APPENDIX C

SANFORD - SPRINGVALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Prepared by:

The Sanford - Springvale Chamber of Commerce
and Economic Development

2001
Sanford-Springvale Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development Plan Process

This plan has been developed with significant input from those interested in economic development in Sanford. This effort has been coordinated by the Sanford-Springvale Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development. Every attempt was made to include broad representation from the community and individuals representing economic sectors (manufacturing, retail, services, non-profit, private sector and public sector). This effort has led to an economic development plan that is broad in scope and specific in action.

The components of the process include:

- A brainstorming session to set broad goals and proposed activities.
- An in-depth session to set priorities and to further refine proposed activities.
- Drafting the economic development plan.
- Soliciting comment and input on the draft economic development plan.
- Completion of the final economic development plan.
- Acceptance of the economic development plan by the local governing body.

Background

Historically, Sanford has been known as a manufacturing community and has produced many goods, that were distributed nationally and internationally. Many of these businesses were located in large mill-style buildings, most remain still standing in the community. Many of these manufacturing firms were engaged in what is now called mature industries (shoes, textiles, etc.). A significant portion of these businesses have closed or downsized as operations have been shifted to overseas locations.

As the mature industries waned in Sanford they were replaced by a number of electronic component and assembly firms. Most of these companies were located at the industrial parks in Sanford as manufacturing started shifting away from mill-style buildings. All of these electronics manufacturing and assembly companies were branch facilities of national and international firms.

Over the past decade the unemployment rate in Sanford has consistently been above State and National unemployment averages. This unemployment gap has risen dramatically in the past year due to lay-offs and closures. Interestingly, most area manufacturers indicate that a significant portion of their labor force comes from Sanford. A strong indicator that while unemployment in the region has been low, jobs and employment lost in Sanford has not been replaced at the same rate.
Broadly speaking, the Sanford Economic Development Plan has several major goals - create new employment opportunities, broaden the tax base and fill existing buildings and industrial park land. To accomplish these goals those involved in developing this plan have prioritized broad activities and made suggestions for specific activities. Where possible, the Plan has made recommendations on which organization is the most appropriate implementer or coordinator. It is the feeling that business retention should be the top priority for economic development activities followed by business attraction and business expansion.

**Business Retention**

Business retention is an important part of any community economic development effort. If one business leaves for every one that starts up or relocates there are no net jobs that are created. This is very important in Sanford, which has seen a number of business closures and downsizings over the past several years.

While the Sanford-Springvale Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development is the Town's economic development arm, it cannot do everything due to the size of its staff and complexity of the task. This is true not only for business retention, but for this entire Plan. SSCCED must be the primary implementor of some of the tasks outlined in this plan. It also must work with other organizations, service providers, educational institutions and the municipal staff who can, and do, share responsibility for implementing this Plan.

**Education, workforce**

- $ Business Visitation Program
- $ Education Program
- $ Talent magnet program
- $ Skill training (targeted)

Education and workforce issues are critical to economic growth in Sanford. The SSCCED should be the primary coordinator for the Business Visitation Program. This program should be reviewed to see if it needs to be updated. SSCCED also needs to support the educational, training and skills development offered by others in the community. These educational institutions should have the primary responsibility for program implementation.

**Business**

- $ Co-op purchasing
- $ Attract compatible suppliers/vendors

In its business attraction efforts SSCCED should target compatible outsource businesses as potential opportunities for business relocation.
Community

$ Continue industrial park promotion
$ Affordable housing

While the Town of Sanford is the primary entity for improving the community, the SSCCED should be an active participant in any related municipal projects and activities. In addition, the SSCCED and Sanford Industrial Development Corporation will continue to be responsible for the development of the Sanford Industrial Estates and Sanford Industrial Development Park.

Business Attraction

The SSCCED should have primary responsibility for the development and implementation of the community's business attraction efforts. These efforts should further marketing efforts that have occurred over the past few years. Business attraction efforts should be coordinated with sub-regional and regional efforts to maximize exposure and effectiveness of any activities.

The success of a business attraction effort rests on the desirability of its “product”, which in this case is the Town of Sanford. The SSCCED should maintain its involvement in municipally based projects that are designed to improve the community.

Advertise

$ Continue advertising
$ Print advertising campaign
$ Convince citizens that Sanford-Springvale is a good place to work (internal)
$ Make community more desirable for business
$ Prospective awareness campaign to sell town
$ Direct business visits
$ Trade shows
$ Utilize current businesses in identification of potential business attraction candidates and in business attraction efforts
$ Media campaign

The heart of any business attraction effort is a marketing campaign to advertise the community. This effort should be multi-faceted and incorporate the aspects identified above.

Community Improvements

$ Spec building
$ Improve transportation network
$ Make community more attractive
$ Traffic flow
**Business Expansion**

Business expansion is an important part of any economic development strategy. Existing businesses offer an excellent chance for the growth of a community’s economy and job base as these businesses already exist in the community. Many of these businesses are Chamber members and will most likely let their future development plans be known. It is important that the SSCCED be the focal point for working with businesses looking to expand their operations. In addition, the SSCCED will have a team of local and regional representatives that can be called on to assist in business expansion opportunities.

**Community**

$ Promote the creation of a TIF District  
$ Business appreciation  
$ Fast track approach document (check list)  
$ Target and promote available commercial and industrial space - targeting existing buildings first  
$ One stop shop

**Business**

$ Continue to expand telecommunications  
$ Targeted training opportunities

**Microenterprise/entrepreneur development**

One very important contributor to the long-term economic health of a community is the development of microenterprises. Typically, these are business start-ups or existing operations of less than 5 employees. In all instances, the bulk of employment in any area is heavily dependent on these small or micro enterprises. These small businesses also provide the highest percentage of employment growth. In the long run, local businesses that expand and grow into large businesses will come from these businesses. Any successful economic development in a community will plan for the development of these businesses.

Sanford was fortunate to be the recipient of two grants that will support microenterprise development. The first was a $750,000 grant to develop an advanced composites technology development center that is located in the Sanford Industrial Estates. The SSCCED and SSDC will continue to be heavily involved in the development of this project. The second grant was $125,000 for the development of a microenterprise information center to provide services for York County. This grant was received by the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission to develop the Business Resource Information Center located at the Anderson Learning Center in Springvale. This project needs continued support from the SSCCED and the community.
Organizational

- Promote incubator (composites)
- Banker's organization for financing
- Better utilize Chamber website to show opportunities
- Promote Business Resource Information Center

It was felt that more effort to utilize existing and future technology needs to happen. A top priority for the SSCCED will be to upgrade its website and allow for more links to other websites as well as make it a crucial stop for area businesses and residents.

Support Services

- Be more active on Community Reinvestment Act
- Create tax incentives
- I.D. potential entrepreneurs
- Develop list of available space
- Create start-up training opportunities
- Expand Junior Achievement

Industrial Park Development

The SSCCED and IDC need to maintain the responsibility for the development and oversight of Sanford’s industrial park. There are two primary priorities for the industrial parks. The first priority is to assist in marketing and securing tenants for empty buildings. The second priority is to market any available lands in the industrial parks to potential tenants.

Infrastructure

- Expand airport usage
- TIF’s
- Develop identifiable airport industrial park
- Upgrade Route 109 to turnpike
- Spec building
- Work with public services

Services/Organizations

- Develop contact list of those decision-makers that may be interested in buying
- Advertise in appropriate publications
- Establish and maintain industrial parks cooperative

Downtown Revitalization

The key to any community is its downtown area. It often is the gateway to a community and defines the community. Sanford does not have a single, concentrated downtown area. This plan recognizes that Sanford has three retail areas, each with its own issues and opportunities. The
three areas are Springvale, downtown Sanford and South Sanford. Each of these areas should have its own co-operative group and the SSCCED will be the entity responsible for coordinating start-up efforts. In addition, the SSCCED should be a participant in any municipal efforts for downtown revitalization.

**Infrastructure**
- Parking
- Improve traffic flow
- Pedestrian friendly
- Vehicle friendly

**Services**
- Various contests/programs - themes
- Grant and financing opportunities - municipal and business
- Revise/review past plan
- Identify appropriate business mix to attract prospects

**Intangibles**
- Improve appearance
- Create positive image

Economic development encompasses many different issues, opportunities, activities and organization in a community. As we have noted before SSCCED is limited in size to be the primary player in every economic development related effort in Sanford. The following is a listing of issues that are important to economic development in Sanford. While the SSCCED will not play a lead role in all these issues, they should be involved in some way.

**Education**

**Business**
- Survey needs of businesses
- Expand partnerships between schools and businesses
- Businesses fund adult education
- Encourage businesses to hire high school graduates with an educational benefit

**Community/Primary**
- Promote job shadow activity
- Education department hire full-time volunteer coordinator
- Recognize education as an important cog in economic development
- Promote/publicize successes
- Use school as a resource beyond school day
**On-going/Higher**

$ Develop education plan with vocational center and YCTC and University College at Sanford
$ Re-education program
$ Support adult education

**Transportation**

$ Vehicular
$ Promote safety and improvement of major highways in and out of Sanford
$ Bus to rail system
$ Study Route 109 by-pass
$ Main Street - assess options
$ Encourage pedestrian/bicycle options
$ Major arteries have problems - Routes 111, 109, 202/4

**Air**

$ Promote airfreight system from Sanford Regional Airport
$ Attract air passenger service

**Rail**

$ Rail service to IDC areas

**Public Infrastructure**

**Municipal**

$ Sewer capacity
$ Expand in correlation to urban zone
$ Surrounding community collaborative

**State**

$ I.D. alternative routes from major arteries
$ Improvement of routes from major arteries

**Private**

$ Alternate fuels
$ Backup telecommunications network
$ Alternate telecommunications network

**Housing**

**Affordable**

$ New zoning for high density - creative development
$ Funding for multi-family homes
More apartments
Encourage rehabilitation or demolition of abandoned buildings
Zoning to encourage replacement of old multi-unit housing stock
Investigate mixed-use development

**Market/Single family**
Tax incentives for renovations
Publicize housing advantages and quality of neighborhoods in Sanford
New construction incentives

**Existing Building Revitalization**

**Financing**
Grants and other financing opportunities

**Planning**
Research other community’s successes
Multi-functional approach
Look at revitalization projects
Creative zoning

**Services**
Consider public right of way
Historic designation
Mill yard co-operative

**Economic Development Service Delivery**

This economic development plan recognizes that the SSCCED is the most appropriate entity to implement Sanford’s economic development activities. However, the fact that the SSCCED is not a municipal department will necessitate that communication needs to occur frequently among individuals and organizations. In addition, Sanford needs to continue to maintain it’s place in the regional and State economic development delivery system. The most effective way to do this is through continued involvement in State economic development activities and programs and to continue its involvement in the Southern Maine Economic Development District.

**Structure**
Hire grant writer
Team effort – town government and Chamber of commerce
Partnership – Chamber of Commerce and developers
Increase Chamber staff
Services
$ Expand role of Internet to deliver information
$ Sell importance of economic development to community
$ Maintain active Chamber membership
$ Coordinate recruitment between industries
Assessment of Sanford as Identified by Economic Development Plan Participants

Strengths
1. People - availability, concentration, education
2. Infrastructure - airport, industrial parks, available
3. Education
4. Business concentration
5. Quality of Life

Weaknesses
1. Location - from transportation infrastructure (rail vehicle)
2. Image/perception
3. Community issues - taxation, town government
4. Lack of high tech businesses
5. Labor force and lack of skilled labor pool

Top Issues
1. High unemployment
2. High taxes
3. Municipal issues - town official turnover lack of direction
4. Public Image
5. Zoning

Adopted by the Board of Directors, January 23, 2002