there is a waterline to this location, there is no sewer connection. This improvement would significantly enhance prospects for marketing this property.

***Recommendation:***

Costs of making the sewer connection to Brookneal include the following:

Construction of pump station to bridge railroad tracks: \$125,000.

The cost of installation of the 1.5 mile sewer line is not known.

**Agricultural Incubator**

***Background:***

The acquisition and development of one of the County's vacant industrial properties as an incubator site for added-value processing operations might include small agricultural and forestry secondary processing and distribution operations involving woodcraft items, distribution of agricultural products and small fruit and vegetable processing operations. There are some examples of this around the country including community kitchen incubators, wood products manufacturing centers and even dairy processing incubators. Employment of this concept would stimulate small added-value operations that could invigorate the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, support tourism and help reuse vacant building space.

***Recommendation:***

This project is worthy of serious consideration if the County determines to move ahead with a multiple-tenant reuse plan for one or more of Campbell's vacant manufacturing facilities or pursues the development of a new incubator facility. It should be a long-term priority. It would require a relatively small portion of the building and could include a retail outlet connected with an agricultural processing or food distribution business, generating additional interest and traffic to the site. Capital funding for such a project would be inextricably linked to financing of the larger project. Feasibility studies and other planning expenses, however, could be financed using USDA Rural Development, EDA or SARE funding. Management of this project should rest with the Department of Economic Development, with input from the Agricultural Coordinating Committee.

### **Downtown Revitalization**

#### ***Background:***

Altavista, Brookneal and Rustburg all have “Main Street” qualities, to varying degrees. While Campbell County lacks a strong county-wide center, there are opportunities to promote stronger commercial development at these locations, with benefits to business owners and County residents. However, the communities need technical assistance on ways to enhance businesses and this is not readily available in the County or in region.

#### ***Recommendation:***

DED and the town managers should take several specific actions recommended to improve the business environment in these locations:

- Create a Main Street coordinator position through the Region 2000 Regional Commission to employ an individual who can provide technical support to the three locations in Campbell County on a dedicated part-time basis while also serving other small towns and villages in the region.
- Physical improvements, such as signage and streetscape, furniture, etc.
- Marketing within and outside the region to potentially interested shoppers.
- Development of store and service attractions that would complement the existing environment.
- Creation of festivals and other special events to increase awareness and traffic.

The estimated cost of \$20,000 represents a share of the cost of retaining a Main Street coordinator at the regional level.

### **Tourism Project Development**

#### ***Background:***

Campbell County has important historic and cultural attractions but there is only a very slight awareness of the potential importance of tourism in the County’s economy and there is no concerted effort to improve the current tourism environment.

The County will pursue opportunities to expand this industry, in the following ways:

#### ***Recommendation: Recommendation:***

The County Executive should create a small task force of individuals in the industry, from the hotel, restaurant and other businesses that deal with tourism, to develop a program for expansion of this sector. This group should review opportunities to:

- Market the County jointly with the regional Chamber of Commerce of attractions and special events.
- Expand the County and economic development websites to provide much more detailed information on tourism.
- Evaluate possible application of lodging and dining taxes as a source of support for tourism marketing.

The County Executive should also assign responsibilities for tourism marketing and development responsibilities to DED.

### **Agro-tourism Development**

#### ***Background:***

Campbell County should encourage the development of additional agricultural tourism businesses, including wineries, to complement other tourism offerings. This can be done with some minimal promotion and financial incentives, combined with favorable zoning that provides for these activities as both principal and accessory uses without major restrictions. Examples include farmers' markets, on-farm processing and sales, outdoor farm recreation, educational experiences, entertainment and farm accommodations. Promoting agricultural tourism is largely a matter of education and technical assistance. The region's farmers first need to be made aware of the tourism assets they possess. One of the most important is the fact most farms are family operations which is an excellent marketing angle to exploit.

#### ***Recommendation:***

Promote, through zoning and financial incentives, as well as technical assistance, the development of an agricultural tourism industry. This should involve incentives for development of wineries and wine trails, promotion of farm visits and recreation opportunities to the Lynchburg market and professional promotion of Campbell County's farm markets and on-farm buying opportunities using brochures, maps and a website. This is a high priority project for the agricultural sector and should be led by the Agricultural Coordinating Committee, which can draw on the resources of Cooperative Extension for support. County funding should be provided for brochure and website development support.

### **Agricultural Marketing**

#### ***Background:***

Many counties throughout the nation have, over the last decade, created agricultural development programs to assist farmers with product development, marketing and related matters. Responsibilities are typically shared among Cooperative Extension, economic development and planning agencies. Some programs operate under the auspices of Cooperative Extension and others are direct functions of county government. Some are based on employment of new agricultural economic development staff while others simply seek to better coordinate and focus the efforts of existing agencies and staff, which is the approach recommended for Campbell County. The emphasis of such programs, in nearly all cases, has been distinctly entrepreneurial in nature.

Cooperative Extension is the most logical location for an agricultural support mission because of the extensive resources available and the contacts Cooperative Extension has established with the industry. It also has the staff and the support expertise required to implement a program. However, because Cooperative Extension is, by its very nature, concentrated on educational goals it is often difficult for the agency to take on advocacy, negotiation and entrepreneurship roles.

#### ***Recommendation:***

It is recommended that an agricultural economic development support structure be created in the form of a 6-8 member Agriculture Coordinating Committee of the Campbell County Economic Development Commission. It would specifically provide oversight for new agricultural development initiatives such as the beef marketing project proposed to TICRC (very important to Campbell County) and help seek funding to

support such programs. A first project should be to develop a direct marketing brochure for promotion of on-farm marketing ventures in the County. This is a high priority for the agricultural sector. The general leadership on this initiative (forming the Agricultural Coordinating Committee) should come from the Department of Economic Development to ensure the proper entrepreneurial approach, but Cooperative Extension staff needs to provide the bulk of the staff support and the Committee itself manage the individual projects.

### **Farm Partnership Program: Strategic Alliances**

#### ***Background***

It is clear, from examining trends in harvested farmland acreage against economic performance in many farm areas, that one of the primary contributing factors to farmland preservation is good management combined with long-term business planning. Farms can and do succeed where those skills exist. Farm consolidation, expansion and diversification have also played a major role. The presence of a strong agricultural natural resource base also helps greatly, but the evidence is that even small farms can do well if accompanied by capable management. Obstacles to farm success include poor pricing, lack of labor supply and difficulty in achieving farm transfers to younger generations, all of which are related to the management challenge. Intervention should be targeted where it will accomplish the most, recognizing that different goals demand different approaches. Strategic alliances among farmers are such an area.

#### ***Recommendation***

A grant program should be considered for partnership projects based on such strategic alliances. Grant funds could be offered in two stages - one to plan the projects and one to implement. Relatively small business planning grants (\$5,000+/-) would be offered at the front end with some larger grants or loans (\$25,000 to \$100,000) to assist with the actual projects. Funding could be secured from a combination of sources, including USDA, CDBG, EDA and similar programs. Leadership in obtaining such grants should come from the proposed Agricultural Coordinating Committee and the Department of Economic Development.

#### ***Additional Projects:***

### **Small and Minority Business Development**

#### ***Background:***

Most economic growth comes from the creation and expansion of “small businesses” meaning companies that employ fewer than 100 people. Campbell County has many businesses in this category.

***Recommendation:***

In order to help them grow, and to facilitate new businesses, DED should develop a special incentives package geared to small and minority-owned businesses. DED should include the following elements:

- Reduce sewer connection fee to small businesses that are located in sewer areas.
- Tailor incentive programs and assistance to reflect lower capital investment and employment parameters.
- Assist small businesses in finding State programs to provide loans and other types of support to SBE's and MBE's.
- Coordinate an annual seminar/workshop on minority business and small business contracting procedures in the County and the region, with a focus on entrepreneurial development and business planning.

**Large Industrial Site Development**

***Background:***

There are industrial sites and properties around the County, particularly in Altavista and Brookneal. Some are older structures verging on obsolescence, at least with respect to modern industrial use potential. One of the types of properties that is not available is a large industrial site of 200+ acres that the County could market to a single major tenant or, more likely, market for smaller industrial uses. The Winston Property on Route 29 will be a Commerce Park. In fact the Route 29 corridor will not be suitable for this type of development. The large Simpson Tract in Altavista has sufficient size but there are topographic limitations and the owner desires to be involved in the final decision on use. The County needs a large site that it can market and development for industrial use.

***Recommendation:***

DED should form a Subcommittee of the Industrial Development Authority to identify the best location and suitable properties for large-scale industrial use. This group should look at locations and properties throughout the County and particularly on Routes 24, 501 and 460.

**7.3 Conclusions**

There are many issues and needs to address over the next 5-10 years and longer. In fact there will be other priority needs that arise as the County makes progress on this strategy. The best plan can only provide a framework and one that will require continual adjustment as resources become available.