

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

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# comments	Strengths (grouped)	Strengths - from exercise
8	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Higher Ed Institutions Universities Multiple University/Colleges Strong Higher Education Network Community Colleges # Higher Ed Institutions Strong educational institutions Public Schools
9	Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to partner/collaborate strong sense of community creative class Historic resources Cultural heritage and the arts Dogwood foundation people Attractive area for multicultural & multigenerational population growing population
11	Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative & collaborative economic/community development agencies vibrant local business base numerous resources for support of Business development Opportunity to create additional busildings/sites for industrial development based on demand low unemployment Growing Manufacturing sector (2) Collaboration between economic & workforce development entities Good transportation (interstate access) Interstate connections Tourism
13	Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> climate good water sources 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 Access to outdoor hobbies Exceptional outdoor recreation lands of natural resources Environment - Natural Resources

# comments	Challenges (grouped)	Challenges
3	Climate	Landslides impact on communities geography, topography, limits development mountainous terrain
6	Growth	growing in a way that doesn't damage our environmental assets growing development footprint aversion to change (density) rural preservation Preserving and protecting the assets that make our region so desirable while implementing growth Stress on natural resources - water/flooding/runoff, etc.
12	Infrastructure	limited public transportation urban infrastructure (asheville) regional transportation Multi-modal transportation options Transportation Limited infrastructure \$ Infrastructure not keeping pace with demand Broadband (2) Broadband in rural areas (2)
4	Education	Educational attainment not keeping up with workforce demands lack of a research university Achievement gaps in education more phd programs focused on stem
9	Economy	Challene in attracting enough workforce to fill projected job creation low wages relative to NC & US average - no coutry 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 harnessing of and preparedness for accelerating tech changes (AI, autonomous vehicles, clean energy, etc.) more resources for small business owners politically remote
3	Childcare	childcare lack of childcare support for children as far as health food, headstart, daycare
5	Housing	Affordability, especially housing Affordable, safe workforce housing affordable housing for all workforce housing lack of housing workforce
7	Economic 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 Growing National brand (esp. "Asheville")
7	Partnerships	Great Regional Planners! Dogwood Trust impact upon Regional Health Leadership in Planning for Future Growth More collaboration across county and city line on larger issues better rural-urban linkages Growing baby boomer population In-Migration of Millennials
5	Economy	Telecommuting Emerging sectors like food/natural products, outdoor, tech, etc Increasing overall prosperity Opportunity to grow additional Advanced Manufacturing Jobs Expand business development around natural resources
3	Education	Increase Research & Development & Tech Transfer via Universities Collaboration between public/private government/education Higher Ed to Workforce - Skills Gap & Attracting Higher Pay Businesses

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