

## 4.2 Assess Your Community's Competitive Position

### Instructions:

- **What:** Assess your community as a competitive location for businesses and other job-generating organizations. Through focus groups, individual interviews and surveys, obtain broad input from existing businesses and organizations on the local perception of the strengths and weaknesses of your community as a business location. In addition, you will want to gain outside perspectives from consultants, representatives from the state department of economic development and other similar organizations.
  - **Why:** Gaining an understanding of the local viewpoint as well as an outside, objective viewpoint is often the best way to evaluate your community. By collecting this data, you have a better understanding of where your community stands based on local perceptions as well as those who are viewing your community strictly through a professional lens. This provides the baseline data to support recruiting new businesses and industries to your community with a clear snapshot of what you have to offer.
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### Assess Your Community's Competitive Location

**Scope:** The following are only some examples of the factors some communities evaluate.

#### 1. Planning & Collecting Community Input:

- Host Focus Group (see [2.2 Gather Community Input](#) for resources)
- Hold Individual Interviews (see [2.2 Gather Community Input](#) for resources)
- Conduct Surveys (see [2.2 Gather Community Input](#) for resources)
- Collect statistical benchmarking of your community to others in terms of wage rates, cost of living and other key locational factors is also extremely useful. Some communities engage consultants to help them with this process and compare them to other communities.

#### 2. Compiling State and Regional Data

Examples of data points:

- State Tax Rates
- Right to Work Status
- Workers Compensation Policies
- State-Level Incentives
- Transportation Infrastructure & Services
- Regional Water and Sewer
- Utility Infrastructure
- Labor Force
- Geography & Proximity to resources and connectivity

### 3. Compiling Community Factors Data

Examples of data points:

- Labor:** availability, cost, skill sets, productivity, work ethic.
- Power:** cost, reliability, service, redundancy
- Natural Gas:** cost, availability
- Water and Sewer:** cost, excess capacity to handle future growth
- Internet:** Download/upload speed, cost, service interruptions, redundancy
- Telephone:** cost, cell coverage, different carriers
- Roads/Highways:** Interstate and 4-lane highway access, road conditions, traffic congestion
- Public Transportation:** availability and service to facility
- Rail:** adjacent to facility, Class I and short-line service, frequency and quality of service (if rail needed)
- Air:** distance to commercial service airports, frequency of flights, destinations served, hub status, general aviation airports and service
- Public services:** quality of fire, police, emergency medical and other public services
- Taxes:** local sales tax, local property tax
- Business Climate:** Regulations and permitting: requirements and enforcement , general attitude toward businesses: supportive or adversarial, land use and zoning laws, etc.
- Business Support Services - Production:** local suppliers of production inputs, machine shops mechanical assistance
- Business Support Services - Financial/Legal:** availability and quality of professional services such as accounting and legal, banking services.
- Educational Resources - Childcare:** Private, in-home and public childcare availability
- Educational Resources - Early Education:** Birth to 5 years old programs
- Educational Resources - K-12:** Quality of K-12 education
- Educational Resources - Higher Education:**
  - Availability/proximity of 4-year colleges, degree programs in engineering and other required skills
  - Availability/proximity of graduate programs in technology, business and production-related degrees
  - Availability/proximity of technical schools
- Sites and Buildings:**
  - Availability and cost of prepared, ready to build industrial/commercial sites
  - Availability and cost of industrial buildings meeting contemporary standards
  - Availability and cost of office space

4. **Evaluating Competitiveness:** Once you have collected data such as the above about your community, you can then determine which data points are going to be best for you to compare to your competition. Use the following format to show how you compare to at least two other communities and the state.

**Competitive Analysis Structure Sample:**

Measure	Home Community A		Community B		Community C		State	
Avg. Hourly Manuf. Wage Rate	Wage Rate	% Chg	Wage Rate	% Chg	Wage Rate	% Chg	Wage Rate	% Chg