



Rating Local Competitiveness

Knowing and understanding the strengths and weaknesses (opportunity for improvement) in a parish is critical to positioning the parish to successfully compete for economic development projects. These understandings allow for the development of marketing materials and actions to key on competitive strengths and highlight a parish’s readiness for investment where it can be “open for business”.

The process for gathering data for this understanding can be intense and time consuming, but there are several factors which can reduce this effort. These factors directly relate to the community criteria identified by corporate and real estate executives as the most valuable and important. In October, 2013 a Site Selection Magazine survey of corporate real estate executives identified the following ten (10) factors as key:

1. Existing workforce skills.
2. Transportation infrastructure.
3. State and local taxes.
4. Utility infrastructure.
5. Availability of land and buildings.
6. Permitting and regulatory processes.
7. Flexibility of incentive programs.
8. Availability of incentives.
9. Union activity.
10. Access to higher education resources.

The charts identify 39 data points covering the key factors identified in the survey outlined above. Based upon current knowledge of your parish, rate each factor as strength, neutral or weakness and then decide whether the strengths and weaknesses are local or competitive. This will provide a guideline for marketing the parish based upon a realistic understanding of current economic development capacity.

ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL COMPETITIVENESS FACTORS

EXISTING WORKFORCE SKILLS:			
	Strength	Neutral	Weakness
Supply and availability:			
Education and skill levels:			
Productivity and quality:			
Wage levels:			
Labor-management relations:			

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE:			
	Strength	Neutral	Weakness
Highways:			
Congestion:			
Availability of trucking:			
Rail service:			
Passenger air service:			
Cargo air service:			
Port:			

STATE AND LOCAL TAXES:			
	Strength	Neutral	Weakness
Sales tax rate(s):			
Property tax levels:			
Inventory tax:			

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE:			
	Strength	Neutral	Weakness
Availability/Capacity and cost of electrical service:			
Availability/Capacity and cost of gas service:			
Availability/Capacity of water and waste water service:			

LAND AND BUILDINGS:			
	Strength	Neutral	Weakness
Availability of industrial and commercial sites:			
Availability of buildings for manufacturing, distribution and commercial use:			
Costs of sites and buildings:			
Sites and buildings located on LED web site:			

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT:			
	Strength	Neutral	Weakness
Permitting and regulatory process:			
Availability of financing for business investment:			
Diversity of the economy:			
Economic development capacity to recruit/retain/grow businesses:			
Labor management relations:			
Overall business climate:			

LOCAL INCENTIVES:			
	Strength	Neutral	Weakness
Availability:			
Attitude towards the use of local incentives:			

HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES:			
	Strength	Neutral	Weakness
Quality of local primary education:			
Quality of secondary education"			
Presence of a community/technical college campus:			
Presence of a 4-year college campus:			

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FACILITIES (Quality of Life):			
	Strength	Neutral	Weakness
Housing availability and cost:			
Availability of medical services/facilities:			
Availability of commercial, retail, lodging and restaurants:			
Availability of recreational facilities/activities:			
Availability of cultural facilities:			
Police and fire protection:			

COMPETITIVE ASSESSMENT FOLLOW UP ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS: Review and determine if strengths are local or competitive (can differentiate your community from another). Competitive strengths can become part of a community's positive attributes in a marketing initiative.

WEAKNESSES: Review and determine if weaknesses are local or competitive (can differentiate your community from another).

If a weakness is a competitive weakness, determine why that is the case and what can be done to either neutralize the weakness or turn it into strength:

What is the time necessary to address? Estimated dollar amount required? Source(s) for funding? Responsible party (individual, group or political entity)?

If a weakness is local, proceed with above questions as appropriate.

NEUTRALS: Many neutrals are "normal" and should not require further action. However, after analysis, determine whether a neutral would become a competitive weakness if left alone. If this is the case then address as indicated for competitive weaknesses.