

Rough Transcription – Notes from the March 4, 2020, Economic Development Commission meeting for Kent County Economic Development Strategic Planning

Strengths

Fiber
Recreation (especially water)
Location – reasonable distance
Proximity to major sectors and customers, many of which are distance-friendly
Tourism destination
Quality of life is attractive
Low traffic!
Washington College, as
 Employer
 Community Support
 Arts & Culture
 Influx of new people – students, parents, faculty
Dedicated employers
Chestertown, all towns
Community pride & loyalty
Citizen Engagement
Preserved communities & landscape – “heritage”
Hunting & Fishing
Education Choices

Opportunities

Federal funds – let’s get our fair share with a grant writer
500 new homes will be sited in the next five years, stimulated by 301
Small school system gives us control – need to change the narrative – high graduation rate, dual completion [rate] [mean] we are keeping up
Manageable size [community as a whole]
Better communications among business owners
Health care & wellness (digital, new [businesses])
Diversity of talent
More marketing – [create] educated and organized marketing teams [of business leaders]
International business links [already exist]
Minimum wage?
Advocacy
Environmental education

Weaknesses

Fiber is not yet widely available
Location – distance, limit of the Bay Bridge
 [Lacking in close-by] conveniences, amenities
 “Not on the way”
Student body at Washington College is decreasing
Few employment opportunities for WC grads
Out-migration [of youth]

Untrained workforce

Small workforce

Training situation is difficult – distance, access, American Jobs Center; businesses are doing training themselves

Health care

We are losing doctors

Practices are limited

No urgent care

Racial issues/diversity

Low-wage environment yet high cost of living

County-town relations (tax differential issue)

Intra-county [governmental] communications

Percentage of ag land – limited zone [zoning] flexibility, tax revenue

Community 'negativity' [- worried about:]

Education

Employment

Ability to compete

Chestertown is landlocked and has much tax-exempt property

Chestertown Downtown community doesn't work with all Kent businesses

Insensitivity to environmental issues (farming practices)

Threats

Proximity to Delaware

Tax structure

Climate change – weather

State of Chesapeake Bay – hurts boating as well as fishing

Flooding, erosion

Bay Bridge condition

Loss of civility

STRENGTHS

FIBER

RECREATION → WATER!

LOCATION - REASONABLE
DISTANCE

PROXIMITY TO MAJOR
SECTORS & CUSTOMERS -
MANY ARE DISTANCE

TOURISM DESTINATION FRIENDLY

QUALITY OF LIFE IS
ATTRACTIVE

LOW TRAFFIC!

STRENGTHS

WASHINGTON COLLEGE -
EMPLOYER

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

ARTS & CULTURE

INFLUX OF NEW PEOPLE

STUDENTS, PARENTS,
FACULTY

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

HEALTH CARE HOSPITAL

CHESTERTOWN MARINA SURVIVING

BUSINESS INCENTIVE DISTRICTS

SAFETY

STRENGTHS

DEDICATED EMPLOYERS
CHESTERTOWN! & ALL
TOWNS

COMMUNITY PRIDE &
LOYALTY

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

PRESERVED COMMUNITIES &
LANDSCAPE - "HERITAGE"

HUNTING & FISHING

EDUCATION CHOICES

THREATS

PROXIMITY TO DELAWARE

TAX STRUCTURE

CLIMATE CHANGE - WEATHER

STATE OF CHES. BAY -

HURTS REC BOATING AS
WELL AS FISHING

FLOODING, EROSION

BAY BRIDGE CONDITION

LOSS OF CIVILITY

WEAKNESSES

FIBER-NOT (YET) WIDELY AVAILABLE

LOCATION (DISTANCE/
CONVENIENCES) BRIDGE

AMENITIES
"NOT ON THE WAY"

STUDENT BODY @ WAC
IS DECREASING

FEW EMPLOYMENT OPP'TY FOR
NC GRADS
OUT-MIGRATION
UNTRAINED WORKFORCE

WEAKNESSES

SMALL WORKFORCE

TRAINING SITUATION IS
DIFFICULT - DISTANCE

IS ACCESS
BUSINESSES ARE DOING
TRAINING THEMSELVES

AMERICAN JOBS CENTER

HEALTH CARE - LOSING DR'S
LIMITED PRACTICES
RESISTANCE TO CHANGE
NO URGENT CARE

RACIAL ISSUES/DIVERSITY
LOW-WAGE ENVIRONMENT YET
HIGH COST OF LIVING

WEAKNESSES

COUNTY-TOWN RELATIONS
TAX DIFFERENTIAL

INTRA-COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS

6% AG LAND/LIMITED ZONE
FLEXIBILITY, TAX REVENUE

INADEQUATE TAX BASE

COMMUNITY 'NEGATIVITY'

- EDUCATION

- EMPLOYMENT

- ABILITY TO COMPETE

BUSINESS TURNOVER

WEAKNESSES

CHESTERTOWN IS
LANDLOCKED & HAS
MUCH TAX-EXEMPT PROP.

C'TOWN DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY
DOESN'T WORK W/ ALL
KENT BUSINESSES

Insensitivity to Environmental Issues.
Farming Practices.

OPPORTUNITIES (7)

FEDERAL FUNDS -
LET'S GET OUR FAIR
SHARE w/ A GRANT
WRITER

500 NEW HOMES WILL
BE SITED IN THE NEXT
FIVE YEARS - STIM. BY

SMALL SCHOOL SYSTEM ^{30%} GIVES
US CONTROL - NEED TO
CHANGE THE NARRATIVE -
HIGH GRAD RATE, ^{DUAL COMPLETION}
WE ARE KEEPING UP
MANAGEABLE SIZE

OPPORTUNITIES (8)

BETTER COMMUNICATIONS
AMONG BUSINESS OWNERS

HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS
↳ DIGITAL, NEW

DIVERSITY OF TALENT

MORE MARKETING - ^{EDUCATED}
MARKETING TEAMS ^(W/ ORGANIZED)

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
LINKS

MINIMUM WAGE?

ADVOCACY
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Refined transcription

(Editor’s Note: This is a first attempt at imposing more rigorous categorization and collapse of topics, to be worked out over all three meetings; ultimately, we should create subcategories for Strengths and Weaknesses; this version includes notes from both meetings, 2/26 and 3/4)

DEFINITIONS (<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4245-swot-analysis.html>)

Internal factors

Strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) refer to internal factors, which are the resources and experience readily available to you.

These are some commonly considered internal factors:

- Financial resources (funding, sources of income and investment opportunities)
- Physical resources (location, facilities and equipment)
- Human resources (employees, volunteers and target audiences)
- Access to natural resources, trademarks, patents and copyrights
- Current processes (employee programs, department hierarchies and software systems)

External factors

External forces influence and affect every company, organization and individual. Whether these factors are connected directly or indirectly to an opportunity (O) or threat (T), it is important to note and document each one.

External factors are typically things you or your company do not control, such as the following:

- Market trends (new products, technology advancements and shifts in audience needs)
- Economic trends (local, national and international financial trends)
- Funding (donations, legislature and other sources)
- Demographics
- Relationships with suppliers and partners
- Political, environmental and economic regulations

S	W	O	T	Item	Notes
(preliminary analysis)				(as stated by participants)	
				STRENGTHS	
S				Great people	
S				Culture – (especially) arts	
S				Rural quality of life	Meeting 2 expressed this as “Quality of life is <u>attractive</u> ”
S				Location – surrounded by major markets	Meeting 2 expressed this as “proximity to major sectors and customers, many of which are distance-friendly”
S				Central to the Eastern Seaboard (Maine to Florida)	
W			T	Heritage tourism	T in terms of demand, changing markets
S		O		Fiber (will promote telecommuting)	
S	W	O	T	Washington College ((as employer, source of community support and arts & culture, brings new people – students, parents, faculty – source of young employees)	W in terms of less active partnership across-the-board with campus community (although Pres Landgraf’s support was mentioned as a positive); T in terms of demand for WC by upcoming generations;

S	W	O	T	Item	Notes
(preliminary analysis)				(as stated by participants)	
S				Safety	
S				Route 301	
S				Recreation “wonderland”	water, hunting, fishing, boating
S		O		Business zones (enterprise, opportunity, hub – means businesses do not pay personal property tax, among other benefits)	
S				School system investment	
S				K-college (“vertical” system of education)	Meeting 2 expressed this as “Education[al] choices”
S				Hospital	Redundant
S		O		Existing businesses offer models and leadership	
S	W			Small population	
				Planning & zoning promoting planned growth	Redundant
				Fiber	Redundant
				Recreation (especially water)	Redundant
				Location – reasonable distance	Redundant
				Proximity to major sectors and customers, many of which are distance friendly	Redundant
S				Tourism destination	
				Quality of life is attractive	Redundant
				Low traffic!	Redundant
				Washington College (as employer, source of community support and arts & culture, brings new people – students, parents, faculty)	Redundant
S		O		Dedicated employers	
S				Chestertown, all towns	
S				Community pride & loyalty	
S				Citizen engagement	
S				Preserved communities & landscape – “heritage”	
				Hunting & Fishing	Redundant
				Education[al] Choices	
				OPPORTUNITIES	
S		O		Tier One status of county	
S		O		Utilities/infrastructure in good shape, from broadband and natural gas to all others	

S	W	O	T	Item	Notes
(preliminary analysis)				(as stated by participants)	
		O		Data centers (need to be ready for when H.B. 1339 passes, incentivizing them)	
		O		Upcoming re-zoning	
		O		Focus on supply chains for existing manufacturers	
		O		Federal funding	
S		O		Boating	
		O		Federal funds – let’s get our fair share with a grant writer	
		O		500 new homes will be sited in the next five years, stimulated by 301	
		O		Small school system gives us control	“need to change the narrative – high graduation rate, dual completion [rate] [mean] we are keeping up”
S				Manageable size [community as a whole]	
		O		Better communications among business owners	
		O		Health care & wellness (digital, new [businesses])	
S				Diversity of talent	
		O		More marketing – [create] educated and organized marketing teams [of business leaders]	
		O		International business links [already exist]	
		O		Minimum wage?	
		O		Advocacy	
S				Environmental education	
WEAKNESSES					
	W	O		No rail [not quite true, actually, and the reason we still have rail is we have at least one business in need of the service]	
	W			Affordable housing is limited	
	W		T	Real estate taxes (Kirwan Commission for statewide education spending requirements, currently under discussion in the current legislative session, are likely to require greater spending by counties, which would have to raise taxes to cover that spending)	Real estate taxes in Kent Co are already locally considered high (and regressive) – a weakness; Kirwan is a threat (outside our control)

S	W	O	T	Item	Notes
(preliminary analysis)				(as stated by participants)	
S	W			Where is Washington College — do we have a proactive partnerships?	Redundant
			T	Delaware competes for jobs, businesses	
	W			Workforce limits: small size	[Meeting 2 confirmed that both size AND training are issues]
	W			Workforce limits: training	Training situation is difficult – distance, access, American Jobs Center; businesses are doing training themselves
	W			Distance to the community college	
	W			(Limited) transportation available to county residents (also identified by United Way as a community concern)	
S	W	O	T	Hospital (like all rural hospitals, threatened by changing economics; but MD is looking at special rural hospital legislation)	Threat only if MD fails to act on proposal during current legislative session
	W			Employment opportunities for trailing spouses	
	W			Shopping/amenities for newcomers (non-rural, unaccustomed to limits)	
	W		T	Tax environment for business growth – the Tax Foundation ranks MD at 43 rd ; specific concern mentioned about penalizing Priority Funding Areas (generally, municipalities and their immediate surroundings where growth is desired) with ‘double taxation’ (where both county and municipality tax for same services)	
	W	O		Aging population of trades providers	
				Small population – lack of critical mass to provide demand for services and amenities	
	W		T	Infrastructure limits	(This was unclear)
S	W			Planning & zoning presents obstacles to change (same speaker praised growth management goals)	
	W			Appeal to younger consumers	
	W			No county grant writer, limited resources invested in supporting efforts to get grants	

S	W	O	T	Item	Notes
(preliminary analysis)				(as stated by participants)	
	W	O		Fiber is not yet widely available	
	W			Location – distance, limit of the Bay Bridge, “not on the way”	
	W			[Lacking in close-by] conveniences, amenities	
	W			Student body at Washington College is decreasing	
	W			Few employment opportunities for WC grads	
	W			Out-migration [of youth]	
				Untrained workforce	Redundant
				Small workforce	Redundant
	W			Health care	(Losing doctors, practices are limited, no urgent care outside emergency room)
	W			Racial issues/diversity	
	W			Low-wage environment yet high cost of living	
	W			County-town relations (caused in part by the tax differential issue)	
	W			Intra-county [governmental] communications	(participant was not specific)
	W			Percentage of ag land – limited zoning flexibility, decreased tax revenue from farmland	
	W			Community ‘negativity’	Especially worried about: education, employment, ability to compete
	W		T	Chestertown is landlocked and has much tax-exempt property	
	W			Chestertown Downtown community doesn’t work with all Kent businesses	
				THREATS	
	W			Conflicting ideas of what “success” looks like – “how do we grow reasonably, in a smart way?”	
			T	New Bay Bridge crossing to Kent County	
				Kirwan (as explained above)	Redundant
			T	Proximity to Delaware	
				Tax structure	Redundant
			T	Climate change – weather	
			T	State of Chesapeake Bay – hurts boating as well as fishing	
			T	Flooding, erosion	

S	W	O	T	Item	Notes
(preliminary analysis)				(as stated by participants)	
			T	Bay Bridge condition	
			T	Loss of civility	
				Other Topics	
		O	T	Role of Maryland's state-level economic development	T because one speaker mentioned that the state could be steering possibilities away from Kent (despite its Tier One status)
	W			Gap between KC businesses and KC schools (although the school system is organized around ten topics that enlist businesses, fear is that participation from businesses is low)	
				Granting process is a challenge and needs more attention, investment (other counties, municipalities employ grant writers)	Redundant

Proximity to Delaware
Tax structure
Climate change – weather
State of Chesapeake Bay – hurts boating as well as fishing
Flooding, erosion
Bay Bridge condition
Loss of civility