

Paducah, KY: A Model for Economic Development and Smart Growth Using Local Assets For Hilton Head Island – Our Plan

Paducah, KY, using the Creative Economy for Economic Development, planned and executed a smart strategy, targeted tactics and incentives to reach economic and quality of life goals.

- population - 25,000; Region - 170,000, in W. Kentucky at the junction of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers.
- Once a center of agriculture, trade and later, enriched uranium production
- By 1988 had a high crime rate and a 70% vacancy rate.
- A new Mayor rallied community leaders and created the Paducah Renaissance Alliance.

The plan focused on using their unique assets, the arts, history and the riverfront, strengthening existing assets while expanding their economic base. Each area had a different strategy and tactics:

- Historic downtown: added to the existing cultural venues with public, non-profit and private funding including a film theater, major performing arts center for their symphony and a new school of art.
- LowerTown Arts District: City purchased 55 vacant buildings and sold them for \$1+ to artists. The City invested \$3 million and the artists > \$35 million. Banks offered mortgages for above appraised value
- Riverfront development: a public park, downstream harbor and adding a boat launch, dock, and marina. > \$10 million in federal funds financed the development.
- New Paducah Riverfront Development Authority was created to address intra and inter area transportation and to have ongoing responsibility for the Renaissance Area Master Plan.

Results: dramatic improvement in the economy and quality of life

- Creative economy generated \$2.9 million in local/state government revenue and created over 800 regional jobs. Tourists were 37.5% of event attendees, spending > 5X that of local residents.
- By 2010 >\$100 million of public/private investment made in downtown area attracted 234 new businesses, 1,000 new jobs and renovated 119 buildings. Vacancy rate dropped 80%.

Successful Strategies and recommended actions/next steps for Hilton Head:

1. Create a community alliance
Next Steps: Identify and create a management structure to plan, implement and track progress against the Comprehensive Plan strategies that includes Town Council members, Town staff, and business, non-profit and citizen community leaders.
2. Identify and build on existing assets that offer the best opportunities for growth.
Next steps: a. Identify key assets within each of our asset areas: Beach/Natural Resources, Outdoor Recreation, Retirement Community, our Creative Economy [Heritage(Mitchelville), Historical sites, Arts, Media, and Functional Creations (e.g. designers)], Proximity to Savannah/Charleston/I-95 and USCB
b. Create plans to protect them and keep them in our community. C. focus on tourists who appreciate our uniqueness and market to convert them to permanent residents.
3. Engage all members of the community to plan for the future.
Next Steps: Continue to make efforts to ensure that underrepresented segments of the community are brought into the Planning and execution processes of the Comprehensive Plan
4. Take advantage of outside funding.
Next steps: For defined projects, investigate Federal and state funding; foundation programs and grants.
5. Create incentives for redevelopment and encourage investment in the community.
Next Steps: develop targeted incentives for each project using a public/business/non-profit funding
6. Encourage cooperation on jointly established priorities – locally and regionally.
Next steps: Continue work with organizations such as SoLoCo, LCOG and other regional organizations to address common issues such as transportation, housing and education
7. Support a clean and healthy environment.
Next steps: Implement Comprehensive Plan Environment strategies