

Pathways to Possibilities Key Steps



The Pathways to Possibilities report identified advantages, opportunities and communication needs.

Competitive Advantages for Cumberland County from three key sectors:

- Transportation & Logistics based on location near interstates, ports, to markets;
- Health Care (Biomedical/Biotechnology/Life Sciences) based on regional provider of health services and the military; and
- Business & Financial Services possibly lead by military service members.

“All three sectors grew rapidly and for all three sectors, the majority of that growth is attributed to unique competitive factors of Cumberland.”

Survey results for Assets and Barriers

“..the top three *assets* for economic development are (1) the community’s proximity to I-95, (2) military presence, and (3) internet accessibility.”

- Downtown revitalization was shown to be a priority and highly supported.
- Respondents want to build upon the community’s pride to combat this perception by outsiders.

... the top three *barriers* to economic development are the (1) local tax burden, (2) cost of doing business and (3) quality of the workforce. Interestingly, there are several differences across demographic subgroups.”

- Anxiety over growth development and congestion
- Public transportation is perceived as a tremendous challenge facing Cumberland County.
- Cited need for more community members to make broad-based decisions; more communication.
- Define what “success” is
- Build upon the strong sense of pride and appreciation for living in this area.
- Better promote the people, lifestyle and sense of place in the community.



- Negative perceptions remain from the 70's as many mentioned "Fayette-Nam."

Needs identified by Pathways:

- Affordable housing
- Leadership development and succession planning
- Quality workforce is a barrier to future success
- Coordinated of resources for small business development
- Flex space, business incubator
- Improved public investment
- One stop permitting
- Good jobs
- Improved cooperation and coordination across those involved in economic development

"..Focus on more sophisticated and balanced approach to economic development that complements traditional recruitment and retention strategies with other initiatives such as technology development and entrepreneurial support."

The Pathways to Possibilities preliminary report identifies several next steps.

In summation these identified a need for the Chamber to take a lead role in:

- Educating the community at large as to what economic development success through improved communication to all citizens
- Enhancing leadership development and plan for succession of leaders knowledgeable about economic development
- Coordinating efforts, programs, services that lead to a successful economic development effort
- Developing the workforce needed by targeted industries through training and in cooperation with educational institutions
- Communicating to the public what efforts are underway, why these efforts over others and why the community is better able to succeed using the Chamber's plan.