

Economic Development Focus Group



Below is the meeting summary for the second Economic Development Focus Group meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to select approximately three goals per topic for further study. In the following three meetings, groups will determine more specific objectives for each goal. All of the Focus Group information will be incorporated into the Community Strategic Plan document which will be considered by the Board of Supervisors later this year.

Meeting Date: 3/17/16

Recorder: Becky James

Meeting Location: South County Library

Number of Participants: 46

Number of Small Groups: 5

Host: Supervisor Jason Peters

Lead Staff: Jill Loope and Philip Thompson

Staff Facilitators: Becky James, Brian Hughes, Tori Williams, Jay Brenchick, Anne Marie Green and Caitlin Gills

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Most Popular Topics by Group Consensus for Meeting 1

Top 3 most popular Topics selected by group consensus at the end of Meeting 1.

1. Infrastructure
2. Regional Cooperation and Marketing
3. Workforce Development

Meeting 1 Topics Confirmed at the Beginning of Meeting 2

1. Infrastructure
2. Regional Cooperation and Marketing
3. Workforce Development

Meeting 2: GOALS DEVELOPMENT

GOALS are defined as “What you want to do.”

Topic 1: Infrastructure

1. Broadband – increase service
2. Airport improvements in general
3. Marketing as technology hub
4. Multi-modal Transportation
5. Utilities
6. Develop land-use policies for both existing parcels and vacant land
7. Connectivity
8. Education of the funding of transportation
9. Pad ready sites, creation and marketing

Topic 2: Regional Cooperation and Marketing

1. Creation of regional database for available parcels/buildings
2. Defining “region”
3. Explore opportunities for regionalism/incentives
4. Promote and retain existing relationships with higher education
5. Educate the public on current regional cooperation
6. Leverage more resources to encourage further cooperation – with the County and region
7. Strengthen ties with Lynchburg
8. Strengthen ties with Colleges and Universities
9. Proactive advertising/outreach networking
10. Marketing the quality of life of the region (live/work/play)
11. Enhancing regional cooperation for economic development and retention of existing businesses

Topic 3: Workforce Development

1. Retaining our existing workforce – this included ongoing training
2. How to make Roanoke “hip and trendy”
3. Utilizing our current educational resources
4. Retain local graduates – targeting
5. Skills training – on all levels
6. Quality of life
7. Trades training
8. Fostering relationships with regional educational institutions
9. “K through Gray” concept of ongoing education/training, etc.
10. Utilization of local training facilities and schools
11. Attracting young professionals to the area

End of Meeting 2: Group Consensus on Top Three Goals by Topic

Topic 1: Infrastructure

- Goal 1. Transportation
- Goal 2. Technological Improvement
- Goal 3. Planned Development (Community Centers)

Topic 2: Regional Cooperation and Marketing

- Goal 1. Enhancing regional cooperation for economic development
- Goal 2. Proactive advertising and greater outreach marketing
- Goal 3. Preparation, support and promotion for local business activity

Topic 3: Workforce Development

- Goal 1. Train and enhance the existing workforce through lifelong learning ("K through Gray") to meet industry needs
- Goal 2. Target industries for workforce development
- Goal 3. Focus on regional solutions and regional partners for workforce development