COUNTY OF SAN BENITO
CITY OF HOLLISTER
CITY OF SAN JUAN BAUTISTA

LOCAL ECONOMIC ADVISORY PROGRAM (LEAP)

An Assessment of the Economic Development Potential and Strategies in three jurisdictions

Held on June 8-9, 2016
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Recommendations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed Recommendations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Remarks</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Steps and Easy Activities</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons Interviewed</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Advisory Team</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Local Economic Advisory Program</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the California Academy for Economic Development</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## APPENDICES

- A. Business and Trade Associations serving in San Benito County
- B. Web Site Recommendations
- C. Demographic Profiles 2016
- D. Power Point Recommendations presented June 9, 2016
Overview

**THE STUDY AREA AND THE PANEL’S ASSIGNMENT**
A five-person volunteer team (Team) visited Hollister and vicinity on June 8-9, 2016 to advise the County of San Benito and the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista (SJB) about economic development activities and implementation priorities. In particular, San Benito County has a new Economic Development Element (Element) in its recently adopted General Plan and an active tourism campaign, and Hollister has an active Main Street Program and other economic development activities.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**
San Benito County is a small California county with a population of about 60,000\(^1\). The City of Hollister, the County Seat, has over half the county population. The county’s fortunes are tied to the strong agricultural industry, and to tourism/agritourism and very high percentage of residents commute to Silicon Valley for work, which further taxes the already overly congested infrastructure. Major tourist attractions are off US 101, so San Juan Bautista, Hollister and the County must promote to draw tourists. Besides agriculture and food processing and related research, Mission San Juan Bautista, the Hollister Airport and Pinnacles National Park are major potential economic development contributors.

County and city officials and members of the San Benito Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Hollister are optimistic about their future. They actively seek downtown and retail development to better meet the needs of local residents and visitors, and have a tourism development program. However, more revitalization, strategizing and implementation are needed. There still exists a perception of business unfriendly laws and fees despite government leaders’ willingness to efficiently advance business and development in compliance with rules and regulations.

This project is intended to provide County and City officials and economic development partners with a better understanding of the area’s economic potential. Specific information being sought includes:

1. Optimal County-wide economic development priorities, including basic SWOT information and General Plan implementation recommendations;

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\(^1\) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Benito_County,_California#Demographics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Benito_County,_California#Demographics)
2. A better understanding of Hollister’s economic development potential within the context of today’s economy and growth, competing communities, retail and downtown revitalization trends, and other factors.

3. Suggestions to enhance the Chamber’s Tourism promotion program;

4. Potential funding opportunities to help implement a program in a small agricultural county.

QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY PANEL MEMBERS

1. What economic development priorities could and should the County and Cities undertake given their limited resources?

2. How can the County, City, Hollister Downtown Association and San Benito Chamber collaborate to implement a coherent and cohesive economic development program?

3. How can the County and City create more jobs to reduce out-commuting?

Methodology

The LEAP Team and City staff conducted the following activities:

- Prior to the Event:
  - The Team worked with the informal San Benito County Economic Development Consortium, including discussing the project, preparing the problem statement and reviewing literature relevant to the study;
  - Consortium members attended an introductory planning meeting on March 30, 2016 at Hollister City Hall; and
  - Staff from the Hollister Downtown Association and the San Benito Business Council arranged the venues and schedule, and invited the participants.

- On June 7, the EVE of the event, the Team:
  - Assembled at the designated hotel for dinner, and took a guided tour of selected locations in the three jurisdictions.

- On June 8, the FIRST day of the event, the Team:
  - Met with about twenty community stakeholders for breakfast and introductory remarks;
  - Went on a guided site tour of Hollister with the City Manager;
Conducted about 30 individual and small group interviews throughout the day;
Convened to discuss impressions and began formulating recommendations; and
Conducted follow-up research to refine our recommendations.

- On June 9, the SECOND day of the event, the Team:
  - Conducted 15 more interviews;
  - Finalized recommendations; and
  - Presented to invited stakeholders at 3pm that afternoon

- After the event, the Team:
  - Conducted four additional follow-up interviews;
  - Gathered additional information;
  - Prepared and discussed the report;
  - Are available to make follow-up presentations to elected officials of the three jurisdictions.
  - Are available for individual after-event consultations.

Key Recommendations

The Team offers the following four key recommendations based on all available information, interviews, observations and experience:

1. **Cooperate.** Cooperation is the only way for this small county with limited resources to build enough economic development momentum to have significant impact.

   There is also a solid complement of nonprofits dedicated to economic development. The County and both incorporated cities are aware of and agree on the need for more joint cooperation, and for more cooperation among private and nonprofit economic development organizations. The San Benito Business Council in particular has been supporting better collaboration

   Economic development is a team sport. In hard economic times, local jurisdictions and other entities see their usual funding diminish. In really hard times the only way for nonprofits to survive is to limit activities, cooperate and leverage scarce resources. Those that do not cooperate tend to dissolve, or at best limp along with no ability to make real progress toward their goals.

   Having weathered the recession with almost no resources or budgets, all entities in the county are getting some of their capacity back and are becoming more able to invest in their various economic development priorities. The trick now is to build momentum – to meet together often, actually improve collaboration, agree on beneficial joint priorities, and
together find the resources to fund those priorities. In addition, State and Federal granting agencies are more inclined to support cooperative projects. The county is so small and its population so centralized that a success in one jurisdiction is a win for all. Starting small, within the limits of available resources, is necessary. Small wins, especially if widely recognized, can pay off big, and will start to build everyone a positive reputation.

2. Quickly develop and implement a business attraction campaign. Both Hollister and the County have significant affordable ready-to-occupy industrial land and buildings adjacent to the Hollister airport—a very attractive industrial product! There are great potential targets just north in the Silicon Valley and in the local agriculture/food processing industry. With so much commuting north, there is also good potential to set up a telecommuting center. JOINTLY determine which entity will take the business attraction lead—the Team recommends the EDC again be the attraction lead with new jointly funded staff capacity, adequate support, and accountable performance criteria. Start discussions about executing a Business attraction Memorandum of Understanding between San Benito County and the City of Hollister. Keep this MOU separate from any revenue sharing or capital improvement planning.

3. Strengthen tourism promotion. The three jurisdictions and all attractions within the county should be heavily engaged in cooperative promotion to regional markets, and especially to residents of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. In particular, a high percentage of new promotion and capacity-building efforts should be focused on San Juan Bautista, which is the strongest potential visitor draw in the county. The City of SJB itself should direct all its TOT tax and as much sales tax and other funds as possible into visitor promotion. To the extent it can, San Juan Bautista should attract specialty food stores selling local products, restaurants, breweries, wine tasting rooms, and entertainment establishments to improve and occupy the vacant storefronts on 3rd Street.

Other key attractions include the wine trail, the Pinnacles, downtown Hollister, and any businesses who offer tours (Marich Confections?). Hotel and B&B development should be a target in both cities. The Wine Trail, farm stays, B&B’s, event venues and other agritourism attractions should be promoted in appropriate unincorporated areas.

2 Rural attractions are an approved County goal—see Element ED-4 in the County General Plan.
4. Retain existing businesses and encourage them to expand. The Red Team (also called Ad hoc or SWAT Team) approach is easy, inexpensive and results-oriented. Hollister and the County should each form one. It involves compiling a list of designated representatives from all city and county departments who oversee or are gatekeepers of business activity (e.g. Planning, Building, Environmental Health, Public Works, Fire, etc.) and outside service entities such as local utilities, insurers, workforce training, the Hollister Downtown Association, etc. Depending on the company's issues, individuals with the expertise to address them are tapped to participate as needed. Designate an expeditor or ombudsperson in each jurisdiction who will oversee the Red Teams, who can expedite meetings, and who will report directly to the County Administrator and the City Manager.

Observations

OBSERVATIONS THAT APPLY TO MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS

- There is a universal belief among interviewees that the county exports too many workers to Gilroy and the Silicon Valley. Hollister and other parts of the county are an easy commute to the Silicon Valley, so Hollister and its surroundings have for decades seen unrelenting pressure to build new housing to serve South Bay commuters. This pressure eased during the recession, but is again strengthening with Hollister housing prices approaching $500,000.\(^3\) Hundreds of homes approved years ago are about to start construction, and a new town of Rancho San Benito proposed for the north end of the county. Del Web will soon begin construction on 1,200 new housing units to be built adjacent to the San Juan Oaks golf course. Growth driven from outside is a cause of congestion on Highway 25 to Gilroy and on Highway 156 to Salinas and Monterey. It strains infrastructure including groundwater quality and roads. Air quality is worsened. Retail and commercial development become skewed towards serving commuters rather than local businesses. Hollister's jobs housing balance ratio is 1.05, indicating a moderate level bedroom community. The County's ratio is similar at 0.98.\(^4\) There is therefore about 1 job per household, too few to be balanced.

- Recent expansions of Hollister's water and sewer systems can accommodate future growth. However, San Juan Bautista lacks wastewater treatment capacity to support new growth, the drinking water quality is poor and residents sometimes must rely on bottled water for drinking supply. Sewer capacity in the older industrial areas may need reviewing.

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\(^3\) source: Zillow.com

\(^4\) 10,866 jobs / 10,943 households= 1.05. A balanced community has a jobs-housing ratio of about 1.6. Under 1.0 indicates a strong bedroom community, over 2 indicates a jobs-rich community.
• Local roads are generally adequate, but there is significant congestion on Highways 25 & 156. A recent tax initiative to amass a local match to expand Highway 156 through the San Juan Valley was rejected, and other local funding must now be sought.

• The Pinnacles and Mission San Juan Bautista are major visitor attractions, but coordination between the operators of these attractions and county-wide tourism promoters can improve. For instance, visitor capacity at Pinnacles National Park is exceeded on many weekends (two hour waits are common), and cooperative problem solving can help establish overflow visitor attractions nearby, create entertainment and refreshments for people waiting, expand capacity within the Park, and/or other potential measures.

• Last year, Hollister spent $50,000 and the County spent $18,000 on tourism promotion, which is managed by a 15-member committee of the Chamber of Commerce. That is about the minimum for an effective campaign. SJB recently completed a branding effort with a commitment to continue community promotions. Attracting visitors is a key economic development activity for the County, and other entities should also contribute as much as possible. See http://discoversanbenitocounty.com

• The web sites of the County and cities need major improvements, especially in the information for businesses that they post. See Appendix E for more detail on several local websites.

• The industrial complex around the airport – portions are in Hollister and in the County – are attractive and well developed, with plenty of vacant sites for new businesses. Existing industry is diverse, including warehousing (e.g. West Marine), several specialty manufacturers (e.g. Corbin, Marich Confectionary, Technova), and a number of office buildings that include City and County services and some high-tech. The area is ripe to attract businesses from the Silicon Valley, especially satellite operations of major employers, other unique manufacturers, food processors and packers, and a telecommuting service center.

• The Hollister Municipal Airport has a 6,300 foot runway now being expanded, about 170 base aircraft, many different activities such as parachuting and gliders, an adjacent new industrial park with some runway access, a Fixed Base Operator (FBO) that caters to jets, and great potential to attract corporate aircraft and expanded airport-related businesses such as
charters, expanded maintenance and sales, and other activity. In addition, the Airport just received a $230,000 federal grant to update its Airport Master Plan.\(^5\)

- The desire to create momentum for economic development is strong and widely agreed. Several business groups have stepped up their activity and are anxious to develop an effective economic development program that is coordinated among the three jurisdictions, the San Benito Chamber of Commerce, the Hollister Downtown Association, the San Benito Economic Development Corporation, the San Benito County Business Council, the Gavilan College SBDC and others. Success is a matter of agreeing on priorities and cooperatively funding implementation.

- There is an opportunity to establish a county-wide Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID)\(^6\), separate from existing TOT taxes. The TBID would involve self-assessments by hotels and other lodging, restaurants, and attractions such as wineries and event venues. Proceeds would be applied toward visitor promotion, event coordination and capacity building.

- The county has about 250 hotel rooms, including the new property scheduled to open this fall. Many local business travelers and visitors stay in Gilroy during their trips to the county. More hotel rooms would bring more business and visitor travel.

- Local residents and business owners appear to have strong loyalty to the City and want to help it thrive. This is an important positive factor, which can aid in the recruitment of volunteers;

**OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SAN BENITO COUNTY**

- The County has a new well-written Economic Development Element (Element) in its General Plan, adopted July 21, 2015. The Element is comprehensive, and includes every recommendation in this report. The Element includes plans to allocate staff resources to economic development (Goal ED-1.10), start a business attraction marketing program while retaining existing businesses and helping them expand (Goal ED-2), promote tourism, wine and hospitality (Goals ED-3, ED-4 & ED-5), create a wayfinding signage program, retain existing businesses, and coordinate economic development activities with the two cities and other stakeholders (Goal ED-7).

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Entitlement and permit requirements over the years have been inconsistent and unclear. Requirements need to be clear and consistent for future developers and project applicants.

Hollister and the County have reached a temporary impasse on the issue of equitable tax sharing. This disagreement should be independent from achieving the other goals in the Element, and especially should not be a reason to defer expenditures on an economic development program.

The SB County Business Council has been working on two activities related to Element implementation:
1. A SWOT analysis about the County’s economic development potential, derived from a number of meetings and discussions;
2. A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is a planning document that identifies critical economic development priorities in each jurisdiction and how to address them. A CEDS also makes the county and its jurisdictions eligible for federal planning, economic recovery, infrastructure, and business assistance projects.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT HOLLISTER

Hollister has a good mix of industrial land, newer retail centers, and a downtown actively being revitalized with new streetscape, building façade improvements, and may events such as festivals, bike rallies and a farmers market. The Team reviewed portions of the 2008 Hollister Downtown Plan. It is a good document which needs aggressive implementation; The Hollister Downtown Association (HDA) appears viable, and should be supported by additional funding, with clear contractual deliverables. The HDA is actively implementing the Main Street Principles.

Hollister dominates the economy of the county, with the exception of tourism in San Juan Bautista and the wine trail, Pinnacles National Park, and plenty of agricultural activity including row crops, orchard crops, and cattle ranching. Almost 60% of the county’s population lives in Hollister, and 66% of the county’s businesses.

Hollister unsuccessfully tried to pass a Property Based Improvement District (PBID) to generate new investment for the downtown. The PBID proponents were unable to get enough preliminary petitions back in favor of going to a vote. Most interviewees who discussed this expressed the
opinion that it would pass if it had a better education campaign. A county-wide TBID could also fund economic development activities.

- Hollister has a Downtown Mixed Use Zoning Ordinance which allows live-work and other combinations of uses that meet the market. However, too many uses require a use permit. The City should consider adopting a Form Based Ordinance and/or Downtown Overlay to reduce the number of use permits.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SAN JUAN BAUTISTA

- San Juan Bautista is clearly the county’s most appealing visitor attraction, and its excellent location near 101 makes the community more attractive for expanded visitation.

- The City has about 80 hotel rooms (half those in the County as a whole), but is plagued by vacant storefronts, part time merchants, limited cooperation with the State Parks and Diocese, and minimal tourism promotion. There is no merchants association, store hours are not coordinated, and the capacity of the city to promote itself is quite limited.

- On June 21, 2016 the City Council established an ad hoc committee to work with the State Parks on the “Orchard Garden” lot. This unique collaboration should expand to include discussions on joint visitor promotion, collaborating on hours of operation and other opportunities. This can be tied to the effort of the Mission San Juan Bautista Preservation Fund to raise $14 Million for mission preservation, and may help that group reach their goal faster.  

- The city’s zoning codes limit chain retail establishments. Allowing selected chains for quick stops at the city’s two Highway 156 intersections – especially the western intersection by the 76 station isolated from the downtown -- would capture some of the traffic that passes by the city without stopping and bring in more revenue, some of which could then be used for economic development purposes.

- San Juan Bautista has a new brand, developed in 2015 that celebrates its Old California history and authenticity as an old mission town. This brand that focuses on the San Juan Bautista’s historical character was developed with strong input from local residents and

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merchants. However, marketing the community’s historical character has a limited upside that is attractive to baby boomers and older visitors and some families.

- In contrast, SJB is well located to also attract business travelers and young Silicon Valley workers seeking an alternative destination to Monterey or Santa Cruz. This could be accomplished by attracting wine tasting facilities, breweries and other food and entertainment establishments that will appeal to young tech workers.

- To help keep vacant store fronts attractive and fill vacant space:
  - The City can develop a phantom Art Gallery Program through the arts organization and encouraging property owners to participate. This will help with filling in the missing teeth on the street and ultimately help these spaces be rented. Plus these space will promote local artists.
  - A Vacant Building Ordinance would help encourage property owners to maintain their properties. No incentive to invest other than pride.
  - Educate property owners about the importance of working with new businesses...maybe a graduated rent scale. As the business becomes stronger the rents can be increased.
  - And finally...if the City does not have a beautification award, they may want to consider doing so...recognition is cheap but very effective

Recommendations

**JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- As described more fully above, the Team recommends that the four most important first activities should be:
  1. **Cooperate** deeply with the cities and other stakeholders for economic development to promote tourism, and attract new business. Executing an MOU would memorialize such cooperation.
  2. **Business attraction**, especially in the joint industrial area near the airport. See below for further discussion;
  3. **Tourism promotion**, coupled with capacity development. The County has already teamed with Hollister and contracted with the San Benito County Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism, and is taking steps to create a wine/hospitality combining district; and
  4. **Business retention**, by using a team approach to work with any business with permitting or infrastructure issues, that is threatening to leave the county, or is seeking to expand;
• The County and cities in the last few years have made limited investments in economic development programs. Now that budgets are more robust, there is an opportunity to expand funding for additional economic development staff or consulting services.

• An aggressive business attraction and job creation campaign can help expand the local job base and mitigate the larger economic forces. It should quickly be organized and funded since businesses are making capital investments now. Components of the campaign should include:
  o Explore whether a USDA Rural grant would fund part of this effort;
  o Define targets, then recruit;
  o Publish Ready-to-occupy industrial sites (See also Appendix E for Web discussion)
  o Find out employer needs (e.g. business walks, surveys, consistent staff outreach);
  o Study employee skills and match against the local population;
  o Fiber/Broadband is key infrastructure. Ensure its availability throughout the industrial area;
  o Create attractive, content-rich marketing materials;
  o Study the feasibility of a workshare, telecommuting facility;

• To help the cities and the County understand the significance of development projects brought before them, institute a regular project Economic Impact analysis. This will identify fiscal and economic effects, including employment, property and sales taxes, and other effects;

• Consider developing a Tourism Marketing District or Tourism Business Improvement District county-wide. Venues may be interested in leveraging their marketing funds through joint promotion;

• Signage can be improved so more travelers are aware of the historic and scenic services and attractions available in Hollister, San Juan Bautista and the County. Consider Highway 156 @ San Felipe Road & Highway 25, and on US 101 at Highways 25 & 156;

• Explore cannabis production cautiously given the uncertainty about changes to Federal and State law.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAN BENITO COUNTY

- The County has a comprehensive economic development vision in the new Element. It is important to focus on those first activities which will create the greatest impact. The SWOT and CEDS processes now underway will add clarity and help forge common agreement on priorities;
- Fund priority projects and provide adequate staff support and coordination to oversee those expenditures; and
- Publish permit requirements on Web to make them transparent and consistent. Make sure staff and applicants have written policies for entitlements, permits, and fees;

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOLLISTER

- Hollister is many things, so its self-image and brand should be clarified. Is Hollister a lower Silicon Valley technology area, the service hub to the farm community, the population center of San Benito County, a stop along Highway 156, a historic city with a vibrant downtown, a recreational mecca, etc.?
- It is also unclear whether Hollister has an economic development vision with clear goals for its economic future. The City should have clear goals derived from workshops and multiple discussions, and the directly involvement of the community and local businesses.
- Regarding Downtown Hollister:
  - To encourage downtown revitalization, consider making fees more flexible, including deferrals, financing, and a negotiated total fee package for larger projects;
  - Establish consistent, written Development policies and publish them on the Web site
  - Some cleanup of the downtown is indicated. Consider better enforcement or establishing codes for vacant building maintenance, trash enclosures, weed abatement, etc;
  - Consider another try at a PBID. Local landowners may be more inclined to vote for a self-assessment now that the economy is improving and if an education campaign is included;
  - Implement the 2008 DT Plan as funds are available. It is comprehensive and rational;
  - Investigate strategies to mitigate ADA issues at downtown buildings;
Consider establishing a Revolving Loan Fund for small businesses. Such a program can be funded through CDBG or USDA grants;

As the business hub of the County, Hollister should retain and recruit key establishments that bring locals into the downtown, including the main Post Office, City Hall and County government, Library, a good hardware store, banks and ATM’s, schools, gathering places, local restaurants, health clubs, etc. Co-promote the availability and convenience of these services;

Defer implementing any parking fees or parking restrictions. There appears to be no need.

Work closely with the Chamber through cooperative events and festivals; and

Already a Main Street community, there may be additional ideas from studying the “Strong Cities10,” “ABCD9” and “Lighter, quicker, cheaper10” approaches to citizen/neighborhood involvement and community development;

- Make sure that the Airport Master Plan update includes plenty of opportunity to expand and add new services. The Plan will likely be in effect for 15-20 years, and should accommodate plenty of potential growth in that time frame and beyond. An economic impact analysis of the existing airport will help establish a baseline for future growth.

- Align schools & training to business needs, Encourage local businesses to engage in schools;

- Encourage community revitalization projects such as the Sports complex;

- To the extent possible, use Successor Agency funds for economic development purposes, and designate property tax previously shifted to the Redevelopment Agency to economic development activities;

- Optimize the use of grants to accomplish economic development goals; and

- Consider another attempt to raise the TOT to the same level as surrounding jurisdictions. Pair this goal with the possibility of establishing a Tourism Development District.

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8 See https://www.eda.gov/challenges/sc2challenge/
9 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset-based_community_development
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAN JUAN BAUTISTA

- Reposition the City into a destination for food, wine, entertainment, arts, weddings, and special events. This approach would attract South Bay Millennials and younger families. Vacant retail spaces could accommodate wine tasting rooms, breweries and new restaurants that could attract young Silicon Valley workers. The historic angle need not be abandoned, just augmented.

- Other recommended downtown actions:
  
  - Proactively seek to improve downtown commercial properties and recruit appropriate tenants
  - Require property owners to clean up buildings. Consider developing and implementing a Vacant Building Ordinance;
  - Collaborate with State Parks and Church to better utilize public space;
  - Fund a consultant to lead the City’s economic development initiatives;

- Seek an Air District/Tesla grant for electric charging stations. Owners of electric and hybrid vehicles would stop, knowing there is a charging station along US 101 and on Highway 156;

- With extremely limited resources, City officials and local stakeholders can glean good ideas by studying the “Strong Cities10,11”, “ABCD12” and “Lighter, quicker, cheaper13” approaches to citizen/neighborhood involvement and community development.

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11 See https://www.eda.gov/challenges/sc2challenge/
12 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset-based_community_development
First Steps and Easy Activities

Some Easy Actions

- Bus tours to SJB, wines, dinner;
- Set up tours to extend visits & room nights
- Web site upgrades
- Study commuter skills;
- Work readiness certificates or Work Keys;
- After school activities (latchkey);
- Flexible downtown rules for small business;
- Co-locate offices, share support staff;
- Business Walks and other retention;

Closing Remarks

The recommended activities in this report are not all expensive projects. They also can and should be conducted daily as time and resources allow -- by city and county staff, elected officials, and the other involved entities. Daily attention in small ways will achieve amazing results and will move many of these recommendations forward incrementally. The City should, however, take advantage of any opportunity to obtain grant and other funding to help fulfill its goals.
### Persons Interviewed

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<tr>
<th>Bill Avera</th>
<th>Greg Harvey</th>
<th>Marty Richman</th>
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<td>Brent Barnes</td>
<td>Mary Hubbell</td>
<td>Carlos Rivera</td>
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<td>Larry Barr</td>
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<td>Karson Klauser</td>
<td>Kathy Schipper</td>
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<td>Andrew Shelton</td>
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<td>Kathy Sherian</td>
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<td>Mindy Sotelo</td>
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<td>Dan DeVries</td>
<td>Robert Lund</td>
<td>Sandy Stimson</td>
</tr>
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<td>Chuck Dogilone</td>
<td>Gordon Machado</td>
<td>Lauren Strojny</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valerie Englund</td>
<td>Chris Martorana</td>
<td>Brad Sullivan</td>
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<td>Gillian Enz</td>
<td>John McCormack</td>
<td>Will Sutton</td>
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<td>Roy Espinosa</td>
<td>Beverley Meamber</td>
<td>Bob Tiffany</td>
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<td>Kay Felice</td>
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<td>Ken Underwood</td>
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<td>Rosa Vivian Fernandez</td>
<td>Cindy Merzon</td>
<td>Loree Van Bebber</td>
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<td>Marilyn Ferreira</td>
<td>Shawn Milligan</td>
<td>Ignacio Velasquez</td>
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<td>Juli Vieira</td>
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<td>Mark Paxton</td>
<td>Brenda Weatherly</td>
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<td>Scott Fuller</td>
<td>Mary Paxton</td>
<td>Beth Welch</td>
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<td>Mary Gilbert</td>
<td>Don Pidd</td>
<td>Jim West</td>
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<td>Peggy Pierce</td>
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Special thanks to Brenda Weatherly, the staff of the Hollister Downtown Association, and Kristina Chavez Wyatt for the great work organizing the event and inviting the participants.

Photos taken by the Team or drawn from [http://discoversanbenitocounty.com](http://discoversanbenitocounty.com)

*The three jurisdictions and the Academy gratefully acknowledge the financial contribution of Pacific Gas & Electric and Wells Fargo Bank, whose generous donations helped make this event possible.*
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About the Local Economic Advisory Program

A LEAP is a one- or two-day long event that helps community leaders and other stakeholders understand their local economy, learn about economic development, and build consensus for action. LEAP events are customized for each community’s specific needs. Each LEAP team is built from CALED’s database of experienced professionals from outside the community who can provide advice on the specific problem, whether it be economic development strategies, recruiting new businesses, downtown revitalization, industrial park assessments, and much more.
About the California Academy for Economic Development

The California Academy for Economic Development (Academy) is a center devoted to Economic Development training, education, and research. By emphasizing innovation as well as tested methods, we strive to educate economic developers and communities on the best ways to grow healthy, vibrant communities. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit, managed by the California Association for Local Economic Development (CALED).

Our mission:

- Educate economic development professionals, officials and others about the critical processes and strategies needed to improve California’s communities so they can succeed in the global economy.
- Provide new business information and resources to local economic development professionals so that they, in turn, can pass this information on to entrepreneurs in their communities.
- Conduct supportive research, data development and analysis.
- Strengthen the link between economic development and educational institutions.
- Make economic development professionals more productive by bringing new technologies to the field.

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APPENDIX A

Local business and trade associations in San Benito County.14

- **San Benito County Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau** - Promoting local businesses and our community, benefits and resources to support member businesses for a strong community and regional economy, civic, cultural and educational climate. [http://sanbenitocountychamber.com](http://sanbenitocountychamber.com)
- **Hollister Downtown Association** - Working hard to create a vital downtown district through beautification programs and community events, ensuring that Downtown Hollister becomes an economic, cultural, educational, governmental, and social center that respects that past, present and future through its blending of people, places, and possibilities. [http://www.downtownhollister.org](http://www.downtownhollister.org)
- **San Juan Committee** - Promoting economic vitality while maintaining the charm and history of San Juan Bautista [http://www.sanjuancommittee.com](http://www.sanjuancommittee.com)
- **Economic Development Corporation of San Benito County** - Supporting business growth and investment and strengthening the local economy in San Benito county [http://edcsanbenito.org](http://edcsanbenito.org)
- **San Benito County Business Council** - Promoting policies and practices that provide outstanding pro-business legislative and local policy; facilitating intergovernmental cooperation, collaboration & consolidation; supporting, expanding and enhancing the local job base; and promoting community wellness & sustainability [www.sbcbusinesscouncil.com](http://www.sbcbusinesscouncil.com)
- **San Benito County Farm Bureau** - [http://sanbenitofarmbureau.org/](http://sanbenitofarmbureau.org/)
- **Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Central Coast** - Promoting and supporting the success of Hispanic businesses in the Central Coast. [https://www.facebook.com/hispanicchambercc/](https://www.facebook.com/hispanicchambercc/)
- **San Benito County Cattlemen’s & Cattlewomen’s Associations** - Non-profit trade associations representing ranchers and beef producers in legislative and regulatory affairs and consumer education.
- **REGIONAL: Grower-Shipper Association of Central California** - Represents member’s agricultural needs in San Benito, Monterey, Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties. [http://wwwgrowershipper.com](http://wwwgrowershipper.com)
- **REGIONAL: Monterey County Economic Partnership** - Non-profit community association working to create a thriving region with quality jobs, excellent education and health care, and a high quality of life for all resident while preserving the natural beauty and healthy lifestyle we all share. [http://www.mbep.biz](http://www.mbep.biz)

14 Courtesy of Kristina Chavez Wyatt of Farmhouse Communications and the SB Business Council
APPENDIX B

Detailed Web Site Recommendations

The City and various entities trying to promote tourism and economic development should create a more robust web presence. Our review noticed several things that should be added to make Hollister and the surrounding area be a destination for visitors and for businesses. We recommend that:

• Hollister should create a website for economic development. This site should include a basic property search tool (e.g. Oppsites, LoopNet and GIS Planning all have good tools at various price points), success stories (see growinwatsonville.com) for home grown companies, large development opportunities and a tool for lead conversion (your site should push people to act - whether it is a phone call or email or other connections). Conversions should be measured.

• Hollister Downtown Association has a fairly good existing website, but should look at more stories, success stories and there needs to be a way to convert website visitors and also track conversions.

• Both the City and HDA should engage in social marketing using tools such as Facebook, Pinterest, Periscope, Twitter and similar tools. Content should be focused on good stories and good photos. Local residents, businesses and visitors should be encouraged to participate. If possible, use trackable promotions when possible. For example, you can have a promotion for your farmers market that gives anyone who stops at the HDA booth a free gift or coupon that can be used at the market. A - B test ideas by checking likes, responses, comments and actions.

• The City, HDA and Chamber should work together to create digital tools for marketing. This should include compelling pictures, graphic treatments that blend well together and most importantly a compelling unified story of who the City, Downtown, Business Community strives to become. Stay on message.

• Tracking and conversions are key. Know how many unique visitors your website has (google analytics is a good free tool, but most websites have analytics), know where you rank on search engines and try to do better with search engine optimization, and above all make everything you do online an opportunity to convert a potential visitor or business to act.
APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY PROFILES 2016
APPENDIX D

LEAP Power Point Presentation of Recommendations

Presented at the Hollister City Council Chambers June 9, 2016