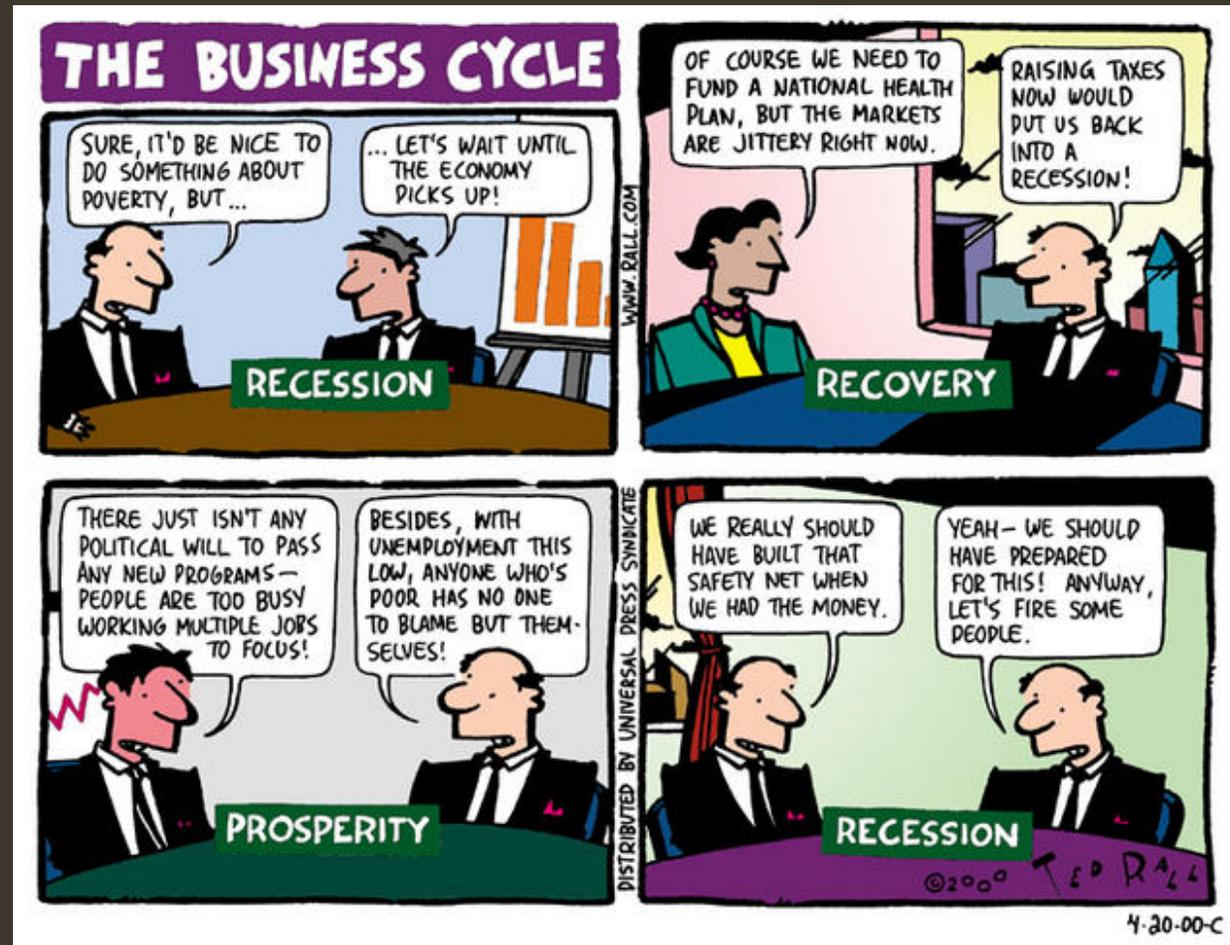


Nancey Green Leigh, PhD, FAICP  
Professor of City & Regional Planning  
Economic Development Specialization Advisor  
Associate Dean for Research -- College of Design



# What's the point of economic development planning?



## TED versus SLED

- TED – Traditional Economic Development
- SLED – Sustainable Local Economic Development
- TED long defined as:
  - Wealth creation
  - Job creation often singled out, particularly in political circles
  - A View that:  
$$\text{Economic Growth} = \text{Economic Development}$$

# Traditional Economic Development Has Given Us

- Global Weirding\*
  - Carbon emissions → rising temperatures
    - More extremes in temperature, rainfall, violent storms
    - Devastating impacts for national and local economies.
  - Sprawl – wasteful use of natural resources & inefficient built environment.
  - Disproportionate low wage workforce
  - Growing Inequality

\* Thomas Friedman's term

# Low wage work creates economic vulnerability

- Recent data *Pre-Covid* (Nov. 2019):
  - 53 million Americans, or 44% of workers 18-64 years old, are low-wage.
  - Low wage group's median hourly wages are \$10.22; their median annual earnings are \$18,000\*
  - Low-wage workers make up the highest share of the workforce in smaller places in the South and West

\*<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2019/11/21/low-wage-work-is-more-pervasive-than-you-think-and-there-arent-enough-good-jobs-to-go-around/>

# Defining Economic *Development*

- More than economic growth/job and wealth creation
- Process that:
  - *Increases quality of life & living standards*
  - *Decreases inequality*
  - *Promotes sustainability*

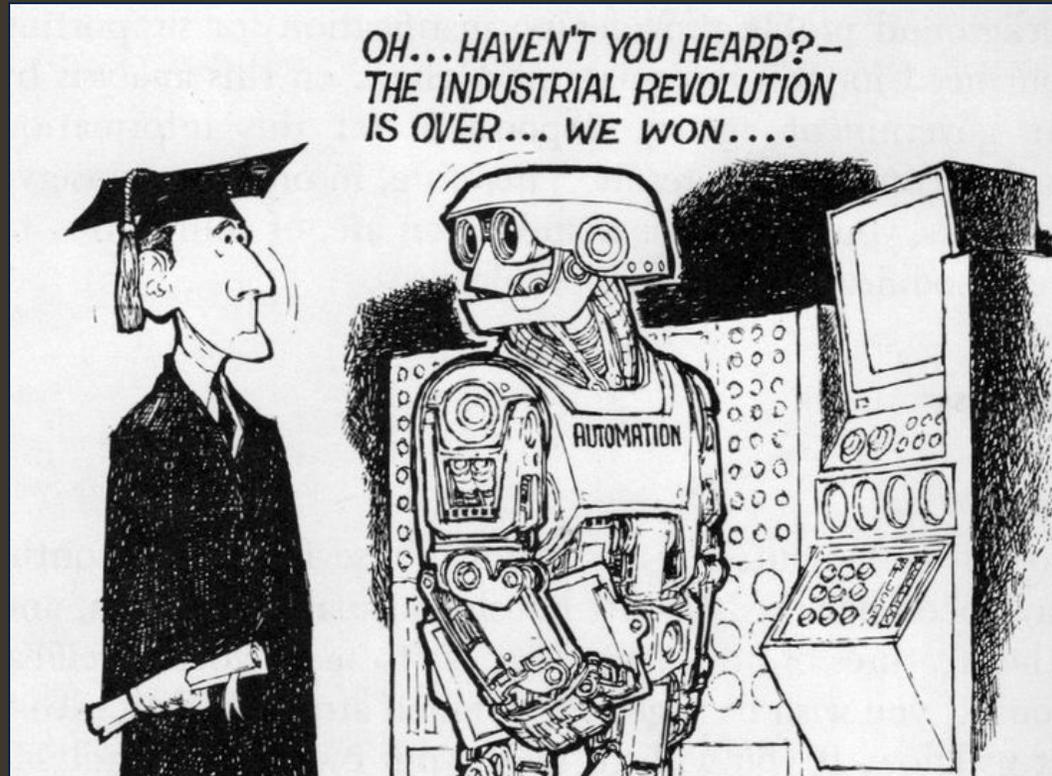
# Three Principles for Sustainable Local Economic Development

1. Establish minimum standard of living for all that increases over time.
2. Reduce inequality between:
  - demographic groups (age, gender, race and ethnicity)
  - Spatially-defined groups ( indigenous populations versus in-migrants, or, old timers versus new comers, urban & rural, central city & suburb)
3. Promote & develop sustainable resource use & production

# Critical need to understand structural changes to...

- Industry and jobs
  - Robots figure prominently in the future jobs debate.
  - Diffusion Question: How many robots are in use and where are they?
  - What will be the regional and economic impacts of robots on workers, firms, and industry?
- Our survey of robot adoption in manufacturing:  
[https://planning.gatech.edu/gatech\\_survey\\_mfg\\_tech/](https://planning.gatech.edu/gatech_survey_mfg_tech/)
  - Demand for robotic-related skills is increasing over time
  - One percent increase in job postings demanding robot skills in 2010 predicted approximately 2% growth in manufacturing employment (largely advanced manufacturing).
  - Difficulty in finding and keep workers in low-wage manufacturing is expected to increase adoption of labor-replacing robots as the robots become increasingly affordable and easier to operate. High relevance for Douglas.

# Structural Change



CARTOONSTOCK.com  
WILDT

Search ID: cwln6464

"At least you were replaced with a 2 ton industrial robot. I was replaced with an app."

## For Sustainable Local Economic Development Planning...

- Communities need to understand how global trends and problems can affect their locality, firms and demographic groups
- Conduct resiliency planning that creates community, business and citizen capacity to respond to environmental, economic and social change
- Integrate workforce development with local economic development to respond to structural industry changes

# Douglas Economic Development Research

- 3 GT Interns, Sarah Dyott, Ian Fraser, and Nijah James
- Created a comprehensive profile of the City of Douglas
  - Interviewed community leaders for insight into City's resources
  - Researched city history, industry, employment, housing, community amenities and population characteristics
  - Provided recommendations for next steps and strategies

# Strategies and Next Steps

- Utilize planned housing study to initiate improvements in city's housing stock
  - Determine if sufficient market exists for professional workforce housing
  - Determine best location for professional workforce housing
  - Review status of manufactured housing
- Risk management of manufactured housing
  - Explore site risks and the need for resiliency plans
  - Incentivize updating any existing "legal nonconforming uses" to current code standards
  - Ensure homes are properly installed and anchored
- Explore possibility of using 2015 Enterprise Zone for housing or retail expansion

# Strategies and Next Steps

- More recreational programs for residents of different interests and ages
  - Ex: Rock Climbing, Cooking Classes, Fitness Classes, Drama Club, etc....
- Add sights to attract more visitors to recreational areas
  - Ex: Community Gardens, Murals, Farmers Markets, Food Trucks, etc....
- Student retention strategies to achieve greater H.S. graduation rates
  - Ex: Southwire's 12 for Life program
- Strengthen connection between high schools & local colleges to increase students' knowledge of career opportunities

# Strategies and Next Steps

- Capitalize on commuter in-flow
  - Keep workers, whether from Coffee County or elsewhere, within city limits
  - Explore the idea of city-county consolidation
- Prioritize skilled jobs and workers
  - Continue to pursue "bring them home" strategy, but think outside the box as well
- Focus on increasing racial equality & equity so the Douglas can reach its full potential

# Appendix

“Douglas still struggles with issues of racial inequality and inequity. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 estimates, 50.8 percent of the city's residents are Black, but just 493 of the 1,624 businesses in the city limits were owned by minorities. According to the 2018 American Community Survey estimates, the average household income in the Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) in which Douglas is located was \$23,290 for Black households; for white households, it was \$62,692.87.”\* That is, Black household income is 63% lower than White household.

*\*Economic Development in Douglas: Past & Future, p. 10*