

Value Task Force

Department of Development Final Report

General Summary

The mission of the City's Department of Development (DOD) is to provide and promote a positive balanced approach towards economic and community growth. To accomplish its mission, the DOD relies on four basic principles: Proactivity, Efficiency, Expediency, and Innovation.

The department provides direct support to the development and business community. This includes planning, marketing, and developing business parks, available commercial properties, tax increment districts, and downtown redevelopment projects. DOD also works closely with the West Bend Municipal Airport and coordinates the operations of the city's shared-ride taxi program.

The 2011 DOD operating budget was \$464,073 – a 1.46% impact on the city's operating budget. The six-person staff is led by Director T.J. Justice, and includes a City Planner & Operations Manager, Economic Development Specialist, Executive Assistant, Business & Development Planner, and an Administrative Assistant.

The majority of the following report focuses on key areas of opportunity regarding technology and internet presence.

Findings

1. Marketing is an essential function for economic development – not only through this department but also other departments and outside entities promoting economic development. Several different entities help promote the city through multiple channels.
 - A. DOD is integrated with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), West Bend Economic Development Corporation (WBEDC), Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), West Bend Area Chamber of Commerce, West Bend Redevelopment Authority (RDA), Plan Commission (PC), and the commercial real estate industry.
 - B. Past DOD budgets lacked a “marketing” line item.
 - C. In several past reports, the VTF has recommended Community TV's value as a marketing resource.
2. The department relies heavily on internet technology and website presence. Website utilization is a key area of opportunity in promoting the city.
 - A. As mentioned in the GIS report, business recruiting dynamics have changed significantly, with the integration of technology.
 - i. Interested site developers and consultants often use websites as their initial point of contact, and are increasingly performing more sophisticated searches.
 - ii. Potential site developers could make decisions based on their experience with the city's website – before anyone with the department of development has an opportunity to make human contact.
 - iii. To effectively leverage the recent “site certified” designation, website integration is critical.

- B. The city's website is outdated, unorganized, and lacks management.
 - i. No mobile device formatting capabilities.
 - ii. No strategic vision
 - iii. No clearly-defined authority over decisions regarding the website's design and content.
 - C. Rock County's website was identified as an effective example of promoting economic development on-line.
3. DOD relies heavily on site planning, virtual building technology, real estate, and specialized maps – all these are GIS capabilities.
- A. From an economic development standpoint, it is advantageous to have GIS resources in-house.

Recommendations

1. Consider funding to maximize DOD's utilization of technology.
 - A. Technology is critical for this department's marketing efforts – including the recent site certification by the State of Wisconsin.
 - B. Enhancement of "virtual building" and GIS capabilities are a priority – complete with 2D drawings and 3D motion viewing.
2. Work with I.S. to create a strategic plan for a new city website – include objectives and priorities around the needs and expectations of community members, city departments, economic development efforts, and technological capabilities.
 - A. Involve the Department of Development in the strategic planning process, for a marketing-minded point-of-view.
 - B. Clearly define decision-making authority for website management.
 - C. Partner with area schools to involve I.T. students in the project.
 - D. Integrate the DOD's on-line marketing efforts and resources with the multiple external groups also promoting the city.
 - E. Also refer to the I.S. report findings & recommendations regarding the website.
3. Explore supplemental funding and resources to support the DOD's marketing objectives.
 - A. Partner with Community TV to centralize marketing resources.
 - B. Consider rolling a portion of the Community TV department's excess funds into a shared marketing fund to supplement DOD's marketing efforts.