

Made in Fairfax Forum

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Notes on proceedings

Introduction – Why Fairfax County is doing this initiative

- Facilitate creative re-use of surplus retail and commercial spaces
- Build unique and “local” identity for County’s traditional commercial districts

What is “Small-Scale Production”? (SSP)

- All kinds of small businesses that produce a tangible good.
- Consumer facing or whole sale.
- About scale of business and how it fits in community.
- Results: vibrant place w/ vibrant economy that brings people together.
- Surveys. “People want places to gather”; SSP’s can offer part of that
- Scaling businesses- sometimes part time sometimes full time. Examples:
 - Soap selling and making in same small store front
 - Prototyping to scaling production (shirts making for bands)
 - Brewery

Why is SSP growing?

- Weakening retail and office market; SSP is another use that compliments
- Need for middle income jobs; SSP can offer that
- Taps neighborhood energy: People will go out of way to buy from neighbors

Where is SSP happening? (examples)

- Fremont, CA - City of Fremont is 5 bedroom communities. Didn’t have downtown so needed a distinctive marker “weirdification strategy”.
- Knoxville, TN – Mayor’s Maker Council and “The Maker City” Directory. City provides funds for Knoxville entrepreneur center
- Baltimore, MD - Created pop-up shop.

County Assets for SSP:

- High-income population spending
- Well connected communities
- A diverse and international population
- Great facilities and a lot of advantages from county.
- Small business development centers in Fairfax support small businesses
- Flexibility in what you can do with spaces- the county gives flexibility
- PARKING.
- New Metro line to give better access to more of the county
- Available space in commercial areas
- A lot of networking opportunities, chambers, business associations, groups.
- Great and vibrant schools

- Access World class distribution and logistics networks
- Being close to DC, but not being in DC
- Pretty good public transportation
- Large commercial spaces available at low costs
- SSP could be biz path vs college
- People with untapped potential
- Lots of volunteers

County Challenges for SSP:

- Cost of commercial real estate in FC
- Cost vs location for SSP
- Program that takes business owners and shows space and how to do this.
- Getting base of people that can work together well
- Creating critical mass for multiple businesses to be successful together
- Public transportation issue- good network but hours have decreased.
- Parking- requirements change depending on area changes with new uses
- Using imagination and not dealing with what is and not what can be.
- Education to overcome biases.
- Nimbyism.
- Walkability, some areas or not very walkable
- Someone to become organizer to partner for capital for space and capital
- Access to mentors and resources
- Need for mall revitalization
- Fairfax county permitting process is a huge challenge
- Getting people that own real estate- to understand and think about it being used as a production place and not store front

Locations that might work for SSP:

- Town of Vienna – create light industrial zone for SSP
- Reston – Lake Anne Village
- Reston Silver Line Corridor
- Springfield Town Center
- All the Fairfax County Revitalization Districts
- Walkable areas
- Old Town Fairfax
- Warehouses around Mosaic District
- Chantilly – near 28
- WOD Trail
- FC – Public School Training centers, Davis – Tyson, Pulley – Mt. Vernon, Alex., near Lorton artists, Vienna vacated restaurant
- Near George Mason U – County-owned Property
- Across 29 from Mosaic, along Prosperity Drive

- Empty big box commercial properties
- Transit accessible
- Govt. owned prop near Herndon
- Near Lorton Workhouse
- Near Herndon
- Vacated restaurants with full kitchen set-up