

Economic Development Plan 2013-2015

City of Bluefield, WV

Economic Development Policy Statement

The City of Bluefield will promote a diversified economic development plan in order to reinvigorate quality of life for its citizens. The City's approach to economic development will incorporate shared ownership between its citizens and local government.

After decades of declining economic activity, the City of Bluefield understands the necessity of introducing activities that are immediate and sustainable. The necessity for action in Bluefield is paramount and facilitates the need to for a short-range planning document. This document presents a "flexible plan" and will be reviewed quarterly by the economic development team in 2013 to monitor progress and to make necessary adjustments.

Purpose of the Economic Development Plan

This economic development plan identifies the partnerships and planned activities for economic development within the City of Bluefield. This proposed flexible plan will transition into a long-range master plan in 2015.

Development Categories

Community Engagement	Re-engaging Bluefield's citizens will be foundational to economic development.
Marketing	Initial marketing efforts will begin in 2013 with a focus on supporting community engagement.
Commercial	Focus will be on activities that impact commerce areas in Bluefield.
Downtown	Revitalization of downtown begins with changing perceptions of the area. It also includes having one vision for the direction of restoration.
Industrial	Focus on energy and transportation opportunities.
Parks & Recreation	Enable Bluefield to reach its full potential in providing the highest quality of life for its citizens.

Community Engagement

Re-engaging Bluefield's citizens will be foundational to economic development. Involvement in local government, shopping locally, and a positive community self-image are essential to maintaining business and attracting business. Ownership of the community by Bluefieldians is the primary footprint to our overall plan, and it will employ the following components—

- Team Blue Campaign 2013
 - Campaign will promote a spirit of ownership and citizenship within the city.
 - A core group of Team Blue will engage in weekly meetings to generate future economic development ideas and planning. This group will be led by private citizens, not city officials.
- Blueprint Communities kick-off in February 2013
 - Will provide training to key citizens who live in Bluefield, WV on community leadership.

Marketing

Initial marketing efforts will begin in 2013 with a focus on supporting community engagement. Bluefield recognizes that it must market internally to its own citizens before it can market itself externally to “big box chains”. Marketing activities will primarily be focused on Bluefield citizens and support overall community engagement.

- Public Service Announcements to commence in January 2013 (Television, internet, Facebook)
 - Team Blue
 - Shop Local
 - YouTube (external market)
- New City of Bluefield website design and implementation to be completed by the first quarter of 2013

Action	Cost	Funding Source
Team Blue PSA	\$3,500	Econ. Dev. Budget
Shop Local PSA	\$5,000	Econ. Dev. Budget
Youtube PSA (external)	\$3,000	Econ. Dev. Budget
Website Redesign	\$10,000	Econ. Dev. Budget
Facebook	\$1,000	Econ. Dev. Budget
Total	\$22,500	

Commercial

Commercial activities should have far reaching impact on all commerce within city limits. Organized planning of activities should include input from merchants. Partnerships are foundational to the city's commercial approach.

- Bluefield State/City of Bluefield Task Force
 - The task force will be initiated in January 2013 with the purpose of supporting cohesion between the college's and the city's strategic growth plans.
 - An initial goal of the task force will be supporting the presence of college courses downtown. The target implementation will be Fall 2013.
 - The task force will consist of 10 members. 6 members will represent Bluefield State College, and 4 members will represent city administration.
- One Merchants association for the City of Bluefield created by end of the first quarter in 2013.
 - Bluefield currently does not have one merchants association supporting the entire city. Commerce is missing opportunities to leverage political influence and cohesive representation.
 - The plan calls for formation of one merchants association for the city. Sub-committees will represent South Bluefield, Downtown, and Bluefield/Princeton Avenues.
- Hatfields & McCoy Tail System
 - The city is working with the state of WV to install signage from John Nash through downtown.
 - Merchants (restaurants/gas stations) will have a kick-off meeting on March 1st each year to discuss strategies for soliciting ATV traffic.
 - To reinforce awareness, an ATV celebration will occur downtown. Invites will go out to ATV organizations and groups to participate in Bluefield's celebration event in March.
 - A hotel feasibility study will be conducted to justify location and support of a lodging facility.
- John Nash Blvd.
 - To effectively market the property, conduct core drilling and surveying by 3rd quarter of 2013.
- The city will evaluate current code enforcement strategies and approach. This will cover all areas of town with specific focus on commercial property.
- Aggressively seek funding for construction phase on Intermodal project.

Action	Cost	Funding Source
Hotel Feasibility Study	\$20,000	Grant (state and/or federal)
Engineering work for John Nash	\$10,000	Econ. Dev. Budget
Total	\$30,000	

Downtown

Revitalization of downtown begins with changing perceptions of the area. It also includes having one vision for the direction of restoration. With a focus on the arts, the components include the following:

- Activities to promote a positive perception of downtown:
 - Additional lighting per street design
 - Re-design auto traffic flow
 - 1 way east bound on Raleigh
 - 1 way west bound on Commerce
 - Enforce parking restrictions, by meter or signage
 - Provide visible “walk the beat” police presence
 - 5pm-11pm Sun-Thurs
 - 5pm-1am Fri-Sat
 - Repair sidewalks, fences

- Expand Downtown focus as “arts and cultural” area
 - Museum
 - Coal Archives
 - Train Collections
 - Interesting Local Collections
 - Increased number of “artists in residence”
 - Restoration of The Granada Theater
 - Stage
 - Screen
 - Other cultural/musical events

- Coordinate weekly community events
 - Arts & Crafts Festivals
 - Music
 - Art Exhibits
 - Car Shows
 - Trolley Tours
 - Tasting Festivals

- Initiate Business Incubator Program
 - Provide rent-free renovated space for specified time for juried vendors
 - Provide use of business equipment/fixtures
 - Provide new business/management training
 - Provide operations oversight
 - Provide advertising

- 10/10/10 Model
 - 10 retail/restaurant businesses
 - 10 supporting businesses
 - 10 businesses open after 6:00pm

- Revitalize Downtown one street at a time
 - Commerce Street Phase 1
 - One-way westbound traffic flow
 - Diagonal parking on the south side of street
 - Remove facades and return exteriors to original
 - Add railway depot facades to all buildings
 - Add railway depot lamp posts both sides of street
 - Repair all sidewalks/fences

- Project Manager
 - Bluefield Preservation Society, Inc.
 - Board Members:
 - Debra Ammar, Pres.
 - Julie Hurley, VP
 - Sara Helmadollar, Sec.
 - Skip Crane, Treas.
 - Hal Gusler
 - Doris Sue Kantor
 - Gail Satterfield
 - Betsey Sorrell

Phase I—Downtown

Action	Cost	Funding Source
Purchase Buildings	\$500,000	Local Private Foundations State/Federal Grants Fund Raising Campaigns
Exterior Façade Renovations	\$75,000	Local Private Foundations State/Federal Grants Fund Raising Campaigns
Street Level Renovations	\$600,000	Local Private Foundations State/Federal Grants Fund Raising Campaigns
Full Building Renovation- -Granada	\$500,000	Local Private Foundations State/Federal Grants Fund Raising Campaigns
Business Incubation	\$250,000	Local Private Foundations State/Federal Grants Fund Raising Campaigns
Total	\$1,925,000	

Industrial

Bluefield has opportunities for diversifying its economic portfolio. The City believes that it can lead the way for Southern WV with respect to long-term industrial development. This footprint will include energy and transportation.

- Pickens Plan Strategy
 - We can develop the station at a cost of roughly \$1,000,000 or utilize a favorable land lease to an existing gas station retailer to build a major truck stop style fueling station.
 - Converting the fleet from diesel to CNG will cost roughly \$8000/vehicle and create roughly \$2,500/vehicle savings in fuel annually.
 - Marketing - \$10,000 towards educating local business on benefits of converting diesel to CNG.
 - We feel that we should be able to offset the cost of the plan through corporate donations and on going cost savings by making the conversion for local governments. 10 conversions = \$24,000 in fuel savings annually

- Energy Company Recruitment
 - Create funnel of companies engaged in Energy production, services, & manufacturing.
 - Create and maintain a list of available office space, warehouse space, re & developable land.
 - Create new and modern land use policy - \$5,000
 - Marketing - \$25,000

- Transportation Company Recruitment
 - Create funnel of companies engaged in Transportation, Distribution, & 3PL.
 - Create and maintain a list of available office space, warehouse space, re & developable land.
 - Utilize new and modern land use policy
 - Marketing - \$25,000

- Thoroughbred Terminal
 - Conduct feasibility study through state university to identify potential volume, key industries, economic impact. \$25,000
 - Construction of facility - \$5,000,000.

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – A TIF allows a geographic area to have taxes generated above projected forecast earmarked for TIF District for infrastructure improvements. Usually last for 20 years and provides a laser focus on a specific area with specific goals.

- We would also propose that NAICS codes be applied to all existing business's in the City for tax purposes and 25% of all net new tax revenue from business's that fall under NAICS codes related to Energy & Transportation be paid into an Economic Development Fund with a minimum of 75% of those funds going towards furthering the growth in E&T and the balance going to fund other economic development plans by the Economic Development Board.
- We will also solicit funding for all 4 phases of the project from bond issuance, local foundations, corporate sponsorships, and nationally relevant sources.

Action	Cost	Funding Source
CNG station	1,000,000	• See Below
Vehicle Conversion (5)	\$40,000	• See Below
CNG Marketing	\$10,000	• See Below
Land Use Policy	\$5,000	• See Below
Energy Company Recruitment	\$25,000	• See Below
Thoroughbred Terminal	\$30,000	• See Below

Parks & Recreation

The City of Bluefield can meet the community's needs for recreation facility development and other leisure activities as outlined in the vision by attaining the goals and implementing the actions recommended below. These strategies will enable the city to provide inclusive facilities, in conjunction with schools and private organizations that host a variety of recreational amenities, including passive and active programs for residents and tourists of all ages.

Goal 1: To upgrade or maintain existing facilities to allow for effective program delivery and community use.

Implementation Strategies

- City Park should remain an important part of the city's recreational offering, with great effort toward providing diverse activities for all ages.
 - Upgrade the youth and adult athletic fields.
 - Construct a dog park facility.
 - Improve the equestrian facility area to increase tourism and program revenue opportunities.
 - Construct a spray ground park.
 - Improve the trails system to include connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods, bike paths and equestrian users.
 - Construct a fitness loop on the trails.
 - Encourage the development of a primitive campground sites to further promote outdoors sporting opportunities.

- City Auditorium and Youth Center
 - Exterior and interior renovations of the City Municipal Center.
 - Replace the gymnasium floor.
 - Install partitions to better utilize the youth center area space.
 - Improve the HVAC and electrical system.
 - Upgrade the auditorium area.
 - Implement a space allocation study.

- Neighborhood Parks
 - Upgrade deteriorated playground equipment
 - Resurface blacktop courts
 - Develop trail connectivity to neighborhood parks

- East River Scenic Overlook
 - Promote the overlook as a major tourist destination in West Virginia.

- Jaycee Park
 - Promote as a special events park.

Goal 2: To plan and construct additional recreational facilities that will diversify and meet the citizen's needs.

Implementation Strategies

- Develop a Master Plan for recreation facility development.

Goal 3: To increase recreational programming opportunities for all age groups and special populations.

- Expand after-school recreational program opportunities for at-risk and not-at-risk youth population.
- Continue to explore and offer nontraditional recreation activities that will appeal to segments of the population not represented by traditional recreation and sports.
- Identify special programs that address the needs of the physically disabled population.

Goal 4: Increase public awareness of Parks & Recreation programs and facilities.

Implementation Strategies

- Develop a department logo and branding signature.
- Develop a user friendly website.
- Develop an on-line registration program procedure.

Goal 5: Continue to adequately fund and maintain facilities and programs to ensure health and safe environments for recreational activities and programs through interagency cooperation.

Implementation Strategies

- Research and develop grant projects.
- Develop community partnerships.