

City of D'Iberville  
Economic Development Advisory Committee  
Initial Findings and Recommendations

August 2010

## Background

After nearly five years since Hurricane Katrina, the City of D'Iberville has steadily worked to rebuild a devastated community and a shattered economy. Beginning with the financial and technical assistance provided by the Governor's Office of Recovery and Renewal, city leaders and the public charted a new course for redevelopment by incorporating the benefits of smart growth and new urbanism to reverse declining conditions, use and appearance of the City.

The Citizens Master Plan represents that new direction and guides redevelopment efforts and investment to stimulate economic and community growth especially in the downtown, the waterfront and the surrounding neighborhood areas. These areas were the hardest hit by the storm and remain somewhat vulnerable, but these same areas also present the greatest potential for re-growth.

As the five year anniversary of the storm nears, the City and the citizens can be proud of the progress made. Both public and private investment has been made throughout the city with more on the way. A key ingredient to the City's success has been public involvement in the making of the recovery and redevelopment plans. In order to remain on track, plans need to be revisited and perhaps modified to reflect current or changing conditions. For that reason, the Mayor and City Council appointed an Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) composed of area business operators, citizens, and community leaders to review the current plans and make recommendations to improve them.

A resolution establishing the EDAC is attached. Approximately thirty individuals were appointed to work with the city staff to review and refine the overall economic development plans and strategies. The EDAC began meeting in March and elected a chairman and co-chairman to facilitate the meetings. A visioning and strengths and weakness analysis was conducted to allow each and every member to voice the top concerns and issues either contribute or detract from D'Iberville's success. With the assistance of Mr. Chuck Ueltschey and Ms Joy Olive, from the Mississippi Power Company a general mission statement was developed and top issues were identified and grouped into four main focus areas.

## MISSION

To identify, for the governing authority, a course of suggested actions designed to achieve the following:

- Continue to develop as the region's premier retail destination.
- Develop new economic opportunities for emerging or potential business or industries
- Further enhance the quality of life found within the City of D'Iberville.
- Further create job opportunities within the City of D'Iberville which provide a wide range of income levels.
- Adequately plan for the necessary community facilities to accommodate economic development.

## Identified Issues and Needs

*Improve the Appearance and Look of the City*

*Develop a wider range of Health Care Services*

*Diversify the Economic Base*

*Increase Public Safety Capabilities*

*Provide a Wider Choice of Housing Types for all Income Levels*

*Reduce Traffic Congestion*

*Construct Sidewalks for Pedestrians*

*Develop Cultural, Arts and Entertainment Programs and Facilities*

*Develop a "Town Center" and other Public Spaces, Parks, etc*

*Recruit Businesses that Yield Higher Paying Jobs*

*Develop a Commercial Harbor and Marina as part of Downtown Redevelopment*

## Participating Members

*Bobby Eleuterius – Chairman*

Lance Trochessett

Eric Sievers

Eric Chambless

Walter Gary

Sissy Andrews

Mike Wallis

Bill Holmes

Sara Miller

Webster Lee

Misty Fayard

Andy Balius

*David Harder – Co-chairman*

John Rhodes

Jimmy Chapman

Jerry Dodge

Mark Blackmon

Carol Heyliger

Bill Holland

Michael Fearn

Miles Culbertson

Bo Mandal

Donna Williams

Nic Lococo

Deanna Comer

# FOCUS AREAS:

## Community Appearance and Improvements

One common theme echoed by every member of the EDAC during the group visioning exercise was the poor visual appearance of the City. Members voiced support for improved appearance of buildings, tree plantings, landscaping and litter prevention as to improve the visual qualities of the City. Members stated the need for a comprehensive beautification and appearance program for both public and private property that would project the best possible image of our City to the visitors and local residents alike. Image was considered a top priority for development, improving the quality of life and building pride in D'Iberville.

- I. Initiate a permanent city-wide beautification and appearance program
  - a. Mayor & City Council Appoint a Community Appearance Task Force of citizens to provide input on the formation, design and implementation of a Community Appearance Program
  - b. Become a KAB Affiliate co venture a wide range of projects and event.
  - c. Organize the first city-wide Clean-up & Green-up Campaign in concert with the national Great American Clean-up held in May.
  - d. Prepare a Community Appearance Action Plan based on the input, deliberations and recommendations of the Task Force
  - e. Recruit and organize resources including area businesses, gardeners/horticulturists, governmental agencies focused on environmental improvement, law enforcement, schools, and volunteers.
  - f. Launch an aggressive anti-litter campaign.
- II. The City should continue and strengthen code enforcement efforts to eliminate blight, substandard buildings, dilapidated structures, overgrown properties and other eyesores.
- III. The city should adopt Architectural Standards to improve the appearance of new and renovated buildings.
- IV. Construct more green spaces, neighborhood parks.
- V. Place greater emphasis on the appearance of city infrastructure including: signage, lift stations, lighting, roadways, roadsides and adjacent drainage ditches/swales.
- VI. Work with the MDOT to implement an Adopt-A-Interchange Program for I-10/110 to include landscaping, way finding and welcome signs
- VII. D'Iberville must be and remain a place that makes people feel safe and comfortable. Continue effective policing to create a sense of safety, security and a welcoming environment.
- VIII. D'Iberville must have adequate and a storm safe emergency operations center away from the surge area with good access to the interstate and all parts of the City.
  - a. Seek state and federal funding to construct a new public safety facility/EOC.

## Marketing and Market Analysis

D'Iberville's emergence as a retail power center and safer redevelopment location away from direct coastal storm surge has driven steady growth since Hurricane Katrina. New single & multi-family housing along with a constant flow of new businesses and shoppers to the Interstate District area has accelerated recovery. Already a gateway to the gaming resorts just across Back Bay, D'Iberville has experienced a significant volume of visitors that simply *pass through* the City with only a small portion actually stopping. The City needs to launch an aggressive marketing program of the many retail stores, restaurants, and family entertainment businesses.

The City has come a long way in a short time – but there is still a long way to go to diversify our economic base to capture an even larger share of potential business from the visitors as well as the surrounding area's resident population. The City must develop a well balanced strategy to build a quality and sustainable economic foundation by taking full advantage of our geographic location, our proximity to the surrounding jobs and our unique environmental setting. While community and private investment continues in the Interstate District, the downtown/waterfront area remains undeveloped and underutilized. This area must become a top priority for redevelopment for the sake of the entire city and the region as a whole. The City needs to understand where *our* potential is for meeting this areas demand for virtually any market and economic segment.

- I. Market & Trend Analysis –A detailed study is needed to identify opportunities and potential to expand and diversify the City's economic base with respect to office/employment, retail, commercial, entertainment, convention/tourism, and other similar market segments to guide business development and recruitment efforts.
  - a. Support and participate in the preparation of an initial market study being conducted by Coast Transit Authority to determine the range of potential business opportunities to be included in the French Market and the Transit Center.
  - b. Enlist technical assistance from Harrison County's Tourism Commission, Development Commission, and from the Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District and other similar agencies and/or universities experienced in economic development and marketing.
  - c. Collect and assemble currently available market data and information from both public and private sector sources that will aid in the preparation of the marketing strategy and subsequent priority business recruitment plans.
  - d. D'Iberville must proceed with the marketing analysis and target market study on a broad scale due to our geographical location as the entry point to the Biloxi/Gulfport/west Jackson County Trade Area
  - e. D'Iberville must acknowledge and take advantage of the number of travelers that must pass through the City drawn by the established casino resorts, sand beach, waterfronts, military and government installations, and other major traffic/visitor generators
  - f. Work with CTA to co-venture a promotional program to current transit riders and to potential tourists and casino visitors of our variety of retail, restaurant, and family

entertainment businesses at Promenade, Lakeview and other areas of the City accessible and along Route 4.

- g. D'Iberville must take advantage of the major transportation crossroads of I-10/110/MS 67 as the main gateway to the coast through the placement of welcome signs and associated promotional advertising of our shopping, restaurant, and family entertainment businesses.

## II. Marketing Materials

- a. The City should produce business marketing materials outlining the assets, locational advantages, community characteristics, resources, etc. that make D'Iberville a good choice for business recruitment of high quality commercial, tourism, interstate retail, entertainment, waterfront business, etc. due to our close proximity to the coast.
- b. The City should prepare a marketing brochure that promotes the emerging interstate retail power center, restaurants and family entertainment facilities and waterfront fishing opportunities.
- c. The City should develop an advertising and/or branding campaign that *creates a sense of place* and highlights our emerging retail and restaurant strengths.
- d. The City should create a partnership with the major businesses to cost share an aggressive marketing program.
- e. *Consider development of a website or post on the City website information concerning economic development and other information that highlights the areas businesses, attractions, and other.*

III. The City of D'Iberville must form a stronger alliance between all businesses for promotion, expansion and retention

IV. The D'Iberville/St. Martin Chamber of Commerce must strengthen its position and operations between the City and the total business community to promote more community events and activities to draw additional visitors.

## Land Development & Management

A combination of factors are identified as barriers to efficient and effective development of available land within the City to promote quality and sustainable growth into the future. These issues can be divided into two categories: 1) public policy(s) governing current and future land use, and/or regulatory measures controlling physical development, and, 2) market or economic conditions that adversely affect new development.

### I. Review Building Codes, Subdivision Regs and Permitting for Ease of Use

- a. The City should update all policy and regulatory actions, laws and procedures to follow the overall intent and direction of the post-Katrina *Citizens Master Plan for Recovery and Redevelopment.*

- b. Upon final review and public notice the city should consider the adoption of the proposed 2010 Comprehensive Plan as the official policy for the physical development of the entire city.
  - c. Upon final review and public notice the city should consider the adoption of the proposed 2010 Zoning Ordinance as the official policy to meet the requirements set out in the comprehensive plan.
  - d. Upon final review and public notice the city should adopt the proposed 2010 Subdivision Regulations.
  - e. Upon final review and public notice the city should adopt Smart Code and Architectural Standard to regulate development in the specified downtown//waterfront area.
    - 1. Build flexibility into the Code for Parking requirements. Many existing lot size are not conducive to requirements.
    - 2. Customize the codes to City need. Codes do not lend themselves to all city needs.
    - 3. City put together a separate committee to review and revise the codes of architects, builders, developers, planners, realtor and others to remove the unwanted parts of the code
    - 4. The final product delivered to the council for approval is remove of bureaucracy speak, make plain.
    - 5. That the final city code adoption be understood first by all parties to implement.
    - 6. Implementing will require complete understanding of the change to present zoning issues.
    - 7. Using as much green space around the new Town Green will be cost effective and beneficial.
    - 8. A liaison be appointed to work between the City and applicant for planning, zoning, codes, etc. that will smooth the process for the applicant. The applicant is to have full knowledge of all.
    - 9. This liaison position will encourage applicants to D'Iberville and not terminate potential due to bureaucracy.
    - 10. The liaison will have to be people friendly.
    - 11. That the implemented smart codes only be applied to the waterfront T-4 development to start then reviewed and changed based on problems, before being implemented to any other section of the City.
  - f. Review the latest adopted Municipal Building Code to insure applicability and cost effectiveness.
  - g. Streamline and make easier the permitting and approval process for new development
- II. Dilapidated Structures, Properties
- a. The City should continue and strengthen code enforcement efforts to eliminate blight, substandard buildings, dilapidated structures, overgrown properties and other eyesores.
- III. Make improvements to link the businesses in the northern interstate district with the emerging downtown business development district.
- a. Improve roadways, sidewalks, bike paths,
  - b. Expand transit service
  - c. Create a themed roadway landscaping plan

- IV. Work with the Ms State Insurance Commission and the Insurance Industry to stabilize and/or the escalating cost of insurance reduce the cost of insurance.
  - a. Encourage builders to meet and or exceed code requirements to reduce insurance costs.
  - b. Continue to petition the Ms Legislature to fully fund the Mississippi Wind Pool.
- V. Acquire Lands for Green Spaces and Parks
- VI. Protect critical environmental resources, waterways and lands.
- VII. Pursue acquisition of sufficient acreage of property to accommodate development of a light industrial park, warehousing, distribution, high tech, business and professionals, etc. that would support creation of higher paying jobs.
- VIII. Encourage development of gated subdivisions/communities to attract more middle income families.
- IX. Encourage Mixed use and Multi-Family Housing in and around the Downtown Redevelopment Area

## Business Development

- I. Position the City of D'Iberville to become a preferred location for commercial & residential redevelopment especially in the downtown, waterfront and adjacent mixed use neighborhood areas.
  - a. Initiate and perpetuate a city-wide beautification program
  - b. Consider tax incentives or abatements to help retain, expand and renovate existing businesses
  - c. Consider tax incentives and or abatements to stimulate new commercial and residential development in targeted areas
  - d. Construct sidewalks, green spaces, parks within the targeted redevelopment areas.
  - e. Support and subsidize to the extent possible upgrades to school facilities, programs and the necessary amenities to help attract more middle and upper middle income families seeking the highest academic standards possible.
  - f. Implement architectural standards and building practices that will best achieve the placement, appearance and function of downtown and waterfront redevelopment
  - g. Expand community facilities such as libraries, public piers, and recreational facilities.
  - h. Continue the high quality public safety services we currently have.
  - i. Encourage and support construction of higher end housing and amenities to attract middle and upper income residents both in the targeted downtown redevelopment areas and elsewhere in the City.
- II. Position the City to take full advantage of all water resources including the Back Bay waterfront and the Tchouticabouffa River watershed.
  - a. Continue to work with the Department of Resources to design a *working waterfront* for the local fishing fleet and sports fishermen that would include harborage, support services, restaurants and retail as a main component of downtown redevelopment.
  - b. Continue to work with the Department of Marine Resource on establishing the Tchouticabouffa River Park at Riverside Drive.

- c. Examine the possibility of expanding the use of the Fountain Beach Park for a low impact marina that would support upland development resort development.
  - d. Market and recruit water related retail, restaurants businesses such as Bass Pro, Cabella's, etc.
  - e. Construct a public access way along the Back Bay in concert with the redevelopment of the waterfront/casino resort zone as recommended in the Citizens Master Plan.
  - f. Continue organizing and hosting professional and amateur fishing tournaments and events, boat shows, boat racing events.
- III. Examine the potential of co-venturing construction and operation of a properly scaled conference/convention facility as an inducement to help secure and co-anchor a casino and downtown redevelopment.
- a. Commission a feasibility study to determine the scope, scale and cost of a facility to support casino development and tourism development.
  - b. Examine the potential for an on-site hotel and related retail.
- IV. Continue build out the Interstate District to take full advantage of the strategic location as a retail power center and Gateway to the Ms Coast.
- a. Continue support of Ocean Expo to locate in the interstate district
  - b. Continue with plans to widen Sangani Blvd.
  - c. Continue plans to support the MDOT to construct the flyover at I-110/Sangani Blvd
  - d. Request the Ms Department of Transportation to proceed rapidly with the construction of the half diamond ramps at D'Iberville Blvd, Big Ridge Road, and Lamey Bridge Road to enable access to the south east and south west quadrants and will reduce local traffic on Sangani and the I-10/110 Interchange.
  - e. Support the City in their request for federal transportation matching funds through the Metropolitan Planning Organization to upgrade the local roads connected with the half diamonds.
- V. Seek additional family attractions similar to the recently announced Ocean Expo to encourage a strong non-gaming tourism market and visitation by a wider spectrum of current and potential visitors.
- a. Explore the potential for construction a sports complex and related facilities to host a variety of sporting events and clinics to include but not limited to baseball, softball, tennis, volleyball, swimming, etc.
  - b. Explore the potential for arts, cultural and museum facilities and programs.
  - c. Study the feasibility of recruiting higher end entertainment such as a water park, amusement park, IMAX, semi-pro baseball, etc.
- VI. Continue efforts to improve and promote the Central Avenue Business District to include restaurants, entertainment venues, retail and commercial developments.
- VII. Discourage further development of large scale multi-family housing units in favor of live over work units, row house, and other less obtrusive housing types targeted to employees in the

areas casino, military, professional, seniors and other demographic categories desiring higher end market rate units in the downtown redevelopment area.

- VIII. Create mixed use neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area with resident populations sufficient to support existing and future small businesses. This would include condominiums, live over work units, row house, and other market rate housing.
- IX. Encourage market rate single family home construction on a lot by lot basis as infill, new subdivisions, and gated community types throughout the City to attract a larger middle income as demand dictates.
- X. Explore the emerging senior market needs and attempt to encourage housing types and pertinent retail and services targeted to this group. This could include geriatric services, clinics, hospitals and health & fitness.
- XI. Commission a feasibility study to determine the potential for the City to develop a town center in adjacent to the Town Green incorporating the 14 acre former middle school site This could include a transit hub, conference and/or convention facilities, hotel, and mixed use retail.
  - a. Continue working with the Harrison County School Board to develop and mixed use project currently called the French Market.
  - b. Continue working with Coast Transit Authority to construct a transit hub as a co anchor within the French Market.
  - c. Conduct a retail marketing study with CTA to determine the scope and scale of leasable floor space.
- XII. Pursue acquisition of sufficient acreage of property to accommodate development of a light industrial park, warehousing, distribution, high tech, business and professionals, etc. that would support creation of higher paying jobs.
  - a. Investigate joint development project with the City of Biloxi to construct a frontage road along the north side of I-10 to connect D'Iberville Blvd/old MS 67 to the Cedar Lake Road exit.
  - b. Investigate availability of a large tract of land along the New Hwy 67 in the proposed annexation area.
  - c. Meet with the Harrison County Development Commission to consider a joint project to develop a light industrial/commerce park for the City of D'Iberville.
- XIII. Continue efforts to secure a gaming/resort development along the waterfront to help co-anchor the French market and to promote the rebuilding of the overall downtown and adjoining residential neighborhoods.

# **Economic Development Advisory Committee**

## **Authorizing Resolution**

### **Purpose**

#### **Economic Development Advisory Committee Created**

#### **Meetings, Officers, Records and Quorum**

#### **Functions and Duties**

#### **Staff Assistance**

### **Purpose**

The purpose and intent of this action is to make available to the City Council, City Manager and Community Development staff additional expertise relative to assessing and strengthening the City's current economic development strategies by establishing an economic development advisory committee consisting of citizens, property and or business owners, co-sponsoring agencies, stakeholders and representatives from various professional disciplines, . The economic development committee herein created shall not supplant administrative input to the City Council by staff, but shall complement staff input through the utilization and application of the special expertise possessed by its members.

### **Economic Development Committee Created**

There is hereby created within the City of D'Iberville an Economic Development Advisory Committee appointed by the City Council. The Mayor and Council shall appoint its' membership. In making appointments to the committee, the City Council shall strive to appoint individuals with experience or expertise from various disciplines and backgrounds.

The Economic Development Advisory Committee is not intended to be a permanent feature. It is anticipated that after thorough review of current studies and programs, the Committee will assess and offer recommendations to strengthen the existing economic development strategies and to offer new strategies and objectives for economic development especially in the downtown, waterfront and commercial areas of the City. The Advisory Committee, with assistance from the City Staff and the stakeholder/sponsoring agencies, will produce a set of observations and recommendations for consideration by the City Council. This should be accomplished by May 2010.

### **Meetings, Officers, Records, and Quorum**

The committee shall elect its own chairperson and vice-chairman. The committee shall hold regular meetings to review, discuss and form recommendations for inclusion in report form. The Advisory Committee, with staff assistance, shall keep a record of its meetings, resolutions, transactions, findings and determinations.

A simple majority of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business. An agenda shall be prepared and distributed prior to each meeting.

## **Functions and Duties**

The economic development advisory committee shall perform the following functions:

- \* Assess the City's current economic development policies, plans and strategies with regard to downtown development for the purpose of recommending such modifications as may be appropriate to achieve the economic goals approved by the City Council and generally outlined in the post Katrina Citizens Master Plan, Smart Code, and other related plans.
- \* Formulate additional economic development strategies and policies for the purpose of assuring achievement of the economic development goals approved by the City Council.

In addition to the broad major functions outlined above, the Economic Development Advisory Committee may at their discretion:

- A. Prepare and submit recommendations on a broad range of matters generally related to economic development.
- B. Provide ideas and opinions and recommendations in formulating, refining and developing economic development strategies, plans and policies.
- C. Develop plans and programs for the purpose of retaining and enhancing the existing commercial and business base of the city.
- D. Develop plans and programs to promote creative incentives including funding mechanisms, to attract, and retain, commercial and tourism development.
- E. Develop strategies and programs to strengthen the concept of the public/private development partnership.
- F. Review and advise the City Council on the relative merits of individual economic development proposals.
- G. Provide guidance and recommendations relative to the appropriate timing, organization and formation of a public development authority or corporation for the purpose of implementing selected and approved development projects.
- H. Perform such other duties and provide such additional information, assistance and advice to the City Council as the Mayor and City Council may request or direct.

## **Staff Assistance**

The staff of the various departments within the city, as assigned by the City Manager, shall provide staff assistance and shall also serve to facilitate communications by the economic development committee to the City Council.