



**Town Vision Building Meeting
January 22, 2013**



Agenda

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 5:00 pm | Welcome & Review Agenda |
| 5:05 pm | What work has been done to date? |
| 5:10 pm | Why we set priorities? |
| 5:15 pm | Review The Strengths
Review The Weaknesses |
| 5:40 pm | Attendees Rank the Priorities |
| 5:50 pm | Review the Opportunities
Review the Threats |
| 6:15 pm | Attendees Rank the Priorities |
| 6:25 pm | Who should lead the implementation of the plan
Words for Building Identity |
| 6:50 pm | Next Steps |



Listed below is the summary from the 120 hours of one-on-one interviews. The interviews were conducted during the months of August-December. The average interview session was two hours in length.

Three group-meeting sessions were held.

- 1) Group of business owners
- 2) Hotel /Motel Association
- 3) Lodging Association

The summary is based on the highest percentage of commonality among interview responses.



STRENGTHS:

Location

Southern Terminus of the Blue Ridge Parkway
141,000 acres National Parks (Great Smoky and Pisgah National Parks)
Highway Access (I-40, Hwy 9, 74)
Cherokee Reservation (4.5 million annual visitations to the Casino)
Ability to serve as a hub to WNC visitors
Geographically central gathering place for families

Natural beauty/mountain vistas

- Therapeutic
- Relaxing
- Quiet
- Moderate climate – cooler in the summer
- Fall foliage

Availability of outdoor recreation

- Fishing, Hiking, Elk, Mountain Biking, Skiing

Small Town atmosphere –not Gatlinburg



STRENGTHS

Wheels Through Time

40,000 visitors a year

Media relations' value

Festival Grounds

Ghost Town

Affordable- Value

Emotional connection with Maggie and visitors through the year

Cataloochee Resort

Cataloochee Ski



WEAKNESSES:

Curbside appeal

Product needs a face-lift

Appearance of area at Town at gateway entrances

Five-lane road a mistake

Power lines

Lots of empty buildings-creates a perception of a real ghost town

Behavior/Cultural Issues

Fear of competition

Constant fighting among difference groups

"What gets into the ears of the community gets into visitor's ear"

Individual agendas override the needs of the business community

The need to be positive

Tolerance

Egos must be put aside

Not willing to work together

Negative thinking/attitude



WEAKNESSES

Lack of entertainment options at night

- Too many businesses close at 5:00 pm
- Nothing to do after 9 pm

Lack of family activities

Seasonality – Lack of year round activities

Festival Grounds

- Events need to be more consistent
- Outdoor venue subject to inclement weather

Lack of communication

- Events – *Business Community*
- Winter closing hours



WEAKNESSES:

Local Government

- Polarization of leadership
- Perception that leadership does not care what the business community wants
 - Doesn't support businesses
 - Perception that it is difficult to open a business in Maggie Valley
- Individual agendas override the needs of the business community

1% Fund

- Fragmentation of distribution

At the mercy of the weather

- Winter Season

Need for entertainment /hospitality training

Community needs a long-term vision

Need for entertainment /hospitality training



OPPORTUNITIES:

Improve curbside appeal

- Improve product appeal
- Promote pride in the exterior appearance of businesses
- Slow down traffic
- Study best practices – Helen, GA

Diversify the economy – attempt to attract non-tourism related businesses

Jonathan Creek area for non-tourism related businesses

Lots of available space for entry level businesses

Establish who is the advocate for new business

Wheels (2-3 or 4 wheels)

Wheels Through Time –upcoming Discovery Channel exposure

- Expansion of motorcycle enthusiasts market place/teaching operators how to embrace the market
- Leverage of their public relations/marketing efforts (i.e.. Discovery Channel)
- Need to embrace the positive economic impact of motorcyclist
- Cyclists.
- Auto Shows



OPPORTUNITIES:

Increase the positioning that Maggie Valley can be an overnight base to the entire region

Taking advantage of Cherokee Reservation traffic

Increase entertainment options/venues

- Nothing to do after 9 pm

Festival Grounds

- growing events and attracting new ones
- establish a more defined booking plan

Increased service level within the valley

- better customer service can help offset some of product weakness

Outdoors Adventure

- Fishing, Hiking, Elk, Mountain Biking

Eagles Nest:

- Is there opportunity for the town to lease or invest as a venue space?



OPPORTUNITIES:

Long-term investment in the holiday season to improve seasonality

- Holiday decorations
- Winter Carnival
- Skating Rink
- Entertainment

Increased emphasis on Arts and Craft

Increased emphasis on Family Reunions

Amateur Sports marketing

- Jonathan Creek Sports Complex

Cataloochee Ski Resort

- Increase joint promotions
- Summer mountain bike trail to expand



OPPORTUNITIES

1% Fund

- Reduce fragmentation distribution
- Invest in common needs

Product Development Fund,

- 2% increase in room tax to fund bricks and mortar projects like Buncombe, Swain Counties

Increased emphasis of vacation rental market

- How does Maggie rank in the region in available rental inventory?

Ghost Town

Encourage more involvement from local businesses

- Generate more interest at Business After Hours Events
 - Learn about each other's business
 - Encourage referrals to each other's businesses

Emphasis on referring visitors to local businesses

- Improve the distribution of event schedules



OPPORTUNITIES

Create a free signature event
i.e.. -Cherokee Bonfire

More cohesive community

- Need to be more positive about each other businesses
- Harmony
- Positive Attitude

Sponsor a Trolley

- at night DUI concerns for restaurants
- Cherokee

Advertise 12 months of outdoor adventure

Seek Grant Funds to improve curbside appeal



THREATS

Cultural/Behavior

- Too many people stuck in time- locked into the 70's and 80's
- Failing to adapt to changing times
- Fighting among groups
- Leadership-Government/Boards
 - Perception that personal agendas override the best interest of the town

Changing demographics of visitor

- Core marketing is aging, not generating a new generation of visitors
- Lack of options for travelling families
- Today's children have a higher benchmark for their entertainment needs

Curbside appeal

- Visitor perception of Valley based on gateway entrances
- Aging product
- Number of vacant buildings
- Condition of



THREATS:

Cherokee Adventure Park

Not a clear advocate for new businesses

Sewage tap fees

-Barrier to opening new businesses

Failing to adapt to changing online/social media trends in tourism

Perception that it is difficult to open a business in Maggie

Perception of excessive police presence after 9:00 pm

-Negative impacts F&B Outlets

Negative image in the media



What organization should lead the ongoing implementation of the Moving Maggie Forward plan?

-Town of Maggie Valley

- Maggie Chamber of Commerce

- new a mission and business model

-A newly formed business council



CREATING A NEW IDENTITY -- What words come to mind when you think of Maggie Valley

Hub

Quiet

Laid Back

Relaxing

Therapeutic

Friendly

Welcoming

Smoky Mountains

Beauty

Outdoor Adventures

People have an emotional connection

Elk

Trout

Unplug

Blue Ridgeway

Miss Maggie

Cool summers

Views

Old and Tired

Crafts

Stuck in the Past

CREATING A NEW IDENTITY -- What words come to mind when you think of Maggie Valley

A family gathering place
A place to make memories
Quiet side of the Smokes
Porch swings and rockers
Value
Bang for the buck

Southern Hospitality

Are there additional words that come to mind?



NEXT STEPS

February

Online Survey

Data Collection

Work session with Aldermen

