

**AGENDA and NOTICE OF MEETING  
CITY OF HIGHLAND  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**CITY HALL  
1115 BROADWAY  
October 7, 2020  
12:00 P.M.**

**Call to order:** Chairman Jim Meredith

**Approval of Minutes:**

- A. Motion—Approve of Minutes of the September 2, 2020 regular meeting of the Industrial Development Commission.

**Reports:**

- A. Treasurer’s Report—Jon Greve
- B. Updates on other job inquiries—Mark Latham
- C. Update on Highland Communication Services—Mark Latham
- D. Update on Disaster Relief Initiatives---Mallord Hubbard
- E. FEMA Map update---Mark Latham

**New Business:**

- A. Review draft of IDC Strategic Plan

**Next Meeting:**

- A. Next meeting of the Industrial Development Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, November 4, 2020.

**Adjournment**



Anyone requiring accommodations, provided for in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to attend this public meeting, please contact Breann Speraneo, ADA Coordinator, by 9:00 AM on Tuesday, October 6, 2020.

**2020 Industrial Development Commission**

**Economic Development Strategic Plan**

**Highland, IL**

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# Introduction

Highland, Illinois is one of the oldest Swiss settlements in the United States and the birth place of condensed milk. Many of Highland's most prosperous industries were founded by local citizens, often growing their operation from garages or basements to multimillion dollar corporations.

Highland is known for a strong sense of community spirit, pride, and engagement as evident in the number of community organizations, indoor & outdoor venues, park lands, and community involvement. With a focus of using innovation and inclusiveness to respond to the diverse needs of the community.

This strategic plan is intended to guide the city's economic development while maintaining the city's commitment to a diversified and innovative economy.

In Highland, we want economic development to foster business growth and to continue to successfully blend industry within a small town atmosphere. This can be done through the creation of jobs and revenue. Economic development should influence business creation, attraction, retention and expansion while maintaining an inclusive and sustainable community.

# IDC Contact Information

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**Vision** Our vision is a vibrant, innovative and diversified economy that creates a positive business climate and a high quality of life for the City of Highland.

**Mission** Our mission is to provide visionary economic development leadership, civic involvement and business advocacy in a non-partisan and collaborative manner to continuously improve the region's economy and high-quality of life.

## Goals

Attract, retain, and grow businesses in the City of Highland

Foster collaborative civic involvement

Activate entrepreneurship

Develop and maintain 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure

Position the region as a national and global center of excellence

Advocate for supportive public policy

### **Key Attributes making Highland prime location for business expansion/relocation:**

Highly-educated & trained workforce

Pro-business policies

Highly rated private & public school systems

Attractive selection of residential neighborhoods and homes

Park System, Trails, and Korte Recreation Center

City owned FTTP (fiber-to-the-premises)



## Business Retention & Expansion

**Description-** Engaging and assisting Highland businesses to stay and grow in Highland will continue to be the primary function of the city's economic development activities. Business retention is a well-recognized best practice that consistently provides a high return on investment for economic development organizations. Effective retention and expansion results require building face-to-face relationships and providing superior customer service to existing businesses and should be complimented by effective incentives, business-friendly city services and thoughtful coordination with regional partners.

### Actions

- Schedule regular meetings with top employers and provide timely follow-up on identified needs and concerns
- Survey businesses to track changes in business practices and program awareness to better inform program and policy responses
- Identify fast-growing companies and facilitate their ability to remain in Highland as they scale up
- Define and manage incentives and services to effectively retain and expand businesses
- Encourage and facilitate a seamless, user-friendly experience for permitting and review

**Key Partners-** Highland Chamber of Commerce, Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Madison County Employment & Training

**Outcomes-** New Jobs, Retained Jobs, New Investment, Strong Relationship with Local Businesses



## Attraction & Recruitment

**Description-** Deploy business attraction and recruitment strategies to be in alignment with retention & expansion efforts with the focus on bringing the highest benefit to the city, its businesses, and residents.

### Actions

- Develop marketing and branding materials that outline information sought by site selectors and targeted industry prospects
- Effectively market city's available job sites including land not actively marketed by owners  
Ex. Intersect Illinois
- Work with state & regional partners to proactively target and coordinate pitches to companies targeting region for potential development
- Commission market research analysis to assist with target opportunity identification
- Resume participation in retail conferences and job fairs to establish relationships with key stakeholders in site selection Ex. ICSC Chicago and Scott Air Force Base Job Fair
- Continue support of additional housing to demonstrate demand for additional retail development

**Key Partners-** Highland Chamber of Commerce, Intersect Illinois, Leadership Council of Southwest Ill, Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO), AllianceSTL

**Targeted Industries-** Data Centers, Ag Tech, Hospitality, Office Availability, Retail

**Outcomes-** New Jobs, Increase in number of companies and employees within targeted industries, New Investment







# Workforce Development

**Description-** A highly competitive regional labor market has made attracting and retaining a reliable and talented workforce a top business concern. Workforce dynamics today are shaped by demographic changes that include a growing cohort of older workers at or near retirement and a young workforce that brings new and diverse attitudes and preferences. The focus of this initiative is to collaborate with local, federal and state partners to ensure that Highland employers have access to a skilled and reliable workforce, and workers have access to meaningful and well-paying career pathways.

## Actions

- Engage with workforce partners to strengthen workforce programs
- Connect businesses with hiring and training resources
- Align workforce incentives and programming with current business needs
- Ensure workforce programming serves diverse business and community needs
- Support K-12 initiatives that bridge student and business needs

**Key Partners-** Madison County Employment & Training, HCUSD #5, SIU-Edwardsville, Lewis & Clark Community College, Southwestern Illinois College, Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois, Business Education Alliance

**Outcomes-** Reduce unemployment, Reduce workforce constraints as measured by survey of businesses and business check-ins, Increase number of Highland residents aware of opportunities to work in Highland, Increase partner engagement in Highland



# Innovation & Entrepreneurship

**Description-** Highland is a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship with a track record of start-ups that have emerged as regional and global leaders in their respective industries. Companies take root in Highland due to its location, workforce, quality of life and pro-business attitude. This initiative focuses on enhancing and promoting Highland as a place for innovative businesses to start and grow.

## Actions

- Technology Innovation Program (TIP)
- Continued Support for MESC
- Highlight innovation successes
- E-commerce push
- Encourage innovation & entrepreneurship
- Highlight Highland's rich history in innovation

**Key Partners-** IL Small Business Development Center, Highland Communication Services, Harrison Edwards

**Outcomes-** Growth in awareness of the Metro East Startup Challenge by businesses, investors and partners

- Demonstrated success in growing innovative companies
- Increased interest in locating in Highland by new and fast-growing businesses
- Increased partner and media recognition of Highland's innovation brand



## Branding & Marketing

**Description-** Branding and marketing are essential functions of economic development as they provide critical information about the community to businesses, site selectors, policy makers, partners and workers. A strong brand conveys the essence of a community and contributes to successful recruitment and retention efforts. Effective marketing ensures that key messages reach and influence their intended audience. In the context of the city’s marketing plan, the city’s economic development efforts will focus on implementing messaging for maximum effectiveness with our current and targeted businesses.

### Actions

- Increase national profile and raise awareness of Highland on a regional & national scale
- Continue to drive traffic to recently deployed website and utilize the site’s available tools to better highlight the economic assets of Highland
- Consistently push information on city’s social media pages to reach current and potential businesses more effectively

**Key Partners-** Intersect Illinois, Harrison Edwards, IllinoisSouth Tourism, Leadership Council, Arcturis

**Outcomes-** New Jobs, Retained Jobs, New Investment, Strong Relationship with Local Businesses, Awareness of Highland’s business activity & achievements



## Infrastructure

**Description-** A strong infrastructure is a critical factor in retaining current or attracting new businesses & industries. Highland is a uniquely positioned community, operating its own utilities (Electric, Water, Sewer) and a cutting edge Fiber-to-the-Premises system capable of 1GB+ speeds for both businesses and residents

### Actions

- Ongoing maintenance & improvement of infrastructure to support new business investment
- Continue coordination with Ameren for potential redundant electric line
- Complete HCS buildout to all residential and businesses within city limits

**Key Partners-** Ameren, Highland Communication Services, Public Works & Electric Departments

**Outcomes-** Increased capacity for additional business development, Attraction of new residents and businesses, Expansion of current businesses