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# Western Piedmont Council of Governments

*Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968*

May 2017



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## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update



On April 26, the CEDS Committee met to discuss the highlights of the CEDS Stakeholder Interviews. During February and March, WPCOG staff conducted 33 stakeholder interviews (30 one-on-one interviews with leaders from private sector, elected officials, education, EDCs, chambers of commerce, and community groups and three group interviews with the Regional Aging Advisory Committee/Senior Tar Heel Legislators, the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board and the Hickory Young Professionals/Greater Hickory Jaycees). Examples of interview questions included asking about the biggest asset of the region not being utilized to its full potential and about barriers to economic progress as a region. Committee members followed up the presentation with a discussion regarding the results of the stakeholder interviews.

During the April 26 meeting, CEDS committee members also learned about Workforce Development Board (WDB) initiatives such as growing the talent pipeline, advocacy and communication of WDB work, community issue forums and business leadership summits. Finally, committee members identified several key regional issues such as a lack of new and affordable housing and apartment living options, recruiting and retaining jobs that keep young people in the region, the need for mixed-use/recreational spaces, and marketing to people out the region.

On May 3, the CEDS Committee completed a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for the region. Top regional strengths identified by committee members were 1) lower cost of living/taxes, physical assets (mountains, rivers and trails), 2) proximity to Charlotte, Asheville, coast, and mountains, 3) educational opportunities (public education, private schools, early college, community colleges and Lenoir-Rhyne University), 4) family friendly and 5) philanthropy (private and community). Top regional weaknesses of the region were 1) lack of entertainment outlets for 21-40-year-olds, 2) lack of high paying jobs, 3) lack of an iconic attraction, 4) lack of new housing and 5) out-migration of our young people's future leaders.

The next CEDS meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 31, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM at the WPCOG offices as the committee discusses the CEDS vision statement and begins to finalize the CEDS regional strategies. On Wednesday, June 7, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM CEDS committee members will complete work on the strategies for the CEDS action plan and discuss the CEDS performance measures.

For more information about the CEDS process, agendas or presentations, please refer to the [WPCOG website](#).

Article by Taylor Dellinger

## Area Agency on Aging Older Americans Month: Aging Out Loud!



Each May the Administration for Community Living (ACL) leads the nation in a celebration of Older Americans Month (OAM). Annually the ACL distinguishes a theme that empowers, encourages, and engages older adults. We know that aging in today's society is not what is use to be, therefore the ACL chose a theme which shines a light on many of the new important trends of older adults in our communities. "Age Out Loud", the theme of 2017 OAM is to give aging a new voice, one that reflects what today's older adults have to say.

Many aging adults have entered a phase of life where their interests, goals and dreams get a second chance or a fresh start. Countless older adults are going back to school to learn something new, many are staying active and starting new exercise programs, and others are speaking up for elder rights to change the face of aging. The Western Piedmont Area Agency on Aging wants to support you as you **Age Out Loud**--however that may be.

Throughout the month the Western Piedmont Area Agency on Aging will share information designed to highlight local programming and stories of how older adults in our region **Age Out Loud**. We encourage you to get involved by defining how you Age Out Loud and share your stories on social media with the #OAM17 and #AgeOutLoud and by sharing your stories with Aging Specialist Sarah Evitt at [sarah.evitt@wpocg.org](mailto:sarah.evitt@wpocg.org).

For information on how you can Age Out Loud, or to find other aging resources, please go to [www.wpcogaaa.org](http://www.wpcogaaa.org).

# AGE OUT LOUD!



Article by Sarah Evitt

## Community & Economic Development City of Morganton Small Business Loan Program (SBLP)

### *Purpose*

The City of Morganton Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Small Business Loan Program (SBLP) is a competitive program offering either startup or expansion companies an opportunity within the City Limits of Morganton to obtain loan funds up to \$75,000 upon approval and in compliance with CDBG criteria. All businesses requesting funds between \$5,000 and \$30,000 must create at least one new job that meets the HUD income criteria. All businesses requesting greater than \$30,000 must be able to create a minimum of 10 new full time job positions within 1 year of funding. Individuals who fall within HUD Low to Moderate Income and Household Income criteria must fill 51% of the newly created jobs. (See criteria below)



Fonta Flora



My Local Bakery

### *Funding*

The SBLP funds are part of the City's CDBG Entitlement Program, provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Loans have 4% interest rate with a nine year term. If the business maintains a good standing on the loan and completes its original business plan, 50% of the principal will be forgiven after 5 years.

### *Eligibility*

- Business owners must show experience in similar business ventures or provide evidence that they have the capability to accomplish the goals set forth. Applicants can also provide evidence of certification through the community college or similar institutions.



- Only businesses that pledge to employ people with low to moderate -incomes are eligible for funding assistance. Low to moderate-incomes eligibility is determined by using household income guidelines established annually by HUD. (51% of the total new employees of the business must fall within the low to moderate-income range.)
- Home-based businesses or occupations may be eligible for SBLP funding, as long as the activities of the business are eligible under existing city ordinances and regulations and have potential to impact or benefit the entire city.
- SBLP funds are available to qualified businesses citywide, but priority will be given to businesses that comply with Morganton's long-term planning goals identified through the Adopted Mission 2030 plan, or are located within target areas where other city programs are taking place such as redevelopment areas, downtown areas or areas in need of reinvestment such as DIG Zones or Urban Progress Zones.
- All Applicants must be a citizen of the United States and the proposed business must be located within the city limits of Morganton.



**Food Matters Market and Cafe**



**Alexander & Brooke**

### ***Eligible Uses***

CDBG funds may be used for a variety of activities, some of which include:

- Purchase of land or buildings
- Building construction
- Building renovation
- Up-fit tenant improvements
- Purchase capital equipment to conduct the business
- Purchase of inventory necessary for project start-up
- Operating Capital

### ***Ineligible Uses***

The following activities may not be assisted with CDBG funds:

- Governmental uses or expenses
- Political activities
- Personal property

### ***Application Process***

Applicants must complete and submit a SBLP funding application to the City's Development and Design Department. Applications are reviewed by the City's Small Business Loan Program Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will meet after the application is received and review the application. SBLP applicant finalist will be asked to present their request to the Advisory Committee prior to final award.

### ***Review Process***

The Advisory Committee will convene to make funding decisions within 30 days after reviewing the SBLP applications and hearing presentation, when appropriate. Applicants will be notified of their application's approval or rejection and funding amount, by the Development and Design staff. The terms of the CDBG SBLP grant and payment amounts will be determined on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with Development & Design staff. SBLP grants are paid out only after all criteria has been

satisfied. If funded the business will be required to submit a quarterly report beginning the quarter after the business is open for a period of four quarters. During the second year, a semi-annual report will be due in June and December. From the third year on an annual report will be due to the city. The report should contain financial information such as a profit and loss statement and the most recent NCUI 101.

**HUD Income limits per household for Hickory, Morganton, Lenoir MSA:**

1 person = < \$29,250      2 persons = < \$33,400      3 persons = < \$37,600  
4 persons = < \$41,750      5 persons = < \$45,100      6 person = < \$48,450  
7 persons = < \$51,800      8 persons = < \$55,150

If you would like to learn more about the SBLP or have any questions, please contact Lisa Helton, Program Administrator | 828-485-4281

[Article by Lisa Helton](#)

[\(Pictured above are businesses assisted with SBLP funding\)](#)

## Community & Regional Planning

### Project WET Workshop

On Saturday, April 8th, 2017 a day long Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) training was held at the WPCOG Offices for science teachers. The workshop was free, and teachers received continuing education credit and environmental education credits for attending. The training was sponsored by the Stormwater Partnership and conducted by WPCOG Staff, as well as Lisa Wear, a STEM educator and certified Project WET facilitator. A primary focus for the Stormwater Partnership is to reach teachers so that they can bring the information back to their classrooms. Training like Project WET puts a large focus on stormwater, and activities used to relate directly back to how water quality is affected by our actions.



**Lisa Wear, a STEM educator and certified Project WET facilitator, instructs teachers at the WPCOG offices.**

Almost two-thirds of water pollution in North Carolina is caused by polluted runoff. When it rains, water washes over lawns, sidewalks, and streets. Besides litter, this water picks up chemicals found in lawn fertilizers, bacteria found in pet waste, and oil from cars. This polluted water then enters roadside ditches, and the storm drains found in our streets. Large pipes under the ground connect the storm drains to the closest lake or stream.

The Stormwater Partnership is made up of five local governments, Conover, Hickory, Maiden, Morganton and Valdese, that contract with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to perform outreach to inform the public about stormwater issues. The program focuses on getting the information to teachers, who in turn, provide that information to students. The Annual Western Piedmont Annual Water Quality Conference and Annual STEM tours conducted at the WPCOG offices are other ways in which the WPCOG educates teachers on stormwater.

Article by Johnny Wear

## IT/GIS Services

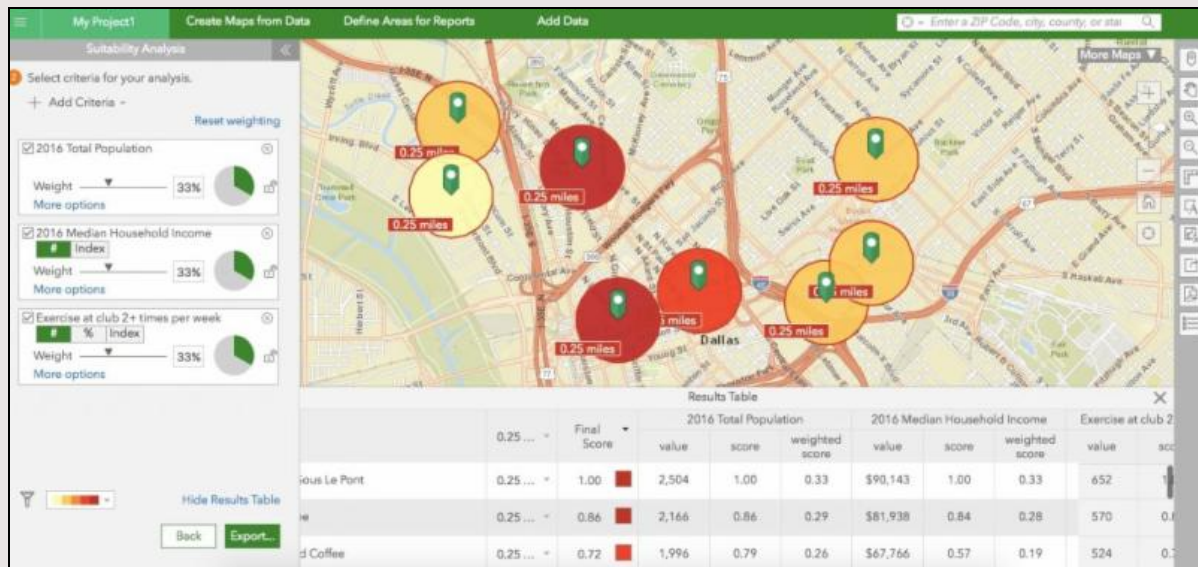
### WPCOG Provides Community Informational Tool

Community Analyst is a cloud-based application that provides easy access to data from a wide variety of information sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal agencies, along with a vast collection of consumer purchasing and community life data. While many local governments and agencies are data rich in landuse or zoning, they find demographics and economic data harder to come by and even more difficult to work with. With Community Analyst, GIS users can now leverage all types of data, such as drive times and retail sales data. When combined with desktop GIS applications, Community Analyst becomes an even more powerful tool for decision makers. Another aspect of the application is the ability to create custom spatial datasets, allowing users to focus on a given study area.

These types of data are what geographers refer to as "geodemographics," or the study and grouping of people in a geographic area according to socioeconomic criteria. This data is stored in the "cloud" and updated frequently. Available datasets include demographics, economics, health, business, education, crime, environmental, transportation, five-year projections and more. Community Analyst is designed to help government agencies, non-profits, civic organizations, planners and others better understand their overall community and make informed policy decisions.

Some practical applications of Community Analyst include:

- Maps showing drive time areas for community amenities, such as parks, schools, libraries, fire and police stations and recycling centers.
- Assist in data gathering for grant applications (examples include household incomes, poverty rates, Wi-Fi usage, ethnicity and age groups).
- Assist planners in assessing needs for a given area by looking at future landuse and community assets.



The Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) in cooperation with North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Government (NCARCOG) [www.ncregions.org](http://www.ncregions.org) has the ability to provide this service to our local governments. If interested please contact the GIS or Planning Staff at the Western Piedmont Council of Governments at (828) 322-9191.

Article by Trey Schweitzer & Taylor Dellinger

## Regional Housing Authority

### Waiting List Preference Process

The Regional Housing Authority (RHA) began accepting applications on February 20, 2017. The RHA is accepting applications until further notice. Applications can be found on the WPCOG website at [www.wpcog.org/applicants](http://www.wpcog.org/applicants) (instructions are included in the application). There are currently 1,255 people on the waiting list. We encourage interested individuals to apply. Please be aware that as vouchers become available, families are selected for assistance based on the order in which they applied and by their preferences.

The RHA uses four preferences for placing families on the waiting list, each preference is assigned a value using a point system. Placement order on the list is determined by greatest to lowest cumulative points. Four points for residents, three points for families with a household member who is disabled, two points for veterans, widowers of veterans, or families with an active duty member and one point for homeless individuals.

The homeless preference was recently added by the RHA to assist in advancing the mission of the North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness (NCCEH). The RHA's vision is to work with the Continuum of Care



(CoC) in our region as well as other Housing agencies and partners to see the mission of HUD and the NCCEH become a reality. We are committed to working with partners to expand opportunities for individuals and families to access quality affordable rental homes, thereby achieving our mutual goal of utilizing housing as a platform for improving quality of life.

*"We believe in these Americans. We believe that no child or family should be subjected to the hardship that comes with life in a shelter or on a street."* - HUD; Secretary's Oral Testimony

Article by Kala Guido

## Workforce Development Your Future Stats Here

### Your Future Starts Here

The NC Youth Leads group has been extremely busy over the past year working diligently to build consistency across North Carolina through a common Youth & Young Adult brand. We are proud to announce that all WIOA Title 1 programs across North Carolina will now be identified as NextGen with a common tagline "Your Future Starts Here!" Now a youth who relocates from one area of North Carolina to another can easily connect with the program in their new location!



Youth and Service Provider Staff, under the funding of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), were focused and engaged during March and April. On March 21 and 23, the Western Piedmont Area held their local Youth Summit at the NC Center for Engineering Technologies. The Summit hosted 100 youth from the area. The youth were given a random selection of items and tasked to create something useful. They worked on their projects in the morning and then after lunch there were preliminary competitions in each room where to select a winner. Those winners moved to the final competition in front of the entire group and judges from the Engineering Center. An overall winner was selected for each day. The winner on the first day was the Hamster Easy Feed that makes caring for your pet hamster very easy and thoughtless. The winner for day two was the Animal Airlift which provides a way for you to care for small injured animals in a safe way.

In early April, thirteen youth from the Western Piedmont area went to the NC State Youth Summit "Make an Impact & Income" in Cary, NC. There they were able to meet and network with other youth from across the state. On Thursday and Friday morning, the youth were given the opportunity to tour several colleges in the Cary area. They visited UNC Chapel Hill, Duke University, and NC Central. They were very impressed with the colleges and began thinking of what it would take for them to continue on to college whether it is a university or a community college. The youth staff will work with them to help them to move toward their goals. On Friday night, there was a gala including a formal dinner and the 2017 Summit Idol where youth were able to showcase their talents. The winner in the dance category and winner overall was a youth from the Western Piedmont area. He represented us well! Dream Builders Communications, Inc. was the facilitators for the summit. They led the group sessions as well as the individual workshop sessions. The workshops covered various topics from becoming a leader to fashion and finance. Program year 2016 is turning out to be a definite successful year for the Western Piedmont Region.



## WPCOG Calendar of Events

May	June	July
02 - Housing Partnership Network (HPN) Seminar (2 PM)	07 - CEDS Meeting (3 PM)	19 - Water Resources (12 PM)
03 - CEDS Meeting (3 PM)	22 - Workforce Board (8:30 AM)	20 - Regional Managers Meeting (12 PM)
08 - Regional Aging Advisory Committee (12 PM)	27 - Executive Committee Meeting (6 PM)	24 - Regional Aging Provider Meeting (2 PM)
16 - Western Piedmont Air Quality Committee (10 AM)	28 - MPO TCC (2 PM) & TAC (3:30 PM)	25 - Policy Board (6 PM)
23 - Policy Board (6 PM)	29 - Mayors/Chairmen/Managers Meeting (6 PM)	26 - MPO TCC (2 PM) & TAC (3:30 PM)
24 - MPO TCC (2 PM) & TAC (3:30 PM)		28 - NCAUG NC Government GIS Symposium (10:45 AM)
24 - UNC School of Government Ethics Webinar (10 AM)		
31 - CEDS Meeting (3 PM)		

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