



**MOUNTAIN WEST PARTNERSHIP
STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2027**

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CONTACT INFO:
Russ Harris
russ@regiona.org
828-586-1962

Mountain West^{NC}
partnership



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document analyzes the current state of the Mountain West Partnership (MWP) and presents a Strategic Plan for recovering, restructuring, and building the resiliency of, the MWP **over the next five years**. A current state analysis shows that there are several strengths and opportunities to grow the organization and its influence in the region by focusing on building an Enterprise Ecosystem tailored to the needs of Small to Mid-sized Enterprises (SMEs), which is the right type and scale of business for the “product” that the seven-county area covered by the Mountain West Partnership – referred to as Region A – has to offer to maximize economic development.

The research included in this report summarizes Region A’s work and commuting habits and highlights opportunities to take advantage of our endemic workforce to create competitive advantages, while also indicating the industry clusters that offer the most opportunities for building regional business.

The focus is on building a new, full-time staffed Public-Private Partnership (PPP) with a set of initiatives to get the organization reformed and launched for success.

Voting and prioritization with members of the MWP Board revealed the most important initiatives and themes to be undertaken by the revitalized organization are:

1. **Board Building** – added by board – develop an SME-focused Board of Directors for the PPP.
2. **Advocacy** – 16 votes – keeping attention of the legislature; obtaining funding for the region.
3. **Housing** – 12 votes – affordable housing for workers.
4. **Support / Enterprise Ecosystem** – 11 votes – “Smart Business Concierge” for supporting SMEs.
5. **Retention** – 11 votes – serving needs of existing ‘high-growth’ potential SMEs.
6. **Workforce Planning** – 6 votes – plan for workforce in region.
7. **Broadband** – 5 votes – develop broadband in remote areas.
8. **Marketing** – 5 votes – appropriate marketing for SMEs.

Each of the eight important initiatives selected by the board members of the Mountain West Partnership are listed as crucial to the success of the new organization.

For each initiative, the “Strengthening” requirement(s) from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the individual supports that they engage, are included. Also, an optimum team leader and members are outlined for each initiative. The initiatives are broken down into specific strategies and tactics. Risks and Mitigation strategies are outlined along with metrics to exhibit the status of each initiative. These metrics are identified as **lagging** (the final result desired) and **leading** (those that indicate influence on and movement/leverage toward the desired final result) metrics.

Appendix A lists a full set of five-year proformas that demonstrate that the organization can, with reasonable focus on self-reliant funding and a strong fundraising function, become self-sustaining and reach an impact for the region that likely provides ARC-recommended level leverage of (6:1) - meaning an impact of roughly six dollars of impact to the region for every one dollar of the \$7 million needed to sustain and staff the organization for the five-year planning window.

A reference Bibliography is available in Appendix B for more insights related to case studies and benchmarking. In addition, a List of Regional Resources is available in Appendix C. Pursuit of these initiatives will help ensure the success of the new team in creating a strong and resilient organization, and building momentum towards reaching goals that ensure a strong, resilient, and fully recovered economic development environment in the Western NC region.

MOUNTAIN WEST PARTNERSHIP – STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 OVERVIEW

HISTORY OF THE MWP

Current Mission and Purpose of the Mountain West Partnership

The Mountain West Partnership (MWP) is a seven-county partnership of the westernmost counties of North Carolina, based out of Sylva NC, and officially formed on May 3rd, 2017. It was chartered as a ‘marketing’ vehicle for the seven counties involved: Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, Graham, Clay, and Cherokee, and also the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI). The MWP provides a voice and advertising agent to the region’s assets to prospective enterprises, expanding existing businesses, and to individuals looking to relocate.

MWP’s original mission statement was to “Stimulate commerce in the member counties by encouraging the establishment of new and expansion of existing businesses, decreasing unemployment and increasing standard of living for all individuals living within the consortium; to promote the common interest of the corporation members by stimulating demand for goods and services through the recruitment of new businesses to the area in which said members conduct business and facilitate the expansion of existing area businesses; through related techniques of general economic development; and lawfully engage in and all activities that are necessary or desirable in connection with the aforesaid purposes. The Mountain West Partnership shall not engage in any activities that would cause it to fail to qualify under Section 501(c)(6) of the United States Internal Revenue Code or successor provisions thereto.”¹

Challenges with the Current MWP Arrangement

However, the mission of the MWP has evolved to become somewhat unclear and confusing. The original intent of jointly marketing the region lost traction after attempts to attract large, corporate clientele into the region fell short. Indeed, this is due to the lack of appropriate economic development “Product” – no large corporate facilities, or properties that are appropriate for them, a thin workforce without appropriate skills and training for corporate/skilled work, and lack of the affordable housing and support infrastructure to attract, grow and sustain larger firms in the area.

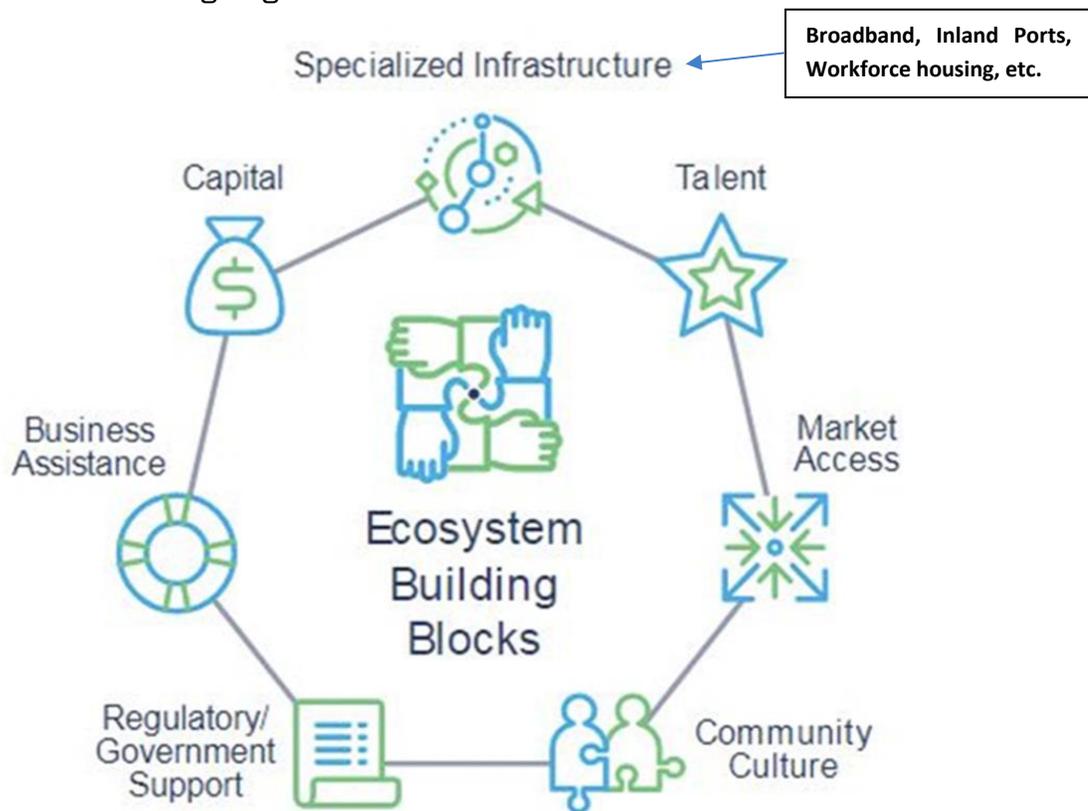
As a result, the players – the seven County Economic Developers with their full-time responsibilities to their respective counties – had difficulty finding traction and time for an unpaid, unfunded responsibility in addition to their already overworked schedules. So, the opportunities to jointly market the region fell away to those more focused on single counties and the Mountain West

¹ Mountain West Partnership Bylaws.

Partnership became a series of meetings from which few decisions were made, and few action items were fully undertaken.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS – OVERVIEW

The Opportunity: Region A has the opportunity to re-invigorate the region’s entrepreneurial and business “enterprise” ecosystem through the Mountain West Partnership. An expanded and re-invigorated MWP can guarantee excellence in the services provided to entrepreneurial and existing enterprise-level businesses in the region, and provide an attractive base to other high-growth-potential businesses outside the region. Such an “**Enterprise Ecosystem**” will also provide greater clarity of focus and momentum to demonstrate that Region A is a ‘region of opportunity’ for small to mid-sized enterprises (SME’s). This can have the effect of bringing new investors, entrepreneurs, and enterprises that provide advanced jobs, innovation, and a more diversified economy to the region. The building blocks of a vibrant, evolved Enterprise Ecosystem are identified in the following diagram.



Source: Building an Entrepreneurial Future – Ideas for Appalachia’s Ecosystem Builders and Champions, 2018

Vision for Success: To create a forum where private sector and entrepreneurial leaders, and ‘change champions’, can engage as core stakeholder partners to local and regional public-sector counterparts to co-create a vibrant, successful, Enterprise Ecosystem. This will focus on growth and retention of existing high-potential businesses, and development of priority enterprise clusters and value-chains focused on high-growth, 21st century economic opportunities. Success will be defined by the emergence of the MWP region as a ‘region of excellence’ within the ARC footprint

for creation of high-wage, sustainable jobs that contribute to long-term community health and well-being, and generate consistent net inflow of value-creating financial and human capital investments into, and retention within, the region. Thus, the vision summarized is to:

- **Achieve** >\$42 million capture in public and private funds to the broader region **over the five-year plan period** (> 6:1 leverage over the \$7M+ cost of operating the new Mountain West Partnership as shown by summarizing revenues from the five year pro-formas),
- **Enable** and build success of SMEs and a resilient, diversified Enterprise Ecosystem in the region as a core priority, through the restructuring of the MWP as a Public Private Partnership (PPP),
- **Create** a counterparty and forum for coordinated action to leading regional anchor businesses (Drake, Moog, Major Brewers, Nantahala Outdoor Center) among others, and,
- **Recruit** targeted, High-Potential SMEs in key sectors who are looking to combine quality of life environment with a supportive Enterprise Ecosystem.

STRATEGY STATEMENT

To support The Southwestern Commission's, and Region A's Economic Development resources in creating a vibrant Enterprise Ecosystem that supports developing, recruiting, supporting, and preserving SMEs in the region.

CURRENT STATE OF THE MWP

Environment in WNC

The Challenge: WNC is challenged by a historic dependence on a limited number of major employers, and an undiversified, retail and service-focused economy (primarily healthcare and tourism). In addition, an influx of part-time residents and wealthier property owners has increased the regional cost of living without commensurate impact on creation of livelihood opportunities beyond lower-wage service jobs. WNC struggles as a region to articulate a clear and compelling opportunity vision, which could make the area more attractive to private-sector investors and established corporations (especially in the emerging 'next economy' sectors like sustainable forestry, clean energy, regenerative agriculture, green manufacturing, outdoor products, wellness and others). This includes a historically weaker representation of regional priorities at the state and federal level, resulting in fewer catalytic funding opportunities (like approved legislative support or grant opportunities) flowing from those sources to the region.

The Solution: Convene the Mountain West Partnership and key stakeholders in a regional consultative planning, co-creation, and prioritization effort to identify the important initiatives that will expand and enhance the ecosystem and bring about a self-sustaining Mountain West Partnership "Enterprise Ecosystem" alliance. The MWP will cultivate leaders for initiatives, develop teams to address each, and begin developing project plans to complete each initiative. This will include a core focus on value-added service provision that can generate ongoing, self-sustaining revenue opportunities for the Mountain West Partnership.

Contributing Factors: Many factors are converging to make this the right time to craft a new extended Enterprise Ecosystem. The convergence of the need for an organized, region-wide ecosystem; COVID-19 recovery funding coming available; move to a distributed business collaboration and "work from home/anywhere" culture enabled by broadband and less place-

dependent workforce requirements as a result of COVID-19 pandemic-related remote-working practices that are likely to be enduring to some degree – which can help bring our region together more efficiently; potential partnership(s) between other regional assets (i.e., Hatch Innovation Hub, Pisgah Fund, CDFIs, WCU-CEI, Appalachian Investors Alliance, EDPNC, NC Commerce, etc.). Possible contributing external trends and factors, subject to the process and prioritization of regional leadership, could include alignment with the broader national shift to prioritize sustainable industry, with potential to position WNC as an ideal ‘take-off’ region for higher-value light manufacturing, technology-related enterprises, regenerative agriculture, energy services and related enterprises in this space. This could potentially include structuring the Mountain West Partnership going forward to better position the region with a coordinated and compelling proposition for new industries and investment flows.

Why: To support an environment of accelerated economic growth and development of our region’s most important economic catalyst – our small and mid-sized businesses. To accelerate diversification of the economy, including creation of higher-wage jobs and career opportunities, which can increase health, wellness, living standards, and overall quality of life for the region’s residents.

Recovery & Resiliency Needs in the region

Based on interviews with the region’s economic development resources (as part of the listening posts outlined later), it was determined that Region A has clear needs to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, and to reach a level of strength and resiliency that assures a strong economy going forward. These include but are not limited to better housing options, a workforce trained with future-proof skills, funding, and resources to support SMEs that make up the bulk of our region’s employment, and access to the resources, funding and capabilities provided by many of our regional, state and federal resources like the Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Also, better and stronger coordination and communication amongst the existing small-business support infrastructure in Asheville/Buncombe area would further strengthen the relationships in the region and provide a strong slate of value-added services to our small businesses.

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SWOT – STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

The consultants and SWC leadership team conducted a SWOT exercise with the following findings:

Mountain West Partnership SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Internal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covers the entire WNC region; sponsor is Southwestern Commission Many participants are from the region, deeply committed and involved in local activities, politics Most are open to regionalism approach to manage large challenges Historically, Regional efforts are/were more successful than parochial efforts (Smoky Mountain Host, GSMRR, etc. as examples) Members are excited to engage in a revitalized MWP Funding should not be / is not really an issue in the region (just need a coordinated awareness of funding opportunities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not really a partnership - few programs involve more than one or two counties; unsure what programs to coordinate Unclear mission/programs - not understood by membership. Confused with Region A mission at times. Lack of staff means it's an afterthought for everyone involved No "teeth" - no power behind it, therefore lacking engagement CCs and other partners unclear about what to do Big business focus in the past has failed - no product to pitch - region does not have 600K sq. ft. facilities or real estate that large Insufficient private sector engagement, no clear 'hook' to bring business leaders to the table Absence of GROWTH CAPITAL including quasi/equity and VC-type Uneven participation by counties - due to above reasons 	
Opportunities	Threats	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become a "One Stop Shop" clearinghouse for regional info. Could be powerful legislative advocate - bring more congressional attention/funding and focus to Western NC; tap legislative money Facilitate/Coordinate "Who is doing what" (i.e., one stop shop for information and access, Business Concierge model) across the region for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing and Retention/Expansion of existing businesses, Recruitment/Support of new Entrepreneurship & Small/MSEs Advocacy - Coordinate "Wall of Money" coming in - ARP, etc. - Do a better job of advocating WNC on the "hill" - get in the budget Hatch Partnership for high-potential/growth Entrepreneurship and education GSMRR run Passenger and Freight on Sylva to Haywood section Members OK with fees - IF the value-add is apparent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued lack of interest/engagement by partners/EDs Lack of interest in a regionalism focused approach (vs. parochial) Inability to convince legislators to budget for a regional approach MBW, Hatch or WCU overlaps the role of the MWP, creating even more confusion about roles/accountabilities in the region 	

There are a few conclusions that can be drawn from the SWOT exercise, and a few opportunities to improve the perspectives reflected herein. First the conclusions.

The SWOT exposed that there are many Strengths and Opportunities in the region, the primary of which is that all the players involved agree that a regional approach (counties acting together) to solving economic development challenges is preferred to a parochial approach (county-by-county acting alone). The second is agreement that a single-source of information about the region's assets, capabilities, opportunities for and resources for funding, attracting and expanding businesses is sorely needed.

Several Weaknesses and Threats were identified – mostly around lack of adequate resources (staff, funding, "teeth" or regional/state/federal influence, etc.) that currently defines the MWP, and a resultant lack of proper engagement by the parties involved.

Another perhaps crucial threat/weakness identified was the lack of access to regional capital in all forms – angel investors, venture capital funds, appropriate small business lending resources, and programs for diverse populations (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color – or BIPOC – for

instance). The MWP should work with regional resources (the Dogwood Health Trust, Mountain BizWorks, Nantahala Health Trust, etc.) to identify, attract and maintain interest from capital providers.

Indeed, these threats are the reason for conducting the renewed strategic planning and are addressed in the initiatives and proposed directions of this strategic plan.

One important perspective missing

It is important to note that a key constituency – the region’s business leadership – was not involved in these listening post and SWOT exercises. The path outlined herein “should” meet the needs of these constituents, but direct involvement proposed by local and regional business leaders is seen by the consulting group, and by the Southwestern Commission, and its Economic Development resources, as crucial to the ongoing success of the strategic plan.

To address this shortcoming, it is recommended that the staff of the new MWP, once hired, conduct a canvassing exercise amongst the region’s business leaders – the ultimate “end user” of the MWP’s services – as soon as practicable to either confirm the hypothesis that the proposed strategic planning initiatives will indeed help resolve the region’s key issues, or that other work might be incorporated to identify their needs and resolve their issues.

FUTURE STATE - DESIRED OUTCOMES

The Mountain West Partnership worked together to highlight broadly the key issues that must be addressed in the future of the MWP Strategy. They are Advocacy, Leverage, Communication, and Partnership. While these are broad, amorphous concepts, they are at the heart of the work to be done by the new and improved MWP in order to address the primary drivers of success for the region. They are further defined below.

Advocacy

To actively ensure consistent and clear coordination of public-private efforts to address regional constraints to growth and retention of anchor industries, through attraction of public funding and private investment dollars into major region-wide projects through legislative advocacy and corporate liaison services.

Leverage

To handle topics and issues that add value beyond individual county efforts, and that create greater impact region-wide from multi-county partnership support. Also, to effectively use and leverage the multitude of state, regional and federal programs (NC Works, Appalachian Regional Commission POWER Grants, EDA programs/funding and grants, Apprenticeship NC, etc.) to create impact without having to reinvent each service locally.

Also, per the Appalachian Regional Commission’s key Strategic Key Performance Indicators, or KPIs², to bring private sector investment into Region A on a **6:1 ratio** (six private company dollars for every public dollar raised) to public funding for major projects that support growth and retention of anchor industries and industry clusters. As the business model presented in Appendix A shows,

² Appalachian Regional Commission. Strengthening Economic Resilience Technical Report. -Feb2019. Accessed 1/22/2022.

the revenues of the new commission will exceed \$7 million US total in the five-year planning window. This implies a leveraged return of roughly \$42 million in value to the region from the activities proposed herein (6 x 7 = 42).

Communication

To conduct awareness building of best practices from within the region and from elsewhere in NC and North America to raise the capacity and capability of all stakeholders in the region. To communicate effectively in a way that increases the profile of the region as ‘center of excellence’ within NC and the ARC footprint, and destination of choice for high-potential entrepreneurs, high-skilled workers, and investors.

Partnership

Proactively engage and support private-sector involvement in **Public-Private Partnership (PPP)** initiatives that benefit the retention and resilience of priority industry clusters through better infrastructure, improved workforce housing, alignment of workforce education and training priorities, and general workforce development, as well as quality of life initiatives to attract and retain high-caliber workers and entrepreneurs to the region.

Selective Metrics

Some selected metrics from the 2022-26 ARC Strategy will be important to track to ensure success:

- # of Jobs created/retained,
- # of businesses attracted into the region/created/retained,
- # of businesses with improved access to infrastructure,
- Ratio of leveraged private investment to MWP dollars (in new/existing businesses), and,
- Ratio of matching private sector partner funding to MWP/SWC dollars (in priority projects/initiatives).

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REGIONAL RESEARCH

Covering seven counties, and the EBCI’s Qualla Boundary, the MWP faces unique geographical and industry-related challenges – some counties more than others. In order to promote growing industries with high paying jobs, the research summarized below examines the major existing businesses (50+ employees) in the region and their representative key industries. This shows who the “anchors” for the region are – key for developing both retention and future growth plans.

Highlights include examples such as manufacturing businesses with 20-49 employees, which show growth potential with above average wages for the region in Breweries, Commercial Bakeries, and related ventures. Additional small to mid-size business concentrations in Professional & Technical Services, Information Technology, and Health Care in high growth sub-sectors show additional opportunities for the MWP to proactively nurture growth of these existing anchor enterprises sectors in the region.

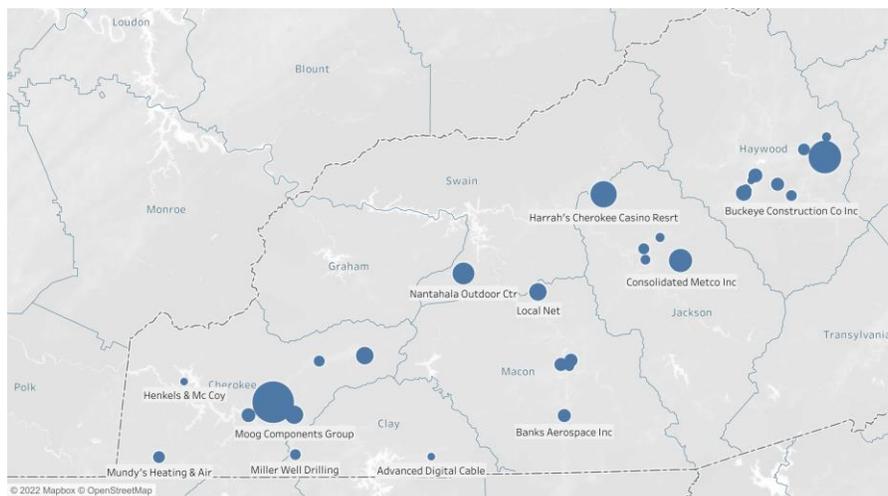
US Census Bureau Small Businesses in MWP Region

2019 County Business Patterns Survey

	n<5	n5_9	n10_19	n20_49	n50_99	n100_249	n250_499
Cherokee	1651	533	270	191	12	4	4
Graham	308	82	89	30	6	0	0
Haywood	3546	918	631	313	54	5	0
Jackson	3140	874	419	349	55	14	0
Swain	984	320	166	107	8	0	0
Macon	3615	1064	536	283	67	12	0
Clay	530	150	67	28	3	0	0
Total Businesses	13774	3941	2178	1301	205	35	4
						Total	21438

<https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/2019/econ/cbp/2019-cbp.html>

MWP Business Employee Size 2022 – Tableau Link



Analytical Narrative: Manufacturing industries were primarily looked at with focus on Advanced Manufacturing – manufacturing that is participating in new technology adaptation at higher rates, incorporating new processes and initiatives (ex. Zero-waste sustainability), and continues to be on the cutting edge with regards to 21st century technologies, sustainability-focus, and enterprise models. There exists a healthy representation of these manufacturers in MWP that employ 50 or more people on an individual enterprise basis.

Advanced Manufacturing is seen as key in no small part due to the higher wage opportunities for employees in these sectors (i.e., engineers, designers, operators, etc.). However, in the current global market manufacturers have been experiencing a variety of supply chain difficulties which could hinder further development in Region A in the short- to mid-term, particularly if individual counties are not able to effectively collaborate in PPP models to ensure adequate enabling support to these ventures to offset such challenges to their survival and growth.

Taking a whole view of the manufacturing industry in Mountain West Partnership, at the small- to mid-sizes of enterprises, there is evidence of a thriving sub-sector of Food and Beverage Manufacturing, exceling in areas like Breweries and Commercial Bakeries.

With strong aligned areas like Food and Beverage Manufacturing, MWP is in a unique position to enable intentional linkages to other high-potential sectors with strong existing anchor firms. Connections to Outdoor Recreation and Tourism & Hospitality could feasibly deliver mutually-reinforcing benefits at a cross-sectoral level with adequately resourced regional-level support. Examples of high-impact anchor enterprises in these areas notably include Harrah’s Cherokee Casino and the Nantahala Outdoor Center, which taken collectively offer the foundations for development of a diversified, resilient, and regionally strong economy with ample employment opportunity at every level of skill and education.

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Case Studies: Prospective Anchors for Regionalized Manufacturing and High-tech Clusters, Integrated Value-Chains and Sustainable Development

Moog Components Group	Drake Software
<p>Moog Components Group is located in Cherokee County and is a prime example of an industry that could create value within the Region A, . Aerospace industries and companies on average pay higher wages than other manufacturers. The increasing trend toward ‘co-botting’ (the use of robots alongside physical laborers) and more concentrated numbers of high-skilled positions also has potential to incentivize and align to more focused regionalized workforce development and educational programs to support a broader base of high-tech manufacturing and related industry clusters. This also includes downstream value-chain opportunity to intentionally support linkages to regional small business suppliers and input providers.</p> <p>Through their most recent capacity-expanding investment of \$2.3 million in 2020 to expand and create 12 new positions, Moog shows that the aerospace and related industries are not stagnating and could provide sustainable and measurable impacts to the region.</p>	<p>Drake Software provides Information Technology solutions, and Professional and Technical Development services to its clients. Located in Macon County, the company already has a proven track record of providing economic benefits to the County and region-wide. Through 18 different subsidiary businesses Drake currently maintains a payroll of ~1,000 employees, though not all are currently regionally based.</p> <p>Jobs in several of their businesses provide higher than average wages, and similar to Moog, has potential to incentivize and align with a more regionalized workforce development and support public-private partnership approach to encourage greater employment of regionally resident workforce (current and also prospective). Currently in a leadership transition, Drake has announced a plan for accelerated growth, with at least 100 new jobs planned. Drakes’ momentum, engaged through a strong PPP partnership, could be further developed to anchor a vibrant high-tech cluster.</p>
Frog Level Brewing	Nantahala Outdoor Center
<p>Frog Level Brewing is a brewery located in Waynesville and is a strong example of the opportunity that exists in the region’s historic train-depot centered downtowns. A sister company of the region’s only female and indigenous-owned brewer, 7 Clans, the brewery connects Haywood and Asheville-Buncombe industry in exciting ways, through past and ongoing partnerships with regional flagships such as with BearWaters and Highland Brewing, and a soon to open 7 Clans venue in Asheville itself (where the company is officially headquartered, it is worth noting).</p> <p>The brewery recently has announced plans to expand and provide more capacity along the river and in Waynesville, with a focus on locally crafted beer, the brewery is a perfect case study on area revitalization. Growing and advocating for a healthy tourism and hospitality industry in the region produces local connections that can lead to a self-sustaining web of local business collaboration.</p>	<p>The Nantahala Outdoor Center (NAC) is a regional outdoor center based in Swain County that promotes and fosters outdoor recreation, and is one of the nation’s leading outdoor recreation companies, supporting adventure itineraries across four states from their WNC hub. The outdoor industry is a permanent and growing industry in WNC, and a major draw for tourists and local residents alike.</p> <p>In addition to anchoring much of the region’s hospitality industry, attracting millions of visitors each year, firms like NOC have the potential to strengthen the incentives for high-value upstream and downstream value-chains in the sustainable economy and related areas, including light manufacturing (esp. outdoor gear and equipment), carbon sequestration and monetization opportunities, integrated land management, agro-tourism, and more. These linkages have potential to drive a diversified and resilient local economy that ties into the sustainability imperative of the 21st century.</p>

Data analytics using advanced tools such as EMSI reflect the presence of high-potential industry opportunities that are well-suited to intentional development of a diversified and resilient regional economy. Strong standouts from cluster analysis (indicating presence of a localized and integrated enterprise supply chain) includes chemical products, electrical, machining, and again localized food and beverage clusters that could be further developed with a consistent and sufficiently-resourced regionalized approach. Additional opportunities may be noted below.

MOUNTAIN WEST PARTNERSHIP – TOP INDUSTRY CLUSTER RANKINGS (BY EMSI RANKING METHODOLOGY) ³

Cluster Rankings

Upstream Chemical Products	96
Local Government Services	89
Lighting and Electrical Equipment	63
Production Technology and Heavy Machinery	53
Local Food and Beverage Processing and Distribution	46
Information Technology and Analytical Instruments	45
Education and Knowledge Creation	42
Automotive	42
Local Utilities	41
Communications Equipment and Services	39

In noting the trends in the regional economy related to occupation, it is notable that food service, construction management, drivers/sales staff, and computer support were the major opportunity gains over the 2010-2020 period, with construction labor, gambling dealers and home health workers close behind.

³ EMSI ranks industry clusters based off:

1. Earnings
 - a) High earnings per worker
2. Growth
 - a) High overall job growth
3. Regional Competitiveness
 - a) Regional growth exceeding national average
4. Regional Specialization
 - a) Regional job concentration exceeding national average
5. Gross Regional Product
 - a) High contribution to GRP

INDUSTRY OCCUPTIONS – TOP 2010-2020 ‘WINNERS’

Description	Employed in Industry Group (2010)	Employed in Industry Group (2020)	Change (2010-2020)	% Change (2010-2020)	% of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2020)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education	Typical On-The-Job Training
Cooks, Fast Food	134	648	+514	384%	1.0%	\$10.32	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	632	1,074	+442	70%	1.7%	\$11.01	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training
Construction Laborers	315	613	+298	95%	1.0%	\$15.26	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
Cashiers	2,261	2,514	+253	11%	4.0%	\$10.50	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
Stockers and Order Fillers	725	952	+227	31%	1.5%	\$12.57	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training

Perhaps equally telling, the major ‘losers’ in terms of occupation opportunities in the 2010-2020 period were in machining and heavy industry (likely a result of increased investment in ‘co-botting’ and similar technologies) executive support services (similarly, likely a result of technology-enhanced moves away from a reliance on human staff support), and mental health and substance abuse workers.

INDUSTRY OCCUPTIONS – TOP 2010-2020 ‘LOSERS’

Description	Employed in Industry Group (2010)	Employed in Industry Group (2020)	Change (2010-2020)	% Change (2010-2020)	% of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2020)	Median Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry Level Education	Typical On-The-Job Training
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	405	101	-304	-75%	0.2%	\$23.55	High school diploma or equivalent	None
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	455	258	-197	-43%	0.4%	\$14.81	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Nursing Assistants	1,002	859	-143	-14%	1.4%	\$13.30	Postsecondary nondegree award	None
Food Preparation Workers	670	527	-143	-21%	0.8%	\$10.84	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
Waiters and Waitresses	1,521	1,388	-133	-9%	2.2%	\$9.60	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training

In addition to identifying key industries and businesses, regional workforce flows remain of importance to understand where the working population of MWP counties are going, especially with regard to occupation and education. The following data snapshots and highlights demonstrate a significant internal workforce flow among the member counties of MWP, and a significant and ongoing ‘export’ of workforce into the Asheville-Buncombe opportunity corridor – particularly in higher-wage employment and younger and likely more qualified employees. This represents a prospective starting point for MWP to proactively explore leveraging Opportunity Zones, an economic development tool that allows people to invest in distressed areas in the United States⁴, and high-impact investments, which can help to inform a broader intra-regional resourcing and workflow strategy in future.

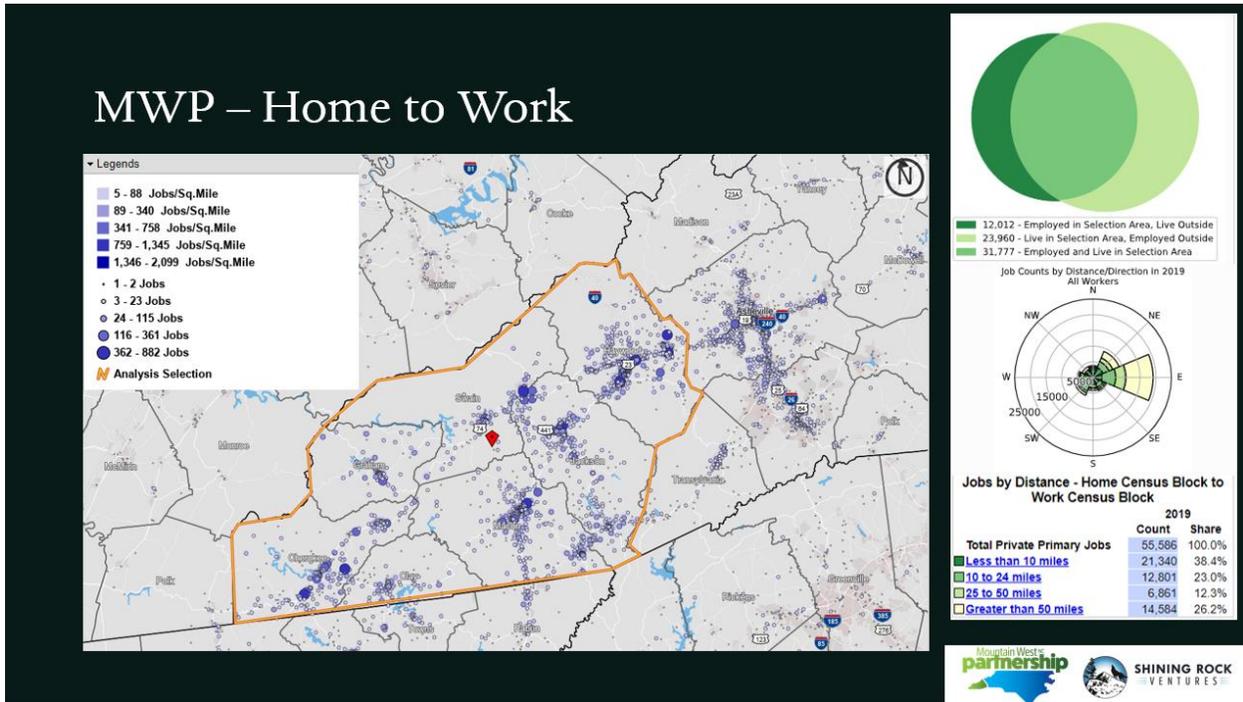
WHERE THE WORKING POPULATION WORKS:

County	Live / Work in same County	Inflow into County	Outflow out of County	Inflow / Outflow (Net)
Cherokee	3,429	2,496	3,877	-1,391
Clay	520	810	2,078	-1,268
Graham	877	667	1,322	-655
Haywood	8,363	5,861	11,709	-5,848
Jackson	3,704	5,229	5,897	-668
Macon	5,380	3,386	5,357	-1,971
Swain	1,145	1,931	2,193	-262
TOTAL	23,418	20,380	32,433	-12,053

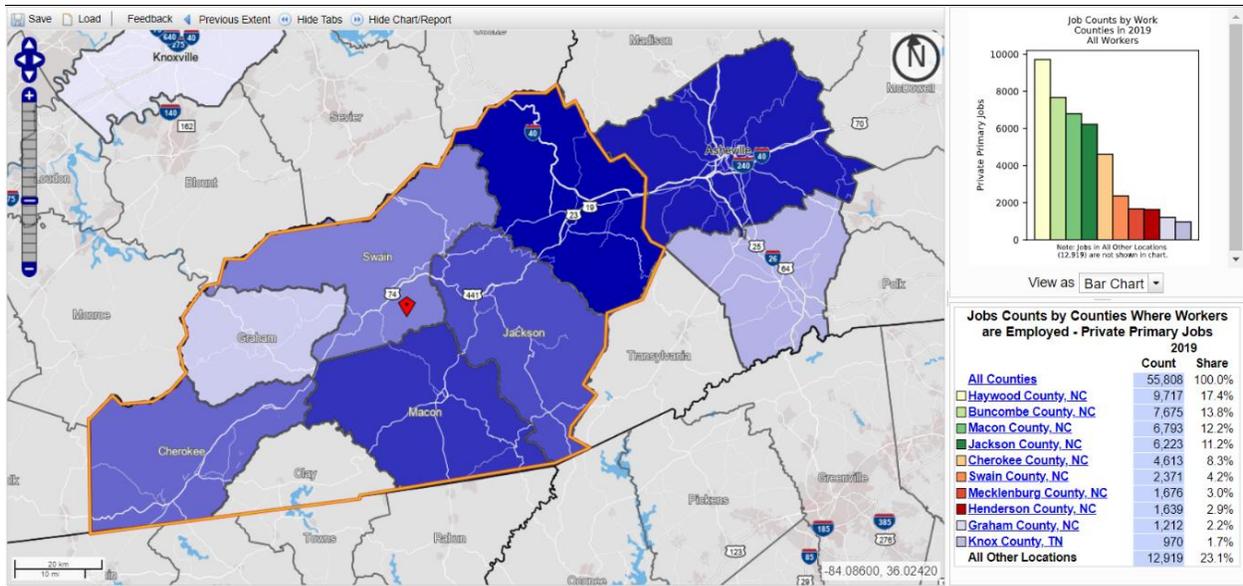
For each individual county in Region A, summary workforce flows are as shown. While each county has inflow and outflow within the region, the Net Inflow / Outflow demonstrates clearly that all of the MWP counties are in the ‘workflow negative,’ category or ‘losing’ the full local economic impact potential of people that live in the region and decide to work elsewhere.

⁴ IRS Definition. <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/businesses/opportunity-zones>. Accessed 3/26/2022.

MWP – Home to Work



In this Home to Work image (where WNC residents work), a large portion of the regional MWP workforce flows East, into Haywood and Buncombe County primarily, but even to points beyond.



The darker the blue, the higher the concentration of where workers who live in Mountain West Partnership's 7-county region work in that county (Example, Haywood County).

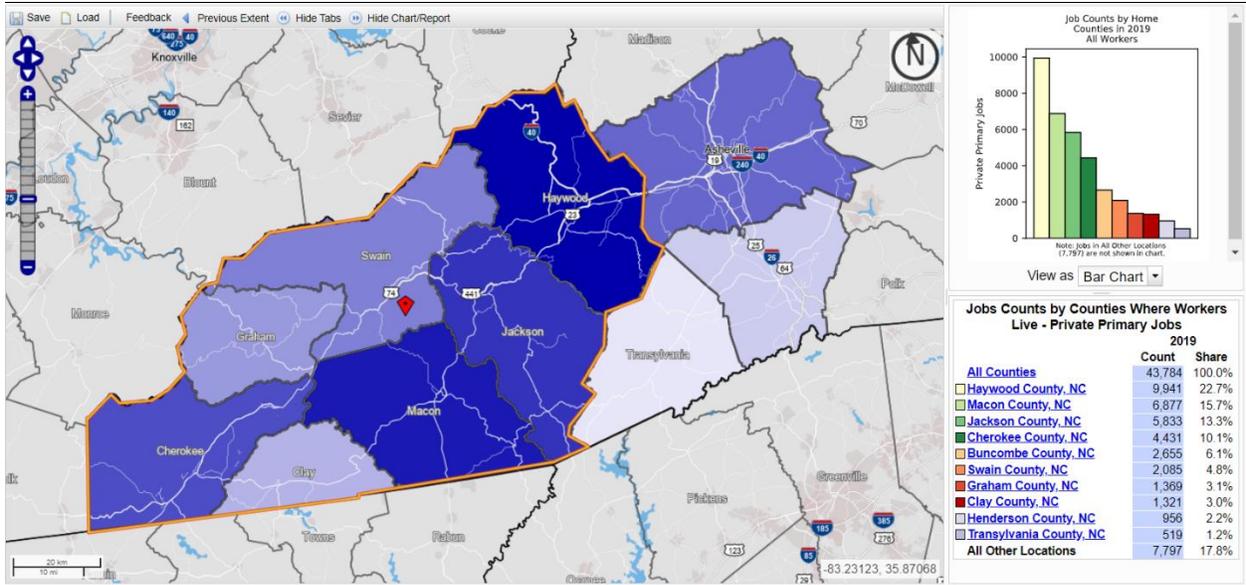
- About 27% of resident workforce in MWP commute from their home counties to work in Swain, Macon, and Jackson Counties; ~15,300 workers.

- About 17% of resident MWP workforce goes to Haywood County; ~9,700 workers.
- Another 17% of resident workforce in MWP work in a combination of Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania Counties; ~9,700 workers.
- About 12% of resident workforce in MWP commute from their home counties to work in Cherokee, Clay, and Graham Counties; ~6,700 workers.
- Less than 2% of resident workforce in MWP work in Knox County, TN: ~1,000 workers.

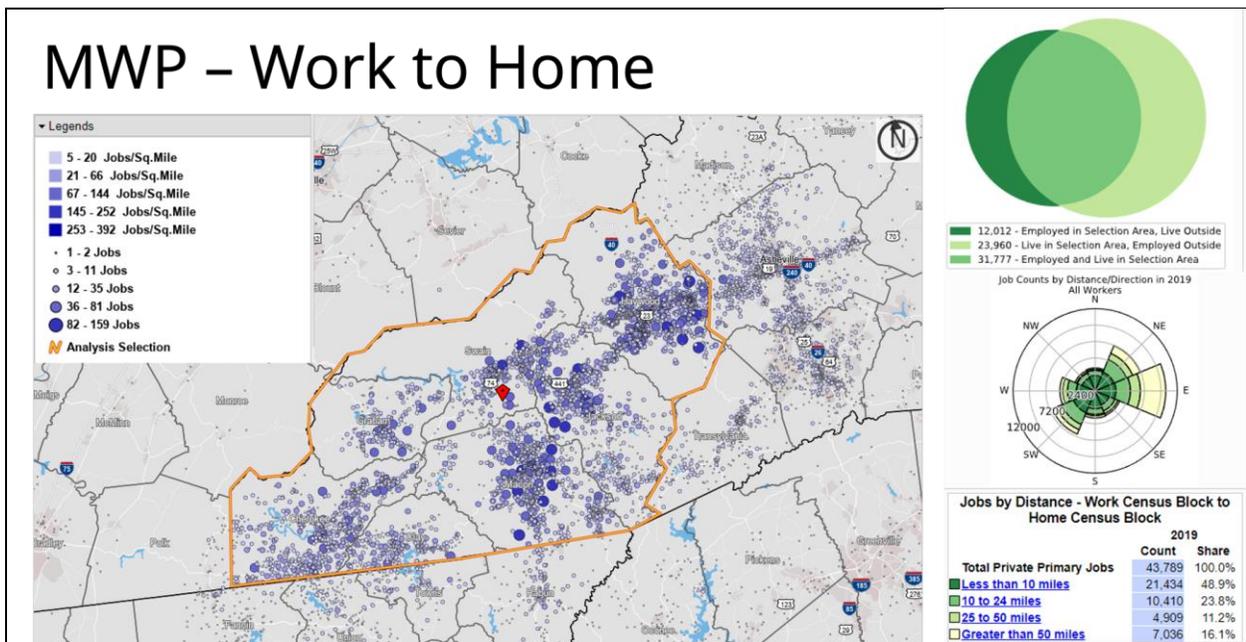
WHERE THE WORKING POPULATION LIVES

County	Employed in Section Area	Living Outside Section Area	Living Inside Section Area	Living in Section Area	Employed Outside Section Area	Employed Inside Section Area
Cherokee	5,925	2,496	3,429	7,306	3,877	3,429
Clay	1,330	810	520	2,598	2,078	520
Graham	1,554	667	877	2,199	1,322	877
Haywood	14,224	5,861	8,363	20,072	11,709	8,363
Jackson	8,933	5,229	3,704	9,601	5,897	3,704
Macon	8,766	3,386	5,380	10,737	5,357	5,380
Swain	3,076	1,931	1,145	3,338	2,193	1,145
Total	43,808	20,380	23,418	55,851	32,433	23,418

- Total MWP Regional Residential Workforce of 55,851 – total of residents employed in MWP region of 43,808 = 12,043 net outflow of MWP Residential Workforce.
- 12,043 workers are leaving Mountain West Partnership area to work in other areas.
- From the data, most of these workers are leaving from Haywood & Jackson Counties to Buncombe County for work.
 - In general, most of the workforce flows from west to east to areas outside of Mountain West Partnership.
 - If flowing west, most workers tend to remain in the 7-county region. A relatively small portion goes into north Georgia – mostly from Cherokee County.
- The inflow/outflow captures remote and hybrid workforce. As noted above, some workers may even commute to relatively distant areas like Charlotte for example.



- About 34% of workers in MWP live in Swain, Macon, and Jackson Counties; ~14,000 workers.
- About 23% of workers in MWP live in Haywood County; ~10,000 workers.
- About 16% of workers in MWP live in Cherokee, Clay, and Graham Counties; ~7,100 workers.
- Another 9% of workers in MWP live in a combination of Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania Counties; ~4,100 workers.



COMMUTING PATTERNS OF THE REGION'S WORKFORCE

Analyzing commuting patterns of Mountain West Partnership's workforce, of the 56,000 workers who live in the 7-county region, about 44,000 of them also work in the region, meaning that **roughly 12,000 people are commuting to work outside of MWP on a daily or near-daily basis**, (note that these patterns are not fully updated to reflect the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on workflow patterns, but are the latest available benchmark).

Additional information regarding the occupations and types of industries of workers leaving the region are not entirely clear from Census Bureau OnTheMap tool. There are difficulties in capturing precise information from OnTheMap's large, broad categories that incorporate the data from workforce flows. For instance, there is difficulty in making presumptions of who these 12,000 people exactly work for and their occupations – if they are engineers working at manufacturing business or if they are a clerk working for a hotel in the leisure and hospitality industry. Generally, the one common theme seems to be that these are higher wage jobs that workers take outside of MWP's 7-county region, particularly in Buncombe County. With this in mind, we recommend two different approaches to the workforce in MWP. The first focuses on retaining the workforce who lives in MWP, and the second focuses on leveraging the greater connection to Buncombe County, the Asheville MSA, and Western NC as a whole.

Given the 12,000 people who live in, but work outside, of MWP, for existing businesses looking to expand their business they would seemingly have ample workforce to take new jobs created assuming a match of a) qualifications, and b) attractiveness of employment opportunity. About 6,000 of these people are leaving from Haywood County, while the rest of leaving from the remaining 6 counties in MWP. If there were attempts to retain currently commuting workforce in the MWP region, Jackson County as well as the border area of Jackson County / Swain County would be likely priorities given their relative population, existing businesses, central location, educational institutions, etc. This would lower commute times for any portion of the ~3,000 that leave from Jackson, Swain, Macon, and potential connections for the other ~3,000 in Graham, Clay, and Cherokee counties who typically commute east out of their counties for work.

The second approach recognizes that MWP's 7-county region is aligned to the Asheville MSA corridor, the regional powerhouse for Western North Carolina's economy. Understanding that workers will continue to naturally be attracted to the region, one consideration could be for MWP to further intentionally develop the attractiveness of the region as a residential base for high-skilled workers employed in Asheville MSA, but preferring to live in the MWP region. For example, one strategy could lead to focused private housing development to retain property taxes while "exporting" skilled labor. Once a foothold is more secured, focusing on how to attract businesses seeking to potentially expand from Asheville MSA westward into MWP region and possible opening up auxiliary campuses, branches, or other expansions.

CONCLUSIONS FROM RESEARCH

From the research, we highlight the anchor industries and companies that operate in MWP's 7-county region. By focusing on these high-value industries and companies, MWP can more directly and proactively support their development and growth, leading to direct and indirect primary and secondary impacts including increased employment, enhanced wages, and increased capital

investment. If MWP wishes to compete on any scale within North Carolina and more broadly at the interstate regional level, a collaborative regionalized approach is required. This will entail MWP counties not just focusing within their county borders, but continuing to see themselves as a greater part of the more successful whole, given the clearly defined interconnections in workforce flows as well as the opportunities to strengthen intentional partnerships with enterprise anchors with high potential. This approach includes MWP leveraging their cumulative resources to build clear-eyed, 'win-win' partnerships with the Asheville MSA, which has an unparalleled advantage in terms of economic development infrastructure and scale.

Aligning strategies with Haywood and Buncombe county in particular will be vital moving forward, given that Haywood County operates as the primary gateway between MWP and Asheville MSA. Topics and strategies could include housing, education, industry-clusters and supply/value-chain enhancement, expansion projects, and anything else that generally falls within the economic development purview that leads to greater wages and higher sustained quality of life in WNC. Part of these conversations will focus on how Asheville MSA could focus development to the west, as opposed to the east – into McDowell and other counties further east, for example.

(Continued next page)

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

Listening Posts

A series of four Listening Post meetings were conducted by consultant representatives, meeting with a few Economic Developers at a time to hear thoughts, suggestions, concerns, and issues directly from participating members. The board of the MWP also reviewed these findings and conducted the SWOT analysis outlined above.

Ideation Sessions

After the Listening Posts were completed, ideas were brought to the MWP board, combined, and prioritized into a list of **eight initiatives** that a new organization could focus specifically upon to have maximum impact on achieving the goals of the region.

Voting and prioritization with members of the MWP Board revealed the following.

1. **Board Building** – added by board – develop an SME-focused Board of Directors for the PPP.
2. **Advocacy** – 16 votes – keeping attention of the legislature; obtaining funding for the region.
3. **Housing** – 12 votes – affordable housing for workers.
4. **Support / Enterprise Ecosystem** – 11 votes – “Smart Business Concierge” for supporting SMEs.
5. **Retention** – 11 votes – serving needs of existing ‘high-growth’ potential SMEs.
6. **Workforce Planning** – 6 votes – plan for workforce in region.
7. **Broadband** – 5 votes – develop broadband in remote areas.
8. **Marketing** – 5 votes – appropriate marketing for SMEs.

These were the most important initiatives and themes to be undertaken by the revitalized organization.

The first initiative, “Board Building,” was added to reflect the urgent need for the new organization to re-architect the MWP board of directors in a manner that reflects a true Public-Private Partnership (PPP) envisioned for the organization. It was recommended by several members of the Partnership that the board consist of at least 70% public company representatives, and 30% public sector resources.

Review of research: Other NC State Partnerships and their Structures

Consultants also conducted a NC statewide comparative of PPP Partnership benchmarks, organized as follows:

- Incorporated Partnerships with standalone staff and financial statements (currently six of these exist based on current available public records).
- Unincorporated partnerships managed as a ‘project line item’ within existing COGs, and staffed on a resource-sharing basis (including the Carolina West/Land of Sky configuration in partnership with the Buncombe County EDC and their 5x5 Plan Public-Private Partnership, as outlined in the AVL 5x5 2020 Economic Development Strategic Plan)⁵.

⁵ Buncombe County 2020 Strategic Plan. https://www.ashevillechamber.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/EDC_AVL_5x5_Vision_2020.pdf. Accessed 3.26/2020.

- General comparison of COGs on a staffing/resourcing basis.

Key Benchmark “Case Study”: The Carolina West Partnership, Asheville-Buncombe EDC and the Regional 5x5 Strategic Constellation

The Carolina West was established in the early 1990s as a seven-county regional economic development team, operating with a lean budget as an unincorporated entity within the broader Land of Sky COG budget. However, Carolina West is heavily anchored and resourced on an informal basis by the relatively outsized capabilities of the Asheville-Buncombe Economic Development Commission. In addition to this, the Asheville-Buncombe EDC has built in a large source of additional cash and in-kind private sector revenues through the aligned AVL 5x5 Strategy. Finally, Carolina West implicitly leverages the robustly staffed EDCs of Henderson and Transylvania Counties, as well as increasingly Madison County.

This neighboring benchmark immediately adjoining the Mountain West Partnership service area highlights the importance of strengthening the regional-level public-private partnership capabilities, which can be done either at the individual County level especially where major metro areas offer opportunities to ‘anchor’ staffing and other capabilities, or conversely, at a regionalized level in more rural areas such as the Mountain West Partnership service area, where individual Counties are not sufficiently resourced to attract and retain sufficient staff and other capacity.

Other PPP Benchmarks in North Carolina:



Benchmarking to other regions of the state, several regional PPP’s have demonstrated strong performance, with robust yet efficient budget configurations and dedicated staff resources delivering sustained and measurable results. Two ‘good practice’ benchmarks for highly rural regions in NC are highlighted in the following discussion. While both represent heavily rural areas that share some common characteristics from an economic development perspective with the MWP region, it should be noted that there are unique features in both that make a ‘like to like’ comparison challenging:

1. **Carolinas Gateway Partnership** was organized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit by several local government entities (Edgecombe and Nash Counties and town governments of Rocky Mount, Tarboro, and Nashville), where private funds are matched on an 1:1 basis. In 2019, the organization had a full-time staff of three professionals, with a direct public budget of approximately \$1m, matched with a private sector commitment (cash and in-kind) of just over \$3m, which drew \$11 million dollars in investment and created 500 jobs in the two-county region in that year alone.⁶
2. **The Southeastern Partnership** is a regional economic development organization doing business under the brand name of North Carolina's Southeast (NCSE), and also a PPP non-profit, although filed under the 501(c)(6) designation. Uniting 18 counties across the Southeastern part of NC and anchored by the Wilmington MSA, the organization has a staff of 4 with annual operating budget at around \$850,000. In the 2020-21 reporting year generated \$110 million in investment activities into the region, creating over 1,000 jobs⁷. This equates to be a 130:1 leverage ratio, which is a significant economic impact on their region and reflected in their forward-looking strategic plan⁸

These benchmarks highlight the importance of sustained, professional staffing at the regional level, especially in heavily rural regions such as that covered by Carolinas Gateway, but even in large rural-dominated regions where there is a metro 'anchor,' such as the Southeastern Partnership.

Organization Capacity and Focus Discussion

A sub-committee of the board also determined that a discussion about creating a fully-staffed organization (vs. the volunteer-only structure to date) was necessary to achieve the strategy. Consultants and the MWP Board Chair, The Southwestern Commission's Director of Community and Economic Development and several board members discussed a potential organizational structure that would enable the organization to most effectively pursue the initiatives determined to be important with greatest odds of success.

Engaging a broader board and audience

Drawing from good-practice examples of the successful business partnerships in NC, it was determined that the ideal composition of the Board of Directors should reflect the present and future-state 'voice' of the region's driving private sector stakeholders, with perhaps 7-12 members, including:

Official (voting) members:

- Southwestern Commission Executive Director (founder/anchor).
- Representatives from Finance, Banking and/or Investment (i.e., First Citizens/United Community Bank, Mountain BizWorks, Sequoyah Fund, Pisgah Fund, etc.).
- Priority-sector Industry Leaders from Tech, Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Tourism (i.e., Drake Software, Moog Components Group, Snap-On Tools,

⁶ <https://www.causeiq.com/organizations/the-carolinas-gateway-partnership.561931327/financials>

⁷ <https://www.ncse.org/downloads/Annual%20Report%202019-2020%20email.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.ncse.org/downloads/Strategic%20Plan%202021-2024%20Final.pdf>

BearWaters/Innovation/Boojum Breweries, LifePoint Health, Nantahala Outdoor Center, Harrah's Cherokee and/or the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad, etc.).

Ex-Officio (non-voting) members:

- County-level Economic Development (ED) Directors.
- Industry Partners (i.e., utilities, major regional service institutions/providers, educational institutions – i.e., Duke Power, Western Carolina University, the region's community college Small Business Centers including HCC, SWCC, and TCCC).
- NC Commerce One-Stop Shop Representatives.
- A representative from the regional Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC).
- North Carolina Biotech Center.
- Dogwood Health Trust Economic Opportunity Executive.

(Continued next page)

FUTURE STATE: THE NEW MOUNTAIN WEST PARTNERSHIP

TWO TARGET AUDIENCES:

This strategic plan is intended to serve two primary target audiences, or “customers”:

1. Community Economic Development Directors (EDs) in the WNC region, and
2. Current and future ‘anchor’ small-to mid-sized enterprises and SME enterprise clusters.

NEEDS OF THE TARGET AUDIENCES:

1. EDs: Comprehensive marketing, data and analytics support, services support for building a strong, fully recovered (from the COVID pandemic) and resilient Enterprise Ecosystem that fosters the development, growth and attraction of SMEs.
2. SMEs: Timely and accessible funding/investment, efficient access to government solutions, qualified and stable workforce (with adequate housing and services), ease of doing business, accessible value-chain partners, reliable and suitable infrastructure.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

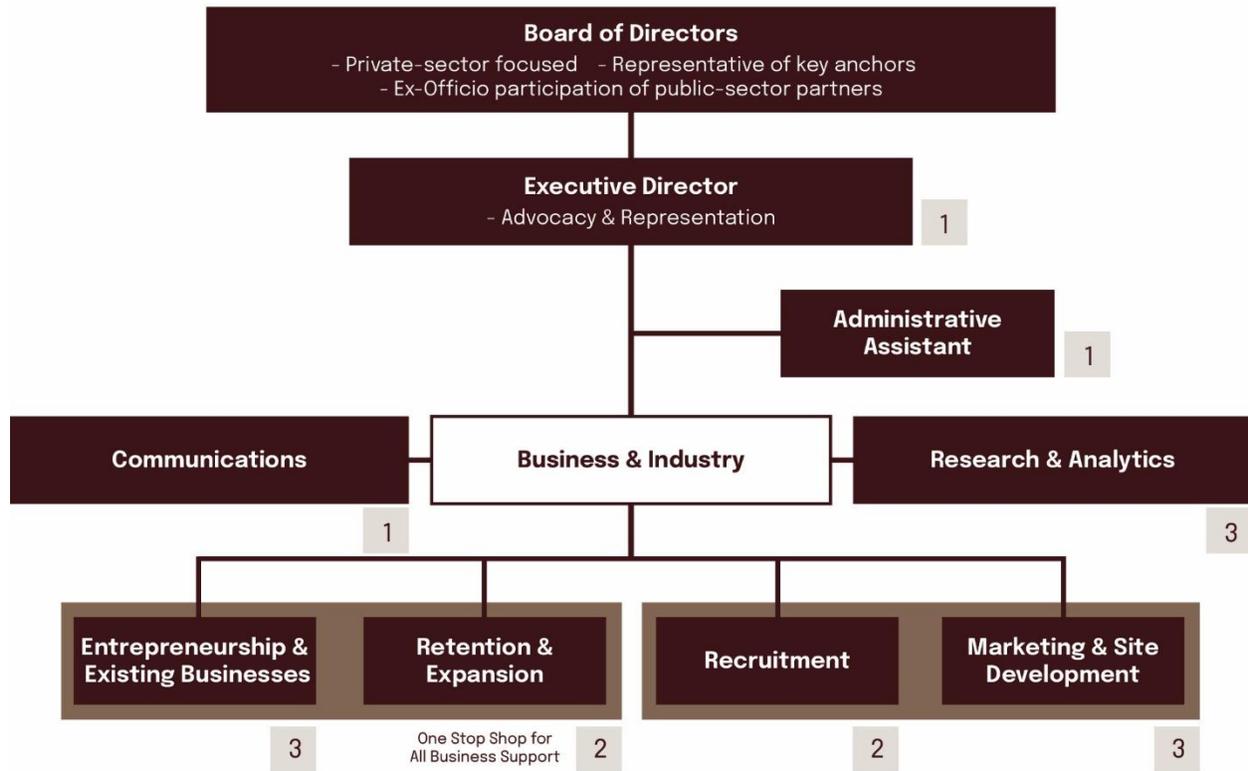
It was determined that the new Mountain West Partnership requires a slate of full-time, seated resources in order to have maximum impact on the region. No longer can a volunteer-only, unpaid and unstaffed organization persist if the region is to reach for and successfully achieve the goals set forth in this strategic plan.

MWP leadership will pursue a full budget from regional legislators (through a legislative allotment) to seat these team members and ensure they have an adequate “war chest” to successfully start on their missions. This support could come in a one- or two- year allocation to “Stand up” the MWP staff, and then – in subsequent years – rely on donations, grants and self-generated organizational income as the business model demonstrates.

Once the organization is underway, grant-seeking, venture investment from the community’s large enterprises, revenue-generating and value-adding services to members and stakeholders, and a Public Private Partnership will be the vehicles to ensure long term sustainability.

The organization is envisioned to have the following initial structure to ensure focus on the initiatives outlined herein.

ORGANIZATION CHART



= Hiring Order

Executive Director Profile (target) – Seasoned public- or private-sector executive with strong commitment to and background knowledge of the region, direct entrepreneurial experience, understanding of capital markets, marketing and/or communications experience. Relationships and influence in the regional political and state legislative environment.

All other positions – specific experience in the areas of specialization:

- Marketing/Communications,
- Entrepreneurship and Business Development,
- Regional Business Services and Support,
- Business Recruitment and Economic Development,
- Business Site / Location Service Marketing, and,
- Deep Data Research and Advanced Data Analytics (machine learning, Artificial Intelligence, etc.).

TYING INTO THE REGION'S PRE-ESTABLISHED NEEDS

The initiatives determined to be important as initial activities support already established needs for the Appalachian region per the Appalachian Regional Commission's report entitled *Strengthening Economic Resilience – Technical Report*⁹.

1. Invest in education, technology, infrastructure, and broadband.
2. Engage the community over the long term.
3. Create communities where people want to live.
4. Grow youth engagement and next-generation leadership.
5. Identify and grow the assets in the community and region.
6. Build networks and foster collaboration.
7. Move multiple sectors forward for economic development and grow value chains.
8. Cultivate entrepreneurs and develop resources for business start-ups.

MWP Initiatives and action items will also support some of these Best Practices and additionally support the five goals outlined in the *Strategic Plan for the Appalachian Regional Commission for the 2022-2026 period*¹⁰ as exhibited below.

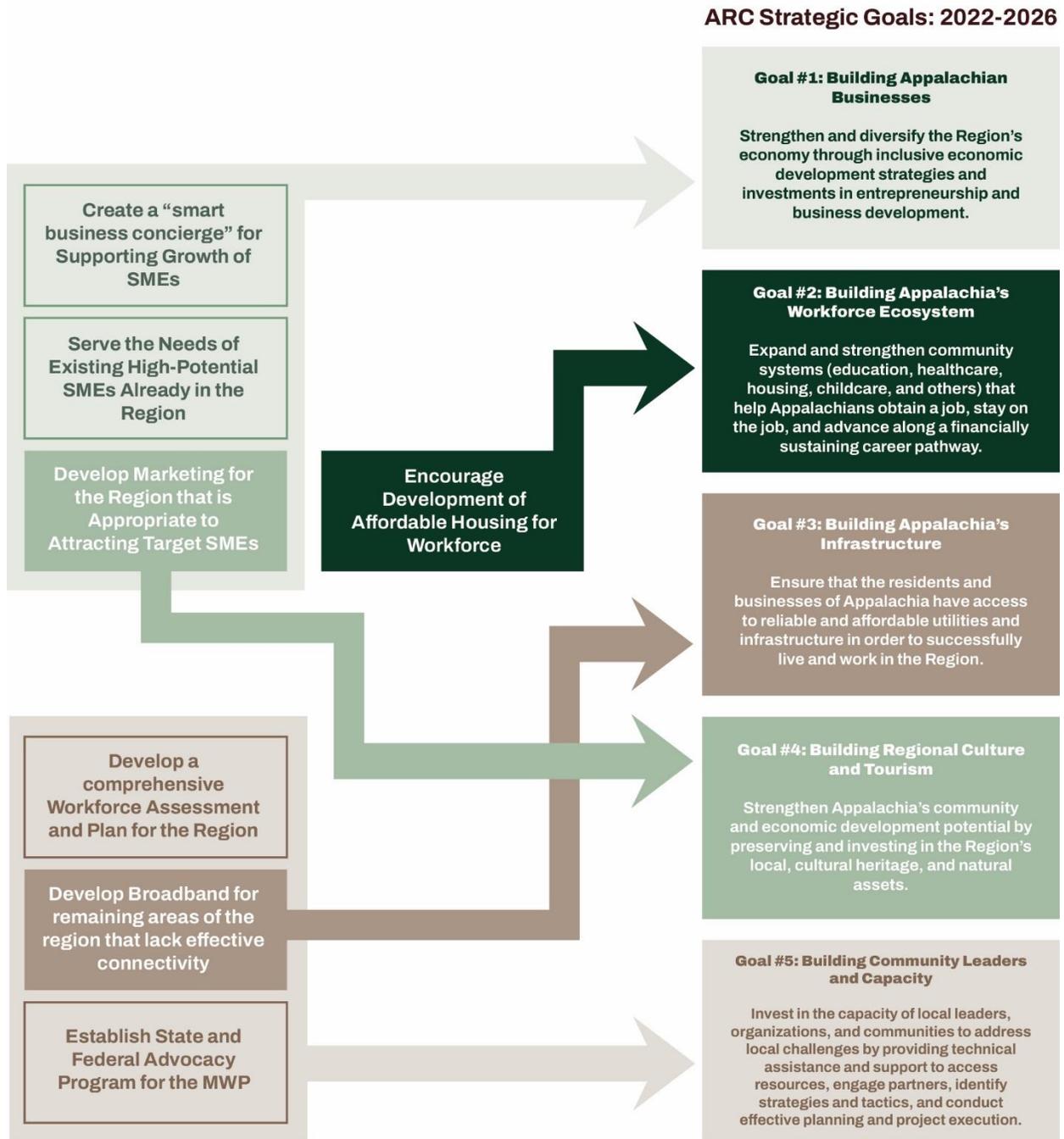
1. **Building Appalachian Businesses** - Strengthen and diversify the Region's economy through inclusive economic development strategies and investments in entrepreneurship and business development.
2. **Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem** - Expand and strengthen community systems (education, healthcare, housing, childcare, and others) that help Appalachians obtain a job, stay on the job, and advance along a financially sustaining career pathway.
3. **Building Appalachia's Infrastructure** - Ensure that the residents and businesses of Appalachia have access to reliable, affordable, resilient, and energy efficient utilities and infrastructure in order to successfully live and work in the Region.
4. **Building Regional Culture and Tourism** - Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by preserving and investing in the Region's local, cultural heritage, and natural assets.
5. **Building Community Leaders and Capacity** - Invest in the capacity of local leaders, organizations, and communities to address local challenges by providing technical assistance and support to access resources, engage partners, identify strategies and tactics, and conduct effective planning and project execution.

The graphic below shows how the MWP chosen Initiatives tie into these regional goals.

⁹ Appalachian Regional Commission. *Strengthening Economic Resilience Technical Report*. -Feb2019. Accessed 1/22/2022.

¹⁰ Appalachian Regional Commission, *Strategic Plan 2022-2026*. <https://www.arc.gov/strategicplan/>. Accessed 1/28/2022.

MWP Initiatives Compared to ARC Strategic Five Goals 2022-26



INITIATIVES

This section outlines and details each of the eight important initiatives selected by the current board members of the Mountain West Partnership as crucial to the success of the new organization.

For each initiative, the “Strengthening” requirement(s) from the ARC (see previous list from the Appalachian Regional Commission’s report entitled Strengthening Economic Resilience – Technical Report) and the individual “supports that they engage, are included. Also, an optimum team leader and members are outlined for each initiative. The initiatives are broken down into specific strategies and tactics. Risks and Mitigation strategies are outlined along with metrics to exhibit the status of each initiative. These metrics are identified as **lagging** (the final result desired) and **leading** (those that indicate influence on and movement/leverage toward the desired final result) metrics.

A List of Regional Resources is available in Appendix C. These resources can be helpful to all committees and chairpersons who are tasked with pursuing initiatives.

Pursuit of these initiatives will help ensure the success of the new team in creating a strong and resilient organization, and building momentum towards reaching goals that ensure a strong, resilient, and fully recovered economic development environment in the Western NC region. Some initiatives will be led by members of the Southwestern Commission who are already involved in similar activities; but will be augmented by team members of the new Mountain West Partnership where helpful.

INITIATIVE 1 – BUILD AND DEVELOP A BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON SME INTERESTS

SUPPORTS: **2. ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY OVER THE LONG TERM.**
 6. BUILD NETWORKS AND FOSTER COLLABORATION.

Identify candidate ‘anchor’ business leaders in the region to join the Board of Directors and recruit/develop them to aid in the focus on primarily business/commercial interests that support the other initiatives above.

Team

Chairs: Executive Director of MWP, Executive Director of Southwestern Commission
Communications Specialist

Strategies

Identify the 20 top business and industry leaders in the region now that can aid in building the MWP into the organization envisioned in this plan. Conduct an outreach program to make them aware of the MWP and new plan, invite them to participate by highlighting the benefits to the region of pursuing the plan.

Tactics

- List of Top 20 business representatives PRIORITIZED, with meetings scheduled with each candidate.
- Meet and invite Top 20 to join board (expect a 30 – 50% participation rate).
- Use Peer CEOs to support recruitment of other CEOs in the region.
- Convene the board and begin making progress on seven prior initiatives. Recruit any “hold out” members once work is underway by giving them an opportunity to actively work alongside their peers from the region.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Risk: Not obtaining interest from the Top 20 identified board candidates

Mitigation Strategy: Work with Southwestern Commission Executive Director and the region’s Economic Developers to identify the “right” members for the board. Prepare a presentation for their recruitment that highlights the impact on the region and the working nature of the board (it’s expected that board members will actively participate in, and influence, the work to be done in addition to soliciting matching funds from their respective organizations). Recruit one or two top members, then utilize their influence to further attract members lower on the list.

Metrics and Measurable outcomes

Lagging: Percentage of Target Top 20 executives recruited (50% is optimum success) within 120 days of starting.

Leading: Meetings set with Target Top 20 executives in the region.

INITIATIVE 2 – ESTABLISH STATE AND FEDERAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM

SUPPORTS: 5. IDENTIFY AND GROW THE ASSETS IN THE COMMUNITY AND REGION.

To build Advocacy the Executive Director of the MWP will actively track sources of funding (grants, legislative support, external and regional capital sources, etc.), and actively remove any restrictions or constraints on the funding, etc.. The MWP will help counties win funds, find matching funds, meet eligibility and compliance requirements, etc. Most importantly, the team will work to build awareness of the region’s needs and capabilities in the state legislature, and with our federal representatives, to ensure that funds flow where appropriate from these governmental programs and resources into WNC. This is particularly timely as the team can help SMEs in identifying and accessing the unusually deep level of ARPA funding that is being released in current congressional actions, and getting it landed in WNC.

Building advocacy should also include – and perhaps provide a primary focus upon – building long-term support from the region’s established businesses and industry leaders. This should include soliciting board appointments outlined above, and ongoing commitment to private-sector provided funding for the Mountain West Partnership through sponsorships, donations and grants to ensure resiliency and sustained positive impact. The pro-forma financial model / budget

included in Appendix A provides a preliminary financial model that exhibits the potential of these sustaining grants and revenue generation potential of the MWP.

Team

Chairs: Executive Director.

Team Members: Board Chair. Executive Director of Southwestern Commission. Members of the board from industry and government.

Strategies

Build relationships with State Legislators and other representatives in local, regional, and state government. Make them aware of issues and opportunities and actively seek grants/government allocations to support MWP programs and needs in the region.

Develop clear alignment with, and incentives for, engagement by private-sector stakeholders, especially those who hold capital and can potentially deploy or leverage it as ‘matching’ to public funds (PPP format), as well as influence greater sectoral engagement and impact.

Tactics

- Hold “Pre-Meetings” – first with Mr. Tommy Jenkins of the MWP board, then with State Legislators to reduce the risk of an inappropriate or difficult ask. Clarify the message.
- Present the MWP Strategic Plan and budget along, with a funding request for two or three years of support for the Strategic Plan, to these State Legislators as part of a formal request for commitments from the State budget.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Risk: Having an inappropriately timed, sized or positioned “ask” for funds for the Mountain West Partnership Strategic Plan support.

Mitigation Strategy: Pre-meeting with State Legislators and staff to discuss funding priorities and current status of funding to determine how to best “Fit” the funding request to take advantage of available funding in the senate. In short, hold a “How to ask appropriately” meeting.

Metrics and Measurable outcomes

Lagging:

- Amount of funding raised / allocated by State Legislators and others – should provide significant (\$1 million plus) in new, additional legislative support for two to three years of the strategic plan.
- Amount of funding raised annually and for ongoing growth-supporting grants from local industry.

Leading:

- Meetings scheduled with State Legislators and others as required to present the strategic plan/budget.
- An up-to-date Funding Pipeline Report as referenced in a consistently updated online reporting portal (Smartsheet, etc.), presented transparently and publicly to maximize trust and interest in the MWP.

INITIATIVE 3 – ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR THE REGION’S WORKFORCE

SUPPORTS: 3. CREATE COMMUNITIES WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE.

Seen by many as “key” to all other issues succeeding, since affordable housing is in such short supply throughout WNC. Businesses will locate where there is appropriately sized and priced workforce (not section (8) necessarily) housing. Possibly join forces to bring in large developers to build across the region vs. each county soliciting individually. For example, in two MWP counties (400 units Cherokee, 130 units Clay) there are over 530 units of housing needed. Some estimates place housing needs at over 1,000 across the region, including over 400 units currently planned or under construction in Haywood County (Waynesville) alone.

Team

Chairs: Southwestern NC Home Consortium Manager; Recruitment and Market/Site Development Specialists

Team Members: Western NC Housing Partnership Executive Director, members of the board who benefit from housing growth in the region (supply partners, infrastructure companies, service providers, etc.), Smoky Mountain Housing Partnership

Strategies

Secure a Memorandum of Understanding and work with regional housing advocates (like the Western NC Housing Partnership, North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, North Carolina Housing Trust Fund, etc.) to identify financing sources for housing in the region.

Tactics

- Identify specific workforce housing needs and inventory the stock of developable land in each county in compliance with workforce housing requirements (e.g., walking proximity to shopping facilities, public transportation, etc.).
- Consolidate the housing supply needs across all counties in Region A. Verify counts and properties with housing directors or Economic Development Chairs in each county. Generate report of housing supply needs.
- Identify and solicit expressions of interest from builders with interest in developing housing in WNC.
- Build a consolidated regional housing opportunity plan, including action planning for action on permits, zoning, etc., issues.
- Education of local officials regarding benefits and impact of workforce housing.

- Organize a regional-level delegation to engage with developers in identified priority opportunity markets, i.e., Charlotte, Atlanta, perhaps Knoxville to present the consolidated opportunity to shortlisted developers and help to facilitate information and address other needs (or dispel myths) that these developers might see as hurdles.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Risks: Dangers of over-development would need to be considered and coordinated within broader Region A infrastructure, transportation, services and other quality-of-life planning and considerations.

Mitigation Strategies: Given the considerable ‘export’ of workforce labor from Region A to Asheville/Buncombe and points further East, consideration of traffic management and mass transit options will be necessary in the midterm, especially considering environmental impacts of increased vehicle flow. Options can include all or a mix of light rail conversion, commuter bus services, ‘kiss and ride’ locations for ride-sharing, ride-sharing support and incentives (including HOV lanes as/if main transport arteries develop), and an expanded Regional greenways plan, especially between Haywood and Buncombe, and within and around major towns/county seats in Region A. Future transitions to broader use of autonomous vehicles and other congestion and environmental impact-reducing technology developments currently gaining momentum nationally and globally should be considered in this process.

Metrics and Measurable outcomes

Lagging:

- Housing (units or beds) built that match or exceed the workforce housing requirements in each county per the consolidated report.

Leading:

- Commitments from developers to build specific workforce housing in the region.

Meetings with developers who construct workforce housing to market the opportunity in the region.

INITIATIVE 4 – CREATE A “SMART BUSINESS CONCIERGE” FOR SUPPORTING GROWTH OF AN EFFECTIVE ENTERPRISE ECOSYSTEM

- SUPPORTS:**
- 6. BUILD NETWORKS AND FOSTER COLLABORATION**
 - 7. MOVE MULTIPLE SECTORS FORWARD FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROW VALUE CHAINS**
 - 8. CULTIVATE ENTREPRENEURS AND DEVELOP RESOURCES FOR BUSINESS START-UPS**

Create and staff (full-time) a clearinghouse or “Concierge” for all info on services related to entrepreneurship and government grants/funding available in the region. Focus on “value chain” participants where industries (like outdoor recreation, tourism, healthcare, high-tech and manufacturing, etc.) can become resilient and self-sustaining in the region. These SMEs are generally those that have the potential for **More than \$1 million in revenue and / or 10 or more**

full-time employees in the next three years of their growth. Provide direct support to SMEs and entrepreneurs on how to get started, where to find helpful resources/agencies, sources of funding (revolving loan funds, MBW, Sequoyah, Angel Networks, etc.) and how to win them.

A “**Smart Business Concierge**” approach would be enabled through the creation of an online/virtual engagement and ‘acquisition’ portal, where businesses could highlight their need and provide minimal baseline information about the nature of their enterprise. This would be channeled through the back-end of the portal to members of the MWP staff best aligned to the business profile, including sector, stage of development, etc., who would then engage directly to meet the business on their terms – ideally at their site itself or online. – This person would utilize the right resources to solve the business owners/managers issue on a real-time basis, or at a minimum, activate the process for the solution on the spot in a highly ‘client-centric’ and technology-enabled approach.

Key capacity requirements for this should include:

- Understanding of regional funding and/or capital resource taxonomy, ability to direct businesses to funders that are aligned to their specific requirements, i.e., grant and/or soft-funding/subsidy providers (SBA, ARC, others), debt providers (Mountain BizWorks, Sequoyah Fund, IA), quasi-equity investors (High Country, Pinnacle Enterprise Fund, 100 Startups, IA, others), equity investors (Angels, private investors, others), and venture capital resources (Pisgah Fund), etc.
- Understanding of regional and extra-regional business support ecosystem resources aligned to sector, stage of business, etc. (i.e., CEI, AB Tech Incubator, Hatch Innovation Hub, Mountain BizWorks)
- Current knowledge of federal, state, and local business support initiatives, permitting and registration requirements and resources, licensing requirements and resources, etc.
- Templates and technical resources and/or referral database for business planning support, financial modeling and planning, market research and data analytics, etc.

Team

Chairs: Retention and Expansion Specialist. Entrepreneurship & Existing Businesses Specialist.

Team Members: Partnership with the regional and local Small Business and Technology Development (SBTDC) Offices and regional Small Business Development Centers (SBCs) at local community colleges (Haywood, Southwestern and Tri-County).

Strategies

Communicate regularly with each resource in the guide. What services are provided? Who is best at getting entrepreneurs or existing ventures to the right answer (funding, help writing a plan, etc.) first and fastest. Updates to the guide should be at a minimum quarterly at first, then semi-annually thereafter.

Be “In the know” about funding resources in the region and those outside of the region who have the potential to make investments in the region. Note the particulars of funding criteria and be able

to make “Hot” referrals to the right source of capital the first time to aid entrepreneurs in getting new ventures funded and launched in the most efficient manner.

Tactics

- Consolidate ALL resources into an updated resource guide and database. House on the internet. Keep updated through a rigorous review and refreshment process.
- Direct linkages to/from regional “Virtual Capital/Ecosystem Marketplace” proposed by Hatch Innovation Hub with other capital partners
- Follow guidelines from the ARC Strategic Plan Goal 1 and Goal 2 for forming an effective entrepreneurial (we call it Enterprise) ecosystem. Adopt metrics & strategies from the ARC goals.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Risk: Confusion with other “one stop shop” resources (like the EDPNC).

Mitigation Strategy: Meet with other agencies and develop a “Region leading” marketing position to prevent confusion.

Risk: Hard to find and or access resources.

Mitigation Strategy: Provide entrepreneurs and owners a set of easy to follow “landing lights” marketing messages in order to find the Smart Business Concierge and services – both in person and online – across the region through enhanced Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and brand marketing tactics.

One possibility is to work with a local bank (that has branches in each downtown area) to locate a referral partner in each major WNC town, who can send new candidate businesses / ventures to the central resource in one call. Have the bank brand market this partnership in addition to the MWP.

Risk: Technology design and/or platform limitations.

Mitigation Strategy: Secure ‘off the shelf’ products designed for business acquisition and lead generation/management, explore collaboration opportunities with aligned service providers (such as Mountain BizWorks, Supportedly.com, others) where economies of scale and/or scope could potentially be achieved through co-funding and other partnership approaches.

Metrics and Measurable outcomes

Lagging:

- Business plans generated, partnerships formed, transactions underwritten/completed, other more ‘outcome’ oriented metrics? (may be harder to track, but use of integrated data analytics, tags, follow up outreach, etc. may be worthwhile to think about here).
- Also, from the ARC Strategic Plan, most of which are Lagging:
 - # of Jobs created/retained,

- # of businesses attracted into the region/created/retained,
- # of businesses with improved access to infrastructure,
- Ratio of leveraged private investment to MWP/SWC dollars (in new/existing businesses), and,
- Ratio of matching private sector partner funding to MWP/SWC dollars (in priority projects/initiatives).

Leading:

- Number of first-time inquiries coming into the Smart Business Concierge platform (including metrics on industry, sector, business segment, demographics, etc.).
- Number of external referrals into the Smart Business Concierge.
- Users of the Smart Business Concierge stating on a survey that the resource was the easiest to find and access.

INITIATIVE 5 – SERVE THE NEEDS OF EXISTING HIGH-POTENTIAL SMES ALREADY IN THE REGION

SUPPORTS: 6. BUILD NETWORKS AND FOSTER COLLABORATION.

Focus on serving the needs of expanding entrepreneurial businesses with high-growth potential in the region. Again, these are business identified as having the potential for 10 or more employees, with \$1,000,000 or more in annual recurring revenue and high-potential for additional expansion and growth alone, and with other complementary businesses in the region.

Team

Chairs: Retention and Expansion Specialist. Entrepreneurship & Existing Businesses Specialist.

Strategies

Catalogue and keep current a profile of each high-growth-potential business in the region. Provide active, outbound outreach and support for these businesses, *proactively* inquiring about their current and upcoming needs (for growth capital, for infrastructure, for supply chain partners – whatever is required) and systematically go about helping them secure those resources for the benefit of their firm.

Tactics

- Catalogue and keep current a profile of each high-growth business in the region), including using data analytics approaches as well as engagement through the Smart Business Concierge platform (can include industry/sector ‘communities of practice’ engaging in Slack and other online resource groups, which can be actively supported and curated by MWP staff).
- Conduct regular, weekly, or daily visits to high-growth firms in the region (this is NOT a desk job).
- Host monthly/quarterly ‘Business Roundtables’ over a meal, offering both networking and socialization opportunities, with featured guest speakers of interest (i.e., key politicians, state/national executives with interests in the region, investors, high-profile part-time

residents of the region, etc.), also providing an opportunity to ‘temperature check’ key stakeholder needs and concerns on a regular but informal basis.

- Creation of dynamic, ‘innovation hubs’ in major regional towns, with co-working and event space to enable a community engagement space, potentially including industry-sector identities. For example, Canton could be innovation industry aligned to ‘Hometown of Tomorrow’ vision, Sylva light manufacturing (aligning to the maker-lab and Western Carolina University Rapid Center), Waynesville focus on hospitality and tourism, Bryson City outdoor leadership, etc.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Risk: Losing high-growth businesses in the region due to being unaware that they are at risk/in trouble.

Mitigation Strategy: Identify and aggressively support businesses that are in trouble or at risk of losing their footing and going out of business. Keep a “Watch List” updated and actively communicate with board members and community resources to provide bridge loans, mezzanine financing and emergency capital to preserve and restore/grow the business.

Risk: Losing business in adjacent counties – including those from Asheville MSA who are outgrowing their “enabling footprint” and are looking to expand into adjacent regions.

Mitigation Strategy: Actively identify and seek out these high potential SMEs in adjacent regions to pitch our region’s Enterprise Ecosystem and infrastructure so they can elect to choose MWP as their next region of expansion.

Metrics and Measurable outcomes

Lagging:

- Number of Jobs created/retained.
- Percent Increase to business sales revenue YOY (can be tracked in Data Axle).
- Count of “At Risk” Businesses retained and rescued.

Leading:

- Businesses earmarked as “At Risk” retained and graduated back to “normal” status.
- Dollars in additional business investment leveraged.

INITIATIVE 6 – DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT AND PLAN FOR THE REGION

SUPPORTS: 1. INVEST IN EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND BROADBAND.

8. CULTIVATE ENTREPRENEURS AND DEVELOP RESOURCES FOR BUSINESS START-UPS.

Create a comprehensive Plan for workforce development in the region with the Colleges/Universities – healthcare, tech, data centers, call centers, etc. – then migrate to oversight of the Southwestern Workforce Development Board (an SWC entity).

Team

Chairs: Workforce Development Director for the Southwestern Commission.

Team Members: Communications, Data Analytics, Marketing and Site Development, Recruitment.

Strategies

Conduct a comprehensive workforce survey/study in the region to identify needs of current SMEs and large employers in the region. Identify areas of workforce training weakness. Consolidate this study into a report that outlines exactly what education, training, and coursework are required.

Tactics

- Identify Desirable Work Categories for the region. Work with local educational resources (i.e., WCU, Community colleges, Workforce training councils, etc.) to redirect existing programs toward future-focused training needs.
- Monitor enrollment in programs and help with marketing and promotion to increase enrollment in qualified programs. Regional examples include the Regenerative Agriculture and Sustainable Land Management Program at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, and the Montreat College Cybersecurity program recently established at that institution in Black Mountain.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Risk: Workforce efforts to date in the region have lacked the coordination needed to make a big impact.

Mitigation Strategy: By *actively* working with participants, consolidating understanding, and arranging meetings between resources, developing sustained workforce planning and execution, the Chair will ensure that forward progress is made in building the right training for the right workers at the right times.

Metrics and Measurable outcomes

Lagging:

- Number of new jobs created in desirable work categories
- Increased number of trained workers in the region in identified segments of “Future focused” work

Leading:

- Enrollment in new or modified workforce training courses
- Number of new or modified workforce training courses developed.
- Parity of regional wage and benefits compared with other extra-regional cohorts/clusters.

INITIATIVE 7 – DEVELOP MARKETING FOR THE REGION THAT IS APPROPRIATE TO ATTRACTING TARGET SMES

SUPPORTS: **2. ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY OVER THE LONG TERM.**
 7. MOVE MULTIPLE SECTORS FORWARD FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROW VALUE CHAINS.

Market the region to *size-appropriate businesses* (MSEs) versus continuing to focus on too large employers that do not “fit” into our region. Partner with regional business entities – Optimum, Duke Energy, Spectrum, Verizon, and other large business who benefit from growth in the region – to attract and retain high-growth-potential businesses.

Team

Chairs: Communications Specialist, Research and Analytics Specialist.

Strategies

Create a comprehensive regional marketing plan. Conduct marketing in regional and national cluster areas that have high concentrations of appropriate SMEs. This also implies high concentrations of high-quality capital resources in the region, another challenge that the MWP must seek to resolve by attracting angel groups and venture capital sources.

Tactics

- Actively monitor venture capital announcements and recruit growing businesses to the region.
- Conduct marketing in proximate regions where clusters of target SMEs (10 employees, \$1 million in revenue) are located and potentially outgrowing resources.
- Conduct a systematic recruitment process for angel and venture capital resources in the region.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Risks: Marketing to the wrong kind of businesses; not marketing to the proper proximate regions.

Mitigation Strategy: Focus marketing on businesses with at least 10 employees and \$1 million in revenue. Market in proximate regions where industry clusters closely match our own (as evidenced in the cluster analysis earlier in this document) to ensure attraction of those businesses in key industries which are seeking a new home with the right mix of infrastructure, talent, and support.

Metrics and Measurable outcomes

Lagging:

- New businesses actively recruited into the region.
- New sources of venture and early-stage investment attracted to the region.

Leading:

- More than 75% of regional target businesses surveyed express having seen and been engaged with marketing for the region.

INITIATIVE 8 – DEVELOP BROADBAND FOR REMAINING AREAS OF THE REGION THAT LACK EFFECTIVE CONNECTIVITY

SUPPORTS: 1. INVEST IN EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND BROADBAND.

Continue to develop broadband into more remote areas, with a focus on those that can host businesses and/or workforce housing. Build out bandwidth and power infrastructure for remote work, high-tech industries, etc.

Team

Chairs: Community and Economic Development Director, Southwestern Commission.

Members: Communications, Retention, Marketing and Site Development.

Strategies

Work with regional broadband entities to identify areas where broadband still continues to be in short supply. Focus on areas where workforce housing and industry development can occur. Build specific plans for seeking out and obtaining funding for building out broadband distressed areas. Ensure proper infrastructure (redundancy, resiliency) is provided for customers to minimize downtime and latency – ensure an *excellent* experience for end-users.

Tactics

- Create a catalogue of distressed broadband areas for each county.
- Identify funding resources to invest in broadband infrastructure.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Risk: Missing opportunities to use grant funding (from USDA, ARC, EDA resources, etc.) to continue broadband building.

Mitigation Strategy: Subscribe to and receive/respond to grant opportunities from these organizations before grant deadlines.

Ensure MWP region complies with most or all requirements in advance of applying.
Work with local broadband providers to solicit grants.

Metrics and Measurable outcomes

Lagging:

- Of target broadband areas identified, percentage marked as having complete, resilient broadband service.
- Percentage of workforce households (new and existing) having appropriate broadband resources.

Leading:

- List of target broadband areas where buildout is completed.

CONCLUSION

While many challenges exist in our region, the creation of a strong, vibrant, and balanced Mountain West Partnership can become one of the key leverage points for the Southwestern Commission Region to increase business, jobs, funding, and impact on our community.

By understanding the key dynamics of the workforce in our region, and by following the organizational, structural recommendations and Initiatives in this report, the MWP can build an effective Public Private Partnership which increases the region's footprint and influence, and ensures a fully recovered and resilient economy for the region.



APPENDIX A: BUDGET / FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The following are a set of pro-forma five-year financials for the new proposed Mountain West Partnership. They are conservative from a few perspectives: they reflect the minimum anticipated capability for fundraising in the region, the minimum staffing needed to successfully conduct the work of the proposed Mountain West Partnership, and the resources/tools needed to succeed in promoting the region to our target audience.

Note that the partnership proposed is “cash flow positive” throughout the entire five-year planning window. While the financials show a significant and growing cash reserve in year five, this funding only exhibits the self-sustaining nature of the partnership. In reality, any cash balance would be re-strategized and re-deployed to further support the mission of the Mountain West Partnership in the most effective way possible.

INCOME STATEMENT

Mountain West Partnership - Pro Forma Financial Statements					
<i>Confidential and Proprietary</i>					
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
INCOME STATEMENT					
Revenue	462,500	1,090,306	1,660,724	1,915,939	2,171,257
Cost of Services/Goods Sold (COGS)	0	0	0	0	0
Gross Margin	462,500	1,090,306	1,660,724	1,915,939	2,171,257
Gross Margin %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Non-Salary General and Administrative	180,064	348,395	522,127	634,909	767,968
Non-Salary G&A %	38.9%	32.0%	31.4%	33.1%	35.4%
Sales & Marketing	98,650	197,211	395,106	411,540	433,103
Sales & Marketing %	21.3%	18.1%	23.8%	21.5%	19.9%
General & Administrative	167,813	447,321	633,187	693,340	707,207
General & Administrative %	36.3%	41.0%	38.1%	36.2%	32.6%
EBITDA	15,974	97,379	110,304	176,150	262,980
EBITDA %	3.5%	8.9%	6.6%	9.2%	12.1%
Depreciation and Amortization	2,250	8,000	17,000	26,500	36,000
Interest Expenses	0	0	0	0	0
EBIT	13,724	89,379	93,304	149,650	226,980
Income Tax	0	0	0	0	0
Net Income	13,724	89,379	93,304	149,650	226,980
Net Income %	3.0%	8.2%	5.6%	7.8%	10.5%

BALANCE SHEET

Mountain West Partnership - Pro Forma Financial Statements					
<i>Confidential and Proprietary</i>					
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
BALANCE SHEET					
Assets					
Current Assets					
Cash	(15,596)	31,792	101,342	259,091	504,441
Accounts Receivable	57,021	134,421	204,747	236,212	267,689
Other Current Assets	-	-	-	-	-
Total Current Assets	41,425	166,213	306,088	495,303	772,131
Fixed Assets					
Gross Fixed Assets	11,250	28,750	45,000	47,500	47,500
Gross Capital Lease Assets	0	0	0	0	0
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(2,250)	(8,000)	(17,000)	(26,500)	(36,000)
Net Fixed Assets	9,000	20,750	28,000	21,000	11,500
Deferred Taxes	-	-	-	-	-
Other Long Term Assets	-	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	50,425	186,963	334,088	516,303	783,631
Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable	16,287	31,611	48,947	59,039	71,208
Short Term Debt	-	-	-	-	-
Accrued Liabilities	20,413	50,000	78,484	83,957	85,636
Total Current Liabilities	36,701	81,610	127,432	142,996	156,845
Long Term Capital Lease Liabilities	0	0	0	0	0
Total Liabilities	36,701	81,610	127,432	142,996	156,845
Stockholders' Equity					
Common Stock	-	-	-	-	-
Paid in Capital	0	0	0	0	0
Cumulative Retained Earnings	13,724	105,353	206,657	373,306	626,786
Total Stockholders' Equity	13,724	105,353	206,657	373,306	626,786
Total Liabilities and Stockholder's Equity	50,425	186,963	334,088	516,303	783,631

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

Mountain West Partnership - Pro Forma Financial Statements					
<i>Confidential and Proprietary</i>					
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
CASH FLOW STATEMENT					
Cash Flow from Operations					
Income Before Taxes	13,724	89,379	93,304	149,650	226,980
Cash Taxes Paid	0	0	0	0	0
Add Non-cash Items					
Depreciation and Amortization	2,250	8,000	17,000	26,500	36,000
(Increase)/Decrease in A/R	(57,021)	(77,401)	(70,326)	(31,465)	(31,478)
(Increase)/Decrease in Other CA	-	-	-	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in A/P	16,287	15,323	17,337	10,092	12,169
Increase/(Decrease) in other CL	20,413	29,586	28,485	5,473	1,679
Net Cash from Operations	(4,346)	64,888	85,800	160,249	245,350
Cash Flow from Investing					
(Increase)/Decrease in Capital Assets	(11,250)	(17,500)	(16,250)	(2,500)	0
Net Cash from Investing	(11,250)	(17,500)	(16,250)	(2,500)	0
Cash Flow from Financing					
Proceeds from Equity Investments	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds from Debt Financing	-	-	-	-	-
Repayment of Debt Financing	-	-	-	-	-
Distributions	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cash from Financing	0	0	0	0	0
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash	(15,596)	47,388	69,550	157,749	245,350
Cash, Beginning of Period	-	(15,596)	31,792	101,342	259,091
Cash, End of Period	(15,596)	31,792	101,342	259,091	504,441

APPENDIX B: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

COG/PPP Background & Benchmarks

The links in this section were used in determining 'best-in-class benchmark comparisons' across North Carolina to inform key aspects of the MWP strategic refresh. Specifically, these are NC Council of Governments, Public Private Partnerships, and the resources investigated to determine legal and financial relationships. .

List of NC COGS

- <https://www.ncregions.org/regional-councils/>
- <https://www.eda.gov/resources/directory/states/nc.htm>

Albemarle Commission

- <https://albemarlecommission.org/>
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NC East Alliance

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Carolina West

- <http://carolinawest.org/about/>

Surrey County Economic Development Partnership

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Carolinas Gateway Partnership

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North Carolinas Southeast

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Research Triangle Regional Partnership

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Piedmont Triad Partnership

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Charlotte Regional Business Alliance

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Henderson County Economic Development

- <https://gohendersoncountync.org/who-we-are/>

Edenton Chowan Partnership

- <https://edenton.net/edenton-chowan-partnership/>

- <https://www.nccommerce.com/about-us/partners-allies>

Piedmont Regional Triad Council

- <https://www.ptrc.org/home/showpublisheddocument/10581/637468347484270000>

PRTC Development Corporation

- <https://www.ptrc.org/home/showpublisheddocument/10591/637468353070600000>

- <https://www.ptrc.org/home/showpublisheddocument/11640/637794765083174593>

Downtown Raleigh Alliance

- <https://downtownraleigh.org/about/downtown-raleigh-alliance>

- <https://ctycms.com/nc-raleigh/docs/dra-by-laws.pdf>

- <https://ctycms.com/nc-raleigh/docs/dra-fy19-budget.pdf>

- <https://www.causeiq.com/organizations/downtown-raleigh-alliance,561994005/>

Wayne County Development Alliance

- <http://www.waynealliance.org/media-center.aspx>

- <https://www.causeiq.com/organizations/wayne-county-development-alliance,205132258/>

Foothills Regional Commission COG

- <https://foothillsregion.org/>

Cape Fear COG

- <https://capefearcog.org/admindocs/>

- <https://capefearcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2020.02.27-Amended-CFCOG-Bylaws.pdf>

KEY PROGRAMMATIC RESOURCES

These links contain state led programs, county led programs, and non-profit organization programs that are aligned with green initiatives and economic development focused funding vehicles or programs that aligned with research direction, and research questions brought up throughout the process of completing this project

ARC Strategic Plan 2016-2020

<https://www.arc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/InvestinginAppalachiasFutureARCs20162020StrategicPlan.pdf>

MadeXMtns

- <https://madexmtns.com/our-industry/>

ARC POWER Initiative

- <https://www.arc.gov/arcs-power-initiative/>

Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC Initiative)

- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/dislocated-workers/grants/workforce-opportunity>

NCEDA

- <https://www.nceda.org/advocacy/>

NCEDA Economic Handbook

- <https://www.nceda.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2016-Economic-Development-Handbook.pdf>

List of Tier counties

- <https://edpnc.com/incentives/county-development-tier-designations/>

JDIC Grants

Job Development Investment Grant

- <https://edpnc.com/incentives/job-development-investment-grant/> One NC Fund

- <https://edpnc.com/incentives/one-north-carolina-fund/>

NC DOT Rail Industrial Access Program

- <https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/rail/projects/Pages/industrial-access.aspx>

NC Commerce

<https://www.nccommerce.com/business/why-north-carolina>

Golden Leaf Economic Catalyst program

<https://www.goldenleaf.org/catalyst/>

SITE Identification Program

- <https://www.goldenleaf.org/SITE/identification/>

Due Diligence for SITE

- <https://www.goldenleaf.org/SITE/due-diligence/>

Development Funding

- <https://www.goldenleaf.org/SITE/development/>

COUNTY LEVEL INCENTIVES/PROGRAMS

Cherokee County

- <https://www.cherokeecounty-nc.gov/1/Home>

Jackson County

Green Park Plans

- <https://www.jacksonnc.org/new/pdfs/Green-Energy-Park-Master-Plan-Update.pdf> Jackson county ED Plan

- <https://www.jacksonthrive.jacksonnc.org/pdfs/Comprehensive-Economic-DevelopmentStrategy.pdf>

Jackson County Incentives page

- <https://www.jacksonthrive.jacksonnc.org/incentives-and-funding>

Haywood County

- <https://haywoodchamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Haywood-Asheville-ChamberPartnership-Update-Feb-2019.pdf> -

Economic Development website

- <https://www.haywoodchamber.com/live-work/business-development/>

Current economic indicators Haywood

- <https://www.haywoodchamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Haywood-EconomicIndicators-2019-2Q-.pdf>

Macon County

List of business resources

- <https://www.maconedc.com/economic-development-resources.html>

Link to 'Incentives' -

- <https://www.maconedc.com/>

Clay County

Clay county tax incentive 2020

- <https://www.economic.claync.us/post/clay-county-economic-development-incentive-for-business-and-industry-approved>

Clay County Economic strategy plan

- https://www.economic.claync.us/files/ugd/fe4bcd_cb0c95a7b2ce429fa4e117db380732bb.pdf

Graham County

- <http://grahamcountyedc.org/business-incentives/>

- <http://grahamcountyedc.org/available-sites/>

GREEN INITIATIVES IN NC/APPALACHIA

NC Green Travel Program

- <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/environmental>-assistance-and-customer-service/ncgreentravel-initiative

List of NC Green Travel businesses in NC

- <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling/programs>-offered/nc-green-travel-program/findnc-greentravel-businesses

NC Environmental Stewardship Initiative

- <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/environmental>-assistance-and-customer-service/ncenvironmental-stewardship-initiative

About ESI:

- <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/environmental>-assistance-and-customer-service/nc-environmental-stewardship-initiative/about-esi SmartGrid.gov

- <https://www.smartgrid.gov/>

Utility Savings Initiative

- <https://deq.nc.gov/energy>-climate/energy-group/utility-savings-initiative#annual-reports

Appalachian Funders Network Energy Report

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/appalachiafundersnetwork/pages/133/attachments/original/1461210976/ENRWG_2015_Workshop_Report_.pdf?1461210976

USDA Economic Impact Initiative Grants

- <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs>-services/community-facilities/economic-impact-initiativegrants/nc