

## Unity Economic Development Center: Joliet's District 4 & 5 Spirit of Pride

Economic Center for Medium and Small Businesses

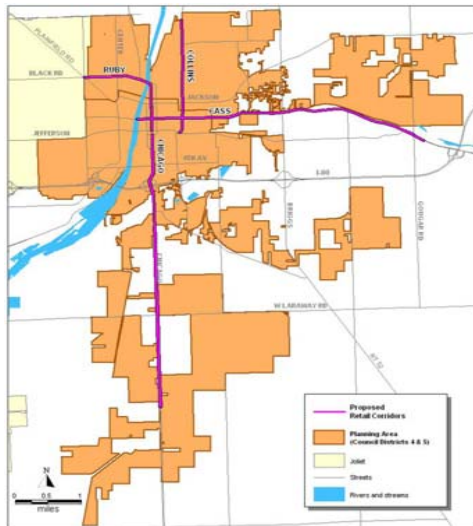


# Unity Economic Development Center



# UNITY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

## LEAD AGENCY



*To achieve implementation of the Quality of Life Plan for Joliet Council Districts 4 and 5. Unity CDC will share direct responsibility for implementing most of the proposals of the Plan, and its members will track progress on those proposals for which the Unity CDC will not have direct implementation responsibility. Unity CDC will have a range of functions and many specific tasks, but its core mission will be to serve as the organization that has the trust of the community and the backing of the City to see that the multi-faceted Quality of Life Plan is carried out.*

— UCDC mission statement

### Planning Task Force

More than 500 Joliet neighborhood residents, business owners, institutional leaders and youth came together in year 2006 to discuss and contribute to this quality of life plan for our community. Unity Community Development Corporation thanks all participants.

In 2006 Planning Area community leaders, eager to increase the pace of neighborhood improvement, formed the Quality of Life (QOL) Task Force. The QOL Task Force and the City of Joliet administration agreed to carry out a community-based planning process with a team of consultants in order to create a holistic plan for improving the lives of Planning Area residents. The Plan would take an integrated approach to quality of life improvements in regard to housing,

recreation, transportation, retail development, industrial development and employment, public infrastructure and land use, education, and human capital issues that encompassed health care, crime prevention, and the needs of youth and the elderly. The Plan would lay out a strategy for leveraging the Planning Area's assets to overcome its problems through a series of proposals for action, on three-year and ten-year time horizons.

## UNITY Economic Development Center

### INTRODUCTION OF PLANNING AREA

The Quality of Life plan presents an action program for improving residents' quality of life in the Fourth and Fifth City Council Districts of the City of Joliet. These districts are the Planning Area for this project. The Planning Area is the historic core of Joliet, and its geography and built environment reflect the city's history. The Planning Area lies along both banks of the Des Plaines River, the original artery of exploration and commerce that brought French voyagers here as early as the 17th Century and the first mills and kilns in the 1840s. From the mid 19th Century the Rock Island Railroad, paralleling the river, provided a powerful industrial artery into Chicago and helped fuel Joliet's growth. The Planning Area contains Joliet's traditional downtown, City Hall, the Will County Seat, and a number of graceful historic buildings including Union Station, the Joliet Public Library, Joliet Township Central High School, and a number of restored commercial properties and private homes.

The Planning Area's landscape encompasses the large vacant site of the US Steel works and a district of obsolete industrial buildings and vacant industrial properties. From the 1940s to the 1970s industrial businesses with well paid labor made the Planning Area boom. Industrial salaries built the solid housing stock and vital residential neighborhoods that still make up most of the Planning Area. Beginning in the 1940s industrial jobs attracted waves of African American immigrants to the Planning Area from the Deep South. By the 1950s African Americans were becoming the predominant ethnic group in the Forest Park neighborhood in the northeast portion of the Planning Area and in the southeast neighborhoods of District Five. African Americans were also beginning to move from the factory floors to populate the professions, with the first African American doctors, attorneys, and judges practicing in Joliet.

By the 1970s Latino immigrants pursuing jobs were settling east and north of Downtown. By the 1990s Latinos had become the Planning Area's fastest growing ethnic group, and Latino entrepreneurs were beginning to establish a successful new commercial district along Collins Street. By 2000 the ethnic composition of the Planning Area's population of 71,436 included: 45% non-Latino Whites, 27% African Americans, and 26% Latino residents. But in the 1970s and 1980s the contraction of heavy industry that devastated so many Midwestern American communities took a heavy toll on the Planning Area. By the mid 1980s unemployment in Joliet topped 26%. In the wake of joblessness drug addiction and crime spread in some neighborhoods of the Planning Area. At the same time, customers were beginning to abandon stores in Downtown Joliet for new shopping centers to the west. Many Joliet area residents began to regard Downtown and large parts of the Planning Area as unattractive, even dangerous places.

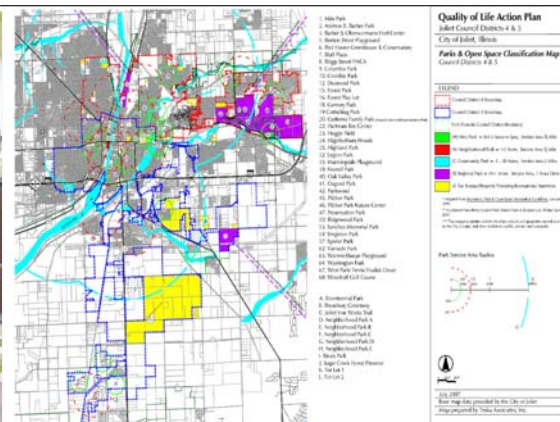
# UNITY Economic Development Center

## JOLIET QUALITY OF LIFE PLAN

Joliet Quality of Life Plan – November 5, 2007

Since the early 1990s conditions in the Planning Area have been improving as a consequence of some favorable economic trends, determined actions by City Government, and individual and institutional decisions. The expansion of population and industrial/logistics businesses from Cook County has stimulated the Will County economy, particularly along rail and expressway routes. The location of two riverboat casinos has given the City of Joliet resources to address its redevelopment challenges.

The City has carried out an aggressive program of expansion west past the I-55 Expressway, incorporating locations for large scale commercial development and prosperous new neighborhoods, and using its expanded resources to support Downtown revitalization efforts, infrastructure improvements, and social service programs in the Planning Area. Important institutions including the University of St. Francis, Joliet Junior College, and Silver Cross Hospital decided to remain and grow in the Planning Area. Local residents including minority entrepreneurs have built successful businesses in the Planning Area. Human service and faith-based organizations have secured local support and created programs to assist Planning Area neighborhoods and residents. Capable residents have committed themselves to their neighborhoods and assumed positions of leadership in local organizations.



## Economic Center

## VISION

**Mission:**

***Provide knowledge and finances to small and medium sized businesses in the 4th and 5th Districts.***

***We will also provide these businesses with certifications and assistance with business planning and accounting.***

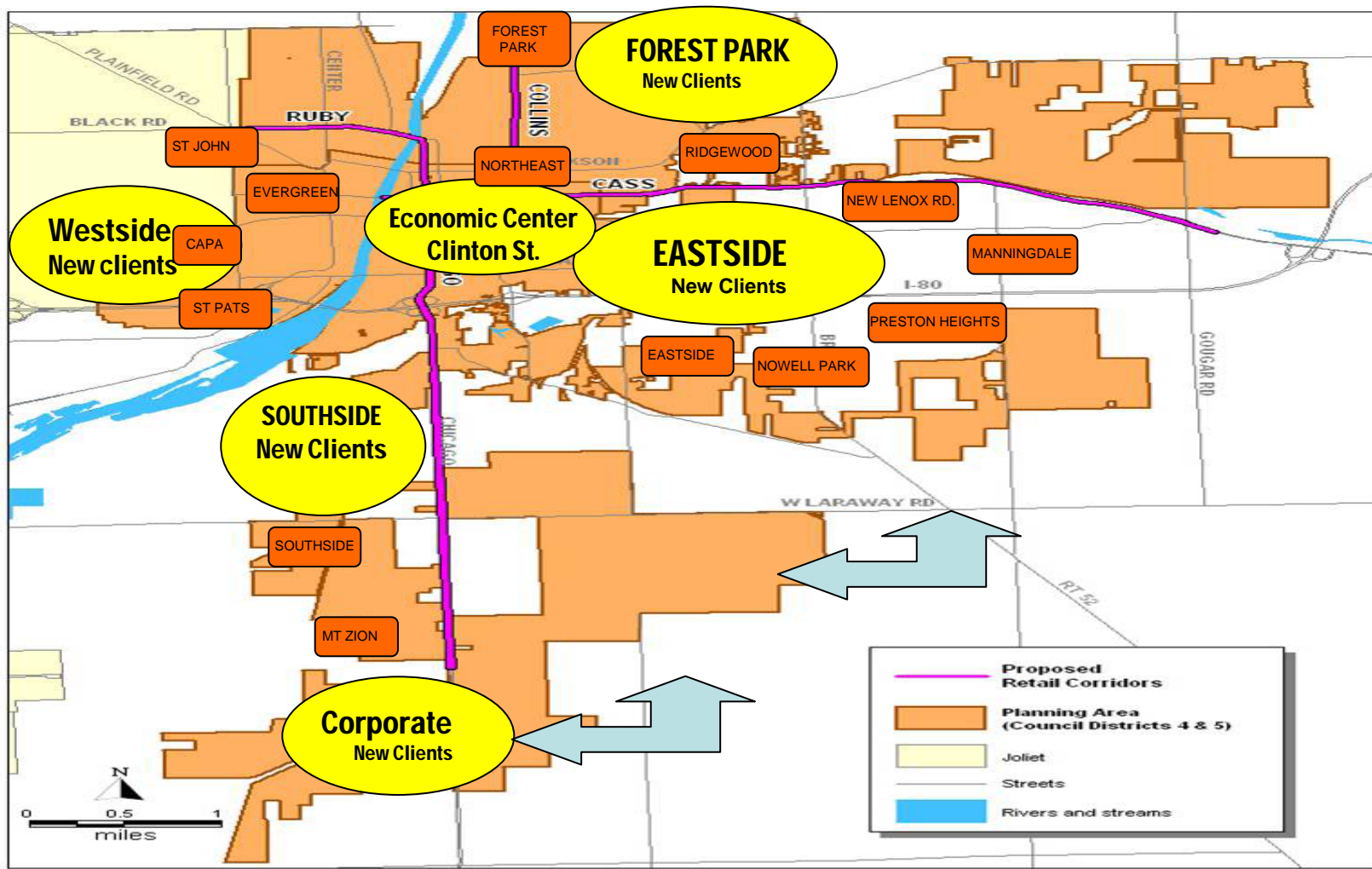
**Vision:**

***To develop and grow 30 businesses in the District area. These businesses will experience growth patterns that will exceed 50% per year over the next three years. Unity will measure growth on three criteria, revenues, number of customers, and customer satisfaction scores.***



# Economic Development Center

## KEY PROJECTS



## Economic Development Center

### STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

#### **STRATEGY 1 To Validate Small/Medium Businesses in Area**

- 1.1 Will have an off site office and hire a Program Manager as the leader of the program. The manager will be supported by support staff and several consultants.
- 1.2 The minimum budget for this program is \$ 131,400
- 1.3 Will have our member businesses in development program that will include a certification programs for MBE, WMBE, and etc.
- 1.4 Program Manager and staff will conduct weekly workshops on business development, accounting, sales, training, staffing, technology, improving process, and financial climate influences.
- 1.5 When members have certified and completed 40 hours of training, they will be given a "Unity Certification" award & published to the community as such.
- 1.6 Each member will be required to attend 8 hours of additional outside training on business related topics to maintain the "Unity Certification" status.

#### **STRATEGY 2 To Secure Funding to Support and Group Businesses**

- 2.1 The funding group will be led by Sheri Gibson who has extensive experience in funding and has worked with 80 sources in the past.
- 2.1 Unity will direct partnership with DCEO, Banks, SBA, and 20 other foundations, grants, and governmental funding. The goal will be to accumulate \$1,000,000 for our member businesses.
- 2.2 Unity is negotiating a \$620,000 line of credit for our member Businesses by June 2009.



## Economic Development Center

### STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS

#### STRATEGY 3 Train Businesses to Improve Acumen, and Sustain Business

3.1 Design system for business development with office, program management and staff. The system will include people, processes, space, technology, and educators.

3.2 EDC will have consultants from several businesses work with members on a “one-on-one” basis to develop the member’s business and planning processes.

3.3 A service requirement or consisting workshops, seminars, and visits to other companies will be a necessary requirement for each member business

3.4 We will outsource five business courses and develop five in house business courses designed specifically for the business owner and his/her key personnel

3.4 This process should all enable Unity to accept new business into the program and in year 2 we will create and develop twenty new business members.

3.5 A measurable customer satisfaction program will be developed and analyzed semi annually for each member (See 4.6)

3.6 Yearly review should result in 90% of businesses being sustained and 80% of businesses experiencing growth





**STRATEGY 4 Loyalty Incentive- Develop a special pricing and guarantee service program for Districts 4 &5.**

- 4.1 Prepare and present to all residents a loyalty program to encourage them to patronize our member businesses . This program must be comprehensive and inclusive of all types of service and product businesses. Unity believes that District residents should and must buy from our members
- 4.2 Develop a discount coupon program on the corporate website for residents to use with Unity Certified Vendors. Coupons should be a minimum of 10% off of services and product. Coupons will be transferable to people outside our residential area.
- 4.3 Develop Unity Certification phone book of members consisting of businesses and contractors. The listing will be complete with website and a backup plan from the Unity Office.
- 4.4 Prepare and present a Special Warranty Program for resident services in the district for our residents. This warranty program should exceed current warranty period for products and services.

4.5 Create an advertising/marketing program to support this loyalty program. This program should include both newspapers, local TV, and magazine advertising. Total spend should be \$1,000 per month for advertising

4.6 Conduct extensive survey for customer services with residents who have received services and have utilized coupons and special warranty. Satisfaction goal will be 95%. (see 3.5)

4.7 "Business of the Month" will be showcased in the monthly newsletter. Will have an annual awards banquet. Will present an award to a business or businesses annually of choice for five categories. Nominations will be taken from the Board of Directors and the Program Manager, and the winners will be announced at the banquet.



## Economic Development Center

### KEY TO PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

#### To Supply new opportunities for members of the Economic Center

5.0 Develop new revenue opportunities for members of the economic development center.

5.1 Secure partnership contracts with city, state and federal for future business support for our members. Would like to average \$500,000 in revenue per year from service and construction contracts from these entities.

5.2 Contract with 20 Unity Business Partners Companies to develop agreement with them to gain contracts for our members.

5.3 Interview 40 additional non Unity Partners for additional opportunities for our members. Sign agreements when possible, but at least secure an order for products and services from 25 non partner companies.

5.4 With the Unity and Non-Unity Partners, create, develop and implement “aside” program for members based on minority participation and ownership.

5.5 Dedicate ten hours a week seeking out new opportunities for additional work networking with other non profits and consultants.

5.6 Develop three workshops on enjoying the prosperity and revamping retirement plans. Sometimes growth causes owners to work harder and not smarter, so, we must prevent that and make sure the extra profits are saved.

5.7 As productivity increases, members will be expected to increase staff salaries and benefits. Business technology should be measured and reviewed quarterly.

# Unity Economic Development Center

## SCHEDULES AND PRIORITIES

### STRATEGY 1: ESTABLISH LINE OF CREDIT

ID	UNITY IMPLEMENTATION STEPS	Start	Finish	Duration	2008			2009																
					Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec					
1	Initial meeting with First Midwest and Unity CDC	9/15/2008	9/19/2008	5d																				
2	Second meeting with Jim Rolf and Bank	1/5/2009	1/6/2009	2d																				
3	Determine Agenda Meeting-Consultants	1/20/2009	1/21/2009	2d																				
4	Consortium reviews of Unity proposals	2/16/2009	2/16/2009	1d																				
5	Consortiums and Unity meet to discuss progress	2/16/2009	2/17/2009	2d																				
6	Banks vote on Unity's credit line	3/18/2009	3/19/2009	2d																				
7	Unity and Bank consortium to sign agreement	3/20/2009	3/23/2009	2d																				
8	Unity and Jim Rolf make media announcement.	4/6/2009	5/7/2009	24d																				
9	Unity Economic Center Opens for business	5/18/2009	7/17/2009	45d																				
10	Unity makes first phase of loans	6/29/2009	8/31/2009	46d																				

## Economic Development

### Budget:

Salaries - \$45,000

Benefits- 5,000

Rent- \$16,500

Supplies- \$6,000

Materials- \$4,000

Leasehold- \$2,000

Phone & Communication- \$24,000

Electric- \$1,200

Consultants- \$24,000

Administration- \$25,000

**Grand Total \$131,000**

## Outcomes

- 30 businesses are in growth mode and experience growth of more than 50%
- All 30 businesses have a detailed business plan
- All businesses have union and non-union affiliations
- Our business owners have a new winning attitude and a renewed sense of hope and prosperity
- Secure \$500,000 in grants for staff and programs
- Secure \$620,000 from six banks to develop line of credit for member businesses
- Businesses are graded and viewed as professional by the District residents
- Businesses are involved in Federal, State, and City contracts in addition to private revenue opportunities
- Businesses are deriving 50% of revenue from District residents- 200 new jobs are created from these businesses



Organizations that have been or will be approached to implement this plan include:

- DCEO
- First Midwest Bank
- Harris Bank
- Chase Bank
- Bank of America
- Chicago Community Loan Fund
- Neighborhood Center Technology (NCT)
- Centerpointe Properties
- Will County Community Trust
- Empress Casino
- Indicom Electric
- Black Contractors Organization
- Warren Sharp Community Center
- Will County
- City of Joliet
- IDOT
- Illinois Department Transportation
- Unity CDC Human Capital Center
- Unity Economic Development Center
- State of Illinois Treasurer Office
- Planning area Churches
- Neighborhood Councils
- SBA
- Latino Business Council

