# Project Review Criteria

The following six criteria will be used to evaluate a project’s contribution to Columbia County. Different projects will make different contributions, and a project does not have to demonstrate an impact on all six areas to merit a recommendation.

Project review criteria are listed below. Please check each criteria that you wish the CEDC to consider in its evaluation. For each, please attach a brief written description of how the project meets the criteria.[[1]](#footnote-1) Note that some project criteria request specific estimates, for example of jobs created, capital invested, or the value of local purchases.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 🞏 | Create or Retain Jobs |
| 🞏 | Invest Private Capital in the County |
| 🞏 | Generate a Positive Fiscal Impact |
| 🞏 | Strengthen Existing Industries |
| 🞏 | Revitalize a Distressed Area |
| 🞏 | Serve the Needs of Residents |

Create or Retain Jobs

A project creates new jobs, or include an investment to retain existing jobs, commensurate with the type of business.

Project characteristics that will be viewed favorably:

* Creation of new jobs.
* Hiring policies that seek to maximize employment of Columbia County residents, including for skilled and management positions.
* Plans to provide on-the-job training or to support employee efforts to learn new skills and increase education levels.
* Collaboration with or participation in education and training efforts in the County.
* Plans to monitor transportation, shifts/schedules, or other constraints experienced by workers in rural areas, for example by working with public transportation providers.
* Participation by local contractors and workers during project construction.
* Plans to monitor and to provide information to the community about the success of hiring, training, and collaboration efforts over time.

A “Job” means direct employment, not contract employment, and must be located within Columbia County. Jobs should be expressed as full-time equivalent (FTE). The project applicant should provide a brief description of the type of job, wage levels and benefits, and indicate whether the position is full- or part time, permanent or seasonal.

Invest Private Capital in the County

A project can make a meaningful capital investment in the County, and increase the value of a commercial property with new or improved buildings or equipment to support economic activity.

Project characteristics that will be viewed favorably:

* Demonstration of the financial resources to make the investment, repay any debt, and meet the financial requirements of any grant award.
* Investment in permanent structures, fixtures, and equipment.
* Identification of local sources for construction materials and project equipment.
* Plans to use local vendors for ongoing supply chain purchases.
* Increased value of the commercial tax base in the County.

CEDC expects the applicant to commit its own equity to the project, in addition to loans, grants, or other sources of funds. Sources of funds should be clearly adequate to cover the costs of the project. The amount of equity and overall capital mix is expected to vary according to the type of project, but all applicants will be asked to provide information that is clear and confirmable, and documentation, for example a commitment letter from a bank, may be requested.

Please provide current estimates of the expenses and capital plan. Sources of Funds should be sufficient to cover Uses (project costs.) A sample format is below. Not all projects will use all categories, and a separate table may be created and attached.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sources of Funds | |
| Owner Equity | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Debt | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Grant Funding (if any) | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Other Funding (if any) | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Total Sources of Funds | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  |  |
| Uses of Funds |  |
| Site Work | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Construction | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Equipment and Fixtures | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Other | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Contingency (if any) | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Engineering/ Professional | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Financing | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Working Capital | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Total Uses of Funds (should not exceed Total Sources) | $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

Generate a Positive Fiscal Impact

A project can demonstrate a measurable, positive impact on the County’s fiscal performance through different means. For example it may generate new sales tax or real property tax revenue, or reduce or avoid expenses the County may currently incur on behalf of a property.

Project characteristics that will be viewed favorably:

* Applicant demonstrates an understanding of the public resources needed to support the project, for example school enrollment and human services for housing projects, public safety for retail businesses, or significant use of water and sewer.
* Project will decrease existing or anticipated County expenditures, for example by undertaking infrastructure improvements that would otherwise have been paid with public funds.
* Project returns a parcel that is currently tax-exempt to taxable status.
* Ongoing project operations will result in the purchase taxable goods and services in the County, generating sales tax revenue.

If project operations will result in additional sales tax revenue through the purchase of local goods and services, please provide estimates of the type of purchases anticipated, and the annual dollar amount.

Please list the current and *anticipated* new assessed value of the parcel(s).[[2]](#footnote-2)

If activity at the property is anticipated to *increase* direct County expenditures for education, public safety, road maintenance, water, or sewer, please provide a brief narrative of the reasons for the increased expenditures and estimates of the amount of increased use.

Strengthen Existing Industries

A project may support existing industries or contribute to the creation of a cluster of skills and expertise in the County.

Project characteristics that will be viewed favorably:

* Provides a local source for goods or services that businesses are currently purchasing from outside the County.
* Provides a business or industrial service that is not readily available, or is not available in sufficient quantity in the County, for example services such as accounting, engineering, or facilities maintenance.
* Purchases local raw or semi-finished materials from County businesses or farms.
* Project will share resources with another local business to the benefit of both, such as coordinating shipping of supplies, produce, or finished products.
* Project supports the growth or creation of a cluster of skills and expertise in the County in a particular industry sector.

Revitalize a Distressed Area

A project may have a major positive impact, regardless of size, when it is located in an area that is economically distressed or where there has been long-term disinvestment and under-investment.

Project characteristics that will be viewed favorably:

* Capital improvements enhance the external appearance of the property.
* Un- or under-utilized property is returned to productive use.
* Private investment is made to improve the surrounding area, such as sidewalk repair, disability access, or enhancements beyond the building footprint.
* A service is provided that will attract workers and visitors to a distressed area, who may then patronize other businesses in the area.
* Hiring and training policies are planned and will be maintained to support employment by the residents of a distressed area.

Serve the Needs of Residents

The project will provide goods or services not readily available to residents of the County.

Project characteristics that will be viewed favorably:

* Project increases access to critical needs such fresh food in an area underserved by existing grocery retail.
* Project co-locates with a related business or service to make it easier for residents to access both services, particularly for seniors, families, and disabled residents.
* Site design for the project corrects an existing problem with the property that affects surrounding parcels, for example relocating a driveway to improve safety.

1. Supporting documents may be attached but CEDC does not commit to reviewing them. A written description must be provided as a summary. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This estimate is for review only and will not be used in determining the final assessed value. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)