

DRAFT | March 17, 2026 REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

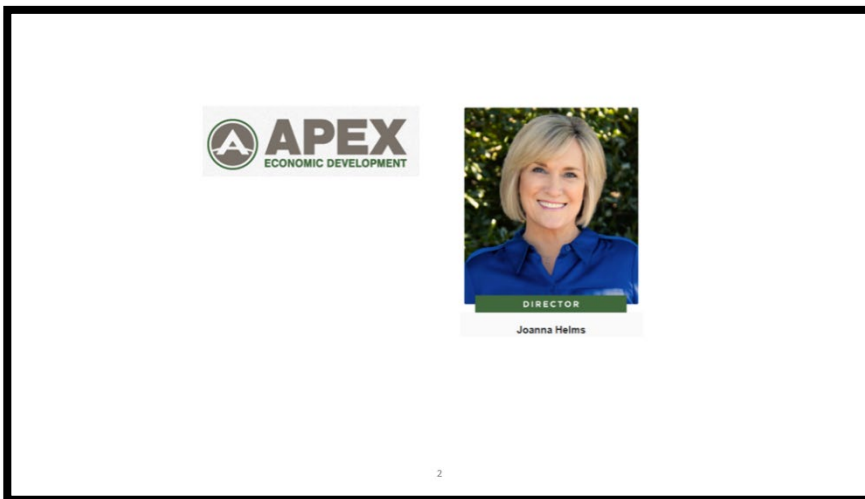
1 **Joanna Helms**, Director of Economic Development, introduced her team members
2 Colleen Merays, Economic Development Manager, Bailey Robertson, Marketing Coordinator
3 and Michelle Boyles, Program Support Specialist. She also introduced Charles Hayes, Sr.
4 Fellow and Daniel Park, Sr. Instructor with Hayes Group Consulting.

5
6 **Mr. Hayes** and **Mr. Parks** gave the following presentation with Mr. Hayes giving this
7 part of the presentation:

8 **[SLIDE 1]**



9
10 **[SLIDE 2]**



11

1 [SLIDE 3]

Today's Presenters



Charles A. Hayes
Managing Partner

Senior Fellow
Instructor



County Manager
County Economic Developer
Research Triangle Regional Partnership, CEO

- Led a 13-county region
- Research Triangle today – one of the leading regions globally



R. Daniel Parks
Senior Strategist

STRATEGIST: Public Sector

- Local Government, Economic Development, Entrepreneurship (in NC) over 30 Counties (across US) 20 States

STRATEGIST: Business/Private Sector

- Corporations & Small-Midsize Companies – over 250 clients

NC State University, Office of Outreach & Engagement (O&E)

- (former) Senior Director - Strategy & Innovation



2
3 [SLIDE 4]




Jan P. Hayes
Managing Partner

North Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority
Vice Chair

North Carolina Community Foundation
Board Member

Central Carolina Community College
Board of Trustees

United Way (Lee County)
Executive Director (2006-2016)



Julian Philpott, JD
Senior Partner
Advocacy

North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation
Lobbyist/General Counsel (retired)

NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission
Member

Central Carolina Community College
Board Of Trustees

NC Association of Community College Trustees
Member; Co-Chair Legislative Committee



Bob Joyce
Senior Consultant


Sanford Area Growth Alliance
Director of Economic Development

Sanford Area Chamber of Commerce
President

Financial Sector Executive



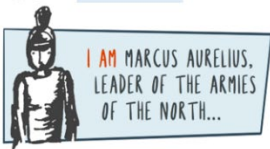
4
5 [SLIDE 5]



Please Introduce Yourself

1. NAME
2. ORGANIZATION

Example:



I AM MARCUS AURELIUS.
LEADER OF THE ARMIES
OF THE NORTH...

5

1 [SLIDE 6]



Economic Development “Academy”


The Vision
To **demystify** economic development for all.

The Mission
To expand the knowledge of economic development (and its dynamics) for **professional practitioners, government officials, community leaders,** and **citizens** - so better collaborative decisions can be made.

The Value
Grounding: What economic development **IS** and what it **IS NOT**.
Understanding **place-based** economic development — “Our place ... our future”
Foundation for actionable planning.

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3 [SLIDE 7]



Continuing & Professional Education
Awards to


Your Name

This Certificate in Recognition of Successful Completion
ECU Honors Seminar in Economic Development
March 17, 2026

Contact Hours: 4.0
CEU: 0.4


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5 [SLIDE 8]



Session Outcomes

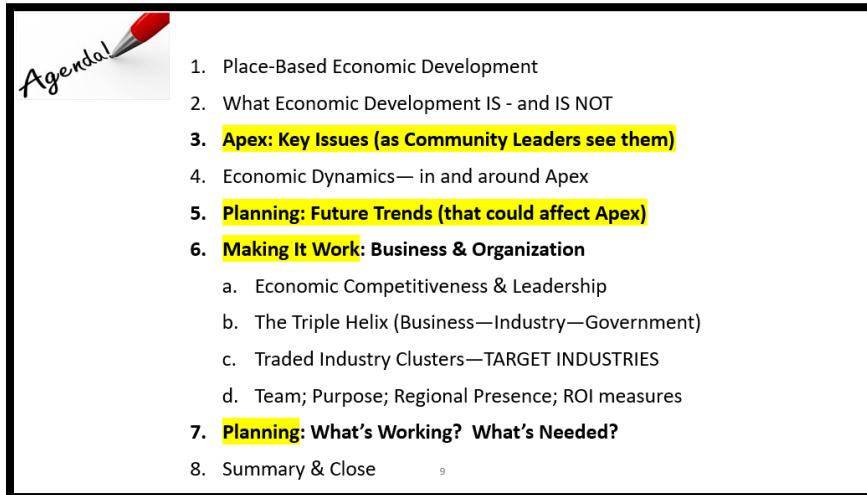
- Enhance awareness of **key terms and concepts** related to economic development.
- Describe the **base economy** including market area, traded clusters, distinguishing factors and needs.
- Explore the **external forces** that could impact Apex.
- Articulate some **potential strategies** for economic development.
- Identify **some next steps** needed going forward.



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1 [SLIDE 9]



Agenda

1. Place-Based Economic Development
2. What Economic Development IS - and IS NOT
3. **Apex: Key Issues (as Community Leaders see them)**
4. Economic Dynamics— in and around Apex
5. **Planning: Future Trends (that could affect Apex)**
6. **Making It Work: Business & Organization**
 - a. Economic Competitiveness & Leadership
 - b. The Triple Helix (Business—Industry—Government)
 - c. Traded Industry Clusters—TARGET INDUSTRIES
 - d. Team; Purpose; Regional Presence; ROI measures
7. **Planning: What's Working? What's Needed?**
8. Summary & Close

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3 [SLIDE 10]



THE POWER OF
PLACE

Place-Based
Economic Development

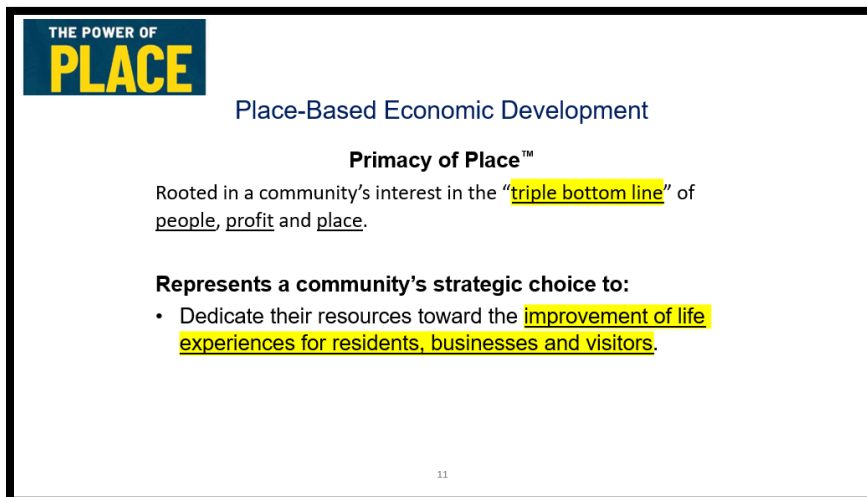


THE PEAK OF GOOD LIVING

Our Place... Our Future

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5 [SLIDE 11]



THE POWER OF
PLACE

Place-Based Economic Development

Primacy of Place™

Rooted in a community's interest in the "**triple bottom line**" of people, profit and place.

Represents a community's strategic choice to:

- Dedicate their resources toward the **improvement of life experiences for residents, businesses and visitors.**

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1 [SLIDE 12]



Slide 12 features a light blue background with a small image of a blue sky with clouds in the top left corner. A white box in the center contains the title "STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR MUNICIPALITIES" and a bulleted list of seven items. The last item, "Economic Vitality", is highlighted in yellow. A small number "12" is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR MUNICIPALITIES

- Efficient—High-performing Government
- Intergovernmental Collaboration
- Neighborhood Livability & Housing
- Health & Safety
- Infrastructure & Public Services
- Tourism, Culture & Entertainment
- **Economic Vitality**

2
3 **Mr. Hayes** gave this part of the presentation:

4 [SLIDE 13]



Slide 13 features a white background with the ECU logo in the top left corner. The title "What Economic Development IS ..." is centered in green. Below the title is a definition of economic development and a statement about the desired result. A small line graph icon is centered at the bottom of the slide, and the number "13" is visible in the bottom center.

ECU

What Economic Development IS ...

Definition: Process that influences growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the economic and social well being of a community.

The desired result is creation of wealth for a place.

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1 [SLIDE 14]



What Economic Development IS ...

Defined as “Creation of Wealth (prosperity) for a PLACE”

Three ways for a community to create wealth:

1. Retain and grow existing businesses
2. Create it (entrepreneurship)
3. Recruit it (attract)

Economic Development = Community Development

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3 [SLIDE 15]



What Economic Development IS NOT ...



Economic development
IS NOT
just about
economic growth.

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4
5 [SLIDE 16]

Key Issues

1. You are attending a community forum. Community leaders are raising what they see as **economic development ISSUES** for **Apex**. What would **THEY** say?
2. What would **YOU** say are the key economic development **SUCCESES?**

Write on Index Cards:

- a. Your reflections and answers to the above questions.
- b. Prepare to share; then cards will be collected by the instructors.



16

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1 **Mr. Hayes** asked what residents may say about Economic Development issues or
2 topics and asked Council and staff to write these down.

3 **Town Manager Vosburg** said that one of the issues is how small-town character is
4 being protected.

5 **Councilmember Reese** said how to learn best practices from other municipalities to
6 keep Apex’s character and community vibrant and how to recruit or keep businesses that will
7 pair well with the potential Children’s Hospital.

8 **Mr. Parks** asked while the Council or staff are out in the community what are some
9 things they are hearing, no data center, can’t believe how much Apex is growing, etc.

10 **Assistant Town Manager Stone** said land cost was one concern.

11 **Councilmember Mu** said that one concern was the housing costs and can’t afford to
12 live here, for example Fire Fighters that can’t afford to live here.

13 **Mr. Hayes** said some may have grown up in Apex and can’t afford to live in Apex.

14 **Mayor Gilbert** said that he hears the opposite compared to places like Holly Springs.
15 He said that he hears about small businesses closing for different reasons and gave an
16 example of Yamato Japanese.

17 **Councilmember Mu** asked what the reason for the Japanese restaurant to close.

18 **Councilmember Zegerman** said that he hears tax dollars and not so much about
19 community and the benefit to the community but about tax income.

20 **Mayor Pro-Tempore Mahaffey** said that he hears concerns about land and
21 development.

22 **Mayor Pro-Tempore Mahaffey** said water and sewer utility issues.

23 **Ms. Merays** said the difficulty in finding employees for retail restaurants because of
24 the cost of living in Apex, Public Transportation impacting the business community, access to
25 capital and Tourism.

26 **Mr. Hayes** said that his summary was is growth sustainable and can be sustained, and
27 what those best practices are and how to keep the character of Apex with the current growth
28 changes are fast and is outgrowing the infrastructure. He said that cost of living is too high for
29 employees to live in Apex and Public Transportation is not available.

30 **Mr. Parks** said that two things that weren’t mentioned were education and health care,
31 which are big issues in other areas, and most people in Apex are secure in these two issues.

32 **Town Manager Vosburg** said that there wasn’t any mention about jobs, and Apex has
33 a lot of employment.

34 **Mr. Parks** said in activity number one was what residents have said about Economic
35 Development in Apex and asked the Council and staff what they would say about Economic
36 Development in Apex that shows up in the media or Economic Development news and
37 successes.

38 **Councilmember Zegerman** said that the Children’s Hospital brings potential for
39 Economic Development growth.

40 **Mayor Pro-Tempore Mahaffey** said that Veridia will bring in a lot of Economic growth
41 to the area.

1 **Councilmember Gray** said that Apex has cultivated an atmosphere and reputation as
2 a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

3 **Mr. Parks** stated that, in working with Roanoke Rapids, the community has faced
4 challenges related to deterioration and is now striving to rebrand itself as a city of resilience.

5 **Mayor Gilbert** referenced the S-Line project as an earlier example of an initiative
6 supporting economic growth.

7 **Assistant Town Manager Stone** stated that, had the Town not invested in
8 infrastructure to extend sewer service to the Big Branch Basin, projects such as Veridea and
9 the Children’s Hospital would not have been possible.

10 **Town Attorney Hohe** said that these efforts date back even further to the West Point
11 Treatment Plant and the Town’s partnership with Cary.

12 **Assistant Town Manager Stone** said that these strategic partnerships and
13 investments in water and sewer infrastructure have been critical to Apex’s economic
14 development and represent some of the most impactful decisions made by Town leadership.

15 **Councilmember Zegerman** aid that investments in downtown Apex and economic
16 growth are positive but should also preserve Apex’s heritage.

17 **Councilmember Reese** said that the Small Business Incubator Program spins out
18 small businesses, but it is equally important that participants enjoy being part of the program
19 and, over time, become Ambassadors for the program and the Town.

20 **Mr. Parks** said the key word is “Ambassadors.” He asked what the defining factors are,
21 including the Peak of Good Living, and how positive developments and good decisions
22 contribute to a defining characteristic of the Town.

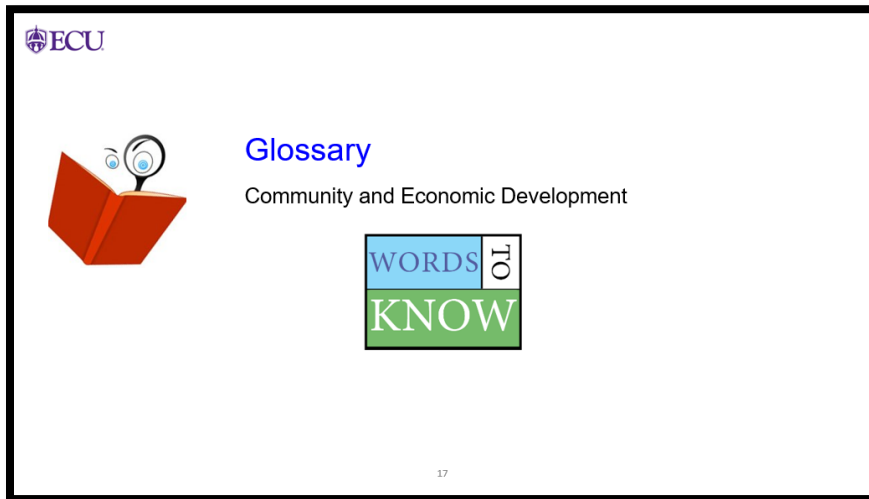
23 **Mr. Hayes** said that what he took from the discussion is that Council and staff are
24 forward-looking, considering impacts beyond the present, such as the Children’s Hospital
25 project. Growth is positive but should be managed carefully, including projects like the S-line.
26 In the past, Apex has focused on planning for the future, including infrastructure decisions. He
27 added that one way to grow is through entrepreneurship and small business development,
28 which Apex has recognized, and that the Town is doing well.

29 **Mr. Parks** said there is a lot to celebrate in being Ambassadors. He noted that a PDF
30 would be distributed for review. He said the Council would take a break and return at 4:37
31 p.m.

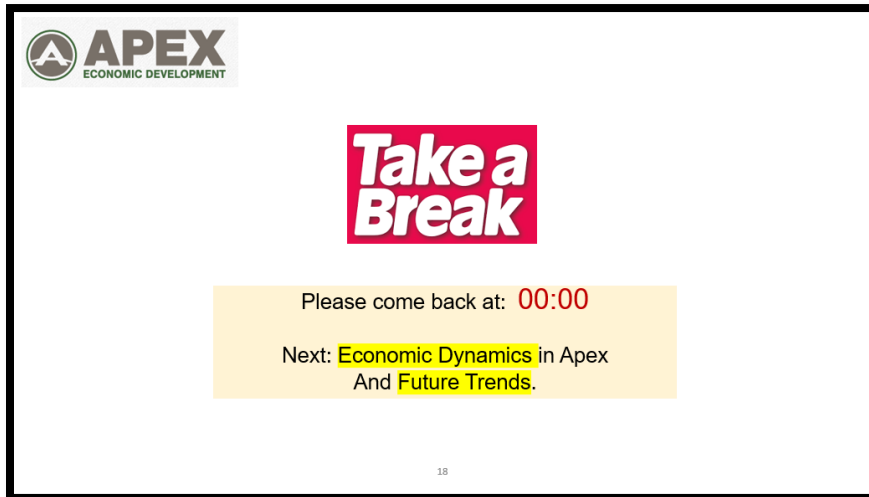
32 **Mr. Hayes** said that when considering investments or relocation, it is important to
33 assume that outsiders know nothing about Apex and consider what they would learn online
34 about the Town.

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1 [SLIDE 17]



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3 [SLIDE 18]



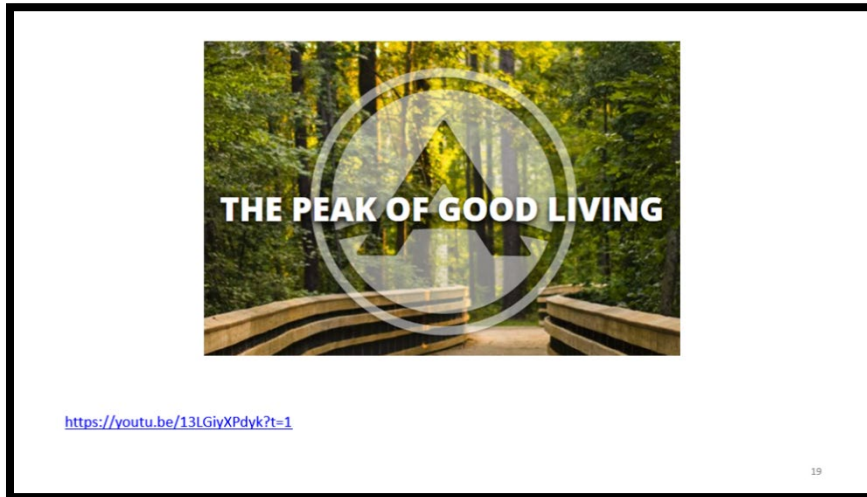
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7 [ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY CONTINUED]

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9 **Mayor Gilbert** called the meeting back in session at **4:40p.m.**

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11 **Mr. Hayes** continued with the presentation.

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1 [SLIDE 19]



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3 [SLIDE 20]

Our Location

Located near the center of the Research Triangle Region, Apex is just minutes from Raleigh-Durham International Airport, three major research universities ([North Carolina State University](#), [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#), and [Duke University](#)), plus several more colleges and universities, and the innovative businesses that comprise the renowned Research Triangle Park.

With our location near the intersection of US Highways 1 and 64, only minutes from Interstate 40 and connected to Interstate 540, Apex offers residents and businesses excellent access to one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. If you're looking for a place to get away for an evening or even a couple of days, we're only an hour from world-class golfing in Pinehurst, NC; between two and three hours from several North Carolina beaches to the east; and the Blue Ridge Mountains to the west.

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5 [SLIDE 21]

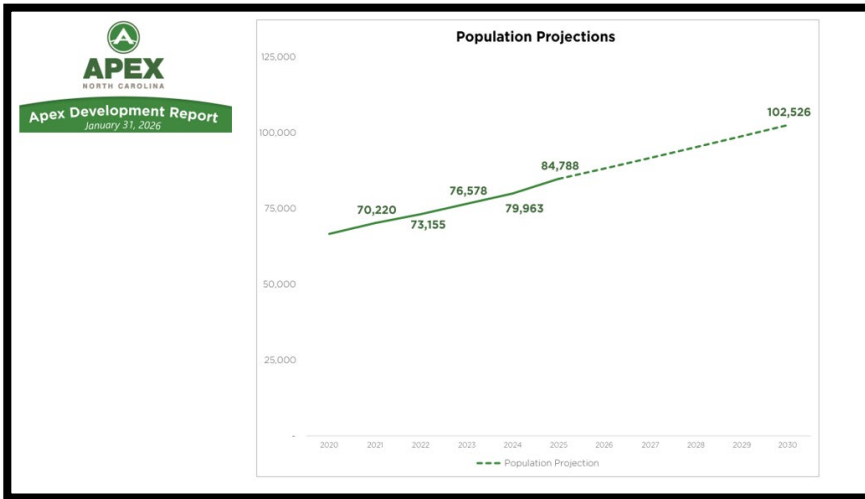
Apex Accolades

- o #10 America's Most Desirable Cities to Move to; US News (January 2026)
- o #3 out of 1,300+ for Best Small Cities in America; WalletHub (September 2025)
- o #1 'Boomtown' in North Carolina; News and Observer (November 2024)
- o #6 out of 1,300+ for Best Small Cities in America; WalletHub (October 2024)
- o #7 Most Livable Small City in America; SmartAsset (July 2024)
- o #3 Best Suburb to Raise a Family in NC; Niche (January 2022)
- o #12 out of 1,300+ for Best Small Cities in America; WalletHub (October 2023)
- o #3 Best Place to Live - Raleigh, Durham; US News (2023-2024)
- o #1 City for Housing Construction Permits Issued in 2018, per capita; Governing Magazine (March 2019)
- o #1 Fastest Growing Suburb in the United States; Realtor.com (June 2018)
- o #10 Suburban Hotspot in the United States; Realtor.com (February 2017)
- o #3 Best Suburb to Live in NC; Niche (January 2017)
- o 6th Safest City in North Carolina; CreditDonkey (February 2016)
- o **Best Places to Live: #1 in America; Time/Money Magazine (August 2015)**
- o #2 Best City in NC to get a Job; Zippia (June 2015)
- o 4th Safest Place to Live in North Carolina; Movoto.com (January 2015)
- o Best Places to Live: #9 in America, and #1 in North Carolina; CNN/Money Magazine (August 2013)
- o #3 Best Place to Move To; Forbes.com (July 2009)
- o Top 100 Places to Live; RelocateAmerica.com (April 2009)
- o Best Places to Live: #14 in America, CNN/Money Magazine (July 2007)

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1 **Mr. Hayes** provided an overview of population growth trends in the area, highlighting
2 recent increases and projected future growth.

3 **[SLIDE 22]**



4 **Mr. Parks** continued the presentation.


5 **[SLIDE 23]**

K-12 Public Schools **EDUCATION**

K-12 public schools in Apex are part of the [Wake County Public School System \(WCPSS\)](#). With approximately 140,000 students, the WCPSS is the largest system in the state and is consistently one of its top performers. Within the WCPSS, Apex schools are some of the most sought after by parents who are anxious to provide their children the best education possible.

Private and Charter Schools

Private and Charter schools have long been a solid alternative for those that choose not to attend a public school. According to the [North Carolina Department of Administration's Division of Non-Public Education](#), there are three private schools and three charter school located in the Town of Apex.



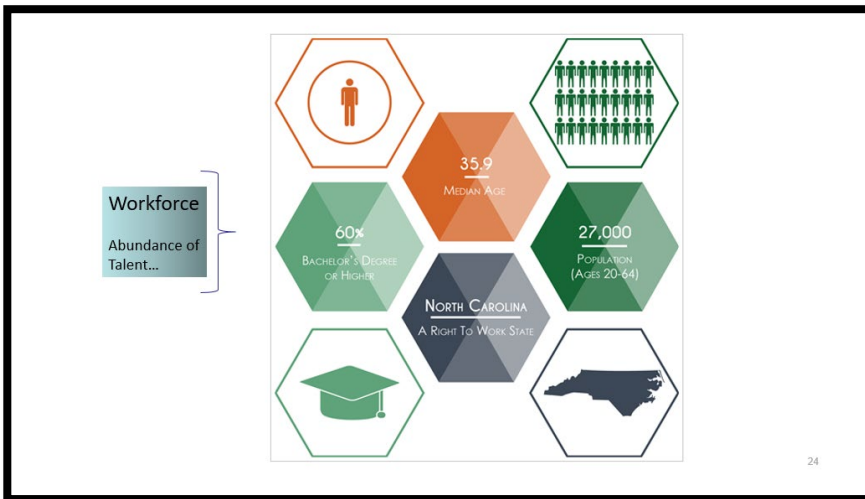
Higher Education

With a name like the Research Triangle Region, you would be safe to assume that higher education is a major component of our community. The Region is home to many top-notch colleges and universities, including three tier-one research universities that combine to spend well over \$1 Billion in research annually.

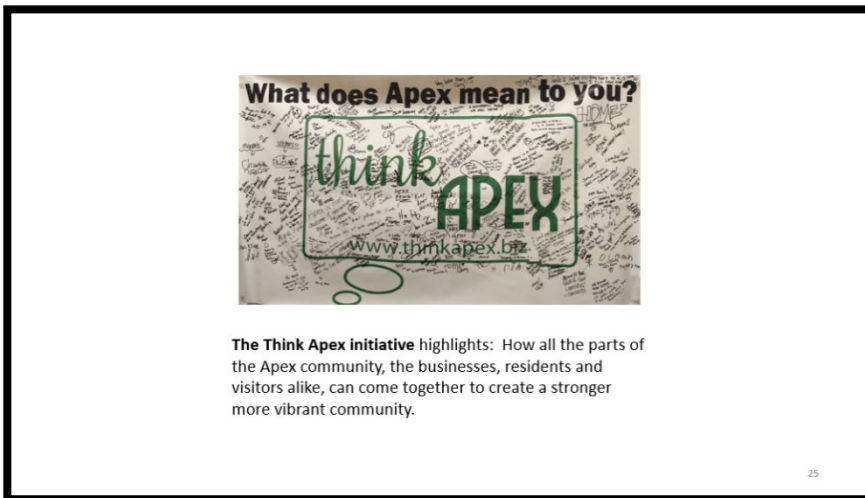
23

7 **Mr. Hayes** asked everyone if they were familiar with the meaning of a "Right to Work"
8 state. He explained that in such a state, individuals have the choice of whether or not to join a
9 labor union and emphasized that he wanted to ensure everyone understood the concept and
10 its implications.
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1 [SLIDE 24]



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3 [SLIDE 25]



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5 **Mr. Parks** asked Ms. Helms what the "Think Apex" initiative meant to her, how it
6 originated, and how it has manifested today.
7 **Director Helms** explained that around 2014, a Council member wanted residents to
8 prioritize "Apex first." She noted that the initiative initially focused on businesses but later
9 evolved to include community recognition. Today, there are two main components:
10 identifying community heroes and "Think Apex Day," which is a day of service. Examples of
11 activities include painting pictures in the park or creating artwork for residents of a local
12 nursing home.
13 **Mr. Parks** said that people have really responded to this.

1 [SLIDE 26]




Key Economic Development Projects & Initiatives:

Veridea Development: A major 1,200-acre project, Veridea is planned as a "mini-city" featuring 8,000 homes and 12 million square feet of commercial/civic space, including the future NC Children's Hospital and a Wake Tech campus.

Infrastructure Improvements: The Apex Peakway Southwest Connector project is underway, adding a four-lane bridge over the CSX rail line to improve connectivity.

Veridea Infrastructure: The Big Branch 1 (BB1) regional wastewater pump station is under construction to support the massive Veridea development.

Peak Plan 2055: An update to the town's Comprehensive Plan that focuses on future growth, particularly south and west of the current town limits, according to the Town of Apex.




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3 [SLIDE 27]

Future Trends



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5 [SLIDE 28]



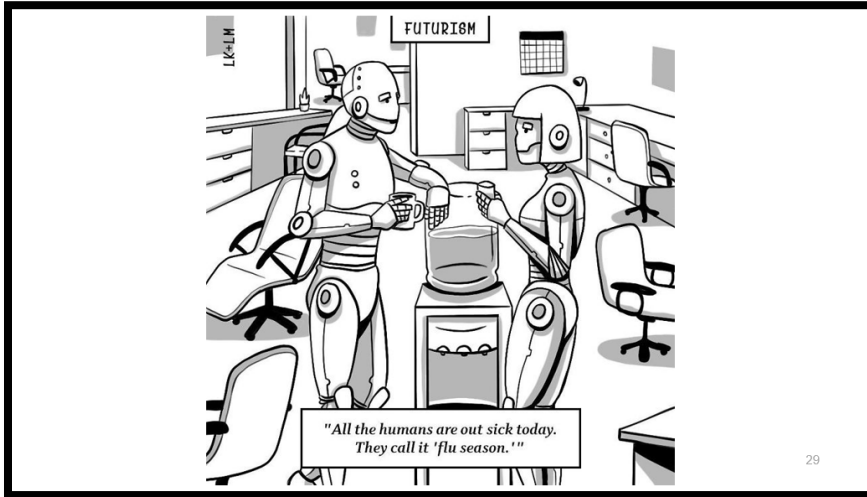
The future ain't what it used to be.
Yogi Berra

Predictions are hard, especially when they are about the future.
Yogi Berra

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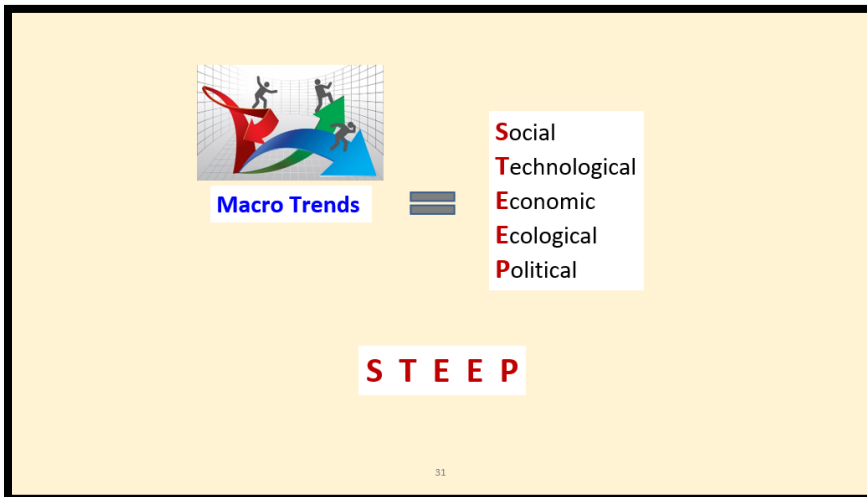
1 [SLIDE 29]



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3 [SLIDE 30]

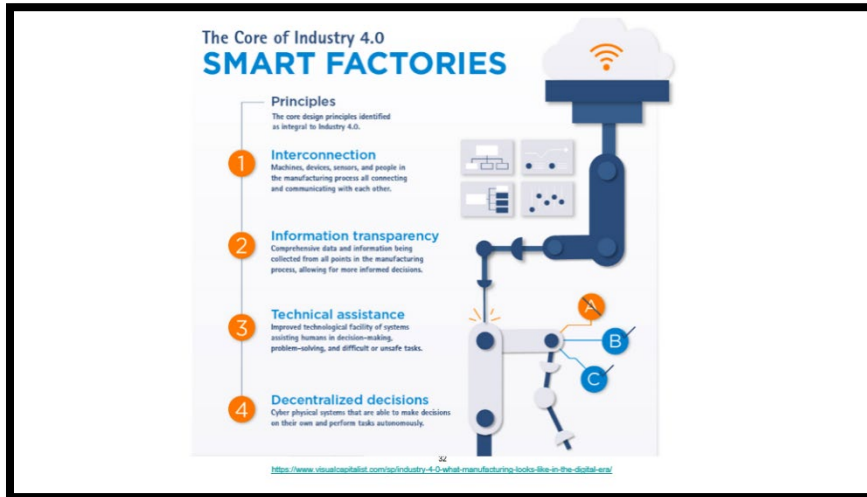


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5 [SLIDE 31]



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1 [SLIDE 32]



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STEEP Analysis		
(S) SOCIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographics Lifestyle Trends Cultural Norms Education Levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population Growth Attitudes Toward Work & Leisure Demands For Mobility
(T) TECHNOLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pace of Change Automation Robotics Innovations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R&D Data Security Impact of Emerging Tech (like AI)
(E) ECONOMIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflation Interest Rates Employment Rates Economic Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposable Income Exchange Rates Distribution of Economic Growth/Income
(E) ENVIRONMENTAL (or ECOLOGICAL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Change Pollution Sustainability Green Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Availability Biodiversity Environmental Regulations
(P) POLITICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dominant Political Parties Dominant Political Viewpoints Government Instability Trade Policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tax Policies Political Stability Geopolitical Tensions Trade Barriers

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5 [SLIDE 34]

Strategic Mindset

Future Trends

As you watch this 5-minute video... make notes:
What are the **greatest impacts for Apex?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTRJlmN6jeU>

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1 **Mr. Parks** asked for everyone to watch the video “Did you know” noting that the audio
2 was not essential. He requested that participants take notes on potential implications for
3 Apex.

4 **Mr. Parks** said that the world is shifting beneath our feet and asked what observations
5 from the video stood out regarding future implications for the town.

6 **Councilmember Gray** said that change occurs more rapidly every day.

7 **Councilmember Zegerman** said that technology is altering how the Town works with
8 residents and collaborates internally, as well as impacting Economic Development, citing
9 examples such as data centers.

10 **Councilmember Mu** said the influence of AI on jobs and the workforce.

11 **Mayor Pro-Tempore Mahaffey** said hybrid work has created shifts in how people
12 work and interact, noting its impact on workplace trends.

13 **Mr. Hayes** asked in the context of these trends, whether staff has developed long-
14 range plan to address future needs.

15 **Ms. Cox** said that staff is currently working with Government Readiness efforts that
16 focus on evaluating major trends.

17 **Mr. Hayes** said that this work involves looking ahead and adapting to the rapid pace
18 of change, and considering what those changes will mean for Apex.

19 **Mr. Parks** organized attendees into groups and asked them to review the handout
20 provided by Clerk Coleman. He instructed participants to begin where they preferred,
21 evaluate the potential impacts on Apex, and discuss their thoughts. He allotted approximately
22 10 minutes for discussion and then requested a volunteer from each group to share key
23 takeaways.

24 **Councilmember Gray** said that one of the key discussion points was the trend of
25 government instability, including a decreased reliance on federal and state partners for
26 grants and funding. He noted the importance of maintaining strong regional and local
27 partnerships to help fill funding gaps, as well as identifying alternative or combined funding
28 sources. He added that this discussion also extended to environmental trends, including
29 regulatory rollbacks, and emphasized Apex’s desire to remain a good steward of the
30 environment.

31 **Mr. Hayes** said that this was a strong example of a current trend and noted that there
32 has been an approximate \$3 million loss in research funding, which has impacted the
33 Research Triangle region.

34 **Councilmember Zegerman** stated that his group discussed evolving forms of
35 mobility, including increased emphasis on walkability and how roadway design must adapt to
36 these changes.

37 **Mr. Hayes** noted that walkability continues to be a growing trend, with increased
38 demand for pedestrian-friendly environments, and observed that downtown Apex is already
39 responding to this shift.

40 **Councilmember Reese** stated that his group discussed environmental sustainability,
41 highlighting benefits such as infrastructure preservation, recreation opportunities, and

1 cultural alignment. He noted that the community appears supportive of the Town’s
 2 investments in environmental and sustainability initiatives.

3 **Clerk Coleman** stated that his group discussed demographic trends, including an
 4 aging population and younger families who wish to live in Apex near relatives but face
 5 challenges finding affordable housing. He noted the need to address services for both
 6 seniors and younger residents, particularly those between the ages of 20 and 50. He added
 7 that the group also discussed the potential impact of artificial intelligence on the workforce,
 8 including increased efficiencies as well as the possibility of job displacement.

9 ? said they discussed the social part of Economic Development and how the
 10 workforce growth and people needing to make more to put in the economy and they saw
 11 these implications as being positive for the workforce growth and with the trend of inflation
 12 increasing the lack of disposable income to put back into the economy.

13 **Mr. Hayes** asked if they thought this was a trend.

14 ? said that it may be a trend in general but not specifically to one thing.

15 **Ms. Cox** said they discussed the data center and the issues that come with that and
 16 data security.

17 **Mr. Hayes** said that data security is something that is not talked about enough.

18

19 **[SLIDE 35]**

Factors that could affect Pharmaceutical Industry– Over next 5 to 10 Years...		
STEEP Analysis		
	ISSUE	IMPACT ON BUSINESS
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient awareness, changing expectations • Increasing longevity & obesity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More pressure on customer service, more price transparency • Market likely to grow with increasing health concerns
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New info & communication (social media) • Customized treatments • Direct to patient advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New digital opportunities creating new "e-models" • Direct to patient communications • More responsive service needed
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in disposable income • Increasing number of buying groups—pressure on pricing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctance of consumers to spend on healthcare • Need to introduce value-added processes
Ecological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing environmental agenda and community awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify eco opportunities to market
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing political focus and pressure on healthcare • Harmonization of healthcare across Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut backs (loss of business); more pressure on pricing • Reference pricing exposing prices across borders

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1 [SLIDE 36]

With your partner(s):

1. List the Issues (on Worksheet).
2. Evaluate their potential impact on Apex.
3. Consider whether their impact is (+) or (-)

TRENDS that could affect YOUR PLACE:

STEEP Analysis			
Macro Factor	Trend/Issue	IMPACT ON YOU	(+) (-)
Social			
Technological			
Economic			
Environmental			
Political			

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Mr. Parks collected the document that had been handed out from all and spoke about dinner.

Clerk Coleman said that there would be a group photo and then recess for dinner.

8 [SLIDE 37]

APEX
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Dinner Time

Please come back at: 00:00

Next: Making it Work!

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Recess began at **5:35 p.m.**

[ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY CONTINUED]

The meeting resumed at **5:55 p.m.**

Mr. Parks gave an overview of "Making It Work" and what would be talked about in this part of the session and continued with the presentation.

1

2 [SLIDE 38]

APEX
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Making It Work

- Team (Leadership & Management)
- Triple Helix
- Traded Clusters
- What does Apex Economic Development do? Program of Work?
- Regional Presence
- Infrastructure
- Return on Investment (ROI) and metrics

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4 [SLIDE 39]




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1 [SLIDE 40]


Leadership

What challenges do we face in getting things done?



- Making timely Decisions
- Managing Information
- Measuring Progress
- Working Together
- Sharing Commitments
- Exhibiting Mutual Trust
- Managing Conflict
- Being Interpersonally Savvy
- Navigating Political Dynamics

2
3 [SLIDE 41]



**BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT and ACADEMIC resources...
aligned and focused ... going in the same direction**

Academia (Higher Ed. and Research Institutions):
The source of **basic research**, knowledge creation, **KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER**, and intellectual human capital.

Industry (Business and Private Sector):
The source of **commercialization**, production, and market application of knowledge.

Government (The State/Policy Makers):
The source of **regulation**, funding, and an enabling environment (e.g., policy, infrastructure).

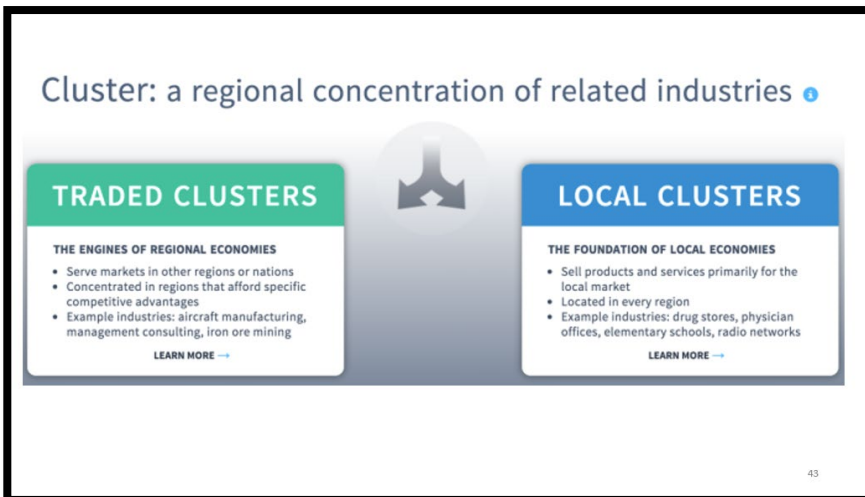
41

4
5 **Mr. Hayes** continued with Academia, Industry, and Government portion of the
6 presentation.

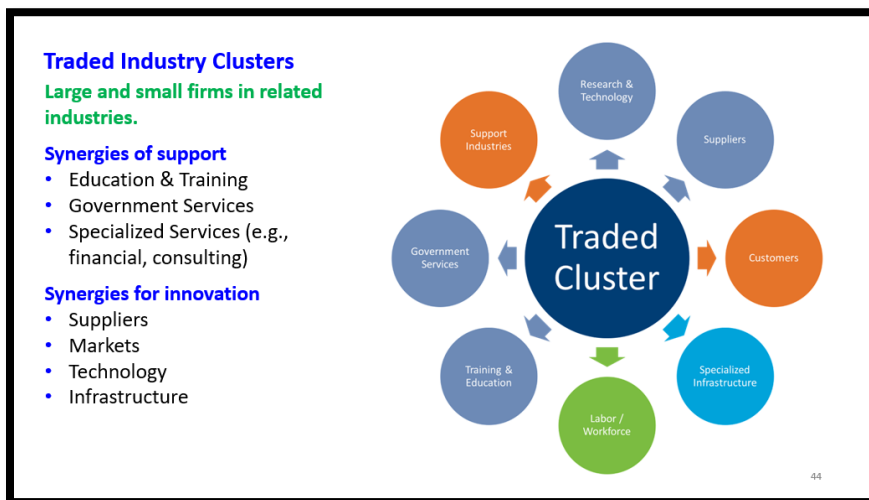
1 [SLIDE 42]



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3 [SLIDE 43]



4
5 [SLIDE 44]



6

1 [SLIDE 45]

Advanced Manufacturing

- Apex is home to significant players like **ATI Industrial Automation**, which produces robotic tools used in automotive and biomedical sectors.
- town also hosts **Apex Tool Group**, a major global eThermployer in the industrial tools sector.

Information Technology

- Major corporations such as **Dell Technologies** maintain a presence, providing high-wage jobs in the community.
- The cluster is supported by a highly educated workforce, with **70% of residents** having attained a college degree.

Life Sciences & Biotechnology

- The town is rapidly expanding this sector through massive projects like **Veridea**, a \$3 billion master-planned development that includes significant commercial space dedicated to life sciences.
- Recent additions include the U.S. headquarters for **Korber**, a company merging technology with pharmaceuticals.

Cleantech & Smart Grid

- As part of the broader Wake County initiative, Apex participates in the regional leadership for smart grid innovation and sustainability technologies.

45

2
3 [SLIDE 46]

APEX
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Traded Clusters

Additional thoughts?

**TRADED CLUSTERS/TARGET INDUSTRIES
(or potential) in Apex?**

46

4
5 **Councilmember Zegerman** asked how Apex could better utilize educational
6 opportunities to support current and future businesses.

7 **Mr. Hayes** stated that a common area of focus would be workforce development. He
8 explained that engaging local business leaders, such as Dell, and partnering with universities
9 and community colleges could help identify workforce needs and develop collaborative
10 strategies. He emphasized the importance of proactive engagement and strategic planning.

11 **Councilmember Reese** noted that historically, collaboration between government,
12 industry, and academia at the state level led to the development of Research Triangle Park, as
13 well as the establishment of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center.

14 **Mr. Hayes** said that over 40 years ago North Carolina had little presence in the life
15 sciences industry, and today ranks among the top three states nationally.

16 **Ms. Helms** provided two local examples, including Launch Apex, which involves
17 partnerships between businesses, Wake Tech, and the Town of Apex, as well as an outreach

1 program that connects local industry with NC State through industrial extension partnerships
2 implemented at the community level.

3 **Mayor Gilbert** asked where the shift in the educational gap has occurred.

4 **Mr. Hayes** stated that he was uncertain of a specific point of change but noted that
5 industrial training schools were prevalent in the 1950s, followed by the establishment of
6 community colleges in the 1960s. He added that there are currently 58 community colleges
7 across the state. Mr. Hayes further noted that there is a growing perception nationally that
8 higher education is not necessary, which he cautioned against, while also acknowledging that
9 a four-year degree is not required for all career paths.

10 **Councilmember Reese** said that community college systems play a critical role in
11 workforce development.

12 **Mr. Parks** discussed the role of branding and noted that there are 17 public university
13 campuses in North Carolina, many of which incorporate economic development into their
14 strategic planning efforts. He stated that this reflects a positive trend of universities engaging
15 with and supporting the broader economy. Mr. Parks provided examples of programs and
16 services offered through these partnerships and then proceeded with the traded clusters
17 portion of the presentation.

18 **Mr. Hayes** explained that there are two types of clusters: non-traded clusters, which
19 provide local services such as barbershops, and traded clusters, which produce goods or
20 services locally for a broader market, such as Dell in Apex. He noted the importance of
21 maintaining a balanced mix, with a focus on traded clusters.

22 **Mr. Parks** asked staff what percentage of Apex's workforce is in manufacturing.

23 **Ms. Helms** said maybe about 24% of the workforce is manufacturing.

24 **Mr. Hayes** stated that the statewide average for manufacturing employment in North
25 Carolina is approximately 12%, and estimated that Apex's percentage is likely closer to 9-
26 10%.

27 **Ms. Cox** said that manufacturing industry for Apex is 6.5%.

28 **Mr. Parks** stated that an important consideration is whether these clusters are well-
29 positioned for future growth in Apex as part of the Town's strategic planning efforts.

1 [SLIDE 47]

Making it Work The Team!

Purpose Statement:
 To provide retention and recruitment services to position the Town of Apex for opportunity and prosperity through growth of business, industry, and entrepreneurship.



Joanna Helms
DIRECTOR

Joanna leads the Town's Economic Development department by advancing strategic initiatives and building partnerships that generate investment and foster economic growth and vitality.



Colleen Merays
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Colleen guides endeavors that promote small businesses, spotlight downtown, and advance inclusive economic growth, while supporting broader industry recruitment and growth efforts.



Barbara Bellicic
SMALL BUSINESS CONSULTANT

Barbara empowers Apex's entrepreneurs and small businesses by managing LaunchAPEX, facilitating tourism development, and delivering programs for business growth and education.



Bailey Robertson
MARKETING COORDINATOR

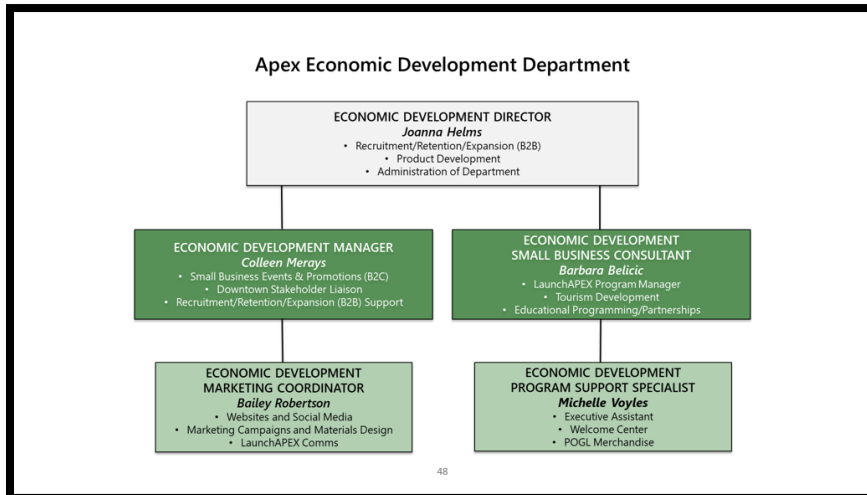
Bailey drives economic development marketing through communications, graphic design, and digital media, while assisting with small business initiatives and promotions.



Michelle Voyles
PROGRAM SUPPORT SPECIALIST

Michelle provides administrative and operational support for the Economic Development Department, manages special projects, and oversees the Town's Welcome Center.


2
3 [SLIDE 48]



4
5 [SLIDE 49]

RESEARCH TRIANGLE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

- **Connector** - between businesses looking to expand or relocate, and the economic development offices, government agencies, and business organizations that support private sector growth.
- **Ambassadors** - introduce companies and organizations to a region that offers incredible access to diverse talent, a competitive cost of living, a strong and diverse economic climate, a supportive infrastructure, and quality of life that is second to none.



49

1 **Mr. Parker** asked staff how regional partnerships are functioning for Apex.
2 **Director Helms** said that Apex works effectively with its regional partners, including
3 Wake County Economic Development.

4 **[SLIDE 50]**

APEX
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Infrastructure

Human Infrastructure

- Professional staff
- Partners

Local "Product"

- Land
- Available buildings
- Zoning
- Physical infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, gas, electric, roads, telecommunications, etc.)
- Business Climate
- Workforce
- "Quality of Place"

50

5
6 **[SLIDE 51]**

Marketing

The State
Markets NC on national and international level:

- Sell NC Trips
- Trade Shows
- Advertising & Publications
- Web Site

Regional Presence

- Wake County EDC
- Research Triangle Regional Partnership
- Prosperity Zone
- Council of Gov't.

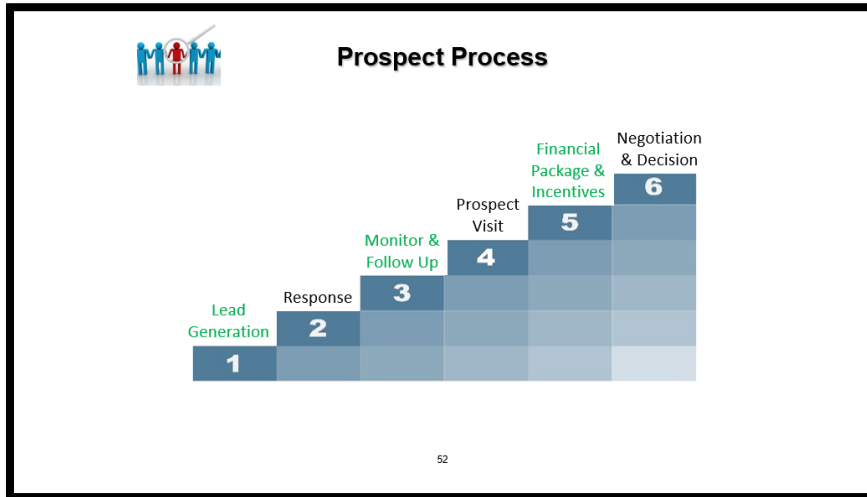
County and Partners
Participate in partnerships:

- Maintain database with community data, buildings and sites.
- Trade Shows
- Community Tours
- Publications & Collateral Material
- Web Sites
- Events
- Speculative Buildings

51

7
8 **Mr. Parker** asked if there were anything additional not listed that is being marketed
9 for Apex.

1 [SLIDE 52]



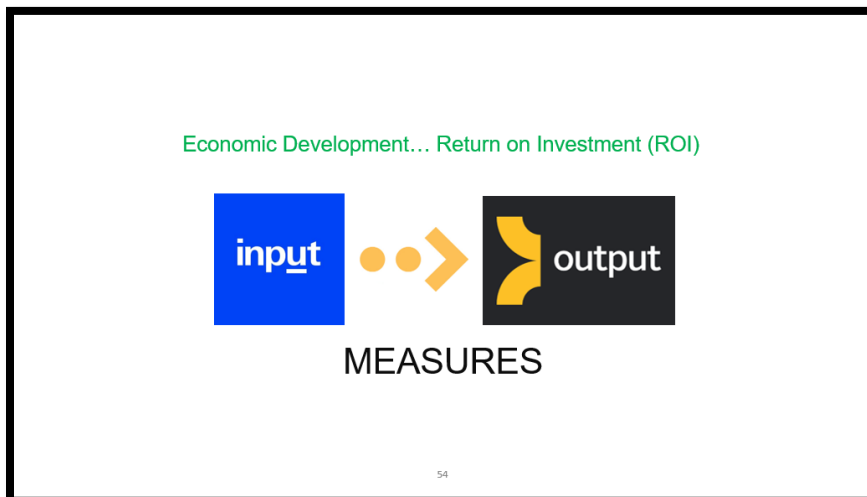
2
3 [SLIDE 53]

Business Retention and Expansion

- Executive Call Program**
 - Meet with executives to learn about their products and processes
 - Build relationships
 - Identify expansion opportunities or companies at risk
 - Learn about issues that keep executives "up at night"
 - Provide resources
- Corporate HQ Visits**
 - Identify how the metro locations compete within the corporate structure
 - Establish ourselves as a resource for future business projects
 - Build relationships
- Local Business Expansion**
 - Focus on community specific project
 - Can be brick and mortar, employment growth, equipment investment
 - Provide pertinent information to influence company decision

53

4
5 [SLIDE 54]



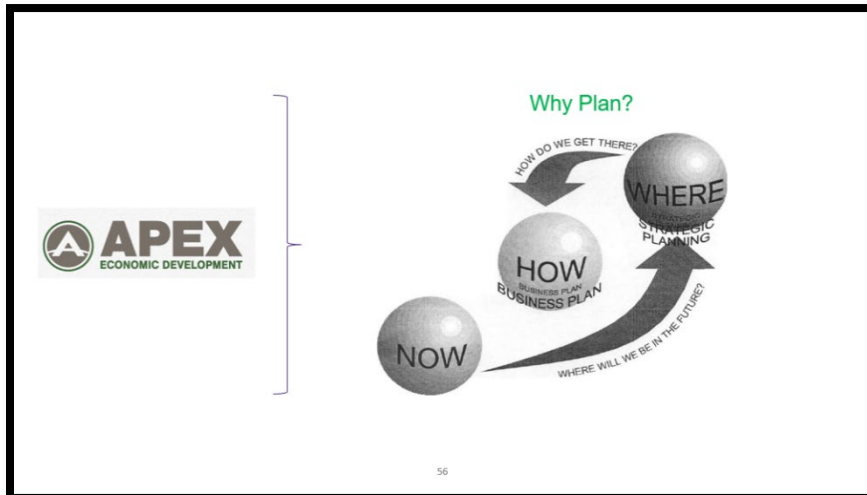
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1 [SLIDE 55]


Examples of typical <u>INPUT</u> measures:	Common <u>OUTCOME</u> growth measures:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Visitations to local companies▪ Regional small businesses receiving assistance and support▪ Local visits by site location consultants▪ Media placement of positive editorial content▪ Site visits for corporate recruiting and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Job growth▪ Employment growth▪ Average wage growth▪ Growth in tax base▪ New business formations▪ Growth in agricultural products▪ Growth in export▪ Reduction in unemployment rate▪ Diversified cluster growth


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3 [SLIDE 56]



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5 [SLIDE 57]



 Developing a Plan: Critical Thinking

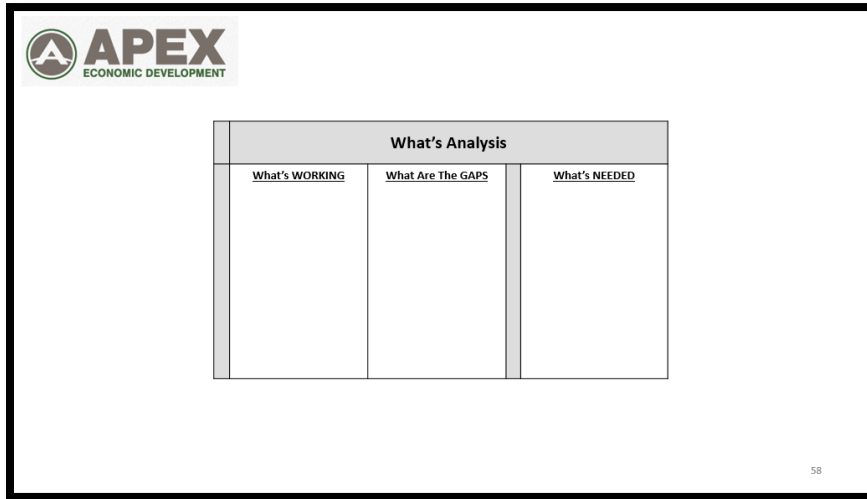
- **WHAT'S WORKING?**
- **WHAT'S NOT WORKING** - What are GAPS?
- **WHAT'S NEEDED?**

57

6

1 **Mr. Parker** asked everyone to return to their groups and review the handout,
2 considering it in the context of Apex’s economic development. He directed them to engage
3 in a critical thinking exercise to identify what is working, what is not working, and what is
4 needed, with an emphasis on identifying needs.

5 **[SLIDE 58]**



6
7 **Mr. Parker** asked for a volunteer to give an example or summary of their group’s
8 discussion.

9 **Clerk Coleman** said that the group discussed similarities between identified gaps and
10 needs, noting that both required further clarification. He stated that strengths included
11 proactive efforts, relationship-building, and the downtown principal business district, with
12 consideration given to expanding beyond downtown and increasing parking. He noted that
13 challenges included limited funding for land- and workforce-related projects, as well as the
14 impact of remote work on industry and downtown businesses. He stated that identified needs
15 included prioritization of existing, available, or redevelopment parcels, favorable rezoning
16 regulations for businesses, enhanced recruitment and retention efforts, and a greater
17 understanding of the “live, work anywhere” concept.

18 **Mr. Parker** said that RTI did an article identifying the professions that would likely be
19 “live anywhere, work anywhere” like civil engineers and this may be something to factor in.

20 **Ms. Cox** said that strengths include Apex’s location, the ability of the downtown to
21 attract visitors, and existing infrastructure. She noted that gaps include the availability of
22 higher-level professional jobs, housing affordability relative to local incomes, and the need
23 for external attractions to draw visitors, as well as patience for non-residential projects to
24 come to fruition.

25 **Mr. Parks** asked what was meant by external attractions.

26 **Ms. Cox** said that this could include venues such as theaters or similar destinations
27 that would attract people to Apex.

28 **Ms. Merays** stated that strengths include existing staffing across Apex, a diverse
29 employment base including industry and small businesses, effective marketing and
30 communications, established relationships with developers and project partners, quality of

1 life, schools and education, and the Town’s budgeting and prioritization of economic
2 development. She noted that gaps include low vacancy rates, particularly for small
3 businesses, limited available commercial space, and insufficient funding for business support.
4 She added that identified needs include additional space and land sites, future infrastructure
5 planning to ensure site readiness, consideration of incubator space for micro-manufacturers,
6 and opportunities to build on stewardship and sustainability efforts.

7 **Director Helms** said that additional strengths include leadership from both elected
8 officials and staff, a business-friendly environment, and a strong external reputation, despite
9 some internal challenges. She noted that areas for improvement include negative resident
10 activism and funding gaps for small businesses. She stated that needs include large tracts of
11 land suitable for major life sciences projects, increased use of business testimonials as part of
12 marketing efforts, and greater vertical integration of companies, as well as strategies to attract
13 additional large industries to Apex.

14 **Councilmember Zegerman** said that while large projects generate excitement,
15 negative commentary during public sessions can detract from those efforts.

16 **Councilmember Mu** said that misinformation shared during public forums can create
17 challenges and negatively impact perceptions of Apex.

18 **Councilmember Gray** said that his group focused on the strength of diversity within
19 Apex’s business community and noted the Town’s resilience during economic downturns
20 compared to other municipalities. He emphasized the importance of communicating this
21 resilience and helping residents understand and adapt to change.

22 **Councilmember Reese** said that his group discussed proactive decision-making in
23 economic development and the importance of capturing opportunities. He noted challenges
24 related to employment retention, including individuals who work in Apex but cannot afford to
25 live there, and those who live in Apex but work elsewhere. He stated that a goal is to better
26 align where people live and work to strengthen community connections and reduce traffic
27 impacts. He added that key needs include additional funding, time, a stable state budget,
28 expansion of Launch Apex, and exploration of future program phases.

29

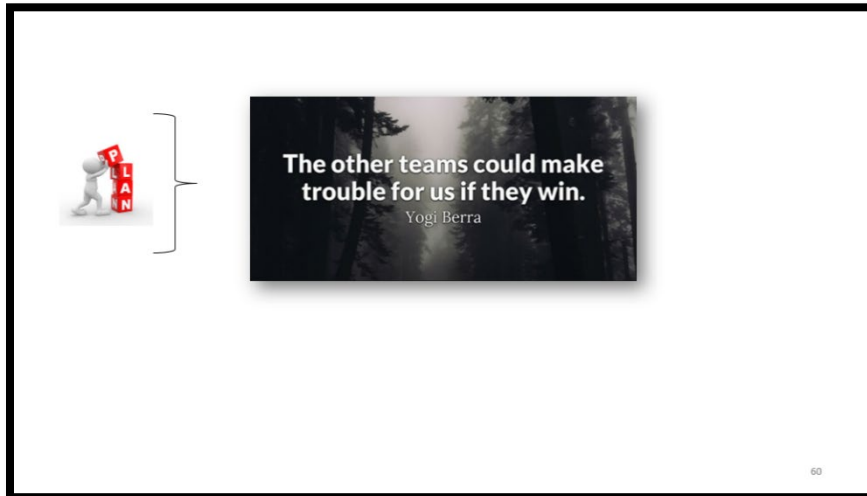
1 [SLIDE 59]



2
3 **Mr. Hayes** asked that the documents be collected and noted that they contained
4 valuable insights for future consideration.

5 **Mr. Parker** said that the plan was well presented and emphasized the importance of
6 not only having a plan, but also building champions to support the vision and goals for Apex.
7 He provided an example from Wayne County to illustrate how results can be effectively
8 demonstrated.

9 [SLIDE 60]



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11

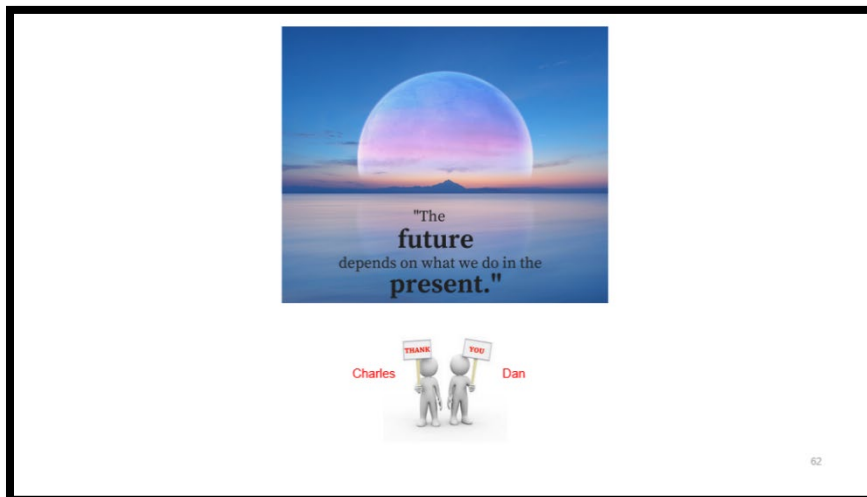
1 [SLIDE 61]



2
3 **Mr. Parker** asked Mr. Hayes if he wanted to discuss ECU and the evaluation process,
4 including finalizing it.

5 **Director Helms** said that staff could handle the evaluations. Although it wasn't
6 mentioned in her email, staff can distribute them.

7 [SLIDE 62]



8
9 **Mr. Hayes** thanked everyone for allowing them to attend and stated that the
10 challenges Apex faces are ones many communities would welcome. He noted that
11 historically, Apex has positioned itself well and is a good place, crediting those present in the
12 room for that success.

13 **Director Helms** thanked the group and confirmed that the certificates and evaluation
14 forms would be returned to Mr. Hayes.

15
16 [ADJOURNEMENT]

17
18 **Mayor Gilbert** adjourned the meeting at **7:16 p.m.**

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Jacques K. Gilbert
Apex, Mayor

Allen Coleman, CMC, NCCCC

Town Clerk to the Apex Town Council

Submitted for approval by Apex Town Clerk Allen Coleman

Minutes approved on _____ of _____, 2026.