



# CITY OF KENT. OHIO

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

*OCTOBER 2005*

#### **GENERAL PARAMETERS**

- Promote community economic development.
- Promote Sustainable Development principals as defined in the Bicentennial Plan.
- Focus on the redevelopment/creative re-use of existing facilities.
- Consider environmental factors in each development project.
- Be fair and consistent to existing corporate residents.
- Promote social equity and economic diversity.
- Balance growth trends between industrial, commercial and residential land uses.
- Create a GIS based data system to facilitate community economic development.

#### **GOAL 1 - To maintain the existing components of the City's current industrial base.**

- A. Continue to lead a systematic, coordinated, information gathering Industrial/Manufacturing Retention and Expansion (Ambassador Visits) program in cooperation with the Kent Area Chamber of Commerce, with goal of meeting with each industrial company once every two years;
- B. Develop a quarterly or semi-annual Industrial/Manufacturing/Research Roundtable to provide private sector input as to how to best serve the needs of this particular community;
- C. Facilitate the expansion of industrial/manufacturing/research companies currently located within the City of Kent:
  1. Use of existing Economic Development incentive programs (RLF, CRA, Enterprise Zone, Job Creation Tax Credit, TIF);
  2. Assistance in locating alternative sites within the City, or JEDD areas for their expansion if the present site is unsuitable;
- D. Assist with succession planning to keep/protect local investment (ESOP).

#### **GOAL 2 - To expand the amount of developable, industrially zoned property available for Industrial/Manufacturing uses.**

- A. Efficient utilization of existing resources:
  1. Identify and map currently unused, or under utilized, industrially zoned properties in the City of Kent that are suitable for industrial, manufacturing and/or research and development;
  2. Partner with the owners of unused, or under utilized, industrially zoned properties to develop these assets;
  3. Create a GIS based listing of these properties to facilitate the expansion of companies currently located in the City of Kent and recruiting companies based on SIC code clustering strategies;
  4. Extension of City utilities to proposed expansion site;

5. Continue the modernization of the City's zoning regulations to facilitate the expansion of existing, nonconforming, industrial land uses;
  6. Facilitate the purchase nonconforming land uses (residential and commercial) currently located in industrially zoned area of the City with the intent to resell them to industrial, manufacturing and/or research clients;
  7. Aggressively pursue the reuse of brownfield sites in the City via assistance with the Ohio Department of Development Brownfield Program and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.
- B. Expansion of useable, industrial development sites:
1. Promote the rezoning of Carter Lumber Property, where requested or appropriate, from residential to industrial uses;
  2. Support the industrial/manufacturing/research development in the Franklin and Brimfield Township JEDDs in the area.

**GOAL 3 - Develop an effective, realistic Economic Development program, including a GIS based marketing and information system.**

- A. Create a joint marketing brochure with Kent State University and Chamber of Commerce;
- B. Create a City of Kent Economic Development Website and update on a monthly or quarterly basis:
  1. Create a GIS data-base of available industrially zoned and commercially zoned properties;
  2. Provide links to local, county, regional and federal economic development sites;
  3. Provide an on-line source of permitting information and forms, financial incentive program applications and other pertinent information, integrated with the GIS system;
- C. Target industries that will complement the existing economic structure through:
  1. Data base analysis of existing industries;
  2. Interview of existing corporate residents;
  3. Inter-industry linkage analysis;
  4. Coordination with Kent State University's Technology Transfer efforts;
  5. Participation with Regional Economic Development Information Service (REDIS) and NEOTech;
  6. Identify specific companies within the targeted list of industries on which the City's attraction efforts should be focused;

**GOAL 4 - Promote commercial development**

- A. Facilitate the redevelopment of the Central Business District (CBD):
  1. Complete the redevelopment of the West River Neighborhood area;
  2. Facilitate the development of a hotel/conference center project per the Bicentennial Plan;
  3. Facilitate mixed development in the CBD;
  4. Coordinate the existing parking conditions, and plan for future parking demand in the CBD;
  5. Facilitate the creation of a downtown merchants organization in cooperation with Kent Area Chamber of Commerce;

6. Facilitate the development of a University based outreach program designed to bring faculty, staff and students downtown per the Bicentennial Plan;
- B. Identify and target commercially zoned, underutilized properties in the City for redevelopment;
- C. Develop a program to facilitate the conversion of residential to commercial uses those areas of the City that are presently zoned commercial along State Routes while retaining a residential character;
- D. Facilitate the development of the proposed Mixed-Use Village or Office/Research Park as illustrated in the Bicentennial Plan.

**GOAL 5 - Business creation**

- A. Provide assistance as requested for the development of the Kent Regional Business Alliance Technology and Entrepreneurship Center Facilitate the creation of student owned businesses;
- B. Facilitate the creation of home occupation start-up companies;
- C. Coordinate with the University's Technology Transfer Program;
- D. Continue to support the East Summit Street Incubator and retain businesses in Kent and/or City of Kent JEDDs.

**GOAL 6 - Business Assistance Programs**

- A. Assist businesses in applying the new Storm Water Adjustment Policy through modified zoning provisions;
- B. Facilitate the provision of fiber optic and wireless infrastructure systems to promote the creation of the next generation of business creation;
- C. Continue to monitor and improve the One-Stop-Shop-Permitting process;
- D. Development of programs designed to assist in the redevelopment/reuse of abandoned, "big box" facilities in the City.