

Chapter 7: Economic Development

Survey Results

Economic Overview

1. In your opinion, what level of impact has the national economic recession had in the Oxford Region?
 - 1 Severe
 - 7 Significant
 - 5 Moderate
 - 2 Slight
 - 0 None
 - 1 Don't know

2. What statement best describes your impression of the current employment environment in the Oxford Region:
 - 12 Job losses are occurring
 - 4 The number of jobs is remaining steady
 - 0 Jobs are experiencing growth
 - 0 Don't know

3. Which do you view as the top growth industries in the Region? (please select all that apply)
 - 12 Agriculture
 - 7 Utilities/Energy/Smart Energy
 - 6 Retail Sales
 - 6 Education
 - 4 Manufacturing
 - 4 Health Care/ Bio-Science
 - 3 Finance/Insurance
 - 2 Construction
 - 2 Other: ___Amish (2); Housing
 - 0 Don't know

4. How important is sustaining agriculture to the regional economy?
 - 14 Very
 - 2 Somewhat
 - 0 Not at all
 - 0 Don't know

5. Which of the following issues are of concern to the Region's farmers? (please select all that apply).

- 13 Next generation farmers
- 9 Access to markets
- 7 Access to capital
- 2 Workforce development
- 1 Local branding
- 0 Other:
- 2 Don't know

Business Retention and Expansion

6. Are you aware of any businesses that have recently completed or have plans for expansion of facilities?

- 12 Yes
- 4 No

If yes, please list: **Mushroom cannery in Oxford (4); Lincoln University (2); CVS (2); Herr's (3); Oakshire mushrooms; Outback Trading Company, Oxford Feed and Grain (2); Walmart, Lowes Distribution (2); Dunkin Donuts (3) currently on hold with DEP**

7. Are you familiar with incentive programs available through the state or the county that can assist with business expansion?

- 4 Yes
- 12 No

If yes, please list: **economic development council; SBA; Lowe's Distribution; DCED**

8. Do your municipal ordinances include incentives for businesses to utilize "green" development or construction standards and/or to implement energy conservation measures?

- 2 Yes
- 12 No
- 2 Don't Know

If yes, please provide detail: **Have not heard of any discussion at meetings.**

Business Growth and Development

9. Which of the following do you believe are helpful in attracting and sustaining businesses in the Oxford Region? (please select all that apply)

- 10 Quality of life
- 9 Development opportunities
- 9 Regional location
- 8 Availability of workers
- 8 Transportation system
- 6 Cost of housing
- 5 Existing support businesses
- 4 Education system

- 4 Tax structure
- 1 Other: Railroad
- 0 Don't know

10. Which of the above do you feel is the Region's greatest economic asset?
 Transportation; Central location to major cities and residents; rail and interstate highway (2); regional location between Phila., Baltimore, Lancaster, Wilmington (4); open space/farming; available to major travel corridors – 95 & 1; Agriculture; Quality of Life (3); development opportunities (commercial/industrial).

Most underutilized asset? Development opportunities; Tax structure; Railroad (2); transportation system (2); availability of workers (2); regional location (2); cost of housing- most new residents work elsewhere; education system.

11. Are you aware of any businesses looking to locate in the Region (e.g. Walmart)?
 11 Yes 5 No

If yes, please list: Walmart (5); Produce Auction (2); Lowes (5), Dunking Donuts; CVS.

Any potential businesses that have decided not to come?

2 Yes 12 No

If yes, please list: Lowes Distribution (2); Walmart

Economic Infrastructure

12. In general, how would you rate the current condition of the following forms of infrastructure needed to support Oxford Region's businesses and employment centers?

Highway system:

3 Excellent 7 Good 5 Fair 1 Poor 0 Don't know

Local roadways and bridges:

0 Excellent 7 Good 7 Fair 2 Poor 0 Don't know

Sanitary sewer systems:

0 Excellent 3 Good 4 Fair 8 Poor 1 Don't know

Water supply:

2 Excellent 8 Good 3 Fair 2 Poor 1 Don't know

Communications and information technology:

0 Excellent 8 Good 5 Fair 3 Poor 0 Don't know

Rail Freight:

0 Excellent 2 Good 10 Fair 3 Poor 1 Don't know

Comments: No viable public transportation, increasing traffic congestion; local roadways definitely need improvement, poorly drained and sloped, too narrow cartway, no shoulder; sanitary sewer lacks capacity, must purchase water from C.W.A. to supplement; rail is underutilized.

13. In your opinion, does the Oxford Region offer adequate public transportation options for residents who do not own cars?

2 Yes 10 No 2 Don't know

Workforce Development

14. Are you aware of any residents who have lost their jobs in the last year?

11 Yes 4 No 0 Don't know

If so, from what industries? Everything; construction (5); GM; every type: medical, financial, labor, etc.; housing development, engineering, surveying; manufacturing (2) (Newark plant); tech.

15. Are you aware of any upcoming layoffs by employers in the region?

2 Yes 9 No 5 Don't know

16. Does your municipality offer referral to services for residents who are out of work?

0 Yes 10 No 5 Don't know

Economic Growth Management

17. Are you aware of any brownfield or grayfield sites (abandoned or underutilized commercial or industrial properties) that have potential for redevelopment/reuse?

11 Yes 4 No 1 Don't know

If yes, please provide detail: Cloud landfill; south of, and parallel to, Route 1 corridor; many empty buildings in Borough (2); landfill; Russellville – Old Limestone Rd. and 896; Rt. 1 – East Nottingham; The old Cabinet Mill, subsequently ATAC (2) east of south 3rd street at southern end of town.

Would you support this type of redevelopment for new or expanding businesses?

15 Yes 0 No

18. Do you support the development of undeveloped land for commercial or industrial uses, if located in appropriate areas?

16 Yes 0 No 0 Don't know

If yes, please comment: The lack of commercial/industrial tax base businesses is detrimental to this area. We need commercial development in the appropriately designated areas to help offset the high taxes; As long as AG land remains undisturbed; if it follows zoning and comp plan, creating jobs and helps tax base; industrial/commercial development would help tremendously with the taxes for the residents; our region needs commercial and industrial tax base; only within the context of the multimunicipal comp plan that will be adopted; relief for tax base; not much left inside boro limits but any acceptable installation that would improve tax base would help.

19. In the last year, has your municipality granted re-zonings of commercial or industrial land to residential?

2 Yes 13 No 1 Don't know

20. In your opinion, how important is the vitality of the Oxford Borough Downtown business district to the greater regional economy?

9 Very 2 Somewhat 5 Not at all 0 Don't know

21. Are you familiar with the achievements and/or current initiatives of the Oxford Borough Main Street program?

15 Yes 1 No

Planning and Coordination

22. Does your municipality support the events and activities coordinated by the Oxford Area, or Southern Chester County, Chambers of Commerce?

11 Yes 1 No 4 Don't know

Other Comments: Entice low environmental impact industry and manufacturing into existing brown- and grayfields areas, provide adequate and reliable transportation (freight and public transit). This increases job availability, reduces residential tax burden, and reduces burdens on existing infrastructure that new residential development brings.

Please contact **Kathy McCarthy** with any questions or comments: 610-344-6285 or kmccarthy@chesco.org