



**Economic  
Development**

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Introduction

Business and industry make a positive contribution to the fiscal health of a community both by creating jobs for the residents and by contributing local tax revenues that exceed the cost of providing public services to such development. These excess tax revenues can then be used to help pay for the public services required by the County's residents while helping to keep residential taxes to an acceptable level.

With the adoption of the 1991 *Comprehensive Plan*, York County recognized that in the face of uncertainty surrounding the future of Federal and State financial assistance, the County would need to be prepared to place a greater reliance on locally generated revenues. This need is compounded by a growing County population that will continue to desire excellent public services. In order to accomplish these objectives while maintaining a relatively low real estate tax rate, a comprehensive analysis was completed which determined that a real property tax assessment ratio of 30% non-residential property to 70% residential property (Public Service Corporations excluded) would provide a desirable balance at the ultimate build-out of York County. This represents an increase from the present percentage of non-residential real property tax assessment of approximately 22%.

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

### Overview

Despite occasional downturns that mirrored national trends, York County has experienced long-term economic growth during the post-World War II era. In the late 1950s, the development of the Amoco (now Giant Industries) refinery and the Dominion Virginia Power Yorktown Power Station provided the County with a strong heavy industrial base, providing approximately 400 well-paying jobs and greatly bolstering local tax revenues. The County's second recent economic expansion began in the 1970s and continued throughout the 1980s. During this time, York County experienced dramatic new motel construction and retail development. Motel construction in the upper County was largely a result of the widening of Bypass Road (Route 60) and the privately funded extension of public water and sanitary sewer service to this area. This provided York County with a viable location to attract new lodging spaces demanded by increasing visitation to the Williamsburg area. The dramatic growth in the County's retail sales resulted from both the development of several new shopping centers to serve a growing residential population and the tourist commercial development mentioned above.

The past 10-15 years have brought a second retail boom as York County's economic growth in the 1990s has surpassed that of its neighbors not just on the Peninsula but throughout the metropolitan area. Although perceived primarily as a "bedroom community," York County has attracted over \$200 million worth of commercial and industrial development in the past ten years (see **Figure 1**), creating over 5,000 new jobs and boosting taxable sales by over \$300 million. Wages have lagged, however, because most of the new jobs have been in the relatively low-paying retail trade and services sectors.

Many of the new businesses are located along Route 17, but Victory Boulevard (Route 171) has also emerged as a major commercial corridor and shopping destination not just for County residents but for people living in neighboring localities as well. In the upper County, the Route 199 corridor in the Lightfoot area has begun to attract economic development with the completion of Route 199 between I-64 and Richmond Road, the completion of the Mooretown Road extension, and the pending relocation of the Sentara Williamsburg Community Hospital. In addition, development of the Bypass Road (Route 60) corridor has continued with the construction of several new businesses oriented primarily toward the tourist market.

## Commercial/Industrial Building Permit Value

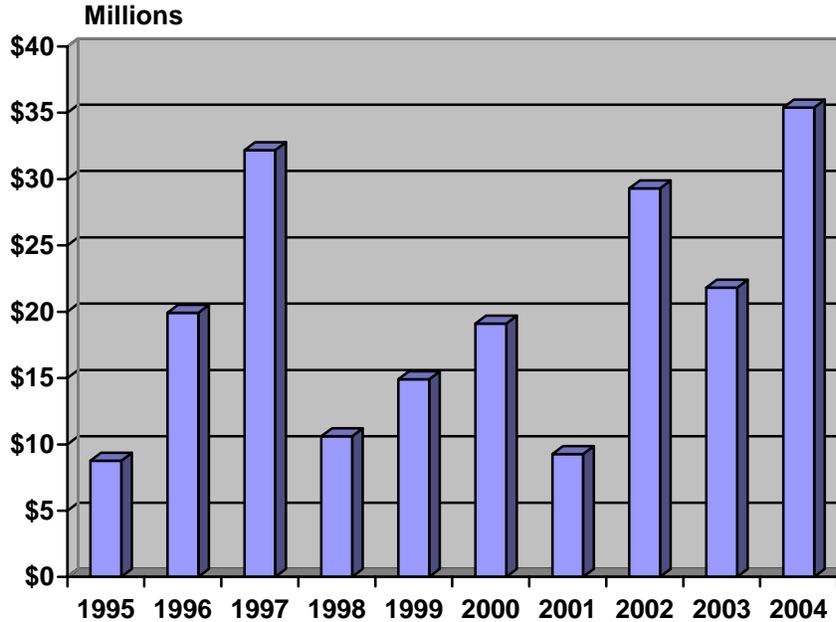


Figure 1

### Employment

As shown in **Table 1**, York County has out-paced its neighbors in employment growth in recent years. With a 42% increase in jobs, York County led the Peninsula in the rate of job growth between 1994 and 2004. During this period the County's share of the Peninsula employment base grew from 6.7% to 8.5%.

<b>AVERAGE AT-PLACE EMPLOYMENT, 1994-2004 (For Quarter ending June 30)</b>				
JURISDICTION	1994	2004	Change, 1994-2004	
			Jobs	Percent
Hampton	57,036	56,710	-326	-0.6%
James City County	15,711	20,276	4,565	29.1%
Newport News	83,748	95,845	12,097	14.4%
Poquoson	1,325	1,873	548	41.4%
Williamsburg	14,350	16,274	1,924	13.4%
<b>YORK COUNTY</b>	<b>12,421</b>	<b>17,638</b>	<b>5,217</b>	<b>42.0%</b>
<b>PENINSULA</b>	<b>184,591</b>	<b>208,616</b>	<b>24,025</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
<b>NORFOLK MSA</b>	<b>586,907</b>	<b>696,491</b>	<b>109,584</b>	<b>18.7%</b>
<b>VIRGINIA</b>	<b>2,861,676</b>	<b>3,412,311</b>	<b>550,635</b>	<b>19.2%</b>
Source: Virginia Employment Commission, <i>Covered Employment and Wages in Virginia by 2-Digit SIC Industry</i> (published quarterly)				

Table 1

The services sector is York County's largest employment sector with a 36% share, followed by government with 23%, retail trade with 17%, and construction with 12.1%. In comparison with surrounding localities, York County has more of its employment in services, construction, and retail trade. The services sector is not just the largest sector; it is also the fastest growing.

Between 1994 and 2004, the number of service jobs increased 89.5% (3,035 new jobs). The retail trade and construction sector also experienced significant growth, adding 1,074 and 629 jobs respectively, while manufacturing and agricultural employment declined. For decades York County's employment base was dominated by the Federal government, primarily the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station. Although the government sector – Federal, State, and local – still occupies a significant position in the jobs base, it has been surpassed by the services sector, as the County has evolved from a public sector-based economy to one that is increasingly reliant on the private sector. In 1980 the public sector accounted for more than half of the County's employment base; by 1990 it accounted for about a third, and as of 2004 it had dropped to less than a quarter (23.1%). Between 1994 and 2004, public sector employment in the County grew by 9% while private sector employment grew by 56%. This is important because increased reliance on the private economy reduces the County's vulnerability to the vicissitudes of Federal policies outside the County's influence.

The large role of the government, retail, and tourism sectors in York County's economy is reflected in the list of major employers in the County, three of the top four of which are public sector employees (the Naval Weapons Station, the School Division, and the County government). Of the top seven private sector employees, three represent the tourism industry (Water Country USA, Fairfield Resorts timeshares, and Kings Creek Plantation timeshares) and three are "big box" retailers (Wal-Mart, Kmart, and Lowes). Giant Industries is the only industrial employer of the County's top ten.

### Wages

As shown in **Table 2**, wages in York County are low in comparison with those offered in surrounding jurisdictions and are below average in comparison with the metropolitan area and the state. The relatively low average wage reflects the high percentage of service and retail sector jobs in the County's employment base, and wages in the County have fallen further behind as these relatively low-paying sectors have grown at a rapid pace. As the proportion of relatively low-paying retail trade and services sector jobs has grown and that of well-paying Federal jobs has declined, York County

<b>AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE, 1994-2004 (For Quarter ending March 31)</b>				
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Change, 1994-2004</b>	
			<b>Dollars</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Hampton	\$445	\$659	\$214	48.1%
James City County	\$400	\$558	\$158	39.5%
Newport News	\$458	\$652	\$194	42.4%
Poquoson	\$309	\$453	\$144	46.6%
Williamsburg	\$367	\$538	\$171	46.6%
<b>YORK COUNTY</b>	<b>\$413</b>	<b>\$536</b>	<b>\$123</b>	<b>29.8%</b>
<b>NORFOLK MSA</b>	<b>\$424</b>	<b>\$626</b>	<b>\$202</b>	<b>47.6%</b>
<b>VIRGINIA</b>	<b>\$490</b>	<b>\$772</b>	<b>\$282</b>	<b>57.6%</b>
Source: Virginia Employment Commission, <i>Covered Employment and Wages in Virginia by 2-Digit SIC Industry</i> (published quarterly)				

**Table 2**

has lagged behind most of its neighbors in both wages and wage growth. The average weekly wage in the County increased by 29.8% between 1994 and 2004, while the metropolitan area and the state, by comparison, experienced wage increases of 47.6% and 57.6% respectively. When adjusted for inflation, the average weekly wage in York County actually fell by 7.8% while the average for the metropolitan area declined 1.4% and the statewide average increased 1.5%. On the Peninsula, where wages are below the average for the metropolitan area and well below the state average, only James City County experienced weaker wage growth than did York County.

### Retail Sales

The most significant economic trend in the County in recent years is the tremendous growth in retail sales, which is illustrated in **Figure 2**. Taxable retail sales in York County more than doubled from \$325 million in 1994 to \$683 million in 2004 – an increase of 110% in ten years (see **Table 3**). York County's percentage increase in retail sales during this period far exceeded those of

neighboring localities as well as the metropolitan area and the State. As a result, York County's share of Peninsula retail sales increased from 10.8% in 1994 to 14.1% in 2004. In per capita retail sales, York County ranks third on the Peninsula behind Williamsburg and James City County.

**York County Taxable Sales, 1990-2004**

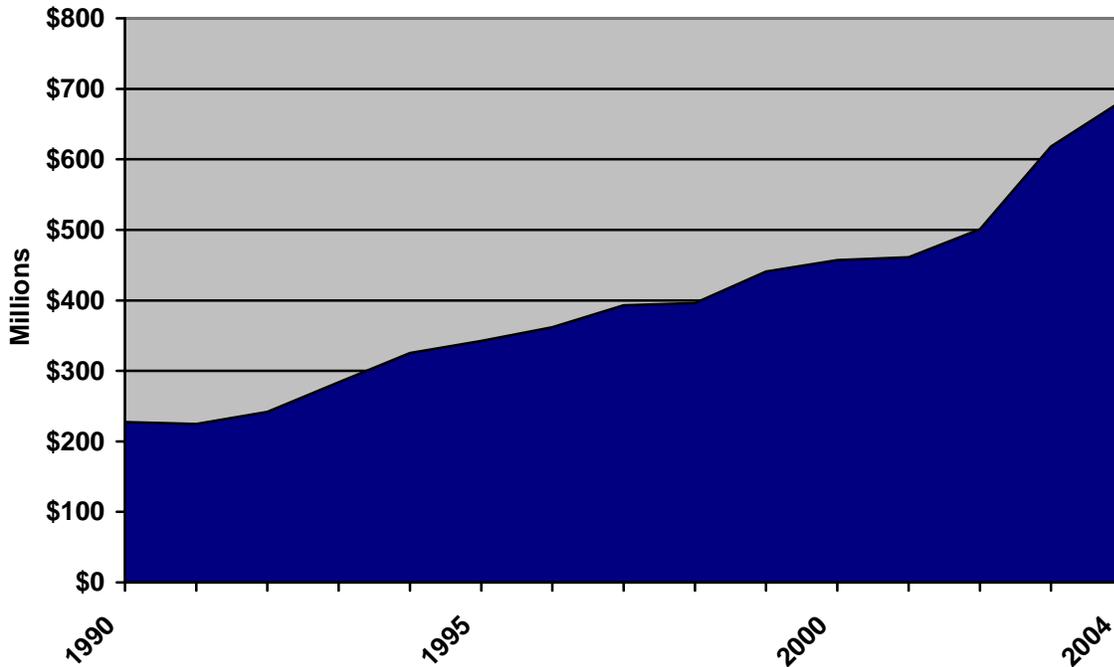


Figure 2

TAXABLE RETAIL SALES, 1994-2004 (Millions)				
JURISDICTION	1994	2004	Change, 1994-2004	
			Millions	Percent
Hampton	\$1,010.1	\$1,179.7	\$169.6	16.8%
James City County	\$406.5	\$677.8	\$271.3	66.7%
Newport News	\$1,047.1	\$1,897.1	\$850.0	81.2%
Poquoson	\$24.5	\$39.0	\$14.5	59.2%
Williamsburg	\$324.8	\$354.1	\$29.3	9.0%
YORK COUNTY	\$325.3	\$683.1	\$357.8	110.0%
PENINSULA	\$3,138.3	\$4,830.8	\$1,692.5	53.9%
VIRGINIA	\$49,728.1	\$81,291.1	\$31,563.0	63.5%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, *Covered Employment and Wages in Virginia by 2-Digit SIC Industry* (published quarterly)

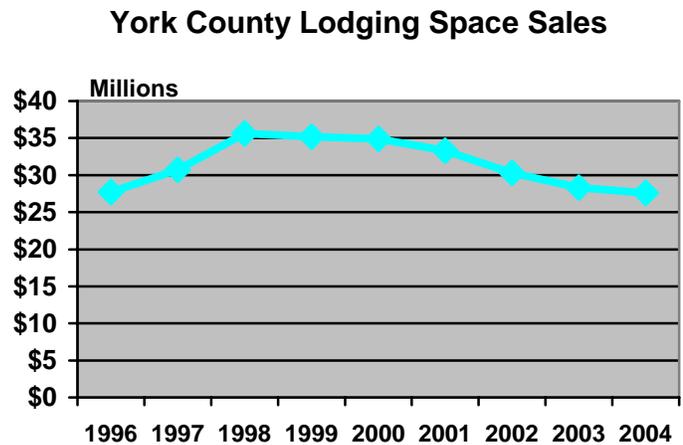
Table 3

**Tourism**

Tourism plays a large role in York County's economy. In 2004 over 3.3 million people visited the Colonial National Historical Park, which includes the Yorktown Battlefield and the historic Jamestown settlement. Visitation at the park has been very stable over the past ten years, increasing by only seven-tenths of one percent between 1995 and 2004.

There are approximately 2,700 hotel and motel rooms in the County, the vast majority of them (86%) in the upper County and particularly along Bypass Road, which is a major gateway into the Williamsburg area and offers over a thousand rooms. The Kiln Creek area is also emerging as a major motel cluster in both York County and Newport News. Yorktown, despite its historical significance, has not attracted significant motel development; there is a single motel in the village and 3 motels along Route 17 within a 3.5-mile radius. One reason for this is that most of the land in the village and in the surrounding area is owned by the National Park Service and thus not open for private development. A second reason is that visitors to Yorktown tend to be “day trippers” staying in the Williamsburg area while making side trips to Jamestown and Yorktown.

Hotel, motel, and tourist camp sales in the County have been on the decline since 1998. Motel occupancy rates in the Williamsburg market have followed the overall downward trend of tourism in Williamsburg (see **Figure 3**). The average annual occupancy rate in the Williamsburg area was approximately 49.1% in 2004, down from 51.9% the previous year, while hotel/motel occupancy averaged 62.1% statewide and 61.3% nationally. The Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News metro area mirrored state and national trends with an average occupancy rate of 60.2% in 2004. Williamsburg lags behind the rest of the region, where average occupancy rates range from a low of 59.7% in Virginia Beach to a high of 73.1% in the Chesapeake-Portsmouth market. The average annual rate in the Newport News-Hampton market was 64.7% in 2004.



**Figure 3**

Not reflected in these lodging statistics are the many timeshare units that have been built in the County. Five timeshare resorts have been built or are under construction in the County, and a sixth was approved in 2005. Together these resorts encompass over a thousand units (including so-called “lock-out units”), with over 2,000 additional units yet to be built. The importance of the timeshare industry as a growing segment of the County’s economy is reflected in the fact that two timeshare resorts are among the County’s top ten employers and top ten real estate taxpayers.

**Tax Revenue**

Business growth, particularly in the retail sector, has had a strong impact on the County’s tax base. Total tax revenues generated by commercial and industrial development increased dramatically in the past 10 years, increasing the commercial/industrial share of tax revenue from about 45% in FY94 to an estimated 52% in FY05. The growth in tax revenue generated by non-residential sources is especially significant since it occurred at a time when the County experienced over \$600 million worth of residential development – almost three times the amount of commercial development that occurred during the same period.

**CITIZEN INPUT**

One of the main recurring themes stressed by the citizens throughout the *Comprehensive Plan* review process was the importance of redeveloping existing commercial sites. York County’s citizens strongly support efforts to attract new businesses to existing vacant commercial buildings. According to the telephone survey, over half of County residents (52.7%) consider it extremely important for the County to encourage new businesses to move into empty commercial properties.

With an average score of 4.31 on a scale of 1 to 5, this goal ranked fourth in the overall ranking of County goals. Similarly, almost half of the citizens (49.5%) feel it is extremely important for the County to purchase and tear down vacant, blighted business properties along major roads to improve the area's appearance. This goal was ranked seventh overall, with an average score of 4.09 on a scale of 1 to 5. This concern for the appearance of commercial development is further reflected in the strong citizen support for ensuring that all new businesses have attractive landscaping, which was ranked sixth overall with an average score of 4.10. In addition, requiring new businesses or those being renovated along major roads to meet certain architectural design standards to make sure they are visually attractive was ranked ninth overall, with an average score of 3.95.

The telephone survey asked how important it is for the County to encourage economic development of different types, including restaurants, retail stores, tourist-oriented businesses, offices, light industry, and heavy industry (see **Figure 4**). Of these, restaurants are the most popular, supported by a slim plurality (34.7%) of citizens, giving it an average score just above neutral on a scale of 1 to 5 (3.02). The remaining uses received relatively low marks, with average scores below 3. Not surprisingly, heavy industry, which is commonly associated with noise, dust, odor, and heavy truck traffic, scored the lowest; almost half the citizens believe it is not important to encourage more heavy industry in the County. The citizens do support efforts to create better-paying jobs for County residents. Over a third of the citizens consider this an extremely important goal, and it received an average score of 3.75 on a scale of 1 to 5. Support is particularly strong in the upper County, where over half the residents (54.3%) consider this an extremely important goal, with an average score of 4.22. Creating good jobs, ranked twelfth countywide, was the fifth ranked goal in the upper County. Another survey question asked if the County should work to attract businesses that will pay a lot in taxes to the County – thereby keeping residential property taxes from increasing – even if it may cause more traffic on the roads. Most of the citizens (53.2%) do not support such efforts, although here again is a pronounced difference of opinion between upper and lower County residents. Slightly over 60% of upper County citizens feel the County *should* work to attract such businesses while almost as large a majority of lower County residents (56.6%) feel the County *should not* work to attract such businesses.

### Telephone Survey Results

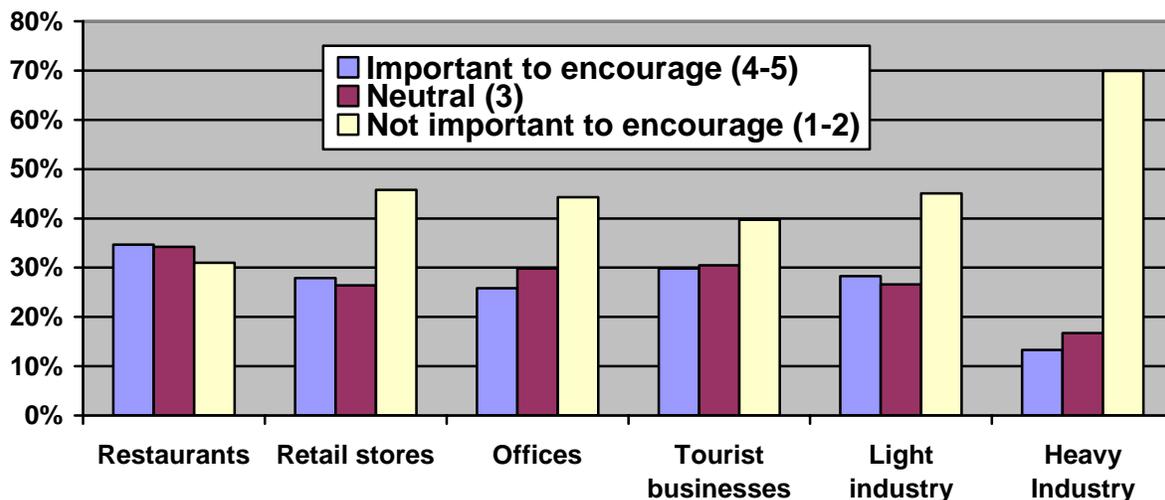


Figure 4

### PLANNING ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

The 1991 *Comprehensive Plan* designated certain “Economic Development Priority Areas” in the County and identified a need for public investments in infrastructure – primarily water and sewer but also transportation improvements – to support future economic development in these

locations. Implementing the recommendations of that plan, the County and the Economic Development Authority (formerly Industrial Development Authority) worked to extend public water and sewer to the Lightfoot area, secured regional funding – as well as contributing some local funding – for the extension of Mooretown Road and Fort Eustis Boulevard, and constructed a 60,000-square foot industrial shell building in the York River Commerce Park. These investments paid dividends, spurring economic growth that generated sufficient revenue to fund County services that accommodated high population growth without increasing the tax burden on County residents. Real estate taxes have risen as a result of new construction and rising property values, but the real property tax rate remained stable from FY1995 through FY2003 and was reduced in FY2004.

Largely as a result of these investments, York County's economic base has been growing steadily for the past 10-15 years, and this growth will need to continue in order to counteract the negative fiscal impact of residential growth, which is projected to add over 14,000 residents in the next two decades. It is important, therefore, to build on the success of previous years and continue to participate financially in providing the infrastructure needed to attract high-quality business development. This entails not just attracting new businesses but also retaining existing businesses and helping them grow. With a well-educated labor force, a highly regarded school system, a low real estate tax rate, and a pleasant living environment, York County offers many attributes that make it an attractive business location. The County must capitalize on these assets while working to enhance economic development and redevelopment opportunities through various strategies and at key existing and potential business locations, as described below:

- The 390-acre area along the east side of Interstate 64 between the Colonial Parkway and Penniman Road is an area where extension of sewer and water is needed. The property, which consists of just three parcels, including 140 acres now being marketed as the Busch Commerce Center and the 250-acre Egger Tract, lies along the rolling wooded frontage of Interstate 64, just east of Williamsburg and is well suited for a Class A park. With 1.3 miles of interstate frontage, the property has excellent visibility and could be developed in a campus fashion for light manufacturing, research and development, data centers, regional and back room offices, or sales and distribution centers for major corporations looking for a high quality business location.
- Route 17 is the County's primary commercial corridor; however, there are gaps in the availability of water and sewer in two important locations. One of these is the northern intersection with Grafton Drive, where the construction of Grafton Middle/High School nearby have created a major community activity center and, in conjunction with several new residential developments in the immediate area, seems to be creating renewed interest in the Grafton commercial area – an area that once was “downtown” York County. With an assortment of residential and non-residential land uses in a relatively compact area, the eclectic development character of this area creates the potential for mixed-use development, and it is identified in the *Route 17 Corridor Plan* as a potential “village activity center.” It is underdeveloped and centrally located and could be redeveloped with a semblance of a “main street” on Grafton Drive.

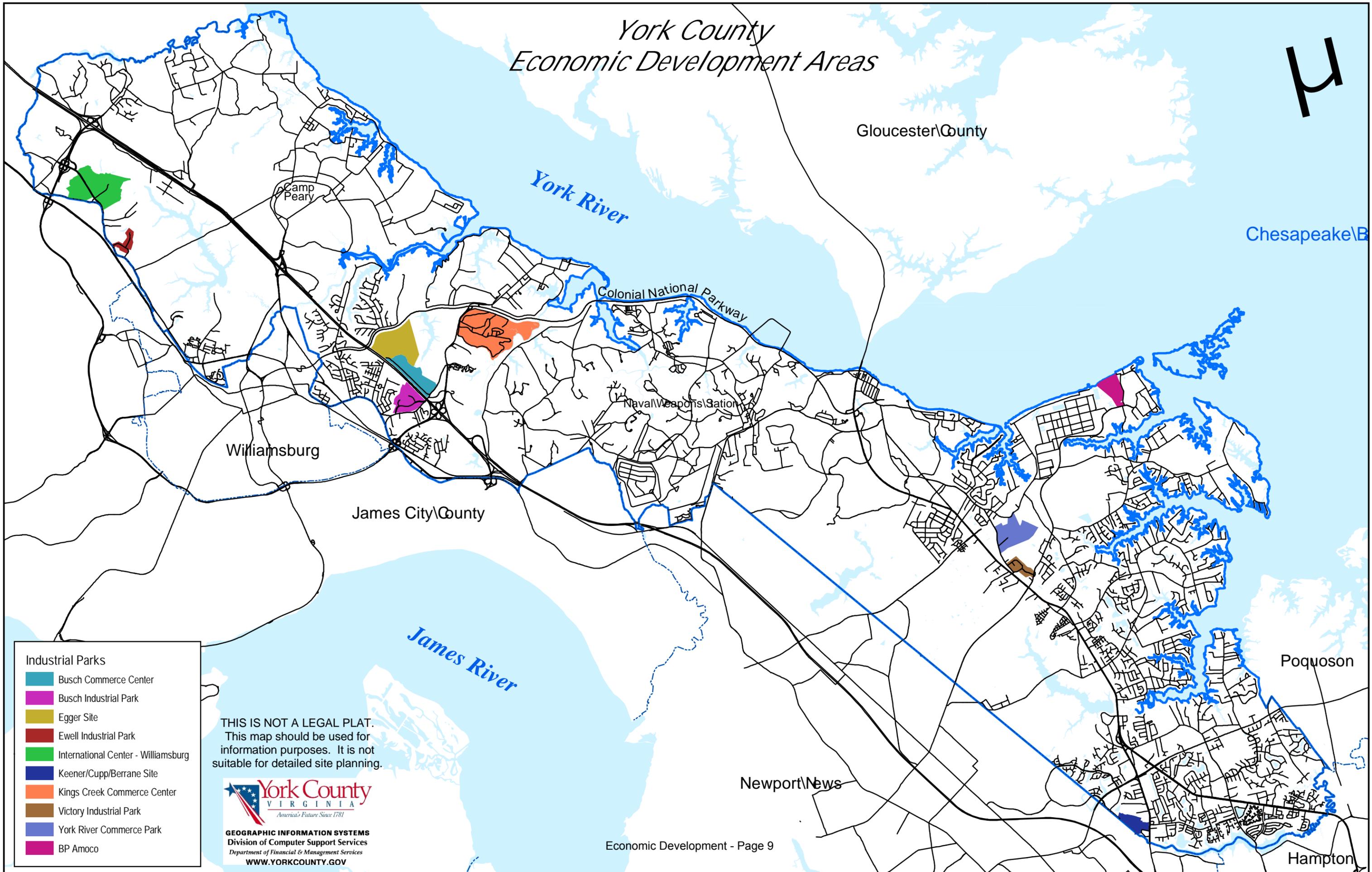
The other section of Route 17 in need of public utilities is near the intersection with Coventry Boulevard, where a large (over 80 acres) assemblage of vacant parcels known generally as the “Keener-Cupp-Berrane” property is poised to attract large-scale, high-quality economic development or mixed-use development with a significant office/light industrial/retail component. The property, which extends from Route 17 west to Commonwealth Drive and the Kiln Creek commercial area, offers proximity to two I-64 interchanges and the Newport News/Williamsburg Airport and the various amenities within the Kiln Creek area (in both York County and Newport News), such as motels, restaurants, shopping, and day care.

- Federal and state requirements for stormwater management ponds can have a significant impact on the cost of developing commercial and industrial sites. A cooperative approach of joint “regional” ponds (i.e., ponds serving multiple properties in the same drainage basin) is more efficient and cost-effective than for each development to develop and maintain its own pond. Construction of these ponds in targeted commercial development areas should be funded through the *Strategic Capital Plan for Water, Wastewater and Stormwater*, with private sector users of the ponds paying their pro rata share of the development and maintenance costs.
- Along established commercial corridors, public investment is often necessary to spur redevelopment of older, unattractive – and often vacant – sites that do not conform to current zoning standards and create a blighting influence. In 2004 the County initiated a Route 17 revitalization program aimed at improving the appearance and preserving the economic vitality of the Route 17 corridor through a combination of tax incentives, grant programs, and subsidies to encourage property owners to make improvements. The Route 17 Revitalization Program, initiated in 2004, is already starting to yield positive results. This program should serve as a model for revitalization efforts along other commercial corridors, such as Merrimac Trail and Second Street. Although the revitalization program does not currently provide for County purchase of blighted commercial properties for the purpose of redevelopment, input from the citizens suggests that this is another strategy that the County should pursue.
- Businesses need accessibility, and in a vehicle-oriented economy, immediate proximity to the Interstate highway system is essential. The extension of Fort Eustis Boulevard eastward from its present terminus at Route 17 to Old York-Hampton Highway, scheduled to be under construction in 2005-06, will improve interstate access to 182 acres of undeveloped industrial land in the Goodwin Neck area and hence the marketability of this land for economic development. Further extension of this road all the way to the intersection of Goodwin Neck Road and Seaford Road, as originally planned, will have the dual benefit of providing direct interstate access both for industrial uses within the park and for residents of Seaford. It is likely that the County will need to secure regional funding for the second segment of this project as it did for the first segment. The extension also would require a new crossing of the CSX rail line, so it is vital that the County work with CSX Transportation, as well as VDOT, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Planning Organization, to overcome this and other obstacles, both environmental and financial.
- With regard to air transportation, the Peninsula is at a competitive disadvantage with other areas and regions. Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport, located in Newport News with runways extending into York County, serves the Peninsula with fewer direct flights than either Norfolk International or Richmond International, both of which are about an hour away from most areas of the County. Newport News/Williamsburg Airport has major runway expansion plans (which are discussed in detail in the Transportation element of this plan), which, if implemented, could greatly improve air service to the Peninsula and spur economic activity in the County, especially in areas close to the airport such as the above-mentioned Keener-Cupp-Berrane property.

In devising strategies for attracting economic development, it is necessary to target those types of businesses that will return the greatest benefits to the County in terms of tax revenue, jobs, the environment, and the quality of life. Different types of economic development have different advantages and disadvantages based on their varying fiscal, employment, and environmental impacts, which are summarized below:

- **Retail:** Generally speaking, commercial retail development generates more tax revenue per acre than either office or industrial development and has a low environmental impact, although the need for extensive automobile parking greatly increases stormwater runoff,

# York County Economic Development Areas



- Industrial Parks**
- Busch Commerce Center
  - Busch Industrial Park
  - Egger Site
  - Ewell Industrial Park
  - International Center - Williamsburg
  - Keener/Cupp/Berrane Site
  - Kings Creek Commerce Center
  - Victory Industrial Park
  - York River Commerce Park
  - BP Amoco

THIS IS NOT A LEGAL PLAT.  
This map should be used for  
information purposes. It is not  
suitable for detailed site planning.

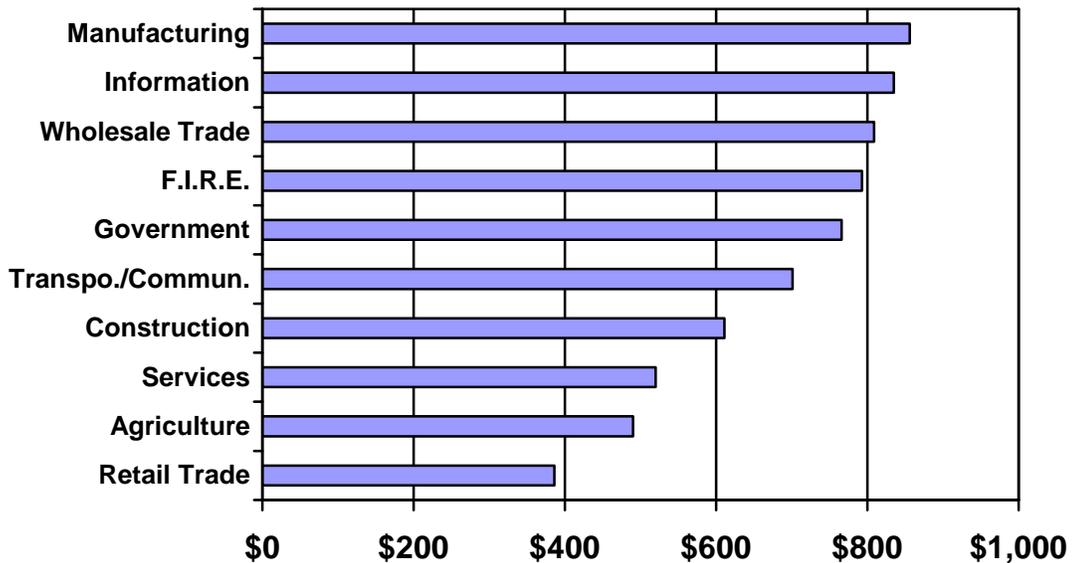


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which can increase the pollutants entering stormwater outfalls and possibly exacerbate stormwater management problems. Retail development generates more traffic than any other type of development and has a moderate effect on job creation, but the jobs offer an average weekly wage of less than \$400 in Hampton Roads and are the lowest-paying jobs of any sector of the economy (see **Figure 5**).

- **Office:** Office development is similar to retail in its environmental impact while generating less traffic and less tax revenue. The employment impacts of office development are highly variable depending on the type of use, with medical and dental offices, office parks, business parks, and research and development centers generating higher numbers of jobs per acre than either industrial or retail development. Office development is also generally associated with better-paying job, such as those found in the information and FIRE (finance, insurance, and real estate) sectors.
- **Industrial:** Gross tax revenues generated by industrial development are lower than for office or for retail, and the employment impacts are comparable. Industrial wages, however, are typically well above average, especially in the manufacturing sector. Traffic generation is also lower, but there can be considerably more truck traffic. General or *heavy* industry is, of course, most often identified with air and water pollution, although EPA standards have lessened these impacts.

### Average Weekly Wage in Hampton Roads by Job Sector, 2004



**Figure 5**

The County has already been very successful in attracting retail development in recent years, particularly in the Lightfoot and Tabb areas. Indeed the County's recent economic boom was primarily a retail boom. The County's retail corridors are fairly well established: Route 17, Victory Boulevard, Merrimac Trail, Bypass Road, Mooretown Road/East Rochembeau Drive, Pocahontas Trail, and Richmond Road... It should also be noted that retail development will be guided by demand, which, with the exception of tourist-related retail, is largely a function of residential and traffic growth.

The County's industrial base is also well established with the longstanding presence of the Dominion Virginia Power plant and the Giant Industries refinery on the Goodwin Neck General Industrial corridor. Opportunities for industrial expansion exist in the surrounding area, mainly in the York River Commerce Park, which is a 182-acre campus-style park planned to accommodate high-tech manufacturers and related enterprises. The park, which is home to Travaini Pumps USA and Ryson International, is located on Old York-Hampton Highway and offers quick access to Interstate 64 (which will be improved by the extension of Fort Eustis Boulevard discussed earlier), Route 17, and the Port of Hampton Roads. Rail access is also available via the CSX spur line. Other industrial parks in the County include Bethel, Ewell, Victory and Busch Industrial Parks, of which only the last has significant vacant land to support additional development. Busch Industrial Park on Penniman Road is a 104-acre, general-purpose park with almost a half-mile of frontage on Interstate 64 and a range of lot sizes that can accommodate most modern business needs, including light industrial, assembly, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and research or sales centers. Roads, sewer, and public water lines are in place, and gas, electricity and other utilities are available in quantity.

Office development is fairly scattered throughout the County, although Michael Commons in the International Center Business Park on Mooretown Road is emerging as a major office node in recent years, triggered in part by the relocation of the Sentara Williamsburg Community Hospital to a new York County site directly across Mooretown Road. This area has become an ideal location for doctors and medical support offices, and the hospital complex itself will eventually include over 400,000 square feet of medical office space. In general, however, the County is lacking in Class A offices and office parks, which are going to be the job centers of the future.

In order to avoid excessive reliance on a single sector of the economy – especially a highly volatile and unpredictable sector such as retail – a balanced approach should be taken with regard to land use and real estate development. A focus on attracting office and light industrial development will create well-paying job opportunities for the County's highly qualified labor force and college graduates. Creating good jobs in the County will make it easier for people to both live *and* work in the County, which, in the long run, will help to relieve traffic congestion. In this regard, the mixed-use development concept – with office, retail, light industrial, and residential uses in a single development (Port Warwick in the City of Newport News, for example) – is an important tool that has great potential in the County. The physical and functional integration of homes and businesses within a single compact, comprehensively planned development creates opportunities for people to live, work, and recreate without ever leaving their neighborhoods or even getting into their cars. York County offers several locations that have potential for some type of mixed-use development, and the County should encourage such development in appropriate locations.

The desire to attract new businesses that provide good jobs must be tempered with the recognition that the County is limited by macroeconomic forces that are beyond its influence. Clearly, the competition for high-wage light manufacturing businesses in Virginia will be keen. Moreover, in today's global marketplace, York County must realize that competition for economic development is not just local or even statewide: rather, it is national and worldwide. It is not enough for a locality to work to enhance its relative attractiveness for economic development within the region. York County must also work with neighboring jurisdictions to enhance and promote the entire Hampton Roads region.

With over 14,000 new residents projected in the next twenty years, York County must continue to pursue a favorable mix of residential and non-residential development. The main economic development challenge facing the County in the years and decades ahead is to pursue a balanced tax and employment base by offering prime locational opportunities to office, light industrial, and mixed-use development that provides the desired quality of jobs and development. York County is ideally situated to attract high-quality, environmentally sensitive economic development if the County is prepared to address the needs of the marketplace through public investment in infrastructure and appropriate land-use designations in key economic priority areas.

# **GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

## **Goal**

Build a healthy and diverse economic base that provides well-paying jobs and generates sufficient revenue to pay for the service needs of both businesses and the citizenry without degrading the County's natural resources or the overall quality of life.

## **Objectives**

1. Continue to expand York County's commercial and industrial tax base.
2. Enhance the long-term visual attractiveness of the County's major commercial corridors.
3. Expand job opportunities for York County residents.
4. Increase visitation to York County.
5. Promote York County as an attractive location for economic development.
6. Encourage mixed-use development in appropriate areas.
7. Encourage creativity in the design of economic development projects.

## **Implementation Strategies**

1. Participate with the private sector in the development of two or more business/industrial parks in the County, with primary emphasis on improving vehicular access and assisting in the cost of public sewer and water and stormwater management facilities in economic development areas.
2. Assist existing businesses with sewer and water extensions that will facilitate their retention and/or expansion.
3. Promote the adaptive re-use of existing vacant, blighted commercial properties in key, highly visible locations by purchasing selected properties, demolishing existing structures, improving the sites, and preparing them for redevelopment by the private sector.
4. Continue the Route 17 revitalization effort and extend it to other commercial corridors, including Bypass Road, Merrimac Trail, and Second Street.
5. Exploit, upgrade, and extend existing rail linkages in York County to promote industrial and warehousing uses.
6. Continue to require landscaping and, to the extent practical, the preservation of existing trees and vegetation in all new economic development and redevelopment.
7. Continue the Yorktown revitalization effort with an emphasis on public improvements to the historic village of Yorktown and other historic sites in the County.
8. Participate in the development of events and facilities designed both to bring visitors into the area during the shoulder seasons or off-season and to encourage visitors to remain longer.
9. Upgrade the County's Economic Development web site for marketing purposes.

10. Support the development of state-of-the-art telecommunications facilities in appropriate locations in the County.
11. Actively work with regional entities and local colleges and universities to develop and promote regional strategies and plans that will benefit the economic well being of York County, the Virginia Peninsula, and Hampton Roads.
12. Foster mutual communication and cooperation among the County government, the EDA, and the business community.
13. Continue to replenish the Economic Development Authority's Capital Fund for economic development.
14. Provide opportunities for the mixing and integration of different types of uses – both business and residential – within a single development under a coherent overall master plan.
15. Amend the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to remove barriers to mixed-use development that allows the integration of different types of housing units with each other and with businesses within a single pedestrian-oriented development under a coherent overall master plan.

