

Case Study Interview Guide

This interview guide is particularly directed toward students who are writing a case study as part of a class. However, local officials and practitioners may find the questions useful to clarify or confirm case study details with local contacts such as town managers and planning directors.

Preparing for the Interview:

- Before reaching out to individual contacts for interviews, conduct a search for relevant local news articles related to the strategy and developments that may have happened. Review in detail to familiarize yourself with the concepts, strategies and events that you will discuss.
- Review the interview questions below and add additional questions relevant to the case and what you've learned from your research.
- Send the interview contact a link to Homegrown Tools with a brief description of the website. Make sure to introduce yourself!

Interview – Project Introduction:

At the beginning of your interview, introduce yourself and give the interviewee the following context:

- *Homegrown Tools tells stories of community-led economic development. The tool connects public officials, practitioners, and researchers to successful strategies and lessons learned, and inspires communities to leverage their unique assets. Homegrown Tools is managed by NCGrowth, an EDA University Center at UNC Chapel Hill, in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, the UNC School of Government, the NC Rural Center, and the UNC Department of City and Regional Planning.*
- *This interview is for a case study of your community's economic development strategy to add to the tool's growing database. We would like to add the story of your town to this website so that others can learn from the work of you and other community members, so they can be inspired to also work towards similar successes in their own communities. Thank you for taking the time to share your story!*

Sample Interview Questions:

1. What is your role in your community?
2. Can you give me a brief history of your community?

3. What is particularly unique about your community?
Probe: Assets your town has, such as being a retirement destination or having a strong cultural heritage.
4. What are the three most urgent economic challenges your community needs to address (e.g., population loss, empty storefronts)?
5. Tell me about your community's most successful economic development strategy, implemented within the last 5 years.
 - a. What specifically was done to implement the strategy, step by step?
 - b. Who were the community partners for the project?
 - c. How was the project funded?
6. Why is the strategy is working? Is there anything you would do differently if you could do it over again?
7. What are some outcomes that can be attributed to this strategy? (for example, new businesses, more visitors, increase in tax base, lower unemployment rates, improved resident satisfaction or engagement)
8. What advice would you give to practitioners around the country hoping to implement this strategy?
9. Are there other people in the community that are knowledgeable about this effort that I should talk to?
10. Collect and record contact information for key contacts responsible for implementing the town's economic development strategy.

For smaller towns, confirm demographic details, especially population size, with the interviewee.