



## WINSLOW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Committee Recommendations Presented to the Winslow City Council January 14, 2020

#### Committee Members

Michael Mendoza, Chair  
Michelle Pennington, Vice-chair  
Anthony Estrada  
Royce Greer  
Frank Guzman  
Lawrence Kenna  
Jessica Stago

#### Elected Officials and City Staff

Thomas L. McCauley, Mayor (ex-officio)  
John Barkley, City Manager  
Paul Ferris, Community Development

#### Background

The Winslow Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) was established by the City Council by **Resolution 1796** on February 26, 2019 as a temporary advisory committee for the following stated purpose:

- A. Advise the City Council and City staff on matters and issues pertaining to economic development activities in the City.
- B. Support the City Council goals and be consistent with the City's Strategic Plan.

The EDAC members convened with the expressed purpose set forth by City Council resolution to discuss and make recommendations regarding economic development in the City Winslow.

## Discussion

The EDAC began the process talking generally about economic development in Winslow and how the City benefits economically from our unique culture and heritage, and dynamic, diverse economy that is enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

Overall, the discussion was centered around how the City can best capitalize on our local strengths and address our many challenges, and how we may better utilize and promote our many assets to spur economic and business development, while retaining and celebrating our local, rural values and heritage.

The fact that City residents, business owners, educators and leaders enjoy a resilient, forward thinking community brings us closer to our goal of becoming a thriving center of local and regional commerce. We have many assets to build on, including the following:

Winslow enjoys a great location and a national reputation. Visitors from around the world want to “Stand on the Corner” and experience the small-town hospitality we are famous for. Our diverse population translates into a variety of art, historic and cultural experiences, all in a central location. Legendary Route 66 runs through the heart of Winslow and gives a nostalgic sense while offering a vast array of potential re-development prospects.

The City enjoys the presence of two thriving hospitals and a world-class professional medical community.

The Burlington, Northern, Santa Fe (BNSF) Seligman Subdivision continues to provide economic and employment opportunities provided by rail transport.

Winslow Lindbergh Regional Airport is the only airport with air tanker refueling capabilities in the region and offers unlimited potential for growth and prosperity in several aspects of the public and private aviation industries.

Winslow offers a vast industrial park which creates a competitive advantage in the region and potential for well-paying jobs.

Northland Pioneer College (NPC) continues to serve as a tremendous asset for the City and the region, offering low-cost educational opportunities and training to meet regional workforce demands.

Beyond our local assets and potential, the City continues to participate in regional collaboration that includes several incorporated cities and towns in Navajo, Apache and Coconino Counties, and three Tribal Nations, all critical to our long-term sustainability. Winslow is a member of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns, the Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG), and the Economic Collaborative of Northern Arizona (ECoNA), which allows us to be part of the regional dialogue and better promote our City.

Winslow is built on a solid foundation to take advantage of opportunities to attract new business, employment, small business expansion, and overall economic prosperity. We do, however, face many challenges as a community that need to be addressed, which brings us to the following list of recommendations from the EDAC:

## Recommendations

Below is an overview of the recommendations made by the EDAC based upon its review and discussion of economic development in Winslow, past, present and future:

### Business Recruitment, Retention and Expansion

- Create a routine series of City sponsored workshops designed to educate current and prospective business owners about opportunities and resources for expansion and start-up. Reach out to NPC/SBDC, USDA Rural Development, and the Local First Arizona Foundation.
- Build a unique Winslow economic development web page and post links to various prospector sites, which contain comprehensive population, real estate, and other critical data. This would provide a professional looking website, possibly designed and supported by a firm that specializes in community economic development websites. This is a critical component of a competitive economic development strategy in Arizona.
- Focus on an aggressive marketing campaign for City-owned properties, with postings on the City's websites and on the many nation-wide commercial real estate listing services, with an emphasis on sale of our 900+ acres of prime industrial property.
- Provide a more proactive and comprehensive offering of online data and guidance to support existing small businesses and attract new business prospects, with detailed regional and local economic data categorized by business sector.
- Review the City's adopted Economic Development Policy and inventory current development incentives, including Opportunity Zones, preferred pricing of City-owned land offered for

commercial and industrial development, Commercial Overlay District, Entertainment District, Façade Improvement Program, Commercial Historic District, and the Special Development Option, which allows for the approval of combinations of land uses not specifically anticipated or allowed in the Zoning Ordinance of the City.

- Allow greater flexibility in payment of water and sewer connection fees, allowing prospective businesses and developers to utilize resources for capital investment on the front end of projects.
- Create a more business friendly experience at City Hall and throughout City government, with a focus on innovation, flexibility and support of the entrepreneurial spirit.
- Provide a detailed, readily available process overview with information about the City's applicable ordinance provisions, permitting and approval process, incentives, and local resources.
- Create a City of Winslow promotional and information packet and post it on the City's various websites, with the intent to promote awareness of the opportunities available in Winslow and attract new and relocating businesses. Include real-time, detailed, relevant economic, census, demographic and socio-economic data.
- Provide and utilize better direct sources of data sets in the analysis of the City's current conditions and for the promotion of economic development. Generally available data sets, including the US Census and the US Census-derived American Community Survey should be made available, along with specialized and proprietary data sets, including the University of Arizona's Native Peoples survey, the regional economic and visitation data assembled by Northern Arizona University, and the proprietary Buxton regional retail survey, which the City accesses through its membership in ECoNA.
- Contact with a licensed professional commercial/industrial real estate broker with industry experience, knowledge and a local presence necessary to aggressively market available City properties and offer a seamless approval process while providing incentives for timely development and construction.
- Create a City Economic Development Department, separate and distinct from Planning and Zoning, and designate a management level staff position with the sole purpose of promoting Winslow, grant writing, networking, and proactively recruiting businesses 24/7.
- Offer more support and incentives for improvements and structural renovations in the City's commercial historic district.

- Establish a framework for detailed, data-driven responses to industrial development inquiries submitted by major industries seeking expansion opportunities in Northern Arizona. Offer highly detailed technical and land use information in coordination with ECoNA and the Arizona Commerce Authority.

### **Local/Regional Tourism**

- Work with our Chamber of Commerce and lend support in promoting the Winslow brand and the many events sponsored by City and Chamber.
- Develop a methodology to measure the economic impacts of the City's large scale events on our local economy.
- Maintain and beautify the downtown area with more attractive lighting, tree plantings, banners, and safe sidewalks, streets, and traffic controls.
- Provide professional law enforcement and fire protection service that serves and protects the interests of both our local community and our visitors.
- Work with our Chamber of Commerce to install and promote a web cam on the "Corner" and other selected points around the City. Pursue sponsorships to help with the associate costs.
- Promote McHood Park as a regional destination and provide better maintenance and more amenities. Increase revenues from parking and use of the park without over-commercializing the experience.

### **Transportation**

- Roll out the planned City transit system to promote greater mobility and access to retail, hospitality, government services, health care, senior services and education.
- Update our inventory of traffic count data. New counts for the Route 66 area need to be requested following the completion of the Renaissance 6 road improvement project on east Second and Third Streets, where the City experienced a temporary reduction in the traffic volume during construction.
- Construct a City-owned truck parking station at the interchange of I-40 and North Park to support local businesses and attract interest to the vacant truck stop.

- Work with the BNSF leadership and local employees to promote greater community involvement and sponsorship opportunities.

### **Blight Abatement**

- Develop a better process to compel absentee landlords to repair or demolish vacant and blighted properties through agreements and/or condemnation and provide more incentives and penalties.
- Establish better code enforcement follow-up and a strong legal process for code-compliance in neighborhoods, downtown, and the commercial overlay district.
- Offer incentives and greater flexibility to encourage redevelopment and adaptive re-use of historic properties.

### **“Border Town” Challenges**

- Reach out to the leadership of our neighboring reservations to establish better communication and productive dialogue on issues of common interest.

### **Housing**

- Make a concerted effort to network with development industry associations to attract interest in quality residential and mixed use projects, and to spur interest in renovation and new construction.
- Market available city-owned properties for housing development opportunities and reach out to large tract property owners to support and market available properties for sale.

### **Hospitality**

- Market Winslow to major hotel chains and promote our small town charm and proximity to major markets.
- Assess the condition and ratings of current hotels.
- Encourage B&B development in the historic district.
- Continue to support and promote the legendary experience of the La Posada Hotel and its place in Winslow and American history.

## Building and Construction

- Review and assess the impact of current building and fire prevention codes and related permitting processes to residential and commercial growth, and eliminate disincentives and provide more flexibility with respect to development opportunities throughout the City.

## Regional Collaboration

- Continue active participation in regional and statewide economic development support organizations.
- Engage and actively participate with ECoNA and the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) to produce custom information and promotional packages for industrial and commercial prospects. Encourage representatives of the two organizations to participate with City staff and elected officials in hosting site visits to Winslow properties by prospects.
- Take full advantage of the City's role and contribution to ECoNA in promoting economic development along the Interstate-40 corridor and provide advocacy and timely, professional responses to prospect leads for Winslow.
- Build strong relationships with statewide elected officials, the Arizona Commerce Authority, the NACOG Economic Development Council, and industry and trade associations to benefit Winslow's economic interests.

With these recommendations in mind, the EDAC committee members wish to express our appreciation to the City Council for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Michael Mendoza*, Chairman

Winslow Economic Development Advisory Committee