

# **BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

## **Introduction**

Poolesville is a small town that will increase to approximately 6,500 residents during the next 10 years. It is located in the 93,000 acre Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve which makes it an island surrounded by sparsely populated agricultural acreage. The majority of the Town residents commute to work to more densely populated areas in Rockville, Germantown, Frederick, Washington, DC, and northern Virginia. This situation provides both benefits and challenges for the local business community.

## **Business Community Today**

The business community in the Town of Poolesville is comprised of businesses that provide goods and services, primarily for the benefit of Town residents and surrounding area. Some of these businesses are medical offices, banks, day care facilities, a grocery store, a drug store, a hardware store, automobile service and gas stations, HVAC, plumbing, electrical services, restaurants, and retail shopping. Other businesses located in Town and the immediate surrounding area provide services on a regional level and provide employment and other benefits to Town residents.

In addition to Poolesville's store-front establishments and corporate offices, there are a significant number of home-based businesses. Both are vibrant and integral parts of the business community in particular and the larger Poolesville community in general.

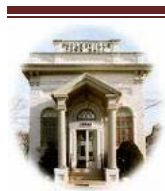
The current customer base for local businesses consists of:

- Local residents
- Students and employees who commute to Poolesville and reside outside the local area
- Commuters who regularly pass through Town
- Visitors to Town and the surrounding area

## **Role of the Business Community**

The small town or village character is a critical component of what makes Poolesville different than many other locations in the county. The key attribute of a small town or village is the harmonious interaction of the residential, commercial, educational and governmental components of the Town. If any one of these three components falters, the entire small town concept is put in jeopardy.

Within the business community as a whole, there are a set of core businesses that serve as anchors for the healthy business interaction. If some of these core businesses fail or otherwise leave Town, there is strong concern that people will take more and more of their shopping activities outside of Town, therefore negatively impacting yet more local



businesses. In some cases, the loss of certain businesses, such as a grocery store or pharmacy could lead to a permanent loss of those types of businesses within Town.

### **Importance of the Business Community**

The business community is vital to the Town, both as a source of basic goods and services and to maintaining Poolesville's quality of life. Without a functioning, attractive, safe and accessible business community residents would be forced to travel some distance for these goods and services.

A vibrant business community provides employment opportunities to residents, builds the Town's tax base, contributes to Poolesville's small town character, provides a place for interaction among residents, and supports local charities, youth athletics and myriad other activities that are the very fabric of the community.

The Town understands the vital role the business community plays and understands that Town residents have expressed their desire to improve the quality of life in Town by having more restaurants and shops. It is necessary for the Town to have a strong business community in order to meet the needs and expectations of its residents. It is important for the Town to work with the business community to ensure that these needs and expectations are met. To this end, the Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC) was founded as a part of the Town government as recommended in the 2005 Master Plan. The CEDC is composed of a cross-section of Town residents, Town government staff/officials, and members of the business community. The Committee's role is to promote a greater sense of community and generate support for existing businesses while promoting the establishment of new compatible businesses.

Conversely, the businesses in the Town and surrounding area need to remain aware of its responsibility to the community. To maximize success, it's important for businesses to work together (e.g., through the Chamber of Commerce) with other businesses, the Town, and the residents. Joint marketing efforts, standard operating hours, and special promotions keying off of Town, school, and athletic events can all contribute to business success and enhanced experiences for Town residents and visitors.

### **Goals and Initiatives**

The business vision for this Master Plan proposes a number of specific goals identified through data-gathering activities conducted over the past five years. These activities included surveys of businesses and residents, a market study, and focus group meetings. The prevailing message to come from these activities was that every effort should be made to preserve Poolesville's small town character while expanding and supporting the business community.



The following initiatives are recommended by the Town in recognition of this positive community dialogue:

**1. Support a town center and town gateway concept**

- Try to blend the existing strip malls into a core town center area
- Create a town center that serves as a social magnet for residents and visitors to walk, shop, dine, and interact
- Create gateways at the east and west entrances to the town center with a roundabout at the east and an architectural structure at the west
- Encourage multi-use in-fill development in the town center with on street or rear parking
- Incorporate pedestrian and bike friendly designs into any changes to the town center area
- Budget each year for the incremental relocation of overhead utility lines to underground

**2. Continue to implement the Town's streetscape plan**

**3. Work with the County and State to provide incentives to specialty and unique businesses to locate in Poolesville**

**4. Pursue, to locate in Poolesville, non-retail businesses that will maintain a workforce in Town during the business day. This workforce will provide a new and expanded customer base for other retail businesses, restaurants, and service businesses in Town.**

