



Town of Beech Mountain
Tourism and Economic Development
Goals and Strategies
2015-2020

In alignment with the 2013-2030 Beech Mountain
Comprehensive Plan

Background:

The Town of Beech Mountain enacted an Occupancy Tax in 2003. Since that time, the proceeds have been distributed according to a formula specified by the North Carolina Legislature in the enacting legislation. The town council appoints the five-member board of the Tourism Development Authority (TDA), which oversees expenditures of Occupancy Tax funds.

In September 2014, the Town of Beech Mountain created a new position titled Director of Tourism and Economic Development. One half of the salary for this position comes from the TDA and one half is paid by the town. The purpose is to expand the duties of the TDA-funded staff person and to include economic development needs beyond tourism. This position reports to the Beech Mountain Town Manager and serves as the staff position to the TDA Board of Directors.

Purpose:

The Tourism Development Authority exists to support the local tourism industry and to promote tourism-related activities in the Beech Mountain area. The Director of Tourism and Economic Development is further charged with the development of other economic opportunities that will improve the local economy and the quality of life for all residents of the Town of Beech Mountain.

Definitions:

Tourism Development refers to activities that promote businesses and opportunities designed to serve people who come to the mountain temporarily or repeatedly for a specific activity or overnight stays.

Economic Development encompasses Tourism Development, and expands to include the creation of jobs and wealth in order to improve the quality of life for all residents and services for visitors.

The goals herein are designed to intertwine both types of development.

Goal 1: Support Existing Businesses within the Town of Beech Mountain.

Strategy 1: Work through the local and regional Chambers of Commerce to create learning opportunities around the use of social media as a marketing tool to reach existing and new customers.

Strategy 2: Work through the High Country Host to participate in cooperative marketing opportunities to promote the mountain as a tourist destination within the region.

Strategy 3: Work with the chamber, volunteers and Visitor's Center staff to direct callers, email contacts and walk-ins to local businesses for goods and services.

Strategy 4: Work with the Chamber to develop the Beech Mountain Ambassador program to ensure that knowledgeable volunteers are available to staff the Visitor's Center during key times in the tourist season, and during other times to support staff.

Strategy 5: Work with the chamber, town departments and other businesses on the mountain to promote and develop festivals, events, services and activities of interest to tourists and residents on Beech Mountain.

Goal 2: Assist in the development of new businesses that support the economy and enhance the lifestyle of residents of the Town of Beech Mountain. (See Appendix A for list of businesses identified by survey respondents in the Town of Beech Mountain Comprehensive Plan.)

Strategy 1: Work with local officials to identify businesses that are needed in the local area.

Strategy 2: Work with the Small Business Administration, SCORE and Small Business Centers to provide technical support for start-up businesses.

Strategy 3: Seek out existing businesses within the region that can expand services or operations to the Beech Mountain area.

Strategy 4: Develop a package of incentives that can be offered by the Town of Beech Mountain to support new businesses during their first__years of operation, if they hire__ or more people.

Strategy 5: Recruit new businesses and entrepreneurs that aren't dependent upon weather/transportation to operate on Beech Mountain.

Strategy 6: Assist potential businesses in seeking other funds or grants where applicable.

Goal 3: Complete a Walking Corridor extending the entire length of the Commercial District and linking the Beech Mountain Bark Park and the Beech Mountain Resort.

Strategy 1: Complete right-of-way agreements with Beech Alpen and any other remaining unsigned owners of necessary properties or seek alternative routes to traverse the entire distance from the Beech Mountain Bark Park to the Beech Mountain Resort.

Strategy 2: Seek grants for pedestrian paths.

Strategy 3: Promote businesses along the path in all marketing materials.

Strategy 4: Develop signage along the path to highlight businesses along the way and draw pedestrians through the entire business district.

Strategy 5: Develop additional parking areas adjacent to the Walking Corridor.

Goal 4: Expand Beautification Efforts for the Commercial District and major routes of travel for visitors.

Strategy 1: Offer financial and technical support and physical assistance to bring all properties along the Beech Mountain Parkway into alignment with the town Beautification Plan.

Strategy 2: Develop an Annual Beautification Plan which coordinates public/private seasonal beautification efforts.

Goal 5: Develop promotions on Beech Mountain to expand tourism into the low season.

Strategy 1: Work with the Marketing Consultant and town departments to develop and promote lodging/dining/tour packages for youth sports and other March-May or Sept-November opportunities.

Strategy 2: Work with the Marketing Consultant to develop relationships with youth sports leagues and other seasonal travelers, print media, internet-based and visual media targeting potential off-season visitors.

Strategy 3: Identify other towns with similar characteristics and tourism-based economies which successfully support a growing full-time population and study their methodologies.

Goal 6: Connect the Beech Mountain Tourism Development Authority and Economic Development office with all other TDA and Economic Development offices in the region and the state.

Strategy 1. The Director of T/ED will attend county commissioner meetings, High Country Host meetings, Rural Center workshops, the Governor's Conference on Tourism, and other regional and state meetings as needed.

Strategy 2: The Director of T/ED will attend committee meetings for local events and agencies as needed.

Strategy 3: The Director of T/ED will participate in professional organizations which provide technical support, networking and professional development opportunities that enhance the town's visibility and ability to meet the above-listed goals.

Goal 7: Enhance Marketing and Public Relations for the Town of Beech Mountain in areas where potential customers reside.

Strategy 1: Align the fund distribution of occupancy tax with the marketing needs of the town and community.

Strategy 2: Work with the Marketing Consultant to create a new winter commercial to be used to expand our exposure in Charlotte and in Raleigh.

Strategy 3: Use analytics from social media and webpages to target three new markets in the Florida area.

Strategy 4: Increase print, radio, and social media exposure in key markets of NC, SC, and Florida.

Strategy 5: Increase online marketing across sites via a Google Adwords campaign and strategically placed banner ads.

Goal 8: Standardize requests for funds for tourism-related capital expenditures.

Strategy 1: Develop and disseminate an application for Capital Funds to all organizations and departments on Beech Mountain that wish to apply for Occupancy Tax funds.

Strategy 2: Evaluate all proposals for funds as to the potential value to the mountain and the local economy, as well as in relation to other projects making application.

Strategy 3: Present all unfunded applications and applications made after the spring deadline to the Capital Committee each January in the event that additional funding becomes available throughout the year.

Goal 9: Extend pavement the entire length of Buckeye Creek Road to increase tourism from visitors to the west of the town.

Strategy 1: Meet with NC DOT to discuss requirements for pavement to state standards.

Strategy 2: Seek funding to complete paving project.

Strategy 3: Work with High Country Council of Governments to have the NC Highway 184 extension project added to the Regional Transportation Plan.

Strategy 4: Request designation of Pine Ridge/Buckeye Creek Road as NC Highway 184 North from the NC DOT.

Goal 10: Create the 20/20 Vision Committee to develop and oversee a comprehensive re-vitalization of the town of Beech Mountain, based upon the goals contained within this document and the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Beech Mountain.

Strategy 1: Identify up-and-coming leaders and new stakeholders to serve as committee members.

Strategy 2: Complete an assessment of needs and resources.

Strategy 3: Work with this document and the Beech Mountain Comprehensive Plan to develop a targeted action plan.

Strategy 4: Assess and adjust committee progress and goals as needed.

Strategy 5: Examine programs that may be compatible with the goals and needs of the Town of Beech Mountain (a partial list can be found in Appendix B).

Strategy 6: Work with other departments within the Town of Beech Mountain to develop applications for appropriate programs.

Goal 11: Provide transportation for visitors and guests on the mountain throughout the year.

Strategy 1: Open communications with local transportation authorities regarding routes that include the Town of Beech Mountain.

Strategy 2: Examine the possibility of a town-run public transportation system to provide call-in or fixed route service within the town limits.

Strategy 3: Explore options for private vendors to provide transportation on an as-needed basis.

Goal 12: To ensure that visitors and potential residents find the services and information they need to make their time on the mountain positive and memorable.

Strategy 1: Provide a Hospitality Certification Program for professionals in the lodging, dining, attractions and related fields.

Strategy 2: Work with the Beech Mountain Chamber of Commerce to develop a re-location guide for the Town of Beech Mountain.

Appendices

Appendix A

Beech Mountain Comprehensive Plan 2013-2030 p. 119-120:

Business opportunities identified by survey respondents as having the potential to flourish and having compatibility with the town's character:

Microbrewery

Bakery

Work-from-home and virtual businesses

Outdoor Recreational Touring businesses

Outdoor Recreational Retail businesses

Retail featuring established Artists and Craftsmen, particularly furniture, pottery, painters, quilting, and other fine and cultural arts

Festivals featuring arts and crafts

Performing Arts (possibly in conjunction with Lees-McRae College)

Spa services

Conference Center

Pet Care/Boarding

Farmer's Market

Gas Station

Campground

Coffee Shop

Delivery Service

Software Development

Day Care/School

Elder Care

Appendix B

Programs related to economic development which may be of benefit to the Town of Beech Mountain:

- AdvantageWest Certified Entrepreneurial Community
- Main Street USA
- NC Certified Retirement Community