



Princeville, North Carolina

Report of
Economic Positioning Vision Forum
October 30, 2018



Presented: April 15, 2019

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**NC Department of Commerce
Rural Economic Development Division
NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center**

*Report on
Princeville Economic Positioning Vision Forum
An Economic Development Strategy
April 15, 2019*

**Princeville, the capital of African-American history, an innovative, resilient,
and proud community. The jewel of the Tar River.**

Introduction

Community visioning is the process of developing consensus about what future the community wants, and then deciding what is necessary to achieve it. An economic positioning/vision statement captures what community members most value about their community, and the shared image of what they want their community to become.

It inspires community members to work together to achieve the vision. Community economic positioning/vision statements are typically developed through a collaborative process that involves a wide variety of community residents, stakeholders and elected officials.

A community economic positioning/vision statement is one of the elements needed to form a forward-looking, strategic framework that provides local government, elected officials, the long-term and comprehensive perspective necessary to make rational, disciplined, and incremental decisions on community issues as they arise.

The forum on October 30, 2018 was facilitated by Bruce Naegelen and Lee Padrick, with the *NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center (MS&RPC)*, a division of the NC Department of Commerce. *MS&RPC* is part of the NC Department of Commerce, the state's lead agency for workforce, community, and economic development. In this capacity, the Center provides planning assistance and downtown revitalization to communities across the state, primarily in economic development planning.

The Process

On Tuesday, October 30, 2018, nine Princeville residents, which included three elected officials gathered at St. Luke Church of Christ Fellowship Hall at 101 Neville Street in Princeville to develop an Economic Positioning/Vision Statement for the Town.

There were two tables with four and five people at each with a Team Leader. The Rural Planning staff led the Teams through a series of activities:

- 1) Identifying the Town's assets
- 2) Identifying the Town's economic drivers
- 3) Identifying the Town's strengths

There was full group discussion after these exercises, including a review of comments and statements from public meetings in 2017. It was suggested by the facilitators that Princeville can re-invent itself by expounding on its unique history and embracing its natural resources.

Each Team was then tasked with developing an economic positioning/vision statement utilizing results from the activities listed above. The "team statements/phrases" were posted on the wall and read to the full group.

The Economic Positioning/Vision Statement

Following the forum, the facilitators took the shared and unique elements from each of those statements, and shaped it into the proposed Princeville Economic Positioning/Vision Statement:

Princeville, the capital of African-American history, an innovative, resilient, and proud community. The jewel of the Tar River.

The Town of Princeville is still in recovery mode from Hurricane Matthew in October 2016. With assistance from myriad state and federal agencies and departments, Town officials and residents continue the process of restoring and making decisions on basic needs that include housing, municipal and public buildings. That is in addition to figuring ways to mitigate future flooding episodes and managing the Town's business on a day to day basis.

Princeville's history as "The Oldest Town Chartered by Blacks in America" is a powerful history and a major spiritual connection to residents. The Town's history was cited as the strongest asset, strength and opportunity for growth. The resiliency and pride of Princeville's residents remains evident in their comments, even though they are feeling a bit battered by loss and hardships of recovery. Although the Tar River is looked at warily by some, and feared by others, it was nonetheless listed as an asset, opportunity and economic driver of the Town.

These are the basis for the economic strategies we believe should be pursued to bring jobs and investment to the Town of Princeville:

- **History & Culture**
- **Community Development**
- **Recreation**

As noted earlier, Princeville has an opportunity to re-invent itself by expounding on its unique history and embracing its natural resources. Something to consider in the not-too-distant future are a couple of very large, but achievable, ideas:

- Become a tourist-oriented “working village” for black history (i.e. Williamsburg model)
- Become a center for black innovators, inventors, thought leaders and researchers

They would require community dedication to long-term goals and a lot of hard work, but these economic development strategies individually, would transform Princeville to a truly historic community with job creation and a global audience. The Implementation Plan provides objectives and actions that could eventually lead to those strategies.

Implementation Plan

From the economic positioning/vision statement above, we have developed a proposed Implementation or action Plan. The Implementation Plan is composed of the following elements: *Strategies, Goals, Objectives, Actions*. The time horizon of the plan is 12 months. The *goals, objectives, and actions* refer to the following definitions:

- **Strategy:** A plan of action designed to achieve a major or overall aim
- **Goals:** are general guidelines that explain what you want to achieve—they are usually long-term and represent broad visions for the future
- **Objectives:** defines strategies or implementation steps to attain identified goals. Objectives are specific and measurable and may have a completion date
- **Actions:** a series of steps a community takes to implement a specific objective or strategy.
- **Tasks:** list of steps to achieve an action, usually achievable in a one-year time frame.
(*Note: the plan does not show specific tasks as these will need to be developed by the individuals and/or team implementing the specific actions*)

Next Steps

A working group of residents and other partners, including the *Main Street & Rural Planning Center*, should be organized to implement these proposed actions over the course of the 12 months.

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Princeville Economic Positioning/Vision Implementation Plan 2019

Economic Positioning/Vision: Princeville, the capital of African-American history, an innovative, resilient, and proud community. The jewel of the Tar River.

| Strategy Area 1: HISTORY AND CULTURE | Strategy Area 2: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT | Strategy Area 3: RECREATION |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Princeville’s story and immense historic significance goes beyond Edgecombe County and North Carolina. Although few historic structures remain, Princeville retains “enormous significance not only for its residents but for the entire nation.”¹ Princeville includes sites that collectively tell the story of generations of African-Americans and embody the last vestiges of memory of one of the nation’s most storied communities. Princeville IS the capital of African-American history and its story needs to be cultivated, shared and remain part of the national story. <i>One way is to work toward development of a “working” village to show what it was like 1) When slaves were freed (Freedom Hill); 2) How slaves arrived in the area (Shiloh Landing) and, 3) to show how life might have been in 1885 when Princeville was starting out.</i></p> | <p>Princeville is a resilient and proud community and, with its unique history, can be a center for innovation. For the past 134 years, generations of Princeville residents have built and rebuilt the Town, developing a deep pride and resiliency.</p> <p>There are currently several state and federal agencies providing services to help re-build the Town. Primarily infrastructure-related, there is still a need to bring residents back into town.</p> <p>Planning, building community capacity and strengthening government leadership are important components to the sustainable redevelopment of Princeville.</p> | <p>Turn the Tar River into an asset of Princeville! One way to start is by considering the development of Shiloh Landing as an economic driver for Princeville and Edgecombe County.</p> <p>The site’s riverfront setting can 1) Serve as an outdoor recreation and event location to attract visitors to the area; 2) Celebrate the rich heritage and promote the natural amenities of Shiloh Landing; and 3) Involve and inspire the community during the site’s development.²</p> <p>Off-river recreation can begin with upgrading Riverside Heritage Park to provide recreational and community gathering opportunities for residents of Princeville.</p> |
| <p>GOAL 1: Make Princeville a historic destination attracting people from throughout the United States.</p> | <p>GOAL 2: Become a strong and welcoming community.</p> | <p>GOAL 3: Embrace the Tar River as a tourist attraction.</p> |
| <p><i>Objective 1.1: Collect and inventory all existing historic artifacts, buildings, stories, oral & video histories, books, and more</i></p> | <p><i>Objective 2.1: Strengthen Town Council governing and staff leadership skills</i></p> | <p><i>Objective 3.1: Develop Shiloh Landing as a tourism and historical center</i></p> |

¹ Princeville, North Carolina: Grounds for Democracy: Landslide 2018, The Cultural Landscape Foundation

² Sustainable Tourism Plan for Shiloh Landing, September, 2014, The Center for Sustainability, East Carolina University

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Action: Town Board should appoint up to 3 people to lead the collection effort.</p> <p>Objective 1.2: Identify location to store the historic collections for future display and research.</p> <p>Action: Work with NC Division of Archives and History to help develop best collection and storage practices.</p> | <p>Action: Assess the Town Board’s policies and procedures for governing the Town (UNC School of Government)</p> <p>Action: All board members (current and future) should attend UNC School of Government courses for local elected officials on at least a semi-annually basis.</p> <p>Action: Town manager should also attend UNC-School of Government courses related to Town Administration at least on a semi-annual basis.</p> <p>Objective 2.2: Provide residents with training opportunities in historic preservation, community leadership, local government, economic development and other relative topics.</p> <p>Action: Develop a monthly or quarterly community workshop schedule for workshops/classes, by working in conjunction with Edgecombe Community College and their Small Business Center.</p> | <p>Action: Appoint a small sub-committee (2-3 people) to review <i>Sustainable Tourism Plan for Shiloh Landing, 2014 (ECU)</i> and <i>Shiloh Landing: Final Report & Implementation Plan 2014, UNC-CH PLCY 698</i>. Also, research and contact potential partners referenced in the reports.</p> <p>Action: With assistance from partners, determine next steps and action plan.</p> <p>Objective 3.2: Re-develop Riverside Heritage Park</p> <p>Action: Appoint a small sub-committee (2-3 people) to research cost and type of equipment upgrades, field layouts, uses and policies.</p> |
|--|--|--|

Princeville Assets & Economic Drivers from Vision Forum 10-30-18

| Assets | Economic Drivers |
|--------------------------|--|
| ABB | ABB?? |
| Barber Shop | ASC |
| Bridgers Store | Bowling Alley |
| Canals | Bridgers Store |
| Cemetery | Cemetery |
| Christmas Parade | Christmas Parade |
| Churches | Churches |
| Dike-Levee | Dale's Transportation |
| Dollar General | Dike-Levee |
| Edgecombe CC | Dollar General |
| Edgecombe County Schools | Edgecombe County |
| Event Center | Edgecombe County Community College |
| Fire Department | Edgecombe County Schools |
| Fire Department | Event Center |
| Freedom Hill | Fire Department |
| Freedom Hill | Freedom Hill |
| Funeral homes | Gym for kids |
| Heritage Park | Heritage Park |
| Hospital | Hospital |
| Indigo | Indigo Lounge |
| K-Hem | K-Hem |
| Mechanics Shops | Marketing of History - Oldest Town chartered by Freed Blacks |
| Mt Zion/Churches | Mini-mart - grocery store |
| Museum | Monument of "Henry Turner Prince" - future |
| Museum | Mt Zion Church |
| Recreation Area-Park | Museum |
| Restaurant | Princeville Elementary School |
| Senior Center | Roberts Auto |
| Senior Center | Rogers Grocery |
| Shiloh Landing | Shiloh Landing |
| Shiloh Landing | Shopping Center |
| Special Events | Tar River |
| Tar River | Town Hall |
| Town Hall | Town of Princeville |
| Tyson | Tyson |
| Walking Trail - Dike | WalMart |
| WalMart | Water Park |
| Wooten House | |

Princeville Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) from Public Comments at Open House & Facilitated Conversation
8.16.17

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|--|---|
| "Can't see giving up" | Action - lack of |
| Bridge that separates Princeville from Tarboro | Barber shop |
| Cemetery | City gym, pool and park |
| Churches | Communication between Mayor and citizens |
| Churches | Diverse population - would like to see more than black people |
| Dike-Levee | Grocery Store |
| Dollar General | Housing |
| Dollar Store | Lack of Sidewalks |
| Fire Department | Laundromat |
| Freedom Hill | Low population |
| Freedom Hill Clinic | Need things for children and young people |
| Heritage Park | Nursing home |
| History | Recreation - YMCA, playground, |
| History - 3rd/4th generation families | Restaurants |
| History should stay in town - new business in new location | School, Town Hall, Water tower |
| Lot's of history - don't want to throw it away | |
| Mt Zion Church | |
| Museum building | |
| Oldest Town Chartered by Blacks | |
| Pride in Community | |
| Resiliency | |
| Senior Citizen's Building | |
| Shiloh Landing | |
| Talent - local | |
| Vacant lots (potential for development) | |

1. Comments in bold are from Princeville Vision Forum 10-30-18

| OPPORTUNITIES |
|---|
| 53 Acres |
| Bowling alley |
| Clothing store |
| Commercial Uses |
| Create a Citizen Board |
| Cultural Trails |
| Dike-Levee |
| Drug store |
| Freedom Hill |
| General store (on corner) w/prescriptions |
| Housing |
| Library/Resource Center |
| Local Talent |
| Marketing |
| Meat store / butcher |
| Movie theater |
| Multi-Family Housing |
| Museum |
| New businesses to generate jobs |
| Park (6-8 acres) |
| People spend more time at store or at home |
| Recording Studios |
| Reservoir |
| River - fishing/water events |
| Shiloh Landing |
| Strip mall |
| Use of old buildings when new ones built on Annex |