

Western/Southern Cumberland Region Strategic Plan

Fact Sheet #3

March, 2004

INTRODUCTION

The Western / Southern Cumberland Region Strategic Plan (WSCRSP) is an effort to advance economic development in the 11 municipalities comprising the Cumberland Development Corporation (CDC) and the City of Bridgeton. This project is being funded through a “Smart Growth” grant from the NJ Department of Community Affairs.

PRIOR REPORTS

The project team prepared “Planning for the Future—A Summary of Cumberland County Planning Initiatives,” available on CD-ROM from the County Planning Office, and on the County website:

www.co.cumberland.nj.us. County planning efforts were summarized in an 8 minute videotape, also called “Planning for the Future.” This video received the 2003 Public Outreach Award from the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association, and the Cumberland County Planning Office has been showing it at different events around the County.

The study team also prepared a *Regional Profile* for the Western/Southern Cumberland Region, as well as *Municipal Profiles* for each of the 12 WSCR municipalities.

The study team also prepared a *Market Feasibility Study*, examining the potential for economic development in the Region.

The Regional Profiles, Municipal Profiles and Market Feasibility Study are available on the CDC website: www.cdcnj.com.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement has been critical in creation of the Plan. Input has been provided through regular Steering Committee and Advisory Committee meetings, as well as through two public meetings. The Steering Committee is comprised of mayors from each municipality, along with representatives from the County Planning Office, Bridgeton Area Chamber of Commerce, New Jersey Office of Smart Growth, and the CDC. The Advisory Committee consists of a wide cross-section of community representatives, including agriculture, environmental, business, utilities, and others.

THE PLAN

The Plan provides strategies in 11 areas. Following are only a few examples:

Natural Areas

The study area has 80,000 acres in preserved lands. Given the many preserved areas, a priority is to better coordinate future acquisition, and provide better access to existing areas.

- Evaluate natural areas not currently in public or non-profit hands, and coordinate further protection of natural areas at regional level.
- Maintain visitor-friendly natural areas, and conduct a comprehensive inventory of roads, signing and other facilities.

Historic/ Cultural

The region has many historic resources unknown to residents and visitors alike.

- Perform an inventory of historic places throughout the region, and coordinate with tourist promotion



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efforts. Each town is also encouraged to develop an historic preservation plan.

Agriculture

There are 68,000 acres of farmland in the region, with 12,000 acres preserved. Maintenance of a viable farming industry is critical to the region.

- Protect farmland through encouraging transfer of development rights from outlying farmland to centers.
- Municipalities should consider farmland preservation programs, in coordination with the County.
- The State should evaluate the ratio of farmland easement values to assessment values, and correct if statewide inequities are revealed.

Transportation

Transportation improvements at the regional level have been identified as having the greatest potential to spur economic development, and are a priority.

- Within region, secure funding for CR 552 improvements and other east-west roadways with connections to Route 55.
- Improve access to South Jersey region through such east-west routes as Route 40, and north-south routes such as Route 77.

Sewer/Water

NJDEP estimates that the study area will face a dependable water supply deficit in the future, so greater planning is key.

- Revitalize state studies of the water supply for the region.
- Pursue construction of sewerage infrastructure in Port Norris, Laurel

Lake and Fortescue, and designation of sewer service areas for other centers, such as in Deerfield and Fairfield.

Economy

- Establish loan guarantee or grant program for agri-businesses.
- Establish loan assistance and marketing program for small businesses.
- Enhance business development on CR 553 corridor.

Intermunicipal Cooperation

- Seek funding to develop a plan for shared services, including police, animal control, housing, tax collectors, and others.
- Create revenue and cost-sharing agreements, especially for regional industrial park and eventually the region.

State Plan

- An important task of this Region Strategic Plan is to gain the endorsement of the State Planning Commission, and to complete the designation process for the various centers in the region. This would provide additional funding and expedited permitting for the region.

MORE INFORMATION?

More information is available on the Cumberland Development Corporation website: www.cdcnj.com. For further information on the Strategic Plan effort, please contact Tony Stanzione, Executive Director, Cumberland Development Corporation at (856) 451-4200 or cdc@cdcnj.com.

