

**TOWN OF VALDESE
TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN PUBLIC INPUT MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024, 6:00 P.M.**

The Town of Valdese Town Council met on Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. for a strategic plan public input session, led by the WPCOG. Members of the Council met at the Old Rock School, Waldensian Room, 400 Main St. W, Valdese, North Carolina. The following were present: Mayor Charles Watts, Mayor Pro Tem Gary Ogle, Councilwoman Rexanna Lowman, Councilwoman Heather Ward, Councilman Glenn Harvey, and Councilman Paul Mears. Also present were Interim Town Manager Bryan Steen, Town Clerk Jessica Lail, WPCOG Executive Director Anthony W. Starr, WPCOG Director of Community & Regional Planning Alison Adams, and various Department Heads.

Absent: None

A quorum was present, but no action was planned.

At 6:00 p.m., WPCOG Director of Community & Regional Planning Alison Adams welcomed everyone and introduced six staff members from the WPCOG who were present to help with the session. Ms. Adams explained the process of the public input session. Ms. Adams split the room into three groups, and participants completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis in each group. After the exercise, participants picked their top four priorities by placing a sticker beside each priority. Ms. Adams said we would do the same process at the following public input meeting on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. The WPCOG team will compile the information from the SWOT analysis, and the surveys sent out in the mail and online and present the outcomes to the Council at a later meeting.

There were approximately 67 people in attendance.

SWOT ANALYSIS TOP PRIORITIES FROM STICKER PLACEMENT:

STRENGTHS – Police & Fire, Recreation Department, Lakeside Park, Hospitals, Location, Parks/Rec/Trails/Pool, Safe Environment, I-40 access, Safety, Outdoor Recreation, Town Services

WEAKNESSES – Jobs(lack of variety), Low Inventory Housing, Competitive Businesses, Taxes, Aging Infrastructure with Public Safety Building, Streets/Paving, Job Availability for Youth, Lack of Industry/Manufacturing Jobs, Lack of Variety of Restaurants/Hours, Aging Infrastructure, Diversity of Industry, Economic Development, Emergency Services

THREATS – Low Housing Stock, Politics, Dysfunctional Local Government/Uninformed Decision Making, Lack of Young People/Aging Population, Property Neglect, Drugs, No Change/Innovation, Political Division, Aging Infrastructure, Business/Job Loss, Aging Population

OPPORTUNITIES – Expanding Rec Center(and other facilities), Old Rock, Partnership with Other Small Towns, More Utilization of Lakeside Park, Market/Create Bus Opps/Cottage Industries, Lake, Market to Restaurant Variety, RV Park, Hotels/BnB, Downtown Development, Sunday Dining, Old Rock School Improvements, McGalliard Falls

At 7:30 pm the public input session was adjourned.

The next Strategic Planning Public Input Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at the Old Rock School, Waldensian Room.

Town Clerk
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Mayor