

Economic Sustainability Chapter

Vision

A strong economy is essential to the social, cultural and financial vitality of our city. Public and private initiatives help create employment opportunities and a vibrant and sustainable economy. The City of Charlottesville is committed to creating a strong, diversified economy and an environment that provides career ladder employment opportunities for residents. At its best, Charlottesville is a community with an effective workforce development system and a business-friendly environment that supports entrepreneurship; innovation; heritage tourism; and commercial, mixed use, and infill development; and access to a growing array of diverse employment and career ladder opportunities for all. The Downtown Mall, as the economic hub of the region, features a vibrant historic district with arts and entertainment, shopping, dining, cultural events, and a dynamic City Market.

Innovation

Goal 1: Create an entrepreneurial environment that fosters the creation and success of businesses.*

1.1: Work with partners to help entrepreneurs identify locations/sites where they can successfully start and grow their companies.*

1.2: Continue partnerships with the University of Virginia, and its affiliated groups in order to maximize the business assistance resources available to entrepreneurs and expand innovative industry locations in Charlottesville.*

1.3: Partner with community organizations to provide relevant training opportunities for startup businesses.*

1.4: Work strategically to continue to develop and implement land use policies and regulations that ensure the availability of sites for business growth and expansion.*

Sustaining Business

Goal 2: Generate, recruit, and retain successful businesses.

2.1: In order to retain existing businesses, develop and implement a talent development strategy to attract skilled professionals to Charlottesville.

2.2: Continue business visitation program to regularly assess the health of our existing businesses.

2.3: Partner with business assistance agencies and local non-profits to provide training opportunities that will help businesses achieve greater success.*

2.4: Increase the number of SWaM certified businesses that are registered vendors with the City of Charlottesville.

2.5: Work with Albemarle County and local educational institutions to ensure that economic and workforce development efforts are appropriately aligned to foster business recruitment and retention in the Charlottesville area.

2.6: Continue to methods of delivering business assistance to customers that use the latest technology.

2.7: Develop and implement a marketing effort that informs residents and businesses about the products and services offered by the City of Charlottesville Office of Economic Development.

Partnerships

Goal 3: Build partnerships with private sector groups in order to maximize strategic capital investment in targeted areas in the City.

3.1: Encourage the development of the City's key commercial corridors and surrounding sites (such as West Main Street, Preston Avenue, Harris Street and Cherry Avenue).*

3.2: Proactively participate in planning and development studies such as small area plans, particularly as they relate to economic development opportunities in strategic areas throughout the City.*

3.3: Participate with internal and external stakeholders to implement the Strategic Investment Area plan.

3.4: Align zoning ordinances to facilitate economic activity in new areas of commercial opportunity identified in the updated future land use map.*

3.5: Work to ensure that newly aligned City ordinances and regulations balance the need to promote development opportunities and competing interests.*

3.6: Explore appropriate incentives for development projects with significant economic impact, with particular emphasis on target industries and those industries that directly address the need for more career ladder job opportunities that will help move City residents towards self-sufficiency (e.g., light manufacturing, semi-skilled trades, etc.). *

Tourism

Goal 4: Increase tourism to help expand the positive economic impact visitors have on the City.

4.1: "Continue collaborative engagement with partners, stakeholders and influencers in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, to raise awareness of the area's rich artistic, ethnic, cultural, and lifestyle diversity through marketing that inspires travel from out-of-area. As the official destination marketing organization for both the city and county, this engagement is ongoing."

4.2: Seek out opportunities for public-private partnerships in the provision of infrastructure that supports the tourism industry.

4.3: Explore ways of creating recreational access routes to our community's heritage and cultural sites to enhance their efforts on Charlottesville's economy.

Downtown Mall

Goal 5: Maintain the economic vitality of the Downtown Mall and surrounding areas.

5.1: Monitor the need for additional parking as new development occurs, with particular attention to parking needs downtown and along the West Main corridor.

5.2: Partner with University of Virginia and other adjacent property owners for continued implementation of the West Main Street Plan.

5.3: Continue to encourage private sector developers to implement plans from the commercial corridor study.

5.4: Evaluate the effects of mixed-use development and changing demographics on the downtown area and continue to support and maintain the Downtown Mall as the economic and cultural hub of the City.

Work Force

Goal 6: Be an effective partner in creating a well-prepared and successful workforce.

6.1: Continue to explore programs for City of Charlottesville youth that will expose them to the principles of financial literacy, economics, and entrepreneurship.

6.2: Provide support for educational programs that will prepare City students for 21st century jobs in our area's target industries.*

6.3: Develop educational programs/training that target jobs that are in high demand to ensure that the local workforce has the qualifications needed to find employment within these industries.*

6.4: Explore programs/initiatives that offer skilled trades training for City residents. Nurture and expand employment opportunities within this industry.*

6.5: Partner with local workforce service providers to offer retraining opportunities for City residents in order to increase their chances of gaining employment in new and emerging industries.

6.6: In collaboration with workforce development agencies in the area, provide recruitment events/activities (e.g., job fairs, conferences, etc.) that connect employers with potential employees of all ages and skill levels.

6.7: Collaborate with workforce service providers to help City residents overcome barriers to employment such as basic education and training, transportation, childcare, etc.

6.8: Continue to operate the Charlottesville Downtown Job Center to ensure that all City residents have access to employment services and training opportunities that will help them meet local employers' workforce needs.

6.9: Continue to implement the Workforce Development Strategic Action Team report, "Growing Opportunity: A Path to Self-Sufficiency in Charlottesville."