

## Economic Development Strategic Planning

By *Frederick L. Hamilton, DPA, CEcD/EDFP*

### PREPARING FOR AN INDUSTRIAL LOCATION PROJECT IN ENTERPRISE, ALABAMA

**This article shows how economic development strategic planning is the foundation for planning for economic growth and positioning a local community, region, or state to be competitive in the global economy.** The city of Enterprise, Alabama, developed and implemented an economic development strategic plan and used the plan as a guide for attracting an industrial project. The city was successful in attracting HS&AA, a tier one Hyundai supplier that initially created 350 new jobs and \$20 million in capital investment. The company is in the process of expanding and estimates 250 new jobs and a capital investment of \$20 million.

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# economic development

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

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### INTRODUCTION

**e**conomic development strategic planning is still a very important component in developing a successful economic development program that will allow communities to compete in the global economy. Local, regional, and state officials must utilize economic development strategic planning for a clear direction on the best economic development practices for economic opportunities. According to Darling and Bittel (1991):

Strategic planning is a framework providing a systematic approach to planning for future development and allocating needed resources for anticipated changes. Ordinary planning goal setting usually looks at the past and bases the future on historic trends, and then bases planning resource allocation on anticipated changes.

The city of Enterprise, Alabama, through the economic development strategic planning process created an environment conducive for an industrial location. HS&AA, a tier one supplier for the Hyundai Motor Company, began producing automobile parts for Hyundai in January 2005. The location of HS&AA to Enterprise provided diversification to the local economy as well as many economic stimulus effects. This article discusses the economic development strategic planning process and how this process led to Enterprise creating an environment conducive for an industrial location project. The article provides an overview of the economic development strategic planning process, which includes initiating and organizing the process, analyzing the community situation,



HS&AA's facility, which is the 50,000 S.F. shell building built as part of the recommendations from the economic development strategic plan. The building was financed by Alabama Power Company's speculative building program.

formulating the plan, implementing the planning process, and evaluating the process and its results. It describes the city of Enterprise's economic development strategic plan and focuses on the Hyundai Motor Company location to the state of Alabama. The article concludes with an overview of the HS&AA location to Enterprise.

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### OVERVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

According to Albertson-Zenor & Raftery (1993):

Strategic planning has become an almost magical phrase in the 1990s. Used since the 1960s by industry, the concept has spread to schools, municipalities, universities, and even churches

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use today. Simply put, strategic planning is a process: a set of concepts, procedures, and tools designed to assist a group in meeting the needs of its organization or a community in changing its environment.

The economic development strategic planning process provides a mechanism for evaluating various aspects of the planning area so that strategies can be developed to make the community, region, or state more competitive in the global economy.

Kolzow (1991) presents five components to the economic development strategic planning process. This process includes the following:

1. Initiating and organizing the process;
2. Analyzing the community's situation;
3. Formulating the plan;
4. Implementing the planning process; and
5. Evaluating the process and its results.

## INITIATING AND ORGANIZING THE PROCESS

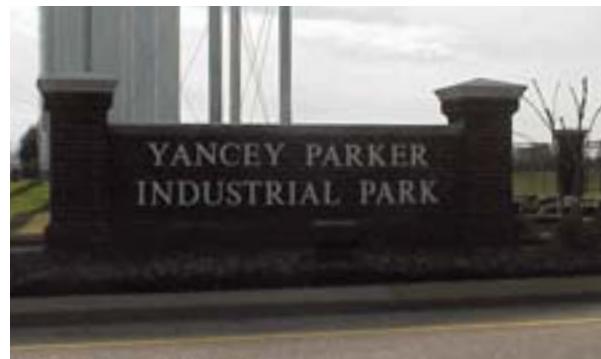
One of the most important steps in the economic development strategic planning process is starting the process. Normally, the leaders in the community will initiate the process by organizing an initial meeting with the stakeholders in the area that will undergo the planning process. Key stakeholders must be identified and encouraged to participate in the economic development strategic planning process. According to Albertson-Zenor and Raftery (1993), "a stakeholder is any person, group or organization that can place a claim on a community's attention, resources, or output, or is affected by that output".

The organization of the planning team is usually inspired by the desire to understand the economic opportunities of the local community and to establish direction on how to achieve desired economic opportunities. It is very important that a lead organization is identified for the planning process. This organization may come from the community, a consulting firm, local college, or university. According to USDA Rural Development (1998), "This organization may provide meeting space, telephones, computers, copiers, fax machines, secretary support, or other things the community needs".

It is also important to identify a facilitator early in the process. It is highly recommended that the facilitator come from outside of the organization. McNamara (1999) gives several reasons why the facilitator should come from outside the organization. These reasons are as follows:

1. Your organization has not conducted a strategic plan before.
2. For a variety of reasons, previous strategic planning was not deemed to be successful.
3. There appears to be a wide range of ideas and/or concerns among organization members about strategic planning and current organizational issues to be addressed in the plan.
4. There is no one in the organization whom members feel has sufficient facilitation skills.

5. No one in the organization feels committed to facilitating strategic planning for the organization.
6. Leaders believe that an inside facilitator will either inhibit participation from others or will not have the opportunity to fully participate in planning themselves.
7. Leaders want an objective voice, i.e., someone who is not likely to have a strong predisposition about the organization's strategic issues and ideas.



*The entrance into the Yancey Parker Industrial Park, which is the location of HS&AA.*

## ANALYZING THE COMMUNITY'S SITUATION

In order to develop a clear understanding of the economic development goals of the community, the planning team should conduct a thorough analysis. Kolzow (2000) states, "Before a community can plan for where it wants to go, it must know where it is. It is often difficult to see the "forest for the trees," so it is important to access the current situation as comprehensively as possible".

The process of analyzing the community consists of, but is not limited to, a thorough analysis of issues such as quality of life, education system, local government, infrastructure system, labor, transportation, utilities, real estate, market, as well as other important attributes of the community. Darling and Bittel (1991) state:

Since the key ingredient of strategic planning is the development of a plan based on anticipated future changes, the planning group needs all relevant social and economic information. Envisioning the future, understanding the competition and analyzing local and outside factors are necessary to identify key issues affecting the political unit.

The planning team can be divided into small committees to study the various issues identified above in order to provide the analysis needed to develop the economic development strategic plan.

## FORMULATING THE PLANNING PROCESS

The visioning process is one of the key components to formulating the economic development plan. Members who serve on the planning team should have a vision for the community and want to see the area grow in prosperity. Kolzow (1991) states, "A visioning for the com-

munity is an ideal and unique image of the future. It incorporates a view of a future condition that would be better, in some important ways, than what now exists".

Formulating the economic development strategic planning process is a key component in creating an economic development plan that will lead to sound economic opportunities. According to the World Bank Website (2006):

As part of the LED strategy, a shared economic vision for the community and LED goals, objectives, programs, projects and actions will be developed. This process ensures that all major stakeholder groups are given the opportunity to define what is to be achieved, how it will be achieved, who will be responsible and the timeframes associated with the implementation of the LED strategy. Most importantly, the LED strategy and action plans must be finely assessed against the staff resource capacity to carry them out, as well as budgetary constraints.

It is very important in the planning process that goals for the area of study be identified so that strategies to achieve the goals can be adequately studied to the point of various recommendations. It is important that the members of the planning team be broken into smaller groups or committees to study and evaluate various components of the planning area. According to Woods (2006):

Key issues are those that will influence the direction of community economic development efforts. A complete set of basic data may indicate some key issues.

They may be things the community can do something about, such as streets, the sewer system or the attitude of the citizens toward change.

## IMPLEMENTING THE PLANNING PROCESS

Many times, great plans are produced only to collect dust on the shelf. How futile it is to call community leaders together to form a great planning team and produce a great plan that is never implemented. Woods (2006) states, "The best plan in the world is no good if it is not used. The plan should be as simple as possible, but complete. It should be flexible to allow for problems that will arise".

Once goals and objective have been identified, the planning team should focus on implementing the planning process. Renkow and Garber (2006) state:

Once goals and recommended strategies have been discussed, key implementors and support groups should be identified for each strategy, and an action plan that can be used to carry out the strategy should be developed. The action plan should list the specific steps to be taken, assign responsibility to specific individuals or groups who will carry out those steps and assure that tasks are completed according to a detailed timetable that is evaluated along the way.

## EVALUATING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Once the economic development plan is in the implementation process, an evaluation system must be put in place to monitor the results of the planning effort. According to the USDA Rural Development Website (2006):

A strategic plan is never finished. It will change as your community's needs, resources and priorities change. Your first version will change over time as you learn from your experiences and improve it. Think of your plan as being in a looseleaf notebook, not as a hardcover book which never changes. Constant evaluation will help you see how the community is doing, understand the benefits and impacts of certain activities, and make decisions on better information.



HS&AA's facility.

It is crucial that the evaluation process be designed to assure the progress or identify shortfalls in the economic development strategic planning process. This process should consist of monitoring the goals of the strategic plan. According to Kolzow (1991):

The purpose of the monitoring effort is to determine whether specific actions and activities are achieved. A key step in monitoring is to compare the current status of a project with an agreed upon schedule of time and expenditure. Obviously, for such monitoring to take place, it is essential that good records be kept by staff involved in the project.

## OVERVIEW OF THE CITY OF ENTERPRISE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

The city of Enterprise is located in southeast Alabama. The local economy is driven by Fort Rucker, Alabama, which is the largest army helicopter aviation training center in the world. Community leaders decided that an economic development strategic plan was needed to further diversify the local economy. Consequently, community leaders hired Troy State University in 1993 to facilitate the economic development strategic planning process.

Troy State University officials worked with the Enterprise local planning team to identify and assess various areas of the community that needed evaluating in

order to promote an environment that would lead to economic expansion. These meetings led to several focus committees being formed to evaluate key components of the community. The components included Enterprise's education system, infrastructure, the need for a speculative building and business incubator, labor, available incentives, and quality of life issues. After the city completed the economic development strategic planning process, several recommendations and priorities were identified.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED**

After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses identified during the planning process, Enterprise immediately focused on several issues to strengthen the community's position to attract an industrial project. The creation of an Economic Development Corporation was one of the first priorities since an economic development organization was needed to implement the economic development strategic plan. The construction of a speculative building was also a priority of city leaders, as well as the construction of a business incubator for start-up businesses in the community.

City leaders also focused on developing local incentives, as well as utilizing the state incentives available to industrial prospects. Furthermore, an analysis of the city's infrastructure was considered a priority. An analysis of labor and quality of life issues was also included in the recommendations and considered a priority by city leaders. Following is a brief overview of the implementation process for the recommendations and priorities identified by the planning team.

### **ENTERPRISE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (EEDC) FORMED**

In 1994, the Enterprise Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) was formed as a public/private economic development organization. The Board of Directors consisted of 13 members, which included business leaders, industry officials, city officials, bankers, educators, and a staff member of the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission.

During the initial stages of forming the EEDC, the city, local bankers, and Alabama Power provided seed money to operate the economic development organization. One of the first goals of the EEDC Board was to hire a professional economic developer to assist the board with the implementation of the strategies that were identified in the economic development strategy. Consequently, in September 1994, Dr. Tim Alford became the first executive director of the EEDC. Dr. Alford's first goal was to review and understand the various strategies that were identified in the economic development plan.

The Board's second priority was to establish various means of financing the organization. The EEDC

obtained a 501(C) (6) from the IRS, which allowed donations given to the board to be written off for tax purposes. After receiving this tax exemption status from the IRS, a brochure was developed to show the impact of 100 new manufacturing jobs on the various businesses in Enterprise. Each board member was asked to talk to business leaders throughout the community for an annual contribution. The business community in Enterprise responded positively to the organization and gave enough funds, along with the city, to operate the newly formed EEDC.

After receiving the funds needed to operate the EEDC, the board members held a series of meetings with the executive director to discuss the implementation of the economic development strategic plan.

**Based on the economic development strategic plan, one of the first goals of the EEDC board was to build a speculative building. An available building is one of the key components to industrial recruitment. In many cases, a community can be eliminated from the industrial location process due to a lack of an available building.**

### **SPECULATIVE BUILDING AND BUSINESS INCUBATOR**

Based on the economic development strategic plan, one of the first goals of the EEDC board was to build a speculative building. An available building is one of the key components to industrial recruitment. In many cases, a community can be eliminated from the industrial location process due to a lack of an available building. The Board of Directors took advantage of Alabama Power Company's speculative building program and built a 50,000-square-foot shell building in the Yancey Parker Industrial Park. The economic development strategic plan also identified the need to build a business incubator to assist start-up businesses. The city was fortunate to receive a \$200,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to construct a new business incubator in the Yancey Parker Industrial Park. The city had to provide local matching funds with the grant and was able to construct a 10,000-square-foot facility. There are current plans to expand the facility.

### **LOCAL INCENTIVES**

The economic development planning process identified the need to create local incentives and understand the state statutory incentives. Consequently, the EEDC Board of Directors did provide funds for local incentives. In most cases, these funds have been used for subsidizing rent. In addition, the Industrial Development Board has the power to provide land on a case by case basis. The remaining incentives are provided by the state of Alabama and are as follows:



- **Tax Abatement:** Alabama's tax abatement program allows the abatement of all non-educational ad valorem taxes on land, building, machinery, and equipment for ten years. Moreover, the program allows for the abatement of all non-educational sales and use taxes on construction materials, machinery and equipment placed in service at the facility.
- **Capital Investment Tax Credit:** This program is designed to allow qualified companies the opportunity to claim a tax credit against Alabama's income tax liability generated by a qualifying Alabama project. The tax credit cannot exceed 5 percent of the initial capital cost annually and also cannot extend beyond 20 years from the date the qualifying project is placed in service.
- **Site Preparation Grant:** Site preparation funds are provided by the State Industrial Development Authority to qualified companies. New companies and expanding companies may use these funds for site preparation work such as preparation of a means to access the site, drainage improvements on the site, surveying, cleaning and excavating, reasonable rehabilitation of buildings and other structures, and other site preparation deemed necessary and appropriate.
- **Alabama Industrial Access Road and Bridge:** The Alabama Industrial Access Road and Bridge Corporation was created through legislation in 1985. This program provides funding for industrial access and bridge construction. The Alabama Department of Transportation administers the program and reviews applications from an engineering standpoint.
- **Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT):** AIDT provides a comprehensive recruiting and start-up training program after a company has met the established criteria.
- **Industrial Revenue Bonds:** A financing instrument that is issued by designating local industrial development boards or other issues authorized by state law. This program provides financing for land, buildings, and equipment for new and expanding companies.
- **Environmental Permitting:** The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) is the single, state regulatory department that provides major federal environmental permits of air, water, land, and hazardous materials.
- **Pollution Control, Reduction, or Elimination of Air & Water Pollution:** Alabama law provides for deductions or exemptions for the amount of money invested by the taxpayer in all devices, facilities or structures, and all identifiable components thereof or materials for the use therein, acquired or constructed primarily for the control, reduction or elimination of air and water pollution. The tax deduction or exemption may apply to Alabama corporate income, ad valorem, and/or sales and use tax.

- **Inventory Tax:** This program provides exemptions for business inventories from property taxation including all materials used in manufacturing, goods in process, stored manufacturing goods and goods in transit for a period of 12 months.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Having adequate infrastructure, such as water, sewer, and roads, is essential for locating an industrial project. Based on evaluation of the city of Enterprise's infrastructure during the planning phase, the city implemented several water system improvements projects, which included drilling three new wells over the past few years. A 750 Gallons Per Minute (GPM) well was installed for the Coffee Gin Company, which is located in the south section of Enterprise. Furthermore, the city installed a 900 GPM water well off Shell Field Road and installed a 1,000 GPM well off of State Highway 167 North. This project extended 10 miles of water mains in the area.

The city also resurfaced 30 miles of streets within its corporate limits. This project was financed by a municipal bond.

The EEDC, as well as Enterprise officials, have made an effort to improve road systems within the city's corporate limits in order to enhance economic development. The city received an Industrial Access Grant from the Alabama Department of Transportation to make road improvements along Salem Road and State Highway 167. The project widened and resurfaced the road, and made intersection improvements. The state funded project was a part of the location of HS&AA. The city also received grant funds from USDA Rural Development to install 16 T-Hangars at the Enterprise Municipal Airport.

## LABOR

Based on the analysis of labor during the planning process, city leaders wanted to be sure that the labor force was prepared for industrial prospects considering Enterprise. The EEDC took action to improve the workforce in Enterprise, as well as surrounding areas, by working with local officials to develop a workforce alliance with the local colleges in the area to provide necessary training for skills needed by industry. In addition, the EEDC contacted the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) office, which provides training programs for new, as well as expanding industries to include comprehensive recruiting and start up training programs for industries that meet a certain employment criteria.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life issues were also evaluated during the economic development strategic planning process. Several years ago, the Enterprise Recreation Complex was completed. The recreation park consists of 200 acres with a lake and a lighted jogging and walking trail. In addition, the park has a playground, as well as four centralized concessions stand softball fields. The park also has one lighted soccer field.

In addition, the city of Enterprise has one of the best school systems in the state of Alabama. In 1953 the city council approved an additional millage tax to be earmarked for education. This tax must be approved every 25 years. It is estimated that the 7-mill tax that recently passed by the city council will generate one million dollars to be used by the school system for capital improvements.

Compared to state and national statistics, crime in Enterprise is low. Due to the close proximity of Fort Rucker, the ethnic background of the Enterprise community is diverse and full of cultural opportunities. Housing opportunities in Enterprise are plentiful and provide excellent opportunities for all walks of life. The city has also expanded shopping opportunities. A new shopping center called North Pointe was recently completed, providing a variety of shops and restaurants, as well as a new hotel. There are plans to develop other new shopping centers in the near future.

### **HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY OVERVIEW**

In early April 2002, the Hyundai Motor Company, which was established in 1967 and based in Seoul, South Korea, announced its plans to locate an automobile production facility in Montgomery, Alabama. Hyundai officials narrowed the location choice down to Alabama and the state of Kentucky. After months of competing, Alabama was chosen for the automotive production facility. According to Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama, LLC Website (2006):

The \$1.1 billion plant is the company's first U.S. manufacturing facility. The plant employs more than 2,700 team members with high-paying jobs and full benefits. Additionally, more than 72 suppliers have located businesses throughout North America to support Hyundai's new plant. Altogether, these suppliers are expected to create 5,500 additional jobs with a combined capital investment of \$500 million.

The Hyundai Motor Company is the fourth automobile production company to locate to Alabama. In 1993, Mercedes-Benz located to Vance for its first United States production facility. In 1999, Honda built an automotive production facility in Lincoln and Toyota announced a production facility in Huntsville to produce Tundra pickup trucks in 2001.

### **ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY**

The Hyundai Motor Company is expected to have a significant impact on Alabama's economy. According to Dugan (2002):

The following estimates the potential economic impact of the investment in Hyundai Motor Co. in Montgomery. Compiled and analyzed by Auburn University at Montgomery economist Keivan Deravi, the individual figures provided are estimates and do not add up to the sum of their parts:

1. Total employment impact: 8,000 jobs
2. Direct employment: 2,000 jobs

3. Indirect employment: 6,000 jobs
4. Total earnings: \$280 million
5. Direct earnings: \$99 million
6. Indirect earnings: \$180 million
7. Average annual earnings for Hyundai employees in Montgomery: \$49,400
8. Average annual earnings for indirect employment: \$28,000.

### **ENTERPRISE INDUSTRIAL LOCATION OF HS&AA**

After many years of hard work in the area of economic development strategic planning and months of negotiations, the city of Enterprise was fortunate to locate HS&AA, a tier one supplier of Hyundai. Several factors identified and implemented from the economic development strategic plan impacted the company's location decision. The factors included the available speculative building in the Yancey Parker Industrial Park; the infrastructure improvements to Salem Road, which provides access to the company's site; and various quality of life issues implemented in the community.

City and HS&AA officials announced the location on February 24, 2003. This was the company's first location in North America. HS&AA built a \$20 million plant in the Yancey Parker Industrial Park in Enterprise. The company produces automotive rubber products, such as hoses and weather strips. In addition, it produces industrial rubber products. According to HS&AA:

The company has been the forerunner of the automobile parts industry since it was founded in 1978. The company has more than 60% of the market share of the automotive rubber products in Korea. The company employs 1,705 people and had \$370 million in sales in 2002 (HSAA brochure np).

### **ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HS&AA**

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis and Regional Economic Information System, the employment base of Enterprise, which is located in Coffee County, consists of 23.7 percent services. This is due to the close proximity of Fort Rucker, which is the world's largest army helicopter training base. Moreover, 19.4 percent of the available workforce works in retail trade. Finally, 18.7 percent of the workforce works in manufacturing.

The proposed project initially created 350 new jobs. Using the motor vehicles and equipment employment multiplier for the company, the 350 news jobs will have an impact of creating 952 new jobs for the county and regional economy. Using the motor vehicles and equipment earnings multiplier, the \$20 million capital investment will have an impact of \$45 million.

HS&AA announced an expansion project in November 2006. The company's expansion project will create 250 additional jobs and a capital investment of \$20 million. The expansion project will further enhance the economy for the city of Enterprise, as well as the regional economy.

## CONCLUSION

Economic development strategic planning is still the foundation of a successful economic development program. Assessing factors such as infrastructure, labor, local incentives, available buildings, and quality of life issues can lead to recommendations that may poised a community for economic growth and diversification. The city of Enterprise's economic development strategy and implementation of the economic development plan finally paid off after many years of hard work. As previously mentioned, the location of HS&AA has brought new jobs and economic stimulative effects for the city, as well as surrounding communities. The company is in

the process of expanding, which will add 250 new jobs and a capital investment of \$20 million, which will further expand Enterprise's economy.

This article has provided an overview of the economic development strategic planning process and shown how this process played a major role in preparing the city of Enterprise for an industrial location project. The location of HS&AA not only diversified the local economy but also has expanded the city's economic base. The implementation of the economic development strategic plan will give Enterprise an advantage in its goal to compete for new business in the global economy. 

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