Wilmington, Delaware

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

November 2014

Contents

Executive Summary

This Economic Development Master Strategic Action Plan is the final element of the City of Wilmington's Economic Development Plan prepared by Wadley-Donovan GrowthTech, LLC and Garnet Consulting Services, Inc. Two prior elements prepared as part of this project were:

- A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) assessment of the City
- A Target Industry Report

The overall project included the following primary aspects:

- Prepare an analysis of the City of Wilmington's economic and demographic characteristics including income statistics, population, housing, employment and labor force characteristics, commutation conditions, occupational factors and educational attainment statistics as they impact economic development and planning.
- Identify marketable strengths that can be capitalized upon, as well as obstacles and weaknesses impacting the City's or region's economic development future.
- Identify target industries for the City's Office of Economic Development's business expansion, retention, creation and attraction efforts.
- Recommend specific action steps to guide economic development in the City.

This portion of the project addresses the last item.

This Action Plan is founded on the information obtained through a variety of methods that are detailed in the SWOT Analysis report, and is summarized in the following Introduction section.

Seven economic development goals for the City were provided to the consulting team by the City's Office for Economic Development:

1. Maintain a Business Roundtable

2. Position Wilmington as a magnet for business

3. Improve effectiveness and efficiency of City permitting and licensing

4. Invest in training, education, and youth employment programs

5. Enhance the marketing of Wilmington as a desirable business location

6. Coordinate an integrated economic development throughout the City

7. Develop and promote employment of City residents, small and minority businesses

Supplementing these goals were 11 economic development focus issues identified as part of Wilmington Works:

1. Mayor's Visitation Program

2. Business Recruitment

3. Economic Development Incentives

4. Diversifying the Economy

5. Revitalization Zones

6. Neighborhood Vitality

7. Marketing and Messaging

8. Jobs in the Building Industry

9. Jobs for Young Adults

10. Employing Wilmingtonians

11. Green Wilmington

During the course of project research, a lengthy list of possible Initiatives was developed that could be elements of the City's Economic Development Action Agenda. This list was modified and streamlined resulting in a set of ten Initiative Groups, most with multiple components. The following table summarizes those Groups and Components.

Initiative Group	Components
1. Marketing	1. Business Attraction Communications and Marketing Strategy 2. Mayor's Visitation Program 3. City-wide Master Marketing Program & Media Image Enhancement
2. Workforce Development	1. Career Fair for Youth 2. "Wilmington Works" Job Readiness initiative 3. Increase Incentives for Employers Hiring Wilmingtonians 4. Job Bank

3. Essential Tools	1. Economic Development Website:
	  a. Real Estate Inventory
	  b. Utilities and Telecommunications Summary
	  c. Directory of Small Business Services
	  d. Cost Comparison Study
	2. City Leadership Team Building for Economic Development (including Public Safety)
	3. Strategic Fund Improvements: Fully-Funded & Sustainable
	4. Economic Development Infrastructure & Site Improvement Closing Fund: Refund and Rebrand
	5. Fix Property Tax Abatement Policy for Existing Vacant Buildings
	6. Diamond State Opportunity (Hope) Zones

4. Crime Reduction	1. Use economic development as a tool for crime reduction.
5. Development Process Improvement	1. One-Stop Shopping 2. Permit Process &Policy Task Force
6. Public Schools	1. Public Schools Marketing 2. Public School Redistricting

Initiative Group	Components
	3. Reduce the dropout rate
7. Improving Economic Development Efficiency and Effectiveness	1. Cost-efficient and effective Economic Development Program
8. Real Estate and Infrastructure	1. Business Park Improvement Zones: Drive Investment towards Wilmington's Five Light Industrial Parks 2. Complete the South Walnut Urban Renewal Plan (Wetlands, Garasches Lane, and Bridge Landing etc.) 3. Recruit Transit Oriented Development
9. Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs	1. Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs Task Force 2. Create Combined Homebuyer and Student Debt Incentive Program 3. Create Bike Lanes
10. Downtown Business Development and City Growth	1. Housing Strategic Fund: Refund and Refocus 2. Increase the City's Population 3. Market City's unique & diverse neighborhoods and opportunities for homeownership Sustain the Downtown Development District Program

A detailed description of the ten Initiative Groups and their Components is presented with information on major action steps, approximate schedule, resource needs, responsibilities, performance measures, and other relevant information to help with implementation.

One important caveat is noted: This is intended to be an Action Plan. Planning is relatively easy and inexpensive compared to implementation. However, economic development rarely happens for free or without effort. Places that want it make an investment to get it – with the express intention of receiving a return on that investment.

Introduction

This Economic Development Strategic Action Plan is the product of a contract between The Wadley-Donovan Group (through its economic-development unit Wadley-Donovan GrowthTech [WDGT]) and the City of Wilmington, Delaware. WDGT partnered with Garnet Consulting Services, Inc. to complete this Action Plan and the other components of this project.

Two other deliverables are being submitted in conjunction with this report:

- A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) assessment of the City
- A Target Industry Report

This Action Plan and the two previously submitted sections were developed in the second of a two phased project. The first phase, or Phase 1, consisted of foundational research used in Phase 2. A report was submitted containing the results of this research

This Plan and its two companion section to Phase 2 are based upon the information obtained through a variety of methods that are detailed in the Phase 1 Report to this project. In summary, these included:

- The results from a nearly identical companion project being undertaken by the consulting team for New Castle County
- Background research from extensive documents provided by the City of Wilmington's Office of Economic Development (OED) in response to a research list provided by the consultant team
- A project alignment meeting with Mr. Harold Gray, Director of the Mayor's Office of Economic Development and Mr. Stephen Williams of the same office.
- A tour of the City by Mr. Martin Hageman, Executive Director of Downtown Visions, and Mr. Will Minster, Director of Business Development, and Main Street Wilmington Program Manager, Downtown Visions, Wilmington Downtown Business Improvement District.
- Collection of key demographic and other data by the consultant team leading to the preparation of a statistical profile of the City
- Orientation interviews with the chairs of the Mayor's three Business Roundtable sub-committees.
- Data-focused interviews were conducted with three key City staff: Tunde Durosomo of the Mayor's Office of Economic Development; Jeff Flynn, Deputy Director, Mayor's Office of Economic Development; and Lenny Sophrin, AIA, Director of the City's Planning Department.
- Six topic-oriented focus groups in which nearly 75 people participated; the topics were:
  - Economic Development
  - Marketing and Promoting the City: Economic Development and Tourism
  - Quality of Life/the Living Environment
  - Wilmington's Development Regulatory Environment and Planning
  - Workforce, Training and Development
  - Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs

Major Goals and Focus Issues

Seven primary goals were identified by the City for Wilmington's future economic development efforts:

1. Maintain a Business Roundtable
2. Position Wilmington as a magnet for Business
3. Improve effectiveness and efficiency of city permitting and licensing
4. Invest in training, education, and youth employment programs
5. Enhance the marketing of Wilmington as a desirable business location
6. Coordinate an integrated economic development throughout the City
7. Develop and promote employment of City residents, small and minority businesses

In addition, Wilmington Works identified 11 economic development focus issues for the City:

1. Mayor's Visitation Program
2. Business Recruitment
3. Economic Development Incentives
4. Diversifying the Economy
5. Revitalization Zones
6. Neighborhood Vitality
7. Marketing and Messaging
8. Jobs in the Building Industry
9. Jobs for Young Adults
10. Employing Wilmingtonians
11. Green Wilmington

The Action Plan was to address these goals and focus areas with specific initiatives to be taken during the next three to five years.

Cross-Cutting Principles that Link Goals and Focus Areas Together

The goals and focus issues are linked by six principles:

1. Strategic Planning is required for the benefit of the City as a whole and its Economic Development efforts.
2. Collaboration is needed among the agencies, organizations and other entities active in the various fields of economic development within the City and County, and by extension the greater Wilmington-Philadelphia region.
3. Economic development must aim for cost-effectiveness.
4. Economic development efforts must be results-oriented.
5. Economic development needs to aim at sustainability of resources and goals.

6. Efforts need to capitalize on and support available programs and allies to benefit from economies of scale and synergies, and to avoid duplicated work.

Project research led to development of 33 possible Initiatives that could be the focus of future economic development efforts. Some were suggested during research; some were identified by the consultant team; and some were suggested by OED staff. These are shown in Table 1, grouped by common theme, with a brief description of what each is about. These brief descriptions, or elaborations thereon, also appear in the Initiative Elements section of each Initiative Group discussion in the following pages.

Table 1
Wilmington, DE Initial Initiatives List

Number	Name	Description
1.	Develop a Business Attraction Message and Implement a Consistent and Ongoing Business Marketing & Attraction Strategy	To continually attract quality employers, the OED must develop a continuous, coherent, and consistent business attraction message with businesses within and outside of the City and implement an ongoing marketing strategy. Work with partners (Chambers, DEDO, DTV, WPA, RDC) to engage the real estate brokerage community in the promotion of Wilmington as a business location. Develop the requisite print and digital promotional materials and include testimonials from current Wilmington businesses. Hold a minimum of two annual events with a regular format of guest speaker, update on what is going on, review of incentives, bus tours of important areas, and other elements.
2.	Mayor's Visitation Program	The Mayor, his Chief of Staff & Director of OED need to visit the leadership of the City's top 50 employers and maintain an ongoing schedule to understand the issues of the business community and communicate the Mayor's crime strategy and City vision.
3.	City of Wilmington Master Marketing Plan & Media Image Enhancement	The City must proactively improve its image and communicate its value beyond economic development. Hire a professional firm to identify all audience stakeholder groups and market segments. Develop targeted message per audience and identify the most effective channels to distribute message. Fund and sustain the effort consistently. Seek to counter the negative news being publicized in the News Journal about crime. Monitor the news and blogs on this subject and develop the influence to have coverage that is more in perspective. Encourage the development of an alternative newspaper that addresses the attitudes and needs of a younger, hipper population, such as Burlington VT's Seven Days, that serves the entire county and beyond into the Wilmington-Philadelphia region.

Number	Name	Description
4.	Career Fair for Youth	Create a more robust Career Fair concentrated on 9th grade students.
5.	"Wilmington Works" Job Readiness Initiative	Work with major employers in the City and DelTech to create a job readiness program with combined class room and field work. Identify available career pathways and the necessary educational or other steps along those pathways. In particular, identify "fast track" pathways for Veterans. Seek placement commitments from local employers. Graduate 100+ people annually.
6.	Incentives for Hiring Wilmingtonians	Create or increase the use of incentives to companies that locate within Wilmington and who employ Wilmington residents.
7.	Jobs Bank	Work with the Delaware Workforce Investment Board and/or other appropriate allies to create, promote, and maintain a Jobs Bank showing jobs available in the City and requirements to obtain those jobs.
8.	Economic Development Website	Create a City Economic Development website separate from the more general government City website that provides the information business prospects and site location consultants typically expect to find this way. Include the following components: Inventory of sites, Cost of doing business comparison, Directory of Small business services, and Directory of Incentives, Infrastructure and telecommunications inventory.
9.	Real Estate Inventory	Prepare and maintain an inventory of available commercial and industrial buildings and sites in the City. Make this inventory available on the City's Economic Development Website. Leverage DEDO's site inventory program.
10.	Utilities and Telecommunications Summary	Prepare and maintain a summary of public water and sewer, electric power, natural gas and tele-communications capabilities in the City. Make this information available on the City's Economic Development Website. Address the need for lower cost access to high speed broadband in the downtown.
11.	Directory of Small Business Services	In association with New Castle County and other allies prepare, broadly disseminate, promote, and maintain a Directory of Small Business Services. Publish in English and Spanish.
12.	Cost Comparison Study	Prepare a Cost of Doing Business Comparison between a Wilmington location and other areas that are typical competitors. Where Wilmington has a cost advantage, promote this in the City's marketing. Where there are cost disadvantages, identify ways to reduce them.
13.	City Leadership Team Building for Economic Development	Create and use a team-building program such as the Metro Hartford Alliance's "Economic Development for

Number	Name	Description
		Public Officials" to meld all City staff who come into contact with the economic development process into a more effective team. Assure that all employees are aware of the critical role they play in Wilmington's Economic Development.
14.	Strategic Fund Improvements: Fully Funded & Sustainable	Work with Finance, Budget and Council to enhance the Strategic Fund with a revolving functionality: return 2.5 years of wage tax revenues from any given Strategic Fund Job Creation or Retention Project Agreement to the Fund. All subsequent wage taxes from Projects go to the General Fund. This avoids successive capital events being needed to fund the Strategic Fund.
15.	Economic Development Infrastructure & Site Improvement Closing Fund: Refund and Rebrand	Currently, the economic development project account(s) in the CIP are not funded. This could potentially put the City at a disadvantage in creating new jobs or new property tax ratables without the ability to leverage private investment with City-funded infrastructure, site improvement or Right of Way incentives. The City should maintain a broad purpose and highly flexible Strategic capital fund for public infrastructure, right of way, and site improvement investments. This fund should seek to leverage private investment and partner with the DelDOT TIP and DNREC HSCA funds to close the gaps on redevelopment of underutilized land, promote transit oriented development and attract employers to the City.
16.	Fix Property Tax Abatement Policy for Existing Vacant Buildings	Amend the City's tax abatement legislation to address the scenario in which vacant buildings get no benefit from the tax abatement for investment in property improvements because the assessment does not change and therefore does not reflect the capital investment. Create an investment tax credit of 50% of current assessment for up to 10 years for cases where the assessed value does not change AND an investment of more than $2 million has been made. The tax abatement may be on a sliding scale with the amount of the abatement declining annually.
17.	Diamond State Opportunity (Hope) Zones	Identify census tracts to be exempt from City, County and State taxes for a period of seven years. This is an attempt to drive investment to areas most in-need and transform them similar to Pennsylvania's Keystone Opportunity Zone program. The State might designate 12 zones throughout. Hire a 3rd party to conduct an independent analysis of revenues being generated in census tracts to determine cost/benefit. Benchmark Pennsylvania's KOZ and other like programs.

Number	Name	Description
18.	Crime Reduction	Continue aggressive efforts both to reduce crime in the City and improve the City's image as a safe place to live and work. Employ Wilmingtonians by implementing the Diamond State Opportunity Zones and Wilmington Works, and increase incentives for employers who hire unemployed Wilmingtonians as tools to reduce crime.
19.	One-Stop Shopping	Build on the City's current front end, informal review process to develop a One-Stop Shopping approach to providing guidance to developers on proposed projects. Use technology to integrate plan submission and track through L&I, Public Works and Planning.
20.	Permit Process and Code Policy Task Force	Develop and maintain a City Permit and Approval Process Task Force that meets regularly to ensure that land use and construction codes are conducive to development. Ensure state fire code revisions are completed and code policies are optimizing public safety and economic development. This task force should be a partnership of City staff, boards and commissions and private sector developers, contractors, architects and engineers. City staff and boards and commissions would be permanent members, while private sector representatives would regularly change to provide fresh opinions.
21.	Public Schools Marketing	Develop an ongoing initiative by the school districts serving the City to develop a marketing program by which the benefits and assets of the districts and Wilmington's diverse charter schools are highlighted and publicized.
22.	Public School Redistricting	Address the potential for redistricting the schools serving the City and County and revisit the possibility of consolidation if there will be an improvement in quality and/or a reduction in cost.
23.	Reduce the public school dropout rate	Lower the dropout rate in the four Wilmington school districts to match, at the least, the national average.
24.	Cost-efficient and effective Economic Development Agency Program	Collaborate with other entities, both public and non-government, to find ways to make the economic development process more cost-efficient and effective. Develop a more effective way to leverage the resources provided to these agencies from the business community. Formalize the current marketing group led by GWCVB.
25.	Business Park Improvement Zones	The City has demonstrated over the last decade that it is able to attract office and residential development but has lagged in the planning, development and attraction of flex –warehouse and light manufacturing investments that are critical to diversifying employment

Number	Name	Description
		opportunities through the creation of blue collar jobs. A significant contribution to crime in the City is lack of employment opportunities for City residents. Business areas with modern flex and manufacturing locations are vital to putting more people to work in the City. Because of its Interstate highways, rail, port, and proximity to both the New Castle County and Philadelphia International Airports, position the City as a multi-modal "distribution" hub for both products and services. Drive investment to Wilmington's five industrial areas by creating development zones and leveraging the Infrastructure Fund, State HSCA Fund, and State Blue Collar Jobs (Gross Receipts) Program. Seek federal assistance from EDA's Public Works program to bring diversity to Wilmington's historical Financial and legal services dominated market.
26.	Implement the South Wilmington TOD	Leverage the momentum of the wetlands, bridge and Garasches lane projects to attract more transit oriented development within the South Walnut Urban Renewal Zone.
27.	Recruit Transit Oriented Development ("TOD")	Develop a plan for increasing transit oriented development in Wilmington at the 495&12[th]street, Northeast Boulevard (&495) nodes. Consider implementing the old DelDOT12[th]Street Connector Plan.
28.	Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals Task Force and Analysis	Prepare a competitive analysis comparing Wilmington with other areas of comparable size in terms of characteristics, programs and services leading to the successful retention and recruitment of young residents. Create a think tank (or advisory/resource group) of young people – both young professionals and others who aren't professionals yet. Further develop the current homebuyer and student-debt Incentive proposals. Aggressively install bike lanes through Wilmington to signal a progressive environment that cares about recruiting and retaining young residents.
29.	Create Combined Homebuyer and Student Debt Incentive Program	Leverage new and existing programs to create a comprehensive package that will spur population growth with new young talent. Expand the existing City employee Homebuyer program and combine it with a new Student Debt Repayment Incentive to attract young professional homeowners away from the surrounding suburbs. The demographics for millennials and recent college graduates are promising; they have higher earnings than our median income, encompass our weakest age brackets, and are highly diverse and eager to live in mixed-use urban centers. The package will

Number	Name	Description
		provide a one-time closing assistance for the purchase of a home, a waiver of half of the City's portion of transfer tax at the time of purchase, and a yearly reimbursement for a portion of paid student debt
30.	Create Bike Lanes	Bike lanes are attractive to the urbanites and millennials; they support the Mayor's Young Professionals policy, increase public safety, encourage health, and present a tangible sign of a progressive, modern City. They are an important component of the national Complete Streets movement and program. Benchmark programs such as the recent Better Block demonstration and New York City's transportation initiative to identify opportunities to stripe lanes within existing roadways and cost-effective installation methods.
31.	Increase the City's population	Hire 3rd party to analyze the cost of living differential between the City and other comparison locations. The analysis should include taxes, utilities and service levels (e.g.-trash collection and professional fire service). Celebrate and Market the City's diverse neighborhood offerings. Attract new residents from the region by implementing growth initiatives and homebuyer attraction incentives to leverage Wilmington's lower homeownership costs compared to the more expensive Philadelphia and New York Markets. Support the efforts of nonprofit housing developers such as WHP.
32.	Housing Strategic Fund	Re-fund the City's Housing Strategic Fund which is currently depleted. The Fund is integral to the City's economic development because it drives private investment in market rate housing, which cannot be supported by CDBG/federal funds.
33.	Downtown Development and City Growth	Leverage and Sustain the new Downtown Development District "DDD") program. Enhance the downtown's living and working environment. Attract young professionals and working class residents.

The next step was to create a final list of Initiatives; this was done by the Consulting Team using input from the Wilmington OED. The initiatives were aggregated into ten Initiative Groups with related components in recognition that staff, budget and other limitations would not support implementation of 33 initiatives at the same time. The final list of Initiative Groups and component elements is shown in Table 2 and elaborated upon later in this document.

Table 2
Wilmington, DE Initiative Groups and Components

Initiative Group	Components
1. Marketing	1. Business Attraction Communications and Marketing Strategy 2. Mayor's Visitation Program 3. City-wide Master Marketing Program & Media Image Enhancement
2. Workforce Development	1. Career Fair for Youth 2. "Wilmington Works" Job Readiness initiative 3. Increase Incentives for Employers Hiring Wilmingtonians 4. Job Bank

3. Essential Tools	1. Economic Development Website:
	    a. Real Estate Inventory
	    b. Utilities and Telecommunications Summary
	    c. Directory of Small Business Services
	    d. Cost Comparison Study
	2. City Leadership Team Building for Economic Development (including Public Safety)
	3. Strategic Fund Improvements: Fully-Funded & Sustainable
	4. Economic Development Infrastructure & Site Improvement Closing Fund: Refund and Rebrand
	5. Fix Property Tax Abatement Policy for Existing Vacant Buildings
	6. Diamond State Opportunity (Hope) Zones

4. Crime Reduction	1. Use economic development as a tool for crime reduction.
5. Development Process Improvement	1. One-Stop Shopping 2. Permit Process &Code Policy Task Force
6. Public Schools	1. Public Schools Marketing 2. Public School Redistricting 3. Reduce the dropout rate
7. Improving Economic Development Efficiency and Effectiveness	1. Cost-efficient and effective Economic Development Program
8. Real Estate and Infrastructure	1. Business Park Improvement Zones: Drive Investment towards Wilmington's Five Light Industrial Parks 2. Complete the South Walnut Urban Renewal Plan (Wetlands, Garasches Lane, and Bridge Landing etc.)

Initiative Group	Components
	3. Recruit Transit Oriented Development
9. Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs	1. Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs Task Force 2. Create Combined Homebuyer and Student Debt Incentive Program 3. Create Bike Lanes
10. Downtown Business Development and City Growth	1. Housing Strategic Fund: Refund and Refocus 2. Increase the City's Population 3. Market City's unique & diverse neighborhoods and opportunities for homeownership Sustain the Downtown Development District Program

Recognition of Work Already in Progress

As with any Action Plan, this one was not prepared in a vacuum of little or no ongoing activity. This Action Plan builds on a great deal of work currently being undertaken by the City's Office of Economic Development and many allied agencies and organizations such as Downtown Visions, the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce, Wilmington Renaissance Corporation, and many others.

The ten Initiative Groups mentioned above and discussed in more detail in the following section recognize ongoing activities of the City and its partners related to their individual initiatives and items intended for completion or substantial progress in the next ten months. However, OED and its partners are also currently involved in many additional work efforts that do not relate to the initiatives recommended in this Action Plan. These include:

Marketing

1. Maintain Mayor's Quarterly Business Roundtable
2. Monthly publication of OED's Out and About
3. Publication of Quarterly YouTube videos

Workforce Development

4. Define Workforce training vendors (Department of Labor Collaboration)
5. Contractor Training and Small Business Success Series
6. Employment of City residents on the Flats Redevelopment project
7. Job Demand Trend Analysis

Essential Tools

8. Deliver City economic development plan(s)
9. Deploy, market and administer Grow Wilmington Fund
10. Negotiate final Navient incentive agreement (>125 jobs)
11. Represent the City on the WEDCO Board and participate in Loan Committee reviews as needed
12. Preside over UDAG Corporation Board Meetings
13. Manage and Administer Sister Cities Program

Development Process Improvement

14. Work with License & Inspection and other City officials to streamline permitting process
15. Improve back office reporting, compliance, and performance tracking.

Real Estate and Infrastructure

16. Manage sale and redevelopment of Harper Thiel property
17. Manage sale and redevelopment of Cooper Building
18. Negotiate sale of 827-829 N. Market St.
19. Support BPG Downtown residential expansions (400+ units)
20. Determine level of City assistance for conversion of 212 14th Street BCBS building
21. Determine and execute an exit strategy for the UDAG note on the Coca-Cola Building
22. Represent the City on the Riverfront Development Corporation Board
23. Represent the City on the State Water Infrastructure Committee
24. Negotiate Hercules pedestrian bridge development
25. Project Leadership for Wetlands, Garasches, & South Wilmington Development

Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs

26. Young Professionals Task Force
27. Support Downtown Creative District

Downtown Business Development and City Growth

28. Capitalize on the State Downtown Development District Program

It is important to note this baseline level of work because the additional work effort created by this Action Plan will necessitate either the completion of ongoing tasks, reassignment of some of these tasks to others, or addition of staff to ensure the capacity for implementing the Action Plan.

The Wilmington Economic Development Strategic Action Plan

The following section of this Economic Development Strategic Action Plan provides details on each Initiative Group designed to help with implementation. Included for each are:

- A list of major action steps and a suggested schedule for implementation
- Identified agencies or individuals to be responsible for or in support of implementation
- The resources needed and possible sources
- Performance measures to gauge the City's success in meeting the Plan's goals
- Additional information that may be of use in implementing the plan
- A recommended schedule for implementation
- The OED goals and Wilmington Works focus areas addressed

This is an aggressive program of work that will require the dedication of staff time, funding, and other resources. It is impossible to start and maintain work on all of these items simultaneously. A staggered start on the various elements within the ten Initiative Groups has been provided in the Initiative Group Tables, but is subject to modification by the City to reflect resource realities and ongoing management responsibilities.

Wilmington, DE Economic Development Action Plan	
Initiative Group #1: Marketing	
Initiative Elements	
1. Develop a Business Attraction Message and Implement a Consistent and Ongoing Business Marketing & Attraction Strategy	To continually attract quality employers, the OED must develop a continuous, coherent, and consistent business attraction message with businesses within and outside of the City and implement an ongoing marketing strategy. Work with partners (Chambers, DEDO, DTV, WPA, RDC) to engage the real estate brokerage community in the promotion of Wilmington as a business location. Develop the requisite print and digital promotional materials and include testimonials from current Wilmington businesses. Hold a minimum of two annual events with a regular format of guest speaker, update on what is going on, review of incentives, bus tours of important areas, and other elements.
2. Mayor's Visitation Program	The Mayor, his Chief of Staff & Director of OED need to visit the leadership of the City's top 50 employers and maintain an ongoing schedule to understand the issues of the business community and communicate the Mayor's crime strategy and City vision.
3. City of Wilmington Master Marketing Plan & Media Image Enhancement	The City must proactively improve its image and communicate its value beyond economic development. Hire a professional firm to identify all audience stakeholder groups and market segments. Develop targeted message per audience and identify the most effective channels to distribute message. Fund and sustain the effort consistently. Seek to counter the negative news being publicized in the News Journal about crime. Monitor the news and blogs on this subject and develop the influence to have coverage that is more in perspective. Encourage the development of an alternative newspaper that addresses the attitudes and needs of a younger, hipper population, such as Burlington VT's Seven Days, that serves the entire county and beyond into the Wilmington-Philadelphia region.

Supports Mayor's Goals and Wilmington Works Focus Areas:

Goals	Focus Areas
Maintain a Business Roundtable	Mayor's Visitation Program
Position Wilmington as a magnet for Business	Business Recruitment
Enhance the marketing of Wilmington as a desirable business location	Diversifying the Economy
Coordinate and integrate economic development throughout the city	Marketing and Messaging
Develop and promote employment of city residents, small and minority businesses	Employing Wilmingtonians

Rationale for Initiative and Background Information

Place marketing has always been a primary function of economic development programs. Such marketing usually includes both external and internal elements – the first aimed at initiating contact with businesses and people outside the area, while the second is aimed at maintaining contact and relationships, and providing information to the businesses, residents, stakeholders and leadership already in the area. Effective marketing can have positive impacts on the entire array of business development activities – attraction, creation, retention, expansion and transition.

There are many existing marketing efforts related to portions of the City's economic development being carried out by the City, Downtown Visions, the Greater Wilmington Convention & Visitors Bureau, New Castle County Chamber of Commerce, and others. Multiple efforts such as this can lead to inefficiencies, reduced effectiveness, and inadequate funding for specific marketing efforts. The Mayor's Business Roundtable has recognized this problem and has a subcommittee focused on better coordinating marketing efforts and improving efficiency and effectiveness. This effort should be continued and perhaps made an ongoing effort to assure that Wilmington is employing the most cost-effective approaches for its marketing expenditures. This is the Master Marketing Program listed above as an element of this Initiative.

In addition, we have suggested three other elements we believe are necessary for Wilmington's marketing program.

1. Development and aggressive utilization of a business attraction message and strategy.
2. Use of the ongoing Mayor's Visitation Program to maintain and enhance communications with existing businesses in Wilmington or nearby; this is important because research indicates these businesses will generate about 70% of future business growth.
3. Creation and utilization of a Master Marketing and Media Enhancement Program. This is important in two ways: first, to use the marketing dollars devoted to Wilmington as efficiently and effectively as possible; and second, to address the issue that while Wilmington has name recognition outside Delaware, it has either little or no image, or a negative image based on the recent Interstate bridge closure, and press reports about crime and drug problems. Creating a more positive image is important.

It should be noted that marketing is not the same as sales – marketing is intended to generate attention to and interest in the place, while sales is what "closes the deal" and results in new capital investment

and employment. Effective sales require many tools for use in different situations; Initiative Group 3 – Essential Tools-provides specific recommendations on this topic. In particular, several of the tools in Initiative Group 3 relate to creation and use of an economic development website linked to but separate from the City's general purpose website so that Wilmington's economic development efforts, programs and services have higher visibility. This is particularly important because of the continually rising use of the Internet as a primary method of initial research about places by businesses and site location consultants.

Ongoing Work and Ten-Month Deliverables

- Maintain Mayor's Quarterly Business Roundtable
- Monthly publication of OED's Out and About
- Publication of Quarterly YouTube videos

Major Action Steps and Schedule

Action Steps	Schedule
1. Discuss the City's SWOT with advertising and marketing agencies to open a dialogue on how professional services might assist in the scoping of a City-wide master marketing and media image enhancement strategy. Explore feasibility stage proposals to and/or elicit different approaches to creating a scope that can meet the stated objective, used to compare approaches and service level agreements, prioritized and competitively priced.	1st Qtr 2015
2. Develop an approach that interfaces with all City departments and agencies and partner NGOs. Identify all of the numerous stakeholder groups and audiences that are both currently touched by the City or identified as audiences that are not currently touched but that need to be targeted in the future to achieve the desired outcomes. Conduct qualitative and quantitative analysis to understand the stakeholders and audiences, their current perspectives, their needs and desires and whether the current perspective and/or image is congruent with the desired outcome. Prepare the Master Marketing Plan that identifies a specific message for each target stakeholder audience, proposed delivery channels and a media plan for each channel. Establish a target date for preparation of a **Master Marketing Plan** that identifies specific marketing programs, schedules, budgets, known funding sources, and implementation responsibility. The plan should also include performance measure targets (e.g., increase in the number of significant business prospect visits, new businesses established, tourists, tourist expenditures, etc.) for evaluating the effectiveness of the overall marketing program and individual elements of it.	1st - 3rd Qtrs 2015
3. As part of the Master Marketing Program, include a **General Media Image and Information Enhancement** element. This should be specifically intended to counter the negative news being publicized in the *News Journal* about crime in Wilmington and similar matters. This may use a **Wilmington Works Blog**, social media, testimonials from businesses (both large and small from a variety	3rd Qtr 2015

of business types), creation of an alternative newspaper that addresses the attitudes and needs of a younger, hipper population, but that also provides information of interest to the general population, and other elements found desirable by the Marketing Coordination Group.	
4. Create an appropriate **funding plan** to implement the strategy and associated media purchases and/or social media schedules. Maintain the program through annual budgeting process and adjust as necessary per audience and City image evolution.	4th Qtr 2015
5. Create **Wilmington Businesses Master Contact List** with contact information, in particular, email addresses of key contacts at each business. Use Constant Contact or a similar software application for management of the list.	1st - 3rd Qtrs 2015
6. Distribute the **OED** newsletter electronically to all business on the Businesses Master Contact List. In each issue include a "Question of the Month" that asks businesses to provide information typically requested in a business retention and expansion questionnaire. (See the section on additional information for a link to an excellent document on BR&E surveys and typical questions.)	Ongoing
7. Each month, the OED's Out and About newsletter should provide a summary of the results from the prior month's question. This information should also be used by OED as a research tool for identifying opportunities for the City or problems affecting the City's business community.	Monthly
8. The Marketing Coordination Group should issue a **Marketing Wilmington Annual Report** that summarizes the past year's marketing efforts and results from those efforts. Results should be packaged to justify funding requests for the next year.	Annually

Responsibility

Primary:	Support:
• Wilmington Office of Economic Development • Marketing Coordination Group • City of Wilmington Communications Department • Greater Wilmington Convention and Visitors Bureau • New Castle County Chamber of Commerce • New Castle County Office of Economic Development • Downtown Visions	• Director of Cultural Affairs, Office of the Mayor • Wilmington Police Department • DEDO • DelDot • Diamond State Port Corporation • Norfolk Southern and CSXT • Delaware River & Bay Authority • New Castle County Airport • City employers

Resources Needed

	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
Funding:	• Marketing Program	Unknown – will be determined by the Marketing Plan	• OED budget • Individual organization budgets • Advertising
	• Constant Contact Subscription	$55 - $85 per month	
Other:	• Volunteer time for Marketing Coordination Group • Staff time to administer and assist the marketing program		

Performance Measures

- Provision of a normal portion of effective Business, Retention and Expansion program
- Improved City-business community relations
- Potential source of leads for business recruitment, retention, expansion
- Potential "early warning system" for business problems
- Creation of a more positive image of Wilmington for residents, prospective residents, business prospects and site selection consultants
- Increase Wilmington's name recognition and chance for consideration as a desirable business or residential location
- Marketing dollars are leveraged more effectively
- Improved inter-organizational teamwork

Timeframe

This Initiative is:

☑ Short-term (1-2 years)	☐ Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	☐ Long-term (5+ years)	☑ Continuing

Additional Information

For information on economic development marketing plans, see:

- The Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC): http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/econ/ed-mark.aspx
- GIS Planning: http://www.gisplanning.com/_blog/GIS_Planning_Blog/post/economic-development-marketing-present-and-future/
- Los Angeles: *cdd.lacity.org/pdfs/edsf/edsf_Section4.pdf*

For information on conducting a BR&E survey and typical questions, see: municipaltoolkit.org/…rFiles/Civittolo&Davis_EN.pdf

For information on Constant Contact, see: http://search.constantcontact.com/email-marketing2

Wilmington, DE Economic Development Action Plan	
Initiative Group #2: Workforce Development	
Initiative Elements	
1. Career Fair & Programs	Create a more robust Career Fair concentrated on 9th grade students. Introduce Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (S.T.E.M.) programs to promote innovation that leads to startups and careers in the high-tech and bio tech sectors.
2. "Wilmington Works" Job Readiness	Provide job readiness and skills training for residents to gain employment through emerging industrial activity in manufacturing, infrastructure, distribution, and transportation. Work with major employers in the City and DelTech to create a job readiness program with combined class room and field work. Identify available career pathways and the necessary educational or other steps along those pathways. In particular, identify "fast track" pathways for Veterans. Seek placement commitments from local employers.
3. Incentives for Hiring Wilmingtonians	Create or increase the use of incentives to companies that locate within Wilmington and employ Wilmington residents.
4. Jobs Bank	Work with the Delaware Workforce Investment Board, Department of Labor, and/or other appropriate allies to create, promote, and maintain a Jobs Bank showing jobs available in the City and requirements to obtain those jobs.

Supports Mayor's Goals and Wilmington Works Focus Areas:

Goals	Focus Areas
Invest in training, education, and youth employment programs	Business Recruitment
	Diversifying the Economy
	Jobs in the Building Industry
Develop and promote employment of city residents, small and minority businesses	Jobs for Young Adults
	Employing Wilmingtonians

Rationale for Initiative and Background Information

Ongoing workforce development is critical for areas to maintain their economic edge. Job requirements change because of new technology developments; shifts in global competitive positioning that require business geographic relocations of operations; new production and operating processes; and the overall evolving business operating environment. A local employed and emerging workforce needs to have the flexibility and skills to meet these changes if an area is to retain its ability to meet business needs. The quality and availability of an educated and well trained workforce is a key determinant for the retention and development of business.

Wilmington's predominant job growth since 2002 has been, and is expected to continue to be, at

least in the short term, in health care, educational services, transportation and warehousing, and administrative support/waste management and services. Finance and insurance, and professional, scientific and technical services, while seeing some workforce declines, remain the industry sectors with the most jobs in the City. Residents will need to have the job skills required of these industries. These include adult residents and middle-school and high school students who will be entering the workforce. Meanwhile, since roughly 48% of the City's residents work elsewhere in New Castle County, it is important that residents have the skills needed for jobs located in the County. The sectors offering the greatest employment growth in the County are healthcare, finance, and business services. The percentage of working age residents of the City in the workforce is five percentage points below the average of New Castle County (see page 26 of the SWOT report), indicating that training programs for adults not in the workforce need to be a continued focus for trainers and educators serving City residents.

Delaware has a significant portion of its working age population that is underperforming or not performing in the workplace due to under education, substance abuse or histories as ex-offenders. A program is needed to bring these residents into the workplace through a "second chance" program.

Ongoing Work and Ten-Month Deliverables

- Define Workforce training vendors (Department of Labor Collaboration)
- Contractor Training and Small Business Success Series
- Employment of City residents on the Flats Redevelopment project
- Job Demand Trend Analysis

Major Action Steps and Schedule

Action Steps	Schedule
1. The Chamber, DelTech, the Workforce Investment Board and area employers develop a robust **Career Fair** with employers in the City. Career Fairs specifically targeted toward technology focused jobs would also be held, possibly modeled on Vermont's Tech Jam. Coordinate with any career fairs held by the County.	3rd Qtr 2015
2. Work with major employers in the City and DelTech to create a **job readiness program** with combined class room and field work. Identify available career pathways and the necessary educational or other steps along those pathways. In particular, identify "fast track" pathways for Veterans. Seek placement commitments from local employers. Graduate 100+ people annually.	4th Qtr 2015
3. Create or increase the **use of incentives** to companies that locate within Wilmington and employ Wilmington residents.	3rd Qtr 2015
4. The County Chamber or the Delaware Department of Labor develops and maintains a **Job Bank** for the County and City. This job bank, if developed	3rd Qtr 2015

by the Chamber, would list available jobs at Chamber member employers or for any employer in the City and County. The website would be available for job seeking use by residents and for individuals seeking to move to the area. Such a website would raise awareness of the jobs available in the City and County, and enhance recruiting by area employers.	
5. The State and County Chambers of Commerce, and/or the State Department of Labor investigates the feasibility of a "Second Chance" program that provides job readiness and life skills training, job placement, mental health and prisoner re-entry services, relapse prevention and sober-living housing for adults and youth in need, with an identified agency to implement the program.	1st Qtr 2016
6. The County Chamber of Commerce works with the Communities in Schools Delaware to enhance, in Wilmington, that agency's development, implementation, assessment, and continuous improvement of programs aimed at increasing student access to post-secondary education and employment opportunities, specifically through its On Track and PHASE Model. Also the Chamber works with the Communities in Schools and its partner, Junior Achievement in job shadowing events, and with the same agency and the Delaware Department of Higher Education's "Delaware Goes To College" initiative.	2nd Qtr 2015
7. The Chamber, working with the City and County Offices of Economic Development investigates the availability, efficiency and effectiveness of alternative commutation transportation systems active in the area, such as corporate sponsored or private carpool and van pool programs. This study may be through a third party consulting firm or service provider active in this field. Assess the value and need for the development of a coordinated corporate van pooling, car pooling or other alternative transportation programs to enhance commuting opportunities for area residents. An enhanced transportation options program would allow more people to enter the workforce, reduce the commutation costs for employees, reduce commutation time for some employees, and reduce the number of cars on the roads.	2nd Qtr 2015

Responsibility

Primary:	Support:
• New Castle County Chamber of Commerce • Business Roundtable, employers • Delaware Workforce Investment Board • Del Tech •Communities in Schools Delaware	• Delaware Department of Higher Education • Delaware Department of Labor • Area employers • Public school systems • Junior Achievement

Resources Needed

	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
Funding:	• Development of a Career Fair	$7,000	• NC Chamber of Commerce • Employers
	• Job Bank	$60,000	• NC Chamber of Commerce funded via fees and advertising
	• Wilmington Works Job Readiness program	Unknown	• Private sector donations; DelTech, state, City budgets
	• Incentives for employers	Unknown	• City budget for grant incentives
	• Enhanced TRACK and PHASE programs	Unknown	• Federal grants • Private sector grants, donations • Public school districts
	• Alternative transportation assessment	$30,000-$50,000	• Employer funded through the Chamber
Other:	• Staff support to administer Initiative Elements		

Performance Measures

- Better informed high school graduates for available jobs
- Better prepared workforce for local companies
- Increased wage tax revenue to the City though increased employment
- Better informed, prepared and adaptable workforce for local companies
- Improved utilization of Veterans in the workforce
- Reduced unemployment rate
- Increased wage tax revenue to the City though increased employment
- Improved employment opportunities for area residents
- Improved workforce recruitment results for City companies
- Reduced unemployment rate
- Increased wage tax revenue to the City though increased employment
- Graduate 100+ people annually from the Wilmington Works program

Timeframe

This Initiative is:

☑ Short-term	☐ Intermediate-term	☐ Long-term	☑ Continuing
(1-2 years)	(3-5 years)	(5+ years)	

Additional Information

The Huntsville AL Chamber of Commerce serves a highly technical and sophisticated business community. Programs include career fairs and coordination of the public school programs with the needs of area companies regarding career development. See their website: http://www.huntsvillealabamausa.com, and to see their jobsite website visit: www.asmartplace.com

Vermont Tech Jam is an annual career fair/tech expo showcasing the state's most innovative tech and bioscience companies. A primary target of the career fair is the young talent they want to keep in and attract to the state. See their website to see how it posts news, events and resources for Vermont's technology community: http://www.techjamvt.com/about/

For information on Career Pathways programs in Wisconsin and New York visit: www.wicareerpathways.org and www.seedco.org/programs/job-seekers/career-pathways/

Information on a Second Chance program can be obtained from this website: http://www.secondchanceprogram.org

For information on the Communities in Schools Delaware program go to: www.cisdelaware.org, and to www.communitiesinschools.org for the national website.

For information on the Delaware Department of Higher Education Office's "Delaware Goes To College" program, see: http://www.delawaregoestocollege.org

For information on a regionally based alternative transportation program in Southeastern Pennsylvania, visit The Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association's (GVF) website: www.gvftma.com. GVF, founded in 1990 is a not-for-profit organization created to advocate and promote a viable transportation network for economic vitality. GVF's goal is to further advance Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies into work sites that allow employees to make sustainable commuting choices. They partner with public and private entities to maximize awareness and develop sustainable support. Contact at GVF is:

 Rob Henry
Executive Director
1012 West 8th Avenue, Suite A
King of Prussia, PA 19406
P: 610-354-8899

For information on a regionally based alternative transportation program in New Jersey, visit: www.TransOptions.org

Wilmington, DE Economic Development Action Plan	
Initiative Group #3: Essential Tools	
Initiative Elements	
1. Economic Development Website	Create a City Economic Development website separate from the more general government City website that provides the information business prospects and site location consultants typically expect to find this way (whether for recruitment, retention/ expansion, or start-up purposes). Include in the website the following four elements:
1A. Real Estate Inventory	Prepare and maintain an inventory of available commercial and industrial buildings and sites in the City. Make this inventory available on the City's Economic Development Website. Leverage DEDO's site inventory program.
1B. Utilities and Telecommunications Summary	Prepare and maintain a summary of public water and sewer, electric power, natural gas and telecommunications capabilities in the City. Make this information available on the City's Economic Development Website. Address the need for access to lower cost high speed broadband in the downtown.
1C. Directory of Small Business Services	In association with New Castle County and other allies prepare, broadly disseminate, promote, and maintain a Directory of Small Business Services. Publish in English and Spanish and make available on the City's Economic Development Website as well as in print.
1D. Cost Comparison Study	Prepare a Cost of Doing Business Comparison between a Wilmington location and other areas that are typical competitors. Where Wilmington has a cost advantage, promote this in the City's marketing. Where there are cost disadvantages, identify ways to reduce them.
2. City Leadership Team Building for Economic Development	Create and use a team-building program such as the Metro Hartford Alliance's "Economic Development for Public Officials" to meld all City staff who come into contact with the economic development process into a more effective team. Assure that all

		employees are aware of the critical role they play in Wilmington's Economic Development.
3.	Strategic Fund Improvements: Fully Funded & Sustainable	Work with Finance, Budget and Council to enhance the Strategic Fund with a revolving functionality: return 2.5 years of wage tax revenues from any given Strategic Fund Job Creation or Retention Project Agreement to the Fund. All subsequent wage taxes from Projects go to the General Fund. This avoids successive capital events being needed to fund the Strategic Fund.
4.	Economic Development Infrastructure & Site Improvement Closing Fund: Refund and Rebrand	Currently, the economic development project account(s) in the CIP are not funded. This could potentially put the City at a disadvantage in creating new jobs or new property tax ratables without the ability to leverage private investment with City-funded infrastructure, site improvement or Right of Way incentives. The City should maintain a broad purpose and highly flexible Strategic capital fund for public infrastructure, right of way, and site improvement investments. This fund should seek to leverage private investment and partner with, the DelDOT TIP and DNREC HSCA funds to close the gaps on redevelopment of underutilized land, promote transit oriented development and attract employers to the City.
5.	Fix Property Tax Abatement Policy for Existing Vacant Buildings	Amend the City's tax abatement legislation to address the scenario in which vacant buildings get no benefit from the tax abatement for investment in property improvements because the assessment does not change and therefore does not reflect the capital investment. Create an investment tax credit of 50% of current assessment for up to 10 years for cases where the assessed value does not change AND an investment of more than $2 million has been made. The tax abatement may be on a sliding scale with the amount of the abatement declining annually.
6.	Diamond State Opportunity (Hope) Zones	Per current census tract, identify areas to be exempt from City, County and State taxes for a period of seven years. This is an attempt to drive investment to areas most in-need and transform them similar to Pennsylvania's Keystone Opportunity Zone program. The State might designate 12 zones throughout. Hire 3rd party to conduct independent analysis of revenues being generated in census tracts to determine cost/benefit. Benchmark Pennsylvania's KOZ and other like programs.

Supports Mayor's Goals and Wilmington Works Focus Areas:

Goals	Focus Areas
Maintain a Business Roundtable	Business Recruitment
Position Wilmington as a magnet for Business	Economic Development Incentives
Enhance the marketing of Wilmington as a desirable business location	Diversifying the Economy
Coordinate and integrate economic development throughout the city	Marketing and Messaging
Develop and promote employment of city residents, small and minority businesses	Jobs in the Building Industry
	Jobs for Young Adults
	Employing Wilmingtonians

Rationale for Initiative and Background Information

Effective economic development usually requires a toolbox with many tools. Wilmington already has many such tools including a Strategic Fund (although some elements are currently inadequately funded), a Small Business Support Center, a micro-loan program, and services for disadvantaged and minority business enterprises.

This Initiative Group is intended to build on that foundation and add several additional essential tools.

As noted in the Rationale for Initiative Group 1 – Marketing, websites have risen over the past few years to be a dominant marketing and public information tool. The timeframe for the site selection process has been shortened significantly and site location consultants uniformly report that after their proprietary data bases, they do about 70% of their initial research on potential locations from those locations' websites. The availability of an easily found and navigable, comprehensive website is an essential tool. Currently, Wilmington's economic development information is buried in the City's general purpose website, and is sparse in available information. Increasingly, communities are creating separate economic development websites that can be found both independently or by link from the more general municipal website.

As part of the creation of this website, four related elements are recommended for inclusion on the website:

- Creation and maintenance of a comprehensive inventory of available properties (buildings and sites)
- Provision of information on utility and telecommunications capabilities
- A directory of programs and services for small businesses (including start-ups)
- Preparation of a comparative cost of doing business study showing where Wilmington can offer competitive advantages or has competitive disadvantages.

While different community attributes are ranked differently by various industry sectors, and even different firms within the same industry sector, the availability of real estate – available space for sale or rent, and sites to build on – are a common denominator for most businesses. Without adequate space in which to operate, it is difficult to run a successful business. Therefore, providing information about available real estate has always been a primary responsibility of a full-service economic development program.

It is difficult to evaluate available properties in Wilmington: neither the City nor New Castle County

maintains such a list (although the Downtown Visions is preparing an inventory for the City's downtown core). While the DEDO website notes the availability of property information using the CoStar system, we were unable to find it. An example of such an inventory can be found at the Greater Newark Partnership, which maintains what appears to be an extensive list of available properties in Newark using LOIS (LocationOne Information System). Other locations use ZoomProspector (GIS Planning Inc.).

Creating and maintaining such a City inventory, and assuring that it is available from the City and County's economic development websites and included in DEDO's listings, is very important in light of the fact, as noted above, that most companies and site selection consultants do the majority of their initial research on places of interest from those places' websites. If they cannot find site information from a website, they may assume the real estate they are looking for is not available and move on to another potential location.

A companion to information on real estate is information on the infrastructure supporting the real estate – particularly utilities and telecommunication services. This is another important item that is missing from the City's economic development information.

Small businesses, while often less visible than larger ones, are usually the backbone of local economies. Small businesses typically need assistance when starting operations or moving from start-up to second generation, including direction on the basics of running a business; legal, financial and accounting assistance and guidance; business plan development; and finding well-located affordable space in which to operate. Finding this assistance can be time-consuming and expensive.   While research on this project showed many different programs and services aimed at assisting small businesses, there is no consolidated directory of them. The City, County and New Castle County Chamber can prepare and maintain such a directory and make it available from their websites.

There is uncertainty about the cost of doing business in a Wilmington location. Rather than rely on conjecture and anecdotal evidence, the City should prepare an analysis of the actual cost of doing business in Wilmington versus other competing locations. This can build on the comparative cost estimating tool currently being developed by the University of Delaware. Components should include:

▪ Labor costs	▪ Taxes
▪ Real estate costs	▪ Incentives to reduce costs
▪ Construction costs	
▪ Utility costs	▪ Other relevant factors

If this study demonstrates that Wilmington has an advantage in cost of doing business, this should be promoted in the City's marketing program. Where it is found the City may be more costly than competitors, actions can be taken to reduce or offset cost components that create a disadvantage.

Another recommended tool is a focused economic development team-building program within City Hall. Business climate is one of the key factors in determining the success of a place in its business development efforts (that is, the full range of retention, expansion, recruitment, and start-up activities.) Simply stated, business climate means how business-friendly and welcoming a place is – or conversely, how onerous the place's development process is perceived to be. This is an area where Wilmington does not get high grades.

Often this situation is a function of lingering perception from long-past "horror stories", while in other instances there is good reason for the dissatisfaction. Frequently it is a reflection of an incorrect understanding on the part of the applicant as to what is required. Usually it is based, at least in part, on the fact that many staff, board and commission members who have an impact on the economic development process, don't think of themselves as being part of the economic development team. Whatever the cause, the reputation of being a business-unfriendly community – that is, having a less than desirable business climate – can result in a community being passed by as a possible location for business investment – both new business attraction and retention/expansion of what is already there.

The premise behind this recommendation for a team-building program is that economic development is a team sport. Success depends upon having all the right players working from the same game plan. This Action Plan is intended to provide the necessary game plan – Wilmington must now field the most effective team possible and limit the number of penalties it earns because of a business climate that is not as good as it could be.

As previously noted the City has an array of incentive and assistance programs as part of or related to its Strategic Fund. Most of the existing elements are fairly narrowly defined in purpose and some are inadequately funded at this time. Available funds are invested as flexibly as possible with the intent of stimulating job creation. The City must insure that existing funding programs continually have adequate resources to allow their use as needed.   This will require inter-departmental collaboration to assure that funding levels are adequate and a refunding mechanism is in place and soundly based.

The City should amend its current property tax abatement policy to reward capital investment in upgrading underutilized commercial and industrial property through a limited duration, declining tax abatement or similar tool. Care must be taken to keep elements of the Strategic Closing Initiative from becoming politicized.

Finally, Wilmington should monitor and support development of a series of special focus investment zones being considered throughout the State. These are currently being referred to as Diamond State Opportunity Zones and are similar to programs in other states such as Pennsylvania's Keystone Opportunity Zones.

Ongoing Work and Ten-Month Deliverables

- Deliver City economic development plan(s)
- Deploy, market and administer Grow Wilmington Fund
- Negotiate final Navient incentive agreement (>125 jobs)
- Represent the City on the WEDCO Board and participate in Loan Committee reviews as needed
- Preside over UDAG Corporation Board Meetings
- Manage and Administer Sister Cities Program

Major Action Steps and Schedule

Action Steps	Schedule
1. If necessary, sequence the Initiative Group elements so as to fit within the overall OED work schedule.	If needed

2. Assign an OED staff person to oversee each of the Initiative elements.	As needed
3. Research award winning economic development websites. See examples in the Additional Information section.	1st Qtr 2015
4. Consult with Mark James, CEcD, at AEP (614-716-2396 – mjjames@aep.com) for recommendations on content, navigability and performance measures of ideal economic development websites.	1st Qtr 2015
5. Prepare specifications for development of a **new economic development website**.	2nd Qtr 2015
6. Retain the services of a website designer with experience in creating effective economic development websites.	2nd Qtr 2015
7. Beta test the website, modify as necessary, and actuate it. Include all other elements noted in this Plan as part of the website and links to marketing pieces (OED Out and About, YouTube videos) and allied organizations.	3rd Qtr 2015
8. Collaborate with Downtown Visions, New Castle County, DEDO, and major commercial/industrial real estate brokers to establish and maintain a City of Wilmington **Commercial and Industrial Property Inventory**. Evaluate and select a method for maintaining this inventory (such as ZoomProspector, LOIS or CoStar).	2nd – 3rd Qtrs 2015
9. Notify all commercial and industrial real estate brokers and developers, owners of available commercial or industrial property, and economic development allies about the availability of this Property Inventory service. Include this inventory as part of the Wilmington Economic Development Website.	3rd Qtr 2015
10. Use IEDC's Site Selection Data Standards as a checklist for preparing a **Utility and Telecommunications Inventory** (see the Additional Information section for how to find the Site Selection Data Standards).	4th Qtr 2015
11. When the Utility and Telecommunications Inventory is complete, make it available on the City's economic development website.	4th Qtr 2015
12. Maintain the Utility and Telecommunications Inventory as necessary.	On-going
13. Create a hard copy and electronic **Directory of Small Business Services** available to start up companies and small existing businesses that includes local contacts serving the City for economic development, real estate, environmental regulations, personnel recruitment, taxes and licensing, telecommunications services, transportation and utility services, small business legal and accounting start up assistance services, and funding sources (angels and equity investors, crowdfunding, federal and state funding, local funding).	4th Qtr 2015 – 1st Qtr 2016
14. Have copies of the directory in English and Spanish. Post both on the City's	2nd Qtr 2016

Economic Development Website. This document should be the result of input from and participation by the agencies serving the City offering business startup and/or growth assistance, and be used by these agencies in their work.	
15. Prepare a **Cost of Doing Business Comparison Study**. Steps in this Study should include: A. Prepare a list of study factors and relevant measures for each to be included in the cost comparison. B. Create a model project for use in collecting comparison cost information. This may be based on an actual project that considered Wilmington or a hypothetical case. C. Identify those places with which Wilmington will compare itself. D. If consultant assistance is to be used in this analysis, prepare and issue a Request for Proposals and select the consultant. E. Complete the data collection and analysis for the costs of the model project in Wilmington and the comparison locations.	2nd – 3rd Qtrs 2016
16. Based on the results of the study, identify cost advantages of a Wilmington location that can be marketed and cost disadvantages that should be reduced or offset. Take appropriate marketing and corrective actions.	4th Qtr 2016
17. Create a **City Leadership Team Building for Economic Development Program** using the MetroHartford Alliance's Economic Development for Public Officials program as a model. Planning the program should include content, logistics, handouts, and other items (e.g., Team Wilmington Business Cards made available to all attendees). The intent of the program is to have all attendees recognize that they are members of the City's economic development team. Regulatory mindsets should be replaced by customer service mindsets.	1st Qtr 2015
18. The Mayor should invite all staff, board and commission members who have an impact on the City's economic development efforts to obtain this team-building program.	2nd Qtr 2015
19. The program should be repeated periodically to incorporate new City employees, board and commission members, as well as new content.	As needed
20. Work with Finance, Budget and Council to enhance the **Strategic Fund** with a revolving functionality: return 2.5 years of wage tax revenues from any given Strategic Fund Job Creation or Retention Project Agreement to the Fund. All subsequent wage taxes from Projects go to the General Fund. This avoids successive capital events being needed to fund the Strategic Fund.	2nd Qtr 2015
21. Refund and Rebrand the City's Economic **Development Infrastructure & Site Improvement Closing Fund** as a broad purpose and highly flexible Strategic capital fund for public infrastructure, right of way, and site improvement investments. This fund should seek to leverage private investment and partner with the DelDOT TIP and DNREC HSCA funds to close the gaps on redevelopment of underutilized land, promote transit oriented development and attract employers to the City.	3rd Qtr 2015
22. Amend the City's **Property Tax Abatement Policy for Existing Vacant Buildings** to address the scenario in which vacant buildings get no benefit from the tax	2nd Qtr 2015

abatement for investment in property improvements because the assessment does not change and therefore does not reflect the capital investment. Create an investment tax credit of 50% of current assessment for up to 10 years for cases where the assessed value does not change AND an investment of more than $2 million has been made. The tax abatement may be on a sliding scale with the amount of the abatement declining annually.	
23. Monitor progress on and support as appropriate the creation of Diamond State Opportunity Zones. If such a state program is created, identify appropriate Wilmington sites for inclusion and market the benefits of these sites.	On-going

Responsibility

Primary:	Support:
• City of Wilmington Office of Economic Development • Wilmington Office of the Mayor • Website developer	• Wilmington Department of Planning • Wilmington Fire Marshal Department • Wilmington Department of Licenses & Inspections • Wilmington Public Works Department • Other City Departments, Boards and Commissions that impact the economic development process • New Castle County Chamber of Commerce • New Castle County Office of Economic Development • Area commercial and industrial realtors, Board of Realtors • Hispanic Business Community • DEDO • University of Delaware • Utility companies and telecommunications providers • Jim Sills, Secretary/CIO State of Delaware

Resources Needed

	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
Funding:	• Consultation with Mark James on website content and design	$3,000	• City budget • OED budget • Cost sharing with New Castle County
	• Economic Development Website	$15,000 to create $4,000/year to maintain	
	• Consultant for Cost Comparison Study	$30,000	
	• Refunding of Strategic Fund and Economic Development Infrastructure and Site Improvement Closing Fund	To be determined	
	• Development of a business services directory	$15,000	
	• Property Inventory Software	Unknown – varies by population size and vendor	

		Budget $2,000/year	
	• Team-building program	$1,500 per session	
Other:	• Staff time for managing Initiative elements • Cooperation of property owners and brokers		

Performance Measures

- Improved success in business recruitment, expansion, retention and start-ups
- Better understanding of how the cost of doing business in Wilmington compares with competing areas
- Potential tool for demonstrating a competitive advantage
- Potential identification of cost areas in need of improvement
- Provision of necessary tool for improved small business start-ups, survival, and growth
- Improved county-wide and region-wide economic development cooperation, including working with the County OED, DEDO and Select Philadelphia.
- Stimulation of business growth by growing Hispanic population
- More effective economic development efforts
- Reduction of complaints about city bureaucracy and regulations impeding development
- Availability of information required to support an effective economic development program
- Increased flow of business prospects leading to increased business attraction, retention/expansion and creation
- Provide available information and statistics expected by site location consultants and business prospects
- Assist real estate brokers and property owners by publishing the real estate inventory
- Reduce the inventory of vacant and underutilized space
- Available information and statistics typically sought by business prospects and site location consultants

Timeframe

This Initiative is:

☑ Short-term (1-2 years)	☐ Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	☐ Long-term (5+ years)	☑ Continuing

Additional Information

For examples of award winning economic development websites (as recognized by the International Economic Development Council – IEDC – at its 2013 Annual Conference), see:

- http://www.waterloo.ca/en/government/waterlooeconomicdevelopment.asp
- http://thinktullahoma.com/
- http://www.gilbertedi.com/
- http://www.calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/

For information on the CoStar property inventory program, see:
http://www.costar.com/products/costar-property

For information on the LOIS property inventory system, see: http://www.locationone.com/

For information on the ZoomProspector system, see:
http://www.zoomprospector.com/findproperties.aspx

To view the City of Newark DE's available properties inventory, see:
http://www2.locationone.com/%28S%281qjhmc45gnvlmomq0lkgaz55%29%29/PropertySearch.aspx?display=results&section=buildings&ssp=&asf=&ht=

For an example of a Property Inventory using Zoom Prospector, see
https://www.ctsitefinder.com/Default.asp

To obtain IEDC's Site Selection data Standards, see: http://www.iedconline.org/web-pages/resources-publications/site-selection-data-standards/

See the Metro-Hartford Alliance's "Economic Development for Public Officials" program as a model for a regional Economic Development Education and Team-Building Program. See
http://www.metrohartford.com/economic-development/municipal-services or contact Becky Nolan, Vice President, Business Development, MetroHartford Alliance, 860-525-4451, Ext. 280.

For examples of the topics that can appear in a Directory of Small Business Services, see:
- http://www.georgia.org/business-resources/small-business-resource-directory/
- http://www.cabq.gov/.../Albuquerque-small-business-resource-directory

For information on Strategic or Deal Closing Funds, see:

- http://choosealbany.com/news-events/news/albany-ups-ante/
- http://www.siteselection.com/onlineInsider/sealing-the-deal.cfm
- www.nmlegis.gov/.../IPOC%20080913%20Item...

Wilmington, DE Economic Development Action Plan

Initiative Group #4: Crime Reduction

Initiative Elements

1. Crime Reduction	Continue aggressive efforts both to reduce crime in the City and improve the City's image as a safe place to live and work. Employ Wilmingtonians by implementing the Diamond State Opportunity Zones and Wilmington Works, and increase incentives for employers who hire unemployed Wilmingtonians as tools to reduce crime. Investigate the approaches taken by other cities to reduce crime, including the relationships made between crime reduction, education and economic development. The City of New Orleans, LA is one example (contact GNO, Inc., the region's primary economic development organization).

Supports Mayor's Goals and Wilmington Works Focus Areas:

Goals	Focus Areas
Position Wilmington as a magnet for Business	Business Recruitment
	Neighborhood Vitality

Rationale for Initiative and Background Information

High crime is a major deterrent to economic development. It frightens away business investment, customers for local business and employees. It also frightens away residents, resulting in a loss of middle and upper income residents, decreased property values, decreased business, an overall decline in the quality of life, a breakdown of communities and cities. Wilmington has a high crime rate. It is affecting the economic health of the City, and by association the health of the County and State. Its reduction needs to be considered as a top priority.

Ongoing Work and Ten-Month Deliverables

- Ongoing City crime prevention programs

Major Action Steps and Schedule

Action Steps	Schedule
1. Investigate the County's Zero tolerance program and the success it has had in **Crime Reduction** in the County. Research other cities that have reduced crime.	On-going
2. Consider applying for a U.S. Department of Justice Violent Gang and Gun Crime Reduction Program grant.	Grant availability
3. Continue the efforts to reduce housing vacancy in the City, and securing vacant homes from vandalism and illegal entry.	On-going
4. Continue strict enforcement of housing and maintenance standards for vacant properties, including a requirement to maintain properties in a safe and visually attractive fashion.	On-going
5. Consider having a stronger visible uniformed police presence in the downtown, especially during the evening hours during the week and on weekends, and during the day on weekends.	On-going
6. Develop stronger community identity for the City's neighborhoods among residents, and encourage the development of strong community organizations.	On-going
7. Consider a requirement for newly hired City police officers and other employees to live in the City, or provide incentives for living in the City as provided in the 5,000 in Five program	On-going
8. Implement the Diamond State Opportunity Zones and Wilmington Works.	If established by State
9. Increase incentives for employers who hire unemployed Wilmingtonians as tools to reduce crime.	Begin 3rd Quarter 2015

Responsibility

Primary:	Support:
• Wilmington Police Department •Community and neighborhood organizations • Wilmington Renaissance Corporation • Downtown Visions	• Business Roundtable • Mayor's Office of Communications • DelTech • Delaware Workforce Investment Board • Employers

Resources Needed

	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
Funding:	• Violent Gang and Gun Crime Reduction Program	Unknown	• U.S. Department Of Justice Protect Safe Neighborhoods Program
	• Wilmington Works Job Readiness program (See Incentive 2)	Unknown	• Private sector donations; DelTech, state, City budgets
	• Incentives (See Incentive 2)	Unknown	• City budget for grant incentives
Other:	• Staff time to administer and maintain programs • Expanded police time on the street.		

Performance Measures

- Improved public safety and quality of life in the City
- Addresses important concern of businesses about potential locations
- Reduces negative image of the City that may be impeding both business and resident recruitment
- 100 graduates per year from the Wilmington Works program (see Initiative 2)

Timeframe

This Initiative is:

☑ Short-term (1-2 years)	☐ Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	☐ Long-term (5+ years)	☑ Continuing	

Additional Information

For information on the Department of Justice's Violent Gang and Gun Crime Reduction Program see: https://www.ncjrs.gov/html/bja/205263/

Wilmington, DE Economic Development Action Plan

Initiative Group #5: Development Process Improvement

Initiative Elements

1. One-Stop Shopping	Build on the City's current front end, informal review process to develop a One-Stop Shopping approach to provide guidance to developers on proposed projects. Use technology to integrate plan submission and track through L&I, Public Works and Planning.
2. Permit and Approval Process and Code Policy Task Force	Develop and maintain a City Permit and Approval Process and Code Policy Task Force that meets regularly to ensure that land use and construction codes are conducive to development. Ensure state fire code revisions are completed and code policies are optimizing public safety and economic development. This task force should be a partnership of City staff, boards and commissions and private sector developers, contractors, architects and engineers. City staff and boards and commissions would be permanent members, while private sector representatives would regularly change to provide fresh opinions.

Supports Mayor's Goals and Wilmington Works Focus Areas:

Goals	Focus Areas
Maintain a Business Roundtable	Business Recruitment
Position Wilmington as a magnet for Business	Economic Development Incentives
Improve effectiveness and efficiency of city permitting and licensing	Diversifying the Economy
Enhance the marketing of Wilmington as a desirable business location	Jobs in the Building Industry
Coordinate and integrate economic development throughout the city	

Rationale for Initiative and Background Information

As previously noted (see Initiative Group 3), business climate is one of the key factors in determining the success of a place in its business development efforts. Wilmington's image and reputation as a business-friendly community can be improved.

The City of Wilmington, through its Business Roundtable, has been working to correct both the perception and reality that it has a difficult business climate. The team-building program recommended in Initiative Group 3 is one element of accomplishing this. Other communities are taking a variety of other approaches; examples include:

- Many communities (see the example from Alexandria, VA in the Additional Information section) provide guidebooks, flow charts, or other summaries of their development process to help applicants obtain permits, approvals and licenses more effectively. The City's Department of Licenses and Inspections provides a Plan Review Checklist that summarizes major development requirements, but this can be made more comprehensive and attractive.

- Other places try to provide "one-stop shopping" where developers are able to meet informally with representatives from the Planning, Building, Fire Marshal, Licensing, and other offices that have oversight of the development process at the same time. Clermont County, Ohio created a "Permit Central" building to facilitate this process.

- Peoria, Arizona has created an "Over-the Counter" plan review process where certain types of projects can be presented to applicable city staff and permits can be issued within a half hour.

- Peoria and Phoenix both offer a "Self-Certification Program" where eligible projects can have their plans certified by Arizona licensed design professionals who have been through a one-day training course, rather than waiting for City staff to review and approve design plans.

- Chesapeake, VA has a qualified engineer on the staff of the Economic Development Department to assure that plans can be approved as rapidly as possible when they are submitted to local permitting agencies.

- An increasing number of places are establishing maximum timeframes (shorter than what may be mandated by state statutes) for issuance of permit applications that are complete and accurate for types of projects that are allowed in the zoning district in which they are proposed.

All of these are examples of how places are attempting to streamline their permit, approval and licensing process to improve their business climates and increase their desirability as a place to locate and operate a business.
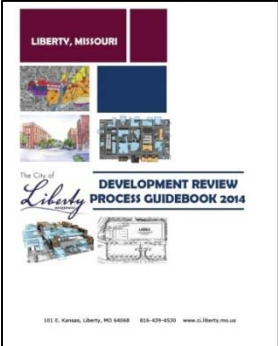
Two specific elements are recommended here:

1. The creation of a "One-Stop Shopping" program within Wilmington City Hall that would function similarly to the example cited above.
2. The creation of a Permit and Approval Task Force to identify ways to make the Wilmington's development process more simple, swift and certain. This task force should be a partnership of City staff, boards and commissions and private sector developers, contractors, architects and engineers. City staff and boards and commissions would be permanent members, while private sector representatives would regularly change to provide fresh opinions. The group would meet regularly with no specific project on the table to identify areas of the City's development process that should be improved and discuss effective methods for making those improvements.

Ongoing Work and Ten-Month Deliverables

- Work with License & Inspection and other City officials to streamline permitting process
- Improve back office reporting, compliance, and performance tracking.

Major Action Steps and Schedule	
Action Steps	**Schedule**
1. The Mayor should establish a **Permit and Approval Process and Code Policy Task Force** comprised of all City Departments, Boards and Commissions that have regulations, procedures, licenses, and other requirements that regulate the development of property and operation of businesses. This Task Force will be responsible for identifying, recommending, and where authorized, implementing actions that will streamline and make the City's development and licensing process more business-friendly, as described above in the two elements of this Initiative Group.	1st Qtr 2015
2. The Permit and Approval Task Force should establish an overall **Development Process Improvement Plan** for carrying out their responsibilities, including a schedule and milestones. This plan should be presented to the Mayor and other entities he considers appropriate and authorized for adoption after any necessary amendments.	1st Qtr 2015
3. The Task Force should establish a **Business Input Group** comprised of representatives of Wilmington's developers, contractors, architects and engineers. This group should meet regularly with City officials with oversight of the development process. The purpose of this combined group is to identify specific areas of Wilmington's development regulations and procedures that impede development and to suggest ways to make improvements.	1st Qtr 2015
4. The Task Force should conduct nationwide research on examples of how other places have implemented **One-Stop Shopping** or other methods of **Process Streamlining** and improving their development regulations and procedures, with specific attention paid to problem areas similar to those identified in Wilmington.	1st – 2nd Qtrs 2015
5. The Task Force should identify and recommend improvements to development regulations and procedures and seek implementation of those recommendations by appropriate boards, commissions, departments or other agencies.	3rd Qtr 2015
6. Improvements should be publicly announced on the City's Economic Development website, the OED Out and About Newsletter, Wilmington Works Blog and other vehicles as appropriate.	As they occur
7. After the first round of improvements, work of the Task Force should continue as necessary.	Ongoing

Responsibility

Primary:	Support:
• Wilmington Office of the Mayor • Wilmington Office of Economic Development	• Wilmington Department of Planning • Wilmington Fire Marshal Department • Wilmington License and Inspection Department • Wilmington Finance Department • Wilmington Department of Public Works • City and State government • DelDOT

Resources Needed

Funding:	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
	• None		

Other:	• Staff time for participation on Permit and Approval Process Task Force and to conduct benchmark research • Volunteer time from the development community to participate on the Business Input Group

Performance Measures

- Streamlined, more consistent permit application and review process
- Correction of weaknesses in the City's development permit and approval process
- Creation of a more business-friendly reputation and reduction of complaints
- Increased development activity

Timeframe

This Initiative is:

☑ Short-term (1-2 years)	☐ Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	☐ Long-term (5+ years)	☑ Continuing

Additional Information

For examples of Development Process Guidebooks, see:
- alexandriava.gov/…pnz_development_process_guide.pdf
- www.ci.liberty.mo.us/DocumentCenter/View/18823
- http://www.mankato-mn.gov/GuideToDevProcess/Page.aspx
- https://us-mg205.mail.yahoo.com/neo/launch?.partner=sbc&.rand=4a69gg2589bn5#mail

Wilmington, DE Economic Development Action Plan	
Initiative Group #6: Public Schools	
Initiative Elements	
1. Public Schools Marketing and Promotion	Develop an ongoing school district-funded marketing and promotion initiative whereby the benefits and assets of public schools in Wilmington serving City children, which include public schools operating as charter schools, are highlighted and publicized.
2. Public School Redistricting and/or Consolidation	Address the potential for redistricting the schools serving the City and County and revisit the possibility of consolidation if there will be an improvement in quality and/or a reduction in cost.
3. Reduce the School Dropout Rate	Lower the dropout rate for Wilmington schools and residents to match, at the least, the national average.
4. Citywide Early Childhood Education Program	Improve the quality of early learning centers and pre-K programs and ensure that all children in Wilmington have access to these forms of early childhood education.
5. Equitable or Weighted Funding for all Public Schools in Wilmington	Wilmington schools, many of which are currently under-resourced, must be funded equitably so they can more effectively serve their high-needs populations. Equal funding is not equitable funding because it serves to create shortfalls in the education resources needed for children who enter the school system with deficits when compared to their more affluent peers.
6. A Place at the Table in the Education of City Children	Parents, community representatives and public officials in Wilmington must have an authoritative voice in determining the educational needs of City children and the resources made available for their education.
7. A Voice on the Creation of Charter Schools in Wilmington	City representatives must have a say in the decision-making process that determines when or if a public school is transformed into a charter school. Likewise, City representatives must have a say in the decision-making process that determines when a new charter school is allowed to be established in the City.
8. Establish Office of Education	Establish a City of Wilmington Office of Education to create and sustain networks for working relationships that will foster collaboration and

	communication between the city and education stakeholders to promote the academic and social growth and development of its students.
9. Establish Re-Engagement Center	Provide supportive services to out of school youth & adults with education information and placement services to obtain their high school diploma or GED. The Center connects youth to comprehensive resources such as childcare and employment, which support academic achievement and success. Focus on ages 16-21.
10. City Employee Mentor Program	City of Wilmington Employee Mentor Program-various departments within the City will each adopt a school in Wilmington. The city employees will be supported and encouraged to provide weekly mentoring to a Wilmington student attending a Wilmington based school. The mentoring will provide both academic and social support.
11. Higher Education Partnerships	Advocate for greater Higher Education partnerships to send more Wilmingtonians to college and provide the supports for them to complete college so that Wilmington can meet the demands of an educated global workforce.
12. Establish Wilmington Education Alliance	Establish a Wilmington Education Alliance- the alliance will be comprised of education stakeholders from ALL education sectors, (Charter, Traditional District, Private, and Alternative). The Alliance will provide the city with education leadership that is responsive, accountable and sustainable through five primary task: • Develop and manage an education plan for the city • Guide education centered partnerships between higher education, corporate, non-profit foundations and Wilmington based schools • Establish a medium through which sharing of

	success is encouraged and supported between All Wilmington schools • Designated as the "official education voice" for the city, recognized by Department of Education, Board of Education, Districts, Charters, Alternative, Private schools and the General Assembly. • Host annual meeting to discuss the "State of Wilmington Education"

Supports Mayor's Goals and Wilmington Works Focus Areas:

Goals	Focus Areas
Position Wilmington as a magnet for Business	Business Recruitment
Invest in training, education, and youth employment programs	Diversifying the Economy
Enhance the marketing of Wilmington as a desirable business location	Jobs in the Building Industry
Maintain a Business Roundtable	Jobs for Young Adults
	Employing Wilmingtonians

Rationale for Initiative and Background Information

The City's non-charter public schools have a reputation for underperformance, driving many families to enroll their children in private schools and charter schools, or to avoid living in Wilmington entirely. This situation has caused alarm among the public school districts, since they see the development of a divided educational system in which the charter schools and private schools have a student population with more motivated students and less social challenges than in the public schools. Reflecting this concern, the City's public schools have a high school dropout rate of over 60%.

Employers complain that many of the graduates of the local school districts lack the skills needed for employment, and are not prepared with the skills or knowledge base required of today's workforce.

Corrective actions on these issues need to be taken by the public school districts serving the City and the County, the State Department of Education and the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce, with the City serving as an advisor and an assisting agency where possible.

School superintendents maintain that the non-charter schools are unfairly rated as mediocre performers or worse by residential realtors and the general public. To counter this reputation, the school systems need to market their successes, including test scores and other performance indicators, and the resources available to students.

Wilmington is served by multiple school districts, and it lacks a high school. This situation does not support community identity and makes it difficult for involvement in the educational process by parents with limited transportation access. Community identity is important as a tool for strengthened neighborhoods, a key factor in fighting crime, among other factors.

Ongoing Work and Ten-Month Deliverables

- Wilmington Police Department Crime Prevention efforts

Major Action Steps and Schedule

Action Steps	Schedule
1. The New Castle County and State Chambers of Commerce urge the State to develop a **State-wide Charter School Plan**, showing where and why charter schools will be allowed.	4th Qtr 2014

2. **Prepare Public School Districts Marketing Material** that demonstrates their quality, using test scores, programs and other indices. Compare this data to those of school districts in neighboring Pennsylvania, Wilmington's and the County's area competitor for housing and educational options. This data, if favorable, should be accessible on the new City's Economic Development Website and in general marketing efforts. If it is not favorable, the School Districts should develop a plan to correct the identified deficiencies. The City, in partnership with the County would act as an advisor in this effort.	1st Qtr 2015
3. The Chamber continues its **Outreach to the Public School Districts** for improved communication with the business community on curriculum needs, and for improved interaction that could include high school internships and co-op programs, identification of career development requirements, curriculum development, teacher shadowing programs, and other initiatives.	On-going
4. The Chamber and public school districts study the Feasibility of **School Redistricting** to provide more community identification among students, give the City of Wilmington a high school, and provide shorter transportation needs.	Begin 2015
5. Work with the Communities in Schools of Delaware [(302) 698-4929; lwingard@cisdelaware.org] to develop an expanded program to **Reduce the Student Dropout Rate**	1st Qtr 2015

Responsibility

Primary:	Support:
• Public School Districts serving Wilmington • New Castle County Chamber of Commerce • Delaware State Chamber of Commerce • Delaware Workforce Investment Board • Communities in Schools • State Department of Education • City of Wilmington	• New Castle County • Delaware Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Trust Fund • City of Wilmington Planning Department/Workforce Development • JP Morgan Chase and other large employers • Challenge Program (Wilmington Area-construction employment for ex-offenders) • Assorted social services • City and County employers

Resources Needed

	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
Funding:	• Marketing materials showing the strength of the Public School Districts and the charter schools	$10,000	• Public School districts • NCC Chamber of Commerce
Other:	• Staff support to administer Initiative Elements		

Performance Measures
• Improvement of the image of Wilmington's school system • Improved efficiency and effectiveness of the regional school system • Reduced operating costs
Timeframe
This Initiative is:

☑ Short-term	☐ Intermediate-term	☐ Long-term	☑ Continuing
(1-2 years)	(3-5 years)	(5+ years)	

Additional Information
For information on the Communities in Schools Delaware program go to www.cisdelaware.org, and to www.communitiesinschools.org for the national website.

Wilmington, DE Economic Development Action Plan

Initiative Group #7: Improving Economic Development Efficiency and Effectiveness

Initiative Elements	
1. Cost-efficient and effective Economic Development Agency Program	Collaborate with other entities, both public and non-government, to find ways to make the economic development process more cost-efficient and effective. Develop a more effective way to leverage the resources provided to these agencies from the business community Formalize the current marketing group led by GWCVB.

Supports Mayor's Goals and Wilmington Works Focus Areas:

Goals	Focus Areas
Maintain a Business Roundtable	Mayor's Visitation Program
Enhance the marketing of Wilmington as a desirable business location	Business Recruitment
Coordinate and integrate economic development throughout the city	Economic Development Incentives
	Diversifying the Economy
	Marketing and Messaging
	Employing Wilmingtonians

Rationale for Initiative and Background Information

This Initiative parallels a similar recommendation included in the New Castle County Economic Development Action Plan. It recognizes that there are multiple economic development organizations (EDOs) in the County with similar goals and objectives. This may be resulting in duplication of effort, wasted resources, and intra-county competition that is unnecessary.

Over the past few years, as municipal resources have remained limited after the recession, more places have sought ways to provide necessary economic development services in more cost-effective ways. Some have established regional EDOs that replace or reduce the burden on smaller local programs. An example is the Danville-Boyle County Economic Development Partnership (EDP), Inc., in Kentucky, an alliance of the Boyle County Industrial Foundation, Danville-Boyle County Chamber of Commerce, Danville-Boyle County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Heart of Danville Main Street Program, Main Street Perryville, and the local governments of Boyle County, and Cities of Danville, Junction City, and Perryville.

This Initiative offers no magic answers to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the City and County's (as well as other municipalities in the County and non-governmental organizations) economic development service delivery system. Rather, it suggests a process through which all interested parties can jointly evaluate the issue and reach consensus on necessary improvements.

Ongoing Work and Ten-Month Deliverables

- Appoint new OED Director

Major Action Steps and Schedule

Action Steps	Schedule
1. In conjunction with New Castle County and other municipal and non-governmental economic development programs in New Castle County, **research other areas that have collaborated to create more cost-effective economic development delivery system.** While a combined municipal - county economic development partnership may not be the right answer for Wilmington and New Castle County, researching such efforts may provide important information and "lessons learned" regarding alternative structures, activities and services, and best practices (see the Additional Information section for some examples). Contact these to discuss how they were established, how they are organized and managed, "lessons learned" from past operations, and similar topics.	3rd Qtr 2015 – 1st Qtr 2016
2. **Evaluate the City's economic development structure, service delivery system and programs and services** in relationship to the identified best practices.	2nd – 3rd Qtrs 2016
3. Identify and implement ways to improve the economic development service delivery for the City.	Beginning 4th Qtr 2016 and continuing as necessary

Responsibility

Primary:	Support:
• City of Wilmington • New Castle County	• Other County Municipalities •New Castle County Chamber of Commerce

Resources Needed

Funding:	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
	• Consultant assistance if necessary	$30,000	• OED Budget
Other:	• Participation by County and other municipal governments		

Performance Measures

- Reduced expenditures and improved effectiveness of the municipal and county economic development programs
- A stronger and more integrated county-wide economic development team

Timeframe			
This Initiative is:			
☑ Short-term (1-2 years) Initial Discussions	☑ Intermediate-term (3-5 years) Planning and Implementation	☐ Long-term (5+ years)	☑Continuing
Additional Information			
For an examples of "umbrella" county economic development partnerships, see: • http://www.betterindanville.com/ • http://gohendersoncountync.org/ • http://www.wrightpartnership.org/ • http://www.hcedp.org/ • http://www.dekalbcountyedp.org/			

Wilmington, DE Economic Development Action Plan	
Initiative Group #8: Real Estate and Infrastructure	
Initiative Elements	
1. Business Park Improvement Zones	Take better advantage of existing business park improvement zones and identify additional project areas needed to support future development.
2. Implement the South Wilmington TOD	Leverage the momentum of the wetlands, bridge and Garasches lane projects to attract more transit oriented development within the South Walnut Urban Renewal Zone.
3. Recruit Transit Oriented Development ("TOD")	Develop a plan for increasing transit oriented development in Wilmington at the 495&12thstreet, Northeast Boulevard (&495) nodes. Consider implementing the old DelDOT12thStreet Connector Plan.
4. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Include TIF public financing method to use future gains in taxes to subsidize redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects, which are projected to create the conditions for gains above the routine yearly increases which often occur without the improvements.
5. Immigrant Investor Program (EB-5)	Utilize the Immigrant Investor Program, also known as "EB-5," to stimulate the economy through job creation and capital investment by foreign investors.
6. Flex Space	Redevelop office buildings and Brownfield's to create multipurpose development. Flex can accommodate a range of uses, from light industrial to office space, in an integrated setting.

Supports Mayor's Goals and Wilmington Works Focus Areas:	
Goals	**Focus Areas**
Maintain a Business Roundtable	Business Recruitment
Position Wilmington as a magnet for Business	Economic Development Incentives
Improve effectiveness and efficiency of city permitting and licensing	Diversifying the Economy
Enhance the marketing of Wilmington as a desirable business location	Revitalization Zones
Coordinate and integrate economic development throughout the city	Neighborhood Vitality
	Jobs in the Building Industry
	Employing Wilmingtonians
	Green Wilmington

Rationale for Initiative and Background Information

This Initiative Group focuses on two discreet real estate development opportunities: Business Park Locations and Transit-Oriented Development.

Many businesses prefer a location in a master-planned and well-managed business park. The City has demonstrated over the last decade that it is able to attract office and residential development but has lagged in the planning, development and attraction of flex-space warehouse and light manufacturing investments that are critical to diversifying employment opportunities through the creation of blue collar jobs. A significant contribution to crime in the City is lack of employment opportunities for City residents. Business areas with modern flex and manufacturing locations are vital to putting more people to work in the City. Because of its Interstate highways, rail, port, and proximity to both the New Castle County and Philadelphia International Airports, the City should be positioned as a multi-modal "distribution" hub for both products and services. Programs and services aimed at driving investment to Wilmington's five industrial areas, such as creating development zones and leveraging the Infrastructure Fund, State HSCA Fund, and State Blue Collar Jobs (Gross Receipts) Program should be aggressively pursued. Seek federal assistance from EDA's Public Works program to bring diversity to Wilmington's historical financial and legal services dominated market.

Across the country, and as a result of increased focus on "smart growth", places are trying to concentrate new development around existing transportation nodes – an approach called Transit-Oriented Development or TOD. TOD is defined in many different ways, depending on the location.

- A TOD can be based on a single type of transportation – for instance, the area around an Interstate highway interchange or other major intersection.
- It can be multi-modal areas such as where major roads serve a train station, port, or airport.
- It can have a focus on public transportation. *Wikipedia* defines TOD as a mixed-use residential and commercial area designed to maximize access to public transport, and often incorporates features to encourage transit ridership.
- It can be development around a major parking area.

Wilmington and New Castle County have all of these possibilities, although it should be noted that inadequate public parking at reasonable prices was a recurring complaint in the competitive analysis prepared as part of this project. In addition, a problem with cost-effective broadband access in Downtown Wilmington was identified during the SWOT analysis prepared for this project.

The City's ongoing and future planning should include specific identification and planning the development of TOD areas as locations for concentrated business development.

The City has actively identified target areas such as South Wilmington, the South Walnut Urban Renewal area, the Peninsula, and Northeast Wilmington as targeted development zones. The City supports redevelopment in these areas through its Infrastructure Fund, detailed planning, and other methods. Continued collaborative efforts by the City (for instance, interdepartmental teams such as OED and the Planning Department) and its allies (e.g., the RDC and DelDOT) can provide a proactive approach to stimulating property reoccupancy, job creation and additional capital investment. This Initiative sets forth an approach for taking such a proactive route for both target areas and individual properties.

For both Business Park Improvement Zones and TOD areas, stimulation of development to exceed what would normally happen often requires strategic investments by the community. These can be incentives such as reduced tax locations. They can be expedited permit and approval processes for certain types of development in specific areas. They can be areas where the City will assist with provision of necessary infrastructure (roads and utilities) to support development. There are many other ways to support development of the City's potential TOD areas that must be determined by the type of development, location, and return-on-investment to the City. The creation of Diamond State Opportunity Zones discussed in Initiative Group #3 is a potential tool.

Ongoing Work and Ten-Month Deliverables

- Manage sale and redevelopment of Harper Thiel property
- Manage sale and redevelopment of Cooper Building
- Negotiate sale of 827-829 N. Market St.
- Support BPG Downtown residential expansions (400+ units)
- Determine level of City assistance for conversion of 212 14th Street BCBS building
- Determine and execute an exit strategy for the UDAG note on the Coca-Cola Building
- Represent the City on the Riverfront Development Corporation Board
- Represent the City on the State Water Infrastructure Committee
- Negotiate Hercules pedestrian bridge development
- Project Leadership for Wetlands, Garasches, & South Wilmington Development

Major Action Steps and Schedule

Action Steps	Schedule
1. The Mayor should establish a **Real Estate Development Advisory Committee**. Members of the committee should include appropriate City staff, representatives of key boards and commissions, and necessary private sector members including property owners, commercial and industrial real estate representatives, architects and engineers, and others as appropriate.	1st Qtr 2015
2. This committee should have three primary focuses (perhaps subcommittees): A. **Business Park Improvement Zones** to stimulate additional development in existing or future business park areas B. Completing and implementing **Urban Renewal Plans** such as the South Walnut Urban Renewal Area C. **Transit Oriented Development** to identify and plan development around portions of the city with key transportation infrastructure (including parking).	1st Qtr 2015
3. Those assigned to each focus area or subcommittee should prepare a **Business Plan** for carrying out their responsibilities. These plans should take full advantage of existing City and other resources (e.g., state and federal programs) but should also identify necessary existing resources. Collaborative efforts with the private sector should be emphasized to leverage available	1st – 3rd Qtrs 2015

	public sector resources.	
4.	Mesh the individual business plans into a **City of Wilmington Real Estate Development Plan.**	4th Qtr 2015
5.	Take necessary actions to **implement the City of Wilmington Real Estate Development Plan**.	Beginning 1st Qtr 2016 and ongoing thereafter
6.	**Promote the City's Plan and ongoing real estate activities and successes** on the City's Economic Development website, the OED Out and About Newsletter, Wilmington Works Blog and other vehicles as appropriate.	Beginning 1st Qtr 2016 and ongoing thereafter
7.	**Work with the U.S. Conference of Mayors for ideas on improving the broadband access, and review the City's position regarding broadband access in the downtown.** The City needs to address and meet the need for access to competitive priced high speed broadband in the downtown for business and residents.	1st Qtr 2015 and ongoing

Responsibility

Primary:	Support:
• Wilmington Office of the Mayor • Wilmington Office of Economic Development • New Castle County Office of Economic Development • Wilmington Department of Planning	• Wilmington Fire Marshal Department • Wilmington License and Inspection Department • Industrial and commercial developers and realtors • DEDO • DelDOT • Amtrak • Norfolk Southern, CSXT and other railroads • DART First State and the Delaware Transit Corporation • WILMAPCO

Resources Needed

	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
Funding:	• General support	$5,000	• OED budget • Property owners
Other:	• Participation of City staff • Participation of property owners, real estate brokers, architects, engineers and other necessary volunteers with relevant knowledge and experience		

Performance Measures

- Development leveraged on Wilmington's multi-modal transportation infrastructure
- Vacant or underutilized properties put back into use
- Increased wage tax revenue to the City though increased employment
- Blighted and high crime areas prevented and/or eliminated

Timeframe

This Initiative is:

☑ Short-term (1-2 years)	☐ Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	☐ Long-term (5+ years)	☑ Continuing

Additional Information

For information on the Center for Transit Oriented Development, see: http://ctod.org/ctod-research.php

Wilmington, DE Economic Development Action Plan

Initiative Group #9: Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs

Initiative Elements

1. Young Entrepreneurs	• Prepare a competitive analysis comparing Wilmington with other areas of comparable size in terms of characteristics, programs and services leading to the successful retention and recruitment of young residents.
	• Create a think tank (or advisory/resource group) of young people – both young professionals and others who aren't professionals yet.
	• Prepare, broadly disseminate, promote and maintain a Directory of Small Business Services. Publish in English and Spanish. Do in partnership with the County Office of Economic Development.
	• Support entrepreneurship through encouragement of home-based businesses as part of a County Incubator Without Walls program, possibly through the New Castle County Chamber's Emerging Enterprise Center, and in partnership with the County's Office of Economic Development.
	• Encourage the development of an alternative newspaper that addresses the attitudes and needs of a younger, hipper population, such as Burlington VT's Seven Days, that serves the City, the rest of the County beyond into the greater Wilmington-Philadelphia region.

2. Create a Combined Homebuyer and Student Debt Incentive Program	• Leverage new and existing programs to create a comprehensive package that will spur population growth with new young talent. • Expand the existing City employee Homebuyer program and combine it with a new Student Debt Repayment Incentive to attract young professional homeowners away from the surrounding suburbs. The package will provide a one-time closing assistance for the purchase of a home, a waiver of half of the City's portion of transfer tax at the time of purchase, and a yearly reimbursement for a portion of paid student debt.
3. Create Bike Lanes	• Aggressively install bike lanes through Wilmington to signal a progressive environment that cares about recruiting and retaining young residents. • Benchmark City efforts to bike lane programs such as the recent Better Block demonstration and New York City's transportation initiative to identify opportunities in Wilmington to stripe lanes within existing roadways and cost-effective installation methods.

Supports Mayor's Goals and Wilmington Works Focus Areas:

Goals	Focus Areas
Position Wilmington as a magnet for Business	Business Recruitment
Develop and promote employment of city residents, small and minority businesses	Diversifying the Economy
	Neighborhood Vitality
	Jobs for Young Adults
	Employing Wilmingtonians

Rationale for Initiative and Background Information

Most area employment is with small employers, defined as companies with employment between 100 and 1,500 employees, depending upon the industry sector. Delaware's private sector employment base is with small employers, as it is in the rest of the nation. Just over 55% of the State's non-government jobs are with employers with fewer than 100 employees, while 72% are with employers with fewer than 250 employees. Since 2003 the trend has been growing. Since then, 60% of the State's job growth has been with employers having fewer than 50 employees, while the number of employees working for companies with more than 250 employees declined significantly. Data is not available at the County level, but because New Castle County is home to 68% of the State's jobs, the State data can be considered reflective of the County's trends.

The trend in the State and County is favoring growth of the smallest employers as the economic base of the State becomes less founded on large employers within the chemical, financial and other sectors. In response, the City needs to focus its attention on the development and nurturing of small employers, particularly those with fewer than 50 employees. This strategy fits well with the targeted industries recommended to the City as part of this Strategic Plan.

Small businesses typically need assistance when starting operations, including direction on the basics of running a business; legal, financial and accounting assistance and guidance; business plan development; and finding well-located affordable space in which to operate. Finding this assistance can be time-consuming and expensive. Some established avenues of help, such as SCORE frequently do not meet the needs of many start up businesses, particularly minority owned firms and technology focused enterprises.

Therefore, it is common for local governmental agencies, together with allies such as chambers of commerce, universities and community colleges to provide assistance through business incubators and business accelerators; facilitate access to financing sources such as private sector venture capital; development of entrepreneurial boot camps or start up weekends; providing referral networks; and providing contract bidding and networking opportunities. The County has a heritage as a location for entrepreneurial development, such as W.L. Gore, and the County Chamber of Commerce, the University of Delaware, Wilmington University and Delaware Technical Community College have been strong partners in stimulating and developing entrepreneurial development in the City and County. DelTech is participating in the Kaufman Foundation's 1 Million Cups program, and the three educational institutions are developing a degree program in entrepreneurial development.

Many areas are making special efforts to attract and retain highly educated and skilled residents in their 20's and 30's (i.e. Millennials) because of their knowledge of cutting edge technologies and operating processes, high energy levels, and greater willingness to take the risks needed to start their own businesses and explore new ideas. The demographics for millennials and recent college graduates are promising: they have higher earnings than the City's median income, encompass the City's weakest age brackets, are highly diverse, and are eager to live in mixed-use urban centers.

Wilmington needs to attract more of these individuals as a source for a new creative direction in its changing economy, to provide the image of a dynamic culture focused on the present and future. The City and County also need to retain more of the graduates from the University of Delaware and other state schools with the technical knowledge needed by the area's information technology, scientific, engineering, finance, healthcare and other industries. The demographic indicators show a slowly aging population. This trend needs to be reversed if the area is to have the flexible, energized and educated workforce needed for the industries of the future.

It is important that the City offers the urban life style sought by young professionals, such as what is available in Philadelphia, even though the attractions would be at a smaller scale. Key elements in attracting young professionals are exciting jobs, ability to network, affordable housing, social and music venues including trendy restaurants and clubs, and well-functioning public transportation systems.

Bike lanes are attractive to the urbanites and millennials, they support the Mayor's Young Professionals policy, increase public safety, encourage health, and present a tangible sign of a progressive, modern City. They are an essential part of the national Complete Streets movement that is being adopted by many communities and regions.

Ongoing Work and Ten-Month Deliverables

- Young Professionals Task Force

- Support Downtown Creative District

Major Action Steps and Schedule

Action Steps	Schedule
1. Create a hard copy and electronic English and Spanish **Directory of Small Business Services** available to start up companies and small existing businesses that include local contacts in the City for economic development, real estate, environmental regulations, personnel recruitment, taxes and licensing, telecommunications services, transportation and utility services, small business legal and accounting start up assistance services, and funding sources (angels and equity investors, crowdfunding, federal and state funding, local funding). Have copies of the directory in English and Spanish. And post both on the City's Economic Development Website (see Initiative Group 2).This document should be the result of input from and participation by the agencies in the City and County offering business startup assistance, and be used by these agencies in their work.	1ˢᵗ Qtr 2015
2. Investigate the availability of **Working Capital for Startup Companies,** such as from private equity, local financial institutions, and crowdsourcing.	2ⁿᵈ Qtr 2015
3. Prepare a **competitive analysis** comparing Wilmington with other areas of comparable size in terms of characteristics, programs and services leading to the successful retention and recruitment of young residents.	2ⁿᵈ Qtr 2015
4. Create a **think tank** (or advisory/resource group) of young people – both young professionals and others who aren't yet professionals.	2ⁿᵈ Qtr 2015
5. Further develop the **current homebuyer and student-debt Incentive** proposals.	2ⁿᵈ Qtr 2015
6. Identify and develop, where needed, **Financing Options** for companies considering a new or expanded operation in the City and for startup businesses (e.g. bond financing, Closing Fund leverage with private equity). Be creative in certain areas, e.g. payroll tax forgiveness and coordination with CRA.	2ⁿᵈ Qtr 2015
7. Expand the existing City **employee Homebuyer program and combine it with a new Student Debt Repayment Incentive** to attract young professional homeowners a	3ʳᵈ Qtr 2015
8. Working with the Chamber's Emerging Enterprise Center, the University of Delaware, Wilmington University, DelTech, and the County's OED a **Plan to Enhance the Available Incubator Facilities and Services** through expanded communication and coordination among these institutions and the other agencies and educational institutions in the City and County active in assisting business start ups and entrepreneurial activities, listed in the Responsibilities section of this Initiative. Offer special programs aimed at retired or "structurally	2ⁿᵈ to 3ʳᵈ Qtr, 2015, on-going

unemployed" residents for business start up. Encourage entrepreneurship through encouragement of home-based businesses through the incubator without walls program. Investigate with the Chamber the feasibility of locating a business incubator or incubators, or business assistance centers in various locations in the City, including store fronts. Work with the Chamber to provide enhanced outreach to the County's African American and Hispanic Communities for expanded business startup assistance. Emphasize information and assistance in accessing working capital and capital assistance and advice, and providing technical assistance (e.g. business plans) and assisting with referral networks. Have staff members fluent in Spanish available to assist Spanish speaking small business owners. Compare the Emerging Enterprise Center's Website to those available in other communities, such as Charlottebusinessresources.com for enhancements.	
9. Develop an enhanced **Young Professional Attraction and Retention Program**, building off of the initiatives of the Chamber and the County. Emphasize availability of attractive and suitable housing and quality of life, social networking, and job availability. An organization run by young professionals would be best.	2nd Qtr, 2015
10. Encourage the development of an **alternative newspaper** that addresses a millennial population	4th Quarter, 2015
11. Initiate a **Coordinated and Enhanced Business Retention Program** in the City. A visitation program to start up City companies, particularly, but not exclusively in selected high impact economic sectors should be the initial primary focus. Coordination with the County on any comparable program it conducts would be beneficial to both the City and county.	2nd Qtr, 2015
12. Create a **Small Business and Start Up Service and Communications Plan.** Maintain stronger communication and cooperation among the City's agencies and institutions that are active in entrepreneurial and business start ups to coordinate and optimize services to entrepreneurs and small businesses. Coordinate with the County and Chamber efforts. Develop a single plan of action to which the City agencies have agreed, implemented by a single organization determined by the group, with shared responsibilities and fund allocations among the participating groups. This entity would be responsible for orchestrating the entrepreneurial and business startups in the City using the resources and experiences of its participating agencies. It would have the responsibility of focusing all of the City's business startup assistance in a unified planned program.	On-going

13. Aggressively **install bike lanes** throughout Wilmington to signal a progressive environment that cares about recruiting and retaining young residents.	Starting 4th Qtr 2015
14. Continue the City's small **Business Success Series**, sponsored by the Mayor's Office of Economic Development and Small and Minority Business Enterprise office.	On going

Responsibility

Primary:	Support:
• Wilmington Office of Economic Development • SBA • Wilmington Renaissance Corporation • Young professionals • New Castle County Chamber of Commerce • Downtown Visions • City of Wilmington	• University of Delaware • Wilmington University • Delaware Technical Community College • Delaware Financial Literacy Institute • Greater Newark Economic Development Council • DEDO

Resources Needed

	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
Funding:	• Small Business Directory	$10,000	• City budget
	• Competitive Analysis	$25,000 or contributed by UD	• City budget
	• Home buyer and new Student Debt Repayment Incentive	Unknown	• City budget
	• Incubator facilities	Unknown	• County Chamber of Commerce • Universities, DelTech • City budget
	• Installation of bike lanes	Unknown	• City budget
Other:	• Staff support to administer Initiative Elements		

Performance Measures

- Increased business start-ups, location and growth in the City
- Increased number of young entrepreneurs and professionals who choose Wilmington as a place to live, work or play
- Increased wage tax revenue to the City though increased employment
- An established strategic plan for attracting and keeping young professionals
- Bike lanes installed

Timeframe

This Initiative is:

☑ Short-term	☐ Intermediate-term	☐ Long-term	☑ Continuing

(1-2 years)	(3-5 years)	(5+ years)		

Additional Information

For information on entrepreneurial startup assistance programs, see
- www.startupweekend.org/
- http://www.1millioncups.com/

Ann Arbor (MI) Spark is an organization that has long been focused on entrepreneurial development as the generator of the area's economic development, working closely with the University of Michigan and other area agencies and institutions. Its website contains useful information on a full service entrepreneurial program. The website has a particularly good profile of Spark's incubator network operating in different sectors of the Washtenaw County. See Spark's website at: http://www.annarborusa.org/

For information on the national Complete Streets program, see: http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets

To see the University of Delaware Institute of Public Administration's Delaware Complete Streets Visualizations, see: http://www.ipa.udel.edu/healthyDEtoolkit/completestreets/visualizations.html

Wilmington, DE Economic Development Action Plan	
Initiative Group #10: Downtown Business Development and City Growth	
Initiative Elements	
1. Increase the City's population	• Hire 3rd party to analyze the cost of living differential between the City and other comparison locations. The analysis should include taxes, utilities and service levels (e.g.-trash collection and professional fire service). • Celebrate and Market the City's diverse neighborhood offerings. Attract new residents from the region by implementing growth initiatives and homebuyer attraction incentives to leverage Wilmington's lower homeownership costs compared to the more expensive Philadelphia and New York Markets. • Support the efforts of nonprofit housing developers such as WHP.
2. Housing Strategic Fund	Re-fund the City's Housing Strategic Fund which is currently depleted. The Fund is integral to the City's economic development because it drives private investment in market rate housing, which cannot be supported by CDBG/federal funds.
3. Downtown development and City Growth	Leverage and Sustain the new Downtown Development District ("DDD") program. Enhance the downtown's living and working environment. Attract young professionals and working class residents. Market the City's unique and diverse neighborhoods and opportunities for home ownership.
Supports Mayor's Goals and Wilmington Works Focus Areas:	

Goals	Focus Areas
Position Wilmington as a magnet for Business	Business Recruitment
Develop and promote employment of City residents, small and minority businesses	Economic Development Incentives
	Diversifying the Economy
	Revitalization Zones
	Neighborhood Vitality
	Marketing and Messaging
	Jobs in the Building Industry
	Jobs for Young Adults
	Employing Wilmingtonians
	Green Wilmington

Rationale for Initiative and Background Information

Wilmington's population peaked in 1940 at 112,504 residents. In 2010 it was 70,851, a decline of 41,653, or a drop of 37%. If an area is to be economically viable, it needs to have population growth, or at the least, stability, and the residents must have incomes that at least match the national median, with a distribution that favors a middle income population.

Programs and policies need to emphasize the health and well-being of business and their employees, for tourists and visitors from outside the City.

New housing needs to be a focus of economic development, and is one of the items in the Chamber's 5,000 in Five Program. Conversion of office and industrial buildings into residential units, where and when supported by a market analysis is needed. The City needs to support such action through supporting zoning and permitting. Within the Chamber's 5,000 in Five program's housing action plan, it is recommended that abandoned homes be made available to City employees for a minimal or no cost, with the provision that the houses be brought up to and maintained at code.

The Downtown needs to be exciting, interesting and lively, not threatening or unsafe perceived or in reality if it is to attract business investment and be a greater source of jobs.

Ongoing Work and Ten-Month Deliverables

• Capitalize on the State Downtown Development District Program

Major Action Steps and Schedule

Action Steps	Schedule
1. Develop and implement the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce's **5,000 in Five** program to increase the City's population by 5,000 in five years. The program has four Issue Sectors (incentives, regulations, amenities and attitude) containing 13 actions.	1st Quarter 2014 and on- going
2. Initiate increased market rate housing opportunities in all, or most, sectors. This could be through the occupation of vacant housing program in the **5,000 in Five initiative,** conversion of office and industrial real estate, or the construction of new units. House development should consider whatever the market demands, such as apartments, condominiums, lofts, townhomes, and single family detached housing.	4th Quarter 2015
3. Investigate more intensive use of **Rodney Square** as an Informal Entertainment Venue.	On-going
4. Investigate the feasibility of **relocating the current transportation hub** at Rodney Square to another location to enhance the appeal of the Square as an informal entertainment center and gathering place for lunch time, after hours and weekend events attended by downtown employees, out of town visitors	On-going

and residents.	
5. Have an initiative to enhance the **perceived safety of the downtown** by enforcing a no loitering, pan handling and other quality of life offenses that are perceived as threatening to many individuals.	3rd Quarter 2015
6. Have a stronger **visible uniformed police presence in the downtown** during the day and evening and weekends. Police would best be on foot and/or on bicycles. A downtown police substation may be worth consideration.	Immediate
7. Seek to have **lower cost parking** in the downtown and less stringent parking enforcement.	1st Quarter 2015
8. Support the Wilmington Renaissance Corporation's plan to seed a creative district in the Quaker Hill neighborhood.	On-going
9. Create an **enterprise district** in the downtown with reduced taxes and incentives to landlords to provide reduced rents to targeted business activities, and to businesses.	3rd Quarter 2015
10. Develop a plan to attract more Millennials (18-34 year olds) to live in the City, with an emphasis on the downtown. Elements of the plan should address strong night life and cultural attractions, artisanal food, networking opportunities, affordable housing, and an effective public transportation system. Specific efforts would include: • Encourage more night life and cultural attractions. Millennials dine out more than the rest of the population, and are attracted to artisanal food, so the City needs to encourage the development of fashionable restaurants, including farm to table restaurants through favorable zoning, facilitated permitting, more low or no cost parking, and increased sense of personal security on the street and in parking venues. Music and entertainment attractions are an important part of the night life sought by Millennials, so the development of a Wilmington music "scene" should be considered as part of any plan that would include clubs and festivals. Sporting events, art galleries and other attractions need to be part of any plan • Maintain an effective public transportation system. Millennials typically want low cost transit that is efficient and offers multiple options for moving around the city in which they live. • Offer affordable housing opportunities. Millennials include people at two different stages of life: Those who are beginning their career or developing an established career. They include people who are single, married with children and married without children. These different conditions require sufficient variety in available housing to meet the different life styles of Millennials, including apartments, condos, townhouses, lofts, and single	On-going

family detached housing. Millennials tend to favor housing closer to central locations containing worksites and social, dining, and entertainment activities. Rents and housing costs need to be affordable for the salaries being paid to the Millennials. • Provide an entrepreneurial environment. According to the Kauffman Foundation, 54% of Millennials want to start their own businesses or already have one. Therefore, it is important to have an environment that strongly encourages and supports entrepreneurial activity, particularly in tech startups.	
11. Hire a 3rd party to analyze the cost of living differential	1st Quarter 2015
12. Re-fund the City's Housing Strategic Fund	1st Quarter 2015
13. Leverage and sustain the new Downtown Development District program	On-going
14. Initiate increased market rate housing opportunities in all, or most, sectors. This could be through the occupation of vacant housing program in the **5,000 in Five initiative,** conversion of office and industrial real estate, or the construction of new units. House development should consider whatever the market demands, such as apartments, condominiums, lofts, townhomes, and single family detached housing.	4th Quarter 2015
15. Investigate more intensive use of **Rodney Square** as an Informal Entertainment Venue.	On-going

Responsibility

Primary:	Support:
• New Castle County Chamber of Commerce • Wilmington Office of Economic Development • Downtown Visions • Wilmington Renaissance • Residential developers and realtors • City of Wilmington •Business Roundtable • Employers	• University of Delaware

Resources Needed

	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
Funding:	• 3rd party for cost of living analysis	$20,000	• City budget
	• Refund the City's Housing Strategic Fund	Unknown	• City budget
	• Leverage and sustain DDD	Unknown	• City budget
Other:	• Staff time for project administration		

Performance Measures
• Improved incentives for residential development and occupancy
• Improved regulatory environment for downtown development
• Improved amenities for downtown living, working and business operations
• More and better jobs for City residents
• Enhancement of the Downtown as a business location with positive impacts on the rest of the City and County
• Wilmington becomes a more attractive location for business and residential development
• Expanded property and payroll tax revenues
• Increase in City population

Timeframe
This Initiative is:

☑ Short-term (1-2 years)	☐ Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	☐ Long-term (5+ years)	☑ Continuing	

Additional Information

The Philadelphia has an active Millennials presence. Articles on this topic are:

- http://www.phillymag.com/issue/the-millennial-revolution-december-2013/
- http://www.philly.com/philly/business/Millennials_in_Philadelphia.html
- http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2014/01/21/millennials-in-philadelphia-a-promising-but-fragile-boom
- http://axisphilly.org/article/pew-report-millennials-love-the-city-but-half-may-leave/
- http://nextcity.org/daily/entry/philadelphia-millennials-pew-state-of-the-city-population-gain
- http://www.solorealty.com/millennials-making-their-mark-city

Much has been written about Kansas City, Missouri's program to attract Millennials. The following websites cover the Kansas City experience:

- http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/20/realestate/commercial/millennials-going-to-kansas-city-to-live-and-work.html?_r=0
- http://www.kansascity.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/yael-t-abouhalkah/article358753/Kansas-City%E2%80%99s-love-affair-with-millennials-hits-a-few-rough-spots.html
- http://www.thisiskc.com/2013/11/marketing-to-millennials-are-you-listening/
- www.heraldtribune.com/article/.../309019988
- http://www.thenewsfunnel.com/blog/why-kansas-city-attracting-millennials#sthash.xFuSz7v7.dpbs
- http://www.arktimes.com/ArkansasBlog/archives/2014/08/20/a-surge-of-millennials-builds-hope-for-downtowns-such-as-kansas-city-and-little-rock

The Kansas City Area Development Council has been orchestrating the greater Kansas City Millennial attraction and retention effort over the years. Its website is: www.thinkKC.com.

The Brookings Institute has written several whitepapers on Millennials. Two examples are:

- http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2011/10/28-young-adults-frey
- http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/brookings-now/posts/2014/06/11-facts-about-the-millennial-generation

Implementation Recommendations

1. Have the City Council officially adopt the Economic Development Action Plan.

2. Have the Plan endorsed by the Business Roundtable and other appropriate groups such as the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce, DEDO, and others identified by the City.

3. Refine the suggested schedules for all elements of the Initiative Groups to create a master calendar of implementation work that reflects staff availability, funding, and other factors.

4. Create a Master Staffing Plan to include ongoing efforts that should be continued and additional programs and services adopted from this plan. If warranted, hire additional staff necessary for oversight of the economic development program and its elements.

5. Create a Resources and Logistics Plan to anticipate and provide for implementation needs. This should include the assignment of staff responsibilities and the development of collaborative efforts with allies.

6. Contact the U.S. Economic Development Administration – Philadelphia Regional Office – to discuss the best way to incorporate the plan into the State's existing Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) so as to increase the likelihood of obtaining EDA funding for eligible Initiatives and elements. Collaborate with State DEDO on an update of the CEDS.

7. Aggressively pursue the identification of applications for grant funding to support implementation of Initiative Elements.

8. Assure that existing City funds, in particular, the Infrastructure and Housing Funds are adequately funded on a continuing basis.