

Appendix B: CEDS Process

The 15-person CEDS committee, comprised of members from all four counties in the Western Piedmont region, met seven times between February and August 2017 to complete the CEDS. During the first meeting (February 1), members had an orientation of the CEDS process and were presented the results of the CEDS regional profile. During the second CEDS meeting (April 5), committee members received the results of the CEDS Survey. Nearly 1,000 respondents completed the 32-question survey. The survey included a mix of multiple choice/section and open response questions covering community life, economic development and workforce issues in the region.

The next meeting (April 26) focused on the results of the CEDS Stakeholder interviews. Thirty one-on-one interviews (consisting of eight in-depth questions covering barriers to economic progress, economic opportunities, improving the region's workforce, and regional leadership) were conducted with leaders from the private sector, elected officials, education, EDCs, Chambers and community groups. In addition, three stakeholder group interviews were facilitated for the Regional Aging Advisory Committee/Senior Tar Heel Legislators (21 in attendance), Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board (26 in attendance), and Hickory Young Professionals/Greater Hickory Jaycees (65 in attendance). CEDS Committee members also identified regional issues at the April 26 meeting. They included marketing the region, resolving educational attainment issues/goals, keeping young people in the region, talking to young people about what they want in general and devising short and long term plans to increase the number of shell buildings.

During the fourth CEDS committee meeting (May 3), committee members completed the regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis and discussed "Regional Resiliency." The next two meetings (May 31 and June 7) were dedicated to completing the CEDS Action Plan strategies. The CEDS divides the strategies into six topics: (1) Economic Development, (2) Workforce, (3) Community Life, (4) Infrastructure, (5) Housing and (6) Marketing. Each CEDS strategy includes details on how the strategy will be accomplished, strategy metrics and responsible parties to implement the strategy. The Committee also approved the CEDS Vision Statement and the CEDS Performance Measures. The final CEDS Committee Meeting (August 2) was dedicated to the CEDS Action Plan implementation. The CEDS Committee at the August 2 meeting recommended approval of the CEDS to the WPCOG Policy Board. The WPCOG Policy Board approved the CEDS plan during their September 26, 2017 meeting.