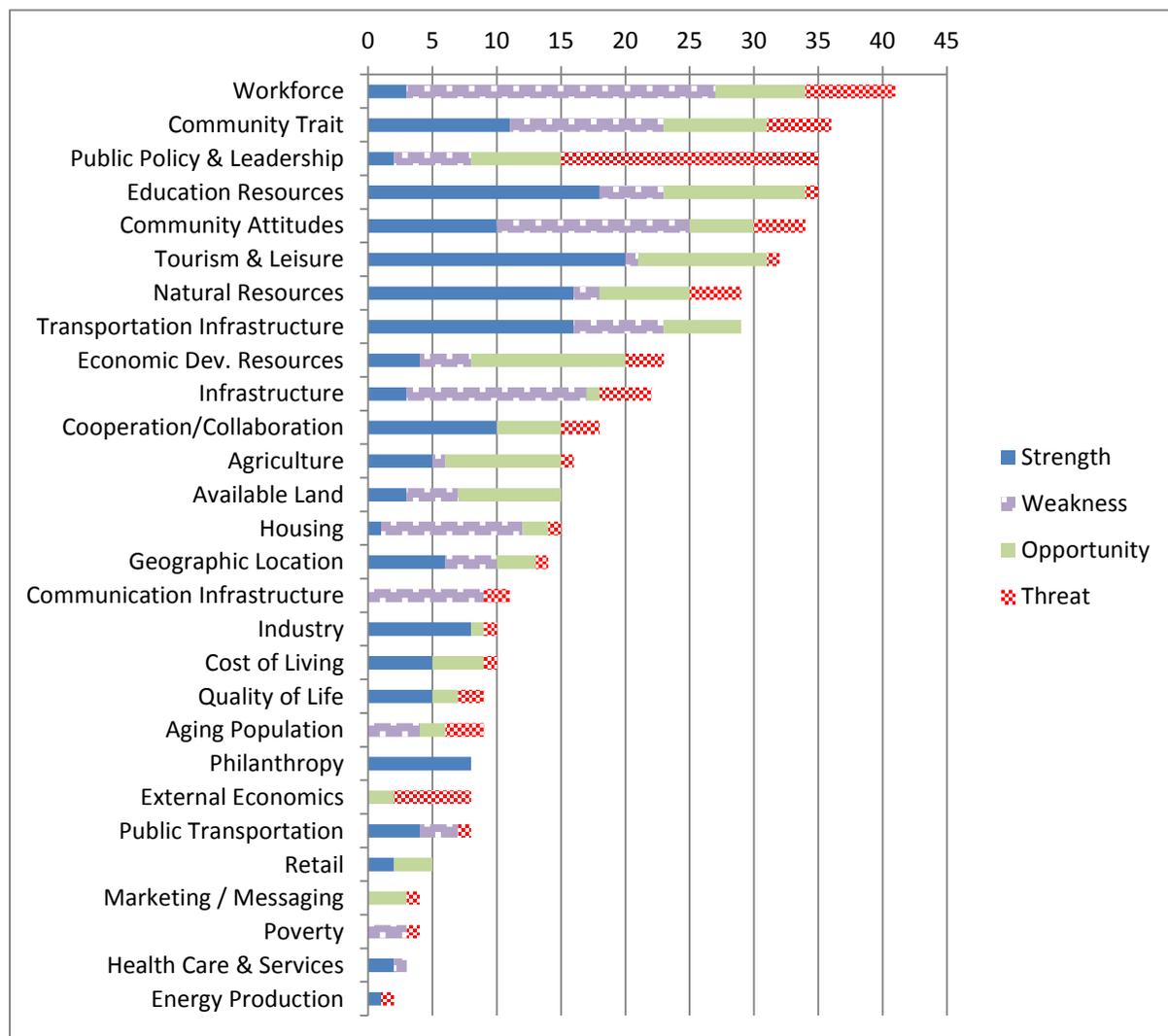


Regional CEDS SWOT Analysis Report

A wide spectrum of social and economic realities exist within the WMSRDC Economic Development District, yet there are many ties that bind the region. A constant challenge of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is to identify common regional characteristics that help guide the CEDS planning process and ensure its relevance. To that end, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis of the regional economy was conducted in the fall of 2016. To maximize the effectiveness and participation in this exercise, a series of six focus groups were facilitated throughout the district. An interactive SWOT form was also made available online to allow other stakeholders and interested citizens to provide their perspectives. The regional SWOT analysis effort yielded 485 comments, which were subsequently analyzed and are described in this report.

Distribution of Comments



SWOT Analysis Summary

Comments solicited through the SWOT analysis were categorized and sorted to identify the perceived regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Fourteen regional themes and twenty-eight sub-themes emerged from the data analysis. Common regional themes (those that were identified in three or more of the five district counties) are summarized in the table below.

STRENGTHS		
Agriculture	Education Resources	Tourism & Leisure
Community Characteristics	Industry	Transportation Infrastructure
Community Mindset	Natural Resources	Quality of Life
WEAKNESSES		
Available Land	Education Resources	Transportation Infrastructure
Community Characteristics	Infrastructure	Workforce
Community Mindset	Quality of Life	
OPPORTUNITIES		
Agriculture	Economic Development Resources	Quality of Life
Available Land	Education Resources	Tourism & Leisure
Community Characteristics	Natural Resources	Workforce
THREATS		
	Community Characteristics	Infrastructure
	External Economics	Workforce

SWOT Analysis Regional Themes

Agriculture S O

Agriculture in the district is viewed as a strength in terms of crop production, food processing, and the overall agricultural community. Opportunities to build upon those strengths include development of the agriculture cluster, food processing, and niche agriculture.

Available Land W O

Components of this theme include undeveloped land, industrial park land, and obsolete industrial properties. Opportunities include the amount of undeveloped land (room to grow), potential industrial park expansions, and reuse of old industrial properties. Noted weaknesses include old/obsolete industrial properties, lack of industrial park capacity, and the cost of construction and land.

Community Characteristics S W O T

Sub-Themes: Community Traits, Geographic Location, Public Policy & Leadership

Community Characteristics encompasses various traits that help describe the character of the district. Geographic location was frequently cited as a strength and opportunity of the district, as it strikes a desirable balance between access to natural resources, the presence of regional services, and access to

metropolitan areas. Economic and land use diversity are also valued as strengths, while traditional downtowns present unique opportunities. Lake Michigan presents opportunities for shipping and recreation, but is also seen as a weakness for being a barrier to transportation and development. In rural areas of the district, agricultural/bedroom community characteristics are valued for the small town feel; however, the inherent inability of those areas to attract critical mass is noted as a weakness. Lastly, region-wide threats include weather, climate change, exploitation/degradation of natural resources, and issues of governance and government policy (local/state/federal funding, red tape, regulations).

Community Mindset

Sub-Themes: Community Attitudes, Cooperation/Collaboration, Philanthropy

This theme focuses on human elements of the district. There exists a strong collective frame of mind that sees strength in the community's quality of life, "blue collar" work ethic, rich history, and philanthropy. Municipal cooperation and collaboration is also widely viewed as a strength within the district. Conversely, weaknesses include resistance to change, negative perceptions of skilled trades, and reliance on government social assistance.

Economic Development Resources

Sub Themes: Marketing / Messaging

Economic development resources (organizations, institutions, programs) provide opportunities such as support for small businesses and entrepreneurialism. Other opportunities include marketing and media messaging, business attraction and expansion, and fostering relationships with regional agencies such as WMSRDC and The Right Place.

Education Resources

Community colleges, K-12 education, and promise zones are considered strengths in the district. Access to higher education and training are weaknesses, especially in rural areas. Opportunities exist to partner with local and regional higher education institutions to fill the skills gap.

External Economics

A number of external economic forces are noted as threats, such as global volatility, strength of currency, and competition from other areas. These generally lie beyond the purview of the district.

Industry

Sub-Themes: Energy Production

Industry is viewed as a strength of the district, especially as it relates to diversity of the manufacturing base, high tech and aerospace manufacturing, advanced metals, and chemicals.

Infrastructure

Sub-Themes: Municipal Infrastructure, Utilities, Communications Infrastructure

With only a few exceptions, Infrastructure is consistently considered a weakness across the district. In rural areas, communications infrastructure and utilities are in short supply and are needed to meet economic goals and demands. Aging or failing infrastructure is cited as a threat to the district as well.

Natural Resources

Natural resources are revered as a strength throughout the district, including environmental cleanup efforts, Lake Michigan and its shoreline, and public-owned forests. Natural resources form the foundation for much of the Tourism & Leisure sector, and positively contributes to the district's quality of life. Natural resource opportunities include utilization of green infrastructure, blue economy potential, and development that leverages natural beauty. Perceived threats include legacy environmental contamination, invasive species, and attacks on water supply and/or natural resources.

Quality of Life

Sub-Themes: Cost of Living, Health Care & Services, Housing, Poverty

Quality of life is generally considered a strength, highlighted by access to natural resources and regional hospitals, as well as an affordable cost of living. However, housing (lacking quantity and quality of all housing types) and poverty are commonly cited as weaknesses throughout the district. The strengths of this theme present opportunities to attract and retain needed workforce talent, so long as affordable and appropriate housing is available.

Tourism & Leisure

Tourism & Leisure is closely related, and often dependent upon, the district's natural resources. It includes a spectrum of outdoor recreation activities as well as arts, culture, agri-tourism, and retail. Throughout the district, Tourism & Leisure is considered to be a major strength and a point of pride. One inherent weakness is the seasonal nature of recreation based upon outdoor activities. Many opportunities were identified to leverage and build upon this aspect of the economy, including the development/promotion of winter and "shoulder seasons" recreation opportunities.

Transportation Infrastructure

Sub-Theme: Public Transportation

Transportation infrastructure is generally considered a strength of the district. This includes highways, railroads, deep water ports, airports, and in certain areas, public transportation. Weaknesses are closely tied to rural areas that are solely dependent on trucks/roadways for commercial purposes. Also for many rural areas, intra- and extra- county transportation for residents is cited as a weakness.

Workforce

Sub-Theme: Aging Population

Across the district, there is a nearly unanimous perception that the workforce is a weakness, especially in areas such as skills/training, educational attainment, talent retention, youth migration, and workforce motivation and age. Depending on individual perspectives, how to address those weaknesses can be viewed as both opportunity and threat. On one hand, addressing those weaknesses presents opportunities for success; on the other, failure to address weaknesses is a critical threat. Other opportunities noted include utilizing retirees as an asset/resource, leveraging quality of life to attract talent, and leveraging partnerships with educational institutions to create "stackable credentials" to bolster the workforce and fill skills gaps.

Regional Theme	Sub-Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Agriculture	Agriculture	Agri-business agriculture/food processing hub Agricultural base	Excessive agriculture ruins natural resources	agriculture hub farm to table movement attract large food companies Food processing agribusiness niche agriculture wood barrel production, wood products, charcoal	loss of farmland
		available space for industry Plenty of building sites Developable property	old industrial space industrial parks lack capacity cost of construction & land for development available land	room to grow (land availability) waterfront property availability reuse of industrial land Hart industrial park expansion buildable industrial space Affordable land	
Community Characteristics	Community Traits	diversity - community small town feel ability to attract critical mass urban and rural characteristics diverse land uses job growth land values economic diversity diverse business Agricultural community	unionized commuters (bedroom community) wages / personal income weather + rural rural / lack access to transportation corridors Rural population poor soil (lake county) blight/vacant properties population numbers no critical mass	diversity grow traditional downtowns educational institutions reviving downtown Muskegon Muskegon Heights downtown redevelopment development in core communities strong community center degraded properties (with infrastructure)	declining school enrollment lower birth rates weather climate change lack of connectivity
	Geographic Location	geographic location proximity to Muskegon / Grand Rapids location - local geography Proximity to metro areas, highways, airports Central location within region	geographic location Lake Michigan is a barrier to development	proximity to larger markets Proximity to deep water port Proximity to Grand Rapids	geography (lake MI barrier to transportation & development)
	Public Policy & Leadership	local control Financial stability at county level	State government policy Funding Lack recycling program leadership lack of zoning lack of enforcement	transparency - sharing change and progress improve efficiency of public service delivery great lakes water strategy State / federal investments in infrastructure Politics helpful to county local community initiatives low-impact development	poor leadership state & federal funding forest management county zoning municipal leadership turnover declining tax base state education policy irresponsible development state and federal restrictions local government funding sprawl mentality failing to communicate with the public Red tape Natural resource exploitation degradation of rivers and environment Balance between QOL, rural character vs development government regulations
Community Mindset	Community Attitudes	strong workforce ethic community history community pride cohesive community volunteering community image "Blue collar" workforce People	community self-image divided community Involvement of younger generations perception/attractiveness of skilled trades legacy perceptions of manufacturing and industry geographic segregation (economic / ethnic) resistance to change Attitude toward post-secondary education (not needed) Perceived reliance on government assistance Culture workforce motivations resistance to change social security dependence	improving perceptions build upon successes localize start to finish Blue collar workforce Changing mindsets with (wealthy) retirees moving in	internal perceptions negative external perception
	Cooperation / Collaboration	open to service consolidation Relationships with neighboring counties municipal collaboration regional collaboration cooperation / collaboration		consolidation of municipal services municipal (local / regional) collaboration more inclusive	municipal competition reluctance towards municipal cooperation lack of coordination between government entities
	Philanthropy	philanthropy Fremont Area Com. Found. Community foundation Gerber Foundation			
Economic Dev. Resources	Economic Dev. Resources	Muskegon Innovation Hub (GVSU) strong branding (chamber, CVB, downtown) economic services NCEDO	small business resources & attraction messaging - awareness of Muskegon Innovation Hub	economic development superstore small business attraction/services incentives for economic development small business and start-up support grand rapids resources Starting Block - expand beyond food industry Business expansion Right Place relationship WMSRDC entrepreneurialism	lack of incentives grand rapids resources small business succession
	Marketing / Messaging			marketing and outreach through Watch Us Go media messaging	media coverage

Education Resources	Education Resources	higher education & training workforce education partners educational institutions job training programs Muskegon Promise post-secondary education West Shore Community College Career tech. center Baker College Muskegon CC Education system - K-12, vocational Access to education special education	gaps in training options and resources unbalanced k-12 school system lack vocational education / student access lack higher education opportunities lack full service higher education	Promise zones Muskegon CC, Baker College, GRCC, WSCC Ferris State, GVSU, MSU skilled trades career tech center partnership with higher education alternative education	lack of coordination between school districts
External Economics	External Economics			globalization of business investment Regional growth	better services/resources in neighboring areas global economic volatility great lakes water diversion Competition from online commerce Gas price increase = pressure to relocate strength of the dollar
Industry	Industry	Diversified mfg base manufacturing (high tech, aerospace, metals) innovation metals chemical plants regional medical industrial center		industry	chemical plants
	Energy Production	energy production (turbines, pump storage)			solar power
Infrastructure	Infrastructure	water / wastewater capacity Hart wastewater excess capacity Municipal services - water, sewer	water / sewer needed in certain areas aging infrastructure underused infrastructure infrastructure - 3-phase power lack wastewater treatment at Silver Lake lack of capital investment Lack of infrastructure utilities natural gas	improve infrastructure (water, sewer)	aging infrastructure failing infrastructure
	Communication Infrastructure		lacking broadband infrastructure High speed internet Cell phone service		broadband infrastructure lack of connectivity
Natural Resources	Natural Resources	environmental cleanup natural/water resources Lake Michigan Beach / dunes public-owned forests	natural resources forest management	green infrastructure blue economy leverage outdoor beauty Utilize natural resources Development around natural resources forest management	environmental issues attack on water supply and/or natural resources invasive species invasive species
Quality of Life	Quality of Life	Quality of life safe communities		leverage quality of life and natural resources improve law enforcement	law enforcement drug use / addiction
	Cost of Living	Cost of living		Affordable cost, quality of living low wages	cost of living
	Health Care & Services	hospitals Human Services Agencies	Access to health care		
	Housing	affordable housing	housing (variety / options / diversity) housing stock (aging, quantity) lack affordable housing Lack of housing for aging population Housing stock - 1/3 secondary; only support retail, general services Housing - only low income available median income housing	housing development Affordable housing	development mismatch (condos v. housing)
	Poverty		High poverty		Poverty (systemic/generational)
Tourism & Leisure	Tourism & Leisure	tourism (arts, culture) public waterfront access seasonal tourism arts / culture / entertainment agritourism growth public spaces for recreation world record sundae outdoor activities Silver Lake State Park ludington downtown Natural resources - tourism hunting /fishing / canoeing motorsports / non-motorized trails	lack cultural activities / fine dining	tourism water / bike trails leverage arts / culture Leverage tourism winter recreation / shoulder seasons signature events / attractions recreation clubs national recreation events	The Dragon bike trail
	Retail	service / retail regional center		services / amenities / lodging conference/meeting space	

Transportation Infrastructure	Transportation Infrastructure	transportation deep water port multi-modal transportation logistics hub highway rail connection Truck transportation airport	air travel infrastructure - all-seasons roads freight movement transportation logistics Only one major transportation mode (trucks) No major highway roads	regional logistics hub commercial shipping opportunities airport port logistics hub short sea shipping highway traffic	
	Public Transportation	public transportation Yates Dial-a-Ride	transportation - taxis Intra-, extra-county transportation		Lack of public transportation
Workforce	Workforce	skills bank skilled labor Workforce (existing)	Workforce needs upgraded skills attraction of young workers gap in labor force / skilled labor Soft skills (parenting) lacking young professionals educational attainment workforce / professional retention skills gap lack of motivated workers amount of qualified workers amenities for young professionals lack of motivated workers balance of seasonal to professional jobs Low unemployment - lack talent	improve educational attainment fill skills gaps workforce development Leverage partnerships to create "stackable credentials" Attract talent via natural resources, QOL, COL Retain youth through employment, training	skilled workforce educational attainment aging workforce (losing youth) missed opportunities related to workforce weaknesses loss of workforce lack of employees
	Aging Population		Youth out-migration rate brain drain	retirees creativity & ambition retirees knowledge	loss of youth aging population / workforce

Lake County

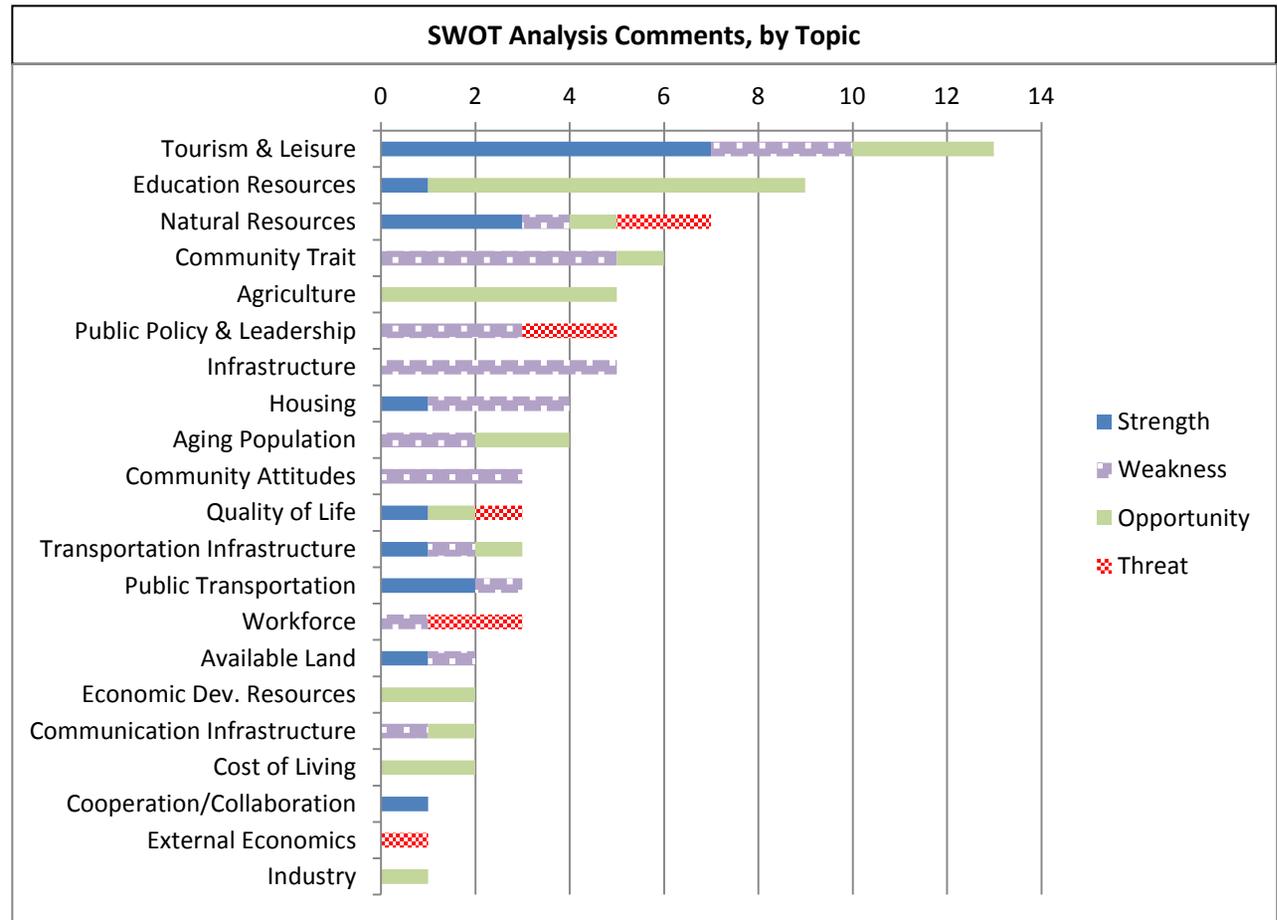
Lake County Economic Development SWOT Analysis Focus Group

November 21, 2016 – Lake County Economic Development Alliance

What does economic development mean in Lake County?

"Grow the pie" through job growth, better infrastructure, workforce motivation, business attraction, and capitalizing on strengths."

"More jobs, more people, more choices; growth of business; medical facilities; sustainable use of natural resources."



Summary of Comments
 Lake County Focus Group
 CEDS SWOT - Fall 2016

Regional Theme	Sub-Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Agriculture	Agriculture			agribusiness niche agriculture wood barrel production wood products charcoal	
Available Land	Available Land	available land	industrial space		
Community Characteristics	Community Trait		blight poor soil vacant school population numbers no critical mass	degraded properties	
	Public Policy & Leadership		leadership lack of zoning lack of enforcement		poor leadership state & federal funding
Community Mindset	Cooperation/Collaboration	Relationships with neighboring counties			
	Community Attitudes		workforce motivations resistance to change social security dependence		
Economic Development Resources	Economic Development Resources			entrepreneurialism small business services	
Education Resources	Education Resources	special education		skilled trades career tech center partnership with higher education alternative education promise program WSCC Baker College Ferris State University	
External Economics	External Economics				better services/resources in neighboring areas
Industry	Industry			industry	
Infrastructure	Communication Infrastructure		internet	better internet access	
	Infrastructure		infrastructure natural gas utilities		
Natural Resources	Natural Resources	natural resources public-owned forests	forest management	forest management	forest management weather
Quality of Life	Quality of Life	safe communities		improve law enforcement	law enforcement
	Cost of Living			low wages cost of living	
	Housing	affordable housing	housing median income housing senior housing		
Tourism & Leisure	Tourism & Leisure	hunting fishing / canoeing motorsports non-motorized trails tourism outdoor recreation options trails	services / amenities lodging conference/meeting space	tourism recreation clubs national recreation events	
Transportation Infrastructure	Transportation Infrastructure	highways	roads	highway traffic	
	Public Transportation	Yates Dial-a-Ride	transit		
Workforce	Workforce		workforce		loss of workforce lack of employees
	Aging Population		youth out-migration brain drain	retirees creativity & ambition retirees knowledge	

Mason County

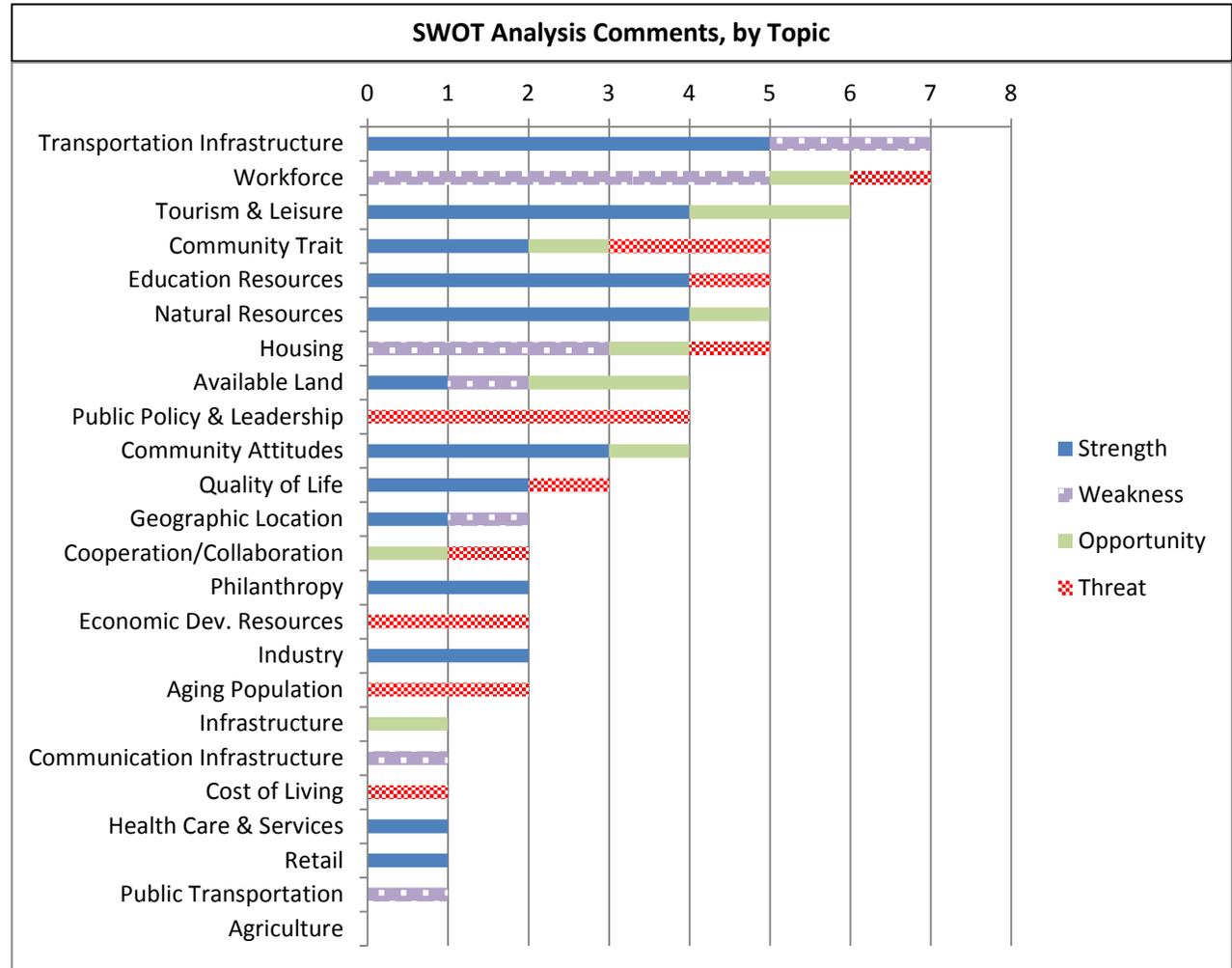
Mason County Economic Development SWOT Analysis Focus Group

October 20, 2016 – Ludington & Scottville Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

What does economic development mean in Mason County?

“Retention, expansion, creation of new opportunities for business while providing resources and educational opportunities for those businesses.”

“Quality jobs, infrastructure, training/education, workforce development, recreational / cultural opportunities, quality of life, attractive community, sense of place, inclusion, marketing, angel investment, entrepreneurship, small business development, talent retention, year-round economy, quality/diversity of housing stock.”



Summary of Comments
Mason County Focus Group
CEDs SWOT - Fall 2016

Regional Theme	Sub-Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Available Land	Available Land	available space for industry	cost of construction & land for development	available land (sites) buildable industrial space	
Community Characteristics	Geographic Location	location - local geography	location - regional geography		
	Community Traits	diverse business diverse economy		strong community center	declining school enrollment lower birth rates
	Public Policy & Leadership				county zoning municipal leadership turnover declining tax base state education policy
Community Mindset	Community Attitudes	cohesive community volunteering community image		more inclusive	
	Cooperation/Collaboration			increase collaboration	lack of coordination between government entities
	Philanthropy	philanthropy			
Economic Development Resources	Economic Development Resources				small business succession lack of incentives
Education Resources	Education Resources	K-12 education post-secondary education education West Shore Community College			lack of coordination between school districts
Industry	Industry	manufacturing energy production (turbines, pump storage)			
Infrastructure	Infrastructure Communication Infrastructure		internet connectivity	improve infrastructure (water, sewer)	
Natural Resources	Natural Resources	natural resources Lake Michigan Beach / dunes		leverage outdoor beauty	
Quality of Life	Quality of Life	quality of life			drug use / addiction
	Cost of Living				cost of living
	Housing		lack affordable housing lack housing quality housing quantity	housing development	development mismatch (condos v. housing)
	Health Care & Services	hospital			
Tourism & Leisure	Tourism & Leisure	world record sundae outdoor activities Silver Lake State Park Ludington downtown		winter recreation / shoulder seasons signature events / attractions	
	Retail	regional retail			
Transportation Infrastructure	Transportation Infrastructure	deep water port multi-modal logistics highway rail connection	freight movement transportation logistics		
	Public Transportation		county-wide public transportation		
Workforce	Workforce		workforce retention amount of qualified workers amenities for young professionals balance of seasonal to professional jobs	workforce development	missed opportunities related to workforce weaknesses
	Aging Population				loss of youth aging population / workforce

Muskegon County

Muskegon County Economic Development SWOT Analysis Focus Groups

October 13, 2016 - Muskegon County Economic Development Corporation

October 18, 2016 - Muskegon Area First

What does economic development mean in Muskegon County?

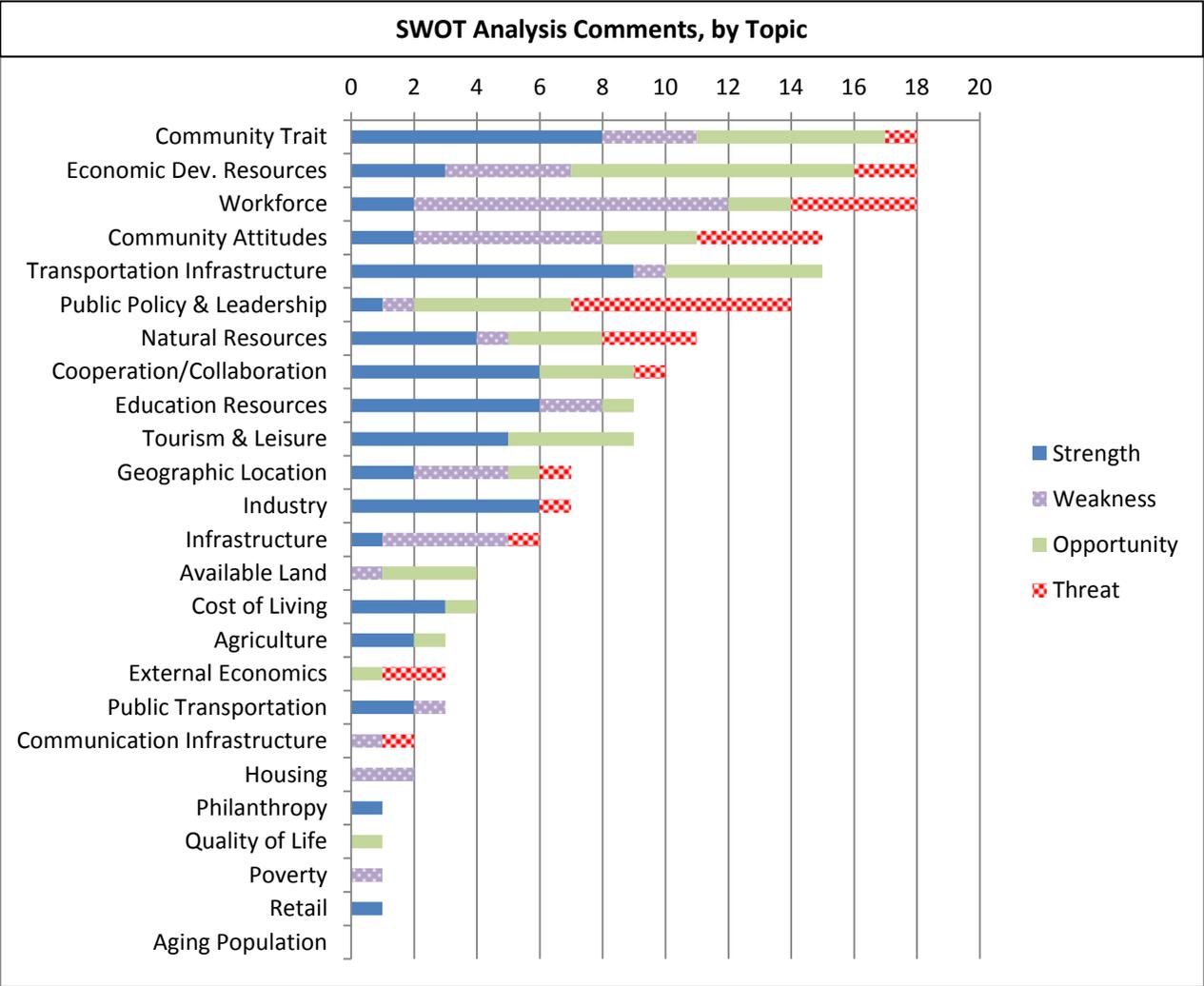
“Jobs, investment, quality of schools, quality of life, image & perception, growth of central city, long-term industry growth, bringing in young families, SMART growth, diversify economy”

“Creating opportunity to expand assets while eliminating obstacles.”

“Reuse of existing resources; leveraging regional location (recreation, industry, transportation hub); utilize public / private partnerships to increase tax base and job opportunities”

“Job creation, income growth, economic diversity, workforce development, and quality of life.”

“Jobs.”



Summary of Comments
Muskegon County Focus Groups
CEDS SWOT - Fall 2016

Regional Theme	Sub-Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Agriculture	Agriculture	Agri-business agricultural processing		agriculture hub	
Available Land	Available Land		old industrial space	waterfront property availability reuse of industrial land room to grow (land availability)	
Community Characteristics	Community Traits Geographic Location Public Polic & Leadership	geographic location diversity - community small town feel ability to attract critical mass urban and rural characteristics diverse land uses job growth land values economic diversity local control	geographic location Lake Michigan is a barrier to development unionized commuters (bedroom community) wages / personal income State government policy	proximity to larger markets diversity educational institutions reviving downtown Muskegon Muskegon Heights downtown redevelopment development in core communities traditional downtowns low-impact development transparency - sharing change and progress improve efficiency of public service delivery great lakes water strategy State / federal investments in infrastructure	geography (Lake MI barrier to transportation & development) irresponsible development local government funding loss of state / federal support sprawl mentality state and federal funding / restrictions great lakes water diversion invasive species
Community Mindset	Community Attitudes Cooperation / Collaboration Philanthropy	strong workforce ethic community history philanthropy open to service consolidation municipal collaboration regional collaboration	community self-image divided community involvement of younger generations perception/attractiveness of skilled trades legacy perceptions of manufacturing and industry geographic segregation (economic / ethnic)	improving perception of Muskegon build upon successes localize start to finish municipal (local / regional) collaboration consolidation of municipal services	external perception internal perceptions municipal competition
Economic Development Resources	Economic Development Resources Marketing / Messaging	Muskegon Innovation Hub (GVSU) strong branding (chamber, CVB, downtown) economic services	small business resources & attraction messaging - awareness of Muskegon Innovation Hub gaps in small business resources small business support	economic development superstore small business attraction incentives for economic development small business and start-up support grand rapids resources marketing and outreach through Watch Us Go media messaging	failing to communicate with the public grand rapids resources media coverage
Education Resources	Education Resources	higher education & training workforce education partners educational institutions job training programs Muskegon Promise	gaps in training options and resources unbalanced k-12 school system	Muskegon Promise (education)	
External Economics	External Economics			globalization of business investment	global economic volatility
Industry	Industry	manufacturing (high tech, aerospace, metals) innovation metals chemical plants industrial manufacturing base			chemical plants
Infrastructure	Municipal Infrastructure Utilities Communication Infrastructure	water / wastewater capacity	lacking broadband infrastructure aging infrastructure water / sewer needed in certain areas underused infrastructure		aging infrastructure broadband infrastructure
Natural Resources	Natural Resources	natural/water resources environmental cleanup efforts	natural resources	green infrastructure blue economy capitalize on water / natural resources	environmental issues attack on water supply and/or natural resources climate change
Quality of Life	Quality of Life Cost of Living Health Care & Services Housing Poverty	cost of living regional medical industrial center service / retail regional center	poverty housing (age, quantity, variety, options, diversity)	leverage quality of life and natural resources cost of living	
Tourism & Leisure	Tourism & Leisure Retail	tourism (recreation, arts, culture, entertainment) public waterfront access seasonal tourism		tourism leverage tourism through arts & culture water / bike trails	
Transportation Infrastructure	Transportation Infrastructure Public Transportation	transportation logistics hub deep water port airport transportation infrastructure public transportation	air travel transportation - taxis	airport commercial shipping opportunities short sea shipping regional logistics hub	
Workforce	Workforce Aging Population	skills bank skilled labor	skilled workforce (skills / labor gap) attraction of young workers educational brain drain older workforce (lacking young professionals) educational attainment workforce / professional retention	improve educational attainment fill skills gaps	aging workforce (losing youth) educational attainment skilled workforce

Newaygo County

Newaygo County Economic Development SWOT Analysis Focus Group

September 20, 2016 – Newaygo County Economic Development Office

What does economic development mean in Newaygo County?

"Creating an environment for long term sustainable economic growth."

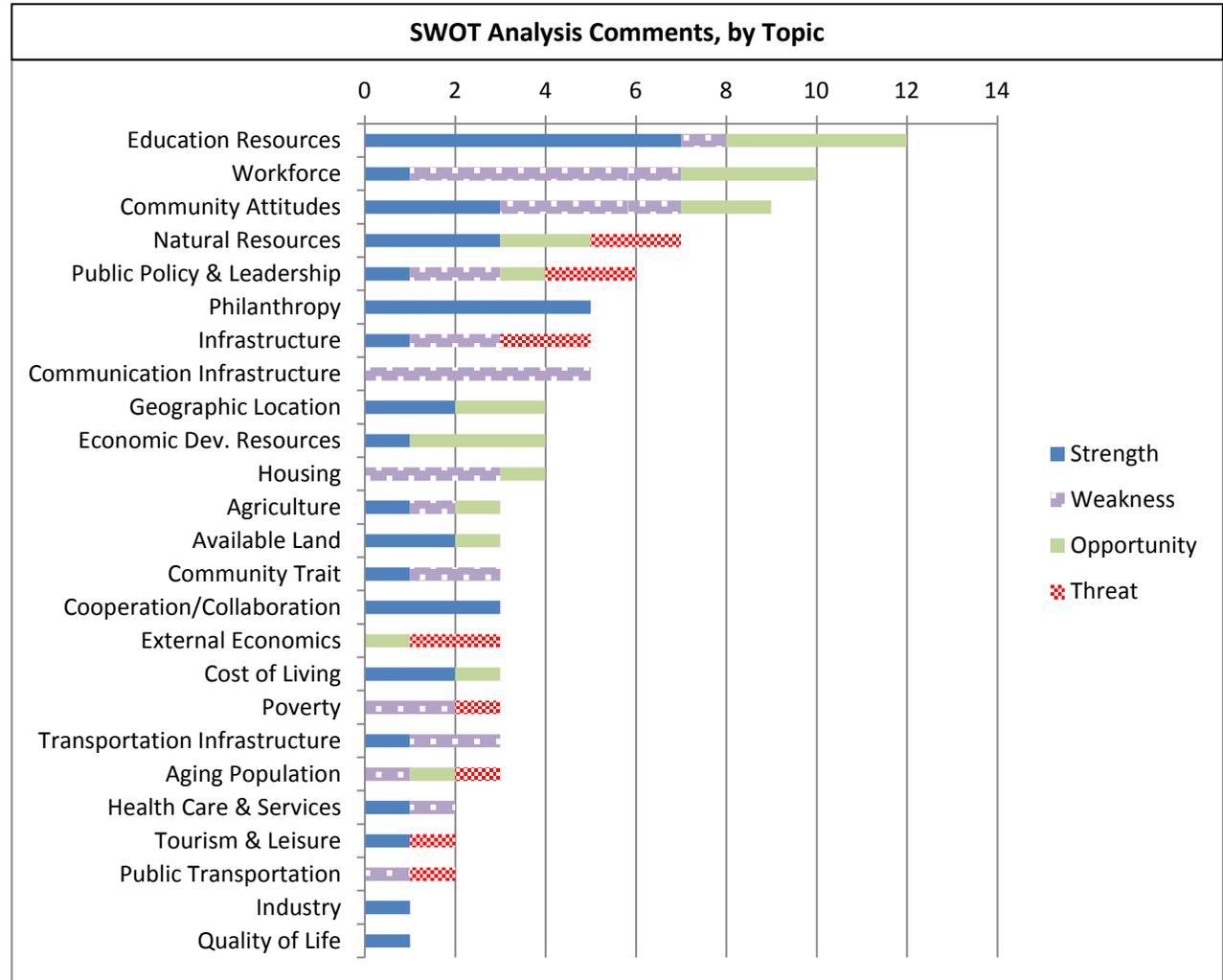
"Economic development supports economic growth:

- *Quality of life, natural resources;*
- *Support retaining jobs, expanding and possible attraction;*
- *Investment in infrastructure and communications; and*
- *Managing natural resources."*

" Growth and retention

- *Agriculture: growers to food processing*
- *Live-work-play*
- *Education is key."*

"Engaging and encouraging diverse industry and service providers which in turn provide a living wage to employees."



Summary of Comments
 Newaygo County Focus Group
 CEDS SWOT - Fall 2016

Regional Theme	Sub-Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Agriculture	Agriculture	Agricultural base	Excessive agriculture ruins natural resources	Food processing	
Available Land	Available Land	Plenty of building sites Developable property		Available, affordable land	
Community Characteristics	Geographic Location	Proximity to metro areas, highways, airports Central location within region		Proximity to deep water port Proximity to Grand Rapids	
	Community Traits	Agricultural community	Bedroom community Rural size of county		
	Public Policy & Leadership	Financial stability at county level	Funding Lack recycling program	Politics helpful to county	Red tape Balance between QOL, rural character vs development
Community Mindset	Community Attitudes	"Blue collar" workforce People Work ethic	Attitude toward post-secondary education (not needed) Perceived reliance on government assistance Scared of change Culture	Blue collar workforce Changing mindsets with (wealthy) retirees moving in	
	Philanthropy	Fremont Area Com. Found. Strong sense of philanthropy Gerber Foundation			
	Cooperation / Collaboration	Municipal collaboration Cooperation			
Economic Development Resources	Economic Development Resources	NCEDO		Business expansion Right Place relationship WMSRDC	
Education Resources	Education Resources	Career tech. center Baker College Muskegon CC Education system - K-12, vocational Promise Zone Access to education	Lack full service higher education	Promise zone Muskegon CC, Baker College, GRCC MSU Ferris State, GVSU	
External Economics	External Economics			Regional growth	Competition from online commerce Gas price increase = pressure to relocate close to employment (50% wage earners travel 30+ miles/minutes)
Industry	Industry	Diversified mfg base			
Infrastructure	Infrastructure	Municipal services - water, sewer	Lack of infrastructure Infrastructure aging		Deteriorating infrastructure Infrastructure
	Communication Infrastructure		High speed internet Cell phone service		
Natural Resources	Natural Resources	Natural resources		Utilize natural resources Development around natural resources	Natural resource exploitation Degradation of rivers and environment
Quality of Life	Quality of Life	Quality of life			
	Cost of Living	Low cost of living		Affordable cost, quality of living	
	Health Care & Services	Human Services Agencies	Access to health care		
	Housing		Lack of housing for aging population Housing stock - 1/3 secondary; only support retail, general services Housing - only low income available	Affordable housing	
	Poverty		Poverty rate		Poverty (systemic/generational)
Tourism & Leisure	Tourism & Leisure	Natural resources - tourism			The Dragon bike trail
Transportation Infrastructure	Transportation Infrastructure	Truck transportation	Only one major transportation mode (trucks) No major highway		
	Public Transportation		Intra-, extra-county transportation		Lack of public transportation
Workforce	Workforce	Workforce (existing)	Low unemployment - lack talent Low educational attainment Workforce needs upgraded skills Soft skills (parenting) Talent retention	Leverage partnerships to create "stackable credentials" Attract talent via natural resources, QOL, COL Skilled workforce	
	Aging Population		Youth out-migration rate	Retain youth through employment, training	Aging population

Oceana County

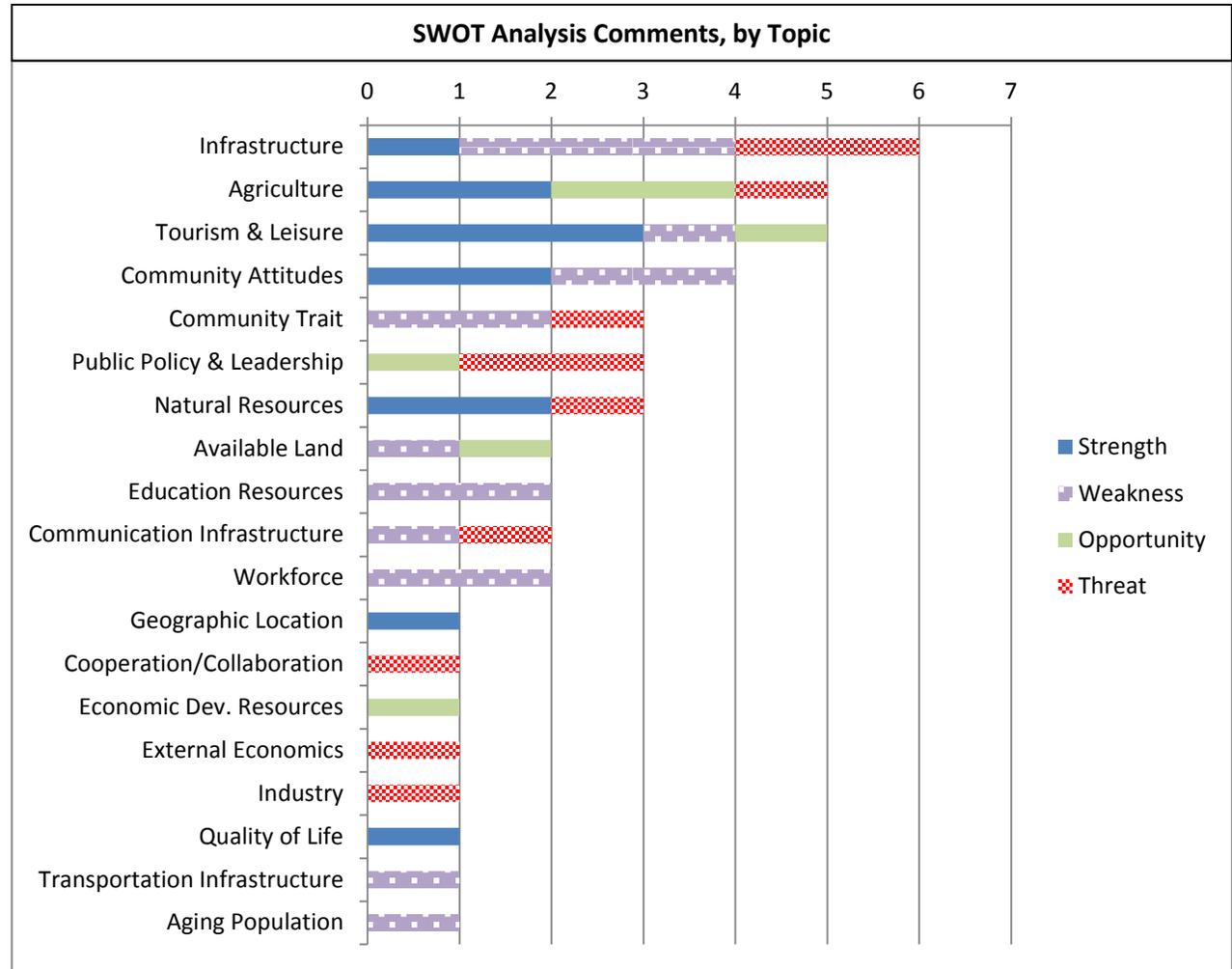
Oceana County Economic Development SWOT Analysis Focus Group

October 11, 2016 – Oceana County Economic Development Corporation

What does economic development mean in Oceana County?

“Supporting existing businesses and sustained growth, while recruiting new businesses and remaining open to change.”

- “1. Add value to existing resources,*
- 2. Attract capital through improved infrastructure, culture, etc.,*
- 3. All of the above to attract / retain jobs.”*



Summary of Comments
 Oceana County Focus Group
 CEDS SWOT - Fall 2016

Regional Theme	Sub-Theme	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Agriculture	Agriculture	agriculture food processing hub		farm to table movement attract large food companies	loss of farmland
Available Land	Available Land		industrial parks lack capacity	Hart industrial park expansion	
Community Characteristics	Geographic Location	proximity to Muskegon / Grand Rapids			
	Community Traits		weather + rural rural / lack access to transportation corridors		lack of connectivity
	Public Policy & Leadership			local community initiatives	government regulations decreasing tax base
Community Mindset	Cooperation / Collaboration				reluctance towards municipal cooperation
	Community Attitudes	community pride	resistance to change		
Economic Development Resources	Economic Development Resources			Starting Block - expand beyond food industry	
Educational Resources	Educational Resources		lack vocational education / student access lack higher education opportunities		
External Economics	External Economics				strength of the dollar
Industry	Industry				solar power
Infrasatrucre	Infrastructure	Hart wastewater excess capacity	infrastructure - 3-phase power lack wastewater treatment at Silver Lake lack of capital investment		failing infrastructure
	Communication Infrastructure		internet		lack of connectivity
Natural Resources	Natural Resources	natural resources			invasive species
Quality of Life	Quality of Life	quality of life			
Tourism & Leisure	Tourism & Leisure	tourism agritourism public spaces for recreation	lack cultural activities / fine dining	Leverage tourism	
Transportation Infrastructure	Transportation Infrastructure		infrastructure - all-seasons roads		
Workforce	Workforce		workforce training / education lack of motivated workers		
	Aging Population		youth out-migration		