



QUALLA 2020

FINAL REPORT

AUGUST, 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the Qualla 2020 planning process. This process was led by BWB Solutions and Medicine Root Inc. for the Cherokee Preservation Foundation.

The purpose of the Qualla 2020 Project is to diversify the Cherokee economy and reduce its risks so that it can better ensure the well-being of the Cherokee population into the future. In order to do this, the Qualla 2020 Project will seek to mitigate the dependence of the economy on gaming revenues, and to develop and expand businesses in ways that uphold the core values of the Cherokee people.

The planning work was performed by the Qualla 2020 Committee, which was composed of a broad cross section of individuals from the Qualla Boundary and the surrounding regions. Meeting attendees are shown on page 7. The Qualla 2020 planning processes were conducted in a manner that referred to and incorporated traditional Cherokee values.

Action Plans

The planning process led to the development of eleven action plans for diversifying the Cherokee economy in four areas: real estate, tourism, small business/entrepreneurial development, and knowledge industry. Each plan specifies the organizational home, activities, resources required, potential funding sources, and a timeline. The following is a brief summary of the action plans developed:

Real Estate

Create Implementation Plan for Compacting the BLA Realty Function

- Home Organization: EBCI Commerce Department
- Goal: create an implementation plan for compacting the BIA Realty function.
- Activities:
 - Assess current Tribal Land Records documents management by BIA
 - Analyze Realty Services workflow and procedures
 - Recommend modifications to Land Records Management database
 - Estimate the initial startup implementation cost and long-term operating cost
- Resources Required: \$50,000. Funding sources to be determined.
- Timeline for Implementation: Spring 2015 – Fall 2016

Develop Draft Statutes for Individual Possessory Holding Legal Framework

- Home Organization: EBCI Office of the Attorney General
- Goal: Fund the legal work required to conduct research on how/whether other tribes have changed statutes regarding individual possessory interests, and to develop draft statutes and regulations that would simplify the process for leases and sales of individual possessory interests

- Activities
 - Engage outside expert counsel
 - Survey relevant tribal experience and review existing EBCI statutes, regulations and case law
 - Develop initial draft of new proposed statutes and review with Executive and Tribal Council leadership
 - Conduct in-depth community engagement and public comment
 - Prepare final draft of new proposed statutes for submission to Council
- Resources Required: approximately \$40,000 for research, legal drafting and community engagement.
- Funding: sources to be determined.
- Timeline for Implementation: Spring 2015 – Fall 2016

Tourism

Explore potential for an Agricultural and Convention Center at the old Cherokee High School site.

- Home Organizations: EBCI Destination Marketing, Cherokee Historical Association and EBCI Recreation
- Goal: Make changes to provide another venue for large attractions/shows in Cherokee with easy public access and parking
- Activities: Conduct meetings with Tribal Council and community members to explore the potential for developing the old Cherokee High School site for convention and other event purposes, while also making appropriate accommodations for organizations/programs utilizing the site.
- Resources Required: Funding for implementation studies
- Funding: Sources to be determined.
- Timeline: by June 2016

[This Action Plan has been revised from the version initially approved by the Qualla 2020 Committee to incorporate comments from community members.]

Small Business and Entrepreneurial Development

Create a single source of information for small businesses

- Home Organization: Cherokee Chamber of Commerce
- Goal: Create a single source of relevant information for businesses operating on or interested in coming to start a business on the Qualla Boundary.
- Activities:
 - Obtain content from Commerce Department, Chamber of Commerce records and WSU surveys/studies.
 - Develop web site.
 - Develop hard copy materials for distribution.
 - Ensure ongoing maintenance of materials.
- Resources Required: \$50,000 for website development and annual maintenance/upgrade cost of \$4000

- Potential funding sources may include:
 - \$25,000 from Preservation Foundation,
 - \$20,000 from Tribal Department of Commerce, and
 - \$5,000 from Cherokee Chamber of Commerce.
- Timeline: April, 2015 - August, 2015.

Strengthen the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce

- Home Organizations: EBCI Commerce Department and Cherokee Chamber of Commerce
- Goal: Strengthen Cherokee Chamber of Commerce financially and operationally to provide improved services to small business on the Boundary.
- Activities:
 - Develop specific set of services that Chamber can provide to businesses and Tribe that fall within purview of EBCI Commerce Department, and can be funded through its budget
 - Define and differentiate the marketing and promotional duties of EBCI Destination Marketing versus the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce
- Resources required: \$80,000 per year to attain financial sustainability
- Potential funding sources: EBCI Department of Commerce, Cherokee Preservation Foundation
- Timeline: August, 2014 - August, 2015.

Create Economic Development Coalition

- Home Organizations: EBCI Commerce Department and Cherokee Chamber of Commerce
- Goal: Create an economic coalition that operates as a permanent entity to support small business attraction, development and growth
- Activities:
 - Create and implement a coordinated plan to attract businesses to locate in Cherokee and the surrounding three counties
 - Develop a strategy that encourages entrepreneurial efforts to start businesses in targeted fields
 - Coordinate and integrate the efforts of economic development on the Boundary with neighboring interests, including economic development agencies and Chambers in Swain, Jackson and Haywood Counties. Also include Smoky Mountain Host.
- Resources required: \$10,000
- Potential funding sources: Cherokee Preservation Foundation, in-kind donations by participating organizations
- Timeline: Spring, 2015 - August, 2015.

Build a More Vibrant Entrepreneurial Culture

- Home Organization: Sequoyah Fund
- Goal: Build a more vibrant entrepreneurial culture and environment on the Qualla Boundary that inspires and creates more business ventures.
- Activities:
 - Establish a baseline description of a desirable/optimal small business environment
 - Complete research necessary to map the small business environment in Cherokee
 - Identify gaps/constraints between Cherokee environment and baseline
 - Prioritize the issues and plan to resolve them
- Resources required: \$30,000
- Potential funding sources: Cherokee Preservation Foundation, in-kind donations by participating organizations
- Timeline: Spring, 2015 – December, 2015

Expand Individual Businesses on Boundary through 8(a) and Similar Programs

- Home Organization: EBCI Cherokee Enterprise Development and Sequoyah Fund
- Goal: Assist enrolled members to expand their business revenues through sales to Federal agencies through the SBA 8(a) program and similar programs.
- Activities:
 - Identify opportunities for Federal procurement contracts that may be appropriate for businesses owned by Tribal members
 - Reach out to business owners to make them aware of Federal procurement opportunities.
 - Work with SBA to develop and deliver training programs and resources to support individual entrepreneurs.
 - Organize mentoring and coaching opportunities for Tribal members seeking to expand their own business through 8(a) and other programs
- Resources required: staff time
- Potential funding sources: in-kind donations of staff time
- Timeline: August 2014 – July 2015

Expand Sales of Cherokee Art

- Home Organization: Sequoyah Fund
- Expand sales by Cherokee artists, of both traditional and contemporary art.
- Activities - four primary strategies:
 - Create web gallery for online sales
 - Expand in-person sales off the Boundary by brokering art on behalf of Cherokee artists
 - Support individual artists to increase sales off-Boundary by providing micro-loans, training, and support for sales booths
 - Create a Cherokee Arts Council to help provide sustainability for these actions.

- Resources required: staff time plus \$60,000
- Potential funding sources: Cherokee Preservation Foundation plus in-kind donations of staff time
- Timeline: August 2014 – December 2015

Knowledge Industry

Marketing Plan for Attraction of Knowledge Industries

- Home Organization: Southwest Commission
- Goal: identify and attract small-midsize knowledge businesses to Boundary and 7 counties of Western NC
- Activities:
 - Inventory and quantify the key assets of western NC region
 - Conduct market research to develop clear profiles of target businesses
Develop “market offering”: sites, information, incentives to share with potentially interested companies.
 - Develop and launch marketing campaign
- Resources required: staff time plus \$50,000
- Potential funding sources in cash and in kind:
 - Special assessment from 7 counties
 - EBCI Department of Commerce
 - Cherokee Preservation Foundation
- Timeline: September 2014 – March 2016

Feasibility Study for Fiber-Enabled Office Building and Co-Working Space

- Home Organization: Sequoyah Fund and Southwestern Commission
- Goal: determine whether sufficient demand exists at specific rental price points to support cost of fiber-enabled office building/co-work space (similar to Mojo Coworking in Asheville)
- Activities:
 - Develop profile of potential users
 - Conduct individual interviews and online survey of tech and home-based entrepreneurs businesses within a 30-mile radius/located in Jackson or Swain County
 - Develop estimate of potential demand for office and co-working space and a suite of services at particular price points
- Resources required: staff time plus \$1,000
- Potential funding sources: Southwestern Commission and Sequoyah fund in-kind and cash donations
- Timeline: September 2014 – March 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to gratefully acknowledge the help and assistance we received from many individuals throughout the Qualla 2020 planning process. Particular thanks go to the all the individuals who attended the Qualla 2020 Committee meetings. Their generous commitment of time and energy enabled this planning process to be conducted successfully.

Qualla 2020 Meeting Attendees

Michell Hicks, Principal Chief	Ruth McCoy
Terri Henry, Chairperson of the Tribal Council	Scooter McCoy
LeChay Arch	Andrea McCoy-Garret
Jim Bigwitch	Terri McElroy
Lynn Blankenship	Paxton Myers
Bill Boyum	Steve Morse
Vickie Bradley	Charlene Owle
James Caldwell	Morgan Owle-Crisp
Tonya Carroll	Agnes Owens
Ethan Clapsaddle	Amy Parker
Kevin Cornelius	Forrest Parker
Paulette Cox	Wilbur Paul
Albert Crowe	Kim Peone
Missy Crowe	Paisley Raby
Bo Crowe	Gloria Rattler
Michelle Evans	Sadie Reagan
Mary Jane Ferguson	Jacob Reed
Sis Forkiller	Brooks Robinson
Lynn Harlan	Ray Rose
Robert Harris	Skye Sampson
Hope Huskey	Tommye Saunooke
Marsha Jackson	Russ Seagle
Tammy Jackson	Rich Sneed
Carla Jamison	Jacob Reed
Glenda Junaluska	Demakus Staton
Marie Junaluska	Russ Seagle
Amy Kaloneheskie	Perry Shell
Ray Kinsland	Ryan Sherby
Lisa Leatherman	Kayla Smith
Jason Lambert	Hannah Smith
Wanda Lawless	Bill Taylor
Courtney Lewis	Bo Taylor
Kristy Long	Jody Taylor
Anita Lossiah	Reuban Teesatuskie
Krystal Luttrell	Rowena Teesatuskie
Adele Madden	Angie Tharp

Don Tomas
John Tissue
Angie Votaw
Mary Wachacha
Becky Walker

Amy Walker
Alicia Wildcatt
Darlene Whitetree
David Wolfe

Cherokee Preservation Foundation

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We also would like to thank the Cherokee Preservation Foundation Board of Directors, particularly those who were able to participate directly in one or more of the Qualla 2020 meetings:

Michell Hicks, Principal Chief
Terri Henry, Chairperson of the Tribal Council
Bill Boyum, Tribal Supreme Court Chief Justice
Mary Jane Ferguson, Business Owner
Wanda Lawless, Business Owner
Morgan Owle Crisp, Business Owner

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REPORT OVERVIEW

This report presents a summary of the recommendations of the Qualla 2020 Committee. The overall goal of the Qualla 2020 Project is to diversify the Cherokee economy and reduce its risks so that it can better ensure the well-being of the Cherokee population into the future. In order to do this, the Qualla 2020 Project will seek to mitigate the dependence of the economy on gaming revenues, and to develop and expand businesses in ways that uphold the core values of the Cherokee people.

The report has two sections. In the first section, we present the statement of Cherokee core values. These values statements were approved by the Tribal Council in 2005. We describe the success metrics – measures that can be used to determine whether the Qualla 2020 project is meeting its goals. We also present a vision of Cherokee in five years. This vision shows how the various action plans come together to create a more financially diverse and sustainable Qualla Boundary.

The second section of the report presents the eleven action plans that were developed by the Qualla 2020 Committee.

SECTION ONE: VALUES AND VISION

CHEROKEE VALUES STATEMENT

Cherokee Core Values (From Vision Qualla, 2005)

- *Prayer, Faith, Spirituality*
- *Group Harmony*
- *Strong Individual Character*
- *Sense of Place*
- *Honoring the Past*
- *Educating the Children*
- *Sense of Humor*

FUTURE VISION FOR THE QUALLA BOUNDARY

A Vision of an Economically Diverse Qualla Boundary August 15, 2018

There are many projects now under consideration that are intended to help make the Qualla Boundary more economically diverse. These projects include those that have been recommended by the Qualla 2020 planning process, as well as those that are being pursued by other organizations, including the EBCI Commerce Department and the Greater Cherokee Tourism Council.

But will all this planning actually make a difference? We believe so. To help share our views on how all these projects might improve Cherokee, we offer two visions on how Cherokee will appear in five years. The first is a vision of how Cherokee will appear to an enrolled member graduating from college, and the second is how Cherokee will appear to a local business owner (non-enrolled) who leases land on the Boundary from an enrolled member.

Cherokee, July 2019: The Young Adult Experience

“Graduation is just two months away, and I still don’t know what I want to do when I leave college”, thought Mary Littledeer. “When I started college, the idea of going back to Qualla Boundary wasn’t particularly exciting. The only jobs for an entrepreneurial college grad that paid good wages were with the Casino or the Tribe, and neither were something that really grabbed my attention. But over that time, the Boundary had changed in ways that has made going home and working there much more intriguing.”

An entrepreneurial culture had taken hold of the Boundary, particularly among the “millennials” like her. Mary knew of half a dozen groups of young adults like her who were working on startups and businesses in the “knowledge” field, some of them working out of their parents’ homes, and others working in the new co-working building – Native Mojo – that had been completed three years ago. Several digital design companies had moved to Cherokee and the surrounding towns, and there was a buzz among her peers about who would become the next to sell their company for \$100 million – a mark hit by Jason Teesautuskie with his video game “Long Man Speaks”, an action-adventure app for the iPhone based on Cherokee legends.

There were other changes as well. Changes to the Oconaluftee Indian Village had driven an increase in attendance, allowing the Cherokee Historical Association to expand programming and to increase jobs for enrolled members. Mary had a number of friends, particularly those with an artistic bent, who were excited about being able to be paid to spend their days working on traditional crafts and honing their artistic skills, which they could then bring to their artwork in the evenings. And the fact that the Cherokee Artists Council was now managing a successful website for online sales (started by the Sequoyah Fund) helped create a market for those who were interested in creating and selling

contemporary art that was infused with Cherokee themes and craft techniques. Her friend Pamela Walker was making almost enough through the sales of her sculptures to be able to support herself entirely from her artwork.

There also were more restaurant and entertainment options – EBCI had partnered with the Casino to develop the former parking lot, and now there were five new restaurants and cafes that her friends liked to visit after work. There was also a more active night life and street scene, because of investments made in downtown stores and Saunooke Village. All of this meant that being in Cherokee was more interesting for Mary and her friends.

Her father had once remarked that when he was growing in Cherokee, the three career options he saw were agriculture, the Army or Atlanta. For Mary, the Qualla Boundary had taken its place as a very attractive career option.

Cherokee, July 2019: The Business Owner Experience

Ryan Street, owner of Little Tennessee Outfitting, was looking back over the first year's sales from his new store in downtown Cherokee. The year had been better than projected, and he was feeling good about his decision to open the store in Cherokee – his fourth in the region.

He had thought about opening a store in Cherokee five years ago when he was looking for a site for his third store, but the red tape and the requirements made him decide that it was not worth the bother. It could take as long as six months to get the lease approved, and he would have to pay for an appraisal as well as put up a performance bond for a full year's lease payment. In comparison, he was able to get a lease approved in a month in Sylva and without a performance bond. The business wasn't so much better in Cherokee that it was worth the extra effort. So he opened in Sylva instead.

But quite a bit had changed in the past five years. The Tribe had changed the laws and regulations regarding land leasing and sales, and as a result, he was able to get the lease negotiated and signed in a month. He also didn't have to have an appraisal or pay for a performance bond. There was also an excellent web site, maintained by the Chamber of Commerce, that provided “one-stop” information about retail sales volume, traffic volumes, and all the approvals and licenses he would need to get in order to operate on the Boundary. He was able to fill out most of the paperwork on-line, which made the process much less onerous.

Equally important, the Tribe had branded the downtown “Base Camp of the Smokies,” and had actively recruited a new wave of businesses to downtown which sold to a similar customer base, increasing the foot traffic and walk-in sales. As a result, Cherokee had become a destination shopping attraction, bringing in outdoor enthusiasts who were purchasing the latest gear before heading off to the Great Smokey National Park or to fish in the local streams. The opening of the new Agricultural and Convention Center had also helped to boost visitation, and the four conferences that had been hosted at the Fairgrounds this past year had brought new visitors to his store and other businesses. EBCI had also worked with the local community colleges to continue their training for hospitality and retail workers, which helped assure him of a steady supply of work-ready individuals. All in all,

Cherokee had become much easier and more attractive place to do business. Ryan was satisfied with his decision, and looked forward to being able to maintain and perhaps even expand his business on the Boundary over time.

SUCCESS METRICS

In order to know whether the Qualla 2020 projects are achieving their goals, it will be important to specify success metrics: ways to measure progress and growth. The Qualla 2020 Committee recommends that following success metrics for use over time:

- Quantitative
 - The proportion of the Tribal levy and privilege tax that comes from Casino versus the proportion that comes all other businesses
 - Currently, approximately 40% of levy and privilege comes from Casino. The Committee suggested aiming for 20%. This would require a significant growth in the non-Casino business sector.
 - Employment on the Boundary by sector
 - This could be measured through TERO and US Census data
 - Revenue on the Boundary by sector
 - This information is collected by EBCI Finance
 - Business openings versus closings on the Boundary per year
 - Percent of retail stores occupied

- Qualitative
 - Increased perception that the Boundary is a good place for business investment
 - Increased perception that Boundary offers good career opportunities
 - This information gathered through surveys and interviews of business people and tribal members

In addition to these metrics, the Committee also felt that it would be important to develop measures for how well the diversification in the economy was helping to improve life for enrolled members. They noted the gap between the “haves” and “have-nots” on the Boundary. The growth of the Casino has improved the overall economy on the Boundary, leading to the creation of many good jobs with family-supporting wages. But only a portion of those living on the Boundary have the education and ability to get and keep these jobs. There are many enrolled members who haven’t been able to get family-supporting jobs, and who rely heavily on per-capita disbursements to make financial ends meet. Attention should be paid to whether those individuals are benefiting from the growth generated by the Qualla 2020 action plans. One metric to look at might be whether the Qualla 2020 action plans have generated year-round jobs with family-supporting jobs that are available to residents.

Participants suggested there should be a workforce action plan that complements the economic diversification action plan. While it’s important to have family-supporting jobs, that’s only half of the issue. The other half is the workforce development needed for residents to be ready for the jobs that get created. This will require education and training, both in the technical skills required by the jobs, and also in the “soft skills” of customer service, workplace culture, and conflict management. The workforce development activities should lead to an EBCI population that is fully ready and able to take advantage of the new job growth, rather than being left behind.

SECTION TWO:

QUALLA 2020

ACTION PLANS

Introduction to Qualla 2020 Committee Action Plans

This section provides the eleven detailed action plans that the Qualla 2020 Committee is recommending to the Cherokee Preservation Foundation and the EBCI Government and Tribal Council. Each action plan includes the following information:

- Goals for the action plan
- Organizational home
- Which organizations will participate in implementing the action plan
- Description of the actions to be taken
- Resources required, and where the resources will come from
- Timeline

All action plans were reviewed and accepted by Qualla 2020 participants in the final July meeting. The tourism action plan was revised from the initial version approved by the Qualla 2020 Committee to incorporate community comments.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR COMPACTING REAL ESTATE

Goal

Create an implementation plan for compacting the BIA realty functions, to enable more efficient and streamlined leasing and land sale processes.

Organizational Home

EBCI Commerce Department

Participating Organizations

- Tribal Housing Program
- Office of the Attorney General
- Office of the Principal Chief
- EBCI Finance
- GIS Office

Background

“Compacting” refers to a process in which the Tribe formally takes over responsibility for a function that has been performed by the BIA. The EBCI has already gone through the process of compacting the hospital, the courts and the schools. In each case, compacting the function has enabled the EBCI much greater control over how the function is performed and what services are provided, and has improved services to enrolled members. Compacting the BIA realty functions would enable the Tribe to reduce the time that is spent waiting for title status requests and for approvals of lease and sale transactions, because the Tribe would not be required to use the complex system of land records used by the BIA.

Because of the unique way in which the Qualla Boundary was created, and because the Qualla Boundary has never been subjected to allotment, the BIA does not have a direct fiduciary responsibility for individual possessory holdings. It only has a direct fiduciary responsibility to the Tribe for the Qualla Boundary as a whole. This means that it is not required to perform the realty functions for real estate transactions that involve just individual possessory holdings. The BIA has been performing these functions for individual possessory holdings at the request of the Tribe. The BIA has also indicated that it will stop performing the realty functions at some point in the future. At that time, the Tribe will be required to take on the realty functions for individual possessory holdings.

If the Tribe compacts the BIA realty functions before the BIA stops providing them entirely, it will receive the funding currently being spent by the BIA on the realty function. If the Tribe waits until the BIA stops providing the realty function before taking them on itself, it will not be able to get funding from the BIA. This highlights one pressing reason to move forward now with consideration of taking on the realty function.

Activities

The implementation plan will help community members and Tribal Council decide whether and how to move forward with compacting of the BIA Realty Function.

The implementation plan should answer these questions:

- Options:
 - What are the potential different options for compacting the Realty function?
- Finances:
 - How much it would cost the Tribe to take over the function?
 - How much money would the BIA pay the Tribe to provide the service?
- Operations:
 - What are the requirements in terms of people, software, and machines?
 - What will be the impact on jobs?
 - What will the process be for resolving current conflicts and issues regarding uncertain and overlapping property boundaries?
- Enrolled members:
 - What will be the impact on individual enrolled members?
 - When will surveys be required under the new system, and who will pay for them? The tribe currently pays for surveys for enrolled members – will that change?
- Examples:
 - What other tribes have done this and what has their experience been?

Specific steps required to develop the implementation plan:

- Assessment of current Tribal Land Records documents management by BIA
- Analysis of Realty Services workflow and procedures
- Recommendations and modifications to Land Records Management database schema
- Estimate of the initial startup implementation cost
- Estimate of the long-term operating cost

Resources Required

- Hiring of independent contractor to facilitate development of implementation plan and development of new procedures - \$15,000
- Travel cost for GIS office staff site visits to two other Tribes and National Tribal GIS conference - \$14,000
- GIS database schema modification cost and custom workflow programming - \$20,000
- Supplies - \$1,000
- Total cost of implementation plan development: \$50,000

Potential Sources of Funding and In-kind Resources

Funding sources to be determined

Timeline

Spring 2015 – Fall 2016

DRAFT STATUTES FOR INDIVIDUAL POSSESSORY HOLDINGS

Goal

Fund the legal work required to conduct research on how/whether other tribes have changed statutes regarding individual possessory interests, and to develop draft statutes and regulations that would simplifying the process for leases and sales of individual possessory interests.

Organizational Home

EBCI Office of the Attorney General

Participating Organizations

EBCI Supreme Court

EBCI Budget and Finance

EBCI Department of Commerce

Background

The current legal framework for individual possessory holdings requires that the BIA give permission for all land transactions, including leases and sales. This means that land transactions on the Boundary are significantly slower than land transactions off the Boundary. This is a burden on enrolled members, and it reduces the attractiveness of the Qualla Boundary to potential business owners and investors.

The current legal framework was legislated by the Tribal Council, and can be changed by the Tribal Council. As noted above, the BIA does not have a fiduciary responsibility for individual possessory holdings. This means that the Tribe has the power to make and enforce all laws regarding the sale of individual possessory holdings to enrolled members, and the leasing of individual possessory holdings to any individual or corporation. Developing a new legal framework could enable transfers and leases to be completed more rapidly and with greater certainty than currently exists.

Activities

- Engage outside expert counsel
- Survey relevant tribal experience
- Review existing EBCI statutes, regulations and case law
- Develop initial draft of new proposed statutes and review with Executive and Tribal Council leadership
- Conduct in-depth process for public comment and community engagement on new proposed statues
- Prepare final draft of new proposed statutes for submission to Council
- Develop draft for Tribal Council review of regulations and procedures required to implement new statutes

In developing the new draft statutes and regulations, it will be important to address three concerns that have been raised by members of the Qualla 2020 Committee:

- *Fairness* – how can statutes, regulations and procedures be structured so that individual enrolled members are assured of a fair way of resolving property disputes?
- *Efficiency* – will the new legal framework and realty functions improve the efficiency of efficient land transactions enough to be worth the increased cost?
- *Privacy* – how can individual privacy be preserved in the new system?

It will also be important to look at the process for resolving disputes concerning land. Currently, disputes concerning land are referred to the Lands Committee. If there is no resolution in the Lands Committee, the dispute goes to the Business Committee, and potentially to the Tribal Council. The new draft statutes and regulations should spell out in detail whether this process will continue, or whether it will be replaced by a judicial process, in which land disputes are settled in the Tribal Courts.

Resources Required

Approximately \$40,000 for research, legal drafting and community engagement.

Potential Sources of Cash and In-kind Resources

To be determined

Timeline

Spring 2015 – Fall 2016

EXPLORE POTENTIAL FOR AN AGRICULTURAL AND CONVENTION CENTER AT THE OLD CHEROKEE HIGH SCHOOL SITE

Goal

Goal: Make changes to provide another venue for large attractions/shows in Cherokee with easy public access and parking.

Organizational Home

EBCI Destination Marketing, Cherokee Historical Association and EBCI Recreation

Participating Organizations

Museum of the Cherokee Indian
Cherokee Chamber of Commerce
EBCI Budget and Finance

Background

Creating an Agricultural and Convention Center would expand the space for programming from the 6.8 acres at the current Fairgrounds to 18 acres. This would enable more diverse programming, which would help to increase attendance. The new site would also increase parking capacity by 1/3, which would help alleviate the overcrowding that occurs. The site's proximity to hotels would also enable the EBCI to attract conventions, which would help to build traffic for retail and restaurants.

Activities

The overall goal for this action plan is to determine if there is sufficient interest among Tribal Council and community to make pursuing a feasibility study creating an Agricultural and Convention Center worthwhile. EBCI Destination Marketing and CHA would like to avoid having hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on a feasibility study only to find that the project is not of interest to Council and community.

The first step in this action plan is to conduct meetings with Tribal Council and community members to explore the potential for developing the old Cherokee High School site for convention and other event purposes, while also making appropriate accommodations for organizations/programs utilizing the site. It will be particularly important to consult with the families whose ancestral lands became the Fairgrounds, as well as Yellowhill and other communities. It will be important to understand community concerns and interests, and to shape the action plan as best as possible to address those concerns and interests.

Concerns to be addressed in feasibility studies include:

- Impact on retail, hospitality and restaurants
 - How to avoid creating additional competition for existing businesses
 - Role of existing businesses in renovated area
- Parking (including potential for parking deck)
- Location of EBCI archives

- Cost and funding

Resources Required

Funding will be required for implementation studies.

Potential Sources of Cash and In-kind Resources

Funding sources to be determined.

Timeline

August 2014 – June 2016

[Please note that this Action Plan has been revised from the version initially approved by the Qualla 2020 Committee to incorporate comments from community members.]

CREATE SINGLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Goal

Create a single source of relevant information for businesses operating on or interested in coming to start a business on the Qualla Boundary.

Organizational Home

Cherokee Chamber of Commerce will be the leader of the effort and serve as the owner of the resulting information sources (online resources and hardcopy documentation).

Participating Organizations

- The Chamber will receive primary assistance from the EBCI Commerce Department.
- Other resources will be engaged as required, i.e. tribal legal support, destination marketing, tribal grants and planning office. Gathering data on relocation, schools and other factors may be a task for an intern.
- Contracted third party resources will play a critical role in structure and content of the final product.
- Western Carolina University is willing to provide research consulting services.
- Other area chambers of commerce and economic development entities will likely participate in the effort by sharing data and resources.

Background

Chambers of Commerce in the U. S. typically serve as central points of information for data and resources to support small business decisions regarding business development and relocation in the area. An example is the Asheville Chamber of Commerce that researches, collects and disseminates information on area employment, housing, education, economic indicators and several other important factors.

The Cherokee Chamber of Commerce was never chartered or funded since the organization was founded in 2006 to serve as a central point of information. The Chamber has served primarily as a resource for promoting existing businesses...mostly those businesses in the tourism sector. For the Chamber to expand its services and become an information resource, significant planning and coordination will have to occur that defines the source of information that would be useful to small business development and relocation.

With funding available from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation and EBCI, the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce can develop the necessary information resources over a period of time, with the assistance and support of other organizations. The Chamber can plan for the methods to present this information publicly, including web-based and document publications. The Chamber would work closely with EBCI Destination Marketing to define roles and responsibilities that intersect but do not overlap. The Chamber would seek funding to make this effort sustainable.

Activities

- Conduct relevant research to identify “best models”

- Research and consolidate relevant information to be provided to the business community
 - Tribal law and regulations
 - Tribal approval and lease process
 - Tribal tax environment
 - Contact persons
 - Process flow chart or diagram
- Business and demographic data
 - Revenues by business segment
 - Relocation information
 - Business that are in demand from tourists – but not yet on Boundary
 - Unemployment rates and workforce skills and experience
- Prepare and issue an RFP to web site development resources
- Select a firm to develop the web resources
- Develop hard copy version of online material
- Develop policy to ensure ongoing, timely maintenance of materials

Resources Required

Estimated cost of web resources development is \$50,000 with and annual maintenance/upgrade cost of \$4000.

Potential Sources of Cash and In-kind Resources

- \$25,000 from Preservation Foundation,
- \$20,000 from Tribal Department of Commerce, and
- \$5,000 from Cherokee Chamber of Commerce.
- Recurring annual maintenance/upgrade cost will be borne by the Chamber of Commerce.

Timeline

- Funding available to Chamber by Spring, 2015
- Funding available to WCU for research by Spring, 2015
- Preliminary products available to the public by August, 2015
- Final products available to the public by August, 2016

STRENGTHEN THE CHEROKEE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Goal

Strengthen Cherokee Chamber of Commerce financially and operationally to provide improved services to small business on the Boundary.

Organizational Home

EBCI Commerce Department, supported by the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce

Participating Organizations

- Cherokee Chamber of Commerce
- Surrounding area Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development agencies
- This would include Swain, Jackson and Haywood counties as well as Smoky Mountain Host.

Background

When the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce was founded in 2006, neither its funding nor its charter required it to provide a full array of business development and growth services. The Qualla 2020 team has identified the Chamber as a potentially strong resource for improving economic growth through small business development and growth. That would include the import of small businesses onto the Qualla Boundary.

Additional funding is potentially available to the Chamber through collaborations with the EBCI Commerce Department. The EBCI Commerce Department carries responsibilities for the economic well-being of the community. That responsibility can be met in part by supporting the Chamber to strengthen its programs and operations. Incentives and support structures need to be created that would attract small business relocation to the area. Additionally, incentives and support structures are needed to encourage the development and growth of small businesses on the Boundary.

The Chamber can develop and adopt small business resources such as business planning, training, networking, financial assistance, business location, tax incentives and so on.

Activities

- Develop a business case for supporting the Chamber from EBCI Commerce funds
 - Anecdotal data suggests Chamber web site and travel guide generate 75% of referrals for hotel/motel/campground stays
- Create a plan for expanding business assets in Cherokee, including expansion of existing businesses, development of new businesses and relocation of business onto the Qualla Boundary
- Develop and provide a complete array of small business services to Cherokee, including information dissemination
- Collaborate with surrounding Chambers and economic development agencies to seek small business growth.

Resources Required

\$80,000 annually

Potential Sources of Cash and In-kind Resources

EBCI Commerce Department

Cherokee Preservation Foundation

Timeline

- Business case/proposal from Chamber by August 15, 2014
- MOU between EBCI and Chamber by January 2015
- EBCI funding by January 2015
- CPF grant funding by Spring, 2015
- Chamber's new programs in place December 2015

CREATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COALITION

Goal

Create an economic development coalition to support small business attraction, development and growth to provide improved services to small business on the Boundary.

Organizational Home

Cherokee Chamber of Commerce

Participating Organizations

EBCI Commerce

Sequoyah Fund

EBCI Destination Marketing

Swain, Jackson and Haywood Counties

Smoky Mountain Host

Western Carolina University

Background

To ensure that the accomplishments of Qualla 2020 and other economic development initiatives are continued into the future, a coalition of interested organizations is proposed. This coalition would be led and facilitated by the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce in a similar fashion to the leadership and function of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce in their area.

Activities

- Develop a coordinated strategy to create new jobs in all sectors of existing businesses through expansion and growth
- Create and implement a coordinated plan to attract businesses to locate in Cherokee and the surrounding three counties
- Develop a strategy that encourages entrepreneurial efforts to start businesses in targeted fields
- Coordinate and integrate the efforts of economic development on the Boundary with neighboring interests, including economic development agencies and Chambers of Commerce in Swain, Jackson and Haywood Counties, and Smoky Mountain Host as well.

Resources Required

\$10,000 for meeting expenses, planning documents, miscellaneous expenses

Potential Sources of Cash and In-kind Resources

Cherokee Preservation Foundation and various in-kind

Timeline

- Cherokee Preservation Foundation funding in Spring, 2015
- Coalition in place August, 2015

BUILD A MORE VIBRANT ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE

Goal

Build a more vibrant entrepreneurial culture on the Boundary that encourages and motivates the development of small businesses.

Organizational Home

Sequoyah Fund

Participating Organizations

- EBCI Commerce Department
- Tribal Casino Gaming Enterprise
- EBCI Destination Marketing
- Cherokee Chamber of Commerce

Background

- Entrepreneurial Small Business needs have been identified as follows:
 - Markets
 - Location to lease or build
 - Access to Capital
 - Employees
 - Small Business Training/Development Resources
 - Business Services – Insurance, Accounting, Marketing, etc.
 - Clear, Concise Information about the Selected Environment
 - Supply and Distribution Chain Information
 - Connectivity
 - Inspiration and Motivation
- Several of these factors are in short supply on the Qualla Boundary, thereby reducing incentives for the creation of a thriving entrepreneurial culture.

Activities

- Establish a baseline description of a desirable/optimal small business environment
- Complete research necessary to map the small business environment in Cherokee
- Identify gaps/constraints between Cherokee environment and baseline
- Prioritize the challenges and attack the problem
- Create incentives to come to Cherokee
- Develop the resources and avenues to connect with potential small businesses locally, regionally and beyond
- Offer entrepreneurship training
- Start, gain momentum, and sustain the effort
- Attract and develop “creative class” in the region
 - Can be attracted by:
 - Outdoor adventure and greenways

- Diverse atmosphere and tourism
- Sense of community
- Clean and beautiful environment
- Native American culture and heritage
- One-stop shopping to set up business
- But note: will need more restaurant and entertainment options
- Can be developed by:
 - Education and training programs to support Knowledge Industry Entrepreneurship
 - Help with reaching external markets
 - Access to expensive tools (example: Fab Lab)

Resources Required

\$30,000 for consultant research and planning

Potential Sources of Cash and In-kind Resources

Cherokee Preservation Foundation and in-kind contributions

Timeline

- Start research and planning by Spring 2015
- Initial changes in place by December 2015
- Additional changes in place throughout 2016

EXPAND INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES ON BOUNDARY THROUGH 8(A) AND SIMILAR PROGRAMS

Goal

Expanding businesses through the U.S. Small Business Administration 8(a) and similar programs can be pursued either at the level of the Tribe or at the level of individual Tribal members, or both. There is a separate effort under way to pursue a Tribal 8(a) holding company. This action plan will focus solely on businesses owned by Tribal members.

Organizational Home

EBCI Cherokee Enterprise Development Staff and Sequoyah Fund

Participating Organizations

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
SCORE volunteers as mentors

Background

Numerous tribal nations and Alaska native organizations participate in the SBA 8(a) program, either as tribal members or Tribal Nations/Alaska Native organizations. The potential exists for obtaining Government contracts under this program...contracts that would otherwise be unavailable for tribally-owned organizations.

Activities

- Identify opportunities for Federal procurement contracts that may be appropriate for businesses owned by Tribal members
 - Review businesses owned by Tribal members to determine which industry code they fit under (NAICS)
 - Research federal purchasing opportunities for these codes to review potential opportunities
- Reach out to business owners to make them aware of Federal procurement opportunities.
 - One Feather
 - Email
 - Direct contacts
 - Work with SBA to develop and deliver training programs and resources to support individual entrepreneurs.
 - Technical assistance in preparation of 8(a) application
 - Development of mentor/mentee relationships for 8(a)
 - Training for Hub Zone status
 - Connection to SBDC procurement specialists
- Organize mentoring and coaching opportunities for Tribal members seeking to expand their own business through 8(a) and other programs.
 - Enrolled members and SCORE volunteers with successful experience in 8(a) programs can help coach and mentor members seeking to expand 8(a) work
 - Potential for formal mentor/protégé relationship, which creates benefits in seeking new work

Resources Required

Primarily staff time from EBCI Cherokee Enterprise Development and Sequoyah Fund

Potential Sources of Cash and In-kind Resources

Staff time, with minimal funding from the two agencies.

Timeline

August 2014 – July 2015

EXPAND SALES OF CHEROKEE ART

Goal

Expand sales by Cherokee artists, both traditional and contemporary art.

Organizational Home

Sequoyah Fund

Participating Organizations

Qualla Arts & Crafts

Background

Activities

- Create online sales using available social media tools
- Develop a Cherokee authenticity label
- Develop a distinctive Cherokee brand
- Create a Cherokee artist council
- Include both traditional and contemporary art
- Broker Cherokee art off-Boundary
- Provide entrepreneurial training
- Qualify Cherokee artist as trainers
- Support creation of artist portfolios
- Provide micro-loans to artists
- Support artists' sales booths at various events
- Ensure the effort is sustainable

Resources Required

Estimate of external resources is \$60,000.

Potential Sources of Cash and In-kind Resources

Primarily Sequoyah Fund with potential support from Cherokee Preservation Foundation of \$60,000 to develop an artist council

Timeline

- Steps being taken now by the Sequoyah Fund, others are being planned for 2014 execution.
- Seek grant funding from CPF for a Cherokee Arts Council by Spring 2014 (\$60,000 estimate)

MARKETING PLAN FOR ATTRACTION OF KNOWLEDGE INDUSTRIES

Goal

Identify and attract small-midsize knowledge businesses to Boundary and 7 counties of Western NC.

Organizational Home

Southwestern Commission

Participating Organizations (Potential List)

EBCI Commerce

Economic Development Departments of the seven western-most NC counties

Duke Energy

Background

To diversify the economy on the Qualla Boundary, the EBCI will need both to encourage existing businesses to grow and to attract new businesses as well. This action plan focuses on the attraction of businesses, while other plans focus on helping existing businesses to grow.

This action plan targets knowledge industries, which are businesses whose operations and success depends mainly on knowledge, innovation and technology. Examples include software, high-tech manufacturing, communications, R&D, and finance. The Qualla Boundary and its surrounding counties have a unique asset that will help in attracting knowledge industries: Balsam West, the high-capacity, high-quality fiber optic network which is co-owned by the Tribe and by Drake Enterprises. This network provides the mission-critical reliability that is essential for knowledge industries. In addition, the region also has high-quality redundant power sources, and abundant fresh water for cooling, both of which are important for particular types of knowledge industries.

There are a number of knowledge industry clusters that are already growing in NC, and other rural areas have been successful in attracting knowledge industry clusters into specific region or corridor. One example is the data center corridor in rural NC, including Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba and Iredell counties, which has attracted data centers from Google, Apple, and major financial services firms.

In order to create a large enough set of locational offering to attract knowledge industries, the EBCI will join together with the seven westernmost counties in NC. Together, the counties and EBCI have a large enough set of attractive locations, educational opportunities, and a large enough talented workforce to make the region of interest to the owners and leaders of small, entrepreneurial knowledge industry businesses.

Activities

- Inventory and quantify the key assets of Mountain West Alliance region make it uniquely attractive to small, growing, entrepreneurial knowledge industry businesses
- Conduct market research to develop clear profiles of target market segments/customers who would find the assets of Mountain West Alliance locations attractive.
- Develop “market offering”: sites, information, incentives to share with potentially interested companies.
- Develop and launch marketing campaign

Resources Required

- Total: approximately \$50,000. Details:
 - Inventory of product/sites: organizational in-kind
 - Logo and messaging: \$5,000
 - Design/build web presence w/ interactive asset map: \$7,500
 - Rich media content, photo/video: 3 videos @ approximately \$3,000/video shot, edited, delivered: \$9,000
 - Design and publish print collateral: \$1,500
 - Market Research (Experian – Proof of concept):
 - Existing regional economic condition profile: Pro bono (Experian)
 - Develop surrounding target markets/businesses that align to built and natural assets of our region: \$21,500
 - Initial outreach to identified targets: \$1,500
 - Host reception with tech industry trade groups/entrepreneurs and local developers: \$1,500 (local) TBD (neighboring metros)

Potential Sources of Cash and In-kind Resources

- Special assessment from 7 counties
- Businesses
- EBCI Department of Commerce
- Cherokee Preservation Foundation
- Timeline:

Timeline

September 2014 – March 2016

FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR FIBER-ENABLED OFFICE BUILDING AND CO-WORKING SPACE

Goal

Determine whether sufficient demand exists at specific rental price points to support cost of fiber-enabled office building/co-work space (similar to Mojo Coworking in Asheville)

Organizational Home

Sequoyah Fund and Southwestern Commission

Participating Organizations (potential)

Cherokee Chamber of Commerce
 EBCI Commerce Department
 WCU Small Business Technical Development Center
 Haywood Committee College Entrepreneurial Program
 EBCI TERO Office

Background

This action plan is focused on assisting individual entrepreneurs and micro-businesses who need high-quality internet service and other digital tools and services to succeed, but who cannot yet afford to rent a fiber-enabled office suite, or to pay to have fiber connected to their place of business. Bringing fiber to an office that does not have a connection already can cost as much as \$7,000, which is not affordable for many small businesses.

A practical alternative to this approach is to rent a workspace or an office cubicle in a fiber-enabled “co-work space”. These are buildings in which individuals or organizations can rent a desk, a cubby or a room by the hour, the day or the month. Mojo Coworking in Asheville is a good example of this type of building. It offers a variety of spaces for rent by the day, week, or month. It also provides access to high-quality internet service, copying, 3-D printing, conference rooms, and kitchens. The building has been quite successful in Asheville, and the key question is whether there is sufficient demand in the Qualla Boundary to make such a building viable here.

Activities

- Develop profile of potential users
- Conduct individual interviews and online survey of tech and home-based entrepreneurs businesses within a 30-mile radius/located in Jackson or Swain County
- Develop estimate of potential demand for office and co-working space and a suite of services at particular price points

Resources Required

60 hours of staff time (in kind); \$1000 out-of-pocket

Potential Sources of Cash and In-kind Resources

In-kind donations from Sequoyah Fund and Southwestern Commission

Timeline

September 2014 – March 2015

APPENDIX:

DRAFT TIMELINE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Timeline

The Qualla 2020 Committee encourages a thorough and deliberate process of engaging the community in discussions and in-depth conversation regarding all aspects of the Committee recommendations. Many of the recommendations will entail far-reaching changes in many aspects of life on the Boundary, and it is important for community members to be aware of what is recommended, why it is recommended and how it is intended to improve life on the Boundary. It will be crucial to understand concerns of community members, and to address those concerns in the final versions of the recommendations.

The following is a draft timeline for engaging the community, gathering input, refining the recommendations, and bringing them to the Tribal Council and the Cherokee Preservation Foundation for decision:

- August – September: Community Engagement
 - Discuss action plans with Tribal Council in working session
 - Modify action plans as appropriate and communicate significant changes back to the Qualla 2020 Committee
 - Present action plans to wide range of community members in meetings and get-togethers. Recruit action team leaders to participate.
 - Develop video describing action plans to be played on Channel 28
 - Prepare insert for the One Feather
 - Create Facebook page
- October – November: Prepare for Decision-making
 - Action team leaders
 - Revise action plans to incorporate community feedback
 - Prepare drafts for Tribal Council review
 - Prepare grant proposals for the Foundation
 - Prepare budgets and plans for EBCI funding
- December – January : Decisions by Tribal Council and Cherokee Preservation Foundation

Approvals Process

The following recommendations will require approval and support by the Tribal Council in order to be enacted and implemented:

- Tourism
 - Explore potential for an Agricultural and Convention Center at the old Cherokee High School site
- Real Estate
 - Create implementation plan for compacting BIA Realty function
 - Develop draft statutes to change legal framework for individual possessory holding

The following recommendations do not require action by the Tribal Council, but do require funding from a variety of sources, including potential funding from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation and other sources.

- Small Business and Entrepreneurial Development
 - Create a source of information for small businesses
 - Strengthen Chamber of Commerce
 - Create an economic coalition to support small business development and growth
 - Build a more vibrant entrepreneurial culture on the Boundary
 - Expand sales of Cherokee art
- Knowledge Industry
 - Marketing plan for attraction of Knowledge Industries

This final set of recommendation can be enacted directly by EBCI Departments and Cherokee nonprofits without the need for additional approvals or funding.

- Small Business and Entrepreneurial Development
 - Expand 8(a) businesses on the Boundary
- Knowledge Industry
 - Feasibility study for fiber-enabled office building and co-working space