



CITIZENS FOR FAUQUIER COUNTY

Post Office Box 3486 ♦ Warrenton VA 20188 ♦ www.citizensforfauquier.org

17 April 2009

Fauquier County Board of Supervisors
10 Hotel Street
Warrenton, VA 20186

Subject: CFFC Observations and Comments Regarding Increasing
the County's Revenue from Commercial Activities

In response to your letter requesting input and comments from the Citizens for Fauquier County (CFFC) in preparation for your scheduled 28 April 2009 retreat (to consider how to better foster business enterprises in Fauquier County), CFFC is pleased to submit the attached *Summary of Assumptions, Observations, and Alternatives for Consideration*; it sets forth our perspectives, and we believe some insights, on the subject topic .

You will also find below some data which has perhaps not previously been considered by County government, along with other data which likely has been considered, but perhaps not from the perspective we suggest the County adopt.

Although we are the County's leading organization devoted entirely to conserving Fauquier County, we present this Summary free of any special pleading for our core mission. We believe that you will see for your selves that the data and conclusions presented below (and likely in most other reports you have solicited) demonstrate that conserving Fauquier is entirely consistent with beneficial economic development and, in fact, that conservation and agriculture already provide the broadest base for it.

If you would like further information or clarification regarding any material in the attached summary please do not hesitate to contact either of the signatories below.

Yakir M. Lubowsky
Acting President
Citizens for Fauquier County

Chuck Medvitz
Chair
CFFC Ad Hoc Committee
On Economic Development

A Summary of Assumptions, Observations, and Alternatives for Consideration
Regarding Increasing Fauquier County's Revenue from
Commercial Enterprises
[17 April 2009]

The Citizens for Fauquier County is pleased to submit this summary of data and related interpolation for consideration by the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors as they consider strategies and actions to foster growth of business enterprises in Fauquier County. The primary references used in preparing this document are county "Community Profiles" prepared by the Virginia Employment Commission, data from the Fauquier County Commissioner of Revenue, the U. S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Fauquier County Comprehensive Plan, and the financial reports and tax rates available on referenced adjacent county web sites.

A. Assumptions

1. The objective is to identify approaches to increase County revenue from commercial activities without generating significant related residential development, with its resulting increased taxpayer-supported infrastructure and administrative costs.
2. Increased commercial activities are expected to reduce the present degree of reliance on residential real estate taxes for County revenue.
3. The most desirable business activities are those which increase County revenue without either undermining the essential nature of the County nor stressing current infrastructure/creating additional needs for government expenses and related general tax demands.
4. Workers who commute from Fauquier to N. Virginia and Washington DC will not generally accept a job in Fauquier County unless the pay and benefits are substantially comparable (less the differential commuting cost savings).
5. Certain commercial activity is not desirable. (There are aspects of some businesses which have environmental, infrastructural, and resource consumption impacts that are undesirable; e.g., demand for an extremely large volume of water consumption in an area with limited water supply, or generation of pollutants that are difficult to dispose of.)
6. As the County population continues to grow, additional large-footprint retail establishments will seek the opportunity to locate within our market area. Recognition that these enterprises carry direct and indirect costs potentially grossly disproportionate to their benefits should be considered in locating them in a manner that does not disrupt road network usability and/or pose other reasonable concerns beyond the scope of this document.

B. Observations

1. A popular conception that has achieved currency in Fauquier County during the past two years is that increased development of commercial properties and employment opportunities within Fauquier County will help hold down the Real Estate tax rate for residential home owners. On the surface, this conclusion would appear to be intuitive, but when County revenue sources and the employment and real estate tax rates for Fauquier County are compared to surrounding, more developed, counties, the underpinnings of this conception are substantially knocked out.

The major contribution to County tax revenue from commercial and industrial sources is based on property, BPOL, and bank stock taxes. Data from the Fauquier Commissioner of Revenue's office presented in Figure 1 shows that over the last eight years tax revenue from businesses peaked at 16.5% in 2001, and for 2008 contributed 13.8% of our tax revenue. During this period cumulative growth of business tax revenue is 42%. It is important to note that over 40% of this revenue is real estate taxes and over 20% is from personal property taxes. It seems reasonable to ask what kind of businesses would commit to the investments required for significant real estate development and personnel property acquisition to noticeably impact this revenue stream.

BREAK DOWN OF BUSINESS PORTION OF COUNTY PROPERTY, BPOL and BANK STOCK TAX REVENUE

Dollars in Thousands

Type Tax	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Total County Tax	68,345	74,461	82,295	84,130	88,476	103,927	114,775	125,698
Commercial & Industrial								
Real Estate	4,135	4,583	5,048	5,128	5,245	5,927	6,581	7,370
Personal Property	1,981	2,261	2,503	2,499	2,603	3,155	3,523	3,679
Machinery & Tools	430	375	397	369	557	542	598	639
BPOL	986	824	982	1,071	1,303	1,466	1,557	1,548
Bank Franchise Tax	83	78	153	164	173	206	160	97
Business Property Assessed by the State								
Corporation Commission	3,647	3,399	3,055	3,055	3,614	3,183	2,080	3,970
Total Business Revenue \$	11,262	11,520	12,138	12,286	13,494	14,479	14,498	17,303
Business % Revenue	16.48%	15.47%	14.75%	14.60%	15.25%	13.93%	12.63%	13.77%
Percent Yr Over Yr Growth		2%	5%	1%	10%	7%	0%	19%
Cumulative Growth		2%	8%	8%	18%	24%	22%	42%

Figure 1. Fauquier County Business Property, BPOL and Bank Stock Tax Revenue Grew 42% from 2001 to 2008

From reviewing the employment, real estate tax rate, and population totals in Figure 2, it is apparent that adjacent counties with higher numbers of internally employed workers have significantly larger populations and higher real estate tax rates than Fauquier County.

	Fauquier	Stafford	Prince William	Loudoun	Fairfax
Zero; no employment	12	14	51	60	244
1 to 4 employees	2,132	2,251	6,432	7,645	29,386
5 to 9 employees	2,298	2,358	7,717	8,359	31,075
10 to 19 employees	3,316	3,481	11,634	13,405	48,878
20 to 49 employees	4,986	6,091	19,952	24,284	83,523
50 to 99 employees	2,572	4,962	14,892	22,605	76,277
100 to 249 employees	2,904	3,566	15,348	23,084	98,535
250 to 499 employees	***	***	8,897	9,785	63,596
500 to 999 employees	***	***	3,114	10,619	48,075
1000 and over employees	***	11,075	15,689	14,074	108,365
Adjustment to Match Totals on VA EC Tables	3,116	1,686	0	0	0
Total Employees	21,336	35,484	103,726	133,920	587,954
2009 Real Estate Tax Rate per \$100 Value****	\$ 0.7650	\$ 0.8400	\$ 1.0322	\$ 1.2450	\$ 0.9200
Census Bureau Estimated Population 2007	66,328	120,723	360,411	278,793	1,010,241
Employment-to-Population Ratio	0.321674	0.293929	0.287799207	0.480356	0.5819938

Note: Asterisks (***) indicate non-disclosable data.

'Zero; no employment' typically represents new startup firms or sole-proprietorships.

Source: Virginia Employment Commission,

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 3rd Quarter (July, August, September) 2008

Note **** Data Accessed at County Web Sites, Rate for Prince William applicable County wide except Town of Quantico

In addition to base rate shown Loudoun and Fairfax have several Tax Districts that increase the base rate depending on real estate location

Figure 2. The Relationship of Business Employees Within a County to the Real Estate Taxes for a County

Figure 2 also shows that Fauquier has a higher employment-to-population ratio than either Stafford or Prince William County, each of which host employees who commute in from outside jurisdictions, including from Fauquier County. The high employment-to-population ratio for Loudoun and Fairfax counties is also fueled by a very significant number of in-bound commuters who live in other jurisdictions.

Based on the data displayed in Figures 1 and 2, the concept that higher numbers of employees and more commercial or industrial real property will hold down residential real estate property taxes appears questionable.

2. Per Census Bureau data, Fauquier County has historically had an unemployment rate under 3% as shown by the data in Figure 3 from the Virginia Employment Commission.



Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

Figure 3. Fauquier County Historical Unemployment Rate

In the current economic downturn, the unemployment rate in Fauquier County has grown to 5.9% as shown in Figure 4.

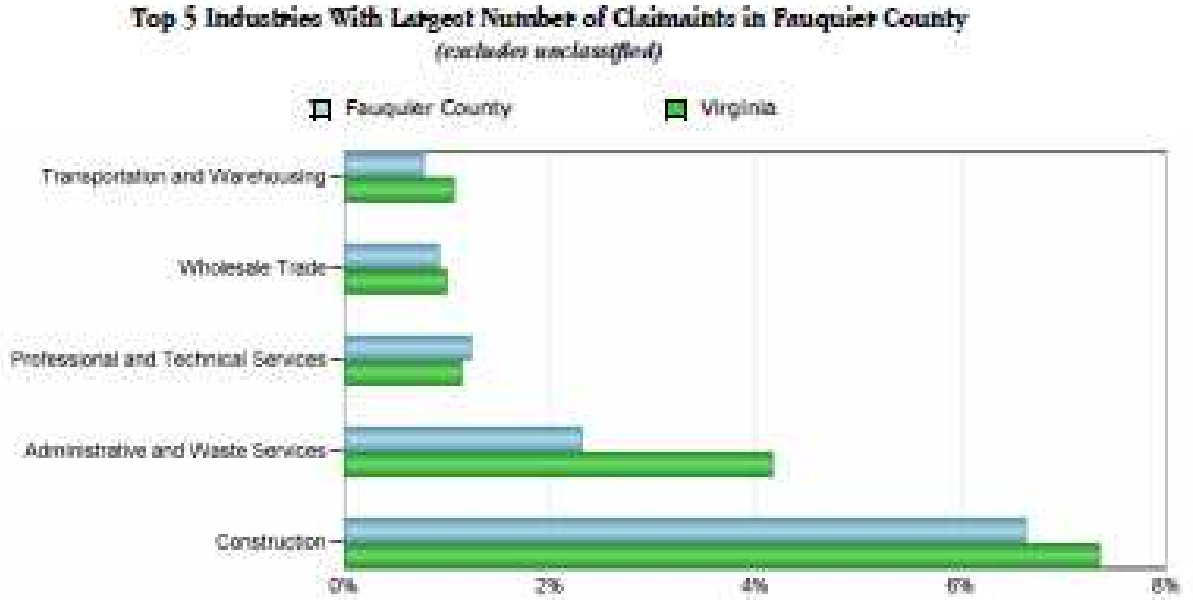
	Fauquier County	Virginia	United States
Feb. 2008	3.3%	3.8%	5.2%
Mar. 2008	3.2%	3.9%	5.2%
Apr. 2008	2.7%	3.3%	4.8%
May 2008	3.1%	3.8%	5.2%
Jun. 2008	3.6%	4.2%	5.7%
Jul. 2008	3.6%	4.5%	6.0%
Aug. 2008	3.8%	4.6%	6.1%
Sep. 2008	3.4%	4.2%	6.0%
Oct. 2008	3.5%	4.2%	6.1%
Nov. 2008	4.0%	4.6%	6.5%
Dec. 2008	4.6%	5.2%	7.1%
Jan. 2009	5.5%	6.4%	8.5%
Feb. 2009	5.9%	7.0%	8.9%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

Figure 4. Fauquier County Unemployment Rate Change Feb2008 to Feb 2009

3. Based on Virginia Employment Commission data, the largest segment of available unemployed members of the Fauquier County work force shown in Figure 5 are

Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed



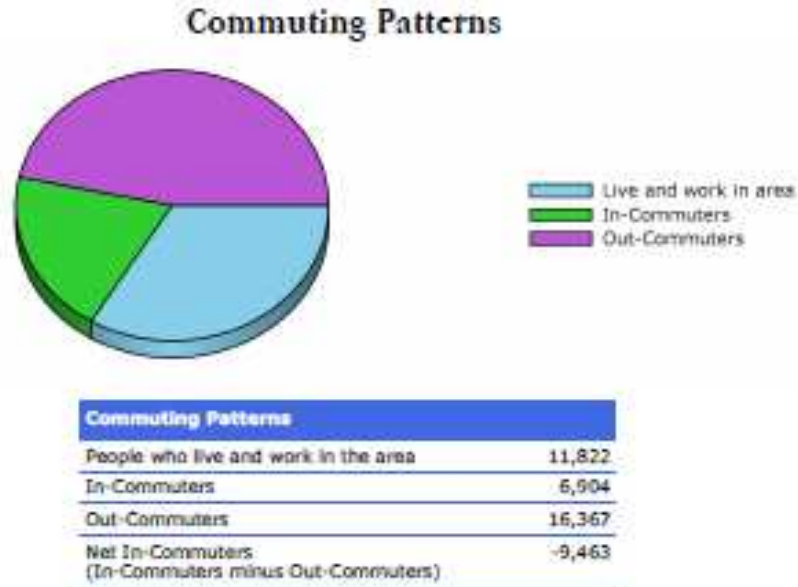
Industry	Fauquier County	Virginia
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	123
Mining	1	427
Utilities		10
Construction	43	6,644
Manufacturing	3	2,514
Wholesale Trade	6	899
Retail Trade	4	1,506
Transportation and Warehousing	5	971
Information		398
Finance and Insurance	1	367
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1	366
Professional and Technical Services	8	1,041
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2	78
Administrative and Waste Services	15	3,769
Educational Services	2	290
Health Care and Social Assistance	3	1,055
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4	349
Accommodation and Food Services	2	2,186
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	3	579
Unclassified	542	66,806

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed, March 2009.

Figure 5. Characteristics of Fauquier County's Insured Unemployed Work Force

“unclassified employees”, presumably lower skilled workers who have not established a trade or industry employment preference or history. These 542 “unclassified” individuals constitute 84% of Fauquier’s insured unemployed work force available to support new businesses.

4. According to 2000 Census Bureau data, the number of Fauquier County residents who commute out of the County numbers 16,367 shown in Figure 6, which is equal to 76% of the 21,336 individuals currently reported as employed within Fauquier County by the Virginia Employment Commission.



Source: 2000 Census.

Figure 6. Fauquier County Commuting Patterns.

5. Based on Virginia Employment Commission weekly salary comparative data, the salary differential for knowledge workers between Fauquier County and surrounding counties to our East is significant. As the data in Figure 7 shows, the Average Weekly Salary in industries such as Information and Professional and Technical Services in Fauquier County are 36% to 58% lower than salaries for these industries in Prince William, Loudoun, and Fairfax Counties.

	Fauquier	Stafford	Prince William	Loudoun	Fairfax
Manufacturing	\$ 858	\$ 744	\$ 877	\$ 1,418	\$ 1,330
Wholesale Trade	\$ 950	\$ 800	\$ 1,037	\$ 1,419	\$ 2,170
Information	\$ 813	\$ 1,053	\$ 1,272	\$ 1,896	\$ 1,841
Finance and Insurance	\$ 1,049		\$ 889	\$ 1,265	\$ 1,689
Professional and Technical Services	\$ 1,283	\$ 1,413	\$ 1,365	\$ 1,654	\$ 1,933
Management of Companies	\$ 1,182	\$ 1,001	\$ 1,814	\$ 1,488	\$ 2,080

Figure 7. Comparison of Selected Weekly Salaries of Fauquier and Neighboring Counties

Based on this disparity in salaries paid within Fauquier County and those within adjacent counties, it is probably reasonable to assume that commuters working in these industries in those counties would not trade their travel time and commuting costs to work in

Fauquier County at today's locally prevailing wages. This Virginia Employment Commission data is reinforced by anecdotal reports from Fauquier residents employed by large companies in Fairfax, who have inquired about transferring to new offices which their employer's opened in Fauquier, and been told they would need to accept at least a 20% pay cut to take a position in the local Fauquier office.

Figure 8 displays a broader comparison of Average Weekly Wage by industry. This comparison demonstrates that the industries in which Fauquier wages are comparable to adjacent counties are: Retail Trade, Administrative and Waste Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Accommodation and Food Service. **Significantly, each of these industries is highly dependent on proximate population growth for business expansion.**

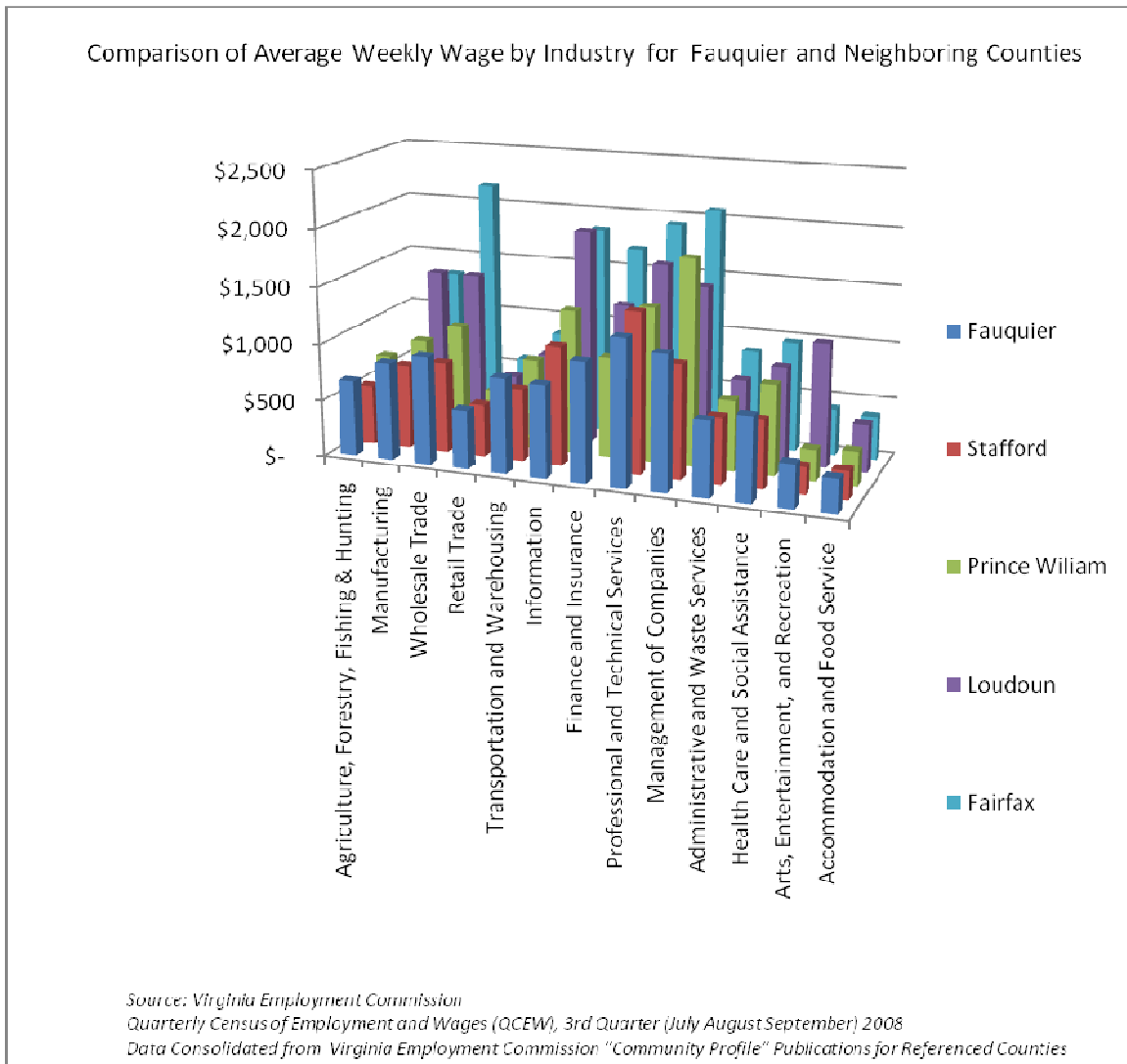


Figure 8. Comparison of Weekly Wages by Industry for Fauquier and Adjacent Counties

Another industry in which Fauquier's prevailing wages are also competitive with those in neighboring counties is Transportation and Warehousing, but due to fuel costs and

continuing increases in travel times to and from the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, this industry seems unlikely to perceive Fauquier as a favorable base of operations. The fact that prevailing wages in this industry are lower in Prince William County than wages for this industry in Fauquier County also works to Fauquier's competitive disadvantage.

6. Current sewer infrastructure and zoning in the Vint Hill and New Baltimore areas of the County readily enable construction of new business workspace. Examples are recent office building construction at Vint Hill and construction planned in the Mill Run Business Park and other areas in New Baltimore which are now seeking tenants.

7. While construction funding is very limited presently for residential construction, funds are reasonably available for commercial or mixed use construction when a viable financial case can be made for the development. Given the volume of commercial property currently on the market in Fauquier County, it is unlikely that significant new business construction will be seen in Fauquier County until higher occupancy rates for available or proposed business space occurs. Further, while the Washington Metropolitan Area has been traditionally less impacted by recession and other downward economic forces, the current crisis in the nation's economy is having a significant negative regional impact. The unemployment rate for the Greater Washington DC area is currently listed as 6.3% by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and recent reports place commercial property vacancy rates at 13.3%.

8. Fauquier County's commitment to maintaining the rural character of Fauquier is captured in Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan where the industrial and commercial zoned acreage identified amounts to slightly more than 1% of total County acreage. Given this land area allocation for commercial and industrial uses, the ability of the Fauquier business community to provide over 13% of County revenue actually speaks well for the economic efficiency of this community.

Given the County's estimated 21% population growth from 2000 to 2008 (Census Bureau numbers), drove Real Estate assessments to grow at an accelerated rate. This dictated increased Real Estate tax rates to pay for School and other infrastructure expansion, and resulted in a total County Real Estate Tax revenue increase from \$ 40,291,135 to \$ 85,368,485, an increase of 112% during this eight-year growth spurt.

During this same period the real estate tax for a typical County home in 2000 rose from \$ 1,665 to \$ 3,191 in 2008, an increase of 92%.

Fauquier's Commissioner of Revenue data indicates the value of County revenue from commercial sources rose from \$ 8,971,009 in 2000 to \$ 17,302,959 in 2008, an increase of 93% during this same time frame. So, the business community, which accounted for over 16% of County tax revenue in 2001, still accounts for over 13% of County tax revenue, despite the grossly disproportionate growth in residential housing (vis-à-vis business expansion) since 2000.

The one component of our local economy that has no apparent visibility in the County revenue stream is the acreage, personal property, and machinery and tools which are dedicated to agriculture, forestry, equine and other revenue oriented businesses which maintain "Fauquier's rural character and quality of life". While the Commissioner of Revenue can easily identify the Tax Assessed Value of properties over 20 Acres, which is over \$16 Million and accounts for 17% of the 2009 assessed real estate taxes, it is unclear how much, if any, of the properties our Commissioner of Revenue classifies as "Suburban less than 20 Acre" properties, which have a taxed assessed value of the more than \$ 56 Million, support agricultural or equine businesses.

It is unclear what revenue contribution our open space businesses make to the county, but it is very clear that each acre kept out of residential development by an open space business saves the County tax payers approximately \$ 4,800 a year (FY2008 total tax revenue of \$125 Million divided by 26,000 housing units) plus infrastructure expansion cost of approximately \$20,000 to \$28,000 per additional dwelling (based on current County Proffer Policy).

C. Alternative Policies For Consideration

1. Improve support for local start-up businesses through pro-active coordination with the Small Business Administration Development Center (SBADC) at Lord Fairfax Community College and establishing a County analysis of available business offerings and market coverage within Fauquier would assist small businesses in several ways.

Small Business Administration training, counseling, financial support, and assistance with small business government contracting programs can be a major aid in helping individuals get a new business up and running. County support of the local SBADC, and promotion of the SBA offerings they provide access to, has the potential to improve the success rate of local small businesses.

When pursuing any start-up, a critical issue is matching business offering to customers, and understanding which offerings are over served or at saturation within a specific market area. Having an analysis of existing businesses operating in the County and their offerings could be helpful to a new-start up in understanding the existing competition and market coverage for their offering during the critical first two years of operation. Such an analysis could be created through a combination of County public records and data collected from a survey of licensed businesses. This type of analysis, maintained by county resources, would not conflict with the Chamber of Commerce business directory which provides a channel for networking and cross support between businesses.

Many new businesses start in entrepreneurs' homes. In today's business environment, access to high-speed broadband Internet service is often essential. The availability of a directory of providers and rates for levels of service available in the County would provide significant information to not only start-up business but many commuters as well. It is not easy to find an Internet service provider in an area of Fauquier which is not serviced by Comcast Cable that can support the bandwidth, data rates, and minimal

latency needed to establish a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection with corporate networks. A directory of service providers who could deliver this service would also be of interest to many commuters who today cannot telecommute any day of the week due to a lack of high quality Internet access. It goes without saying that reasonable support for a responsible provider of broadband Internet service would likely pay a multiple in returns for the County's economic development.

When a business is ready to move from home to office space, or needs to arrange access to offices and meeting rooms for client interaction, a directory of available business space and services within Fauquier would be highly useful. Such a directory could also be useful to local organizations and community groups seeking to hold meetings or special events.

The basic objective of supporting small businesses from a County revenue standpoint is for these businesses to grow to the point where they occupy office space and acquire taxable property, machinery, and tools which are the primary basis for County tax revenue, without creating significant pressure for population growth.

2. Coordinate with other local government entities, such as the Vint Hill EDA to support the creation of business incubators which package many of the services or resources discussed in paragraph 1 and usually provide:

- flexible space and leases, many times at low rates
- fee-based business support services, such as telephone answering, bookkeeping, secretarial, fax and copy machine access, libraries and meeting rooms
- group rates for health, life and other insurance plans
- business and technical assistance either on site or through a community referral system
- assistance in obtaining funding
- networking with other entrepreneurs;

as well as potential access to Investors and Coaches/Counselors within a specific business area or industry.

Creating a successful incubator is not an easy task in an up market, and the current economy will make generating a successful incubator even more challenging. Undertaking an effort to create an incubator facility should only be encouraged if a facility manager were engaged who had a record of creating and operating a successful incubator.

3. Based on Virginia Employment Commission data, Fauquier has the potential to be competitive in the Accommodations and Food Service industry that supports tourism. While Fauquier officials have asserted that growth of tourism is a County objective, coordination efforts with the most significant tourism initiative in the region, The Journey Through Hallowed Ground (JTHG), appears to have been less than aggressive. A simple validation activity like reviewing the list of historical sites in Fauquier County on the

JTHG web site at <http://www.hallowedground.org> or in the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Draft Corridor Management Plan reveals an apparent lack of attention or interest in participating with this program. CFFC strongly suggests that consideration be given to establishing a pro-active relationship with the JTHG initiative at the County level. With commemorative activities for the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War fast approaching, Fauquier has an opportunity to build a more robust Accommodations and Food Service component to our economy.

4. Over the past 15 years the Federal Government has invested over \$10 Million in developing the Warrenton –Fauquier Airport into a regional reliever facility. Due to past runway, sewer, and water limitations, this facility has not provided the impetus for business growth. With the runway lengthened to 5,000 feet that is now feasible. While it is important for this facility to have proper sewer and water infrastructure to be successful, these services must be provided in a manner consistent with the standards the County requires any private commercial or residential development to meet. In anticipation of successfully providing needed sewer and water services to this facility, it would be very beneficial to begin development of a market analysis and plan for fostering development of the commercial and industrial planned and zoned property adjacent to the airport. Noting the industries which have located adjacent to or near the Manassas, Leesburg, and Culpepper airports, then exploring the relative attractiveness of having these industries located in Fauquier, would be an easy and prudent initial step in developing a targeted market plan for the airport area.

5. The existing zoning and comprehensive plans for our service districts will support the doubling of the County population at current dwelling occupancy rates, assuming a significant number of development rights are not transferred to the service districts from rural areas. As our population grows, additional retail, wholesale, and services industries, that support residential populations, will seek locations in Fauquier.

Historically the location, and even presence, of big-box stores has been a contentious issue in Fauquier. When combined with a lack of reasonable comprehensive planning for designated C-3 areas near our largest population concentrations, the current zoning ordinances for C-2 and C-3, which have very different descriptions, but no significant differentiation in the supporting use tables, create a deterrent to large retail firms who might otherwise locate in the County.

There is no questioning the fact that many local small businesses, some of which had operated for decades, have closed their doors as the result of national chains locating in the Warrenton area. The common development pattern in many locales is to place the large footprint stores on the distant periphery of existing commercial areas. The impact of this is easily observable in Manassas, where many large stores have been congregated near Interstate 66, drawing customers away from older commercial areas which have deteriorated as a result, and left many small businesses out of the primary traffic patterns of shoppers.

To support preservation of existing retail and accommodate additional business which can be expected to seek a presence in Fauquier, CFFC suggests the Supervisors consider adjusting the C-2 and C-3 zoning ordinances to reflect distinct scales of use, and that a planning effort be initiated in conjunction with the Town of Warrenton to develop a land use plan for future commercial retail and wholesale businesses which will reinforce customer traffic through existing retail centers to support existing businesses as the County's retail industry grows in a fashion that is supported by the County's transportation network and residential development pattern.

6. Continue to promote agriculture, forestry, equine and other open space businesses in the County for both revenue generation and cost avoidance, as well as to reinforce the cultural elements most central to the County's character.

Approaches to do this could include:

a. Capture and acknowledge in County revenue formats the real estate, personal property, and machinery and tools tax revenue from open-space businesses. Land Use deferment qualification or a modest BPOL tax on such business could be used as a means to identify these enterprises for the purposes of revenue identification.

b. Consider differentiating and Real Estate, Personal Property, and Machinery and Tools taxes paid which is associated with open spaces business separately from other payments based on either association with a property in land use, business license, or some other convenient means. This would enable the recognition, monitoring, and development of the health of our open-spaces businesses whose success is essential to meet the goals of the County Comprehensive Plan.

e. Investigate potential for participation in rural alternative energy research programs which are pursuing non food stock low care crops such as shrubs, grasses, and oil bean plants as energy sources. Bio mass research has shown that varieties of shrubs, grasses, and certain oil bean draught hardy plants, which are non food stock, provide a higher energy potential than any food stock based ethanol. Current jet airliner flight tests with bio fuels use bean oil and algae based fuel which is actually higher test than standard jet fuel. Another plus is that the shrubs, grasses, and certain oil bean plants do not need the cultivation, fertilizer, and irrigation which food stock sources do. Commercializing these plant sources are one of the primary areas of current research and could be the basis for future cash crops in Fauquier.

f. Support educational programs for agricultural methods which reduce operating costs and produce products with higher marketability and revenue potential.

7. Target the commuter workforce with remote work centers as has been done in Manassas and Stafford County. At the same time, approach those firms who employ a significant number of County residents who commute to office space in Northern Virginia to establish a remote work center for their employees who live in the County.

8. Consider pursuing Stimulus Funds for rural Internet broadband expansion, enabling more telecommuting, as well as development and growth of Internet-based businesses in a broader range of locations in the County, with the expectation that this would at a minimum increase local sales tax revenues. Such an initiative could revitalize some of our Villages into local business hubs for small businesses and result in increased real estate tax revenue from these locations.

9. The current popular perception of an imbalance between commercial and residential tax revenue results from an apparent misunderstanding of the economic realities. First, the less favorable ratio today, compared to the business high water point of 2001, is not so much worse as to be reasonably viewed as a substantial problem. Second, the decline has its root entirely in the excessive residential development boom, not in a decline in business. So while the basic reaction to this perception is to seek higher rates of commercial revenue growth, a better option is to begin by more accurately understanding where the disparity has come from, and seeing that it can be improved (as a ratio) equally by reducing the rate of residential growth. More business development, of the desirable types, is worthy of pursuing for many policy reasons, but to address a misperception is not one of them. Finally, it is critical to fully and accurately reflect the agriculture industry's contributions to County tax revenues so as to work from a more accurate understanding of where we stand (which is that "business" in the aggregate actually provides closer to 30% of tax revenues in Fauquier).

CFFC would be happy to participate in a strategic economic development planning effort under the auspices of the "Virginia Economic Development Partnership Act" which seeks to lay out a course and plan of action for balanced commercial, industrial, and agri-business economic development. We believe **truly "Preserving Agriculture in a Business Friendly Community"** is essential to meet the goals of Fauquier's comprehensive plan.