

Strategic Economic Development Plan

Local Work Group

Your Town. Your Voice. Your Plan.



Executive Summary & Background:

The Town of Sparta has requested *Strategic Economic Development Planning Services* to be provided by the North Carolina Main Street and Rural Planning Center (MS&RP).

The NC Main Street & Rural Planning (MS&RP) Center works in regions, counties, cities, towns, downtown districts, and in designated North Carolina Main Street communities, to inspire placemaking through building asset-based economic development strategies that achieve measurable results such as investment, business growth, and jobs.

The MS&RP Center works closely with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC), and the Outdoor Economy Office, all part of the N.C. Department of Commerce's Rural Economic Development Division (REDD). The Rural Planning Program, part of the NC MS&RP Center, has offices throughout the state in each of North Carolina's eight prosperity zones. Recognizing that economic prosperity is the number one priority in most communities, our experienced staff partners with community leaders to add value to their economic development efforts through a variety of services and assistance. Services include: Strategic Economic Development Planning, Technical Assistance, Training & Education, and Grants.

Planning Process:

⇒ Community Economic Development Assessment (2 months)

This is a snapshot of Sparta's economic condition and will help develop an initial strategic focus to the Town's economic development efforts. Activities include:

- Meeting with a local work group to assist with input and feedback
- Identification of community assets and opportunities/SWOT analysis
- Issue identification (discussion, stakeholder interviews)
- Retail leakage analysis

⇒ Community Economic Visioning Workshop (1 month):

This will be a 2-1/2-hour public workshop to develop an economic positioning/vision statement for the Town of Sparta. Visioning is the process of developing a consensus about what future the community wants, and then deciding what is necessary to achieve it. This provides local government boards/commissions a long-term, comprehensive, and strategic focus to make disciplined, tactical, and incremental decisions on community issues as they arise. A community's vision is the foundation for economic growth and prosperity.

⇒ Five-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan (3 months):

Guided by the Community Economic Development Assessment and Economic Vision the Five-Year Strategic Plan will center around economic development strategies that adopt a place-based approach to economic development. This refers to strategies that build upon existing assets, take project-focused incremental actions to strengthen communities, and build long-term value to attract a range of investments.

The Local Work Group/Steering Committee:

⇒ The Local Work Group is comprised of 8-12 community stakeholders. Meetings are held on a monthly basis throughout the planning process to steer the direction of the strategic plan. Ideally, Local Work Group members will work alongside others to lead implementation of the plan upon its completion. In consideration of forming the local work group, a list of suggested stakeholders is below:

- Members of the local government board or staff
- Business assistance/development professionals, such as staff from Economic Development Commissions, Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Centers, Main Street Programs, etc.
- Owners of local businesses, downtown businesses, and anchor businesses in the tourism industry
- Property owners of key opportunity sites
- Residents
- Leaders of civic organizations (Rotary Clubs, Non-Profit Community Development Organizations)
- Local health, education, and arts leaders



Interested in Participating? Contact:



José G. H. Butrón, MPA

Town Manager

304 S. Main St

PO Box 99

Sparta, NC 28675

Phone: (336) 372-4257

Fax: (336) 372-2051

Email: townmanager@townofsparta.org