

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION OF CAMDEN COUNTY, GEORGIA

Recommendations for a Marketing Plan

Prepared for

The Camden Partnership
Camden County Public Service Authority

Prepared by

Georgia Tech's Office of Economic Development & Technology Ventures

Ann O'Neill

October 25, 2005
Copyright © 2005
Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, GA 30332

OVERVIEW¹

Developing a marketing plan for Camden County, and effectively implementing it, is critical to achieving the vision for the county clearly laid out by citizens during the community stakeholder interviews.² Components of the vision that could be directly and positively affected by the marketing plan include:

- Avoiding locating any industry that could negatively affect the environment
- Developing a diversified economy
- Attracting higher-quality jobs
- Developing more activities/things to do for residents
- Avoiding uncontrolled residential development.

Local leaders' firm commitment to a marketing plan will also help address some of the citizens' and external statewide and regional economic development partners' concerns, such as:

- Political infighting/Not working together
- Lack of leadership vision/know-how
- Ineffective planning/growth management
- Excessive dependence on the submarine base.

Partners were asked to share their views regarding how marketable Camden County is for five key economic development strategies related to the future prosperity of the community. For each, they were asked to use a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all marketable" and 5 means "very marketable." In general, partners viewed Camden to be marketable for all five strategies, with each having an average rating that exceeds 3, the median mark on the scale. This indicates that positive ratings outweighed negative ratings in each case. Partners provided the highest average rating (4.32) to Camden County's marketability for tourism. Such a rating denoted the general view that Camden is marketable or very marketable for attracting tourists.

	MARKETABILITY RATING BY PARTNERS	IMPORTANCE RATING BY STAKEHOLDERS
Developing a quality work force	3.56	4.76
Recruiting new industry to move to your community	3.87	4.53
Helping local businesses sustain and expand their operations	3.90	4.40
Supporting entrepreneurs / fostering business start-up activity	3.88	4.27
Attracting more tourists to your community	4.32	4.10

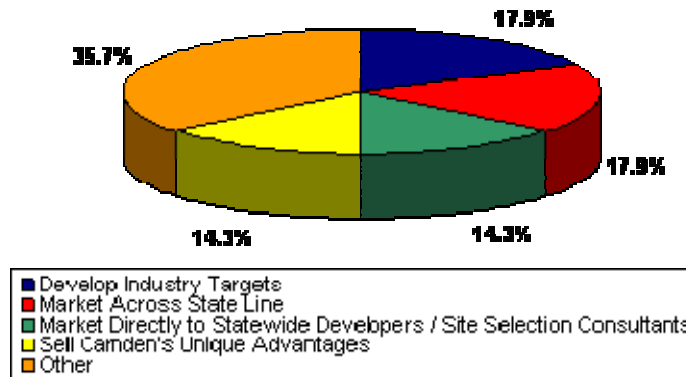
¹ This report is part of the "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia" series of reports that were completed by Georgia Tech in October 2005. For information on other reports in the series, please contact The Camden Partnership.

² Georgia Tech interviewed 93 community stakeholders and 20 external statewide and regional economic development partners to Camden. Findings from those interviews are cited throughout this document. More detailed information can be found in the companion reports, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Summary of Interviews With Community Stakeholders" and "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Summary of Interviews With Statewide and Regional Economic Development Partners."

Some aspects of economic development will not be addressed by the marketing plan. For example, some stakeholders and external partners mentioned opportunities related to residential development. The economic development report card showed the rate of residential development in Camden has exceeded regional and state averages for the last 14 years. This will likely continue and even increase without any encouragement from local leaders. In light of this, marketing efforts are unlikely to be necessary. Instead, it would be wise to assess the impact on the county of various types of additional residential development, and to attempt to manage this to the county's benefit.

Camden's partners offered some insights for what aspects they viewed as being important to include within the plan. Developing industry targets and marketing across the state line (into Florida) received the highest mention (17.9 percent each) by partners when asked for suggestions on what Camden should do about marketing. In addition, marketing directly to statewide developers and site selection consultants and developing a selling strategy based on Camden's unique advantages also received a fair degree of mention, each accounting for 14.3 percent of the responses.

What Should Camden Do Regarding Marketing?



To begin the process of developing a marketing plan, the first step should be to create a positioning statement. Such a statement clearly defines how the county wants to be viewed by outsiders, particularly with respect to business recruitment and expansion and to entrepreneurial development. Based on the citizens' vision, as well as the strengths and weaknesses identified by stakeholders and external partners, the following positioning statement is suggested:

Camden County offers expanding businesses and entrepreneurs a desirable Southern coastal location to thrive, with great access to nearby cities, major highways, airports and deepwater ports.

This positioning statement is not a slogan or tagline, which are designed for external marketing and promotion. The positioning statement's purpose, similar to a mission statement, is to guide local leaders in their efforts, in this case in developing a well-designed, targeted marketing plan.

Note also that this positioning statement does not address tourists and how they should perceive Camden County. Although some communities have attempted to develop a single positioning statement to guide tourism and business development, the two markets differ substantially in what appeals to them, and such efforts have seldom been successful. Additional research and collaboration between the cities and the county will be necessary to develop a positioning statement for tourism. This is discussed further in the tourism section of this report, and in the recommendations for tourism which appear below.

The next section of this report summarizes the recommendations made in the various companion reports, which are appropriate for inclusion in a marketing plan. The section is organized into four subsections, which contain recommendations applicable to:

- Multiple economic development sectors
- Industrial and business recruitment, retention, and expansion
- Tourism
- Entrepreneurship.

In each section, the recommendations attempt to address the key components of a marketing plan. First among these is to define the customer, which in each case is different. Camden will be marketing itself to outside industrial prospects; existing businesses which may be looking to expand elsewhere; existing businesses that haven't thought about expanding, but could be candidates; tourists; entrepreneurs (local and non-local); and even to potential residents who possess desirable skills. The attitudes, opinions, desires, and characteristics of each customer set should be carefully considered in developing the marketing plan.

The remaining components of the marketing plan include:

- **Defining the product.** What will be marketed to each customer segment? Focusing on certain features of the county may be more appealing to entrepreneurs, while tourists are motivated by a completely different product.
- **Setting a price.** In the case of economic development, this is more akin to adjusting the price — through incentives to businesses, favorable zoning or tax treatment for desirable developments, and discounted packages for travelers.
- **Establishing a promotional strategy.** How will the county be marketed to each customer segment? Advertising and promotional channels will be far different for tourists than for local business or industrial prospects. Direct sales or personal visits are key to high-value prospects, while visitors are typically reached via advertising and public relations efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Applicable to Multiple Economic Development Sectors

Recommendation: Based on the positioning statement outlined earlier — “Camden County offers entrepreneurs and expanding businesses a desirable Southern coastal location to live, work, and play, with great access to nearby cities, major highways, and deepwater ports” — economic developers should develop a brand image and tag line, then launch a campaign to market the community. This effort should be targeted to industrial and business prospects, existing business and industry, current residents (including young people and retirees), military personnel and their families, and second-home owners. It should also be targeted at tourists, but only during and after their visit to Camden County. The purpose of targeting visitors with this message is to appeal to those with the skills for “creative class” occupations. Retaining and attracting talent will be pivotal for future workforce, entrepreneur, and business development efforts.³

Recommendation: Camden County leadership should investigate and meet with representatives of the Creative Coast Initiative (CCI) to identify opportunities. These could include membership in CCI, a partnership of some sort, or simply learning more about a best practice that could be adapted to

³ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 9 in the companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan.”

Camden County's situation. Consider attending CCI events for networking opportunities with entrepreneurs, "creative class" workers, and local and statewide developers.

Recommendation: Camden County should investigate and meet with the Coastal BETA. See CCI recommendation above for details.

Recommendation: Camden County should target knowledge-based businesses in Jacksonville for possible expansion into Camden County. Among other advantages, cite the potentially lower labor costs in Camden for "creative class" occupations.

Recommendation: Camden County should select the most promising areas of the county and give them priority in marketing efforts. Stakeholders and external partners differed in their assessment of the areas of the county with the most potential for development/redevelopment. The areas where they were generally in agreement were St. Marys, North Camden, and the Durango site. These three should be strongly considered as priority candidates.

Recommendation: A sound, general strategy would be to use Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay (NSBKB), Jacksonville, and Brunswick as "springboards" for industry, supported by the county's other strengths, and to put the greatest effort/resources into developing talent (not just workforce) and entrepreneurs in targeted sectors. Talent and entrepreneurs require flexible, personalized, hands-on support and experience.⁴

Recommendation: Camden County's economic development organizations (EDOs) should consider developing joint materials for dissemination to prospective businesses, residents, tourists, and other investors. This could include a joint economic development newsletter showcasing assets and key accomplishments in the various areas of economic development. Another idea involves a joint Web portal for Camden County economic development that links all the existing Web sites for the various EDOs, as well as providing one Web destination to go to for all economic development-related information on Camden County.⁵

Recommendation: Camden County should foster excellence in strong non-basic industries—food services, personal services, accommodations, and retail—to support basic industry development.⁶

Recommendation: Camden County should cultivate Data Processing, Hosting, & Related Services and Computer Systems Design and Related Services as basic industries that market their services out-of-state.⁷

Industrial and Business Recruitment, Retention and Expansion

Partners viewed Camden to be quite marketable for recruiting new industry and helping local businesses sustain and expand their operations, providing an average rating of approximately 3.9 (out of a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is "very marketable") to both. Stakeholders viewed industrial recruitment to be the second most important economic development activity to Camden's future prosperity, providing an average rating of 4.5. And, they also considered business retention and expansion important, providing an average rating of 4.4.

⁴ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

⁵ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 1 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

⁶ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

⁷ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

Recommendation: Camden County should identify target industries and focus all marketing efforts on them. The companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: business Growth Opportunities provides an extremely thorough evaluation of the potential for various industries to locate in Camden County. It identified two primary strategies:

1. Expand on existing, high-wage industry in the county. On examination, most of the high-wage manufacturing and non-manufacturing industries are tied to the naval base and thus, show little opportunity for expansion. Camden also has a relatively small manufacturing sector, compared with other non-MSA counties, and few of its high-wage manufacturing industries are expected to grow nationally. The bottom line: this strategy is unlikely to yield much that will help Camden reach its goals.
2. Leverage the larger economies to the north and south, primarily the Jacksonville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) to the south. This strategy involves identifying large, healthy industries in the Jacksonville MSA (and possibly the Brunswick MSA) that are forecast to grow, and developing supplier businesses to fill voids in their supply chain, due to a lack of these supplier firms in the immediate MSA area. It is this second strategy that shows the most potential.

To further develop the second strategy, local economic developers should:

- Review the tables in the companion report “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Business Growth Opportunities.”
- Select those supplier industries tied to high-location-quotient, growth industries located in the Jacksonville and/or Brunswick MSAs.
- Further review those industries to screen out those that do not fit with the stakeholders’ desires.
- Identify the location criteria for each industry selected.
- Develop a plan of action to recruit and/or foster new business start-ups in those industries.

Recommendation: Camden County should investigate NAICS industry targets at a micro level by contacting member firms to gather more intelligence on each industry. Develop a contact list for the companies in the recommended manufacturing and service sector targets from the companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Business Development Opportunities.” Meet with each company to gather information on why they are located in Camden, what are the specific location factors of most importance to the industry, what their water and sewer requirements are for an average-sized facility, what acreage is needed to accommodate an average-sized facility, what they need to grow and stay competitive, who their customers are, who their suppliers are, and any other factors important to determining the feasibility of recruiting more firms in each industry. Use this information to determine if the industry targets fit Camden County’s preferences and available resources.⁸

Recommendation: Camden County should determine what industries to pursue, based in part on information provided through the companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Business Development Opportunities.” The EDOs should develop a joint marketing package that showcases Camden’s advantages specifically for those industries, and a Joint Development Authority-led sales team of all EDOs, as well as key officials in local government, should expand direct marketing efforts to site selection consultants and statewide economic developers.⁹

⁸ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 in the companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan.”

⁹ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 1 in the companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan.”

Overview of Economic Diversification Opportunities

● = Primary focus

◐ = Secondary focus

○ = Tertiary focus

Industry sector	Industrial recruitment	Existing industry support	Entrepreneur development
Business services		◐	●
Distribution	●		
Glass and metals	○		
Logistics	◐		○
Plastics and rubber	◐		
Sand and concrete		◐	
Timber and pulp	●	◐	
Warehousing	●		
Wholesale		◐	●

Recommendation: Facilities support services opportunities are limited to NSBKB, but Camden County should work to ensure local firms are in the supply chains of VT Griffin and the Trident Refit Facilities.¹⁰

Recommendation: Camden County should support wood products and wholesale trades that serve the local construction market as import substitution.¹¹

Recommendation: Camden County should develop wood products into a basic industry that adds value to local timber stock through services such as marketing assistance, product design assistance, and trade assistance.¹²

Recommendation: Camden County should target industries in Duval and Nassau counties (Florida) supplier voids' for recruitment/development. Many of these voids are in the materials sector.¹³

Recommendation: Camden County should consider developing marine industries utilizing location and NSBKB-related workforce; this would require development of a public marina and related facilities, which should only be done based on an in-depth market analysis.¹⁴

Recommendation: Camden County should focus industrial recruitment efforts on distribution/warehousing/logistics, wood products, plastics, and marine industries.¹⁵

¹⁰ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

¹¹ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

¹² This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

¹³ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

¹⁴ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

¹⁵ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

Recommendation: Camden County should increase marketing to statewide developers and site selection consultants. Those responsible for economic development for Camden County and each town should become members of the Georgia Economic Developers Association. If they are already members, each should attend as many meetings as possible, including monthly luncheons, the annual conference, and the spring workshop. Networking at these meetings with peers and statewide developers can be invaluable.

Develop a list of statewide developers, including the Georgia Department of Economic Development's (GDEcD) regional project and marketing managers; GDEcD Atlanta-based project managers with expertise in industries targeted by Camden; Georgia Power, Georgia EMC, and Georgia Natural Gas. Develop a list of site selection consultants, in Georgia and elsewhere, and target them for marketing efforts. Seek advice from experienced local and statewide developers on strategies effective with these individuals.

Review the evaluation of the county's strengths and weaknesses by stakeholders and external partners, and the asset evaluation conducted as part of this project. Develop materials to educate local economic developers, elected officials, and citizens on the county's main strengths. External partners had a high degree of uncertainty about several factors of high importance to economic development, so these should receive special emphasis. These included the existence of favorable business regulations and taxes, the availability of water and wastewater treatment, natural gas service, local financing for economic development, and telecommunications.

Develop a plan of action to meet with each of these developers within the next six months, and at least annually thereafter. The purpose of these meetings is to educate developers about Camden's strengths and assets, and the type of industry it seeks to attract. With 159 counties in Georgia, and fairly rapid turnover among state-level economic developers, never assume that your community is on their radar.

Recommendation: Camden County should consider marketing Camden to Florida-based industry and entrepreneurs. Meet with Jacksonville/Nassau County development organizations to explore synergistic marketing, in which prospects are directed to the most appropriate community. Prepare for this meeting by developing talking points on the advantages of this approach. For example, under this approach, Jacksonville could see an increase in prospect activity from Camden referrals. Also, if prospects not suitable for Jacksonville could be encouraged to locate in Camden County, it would increase area employment and income, which in turn would help support Jacksonville's economy.

Recommendation: Camden County should develop a criteria-based incentives program. To help ensure the quality business development Camden desires, a set of criteria to be used when offering incentives should be developed. These criteria would be guidelines that would be adhered to in most cases, but would allow for adjustments should an unanticipated situation arise. Criteria to be considered could include desired employment levels, average weekly wage, average skill level, environmental impact, and long-term viability of the industry.

Recommendation: The county and cities should also explore various types of incentives to direct and shape redevelopment. These incentives can take the form of density bonuses; permit fast-tracking for desirable projects, zoning ordinances that allow for innovative projects, and possibly a transfer of development rights program.¹⁶

Investment and incentive strategies should pay particular attention to areas that have excess public infrastructure and service capacity and that are contiguous to existing development. Focusing growth in these areas makes the public infrastructure and service provision less costly and protects the county's open spaces and scenic views.

¹⁶ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 3 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

Recommendation: Camden County should develop a plan of action to address the competition. Draft a realistic list of strengths and weaknesses for a Camden County business location versus Jacksonville, Brunswick/Glynn County, and Savannah, and for smaller coastal counties such as McIntosh and Liberty. Prepare talking points to educate prospects and statewide developers on Camden's key strengths (e.g., lower taxes, lower land and construction costs, less traffic, lower employee turnover, friendlier, more livable, better schools, etc.) Develop counterarguments to address each weakness, and/or strategies to remedy weaknesses. Familiarize all local leaders and potential members of a prospect team with these talking points.

Recommendation: Camden County should organize informal business groups within the targeted sectors. Arrange relatively small groups of entrepreneurs and executives within the sectors identified above to meet periodically and discuss topics of interest to their operations. The potential to link to the Georgia Department of Labor's Kings Bay Employer Committee should be explored. Ideally, membership would be by invitation only and facilitated by a coordinating body. Even with a coordinating body, the sector groups should be designed to be self-regulating by members of the group. Such business groups:¹⁷

1. Enable similar businesses and industries to discuss operational challenges, share information, and investigate the potential for strategic alliances, partnerships, and collaborative activities to support their competitive positions
2. Provide regular input to the county and chamber about existing business and industry needs and programs and services that would be helpful for sustaining and expanding their operations
3. Enable existing business and industry to participate in economic development decision-making and provide opportunities for engaging existing industry's help in attracting or growing new industries, particularly those relevant to the cluster.

Recommendation: Camden County's leadership should develop a stronger connection with local suppliers to the Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay. Working with the chamber and JDA, the Camden Partnership should lead an effort to meet with suppliers to the base to help them explore opportunities to expand their markets into non-military areas, as well as to determine whether their supply needs can be filled by local businesses. It is recommended that Camden's leadership work with VT Griffin's leadership to gather further intelligence on the base's suppliers and vendors. For example, it would be helpful to understand the sales volume by industry to know what firms and industries do the most business with the base. That would reveal what types of businesses could potentially sell goods and services to the base. Camden should also arrange for training to local businesses on how to do business with the federal government, especially Department of Defense installations. Georgia Tech's Procurement Assistance Center is one organization that provides such training.¹⁸

Recommendation: Camden County should launch an aggressive effort to "get to know" its existing business and industry, and their needs. Members of Camden's business and industry community should be inventoried and profiled, and they should receive personal visits from key chamber and JDA officials. Camden should develop a contact list for the companies in the recommended manufacturing and service sector targets from the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Business Development Opportunities" and meet with those companies to find out what they need to grow and be competitive.¹⁹

¹⁷ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 10 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

¹⁸ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 and Issue and Strategic Goal 10 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

¹⁹ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 10 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

Recommendation: The Camden-Kings Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and Camden County Joint Development Authority should begin efforts to (a) raise awareness among community leaders, citizens, and organizations about the needs of existing business and industry and that it includes all area businesses, in addition to manufacturers, and (b) foster appreciation for existing business and industry.²⁰ Marketing activities could include:

- Employer Appreciation and Spotlight Program, including the placement of the company's profile on both organizations' Web sites, local media channels, etc.
- Facilitation of media interviews with and coverage of local employers
- Facilitation of regular visits to existing business and industry by development authority board members
- Publishing and distributing a directory of existing business and industry, as well as showcasing it on Web sites
- Hosting of an annual Existing Business and Industry Appreciation event.

Recommendation: The downtown development authorities in Kingsland, St. Marys, and Woodbine should encourage enterprises in their business districts to operate more cohesively. They should be encouraged to maintain consistent operating hours, as well as to engage in joint marketing efforts. They should also seek to foster opportunities for cross-selling among the businesses, both within and among all three districts.²¹

Tourism Development

Stakeholders and external partners agree most closely on the desirability of tourism and tourism-related businesses as an economic development target. Combined, 35 percent of stakeholders preferred tourism-related development such as "shopping and retail," and "hospitality." This is three times the number who identified any other industry or form of economic development. However, when asked to rate the importance of various economic development strategies, tourism received the lowest ranking, although it still achieved a score of 4.1 out of 5 possible points. In light of this, and the county's location and tourism assets, a strong tourism development effort should be part of the overall economic development marketing plan.

Recommendation: Camden should use discovery research (plus any follow-on research) to develop a Camden "umbrella" brand, which incorporates the county's and all municipalities' tourism promotional philosophies. Building upon Camden's rich outdoor recreation and historical/cultural assets, tourism development leaders should use discovery research to design focused advertising and promotional campaigns. Target existing travelers who will stay a little longer and spend a bit more today, who have the potential to establish second homes in Camden tomorrow, and who may retire in the county in the future. Camden should investigate what other forms of follow-on research will aid in increasing advocacy, promotional planning, and development of tourism.²²

Recommendation: The county and its municipalities should jointly investigate workable structures for the promotion and development of tourism. Options include incorporating tourism into the missions of existing structures, such as the JDA or chamber, or the creation of a countywide convention and visitors bureau.²³

²⁰ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 10 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

²¹ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 10 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

²² This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 11 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

²³ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 11 in the companion report, "Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan."

Recommendation: Camden should recognize the opportunities created by its tourism market, then elevate its importance tactically, operationally, and strategically. County and city officials should be lobbied and educated by Camden’s tourism advocates as to the opportunities and needs revealed by the discovery research performed within this study.²⁴

Recommendation: The downtown development authorities in Kingsland, St. Marys, and Woodbine should encourage enterprises in their business districts to operate more cohesively.²⁵ See the full text under Industrial and Business Recruitment, Retention, and Expansion, above.

Recommendation: The city of Kingsland should consider dedicating a larger portion, if not all, of its bed-tax revenues to tourism promotion and development. Similar increased returns can occur elsewhere in Camden County when tourism promotion and development is viewed as an investment rather than an expense.²⁶

Entrepreneurial Development

Because of its desirable coastal location and proximity to air and highway transportation, Camden County should strongly appeal to entrepreneurs, and external partners confirmed this, rating Camden 3.88 out of 5 points in its appeal to entrepreneurs. Stakeholders did not spontaneously mention entrepreneurs as an economic development strategy. However, when given a list of five possible economic development strategies, attracting entrepreneurs was rated fourth highest in importance at 4.27 out of 5 points. Despite this, Camden’s ability to attract and retain entrepreneurs may be limited as stakeholders felt that the community does not do a good job in providing the kind of support they need.

Recommendation: Camden County should recognize there are certain business development opportunities that represent some of the major entrepreneurial opportunities in Camden County. These includes those identified in the companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Business Growth Opportunities.”

Recommendation: The Camden-Kings Bay Area Chamber of Commerce should continue with its effort to develop a strong entrepreneur culture in Camden County with the Georgia Department of Economic Development and other statewide partners. There are literally dozens of ways to assist local entrepreneurs, but the community must match real needs with focused assistance efforts. The community should go through these six steps to develop its own unique strategy.²⁷

Step 1: Get leadership commitment.

Step 2: Build community awareness and support.

Step 3: Continue strong ties with existing service providers.

Step 4: Map your entrepreneurial and local assets.

Step 5: Visit and interview entrepreneurs.

Step 6: Design a focused and strategic program of assistance.

²⁴ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 11 in the companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan.”

²⁵ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 10 in the companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan.”

²⁶ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 11 in the companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan.”

²⁷ This recommendation appears under Issue and Strategic Goal 2 and Issue and Strategic Goal 10 in the companion report, “Economic Diversification of Camden County, Georgia: Recommendations for a Strategic Plan.”