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Perceived Problem

There are ominous trends apparent in Jefferson Parish. The Parish is losing population and a majority of those leaving are middle and upper income residents. Crime is increasing throughout the area and the educational system is perceived to be in a state of decline. There is a general lack of confidence in the area's flood protection and drainage systems and a degree of anger and frustration expressed by residents about this. There are broad and general concerns about quality of life issues throughout both east and west bank areas. These factors and trends have become more apparent and are accelerating in the post Katrina era.

To address this situation, JEDCO has initiated a review of the EDGE2010 to determine if the scope of economic development initiatives should be broadened to address quality of life issues. The consensus of parish leaders was clear – quality of life is a critical and driving factor in the future prosperity of the parish. In this regard, an assessment of what can be done to address these concerns has been initiated. The following summary states the primary observations, thoughts and objectives recorded at a forum sponsored by JEDCO on June 7, 2007 to address these issues. The discussion of panel focused on three priority areas: leadership, quality of life, and economic development.

Community and Political Leadership

Objective: Encourage parish and business leaders to seize the opportunity to assume a greater leadership role in regional issues – particularly those directly affecting Jefferson Parish.

- Focus legislative and congressional initiatives on the pursuit of funding to improve community infrastructure, facilities, and services
 - o Continued funding of flood protection and drainage programs
 - o Required resources to build a more effective criminal justice system
 - o Funding to improve public education and expand job training programs
- Encourage leadership initiatives from the business community and regional planning and economic development agencies
 - o Engage the business community to recognize and promote the role of Jefferson Parish in the regional economy
 - o Insure that Jefferson Parish's interest and objectives are embodied in regional plans and initiatives, i.e. the Regional Planning Commission and GNO, Inc.
 - o Encourage local business to get more involved in the design of workforce training.

- Strive for more effective government at local, regional and state levels
 - o Develop a coordinated regional legislative agenda lead by Jefferson Parish
 - o Implement a “fact based” reporting system to chart the progress and accomplishments of governmental programs and initiatives
 - o Enhance the coordination and management of governmental agencies and the delivery of related services throughout Jefferson Parish

Quality of Life Issues

Objective: Identify programs that recognize the problems affecting the quality of life in the parish and implement a high profile program to address the most immediate issues.

- Address the major issues perceived as diminishing the quality of life in Jefferson Parish
 - o In coordination with the Sheriff and other law enforcement agencies throughout the Parish, initiate a program to address both the perception of and reality of the area's rising crime rate.
 - o Implement an immediate and well publicized program to lobby for the funds required to improve flood protection and drainage throughout the Parish.
 - o Improve public education in the Parish and make it more responsive to the needs of the population, especially the middle class.
 - o Work with federal, state, and local health care officials to implement interim, short term improvements in health care delivery, infrastructure, and personnel to mitigate the loss of regional health care facilities.
- Commit to and focus on improving communities and neighborhoods throughout the Parish
 - o Implement beautification program to enhance the image of major corridors and neighborhoods
 - o Improve permitting and code enforcement procedures in the parish.
 - o Initiate an aggressive program to manage adjudicated properties and eliminate blighted properties in neighborhoods throughout the Parish.
- Initiate an aggressive public outreach program to promote the advantages and benefits of living and doing business in Jefferson Parish.
 - o Begin an active dialogue with civic and business leaders to monitor perception throughout the community and to identify problematic issues early in their life cycle.
 - o Identify and publicize the economic advantages of living in



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Jefferson Parish. For example, low taxes, proximity to employment, cultural, and entertainment facilities.

- o Promote Jefferson Parish's image as major employment, retail, and business center with major media outlets; that is, enhance the image of the Parish relative to its new role in the metro area and as the largest parish in the state.

Economic Development Initiatives

Objective: Focus on the retention of residents and businesses in the parish and region as a way of stabilizing the area.

- Maximize the opportunities associated with the transportation infrastructure and natural resources of Jefferson Parish
 - o Work to regionalize the governance of Louis Armstrong International Airport to promote a higher level of economic development in adjacent areas and evaluate the feasibility and viability of establishing a port on the west bank of the Mississippi River in Jefferson Parish.
 - o Formulate a "more effective" development plan for lakefront and riverfront properties.
 - o Formulate a progressive development plan for the land in the west bank approach of the Huey P. Long Bridge in anticipation of the widening of the facility.
- Establish a development authority to address the redevelopment of blighted and underutilized properties.
 - o Immediately implement a program to address the declining properties in Fat City and facilitate a comprehensive redevelopment of the area.
 - o Formulate a program to address the "clouded titles" inhibiting the redevelopment of the properties in the South New Orleans subdivision on the West Bank.
 - o Implement a program to address the adjudicated and blighted properties scattered throughout the Parish.
- Assume an advocacy position to promote a higher level of business interest and investment in Jefferson Parish.
 - o Advocate for the extension of the GO Zone Incentives in Jefferson Parish through 2010.
 - o Aggressively seek solutions to mitigate the impacts of the rising costs of insurance on residents and businesses throughout the Parish.
 - o Promote the issuance of a Master 404 Permit for the West Bank to facilitate the formulation of an intelligent development plan for this area.

In an effort to stabilize the population of the Parish and improve the quality of life for its businesses and residents, the foregoing initiatives are thought to be of critical importance in short term. The primary directives in each of the three major initiatives (political leadership, quality of life, and economic development) will send a strong and positive message to the residents and businesses of Jefferson Parish. This is what is needed to address and reverse the ominous trends observed in recent years.