



6 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

A. INTRODUCTION

The City of Cumberland has historically been a regional hub for economic and commercial activity within Allegany County and the larger Western Maryland region. The City's economy was largely built upon a manufacturing base that established the City of Cumberland as the second largest city in Maryland. Starting in the second half of the 20th century the city's economy experienced a fundamental transformation as global economic patterns shifted and caused traditional manufacturing based economies throughout the United States to see their foundations altered.

The City has made great strides to stabilize from the economic decline that marked the past 50 years, but much work is needed in order to establish an economic base that will fill the void created through the loss of major manufacturing employers. The City of Cumberland has made progress and seen success in many areas including, but not limited to, growth as a regional medical services hub, a robust arts and entertainment district, a strong collection of stable tourist attractions, a steadily growing outdoor recreation economy, and a viable location for information technology development and a variety of mid-high level skilled office operations.

This economic development strategic planning process is the critical step to update and synthesize its economic development vision from the 2004 and 2012 strategies, and create a more defined implementation strategy to guide future endeavors. This following implementation strategy provides a framework to enable the City to pursue a proactive, comprehensive economic development effort aimed at increasing the local tax base, attracting new employers, enabling existing employers to grow, and supporting the continued development of the arts and tourism industries. This implementation plan is intended to guide the City's economic development efforts over the next five to ten years. The strategies developed for Cumberland focus on the City's defined goals, and address both the needs and impediments for existing business while defining methods for attracting and growing new business areas of opportunity.

B. OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

Throughout the planning process, RKG Associates has engaged with numerous public, non-profit and private entities, civic and institutional organizations, elected leaders, partner organizations, and the Cumberland community. These interactions provided a number of benefits for the strategic planning process. However, the most important benefit is it enabled RKG to synthesize the desires, frustrations, and preferences into the empirical data collected and analyzed into those overarching issues that must be addressed in order for the community to be able to move forward. It is through these principles that RKG Associates, the City's economic development staff, and the Steering Committee defined the City's economic development goals, framed the implementation strategy, and prioritized actions. For the City of Cumberland, the strategies overarching principles are:



- **Promote a “unity of vision” for Cumberland’s economic development efforts** – Many of the goals identified for future efforts reflect the need to maintain and build upon community understanding and support for the economic development initiatives. The implementation strategy combines the technical actions needed to engage in economic development with the procedural efforts needed to build understanding, trust, and support of engaging in economic development. The lack of unity around economic development was noted as one of the most substantial barriers the City has faced in sustaining an economic development plan.
- **Take advantage of local, regional, and state-wide initiatives** – While Cumberland serves as the economic center for Western Maryland, the City’s economic climate is not strong enough to sustain itself independently from the Western Maryland region. Simply put, economic development (retention and recruitment) does not operate in a vacuum. Improvements in transportation and technology have reduced the importance of the City center and decentralized economic opportunity. Frankly, this phenomenon is one of the primary opportunities for Cumberland, being a support hub for the large regional metropolitan areas. To this point, the implementation strategy identifies ways the City can build upon the resources and opportunities of the region and the state.
- **Look beyond the “traditional” economic development efforts** – This strategy highlights the unique characteristics of Cumberland that make traditional business recruitment a challenge (i.e. limited developable land assets; aging, inefficient building stock, comparatively small workforce). To this point, RKG Associates, the City’s economic development staff, and the Steering Committee maintained an open mind during this process, enabling the consideration of opportunities traditionally not part of an economic development strategy. For example, the plan calls for the City to focus on actively improving and enhancing the City’s housing stock. Housing growth/rehabilitation typically is a reaction to economic development. For Cumberland, it is a challenge that must be addressed for the City to be successful at economic development.

C. PROPOSED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The City assembled a Steering Committee to represent City interests in the development of this plan. As part of that effort, a comprehensive outreach strategy was held to identify, refine and select the City’s economic development goals. These goals were presented and reviewed at each milestone interaction with the Steering Committee and the public. The following list of goals represents the culmination of this input and selection process. It is important to note that the order of goals is not reflective of priority.

- **To create jobs that pay above median income for Allegany County** – Given the City’s history surrounding the loss of substantial manufacturing employment (and the support industries related to direct and indirect spending), it is logical that job creation is a goal for Cumberland. However, it was clear throughout the process that both the Steering Committee and the public did not endorse a “job creation for the sake of job creation” mentality. Rather, it was clear that the Cumberland community wants to see jobs that improve the quality of life and local opportunities for residents. The stated preference is for jobs that pay above the median income level and/or provide health/fringe benefits.
- **To add wealth through “primary” job attraction** – Along the same line as the job creation goal, the expressed preference for “primary” jobs—or jobs where the product is sold outside the local community. Simply put, primary jobs export goods and import wealth, enabling a



- substantially greater positive impact for the local economy. While the Steering Committee recognizes that it is unreasonable to expect all recruitment will yield primary employers, primary industries should have priority.
- **To create a new image for Cumberland that can be marketed** – The outdated image of Cumberland as a manufacturing/railroad City no longer fits the community’s economic development opportunities. The City needs to create its new image to reflect its greatest market opportunities, as a destination entertainment venue and savvy alternative to high-cost metropolitan markets. Given the potential to serve four major economic centers as a professional services back office location, a proactive marketing campaign to rebrand the City should be part of the economic development efforts.
 - **To encourage entrepreneurship and small business development** – The physical and environmental realities of Cumberland make it an unlikely location for large-scale, industrial based recruitment and retention. The City has much greater potential to attract and nurture small businesses. To this point, enhancing the existing entrepreneurial efforts has been recognized as a priority for the City.
 - **To define a tangible, multi-year plan that can garner support** – There has been universal recognition that the City has been hampered by an inability to “stay the course” on economic development initiatives. One of the more obvious reasons is that there has not been a well-defined implementation plan or a strong central organization to pursue and promote this plan. The EDSP process included a substantial amount of outreach and consensus building to increase awareness and garner support. However, the Steering Committee recognizes that those effort have just begun, and need to be part of the City’s economic development efforts.
 - **To identify a strategic approach to addressing blight and redevelopment** – The City is mostly developed with a substantial portion being decades old. While there is value to certain components of that age (i.e. the character of Downtown Cumberland), there are components that make the City’s existing physical inventory a detriment to business retention and recruitment. To this point, the Steering Committee recognizes that an important component of the City’s economic development effort is to create defined strategies within those areas of the City best positioned to accommodate economic development investment.
 - **To reverse negative attitude in community** – The City’s years of economic decline/stagnation has understandably created some negative attitudes about the City’s economic development potential. The lack of a unified vision and viable strategy has enabled these perceptions to sustain. The economic development strategic plan—and specifically the implementation strategy—was crafted to provide an aggressive, but realistic, approach to improve the market climate in Cumberland. The need for community leaders to embrace and champion this strategy is an important component of success.
 - **To educate decision makers and community stakeholders on the purpose and value of economic development** – Creating a dynamic, achievable plan is only one component of positioning the community for success. There was universal recognition that educating the community, from the local citizens to the business community to the elected leadership, is a critical component of the City’s economic development effort. Implementation will be challenged if the community is not well informed of the basic components of economic development as well as the benefits, challenges, and approaches being undertaken.



- **To create a business case for moving past the “the way it was” mentality** – The previous sections of this report focused on providing an analytical approach to identifying the greatest opportunities for economic development success within the City of Cumberland. As noted already, it is understandable that a portion of the community would desire to see Cumberland’s “glory days” return, as they have been the most prosperous times for the City. However, the education and outreach process must include conversations about why the City’s economic future is not tied to past success (i.e. competitive environments, globalization, cost structures...). That said, even more effort should be taken to focus on the opportunities available to the City now.
- **To continue development and growth of the robust arts and tourism markets in Cumberland** – The City—and Allegany County as a whole—have a thriving tourism and arts community. In addition to the tourism activity brought by attractions such as Rocky Gap Casino and the GAP Trail, organizations like the Allegany Arts Council, and Downtown Development Commission and the Canal Place Preservation & Development Authority have been successfully building additional heritage, arts and cultural communities within Cumberland. These efforts, combined with Western Maryland’s four-season outdoor recreation market make the arts/tourism industry a viable target for business retention, expansion, and recruitment.

D. PRIORITY ACTIONS

RKG Associates has learned that the most effective ways to influence job retention and creation are to improve economic conditions, actively recruit specific business enterprise, enhance the predictability of the development process, and incentivize those opportunities that met the stated goals of the community. To this end, the following efforts support the overarching goal of job creation, business expansion, and wealth creation.

The implementation strategy organizes the action steps into three topic areas most relevant to the goals and priorities established by the Steering Committee. These categories include: [1] Market and Asset Development, [2] Marketing and Outreach, and [3] Organization and Regulatory. The prioritization of action steps was shaped through combining the vision of the Steering Committee, the expectations of civic and government leaders, current market conditions, identified opportunities, and projected future market influences. The following narrative describes the most substantial efforts the City of Cumberland and its implementation partners could undertake to position (or reposition) the City’s opportunity areas in a manner that best leverages local resources to promote private investment that will retain existing jobs, attract new business investment, and sustain growth into the future.

It is important to note that the implementation matrix presented at the end of this chapter includes objectives not detailed in this section. This was done purposefully, as those objectives were deemed to be self-explanatory.

1. Market and Asset Development

Objective #1: Formalize the economic development focus for the City’s seven opportunity areas – During this economic development strategic planning process, the Steering Committee and RKG Associates discovered that the City historically did not have any defined vision for what type of non-residential markets to recruit and how to accommodate new prospects once they were interested. Given the development patterns in the City and the lack of large, undeveloped land assets, it became apparent that defining a reinvestment/development vision for strategic non-residential areas in the



City was necessary to support the City's economic development effort. Simply put, having a plan to attract businesses with no consideration on how those businesses will be accommodated would be inefficient and potentially counterproductive for future efforts. For example, attracting heavy industrial uses to operate near the City's more successful outdoor tourism venues could adversely impact the success of those venues (i.e. noxious smells or unsightly facilities).

Based on these points, the Steering Committee, with feedback from the local community, identified seven opportunity sites throughout Cumberland to focus potential economic development efforts. Just as Cumberland has many ways forward in the process of expanding economic development efforts within the City, the opportunity sites are envisioned to accommodate unique opportunities and development scale. The Steering Committee recommends the following focus for each of the seven opportunity areas (greater detail is provided in the Real Estate Market Analysis chapter).

- Downtown – Cultural and entertainment center, urban living
- Cumberland Plaza Area – Urban living, cultural and entertainment center
- Canal Place – Outdoor recreation and leisure
- Memorial Hospital – Retirement village; medical services
- Rolling Mill – Mixed-use employment-commercial village
- South End – Small-user industrial park
- Willowbrook Road – Interstate growth corridor

To this point, the next steps are for the implementation entity to verify these recommendations and then pursue individual small area planning processes for each one. While the concepts define a general vision, the City will need to be more specific within each area to ensure the vision is compatible with market forces. One of the biggest unknowns at this point is the interest/willingness or property owners to embrace these concepts. Additionally, a number of these opportunity areas have organization and entities that espouse their sustainability/revitalization (i.e. Downtown and Canal Place). The implementation entity, the City administration, property owners, business leaders, and these partner organizations will need to coordinate on developing more specific, real estate-based recommendations.

The most prudent way to accomplish this is for the City to lead a design/market analysis effort either through the City's community development department or directly through the implementation entity. Given the scale of these efforts, the importance to economic development, and the technical nature of some of the recommendations, (i.e. regulatory overlays and economic development incentives), these plans should be developed as a partnership between the economic development implementation entity, the City's community development department, the partner organizations and a consulting firm with extensive experience in urban/downtown revitalization strategies. Substantial outreach to existing business and property owners will be important to understand the potential of each area and to determine the phasing of implementation.

The cost of these studies can range from \$50,000 to over \$200,000 depending on the level of specificity and complexity of the study area. As a result, the Steering Committee recommends the City prioritize the first one or two areas to address initially based on priority and ability to advance the City's economic development goals, and create plans for each area as resources allow. The State is a potential funding source to pay for some/all of the small area plans or feasibility studies.

Objective #3: Land bank strategic properties within the City to enable the implementation of the City's opportunity area plans – Many of the opportunity sites within the City will require property assemblage for them to attract private sector interest. In reality, this process can be slow and challenging for a private entity to accomplish in a strong market. Cumberland's current real estate market climate makes this a substantial barrier to implementation. To this point, the City should consider enabling a land bank to acquire parcels strategic to enabling redevelopment projects and packaging them for resale to encourage economic development.



There are a number of ways that the land bank could be established. The most common ways are to either include it as part of the non-profit implementation entity or to create a separate non-profit entity where the City Council is the Board of directors. There is a benefit in having the land bank as part of the implementation entity, as it will enable private matching funds to be collected and used to purchase this land (although that often comes with some form of guaranteed return for the private dollars invested). Many communities partner with local utility companies that engage in economic development to further leverage the public and private investments in land banks. In any case, creating a legally recognized land bank outside the City government structure allows for the City to proactively encourage reinvestment in the City in an effective and efficient manner.

Objective #4: Expand residential offerings (new construction) and condition (rehabilitation) in Cumberland – As noted in the Socioeconomic Analysis chapter, the City has steadily lost population over the past few decades. This loss comes from two primary reasons, [1] the decline in jobs and [2] lack of suitable housing to age-in-place. The loss of population has had direct and indirect impacts on the City’ economic development potential. At a base level, the loss of population means a loss of workers, reducing the local labor force. However, it also has translated into a loss of spending power, adversely impacting local goods and service providers. To these points, reversing population trends is necessary to both better position the City to recruit businesses as well as strengthen its retail/service market.

A number of implementation recommendations—especially the rural sourcing recruitment strategy—require a varied and high-quality housing stock. Simply put, many of these industry targets are going to be persons attracted to Cumberland’s urban feel surrounded by world class recreation offerings. The City’s existing Downtown housing selection is small, particularly for higher-end amenity-laden units. In addition, the City has the fundamentals to be a highly desirable location for retirees.

In addition to the four-season indoor and outdoor recreation amenities, Cumberland is within close driving and commuter rail proximity to four major metropolitan areas (Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington). This “in between” location is ideal for retirees with children located in one or more of these markets. However, there is little variety in type or price point for housing conducive for retirees, particularly those with physical limitations.

To this point, the Steering Committee recommends the City take some or all of the following actions to address both needs:

- ***Strengthen programs to encourage more downtown housing*** – As noted in the Real Estate Analysis chapter, one of the opportunity areas focuses on the Cumberland Plaza area on the edge of Downtown. At a base level, the shopping center’s suburban development scale is not consistent with the rest of Downtown. Redeveloping the site to match Downtown’s scale will improve the aesthetic and feel of Baltimore Street as well as create a housing stock ideal for young entrepreneurs and creative types. Furthermore, the redevelopment of the property for mixed use allows for the viable retail to remain on-site while adding substantial residential presence to Downtown Cumberland. This concept will require a zoning overlay to accommodate.
- ***Market the Memorial Hospital site for an age-restricted community*** – The old Memorial Hospital site is situated in a predominantly residential area with poor transportation access to Interstate 68. The site is more conducive to residential development. Given the site’s view sheds due to its elevation and the dearth of modern, age-restricted housing in the City, this site is ideal for a signature active adult project. The City could rezone/overlay the site to allow age-restricted housing and market the property to attract a private developer.



- Test the market feasibility of the upper story rehabilitation Legacy Grant – The Legacy Grant available to Downtown property owners for rehabilitating upper story space has not been utilized to its intended levels. Anecdotal information indicate that one reason is the program does not provide enough money to make the owner’s investment financially feasible. To this point, the City should consider doing a detailed pro-forma analysis of rehabilitating this space for either office or residential use. The analysis will help inform whether the Legacy program is sufficient from a financial perspective, and offer opportunities for the City to enact policies to fill the “gap.”
- Strengthen programs to enable aging-in-place – Similar to the Legacy Grant program, the City has initiatives in place to assist its mature residents with modernization and weatherization. However, there has been no analysis to determine if the programs are sufficient to motivate residents to use them. If the analysis proves the programs are not sufficient, it will inform the City on what is an appropriate investment. If it proves they are sufficient, then it will indicate the problem is elsewhere (i.e. a marketing/public awareness issue).

Objective #6: Create and operate an Allegany County/Western Maryland employment exposition – All students (and career transitioning adults) should be engaged early and often about the importance of education to their future earning potential. The implementation entity should work with Allegany College of Maryland, Frostburg State University, neighboring economic development entities, and regional employers to establish an annual employment exposition. The objective of the employment exposition is to provide separate, specialized sessions for middle school children, high school children, and transitioning adults to engage these businesses about educational needs, potential career paths and typical incomes.

The exposition could be a two or three-day event that brings together regional employers to showcase the type of jobs available, the education and training requirements, and the salary ranges of these jobs. Ultimately, this effort is intended to be a bridge between the City’s current and future workforce and the companies that require them to be appropriately prepared for jobs. Given the potential for this to showcase opportunities outside of the City for local residents, the event could be hosted on a rotating basis with all participating economic development entities. Sponsorships should be sought from participating business to defray costs of holding the events.

A similar effort is currently implemented in Oconee County, South Carolina. RKG Associates recommends that the new implementation entity make contact with the Oconee County Economic Development Partnership to discuss how the event is organized and implemented; and hear about “lessons learned” on how to make the event as productive as possible.

Objective #7: Retain and nurture existing businesses – Research has shown that communities have a much greater success rate at retaining existing businesses and encouraging them to expand. At a base level, these businesses already are located in Cumberland, so they will have a disincentive to move (i.e. the cost, community ties...). In addition, these companies came to Cumberland for a reason, so there likely is some competitive advantages for doing business locally. Cumberland’s existing business base is its strongest asset in creating new jobs locally (through organic growth) as well as identifying clear examples of how doing business in Cumberland is an asset (for marketing). The following action steps should be considered by the City’s implementation entity.

- Create a comprehensive business database– The City’s economic development implementation entity will benefit from having an exhaustive list of all businesses and their



- respective contacts. At a base level, it ensures all businesses have the opportunity to participate in the annual business survey. However, it ensures the implementation entity can communicate with all companies, providing updates on economic development and ensuring they are aware of all programs, opportunities, and incentives available for them to sustain and grow in Cumberland.
- Implement an annual workforce and business climate survey – The business survey is intended for the City’s economic development entity to gauge the business climate within the City, identify potential growth/relocation opportunities, and assess needs challenges local businesses are facing. The survey should focus on labor force/employment needs, business operation opportunities/challenges, and assistance requests/identification. The survey should be open to all businesses, but require them to identify the type of business. The results of the survey should be posted online and include potential action items. The results of the survey provide three benefits: [1] it identifies businesses that would benefit from resources/assistance that enables the implementation to focus its outreach efforts; [2] it tracks general market trends that can be shared with key stakeholders and partner entities to help set policies/steer programs; and [3] it cultivates greater awareness and interest—and therefore participation—in economic development efforts by local business leaders.
 - Create regular visiting schedule for primary employers – The City’s economic development staff currently is implementing an outreach effort to local employers. However, this effort is not strategic or coordinated, and typically is reactive to expressed need. The Steering Committee recommends the implementation entity formalize its outreach effort, using the survey to guide priority efforts. The results of this effort should be recorded in a database-style inventory showing contact and the results of those meetings. Implementing this benefits the businesses (as it minimizes site visits while identifying those businesses who have not been contacted) and the implementing entity (it ensures they are being comprehensive ensuring all businesses have equal access).
 - Coordinate retention visits with other stakeholders – An initial effort related to business retention is to coordinate visits with other entities that do outreach to businesses. For example, the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development performs retention visits as well. Coordinating with other entities that call upon City businesses is a critical step to avoiding duplicative efforts and minimizing any inconvenience of having to answer the same questions multiple times.
 - Host regional industry networking events – Creating business-to-business connections within a local and/or regional market provides opportunities for local business to grow (through new contracts) and reduce input costs (through consuming goods or services locally). Implementing a regularly scheduled industry networking event (i.e. semi-annually) allows these companies to interact in a social setting. Cumberland should consider co-hosting these events with Frostburg’s and Allegany County’s economic development entities and neighboring counties with the intent of solidifying business within the region.
 - Host annual business lecture series – Over time, the Cumberland economic development entity should consider co-hosting one or two lectures each year on topics germane to doing business in Western Maryland. These lectures should correspond to issues/opportunities identified in the business survey results. Ultimately, the topics should reflect the interest/concerns identified by existing businesses. Initial lectures should focus on small business development, entrepreneurship, and integrating technology into a business. Some example events include:



- **Industry Forums** – Industry forums are intended to focus on current and near-future opportunities and challenges within a specific industry (i.e. financial services, hospitality, health care...). These events oftentimes use a panel-style set up to have local and regional industry leaders address questions from a moderator aimed at educating attendees about the likely future of the industry. This effort should be done in concert with the Frostburg State University or/ or Allegany College of Maryland.
- **Guest Lectures** – Guest lectures allow Cumberland to invite subject matter experts from around the world to talk to attendees about a topic relevant to current economic development initiatives. For example, Cumberland could partner with Allegany County Economic Development to bring in a lecturer on contracting opportunities for minority/women owned businesses in the region, state and nationally.
- **Best Practice Seminars** – Best practices seminars often focus on regulatory and policy issues. For Cumberland, best practices seminars surrounding a topic relevant to promoting economic development at the regulatory level (i.e. incentives) is a logical approach. In these instances, Cumberland can invite all relevant stakeholders to participate in a presentation/discussion surrounding the benefits and drawbacks of that particular opportunity.

Objective #9: Proactively pursue “rural sourcing” concept – The economic development goals for Cumberland include attracting jobs that pay above the local median and bringing in primary employment (jobs where the products are sold outside the local market). The City’s 2012 plan identified rural sourcing as a viable strategy. This effort has confirmed that finding, identifying that back office and data intensive professional service industries are the most likely focus (specific industry codes are identified in the Target Industry chapter). Simply put, the City offers the fundamentals attractive to professional service companies to locate their back office/research/customer service operations. The City has necessary broadband connections, proximity to metropolitan corporate centers, strong recreation amenities, available building stock, and low cost of living. More importantly, these jobs often have competitive wage rates, offer benefits, and generate new wealth as the “product” is consumed outside the area.

The target industry marketing campaign for rural sourcing involves three basic steps: [1] target identification, [2] target communication, and [3] recruitment. Each step builds on the success of the previous step. However, the steps should be repeated on a regular basis as new companies are developed, leadership within companies change and the local, regional and national markets consistently shift. Furthermore, the marketing process will vary from company to company, oftentimes requiring a long ‘courtship’ process.

- **Target Identification** – Target identification involves developing, maintaining and expanding a list of businesses within the identified industry clusters to actively contact and recruit. The Steering Committee recommends the implementation entity collect contact information for businesses within the targeted industries. There are two primary methods of doing this; [1] referrals and [2] data vendors. The referral method involves working with existing businesses within these industry groups to identify partner/vertical relationships that may also benefit from locating in Cumberland. Data vendors, such as Dun and Bradstreet, sell contact information of companies based on screening criteria entered by the user. This process ensures the resulting list best meets the client’s needs. Inputs typically include industry code, location, company size, employee count and annual sales volumes, among others.



- ***Target Communication*** – Target communication includes all interaction between the implementation entity and the prospects from initial contact to face-to-face meetings. The communication process should be initialized through a combination of site selector relationships outlined later in this plan and a direct mailing campaign using the target list developed in the last step. The mailing should include information about the City, industry-specific information within the region, and other pertinent documentation. The initial communication should be followed up with a direct phone call within two to three weeks. The phone call should be made by either staff or an ambassador (detailed later in this chapter). If this is a referral, then the person making the referral should be involved early in the process.
- ***Recruitment*** – Communication beyond the initial phase of contact needs to be tailored based on the response of the prospect. The recruitment process may require several contacts, meetings at professional trade shows and/or multiple attempts through the initial communication process. The ultimate goal should be to get the prospect to visit the community either on a one-on-one basis or as part of a recruitment/networking visit. Regardless of the timeline, continued contact is important in developing a rapport with the prospect. It is important to note that the person/persons in charge of working with a prospect should be consistent throughout the process, when possible.

While this process has been described for the rural sourcing target industries, it is the most effective method to follow for all of the target industry clusters (i.e. health and social services).

Objective #11: Grow and enhance the City’s arts, culture, entertainment and recreation industry cluster – Cumberland, and Allegany County, have a robust arts, culture, and tourism market. Cumberland has a number of recognized, successful venues. Simply put, Cumberland is a four-season recreation destination. However, there is an opportunity to continue to improve the collaboration between the various destinations, entities and organizations involved in arts and tourism development. Most notably, there lacks a central location and entity to lead marketing, recruitment, and collaboration efforts. While the City’s implementation entity is not the appropriate vehicle to be that entity, having a viable implementation partner for arts and tourism development is critical for the City’s economic development efforts to benefit those stakeholders.

The Creative Placemaking initiative currently underway in Cumberland is an effective start to this process. The Allegany Arts Council is undertaking an effort to develop a strategic plan for growing arts within Cumberland and Allegany County. A concurrent effort to develop a strategic plan for tourism through Allegany County Tourism would establish the final complementary piece of enabling an arts, culture, entertainment and recreation economic development initiative.

Some of the potential strategies identified through this process that the City’s implementation entity can assist/advise upon include:

- ***Partner with or participate in an arts, culture, entertainment and recreation roundtable of industry stakeholders*** – The implementation entity is recommended to have a number of industry roundtables tasked with advising the economic development staff on opportunities and challenges. Having one focused on this topic is a logical step for the implementation entity.
- ***Developing a regular shuttle service from Downtown Cumberland to Rocky Gap Casino*** – Ensuring people can move between the two venues increases business for both Downtown goods and service businesses as well as the Casino/resort



- Performing a market and feasibility study to expand recreation amenities at Canal Place – There are a number of recreation activities already at Canal Place due to its central focus of transfer from the GAP Trail to the C& O Canal. Additional effort should be done to determine what spin-off activity could be generated at this location that augments the trail user’s experience.
- Help fund a Downtown retail market opportunity analysis – The desire for more retail activity in Downtown is pervasive in Cumberland. While the Socioeconomic and Real Estate Market analyses indicate there is limited opportunity for traditional retail activity in Downtown, a detailed analysis will provide the empirical data necessary to address this desire and scale the City’s marketing and recruitment accordingly.

Objective #12: Enable the implementation entity to pursue and execute a signature project – One of the ways the City can build credibility for this economic development effort is to identify and pursue a “signature project” that meets the goals and objectives identified for economic development. One of the more common approaches is for the execution of a real estate development project. The execution of a real estate deal has three primary benefits. First, it often reactivates a public asset by bringing back onto the local tax rolls while promoting greater activity. Second, it is a highly visible endeavor that can be promoted to show the locality is serious about implementation. Finally, it establishes the local community’s willingness to implement public private partnerships. In all three cases, perceptions about the local community’s dedication to economic development are clarified.

The Strategy Committee recommends that the City Council consider enabling the new implementation entity to foster and implement a real estate project that meets the defined economic development goals. Based on the real estate analysis and the economic development goals set forth in this study, RKG Associates and the Strategy Committee recommend that the implementation entity work together with the Mayor and City Council to identify an appropriate site to initiate development through this public private partnership. The opportunity site analysis indicates this location has the potential to expand the City’s housing variety and quality, attracting entrepreneurs/retirees to the City.

The process to establish a public private partnership includes a series of action steps that focus on: [1] defining expected outcomes and returns for the City; [2] performing a feasibility analysis to create the development program for the public private partnership; [3] defining the partnership requirements and clawback performance thresholds; [4] soliciting bids from development/investment entities on how to execute the development programs; [5] executing a development agreement; and [6] implementing the development project.

There are a number of ways to organize the financial relationship between the implementation entity and the developer. The ultimate structure will need to be negotiated between the two parties. However, the implementation entity offers a number of attractive benefits that should be considered in creating the deal. Most notably, the implementation entity can be the land holding entity, reducing the up-front costs for the developer and allowing a phased approach without impacting the financial commitment from the private sector. Additionally, the return expectations can be set based on performance of the investment program, rather than a fixed fee. In other terms, the price of the land (recapture of value by the implementation entity) can be done on a sliding scale that protects the developer if the project does not meet market expectations but allows the implementation entity to capture some of the windfall if the development exceeds expectations.



2. Marketing and Outreach

Objective #1: Develop relationships with external partners – Locally-implemented economic development, as a practice, has been transitioning. Former stalwart activities such as cold-calling and direct mailing are quickly phasing out as companies are becoming more focused on long-term planning and site selection continues to grow in popularity. In short, companies are actively pursuing their “next steps” with either an in-house real estate professional or through a consulting entity well before a community cold calls them. To this point, establishing and maintaining relationships with both public sector (i.e. state economic development entities) and private sector (i.e. site selection professionals) is important to ensure Cumberland gets consideration in the site selection process.

- Continue strengthening industry relationships – Strategic relationship building within economic development marketing and recruitment requires consistent effort. To this point, the City’s economic development should continue to cultivate these relationships. Entities to focus on include local partnership building (Allegany County, neighboring municipalities), Tri-County Council, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED), local utility providers (i.e. First Energy), and local and regional financial institutions.
- Join target industry trade associations – The target industry analysis identified specific industries that Cumberland can focus its recruitment efforts. Another method of establishing relationships with companies in these industries is to join and participate in their respective trade associations. Participation can include leadership roles (i.e. board membership), trade show attendance (as an exhibitor), and direct marketing. The Steering Committee recommends the implementation entity’s Board of directors identify which organizations to target based on priorities established through the business planning efforts, tempered by available resources. Particular consideration should be given to trade associations that neighboring jurisdictions (partnerships) or DBED (piggyback) are members.
- Build a site selector database – Given the scale of economic development potential in Cumberland (at least in the short-term), the City’s greatest opportunities will be through professional site selectors. Many of the companies Cumberland could reasonably attract likely will not have the resources to have in-house staffing. Rather, these businesses will use site selectors to find new/expansion opportunities. To this point, the City’s implementation entity should create and maintain an active site selector database. This database should serve three primary purposes: [1] to provide contacts within local recruitment and retention efforts; [2] allows the implementation entity to communicate with industry leaders to better understand emerging trends/needs; and [3] creates a convenient distribution list for opportunities/informational updates from Cumberland. The action of creating the list should not simply be populating phone book. Collecting the data should be the result of direct networking efforts and relationship building.
- Network with site selection professionals – The second phase of the site selection database effort involves direct networking and marketing to these professionals. This effort can manifest in a number of ways, ranging from the most passive (direct newsletters) to the most proactive (hosting networking events). The Steering Committee recommends the implementation entity’s executive director initially focus on relationship building (i.e. targeted introductions at larger events). As these relationships build, attending/cohosting targeted marketing and networking events with neighboring economic development groups and/or DBED provides greater involvement and control over the message. The City also can consider cohosting smaller events, as partnerships allow and resources become available.



These local events should be limited to specific initiatives being pursued, as most of these efforts have a regional value/reach.

Objective #3: Enhance Cumberland's marketing collateral – The City of Cumberland does not have the marketing collateral necessary to implement a recruitment campaign. A substantial part of this is due to the lack of defined target industries. However, it also was noted that creating this material has not been a priority in the past due to the City's passive approach to economic development. While having materials is a baseline requirement, keeping them consistent and current is the true benchmark. This is particularly important for Internet-based materials, as having data sources can harm the community's potential for a prospect before the community ever learns about the opportunity. The Steering Committee recommends the following materials be created:

- Quality of Life Sheet – The quality of life brochure should focus on the intangibles of living and working in Cumberland, highlighting the four-season recreation and entertainment market in Western Maryland. The content should emphasize factors such as cost of living, school performance, natural amenities (i.e. the GAP and C&O Canal trails), proximity to road and rail transportation, access to large metropolitan markets, and quality/variety of leisure activities. This material is particularly valuable in the professional services recruitment and entrepreneurial development.
- Target Industry Materials – The City should have industry-specific marketing materials for each of the target industries. Each document should be customized based on the particular cluster. The documents should highlight information including employment and establishment growth data, current businesses operating in the area, competitive advantages of operating locally, unique incentives available (where applicable) and local business contacts (ambassadors).
- Incentive Sheet – A series of incentive documents should be created that detail all local, county, state and federal incentive programs available for businesses locating in Cumberland. Each incentive sheet should focus on those programs relevant to the particular industry group being targeted. Prospective businesses can use this document to gauge the financial benefits to doing business, and existing businesses may be alerted to incentive programs they were unaware of, therefore helping to ensure their continued presence.
- Business Testimonial Book – RKG Associates' efforts for this analysis has revealed a number of compelling "success stories" of existing businesses succeeding in the City of Cumberland despite the negative perceptions of the area. However, these experiences are not chronicled or readily available to use in marketing. The Steering Committee recommends crafting a business testimonials book with written statements from existing industry leaders on topics ranging from quality of life, business climate, market performance, and personal preference to do business in Cumberland. Getting input from companies that have chosen and thrive locally is valuable to industry recruitment. Individual testimonies of leaders from business in the target industries should also be included in the target industry brochures.
- Property Assemblage Book – Many of the City's best economic development opportunities will require some level of property assemblage and redevelopment. The first step in inventorying the level of effort/cost to completing this task is to inventory all of the properties being considered as part of the project site. Once the properties are inventoried, the City's economic development entity will need to reach out to each property owner to determine their ability/willingness to be considered as part of an assemblage. Those areas where enough properties are willing to consider it are then ranked based on a number of factors, which may



include catalytic potential, location, and cost. The property assemblage book can then be marketed to investors seeking opportunities. The book should provide information on all the properties as well as the community's development vision for that area. The assemblage book can serve as a "playbook" for the City's land bank strategy, with the City acquiring key pieces as they become available on the market.

Objective #4: Implement community outreach and education efforts – As mentioned, community awareness and support is a critical component of implementation. Simply put, the amount of financial and political support for economic development is influenced by the willingness of residents to endorse local action. Past actions (that occurred before initiating this effort) indicate there is not widespread understanding of what economic development means in Cumberland, why it is important for future sustainability, and what needs to be done to achieve the stated vision. Increased awareness and education about economic development can only benefit the City's implementation in building sustainable and strategic relationships with all local stakeholders.

- Publish community E-Newsletters –The Steering Committee recommends the City's economic development entity create regular eNewsletters that highlight the actions and successes of the City's economic development effort. This newsletter should vary slightly from one sent to stakeholders, partners, and prospects, presenting the data in less industry-focused language. The Steering Committee and RKG Associates encourage the City's implementation entity to include some small educational components/editorials to the newsletter that better explains the more technical content presented. One potential addition could be a "Message from the Chairman" that highlights a relevant piece of the newsletter within context of why it is important and the benefits created by that effort/success.
- Host community update meetings – It was noted through this effort that the City's economic development department historically has not provided regular updates beyond the City Council. This disconnect enables naysayers to "define the reality" of the City's economic development efforts. The Steering Committee recommend the implementation entity used its community advocates to meet with citizen and civic groups to provide annual updates on the actions of the organization and the benefits being generated for the community. This effort can dovetail into a staff-led town hall presentation/discussion enabling community members to hear about the organization and ask questions/give feedback. The town hall event is more formal, focusing on the "state of economic development" within Cumberland
- Publish "Economic Development 101" videos to inform the community about economic development – A popular and easily delivered initiative is the development of an "Economic Development 101" program. Simply put, this effort can be delivered to small to mid-sized groups to educate them on the virtues and challenges of implementing an economic development plan. Topics include defining what economic development means for Cumberland, how job retention and creation programs work, and the economic benefits and costs of active economic development initiatives. Implementing a series of these education sessions will allow the City's implementation entity to simplify the discussion to specific components of economic development and the organization's economic development process. The Steering Committee recommends the following sessions:
 - **What is economic development?** – A primer that demystifies the comprehensive term, "economic development" and focuses deliverable expectations from the City and its implementation partners. This session allows participants to understand the concerns/opportunities identified through the EDSP data collection process.



- **What are the benefits and costs of economic development initiatives?** – An honest breakdown of what is considered a “win” for the City and the costs to implement the programs to get those wins. This presentation enables a discussion about all economic benefits (i.e. new tax revenues, jobs...) and can educate the community on the competitive environment that the City must operate within to find those “wins.”

3. Organization and Regulatory

Objective #1: Develop an implementation entity that enables the City to maximize its effectiveness in economic development – It is important to note that implementation can occur under a number of different organizational plans, including the current arrangement of the City’s economic development department. However, it is RKG Associates experience that communities that are most effective and efficient at economic development are ones that have a functional public-private partnership. These public private partnerships bring together the resources of the local governments with the resources and expertise of the community’s business leadership. The Steering Committee and RKG Associates recommend that the City Council consider a different approach that can reactivate the City’s business leadership, expanding the capacity of the City’s economic development effort. Both the Steering Committee and RKG Associates recognize that this will be a substantial undertaking. That said, the Steering Committee believes the benefits of establishing a more inclusive organization for implementation far outweigh the process-based challenges.

Of the options available to the City, RKG and the Steering Committee recommend the City establish a 501(c)(3) entity under which all economic development functions will be administered. Simply put, the proposed goals and objectives identified by the Steering Committee and community as a whole require a comprehensive effort that will need the input and participation from all implementation partners. Creating an entity outside the auspices of a single governing body enables the implementation partners to equally participate in the development of a business plan, make decisions on specific approaches, and guide go/no go decisions on business retention, expansion, and recruitment. At a base level, none of the stakeholders that have participated in this effort have the capacity or capability of executing this strategy alone. The 501(c)(3) approach offers these partners the means to pool their resources and assets into a single “voice” for the City of Cumberland.

Most importantly, the 501(c)(3) provides the opportunity for Cumberland’s business community the opportunity to participate in economic development implementation. It is RKG Associates’ experience that the most successful economic development entities are ones that activate the local industry leadership as direct partners, both financially and programmatically. Given the level and depth of experience and interest just on the Steering Committee, there are substantial resources available outside the local government structure and vested organizations. However, this level of effort from the private sector requires some level of direct influence over decision-making and strategic planning. More simply, it is RKG Associates’ experience that businesses/individuals asked to fund or volunteer effort towards economic development are more likely to participate if they have a direct stake in leadership and decision making. To this end, the implementation entity is envisioned to have substantial private-sector representation among its Board members.

The proposed structure provides the following benefits to the City of Cumberland:

- ***Instant credibility*** – Removing these efforts from the direct control of the City government will provide an almost instant message to the business and development community that Cumberland is serious about success. Independent, non-profit economic development entities are able to separate more easily from political and administrative nuance in the development



process since direct accountability is to the Board of Directors, and not an elected body. There are several examples of this model for similar sized communities where a quasi-governmental economic development entity has produced success. It is the Steering Committee's position that maintaining this independence is critical to attract the private sector back to economic development.

- Greater flexibility – Having a singular economic development entity outside administrative controls also allows the Board of Directors more flexibility in staffing, outreach, community and business interaction, and implementation. Simply put, jurisdictions must follow certain procedures and protocols that independent non-profits do not. For example, procurement procedures typically are much different for an independent entity than they are for a governmental body. In addition, it was made apparent through this effort that having the economic development implementation entity outside of government to garner private support, both financial and strategic resources, in the City of Cumberland.
- Accountability – Despite the increased credibility and greater flexibility, a single, outside economic development entity ultimately will be more accountable to both the public sector entities and private sector investors. While initial funding almost exclusively will be generated by City government, the implementation entity will have to provide detailed accounting of its efforts, successes and failures to each investor. Assuming the investors enter into an agreement with the implementation entity that has a performance clause, then the City Council and private investors will retain a level of oversight with the implementation entity and can de-fund the entity if it does not meet its stated deliverables.

RKG Associates recommends the entity should be structured so the staff is employed by the City of Cumberland, with the mission and implementation actions being decided by the Board of Directors. While the final make-up of the Board will be determined through collaboration between the City Council, the City Administration, the Economic Development Commission, current economic development staff, and the Steering Committee.

RKG Associates and the Steering Committee recommend the following structure for consideration: A 7-person Board of Directors for the implementation to include representation from the City of Cumberland, Allegany College of Maryland, and strategic private-sector stakeholders. A detailed business plan should be created based on the priorities and available resources to implement the comprehensive economic development strategic plan detailed herein; to be reviewed and updated annually.

The initial step in (re)creating the implementation entity is to establish an organization and board structure that capitalizes on the private sector talent in the City of Cumberland while ensuring the community benefit component remains the primary focus. The Steering Committee recommends that the City organize the new implementation entity with three appointed Board members and four elected Board members composed of private sector or public representatives.

RKG Associates and the Steering Committee strongly encourage that none of the Board members hold a publicly elected position. This is important, as removing the political nuance from the process is critical to developing trust and buy-in. The elected body of the City will continue to have engagement and buy-in as projects that require public private partnerships will need support from the Council. Furthermore, the Council will continue to oversee the majority of funding for the new entity, making sure the Board of Directors remain mindful of the City's priorities and accountable for their actions. The proposed Board could include:



- An appointed City official (City Administrator recommended)
- An appointed City Council representative (private sector leader not in an elected position recommended)
- An appointed representative of Allegany College of Maryland (WHEN POSITION FUNDED)
- Four private sector elected members

The two appointed government representatives should serve one-year terms, renewed through a letter of recommendation from the City Council each year. The College appointee should serve one-year terms, renewed through a letter from the College each year. These seats are available as long as the College and the City are contributing its agreed upon share of operational and capital investments (discussed below). The private-sector individuals should be persons that understand economic development and are willing to provide direct financial support to the organization in the form of a financial contribution or ‘in-kind’ contribution of labor, materials or services. The elected seat should be for two year terms, staggering the four seats (two elections each year). The “buy-in” for the governments and the at-large seats are proposed at:

- City of Cumberland - \$350,000 (capital investments separate)
- Allegany College of Maryland - TBD
- Elected members - \$5,000 each
- Other sources – as donated/collected

As noted above, the Steering Committee, existing economic development staff and the City’s Economic Development Commission should work with the City administration and Council to create recommendations for the first seven individuals. It is critical that the initial Board have broad support from the City’s leadership, a substantial interest in furthering economic development within Cumberland, and the willingness to be financially invested in implementation. Given the stated goal of having the 501(c)(3) created by July 1, 2015, all terms should run from July 1st to June 30th. This corresponds with the organization’s creation, enables stability for the first Board (at least 1 year involvement), and corresponds with the City’s funding cycle. The first appointees’ positions should expire on June 30, 2016, giving them at least 1 year to establish consistency for the group. For the four elected seats, two should expire on June 30, 2017 with elections to be held in March of 2017 and two should expire on June 30, 2018 with elections in March of 2018. Subsequent elections among the sitting Board members will be held every two years thereafter. The Steering Committee does not recommend term limits for Board members, as consistency in organizational leadership is critical for efficient and effective implementation.

A Board retreat should be held each year to initiate (in the first year) and update (subsequent years) the implementation entity’s business plan. Typically, these retreats are held over the course of 1 day, bringing Board members together to assess priorities, reconstitute or terminate existing efforts and add new efforts for the year. Consideration should be given to a 2 day off site retreat for the initial business plan development in order for the newly formed entity to have sufficient time to gain familiarity with the process and each other. The retreat and completed business plan should coordinate with the public funding cycles to the best extent possible for annual assessment and review.

RKG Associates recommends the City and other implementation partners strive to make the new implementation entity structure as autonomous as possible. While the RKG Team recognizes that the implementation entity and the local government must work as partners in economic development, it is the Consultant’s experience that implementation entities are most successful at building legitimacy with the business and development community when they are headed by individuals with substantial



expertise in economic development issues (i.e. finance, workforce, business, real estate, etc.) and less influenced by the political component of government administration.

The new implementation entity will require a broad range of skills and staffing to implement the plan successfully. RKG Associates and the Steering Committee is recommending the new implementation entity be staffed by three professionals, with the potential of adding additional professional staff members as efforts increase and expand. RKG Associates recommends these staff members should be full-time employees of the City, but managed by the Board of Directors on a day-to-day basis. Allowing the staff members to be City employees provides an economy of scale for paying benefits and salaries (all done through the City's existing program). However, administrative oversight of the new entity's executive director should be managed by the Board of Directors. The executive director should administer the remaining staff directly. This approach ensures a healthy, vertical work environment and minimizes the potential for conflicting/confusing management arrangements.

RKG Associates and the Steering Committee recommends that the City's existing economic development staff lead this transition from City department to public private partnership given their respective level of knowledge and familiarity with the City's past, current, and proposed efforts for economic development. This ensures the greatest amount of consistency during a period of substantial change. The new implementation entity staffing plan includes:

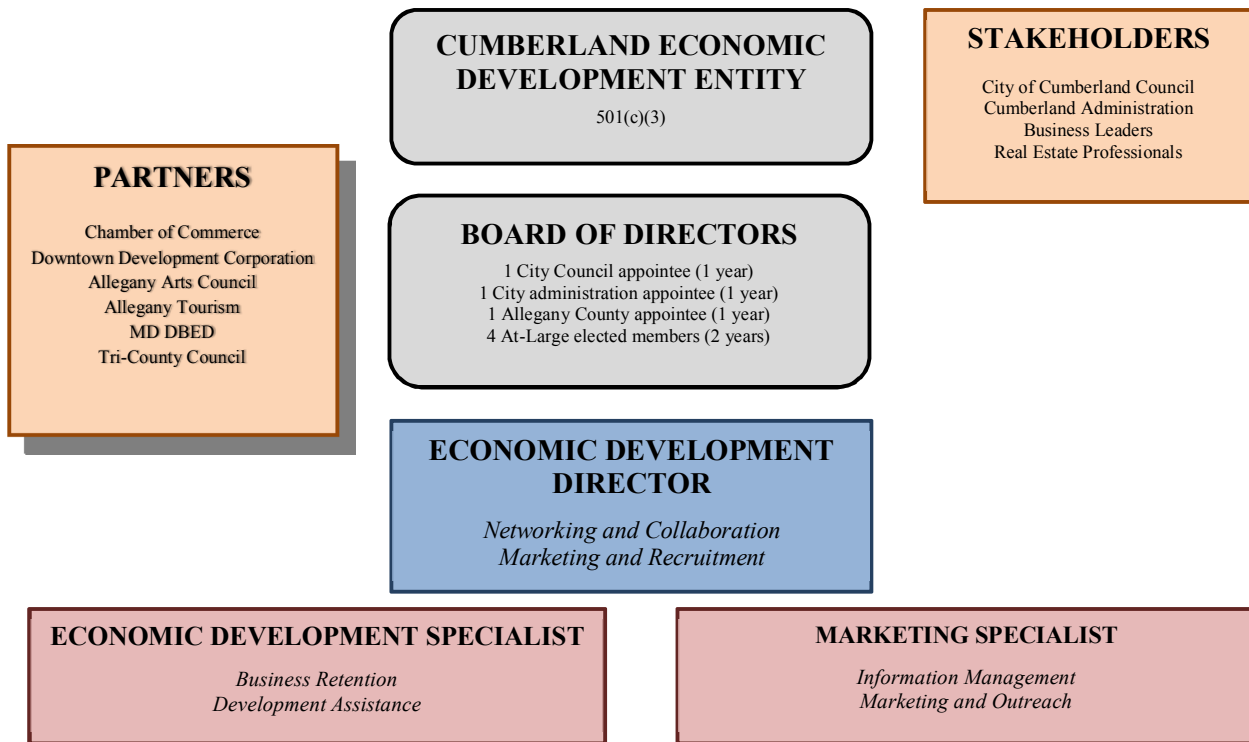
- *Economic Development Director* – The economic development director should have three primary responsibilities: prospect recruitment; stakeholder coordination; and relationship development. In terms of prospect recruitment, it is envisioned that the executive director represent the City of Cumberland at industry trade association events, regional and statewide economic development efforts, and direct outreach. This position also requires this individual to be able to build relationships and work with all of the City's implementation partners to ensure seamless coordination and action. Strong interpersonal skills are a necessity. Finally, the economic development director should be leading citywide efforts to build relationships with the development, investment, site selection, and real estate communities. It is equally important to build those relationships locally and regionally.

It is highly recommended that the executive director have experience in creating an economic development entity and/or have substantial local familiarity. Simply put, there are a number of local and regional challenges that will need to occur in order for this entity to begin operation sooner rather than later. While this document will serve as a critical guideline for initiating a successful economic development effort, it is impossible for the Steering Committee to anticipate and mitigate all potential issues and challenges that might occur within the next 12 to 24 months as the implementation entity begins operations.

- *Economic Development Specialist* – The economic development specialist should be tasked with assisting investors and developers going through the development process with the City. The economic development specialist should manage and operate the ombudsman program, being the strategic resource for real estate investment in Cumberland. This staff member should be familiar with the different regulatory procedures for the City and have a strong understanding of staff responsibilities throughout the various departments in order to know whom to contact about a particular issue. Furthermore, the economic development specialist should manage the various roundtables created as part of the economic development effort (i.e. technology roundtable; tourism roundtable...). The economic development specialist also should be tasked with implementing the existing business outreach efforts, implementing and analyzing the results for the annual business survey. This position ultimately should be the direct contact for existing Cumberland businesses and business prospects.



- Marketing Specialist** – The marketing specialist should be charged with three main tasks. First, the marketing specialist should develop and coordinate a more comprehensive and efficient information-sharing program between the implementation entity and the various public and private-sector partners. The information sharing process should be a multi-media program that informs prospects, partners, and interested community members about the progress by the implementation entity. Efforts such as the monthly newsletter, Email blasts, and press releases all should be managed by the marketing specialist. Second, the marketing specialist should be tasked with creating and maintaining all marketing materials, keeping them current and relevant to the mission of the implementation entity. This task is critical, as the City’s marketing efforts cannot begin until the collateral is created. Finally, the marketing specialist should be coordinating with the various government, community and interest groups on events taking place related to the marketing and promotion of the City. These should include, but not be limited to celebrations and festivals, downtown events, business recruitment trips, trade show exhibits and public ceremonies.



Objective #2: Consider drafting the implementation's mission and by-laws to eventually become the county-wide economic development entity – The Steering Committee and RKG Associates recognize the need to develop a public private partnership to administer the City’s economic development efforts into the future. Addressing this need immediately is the most logical step, as the City is embarking on a much more comprehensive economic development effort as a result of this process. Having the new implementation entity take leadership with the new economic development plan is the most efficient way to ramp up local efforts. Delaying the development of this implementation entity will only create greater challenges as implementation will already be underway and the new entity will have to be ‘shoe-horned’ into an existing process.



As a result, the Steering Committee wants to be more comprehensive than just addressing the City's economic development approach. The Committee desires to create an organization that can immediately implement this strategy while having the flexibility to accommodate the participation of all economic development efforts for Allegany County. An alternative to developing just a City entity is to frame the by-laws and structure of the implementation entity would be developed to accommodate the City of Frostburg and Allegany County if/when they support being part of the 501(c)(3). This objective enables the City to pursue the intent of Objective 1 while accommodating the eventual unification of economic development in Allegany County. It is of significant importance to note that even if the County and City of Frostburg choose not to move into the 501(c)(3) upon creation, there will certainly be opportunities to participate with the City of Cumberland-based 501(c)(3) to build stronger relationships as identified in the implementation matrix. The City of Cumberland acknowledges how important the County's and Frostburg's participation will be in the success of this plan regardless of what organizations are created or what roles are chosen.

The Steering Committee and RKG Associates recognizes the potential challenges to coordinate all three economic development efforts in a short amount of time. At one level, there are a number of legal and regulatory efforts that will be required to allow the existing efforts to be emancipated into a new non-profit organization. However, there also are a number of smaller organizations with some level of economic development focus that need to be coordinated to either integrate into the 501(c)(3) or adjust their economic development efforts to advisory in capacity. In short, the Steering Committee recognizes that a full integration of economic development into a single entity will be incremental. To this point, the Steering Committee recommends the City Council approve the Board structure that can function consistent with Objective 1, while accommodating Frostburg and Allegany County within this structure if they choose to commit to this entity. The following narrative describe the revised structure of the implementation entity.

The initial step in (re)creating the implementation entity is to establish an organization and board structure that capitalizes on the private sector talent in the Cities of Cumberland and Frostburg as well as Allegany County as a whole while ensuring the community benefit component remains the primary focus. The new implementation have could have five appointed Board members and six elected Board members composed of private sector, strategic partner organization and public representatives. None of the appointed or elected Board members could hold an elected position on any government entity. The proposed Board could include:

- An appointed City of Cumberland official
- An appointed City of Frostburg official (WHEN POSITION FUNDED)
- An appointed Allegany County official (WHEN POSITION FUNDED)
- An appointed representative of Allegany College of Maryland (WHEN POSITION FUNDED)
- An appointed representative of Frostburg State University (WHEN POSITION FUNDED)
- Six private sector elected members
 - Four initial elected members
 - One added when Frostburg joins the entity
 - One added when Allegany County joins the entity

Objective #3: Activate the existing business community – It was reported to RKG Associates that a number of the City's business leadership historically have tried to participate in economic development, ending with little success and great frustration. A number of private sector leaders expressed concern about funding/participating in an economic development effort that is susceptible to political influences. The implementation entity concept is a substantial first step in easing that concern. Unfortunately, the result of the current structure has led to a small number of business



leaders currently shouldering a majority of the effort related to economic development. While it is unreasonable to anticipate all business leaders will step forward to engage economic development, having a greater number of participants with a broad scale of interests and talents participate with the City's implementation entity is preferred.

To this point, the Steering Committee recommends the implementation entity create industry specific roundtables to bring business leaders together to discuss general market conditions within their respective fields. The roundtables allow participation in economic development while maintaining distance from the administration and oversight of the entire process. More importantly, it reengages individuals with substantial benefit to the economic development effort without committing to leadership roles while allowing business leaders interested in participating but feel they lack the technical understanding to oversee the effort. These roundtables should meet quarterly to discuss emerging industry trends, identify potential market needs, review current implementation efforts, and provide feedback on additional opportunities. Initial roundtable groups include:

- Professional, information, and Internet services,
- Healthcare and social services,
- Education and workforce development, and
- Arts, culture, tourism and entertainment.

The initial industry focus groups should be organized within industry clusters that correspond with the target industries. Creating formal working groups in areas where the implementation entity will be actively pursuing prospects creates a number of benefits, not the least of which is identifying and engaging ambassadors to assist in recruitment. The focus group also provides networking opportunities and can identify actions/opportunities to refine or redefine the economic development implementation approach.

Objective #4: Train and activate local partners – There are a small number of community and business leaders that have taken a very active role in developing this economic development strategic plan. While these individuals have proven invaluable to delivering this strategy and the positive momentum it delivers, they are not capable of addressing all of the implementation assistance that this effort requires. Simply put, there are not enough resources available to address all technical and labor needs. For the City to meet all of the goals established through this plan, additional support for civic, community, and business leaders will be necessary. The following approaches provide some key areas with the greatest need:

- *Advocates to assist in community outreach* – Prior to this effort, there has been little effort to engage local residents about the opportunities/challenges of implementing an economic development program. Given the challenge of reaching all of the different community groups (and economic development perspectives), additional personal and professional relationships with key civic stakeholders will need to be developed. Ideally, the community advocates would be individuals with strong ties and broad recognition within either a particular area of the City or with a civic group. Individuals selected to be advocates should be familiar with the City's economic development efforts, have the ability to discuss and explain economic development concepts, and be well spoken. Most importantly, the advocates must be available to assist in outreach to various community (i.e. congregations) and civic (i.e. neighborhood groups) entities. The advocate effort is intended to build community-wide awareness of the benefits and challenges of implementing an economic development strategy at the local level without requiring a staff large enough to provide individual attention to every citizen.



- *Ambassadors to assist in industry retention and recruitment* – The ambassador program is a collection of business and industry leaders within the City that provide support to the economic development entity’s staff for industry recruitment and retention. Although these individuals will have no formal authority within the recruitment process, they provide a “real life” vantage point for prospects about doing business in Cumberland. Their most important function is to provide a business-perspective for prospects interested in locating/expanding within the City. Utilizing business leaders in the recruitment process legitimizes the recruitment effort through testimonials while leveraging the staff’s time and effort. It is important that ambassadors be well informed, well-spoken and respected within their industry. In other words, the most effective ambassadors may not be from the largest businesses. A wide variety of business types should be represented to ensure appropriate coverage regardless of the prospect.
- *Mentors to foster entrepreneurial growth* – There are a number of retired or near-retired individuals in Cumberland that have vast experience in creating and operating successful businesses in the City/area. These individuals should be approached to participate in a mentorship program, coordinated with Frostburg State University and its Small Business Development Center. It is recommended that the implementation entity utilize a training program for its mentors to ensure consistent and successful efforts (i.e. the Mentor-Protégé Program through the Small Business Administration).

Objective #6: Enhance the City’s economic development toolbox to encourage investment and growth – Economic development is a competitive environment. There are many more communities trying to attract businesses than there are businesses seeking to relocate/grow. This imbalance in supply and demand has created competition. More aggressive communities are willing to “share” the benefits they will receive back to the business that is providing the benefits (i.e. tax base, jobs, investment, diversification...). This sharing can be in expedited review processes, relaxed regulations, and financial inducements. Each benefit is focused on providing greater predictability to the company, therefore reducing risk. To maximize success from an economic development perspective, the Steering Committee recognizes that the City of Cumberland and Allegany County have to be competitive in this environment. Current and potential strategies for supporting economic development include (and some are already being employed in the City):

- Community/business improvement districts,
- Tax increment financing,
- Tax abatements,
- Universal design code,
- Overlay districts,
- Transfer of development rights,
- Streamlined development review process,
- Fee reductions/waivers,
- Infrastructure cost mitigation, and
- Zoning.

The Steering Committee recognizes that the City of Cumberland has limited resources available to a number of City initiatives-of which economic development is one. To this point, the Committee encourages the City Council to be aggressive in pursuing job creation and retention, but in a manner that measures the benefits of a given investment with its potential benefits. The proposed incentive “tool box” should offer a variety of options to accommodate the specific needs of a prospect to be applied to the benefit of both the community and the business. RKG Associates and the Steering Committee recognize that some prospects may require too many benefits to justify the return



to the community. It is in this perspective that the implementation entity should work with stakeholders to define the eligibility parameters for each incentive program and define performance measures that ensure the company will deliver on its promises.

- Define incentives available within each opportunity area – As noted earlier in this chapter, the Steering committee recommends that seven distinct economic development opportunity areas be defined and studied to determine strategic actions to meet the stated vision. The potential local incentives available for those areas—and the criteria to qualify for those incentives, needs to be clearly defined. For example, residential may be desired in one area, but not another. To this point, local infrastructure incentives may be available to a development in the one area but not for the exact development in the other. An effective way to create this control is through the use of overlay districts.
- Develop formulas for incentive and partnership opportunities – The next step in defining which incentives the City is willing to offer is to define the parameters that incentive is available. Certain incentives may be appropriate for a specific area, others for a specific land use type. The Steering Committee encourages City and County leadership to engage in a dialogue about expanding and formulating regulatory and financial incentives for business retention and recruitment. Simply put, establishing formulas to determine whether a prospect can access specific benefits is the easiest way to eliminate uncertainty in the process and ensure community priorities are met.

The dialogue should focus on presenting the various incentives that communities can enact/support and then defining the requirements (the formulas) to determine how companies qualify. From Jan economic development perspective, it removes the guess work for prospects considering Cumberland. From the public sector side, it ensures incentives given will yield the type of investment/job creation that the community will support.

As part of this approach, the communities should consider performance requirements, or “claw-backs,” for companies as well. These claw-backs ensure the company delivers the metrics it promises in order to get access to the incentives. The claw-back provisions should be written to prorate benefits based on the difference between the minimum threshold and what the company actually delivers. In effect, the company has to reimburse the community for not reaching the agreed levels of performance.

- Enumerate existing local, state, and federal programs – There are a number of programs already available to businesses seeking to locate or expand in Cumberland. While these programs are available in other jurisdictions in the state (if a Maryland program) or the Country (if a federal program), not advertising them in Cumberland marketing materials could confuse an unfamiliar business owner into believing they are not available in the City. The incentive sheet discussed earlier should provide a brief explanation for all of the programs relevant to Cumberland and provide the threshold requirements to gain access.
- Lobby Maryland legislature to be more competitive – As noted in the target industry section, Maryland does not compare favorably to neighboring states in terms of its aggressiveness in incentives. While Cumberland does not control these decisions, they can work with surrounding communities, the Tri-County Council and DBED to lobby for economic development reform in the State.
- Continue to refine procedural consistency in Cumberland – It is RKG Associates’ experience that seemingly successful business recruitment efforts have ultimately failed when the



business prospect encountered cumbersome and confusing development approvals processes. Anecdotal information indicate that there are certain aspects of the City's development code that can be confusing and challenging to navigate. While all communities have their regulatory technical difficulties, it is prudent for them to continually assess ways to improve the process without undermining the results the process was developed to ensure. Having a consistent development review approval process will make the implementation entity's job in assisting existing businesses much easier. One immediate opportunity is for the City to proactively market the ombudsman services available through the implementation entity.

F. IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The following implementation matrix presents the full range of objectives and corresponding action items for consideration when creating the implementation entity's first year business plan. The time lines, estimated costing, and implementation partners for each action item identified in the matrix reflect of the level of effort desired by the Steering Committee and assessment by the Consultant. The final business plan established by the implementation entity should be heavily influenced by the Steering Committee's established strategy, but refined based on the available strategic and capital resources available to this effort. The final timing, focus, and potential costs will be better determined by the formal implementation entity representatives and the dedicated participation from various public and private sources.



Strategic Economic Development Plan
City of Cumberland, Maryland

Implementation Matrix	CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN				Implementation Lead	Implementation Timing			Estimated Cost
	MARKET AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT	Public/NP	Private	Short-Term		Mid-Term	Long-Term		
Objective #1: Formalize the economic development focus for the City's seven opportunity sites	Verify the proposed focus defined in the real estate chapter of this document for each of the seven opportunity areas with the newly appointed implementation entity	E, CU	C, D, O, R, Z					A	
Action 1:	Enhance economic development toolbox, including the potential for tax increment financing in each opportunity zone. Define incentive criteria based on focus for each specific area	CU, AL, FR						A	
Action 2:	Consider opportunity overlay zoning districts for each area, based on the results of the small area plans	IE, CU, AL						A	
Action 3:	Lobby state legislature for funding to develop small area plans for each of the opportunity zones	IE, MD						A	
Action 4:	Fund two small area plans for those opportunity areas determined to have the greatest immediate potential for economic development investment (Downtown and Memorial Hospital recommended)	IE, CU	C, D, O, R, Z					E	
Action 5:	Fund three small area plans for those opportunity areas determined to have the potential for economic development investment (Canal Place, Rolling Mill, and Willowbrook Road recommended)	IE, CU	C, D, O, R, Z					E	
Action 6:	Fund two small area plans for those opportunity areas determined to have the long-term potential for economic development investment (South End and Cumberland Plaza recommended)	IE, CU	C, D, O, R, Z					E	
Action 7:	Engage property and business owners on area focus, investment goals, and current market conditions. Utilize this information to modify/enhance the City's efforts	IE	D, O, R					A	
Objective #2: Expand upon the state's property database to include a more locally-focused database of available land and building assets	Utilize an Excel database to augment the state's property data with locally collected data on all available non-residential properties, including asking prices (for rent and for sale)	IE, MD	C					C	
Action 1:	Inventory all assets by opportunity zone and rank based on timeline to revitalize/redevelop in accordance to the opportunity zone plan	IE	D, O, R					A	
Action 2:	Outreach to property owners with assets available for sale or rent to fill in any missing data relative to their specific property. Ensure the City's database is complete	IE	O					A	
Action 3:	Develop on-line data entry capability for property owners and real estate brokers to submit property information data for all available assets within the City. Use this information to update the City's database	IE	C, O, R					C	
Action 4:	Make the database available on the City's economic development website in a geospatial search engine similar to the state's search engine	IE	C					Included in Above	
Action 5:	Develop a "property assemblage book" that highlights the 5-10 development/redevelopment properties in the City with the greatest catalytic/transformational potential. Advertise the book on the City's website	IE, ED						B	
Action 6:		IE	O, R					A	
Objective #3: Land bank strategic properties within the City to enable the implementation of the City's opportunity area plans	Identify parcels considered to be strategic in the implementation of the opportunity site plans, specifically ones that are part of necessary property assemblage	IE						E	
Action 1:	Utilize the City's blight removal program to address properties of particular concern.	IE, CU, AL	R					E	
Action 2:	Acquire properties that meet the defined criteria with the intent to package for resale to an investor seeking to implement the small area plan	IE, CU, AL						Included in Above	
Action 3:	Establish a land bank component to the new implementation entity	IE, CU, AL							
Action 4:		CU, AL	O, D					F	
Objective #4: Expand residential offerings (new construction) and conditions (rehabilitation) in Cumberland	Implement the City housing plan on neighborhood rehabilitation for areas close to Downtown	CU, AL						A	
Action 1:	Enact regulatory incentives to develop townhouse, condominium, and apartment developments at strategic locations (i.e. the Eastside School site)	CU, AL							
Action 2:	Enable mixed-use residential development at the Rose's shopping center	CU						A	
Action 3:									



Strategic Economic Development Plan
City of Cumberland, Maryland

CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN		Implementation Lead			Implementation Timing			Estimated Cost
Implementation Matrix		Public/NP	Private	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term		
MARKET AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT								
Action 4:	Encourage development of age-restricted housing at the former Memorial hospital site	IE, CU						A
Action 5:	Perform financial feasibility analysis to determine if the City's Downtown Legacy grant program for upper-level rehabilitation needs to be expanded/augmented	E	C, O					C
Action 6:	Market test the City's age-in-place programs (i.e. rehabilitation and weatherization programs) to determine appropriate metrics	E, CU	C					A
Action 7:	Consider property tax freezes for person who meet an age and income qualification threshold	CU, AL						F
Action 8:	Implement a proactive marketing effort of Cumberland as a place to retire, promoting programs and opportunities in the City	E, CU						B
Objective #5: Execute greater coordination efforts for workforce development								
Action 1:	Establish an education and workforce roundtable that brings the FSU, ACM, Board of Education and private businesses together with City and County leadership on a quarterly or semi-annual basis	E, AL, CU, AC, FS, BE, MD						A
Action 2:	Actively promote the new advanced manufacturing/CNC continuing education and IT Center for Excellence programs	IE, AC, FS, ED, MD						B
Action 3:	Inventory existing degree programs at FSU and ACM to include in target industry marketing materials. Advertise continuing education/workforce development programs to local residents through the implementation entity's website	IE, AC, FSU						A
Action 4:	Identify existing workforce programs that can be expanded/refined to correlate to industry retention and recruitment	IE, AC, FS, MD	C					A
Action 5:	Identify new education/continuing education programs that can be developed based on the results of the business survey and interactions with the industry roundtables	IE, AC, FS, MD						E
Action 6:	Identify 5-8 local business leaders willing to serve as mentors under the SDBC/implementation entity. Expand number as needed/talent allows	E	I					A
Action 7:	Provide formal training to selected mentors (i.e. the SBA's Mentor-Protégé Program)	E, MD	I					D
Action 8:	Implement mentorship program in coordination with the Small Business Development Center, bringing entrepreneurs together with implementation entity mentors	IE, AC, MD	I					B
Action 9:	Monitor success/effectiveness of existing programs and modify as needed based on changes in marketing and recruitment efforts/market conditions	E	I					A
Objective #6: Create and administer an Allegany County/Western Maryland employment exposition								
Action 1:	Work with education institutions, neighboring economic development entities, and regional employers to establish an annual career exposition	IE, AC, AL, BE, CU, ED, FR, FS	I					E
Action 2:	Host exposition on a rotating basis with all participating economic development entities	IE, AC, AL, BE, CU, ED, FR, FS	I					Included in Above
Action 3:	Provide separate, specialized sessions for middle school children, high school children, and transitioning adults to engage these businesses about educational needs, potential career paths and typical incomes	IE, AC, AL, BE, CU, ED, FR, FS	I					Included in Above
Action 4:	Hold the event over 2-3 days	IE, AC, AL, BE, CU, ED, FR, FS	I					Included in Above
Action 5:	Seek sponsorships from participating business to defray costs of holding the events	IE, AC, AL, BE, CU, ED, FR, FS	I					Included in Above
Action 6:	Offer mock interview sessions and communication skills seminars for high school students and interested adults	IE, AC, AL, BE, CU, ED, FR, FS	I					Included in Above
Action 7:	Provide transportation for school-aged children to attend event	IE, AC, AL, BE, CU, ED, FR, FS	I					Included in Above
Action 8:	Consider offering access to parents to attend with their child	IE, AC, AL, BE, CU, ED, FR, FS	I					Included in Above



Strategic Economic Development Plan
City of Cumberland, Maryland

Implementation Matrix	Implementation Lead		Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Estimated Cost
	Public/NP	Private				
CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN						
MARKET AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT						
<p>Action 9: Create a jobs "app" for Cumberland that allows local employers to post openings/job requirements in a real-time manner accessible from the Internet and smart phones</p>	E	C				C
Objective #7: Retain and nurture existing businesses						
Action 1: Create a comprehensive business database for all businesses in Cumberland. Update annually	E	O, I				A
Action 2: Develop and implement a web-based survey for all businesses, focusing on identifying needs, emerging market trends and potential obstacles to success	E	O, I				A
Action 3: Hold workforce forum to share results of initial workforce survey results with local workforce training providers	E, AC, FSU, BE, CU	Z				B
Action 4: Present survey's market findings at industry roundtables relevant to that industry, soliciting response and advice on addressing specific needs/opportunities. Use this data to inform the annual business planning retreat	E	I, D, O				A
Action 5: Coordinate with local and state entities also performing retention activities to eliminate duplicative efforts and avoid inconveniencing local businesses	E, ED, TC, MD, CC, DD					A
Action 6: Provide monthly newsletter to the business community database	E					A
Action 7: Host 2-3 regional industry-specific business networking events each year; potentially in partnership with Frostburg/County economic development entities	E, ED, TC	C, I				B
Action 8: Develop a business lecture series, hosting 1-2 event per year, establishing topic areas based on the responses to the annual business survey and interacting with the industry roundtables	E, ED	C, I				C
Objective #8: Nurture and develop the City's home-based and entrepreneurial businesses						
Action 1: Create databases of entrepreneur/small business development partners; focus group members, business leaders, mentors and program participants	E, MD					A
Action 2: Determine the feasibility of an incubator/co-share/accelerator concept for the City	E, CU	C				C
Action 3: Expand/market business development programs including: [1] writing a business plan; [2] how to finance a business; [3] how to identify, hire and manage staff; and [4] how to market to clients	E, AC, FS, ED	I				B
Action 4: Establish incentives to accommodate home-based businesses; including business license fee waivers, business financing packages (tied to development program attendance), and a loan consortium dedicated program	E, ED	F				D
Action 5: The mentorship program to enrollment in business development programs	E, AC	I				A
Action 6: Implement a program conclusion and follow up survey of program participants to track effectiveness and success rate	E, AC	I, F				A
Action 7: Expand mentorship program as an industry recruitment effort as resources become available. Consider specific entrepreneurial development effort for women/minority owned businesses	E, AC	I				C
Objective #9: Proactively pursue "rural sourcing" concept						
Action 1: Work with the professional services industry roundtable to define market opportunities and identify potential target markets in context of the target industry clusters	E, MD	I				A
Action 2: Utilize a business listing database, such as Dun and Bradstreet, to get a list of businesses within the professional services target industries (admin & support services; internet & virtual services; and technical & research services)	E					B
Action 3: Inventory businesses operating in these industries, developing relationships to identify opportunities for them to expand (retention) or name potential targets (recruitment)	E					A
Action 4: Coordinate and distribute marketing materials to 50-100 targets, tracking responses and rationale for responses to modify approach for future recruitment efforts.	E	I				B
Action 5: Join 1-2 national trade associations within the specified industry segments (advised by local business leaders in those segments)	E, ED	I				B



Strategic Economic Development Plan
City of Cumberland, Maryland

CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN		Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing			Estimated Cost
Implementation Matrix		Public/NP	Private	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	
MARKET AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT							
Action 6:	Attend 1-2 national trade association conferences, exhibiting at the event and establishing direct meetings with targeted attendees; bring business ambassadors to these events	IE, ED, TC, MD					B
Action 7:	Coordinate recruitment trips and visits with County and DBED, identifying opportunities to joint market	IE, ED, TC, MD					B
Objective #10: Proactively market to businesses in the healthcare industry							
Action 1:	Work with the healthcare industry roundtable to define market opportunities and identify potential target markets in context of the target industry clusters	IE, MD	I				A
Action 2:	Utilize a business listing database, such as Dun and Bradstreet, to get a list of businesses within the target industries identified in the target industry section of this plan	E					B
Action 3:	Perform a medical services market opportunity analysis, identifying specializations/sectors currently underrepresented in Western Maryland	E	C, I				C
Action 4:	Inventory businesses operating in these industries, developing relationships to identify opportunities for them to expand (retention) or name potential targets (recruitment)	E	I				A
Action 5:	Work with Western Maryland Regional Health Systems to define future of healthcare operations in their Cumberland facility. Develop recruitment/incentive programs to assist in meeting their stated focus for this facility	IE, ED, TC	I				A
Action 6:	Coordinate and distribute marketing materials to 25-50 targets, tracking responses and rationale for responses to modify approach for future recruitment efforts.	E	I				B
Action 7:	Join 1-2 national trade associations within the specified industry segments (advised by local business leaders in those segments)	IE, ED	I				B
Action 8:	Attend 1-2 national trade association conferences, exhibiting at the event and establishing direct meetings with targeted attendees; bring business ambassadors to these events	IE, ED, TC, MD					B
Action 9:	Coordinate recruitment trips and visits with County and State, identifying opportunities to joint market	IE, ED, TC, MD					B
Objective #11: Grow and enhance the City's arts, culture, entertainment and recreation industry cluster							
Action 1:	Work with the arts and tourism focus group to identify potential opportunities, regional and national industry trends & projections, and opportunities to enhance these industry clusters	E, TO, AA, DD	I				A
Action 2:	Perform a retail market opportunity analysis for Downtown, focusing on determining the appropriate mix of traditional and destination retail for Cumberland	DD	C				C
Action 3:	Work with the Allegany County Tourism to identify and test potential investments and developments for market and financial viability, starting with a potential urban ropes course at Canal Place	E, TO	C, I, O				C
Action 4:	Perform a market and financial feasibility study to determine the costs and benefits of expanding the City's arts recruitment and retention efforts with particular focus on artist live/work space	E, AA,	C, F, O				C
Action 5:	Work with Allegany County Tourism on joint marketing efforts	E, TO					A
Action 6:	Work with the Downtown Development Commission to integrate the event calendar/event venues as part of the Downtown small area plan needs	E, DD	I				A
Action 7:	Work with Rocky Gap Casino to develop regular shuttle service between Downtown and the casino	IE, DD	I				F
Action 8:	Utilize a business listing database, such as Dun and Bradstreet, to get a list of businesses within the target industries identified in the target industry section of the strategic economic development plan	E					B
Action 9:	Coordinate and distribute marketing materials specific to the retail, entertainment and recreation opportunities	E, AA, DD, CC	I				B
Action 10:	Join professional associations related to the industries identified in the industry cluster, advertising in their trade publications and attending regional and national conferences	E					A



Strategic Economic Development Plan
City of Cumberland, Maryland

Implementation Matrix	CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN			Implementation Lead			Implementation Timing			Estimated Cost
	Public/NP	Private		Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Public/NP	Private		
MARKETING AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES										
Objective #1: Enable the implementation entity to pursue and execute a signature project										
Action 1:	E, CU	I	Finalize the creation of the City's implementation entity, including the capacity to own real estate (preferably through the land bank concept)							A
Action 2:	E, CU		Transfer ownership of city-owned land asset to be enacted for economic development, as determined through coordination between the City Council and the new implementation entity Board of directors							A
Action 3:	E, CU	C	Develop a business plan for the transferred land asset, including a financial analysis of the proposed project							C
Action 4:	E	D	Create a request for proposals to solicit development proposals from private firms/investment partners that details the development program and expected deliverables through the public-private partnership							A
Action 5:	E	D	Score and select preferred partner for the development project							A
Action 6:	E, CU	D	Negotiate development agreement with development partner, detailing phasing and deliverable expectations of the project							A
Action 7:	E, CU	D	Implement development and marketing strategy (if applicable) for the development project							A
Action 8:	E, CU		Provide regular progress reports to the City Council/community							A
Action 9:	E		Use and development proceeds (if applicable) to develop future investment/partnership projects between the City, implementation entity, and private sector							A
Objective #1: Develop relationships with external partners										
Action 1:	E, MD		Continue to build a relationship with the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, providing them pertinent information on Cumberland's economic development business plan (to be developed)							A
Action 2:	E, UT		Increase coordination with Potomac Edison/West Penn Power/FirstEnergy on local and regional economic development efforts							A
Action 3:	IE, FR, AL, ED, TC		Create quarterly or semi-annual coordination meeting with Frostburg, Allegany County, Tri-County Council economic development entities							A
Action 4:	E	I, S	Establish and maintain a site selector contact database, focusing on contract site selectors that operate in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and/or in Cumberland's target industries							A
Action 5:	E	S	Implement regular electronic communication to the site selector database (preferably the Cumberland economic development newsletter)							A
Action 6:	E, CC	I, O, R, D	Host a semi-annual real estate professional networking event, bringing Realtors, brokers, developers, and investors together in a social setting							B
Action 7:	IE, ED, TC, MD	C, I, R, D	Partner with local, regional and statewide economic development groups to cohost an industry-specific site selector event in Western Maryland - rotate location among partners							B
Objective #2: Expand City's role in regional and state wide economic development efforts										
Action 1:	E, MD		Host quarterly or semi-annual coordination meetings with Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development representatives, focusing on existing initiatives and emerging market trends							A
Action 2:	IE, ED, TC, MD		Build a target industry matrix overlaying local, regional, and statewide target industries to share with implementation partners and site selectors, posting on the City's website							A
Action 3:	IE, ED, TC, MD		Collaborate with DBED, Tri-County Council and Allegany County to attend 1-2 industry trade shows they are attending, focusing on events that correspond with local industry targets or emerging prospects (i.e. cybersecurity, back office)							B
Action 4:	IE, ED, TC, MD		Collaborate with DBED, Tri-County Council and Allegany County to attend 1-2 recruitment trips they are sponsoring, focusing on events that correspond with local industry targets or emerging prospects (i.e. logistics, tourism)							B
Action 5:	E	D, R, I	Host a recruitment event each year for 4-8 industry targets cultivated through direct marketing and outreach							C



Strategic Economic Development Plan
City of Cumberland, Maryland

CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN Implementation Matrix	Implementation Lead		Implementation Timing			Estimated Cost
	Public/NP		Mid-Term			
	Private	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term		
MARKETING AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES						
Objective #3: Enhance Cumberland's marketing collateral						
Action 1:	E	C				D Included in Above
Action 2:	E	C				Included in Above
Action 3:	E, CU	C				Included in Above
Action 4:	E	I, C				Included in Above
Action 5:	E					Included in Above
Action 6:	E					B
Action 7:	E	C				B
Action 8:	E					C
Objective #4: Implement community outreach and education efforts						
Action 1:	E	I, Z				A
Action 2:	E, CU	Z				A
Action 3:	E, CC, TO, DD, AA, UT					B
Action 4:	E	Z				A
Action 5:	E					A
Action 6:	E, ED, MD					B
Action 7:	E	Z				A
Action 8:	E, MD					B
Action 9:	E, ED, TC	C, I, D, R				C
Objective #5: Expand the implementation entity's website to provide greater information for investors, businesses, and City residents						
Action 1:	E					A
Action 2:	E	C				A
Action 3:	E	I, O				A
Action 4:	IS					A
Action 5:	E, MD	C				A



Strategic Economic Development Plan
City of Cumberland, Maryland

CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN		Implementation Lead			Implementation Timing		Estimated Cost
Implementation Matrix		Public/NP	Private	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	
MARKETING AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES							
Objective #6: Create a multi-faceted social media outreach effort							
Action 1:	Create and regularly maintain a Facebook account	IE					A
Action 2:	Create and regularly maintain a Twitter account	IE					A
Action 3:	Create and regularly maintain a LinkedIn account	IE					A
Action 4:	Develop a comprehensive digital outreach list to publish regular eNewsletters and make necessary eBlast messages	IE					A
Action 5:	Build relationships with all local print, digital and social media outlets and create a regular communication strategy	IE	M				B
Action 6:	Get a Quick Response code developed for the implementation entity's website	IE	C				B
Action 7:	Have all materials translated into other languages, starting with Spanish	IE	C				B
Action 8:	Dedicate staff time to consistently and frequently update and maintain these efforts and relationships	IE					A
ORGANIZATIONAL AND REGULATORY							
Objective #1: Develop an implementation entity that enables the City to maximize its effectiveness in economic development							
Action 1:	Create a 501(c)(3) corporation to implement the City economic development strategy	IE, CU	I				A
Action 2:	Consider integrating the Cumberland Allegany County Industrial Foundation (CACIF) organization into the implementation entity	IE, CU, CA	I				A
Action 3:	Constitute a 7-person Board made up of 2 City appointed members, 1 ACM appointed member, and four elected business community leaders	IE, CU	I				A
Action 4:	Transition the City's existing economic development director to the new entity	IE, CU					A
Action 5:	Develop a long-term funding strategy that combines the City's economic development budget with a contribution formula for each additional Board member	CU	I				A
Action 6:	Establish a permanent, dedicated hosting and meeting space for the new implementation entity outside Cumberland City Hall, preferably in Downtown	IE, CU	O, R				F
Action 7:	Define City's implementation guidelines for the entity to follow	CU					A
Action 8:	Hire a new economic development specialist	IE					A
Action 9:	Hire a new marketing specialist	IE					C
Action 10:	Hold and annual off-site retreat to create (and subsequently refine) the implementation entity's business plan	IE, CU	I				B
Action 11:	Create a business recruitment marketing strategy to transition the City's economic development effort from predominantly reactive to predominantly proactive	IE					A
Action 12:	Define metrics based on the priorities established in the business plan and the activity level of the Board members	IE, CU					A
Action 13:	Monitor successes and report them to the Cumberland City Council, the organization's investors, and the community	IE, CU	I				A



Strategic Economic Development Plan
City of Cumberland, Maryland

CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN Implementation Matrix		Implementation Lead	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Estimated Cost
		Public/NP	Private			
ORGANIZATIONAL AND REGULATORY						
Objective #2: Consider drafting the implementation's mission and by-laws to eventually become the countywide economic development entity						
Action 1:	Increase coordination meetings with economic development entities in Frostburg and Allegany County	IE, FR, ED				A
Action 2:	Develop joint marketing/recruitment strategies	IE, FR, ED				B
Action 3:	Invite Frostburg and Allegany County to participate in the expansion of the implementation entity focus and mission	IE, CU, FR, AL, ED	I			A
Action 4:	Incorporate Allegany County, Frostburg, and Cumberland economic development efforts into the entity	IE, CU, FR, AL, ED	I			A
Action 5:	Develop comprehensive strategic economic development plan (possibly with funding assistance from U.S. EDA) for Allegany County, incorporating City plans	IE, CU, FR, AL, ED	I			A
Action 6:	Expand the entity's mission to actively market and serve the entire County's economic development needs	IE, CU, FR, AL, ED	I			A
Action 7:	Transfer/hire the appropriate staffing to implement a county-wide strategy, a recommended structure is detailed in this section of the report	E				A
Action 8:	Monitor successes and report them to the Cumberland City Council, Frostburg City Council, Allegany County Commission, the organization's investors, and the community	E				A
Objective #3: Activate the existing business community						
Develop industry roundtables in the following areas: Production industries; professional, information & Internet services, healthcare & social services; education & workforce; and tourism & hospitality						
Action 1:	Implement quarterly/semi-annual meetings with the focus groups to discuss current market climate, emerging trends/issues, and identification of challenges	E	I, D, O, R, F			A
Action 2:	Adjust business plan as needed to address any time-sensitive opportunities or challenges to be addressed	E	I, D, O, R, F			B
Action 3:		E				A
Objective #4: Train and activate local partners						
Identify and train community 4-6 advocates, empowering them to interact with individual citizens, community groups, and local elected bodies. Candidates should be individuals well respected in the community						
Action 1:	Identify and coordinate existing business leaders within various industry sectors (i.e. healthcare, manufacturing) in Cumberland to become marketing ambassadors, actively participating in business recruitment	E	Z			A
Action 2:	Establish guidelines for FSU's Small Business Development Center that enables applicants direct support from the Cumberland's mentor program	E, AC	I, O, R			A
Action 3:		E, AC				A
Objective #5: Improve internal information sharing and role delineation around economic development in Cumberland (Allegany County)						
Meet with all organizations that claim to do economic development, clearly defining their role in the implementation of the new business plan. Ensure all economic development activity is monitored by the implementation entity						
Action 1:	Work with media outlets to establish a regular economic development opinion editorial (monthly or bi-monthly) to address community-focused information out of roundtable/market interactions	IE, AA, CA, CC, DD, TC, TO	I			A
Action 2:	Host an annual "state of economic development" event for elected officials and implementation partners to brief on progress over the previous year and new business plan for the upcoming year	E	M			A
Action 3:	Attend elected official meetings, as needed and requested to address specific issues opportunities	IE, ED				B
Action 4:	Provide more regular press releases connected to the implementation entity's education and outreach efforts	IE, CU				A
Action 5:	Host an elected official retreat at least two weeks before Board retreat to garner input on perceptions and desires related to economic development in Cumberland as part of the annual business plan development process	E	M			A
Action 6:	Develop a centralized economic development database to collect and maintain data related to: building permit information, development trend data, local development procedures, utility rate and tap fees, and local incentives	IE, CU	I			B
Action 7:		E	C			B



Implementation Matrix	CITY OF CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN		Implementation Lead			Implementation Timing		Estimated Cost
	Public/NP	Private	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term			
ORGANIZATIONAL AND REGULATORY								
Action 8:	E, ED, TO, CU, AL	C, I						A
Encourage the consolidation of tourism marketing and development under a single entity, advocating for a strategic tourism marketing plan for all of Allegany County								
Objective #6: Enhance the City's economic development toolbox to encourage investment and growth								
Action 1:	CU, FR, AL							A
Create formulaic incentive structure for all incentive programs, defining the job creation and/or tax base enhancement thresholds to access those programs								
Action 2:	CU, FR, AL							A
Frame grants based on the size of the company/project most suitable for the program (i.e. loan assistance for start-up businesses vs. tax reimbursement for large job creation).								
Action 3:	CU, FR, AL							C
Consider permitting/development fee reductions (i.e. water and sewer tap fees) that meet defined thresholds for economic development								
Action 4:	CU							F
Define structure for tax increment financing in each of the opportunity zones								
Action 5:	CU, AL							A
Consider overlay zones in opportunity areas that increase development flexibility in exchange for aesthetic controls								
Action 6:	CU							A
Consider density bonuses in and near downtown in exchange for favorable land use programs (i.e. mixed income developments)								
Action 7:	CU, AL, FR							F
Consider locally funded tax abatement/tax credit programs tied to job creation, particularly for jobs that exceed area median wages and/or offer benefit packages								
Action 8:	CU, AL, IE	I						E
Provide land acquisition cost mitigation or reimbursement (tied to the land bank concept)								
Action 9:	E, CU	F, I						A
Work with financial institutions to offer loan guarantees and/or interest rate write downs for start-up or home based businesses; consider formalizing this program in the City's existing loan pool								
Action 11:	IE, CU, ED, AL, MD, TC	I						A
Lobby Maryland legislature to provide economic development programs more conducive to Western Maryland market and more competitive with surrounding states								
Action 12:	IE, CU, AL, FR							A
Review effectiveness of incentive programs and refine as necessary								
Action 13:	E, CU							A
Work with City of Cumberland departments to create single development approval/review process for development (i.e. concurrent review)								
Action 14:	CU, AL							A
Consider guaranteed expedited review processes for priority projects (tied to formulate criteria)								
Action 15:	E, CU							E
Formalize the City's blight funds under the economic development entity								



LEGEND

Implementation Leaders

Public:

- AC - Allegany College of Maryland
- AL - Allegany County
- BE - Allegany County Board of Education
- CU - City of Cumberland
- ED - Allegany County Economic Development Department
- FR - City of Frostburg
- FS - Frostburg State University
- IE - Cumberland Economic Development Implementation Entity
- MD - Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development

Partners:

- AA - Allegany Arts Council
- CA - Cumberland Allegany County Industrial Foundation
- CC - Allegany County Chamber of Commerce
- DD - Downtown Development Commission
- TC - Tri-County Council
- TO - Allegany County Tourism
- UT - Utilities

Private

- C - Consultant
- D - Development Community
- F - Financial Institutions
- I - Industry Leaders
- M - Local Media
- O - Property Owners
- R - Realtors/Brokers
- S - Site Selection Professionals
- Z - City of Cumberland Residents

Cost Estimate Legend:

- A - Under \$1,000
- B - \$1,000 to \$10,000
- C - \$10,000 to \$50,000
- D - \$50,000 to \$100,000
- E - \$100,000 to \$500,000
- F - Over \$500,000
- Unk. - Unknown