

# Sample

## Economic Development Needs Assessment

(15 Pages)

# Sample Economic Development Needs Assessment

This document, a **Sample Economic Development Needs Assessment**, was created to provide communities impacted by Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Irene, and Tropical Storm Lee guidance on how to develop economic needs assessments for their communities.

The following excerpts draw from assessments created by several different communities.

## SWOT Analysis

Example: The City of Milpitas, California  
 ([http://www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov/\\_pdfs/econ\\_plan\\_strategic\\_appen\\_e.pdf](http://www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov/_pdfs/econ_plan_strategic_appen_e.pdf))

The following SWOT Analysis was conducted by the Milpitas Economic Development Corporation and was conducted in order to identify the area's leading strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for economic development, specifically as they pertain to business retention and attraction.

Economic Development Strengths and Weaknesses of Milpitas for Midtown and Downtown Revitalization		
	Strengths (Sell as an Advantage)	Weaknesses (Needs Improvement)
<b>Internal (Can be changed or influenced, often relatively quickly)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong redevelopment program.</li> <li>▪ Thorough and well-planned Midtown Specific Plan, including library, light rail station, new housing units close to shopping and transportation. Plan is far along in successful implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Though there is a defined Midtown, it is a large area and it is in a different location than the City Hall and Town Center. As Midtown develops, under-performing Town Center will eventually need similar attention;</li> </ul>
<b>External (Cannot be easily changed or influenced)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ BART may come to the Great Mall in 10 years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Other downtowns have a head start (Mountain View, San Jose, Pleasanton etc.)</li> </ul>

## Economic Development Strengths and Weaknesses of Milpitas for Industrial and Office Development

	<b>Strengths (Sell as an Advantage)</b>	<b>Weaknesses (Needs Improvement)</b>
<b>Internal (Can be changed or influenced relatively quickly)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong redevelopment program</li> <li>▪ Mix of industrial and office space, from small incubator and multi-tenant space to large floor plate office and industrial facilities</li> <li>▪ Plenty of new space available at office parks and industrial parks</li> <li>▪ Though some of the existing facilities need modernizing and upgrading, most are up to current standards</li> <li>▪ Lease rates for office, R&amp;D, manufacturing, and warehouse space are competitive</li> <li>▪ Milpitas has a very strong jobs to housing ratio (2.8), indicating a strong employment base, but a weaker housing base</li> <li>▪ K - 12 education is average for the Silicon Valley, as measured by the Academic Performance Index (API)</li> <li>▪ Large number of world-class academic and research institutions exist within an easy driving distance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Milpitas is among the last communities recognized when conducting an industrial site search in the Silicon Valley. In fact Milpitas is considered a part of the San Jose/Santa Clara environment.</li> <li>▪ Of the city's 30,000 employed residents, only 6,000 work in Milpitas</li> <li>▪ High vacancy rate for existing industrial and office buildings</li> <li>▪ The city's unemployment rate is higher than many other Silicon Valley communities except for San Jose, indicating the need to upgrade the skills of local residents</li> <li>▪ Housing opportunities should be strengthened so more of Milpitas' work force can live in the city rather than commute</li> </ul>
	<b>Strengths (Sell as an Advantage)</b>	<b>Weaknesses (Needs Improvement)</b>
<b>External (Cannot be easily changed or influenced)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The city's daytime work force is 56,000. Most commute to Milpitas from other communities</li> <li>▪ Milpitas is within commute distance for hundreds of thousands of workers</li> <li>▪ The city's industrial employment is driven by its key clusters, including computers, communications, hardware, semiconductors, software, and medical devices</li> <li>▪ Excellent location amid the country's largest center of high technology companies</li> <li>▪ Access to employment and markets is as good as anywhere in the Silicon Valley or Bay Area</li> <li>▪ Close proximity to San Jose, Oakland and SFO airports for both cargo and passenger travel</li> <li>▪ Close proximity to Oakland and other ports for waterborne transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ongoing traffic congestion, a perennial problem</li> <li>▪ City is almost built out, with 158 acres of industrial land still vacant and 39 acres of office land still vacant</li> <li>▪ The San Jose landfill at the Dixon Landing Interchange of I-880 is a liability. The City should acknowledge its presence, note how far active landfill activities are from the city, and commit to continued mitigation of odors, dust and traffic</li> </ul>

**Economic Development Strengths and Weaknesses of Milpitas  
for Retail and Small Commercial Development**

	<b>Strengths (Sell as an Advantage)</b>	<b>Weaknesses (Needs Improvement)</b>
<b>Internal (Can be changed or influenced relatively quickly)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong redevelopment program, city finances, and civic participation</li> <li>▪ Many local and regional business organizations support local business, (including the Milpitas Chamber of Commerce, the Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce, the Taiwanese American Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Silicon Valley and the Milpitas downtown Business Association</li> <li>▪ Many existing service providers to assist small businesses, such as the small Business Administration.</li> <li>▪ One-fourth of the city's retail sales are generated at the Great Mall (\$213 million). One-fifth of all sales are generated at McCarthy Ranch (\$171.5 million)</li> <li>▪ Established niches in ethnic retail markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Though not built out, Milpitas has limited opportunities for new development. Most undeveloped land is infill</li> <li>▪ Store mix does not reflect upscale income levels in community</li> <li>▪ Some shopping centers show signs of age</li> <li>▪ Great Mall not yet performing up to its potential</li> </ul>
	<b>Strengths (Sell as an Advantage)</b>	<b>Weaknesses (Needs Improvement)</b>
<b>External (Cannot be easily changed or influenced)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong retail capture from existing residents, surrounding cities, daytime employees</li> <li>▪ Milpitas residents spend \$400 million per year at retail stores</li> <li>▪ Milpitas retailers generated \$850 million in sales in 2003</li> <li>▪ Daytime employees and residents within 15 minutes of Milpitas spend \$3 billion per year at retail stores, indicating there is potential for additional retail capture</li> <li>▪ Regional market of over \$2 billion in household spending</li> <li>▪ Average annual household income is \$99,000. Household incomes rose dramatically over the last decade</li> <li>▪ The Milpitas population is projected to increase 32.5% to 83,500 people by the year 2020. Much of this growth is projected in the Midtown area, which has plans for over 4,500 new dwelling units</li> <li>▪ Milpitas has 2,700 hotel rooms and hosts thousands of visitors every year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New competition from San Jose and Fremont threatens to cut into regional market now captured by Milpitas</li> <li>▪ Uncertain ongoing impact of technology sectors.</li> </ul>

**Economic Development Strengths and Weaknesses of Milpitas  
for Midtown and Downtown Revitalization**

	<b>Strengths (Sell as an Advantage)</b>	<b>Weaknesses (Needs Improvement)</b>
<b>Internal (Can be changed or influenced, often relatively quickly)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong redevelopment program.</li> <li>▪ Thorough and well-planned Midtown Specific Plan, including library, light rail station, new housing units close to shopping and transportation. Plan is far along in successful implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Though there is a defined Midtown, it is a large area and it is in a different location than the City Hall and Town Center. As Midtown develops, under-performing Town Center will eventually need similar attention;</li> </ul>
<b>External (Cannot be easily changed or influenced)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ BART may come to the Great Mall in 10 years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Other downtowns have a head start (Mountain View, San Jose, Pleasanton etc.)</li> </ul>

## Data Collection/Analysis

Example: East Tampa, Florida

([http://www.tampagov.net/dept\\_economic\\_and\\_urban\\_development/files/east\\_tampa/East\\_Tampa\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_Report.pdf](http://www.tampagov.net/dept_economic_and_urban_development/files/east_tampa/East_Tampa_Needs_Assessment_Report.pdf))

The following information regarding Data Collection/Analysis was produced by the Health, Education and Social Services Committee, the East Tampa Community Revitalization Partnership, and the Corporation to Development Communities of Tampa, Inc. in order to provide the East Tampa Community and the City of Tampa with pertinent data to improve the health, educational and social services in East Tampa. The information below outlines the collaboration's effort to collect and analyze data.

The Health Education and Social Services committee, with other community members were charged with the development of all phases of the project from the development of the instruments, outreach, and the action plan for conducting the needs assessment, analysis, report writing and recommendations. This committee conducted all decision-making, action plans and subsequent implementation, documentation and tracked over time.

The survey and focus group methodologies represented an attempt to address perceptions of awareness, use, and effectiveness of existing services, and perceived need for new services. In order to make the survey manageable for the community, residents participated in the process of developing, revising, and reducing its length and depth. Once the survey was developed focus group questions were developed to use as means to obtain more in-depth information. The surveys alone cannot get at the critical question of coordination of services.

The survey instrument was planned to administer to a total of 1000 residents via face-to-face interviews and focus groups by paired residents and USF students. An intensive outreach and marketing effort was planned and directed to media and to faith and community organizations in targeted neighborhoods and zip codes. The specific East Tampa neighborhood organizations were contacted and sampled. Census track data were developed to be used to select participants randomly while ensuring that participants include residents of each neighborhood in the designated East Tampa area.

### **Development of Needs Assessment Survey/Interview Instrument**

- Development of purpose & scope of needs assessment with HESS committee, including member partners & Residents
- Development of items via multiple meetings with HESS committee and community residents
- Piloted interview schedules with residents
- Revised items and interview schedule

- Revised items and interview schedule with input from URS and City of Tampa
- Revised format with HESS committee and residents

### **Development of Training Manual for Interviews and Focus Groups**

- Reviewed prior training manuals
- Adapted and developed training manual to specific interview schedule
- Piloted training with residents
- Revised training manual

### **Developed Grid for survey sample across all neighborhoods within East Tampa, and documentation format**

- Developed survey sample grid to ensure interview/focus group participants from all neighborhoods
- Developed documentation forms and procedures to ensure accurate records of interviews/focus group participants, accuracy/completion of data entries, and delivery of monies for successful completion of training, and successful completion of interviews/focus groups

### **Development of marketing materials**

- Developed drafts for media coverage, flyers to recruit interviewers and participants, & information for service agencies

### **Recruitment efforts**

- Community members attended community events, presented tentative information about upcoming needs assessment, and recruited names and contact information of people interested in becoming interviewers and or participating as interviewees or in focus groups
- Ads were drafted for coordinators, support staff, interviewers and advertised locally in the Florida Sentinel Bulletin and placed in location throughout East Tampa

### **Hired**

- Four Project Coordinators
- Twenty-eight East Resident interviewers

These Project Coordinators were responsible for recruiting, screening, hiring and training interviews of focus groups facilities. The coordinator documented successful completion of interviews/focus groups, and maintained records and completed survey forms

## Needs Assessment: Data Collection

- **Orientation**-Applicants were notified to attend orientation at the Thirty-Fourth Street Church of God on January 12, 2008. Twenty-eight East Tampa residents completed the orientation that was facilitated by {names omitted}.
- **Training**-Training was conducted January 22 and 24 at the Thirty-Fourth Street Church of God. Twenty-three East Tampa residents completed the training and are eligible to work as interviewers for the needs assessment. The training was facilitated by Program Coordinators {names omitted}.
- **Focus Group #1**-The first focus groups were held on January 19, 2008 at various community agencies. East Tampa residents, neighborhood associations, and community agencies were contacted as part of the recruitment process by the program coordinators and asked to participate in the focus groups. Residents were given the opportunity to attend at The Heart of East Tampa Front Porch office, Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa, Inc. (CDC), 34th Street Church of God, Belmont Heights Estates and Community Health Advocacy Partnership (CHAP). Forty-seven out of the fifty-one registered participated. The age range for this group was middle age and senior citizens. These focus groups were facilitated by {names omitted}.
- **Focus Group #2**-The demographics for this group was African American East Tampa males, who are in the prison reform system. Their age range is middle thirty to fifty-five. The focus group, which was held at Abe Brown Prison Ministries on March 13, 2008, consisted of nine participants who live reside in two different group homes. One male was not a part of the prison ministry program. The facilitator was {names omitted}.
- **Focus Group #3**-The demographics was a diverse group of Hillsborough Community College GED students that reside in East Tampa, whose age ranges from 18-25. There were seven participants, and {names omitted} were the facilitators for this March 18, 2008 focus group. Two USF students, {names omitted} assisted.
- **Focus Group #4**-The demographics for this March 25, 2008 focus group was African American East Tampa males and females attending The Sylvia Kimball Center's GED class. Their age range was 18-25. Two of the instructors also participated for a total of 14. Facilitators for this group were program coordinators {names omitted}, who were assisted by two USF students, {names omitted}.
- **Strategic Planning**-The four program coordinators met on January 31, 2008 at The Heart of East Tampa Front Porch Council, Inc., to plan the assignments for the interviewers. Tampa Police Department grid map and zip code boundaries were used to divide twelve communities into four groups, one per coordinator. Nineteen grids were divided that allowed each team to be responsible for approximately 199 to 202 residents that would be selected randomly by the interviewers. Only two homes per street would be visited in order to include all targeted areas. The interviews began February 1 and ended April 4. A total of 923 residents were interviewed. Other sites where interviews were conducted for no more than two days were the CDC of Tampa's Stepping Stones class and First Baptist Church of College Hill feed the homeless program.

- **Fiscal Agent**-The fiscal agent for the program was the Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa, Inc. {Name omitted}, Contracts Manager, received invoices from program coordinators and issued checks on a bi-weekly basis. Distribution of funds for interviewee payments were also issued by {name omitted}. {Name omitted}, was the lead person, with the assistance of {name omitted}, in this process.
- **Wrap-up**- A chat n’chew awards recognition was held April 17 for the final 12 team members at the Front Porch Office. A post evaluation was distributed. All responses were favorable. All surveys were delivered to {name omitted} on April 24 for data analysis

## Business Needs

Source: Cedar Rapids

(<http://quake.abag.ca.gov/wp>

content/documents/resilience/CedarRapidsEconomicRecoveryreport81808.pdf)

***What do commercial, industrial, or agricultural uses damaged by the storm need in order to reopen in their current location, to relocate to a less hazardous area, and/or to mitigate against future storm damage?***

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) was retained by the US Chamber of Commerce’s Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC) to assist Cedar Rapids, Iowa in its economic recovery from the June 2008 floods. The following excerpt addresses the identified business needs as a result of the flood.

Small business is the backbone of local economies. Unlike larger businesses, they typically lack the resources to withstand even a few weeks of disruption. Even larger businesses suffer when their small business suppliers discontinue operations. The importance of business is especially evident in Cedar Rapids since businesses pay a larger portion of the property tax than in most other cities. Therefore, the team believes that small business support is the primary short term need for economic development recovery. The Cedar Rapids based SBA business recovery center is a good first step in this process.

The team recommends that the Chamber and Priority One take a leadership role in identifying and providing long-term recovery and rebuilding resources that will be needed by both the for-profit and non-for-profit business community as the post-disaster redevelopment proceeds. The SBA small business recovery center will close after short-term needs are addressed – perhaps in September when the SBA loan application period ends – yet there will still be great need for assistance in securing funding, building permits, legal advice, etc. The Chamber should coordinate the development of a Rebuilding Resource Center that would provide local and state services from the public and private sectors to those who need advice and assistance in order to rebuild and reopen operations. The resource center would continue the services of the SBA

small business and FEMA disaster recovery centers at one location. The types of services and information that the Resource Center could provide include: city rebuilding requirements, inspection requirements, lists of state licensed contractors, information regarding how to select and pay a contractor, how to deal with insurance companies, local, state and federal government assistance programs, etc.

The team recommends additional steps beyond the current SBA efforts. First, the Job and Small Business Recovery Fund, launched by the Chamber / Priority One, is very important. This local program is ideal for small businesses that cannot or do not want to take on more debt. Both public and private sources are needed for such a fund. Although the fund provides grants and forgivable loans, the team recommends that all applications go to a formal review committee staffed by professionals, such as bankers, with lending and underwriting experience. The team recommends that the City explore a bridge loan program with the state. Florida has found that its bridge loan program has been effective in helping small businesses maintain operations while they are dealing with the process of securing other, longer-term financial support.

The team recommends that Cedar Rapids' leaders and their state support organizations, such as the Rebuild Iowa and Iowa Economic Development, develop tools and identify and coordinate resources to deploy economic and business development programs, pre-disaster/business continuity planning, and post-disaster redevelopment. Among the focus areas, the team recommends the development of a reliable database of all businesses in the Cedar Rapids-Iowa City region. This database should include all base industry and large employers, Chamber members, and convention and visitor bureau members. But it should also include all small business, cultural, tourism and non-for-profit organizations, all of which play an integral role in the local, regional and state's economy. Such a database is an essential tool in promoting continuity planning programs, quantifying and deploying economic impact assessments, and post-disaster initial impact and long-term economic disaster impact assessments. It can also be used to facilitate and educate the business community on economic and workforce development initiatives.

Information is critical for a successful small business program. A local organization needs to take the lead in developing a system to identify impacted businesses and their needs, and quantify the overall economic impact of the flood. During the site visit, there was concern that not enough businesses were taking advantage of the SBA business center technical assistance and loan programs. This concern cannot be validated without contacting the flood impacted businesses. Priority One is trying to identify businesses, but is struggling to locate many of them. Given the unclear location of many businesses, there is a need for considerable effort to find them and identify and address their needs. This information is needed quickly to provide the knowledge necessary to direct business recovery and rebuilding efforts. Such information gathering is a key component to a business retention program.

## Strengthening Economic Assets

Example: Cedar Rapids, Iowa

<http://quake.abag.ca.gov/wp-content/documents/resilience/CedarRapidsEconomicRecoveryreport81808.pdf>

### ***Are there economic assets in the community that were weakened or destroyed that should be strengthened and mitigated?***

The following is also drawn from the IEDC report regarding Cedar Rapids, Iowa in their economic recovery from the June 2008 floods and addresses the flood's impact on economic assets.

Cultural facilities are important in helping firms attract and retain talented labor. Therefore, the lack of such facilities, as caused by the flood, will hinder employee recruitment and retention efforts in Cedar Rapids. The business community in Cedar Rapids made it clear to the study team that the wealth of cultural institutions and facilities in Cedar Rapids were significant contributors to the city's excellent "quality of life." Therefore, it is critical to get the cultural amenities back into operation.

A cultural alliance already exists, serving as an umbrella organization for many of the city's cultural institutions and organizations such as arts, music, museums, crafts, etc. These institutions and organizations come together often to achieve economies of scale for marketing, members services, etc. It is suggested that this alliance be strengthened. The alliance could provide the following functions:

- Focus attention on the communities (cultural) needs and the audiences to be served;
- Create a more open collaborative environment among cultural organizations to encourage mutual support;
- Provide information and technical assistance to organizations to help them to improve their programs, business practices and community services;
- Be the voice of the cultural community in important community decisions and planning processes; and
- Create dialog and trust between organizations that will serve as the basis for innovative collaborations and more sophisticated joint efforts.

## Evaluating Pre-Storm Plans for Post-Storm Use

Example: Cedar Rapids, Iowa

[http://quake.abag.ca.gov/wp-](http://quake.abag.ca.gov/wp-content/documents/resilience/CedarRapidsEconomicRecoveryreport81808.pdf)

[content/documents/resilience/CedarRapidsEconomicRecoveryreport81808.pdf](http://quake.abag.ca.gov/wp-content/documents/resilience/CedarRapidsEconomicRecoveryreport81808.pdf)

***Are the economic development plans in place prior to the storm still appropriate to pursue? If changes are appropriate, which make the most sense?***

Cedar Rapids is fortunate in that the City has been developing a downtown plan, having retained planning and engineering firms prior to the flood. If well done, a downtown plan could, given the flood, attract considerable flood related public funding and private investment. The sooner the plan is complete, the better position the City will be in to attract outside funding. However, a quickly completed plan could conflict with regulatory constraints that will result from the flood. Without support from federal agencies such as FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers, the City may not be able to implement and fund the plan recommendations. The City is working to address this potential disconnect by retaining capable planning and engineering firms (and a developer for one project). However, City and downtown BID staff will need to be very engaged in the process and be aware of pitfalls to ensure a timely, implementable plan that results in a reinvigorated downtown. They will need to work closely with their consultants, FEMA, and the Army Corps. They must balance the City's short term planning horizon with the longer term tendency of federal regulatory decisions.

There are other potential challenges. The plan needs to consider ongoing downtown recovery actions and decisions. Businesses that invest in their recovery should not encounter a plan that proposes changes that negate their investment. For this and the other reasons, the City may need to reconsider conclusions from the already developed concept plan.

More generally, the City should work to channel the recovery momentum to downtown development. There is a tremendous opportunity to rebuild so that the downtown is better than before the flood. The City and downtown BID should harness the planning and recovery efforts to reinvent the downtown.

## Incorporating Disaster Resilience into Economic Development Plans

Example: Cedar Rapids

<http://quake.abag.ca.gov/wp-content/documents/resilience/CedarRapidsEconomicRecoveryreport81808.pdf>

### ***How can disaster resilience work be incorporated into economic development plans?***

The following is also drawn from the IEDC report regarding Cedar Rapids, Iowa in their economic recovery from the June 2008 floods and addresses disaster resilience and economic development planning.

Prior to the flood, the City, working with the citizens, developed a strategic plan with goals, strategies, actions, time lines, roles, and designated resources. This planning effort demonstrates the progress that was made by the City since it changed from a Commission to a Council-Manager form of government 2.5 years ago. Many aspects of this well prepared plan still apply post-flood. However, refinements will be needed.

The team recommends that a recovery and rebuild section be added to the plan. Given the enormous challenges of the flood, the City and private sector need to partner effectively to address key economic issues. The roles and responsibilities of the City and private sector EDOs need to be clearly delineated, as each sector has their strengths. The city government represents the collective will of the citizens. The private sector has business and economic expertise and can often be more flexible in their use of funds.

The plan addendum should result in a memorandum of understanding among the City, downtown BID, Priority One, and the Chamber of Commerce on the roles and responsibilities of each. The effort to create the MOU will help to solidify local leadership, presenting a unified front to state and federal agencies. This unified voice will demonstrate that Cedar Rapids is capable of effectively deploying funds, resulting in greater amounts of funding.

Some roles are clearer than others. Priority One is the regional economic development organization for economic base industries. They may need to review their industry targets and possibly broaden their targeted sectors. Typically, the regional EDO takes the lead in the evaluation and determination of the targeted sectors. The Chamber works with member businesses and advocates business needs to the City. The BID is the leader for downtown retail.

It is unclear who is leading retention efforts with noneconomic base industries and downtown office users.

The City and BID are jointly administering the development of the downtown plan, but one entity needs to be very engaged given the flood related complexities. This needs to be determined. Similarly, there needs to be a lead organization for downtown redevelopment, which would typically be either the City or the BID. The organization would need to develop the staff capacity to drive complex public/private real estate deals. Alternatively, this work could be done by a redevelopment authority. The authority could be closely linked to the city, with the City Council serving as its board of directors. In contrast, it could be more autonomous with a mayor appointed and council approved board of private sector specialists.

## Workforce Development Needs

Example: Tennessee

<http://www.technologycouncil.com/create/t3/>

***Is there a need for business initiatives to encourage expansion of the workforce, and likewise, is there a need for workforce development programs to build needed skills?***

Recognizing the need for skilled technology professionals to support recruitment, retention, and expansion of businesses in Middle Tennessee, the Nashville Technology Council launched the T3 Workforce initiative.

In 2008, the NTC launched the T3 Workforce initiative as a proactive measure to turn the tide before it negatively impacted our region's robust economy. Over the last few years, the initiative grew from working with a few universities and colleges to a five pillar plan that addresses both long and short term solutions. What began as an effort to organically growing a pipeline of skilled tech workers now includes activities to recruit tech talent from other cities, ensure its current tech talent's skills remain current, accelerate development of new tech talent, and educate employers regarding how to effectively recruit and retain tech talent.

Through a collaborative effort that includes the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, the Tennessee Chapter of HIMSS, state and local economic development agencies, academic institutions, and business leaders, Middle Tennessee is recognized as a leader in this area and was recently designated as a Top 10 Underrated Hot Bed of American Innovation by Fast Company.

## Identifying Business Gaps

Example: City of Lebanon, New Hampshire

<http://lebcity.net/Planning/Documents/master%20plan/Master%20Plan%20Final%20chapters / Chapter%204%204-1%20thru%204-9.pdf>

***What new businesses or investments would positively contribute to the character of the community, particularly in the Main Street commercial district or recreational areas?***

In an effort to revitalize its Central Business District, City officials, business owners, and residents identified the following criteria and guiding principles:

- Traffic and parking concerns
- Preservation of historic assets, economic vitality, and small-town character
- Continued rehabilitation, reuse of older buildings
- Focus should be on infill and redevelopment rather than developing new properties which would compete with existing commercially-zoned properties
- Making better use of existing retail space in the City's downtown area
- Need for comprehensive inventory of both vacant and under-utilized downtown buildings and sites would help increase infill and redevelopment
- Any new developments within the West Lebanon CBD should be compatible with existing uses and be attractive and complementary to the community's history
- In general, mixed use should be encouraged, such as combining commercial storefronts with upper-story residential units
- The current mix of businesses in the district could provide a more consistent identity or unified vision for the downtown.
- In order for the CBD to remain a viable downtown center, serving the needs of residents and attracting regular customers, a coordinated plan will be needed that assesses its economic viability and business market potential, preserves its historic features and appearance, and takes into account the many needs of local residents.
- As there is a critical mass of residents of all ages who live within and just outside of the West Lebanon CBD, community-oriented services and shopping (such as civic services, grocery, restaurants, pharmacy, day care, or a farmers' market) should be encouraged to stay in or move to the West Lebanon CBD to meet the needs of the people who work and live in or near the downtown. School-aged children should specifically be included among those to be served by community facilities and commercial establishments.

- The proximity and concentration of different services to surrounding residential neighborhoods and public transit allow more tasks and activities to be accomplished with significantly less vehicular traffic generated. Providing additional recreation, park, or enhanced community center functions is essential to the vitality of this area, completing the symbiotic relationship between the existing businesses in the core, and the nearby residents.

## Tourism-Related Activities

Example: Town of Jerusalem, New York

[http://www.jerusalem-ny.org/comp\\_plan/12.%20Policies%20&%20Actions%20-%20Tourism.pdf](http://www.jerusalem-ny.org/comp_plan/12.%20Policies%20&%20Actions%20-%20Tourism.pdf)

### *How can tourism-related activities be expanded in the community?*

It is Jerusalem's policy to encourage tourism activities that celebrate the Town's natural resources, scenic beauty and rich history in ways that preserve them for future enjoyment. Building on the positive reputation and appeal of the Finger Lakes Region, Jerusalem will support the promotion of its physical and cultural assets, such as Keuka Lake, local wineries and Native American heritage. Jerusalem understands that tourism is a growing industry, both regionally and nationwide. The Town will continue to identify economic development opportunities related to tourism, such as niche business development and tourism-related services, to help ensure a stable local economy. Jerusalem will collaborate with other agencies and institutions to coordinate events and activities, making Jerusalem an attractive destination for travelers near and far.

### **Strategies**

- Improve tourism coordination and information sharing opportunities.
- Expand opportunities for organized tourism opportunities within the Town.
- Increase collaboration among local businesses to attract visitors.
- Expand tourism-related services and retail within the town.
- Expand partnerships with local, county and regional partners.

### **Measures**

- Attendance at local festivals
- Estimated number of visitors annually
- Number of guests at inns and bed and breakfast establishments each year
- Tourism-related revenue and sales