

PROJECT SUMMARY

**PIEDMONT TRIAD REGION,
N.C.**

Submitted by
MARKET STREET SERVICES, INC.
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LIVE GROW WORK

Market Street brings original insights and clarity to the evaluation and revitalization of the places where people live, grow and work. *Market Street* inspires trust in all community stakeholders – citizens, educators, leadership and industry – because our holistic, proactive process takes into account all the aspects that shape community life. Through honest and informed assessments, *Market Street* can equip you with the tools to create meaningful change. Our solutions successfully merge our unique vision with your economic and social realities.

BACKGROUND

The Piedmont Triad Region (“Triad” or “Region”) is defined as the 12-county area that is the jurisdiction of the Piedmont Triad Partnership, as created and authorized by the North Carolina General Assembly, and several other regional organizations. The Piedmont Triad Partnership (“PTP”) contracted with *Market Street Services*, a national economic and workforce consulting firm headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, to gain a better understanding of where the Piedmont Triad Region is today, to update its *Regional Vision Plan*, and to move the Piedmont Triad Region towards its goals. The North Carolina legislative mandate from Section 13.6 of House Bill 1414 provides funding for the state’s seven regional economic development partnerships to develop and implement strategic vision plans that accomplish the following tasks:

1. Perform a comprehensive study of the region’s resources and existing businesses located in the region to determine what business clusters exist and the boundaries of those clusters, to develop ways to strengthen those clusters, and to determine in what areas the region has a competitive advantage that could lead to the development of future clusters.
2. Ensure that the benefits of the economic development plan are widely dispersed and that the plan provides real opportunities in rural areas as well as in urban and suburban areas.
3. Develop focused and targeted economic development initiatives related to the recruitment and development of new businesses and the retention of existing businesses.
4. Provide a mechanism for continuous monitoring of the regional economy and competitiveness indicators and for updating the strategic economic development plan to take account of changing economic conditions.
5. Recommend infrastructure investments to meet the region's current and anticipated future needs.
6. Integrate the North Carolina Community College System and The University of North Carolina into economic development efforts and planning.
7. Create leadership networks that span the public and private sectors and that facilitate communication within clusters, between members of complementary clusters, and between members of the public and private sectors.

Market Street outlined a process for the Piedmont Triad Region to address the legislative mandate and succeed in uniting all regional communities under the

umbrella of quality growth and sustainable development. The project has been guided by a 34-member Steering Committee and includes four phases as described below:

- I. ***Competitive Realities.*** A realistic assessment of the Region's demographic and economic trends and its business competitiveness compared to three peer metropolitan areas. Complementing the quantitative data analysis is feedback gathered and compiled into a ***Regional Input Summary.***
- II. ***Target Cluster Analysis.*** Identifies primary business sectors that have the highest probability of sustained success for the future of the Region's economy. The ***Target Cluster Analysis*** examines national trends and builds upon the work of the ***Competitive Realities.***
- III. ***Regional Vision Plan.*** Developing the ***Plan*** brings together all subsequent project deliverables and provides a blueprint for the Region's future actions. The ***Plan*** addresses targeted business clusters, entrepreneurship, improving factors that affect business competitiveness, and leveraging regional partnerships.
- IV. ***Implementation Plan.*** Effective implementation is critical to the ultimate success of the ***Regional Vision Plan.*** The Steering Committee and ***Market Street*** will work together to designate lead organizations, provide program assessments, determine funding reallocations, establish timetables, and recommend marketing and communication approaches.

This document provides a summary of each of the deliverables, except for the ***Implementation Plan***, which is currently being developed. Only highlights are presented here; the individual documents provide a far greater level of detail and can be downloaded from the project website, www.piedmonttriadvision.com.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee, chaired by Tom Ross, Executive Director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, and Watts Carr, Chairman of the Piedmont Triad Partnership Board of Directors, was established at the beginning of the strategic planning process to provide guidance and leadership. The Committee was selected from both public and private sectors throughout the 12-county Piedmont Triad Region to provide broad representation of businesses, economic development groups, higher education institutions, K-12 education systems, elected officials, and tourism assets.

The Steering Committee has been responsible for reviewing and providing feedback on project deliverables and participating in discussions about the future direction of the Region. It has made decisions about the final selection of the goals and objectives in the *Regional Vision Plan* and reached consensus on a vast majority of the detailed action steps. The Steering Committee approved unanimously on June 23, 2005 that the *Vision Plan* provides the strategies that need to be implemented to move this Region forward.

The following are the chairmen and members of the Steering Committee.

Co-Chairmen

Watts Carr	Piedmont Triad Partnership
Tom Ross	Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

Members

Evelyn Acree	Mechanics and Farmers Bank, Winston-Salem
Dennis Barry	The Greensboro Partnership
Robert Brown	B & C Associates, High Point
Steve Googe	Economic Developers Advisory Council/Davidson County Economic Development Commission
Lyons Gray	Piedmont Triad Partnership
Nate Hall	Piedmont Triad Council of Governments
Phil Hanes	Cultural Affairs – City of Winston-Salem
Wade Hobgood/Susan Booth	North Carolina School of the Arts, Winston-Salem
Keith Holliday	Greensboro Mayor
Jose Isasi	Latino Communications, Inc., Winston-Salem
Allen Joines	Winston-Salem Mayor
David Jones	NC Zoological Park, Asheboro
Mary Kirk	Montgomery Community College
Harold Martin	Winston-Salem State University
Jim Melvin	Joseph M. Bryan Foundation, Greensboro
Judy Mendenhall	International Home Furnishings Market Authority, High Point
James Merrill	Alamance-Burlington School System

Jeff Miller
Adnan Mjalli
Dave Norbury
John O'Leary
Dan Pugh
James Renick/Phil Halstead
Steve Ross
Frank Sells
Ralph Shelton
Becky Smothers
Patricia Sullivan/John Merrill
Priscilla Taylor
Barbara Todd
Craven Williams
Ralph Womble

High Point Regional Hospital
TransTech Pharma, High Point
Piedmont Triad Entrepreneurs Network
Thomas Built Bus, High Point
Northwest Piedmont Triad Council of Governments
North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro
Burlington Mayor
Surry Community College
Southeast Fuels Incorporated, Greensboro
High Point Mayor
UNC Greensboro
UNC Board of Governors, Greensboro
Yadkin County Schools
Greensboro College
Hanes Dye & Finishing, Winston-Salem

COMPETITIVE REALITIES

The purpose of the *Competitive Realities* document was to assess the Piedmont Triad Region's demographic characteristics, economic performance and structure, business climate, and competitiveness as a place to live and do business. To get a sense of the Piedmont Triad's performance and competitiveness, it was compared to three peer metro areas in the Southeast of similar size and economic characteristics. These peer metros are: Memphis, Tennessee; Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, South Carolina; and Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, Virginia.

Key issues and challenges were identified through the quantitative analysis of the *Competitive Assessment*. The major findings of the research were:

- ⇒ The Region's per capita income, while growing slowly, is not approaching the national average, and the gap is widening.
- ⇒ Per capita income and poverty rates vary quite widely by county, indicating that there are significant economic disparities among counties within the Region. Poverty and educational attainment rates are worse for Blacks and Hispanics than for whites. These disparities have a negative impact on the Region as a whole, and efforts must be made to create job opportunities and improve the standard of living in all counties and for all ethnic groups in the Region.
- ⇒ The Region has experienced huge job losses in the past few years – across manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, retail, and information services. In fact, 4.5 percent of the Region's total jobs disappeared between 2001 and 2003.
- ⇒ Over the last two decades, employment growth in the Region has not kept up with North Carolina and was slower than job growth in the United States from 1990 to 2000. In addition, the Region lost a greater proportion of its jobs between 2001 and 2003 than the state, nation, and three peer metro areas. The Region has a higher proportion of its employment in the manufacturing sector than do North Carolina and the United States. This could result in additional job losses to the Region as the economy continues to restructure towards a more technology and service-oriented economy.
- ⇒ The Region's low labor force participation rate and decreasing labor force size indicate lack of confidence in the local labor market and that people have given up looking for a job.
- ⇒ A lower percentage of the Region's K-12 schools had at least 80 percent of their students testing at or above grade level than the state average. Combined

with SAT scores that are lower than the national and state averages, this raises concern about the preparation of the Region's youth for competition in the knowledge-based workforce.

- ⇒ The bright spot in the Region's education system is in the community colleges and universities. New graduate and research programs are being introduced, and program offerings at community colleges are aligned with sectors that have promising job opportunities. Also, the two and four-year institutions in the Region have begun collaborating in a number of ways, to engage in joint research and offer joint academic programs.
- ⇒ The Region has solid physical infrastructure, particularly in its highway accessibility. It is also competitive in its business costs, although this is typical of many metro areas in the Southeast.
- ⇒ The low cost of living and abundant recreational and cultural opportunities help improve the quality of life in the Piedmont Triad region. The Region must keep in check its pollution and environmental issues in order to prevent these from deteriorating the Region's quality of life. The Region has a number of unique arts and cultural assets, but region-wide efforts should be made to create a cohesive arts network and generate the support of the all of the counties.

The Piedmont Triad Region's main comparative advantages are its infrastructure and business costs. The Region has a high quality of life, but certain aspects of arts and culture are still developing. Also, environmental issues prevent it from outperforming its peers. Although the Region is improving its post-secondary education programs, its K-12 public school performance lags behind its peers, the state, and the nation. The Region's main comparative disadvantage is its economic performance, where job losses have been significant and may continue to occur, given the higher proportion of manufacturing employment in the Region.

REGIONAL INPUT SUMMARY

Community input was gathered through individual interviews, focus group meetings, and an online survey. Community participation and engagement was a critical component to laying the groundwork for the success of the *Regional Vision Plan*.

Market Street conducted over 30 individual interviews with key economic development partners. Interviews were held across the Region and included people involved with private businesses, regional organizations, public school systems, higher education, elected government positions, charitable organizations, and other economic development entities. *Market Street* also facilitated nine focus group meetings, where many individuals from similar backgrounds were invited to participate in open discussions regarding the future of the Piedmont Triad Region and key issues that need to be addressed. To reach as wide of an audience as possible, an online survey was posted on the Regional Vision Plan website (www.piedmonttriadvision.com). The survey drew 1,147 respondents from all counties in the Piedmont Triad Region, and even a few from outside of the Region.

Input collected through the multiple methods of stakeholder participation identified several common themes. The Piedmont Triad Region's location, quality of life, and transportation network are its greatest assets that need to be supported and leveraged. Stakeholders also identified multiple challenges that the Region needs to address:

1. The Region's universities are assets, but research capacity needs to be developed further. The *Competitive Realities* report found that aside from Wake Forest University, the other universities in the Region do not make a substantial impact in terms of their R&D funding. Also, the quality of the K-12 education system is a concern to many stakeholders. Data from the *Competitive Realities* report supports this concern.
2. The Region needs to take steps to attract and retain younger workers and the creative class, by creating job opportunities and developing assets that improve their quality of life. The Region lost population in its 18-to-24 age group between 1990 and 2000, and saw only anemic growth in its 25-to-34 age group.
3. Regional entities must work together on planning for land-use, transit, and water and sewer capacity. Stakeholders are increasingly concerned that lack of planning will affect quality of life and the environment. Data from the *Competitive Realities* report showed that pollution was impacting the Region's environment.
4. The Region needs to support existing businesses, small businesses, and entrepreneurs with increased resources and coordinated efforts. While bank

loans are widely available, venture capital funding for high growth firms is scarcer.

5. Regional leadership needs to be more open and inclusive, of all parts of the Region as well as of minorities.
6. The Region needs to work together to leverage its potential. Many stakeholders are very concerned about the Region's economy and its ability to create quality jobs. Promotion of the Region needs to be done internally as well as to those outside of the Region.

PRIMARY ISSUES TO ADDRESS

The presentation of these previous findings led to the Steering Committee's identification of these issues for the Piedmont Triad Region to address:

1. Air quality problems affect not just manufacturing operations, but also quality of life.
2. The Region's air quality is heavily influenced by its transportation system. Public transportation options in the Region can reduce reliance on the automobile and serve aging and low-income populations.
3. The Region needs to address solid waste disposal.
4. The Region's water supply problems need to be addressed.
5. The Piedmont Triad needs a comprehensive land-use planning effort that will address the need to preserve and create greenspace. If existing development patterns persist, the Region's vital tourism business will be adversely affected by the loss of greenspace.
6. Throughout the Region, including the smaller communities, the central business districts need to be strengthened.
7. The Region needs stronger collaboration and a regional strategy to approach business retention and attraction. Piedmont Triad should not just focus on hard infrastructure and assets, but use creative solutions for business recruitment and retention.
8. The Region needs to build a culture of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship based on existing assets.
9. There should be an effort to grow, recruit, and retain smart people of all ages.
10. There are concerns regarding race relations within the Region.
11. The Region's high illiteracy rates are contributing to the low labor force participation rates as illiterate people have difficulty finding jobs.
12. There is a leadership drain from the Region. We need to identify more leaders from the private sector. The nature of leadership and dialogue in the Piedmont Triad is changing, and it needs to reflect the demographic changes in the Region as well.

13. There needs to be a regional identity or brand. A region-wide project or festival could help create a Piedmont Triad brand and build trust within the Region.
14. Piedmont Triad needs more effective regional communication, marketing, and public relations – both externally and internally. The fragmentation of the media industry negatively affects a sense of regional identity.
15. The Region needs to create a sustained, multi-jurisdictional structure for working together.

TARGET CLUSTER ANALYSIS

The *Target Cluster Analysis* recommends the most important and most promising business sectors for economic developers to pursue. The main criteria used to identify and recommend target clusters were:

- ✓ Does the Region have a significant presence in this target cluster, in terms of employment quantity or concentration?
- ✓ Are the industries in the target cluster export sectors?
- ✓ Does the target cluster have good growth prospects nationally?
- ✓ Is there wealth creation potential in the target cluster, in terms of high wages and advancement opportunities?
- ✓ Is the existing workforce prepared to take jobs in this target cluster, and do community colleges and universities provide needed education and training programs related to this target cluster?
- ✓ Do all of the targets combine to provide opportunities for rural, urban, and suburban areas of the Region?

EXISTING STRENGTHS

The *Competitive Realities* report showed that manufacturing employed over 145,000 people in 2003, or 21 percent of all jobs in the Region. Of the major business sectors, manufacturing had the highest concentration or location quotient, 1.84. Within manufacturing, the sub-sectors that have the greatest strength in terms of location quotients are furniture, textiles and apparel, and tobacco products. Because these sub-sectors have experienced significant job losses since 2001 and have dim growth prospects, *Market Street* does not recommend them for target clusters.

There are some possibilities for growth within these sub-sectors of manufacturing, which can help stem some of the heavy job losses. The Region should be prepared for the shift of apparel companies' employment focus from manufacturing to branding and marketing. There may also be opportunities for custom-made products and high-tech garments and fabric, perhaps for the defense sector. Within furniture manufacturing, upholstered furniture and ready-to-assemble furniture should be more stable than case-goods furniture, and steel and high-end office furniture are more likely to stay in the United States as well. The Piedmont Triad Region should seek growth opportunities in the production of kitchen cabinetry and wood flooring, which requires similar workforce skills as that of furniture manufacturing.

TARGET CLUSTERS

Market Street has categorized the Piedmont Triad Region's target clusters into tiers. The first tier represents targets that have the strongest growth prospects for all counties in the Region. These are: Health Care (including Biotechnology), Logistics,

and Wholesale Trade. The second tier includes target clusters that are more specialized in the Region. The third tier of target clusters is comprised of the Arts, which includes design and film. This target is still emerging and is fairly fragmented in the Region.

Target Clusters by Tier

Tier	Target Clusters	Tier Description
Tier 1	Health Care (including Biotechnology) Logistics Wholesale Trade	Strongest growth prospects for all counties in the Region
Tier 2	Finance and Insurance Food Processing	Specialized
Tier 3	Arts	Emerging

In addition to the target clusters, *Market Street* has identified “areas of emphasis” for the Piedmont Triad Region to work on to increase job growth opportunities. These are important components of economic development that cut across clusters but represent areas of potentially significant job creation. The areas of emphasis are:

- Tourism;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Homeland security and defense; and
- Education.

The *Target Cluster Analysis* describes the Piedmont Triad Region’s assets and weaknesses in each target cluster. Goals and specific action steps for growing these target clusters are included in the *Regional Vision Plan*. It should be noted that target clusters are not just for traditional business recruitment. Developing clusters is a much more holistic economic development approach, which includes business recruitment as just one component. Successfully developing target clusters must include a combination of supporting existing businesses, establishing communication networks, developing education and training programs, and creating an environment attractive to both businesses and workers.

The next sections provide a brief description of each recommended target cluster.

HEALTH CARE

The health care sector includes services, research, and manufacturing sub-sectors. The sector is defined as follows:

- Health Care Products and Services
 - Medical Equipment and Supplies Manufacturing (NAICS 3391)
 - Ambulatory Health Care Services (NAICS 621)
 - Hospitals (NAICS 622)
 - Nursing and Residential Care Facilities (NAICS 623)

- Biotechnology
 - Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (NAICS 54171)
 - Pharmaceutical and Medicine Manufacturing (NAICS 3254)

The greatest impact in the health care target for the Piedmont Triad Region in terms of number of jobs and reach into rural counties will be in health care services and medical supplies and device manufacturing. Sub-sectors of particular focus are health care practitioners, laboratories and testing, health care services for senior citizens, and medical equipment and supplies. Biotechnology is still an emerging sub-sector and the reach of its growth will be limited in the near term.

The Region must work to improve workforce recruitment and retention in health care fields. This includes providing a smooth continuum from the classroom to the workplace. Currently, no health care industry council exists to facilitate discussions and interactions among health care employers to address major issues like workforce retention.

LOGISTICS

The logistics sector (NAICS 484, 488, 492, 493) includes truck transportation, warehousing and storage of goods, courier and shipping services, and support activities related to modes of transportation; the sector is also referred to as *distribution*. Given the Region's extensive highway transportation network, its location, and its accessibility, the logistics cluster is a natural fit and will leverage the Region's strengths.

The most exciting opportunity and challenge for the Region is to leverage the new FedEx hub to fully develop linkages throughout the logistics sector. There are opportunities for suppliers, such as trucks, parts, and repair services, and even more opportunities for customers who would benefit from FedEx's immediate shipping services.

Having a readily available workforce with skills and experience in truck driving, warehousing and distribution operations, and logistics and scheduling systems is important to growing the Region's logistics cluster. Training programs should be further developed, and workforce retention is also an issue.

WHOLESALE TRADE

Wholesale trade firms buy large lots of goods, usually from manufacturers, and sell them in smaller quantities to businesses, governments, other wholesalers, or institutional customers. They provide businesses a nearby source of goods made by many different manufacturers, and they simplify product, payment, and information flows by acting as intermediaries between the manufacturer and the final customer.

The Region's transportation network and developing logistics sector are key assets to attracting and expanding wholesale businesses.

Because wholesalers are so varied in the products they sell and the markets that they sell to, there is currently very little interaction among the Region's companies to discuss common needs and ideas. Wholesalers may have similar problems with regulations, workforce retention, or road conditions, and as a group, they may be better able to find ways to address these issues. Also, the business of wholesale trade is inextricably linked to logistical functions. Supporting these linkages through industry trade groups or forums helps to ensure that needs of both sides are being met.

FINANCE AND INSURANCE

The finance industry is quite diverse, with retail operations that serve consumers and business owners, investment banking operations that serve larger institutions, and secondary markets that buy and sell financial instruments based on risk tolerance. The insurance industry has a similar market setup, with various risk management products sold to households, businesses, and institutions, as well as secondary markets for re-insurance and other instruments. The Piedmont Triad Region's finance and insurance cluster has a diverse group of businesses that includes:

- Commercial banks, savings institutions, credit unions
- Credit cards and consumer lending, mortgage banking
- Investment banking, securities and commodities trading, portfolio management
- Insurance carriers, claims adjusters, agencies and brokerages
- Pension fund management, trust fund management, real estate investment trusts

Due to the heavy concentration of existing jobs in Guilford and Forsyth Counties, future growth in finance and insurance is likely to be focused on these counties.

To prevent job cuts resulting from frequent consolidation activity from having a long-term effect on employees, the Region should develop this sector to the fullest possible extent in terms of breadth of services. This means focusing not only on banks, but also credit cards, other types of lending, claims adjusters, various types of insurance, and portfolio management. Skills are often portable among firms even if they offer different types of services.

The Region's finance and insurance sector also lacks a business group for meeting to discuss common needs and issues. This does not have to be solely at the chief executive level; department heads can also meet to discuss topics such as human resources, technology needs, or education and training.

FOOD PROCESSING

Food Manufacturing (NAICS 311) is a very broad category that includes a number of manufacturing, milling, refining and processing sub-sectors. The industry is typically shielded from downturns in the economy, because households continue to consume food even in tough economic times. Local economic developers should concentrate on the high-end niches in these categories that provide well-paying, higher skill jobs without the workplace hazards characteristic of certain food processing employment. The sub-sectors that have higher value-added products include pet food manufacturing, snack food products, prepared food, and other specialty foods. As a target cluster, food processing is meant to provide job opportunities to those without specialized skills or high education levels, particularly in the rural areas of the Region.

The greatest challenge for this target cluster is to move from low-value production (poultry processing dominates) to high value-added products. There will need to be considerable efforts made to fully develop the target cluster. Linkages among food processing companies, between food processing companies and suppliers, and any sort of industry support infrastructure are yet to be established.

ARTS

“Arts” is a very broad term that includes multiple types of media and activities. Americans for the Arts identified six creative industries in which arts could be categorized: museums/collections; performing arts; visual/photography; film, radio, and TV; design/publishing; and schools/services.

The arts have traditionally been regarded as a cultural amenity that has a positive impact on the quality of life in a community. However, the arts can also be regarded as a viable component of economic development. There are artists who earn a living in the business world, either through freelancing or steady employment, doing design work for profit-driven firms. Individual artists are finding new markets through the Internet, arts festivals, and other direct sales routes. While the economic impact of the arts in terms of direct and indirect employment (the multiplier effect) is likely to be limited in its reach, the arts play an important role for promoting entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency.

The Piedmont Triad Region has a tremendous number of assets in the arts; however, they tend to be fragmented by location and organization. The main challenges for developing this emerging cluster include coordination across organizations and cities, achieving regional branding without sacrificing the uniqueness of individual communities, improving the interactions between professionals and universities, and leadership development.

REGIONAL VISION PLAN

The *Regional Vision Plan* presents a vision for the Piedmont Triad Region's future, and outlines five primary goals that the Region will strive for to achieve that vision. Each goal includes a set of objectives that represent the key strategies to focus on to attain that goal. Recommended action steps are provided for each objective. Action steps are the specific policies the Region will need to implement the objectives, and ultimately achieve the goals.

The *Regional Vision Plan* focuses on what needs to be done to move the Region toward its vision for the future. It avoids discussion about who is responsible, when the strategy should be implemented, and how the strategies will be financed. These are topics that are addressed in the next phase, the *Implementation Plan*.

VISION STATEMENT

Market Street worked with the Steering Committee to develop a vision statement that articulates the preferred future envisioned by the Piedmont Triad Region's residents, businesses, and elected leaders. It describes an ideal, a model not yet achieved. The vision serves as a guide for regional decision-making and long-term initiatives.

The vision statement for the Piedmont Triad Region is:

The Piedmont Triad will be a dynamic region, working in unison toward a stronger economic future and an enhanced quality of life. A foundation and value system of broad diversity, educational excellence, and progressive leadership will make the Piedmont Triad an unparalleled place to live, work, and visit.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Based on the quantitative and qualitative research, five main goals and subsequent objectives were identified for the Piedmont Triad Region:

Goal 1: Education and Workforce Development

The Region will develop a highly skilled and well-trained workforce prepared to serve existing and future businesses.

- Objective 1:** Improve student performance and instill confidence in the K-12 education system.
- Objective 2:** Work to increase educational attainment in the Region, particularly for minorities, rural areas, and those under age 30.

- Objective 3:** Provide the education, training, and job search support needed for older, displaced factory workers to achieve self-sufficiency through the remainder of their working years.
- Objective 4:** Continue to develop and maximize the Region’s research capacity of its colleges and universities, and seek opportunities for collaborative efforts.
- Objective 5:** Develop and enhance education and training programs and strengthen the connections between businesses and higher education institutions to prepare the workforce for jobs in the target cluster areas.

Goal 2: Leadership, Communication, and Partnership Building

The Region’s leadership will establish the framework to align goals, effectively boost local morale, build trust, and maximize cooperation among regional constituencies.

- Objective 1:** Establish “rules of engagement” – a framework and principles of collaboration for elected officials, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, and other organizations from multiple jurisdictions to work together on economic development issues and the *Regional Vision Plan*.
- Objective 2:** Create multi-jurisdictional vehicles and organizational structures that promote regional cooperation and allow sharing of resources.
- Objective 3:** Develop a regional identity that unifies the Region but does not compromise the unique qualities of individual counties and cities.
- Objective 4:** Develop regional media outlets that present news and information from all parts of the Region.
- Objective 5:** Build the regional leadership capacity that is inclusive of minorities, rural areas, multiple generations, and is necessary for the Region to succeed.

Goal 3: Economic Growth, Diversification, and Sustainability

The Region will diversify its economic base, generate quality job growth, and increase local wealth in the short term, and ensure economic sustainability in the long term.

- Objective 1:** Develop and expand the target clusters to create jobs and

- diversify the economy.
- Objective 2:** Coordinate the support infrastructure and create the culture and environment that will allow high-growth entrepreneurs to thrive.
- Objective 3:** Coordinate the support infrastructure to promote entrepreneurship and help lifestyle entrepreneurs attain self-sufficiency.
- Objective 4:** Increase the assistance and resources to support existing businesses and their expansion.

Goal 4: Infrastructure Development

The Region will commit resources to build the infrastructure needed to support economic growth and a high quality of life throughout the Region.

- Objective 1:** Develop a regional transportation plan that will accelerate and expand transportation infrastructure improvements, improve air quality, and accommodate alternative modes of transportation, including mass or public transportation.
- Objective 2:** Improve cellular and high-speed internet access in rural areas.
- Objective 3:** Develop an accepted plan to address solid waste disposal in the Region.
- Objective 4:** Ensure that the water supply and water quality in all of the Region's counties is adequate to support existing residents and businesses, as well as future growth.

Goal 5: Quality of Life Enhancement

The Region will be a place where people of all ages, incomes, and ethnicities want to live and have a high quality of life.

- Objective 1:** Expand arts, cultural, recreational, and entertainment activities that will attract people from all parts of the Region.
- Objective 2:** Work to attract and retain young people in the Region.
- Objective 3:** Improve air quality and exceed EPA air quality attainment standards in a way that enhances quality of life without hampering economic growth.
- Objective 4:** Create a framework for region-wide, coordinated land-use planning that preserves greenspace and is aligned with

transportation infrastructure plans.

The *Regional Vision Plan* provides a blueprint for the Piedmont Triad Region's future. The Region has a tremendous opportunity to capitalize on its strengths and create a stronger economic future. To do that however, it must overcome leadership and communication obstacles that have persisted in the Region for more than 20 years. Achieving the Region's vision for the future involves addressing fundamental issues like education and workforce development. The Region must continue to leverage its best assets – quality of life, location, and its transportation network – to recruit and retain not only businesses, but also people.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The scope of the *Regional Vision Plan* is far ranging and comprehensive. The five primary goal areas, the supporting objectives, and the specific action steps represent a tremendous undertaking. Implementation is the final and most critical part of the strategic planning process.

Market Street is working with the Steering Committee to develop the *Implementation Plan*. During meetings on June 8 and June 23, the Steering Committee discussed the following topics:

- ✓ Objectives from the *Regional Vision Plan* that were priorities for implementation.
- ✓ Other metro areas that have successfully implemented regional economic development efforts.
- ✓ The potential to merge or consolidate the Region's numerous economic development entities.
- ✓ New or existing organizations that could implement the *Regional Vision Plan*, and the re-structuring and funding levels that would be necessary to do so.

The Steering Committee has concluded that there are no vehicles or organizations available in the Piedmont Triad Region that can, with current funding and staff levels, lead the implementation effort of the *Regional Vision Plan* and bind the Region together under each of the five goals. If serious resources, both fiscal and human, are not redirected or committed from new sources, this plan cannot be implemented.

The co-chairmen of the Steering Committee, Watts Carr and Tom Ross, have planned a meeting with key business leaders in the Region to garner support for the *Vision Plan* and find possible avenues for implementation. *Market Street's* work on the *Implementation Plan* will proceed once the Steering Committee has determined additional implementation options.