

Ten Simple Steps for Small Community Economic Development

Della G. Rucker, AICP
Jacobs Edwards and Kelcey

Linda Fitzgerald
LSR Consultants

David J. Allor Planning and
Zoning Workshop

Ohio Planning Conference,
Cincinnati Chapter

October 18, 2007

What are the Goals of Economic Development?

- **Create Jobs**
- **Build Tax Base**
- **Reduce reliance on one industry or business**
- **Get ahead of changes in regional/international economy**
- **Develop businesses with higher pay / better benefits than currently available**
- **Others?**



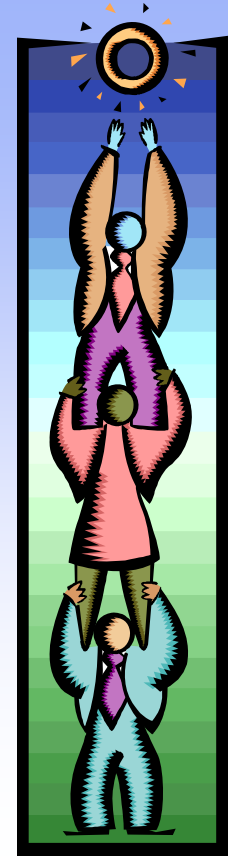
What are the barriers to effective economic development?

- Hanging on to hope for obsolete industries
- Unwillingness to make investments/take risks
- Looking for one-shot solutions
- There's no obvious solution → paralysis.
- Chasing after anything that comes along, whether it fits or not
- Who's gonna do it?



Ten Simple Steps:

1. Define *your* goals.
2. Find *your* strategic advantages.
3. Make a plan to get what you want.
4. Retain your healthy businesses, especially small ones
5. Recruit and grow small businesses in healthy segments.



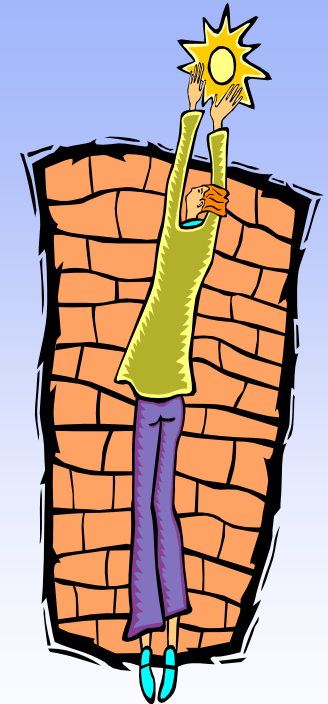
Ten Simple Steps:

- 6.** Figure out what you want the world to know about you.
- 7.** Tell them!
- 8.** Use your hidden resources.
- 9.** Use the help available to you.
- 10.** Be in it for the long haul.



1. Define Your Goals

- **What does your community need?**
 - Jobs for residents?
 - Income/earnings taxes?
 - Property taxes?
 - Improved reputation/appearance?
- **What parts of town have particular needs or challenges?**
 - Downtowns
 - Suburban commercial strips
 - Neighborhood centers
- **What specifically needs to happen?**
 - Growth
 - Change in quality
 - Improved appearance
 - New jobs



2. Find your strategic advantages

- **What are these?**

- ▶ Things your community can provide/do/support better than others
- ▶ Things that are unique to your community – make you stand out from the crowd.

- **How do you find them?**

- ▶ Analyze local economic data – look for high growth/high share sectors
- ▶ Examine similar communities that are successful
- ▶ Ask your business owners, leaders, residents.



3. Make a Plan to Get What You Want

- **Balance between ambitious and visionary... and impossible.**
- **Spell out your goals in writing.**
- **Use the analysis to identify the economic activity you want**
 - *Not all economic development is good economic development.*
 - *Not all short-term gains are worth the long-term costs.*
- **Use the characteristics to identify a small number of target sectors (and the sectors that support them).**
- **Get buy-in from the community during the process.**



4. Retain your healthy businesses (especially the smaller ones)

- **Who is healthy?**
 - Growing sales, employment, site
 - Fits desirable characteristics
 - Fits target sectors (or has synergy with them)
 - Benefits the community
- **What's so great about small businesses?**
 - Biggest source of job growth in the nation
 - More likely to be locally owned (and more likely to stay when they get bigger)
 - Often better able to adapt to economic changes
 - Your target industry sectors may be dominated by small businesses.



4. Retain your healthy businesses, Part 2

- **How do you retain them?**
 - Talk frequently and honestly
 - Take their concerns seriously
 - Fix them if you can
 - Help them find other things they need (e.g, state loans)
 - Make sure they know that you value them
 - Encourage them to participate in the community
 - Thank them



5. Recruit and Grow Small Businesses

- **How do we find them?**
 - Word of mouth
 - Success stories next door
 - Potential entrepreneurs
 - Business incubator occupants
- **How do we help them grow?**
 - Talk to them
 - Listen to them
 - Know where to find help
 - Help them talk to each other



6. Figure out what you want to tell the world

- **Why?**

- Put the word out to potential businesses, residents, shoppers
- Change your reputation
- Create interest
- Build community pride



7. Tell them!

- **But won't that cost a ton? *Some low cost alternatives....***
 - Familiarization tours
 - Public relations
 - Posters, flyers, bumper stickers
 - Special events
 - Our friend the internet
 - Targeted marketing



8. Use your hidden resources

- **Non profit organizations**
- **Charities and Foundations**
- **Service Groups**
- **Schools**
- **What can they do?**
 - Participate in planning
 - Community Improvements
 - Technical Support
 - Ambassadors



9. Use the help available to you

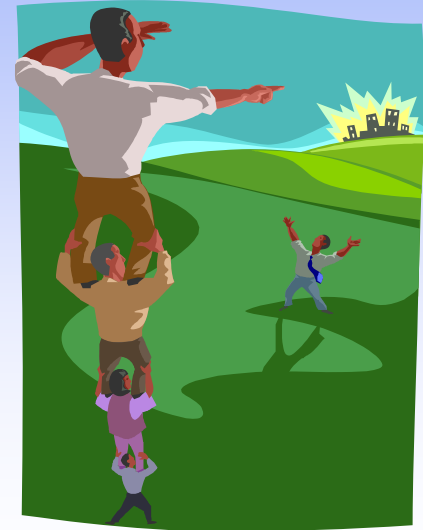
- The County
- The State
- The Feds
- Regional sources

- How?
 - Learn what's out there
 - Keep track of what's out there
 - Have the materials to help your businesses use it

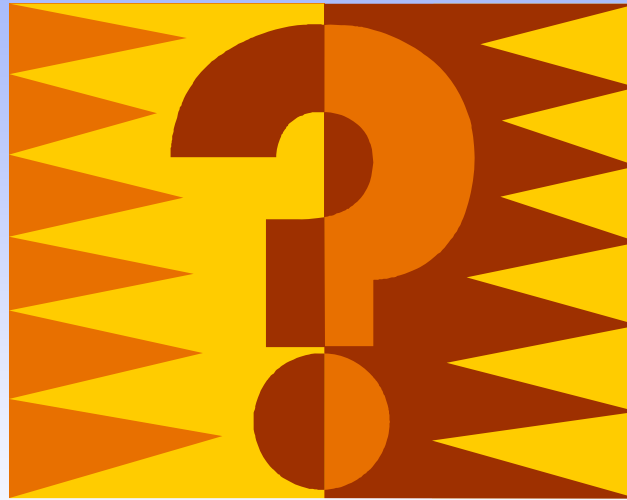


10. Be in it for the long haul

- Quick solutions usually don't work, or not for long
- Understand the realities of political support
- Celebrate every small success
- Communicate the Vision
- Stay on message



Questions? Insights? Good ideas?

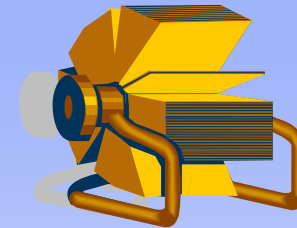


Ten Simple Steps for Small Community Economic Development
David J. Allor Planning and Zoning Workshop
October 19, 2007

JACOBS

Thank you!

For more information:



**Della G. Rucker, AICP
Jacobs Edwards and Kelcey**

**895 Central Ave. Suite 800
Cincinnati, OH 45202**

**Phone: 513-272-5531
Fax: 513-272-5522**

Della.Rucker@Jacobs.com

**Linda Fitzgerald
LSR Consultants**

**P.O. Box 966
Loveland, OH 45140**

Phone: 513- 677-9766

LSRconsult@fuse.net