

# FY 2020-2025

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

**PREPARED BY:**

**Region XI Brooke-Hancock Regional  
Planning and Development Council**

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**February 2020**

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# Acknowledgements

## CEDS Committee

Brooke- Hancock Regional Planning and  
Development Council

Brooke County Commission:  
Honorable AJ Thomas  
Honorable Tim Ennis  
Honorable Stacey Wise

Appointed Brooke County Community  
Representatives:  
Eric Fithyan  
Ruby Greathouse

Beech Bottom- Mayor:  
Honorable Rebecca Uhly

Appointed Representative:  
Robert Sadler

Bethany-Mayor:  
Honorable Shirley Kemp

Follansbee-Mayor:  
Honorable David Velegol

City Manager  
John DeStefano

Wellsburg-Mayor  
Honorable Sue Simonetti

City Manager  
Steve Maguschak

Appointed Representative  
Randy Fletcher

Windsor Heights-Mayor  
Honorable Grace Davis

Hancock County Commission  
Honorable Joe Barnebei  
Honorable Paul Rex Cowey III  
Honorable Jeff Davis

Appointed Representatives  
Jeffrey Oyster  
Bill Visnic

Weirton- Mayor  
Honorable Harold Miller

City Manager  
Joe DiBartolomeno

Appointed Representatives  
Flora Perrone  
Tim Connell  
Marvin Six  
Jessica Gumm

Chester-Mayor  
Honorable Ken Morris

New Cumberland-Mayor  
Honorable Richard Blackwell



# Forward

The following report constitutes the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for West Virginia Region XI, consisting of Hancock and Brooke counties. This report has been developed by the Brooke Hancock and Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission with the financial support of the United States Economic Development Association (US EDA) and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

As stated by the US EDA, the CEDS contributes to effective economic development in America's communities and regions through a locally based, regionally-driven economic development planning process."

The purpose of the CEDS is to provide an overview and analysis of current economic conditions and provide a foundation for both the selection and planning of future projects.

Community involvement is a cornerstone of CEDS development. Special recognition and appreciation must be provided to the Brooke Hancock and Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission (BHJ-MPC) Executive Committee and the BHJ-MPC Technical Advisory Committee for providing guidance and valuable community insight.

It is also important to note this document relies heavily upon contributions made by and research presented by the Business Development Council's Weirton Reuse Report.

## Section 1

# Introduction



The Northern Panhandle is the northernmost part of West Virginia. It is wedged between the state of Ohio and the Ohio River to the west and the state of Pennsylvania to the east. Brooke and Hancock Counties are the two most northern counties in the panhandle. Development patterns in the Brooke-Hancock Region were strongly influenced by the area's hilly topography and the Ohio River. Population growth developed alongside the river in small towns. Undeveloped land is either too steep for development or rests within floodplains.

Brooke and Hancock Counties are also two of twelve counties within the Pittsburgh-New Castle-Weirton, PA-OH-WV Combined Statistical Area (CSA).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the twelve-county area's estimated population was 2,635,228 in mid-2016. The Weirton-Steubenville, WV-OH Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) consists of both Brooke and Hancock Counties with the addition of Jefferson County, OH. The area's population is 117,064. The two largest cities in the MSA are Steubenville, OH and Weirton, WV. Both cities have about 18,000 residents.

Economies of Brooke and Hancock Counties are very similar. Both counties trail in nationally accepted economic indicators. The unemployment rate of Brooke and Hancock Counties at the close of 2019, were respectively 5.3% and 5.1%.

Unemployment rates in both counties were higher than state and national averages. Educational attainment of residents 25+ years old is also lower than state and national averages. Median household income is significantly below the national average of \$60,293. The median household income in Brooke County is \$49,772 and in Hancock County is \$31,984.

The Brooke and Hancock Counties region has suffered from population and employment loss for many years due to the decline of the steel industry. It was projected that from 2000-2020 the Weirton-Steubenville MSA would lose 5,856 jobs.

Coal resources of the Ohio River Valley area in West Virginia are principally distributed in four areas, the Northern Panhandle, the Burning Springs Anticline, the headwater region of the Little Kanawa River, and the southern Ohio River Valley area. Many of the coals which were once mined locally in many places to supply fuel to near-by communities have not been mined since the development of extensive highway systems and improved transportation facilities. Some of those coals are no longer considered a portion of the minable coal reserve because many are less than thirty inches thick, contain a high percentage of ash and are limited to local areas.

The regional economy is currently more diverse with employment opportunities primarily in seven industry super sectors, consisting of manufacturing, leisure and hospitality, education and health services, trade, transportation and utilities, government, financial activities, and professional and business services. Although examining industry super sectors provides a broad overview of industry trends within an area, it does not provide enough detail to identify sub sectors that must be identified to further economic development.

Industry cluster analysis has been used to identify potential sectors for growth. AECOM executed a cluster analysis to identify sub-sectors that should be targeted to help maximize economic development. Six sub-sectors were identified for predicted employment groups. Sub-sectors were, from largest growth to least, real estate-rental-leasing, arts-entertainment-recreation, professional-technical services, retail trade, wholesale trade, and healthcare and social assistance. The Ohio State Cluster Study was executed by Ohio University and compared industry clusters in the Weirton-Steubenville MSA to industry clusters in Altoona, PA and Parkersburg, WV. The study concluded that the Weirton-Steubenville MSA may have a competitive advantage in advanced materials and business and financial services as a growth area.

Regional extraction of oil and gas has created economic growth in Brooke and Hancock Counties. While oil and gas production numbers in West Virginia have reached record highs, production in both Pennsylvania and Ohio are also at high levels increasing demand for skilled workers. The region has been unable to produce enough qualified workers to meet demand, and companies have been temporarily relocating workers from other states. The Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle has estimated the industry needs 3,500 welders to meet future job demands. Two job training centers are being created in the region. One will be in Steubenville, Ohio and another in Weirton, West Virginia.

Several years ago, the BDC commissioned a Regional Investment Strategy Report to identify what industry clusters to target in order to facilitate economic growth. The clusters included Value-added Metals, Petro-chemical, Energy, Transportation Economy, and Healthcare. Economic growth in 2018-2019 is attributed to growth generated in the areas of Machinery, Energy Industry, Logistics and Transportation, Plastics Production, and Primary and Fabricated Materials. The Bureau of Business and Economic Research at West Virginia University projected growth in these sections during the last five years. The accompanying bubble diagram will provide additional information regarding industry clusters and projected economic growth.

By examining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats the CEDS will be used to guide economic efforts across the Brooke and Hancock Counties, WV region. Plan utilization will not only help identify areas of growth but will help assure economic resiliency. The Bureau of Business and Economic Research at West Virginia University projected growth in these sections during the last five years.

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<https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files/time-series/demo/metro-micro/delineation-files.html>

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/WEUPOP>

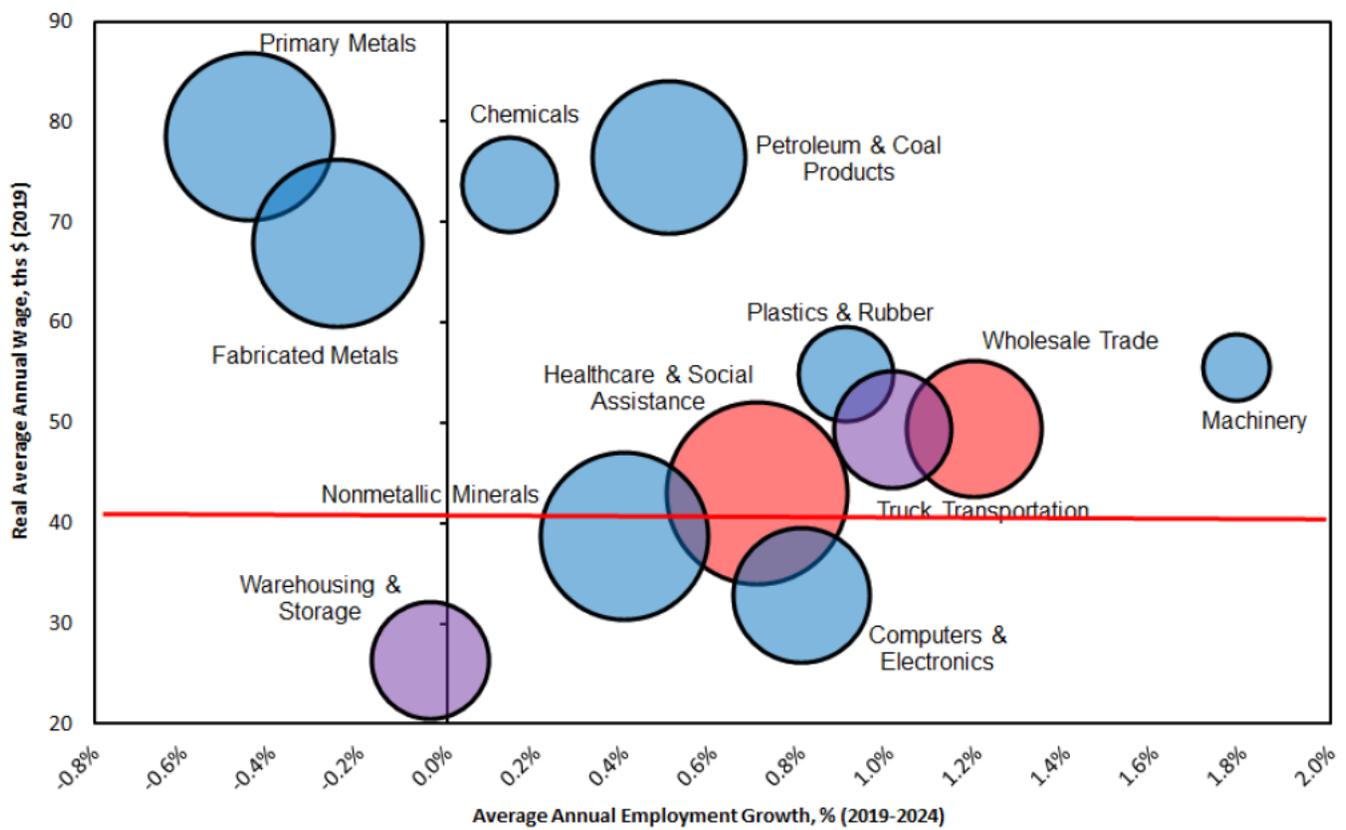
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/steubenvillecityohio,weirtoncitywestvirginia,US/PST045219>

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US,WV,hancockcountygeorgia,brookecountywestvirginia/PST045219>

Regional Investment Plan: Brooke-Hancock, West Virginia, July 2011

# Weirton Reuse Report- BDC, 2019

## Forecast Job Growth and Wages, Select Sectors in Brooke and Hancock Counties



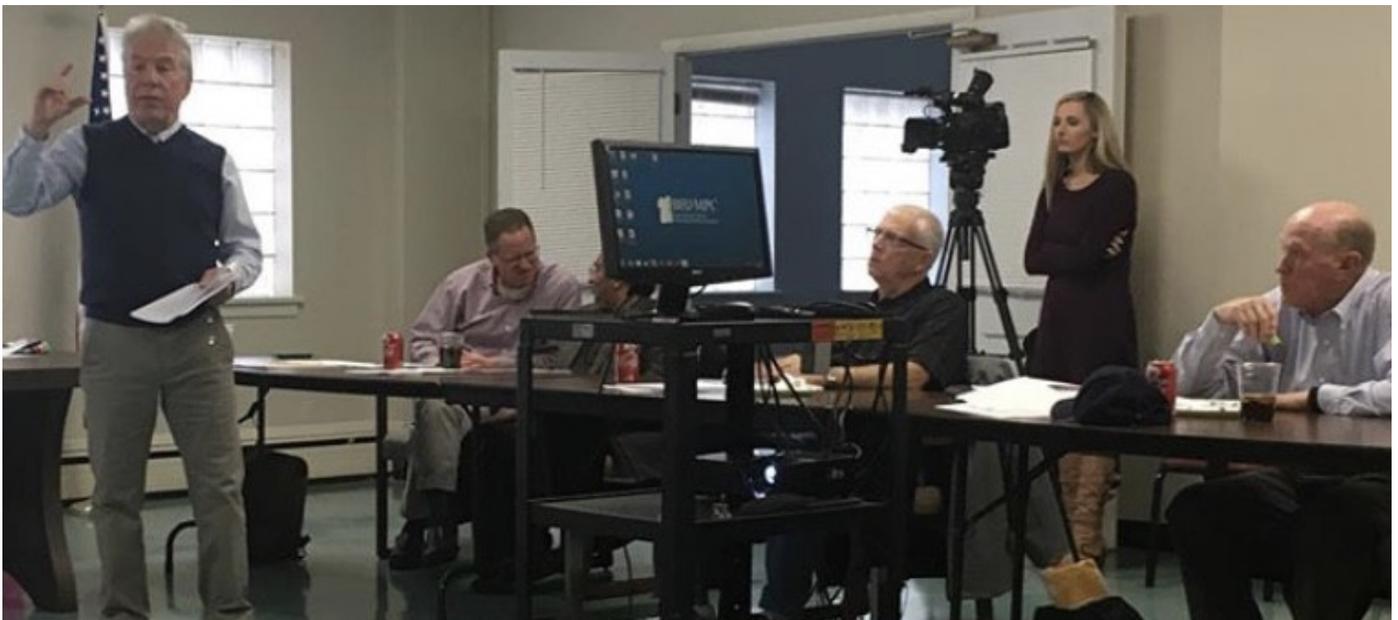
# Vision

The Brooke and Hancock Counties, WV CEDS is guided by the U.S. Economic Development Administration's basic principle that "distressed communities must be empowered to develop and implement their own economic development and revitalization strategies."

Based on locally and regionally developed priorities Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council (BH) has adopted five programs (Brownfields Redevelopment, Entrepreneurship, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Port Development, and Economic Development) with subsequent goals and objectives.

BH's key implementation partner is the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle (BDC). Goals of the BDC are compatible with BH priorities. The BDC seeks to create a broader and more diverse economic base, globally market the region's attributes via a regional messaging strategy, complete projects that advance regional capacity to promote, nurture, and sustain a regional economy, encourage a common focus for economic development efforts, and target site specific projects based upon market drivers. Together the priorities of the BHJ and goals of the BDC provide a platform for creation and implementation for the Brooke and Hancock Counties, WV CEDS.

"Distressed communities must be empowered to develop and implement their own economic development and revitalization strategies."



# Crafting the CEDS

The CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for economic development. A cornerstone of CEDS development and eventual maintenance is stakeholder involvement. Several organizations have both played vital roles crafting and will be active implementing the CEDS. Each organization is complimentary and is active in the facilitation of and maintenance of economic health in the region.

In 1971, West Virginia Code, Chapter 8, Article 25 mandated that West Virginia be divided into eleven regions to serve as “development districts.” Region XI Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council (BH) is a council of local governments in the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia. Collaborating with shared resources, the organization seeks to achieve optimal administration of planning and development functions. Council members are elected officials and additional appointees representing governments in Brooke and Hancock Counties, WV.

The Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission (BHJ-MPC), was established in 1967 and is the sister agency to BH. Both agencies are housed in the same facility. As a metropolitan planning organization, the federal government has charged BHJ-MPC to set regional transportation priorities. Every four years BHJ-MPC updates a long-range transportation plan. The BH board meets on a quarterly basis.

The Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle (BDC) was established in 1993 by the five existing economic development organizations in Brooke and Hancock counties for the purpose of consolidation to form a single organization dedicated to creating jobs and encouraging economic investment in the Northern Panhandle. The county commissions appointed board members and provided funds to the new organization. These funds were matched by the West Virginia Development Office.

Chartered as a 501-C3, the BDC has established Brooke and Hancock counties as a Certified Development Community. Certification exemplifies that the business community is prepared for expansion. The economic development organizations are continuously striving to improve and expand economic opportunities in both counties.

# Brooke County Data Sheet

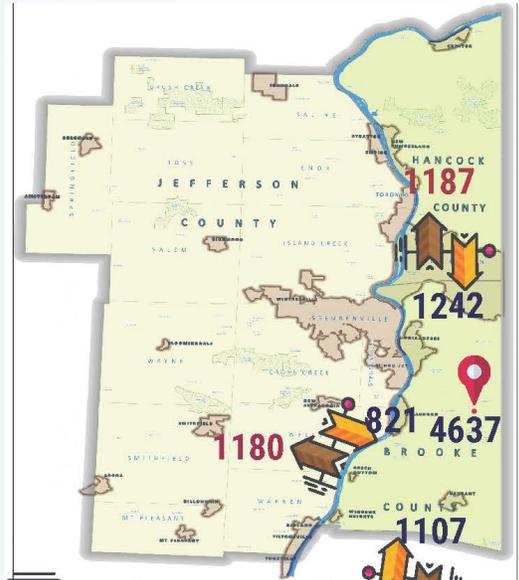
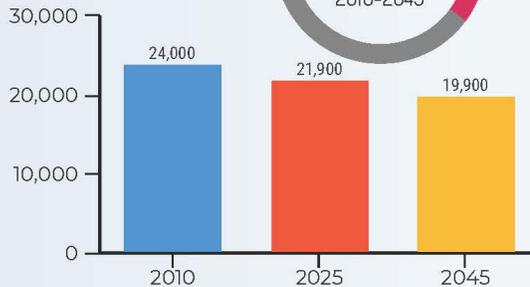
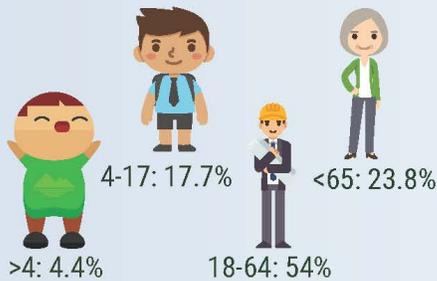
## Brooke County

### CEDS Snapshot

Population: 22,203 (2018 Estimate)

Median Age: 46.2

#### Age Distribution



Median Household Income- \$48,835  
 Median Gross Rent- \$589  
 Household with Zero Vehicle- 9.6%  
 Families Living Under Poverty- 13.70%



Male: Female Ratio  
48:52  
 Minority Population  
3.60%



Work Commuter Flow  
2011-15  
3340

**\$860 Million**

Gross Domestic Product 2018



**8,473**

Employment Number, 2019



**6.1%**

Unemployment Rate 2018



#### Top 10 Industrial Sector

1. Healthcare and Social Assistance
2. Manufacturing
3. Government
4. Retail Trade
5. Accommodation and Food Services
6. Educational Services
7. Other Services (Not Public Administration)
8. Construction
9. Transportation and Warehousing
10. Wholesale Trade



#### Top 10 Employers

- Weirton Medical Center
- Brooke County Board of Education
- Wal-Mart Associates, Inc.
- Mountain State Carbon, LLC
- Kroger
- Bethany College
- WMC Physician Practices, LLC
- Wheeling-Nisshin, Inc.
- Eagle Manufacturing Co.
- Brooke County Commission

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2019; American Community Survey, 2017; Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019; Workforce West Virginia, Department of Commerce, West Virginia, 2019; Bureau of Economic Analysis, US Department of Commerce, 2019; Bureau of Business & Economic Research WVU; Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, BLS, 2019.  
 Prepared By: Brooke Hancock Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission.

# Hancock County Data Sheet

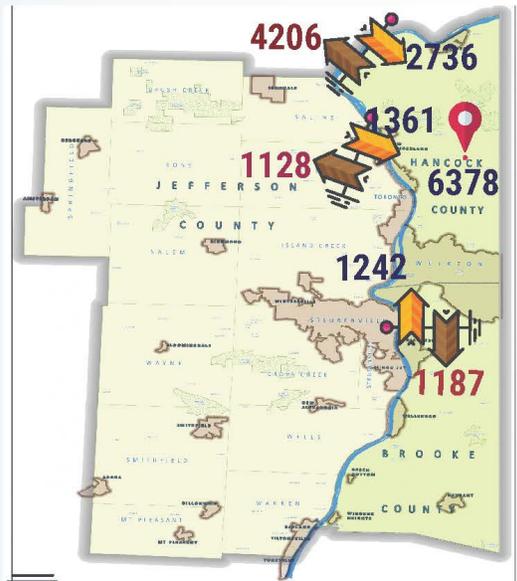
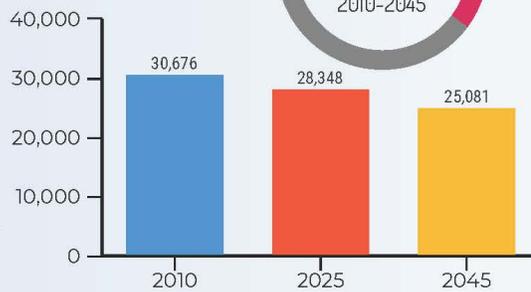
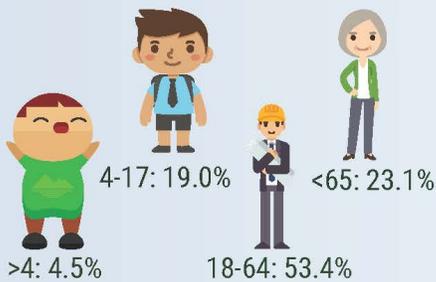
## Hancock County

### CEDS Snapshot

Population: 29,094 (2018 Estimate)

Median Age: 46.1

#### Age Distribution



Work Commuter Flow  
2011-15



Median Household Income- \$47,229  
Median Gross Rent- \$648  
Household with Zero Vehicle- 8.2%  
Families Living Under Poverty- 13.20%



Male: Female Ratio  
48:52  
Minority Population  
5.10%



**\$1306 Million**  
Gross Domestic Product 2018



**10,270**  
Employment Number, 2019



**5.9%**  
Unemployment Rate 2018



#### Top 10 Industrial Sector

1. Manufacturing
2. Government
3. Accommodation and Food Services
4. Healthcare and Social Assistance
5. Retail Trade
6. Other Services (Not Public Administration)
7. Finance and Insurance
8. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
9. Construction
10. Transportation and Warehouse



#### Top 10 Employers

- ArcelorMittal USA, Inc.
- Mountaineer Park, Inc.
- The Homer Laughlin China Co.
- Hancock Co. Board of Education
- Bellofram Corporation
- Weirton Geriatric Center, Inc.
- Ergon-West Virginia, Inc.
- Change, Inc.
- City of Weirton
- Hancock County Commission

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2019; American Community Survey, 2017; Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019; Workforce West Virginia, Department of Commerce, West Virginia, 2019; Bureau of Economic Analysis, US Department of Commerce, 2019; Bureau of Business & Economic Research WVU, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, BLS, 2019.  
Prepared By: Brooke Hancock Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission.

# Weirton- Steubenville Data Sheet

## Weirton-Steubenville MSA

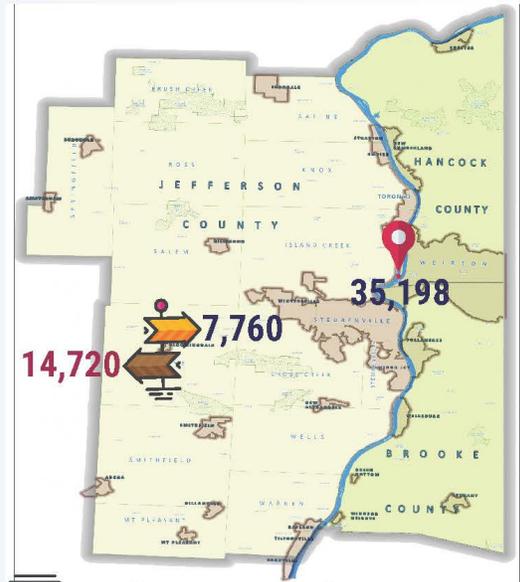
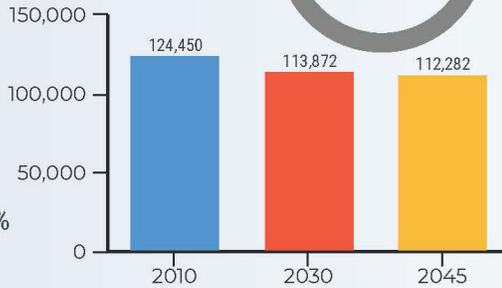
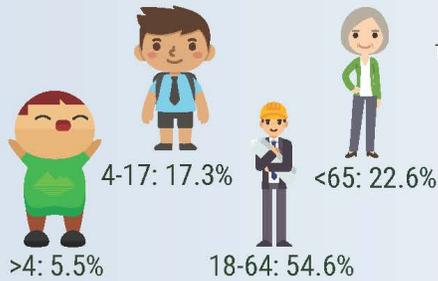
### CEDS Snapshot

Population: 117,906 (2018 Estimate)

Median Age: 45.3



### Age Distribution



Median Household Income- \$44,576  
Property Value- \$89,400  
Owner Occupied Household- 70.8%  
Families Living Under Poverty- 15.70%



Male: Female Ratio  
48:52  
Minority Population  
6.67%



Work Commuter Flow  
2011-15

**\$6.003 Billion**  
Gross Domestic Product 2018



**39,700**

Employment Number, 2019



**6.1%**

Unemployment Rate 2018



### EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (%)



Sources: US Census Bureau,2019; American Community Survey,2017; Local Area Unemployment Statistics,Bureau of Labor Statistics,2019; Workforce West Virginia,Department of Commerce,West Virginia,2019; Bureau of Economic Analysis,US Department of Commerce,2019; Bureau of Business & Economic Research WVU; Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages,BLS,2019.  
Prepared By: Brooke Hancock Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission,

# SWOT Analysis

The CEDS Committee and BHJ-MPC staff conducted a regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis following a review of county and regional data. In addition, a survey was circulated to community stakeholders.

The following page lists key themes and topics identified by the SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis was used to identify goals and objectives in section four.

## **Strengths**

- Intermodal transportation
- Local colleges, universities, and K-12 schools
- Natural and cultural resources
- Local economic development staff
- Charities and non-profit
- Destinations and events
- "Small town feel"

## **Weaknesses**

- Lack of high-speed internet
- Gaps in cellular coverage
- Lack of industry ready sites
- Lack of infrastructure improvements
- Disconnect between employers and qualified applicants
- Lack of professional jobs
- "Brain drain"
- Limited workforce housing
- Lack of public participation
- Resistance to change
- Lack of health services
- Abandoned/ contaminated property

## **Opportunities**

- Grants and tax credits
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Local training programs
- Tourism
- Industrial parks
- Nearby clusters and development
- Intermodal transportation
- Abandoned/ contaminated property

## **Threats**

- Increased burden on infrastructure
- Inadequate tax revenue to balance demands on public utilities and infrastructure
- Gaps in workforce development
- Environmental threats
- Lack of established public information and marketing
- Aging population
- Unattractive taxation

## CEDS Survey

Thank you for participating in our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy survey. We are seeking your input regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing your communities. Please honestly answer the following questions. Thank you.

In your opinion, what makes the economy of the Steubenville-Weirton, OH, WV Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) strong?

In your opinion, what makes the economy of the Steubenville-Weirton, OH, WV Metropolitan Statistical Area weak?

In your opinion, what opportunities face the Steubenville-Weirton, OH-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area?

In your opinion, what threats face the Steubenville-Weirton, OH-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area?

To increase economic resiliency in the Steubenville-Weirton, OH-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area what actions or initiatives would you recommend?

# Strategic Direction/ Action Plan



## Goals

Goals guide economic development by building upon strengths and pursuing opportunities that will both overcome weaknesses and reduce the impact of threats to the regional economy. The CEDs committee in coordination with BHJ MPC staff identified the following goals to provide a regional strategic direction for economic development.

- To create a broader and more diverse economic base
- To market the region's attributes to the world and create a regional messaging strategy
- To complete projects that visibly and substantively advance our regional capacity to promote, nurture, and sustain a diverse economy
- To encourage a common focus for multiple, collaborative, parallel, but not duplicative economic development efforts in West Virginia's Northern Panhandle
- To target site specific projects based upon market drivers such as demographics, ownership, the built and natural environment, and existing or planned infrastructure

The following section discusses objectives that allow partners and community members to make meaningful contributions to accomplishing goals.



## **Objectives**

Brownfields Redevelopment Program

Objective: To implement a successful Brownfields redevelopment program.

### Priorities:

- 
- Complete Phase 1 and Phase 2 environmental assessments on priority sites.
- Continue public awareness to promote the brownfields program.
- Revise GIS brownfield site file for state and federal review.

### Tasks:

- 
- Continue environmental site assessments.
- Maintain shared brownfield work with the BDC, the Northern West Virginia Brownfield Assistance Center, and the US Environmental Protection Agency.
- Prepare an environmental assessment grant application called "US EPA National Environmental Assessment Grants: Hazardous Waste and Petroleum Waste for Brooke and Hancock Counties.

## Evaluation:

The EPA Brownfields program measures progress and reports results in order to track performance. Depending upon the type of grant, progress may be measured by one or more performance measures including properties assessed, jobs leveraged, dollars leveraged, and ACRES made ready for anticipated reuse.

Achievements: The BHJ Brownfields Task Force, which is made up of local leaders, development organizations and state DEP officials, meets on a quarterly basis to review projects and drive solutions forward. Currently, there are 51 sites in the tri-county area that have been identified as eligible for brownfields assistance. To date, the task force has

- 34 sites with Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) completed. Phase 1 ESA actions identify the nature and extent of contamination on the site, including a review of records and site inspections
- 16 sites with Phase II ESAs completed. Phase II ESA actions can involve a number of different kinds of tests, including surface soil and water samples; subsurface soil boring; groundwater monitoring; well installation, sampling, and analysis; drum sampling; and/or floor drains and catch basins.
- 6 sites cleaned and cleared for redevelopment
- 300 local jobs maintained and/or created

Timeline: Ongoing

Resiliency Factor: Brownfields programs and clean-up efforts help encourage economic resiliency by facilitating redevelopment and creation of greener communities.



6 [https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-program-accomplishments-and-benefits\\_.html](https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-program-accomplishments-and-benefits_.html)

## ***Broadband Access***



Objective: Provide broadband infrastructure to facilitate economic development in the region and improve the general quality of life.

### Priorities:

- Completion of the regional broadband plan for Brooke and Hancock Counties.
- Increase involvement of community stakeholders in broadband plan development.
- Identify and apply for broadband infrastructure funding

### Tasks:

- Completion of survey distribution and analysis.
- Completion of speed testing.
- Identification of suitable provider for broadband development in region.

Evaluation: Performance measures could include amount received from grants and private investment in infrastructure.

Achievements: BHJ has been awarded a \$125,000 HUD Small Cities Block Grant by the West Virginia Department of Commerce. The study will pinpoint areas and communities currently under served by broadband. Magellan Advisors of Denver, CO. has been contracted to study broadband access in the region.

Timeline: Six months/ Ongoing

Resiliency Factor: By ensuring redundancy in telecommunication and broadband networks commerce and public safety will be better protected in case of natural or man made disasters.



## ***Economic Development***

Objective: To draw committed investors from the most logical sectors that will in turn enable the region to compete successfully in current and emerging economies.

### Priorities:

- Develop relevant cluster information.
- Develop GIS property program.
- Establish industry cluster point of contact  
Ensure that appropriate staff is available to address the most complex target clusters, such as advanced manufacturing. This could include designating a primary point of contact for the industry to address regulatory issues, access job training programs, relocation opportunities, and so forth.

- Encourage Business Retention
- Develop effective workforce performance programs and potential linkages with Industry and collaborate to define and expand appropriate training programs.

### Tasks:

- Share plans with regional groups and work with local brokers.
- Work with State of West Virginia on cluster recruitment.
- Establish zoning.

Evaluation: Performance measures may include amount of new investment and or number of new jobs created.

Achievements: During the last decade the partnership between BDC and BHJ-MPC has contributed to economic growth in the Northern Panhandle. Since 2009, 3,200 jobs have been created, \$42 million dollars of grants and loans have been awarded, and \$550 million dollars have been invested. Every \$1 received from the EDA or EPA has leveraged \$35 of private investment.

Timeline: Ongoing

Resiliency Factor: Diversification initiatives, such as targeting the development of emerging clusters, will allow the building of a more resilient workforce that can shift between jobs or industries.



## ***Transportation***

Objective: As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Weirton-Steubenville, WV-OH Metropolitan Area, the BHJ-MPC mission is to fulfill the federal transportation planning requirements of the most current authorized surface transportation legislation, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The overall scope of this transportation planning process considers short and long-term projects and strategies that strengthen the region's transportation network by integrating metropolitan planning factors.

### Priorities:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.
- Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

### Tasks:

- Creation, distribution, and presentation of transportation plans.
- Conduct traffic counts and other research.

Evaluation: Transportation performance measures predict, evaluate, and monitor the degree to which the transportation system accomplishes its objectives. Measures are varied and could include federal or state dollars received, number of riders using public transportation, miles of trails or road developed, and road/ rail/ river usage information.

Achievements: The Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Organization creates the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) in

cooperation and coordination with the Ohio and West Virginia departments of transportation and local public operators, the Steel Valley Transit Authority in Steubenville, OH and the Weirton Transit Corporation in Weirton, WV.



Updated in its entirety every two years, BHJ may amend the TIP by adding or deleting a project or a project phase, significantly change a project's description or scope, or revising a project's phase cost estimate over the thresholds noted in the tables below. All amendments are major revisions to the TIP that require adoption by the BHJ Transportation Policy Committee and federal approval, as well as public review and comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity demonstration.

Timeline: Ongoing

Resiliency Factor: Transportation resiliency refers to the ability of people to move around in the face of obstacles to normal function. By prioritizing the creation and maintenance of transportation infrastructure the community can assure mobility and the continuation of commerce during both natural and manmade disasters. Further utilization and development of intermodal transportation, including river and rail, will help assure economic resiliency of the region as well.



## **Infrastructure**

Objective: To assist with research, grant writing, and other tasks deemed appropriate and necessary for economic/ community development throughout Brooke and Hancock counties.

### Priorities:

- Administer requested local water and sewer infrastructure projects.
- Prepare and submit funding requests for BHJ-MPC mission projects.

### Tasks:

- To retain a continuing dialogue with strategic investment agencies while building future opportunities for its constituent communities.

Evaluation: Performance measures will vary depending upon project and types of funding. Measures may include number of new recipients of utility service or number of persons receiving a service from a refurbished or repaired utility. An additional measure could be the amount of money received from grants, loans, or other sources.

Achievements: The BHJ-MPC has a continuing dialogue with Brooke and Hancock county representatives. Members of the B-H Regional Council regularly attend meetings of the county commissions, the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle, the Brooke County Economic Development Authority, Brooke and Hancock Public Service Districts, and city councils. At the request of these groups, B-H regularly prepares grant proposals, substantiates project needs, locates potential investment sources, shares and promotes a strong regional investment approach and creates an opportunity for consensus building.

During 2019, the Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council received loans for infrastructure totaling \$13,620,6602. The region also received grants totaling \$1,814,545.

Timeline: Ongoing

Resiliency Factor: By replacing or expanding water and sewer infrastructure communities will be more apt to deal with climate change and will minimize costs financial costs due to disruption of services.





## ***Diverse Community Involvement/ Planning***

Objective: To create and sustain a continuous planning process to promote long-term economic development and opportunity within the Brooke and Hancock Counties area.

### Priorities:

- Annually submit updated CEDS document to the West Virginia Development Office.
- Create and substantiate local investment for job creation purposes.

### Tasks:

- Schedule meetings with the Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council to update/prioritize projects.
- Track and record plan progress.

Evaluation: Potential performance measures include number of completed meetings, number of participants, and increasing number of attendees from minority community populations.

Achievements: The BHJ-MPC director and BDC director are members of both boards and attend scheduled meetings of these organizations. Common agenda items for B-H are infrastructure improvements, grant preparation and technical studies. Common agenda items for the BDC are existing and future businesses contacts, site development, and the holding of development properties. Both boards consist of active members from throughout their service areas.

Timeline: Six months/ ongoing

Resiliency Factor: By engaging in broader community planning the residents and interested parties will be able to better define and implement a collective vision for resilience including alignment with other planning efforts

## Section 5

### ***Evaluation Process***

The Brooke Hancock and Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission will annually review and update the plan. To establish this task BHJ-MPC will establish standards for plan review that will measure changes in the economic climate of the region. The BHJ-MPC will continue to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

An advisory committee will be formed to conduct a series of meetings with interested community stakeholders. The advisory committee will evaluate information and establish an agenda for public information.

Residents from throughout the Steubenville-Weirton MSA will be invited to participate in a public forum to set goals and objectives for plans and programs. Meetings will be conducted on an annual basis and information will be continually added to the CEDS.



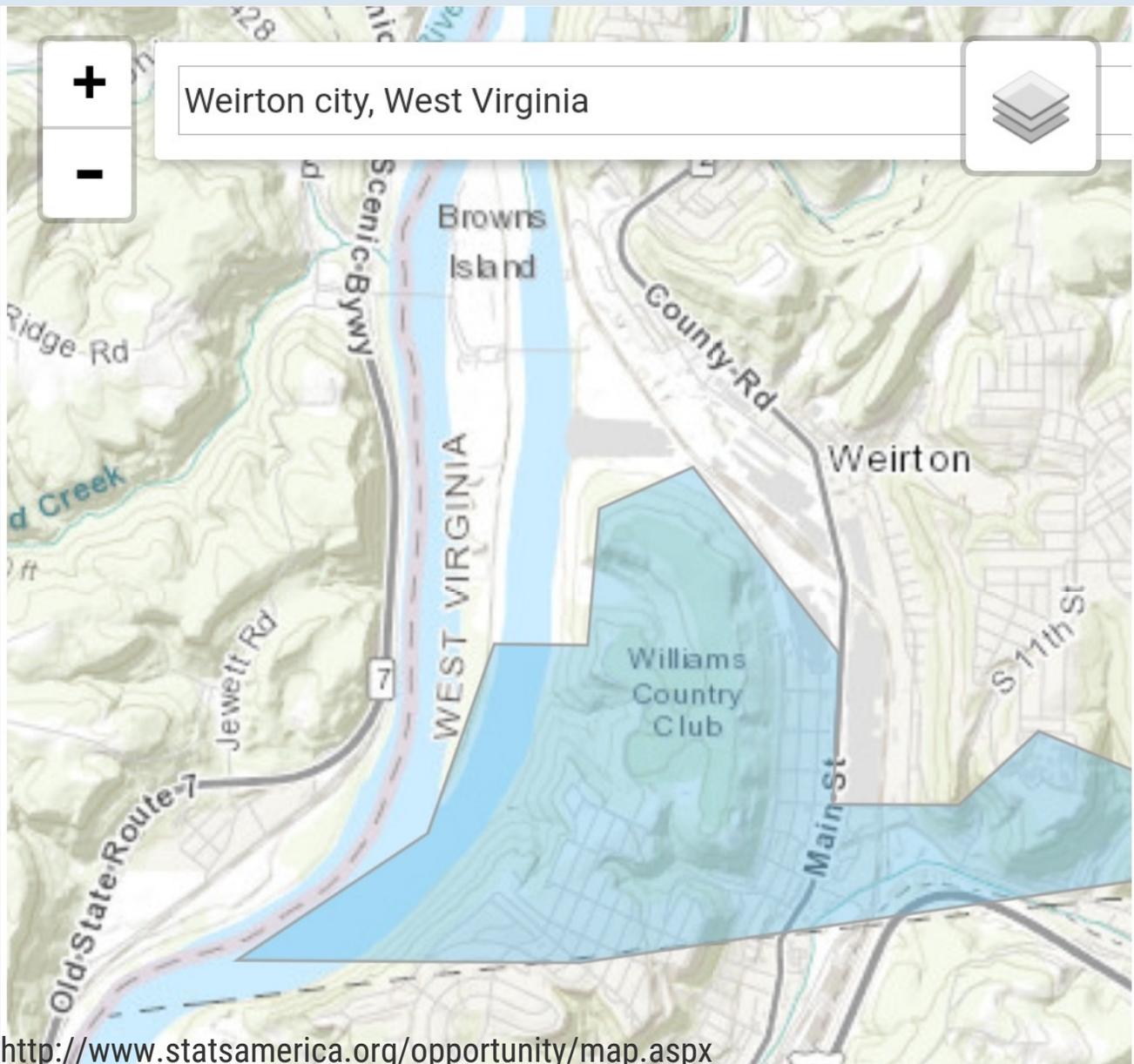
## Section 6

### **Opportunity Zone, Hancock County, WV Tract 0213.00**

On January 20, 2021 the EDA updated CEDS guidelines to help communities maximize ability to attract opportunity zone investments. Opportunity Zones may be used to improve economic diversity and the resiliency of local economies.

An Opportunity Zone is a designated census tract where private investment may be eligible for capital gain tax incentives. Investors can defer and possibly eliminate tax on prior gains invested in a Qualified Opportunity Fund (QOF) before an investment in a QOF is sold or exchanged until December 31, 2026.

### **Opportunity Zone Map**



## Key Partners/ Collaborations

Communities must position themselves for successful investment in Opportunity Zones. A successful Opportunity Zone project will be part of a thoroughly considered and well-prepared economic development plan. Key stake holders must not only be identified but must be able to recognize and market regional assets. In Brooke and Hancock Counties there are several organizations that may assist with critical planning and stakeholder engagement.

### Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council

The purpose of the Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council is “to assist communities throughout the region to realize long-term economic development.” West Virginia planning programs are funded through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the United States Economic Development Administration (US EDA).

### Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle

The BDC is comprised of “leaders and catalysts for creating and maintaining a diverse and expanding economy in the Brooke-Hancock Region of the great State of West Virginia.” The BDC has resources and collaborative relationships to help facilitate and continuously implement economic growth in the region.

### Weirton Chamber of Commerce

According to its website, “The Weirton Area Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary, non-profit partnership of business and professional people working together towards a common goal- to build a healthy economy and to improve the quality of life in our community.”

## Goals and Objectives

The Weirton Reuse Report drafted by the BDC provides insight into the potential of Weirton's Opportunity Zone. Marketing and or preparation of the opportunity zone may be complimented by ongoing efforts to attract targeted industries.

### Industries Generating Growth

- Machinery
  - Energy Industry (specifically, natural gas and natural gas liquids)
  - Logistics and Transportation
  - Plastics Production
  - Primary and Fabricated Metals
- Targeted Industry Attraction Efforts
- Energy and Natural Gas
- Upstream
    - Attract additional instrumentation companies that supply the natural gas industry, such as gas dehydrogenation equipment manufacturers.
    - Provide in the master plan - flexplace combined with 5 to 10 acre "lay-down" yards.
  - Mid-stream – attract those within the hydrocarbon value chain gaps. This would include:
    - "On purpose" dehydrogenation facility
    - Manufacturers of fuel additives
    - Manufacturers of food additives
  - Downstream – chemicals and plastics
    - Capitalize on transportation advantages for raw materials
    - Facilitate expansion of local/regional existing plastics producers especially those that can service the fuel additive and food additive industry
    - Attract manufacturers of compounds and resins
    - Attract manufacturers of plastic wraps and sheets
    - Steel Industry
  - Capitalize on advantages of low-cost natural gas
  - Attract suppliers/customers to Mingo Junction
  - Attract customers of Wheeling Nisshan
  - Provide multi-tenant space to locally owned suppliers and "small shops"
    - Transportation & Logistics
  - Court this sector to diversify both the local economy and Frontier Crossings. For Distribution operations may take advantage of the region's unique access to rail, river, highway, and the Pittsburgh International Airport.
    - Smart Park
  - Strive for that "smart park" theme, where companies look to the region not just for land or buildings, but for a variety of needs, including complementary business groupings (e.g. the bottle manufacturer located next to the producer of product that fills the bottles or the customer of Wheeling – Nisshin ZAM), energy needs through the co-generation facility, labor requirements through the training centers, and timely railroad service from Norfolk Southern.

## Section 7

### CEDS SWOT SURVEY COMMENTS

#### Question 5

To increase economic resiliency in the Steubenville-Weirton, OH-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area what actions or initiatives would you recommend?

#### Comments

Revolutionary education system (look to Europe). Continue to focus on “grow your own.” Bring ownership of land closer to home.

Need to see what others have done to make themselves competitive quickly, shortest distance between today and tomorrow, e.g. case studies etc.

Collaborative applications of their missions-mission.

To bring in industries to the empty space located in Beech Bottom. To get a program to help addicts and or people who need to get back on track.

Aggressively seek businesses to come in. We have to compete with neighbors.

Increased/ better infrastructure- e.g. water, sewage that can hold more business/ population.

Not sure what more can be done. Centralized transportation could be a help.