

## Economic Development

Businesses are fundamentally important to the well being of the Village. The Village “Main Street” is valuable to the community, not only for economic reasons, but also as a focal point that helps define the character of the Village. The decline of many downtown/central business districts in many communities has negatively impacted residents, property values, tax base and cultural opportunities.

At the community S.W.O.T. analysis workshops, members of the residential and business community said that the loss of businesses, jobs and vacant buildings on Main Street is a major threat to the future of the Village. It is crucial for the Village to provide new jobs for the younger population, so that those who go elsewhere to seek higher education will return to live in the Village. Encouraging youth to be more involved in community events will help the young form a bond with their hometown. The identification of an Empire Zone will help with the effort to attract new businesses.

In addition, participants of the S.W.O.T. analysis workshops stressed the importance of marketing downtown’s unique characteristics to shoppers, investors, new businesses, tourists and others. It is important to maintain and enhance the Village Business District by encouraging a new mix of businesses, which will increase revenue and keep taxes down. The following Goals and Recommendations address these issues:

**Goal 1: Develop a business friendly environment to assist current and future business enterprises.**

**Recommendations/Actions:**

1. Create an Economic Development Committee to promote and market business opportunities within the Village.
2. Conduct a vacant land and commercial building inventory to identify developable properties.
3. Identify or create recruitment or business assistance programs.
4. Design a Village of Granville web site for the promotion of existing and forthcoming economic development programs to attract and retain village businesses.
5. Support and reward current businesses that improve the aesthetic appearance of the community.
6. Develop a Village mentoring program, or "Adopt-a-Student" program to educate students and younger residents about the types of business opportunities available in the community.
7. Establish a "Buy Granville First" initiative by creating a directory of local services and products.

**Goal 2: Promote Main Street as the vibrant heart of the Village of Granville.**

**Recommendations/Actions:**

1. Draw residents to Main Street on evenings and weekends by encouraging business owners to stay open past 5:00.
2. Encourage business raffles and or special activities on Main Street.
3. Attract additional government and public services downtown.
4. Maintain the downtown area's residential atmosphere by rehabilitating dilapidated housing units and developing new housing opportunities.
5. Develop one or more public gathering places along Main Street.
6. Plan and implement a parking strategy that supports the Village character and links to the Village sidewalk system.
7. Initiate a business development or assistance program aimed at sustaining employment opportunities along Main Street.
8. Improve the overall aesthetics of Main Street by addressing issues such as vacant buildings, unscreened dumpsters, dilapidated building facades, and cluttered sidewalks.
9. Develop sign and architectural design guidelines to encourage continuity and aesthetic design along Main Street.
10. Maintain current buildings and historic character of existing Main Street.

**Goal 3: Continue to focus attention on sustaining the economic vitality of the Village.**

**Recommendations/Actions:**

1. Work with the Chamber of Commerce, Washington County Local Development Corporation, Washington County Empire Zone Board, the Washington County Tourism Agency, and the Washington County Planning Department to attract and retain employment opportunities within the Village.
2. Amend the Village Zoning Ordinance to reduce the number of home occupations.
3. Develop a micro-enterprise revolving loan program to assist small business owners along Main Street.
4. Support local businesses in accessing Empire Zone benefits to create and/or retain current jobs.
5. Market the unique characteristics of the Village's Main Street shopping experience and promote the existing factory outlets as a tourist/commercial destination.
6. Promote the Village's Main Street together with the Pember Museum, Library, and Slate Valley Museum.

**Goal 4: Provide a wide range of strategies and programs aimed at increasing employment opportunities and expanding the tax base within the community.**

**Recommendations/Actions:**

1. Create a Commercial Development Grant/Loan Program, which may include but is not limited to: a 50/50 grant/loan façade improvement program and/or a micro-enterprise loan pool.
2. Create a program that gives incentives to businesses to locate in existing vacant buildings.
3. Team with the Washington County Local Development Corporation to provide encouragement, tools, and training to help local businesses become more profitable.
4. Create a Business-To-Business peer group to assist each other in assessing local business problems and operating methods – Items that can be reviewed include marketing, product presentation, item pricing, etc.
5. Develop a Market Analysis to determine the business mix in the trade area, and to assess consumer-spending patterns.
6. Develop an effective business recruitment package that provides information on the social, economic, governmental, and physical conditions of the commercial areas.
7. Develop informational material that establishes and markets a theme within the business community.

8. Utilize a new Village web site to promote the programs available to businesses within the Village.