



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

DIVISION OF PLANNING & PERMITTING

Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office

Deborah A. Carpenter, AICP, Division Director

Kimberly Gaines, Director

Investing in Worker & Workplaces Advisory Group Meeting 1 May 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes

I. Meeting Details

Meeting date and time: Tuesday, May 7, 2024, at 2:00 PM

Meeting location: Transit Services, 1040 Rocky Springs Road, Frederick, MD 21702

II. Attendance

Advisory Group members present: Andrew Brown, Chris Smariga, Louise Kennelly, Danielle Adams, Brian Morris, Lisa Graditor, Karen Cannon, Taylor Davis, Don Pleasants, Eric Soter, Kai Hagen, Matt Holbrook, Tony Checchia

Advisory Group members absent: Taylor Davis

County staff: DPP: Debbie Carpenter, Kimberly Gaines, Denis Superczynski, Karin Flom, Andrew Stine; DEO: Lara Fritts, Troy Bolyard, Beth Woodring, Patty McDonald

III. Call to Order

Ms. Fritts brought the meeting to order at 2:00 PM and welcomed the advisory group members. All present introduced themselves.

IV. New Business

Plan Purpose and Scope

Ms. Fritts provided an overview of Economic Development priorities and challenges, sharing statistical data on key indicators of unemployment, educational attainment, median income, population growth, and residential real estate activity, which combine to make Frederick County an attractive location. She presented additional data on the level of commercial activity and vacancy and a snapshot of the current pipeline of economic development prospective projects. Ms. Fritts highlighted that based upon the preceding data, a crucial priority is to increase the share of commercial tax in the county tax base, which at FY 2022 comprised 22% and 78% residential. Ms. Fritts concluded with the importance of identifying opportunities for redevelopment and planning for site readiness as this planning process proceeds.

Ms. Carpenter noted that this plan continues implementation of Livable Frederick, which was adopted in September of 2019 and affords the County the flexibility to develop “opportunity plans” to address emerging challenges or take advantage of strategic opportunities. She added that the plan will focus on increasing the non-residential tax base, as described by Ms. Fritts, and ensure that we are fostering complete communities – communities with a mix of housing types at different price points, transportation access, adequate infrastructure, and services that support employees, like childcare. Ms. Carpenter noted that the planning process will include a review of select community growth area

boundaries, land use designations, zoning designations, and water/sewer classifications. She specified that we are not bound by the land use and zoning designations that exist today.

Livable Frederick Work Program Overview

Ms. Gaines provided an overview of the Livable Frederick Work Program, which has been approved by the County Executive. Several other planning efforts are currently underway: the Water Resources Element, the Triennial Update of the Water and Sewerage Plan, and Municipal / County Comprehensive Plan Reconciliation. Future plans in the work program include the Housing Element, the Green Infrastructure Plan, and the Urbana/I-270 Corridor Plan. The work program can be accessed at <https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/342209/Livable-Frederick-Work-Program?bidId=>

The Planning Process and the Role of the Advisory Group

Mr. Superczynski provided an overview of the planning process. He explained that the advisory group will assist staff in the development of a first draft by sharing their insights and experience. The staff draft serves as a starting point for the Planning Commission's work on the plan. The Planning Commission will conduct a series of workshops and a public hearing, and ultimately advance their recommended plan to the County Council. The Council will conduct their own workshops and public hearing(s) prior to plan adoption.

Discussion of Current Strengths and Weaknesses

Ms. Woodring and Mr. Bolyard facilitated a group discussion of strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths include employment diversity, zoning overlays that are not over-used, long-range planning for preservation/conservation and growth, water/sewer capacity, our municipalities, the South Frederick Corridors Plan for its focus on infill development and redevelopment, the Livable Frederick Master Plan for the flexibility it has created in planning for our future and the guidance it provides for big decisions, our location with interstate access and passenger/freight rail, prime farmland and the programs to permanently preserve it, and our younger generations.

Weaknesses identified include the ORI land use and zoning designation, the use categories in the zoning ordinance (issues with homebased businesses, inflexibility, change of use triggering a site plan), the time it takes to be "shovel ready," potential displacement of businesses with redevelopment, land preservation preventing planned growth, the traditional low-density growth model, the water/sewer planning process, and the lack of safe, affordable housing for the workforce.

Other topics offered for consideration at future meetings included developing in a manner that is mindful of our changing climate – particularly ensuring that jobs and housing are in close proximity to minimize emissions associated with transportation, data mining, public-private partnerships for infrastructure, best practices for high-density development, incentives for residential development in municipalities, transfer of development rights, review of Priority Preservation Area/prime soils maps, the needed for more optional methods of development in the Zoning Ordinance, and the need for a flow monitoring program for water/sewer capacity.

Planning for May 21 Meeting – Current Conditions / Baseline Information

Ms. Gaines stated that the May 21 meeting will largely focus on sharing data concerning current conditions. All advisory group members are invited to share data that they collect or track.

Advisory Group Schedule for May to August

The advisory group members elected to meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 2:00PM.

VIII. Adjournment

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.