



Economic Development Strategic Plan

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Franklin County
Board of Commissioners

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING

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This Franklin County Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) provides a roadmap for the next generation of economic development work in Franklin County. It establishes a resident-centric framework for economic development while sustaining a commitment to business engagement and private sector job creation. The Strategic Plan is data-driven, has been informed by extensive stakeholder engagement, and complements other regional planning and economic development efforts. The EDSP leverages the full resources of the Economic Development and Planning (EDP) Department and supports the broader mission of Franklin County government.

This Strategic Plan:

- Helps Franklin County deploy its economic development and planning resources in the best way possible to meet resident and commercial needs;
- Strives to address the region's most pressing economic challenges as they affect Franklin County;
- Is timely as new regional priorities are emerging and EDP's partners within the County and across the region are also undertaking their own strategic reviews;
- Has been created in a spirit of collaboration with EDP's many partners and allies so that it complements rather than overlaps other initiatives; and
- Provides tangible takeaways to sharpen Franklin County's economic development focus for the next five years.

What's new:

- Affordable housing as a focus area
- Revamped navigation function to expand networks and build relationships to bring new perspectives to Franklin County's economic development work
- A more strategic and intentional approach to partnerships
- Emphasis on engaging residents more directly in the economic development conversation
- Strengthened commitment to leadership on the region's most pressing economic challenges affecting Franklin County residents
- Closer collaboration among the County's Planning, Community Development, and Economic Development Divisions

What continues:

- Judicious use of inducements and other financing mechanisms
- Dedication to good governance and careful stewardship of County funds
- Concern for sustainable economic development
- Commitment to regional objectives
- Support for private sector job creation

Mission

County Board of Commissioners

The Franklin County Board of Commissioners is committed to serving, supporting, and uplifting all residents of Franklin County through a lens of respect and human-centered care. We strive to ensure that every resident's needs are met on the fundamental social, wellness, economic, and environmental levels. We are dedicated to constant innovation, sustainability, and progress, for the sake of providing the best possible quality of life for all residents.¹

Economic Development and Planning Department

To be the best county community and economic development organization in the State of Ohio through the use of innovative public policy that makes significant and lasting contributions to enhance the quality of life for the residents of Franklin County.²

EDP supports the County Board of Commissioners mission by implementing resident-centric economic development and planning policies that strive to improve access to opportunity, quality of work, and quality of place. EDP works in collaboration with departments across Franklin County and partners throughout the region in pursuit of this mission.

EDP includes the Economic Development, Community Development, Geographic Information Systems, Planning and Zoning, and Building Services Divisions.

The Economic Development Division provides technical assistance and develops policies to support the County's economic priorities. The Division manages tax abatements, grants, and other targeted inducements to encourage commercial activities that create good jobs, strengthen the local tax base, promote economic well-being, and improve economic opportunities for people in Franklin County.

EDP Economic Development Goals

1. Economic development activities and programs should align with and contribute toward the region's collective economic goals of increased private investment, job growth, and rising wages.
2. Economic development activities and programs should promote an equitable quality of life and place for all Franklin County residents.

¹ <https://commissioners.franklincountyohio.gov>

² Adapted from the 2019 EDP Budget Presentation and 2017 Annual Report.





3. Economic development activities and programs should play a role in lifting Franklin County residents out of poverty.
4. Economic development activities and programs should help create an economic environment where entrepreneurs of diverse backgrounds and incomes are able to startup and grow businesses across all industry sectors.
5. Economic development activities and programs should promote and improve the environmental sustainability of the region.
6. Economic development activities and programs should contribute to the fiscal sustainability of the County and its partners - *either* in terms of tax revenue generated as a result of economic growth, program income, and/or in a decreased need for public spending.
7. Economic development activities and programs should fill gaps in local economic development programming in order to support the growth and development of the political subdivisions within Franklin County.

SWOT Summary

The *Franklin County Economic Development Capacity-Focused SWOT* (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis) examines the strategic issues that will affect Franklin County's economic future and highlights factors that County leaders can alter or support to achieve their objectives or address their concerns. It draws on input from focus groups, interviews, opportunity workshops, review of current and new plans and reports, and analysis of quantitative data.






The SWOT analysis summarizes Franklin County's competitive position across four capacities: People, Business, Place, and Policy & Governance. People, Business, and Place are all critical to building a successful economy. Strategic capacity investment requires policies that can address the long-term growth and critical issues facing the County and the Columbus metropolitan area. Thus, Policy & Governance leadership is a consequential fourth capacity for Franklin County EDP as it pursues an equitable and inclusive economic and community development strategy. Attention to these four capacities will enable Franklin County and its communities to be prepared for growth and economic opportunities in order to achieve their own economic development objectives.

The table below summarizes the analytical findings on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by People, Business, Place, and Policy & Governance capacity.

	 People	 Business	 Place	 Policy and Governance
Strengths	Young population Educational attainment Population and job growth Declining unemployment Good labor force participation Rising wages but disparities	Business growth FIRE industry advantage Health care industry dominance Growth entrepreneurship (revenue and employment)	Reputation of attractive city/neighborhoods (although uneven) Rickenbacker land and central location Logistics assets	EDP talent and willing to experiment Good governance New regional leaders and energy Collaborative comprehensive economic development
Weaknesses	Persistent poverty dynamics Income and racial segregation Working poor Regional workforce system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce education levels and preparation • Fragmented workforce system approach • Soft skills collaboration with technical skills training Workforce mobility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial mismatch 	Manufacturing losses and economic impact Job growth in low wage occupations/local serving sectors like healthcare Lack of priority sectors Entrepreneurial ecosystem and diversification of support; open innovation and access to capital Barriers to entrepreneurship diversity and small business	Inequitable growth Transportation, transit network and utilities Housing dynamics; affordability; inequitable impact on working poor, low income, and communities of color Segregation	Program-think needs to be region-think EDP outreach capacity and limited resources Better define economic development inside County and with municipalities and partners Civic capacity breadth, depth, and trust for collaboration Lack of CDCs and philanthropic giving
Opportunities	Leverage diversity Collaboration around County poverty efforts Regional workforce leadership and partnership to improve dialogue with the private sector Increasing opportunity for African-American and immigrant communities	Rickenbacker FTZ, value-added opportunity, and TDL cluster evolution E Entrepreneurship and small business support and alignment (entrepreneurs, neighborhood, social enterprise, middle stage)	Opportunity Zones and corridor readiness Leverage housing funds and policy Rickenbacker future uses and potential EnergyWorks rethink Workforce mobility Interjurisdictional development collaboration	Framework for interjurisdictional, cross-sector leadership and partnership Dividends from greater community engagement and with municipal partners Using consensus to motivate change Sustainable and equitable good government and governance
Threats	Importing talent Persistent diversity exclusion and racial disparities Workforce readiness for changing nature of work (staffing agencies, contract work, automation)	Lack of industrial diversification Economic disruption of sectors Greater use of staffing agencies/contract worker Core competencies in future technology growth areas Lack of inclusive environment	Transportation and infrastructure expansion Downside of not effectively planning for growth Lagging global integration Increasing social service obligations	Lack of action to address current and forecasted economic situation and trends Macroeconomic decline and fiscal risk Lack of capacity at local levels Lack of coordination and closed, risk averse culture

The SWOT analysis also identified nine critical issues relevant to the pursuit of economic development that is equitable and inclusive and that afford the County the opportunity to provide leadership and develop niche programming to solve regional challenges. These nine issue areas have been distilled into five strategic priorities to guide the County's economic development work. These priorities recognize EDP's capacities and promote a collaborative and cross-sector approach to its activities.

Strategic Priorities

-  Assist Franklin County's communities prepare for anticipated job and population change.
-  Promote quality work opportunities in Franklin County.
-  Include resident perspectives more intentionally in economic development efforts.
-  Reduce disparities and expand economic inclusion among Franklin County residents.
-  Create an environment that encourages commercial activities and in which entrepreneurs and small businesses from all backgrounds are able to start up and grow.

Programs and Policy Initiatives for Consideration

Programs and policy initiatives that are consistent with the EDP mission, goals, and strategic priorities and respond to findings from the SWOT analysis are organized into six categories representing recommended areas of focus for EDP's economic development work for the next three to five years:

- Partnership, Leadership, Collaboration
- SmartWorks
- Financing Tools and Incentives
- Small Business and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem
- Rickenbacker Area Opportunities
- Housing Policy

Partnership, Leadership, Collaboration

Franklin County is at the core of a larger regional economy, and EDP plays several important roles in the regional economic development system. These roles require a continued emphasis

on partnership, leadership, and collaboration to achieve local and regional economic goals and to address the strategic priorities:³

- EDP identifies and addresses economic, land use, and policy issues that affect private sector job creation, quality of work and quality of place in Franklin County.
- EDP strives to provide leadership and expertise on pressing challenges in the Columbus regional economy, with a focus on addressing unmet needs and filling gaps in regional initiatives.
- EDP takes a collaborative approach to all aspects of its work and is actively engaged in partnerships across the county and throughout the region.

One way that this plan suggests implementing many of the Partnership, Leadership, Collaboration strategies is through an “expanded navigation function.” The purpose of the expanded navigation function is to grow EDP’s network and build relationships in the service of the county’s economic development work. The expanded navigation function would engage internal and external partners more intentionally in pursuit of the County’s economic development goals. While the “navigation” concept stems from EDP’s existing Workforce Navigator position, these activities do not need to be limited to one person or one discipline. Navigation tasks should be considered part of the work of all EDP staff. This function is called out here because it is fundamental to many of the strategies throughout the EDSP.

The Partnership, Leadership, Collaboration strategies apply to many stakeholder groups: residents, private sector businesses, regional partners, other Franklin County departments, and Franklin County’s townships and municipalities.

BRING RESIDENTS INTO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONVERSATION (COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)

Equitable economic development requires meaningful, responsive community engagement. If Franklin County is committed to decreasing disparities and improving economic inclusion, EDP must spend time listening to and acting on the needs articulated by its residents. The Economic Development Division (EDD) can start by building on the Planning Division’s outreach methods and extending their approaches to economic development activities. The expanded navigation function includes this community engagement work.

Bringing residents into the economic development conversation should be done with purpose. EDP’s objectives during its community engagement work may include:

- Identify assets, needs and priorities within different Franklin County communities.

³ P. 113-120, Policy and Governance Capacity, Franklin County Economic Development Capacity-Focused SWOT, 2019.

- Obtain insights from residents that will inform its work on redevelopment, mobility, zoning and planning, infrastructure and inclusive growth.
- Build a sense of place among unincorporated Franklin County communities.
- Learn more about local businesses and their needs.



Identify new stakeholders and build relationships.

Conduct an asset mapping exercise internally and with other County departments to identify new stakeholder and business groups beyond the Economic Development Division's typical constituencies. Seek out new voices, including:

- Ethnic chambers
- Faith-based groups
- Immigrant organizations
- Nonprofit service providers (workforce, small business, human services)
- Educational institutions, training partnerships, and associated support organizations (such as PTAs, boards and committees)

Gain knowledge about the community. Create internal tools and materials to share information and enable cumulative learning. For example:

- Do some basic research prior to meetings to obtain individual and organizational background information; basic data on neighborhood resident and business demographics; neighborhood context; market data as available; and past city or county projects.
- Ask about their history and networks they value.
- Start with one-on-one meetings or by attending their events to learn about their issues of concern. Later, offer to make a presentation on current issues that concern the group and to create an opportunity for learning and data gathering.
- Actively listen. Formulate a template to guide "how and what to listen for" questions.
- Document the issues they are excited or concerned about. Formulate a template to document responses that can be shared and queried by others for knowledge management and feedback to the community.

Timeframe: Ongoing



Make the engagement more about listening than talking.

Suggestions for ensuring that the engagement enables learning from the audience (80%) include:

- Ask for their opinion about projects in their communities.
- Hear about their vision and priorities for their neighborhoods.
- Don't be afraid to hear about problems.
- Take notes even when the issues raised aren't within EDP's control. Task someone to serve as the liaison to convey concerns.
- Discuss honestly how Franklin County and its partners can act on issues raised.
- Follow-up and maintain connections through multiple venues, including email, listservs, social media, or future meetings. Provide guides/process diagrams that show progress and issues being addressed to convey how Franklin County and its partners can act.
- Recognize that multiple perspectives exist within communities and demographic groups, so do not rely on one meeting or event to provide a complete perspective.

Suggestions for sharing information about Franklin County during engagement meetings include (20%):

- Engagement is about “giving the floor” to the community, not about promoting projects or initiatives or giving officials time on the agenda.
- Explain what EDP does in basic terms:
 - Give examples.
 - Use the People, Business, Place organizing construct.
 - Describe County and EDP priorities.
 - Offer material on leading EDP issues, where appropriate.
- Prepare maps and content that can be used in multiple venues.
- Create neighborhood assessments or current conditions reports (basic data about the community) for select engagements.
- Bring other County materials to share (e.g., Office on Aging).
- Consider multi-departmental events with a “program” that also allows attendees to “get some County business done” (such as tax information, permits, etc.).

- Know your City and County partners who can answer questions/solve problems. Be a liaison to convey community questions and issues to them. Determine who will be responsible for conveying information back to the community and how.
- Document and report back to the community on progress, again using multiple venues, to convey what Franklin County did in response.

Timeframe: Ongoing



Make community engagement a priority activity for all staff.

Options include:

- Schedule and share each person's meetings on a common calendar. Create a time to report back on takeaways from these meetings.
- Identify and support staff participation in training opportunities to learn new engagement techniques covering topics such as meeting management, outreach tools, and cultural and gender sensitivity.
- Think beyond formal "community engagement" meetings.
- Start small – coffees, one-on-one meetings, attending other programs first.
- Strive to be more inclusive and to build new relationships based on recommendations from other departments.
- Use these informal meetings to identify and connect with additional organizations and events.
- Plan for a limited number of the Economic Development Division's own events to start. In planning, consider:
 - Partnering with other departments and divisions. Beyond being considerate of people's time, it can pull in a wider audience and support the comprehensive ethos of equitable economic development.
 - Logistics such as date, time, location, set-up, technology, materials for activities, and transportation to maximize likely attendance among a broad range of participants. Think about needs that may affect attendee participation (childcare, language, disabilities, etc.).

- Staff available who would be willing and able to play a navigation or facilitation role. Identify training opportunities if needed to help staff develop an understanding of how to channel information and questions.
 - Designing activities around the audience and the desired questions that can help move a process or project.
 - Using breakout groups and preparing activities or assignments to complete during events (such as asset maps or needs rankings). Prepare a takeaway or wrap-up step for each activity. Collect information to summarize input and develop next steps as needed.
 - Encouraging people to move around and talk to each other.
 - Using art and local food sourced from local businesses.
 - Concluding with next steps – how the community will be kept informed, method for feedback, point of contact, timelines or milestones as appropriate.
- Participate in County or regional resource fairs or other similar programs.

Timeframe: Ongoing



Coordinate Planning, Community Development, and Economic Development outreach efforts and messages.

To avoid overlap and improve efficiency, EDP outreach efforts and messages should be coordinated among all divisions. A joint calendar, departmental meetings, and/or online tools can help share objectives and community information before and after specific outreach activities. The Economic Development Division should attend Planning Division and other County departmental outreach events as appropriate, and vice versa.

Timeframe: Ongoing



Utilize feedback and findings to fine-tune EDP initiatives.

Identify shared internal tools – whether meetings, spreadsheets, shared online documents, or special notetaking or CRM (customer relationship management) software – to document activities, messages, inputs and next steps. Build a report-back process into engagement activities. Incorporate feedback and resulting action items as appropriate into work plans so it becomes a visible and valued staff activity.

Timeframe: Ongoing

CONTINUE TO SERVE AS FRANKLIN COUNTY'S PRIMARY INTERFACE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR (BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT)



Build relationships with new and existing businesses.

EDP continues to serve as the County's primary interface with the private sector. It is also responsible for business visits and retention/expansion activities in the unincorporated areas of the County. The SWOT analysis reaffirms that EDP's support for conditions that maximize expansions among locally-owned businesses is one of its critical job creation functions.⁴

As with the community engagement strategy, EDP should continue to build relationships with new and existing businesses, learn about business needs and priorities, share pertinent EDP and County data and program information, incorporate feedback as appropriate into specific responses and departmental workplans, and share summary findings with partners within the County and region. Business visits can also intentionally include more food systems business, consistent with the economic development component of EDP's Food Action Plan. The focus on expanding networks and establishing relationships to bring external perspectives to the County also makes business engagement an important element of EDP's expanded navigation function.

Timeframe: Ongoing

RAISE THE VISIBILITY OF EDP PRIORITIES BY SERVING AS AN INFORMATION RESOURCE IN THE REGION ON PRIORITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOPICS (EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION)



Prepare content to share around the County's economic development priorities.

Prepare talking points and/or one-page summaries on EDP priorities to explain what each issue is and why it is important to address it. Select two topics per year for a deeper dive analysis, including a description of implications for economic development activities within the County and across the region. EDP may consider starting with themes from the affordable housing initiative, insight 2050 implications, or the County's poverty study and inclusion council work.

The objective is to provide leadership on and raise the visibility of topics not being addressed by other economic development partners. These include poverty-related topics, the workforce implications of the benefits cliff, individual barriers to employment (beyond the skills and training gap), quality of work topics (shift times, changing schedules, transportation options), workforce

⁴ P. 88, Business Capacity, SWOT.

readiness (responding to technology change/disruption, the rise of staffing agencies and contract work, demand for business skills such as professionalism, communication and teamwork, the need for continued services to individuals after job placement), how housing policy is related to business talent/workforce requirements, child care and transit/transportation issues, racial disparities/exclusion, sustainability topics, etc.

Timeframe: Ongoing



Create and implement a communication plan.

EDP can work with the County Public Information Officer and deploy available media and social media tools to expand its communication reach to partners and stakeholders inside and outside of County government. The communication plan may include:

- Speaking engagements or presentations at local and regional meetings
- Intentional and proactive participation in events – not just attendance
- A departmental calendar identifying meetings and staff participation or presentations
- Designation of a primary contact/lead speaker on priority topic areas so partners know who to contact
- Determination of the appropriate media for various audiences and taking advantage of the County website, white papers, meetings and events, news articles, and social media
- Building internal support for external engagement around priority topics
- Improving the EDP website and social media presence

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year) then ongoing



Utilize feedback and findings to fine-tune EDP initiatives.

Similar to the strategies described previously, insights obtained from creating and sharing information on the County's economic development priorities should be shared across the department, with resulting responses incorporated as appropriate into work plans. The expanded navigation function should emphasize bringing these external perspectives and responses to the County's economic development work.

Timeframe: Ongoing

BUILD STRONGER WORKING RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT TO MAKE PROGRESS ON PRIORITIES (INTERNAL COMMUNICATION)

EDP collaborates with other departments that have related programs and initiatives to enable collective progress on equitable and inclusive economic and social policies. EDP could expand this collaboration within Franklin County government to capitalize on areas of focus that intersect or overlap with the work of other departments.⁵ The County's recent policy discussions following the Poverty Study and Economic Inclusion Advisory Council's work provide fertile ground for this approach. The expanded navigation function can build more cross-departmental relationships, identify internal stakeholders across County government for EDP strategic priorities, and continue to actively support initiatives in other departments that have an economic development component.



Encourage staff to build cross-departmental relationships.

Options include:

- Define goals in conjunction with other County departments – with management input.
- Enable and encourage more “sideways” conversations across departments.
- Continue to engage with the County Engineer and other elected officials as well as staff.
- Sustain the positive working relationship with City of Columbus counterparts.
- Consider offering a “tour” of the new strategic plan to other departments to inform them of what EDP is striving to accomplish and identify areas for cooperation.

Timeframe: Ongoing



Identify internal County stakeholders across departments and leadership for strategic priorities and select initiatives.

Options include:

- Identify EDP or partner project champions.
 - Who is in charge (of the project and of the strategy or priority)?
 - List departments and key decision makers that need to be on board; identify staff responsible for making the connection.
 - Obtain other agency mission statements and program areas as part of the due diligence to help identify stakeholders that should be included.
 - Consider staff and leadership in townships and municipalities.
 - Provide title and department, not just individual names.
- Identify who has relationships with key individuals.

⁵ P. 113-120, Policy and Governance Capacity, SWOT.

- Use the due diligence for engagement template to organize internal stakeholder information and assign responsibility for maintaining the information.
- Describe County management that needs to be on board and assess their current level of support; identify staff responsible for gaining support.
- List external organizations, their key decision makers, and level of interest in the project or priority.
- Describe commissioner interest, how and when they were briefed, project elements important to them, and level of support.
- Share information with each other.
- Prepare materials and talking points as needed.

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year)



Continue to actively support initiatives in other County departments that include an economic development component.

The Franklin County Poverty Study and the Economic Inclusion Advisory Council have outlined multiple goals and strategies that are in line with EDP's strategic plan priorities. Facilitating, collaborating, partnering, and leading on specific policies that are within EDP's vision and capacity is an opportunity to collectively move the needle on equitable and inclusive development.

For example, EDP could assist with the proposed "inventory of existing business and skills among residents in targeted neighborhoods and develop growth strategies in partnership with local companies to meet employment needs" that is a component of the Poverty Study. EDP could also assist with the proposed effort to "foster greater inclusion and success for minority business owners" that is a core element of the economic inclusion initiative with Forward Cities.

In addition to supporting these efforts, EDP may need to clarify the County's "internal" understanding of its service areas for its planning and financing work and the specific set of tools EDP has to offer.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)

PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ANALYSIS TO TOWNSHIPS AND MUNICIPALITIES

With 17 townships, 16 cities, and 10 villages, the County performs many roles, including funder, administrator, partner, planning and GIS functions, and capacity-builder to those communities lacking economic and community development staff and expertise. Franklin County EDP could capitalize on the activity, concern, and desire to confront the region's forecasted growth and

economic challenges in a new way through these relationships. The expanded navigation function can serve these roles through focused technical assistance on the local implications of regional strategies and trends and by raising awareness of EDP programs, services and financial tools that can help.⁶



Communicate in plain language the local implications of regional economic strategies and trends.

EDP can help articulate the real-world changes that can occur at the township and municipality level as a result of economic trends and the regional strategies that are being developed in response to those trends. For example, EDP is in a good position to state the practical steps that sub-county leaders can take to implement appropriate elements of the insight 2050 corridor concept study, the new Columbus 2020 strategic initiatives, and/or the County's housing, poverty and economic inclusion work. EDP can help translate the broad strategies into practical steps for local leaders on how they can make evolving trends and policies work well for their residents.

Specific outreach opportunities for this purpose could overlap with efforts to promote InfrastructureWorks within the County, Columbus 2020's Prepared Communities Win program, the MORPC Competitive Advantage Grant, and the Planning and Community Development Divisions' ongoing work with townships and municipalities.

Taking a broader approach, EDP could also create an intra-County taskforce that addresses pressing regional challenges, complements the work of existing partners, and creates a cooperative agenda where each partner is responsible based on their geography and mission. A shared agenda would encourage space for responsible parties to lead or partner where appropriate for specific goals, policies, or funding.

Timeframe: Ongoing



Raise awareness of EDP programs, services, and financial tools available to townships and municipalities.

Options to raise awareness of EDP programs and service include:

- Conducting more outreach on EDP programs, including offering to speak at meetings, presenting at events, and testifying when appropriate, as well as more informal interactions with colleagues
- Engaging not just with peer staff, but also elected leaders and board members

⁶ P. 113-120, Policy and Governance Capacity, SWOT.

- Advocating for good local policies (including a more strategic approach to economic development beyond tax generation)
- Sharing good practices for incentive management tools and procedures
- Preparing “in your neighborhood” maps or summaries of relevant EDP projects, incentive use, corridors, etc.
- Providing regular updates on EDP activities and initiatives
- Attending programs with both Economic Development and Planning division participants when possible

In turn, EDD would increase its understanding of the needs of its diverse cities, villages, and townships and could utilize this knowledge in a number of innovative ways, such as aligning and streamlining development standards and fostering a more strategic, equitable and inclusive approach to economic and community development. Enabling an organized voice and greater sense of community identity will provide EDP with a stronger sense of how EDP can better design and implement tools that can assist any given area.

Timeframe: Ongoing

DEFINE EXPECTATIONS AND OUTCOMES FROM EACH PARTNERSHIP (MANAGING PARTNERSHIPS)

Partnerships are foundational to the way economic development is conducted in Franklin County. The numerous recent strategic planning and research efforts among EDP partners provide a wealth of information to shape future actions, but siloed conversations in economic development, housing, transportation, transit, and workforce development will not generate meaningful change or desired results. Partnerships are therefore critical to the region, not just to Franklin County economic development activities, and should be managed as carefully as any program.⁷

EDP should outline its expectations for its participation, advance policy conversations around the County’s strategic priorities, and define measurable outcomes where appropriate with each partner organization. The priorities, programs, and policy initiatives in the EDSP can help guide an intentional approach to participation with each regional partner. The expanded navigation function emphasizes this level of partnership and collaboration with EDP stakeholders as a core component of each staff member’s economic development work.

⁷ P. 113-120, Policy and Governance Capacity, SWOT.



Report activities and outcomes associated with economic development grant funding (PartnerWorks).

EDP provides funding to select partners to advance Franklin County's strategic priorities and economic development agenda, including support for regional initiatives.

For example, current partners include (may not be a comprehensive list):

- Columbus 2020
- Sister Cities
- Greater Columbus Sports Commission
- Rev1
- Experience Columbus
- Organizations supported through CDBG program funds (such as ECDI)

The County is also providing funds to the Inclusion Fellow with the Forward Cities Program and related to the Columbus Crew stadium and development with an expectation of positive economic development outcomes for the County. Funding has been recommended for the City-County Community Land Trust for affordable housing. It would be appropriate for EDP to track updates and results related to use of these funds.

EDP could expand its annual reporting to provide more information on County partners, their activities, and associated expenditures and outcomes. The strategy "Establish PartnerWorks to report on progress toward County priorities from funds provided to partners" under SmartWorks provides more detail on how to do so.

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year) then ongoing



Establish objectives for participation in regional organizations based on strategic priorities.

EDP also participates in several regional organizations to provide a voice for Franklin County interests, contribute to each organization's mission, guide the message and agenda, and share information and insights. A critical element of the expanded navigation function is to engage these partners more intentionally in pursuit of the County's own economic development goals. By taking a more strategic and intentional approach to partnerships, EDP can clarify its objectives when attending meetings, taking leadership roles, joining committees, making presentations, and leading activities. In short, engaging with partners is not a passive exercise, but a purposeful element of EDP work as part of the expanded navigation function.

Such an approach is especially helpful when EDP does not provide direct funding to partners, or when the partners, rather than the County, play the lead role on critical issues affecting the

County's strategic priorities, such as workforce development, multi-county planning, and transit. For example:

- Workforce system organizations. EDP can leverage the lessons learned from PeopleWorks to provide a voice in the regional workforce conversation to:
 - Curate ideas and provide guidance around the issues of workforce and growth based on EDP activities, including PeopleWorks
 - Influence workforce policies and initiatives to be consistent with Franklin County's priorities, especially around quality of work, economic inclusion, and poverty reduction
 - Explore opportunities to support other un-met County workforce needs among low-income residents. These might include ways to engage employers on hiring expectations, funding to provide soft skills/business skills training, options to address (or at least consider) the implications of the "benefits cliff" for job seekers, and issues associated with gig and temporary work.⁸
- Transit. EDP plays an important role in the transportation planning process, but it is not in the EDD's direct purview. However, EDP can continue to provide necessary insights on economic development and planning topics that have obvious implications for regional transportation and transit planning. A specific opportunity is to be a voice for workforce mobility in conversations with the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA), articulating the needs of Franklin County residents who do not have a vehicle and struggle to travel to job locations across the county (especially in the Rickenbacker area) without good transit access either at the beginning or end of their commutes.⁹
- Regional Planning. EDP participates at several levels in Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) activities. Accordingly there are multiple options for pursuing the County's strategic priorities, such as articulating the need for more equitable and inclusive growth and development; utilizing toolkits and findings from the Insight 2050 Corridors and Rickenbacker area studies to inform incentive use, land use and zoning decisions and transportation investments within Franklin County; improving collection and reporting of development-oriented planning data; and possibly partnering to increase utilization of the Competitive Advantage Grant to assist municipalities in the

⁸ Workforce system issues and other potential priorities are addressed more completely in the People Capacity section of the SWOT analysis, p. 6-59.

⁹ P. 41-43, People Capacity; p. 97-98 and p. 112-113, Place Capacity, SWOT.

prioritization of projects for federal funding application.¹⁰

A longer-term tactic might involve creating and leading a taskforce that addresses pressing regional challenges, complements the work of existing partners, and creates a cooperative agenda. This approach would be appropriate for priorities that cut across organizations and are not adequately covered by individual partners or stakeholders in the region.¹¹

As EDP expands its partnership, leadership and collaboration activities, it may be useful to identify and support staff participation in training programs addressing leadership, speaking or presentation skills, and/or managing committees that would enable EDP to take full advantage of the benefits associated with collaborating with partner organizations.

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year) then ongoing

SmartWorks

The goal of EDP's SmartWorks program is to provide innovative solutions in the niche areas of the local economic development landscape not being served by Franklin County's municipal and township partners in order to help foster economic growth throughout the entire County. In their current configuration, the SmartWorks programs are designed to provide flexible financing and technical assistance related to energy, workforce, and infrastructure.

The evaluation of the SmartWorks programs found they are well-run, consistent with Franklin County's strategic priorities, and are generating desired outcomes. However, in some cases, the volume of activity and accompanying results have fallen short of expectations. After nearly five years, some programs have gained their footing and are poised to meet the County's expectations. Others merit reconsideration, especially as the economic development environment in Franklin County and the region continues to evolve.

EXPAND INFRASTRUCTUREWORKS (FRANKLIN COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE BANK)¹²

The main objective of InfrastructureWorks is to encourage and accelerate public sector investment in infrastructure projects that result in economic growth and job creation. Additional expected outcomes include leveraging other financing and funding sources, increasing capital investment, and focusing infrastructure investment on projects with greater economic impact.

¹⁰ More information on inequitable growth and options for collaboration on regional planning issues can be found throughout the SWOT, including on p. 97-100, p. 108-109, 112, 118.

¹¹ P. 113-114, Policy and Governance Capacity Strength, SWOT.

¹² P. 112, Place Capacity, SWOT.

InfrastructureWorks has performed slowly but surely, is achieving its cost-savings and investment objectives, and is consistent with strategic priorities. Program participants from Franklin County have praised its value and ease of use.

Regional growth projections give this program new urgency and new opportunity. Preparing for growth is already established as a regional priority among elected leaders and economic development stakeholders. InfrastructureWorks can serve as a platform for engaging, preparing, and helping Franklin County's political subdivisions make wise infrastructure investment decisions to support growth in a manner consistent with their own and regional economic development priorities.



Devote more resources to conduct outreach and build the project pipeline.

The SmartWorks evaluation found that it is likely many of the intended InfrastructureWorks users are not yet aware of or are not yet comfortable with this relatively new financing mechanism. Several stakeholders mentioned the lack of staffing and financing expertise at the village and township levels. Accordingly, EDP should spend more time raising awareness and providing technical assistance to enable more jurisdictions to access the available program funds. For example, past recipients suggested speaking at the monthly meeting of local finance directors organized by MORPC and at the local government conference organized annually by the state auditor. EDP may also consider greater outreach to other eligible borrowers besides subcounty jurisdictions, which may include the City of Columbus, the Columbus Regional Airport Authority and County Engineer.

Timeframe: Ongoing



Use InfrastructureWorks as a springboard to prepare Franklin County's townships and municipalities to make infrastructure investment decisions that are beneficial locally and regionally.

The availability of InfrastructureWorks funds provides a good opportunity to enter into a broader conversation with Franklin County subdivisions on preparing for growth in a manner consistent with local economic development priorities. Economic development stakeholders and County leaders have consistently noted that the region must prepare for expected growth and that Franklin County's political subdivisions are a critical component of any successful regional approach. They must either step up and guide growth in ways that are consistent with their own economic goals, or they will find themselves with less say over how that growth will affect their communities. InfrastructureWorks offers a useful tool to address local infrastructure investment challenges, especially for the less affluent places within the County.

Timeframe: Ongoing



Update the InfrastructureWorks Review Tool so that it is consistent with EDP goals and strategic priorities.

Consider supplementing the current Review Tool with instructions and impact estimates related to housing affordability and transportation accessibility; consistency with regional planning or economic development priorities; support for more equitable or inclusive economic development; and small business/neighborhood business/entrepreneurial opportunities.

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year)



Revise annual reporting on InfrastructureWorks activities and results.

Annual InfrastructureWorks reporting can be expanded to provide a more complete accounting of its impact. In addition to location, project value, loan amounts, and job creation, the report could also provide more detail on the characteristics and rationale for each project, benefits beyond job creation (such as safety, quality of services), a summary of estimated cost savings to the borrowers, and repayments to the County. EDP may wish to model its reporting on Ohio's State Infrastructure Bank annual report.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Demonstrate how InfrastructureWorks can be a flexible financing tool for an expanded portfolio of projects.

Prepare brief case studies describing how InfrastructureWorks can be used (or has been used) to support specific infrastructure investments. The project summaries on the Olentangy Valley Center Redevelopment Project and La Plaza Tapatia prepared in late 2018 provide a good model. EDP can also specify if and how InfrastructureWorks may be an appropriate tool to support Transportation Improvement District or Opportunity Zone investments.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)

PREPARE A TRANSITION PLAN FOR ENERGYWORKS¹³

EnergyWorks is designed to increase the energy efficiency of existing and new facilities, resulting in lower energy costs, fewer carbon emissions, and economic growth in Franklin County. The EnergyWorks program has performed well and is consistent with the County's past strategic priorities, but the market has evolved, and it appears that many of the County's objectives can be achieved through both private and other Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority (CFFA) financing options.

Assuming CFFA remains an important local player in energy finance for commercial properties, it is not yet self-sufficient as the early returns have only begun to replenish the loan fund. Accordingly, a transition period is appropriate.



Work with CFFA on a two-year plan to taper direct County funding for commercial energy efficiency financing programs.

After reviewing other energy efficiency financing programs in Ohio,¹⁴ it does not appear that other energy districts or finance authorities receive county-level contributions. Instead, supporting PACE financing and establishing Energy Special Improvement Districts appear to be the norm. Similarly, most benchmark communities outside of Ohio examined for this assessment do not appear to provide appropriations for commercial energy efficiency programs. As other capital providers and funds have entered the PACE market, the County may not need to sustain a long-term financial commitment to the Energy Fund in order to experience continued reductions in energy use.

Since other financing options have become available and more program income from repayments will become available for use, a transition plan is suggested. EDP can work with CFFA to prepare a multi-year analysis examining expected repayments from past loans plus other sources of funds compared to expected deal flow for commercial energy efficiency financing to identify the near- and medium-term funding gap. From that assessment, EDP and CFFA can structure a taper of the County commitment to EnergyWorks over a 2-year period.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)

¹³ P. 110, Place Capacity Opportunity, SWOT.

¹⁴ NEO Advanced Energy District, Development Finance Authority of Summit County, NOPEC, NEODFA, Lake County Ohio Port and Economic Development Authority



Explore opportunities to pursue unmet energy efficiency priorities for housing and industrial properties.

Another transition option would be to explore opportunities to extend the energy efficiency market to serve industrial and low-income housing properties, which have not been a focus of the Energy Fund or EnergyWorks financing. The County's 2018 Energy Study includes a recommendation to reduce energy consumption in homes and businesses by 20%. Aging warehouse facilities in the Rickenbacker area may also generate demand for favorable energy efficiency financing options. If EDP chooses to pursue this option, it may be necessary to establish a more explicit connection between this activity and job creation to justify the commitment.¹⁵

Timeframe: Longer term (3 to 5 years)

REALLOCATE PEOPLEWORKS RESOURCES¹⁶

PeopleWorks facilitates private sector employment and training for low-income residents who currently receive public assistance. The program provides a matchmaking service connecting businesses and employment candidates and offers three grant programs that provide resources to train and hire participants. The program has gone through several iterations. Its current objective is to increase the placement of Franklin County residents who receive social services into jobs that pay a wage sufficient to no longer require public assistance.

The PeopleWorks programs have made progress toward their stated objectives and resulted in benefits to Franklin County residents. PeopleWorks funding has led to successful outcomes (job placements) at a relatively low cost. The program is well-run and thoroughly documented. Overall, however, PeopleWorks has had a limited impact on the challenge it set out to address. The number of projects, distributions and placements since 2015 has been low. The strategic plan provides an opportunity to consider other options that may generate greater impact relative to the core objective and the county's strategic priorities, such as:

- Funding to support or supplement the small business work of the Forward Cities' inclusion fellow
- Directing funds to assist job placement for previously incarcerated residents
- Providing funds to partners for soft skills training or ongoing support services for which it is difficult to obtain funding from other sources
- Meeting the workforce needs of small businesses (<100) or social enterprises, which is currently a gap in the regional workforce system.

¹⁵ P. 110, Place Capacity Opportunity, SWOT.

¹⁶ P. 47-48, People Capacity Opportunity, SWOT.

To the extent PeopleWorks is redesigned or funds reallocated, an outreach strategy to businesses, business groups, municipalities, and workforce partners will be necessary to raise awareness.



Continue to fund high-performing PeopleWorks grantees as Partners.

EDP may wish to continue to fund organizations like Per Scholas that have an established track record in accomplishing training and placement objectives either within the PeopleWorks framework or as it would fund any other economic development partner under PartnerWorks. This approach would allow the County to continue supporting organizations that provide valued services to residents regardless of the PeopleWorks program status. However, it would shift EDP workforce activities from a “doing” role to a “funding” role in the regional workforce system.

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year)



Explore opportunities to support other un-met County workforce needs among low-income residents in partnership with other lead organizations.¹⁷

Outside of PeopleWorks, the County and EDP can be very flexible in how they deploy funds. This flexibility can help fill funding gaps in the workforce system that other funders or program rules don’t allow. For example, workforce partners noted that it can be a challenge to obtain funding for ongoing, soft skills training that are especially needed by individuals who face multiple barriers to employment. Franklin County EDP could serve as a regional source for non-traditional/very flexible funds for workforce needs not allowable through other sources of workforce training dollars.

Another option would be to build the next iteration of EDP’s workforce activities around other County efforts, such as continued support for Building Futures, initiatives serving the previously incarcerated, assisting entrepreneurs in underserved communities as identified in the poverty study and economic inclusion initiative, or helping meet the workforce needs of social enterprises.

Another idea raised during stakeholder outreach would be to prepare a program in conjunction with partners to get employers “ready to hire” in conjunction with efforts to get individuals “ready to work.” A focus on employer preparation may help both hiring and retention, especially for individuals with limited work experience or whose individual needs require ongoing support services once they begin a new job.

¹⁷ P. 6-59, People Capacity, SWOT.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Expand the Navigator role to incorporate more EDP priorities, not just workforce.

Through the Workforce Navigator, EDP expanded its network and established relationships with the leading County, city and non-profit organizations engaged in workforce development in the region. In the short-term these relationships enabled implementation of the PeopleWorks program, but they also yielded long-term gains for EDP through the insights and network resources EDP was able to bring to its work internally and to cross-county initiatives like the inclusion council and poverty study. The expanded navigation function described throughout this EDPSP would continue to bring these external perspectives to the County's economic development work, expand the approach to the County's other strategic priorities, and use these relationships to engage potential partners more intentionally in pursuit of the County's economic development goals.

Timeframe: Ongoing

ESTABLISH PARTNERWORKS TO REPORT ON PROGRESS TOWARD COUNTY PRIORITIES FROM FUNDS PROVIDED TO PARTNERS



PartnerWorks would be an accountability mechanism to report on the tangible benefits, including progress toward strategic priorities, of County funding provided to partner organizations. It would complement the current program reporting for SmartWorks and become part of the EDP annual report. This reporting could also become part of the annual State of the County report which already incorporates information on some, but not all, partners receiving funding to support economic development in Franklin County. Presenting both the expenditures and the results of partner programs would offer a more complete picture of EDP's work and economic development activity in Franklin County. Examples and suggestions include:

- Columbus 2020 already provides quarterly results reports to Franklin County related to the 2020 strategic goals. The number of projects, new jobs, capital investment, created payroll, jobs retained and average wage per job are also featured in the annual State of the County report. This is a good model for other partner reporting. EDP could determine if additional information can be provided to describe activity related to EDP's strategic goals and to provide mapping or other data breakdowns to demonstrate the distribution of projects by geography or demographic category where possible.

- HUD and CDBG funded programs¹⁸ are also largely well-documented and reported. It may be helpful to draw attention to program areas that have changed from year-to-year and to explain the rationale for doing so. This would be especially useful if those changes are made to align better with EDP strategic priorities, particularly in demonstrating equitable and inclusive monitoring and reporting.
- Several programs receiving grant funding distribution are listed in the 2017 Annual Report and 2019 Budget Presentation. It would be helpful to add a few sentences about each describing the purpose of the program, rationale for EDP grant funding, and activities or results in relation to strategic priorities. These programs include Sister Cities, Sports Commission, Rev1 Ventures, and Experience Columbus. In the future, workforce training program grants to organizations like Per Scholas and Fortuity may also be reported in this manner.
- Three new initiatives with a strong economic development focus are also being funded (or may be funded) by Franklin County. Again, the purpose of each initiative, the rationale for County funding, and activities or results should be reported for each. The results reported may be based on the terms of a negotiated agreement, if one exists. In the absence of such an agreement, a connection should be made between each initiative and the County's strategic priorities, and relevant data for select metrics should be collected and reported. For example:
 - Franklin County has agreed to provide \$2.5 million for 30 years to related to the development of Confluence Village and a new stadium in the Arena District and to redevelop Mapfre Stadium into indoor and outdoor sports fields, green space for community use, and a training complex for the Crew. The Commissioners and County Administrator have been clear that they view this investment as supporting economic development in Franklin County.¹⁹ Expected benefits are new jobs, new business, residential and office spaces, and the community park and green space.²⁰ Accordingly, data on job creation, square feet of new development, and the status of the community spaces should be collected and reported, preferably on an annual basis consistent with the payments made.
 - Franklin County has agreed to fund the Forward Cities inclusion initiative for \$125,000 over 2 years. The Commissioners have indicated they want this initiative to increase the number of entrepreneurs among underrepresented communities who are building small businesses and employing their neighbors.²¹

¹⁸ Adapted from p. 6 of 2019 budget presentation and the 2019 Franklin County Action Plan Summary for Housing & Urban Development Funds.

¹⁹ <https://radio.wosu.org/post/franklin-county-commission-takes-crew-stadium-measure#stream/0>

²⁰ Resolution 0894-19, December 2018.

²¹ P. 11, 2019 State of the County Report.

Accordingly, we would expect that data on the baseline and increase in the number of entrepreneurs, the communities in which they work, and employment of community residents will be collected as part of their activities and should be provided to Franklin County.

- The County is considering funding for the newly formed Franklin County-City of Columbus Land Trust within the Central Ohio Community Improvement Corporation's Land Bank. The Land Trust would "achieve permanent affordability by placing the land under a residential property within a community trust, while selling or renting the actual housing structure that sits atop the land to an income qualifying buyer or renter." Funds would be used to close the financing gap for the initial purchase and to provide wrap-around services to renters and buyers. The expected impact is creation of at least 25 minimum new affordable units per year. Accordingly, if approved, data should be collected and reported on use of funds for land purchases, provision of wrap-around services, and the resulting number of new affordable units per year.²²

Financing Tools and Incentives

Economic development financing programs and incentives should always be connected to a larger economic development strategy. In other words, incentive use is not about completing a transaction but about supporting projects that generate desired outcomes for the community. EDP already takes a thoughtful approach to providing incentives, using the tools at its disposal to make sure incentivized projects are aligned with County economic priorities. EDP can build on its current approach to maximize the potential for incentive programs to accomplish the County's intended objectives through the following program design, management, and reporting strategies.

UPDATE INCENTIVE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES AND ALIGN WITH CURRENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (INCENTIVE STRUCTURING) (CRA, EZ)

The Economic Development Division is responsible for administering the State of Ohio Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) and Enterprise Zone (EZ) programs, largely within the unincorporated areas of Franklin County. The Franklin County Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) reviews the County's tax incentive portfolio on an annual basis.



²² Affordable Housing Implementation Framework Draft v1, April 2019, p. 14.



Adapt the InfrastructureWorks Review Tool to create a checklist to prepare for negotiations and ensure proposed incentivized projects are consistent with strategic priorities.

The Review Tool used to assess InfrastructureWorks project applications on how the project addresses many of the County's economic development priorities can be updated to reflect the current strategic plan. This review tool can also be adapted to document the decision-making criteria guiding all of EDP's incentive negotiation processes and to provide a template that can be shared with other jurisdictions offering incentives within the County. The objective is to make sure incentivized projects have the potential to generate the outcomes that the County seeks.

Options to consider include:

- Specifying the County's goals and expectations for each incentive program;
- Implementing a scoring approach rather than hard and fast rules so EDP can be flexible and responsive to unforeseen project opportunities;
- Including sustainability or triple bottom line (TBL) metrics or review criteria;
- Favoring projects that pay a wage at which individuals will not require county social services; and
- Leveraging the flexibility within state guidelines that give discretion to counties on the amount and term of incentive offers, recognizing the effect of other municipal costs that may be incurred associated with a given project.

This additional structure around the County's current negotiation process is suggested to assist with internal program management as well as to demonstrate to internal and external stakeholders that the County is using incentives thoughtfully and carefully. These procedures can also be shared with EDP partners through its technical assistance efforts to expand the use of good practices throughout the County.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Conduct a more structured economic and fiscal impact analysis for projects seeking incentives.

The EDP currently prepares its own internal analysis of the costs and benefits associated with incentivized projects that it uses to adjust incentive offers. The EDP can formalize this approach and share it with sub-county jurisdictions for their own use. Alternatively, the EDP can offer to perform the calculations as part of its technical assistance program.

The EDP may also choose to subscribe to impact analysis software that can be customized by location and that includes both economic and fiscal impact calculations. This step would assist EDP in making informed decisions in its incentive negotiations and provide another technical

assistance option for Franklin County municipalities as EDP could offer to run the model for incentivized projects in which it is not directly involved.

A consistent approach to evaluating costs and benefits across proposed projects would likely improve local confidence in offering incentives, provide insight into costs that may currently be overlooked, and encourage consideration of pros and cons of each project beyond the tax gains by local jurisdiction.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Update procedures to monitor compliance with incentive agreements.

Monitoring compliance and milestone achievement is a challenge for most state and local economic development organizations managing incentive programs. EDP effectively reports on jobs created and retained, payroll, and investment associated with tax abatements. The following steps would also align reporting with strategic priorities and provide more insight into the costs and benefits associated with incentive use. Options for consideration include:

- Specifying other commitments (required or voluntary) the County seeks that are allowed to be negotiated and determining how to monitor compliance. Tax incentive agreements must include certain information to be provided to the Tax Incentive Review Council, but by statute other commitments may be negotiated.
- Defining project metrics and creating a compliance rubric (both required and voluntary elements) that connect to strategic priorities, including quality of work, reduction of disparities, and inclusive economic development
- Clarifying how to define and count jobs. Full-time equivalent jobs are currently reported, but it would be useful to know the number of true full-time, part-time, and temporary jobs associated with incentivized projects. It is our understanding that the EZ reporting requirement includes that breakdown. EDP may also wish to inquire specifically about contract workers to the extent they are not included in the temporary job category.
- Conducting a cumulative analysis of taxes foregone, jobs created and other metrics for the county's CRA and EZ abatement agreements to supplement the annual data currently provided
- Working to improve and make consistent the data collection method for required state forms
- Identifying methods for data collection on jobs and payroll and other public benefits from end users or tenants who are not party to the incentive agreement but who are actually creating the jobs and generating the expected benefit. Methods include site visits or

accessing other government administrative data sources that track businesses. Consider researching how other Ohio counties approach this task.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Expand reporting on incentive activities and outcomes.

As stated, EDP effectively reports on the essential outcomes associated with the incentives Franklin County has offered. However, EDP should also report on new metrics and additional commitments that are negotiated. EDP could also expand its discussion on the location and characteristics of the incentivized projects to understand how and where incentives have been used successfully in the community. Pictures and maps can often tell the story better than numbers in a table.

Another option for consideration is breaking out statistics by residential and commercial projects, especially since the housing strategy will be a priority for the coming years. The 2017 Lincoln Institute of Land Policy study, “Evaluation of Real Property Tax Abatements in Franklin County, Ohio,” provides several good examples (see Tables 4 and 5 plus Appendix Tables 8 and 9).

EDP may also wish to provide a cumulative summary of incentive costs and benefits to complement the annual data provided in, for example, the 2019 EDP Budget Presentation. It would also be illuminating to break out the pre- and post-1994 CRA data and EZ data. A timeline of projects with cumulative costs and benefits would likely be useful to decision-makers.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)

ESTABLISH POLICIES TO GUIDE USE OF ADDITIONAL INCENTIVE AND FINANCING TOOLS (TID, TIF, OZ)

Franklin County has the opportunity to leverage three additional incentive and financing tools beyond the CRA and EZ programs: the new Transportation Improvement District (TID), Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and Opportunity Zones (OZ). As with the CRA and EZ, EDP will need to establish procedures to ensure projects funded through these programs are aligned with Franklin County’s strategic priorities and achieve expected results.





Specify guidelines and objectives based on strategic priorities.

As Franklin County makes greater use of TIF and prepares for TID and OZ projects, EDP should prepare general guidelines that granting entities and applicants alike can review. These guidelines can state principles or expectations for the types of projects Franklin County is seeking and is most likely to support. These guidelines should be aligned with Franklin County's strategic priorities and could address critical issues identified in the SWOT and throughout the EDSP. For example, the guidelines may favor projects that improve transportation or transit access for workers, address regional disparities, are environmentally sustainable, or provide quality work opportunities, among others.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Establish TID options for investments aligned with strategic priorities.

The new Transportation Improvement District²³ is a quasi-governmental entity that enables areas across multiple political jurisdictions to collaborate more easily to fund transportation projects by setting joint priorities, pursuing federal and state funding, and leveraging combined resources, among other financing options. As a TID Board member, EDP can encourage projects within the County that are consistent with the principles in the SWOT and Franklin County's strategic plan, such as those that support transit-oriented development, take into account job and housing implications, and are broadly consistent with the insight2050 Corridor Study. EDP may also wish to incorporate TID into its technical assistance to the townships and municipalities, while also working to build support among townships for TID projects.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Advise on County interests and points of influence in Opportunity Zones.

Much remains unsettled regarding Opportunity Zones²⁴, but EDP is likely to be the main point of contact for information on OZs in Franklin County. EDP should get out in front to inform County stakeholders who have high expectations but may not be aware of the market factors and limitations surrounding the OZ program. This is especially important given the limited influence local government will have on most OZ investments. Options include:

²³ P. 111, Place Capacity, SWOT.

²⁴ P. 108-109, Place Capacity, SWOT.

- Preparing a one-page briefing for internal County departments and townships clarifying how Opportunity Zones work, including the limited role for communities in implementation and reporting
- Adding a “community engagement narrative” and community needs discussion to Opportunity Zone promotional material. For example, insights from the Westland community meeting could be included in the regional OZ prospectus. Encouraging the residents to be part of the development process and demonstrating how EDP can facilitate their involvement can set a precedent.
- Adding information on select Franklin County and regional programs that would help OZ investments achieve County objectives – for example select workforce development programs (such as Building Futures and Per Scholas), small business/entrepreneur support programs, energy efficiency programs, and other incentives as appropriate
- Collaborating with other internal Franklin County partners to identify options (such as reaching out to the Kresge Foundation) to steer investment to businesses in Opportunity Zones
- Adding Grove City and Whitehall information to the Columbus Prospectus
- Striving to track property investments by type in the County’s Opportunity Zones through the Planning and GIS Divisions or through the updated procedures to track incentive compliance if additional County inducements are provided to OZ investors

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year) and ongoing



Advocate for state program rule changes to TIF that would allow it to be used throughout Franklin County.

State TIF rules have inadvertently limited its applicability within Franklin County’s urban townships. The Plaza Tapatia project has demonstrated TIF’s value in addressing development challenges within the County, and EDP should coordinate with the County’s Government Affairs Director to pursue rule changes to make more areas of the County eligible for TIF.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)

EXPAND AWARENESS OF THE COUNTY’S FINANCING AND INCENTIVES TOOLKIT AMONG LOCAL JURISDICTIONS

This strategy is consistent with the policy to “Provide technical assistance and analysis to townships and municipalities” and the strategy to “Raise awareness of EDP programs, services,

and financial tools available to townships and municipalities” under Policy, Leadership, Collaboration.



Share incentive management tools and procedures.

The incentives review checklist, economic and fiscal impact analysis model, procedures for monitoring compliance, and expanding reporting on incentive outcomes suggested for Franklin County can also apply to each of the County’s cities, villages, and townships that administer their own programs. EDP can provide models, templates, and technical assistance – when appropriate and when requested – to assist Franklin County municipalities manage their incentives responsibly.

Timeframe: Long term (1 to 5 years)



Socialize incentive approaches with municipalities, partners, business groups, county leaders.

Beyond the technical management procedures described above, EDP can also share its overall strategic priorities and information developed as part of the EDSP recommendations to “Raise the visibility of EDP priorities by serving as an information resource in the region on priority economic development topics” and “Prepare content to share around the County’s economic development priorities.”

EDP will also likely serve as the lead organization to bring municipal leaders within Franklin County up to speed on new opportunities associated TID, TIF, and Opportunity Zones. As was found with InfrastructureWorks, outreach and education are critical to adoption of new financing tools. These conversations will also provide an opportunity to address how well these financing and incentive programs align with County strategic priorities as well as individual township, village, or city objectives.

Timeframe: Long term (1 to 5 years)

Small Business and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

Stakeholders identified gaps in small business programs and weaknesses in the entrepreneurship ecosystem as priority regional issues throughout the strategic planning process²⁵. Specific themes that emerged were redundancies among the region’s small business support services that result in confusion and inefficiency, a lack of focus on second-stage local

²⁵ P. 80-89, Business Capacity, SWOT.

businesses in priority industries, and a need for more diverse and inclusive small business and entrepreneurship support.

EDP has an opportunity to play a meaningful role in filling these gaps and providing regional leadership through its Food Action Plan, by actively engaging with other City and County initiatives around inclusion and diversity among small businesses, and rethinking the County approach to small business, both internally and through its support to partner organizations.

IMPLEMENT SELECT FOOD ACTION PLAN PROJECTS



Implement select economic development action items from the Local Food Action Plan.

The November 2016 Local Food Action Plan for the City of Columbus and Franklin County lists nine actions under the goal to increase the role of food in economic development. The set of actions highlighted here are most consistent with the strategic priorities within this plan. It is not intended to signal a lack of support for the other actions.

- Advocate for food system workers in local and regional workforce development efforts.
- Study and describe the impact of wages and policies on food system workers and the affordability of food.
- Revise zoning codes, related permit requirements and land use plans to support and encourage agricultural and food system uses as a viable option for community revitalization.
- Repurpose vacant commercial, industrial and residential sites for local food system uses.
- Connect new or growing small-scale neighborhood food businesses to flexible financial and technical assistance options.

Other options include expanding EDP incentives and programs to include a food systems component and building on EDP's collaboration with the Council of Development Finance Agencies Food Systems & Development Finance program, which identifies steps to bring development finance tools to food systems. EDP should revisit the 2016 plan and choose actions that can be implemented within the next three years and are consistent with the priorities, programs and policy initiatives within this strategic plan.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Fund and create the proposed business portal.

The portal would be an online source that provides entrepreneurs with technical assistance resources, financing best practices, and connections to business services. The portal is the recommended approach to connecting food businesses to the resources and services they need to start, operate and expand. A portal that would bring fragmented information together is needed because:

- “Many free and low-cost information resources are available to food-related entrepreneurs and business owners, but they may not be aware of them because of there is no central clearinghouse, hub, or toolkit for starting, maintaining, and expanding a business.
- Relatedly, a lack of effective coordination and collaboration between existing service providers hinders a client-centric model of service delivery. . . . A central toolkit created in coordination with existing service providers will benefit food-related entrepreneurs and businesses.
- Interviewees specifically identified a lack of connections and access to resources for businesses owned by Black, Hispanic, Somali, and Nepalese individuals as well as businesses owned by broader immigrant and refugee communities.
- Food-related entrepreneurs and businesses controlled or run by socially or economically disadvantaged (SED) individuals or located in SED communities face heightened challenges and barriers . . . (and) will benefit from a central clearinghouse. . . .”²⁶

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Use the portal and the food action plan as a springboard for future small business and entrepreneurship support activities.

The portal will fill an identified need from the Food Action plan, but it should also prove useful for other entrepreneurs and small businesses in Franklin County. This portal would be one way to improve access to information and would have the side benefit of identifying specific redundancies and gaps within the system. Progress on the food action plan could be shared with EDP’s numerous partners and allies as a platform from which to identify and implement future small business and entrepreneurship initiatives. The portal could create a basis for EDP’s collaborative leadership to improve the regional small business support system.

Timeframe: Long term (1 to 5 years)

²⁶ Action C-9 Current Conditions Report (DRAFT), Local Food Action Plan, City of Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio.

SERVE AS AN ASSET TO CITY- AND COUNTY-LED BUSINESS ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE DIVERSITY AND EXPAND ECONOMIC INCLUSION



Support and serve as an asset to the Forward Cities Inclusion Fellow.

Franklin County's funding for inclusive entrepreneurship and small business ownership programming provides an opportunity for EDP to leverage and support County-led initiatives beyond EDP that are designed to help small businesses succeed. Options for consideration include:

- Building stronger cross-departmental ties either by participating in the new Franklin County Inclusive Entrepreneurship Council or facilitating a cross-departmental committee to share updates and available program resources in order to amplify each department's individual efforts. This type of collaborative approach would also allow Franklin County to share lessons learned from the Forward Cities program with others throughout the County.²⁷
- Assisting with the proposed effort to “foster greater inclusion and success for minority business owners”²⁸ that is a core element of the economic inclusion initiative with Forward Cities
- Offering to help the Forward Cities Inclusion Fellow identify local assets and connect with businesses that EDP has engaged through its private sector outreach work and via the Food Action Plan
- Engaging in efforts to expand County construction contracting opportunities among Small and Emerging Business Enterprises, leveraging EDP contacts among private businesses plus recent partner funding provided to the Economic & Community Development Institute (ECDI) for certification and to increase bonding capacity among minority contractors in their Capital For Construction program

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)

²⁷ P. 89, Business Capacity Opportunity; p. 118, Policy and Governance Opportunity, SWOT.

²⁸ P. 12, Franklin County Advisory Council on Economic Inclusion, Innovating New Pathways to More Equitable Prosperity Final Report, January 29, 2019.



Communicate and coordinate with the City of Columbus on its small business and entrepreneurship initiative.

Partnering with the City on small business initiatives would help address the regional problem with redundancy of services, connect the services in a meaningful way for business, leverage cross-governmental efforts, and increase the likelihood that the entrepreneurship and small business ecosystem is receiving appropriate support. For example, EDP could coordinate with and leverage Accelerate Columbus efforts to formalize the network of entrepreneurial support organizations and map each one's services to the life cycle of a small business. EDP could strive to align County-specific programs in the same manner. A second example would be a website through which Franklin County could consolidate practices among its municipalities and partner with the City to provide small business owners and aspiring owners with pertinent regulatory and incentive information.²⁹

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)

DETERMINE IF THE SMALL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM SHOULD BE AN AREA OF FOCUS FOR EDP

Improving support for small businesses and entrepreneurship is a regional need. EDP's mission, priorities, and toolkit suggest it should be an active partner on small business and entrepreneurship issues. While EDP has an opportunity to play a meaningful role in some segments of the small business and entrepreneurship ecosystem, it remains an open question whether EDP is well-suited to take on a larger leadership or programmatic role. For example, the region needs better services to help sustain and grow second-stage businesses, but EDP might not have the resources to play this part effectively. Accordingly, the recommendation is to start by implementing the strategies listed above, then identifying new partners and assessing existing programs to determine the function EDP should serve long-term in the region's small business and entrepreneurship ecosystem.



Identify new potential partners beyond the legacy small business and innovation organizations.

The regional entrepreneurship support ecosystem is dominated by a small number of organizations, and the wider world of small business programs includes many legacy programs whose funding has not been tied to either quality of service or outcome benchmarks. EDP can use the opportunity provided by the series of County and regional strategic planning exercises to re-examine these programs, identify new potential partners, and incorporate strategic priorities and outcome metrics into their partner support. The expanded navigation function and

²⁹ P. 88-89, Business Capacity Opportunity, SWOT.

the steps included under Partnership, Leadership, Collaboration can help in identifying new players with whom partnerships can be created.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Look under the hood of existing County and sub-county small business programs.

Building from the inventory prepared for the food systems portal project, EDP can conduct an internal review of County and municipality policies and programs designed to serve small businesses to identify modifications that would make them more accessible, more useful, and less bureaucratic. This exercise should identify the program purpose, goals, level of annual activity, expenditures, metrics and outcomes, and alignment with different types of business needs for each program.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Based on these steps, prepare a condensed strategic plan to define EDP's role in the region's small business and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Rather than creating a small business program (the “build it and they will come” approach), EDP can take the steps outlined above to help County small businesses and entrepreneurs based on identified needs and via several City and County initiatives already underway. This plan suggests a cautious approach to avoid conflicts with other County initiatives as they get started and to ensure that any future new program proposal (and the accompanying funding request) is justified and poised for success.

With this experience, EDP will be in a better position to determine the appropriate path for its small business and entrepreneurship activities. The proposed plan should specify the EDP role, establish goals, identify partners, create an implementation plan, and describe the resources necessary for the mission. EDP can use the engagement strategies described under Partnership, Leadership, Collaboration to expand its network and make the connections necessary to ensure any future program or leadership initiative is built on a strong foundation. EDP can also draw on the lessons learned from work completed in the other strategies under Small Business and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem to determine the gaps it is best-suited to fill and align with equitable and inclusive strategic priorities.

Timeframe: Long term (1 to 5 years)

Rickenbacker Area Opportunities

How can Franklin County's economic development efforts leverage the Rickenbacker area assets - especially those related to air cargo and the intermodal facility - to bring better and higher-paid jobs to that area? What should the County be thinking about "outside the fence" to prepare for new opportunities?

The SWOT analysis concludes that the Rickenbacker area is primed for aggressive policy innovation with a comprehensive economic and community development approach. Working to activate other parcels of land in the area for higher value-add industry that is complementary to the current distribution and logistics operations as well as thoughtful tackling of the workforce mobility, transportation, and housing issues would allow Rickenbacker to realize its potential.³⁰

ADVOCATE FOR A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO LAND ASSETS "OUTSIDE THE FENCE" TO KEEP THE REGION ELIGIBLE FOR FUTURE HIGH-VALUE LOGISTICS OPPORTUNITIES



Define the strategic logistics-related business activities for which the Columbus region would like to compete. Estimate the opportunity costs of business as usual.

One option is to prepare a joint white paper with Columbus 2020 and CRAA to lay the groundwork and create a positive narrative supported by market data around the future business investment opportunities envisioned in the Rickenbacker area that would take advantage of the full set of Rickenbacker assets. These opportunities may revolve around pharmaceutical, e-commerce, advanced manufacturing, or perishables operations. The white paper should also draw on developer and logistics company perspectives.

Franklin County and its partners may also choose to contract for a full market analysis for select sectors.

The white paper and/or market analysis should also outline the real incurred costs as well as the opportunity costs associated with continued development of warehouse operations and overreliance on the existing "distribution monoculture" given this development's impact on the potential of business and workforce opportunity and quality of life in surrounding municipalities.

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year) to Medium term (1-3 years) for a more thorough study if needed

³⁰ P. 47, 86, 95-96, 110, People, Business and Place Capacities, SWOT.



Describe the land use and planning implications associated with the logistics-related opportunities as defined above.

Engage the Planning Division in the discussion around future opportunities. Begin to consider the land use and planning implications of the different options. Prepare talking points (or study points) that will be relevant to the cities, villages, and townships in the area, including those for which EDP provides planning and zoning services. Establish TID/TIF options for infrastructure investments aligned with strategic priorities.

Timeframe: Medium term (1-3 years)



Lay the groundwork for a long-range land use plan.

These land use and planning steps can lay the groundwork for a long-range regional Rickenbacker Area vision and strategic plan process – once the individual CRAA, MORPC, and 2020 plans are complete. These individual plans are valuable respectively in addressing airport development “inside the fence;” immediate workforce, transportation and quality of place needs; and the regional approach to business development, but they do not provide an overarching vision for the future of the entire Rickenbacker Area. This future visioning process is a longer-term strategy that could be combined with a long-range land use plan.

This long-range land use plan could address important questions around:

- Sustainability elements, including alternative energy development and smart growth principles
- Technology evolution and its impact on business operations and communities
- Multi-county collaboration
- Infrastructure needs and financing
- Workforce and housing implications

A recommendation raised during the Opportunities Workshop involved reconvening or creating a formal structure (a “mini Columbus 2020”) to advise the effort.

Timeframe: Longer term (3-5 years)



Raise awareness of tradeoffs and opportunities through Partnership, Leadership and Collaboration efforts.

EDP can share the opportunity options, market data, and land use implications through all of its Partnership, Leadership, and Collaboration channels, with emphasis on technical assistance to

municipalities as well as serving as an information resource to internal and external economic development partners.

The concepts and market information should also be socialized with local developers, land owners, and logistics executives both to learn their perspectives on the true potential of each opportunity and to understand how they expect their firms and operations to evolve in response to future market conditions.

A result of this work may be agreement to reconvene the Rickenbacker Working Group and/or the Chamber Logistics Council to consider the impacts and tradeoffs of different future uses.

Another narrower option would be to prepare a cost-benefit analysis examining the balance between needed revenue for airport operations and the near-term and long-term costs of airport real estate sales to address the pressure on CRAA to sell its land assets regardless of end use.

Timeframe: Medium term (1-3 years)

PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FINANCING AND INCENTIVE USE IN THE RICKENBACKER AREA



Create a project checklist that granting entities can review before awarding incentives.

Adapt the FCIB Review Tool for projects seeking incentives in the Rickenbacker Area to use. The review tool or checklist should help determine how well proposed projects align with the County's strategic priorities and should consider the negative as well as positive effects of the project. This task is consistent with strategies elsewhere in the EDSP to "update incentive management procedures" and "establish policies to guide use of additional incentive and financing tools." The checklist can be made available to townships and municipalities in Franklin County and neighboring jurisdictions as desired.

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year)



Offer technical assistance to estimate the economic and fiscal impacts of incentivized projects.

Please see the strategy under Financing and Incentive Tools to "Conduct a more structured economic and fiscal impact analysis for projects seeking incentives" for more detail on this approach.

Timeframe: Medium term (1-3 years)



Draft a new incentive policy directed at Rickenbacker area projects for which the original incentive term will be ending.

The earliest CRA incentives awarded in the Rickenbacker area will begin to expire soon. The planning and research steps described above create new opportunities for EDP and its partners to use incentive policy to pursue Franklin County's strategic priorities and meet the region's expectations for future growth in the Rickenbacker area. This step would primarily involve repackaging and repositioning existing inducements to align with those priorities but could also incorporate new tools. For example, there may be options to use the TID structure to support priority investments, to incorporate sustainability elements into future agreements, to leverage Opportunity Zone status, and to package other state or local incentives to encourage refurbishment of aging facilities and infrastructure.

A revamped incentive menu could be socialized among developers, land owners, and municipalities to increase interest in aligning future investment with the County's strategic economic development priorities in the area.

Timeframe: Longer term (3-5 years)

ADDRESS THE WORKFORCE AND RESIDENT NEEDS ASSOCIATED WITH DEVELOPMENT IN THE RICKENBACKER AREA



This section draws on the MORPC Rickenbacker Area Study to describe steps EDP can take to address the resident and worker needs. The Rickenbacker Area Study areas of focus are workforce mobility/safety, congestion alleviation, leveraging the area for further economic growth, and improving overall quality of life for residents and workers.



Collaborate with MORPC and other regional partners to enhance workforce mobility, services, and safety in the Rickenbacker Area.³¹

Safe and convenient worker access is lacking in much of the Rickenbacker Area. At the same time, businesses struggle to attract and retain their workers. An improved workforce mobility initiative, including a potential Mobility Hub, may address the near-term challenge and has the potential to create a competitive advantage for Rickenbacker Area operations relative to distribution activities in other places. EDP can:

³¹ P. 96, 98, Place Capacity Strength and Weakness, SWOT.

- Participate in conversations with COTA and Groveport Rickenbacker Employee Access Transit (GREAT) around creation of a Mobility Hub to provide transit services that are accessible by biking and walking and includes electric vehicle charging stations and solar energy facilities.
- Plan for transportation improvements in unincorporated areas of the County and facilitate investments using available financing tools, such as TID and InfrastructureWorks.
- Plan for other commercial and mixed-use developments.
- Involve other County agencies, such as Job and Family Services, as appropriate to ensure resident needs are addressed.
- Identify planning and financing tools necessary to execute ideas.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Help socialize Rickenbacker Area needs and proposed concepts with townships and cities within Franklin County.

EDP can share the workforce, safety, mobility, commercial and mixed-use development, and other land use implications of proposed initiatives through all of its Partnership, Leadership, and Collaboration channels, with emphasis on technical assistance to municipalities.

Timeframe: Ongoing

Housing Policy

LEAD FRANKLIN COUNTY'S RESPONSE TO THE REGION'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING CHALLENGE. ³²



Specify Franklin County's affordable housing goals in coordination with County leadership and other departments.

The County has been clear that it can neither spend nor build its way out of the affordable housing challenges facing the region. Instead, the County wishes to focus its resources and should therefore determine the impact it wishes to have. For example, would the County seek to assist extremely low-income and vulnerable populations (as emphasized in the Affordable Housing Alliance Central Ohio report on The Columbus and Franklin County Affordable Housing Challenge: Needs, Resources, and Funding Models), would it prefer to direct its efforts to

³² Housing is addressed throughout the SWOT but is a focus on p. 98-107, Place Capacity.

housing affordable to the working population in the region's leading industries (in connection with priorities identified in the Columbus 2020 strategic planning process), or should it strive to increase housing supply for the fast-growing segment of one- or two-person households without children (as quantified in the Insight 2050 study from MORPC)? The EDP is well-positioned to lead this county-wide conversation given its planning, financial, economic development toolkit and expertise.

Update: The goal proposed in the draft Franklin County Affordable Housing Implementation Framework (April 2019) is "to induce the construction of as many new affordable units for low-income residents with the most efficient use of County tax dollars, while also preserving neighborhood affordability."

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year)



Scan Franklin County's housing, economic development, and other pertinent policies to determine how they can be coordinated and deployed.

EDP can lead a cross-county review of housing policies, programs, services and financing tools to assess how well they meet the County's articulated affordable housing goals. The scan should assess the impact each element has on the others, identify gaps, and eliminate overlaps. This task would build from the substantial EDP work already done on the topic, including the draft housing tactics and implementation plan, which describes existing programs and services, responsible departments, sources of funds, budget, and timing.

This task can include consideration of the housing implications of incentivized projects and examination of existing incentive policies to determine the extent to which they can be used to support affordable housing.

Update: The draft Franklin County Affordable Housing Implementation Framework addresses several incentive options to support housing.

Timeframe: Short term (less than 1 year)



Communicate the importance of the County's housing strategy with economic development partners and communities within Franklin County.

A theme throughout this strategic plan is sharing information, advocating for County priorities, and deploying program and financing tools across the County, especially in the townships and unincorporated areas where EDP is most active. EDP could lead an effort to educate local officials and residents on how an affordable housing policy can support economic and

community development. EDP tasks may involve preparing a brief presentation on Why Housing Matters that addresses the importance of individual and family well-being to economic and community development; defining community benefits such as equitable access to services and opportunity; articulating economic development gains such as attracting and retaining workers; improving commutes; and encouraging sustainable growth.

EDP can also take the lead on communicating specific details of the County's affordable housing goals, policies, and programs to the municipalities within Franklin County.

- Communicate the existing and new financing, services and land use options available to support affordable housing with sub-county jurisdictions, economic development partners, and communities within Franklin County.
- Direct planning, zoning and code enforcement conversations in the County's unincorporated townships and areas, where the Planning and Zoning Department has responsibility. EDP is uniquely positioned to encourage a comprehensive approach that recognizes the intersection of housing, future of businesses, jobs, transportation, workforce, and infrastructure.
- Convey housing's importance for growth planning/meeting resident needs, preparing for economic opportunity, managing change so that it is consistent with local culture and expectations, and ameliorating the "inequities of the past born by the working poor, low income, and communities of color."³³

Timeframe: Ongoing



Advocate for the County's housing goals with partners external to Franklin County and provide support when appropriate for regional initiatives.

Continue to be a good partner to other regional entities addressing and influencing the area's supply of affordable housing. These partners include but may not be limited to MORPC, Columbus 2020, COCIC, AHACO, and housing developers with affordable housing expertise. Other partners whose activities would also touch on housing goals include COTA and other transportation partners, education and workforce development entities, and other nonprofit organizations or social enterprises. These partners should be aware of Franklin County's affordable housing goals, policies, and programs.

See the tasks described for the strategy "Define expectations and outcomes for each partnership" within the Partnership, Leadership, Collaboration category.

³³ P. 123, Capacity-Focused SWOT Conclusion, SWOT.

Timeframe: Ongoing



Advocate for state funding and policy changes that would help achieve Franklin County's affordable housing goals.

EDP will work closely with Franklin County's Director of Government Affairs to advocate for policy changes with members of Ohio's legislature and executive branch. Recently EDP and Government Affairs have been in initial discussions on advocating for additional state affordable housing resources as well as allowing certain urban redevelopment tax increment financing laws to be allowed to be utilized by County governments with large urban unincorporated areas.

ADAPT COUNTY FINANCE AND LAND USE TOOLS TO FACILITATE INVESTMENTS THAT WILL INCREASE THE COUNTY'S SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Define County-level financing and funding options that can increase the supply of and access to affordable housing in support of specified county goals. Prioritize options that leverage state and federal sources of funds.

Building from current staff efforts, create a menu of existing and potential new financing, funding and incentive options that can be used to achieve the County's specified affordable housing goals. The draft Franklin County Affordable Housing Implementation Framework outlines three core housing considerations:

1. Preserving Established County Funding for Housing
2. Creating New Housing Incentives and Zoning Updates to Induce the Private Market to Build and Maintain More Affordable Housing Units
 - Community Reinvestment Area Tax Abatements
 - Tax Increment Financing
 - Sales Tax Exemption
 - Inclusionary Zoning Update to Create Less Barriers to Affordable Housing
3. Creating New County Budget Funded Initiatives to Spur the Creation of Affordable Housing Units
 - County Housing Magnet Fund
 - Community Land Trust
 - Quick Strike Acquisition Fund
 - Linked Deposit Mortgage

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years)



Utilize County land use, planning, GIS, and zoning services to increase the supply of and access to affordable housing.

EDP has already implemented Smart Growth Overlays to accommodate more affordable and dense housing along major corridors within the County. EDP will also revise the County Zoning Resolution to reduce barriers to affordable housing. Building from these current staff efforts, options include:

- Complete the update to the County Zoning Resolution;
- Identify and review affordable housing redevelopment potential for outdated or underutilized land in the County (including land and buildings owned by mission-driven organizations and commercial properties seeking new uses);
- Conduct a regulatory review to improve efficiencies and reduce unnecessary costs; and
- Lead County-wide process to map evictions and foreclosures so the County knows where to target prevention efforts.

Timeframe: Medium term (1 to 3 years) and Long term (3 to 5 years)



Highlight outcomes of housing-related activities as a separate section in EDP's Annual Report.

EDP's affordable housing work should be visible to partners and interested stakeholders. EDP should report on all three aspects of its affordable housing activities – community development, planning, and financing – together in the Annual Report to convey the total impact of EDP's efforts. Pictures, maps, and project examples should complement budget and outcome tables to tell a complete story.

Timeframe: Ongoing on an annual basis

Capacity

This strategy represents an evolution in EDP's work and an expansion in its mission with the addition of affordable housing to its portfolio. Accordingly, it is appropriate to reconsider the staff and resources necessary to implement these programs.



Two capacity recommendations stem from the priorities, programs and policy initiatives within the EDSP:

- Consider adding one staff member to the economic development team to accommodate the expanded mission (especially affordable housing), contribute to the expanded navigation function work, and support the expanded analytical and reporting role suggested for financing and incentive use.
- Consider providing resources to reconfigure EDP space both to accommodate at least one additional staff member and to encourage greater collaboration among EDP's divisions.

Evaluation Framework

Jobs, payroll, and private investment are the main metrics that the EDP monitors and reports. Most economic development organizations do the same. While these items will remain the foundation of the County's economic development reporting, EDP seeks a broader range of metrics to indicate community impact and alignment with priorities and goals.

Exploring a Broader Range of Metrics

Given the range of programs and priorities the EDP is pursuing, there is no single set of metrics that can adequately capture the results associated with all of EDP's work. For example, the metrics for the affordable housing initiative will be very different from the small business and entrepreneurship support activities. Even within SmartWorks, the program metrics are different for each of the three programs based on their defined purpose. Individual program reporting should continue to be organized around the purpose of each program, the terms of agreement for participation in the program, and data on the outcomes associated with those terms.

As requested in the RFP, however, this section provides a menu of a broad range of metrics that can be used to evaluate overall economic development activities to demonstrate their community impact. Several metrics are also intended to measure the extent to which economic development work is equitable and inclusive, mostly by reporting on the location of jobs and investment and, where possible, the socioeconomic or demographic distribution of jobs and investment. The list below is not intended to be fully implemented because it would be too extensive to be useful for public reporting. It is also not clear if County- or project-specific data relevant to every suggested metric are available to EDP. However, many metrics from this list will be useful to consider incorporating into specific EDP programs and internal project compliance monitoring, as well as for general reporting on activities.

The menu of metrics for consideration is organized below by the four capacities of People, Place, Business, and Policy & Governance. Ideas for metrics and reporting for individual programs are also embedded throughout the EDSP.

People / Quality of Work

- Continue to distinguish between projected (or committed) and actual jobs created for projects receiving incentives

- Map the location of jobs being created
- Expand payroll and wage information for projects receiving County support
 - Consider providing median or average wages per job in addition to total payroll
 - Consider categorizing per job payroll data by whether those jobs would remain “low income” or eligible for social assistance. For example, how many jobs from incentivized projects would fall at or below the following limits:
 - HUD FY16 income limits for a 3-person household:
 - Franklin County AMI - \$69,600 (\$33.46/hour for 2080 hours)
 - Extremely low income 30% AMI - \$20,160 (\$9.69)
 - Very low income 50% AMI - \$31,350 (\$15.07)
 - Low income 80% AMI - \$50,150 (\$24.11)
 - FC food assistance 130% federal poverty guidelines
 - Single person - \$16,237 (\$8/hour for 2080 hours)
 - Two people - \$21,983 (\$10.57)
 - Four people - \$35,475 (\$17.06)
 - WIC 185% HHS poverty income guidelines (ODH)
 - Single person - \$22,459 (\$10.80/hour for 2080 hours)
 - Two people - \$30,451 (\$14.64)
 - Four people - \$46,435 (\$22.32)
 - OH self-sufficiency standard Franklin County
 - Single Adult (\$9.89/hour)
 - One Adult, One Child (infant) (\$22.36/hour)
 - One Adult, One Child (school age) (\$17.36)
 - One Adult, Two Children (\$25.44 - \$30.00 per adult)
 - Two Adults, Two Children (\$16.74 per adult)
 - Two Adults, Three Children (\$15.91 per adult)

SAMPLE: Number of jobs for each incentivized project that fall at or below each hourly wage category:

Below self-sufficiency/extremely low income - \$10 or less

Eligible for multiple levels of social assistance - \$11-16/22 at full-time employment

OH self-sufficient family - \$16-23/30 per adult

AMI - \$34 at full-time employment

- Describe benefits provided for each job
 - Percent of jobs with 3 or more benefits (paid sick days, paid family leave, childcare, health insurance, retirement, etc.)
- Number of jobs that are full time / part time / temporary
- Jobs going to existing neighborhood or Franklin County residents, or residents within a standard, acceptable commute area
- Request information on jobs that involve variable hours, are on-call, or involve late/early shifts as these would have transit, childcare, safety, and other quality of work impacts
- Provide information on the industry sector for jobs
- Occupations for jobs – descriptions and by skill or education category
- Company participation in regional workforce development programs (including defining accurate skill requirements for jobs)
- Length of stay and average rate or pace of wage increases for employees
- Employee advancement programs

Place / Quality of Place

- Investment description (what was developed and built and what it replaced)
- Map the location of activities and investments
- Investment type – commercial, residential, industrial
- Investments by category of project characteristics (LEED, historic preservation or restoration, brownfield remediation, infill development, relevance to food systems, proximity to public services, transit, or priority corridors, etc.)
- Local investment match
- Project quality / Investment effect on place
 - impact on housing
 - transportation/transit/worker mobility
 - environment/sustainability
 - equity
- Infrastructure effect on place
 - impact on safety,
 - impact on community appearance
 - improvement in service levels
 - effect on economic development outcomes such as jobs (currently measured)
- Sustainability
 - reductions in energy use
 - energy savings
 - effect on “environmental health”
 - preservation of green space and natural resources
- Property brought back to productive use / Adaptive reuse of existing or vacant facilities
- Number of new affordable units – overall, constructed, assisted
- Dollar amount of housing assistance to residents
- Number of home rehabilitations
- Number of homes that remain affordable as a result of activities

- Number of homeless served
- Homelessness prevention
- Fair Housing metrics
- Neighborhood satisfaction surveys

Business

- Business starts
- Business growth metrics (if possible – employment or revenue)
- Business locations – inventory for specified neighborhoods and for assisted businesses (map)
- Industry of businesses assisted (NAICS)
- County procurement data and number of targeted businesses, per the Small and Emerging Business Enterprises (SEBE) program³⁴
- Funding or services provided to assisted businesses
- Number of businesses assisted
- Number of employees added

Policy & Governance

- Leverage of Franklin County funds (private and public)
- Funds repaid through programs structured as revolving loan funds
- Cost savings to partners (InfrastructureWorks)
- Tax revenue generated (specific or in general)
- Partnerships and partnership metrics (PartnerWorks)
- Navigation tasks
 - Modify record-keeping used for business retention/expansion visits to include community-based visits
 - Number of meetings
 - Location of meetings (townships, etc.)
 - Follow-on activities identified and completed
 - Network map (asset map of contacts)
 - Number of residents engaged (through meetings, events, social media, mailers, etc.)
 - Number of projects or joint activities with Franklin County municipalities
 - Leadership roles with partners by EDP staff
 - Number of joint meetings with other EDP, County, or partner organizations
 - Number and type of collaborations with other County or City partners
 - Training attended by EDP staff to improve partnership, leadership, and collaboration skills

³⁴ Construction Inclusion Plan for the Franklin County Corrections Center, July 2017.

Selecting a Limited Number of Key Metrics and Reporting Options

In addition to requesting a broad range of metrics, EDP also requested a limited number of key metrics to be identified that are in keeping with the statutory definition of economic development in the Ohio Revised Code.³⁵

The key metrics should also be aligned with EDP's mission and goals and have reasonable data collection costs. The metrics suggested in the table below mostly stem from the current job, investment and project data already collected and reported by EDP. The recommendations expand on these metrics by suggesting additional detail be provided on location, quality characteristics, and, where possible, demographic category to understand whether Franklin County's equitable and inclusive economic development objectives are being met.

Mission:	Improve access to opportunity	Promote quality work opportunities	Improve quality of place
Goals:	Support job creation Assist local businesses to start and grow Reduce disparities and increase economic inclusion	Support jobs that help increase per capita income Help lift residents out of poverty	Support increased capital investment Promote equitable quality of life and place Promote environmental sustainability Assist Franklin County municipalities prepare for job and population change
Proposed Metrics:	Number of FTE jobs created by entities receiving inducements or participating in programs (currently reported) Geographic location of jobs created (map) Number of businesses receiving inducements or participating in programs Category (small, local, demographic category, location) and geographic location of businesses assisted	Number of jobs created by hourly wage category (not FTEs, not average wage per project) Number of jobs created that are part-time, full-time, temporary, or contract work Number of jobs by industry sector (NAICS) Number of jobs going to Franklin County residents or individuals within an acceptable commute area (if possible)	Dollar value of investment by entities receiving inducements or participating in programs Geographic location of investment (map) Dollar value and number of investments by residential, industrial or commercial categories Investment by categories for select characteristics (such as LEED, infill development, proximity to public services and transit, etc.) Number of projects (active and in pipeline) done in partnership with municipalities

³⁵ Ohio Revised Code 307.64 states, "As used in this section, 'economic development' means promoting the economic welfare and improving the economic opportunities of the people in the county . . . by assisting in the establishment or expansion within the county or counties of industrial, commercial, or research facilities and by creating and preserving job and employment opportunities for the people of the county or counties."

EDP already has a solid foundation for reporting outcomes into which these metrics can be incorporated via project mapping, additional data tables, and pictures and a few sentences describing projects, their benefits, and rationale for County support. These include the State of the County Report, EDP Annual Report, InfrastructureWorks Annual Report, and EDP website. Adding key metrics to these resources will more fully tell the story of EDP's work and convey the value of that work in achieving desired community outcomes.