

# Talbot COUNTY

Economic Development  
*Our People Make It Work*



Talbot County Strategic Plan for Economic Development (2018–2022)



## ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

Talbot County sits at the very heart of Maryland's Eastern Shore and is rich in both history and tradition. With more than 600 miles of shoreline, it is home to some of America's most charming coastal towns, thriving villages, and picturesque and productive farmland.

At the same time, Talbot County offers a wealth of opportunities for economic development. We believe that the unique Chesapeake lifestyle that defines the region can go hand-in-hand with business opportunity, if carefully planned and nurtured.

The following strategic plan provides the details of our vision to build a community where Talbot County's citizens and businesses thrive together. This county possesses every advantage as an ideal place to live and work, as well as a premier travel destination for visitors seeking an authentic Chesapeake Bay experience.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to chart our long-term course, improve the services we provide to the citizens of Talbot County, and maximize the human and capital resources at our disposal. The plan is intended as a roadmap for the next five years, from 2018–2022. However, if implemented effectively, it will have benefits that extend much further into the future.

Our vision statement is meant to capture the aspirational future of Talbot County, while our mission statement describes the overarching purpose and methods of accomplishment. In addition, we have identified strategic goals with associated actions and indicators of success.

**While we are certain that these goals and measures will evolve, we are equally certain that the foundation established here represents a powerful starting point for an inclusive conversation among all stakeholders.** We anticipate future budget and policy recommendations that will tie to this plan.

The **values** we ascribe to in Talbot County anchor this strategic plan. Our region's rich past is a compass for our future. We are proud of the natural beauty and many advantages this county possesses. We are even more proud of the energy and spirit of our citizens. This strategic plan pays tribute to the values we all hold dear.

- **Sustainability** applies in many ways to our role as stewards—of our environment, our citizens tax dollars, and the legacy we share. We care for our resources and manage them wisely.
- **Inclusivity** is the belief that all of our County's citizens have value and potential. Synergy is born of their collective voice. We are committed to representing the interests of all.
- **Innovation** is the creative energy that catalyzes our efforts. We will be a national leader in the best practices of public service.
- **Economic Strength** is the engine that sustains and improves our lives. We will promote a strong local economy through maintaining low tax rates, retaining local talent, and removing barriers to business.

We commit ourselves to accountability to ensure that these values are a part of everything we do.



Cassandra M. [Signature]      [Signature]      [Signature]



**“THINK LITTLE GOALS AND EXPECT LITTLE ACHIEVEMENTS.  
THINK BIG GOALS AND WIN BIG SUCCESS.”—D.J. Schwartz**

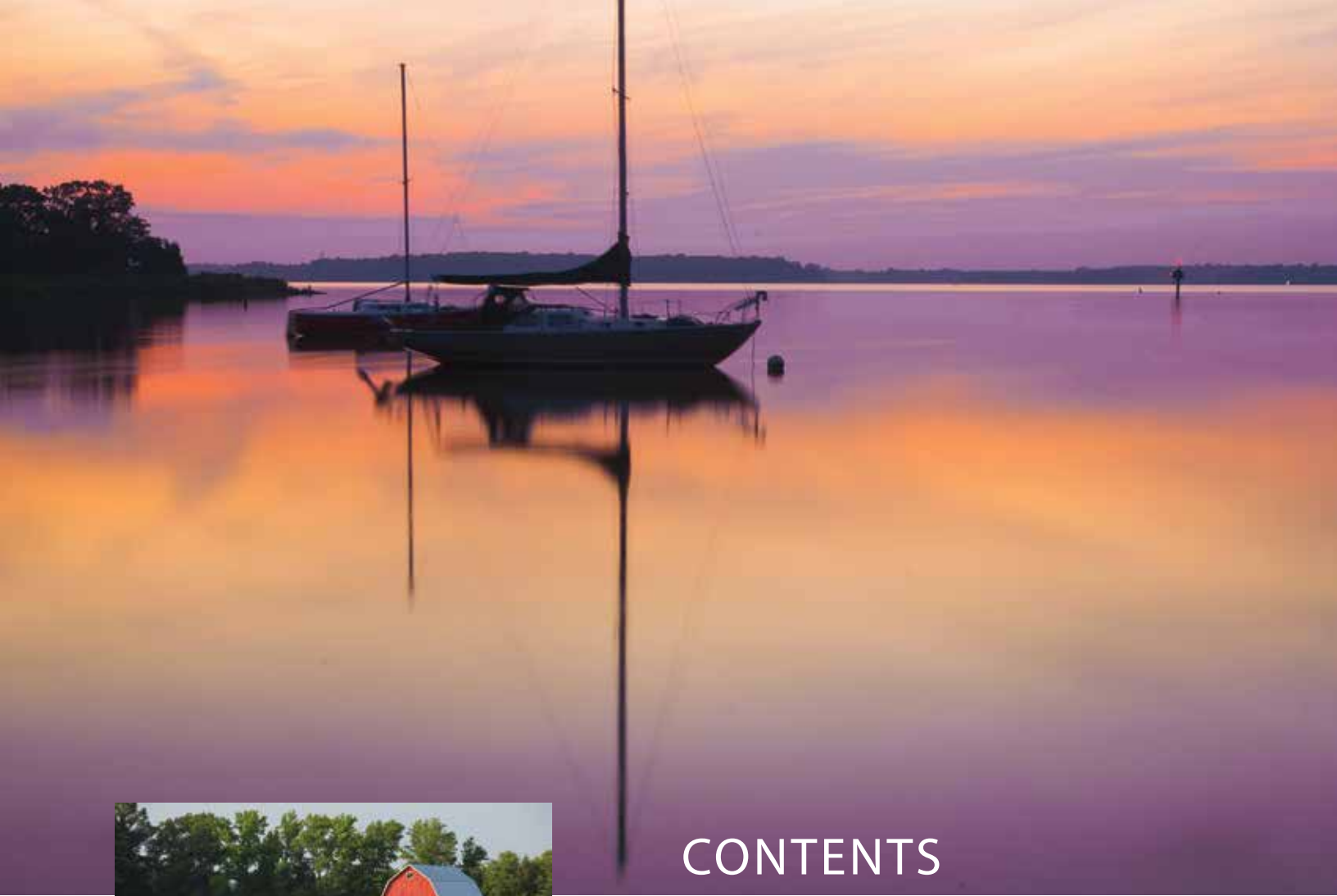


## **VISION**

Strong Communities  
Empowered Businesses  
Innovative Solutions

## **MISSION**

To enhance and promote a business-friendly environment for current and prospective enterprises and to advocate for policies that support and strengthen the economic vitality of Talbot County.



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# OVERVIEW OF TALBOT COUNTY



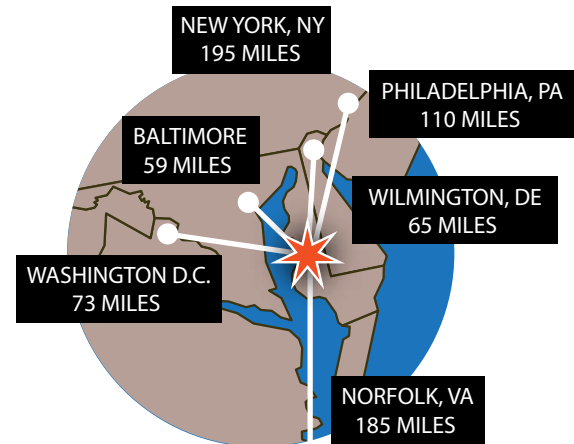
Talbot County is surrounded by the Chesapeake Bay with five river systems, agricultural fields, and forested wetlands that provide a stable base for selected business growth. Aviation and marine services, agriculture, food production, healthcare services, small manufacturing, test labs, and technologies that monitor the environment have been targeted as sectors for growth.

Eight industrial parks offer secure sites ready for the development process with high-speed redundant internet connections, infrastructure capacity, and access to major roadways. Talbot County offers the lowest real property tax rate in the state and the second lowest income tax rate as incentives for a competitive advantage.

The town of Easton and the surrounding area serves as the county's economic hub, attracting workers from around the region. Approximately 30 percent of the working-age population commutes to jobs out of the county on a daily basis.

Located just east of the I-95 corridor on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Talbot County is also conveniently located within a 90-minute commute of downtown Baltimore and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Transportation links connect residents and visitors to Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI), the Port of Baltimore, and the Mid-Atlantic metropolitan market.

U.S. Route 50 bisects Talbot County and serves as a major north-south transportation thoroughfare for the Delmarva Peninsula. U.S. Route 301 is a truck transport corridor linking Wilmington, Delaware, with points north and Washington, D.C., with points south.



## DEMOGRAPHICS



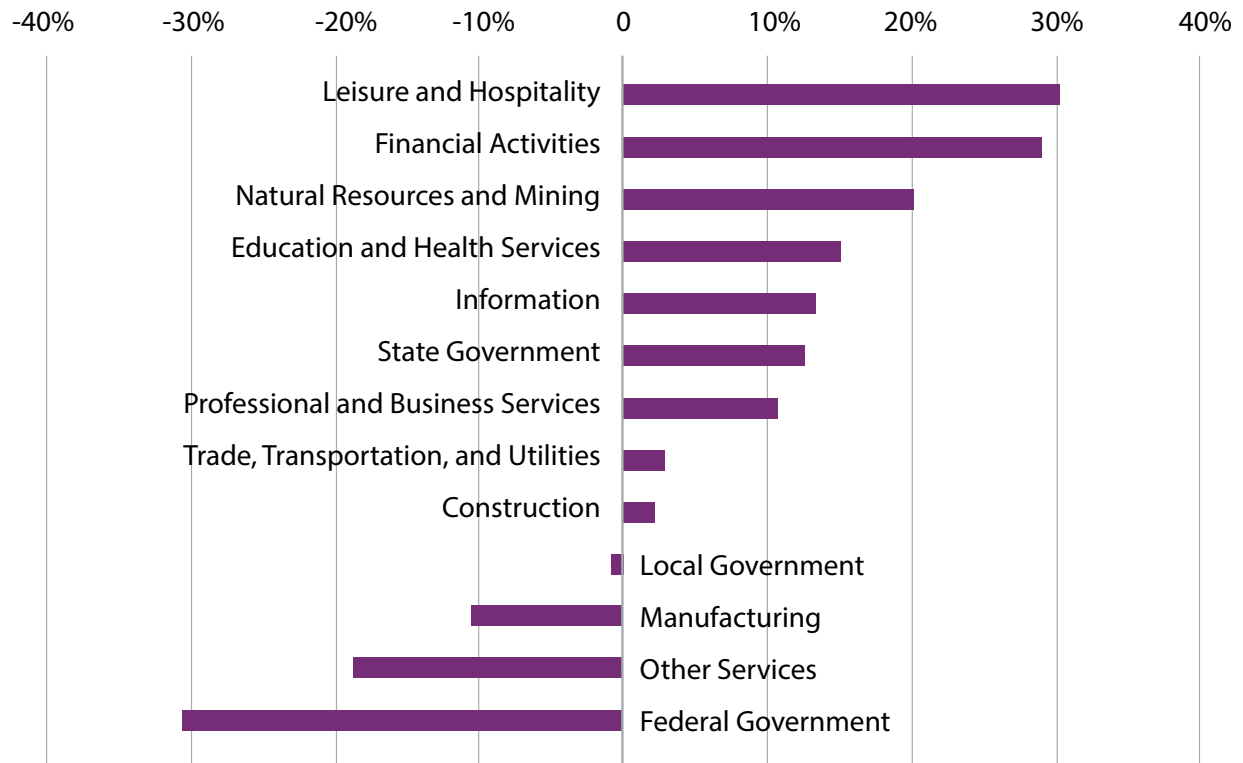
## WORKFORCE

**Percent Change in Employment by Major Industry: 2010-2016**

Industry	Employment 2010	Employment 2016	% change 2010-16
Leisure and Hospitality	2,498	3,248	30%
Financial Activities	778	1,002	29%
Natural Resources and Mining	76	91	20%
Education and Health Services	3,625	4,162	15%
State Government	201	225	12%
Information	281	316	12%
Professional and Business Services	2,508	2,772	11%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	3,280	3,398	4%
Construction	904	929	3%
Local Government	1,413	1401	-1%
Manufacturing	893	799	-11%
Other Services	1,004	820	-18%
Federal Government	300	208	-31%
Source: DLLR, BLS, QCEW			

**WORKFORCE**

**Percent Change in Employment by Major Industry: 2010-2016**



Source: DLLR, BLS, QCEW

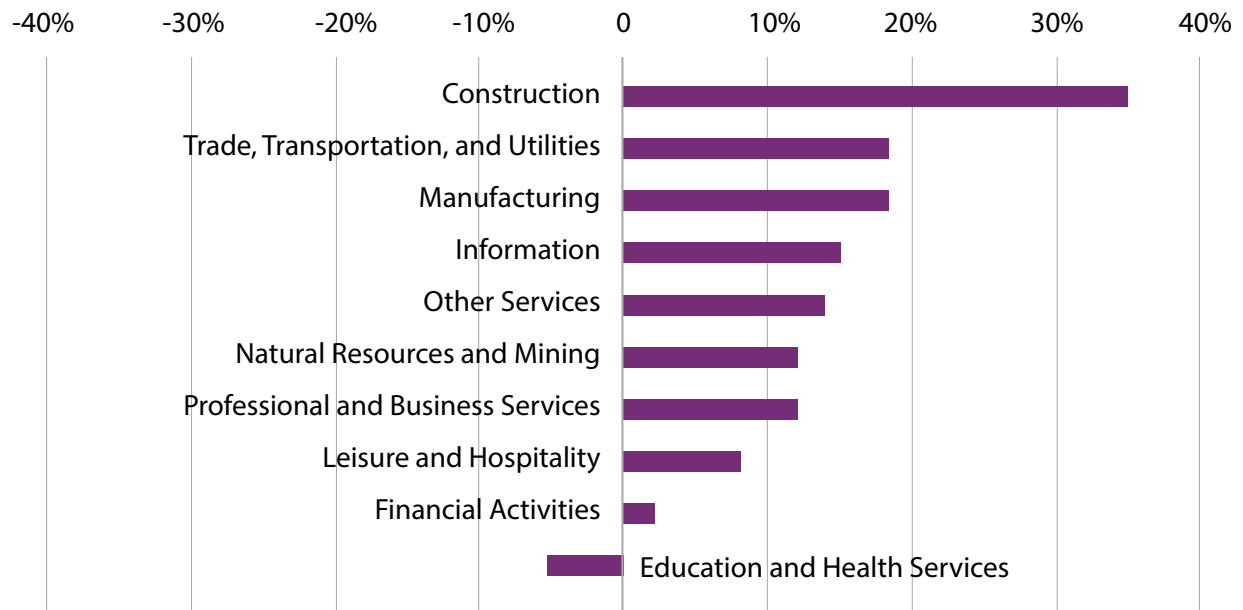
**Average Weekly Wages by Major Industry: 2010-2016**

Industry	Av. weekly Wage 2010 \$	Av. weekly Wage 2016 \$	% change 2010-16
Construction	565	758	34%
Manufacturing	762	898	18%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	737	870	18%
Information	548	629	15%
Other Services	349	397	14%
Natural Resources and Mining	851	952	12%
Professional and Business Services	1,039	1,161	12%
Leisure and Hospitality	874	942	8%
Financial Activities	793	808	2%
Education and Health Services	859	820	-5%

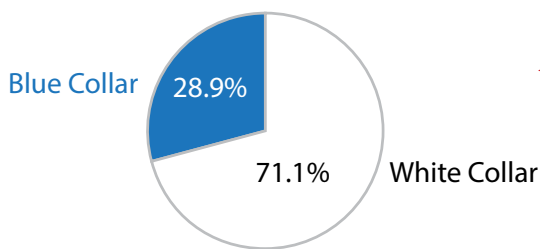
Source: DLLR, BLS, QCEW



## Industries with Largest Weekly Wage Growth: 2010-2016



Source: DLLR, BLS: QCEW



### EDUCATION

High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 89.2%

Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 35.8%

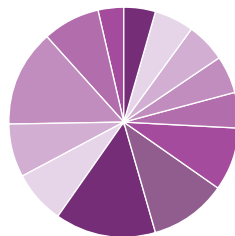


Persons under 5: 4.5%

Persons under 18: 18.5%

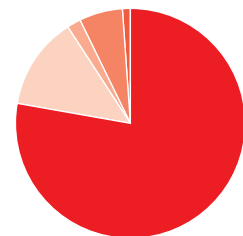
Persons 65 and over: 27.9%

Persons in civilian labor force, age 16 years+ : 59.4%



### POPULATION

Under 5 years	1,762
5 to 9	2,063
10 to 14	2,120
15 to 19	2,025
20 to 24	1,853
25 to 34	3,411
35 to 44	4,067
45 to 54	5,348
55 to 59	2,850
60 to 64	2,850
65 to 74	5,206
75 to 84	3,058
85 years+	1,281
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,894</b>



### RACE

White	29,703
African American	4,778
American Indian/Alaskan	15
Asian	569
Pacific Islander	24
Hispanic/Latino	2,228
Others	94
Combined Races	483
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>37,894</b>



**26.6** minutes

Mean travel time to work for ages 16 years+

**BUSINESS**

**16,767**

Total Employment

**1,452**

Total Employer Establishments\*

**4,287**

Total Non-Employer Establishments

**1,821**

Women-Owned Firms\*

**538**

Minority-Owned Firms

**MAJOR EMPLOYERS 2018**

EMPLOYER	EMPLOYMENT
University of Maryland Shore Regional Health	1,640
Quality Health Strategies	474
Shore Bancshares, Inc.	350
Integrace Bayleigh Chase	267
APG Media of Chesapeake	220
Chesapeake Center	198
Genesis HealthCare/The Pines	170
EAG Laboratories	160
Inn at Perry Cabin by Belmond	160
Chesapeake Building Components	155
Aphena Pharma Solutions	135
The Whalen Company	116
Comfort Keepers	115
YMCA of Talbot County	115
Tidewater Inn	100
Sea Watch International	95
Willow Construction	88
Konsyl Pharmaceuticals	65
Celeste Industries Corporation	60

**MAJOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYERS 2018**

Talbot County Public Schools	614
Talbot County	386
Easton Utilities	146
Town of Easton	133



**EASTON AIRPORT**

Total Employment: 483 Jobs  
 Business Revenue: \$42,461,000  
 Personal Income: \$20,060,000  
 State and Local Taxes: \$2,126,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Business Owners

Definition of Establishment and Firm:

\* An establishment is a single physical location at which business is conducted or where services or industrial operations are performed. It is not necessarily identical with a company or enterprise, which may consist of one establishment or more. For a complete definition, visit [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

Included are all nonfarm businesses filing Internal Revenue Service tax forms as individual proprietorships, partnerships, or any type of corporation, and with receipts of \$1,000 or more. The SBO covers both firms with paid employees and firms with no paid employees. The SBO is conducted on a company or firm basis rather than an establishment basis. For a complete definition, visit [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

## TAXES

Combined State and County Real Property Tax Rate (\$ per hundred)	
County	Rate
<b>Talbot County</b>	<b>\$0.66</b>
Montgomery County	\$0.89
Worcester County	\$0.95
Queen Anne's County	\$0.96
St. Mary's County	\$0.96
Anne Arundel County	\$1.03
Washington County	\$1.06
Wicomico County	\$1.06
Calvert County	\$1.06
Dorchester County	\$1.09
Allegany County	\$1.09
Caroline County	\$1.09
Garrett County	\$1.10
Cecil County	\$1.10
Prince George's County	\$1.11
Somerset County	\$1.11
Howard County	\$1.13
Carroll County	\$1.13
Kent County	\$1.13
Harford County	\$1.15
Frederick County	\$1.17
Baltimore County	\$1.21
Charles County	\$1.32
Baltimore City	\$2.36

Maryland Income Tax Rate	
County	Rate
Worcester County	1.75%
<b>Talbot County</b>	<b>2.40%</b>
Anne Arundel County	2.50%
Dorchester County	2.62%
Garrett County	2.65%
Caroline County	2.73%
Calvert County	2.80%
Cecil County	2.80%
Washington County	2.80%
Baltimore County	2.83%
Kent County	2.85%
Frederick County	2.96%
St. Mary's County	3.00%
Carroll County	3.03%
Charles County	3.03%
Allegany County	3.05%
Harford County	3.06%
Somerset County	3.15%
Baltimore City	3.20%
Howard County	3.20%
Montgomery County	3.20%
Prince George's County	3.20%
Queen Anne's County	3.20%
Wicomico County	3.20%



## STRATEGIC GOALS

The Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism has identified five broad strategic goals to accomplish this vision. Each is rooted in a series of outreach sessions conducted during the Spring and Summer of 2017.

More than 300 community participants provided feedback on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing Talbot County's future. Stakeholders represented citizen concerns from Easton, Oxford, St. Michaels, Tilghman Island, and Trappe. Each individual forum included a diverse blend of people from education, not-for-profits, local government, and various industries.

This office owes a debt of gratitude to all participants for their time and willingness to offer input. The strategic goals for 2018–2022 and beyond are articulated on the next page.







The Whalen Company

## DEVELOP AGGRESSIVE BUSINESS RETENTION STRATEGY

### ➔ SHOW BUSINESSES THEY ARE VALUED

Host business appreciation events and initiatives.  
*i.e. Business Appreciation Breakfast, featured business social media posts, Economic Development Week promotion, and regular retention meetings.*

### ➔ DEVELOP RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

**to respond to business concerns that require immediate action**

Identify team and determine actions that need to be taken.

*i.e. Business attraction inquiries, business relocation out of the county, county legislative and regulatory issues, and others.*

### ➔ CREATE BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDES

Publish guides on Talbotworks.org and use to attract newsletter subscribers and referrals.

*i.e. Doing Business in Talbot County, How to Expand Your Business.*

### ➔ WORK WITH DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES (DES)

**to create natural disaster mitigation plan for the business community**

Work with DES and other key stakeholders to develop an action plan on how to respond to help the business community after natural disasters occur.

### ➔ HOST SERIES OF EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUMS AND WORKSHOPS

Topics include succession planning, funding and financing, social media, website development, and insurance.



Trident Aircraft

## DEVELOP AGGRESSIVE BUSINESS ATTRACTION STRATEGY

### ➔ ENGAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TO IDENTIFY TARGETED INDUSTRIES

Conduct industry analysis/assessment.

Conduct assessment of the state of retail in Talbot County to best target quality retail, restaurants, and food businesses.

### ➔ LAUNCH TARGETED INDUSTRIES CAMPAIGN

Develop strategy for attracting companies in targeted industries.

### ➔ DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

Launch a digital marketing strategy.

### ➔ LEVERAGE MARQUEE EVENTS to entertain prospective businesses and site selectors



Oxford-Bellevue Ferry

## DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN AND PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY

- ➔ **DEVELOP MARKETING PLAN TO BETTER ATTRACT A QUALIFIED WORKFORCE**  
with an emphasis on recruiting the millennial generation

Partner with Mid-Shore Regional Council to launch regional marketing initiative.

- ➔ **DEVELOP PROCESS TO BETTER TRACK VITAL ECONOMIC DATA**

Work with Mid-Shore Regional Council to develop a web-based economic dashboard featuring the most current economic data.

- ➔ **ENGAGE IN ONGOING PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**  
to underscore the advantages of doing business in Talbot County

Host periodic listening sessions to gather input from the business community.

Promote Talbot County's business success.

Actively seek speaking engagements with local civic organizations.





Tilghman Island, Maryland

## ADVOCATE FOR COUNTY LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT THE RETENTION, EXPANSION, AND ATTRACTION OF BUSINESSES

### ➔ ADVOCATE FOR STRATEGIC EXPANSION OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Work with businesses to identify critical infrastructure needs and collaborate with Towns, County, and State to meet those needs.

### ➔ ADVOCATE FOR TOURISM-RELATED POLICIES THAT ENHANCE TALBOT COUNTY'S MIX OF DESTINATION PRODUCTS

Work with County Planning and Zoning and County Council to have agritourism added to the County Land Use Code and help them start and grow.

Work with County Planning and Zoning and County Council to have craft beverage industries added to the County Land Use Code.

### ➔ ADVOCATE FOR STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Work with County Planning and Zoning, Public Works, and other stakeholders to identify priority initiatives that can positively impact business retention and growth.





Greg Gannon, Cecil H. Gannon & Sons, Inc.

## CREATE SECTOR-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- ➔ **DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY WORKFORCE ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS**  
for primary industries in Talbot County
- ➔ **PROMOTE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AS PART OF COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**
- ➔ **FORMALIZE PARTNERSHIPS**  
with other workforce agencies and stakeholders

# LISTENING SESSION FEEDBACK

## STRENGTHS

- Quality of life
- Health services
- Location
- Airport
- Education
- Availability of industrial land
- Heritage
- Access to water
- Arts and entertainment
- Well-preserved environment
- Philanthropy and non-profits
- People

## CHALLENGES

- Lack of workforce
- Talent retention
- Attracting millennials
- Lack of obtainable housing
- Lack of knowledge regarding available jobs
- Revenue cap
- Transportation
- Business succession planning
- Broadband and cell service
- Negotiating government regulations
- Empty storefronts
- Seasonality of businesses
- Come heres vs. from heres

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Business opportunities for entrepreneurs
- Facilitate partnerships
- Business advocacy
- Market assets
- Technical assistance
- Financial assistance
- Business attraction

# COMMISSION ROSTER

*We would like to offer our sincere thanks to the members of the Talbot County Economic Development Commission and the many members of the community who contributed their time and expertise to helping create this document.*

**Timothy Jones, Chairman**

Vice President, Administrative Services  
Chesapeake College

**Alan Silverstein, Vice Chairman**

President and CEO  
Talbot County Chamber of Commerce

**Ted Bautz**

Commercial Realtor, Oxford Commercial

**Lloyd "Scott" Beatty**

President and CEO, Shore Bancshares, Inc.

**Walter Chase**

Councilman, Town of Trappe

**Shannon Potter Dill**

Director, UME Talbot County

**Peter Dunbar**

Representative, Town of Oxford

**Ron Engle**

Councilman, Town of Easton

**Margaret Enloe**

Executive Director, Waterfowl Chesapeake

**Mike Henry**

Manager, Easton Airport

**Andrew Hollis**

County Manager, Talbot County

**Andrea Lev**

Executive Director, Integrate Bayleigh Chase

**Gerald O'Mara**

Agriculture

**Clayton Railey Ph.D.**

Vice President for Workforce and Academic Programs  
Chesapeake College

**Terenda Thomas**

Upper Shore Labor Exchange Administrator  
Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

**Craig Wanner**

President and CEO, The Whalen Company

**Jean Weisman**

Town Manager, Town of St. Michaels

**Jennifer Williams**

Council President, Talbot County Council

**Jacqueline Wilson**

Vice President, Provident State Bank

**Cassandra Vanhooser**

Director, Talbot County  
Economic Development and Tourism



**Talbot County Council 2014–2018**

Jennifer L. Williams, President and Liaison  
to the Economic Development Commission

Corey W. Pack, Vice President

Dirck K. Bartlett

Chuck F. Callahan

Laura E. Price



