PHASE 2: FAYETTE VISIONING INITIATIVE
VISION PLAN

Submitted by Market Street Services, Inc.
www.marketstreetservices.com

June 2014
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Fayette Visioning Initiative is a seven month process that has included extensive opportunities for public input, stakeholder perspectives, and community involvement. The Fayette Visioning Initiative is comprised of three phases. Each phase is guided by a diverse, engaged steering committee of leaders from across the county. Leveraging Fayette County's education system, diversity of communities, and advantageous location, the vision will provide a foundation for future prosperity.

Community Involvement

Community involvement opportunities included focus groups, stakeholder interviews, community leadership meetings, an online community survey, structured community dialogues on the MindMixer web platform, and social media. The input that was received helped identify issues, challenges, opportunities, and strengths not easily captured through data analysis.

Phase 1: Competitive Assessment

The first phase of this process compared Fayette County’s social, demographic, economic, and physical characteristics to Hanover County, Virginia; Forsyth County, Georgia; Williamson County, Tennessee; the Metro Atlanta region; and the nation. Rather than creating charts for dozens of data points, the Competitive Assessment synthesized the quantitative data with public input to frame a discussion around the key “storylines” and competitive issues facing Fayette County. The Competitive Assessment answers questions about Fayette County’s people, the county as a place, and economic issues that affect Fayette County’s long-term prosperity.

Phase 2: Fayette Vision Plan

This Vision Plan reflects the research and input gathered to date and answers the fundamental questions of “where do we want to be?” The vision includes specific goals, objectives, and tactics for creating the future that Fayette County desires. Examples of best practices from across the nation are provided for additional guidance related to individual components of the plan. These best practices showcase what trailblazers in the field are doing to demonstrate what is possible and serve as a catalyst for conversation and excitement about how Fayette County may develop its own best-practice approaches.

Phase 3: Implementation Guidelines

When the vision planning process is complete, the real work begins. Timely and effective implementation is critical to the ultimate success of the Fayette vision. If the vision plan represents the “what,” the Implementation Guidelines represent “how” the Fayette vision will be implemented. The Implementation Guidelines will include detailed timelines for each year of plan implementation, identify community partners responsible for accomplishing specific tasks, address capacity constraints, estimate costs and funding sources, and provide measurement tools that will enable Fayette County’s leaders and residents to track progress and goal attainment.
**Steering Committee**

The Fayette Visioning Initiative has been guided by a diverse Steering Committee of leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors. These individuals have volunteered to oversee the entire process, make decisions about Fayette’s strategic priorities, build consensus, and serve as champions for the implementation of the Vision Plan.

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<th>Committee Member</th>
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<td>Odessa M. Archibald</td>
<td>Georgia Power</td>
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<td>Sheriff Barry Babb</td>
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<td>Dr. Jody Barrow</td>
<td>Fayette County Board of Education</td>
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<td>Cathy Berggren</td>
<td>Real Life Center</td>
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<td>Michael Burnett</td>
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<td>Vickie Butler</td>
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<td>Stephen Childs</td>
<td>Panasonic Automotive Systems Company of America</td>
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<td>Mary Ann Cox</td>
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<td>Dr. Steve Dodson</td>
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<td>Zaheer Faruqi</td>
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<td>Rep. Virgil Fludd</td>
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<td>Scott Formel</td>
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<td>Jim Fulton</td>
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<td>Virginia Gibbs</td>
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<td>Randy Hayes</td>
<td>Hayes Development Corporation</td>
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<td>Kyle Hood, MPA</td>
<td>Town of Tyrone</td>
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<td>Dr. Tim Hynes</td>
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<td>Scott Israel</td>
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<td>Pastor BaSean A. Jackson</td>
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<td>Mayor Gary Laggis</td>
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<td>Larris Marks</td>
<td>RET. U.S. Army Forces Command</td>
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<td>Al Mead</td>
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<td>Joe Morton</td>
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<td>Dawn Oparah</td>
<td>Association of Village PRIDE, Inc.</td>
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<td>Jim I. Pace, Jr.</td>
<td>Group VI</td>
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<td>Dr. Jim Pennington</td>
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<td>Dr. Randall Peters</td>
<td>Southern Crescent Technical College</td>
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<td>Emily Poole</td>
<td>Fayette County Development Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nancy Price</td>
<td>Peachtree City Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau</td>
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<td>Trey Ragsdale, III (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Kaiser Permanente, Co-Chair</td>
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<td>Matt Ramsey</td>
<td>State Representative Matt Ramsey</td>
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<td>Steve Rapson</td>
<td>Fayette County Administrator</td>
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<td>Bob Ross (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>R. J. Ross Associates, Inc.</td>
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<td>Kim Schnoes</td>
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<td>Brian Simons</td>
<td>NCR</td>
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<td>Tony Sinclair</td>
<td>Coweta-Fayette EMC</td>
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<td>Sheryl Watford</td>
<td>Fayette Care Clinic</td>
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<td>Randy Weaver</td>
<td>Allstate Insurance</td>
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<td>Congressman Lynn Westmoreland</td>
<td>US House of Representatives - 3rd District Georgia</td>
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INTRODUCTION

The Fayette Visioning Initiative is about building a place that does not yet exist. Determining a course of action that leads to the desired future is a bold proposition because it recognizes that accepting the status quo is not an option. However, the act of describing a preferred state of affairs is not sufficient to move Fayette County forward. The recommendations and actions that are contained in this Vision Plan are not intended to sit idle, but rather they must be carried forward by the community. This is the community’s Vision Plan and it must be seen as a living document that enables action, partnerships, and collaboration to build a new future.

The task of creating a community-wide vision has not been taken lightly. The process has included opportunities for the public to be engaged at all points and the inclusion of community voices, inclusive of students, seniors, parents, employers, entrepreneurs, nonprofits and faith-based communities, has led us to the point of identifying the components that make up the Vision for Fayette County.

Why Now?

Timing is crucial to implementation and it is clear that the time for Fayette County to act is now. The first phase of this process, the Competitive Assessment¹, found that there are a number of challenges and realities that if left unchecked or unattended to, will negatively impact the future of Fayette County.

Our education system is under threat.

Education is the crown jewel of Fayette County. There is no doubt that the K-12 system has long attracted residents to the county. However, as the Competitive Assessment pointed out, enrollment is on the decline and unprecedented measures had to be taken. The enrollment decline can be directly traced to the loss of people between the ages of 25 and 44, those likely to have younger children. But, this phenomenon is exacerbated by the increasing number of senior households that are eligible for homestead exemptions, the relative increase in the quality of nearby school districts, and stagnating population growth. Without a way to differentiate Fayette County Public Schools, the longstanding education advantage of Fayette, may disappear.

Our residents don’t work here.

The jobs that are available in Fayette County are not aligned with the skills of the residents. This is evidenced through the fact that the number of workers who commute beyond the borders of Fayette County is exceptionally elevated and Fayette has not advanced its position as an employment hub. Without a critical mass of quality employers, companies are hard-pressed to recruit new talent and the potential of collaboration between schools and business will never be fully realized. This situation is made more acute by the fact that the inventory of sites and buildings that are available to new or expanding employers, are not the kinds of assets that can attract corporate headquarters, professional service firms, or high-value manufacturing, that could alleviate high levels of out-commuting. Without direct access to an interstate or a competitive inventory, Fayette’s potential to grow and attract jobs that will employ residents will diminish.

Our community demographics are changing.

¹ An overview is provided in Appendix A
Fayette County, like Metro Atlanta, is becoming more racially diverse. It is unsurprising that the quality of life and education that a place like Fayette County offers is attractive to people of all races, ethnicities, and ages. While two-thirds of the population is white, non-Hispanic, all population growth has come from minority residents over the past five years. Population growth rates for Hispanics, blacks, and Asians, in Fayette have outpaced those of Metro Atlanta. Such dynamics point to the need for renewed efforts to make sure that all residents feel welcomed and included. Less than half of survey respondents (43 percent) said that ‘opportunities for leadership’ were ‘good’ or ‘excellent,’ ranking it second to last in terms of quality of life items. When analyzed by race and ethnicity, it was clear that black respondents feel that there are fewer opportunities to access leadership opportunities than white residents. Without formalized strategies to address these disparities, fragmentation of the community may ensue.

Our built environments are not attracting a sustainable population.

In Fayette County, it is clear that public input participants and stakeholders desire development that looks and feels different from existing development patterns. If young professionals and young families are not able to find housing options that align with their income, they will choose other areas to live. This also applies to seniors, who may desire more amenities, such as shops, restaurants, and green spaces, that are accessible without needing to drive. Addressing the need for homes that are more financially accessible for a sustainable population, which are likely to be smaller and located in denser settings, Fayette County is facing the proposition of having housing stock that may not appeal to future generations.

How does this impact the Vision Plan?

These themes not only give credibility to the timing of the Vision Plan, but are a direct call for action. While these items are not the sole evidence for the recommendations, there is a clear and compelling connection between the data and the recommendations. The Vision Plan represents the “what” Fayette County is going to do and along with the Implementation Guidelines, the “how,” Fayette County will be able to make tangible progress and achieve the desired future.

How will the residents of Fayette County continue to own this Vision Plan?

The Vision Plan is rooted in the public input and stakeholder feedback that has characterized this process. However, the need for ongoing communications and forums to discuss not only the recommendations in the Vision Plan, but implementation efforts, new realities, and collective action will be needed. As stated previously, this document should not be considered to be etched in stone, but rather is a living document that needs to be constantly updated and allowed to respond to the changing times. Finding the right mechanism for establishing the public dialogue and creating an avenue for collective buy-in will be part of implementation. However, this Visioning Initiative occurred because County leaders decided it was time to listen, debate, and find consensus on a path forward. The door has been opened and the expectations set. Ongoing communications must continue and once implementation begins, outreach to and inclusion of the public will need to be a central hallmark of the Fayette Vision Plan.
FAYETTE VISION PLAN: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vision Statement contains the guiding principles and themes that the Vision Plan seeks to enable. The statement is at the heart of the recommendations and is intended to be a touch point for the community as it continues to flourish. Political, social, and economic realities may change, but over the life of this Vision Plan, the following statement should provide a beacon for navigating the future.

*Fayette County is the place where bold ideas become reality. We shall achieve this through our collaborative and inclusive leadership that elevates education, economic development, employment opportunities, and quality of life to unrivaled heights.*

The vision statement, along with the findings and strategic implications from the Competitive Assessment, supports four Focus Areas that structure the recommendations of the Vision Plan. Each Focus Area contains recommendations and a defined vision, but the interdependence of the Focus Areas is an integral point as implementation efforts will necessitate working across boundaries and breaking down established silos.
Focus Area: Education

Creating a Center of Excellence for K-12 Education and Continuous Lifelong Learning

The Vision: Fayette County will have an education system that is recognized as a national and international leader. Built on the strength of Fayette County Schools, the K-12 system will be known for its strategic use of technology that provides all students with access to new subjects and career tracks. Graduates will have exposure to leadership training, experience with the business community, and the skills to be productive citizens. Every student, young and old, will have access to exceptional learning opportunities, across the full continuum of learning, which will attract students and families to Fayette County.

Fayette will...

...create a K-12 system that is recognized as a world-class asset.

...increase postsecondary education opportunities in Fayette County.

...actively support district teachers and staff.

What if we don’t?

If Fayette County does not elevate and differentiate K-12 opportunities, there is significant risk that Fayette will lose its status as an educational leader, and enrollments will continue to decline. This will have repercussions not only in terms of education quality, but will decrease the desirability of Fayette to future families, dynamic businesses and to capital investment by companies. Connections between the K-12 system, postsecondary institutions, and the business community must be intentional and appropriately coordinated.

“Far and away, schools are considered the greatest strength of Fayette County. Respondents wrote, ‘In my opinion, Fayette County’s greatest strength is its school system.’ ‘We have the] best public education system in the state of Georgia.’ Further, high quality education is drawing residents to live in Fayette County. Respondents who had moved to Fayette County at some point in their life were asked to identify the primary reasons for their relocation. The most commonly chosen option was the quality of K-12 education.”

-Competitive Assessment
1.1 Create a K-12 System that is Recognized as a World-Class Asset.

The K-12 system must be the hallmark Fayette County’s value proposition. This will occur through the use of technology, implementation of innovative learning systems, and a willingness to “go first.” Further, these characteristics entail embracing a reality where traditional notions of campuses, classrooms, and teaching methodologies are likely to be much more fluid and integrated with the business community, two year colleges, and four-year universities.

Action: Continue to discuss priorities for the future of education in Fayette County.

Action: Expand internship opportunities so every student will have the option to gain work experience before they graduate.

Action: Enable all students to have access to the same academic courses and career pathways, regardless of the school they attend.

Action: Blend the offerings related to academic and technical education to provide models where knowledge is applied to real world settings throughout K-12 settings and post-secondary institutions.

Action: Optimize the programmatic elements of the Fayette Chamber’s Education Partnership.

1.2 Increase Postsecondary Education Opportunities in Fayette County.

Without a permanent higher education campus in Fayette County, residents are unable to locally pursue many of the degree options that are desired. However, there is evidence that momentum is shifting toward the provision of higher education capacity. Leveraging new investments to establish a full continuum of education in Fayette, from kindergarten to four-year degrees, must be a signature focus of the Vision Plan.

Action: Establish and operate a world-class technical training facility in Fayette County.

Action: Expand continuing adult education opportunities.

1.3 Actively Support District Teachers and Staff.

Research has shown that a school district is only as good as its faculty and staff. The Chamber and other groups have demonstrated leadership in supporting professional development opportunities for teachers and staff. Decreasing enrollments and overall threats to the school system require that teachers continue to feel engaged and supported by the broader community. Finding ways to ramp up ongoing efforts while also exposing teachers to local and regional businesses can help retain teachers and improve the quality of education.

Action: Enhance professional development opportunities for teachers.

Action: Hold an annual intra-district best practices summit for teachers and administrators.
Focus Area: Economy

GROWING A PROSPEROUS AND DYNAMIC ECONOMY

The Vision

Fayette County will have an economy that is growing and that provides jobs that align with resident skills. Working closer to home will allow residents to spend less time in their cars and feel more attached to their home County. Companies will want to locate in Fayette because of the coordination between education and business, the high quality of life, the support they receive from the community, and the competitive inventory of sites and buildings. The growth of the economy will continue to reflect not only the highest priority economic sectors, but will also respect and encourage the identities of the different areas and municipalities in the County.

Fayette will...

...support small business and entrepreneurial growth.

...attract, retain, and expand businesses that employ Fayette residents.

...develop a sustainable film and entertainment cluster

What if we don’t?

If Fayette County does not invest time and money into developing the economy, the mismatch between jobs and residents will continue to widen. A widening gap will decrease the appeal of Fayette as longer commutes are not appealing to younger generations in particular. Conversely, if younger generations are not seeking out Fayette, local companies will be hard-pressed to recruit and retain talented workers. This scenario will negatively impact the fiscal stability of local municipalities, the school system, and compel companies to choose other areas over Fayette County. Additionally, if Fayette does not take an intentional path towards its economic growth, the quality of life and community options that Fayette offers, will likely be degraded.

“The mismatch between jobs and residents is key challenge for Fayette County. Working to better align local jobs with the skills of local workers can increase community attachment and decrease traffic and congestion. Moving forward, Fayette will need to invest in the types of areas that can support these types of employers.”

-Competitive Assessment
2.1 Support Small Business and Entrepreneurial Growth.

Supporting entrepreneurs should be a prime focus for Fayette County as residents desire more jobs closer to where they live and opportunities for technology growth abound. Growing Fayette companies must be on equal footing with attraction efforts and will require new investments to be competitive.

Action: Assess the current state of entrepreneurship and small enterprise in Fayette County

Action: Create a designated virtual “landing pad” for information and assistance on small business development.

Action: Optimize local small business and entrepreneur support programs, tools, and capital resources.

Action: Establish an incubator or accelerator that is focused on technology-oriented businesses.

2.2 Attract, Retain, and Expand Businesses that Employ Fayette Residents.

The Competitive Assessment revealed that there is a distinct desire to grow more quality jobs in Fayette County. Supporting businesses in core sectors, such as aviation, health care, and professional services must be priorities for economic development success.

Action: Optimize the Industry Operations Council to support economic competitiveness in Fayette’s business sectors.

Action: Support existing business in core economic sectors.

Action: Use existing economic concentrations to build external awareness about Fayette County as a competitive place to do business.

Action: Expand the inventory of sites and buildings that will support diverse job creation and targeted recruitment.

Action: Extend fiber infrastructure to high priority business areas.

Action: Increase the linkages among local businesses by encouraging procurement from local vendors.

Action: Assess and optimize local incentive tools.

Action: Develop a coordinated talent attraction marketing campaign.

2.3 Develop a Sustainable Film and Entertainment Cluster.

In order to capitalize on growth opportunities in the film and entertainment sector, strategic actions must focus on facilitating relationships between local vendors and production companies, while also making sure talent needs are met.

Action: Expand capacity and resources to support development of the film sector.

Action: Connect local organizations and business with film activity and opportunities.

Action: Train and support a world-class film workforce.
Focus Area: Community

ENSURING OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY CONTINUES TO BE INCLUSIVE, SAFE, AND WELCOMING

The Vision

Fayette County will be a model community for embracing changing demographics and building a place where all types of people can find a home. Racial and ethnic diversity will be celebrated. Young and old generations will find common ground through their engagement in the community and sharing of leadership experiences. Fayette residents will be able to rally around a common identity and understand the dynamics that are ongoing in their community. Together, the residents of Fayette will be proud of their home and work tirelessly to ensure that Fayette continues to be an inclusive, safe, and welcoming community.

Fayette will…

…proactively develop new leaders across all generations and ethnicities.

…celebrate and welcome all residents.

…create new engagement opportunities for residents.

…establish a unified Fayette County identity and consistent messaging.

…sustain Fayette’s excellence in public health and safety.

What if we don’t?

If Fayette does not define itself as a welcoming place or invest the time to build an inclusive environment, there is significant risk the community will further fracture. A divided community will reject a shared sense of identity and relationships will be hallmarked by infighting, parochialism, and distrust. The worst-case scenario would undoubtedly earn Fayette a negative reputation and undermine the appeal of Fayette to employers, residents, and visitors.

“Fayette County still has some growth opportunities towards embracing diversity across the county. I want to be part of a community that welcomes families of all cultures and ethnicities...to make us great.” In order to get to the point of working together, stakeholders said that minority inclusion and ongoing honest dialogue between and among people of different racial backgrounds must occur, especially as the demographics of the county continue to change.

-Competitive Assessment
3.1 PROACTIVELY DEVELOP NEW LEADERS ACROSS ALL GENERATIONS AND ETHNICITIES.

The importance of developing new leaders cannot be understated. Less than half of survey respondents (43 percent) said that ‘opportunities for leadership’ were ‘good’ or ‘excellent,’ ranking it second to last in terms of quality of life items. Fayette must intentionally create opportunities for leadership development that activate and encourage all resident to be leaders. As such, these opportunities must leverage and reflect Fayette’s diversity, in all of its forms, including generations, races, and ethnicities.

Action: Ensure K-12 students have access to leadership training opportunities.

Action: Create a community leadership pipeline for young professionals.

Action: Develop an annual inter-city visit trip for local leaders.

Action: Establish a political candidate education program.

3.2 CELEBRATE AND WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS.

As Fayette continues to change, it is important that people of all backgrounds feel welcome and a part of a broader community. Through a candid assessment of obstacles related to minority leadership, a formal celebration of the changes that are occurring in Fayette County, and increased visibility of opportunities to donate locally, all residents will be able to stake a claim in the future of the county.

Action: Hold an annual signature event to discuss and celebrate Fayette’s changing demographics.

Action: Create a clear, transparent, and fair hiring process for city/county job vacancies to address perceived bias.

Action: Increase the support and visibility of the Chamber for Good website as a central portal for coordinating local charitable giving.

3.3 CREATE NEW ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS.

Distinct challenges including high percentages of out-commuters, well-established leadership networks, and divisions along racial and ethnic lines, work against people feeling connected to Fayette County. Working to empower residents to take ownership of their community must be done in a proactive manner.

Action: Establish a signature volunteer day in Fayette County.

Action: Increase opportunities for web-based interaction with city and county organizations.

Action: Use popular crowd-funding sites to allow residents to fund projects they feel will transform Fayette County.

Action: Encourage additional transparency for city and county performance measures

3.4 ESTABLISH A UNIFIED FAYETTE COUNTY IDENTITY AND CONSISTENT MESSAGING.
Communication with residents is an important part of establishing a community that is cohesive and collaborative. Without clear channels of communication, messages and priorities can become mixed and even off-putting to some residents. Fayette must seek to develop better internal marketing in order to connect with a broad set of residents.

*Action: Leverage the public outreach channels of the Visioning Initiative to communicate with residents.*

*Action: Create a central online portal that provides information about different events in Fayette County.*

### 3.5 Sustain Fayette’s excellence in public health and safety.

Fayette County is a healthy and safe community. Residents and leaders must be vigilant and proactive to safeguard these qualities. This objective addresses the need for increased collaboration between groups tackling these tough issues. Increasing connections between law enforcement and the broader community will be especially important when it comes to communication, participation in public safety initiatives, and financial support. Finding new ways to support healthy outcomes for residents and collaborate with local initiatives must also hallmark the sustaining commitment to a vibrant future.

*Action: Grow the participation in citizen police academy programs in the jurisdictions that offer the classes.*

*Action: Empower residents with information about public safety in Fayette County.*

*Action: Establish plans to create a public safety foundation to support police, fire, and other emergency and first responder personnel.*

*Action: Work with local health initiatives and health service providers to make Fayette County the healthiest county in the state of Georgia.*
**Focus Area: Place**

**BUILDING AN APPEALING PLACE TO LIVE, INTERACT, AND ENJOY**

**The Vision**

Fayette County will offer residents of all ages, **stimulating and enjoyable environments**. Recognizing the great history and importance of green space in the County, these places will not subsume traditional development patterns, but rather complement them, as they will appeal to a broader population. Housing options will increase and will attract younger families, while allowing older residents to age in place. New commercial developments will encourage community interaction, enjoyment of the natural beauty of the County, and will be walkable, mixed-use, and vibrant.

**Fayette will...**

...develop additional quality of life amenities.

...encourage housing and development that appeal to a broad population of all ages.

...expand transportation infrastructure and mobility options.

**What if we don’t?**

If Fayette County does not support new development patterns in specific and limited areas, young professionals and families will continue to be priced out of the market and choose to live elsewhere. The shops, restaurants, and cultural attractions that residents currently desire, risk not being developed as denser environments are needed to sustain such amenities. Without a candid conversation about development patterns that enhance the future of the County, the school system will continue to shrink, leadership pipelines will dry up, and companies will not choose Fayette because they will be unable to convince workers to live in the County.

“As the county changes, Fayette residents and newcomers will continue to want options. The product that Fayette County can offer to talented individuals, new companies, and existing residents must continue to evolve as preferences change.”

-Competitive Assessment
4.1 DEVELOP ADDITIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE AMENITIES.

The Community Survey revealed that Fayette residents would like to see the development of facilities that could support artistic experiences as well as arts programming. Maximizing enjoyable green space and recreational offerings also came across as priorities. Investment in these areas will support a physically healthy population that can access and enjoy the natural beauty of Fayette County, which has been an attraction for many people.

**Action:** Establish a single nonprofit entity to coordinate arts events and arts programming.

**Action:** Perform a feasibility study for a multi-use event space.

**Action:** Expand annual event and festival offerings in Fayette County.

**Action:** Expand Keep Peachtree City Beautiful to the entire county.

**Action:** Establish a long-term plan for county-wide parks, recreation, trails, and paths.

4.2 ENCOURAGE HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT THAT APPEAL TO A BROAD POPULATION OF ALL AGES.

In Fayette County, it is clear that public input participants and stakeholders desire development that looks and feels different from existing development patterns. The Competitive Assessment showed that housing options in Fayette County are not appealing to a diverse array of people, including young professionals. The goal should be to offer an inventory of housing stock that can support people in various stages of their lifecycle.

**Action:** Develop quality housing options that attract young professionals and families.

**Action:** Establish a “toolkit” for municipalities and developers that encourages mixed-use environments that are pedestrian friendly.

**Action:** Assess the effectiveness of incentives for desired development.

**Action:** Conduct a retail leakage analysis to identify opportunities for additional shopping options.

4.3 EXPAND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND MOBILITY OPTIONS.

Traffic and congestion are challenges for Metro Atlanta and Fayette residents have expressed a desire for relief. The lack of direct access to an interstate and the high share of out-commuters exacerbate the pressure placed on arterials and highways. The County should continue to prioritize projects it feels will make the greatest impact and look to understanding the full extent of resident transportation needs.

**Action:** Incorporate support for various types of mobility enhancements in the County Comprehensive Plan.

**Action:** Perform a “needs assessment” related to senior transportation enhancements.

**Action:** Evaluate possibilities related to increasing alternative commuting options.
FAYETTE VISION PLAN: ACTION FOR THE FUTURE

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_Fayette County is the place where bold ideas become reality. We shall achieve this through our collaborative and inclusive leadership that elevates education, economic development, employment opportunities, and quality of life to unrivaled heights._

The vision statement, along with the findings and strategic implications from the Competitive Assessment, has been condensed into four Focus Areas that structure the recommendations of the Vision Plan. Each Focus Area contains recommendations and a define vision, but the interdependence of the Focus Areas is an integral point as implementation efforts will necessitate working across boundaries and breaking down established silos.

As shown in the following graphic, the Vision Plan has been divided into four primary focus areas. The controlling elements of the Vision Statement are woven throughout each focus area and through the component objectives and actions.
Focus Area: Education

Creating a Center of Excellence for K-12 Education and Continuous Lifelong Learning

The Vision: Fayette County will have an education system that is recognized as a national and international leader. Built on the strength of Fayette County Schools, the K-12 system will be known for its strategic use of technology that provides all students with access to new subjects and career tracks. Graduates will have exposure to leadership training, experience with the business community, and the skills to be productive citizens. Every student, young and old, will have access to exceptional learning opportunities, across the full continuum of learning, which will attract students and families to Fayette County.

Fayette will...  
...create a K-12 system that is recognized as a world-class asset.  
...increase postsecondary education opportunities in Fayette County.  
...actively support district teachers and staff.

What if we don’t? If Fayette County does not elevate and differentiate K-12 opportunities, there is significant risk that Fayette will lose its status as an educational leader, and enrollments will continue to decline. This will have repercussions not only in terms of education quality, but will decrease the desirability of Fayette to future families, dynamic businesses and to capital investment by companies. Connections between the K-12 system, postsecondary institutions, and the business community must be intentional and appropriately coordinated.

“Far and away, schools are considered the greatest strength of Fayette County. Respondents wrote, ‘In my opinion, Fayette County’s greatest strength is its school system.’ ‘[We have the] best public education system in the state of Georgia.’ Further, high quality education is drawing residents to live in Fayette County. Respondents who had moved to Fayette County at some point in their life were asked to identify the primary reasons for their relocation. The most commonly chosen option was the quality of K-12 education.”

-Competitive Assessment
1.1 Create a K-12 system that is recognized as a world-class asset.

Education is at the center of Fayette’s value proposition moving forward. The population dynamics in Fayette County jeopardize the long-term competitiveness of the school system as young professionals choose to live elsewhere, young families are not retained, and the tax base is eroded by increasing elderly homestead exemptions from school property taxes. As such, the competitiveness of the education offerings must reflect a quality and capacity that ensure people choose Fayette County over other places to live. Education must continue to be the asset that attracts and retains future generations.

The K-12 system must be the hallmark of what Fayette offers. This will occur through the use of technology, implementation of innovative learning systems, and a willingness to “go first.” Further, these characteristics entail embracing a reality where traditional notions of campuses, classrooms, and teaching methodologies are likely to be much more fluid and integrated with the business community, two year colleges, and four-year universities.

The recommendations that follow reflect the need to identify the areas where Fayette County can find consensus and make strategic investments. Taken from public input, stakeholder interviews, and results from the community leadership meetings, there are clear ideas for the kinds of opportunities that students and parents desire. Identifying how these ideas are made into realities in Fayette County must be the work of implementation.

1.1.1 Continue to discuss priorities for the future of education in Fayette County.

- Use the findings of the Visioning Initiative public input process to hold regular forums between the school system, teachers, parents, business community, and students about how new programs and experiences will be introduced to Fayette classrooms.
  - Priorities that were identified include hands-on learning opportunities, technical training and post-secondary options, and education offerings that better connect to the business community.
- Ensure priorities are integrated into district, institutional, and community-wide strategic planning and implementation activities.
- Ensure the business community, parents, students, and education stakeholders are involved in the identification and development of career pathways that will be offered in Fayette County.
- Make the findings of the recent parent and student survey available to businesses and interested parents.
- Develop a resource for parents and businesses that provide an overview of the implementation of career pathways in Fayette County schools.

1.1.2 Expand internship opportunities so every student will have the option to gain work experience before they graduate.
Work with parents, the Fayette County Board of Education, private schools, and home school community to determine scale of interest in types of summer internships and apprenticeships, including areas of focus.

Develop a "needs menu" for the local business community to ensure companies know of the kinds of opportunities that are needed and the requirements in terms of oversight.

Engage select employers to pilot an application-based summer internship and apprenticeship series.

Conduct follow-up surveys of participants to determine the feasibility and value of program expansion.

>>> BEST PRACTICE: RIGHT TRACK (ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA)

1.1.3 Enable all students to have access to the same academic courses and career pathways, regardless of the school they attend.

Work with Fayette County Schools to determine which classes may be in high demand, but not available at certain schools.

Establish technical capabilities at all high schools in the County to participate in such programs.

Evaluate the success of the relationship between Fayette County Schools, Clayton State, and ToonBoom Animation to serve as a model for developing additional career pathways that tie into local creative sectors.

Work with the school system and other organizations to identify the needed funding and a viable financing model to ensure that these opportunities are continually available.

1.1.4 Blend the offerings related to academic and technical education to provide models where knowledge is applied to real world settings throughout K-12 settings and post-secondary institutions.

Continue to engage the Fayette County Board of Education on the need for additional career and technical options in Fayette County.

Seek to ensure that college and career guidance is provided as early as possible and students are exposed to multiple post-secondary pathways.

- Ensure that students are exposed to local trades in career-focused initiatives and outreach to youth is ongoing.

Evaluate feasibility of working with other Southern Crescent Technical College (SCTC) campuses and Clayton State University to enhance dual enrollment options and expand current technical options.
Leverage local post-secondary capacity, once established (Objective 1.2), to build additional partnerships with the K-12 system to offer expanded technical and hands-on learning opportunities.

1.1.5 Optimize the programmatic elements of the Fayette Chamber’s Education Partnership.

- Leverage the Chamber’s leadership to convene a group of business and education leaders to discuss and identify the highest priority elements that should be pursued on a yearly basis.
  - Identify the areas where the resources of the business community can best be applied to enhancing the connection between education and business, including leadership development, mentoring, internships, and others.

- Work to establish a first year action agenda, comprised of actions from the Vision Plan as well as other strategic initiatives.
  - Work to expand the visibility and community knowledge of the Chamber for Good website and position it as a primary resource for businesses wishing to donate time and money to local schools.
  - Consider ways to incorporate more opportunities for job shadowing and mentoring in the schools.
  - Seek to publicize information about the high-performance of all local schools and celebrate achievements.

>>> BEST PRACTICE: AUSTIN PARTNERS IN EDUCATION (AUSTIN, TEXAS)

>>> BEST PRACTICE: MONTGOMERY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA)

1.2. Increase postsecondary education opportunities in Fayette County.

Without a permanent higher education campus in Fayette County, residents are unable to pursue many of the degree options that are desired. However, there is evidence that momentum is shifting toward the provision of higher education capacity. The announcement by Georgia Military College to establish a two-year campus near Pinewood Atlanta Studios and the $400,000 that has been included in the University System of Georgia’s budget to prepare a new curriculum for television and movie course offerings that could be presented in Fayette County, indicates there is a desire and anticipated demand for higher education in Fayette. Leveraging these investments to establish a full continuum of education in Fayette, from kindergarten to four-year degrees, must be a signature focus of the Vision Plan. Establishing such an environment could allow local manufacturers, health care providers, and other sectors access to a whole new source of employees.

1.2.1 Establish and operate a world-class technical training facility in Fayette County.
✓ Work with higher educational institutions to explore options related to establishing additional capacity in the county.

✓ Strategically leverage Pinewood Atlanta Studios as a catalyst for the development a four-year institution in Fayette.

  ▪ Engage with the University System of Georgia to move forward with the “development of a concentrated university and technical college curriculum in Fayette County for workforce development related to the growing film, television, and digital media industries in Georgia” as budgeted in the FY 2015 budget.

✓ Work with educational partners to identify the phasing, barriers, and funding needs for establishing a campus.

  ▪ Determine which courses and programs of work should be prioritized. Leverage this information to determine scope and initial outlays needed.

  ▪ Conduct appropriate outreach to state and local officials to develop a funding plan. Exploration of land or building donations should be conducted.

  ▪ Consider the need and feasibility of passing a special local option sales tax (SPLOST) to fund development of post-secondary opportunities.

✓ Leverage new presence to establish partnerships between K-12 schools, higher education, and businesses to offer additional technical learning opportunities.

  ▪ New opportunities catalyzed by the presence of additional higher education institutions could include coursework in telemedicine, advanced manufacturing, aviation, and robotics.

> > > BEST PRACTICE: HENRY COUNTY CENTER (HENRY COUNTY, GEORGIA)

1.2.2 Expand continuing adult education opportunities.

✓ Work with existing, as well as non-local educational institutions, to determine the classes, courses, and programs of study that could be offered in the county.

✓ Leverage Fayette Senior Services to better understand the potential educational needs and desires of senior citizens in the county.
MindMixer: Technical Education within Fayette County

From participants on MindMixer:

"Presently, most students have no alternative but to travel to a surrounding county - Clayton, Fulton, Spalding - to obtain technical training and trade skills. The tuition money and associated jobs do not benefit Fayette County. Let’s have a local technical college where our young people who do not desire to attend a traditional four-year college can learn the skilled trades. Industry is desperate for candidates with experience in advanced manufacturing processes. With a skilled labor force, attracting the right kind of industry becomes easier. The FCBOE could partner with a Fayette-based institution to create a technical skill track starting in High School."

“Students can learn outside the classroom in fields like aviation, manufacturing, healthcare, culinary arts, public safety, welding, and more. Fayette industries have made clear through an Industry Needs Assessment that qualified workers in these fields are in high demand. Southern Crescent Tech offers these programs. They also offer programs in the seven skilled trades disciplines needed at Pinewood Studios. Fayette has the need, SCTC is ready to partner, and the time is right to establish a College and Career Academy to pull the partnerships together.”

MindMixer: University Campus

Per a participant on MindMixer:

“Many of the comments in the Competitive Assessment mentioned the need to create a youthful vibe in the community. What better way to do this than create a college town feel. If this University focused on the arts that would generate future workers at Pinewood this would even be better because we could retain those students in the community. In the last Fayette vision process we main outcome was Piedmont Fayette Hospital. We need to think big again.”

1.3 Actively support district teachers and staff.

Research has shown that a school district is only as good as its faculty and staff. The Chamber and other groups have demonstrated leadership in supporting professional development opportunities for teachers and staff. Decreasing enrollments and overall threats to the school system require that teachers continue to feel engaged and supported by the broader community. Finding ways to ramp up ongoing efforts while also exposing teachers to local and regional businesses can help retain teachers and improve the quality of education.

1.3.1 Enhance professional development opportunities for teachers.
✓ Continue to seek funding for professional development opportunities for teachers in all grade levels via A.M.P.L.I.F.Y. (Advancing More Professional Learning in Fayette Yearly).

✓ Seek to increase the cross-pollination of teachers and businesses through an annual externship program with local employers.

  ▪ Work with employers to host teams of teachers at their facilities during the summer months, for a couple days. The externships should allow teachers to experience the local business and provide time for teachers to collaboratively think how to incorporate experiences into curriculum.

  ▪ Consider working with nearby school systems to increase the pool of employers accessible to teachers.

>>>BEST PRACTICE: FORD NEXT GENERATION LEARNING EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM (LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY)

1.3.2 Hold an annual intra-district best practices summit for teachers and administrators

✓ Establish a committee of teachers from different schools willing to plan and coordinate a best practices summit.

✓ Develop a day or half-day of programming that allows teachers from different schools to share their best practices with others.

  ▪ Consider breaking up into small groups to tackle common problems submitted beforehand.
Focus Area: Economy

Growing a Prosperous and Dynamic Economy

The Vision

Fayette County will have an economy that is growing and that provides jobs that align with resident skills. Working closer to home will allow residents to spend less time in their cars and feel more attached to their home County. Companies will want to locate in Fayette because of the coordination between education and business, the high quality of life, the support they receive from the community, and the competitive inventory of sites and buildings. The growth of the economy will continue to reflect not only the highest priority economic sectors, but will also respect and encourage the identities of the different areas and municipalities in Fayette County.

Fayette will...

...support small business and entrepreneurial growth.

...attract, retain, and expand businesses that employ Fayette residents.

...develop a sustainable film and entertainment cluster

What if we don’t?

If Fayette County does not invest time and money into developing the economy, the mismatch between jobs and residents will continue to widen. A widening gap will decrease the appeal of Fayette as longer commutes are not appealing to younger generations in particular. Conversely, if younger generations are not seeking out Fayette, local companies will be hard-pressed to recruit and retain talented workers. This scenario will negatively impact the fiscal stability of local municipalities, the school system, and compel companies to choose other areas over Fayette County. Additionally, if Fayette does not take an intentional path towards its economic growth, the quality of life and community options that Fayette offers, will likely be degraded.

“The mismatch between jobs and residents is key challenge for Fayette County. Working to better align local jobs with the skills of local workers can increase community attachment and decrease traffic and congestion. Moving forward, Fayette will need to invest in the types of areas that can support these types of employers.”

- Competitive Assessment
2.1 Support small business and entrepreneurial growth.

Job creation is often positioned as a three-legged stool, comprised of business attraction, existing business expansion, and entrepreneurship. While on equal footing, there are many nuances and challenges related to building an entrepreneurial community that are often overlooked. Supporting entrepreneurs should be a prime focus for Fayette County as residents desire more jobs closer to where they live and the aging, wealthy population is a traditionally entrepreneurial demographic.

2.1.1 Assess the current state of entrepreneurship and small enterprise in Fayette County

- Conduct a follow-up survey of entrepreneurs to the 2008 survey conducted as a prerequisite for becoming an Entrepreneur Friendly community. Use the 2008 findings as a baseline assessment and determine how needs have shifted.
  - Work with the SCORE chapter, the SBDC, and other organizations to supplement the survey with trends and information gleaned from the provision of their services.
  - Consider holding focus groups of entrepreneurs to augment the survey findings.

- Seek to identify and understand the perspectives of Baby Boomer entrepreneurs and specifically catalogue the unique problems they may face in the county or region.

2.1.2 Create a designated virtual “landing pad” for information and assistance on small business development.

- Leverage the resources available on the Chamber’s website to establish a single resource that provides a comprehensive overview of small business opportunities and support in the county.

- Work with local and regional organizations to ensure that the information is up-to-date and reflective of small business priorities.

- Market the resource broadly to encourage entrepreneurs and small businesses to effectively engage with the offered resources.

> > > BEST PRACTICE: KC SOURCELINK (KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)

2.1.3 Optimize local small business and entrepreneur support programs, tools, and capital resources.

- Based on the survey of small businesses and entrepreneurs (Action 2.1.1), identify the priorities for advancing the state of entrepreneurship in the county. Consider the following actions:
  - Conduct outreach to national groups that are working to support older entrepreneurs, such as the AARP and the Kauffman Foundation (through their FastTrac partnership), to establish a training program.
  - Work with the Clayton State University Small Business Development Center to establish physical presence in Fayette County.
• Co-locate small business resources with the proposed incubator (Action 2.2.4) or a co-working space.

✔ Optimizing entrepreneur connections to resources.

• Conduct a marketing campaign to educate home-based businesses and small enterprises about the resources that are available.

• Establish a quarterly entrepreneur meet-up to provide a casual series of networking opportunities for entrepreneurs in the Southern Crescent. Consider orienting each meet-up around a theme and hosting a speaker.

✔ Ensure K-12 students have access to entrepreneurship training opportunities and are considered part of the ecosystem.

✔ Inventory the capital sources available to entrepreneurs in the Southern Crescent and create an online resource.

>> LAUNCH ENTREPRENEURSHIP (CHATTANOOGA, TN)

2.1.4 Establish an incubator or accelerator that is focused on technology-oriented businesses.

✔ Leverage the development of Pinewood Studios and the piloted digital media career pathway to establish momentum for enhanced entrepreneurial support in this area.

✔ Work with partners such as Technology Association of Georgia (TAG), Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC), and Small Business Development Center (SBDC), to evaluate feasibility of establishing an incubator or accelerator.

• Conduct outreach to regional post-secondary institutions with digital media and film training capacity, including Clayton State University, Georgia Tech, and Georgia State.

• Identify a local retired executive who could champion and lead initial efforts to develop such a resource.

• Encourage participation by companies related to post-production and editing.

✔ Perform feasibility analysis and identify viable funding mechanisms.
2.2 **Attract, retain, and expand businesses that employ Fayette residents.**

The Competitive Assessment revealed that there is a distinct desire to grow more quality jobs in Fayette County. Whether the goal is to attract more professionals (young and old), decrease traffic, or employ residents, higher-value jobs in the county are needed. To advance these objectives, Fayette must ensure that its existing employers are retained and supported and that it is strategically investing in the types of building and sites that will attract high-value employers. Creating an Existing Business Partnership will facilitate many of these discussions and coordinate strategic business support. Nearing build-out in its industrial parks and without large scale office space for a corporate tenant, Fayette County is nearing a point of diminishing competitiveness. Without a portfolio of sites and buildings, Fayette is likely to be bypassed by companies looking to grow. All of the actions contained in this objective seek to increase Fayette’s ability to grow the kinds of jobs that will employ local talent, including health care, aviation, manufacturing, and professional services.

2.2.1 **Optimize the Industry Operations Council to support economic competitiveness in Fayette’s business sectors.**

- Identify additional companies and nonprofits that should be invited to sit on the council. Ensure economic diversity reflects the diversity of employers in the County.

- Leverage the expertise of councilmembers to inform strategic efforts related to improving the business climate, supporting small business, improving workforce development, elevating education coordination, and other economic development initiatives.

- Create an agenda for the year that reflects the highest priority items, as identified by members.

2.2.2 **Support existing business in core economic sector, including health care and medical services, aviation, manufacturing and professional service firms.**

- Support the Fayette County Development Authority as the primary business retention and expansion (BRE) entity.

  - Ensure major Fayette County employers are visited on a regular basis.

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## MindMixer: Fayette County Innovation Center

One of the ideas receiving traction on the Fayette Visioning Mind Mixer website has been the creation of the Fayette County Innovation Center. As described on the site, “Fayette County is blessed with many world-class companies, and retired business professionals. These resources could be leveraged by individuals and small business to support innovation and creativity.” With potential beginnings as a network of aspiring inventors and entrepreneurs, the vision is to potentially offer a physical space that can house and be a locus for innovation in Fayette County.
• Continually evaluate the criteria for business retention and expansion visits, in addition to size, and ensure the data that is collected is actionable.

>> Best Practice: Business First Greater Richmond (Richmond, Virginia)

✓ Use the intelligence gained from existing business visits to better position entrepreneurial resources, establish direct connections with education pipelines, and inform communications strategies.

✓ Work to identify the many home-based businesses in Fayette County and seek to connect those entrepreneurs with resources to help scale their operations.

• Leverage business license data and public communication channels to identify and connect with small companies.

Focus on Health Care

The sector that has created the most jobs in Fayette County over the past 10 years has been health care and social assistance. Driven by the growth and success of Piedmont Fayette Hospital, the value of health care to Fayette County cannot be understated. Ensuring that Piedmont Fayette Hospital is able to grow and expand will be vital to continued prosperity, especially as medical facilities are added throughout the Southern Crescent. Alleviating talent needs, especially in relation to technicians, physician assistants, rehab aides, pharmacists, and others should be a priority for the education and economic development organizations in the county. Identifying other needs, such as a 24-hour pharmacy, and opportunities for local sourcing should also be pursued.

2.2.3 Use existing economic concentrations to build external awareness about Fayette County as a competitive place to do business.

✓ Establish a target business sector strategic plan based on available buildings, sites, education pipelines, and regional workforce to better serve local companies and attract new investment.

✓ Leverage new industrial and office inventory (Action 2.2.4) for targeted business recruitment, including headquarters and regional headquarter operations.

✓ Ensure the Peachtree City Industrial Park Free Trade Zone is marketed to high-value wholesale companies and firms that import materials from abroad.

✓ Align recruitment strategies for digital media, post-production, and gaming companies with regional and state efforts.
Ensure marketing messages leverage the digital media career pathway and Pinewood Atlanta Studios.

Work with Atlanta Regional Airport-Falcon Field and existing aviation companies to attract high value suppliers and firms.

### 2.2.4 Expand the inventory of sites and buildings that will support diverse job creation and targeted business recruitment strategies.

Enhance manufacturing and industrial development “product”:

- Ensure the database of existing sites and buildings reflects up-to-date inventory and marketable assets.
- Assess future needs for industrial space, including an estimated timeline for complete build-out and absorption of existing industrial inventory.
- Identify locations within the county that could be used to establish new industrial capacity.
- Based on market conditions, prioritize the possible locations for increased inventory and establish a plan to annex, extend infrastructure, and zone appropriately.
- Identify city and county funding sources that could be used to acquire right of way and extend infrastructure to priority industrial locations.
- Determine the need to assess the viability and impact of the Fayette County Development Authority owning and managing a portfolio of property to offer prospects.

Enhance the inventory of office space that will accommodate corporate operations and professional firms.

- Assess current stock of available office space and catalogue greatest challenges.
- Consider establishing a revolving loan fund to help upgrade existing office space.
- Ensure that land use plans reflect the desire for more corporate office space.
- Continue to build relationships with the development community to communicate opportunities for redevelop and speculative office space. Such communication should be informed by data from business retention visits.

### 2.2.5 Extend fiber infrastructure to high priority business areas.

Empanel a working group, comprised of representatives from both public and private sectors, to lead fiber infrastructure planning and strategic development.

- Position the group as a central information portal for businesses interested in accessing higher-speed internet services, including gigabit.
✓ Conduct a follow-up survey to the 2010 survey that was used for Google Fiber attraction efforts, to measure the level of demand that currently exists for higher speed internet within the county.
  - Consider restricting the survey population to local businesses in order to measure the commercial demand.

✓ Based on survey results and other discussions, identify the priority locations for commercial gigabit connectivity.

✓ Identify funding mechanisms and state programs that could help alleviate the cost of establishing a more robust fiber infrastructure, including state and federal grant opportunities and the Digital Georgia Program (part of the Georgia Technology Authority).
  - Evaluate feasibility of offering right-of-way easements to encourage new service providers.

✓ Engage internet service providers on the cost and feasibility of extending high speed service to priority areas.

✓ Based on feasibility of service providers extending current capacity, consider issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to receive feedback and vendor interest in extending gigabit internet to businesses and residences.

>>>BEST PRACTICE: FIBER DEVELOPMENT (MULTIPLE)

2.2.6 Increase the linkages among local businesses by encouraging procurement from local vendors.

✓ Leverage business network databases, such as Chamber membership directory, to categorize and organize the types of products and services available locally.

✓ Plan and execute an ongoing initiative to encourage local companies to switch from a non-local vendor to a Fayette-based supplier. Track and publish metrics related to successful vendor transitions and work with the Development Authority or other organization to estimate economic impact.

✓ Consider aligning this campaign with the Community EXPO.

>>>BEST PRACTICE: BUY HERE PROGRAM (IOWA CITY, IOWA)

2.2.7 Assess and optimize local incentive tools.

✓ Conduct a best practices assessment of local and regional governments and the incentives policies they have in place.
  - Consider targeting communities of similar size that may be targeting similar types of companies for recruitment and expansion.
• Work with economic development partners to inform the review process. Ensure non-financial offerings, such as expedited permit reviews, are included.

• Identify changes that can be made to local ordinances to strengthen and coordinate policies.

✓ Ensure that city and county permitting, zoning, and construction requirements are streamlined in order to make it easier for businesses and developers to do business in Fayette County.

2.2.8 Develop a coordinated talent attraction marketing campaign.

✓ Work with YP Fayette and private employers to assess and establish the need for a targeted marketing campaign to attract professionals.

✓ Work with local employers to identify specific skill sets that are needed.

  • Leverage business retention and expansion data to support targeted talent outreach.
  
  • Ensure the representation of film-related interests and inclusion of production companies.
  
  • Specifically work with Piedmont Fayette Hospital to understand talent challenges and opportunities related to the medical field.

✓ Work with regional workforce development and economic development entities in Metro Atlanta to effectively leverage regional resources for targeting talent.

✓ Identify target audience and establish central messaging, branding, and outreach strategy.

>>>BEST PRACTICE: WORK IN THE TRIANGLE (RALEIGH-DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA)

2.3 Develop a sustainable film and entertainment cluster.

The development of Pinewood Atlanta Studios is a defining asset for Fayette County. However, as the Competitive Assessment indicated, its potential scope and economic impact remains to be determined. In order to capitalize on growth opportunities in the film and entertainment sector, strategic actions must include communicating with community partners, brokering relationships, and actively capturing follow-on investment from outside vendors and companies. Taken together, the following recommendations are intended to build capacity to accommodate the film sector, and lay the groundwork for larger investments.

2.3.1 Expand capacity and resources to support development of the film sector.

✓ Continue development of marketing tools and relationships to support growth of the film sector in Fayette County.

  • Support continued development of Film Fayette as the primary film marketing arm for Fayette County.
• Centralize information about filming in Fayette County and ensure web-based tools communicate relevant filming regulations, aid in location searches, and connect production companies with local talent.

• Design and implement a marketing campaign to increase awareness of the West Fayetteville area.
  • Consider creating a microsite specifically designed to showcase the development opportunity and optimize communications with potential developers.

• Ensure commercial space that is developed in the area is suitable for needs of companies that service film productions and back-lot production activities.

• Work with the Georgia Department of Economic Development and other relevant partners to measure the impact of the film sector on Fayette’s economy.

> > > BEST PRACTICE: WILMINGTON FILM COMMISSION (WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA)

2.3.2 Connect local organizations and business with film activity and opportunities.

✓ Convene community leaders who represent public safety, housing, development, permitting and zoning, the airport, and others, on a regular basis. Discuss impacts of increased film production on community partners.

✓ Seek to develop communication and coordination protocols for addressing unforeseen and recurring challenges.
  • Work with local jurisdictions to streamline permitting requirements to ensure requests are handled expeditiously (when filming needs to occur off-site).
  • Consider holding regular “office hours” at Pinewood Atlanta Studios for county and municipal staff to meet with production representatives regarding permitting requests.
  • Work to educate landlords about the types of leases that they can offer to best situate themselves for film crew tenants.
  • Ensure communications with officials at Atlanta Regional Airport-Falcon Field regarding the anticipate demand for increased use.
  • Identify ongoing coordination challenges and adjust strategies accordingly.

✓ Seek to connect local businesses with film opportunities to become vendors of choice for productions occurring at Pinewood Atlanta Studio.

2.3.3 Train and support a world-class film workforce.

✓ Conduct a detailed needs assessment of key occupations that may be lacking or overrepresented in the Atlanta Metro region.
• Work with production companies and the Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office to identify acute talent needs and establish a plan to alleviate any shortages.

✓ Support the continued development of film-related programs offered by Clayton State University and encourage ongoing dialogue on how to best optimize the training programs.

✓ Work with other universities and colleges to increase the training presence and capacity in Fayette County (see actions under objective 1.2)

✓ Establish a central portal for connecting talent with available jobs.
  • Establish a database of available talent, including production, post-production, and crew workers.
  • Encourage production companies to post available jobs on the website.

>>>BEST PRACTICE: FILM NEW ORLEANS (NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA)
Focus Area: Community

ENSURING OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY CONTINUES TO BE INCLUSIVE, SAFE, AND WELCOMING

The Vision
Fayette County will be a model community for embracing changing demographics and building a place where all types of people can find a home. Racial and ethnic diversity will be celebrated. Young and old generations will find common ground through their engagement in the community and sharing of leadership experiences. Fayette residents will be able to rally around a common identity and understand the dynamics that are ongoing in their community. Together, the residents of Fayette will be proud of their home and work tirelessly to ensure that Fayette continues to be an inclusive, safe, and welcoming community.

Fayette will...
...proactively develop new leaders across all generations and ethnicities.
...celebrate and welcome all residents.
...create new engagement opportunities for residents.
...establish a unified Fayette County identity and consistent messaging.
...sustain Fayette’s excellence in health and public safety.

What if we don’t?
If Fayette does not define itself as a welcoming place or invest the time to build an inclusive environment, there is significant risk the community will further fracture. A divided community will reject a shared sense of identity and relationships will be hallmarked by infighting, parochialism, and distrust. The worst-case scenario would undoubtedly earn Fayette a negative reputation and undermine the appeal of Fayette to employers, residents, and visitors.

“Fayette County still has some growth opportunities towards embracing diversity across the county. I want to be part of a community that welcomes families of all cultures and ethnicities...to make us great.” In order to get to the point of working together, stakeholders said that minority inclusion and ongoing honest dialogue between and among people of different racial backgrounds must occur, especially as the demographics of the county continue to change.

-Competitive Assessment
3.1 Proactively develop new leaders across all generations and ethnicities.

The importance of developing new leaders cannot be understated. Less than half of survey respondents (43 percent) said that ‘opportunities for leadership’ were ‘good’ or ‘excellent,’ ranking it second to last in terms of quality of life items. When analyzed by race and ethnicity, it was clear that black respondents feel that there are fewer opportunities to access leadership opportunities than white residents. However, young professionals, overall, do feel that they are able to find opportunities to lead. With an aging population and changing demographics, finding the next cohort of leaders is vital. Leadership, in this context, is not just about elected positions, but filters down to non-profits, private sector entities, and faith-based organizations. Being intentional about creating access points for the young leaders will not only increase the population of potential leaders, but will increase the quality of community attachment.

Fayette must intentionally create opportunities for leadership development that activate and encourage all resident to be leaders. As such, these opportunities must leverage and reflect Fayette’s diversity, in all of its forms, including generations, races, and ethnicities.

3.1.1 Ensure K-12 students have access to leadership training opportunities that are part of a larger leadership development paradigm.

- Seek to align resources and organizations that are involved with leadership development in the county.
  - Create an “asset map” of the leadership development organizations and resources in Fayette County to identify gaps.
  - Identify gaps and redundancies to better serve the pipeline of students.
  - Evaluate the Leader in Me implementation efforts and determine next steps.
- Establish a summer internship series for high school students that combine hands-on experience with leadership training.
  - Work with existing young leadership opportunity providers, such as AV Pride to develop the program or enhance an existing program.
  - Internship opportunities could focus on public sector employers and public-facing experiences.
- Engage YP Fayette to analyze and make recommendations related to new leadership opportunities that could be developed for K-12 students.

>>>BEST PRACTICE: CITY OF ASHEVILLE YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA)

3.1.2 Create a community leadership pipeline for young professionals.
Continue to grow and expand YP Fayette to be the preeminent young professional group in the county.

- Assess the effectiveness of the Young Protégés mentoring program and seek to increase its value for both young professionals and mentors.
  - Consider encouraging the attendance of participants at mentor’s board meetings (if they serve on nonprofit boards).
- Continue the representation of YP Fayette on the Chamber board and in other leadership organizations.

Encourage YP Fayette to develop a list of advocacy issues that they would like to champion in the community and develop an actionable program of work.

- Work with YP Fayette to take ownership of parts of the Vision Plan and be implementing agents.
- Partner the cohort of young professional leaders with local nonprofits to serve in an advisory or pro-bono consulting role.

>>>BEST PRACTICE: TULSA’S YOUNG PROFESSIONALS (TULSA, OKLAHOMA)

>>>BEST PRACTICE: YP SUMMIT (OMAHA, NEBRASKA)

3.1.3 Develop an annual inter-city visit trip for local leaders.

- Leverage the success of the Chamber-sponsored leadership trip to Williamson County to establish an annual or biannual inter-city trip.
- If an out-of-state trip is conducted biannually, leverage the “off year” to plan a leadership trip to a local county to study and learn about a focused topic, such as provision of technical training, business retention and expansion, development, or others.
- Establish a feedback mechanism and follow-up procedure to leverage trip knowledge into actionable items.

3.1.4 Establish a political candidate education program.

- Create a non-partisan political education program for residents interested in seeking office.
  - Include information on the process of running for office, fundraising compliance issues, and basic public finance.
  - Leverage the knowledge and experience of current and former elected officials.
  - Consider compiling a resource from elected officials on lessons learned and things they wished they would have known prior to running for office.
✓ Leverage the political candidate education program to establish and conduct transition workshops for citizens elected to public office but not yet sworn into office.

>>>BEST PRACTICE: Forsyth County Political Candidate Training Program (Forsyth County, North Carolina)

3.2 Celebrate and welcome all residents.

Demographics in Fayette County are changing quickly. Not only has the white, non-Hispanic population declined in recent years, but the cultural-generational gap was the largest of comparison communities studied for this process. There is a distinct need to own and champion these changes. Through a candid assessment of obstacles related to minority leadership and a celebration of the changes that are occurring in Fayette County, all residents will be able to stake a claim in the future of the county. These efforts cannot be done just for the sake of doing, but rather must seek be intentional in their sincerity to move Fayette County forward.

3.2.1 Hold an annual signature event to discuss and celebrate Fayette’s changing demographics.

✓ Establish a steering committee to plan and coordinate an initial annual event that celebrates and addresses issues related to Fayette’s changing demographics.
  ▪ Consider aligning with an existing event, such as Taste of Fayette.
✓ Work with local employers, nonprofits, and young professionals to determine topics of relevance.
✓ At the conclusion of the event, develop a work plan to continue the conversations and implement ideas that may have surfaced or gained traction.

>>>BEST PRACTICE: Diversity Summit (Montgomery, Alabama)

3.2.2 Create a clear, transparent, and fair hiring process for city and county job vacancies to address perceived instances of bias and favoritism.

✓ Evaluate challenges related to diversity and leadership opportunities.
  ▪ Work with elected, nonprofit, and private sector leaders to identify opportunities for increasing diverse representation.
  ▪ Ensure processes for appointments to county boards and council vacancies are examined as well.
✓ Share findings and recommendations with appropriate organizations and bodies.
✓ Identify strategies for outreach and activation of minority candidates for leadership programs and other pipelines that feed into leadership positions.
✓ Encourage city and county elected officials to include age, gender and racial diversity as a consideration in making citizen appointments to boards, committee, task forces and advisory groups.
3.2.3 Increase the support and visibility of the Chamber for Good website as a central portal for coordinating local charitable giving.

- Increase the visibility of the Chamber for Good website among local nonprofits, businesses, and corporate givers.
  - Develop a 10-15 minute presentation about the Chamber for Good website and how organizations can benefit. Seek to incorporate success stories of organizations receiving donations of time, money, and items.
  - Use presentation to target nonprofits, associated boards, and companies to build more awareness about donating locally and the impact it can have on local residents.
- Set a “penetration goal” for the number of local nonprofits using the site compared to the total number of nonprofits.
  - Work towards getting a majority of nonprofits to use the site for at least one campaign or need.
- Survey nonprofits and users of the site to inform ongoing strategic publicity.

3.3 Create new engagement opportunities for residents.

When people feel attached to their communities, they are more likely to participate in and care about the future of the community. A common concern that survey respondents and Steering Committee members expressed was a desire for more proactive community-building opportunities. As presented in the Competitive Assessment, distinct challenges including high percentages of out-commuters, well-established leadership networks, and divisions along racial and ethnic lines, work against people feeling connected to Fayette County. Working to empower residents to take ownership of their community must be done in a proactive manner that includes developing new modes of interaction, increasing the transparency of government, and enhancing communication channels.

3.3.1 Establish a signature volunteer day in Fayette County.

- Work with nonprofit and faith-based service providers to establish a volunteer event or series that would connect residents with opportunities in other Fayette communities.
- Consider adding a competitive element, encouraging local cities and the county to activate as many volunteers as possible.
- Seek to align the volunteer day with an existing event, such as the Points of Light Annual National Volunteer Week or the Martin Luther King Holiday Day observances.

3.3.2 Increase opportunities for web-based interaction with city and county organizations.

- Work with the Peachtree City CVB to evaluate feasibility of expanding the scope of the mobile app to encompass the entire county. Address software development and funding challenges.
✓ Establish a countywide app that allows citizens to report potholes, illegal dumping, code violations, and other concerns.

✓ Ensure that social media outlets are updated on a regular basis and websites contain most up-to-date information.

3.3.3 Use popular crowd-funding sites to allow residents to fund projects they feel will transform Fayette County.

✓ Determine the parts of the Vision Plan that could feasibly be funded by residents of Fayette County with crowd-funding.

✓ Research examples of successful public-oriented crowd-funding campaigns. Conduct outreach to jurisdictions, if needed.

✓ Evaluate the different crowd-funding sites and choose a partner. Establish a timeframe, a goal, and other necessary elements to effectively raise the needed funds.

3.3.4 Encourage additional transparency for city and county performance measures

✓ Establish a central online reporting site where cities and the county can publish performance metrics.

✓ Consider leveraging an existing public website to accommodate additional data and statistics.
  ▪ Encourage the timely reporting and benchmarking of statistics related to crime, education, and infrastructure.
  ▪ Data related to social media interaction, the implementation of the Vision Plan, and other communications-related metrics should also be included.

✓ Establish a public outreach campaign to increase understanding of how local jurisdictions are performing.

3.4 Establish a unified Fayette County identity and consistent messaging.

Communication with residents is an important part of establishing a community that is cohesive and collaborative. Without clear channels of communication, messages and priorities can become mixed and even off-putting to some residents. The Fayette Vision Plan and implementation efforts should give clarity of mission to many organizations and how their work fits together within the larger context. There is no doubt that communications will need to be robust and flexible. A starting point for establishing a cohesive message and visual should begin with how the Vision Plan is rolled out to the public. Establishing a clear brand for this

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2 Crowd-funding is a method of fundraising that seeks to leverage a large pool of funder (“the crowd”) to pool resources for a specific project, often facilitated by a web platform, such as Kickstarter or IndieGogo.
process can inform and supplement other types of communication, including information on implementation efforts, county events, and dialogue with law enforcement.

3.4.1 Leverage the public outreach channels of the Visioning Initiative to educate and communicate with residents.

- Continue to use social media, MindMixer, and other print outlets for communicating implementation successes.
- Establish an ongoing communications calendar for communicating about the Vision Plan.
  - Include posting print information in priority locations, such as at Fayette Senior Services, the Fayette Public Library, local schools, and government buildings.
- Consider holding an annual event to update the public on the status of implementation and opportunities to be engaged.

3.4.2 Create a central online portal that provides information about different events and happenings in Fayette County.

- Establish an online portal where residents can find information on upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and other ways to be engaged in the community,
- Consider using an existing platform for hosting the information.
- Enable a mechanism for municipalities, non-profit organizations, businesses, and faith-based organizations to submit information about upcoming events and happenings.

3.5 Sustain Fayette’s excellence in public health and safety.

Fayette County is a healthy and safe community. Residents and leaders must be vigilant and proactive to safeguard these important community qualities. This objective addresses the need for increased collaboration between groups tackling these tough issues. Increasing connections between law enforcement and the broader community will be especially important when it comes to communication, participation in public safety initiatives, and financial support. Finding new ways to support healthy outcomes for residents and collaborate with local initiatives must also hallmark the sustaining commitment to a vibrant future.

3.5.1 Grow the participation in citizen police academy programs in the jurisdictions that offer the classes.

- Increase the visibility and marketing presence of the different citizen academy programs in the County.
- Seek to grow participation across all programs and continue to engage graduates towards public safety goals.
3.5.2 **Empower residents with information about public safety in Fayette County to close the gap between perception and reality.**

- Work with local media outlets to contextualize crime statistics through comparisons with other counties and Metro Atlanta.
- Leverage geographical crime statistics to identify potential crime hotspots and ensure the neighborhood organizations in those areas are aware of programs such as Neighborhood Watch.
- Based on crime statistics and location of crimes, evaluate the need for special districts, such as a community improvement district, where businesses would be able to fund additional security measures.

3.5.3 **Establish plans to create a public safety foundation to support police, fire, and other emergency and first responder personnel.**

- Empanel a leadership group to lead the planning for establishing the foundation.
- Seek to incorporate the foundation as a nonprofit entity.
- Establish a board, bylaws, web presence, vision, and mission statement
- Identify major funding sources that could be founding members and conduct fundraising.

3.5.4 **Work with local health initiatives and health service providers to make Fayette County the healthiest county in the state of Georgia.**

- Work with local health providers and medical service organizations to establish a work plan for addressing health outcome challenges.
  - Ensure that there are liaisons between the Live Better Fayette health coalition and the Vision Plan’s Implementation Committee. Identify opportunities to connect and integrate implementation activities based on health priorities for Fayette County.
  - Leverage the County Health Rankings and Piedmont Fayette Hospital’s Community Health Needs Assessment to understand Fayette’s relative position within the state of Georgia.
- Ensure that Vision Plan initiatives and local health initiatives are cross-promoting events and are supportive of common goals.
**Focus Area: Place**

**Building an Appealing Place to Live, Interact, and Enjoy**

**The Vision**

Fayette County will offer residents of all ages, **stimulating and enjoyable environments**. Recognizing the great history and importance of green space in the County, these places will not subsume traditional development patterns, but rather complement them, as they will appeal to a broader population. Housing options will increase and will attract younger families, while allowing older residents to age in place. New commercial developments will encourage community interaction, enjoyment of the natural beauty of the County, and will be walkable, mixed-use, and vibrant.

**Fayette will...**

...**develop additional quality of life amenities.**

...**encourage housing and development that appeal to a broad population of all ages.**

...**expand transportation infrastructure and mobility options.**

**What if we don’t?**

If Fayette County does not support new development patterns in specific and limited areas, young professionals and families will continue to be priced out of the market and choose to live elsewhere. The shops, restaurants, and cultural attractions that residents currently desire, risk not being developed as denser environments are needed to sustain such amenities. Without a candid conversation about development patterns that enhance the future of the County, the school system will continue to shrink, leadership pipelines will dry up, and companies will not choose Fayette because they will be unable to convince workers to live in the County.

“As the county changes, Fayette residents and newcomers will continue to want options. The product that Fayette County can offer to talented individuals, new companies, and existing residents must continue to evolve as preferences change.”

-Competitive Assessment
4.1 **Develop additional quality of life amenities.**

Quality of life amenities help create experiences that increase a person’s enjoyment of their community. While those assets can look very different for different people, the Community Survey revealed that Fayette residents would like to see the development of facilities that could support cultural and artistic experiences as well as more arts programming. Maximizing enjoyable green space and recreational offerings also came across as priorities. Further, investment in these areas will support the idea of creating and sustaining a physically healthy population that can access and enjoy the natural beauty of Fayette County, which has been an attraction for many people.

4.1.1 **Establish a single nonprofit entity to coordinate arts events and arts programming, as well as serve as a vehicle for grants and donations.**

- Task the nonprofit with assessing current arts assets and establishing a plan to coordinate and enhance arts programming.
  - Consider working with the Georgia Council for the Arts to coordinate additional programming and identification of needs.
- Leverage the work and recommendations of the Public Art Committee to establish a short-term plan for attracting and funding art exhibitions and public art installments.
- Work with the local school system to identify additional arts opportunities that could enhance curriculum offerings.
- Consider the feasibility of implementing an arts district with targeted incentives.

>>>BEST PRACTICE: ARTWORKS! GWINNETT (GWINNETT COUNTY, GEORGIA)

4.1.2 **Perform a feasibility study for a multi-use event space.**

- Plan a leadership trip to visit and learn about other multi-use event spaces within Metro Atlanta.
- Engage a planning firm to study the feasibility of establishing an arts venue or other multi-use event space.
  - Ensure the assessment considers different scenarios with regard to use, size, and funding mechanisms.
- Identify the scenario that best fits the needs of Fayette County and identify implementation steps, such as issuing a RFP.

4.1.3 **Expand annual event and festival offerings in Fayette County.**

- Establish a Public Events Council to inventory the annual events and offerings in Fayette County.
- Task the council with making recommendations and funding sources for additional types of festival and annual events.
• Work with the Peachtree Convention and Visitors Bureau and other groups to target the attraction of festivals and events.

• Consider events such as a jazz festival, an arts festival, or other potential event that could differentiate Fayette.

4.1.4 **Expand Keep Peachtree City Beautiful to the entire county.**

✓ Identify and establish a leadership team that includes representatives from each municipality and the county.

✓ Plan and coordinate a major clean-up event that can be held in each municipality, either concurrently or over the course of multiple weekends.

✓ Encourage volunteers to participate in a site outside of their place of residence

✓ Leverage the success of a large-scale cleanup event to build awareness and momentum for a scaled Keep Fayette Beautiful organization.

4.1.5 **Establish a long-term plan for county-wide parks, recreation, trails, and paths.**

✓ Update the Fayette County parks and recreation needs assessment based on current and projected population growth.

✓ Integrate similar efforts in the municipalities to present a complete and comprehensive inventory and needs identification for the entire county.

✓ Consider establishment of a separate nonprofit entity to receive donations, gifts, and other grants to enhance the public parks and recreation facilities in Fayette County.

✓ Leverage the work of the recently formed Justice Center Park Committee to identify best practices and options for funding additional passive parks.

✓ Develop non-motorized water recreation and competitions on lakes

  • Consider development of boat rental facilities that could offer kayaks, paddle boats, and canoes for public recreation.

  • Determine the feasibility of allowing swimming in limited areas of Lake McIntosh and Lake Horton.

  • Establish a series of competitive events revolving around the lake amenities in the county.
    • Events could include a triathlon and stand up paddleboard race series.

✓ Establish countywide multi-use path system connectivity.

  • Continue to invest in the build out of the multi-use path system in Peachtree City and other municipalities.
▪ Explore alternative financing mechanisms for future build out, including crowd-funding and private grants.

▪ Ensure connectivity and path upgrades are accommodating to joggers, pedestrians, and disabled persons. Consider adding workout stations, benches, and public art installments along the paths.

4.2 Encourage housing and development that appeal to a broad population of all ages.

The Competitive Assessment showed that housing options in Fayette County are not appealing to a diverse array of people, including young professionals. The goal should be to offer an inventory of housing stock that can support people in various stages of their lifecycle. Many times, both older and younger generations seek denser housing for its proximity to amenities, such as restaurants, parks, and work. In fact, per the Wall Street Journal, which covered this topic in early 2014, “As the boomers get older, many will move out of the houses where they raised families and move into cozier apartments, condominiums and townhouses (known as multifamily units in industry argot). A normal transition for individuals, but a huge shift in the country’s housing demand.”3 This shift corresponds with increased demand for rental units by younger generations who are still wary of buying homes. In order to retain both aging boomers and attract new, younger residents, new types of residential development will have to be pursued.

Developing these types of options, at price points that are accessible by young professionals and those living on fixed incomes, will be important. Development is a market-driven activity and as such telling developers what and where to build is not feasible. However, communities are able to describe and encourage the type of development they would like to occur, and can support those visions with targeted incentives.

In Fayette County, it is clear that public input participants and stakeholders desire development that looks and feels different from existing development patterns. Existing residential patterns favor single-family lots and large homes, especially in the unincorporated parts of the county, which account for 74 percent of Fayette’s total land and require a minimum lot size of one acre. Further, over 46 percent of homes have more than four bedrooms, a level that is much higher than Coweta County (28.2 percent) and Metro Atlanta (29.8 percent). Almost half of rental units in all of Fayette County are single-family detached homes.

These types of residential developments, coupled with elevated price points, are not in line with what young professionals said they would like to have as housing options. As one survey respondent wrote, “Many young professionals are choosing Coweta County due to more new construction. A lot of young professionals like Peachtree City, but housing is becoming too dated and the newer construction is unaffordable for most young professionals.” Another respondent wrote, “Young professionals like newer, smaller homes. Fayetteville has older homes in the lower price range, but not newer starter homes. We need new developments with homes in the $130-200k price range.” Another wrote, “Many apartment complexes are old and dated. [We need to] think Post Properties. Finally, a respondent wrote, “Affordable housing is very limited. This is because the word

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affordable is associated with cheap and run-down in the minds of citizens.” If Fayette is going to grow and be able to sustain a world-class education system, homes (single-family, townhomes, or apartments) will need to be accessible by families with young children.

Commercial development, much like residential development, is based on market conditions. However, the look and feel of commercial development impacts the quality of a place. Numerous stakeholders mentioned that the area around Canton Street in Roswell, Georgia exemplifies the type of commercial space that residents would like to see in Fayette. Canton Street, part of the Historic Downtown Roswell, was improved with $1.2 million in streetscape funding and has attracted over $20 million in additional investment in the form of new vendors and restaurants. The next step is to better integrate City Hall with the district through the creation of a city green and open-air public spaces.

The Vision Plan can help establish mechanisms for enhanced community conversations about the future of development in the county. Looking to specific examples, such as Roswell, GA, can help residents and developers pinpoint the look and feel of desired development.

The following recommendations provide an avenue through which development priorities can be identified and encouraged, working in partnership with public entities, private developers, and others.

> > > BEST PRACTICE: BLVD TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA)

4.2.1 Develop quality housing options that attract young professionals and families.

- Work with local realtor and development groups to identify where demand for non-single family homes is likely to occur.
- Encourage architectural schools, land planners, and others to do pro-bono conceptual studies and proposals on alternative housing and multi-use development plans for various areas of the county.
- Work with YP Fayette and Fayette Senior Services to identify price points and amenities that would increase attractiveness of new housing developments.
  - Identify areas where such development could be feasible.
  - Areas to consider include Tyrone, Starr’s Mill, the West Fayetteville area, and downtown Fayetteville.

4.2.2 Establish a “toolkit” for municipalities and developers that encourages mixed-use environments that are pedestrian friendly.

- Leverage the Fayetteville Planned Community District Ordinance as a model ordinance for additional mixed-use zones.
- Work to increase the visibility of Fayetteville Main Street program and seek to transform the downtown area into a more walkable and vibrant destination.
- Seek to incorporate elements of the ARC’s Lifelong Communities Initiative into planning efforts where possible.
✓ Hold planning charettes and dialogue sessions to further develop the vision for the kinds of elements that residents would desires in mixed-use settings. Incorporate such guidelines into Comprehensive Plans as appropriate.

✓ Publicize the design guidelines and elements that best fit with desires for the future.

4.2.3 **Assess the effectiveness of incentives for desired development.**

✓ Evaluate the cost of developing public infrastructure to priority mixed-use development areas.

✓ Assess the feasibility of covering such costs as incentives for further development.

✓ Evaluate the needed ordinance and zoning changes need to activate such development.

4.2.4 **Conduct a retail leakage analysis to identify opportunities for additional shopping options.**

✓ Engage a retail analytics firm to conduct psychographic analysis on the shopping preferences and habits of residents.

✓ Identify the retail expenditures of Fayette residents that are being fulfilled beyond the county (leakage) and those that are satisfied within the county (surplus).

✓ Leverage findings to actively target certain retailers and types of restaurants.

> >>>BEST PRACTICE: RETAIL ANALYSIS AND ATTRACTION (CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS)

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**MindMixer: Develop Our Local Personality**

Per a participant on MindMixer:

“We need to develop with the thought of staying at home. What I mean by that is having more "things to do" locally. Whether it is an ice skating rink, dinner theater, dueling piano bar, or unique "local" restaurants, we need to encourage investment into the entertainment side of life. There are two great amphitheaters in the county, but both cater almost exclusively to the aging crowd. I look at a place like Austin, TX (yes I know it has a big university) but there is so much to do there and people decide to stay and add their unique perspective to the local landscape. They open shops, boutiques, restaurants, cafes and you cannot find anything like them outside of the area. I think Fayette County would benefit greatly if there was more to do here, so it wasn’t that people just lived here, but that they could play here as well.”
4.3 Expand transportation infrastructure and mobility options.

Traffic and congestion are challenges for Metro Atlanta and Fayette residents have expressed a desire for relief. The lack of direct access to an interstate and the high share of out-commuters exacerbate the pressure placed on arterials and highways. While the development of multi-use paths in the county can take some cars off the road, the network does not connect sufficiently to job centers to offer widespread traffic relief. Of course, the convenience and lifestyle that widespread use of golf carts supports is a differentiating factor in the county and complete connectivity should be a long-term goal. In terms of congestion relief, the failed TSPLOST vote in July 2012 signaled that regional solutions are still a ways off. Until, then the county should continue to prioritize projects it feels will make the greatest impact and look to understanding the full extent of resident transportation needs.

> > > BEST PRACTICE: TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (PASADENA, CALIFORNIA)

4.3.1 Incorporate support for various types of mobility enhancements in the County Comprehensive Plan update.

✔ Continue to prioritize road and intersection improvements, as the primary mode of transportation among county residents is the automobile.

✔ Continue to advocate for additional multi-use path, bicycle path, and trail network capacity.

✔ Consider adding language to the Comprehensive Plan in support of wider usage of carpool, vanpool, and other rideshare opportunities in order to address the number of cars on the road.

4.3.2 Perform a “needs assessment” related to senior transportation enhancements.

✔ Work with Fayette Senior Services to analyze their ridership information and data. The needs assessment should project anticipated demand levels and provide recommendations.

  ▪ Engage MBA students at Clayton State University and other institutions to decrease the cost of such a study.

  ▪ Leverage the expertise of the Atlanta Regional Commission on aging and transportation to help guide and consult on the project.

✔ Leverage the findings of the assessment to establish new priorities and potentially new models for maximizing senior transportation dollars.

4.3.3 Evaluate possibilities related to increasing alternative commuting options.

✔ Perform an origin-destination analysis to further understand the travel behavior of residents and identify modes of transportation that could offer solutions.
Work with GDOT and local planning authorities to evaluate the feasibility and demand for options identified in the study, such as a park and ride, bus rapid transit, vanpools, or increased telecommuting, among others.

- Connectivity with Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport should be a priority.

Evaluate opportunities to strengthen transportation options to Coweta County.

MindMixer: Connect Fayetteville and Peachtree City by Bike/Cart Paths

As mentioned previously, the presence of multi-use paths are part of the identity of Fayette County, and specifically Peachtree City. Ensuring that these paths connect the County is an idea that has a lot of support. Per a participant on MindMixer:

“At least one connection should be completed - whether using existing path infrastructure along Redwine Road or 54, or creating a new connection. Going further, I see a network of Bicycle / Cart paths connecting all of the High Schools in the county. We should also explore the use of any existing right-of-ways (utility/abandoned RR, etc.) to create something similar to the Silver Comet Trail.”
CONCLUSION

Fayette County is unique. Low unemployment, high per capita income, available land, good public education, citizen pride and an outstanding quality of life make Fayette an exceptionally attractive place to live and work. This study shows clearly that a significant percentage of Fayette’s leaders as well as some of its residents understand the dangers and benefits of growth. Most importantly, the survey reveals a high level of interest and concern for the future of the county, and a willingness and determination to develop mechanisms for managing and controlling future growth.

-Executive Perspective, Project: Fayette ’93

Fayette is once again poised to take a new step forward to determine its future. Many of the same themes and assets continue to play a role in the Visioning Initiative, just as they did in Project: Fayette ’93. However, while growth in population has yet to reach the acute levels predicted in the previous visioning process, the underlying themes of thoughtful growth and deliberate planning are carried through the Vision Plan.

The recommendations contained in the Vision Plan represent a combination of protecting key assets and enhancing new areas of competitiveness. Education, quality of life, and an affluent population sustain the attractiveness of Fayette County, and thus it is critical that investments be made to not only maintain the high quality of the system, but also in the long-term differentiation of the schools, to the point they are sought out by parents. This also means that more components and partners must be in place to support continued increase in excellence, including post-secondary partners and robust collaboration by the business community. In terms of development, it is clear that there is a desire to offer new and different options, in order to cater to populations that can sustain the schools system, fill the talent needs of local employers, and represent the next generation of Fayette County. Through deliberate planning and thoughtful outreach more mixed-use and walkable developments, with price points that are not overly prohibitive, can be realized.

The Vision Plan presents a way forward for Fayette County. As was stated previously, building a community is tough work and consists of investments in the most basic of elements (“blocking and tackling”) as well as the big-ticket items. However, by building consensus that this is the right way forward, Fayette County can begin to realize its preferred future.
APPENDIX A: COMPETITIVE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The results of the first phase of the Fayette Visioning Initiative were compiled in the Competitive Assessment. This document compared Fayette County’s social, demographic, economic, and physical characteristics to Hanover County, Virginia; Forsyth County, Georgia; Williamson County, Tennessee; the Metro Atlanta region; and the nation. Combining data with public input, the Competitive Assessment sought to answer questions about Fayette County’s people, the county as a place, and economic issues that affect Fayette County’s long-term prosperity.

The Competitive Assessment was structured around eight storylines which emerged from the research. Each storyline reflected the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of Fayette County. Taken together, these storylines provided a basis for building a comprehensive and shared vision of Fayette’s future. The full report can be found at fayettevision.org.

The eight stories and their key findings were as follows:

**Growth and Migration**: Fayette County population growth is slowing to the point of stagnation. The robust growth rates that characterized much of the 1970s and 1980s have given way to rates of growth of less than one percent per year. Migration is the primary driver behind population growth as in-migration has slowed and birth rates continue to be low. The population that is coming to Fayette County tends to be older and supports an aging population. This dynamic has created a situation where the sustainability of the community is threatened as the retention and attraction of younger generations is vitally important. Policy and infrastructure implications abound as Fayette County seeks to enhance the attractiveness of its communities to a wide array of people. However, development is often viewed as the antithesis to the value that Fayette has provided for many families and must be pursued in a thoughtful manner.

**Strategic Implication**: Fayette must focus on improving and enhancing the attractiveness of the area to both the ends of the age spectrum while also preserving the attributes that attract families.

**Shifting Race and Ethnicity**: Fayette County is diversifying more rapidly than Metro Atlanta. The cultural-generational gap and in-migration of minorities supports a diversifying population. Many residents feel that lower income minorities have come to Fayette County, especially in the wake of the Clayton County accreditation loss in 2008. However, there is little data to support that notion as black households have higher median incomes, lower shares of households making less than $25,000, and higher rates of educational attainment than their peer groups across Metro Atlanta. While there are distinct attitudinal differences between black and white residents, such as feelings of attachment and perceptions of openness, there are many similarities between the groups, especially as it comes to rating quality of life.

**Strategic Implication**: Rapid diversification underscores the need to include as many perspectives as possible in leadership opportunities. There are distinct differences of opinion, but there are also many similarities.
**Strategic Implication:** Perceptions that many lower income minorities are coming to Fayette are not supported by data.

**Local Education: Preserving an Asset:** The public school system is the crown jewel of Fayette County. Many public respondents said that they chose to live in Fayette County because of the school system. There is little doubt that public schools in Fayette County are among the best in the state of Georgia. Declining achievement gaps and highly competitive graduation rates underscore the high quality of local schools. However, structural challenges and the over-building of schools have ingrained some skepticism and mistrust of the local school leadership. Further, challenges relating to declining enrollments, erosion of the tax base as the population ages, and opportunities for “hands-on” and technical learning will have to be addressed.

**Strategic Implication:** Fayette County must make choices about post-secondary and technical education in the county and how that connects to K-12 systems.

**Strategic Implications:** Fayette County must be intentional to remain one of the best districts.

**Highly Educated and Affluent, But Are We Losing Ground?:** Residents in Fayette County are affluent and highly educated. Poverty rates in Fayette County are the second lowest in the Georgia and educational attainment has improved over the past five years. In fact, Fayette County is among the highest educated communities in the nation. However, public input participants indicated that they felt there was a growing and more acute challenge of needy persons in the county. The disconnect between such affluence and perception of need speaks to a potentially fragmented non-profit community that has been shocked by the relatively small increase in the needy population.

**Strategic Implication:** Part of the challenge between such affluence and the perception of need, is the fact that small increases in the number of people and households in poverty may act as a shock to the system. Finding ways to better prepare and streamline the safety net will be important.

**Recession, Recovery, and Economic Transition:** The Great Recession ushered in a new era of economic uncertainty as wealth and job losses reached record levels. The Great Recession claimed 10.4 percent of the local employment base and job growth, since the end of the recession, has only reached 3.7 percent. The jobs that have come back since the end of the recession have primarily been local-serving sectors, such as healthcare, retail, and accommodation and food services. With the exception of healthcare, these sectors tend to be low-paying, but all three serve a predominantly local market. The decrease in manufacturing and construction jobs underscores the transition away from dominant export-oriented sectors. Some growth is evident in professional and white-collar employment, but such growth has been much slower than other sectors. In order to bring the kinds of jobs that will retain young professionals and better match the desires of residents, Fayette will need to address availability of commercial space, transportation networks, and broadband infrastructure.

**Strategic Implication:** The growth of local-serving companies is positive, especially as the economy continues to struggle, but without the complementary growth of higher-paying employment opportunities, residents will continue to seek jobs elsewhere.
Strategic Implication: There is a distinct desire to grow employment opportunities in professional firms and white-collar jobs, but investments will need to be made to be competitive.

Strategic Implication: Leveraging Pinewood Atlanta Studios for follow-on investment will be important to maximizing its potential for the local economy.

Spatial Mismatch: Resident Skills and Local Jobs: Local employment opportunities do not align with educational attainment levels or incomes of households in Fayette County. The high-percentage of out-commuters reinforce the mismatch of local jobs with resident skill sets and troubles many residents as they feel this dynamic negatively impacts resident involvement and feelings of attachment to the community. Finding a better match between local skill sets and local jobs must be a top priority as traffic congestion is an oft-cited concern for residents, but public transportation tends to be a non-starter.

Strategic Implication: Moving forward, Fayette will need to invest in the types of areas that provide jobs requiring the skills of local residents. Working to better align local jobs can increase community attachment and decrease traffic and congestion.

Strategic Implication: Growing local entrepreneurship can help better align skill sets, while also leveraging the talents of an aging and wealthy population.

Quality of Life: Amenities, Mobility, and Housing Options: The community survey captured many important opinions regarding quality of life. Public input respondents were clear that there are enhancements that need to be made regarding opportunities to be in leadership positions, cultural and arts facilities, shopping and dining opportunities, and entertainment and recreation amenities, if the county wants to continue to offer a competitive quality of life. The lack of community gathering spaces was also an area of potential enhancement. There is concern that aesthetics are not reflective of community values, especially as there seem to be a surplus of vacant and rundown commercial areas. Survey respondents identified mobility as a key challenge for the community, with many people citing a desire for additional transportation options connecting to Atlanta. However, bringing MARTA to Fayette does not resonate with many residents. Finally, development patterns have favored low densities in the county. This development pattern has some residents concerned that young professionals are being priced out of the market and turning to nearby counties for their housing options. Further, residents said the lack of higher density options, especially those reflecting the “live, work, play” model, is likely decreasing the attractiveness of Fayette to a younger generation.

Strategic Implication: Residents want to strengthen the feel of community throughout the county, repurpose vacant buildings, and provide additional recreational amenities and arts and entertainment activities.

Strategic Implication: Home affordability and “live, work, play” options are also desired to attract young professionals.

Strategic Implication: Overall, input from focus groups and interviews overwhelmingly indicated that attracting young professionals is imperative to having a sustainable county and offering different housing options must be a key value component of the county.

Safety and Perception of Crime: The number one challenge that residents cited for Fayette County was crime. There is growing concern that Fayette has an imported crime problem and areas like the Pavilion are ground-
zero. However, data suggests that the situation is not as acute as perceptions. Property crimes are falling and Fayette has many fewer violent crimes committed than the average for Metro Atlanta. The vision for Fayette will certainly address the perception of crime, but building walls cannot be the central strategy. Despite feeling that crime is a key challenge, many respondents still feel safe and value safety as a key value of Fayette County.

**Strategic Implication:** Data points to a much less acute crime problem than public input would suggest, especially as Fayette County is much safer than other communities in Metro Atlanta.

**Strategic Implication:** The vision for Fayette will certainly address the perception of crime, but building walls cannot be the central strategy. Despite feeling that crime is a key challenge, many respondents still feel safe and value safety as a key value of Fayette County.

**Strategic Implication:** Finding ways for residents and businesses to invest in community safety, feel more connected to their community, and understand actual crime dynamics will be important to moving forward.

**Conclusion:** As the county changes, Fayette residents and newcomers will continue to want options. The changes that have been highlighted in the Competitive Assessment will require Fayette residents to think anew about development patterns, leadership structures, and community assets. The product that Fayette County can offer to talented individuals, new companies, and existing residents must continue to evolve as preferences change. Moving forward, the focus must be on enhancing certain parts of the community that can support a younger generation while also providing for an aging population. Policy and infrastructure decisions will have to be addressed and choices will have to be made. At the same time, it will be important to preserve and support existing assets, such as the school system, in order for families to continue to want to live in Fayette County. Together, these themes of enhancement and preservation will be woven throughout the Vision Plan and provide the basis for Fayette’s future prosperity.
APPENDIX B: ESTABLISHING THE VISION

The first phase of the Fayette Visioning Initiative, the Competitive Assessment, is now complete. The research and findings presented in the Competitive Assessment provide a common base in which to anchor the development of the second phase, the Vision Plan. Building on the opportunities, strengths, and challenges identified in the research, Fayette is now ready to determine the specific actions and objectives that will enhance quality of life for current and future residents.

The project’s Steering Committee has been clear that Fayette County needs to “think big” and not shy away from challenging the status quo. However, the work of building a community also requires smaller and less visible actions, in order to truly build a framework for prosperity. This Vision Plan is the beginning of the process to identify and refine the actions that the Fayette community is willing to embrace, support, and champion. Determining “what” will be included in the Vision Plan must precede any discussion of “how” the Vision will be implemented. Discussion of cost, implementation agents, and funding sources must be tabled until the Vision Plan is finalized and approved.

Vision Statement

At the very core of the Vision Plan is the Vision Statement. In order to capture a common vision, focus group participants, survey respondents, and the Steering Committee were all asked to complete a visioning exercise. The Vision Statement, built from the words and phrases generated by those groups, and shown on the following pages, represents an overarching view of what Fayette County will be in the future.

The following themes were represented among the words and phrases Steering Committee members identified during the visioning exercise. The frequency that certain themes were mentioned is included in parentheses.

- Inclusivity of a diverse population (4)
- Appealing to a multigenerational population (4)
- Being creative, innovative, intentional, and having a sense of urgency around change (2)
- Strong sense of place and community (3)
- High quality education systems (5)
- Economic creativity and quality jobs (6)
- Enhanced communications and closing gap between perceptions and reality (3)
- Affordable housing (2)
Focus Group responses to the prompt “Please provide a short list of words or phrases that you would like to see describe Fayette in the year 2020”:

Survey responses to the question asking respondents to submit ideas or phrases to describe the ideal future for Fayette County:
Full vision statements provided by public input participants, included the following:

We will be a connected, multigenerational and diverse community that is next in class in education, business, and fun. Fayette County will become an integrated community of a diverse population, fostering creativity in all sections of community life; with a thriving economy, cutting edge education, affordable housing, and a strong sense of community.

Our community will be safe, friendly, sustainable, fiscally strong, and united in all areas, working together for the greater good. We will have a strong educational system, be willing to embrace change, and will stand strong and proud together.

Fayette County strives to be the home to engaged families, lifelong learners, business, and cultural creativity. We embrace a leadership style that is collaborative, unifying, and is focused on our best future.

Our vision for Fayette County is to build on our rural and small town strengths to become the premiere place to live in Metro Atlanta by adding employment, housing, amenities and entertainment options that will appeal to a younger demographic.

An authentic community that cares about the heart of the matter, sees possibilities, and invests in the next generation. We engage citizens to embrace the future, treasure the traditions and persevere in the present to maintain an enhanced economic, educational and healthy community for families.

Fayette County is a growing community which prioritizes education, safety, and family which as a result encompasses itself as a sanctuary for white-collar jobs, retirees, and growing families. Whether it is the proximity to the city or the availability of the countryside, Fayette County offers the best of both worlds.

We envision Fayette County being the face of a new America. Cherishing place, family, education and tradition within a medley of innovations and transformations. We do this through a commitment of loving where we come from, loving where we’re going, and valuing all the parts that make us a greater whole.
Based on a number of potential statements, the Steering Committee was asked to rank various options. The Vision that received the most support is as follows:

Fayette County is the place where bold ideas become reality. We shall achieve this through our collaborative and inclusive leadership that elevates education, economic development, employment opportunities, and quality of life to unrivaled heights.
APPENDIX C: BEST PRACTICES

1.1.2 Right Track (St. Paul, Minnesota)

As a partnership between the City of Saint Paul, Saint Paul Public Schools, and the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, Right Track is St. Paul’s youth jobs initiative. In 2013, Right Track placed 21 high school students into internship positions with 14 major employers, including Wells Fargo, US Bank, Ecolab and the Metropolitan Council. In 2014, the program will have the capacity to place 80 to 100 people in internships, in both corporate and small business settings.

The first six weeks of Right Track internships include professional skills training through Genesys Works, a nonprofit job-training center for teens. The young people were paid at least $7.25 per hour, or an average of $1,400 for the summer. Smaller employers can apply for up to $1,000 in reimbursement to cover 70 percent of an eight-week, 20-hour-per week summer internship.

The St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation is contributing $12,000 to the Right Track program in 2014, and smaller grants have been contributed by the Bush Foundation, the St. Paul Foundation and the F.R. Bigelow Foundation.


1.1.5 Austin Partners in education

Focusing on Austin Independent School District’s (ISD) Title I schools located in under-resourced communities and serving predominantly economically disadvantaged students, Austin Partners in Education delivers innovative, volunteer-driven academic and supportive mentoring programs. APIE’s 1,800 volunteers work with students at pivotal junctures in their education, adding to the quality and capacity of AISD’s campus programs and providing a vital extension of academic and social/emotional support to students. Through the flagship Classroom Coaching program, students benefit from same-level, small group (3:1 or below) instruction from a dedicated team of volunteers drawn from more than 200 Austin area government agencies, businesses and community organizations.

In the 2012-13 school year, APIE served 3,300 students through the following programs:

- **2nd Grade Reading Classroom Coaching and Compañeros en Lectura**: Volunteers in the classroom work weekly with students developing reading skills in either English or Spanish.
- **6th Grade Reading Classroom Coaching**: Volunteers in the classroom work weekly with students helping them to prepare for the higher levels of reading required in all subjects.
8th Grade Math Classroom Coaching: Volunteers in the classroom work weekly with students to build a strong foundation in middle school math, putting them on track to succeed in high school algebra.

Step-Up Math and Step-Up Reading: Volunteers provide extra (3x per week) instructional support to accelerate middle school struggling students’ academic achievement.

College Readiness (11th and 12th grade) and Case Management: Advocates offer information, advising and tutoring to students “in the bubble” between being qualified to graduate and being college ready.

Mentoring (all grades): Volunteers work one-on-one with students during the school day to help students improve their social and study skills, strengthen their communication skills, and build self-confidence.

1.1.5 Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce Education and Workforce Development Council (Montgomery, AL)

The Education and Workforce Development Council (EWDC) at the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce provides support to the Montgomery Public Schools (MPS). The council appoints task forces chaired by a business or community leader. These task forces champion major initiatives, which currently include: career academies, higher education, middle schools, school facilities improvement, and leadership development for all MPS principals and central office staff.

The Career Academies Task Force works with MPS administrators to help support the development of career academies. Seven career academies are located in the system’s four high schools and are focused on health science, teaching, information technology, advanced manufacturing, hospitality/tourism, law/public safety, and business and finance.

The Higher Education Task Force is comprised of the college and university presidents and chancellors of the region’s top higher education institutions. Its mission is to strengthen the linkages between area colleges, the region, the city, and its schools. Its 2012 program of work includes the development of a student leaders forum and the implementation of “Financial Aid Fridays,” a program to assist high school students seeking to access the financial aid necessary to attend college.

The Middle School Task Force focuses on increasing the MPS graduation rate and provides opportunities for seventh and eighth grade students to gain experience in and appreciation for careers offered through the career academies. The task force has developed career academy camps that focus on each of these areas.

The School Facilities Task Force works with hundreds of volunteers to help improve school grounds through painting, planting, landscaping, and other projects. This annual School Clean Up, with nearly 1,200 participants, services every campus in the school district.
The Leadership Development Initiative provides training focused on supervisory tools and the principles of leadership to help enhance the leadership attributes of MPS officials including senior staff and principals. The program was developed in partnership with Alabama State University, other higher education institutions, and Maxwell Air Force Base.


1.2.1 Henry County Center (Henry County, Georgia)

Southern Crescent Technical College broke ground on a 25-acre campus in McDonough in Henry County in 2013. The eight building campus, the Henry County Center, is slated to open in 2014 and is located adjacent to the Henry County High School. According to the Henry Daily Herald, the technical college is contributing $2.5 million to $6 million in state funds. Plans for the new space include, "general purpose classrooms for pre-health program, business management and criminal justice courses. Officials said there also will be a CISCO networking lab, computer classrooms, life science labs and an MRI/CT simulator."

The process to bring Southern Crescent Technical College to Henry was years in the making and was helped forward by the Chamber of Commerce’s collaboration known as E2: Economics and Education Task Force. The facility will also be able to partner with the Academy for Advanced Studies, which is a charter college and career academy set to open at the high school.

http://www.sctech.edu/about/location_Henry.php

1.3.1 Ford Next Generation Learning Teacher Externships (Louisville, Kentucky)

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) is working with the Ford Motor Company to become a Next Generation Learning (NGL) Community. The partnership is innovative and seeks to use career pathways within high schools to increase the quality of STEM graduates and the overall workforce.

As part of the Ford NGL partnership in Louisville there is a focus on professional development for teachers. In 2013, JCPS, Greater Louisville Inc. (regional Chamber), and 13 business and civic partners came together to coordinate the first teacher externship program. Two to three teachers from a school, from different disciplines, were paired together to shadow a business leader and participate in business activities. The cross-pollination across disciplines is one of the hallmarks of the Ford NGL model. Teacher teams were placed in businesses including Forest Giant, externship teams were placed with Norton Healthcare, GE, Nth Works, Atlas Machine, Louisville Slugger, Ford, Bisig, Business First, WAVE3, the Louisville Metro Police Department and Louisville and Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer Department. Some teams completed projects while on site, including a product plan for a cellphone app.

http://insiderlouisville.com/news/2013/06/26/forest-giant-education/
2.1.2 KCSourceLink (Kansas City, Missouri)

Launched in 2003 by the Kauffman Foundation, in collaboration with the Small Business Administration and the University of Missouri-Kansas City, KCSourceLink connects small business owners with critical resources. KCSourceLink connects a network of over one hundred business resource providers to help entrepreneurs in the Kansas City region grow and succeed.

The model, which is now being replicated in other parts of the United States focuses on helping individuals move through the maze of local entrepreneurship support services. The goal of the model is to save entrepreneurs time, provide more relevant information, and encourage collaboration among area service providers. The KCSourceLink site includes a list of resources: a resource navigator, a resource directory, a resource library, and a toll-free referral phone line staffed by knowledgeable personnel. KCSourceLink also tracks inquiries and the impact of its service provider partners’ work to determine how its system may be able to work even more effectively in the future.

With the formation of KCSourceLink, Kansas City became one of the first cities selected by the SBA for its new National Entrepreneur Center Alliance, which sets Kansas City as a model environment for advancing entrepreneurship.

http://www.kcsourcelink.com/

2.1.3 Launch Entrepreneurship (Chattanooga, Tennessee)

LAUNCH High School Entrepreneurship program – held over a course of an academic semester – is focused on teaching business fundamentals to high school students. Upon completion of the course, students are equipped to launch and grow successful entrepreneurial ventures. The program focuses on the ideas of market opportunities, viability, feasibility, innovation, and basic concepts required to develop a competent business plan. At the conclusion of LAUNCH, students compete in a regional business plan competition held at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Students pitch their business ideas with the winning team awarded a $10,000 prize package of start-up financing and services to begin their business venture. Over 12 groups of entrepreneur students are slated to compete in the 2013 competition this December. Previous winners have gone on to create a product, engage investors, and launch their business. The High School Entrepreneurship program is facilitated by LAUNCH, a nonprofit organization formed in 2010 by local businessmen whose eyes were opened to the needs of the underserved and believed that the business community has many of the tools necessary to address poverty.

http://www.launchchattanooga.org/programs
2.2.2 Business First Greater Richmond (Richmond, Virginia)

Founded in 2006, Business First Greater Richmond is a proactive initiative managed by the Greater Richmond Partnership (GRP) to support existing businesses in the area. The program is based on face-to-face meetings with CEOs and top company officials conducted by both Partnership staffers and trained volunteers from the business community. Interviews cover a wide range of topics and findings include hiring prospects for the next year, perceptions of the regional workforce and specific skill shortages, projected sales, and business climate issues. The data allows the GRP to gauge the health of the regional economy and provide targeted solutions.

The program also responds to specific requests for assistance. By partnering with local government entities, the program leverages the full suite of available resources and provides customized service to businesses.

In FY 2012-2013 Business First staff and volunteers met with 550 companies and assisted companies created 419 jobs, and invested $77.8 million in capital investment. Since 2006, assisted companies have created over 2,000 jobs, invested over $270 million, and retained more than 2,500 jobs.

http://www.businessfirstrichmond.com/

2.2.5 Fiber Development

*Chattanooga Gig – Chattanooga (TN)*

Chattanooga's smart grid is a fiber optic network that offers 1 gigabit per second (1 Gb/s) data speeds and is available to every home and business in Chattanooga. Planning for the municipal owned grid began in the mid-2000s and took off with a stimulus grant from the Department of Energy. Chattanooga credits the gig with helping to land Volkswagen’s North American manufacturing headquarters and Amazon.com’s new distribution centers.

http://chattanoogagig.com/

*UltraFi – Tampa (FL)*

In Tampa, Florida a housing developer, Metro Development Group (MDG), and a cable systems operator, Bright House Networks, have partnered to create a community where new homes will be pre-wired for access to high-speed fiber optic connections. Not only will their homes be wired, residents will also have access to 1 Gb/s Wi-Fi on neighborhood nature trails and playgrounds and in the neighborhood clubhouse.

http://www.myultrafi.com/

*Santa Monica City Net – Santa Monica (CA)*

Santa Monica City Net is a fiber network offering speeds of 100 Mb/s to 10 Gb/s to local businesses and allowing free Wi-Fi access to residents in many areas. City Net was built incrementally and without debt.
Initially designed to eliminate leased lines and offer higher speeds, the initial $530,000 investment in fiber infrastructure has resulted in a savings of about $700,000 per year.


2.2.6 Buy Here Program (Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce)

“Buy Here” is a local economic development initiative created by the Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce to create awareness within business community in Johnson County, Iowa to keep their spending money local. The Chamber is asking for a pledge within the business community to keep business local and assists the companies by providing a local membership directory. Since its creation in 2007 the “Buy Here” campaign has kept more than $6 million in Johnson County. More than 200 businesses, non-profits and local governments have pledged to shift five percent of the non-local spending back to Johnson County.

http://www.iowacityarea.com/content/buy_here.aspx

2.2.8 Work in the Triangle (Raleigh-Durham, NC)

Formed as a collaborative partnership between numerous economic development agencies within the Raleigh-Durham Area, the Research Triangle Regional Partnership is a proactive talent initiative that showcases the Research Triangle’s amenities attractive to young professionals. Dubbed “Work in the Triangle, Smarter from Any Angle,” the regional marketing strategy contains a robust communications platform encompassing an attractive website including resident testimonials, job search capability, and a wide swath of information pertinent to an individual making a relocation decision for themselves and/or their family. Work in the Triangle also features integrated social media; leveraging Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr to reinforce each social media tool as well as provide fresh content that maintains a connection to perspective talent. Social media accounts hosted by Work in the Triangle are updated regularly with relevant updates on new job postings and local current events. The website and social media tools combine to project a clear message: Raleigh-Durham is a premier destination for young talent. To further enforce their messaging, Work in the Triangle invites local young professionals to become an ambassador empowering them to share their experience with friends, family, and perspective residents. Talking points are provided for ambassadors which entail current Research Triangle rankings, Top 3 reasons to live in the Research Triangle, and the Top 3 myths the Research Triangle is attempting to dispel. Ambassadors are also encouraged to post testimonials regarding their experience living in the Raleigh-Durham area on their website.

http://www.workinthetriangle.com/
2.3.1 Wilmington Regional Film Commission, Inc. (City of Wilmington & New Hanover County, North Carolina)

The Wilmington Regional Film Commission is a one-stop-shop for film production in southeastern North Carolina. The Commission markets local assets to the production industry—from bridges and barns, small town squares, college campuses, and farms to their local soundstages, their highly qualified production industry workforce and their network of supporting industries such as catering, equipment rental, construction, and the like. Location pictures and maps are available on the Commission’s website along with local weather data and searchable directories of local crew members and support services. The Commission also offers production companies a complete range of pre-production services through a central contact, streamlining the pre-production process. They also provide information about local procedures and permits, act as a liaison between production companies and local government agencies, and provide information (and all necessary forms) about film incentives and accommodations tax waivers.


2.3.3 Film New Orleans (New Orleans, Louisiana)

Film New Orleans serves as the primary liaison between film and television productions and the City of New Orleans and has many responsibilities. The office leads marketing efforts to attract film and television related business, assists production projects with the permitting process, connects those projects to local resources, and facilitates communication between productions and the local community to find balance between film activity and the local quality of life. Their website is a one-stop shop for companies considering New Orleans for their project. The site includes information about Louisiana’s tax incentives, permitting, accommodations, neighborhood filming policies, local union requirements, provisions for the use of special effects and explosives, as well as a Crew and Resource Directory and contact information for an array of useful local and state organizations. The site also has a section for local residents who may be interested in breaking into the film industry, whether as a production business or as talent or a crew member. The News section keeps readers updated on filming notices and announcements of conferences, festivals, and seminars.

http://www.filmneworleans.org/

3.1.1 City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA)

An essential program of its “Grow Your Own” initiative, the City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA) recruits, trains, and provides local high school students with meaningful summer jobs with the city and participating partner agencies, such as the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, Asheville Art Museum, Buncombe County Department of Health, Habitat for Humanity, and United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County. The students also attend weekly day-long workshops on topics such as financial literacy, leadership, career exploration, and 21st century job skills. Throughout the school year, students are offered academic support, enrichment opportunities, and assistance with college preparation. CAYLA
students regularly plan and lead community service projects to encourage civic responsibility and to date, have completed over 2,500 hours of service with organizations such as MANNA Food Bank, Meals on Wheels, Asheville GreenWorks, Kids Against Hunger, and Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry Women and Children’s Shelter. Since the program began in 2007, it has been nationally recognized by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government. In 2011, the Academy received the North Carolina Governor’s Award for Volunteer Service.

http://www.ashevillenc.gov/Departments/HumanResources/YouthLeadershipAcademy.aspx

3.1.2 Tulsa’s Young Professionals (Tulsa, Oklahoma)

Tulsa’s Young Professionals (TYPros) was founded by the Tulsa Metro Chamber in 2003 in response to the region’s “brain drain” of new graduates and young professionals to other cities and states. TYPros has since grown to more than 8,000 members. The organization is a key component of the Tulsa Metro Chamber’s regional economic development plan, Tulsa’s Future. To ensure that the group was maturing into an active facilitator of community change, TYPros developed “work crews” allowing young professionals to have a collective voice and impact on a number of community concerns and initiatives. TYPros work crews are focused around the following issues:

- Business Development
- Colleges & Universities
- Community Ambassadors
- Community Redevelopment
- Diversity
- Government Relations
- Next Generation Leadership
- Special Events
- Sustainability

The Government Relations Crew organized has organized legislative days in which they rent buses and take a large consistency of young professionals to the state capital for a day of meetings with state representatives from the region. The Diversity Crew promotes greater diversity within TYPros membership while hosting a number of events to promote dialogue about diversity in Metro Tulsa. The organization’s mission is to attract and retain young talent in the Tulsa metro region while also establishing Tulsa’s next generation of business and community leaders.

http://www.typros.org/
3.1.2 YP Summit (Omaha, Nebraska)

Hosted by Greater Omaha Young Professionals, the annual YP Summit brings together young professionals and community and business leaders to discuss community issues affecting Omaha’s youngest and next leaders. The speakers and breakout sessions of the YP Summit are focused on nurturing and challenging young professionals in Greater Omaha, but the event is open to anyone with an interest in the future of the community. National speakers headline the event, which also includes breakout sessions facilitated by young professionals. YPs and community members can apply to host a breakout session related to the year’s theme. (The 2013 theme was “Transformation;” the 2014 theme will be “Empower.”) The YP Summit also connects summit attendees with volunteer and community engagement opportunities, serving as a major network for regional non-profits to connect with potential volunteers.

http://omahayp.org/ypsummit/

3.1.4 Forsyth County Political Candidates Education Program (Forsyth County, North Carolina)

The Forsyth Political Candidates Training Program is presented by the non-partisan Institute of Political Leadership and is sponsored by the Winston-Salem Foundation, the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce, and Leadership Winston-Salem. The application-based program is focused on making an introduction between potential candidates and running for office. The program is held over two days and is comprised of the following sessions: Strategy and Political Campaigning (2 hours), Messaging (4 hours), Campaign Finance Laws (2 hours), Fundraising (2 hours), and Why Are You Here? Opportunities and Challenges of Service (2 hours). The overall goal of the program is “to help civic-minded individuals seriously consider running for public office and to ensure that future elected officials run the office in an ethical, effective and inclusive way.”

http://www.wsfoundation.org/document.doc?id=683

http://www.wsfoundation.org/page.aspx?pid=1127#Anchor3

3.2.1 Montgomery Diversity Summit (Montgomery, Alabama)

Like many major Southern cities, Montgomery was an important location for a number of pivotal Civil Rights events of the mid-20th century, starting with Rosa Parks’ refusal to yield her bus seat to a white man in 1955. While the region’s role in social justice has been a point of pride for many, historic racial tensions and distrust in many cases perpetuated among community members for decades.

In 2005, the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce initiated a process to develop their five-year strategy called “Imagine a Greater Montgomery.” During the course of strategy development, stakeholders identified a lack of diversity in Montgomery’s civic and business leadership that did not represent the
makeup of the community’s demographics. “Civic engagement is badly colored by race,” said one community member. Others noted that women were underrepresented in decision making.

Four major goals emerged from this planning, one of which emphasized the community’s need to further embrace diversity and enhance leadership capacity. “The very future of Montgomery hinges upon our ability to capitalize upon the strength of our diversity,” the plan explains. The extent to which the chamber set out to accomplish this goal has been a model example for other chambers.

In September 2013, the chamber and its minority business development staff hosted Montgomery’s sixth annual Diversity Summit. The purpose of this day-long event is to offer executives, human resources professionals, and community leaders an opportunity to have a conversation about workplace diversity, inclusion, and engagement. Each year’s summit boasts a different theme and nationally-known speakers and leaders on topics related to diversity; in 2013 the premise was “New Perspectives for Today’s Workplace” with keynote speaker Steve Bucherati, Chief Diversity Officer, Coca Cola. Breakout sessions included:

- Diversity as a Growth Engine: Building the Business Case for Diversity
- Inclusion Begins with Leadership: Creating & Modeling an Inclusive Work Environment
- “He’s How Old?” Bringing out the Best in Every Generation
- Becoming a Phenomenal Women Leader: Designing a Personal Blueprint to Reach the Corner Office
- “That’s NOT What I Meant!” Virtual Communication in a Diverse World – The Unseen Effects of Diversity in Virtual and Online Communications

The summit’s success is evident as the sold-out event attracted over 800 attendees and coverage by the national publications, such as the Huffington Post.

http://www.montgomerychamber.com/diversity2013

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/trudy-bourgeois/could-it-be_b_4031515.html

4.1.1 ArtWorks! Gwinnett (Gwinnett County, Georgia)

When Market Street first partnered with the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce in 2006 on the initial five-year Partnership Gwinnett: A Shared Vision for the Future strategy, stakeholders repeated the need and desire for more arts amenities and activities within the county, as well as a sense that local and external perceptions were that Gwinnett's assets were not as strong as those in some other metro Atlanta communities. Additionally, Market Street’s quantitative analysis found that while the community had strong assets in arts, cultural, and recreational opportunities, there was still room for significantly more capacity in these areas.
In 2007, the Arts and Tourism subcommittee of Partnership Gwinnett 1.0 launched StrengthInArts, an independent initiative focused on strategically enhancing the arts in Gwinnett County. Based on the recommendations of the Partnership Gwinnett 1.0 economic development strategy and the results of a survey of Gwinnett County residents, the initiative's early core goals were: consolidated fundraising, smarter grantmaking, and coordination and cooperation to build the impact and influence of the arts in Gwinnett County.

In 2009 and 2010, the StrengthInArts initiative evolved into something bigger—ArtWorks! Gwinnett, an independent 501(c)(3) entity that serves as the multidisciplinary arts alliance and advocate in and for Gwinnett County. ArtWorks! is now a professionally staffed organization, housed at the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, and led by a diverse, committed board of directors representing the County's arts, education, civic, tourism, and business communities.

The three primary activities of ArtWorks! are increased visibility and resources for the arts in Gwinnett planning and hosting education and networking series for artists; and unified fundraising, in partnership with the Community Foundation for Northeast Georgia. ArtWorks! partners closely with the Gwinnett Convention and Visitors Bureau, and offers individual memberships. The benefit to economic development is also clear as Partnership Gwinnett has found that having an arts program can be an asset in the project/site selection process, as many companies factor local cultural amenities into their decision-making process.

http://new.artworksgwinnett.com/?p=124

4.2 Lancaster, CA - The BLVD Transformation Project

Lancaster, CA is a city of 157,000 located in northern Los Angeles County. The city's population has tripled since 1980 and increased by 31 percent between 2000 and 2010. Like many cities in California, the demographics reflect a majority-minority population. In 2008, the City of Lancaster decided that it had to do something to revive the downtown district. The first step was the adoption of a form-based code for the downtown Lancaster Boulevard corridor. Leveraging the revamped code, the City hired an architecture and planning firm to redesign the boulevard. With a focus on walkability, aesthetic appeal, and public spaces, the study became the basis for what has come to be known as THE BLVD Transformation. Key design elements identified by the architect and planning firm included “wide, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, awnings and arcades, outdoor dining, single travel lanes, enhanced crosswalks, abundant street trees and shading, and added lighting, gateways and public art.” Further, a
coordinated branding and marketing strategy, along with uniform landscaping and signage, has produced an area with an identity.

The EPA recently recognized the transformation of Lancaster Boulevard with the 2012 Overall Excellence in Smart Growth Award. However, the benefits to the city are more impressive as city officials estimate that the transformation has resulted in $273 million in economic output, $130 million in private investment, 48 new locally owned businesses, and over 1,900 jobs.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=pojylzK2uSM

http://www.theatlanticcities.com/design/2013/01/case-walkability-economic-development-tool/4317/

4.2.4 Retail Analysis and Attraction City of Denton, TX

Attracting retail development is one of the more tangible aspects of economic development as it shapes where and how people spend their money. Understanding the dynamics and demographics, down to the household level, is integral to formulating a comprehensive attraction strategy. Further, the ubiquity of data analysis done by retailers to site new stores requires that public sector clients understand how their demographics impact opportunities for new stores. Data analysis can pinpoint retail leakages and surpluses in a trade area, which can suggest the types of retail that local consumption patterns would be able to support. The City of Denton, TX partnered with a national retail analytics firm, to understand their market in support of creating jobs and development that would be supportive of local residents. The City was working with a developer to establish a mixed-use development. The consultant was retained to identify the types of retail, and the specific retailers, who would best fit within the market parameters and who would be able to anchor the development. The City has seen success was able to attract a Bed, Bath and Beyond as well as a TJ Maxx. Other retailers in the development include Best Buy, Kroger, and Chipotle Mexican Grill. By understanding the trends and data that shaped the trade area, the City was able to proactively attract the types of retailers they wanted for their community.

http://static.buxtonco.com/Field_Brief/CityofDentonCaseStudy.pdf