

CHAPTER FOUR

Economic Development Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to outline the City of Inglewood’s Economic Development Action Plan. This document outlines the overall goals, along with specific objectives, their focus, core challenges, overall approach and specific Inglewood Fast Actions (I-FAST-ACTS).

What is the City of Inglewood’s Economic Development Plan?

The goal of this action plan is to improve economic development opportunities within the City of Inglewood, in four specific areas:

- 1) Increase employment opportunities;
- 2) Broaden the tax base;
- 3) Attract people and businesses; and
- 4) Increase service opportunities for residents.

The City of Inglewood’s Economic Development Strategic Plan is focused on all four of these aspects.

The Economic Development Plan in the Context of Other Plans

In general terms, the fundamental basis of any development effort is to create a vibrant, attractive, sustainable and safe community. And there are several types of plans that provide the framework toward developing a community. An economic development plan is just one type of plan that is typically used. Other plans include a General Plan, a Specific Plan, and a Redevelopment Plan. Understanding how the economic development plan relates to these other plans is important to understand within the overall context.

| Type of Plan | Scale | Examples of Vision | Examples of Goals |
|---------------------------|---------------|--|--|
| General Plan | City level | Depends on community priorities- a very long range statement | Improve quality of life, housing and clean environment |
| Specific Plan | Specific Area | Depends on the requirement of a specific area: downtown, waterfront areas, etc | Narrows down to micro level planning depending on the needs of the specific area |
| Economic Development Plan | City level | To create a diverse and vibrant economic base | Strengthen workforce; promote businesses and industries |
| Redevelopment Plan | Specific Area | Elimination of deficient living and business conditions | Facilitate rebuilding and development of the targeted areas. |

A General Plan is a document that can best be defined as the City's blueprint for the future. It details the City's policies regarding the nature and location of future development, and indicates what City services and infrastructure will be needed. Most General Plans are a comprehensive, long range statement of policies for the development and preservation of a city. It is a statement of community priorities and values to be used to guide decision making in the future, and consists of citywide elements as well as specific plans for each of a City's planning areas.

On the other hand, the purpose of an Economic Development Strategic Plan is to improve the City's job base and increase tax revenues. It has a specific focus on the issues and opportunities toward improving the economic well being of the City. The plan can include efforts to diversify the local economy, expand existing business and attract new business. And to do so within the general context of the overall vision for the City.

This is the exact juncture of this report. It comes after a long and comprehensive community involvement process that included feedback from the citizens, the businesses, the administrators and the leadership of the City. The feedback was broad and comprehensive and helped set the vision for the City. Much of this feedback will be useful to the City as it updates its General Plan, and has been documented in earlier reports produced as part of this study.

And while the feedback was on the scale applicable to a broader and comprehensive plan (like a General Plan), the information also set the tone for the economic development strategy. The key community feedback elements that are relevant to an economic development strategy include the need for higher paying job opportunities, job training and development, need for locally based upscale retail and commercial opportunities and entertainment venues, as well as the desire to afford housing and to provide employment opportunities for Inglewood residents.

ACTIONS TOWARD EXPANDING JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Objective

To increase the number of jobs within the City of Inglewood, the quality of jobs as measured by income and benefits, and the share of jobs held by the residents.

Focus

Target industry sectors that offer higher income levels at or above the current average income levels in the City of Inglewood. These would include high-tech businesses and industries and entertainment driven services, particularly those that have some connection to Inglewood's existing base of industries, including medical/biotech, aerospace, television

and entertainment. The types of jobs would include process/manufacturing, research, management/administration, back-office and services.

Core Challenge

The greatest challenge toward meeting this objective is the need to improve the resident skill base. Based on previous studies, business interviews conducted as part of the study, and interviews with local residents, the City's resident labor base is underemployed due to its aggregate skill level, particularly from an education attainment standpoint. In order to attract investment in higher paying jobs, an aggressive job development plan is the imperative.

Overall Approach

The overall job training approach should be two-tiered. The first is to create a critical mass of trained residents by catering the training for high paying jobs anywhere - in Inglewood itself, as well as in nearby job markets. Once a critical mass skill base begins to emerge, the City will be able attract a larger share of locally based employment, thereby evolving toward training catered for jobs/employers exclusive to Inglewood. Again, the critical first step is establishing the program, regardless of where the jobs are. In addition to focusing on resident adults, long term training programs should be established in conjunction with the South Bay Workforce Investment Board's (SBWIB) programs for the youth population, as well as to continue engaging the School District to be a partner and participate in the functioning of these programs. It is important to note that the City is currently partnered with the SBWIB, and should continue this partnership.

I-Fast-Acts

The most immediate priorities are to:

Determine the Scale and Scope of Job Training Needs

Reach out to the most immediate opportunity industries and determine what their skill requirements are, and find out what ancillary businesses can be attracted.

- 1) Talk to the local and surrounding medical centers;
- 2) Talk to businesses that already provide training;
- 3) Talk to aerospace and other high-tech industries in neighboring cities; and,
- 4) Talk to vendors that provide noise abatement services and materials.

Increase availability of Job Development Programs

- 1) Make citizens aware of existing job development training programs.
- 2) Work with existing businesses that provide training within Inglewood.
- 3) Work with existing programs to provide training at locations within Inglewood.
For example:

- a) Work with the SBWIB to continue to focus, in addition to adult re-employment, on targeting specific adult under-employed sectors of the population to seek job training; work with the community based organizations to reach out to these population groups.
 - b) Continue to expand the City’s partnership role with the SBWIB beyond providing employment opportunities for students and transitioning adults. The City should increase its partnership role by proactively working with the SBWIB to identify potential training programs targeted at underemployed sectors.
 - c) The training should be geared toward the skill areas identified in the first step (Determine the Scale and Scope of Job Training Needs). The SBWIB currently have a specific focus on attaining federal grants for up-training residents into health care field (Centinella, Freeman hospitals). The City should identify additional areas (for example Bio-tech) and partner with SBWIB to obtain funding for training.
- 4) Provide on-site amenities such as day-care to allow dual income families and working single parent families to attend training.
 - 5) Encourage job training programs to provide training for Inglewood residents for jobs in the most immediate areas around Inglewood (for example El Segundo)
 - 6) Immediate job training skill opportunities should include but not be limited to the target industries listed in the Kosmont report:
 - Aerospace
 - Bio-Science
 - Communications
 - Computer Services
 - Entertainment
 - Environment Technology
 - Medical Services
 - Software
 - Transportation

Benchmarks

In order to help measure the City’s success at expanding job opportunities, the following are some short-term and long-term benchmarks:

| Benchmark Indicators | Targets |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Number of residents participating in job development training programs | Increasing trend year - over - year |
| Number of net new jobs created in Inglewood that pay greater than the Inglewood Cost of Living Index as a percent of total jobs | Increasing trend |
| Percent of households earning less than \$25,000 per year | Decreasing trend year - over - year |

ACTIONS TOWARD EXPANDING THE TAX BASE

Objective

The fundamental purpose of expanding the tax base is to provide a revenue source for the City of Inglewood to perform its functions as a steward of the community, providing services and employment opportunities. Even more paramount for the City of Inglewood and its residents is to shift more of the tax burden from the residents to the business community, especially due to the eroding effect of escalating housing costs on the household income level. It can be expected that the residential tax base will continue to grow due to the natural appreciation in the real estate market. The City should focus its energy on attracting businesses that will expand the city's tax base and lower the share of burden on the residents.

Focus

The primary tax growth strategy for the City of Inglewood is to expand sales tax base, specifically retail, as well as its business property tax base. The most immediate opportunity is to focus on retail development, specifically toward higher-end and entertainment driven mixed-use development.

Core Challenges

The challenge for the City is the quality of the development mix that has historically targeted the City, given the market's perception of the City's ability to support higher quality retail development, as well as the City's ranking as a retail trade area using traditional income measures. The City also has a reputation for moving slow to take advantage of constantly evolving market opportunities. While there exists a variety of development opportunities which have generated private sector interest, there is little **certainty in outcome** for many of these developments.

Overall Approach

Despite the trend over the 70's, 80's and early 90's, the City has recently seen an up swing in the quality of retail demand. The City should capitalize on this trend by tactically "swimming up the value" chain by incrementally targeting larger, mixed-use, entertainment driven retail developments that offer a regional as well as local draw. However, to get there, the City first must demonstrate success at attracting intermediate scale developments that set the stage for attracting the higher-end developments like *Universal City Walk Hollywood* and *The Grove*. Therefore, over the short term, it should target retail/mixed-use developments that tap into a 2-3 mile trade area, rely on the City's arterial roadway network, and specifically reduces local retail leakage (keeping more retail dollars within Inglewood). Over the long term, the City should target larger mixed-use developments that have a regional draw, rely on the freeway system, and the airport's "fly-away" related

business as a means for access to bring shoppers from surrounding cities, as well as satisfy local demand.

I-Fast-Acts

The immediate imperative for the City is to establish an environment and process towards providing **certainty in outcome**. Certainty in outcome implies that a specific process is set in place, whereby if it is followed in accordance with the guidelines established thereto, that the desired outcome is likely to occur. There are two fundamental actions that must be undertaken:

Update the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance

In the process of updating the General Plan, the City should:

- a) Designate the key retail/commercial corridors such as Century Blvd, Manchester Ave, La Brea, Market Street, La Cienega, Arbor Vitae and Crenshaw/Imperial as the immediate retail/commercial growth corridors, mostly with a local (2-3 mile) trade area, targeted at reducing economic leakage, as well as sustainable long term development corridors.
- b) Designate the Hollywood Park/Forum area (Manchester, Prairie and Century) as the core focus for a regional-scale mixed-use development to accommodate high-income sales tax and property tax generating businesses. The uses should include but not be limited to retail, residential, high-tech industrial, office park, civic and entertainment uses. From an economic development standpoint, the role of this area is to attract dollars from outside the City. The current land owners should be engaged before, during and after the General Plan process so as to ensure that the vision conveyed by the community and their Plan is consistent with economic realities set forth by the market.
- c) As part of a zoning review process (possibly during the General Plan update or Specific Plan as determined by the General Plan) allow for up-zoning opportunities in all of the aforementioned areas, specifically to allow for vibrant mixed-use development. The Arbor Vitae corridor should be allowed to evolve into a retail commercial corridor. Portions of N. La Brea should be allowed to accommodate mixed-use development.

Improve the Environment for Doing Business

Improve the development review process (see next objective “Attractive to People and Businesses”).

Brand the Individual Opportunity Areas

In addition to improving certainty in outcome the City should aggressively designate themes to the aforementioned corridors and centers, thereby creating branding opportunities from a marketing standpoint, improving the City’s edge at attracting retail sales. The themes should be tied with festivals and public events in an effort to better position the individual areas as stand alone areas. For example, the Arbor Vitae corridor



should be themed as Hispanic so as to position that corridor as a place to shop for that respective population group. The Hollywood Park area should be branded based on its entertainment theme. The Century Blvd corridor should be branded as a “Flyaway” corridor. Market Street should be branded as a place to live, shop, work and play. In other words, the City of Inglewood should not be the core brand, but rather each of the sub areas should be branded based on what they are and the role they serve.

Improve Parking

The City should implement strategies to provide adequate parking for the aforementioned areas. The parking strategies should vary based on the specific needs; downtown; on-street and off-street parking for the commercial spine corridors; larger joint use parking facilities for the larger mixed-use regional developments. The City should also pursue a parking financing plan to include options such as Business Improvement Districts, as well as private/public partnership to fund the construction of larger multi-use parking structures.

Parcel Assembly

The City should pursue parcel assembly strategies for some of the existing commercial spine corridors to allow for mixed-use development where applicable. For example, the parcels along North La Brea are too narrow for mixed-use development; parcels would need to be bundled to allow for mixed-use development. This is also true for Arbor Vitae which is an emerging retail corridor with a Hispanic focus.

Clear Development Goals and Objectives

The City should provide clear development goals and objectives for areas within the City that are currently not being developed due to inconsistent development objectives. Clear zoning and land use guidelines should be outlined for the areas that are stagnant. These should be based on a fair and transparent process that invites and takes into account public and community feedback. Examples of specific areas of concern include the “corner lots” that were formerly gas stations that are currently under the Special Use Permit process. Other areas include potential development sites along the high traffic corridors. Again, the intended outcome is to provide a clear vision and objectives that provide an opportunity for certainty in outcome.

Benchmarks

The following are the benchmarks for determining the City’s success at expanding its tax base:

| Benchmark Indicators | Targets |
|--|--|
| Per capita sales tax revenue (total sales tax divided by total city residents) | Improve to match and exceed the South Bay Cities average |
| Per capita property tax revenue from businesses (total property tax from businesses divided by total city residents) | Improve to match and exceed the South Bay Cities average |

| | |
|--|--|
| Sales taxes and property taxes (from business) as a share of total tax revenue | Improve to match and exceed the South Bay Cities average |
| Property taxes from businesses as a share of total property tax revenue | Increasing trend year - over - year |

ACTIONS TOWARD IMPROVING THE CITY’S APPEAL AND ABILITY TO ATTRACT BUSINESSES AND PEOPLE

Objective

The City of Inglewood, for a variety of reasons, either right or wrong, has an image challenge. And image is mostly perception. The City must take specific steps toward addressing these perceptions, not through a marketing and public relations driven campaign, but through specific tangible programs that can produce demonstrated results.

Focus

The focus should be on businesses and people, not one or the other. Therefore the efforts should be directed at:

- 1) Business Environment - Business should feel welcome.
- 2) Safety - Residents, businesses and their customers should feel safe.
- 3) Housing - People should be able to afford their homes.
- 4) Blight - The City should look like a great place to live and work.

Core Challenge

The challenge for the city is that perception regarding all four of these areas are not where it should be. This is based on previous studies, business interviews conducted as part of the study, and interviews with local residents. While the people who live and work in and for the City of Inglewood are friendly and accommodating as any other City, the process that businesses have to go through is sometimes cumbersome and unfriendly, particularly the certainty in outcome of the development plan review process. When it comes to the perception of crime, Inglewood is a favorite target for the media and pop culture, right or wrong. The availability of an affordable housing stock presents a major challenge for home ownership, which in turn affects local economic vitality and sustainability. And blight along major gateway corridors such as Prairie presents an unwelcome introduction to the City. These are all challenges that can be overcome.

Overall Approach

The overall approach in improving the perception of the City’s attractiveness should not be to immediately launch a marketing and public relations campaign that counters these perceptions. We propose a philosophy of first deploying measures that improve the factors that drive these perceptions. Due to the realities of the region’s economic

dynamics, specifically an increasing demand for and a diminishing supply of development opportunities elsewhere, and emerging opportunities within Inglewood, people and businesses are increasingly coming into contact with Inglewood. These are the people and businesses that must experience first hand improvements in the aforementioned attractiveness factors. This is the City's first line of offense. While the market is "hot", the best approach toward changing perception is to demonstrate success at accommodating those who come knocking. Only when this happens will a marketing and public relations approach be effective. Success breeds success.

I-Fast-Acts

Establish a Stewarded Development Review and Approval Process

From an economic development standpoint, the immediate imperative for the City is a friendly business environment, specifically one that improves certainty in outcome. That is not to say that safety, blight, and housing are not important. Indeed, these issues must also be addressed. However, for the purpose of immediately addressing the core aspects of economic development (expanding the tax base and improving job opportunities) it is vital that the City immediately overall the process it employs for reviewing and approving projects. We recommend an approach that relies on a board to act as the steward of the development review and approval process – Stewarded Development Review (SDR) Process. However, the SDR Process cannot succeed unless the vision and guidelines are set in place – hence the need for the General Plan Update. The following are key aspects of the SDR process.

- 1) SDR Committee – A committee consisting of the heads of each of the key units and departments within the City, including but not limited to, Planning, Building and Safety, Redevelopment, Housing, Economic Development, Parks Recreation and Community Services, Public Works, Police and Finance. The SDR Committee should likely be chaired by the Community Development Director.
- 2) Development Plan Review – The SDR Committee meets regularly to review the status and progress of specific development plans that are under review.
- 3) Official Application Process – Only projects that have been filed, provided required application information, paid application fee, and given a SDR application number, will begin the review process.
- 4) Spirit of Stewardship – Projects under review should be stewarded through the process; efforts should be made to guide the applicants through the correct channels. All "live" projects should be included on the weekly meeting agenda and the status of all should be reviewed. Assignments to relevant departments are made, with specific actions.
- 5) Continuous Coordination with Council – The SDR Committee Chair should regularly update the Council Community Development Committee on the status of project that are under review. The reports to the Council Community Development Committee should provide advance notice of projects that are likely to need future Council review (for example projects that do not meet zoning

- guidelines, or planning guidelines, or the guidelines of the other City departments that are represented by the SDR Committee.
- 6) Council Review - Only projects that have an SDR number, and that have been reviewed by the SDR Committee, can be put in front of Council's Community Development Committee or full Council for review.

The SDR process should be patterned after similar development plan review approaches such as the one for the City of Ontario (see Appendix).

Continue Economic Development Based Crime and Blight Reduction Efforts

The City's Police Department has been effective at working with other City departments at improving public safety in key business and retail areas. Examples of previous successful initiatives include the establishment of business improvement districts to fund an increased police presence, as well as targeted crime reduction efforts deployed in conjunction with redevelopment investments in specific corridors, like at Crenshaw and Century. It is recommended that the City take advantage of the success of coordinated approaches, specifically the latter example, and deploy this strategy in other areas. An immediate area of opportunity is a coordinated effort at reducing criminal activities along the Prairie corridor, specifically near I-105 and along Century Blvd near the I-405, followed by efforts to demolish abandoned and boarded buildings, cleaning up the sites, creating interim "pocket parks" (see description below). These efforts should involve the directors of a variety of City Departments such as Police, Parks and Recreation, Redevelopment, Planning and Public Works. These efforts should directly involve the existing property owners and the City should, where possible, avoid purchasing the subject parcels so as to allocate needed public resources toward other areas. Property owners should be co-opted into appreciating the up-side market impact of improving blighted areas.

Convert Stagnant Development Parcels into Temporary "Pocket Parks"

Several cleared development parcels throughout the City have remained stagnant, for a variety of reasons, particularly corner lots along key corridors. These should be converted into temporary "pocket parks", where applicable from an accessibility and safety standpoint. The City should avoid purchasing the subject parcels by coordinating directly with the existing land owners, and where needed educating the owner on the up-side market potential of improving the "presentation" of the available sites, and where available, provide low cost assistance for improvements such as landscaping (planting grass) and adding art work created by area residents. In addition to improving the marketability of the subject sites, this strategy improves the overall look of the City, and provides badly needed public space. One approach is to enter into no-cost lease agreement with lot owners to utilize the lot as public space while it is on the market. Stress that owner will be relieved of all maintenance headaches for the lot. Usually requires the City to assume liability for lot while it is in public domain. To help costs low for the City, pursue an incremental (one park at a time) strategy.

Improve Housing Opportunities

While increasing affordable housing stock does not directly relate to the core economic development goals, a high incidence of home ownership does provide an environment for long term business and retail sustainability. Therefore, it is recommended that from an economic development standpoint, it is important that the General Plan update outline the necessary mix of residential development. However, it is important to ensure that the guidelines and metrics be applied on a block/neighborhood basis, and not on a parcel specific basis. From an economic development standpoint, parcel level requirements create a restrictive environment for healthy mixed-used development to succeed. Of course, all available funds earmarked to support the development of affordable housing should be applied thereto, including the requisite share of redevelopment funds allotted for affordable housing.

Benchmarks

The following are the benchmarks for determining the City’s success at improving perception:

| Benchmark Indicators | Targets |
|---|---|
| Informal drive-by perception survey – once a year, drive a van of visitors along a specific series of routes that are being improved – and document the responses | Improvement in remarks made by survey respondents from year to year |
| Paper Survey of Investors – Survey form filled out by investors that cover 3-5 key areas affected by perception | Improvement in remarks made by survey respondents from year to year |
| The Number of Blighted Development Sites | Reduction in the number of blighted sites |

DEPLOY SERVICES THAT IMPROVE THE CITY’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Objective

As stated earlier, one of the core ideals of the City of Inglewood’s economic development plan is to increase the level of tax revenue generated by the City’s business tax base, thereby improving the level and quality of services provided by the City. Conversely, many of the actions ascribed to this point in the report rely on services provided by the City. In other words, the level of success of the economic development program can be influenced by the level and quality of services provided by the City. For example, the perception of safety is an important factor influencing the willingness of businesses to locate in the City, which can be improved by investments deployed by the Police Department to improve safety. Adding pocket parks requires the use of resources overseen by the Parks and Recreation Department. Therefore, as a general rule, the level and quality of services provided by the City should be optimized so as to maximize the success of economic development efforts within the City. Building a strong economy is “Everybody’s Business” in Inglewood.

Focus

The following investments and services can have a positive impact on economic vitality when deployed in conjunction with economic development efforts:

- 1) Civic Facilities - Cultural centers; civic centers, museums.
- 2) Training and Education - High school, college, job training.
- 3) Recreation - Parks, recreation and meeting places.
- 4) Police - Safer streets and neighborhoods.
- 5) Public Services - General services (transportation, public works, administration, etc)

Core Challenge

The challenge lies in the reality that the level of services provided within the City are largely a function of available fiscal resources, which in turn is dependent in large part on the City's ability to generate tax revenues. Periods of economic decline result in budget deficits which result in cuts in the level of public services, which in turn can contribute to prolonging the period of economic decline.

Overall Approach

Understanding the linkage between service provision and the economic vitality of the City is critical. This understanding should provide a basis for driving the philosophy for delivering public services, specifically in terms of the quality of the delivery. The better the quality of delivery, especially during a fiscal downturn, is critical toward providing an environment for economic development.

I-Fast-Acts

The previous actions include specific service based I-Fast-Acts.

Benchmarks

No specific benchmarks are applicable hereto, other than the aforementioned.