





PURPOSE

Jackson County's purpose in seeking an updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is to continue to improve the quality of life for its citizens by building a robust and healthy economy that is both diversified and sustainable.

PROJECT INFORMATION GATHERED

- Research
- Conversations
- Data collected through various in-person and electronic means
- Information derived from existing strategies



PROJECT OVERSIGHT

 Approximately 30 business, government, and regional/state leaders

 The Business and Industry Advisory
 Committee played an important oversight role throughout.



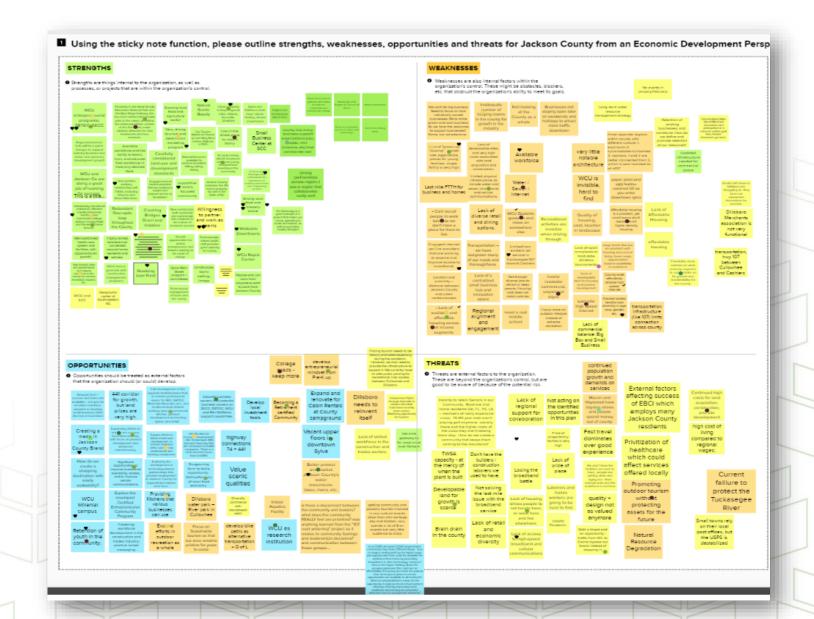


HIGHLIGHTS

- Project kickoff, August 4, 2020
- Assisted Jackson County with organizing and convening focus groups
 - Met in October and participated in the online SWOT and Gap analyses
- Conducted various working sessions with Rich Price, Director of Economic Development
- Updated the Business and Industry Advisory Council on Tuesday December
 1, 2020 and preliminary review on Tuesday February 2, 2021
- Submitted a **rough draft** on December 10, 2020 and met with Rich Price on December 14 for feedback



VIRTUAL SVVOT ANALYSIS





RESEARCH INFORMATION

- Affordable Housing
- Population
- Industry Mix



RECOMMENDATIONS

MAINTAIN A
ROBUST &
SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM
DESTINATION

- Regional tourism committee
- Lodging study what, when, where
- Retail study
- Improve access to amenities/features



GOAL 2

- Career education, readiness, exploration, starting in elementary-school and continuing through adulthood
- Employer-facilitated childcare
- WCU and SCC offer targeted certificates, credentials, and training
- Create transit/ride-sharing options

BUILD A
WORKFORCE
THAT WILL MEET
THE NEEDS OF
CURRENT &
FUTURE
EMPLOYERS



RECOMMENDATIONS

COUNTYWIDE HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND AVAILABILITY WNC Broadband Project recommendations Digital Inclusion Committee Revolving Loan Fund



- Regional brand
- Regional supply chain study
- Refresh the OED website; update buildings and sites
- Revolving Loan Fund
- Cluster focus groups

GOAL 4

CREATE A
MARKETING
CAMPAIGN TO
SUPPORT
EXISTING
BUSINESS &
ATTRACT NEW
BUSINESS



RECOMMENDATIONS

IDENTIFY
INVESTMENT
OPPORTUNITIES
TO ADDRESS
CURRENT &
FUTURE CRITICAL
ECONOMIC
NEEDS

- Evaluate infrastructure to support targeted growth
- Create a product development team
- Invest in real estate that would match the supplychain



GOAL 6

- Create an entrepreneurship/small business hub
- Engage small business owners, chambers, and stakeholders; make a plan to retain businesses
- Coordinate with WCU and SCC

COMMIT TO
BECOMING AN
ENTREPRENEURIAL
& SMALL BUSINESS
CAPITAL



RECOMMENDATIONS

MAINTAIN A
COMPREHENSIVE
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY





GOAL 8

Coordinate and partner with municipalities

Expand awareness of citizen academy

MAINTAIN &
ENHANCE QUALITY
OF LIFE FOR
CITIZENS,
TOURISTS, &
SMALL BUSINESS
OWNERS



FINAL THOUGHTS

- Keep this CEDS and other strategy documents "open"
 - Though a five to seven-year plan, it should be revisited often
- More County growth = challenges and opportunities





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Mr. Rich Price
- County Leaders & Stakeholders
- Business & Industry Committee
- Jessica Martin-Lane Chief Strategy & Marketing Officer, WithersRavenel
- Jenny Mizelle Business Development Representative, Withers Ravenel







SWOT ANALYSIS FEEDBACK

STRENGTHS

- Collaboration
- Vibrant
- Progressive healthcare
- Growing outdoor recreation industry
- Highly skilled residents and retirees
- Center of Western NC
- Great place to raise family





SWOT ANALYSIS FEEDBACK WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

- Lack of adequate infrastructure and developable land
- Lack of workforce
- Low wages relative to cost-of-living
- Lack of amenities, services, and shopping relative to other areas



SWOT ANALYSIS FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop natural resource management plans
- Improve river access
- Improve connectivity between communities
- Understand businesses, needs, and areas for growth
- Entrepreneurship
- Outdoor recreation
- Increased tourism promotion / investment

