

UPDATE OF THE 2017 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

ECONOMIC & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Public Meeting

August 18, 2021

6:00 pm Welcome

Masks are strongly encouraged and please practice social distancing.

Introductions

Background

Ground Rules and Meeting Norms

6:15 What did we learn from COVID?

6:45 Additional SWOT Input

7:15 Open Discussion

8:00 pm Adjournment



The **mission** of Kent County Government is to deliver services to protect and improve the health, safety, education, welfare, environment, economy, and unique quality of life of its citizens consistent with the County's values and priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.

The **vision** is to ensure accountability to the County's citizens for the delivery of essential services consistent with our mission statement.

2017 Economic Development Strategic Plan

MISSION STATEMENT Kent County Economic Development promotes activities that seek to enhance the business community, the services and income opportunities available to residents, as well as the social well-being and quality of life for all members of the county.

VISION Leverage the County's new digital infrastructure to help retain and expand existing businesses and increase their competitiveness, as well as to attract desirable new businesses. Advocate for upgrading infrastructure and developing a workforce to meet the needs of current and future employers.

What did we learn from COVID?

- Attractive Community for all ages, not only retirees
- Broadband Access allows telework and virtual engagement especially in government
- Increase the Importance for Nature Attractions
- Influx of Out of State Visitors and New Residents due to Rural Nature
- Increase in Visitors due to DE Bypass Rt.1/301
- Businesses Demonstrated they are very Tech Savy and Flexible and Quickly Adopted New Ways to conduct business
- Businesses Pivoted and will Keep some of those practices
- Business Associations created programs and Leveraged Partnerships
- **Need for Additional Food and Beverage Services with Extended Hours**
- Migration from Urban Areas
- Community Ambassadors were key
- Shed Light on Inequities, especially related to Broadband and Healthcare
- Boating Exploded due to it's an outside activity that is social distanced and our access to the Waterfront
- Outdoor Recreation
- New Relationships were Formed
- Relationships were Strengthened
- Ability to Adapt Quicker due to Size
- **Lack of Available Workforce**
- Diversification of Community
- **Lack of Affordable Housing**
- **Old and Insufficient Infrastructure**

Additional SWOT Input

Strengths

- Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board
- Arts & Culture
- Ability to Telework and Shop from Home
- Outdoor Recreation
- Entertainment
- Education Choice
- Ambassadors who Share Positive Experiences, Living Here, School System, etc.
- New Ambassadors/Resident to Spread the Word to Others
- New Volunteers
- Commutes are Shorter, more time to get involved with the community and government.
- Rural Hospital Designation, Partnership with Choptank Community Health, and focus on Center for Excellence for Aging

Weaknesses

- Public Education Test Score System and Ranking
- Zoning Regulations

Opportunities

- Job Training
- Arts & Culture
- Retention of new Residents due to lack of Services, Programs and Amenities
- Retention of Businesses
- New Ambassadors/Resident to Spread the Word to Others
- New Volunteers
- New Home Construction
- New Developments
- Infill
- Strengthen Partnerships and Relationships with the Towns
- YMCA

Threats

- Retention of new Residents due to lack of Services, Programs and Amenities
- Retention of Businesses
- Lack of physical Shopping
- Infrastructure: Water & Sewer and impacts to plants
- Drug Addiction
- Homelessness
- Zoning Regulations

Open Discussion

Ms. Williams provided the 2020 US Census Population, compared to the 2010, Kent County lost 999 residents.

Topics Covered

- Track 2nd Homes
- Track Residents another way for more accurate data
- Use data to sell Kent County
- Destination economy
- Short term rentals
- Focusing on one industry, putting all efforts into attraction in that industry
- Trades Shows
- Identify and Visit Prospects in the chosen industry sector
- Enhance and support infrastructure investment
- Historical Heritage
- Promote ‘safe place to live and raise a family’
- Balance Preservation and Development, find common ground
- Partnerships
- Economic mobility of current families and residents
- Shopping centers
- Community support for families