

## Appendix F

### One-Year Action Plan with Specific Short-Term Priority Projects

**Organizations within Hillsdale County will pursue the following actions in the first year of the Hillsdale County Economic Plan.**

<b>Objective #1: Create An Enhanced and Unified Organizational Structure For Carrying Out Hillsdale County's Economic Development Goals.</b>			
<b>Strategy A:</b> Hillsdale County must operate as efficiently as possible when it comes to economic development efforts. To this end, the two existing economic development organizations the Hillsdale County Industrial Development Commission (HCIDC) and Hillsdale County Chamber of Commerce (HCCC) will join forces under the umbrella of a newly formed organization called the Hillsdale County Economic Development Partnership (HCEPDP). This will provide a single focal point for all economic development efforts, help create organizational efficiencies and lead to greater collaborative partnerships.			
<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Targeted Completion Date</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
Develop bylaws for HCEPDP	HCCC and HCIDC Board Members	1/1/06	None
Complete incorporation process for HCEPDP	HCCC and HCIDC Board Members	1/1/06	Legal services
Appoint and select members to HCEPDP Board based upon bylaws	HCCC and HCIDC Board Members	2/1/06	None
Appoint a joint task force of HCCC and HCIDC Board Members to explore shared resources including the logistics of shared space	Appointed Task Force	2/15/06	Cooperation of HCCC and HCIDC
Undertake a strategic alliance process for HCCC and HCIDC to share resources	HCEPDP Board	3/1/06	Cooperation of HCCC and HCIDC
Monitor and assess progress in meeting the economic development vision and plan	HCEPDP Board	Ongoing	Cooperation of HCCC and HCIDC
Review results of the alliance between HCCC and HCIDC and assess future steps to move toward both one organization and private funding stream within three years.	HCEPDP Board	Ongoing	Cooperation of HCCC and HCIDC

**Strategy B:** Expand Hillsdale County Chamber of Commerce’s responsibilities to include a comprehensive marketing and tourism program through the establishment of a countywide Convention and Visitors Bureau.

<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Targeted Completion Date</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
Plan and execute a vote of hotel and motel operators regarding a hotel/motel tax to support a Convention and Visitors Bureau	HCCC Executive Director	1/1/06	County Board of Commissioner support
Develop by-laws and incorporation for CVB	HCCC Executive Director		
Complete incorporation process for CVB	HCCC Executive Director	2/1/06	Legal services
Create a separate CVB Board of Directors	HCCC Executive Director and Board	2/15/06	None
Prepare job description; recruit and select a staff person for the Convention and Visitors Bureau	CVB Board	4/15/06	Cost of advertising the position
Assist Allen Antique business establish an ongoing association of antique businesses and dealers	CVB Director	10/15/06	Cooperation of Antique businesses and dealers
Establish work plan for promoting and marketing the County – and begin carrying out plan	CVB Director	Ongoing	Marketing materials

**Strategy C:** Establish a Hillsdale County Center for Entrepreneurship within the Hillsdale County Chamber of Commerce to serve as the centerpiece of efforts to support small business development in the County.

<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Targeted Completion Date</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
Secure initial funding to establish the Center within the HCCC.	HCCC Board	Ongoing	Additional County operating funds for economic development
Prepare job description, recruit and select a Manager for the Center	HCCC Director	7/2/06	None
Work with Hillsdale College to secure an “Entrepreneurial Chair” or other support for the Center	HCCC Director	9/1/06	Hillsdale College cooperation and staff resources
Work with South Central Michigan Works! to secure additional resources for the Center	HCCC Director	9/1/06	South Central Michigan Works! cooperation and staff resources
Establish a strategic plan and work plan for small business development services.	Center’s Program Director	10/1/06	Technical assistance to complete the strategic plan

**Strategy D:** Reorganize and expand Hillsdale County Industrial Development Commission's responsibilities to include a broader industrial retention and attraction program as well as real estate development and technical assistance support for business districts within the County.

<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Targeted Completion Date</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
Change name of HCIDC to reflect its expanded roles and responsibilities	HCIDC Board	1/1/06	None
Revise HCIDC by-laws and Board composition to reflect broader responsibilities including enhancing business districts	HCIDC Board	2/1/06	None
Recruit additional Board members based on new by-laws and expanded role.	HCIDC Board	3/1/06	None
Convene meeting of all communities with business districts to discuss serving as a redevelopment resource	HCIDC Director and Board Chair	3/1/06	None
Develop work plan and programs to support business districts.	HCIDC Director	4/1/06	Additional County program funds for economic development
Prepare job description; recruit and select a program staff person for additional roles and responsibilities of HCIDC	HCIDC Director	5/1/06	Additional County operating funds for economic development
Establish an advisory board, comprised of all participating jurisdictions	HCIDC Director	6/1/06	None
Provide expanded services to all participating business districts within Hillsdale County	New program staff person	Ongoing	Additional County operating funds for economic development
Begin to engage in real estate development for selected strategic properties such as the previously identified vacant properties in downtown Reading.	HCIDC staff	12/1/06	Additional staff support, and access to necessary public and private financing for real estate development
Provide expanded retention/attraction services within the County	HCIDC Director	Ongoing	Additional County operating funds for economic development

<b>Objective #2: Assist existing industry remain and expand within Hillsdale County</b>			
<b>Strategy A:</b> Establish a collaborative approach to visiting, supporting and helping all industries within the County stay and grow in partnership with all appropriate community partners.			
<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Targeted Completion Date</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
Prepare a computerized inventory of all industries in the community with information about principals, type of business, numbers of employees, products and services. Update list on an ongoing basis.	Executive Director, HCIDC	2/1/06	Computer software to create the system
Establish a formalized "Hillsdale County Retention and Expansion Team" to conduct formalized site visits to <u>all</u> private sector companies on an annual basis.	HCIDC, with all community partners	Ongoing	Community leadership and volunteers
In response to individual needs aggressively provide and/or facilitate support to companies planning to remain in the County and those wanting to expand. Assistance should match the individual needs of companies and could include:	HCIDC, with all community partners	Ongoing	Community leadership and volunteers

<b>Objective 3: Create a more targeted and aggressive program for attracting new businesses that will diversify the economy.</b>			
<b>Strategy:</b> Establish a targeted, comprehensive and collaborative approach to attract new businesses consistent with attraction policies. While the County must continue to recruit and do everything possible to entice every industry interested in locating in the area -- extra efforts need to be put forth for those prospective industries that meet one or more of the established criteria.			
<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Targeted Completion Date</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
Adopt the Attraction Policies as a guide for targeting new industrial attraction efforts.	HCIDC	1/1/06	None
Improve the County's Web page of industrial sites as described in an earlier section	HCIDC	1/1/06	Expanded data regarding all available sites and buildings
Prepare professional marketing material to promote Hillsdale County as a community that welcomes new commercial and industrial development	HCCC	1/1/06	Funding for professional marketing services and printing
Work with Hillsdale College to establish an ongoing linkage to promote the County as part of <i>Imprimis</i> or as a special Hillsdale College publication to its extensive mailing list.	HCCC	1/1/06	Cooperation of Hillsdale College

Establish a special committee or task force to address the issue of infrastructure improvements. The committee should be comprised of county and other local engineering staff, elected officials and economic development staff.	HCIDC and utility company representatives	1/1/06	None
Establish a special task force to review strategies for expanding training programs in Hillsdale County to better meet the needs of current and future employers – particularly higher skilled jobs. South Central Michigan Works!, in cooperation with Jackson Community College’s Clyde LeTarte Center branch and industry representatives should provide leadership for the task force	South Central Michigan Works!	1/1/06	None

<b>Objective 4: Establish a small business incubator providing small, entrepreneurial businesses with affordable space and shared support and business development services. Incubators can play a nurturing role in helping young businesses survive and grow during the start-up period when they are most financially vulnerable.</b>			
<b>Strategy:</b> Begin the predevelopment process for the establishment of the small business incubator in cooperation with all potential partners.			
<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Targeted Completion Date</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
Establish an Incubator Planning Committee comprised of HCCC, HCIDC, Hillsdale College, South Central Michigan Work and others.	HCCC	2/1/06	None
Secure a planning grant to 1) Review alternate spaces and select the preferred site for the incubator; 2) Prepare a construction and operating budget and identify sources of funds; 3) Prepare a work plan for the incubator.	HCCC in cooperation with identified partners	5/1/06	Planning grant

**Objective 5: Undertake an area-wide mixed-use redevelopment effort, involving several key properties that can serve as a centerpiece of countywide economic development efforts.**

**Strategy:** Select the area on the east side of downtown Hillsdale (as shown on Map ##) that includes the old Pillsbury buildings and vacant warehouse buildings, and define this area as an Economic Renewal Corridor. Target this area as a potential site for the business incubator, along with a wide range of other uses such as loft-style housing, live-work units for artisans, culture and entertainment –related uses, specialty retail, and offices. Address redevelopment of these sites as a group or corridor intended to offer a high level of synergy and interaction between each use.

Specific Actions	Responsibility	Targeted Completion Date	Resources Needed
Convene a meeting of property owners and local community leaders to initiate conversations concerning development options and needed steps.	HCEDP	9/1/06	Local
Prepare a market study to determine opportunities for various land uses and conduct a planning workshop to explore various adaptive reuse concepts and desirable unifying urban design elements.	HCEDP, Private Property Interests	12/31/06	About 15-20K for a consultant study and to facilitate workshops.
Prepare and distribute an RFP for a nation-wide developer audience that describes development options and available incentives.	HCIDC	6/6/06	Local resources, or 5-10K consultant effort
Review and select a 2 <sup>nd</sup> large scale Economic Renewal Corridor	HCIDC	12/31/06	Local

**Objective 6: Create an Arts, Culture and Entertainment District that can serve as a focal point for local expressions of the uniqueness of Hillsdale County.**

**Strategy:** Many major art-related and cultural attractions are located throughout Hillsdale County. However, certain areas in Hillsdale County have the potential to evolve into a noteworthy place of art, culture, and entertainment that provides a significant economic draw. When art, culture and entertainment activities are clustered together, the area can become much more alive and dynamic, as a critical mass of similar land uses build on collective appeal. Strategically, implementation steps should begin with basic exploratory plan, followed by measured implementation steps.

Specific Actions	Responsibility	Targeted Completion Date	Resources Needed
Develop a Steering Committee of knowledgeable parties.	HCEDP and local communities	9/1/05	None
Assemble relevant data and prepare market study to document conditions	Committee	2/1/06	Minimal if conducted by volunteers, 15K-20K if prepared by consultants.
Visioning Session/focus groups to explore concepts and alternatives	Committee	3/1/06	
Complete development of the district plan	Committee	5/1/06	

**Objective 7: To more fully develop an image or “brand” for Hillsdale County, followed by deliberate steps to embrace, develop and advance this image over time.**

**Strategy:** Because the image that Hillsdale County conveys to the outside world is so important in future economic development successes, deliberate efforts to shape and mold this image are called for. The image that develops with additional effort likely includes capturing the uniqueness of the area created by elements such as an entrepreneurial spirit, positive attitudes and environmental quality.

<b>Specific Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Targeted Completion Date</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
Working with the newly established Convention and Visitors Bureau, create a Task Force charged with the job of refining branding concepts offered in this plan, ultimately developing a graphic and verbal image of Hillsdale County to be used consistently in marketing efforts.	CVB, HCEDP, Chamber, HCIDC	9/1/05	None
Conduct workshop(s) with interested/involved organizations and related efforts to build consensus around verbal and graphic expressions of desired image and brand.	Task Force	3/1/06	Minimal if conducted by local volunteers, 5K-10K if prepared by consultants.
Define image (including text and graphics) to be consistently used in material that is aimed at both local and non-local markets.	CVB, HCEDP, Chamber, HCIDC	5/1/06	Minimal if conducted by local volunteers, could vary widely depending on specifics if prepared by consultants.