



2014

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE CITY OF KENTWOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Prepared by Williams & Works, Inc. | In Partnership with the City of Kentwood EDC

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Overview of Strategic Planning Process	3
Action Planning	7
• <i>Government Relations</i>	
• <i>Business Tools</i>	
• <i>Communications</i>	
APPENDIX	15
• <i>Appendix A: Economic Development corporation (EDC) Precedent Guide</i>	
• <i>Appendix B: Online Survey</i>	

Executive Summary

This document describes the process used by the City of Kentwood Economic Development Corporation and the facilitators, Williams & Works, to develop the 2014 Strategic Plan. The methodology is presented so that the actual Strategic Plan can be succinct and useful. It is important to document the process used to create the Plan so as to recognize and give credit to the effort and thought that make up its foundation. In addition to detailing the process used to create the plan, we have included action planning steps which will clearly delineate the preferred outcomes that this strategic plan will achieve. This document also includes a visual “one-pager” set of charts with the goal of organizing an action plan into a useable format, and a precedent guide, which outlines the efforts of EDCs in other cities. The appendix also includes results from the survey which was distributed to members of the EDC in order to gauge their perceptions of the EDC organization.

What is the Economic Development Corporation?

The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) was formed to coordinate and implement economic development activities of Kentwood. The EDC Board is appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the City Commission. All Board members are Kentwood residents or businesses representing a variety of interests and industries.

What does the EDC do?

The EDC acts as a liaison to attract, retain and expand business within the Kentwood community. The Board members and their staff work with various branches of the government in enhancing resources that are available to businesses.



Overview of Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning exercise was held in one, four-hour session starting at 8:00AM on Friday, May 23, 2014. The overall program followed this outline:

- Cluster members into table groups
- Introduction and icebreaker
- Overview of workshop
- Confirm strategic question
- Overview of schedule
- Individual listing of objectives
- Group clustering of objectives
- Tag and name clusters
- Action planning
- Reflection and recap

In the weeks leading up to the strategic planning session, participants were also asked to complete an online survey. The survey was conducted using the online service SurveyMonkey. A precedent study was also provided as a way for participants to become accustomed to the activities and tools currently being used and developed by other economic development bodies. Following a brief introduction by the facilitators, the session began with a review of the results of the online survey.

The following questions were asked to confirm the strategic question:

- What surprised you about the survey?
- What did you learn about your peers?
- What will you carry forward into today's session?
- Of the thoughts expressed so far, which are already working for the EDC? What would need to change? What challenges or opportunities do these present?
- How do the results match the strategic question for today?
- What is this really about?
- What will the EDC mean for community?

Among the observations, the participants noted that there were a variety of answers for each question, however, not necessarily any surprises. It was also noted that several of the participants were looking forward to good dialogue. The conversation led into a discussion about being better connected with the business community and getting others to identify and care about Kentwood. Several other participants agreed that the Kentwood EDC is not doing enough to promote itself and that it could do better.

Defining Objectives

After the discussion, the participants were led in a brainstorming exercise to develop short, meaningful responses to the workshop's focus question:

What objectives must be achieved and what actions must be taken to realize a desired future for the Kentwood EDC?

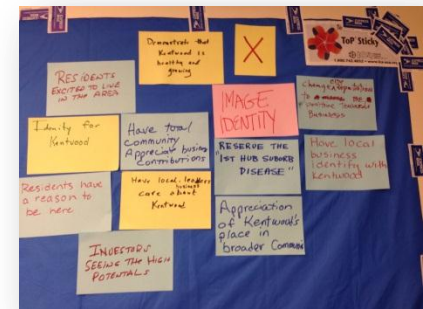
For the initial exercise, the participants were asked to focus on objectives as opposed to actions. Each participant received a marker and several sheets of colored paper. Participants were then asked to identify objectives for the EDC.

The participants quickly outlined about fifty strategic responses to the workshop's focus question. The objectives were subsequently organized into clusters with identifiable relationships such as intent, action, or accomplishment. Initially, the groupings were simply assigned symbols until a working title could be developed as the content and meaning of the groupings became clear. The participants were asked to compose a three to seven word phrase which they thought described each cluster. The participants initially determined six clusters; however, after further discussion, two were identified to be action clusters and are labeled as such. The following are the names of the clusters, their symbols, and objectives:

- **O: Government Relations (objective cluster)**
 - Do a little or more, decide
 - Collaborate with Right Place and other agencies to ensure they help sell Kentwood
 - Share business development successes with City Commission
 - Get more buy-in from county, state, and federal representation to needs of City
 - Improve communication with City Commission to enable faster response times and coordinated approaches to economic development

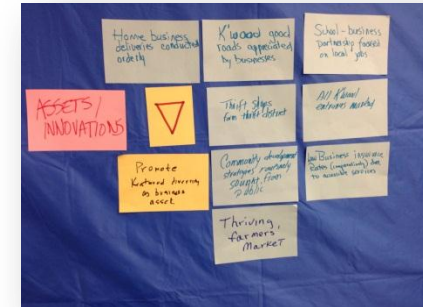


- **X: Image/Identity (action cluster)**
 - Residents excited to live in the area
 - Identity for Kentwood
 - Residents have a reason to be here
 - Investors seeing the high potential
 - Have total community appreciate business contributions
 - Have local business leaders care about Kentwood
 - Reverse the “1st Ring Suburb Disease”
 - Demonstrate that Kentwood is healthy and growing
 - Have local businesses identify with Kentwood
 - Appreciation of Kentwood’s place in broader community
 - Ensure reputation as positive to business by understanding the perceptions in the development community
- ***: Business Tools (objective cluster)**
 - Resource platform for business
 - Awareness of available benefits
 - “Free” wireless access available
 - New EDC bond makes small business loans easy
 - New business location assistance and advice
 - Kentwood guide to starting a business
 - Effectively use State and Federal economic development tools
- **#: Communication (objective cluster)**
 - Understand business issues better
 - Kentwood Rotary annually honors business of the year
 - Improved communication between city and business
 - Top 30 businesses know us on 1st name basis



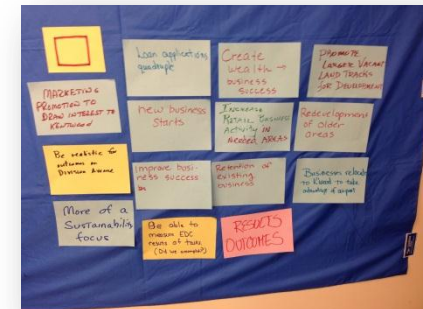
- **Δ: Assets/Innovations (action cluster)**

- Home business deliveries conducted orderly
- Kentwood good roads appreciated by business
- Promote Kentwood diversity as business asset
- Thrift stores form thrift district
- Community development strategies routinely sought from public
- Thriving farmer's market
- School-business partnership focused on local jobs
- All Kentwood entrances marked
- Low business insurance rates (comparatively) due to accessible services



- **□: Results/Outcomes (action cluster)**

- Marketing promotion to draw interest to Kentwood
- Loan applications quadruple
- Create wealth and business success
- Promote larger vacant land tracts for development
- New business starts
- Be realistic for outcomes on Division Avenue
- More of a sustainability focus
- Improve business success
- Be able to measure EDC results of tasks
- Increase retail business activity in needed areas
- Redevelopment of older areas
- Businesses relocate to Kentwood to take advantage of airport
- Retention of existing businesses



ACTION PLANNING

Following the clustering activity, participants were asked to work in groups of two to develop a vision and action program for each strategic cluster. The following outlines each cluster name, accompanying vision statement, and related tasks as identified by the participants.

If we mean for the vision statement to be achieved by 2019, what must happen between now and then to make it happen?

Government Relations

Vision Statement: The city, county, state, and federal agencies recognize the importance of policies supporting business development expansion and retention and the effect they have in the City of Kentwood.

Task or Activity	Responsible Party(s)	Start Date (Year/Quarter)	Sequence	Metric(s) of Success
Have local leaders attend EDC meetings	EDC and government units	3Q 2014	On-going	Local leader attends each EDC meeting
Have local leaders informed of business related policies/issues	Government units, elected officials	3Q 2014	On-going	EDC member provides monthly report to City Commission
EDC informs local leaders of needs, wants, issues	EDC	1Q 2015	On-going	EDC member provides monthly report to City Commission
Regular EDC reporting to City Commission	EDC and City Commission	3Q 2014	On-going	EDC member attends monthly meeting
EDC as conduit for business community communications	EDC and City staff	3Q 2014	On-going	Number of suggestions/ complaints/ reporting
Business Owner Exchange	EDC (and others see below)	3Q 2014	On-going	Quarterly or Bi-Annual Mixer Event with Businesses
Legislative Breakfast or Politics and Pints	EDC, Wyoming-Kentwood Area Chamber of Commerce	3Q 2014	On-going	Quarterly or Bi-Annual Mixer Event with Elected Officials

Summary of Next Steps: Government Relations

Becoming involved with the City Commission will be the first step in the Action Plan for the Kentwood EDC in regard to the Government Relations cluster. As noted as a task above, regular EDC reporting with the City Commission is an introductory activity. Regular reporting to the City Commission will require regular attendance by the EDC. The EDC may wish to appoint a Commission liaison charged with regular reporting and communications between the group and Commissioners. In return, the EDC may gain regular attendance by a City Commissioner at EDC meetings which is also listed as a task above.

The EDC could interface with the City of Wyoming, Grand Rapids and the adjacent Townships (Gaines, Cascade and Caledonia) to share experiences seeking and receiving start-up and retention programs, creating a viable business owner exchange. A business owner exchange is identified as a tool to help broadcast and share experiences and lessons learned with small and mid-sized business development within Kentwood and also regionally. Partners might include The Right Place, GROW, SCORE, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce and the Wyoming-Kentwood Area Chamber of Commerce.

Legislative Breakfasts and/or Politics and Pints types of events are informal exchanges with legislators to share needs, concerns, and opportunities within the local communities and learn about new bills and other legislation proposed that might impact local business. Events are structured as mixers, with the understanding that each official will have a few moments for formal remarks and Q&A.

Personnel: Rich Gaffin, EDC Chairman

BUSINESS TOOLS

Vision Statement: By 2019 at least 75% of Kentwood businesses will have contact with the EDC and the City of Kentwood about its resources.

Task or Activity	Responsible Party(s)	Start Date (Year/Quarter)	Sequence	Metric(s) of Success
Web page update	EDC Director and IT Department	Q3 2014	2	Finished product online; and regular maintenance
"Starting a New Business" page	EDC Director and IT Department	Q3 2014	1	Completed manual, increased webpage hits
Links to MEDC Resources	Business Development Manager – MEDC	Q3 2014	1	Link completion, increased webpage hits
Kentwood spotlight piece/info	EDC Director and Mayor's Office	Q3 2014	3	Kentwood spotlight perpetual information piece
Free Wifi	EDC, Public Works, IT	2016	5	Wifi access fully available, perhaps at City Hall, Libraries, and other City parks as a first step
Create Downtown Development Authority (DDA) or Corridor Improvement District	EDC, Planning Commission and City Commission	2015	4	DDA or CID created, improved corridors, increase in property values
Business Visits (Retail, Office and Industrial)	All EDC members	2014	On-going	At least 4 visits per month
Expand Incentive Programs	EDC, Chamber	2015	On-going	At least one additional program created

Summary of Next Steps: Business Tools

Web page updates and new web pages can lend themselves to the utilization of best practices. It is wise for the Kentwood EDC to refer to the Precedent Guide and other EDCs across the state and nation for website and web page examples related to the topics listed above. The EDC could spotlight existing businesses that have received liquor licenses, loans, business training or other assistance from the City and EDC to help promote its services and tools to a larger audience.

Additionally, Wifi access and Downtown Development Authority/Corridor Improvement District implementation can also be studied utilizing other organizations as examples. For example, a first step in creating a Corridor Improvement District or a DDA would be an initial boundary and tax increment financing study to determine potential tax capture. Knowing the capture would help determine whether there is substantial benefit to the City. In addition to just the tax capture, there are other benefits to DDA or CIDs, including the ability to issue liquor licenses. The EDC should have an understanding of whether these types of tools benefit the City and whether they are advantageous to economic development goals.

Historically, EDC staff and members have conducted site visits to major employers within the City. These visits help maintain transparency and are good business practice for business retention and expansion pursuits. Moving forward, visits to small business are also encouraged as part of the economic gardening necessary to maintain a diversity of business types in the City. Retailers, office development and other small industrial uses would benefit from a casual visit to welcome them to Kentwood and thank them for choosing Kentwood. EDC members and staff could use the opportunity to share news about Kentwood's growth and development plans, explain development tools and incentives available, and inquire about perceptions and needs from a business perspective. The EDC could partner with Local First and the Wyoming-Kentwood Area Chamber of Commerce to conduct the site visits.

The City of Kentwood Master Plan prioritizes certain areas for redevelopment, including the Division Avenue Corridor (especially around the Silver Line BRT), 28th Street, and Eastern and 52nd and 44th and Breton). Other priorities include sustainable and green development practices for business. The EDC could explore the use of grants and loans as incentives for creating new businesses and growing existing businesses within these priority areas. Façade improvement grants and loans, green retro-fit grants and loans, and other incentive programs could be explored to help offset costs to small business and also encourage development and retention in areas of the City prioritized for revitalization.

Personnel: Lisa Golder, City Planner, City of Kentwood

COMMUNICATION

Vision Statement: Promoted Kentwood as a “Community Effort” that is open for business, fair to development and welcoming to all.

Task or Activity	Responsible Party(s)	Start Date (Year/Quarter)	Sequence	Metric(s) of Success
PR Firm for Kentwood	City Commission	07/01/2015	1	Hire PR firm
Development Perceptions Survey	EDC	11/1/14	1.a	Survey distributed, tabulated, and results disseminated 50% response rate
Lobby for City of Kentwood at State of Michigan	City Commission	07/01/2015	1. b	Hire PR firm
Take stock of who is in Kentwood	Clerk, PR firm, City Commission, EDC	07/01/2015	1.c	Improved business license process
Community email list	Clerk's PR firm	07/01/2015	1.d	New forms, email list useable
Improved social media presence	All and PR firm	07/01/2015	1.e	Regular input back to city, at least one post/share per week

Summary of Next Steps: Communication

When hiring a PR firm, it will be important for the EDC to identify a work scope to include in a Request for Proposals. The EDC can coordinate with the City to determine other shared opportunities for public relations beyond EDC-related functions.

The EDC desires Kentwood to be known as a place that is welcoming to business, that has incentives to attract and retain business and that is fair and efficient in its operations. To determine the perceptions that exist within the development and business communities, a development perceptions survey could be distributed to various development and real estate groups, including the Commercial Alliance of Realtors, Grand Rapids Association of Realtors, Society of Industrial and Office Realtors, Michigan Chapter of the Certified Commercial Investors, and the Commercial Alliance of Realtors of West Michigan. Opportunities exist for the City of Kentwood to partner with other adjacent municipalities including Cascade Township, Wyoming, and Grand Rapids to issue the survey and collect regional results, helping each municipality to improve its efficiencies and perception in the community.

Additionally, new forms and business license processes could also be in partnership with the City of Kentwood. Many communities are creating an on-line digital form that can be used as a general intake form for all City permits, licenses, and other applications. This way, a consistent set of information is available to all City departments, making tracking and benchmarking easier. Email addresses can be collected and used for future outreach efforts.

Personnel: Rich Houtteman, Deputy Administrator, City of Kentwood.

Kentwood EDC Strategic Doing Action Program Work-plan “One-Pager”

This one page summary provides a quick glance of the action planning clusters, and is meant to be a guide or tool for referencing the Strategic Plan.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS		
TASK OR ACTIVITY	METRICS OF SUCCESS	COMPLETED
Have local leaders attend EDC meetings	Local leader attends each EDC meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have local leaders informed of business related policies/issues	EDC member provides monthly report to City Commission	<input type="checkbox"/>
EDC informs local leaders of needs, wants, issues	EDC member provides monthly report to City Commission	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular EDC reporting to city commission	EDC member attends monthly meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>
EDC as conduit for business community communications	Number of suggestions/complaints/reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business owner exchange	Quarterly or Bi-Annual Mixer Event with Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legislative breakfast or politics and pints	Quarterly or Bi-Annual Mixer Event with Elected Officials	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMUNICATION		
TASK OR ACTIVITY	METRICS OF SUCCESS	COMPLETED
PR Firm for Kentwood	Hire PR Firm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lobby for City of Kentwood at State of Michigan	Hire PR Firm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take stock of who is in Kentwood	Improved business license process	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community email list	New forms, email list useable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved social media presence	Regular input back to City, at least one post/share per week	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development Perception Survey	Regular input back to City, at least once per year	<input type="checkbox"/>

BUSINESS TOOLS		
TASK OR ACTIVITY	METRICS OF SUCCESS	COMPLETED
Web page update	Finished web page	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Starting a New Business” page	Completed manual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Links to MEDC Resources	Link page completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kentwood spotlight piece/info	Completed Kentwood spotlight piece	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free Wifi	Completed network	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create Downtown Development Authority (DDA)	DDA created	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Visits	At least 4 visits per month	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expand Incentive Programs	At least one additional program created	<input type="checkbox"/>

STRATEGIC PLANNING QUESTION

What objectives must be achieved and what actions must be taken to realize a desired future for the Kentwood EDC?

NOTES & IDEAS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

APPENDIX

Precedent Guide and Strategic Planning Assessment Survey Responses

The attached pages include the results of the above mentioned precedent study and online survey.

APPENDIX A - Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Precedent Guide

EDC/EDO Name	Contact	Description	Economic Development Activities
Grand Rapids Economic Development Corporation & Economic Development Office Grand Rapids, MI Governmental: City of Grand Rapids	(616) 456-3196 http://grcity.us/	“The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is a public economic development corporation. The EDC was created to alleviate and prevent conditions of unemployment; to assist and retain local industries and commercial enterprises; to strengthen and revitalize the economy of the City of Grand Rapids and of the State of Michigan.”	<i>Business assistance and retention, site location assistance, brownfield redevelopment, SMART zone, corridor improvement districts, neighborhood enterprise zones, renaissance zones, financing and abatements.</i> Highlighted project: <i>The Grand Rapids EDC receives “Economic Gardening” support funds from the City of Grand Rapids. Economic Gardening funds can be used for a variety of economic development activities designed to benefit entrepreneurs, business start-ups and existing businesses by giving them information or assistance necessary to succeed.</i>
Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation, Traverse City, MI Non-profit: 501c6	(231) 995-7115 or tbedc@tcchamber.org http://tcchamber.org/economic-development/tbedc/	“Here in the Traverse Bay Region, we are proud to offer vast opportunity for business growth. Few other areas in the state offer more in terms of quality of life and economic opportunity than the Traverse Bay Region.”	<i>Business assistance, site and building location assistance, financing and incentives, relocation information, state and local government information, general information.</i> Highlighted project: <i>The Traverse Bay EDC is affiliated with the Traverse City Chamber of Commerce. While the Chamber provides a variety of services for its members, the Chamber and EDC also offer business consulting services to non-members via the TCACC-eXtention team.</i>
Battle Creek Unlimited, Battle Creek, MI Non-profit: 501c3	(269) 962-7526 or info@bcunlimited.org http://bcunlimited.org/	“Battle Creek Unlimited facilitates regional wealth creation through human, economic, and community development, by stimulating a diverse civic culture, fostering new ideas, organizational models and healthy lifestyles.”	<i>Business assistance, industrial park, financing assistance, site location assistance, relocation information, downtown development.</i> Highlighted project: <i>Battle Creek Unlimited offers an After-services program which continues to work with businesses long after they have relocated or set up shop in Battle Creek. The program helps to assure that new businesses survive their establishing years.</i>

EDC/EDO Name	Contact	Description	Economic Development Activities
Wyoming Economic Development, Wyoming, MI Government: City of Wyoming	(616)530-7226 http://www.ci.wyoming.mi.us/	“Enhance the tax base of the City of Wyoming, encourage development and redevelopment for increased economic vitality of the industrial districts, create and retain industrial employment in the City of Wyoming, reduce property taxes as an obstacle to development, enhance attractiveness of our community.”	Business retention program, business incentives, brownfield redevelopment, training network, general resources. Highlighted project: The City of Wyoming offers Brownfield Redevelopment incentives and the Wyoming Advantage.
Lakeshore Advantage, Zeeland, MI Non-profit: 501c6	(616) 772-5226 http://lakeshoreadvantage.com/	“Lakeshore Advantage is a non-profit organization that works within the community to leverage the strengths of West Michigan. Lakeshore Advantage works to attract new businesses and encourage growth in companies located here.”	Business assistance, accelerator, talent/workforce development, general resources. Highlighted project: Lakeshore Advantage provides the NewNorth Center for Design in Business. NewNorth Center is a world-class innovation methodologies training organization focused on transforming the minds of top business leaders. These leaders, in turn, inspire innovation at area companies.
Invest Novi, Novi, MI Government: City of Novi	(248) 347-0583 or novibusiness@cityofnovi.org http://www.investnovi.org/	“Economic development continues to play an important role in maintaining Novi’s growth and quality of life for both commercial ventures and residents. Troubled times in Michigan call for all communities to formulate and execute sound economic development plans that will both foster new growth and retain development.. We influence and facilitate the process that allows business to create jobs and grow a diversified Novi tax base.”	Business assistance, workforce information, incentives and financing, building and site selection assistance, general resources. Highlighted project: Invest Novi offers an online tool which allows a potential business or business owner to search for available sites and buildings located exclusively inside the City of Novi. While this tool is used at other EDCs, it is unique in that it is dedicated to Novi.

EDC/EDO Name	Contact	Description	Economic Development Activities
Lansing Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) & Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), Lansing, MI LEDC: Quasi-governmental LEAP: Non-profit: 501c6	(517) 702-3387 http://edc.lansingmi.gov/ http://www.purelansing.com/	<p>“The Lansing Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) is a quasi-governmental agency, a separate corporation run by an independent Board of Directors.”</p> <p>“The Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) is a coalition of area leaders committed to building a prosperous and vibrant region where businesses can thrive. To do this, we help entrepreneurs start new businesses, help existing businesses grow, and attract new businesses to the region.”</p>	<p>Business assistance, building and site selection, workforce development, SMART zone, financing and incentives, brownfield redevelopment, tax increment financing authority (TIFA), general resources.</p> <p>Economic development overview: The LEDC and LEAP signed a contract in 2012 for an economic development services partnership between the two entities. The partnership allows for a more unified economic development strategy for the entire Lansing region taking a more regional approach.</p> <p>Highlighted project: The LEDC offers the Lansing Main Street Loan Fund. The program offers a \$175,000 revolving loan fund, originating from the LEDC's Business Finance Assistance Program, and will provide financing to a minimum of five (5) loans of up to \$35,000 beginning July 1 each year. Business training and consultation will be provided for the life of the loan which is targeted toward spurring new business development.</p>
Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC), Detroit, MI Non-profit: 501c4	(313) 963-2940 http://www.degc.org/	<p>“DEGC has been designed to make business success in Detroit possible. Many companies know exactly what they’re doing, but need help deciding where to do it and how to get there. That’s where we excel. We know Detroit well, we know the city’s government, and we’re aware of the countless opportunities the city has to offer. We’ve been designed to share all that business knowledge with companies and organizations like yours, and to maximize its value right here in Detroit.”</p>	<p>Business assistance, workforce development, incentives and financing, assistance with City processes, assistance with State and County processes, site selection assistance, general resources.</p> <p>Highlighted project: The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation currently offers the REVOLVE Detroit program. REVOLVE is a collaborative program of the DEGC that partners with local leaders, building owners, entrepreneurs, and artists to activate vacant storefronts with transformational businesses and art installations. The goal of the program is to foster the evolution and vibrancy of Detroit's neighborhood business districts.</p>

Common Themes among Economic Development Activities

Themes	Example
Assistance with government processes	Local knowledge of government bureaucracy, local experience with processes
Business assistance	Incubators, development services, small business development center, SMART zones
Financing and incentives	Incentive packaging, financing resources, microloans
General resources	Population, demographics, income data, local economic data
Site and building selection assistance	Property finder, building finder, local infrastructure knowledge
Workforce development	Compiled education resources, training opportunities, workshops

Designations among EDCs

Designation	Description
Government	Operated within governmental organization such as a city or county.
Quasi-governmental	Supported by the government but managed by a separate entity such as a board of directors.
Non-profit: 501c3	Charitable organizations, et cetera.
Non-profit: 501c4	Civic Leagues, Social Welfare Organizations and Local Associations of Employees, et cetera.
Non-profit: 501c6	Business Leagues, Chambers of Commerce, Real Estate Boards, et cetera.

APPENDIX B – Online Survey

Question 1: The EDC has an established mission as set forth in the bylaws pursuant to Act 338 of 1974. What aspects of the Economic Development Corporation Act do you feel are most relevant in the City of Kentwood? Rank order the eight choices with 1 as the highest priority and 8 being the lowest.

Answers	(a) Construct, acquire by gift or purchase, reconstruct, improve, maintain, or repair projects and acquire the necessary land, or an interest in land or portions of the land, for the site of a project.	(b) Acquire by gift or purchase the necessary machinery, furnishings, and equipment for a project.	(c) Make secured or unsecured loans, participate in the making of secured or unsecured loans, undertake commitments to make secured or unsecured loans and mortgages, sell loans and mortgages at public or private sale, rewrite loans and mortgages, discharge loans and mortgages, foreclose on a mortgage, or commence an action to protect or enforce a right conferred upon it by a law, mortgage, loan, contract, or other agreement.	(d) Borrow money and issue its revenue bonds or revenue notes to finance or refinance part or all of the project costs and the costs necessary or incidental to the borrowing of money and issuing of bonds or notes for that purpose, and may secure those bonds and notes by mortgage, assignment, or pledge of any of its money, revenues, income, and properties.	(e) Enter into leases, lease purchase agreements, installment sales contracts or loan agreements with any person, firm, or corporation for the use or sale of the project.	(f) Mortgage or create security interests in the project, a part of the project, a lease or loan, or the rents, revenues, or sums to be paid during the term of a lease or loan, in favor of holders of bonds or notes issued by the corporation.	(g) Sell and convey the project or any part of the project for a price and at a time as the corporation determines.	(h) Lend, grant, transfer, or convey funds, described in section 27, as permitted by law, but subject to applicable restrictions affecting the use of those funds.
Average Ranking	4.86	3.14	5.57	2.71	4.86	4.86	3.86	6.14

*The lower the average ranking the higher the average priority.

Question 2: The EDC has established five key goals to accomplish its mission. Using a scale of 1-4, please evaluate the importance of each goal. 1 is the highest priority, 4 is the lowest

Answers	Maintain existing businesses	Encourage business attraction/start-ups	Encourage the redevelopment of declining areas	Improve communication with the business community	Improve identity of community
Average Ranking	1.29	1.57	2.33	1.86	3.14

*The lower the average ranking the higher the average priority.

Question 3: In your opinion, which of the 18 objectives of the EDC have been (a) completed, (b) are in progress, (c) are incomplete, but still important or (d) are not complete and no longer a priority?

	a. completed	b. in progress	c. are incomplete, but still important	d. are not complete and no longer a priority
Continue business visitation program with the MEDC and Right Place, Inc	0%, 0	71.4%, 5	14.3%, 1	14.3%, 1
Communicate with all businesses regarding new programs, processes and regulations	0%, 0	85.7%, 6	14.3%, 1	0%, 0
Encourage membership in commercial business associations	0%, 0	14.3%, 1	85.7%, 6	0%, 0
Provide information on programs to assist existing commercial businesses in the area	14.3%, 1	42.9%, 3	28.6%, 2	14.3%, 1
Continue partnership with the Right Place to be the city's agent to attract industry to the area	28.6%, 2	57.1%, 4	0%, 0	14.3%, 1
Assist entrepreneurs in taking advantage of the support through the Small Business Technical Development Center	14.3%, 1	42.9%, 3	42.9%, 3	0%, 0


Schedule seminars, SCORE counseling, and other means of assistance through the Kentwood Entrepreneurial Center and communicate availability of programs to the public	14.3%, 1	42.9%, 3	28.6%, 2	14.3%, 1
Provide information to prospective businesses on other programs that are similar such as the SBA 504 and 7a programs that are available to start up businesses	0%, 0	57.1%, 4	0%, 0	42.9%, 3
Adopt the Fisher's Station plan into the city's Master Plan update	14.3%, 1	14.3%, 1	42.9%, 3	28.6%, 2
Identify commercial areas that have a large number of vacancies	57.1%, 4	14.3%, 1	28.6%, 2	0%, 0
Update website to be more informative and user friendly	0%, 0	57.1%, 4	42.9%, 3	0%, 0
Develop a database of businesses for email updates; send only then there is something new to communicate	0%, 0	42.9%, 3	28.6%, 2	28.6%, 2
Sponsor periodic meetings with the business community regarding issues and concerns to the businesses	14.3%, 1	71.4%, 5	14.3%, 1	0%, 0
Go back to Forum as a Business Roundtable rather than an educational opportunity	0%, 0	42.9%, 3	42.9%, 3	14.3%, 1
	0%, 0	57.1%, 4	0%, 0	42.9%, 3
Look at ways to rebrand the community	14.3%, 1	28.6%, 2	28.6%, 2	28.6%, 2
Place new entry signage	0%, 0	42.9%, 3	28.6%, 2	28.6%, 2
Work with schools to continue to promote the benefits of Kentwood Public Schools and other school districts in Kentwood	0%, 0	42.9%, 3	28.6%, 2	28.6%, 2
Work on City Campus concept to give Kentwood a focus in lieu of a traditional downtown	0%, 0	28.6%, 2	57.1%, 4	14.3%, 1

Question 4: In your opinion, what assets or advantages has the EDC been able to use in advancing its goals?

- Our RLF and we seem to have the Mayor's ear on the importance of economic development issues.
- EDC has come a great way in the last 8 years and we have implemented programs that we need to prioritize to be able to enhance them.. as market gets better these programs can be a demand if they are aware we have them.
- Having Lisa Full time, Brownfields
- Not sure
- Good contacts in local community that can be used as speakers, advisers and consultants.
- EDC has funds to use and can be considered as separate but connected to city government
- Not sure of assets other than the director as a strong liaison and representative of the City's relationships to business.

Question 5: What do you see as new or emerging challenges for the EDC?

- The competition amongst local communities and other states for businesses and the limited incentive programs in Michigan.
- As we reset a master plan and turn our energy to attracting business to certain areas. we will be in need of more time commitment to our members and the need to be able to have multiple times to address these issues instead of an hour in a morning>> this being said it will be the ability to have these goals met and accomplished in a timely manner
- Getting the word out about what we do
- Not sure
- We need to establish better criteria for granting liquor licenses and abatements. Current criteria are too narrowly focused.
- keeping businesses here; lack of new undeveloped property, development going further out into greenfields, or to downtown, declining condition of older buildings, lack of identity
- No sure it has any effective purpose other than business relations.

Question 6: What professional or personal qualities or skills do you bring to the EDC? 

Question 7: What, if any, skills or tools are necessary to help you better contribute to the effectiveness of the EDC?

- A better understanding of the tools available to attract and retain business. And input from our local representatives (county, state, federal) on how they see our economy developing.
- A true definition of our task as we go into a system of approving brownfield projects and other licensing requirements.
- Not sure.
- Understanding of the City government processes and procedures.
- ?
- Authority of city commission, funding.
- None

Question 8: To help us prepare for the strategic planning session, what are your expectations for a successful process?

- We need to address realistic expectations of what we can accomplish. To do so we need to know where the City Commission is heading on business issues (e.g., tax abatements), what issues it is willing to delegate to EDC for input.
- A new master plan with short term and long term direction.
- Be clear on the direction wanted.
- To establish a focus of measurable goals for the EDC.
- That we come to a better sense of what priorities need to be in what we choose to undertake.
- Everyone to come, realistic expectations, focus on something that is do-able.
- Uncertain, define purpose of EDC as we don't really seem to have any impact.

Real estate	42.86%
	3
Brokerage	14.29%
	1
Marketing	28.57%
	2
Planning/Zoning	14.29%
	1
Land Use	42.86%
	3
Legal	28.57%
	2
Accounting	14.29%
	1
Small Business Acumen	28.57%
	2
Large Business Acumen	42.86%
	3
Government	28.57%
	2
Public Relations	14.29%
	1

Question 9: About how much time per month are you willing to devote to your role as a member of the EDC?

Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 1 hour	14.29% 1
1-2 hours	14.29% 1
2-3 hours	28.57% 2
As much as it takes	42.86% 3