Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council  
Regional Economic Development Summit  
SWOT Analysis Results

The Regional Economic Development Summit held on October 28, 2016 featured breakout groups that were attended by about 60 people representing the region’s business development organizations, industries, educational facilities, local governments, and the public. Council staff facilitated the breakout group discussions, which covered the following topics: Talent Supply & Education; Innovation & Economic Development; Infrastructure & Growth Leadership; Business Climate & Competitiveness; Civic & Governance Systems; Quality of Life & Quality of Places; and Economic Resilience. Each breakout group was asked to develop a list of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) related to the breakout group topic. After developing the lists, the participants were asked to select the single most important Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat related to the topic. Results of the breakout group SWOT analysis are presented below. The SWOT items identified by the breakout group participants to be most important are shown in italics.

Talent Supply & Education

Strengths
• A strong collaboration between educational institutions, businesses, counties, and CareerSource to develop talent pool
• Connected quality education
• Diverse business community
• Quality of life
• Low tuitions – education more affordable

Weaknesses
• Gap between talent and demand due to lack of educational capacity in high-demand jobs and advanced degree programs
• Perception educational system is weak
• Wages are low
• Poverty levels are high
• Do not understand younger generations

Opportunities
• Enhance alignment of career academies, K-12 schools, and businesses to identify and build career pathways and post-secondary schools
• Increasing populations
• Business involvement in training and development of talent pool
• Encourage businesses to “grow their own” (offer training and education to current employees)
Threats

- Persons becoming obsolete
- Poverty
- Lack of funding
- Regulations
- Inability to connect with Millennials
- Aging Workforce
- Lack of talent supply
Innovation & Economic Development

Strengths
- Unrealized talent pool
- Innovation
- Aviation Industry
- Environmental/Tourism
- Ecotourism - sustainable advantage
- Innovation and productivity
- Talent – all generations
- High investments capacity
- Early start-up ventures

Weaknesses
- Lack of unified culture that provides the will, process, and policies to succeed
- Talent Mismatch
- Source and vetting – globally
- Qualified candidate pool is shrinking
- Lack of entry level jobs
- Lack of intermodal connectivity
- Lack of urban amenities and recreation activities
- Lack of innovation – support culture
- No 21st century vocabulary

Opportunities
- Re-examine the region’s competitive advantages and define the future and action plan to get there
- Partnering with colleges, CareerSource, connect job seekers with good jobs
- Awareness and alignment of resources and talent matching
- Vocational-technical/trade opportunities are booming
- Determining what we want to be
- Latin-American company attraction – regional offices
- Social lifestyle innovation

Threats
- Political will and public perception
- Water supply
- Literacy
- Underutilized potential
- Political local-to-public perception of economic development
- Infrastructure
Infrastructure & Growth Leadership

Strengths

- Robust and well-maintained transportation network
- Rail network including passive rail right-of-way as well as active port connections, to/from other counties
- Roadway network – conditions good, reasonable capacity, north-south connections
- Airports – commercial and general aviation, corporate capacity
- Waterways – Intracoastal Waterway, ocean/inlets, lagoon, rivers, canals, including cross for connection, Okeechobee Waterway
- Seaports – Port of Palm Beach, Port of Fort Pierce
- Medical/Trauma System Network
- Energy – FPL reliability, municipal utilities
- Educational institutions – K-12/University

Weaknesses

- Lack of east/west connectivity (complicated by rail network and need for grade-separated crossings)
- Inter-regional connectivity – county-to-county connections; e.g., bus, Tri-Rail
- East-west connections within and between counties
- Lack of multimodal facilities
- Rail/roadway/interface/# of grade crossings
- Rail impact on emergency services
- Lack of multiple routes to I-95/Turnpike when closures occur

Opportunities

- Complete missing pieces of transportation network with improvements such as grade-separated rail crossings and multi-modal components for bike/pedestrian/transit
- Rail on US 27/inland port by Indiantown utilize SR 710/may need airport
- Consolidation of energy provision
- Improve multimodal network/features
- Grade separated rail/road/pedestrian crossings with prioritization to include hospitals
- Monitor/integrate non-limited access facilities
- Ride sharing/private providers for last mile connection to transit and county-to-county
- High school career academies to supply marine industries workforce
- Tri-Rail extension/intercity bus connections

Threats

- Hurricanes/natural disasters causing need for evacuation with limited east/west routes out of county and environmental impact on river and water quality from Lake Okeechobee discharges
- Energy – range of rates/unpredictability
- Lack of increased gas tax/ without indexing – declining revenue stream
- Increased utilization of FEC rail corridor such that east/west crossings are impacted for emergency services, vehicular travel
Business Climate & Competitiveness

Strengths
- Geography/Location
- Physical growth potential
- Economic value (relatively attainable)
- Generally pro-growth local and regional governments
- Strong roadway and highway infrastructure (although lacking in transit)
- Untapped potential growth in lifestyle and eco-businesses
- Positive awareness of region to outsiders
- Emerging agriculture potentials
- Location and geography
- Marine and aqua-culture related interests

Weaknesses
- Lack of diversity
- Misconceptions about the region
- The school system
- Young talent recruitment and retention
- Lack of economic diversity
- Lack of vital infrastructure including sewer and water in some areas
- Lack of business “risk takers”
- Employment skills misaligned with available jobs
- Water quality
- The physical (suburban) environment is weakness for a robust business climate

Opportunities
- Growth potential
- High vacancy rates in existing commercial buildings and centers
- “Pleasure-to-permanent” recruitment efforts aimed at retaining visitors as business investors
- Continued population growth
- The northern migration from Miami-Dade and Broward counties in addition to the southern migration from Central Florida (primarily due to housing costs)

Threats
- Collective will to address problems
- All Aboard Florida proposed passenger rail service
- Failure of local governments and communities to express the will to address tough issues
Civic & Governance Systems

Strengths
- Governments communicate and work together to encourage economic development
- Governments work cooperatively with chambers of commerce
- Regional planning has been done and is being done

Weaknesses
- Consensus vision for economic development lacking
- Citizens need accurate information
- Untapped experienced retirees
- No entrée into Government
- No entrée into Private Sector
- Communication between counties
- Vision not being communicated to the community
- Newcomers to the area have no background on issues
- Lack of education in civics
- Lack of civility in discourse
- Dissolution of clubs and declining participation
- Lack of advisory board participation
- Lack of broadly accepted goals

Opportunities
- Citizen involvement, especially youth
- Untapped talent
- Young people
- Social media as a means of communication
- Local government connect with school children
- High school students on advisory boards
- Police explorers
- Veterans, especially recent ones
- College students as poll workers
- Volunteers
- Citizens academy for youth with “placement” for graduates
- Youth leadership program
- Existing plans (such as Seven50)

Threats
- Lack of civics knowledge
- Misinformation
- Goal/regulation mismatch
- Conflicting goals among jurisdictions
- Slow processes
- Confusing / unclear regulations
• Incompatibilities between local and larger desires
• Aging population
• Crumbling infrastructure
• Trade education lacking
• Lack of good jobs
Quality of Life & Quality of Places

Strengths
- Location/diversity in all categories
- Weather
- Outdoor activities (boating; yachting; golf; fishing; hunting; equestrian)
- Lakes and waterways
- Ecosystem – landscape
- Education and Cultural opportunities
- Urban and cultural diversity
- Small town/city feel
- Beach
- Agricultural open space
- Planning

Weaknesses
- Inconsistent execution of vision
- Sustainable industry and higher wages
- Lack of affordable housing stock (all kinds – diversity)
- Lack of public transportation that is efficient and user friendly
- Pattern of development
- Inconsistent leadership
- Term limits – or not
- Intergovernmental cooperation
- No unified Regional Vision
- Water management/water quality
- Lack of infrastructure maintenance
- Education

Opportunities
- Collaboration inter- and intra- city/county public/private
- Growth
- Ethics by example
- Redevelopment/Reuse
- More Cultural Events
- Marketing what we have
- Regional/Community calendar
- Younger more diverse Population
- Attract People Back
- Education

Threats
- Unbridled/unbalanced growth
- Sea Level Rise/Climate Change
• Water quality and quantity
• Poverty/Lack of Affordable Housing/Cost of Living
• Environmental degradation
• Infrastructure conditions and cost of maintenance
• All Aboard Florida or not
• Access to healthcare
• Equity in taxation
• Homestead Exemption!
Economic Resilience

Strengths
- Industry diversity - six sectors: marine, energy, aerospace, medical, agriculture, tourism
- Hub for energy producing design, research, regional collaboration, technology (wind, solar, electric, nuclear)
- Climate – weather allows year-round work opportunity
- Highly educated workforce in key sectors (water, energy)
- Medical training, research and implementation (check weakness)
- Transportation infrastructure (rail, airports)
- Agriculture – four seasons of growing

Weaknesses
- Water quality injures tourism, local quality of life
- Power exported from region
- Medical: cannot seem to meet the needed, expected volume workforce residence, nurses, graduates, doctors
- all access to medical services/affordability
- Small business protection
- Water quality injured tourism, local quality of life

Opportunities
- Expansion and retention of existing contributory industry (aerospace, energy, agriculture, medical, marine)
- Built industry should encourage long-term planning to develop quality goods
- Agriculture – four seasons of growing

Threats
- Man-made/natural disasters (hurricanes, cyber-terrorism, terrorism, civil unrest)
- Repetitive losses – property/residential/governmental facilities in flood zones
SWOT Analysis Summary

Strengths
- A strong collaboration between educational institutions, businesses, counties, and CareerSource to develop talent pool (Talent Supply & Education)
- Unrealized talent pool (Innovation & Economic Development)
- Robust and well-maintained transportation network (Infrastructure & Growth Leadership)
- Geography/Location (Business Climate & Competitiveness)
- Governments communicate and work together to encourage economic development (Civic & Governance Systems)
- Location/diversity in all categories (Quality of Life & Quality of Places)
- Industry diversity - six sectors: marine, energy, aerospace, medical, agriculture, tourism (Economic Resilience)

Weaknesses
- Gap between talent and demand due to lack of educational capacity in high-demand jobs and advanced degree programs (Talent Supply & Education)
- Lack of unified culture that provides the will, process, and policies to succeed (Innovation & Economic Development)
- Lack of east/west connectivity (complicated by rail network and need for grade-separated crossings) (Infrastructure & Growth Leadership)
- Lack of diversity (Business Climate & Competitiveness)
- Consensus vision for economic development lacking (Civic & Governance Systems)
- Inconsistent execution of vision (Quality of Life & Quality of Places)
- Water quality injures tourism, local quality of life (Economic Resilience)

Opportunities
- Enhance alignment of career academies, K-12 schools, and businesses to identify and build career pathways and post-secondary schools (Talent Supply & Education)
- Re-examine the region’s competitive advantages and define the future and action plan to get there (Innovation & Economic Development)
- Complete missing pieces of transportation network with improvements such as grade-separated rail crossings and multi-modal components for bike/pedestrian/transit (Infrastructure & Growth Leadership)
- Growth potential (Business Climate & Competitiveness)
- Citizen involvement, especially youth (Civic & Governance Systems)
- Collaboration inter- and intra- city/county public/private (Quality of Life & Quality of Places)
- Expansion and retention of existing contributory industry (aerospace, energy, agriculture, medical, marine) (Economic Resilience)

Threats
- Persons becoming obsolete (Talent Supply & Education)
- Political will and public perception (Innovation & Economic Development)
- Hurricanes/natural disasters causing need for evacuation with limited east/west routes out of county and environmental impact on river and water quality from Lake Okeechobee discharges (Infrastructure & Growth Leadership)
- Collective will to address problems (Business Climate & Competitiveness)
- Lack of civics knowledge (Civic & Governance Systems)
- Unbridled/unbalanced growth (Quality of Life & Quality of Places)
- Man-made/natural disasters (hurricanes, cyber-terrorism, terrorism, civil unrest) (Economic Resilience)