Town of Arlington

Economic Development Authority Report Executive Summary

The Town of Arlington Economic Development Authority (EDA) has written an economic policy plan for the Town of Arlington. The plan is intended to advance dynamic and interactive discussion. It will be used to continuously assess and foster decision-making about the following in the Town of Arlington:

Development

Infrastructure

Quality of life

Mission Statement

The purpose of the EDA is to foster a sustainable economy consistent with the town’s planning objectives. The mix of industry, commerce, open space, residential development, and the arts in Arlington results in the town’s vitality and an excellent quality of life for its citizens. Maintaining this balance is important.

Guiding Principles

Six basic principles guide Arlington’s economic policy. These principles seek to safeguard the special features that give the town its character while embracing appropriate economic opportunities.

Arlington should remain a major economic center of the region.

Economic activity must respect Arlington’s natural, cultural, and historic heritage.

A pedestrian-friendly core commercial center is essential.

Sustained economic prosperity requires a balance between residential development, industrial/commercial development, and open space.

Open space in the rural district must be preserved.

Investing in the infrastructure is necessary to maintain and expand the existing tax and job base.

Issues

Of Arlington’s approximately 64,000 acres of land, 12% is zoned for business, commercial, or industrial use, and 88% for residential development. Historically the town has relied upon business and industry to provide 35%-40% of the tax base, as well as employment opportunities. Non-residential development has traditionally been the backbone of the Arlington economy. Today, however, Arlington does not have a great deal of non-residential development potential.

The population of Arlington is expected to rise dramatically over the next few decades. The following chart shows the expected change:

Years Population Growth

1990-2010 4.5%

2010-2030 53% (projected)

Source: Office of State Planning

At issue is the town’s ability to continue to support increasing public costs (most importantly, education) with a tax base shifting toward residential taxpayers. The EDA believes Arlington should remain the market center of the region and avoid becoming a bedroom community. Arlington has maintained a sense of community in part because more than 50% of working residents are able to earn a living within the town. Jobs must be continuously created to sustain the percentage of residents who live and work in Arlington.

Proposed Actions

Implement a business retention program that focuses on the growth and expansion of businesses already operating in Arlington.

Build a consortium of technical and skill development resources to assist companies with educational and training needs.

Sponsor a green business workshop.

Allocate funds for expanded downtown parking.

Develop a strategic open space plan.