

# Stark County SWOT Analysis

## Strength

- Location (access to major Midwest & Eastern markets)
- Transportation Systems (highway, rail, air)
- Availability of developed industrial sites & parks
- High labor productivity
- Location of universities, colleges and technical schools
- Low cost of living

## Weaknesses

- High cost of worker's compensation
- Labor Unions (high wages/benefits)
- Lower Educational Attainment of Workers
- Ohio's Tax System
- Climate
- County's Financial Condition

## Opportunities

- Develop new strategies and initiatives to target Service, R&D, High Technology, Warehouse & Distribution companies as new prospects
- Help to create new collaborations/organizations that can be more successful in producing greater numbers of business prospects by promoting Northeast Ohio as an economic region
- Work to link more closely the top research faculty and programs of the universities and colleges within Northeast Ohio to the development strategies and initiatives of the development groups in Northeast Ohio, including SDB.

## Threats

- Continued over-reliance on any one business/industry group
- Increasing competitiveness of other Ohio cities.counties and other states to steal our existing companies

# Introduction

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to evaluate the mission and vision of the Stark Development Board and make purposeful decisions regarding strategic planning directions and tactical plans. The intended result is to move the Board to the next level of economic development plans and services for the benefit of the Stark County area.

## Our Mission

To retain, expand and attract business investment in the Stark County area.

## Our Vision

To be one of the top five economic development groups in Ohio and recognized as the leading organization that provides leadership, vision and success in making Stark County a better place to live and work in the 21st century.

## Values

### **Integrity –**

We are committed to working within the Board and the Stark County area with high standards of personal and professional behavior and accountability. We believe that each individual is important. We pledge to treat each person – whether employee, client, or colleague – with respect, equality and fairness. We value hard work, honesty, trust and commitment, and believe that these traits bring achievement and self-fulfillment.

### **Excellence –**

We strive for quality in all that we do and remain committed to continuous improvement for the benefit of individuals, our clients and communities/organizations we serve. Our quality is made possible through vision, leadership, teamwork, consistency, communication and collaboration with all those that we work with.

### **Effective and Efficient –**

We strive to be accountable, cost effective and efficient in serving the community. We pledge to be responsible stewards of human, financial, physical and environmental resources.

## **Responsive –**

We remain dedicated to serving the community, locally and globally, and believe that anything we do to strengthen our external environment enhances us internally. We willingly partner with local government officials; federal and state government; community organizations; chambers of commerce; and other regional or state entities for the advancement of our economic development, civic and community development goals. We also remain committed to understanding the needs of the community so that we may serve it better.

## **Entrepreneurial –**

We encourage individual initiative within the Board and the community. We believe in empowering individuals to be creative and resourceful risk takers in performing their jobs. We encourage flexibility and innovative thinking that benefits the Board, clients we assist or the community we serve.

# **Governance**

The Stark Development Board is governed by a 45 person Board of Trustees that is nominated and elected to serve staggered terms of office by the Members of the Stark Development Board. Each year the Board elects officers who serve a one-year term of office. The board is also served by an Executive Committee, of no less than 12 Board of Trustees who meet monthly and have the authority to make decisions regarding SDB's business on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

# SDB Three Year Strategic Plan

## (2003 – 2006)

- Continue and expand SDB's current organization mission.
- Significantly increase SDB's marketing/ promotion efforts that are focused on diversification of Stark County's economic base.
- Expand the role of the Stark County Port Authority in supporting and funding local economic development projects.
- Provide statewide private sector development leadership in shaping the future economic development strategy and programs of the State of Ohio.
- Increase SDB's role in Workforce Development activities.

# Continue And Expand SDB's Current Organizational Mission

## Planning Components

- Seek continuous improvement of SDB's programs and services to businesses.
- Strengthen and develop community/development resources to encourage new business investment and jobs.
- Improve Stark County's business climate to be more competitive for future business and industry growth.
- Foster and support better regional and state competitiveness.

## Measures

- Benchmark SDB's programs, services and accomplishments with other top development organizations within and outside of Ohio.
- Calculate and compare such measures as new capital investment by company; costs (SDB) expended per company; new or retained jobs; income/payroll per company; and the return on investment to SDB contributors.
- Accounting of new federal and state dollars committed to Stark County projects.
- Track Stark County demographic/economic statistics with other major metro areas in Ohio.

# Significantly Increase SDB Marketing/Promotion Efforts

## Planning Components

- Complete efforts to create a new regional economic development organization (Team NEO) to promote Northeast Ohio to high growth & high technology companies.
- Investigate opportunity to establish a Stark County Angel Fund.
- Create a special venture capital forum to attract smaller high growth & high technology companies to discuss their projects.
- Identify new Internet marketing links/opportunities to promote SDB/Stark County to business & industry.
- Work with local Stark County communities to upgrade their information on industrial sites and buildings available on computer.

## Measures

- Track total number of prospect inquiries/successful locates/new capital investment/ income & payroll/ and cost per job resulting from Team Northeast Ohio.
- A go/ no go decision on creating an Angel Fund.
- Track results from testing new internet marketing ideas/links.
- Number of Stark County communities/chambers that have upgraded materials/building & site information.
- Success in finding new opportunities/strategies to target smaller high technology companies to Stark County.

# Expand The Role Of The Stark County Port Authority

## Planning Components

- Develop and implement a marketing plan to promote the Stark County Port Authority to the business, financial and accounting community.
- Actively pursue opportunities for the Port Authority to help finance companies investing in new business facilities, machinery & equipment.
- Devise a strategy to extend Foreign Trade Zone # 181 to additional sites in Stark County.
- Continue to establish the Port Authority as the lead organization with regard to Brownfield Redevelopment.

## Measures

- Track and evaluate number & effectiveness of marketing activities in terms of increased opportunities to utilize Port Authority projects.
- Track total opportunities; completed projects; new capital investment; retained or new jobs created and investment per job on Port Authority projects.
- New sites and total new acreage within U.S. Foreign Trade Zone # 181 within Stark County.
- Number of brownfield sites identified, remediate for redevelopment in Stark County and new capital investment in facilities resulted from the Port Authority's efforts.

# Provide Statewide Private Sector Development Leadership

## Planning Components

- Continue SDB efforts to seek appointments of Stark County business leaders on key state agency commissions and boards
- Continue to work with our federal and state elected officials to pursue opportunities for funding for Stark County's infrastructure & highways; airports; research & development; high technology; workforce and economic development projects.
- Begin a process that assembles the lead private development organizations from across Ohio to strengthen the state's future economic development policies and strategies and tools
- Help create an Ohio Competitiveness Task Force, comprised of the lead private development organizations from across Ohio, to meet with congressional and state legislators and the Governor regarding economic development issues.

## Measures

- Track number of appointments to state boards and commissions
- Track amount of new federal and state dollars received by Stark County on highway & infrastructure projects; airport funding; research & development; high technology support; workforce development funding and economic development projects.
- Changes made to Ohio economic development strategy and tools and actual results (increase in numbers of successful projects completed) accountable to these changes

# Increase SDB's Role In Workforce Development Activities

## Planning Components

- Use SDB's web site to link educational institutions that offer credit and non-credit training programs.
- Conduct survey of businesses regarding educational needs.
- Participate in the Stark County P-16 compact.
- Provide information to businesses regarding state programs that provide monetary assistance for training and research.
- Continue to support Stark County's Tech Prep Consortium.
- Continue SDB efforts to host high school juniors and seniors in vocational studies to attend selected industry trade shows.
- Work with Stark County chambers to recreate a program to allow teachers to visit and tour businesses and industry.

## Measures

- Monitor the number of "hits" on the SDB web site seeking job training information
- Complete business survey, analyze results and distribute to educational/training providers
- Examine data regarding high school graduates who go to college
- Collect data regarding how many companies are involved with non-credit training and are utilizing state dollars
- Total number of students attending trade shows
- Total number of students participating in Tech Prep in Stark County
- Numbers of teachers and companies participating in teacher visitation program