

Hampton County Promise Zone Town Hall
Market Square – Varnville - July 15, 2015
Facilitator: Andy Brack | Attendees: 128 people

Q: What are Hampton County's strengths?

- Friendly people
- Available workforce
- Trainable workforce
- Healthcare
- Experienced leadership
- Good schools
- Access to grants
- "A rural paradise"
- Outdoor life
- Natural resources
- Interstate 95 accessibility
- Railroad access
- Affordable housing
- Proximity to major ports in Savannah and Charleston
- Site-ready industrial locations
- Developable airports
- State park
- Free trade zone in industrial park
- Regional water system
- Land
- Existing industry

Q: What is your vision for Hampton County for 2035?

- More opportunity
- More business
- Lower taxes
- Increased population
- Better schools
- Better health
- County-wide Internet access
- Improved roads
- Better-trained workforce
- More recreation
- Financial stability

* reflects an addition from group notes provided after the meeting

- Lower unemployment rate
- Less crime
- More greenspace
- A suburb of Savannah/Hilton Head
- Broader educational opportunities
- More retail operations

Q: What would you do to grow jobs in Hampton County?

- Develop historic properties to grow tourism economy
- Community development
- Lower taxes
- Recruit industry
- Hiring incentives for business to hire locally
- Improve infrastructure
- Improve schools
- Change perception of Hampton as a place for lawsuits
- Better Internet access
- Apprenticeship programs
- Small business funding
- More resources for county economic development
- Public transportation improvements
- Improved quality of life
- Market Hampton County as a retired military community
- Commerce hub/marketing distribution center near Interstate 95
- Improve water/sewer capacity
- Develop more industrial sites
- Change attitudes of local people
- Better political representation at state level
- Utilize land resources
- Business incubators
- Excellent economic development commission
- Vocational education programs
- * Expand health services
- * Better education and technical education
- * Family support system
- * More marketing and promotion
- * Capital for business
- * Train and prepare for suppliers of large companies like Boeing with automation and industrial maintenance; programmable mechatronics
- * Equity in the education system

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- * Research industry in high demand
- * Tax breaks for major industries
- * Market county as an alternative to Colleton County
- * Better political push at Statehouse
- * Competitive salaries
- * Full circle use of resources, especially value added with agriculture, forestry
- * FOCUS on improving education, especially from prenatal to pre-school, and invest in high-quality child development centers
- * Reduce unwanted pregnancies

Q: What would you suggest to improve education in Hampton County?

- Programs to attract and retain good teachers
- County regional transit system
- Improved adult education programs geared toward parents
- Countywide Internet access
- Better agricultural educational programs
- Improve the look of the county
- Improved early education programs
- Improve family support
- Improve home access to technology
- Improve vocational opportunities in high schools
- More specialized vocational training
- Mentoring programs
- Put God back in schools (applause)
- Developmental screening for kids
- Parenting skills training
- Consolidate school districts
- School collaboration
- Better recreation facilities, extra-curricular activities
- New high school
- Additional guidance counselors
- More staff development training for educators
- Teacher incentives
- Countywide philanthropic resources
- Specially-funded training
- * More child care programs
- * Preventive health programs
- * More creative arts, music, dance
- * Ask the kids
- * Junior Achievement

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- * Figure out ways to make schools work together
- * Developmental screening
- * Agricultural education
- * More quality child care
- * More community involvement
- * Incentives for kids to attend schools
- * More tutoring, after-school programs
- * More staff development training
- * Two school districts need to unite
- * USC campus in Hampton County
- * More funding for Camp Wildwood
- * Town hall meetings with youth to give them a voice
- * Build more schools
- * Motivated educators
- * Competitive salaries
- * Improved family support so home matters aren't a distraction to kids
- * More available higher education opportunities for working people -- Saturday, Sunday classes, for example
- * Identify at-risk children to get skills, vocations
- * Shadow teachers for special ed students to mainstream

Q: What would you suggest to reduce crime in Hampton County?

- Public accountability
- More activities for children
- Education programs for released prisoners
- Youth leadership programs
- Increase drug education
- Stricter laws and punishment for offenders
- Police presence in schools
- More access to mental health services
- More jobs = less crime
- More officers on the street
- Crime watch programs
- Youth Town Hall meetings
- Increased outside lighting
- * Tougher laws
- * Recreation
- * Anti-bullying, mentoring
- * YMCA
- * Increase wages

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- * More recreational activities
- * More parental training
- * Police presence in the schools
- * Dedicated solicitors for the county
- * Reduce unemployment
- * Increase ROTC at schools

Q: What are some impediments or barriers to change in Hampton County?

- People in the county are too territorial
- Resistance to change
- The good old boy system
- “Not in my backyard” attitude
- The tax rate is too high
- Inability to market
- Prejudice

Q: If you had only one big Idea to make Hampton County better, what would it be?

- Countywide Internet access
- Public transportation system
- Lower taxes
- Adequate health care -- “If my wife can’t have a baby here, I’m not coming.”
- Water/sewer improvements
- Agriculture that keeps proceeds local
- Attract a huge industry
- Attract smaller businesses to eventually attract large businesses
- Improve education
- Create optimal health and well-being opportunities
- Improve infrastructure, including roads and water/sewer
- Recruit industry through Boeing
- Prepare for growth
- Take a diverse business approach
- Improve access to technical training
- * Bring the county together -- no Hampton, Varnville, Early Branch, Estill, Brunson division; consolidate to utilize strengths