

Economic Development Commission Findings and Recommendations Report

2013 SWOT Analysis & Strategic Plan Update

Economic Development Commission Presentation

to

Cecil County Executive & County Council

May 1, 2013

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Executive Summary

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) is pleased to present the following findings and recommendations to Cecil County Executive and County Council. The EDC, along with other collaborators and subject matter experts, have been meeting over the course of eight months to gather, decipher, review, analyze and evaluate reports, studies, presentations and historical data.

Goal: Provide a set of findings and recommendations that would contribute to the economic vitality of Cecil County, and provide achievable goals and direction to the Office of Economic Development.

Charge: Present Actionable and Achievable goals for the near term (three year) that emphasize the County's strengths in order to mitigate the County's weaknesses.

Consistency among subcommittees' findings were evident in two priorities that were deemed immediate in nature to the overall mission of the County:

- ❖ *Improving the perception of the county.* It is highly recommended that a Public Information Officer, or Marketing & Communications Director, be a top priority to: provide professional expertise in disseminating information; proactively and progressively manage the messaging; and pushing positive newsworthy information to the public.
- ❖ *Identify sources of funding.* It is highly recommended that the county engage the services of an effective Grant Writer. This position would be self-funding and support each department in identifying and managing federal, state or other grant programs.

Recommendations were developed through a collaborative effort, analysis and structure. In addition to the above mentioned priorities, the EDC believe and encourage the County Executive and County Council to embrace and support the following recommendations:

- ❖ *Financial Resources.* Assess the financial incentives and adjust to be more competitive to the surrounding region; Identify gaps from other funding sources for practical solutions; Design a Business Incentive Fund program to maximize the usefulness of the VLT funds.
- ❖ *Technology Progressive.* Conduct a Feasibility Study to include analysis of incubator programs, models, and funding sources that will result in an overall Technology Plan for the County; Establish County as Technology Progressive; Ensure that technology foundation permeates all areas of the county (workforce, education, financial resources, infrastructure/broadband).
- ❖ *Land Use (Balance).* Maintain focus of effort on Growth Corridor for a balanced approach to business, agriculture and tourism; Ensure all facets of infrastructure (broadband is crucial) are within the Growth Corridor to facilitate business growth; Market the Enterprise Zone to increase investment.
- ❖ *Clear Communication.* Maximize use of communications channels to improve current perception; Leverage resources through partnerships to provide open and transparent environment; Communicate both proactively and progressively; Invest in professional services to provide a comprehensive communications plan; Invest in a designated marketing specialist dedicated to overall county mission.

- ❖ *Education & Workforce Development.* Support and develop resources for an effective workforce training initiative to meet the needs of the future; address issues that negatively impact workforce (life skills, drugs/alcohol, etc); Promote and collaborate in cross-functional teams to ensure workforce preparedness among all spectrums of educational system; Collaborate with other organizations and entities to exact excitement and passion for education and STEM.

Resourcing is critical to attaining the achievable goals developed under this Report. Some of these recommendations will require modification of the current FY14 Budget, and/or be incorporated into the FY15 Budget. These specific resources are:

- ❖ Employ the services of a professional Grant Writer (this position can be self-sustaining)
- ❖ Select a professional Marketing Firm to create a comprehensive marketing and communications plan
- ❖ Employ a Marketing /Communications professional to be the conduit for communicating the progressive, positive, and innovative image of Cecil County
- ❖ Fund a comprehensive Technology & Incubator Feasibility Study utilizing Local, State and existing Federal funding programs.

Task Force Report Card is a useful tool that will be created to Monitor and Evaluate the tasks on these major recommendations and at the end of the fiscal year provide details in the form of an Annual Report, ensuring that these tasks are measureable and manageable.

Implications

Cecil County, one of the fastest growing counties of the state, is experiencing some *Growing Pains* that require attention in the areas of infrastructure, workforce and progressive positioning in order to be competitive in the marketplace. Members of the EDC, and others, have outlined the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and have worked through each implication in order to minimize the negative impact to the County's economic vitality.

This Report aligns with the County's and Economic Development's Mission and within the guidelines established for the Economic Development Commission

History

Mission of Cecil County Government

The mission of Cecil County Government is to deliver essential services to our communities and citizens that ensure the opportunity to maintain and enhance the County's heritage, environment, and quality of life. Cecil County Government elected officials and employees are stewards of the public's trust and are engaged in the business of public service.

To achieve our mission and maintain public confidence, we will be guided by the following values:

- ❖ *Strong Personal Ethics*
- ❖ *Teamwork*
- ❖ *Mutual Respect*
- ❖ *Open and Effective Communication*
- ❖ *Flexibility*
- ❖ *Excellence*
- ❖ *Accountability*

Mission of the Department of Economic Development, Agriculture & Tourism

The overall mission of the Cecil County Office of Economic Development is to stimulate economic growth and job creation through the expansion of the County's existing business and agricultural base, attraction of new business and the development of tourism.

Establish Cecil County as a destination for diverse business industries, advanced manufacturing, technology and commerce. Leverage necessary resources, foster business development, capitalize on our strategic location, and market real estate product. Identify opportunities to strengthen education and workforce development.

To unite the agriculture community of Cecil County, to promote and enhance the economic vitality of all sectors of agriculture, to advise government on the interest of agriculture, to raise the public awareness of the importance of agriculture and to increase public understanding of modern agricultural production processes.

In conjunction with the Tourism Committee, Cecil County Tourism promotes the county as a tourist destination. By executing an advertising and marketing campaign, developing committee projects, fostering industry cooperation, and producing quality marketing materials, the desired result is to affect an increase in visitor spending. This increase will support the local economy, including jobs. (See Appendix for a list of Staff).

Mission of the Department of Economic Development Commission

The Economic Development Commission was established for the purpose of advancing economic welfare through programs and activities resulting in new economic activity (job growth, tax revenues); encourage the expansion of existing and new commercial, agribusiness and tourism activity, disseminate information of interest; and develop alliances. (See Appendix for a list of Members).

Background

An Economic Development Strategic Plan was completed in 2004 with a similar process that resulted in highlighting fundamental recommendations. These recommendations are still valid today: provide much needed infrastructure (water, wastewater, gas, fiber and transportation) in the designated growth corridor; best practices for government services; workforce enhancement; and improvement of the County's image.

The plan was updated in 2006 through Sage Policy Group indicating that Cecil is emerging as one of Maryland's fastest growing counties, bringing higher property values; demand for services and public infrastructure. **While some progress has been made, there have been significant changes in the national, state and local economy over the past several years and external factors that have made the necessity to update the SWOT Analysis and develop new strategies, objectives and goals. In 2012, the Economic Development Commission (EDC) recommended a Strategic Plan update to reflect the changes to Charter Government and the economic challenges impacting the region.**

To facilitate this effort the EDC members were divided into five focus groups: Technology, Land Use, Workforce, Finance, and Communications, with regard to updating the SWOT Analysis of 2004, with respect to their specific areas of impact. Each subcommittee was appointed a Chair and met separately to the regular EDC monthly meetings. The Subcommittees then provided an update of the status of work to the full membership of the EDC, including other participants. In addition, key presentations were provided at EDC meetings regarding status of projects, studies, infrastructure updates, and reports that supported this ongoing effort.

Structure & Development

For planning purposes, the EDC membership was categorized into five separate focused subcommittees and goals. These focus groups allowed the development of a comprehensive SWOT Analysis, and were provided flexibility to expand the initial points identified, in the following areas of interest:

Education & Workforce, Chair Denise Davis, Director, Cecil County Public Library

- Review and provide feedback on the Regional Labor Shed Study
- Disseminate educational / workforce needs of the future
- Identify partnerships to support county's STEM initiative
- Work with Finance Committee on Business Incentive Fund (such as Tech Training Grant)

Technology, Chair Norman Gaither, President NorArk Executive Group

- Support Tech Plan and Incubator Feasibility Study
- Identify methods to strengthen county's Technology sector
- Review available technology industry resources (TEDCO, NMTC, etc)
- Work with Finance Committee on Business Incentive Fund (such as Tech Training Grant)

Finance, Chair Chick Hamm, EVP, PNC Bank

- Review the current incentives (i.e. Revolving Loan Fund)
- Research, develop and recommend criteria for Business Incentive Program
- Develop program for Business Incentive Fund (such as Tech Training Grant)
- Review and provide recommendations to the Economic Development budget

Land Use / Agriculture, Chair Rupert Rosetti, Citizen

- Assess and support the redevelopment efforts along Route 40 / Growth Corridor
- Support the reapplication of the EZ due in April 2013 (currently expires Dec 2013)
- Review and provide recommendations on Land Use issues (Plan MD, WIP, Septic Bill)

Communications, Chair JoAnn Dawson, Owner, Fairwinds Stables

- Develop communications plan for Ec Dev
- Assess website and other materials for messaging/branding
- Identify trade shows, outreach activities (Tourism, Agriculture, Business)

Meetings

EDC monthly meetings were developed to provide meaningful information to assist members of the EDC in achieving their goals, through a variety of presentations and reports. Separate subcommittee meetings were established by each of the Chairs to better understand their areas of interest, as noted in the Appendix. The EDC meetings were hosted by Cecil College and were open to the public:

September 5, 2012	Kick off meeting/New Subcommittee Structure
October 3, 2012	Presentation: Artesian Water status on infrastructure
November 7, 2012	Presentation: Tier Map (P&Z) and its impact to county
December 5, 2012	EAGB/Battelle APG Talent Study, discussion on workforce needs
January 2, 2013	Upper Shore Regional Council Briefing, Doris Mason
February 6, 2013	Economic Outlook (Daraius Irani, RESI TU) impact to the county
March 6, 2013	Evaluation of SWOT Findings & Recommendations
April 3, 2013	Labor Shed Market (Anirban Basu), analysis of workforce
*May 1, 2013	Report Presentation to County Executive & County Council

*Planned event at time of printing

Reports, Studies & Analysis

A plethora of information was provided to the Subcommittee members, through EDC meetings that included historical data and analyses by subject matter experts. County personnel and private companies provided status updates on a variety of infrastructure needs. The Maryland Economic Development Association provided a free one-day evaluation from their Past President's Council (Council), consisting of four highly experienced Economic Development Professionals. This Council were provided read ahead materials, including the 2004 Strategic Plan as well as other supporting materials. The Council met with the then County Commissioners, EDC members, and other leaders in the community that resulted in a brief analysis and recommendations to serve as guidelines and next steps to secure a firm foundation for the Economic Development Office (see compilation under the Appendix, Supplemental Materials).

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Incentive Programs (Enterprise Zones, Fast Track Process)	High Competitive Market (Higher financial capacity in surrounding jurisdictions)	Business Incentive Fund (VLT County level), Includes Workforce incentives; State matched funds; SWN could possibly fund gaps –(GAP analysis needed)	Legislation (Non-competitive to surrounding states)
County’s AA Bond Rating (IRB –Industrial Rev. Bonds)	Lending Environment (Regulatory demands; Lack of funding for infrastructure; Distance to private equity).	Infrastructure Financing (Options for water/sewer, gas, broadband, as well as Partnering with State and private sector thru Delegation and County Government)	Workforce (Loss of well educated workforce; aging workforce; Increased out commute to work; lack of 4 year institution).
Funds Available (VLT and Revolving Loan Fund)	Lack of Flexibility (Funding sources very specific, not flexible; RLF difficult to utilize)	Simplify Revolving Loan Fund	Retention of skilled labor (Critical to maintain high level of available and skilled workforce).
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Quality of commitment to excellence; state and local recognition of achievement; Respected and connected education and workforce statewide.	Perception of lacking passion for Ed.; Funding; Failure to correlate education to economic development.	DOD expansion; STAR campus collaboration; Land availability; Regional opportunities in tech corridor; 17.6% pop. Growth.	Funding (deficit cutting); Funding from county Centralized state planning; High unemployment; High School drop- out rate; Completer rate for college; Low education attainment pop. In county;
Pro-economic and business development between education, workforce leaders, and businesses.	Lack of bold vision; Lack of tech training including mid-level skills; Illiteracy; Residency low in percentage of Bachelor degrees.	Focused development on Cyber, bio-med., and IT ; Renewed focus on early childhood Ed through new advisory council (library, school, and college systems)	Disconnect between Ed and qualified workforce requirements; Increase in Drug abuse and crime
Geographic location – regional access to Harford and New Castle counties; Large labor shed; High grad rate in Tech schools with recognized trade certifications; STEM; Articulation agreements by Cecil College; CSTC; BEPAC, library, SWN and small business resource partners	Drug use and abuse; Lack of workforce training resources/incentives; Reputation for intolerance	Business involvement and interest in county; Number of emerging small and micro businesses; Expansion of county labor force; BRAC Ed opportunities; Basell site; Increase higher Ed availability.	Strains on social agencies with little resources; Demand for diversified workers with multiple skill sets (tech and soft skills); Aging workforce

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Access to regional technology centers; Availability of tech-ready space; Educational shift to STEM and workforce readiness; New Math & Eng. Building at Cecil	Lack of beneficial Partnerships with Tech businesses/industries; Lack of Baccalaureate programs in Tech	*APG –job opportunities in IT, SWE, EE, CE, Cyber, CS, etc...); Leverage STEM Ed excellence to meet high Tech opportunities; Leveraging affiliations with Tech driven organizations (NMTC,CSSC, EAGB, NBCIA)	Federal budget cuts; Sequestration; Local budgets not fully integrated to comprehensive plan; Attracting new companies (State is non-competitive).
Strong organizational support (TEDCO, CC Libraries, BEPAC, SBA,NMTC, CSSC, CC Chamber of Commerce, and EDC)	General lack of highly educated tech workforce; Perception of county as non-tech; Lack of all resources needed for Tech firms	Regional collaborations (HEAT, STAR, etc...); Coordinate new water infrastructure trenches for Wide-Band fiber lines –at a minimum run conduit.	Skilled workforce is yet to be impactful in attracting tech businesses; Infrastructure is along limited pathways.
Infrastructure Broadband access through BTOP and 95 corridor; Affiliations with BRAC, STAR, NEMD-URP, and articulations with numerous colleges	Limited economic development staff (for focus on coordinating Tech based county programs)	New beginning with new form of CC Government.	Tolls to enter County; Slow movement on Cecil Connector/Rail System.
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Location: on five rivers; on major transportation corridor; easy access to markets, services & tourism destinations	Infrastructure: patchy in all areas – water, sewer, natural gas, broadband	Infrastructure: develop financing for services in growth area; work with state & local governments, and private partners	Restrictive Legislation: Plan MD; SB236; TMDL & WIP, etc.
Natural Resources: Piedmont soils; gravel & hard rock; ag & forests; State Parks; scenic vistas	Transportation: Susq. and DE tolls; commuter rail gap	Transportation: close commuter rail gap; make use of waterways; leverage WILMAPCO Rt. 40 Corridor Plan; Add I-95 interchange	Anti-growth sentiment (morphing into anti-business development
Room for growth plus ag business clusters	Usability of Available Land: few large/contiguous blocks; brownfield/ superfund sites; commercial mineral deposits; lack of services; environmental constraints; ag business constrained in rural areas	Available Land: create GIS land & services inventory; create clearing house for ag relocations and local mixed use listings; reconnect with commercial & industrial brokers; Promote as equestrian destination	Growth in rural areas diverts needed resources from growth area (need to better understand cost of services)
Incentives: EZ, Fast Track; affordable housing	Cost of services “out of date”		Anti-government sentiment

* See Appendix, Supplemental Materials, Technology Subcommittee SWOT Analysis Report for a list of Acronyms

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Talented, dedicated & award-winning staff; contact database; inventory of available sites; volunteers	No consistency in marketing and outreach; website needs improvement	Capability to do e-blasts, issue newsletter, increase social media presence	State and county budgetary constraints
Enterprise Zones and HUB Zones being promoted	Non-business friendly County policies	Ability to participate in trade shows	Loss of federal and state incentives (DBED funding, EZ's or HUB Zones)
Support BEPAC & education system	In-fighting among local officials	Ability to focus on increased funds for tourism; desire to hire marketing specialist or firm for branding	Increased government regulations on business and agriculture
Professional videos on the website promoting the County	Limited funds for marketing	Numerous brochures and outreach materials from which to begin synthesizing our brand	The "outside world" branding Cecil County with their own erroneous perceptions
Dedicated group of business partners	Lack of public understanding on importance of economic development, agriculture, and tourism	Ability to showcase our outstanding educational system in comparison to DE	

Legend:



FINANCES



WORKFORCE & EDUCATION



TECHNOLOGY



LAND USE



COMMUNICATIONS

Findings & Recommendations

Financial Directives:

Form a small synergistic task force with the goals of providing resolution to the following:

- Competiveness environment to attract businesses to the County through financial incentives
- Create a new, business friendly process for companies looking to utilize the RLF (Revolving Loan Fund)
- Identify the gaps with outside sources of funding and recommend a practical solution to bridging those gaps
- Support and market the Enterprise Zones for expansion and attraction efforts
- Design a program for distribution of VLT Business Incentive Fund that will best maximize the utilization of these funds

Land Use Directives:

Form a small synergistic task force with the goals of identifying and providing solutions for the following:

- Provide a conceptual model of a balanced approach to Business, Ag, Tourism and conservation for the county
- The management and sequencing of infrastructure within the County's Growth Corridor
- A concise layout providing connectivity (the 'Last Mile') in the county, layouts of backbones and right-of-ways, and provide visuals as a marketing tool for the county
- Provide a 'Straw-Man' concept of vertical parking possibilities for the county
- Support the Enterprise Zone as a means of increasing investment in designated areas

Communication Directives:

Re-brand the county's new progressive image through a marketing specialist to accomplish the following goals:

- Maximize the use of communications channels (print, media, etc.) to improve the current perception of Cecil County by leveraging resources available through the EDC, College, etc. providing an open and transparent environment - revitalizing pride in a Tech progressive, environmentally sensitive, education passionate, business-friendly, work force adaptable, and practical conservation of the rich heritage of equine, bucolic countryside, and clean waterways
- Develop a cohesive logo, slogan and color scheme which allows for partial variations between business, agriculture and tourism
- Set up information and progressive activity e-blast to key personnel and existing businesses, as well as targeted and potential businesses considering Cecil County
- Consider a communication spokesperson, as an aid to the County Executive, who can disseminate progressive information to the cities and towns, as well as regional affiliates of Cecil County

Technology Directives:

Form a small technical-oriented task force to accomplish the following goals:

- Conduct a Feasibility Study, to include recommendations of Incubator programs (through research and pragmatic conclusions) for the county, available resources and funding, and how they can interface with local and regional, educational and administrative resources.
- Determine the feasibility of creating a position for Technology Director and the expectations of such a position.
- Coordinate with all other directives (Financial, Land Use, Communication, and Education) to assure that future requirements for establishing a 'Technology Progressive' profile for the county are achieved.

Education & Workforce Directives:

Form a small task force of diverse individuals to address the following:

- Continue collaboration between education, workforce and economic development as a priority to better prepare for the needs of future workforce
- Support the Finance Task Force in developing the Business Incentive Fund for an effective Workforce Training initiative, meeting the needs of existing and future businesses in developing an adaptable workforce
- Identify and work with partners to address issues that negatively impact the workforce, such as; life skills, drug and alcohol abuse, etc.
- Research and suggest programs for exciting passion in students for education – including tangible and practical applications of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) in the community
- Promote and collaborate in cross-functional teams to enhance 0 to 12 education/workforce preparedness
- Collaborate with EDC partners in developing a pathway to employing a 'Grant Writer' for the county to work with the full scope of elements for economic development

Appendix

SWOT Subcommittee Reports (2013)

Contributors

Supplemental Materials to this Report

Subcommittee SWOT Reports

FINANCE COMMITTEE, Chair Chick Hamm

Common Themes

Review of the Strengths across all committees indicates a significant number of advantages related to the county's location, financial condition, land availability, approval processes, enterprise zones, life quality features and access to a meaningful labor shed which is now largely out-commuting. Maximizing the economic utility of these given resources is challenged by funding issues, coordination among stakeholders, and consistent execution against a clear vision of the future.

Near Term Action Items

Retooling the RLF to make it more user-friendly and responsive is a near term, achievable priority. We should revisit the application, approval, documentation and loan accounting processes with an objective of making them less cumbersome and more user friendly. We also need to review how the fund is promoted and the relative need for bank sponsors vs. a direct application process.

Establishment of a Business Incentive Fund (BIF), or funds, via access to state matching and VLT funding is also a near term, achievable priority. Grant processes can be developed to target specific priorities required by funding sources. A BIF could also be used to fund existing programs which are historically successful and demonstrate a demand which exceeds funding ability. Funding gaps that occur in the SWN programs are noted as priority, because infrastructure for finding qualified applicants and monitoring performance of grant recipients already exists.

Connectivity to Other Committee Priorities

The need for educating, training, and retaining a skilled workforce appears throughout the SWOT analysis. To the extent BIF grants can impact technical training needs and/or diminish the impact of lost state and federal funding for existing programs that have demonstrated success, a connection can be drawn to workforce, education, and technology initiatives.

Workforce issues related to life skill challenges and the severity of Cecil's drug abuse problem impact many aspects of economic development and the thought of many of our work groups.

Long term funding/finance solutions for infrastructure development would enhance employer recruitment, develop jobs, improve the balance of the tax base and add clarity to land use policies and solutions.

TECHNOLOGY, Chair Norman Gaither

- Advance a Tech Business Incubator
- Build on the regional initiatives for higher education through collaborative efforts with NEMD-URP (BIC), STAR, CTE, and HEAT Center
- Revisit the economic development strategy to incorporate a technology competence - with special focus on technology/future jobs
- Conduct a complete assessment of current infrastructure - seek grant funding from Federal or State Government
- Create attractive business incentives programs for businesses considering Cecil as a potential location for their companies

- Create a marketing strategy for re-branding the County as PROGRESSIVE in all initiatives (technology, education, commerce, agriculture, etc.)

LAND USE COMMITTEE, Chair Rupert Rossetti

Recommended Actions

Business Attraction

- Form cross-functional Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction (BRE&A¹) Teams
 - The BRE&A Teams should recommend ways to strengthen our incentives packages.
 - Target two types of business: Those who originate in rural areas similar to Cecil, and those who are expecting a much more urbanized environment
- Form a Public Education and Outreach team to educate Cecil County citizens and businesses
- Prepare and maintain an inventory of available industrial parcels and assess the “shovel- and infrastructure-readiness” of each available parcel.
- Market/develop/redevelop where we already have infrastructure
- Support the construction of structured parking garages in municipalities

Transit-oriented Development

- Support the re-opening of Elkton Station and the development and implementation of Transit-Oriented Development Plans in the municipalities.
- Work with the State and the Federal Government to close the commuter rail gap,
- Pursue funding through competitive federal grants and state funding through the MDOT CTP process.
- The County should work with the Towns to promote “transit ready” development near proposed stations and transit oriented development along existing/planned bus routes.

Broadband

- We support the Technology subcommittee Opportunity Statement “Coordinate new water infrastructure trenches for Wide-Band fiber lines –at a minimum run conduit”
- Expand to include all linear infrastructure projects including sewer, gas and road².
- Incentivize the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to “complete the last mile” from the broadband backbone.
- Improve bandwidths in the rural and residential areas outside the Growth Corridor.

Financing

- We support the Finance subcommittee Opportunity Statement: Develop “options for water/sewer, gas, broadband, as well as partner with State and private sector thru Delegation and County Government”
- Continue to leverage Federal funding through the USDA³,
- Explore additional funding options available through the Economic Development Administration (EDA)⁴
- Provide a grant circuit writer to help municipalities and the county to write grants (consider using a portion of the Casino revenues)

Miscellaneous

- Grain/Bulk Terminal on the C&D Canal

¹ Typically thought of as BR&E Teams, but we’re seeking to Attract new businesses as well

² e.g. the installation of fiber in conjunction with roadway median barrier projects in South Carolina

³ e.g. Rising Sun Wastewater Treatment Plant

⁴ Consult Doris Mason for more details

- additional interchange on I-95
- commuter pass option at the Delaware Toll Booth on I-95.
- Further incentivize land preservation

COMMUNICATIONS – Chair JoAnn Dawson

Achievable Goals

- Taking inspiration from Tourism to expand e-blasts from Agriculture and Economic Development
- Determine target audience and develop quarterly e-mail newsletter, patterned after Howard County's success
- Advertise that we are on Social Media : Facebook, Twitter (@ceciloed) and make sure these sites are kept current. Tweets can improve public understanding.
- Continue updating website
- Add YouTube videos to website
- Develop a blog?
- Increase frequency of press releases highlighting good news in Cecil County
- Research finding the right Trade Shows to participate in within budget
- Utilize local college interns to help with marketing
- Work with ideas of County Executive concerning branding & marketing in order to present a cohesive look
- Check into availability of grants from DBED, USDA

Priorities

- Hire Marketing Specialist
- Hire short-term Branding Professional
- Financing of Trade Shows
- Increased marketing dollars
- Hire a staff person to walk people through the permitting process and market the fact that we have such a person to help bring business in
- Improve county business policies
- Improve image of county government

Commonalities

The communications committee has the ability to review the commonalities of the **strengths and opportunities** of all other committees and help publicize and promote them through our achievable goals listed above.

We all have commonality in **threats**, which largely refers to funding in all areas.

Our commonality with **weaknesses** comes down to a few key words: perception of county, lack of consistency and vision, limited staff. If we are able to apply our committee's achievable goals, we may be able to remedy some of these weaknesses.

EDUCATION/WORKFORCE, Chair Denise Davis

- Support the newly convened Early Childhood Advisory Council to strengthen the connections among county agencies to provide for the education and well-being of our youngest students with particular emphasis on those identified as at risk.
- Support summer reading, learning, and well-being of all students, with particular emphasis on those identified as at risk; develop connections among county agencies to enhance efforts countywide

- Increase opportunities for secondary students in technical education that support work force needs by using labor market analyses and by identifying short and long term ways to deliver requisite instructional programs. (Basell property conversion to CTE school or new Career and Technical High School are several options.)
- Expand STEM and Project Lead the Way programs to prepare students to enter careers in science and technology located in our region.
- Examine ways to increase the number of high school students who participate in a college level course prior to graduation and who are deemed college and career ready.
- Examine ways to integrate expectation of college attendance and training across county agencies that work with children (CCPS, CCPL, LMB)
- Exhibit passion for education for all ages, life-long learning/up-skilling, college attendance/degree attainment (and progress toward state goal of 55% by 2025)
- Examine ways to foster successful college experience
- Support the growth of micro businesses by providing training incentives; increasing human capital potential of the business and expanding their market penetration
- Provide medium and larger companies training grant opportunities for incumbent workers. This supports business retention, attraction and expansion (and employment potential) while raising skill level
- Determine and prioritize industry growth desires and potential; explore and support opportunities for the existing labor force (employed and unemployed) to obtain the requisite skills for these “demand” industries
- Examine ways/collaboration to support GED success and pride in GED attainment; connect GED test takers to further up-skilling opportunities
- Aggressively counter negative image of Cecil County (that Cecil is lacking in passion for education, intolerant, behind-the-times) with **countywide collaborative public relations/rebranding campaign**—enlisting the business community’s resources and expertise, tapping into expertise countywide, and using social media aggressively

Contributors

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Commission was established for the purpose of advancing economic welfare through programs and activities resulting in new economic activity (job growth, tax revenues); encourage the expansion of existing and new commercial, agribusiness and tourism activity; disseminate information of interest; develop alliances;

The office works in coordination with the Economic Development Commission, which consists of representatives from a variety of county businesses and industries; public agencies and organizations; each of the County's eight municipalities; and the general public.

EDC Members:

Michael Ratchford, EDC Chair
Denise Davis
JoAnn Dawson
Norman Gaither
Chick Hamm
Rupert Rossetti
Dr. Steve Pannill
Dr. D'Ette Devine
Bruce England
Dr. Ken Lewis
Danny DeMarinis
Mike Lara
Linda Tipton
Andrew Jodlbauer
Michael Travers, III
William Kilby
Paula Gilley
Laura Mayse
Grove Miller
Woody Jackson
Doris Mason

Joe Zang, Mayor Cecilton
Dr. Robert Gell, Mayor Charlestown
Dean Geracimos, Mayor Chesapeake City
Joe Fisona, Mayor Elkton
Robert McKnight, Mayor North East
James Eberhardt, Mayor Perryville
Wayne Tome, Mayor Port Deposit
Robert Fisher, Mayor Rising Sun
Robert Hodge, County Council President

Economic Development Staff Members:

Lisa Webb, Director
Melissa Sadowski
Joanne Richart-Young
Sandy Turner
Mary Kuna
Susan O'Neill
Deborah Graham

EDC members and subject matter experts actively contributed on the following subcommittees:

Education/Workforce	Technology	Finance	Land Use	Communications
<i>Denise Davis, Chair</i>	<i>Norman Gaither, Chair</i>	<i>Chick Hamm, Chair</i>	<i>Rupert Rossetti, Chair</i>	<i>JoAnn Dawson, Chair</i>
Steve Pannill	Ken Lewis	Andrew Jodlbauer	William Kilby	Woody Jackson
D’Ette Devine	Danny DeMarinis	Michael R. Travers, II	Paula Gilley	Doris Mason
Bruce England	Mike Lara	Susan O’Neill	Grove Miller	Laura Mayse
	Linda Tipton		Jeanne Minner	Sandy Turner
	Melissa Sadowski		Joanne Richart-Young	Mary Kuna
<i>Subcommittee Chairs invited others to assist in developing the SWOT and strategies:</i>				
	Steve Pannill	Tammy Edwards (DBED)	Kathy Kunda, (BEPAC)	
	Andrew Lubin (UDeI)		Doris Mason	
	Tim Corder (CCPS)		Norm Wehner (Cecil Landlords Assoc)	
	Steve DiFilipo (Cecil College)		Jeremy Rothwell (UDeI Public Policy)	
			Mie Mie Joe Strickler	

Supplemental Materials to this Report

Economic Development Strategic Plan (2004) *

Update of Cecil County Development Trends & Fiscal Impacts (Sage, 2006) **

Labor Shed Study (Sage, 2012) **

Artesian Water Update (Artesian, 2012) **

SB236 Tier Map Update by Director Sennstrom (P&Z, 2012)*

MEDA Past President's Council Recommendations (May 2012)*

APG Talent Study (Batelle, 2012) *

Upper Shore Regional Council Update by Executive Director Mason (2013)*

Economic Outlook (RESI, 2013) **

Cecil County Enterprise Zone (Map 2013)**

Technology Subcommittee SWOT Analysis*

***Materials are not available electronically but are available in the Economic Development Office for review**

****Materials available on the Cecil County Economic Development website**