

# Ashe County SWOT Analysis



Strength

Weakness

Opportunity

Threat

# Outline

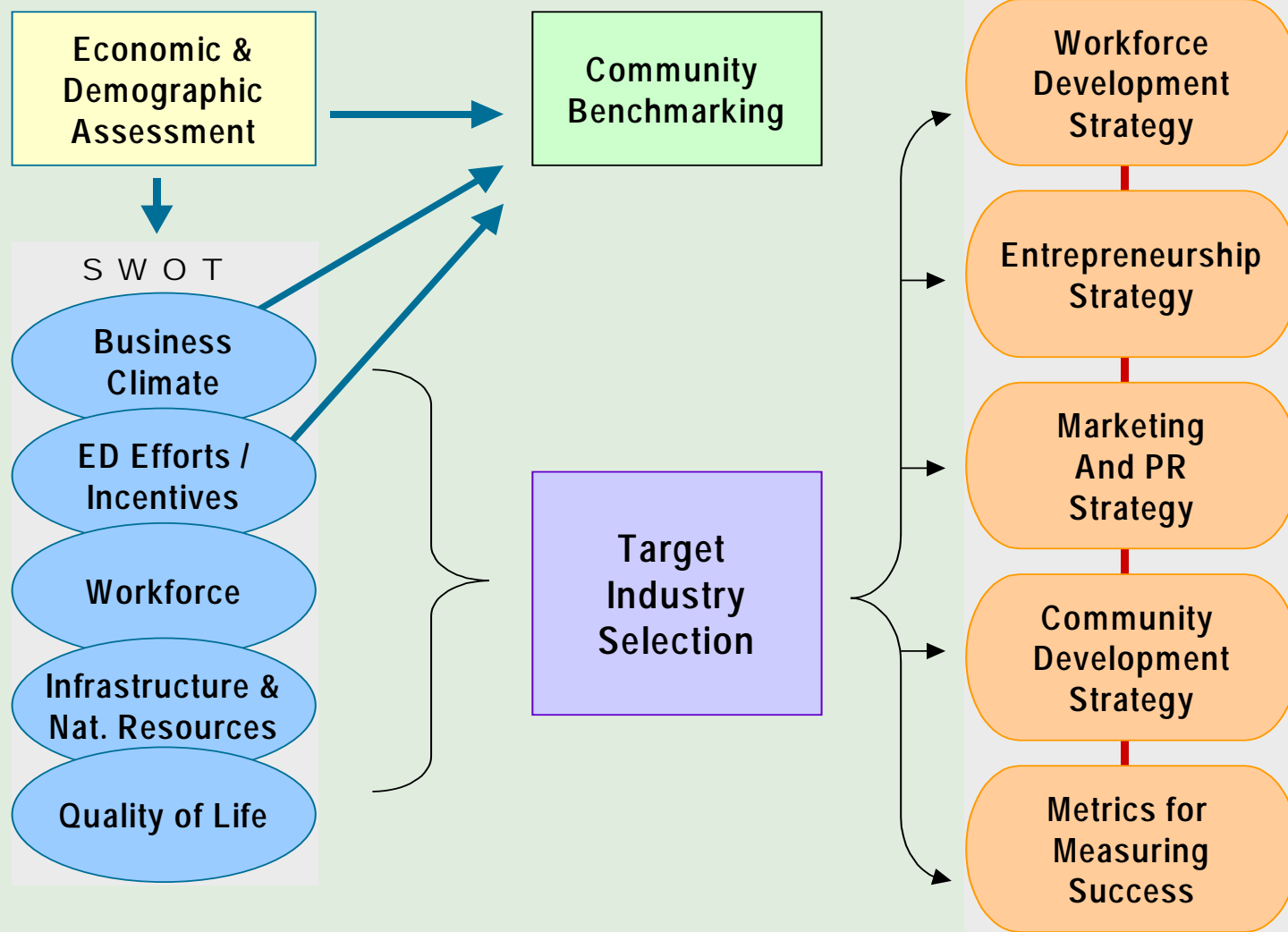
- Introduction
- Survey Results
- Key Findings
  - Business Climate
  - Workforce and Education
  - Infrastructure
  - Quality of Life
  - Economic Development Efforts
- Next Steps



# Introduction



# Introduction



**Research/Input**

**Benchmarking**

**Recommendations**

# Introduction

- SWOT:
  - Focus Group Input
  - Survey Feedback
  - Economic & Demographic Assessment
  - Consultant Observation  
*(Site Selection Perspective)*
  - Review of Reports, Studies

# Survey Results

## Ashe County Companies' Survey Summary

*Top 5 Issues Ranked within Each Category*

<b>Important Criteria for a Business Location</b>	<b>Criteria in which County is Successful</b>	<b>Criteria in which County Needs Improvement</b>
1 <i>Good Healthcare</i>	<i>Strong Family Environment</i>	<i>Access to R&amp;D Resources</i>
2 <i>Family Environment</i>	<i>Low Crime</i>	<i>Strong Economic Growth</i>
3 <i>Low Crime</i>	<i>Climate</i>	<i>Location for High Tech Activities</i>
4 <i>Good K-12 Education</i>	<i>Local Community College</i>	<i>Highway</i>
5 <i>Strong Economic Growth</i>	<i>Arts / Culture</i>	<i>Mobile Phone Service</i>

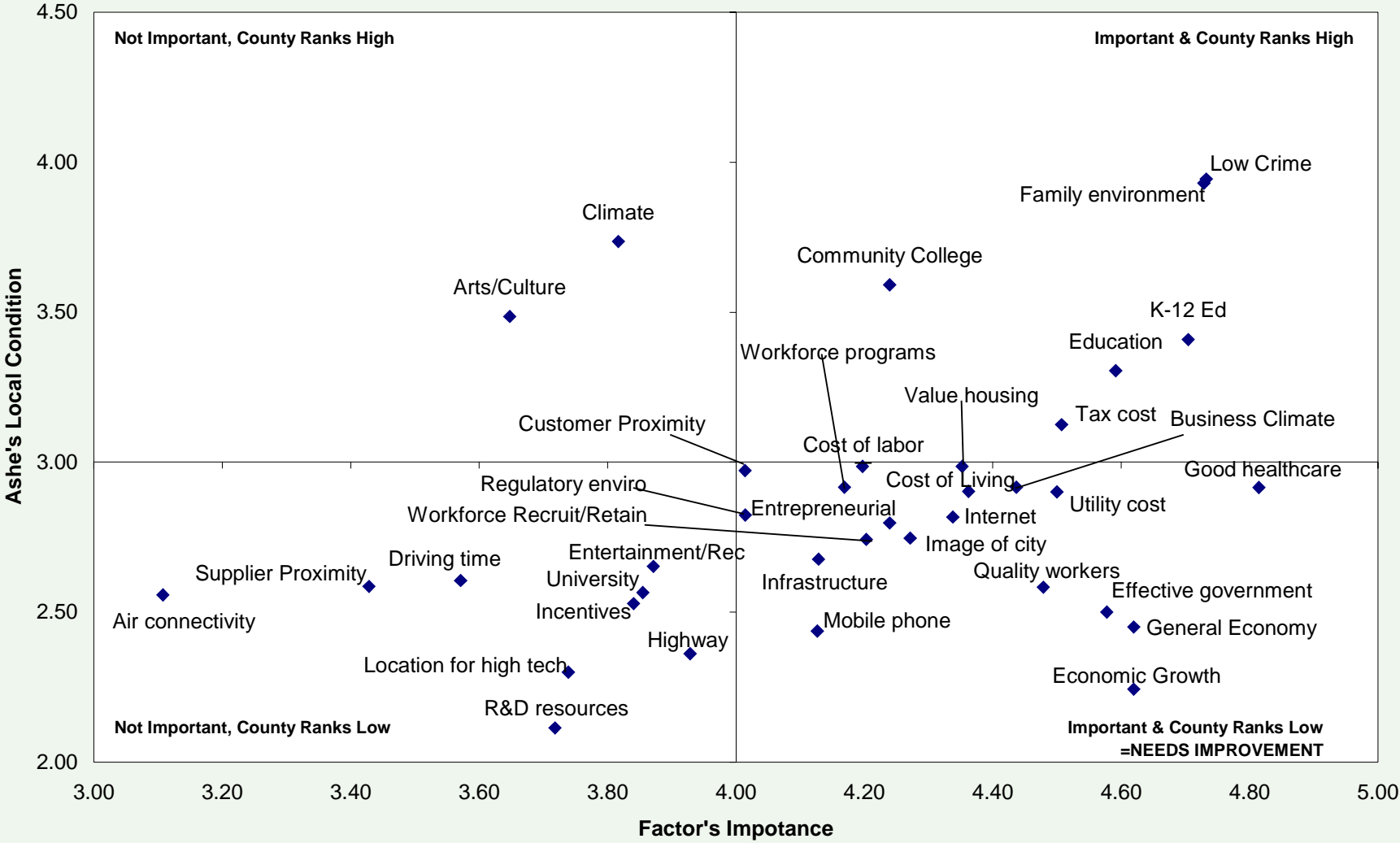
## Ashe County Residents' Survey Summary

*Top 5 Issues Ranked within Each Category*

<b>Important Criteria for a Place to Live</b>	<b>Criteria in which County is Successful</b>	<b>Criteria in which County Needs Improvement</b>
1 <i>Good Healthcare</i>	<i>Low Crime</i>	<i>High Paying Jobs</i>
2 <i>Low Crime</i>	<i>Strong Family Environment</i>	<i>Family Environment</i>
3 <i>Good K-12 Education</i>	<i>Good K-12 Education</i>	<i>Career Advancement Opps.</i>
4 <i>Low Cost of Living</i>	<i>Climate</i>	<i>Strong Business Growth</i>
5 <i>Good Job Availability</i>	<i>Local Community College</i>	<i>University</i>

# Survey Results

**Importance vs. Local Condition**





# Key Findings



# Key Findings

Issues influencing Ashe economic development:

- Prioritizing and organizing economic development
- Influx of retirees and second home owners
- Ashe County's position within a regional economy



# Business Climate

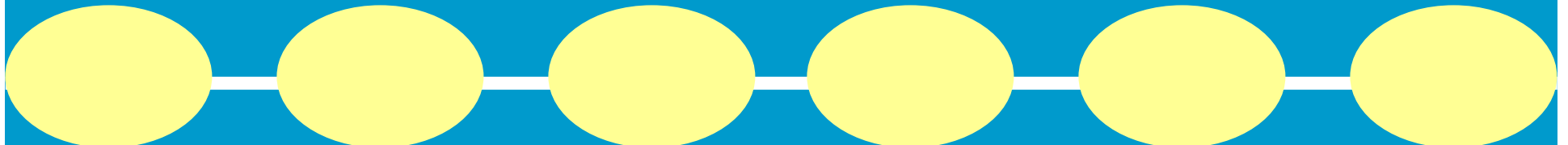


# Business Climate

## Business Climate & Entrepreneurship

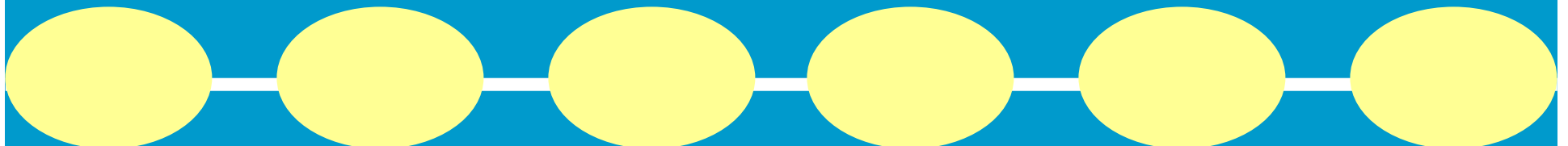
*"High" = Strong; "Moderate" = Adequate; "Low" = Requires improvement*

Topic	Rating
<i>Tax rates</i>	High
<i>Regulatory climate</i>	Moderate
<i>Industry growth</i>	Low
<i>Location</i>	Moderate
<i>Entrepreneurial environment</i>	Low
<i>Incentive policy</i>	Moderate



# Business Climate

- Tax burden is relatively low and constant
- Pro-business regulatory environment
  - *Few land use restrictions*
  - *Open, accessible public leaders*
  - *Caution – preserve natural beauty*
- Weak industry growth
- Scenic location but difficult to access
- Good potential for entrepreneurship
- No targeted incentives program





# Workforce and Education

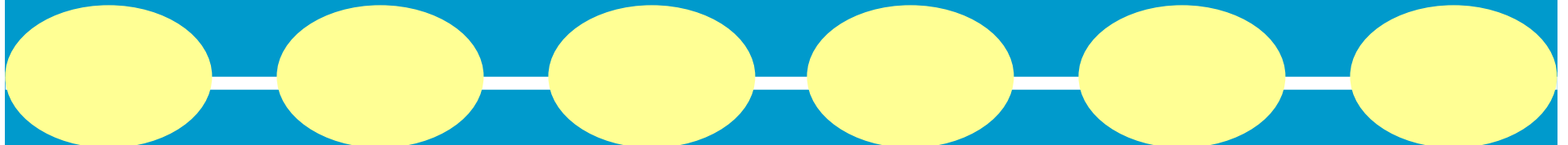


# Workforce and Education

## Workforce & Education

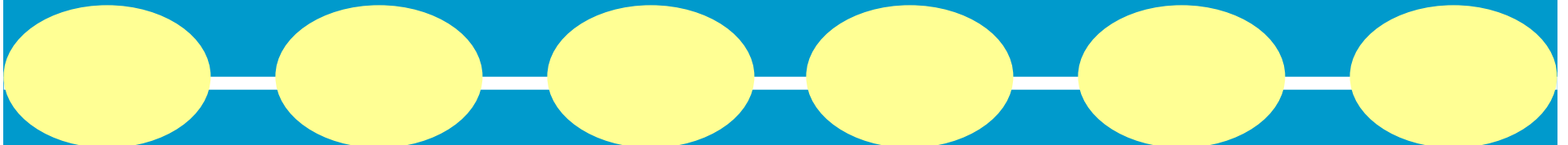
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Topic	Rating
<i>K-12 education</i>	High
<i>Higher education</i>	Moderate
<i>Workforce training</i>	Moderate
<i>Labor pool</i>	Moderate
<i>Educational attainment levels</i>	Low



# Workforce and Education

- Great K-12 education
  - *Important to businesses and residents*
  - *Good performance*
- Good higher education access for rural county
  - *WCC, ASU*
  - *Employer / workforce training disconnect*
- Loyal, affordable workforce
  - Aging population, shrinking young professionals
  - High unemployment = ample supply of workers
- Below average educational attainment





Infrastructure

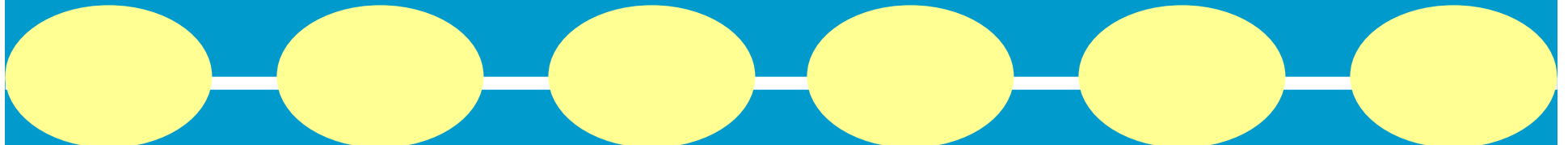


# Infrastructure

## Infrastructure & Land Use

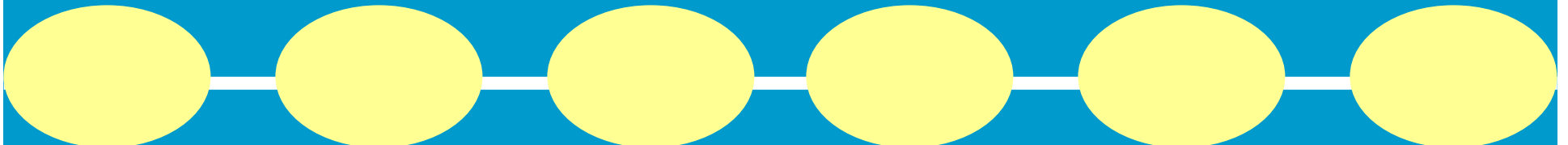
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Topic	Rating
<i>Land</i>	High
<i>Transportation infrastructure</i>	Low
<i>Telecommunications</i>	Low
<i>Utilities</i>	High
<i>Available buildings / sites</i>	Moderate



# Infrastructure

- Good greenfield sites and building space
- Poor roadway infrastructure
  - *Narrow, winding roads – some unpaved*
- Poor telecom infrastructure
  - *Mobile phone and Internet listed as top 5 weakness*
- Good power and water infrastructure
  - Proactive utility provider
  - Ample capacity
- Good business park
- Thomasville facility could set Ashe's future direction





Quality of Life

# Quality of Life

## Quality of Life

*"High" = Strong; "Moderate" = Adequate; "Low" = Requires improvement*

Topic	Rating
<i>Safety</i>	High
<i>Commute times</i>	Moderate
<i>Retail choice</i>	Low
<i>Health care</i>	Moderate
<i>Community image</i>	High
<i>Diversity of housing stock</i>	Moderate
<i>Entertainment</i>	Low

# Quality of Life

- Safe, beautiful environment
- Lacks retail choice
  - *Potential to be a regional retail hub*
- Opportunity to expand health care services
- High QOL attracts many second home owners
- Improving diversity of houses
  - *21% mobile homes*
- Entertainment needs improving
  - *Great for outdoor enthusiasts*
  - *High per capita spending on arts*
  - *Lack of entertainment for young people*



# Economic Development Efforts



# Economic Development Efforts

## Economic Development Efforts

*"High" = Strong; "Moderate" = Adequate; "Low" = Requires improvement*

**Topic**

**Rating**

*External promotion*

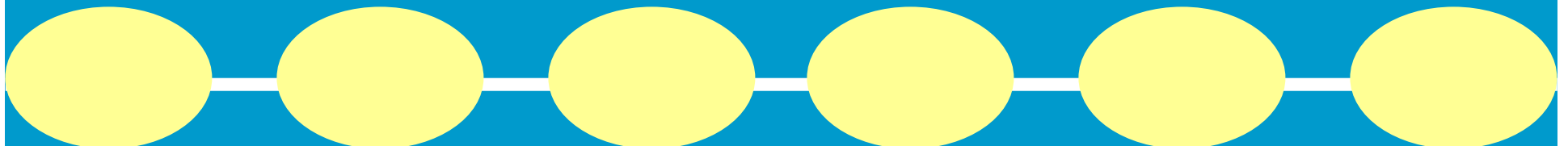
Low

*Internal promotion*

Moderate

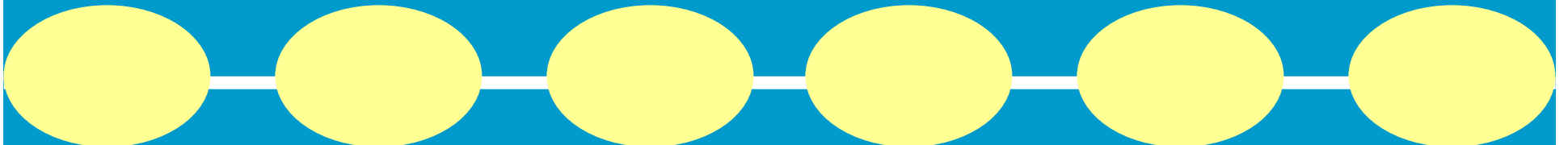
*Resource allocation*

Low



# Economic Development Efforts

- No ED director and little funding
  - Reestablished EDIAB is a good start
  - Relies on AdvantageWest
- Good tourism promotion
  - HandMade in America
- Internal communication needs improving

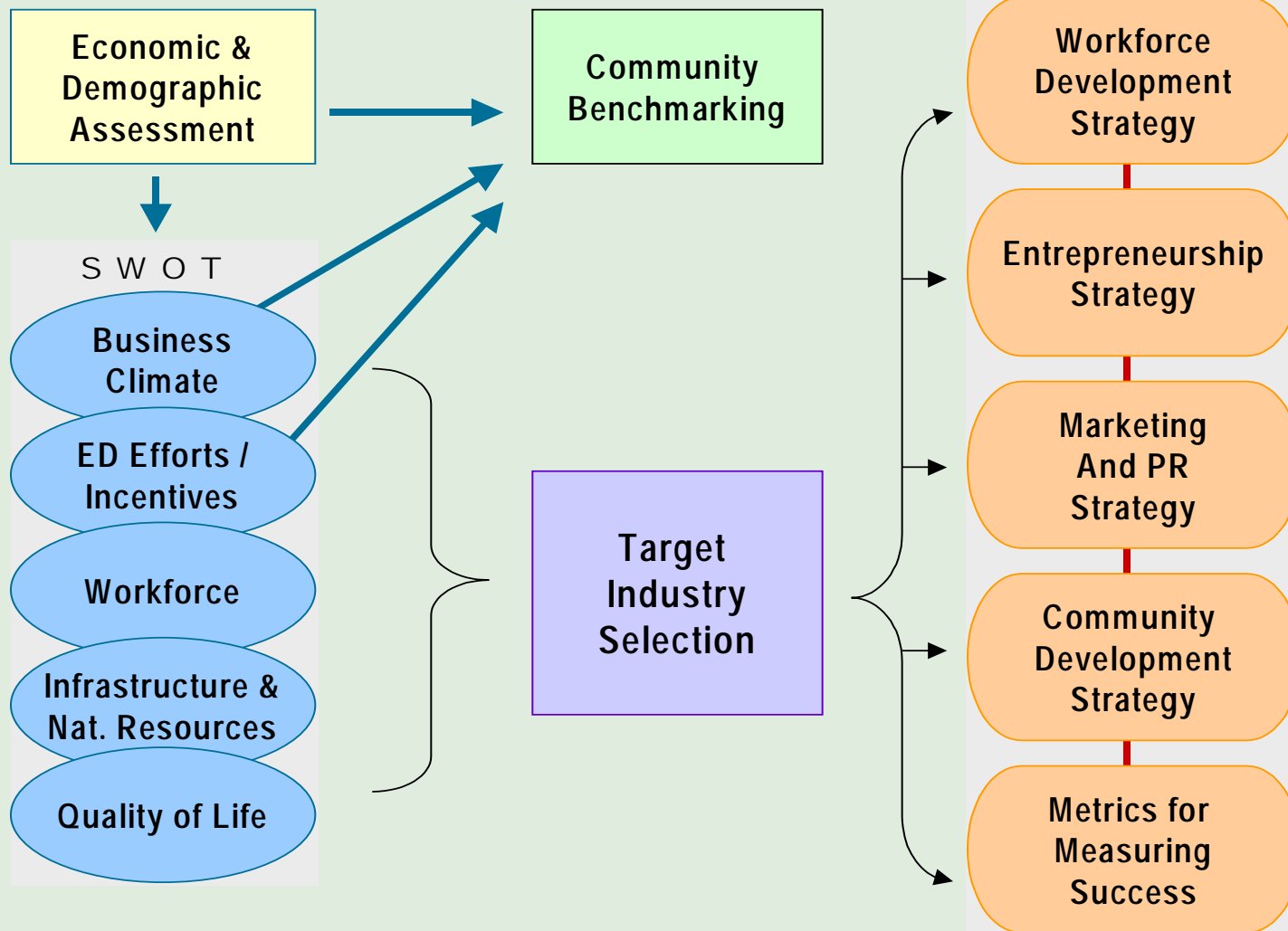




Next Steps



# Next Steps



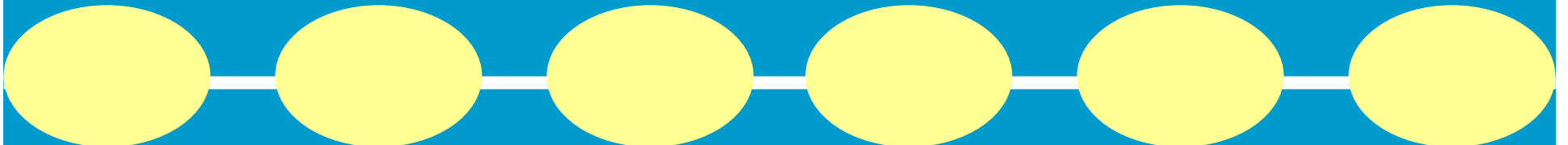
**Research/Input**

**Benchmarking**

**Recommendations**

# Next Steps

- SWOT Analysis Report Review
- August 11 – 15:
  - Target Industry
  - Benchmarking
  - Marketing Workshop



# Ashe County SWOT Analysis



Strength

Weakness

Opportunity

Threat

