



4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DRAFT

LONG-TERM GOAL

The City of Hamilton will have a vibrant and diverse economic environment that promotes new business development, redevelopment, and reuse of its core assets through mixed use developments, improvements to public facilities and services, improvements to existing neighborhoods including housing choices for all income levels, and strong educational resources that support the overall economic vitality of the community.

INTRODUCTION:

Perhaps the most important elements of comprehensive planning involve guiding land use, population growth, and urban/economic development. This document will serve as Hamilton's economic development roadmap for the next 20 years. The Economic Development Plan is not static but must recognize current trends and changes in the local and regional economy that will impact the future of the region and the City of Hamilton. The goals and policies defined in this section establish much of the framework for the City of Hamilton to be a

Sustainable/Regional Hub in the Cincinnati - Dayton Metroplex through smart growth concepts contained within this Comprehensive Plan.

The Economic Development Plan, goals and policies defined in this section will set up the City of Hamilton to continue to be economically viable and become a catalyst for future growth. *“Economic development is a process that leads to business development, expansion, and/or reinvestment within the OKI Region. The process results in expanded job opportunities for citizens, and an increased tax base for the government to provide necessary public facilities and services.”*

Further economic growth will allow the City of Hamilton to compete regionally for both employment and income growth. *“Components of a strong regional economy include employment and income growth in the region. They are two factors necessary for improving the competitive advantage of a region. The OKI Land Use Commission's committee on economic development and funding identified ten elements for a strong regional economy. These elements include jobs and income, diversity in industry sectors, developing economic clusters, public facilities and services, downtowns, historic preservation, brownfield redevelopment, transportation linkages, quality of life, and incentive programs.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.73-74)



4.1 Overall Objective:

- A. The City of Hamilton's primary economic development policy is to accommodate growth in ways that make economic sense, enhance the community's well being, and preserve the environment, while allowing the City to compete regionally and globally. Appropriate economic development and growth are vital to Hamilton's existence and constitute one of the most critical elements in maintaining and enhancing the community's life, health and environmental quality.



The City of Hamilton skyline



OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, and ACTIONS:

4.2 Redevelopment and Infill

Objectives:

- A. Redevelopment and Infill projects should be focused on creating a sustainable economic future for the City of Hamilton.
- B. The City of Hamilton should work towards the creation of a vibrant and economically stable urban core.
- C. The City of Hamilton should encourage new economic development on vacant or underutilized land, while preserving and respecting the architectural character of the City of Hamilton.
- D. Properties with historic value should be redeveloped whenever possible, especially in the urban core area to promote an economically vibrant downtown.
- E. Brownfield redevelopment should continue to be a priority for the City of Hamilton.

Strategies:

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- The City of Hamilton should work towards the redevelopment of the urban core. A strong urban core is essential for the overall economic health of the City of Hamilton as it is the historical center of business activity. The success of the urban core can have a major impact on the overall economic vitality of the remainder of the City.
- *“Strong and healthy downtowns are the centerpieces of any region. Generally, a downtown has recreational centers, arts, and cultural centers, as well as retail, [residential], and business activities. They become hubs for business, [residential], cultural, social, and recreational activities, making a downtown the most attractive center in a city. Downtowns are generally the focus for economic development.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.74)
- The redevelopment of vacant/underutilized land and deteriorating structures located within the core is key to returning economic vitality to the urban core.
- *“Local comprehensive plans will promote the adaptive reuse of buildings and sites in the region's urban cores/business districts, where appropriate.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.85)



- *“The traditional commercial district is a location for independent businesses and is a good incubator for new small businesses.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.84)
- *“Downtowns retain and create jobs, which support a community’s tax base.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.83-84)
- *“Historic preservation means identifying and working to protect and conserve the properties and sites that are important components of a community’s history and character, and in this context, it focuses mainly on the traditional commercial and residential areas of the community. Generally speaking, historic preservation efforts have proven to be a powerful economic development tool for many communities.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.74)
- *“Brownfields are generally located in once thriving areas of economic activity. They lie abandoned today for a variety of reasons including: the contamination that resulted from past uses; changes in manufacturing processes; and changes in the business conducted on the site. Sitting unused or under-utilized, brownfields are impediments to economic development in rural and urban communities across the nation, and their redevelopment comes with challenges.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.74)

Actions:

- A. The City of Hamilton should focus redevelopment efforts on key corridors to rejuvenate the urban core.
- B. The City of Hamilton should provide infrastructure improvements to advance the city’s economic and aesthetic appeal. Such as streetscapes, transportation improvements, technology infrastructure improvements, public utility services, and the enhancement of natural resources.
- C. The City of Hamilton should capitalize upon its urban core properties with investment in projects that improve vacant/underutilized land that enhance the overall economic vitality of the community.
- D. The City of Hamilton should create zoning regulations to accommodate appropriate adaptive reuses for core urban properties and designated historic districts to foster economic development.



4.3 Mixed Use Centers



An example of mixed use development



A different example of mixed use development

Objectives:

- A. The City of Hamilton should encourage the creation of diverse districts through appropriate mixed use development that will foster new economic development opportunities throughout the city.
- B. Create mixed use neighborhoods that integrate housing and business opportunities in a walkable environment, increasing the economic viability of the City's neighborhoods.
- C. The City of Hamilton should create an environment where individuals can work, live, and play all in the same location, thus allowing individuals to enjoy higher quality of life.



Strategies:

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- *“In 2020, centers that include a mix of integrated office, retail, residential, and civic uses will be found throughout the region. These mixed-use centers – of a scale appropriate to their surroundings – will concentrate uses in a manner that supports walking, biking and public transit, and automobiles.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.18)
- The City of Hamilton should strive to develop vibrant mixed use communities that are active throughout the day. The creation of a vibrant city core is vital in terms of attracting/retaining young professionals that will help the city stay economically sustainable.
- Utilize historic structures that would be appropriate for mixed use development to help create a thriving center for government, culture, and commerce in Butler County.
- *“The goals, objectives, and policies of local comprehensive plans will lead to the revision of zoning ordinances to allow mixed-use development, where appropriate.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.85)

Actions:

- A. The City of Hamilton should encourage the development of mixed use neighborhoods and districts to improve the quality of life for its citizens, and to attract new people and investment to the city. This could be accomplished by creating mixed use zoning overlays and mixed use zoning categories.
- B. The City of Hamilton should promote a mix of uses within structures and neighborhoods that increases the accessibility and economic vitality of the business districts throughout the city.



4.4 Industry and Job Diversity



An office plaza located in Hamilton

Objectives:

- A. The City of Hamilton should concentrate on creating a local economy that is diverse with a focus on businesses that have high growth potential.
- B. The City of Hamilton should assess its strengths and focus its economic development efforts on those assets.

Strategies:

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- *“Jobs and income generation is the most important objective of any economic development strategy. Availability of different types of jobs of various income levels indicates diversity in the job-market and ensures opportunity for people with diverse skill levels.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.74)*
- *“Diversity in industry sectors within the region means that the region's economy is not tied to a single industry group. Diversity also means that there is a range of industrial sectors in the region requiring different skill types and levels of education.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.74)*



Actions:

- A. The City of Hamilton should develop a strategy to generate interest and opportunity for attraction of diverse business and industry groups.
- B. The City should identify selected growth industries that capitalize on the city and region's assets.
- C. The City should focus economic development efforts on projects that maximize the identified economic strengths of the city and region.
- D. The City of Hamilton should gear its economic development incentive program to project long-term economic growth and return on public investment.



4.5 Public Facilities and Services



City of Hamilton Municipal Building

Objectives:

- A. The City should maintain and enhance existing utility infrastructure and expand where appropriate to serve the needs of current clients and new economic development that meet established efficiency standards.

Strategies:

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- *“Public facilities and services are also referred to as the infrastructure of the region. Public facilities and services include transportation systems or facilities, sewer systems or facilities, solid waste systems or facilities, energy facilities, drainage systems or facilities, potable water systems or facilities, telecommunication facilities, educational systems or facilities, cultural facilities, parks and recreation systems or facilities, fire and police systems, public health systems or facilities, and historic and archeological resources.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.74)
- Public facilities and services should be widely available for all citizens and businesses in the City of Hamilton. These facilities offer great building blocks for economic development through job creation and investments into neighborhood business districts.
- Price utilities and services so as to generate revenue sufficient to maintain facilities, cover depreciation of assets, and accrue for future expansion of plants, treatments and methods in order to offer the most efficient services possible for existing and new economic development.



- Ensure that access to all utilities is adequate to meet the demands of economic development and population growth.
- There is a need for improved communications infrastructure and a workforce possessing a more technologically based skill set in order for the city to attract high growth industries, services, and retail business.
- *“Adequate public facilities and service will be available for all planned development, and adequate capacity will be maintained for all existing development and redevelopment areas.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.38)

Actions:

- A. The City of Hamilton should continue to invest in its public facilities and services to offer a variety of services to its residents and businesses.
- B. The City of Hamilton should continue its participation and leadership in the Wellhead Protection Program efforts and business outreach.
- C. Periodic assessments should be undertaken to determine appropriate consumer pricing of public utilities in order to maintain facilities, cover depreciation of assets, and accrue funding for future expansion of water and sewer mains, plants, treatments, and methods.
- D. The City of Hamilton should assess current wastewater collection and treatment systems and determine where upgrades are necessary while maintaining the ability to collect, transport, and treat all wastewater flows that enter its sewer system and reserve adequate capacity to serve all possible new customers.
- E. The City of Hamilton should *“support coordinated economic development by encouraging the location of new or expanded business in areas currently served by public facilities and services or in areas that are planned for infrastructure expansion.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.78)
- F. The City of Hamilton should facilitate improved communications infrastructure and educational opportunities in communication technology for a workforce possessing more technologically based skills.



4.6 Transportation and Connectivity

Objectives:

- A. The City of Hamilton should allow for the successful implementation of transportation alternatives that will enable the City of Hamilton to properly benefit economically from investments in transportation.
- B. The City of Hamilton should facilitate transportation and connectivity options for its citizens to efficiently navigate throughout the City of Hamilton and Butler County.

Strategies:

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- City of Hamilton should allow for key economic investment near potential hubs of activity around diverse transportation nodes. These nodes will offer increased investment through the increased flow of people and goods through specific areas of the city.
- The City of Hamilton should explore ways to increase accessibility through multiple modes of transportation that will continue to allow the City of Hamilton to be a center for cultural and economic activities for Butler County.
- *“Provide an effective, balanced, integrated and financially constrained transportation system for the entire region.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.20)
- *“Transportation linkages refers to linkages between transportation modes, linkages between people and places, and linkages between this region and other regions. The region's ability to efficiently move people, goods, and services is an important component for economic development. The movement of people within, around and through the region is also a major factor related to economic development.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.74)

Actions:

- A. The City of Hamilton should ensure that its transportation options facilitate economic stability and future development.
- B. The City of Hamilton should plan and construct its transportation infrastructure so that it is conducive to transitioning towards future regional transit options, ensuring that Hamilton continues to be the hub for Butler County.
- C. To improve its economic viability the City of Hamilton should continue to support transportation alternatives such as mass transit, biking and pedestrian walkways.



- D. The City of Hamilton should study appropriate forms of accessibility to the Butler County Regional Airport to improve the economic impact of the facility.
- E. A Master Thoroughfare Plan should be created to address all modes of transportation and determine their value relative to economic development.

4.7 Mixed Use Neighborhoods

Objectives:

- A. The City of Hamilton should foster a sense of place through the emphasis of mixed use districts throughout the City of Hamilton to improve the economic stability of the surrounding neighborhood.
- B. The City of Hamilton should capitalize on its unique and varied architecture by complementing its character with viable and unique business assets through mixed use development.
- C. The City of Hamilton should cultivate its unique sense of place through fostering increased economic activity and creating a higher quality of life for its citizens through mixed use development.

Strategies:

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- Market potential structures and districts through special incentives to attract mixed use investment opportunities to precipitate economic development.
- These mixed use neighborhoods should help to create a better overall quality of life for the residents of the City of Hamilton. Residents will be able to have more options in terms of lifestyle choices, and have more efficient public/neighborhood services at their disposal.

Actions:

- A. The City of Hamilton should research what types of mixed use developments and their value to determine which are most appropriate.
- B. The City of Hamilton should create zoning regulations to accommodate appropriate adaptive reuses for historic buildings and allow new development of mixed use buildings, developments, and neighborhoods.



4.8 Housing Choices

Objectives:

- A. The City of Hamilton should encourage the development of a variety of housing options for all income levels in the community.
- B. The City of Hamilton should encourage the creation of new housing opportunities to sustain the local economy.
- C. The City of Hamilton should develop an inviting and diverse housing environment for artists, creatives, and other young professionals that stimulate economic development.

Strategies:

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- *“Offer a diverse mix of housing choices – in terms of size, price, type, transit accessibility and location – within communities throughout the region, and maintain and improve the quality of the housing stock in every community in the region, whether newer developments or older neighborhoods, owner-occupied or rental.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.60)

Actions:

- A. The City of Hamilton should ensure that the Future Land Use Map of its Comprehensive Plan encourages a range of housing types, densities, and affordability within the community.
- B. The City of Hamilton Zoning Ordinance should be revised to allow a range of housing types, densities, and affordability within the community.



4.9 Education



Miami University Hamilton Campus

Objectives:

- A. To produce and offer an adaptable and skilled work force for existing and prospective businesses through area educational facilities.
- B. Offer a high quality education for all residents of the City of Hamilton both young and old, keeping the intellectual levels of the residents high and vibrant.
- C. Maintain a high standard for education to continue the City of Hamilton working towards the goal of a highly educated workforce that is capable of adapting to a changing job climate.



Strategies:

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- *“Economic vitality depends on an educated, skilled workforce.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.78)
- *“Without a skilled, educated workforce, businesses will not choose to locate in the region, which, in turn, effects the diversification of the job base, the maintenance of healthy industry clusters, the redevelopment of brownfields and other components of the economy.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.78)
- *“The ability to get and keep a good job requires a range of basic skills that are necessary to meet workplace expectations. These may include skills as basic as a positive attitude and reliability/punctuality, as well as problem-solving and other cognitive skills, oral communication skills, and interpersonal and teamwork skills.”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.79)
- Educational opportunities for workforce development should include “soft skills” such as non-technical skills, abilities, and traits needed to function in the work environment.

Actions:

- A. The City of Hamilton will create an alliance between itself and all area educational facilities to develop school-to-work programs that offer basic skills such as reading, writing, math, computer literacy, as well as simple communication and work ethic skills.
- B. The City of Hamilton, along with the Chamber of Commerce, should study on how best to avoid “brain drain” associated with young adults choosing to leave the area for places with more to offer in terms of opportunity and quality of life.



4.10 Regional Cooperation



Bridgewater Falls Regional Shopping Destination

Objectives:

- A. Foster a working relationship with neighboring communities to help promote the area as a whole to those outside the region.
- B. Cooperate and coordinate on economic development efforts and opportunities throughout the region, and provide incentives in order to promote this region as the location of choice for diverse businesses.
- C. Maintain a working relationship with the OKI Regional Council of Governments to ensure the future success of the City of Hamilton within the Cincinnati-Dayton Metroplex.



Strategies:

In order to meet the objectives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development section, the following strategies should be pursued by the City of Hamilton:

- *“This Comprehensive Plan should encourage cooperation with economic development agencies and major institutions in the region to provide information about sites and services available for new and expanding businesses.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.78)*
- *“Local governments will work together to establish a set of best practices that can be used to streamline local regulatory and permitting processes, thus improving the climate for business retention, expansion, and recruitment.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.78)*
- *“An economic cluster refers to a concentration of companies and industries in a geographic region that are interconnected by the markets they serve and the products they produce, as well as by suppliers, trade associations and educational institutions. Three examples of economic clusters in the OKI region are health care, personal care products, and food processing.” (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.78)*

Actions:

- A. The City of Hamilton should support clusters of related businesses that export outside the region and have strong economic multipliers.
- B. The City should organize with other local governments within this region in order to establish a set of best practices that can be used to streamline local regulatory and permitting processes and therefore improving the climate for business retention, expansion, and recruitment.
- C. Economic incentive programs should be used to attract and retain businesses in the region that would directly benefit the City of Hamilton in some way.



Economic Development Action List

Redevelopment and Infill:

- A. The City of Hamilton should focus redevelopment efforts on key corridors to rejuvenate the urban core.
- B. The City of Hamilton should provide infrastructure improvements to advance the city's economic and aesthetic appeal. Such as streetscapes, transportation improvements, technology infrastructure improvements, public utility services, and the enhancement of natural resources.
- C. The City of Hamilton should capitalize upon its urban core properties with investment in projects that improve vacant/underutilized land that enhance the overall economic vitality of the community.
- D. The City of Hamilton should create zoning regulations to accommodate appropriate adaptive reuses for core urban properties and designated historic districts to foster economic development.

Mixed Use Development:

- A. The City of Hamilton should encourage the development of mixed use neighborhoods and districts to improve the quality of life for its citizens, and to attract new people and investment to the city. This could be accomplished by creating mixed use zoning overlays and mixed use zoning categories.
- B. The City of Hamilton should promote a mix of uses within structures and neighborhoods that increases the accessibility and economic vitality of the business districts throughout the city.

Industry and Job Diversification:

- A. The City of Hamilton should develop a strategy to generate interest and opportunity for attraction of diverse business and industry groups.
- B. The City should identify selected growth industries that capitalize on the city and region's assets.
- C. The City should focus economic development efforts on projects that maximize the identified economic strengths of the city and region.
- D. The City of Hamilton should gear its economic development incentive program to project long-term economic growth and return on public investment.

Public Facilities and Services:



- A. The City of Hamilton should continue to invest in its public facilities and services to offer a variety of services to its residents and businesses.
- B. The City of Hamilton should continue its participation and leadership in the Wellhead Protection Program efforts and business outreach.
- C. Periodic assessments should be undertaken to determine appropriate consumer pricing of public utilities in order to maintain facilities, cover depreciation of assets, and accrue funding for future expansion of water and sewer mains, plants, treatments, and methods.
- D. The City of Hamilton should assess current wastewater collection and treatment systems and determine where upgrades are necessary while maintaining the ability to collect, transport, and treat all wastewater flows that enter its sewer system and reserve adequate capacity to serve all possible new customers.
- E. The City of Hamilton should *“support coordinated economic development by encouraging the location of new or expanded business in areas currently served by public facilities and services or in areas that are planned for infrastructure expansion”* (OKI, Strategic Regional Policy Plan p.78)
- F. The City of Hamilton should facilitate improved communications infrastructure and educational opportunities in communication technology for a workforce possessing more technologically based skills.

Transportation and Connectivity:

- A. The City of Hamilton should ensure that its transportation options facilitate economic stability and future development.
- B. The City of Hamilton should plan and construct its transportation infrastructure so that it is conducive to transitioning towards future regional transit options, ensuring that Hamilton continues to be the hub for Butler County.
- C. To improve its economic viability the City of Hamilton should continue to support transportation alternatives such as mass transit, biking and pedestrian walkways.
- D. The City of Hamilton should study appropriate forms of accessibility to the Butler County Regional Airport to improve the economic impact of the facility.
- E. A Master Thoroughfare Plan should be created to address all modes of transportation and determine their value relative to economic development.

Mixed Use Neighborhoods:



- A. The City of Hamilton should research what types of mixed use developments and their value to determine which are most appropriate.
- B. The City of Hamilton should create zoning regulations to accommodate appropriate adaptive reuses for historic buildings and allow new development of mixed use buildings, developments, and neighborhoods.

Housing Choices:

- A. The City of Hamilton should ensure that the Future Land Use Map of its Comprehensive Plan encourages a range of housing types, densities, and affordability within the community.
- B. The City of Hamilton Zoning Ordinance should be revised to allow a range of housing types, densities, and affordability within the community.

Education:

- A. The City of Hamilton will create an alliance between itself and all area educational facilities to develop school-to-work programs that offer basic skills such as reading, writing, math, computer literacy, as well as simple communication and work ethic skills.
- B. The City of Hamilton, along with the Chamber of Commerce, should study on how best to avoid “brain drain” associated with young adults choosing to leave the area for places with more to offer in terms of opportunity and quality of life.

Regional Cooperation:

- A. The City of Hamilton should support clusters of related businesses that export outside the region and have strong economic multipliers.
- B. The City should organize with other local governments within this region in order to establish a set of best practices that can be used to streamline local regulatory and permitting processes and therefore improving the climate for business retention, expansion, and recruitment.
- C. Economic incentive programs should be used to attract and retain businesses in the region that would directly benefit the City of Hamilton in some way.



References

OKI Regional Council of Governments. Strategic Regional Policy Plan. Cincinnati: 2005.