

Delaware County Economic
Development Department

Annual Report 2019



Executive Summary

2019 was another impressive year for Delaware County with continued economic and residential growth. The population increased from 205,091 to 209,177 and median household income rose to \$104,322, the highest in Ohio. The sustained growth in Delaware County is a clear indication that the “Smart Growth” philosophy adopted by the County Commissioners is effective in bringing forward positive development that benefits the community.

The Economic Development department’s responsibilities include business attraction, retention, expansion, market research, site selection, marketing, land acquisition assistance, and serving as staff for the Delaware County Finance Authority. All action items are done under the backdrop of the County’s Smart Growth ideology. Smart Growth is defined as development that will aid the community in diversifying its tax base and providing for the needs of its residents, while factoring in and leveraging market conditions. To put it simply, Smart Growth is about incorporating commonsense development that supports school districts, increases quality of life and amenities, and offers more employment opportunities for residents, while maintaining balance of the County’s rich history and green space.

One of the best examples of our philosophy in practice is the Creekside Industrial Park and development on US 23. The Creekside Industrial Park is a 100-acre shovel-ready site. In 2019, we saw most of the parcels being sold and/or in the construction phase. Businesses such as Hoshizaki North American Distribution and Automated Technology Solutions purchased land to develop, which will provide the community with high-paying, technical jobs. Seeing the success of Creekside signals the desire of businesses to locate to Delaware County.

Executive Summary

The largest initiative in 2019 was to create shovel-ready land, particularly in the Berlin Business Park, a proposed park on the US36/SR37 Corridor just to the east of the City of Delaware in Berlin Township. Efforts include infrastructure planning, incentive package development, and working through the zoning process to help expedite processes for businesses and developers. A comprehensive incentives package, including a sales tax exemption on construction materials, TIFs to assist with infrastructure costs, and a CRA, was created to support development. TIFs are used to support the various critical infrastructure needs of the community such as road expansions and sewer build-out, and CRAs are used to assist with the financials of the development.

Beyond the land repositioning efforts, other key endeavors were initiated in 2019. The Workforce Development Committee created an informational pamphlet that organized the various workforce development resources in the County to better serve businesses looking for creative hiring solutions or support efforts for existing staff. Additionally, the Trails Committee began implementing changes to their grant program to improve the effectiveness of the Trails Assistance Program.

The Wireless Development Plan, an initiative finalized in 2019, strategically prepares Delaware County to expand its wireless internet and cellular capacity. It includes a marketing strategy and outlines the benefits of robust access to internet and cellular services. Our office will be working to implement this plan and work towards positioning county land for additional cellular and fiber infrastructure and working toward a dig once policy to save on the costs of underground infrastructure costs.

Delaware County Finance Authority



The Delaware County Finance Authority had another successful year in 2019. While the Board currently has +/-58 projects that it is working with, 8 projects closed in 2019 with a projected TIF generation of more than a half million dollars during the TIF agreements. The Board also completed their strategic planning for the next five years. The Board's big goals included focusing on outreach to local jurisdictions, increasing impact on economic growth by incentivizing diverse housing, targeting projects that create additional high-wage jobs, and finding new methods to fund critical infrastructure programs.

The Delaware County Finance Authority assists with projects through its incentive programs and expertise in development and financing. The DCFA works closely with local jurisdictions to prepare them for incoming development and works with developers to help them through the local jurisdictions' development process. Because they are able to assist both sides of the development process, it leads to more effective projects. The DCFA aims to serve as a one-stop shop for development that both local governments and developers can rely on to assist them through development processes. The Sales Tax Exemption Program assists larger projects on cost-savings that would otherwise make the project too expensive to complete. The Board also work with organization's interested in pursuing the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program. The PACE program allows developers to work with local governments and their lenders to have energy improvement assets be loaned out and paid back through a special assessment on the property taxes. This helps developers reduce costs to create more energy efficient buildings.

Project Highlights

US 23 Corridor

Delaware Now, a private economic development organization, raised public and private funds to hire a planning consultant to evaluate US 23 in the county. The Delaware County Commissioners and Delaware County Finance Authority contributed towards the payment of this study. The study provided planning recommendations that the EcD department will implement in 2020, including creating a brand for the corridor and contracting with communities to create commercial overlay zones.



Berlin Business Park

The Berlin Business Park is a proposed 2,000-acre business park US36/SR37 in Berlin Township. The Township and the Delaware County Finance Authority began the partnership last year, but much progress has been made on repositioning this land for a myriad of commercial uses, such as advanced manufacturing, retail, and office

Creekside Industrial Park

The Creekside Industrial Park is 100 acres of shovel-ready land off US 23 at Corduroy Road. This was the EcD Department's first attempt to reposition land in this fashion to spur development and to understand how the market will respond to preparing land with infrastructure and incentives. The project was a success with most of the parcels being sold for commercial development.





Kilbourne Revitalization

A developer reached out to the DCFA and the EcD Department for assistance in the redevelopment of the Kilbourne Area. They plan to improve the infrastructure in the area and rebuild the town center. CDBG2020 grant funds are being used to cover a portion of the improvements.

Village of Ostrander

The Village of Ostrander approached the EcD Department to assist them in planning for future growth. This was our first official Economic Development Action Plan with a community. The department will meet with residents and stakeholders of the Village and then provide recommendations to the Village Council.

Evans Farm

Evans Farm is a 1,600-acre “new urbanism” development that promotes walkability and seeks to provide a true sense of community. This development offers residential, commercial, and recreational space as well as location for a school site.



Delco Ready

The EcD Department continues preparing the County for Smart Growth by securing infrastructure improvements, assisting local governments with property rezoning and implementing enhanced development standards, bolstering the local tax base and any other items required for careful planning of new development. Further, the program works with property owners, developers and local jurisdictions to encourage the development of shovel-ready sites throughout the community. Our proactive approach to development allows us to carefully evaluate prepare for new development opportunities.

Delco Invest

This is a focus on our Business Attraction & Business Retention/Expansion programming. It seeks to attract new investment to the community. The new investment comes from existing businesses that plan to stay in our community. New investment also occurs when businesses who are not present in our community choose to locate their operations in Delaware County.

DelCo Smart

DelCo Smart is the name of our Action Plan creation project. Our goal is to assist jurisdictional partners in better positioning themselves to meet the demands of a growing community. These demands are both fiscal and quality of life. The process begins by listening to elected officials, businesses, and local residents about what they believe is the right future for their community. After the initial engagement period, we create a series of action steps that list out objectives (i.e. re-zoning, target sectors, infrastructure improvements, and partnerships) that will help the community reach its goals. Once the plan is drafted, we review with elected officials as well as the involved stakeholders. When finalized, we evaluate our programs and our partners' programs that can assist the community with Smart Growth.

Delco Engage

Being engaged with all of our communities is a top priority for our team. This means engaging all of our stakeholders: residents, businesses, land owners and public/non-profit entities. Our social media platforms are just another way to engage with communities. Not only is it easier to inform the community of projects at large, but is also a great tool to gather feedback in an open dialogue setting. Further, we will invest in other initiatives such as Workforce Housing, Public Transportation, and continuing our support of Entrepreneurship throughout the County. We hope to be able to invest heavily into these different areas and continue to improve our county.

2020 Key Endeavors

- Partnerships with local jurisdictions
- Business Attraction and Retention support
- US 23 Corridor Branding
- Delaware Entrepreneurial Center Strategic Planning
- Finalize Fiber Connectivity plan
- Workforce Initiatives
- Berlin Business Park Overlay
- CDBG 2020

