**REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION**

DATE: July 1, 2009

SUBJECT: UPDATE OF ECONOMIC VITALITY STRATEGY

Recommendation: Provide input and direction to staff for completing the process to update the Economic Vitality Strategy, as described above in this report.

Background:

On March 25, 2009, the Ad Hoc Committee on Economic Vitality approved a process to update the City's Economic Vitality Strategy. The Vitality Strategy sets the vision, goals, and priorities for all economic development efforts in the City, and it is closely coordinated with the Vitality Element of the General Plan.

To update the new Vitality Strategy, staff conducted extensive research, analysis, and outreach to various stakeholder groups. In addition to one-on-one meetings, staff hosted six larger meetings in April-June 2009. These meetings included a workshop for the general public, as well as workshops with the Chamber of Commerce, Todos Santos Business Association, Contra Costa Council, Contra Costa Small Business Development Center, East Bay Works, City employees, Monument Community Partnership, Cal State East Bay, Mt. Diablo Unified School District, and other stakeholder groups.

On June 17, staff returned to the Ad Hoc Committee, which provided staff with additional feedback (Attachment 1). Based on the Ad Hoc Committee's input, staff drafted the proposed new Vitality Strategy (Attachment 2). This report presents the findings of the update process, and it seeks input from the Planning Commission before the new Vitality Strategy is finalized and brought before the City Council.

Discussion**1. Economic Analysis**

Based on the Ad Hoc Committee's direction, staff gathered, analyzed, and incorporated data from a wide variety of sources, including:

- Economic reports from the Contra Costa Council, Bay Area Council, and other organizations;
- Market data and reports from local commercial real estate brokers, Nielsen Claritas, LSA Associates, and other firms;
- Regional, state, and national employment trends data supplied by the East Bay EDA, East Bay Works, and other organizations;
- The City's General Plan, Redevelopment Plan, Concord Community Reuse Plan and other City policy documents;

- National and regional publications; and
- Sales tax data provided by the HdL Companies.

Staff's analysis provided several interesting findings that helped to guide the revisions to the Vitality Strategy. Highlights include the following findings:

Retail

- *Concord's retail base continues to be healthy and diverse – and captures a disproportionate share of the regional retail market.* With only 12.2% of the County's population, Concord captures 20.1% of all retail business in Contra Costa County. Local retailers generate \$4,632 in sales per resident, which is almost twice the county average of \$2,813 in retail sales per capita.
- *Concord has limited to moderate capacity for new retail development.* Based on analysis of sales tax and demographic data, staff estimates that Concord has a relatively modest level of demand for additional retail – equal to about \$250 million in potential new retail development. It may be difficult to add to Concord's already vibrant regional retail base, because (a) Concord already penetrates a disproportionate share of the region's retail business (as discussed above); and (b) the increasing number of retail centers in Contra Costa County has changed the competitive environment and reduced the size of Concord's trade area for retail.
- *Concord is underserved in restaurants, service stations, groceries, and specialty stores.* Staff analyzed the amount of sales generated by each type of retail in Concord, as a percent share of the city's total retail activity. Staff then compared this percent breakdown to the percent breakdown at the county level. Based on this analysis, Concord is underserved in four retail categories: restaurants, groceries, service stations, and specialty stores. These four categories would be logical focal points for future retail attraction efforts.
- *Although overall retail sales have declined moderately, some retail categories have declined significantly – notably auto retail.* In the wake of the 2008-09 recession, Concord's retail sales levels have declined by about 13.4% overall. However, this aggregate figure masks the fact that some retail categories have seen little if any declines, while other categories have been hit much harder. In particular, new car sales are currently down 27.5% compared to 2008 levels.

Office

- *Concord's Class A lease rates are consistently 25%-30% lower than for comparable space in other comparable markets.* This presents an opportunity to attract office tenants from the region who, in response to recent economic conditions, may be seeking to consolidate or relocate their offices to reduce costs.
- *Bank of America's Tech Center poses a significant risk, and opportunity, to the local office market.* Bank of America has been undergoing a gradual reorganization and consolidation of

its facilities nationwide. They have repeatedly reassured the City that they intend to stay in Concord; yet on the other hand they have attempted to sell the Concord tech center several times in recent years. The five-building tech center has more than 1,000,000 sq. ft. of office space. Because the tech center is so large relative to the entire Concord office stock, its redevelopment could have dramatic impacts on vacancy, absorption, and lease rates. For example, converting the tech center to a multi-tenant facility, if done properly, could help to expand and stabilize Concord's Class A office market.

- *Concord is well-positioned to accommodate future office growth.* In particular, the entitled office pad at Metroplex and the potential for Two Corporate Center next to downtown BART provide the capacity to add more than 500,000 sq. ft. of Class A space to Concord's office stock. Redevelopment of the Agency's five-acre Oak Street property provides further opportunities for office development.

Industrial

- *Concord is the largest industrial center in the I-680 market.* In particular, the City contains over 65% of all R&D/flex space, and about 45% of all general industrial space, in the I-680 market. This allows Concord to be well-positioned for technology-focused development in North Concord.
- *Solano County poses a significant long-term competitive threat to Concord's industrial base.* Fairfield, Benicia, and other locations in Solano County have been very aggressive in attracting high-end industrial uses, notably the Genentech campus. Solano County offers less expensive space and, with construction of the new Benicia Bridge, it has improved its access and convenience to the central Bay Area. However, Concord continues to have a more central, convenient location.
- *As with the rest of California, Concord is facing a decline in the manufacturing sector.* Throughout California, manufacturing businesses have been gradually migrating to other locations with lower taxes, employment, and real estate costs. Manufacturing currently produces 5.9% of jobs in Concord, with an average salary of \$78,000.

Workforce

- Contra Costa County is in the top 0.5% of best-educated counties nationwide. In particular, 38% of adults have an undergraduate degree or higher. This is a major competitive advantage for Concord in attracting businesses.
- *In the aftermath of the 2008-09 recession, unemployment in Contra Costa has risen to 10.25%.* Unemployment is expected to stay at or above 10% for an extended period before returning to normal levels over the next two years.
- *Concord's workforce is aging.* Workers over age 55 now account for 18.5% of the total workforce. This trend will continue to affect mid-career education needs, business attraction and retention, and other aspects of Concord's economy.

- *Small businesses have become even more important to the local economy.* Concord already has a disproportionate percentage of small businesses, accounting for more than 92% of all local businesses. About 57.5% of the region's jobs are produced by companies with less than 100 employees. This trend has accelerated due to the 2008-09 recession, which appears to have catalyzed the formation of start-up companies and home based businesses by employees who have been affected by downsizing, consolidation, and reorganizations of larger companies.

2. Highlights of the Proposed New Vitality Strategy

Based on the analysis and public input described above, staff has attempted to craft a new, revised Economic Vitality Strategy that will focus staff efforts on attracting and retaining key industries in Concord (see Attachment 2).

A. Concord's Position in the Bay Area Market

The Vitality Strategy attempts to define the competitive advantages that set Concord apart from other locations in the Bay Area. Concord is located in a highly competitive area, where businesses have many high-quality locations to choose from. However, Concord has distinguished itself as a premier business destination due to several key advantages:

- A Central, convenient location;
- Best value for office/industrial space;
- Access to a tech-skilled workforce; and
- An efficient, responsive, business-friendly government.

Concord is the largest business center in Contra Costa County, and it is a destination for innovative and entrepreneurial businesses that require highly skilled labor. Concord offers the infrastructure and amenities that businesses need for success. Its vibrant business environment has attracted key firms and has created ideal conditions for local businesses to expand. The City's commitment to families and to the business community fosters a high quality of life with attractive residential neighborhoods, abundant recreation, and entertainment for all ages. Concord is a community of friendly neighborhoods with an excellent park system, convenient shopping, excellent dining opportunities, and large preserves of scenic open space.

B. Opportunities & Challenges

As discussed in Attachment 2, Concord faces a wide range of exciting challenges and opportunities for its economy. Some of the most serious threats include:

- Consolidation of auto retail, financial services, and other employment sectors;
- Increased competition in retail from the proliferation of retail centers;
- The statewide exodus of manufacturing out of California;
- Solano County's long term competitive threat to Concord's industrial base;
- Continuing impacts from the 2008-09 recession, State budget crisis, educational funding and other crises; and
- Concord's lack of image and identity among businesses in key industries.

Some notable opportunities include:

- Opportunities to attract emerging industries (e.g., cleantech, life sciences, etc.);
- The opportunity to build Concord's image/identity;
- The long-term development opportunities of the Concord Reuse Project/Concord Naval Weapons Station, combined with the short-term development opportunities in North Concord, Downtown, and elsewhere in Concord;
- The lack of remaining space in Walnut Creek and other I-680 cities, combined with trends towards less expensive office space, which put Concord in a position to attract more office uses;
- Opportunities to refurbish, re-invest, and reposition Concord's shopping centers (e.g., Sunvalley Mall, the Willows, Park & Shop) to secure Concord's dominant position in the regional retail market; and
- Opportunities to reposition/redevelop closed auto dealership sites.

C. Staff & Budget Priorities

The proposed Vitality Strategy attempts to focus on a select few staff initiatives that can be accomplished with diminishing resources and that will leverage the greatest long-term economic advantages to Concord. The proposed priorities are:

- ***Strategic Marketing Planning.*** Under the proposed Vitality Strategy, staff would develop and carry out an integrated Economic Development Marketing and Public Information Campaign targeted to prospective new businesses, based on a well-defined branding strategy. Efforts would include marketing research, development of a compelling branding strategy, Web-based communications and the redesign of the City's economic development website, broadcast media strategies, press and publicity, trade shows, and brochures – all integrated to articulate a consistent message that highlights Concord's competitive advantages to business.
- ***Attraction of Key Industries.*** Based on staff's analysis, several industries appear to be increasingly important to Concord's economy and have the potential to become major drivers in employment. These industries include: health care, financial services, retail, engineering, green/clean-tech/energy, applied sciences, life sciences / biotechnology, and professional & business services.

These industries may have special needs with respect to infrastructure, workforce development, Zoning and General Plan issues, and business services. The City would also seek partnerships with other cities to help market the Central Contra Costa region and to leverage the City's limited marketing funds.

- ***District Strategies.*** The City's Economic Development program would develop and implement comprehensive district strategies for several key business districts in Concord, including:
 - Clayton Road
 - West Concord
 - Monument Boulevard

- Other districts as time and resources are available

These strategies will incorporate the unique characteristics of each business area, promote the businesses currently operating in these areas and encourage reinvestment opportunities in each for business attraction efforts.


- ***Business Attraction & Retention Efforts.*** Staff would continue efforts to strengthen the City's positive business climate, including initiatives such as:
 - Continuous improvements to the delivery of business services;
 - Communications with the business community (including the annual business survey as well as more regular communications);
 - Ombudsman services to expedite government approvals and serve business needs;
 - The business recognition awards program;
 - Welcome letters to new businesses;
 - Goodwill visits and retention visits to local companies;
 - Partnerships with the local business community;
 - Small business seminars; and
 - Marketing to key retail tenants.

3. Coordination with Other City/Agency Policy Initiatives

The update of the Vitality Strategy is taking place in concert with the development and update of other City and Agency policy efforts that are currently being considered or that may be considered in the near future, such as the proposed Zoning Ordinance Update, Central Concord Redevelopment Strategic and Implementation Plan, and/or other policy documents. Over the coming year, staff plans to come before the City Council and Agency Board to seek guidance on these efforts.

4. Next Steps

After receiving input from the Planning Commission, staff plans to bring the proposed new Vitality Strategy to the City Council for final approval on July 27, 2009.



James Forsberg
Director of Planning and
Economic Development
James.Forsberg@ci.concord.ca.us

Prepared by: Alex Greenwood
Economic Development Manager
Alex.Greenwood@ci.concord.ca.us

Reviewed by: John Montagh
Redevelopment & Housing Manager
John.Montagh@ci.concord.ca.us

Exhibit A: 6/17/09 Ad Hoc Review Committee on Economic Vitality Annotated Agenda
Exhibit B: Revised Economic Vitality Strategy (Proposed Draft)

CITY COUNCIL
AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING

**AD HOC REVIEW COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC VITALITY**

Guy Bjerke, Chair
Laura Hoffmeister, Committee Member

JOINT WITH: Bob Hoag, Planning Commissioner
Ron Leone, Planning Commissioner

5:30 p.m., Wednesday, June 17, 2009

Garden Conference Room
1950 Parkside Drive, Concord

- ANNOTATED AGENDA -

ROLL CALL: All Present: Mayor Laura Hoffmeister (arrived at 5:48 p.m.), Vice Mayor Guy Bjerke, Planning Commissioner Bob Hoag, Planning Commissioner Ron Leone

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Forsberg, Director of Planning and Economic Development; John Montagh, Redevelopment and Housing Manager; Deborah Raines, Planning Manager; Alex Greenwood, Economic Development Manager; Joyce Seitz, Economic Development Specialist

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: Paul Choissier, Charles Lindquist

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO ADDRESSED THE COMMITTEE: Paul Choissier

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: None

- 1. REVIEW – Process for updating City of Concord’s Economic Vitality Strategy and Economic Development Action Plan - Report by Alex Greenwood**

Alex Greenwood presented the staff report. Over the past two months, staff held 14 meetings with various stakeholder groups, and conducted extensive research and analysis. Mr. Greenwood provided an overview of Concord’s retail, office, and industrial markets, which all face economic challenges but appear to remain healthy overall. Mr. Greenwood concluded with a brief summary of the goals and objectives contained in the proposed new Economic Vitality Strategy. The proposed Strategy calls for four major staff initiatives: marketing, attraction of key industries, district strategies, and business attraction and retention efforts.

Commissioner Hoag commented that Concord should highlight public safety as a major selling point for the City. Mayor Hoffmeister added that parks and recreation amenities are also good selling points for Concord.

Vice Mayor Bjerke commented that Concord needs to attract more business-to-business retail in order to have a more balanced retail mix.

Vice Mayor Bjerke asked if staff could provide a more detailed analysis of Concord's office market, including Concord's vacancy rate relative to other cities in the area. John Montag indicated that staff will periodically present a more in-depth office analysis to the City Council. Jim Forsberg discussed office rental rates. He stated that they have come down this year, and tenants are coming to Concord from Walnut Creek because rents are less expensive in Concord.

Commissioner Hoag said he is concerned about service stations as an underserved retail category. Mr. Hoag expressed concern that Concord may not want to attract service stations due to environmental issues and stricter regulations. Mr. Hoag also expressed concern about specialty stores as an underserved retail category. He commented that Concord needs to think of the big box retail as its base.

Mayor Hoffmeister mentioned that Concord can be the consolidated hub for all retail, including auto retail, etc. A balancing game is what is needed.

Commissioner Hoag stated that Concord is phenomenally centrally located. He felt that business-to-business transactions should be highlighted also.

Commissioner Leone noted that attracting additional grocery stores might just transfer the sales among all the stores rather than increase sales tax revenues for the City.

Commissioner Leone asked if the City has looked at its process for attracting businesses. Does the City create barriers to businesses wanting to come here? Anything that makes City Hall more business friendly is good.

Commissioner Hoag noted that, relative to the industrial sector, he doesn't know that Concord can do much about Solano County as a threat. Concord can encourage other industries like health, applied sciences, and life sciences to take over the industrial space. Ancillary uses should go in near the health, applied sciences and life science uses. He suggested that Concord can migrate to higher pay, higher educated types of jobs - the cream of the industrial base.

Mayor Hoffmeister stated that she saw industrial as a broad category including many clean, high technology industries, such as life sciences or applied sciences research facilities. She would like high tech to be a focus of industrial development.

Alex Greenwood spoke about Concord's place in the market and how Concord can differentiate

itself from others in the area. Mayor Hoffmeister agreed that quality of life, parks, and green space are a big selling point to businesses and their employees.

Mayor Hoffmeister asked about marketing efforts using trade journals and targeted marketing.

Vice Mayor Bjerke commented that Concord can build on the marketing strategies already in place.

Alex Greenwood commented that, in order to target key industries, staff needs to learn more about their needs and then identify ways to streamline the development process. Mayor Hoffmeister mentioned the slogan "Come Grow with Us". There was consensus that this is all a good idea.

Vice Mayor Bjerke asked about tourism based marketing, to bolster the hospitality industry. While not an immediate priority, staff should monitor potential opportunities for tourism and hotel development. Perhaps in five years it will be a bigger sector to encourage as the base develops.

Commissioner Leone asked how Concord can create an enticement for conventions. Concord does not have the largest space. A hotel near the BART stations would make sense.

Mayor Hoffmeister stated that there used to be a letter from the Mayor in hotel packages left in guests' rooms and that it may be appropriate to look at that again.

Commissioner Hoag stated that there needs to be quality dining and entertainment options near the hotels. He noted that the Willows has a few.

John Montagh noted that there are barriers to entry to Concord. The Mt. Diablo Unified School District can hinder attraction efforts. Concord's higher education is good and strong, but Kindergarten -12th grade is not.

Alex Greenwood commented on district strategies, stating that Concord should look closely at its districts and work to make them better and capitalize on what is already there.

Mayor Hoffmeister stated that Park & Shop will need its own attention in the Redevelopment Strategy update.

Commissioner Leone stated that the City already has –effective development policies in place, and new initiatives should take advantage of the Zoning Ordinance Update.

Vice Mayor Bjerke recommended that staff be careful in how the district strategies are characterized. The Strategy should clarify that staff's efforts on the Downtown will continue. The three new districts mentioned – Clayton Boulevard, West Concord, and Monument Boulevard – are the next districts that will receive priority for development of district strategies, but other districts are anticipated for the future, so the rest of Concord is not being excluded.

Commissioner Hoag commented that Monument Boulevard's district strategy could be similar to that of the Todos Santos Plaza area, with an ethnic flair.

Commissioner Leone stated that he likes an ethnic flavor and each district can be distinctive. Street signs could be different for each area and encourage all of the multi-cultural businesses there.

Mayor Hoffmeister would like to put the Economic Insights newsletter on-line. She would also like an e-mail database created to mail out newsletters and information.

Mayor Hoffmeister stated that she likes the City welcome letters signed by the Mayor and sent personally to new businesses. She thinks businesses like the letters and respond to them.

Commissioner Hoag commented that the City needs to be careful in attracting "green" industry, because it seems very similar to the "dot.com" industry in the late 1990s prior to the shakeout of that industry. The dot.com bust was tough on cities; so Concord shouldn't put all of its eggs in that basket. Concord needs to think of how it can attract businesses within the context of the statewide trend of many people migrating out of California. The City needs to think of this as an indicator of how it does business.

Vice Mayor Bjerke stated that the City needs to continue to improve its processes and be fair, reasonable, and hospitable to ensure success. Concord needs to make sure to help businesses succeed.

Mayor Hoffmeister emphasized that the City needs to make sure it is primed, ready and positioned as the shake out occurs. She noted that with the broad base of industry, diversification is key.

Alex Greenwood presented the next steps:

- July 1, 2009 - Planning Commission Meeting – Presentation of the Economic Vitality Strategy.
- July 27, 2009 – City Council Meeting – Presentation of the Economic Vitality Strategy.

Vice Mayor Bjerke stated that there needs to be a Plan B for the Bank of America space if the Bank of America Tech Center ever goes away. He wants to make sure the City is prepared for that day.

Commissioner Leone asked about the impact of traffic on the City as a barrier to businesses. Mass transit is needed, but it needs to be managed well. Concord has better traffic than others around it - staff needs to continue to tout that.

Paul Choissier commented that the City should emphasize BART, the County Airport, Concord's bicycle paths, and the Iron Horse Trail. Concord needs to emphasize BART's access to Todos

Santos Plaza. He asked if shopping centers were a district strategy in the past.

Mayor Hoffmeister would like to emphasize the County Airport and access to quality health care in Concord. They are key assets that need to be called out in marketing brochures and pieces.

ADJOURNMENT – 6:56 p.m.

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Distribution: City Council
Dan Keen, City Manager
Valerie Barone, Assistant City Manager
Craig Labadie, City Attorney
Mark Coon, Assistant City Attorney
Jim Forsberg, Director of Planning and Economic Development
John Montagh, Redevelopment and Housing Manager
Deborah Raines, Planning Manager
Alex Greenwood, Economic Development Manager
Joyce Seitz, Economic Development Specialist
Administrative Services

Economic Vitality Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The Economic Vitality Strategy sets the vision, goals, and priorities for all City efforts related to economic development. The Strategy is updated every five years, in coordination with the City's General Plan, Redevelopment Plan, and other policy documents.

By taking a long-term, comprehensive approach to economic development, the City of Concord seeks to:

- Enhance Concord's quality of life;
- Facilitate a stable, healthy business environment;
- Retain, attract, and expand businesses in strategic industries;
- Expand the City's tax base to ensure long-term fiscal stability;
- Provide efficient, effective government services to Concord businesses;
- Promote high-quality job opportunities;
- Maintain a highly-skilled, competitive workforce;
- Support entrepreneurship and small business opportunities;
- Revitalize Downtown and other business districts.

This 2009 version of the Economic Vitality Strategy was put together with the help of many local business leaders, residents, property owners and other stakeholders, who participated in a series of 14 meetings that were held in April- June 2009. The Strategy also incorporates data and analysis from the Contra Costa Council, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), and other sources.

CONCORD'S POSITION IN THE EAST BAY MARKET

Concord is the largest business center in Contra Costa County; and it is a destination for innovative and entrepreneurial businesses that require highly skilled labor. Concord offers the infrastructure and amenities that businesses need for success. Its vibrant business environment has attracted key firms and has created ideal conditions for local businesses to expand. The City's commitment to families and to the business community fosters a high quality of life with attractive residential neighborhoods, excellent public safety and services, convenient mass transit, abundant recreation and entertainment for all ages. Concord is a community of safe and friendly neighborhoods with an excellent park system, convenient shopping, diverse dining opportunities, and large preserves of scenic open space.

Concord is located in a highly competitive area, where there are many high-quality locations businesses can choose. However, Concord has distinguished itself as a premier business destination due to several key advantages:

- A central, convenient location;
- Best value for office/industrial space;
- Access to a tech-skilled workforce;
- An efficient, responsive, business-friendly government.

This 2009 update of the Vitality Strategy comes at a time when Concord faces several critical challenges and opportunities. On one hand, Concord has achieved some key successes in economic development since 2002, when the Vitality Strategy was last updated. These successes place Concord in an ideal position to significantly expand and upgrade existing businesses, and to attract new business. Some of the City's most notable achievements include:

- Opening of Renaissance, Centre Point, Legacy, and other high-end residential projects.
- Completion of John Muir Health's Core Laboratory and John Muir's 174,000 sq. ft. Concord Campus expansion.
- \$33 million remodel of Clayton Valley Shopping Center.
- Attraction of major regional retail tenants to Sunvalley Shopping Center, the Willows, and the Park & Shop Center.
- Attraction of key shops and restaurants to the downtown.
- Construction of NorthPointe Business Park and other office projects in North Concord.
- Increasing attendance of concerts and events at Todos Santos Plaza to more than 200,000 visitors per year, including the Concordstock public art project.
- Attracting key retailers and restaurants, including: Sport Chalet, Lowes, BJ's Brewhouse, 99 Ranch , E.J. Phair's, Seafood City and others.

Despite these successes, Concord's economy was affected by the 2008 nationwide recession, which resulted in over 10% unemployment and the closure of several major Concord businesses. Presently, Concord faces an array of challenges and opportunities for its economy, including:

- Building Concord's image/identity
- The Concord Community Reuse Project (former Concord Naval Weapons Station)
- Opportunities to attract emerging industries (e.g., cleantech, life sciences, etc.)
- Redevelopment of the area surrounding Downtown/Concord BART Station
- Changes in the regional retail market
- Large development-ready pads in North Concord, Downtown and elsewhere
- Consolidation of auto retail, financial services, and other employment sectors
- Statewide exodus of manufacturing

KEY INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Over the past 20 years, several industries have driven job growth in Concord (and Contra Costa County in general), such as manufacturing, construction, and information technology. These industries will continue to be important sources of jobs, but in some cases they are not expected to continue the rapid growth that was experienced previously. As a result, the City needs to identify additional industries that offer the potential for job growth in the future.

Looking forward to the next 5 - 20 years, several new industries are becoming increasingly important to Concord's economy and have the potential to become major drivers in employment. These industries include:

- Health Care
- Financial Services
- Retail
- Engineering

- Green/Clean-Tech/Energy
- Applied sciences
- Life Sciences / Biotechnology
- Professional & Business Services

These emerging industries may have special needs with respect to infrastructure, workforce development, Zoning and General Plan issues, and business services. The City will incorporate the needs of these key industries as it works to continuously improve its delivery of efficient, effective business services, and as it continues to update the Zoning Code (scheduled for completion in 2010) and other City policies. The City's Economic Development Program will also develop targeted marketing strategies and other initiatives – all in a coordinated effort to facilitate the growth of these industries in Concord. The means to accomplish this is discussed in the following section, which describes the strategic initiatives to be undertaken as part of the Vitality Strategy.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Goal #1: Develop and implement a comprehensive, integrated Economic Development Marketing Strategy to strengthen Concord's image and brand identity among key target industries

Objective 1.1: Develop and carry out an integrated Marketing and Public Information Campaign targeted to prospective new businesses, based on a well-defined branding strategy

- A. Market Research & Branding Strategy. Economic Development staff will conduct marketing research and develop a well-defined branding strategy for the City.
- B. City Website and Internet Marketing. Economic Development staff will comprehensively update, reorganize, re-brand and promote the City's Economic Development website. The City's Economic Development Program will carry out Internet advertising campaigns, as appropriate. Websites would be selected based on their ability to reach key groups that the City targets for business attraction. In addition, the City's Economic Development Program will consider initiatives to communicate the City's message using well-established community websites, social networking websites, blogs, webzines, and other websites.
- C. Broadcast & Mass-Media Strategies. As appropriate, Economic Development staff will carry out advertising campaigns on radio, Cable television, and other broadcast media that are selected based on their cost-effective ability to reach the geographic and psychographic groups that Concord wishes to target for attracting potential new businesses.
- D. Press & Publicity. The City's Economic Development Program will develop a 12-month press calendar, which will allow staff to plan in advance to issue press releases and/or media advisories. The goal would be to place positive coverage of Concord in the press at least once per month for an entire year. This would keep Concord active in the public's awareness for a sustained period. Economic Development staff will also develop proactive relationships with journalists and editors of key publications and websites, in order to cultivate and pitch favorable story ideas. Public relations

efforts would coordinate with the editorial calendars of key weekly/monthly publications, such as Via, Sunset, Southwest In-Flight (“Spirit”), Forbes, Wired, the San Francisco Business Times, Diablo Magazine and other key publications.

- E. Brochures & Trade Shows. The City’s Economic Development Program will redesign its line of brochures, maps and other collateral materials that are intended for prospective businesses, so that they have up-to-date content and are consistent with the City’s brand strategy. Economic Development staff could also reach existing local businesses using special inserts to the Economic Insight Newsletter and/or annual mailings of business license renewals, which are mailed to all 6,000 business license holders. In partnership with the East Bay Economic Development Administration and other support agencies, Economic Development staff will attend key trade shows and business events, and will plan meetings in advance in order to maximize the effectiveness of the attendance.

Objective 1.2: Develop partnerships with businesses and other government agencies to help market the Central Contra Costa region and to leverage the City’s limited marketing funds.

- A. Regional Internet Marketing Efforts. The City’s Economic Development Program has started a pilot program to partner with other cities to market central Contra Costa County as a destination for shopping, events, and recreation.
- B. Public Service Announcements. The City’s Economic Development Program will partner with BART to display public service announcements in their system to build awareness of Concord. Similarly, the Economic Development staff will explore Public Service Announcements with billboard companies (e.g., ClearChannel, CBS).
- C. Partnerships with Regional Retailers and Hotels. The City’s Economic Development Program will partner with Sunvalley Shopping Center, the Willows, local hotels, the auto dealership community, and other major sales tax generators and regional shopping centers to further promote Concord as a shopping and entertainment destination.

Objective 1.3: Integrate the City’s economic development branding strategy into non-advertising efforts throughout the City.

- A. Streetscape Image & Identity. Banners on major arterials (Clayton, Concord, Willow Pass, etc.) provide a cost-effective opportunity to promote the new brand image of Concord.
- B. Special Events. The City will continue to sponsor downtown promotions and cultural events at Todos Santos Plaza including the Farmer’s Market, Music Series, Halloween parade, holiday events and other special events.

Goal #2: Develop long-term, integrated strategies to target key emerging industries in Concord.

Objective 2.1: Develop strategies to facilitate and encourage the development of modern, high-quality office, flex-office, research, and industrial space that can attract and serve the needs of key industry clusters

- A. Facilitating Development Planning & Development Approval Process. The City's Economic Development Program will work with industry contacts to determine the site requirements, building requirements, infrastructure requirements, and other development standards that are needed in order to attract and foster the development of key industrial tenants in Concord. Using this data, Economic Development staff will work internally with Planning, Building, Engineering, Finance, Public Works, and other parts of the City to incorporate the needs of key industry clusters into the development planning and development approval processes.
- B. Targeted Marketing Efforts. As part of the marketing efforts described in Objective 1.1 above, the City's Economic Development Program will conduct outreach to prominent industry leaders, trade organizations, brokers, developers, and other influential representatives for each of the key industry clusters mentioned above.
- C. Planning for Life Cycle of Company Expansion. The City will pursue strategies to facilitate the business and real estate needs of emerging industries at different points in their growth. The goal will be for companies to feel confident that Concord is an excellent location to address their needs as they progress from the start-up phase to reaching maturity as a medium- to large-sized business occupying one or multiple facilities. This will require partnerships with local brokers and property owners; partnerships with the Contra Costa Small Business Development Center, East Bay EDA and other organizations serving small businesses; incorporating the long-term growth needs of key industries into planning for the Concord Community Reuse Plan, and other related efforts.

Objective 2.2: Enhance Educational and Workforce Development Opportunities

- A. Program Assessment and Facilitation. The City's Economic Development Program will continue to support the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, the Mt. Diablo Unified School District, EastBayWorks, along with the California Employment Development Department, California State East Bay – Concord, and other educational institutions in their effort to link the business community to local educational resources.
- B. Community Training. The City's Economic Development Program will work with Local, Regional and State Agencies who are focused on building a diversified training and retraining program to meet the rapidly changing technical and professional needs of the business community. The City's Economic Development Program will promote partnerships and support of the Mt. Diablo Unified School District, Diablo Valley College, EastBayWorks, Contra Costa Small Business Development Center, Workforce Development Board and other agencies in promoting their training programs and referral services.

Goal #3: District Strategies

The City's Economic Development Program will continue to implement its downtown revitalization strategy, and will begin developing comprehensive district strategies for all business districts in Concord. The key business districts to be focused upon initially will include:

- Clayton Road
- West Concord (bound roughly by Concord Ave., I-680 and Highway 242)
- Monument Boulevard
- Other districts as time and resources are available

Objective 3.1: Develop district strategies for Concord's key Districts

The City's Economic Development Program will develop and implement comprehensive district strategies for Clayton Road, West Concord, Monument Boulevard, and other Districts as time and resources provide. These strategies will incorporate the unique characteristics of each business area, promote the businesses currently operating in these areas and encourage reinvestment and development opportunities for business attraction efforts.

Objective 3.2: Continue Downtown Revitalization Efforts

- A. Downtown Management & Merchant Organization. The City's Economic Development Program will continue to support the activities of the Todos Santos Business Association in order to strengthen relationships between the City and the business community. Where possible, the City's Economic Development Program will develop programs to address the needs raised by this association in a proactive manner. In addition, the City will execute a comprehensive Downtown Management Program that addresses issues related to appearance, maintenance, safety and parking.
- B. Special Events. The City will continue to sponsor promotions and cultural events at Todos Santos Plaza including the Farmer's Market, Music Series, car shows, Halloween parade, and holiday events. The City will review opportunities to co-sponsor and/or present new special events in the downtown area that promote the downtown businesses, community identity, the arts, and are consistent with the businesses in the downtown.

Goal #4: Retain, Expand, Develop and Attract Business

Objective 4.1: Strengthen the positive business climate that supports the growth, development and prosperity of Concord's business community.

- A. Annual Business Survey. The City's Economic Development Program will continue to seek the input of businesses on an annual basis through a business survey. The survey will gather information about existing firms, evaluate the business climate and identify business problems, business opportunities, and expanding or relocating firms.

- B. Customer Service. The City of Concord will continue to seek ways to further expedite permit decisions, coordinate inter-jurisdictional permit reviews, speed, clarify and ease communication between applicants and permitting agencies, and provide training and support to further implement improvements to customer service.
- C. Ombudsman and Information Services. Economic Development staff will continue to serve as an ombudsman and information resource to existing businesses, providing information, direction, advice and documents on all issues pertaining to doing business in Concord and Contra Costa County.
- D. Business Communications. The City's Economic Development Program will continue to regularly communicate with residents, businesses, property owners and other stakeholders and partners using electronic media, print sources, flyers, advertisements, radio, television, e-mail notifications, and other appropriate avenues to ensure information of interest is provided to Concord's residential and business community.
- E. Business Recognition Award Program. In cooperation with the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, the City will continue to honor throughout the year companies that have shown significant growth or innovation, have longevity in Concord, support Concord's community, are major employers, or are major revenue generators.
- F. Welcome Letters. The City's Economic Development Program will continue to send welcome letters, signed by the Mayor and City Manager, to targeted new businesses in Concord in order to make them feel welcome, promote cooperation with City Hall, and provide them with a resource to contact when issues arise that affect the success of the business.

Objective 4.2: Provide assistance to attract, retain, and expand businesses in Concord

- A. Goodwill Visits. The City's Economic Development Program will continue to conduct goodwill visits to major employers and sales tax generators to build strong, long-term relationships, improve communication between the City and the business community, demonstrate Concord's concern for its existing major businesses, and to encourage these businesses to remain and expand in Concord.
- B. Business Retention Visits. The City's Economic Development Program will also continue to conduct business retention/expansion/welcome visits to small businesses that are expanding, new to the community, or in a growth sector in order to build a rapport with the business community, encourage communication between the public and private sectors and to encourage these businesses to remain, expand in Concord and promote the City to their business colleagues.
- C. Participation in business events and community building activities. The City's Economic Development Program will support local business organizations' efforts that encourage business leaders to contribute to the community by having staff serve on appropriate task forces and special committees, contribute to projects and sponsor events.

- D. Home Based Businesses. The City will continue to support the development of entrepreneurs in home based businesses by providing business licenses and home based business permits to these businesses. The City will encourage and foster the development of “executive suites” facilities and other services to promote home based businesses in their expansion into storefronts and offices.
- E. Small Business Seminars. Economic Development staff will continue to facilitate small business seminars (“Cash in on Concord” events) and other appropriate programs with its partners such as the Contra Costa Small Business Development Center, Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Development Board, Todos Santos Business Association, The Federal Technology Center, Small Business Administration, in order to provide new information, resources and trends on marketing, planning, management, advertising, financing and other business topics of interest to Concord’s small business community. These events will also continue to promote local business-to-business transactions and the City’s “Buy Concord” initiatives.
- F. Business Attraction. The City’s Economic Development Program will continue to pursue attraction programs to broaden Concord’s business and economic base (including business-to-business sales) by identifying sites and available space that would be appropriate to businesses in all sectors and their respective representatives. The City’s Economic Development Program will aggressively work with brokers, realtors, site selectors, the East Bay Economic Development Alliance, Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce and the Todos Santos Business Association to evaluate and encourage opportunities for new businesses that enhance our economic base. The City’s Economic Development Program will also continue to work with brokers and property owners on land assembly opportunities for larger development projects.