



Economic Development Work Group August 7, 2025 Meeting Summary

Members Present:

The following members were signed in – Amy Yingling – Small Business Development (Chair), Andrew Gray – Carroll County Planning (Facilitator), Beth Gray – Freedom Representative, Brian Ditto – Real Estate Professional, Chris Heyn – Carroll County Planning, Clark Shaffer – Attorney, Darren Peyton – Higher Education, Denise Beaver – CC Economic Development, Duane Arbuthnot – Finksburg Representative, Julie Ford-Mount – Business Owner, Louis Toth – Business Owner/Management, Matt Taylor – Developer, Michael Kane – Planning & Zoning Commission, Paige Sunderland – CC Economic Development, Scott Singleton – Workforce Development, Theresa Bethune – Carroll Technology Council, Timothy Redmond – Citizen at Large, Winona Peterson – Citizen at Large

1. Welcome

Mr. Gray welcomed work group members.

2. Recap of Previous Meeting

Mr. Gray skipped through this section, so the group had ample time to review the final recommendations emailed on Friday, August 1, 2025.

3. Review Final Recommendations

Discussion ensued on the draft work group recommendations. Please see the *Economy Work Group Recommendations* below.

4. Conclusion

An eighth meeting was scheduled for August 21, at 4:00 PM.

Economy Work Group Recommendations

The Economy Work Group Said	Recommendations	Work Group Comments
<p>Designate and zone additional land for economic development uses. This has been a very important theme of workgroup meetings since approximately 3 percent of the county land area is zoned for economic development land uses as compared to 7.5 percent average for surrounding Counties in Maryland.</p> <p>Prioritize the redevelopment of underutilized sites or vacant buildings to leverage the existing infrastructure and services that exist.</p> <p>Land for economic development needs to be served by proper infrastructure including water/sewer/broadband and transportation. The workgroup examined areas with high development potential and suggested locations for additional economic development below.</p>	<p>Land:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rezone more land for economic development uses focusing on the areas specified below. 2. Designate adjacent properties in and around growth areas for commercial, industrial, and mixed-use land uses. 3. Study the strategic locations for new economic development land uses identified by the workgroup for possible land use designation changes and investment. (Please see attached map and strategic locations below) 	<p>Land:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group recommends not to specify an acreage number but rather rezone more land. Areas to be rezoned should be focused on land that is in the areas already identified by the Group. 2. “Designate and Rezone”, combine with #1. Remove “large” and leave properties. Designate “adjacent” properties instead of large. 3. Group approved with no comments.

	<p>Policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide outreach to the public and work with civic groups to ensure the benefits of economic growth are conveyed to overcome negative growth perceptions from existing residents and property owners. 	<p>Policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Group approved with no comments
	<p>Financial/Capital:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fund infrastructure needed to support new commercial and industrial land uses, in particular water, sewer, broadband, and transportation enhancements. 	<p>Financial/Capital</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Group approved with no comments
<p>Provide housing so people can live and work in Carroll.</p>	<p>Land:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore Mixed Use zoning districts 	<p>Land</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Group opts to modify wording to “Explore mixed used zoning”

	<p>Policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a mix of housing types. 	<p>Policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Group mentioned modification to “Provide mixed housing types” 2- Group votes to remove item 2 of “<i>Monitor the vacancy and utilization rate of housing</i>”.
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	<p>Financial/Capital:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incentivize housing developers to provide workforce housing. 	<p>Financial/Capital</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group approved with no comments
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Ensure the rural character of the County is preserved. This is in keeping with the joint work group takeaway of “Agriculture, Economy, and Housing – look at the strategic placement of each in the County”.

The rural nature of the County contributes to its attractiveness as a place to live and do business. Additionally, farming and agritourism is a significant part of the county’s economy and supports numerous associated businesses and industries.

Continue to invest in agricultural preservation on properties that are not suitable for economic development.

Policy:

1. Identify economic initiatives that will promote and leverage agricultural production, value added agriculture, research, and support services.
2. Recognize the value of the rural and agriculture nature of the County
3. County policies should be reviewed to support the rural and agriculture nature of the County.

Policy

1. Group approved with no comments
2. Group requested to define rural
3. Remove “*Ensure the rural character of Carroll County is maintained*” Group agreed to move item 2 & 3 to “*what the Economy Work Group Said*” area.

<p>Improve timing of the Development Review/Permit Process. This was a key point of discussion from the first half of the work group meetings and mentioned during the joint workgroup meeting. The work group also mentioned improving the development review process in general to make development easier.</p>	<p>Policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to evaluate and implement ways to streamline the development review process for efficiency to reduce turnaround times and provide greater clarity of the process. 2. Improve the efficiency of the building permit process. 3. Shorten the development entitlement process. 	<p>Policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suggested changing wording to “Continue to evaluate and implement...” 2. Update wording to “improve efficiency of the building permit process”. Remove “public works” & keep “improve the efficiency of the building permit process” 3. Add “<i>Shorten the development entitlement process</i>”.
<p>Collaborate with municipal governments to revise all zoning codes to be more consistent. This stemmed from one of the key points of discussion regarding intergovernmental collaboration and standardizing zoning codes to be more consistent for ease of development across the county. This topic is in keeping with the joint work group takeaway of “<i>Review laws/policy for better coordination between Towns</i>”.</p> <p>Improve interjurisdictional cooperation and coordination with the eight municipal governments. It was mentioned that cooperation and coordination with the municipal governments are key to economic success across the County since the municipal</p>	<p>Policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with local governments to standardize zoning codes, as best as possible, to be more consistent and efficient. 2. Draft written agreements for mutual economic development, planning, and zoning with municipalities to ensure a comprehensive and consistent economic development vision. 	<p>Policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group approved with no comments. 2. Group approved with no comments
	<p>Financial/Capital:</p>	<p>Financial/Capital</p>

<p>governments provide most of the access to needed public infrastructure. This is in keeping with the joint work group takeaway of “<i>Unified vision for the County and the Towns</i>”.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monetarily incentivize municipalities for improving the economic landscape of their community based on an agreed upon MOU that considers the overall growth vision for the County. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group wanted to remove “<i>tax break</i>”
<p>The workgroup discussed the need to identify goals for healthy economic development.</p>	<p>Policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor yearly business and job retention/growth rates. 2. Review year over year employee growth 3. Monitor year over year sales 4. Monitor the number of new businesses starts 5. Provide workforce development assistance to the targeted industries and business for recruitment. 6. Monitor the commercial tax base, employment, and business growth 7. Identify economic development indicators 	<p>Policy</p> <p>State data is behind 18 months and not available on a yearly basis.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor employment and Business growth 2. Group vote to keep “Identify economic indicators for”