

Brown County Redevelopment Commission (RDC)

Mid-Year Report - June 2017

Community Vitality Indicators (CVIs).

We continue to reinforce and raise awareness on the value of the CVIs in assessing the feasibility of new and proposed projects. In addition to referencing the CVIs on the about-us page on the RDC Choose Brown County Website, the 2016 assessment of Brown County's CVIs are available on the RDC's Document Resources page.

Helmsburg Economic Development Area (EDA); Helmsburg Leadership Team (HLT).

Community leaders in Helmsburg requested assistance from the RDC to help address distressed properties and support economic development through housing and commercial development related opportunities.

The RDC in partnership with the Helmsburg Leadership Team (HLT) and with the support of the County Commissioners, County Council, Area Plan Commission and our county attorneys – Barnes and Thornburg LLC, established an Economic Development Area (EDA) that was finalized on June 22, 2017. An EDA authorizes the RDC to acquire and dispose of properties.

Once the EDA was established, execution began on the action plan to prioritize property acquisitions (two specific properties) and to develop a vision to guide marketing and master planning.

The Brown County Democrat published a series of articles on actions to revitalize the Helmsburg Community:

- May 31, 2017. *Commissioners OK Helmsburg economic development area*
- April 25, 2017. *Helmsburg properties bulldozed; local team charts future*
- March 15, 2017, *Community leadership team taking hold of Helmsburg's future*
- Jan 5, 2017, *Helmsburg development: What is area's next chapter?*
- Nov 23, 2016, *Residents of Helmsburg settled and stayed for various reasons; meetings ongoing to discuss village's future.*

Talent Management and Pipeline – Supporting Leadership Development in Brown County

- *Eleven Fifty Academy.* The CVIs include two education related indicators – School Enrollment and Educational Attainment. In support of the Brown County Schools, the RDC in partnership with the School Superintendent, County Council and Commissioners, provided funding for a week-long education and training event that is tentatively scheduled for September 2017.

- [Hometown Collaborative Initiative \(HCI\)](#). At the request of the County Commissioners in March 2017, the RDC applied to participate in the HCI ([HCI Application](#)). Brown County was selected as a finalist that included a site visit and [presentation](#).
 - Community Vitality Indicators (CVIs). The fact that we have a current assessment and integrate the CVIs as an integral part of our community and economic development strategies was a key consideration of the county's HCI selection. The support and participation in the Community Readiness Assessment(CRI) SURVEY facilitated by Ball State University was an additional factor in our selection.
- Articles in the Brown County Democrat:
 - [Brown County chosen for Hometown Collaboration Initiative](#)
The HCI program is delivered by OCRA in a partnership with Ball State University's Indiana Communities Institute and Purdue University's ...
 - [Hometown Collaboration Initiative pitch made to state - Brown County ...](#)
are just some of the reasons why a group of county residents said they are trying for the Hometown Collaboration Initiative. It's a state ...
 - [Leaders wanted for project to boost collaboration - Brown County ...](#)
HCI. Wanted: Volunteers to brainstorm, gather data and guide priorities for Brown County, collaborate on projects and learn how to become the ...
- **Community Readiness Initiative (CRI) – Bedroom Community.** To help assess the readiness of the community in supporting community and economic development related initiatives, RDC members participated in the Community Readiness Initiative survey sponsored by Ball State University. A copy of the presentation including results from the survey is available at: RDC Document Resources - [2016 Community Readiness Initiative \(CRI\)](#). A follow-on article published in the Brown County Democrat provided below:
 - [What are best bets for future of local economy? - Brown County ...](#) – May 4, 2017
communities rely more and more on income taxes to fund ... The survey and analysis were offered for free to Nashville and Brown County ...
- **RDC Membership** - The RDC has consistently met with individuals who have expressed an interest to be involved with the commission or its work. The group has quickly embraced the support and worked to find opportunities for involvement. This approach has led to additional member and additional capacity to manage work.

State and Federal Economic Grants

- To take advantage of any available state and federal economic development related grants, the RDC contracted with a Grant Administrator to conduct the first-ever county wide income survey. If Brown county qualified for funding, the RDC will apply for two major grants in 2017 that include:
 - Strategic Economic Development Plan – \$40,000 grant.
 - Updates to the County Comprehensive Plan - \$50,000 grant.
- [*Income surveys needed for economic development grant.*](#) Jun 6, 2017 - Within the next week or so, about 3,000 randomly chosen Brown County residents will receive a survey in the mail asking about their income

Teamwork and Communication

- RDC members are making a conscious effort to attend other county and township board meetings and forums to improve collaboration, align planning and build partnerships that effectively support our community. Communication strategies and messages have been developed collaboratively with local journalist to ensure information being shared is clear and consistent.
- The [*RDC Website*](#) has been consistently updated with the latest information to ensure the public is informed on a timely and basis. (Leveraging social media is a goal.)
- As the year progressed and the number of RDC responsibilities increased, it became clear that monthly meetings were insufficient for tackling the work ahead. A decision was made in March to begin all day quarterly working sessions. Sessions were held on March 11th and May 20th. Other boards, government officials and citizen groups were invited to attend to align strategies and engage in the thought process. The key elements of a Master Plan were defined and a review of initiatives against the plan was assessed. Priorities were determined for 2017 which included the Helmsburg Project, RDC team development, messaging, communication, and collaboration strategies. Non-RDC members provided input into the planning process and discussed their initiatives to gain alignment.

Community Collaboration

- **RDC Support for Development of the Brown County Schools Strategic Plan.** In the 2016/2017 school year, the team developed their vision, mission, core values, goal categories, and objectives. The team was involved in applying for two major grants. These included the Comprehensive Counseling Initiative for Indiana K-12 Students and the Regional Opportunity Initiative (ROI) Ready Schools Grant. In the 2017/2018 school year, follow-on actions will include establishing teams for each of the goal categories and refining feedback measures to help assess when change results in improvement.
- **Sewer Project Support.** The RDC was asked to help support the Bean Blossom, Woodland Lake, and Little Fox Lake Sewer Project. Dave Redding developed a presentation that illustrated the project in the context of a county-wide strategy. The presentation included facts, assumptions, options, risks, resources, constraints, and

barriers.

- In addition, key stakeholders were identified with initial work started on roles, responsibilities, and tasks. As a result of this support, the need for a project checklist emerged and continues to be refined. In addition, the outline for a decision-making framework was also created and continues to be refined. This checklist along with the framework will be useful for assessing and managing projects that have county-wide impacts. Even though RDC involvement was overcome by events, once the current vacancies on the RSB have been filled, the new RSB may find this information useful.
- **Maple Leaf Performing Arts Center.** On April 9, 2017, RDC members (Dave Redding, Keith Baker, Tim Clark, Jim Schultz) attended a presentation that outlined the “concept” for the Maple Leaf Performing Arts Center (MLPAC). In a follow-up contact following the presentation, the RDC reinforced their support for the concept and the importance of aligning the project in context of a county master plan and strategy. The RDC had no further involvement in the project. Jim Schultz continued to attend project meetings as an interested individual and not as an RDC representative.

Economic Analysis

The RDC sponsored a project for an IU SPEA Graduate Class to provide an economic assessment for Brown County. The students (Liza Bartlett, Daniel Lopez, Drew Sherman) developed an inventory of available economic data and provided an assessment that identified opportunities and challenges. They also provided a presentation on their results to government leaders and also developed a research paper that is posted on the RDC website. Their report: [*“Brown County Redevelopment Analysis”*](#) Liza Bartlett, Daniel Lopez, Drew Sherman”

Brown County Democrat Article: [*“Local taxes, job options need further scrutiny”*](#)

Economic Development - Customer Care

RDC members are legally contacted to talk with existing residents and/or prospective businesses owners interested in expanding a business and/or starting or relocating a business to Brown County. These inquiries are treated confidentially. Examples included:

- Confidential Individuals Requesting Support of Their Business Concept
 - (2) Individual Inquiries, (1) That is on hold
 - Little Nashville Opry (Council granted tax abatement and coordination with RDC)

To help assess the viability of an economic development opportunity or project, the RDC has developed a checklist (appendix A). This checklist includes the CVIs as well as other criteria that is valued by the community and RDC.

As a project transitions from a concept to a project that will require community support, the RDC conducts additional analysis to help identify all the aspects of the project that will need to be

considered in order to complete the checklist. Documentation of the review and assessment are made as part of the assessment process. .

Although a work in progress, the RDC considers the Helmsburg Revitalization Project, as a successful economic development model that includes the following critical attributes:

- **Transparency.** Discussion on the needs and scope of the project have been discussed in public meetings and follow-on articles provided by the local paper.
- **Community Involvement.** The Helmsburg Leadership Team (HLT) has involved their community in identifying challenges and developing a plan of action. The HLT developed their economic plan in support of the Economic Development Area (EDA).
- **Collaboration.** Quarterly RDC Working Sessions
- **Data Based.** The CVIs provide a baseline for assessing the results of economic development.
- **Status Update:** Dave Redding provided an update to the county council that identified the status on 2017 goals and objectives that could be accomplished with available resources.
- **Additional goals/projects to pursue in late 2017/2018:**
 - Priorities for 2018 could include:
 - Gnaw Bone Redevelopment through an expansion/extension or Flex of Critical Infrastructure, EDA/TIF.
 - Develop a concept and master project plan for a Technical Park
 - Develop a Branding & Communications Message To Engage External Capital Sources
 - BroadBand Ready, Accelerate Attracting Service Providers to Connect BC

Appendix A – Project Checklist

Categories	Project Name ✓	Remarks
Do No Harm		
1. Public Safety & Traffic		
2. Financial Risk to Taxpayer		
3. Unintended Consequences		
Brown County Values		
1. Increases Economic Activity		
2. Incremental Job Growth		
3. Sustainable Growth Contribution		
4. Advancement of BC Branding		
5. Best Use of Land/Resources		
6. CVI - Assessed Value		
7. CVI -Per Capita Income		
8. CVI - School Enrollment		
9. CVI - Population Growth		
10. CVI - Educational Attainment		
Brown County RDC Values		
1. Best Use of Land/Resources		
2. Reduces TaxPayer/Citizen Risk		
3. Maximizes Return Taxpayer Assets		
4. Synergy - Enables New, Incremental Investment		
5. Integrity & Transparency Process & Priority		
6. High Integration of Citizens and Area Leaders		
7. Execution Risk - Are We Capable? Capacity?		

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