

2009 County Economic Recovery Strategy

In the coming two years, nothing is more important than leading a local and regional economic recovery. Not only will this address the top concern of citizens and families in our community—so many of whom are caught up in the economic crisis. But only such a recovery will allow us to **generate the revenues** to fund the **public safety** and other priority services that citizens expect and demand.

While we can't control everything from a local level, there's much we can do to spark immediate relief and recovery, and to assure that we are as competitive as possible when the national economy begins to turn around. So our priority will be to push in every responsible way to help **spur that recovery locally**.

The strategy has three straightforward goals.

First, we must provide **immediate relief to working, middle class families** caught up in the economic crisis. The true engine of any economic turnaround will be renewed financial stability and confidence among the working, middle class families of this community. If they are employed, securely in their home, making ends meet, spending as they did prior to last fall, and confident, we will ultimately recover. If they are not, the economy will struggle. Doing everything we can to renew financial stability is critical.

Second, we must implement a **job attraction and retention strategy**, building on the strengths we already have, tapping into the opportunities of the future, and tying our residents and small businesses into every opportunity that comes our way through job training and effective workforce development.

Third, we must take advantage of the numerous opportunities and resources that will be coming our way to **invest in infrastructure and economic growth**. And we must invest these dollars strategically, supporting those projects and investments that will create long-term economic growth and competitiveness.

As a County, to do all this well, we must **coordinate** our numerous community and private efforts so we are all rowing in the same direction. And we must measure our work rigorously so we know where we are going, what is working, and what is not.

There's much to do in the next few years. It will all take hard work. But we're well positioned as a community because we start off with so many strengths. With all hands on deck, and everyone rowing in the same direction, we will get the job done.

The details of each of the three strategies are below:

1. IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY

OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working families are struggling in this economy—working harder, yet still falling behind• One in four working families are now low income, and many are seeing reduced benefits and higher costs• County and community partners can provide immediate relief for struggling working families• County efforts can also spark the local economy by putting millions of dollars back into the economy
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- 1. FORECLOSURE PREVENTION AND REINVESTMENT:** *Preventing foreclosures is the best way to anchor family and community stability, and keep property values from declining further*
 - a. The County/City will expand the Homeowner Preservation work, which has already saved 800 homes since 2007.
 - b. The County will invest millions to clean up blight left by foreclosures, preserving property values of the entire community
- 2. IMMEDIATE RELIEF FOR WORKING FAMILIES/LOWERING COSTS:** *As wages stagnate, and some residents lose their jobs, the cost of living keeps rising. The County will work to help families save dollars in every way possible.*
 - a. **Reducing Medical costs:** the County will expand efforts to help working families and seniors cope with the costs of medicine—including lowering the price of prescription drugs, and increasing access to Medicaid for children
 - b. **Reducing Energy costs:** the County will improve efforts to help citizens reduce the high costs of energy, including access to programs that reduce home energy costs, incentives to make a family home more energy efficient, and partnering with Duke Energy to allow each consumer to reduce their local energy bill
 - c. **Family costs:** the County will work with community partners to expand access for working families to reduce the costs they pay for critical needs such as child care, food and housing improvement costs
- 3. EMPOWERING WORKING FAMILIES:** *Empowering working families through programs such as “Make Work Pay”—bringing millions into our local economy*
 - a. **Jobs, Jobs, Jobs:** we will connect residents to job training and jobs through programs described below

- b. The County will continue to be a lead partner in the “**Make Work Pay**” Initiative, expanding access to the Earned Income Tax Credit to eligible working families—and bringing millions into the local economy
- c. The County will roll out a **banking initiative** for working families and previously “unbanked” citizens, allowing them to make the most of their hard-earned dollars
- d. The County will play a proactive role in having this community take full advantage of the “Benefit Bank” opportunity being spearheaded by the state

4. SENIORS AND VETERANS: *The County will continue its outreach to veterans and seniors to ensure they get the relief they need at this difficult economic time.*

2. JOB CREATION AND RETENTION STRATEGY

OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create good jobs and drive short- and long-term economic growth through proactive business attraction, retention and expansion • Connect and train citizens for new jobs created, stabilizing working families and ensuring that businesses have a skilled workforce when they seek to locate and grow here • Identify job/business opportunities that take advantage of Hamilton County’s unique strengths and assets, as well as new opportunities such as biotech, health care and green/clean energy jobs
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1. **BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION AND ATTRACTION:** *At the core of creating a healthy economy is attracting good jobs and new businesses to the area, and retaining and expanding the ones already here*
 - a. **HCDC Attraction/Expansion Work:** we will continue to support and monitor the work of HCDC, in conjunction with the Greater Cincinnati Partnership and our local and state government partners, in retaining, expanding, and attracting companies to Hamilton County
 - b. **Initiate a proactive Homebase Strategy:** we will work with and leverage our strong business and headquarter community so that they and we together attract their suppliers, vendors and other businesses to locate in Hamilton County
 - c. **“Team 250 strategy”:** we will identify our 250 largest, fastest growing and/or most strategic companies, and ensure we are reaching out to them to do all we can to keep them here as they grow

2. **CAPITALIZE ON HAMILTON COUNTY’S UNIQUE STRATEGIC GROWTH/INNOVATION AREAS:** *Focus on those areas that show unique promise and growth opportunity for our region, leading to business opportunities and new, good jobs*
 - a. **Green/Clean Energy:** particularly in the Midwest, demand will be high in the coming years for both “green” jobs, and clean/alternative energy technologies (to keep up with increased mandates for alternative/sustainable energy)
 - b. **Biotech:** Children’s Hospital and U.C. anchor a growing regional opportunity for biotech spinoffs and growth
 - c. **Health care:** health care continues to be one of the fastest growing job sectors, and has proved a very promising area for entry level jobs leading to good careers
 - d. **Tourism/conventions:** with sharp growth in 2008, this sector continues to thrive despite other economic challenges, bringing money in from outside our community

- e. **Creative/consumer:** the presence of major advertisers and marketing firms such as Procter & Gamble and Kroger has created a cluster of creative/advertising/packaging firms
 - f. **Trade:** the County has a stronger foothold in the international economy than most peer communities in Ohio and the Midwest, which can anchor economic growth even at a tough time
 - g. **Hometown strategy:** (see above)
 - h. **Other:** the Chamber has identified other growth opportunities through its cluster analysis
3. **SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH:** *Small businesses are the backbone of communities and small business growth is the bedrock of the county's economic growth and job creation*
- a. The County will work with the State Treasurer to increase County involvement in Ohio's **GrowNow Link Deposit** program, which [helps businesses finance growth, expansion and needed capital investments](#) (Hamilton County ranks 17th in the State in using the program, seeing only 20% of the investments made in Cuyahoga and Franklin counties, and on par with far smaller, rural counties)
 - b. HCDC will spearhead the growth of the **Small Business Development Center**, which will nurture County small businesses to grow
 - c. HCDC will continue to lead the **County's Business Incubator**, and utilize it particularly for strategic opportunities
 - d. HCDC will continue to lead its very active **SBA loan program**, but we must more proactively market this opportunity
 - e. When it invests public dollars, the **County** will implement policies that encourage more small business growth/capacity
4. **BUSINESS FRIENDLY/BUSINESS READY:** *Make it as easy as possible to start and grow businesses here—meaning keeping costs, delays and uncertainty down*
- a. The County is overhauling and streamlining its **development process** to be more user-friendly; we will roll out this new process in the first quarter
 - b. The County is looking to **regionalize certain functions** (tax collection, code enforcement, economic development, etc.), easing the process of doing business across the County
 - c. The Court of Common Pleas will operate a **Commercial Docket**, unique in the state, to help resolve business disputes in a timely, consistent manner
 - d. The County will work to **keep the cost of government down**, reducing waste and inefficiency, to include reducing property tax levy amounts
5. **EXPAND AND INVEST IN JOB TRAINING AND PLACEMENT:** *The new jobs of the 21st century require skilled workers. Through the Workforce Investment Board, County government can play a leading role in training and placing workers.*
- a. We will continue to build on the record-setting success of the **Super Jobs Center** by connecting citizens to new jobs, including in priority areas such as health care, construction and redevelopment, green-collar/clean energy jobs

- b. The County will require that those who receive County funding, or support from public agencies such as the Port Authority, partner with the **Super Jobs Center** in identifying workers and listing jobs
- c. The County will continue to support efforts to build **tomorrow's workforce**, including providing teen jobs and skills training, drop-out recovery efforts, second-chance efforts, and after school
- d. The County will work with the Chamber of Commerce and others to lead a strategic effort to keep the County's **talented young people** here in the County

3. INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

<p>OVERVIEW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The history of our country’s economy, or any region’s economy, directly reflects the history of investment in infrastructure—investment in river, rail, road, water, and sewer infrastructure leads to new business development and jobs • There are numerous infrastructure investment needs in this County, but there also will be numerous investment opportunities on the near horizon • If made strategically, these investments will lead to both short- and long-term job development and economic growth • This is not only an economic issue, but a serious public safety issue and a quality of life issue
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1. OVERALL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT/OPPORTUNITY AND INVESTMENT: *The upcoming stimulus bill from Washington will provide a substantial opportunity to upgrade local infrastructure in a number of areas, meaning jobs and economic development for the county.*

2. NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION: *We must invest to revitalize our communities, particularly those that have borne the brunt of the recent housing/foreclosure crisis*

- a. Implement the **\$8M Neighborhood Stabilization Plan** in 15 targeted communities.
- b. Expand the **MSD 514 Program** through public-private partnership, accelerating development and redevelopment opportunities (both commercial and residential)
- c. Tap into dollars available by the **Cincinnati Development Fund grants and revolving loan funds** for site acquisition and preparation
- d. **HCDC** and the **County Engineer** will continue to work to improve commercial and business districts in our various communities

3. GREEN AND NEW ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE: *There will be an enormous opportunity to invest in green infrastructure in the coming years, due to regulations, laws, cost-cutting technologies, and growing demand from citizens. These investments will lead to the green-collar jobs of the future.*

- a. **MSD Consent decree:** to comply with the federal Consent Decree, there will be billions invested to clean up and upgrade our sewer system, including much opportunity to incorporate new green technologies—both lowering cost, and improving the environment

- b. **Stormwater:** in conjunction with the MSD, the Stormwater District will have opportunities to invest in Green Infrastructure, and encourage others to do the same
 - c. **HIP:** The Home Improvement Program provides an opportunity for thousands of dollars to be invested in “greening” and making more energy efficient homes and businesses
 - d. **Climate Community Effort:** the County’s Climate Community effort will lead to “green” improvements being made in communities across the County
- 4. TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE:** *Transportation projects both large and small can create thousands of jobs, and also open up numerous economic development opportunities. Numerous projects are on the horizon:*
- a. **Roads, streets, bridge and highway** upgrades
 - b. **Regional transportation** opportunities
 - c. **Freight opportunity:** a modern, intermodal freight infrastructure is critical to being connected to the global economy, and millions need to be invested to put Hamilton County where it needs to be
 - d. **Bike trail development to downtown**
- * Federal (including CDBG), state and local sources of funds are all available to support transportation infrastructure
- 5. BUSINESS SITE DEVELOPMENT/BROWNFIELDS:** *To be competitive, Hamilton County must be able to offer more attractive sites for businesses to locate.*
- a. **Brownfield redevelopment: The Port Authority and HCDC** must work together to proactively create an inventory of attractive sites for business development
 - b. The County must assess County-owned property—namely, the County **Fairgrounds**, and the **Sarah Lee** site—as potential sites for neighborhood-friendly development
 - c. The County must make the needed infrastructure investments to make business sites **accessible**, such as completing the **Anchor Connector** and other priority transportation projects
 - d. The County must tap into as many resources as possible, such as the State’s ULAP Program, or the Treasurer’s GrowNow fund, to maximize these investments
- 6. STRATEGIC LOCATIONS:** *The County must keep a special focus on its most strategic economic development and infrastructure locations, which will generate economic growth, grow tourism, and expand our tax base:*
- a. **Riverfront/The Banks**
 - b. **Eastern Corridor (including Anchor Connector)**
 - c. **County-owned properties**
 - d. **Retail development (Kenwood Towne Center)**