

What is Important to YOU? ECONOMIC CLIMATE!



What are the hot topics and what do we do with them?

For the past six months, in preparation for the Comprehensive Plan update, the Community Participation Team has been collecting your thoughts and ideas on the issues facing James City County. We have read all the input received, which is available for you to examine at www.jccplans.org, and have developed a list of hot topics that are on your minds. Hot topics were strongly related and many comments crossed categories, but generally included the impacts of growth, community character/quality of life, transportation, economic climate, environment, housing, population needs, and water. We are going to highlight the topics on a regular basis leading up to the second round of Community Conversation meetings. **Economic climate will be discussed at the Community Conversation on Tuesday, August 19 from 6-9 p.m. at Jamestown High School, 3751 John Tyler Highway.**

What do we mean by “economic climate”?

The third hot topic we’re highlighting focuses on comments about the County’s economic climate. We heard a strong desire to attract higher paying jobs that provided full-time, year-round employment opportunities. Paired with this was the idea of broadening the tax base to include more non-tourism related jobs with a preference towards clean industries and research and information technology businesses, also known as knowledge-based businesses. Branching out from new retail growth and encouraging the rehabilitation and reuse of existing buildings and shopping centers was also expressed by many citizen comments. Finally, it is important to recognize that in order to attract some of these new businesses to the area, it would be important to invest in the development of technological infrastructure, such as broadband internet service. There were some conflicts related to the desired speed of business growth. Some comments called for selective and controlled business growth, while some supported the need for more business and industrial growth at a faster pace with greater predictability.

How does economic climate affect my daily routine?

The economic climate of James City County affects every aspect of a citizen’s life. Economic vitality influences the number and types of goods and services the County is able to offer and economic growth creates new jobs and shopping opportunities. The cost of living, cost of housing, and quality of life that citizens have come to expect are also influenced by the County’s economic climate. Finally, business and industry growth can result in additional tax revenue for the County to offset the cost of these services provided to the community.

How did we get here and how would the Comprehensive Plan address the issue?

James City County is ideally located on the peninsula to provide for the needs of businesses. As a quickly growing locality, the County has been in a position to support rapid retail growth. In the 2003 Comprehensive Plan citizen’s survey, feedback indicated citizens would support growth in the commercial and industrial sectors to make shopping opportunities more convenient. Due to development patterns in the last five years, opinions gleaned from the 2007 citizen’s survey appear to have shifted away from the desire for additional retail growth. **One of the questions we have for you during the second round of Community Conversations is what types of industries and businesses, including retail, office, and agri-business, do you want to see more or less of in the County.**

The 2008 plan is expected to focus on several areas of the economic climate, including its strong relationship to creating a sustainable community. **Sustainability involves ensuring that the County is left**

in good shape – economically, socially, and ecologically – for future generations. Particularly, a sustainable and stable economy calls for the provision of prosperity and opportunities for all citizens, efficient use of resources, and full consideration of the social and environmental costs and benefits of development.

The Comprehensive Plan update will first take a more in depth look at infill (development of vacant spaces in between existing buildings) and redevelopment (improving areas that are rundown through renovation). Part of this is looking at the redevelopment corridors, Ironbound Road, Jamestown Road, Lightfoot, and Route 60 through Grove, which were established in the 2003 plan. *Are these still the most convenient and appropriate locations for redevelopment given the current status of development and improvements to roads and utilities?* Another aspect is identifying properties within the Primary Service Area that would be good candidates for redevelopment or new development and ensuring that they are designated on the Land Use map to encourage that type of development.

The update will then look at diversifying the County's economic base. Currently, the County's tax revenue is heavily reliant on traditional commercial, retail and service industries (including tourism). Incorporating other potential economic areas, such as agri-business and research and development (R&D), would have positive effects on both the County's tax base and on the diversity of job opportunities offered to current and prospective residents.

With the understanding that County citizens would like to see growth in information technology and clean industry fields, the third area of focus is to look at expanding County broadband capabilities to attract these internet-linked businesses. Such businesses are beneficial to the County both in that they diversify the tax base and often involve less impact on the environment and character of the County.

The final focus, the concept of the "creative class," is an idea to improve the quality of life in the County and attract new businesses and employees to the area. Generally speaking, the creative class is a piece of the population made up of intellectuals, artists, scientists, architects, healthcare professionals and other professions that often require a high degree of formal education or individuals that are compensated for their creative output (as opposed to jobs in the service and manufacturing sectors). It centers on the idea that in order to attract these types of employees, the County needs to be the kind of environment that can retain them by providing for their cultural, creative, and technological needs. The creative class concept also attempts to attract and retain an economically, generationally, and ethnically diverse population. Often, the retention of younger professionals is a large part of the creative class concept. *Help us determine what strategies the County could implement, such as increasing outdoor recreation opportunities, providing more workforce housing and entertainment venues, or recruiting more knowledge-based businesses and higher paying jobs, to attract and retain these younger professionals.*

Where can I go for more information?

- 2003 Comprehensive Plan: <http://www.jccegov.com/government/administration/comp-plan.html>
- JCC Office of Economic Development: <http://www.jccecondev.com>
- Business Climate Task Force findings: <http://www.jccecondev.com/strategy/bcft-report-08.html>
- Creative Class- <http://creativeclass.com/>
- Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance: <http://www.hreda.com/>
- Peninsula Council for Workforce Development: <http://www.pcfwd.org/>
- Virginia Economic Development Partnership: <http://www.yesvirginia.org/>
- Virginia Employment Commission: <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/vecportal/>
- Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance: <http://www.williamsburgcc.com/> [website/](#)