

Town of Hillsdale:

Three Year Economic Development Plan

February 18, 2014

INTRODUCTION

In 2013 the Town Board initiated an effort to develop a three year economic development plan for the Town. Two teams were formed representing government, agriculture, real estate and retail businesses and the community.

“Team I” focused on developing goals and initiatives to assist in the growth and employment of existing businesses in the Town.

“Team II” focused on developing a priority group of new businesses that would be successful and benefit Town residents.

The balance of this report will present the findings of each Team and propose next steps for implementation.

Team I: Helping Existing Businesses

Two business categories were identified as offering the greatest potential for future growth:

- A- Resident and business services. The majority of existing businesses currently fall into this category and need to be supported.

- B- Tourism. This category was selected because of the quantity and quality of existing offerings.

A. Service Businesses

1. Build on and support work with the Hillsdale Business Alliance to help create a more comprehensive business directory by:
 - Encouraging missing businesses to join the directory
 - Developing an on-line directory with links to the businesses' own websites
 - Publishing the directory on the Town web site
 - Planning for organized updates to the directory

2. Develop a Hidden Treasures/Points of Interest Guide. Hillsdale has a number of hidden treasures that one cannot see just driving by. A small travel guide could offer more details on our treasures and could also be linked to our town website and made available at local destinations. Several inclusions might be:
 - Country Road Walking and Biking Tours identifying which roads give what views.
 - Rodgers Book Barn, browsing over 50,000 titles.
 - Hawthorne Valley Farm—what a find for a family visiting our area! Also good for visiting house guests young or old.
 - Hillsdale's Farmer's Market, now exploring expanding into Thanksgiving and Christmas Markets.
 - Hillsdale's Town Hamlet—it's all about the home and good food.
 - Other interesting businesses (farm sellers, etc.) might be encouraged to join the list.

B. Tourism

1. Develop a Tourism Information Area.
 - Locate and secure a central site in the Hamlet.
 - Build a space for local business and tourism brochures.
 - Develop standards for use of the area.
 - Find staffing to keep area up to date and within standards.

2. Develop the Roe Jan Park as a venue to increase tourism.
 - Formulate a plan to promote and increase weddings
 - Engage out-of-town wedding guests to visit our businesses. The Park might develop an incentive program for these guests, such as a give back “Nuptial Notes” for the bride and groom to add to their guest welcome package.
 - Use the Roe Jan Park for music festivals, concerts and/or attractions that will appeal to out-of-town visitors and draw people to our area.

3. Work with the Roeliff Jansen Community Library to identify and create an inventory of materials, services and programs that could help establish new and grow existing businesses in the service and tourism business sectors.

Team II: Identifying Potential New Businesses

The team established guidelines for considering new businesses:

- Harmonize with rural character of community.
- Preserve environment and maintain Town's natural beauty
- Re-use existing /vacant structures if possible.
- Expand/complement existing businesses/services.
- Attract regional shoppers.
- Create new, higher paying employment opportunities.

Based on 8 months of interviews and research, the following recommendations were made in four categories:

- A. Agriculture—Build on the many existing agricultural efforts and support the development of our area as a food hub.
 - 1. Commercial kitchen—to support small scale food processors (artisan food producers) and give farmers a means to preserve food and create value-added products to sell.
 - 2. Micro-farming—to provide farmable land to start-ups.
 - 3. Micro-brewery—to create something unique to draw people to the area that fits with our agricultural make-up.

- B. Rail Trail Village—Maximize the benefits of having the Rail Trail go through Hillsdale to enhance the Rail Trail experience.
 - 1. Antique center—to build on existing reputation of this area an antique-rich destination.
 - 2. Bike/outdoor shop—to service all users of the Rail Trail
 - 3. Attract the above or other businesses to an anchor store in the Old Agway building or another vacant site.

- C. Affordable Senior Housing—Fill a need for independent to assisted living while providing employment and boosting the economy.

D. Community Services. Basic Needs—Develop amenities that are primarily geared towards supporting local residents but will also make the Town more attractive to visitors.

1. Rapid Health Care
2. Pharmacy
3. Florist
4. Car Wash
5. Laundromat
6. Stationary Store

NEXT STEPS

- A. Obtain public input on recommendations
- B. Obtain acceptance of plan by Town Board
- C. Develop specific work plans, timetables and funding requirements for each recommendation.