

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION/PLAN FOR GREENHAVEN, GA

THE PHILOSOPHY

The ideas/plans below represent plans to stimulate and encourage economic development and planned growth in the southern part of DeKalb County. Traditional economic development is business centered (what matters to the business) and does not take into account community residents. Residents are generally considered as obstacles, often fighting against development. Traditional economic development also considers land use almost primarily from a zoning perspective and not from an asset-based perspective; i.e., how can nearby parks, waters, attractions, environment, etc. be used. For example, Greenhaven can take recreational amenities such as parks and public golf courses and make them more tourist friendly (or take dormant facilities such as Hidden Hills golf course and make it a high quality, reasonably priced attraction), which will serve to make the area more attractive to people and businesses.

The approach taken by Kathryn Rice, Ph.D. combines several perspectives – economic development (wealth building) with planning (land-use building); community (resident interests) with business (commercial interests); and an environmental (asset-based focus) with land-use perspective (zoning focus). It is a new model to stimulate economic revitalization, planned growth and community involvement, each of which at this time in Greenhaven are underdeveloped.

CONTEXT

There are 6 districts in Greenhaven. Each district contains a Community Area Planning Unit (a model based on the City of Atlanta's Neighborhood Planning Units where residents organize and are officially recognized by the City to provide input to the City regarding decisions about primarily planning.) CAPUs are part of the Greenhaven charter and will receive technical assistance from the city ensuring their participation. The leadership should ensure that the CAPU is functionally geared toward neighborhood asset development to ensure the assets' maintenance and quality. This will contribute to economic development continuity.

Another key point about Greenhaven is that it already enjoys many of the assets pointed out by Harvard professor Michael Porter regarding the strategic assets of many inner city locations. Greenhaven was a bedroom community to the City of Atlanta/Fulton County. While it still would not be defined as an "inner city," a good portion of it is city-urban. Greenhaven is urbane in much of its area but it also includes considerable unused land space.

The following approach is not designed to be linear and sequential. Rather, the following approach outlines a set of actions that must occur for success (the vision) to occur. While there are some steps that must precede others, much of the following should occur along parallel paths.

THE APPROACH (to be named)

Phase 1 – Determining Central Targets for Growth

To maximize the money available for stimulation of development, each of the six Greenhaven districts should choose one central location. This would be akin to what is generally described as the Central Business District. All initial planning, funding, economic development, and community efforts will be targeted toward this area. This is not a bottoms-up or trickle-down approach; the goal is a ripple-out effect. The Greenhaven planning department will utilize their expertise to select up to 3 areas in each district that might best fit what will be a central planning district. With the assistance of the Greenhaven Planning Department, the citizens of that district will select one Central Planning Area. People will enjoy a central commercial area that reflects their landscaping and desires. Business will enjoy less competition initially. Residential areas will not be subject to retail/commercial/industrial effects and will preserve their greenspaces. Local government will maximize the use of its public dollars.

Phase 2 – The District Based Art Approach

When residents like their area and are attracted to it, businesses are much more likely to also be attracted to it. Due to several factors including the lack of recovery from the 2007 recession, low property values, a local government that seems inattentive to code compliance and littering, and constant negative media attention, most Greenhaven residents, at this time, do not feel positive about their area.

To stimulate community involvement, the Greenhaven Planning Department with the help of artists (preferably local) will engage in art development – a single structure, painting, sculpture, garden or created entity that is a unique, creative reflection of that community. The primary purpose of this created piece is to help the CAPU get started, change the mindset of current residents, attract prospective residents, and initiate the development of a central business/theme area.

The development of this piece is to take place over months starting from the initiation of the CAPU and it will be financially supported (to a limit) by the city of Greenhaven. The development of this piece will be the activity that assists the CAPUs in encouraging, attracting and getting community involvement. The development of these 6 pieces will be the community's primary contribution to economic development in their area.

Phase 3: The Contract

In return for benefiting and beautifying their community, the community will agree to a contract to promote economic development (to be agreed to prior to the execution of Phase 2). In theory, this contract is similar to an overlay district; however, it is less restrictive. In exchange for support for Phase 2, the community will agree to:

- retail/commercial/industrial development in the Central Planning area
- support for MARTA and/or separate transit-oriented-development in Greenhaven
- a fast track permitting system for approved commercial or industrial uses

The formation of a Greenhaven Business Alliance can work to develop the processes that will lead to an expedited permitting process and to communicate Greenhaven's progressive measures to the business community at-large.

Phase 4: Business Attraction

The Greenhaven Department of Economic Development in tandem with the Greenhaven Development Authority (if one exists) will develop an economic development strategy based on Greenhaven's six districts and their Central Planning area. That strategy will include:

- attraction of innovative, first responder companies in targeted industries
- identification of companies in industries that fit the profile of a strategic economic development direction
 - o industries that are already strong in Greenhaven
 - o industries that can be strong given the strength of industries in nearby counties, cities or neighborhoods
 - o industries that Greenhaven can develop based on its natural and strategic assets and environment. In particular, Greenhaven will emphasize "green" initiatives such as green efficient or green energy industries (an element for which DeKalb County is already known and for which the county neighbors are already targeting).
- an approval process that facilitates business development
- financial tools that accommodate business development, particularly innovative, first responder companies
- the support and involvement of key ancillary agencies that will facilitate development – police, fire, planning, infrastructure, water/sewer, workforce development, etc.

Phase 5: Education and Workforce

K-12 education is not in the purview of the city. Nevertheless, its status greatly affects economic development and quality growth. Therefore, Greenhaven will liaise with the DeKalb Board of Education on a regular basis. If possible, Greenhaven will seek to supplement K-12 efforts through innovative, efficient after school programs that focus on basic reading, writing and math.

Greenhaven already enjoys a significant professional population. Building on that, Greenhaven will work with Quickstart and existing university and community colleges in Greenhaven to implement the latest workforce development methods to match business needs with workforce development and training.

THE VISION

At the end of this process, Greenhaven will look like an international city populated by citizens of all hues and cultures with a multiple business strategy focused on “green.” It will represent a creative, attractive, planned growth city with an artistic, intelligent and involved citizenry.

Demographically, due to its emphasis on art and transportation, population growth will increase in its technical, creative and international populations. A younger and more educated population will be attracted to Greenhaven’s emphasis on the environment and green industries. Community involvement will be encouraged and required thus attracting more motivated, high quality residents. Greenhaven will become more diverse and more affluent.

Businesswise, due to its size and diversity, and also due to its targeted central planning area growth strategy, Greenhaven will have simultaneous but differing growth in six spots. Based on existing and potential economic strategies, on the western and northern side, Greenhaven will be more urbane, retail-oriented, international, and green focused. On the eastern and southern side, Greenhaven will remain suburban but it will also be more commercial and industrial with a wider footprint for green, commercial industries.

When it comes to *environment, land-use and planning*, at least for a period of time, Greenhaven will look like a city with planned growth. It will be built on a foundation of art, for which all great cities are known. Everyone is attracted to beauty, form and intelligence. And Greenhaven has the benefit of being next door to one of the major growth entertainment complexes in the United States.

Educationally, Greenhaven will be at the cutting edge of local government-public school partnerships. The existing distance between two entities whose outcomes are dependent on each other (businesses and governments hire graduates; schools depend on interaction and partnerships with businesses and government) is unacceptable. Greenhaven will be a forerunner of partnering with public and charter schools.

In summary, Greenhaven will have six, varying growth spots that will look like a wheel with residential areas surrounding a central commercial hub at the centre. It will be a new model that utilizes a community-business, economic development-planning, environmental-land-use approach to development. Greenhaven will be the symbol of innovation, green industry, planned economic growth and revitalization, and citizen involvement. It will be an international city, which many will try to model.

(The above Vision/Plan originates from Kathryn T. Rice, Ph.D. for the development of Greenhaven, Georgia.)