

2019 CEDS - SWOT  
Workgroup

**Strengths**

Great Higher Ed Institutions  
Universities  
Multiple University/Colleges  
Strong Higher Education Network  
Community Colleges  
# Higher Ed Institutions  
Strong educational institutions  
Public Schools  
Innovative & collaborative economic/community development agencies  
Willingness to partner/collaborate  
strong sense of community  
creative class  
Historic resources  
Cultural heritage and the arts  
Dogwood foundation  
people  
vibrant local business base  
Attractive area for multicultural & multigenerational population  
climate  
good water sources  
growing population  
Opportunity to create additional busildings/sits for industrial development based on demand  
low unemployment  
Growing Manufacturing sector (2)  
Collaboration between economoic & workforce development entities  
Good transportation (interstate access)  
Interstate connections  
Outdoor recreation/Quality of life  
attractive Environment/Unique  
Beautiful Location  
Diverse Natural Resources  
Beauty of Landscape  
National Recognition (Top 10 Lists)  
Amenities avaiable for large city but with small town atmosphere  
A place where people all over the world want to visit  
numerous resources for support of Business development  
Access to outdoor hobbies  
Tourism  
Exceptional outdoor recreation lands of natural resources  
Environment - Natural Resources

## Challenges

Landslides impact on communities  
limited public transportation  
urban infrastructure (asheville)  
regional transportation  
Multi-modal transportation options  
Transportation  
Infrastructure not keeping pace with demand  
Educational attainment not keeping up with workforce demands  
Challenge in attracting enough workforce to fill projected job creation  
low wages relative to NC & US average - no county in WNC is at NC average  
We are older, sicker, and poorer than US average  
low wages  
unable to fill high paying jobs  
Creating a highly skilled workforce  
more phd programs focused on stem  
harnessing of and preparedness for accelerating tech changes (AI, autonomous vehicles, clean energy, etc.)  
Limited infrastructure \$  
more resources for small business owners  
Broadband (2)  
Broadband in rural areas (2)  
politically remote  
lack of a research university  
childcare  
lack of childcare  
support for children as far as health food, headstart, daycare  
Affordability, especially housing  
Affordable, safe workforce housing  
affordable housing for all workforce  
housing  
lack of housing workforce  
economic diversity (or lack thereof)  
Why did % families below poverty level increase from 2014 to 2018? 11% to 13.9%  
Economic mobility - challenging to get out of poverty  
cost of living (high)  
lack of living wage - unemployment  
unplanned growth  
income and education disparity  
Achievement gaps in education  
growing development footprint  
aversion to change (density)  
Preserving and protecting the assets that make our region so desirable while implementing growth  
Stress on natural resources - water/flooding/runoff, etc.

geography, topography, limits development  
mountainous terrain  
growing in a way that doesn't damage our environmental assets  
rural preservation

### **Opportunities**

Protected Natural and Historic Assets  
Growing National brand (esp. "Asheville")  
Great Regional Planners!  
Telecommuting  
Dogwood Trust impact upon Regional Health  
Leadership in Planning for Future Growth  
Increasing overall prosperity  
More collaboration across county and city line on larger issues  
better rural-urban linkages  
Growing baby boomer population  
Increase Research & Development & Tech Transfer via Universities  
Expand business development around natural resources  
Collaboration between public/private government/education  
Emerging sectors like food/natural products, outdoor, tech, etc  
Higher ed to Workforce - Skills Gap & Attracting Higher Pay Businesses  
In-Migration of Millennials  
Opportunity to grow additional Advanced Manufacturing Jobs

### **Threats**

"Resort Prices" stressing local workers, small businesses, etc.  
Uncertainty with Business Cycle  
Big Rock Slide  
Climate Change (2)  
Health Insurance Costs  
Technology Change - region is underrepresented in tech  
declining access to markets/information due to broadband challenges  
Economic Sustainability - disconnect between jobs and cost of living  
Increased Economic segregation  
Youth migration from rural areas  
Rapid change in culture due to growth  
Growth before infrastructure causing gridlock/over-crowded schools/stressed resources  
Pressure from Aging population  
Aging Population - region is 20 years older than nation - healthcare impact  
Growing Baby Boomer Population  
Aging Rural Population  
Recession or financial crisis  
International Economics

## State Politics

Although region is growing around Asheville will have smaller % of legislative representatives after 2020 census.

Lack of resources from State Government

Drug Addiction in rural areas

## 2019 CEDS - SWOT Workgroup

| # comments | Strengths (grouped) | Strengths - from exercise   |
|------------|---------------------|---|
| 8          | Education           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great Higher Ed Institutions</li> <li>Universities</li> <li>Multiple University/Colleges</li> <li>Strong Higher Education Network</li> <li>Community Colleges</li> <li># Higher Ed Institutions</li> <li>Strong educational institutions</li> <li>Public Schools</li> </ul>  |
| 9          | Culture             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Willingness to partner/collaborate</li> <li>strong sense of community</li> <li>creative class</li> <li>Historic resources</li> <li>Cultural heritage and the arts</li> <li>Dogwood foundation</li> <li>people</li> <li>Attractive area for multicultural &amp; multigenerational population</li> <li>growing population</li> </ul>   |
| 11         | Economy             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovative &amp; collaborative economic/community development agencies</li> <li>vibrant local business base</li> <li>numerous resources for support of Business development</li> <li>Opportunity to create additional busildings/sites for industrial development based on demand</li> <li>low unemployment</li> <li>Growing Manufacturing sector (2)</li> <li>Collaboration between economic &amp; workforce development entities</li> <li>Good transportation (interstate access)</li> <li>Interstate connections</li> <li>Tourism</li> </ul>                    |
| 13         | Place               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>climate</li> <li>good water sources</li> <li>Outdoor recreation/Quality of life</li> <li>attractive Environment/Unique</li> <li>Beautiful Location</li> <li>Diverse Natural Resources</li> <li>Beauty of Landscape</li> <li>National Recognition (Top 10 Lists)</li> <li>Amenities avaiable for large city but with small town atmosphere</li> <li>A place where people all over the world want to visit</li> <li>Access to outdoor hobbies</li> <li>Exceptional outdoor recreation lands of natural resources</li> <li>Environment - Natural Resources</li> </ul> |

| # comments | Challenges (grouped) | Challenges   |
|------------|----------------------|--|
| 3          | Climate              | Landslides impact on communities<br>geography, topography, limits development<br>mountainous terrain   |
| 6          | Growth               | growing in a way that doesn't damage our environmental assets<br>growing development footprint<br>aversion to change (density)<br>rural preservation<br>Preserving and protecting the assets that make our region so desirable while implementing growth<br>Stress on natural resources - water/flooding/runoff, etc.  |
| 12         | Infrastructure       | limited public transportation<br>urban infrastructure (asheville)<br>regional transportation<br>Multi-modal transportation options<br>Transportation<br>Limited infrastructure \$<br>Infrastructure not keeping pace with demand<br>Broadband (2)<br>Broadband in rural areas (2)  |
| 4          | Education            | Educational attainment not keeping up with workforce demands<br>lack of a research university<br>Achievement gaps in education<br>more phd programs focused on stem  |
| 9          | Economy              | Challene in attracting enough workforce to fill projected job creation<br>low wages relative to NC & US average - no coutry in WNC is at NC average<br>We are older, sicker, and poorer than US average<br>low wages<br>unable to fill high paying jobs<br>Creating a highly skilled workforce<br>harnessing of and preparedness for accelerating tech changes (AI, autonomous vehicles, clean energy, etc.)<br>more resources for small business owners<br>politically remote |
| 3          | Childcare            | childcare<br>lack of childcare<br>support for children as far as health food, headstart, daycare   |
| 5          | Housing              | Affordability, especially housing<br>Affordable, safe workforce housing<br>affordable housing for all workforce<br>housing<br>lack of housing workforce  |
| 7          | Economic<br>Mobility | economic diversity (or lack thereof)   |

13.9%  
 Economic mobility - challenging to get out of poverty  
 cost of living (high)  
 lack of living wage - unemployment  
 unplanned growth  
 income and education disparity

| # comments | Opportunities (grouped) | Opportunities  |
|------------|-------------------------|--|
| 2          | Place                   | Protected Natural and Historic Assets<br>Growing National brand (esp. "Asheville")   |
| 7          | Partnerships            | Great Regional Planners!<br>Dogwood Trust impact upon Regional Health<br>Leadership in Planning for Future Growth<br>More collaboration across county and city line on larger issues<br>better rural-urban linkages<br>Growing baby boomer population<br>In-Migration of Millennials |
| 5          | Economy                 | Telecommuting<br>Emerging sectors like food/natural products, outdoor, tech, etc<br>Increasing overall prosperity<br>Opportunity to grow additional Advanced Manufacturing Jobs<br>Expand business development around natural resources  |
| 3          | Education               | Increase Research & Development & Tech Transfer via Universities<br>Collaboration between public/private government/education<br>Higher Ed to Workforce - Skills Gap & Attracting Higher Pay Businesses  |

| # comments | Threats (grouped) | Threats  |
|------------|-------------------|--|
| 7          | Economy           | "Resort Prices" stressing local workers, small businesses, etc.<br>Uncertainty with Business Cycle<br>Economic Sustainability - disconnect between jobs and cost of living<br>Health Insurance Costs<br>Recession or financial crisis<br>International Economics<br>Technology Change - region is underrepresented in tech |
| 3          | Climate           | Big Rock Slide<br>Climate Change (2)   |
| 2          | Infrastructure    | declining access to markets/information due to broadband challenges<br>schools/stressed resources  |
| 3          | Politics          | Although region is growing around Asheville will have smaller % of legislative representatives after 2020 census.<br>State Politics<br>Lack of resources from State Government   |

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People

Drug Addiction in rural areas

Increased Economic segregation

Youth migration from rural areas

Rapid change in culture due to growth

Pressure from Aging population

Aging Population - region is 20 years older than nation - healthcare impact

Growing Baby Boomer Population

Aging Rural Population