



EDDIE
MELTON
— FOR —
MAYOR
GARY 2023

Economic Development Plan

April 2023

An Economic Development Plan

FOR GARY, INDIANA

INTRODUCTION

“As Mayor of Gary, I will focus on promoting strategic and sustainable economic growth by promoting business start-ups, supporting existing small and medium-sized enterprises, fostering innovation and attracting new businesses to the area by leveraging our unique geographic location, logistics infrastructure and natural resources.”

— Senator Eddie Melton

Gary residents deserve to enjoy stable neighborhoods, a healthy economy and an improved quality of life. As Mayor, I will work to achieve these goals by incentivizing equitable development throughout the entire city. Equitable development is not lofty, aspirational, or theoretical. It is tangible and possible, and we have examples of how this can be accomplished in our city from cities across the United States.

As Mayor of Gary, I will focus on promoting strategic and sustainable economic growth by promoting business start-ups, supporting existing small and medium-sized enterprises, fostering innovation and attracting new businesses to the area by leveraging our unique geographic location, logistics infrastructure and natural resources. I will accomplish this by developing innovative local, state and federal funding programs to help spur investment and generate capital for the city.

Possessing a strong economic development plan is vital to the future of Gary. As Mayor, my economic strategy will focus on making our city safer and more attractive, fostering investment, reducing environmental impact, creating jobs and generating tax revenue that can be used to finance local government services. We will work toward maximizing transit-oriented development, historic preservation and traditional neighborhood design.

Currently, the city appears to operate in a fragmented state, where municipal services don't work together to foster development. I will develop a working group of City Council members, the heads of Redevelopment, Planning Department and Public Safety to help connect the dots and optimize opportunities by ensuring these departments work to make safer streets and bring the investment to stabilize and grow our communities.

Gary has the potential to grow while maintaining its sense of place. In order to get the kind of development local citizens want, a concise development and financing plan is needed to send a clear signal to the private sector about the opportunities that exist. To help bring inclusion into this process, I will create a transparent process that involves the community. This will include having a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) in place for developments that exceed \$1 million to help ensure community needs are front and center within all major developments.

Because Gary is a desirable place to develop, the city can insist on having development occur on its terms and not just accept any random project.



A Strategic Economic Development Plan

My administration will take a series of steps to generate economic growth in Gary:

Establish the Office of Economic and Community Development

The City of Gary doesn't have a department or an individual to focus on the economic and community vitality of our city. As Mayor, I will develop the office of Economic and Community Development. This office will champion business recruitment and retention programs, leading to a more vibrant small business, commercial and industrial environment in Gary. The Director of Economic and Community Development will be responsible for developing innovative funding solutions, maintaining collaborative relationships with local businesses, as well as assisting developers, corporations and investors in locating sites, conducting site tours and providing developers with vital information.

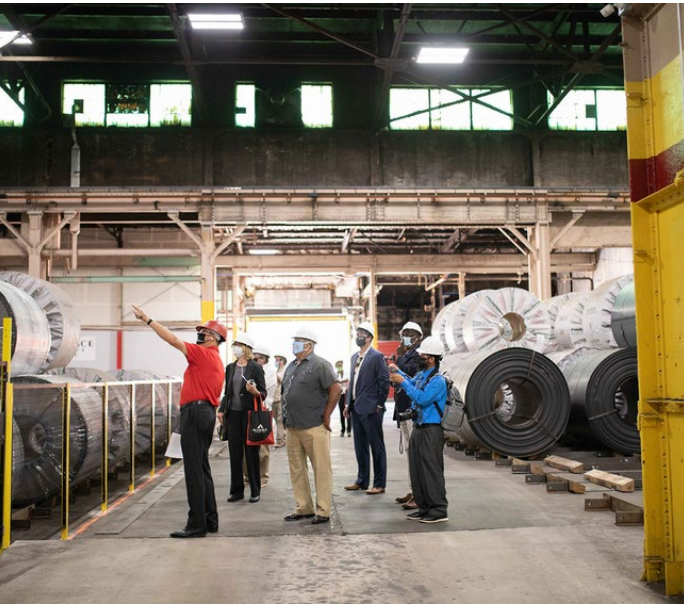
I will charge the director of this office to serve as the liaison for the Gary Housing Authority, Airport, NWI RDA, and Port Authority to think and operate strategically on behalf of the city. I will also charge the office to develop and implement the Gary Small Business Center, an initiative geared to support small businesses and entrepreneurs by connecting them to access to capital, incubator space and technical assistance.

Gary Small Business Center

In speaking with small business owners throughout the city and region, I constantly hear how difficult it is to start and grow a business in Gary. This is why my administration will create a Small Business Center that will serve as a "central service" to support all business needs in one location. The Gary Small Business Center will streamline small business interactions with city government and serve as the nexus for new programs and resources such as permits, zoning, etc.

The following objectives will help guide the work of the Gary Small Business Center:

- Reducing red tape and creating streamlined and transparent processes
- Expanding access to capital by advocating for equitable lending practices
- Promoting innovation and entrepreneurship by funding youth programs, funding flexible workspace projects, providing incentives to business (tax abatement)
- Providing resources that encourage small businesses to hire local qualified workers from within their community, particularly veterans and formerly incarcerated individuals with state tax credits.



Gary Small Business Advisory Council

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, providing our communities with goods and services, jobs and gathering places. Small business owners are leaders who invest in our neighborhoods, and they ignite an entrepreneurial spirit in others to pursue their dreams of starting and growing a business. As Mayor, I will establish the Gary Small Business Advisory Council to be the voice of small business in Gary. The members of this council will provide guidance to city government on issues and opportunities affecting small businesses in our community, ensuring the needs of our entrepreneurs of all backgrounds are met and providing a space for small business owners to share both their ideas and their concerns for doing business in our city.

Disparity Study and Supplier Diversity Programming

As Mayor, I will advise the City of Gary to partner with Indiana University Northwest to conduct an annual disparity study related to Minority, Women and Veteran Business Enterprises. A disparity study is a powerful tool to help make the changes needed in the way the city spends its resources. We want to make these changes effective and sustainable. Reversing decades of inequity requires thoughtful, collaborative, rigorous work.

The goal of the disparity studies will help determine if inequities exist in our public procurement and contracting that adversely affects minority, women and veteran-owned (MWBVE) businesses. We will also seek to implement programs to support MWBVE to support their growth and expansion, but most importantly, their ability to compete for bids on a local and state level. The purpose of supplier diversity programs is to encourage these minority, women-owned and veteran-owned businesses to participate in procurement and contracting opportunities while creating a fair and equitable playing field.

The 2024 Broadway Plan



As Mayor, I will promote equitable development by leveraging innovative financing, applying a targeted approach to investing within our City corridors. As the primary road running through the entire city, Broadway was once a symbol of Gary's strength. Broadway hosted entities of all types, from small businesses to corporate offices, government offices, shopping, art and cultural enterprises. Equally important for locals, Broadway is still a corridor that connects the distinct districts of Downtown, Midtown, University Park and Glen Park. As Mayor of Gary, I will seek to revitalize Broadway from north to south. We will build upon our anchors in each district to help refine each of their distinct characteristics, helping grow both local civic engagement and the economy.

- **Downtown Metro Station:** We will transform Downtown Broadway into a mixed-use residential, business and government district that serves as the epicenter for our revitalization. We will build a new downtown Metro Station in conjunction with the South Shore Double Tracking Expansion, which will serve as a catalyst to our growth and development. We will also expand the footprint of Indiana University Northwest downtown with a new law school.
- **Genesis Convention Center:** As part of the Gary Metro Center Redevelopment project, we will engage the community in a series of meetings to discuss future uses and the revitalization of the Genesis Center. Potential uses include office space, which leverages its proximity to the South Shore Train station, retail, restaurant and recreational space.
- **Gary Railcats Stadium:** This attractive municipally-owned stadium hosts a minor-league baseball team and is underutilized as a community resource. After renegotiating the stadium contract, we will increase its accessibility and use by the community for additional outdoor festivals and sporting events including softball, amateur league play, intramural teams and tournaments. We will also ensure the venue, including suites and meeting spaces, are more accessible to the public for meetings, parties, family reunions and community events.
- **Midtown Vision:** Midtown is the historic heartbeat of Gary's African-American community. This district has vibrant historical and cultural assets with so many stories to share. We will leverage the history of this district to help drive

redevelopment of the iconic Roosevelt High School into a mixed-use facility that can serve as a museum and center for arts and culture. We will also partner with the world-famous Jackson Family to engage their celebrity status in attracting tourism to their home at 2300 Jackson Street near Roosevelt.

- **Glen Park and University Park:** Home to Indiana University Northwest and the Ivy Tech Gary Campus, the Little Calumet River to the North, Gleason Park Golf Course and the long-closed Gilroy Stadium to the West and I-65 to the east, University Park is ripe for residential development including in-fill developments in the residential areas bordering campus, dormitories serving IUN and Ivy Tech students, restaurants, coffee shops and other businesses to service the needs of students and other residents, as well as the development of recreational uses leveraging the presence of the Little Calumet river and green spaces extending from the river to I-65.

Transportation and Logistics Hub (Gary Chicago Airport, Buffington Harbor)

Gary is home to an international airport and multiple rail lines, and it is traversed by major highways. It is also home to an underdeveloped, underutilized deep sea port with access to the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence Waterway, and thus the Atlantic Ocean, giving it the ability to accommodate ocean-going vessels. We will bring all these resources to bear to transform Gary into a major logistics hub not only for the Midwest, but for the world. The number of trains flowing through Chicago and Gary is forecasted to grow substantially from 2005-2035, and we will be positioned to take advantage of this opportunity.

Expand Filming Industry

Gary features diverse vistas ranging from a mature urban corridor and industrial areas, to mid-century modern buildings, a university campus, a variety of residential neighborhoods, five miles of sandy lakeshore, rivers, marsh, forested land, prairie and ecologically-rare dune and swale landscapes. This, combined with Indiana's Film and Media Tax Credit, which offers an income tax credit of up to 30% to offset production expenses, will position Gary to attract opportunities for filming projects.

Tourism and Visitors Taskforce

From being one of the nation's leading steel manufacturers to our 5 miles of recreational beachfront and our rich history in the arts, sports and entertainment, Gary is perfectly positioned to leverage our unique urban landscape, natural environment and historic culture to grow our local economy. As Mayor, I will form a diverse taskforce of citizens and stakeholders to help tell our story to the rest of the world. This taskforce will develop a tourism plan and marketing strategy to promote Gary to residents of surrounding cities and the rest of the country.

Renewable Energy Taskforce

To deal with the challenge of climate change and energy security, renewable energy has been widely regarded as an increasingly important solution leading to a more sustainable future. Given the fact that more than half of all energy is consumed in cities today, designers and academics have sought to integrate renewable energy technologies at small scale into the urban environment. As Mayor, I will commission a local taskforce to explore effective ways of combining renewable energy in our urban development strategies. I will ask this task force to focus on renewable technologies that fit within Gary's land use study and explore ways to save the city money on our utility bills.

Transit-Oriented Development "TOD" (Downtown Gary and Miller)

As Mayor, I will maximize our economic opportunities by investing in our Transit Development Districts. The city will partner with local, state and federal agencies to guide and promote development that brings dense mixed-use development within walking distance of our high rapid transit stations. I envision vibrant streetscapes and land use characteristics that make it convenient and safe to walk, cycle and use public transportation. Public transportation can help foster partnerships in communities that support the development of market rate and affordable housing around transit. This type of development will lead to more equitable communities.



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