



3

Grow Our Economy



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Photo credit: Western Star

Overview

Economic development is the focus of this issues-based chapter. The need for increased economic development activity was raised at every planning meeting and emerged as a top 5 community issue.

City officials and residents alike keenly equate economic development with increased City revenues. Additional dollars born by economic development are needed to pay for essential services and quality of life enhancements.

Residents also understand community appeal – being a community of choice – improves Xenia’s economic development potential. Xenia must improve its downtown and neighborhoods and other top community planning issues to be able to attract new business and “Grow Our Economy.”

Xenians want more jobs and more industry to create a sustainable community. The City has the ingredients needed to “grow our economy” including a great location, ample available land, abundant utilities and highway accessibility.

X-Plan calls for a sustainable amount of land area planned for Business Park development to meet Xenia’s long-term economic development needs. Existing industrial zones are shown on Map 2.1, while proposed Business Park areas are shown on Map 6.2 in Chapter 6.

Strengths

Xenia’s strategic location provides excellent access to US 35, I-675, I-70 and I-71 and to Dayton, Cincinnati and Columbus metropolitan markets. Xenia is also close to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base – the largest sole-source employer in Ohio.

Xenia has **abundant, affordable vacant land** suitable for office and industrial development with easy access from US 35 at Lower Bellbrook Road, US 42 and US 68.

Xenia has **ample, affordable water and wastewater utilities** to accommodate business growth well into the future.

Area employers give Xenia’s workforce high marks for a **strong work ethic**.

Greene Memorial Hospital is a full service medical provider offering a variety community health and wellness benefits.

Xenia is in the center of an extensive **higher education cluster** with thousands of college students attending public and private colleges and universities within a 15-minute drive of Xenia.

Weaknesses

Housing for company executives is generally not available in Xenia.

Lagging but improving educational attainment levels may make Xenia less attractive to high-tech companies.

There are **few modern industrial buildings** in Xenia’s inventory and office buildings are nearly non-existent. High-tech users desire modern buildings with flexible floor plans.

A significant percentage of Xenia’s industrial base is **land locked** suggesting that relocations, potentially out of Xenia, may be necessary to accommodate expansion plans.

Regional competition is fierce. Xenia may lack the fiscal resources needed to consistently match aggressive incentive packages or overcome potential infrastructure gaps.



Objectives and Strategies

GE1 Market Xenia to Attract Jobs and Industry

The industrial market has changed significantly over the past few decades. The average industrial business sits on five acres or less, uses technology instead of massive manpower, and has little impact on the environment in terms of smoke, noise, odor or vibration.

The industrial site selection process has also changed. Decisions are often made using available on-line resources. Communities can be considered as a location for a new facility without knowing it.

The City must make its strategic advantages known to site selectors and prospective businesses. For example, one of Xenia's best advantages is value: relatively low land costs, utility rates and property taxes.

GE1.1 Create a content-rich economic development webpage. Update the City's economic development webpage to create a 24-hour marketing portal.

The nature of the site selection process requires a robust economic development web presence. Local government webpages must offer rich and up-to-date content including information on taxes, utility rates, location, available land and building space data, workforce demographics, etc. The website should include an emphasis on Xenia's low cost of business and value provided for that cost.

GE1.2 Create and maintain a site selection inventory database. A site selection Request for Proposals (RFP) requires significant data collection and time to complete. Submitting incomplete responses, even one missing item, can result in an automatic rejection. Place comprehensive data inventories on all business park locations in a database to enable faster and more customizable responses.

GE1.3 Adopt business park design standards.

Xenia has several exciting possibilities regarding the future of its business parks. As part of a broader Zoning Code update recommended in Strategy GE6.1, create design standards that reflect the values of the type of companies that the City wants to attract.

Image conscious corporations care about their surroundings and how they are perceived. Avoid use of incentives unless companies can meet minimum performance and design guidelines.

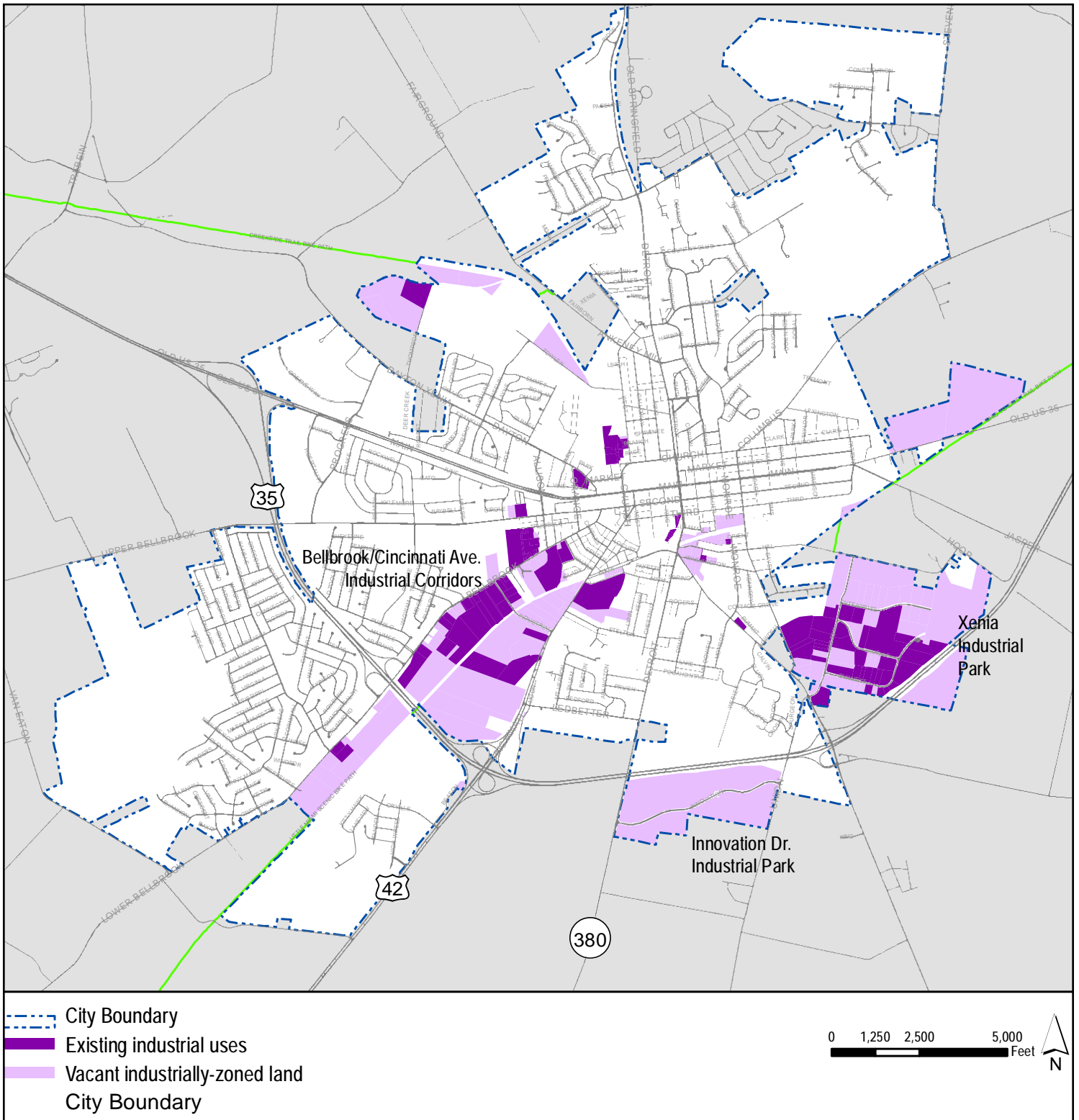
GE2 Implement a Focused Recruitment Effort

Xenia needs to attract additional companies to improve City tax revenues. In this sense, no business with good financials should be turned away. However, a focused business attraction effort aimed at industries in sectors that can benefit from Xenia's unique attributes will lead to greater market success.

GE2.1 Build and maintain strong relationships with Greene County DOD and the DDC. The City already enjoys a close working relationship with the Greene County Department of Development (DOD). Build similar ties with the Dayton Development Coalition (DDC), which is Jobs Ohio's Regional Economic Development Partner for the Dayton region. The DDC is Xenia's first point of contact for state tax incentives and low interest loans.

The DDC also hires industry experts in the areas of advanced manufacturing, advanced materials, health science, and aerospace. These experts can help Xenia companies grow in these markets and help the City position itself for growth.

GE2.2 Update the City's economic development marketing plan. A marketing plan would help the City identify industries that benefit from Xenia's strengths, determine the most effective marketing tactics, and gain support from



Map 2.1: Existing Industrial Zones



regional partners. Examples of industries Xenia could pursue, with or without a plan, include the following:

- **Aerospace.** Xenia’s proximity to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Wilmington Air Park creates opportunities to attract aerospace-related investment. Not all companies require immediate adjacency to WPAFB.
- **Valued-added agriculture.** Businesses in value-added food processing or other agriculture-related industries can build on Xenia’s excellent reputation already developed by Bob Evans and the strong agrarian economy established in rural Greene County.
- **Logistics.** Xenia’s unique location in the Transportation Triangle provides opportunities to attract businesses in the supply chain industry. Wright State University’s Logistics and Supply Chain Management program can help Xenia identify opportunities and attraction strategies (see Figure 2.2).

GE2.3 Establish industry roundtables. Raise awareness of Xenia’s goals, opportunities and strengths and seek feedback from economic development stakeholders. One way to do this is to hold annual or bi-annual roundtable meetings with Xenia’s business executives, regional development experts, higher-education institutions, developers and brokers. Existing businesses can offer a great deal of information about Xenia’s strengths and weaknesses and opportunities to attract additional industries.

Collaboration with regional partners is essential. Such organizations have additional resources that can be leveraged on Xenia’s behalf. Their success in some ways is tied to local community success but they must know Xenia’s goals before they can proactively work on our behalf.

GE2.4 Review/adjust incentive policies to align with the marketing plan and other X-Plan goals. Based upon the marketing plan, revise incentive policies as needed to align with target industry needs. Aggressively pursue companies

What is Economic Development?

No single definition has been adopted by economic development professionals but generally local government is interested in economic development to:

- Create and retain jobs
- Increase wages, community wealth and economic well-being
- Improve resident quality of life
- Generate income tax for general fund expenditures
- Diversify the local economy

To do this on behalf of its residents and businesses, City Council must:

- Hire professional staff to implement City economic development goals and policies
- Enact budgets to provide roads, utilities and services needed to support industry
- Approve incentives for companies that add a significant amount of new jobs to Xenia

Economic Development Paradigm Shift

Competition for new jobs and retaining existing ones is fierce between states and regions. Many communities have found that offering land and infrastructure is no longer enough to attract high tech businesses. Technological advances in all aspects of our economy including manufacturing require an educated workforce. Communities are working hard to provide companies and their educated workforce a high quality of life. X-Plan touches upon many quality of life aspects – bike trails, housing, shopping and image - that all must be construed as part of Xenia’s overall economic development strategy.



Economic Development Success

The City recently partnered with TJAR to proactively help this local startup company grow and create jobs in Xenia.

Company owners, working out of a pole barn up to July 2010, turned to the City of Xenia for assistance.

The City put together a very competitive package including Revolving Loan Fund assistance to help TJAR purchase a much-needed building in the Xenia Industrial Park.

As a result of this partnership, the company needs to purchase another property in the Xenia Industrial Park to keep up with increased demand.

in desired sectors and tie incentive use to performance as a means to attract companies. Consider a tiered incentive policy that matches incentive levels to both the number of jobs and wages among meeting other X-Plan goals and strategies.

GE3 Preserve Land for Long-term Economic Growth

Xenia is fortunate to have vacant land located close to interchanges on US 35. Treat this land as a finite resource that must be preserved for the City's long-term economic sustainability.

GE3.1 Pursue economic development opportunities and partnerships in the Central State (CSU), Wilberforce University and Payne Theological Seminary areas. These institutions are tremendous nearby assets that can be engines for economic growth. Xenia already provides utilities, Fire protection and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to CSU.

Future development potential includes retail and services for students and visitors, as well as industrial/office/hospitality uses between the campuses and US 35.

GE3.2 Pursue economic development opportunities and partnerships at the Greene County Airport and vicinity. The Greene County Airport is a nearby asset that could spur airport-adjacent business development that is closer to the I-675 corridor than Xenia. Xenia, as the closest utility provider, can offer the most cost effective public utility extensions and services such as Fire protection and EMS.

GE3.3 Increase water pressure in southeastern Xenia through improved pipe connections and standpipe eliminations. Although there is not currently a water pressure problem in this portion of the city, recent studies have indicated potential long-term problems as the City's industrial parks approach full build-out. This action is a relatively low-cost step that can be taken to ensure adequate water pressure in the area.

GE3.4 Seek and Obtain Ohio Job Ready Site Certification. The State of Ohio is considering a law that would grant "Job

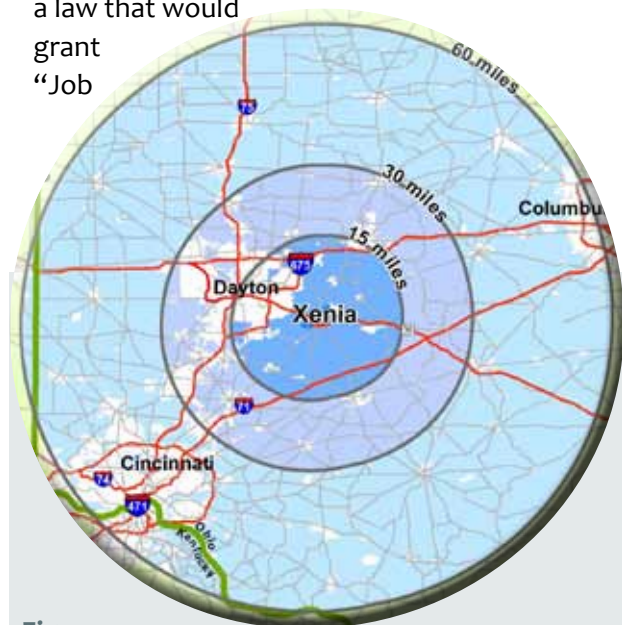


Figure 2.2:
Transportation Triangle

Xenia is in the middle of the "Transportation Triangle" formed by intersecting interstate highway infrastructure including I-75 to the west, I-70 to the north, and I-71 to the south.



Ready” certifications to properties that meet minimum requirements. Such certification would indicate to prospective office and industrial users that Xenia’s business parks are ready for business. Job Ready also saves companies time and money over sites that are not job ready. Participate in the program once program rules are finalized.

GE3.6 Construct an additional water tower in southeastern Xenia. Recent studies have indicated that certain types of large-scale, high-intensity industrial users may require construction of an additional water tower.

GE3.5 Extend Innovation Drive east to US 68. This roadway improvement will spur development in the Innovation Drive business park, as it will provide more direct access from the US 35/US 68 interchange.

GE3.7 Expand the Innovation Drive business park west to US 42. Consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, create one large, unified business park south of US 35 from US 42 to US 68. Extend Innovation Drive west to US 42 and align with Wright Cycle Boulevard in order to further improve access from US 35. Support annexation of this area to create additional land for long-term economic growth.

Stipulate via development agreements, covenants and restrictions, or public/private venture ownership agreements that land designated as Business Park on the Future Land Use Map will be used for economic development purposes before annexing land, extending infrastructure or offering incentives.

GE3.8 Acquire or reserve property. Enter into first rights of refusals and purchase contracts to acquire key development parcels needed to develop or expand Business Parks in Xenia.

This may appear as an extreme measure. Current economic conditions and lending practices are not aligned for private investors

to hold land in speculation that industrial users will come.

Many public sector participants in southwest Ohio have been thrust into the development business as a result. Public ownership gives communities additional leverage when negotiating incentives.

Alternatives to this approach include development agreements, annexation agreements, covenants and restrictions, and zoning for industrial use. Agreements must stipulate minimum zoning and performance requirements.

GE4 Reposition Older Business Parks

Reposition older industrial areas such as those found along Bellbrook Avenue to maintain their attractiveness as business parks.

Like most mature communities, Xenia’s older industrial areas are partially integrated in residential neighborhoods. Some properties are landlocked and structurally outdated.

GE4.1 Seek incentives to modernize or demolish outdated industrial buildings in the Lower Bellbrook Road/Cincinnati Avenue area. Work with property owners to reposition antiquated industrial buildings to better meet modern industrial user needs. Look for energy-efficient retrofit incentives, tax credit and brownfield assessment/cleanup incentives.

- **Hooven and Allison property.** This former cordage plant located on Cincinnati Avenue





was once a major Xenia employer. It is now a long-vacant, deteriorating complex of buildings that is a blighting influence on several surrounding neighborhoods and one of the City's major thoroughfares and entrances. The City has successfully utilized grant funding to perform environmental assessments and has received a grant for cleanup. The remaining steps are to secure local match funding, complete the cleanup/rehabilitation and recruit end users.

GE 4.2 Enhance Bellbrook and Cincinnati Avenues and brand as business corridors.

Enhancements and branding will send clearer signals about the identity and future direction of these corridors, which also serve as key entry points to Xenia. Enhancements can also help to preserve the viability of adjacent residential areas. Examples of physical improvements include gateway signage, decorative lighting, screening and/or landscaping.

GE5 Take a “Grow Your Own” Approach to Economic Development

An increasingly popular strategy is to “grow your own” economy by diverting some economic development resources away from recruitment efforts to helping local startup companies grow.

This concept is referred to as “Economic Gardening.” Its popularity is linked to its internal focus of tapping into the near endless supply of innovative people that already live in a community.

Xenia is in an incredibly good position to win using an economic gardening strategy due to its excellent regional location, access to universities and potential availability of lower cost buildings.

For these same reasons, Xenia could become a laboratory for commercialization of new technology developed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Wright State University and Central State University.

GE5.1 Develop and maintain a database for vacant industrial, commercial and downtown mixed-use space. Many occupied buildings have unused space that can be used by small startup companies. Utilize real estate listings, permit data, utility billing data and other sources to inventory and monitor information on available commercial, industrial and downtown mixed-use space. Identify square footage, use and occupancy status by floor. List information on the City's website to assist potential entrepreneurs.

GE5.2 Expand Business Retention and Expansion Efforts. Economic development professionals often attest that 80% of new jobs and investment come from existing businesses. This is best accomplished when local governments work in cooperation with business.

Ideally, the City would have two full time economic development professionals. The director would run the department and work on attraction, networking and marketing efforts. A retention specialist would focus on relationship building with existing companies. This could be a part-time position.

However, resources are limited and the Development Department is not the only entity involved in the economic development process. Use an integrated team approach where City department heads are assigned as case managers for a set number of companies.

Other critical components of the City's Retention and Expansion program include membership in the BusinessFirst! program, periodic retention surveys, and a database containing business information and contacts.

GE5.3 Create a small business incubator. There are thought to be over 1,000 incubators in the United States with the vast majority of those being not-for-profit or publicly controlled. Evidence suggests that startup companies that



How can Xenia “grow its economy” from within?

The concept of growing a local economy from within took root in Littleton, CO in the late 1980s after it became apparent heavy job losses could not be backfilled by new business recruitment alone. In response, Littleton retooled its economic development strategy and shifted resources to support local entrepreneurs.

This strategy is referred to as “economic gardening” and it is used to create a more balanced approach in conjunction with business attraction programs or “economic hunting.”

A goal of economic gardening is to develop a broad portfolio of entrepreneurially-based startup companies in various stages of development that collectively employ hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people over time.

To do this, cities and regions provide high-level services and access to data that is generally only available to larger companies. The goal is to provide entrepreneurs with accurate information about their competitors, customers, markets, and industry trends empowering small business owners to make strategic decisions and avoid costly mistakes.

Incubators

Incubators help startups by offering office and shop space and specialized business services in-house and through a network of service providers. An incubator’s goal is to produce financially viable companies that can graduate out into the community, create jobs, strengthen local economies, and increase building occupancy levels and property values. Xenia already relies upon The Entrepreneurs Center (TEC) incubator in Dayton and could eventually build the capacity to start its own incubator.



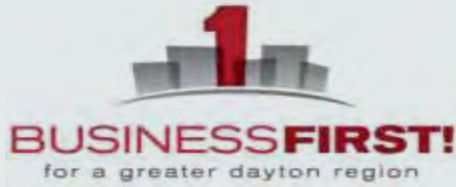
Economic Gardening Ideas

Xenia can take advantage of the availability of vacant buildings to start a business incubator as part of an economic gardening strategy. Seek partnerships to provide resources needed to succeed. Potential partners include Greene County, Small Business Development Center (SBDC), area colleges and universities, property owners and even established incubators in Ohio.

Like everything else worthwhile, economic gardening will take time to yield results. A long-term commitment by Xenia leaders is necessary.

Resources

- http://archive.sba.gov/advo/research/sbe_06_ch06.pdf
- <http://icma.org/en/Search?s=economic%2Bgardening>
- <http://www.nbia.org/>
- <http://www.inc.com/magazine/20100501/the-best-business-incubators.html>



The BusinessFirst! Program gives economic development professionals the opportunity to meet with local businesses and learn about their needs and plans.

The BusinessFirst! Program links businesses with needed resources to help them stay and grow in Xenia. graduate from incubator programs are up to twice as likely to succeed long term as other startups.

The Tech Center in Dayton is an excellent example that already provides services available to Xenia businesses. Xenia, perhaps through a private or nonprofit partner, could offer a satellite facility or program that utilizes vacant industrial, commercial or downtown mixed-use space.

GE5.4 Increase the City's role in facilitating a business startup assistance network. Facilitate networking and discussions between startups and service organizations to help companies grow.

Work closely with SBDC/SCORE to help startups secure business advice and small business financing. SBDC counselors ask tough questions and can tell if a business plan is able to succeed.

Help startups access market data needed to make informed business decisions including market research. Business schools can assist with business planning and more technical departments can assist with idea and product development.

GE6 Turn City Government into a Business Advocacy Organization

GE6.1 Streamline and update regulations and processes. Portions of the City's development regulations have not been significantly updated since 1968. This results in frustrations for development applicants and City staff without improving the quality of development. Comprehensive reviews of the City's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations and permit review process are needed.

This review/rewrite should remove unnecessary steps and address regulations that are conflicting, inconsistent, ambiguous or otherwise inappropriate. This process could also address multiple other strategies in X-Plan that are geared toward improving the quality of development.

The streamlining process should generally include the following components:

- **Create a diverse Steering Committee.** Assemble a committee of community leaders as well as business, development and community interests to study the current codes and processes and recommend changes to create a user-friendly code and processes.
- **Seek community input.** Allow the general public to drive the process and have a voice, since individual citizens and property owners will be directly impacted by the changes.
- **Obtain design and development professional input.** Architects and engineers work with local government development regulations on a daily basis. Seek design professional input on Xenia's regulations and procedures.
- **Consider a Unified Development Code.** A unified development code places



all development related regulations, definitions, processes and procedures in one cross referenced document including subdivision, access management and zoning. This can reduce the amount of time an applicant will spend tracking down various documents.

- **Encourage pre-submittal meetings.** Encourage all zoning and development applicants to attend pre-submittal meetings with City staff. Include pre-submittal language on application forms and in the zoning code. These meetings give applicants time to ask questions and review procedures and minimal application requirements with City staff before submitting.
- **Establish E-government and permitting.** Post codes, plans and interactive applications in an easily-accessed location on the City’s website. Transition toward electronic submittals, review and recordkeeping.
- **Explore a One-Stop Shop.** Create a more seamless, user-friendly process for applicants who must deal with multiple agencies. Since it may be cost-prohibitive to bring all development functions under one office, utilize technological and communication improvements to create a “virtual” one-stop shop. This can be accomplished through

interconnectivity of permitting databases and increased collaboration in permit review and enforcement.

- **Create consistent, predictable standards.** Streamlining the City’s development regulations does not necessarily mean lowering standards. Developers rarely complain about meeting clear, reasonable and predictable community-based development standards for building design and landscaping, etc. Developers do struggle with moving targets and prolonged review processes born out of a community’s desire to articulate standards on a case-by-case basis. Both Xenia and its development partners would benefit from an officially adopted, consistently applied set of reasonable development standards.

Why are Regulations and Permits Important?

Development regulations and public oversight in the permitting process is a legitimate and important use of the City’s police power. It ensures development meets minimum federal, state and local laws designed to protect public health, safety and welfare.

Streamlining the permitting processes is nonetheless a legitimate goal. Xenia desires to be business friendly while ensuring public safety. Examples of regulations and permits include the following:

- **Zoning Ordinance.** Ensures land is used efficiently in a rationale manner to protect people from incompatible uses and to maintain property values.
- **Zoning Permit.** A zoning permit ensures that proposed new development or building expansions or remodeling is legally permitted before an applicant spends money on a project.
- **Right-of-Way Permit.** This ensures that work in the right-of-way can be accomplished safely without interfering with normal traffic operation. Driveway openings are approved for spacing and visibility against other streets and driveways for traffic safety purposes.
- **Certificate of Occupancy (CO).** This permit is approved by the Greene County Department of Building Regulation. CO’s ensure buildings are constructed to code and electrical and structural systems meet minimum life safety requirements before buildings are occupied.



- **Use an incentive-based approach.** Standards can utilize an incentive-based approach which rewards high-quality submittals with reduced review time or other incentives.
- **Implement other X-Plan goals and strategies.** Utilize a more land use-flexible, design-focused approach that follows the Future Land Use Plan. Implement other X-Plan strategies which are aimed at improving the quality of development.

GE6.2 Develop excellent customer service. First impressions are lasting. Economic development requires a team effort. Each city employee has the ability to improve Xenia's image as a business friendly community. This goal can be accomplished when all staff members exhibit a polite and positive service-oriented attitude.

Develop minimum customer service standards for all City employees, and include County permitting agencies as well. An example of such a standard is the need to treat permit applicants as customers and help them navigate the permitting process.

Provide annual customer service training to City employee. Explain why customer service is important to the City's mission. Positively reinforce desired behavior and recognize employees that exceed expectations. Monitor results through customer surveys.

Consider partnering with a third party organization to expand upon City staff's limited capacity and further enhance the customer experience.

GE6.3 Develop a community advisory board. A recently passed City ordinance required creation of an Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB), which serves as a core advisory body regarding economic development interests and activities. The EDAB can increase communication, raise awareness and elevate

pressing economic development issues to the highest layer of City leadership.

In addition to City staff and City Council representation, participation in the EDAB could include area business leaders, County officials, university staff, key property owners and regional economic development organizations. This would create a multidiscipline problem solving body working together on a regular basis to attract new and retain existing companies, discuss economic development issues, react to opportunities and overcome obstacles.

Subcommittees of the EDAB could meet on a more frequent basis or address specialized issues such as quick-response and initiatives such as Town and Gown and Healthy Communities.

GE6.4 Develop and Rehearse a Consistent Message. Hire a marketing and/or PR firm to establish the City's economic development message as part of broader effort to improve Xenia's image. Use the resulting copy to create positive collateral material and webpage content.

Incorporate message training with customer service training (GE6.2). Xenia must market itself in a positive light internally and externally. Message training is a great way to begin this process.

GE6.5 Prepare a Development Manual. Development manuals serve as "doing business" guides with local government. Include step-by-step check lists of all required permits and approvals, as well as a user-friendly overview of applicable standards.

GE7 Foster Town and Gown and Healthy Community Partnerships

Xenia has multiple assets related to education, healthcare and wellness that can serve as



Figure 2.3: Town and Gown/Healthy Communities

What is “Town and Gown?”

Town and Gown refers to the relationship formed between a college or university and its host community. In the past such relationships have been adversarial due to a lack of communication and differing priorities. Today, town and gown relationships are evolving from adversarial to partnerships focused on mutual beneficial outcomes, shared resources and win-win scenarios.

Xenia is surrounded by higher education institutions and has a unique opportunity to partner with one or more of these institutions.

Examples of Town and Gown Opportunities for Xenia:

Universities have unique financial and intellectual resources that when applied locally can generate significant community benefits including but not limited to:

- Students Tutoring Children
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Downtown Revitalization
- Service Delivery Recommendations
- Economic Development Planning
- Community Service Projects
- Joint use of Facilities
- Collaborative Planning
- Branch Campus Development

Xenia has many suitable locations for a branch campus including historic buildings and shopping centers with available space and large institutions such as Greene Memorial Hospital and Legacy Ministries.



What are Healthy Communities?

“Healthy community” programs under the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Ohio Department of Health focus on helping communities reduce the burden of chronic disease and achieve health equity. Although many medical and nutritional aspects of these programs are beyond the scope of a Comprehensive Plan, certain aspects of a healthy community include access to medical services and encouragement of physical activity, both of which relate to development and infrastructure.

Xenia already has many health and wellness assets that could be improved and leveraged for economic development purposes: Greene Memorial Hospital, Greene County Combined Health District, bike trails, Athletes in Action headquarters and competition facilities, and the YMCA.

Examples of ways a Healthy Communities Initiative could benefit the City include:

- Support Greene Memorial Hospital’s continued presence and success
- Attraction of additional healthcare-related businesses to Xenia
- Utilize the City’s bike trails as a means of recruiting and retaining employees and encouraging them to live in Xenia. The bike trails enhance Xenia’s general quality of life and even provide the ability to bike to work.
- Increase Athletes in Action’s (AIA’s) presence in the community and region by promoting AIA’s athletic competitions to potential spectators, promoting local businesses to AIA visitors.
- Partner with the YMCA and other potential entities to construct a community recreation center in Xenia.
- Explore joint use/development opportunities for City parks and School District properties.



Potential Town/Gown “Early Win:” African American Historical Trail. The Xenia area enjoys a prominent heritage in African American history. Central State University (est. 1887) is Ohio’s only predominantly African American public university and also houses the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center. Wilberforce University is the nation’s oldest private African American university (est. 1856). Wilberforce in particular was an Underground Railroad destination point.

The **Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument** in Wilberforce, designated in March 2013, was the adult home of Col. Charles Young, the highest ranking African-American U.S. Army commanding officer from 1894 until 1922. He also served as the first African-American superintendent of a national park (Sequoia/General Grant National Parks - now Kings Canyon) while commanding a troop of Buffalo Soldiers.

These and other area historical sites represent a potential tourist attraction. Linking these sites with Xenia’s bike path system through path connections, joint promotion and signage could celebrate the area’s heritage while attracting more visitors to Xenia.



Photo credit: Dayton Daily News

catalysts for economic development (see Figure 2.3).

GE7.1 Establish a Town and Gown initiative.

Create a task force, potentially as a subcommittee of the Economic Development Advisory Board, that is focused on improved communication with area higher education providers and identification of town and gown opportunities.

Discussions may lead to new and exciting opportunities for all parties and usher in a new era of collaboration. See Figure 2.3 for more information on town and gown opportunities

GE7.2 Attract a branch campus or components of such a campus to Xenia. College and

universities across the country are investing in branch locations, including suburban campuses as well as adaptive reuse of downtown buildings. Downtowns are particularly well-suited for these uses due to their rich pedestrian environments, arts, culture and a variety of unique shops and eateries.

Downtown classrooms and dorms provide additional market demand for area businesses. Possible locations include the Eavey building, Xenia Towne Square, or the upper floors of downtown buildings.

Consider adapting existing downtown buildings to student housing. Greene CATS could provide (and already provides in some cases) connectivity between Xenia and the main campuses. Other options for a Xenia branch campus include Athletes in Action’s campus and Greene Memorial Hospital.

Since a single college or university may not have the resources for branch facilities, explore the feasibility of a multi-institutional facility, along with other complementary uses, to reduce costs and to attract multiple providers to Xenia.

For example, Sinclair Community College



offers the University of Dayton, Wright State University and the University of Cincinnati classroom space at their Warren County campus in Mason, Ohio.

GE7.3 Expand workforce development

offerings. Post-secondary education plays a critical role in preparing the work force for tomorrow's high-tech jobs.

Regions that demonstrate a high degree of education in a desired technical area have a competitive advantage. Work collaboratively with Xenia Community School District, Greene County Career Center and area colleges and universities to link higher education programs with employer needs. Promote to existing and prospective businesses.

Examples include Sinclair Community College's and Clark State's certificate, degree and worker training programs, as well as the Greenworks Employment and Training Center. Student co-ops and interns are another possibility.

GE7.4 Establish a Healthy Community

initiative. Create a task force, potentially as a subcommittee of the Economic Development Advisory Board, that seeks partnerships with Greene Memorial Hospital, Athletes in Action, the YMCA and other organizations that are focused on health and wellness activities. Such partnerships can yield economic development benefits for the City as described in Figure 2.3. Seek grant funding or recognition from programs such as Ohio's Healthy Community Awards or the CDC's Healthy Communities Program. Coordinate with recommendations for parks, recreation facilities, bike trails and street design in Chapters 1 and 4.

