



CITY OF BELPRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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1 | Executive Summary

Overview

No single definition incorporates all of the different aspects of economic development. Typically, economic development can be described in terms of objectives. These are most commonly described as the creation of jobs and wealth and the improvement of quality of life. Economic development can also be described as a process that influences growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the economic well-being of a community. In the broadest sense, economic development encompasses three major areas:

- ▶ Policies that government undertakes to meet broad economic objectives including inflation control, high employment, and sustainable growth.
- ▶ Policies and programs to provide services including building highways, managing parks, and providing medical access to the disadvantaged.
- ▶ Policies and programs explicitly directed at improving the business climate through specific efforts such as business finance, marketing, neighborhood development, business retention and expansion, technology transfer, real estate development, and others.

The main goal of economic development is improving the economic well-being of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life. As there is no single definition for economic development, there is no single strategy, policy, or program for achieving successful economic development. Communities differ in their geographic and political strengths and challenges. Each community, therefore, will have a unique set of approaches for economic development.

Previous Planning Efforts

The City of Belpre and Washington County have completed several planning efforts prior to the undertaking of this Economic Development Strategy. These plans include the Washington County Comprehensive Plan (2004), as well as the City of Belpre Economic Development Strategic Plan developed by the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University (2017).

Planning Process

In Fall of 2019, the City of Belpre set out to develop an Economic Development Strategy that would evaluate the City's potential for business. They brought on Burton Planning Services (BPS) to assist with this effort. The planning process included a review of existing

documents related to economic development in the City, as well as a thorough existing conditions assessment (**Chapter 2**).

Stakeholder input was critical for the creation of this Economic Development Strategy. In coordination with City staff, BPS facilitated an economic development exercise and stakeholder interviews to introduce key economic development techniques that could potentially be implemented in Belpre. Stakeholder interviews also revealed the strengths and opportunities for business and economic development in the City. More details on stakeholder involvement can be found in **Appendix A**.

Following these key opportunities for stakeholder participation, the Project Team utilized the input obtained to develop a list of strategies (**Chapter 4**). Each strategy has an associated list of targeted actions that can be implemented to achieve the strategy. These strategies and actions, along with associated implementation details, are included into an Action Plan Matrix that can be used by the City as a reference for years to come.

COVID-19 Impacts on the Planning Process

In early 2020, the world was impacted by COVID-19. Like the Great Depression and WWII, the COVID-19 pandemic will alter how we think about the economy and public policy in the everyday vernacular by which people talk about their livelihoods and futures.

The rapidly changing and unpredictable situation, with no clear timeline, shut down the economy. The State of Ohio and local municipalities have seen drastic reductions in revenue. Many local companies were forced to close, and employees suffered layoffs. Although some employees were fortunate to work from home, some jobs cannot be done remotely and/or high-speed internet and telework resources are not available.

When the City of Belpre began the process to create the Economic Development Strategy, the world looked different than it does today. This Strategy utilizes traditional economic development processes as well as new, innovative ways only known to us because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the forced need to look at the way businesses is done post-pandemic.

2 | Existing Conditions

2.1 Introduction

The following section details the existing conditions for the City of Belpre related to population and demographics, including population trends, aging trends, disability status, educational attainment, family householder characteristics, and employment. This

chapter also describes existing infrastructure related to water and sewer, fiber and internet, the existing road and rail networks, water resources, and natural gas. This chapter concludes with a section defining various terms and concepts related to economic development.

2.2 Demographics

Introduction

The Demographics section of this report outlines the growth and aging trends of people living in the City of Belpre. It also describes persons with disabilities who are present in the City, as well as the levels of education attained by residents of the City compared with Washington County and the State of Ohio. This section explains family household and employment characteristics.

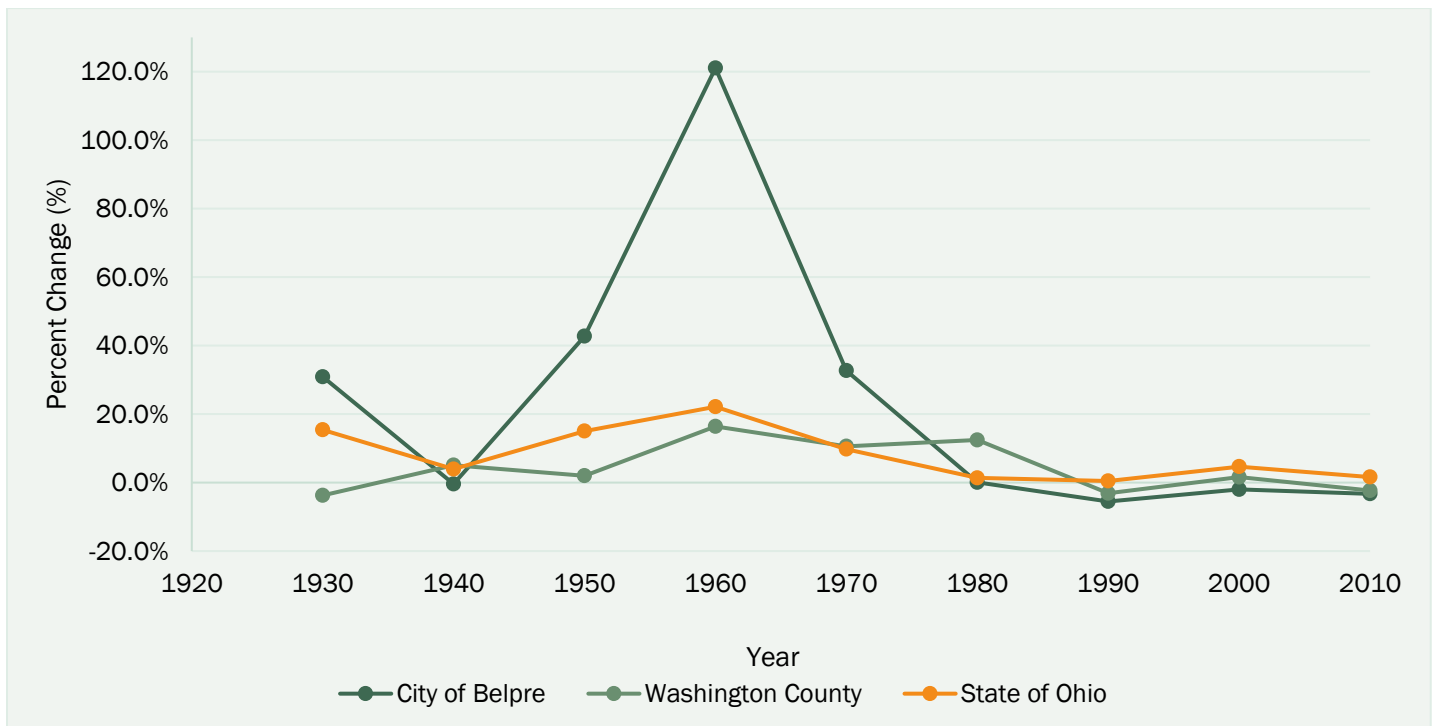
Population Trends

The City of Belpre's population has seen continuous decline since the 1980 Census, with a current annual rate of decline of -0.27 percent. In 1980, the City of Belpre saw a record population of 7,193 people, which

has since declined to 6,551 people in the 2010 Census. The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates the 2019 population of the City to be 6,421, which continues the trend in declining population from 2010. **Figure 2.1** displays the percent change in population for the City of Belpre compared with Washington County (Ohio) and the State of Ohio over the last century (approximately). The figure indicates that the City experienced peak growth between 1950 and 1960, when the population more than doubled. Since then, the percent change in population has continued to decline.

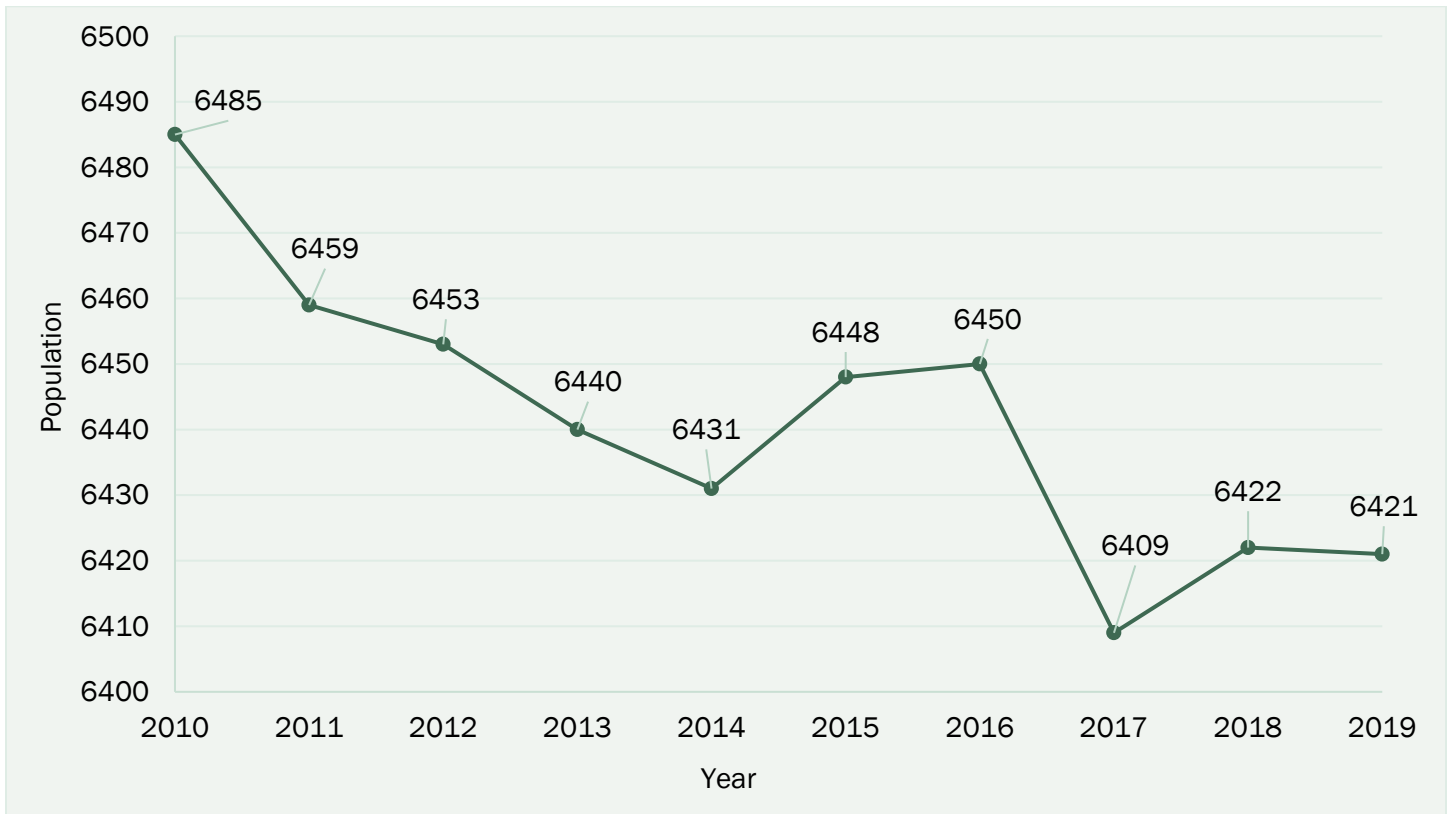
Figure 2.2 displays the City of Belpre's population from 2010 to 2019. During these years, the City experienced a decline of approximately six to seven individuals per year.

Figure 2.1: City of Belpre, Washington County, and State of Ohio Population Change, 1920 - 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

Figure 2.2: City of Belpre Population Trends, 2010 – 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019

Aging Trends

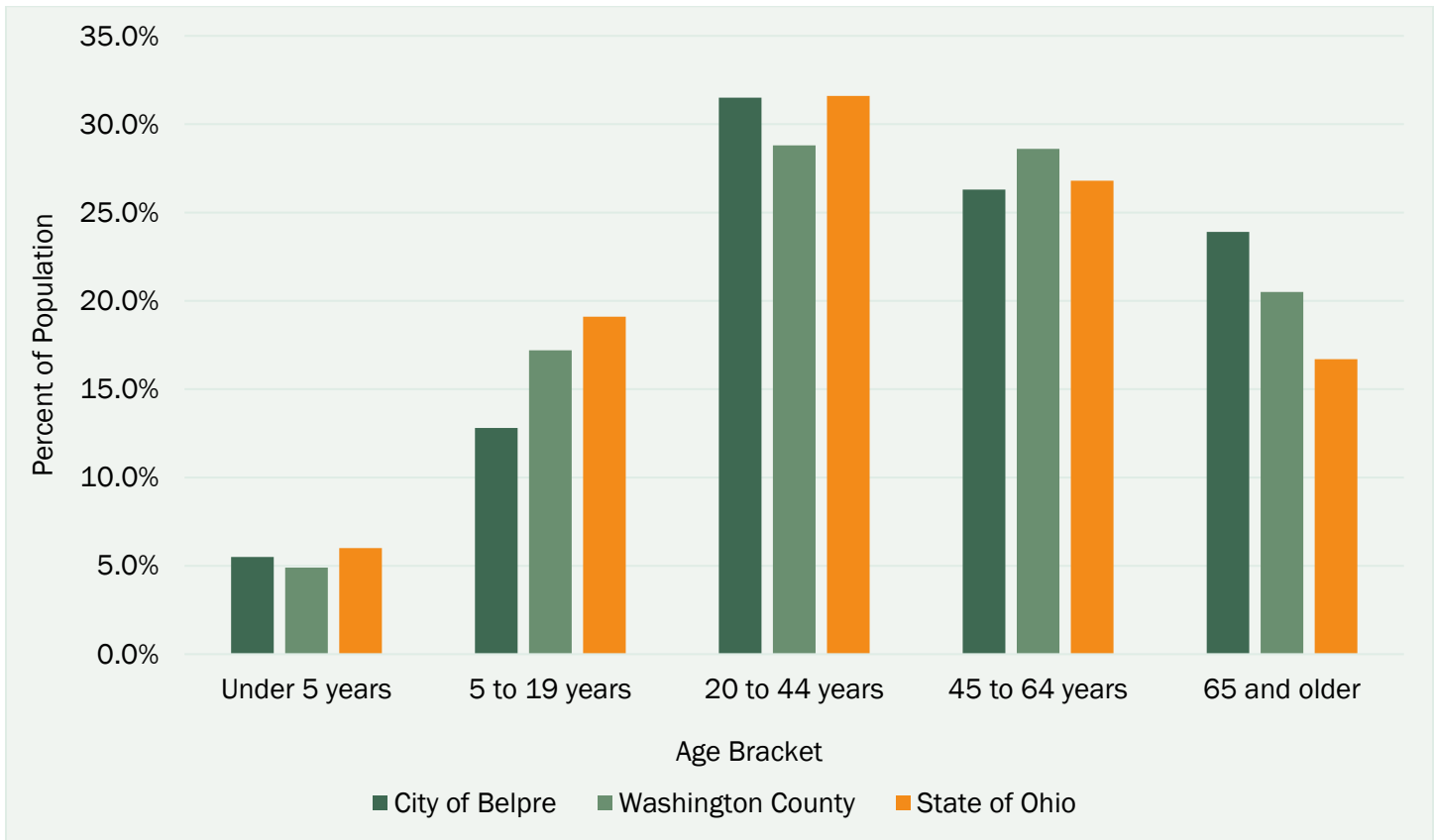
The City of Belpre has an older population relative to both Washington County and the State of Ohio. The median age in Belpre is 45.2 years, while Washington County and the State have median ages of 44.3 and 39.4, respectively. Additionally, **Figure 2.3** compares the breakdown by age of residents in the City of Belpre, Washington County, and the State of Ohio. As the figure shows, the greatest percent (31.7 percent) of Belpre's population is 20 to 44 years old. Altogether, over half of Belpre's population is between 20 and 64 years of age. Additionally, nearly one in four residents of Belpre (23.9 percent) are 65 years of age or older, which is a larger percentage of the population than both Washington County and the State of Ohio (Source: U.S. Census Bureau).

Child and old-age dependency ratios can also be used to better understand the proportion of young children and older adults, who are generally not in the working force, relative to the population that typically makes up the labor force. As such, these ratios provide a method of measuring the pressure on the productive population by children and older populations. The child dependency

ratio is the ratio of the population under 18 years of age to the population ages 18-64, while the old-age dependency ratio is derived by dividing the population over 65 years of age by the 18-to-64 population. These numbers are then expressed as percentages. A low dependency ratio signifies that there are sufficient people working to support the dependent population.

Belpre has a child dependency ratio of 31.1 percent, while Washington County and Ohio have child dependency ratios of 32.8 and 36.5 percent, respectively. Additionally, Belpre has an old-age dependency ratio of 38.7 percent, while Washington County and Ohio have old-age dependency ratios of 33.3 percent and 28.1 percent, respectively. These ratios indicate that, at this point in time, Belpre's working population, as well as the County's and State's, experiences more pressure from aging adults than from children. These numbers also indicate that Belpre's older population puts more pressure on the labor force when compared to Washington County and the State (Source: U.S. Census Bureau).

Figure 2.3: Age Trends in Belpre City, Washington County, and State of Ohio



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019

Disability

Of the 6,421 individuals residing in the City of Belpre, 21.9 percent have a disability, as recorded by the U.S. Census. This percentage is comparable to the County but larger than the State of Ohio, which have disability rates of 20.3 percent and 14.0 percent, respectively. In the table below (**Table 2.1**), the percent of Belpre's

population is recorded, along with associated disabilities. It is important to note that the total is not representative of a sum of all disability types, as individuals can potentially have one or more of the disabilities listed below (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 5-Year ACS).

Table 2.1: Population with Disabilities in Belpre, Ohio

Disability Type	Percent of Population with Disability
Total Population with Disability	21.9%
Hearing Difficulty	7.2%
Vision Difficulty	3.1%
Cognitive Difficulty	10.5%
Ambulatory Difficulty	13.1%
Self-Care Difficulty	4.5%
Independent Living Difficulty	9.0%

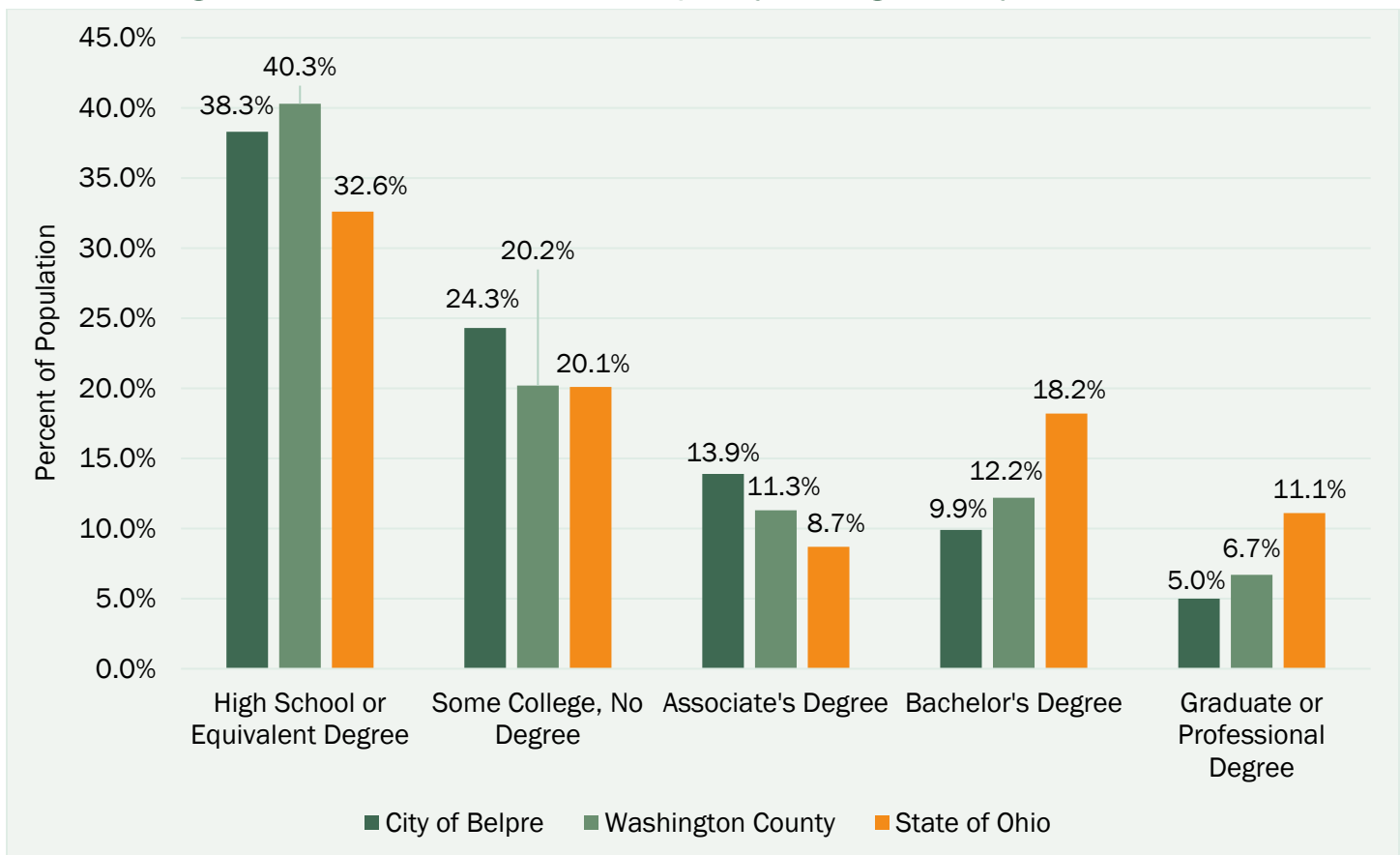
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019

Educational Attainment

Figure 2.4, below, displays the percent of the population that has attained a high school degree or higher, as well as the percent that has attained a bachelor's degree or higher. The City of Belpre has a similar percentage of high school graduates (91.4 percent) compared to both

Washington County (90.7 percent) and the State of Ohio (90.7 percent). Additionally, the City has a lower percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher (14.9 percent) compared to Washington County (18.9 percent) and the State (29.3 percent).

Figure 2.4: Education Level Attained in Belpre City, Washington County, and State of Ohio



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019

Family Household Characteristics

As of the 2019 ACS, there were 2,941 households in the City of Belpre, with an average of 2.18 persons per household. Of these households, over half (56.3 percent) were family households and 43.7 were non-family households. The average family household size was 2.79 people and the average non-family household size was 1.24 people (Source: U.S. Census Bureau). The median income for households in the City of Belpre was \$45,307, which is less than both Washington County and the State of Ohio, where the median household incomes were \$58,642 and \$50,021, respectively. In the same year, the City of Belpre had a poverty rate of 15.1 percent.

Figure 2.5: Housing in Belpre

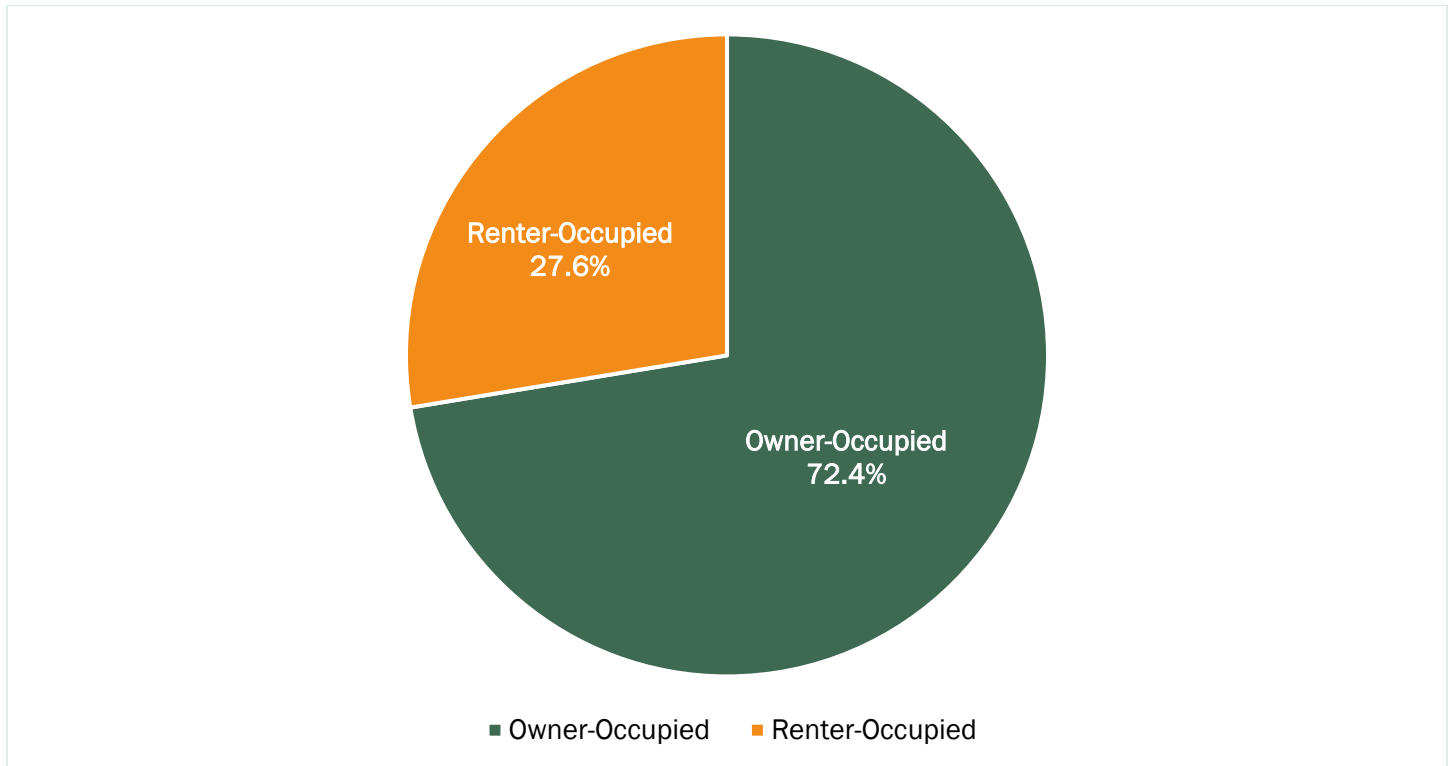


Source: Burton Planning Services

In the City, more than one in five (23.2 percent) households had one or more people under 18 years of age. Alternatively, more than half (53.6 percent) of households had one or more people 60 years of age and older. 17.5 percent of households were householders over the age of 65 living alone.

Figure 2.5, below, shows housing tenure in the City of Belpre. Approximately three quarters (72.4 percent) of all households are owner-occupied and one in four (27.6 percent) are renter-occupied. Median rent in 2019 was \$705 per month, while the median house value was \$112,800.

Figure 2.6: Housing Tenure in the City of Belpre



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019

Employment

As of the 2019 ACS, the unemployment rate in the City of Belpre was 4.5 percent, which is comparable to the unemployment rate in Washington County (4.0 percent) and the State of Ohio (4.6 percent). Alternatively, the labor force participation rate for the City of Belpre was 53.0 percent, which was less than both the County and

the State (56.6 percent and 63.3 percent, respectively). The labor force participation rate represents the number of people in the labor force as a percentage of the civilian noninstitutional population. In other words, the participation rate is the percentage of the population that is either working or actively looking for work.

2.3 Infrastructure

Water and Sewer

The City of Belpre Water Department is a community public water system serving 7,400 people in Belpre, Ohio. This system operates five (5) wells that pump approximately 1,300,000 gallons of water per day from a sand and gravel aquifer (water-rich zone) within the Ohio River sand & gravel aquifer system. The aquifer is covered by up to 25 feet of moderately-permeable material, which provides some protection from contamination. Depth to water in this aquifer is 15 - 30 feet below the ground surface.

Fiber and Internet

The majority of the City has at least three broadband providers that supply internet using either ADSL, cable, satellite, or fixed wireless. Southeast Ohio Broadband Co-op and Horizon partner to offer fiber, 5G, and wireless internet access in the rural parts of Washington County. The Co-op's study of speeds from October 2020 through February 2021 show that:

- ▶ 41 percent of the speed tests conducted inside Belpre city limits were under the FCC definition of "high-speed" internet. The county average is 76%, comparatively.
- ▶ 46 percent of speed tests conducted within the Belpre City School District were under the FCC definition of "high-speed" internet.
- ▶ 52 percent of speed tests conducted within Belpre Township were under the FCC definition of "high-speed" internet.

"High speed" is considered to be between 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up

Road Network

The City of Belpre has a well-connected network of roadways including the important north-south link State Route (SR) 7 (**Exhibit 2.1**). US Route (US) 50 is also located in close proximity to Belpre. Other major roadways that also enable access to essential services include SR-618 and SR-339 to the west and north, respectively. In addition, the City has an internal network of minor roads connecting the residential and commercial areas. The street layout is in form of curvilinear loops with a few cul-de-sacs seen along Boulevard Drive.

Belpre is also connected to the neighboring City of Parkersburg by two bridges. The four-lane Parkersburg-

Belpre Bridge extends between Parkersburg's downtown to the intersection of Main Street and Washington Boulevard in Belpre. The Memorial Bridge is tolled, has two-lanes, and connects the north of Parkersburg with SR-7 Belpre by-pass. The Memorial Bridge is owned and operated by the City of Parkersburg. Another bridge connecting Ohio and West Virginia is located west of Belpre.

Data on reported crashes between 2016 and 2020 indicated over 500 crashes, including one pedestrian fatality. The common types included rear end and angle crashes, most with property damage only. Most crashes occurred under dry pavement conditions, and not at an intersection.

Rail Network

Washington County and the City of Belpre have benefited greatly from the presence of railroads (**Exhibit 2.1**). The Belpre Industrial Parkersburg Railroad, LLC is a noncarrier that operates 48 miles of rail network owned by CSX Transportation, Inc. The line transports commodities such as aggregates, chemicals, coal, construction materials, fertilizers, metals, minerals, petroleum products, plastics, steel, and scrap.

The line runs west from Parkersburg and crosses the Ohio River on the Parkersburg Bridge into Belpre. It splits near Depot Park and continues west traversing the length of Belpre and north to Marietta along the Ohio River. Although railway crossings are available at regular intervals, the line visibly divides the City.

Water Resources

The City of Belpre operates its own water distribution system unlike most of Washington County. The Public Water System receives its drinking water from groundwater supplied by wells. The Belpre well system is fed by the Ohio River Valley aquifer which supplies water to the Ohio River. The City of Belpre Public Water System produces an average 1 million gallons per day of quality drinking water.

The Belpre Water Department is located at 906 Florence Street. It is supervised by full-time staff. The City is supplied by a well-connected system of water mains with meters installed in various parts of the City.

The City of Belpre also treats its own wastewater through the Belpre Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) that

serves the City as well as receives flow from the Barlow-Vincent Sewer system which serves parts of western Washington County.

Natural Gas

Historically, the oil and gas industry has been a significant presence in Washington County. Two companies provide natural gas in Washington County, Columbia Gas of Ohio and National Gas and Oil Co-op (Public Utilities Commission of Ohio - PUCO). In 2018, eleven (11) wells produced 4,679,948 MCF of natural gas (1 MCF is equivalent to 1,000 cubic feet of gas).

Natural gas is the most commonly used house heating fuel in Belpre; however, due to the City's location at the

end of the natural gas pipeline in southeast Ohio, there is a supply bottleneck between Marietta and Belpre. The City has small lines generating low pressure gas causing a lack of service to residential and commercial facilities. New development along the line further reduces supply for residents of Belpre and hinders economic growth as well as quality of life.

In 2019, PUCO was considering a project by Dominion Gas to invest about \$10 million in new piping, pumping stations, and overall capacity expansions in Belpre. The outcome of this project is unclear at this moment. Over the years, there have been other efforts to replace the older lines that feed into Belpre and resolve the pressure issues. However, sufficient supply remains a challenge.

2.4 Zoning & Land Use

Zoning

There are eight (8) zoning classifications included in Belpre's Codified Ordinances:

- ▶ C-1 Central Business District
- ▶ C-2 General Commercial District
- ▶ C-3 Commercial Recreation District
- ▶ M-1 Manufacturing District
- ▶ P-1 Public and Semipublic District (including Public Schools)
- ▶ N-C Neighborhood Commercial District
- ▶ R-1 Residential District
- ▶ R-2 Residential District

The principal, accessory, and special uses for each district are detailed [in Section 1145.01 of the Codified Ordinances](#).

The City's zoning map (**Exhibit 2.2**) shows where these districts, as well as property owned by the City ("City Property") and the State of Ohio ("State of Ohio"), are located.

Most of the property in Belpre falls within the General Commercial (C-2), and Residential (R-1 and R-2) districts. The Washington Boulevard and Main Street corridors are predominantly zoned General Commercial (C-2).

Land Use

The land use of properties in Belpre is generally consistent with the uses identified in the corresponding zoning classifications. Commercial and residential land uses are predominant, and follow a pattern similar to the commercial and residential zoning districts along main corridors such as Washington Boulevard and Main Street, and throughout the community

Exhibit 2.1: Road Network Map

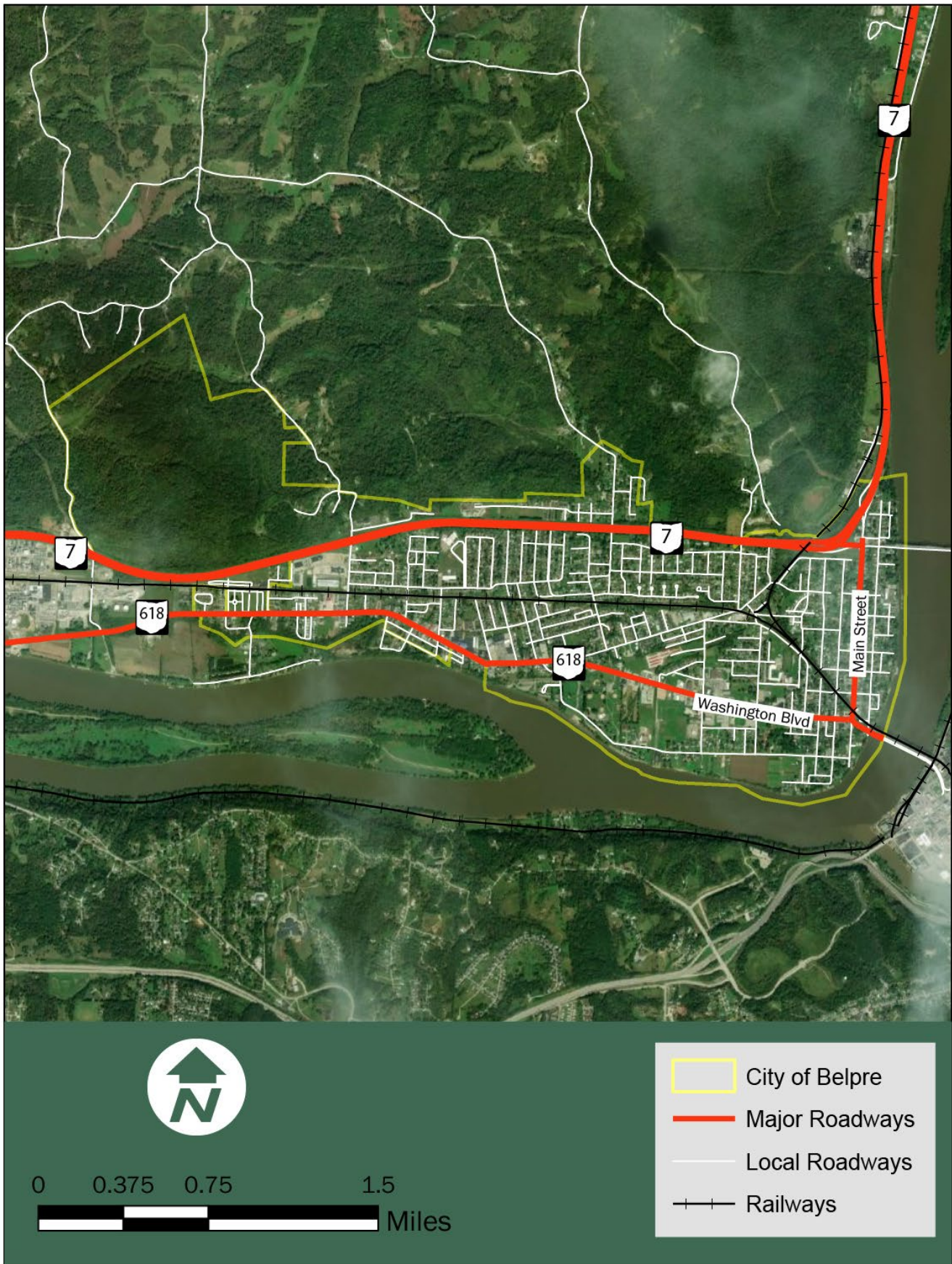
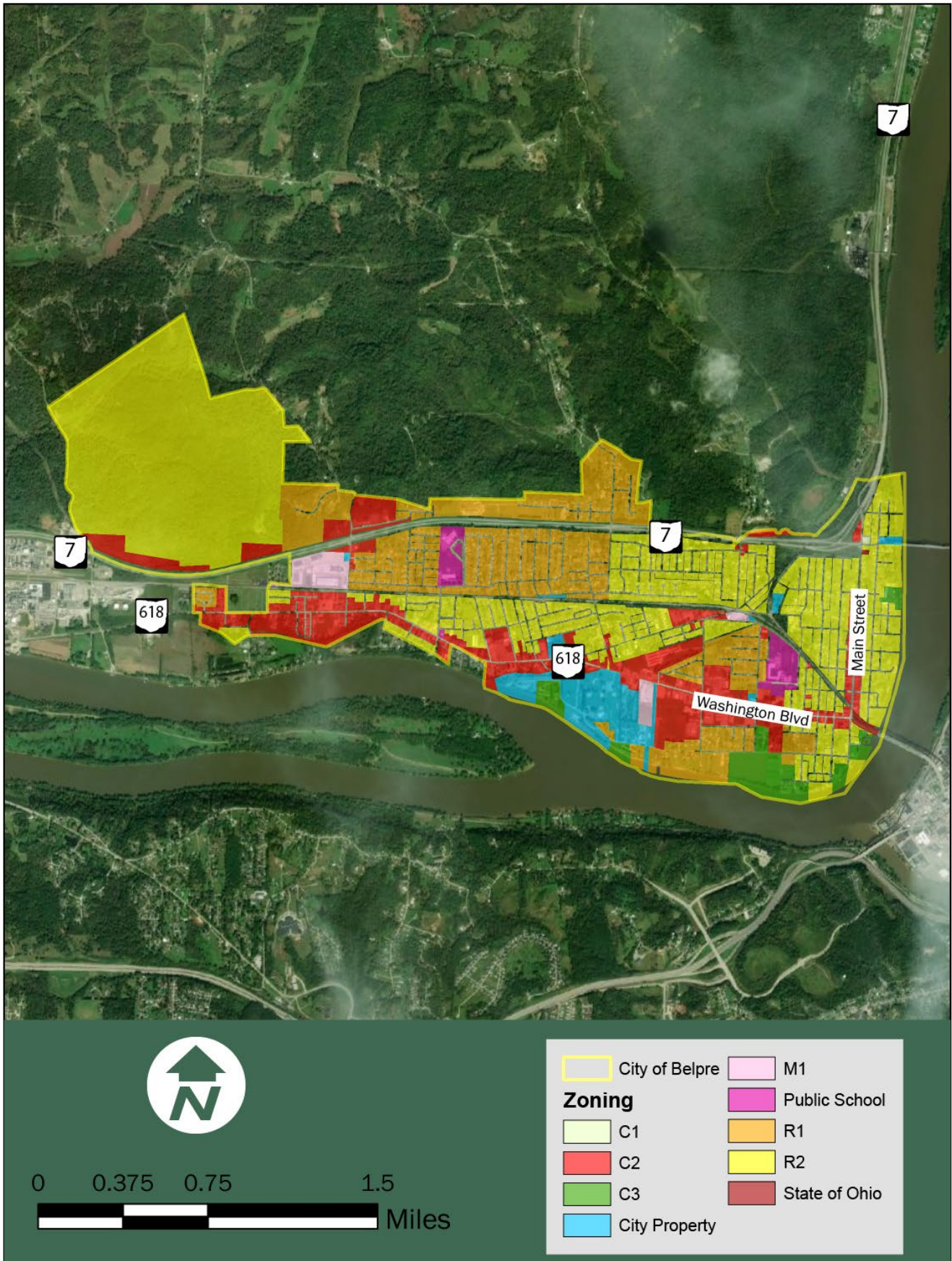


Exhibit 2.2: Zoning Map



3 | Economic Development Strategy

3.1 Introduction

Overview

The main goal of the Economic Development Strategy is to plan a path to improving the economic well-being of the community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life. As there is no single definition for economic

development, there is no single strategy, policy, or program for achieving successful economic development. Communities differ in their geographic and political strengths and weaknesses. Each community, therefore, will have a unique set of approaches for economic development.

3.2 Economic Development Tools

Economic Development Organizations

The City of Belpre works in concert with the Southeast Ohio Port Authority and Belpre Chamber of Commerce for economic development. During the planning process it was evident that an informal network is currently handling the activities for the greater City area and a more succinct plan is needed to coordinate economic activities for the City of Belpre.

Ohio's Local Economic Process

Local private-sector not-for-profit organizations, which are often trade associations organized as chambers of commerce, as well as not-for-profit foundations, typically provide leadership and funding for a region's economic growth. Local government and local elected officials also play a role in local economic development since they have relationships with many of the organizations and award many of the local incentives given to companies. However, local governments and elected officials cannot control the various not-for-profit organizations in the region. Ohio also has a system of multi-county, regional economic development organizations that have a fee-for-service contractual relationship with JobsOhio. The JobsOhio regional network includes One Columbus (Central Ohio), Team NEO (Northeast Ohio), Ohio SE (Southeast Ohio), Dayton Development Coalition (West Ohio), Regional Growth Partnership (Northwest Ohio) and REDI Cincinnati (Southwest Ohio).

These regional economic development organizations often serve as the first point of contact for companies considering a job retention or expansion project in Ohio. However, any organization could be the first point of contact for a company. Local and regional organizations work together with company representatives or their corporate site location specialists, to identify potential sites for development and engage local government leaders who can offer local tax incentives and other assistance, including non-incentive benefits like bus

routes and traffic light patterns that are also important to companies. JobsOhio network partner staff will also determine whether they believe a project is appropriate for JobsOhio or Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) funds and assist with that application process.

Infill Development

Infill development is the promotion of development, redevelopment, and revitalization of downtowns and adjacent areas in a community. Commercial and residential growth in the suburbs has contributed to the decline of downtowns. Downtowns traditionally are the centers of both business and culture. Redeveloping underutilized or vacant property in these areas can involve a range of activities, including marketing for both business and tourist attractions, building or improving infrastructure, clean-up initiatives, property redevelopment and reuse, and business retention programs. The purpose of these initiatives is to create an attractive environment to increase the number and variety of businesses and bring in employment opportunities, shoppers, and tourists.

Since infill development encompasses multiple activities designed to meet complimentary goals, it requires partnerships among local government, chambers of commerce, and public-private partnerships, such as forming business improvement districts and convention or tourist bureaus, in order to succeed.

Brownfield Redevelopment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines brownfields as commercial or industrial sites that are abandoned or under-utilized and have some degree of environmental contamination, whether real or perceived. Brownfield remediation adds new developable land to a community's inventory, uses existing infrastructure, and encourages new

construction, investments, and jobs to a community. Communities can use brownfield redevelopment to meet a series of goals, including neighborhood revitalization, open space creation, crime reduction, blight clearance, workforce development, and growth management. Brownfields, therefore, can be important catalysts for economic development.

Joint Economic Development Districts

Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDDs) are territorial districts created by agreement of the legislative authorities of municipal corporations, townships, and, under certain circumstances, counties. Their purpose is to promote economic development, create and preserve jobs, and improve the economic welfare of citizens. Typically, these purposes are accomplished by imposing an income tax within the district and sharing the revenue among the participating subdivisions. The revenue and resources are used to enhance infrastructure, provide new and additional services and facilities to the district, accomplish other goals that may be specified in the JEDD contract, and supplement the revenue of each participating subdivision.

Land Reutilization Corporations

Land reutilization corporations, also known as “Land Banks,” are a form of CIC, (first authorized in Ohio in 2009) that facilitate the reclamation, rehabilitation, and reutilization of vacant, abandoned, tax foreclosed, or other real property. They will often hold and manage the property and clear the title of the property, which promotes economic and housing development. Land Banks can also demolish condemned structures and engage in code enforcement and nuisance abatement, including cutting grass and weeds and boarding up vacant or abandoned structures.

Community Reinvestment Areas

A Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) is an area of land designated by a local government on which property owners can receive tax incentives for constructing new or renovating existing buildings. The CRA Program permits municipalities, townships, or counties to designate areas where investment has been lagging to encourage revitalization of the existing housing stock and the development of new structures. Residential, commercial, and industrial projects are all eligible. The program incentivizes investment by allowing for property tax abatements. The CRA program results in an

exemption from real-property taxation of all or a portion of the assessed valuation of select parcels of land in a geographically distressed area for an agreed-upon term negotiated on a project-specific basis.

Ohio CRAs are divided in two categories: pre-1994 and post-1994. CRAs established before 1994 provide a 100 percent real-property tax exemption for residential, commercial, or industrial projects and do not require approval from the local school board. Pre-1994 CRAs can be amended only twice after July 1994 to retain operation under the old legislation – any additional amendments will invoke the Post-1994 CRA rules.

Post-1994 CRAs require the exemption percentage and term for commercial and industrial projects to be negotiated on a project specific basis (residential percentages are set when the CRA is established). If the proposed real-property tax exemption is greater than 50 percent, it requires local school district approval unless the local legislative authority decides that at least 50 percent of the amount of the taxes “lost” by the school district will be made up by other taxes or payments available to the school district.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development tool that enables local governments to finance public infrastructure improvements and, in select circumstances, privately-owned economic development projects and residential projects in specific areas. TIFs can be established by municipalities, townships, and counties, and they can cover a single parcel or a district (multiple parcels). Once the TIF is established by legislative action, the governmental entity may begin collecting funds to pay for infrastructure improvements. TIFs are not tax increases. Rather, they capture increases in the taxable value of real property.

Small Business Investment

Economic development includes not only attracting and supporting big business, but also smaller, locally-owned and operated businesses. Every job in a local business generates approximately two to four times as much as a comparable local reinvestment with a large corporate business. The return on investment is higher with small businesses because they hire locally, use local services, give back to the community with donations and volunteering, and are more likely to stay in the community long term. As such, utilizing small business investment programs, such as the grants and programs

described below, can be an incredibly useful tool for economic development in the City of Belpre.

Business Retention & Expansion (R&E) – Research shows that existing businesses create 60 to 80 percent of all new jobs. Communities that actively implement an on-going R&E program focusing on the retention and expansion of local businesses will improve the business climate of the community, help to make local businesses remain competitive, increase employment, and stabilize the local economy (OSU Extension, 2021). R&E includes proactively connecting with existing businesses to understand and respond to local business needs, including providing technical assistance to support marketing and administrative needs of the businesses.

Small Business Loan Guarantee Program – A Small Business Loan Guarantee Program can be a great investment for the City. This Program facilitates local lenders providing capital to small businesses that otherwise would not receive loans. Special emphasis is placed on the creation and retention of jobs. Loans can be utilized for a variety of purposes and can encourage local use, such as working capital, equipment purchases or maintenance, inventory, contract financing, business expansion, lines of credit, and real estate.

Downtown Façade Grant Program – This program offers a small zero-match grant to building owners in a designated area (downtown, where older buildings are located) to help them improve and beautify the facades

of their buildings. This program can utilize CDBG funds or City revenues.

Business Incubator Coworking/Flex Spaces – Office buildings are going to be seeing increased vacancies due to COVID-19. The City can partner with office space owners that have vacant spaces to set up one or more coworking spaces in Belpre that are near and walkable or bikeable to residential areas. These spaces should be offered to residents for low rates, and the City could offer the owner free internet service and utilities for their participation. The purpose is to support entrepreneurs and start-up small businesses and serve as an incubator for them.

Local Services and Amenities

Economic development extends beyond direct support of businesses and funding mechanisms: public infrastructure, services, and amenities attract businesses to a community, and provide an incentive to stay. By providing roads, sidewalks, water, sewer, electricity, waste management, firefighting and policing, parks, recreation centers, and more, a City is investing in its residents, businesses, and visitors by fulfilling essential needs, and enhancing the local quality of life. Safety and security, the meeting of basic needs - and exceeding them -, and even the look and feel of the community impact business interest and retention in a community.

3.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Belpre Stakeholder Exercise

Economic development used to focus on growth via influencing business location decisions. Communities that attracted businesses grew and those that did not attract new businesses declined. Economic development efforts used to focus on luring companies with tax or other business incentives. Today we know that in order to grow and prosper in the short and long-term, communities and regions need to change this approach.

On October 23, 2020 over thirty city stakeholders met at the Belpre Senior Center to discuss the characteristics a successful community needs in today's rapidly evolving environment (**Figure 3.1**). The day was designed to provide a framework for understanding local and regional economic growth and prosperity and discuss the tools to conduct realistic analyses that can help

decision-makers, clients, and constituents make better, more informed decisions.

The first half of the day consisted of an overview of the key components of a successful economic development program. BPS staff explained each component, reviewed real life scenarios of each key component, and discussed what opportunities exist in the City of Belpre to utilize the key components. The following topics were specifically discussed.

1. What is Economic Development
2. Business Retention and Expansion
3. Brownfields
4. Business Climate
5. Clusters
6. Downtown Development
7. Entrepreneurship

8. Empowerment Zones/Enterprise
9. Communities
10. Economic Development Finance
11. Incentives
12. Infrastructure
13. Neighborhood Economic Development
14. Public-Private Partnerships
15. Quality of Life
16. Real Estate Redevelopment
17. Site Selection
18. Smart Growth
19. Transportation
20. Workforce Development

Following the presentation, the stakeholders participated in a real-world exercise of the process to attract a manufacturing facility from lead generation to ground breaking. The stakeholders in the room were asked to respond to the various requests and determine the correct individuals to handle the requests. This helped facilitate identification of gaps in process and procedures from the various stakeholders.

Stakeholder & Business/Industry Interviews

Targeted economic strengths and opportunities can best be identified by using data analysis in concert with

research gained through interviews and conversations with industry and economic development stakeholders. This “on the ground” perspective reveals the strengths of relationships between firms, service providers, and other stakeholders involved in a local and regional economy and identifies opportunities for private and public investment that cannot be seen solely through data analysis. Moreover, stakeholder and public involvement can help to create community buy-in for the strategies developed in the plan which will enable effective implementation.

During the first week of December 2020, BPS staff conducted 22 stakeholder interviews with key City staff, area professionals, industry and business leaders, elected officials, commercial real estate professionals, and other stakeholders.

These interviews provided both internal and external perspectives of the community’s strengths, challenges, and opportunities and were used to solicit information for various components of the plan. The interviews were structured to provide first-hand insight related to issues specific to development, workforce, community perception, assistance to businesses and other key economic development components. The knowledge gained from these interviews is crucial to the development of targeted strategies and action plan.

Figure 3.1: Stakeholder Exercise



Source: Burton Planning Services

3.4 Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results (SOAR) Analysis

Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results (SOAR) Analysis is an approach to identifying opportunities with an organization or community's structure. SOAR strives to be forward-thinking to address the potential of a community. SOAR incorporates a level of accountability by addressing the metrics in which results will be identified and tracked.

The following strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results were determined by the input of stakeholders.

Strengths

This section aims to determine the strengths of the City that can be leveraged and built upon to seize the opportunities the City decides to pursue. What is the City's unique selling point (USP) to businesses? A USP is the essence of what makes the City better than other communities for business. City stakeholders indicated the following as strengths:

Access to Ohio River - The Ohio River and its seven navigable tributaries comprise over 2,500 miles of waterways, upon which more than 270 million tons of coal, aggregates, chemicals, agricultural, industrial and petroleum products are transported annually. This waterway transportation provides a less costly means for companies to transport bulk goods, moving 35 percent of the nation's waterborne commerce (Source: USACE, 2020).

Access to nature is known to improve health and quality of life. The lives and health of millions can be improved by ensuring that all people, including those that are underserved such as low income and minority groups, have safe access to the river and its surrounding natural areas. In order to accomplish this, there is need for clear, comprehensive communication to the public on nature opportunities and events on the Ohio River. The river provides a large variety of options when it comes to recreation such as fishing and boating, trails and bike paths, nature viewing, or camping. Creating an integrated recreational system that links the Ohio River with the City infrastructure system will enable more people from the City and visitors to the City to be connected to the waterways.

Civitan Park - Located at 1600 Blennerhasset Avenue is the City's largest park featuring a band stand, two picnic shelters, a walking track, four little league baseball fields, one high school and pony league baseball field,

basketball, tennis courts, an updated swimming pool and river boating access.

Figure 3.2: Civitan Park



Source: Burton Planning Services

Transportation Network - Belpre is served by several major transportation routes including US-50, SR-7 and SR-618. I-77, although not located in the City, is approximately ten miles east through the City of Parkersburg, West Virginia.

SR-7 is a four-lane, divided highway on the north side of the City. It is designated as the Ohio River Scenic Byway by the Ohio Department of Transportation. Spanning 14 counties in southern Ohio, this byway encompasses the entire length of the Ohio River in Ohio, 452 miles.

SR-618 (Washington Boulevard) is the major retail and commercial corridor of the City. Washington Boulevard is a four-lane highway.

Located to the west and south of the City, US-50 is a major east-west route of the U.S. Highway system, stretching 3,073 miles from Interstate 80 in West Sacramento, California, to Maryland Route 528 in Ocean City, Maryland.

Large Employers - The education, health care, and social services industry is Belpre's most significant employer with 26.7 percent of the city's working population. This industry is also the most significant employer for Washington County and Ohio.

- **Kraton Manufacturing Facility and Innovation Center** - develops, manufactures, and markets biobased chemicals and specialty polymers.

- ▶ **Memorial Health System: Belpre Medical Campus** - The Belpre Medical Campus offers a variety of medical services including: Strecker Cancer Center, diagnostics, endocrinology, emergency room, Marietta Occupational Health Partners (MOHP), pain management services, physician offices, therapy services and a wound care center.

Figure 3.3: Kraton Manufacturing Facility & Innovation Center (Top) & Belpre Medical Campus (Bottom)



Source: Burton Planning Services

Workforce Development and Education – Washington State Community College’s Workforce Development Program was created to support and work collaboratively with business and industry to build customized training solutions that meet their specific workforce needs. Their team is committed to providing high-value, high-quality training programs that facilitate the growth and development of the employees and businesses in our community.

Opportunities

This section of the SOAR analysis aims to identify the opportunities in the marketplace that could be pursued to become more successful. City stakeholders identified the following opportunities for the City of Belpre:

Redevelopment of Washington Boulevard and Main Street – Redevelopment of Belpre’s two main vehicular corridors could include access management and safety improvements, future land use and zoning changes, design standards, and a market study which can be used to attract a future development partner.

Support of and collaboration with Belpre City Schools – Forming a cooperative relationship between the City and School District will help prepare students for real-world employment opportunities.

Utilization and Promotion of Ohio River and Blennerhassett Island – There are many unrecognized opportunities for ecotourism development which exist along the Ohio River in the City of Belpre and areas such as Civitan Park and Blennerhassett Island.

Formation of Belpre Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) - A community improvement corporation incorporated as an economic development corporation is organized for the purpose of “advancing, encouraging, and promoting the industrial, economic, commercial and civic development of a community or area” (ORC 1724.01(B)(1)).

CIC’s assist with the promotion and financing of economic development by providing loans to individuals and businesses; buying, selling, and leasing real and personal property for economic development purposes; and by entering into contracts with the state and local governments.

Creation of Community Master Plan – A Community Master Plan will help guide all city departments and partners in decision making. An adopted plan will ensure continuity of action during times of administration and/or council change. This Plan, once adopted, should be updated every five years.

The Community Master Plan will create a community vision, growth and development policies, and implementation strategies. The plan will provide clear and defined guidance and serve as a framework for the development of future land use policy. Themes of the plan may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Built environment and housing – trends, needs, future demands
2. Community character - architecture, design, public spaces, etc.
3. Existing and future land use
4. Local economy

5. Infrastructure - utilities, roads pedestrian/bike connectivity
6. Parks and recreation
7. Public services
8. Implementation and priorities

Zoning Code Audit and Update – An update the City’s zoning code will take into account current assets, future areas for development, and create a cohesive community identity. The Update could also integrate specific overlays of the Washington Boulevard and Main Street commercial district. The resulting updated Code will provide quick direction stakeholders to assess future development opportunities and make related decisions that advance their overall goals.

Aspirations

This section aims to identify stakeholders’ aspirations for the future. It is essentially a vision built on the strengths and opportunities identified to both challenge and inspire an organization to achieve.

The City seeks to reverse the trend of population decline by offering economic opportunities to future generations. Belpre is an economically self-sustaining community that maximizes the potential of its natural

assets. Development is encouraged in order to support healthy commercial, manufacturing, and recreational areas and City services. Successful local business districts are attractive destinations for residents as well as visitors. Developed areas incorporate green space, public art, residential density, and visitor appeal, and draw people to work, shop, stay and play in Belpre.

Results

This section aims to show how the City will know that they have achieved their aspirations and also outline how they intend to track progress towards their ambitions. The Plan reflects a commitment to improving economic conditions through:

- ▶ Easing, clarifying, and/or enforcing regulations and restrictions.
- ▶ Proactive outreach to investors and developers.
- ▶ Encouraging high economic impact development such as ecotourism.
- ▶ Promoting the City by attracting target populations to patronize Belpre businesses.

Figure 2.8: Belpre, Ohio Mural



Source: Burton Planning Services

4 | Targeted Strategies and Action Plan

4.1 Introduction

The Targeted Strategies and Action Plan outlines the goals and actions identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan. Listed below are strategies, each with a description, timeframe, responsible party, and associated action items. **Table 4.1**, the Action Plan Matrix, includes each strategy and corresponding actions, assigns the lead that is responsible for implementation, estimates the priority and timeframe of the strategy, identifies resources and potential barriers to be addressed, establishes benchmarks for tracking progress, and includes a column to identify the current status towards achieving the goal. Below is a key for the priorities and timeframes in the matrix:

Priorities:

- ▶ Low
- ▶ Medium
- ▶ High

Timeframes:

- ▶ Short: 1-2 Years
- ▶ Medium: 2-5 Years
- ▶ Long: 5-10 Years

It is anticipated that the status column will be regularly updated as progress is made towards implementation. Implementation status will be reported to the Belpre Chamber of Commerce on a regular basis to identify progress made towards furthering economic development within the City. In addition, a status report regarding implementation will be presented to the Council on an annual basis.

Appendix C, Implementation Resources and Best Practices, lists reports, studies, and “best practices” examples for each strategy. The list is not exclusive, but rather a tailored selection of resources relevant to the City of Belpre. The information is meant to provide reference material to assist with implementation of the strategies.

4.2 Strategies & Action Plan

Strategy 1: Create a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)

Priority: High | Timeframe: Medium | Responsibility: City, and Chamber

A Community Improvement Corporation incorporated as an economic development corporation is organized for the purpose of “advancing, encouraging, and promoting the industrial, economic, commercial and civic development of a community or area.”

Action 1-A: Form community of stakeholders from City, Chamber and Port to gather relevant information and process.

Action 1-B: Formalize CIC with legislation passed by City Council.

Action 1-C: Appoint members to the CIC.

Strategy 2: Update the City Website

Priority: Medium | Timeframe: Short | Responsibility: City

Utilizing a 3rd party vendor, such as Squarespace or Wix, update the City website for easy navigation and promotion of City activities and information.

Action 2-A: Prepare Request for Proposals for interested vendors.

Action 2-B: After selecting vendor, provide needed information to update the website.

Action 2-C: Select an employee(s)/position(s) that is responsible for the updating of information.

Strategy 3: Identify Sites and Secure Funding for Brownfield Revitalization

Priority: High | Timeframe: Medium | Responsibility: City, and Port Authority

Identification, planning and redevelopment of the identified brownfield sites and adjacent properties.

Action 3-A: Utilize information supplied by Port Authority to catalogue potential brownfield sites.

Action 3-B: Coordinate a discussion with Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission.

Action 3-C: Draft and submit application for funding to the Ohio EPA for Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA).

Strategy 4: Review and Revise Zoning Regulations

Priority: Medium | Timeframe: Long | Responsibility: City

Reimagine a City Zoning Code for the community that takes into account current assets, future areas for development, and create a cohesive community identity. The deliverables will empower the City to be an active participant in the development process. The resulting Code will provide quick direction for Village stakeholders to assess future development opportunities, such as within the Washington Boulevard and Main Street corridors, and make related decisions that advance their overall goals.

Action 4-A: Conduct zoning ordinance and map review to determine changes needed to spur development.

Action 4-B: Initiate rezoning process to carry out identified changes.

Strategy 5: Study and Implement Safety and Walkability Improvements to Washington Boulevard and Main Street

Priority: High | Timeframe: Long | Responsibility: City

Study multi-modal transportation safety within the corridors to provide recommendations for safety and transportation infrastructure improvements.

Action 5-A: Coordinate access management and safety discussion with Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission (WWW).

Action 5-B: Work with WWW and/or private consultant to identify safety countermeasures, zoning updates, infrastructure improvements, and funding sources to address the issues in the corridor.

Action 5-C: Implement internal code and policy changes needed and apply for funding for safety and infrastructure improvements.

Action 5-D: Construct the identified safety and infrastructure improvements.

Strategy 6: Establish a City/School Liaison Committee

Priority: Low | Timeframe: Short | Responsibility: City, and School District

The purpose of the School District Liaison Committee is to enable officials of the City Council and School Board to confer on a regular basis to achieve community financial coordination and better coordination in other fields of community concern.

Action 6-A: Coordinate quarterly meeting between City Council and School Board including proper administration officials to discuss items of mutual concern.

Action 6-B: Maintain minutes of meetings to ensure follow-up.

Strategy 7: Establish the Civitan Joint Recreation District

Priority: Medium | Timeframe: Long | Responsibility: City, Port Authority, Chamber, City School District

Civitan Park and adjacent City-owned property along are river present untapped potential to provide additional recreational opportunities to Belpre residents and visitors to the area, specifically Blennerhassett Island. Enhancements to existing amenities, and addition of new amenities will offer leisure and exercise options, as well as tourism and service industry benefits. Establishing a joint recreation district will allow for administration of programs which provide athletic, recreational, and quality of life opportunities for the welfare and physical health of the district which would include the territories of the City, School District, and surrounding townships. Additionally, under Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 755.17, a joint recreation district “may issue bonds for the purpose of acquiring lands or buildings, or extending, enlarging, or improving existing lands, facilities, or buildings for parks, playgrounds, playfields,

gymnasiums, swimming pools, public baths, indoor recreation centers, or community centers, and for the equipment thereof. Land acquired by a municipal corporation for a swimming pool may be within or without the limits of such municipal corporation.”

Action 7-A: Establish the Joint Recreation District pursuant to ORC Chapter 755.

Action 7-B: Develop a marketing strategy for the Recreation District.

Action 7-C: Create a signage and wayfinding plan for the Recreation District.

Action 7-D: Identify existing amenities to be improved and new amenities to be added within the Recreation District, and estimate costs. Examples include, but are not limited to, improving the ballfields, playground, pool, and track, and adding a kayak launch and rental services, and food/beverage retail services.

Action 7-E: Identify opportunities to enhance City-owned riverfront property for passive recreation opportunities such as, but not limited to, walking and biking paths, bird-watching, fishing, and picnic grounds, and estimate costs.

Strategy 8: Create & Implement Ecotourism Plan

Priority: Medium | **Timeframe:** Medium | **Responsibility:** City

Identify unrecognized opportunities for ecotourism development which exist along the Ohio River in the City of Belpre and areas such as Civitan Park and Blennerhassett Island.

Action 8-A: Conduct research on ecotourism best management practices.

Action 8-B: Identify possible improvements to City infrastructure to promote ecotourism.

Action 8-C: Work with City stakeholders to draft and implement plan.

Strategy 9: Create a Business Retention and Expansion (R&E) Program

Priority: High | **Timeframe:** Short - Medium | **Responsibility:** City, Port Authority, and Chamber

R&E is an economic development strategy of proactively connecting with existing businesses to understand and respond to local business needs, including providing technical assistance to support marketing and administrative needs of the businesses

Action 9-A: Create/update list of City businesses.

Action 9-B: Contact businesses and hold interviews to determine needs.

Action 9-C: Set up programs and provide technical assistance to facilitate small business development, such as a Small Business Loan Guarantee Program, a Downtown Façade Grant Program, and Business Incubator Coworking/ Flex Spaces.

Action 9-D: Follow up with any issues identified in business interviews.

Action 9-E: Provide marketing and administrative technical assistance to small businesses.

Strategy 10: Advocate for Increased Natural Gas Supply

Priority: Medium | **Timeframe:** Short | **Responsibility:** City, Port Authority, and Chamber

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio has approved a plan that will improve and expand the natural gas infrastructure between Belpre and Marietta. Continue to advocate and monitor the progress of the proposed improvements.

Action 10-A: Lobby lawmakers to assist the City to increase capacity availability.

Action 10-B: Lobby Dominion Energy to provided increased capacity availability.

Strategy 11: Address Absentee Landlords and Dilapidated Properties

Priority: Medium | Timeframe: Short | Responsibility: City

For cities that are seeking to preserve, strengthen or revitalize their neighborhoods and downtowns, coming up with effective strategies to deal with the owners of privately-owned problem properties, encouraging responsible owners and cracking down on bad land owners, is a critical element in any such undertaking.

Action 11-A: Evaluate and update as needed current ordinances to allow clean-up of dilapidated property.

Action 11-B: Create list of targeted properties not in compliance with ordinances.

Action 11-C: Enforce ordinances to ensure cleanup of property.

Strategy 12: Create a City Digital and Print Marketing Package

Priority: Low | Timeframe: Short | Responsibility: City, and Chamber

The overall goal of the digital marketing package is to increase and sustain the public awareness of the City of Belpre brand identity as well as increase the exposure and assets of the City of Belpre and all of its related services available to targeted industry and labor talent.

Action 12-A: Work with local educational institution (high school, Marietta College, WSCC, etc.) to create marketing package.

Strategy 13: Address Land Redevelopment Costs & Affordable Housing Options

Priority: High | Timeframe: Medium | Responsibility: City, and Port Authority

Identify existing rental and future affordable housing stock strategies within the community. Some topic areas include assessment of existing housing conditions, demographic and market demands (present and future), and identify critical housing gaps and issues.

Action 13-A: Evaluate options for creative financing such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to offset high costs (real or perceived) of redevelopment.

Strategy 14: Create a Community Master Plan for the City of Belpre

Priority: High | Timeframe: Medium | Responsibility: City

Draft and adopt a Community Master Plan – or comprehensive plan – for the City including the creation of a community vision, growth and development policies and implementation strategies. The plan should provide clear and defined guidance and serve as a framework for the development of future land use policy.

Action 14-A: Create a Request for Proposal for community planning services to draft the Community Master Plan.

Action 14-B: Assign an oversight community to ensure that the planning process includes all needed parties and report to City Council.

Action 14-C: Adopt the Community Master Plan.

Strategy 15: Maintain and Update the Economic Development Strategy

Priority: High | Timeframe: Short - Long | Responsibility: City, and Chamber

This Strategy should be updated every five years. In addition, the “Current Status” column of the Action Plan Matrix should also be updated frequently and presented to City Council on an annual basis to report on the work accomplished each year toward implementation.

Action 15-A: Present a status update to Belpre City Council annually, including implementation status of each action.

Action 15-B: Update the Economic Development Strategy every five years.

Table 4.1: Action Plan Matrix

Action	Lead Agency/ Department	Priority	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Barriers	Benchmarks	Current Status
Strategy 1: Create a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)							
Action 1-A: Form community of stakeholders from City, Chamber and Port Authority to gather relevant information and process.	City, Chamber	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Staff time▶ \$60-000 - \$150,000 (\$60,000 for staff, remainder for other startup costs such as marketing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Interest/availability of stakeholders▶ Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Regular schedule of CIC meetings	
Action 1-B: Formalize CIC with legislation passed by City Council.				<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Potential start-up funding sources include City's General Fund, CDBG Funds to purchase properties			
Action 1-C: Appoint members to the CIC.				<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Determine management details of CIC			
Strategy 2: Update the City Website							
Action 2-A: Prepare Request for Proposals for interested vendors.	City	Medium	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Staff Time▶ \$5,000 - \$20,000 for consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Funding for consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Development of new or updated website	
Action 2-B: After selecting vendor, provide needed information to update the website.							
Action 2-C: Select an employee(s)/position(s) that is responsible for the updating of information.							

Strategy 3: Identify Sites and Secure Funding for Brownfield Revitalization

Action 3-A: Utilize information supplied by Port Authority to catalogue potential brownfield sites.	City, Port Authority	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants ▶ EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grants (20 percent cost share) ▶ Staff Time ▶ \$0 (staff time) - \$5,000 (consultant) for application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Funding and local match ▶ Obtaining historic information on properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ List of brownfield sites ▶ Completed & submitted application to Ohio EPA for Phase I/II ESAs 	
Action 3-B: Coordinate a discussion with Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission (WWW).							
Action 3-C: Draft and submit application for funding to the Ohio EPA for Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA).							

Strategy 4: Review and Revise Zoning Regulations

Action 4-A: Conduct zoning ordinance and map review to determine changes needed to spur development.	City	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Staff Time ▶ \$5,000 - \$10,000 for consultant to review and update zoning ordinance and map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Community/property owner support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adoption of updated zoning ordinance and map 	
Action 4-B: Initiate rezoning process as identified in Action 4-A above.							

Strategy 5: Study and Implement Safety and Walkability Improvements to Washington Boulevard and Main Street

Action 5-A: Coordinate access management and safety discussion with Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission (WWW).	City	High	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ODOT Safety Funds ▶ ODOT Local Road Safety Assistance Program ▶ ODOT Highway Safety Improvement Program ▶ ODOT Transportation Alternatives Program ▶ ODOT SRTS Program ▶ \$15,000-\$50,000 (consultant) for Corridor Study ▶ <\$1 million for improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Community support ▶ Funding process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reduction in crashes ▶ Improved sense of safety from community members ▶ Development of Study 	
Action 5-B: Work with WWW or private consultant to identify proper infrastructure improvement countermeasures and funding sources to improve the corridor.							
Action 5-C: Implement internal code and policy changes needed and apply for funding for safety and infrastructure improvements.							
Action 5-D: Construct the identified safety and infrastructure improvements.							

Strategy 6: Establish a City/School Liaison Committee

Action 6-A: Coordinate quarterly meeting between City Council and School Board including proper administration officials to discuss items of mutual concern.	City, School District	Low	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Staff Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interest/availability of stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Completed quarterly meetings; Published meeting minutes online 	
Action 6-B: Maintain minutes of meetings to ensure follow-up.							

Strategy 7: Establish the Civitan Joint Recreation District

Action 7-A: Establish the Joint Recreation District pursuant to ORC Chapter 755.	City, Port Authority, Chamber, City School District	Medium	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Staff time ▶ \$10,000 – \$15,000 in start-up costs for legal expenses to draw documents and enact legislation (i.e., agreements, constitution and by-laws) ▶ <\$200,000 for first year operational budget of established Recreation District (includes staff, overhead, direct costs, and consulting services for marketing) ▶ \$20,000 - \$35,000 for consultant to identify new amenities, improvements to amenities, and opportunities for underutilized riverfront, and estimate costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Funding ▶ Floodplain regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Joint Recreation District agreements executed ▶ Constitution and by-laws adopted ▶ Funding mechanism enacted ▶ Identification of existing amenities to be improved and new amenities to be added ▶ Increase in utilization of recreational amenities 	
Action 7-B: Develop a marketing strategy for the Recreation District.							
Action 7-C: Create a signage and wayfinding plan for the Recreation District.							
Action 7-D: Identify existing amenities to be improved and new amenities to be added within the Recreation District, and estimate costs. Examples include, but are not limited to, improving the ballfields, playground, pool, and track, and adding a kayak launch and rental services, and food/beverage retail services.							
Action 7-E: Identify opportunities to enhance underutilized City-owned riverfront property for passive recreation opportunities such as, but not limited to, walking and biking paths, bird-watching, fishing, and picnic grounds, and estimate costs.							

Strategy 8: Create & Implement Ecotourism Plan

Action 8-A: Conduct research on ecotourism best management practices.

Action 8-B: Identify possible improvements to City infrastructure to promote ecotourism.

Action 8-C: Work with City stakeholders to draft and implement plan.

City

Medium

Medium

- ▶ Staff Time
- ▶ \$10,000 - \$30,000 for consultant to create plan

- ▶ Funding
- ▶ Lack of staff time

- ▶ Increase in tourism industry revenues

Strategy 9: Conduct Business Retention and Expansion (R&E) Efforts

Action 9-A: Create/ update list of City businesses.

Action 9-B: Contact businesses and hold interview.

Action 9-C: Set up programs and provide technical assistance to facilitate small business development, such as a Small Business Loan Guarantee Program, a Downtown Façade Grant Program, and Business Incubator Coworking/ Flex Spaces.

Action 9-D: Follow up with any issues identified in business interviews.

Action 9-E: Provide marketing and administrative technical assistance to small businesses.

City, Port Authority, Chamber

High

Short - Medium

- ▶ Staff Time

- ▶ Business owner interest, staff capacity and knowledge

- ▶ Regular schedule of R&E meetings
- ▶ Number of small businesses receiving technical assistance

Strategy 10: Advocate for Increased Natural Gas Supply

Action 10-A: Lobby lawmakers to assist the City to increase capacity availability.	City, Port Authority, Chamber	Medium	Short	► Staff Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Reliance on private energy providers to improve supply ► Progress of PUCO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Expanded/improved infrastructure ► Increased supply of natural gas 	
Action 10-B: Lobby Dominion Energy to provide increased capacity availability.							

Strategy 11: Address Absentee Landlords and Dilapidated Properties

Action 11-A: Evaluate and update as needed current ordinances to allow clean-up of dilapidated property.	City	Medium	Short	► Staff Time	► Code enforcement capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Reduction in percentage of renter-occupied properties that are considered to be dilapidated 	
Action 11-B: Create list of targeted properties not in compliance with ordinances.							
Action 11-C: Enforce ordinances to ensure cleanup of property.							

Strategy 12: Create a City Digital and Print Marketing Package

Action 12-A: Work with local educational institution (high school, Marietta College, WSCC, etc.) to create marketing package.	City, Chamber	Low	Short	► Staff Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Reach of marketing efforts ► Presence of local entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Number of new businesses established 	
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Strategy 13: Address Land Redevelopment Costs and Affordable Housing Options

Action 13-A: Evaluate options for creative financing such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to offset high costs (real or perceived) of redevelopment.	City, Port Authority	High	Medium	► Staff Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Funding ► Interest of land and property owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Increase in percentage of renter-occupied properties that are considered to be affordable 	
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Strategy 14: Create a Community Master Plan for the City of Belpre							
Action 14-A: Create a Request for Proposal for community planning services to draft the Community Master Plan.	City	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Staff Time▶ \$20,000 - \$100,000 for consultant to create plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Begin implementation of Community Master Plan▶ Development of Master Plan	
Action 14-B: Assign an oversight community to ensure that the planning process includes all needed parties and report to City Council.							
Action 14-C: Adopt the Community Master Plan.							
Strategy 15: Maintain and Update the Economic Development Strategy							
Action 15-A: Present a status update to Belpre City Council annually, including implementation status of each action.	City, Chamber	High	Short - Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Staff Time▶ \$20,000-\$30,000 for a consultant to update Plan▶ Possibly completed by the CIC (once Strategy 1 is implemented)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Annual presentations to Council▶ 5-Year Updates	
Action 15-B: Update the Economic Development Strategy every five years.							

Summary

In summary, the above strategies and corresponding actions each reflect the needs and desires of the City's stakeholders and community members. As previously mentioned, and as is integrated into Strategy 14, this Plan should be updated every five years. The "Current Status" column of the Action Plan Matrix should also be updated frequently (at least annually, if not more frequently) and presented to City Council on an annual basis.

This Strategy will be most successful with continued, renewed involvement from key stakeholders in the community. Each Plan Update should include them and incorporate their needs and desires.

5 | Appendices

Appendix A: Sources

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Appendix B: Stakeholder Engagement

Documentation contained in this appendix includes materials and summaries from the stakeholder engagement activities described in Chapter 3. The following items are included:

Stakeholder Exercise: October 23, 2020

- ▶ Agenda
- ▶ Presentation
- ▶ List of Attendees

Stakeholder Interviews: December 2020

- ▶ Stakeholder Email & Scripted Questions
- ▶ List of Stakeholder Comments

Economic Development Simulation Agenda

October 23, 2020
8:00am to 4:00pm
Belpre Senior Center

1. Welcome and Introduction of Guests
2. Explanation of Simulation
3. Presentation - Components of an Economic Development Program
4. Simulation – Roles and Responsibilities of Winning a Project
5. Question & Answer

*Lunch is scheduled to arrive at 12 PM.

City of Belpre

COMPONENTS OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



INTRODUCTIONS



PLANNING PROCESS TO DATE

PURPOSE OF TODAY

- Review components of a successful economic development program
- Explain each component
- Review real life scenarios of each key component
- Discuss what opportunities exist in the City of Belpre

4

WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- That is up to the City of Belpre
- There is no single definition for economic development
- There is no single strategy, policy, or program for achieving successful economic development
- Communities differ in their geographic and political strengths and weaknesses
- Each community, therefore, will have a unique set of challenges for economic development

5

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAN ENCOMPASSES THREE MAJOR AREAS

- Policies that government undertakes to **meet broad economic objectives** including inflation control, high employment, and sustainable growth.
- Policies and programs to **provide services** including building highways, managing parks, and providing medical access to the disadvantaged.
- Policies and programs explicitly directed at **improving the business climate** through specific efforts, business finance, marketing, neighborhood development, business retention and expansion, technology transfer, real estate development and others.

6

COMPONENTS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

7

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION



Known commonly as "BRE"



Business retention programs have become the most popular economic development efforts of communities nation-wide



Real job growth over time comes from local business expansion



Typically involve partnerships among public and private organizations that the opportunities of individual companies through periodic surveys, interviews, and visitations

8

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

The purpose is to establish relationships between community businesses and economic developers to strengthen existing companies, establish early warning systems to flag at-risk businesses that require assistance, and ensure that public programs meet local business needs

Business retention initiatives usually include a mechanism for linking expanding businesses with public programs designed to mitigate growing pains and regulatory issues.

9

TRENDS IN BRE

Low-interest loans, available to businesses purchasing land, refurbishing buildings, and new equipment.

Bond programs are created to help lower the cost of borrowing for a business; the interest on a bond is much lower than on traditional bank loans.

Increased use of zoning to encourage and discourage desirable and undesirable business expansion and retention

Low-cost training provided for the workforce of businesses and industries, allowing them to remain competitive, this is usually provided locally through a variety of counties or state programs.

Tax credits for businesses encouraging business retention and expansion.

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TRENDS IN BRE

Business cluster group strategies are increasingly used to assist BRE. Sharing concerns such as infrastructure, zoning and quality of life enables a more powerful voice to be heard, influencing business climate improvement.

One-stop permitting centers enable businesses to begin or expand operations quickly.

Creation of Planned Manufacturing Districts (PMDs) which create tiered zoning reserving the core of an area for manufacturing

Ensuring business finance availability is an important part of BRE including: Finance, Incentives, Taxes, Real Estate, Workforce Development, Regulations and Technology

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BROWNFIELDS

Brownfields are "commercial or industrial sites that are abandoned or under-utilized and have some degree of environmental contamination, whether real or perceived" – *US EPA*

Historically, brownfields, which tend to be located in economically distressed neighborhoods, were not redeveloped because environmental clean-up costs were high, pertinent regulations were complex, and unclear liability dissuaded both developers and banks from investing in these projects.

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BROWNFIELDS

Brownfields remediation adds new developable land to a community's inventory, **uses existing infrastructure**, and adds new construction, investment and jobs to the city.

Communities can use brownfields redevelopment to meet a series of goals, including neighborhood revitalization, open space creation, crime reduction, **blight clearance**, workforce development and growth management.

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Brownfield redevelopment projects usually focus on industrial uses like manufacturing and processing.



Mixed-use projects are tied to efforts to curb suburban sprawl and foster urban revitalization. Redeveloping brownfields contributes to communities plans for smart growth.



A growing interest in providing open green spaces within urban areas has sparked the redevelopment of brownfields into parks and recreational areas.



\$1 of public investment in brownfield redevelopment leverages an average private investment of about \$2.50.

TRENDS IN BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT

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BUSINESS CLIMATE



BUSINESS CLIMATE INDICATES HOW STATES STATE, REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLICIES, RELATIONSHIPS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES SUPPORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.



A GOOD BUSINESS CLIMATE ALLOWS BUSINESSES TO CONDUCT THEIR AFFAIRS WITH MINIMAL INTERFERENCE WHILE ACCESSING QUALITY HIGH INPUTS AND CUSTOMERS AT LOW COSTS

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BUSINESS CLIMATE

Key factors used in the measure of business climate include:

- Business and income tax levels
- Workforce availability
- Energy costs
- Market size
- Quality of services
- Cost of living
- Quality of life
- Environmental regulation
- Permitting, licensing, and various reporting regulations
- Real estate costs and availability
- Infrastructure
- Access to financing and capital
- Incentives

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TRENDS IN BUSINESS CLIMATE

The pervasive need for an available skilled workforce has spurred workforce development initiatives, with a particular emphasis on training in new technologies.

De-regulation of utilities has allowed businesses to purchase lower cost energy.

Localities now offer incentives, such as tax breaks, to businesses that are expanding locally not just those that are relocating to the area for the first time.

Income tax is kept as low as possible because many skilled workers demand high net pay and prefer working and living where they have maximum purchasing power.

Local governments create one-stop centers to streamline the process for obtaining business permits when beginning or expanding operations.

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TRENDS IN BUSINESS CLIMATE

Public and private sector investment initiatives in telecommunications infrastructure ensure that high speed, high bandwidth communications are available for business.

To encourage the growth of e-commerce, the Internet Tax Freedom Act signed in 1998 imposed a three-year moratorium on new state and local taxes for online transactions and sales.

Localities focus resources on improving arts, culture and other the quality of life factors to attract and retain skilled workers that businesses seek.

Development of affordable housing attracts and retain key workers who may other wise be priced out of the local housing market in a growing economy.

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CLUSTERS

- Clusters are geographic concentrations of interdependent, complementary and/or competing businesses in related industries that trade with each other.
- Clusters develop and change over time, stemming from the long-term economic history, companies and demand for products, and services locally.
- Clusters act as a powerful magnet for business location and create diverse pools of skilled workers.



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CLUSTERS

They also attract new suppliers that congregate nearby for increased efficiency.

Clusters thrive on a steady stream of skilled workers, finance, infrastructure and a good business climate.

Spin-off businesses started up by experienced workers also foster a competitive spirit that stimulates growth and innovative strategic alliances.

Built around core export orientated firms, industry clusters generate new wealth in a region.

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TRENDS IN BUSINESS CLUSTERS



To prevent talent poaching, regions are using business clusters to identify shared skill needs to prepare joint workforce development and training programs.



Economic developers identify the workforce needs of local clusters and encourage universities, colleges and schools to provide relevant skills training corresponding to the needs of local clusters.



Communities are targeting clusters that provide well-paid jobs and promise high growth including:

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Cluster Types

Nanotechnology

Bio-tech

Pharmaceutical

Optics

Information Technology

Electronics

Defense

Aerospace

Health and Beauty

Logistics

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TRENDS IN BUSINESS CLUSTERS

Resource-based and manufacturing clusters like wood, plastics, brewing, and auto industries strongly influencing regional economies.

Seed funds used to assist cluster development, leverage private investment, and improvements made to access risk and venture capital.

Clusters working together to attract federal research and development funding.

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TRENDS IN BUSINESS CLUSTERS

Regional and local organizations facilitate the formation of industry associations, networks and support centers addressing common needs to help businesses implement new technologies and business practices.

Identifying and removing barriers to the commercialization of university-developed technology and encouraging access to federal laboratories.

Cluster analysis is used to help identify missing or weak links, making these businesses targets of business recruitment programs.

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DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Downtown development is the promotion of development, redevelopment, and revitalization of the central business districts and adjacent areas in a city.

Commercial and residential growth in the suburbs has contributed to the decline of downtown.

Downtowns traditionally are the centers of both business and culture.

Developing downtowns involves a range of activities, including marketing for both business and tourist attraction, building or improving infrastructure, clean-up initiatives, property redevelopment and reuse, and retention programs.

The purpose of these initiatives is to create an attractive environment to increase the number and variety of businesses downtown and bring in shoppers and tourists.

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TRENDS IN DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Safety and crime prevention encourage downtown visits.

Arts districts - with their galleries, cinemas, opera houses, artist housing, and theaters - are emerging as an important revitalization tool and are continuing to grow in popularity in downtowns of all sizes.

Mixed-use downtown developments that include retail, residential, and entertainment, create downtowns that are busy around the clock all week long.

Retailers are showing a renewed interest in central business districts (CBDs), due to the potential size of untapped markets.

Large scale projects are developed to stimulate lagging areas. Waterfront development utilizes neglected or under-utilized downtown waterfronts to provide recreation, business, commercial, and residential areas.

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TRENDS IN DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

The redevelopment and preservation of railroad stations to attract business near the stations and help to revive surrounding downtown areas.

Some communities are moving away from developing large projects such as sports stadiums (attracting people only on game days) towards smaller-scale projects.

Communities develop open space to create improve the quality of life in urban cores.

Hotel construction in downtown areas meets the growing demand for accommodation from people on business, and also acts as a spur encouraging tourists.

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TRENDS IN DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Integrating transportation and land use in downtown areas produces a more efficient transportation system whilst reducing congestion and pollution:

Creating and extending cycle routes

Developing more integrated mass transit systems & Building pedestrian friendly streetscapes

Market research has become a key component of downtown developments.

Understanding local markets helps to decide which potential projects will meet local demand and receive support.

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TRENDS IN DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Downtowns have also developed fiber optic infrastructures to support IT businesses.

Information technology businesses are moving into downtown offices with large open plans to nurture team work and collaboration.

Maps of fiber optic cable help businesses locate near to fiber cable in downtown areas.

Funding for downtown projects has become more widely available and easier to obtain, due to public, media and government interest shown in CBDs.

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Entrepreneurship is the process of creating a business idea and turning it into a real business.



Entrepreneurs create new goods and services based on new technologies or demands.



Entrepreneurs are the engines of the economy in every generation, so many economic development efforts support their needs in the hope of creating new employment prospects.

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship development programs provide potential entrepreneurs with the capital, training, and technical assistance they need to start-up and grow their business.

Incubators are one of the many initiatives used for entrepreneurship development, but programs also include technical assistance, financing, legislation, marketing, accounting, and networking.

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TRENDS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurs create approximately 600,000 - 800,000 new businesses each year.

Skilled individuals leave large businesses to become entrepreneurs because they see:

- (1) New and emerging market opportunities
- (2) Greater career progression/use of skills independence

Graduates and university students in IT-related fields are becoming entrepreneurs in IT, e-commerce, and electronic engineering businesses.

Entrepreneurs need training and technical assistance; technology incubators empower entrepreneurs by giving them access to equipment, funding, and mentoring.

Entrepreneur training programs through local colleges give entrepreneurs skills and business acumen to develop ideas into real businesses. Programs cover issues such as financing, legislation, marketing, and accounting practices.

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TRENDS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Programs aimed at developing women and minority entrepreneurs, often offer technical assistance, access to capital, administrative services, information, networking, and incubators.

Angel venture capitalists target university alumni and students for their connections to cutting edge technologies, research and development.

States are trying to mobilize networks of angel investors who meet regularly and listen to presentations from local companies seeking investments.

Growth in the entrepreneur population has been fueled by investments of personal savings and lower risk among those with few or no children.

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Businesses will locate where there is labor available.

Approximately 1.1 million jobs went unfilled in 2019, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, placing workforce development on many legislative agendas. Policies intended to ensure employability by aligning the skills of employees with national market trends and local business needs are popular among local policymakers.

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TRENDS IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Many economic development agencies view workforce development as their top priority.

Targeted social media campaigns seek individuals looking for new opportunities using specific algorithms.

Communities recognize the need to close the skills gap by showcasing the new way of manufacturing work.

Partnering with technical schools and other educational institutions is critical for developing stable workforce.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE

36

Purpose

An exercise to discuss workflow, responsibility and authority during the business attraction process

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Scenario

Site selector is seeking 30 acres. 125 new jobs are associated with the project.

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Project Needs

BUILDING / LAND REQUIREMENTS

- Greenfield Size: 30 acres (Phase I), with ability to expand up to 75 acres.
- Existing Facility Size: Facilities at a minimum of 250k SF will be considered if they have the ability to expand to 500-750k SF within 24 months.
- Clear Height: 25' +
- Floors: 4-6k PSI floor load
- Docks: 15 dock doors (minimum)
- Occupancy: Single tenant preferred
- Ownership: Prefer lease with option to buy, but can consider purchase

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Project Needs

UTILITIES

- Electric: 325k to 975k kWh per month.
- Natural Gas: 1,000 - 3,000 MCF per month
- Water/Wastewater: 1,300 - 4,000 GPD

PROJECT TIMING

- Site selection decision: Q1 2022

OTHER DETAILS

- Company does have noise associated with production process and wants to be sensitive to immediate adjoining uses. Therefore, proximity to residential uses is a concern.

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Check 1 – Project Request for Information (RFI)

1. What organization handles the RFI intake?
2. What local organizations are notified of the RFI?
3. What organization is responsible for responding to the RFI?

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Check 2 – Property Identification

1. Database of Properties?
2. Who owns the property?
3. Who negotiates with property owner?
4. Does property have proper vetting?
 - a. Environmental
 - b. Archeological
 - c. Geotechnical
 - d. Historical

42

Check 3 – Incentives

1. Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)
 - a. Pre-1994 CRA
 - b. Post-1994 CRA
 - c. Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)
2. Income Tax (City) Rebate
3. State Offers
 - a. Jobs Ohio (JO)
4. Joint Economic Development District (JEDD)
5. Other Creative Financing Programs

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Check 4 – Utilities

1. Who is Service Provider and Do They Have Capacity?
 - a. Electric
 - b. Natural Gas
 - c. Water
 - d. Wastewater
 - e. Broadband

44

Check 5 – Workforce

1. What Skill Set Does the Business Need?
2. Relationship with Technical College
 - a. WSCC
3. Relationship with Traditional Schools
 - a. Marietta College
 - b. Belpre City Schools

45

Check 6 – Noise

1. Does City Have Noise Ordinance?
 - a. Will the facility violate city noise ordinance?
 - b. Remediation techniques available?
 - c. Is that a deal breaker?
 - d. Are you ready to deal with resident complaints?
 - e. Who has authority to make that decision?

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Check 7 – Transportation

1. Can the regional transportation network handle the project?
 - a. River Port
 - b. Interstate
 - c. Rail
 - d. Intermodal
 - e. Air

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Check 8 – Land Use

1. Is the property zoned correctly?
 - a. If not, what is the process to rezone
 - b. Remember - speed to market is critical for the business
2. Height restrictions can play a role for some projects
3. FEMA Flood Zone
4. Check for deed restrictions or covenants
5. City permitting process will be questioned

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Check 9 – What Did We Miss

1. Belpre is unique with its own advantages.
2. How do we sell that to the business during this process?

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General Notes on Projects

1. Response to an RFI is typically 48 - 72 hours.
2. Potentially another 6-18 months until decision by company.
3. Be prepared to loose. You won't win each project.
4. By planning and being ready to respond shows the company you may be a good fit for them.

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Why Belpre, Ohio?

Discuss what opportunities exist in the City of Belpre that we haven't covered today

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Contact

Burton Planning Services
 Jim Lenner
 Community & Economic Development Director
 740.817.3693
jlenner@burtonplanning.com



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Economic Development Simulation Invite/Attendance List, October 23, 2020

Last Name	First name	Representing	Email	Attendance
Brown	Ashley	Peoples bank regional manager/BACC VP	ashley.brown@pebo.com	no
Dennis	Lyndsay	Park. Art Center planner/ City resident	lyndsaydennis@yahoo.com	no
Doyle	Rob	<u>1st Mutual Bank CEO</u>	rdoyle@1stmutualbank.com	yes
Drake	Judy	Belpre Womans Club, city resident	hltjudy@suddenlink.net	yes
DuVall	Marian	Exit Realty	warianduvall@gmail.com	yes
Erlwein	Lance	Belpre City Schools Treasurer/BACC board	bc_lerlwein@belpre.k12.oh.us	no
Gant	Tim	Belpre City Council	timsue1998@yahoo.com	no
Gilbert	Janet	BACC Board/Econ Dev Comm/ Real Living Realty	janetgilbert@suddenlink.net	yes
Green	Nathan	city resident/media amd marketing	denbro9899@gmail.com	yes
Greenley	Jeff	Belpre City Schools superintendent	bc_igreenley@belpre.k12.oh.us	yes
Hannah	Ryleigh	Marietta College student/city resident	rhannah20@belpre.k12.oh.us	yes
Hobitzell	Connie	City of Belpre Safety Service Director	belpressd@lumos.net	yes
Locke	Bill	Belpre City Council	speedybill@sbcglobal.net	yes
Lorentz	Mike	Mayor, City of Belpre	belpremayor@lumos.net	yes
Martin	Larry	Belpre City Council	lmartin@champion-industries.com	no
McCloy	Bob	Econ Dev. Comm/Rotary/BACC Board	bmccloy2003@yahoo.com	yes
McGowan	Bonnie	Belpre Sr. Center Director	bmcgowan@oneillcenter.com	no
Miller	Nancy	BACC President, Miller Prosthetics	nancymiller@millerpo.co	yes
Morris	Curt	Kraton/ BACC Board	Curtis.morris@kraton.com	no
Neff	Jon	Bob's Market manager	jon.neff@bobsmarket.com	no
O'Donnell	Cathy	Belpre City Schools Board/BACC employee	codonnel@kent.edu	yes
Rauch	Bob	Econ Dev. Comm./ Main St. Car Wash	bobrauch13@aol.com	yes
Roush	Jesse	SEO Port/ BACC Econ Dev. Committee	jesse@seohioport.com	yes
Tanner	Abbey	Peddlers Junction/BACC board	abbeydtanner@yahoo.com	yes
Totten	Jeff	MOV2Go producer/ Econ Dev Committee	tvaudio4hire@aol.com	yes
Waller	Karen	BACC Exec Director/ Rotary	wallerkaren53@suddenlink.net	yes
Williams	Travis	Belpre Church of Christ minister/city resident	twilliams143@yahoo.com	yes
Wolfe	Shawna	OU/ city resident	wolfesab75@gmail.com	yes
Wonycott	Jessie	landowner, rental owner	jwonycott@gmail.com	yes

Stakeholder Interviews Script

Introduction

In cooperation with the Belpre Chamber of Commerce and Southeastern Ohio Port Authority, the City of Belpre is undergoing an economic development planning process to create an actionable plan for the next five to 15 years. Burton Planning Services has been asked to facilitate the strategy creation process.

The main goal of the economic development strategy is to plan a path to improving the economic well-being of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life. As there is no single definition for economic development, there is no single strategy, policy, or program for achieving successful economic development. Communities differ in their geographic and political strengths and weaknesses. Each community, therefore, will have a unique set of challenges for economic development.

As part of the process, I am contacting you to request (up to) 30 minutes of your time for a phone call interview to gather opinions on the current and future economic health of the City. The information gathered from these interviews will help shape the Strategy, goals and objectives.

I have blocked off December 4 and December 7 to help accommodate busy schedules. This [link](#) will take you to a calendar in which you can reserve a date and time. If easier, you can simply reply to this email with your meeting preference.

On behalf of the City, Chamber and Port Authority, I sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in this process.

City of Belpre Economic Survey of Stakeholders: List of Questions

1. What are Belpre's strengths?
2. What are Belpre's challenges?
3. How should Belpre's challenges/problems be addressed?
4. How do you feel about growth and change in Belpre?
5. What would you like to preserve in the town?
6. What would you like to change in the town?
7. What kinds of assets are missing now that you would like to have here? This could be anything from sewers and another elementary school to specific types of businesses, populations, buildings, services, etc.
8. What makes Belpre a good place to do business?
9. What makes Belpre a difficult place for business? What makes it difficult to run a business in Belpre and how can the City help?
10. What could businesses do together to help? What kind of programs could help business? What kind of group or organization could businesses collaborate on to advance their needs and interests?
11. Are there other businesses or industries that you would like to see in Belpre?

Stakeholder Comments Summary

Comment

Regulations and ordinances are crippling new/existing businesses
Younger generation not interested in participating
Belpre is over regulated
Has potential to be great bedroom community
Needs to be walkable with town center concept
Natural gas supply is prohibiting growth
Main St/Washington Blvd need improved with sidewalks/etc.
No one is enforcing current housing ordinances
Relationship between council, staff and community isn't consistent
Feeling of community is lost
Structure of council needs revised
Must appeal to youth
School buildings aren't modern
City should be helpful; not heavy handed
Council is receptive to change
Close to Rt 50 and Rt 7
Many different parts working on the same project but not in concert
City has sprawled with no major identity to commercial districts
Need to have conversation on taxing incentives and alternative mechanisms.
School funding is concerning
Must look at grants and creative financing
Get Council/staff/school/county on same page with development
City should represent they are open for business
Focus on Main Street and Washington Blvd
Must set up CIC for one stop shop
Other towns have acted together which attracts development
Warehousing and distribution should be attraction focus
Must be creative in lowering land prices
Focus/develop waterfront, river access and Civitan Park
Must attract a destination that makes people want to visit city
Can't be all things to all people. Need a plan to know who we want to be.
Must get youth to attend BCS; not Warren
Website needs updated

Appendix C: Implementation Resources and Best Practices

Strategy 1: Create a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)

Resources

- ▶ Ohio Revised Code Chapter 1724: Community Improvement Corporations: <https://codes.ohio.gov/orc/1724>
- ▶ Chapter 80 of the Ohio County Commissioners Handbook, County Commissioners Association of Ohio (2015): <https://www.ccao.org/wp-content/uploads/HBKCHAP080%207-16-15.pdf>
- ▶ “Community Improvement Corporations CIC’s” Presentation from the Auditor of State’s Annual Local Government Officials’ Conference (2015): [https://ohioauditor.gov/trainings/lgoc/2016/Community%20Improvement%20Corporations%20\(CICs\).pdf](https://ohioauditor.gov/trainings/lgoc/2016/Community%20Improvement%20Corporations%20(CICs).pdf)

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ Shelby, Ohio, Community Improvement Corporation: <https://www.shelbycic.com>
- ▶ Bexley, Ohio Community Improvement Corporation: <https://bexley.org/community-improvement-corporation>
- ▶ Newark, Ohio, Community Improvement Corporation: <https://www.wedignewark.com>
- ▶ Perry County, Ohio, Community Improvement Corporation: <http://www.perrycountyohio.net/agencies-and-offices/perry-county-community-improvement-corporation>

Strategy 2: Update the City Website

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ Lebanon, Ohio: <https://www.lebanonohio.gov>
- ▶ Tipp City, Ohio: <https://www.tippcityohio.gov>
- ▶ Canal Winchester, Ohio: <https://www.canalwinchesterohio.gov>

Strategy 3: Identify Sites and Secure Funding for Brownfield Revitalization

Resources

- ▶ Ohio Environment Protection Agency, Grant-Funded Brownfield Assistance: https://epa.ohio.gov/derr/SABR/Grant_Assistance.aspx
- ▶ Ohio Development Services Agency, Ohio Brownfield Fund: https://development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_brownfield.htm

Strategy 4: Review and Revise Zoning Regulations

Resources

- ▶ American Legal Code Library for Ohio: <https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/regions/oh>
- ▶ Form-Based Code Institute: <https://formbasedcodes.org/>
 - Form-Based Code Overview (from Newark, Ohio): http://www.newarkohio.net/userfiles/files/Department%20of%20Development/Projects%20and%20Programs/FBC_Overview%26Process.pdf

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ Tiffin, Ohio, Zoning Code Update: https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/tiffin/latest/tiffin_oh/0-0-0-14525
- ▶ Tipp City, Ohio, Zoning Code: https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/tippcity/latest/tippcity_oh/0-0-0-13210

- ▶ Westerville, Ohio, Zoning Code Update: <https://www.westerville.org/services/planning-development/planning-zoning/zoning-code-update>

Strategy 5: Study and Implement Safety and Walkability Improvements to Washington Boulevard and Main Street

Resources

- ▶ Ohio Department of Transportation's Safety Program & Resources: <https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odot/programs/Highway+Safety/welcome#page=1>
- ▶ National Complete Streets Coalition Resources: <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/>
- ▶ National Association of City Transportation Officials, Urban Street Design Guide: <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/>
- ▶ Small Town and Rural Design Guide: <https://ruraldesignguide.com/>

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ City of Huber Heights, Ohio, Brandt Pike Target Revitalization Plan: https://hhoh.org/DocumentCenter/View/2667/Brandt_Pike_Target_Revitalization_Plan_FINAL_DRAFT_2017_0512
- ▶ City of Urbana, Ohio, South Main Street Corridor Plan: https://www.urbanaohio.com/uploads/1/2/4/6/124631710/urbanamainstreetcorridor_finaldraft_2020_1102_compressed.pdf

Strategy 6: Establish a City/School Liaison Committee

Resources

- ▶ School Board/City Council Collaboration Article: <https://insights.diligent.com/board-collaboration-public-education/how-school-boards-can-collaborate-with-city-councils-to-achieve-goals>
- ▶ Local Governments and Schools Systems Partnership Policy Guide: <https://cviog.uga.edu/resources/documents/publications/local-governments-and-school-systems.pdf>

Strategy 7: Establish the Civitan Joint Recreation District

Resources

- ▶ Ohio Revised Code Chapter 755: Parks; Recreation: <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/755>
- ▶ Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Program, United States Environmental Protection Agency: <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities>
- ▶ Evaluation Resource Hub, National Recreation and Park Association: <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/evaluation-resource-hub/>

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ Johnstown, Ohio, Sample Resolution Authorizing Joint Park District Agreement (draft): see attachment
- ▶ Johnstown, Ohio, Sample Joint Recreation District Board Constitution and By-Laws: see attachment
- ▶ Bellefontaine [Ohio] Joint Recreation District: <https://bellefontaineoh.myrec.com/info/default.aspx>
- ▶ Fredericktown [Ohio] Recreation District: <http://fredericktownparks.org/>
- ▶ Richfield [Ohio] Joint Recreation District: <https://www.rjrd.org/>

Strategy 8: Create & Implement Ecotourism Plan

Resources

- ▶ “Travel and Tourism” Report, Ohio Department of Transportation. (2019).
https://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/SPR/StatewidePlanning/access.ohio/AO45%20White%20Papers/AO45_WhitePaper_TravelAndTourism.pdf
- ▶ “Tourism Strategic Planning: The Tried and True”, eConsult Solutions Inc. (2020).
<https://econsultsolutions.com/tourism-strategic-planning-the-tried-and-true/>
- ▶ “Ohio Tourism Works” Report:
https://www.ohiotravel.org/aws/OHTRV/asset_manager/get_file/155185?ver=394
- ▶ “Master Planning for Tourism in Michigan” Report, Michigan Chapter of the American Planning Association:
<https://miapa.memberclicks.net/assets/images/Tourism/Master%20Planning%20for%20Tourism%20in%20Michigan%20web.pdf>

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ Marietta, Ohio Tourism Study (2018):
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwGsbdSC4rRvZE5tbWk0Mk5ZeWgxZU1qb2x4TIZvZURhVU5J/view>
 - Associated article: <https://www.ohiowatershed.org/one-ohio-river-town-thats-using-outdoor-recreation-to-boost-its-economy.html>
- ▶ Oregon City, Oregon: <https://www.orcity.org/economicdevelopment/tourism-strategic-plan>

Strategy 9: Create a Business Retention and Expansion (R&E) Program

Resources

- ▶ Ohio Development Services Agency
 - Community Services Division: <https://development.ohio.gov/communityservices.htm>
 - Community Grants, Loans, Bonds & Tax Credits:
https://development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_grantsloansbonds.htm
 - Business Bonds, Grants, Loans & Tax Credits:
https://development.ohio.gov/bs/bs_busgrantsloans.htm
- ▶ JobsOhio: <https://www.jobsohio.com/>
- ▶ Small Business Administration: <https://www.sba.gov/>
 - Small Business Development Centers: <https://americassbdc.org/find-your-sbdc/>
- ▶ “Buy Local” programs
 - American Independent Business Alliance organization: <https://www.amiba.net/>
 - Institute for Local Self-Reliance: <https://ilsr.org/>
- ▶ Main Street America program: <https://www.mainstreet.org/home>; Heritage Ohio:
<https://www.heritageohio.org/>
- ▶ Downtown articles:
 - “A Healthy Downtown is Key to a Strong Community”: <http://plannersweb.com/2013/09/healthy-downtown-key-strong-community/>
 - “Downtown Revitalization is Economic Development”: <http://www.downtownsherman.com/economic-development/>
- ▶ Incubator Guide: https://createprosperity.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/IncubatorGuide_NCGROWTH_5_2020_1.pdf
- ▶ U.S. Chamber of Commerce, “What is a Business Incubator?” article:
<https://www.uschamber.com/co/start/startup/business-incubators-explained>

- ▶ University of Wisconsin Extension, “Seven Components of a Successful Business Incubator” article: <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/downtowneconomics/files/2012/08/Seven-Components-of-a-Successful-Business-Incubator.pdf>
- ▶ Coworking Resources organization: <https://www.coworkingresources.org/>

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ Lebanon, Ohio: https://www.lebanonohio.gov/residents/business/economic_development/index.php
- ▶ Wilmington, Ohio: <https://wilmingtonoh.org/working/business-incentives>
- ▶ Newark, Ohio, Small Business Loan Guarantee Program: <http://www.newarkohio.net/city-services/departments/development/programs/economic-development/small-business-loan-program>
- ▶ Newark, Ohio, Retention & Expansion and other economic development programs: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/efz8j5lsm8k7i6e/AAA8lyLdrzbWTIKL2pjNyobZa?dl=0>

Strategy 10: Advocate for Increased Natural Gas Supply

Resources

- ▶ Shale Crescent USA: <https://shalecrescentusa.com/>

Strategy 11: Address Absentee Landlords and Dilapidated Properties

Resources

- ▶ International Property Maintenance Code: <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IPMC2018/preface>
- ▶ Greater Ohio Policy Center, “Using Rental Registries as a Blight Mitigation Tactic” article: <https://www.greaterohio.org/blog/2019/3/8/rental-registries-as-a-blight-mitigation-tactic>
- ▶ Center for Community Progress, Rental Registration and Licensing information: <https://www.communityprogress.net/tool-1-rental-registration-licensing-pages-207.php>

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ Boardman Township, Ohio, Rental Registration Program: <https://www.boardmantwp.com/zoning/landlord-registration>
- ▶ City of Fairborn, Ohio, Property Maintenance Program: https://www.fairbornoh.gov/government/development_services/property_maintenance_division/index.php
- ▶ City of Mount Vernon, Ohio, Property Maintenance Program: <https://mountvernonohio.org/departments/property-maintenance-enforcement-office>
- ▶ City of Bucyrus, Ohio, Property Maintenance Program: <https://www.cityofbucyrusoh.us/property-maintenance.php>
- ▶ City of Newark, Ohio, Property Maintenance Program: <http://www.newarkohio.net/city-services/departments/public-safety/property-maintenance>

Strategy 12: Create a City Digital and Print Marketing Package

Resources

- ▶ “The Secret to Marketing Your City”, Medium. (2018): <https://medium.com/@NYUUrbanlab/the-secret-to-marketing-your-city-af563cde244>

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ Explore Licking County: <https://explorelc.org>
- ▶ Explore Granville: <http://www.visitgranvilleohio.com>
- ▶ Lebanon, Ohio: https://cms8.revize.com/revize/lebanonoh/Business/2015LebanonCommunityProfile-e-version_201607221251532519.pdf

Strategy 13: Address Land Redevelopment Costs & Affordable Housing Options

Resources

- ▶ Ohio Development Services Agency, Tax Increment Financing Programs: https://development.ohio.gov/bs/bs_tif.htm
- ▶ OSU Extension, “Ohio’s Tax Increment Financing Program” fact sheet: [https://www.cdfa.net/cdfa/cdfaweb.nsf/ord/21d888e22f58deb188257936006740f6/\\$file/ohio%20tif%20fact%20sheet.pdf](https://www.cdfa.net/cdfa/cdfaweb.nsf/ord/21d888e22f58deb188257936006740f6/$file/ohio%20tif%20fact%20sheet.pdf)
- ▶ Ohio Auditor, “Tax Increment Financing and Residential Incentive Districts” presentation/training: <https://ohioauditor.gov/trainings/lgoc/2010/Tax%20Increment%20Financing%20and%20Residential%20Incentive%20District.pdf>
- ▶ Lorain, Ohio, Port and Finance Authority, Tax Increment Financing webpage: <https://www.lorainport.com/development/tif/>
- ▶ Ohio Development Services Agency, Affordable Housing Programs: https://development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_affordhousing.htm
- ▶ National Low Income Housing Coalition: <https://nlihc.org/explore-issues/why-we-care/problem>
- ▶ Greater Ohio Policy Center, Affordable Housing Learning Exchange Program: <https://www.greaterohio.org/affordable-housing-learning-exchange>

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ Boardman Township, Ohio, Rental Registration Program: <https://www.boardmantwp.com/zoning/landlord-registration/>

Strategy 14: Create a Community Master Plan for the City of Belpre

Resources

- ▶ Ohio Chapter of the American Planning Association: http://www.ohioplanning.org/aws/APAOH/pt/sp/home_page

Best Practices & Sample Communities

- ▶ Athens, Ohio, Comprehensive Plan: <http://ci.athens.oh.us/DocumentCenter/Index/44>
- ▶ Johnstown, Ohio, Comprehensive Plan: <http://burtonplanning.com/onlinecompplan>