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MIDDLE GEORGIA CHARRETTE AND REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVE

SCENARIO-BASED THINK TANK WORKSHOP

July 2018



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This report summarizes the Scenario- based Think Tank workshop held in Warner Robins, Georgia on June 15, 2018. Approximately 80 regional stakeholders attended the workshop and developed the scenarios presented in this report. This report has been produced as part of the wider Middle Georgia Charrette and Regional Planning Initiative.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

future→iQ

WORKSHOP HOSTED BY:



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Scenario-based Think Tank workshop was conducted as part of the wider Middle Georgia Charrette and Regional Planning initiative, funded by the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment. The initiative is being led by the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) with coordinated support from multiple agencies within the region. Future iQ has been contracted by the Georgia Department of Economic Development to design and deliver the overall Middle Georgia Charrette and Regional Planning initiative.

The Middle Georgia Charrette and Regional Planning Initiative is building on the existing defense industrial base, and exploring opportunities to diversify the regional economy from dependence on Department of Defense contracts. One of the crucial industries in the region is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB). It is the largest single-site industrial complex within the State of Georgia, employing almost 22,000 individuals. As this base contributes to much of the economic activity in the region, the Middle Georgia Charrette and Regional Planning initiative intends to assess Middle Georgia's strengths, and determine opportunities to develop business in alternative markets. The goal of the initiative is to provide a road map to an economy that is more resilient to Department of Defense spending fluctuations.

The Scenario-based Think Tank workshop was carried out to gain better understanding of regional stakeholder priorities and desired resource allocation for business and economic development to build resiliency in the region. The Think Tank explored how the region would change over time, in relation to emerging macro and local trends. What may happen if the focus is on a strong regional collaboration approach in contrast to locally focussed efforts. Or if the region focuses on a defense based economy or moves to a diversified economy? The Think Tank was conducted to create an awareness of plausible futures, which would then assist with the decision regarding the preferred future for the Middle Georgia region.

Prior to the Scenario-based Think Tank workshop, an Asset Mapping process was conducted in order to consider the natural, political, financial and built capital in the region. This provided context to the Think Tank workshop, but was predominantly carried out to provide an understanding of the region with regards to the wider initiative. It is cited in this report, as information from the Asset Mapping process was used within the Think Tank workshop.

This report will outline the Scenario-based process which was represented in the Think Tank workshop, with the results obtained from the process.



2.0 MIDDLE GEORGIA ASSET MAPPING

Prior to the Scenario-based Think Tank workshop, an Asset Mapping process was conducted in order to consider the natural, political, financial and built capital in the region. This involved identification of potential business targets and growth opportunities for the Middle Georgia region. It provided an examination into the potential for industry clusters in the region and the development of concepts for critical reuse and development of existing assets in the region.

The intention of the overall asset mapping activity was to create a positive dialogue around the capabilities and potential of a region's businesses, community organizations, and other non-profit organizations. The results of this analysis will allow the key stakeholders in the region to more effectively make collective decisions based on the total capacity of the region to respond to change.

The results from the Asset Mapping process will be produced in a separate short report.





The results from the stakeholder survey would help create the axis of the scenario matrix used in the Think Tank and guide the workshop discussions.

3.0 MIDDLE GEORGIA STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

Leading up to the Scenario-based Think Tank workshop, a stakeholder survey was conducted and participation was encouraged through the month of June. The survey aimed to explore the views from stakeholders in relation to their perceptions of the opportunities and threats facing the Middle Georgia region looking out over the next ten years. The survey also explored how important previously identified factors were seen by the survey respondents in the current climate of 2018 and then their importance, looking out to 2030. The respondents were requested to identify whether such factors and changes going forward from 2018 to 2030 would be positive or negative for the region. Finally, the respondents' views were explored on whether the region was prepared to adapt to these changes, and the best strategies to manage change. 134 responses were obtained from the survey.

The report will outline the compiled results from the survey in the following sections. However, further analysis of the stakeholder survey will be included in the Stakeholder Engagement Analysis report.

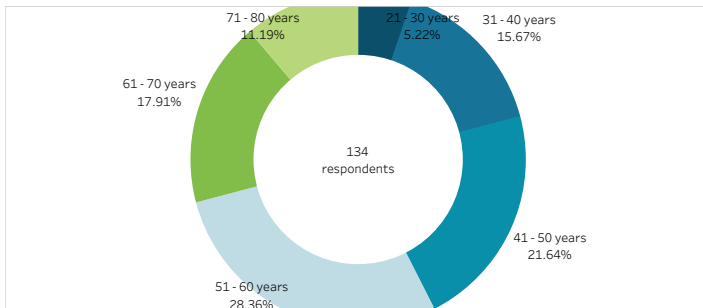


3.1 STAKEHOLDER PROFILE INFORMATION

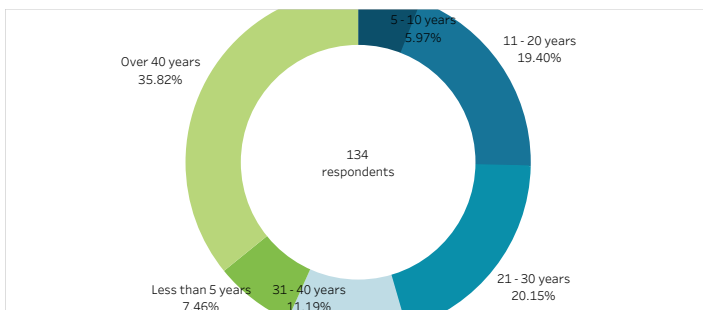
In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 41-60 years. Almost 80% of the respondents described themselves as White/Caucasian. 12% of the participants described themselves as Black/African American. The remainder of respondents preferred not to answer or were of other races.

The majority of the respondents represented the sectors of Economic Development and Education. The remaining sectors were not as strongly represented.

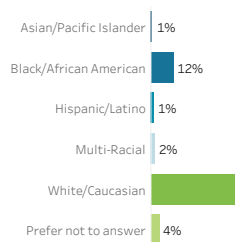
Age Distribution



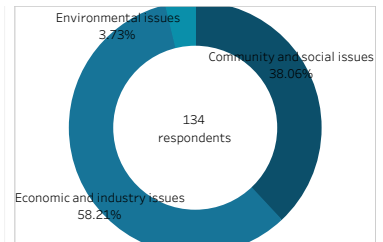
How Long You Live/Work in Middle Georgia Region?



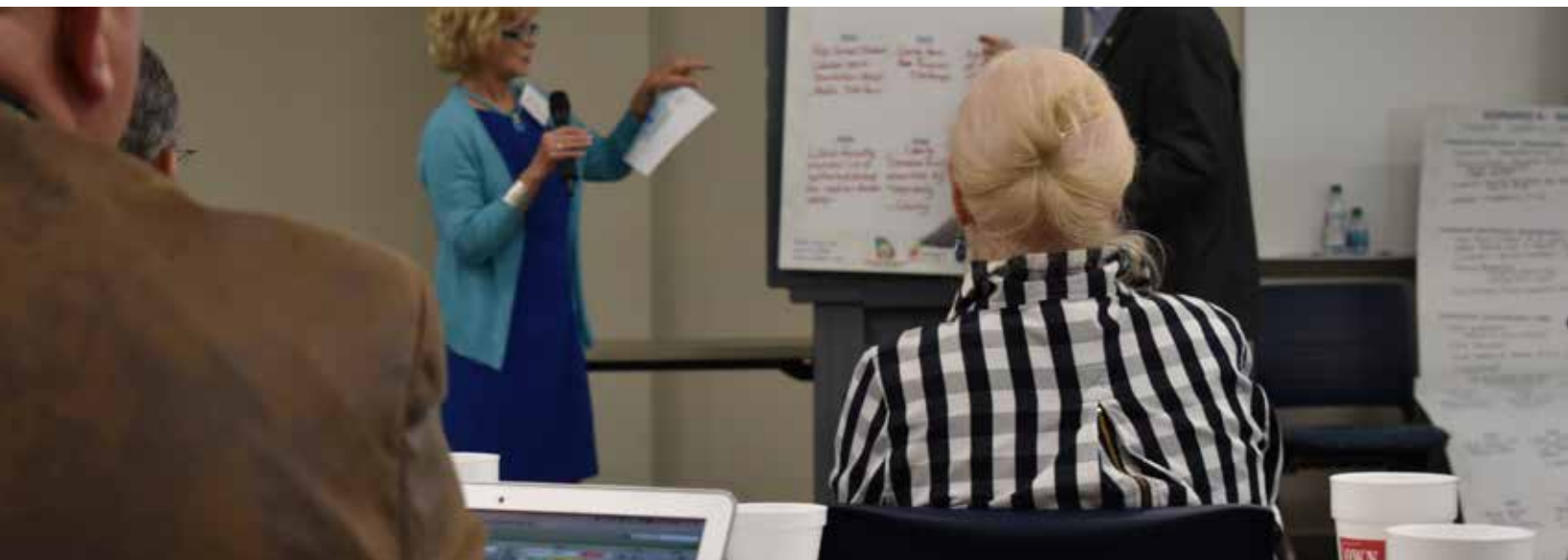
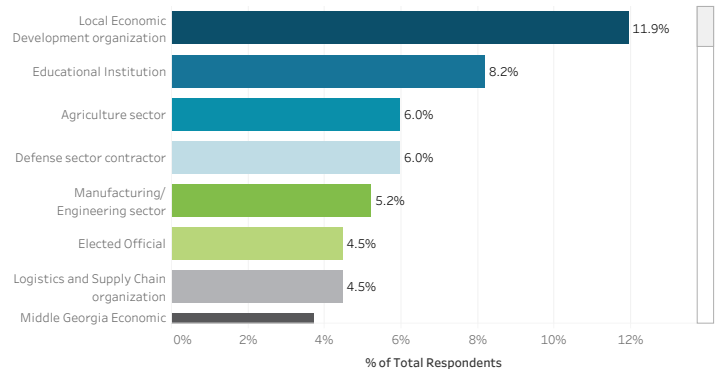
Describe Yourself



Most Interested In



Sector/Area You Represent

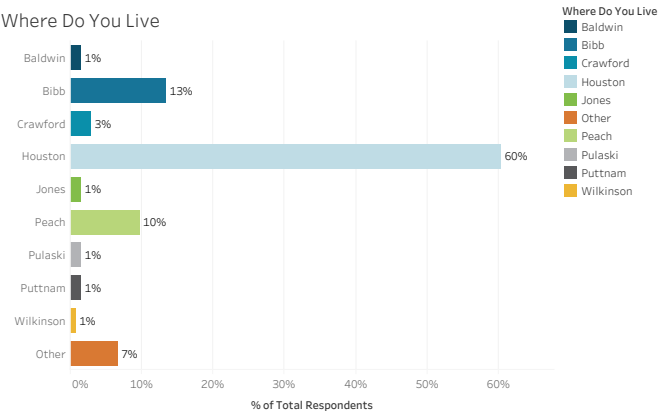


60% respondents lived in Houston county. This was a large majority, followed by 13% respondents living in Bibb county and then 10% living in Peach county. The remaining counties were not well represented.

Middle Georgia Region Map



Where Do You Live



3.2 OPEN-ENDED NARRATIVE RESPONSES

The community survey also included questions with open-ended narrative responses allowing for a closer exploration into respondent perspectives. Below are the categorized responses and word clouds summarizing those questions.

3.2.1 OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE MIDDLE GEORGIA REGION

The respondents were asked what they believed to be the biggest opportunities facing the Middle Georgia Region over the next 10 years.

What do you believe are the biggest opportunities facing the Middle Georgia Region over the next 10 years?

The following opportunities were cited by the respondents:

- New Business and Industry (19%)
- Economic Growth (16%)
- Job Creation (13%)
- Education (9%)
- Transportation (8%)
- Port Access (8%)
- Defense and Air Base (8%)
- Interstate Connection (7%)
- Sense of Identity (6%)
- Film Industry (6%)
- Tourism (6%)
- Innovation (5%)



KEY POINTS TO NOTE:

- The majority of respondents felt that new business and industry (19%) was the biggest opportunity facing the region over the next 10 years
- This was followed by economic growth (16%) and job creation (13%)

3.2.2 THREATS FACING THE MIDDLE GEORGIA REGION

The respondents were asked what they believed to be the biggest threats facing the Middle Georgia Region over the next 10 years.

What do you believe are the biggest threats facing the Middle Georgia Region over the next 10 years?

The following threats were cited by the respondents:

- Crime (24%)
- Workforce Issues (21%)
- Lack of Vision (14%)
- Leadership (11%)
- Infrastructure (9%)
- County Isolation (9%)
- Blighted Areas (8%)
- Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) (8%)
- Traffic Congestion (8%)
- Uncontrolled Development (8%)
- Lack of Collaboration (6%)
- Lack of Investment (6%)
- Education System (5%)
- Focus on Robins Air Force Base (5%)
- Lack of Housing (5%)
- Regulations (3%)
- Lack of Industry (2%)
- Loss of Aviation Industry (2%)



KEY POINTS TO NOTE

- The majority of respondents felt that crime (25%) was the biggest threat facing the region over the next 10 years
- This was followed by workforce issues (22%) and lack of vision (14%)

DataInsight



3.2.3 PROMISING EMERGING TRENDS – WORD CLOUD

Participants were asked what they found to be most promising or interesting about emerging trends facing the Middle Georgia Region over the next 10 years. This is displayed in the following word cloud.

What do you find most promising or interesting about emerging trends facing the Middle Georgia Region over the next 10 years?

Transportation Potential Future Leadership Business
 Farm Growing Energy Community
 Tech Schools Growth Green Spaces
 Development Workforce Jobs Beginning
 Increased Interstate Technical Needed Middle Georgia



KEY POINTS TO NOTE

- From analysis of the data, economic growth (14%) was seen as the most promising or interesting emerging trend
- This was followed by enhanced parks and recreation and downtown growth

DataInsight



3.2.4 CONCERNING EMERGING TRENDS – WORD CLOUD

Participants were asked what they found to be most concerning or threatening about emerging trends facing the Middle Georgia Region over the next 10 years. This is displayed in the following word cloud.

What do you find most concerning or threatening about emerging trends facing the Middle Georgia Region over the next 10 years?

Business and Industry Threatening Development Loss
 Training Government Workforce Life County
 RAFB Crime Corridors Growth Issues Skilled
 Meet Transportation Defense Increasing Bibb



KEY POINTS TO NOTE

- From analysis of the data, crime (25%) was seen as the most concerning or threatening emerging trend
- This was followed by workforce issues and over development

DataInsight



3.3 KEY FACTORS SHAPING THE FUTURE

A number of factors were highlighted as being key forces shaping the future of the Middle Georgia region. The following factors were identified through research carried out at the beginning of the overall Middle Georgia Charrette and Regional Planning Initiative.

- Automation and robotics in industry
- Proximity to Atlanta metropolis
- Location as a major logistics hub
- Economic and industry diversification
- Quality of regional transportation infrastructure
- Decline in mining and agriculture sectors
- Potential for tourism destination development
- Workforce and skills shortage
- Aging population
- Difficulty in youth attraction and retention
- Income disparity across region
- Collaboration between counties



3.3.1 IMPORTANCE OF FACTOR

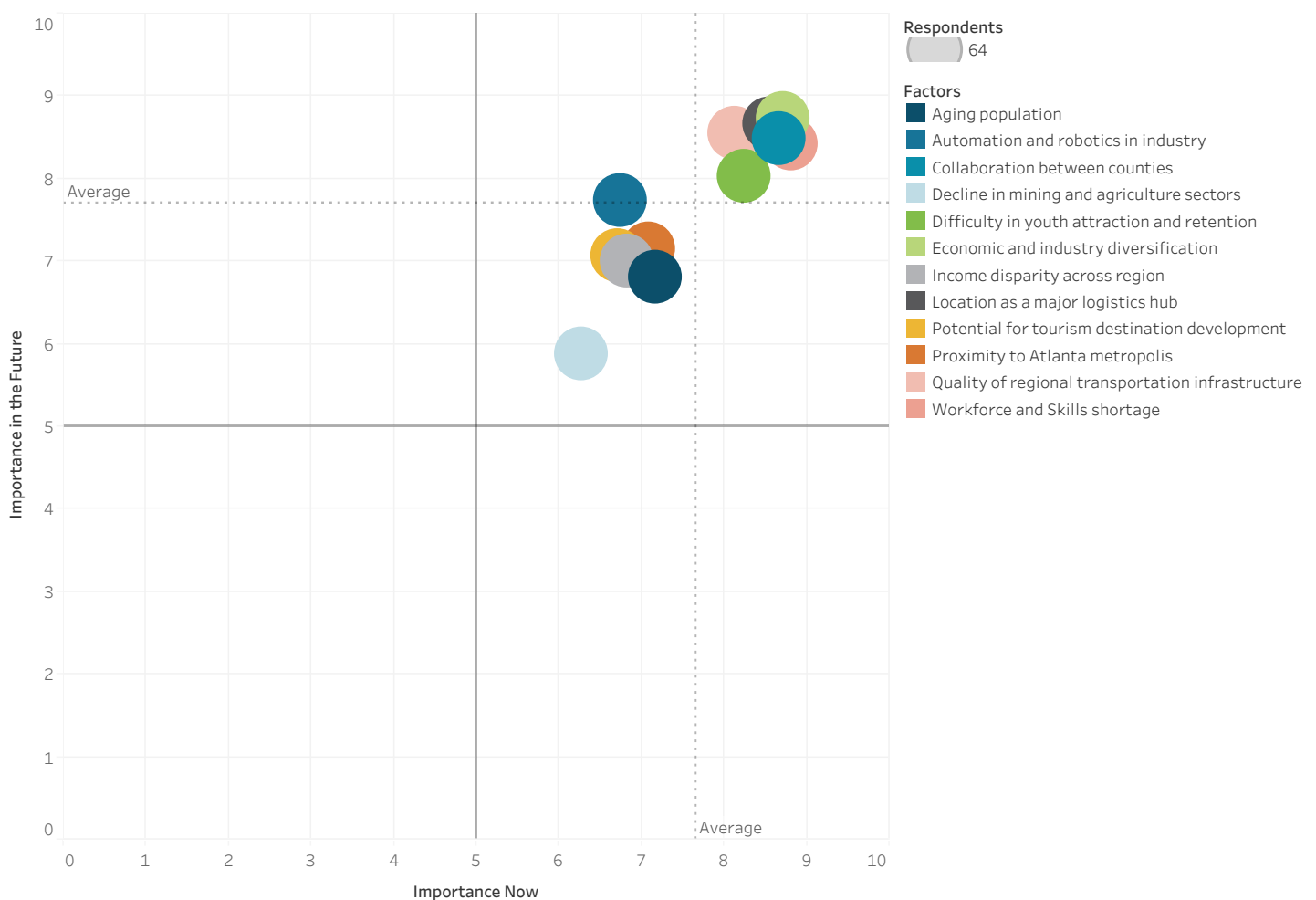
Respondents were asked how important each factor was to the Middle Georgia Region in 2018 and looking out to 2030

X Axis: How important do you think the following factors are to the Middle Georgia Region in 2018?

Y Axis: How important do you think the following factors are to the Middle Georgia Region in 2030?

Scale: 1= Not at all importance; 10 = Critically Important

Quadrant I - Average Points



KEY POINTS TO NOTE

- Workforce and Skills shortage was seen as the most important factor for the Middle Georgia region. This was followed closely by collaboration between counties and economic and industry diversification
- There was very little difference between the importance attached to factors in 2018 and 2030
- All factors are in the quadrant which is both highly important now and highly important in the future

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3.3.2 IMPACT OF FACTOR

Respondents were asked whether changes within each factor would be positive or negative for the Middle Georgia Region.

Do you think expected changes in each of these factors will be positive or negative for the Middle Georgia Region?

Scale: -5= Very negative; 0 = Neutral; +5 = Very positive



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KEY POINTS TO NOTE

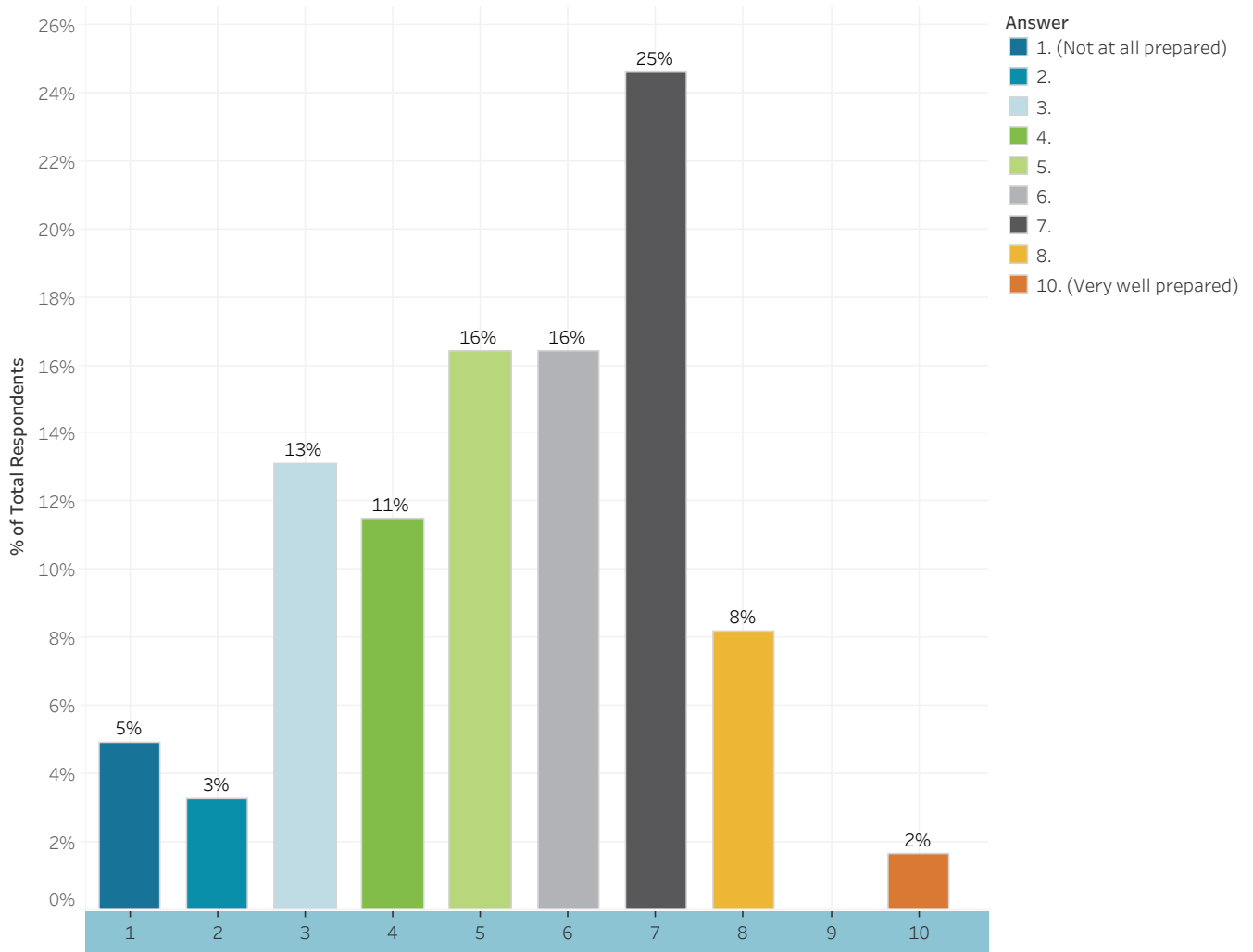
- Economic and industry diversification were seen as the most positive change for the Middle Georgia Region. This was followed by location as a major logistics hub and quality of the regional transportation infrastructure
- Workforce and skills shortage was seen as the most negative change for the Middle Georgia Region. This was followed by difficulty in youth attraction and retention
- Weighted average of all factors are neutral or positive. This points to an optimistic view of the future

3.3.3 PREPAREDNESS OF REGION

Respondents were asked how well prepared the region is to adapt to these changes.

How well prepared is the Middle Georgia Region to adapt to these changes?

Scale: 1= Not at all prepared; 10 = Very well prepared



KEY POINTS TO NOTE

- Only 2% of respondents felt that the Middle Georgia Region was very well prepared to adapt to these changes. 5% of respondents felt that the Middle Georgia Region was not at all prepared to adapt to these changes
- The majority of responses suggest that the region is moderately prepared to adapt to change
- This highlights potential vulnerability to unexpected changes and reinforces the value of the current planning process

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The Think Tank was conducted to create an awareness of plausible futures, which would then assist with the decision regarding the preferred future for the Middle Georgia region.

4.0 SCENARIO PLANNING

4.1 SCENARIO-BASED THINK TANK WORKSHOP

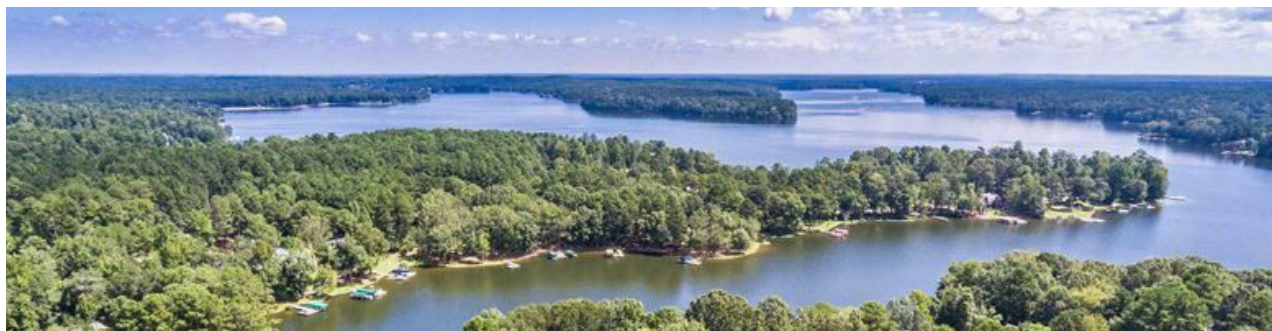
The scenario-based Think Tank workshop was conducted on June 15, 2018, and included representation from the Middle Georgia Economic Alliance (MGEA), Economic Development professionals, City Managers, Defense and Military, Educational Institutions, Mayors, Local Businesses and Community Groups. Approximately 80 people attended the full day workshop.

The workshop facilitated understanding of the future issues that would impact the Middle Georgia region. The Think Tank began with an in-depth presentation on future trends and global conditions, before moving on to conduct scenario planning for the Middle Georgia region. Future iQ's Scenario Planning process provides a methodology from which to explore plausible futures and considers the implications of various future scenarios. The process aimed to:

- Deepen the understanding and examination of how external events and local conditions could shape decision-making.
- Identify and understand the key influences, trends, and dynamics that will shape the Middle Georgia region over the next 10 years, looking out to 2030.
- Create and describe four plausible long-term scenarios for the Middle Georgia region
- Begin exploring alignment around a shared future vision.
- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of the community as perceived by the citizens.

The scenarios developed during this Scenario Planning process and outlined in this report are important in order to provide a framework to discuss future possible outcomes and implications for the region. Workshop deliberations can assist in identifying key actions for the Middle Georgia region and in identifying how various groups might effectively contribute to future developments. Participants were guided through the Scenario Planning process in order to develop four plausible scenarios for the future of the Middle Georgia region. The process involved an exploration and discussion of global, regional, and local trends and forces of change; development of a scenario matrix defining four plausible scenarios spaces for the future; and, the development of descriptive narratives of each scenario. The event concluded with discussion of the scenarios, selection of a preferred scenario and plausibility mapping, and an exploration into the strengths and weaknesses of the community via the Attributes of Successful Communities exercise.

4.2 THINK TANK AGENDA



Middle Georgia Economic Alliance Charrette and Regional Planning Future Think Tank Workshop

AGENDA

We are looking forward to your participation at the Middle Georgia Economic Alliance Charrette and Regional Planning Future Think Tank Workshop. This will be an engaging and interactive scenario planning workshop.

Date: Friday June 15th, 2018

Time: 9am to 3pm (Registration will be open from 8am)

Location: Roy H. "Sonny" Watson Health Science Building, Central Georgia Technical College, 80 Cohen Walker Drive, Warner Robins, GA

High Level Agenda:

8:00	Registration	12:30	Lunch
9:00	Welcome and Introduction	1:00	Scenario Presentations
9:15	Future Trends and Emergent Issues and connection to the Middle Georgia Region.	1:30	Implications Analysis
10:30	Break	1:45	Plausibility Mapping
10:45	Key Drivers and Scenario Matrix	2:00	Roadmap Strategy Development
11:00	Scenario Narrative Development – breakout groups	2:30	Prioritization exercise
		3:00	Finish

The Middle Georgia Economic Alliance Charrette and Regional Planning Initiative has been funded by the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment. The initiative will be run throughout 2018 and will result in an innovative strategic roadmap and regional Action Plan that will build economic resiliency in the Middle Georgia region into the future. For more details of the initiative <http://lab.future-iq.com/middle-georgia-economic-alliance/>

The Future Think-Tank Workshop is being facilitated by Future iQ, an international consultancy company specializing in future planning. This firm has been contracted by the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDECD) to design and facilitate the Middle Georgia Economic Alliance Charrette and Regional Planning initiative.

For further details please contact Angie Gheesling, Development Authority of Houston County
gheesling@houstoncountygga.net / 478-923-5470



4.3 A DEEP DIVE INTO THE FUTURE

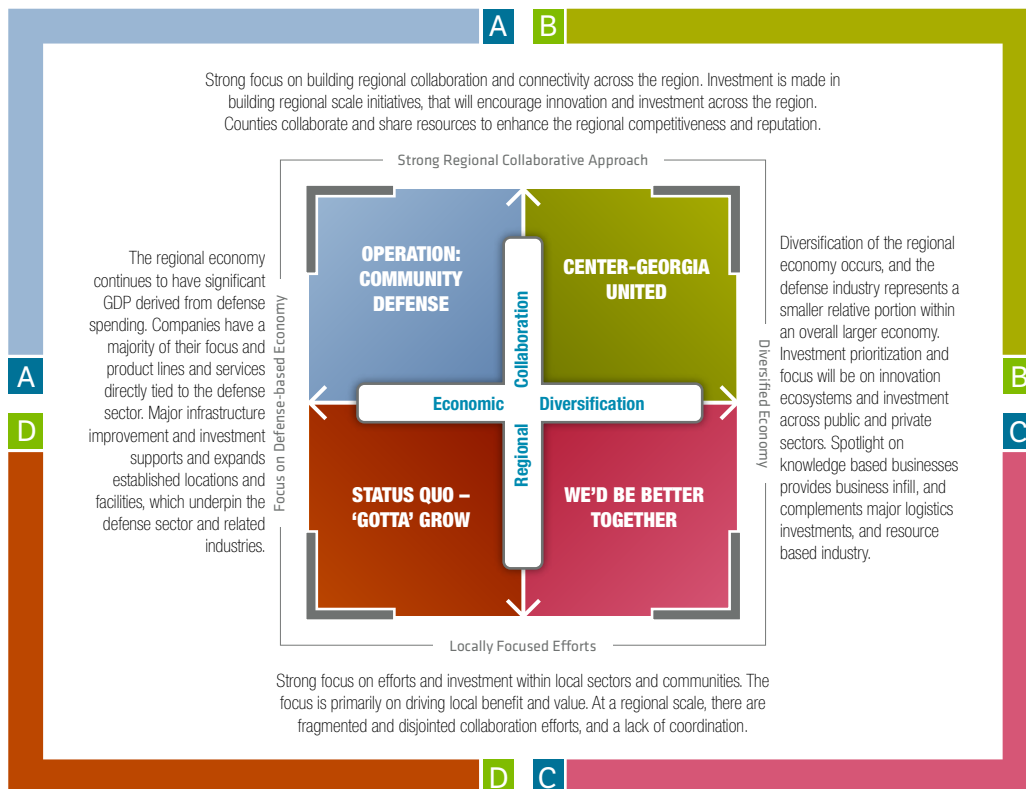
In order to create a context for the scenario planning that would be carried out during the workshop, future trends were presented at a global, regional and local level. Emergent issues and their connection to the future of the Middle Georgia region were discussed by the participants at both table level and at an overall group level, in a facilitated manner. These trends included:

- Demographics, population and urbanization
- Macro-economics and shifting power
- Cities of the Future
- Energy, food, water and climate change

4.4 DEVELOPING FOUR PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE

Workshop participants were presented with a scenario matrix, defined by two major axes entitled 'Economic Diversification' and 'Regional Collaboration'. Brief descriptions were also attached to the end points of each axes. While these end points do not necessarily represent two extremes on a linear continuum, they are distinct enough to suggest some degree of separation and a plausible range of outcomes between them. The four quadrants (scenario spaces) based on different combinations of the two cluster themes, were reviewed and discussed with the workshop participants. This discussion explored the description of the end points included in each scenario space, the possible interaction between these drivers, and how they formed the axes that defined the four scenario spaces.

Economic Diversification and Regional Collaboration were the two major axis used in the Scenario Matrix.



4.5 SCENARIO MATRIX – VIEWS OF THE FUTURE

Event participants were randomly allocated to one of four groups and asked to formulate a scenario for their respective quadrant. Each group was asked to describe characteristics of the following dimensions of Middle Georgia in 2030 under the conditions of the scenario quadrant that they had been given in terms of the triple-bottom line of social, economic and environmental characteristics.

Additionally, they were asked to devise major events or headlines of how the scenario occurred using the years 2020, 2025, and 2030 and to give their scenario a descriptive name. Once the scenarios had been developed, each group reported back, describing their scenario to the other workshop participants. Each group's notes for their scenario and the description were used to produce the detailed narrative for each scenario.

Exploring the four scenario spaces enabled the Middle Georgia Region stakeholders to really examine how the future could develop by 2030.

These four scenarios paint very different plausible futures for the Middle Georgia region. Narratives and descriptions of each scenario, as developed by the workshop participants, are included in the following section. Each scenario has its subsequent consequences and impacts on the Middle Georgia region – impacting the community, services, and organizational fabric in different ways. No one future is the 'perfect' future, as each comes with its attendant challenges and implications. The process, however, does provide a way to tease out the future scenarios and examine them from a speculative standpoint. They represent different possibilities for the future, and are not predictions.





5.0 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENARIOS

5.1 SCENARIO A – OPERATION: COMMUNITY DEFENSE – 2030

The Middle Georgia region has embraced and developed strong collaboration across the 11 counties. While still focusing on the existing defense-based economy, there has been diversification outside of Robins Air Force Base, with an appreciation that the region faces increased vulnerability if it is totally reliant on the defense-based economy. Consolidation has become important to the region, as business development centers work together in a collaborative manner. This has greatly assisted the entrepreneurs in the region, who are being supported by these centers but also innovation in Middle Georgia generally.

Major infrastructural improvement has taken place and investment has been made across the region. A strong regional transportation system is now in place across

Middle Georgia which links the 11 counties. This has removed the counties isolation from each other, as experienced in the past. It has also increased the regional competitiveness at a national level.

The region has become a safer place to live, as citizenship has been enhanced by security clearance. It is predominantly an ageing population and it is proving difficult to attract millennials and young families to the area. Attempts have been made to create a variety of affordable housing options in order to attract a younger cohort to live in the region.

There is a need to retain the youth in the region, and so technical skills have been marketed to parents as an alternative to college. This will assist the ageing demographics of the region, and provide a ready workforce. There has been a focus on STEM in schools at all levels in order to meet the workforce needs of the region in the future.





SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2030

Economic and Business

- Regional transportation in place
- Consolidated business development centers
- Supporting entrepreneurs and innovation
- Diversification outside Robins Air Force Base for resilience
- Increased vulnerability to D.C

Community and Societal

- STEM focus in schools at all levels
- Marketing of technical skills to parents as alternative to college
- Citizenship enhanced by security clearance reinforcing safe community
- Potential bifurcation relating to security clearance and workforce
- Strong parenting and family influence
- Strong traditional institutions (i.e. churches) and civic groups

Environment

- More conservative
- Difficult to attract millennials to the region
- Ageing population
- Creation of variety of housing options with amenities
- "Every Day in Middle Georgia is Air Force Appreciation Day"



OPERATION: COMMUNITY DEFENSE – HEADLINE NEWS

	2020	2025	2030
Economic and Business	<i>Mercer, FVSU, MGSU & GT partner to form defense focused innovation center</i>	<i>Mid Georgia region lands major defense software company</i>	<i>Mid Georgia becomes 'go-to' for defense industry</i>
Community and Societal	<i>Defense career pathway in ALL Mid Georgia school systems</i>	<i>Grant awarded to launch Mid Georgia wide transportation system T-SPLOST passes</i>	<i>Crime rate at all time low in Mid Georgia</i>
Environment	<i>Rigby's announces expansion</i>	<i>Cities working to attract millennials with housing options</i>	<i>Mid Georgia named Top 100 areas to retire</i>



5.2 SCENARIO B – CENTER-GEORGIA TOGETHER – 2030

The Middle Georgia region has adopted the need to really embrace a strong regional collaborative approach in order to build connectivity across the region. A single branding initiative for Middle Georgia has been launched, marketing the region as a 'Destination for Living'. As a result of collaborative efforts, there is an inclusive sense of community across the whole region rather than within each county.

The region has attracted new residents who wish to make Middle Georgia their home, and this has shifted the demographic weighting of a previously ageing population.

An autonomous transit system now exists, alongside a variety of housing and workspace options. With more green spaces and recreational opportunities, the region is becoming an increasingly desirable place to live.

Focus has shifted from reliance on the defense-based economy and it now represents a smaller relative portion within the overall larger economy. The economy has transitioned to a more diversified economy and investment has been made in innovation ecosystems and across the public/private sphere. Growth in new and existing industry has resulted in higher employment and the region as a whole has set a target for future economic growth. The work that was carried out over the past 10 years has resulted in a very different Middle Georgia and the region wants to build on this over the next 10 years.





SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2030

Economic and Business

- Collaboration movement towards transportation SPLOST
- Industry declares need for future economic growth
- Growth in new and existing industry aligns to meet global demands
- Creation of regional bio-mass innovation center
- Higher employment in high skill positions

Community and Societal

- Agreements between K-12, Tech and 4-year in region
- Autonomous transit system
- Consolidation of school districts
- Inclusive sense of community
- Single branding initiative for Middle Georgia as a 'Destination for Living'

Environment

- Transit infrastructure
- Choice of living space
- Choice of work space
- Energy diversity and storage
- Green spaces
- Regional water authority
- Cultural centers
- Trail system



CENTER-GEORGIA TOGETHER – HEADLINE NEWS

	2020	2025	2030
Economic and Business	<p>Career academies align with regional industry needs</p> <p>Industries sponsor new career academy programs</p> <p>Bio-innovation center conceptualized</p> <p>TSPLOST passes in region</p>	<p>RESAs making education funding equitable across state</p> <p>Region's universities now tied to targeted industry focus</p> <p>Bio-innovation center launches with university coalition</p>	<p>Sub-regional transportation alliance funds improvements – increases port, air and road access</p> <p>Bio-innovation center unites food processing and biomass efforts</p> <p>Population shifts – concentrating talent around industry hotbeds</p>
Community and Societal	<p>Regional branding initiatives targeted to address quality of life and explore educational excellence</p>	<p>Regional transportation alliance successfully implemented</p>	<p>Middle Georgia voted best for quality of life by desirablecommunities.com</p>
Environment	<p>Central Georgia develops plan to increase infra arteries and connect all of Middle Georgia's 'Gran Georgia' communities</p>	<p>Central Georgia's cultural center in Macon opens doors with a PL/GA concert. Sub-culture centers throughout Middle Georgia follow with various kick off activities.</p>	<p>Central Georgia Regional Water Authority wins landmark case against Athens Water Authority which allows them to blow up their dam.</p>



5.3 SCENARIO C – WE’D BE BETTER TOGETHER – 2030

The Middle Georgia region has recognized the need to diversify the economy and rely less on the defense-based economy. This has resulted in an I.T driven economy with a concentration on knowledge based businesses. There are clusters of such businesses in downtown areas and data centers, and an increase in research and knowledge based learning. A logistics hub at Savannah port has increased efficiency overall.

The counties within Middle Georgia are focused on their own efforts, and there is a continuing lack of regional collaboration and connectivity across the region. There are pockets of exponential growth, but this has resulted from each county driving local benefit and value. As a result of a lack of collaboration, there is a lack of regional funds and each county views itself as separate to the region as a whole. This has also led to competition within the region.

While some urban areas flourish, the isolation of each county exacerbates those with wealth and those living below the poverty line. This has an impact on poor educational levels, unemployment and increased crime and blighted areas across Middle Georgia.





SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2030

Economic and Business

- I.T. driven economy
- Clusters of knowledge in downtown areas and data centers
 - » Biotech/Healthcare
 - » Agriculture/Hydroponic
 - » Cyber security
 - » Software
- Logistics Hub at Savannah Port
- Increase in research and knowledge based learning

Community and Societal

- Small towns
 - » Each town has different strengths and resiliency
 - » Pockets of exponential growth
 - » Each town has different perspectives
- Lack of funds
- A need for local economic enticements

Environment

- Urban areas flourish
- 'Water Wars' with inefficient usage
- More local loyalty with greater community competitiveness
- Issues at a county level



HEADLINE NEWS - WE'D BE BETTER TOGETHER – 2030

	2020	2025	2030
Economic and Business	<i>Edge computing center purchases former Macon telegraph building</i>	<i>High school student develops next generation social media platform</i>	<i>Local faculty member wins national award for medical device design</i>
Community and Societal	<i>Macon-Bibb and Houston County announce new industry</i>	<i>County faces financial challenges</i>	<i>County dissolved – being absorbed by neighboring community</i>
Environment	<i>County lines dispute continues – water wars on horizon</i>	<i>Record number of new young voters elect new state of young leaders</i>	<i>Consolidation of counties to vote on Tuesday</i>



5.4 SCENARIO D – STATUS QUO - ‘GOTTA GROW’ - 2030

The region has retained its focus on the Defense-based economy and the regional economy’s GDP reliance on defense spending. There has been an increase in aerospace suppliers and engineers have moved to Middle Georgia from other countries to fulfil the needs of the regional economy. Reliance on the defense industry has led to job growth, predominantly within Robins Air Force Base (RAFB). In order to fulfill workforce needs at RAFB, there has been an increased focus on STEM in the education system and students are learning about aerospace opportunities earlier. There is an emphasis on obtaining skills that will match the needs of the base.

The region has remained focused at a local level and there is a lack of regional collaboration. Economic growth exists in counties nearer to the RAFB. There is an increasing challenge of an aging population as citizens retire, and less young families move the region. This has led to an increasing need for healthcare options for the elderly and a decline in the education system. For students who are not aiming to work at the RAFB, they have either moved out of the region or have become unemployed.

Robins AFB in Houston County is the economic center of Middle GA Region. The remaining 10 counties face high levels of unemployment, poverty and the associated social problems which face isolated communities. The rural populations are declining rapidly, and with fewer opportunities and amenities, there are increasing levels of crime and an increase in drug and alcohol addiction.





SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2030

Economic and Business

- Increase in veterans and retired citizens leads to increasing need for healthcare
- Middle class expansion
- Expansion in programs from colleges and universities
- Increased Aerospace suppliers
- Small business expansion

Community and Societal

- Increased focus on STEM
- Potential increase in ethnic and cultural groups
- More engineers from India
- Potentially higher incomes
- Changing education methods
- Students learning about aerospace opportunities early

Environment

- Decrease in rural population
- Fewer opportunities and less cultural amenities in rural communities



HEADLINE NEWS – STATUS QUO - ‘GOTTA GROW’ - 2030

	2020	2025	2030
Economic and Business	<i>Global Hawk mission established at RAFB – 500 new jobs</i>	<i>10 new companies and 2000 new jobs!</i>	<i>Department of Defense establishes center of excellence for Drone tech</i>
Community and Societal	<i>Population rising faster than national average</i>	<i>New missiles at AFB</i>	<i>100% High School graduation</i>
Environment	<i>I-75 transforms into industrial hub in Middle Georgia</i>	<i>Large retail center to be constructed in Middle Georgia</i>	<i>Rural Mid Georgia struggles with population moving to cities</i>

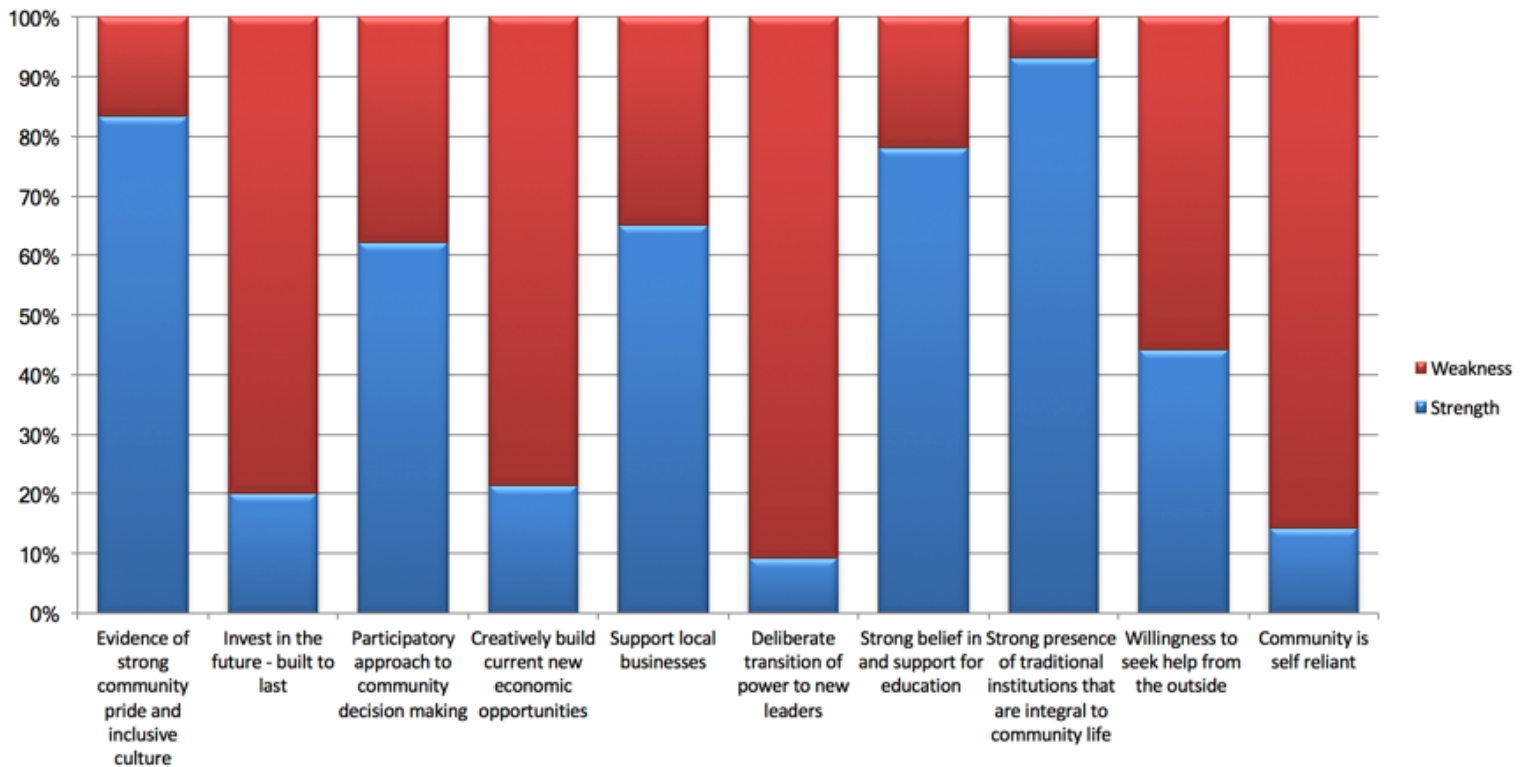


The Think Tank was conducted to create an awareness of plausible futures, which would then assist with the decision regarding the preferred future for the Middle Georgia region.

6.0 ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL COMMUNITIES EXERCISE

Having produced four plausible scenarios of the future, the participants engaged in the Attributes of Successful Regional Communities exercise. Participants individually evaluated the current status of the region based on the Ten Attributes of Successful Regional Communities..

Attributes for Successful Regional Communities – Middle Georgia – June 2018



KEY POINTS TO NOTE

- There is weakness in forward facing attributes such as deliberate transition of power to new leaders, investment in the future and creatively building new opportunities
- There is weakness in the perception that the region is self-reliant. This increases the need to build regional capacity.

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The four scenarios presented represent a range of plausible outcomes for the Middle Georgia region. An assessment was made by each participant of the plausibility of the four scenarios, through filling out a 100-cell matrix. This was essential in order to ascertain which scenario represented the expected and preferred future, looking out to 2030.

The expected future is the one deemed most likely to happen if there is no change in the current trajectory. The workshop participants indicated that Scenario D, Status Quo – ‘Gotta Grow’, is the scenario they believed most represented the current direction of the Middle Georgia region.

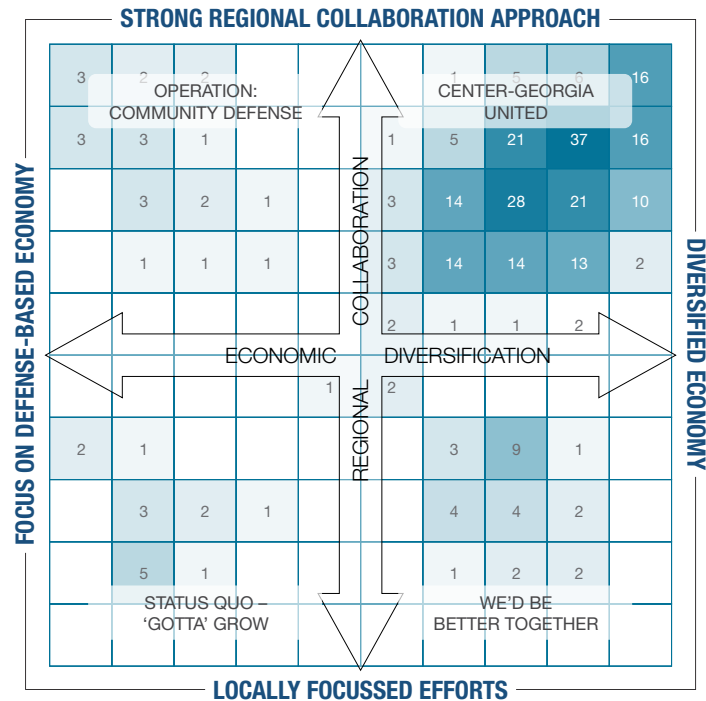


7.2 PREFERRED FUTURE: SCENARIO B: CENTER-GEORGIA UNITED

While each of the scenarios were viewed as plausible, Think Tank participants expressed a strong preference for one of the presented outcomes, Scenario B, Center – Georgia United. This was the scenario which focused on a diversified economy and strong regional collaboration.

MIDDLE GEORGIA CHARRETTE AND REGIONAL PLANNING HEAT MAPS

PREFERRED FUTURE – 2030



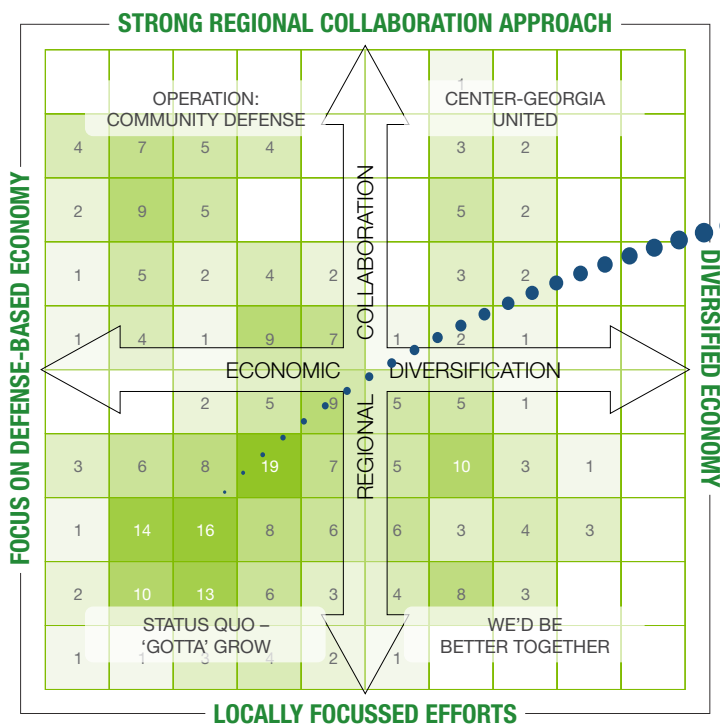
There is a very high level of consensus with concentration in Center-Georgia United. There is quite an ambitious appetite for change moving towards the continuum of a diversifying economy and strong regional collaboration. Given that there was representation and participation from different sectors, this is a strong mandate for collaborative action.

7.3 MOVING FROM THE EXPECTED TO THE PREFERRED

The challenge will be how to move from Scenario D, which is a future focused on the defense-based economy and local efforts to the collaborative and diversified Scenario B. This will be the work that the initiative will undertake throughout the duration of the overall Middle Georgia Charrette and Regional Planning initiative.

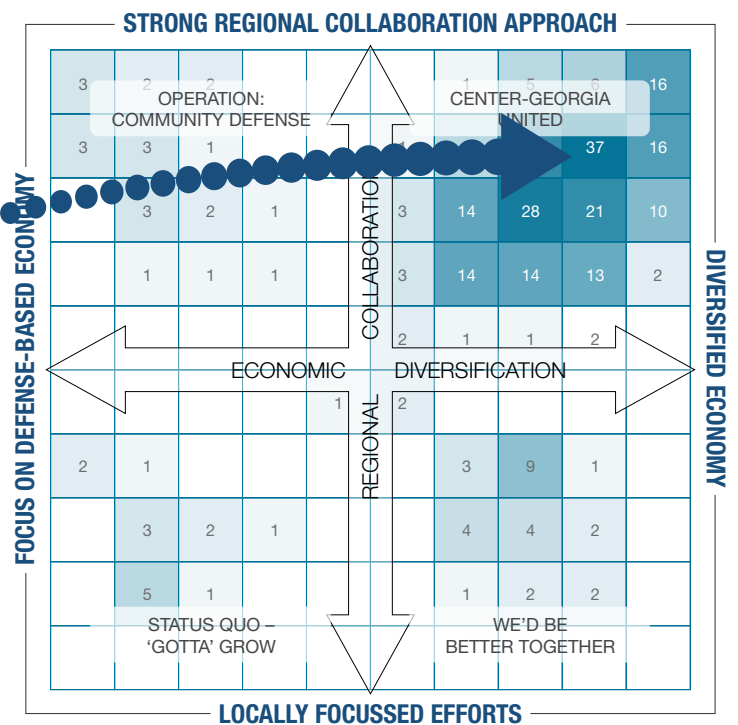
MIDDLE GEORGIA CHARRETTE AND REGIONAL PLANNING HEAT MAPS

EXPECTED FUTURE – 2030



MIDDLE GEORGIA CHARRETTE AND REGIONAL PLANNING HEAT MAPS

PREFERRED FUTURE – 2030



DataInsight

KEY THINGS TO NOTE

- There is a large gap between the Expected and Preferred futures, suggesting an opportunity for collaborative action.
- This will be a significant task for the region to build a diversified economy
- This planning process will help define this roadmap



8.0 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND PRIORITIZATION

Finally, the Think Tank participants developed a list of eight broad strategic priorities. These strategic priorities were defined as what the Middle Georgia Region needs to address as it moves from its 'Expected Future' (one that would eventuate if no change happens within the network) to its 'Preferred Future'.

Following the development of the list, participants were asked to prioritize each strategic priority over the next five years. This exercise aimed at understanding what Think Tank participants viewed as immediate priorities for the region as it moves towards its Preferred Future of 'Center-Georgia United.' Whilst this was a high-level process, it provided initial insights into key areas to be considered in the development of the Strategic Plan, with some information on sequencing priorities.

Building trust and goodwill among the elected and community leadership to forge collaboration was seen as the most important and urgent strategic priority, followed by a regional transportation plan.

Priority	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Regional Transportation Plan</i>	28	22	16	17	9
<i>Identify and attract complimentary industries to RAFB as a deliberate strategy</i>	11	8	5	8	4
<i>Build trust and goodwill among the elected and community leadership to forge collaboration</i>	32	19	17	11	8
<i>Merge regional planning and governmental activities and accountabilities</i>	14	17	8	5	7
<i>Build an innovation ecosystem</i>	21	12	9	5	5
<i>Leverage private funding to expedite public projects and identify funding</i>	17	11	6	8	5
<i>Strategy around leadership development</i>	26	16	12	7	4
<i>Understand regional asset portfolio and coordinated local action</i>	20	13	7	3	1

The priorities need to be implemented in the immediate future (2019) as there was less emphasis on each priority over the years 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

These results will be further explored through the region wide engagement sessions in August 2018.



9.0 NEXT STEPS

The results from the Think Tank will be taken out to the wider region through a series of regional Engagement Sessions in August 2018. This will include broad and extensive engagement with the citizens across the region. The sessions will include:

- Introduction to the Middle Georgia Charrette and Regional Planning project
- Outline and discussion of key issues, trends and economic drivers of the region
- Outline of the scenarios developed by the Think Tank group
- Discussion about potential implications and impacts of each scenario on the target workshop groups or stakeholders
- Completion of detailed input survey

The results from the Engagement survey will be collected and presented on the initiative's interactive data visualization platform. Social network mapping will be conducted post Engagement sessions, in order to assist the regional stakeholders to identify all of the critical entities and individuals that are part of the regional ecosystem. The Stakeholder Identification and Analysis report will be produced to convey the results of the engagement process and social network mapping to date. All engagement information will be compiled to provide a detailed analysis of the project's stakeholder views and desires for the future. This will include identification of region-specific short term and long term goals and priorities for regional development.

All collected research and information will be synthesized to generate multiple planning options in an initiative and priority project matrix. These multiple initiatives and priorities will provide the basis for recommendations for the final preferred Middle Georgia Regional Plan for Action. Utilizing all gathered data, reports and charrette input, a preferred Plan for Action will then be developed. The plan will identify quarterly milestones and outcomes for at least two years after plan implementation begins.

The Think Tank workshop group will be invited to reconvene in early November 2018. At this second workshop, all participants will review the draft Plan for Action and provide input. This workshop will allow stakeholders to review the compiled input and validate the final findings and plan for the region.

Finally, all information and input will be compiled into a final draft of the Plan for Action for review by the Georgia Department of Economic Development and supporting agencies.



10.0 ABOUT FUTURE IQ

Future iQ specializes in the development and application of scenario planning; network analysis, industry and regional analysis, and community engagement and capacity building. Future iQ applies innovative tools and approaches to assist organizations, regions and industries shape their economic and community futures. With over a decade of business experience, the company has grown to have a global clientele spanning three continents.

To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects visit www.future-iq.com or by email at info@future-iq.com

Report and Scenario Planning workshop prepared by:



DAVID BEURLE, CEO, FUTURE IQ

As CEO of Future iQ, David specializes in creating future planning approaches for the use in regional, community and organizational settings. David has worked in the field of organizational and regional economic and community planning for over 20 years. His work in community and economic development has earned his work international, national and state awards.



CELINE BEURLE, COO, FUTURE IQ

With an academic background in Sociology and Philosophy, Celine is passionate about understanding society and this has led to her ongoing interest in pursuing societal change. She has drawn upon her research background, to write policy and scientific papers. Drawing upon her life long passion to instigate change, Celine has led many major projects and initiatives within her career, and is passionate about helping to create powerful and effective future strategies for communities and organisations.



11.0 FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Middle Georgia Charrette and Regional Planning initiative, please contact:

Angie Gheesling, Project Lead

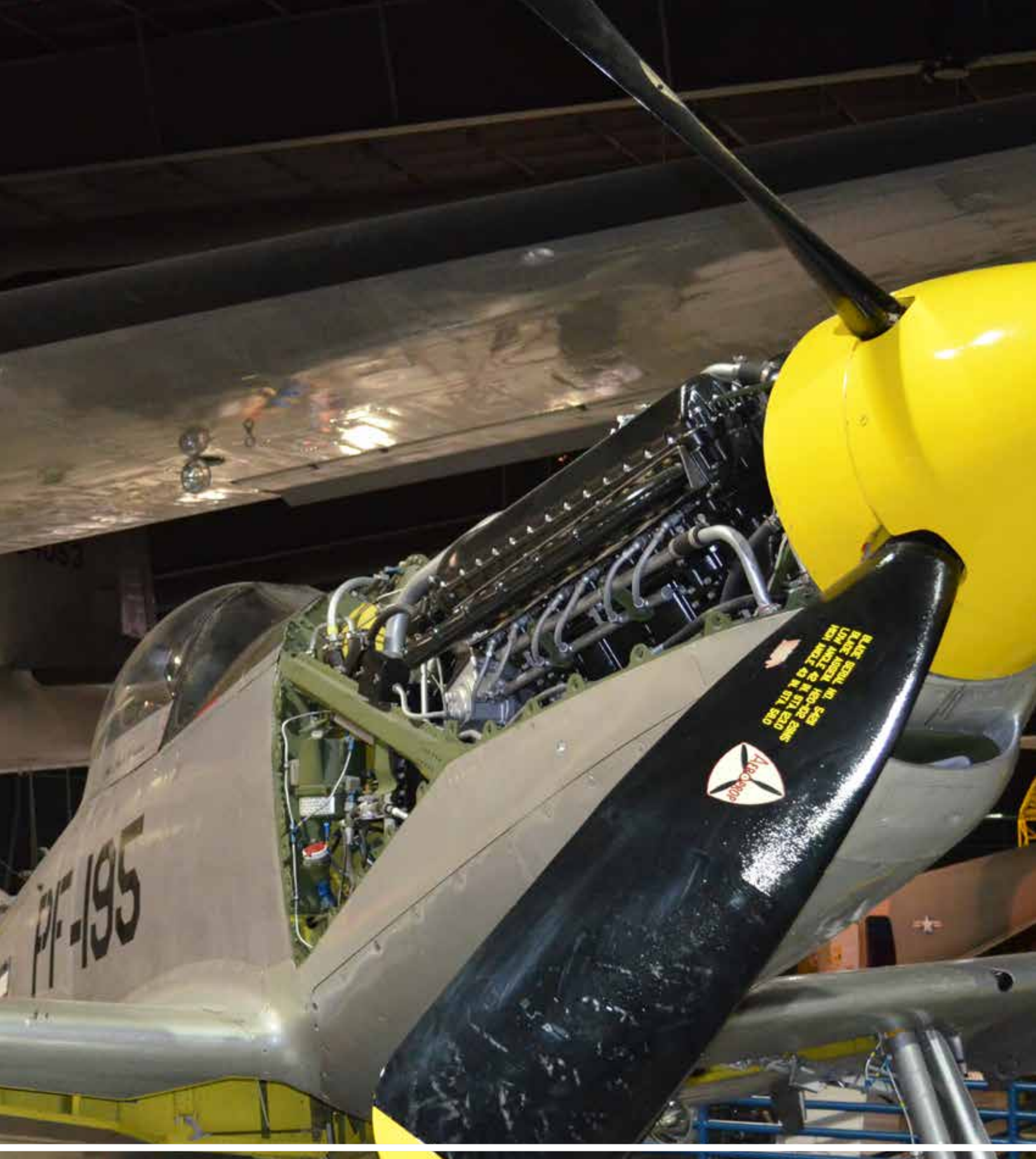
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