



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 15-009, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 6/3/2015

TITLE:

Route 29 Solutions Business Assistance Program

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Implementation Matrix for Comprehensive Business Assistance Program for Route 29 Solutions Project

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Foley, Catlin, Graham, McClintic, Stimart

PRESENTER (S): Lee Catlin

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Thomas C. Foley

BACKGROUND: The Board has expressed a strong desire to consider strategies and develop a comprehensive business assistance program for businesses in the Route 29 construction areas. Staff presented possible strategies for the Board's consideration during a work session in March. Board members provided feedback and direction regarding the possible strategies and directed staff to bring back final recommendations for their action.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Economic Prosperity: Foster an environment that stimulates diversified job creation, capital investments, and tax revenues that support community goals.

DISCUSSION: Following the March work session, staff developed a preliminary proposal based on the Board's input for further discussion and action. A revised overview of the Business Assistance Program and an implementation matrix that outlines eligibility, timing, lead staff/partners and budget/resource impact for each the final recommended strategies are included as Attachments A and B for the Board's consideration.

As a reminder, the preliminary proposal was based on staff research and feedback from the business community in a variety of formats, including an open house, a stakeholders meeting with the Board of Supervisors, and drop in opportunities in all sectors of the Rio/Route 29 intersection quadrant. Additionally, once the preliminary proposal was developed, it was vetted in the following ways before being presented to the Board in March:

- Reviewed with the Route 29 Solutions Business Assistance subcommittee
- Reviewed with representatives from the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (CVPED)
- Reviewed with representatives from the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Reviewed at drop-in opportunities at locations in the Rio intersection quadrants

Following the Board's March meeting, a meeting was held with the Board Chair and Vice Chair, County staff, and representatives from the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce, including Tim Hulbert, Chamber President and CEO; Chad Zakaib, 2015 Chair; Adrian Felts, First Chair/Chair-Elect; and L. F. Wood, Chair of the North Charlottesville Business Council. The meeting included a good discussion of shared goals and concerns and resulted in commitments from the Chamber that have informed the revised plan that is being presented to the Board on June 3.

Major direction provided by the Board in March included:

- **More specifics on partner commitments as part of the public/private partnership** - staff has received specific commitments from the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce, which are incorporated into the implementation matrix.
- **Coordination with signage efforts** - staff from the County Executive's Office, the Economic Development Office, and the Community Development Department are working cooperatively with the Virginia Department of Transportation to make sure that signage efforts are coordinated and that business issues are being addressed.
- **Waiving of sign fees** - Staff will be coming back to the Board with a proposal for waiving sign fees as part of the Phase 2 and 3 signage discussion in September; exact details will depend on engagement with the business community over the next several months as part of the signage plan outreach.
- **Coordination with the Planning Commission, the Architectural Review Board, and Community Development Department staff** - the business assistance plan has been shared with Community Development Department staff and will be presented to the Planning Commission and the Architectural Review Board following adoption by the Board of Supervisors.
- **Identification of baseline indicators to measure as construction progresses** - Economic Development Office staff has identified aggregated property taxes, aggregated sales taxes and aggregated BPOL taxes for Tier 2 businesses as the most appropriate indicators to measure, and that tracking has been included in the implementation matrix.
- **Elimination of strategies related to direct financial assistance/tax relief** - A majority of the Board did not support further exploration of financial assistance/tax relief strategies, so those items have been removed from the plan.

As has been discussed, while staff is looking for the Board to approve a final program so that work can begin on the identified strategies, the program will remain a work in progress during the course of construction so that it can be adapted to respond to conditions and needs as they occur.

BUDGET IMPACT: While many of the strategies can be accomplished within existing resources, there are several strategies that require additional funds as outlined below. Details about these expenditures, including sources of funding, are contained in the attached implementation matrix. The following reflects proposed funding from Albemarle County:

- Technical support - \$2,000 (an additional \$15,000 to be requested from the Economic Development Authority)
- Marketing - \$150,000 (\$130,000 in the current fiscal year, \$20,000 in FY 17)
- Communications - \$2,000

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board provide any final direction for the initial roll out of the Business Assistance Program and direct staff to begin working on strategies as outlined in the implementation matrix.

Attachment A - Revised Program Description

Attachment B - Implementation Matrix