

Anderson Township Economic Development Committee Summary of Past Initiatives December 2020

The Anderson Township Economic Development Committee was formed in 2008, in large part to stimulate development activity in the Township and serve as an advisory group, like other Township Committees, to the Board of Township Trustees. The initial mission of this group, as developed by members, was as follows:

“The mission of economic development in Anderson Township is to protect the community’s assets by advocating for competitive services; retain existing and foster growth of new businesses; and facilitate quality development / redevelopment, and improve the retail, office, and industrial offerings in the community, which subsequently improve residential property values and stabilize Anderson’s tax base.”

Stemming from this, after several years of assisting staff with various projects and discussing economic development strategies, the Committee chose to develop a series of initiatives/teams to guide various efforts. The subcommittee structure that accompanied this continues to this day, even as initiatives, subcommittees, and members have changed.

Below is a summary of these initiatives and past projects, which hopefully helps provide perspective and insight into the Committee’s past achievements. This also brings to light topics that the Committee may choose to discuss further in the future, to better understand the work that has been undertaken in these areas.

2011

The initial Initiatives, established by the Committee, were as follows:

1. Reevaluate and expand the existing Beechmont Vision Plan and conduct market assessment of this plan for development of two marquis sites (corners of Asbury and Wolfangel roads). In conjunction with this, identify expertise that can lead or facilitate development of key demonstration sites.
2. Encourage improvements to the built environment, such as clustering high-density affordable housing for young professionals, encouraging a walkable community, and facilitating a more accessible (vehicular) community, especially on Beechmont Avenue.
3. Establish an independent economic development “Anderson” Ambassador to conduct outreach to other areas, create marketing / identity initiatives, and identify / bring specific users quality restaurants, retailers, etc. to the community, while also retaining and facilitating the expansion efforts of existing businesses

4. Initiate design / architectural guidelines.
5. Support the completion of the Anderson Comprehensive Plan update, to include recommendations arising from the Economic Development Committee, and develop targeted economic plan for the Township, containing goals, policies, benchmarks, and implementation strategies. In conjunction with this, analyze existing tax and other revenue streams to assess benefits, opportunities and limits to these resources.

2012

The five initiatives from 2011 continued in 2012, and were joined by two additional efforts, resulting in seven initiatives, as Committee members were engaged with Township planning efforts in these two geographic areas:

6. Participate in and support the development of the Anderson Township Riverfront Plan update and facilitate implementation of the Plan's recommendations.
7. Participate in and support the development of the Anderson Township Ancor Area Plan update and facilitate implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

2013

In 2013, the Committee revisited its Mission statement and slightly modified this to read:

"The Mission of Economic Development in Anderson Township is to protect the community's assets resulting in improved property values and a broader tax base, by:

- *Retaining existing businesses*
- *Fostering the growth of new businesses*
- *Facilitating quality development/redevelopment*
- *Enhancing the retail, office, industrial, and residential offerings in the community"*

With this, the Committee elected to focus on the following areas:

1. Continue work on the Beechmont Vision, through facilitating the recommendations set forth in this plan for "Downtown Anderson" on Beechmont between Wolfnagel and Asbury Roads. This work ultimately led to the pattern of development and infrastructure improvements that have resulted in this area and development groups facilitated the redevelopment of the northeast corner at Wolfangel and the southwest corner at Asbury.
2. As Township staff continued to assume duties of a potential "Ambassador" and there was not funding in place for such a position, the Committee sought to

assist Anderson Township with promotion and marketing activities to attract new investment and businesses in the community, while also retaining and facilitating the expansion efforts of existing enterprises.

3. As development guidelines, advanced by the Committee, were adopted by the Township, a focus was to facilitate awareness of these guidelines and the availability of a pre-development meeting. This was a new process in the Planning & Zoning Department intended to bring development interests and nearby residents of a site, together at an early part in the development process.
4. Similarly, as the Riverfront Plan was adopted by the Township, a subcommittee sought to conduct a review of the economic development recommendations arising from this Plan update and facilitate implementation of select strategies.
5. Work continued on the Anderson Township Ancor Area Plan update, and the subcommittee participated in this process with the ultimate intent to facilitate implementation of the Plan's recommendations.
6. A new initiative was developed aimed at completing a housing study/monitoring program to better identify housing needs and opportunities and seek to increase residential property values.

2014 - 2016

2014 brought about a focus of the Committee efforts into four areas, which continued through 2016. Three of these were a continuation of prior work and the fourth was a greatly expanded effort to look at housing opportunities in the community:

1. Anderson Ambassador - Assist Anderson Township with promotion and marketing activities to attract new investment and businesses in the community, while also retaining and facilitating the expansion efforts of existing enterprises. Efforts during this time, which continue today, include outreach and promotional activities, such as presentations to community groups/business districts/real estate offices, tracking of available properties, development newsletters, open houses, planning efforts, neighborhood business district promotion, and facilitated development/redevelopment opportunities.
2. Ohio Riverfront - Conduct review of the economic development recommendations arising from the Anderson Township Riverfront Plan update and facilitate implementation of select strategies. Over the years, efforts in this area included the establishment of a business district along Kellogg, introduced natural gas to missing areas, improved traffic flow relating to events, roadway resurfacing, Township property acquisition/clean up of the former Boatsmith Marine, Ohio River Trail expansion, and subdivision development.
3. Ancor- Participate in and support the development of the Anderson Township Ancor Area Plan update and facilitate implementation of the Plan's recommendations. Discussions included advancing Eastern Corridor projects,

improving the relationship with Newtown, sewer expansion, and a greater opportunity of development potential in the northeast area of the Township.

4. Housing - Complete housing study/monitoring program to better identify housing needs and opportunities, and seek to increase residential property values. Work focused on identifying residential development opportunities, conducting housing surveys on several occasions with real estate professionals, working with new residential subdivision interest, and attempting to advance efforts for additional non-single-family housing opportunities in the Township.

2017

2017 brought about a shift in the Committee's initiatives, and this continued through most of 2018. In some part these evolved from prior work, and were as follows:

1. Zoning - The Committee will review potential projects for their viability that come through zoning. They will essentially become part of the vetting process for new development and provide valuable insight and feedback. This effort is not intended to serve as another formal layer of review, but rather to provide input on proposed projects, rezonings, subdivisions, to name a few as deemed to be warranted or requested by the Township.
2. Key Sites / Project Specific Supply / Demand Analysis - The Committee will identify tracts of undeveloped or underdeveloped land that have the potential to be developed or redeveloped into assets that improve the economic sustainability of the Township through real estate taxes, or which provide facilities or services that do not currently exist or are underserved. This effort will also evaluate the potential for development of a hotel, multi-family residential or senior living project in the Township either on a key site or another location. This initiative will involve gathering demographic information, field work and mapping to determine market demand, identification of potential sites and communicating with potential developers that specialize in these product types.
3. Workforce Development – The Committee will create programs to enhance the local workforce through interaction with key employers in and around Anderson Township, and sources of people (high schools, technical schools and colleges) that fit employer needs. Several initial tasks were suggested to include:
 - Meet with Jobs Ohio to understand what their programs are and discuss how our sub-committee can interact with that group to further our goals
 - Identify and contact major employers in and around Anderson Township.
 - Meet with and ask for the type of positions they have needs to fill and what challenges they have experienced in finding the right people.
 - Define roles and responsibilities of positions employers are looking to fill and determine the competency and skill sets required.
 - Determine what current relationships exist with any of the schools in the area to build these relationships.

4. City v. Township – The Committee began discussions related to overall governance. This was intended to be a first step to analyze the pros and cons of different forms of governance and utilize previous work completed by the Township on this subject. Some issues that would be researched and debated might include highway ownership, boundary control, autonomous zoning, revenue sources, and payroll taxes.

2018 - 2019

In mid 2018, the work in the City v. Township area wrapped up. The subcommittee developed a robust report that looked into this topic and set forth questions for Township leadership to consider, should they wish to look into this further. Ultimately, the decision was made to table the conversation as other legislative actions were advanced to assist the Township's fiscal health. This report was by far the most detailed prepared in this area and can be advanced if/when necessary.

Also, in 2018, the zoning group, which established a procedure by which they would “plug into” development requests during zoning changes where they would provide comment prior to the Township Zoning Commission's review of an application. Thus, the efforts in this area were merged into Key Sites/ Project Specific Supply / Demand Analysis, and this initiative was identified as Key Sites / Zoning.

The fourth initiative, targeted at workforce development, continued, yet this was suspended during the spring of 2018 to provide assistance and monitor the work that was being done in this area by the Forest Hills School District and Forest Hills Foundation for Education. This effort resumed in early 2019, as well as the Committee's continued work to identify/advance/comment upon Key Site and Zoning applications.

Both of those efforts were at the forefront of the Committee's activities throughout 2019. The Workforce Development tasks paralleled the School District's outreach with their “Experienceship” program. Working in conjunction with the District and Foundation, the Township and Committee coordinated an updated to the Business Survey, in which 100 businesses participated. This feedback helped not only on the workforce front, but also outreach to assist these businesses on a case-by case basis. It also afforded some helpful analysis and comparisons with prior surveys.

The second effort of 2019 entailed Key Sites/Zoning, or the review of proposed development projects, an effort that carried through the pandemic in 2020 and will continue in 2021.

2020

At the onset of 2020, the Committee had plans to continue and expand efforts related to Workforce Development and Key Sites. There was considerable discussion in late 2019 and early 2020 about new areas of focus.

In response to this, and in conjunction with planned Township studies, the group's focus then expanded into four new areas, namely the Clough Pike Traffic Study, Kellogg Gateway Study: Hospitality, and Aquatic Center and Indoor Recreation. The impact of the COVID pandemic soon derailed two of these, related to Workforce Development and Hospitality (though the Township did commission and complete an updated to its 2017 Hotel Study in late 2019).

Efforts then focused on assisting staff with studies on Clough Pike and the Kellogg Gateway Area, which substantially wrapped up by the end of 2020. In addition, Key Sites continued to be a focal point with development interest in several previously identified key properties, on which the Committee provided input.

Perhaps the highlight of the Committee's efforts in 2020 rested with its efforts from March through August to study a potential Aquatics and Indoor Recreation Center in Anderson Township. Working in conjunction with Township staff, the Forest Hills School District and Anderson Park District, the group met five times virtually and ultimately developed a summary report on options and opportunities across the Township. This also entailed input from key community partners such as the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati and Mercy HealthPlex, and provides a starting point when the timing is right for such discussions to continue.

In the summer of 2020 the Home Builders of Greater Cincinnati announced that Homearama 2021 would return to Anderson Township for the first time in over 30 years. This represented an investment in Anderson Township, but more importantly, an opportunity for the Township to market and promote itself to the entire region. Thus, it became a focal point of the Committee's efforts in late 2020 and will be the primary initiative for the group for at least the first half of 2021.

Finally, 2021 will see a continuation of the Key Sites effort, assistance with the Township's Comprehensive Plan, and possible opportunity to restart its Workforce Development efforts.