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# FINAL REPORT Monroe County Economic Development Implementation Plan

Monroe County, Pennsylvania

**Prepared For:**  
**County of Monroe, PA**

**Final Report**  
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**Prepared By:**



**Vantage Point Development Advisors**  
**111 Annapolis Street**  
**Annapolis, MD 21401**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The objective of the *Monroe County Economic Development Implementation Plan* is to prepare a series of recommendations and implementation actions that help define a cohesive County economic development policy for the support of existing businesses, attraction of new businesses and to increase economic activity for the County. The report provides a series of recommendations that will be implemented over a number of years.

The Economic Development Implementation Plan (EDIP) is intended to broaden the approach and clarify the path to successful economic development activities in the region by addressing several specific areas where changes in existing practices could be improved to facilitate economic development. The Plan does not establish a grand vision for economic development, but seeks to provide a series of steps to identify strategies and provide an implementation program to organize economic development activity and serve as a road map for specific catalytic actions.

The EDIP is only a component chapter of a greater effort in comprehensive planning for the County and thus needs to be read and implemented in the context of land use planning, infrastructure planning, smart growth, ag/farmland conservation and other county goals and objectives. The county also has an updated Economic Development Policy that was developed as a component of Monroe 2020 and lays out principles and economic development needs of the County. That document was reviewed as a part of the development of this Economic Development Implementation Plan. The following guiding principles were cited in the economic development policy:

1. *Diversity will be a key to success.*
2. *Multiple institutions carry the economic development message and play important roles in promoting Monroe County. Their respective policies merit coordination.*
3. *The County's setting in relation to the New York-New Jersey Metropolitan Region is a crucial element in its economic development history and potential.*
4. *An educated and professionally trained workforce is essential for filling positions in increasingly technical fields, and in attracting businesses that require such capably trained employees.*

The overall use of this Implementation plan is as a guide to streamline economic development activities within the county and amongst the key players in the county, PMEDC, PMVB, Conservation District and others. While this strategic implementation plan has specific recommendations, actions items and lead entities, the overarching

intention of the EDIP is to engage the entire economic development community going forward for continued coordinated and streamlined economic development policy and programming.

### **Short-term/High Priority Recommendations**

The short-term recommendations will have the most immediate and catalytic effect on cooperative economic development in Monroe County. Nearly all of the recommendations below are important tools to be used as the foundation for mid-term and long-term recommendations and serve to broaden the county's competitiveness in the economic development arena. These recommendations help to elevate the importance of economic development, begin to forge longer term relationships and partnerships, and consider strengthening business retention and expansion efforts. Short-term recommendations also encourage the municipalities and the County to review the existing regulatory environment and customer service practices in the context of improving the business climate in the County.

- **Re-focus on Existing Industry Base.** The majority of growth in the local economy, especially during a downturn in the economy, comes from the retention and expansion of the existing industry base. Because these companies are already in the community and have invested in both personnel and facilities, they are more likely to stay and grow if properly supported. A comprehensive and coordinated Business Retention and Expansion program (BRE) should be supported and augmented under the PMEDC with support from Monroe County and County municipalities.
- **Optimize and Articulate the Development Approval and Permitting Process.** Whether in reality or in perception, the development process is often viewed as the culprit for lack of business attraction and even business retention. This task would seek to address both the real issues and those perceived to position Monroe County as a "business friendly" community.
- **Institute a Business Liaison.** Create a position of Business Liaison within the County to assist existing and attraction companies in the development approval process. This contact person would be the front line contact and act as an objective agent of the client company in navigating the development approval process.
- **Continue to support and promote an inventory of buildings and sites and a database to track them.** It is critical for both business attraction and business retention that a comprehensive database of available properties and sites be maintained. Because of their vested interest in the database, the commercial brokerage community and related developers should provide regular updates to the database to ensure its accuracy. The PMEDC should continue to maintain and improve the existing database.

- **Develop Competitive Incentives.** To attract new companies to the County it will be important to have competitive locational incentives to the surrounding communities (Luzerne and Lackawanna counties, etc.) as well as fully understanding the incentives offered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as compared to adjacent states, New Jersey in particular.
- **Consistency in Zoning/Regulations.** Tied closely with reviewing the development approval process is insuring there is consistency in the zoning code, regulations and their application across the County in the various municipalities. It may be difficult for brokers/developers and companies not familiar with the zoning codes in the County to understand the differences in the codes, especially where a project might cross multiple municipalities.
- **Predevelopment Coordination Meetings with designation of lead agencies.** Predevelopment coordination meetings should be recommended for all projects, and in these meetings the full development team should be expected to attend. If a project seeks to qualify for the Fast Track development process, this predevelopment meeting should be mandatory.
- **Assess County infrastructure capacity and begin to plan for potential expansion.** In order to plan for future business and economic growth it is important to assess the support infrastructure, identify where it is run now and where it needs to be run, and to plan accordingly. Failure to plan for future infrastructure needs will lead to sprawled development, increased overall infrastructure costs and longer term planning conflicts.
- **Continue to Support and Enhance Workforce Development in the County.** There is a constant need to coordinate the needs of the existing workforce, especially those seeking employment, with the existing industry base to provide the training needed for employment within the County. This collaboration is a marriage of the WIB and BRE programs. The WIB provides the information and understanding of the types of training and sources currently available and the BRE gathers firsthand the workforce and training needs of the existing businesses so a logical coordination and collaboration exists. This coordination involves the school districts, Monroe Career and Technical Institute (MCTI), Northampton Community College (NCC), East Stroudsburg University (ESU), the Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) efforts. The county's education and workforce infrastructure can provide a "knowledge first" model that will address the workforce and training needs of existing businesses and attract new businesses to the region.
  - **Develop and Enhance Adult Education/Remedial Learning Programs.** Changing workforce needs and succession planning will require more adult learners to be retrained. Enhancing the collaboration among the WIB, MCTI, ESU and NCC will ensure that adult education and training needs are met. Additionally, ESU's degree completion program and the Business Education Partnership of Monroe County (school districts, MCTI, NCC and ESU) are further enhancing the opportunities for adult education and the interaction between business and educational systems in

the county. Adult education programs should focus on serving workers who are either returning to the labor force or who are looking for gainful employment after being laid off or otherwise being unemployed. This population has different needs and skills than the entry level vocational workforce described in the next point and customized strategies to meet their needs should be developed.

- **Focus on vocational/technical training Workforce – entry level.** In addition to a focus on the adult workforce, particular importance needs to be placed on reaching the young workforce in high school, MCTI, NCC and ESU. Relationships between existing industry and education need to be formed and cultivated to ensure that the existing industry base has a consistent flow of trained employees going forward. To that end, businesses can offer internships and externships through both NCC and ESU, provide adjunct faculty, and access to specialized equipment for training, etc. The expansion of Northampton Community College in the county and ESU's degree completion program will also provide expanded educational and training opportunities in both traditional and online formats.
- **Develop a program to enhance “Awareness” of career opportunities.** Hand in glove with the previous recommendation area, it is important to reach out to job seekers, HS and tech school graduates to present the employment opportunities in the County. This is particularly important with high schoolers as they make the decision for work, tech school or college. Coordinating workforce needs and career opportunities as described above is an important component of the awareness effort and can be coordinated through the high school guidance offices, in collaboration with career service efforts at MCTI, NCC and ESU.

### **Mid-term/Medium Priority Recommendations**

The mid-term recommendations generally focus on relationship tools where economic development initiatives could strengthen economic prosperity in the County by redeveloping underutilized areas, improving inter-agency communication, improving educational opportunities relating to economic development tools, marketing and other promotion activities. These goals will take longer because of the complexity of public/private partnerships needed to make these efforts successful.

- **Facilitation with State and Federal Agencies (PennDOT, DEP, Army Corps of Engineers, etc).** An issue consistent across Pennsylvania communities as well as the rest of the nation perhaps is coordination and communication with state and federal agencies, particularly transportation and environment. It will be important to open lines of communication and to keep the state agencies in the loop early on upcoming projects and issues. These key stakeholders should also be invited to Monroe County to attend economic development seminars, the annual economic development meeting and other events to keep them in the loop. If they are unable to attend the events, meeting minutes and summaries should be sent as a courtesy.

- **Increased collaboration between County and municipal departments/entities.** To facilitate longer term economic planning and consistency regarding the development approval process there should be enhanced communication and collaboration between the County and the municipal leadership.
  
- **Participate in and support education and training seminars covering economic development issues.** Often a significant impediment to economic development is a lack of understanding of the available tools, purpose of the initiatives, overall purpose of economic development and other issues. Quarterly seminars would address economic development issues and concerns of the business and development community, including, but not limited to: development approval process, how to secure seed/start-up funding, how to write a business plan, assistance with management issues (mentorship), marketing 101, how to expand your business globally, etc. The entrepreneurial programs and economic development initiatives underway at NCC, ESU, and the Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation (PMEDC) can provide content for these seminars.
  - **Annual Economic Development Symposium.** At least annually the County, municipalities and key stakeholders should meet to discuss economic development over the past year, reevaluate the County's economic development goals, discuss this economic development implementation plan and other issues. This should be thought of as a working session and should chart the course of the County for the next year.
  
- **Coordinate and leverage marketing resources to more comprehensively present the County and Pocono Region to the outside.** There are multiple agencies/entities that are actively marketing components of the County/region. These include, but may not be limited to: County, PMEDC, Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau (PMVB), Greater Pocono Chamber of Commerce, NCC and ESU. There should be coordination among the entities to fully leverage everyone's resources and ensure consistency of message. While the marketing focus may seem different, people attracted to the Poconos for skiing may very well also be interested now, or down the road, in relocating or expanding a business for which the County could compete or pursuing higher education opportunities.
  - **Develop a community calendar to coordinate/promote activities.** This recommendation would build off the efforts currently underway by the Chamber but would include initiatives and actions being carried out by other entities in the community. A coordinated and comprehensive approach will clearly show both visitors and prospects the commitment of the entire region to quality of life and supporting the business community. A localized PR Campaign about the community's vision and brand should also be considered.

- **Strategy to deal with grayfield and vacant space.** This strategy will become more easily addressed after the commercial property and sites database has been updated. In addition to the database, a specific strategy to assess these properties, identify deficiencies and plan for their remediation should be undertaken. The County should play an advisory role but where the property is in private hands it should be the onus of the property owner to carry out and rehab or remediation.

### **Long-term Recommendation: FastTrack Development Approval Process**

This last category includes those recommendations that are important but for which efforts and actions outside of the County will be required for success. This recommendation will have statewide implications because enacting it will require changes to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and thus must be addressed at the state level. An effort such as this will take significant time and commitment of County/Municipal leadership and staff to pursue. However, enacting a FastTrack process will set Monroe County apart from, and above, competitive counties both inside Pennsylvania and the rest of the eastern seaboard and nation overall. In an economy where timing is everything, a FastTrack process will be critical.

**Overview.** There should be a separate development approval process within the County that follows the basic process and adheres to current zoning and development regulations yet guarantees a 60-day turnaround time. The County would concurrently review different development criteria to shorten the overall process. The developer/submitter would also commit to quick responses, would bring the key team members to meetings as requested by the County and would commit to the process. If statutorily permissible, the County should charge a FastTrack fee to ensure the commitment of the developer.

### **Comprehensive Approach to Planning, Community & Economic Development**

There are many facets to a comprehensive approach to planning, community development and economic development and no one implementation plan or strategy can cover them all. While this Implementation Plan is focused on specific actions and strategies that can be implemented quickly and will have the most catalytic effect on economic development in the county, there should be linkages with the county's open space program to marry the economic needs of the county with the open space needs/goals. With that said, there are other economic-development related uses that are important to consider and to plan for going forward but are not included in detail in the recommendations. These including the following:

- Analyzing the importance of and supporting agriculture within the county
- Strategies to enhance tourism & passive/active recreation in the county
- Assess and discuss development costs, particularly School Property Tax Reform
- Assess and discuss solutions for large-scale school district debt reduction
- Assess and support the issue of community health and the health care industry



**INTRODUCTION: OVERVIEW OF REPORT GOALS**

The objective of the *Monroe County Economic Development Implementation Plan* is to prepare a series of recommendations and implementation actions that help define a cohesive County economic development policy for the support of existing businesses, attraction of new businesses and to increase economic activity for the County. The report provides a series of recommendations that will be implemented over a number of years.

The Economic Development Implementation Plan is intended to broaden the approach and clarify the path to successful economic development activities in the region by addressing several specific areas where changes in existing practices could be improved to facilitate economic development. The Plan does not establish a grand vision for economic development, but seeks to provide a series of steps to identify strategies and provide an implementation program to organize economic development activity and serve as a road map for specific catalytic actions.

**SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

From our initial observations, document review and key stakeholder interviews, Vantage Point has identified 22 recommendations for inclusion in the Monroe County Economic Development Implementation Plan. Each recommendation will follow the same format and will identify the following:

- Overall purpose and approach
- Lead entity, roles and cost/staff time
- Support entity(ies), roles and cost/time
- Time/schedule
- Important Success Measures/Metrics

Our recommendation is that these recommendations be divided into short-term, mid-term, and long-term priority based on the definitions provided below:

Short-term recommendations either have significant or immediate impacts or serve as the foundation for implementation of mid-term or long-term recommendations. Short-term recommendations could generally be accomplished in one-to-three years in conjunction with cooperation from others and within the limits of existing

Monroe County and support agency resources. The short-term recommendations have been prioritized and addressed accordingly in the text below.

Mid-term recommendations have positive benefits, but do not have the immediacy of short term recommendations. These recommendations would require significant support from other entities to implement, require a higher level of time commitment and may require expertise not currently provided by internal staff. Mid-term and Long-term Recommendations are not in priority order.

Long-term recommendations would result in long term positive benefits in the County, however, they require substantial commitment from others to implement.

### **Short-term/High Priority Recommendations**

The short-term recommendations will have the most immediate and catalytic effect on cooperative economic development in Monroe County. Nearly all of the recommendations below are important tools to be used as the foundation for mid-term and long-term goals and serve to broaden the county's competitiveness in the economic development arena. These goals help to elevate the importance of economic development, begin to forge longer term relationships and partnerships, and consider strengthening business retention and expansion efforts. Short-term goals also encourage the municipalities and the County to review the existing regulatory environment and customer service practices in the context of improving the business climate in the County.

- Re-focus on Existing Industry Base.
- Optimize and Articulate the Development Approval and Permitting Process.
  - Institute a Business Liaison.
- Continue to support and promote an inventory of buildings and sites and a database to track them.
- Develop Competitive Incentives.
- Consistency in Zoning/Regulations.
- Predevelopment Coordination Meetings with designation of lead agencies.
- Assess County infrastructure capacity and begin to plan for potential expansion.
- Continue to Support and Enhance Workforce Development in the County.
  - Develop and Enhance Adult Education/Remedial Learning Programs.
  - Focus on vocational/technical training Workforce – entry level.
  - Develop a program to enhance “Awareness” of career opportunities.

**Mid-term/Medium Priority Recommendations**

The mid-term recommendations generally focus on relationship tools where economic development initiatives could strengthen economic prosperity in the County by redeveloping underutilized areas, improving inter-agency communication, improving educational opportunities relating to economic development tools, marketing and other promotion activities. These goals will take longer because of the complexity of public/private partnerships needed to make these efforts successful.

- Facilitation with State and Federal Agencies (PennDOT, DEP, Army Corps of Engineers, etc).
- Increased collaboration between County and municipal departments/entities.
- Participate in and support education and training seminars covering economic development issues.
  - Annual Economic Development Symposium.
- Coordinate and leverage marketing resources to more comprehensively present the County and Pocono Region to the outside.
- Need for a community calendar to coordinate/promote activities.
- Strategy to deal with grayfield and vacant space.

**Long-term Recommendation: FastTrack Development Approval Process**

This last category includes those recommendations that are important but for which efforts and actions outside of the County will be required for success. This recommendation will have statewide implications because enacting it may require changes to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). An effort such as this will take significant time and commitment of County/Municipal leadership and staff to pursue. However, enacting a FastTrack process will set Monroe County apart from, and above, competitive counties both inside Pennsylvania and the rest of the eastern seaboard and nation overall. In an economy where timing is everything, a FastTrack process will be critical.

**Implementation Phasing**

The final report recommends a three Phase Implementation of the Recommendations as described below based on discussions with the client work group. After each phase of implementation the County, Municipalities and other key stakeholders should reassess the priority of the recommendations, their timing and strategy for implementation. An economic development plan is a living document that must be reviewed and revisited often as market and economic changes occur.

- **Short term** - Initiate and carry out the Short-term Recommendations
  - Monitor and benchmark the effectiveness/success along the way
- **Mid Term** - Hold a “Decision Point” session to review the results of the Short-term and plan for the implementation of the Mid-term Recommendations
  - Re-rank (if necessary) the Mid-term Recommendations
  - Initiate and carry out the Mid-term Recommendations
- **Long Term** - Hold a “Decision Point” session to review the results of the Short and Mid-term and plan for the implementation of the Long-term Recommendations
  - Re-rank (if necessary) the Long-term Recommendations
  - Initiate and carry out the Long-term Recommendations

**RE-FOCUS ON EXISTING INDUSTRY BASE**

The majority of growth in the local economy, especially during a downturn in the economy, comes from the retention and expansion of the existing industry base. Because these companies are already in the community and have invested in both personnel and facilities, they are more likely to stay and grow if properly supported. A comprehensive and coordinated Business Retention and Expansion program (BRE) should continue to be supported by the County and municipalities in a program operated by the Pocono Mountain Economic Development Corporation (PMEDC). It is the recommendation of this report that the current efforts of the PMEDC be augmented and supported by the Monroe County Planning Commission to increase the companies contracted through the BRE efforts and shorten the response time to client company concerns.

**A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

***Purpose, Need and Benefit.*** Especially in tough economic times, retaining and growing existing businesses will be extremely important to the economic health of the County. Coordinating and consolidating comprehensive business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts will benefit Monroe County by having an understanding of the local business and industry base in the region, identifying those businesses and industries that are either at risk or expanding, assessing their needs, and seeking to assist them in order to keep them in the community or expand as needed.

***Approach Overview.*** The approach to this recommendation is to develop an understanding of those businesses and industries that are either at risk, or expanding, understanding their needs and attempting to assist them in order to retain or expand them in the County.

***Optimum Outcome.*** The optimum outcome of this recommendation would be a common understanding of the local business and industry base in the region and considering a program to assist, to retain or expand local businesses. Understanding the needs of business in a holistic way will allow for better and more coordinated long-term economic development planning.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

***Lead Role.*** Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation (PMEDC)

**Activities of the Lead Entity**

- **Start-up Steps.** PMDEC should meet with the County, municipal managers and other key stakeholders to assess current BRE program activity and discuss any changes, assistance or coordination that would make the program stronger and more effective. Initial and ongoing communication should also occur with the Pennsylvania Business, Retention and Expansion Program (BREP).
- **Ongoing Operations.** Conduct routine BRE visits with Monroe County companies, seeking to reach all companies at least every three years. Some companies may not wish to have a formal interview/site visit but should still receive an emailed survey form check on their status. All firms that are not visited in a given year should receive the “check-in” email.
- **Monitoring/Tracking:** Annually, if not quarterly, the program should be reviewed to make sure enough companies are being visited, their concerns registered and addressed, and that the program is working effectively. For those companies that have requested assistance, a case manager or liaison should be assigned to them right away to guide them through the process. Follow through to ensure existing companies stay in the County is critical. Companies that have been successfully assisted should be encouraged to reach out to other Monroe County companies to let them know of the value of participation in the BRE program.

**Estimated Time/Cost.** As this is an ongoing function of the PMEDC time and cost is already in their budget. Additional staff time required for coordination and other assistance from the County and municipalities will be assessed in this recommendation, but is not thought to be significant.

**C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

**Support Roles.** County Planning Commission

**Activities of the Support Entities.** The County would play an important role in the BRE program in terms of sharing information and issues they have gathered regarding companies in the County. Both the County and the local municipalities will be involved in continued outreach and participation in the program either in terms of joining the PMEDC on BRE visits where appropriate, identifying BRE target companies or in assisting with discovered company issues.

**D. What is the likely timeline?** The current BRE program would continue.

- E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Funding and staffing is already budgeted in with the PMEDC.
- F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** Supporting the BRE program within the County is a primary goal
- G. Are there preconditions to success?** Working with the PMEDC and County municipalities to ensure full coordination and cooperation.
- H. Measures of Success:** The Measures of Success below are suggested metrics but are not specifically defined. Specific measures will depend on the status of the current efforts, goals and objectives and other factors.
- Visitation of all major companies in a three-year period
  - Reduction of response time to key issues
  - Expansion of local businesses and the locally-generated employment base

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**OPTIMIZE AND ARTICULATE THE DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL AND PERMITTING PROCESS****A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** During the interview process a number of key stakeholders indicated that the overall development process in the County was difficult to understand, difficult to navigate and sometimes applied arbitrarily. This included both the planning/rezoning process and the construction permitting process. The benefit to the County of improving the development approval process is to better encourage and support business expansion and attraction. It is important to qualify up front what this recommendation is not suggesting. This plan is not suggesting or recommending that zoning, development criteria, permitting rules or other laws/ordinances/standards be changed or consolidated, only that processes be reviewed and refined for better efficiency and understanding. Also, developers are often looking for a fast track development process that adheres to the existing rules, but is carried out much more quickly to accommodate projects with an accelerated timeline. Criteria to assess the types of projects that may be considered under this recommendation should be developed. For example, businesses that create family-sustaining jobs and employ local residents may be appropriate for consideration.

**Approach Overview.** The overall approach is to review the current development approval process, hold focus groups and stakeholder interviews, especially with those that have been through the process, to identify areas where the current development approval process is causing confusion or unnecessary delays. Best practice development processes from similar communities could be identified and compared to the practices in the municipalities. Recommendations should be made for each municipality to improve their overall development approval process while not changing any zoning, codes or ordinances.

**Optimum Outcome.** The desired outcome is a summary of best practices regarding the development approval process to be more efficient for both municipality and the applicant, is more understandable, efficient and develops a process that is intended to create a better environment for attracting and expanding businesses in the County.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** The County, Monroe County Conservation District and municipalities.



**Activities of the Lead Entity**

- **Start-up Steps.** County staff should sit down with the key stakeholders in each of the municipalities to discuss the process, their development approval process and where they think improvements can be made. Subsequent in-depth interviews with each municipality will then be held to fully understand their development approval process. Interviews with the business, brokerage and development community will identify specific and actual issues and concerns with the various development processes. Best practice development approval processes will be identified and compared to those in use in Monroe County. Overall principles should be identified and targeted recommendations for each municipality presented.
- **Ongoing Operations.** Implementation of the recommendations.
- **Monitoring/Tracking.** This recommendation is expected to take at least 24 to 36 months to complete. Follow-up should be conducted after the recommendations are implemented with a similar group of key stakeholders, and those that have been through the revised processes to assess their effectiveness.

**Estimated Cost/Staff Time.** Existing County staff, assistance from municipal planning staff and the development and consulting community would be utilized to complete this recommendation. This process can be relatively time consuming and dependent upon discussions and issues that have not yet occurred or come to light. Typically a Working Group would meet several times a month for an hour or two each meeting in addition to time spent with their own municipal leadership and staff.

**C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

**Support Role.** Municipalities, Development Community

**Activities of the Support Entities.** Active participation by the municipalities and the development community to identify and review regulatory practices that may be barriers to development at the municipal level and identify best practices for individual municipalities to consider.

- D. What is the likely timeline?** This process should be initiated in the short term, and could take several years to be completed, depending upon the number of municipalities involved and the extent of the changes. The initial step in this recommendation should be to determine what processes are barriers to economic development and the extent to which removal of those barriers would facilitate the development review process.

- E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Existing resources at the County and assistance from municipal planning staff and the development and consulting community will be used for this recommendation. Estimated time requirements are provided above.
- F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** High. This is an important recommendation and will lead to more efficient development processes. The first step in the process should be completed to determine what future changes to the process are necessary.
- G. Are there preconditions to success?** Preconditions to success for this recommendation include a willingness by municipalities to prepare development review processes that identify and eliminate regulatory barriers to success. Likewise the development community must be prepared to come to the table prepared with complete plans that can reviewed and permitted with fewer review cycles.
- H. Measures of Success**
- Meetings held with County/Municipal stakeholders
  - Identification of key issues
  - Passage of new policies/procedures
  - Recognition from the business community of an improved process

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**IMPLEMENT TOOLS TO FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL AND PERMITTING PROCESS**

Whether in reality or in perception, the development process is often viewed as the culprit for lack of business attraction and even business retention. The first component of this recommendation (2a above) seeks to clarify the understanding of the development process. This recommendation builds upon that understanding and articulation by instituting tools to facilitate the development process. While two separate recommendations, they work hand-in-glove with the Business Liaison facilitating the FastTrack process. Each recommendation is described briefly in the paragraph below and then described in detail comparable to the other recommendations in this report.

- **Institute a Business Liaison.** Create a position of Business Liaison within the County to assist existing and attraction companies in the development approval process. This contact person would be the front line contact and act as an objective agent of the client company in navigating the development approval process.
- **Predevelopment Coordination Meetings with Designation of Lead Agencies.** An important component of facilitating the development approval process is requiring Project Predevelopment Coordination meetings. Project Predevelopment Coordination Meetings provide an initial important discussion of the overall project concept, key attributes of the projects, potential issues and constraints and expectations of all parties going forward. The full development team should be expected to attend including the property owners and not representatives on their behalf.

**Institute a Business Liaison at the County to Facilitate the Development Process****A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** There is concern among many of the key stakeholders in the County, including businesses, government and education, and shared by the Consultant, that companies interested in locating or expanding in Monroe County don't have a single point of contact within the County to provide clarity and productivity to the development process or to help guide the prospect to appropriate individuals for assistance. It is a concern that prospects have been passed along from entity to entity throughout the County in an attempt to locate the particular municipality or entity that can assist them, sometimes passing hands multiple times. This recommendation can also result in a more efficient process of assisting and tracking prospect companies interested in the County and bring a higher level of accountability to the process by having a single point of contact.

**Approach Overview.** A single point of contact should be created to work directly with State agencies, including the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Monroe County departments, municipalities, PMEDC, Conservation District, Chamber and PMVB to receive, disseminate, and track business development leads.

**Optimum Outcome.** A single point of contact is responsible for assisting the company/prospect and will facilitate a more cohesive approach that brings more accountability and better results to the process.

## B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities

**Lead Role.** The single point of contact at the PMEDC would be responsible for assuring potential prospects are referred to the appropriate entity and to track that effort.

**Activities of the Lead Entity.** In this case, the activities of the lead entity will be split between three main functions: 1) Start-up activities, 2) carrying out the activities of the single point of contact and 3) providing monitoring and transparency to the County and County municipalities. Key activities include:

➤ Start-up Steps

- Identify the single point of contact at the PMEDC.
- Identify contacts at each of the municipalities.
- Bring participants together to establish the process and procedures to facilitate the process.

➤ Ongoing Operations

- Alert the contacts of incoming prospects and recommend a lead entity to work with the prospect
- Follow-up with the assigned entity to track the status of the lead.
- Maintain a database of leads, won and lost, and reasons for their final location decision.
- Discuss results, wins and losses, at regular meetings.

➤ Monitoring/Tracking:

- Regular reporting to the County and municipalities to describe prospects that have come in and where they have gone
- Tracking of reasons/issues preventing prospects from locating in the County and the steps be undertaken to address the issues, as appropriate.

**Estimated Cost.** Anticipation is to utilize existing staff at the PMEDC. The amount of time depends directly on the number of development projects/issues. Each issue would like require 1-2 days over the course of a month.

**C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

**Support role.** Each municipality should assign a contact to participate in the program and to be the “local” point of contact for prospects interested in their area.

**Activities of the Support Entities.** Development project requests received by the Business Liaison or municipal contact should be handled locally if determined to be a quick issue or if multiple approvals are not needed. Development projects that require multiple approvals, especially across governmental borders (township/borough, state and/or federal) should be referred to the PMEDC Business Liaison for action.

**Estimated Time/Cost.** Given the volume of current activity, it is anticipated that existing staff at the PMDEC and municipalities will carry out this activity. Again, time will be based on the number of development projects for each particular municipality, the complexity of the project and other factors.

- D. What is the likely timeline?** This Recommendation does not need financing or approval process and can begin immediately. The PMDEC should set up a meeting within four to six weeks after adoption to begin establishing the process, policies and procedures.
- E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** This recommendation is anticipated to utilize existing staff.
- F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** This is a short-term priority action item and should be among the first implemented.
- G. Are there preconditions to success?** This recommendation is not directly dependent on other recommendations in this report but will require cooperation with the municipalities in the region to be successful

**H. Measures of Success:**

- Institution of the Business Liaison position
- Reporting of projects/clients assisted
- Documentation of continuing issues and constraints

**CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE AN INVENTORY OF BUILDINGS AND SITES AND A DATABASE TO TRACK THEM**

It is critical for both business attraction and business retention that a comprehensive database of available properties and sites be maintained. Because of their vested interest in the database, the commercial brokerage community and related developers should provide regular updates to the database to ensure its accuracy. The PMEDC maintains a commercial real estate database. It is the assumption of this report that PMEDC will continue to update and populate their database and that the County and municipalities will continue to support the effort and provide data and assistance as appropriate. This strategy has not been detailed because it has already been implemented and this report supports their position as the lead entity.

**DEVELOP COMPETITIVE INCENTIVES****A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** To attract new companies to the County it will be important to have competitive locational incentives to the surrounding communities (Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, etc) as well as fully understanding the incentives offered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as compared to adjacent states, New Jersey in particular. For better or worse, in this down economy where expansions and attractions are highly competitive it is important to be able to offer incentives that seek to level the playing field with competitive jurisdictions.

**Approach Overview.** The approach is to inventory all of the currently offered incentive programs offered by the county, state, municipalities and other entities serving the Monroe County area. This includes educational institutions, non-profits and private businesses (if applicable). Assistance with workforce training and re-training, for example, can be equally important to tax abatements.

**Optimum Outcome.** A package of incentives (financing, funding, training, etc) that is available to Monroe County business for expansion and growth and for attraction of out of county companies. The process would also include coordinating with the BRE process and understanding existing company needs. Additional incentives/programs/initiatives would also come out of this process to help fill needs gaps of existing Monroe County businesses.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** The Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation (PMEDC). The PMEDC is recommended in this report to be the point organization for business development and attraction and should take the lead role in inventorying and tracking the various incentives available.

**Activities of the Lead Entity.**

- Start-up Steps. The initial step is to review and verify the current information at the PMEDC with respect to incentives and gather additional information to have a comprehensive inventory
  - Reach out to the state, county and municipalities to verify the list of incentives that the PMEDC has is current and that especially for funding financing programs, that monies are still available for new projects.
  - Coordinate with the County on typical business assistance needs (incentive based) discovered through the BRE process and begin to link to existing incentives
  - Identify needs gaps and gaps in the offering for both new attractions and existing businesses.
  - Working with the county and state, seek to identify incentives, funding and programmatic, to fill the above discovered gaps.
- Ongoing Operations. Routinely reach out to the sources of the various incentive programs to ensure their validity and activity. Periodically reach out to the County to assess BRE needs and gaps.
- Monitoring/Tracking. Track the number of new and existing companies that have used incentives to locate or expand in Monroe County. Companies for which incentives could not be identified that either located elsewhere or were unable to expand should also be tracked.

**Estimated Cost.** It is assumed that the PMEDC and the County can utilize existing staff. If a new staff person is required, an intern part-time position, or a position that shares other responsibilities, would be sufficient.

**C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

**Support Role.** County, Municipalities, State

**Activities of the Support Entities.** Participate in the update process and provide timely response to the requests for updates to currently offered incentives, funding amounts, any rule/policy updates, etc.



- D. What is the likely timeline?** This process is not dependent on previous recommendations or steps and can begin immediately. It will likely take a month or two to inventory all of the currently available incentives then 3-4 hours per month to maintain the inventory.
- E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Funding should not be an issue
- F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** Moderate
- G. Are there preconditions to success?** No
- H. Measures of Success:**
- Identification of competitive incentives to match/exceed
  - Implementation of new incentives to support retention and business attraction
  - Tracking of businesses that have utilized the incentives and their economic impact on the community
    - Increased employment
    - Increased investment
    - Broadening of product lines

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**PROMOTE CONSISTENCY IN ZONING/REGULATIONS****A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** Tied closely with reviewing the development approval process is insuring there is consistency in the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDO), regulations and their application across the County in all the municipalities. It may be difficult for brokers/developers and companies not familiar with the zoning and SALDO ordinances in the County to understand the differences in the codes, especially where a project might cross multiple municipalities.

**Approach Overview.** The overall approach is to first assess the current issues and constraints with zoning and SALDO regulations as it relates to the development approval process for commercial and industrial projects. With an understanding of the major issues in zoning/regulatory process the County should meet with the planning/zoning key personnel and officials from the municipalities and the County itself to discuss the issues and seek resolution. If appropriate, amendments/modifications to the various zoning codes can be recommended to add consistency across the board.

**Optimum Outcome.** A zoning, SALDO and regulatory environment across the County that has consistent definitions for various uses and a similar development approval process. And specifically that integrates with the FastTrack recommendation and Business Liaison recommendation.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** Monroe County Planning Commission

**Activities of the Lead Entity.**

➤ Start-up Steps.

- Meet with the businesses, brokers, developers that have been through the development process to identify the issues they have faced. In particular, reach out to those whose development permits were not issued or who have experienced an extended approval time.
- Meet with the municipalities and other County agencies to again get their sense for the issues relating to the development approval process. Identify both what is working well and what is not.

- Summarize the findings of the two sets of interviews/focus groups and provide to both groups. Receive comments and update the summary report
- Meet with the various applicable County agencies and municipal players to discuss ways to provide consistency in zoning, SALDO and regulatory policies and enforcement.
- Continue efforts to develop consistent zoning and SALDO ordinances in the multi-municipal planning areas.
- Hold work session meetings with representatives from the County Planning Commission and all the municipalities to review the recommended ordinance revisions.
- Revise as needed and present the final recommendation to the municipalities.
- Ongoing Operations.
  - Utilize the revised code on all new development projects within the County
- Monitoring/Tracking.
  - Provide support to ensure zoning and SALDO changes will be implemented.
  - Follow-up with brokers and developers to ensure that consistency is being experienced on the “customer” side
  - Revisit the process annually

**Estimated Cost.** While this task will be accomplished with existing staff, there will be significant time required in the early stages in attending meetings, drafting documents and presenting results.

### C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities

**Support Roles:** County agencies, Municipal planning/zoning/code enforcement

**Activities of the Support Entities:** Participate in the overall recommendation process, providing input and guidance. Present the final recommended zoning and SALDO ordinances to their governing body. The most important role of the supporting entities is to buy-in to the process and to be willing to modify zoning/regulatory ordinances for the purpose of consistency across the County.

- D. **What is the likely timeline?** Twelve to 18 months. This process will take time to gather the initial information from both the private stakeholders and public entities. The development of the Recommended Code will take an interactive process of work sessions, review and revision.

**E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Funding is an issue, and the continuation of the Financial Assistance Program (FAP) is critical.

**F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** High

**G. Are there preconditions to success?** No

**H. Measures for Success**

- Identification of zoning, SALDO and other regulatory issues
- Drafting of new polices/regulations/ordinances
- Recognition from clients/businesses of an improved zoning, SALDO and other regulatory ordinances

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**ASSESS COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY AND BEGIN TO PLAN FOR POTENTIAL EXPANSION****A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** In order to plan for future business and economic growth it is important to assess the support infrastructure, identify where it is run now and where it needs to be run, and to plan accordingly. Failure to plan for future infrastructure needs will lead to sprawled development, increased overall infrastructure costs and longer term planning conflicts.

**Approach Overview.** The County should work with the municipalities and local utilities to accurately map/confirm the location, size and capacity of all existing utilities and infrastructure in the County, including telecommunications and internet (cable/fiber). The infrastructure maps should then be overlaid on the future land use/zoning maps to confirm that future land use is mapped where infrastructure is present or planned. New re-zoning requests, development projects and other land use changes should be compared to the utilities land use map and development, in as much as it is legally possible, steered to those areas.

**Optimum Outcome.** A development pattern in the County that minimizes development sprawl and maximizes the infrastructure now in place and develops along planned infrastructure corridors.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** Monroe County Planning Commission

**Activities of the Lead Entity.**

➤ Start-up Steps.

- Prepare a base map of the County showing the current information on the location of utilities and infrastructure throughout the County, including but not limited to: roads, rail, water, sewer, electric, gas, telecom, cable, and fiber.
- Meet with the municipalities and other County departments to review the map and confirm the accuracy of the locations.
- Meet with the utility providers to confirm the location of the lines, their size and available capacity. Planned infrastructure improvements should also be designated.
- Summarize the findings of the discovery and refresh the base map and utility layers as necessary.

- Provide a final map to all stakeholders for confirmation and reference.
- Revise as needed and provide updates to the utility stakeholders and municipalities.
- Ongoing Operations.
  - Continue to update and maintain the utility/infrastructure map at least quarterly.
  - Provide review and comment opportunities/review sessions with key providers to ensure the accuracy of the map.
- Monitoring/Tracking.
  - Confirmation from the providers and County staff that the map is being updated and utilized in planning-related decision making.

**Estimated Cost.** Staff time only. Comparable to previous recommendations, this recommendation will take considerable organization, management and facilitation time but not significant technical work or analysis. A planning intern from the local universities would be the optimal choice for additional staff support.

#### C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities

**Support Roles:** Municipal planning/zoning/code officials, utility companies, telecom/internet providers

**Activities of the Support Entities:** Participate in reviewing the Land Use/Utility Base Map and verifying location, size and capacity of existing infrastructure. Locate planned/proposed improvements and update the County as needed

D. **What is the likely timeline?** Ongoing, however the initial process should take approximately six months to gather the initial information from both the private utility stakeholders and public entities.

E. **If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Funding should not be an issue

F. **What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** High

G. **Are there preconditions to success?** No

#### H. Measures of Success:

- Identification and summary of current development plans and activities

- Inventory and assessment of existing and planned transportation and utility infrastructure
- Longer term planning process integrated into economic development decision making
- Reduction of sprawl and a more consolidated planning approach

**DEVELOP AND SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM**

The following four recommendations fall under the umbrella of developing and supporting a comprehensive workforce development and training program. As such the key elements for each of the sub-strategies are the same and can be carried out concurrently with other strategies. The County will need to work with the school districts, Monroe Career and Technical Institute, Northampton Community College, East Stroudsburg University, Workforce Investment Board, and the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program to fully assess the needs and to begin to develop a comprehensive approach. The optimum approach would be to include a best practice analysis of comparable communities' efforts in workforce training. The strategy outlined below identifies the overall process of identifying and assessing the workforce needs of the community.

- 1. CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTY.** There is a constant need to coordinate the needs of the existing workforce, especially those seeking employment, with the existing industry base to provide the training needed for employment within the County. This coordination involves the school districts, Monroe Career and Technical Institute (MCTI), Northampton Community College (NCC), East Stroudsburg University (ESU), the Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) efforts. The county's education and workforce infrastructure can provide a "knowledge first" model that will address the workforce and training needs of existing businesses and attract new businesses to the region. In addition, as a part of the educational seminar recommendations, provide seminars that address existing company needs, including writing grant/loan applications, screening and hiring new staff, and tools to expand into different markets (both geographic and products), as a few examples.
  
- 2. DEVELOP AND ENHANCE ADULT EDUCATION/REMEDIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS.** Support existing educational opportunities and training programs focused on adult education offered by WIB, MCTI, NCC and ESU. These programs should focus on serving workers who are either returning to the labor force or who are looking for gainful employment after being laid off or otherwise being unemployed. This population has different needs and skills than the entry level vocational workforce described in the next point and customized strategies to meet their needs should be developed.
  
- 3. FOCUS ON VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL TRAINING WORKFORCE – ENTRY LEVEL.** In addition to a focus on the adult workforce particular importance needs to be placed on reaching the young workforce in high school, MCTI, NCC, and ESU. Relationships between existing industry and education need to be formed and cultivated to ensure that the existing industry base has a consistent flow of trained employees going forward. The expansion of Northampton Community College in the county and ESU's degree completion program will also provide expanded educational and training opportunities in both traditional and online formats.



**4. DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO ENHANCE “AWARENESS” OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.** Hand in glove with the previous recommendation area, it is important to reach out to job seekers, HS and tech school graduates to present the employment opportunities in the County. Coordinating workforce needs and career opportunities is an important component of the awareness effort and can be coordinated through the high school guidance offices, in collaboration with career service efforts at MCTI, NCC and ESU.

**A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** The overriding purpose and need for this recommendation is providing high quality jobs to Monroe County residents and providing high quality employees to Monroe County businesses. As the economy continues to shift and change and technology becomes more important to every job function, training – and more appropriately, retraining – will be important to both County residents seeking jobs and County employers seeking staff.

**Approach Overview.** The two components critical to the success of this effort are communication and sharing of information. The BRE systems should be assessing the needs of current Monroe County employers, and likely a top need for those wishing to expand is securing a trained and capable labor force. The WIB and the community/technical colleges, on the other hand, have a sense for what kinds of jobs the workforce is looking for. Coordination among the players will be crucial.

**Optimum Outcome.** A comprehensive program where workers can participate and seek training that matches the needs of existing companies and where existing companies can partner with training providers to recruit and train/retrain employees.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** Form a *Workforce Training Action Committee* to carry out the actions of this task. While the other recommendations had a clear entity lead, this recommendation crosses enough disciplinary lines to need a more collaborative approach than a single lead entity. In this case, a working committee made up of Monroe County BRE staff, the development liaison, and representatives from the school districts, MCTI, NCC, ESU, WIB, SBDC/SCORE and others involved in workforce training in the County is recommended.

***Activities of the Lead Entity.*****➤ Start-up Steps.**

- Form the Committee. The County should work with the Workforce Investment Board to identify key stakeholders and players in workforce training to be invited to join the effort. Membership from the following groups should be solicited:
  - Monroe County BRE
  - Workforce Investment Board
  - Educational Institutions (K-12, Community Colleges, Universities)
  - Monroe County Businesses
  - Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation
  - Greater Pocono Chamber of Commerce
- Identify Needs. Focusing on the “demand” side, assess the current workforce needs of existing Monroe County companies and other high probability prospects. The running results of the BRE program as well as information from the PMEDC will be important starting points.
- Identify Assets. On the “supply” side, focus on an inventory of the institutions/entities providing training and workforce education, the programs currently offered and the ability to offer customized training for specific companies.
- Identify Gaps. Identify what gaps exist in physical facilities, funding or programming.
- Identify Perception and Other Constraints. An important component to the success of training programs, especially when dealing with high school students, is the perception and reassurance that the time committed to the program will result in quality training and employment opportunities. This needs to be an aspect of the overall process and strategy development.
- Seek Commitment From Key Players. The Committee should hold an overview briefing on the overall workforce development plan and seek buy-in and commitment from the key players. Both demand and supply entities should be invited and an open discussion held on how best to coordinate. The session should be hosted/moderated by the WIB.
- Develop a System. Develop an integrated system to track both the workforce demand and supply and to match up where the two meet. Agreements with the school districts, MCTI, NCC and ESU should be established to assure that special training programs and seminars can be developed quickly to respond to company/industry need.

- Implement and Advertise. One of the biggest issues with workforce training is the lack of clear promotion and dissemination of the information. The Supply side has workers that want to work and the Demand side has jobs to fill, but they either don't know, or the workers need retraining and the company has no more training budget. Communication is key.
- Ongoing Operations. The Committee should meet regularly with both Demand and Supply side players and constantly adjust the offering to meet the current need.
- Monitoring/Tracking. New jobs created that retain existing workers or new companies attracted because of workforce training opportunities should be captured in a quarterly, or annual, report and shared with media. Communication is key.

**Estimated Cost.** Cost should be limited to staff time and volunteer efforts of Committee Members. It is not anticipated that a full time staff person would be required.

#### **C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

**Support Role.** School Boards, Same as Lead Entity.

**Activities of the Support Entities.** As noted above, this recommendation will be coordinated by the County but will be run by a working workforce preparedness committee.

- D. What is the likely timeline?** The process of forming the Committee can begin immediately upon approval of this strategy.
- E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** It is not anticipated that funding will be a concern. If issues arise where funds are needed, a small service fee could be considered or donations from companies that have been through the program and have prospered because of it.
- F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** High. Without a quality workforce, or a means to achieve one, Monroe County will not be successful in attracting and growing companies.
- G. Are there preconditions to success?** No

**H. Measures of Success:**

- An effective program that matches workers to companies
- Active participation in the program by Monroe County employers
- Active participation by workforce training stakeholders
- Measurable reduction in unemployed and underemployed workers in the County

**Mid-term/Medium Priority Recommendations**

The mid-term recommendations generally focus on relationship tools where economic development initiatives could strengthen economic prosperity in the County by redeveloping underutilized areas, improving inter-agency communication, improving educational opportunities relating to economic development tools, marketing and other promotion activities. These recommendations will take longer because of the complexity of public/private partnerships needed to make these efforts successful.

**FACILITATION WITH STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES (PENNDOT, DEP, ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ETC).****A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** An issue consistent across Pennsylvania communities as well as the rest of the nation perhaps is coordination and communication with state agencies, particularly transportation and environment. It will be important to open lines of communication and to keep the state agencies, and relevant federal agencies, in the loop early on upcoming projects and issues. These key stakeholders should also be invited to Monroe County to attend economic development seminars, the annual economic development meeting and other events to keep them in the loop. If they are unable to attend the events, meeting minutes and summaries should be sent as a courtesy.

**Approach Overview.** Meet quarterly (at least) and establish regular communication with the Pennsylvania State Agencies and relevant federal agencies directly involved in economic development, financing and related areas. The key is keeping the lines of communication open and providing accurate real-time information to the State when they are looking to place prospects. Being prepared ahead of time will be critical as often development decisions are made very quickly.

**Optimum Outcome.** A more seamless relationship with State agencies and more rapid response to needs of existing and prospective companies.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** PMEDC and Monroe County Planning Commission

**Activities of the Lead Entity.**

- **Start-up Steps.** An initial kick-off session should be held in Monroe County where the State representatives are introduced to their local counterparts and a brief presentation on the County and its assets is made. While this may seem too fundamental, staff changes regularly and relationships need to be reestablished. A bus tour of key shovel ready sites should also be considered for this meeting.
- **Ongoing Operations.** Quarterly meetings/conference calls should be held to keep up with the State representatives and make sure Monroe County properties are up to date in the state's database and actively being considered.
- **Monitoring/Tracking.** During the quarterly meetings gather information on the number of prospects that have been introduced to the County, have been shown sites/properties and/or located in the County. Understand from the State why companies that were shown locations in the County decided to locate elsewhere to assess what could be done better to make Monroe more attractive.

**Estimated Cost.** Existing staff would be used for this task and would likely spend 4-8 hours a month in coordinative meetings and other project work sessions outside of typical work flow.

**C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

**Support Role.** None.

**Activities of the Support Entities.** None

**D. What is the likely timeline?** Ongoing

**E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Funding should not be an issue

**F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** Moderate

**G. Are there preconditions to success?** No

**H. Measures of Success:**

- Establishment of regular meetings and regular communication with state and federal stakeholders
- Tracking data showing that state/federal approval processes are moving more quickly and efficiently

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**INCREASE COLLABORATION BETWEEN COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS/ENTITIES**

To facilitate longer term economic planning and consistency regarding the development approval process there should be enhanced communication and collaboration between the County and the municipal leadership.

**A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** During the interviews conducted for this project, it was suggested that better coordination between the County level planners and engineers with the comparable staff at the municipal level would be important in facilitating long range planning, and short term development projects. The benefit of this type of meeting is to more fully integrate the planning, infrastructure planning, capital improvement planning and other issues of County/regional importance.

**Approach Overview.** The approach is for each municipality to assign a representative, to participate in monthly cooperative planning meetings. The monthly meetings would be relatively short, perhaps an hour, and could be held in the morning as a breakfast meeting. Where there are no major issues pending the group would be encouraged to meet anyway to continue the dialogue.

**Optimum Outcome.** Better coordination at the local and regional level in planning and economic development.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** Monroe County municipalities and Monroe County Planning Commission.

**Activities of the Lead Entity.**

- **Start-up Steps.** Present the concept to the Monroe County municipalities and seek buy-in. Seek volunteers from each municipality, and the County, to participate in the monthly meetings. Once a core group has committed, set a standard meeting date (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month) and begin meeting.
- **Ongoing Operations.** Monthly coordinative committee meetings.
- **Monitoring/Tracking:** Identification of the key planning and related issues and any resolutions.

**Estimated Time/Cost.** Two hours per month, per municipality, for meetings. Staff needs for follow-up on activities that come out of the meetings would be determined on an as needed basis.

**C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

**Support Role.** None.

**Activities of the Support Players.** None.

**Estimated Time/Cost.** Staff time.

**D. What is the likely timeline?** The working group can be formed within the first several months of adoption and monthly meetings, or quarterly as desired, can begin thereafter.

**E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Funding is not an issue.

**F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** This is a short-term goal that can be implemented immediately.

**G. Are there preconditions to success?** No.

**H. Measures of Success:**

- Regular meetings held between County and municipal stakeholders
- Recommendations implemented for improving the development process
- Improved county-wide complementary long range planning
- Recognition of a more efficient development review process



**PARTICIPATE IN AND SUPPORT EDUCATION AND TRAINING SEMINARS COVERING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES.**

Often a significant impediment to economic development is a lack of understanding of the available tools, purpose of the initiatives, overall purpose of economic development and other issues. These quarterly seminars would address economic development issues and concerns of the business and development community, including, but not limited to: development approval process, how to secure seed/start-up funding, how to write a business plan, assistance with management issues (mentorship), marketing 101, how to expand your business globally, etc. The entrepreneurial programs and economic development initiatives underway at NCC, ESU, and the Pocono Mountains Economic Development Corporation (PMEDC) can provide content for these seminars.

**Annual Economic Development Symposium.** At least annually the County, municipalities and key stakeholders should meet to discuss economic development over the past year, reevaluate the County's economic development goals, discuss this economic development implementation plan and other issues. This should be thought of as a working session and should chart the course of the County for the next year. This Annual Economic Development Symposium should be the keystone event in the economic development training seminars. As such, this recommendation is included in the overall Education and Training Seminars recommendation presented below and not addressed separately to avoid redundancy.

**A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** Many of those interviewed felt more training and awareness of economic development funding was needed to fully leverage the existing financing and funding, economic development initiatives and other programming in the County. It is anticipated that participation and support from the County will expand the knowledge of programs to respond more quickly and effectively respond to existing and potential business needs. One area where the County and municipalities could expand the knowledge base is with building public/private partnerships. Potential opportunities for the County or municipal planners to provide training on municipal zoning, planning and permitting processes to better inform businesses of review and permitting procedures should also be explored with these groups and independently as well.

**Approach Overview.** Topics could include: financing/funding strategies, target marketing, business retention and expansion (BRE), brownfield redevelopment, and others. This recommendation focuses specifically on connecting local businesses and municipalities.

**Optimum Outcome.** Greater participation in education and training offered in the region, with the opportunity to provide training on municipal zoning, planning and permitting processes to better inform businesses of review and permitting procedures.

## **B. Strategy Components: Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** Monroe County and PMEDC.

### **Activities of the Lead Entity.**

- **Start-up Steps.** Working through the existing committees and networking functions in place identify the important questions and issues that the economic development stakeholders in the community are most in need of learning more about from existing economic development entities, municipalities and the County.
- **Ongoing Operations.** Record any training provided by County and consider conducting bi-annual trainings and re-run sessions on public TV/YouTube.
- **Monitoring/Tracking:** Track the number of attendees for each session type both in total numbers and affiliation. Follow-up with attendees to track how they have been able to use the knowledge gained and seek input on how the sessions could be more useful and effective.

**Estimated Cost.** Costs will vary depending on the seminar, number of attendees, refreshments (if provided), special A/V needs, etc. In general though, the basic cost will be staff time of the County in announcing the event, identifying speakers and arranging the logistics. The fee for attendance should be very low, or at no cost, to encourage participation. If food is provided, a nominal fee can be charged to offset the costs, but these events should not be seen as revenue generators. The sessions can likely be held in the large conference room in the County offices so there should not be an additional facility cost.

## **C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

**Support Role.** Monroe County municipalities, MCTI, NCC, ESU, training partners, WIB, Penn State Extension.

**Activities of the Support Entities.** The role of the support players is to support the sessions and seminars by attending the events, providing speakers on relevant topics/issues and working with the County to

suggest new topics and provide feedback. In order for key stakeholders in the community to volunteer their time to speak at and participate in these sessions, they will need to be well attended.

**Estimated Cost.** Low cost, if any, to the municipalities. If County conducts sessions/seminars that have refreshments provided it may require a small recovery cost for the County.

- D. What is the likely timeline?** Training is an on-going function throughout the year.
- E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Organizing and staffing educational events can be an expensive proposition if the volunteers and key stakeholders don't fully support the effort. It would be important up front to assess the assets/resources available for this effort.
- F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** This is a low priority recommendation. While it is important to the community, seminars take time and effort to bring together and do not have a direct, or immediate, impact on economic development.
- G. Are there preconditions to success?** No
- H. Measures of Success:**
- Annual Economic Development Conference held
  - Quarterly training seminars held
  - Once underway, increased participation and interest in the conferences
  - Multi-disciplinary attendance (County/municipal government and entities, businesses, citizenry, State/National agencies, etc.)

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**COORDINATE AND LEVERAGE MARKETING RESOURCES TO MORE COMPREHENSIVELY PRESENT THE COUNTY AND POCONO REGION****A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** There are multiple agencies/entities that are actively marketing components of the County/region. These include, but may not be limited to: County, PMEDC, Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau (PMVB), Greater Pocono Chamber of Commerce, NCC and ESU. There should be coordination among the entities to fully leverage everyone's resources and ensure consistency of message. While the marketing focus may seem different, people attracted to the Poconos for skiing may very well also be interested now, or down the road, in relocating or expanding a business for which the County could compete or pursuing higher education opportunities.

**Approach Overview.** The various entities in the Pocono region (and Monroe County) should coordinate with the PMVB on outreach marketing efforts to ensure consistency of message, to avoid duplication and to maximize resource allocation. That is not to say that the PMVB will have authority over, permission to edit or redact, or otherwise control the marketing efforts of Pocono region entities. This is a cooperative recommendation intended to maximize dollars invested in outreach marketing and consistency throughout.

**Optimum Outcome.** Coordinated efforts that have a consistent look and message, fully leveraging marketing dollars invested and cross marketing where appropriate to maximize the exposure of the Pocono Mountain/Monroe County area.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau

**Activities of the Lead Entity.****➤ Start-up Steps.**

- Hold a coordination meeting with the County, PMEDC, PMVB, Chamber and others involved in marketing efforts to discuss the issues and advantages of coordinating marketing efforts.
- Begin to lay out the basic process and procedures for coordinating marketing efforts.
- Draft a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the coordination of marketing activities and allow each party time to review and comment.

- Draft a final MOU and present it the working group for discussion and presentation to their governing bodies.
- Ongoing Operations. Meet quarterly, or more often if needed to coordinate marketing efforts and evaluate the effectiveness of the MOU. If necessary, revise the process and procedures and amend the MOU.
- Monitoring/Tracking. Catalog the marketing efforts indicating the cooperative and collaborative efforts of each, if applicable. Calculate, qualitatively if necessary, the cost savings and value to the member of the MOU for their collaborative marketing partnership.

**Estimated Cost.** Staff time only, and possibly reduction of total marketing costs with collaborative marketing efforts with partners.

### C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities

**Support Role.** PMEDC, County, Municipalities

**Activities of the Support Entities.** Coordinate marketing efforts, event announcements and other outreach marketing with the PMVB. A standard “deadline” should be established for marketing efforts in order to be combined/included with PMVB marketing efforts. In the event a deadline cannot be achieved but the announcement is time sensitive, the individual entity would continue with the marketing effort, but keep the PMVB in the loop.

- D. **What is the likely timeline?** Immediate and ongoing. This recommendation is an ongoing process whereby the players might meet once a quarter to talk about upcoming marketing efforts.
- E. **If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Funding is not anticipated to be an issue.
- F. **What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** Low.
- G. **Are there preconditions to success?** Buy-in and participation by the key players in marketing the County and greater Pocono Region.

**H. Measures of Success:**

- New coordinated approach with buy-in from all key stakeholders
- Increase in cooperative marketing materials/efforts

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**DEVELOP A COMMUNITY CALENDAR TO COORDINATE/PROMOTE ACTIVITIES****A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** This recommendation would build off the efforts currently underway by the Chamber but would include initiatives and actions being carried out by other entities in the community. A coordinated and comprehensive approach will clearly show both visitors and prospects the commitment of the entire region to quality of life and supporting the business community. There is a need for a localized PR Campaign about the community's vision and brand.

**Approach Overview.** Continuing on their existing momentum, create and maintain a monthly community calendar that is both online and available as a PDF. This material will be very important in recruiting companies to the region by highlighting the amenities, activities and high quality of life. Communication is key, once again, and all media outlets and marketing efforts should be coordinated to the maximum amount possible.

**Optimum Outcome.** A living community calendar that is updated routinely with significant events and happenings. Effort should be given to make sure the piece does not become too much of a marketing/promotional tool.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** Greater Pocono Chamber of Commerce

**Activities of the Lead Entity.**

- Start-up Steps. Coordinate with the other marketing entities in the County, the County itself and others hosting/organizing community-wide events for participation in the process. Establish a methodology whereby "partners" in the effort can either submit new events directly to the Community Calendar or can submit the events to the Chamber coordinator.
- Ongoing Operations. Continued use and coordination of the calendar.
- Monitoring/Tracking. Track how many events are added to the calendar by each entity. Communicate with the partner participants to elicit comment on how well the system is working and if changes need to be made.

**Estimated Cost.** If existing resources and staff are utilized the cost should be minimal. However, if a new online calendar system is implemented there will be web design and implementation costs, and staff time in creating the content. With that said, a straightforward web site for a community calendar should cost less than \$5,000. Possible web programming/updating, 3-4 hours a month (\$300-\$500 depending on hourly rate of IT consultant)

**C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

**Support Role.** County and others in area-wide events/marketing

**Activities of the Support Entities.** Coordinate with the Chamber

**D. What is the likely timeline?** Ongoing, first calendar should be up within a month.

**E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Chamber

**F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** Low

**G. Are there preconditions to success?** No

**H. Measures of Success:**

- Participation and buy-in from key stakeholders
- Development of a community calendar
- Development across a variety of media (web, e-mailers, hard copy)



**DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO DEAL WITH GREYFIELD AND VACANT SPACE**

This strategy will become more easily addressed after the commercial property and sites database has been updated with these older, and sometimes troubled, buildings and sites. In addition to the database, a specific strategy to assess these properties, identify deficiencies and plan for their remediation should be undertaken. The County should play an advisory role but where the property is in private hands it should be the onus of the property owner to carry out and rehab or remediation.

**A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** There are a number of underutilized and vacant properties and commercial centers in the County that provide an opportunity to new and expanding companies. The purpose of this recommendation is to identify and inventory the sites and centers, understand any barriers to development or reuse they may have, and have them available for reuse opportunities that may include mixed use developments. The benefit is to have the sites marketed more effectively along with other sites/buildings in the County for possible expansion and/or relocations.

**Approach Overview.** Revitalization of underutilized and vacant properties is a complex and long term undertaking that requires the County, municipalities and private property owners to forge strong working relationships to improve the properties. Working with the owner/broker representing the property and the municipality, fully understand the opportunities and features of the property as well as any development constraints. If improvements are needed to make the property more marketable, work with the property representative to identify possible funding/financing programs or other incentives to assist in the rehab costs.

**Optimum Outcome.** The optimum outcome is to facilitate the redesign of underutilized and vacant properties to infill development and create jobs and tax revenues for the economy.

**B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

**Lead Role.** The County and PMEDC should share the lead role in this recommendation. A key responsibility also lies with the property owner and their desire to improve and market their property.

**Activities of the Lead Entity.**

- **Start-up Steps.** Through interviews with commercial brokers and municipal officials, and a search of the commercial real estate database, identify the major underutilized properties in the County and reach out to the owner/broker to assess their interest in improving and marketing their properties. Seek a commitment that once engaged in the process, they will follow through to improve their property. Working with property representative, identify the major strengths and weaknesses of the property.
- **Ongoing Operations.** Continue to track underutilized properties and provide them to prospect companies and expansion opportunities.

**Estimated Cost.** Costs to undertake this recommendation could be considerable and may require expertise beyond current staffing capacity. This should be explored after Short-Term Recommendations are completed.

**C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

**Support role.** Support should be provided by municipal planning staff, commercial brokers and property owners who are interested in revitalization.

**Activities of the Support Entities.** Participation in the process, timely return of data requests regarding property availability and attributes.

**D. What is the likely timeline?** The timeline for this recommendation will be determined upon completion of Short-Term Recommendations. The initial list of underutilized properties and contact with property owners can be developed in the near term. The timeline for improvements and fully marketing the property will depend on the improvements needed and the property owner. This type of endeavor can be complex and a more thorough examination of the benefits should be known before moving forward.

**E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** Funding for this recommendation is difficult to determine at this time. Revitalization and redevelopment is a complicated and time consuming effort that requires municipalities to understand long term costs and benefits of participating. A more detailed assessment of the extent to which this recommendation would be undertaken should occur after the Short-Term Recommendations are completed.

**F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** This is a Mid-Term Recommendation due largely to the extensive involvement of individual private property owners. The County can be very effective with attempting to eliminate barriers to development, identifying funding sources and integrating this recommendation with other regional goals. The cooperation of private property owners however, is the key to the ultimate redesign and revitalization of these properties.

**G. Are there preconditions to success?** Precondition for success is the volunteer involvement of property owners/brokers.

**H. Measures of Success:**

- Recognition of the need to reuse greyfield sites
- Reduction of the inventory of greyfield sites
- Addition of incentives/initiatives to focus on these sites
- Commitment of land owners to invest in these sites as necessary for marketability

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**INSTITUTE A FASTTRACK DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL PROCESS**

This last recommendation is certainly important to competitive economic development but is one in which efforts and actions outside of the County will be required for success. This recommendation will have statewide implications because enacting it will require changes to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and thus must be addressed at the state level. An effort such as this will take significant time and commitment of County/Municipal leadership and staff to pursue. The first important step in this process will be reaching out to other Pennsylvania counties to gauge support for joining a statewide effort to change the MPC. A series of calls/contacts can be made to identify co-sponsors of an effort to lobby Harrisburg for a change in legislation.

There should be a separate development approval process within the County that follows the basic process and adheres to current zoning and development regulations yet guarantees a set turnaround time (typically 60-75 days). The County would concurrently review different development criteria to shorten the overall process. The developer/submitter would also commit to providing relevant documentation and site plans up front, quickly responding to County/municipal questions, bringing the key team members to meetings as requested by the County and would committing to the process. If statutorily permissible, the County should charge a FastTrack fee to ensure the commitment of the developer.

**A. Detailed Description of the Recommendation**

**Purpose, Need and Benefit.** During the interview process and in discussions with key stakeholders the issue of long development approvals with lengthy delays have caused important development projects to fail and seek other communities, and those that remained endured increased costs and development delays. Creating a FastTrack Development Approval Process would allow time-sensitive select projects to move more rapidly through the development approval process. The same zoning, regulations and codes would be enforced, but much of the process could run concurrently with project meetings attended by multiple agencies/entities.

**Approach Overview.** A process, likely coordinated primarily by the Liaison described above, where the development project would have to meet a set of pre-established conditions/standards and would be granted FastTrack status. The Liaison would coordinate an initial project concept meeting between the developer and their team (designers, engineers, etc) and County and municipal officials to present the

project, identify permitting, zoning and other regulatory needs and establish a timeline for both Client and County/Municipal deliverables.

***Optimum Outcome.*** Moving select time-sensitive development projects/expansion quickly through the development process to be more cost effective and more competitive with neighboring competitive counties and states.

#### **B. Primary Roles and Responsibilities**

***Lead Role.*** The Business Assistance Liaison with PMEDC would be responsible for coordinating the FastTrack program, setting up meetings and facilitating the process.

***Activities of the Lead Entity.*** Work with the developer/client and the County/municipalities to coordinate development meetings, delivery of documentation, plans, reports to the County for use in permitting and regulatory process. The Liaison will also track and monitor the County/Municipal progress on various reviews and track the projects progress through the development process.

***Estimated Cost.*** Anticipation is to utilize existing staff at the PMEDC, likely the staff assigned to be the Business Liaison. The amount of time depends directly on the number of development projects/issues.

#### **C. Supporting Roles and Responsibilities**

***Support role.*** The County and each municipality should assign a contact person to coordinate with the Liaison. The County and municipalities should also be in full agreement and support of this initiative. Without their participation, the FastTrack process will be ineffective..

***Activities of the Support Entities.*** Activities include attending development meetings, working with the development company/Liaison on permitting and regulatory compliance and in general facilitating the development review process.

***Estimated Time/Cost.*** No additional cost is expected for the County/municipalities.

- D. What is the likely timeline?** This Recommendation does not need financing or approval process and can begin immediately. The PMEDC should set up a meeting within four to six weeks after adoption to begin establishing the process, policies and procedures.
- E. If funding is an issue, what are potential funding sources?** This recommendation is anticipated to utilize existing staff. Note: The processes themselves will not change or require additional work, but will be carried out concurrently not sequentially as they are done now. So in essence, the same amount of work will be required, but over a shorter duration. There will likely be the need of additional coordination meetings but that should be accommodated by existing staff within current work hours.
- F. What is the overall priority (vs. the other Recommendations)?** This is a long-term priority action item.
- G. Are there preconditions to success?** Although this recommendation is not directly dependent on other recommendations in this report, it will require cooperation with the municipalities in the region to be successful.
- H. Measures of Success:**
- Implementation of a FastTrack system
  - Tracking and results of the FastTrack system
  - Economic and fiscal impact of the projects, including the cost savings to the developer and County

NOTE: It is recognized that implementation of the process described above will require amendments to the PA Municipalities Planning Code, and that this could take an extensive amount of time to accomplish. In the interim, an alternative process proposed by several municipalities is recommended:

Another process could yield the desired results under current MPC regulations and Growing Greener planning principles. A developer and their engineer could schedule a planning commission workshop where a pre-sketch plan comprised of an Existing Resources and Site Analysis (ERSA) plan is discussed to determine developer and community interests and how best to design the project. Based on workshop discussions, the developer would have their engineer prepare a sketch plan for a regular meeting of the planning commission where preliminary engineering issues are reviewed. The developer would then have their engineer address planning commission and township engineer comments in the land development plan application at the planning commission's next meeting at which the 90-day time clock begins.

Thereafter, if the developer and their engineer have met municipal ordinance requirements within 30, 60 or 90 days of application submittal, then the municipal governing body could grant an approval with conditions, such as state agency approvals which should be sought concurrently with municipal approvals.

Additional fees need not be imposed by municipalities and the county for the developer to take this voluntary, yet progressive planning approach. The burden of timely performance lies with the developer and their engineer to meet ordinance requirements as soon as possible after mutually planning their project with municipal officials who should be willing to schedule special meetings if needed to help plan the best project possible.

With respect to the facilitation with Agencies (PennDOT, DEP, etc) section, an automated interactive progressive permitting program should be developed and incorporated into the approval process. Government agencies elsewhere are utilizing the latest software and device technologies to expedite permitting. A collaboration of county and municipal participants should explore such permitting with state agencies.

## APPENDIX

Through the course of this work the County and Consultant were presented additional information regarding key stakeholder plans and policies currently in effect, and others that were in planning. While all the information gathered in the course of developing these implementation strategies played a role in the final strategy development, some of the good thinking and materials provided was not best suited for inclusion within the EDIP. This appendix includes information important to the economic development health of the community and the actions laid out in this plan and should be used in concert with the implementation of the strategies described above.

### Entrepreneurial/ESU Coordination Recommendations

These recommendations are important to the overall economic development strength and growth of the County, but are led by, or heavily coordinated with East Stroudsburg University (ESU). They are considered longer-term goals only within the context of the other recommendations, not as individual recommendations. The County and other economic development entities should support ESU in pursuing these recommendations and should coordinate the overall economic development activities to ensure full leveraging of financial and human capital assets.

The particular focus areas, based on the information presented by ESU at Task Force meetings include:

1. Create an entrepreneurial environment in Monroe County that attracts innovative startup companies, supports job creation, and encourages research and development.
2. Collaboratively link colleges' and universities' research and development programs
3. Expand bioscience education, training and internship opportunities
4. Attract and retain skilled workers required to expand the bioscience sector
5. Establish an Entrepreneurial Consortium to further develop a county-wide entrepreneurial network
6. Ensure appropriate real estate options are in place to meet the needs of the targeted segments
7. Diversify the economic base and create employment opportunities not only for ESU graduates but also for faculty/staff family members (i.e. spouses of individuals who relocate with ESU)

### Coordination with Other County Plans

A major theme running through the Economic Development Implementation Plan (EDIP) is the need for coordination and communication and the EDIP cannot be considered as a stand alone document. Its success will heavily depend on coordination with other key activities such as the Comprehensive Plan and the Open Space Plan updates. The importance of the interrelationships between these plans and their components cannot be over-emphasized.

A number of recent proposed projects involve resort/recreation facilities which will enhance the tourism sector of the economy. This is directly consistent with the Economic Development Policy contained in Part III of the Comprehensive Plan. The tourism industry has its roots in the 1800's when people began to visit the county for its



natural resources and scenic beauty. The Open Space Program has made significant progress in preserving these assets and enticing the “visitor experiences” in Monroe County, and thus been an important factor in the economic development projects noted above.

Open space areas can also provide other benefits for economic development projects if they are suitable for land application of treated effluent utilizing spray and drip technologies. Businesses devoted to outdoor activities are another example of the synergy between open space and economic development, which are not mutually exclusive, but can be quite complementary.

**INSERT PHS Letter in PDF**

P1

P2

P3

## Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis: Monroe County Prototype Project

The following is provided as an example of the impacts a successful economic development project can have on the local and state economy. For a prototype project provided by the Pocono Mountain Economic Development Corporation, an economic and fiscal impact overview has been generated. The prototype project analyzed below is a 567,400 square foot mixed-use development that is comprised of warehouse, retail, grocery and a multi pump gasoline station. The analysis below includes direct and indirect impacts and calculates project value, total employment, payroll, retail spending and sales and income taxes. A full economic and fiscal analysis would also include construction period impacts, and specific impacts to the local municipalities and school district(s).

### **Development Program**

The development program consists of five different buildings totaling 567,416 square feet of warehouse, retail, restaurant, convenience goods and a gasoline station. Table 1 details the project by type of use, gross SF, and approximate development cost, not including land cost or atypical infrastructure improvements.

**Table 1  
Development Assumptions (1/  
Monroe County Prototype Project  
2012 Dollars**

| <b>Table 1. Development Program - Monroe County Prototype Project</b> |                    |                 |                    |                                 |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Building</b>   | <b>Use Type</b>    | <b>Gross SF</b> | <b>Cost Per SF</b> | <b>Total Construction Costs</b> |
| Building 1  | Distribution       | 460,000         | \$74.56            | \$34,295,500                    |
| Building 2  | Grocery Store      | 75,000          | \$100.04           | \$7,503,000                     |
| Building 3  | Retail/Restaurant  | 20,000          | \$99.38            | \$1,987,500                     |
| Building 4  | Convenience Retail | 12,416          | \$95.84            | \$1,190,000                     |
| Building 5  | Gasoline Station   | 8,000           | \$95.84            | \$766,753                       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  |                    | <b>575,416</b>  |                    | <b>\$45,742,753</b>             |

### **Source Notes**

- 1/ Site and development assumption figures provided by PMEDC
- 2/ Efficiency factors assume all buildings are single tenant occupied with no common space

### **Economic Impacts**

The project described above will generate employment and those employees will have payroll and will generate consumer spending. In this case we are only calculating the “at work” consumer expenditures and not total household expenditures as we don’t know how many employees will be new to the County/Commonwealth. However, because there are retail operations in the project, we have calculated the likely retail sales based on average per square foot sales from the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC). The total direct employment impact of the prototype project is estimated at 649 workers. The indirect employment impact, the

secondary jobs created by the new economic activity, are estimated at 435. The summary table below shows the direct and indirect impacts, payroll, consumer expenditures and retail sales on site.

| <b>Table 2. Summary Annual Operations: Economic Impacts</b> |               |                      |                     |
|---|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|   | <b>Direct</b> | <b>Indirect (3/)</b> | <b>Total</b>        |
| Jobs (FTE)  | 649           | 435                  | <b>1,084</b>        |
| Payroll   | \$22,401,600  | \$22,927,400         | <b>\$45,329,000</b> |
| Consumer Expenditures                                       | \$19,102,300  |                      | <b>\$19,102,300</b> |
| Retail Sales (on site)                                      | \$48,509,040  |                      | <b>\$48,509,040</b> |

**Detailed Employment and Payroll Calculations**

Working off of the summary table above, we have calculated the direct and indirect employment and payroll for each building within the project. Because the wage rate and multipliers are different for retail vs. restaurant uses, we have separated Building #3 into two different entries in the table. (Note: When breaking down the data into specific buildings, and because multipliers are out four decimal places (eg. 1.3676) rounding can create summation errors).

| <b>Table 3. Annual Operations: Employment Summary</b> |                    |                      |              |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|--------------|
|   | <b>Direct (1/)</b> | <b>Indirect (2/)</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| Building 1: Distribution                              | 373                | 333                  | 706          |
| Building 2: Grocery Store                             | 164                | 60                   | 224          |
| Building 3: Retail                                    | 20                 | 7                    | 27           |
| Building 3: Restaurant                                | 56                 | 21                   | 77           |
| Building 4: Convenience Retail                        | 20                 | 7                    | 27           |
| Building 5: Gasoline Station                          | 16                 | 6                    | 22           |
| <b>Total Employment (FTE)</b>                         | <b>649</b>         | <b>435</b>           | <b>1,083</b> |

| <b>Table 4. Annual Operations: Employment Payroll Estimates (3/)</b> |                     |                     |                     |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|  | <b>Direct</b>       | <b>Indirect</b>     | <b>Total</b>        |
| Building 1: Distribution   | \$14,596,600        | \$13,853,600        | \$28,450,200        |
| Building 2: Grocery Store  | \$4,669,400         | \$7,304,300         | \$11,973,700        |
| Building 3: Retail   | \$559,900           | \$316,000           | \$875,900           |
| Building 3: Restaurant   | \$1,372,300         | \$774,400           | \$2,146,700         |
| Building 4: Convenience Retail                                       | \$559,900           | \$316,000           | \$875,900           |
| Building 5: Gasoline Station   | \$447,900           | \$252,700           | \$700,600           |
| <b>Total Employment (FTE)</b>  | <b>\$22,206,000</b> | <b>\$22,817,000</b> | <b>\$45,023,000</b> |

**Source Notes**

1/ Employment for Building 1 and Building 4 provided by PMEDC

2/ Inderect employment based on BLS RIMS II multipliers

3/ Salary information based on average salaries in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

**Income and Retail Tax Generation**

The total payroll generation calculated in Table 4 above is then translated into income tax for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The income tax calculated below assumes that 95% of the workforce reside in the state and shows the total possible tax. Because of the level of detail inherent in this analysis we have not sought to estimate typical deductions for Monroe County/Pennsylvania residents. Total taxable income for the projects employment is just over \$22.2 million with annual income tax of \$647,600 going to the state.

| <b>Employee Category</b>       | <b>BASELINE<br/>Estimated<br/>Number of<br/>FTE Jobs / HH</b> | <b>Average<br/>Earnings/Hour<br/>(1/)</b> | <b>Estimated<br/>Individual<br/>Taxable<br/>Income (2/)</b> | <b>Total<br/>Taxable<br/>Income</b> | <b>BASELINE<br/>Realized<br/>Taxes<br/>Commonwealth (3/)</b> |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Building 1: Distribution       | 373   | \$18.81                                   | \$39,133  | \$14,596,600                        | \$425,710  |
| Building 2: Grocery Store      | 164   | \$13.71                                   | \$28,514  | \$4,669,400                         | \$136,183  |
| Building 3: Retail             | 20  | \$13.46                                   | \$27,995  | \$559,900                           | \$16,329   |
| Building 3: Restaurant         | 56  | \$11.78                                   | \$24,502  | \$1,372,134                         | \$40,018   |
| Building 4: Convenience Retail | 20  | \$13.46                                   | \$27,995  | \$559,900                           | \$16,329   |
| Building 5: Gasoline Station   | 16  | \$13.46                                   | \$27,994  | \$447,900                           | \$13,063   |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>649</b>  |   |   | <b>\$22,205,834</b>                 | <b>\$647,633</b>   |

**Source Notes**

- 1/ Annual wages for a full-time job are estimated by multiplying average wage by 2080 hours
- 2/ Under Pennsylvania law, gross compensation is taxable. No standard deductions or personal exemptions permitted
- 3/ Assumes 95% of employees live in the Commonwealth

Retail sales tax in the Commonwealth is 6.0% of the purchase price. Exempt items, that are included in our analysis, include groceries and clothing. We have assumed that 25% of the general retail purchases will be clothing and thus non-taxable.

|                                      | <b>Restaurant</b>  | <b>General<br/>Retail (3/)</b> | <b>Grocery</b>      | <b>Total</b>        |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Revenue Per Unit (Sales per SF) (2/) | \$300              | \$200                          | \$550               |                     |
| Net Leasable Units (1)               | 10,000             | 22,416                         | 75,000              | 107,416             |
| Net after vacancy                    | 10,000             | 21,295                         | 75,000              | 106,295             |
| <b>Gross Sales</b>                   | <b>\$3,000,000</b> | <b>\$4,259,040</b>             | <b>\$41,250,000</b> | <b>\$48,509,040</b> |
| <b>Sales Tax</b>                     | <b>\$180,000</b>   | <b>\$191,657</b>               | <b>\$0</b>          | <b>\$371,657</b>    |

**Source Notes**

- 1/ Assumes 50% Restaurant and 50% General Retail
- 2/ Retail sales per square foot are estimated as a function of comparable projects in the area
- 3/ Assumes 25% of general retail sales are non-taxable clothing sales

**Overview of the Retail Gasoline Market**

Another component of the analysis is a multi-pump gasoline station. We have accumulated information on the gasoline market in general, and have applied that knowledge and national average data do this prototype project.

According to the NACS Annual Fuels Report in 2011, “the average convenience store in 2009 sold 121,000 gallons of motor fuels per month - approximately 4,000 gallons per day.” Assuming the price per gallon for regular unleaded fuel is \$3.04, the average convenience store could sell \$4,414,080 annually.

While most gas stations make a few cents per gallon sold, much of station profits come from attached convenience stores that cigarettes, coffee, and various types of snack foods.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates independently owned and operated gas stations take between 7 and 10 cents of every gallon sold.

The NACS Annual Fuels Report of 2011 estimates the typical retailer averages about 3 cents per gallon in profit. According to CNNMoney.com crude oil producers like Chevron and British Petroleum (BP) receives the most expensive part of a gallon of gas. CNNMoney.com estimates oil producers get on average \$2.07 per gallon while transportation cost takes the second largest sum at 24 cents per gallon. Refineries like Valero and Sunoco consumes the third largest sum of cost per gallon of fuel. Refineries on average receive roughly 24 cents per gallon of gas sold at gas stations while state and federal taxes consume the rest.

**Prototype Monroe County Project**

A component of the economic and fiscal impact analysis is a seven-pump gas station. To calculate the sales we are using the national average of sales described above.

To calculate the tax implications, on average taxes consume 40 cents of every gallon sold at gas stations. The portion of state taxes are slightly higher than federal taxes as states receive on average 22 cents per gallon sold while the federal government receives 18 cents per gallon sold. The table below is an estimate of the average fuel station distribution of tax per gallon of gas sold.

| <b>Fuel Pump Analysis</b>                                     |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <i>Gallons Sold Per Year</i>                                  | <i>1,452,000</i>    |
| <i>Average Price Per Gallon<br/>(Central Atlantic Region)</i> | <i>\$ 3.04</i>      |
| <i>Annual Fuel Sales</i>                                      | <i>\$ 4,414,080</i> |
| <i>Annual State Tax</i>                                       | <i>\$ 319,440</i>   |
| <i>Annual Federal Tax</i>                                     | <i>\$ 261,360</i>   |

**Summary**

The prototype project described above will have significant impacts on the local and state economy producing over 1,000 new jobs, \$45M in direct and indirect payroll and over one million dollars in sales and income taxes to the Commonwealth. There are additional direct benefits to the County, municipalities and school district beyond those calculated above.