

**Supporting The Findings And Recommendations Of The 2020 Final Report And Plan Completed By The Ulster 2040 Working Group**

Referred to: The Economic Development, Tourism, Housing, Planning and Transit Committee (Chairman Cahill and Legislators Archer, Corcoran, Delaune, Litts, Maio, and Uchitelle), and The Ways and Means Committee (Chairman Gavaris and Legislators Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, Ronk, and Walter)

Chairman of the Economic Development, Tourism, Housing, Planning, and Transit Committee, Brian B. Cahill, and Deputy Chair Herbert Litts, III offer the following:

WHEREAS, this Resolution has been submitted at the request of the County Executive on behalf of the Department of Economic Development; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Local Law Number 5 of 2019, the Ulster County Legislature established the Department of Economic Development in order to facilitate economic growth, attract business, and increase investment and development in and for the County; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature recognizes the importance of having a plan that provides a sound basis for implementation of economic development strategies to coordinate the collective activities of the Department and other economic development partners and to focus strategic economic development efforts, and

WHEREAS, federal stimulus and recovery funding available to Ulster County and its municipalities presents a unique opportunity to invest in our local economy to enhance resiliency and achieve economic gains for Ulster County residents; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Department of Economic Development formed an Ulster 2040 Working Group, comprising business and community leaders who represent a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds, and led the group through a twelve month process to update the County's economic development strategy; and

WHEREAS, at the conclusion of its work, in September 2020, the Ulster 2040 Working Group published a final report and plan, titled "Building a People-Centered Economy for Ulster County," which identified long-term goals and short-term priorities for building a more equitable and sustainable economy in Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, during its development the Plan was subject to three public meetings to incorporate input and accept comments on the Plan, and since its completion the Department of Economic Development has continued to gather input and feedback on the Plan with the intent to conduct appropriate updates to ensure the Plan's continued relevance to changing circumstances; and

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WHEREAS, the recommendations of the Plan were presented to the Ulster County Economic Development, Tourism, Housing, Planning, and Transit Committee on May 4, 2021; and

WHEREAS, both a review of existing studies and socio-economic data support the Plan's argument that Ulster County's economic development efforts must adapt to new challenges being experienced throughout the County, which include rapid increases in cost of living, coupled with stagnant or declining wages for many residents; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations in the Plan are designed to support targeted investments of County resources in industries and sectors that are most likely to increase the earnings and income of County residents, as well as "social and economic infrastructure" investments that expand equity and opportunity to traditionally underrepresented individuals and communities; and

WHEREAS, the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to continue to put pressure on affordability and economic opportunity, especially for economically and socially disadvantaged residents; and

WHEREAS, the Plan includes five priority "clusters" that are: (1) Makers and Creators, which includes manufacturing, the arts and culture, digital design and fabrication, software, and film/TV/music production; (2) Agriculture, Food and Beverage, which includes growers/producers, aggregators, co-packers and food/beverage processors, distributors, wholesalers and retailers; (3) Health, Wellness and Care, which includes healthcare providers, wellness practitioners, and caregivers, such as adult care providers and childcare providers; (4) Clean Energy and the Environment, which includes businesses across virtually all industries, but focuses on those businesses which, through their internal practices and/or products and services seek to assist the County and the State achieve their ambitious climate goals; and (5) Social and Economic Infrastructure, which includes housing, transportation, childcare, education, entrepreneurship and innovation, broadband access, and workforce development; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature supports the recommendations of the Ulster 2040 Working Group and urges the County Executive to direct resources of the Executive staff towards implementation; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, that the Director Ulster County Department of Economic Development is hereby directed to advise the Ulster County Legislature and the Ulster County Executive on i) updates and changes necessary to ensure that the Ulster 2040 economic development strategy remains relevant and timely as economic conditions continue to evolve, ii) implementation of the recommendations contained in the Ulster 2040 plan, ii) the adoption, modification or repeal of laws and regulations that pertain to economic development, iii) the need for strategic investments in economic development by the County and iv) the coordination of economic development efforts with local, regional and state partners to and facilitate in the accomplishment of the Ulster 2040 plan,

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 22                      NOES: 1  
(Noes: Legislator Gavaris)

Passed Committee: Economic Development, Tourism, Housing, Planning and Transit on June 1, 2021

Passed Committee: Ways and Means on June 8, 2021

FINANCIAL IMPACT:  
TBD

