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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





The purpose of the Economic Development element within the Comprehensive Plan is to strengthen the economic vitality of Silverton and guide public investment in economic development. The Comprehensive Plan directs the City to work cooperatively with private industry, regional economic development partners, and state and federal agencies to promote investment in projects that will create quality employment opportunities for area residents and quality tax base for the community.

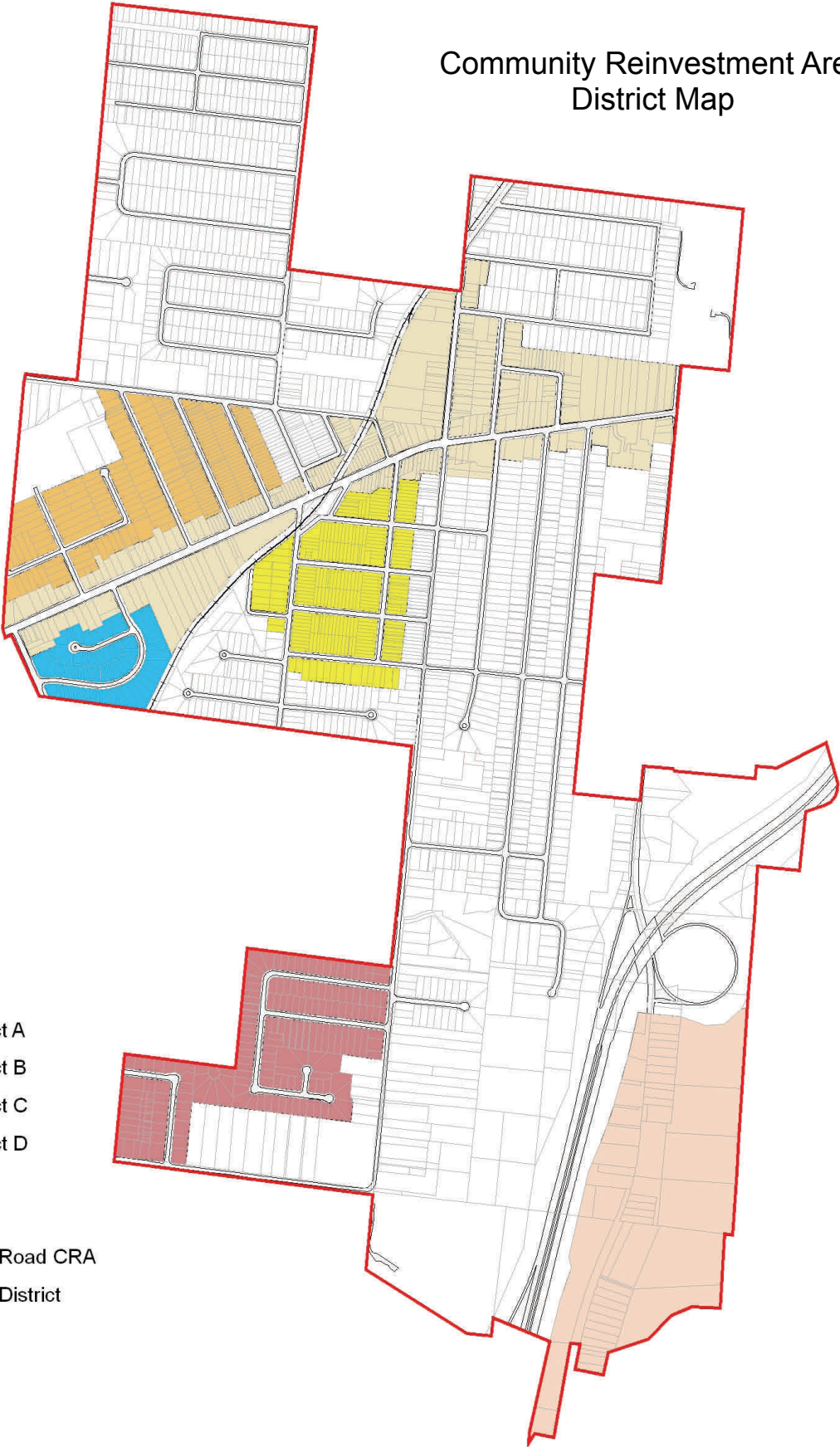
Within the context of a comprehensive plan, it is appropriate to examine long-range economic goals and the strategies required to help a community achieve those goals. In contrast, most economic development programs are undertaken within a relatively short timeframe, targeting specific and immediate needs. Stand-alone economic development plans address these issues and get into significantly greater detail than comprehensive plans on this topic. However, the steps in both efforts are similar - setting goals, identifying opportunities and obstacles, and developing strategies that help the community achieve its desired economic future.

Business development and job creation are guided both to central locations, promoting redevelopment and infill growth along the Montgomery Road and Plainville Road Corridor as well as the identified Silverton City Central district, and to fringe commercially zoned locations such as the lower Stewart Road commercial district. Well-located and serviced business and office developments are critical to the expansion of existing businesses and key to attracting new companies. The City and its partner, Silverton Development, Inc., should continue to support investment in the targeted redevelopment areas.

Silverton should aggressively utilize the economic development programs made available to it through the governing Ohio statutes. Some of the programs promoted in this Comprehensive Plan include Tax Increment Financing districts, Community Reinvestment Area tax abatements, Business Improvement Districts, a Silverton Design Assistance Program, land acquisition and development through a Silverton Community Improvement Corporation and application of Community Development Block Grant funds.



Community Reinvestment Area District Map



Legend

- Residential CRA District A
- Residential CRA District B
- Residential CRA District C
- Residential CRA District D
- Stewart Road CRA
- Commercial District
- Montgomery/Plainfield Road CRA
- Proposed Commercial District
- Rail Line
- Roads

Economic Development Policy Recommendations

ED 1.0 Establish bi-annual developer roundtable forum.

Silverton staff should consider facilitating an inaugural developer round table discussion after promoting the event to both the development community and the public at large. The intent of the roundtable meetings serve to educate and stimulate interest in development opportunities within Silverton, most specifically, the opportunities and city initiatives underway in the Silverton City Central district.

ED 1.1 Develop database and associated marketing materials of available properties and sites.

Creating the materials necessary to convey the positive message of Silverton's assets is critical. These materials may take the form of traditional brochures, print advertisements, and website promotion. Other tools may include bird's eye view corridor videos distributed on DVD's. The marketing material should also highlight a comprehensive financial incentive plan for prospective targeted businesses. Lastly, any incentive zoning that may be implemented as part of this plan should be highlighted as well. A comprehensive incentive package combines both the economic development financing tools offered through local and state governments along with zoning incentive bonuses typically provided through creative overlay and planned unit development districts.

Providing project density bonuses, setback relief and other zoning related "incentives" are often highly sought after from the development community. A separate marketing piece should be considered for the Silverton City Central district and the specific opportunities and the financial and zoning incentives available to qualifying projects.

ED 1.2 Establish an Aggressive Business Retention and Communication Program for Silverton Business Owners.

The City may consider establishing an aggressive business retention program for the existing businesses located in the city. Reaching out to the existing businesses on an annual basis holds many benefits. In most instances, local business owners welcome the opportunity to have one on one meetings with public officials. One effective method is to implement a Business Walk Program where city officials can visit the business owners on foot. These meetings can be invaluable to gain information on why the business owners choose to continue to operate in Silverton and also a chance to learn about potential issues the business may be facing. In some cases, the City official may be able to answer or at least address the problem, while in other cases, the official can assist in putting the business owner in contact with an individual to help resolve the issue. Other benefits of a retention program include promoting a proactive public stance to retaining businesses and providing the opportunity to promote new City programs and initiatives.

Economic Development Policy Recommendations (continued)

ED 1.3 Explore the creation of Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) or Joint Economic Development Zone (JEDZ) pursuant to ORC 715.69-83.

Research the viability of creating a JEED or JEDZ among identified local government stakeholders. These income tax districts are an effective way to create new revenue sources to be applied toward the investment and construction in new public improvement projects. Silverton should consider possible JEDD / JEDZ arrangements with both other municipalities as well as neighboring townships that are exhibiting significant new growth activity.

ED 1.4 Tax Increment Financing Districts

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts are a valuable tool for creating a revenue stream to construct the public improvements necessary to service a redeveloped corridor business district. TIF's provide revenue from the increased real property valuation after new construction occurs within the district. The real property taxes derived from the increased property valuation may be used to service the debt for new public improvement projects including new roadways, sidewalks, public utility extensions, public parking facilities and public gateway projects. With local school district approval, a TIF can exist for a period up to 30 years. Silverton should consider adopting TIF guidelines to provide clear parameters for Silverton TIF eligibility.

ED 1.5 Provide for smart growth (LEED) incentives.

Research the types of incentives local governments are now providing developers and builders for building to LEED certified standards. Early studies are showing a dramatic increase in lease rates, quicker lease-up periods, lower tenant turnover rates and high worker productivity in buildings built to LEED standards. Examples of potential LEED based incentives may include: points towards a CRA tax abatement, providing reduced or waived building permit or zoning related fees and providing fast track permitting for LEED projects.

ED 1.6 Create a Montgomery-Plainfield Commercial CRA District

Community Reinvestment Areas are areas of land in which property owners can receive tax abatements for investing in real property improvements. The CRA program has been used with great success in stimulating economic development projects for both commercial, mixed-use and industrial projects throughout Ohio communities. Eligible projects may receive up to 100% real property tax abatement for a period up to 15 years (for new commercial, industrial and residential construction). The City can establish it's own set of project criteria and goals and have authority to deny projects an abatement if the stated project criteria are not met. CRA abatements are especially useful in mixed use development scenarios where a residential component is included in the project.

Silverton has created one commercial CRA district and four residential CRA districts. Further consideration should be given to creating a commercial CRA district over the properties identified for development and redevelopment opportunities consistent with this plan. CRA project criteria should be drafted and adopted with the district providing clear guidance for the eligibility requirements for future development projects seeking CRA tax abatements.

Economic Development Policy Recommendations (continued)

ED 1.7 Explore implementation of a Business Improvement District (BID) (or Special Improvement District)

The city should explore the creation of a special improvement district (SID) over targeted portions of the Montgomery Road and Plainfield Road business corridor areas under the provisions in ORC Chapter 1710. A SID must be petitioned by 60% of the front foot property owners or 75% of the total area property owners to be created. Once created, assessments may be levied within the district to pay for public improvements and the cost to provide public services that are not currently being offered by the local government. The improvements or services are paid by the property owners within the district who are assessed on their tax bills. SID's can be an effective tool in building public improvements and public services needed to further the growth and development of a business corridor. Some examples of public improvements for a business corridor may include: streetscape and other beautification projects, gateway entrance signage and other features, public parking facilities, public gathering places and sidewalk construction. This effort should occur after a Capital Improvement Plan has been adopted for the Montgomery Road and Plainfield Road corridor areas.

ED 1.8 Establish a Corridor Business Walk Program

Establish a Silverton Business Walk Program that features city staff / elected officials visiting business owners in a door to door fashion. The intent is to support Silverton businesses by gaining feedback into their issues and concerns while also providing information to the business owners regarding economic development initiatives and programs.

ED 1.9 Initiate the Creation of a Local Business Association

At the present time, Silverton is not served by a local chamber of commerce. Silverton officials and staff should consider taking a pro-active lead in creating a local business association. A local business association is a critical element of creating and perpetuating successful redevelopment within the city. Local business associations serve to coordinate communication among area businesses and to provide a forum for problem resolution and education. Possible business association activities might include inviting City representatives to association meetings to explain particular sections of the City Code, development standards and procedures which might be causing confusion. The association could work with the City in developing a detailed streetscape plan for the area; coordinate efforts to establish a special area identity for the City Central district; coordinate joint business promotions and activities; and provide a forum from which to communicate to City Council on issues of concern.

ED 2.0 Establish a Silverton Community Improvement Corporation

A Silverton Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) may be established to engage in public sector development activities. A CIC gives a local government the flexibility to invest in and development property. The CIC may be utilized to acquire, dispose and develop identified properties. A CIC can purchase and lease property as well. Many creative deal structures may be formulated between the private sector and a CIC that enables a more flexible working relationship between the private and public sectors.

Economic Development Policy Recommendations (continued)

ED 2.1 Establish a Design Assistance Program

Matching grants and low interest loans may be utilized to provide property owners access to low cost property improvements within a designated area. A design assistance program provides financial incentives to property owners for facade and site improvements which helps facilitate the implementation of the streetscape plan and redevelopment plan for the Montgomery Road and Plainfield Road corridor areas. Funding should be allocated on a yearly basis to operate the program.

Low interest loans and matching grants should be used by the applicant for exterior or façade improvements to buildings that are visible to the public, such as window and door repairs, glass replacement, façade repair, brick and mortar repair, awnings, trim repair or replacement, and paint. Site improvements may also be eligible for financial assistance including upgrades to parking lot areas, site lighting and signage.

ED 2.2 Utilizing Community Development Block Grant Funds

The city should continue to seek funding for community development block grant programs targeted towards infrastructure improvement projects that will have a direct positive effect on the city's economic development efforts. The city may also identify economic development specific projects that may be partially funded by the CDBG program. Examples of these types of projects include: acquisition of land for redevelopment efforts through the use of a Silverton CIC, acquisition and development of land converted to public parking areas and funding used as seed money to establish a design assistance program for the business properties fronting along the city's primary business corridors.

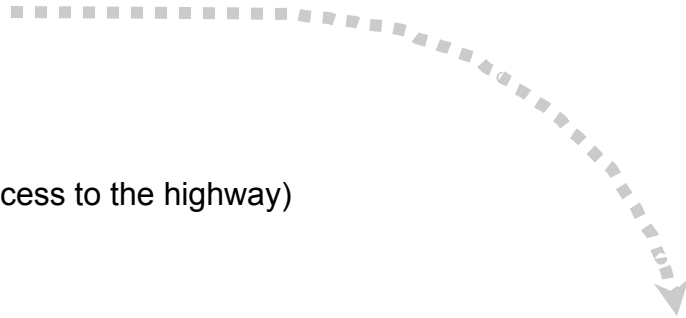
ED 2.3 Annexations as an Economic Development Tool

The City may consider exploring the use of annexation as one method to increase the community's tax base and income tax revenues. The annexation of adjacent land suitable for commercial, office or industrial development or redevelopment should be considered. Prior to any annexation efforts, the City should performed a detailed cost-benefit of each proposed annexation to ensure the total cost to adequately service the newly acquired area does not exceed the expected tax revenue derived from the property at build-out.

Land Use SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Proximity to Kenwood
- Montgomery Road
- Affordable living
- Commercial rent (low)
- 2 Dimensional downtown
- Easy access for commuters (access to the highway)
- Rail
- Public transportation
- Quality of housing stock
- Proud of property
- People



GOALS

Weakness:

- Rail
- Vacant buildings
- Available land
- Access to park (lack of) proximity
- Commercial/ Residential
- Parking
- High rental (residential)
- High multi-family
- Out dated zoning
- Lack of greenspace
- Lack of quality of businesses
- Lack of locations for offices

- City to make changes
- Update this plan once adopted
- Update zoning code
- Attract residents / businesses
- Blight reduction
- Increase housing mix (senior/family)
- Market our assets

Opportunities:

- Highway adjacent property
- Growth from Kenwood
- Downtown development
- Streetscape
- Finding identity
- Businesses (clean slate)
- Meier's Wine

Threats:

- Small lot size
- Increasing rental
- Zoning code
- Decreasing tax base

Community Character SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- History
- Diversity
- Sense of neighborhood
- Physical location
- Size
- School
- Museum school
- City services



Weakness:

- No identity
- Lack of gateways/ landscape
- Cluttered feeling
- Not uniform
- Signs
- Vacant housing

Goals:

- Creating identity
- Marketing identity
- Raising expectations
- Maintain diversity
- Create unique sense of place
- Eliminate vacant structures

Opportunities:

- Uniform development standards
- Provide flexible tax code
- Raise expectations
- Neo-traditional design
- Educate
- Create rehab credits
- Realtor solicitation

Threats:

- City landmarks leaving
- Identity
- Perceived bad school

Community Facilities / Transportation / Infrastructure SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Park and greenspace
- Railroad
- Police department
- Montgomery road
- Post office
- Railroad museum
- Meier's winery
- Metro training
- Women writing for change
- Post office
- Block watch

Weakness:

- Lack of medical facilities
- Age of infrastructure
- Park underutilized
- Run down post office
- Too much speeding
- Traffic signals

Opportunities:

- Existing school
- Inter-jurisdictional
- Cooperation
- Arts corridor
- Streetscape
- City corner
- Red bank road
- Signage

Threats:

- Negative influence



Themes:

- Marketing community assets
- Gateways
- Maintain high service delivery levels
- Build upon public building locations in core
- Exploring shared services
- Plan for Montgomery / Plainfield corner