



KENNER CREATES CITY-WIDE ECONOMIC BLUEPRINT

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For Immediate Release

The City of Kenner is beginning the preparation of its first Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), a long range plan that will guide economic growth throughout the city. Mayor Mike Yenni initiated this planning process, which is expected to span the course of three (3) months and will include participation from local elected officials, the Mayor's Economic Development Task Force and Kenner residents. The Jefferson Community Foundation and Kenner resident and business owner, Henry Shane, have joined the City of Kenner to fund this \$30,000.00 initiative. GCR & Associates, Inc. has been retained to facilitate the planning process and formulate the strategic plan.

In May of this year, Mayor Yenni's Economic Development Task Force held its first briefing where it was presented with a demographic analysis of Kenner. The findings showed unfavorable trends such as population decline, decreasing household income and increasing housing vacancy. The 35-member task force, which consists of three (3) council members and various stakeholders representing numerous sectors of the Kenner community, agreed that action must be taken in order to end the negative trends and spur economic growth.

The CEDS will, in part, present strategies to attract new residents and businesses to the community while also focusing on the retention of Kenner's existing residents and businesses. The plan will address the improvement of Kenner's major assets, such as utilizing Laketown and putting vacant airport-owned land back into commerce.

Mayor Yenni recognizes the challenges the city is facing as well as its potential for growth. His work with state legislators to change laws to allow commercial development at Kenner's Laketown proved successful, and his administration is also working with officials at the Louis Armstrong International Airport to streamline the process for returning the airport's redevelopment property to private hands. "A strategic plan will set the blueprint for Kenner's economy," Yenni said. "With this document, key decision makers within the City will be guided by policies and actual economic development initiatives that are designed to generate new job growth and improve quality of life for the Kenner's residents."

GCR will undertake the planning process that will include data collection and analysis, a program of public surveys, as well as focus group workshops of the Mayor's Economic Development Task Force. The next step of the initiative is an assessment of Kenner's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, or SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis will include input from Kenner residents, elected officials and the Economic Development Task Force. A thorough comparison of the completed product will then be compared to the SWOT analysis completed in 2007 by former Mayor Ed Muniz' Economic Development Committee.

Using the new SWOT analysis as a guide, the Task Force will develop the plan consisting of a concise vision and key goals, objectives and policies supporting it. The plan will contain an implementation component consisting of specific short-term and long-term economic development projects that once implemented should fulfill the plan's goals and objectives.

Because public participation is a critical component of the planning process, a survey designed to gauge public perception of Kenner will be available on the city's website, www.kenner.la.us, and all residents are asked to complete it. In addition to the online survey, three hundred (300) Kenner residents will be randomly selected to participate in a phone survey. Results of the surveys will be compiled by GCR and analyzed by the task force as part of the SWOT analysis.