

NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

Rural Economic Development Division
North Carolina Department of Commerce

Grace Lawrence, Community Economic Development Planner, Sandhills Region



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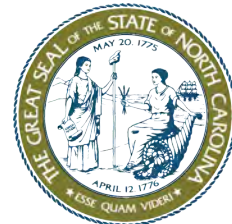
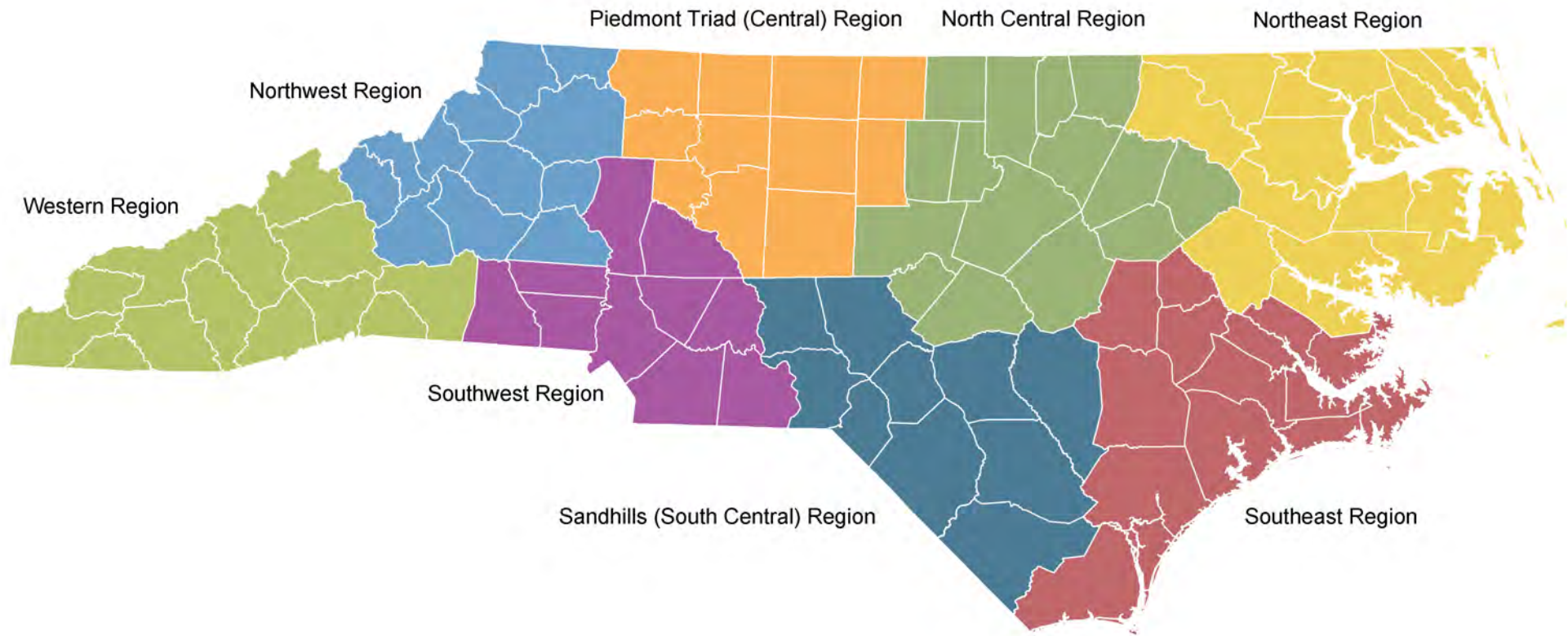
Who are we?

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



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North Carolina Prosperity Zones



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What do we do?

Services:

- Strategic Economic Development Planning
- Technical Assistance
- Training & Education
- Funding Opportunities & Resources



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NC Commerce Rural Planning Program Services



Strategic Economic Development Planning

- Community Economic Development Assessment Plans (1-Year)
- Strategic Economic Development Plans (5-Year)
- Creating Outdoor Recreation Economy (CORE) Plans
- One-Day Economic Visioning Workshops
- Asset Mapping
- Project Development & Implementation

NC Commerce Rural Planning Program Services



Training and Education

- Economic Development Workshops and Other Regional and Statewide Training Opportunities
- North Carolina Main Street Conference
- Community-Specific Training for Development and Implementation
- Research and Information Sharing

NC Commerce Rural Planning Program Services



Technical Assistance

- Project Development
- Funding and Resource Identification
- Community Economic Opportunities Mapping and Analysis
- Local Policy and Ordinance Review
- Custom GIS Mapping
- Disaster Recovery Services
- Other Economic Development Planning Assistance

NC Commerce Rural Planning Program Services

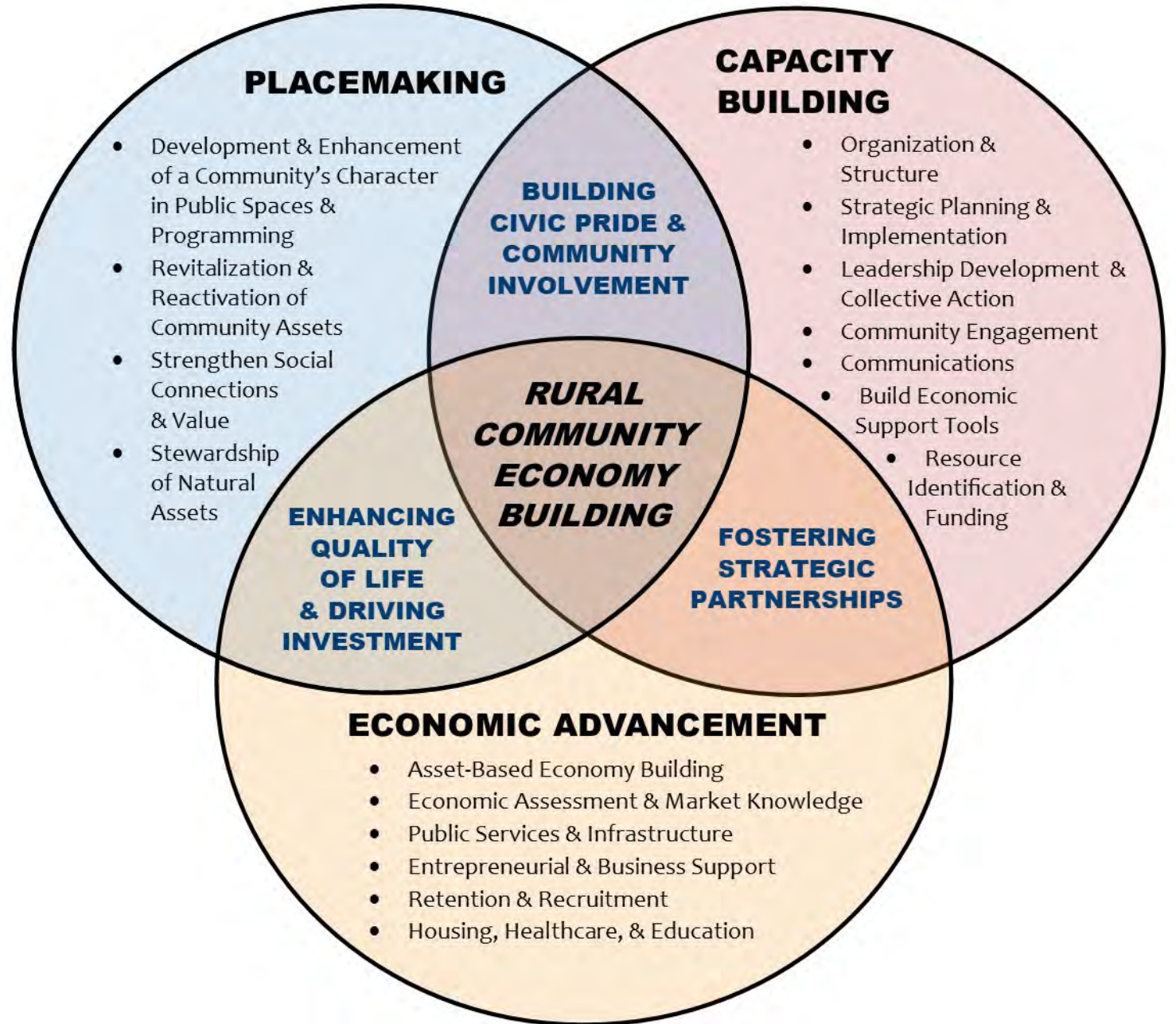


Grants

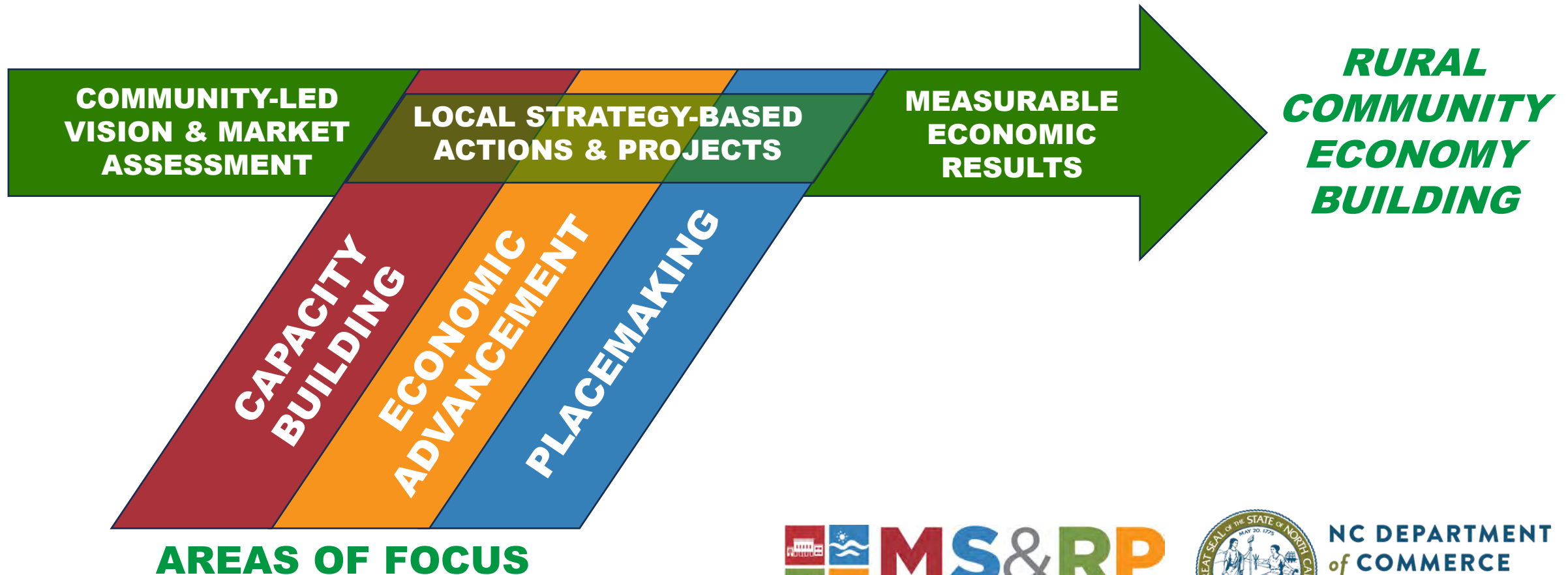
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
- Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC)
- Downtown Rural Economic Development Grants
- Identification of Other Funding Sources

RPP Approach to Community Economy Building

- CB** Capacity Building
- EA** Economic Advancement
- P** Placemaking



NC Commerce Rural Planning Program Approach to Community Economy Building



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RPP Approach to Community Economy Building



Capacity Building

- Organization and Structure
- Strategic Planning and Implementation
- Leadership Development and Collective Action
- Community Engagement
- Communications
- Build Economic Support Tool
- Resource Identification and Funding

RPP Approach to Community Economy Building



Economic Advancement

- Asset-Based Economy Building
- Economic Assessment and Market Knowledge
- Public Services and Infrastructure
- Entrepreneurial and Business Support
- Retention and Recruitment
- Housing, Healthcare and Education

RPP Approach to Community Economy Building



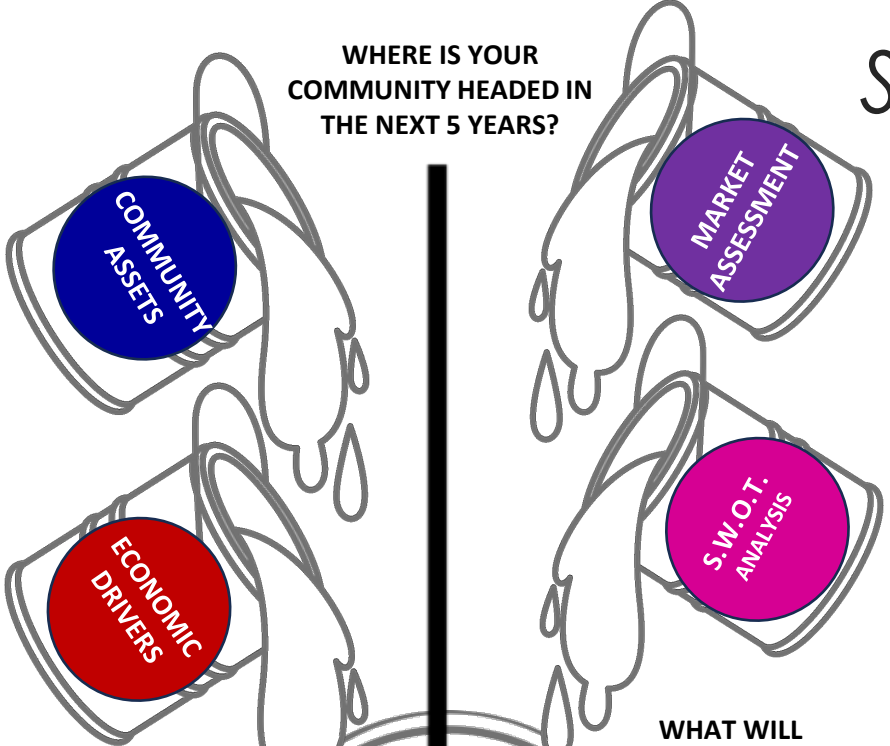
P

Placemaking

- Development and Enhancement of a Community's Character in Public Spaces & Programming
- Revitalization and Reactivation of Community Assets
- Strengthen Social Connections and Value
- Stewardship of Natural Assets

Strategic Economic Development Plan

WHERE IS YOUR COMMUNITY HEADED IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS?



PUBLIC & PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

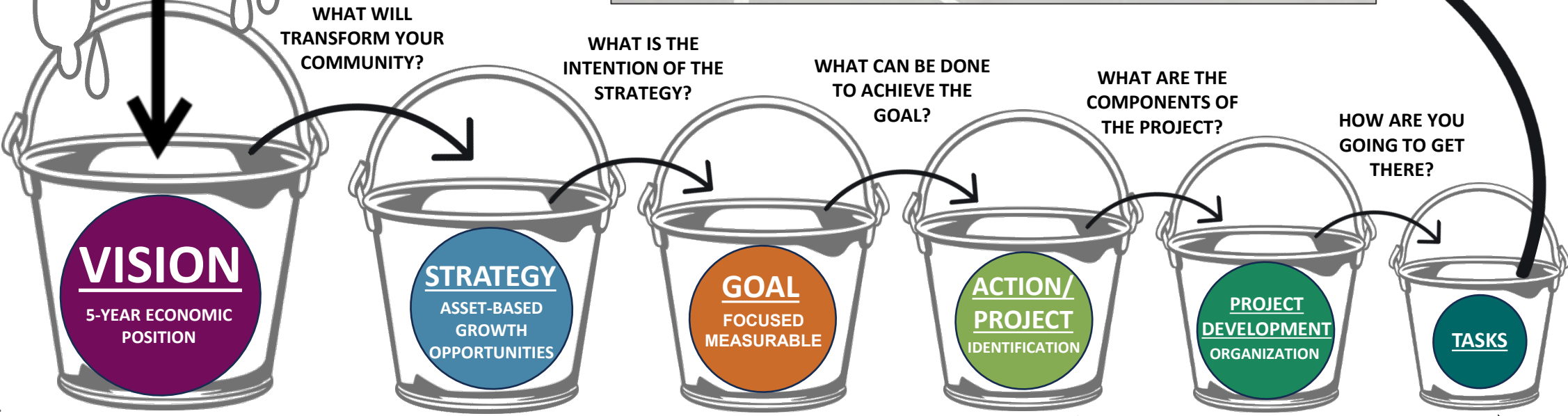
WHAT WILL TRANSFORM YOUR COMMUNITY?

WHAT IS THE INTENTION OF THE STRATEGY?

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL?

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT?

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET THERE?

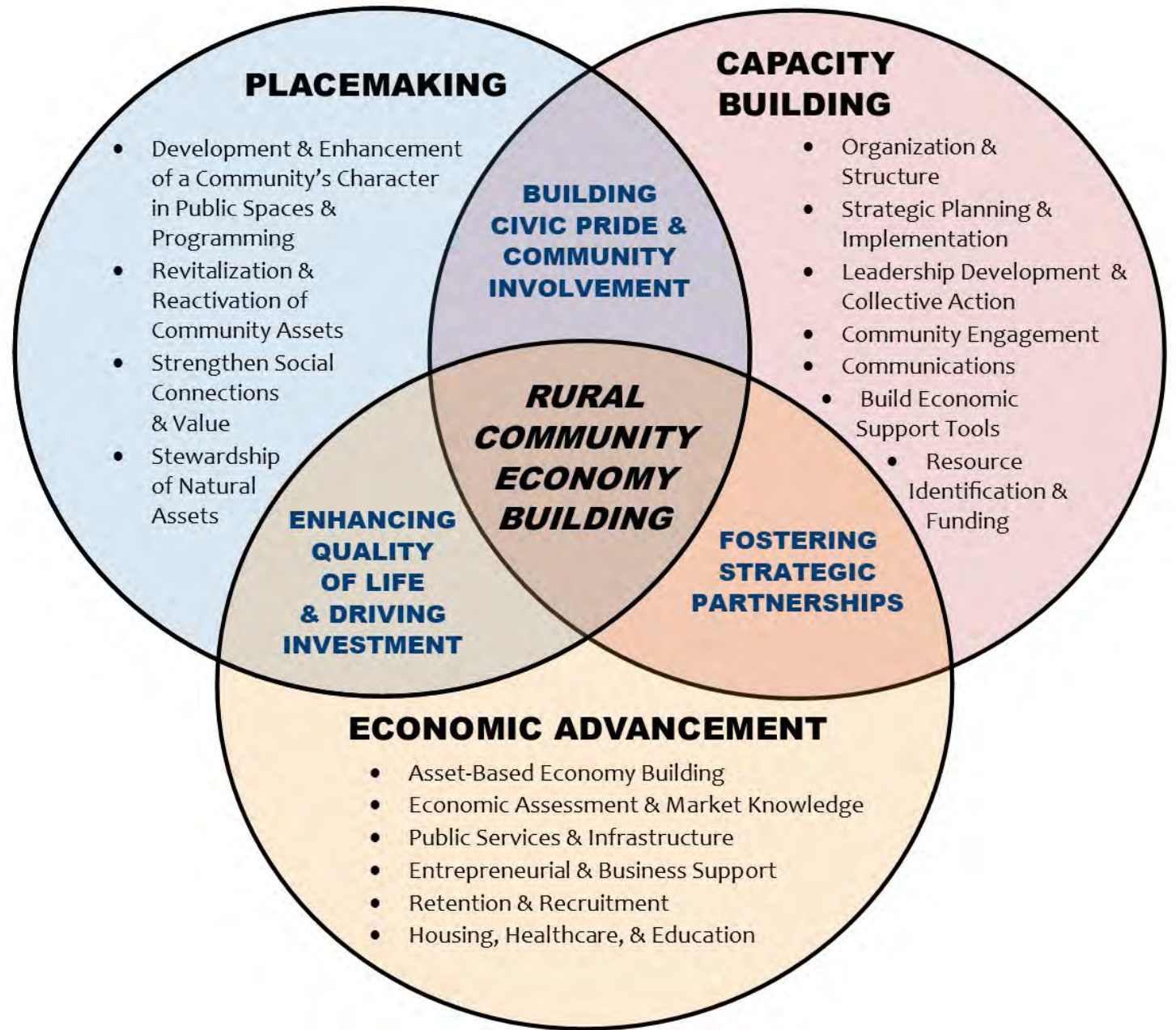


MISSION
ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE IN ACHIEVING THE VISION

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

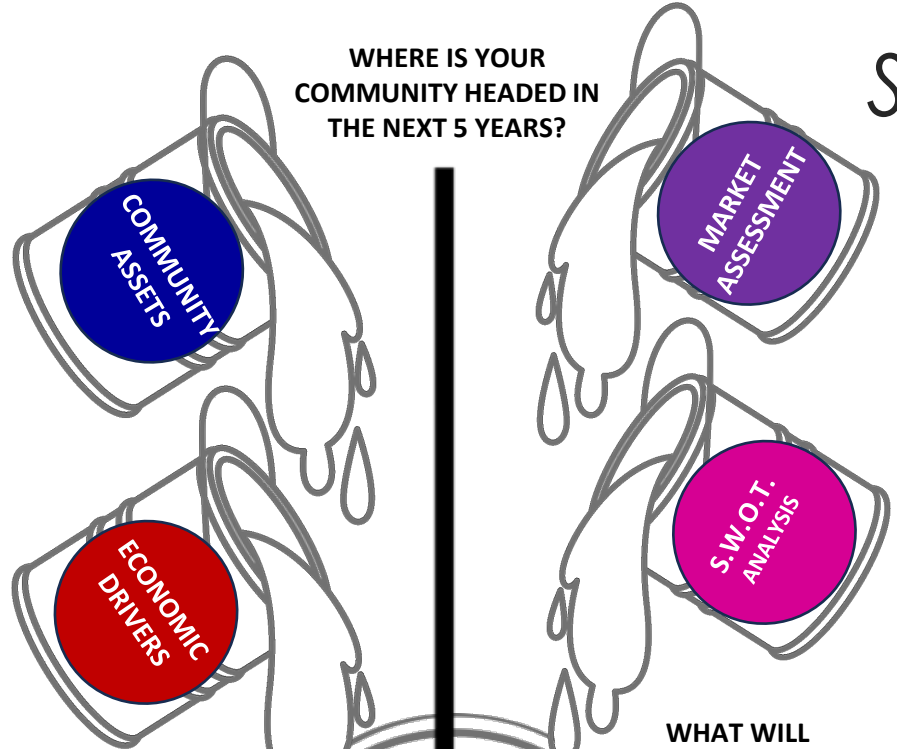
IMPLEMENTATION

How is the RPP Approach to Community Economy Building Applied to a Strategic Economic Development Plan?



Strategic Economic Development Plan

WHERE IS YOUR COMMUNITY HEADED IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS?



PUBLIC & PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

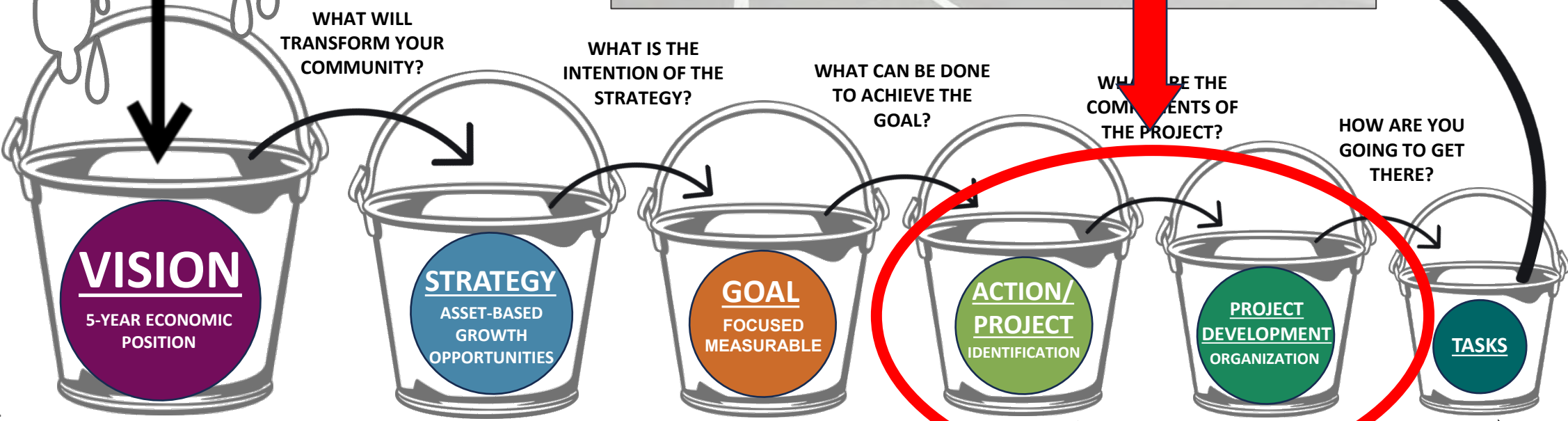
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MISSION
ORGANIZATIONAL
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Implementation Chart

The strategic economic development plan's implementation chart translates the City of King's vision into action by identifying three core economic development strategies, each supported by clear SMART goals, actions, and projects. Every action and project is labeled by the focus area it most directly supports Capacity Building, Placemaking, or Economic Advancement providing clarity on how individual efforts contribute to broader objectives. This visual framework is designed to guide decision making, track progress, and ensure a balanced, coordinated approach to implementation across all focus areas.

Economic Positioning/Vision Statement: Historic Downtown King is nestled in the rolling foothills of the Sauratown Mountains, where Southern hospitality meets leisurely exploration. Featuring thoughtfully crafted culinary experiences, curated specialty shops, and convenient access to outdoor adventure, King is the ideal place to reconnect with community.

STRATEGY 1 <i>Historic Downtown King offers thoughtfully crafted culinary experiences</i>	STRATEGY 2 <i>Historic Downtown King enjoys artfully curated specialty shops</i>	STRATEGY 3 <i>Historic Downtown King provides convenient access to outdoor adventure</i>
<p>Goal 1: Establish Downtown King as a recognized culinary destination by increasing dining-related visitation by 25% and launching at least one recurring signature food-focused event by 2031.</p> <p>Actions/Projects:</p> <p>1.1 Create a Promotions Committee and  include restaurant owners, breweries, and food entrepreneurs to coordinate events, shared marketing, and advocacy.</p> <p>1.2  Assess the feasibility of establishing and programming a social district. Draft a social district management plan.</p> <p>1.3  Implement temporary outdoor dining pilots (parklets, street closures, shared patios) during peak weekends and events.</p> <p>1.4  Install cohesive wayfinding and streetscape elements highlighting dining clusters and walkability.</p>	<p>Goal 3: Reduce vacant storefronts by 20% and recruit 3-5 anchors or destination specialty retail businesses by 2031.</p> <p>Actions/Projects:</p> <p>3.1  Form an Economic Advancement Committee including property owners, brokers, and business leaders to focus on business retention, recruitment, and priority economic advancement projects.</p> <p>3.2  In addition to a property inventory, create a short business recruitment document outlining benefits of locating in Downtown King with resources available to new businesses.</p> <p>3.3  Promote new businesses through coordinated grand openings and seasonal shop local campaigns.</p>	<p>Goal 5: Increase downtown lodging options by supporting 1-2 new or expanded lodging facilities that connect outdoor recreation visitors to Downtown King by 2031.</p> <p>Actions/Projects:</p> <p>5.1  Convene property owners, developers, and tourism partners to align lodging opportunities. Work with Stokes County TDA. Prioritize cooperation with park rangers, wildlife commission, NC Outdoor Commission for Youth, etc. – building strategic partnerships with outdoor recreation leaders to help connect visitors to King.</p> <p>5.2  Identify potential lodging opportunities (vacant buildings, upper floors, vacant lots for infill) and compile a list of local and regional developers as potential investment leads. Engage property owners to build trust and facilitate local</p>

STRATEGY 1 CONTINUED...

- 1.5 Provide small façade, equipment, or kitchen upgrade grants to support downtown restaurants, menu expansion, and extended hours. CB
- 1.6 Explore market opportunities for a neighborhood bodega or boutique grocery option to support locally sourced ingredients. This potential business could be an expansion of an existing business. EA
- 1.7 Create a Downtown King Dining Trail or Passport program to incentivize multi-stop visits. P
- 1.8 Feature downtown restaurants in regional tourism, outdoor recreation, and social media campaigns. Highlight locally sourced resources through branding campaigns to generate community buy-in. Focus on human-centered storytelling. P

Goal 2: Strengthen Downtown King’s culinary offerings by supporting existing food and beverage businesses and delivering a minimum of three food-focused programs or events annually by 2030.

Actions/Projects:

- 2.1 Establish a food and beverage mentorship program pairing new operators with experienced restaurateurs. Facilitate relationship building. CB
- 2.2 Explore feasibility of a weekly/monthly farmers market in Downtown King. Consider moving farmers market to a more central location. EA

STRATEGY 2 CONTINUED...

- 3.4 Brand downtown as a distinct shopping district with curated retail shopping. P
- 3.5 Create promotions plans and social media calendar to prioritize promotions of economic opportunities and the downtown vision to encourage investments. Include a business of the month feature to support existing businesses. CB
- 3.6 Review, update, and promote façade grant program to improve building design and activation. Prioritize historic integrity of the buildings. CB
- 3.7 Offer targeted incentives for priority retail categories (outdoor gear, artisan goods, lifestyle retail). CB
- 3.8 Create and maintain an internal inventory of downtown properties noting property type, original building date, parcel number, property address, business name and current use, property owner name and contact, square footage, total assessed value, value per SF, value per acre, # of floors, occupancy, # of SF occupied, and property condition. EA The MS&RP can provide a template.
- 3.9 Launch a vacant storefront activation program with window displays, art installations, or temporary uses. P

Goal 4: Complete at least one streetscape and/or three public space improvements and increase downtown pedestrian activity by 15% by 2031.

STRATEGY 3 CONTINUED...

- investment.
- 5.3 Coordinate with regional outdoor recreation partners to package King lodging with recreation experiences. CB
- 5.4 Consider updating zoning or design guidance to support small-scale downtown appropriate lodging. CB
- 5.5 Enhance streetscape connections/walkability between lodging sites and dining/shopping areas. P
- 5.6 Recruit boutique lodging, inns, or adaptive reuse hotel concept to vacant or underused property. EA
- 5.7 Support public-private partnerships for feasibility studies that support priority projects within this plan and redevelopment planning. EA
- 5.8 Assess potential greenway or connections from the downtown district to King’s outdoor recreational/natural assets and nearby lodging sites (Airbnb’s near downtown). EA
- 5.9 Market downtown lodging as the gateway to Hanging Rock, Pilot Mountain, and regional trails. P
- 5.10 Create stay and play packages linking lodging, dining, and outdoor recreation. Consider partnerships with Stokes County TDA for this effort. P
- 5.11 Create outdoor recreation-based itineraries that link outdoor activities to downtown King’s food and beverage establishments while supporting retail and services. P

Community Vision + Asset-based Strategic Planning = Incremental Transformation



The **Community Vision** serves as the foundation of building your local economy.



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What is an Economic Positioning/ Vision Statement?



- An economic positioning statement is the vision for the **economic role** that your **town will play in the greater economy** in the local/county/regional economy over the next five years.
- Your Economic Positioning statement is **what your community can achieve** and **how will your town be different** from other areas in your county and region.

What is an Economic Positioning/Vision Statement?



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- The Economic Positioning Statement should be a community vision **built on consensus and one that is it memorable.**
- Write the statement as a community economic positioning statement that is **grounded in growth opportunities and centers of activity.**

What's Your Vision for Your Community?



Can you SEE your vision in your mind?



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QUESTIONS? THANK YOU!

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