

## PREFACE

This Plan Overview presents the consultants' recommendations to advance economic development across Dare County. This is not the final plan. We are using this overview to engage Community Leaders for their feedback. Our recommendations address the areas below. We have drafted Vision & Mission statements along with Goals & Strategies for review.

- Vision
- Mission
- County Leadership
- Economic Development "Transactional" Structure
- Goals
- Strategies

## VISION & MISSION

A VISION STATEMENT answers the question: ***What will success look like?*** A Vision is inspiring. It is a beacon in a turbulent world. It prepares for the future, but honors the past. In that light, we have connected the "land of beginnings" legacy of Dare County to its economic development VISION.

### Dare County VISION

***To be the continuous "land of beginnings" for our economy and for our people – as we were the first New World settlement and the site of first flight for aviation.***

A MISSION STATEMENT answers the question: ***What are we here to do, and why?*** It is a statement of purpose, a reason for existence. It should be developed in light of who the stakeholders are and how public value can be created. We have used the charge given by the Dare County Commissioners for this strategic plan (i.e., to optimize and to diversify the economy) to frame the economic development MISSION.

### Dare County MISSION

***To optimize proven economic successes while working to diversify economic development and enhance the quality of life for all citizens and communities.***

## COUNTY LEADERSHIP

Going forward, we recommend that the County provide a vision and sustained leadership for economic development. This includes:

- Providing appropriate resources and funding support
- Framing policies to advance business growth
- Continuously monitoring the overall business climate
- Convening stakeholders

## TRANSACTIONAL STRUCTURE

Options for Economic Development "Transactional" Structure will follow agreement on goals & strategies and formal adoption of the plan. A transactional structure can be accomplished through:

- Coordination by the current Dare County Planning office
- Creation of a County Economic Development office
- Formation of a public-private partnership (with shared responsibilities and costs)

To help determine the best ways forward for managing economic development (structure), it will help to review the GOALS below. These represent what we see as the economic development FOCUS AREAS to be addressed.

**GOALS (focus areas)**

- I. Optimization of Traditional Economy
- II. Targeted Growth & Attraction for Economic Diversification
- III. Infrastructure (Economic Development “Product”)
- IV. Education & Workforce
- V. Entrepreneurship & Small Business
- VI. The Dare County Story

**STRATEGIES**

Strategies represent key economic development TASKS to be performed. The good news is that some of these tasks are currently being performed by partner organizations. To advance economic development in Dare County, however, the choice is how these strategies & tasks will be driven, managed, and coordinated. The best approach is to gain agreement on the “division of labor” then put the plan into action.

Review the STRATEGIES (below) as they align with each of the goals. Agreement on these can serve to join the County with its partners to focus directly on economic development.

Note that we have color-coded strategies to offer three resource areas. Again, there’s a lot that can be done with current County resources and resources of other groups. In addition, there will likely be a continuum where strategies are built out along the way.

**COLOR CODE:**

Yellow	Completed by or lead by EXISTING COUNTY STAFF with only volunteer help.
Blue	Part of new, contracted county services (pay someone either on contract or as new county staff).
Green	Part of existing organization’s services (nobody pays for anything new).

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I. Optimization of Traditional Economy Goal 1: Focus on growing the dominant and traditional economic sectors in Dare County.	II. Targeted Growth & Attraction for Economic Diversification Goal 5: Develop new economic initiatives to diversify the traditional Dare County economy.
<p><b>1. Strategies</b></p> <p>1.1. Focus on tourism as the prime economic driver; collaborate with and support the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau strategic plan.</p> <p>1.2. Leverage the Outer Banks Chamber including their economic development experience and business networks.</p> <p>1.3. Collaborate with the Wanchese Seafood Industrial Park to promote, enhance, and offer business opportunities for marine-related enterprises.</p> <p>1.4. Leverage partners to provide existing industry support services to all key, identified businesses in real estate, construction, agri-business, commercial fishing, and retail businesses.</p>	<p><b>2. Strategies</b></p> <p>2.1. Leverage the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau to advance innovative directions including expanding the shoulder season, sports recreation, and expansion of events.</p> <p>2.2. Engage and support the Outer Banks Hospital in diversifying healthcare resources and options.</p> <p>2.3. Expand/diversify retirement options; link to healthcare and tourism.</p> <p>2.4. Refine criteria; pursue attraction of professional firms that can live/work anywhere (telework).</p> <p>2.5. Leverage the distinctive asset, the Coastal Studies Institute (CSI), to attract allied industries, develop an entrepreneur ecosystem, and the teaching mission to include year-round students.</p> <p>2.6. Focus on wind &amp; water assets; advance the business plan for a proposed National Sailing Center.</p>

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<p><b>III. Infrastructure (Economic Development "Product")</b>                  Goal 3: Ensure the sustainability and enhancement of tangible assets needed for economic development.</p> <p><b>3. Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1. Recognize water and water access as prime assets; develop policies to protect and enhance.</li> <li>3.2. Provide resources for critical infrastructure (i.e., inlet dredging, beach re-nourishment, broadband).</li> <li>3.3. Coordinate with resources to assess the potential impact of sea level rise; pursue grants and associated funding.</li> <li>3.4. Pursue programs and funding to establish more affordable housing.</li> <li>3.5. Explore partnerships with neighboring counties to leverage respective resources for mutual benefit.</li> </ul>	<p><b>IV. Education &amp; Workforce</b>                  Goal 6: Align the workforce to best serve the traditional and emerging business sectors.</p> <p><b>4. Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1. Build workforce &amp; existing industry partnerships; leverage the College of the Albemarle.</li> <li>4.2. Work with the Outer Banks Chamber and other key partners to identify and focus on targeted business sectors.</li> <li>4.3. Identify the essential workforce skills needed and gaps.</li> <li>4.4. Align educational needs of the "work anywhere" segment; partner with educational resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>V. Entrepreneurship &amp; Small Business</b>                  Goal 7: Work with specialist small business service providers to target and enhance support to small businesses throughout Dare County.</p> <p><b>5. Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1. Catalog resources and their services (e.g., Small Business &amp; Technology Development Center, Cooperative Extension Service, Industry Expansion Solutions, Workforce Boards).</li> <li>5.2. Identify needs and opportunities by each small business sector (e.g., commercial fishing, agri-business, retail, sports recreation, entertainment).</li> <li>5.3. Pursue "creative economy" initiatives (e.g. "Fish to table").</li> <li>5.4. Continue to connect with the Coastal Studies Institute; explore the potential to build an entrepreneur ecosystem related to CSI's work.</li> </ul>	<p><b>VI. The Dare County Story</b>                  Goal 8: Invest in resources to recast the amazing Dare County story for economic development purposes.</p> <p><b>6. Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1. Engage resources to develop the Dare County story going forward; develop a formal marketing-branding initiative.</li> <li>6.2. Leverage the marketing resources and initiatives of the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau.</li> <li>6.3. Design/apply the story to identified and targeted sectors.</li> <li>6.4. Develop a website and associate social media to advance the story.</li> <li>6.5. Promote Dare's distinctive assets, culture, and history ("Land of Beginnings") for economic development purposes.</li> </ul>