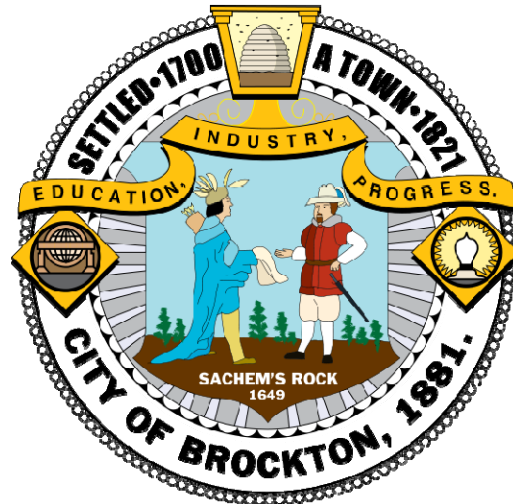


**Draft Report of the
Task Force on Economic Growth and Development**



City of Brockton, Massachusetts

**Prepared for Linda Balzotti, Mayor of the City of Brockton
March 12, 2010**

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Task Force Members

John Lloyd (Chair)
Principal, OnPoint Coaching
Brockton Resident

Sean Almonte, *Urban Planner*
Resident Services/Community Development Coordinator
Brockton-based employee of Beacon Communities, LLC

Christopher Cooney
President and CEO, Metro South Chamber of Commerce

Lorraine Green, *Human Resources Specialist*
HR Management Systems
VA Boston Healthcare Systems/Brockton Campus
Brockton Resident

Charles Hickey
Manager of Employer Services
Careerworks/UMass Donahue Institute
Brockton Resident

Diana Jennings, PhD
Director for Regional Outreach, Bridgewater State College

Patrick Quinn
Freelance Cameraman
Brockton Resident, Brockton Water Commissioner

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Metro South Chamber
Brockton School Department
Pat Ciaramella, Old Colony Planning Council
Mary Waldron, Brockton 21st Century
Thomas Monahan, Brockton City Council
Reginald Nunnally, State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance
Andre Porter, State Office for Small Business and Entrepreneurship
Erick Jean, 4 Corners Main Street

Introduction and Executive Summary

In January 2010, Linda Balzotti, Mayor of the City of Brockton, announced the formation of five task groups to study and provide recommendations on several areas of importance to the City's future. This is the report of the Task Force on Economic Growth and Development, charged with looking for ways to increase the level of employment and the production of goods and services in Brockton.

The task force membership was comprised of a mix of Brockton residents and individuals who work in, or with, the city. The group met weekly from the beginning of January until mid-March at the Metro South Chamber facilities located on School Street in Brockton. In addition, the group, in whole or in part, visited key locations in the city and/or met with key individuals (local and statewide) to gain additional input. The group also consulted a number of documents, proposals and recent studies pertaining to economic issues in Brockton.

Our recommendations broadly fall into two areas. The first group includes strategies to improve how the City runs itself. These are recommendations that relate to operations, organizational development, and the City's image. Each of the sections that follow specifies recommendations with timelines and costs associated with implementation.

Among our recommendations are the following:

- Hire a City Planner and Assistant City Planner. The reinvention of Brockton begins with this step. The City has been without a planner for far too long. In this economic climate it is imperative to have a citywide vision. Having no coherent vision allows haphazard development which is bad for Brockton. The city planners will administer the policies, programs, initiatives and regulations that manage the growth and development in Brockton.
- Ask each department to study its effectiveness in its day-to-day operations and customer service. Develop standard operating procedures in terms of for example, sharing information on the web and accepting cash payments.
- Use continuous improvement methods (for example, Kai-Zen) to improve the operations of City departments. Report to the Mayor monthly and to the public annually to show how each department is making the best possible use of resources and people to get the job done.
- Procure a Geographic Information System (GIS) package for the city and use it appropriately throughout city departments. GIS tools are widely used by modern municipalities for data collection, planning, and development activities.

- Redesign the City website. The modern city website should be an image-maker, a tool for transparency in government, and a rich source of citywide information. The present website has a ways to go to meet these criteria.
- Revitalize the Brockton Commission on Diversity. Brockton is a multicultural city and its many voices must participate fully in government and commerce.
- Commit, perhaps by forming a task force, to studying ways to enhance the multicultural aspects of economic development in Brockton. Collectively, multicultural communities represent spending power and market opportunity.

Our next recommendations concern how the City can position itself to be a more welcoming environment for economic development. Some of these recommendations promote the general physical environment of the City:

- Reestablish parking enforcement downtown in order to enhance commerce in the downtown area, provide jobs and enhance revenue.
- The City should convene a committee of departments and citizens who are charged with the oversight of public spaces citywide. There should be a commitment to social and economic development through visual outdoor appeal.
- Improve signage and beautify key areas in order to enhance city life and growth. The City should inventory existing signage, develop a universal standard for signs and public spaces, paint fire hydrants.
- Implement key road changes that will enhance development of the downtown area. Specifically, we recommend that the City revisit the “Downtown Traffic Re-circulation Plan,” a study by the Old Colony Planning Council, which outlines a plan for a two-way street system for downtown.
- Execute a proposal process to develop underused or abandoned properties such as, specifically, the Corcoran Building. In this report, we provide a plan for that process and a rationale for starting with the Corcoran.

Others represent ways to foster specific kinds of development. Some are organizations targeting particular locations while others are programs that can bolster development citywide.

- Implement a Brockton Main Streets organization downtown. Main Streets are nonprofit organizations that create and sustain an economic district’s image through organization, development, and resident and merchant education in order to produce vital, sustainable business neighborhoods.

- Implement a Small Business Fund to foster the development of small businesses city-wide. This fund would help to launch up to four new small businesses per year.
- Encourage the development of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). BIDs are special assessment districts in which property owners vote to create, manage and finance additional services or improvements beyond current municipal services.
- Creatively develop financial incentives for development of older structures, leveraging Historical and New Market Tax Credits. The Historic Tax Credit for example allows the generally more expensive costs of renovation of older structures to compete with the costs of building new structures.

Many of these strategies are relatively low-cost, high impact improvements that can be implemented in a relatively short time-frame. The key ingredient is the engagement and commitment of citizens and employees. We echo Mayor Balzotti's inaugural address:

"We need everyone...to step up to the plate...so that we may all pull ourselves up by the bootstraps and make this a 21st century city with a backbone of dedicated, energetic and innovative individuals."

With commitment and focus Brockton will become an energized, diverse and healthy city in which to live, work, and shop.

On the pages that follow, we describe our recommendations, suggest timelines and costs, and provide potential metrics for success.

Hire a City Planner and Assistant City Planner

Insight

The growth and development in Brockton has been piecemeal throughout the years. For example, multi-family townhouses have been built next door to single-family homes. Some of this development could have been as-of-right; other projects may have sought special permission from the planning board. Regardless of the reasons, this lack of a comprehensive vision can be attributed to the absence of a fully, functioning city planning department.

The absence of a city planner has left the community without a forward thinking, citywide vision for where the City of Brockton sees itself in fifty, twenty or even five years into the future. If the City of Brockton cannot envision its own future, how can it expect entrepreneurs to envision Brockton into their business plan?

It is the recommendation of the Economic Growth and Development Committee to hire a City Planner and assistant city planner and begin working on a comprehensive plan. This plan will be the blueprint for Brockton's reinvention. The city planners will administer the policies, programs, initiatives and regulations that manage the growth and development in Brockton.

City planners develop short and long-term plans for the land use, development and revitalization of urban, suburban, and rural communities in which they are located. They can address social, economic, transportation and environmental problems by recommending locations for new roads, and schools and recommend and implement zoning regulations to guide private development. The core of planning is forecasting the future needs of a community's population.

Planners attempt to maximize a community or city's land and resources for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional purposes. They target environmental, economic, social, and health issues of a community as it changes.

Generally speaking, city planners study and report the current residential, commercial, industrial land uses. A planner's report can include information on the location and capacity of roads, highways, and schools. They also provide data on the types of industries in a city, the demographics of the city, and the current employment and economic trends.

City planners are also responsible for municipal planning functions and budget development for the planning department. Planners review and analyze public and private development projects, provide technical planning assistance and coordinate the city's long- range comprehensive planning activities.

Most city planners have an area of specialization, such as transportation, urban design, community development, and land-use/code enforcement. While planners may specialize

in these and other areas, they are required to keep a bigger picture and advocate for what is best for a neighborhood or city.

Delivery Methods and Procedures

The City would follow its regular procedure for the screening and hiring for the positions of city planner and assistant city planner. However, due to the possibility of a limited number of qualified candidates for these positions, it is the recommendation of the committee to waive the Brockton residency requirement for one or both of the positions. By allowing the city to recruit from a larger pool of qualified candidates, the prospective employees will have a wide range of educational and professional experiences and a diverse skill set.

Estimated Time for Completion

The recruitment of the city planner and assistant city planner happen within the first year of the mayor's term, preferable sooner. This will allow the new planning staff to initiate planning initiatives throughout the city, thus laying the framework for economic development.

Oversight

The city planner would be the head of the City Planning Department, and thus under the direct supervision of mayor's office and would be subjected to any City Council approvals. This position would similar to heads of the Department of Transportation or the School Department. The assistant city planner and any other supportive positions would report directly to the city planner.

Metrics

The committee recommends the City adapt its current employee evaluation system to the city planner and assistant city planner positions and using the following measures to evaluate the city planner. Suggested categories include knowledge of regulations, knowledge of the planning process, problem solving skills, initiative, public speaking, decision-making, interaction with the public, colleague interaction, ownership of projects, time management, productivity, and/or the use of planning tools (i.e. GIS). Measures of evaluation could be the number of projects reviewed by the city planning department or the completion of a citywide comprehensive plan.

Outputs

The employment of a city planner and assistant city planner will enable the City of Brockton to:

- 1) Guide future development to strategic locations
 - a. Downtown Brockton or industrial parks
- 2) Obtain administrative and technical support for the Brockton Planning Board
 - a. Site plan review for projects requesting zoning variances or special permits
- 3) Initiate strategic planning initiatives throughout the city, including;
 - a. Neighborhood re-zonings
 - b. Coordinate Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

- c. Create a citywide, comprehensive plan.
- 4) Initiate and administer citywide and neighborhood planning studies,
- 5) More efficiently and strategically allocate city funds to accommodate changes in population, increased capacity on local infrastructure, or increased housing and transportation demands.

Estimated Costs

According to the FY2008 Budget, the total budget allocated for the planning department was \$176,115. The majority of the funds went to the city planner, junior planner and clerk salaries, totaling \$145,178.

According to the American Planning Association Salary Survey in 2008, the median salary for a city planner was approximately \$70,000 per year. The assistant city planner would earn less, at approximately \$52,000 per year.

Implement Action Plans for City Departments

Standard Operating Procedure

Insight

The City is host to approximately 47 different departments with over 700 employees not including School personnel. According to the City's organizational chart, which separates the city into 3 distinct branches, City Council, Mayor, and School Department – it is clear that City Departments follow the structure of Employee, Department Head and ending with the Mayor as the chain of authority.

Politics has played a key role in employment and execution of each department's obligations in serving the City. During the trial of Police Lieutenant Charlie Lincoln, former and present City Officials pointed out that City Departments had been and at the time were never "micro-managed" but rather scampered under a laissez-faire styled management –which easily leads to political hirings in which work ethic implodes, efficiencies subside and the cost of doing business out passes cash inflows due to lack of supervised goals. Supervision from the Mayor's office as well as the public perception of the lack of accountability has fostered complacency within the structure of government.

Many Departments that adhere to State and Federal guidelines operate well within the public perception of accountability compared to other Departments that are not subject to State and federal guidelines. The City has numerous skilled and well-qualified personnel working across all departments. In order to stay competitive with surrounding cities, Brockton needs to continue hiring Department Heads and promote employees with the Educational qualifications that other Cities require for those same positions. The City for some time has used "Credentialing" versus "Education" in placing personnel in managerial positions, which is evident from the lateral movement of personnel from one department to another that may require a different set of qualifications, professional experience and training. The overall philosophy of "protecting one's job" has become more important than "protecting the job" which can and has lead to lower efficiency. The City could encourage younger employees to seek the appropriate training and education from colleges and institutions prior to the time of promotion.

The Task Force recommends that the Mayor's office formalize a "Standard Operating Procedure" for all departments to follow, based on 'Zero Based Budgeting' and efficiency (see appendix A). Departments should follow a uniform standard procedure for and not limited to; accepting payment for services, distribution of requests for public records, information disbursement of services (Public Relations), Website accessibility, outsourcing of services, and capital expenditures.

The Task Force also recommends that one 'Mission Statement' be developed and utilized by each department with the emphasis on improving efficiency, public relations, and cost saving measures. The Mission Statement and its contents should also provide details of the department's specific purpose and what their responsibilities are which should be the foundation of every Department Head's 'Action Plan'.

Delivery Methods and Procedure

The Task Force recognizes that the Mayor is responsible for the tempo of all City Departments and that the Department Heads are responsible for the daily outputs and intakes of their assigned Department. Therefore it is imperative that the Mayor institutes specific guidelines for all Department Action Plans while allowing each Department Head to add their own style of expertise while managing and adhering to the Mayor's guidelines.

The recommendations for Action Plans:

- Detailed outline of specific procedures to attain the Department's Mission Statement, i.e.: Define departmental jobs specifically and their daily tasks including hours allocated for each task and the methods used for attaining improved efficiency.
- Specific procedures – responsibilities and how those responsibilities are carried out within each department's jurisdiction with recommendations for improving work flow through the use of technology
- Defining monthly, quarterly and yearly timelines, when does (it) happen
- Top 3 technology priorities – leaning towards more efficiency
- Top 3 grant proposals – Most Departments qualify for Federal and State monies while some could benefit from private sector relationships from Universities to Charitable Foundations.

Many City Departments have operated under a reactionary method towards ongoing issues and those that may occur randomly. If Departments were to formulate a plan of attack on any possibility of issues that may or may not arise, the City will be able to address and solve future issues through planning ahead which is a major cost saving tool. Each department should be required to search for grants or at the least identify grants that are available but may not qualify for, to show due diligence for the public perception.

Estimated Time and Costs for Completion

The Election cycle in the City, which is every 2 years, has in the past prohibited many policy initiatives from full enactment since every other year individuals in leadership positions tend to focus more effort on re-election than the implementation of such initiatives coming out of City Hall which has lead to a waste of money and time.

“Kaizen Blitz” is a focused short-term project to improve a process or the sudden overpowering effort to take something apart and put it back together in a ‘better way’. Large-scale improvement is attractive; it promises quantum jumps in productivity, quality and effectiveness. However, it is difficult to implement because it affects many areas, people and process, the design must be near perfect because failure courts disaster. Small-scale improvements are easier and faster, the risks are low because they generally

have limited effect. However, the accumulated effect is often greater than a single large improvement.

The Task Force recommends a “Mini Kaizen”, which requires both conscious and sub-conscious thinking about improvements day-by-day and minute-by-minute on the part of all employees. This “Mini Blitz” could be implemented within a few months while the larger “Blitz” can have an ongoing approach.

The impact of this proposal would be economic-savings – due in part to more efficient city departments as they stream line their day-to-day business. The only foreseeable negative cost could be political fall-out from employees that do not possess the skills for this type of thinking but would be minimized once everyone is on board with the new way of doing business.

Oversight

Each Department Head will need to evaluate their department’s strengths, weaknesses and performance and submit a written brief on their department’s progress through ‘Mayoral Monthly Briefings’.

The Task force recommends that the Mayor hold monthly meetings with all Department Heads as a group in which every Department Head would be required to show ‘Evidence of Active-Thinking’ through proof of accomplishments that can then later be brought to the public’s attention.

Dependencies

Improving the efficiency of City Departments depends on the willingness of Department Heads and the stamina of oversight. One of the largest detractors to progress has been the culture of using the term “The Union won’t let me”. It is well known in every unionized workplace that the employer defines the work and the union assures that employees are given a fair wage, health and retirement benefits, and a safe workplace.

The Task Force recognizes the importance of a unionized work force; generally union workers are more skilled, more productive, and willing to adapt to new technologies. Providing the best overall efficiency, the “Union Worker” has, ever since the dawn of unions “done the job better than anyone else”.

The Culture within City Hall should transcend the benefits of efficiency, quality of service and 21st century technology which can lead to a more productive workforce, a more engaged and educated public, and an overall increase in respect from a public perception. The Mayor’s office should act as the lead catalyst to the improved workplace by setting the bar for exemplary public service.

Metrics

The City will be able to measure the success of such an undertaking by workmanship, enthusiasm and satisfaction within Departments.

The Task Force recognizes that self-evaluation is an unequivocal part of economic development and therefore recommends that every Department issue an Annual Report outlining the Action Plan including all relevant data. These Annual Reports with statistics can be used to compare our progress from previous years and help to formulate future policy by comparison to comparable cities and towns in the Commonwealth.

Conclusion

Brockton is not immune to today's economic crisis and should not use this time unwisely. The ability to come out of a crisis either on the top or simply floating each have their own merits. However, Brockton has been floating far too long to ignore, and it is this moment that the Task Force recommends a full reevaluation of City Department efficiency in incremental steps while following the greater goal of Core Values that must return to everyday business if Brockton is to come out on the top.

Core Values

Customer Service

Responsiveness

Honesty and Integrity

Accountability

Innovation-(*non-traditional solutions and creative methods*)

Continuous quality improvement

Leadership

Open clear and frequent communications

Cultural Inclusiveness and Diversity:

Strategic Priorities

Public Safety

Economic Development

Customer-Involved Government

Excellence in Education

Neighborhood Vitality

Technical Innovation

Youth Development and Community Values

Implement a GIS System

Insight

A Geographic Information System, also known as GIS, is a powerful mapping tool that is widely used in the public and private sectors. A GIS is a collection of hardware, software, and data used to capture, analyze, manage and display geographic information. Many municipalities use a GIS to analyze patterns and relationships. Many of the prominent issues facing municipalities have a geographic element to them, such as transportation, economic development, crime and the environment.

The Brockton Department of Public Works is the only City agency that uses some limited GIS data, but parcel data, which are the most versatile data collected by the City Assessor's Office, are not available.

This technological absence is unusual and puts the City of Brockton at a distinct disadvantage relative to other gateway cities or cities of comparable size.

Delivery Methods & Procedures

The Mayor's Office needs to meet with a GIS provider to discuss various software and licensing options to decide what would best fit the City's needs and capacity.

Estimated Time and Cost for Completion

Depending on what type of GIS the Department of Public Works is currently utilizing, the City may have to purchase additional operating licenses to operate a GIS on computers in other City agencies. According to the Downtown Brockton Market Study and Policy Recommendations report, it is estimated to cost between \$175,000 and \$250,000 to develop the parcel data. The City will have to expand a current information technology position or create a new GIS Administrator position to manage this investment.

There are funding sources throughout Massachusetts that assist municipalities in developing a GIS; these sources include bonds, grants and no interest loans. The start-up costs of developing a GIS and its supportive database can be high, however, to reduce those costs the City should consider a partnership with the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC), the local regional planning agency. Through this partnership, the City and OCPC could develop joint aerial photography projects, share staff and systems.

Oversight

The administration and oversight of a GIS in other gateway cities in Massachusetts fall under the planning department. If the City of Brockton implements GIS, it should be managed by the Office of the City Planner. Since the City will initially build its capacity with GIS, the GIS Administrator should have extensive experience with computer systems specific to GIS.

Dependencies (Internal & External)

Internal: The successful implementation of a GIS is dependent upon the commitment of the City to pursue this technology. GIS software is readily available.

Metrics

The City should consult with a GIS provider about specific evaluation methods for GIS.

Outputs

GIS will provide the framework for gathering and organizing spatial data and other information so they may be displayed and analyzed. By visually analyzing data, City officials and business leaders will be able to make more informed decisions. Furthermore, GIS will assist with data management, planning and analysis and business operations. The City may also experience significant dollar savings through more efficient staff time or increased tax revenue. For example, the City of Fitchburg discovered errors between the parcel area calculations by the Assessor's Office and the parcel calculation by a GIS. The City gained nearly \$225,000 in assessed value in the first ten properties corrected.

Improve the City's Website

Insight

In the fall of 2006 the non-profit group "Common Cause" published its findings from a study called "Massachusetts Campaign for Open Government". The City of Brockton, the States 6th largest City scored a ZERO in this report. Most City officials and private citizens were not astonished with these findings, for Brockton's website has been since its inception almost a decade ago a modern 21st century idea lingering between closed-door government and poor design.

Today we see an added approach from national leaders to put more of the Federal Government within the reach of ordinary citizens. Just recently President Obama introduced an open government directive making the federal process a more transparent public organization.

Transparency within government leads to more accountability and citizen involvement. Brockton finds itself today in a situation of shrinking budgets and lay-offs that could cripple free flow of information and prolong the anti-trust sentiment people have for government. Even though free flow of information on a website minimizes human interaction at City Hall – the gains are, saved time in gathering information requests in which more time can be spent in the department on improvements and efficiency and overall more citizen involvement due to a well informed citizenry.

Not only does an open and transparent government lead to better accountability and efficiencies it also leads to economic development from those who may invest in our community from our willingness to be forthcoming with information.

Even though our City Website has been up and running for roughly a decade it lacks the necessary backing from previous administrations for city employees to understand its importance in today's 21st century communication economy.

Delivery Methods and Procedure

The Information Technology Department presently has 8 full time employees, while the role of Webmaster is shared between the entire departments; no one employee is charged with the task of maintaining and updating the City Website. In Fact the City Website is updated more on a request basis than on a requirement basis that lends itself to having outdated and inaccurate information.

The Task Force recommends that the administration form regulations pertaining to posting government information. Since all City departments and commissions are under the jurisdiction of the mayor – it is the mayor who can decide without dispute what should be posted beyond the abilities of requests from City Council and ordinances.

A master plan or timeline of recurring information needs to be devised and published within the administration so that all are aware of the importance of mass communication and especially the physical substructure of internet information – where subjects are interlinked within one major site to form smaller groups of information which lead back to the main site.

Presently the City website lacks design standards, which leads to cumbersome surfing of the site for information that is usually effortless to find on other City Websites. The Task Force recommends that a new task force be created to identify systemic problems throughout the website which include:

- 1) Layout standards
 - a) Typesetting, font, color and graphic standards – following standard layout formats (headings-titles-subtitles-information links)
 - b) Compatibility issues with PC and MAC based operating systems
 - c) Differentiate between Mayor, City Council, City Departments
- 2) General posting of information, current and historical
- 3) Create a map of subsections:
 - a) Residents:
 - b) Education & Schools – School department link
 - c) Neighborhoods – housing & property
 - d) Safety & Crime – external links
 - e) Health & Human Services
 - f) Taxes
 - g) Seniors
 - h) Youth
 - i) Elections & Voting
 - j) Transportation
- 4) Visitors:
 - a) About Brockton – videos & historical photos
 - b) Transportation – external links
 - c) Things to do – external links
 - d) Culture & Recreation – external links
- 5) Businesses:
 - a) Doing business w/Brockton
 - b) Starting a business in Brockton
 - c) Licensing & Permitting – online forms
 - d) Economic Development
 - e) Real Estate & Construction
- 6) Online Services:
 - a) Payments
 - b) Forms, permits, Applications
 - c) Assessors Database
 - d) Assessors Maps
- 7) News & Information:
 - a) Newsletter – various

- b) Event Calendar
 - c) Latest News
 - d) Archives
 - e) FAQ's
 - f) Job, Procurement, Legal Postings
 - g) Cultural events
- 8) Who's who in government i.e.: pictures of City Councilors, Department Heads and Commission members with bio's and specific emails when possible
 - 9) Automatic email notifications
 - 10) City Ordinances should be an external searchable link to the website of the host codifier
 - 11) GIS linked software – the gatekeeper to future development
 - a) Throughout the mass communication 21st century world 1st, 2nd and even 3rd tier cities utilize GIS software for a living computer model of the heart beat of their cities, enabling those cities to have a virtual reality of their surroundings

Estimated Time and Costs for Completion

There will be a 3-part process in re-working the City Website. First identify the information that is warranted for a public website; second, design layout and web standards to be followed throughout the life of the site; third, disseminate information to the website either from government and private agencies or to be collected by the IT department.

The cost of a quality-based website has many variables and can range from \$10,000 to \$100,000 plus, based not on the information to be posted but more on the design styles and interaction of the site to off site portals such as: Flash versus Html, Video and Information Bandwidth, eCommerce Links – Bill Payment, External Host Sites – Assessor's Database and Searchable Ordinances and the overall intuitiveness of the site

The City has under its possession roughly \$2.5 million in funds secured to improve the Downtown area. Since the Website can be a portal of information to expose the downtown to future growth it is the Task Forces opinion that some of these funds should be allocated to rebuilding the City Website and possibly hiring a full time webmaster or elevate a number of employees to the task of webmasters sharing in the role.

A proper timeframe would be 6 months: 2 months for each part of the process, with design layout encompassing all 6 months until the new site goes live.

Oversight

The Mayor's office would be the head oversight agent for the website, leaving the School Department, Police Department and the City Clerks pages to be the responsibility of those departments entirely.

Department Heads can be directed as the head agent in charge of following the regulations set by the Mayor's office for website dissemination of each individual department.

Dependencies

Internal disbelief of the importance of the free flow of information is the largest detractor to an improved City Website. The second is quality of workmanship and work ethic – there should be no reason gathering and passing information off to a website needs further training when for most of the past 50 years humans have dealt with computer technology and especially when in the last decade mass communication has taken the lead over print media and at the click of a button an individual, a company, and even a government can reach the entire population

Metrics

The Website will have a symbiotic relationship with all that is government in regards to efficiency relating to cost saving measures and economic development.

The first measure will assume public approval of the website for its openness to inclusion. Secondly, a change will occur behind the desk at City Hall, where the culture will feel more apt to share than hide, and lastly, economic growth not simply development will be the true measure of the impact of a new improved website when tangible improvements to what is already established show through with a new sense open government.

Conclusion

Simply put – a City which calls itself “The City of Champions” by name must prove to its own citizens and the outside world that it is not just in a name but in everything we do, and one of those things in today's world is a website

Cultivate a Multicultural Approach to Economic Development

Minority populations have more buying power and a bigger middle-class and affluent sector than you may realize. The University of Georgia's Selig Center for Economic Growth reports that the buying power of Hispanics exceeded \$860 billion in 2007 and will grow to more than \$1.2 trillion five years from now. For the same period, African Americans spent \$845 billion with growth, to \$1.1 trillion in five years, and Asian Americans \$459 billion, with growth projected to rise to \$670 billion. – Esther Novak, BusinessWeek

Insight

By any measure Brockton is a diverse urban center. Brockton 2008 Census estimates state Brockton's demographics as: 52.9% White, 31.6% African American, 0.2% Native American, 2.9% Asian, 10.3% from other races, 4.1% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 10.0% of the population. This diversity is in constant flux; the African American population has nearly doubled in the last six years while the white population has declined by 30% since the 1980s.

The city has throughout its history hosted immigrants of many nationalities. By turns Swedish, Irish, Lithuanian, Cape Verdean, Puerto Rican and Haitian communities (among others) have taken root in the city. More than 20% of Brockton residents were born in another country; more than a third of these residents are naturalized citizens. Yet the diversity of the city is not reflected in its elected officials; only this year was a woman been elected as mayor, and only this year did the first African-American take a seat as a city councilor.

Diversity is a fact of life for Brockton, a city surrounded for the most part by towns that are far less diverse. How can Brockton cultivate its diversity as a strength? Can a vibrant, multicultural Brockton elevate its different ethnic communities, invest in its multicultural strengths, build its minority and women-owned businesses, and attract revenues from its less diverse and wealthier neighbors?

This is a topic that the City needs to explore in depth on many levels. One mechanism for this discussion already exists. Years ago, Mayor Harrington initiated the Mayor's Community Advisory Council. According to the former Mayor's website, this Council was comprised of eleven individuals of diverse backgrounds who were chosen by their peers and organizations to represent their community and provide feedback. The council was later converted into the City's Diversity Commission (DC). Sadly, that body has not met since June of 2009.

We recommend that:

- The Diversity Commission (DC) be re-engaged, re-structured and re-tasked.
- The City develop a task force or Diversity Commission subcommittee that would explore ways to nurture, sustain and elevate a vibrant multicultural ecosystem in Brockton.

Delivery Methods and Procedures

Revitalization of the Brockton Commission on Diversity (DC):

The composition and charter of the DC is presently governed by a city ordinance (Appendix B). To augment and improve the operation of this commission, we suggest that efforts be made to evaluate the commission's effectiveness via a task force. The Diversity Task Force should be convened as the chairs of the present mayoral task forces on public safety, education and training, street violence, economic growth and development, (official names of task forces), housing and neighborhood stabilization. We recommend asking these chairs to serve because multicultural concerns pervade the work of their committees. In addition to being well-versed in Brockton's current events and issues, these individuals are closely associated with key educators, clergy, community organizers, and the public.

The tasks of the Diversity Task Force with respect to the DC would include:

- Evaluating the charter, mission and values of the DC.
- Setting selection criteria for the full membership of the DC.
- Conducting the search for the membership.

A revitalized DC sends a welcoming message to multicultural businesses in Brockton. It also sends an empowering message to the next generation of workers and leaders now making its way through Brockton's public school system.

Identify, nurture, promote and sustain the economic capacity of multicultural communities and business owners in the City of Brockton:

"We need to capitalize on the presence of so many different cultures. Our immigrant diversity is strength. People move here to move up." –quote from a focus group conducted by Concord Square

A 2009 marketing study conducted by Concord Square identified that one of the top three market segments within the 5-minute drive time from downtown Brockton is "international marketplace" – that is, a developing urban market having a rich blend of cultures and household types. The same study indicated that Legion Parkway could be a key location for an ethnic market.

With a revitalized DC in place, the next step would be to promote multicultural economic development either in the context of a DC subcommittee, or an advisory board or task force that would focus on this topic. This entity, which we will give the working title of MEDC (Multicultural Economic Development Committee) would gather information to advise the Brockton city government in areas to include the following:

- What is the economic impact of minority-owned businesses in the City?
- What multicultural economic needs could be met by new or existing businesses in the City? (For example, Asian Indians throughout the South Shore flock to Indian grocery markets in Quincy in order to purchase ethnic foods)

- How can the city and other entities facilitate the long-term success of minority-owned businesses? (For example, can Brockton partner with SOMWBA to increase SOMWBA certifications of city businesses?)
- What ongoing conversations are required to address issues of economic development in a multicultural ecosystem like Brockton's? Would summits or conferences be of use?
- Are there ways to partner with area higher education institutions to better equip the non-white workforce to be competitive in the modern economy?
- How can the educational capacity/attainment of non-white groups in the City be elevated?
- Are there international markets which can be particularly exploited by Brockton businesses?

Estimated Time and Costs for Completion

Cost: N/A – (logistical support from Mayor's office)

Time: 6 months

Oversight

We recommend that there be liaisons from the Mayor's office and the City Council. Consider the possibility of asking councilors to each do a six month rotation with the Diversity Commission.

Dependencies (internal and external)

Internal: There needs to be buy-in and leadership from the existing commission membership.

External: Is there cultural competition and dissent amongst community committees, organizations with similar groups. If so, who are they? What are the possibilities for partnership?

Metrics

Metrics are specific for the DC and MEDC upon creation. Directions from task force chairs and the Mayor's Office will help drive quantifiable metrics in the future. Certainly in the long term one would expect to see evidence of more, and more sustainable, multicultural businesses to be created.

Outputs

The big picture result will be that the City will devise an inclusive strategy for revitalizing Brockton's efforts to promote cultural awareness and "to make Brockton a more inclusive and diverse place" to live, work and play.

Reintroduce Parking Enforcement

Summary

The administration of Mayor Linda Balzotti is preparing to submit to the Brockton City Council a plan to re-establish parking enforcement in the downtown area with part-time, uniformed city employees working under the supervision of the Parking Authority.

This plan is designed to improve parking services to the public, enhance commerce in the downtown area, provide employment, generate net revenue for the city and establish a long-term mechanism to fund the maintenance and improvement of city parking facilities and services.

Background

Other than intermittent ticketing by police officers, the City of Brockton has had no regular enforcement of parking regulations downtown since the retirement in April 2009 of the three, full-time parking enforcement officers who worked under the supervision of the Police Department.

The parking enforcement officers retired in the face of layoffs that the previous administration anticipated making in a round of cost cutting for Fiscal Year 2010. The parking enforcement efforts of regular police officers were expected to fill the void. When this did not occur, the administration developed a plan to privatize parking enforcement. (Retirement rules prevented the experienced parking enforcement officers from returning to the job.) In late-summer 2009 a request for proposals for parking enforcement, data processing and collection services for parking violations was prepared and submitted to the City Council sitting as the Finance Committee, along with a request for an appropriation to establish a forward-funded revolving account to pay for the program. The proposal failed to receive enough support from the Finance Committee to advance to a vote of the City Council. Following Councilor-at-Large Linda Balzotti's election as mayor in November 2009, the Parking Authority developed a new parking enforcement proposal in consultation with the mayor-elect.

In the meantime, parking enforcement has been limited to ticketing by police officers, who, because of more pressing law enforcement priorities, have concentrated primarily on the most egregious parking violations, such as illegal parking in handicapped spots or no-parking zones. There has been no routine enforcement of the regulations governing the use of parking lots with monthly fees, spaces with meters or spaces with one- or two-hour free parking limits. The lack of enforcement has cost the city revenue and led to complaints from merchants that short-term parking spots are being occupied all day by people who work downtown and who should be using the James J. Adams Parking Garage or Parking Authority lots with monthly fees.

The Plan

The parking enforcement plan currently under consideration anticipates the employment of four part-time, uniformed parking enforcement officers who will work under the supervision of the Parking Authority as members of Local 1162 of the Laborers International Union of North America in Brockton. An ordinance change will be needed to give the parking enforcement officers the authority to write tickets. The authority of police officers to also enforce parking regulations will remain unchanged.

Integral to the plan is an upgrade in technology through the acquisition of hand-held ticket-writing devices with data collection capabilities that will aid in the supervision of parking enforcement officers and lead to enhanced program performance. The plan also will establish revamped collection procedures for fines, based on anticipated increases in ticket volume.

The primary purpose of reintroducing parking enforcement downtown is to maximize the use of the city's parking resources by reinforcing public awareness of the availability of the Adams garage and lots with monthly fees for all-day and long-term parking, thus freeing up metered and limited free, on-street spaces for short-term parking. Re-establishing orderly parking patterns is expected to enhance parking revenues, improve commerce downtown and produce a more positive experience for visitors.

While not a primary goal, an unavoidable consequence of improved parking enforcement is enhanced revenues from parking fees and fines. The Parking Authority not only expects the plan to be financially self-sustaining, but it projects net annual income for the city of nearly \$350,000. The plan anticipates a portion of the net increase in revenue will be set aside for the Parking Authority for the maintenance and improvement of parking facilities and services, which are essential to the city's economic development, especially in the downtown area.

Implementation

The plan to reintroduce parking enforcement has been under development for several months by the Parking Authority, which is empowered by state law to regulate parking in the City of Brockton. The preparation of job descriptions for the parking enforcement officers and the drafting of changes to city ordinances that will be required to enact the program are underway. The particulars of the plan and the supporting financial documentation are subject to the mayor's approval.

Once approved by the mayor, the plan, a request for a \$137,000 appropriation to implement it, and the necessary ordinance changes will be submitted to the City Council, first to the Finance Committee sitting as a committee of the whole. If a majority of the Finance Committee approves, the plan will go to council for final approval.

Following the City Council's enactment of the legal and financial framework for the plan, the Parking Authority will acquire the ticket-writing and fine collection technology and services through a public bidding process. The Parking Authority also will advertise for

and hire the part-time parking enforcement officers. The parking enforcement officers will be trained on parking regulations, enforcement, performance standards and other job-related matters. They also will be equipped with and trained in the use of the technology they will be required to employ as they carry out their duties.

A reasonable timeline for the enactment and reintroduction of parking enforcement downtown is before the end of the current fiscal year.

Metrics

The City of Brockton will have several ways to measure the impact of the reintroduction of parking enforcement, not the least of which is the feedback the Parking Authority, the Mayor's Office and other sources will receive from various downtown stakeholders, including retail and commercial interests, their customers, downtown employers and employees, and visitors.

On a more quantitative level, the enforcement process itself will generate a plethora of data. This information, added to the considerable amount of data the Parking Authority has from its current operations, should provide the framework for continuous improvement in the management of parking enforcement. That, in turn, should result in the attainment of revenue goals for both fees and fines by the end of the 2011 Fiscal Year that reflect consistently effective utilization of the city's parking resources.

However, the maximum effectiveness of this initiative will be realized only if a share of the net resources generated by parking enforcement is dedicated to the long-term improvement of parking facilities and services, which are essential to Brockton's economic growth and the development of a vibrant and inviting downtown.

Pay Attention to Signage and Beautification

Streets and public spaces

Insight

Brockton's rich and enlightened history spanning from revolutionary days through the industrial "shoe" revolution and continuing with modern urban sprawl has been troubled with a lack of citywide cohesion in regards to the physical and emotional feel of its streets and its beautification of public spaces.

In very elemental ways, streets allow people to be outside. Barring private gardens, which many urban people do not have, or immediate access to parks, streets are what constitute the outside for many urbanites; places to be when they are not indoors. They are where you meet people, which is a basic reason to have cities in any case.

Sociability is a large part of why cities exist and streets are a major place for that sociability to develop, everyone can use the street. Knowing the rhythm of a street is to know who may be on it or at a certain place along it during a given period; knowing who can be seen there or avoided or meetings can be by chance and for a split second but immensely satisfying.

Some streets, especially major thoroughfares are for exchange of service or goods; places to do business. They are public showcases, meant to exhibit what a society has to offer, and to entice. The entrepreneur offers goods, displays them, and comes out onto the street with wares to be seen. The looker sees, compares, discusses with a companion, and ultimately decides to enter the selling environment leaving the protection of the public realm for the private exchange.

Streets are also political spaces. Neighbors discuss zoning or impending local and national initiatives. It's on Main Street, at the Holiday parade and the Veteran's Day parade that political celebrations take place. The street is a place where personal and political life flow together. Whether as a meeting ground for the development and exchange of ideas and hopes, or as a stage for demonstration and mass expression, the public street is special place.

The people of cities understand the symbolic, ceremonial, social, and political roles of street, not just those of movement and access, and Brockton as governmental body must understand this as well. The best streets encourage participation. People stop and talk or maybe they sit and watch, as passive participants, taking in what the street has to offer.

There is magic to streets. We are attracted to the best of them not because we have to go there but because we want to be there. The best are as joyful as they are utilitarian. They are entertaining and they are open to all. They are symbols of a community and of its history; they represent the public memory. On a great street we are allowed to dream; to

remember things that may never have happened and to look forward to things that, maybe or never will.

Delivery Methods and Procedures

Brockton needs to define those physical elements most likely to make urban streets places where the magic can happen; by implementing a city wide plan for uniform streets, uniform public signage and public spaces including median strips and parks, as well as design standards for private signage that encompasses this philosophy of social and economic development through a visual outdoor appeal.

The City needs to bring together any government agencies whose departments oversee public property and private citizens that have vested interest.

- Create a City Commission that reports directly to the mayor with this philosophy as its core mission whose recommendations are funneled through the Mayor's office.
- The Mayor should request from the appropriate department a schedule for implementing the commission's recommendations.

The City needs to create a 'Universal Standard' for signage and public spaces. Historically every new project whether it be a street laying, traffic control or park improvement has had its own identity, an *ad hoc* approach drifting far from any uniform design that lets the outside viewer to know they are in Brockton.

- Use already existing guidelines for private signage formulated by the office of the City Planner. See appendix C (*Design Guidelines for Signs*)
- Create guidelines for public signage and green spaces - median strips, to be used in all existing and new city projects.

The City needs to implement an inventory of all public signs and infrastructural items, including street signs, cross walk signs, parking regulation signs, pedestrian signs, general informational signs, historical signs, fire hydrants, electrical boxes, etc. by utilizing up to date, technology efficiency:

- GIS software to tally and keep track of all signage and public green spaces.
- Identify all old and aesthetically unpleasing signage for removal.
- Example: unreadable signs, bent signposts, and large unwelcoming signs
- Identify all obsolete and redundant signage for removal.
- Example: are there too many signs in a given area? How many 'Main Street' signs does a city really need coming out of a thickly settled area?
- Replace signage with new signs conforming to new 'Universal Standards'
- Paint all City fire hydrants, electrical boxes and any other infrastructure items to new 'Universal Standards'.

Estimated Time and Costs for Completion

The City should implement a policy in which encourages a proactive approach to street beautification. Whenever a project is under development, there needs to be thought and discussion as part of the overall plan for beautification, which will inevitably save time and money from planning ahead as part of any project involved.

Signage and beautification is and should be a rolling effort with completion times and cost for specific projects. Costs would already be worked into department's budgets and utilization of inventory would minimize overall costs such as:

- Fire hydrant painting: new cost, paint - established cost, personnel already on payroll within the department - completion, fill time not already allocated to another project or part of an existing project.
- Fire Electrical boxes: new cost, paint and design - established cost, personnel already on payroll engaging in maintenance - completion, allocate time during usual maintenance or non allocated hours.
- Public Signs: new cost, creation of signs - established cost, personnel already on payroll, cross departmental cooperation - completion, allocate time during another project and/or fill time not already allocated.

Oversight

Accountability has always been a major issue in Brockton's progress; therefore the progress of Brockton should not be based on one person's ability or non-ability to comply with a new "universal standard" of beautification.

The commission created for this purpose should be the lead entity overseeing quality of, and execution of every project. The commission shall report its findings directly to the Mayor who acts as the chief executive over all City Departments. The Mayor would then be charged with ordering the proper use of City assets to fulfill the Commission's mission.

Dependencies

The largest obstacle foreseen is not only a possibly costly overhaul of the City's signage and green spaces but the attitude within the public sector that there is nothing more that can be done without more funds. Any employer knows that there are busy times and down times within the working day, complacency must be exposed and handled in a fashion that will energize and fulfill those individuals charged with execution of the task at hand.

Throughout Brockton's beautification process the City should hold well-publicized and open meetings to encourage private citizens for their opinions on what "universal standards" should encompass while educating the public on the benefit of such standards.

Metrics

The City will be able to measure the success of such an undertaking by simple statistics. Those statistics would range from foot traffic counts within the main street business areas, property values and real estate turn-around sales, number of and productivity of city and private projects, crime data and economic data including spending trend and new business permits.

Conclusion

If Brockton were to take a lesson from the City of Lowell's relentless use of the "Broken Windows Theory", which inevitably turned the former Rust Belt City into a vibrant place of social and economic growth we too can rebound into a community with shared values through public standards that mirror our own private vibrant lives. Once a beautification and Universal Signage plan has been established and implemented within the City, Brockton will not be a City on the move but a City that's moving.

Implement a Two-Way Street System Downtown

Insight

Transportation, as it relates to Brockton's downtown district has a direct and indirect impact on several aspects of economic growth and development such as: city planning, image (*urban environment*), commerce (*economic growth*), investment (*residential / commercial*), parking and revenue sources. From an external perspective, Brockton's proximity to Boston and Providence is considered an ideal geographic location and is leveraged via the MBTA Commuter Rail. Internally, the BAT bus system provides exceptional service, in addition to cab services providing an alternative option for the general public. That said, the focus of transportation with regard to the downtown district should be scrutinized by the following criteria: accessibility, mobility and feasibility. The long term solution is the incorporation of a two-way street system.

Delivery Methods and Procedures

For implementation procedures and options the EGDC recommends the City of Brockton should re-visit the "Downtown Traffic Re-circulation Plan." A detailed report from the OCPC outlines the phases on how to execute a two-way street system.

Estimated Time and Costs for Completion

Estimated time for a two-way street system implementation is approximately 2-3 years at an estimated cost of \$7.5M.

Oversight

Brockton Area Transit Authority, Brockton Planning Department – (City Planner) and Brockton Redevelopment Authority.

Dependencies

Internal: Funding, Planning / Implementing, Bureaucratic process (multiple agencies/organizations involved with the process) and Community involvement.

External: Construction timeline, Transportation constraints, Project schedule and Community involvement.

Metrics

Establish an oversight committee to work in conjunction with the Brockton Area Transit Authority, Brockton Planning Department and the Brockton Redevelopment Authority and provide quarterly review of the implementation process according to the strict adherence of the project schedule and timeline.

Outputs

According to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, traffic guidelines recommend that traffic analysis be completed at a minimum of 5 years into the future. For a project of this magnitude a 10 year time-frame would be appropriate for a reasonable level of background traffic growth. The projected outputs for this initiative should have a positive impact on image, commerce and investment.

Execute a Request for Proposals for the Corcoran Building

Insight

There is a significant amount of city-owned land in Downtown Brockton that offers opportunities for redevelopment. The EGDC has identified the Corcoran Building and the adjacent parking lots as a priority for downtown redevelopment. The City has previously identified these parcels through past Request for Proposals.

Many development companies, private citizen focus groups, and entrepreneurs have in the past levitated towards the Corcoran Building as a possible foundation for economic growth. From the “Plan Brockton 2008” community discussions, National Black Doll Project & Museum to the Concord Square Planning & Development Market Study in 2009, many visionary thinkers, entrepreneurs, and planning companies have look at the Corcoran Building as Brockton’s public beginning to private economic development.

Other cities across the commonwealth including Boston, Somerville, Lawrence, Lowell, and Worcester have proven that in the absence of private economic funds, public funds become the catalyst for a change in economic development – which ultimately leads to economic growth from the private sector once this disbelief is shattered by the opportunity that is clearly visible from sidewalk observations. Where the private sector fails to implement development it is the responsibility of the public trust to push for that development with the use of public funds for the greater community but also in doing so attracting private business.

Geographically the Corcoran property sits as an urban bookmark to the core downtown commerce area with the Frederic Douglas Way, formally High Street area and Legion Parkway as the other ends of this bookmark. Situated less than 5000 feet from the City’s Main Library, the YMCA, and the Council on Aging – The Corcoran building will have no problem attracting foot traffic – a key part of a successful rebound of Downtown. Forward looking development of the downtown area also places the Corcoran in position to gain from the Legion Parkway, High Street, and City Hall traffic which is less than a 10 minute walk and is situated along the “greening” of the Salisbury brook project – a place for commerce off the trail.

The Corcoran building with its location along one branch of the South Shore Commuter Rail could also show from a physical appearance that “something” economically is happening within the City. A developed Corcoran building could entice the traveling shopper or entrepreneur to visit the downtown area returning the core to a place for South Shore commerce – a bustling city center which is the heart of any city.

Delivery Methods and Procedures

The City is in a unique situation for a controlled urban plan of renewal provided any plan is thoroughly examined for ‘Total Return on Capital Investment’ against future economic growth, perceived safety of the downtown, human traffic, and increased tax revenue.

Even though the Corcoran building has had some but limited interests over the years, with today's economic situation it is most likely that the City will have to rely on a public plan rather than a private one for the economic growth of the Corcoran building zone – without expelling private investment.

The City could look towards the Corcoran as an incubator space for small start-ups and other already formed organizations looking for space. The City should use smart growth urban planning parameters to identify a possible use of the space – leaning heavily on 'mixed use' principles. For instance the city has the opportunity first hand to formulize what is missing from downtown and attract those economic pieces through small and mid-sized (RFP's).

Gentrification for the later part of the last century has taken on the term of meaning rapid improvements in a usually desirable area that has fallen undesirable – while some displacements of peoples occur; proper adherence to smart growth philosophy minimizes the displacement of people. A gentrification approach to the Corcoran would have little to no adverse effects on the surrounding areas since there already is little population and very little competing businesses that would be outlined for attraction such as:

- Theatre space / Music Venue – used by Brockton Symphony and rented out for other programs
- Farmer's Market permanent space
- AIR (artists in residence) spaces
- Bakery, Bookstore Café, Garden Center, Restaurants, Boutique stores (clothing, sneakers, gifts)
- Small start-up spaces for: internet, print, non-profits, etc.
- Art Gallery spaces
- Green space for leisure activity

The City could take one of two avenues when approaching the Corcoran building: Sell the entire area to a private entity with little to no future planning and tempo for space or maintain the space under City control while leasing areas out while maintaining control of future planning, tempo, and economic direction of the “book end”. The City needs to continue to look for uses while a definitive plan is implemented by continuing Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Corcoran Buildings and the adjacent parking lots all while looking into the possibility of a City-run incubator space which could be managed under an existing City entity such as the Cultural Council, BRA, 21st Century or creating a new one.

Time and Costs for Completion

Estimating costs for rehabbing the Corcoran are close impossible without a definitive plan in place, yet going off previous plans a cost could range from \$5 million to \$10 million. Extending the costs would enable a multiple phased approach to any City-driven rehab – renovating a theatre space first would immediately generate revenue through ticket sales, concession sales, and parking fees.

Cost is the second half of any plan and there are multiple avenues for funding the Corcoran endeavor beyond total private money:

- Low interest HUD 109 loans to the City
- Use of funds already earmarked for Downtown rehabilitation – presently around \$2.5 million
- HUD’s Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program – \$140 million available nationwide
- Creating a cooperative entity in which private citizens can invest.

Oversight

- The City of Brockton would oversee the RFP process until the disposition of the city-owned land.

Dependencies

Internal:

- The amount of time it takes the City to develop and post the RPP
- Review process of RFP response (Who will perform this task? B21, BBB, City Planner, special committee). A sample RFP is shown in Appendix D.
- Final Negotiations
- Title transfer
- Permitting and licensing
- Amendments

External:

- Response from Developers (Time, Quantity and Quality)
- Ability of Developer to obtain financing
- Construction Costs
- Lack of Entrepreneurs

Metrics

- Quarterly benchmark review for each phase
 - Phase I – Construction (Length TBD) (On schedule? Challenges?)
 - Phase II - Lease Up (length TBD)
 - Phase III - Full Operations (Length 1 year)

Outputs

- Job creation
- Additional revenue stream for the City
- Neighborhood revitalization
- Increased property values

Consider a Business Improvement District (BID) for Downtown

Insight

The Brockton business community has three business associations: the Downtown Brockton Association, the Campello Business Association and the Montello Business Association. As valuable as business associations are in promoting member businesses and increasing overall business for members, their impact does have limits. A Business Improvement District in one or more of these established economic centers would further enhance commerce by providing financial sustainability and professional management.

Business Improvement Districts were formed by property owners in direct response to increased customer demands for goods, services and programs, above those already provided by municipalities. Additionally, urban centers began to decline in the 1970s and 1980s, leading to further disinvestment and decreased revenues. Business Improvement Districts gave property owners a new way to compete and empowered them to take control of the physical environment.

A Business Improvement District, commonly referred to as a BID, is a special assessment district where property owners vote to create, manage and finance additional services or improvements beyond current municipal services. The assessment is levied on properties within the district and spent exclusively within the district. Supplemental services can include marketing, capital improvements, planning and business development. This management arrangement provides a sustainable funding stream for the revitalization of city centers, neighborhood commercial districts and industrial areas. BIDs have been proven to attract residents, customers, shoppers and other business to the district area.

BIDs work with municipal governments to provide additional services and assist in economic growth and development. Common BID programs include, but are not limited to, landscaping, maintenance, public safety, community services, housing and parking facilities.

Delivery Method

The Massachusetts Guide to Business Improvement Districts lays out the process to establish a BID in four phases:

- **Phase One** is to test the feasibility of a BID (3 months)
 - a. Are the conditions favorable for a BID?
 - i. Is there significant property mix in the proposed district? BIDs are contiguous districts in which 75 percent of the area is commercial, retail, industrial or mixed-use properties.
 - ii. Is there stakeholder support for the BID? Stakeholders could include elected officials, the major property owners, Chamber of Commerce leaders, local media, community activists and business owners.

- iii. Political support? Even though the BID is a private sector initiative, it is important to have the support of the mayor. At a minimum, the City must be a strong supporter of the BID concept. The City could even provide financial assistance to underwrite the BID start-up.
 - iv. Is the proposed district economically stable? The BID should be created in an area with a solid economic base. The district must have the economic strength to support the additional assessment used to generate the operating revenue.
 - b. State the rationale for the BID
 - c. Introduced and explain the concept of a BID
 - d. Recruit the steering committee
 - e. Explore potential resources
 - f. Propose BID boundaries
 - g. Develop a database for BID properties
- **Phase Two** is to create the “BID Improvement Plan” (4 – 5 months),
 - a. Conduct a needs assessment
 - b. Community outreach
 - c. Create the BID Improvement Plan
 - d. Determine BID budget
 - e. Develop fee formula—the equation of determining each BID member’s fee
 - f. Establish Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)—a contract outlining the responsibilities of the BID board of directors and the city
- **Phase Three** is to begin the petition process (6 – 12 months),
 - a. Prepare BID petition
 - b. Organize BID petition campaign
 - c. Dissemination of BID information to property owners
 - d. BID signature campaign
 - e. Initiate legislative authorization process
- **Phase Four** is the initiation of BID Operations (6 – 8 months),
 - a. Form bylaws and articles of organization
 - b. Create board of directors
 - c. File for non-profit status
 - d. Maintain communication with BID members
 - e. Hire BID staff
 - f. Select vendors for BID programs
 - g. Send initial billing for BID assessment
 - h. Formerly begin BID services

(Further details for each phase of the creation of a BID are available in the BID Guide.)

Estimated Time & Costs for Completion

The formation of a BID will take 18 to 24 months, depending on community understanding of the BID concept and the size and complexity of the proposed district.

The formation process can also require 20 to 40 hours per week of staff time to coordinate the process.

Oversight

During the formation process, a steering committee should be recruited to provide leadership and feedback. Once the BID is established, it is required to file for non-profit 501(c)(3) status and establish a board of directors.

Dependencies

Throughout the BID formation process there are a number of variables to the success or failure of a Business Improvement District, such as support and buy-in by property owners with the proposed boundaries, community understanding and support of the BID concept or the political support from local officials.

Metrics

The ultimate goal of a BID is to increase revenue for businesses and property values for property owners within the district, therefore, to measure the success of the BID, the board of directors can compare pre-BID and post-BID business financials or property values. The board can also analyze the amount of supplemental services the BID has provided within the district.

Outputs

The success of BIDs has been documented for nearly thirty years. According to the Massachusetts Guide for Establishing BIDs, there are seven reasons why they are successful:

- BID programs are cost-effective when addressing common property-owner issues and needs. Through the collective nature of the BID, property owners can achieve results on a scale that would have been expensive or impossible for one business to take on alone.
- A BID is designed to be flexible. It is the responsibility of the BID management to design programs to respond to specific issues, such as maintenance of sidewalk cleanliness or the recruitment of new business. Targeted marketing campaigns can create residential, commercial and cultural opportunities to targeted audiences.
- The creation of the BID can make the area a stronger competitor in the regional marketplace. Creating and branding a location as a “destination,” enables downtowns to compete with malls.
- BIDs provide property owners with a collective voice on issues that directly impact the surrounding area. This collective voice gives property owners more power to influence public policy.

- The funding structure of BIDs creates a predictable revenue stream and allows the BID to maximize its available resources.
- BID properties experience increased values and occupancy rates, even during real estate downturns.
- Lastly, BIDs provide stability during periods of political change and uncertainty. BIDs achieve this through the continued funding of programs and services vital to the success of the district.

Implement a Small Business Fund (aka Municipal Micro-Lending Program: MMLP)

Insight

The objective of the Municipal Micro-Lending Program (MMLP) is to generate localized economic activity and growth through low-interest micro loans to local entrepreneurs and/or small businesses. The MMLP is to be used as the “lender of last resort.” During difficult economic periods, where lending and credit are in short supply, the MMLP can assist select applicants who have been disqualified for conventional loans.

Program Requirements

- Successfully complete a minimum of 3 technical assistance program(s) offered at the SCORE, SEED and/or MSBDC offices.
- Businesses 3 years old or less – (i.e. **Start-up’s and Entrepreneurs**) must submit a completed business plan which includes financial projections for 3 years of operation status.
- Existing businesses with **3 or more years of operation** status must submit 3 years of prior financial history.
- Demonstrate the **inability** to obtain financing from a traditional lending source by providing **two** “Letters of Denial” from a conventional lending institution.
- Demonstrate the **inability** to obtain financing from the Southeastern Economic Development Corp. (SEED); and/or express with substantiated proof that the amount qualified for is too low for the needs of the company / organization.
- Must be current on all local, state and federal debt
- Submit a credit release, authorizing the City of Brockton to obtain personal and corporate credit reports.
- Complete the City of Brockton micro-loan application, in conjunction with a business plan and/or continuity plan along with any and all supporting documentation.
- Businesses must demonstrate adequate collateral, credit and capacity to repay the loan and adhere to the rules and regulations set forth in the MMLP – (i.e. interest rate, term, etc.).
- **Job creation** – (i.e. minimum of three (3) full-time or 6 part-time employees = 105 hours of work per week).
- Depending on type of business and industry, approved applicants of the MMLP will be required to make the best effort to buy supplies, materials, etc. from local or small businesses in the Brockton area or otherwise specified by 30 mile proximity.
- Selected applicants will be required to work with a post-finance technical assistance consultant for a 6 month term.
- 1 year minimum membership requirement to the Metro South COC.
- 40 hour minimum volunteer service requirement.

- Non-compliance with any of the program requirements will result in an increase in the loan’s interest rate.

Criteria for Start-Up’s and Entrepreneurs – (3 or less years of operation)

- 1) Future business must be Brockton-based.
- 2) Majority (at least 51%) of employees must be Brockton residents.
- 3) Completed business plan and supporting documentation.

Criteria for small businesses – (3 or more years of operation)

- 1) Business must be based in Brockton.
- 2) Majority (at least 51%) of employees are Brockton residents.
- 3) Completed business continuity plan.

Possible Loan Selection Process

- 1) Review of applicant pool by Municipal Micro-Lending Board
- 2) Qualified applicants will be entered into a lottery
- 3) Random selection of qualified applicants will be chosen

Delivery Methods and Procedures

City of Brockton will outsource the creation of the micro-loan application through the assistance of a community bank and/or credit union. The “Economic Advisers” to the Mayor will outline the details of the MMLP utilizing the recommendations from the EGDC, Metro South COC, B21, BBB and Old Colony Planning Council.

Estimated Time and Costs for Completion

Estimated Time for Completion: Six (6) months to create loan application, devise program requirements and implement.

Estimated Costs: Costs incurred for loan application creation directly related to outsourcing of Bank(s) to take on this task. MMLP creation of requirements, credit policy and recommendations = N/A.

Oversight

Brockton 21st Century, BBB, or local community bank.

Dependencies

Internal: Finding the financing! Managing the process. Bureaucratic process = (Mayor’s Office and City Councilors) could lead to time loss for implementation and execution.

External: Applicant defaults on loan. Turbulent business climate effecting industry specific to applicant. Technology.

Metrics

EGDC recommends a pilot program for two years, 4 businesses selected for each year and a maximum loan amount of \$25K for each business selected. Metrics will include quantitative and qualitative results – (i.e. success of business at benchmark review dates on a quarterly basis, repayment of loan, revenue goals set by the business management

team in conjunction with City of Brockton, **job creation** goals, revenue generated from the “buy locally” requirement, etc.)

Outputs

The MMLP will promote economic growth for the City of Champions by creating jobs and providing an additional revenue stream for the city in terms of taxes, parking, etc. The program itself, if successful will be seen as an ideal model to be followed by the other gateway cities. Selected applicants will be given a financial opportunity otherwise not possible without the assistance of a city invested in its business community and not afraid to think out-of-the-box during tough economical times.

Create Financial Incentives using Tax Credits

Insight

The EGDC recommends creating a financial incentive package leveraging the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit and the New Markets Tax Credit in conjunction with additional support from the City of Brockton which will yield an advantageous incentive for prospective investors to purchase, renovate and lease commercial space to qualified businesses.

Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit – “The Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit is an exciting addition to the preservation toolkit. Under the program a certified rehabilitation project on an income-producing property is eligible to receive up to **20%** of the cost of certified rehabilitation expenditures in state tax credits. There is an annual cap, so there are selection criteria that ensure the funds are distributed to the projects that provide the most public benefit.”

New Market Tax Credit – “The New Markets Tax Credit program encourages investment in urban and rural low-income areas to help finance community development projects, stimulate economic growth and create jobs. Private-sector investors receive credit against federal income taxes. The credit equals **39%** of the investment paid out over **seven years**. The program allows individual and corporate taxpayers to receive a credit against federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in Community Development Entities, or CDEs.”

Delivery Methods and Procedures

1. Utilize what’s out there for investment incentives.
2. Create a financial incentive package combining both State and Federal programs.
3. Determine how and what the city can do to compliment the state and federal programs available as to establish uniqueness.
4. Actively solicit prospective investors in parallel with educating the existing business community – (eg. *property owners*) via workshops /seminars.

Estimated Time – 6 months: (financial package creation)

Estimated Cost – N/A

Oversight – City of Brockton, Mayor’s Office, Brockton Redevelopment Authority and/or Brockton 21st Century.

Dependencies

Internal: research time, data collection and package creation

External: N/A

Metrics

Metrics for this recommendation are dependent on the creation of the financial incentive package. Upon completion of the package, criteria for evaluation will be quantifiable but will vary widely.

Outputs

The utilization of the Historical Rehabilitation Tax Credit and the New Market Tax Credit for incentivising potential investors is only the first step. The real differentiating factor is the role that the City of Brockton can play to compliment the menu of financial resources available both at the state and federal level to further encourage prospective investors. Simply put, the more unique Brockton's incentive package becomes, the more likely Brockton will gain strides in economic growth and development from a regional perspective.

Appendices and Resources

- A. Zero-based Budgeting**
- B. Ordinance, Brockton Commission on Diversity**
- C. Design Guidelines for Signs**
- D. Sample RFP**
- E. Resource: UMass Dartmouth Marketing Survey Questionnaire**
- F. Resource: “Employment, Unemployment and Economic Development Brockton, MA” by Charles Hickey**

Appendix A. What is Zero-Base Budgeting?

Zero-base Budgeting is a budgeting and financial management strategy to help policy makers achieve more cost-effective delivery of public services.

The concept of zero-base budgeting has been utilized successfully by private corporations and recommended for application to the federal budget for some time. For government use, this planning and budgeting technique endeavors to redirect efforts and funds from lower priority current programs to higher priority new programs, improve efficiency and effectiveness, and reduce spending.

Traditionally, most government budgets have been constructed by adding to the current expenditure level such amounts as seem warranted by circumstances. In most jurisdictions, expenditures for the coming year will exceed those of the current year. For this reason, most attention is directed to the “increments” that have been added to this year’s expenditures to reach the proposed budget total. A major flaw in incremental budgeting is that it assumes the current year’s expenditure level is justifiable and this may not be true. It may be either too high or too low.

Zero-base Budgeting, on the other hand, is a detailed and concentrated study of those activities that might be considered costly or ineffective and that continue to be funded primarily because they are never examined.

It may be useful for one or more government programs to be subjected to zero-base budget analysis every year. In such an analysis it is not assumed that the current year’s spending for a particular program is justified. On the contrary, the wisdom of spending any money at all on the program is examined.

These questions are typical for analyses of this type:

- Is there any measureable evidence of the value of the program under review?
- Are the goals and objectives of the program important enough to warrant the expenditure being made?
- What would happen if the program were not provided at all?
- Are there other less costly and more effective ways of achieving these objectives?
- Where would the program fit in if all the programs were displayed in order of importance?
- Would the benefits be greater if a portion of the funds spent on the program under review were used instead for other programs?

An important element of this budgeting procedure is that it forces prioritization of government programs and activities. With the prospect of insufficient revenue to match the demand for spending, it is useful for government to have a ranking of programs and activities based on proven effectiveness, as well as suggested alternatives to expensive or ineffective programs.

There are two basic steps to the process of zero-base budgeting. The first step is to develop what is referred to as “decision packages”. The second is to rank the decision packages. The decision package is a document that identifies and explains the specific activity, its goals and objectives, measurement of performance, costs, benefits, and alternative courses of action. Ranking of decision packages is then accomplished at each management level until a comprehensive agency wide ranking is obtained.

Conceptually, zero-base budgeting is a systematic logical approach to allocating limited resources where they will do the most good.

Modified Zero Based Budgeting

Service-level budgeting is a modified zero-based budgeting approach. This concept matches spending levels with services to be performed. Under zero-base budgeting, a great deal of effort can be devoted to documenting personnel and expense requirements that are readily accepted as necessary. Modified zero-base budgeting can avoid this by starting at a base that is higher than zero. An appropriate starting point for a jurisdiction might be 80 or 85 percent of current spending levels. High-priority requests above this level could be identified to restore part or all of the current year’s service levels. Desirable new programs could also be considered for funding. As a result, a legislative body might be presented the choice of reducing some current operations in favor of adopting a new program. Thus a new program might be funded out of savings incurred by reduction of an existing program. The phrase “service-level budgeting” is in some cases a better description for this process.

APPENDIX B. Ordinance for Brockton Commission on Diversity

DIVISION 6. BROCKTON COMMISSION ON DIVERSITY*

Sec. 2-500. Membership and appointment.

- (a) There shall be a Brockton Commission on Diversity which shall consist of eleven (11) members, all of whom shall be residents of the city and who shall be appointed by the mayor, subject to confirmation by the city council to serve initially for the following terms:
 1. Four (4) members shall serve for a one-year term;
 2. Four (4) members shall serve for a two-year term;
 3. Three (3) members shall serve for a three-year term.

After the initial terms, all members shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years. The commission should, at all times, be representative of all socio-economic and racial segments of the city as well as different neighborhoods.

- (b) At least one (1) member shall be from each of the seven (7) wards of the city.
- (c) No member of the commission may serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms. A member having served two consecutive terms must remain off the commission for at least one (1) year before becoming eligible for reappointment.

***Editor's note**—Ord. No. E002, adopted Aug 29, 2000, amended Division 6 in its entirety. The former Division 6 pertained to the Brockton Commission on Women's Issues and derived from Ord. No. D 331, adopted July 27, 1993.

- (d) The members of the commission shall elect a chairperson from among its members, and shall adopt bylaws for the commission.
(Ord. No E002, 8-29-00)

Sec. 2/501. Function and purpose.

It shall be the function of the commission to act as a central focus in the city and community which will deal with diversity issues providing information, referral, guidance and coordination to public agencies, private persons, organizations and institutions engaged in activities and programs intended to deal with issues affecting diversity such as, but not limited to prejudice and discrimination against all people because of their race, language, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, religion, marital status, military status or age.

(Ord. No. E002, 8-29-00)

Sec. 2-502. Powers and duties.

The powers and duties of the commission shall include the following:

- (1) To help ensure equal status of all people in education, economic, political, health, legal and social spheres;
- (2) To help design programs that promote equality for all in the city;

- (3) To help develop recommendations and recommend policies in all departments, divisions and agencies of the city, including the mayor and the city council;
- (4) To assist in the coordination of activities of all departments and divisions of city government on issues affecting diversity;
- (5) To recommend the enactment of legislation which promotes equal status of all people on the city, state, and federal levels, and to assure that appropriate regulations are adopted and enforced pursuant to such legislation;
- (6) The commission shall submit in February of each year to the city council, an annual report detailing its activities for the prior calendar year and stating its policy recommendations and legislative recommendations to all departments, divisions and agencies of the city, including the mayor and city council.

(Ord. No. E002, 8-29-00)

Appendix C. Design Guidelines for Signs

Appendix D. Sample RFP

Appendix E. Resource- Marketing Study

Metro South Chamber of Commerce Business Survey

Conducted By:

The Center for Marketing Research at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

1. How many years has your business been operating in Brockton?
Less than 1 ___ 16 - 20 ___
1 -5 ___ 21 - 25 ___
6 - 10 ___ More than 25 ___
11 - 15 ___

2. What originally brought your business to Brockton? (Check all that apply)
Needed a Larger Facility ___
Needed a Smaller Facility ___
Opened as a New Location ___
Financial Leverage ___
Change of Ownership ___
Other (Please Specify) ___

3. What types of business challenges are you experiencing now? (Check all that apply)
Decreased Profits ___
Decrease in Customers ___
Diminished Physical Appearance/Structure ___
Accessibility of Business Location Within City Is Not Ideal ___
Finding Qualified Employees ___
Increased Building Costs Associated with Rent, Utilities, and
Regular Maintenance ___
Other (Please Specify) ___
Business is Not Facing Any Challenges ___

4. How can the city of Brockton help you with these challenges? (Check all that apply)
Provide Financial Assistance ___
Provide Training Programs For Potential Employees ___
Promotion Within The City to Increase Customer Traffic ___
Provide Funding For Maintaining Physical Structure/Appearance of Location ___
Provide Assistance With Building Costs ___
Other (Please Specify) ___
Do Not Need Help ___

5. How familiar are you with the availability of these free materials and services offered by the Metro South Business Center?

| | Very Familiar | Somewhat Familiar | Somewhat Unfamiliar | Very Unfamiliar |
|--|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Computer hardware & software | | | | |
| Business Related software (i.e. QuickBooks Pro, BizForms, etc.) | | | | |
| Informational & Instructional videos (including: "Sales Strategies" & "Running a Small Company") | | | | |
| Reference materials (including: "Financing a Small Business" & "Anatomy of a Business Plan") | | | | |
| Business Counselors & Consultants | | | | |
| Workshops and seminars covering all aspects of starting and operating a business | | | | |

6. Are you participating in, or have participated in, any financial assistance from Brockton or state of Massachusetts?

| | Currently | In last 5 years | In last 10 Years |
|---------------|-----------|-----------------|------------------|
| Brockton | | | |
| Massachusetts | | | |

7. If you are currently participating in any financial assistance programs from the City of Brockton or Massachusetts, which one(s)?

If you have participated in any financial assistance programs from the City of Brockton or Massachusetts in the past, which one(s)?

8. How satisfied are you with the following?

| | Very Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Somewhat Unsatisfied | Very Unsatisfied | If Somewhat or Very Unsatisfied Why? |
|---|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Accessibility to Your Location | | | | | |
| Appearance/Maintenance of Building That Business is Located In (e.g. Peeling Paint, Water Leaks, Broken | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Lights) | | | | | |
| Appearance/Maintenance of Side Walks and Streets Surrounding Your Business (e.g. Potholes, Debris) | | | | | |
| Available Parking for Your Business | | | | | |
| Financial Climate in the State | | | | | |
| Support of Area Residents for Local Businesses | | | | | |
| Support of City Officials for Local Businesses | | | | | |
| Availability of City Funding | | | | | |
| Availability of State Funding | | | | | |

9. If you could ask the mayor to help your business in some way, what would you ask for?

10. Are there any community events that increase the foot traffic or sales volume for your business? (Check all that apply)

- Black History Month Showcase at City Hall ___
- Blood Drives ___
- Job Fairs ___
- Brockton Parks and Recreation Department Events ___
- “Mardi Gras Madness” ___
- “A Taste of Metro South” ___
- Woman of the Year Awards ___
- Flower and Garden Show ___
- Brockton Fair ___
- Other ___
- None ___

11. Do you own or rent your business space?

Own ___ Rent/Lease ___ Other ___

12. Do you own/operate your business at more than one location?

Yes ___ No ___

If yes, how many are located in Brockton? ___

13. What is the busiest day of the week for your business?

Monday ___ Friday ___
Tuesday ___ Saturday ___
Wednesday ___ Sunday ___
Thursday ___

14. What are the busiest times of the year?

Fall ___ Spring ___
Winter ___ Summer ___

15. What were your annual sales last year (2009)? _____

16. How many full time people do you employ at this location?

Less than 10 ___
10 - 19 ___
20 - 29 ___
30 - 39 ___
40 - 49 ___
50 or more ___

Within your entire company?

N/A ___
Less than 50 ___
50 - 99 ___
100 - 149 ___
150 - 199 ___
200 - 249 ___
250 - 299 ___
300 or more ___

A. Appendix F. Resource: “Employment, Unemployment and Economic Development Brockton, MA” by Charles Hickey