



A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Bay County, Michigan

Whittaker Report – September 2004
Recommendations with
2012 Updates



Methodology

- Task 1: Discovery and Assessment
- Task 2: Goal Setting/Strategy Development
- Task 3: Target Programs
- Task 4: Implementation Plan
- Task 5: Strategy Review/ Performance Monitoring

Recommendations

23 Recommendations were
made for community-wide
implementation

Product Marketing Recommendation No. 1

- Set Target Priorities to match local areas of opportunity with growing, emerging technology and industries

Five Future Technology Targets:

- Mobile Entrepreneurs
 - Manufacturing
 - Food Processing
 - Plastics
 - High End Office
- Long Term Targets To Expand Technology Base & Diversify Economy:
 - Medical Equipment Manufacturing
 - Advanced Materials
 - Fabricated Metal Products
 - Industrial Machinery

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay Future Inc. (BFI) is currently partnering with Midland Tomorrow and Saginaw Future Inc. to identify targets related to the solar industry.
- ✓ GreatLakesBaySites.com was created to market available land and buildings. The site also includes demographic and industry data to aid in decision making process.

Product Marketing Recommendation No. 2

- A metro-wide statistical database is needed, following IEDC guidelines.

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay Future Inc. has developed a comprehensive database on county and regional statistics and regularly provides customized demographic reports for commercial and industrial prospects.
- ✓ The Bay Area Chamber in conjunction with Midland and Saginaw Chambers prints the highly regarded “3 Point Perspective” with demographics for the Great Lakes Bay Region.

Product Marketing Recommendation No. 3

- Examples of positive Union relations should be documented.

ACTION:

- ✓ GM Powertrain management and UAW worked to create new opportunities for growth at Bay City facility.
- ✓ Media coverage of IBEW and UAW construction and placement of beachfront walkways at State Park.
- ✓ Ironworkers building on the piers for the dock infrastructure at the future Naval Ship Museum site.

Product Marketing Recommendation No. 4

- Improve reputation of area's public schools

ACTION:

- ✓ School Improvement bonds pass; Bay City Schools 2006; Bangor Schools 2006; Pinconning Schools 2007.
- ✓ Bay City Schools (BCS) complete 1st year ('07) of 3 year construction at Central and Western HS; Bond for '08 will continue and complete high schools and begin Handy Middle and elementary schools.
- ✓ BCS District awarded a state Parental Involvement and Education (PIE) grant partnering with Chemical Bank to help parents develop skills for encouraging pre-K children prepare for school; reading and math.
- ✓ The Bay Area Chamber's Business Education Partnership is one of strongest in the state, with representatives from the area's 7 districts along with SVSU, Delta, Davenport, MEA, and area business leaders meeting monthly.
- ✓ Host the annual Business Education Forum.

Product Marketing Recommendation No. 5

- Improve image of vocational technical education for students who are not college bound

ACTION:

- ✓ Technology and course offerings prompted the Bay ISD to make an appropriate name change from the vocational Skill Center to the Career Center.
- ✓ BC Schools partners with the Chamber for a popular co-op program, matching approximately 200 area high school students each year with 25-30 business in the area for office work, pre-professional, trades, and marketing experience.

Product Marketing Recommendation No. 6

- An annual gathering of national site location consultants and other allies should be hosted to inform them of advantages of doing business in Bay County

ACTION:

- ✓ The Bay Area Chamber hosts the annual Bay Area on the Go! to recognize the success stories of the past year and to showcase the areas potential to affiliated business partners.
- ✓ Bay Future, Inc. participates in site selector activities including training and site selector visits to Bay County and the Great Lakes Bay Region.

Product Improvement Recommendation No. 7

- Bay County should work with the state for countywide high-speed internet wireless technology.

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay County currently has wireless access to townships and emergency – fire departments (911) except for 2 northern townships.
- ✓ WiFi in Pinconning Park for campers.
- ✓ Currently working to provide increased opportunities for data sharing between units.

Product Improvement Recommendation No. 8

- A community college should start a Small Business Incubator for target business start up needs.

ACTION:

- ✓ The Mid-Michigan Innovation Center is a newly formed privately funded organization serving entrepreneurs and start-up companies in the industrial sectors within the region. MMIC has formed partnerships with the Great Lakes Bay Regional Chambers, Bay and Saginaw Future, Inc. and Midland Tomorrow, SVSU, Delta College, Bay County Growth Alliance and other economic development organizations.
- ✓ The Great Lakes Bay Region is served by the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center hosted by Delta College. The Federally funded and locally supported program provides confidential/no cost counseling, research and training for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Product Improvement Recommendation No. 9

- Bay County needs to increase available prepared sites and available properties.

ACTION:

- ✓ Marquette Industrial Park: The City of Bay City took a 20 acre not-development-ready parcel (on side road) and brought full utility service on line including high capacity electrical, water and sewer with new signage on main frontage for a highly visible move-on ready property.
- ✓ Valley Center Technology Park has shovel ready parcels
- ✓ Market Place Corporate Center has shovel ready parcels.
- ✓ A virtual spec building is being promoted through BFI for two sites: Monitor Township and the City of Bay City.

Product Improvement Recommendation No. 10

- Conduct a real estate analysis to make appropriate manufacturing, distribution and office shell buildings available.

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay Future Inc. has conducted inventories on available properties and has developed its own commercial real estate database.
- ✓ GreatLakesBaySites.com is tied into Zoom Prospector which is a nation-wide database .

Product Improvement Recommendation No. 11

- A uniform policy should be developed and adopted by the various governmental jurisdictions on offering incentives to new and existing business based on measurable criteria with compliance criteria.

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay Future put together a sample packet for tax abatements and is working on presenting it to the local municipalities.
- ✓ Using City of Bay City's policy as a best practice for encouraging growth opportunities.

Product Improvement Recommendation No. 12

- Need for area homebuilders to provide more executive level.

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay Area Realtors describes that most new homes built in developing areas of Monitor, Williams, Frankenlust, Hampton and Bangor are \$200K or higher, addressing this need.

Product Improvement Recommendation No. 13

- Bay County should work to create public beach access to Saginaw Bay.

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay County Commissioners, particularly Krygier and Coonan have worked to create new public beach access on our existing beach by removing the obstructing muck, cleaning the sand and placing walkways to allow people to out to water past the muck.
- ✓ Pinconning Park beach access improvements are currently underway to demolish the old water treatment plant on the beach.
- ✓ The Chamber of Commerce is supportive of identifying a possible new beach access site for redevelopment.

Product Improvement Recommendation No. 14

- A Venture Capital program created through public/private partnerships should be pursued for economic growth

ACTION:

The Mid-Michigan Innovation Center along with BFI, the Growth Alliance and area sponsors, are bringing together more than 60 community and business leaders to participate in forming an Angel Investment Network in the mid-Michigan area. An Angel Investment Network is a group of individuals and companies who leverage their capital to support entrepreneurs and startup companies.

The Growth Alliance serves as an Angel investor along with providing gap financing for projects in the Bay county and tri-county area. The Growth Alliance provided funding for the required match on the Depot renovation project for the Great Lakes Center Foundation to qualify for the Michigan Magnet Fund.

Organizational Improvement

Recommendation No. 15

- It is recommended that Bay Future Inc (BFI) be the primary economic development agency responsible for recruiting business to the area, and should consider a regional national marketing campaign.

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay Future Inc. has established itself as the community lead in economic development recruitment and regional marketing.
- ✓ Bay Future along with Saginaw Future and Midland Tomorrow have marketed the Great Lakes Bay Region at several trade shows across the United States and in Asia and Europe.

Organizational Improvement Recommendation No. 16

- Bay Future Inc operating budget, (from public and private sources) should be at least \$400,000 annually with no less than 3 full time employees.

ACTION:

- ✓ BFI increased their staffing to 3 FTE's in 2006.
- ✓ Bay Future has continued to add new investors and increase their existing investor contributions.

Organizational Improvement Recommendation No. 17

- Bay Future, Inc. should create a comprehensive web site to include the latest technology that customers may benefit from including GIS technology.

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay County Community Development worked to provide the needed connections and first year GIS Arcview license agreement for Bay Future to have real time access to web based parcel data for site selection purposes.

Organizational Improvement Recommendation No. 18

- A community wide Strategic Plan and long term vision for all facets of the community is needed to avoid piecemeal decisions and community discourse.

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and the Bay Area Community Foundation have sponsored a county-wide strategic plan.
- ✓ Efforts are currently underway.

Organizational Improvement

Recommendation No. 19

- As part of visioning, more dialogue should be held regarding consolidation of services amongst the many municipalities in Bay County.

ACTION:

- ✓ The Bay County Executive Tom Hickner has held three (3) leadership forums to identify potential areas for sharing resources and cooperative efforts between units. Potential avenues focus on electronic records back-up and data sharing using GIS technology.
- ✓ The BC Schools and ISD have developed a shared data processing computer system for accounting, Human Resources, student records, and payroll, resulting in \$500,00 a year in cost savings. On-going dialogue continues quarterly identifying opportunities for consolidation where it makes sense.
- ✓ ISD hosts a Districts- wide Substitute Teacher Tracking and Calling system which is shared by other Districts resulting in a cost savings of \$200,000 year.

Organizational Improvement Recommendation No. 20

- The area's economic development partners should hold formalized training once a year for government and elected officials, the business community, and the general public to orient the community on the fundamentals and foundations of economic development.

ACTION:

- ✓ BFI has sponsored speakers and seminars on economic development issues. Topics included government contracting, targeted development financing tactics, foreign trade zones, and starting a small business.

Organizational Improvement Recommendation No. 21

- The area development offices should work to create a “one stop” office for business licenses and permits.

ACTION:

- ✓ Several local units are discussing a possible consolidation of services for building permits, northern townships use a joint building inspector in a consolidated inspection office.

Further work is needed on this recommendation.

Organizational Improvement Recommendation No. 22

- The community should create a formalized business retention program.

ACTION:

- ✓ Bay Future heads up an effective retention program for business' within Bay County, making approximately 60 calls a year.
- ✓ The County works with local units on environmental and land use issues and community development grants to encourage quality of place and retention of business.
- ✓ The Chamber works with the City, County and BFI to promote the area and support member business needs.

Organizational Improvement Recommendation No. 23

- An annual intercity visit program should be held where community representatives can learn from another US city.

ACTION:

- ✓ The Chamber has offered to lead the planning of a visit to the city of Racine, Wisconsin.