

To summarize the discussion at the first Working Group meeting for Economic Development and Business Retention, comments have been categorized into themes. One theme concerns how to make the city more attractive to employers and employees. This includes providing a business climate that is attractive to industry. There was also a discussion about infrastructure needs (communication technologies, transportation, etc.) that could contribute to making Cincinnati more attractive to businesses and professionals. There is an opportunity for a cross-element meeting with the Transportation and Transit element or the Infrastructure element to discuss these issues. A few comments in this theme also mentioned marketing ideas for the City, cost of living, attractions, and our geographic location within the region. Finally, this theme includes the scope of Cincinnati's economic policy focus (specifically, that Cincinnati should tap into world markets rather than focusing on local and domestic markets).

Another theme that was present in several comments is that a strong economy embraces diversity. As it relates to the economy, the term "diversity" has a few implications. There were several comments about the ability of the local economy to employ the work force that already exists (opportunities for a diverse group of people), as well as increasing the diversity of businesses in the Neighborhood Business Districts (providing for a neighborhood's diverse needs). Some of the Working Group members made specific comments regarding fostering employment opportunities for residents in all demographic categories.

Innovation and emerging industries could be included in the theme of diversity, since innovation is a way of offering new opportunities for employment. There were a few comments about leading the way into new markets and being on the cutting edge in terms of new industries. These comments offer guidance on how to redefine the local economy to be sustainable and positioned for growth as we emerge from the current national recession. Cultural identity and the arts/entertainment industry were also thematic in the discussion. These discussions present another opportunity for a joint Working Group meeting with the Arts and Culture Working Group.

Cultural identity includes ideas about place, dwelling, locality, and uniqueness. One comment was about supporting locally produced goods, such as Amish products (cheese, furniture, crafts, etc.), bourbon, beer, wine, horse and auto racing, Bluegrass

music, and others. The justification for including this in the economic development strategy for the City is to make Cincinnati a market-hub for regionally produced goods. This would encourage tourism dollars to be spent in ways that most benefit the local and regional economy.

The last of the themes that dominated the conversation was about Cincinnati's business districts. There seemed to be an underlying idea that the concept of "Neighborhood Business Districts" is currently ill defined in its scope and purpose. A specific comment called for the definition of a Neighborhood Business District. Another aspect of the business district theme dealt with understanding who the patrons of Neighborhood Business Districts' businesses are and whether the businesses serve the needs of local residents. More broadly, the group seemed curious about how business districts can be used to foster community. The concepts of a "Third Place," a "commercial commons," and self-contained neighborhoods fall under this theme.