



PLANNING MEETING

Workforce Development Board of Ventura County
Wall Notes: October 27, 2016

The Workforce Development Board of Ventura County (WDB) continued its regional planning meetings in 2016, providing opportunities for public discussion of workforce and economic development issues in Ventura County. In October, the WDB meeting focused on six questions related to five categories:

1. *What are our strengths as an economic region? What are our challenges?*
2. *How do the realities of the economic environment affect our business and education strategies?*
3. *How might our region “redefine” growth to benefit economic and workforce development?*
4. *What steps would help to strengthen a level of regional identity and collaboration that would benefit employers and job seekers?*
5. *How might we grow employer participation in regional workforce development activities?*

Attached is a summary of comments and recommendations resulting from the discussion. The input will be considered during WDB regional and local planning processes in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). For more information, please contact WDB staff at (805) 477-5306.



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1a. What are our strengths as an economic region?

- Awareness of current business climate/dynamics
- Ventura County public/private collaborations with readiness/capacity to deal with challenging issues
- Low unemployment
- Opportunities for growth
- Diversity of workforce/employer base
- Offers industry and occupation diversity
- Continued future demand in jobs in healthcare and manufacturing sectors
- Naval Base Ventura County
- Port of Hueneme and port expansion
- Growth opportunities as demonstrated in the data
- Strong pre-K to university level education system
- Career education capacity – pathways/funding
- Quality of life in Ventura County x3 (life attracts people)
- Bedroom community (very desirable)
- Community feels small or cohesive
- Desirable place (weather)
- Freeway system for North/South commutes
- Ventura County = own metropolitan statistical area and own WDB region

1b. What are our challenges as an economic region?

- Attracting and retaining skilled workers in Ventura County
- Retaining current employers
- Attracting new employers
- Growth policy
- Regulatory environment in Ventura County
- Regulatory building restrictions
- Low inventory of manufacturing space
- High cost of living
- Housing costs too high
- Housing inventory low
- Limited public transportation
- Infrastructure: highways and roads
- Port infrastructure; container ships; tourism ships
- Traffic jams, highways, and subway
- Demographics: aging population; % not working
- Retaining balance: quality of life
- Policy idea: buy locally, work locally, live locally



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2. How do the realities of the economic environment affect our business and education strategies?

- Immigration policy issues are impacting business and education strategies
- Need to maintain policy balance between agriculture and development
- Need better and more timely match of education to employment demand
- Retraining needed to help grow the business base
- Labor sector demands now driving sector committee program development in high skill/high wage jobs
- Need to focus our collaboration on high-paying jobs
- Increased OJT and apprenticeship programs education becomes paramount to creating new jobs
- Need innovative and creative ways to develop training programs
- Need to find nontraditional, less costly ways of education
- Need even closer ties between colleges and industry
- Can we grow our economy without growing our housing inventory?
- Lack of housing not matching the workforce – no housing, no workforce
- Lack of manufacturing space

3. How might our region “redefine” growth to benefit economic and workforce development?

- Redefining what “growth” means, including it as a “positive” for all concerned
- Need to get comfortable with more density
- Help our current businesses to stay strong and innovative
- Incentives to bring higher paying jobs
- Ways to retain the high-paying quality jobs
- Encourage spending locally
- Greater number of employment opportunities
- Create living wage jobs
- Create jobs correlated to cost living (high paying)
- Encourage employers to pay above living wage
- Hire locally
- Increase the diversity of types of jobs available
- Grow training opportunities for higher paying jobs
- To increase manufacturing, improve community college technical education—home grown
- Increase enrollment completion in career pathway programs
- Start young to develop a career mindset
- Improve public transportation throughout the county
- Create a higher percent of residents who live and work in Ventura County
- Increase percent of people who come to here
- Establish measurable parameters for county-wide workforce and economic development
- Increased data collection and tracking capacity regarding shifts around jobs/careers and labor sectors



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4. What steps would help to strengthen a level of regional identity and collaboration that would benefit employers and job seekers?

- Build a collaborative community (between cities in county)
- Collaboration that drives advocacy for positive economic development
- Identity of our county needs to be shared by all
- Create a regional identity and strategy which includes all cities in county
- Develop a stronger regional buy-in (less city-centric)
- Need a stronger “council of governments” in Ventura County
- Continue to build a highly skilled local workforce
- Region-wide communication campaign: marketing including best practices, job postings, etc.
- More marketing to employers about our current collaboration and benefits
- Vote for lawmakers who support a collaborative, regional approach

5. How might we grow employer participation in regional workforce development activities?

- Advertise the value proposition of regional collaboration for workforce development
- Campaign to highlight the benefits
- Social media
- WDB link on company websites
- Create flyers that answer questions and promote the opportunity
- Expand the concept of manufacturing roundtable to other industry sectors
- Broaden the concept of manufacturing week to include other industries
- Make business involvement easy and accessible
- Ask them!
- Board member participation in outreach to contacts
- Target specific businesses and find connections to involve them via existing relationships
- B-2-B contacts
- Expand outreach to employers
- Engage employers using existing groups (Chambers, Roundtables, service groups)
- Visit other businesses more often and collaborate on workforce development initiatives
- Second level of involvement: use networks/contacts to engage employers at the AJCC
- Host teachers at local businesses