

# FORWARD PADUCAH VISION & STRATEGY DRAFT

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Prepared for Paducah Economic Development by Avalanche Consulting, Inc.  
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Working draft



# Section 1: Introduction

For nearly two hundred years, Paducah and McCracken County have been the cultural and economic center of Western Kentucky. Sitting at the confluence of the Tennessee and Ohio rivers, Paducah was a natural location to establish trade and manufacturing operations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Growth spurred in new directions with the opening of the gaseous diffusion plant and the birth of the “Atomic City” in the 1950s. The busy port and strong economy sustained a thriving arts scene – home to the National Quilt Museum and recognized internationally as a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. The proud and ever-changing story of the community is beautifully captured in the floodwall murals stretching through downtown, and that story is poised for another moment of change.

In recent years, Paducah and McCracken County have seen the gaseous diffusion plant cease operations and population growth slow as many young people move to bigger cities and fewer find opportunities to bring them back home. At the same time, the community invested further into education – opening a Paducah campus for the University of Kentucky Engineering School, expanding offerings at Murray State, and West Kentucky Technical & Community College, and opening a world-class facility for the Paducah School of Art & Design. Baptist Health and Lourdes Health systems continue to open new treatment centers and expand their offerings. The Paducah-McCracken County Riverport is busier than ever, and Downtown Paducah is coming back to life with new commercial business, residences, and even a hotel.

This is the time for Paducah and McCracken County to take action – to build on the assets and cultural history that have shaped the past and create a new future for families and businesses. **This report refers to Paducah and McCracken County as Greater Paducah – not only to capture the county and city as one entity – but also to inspire residents and outsiders to think of what can be moving forward – how to build together toward a shared future.**

**This Forward Paducah strategy takes a modern, holistic approach to economic development – recognizing that the community must address numerous issues and build on a diverse base of assets to change its story.** This strategy first establishes a clear vision for Greater Paducah’s future and then identifies six strategic goals that will begin moving the community towards that vision.

The Forward Paducah approach does not call on the community to attract any business to Greater Paducah at any price. Instead, the strategy addresses fundamental challenges in Greater Paducah and maximizes new opportunities. This includes building housing and amenities that retain and attract population, supporting existing business to help them thrive and create new jobs, and creating an environment that encourages new businesses to start. At the same time, it includes making strategic investments to attract businesses in targeted industries and create new opportunities.

The Forward Paducah initiative will involve the entire community. Paducah Economic Development and its partners cannot change the story of Greater Paducah alone. This strategy provides the roadmap, but everybody must play a part in moving the community forward and shaping a positive story for the future.

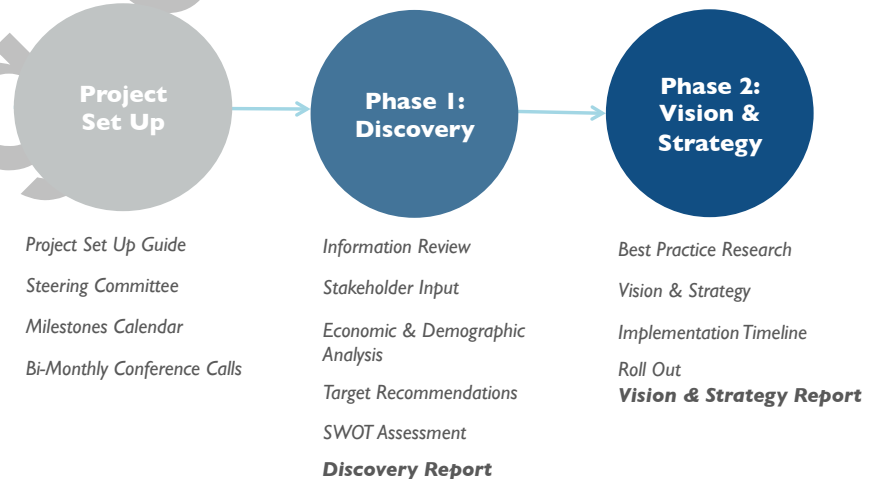
## About the Project

In September 2015, Paducah Economic Development (PED) and Avalanche Consulting, Inc., began a process to prepare an economic development strategy for Paducah and McCracken County. The seven-month planning process was designed to improve the community’s economic vitality through an aligned initiative to address challenges and seize opportunities. The planning process helps community leaders:

- Identify opportunities and priorities to guide future economic development in McCracken County,
- Identify and refine target business clusters that will be the focus of future economic development efforts, and
- Provide a plan of action that will create jobs, build the talent pool, and improve quality of life across the community.

Phase 1 of the planning process, Discovery, included an in-depth evaluation of Paducah and McCracken County’s economic performance and demographics. This phase involved extensive stakeholder input through focus groups, individual interviews, and an online survey of residents. This research and community engagement informed the identification of business clusters that will be the focus of future economic, workforce, and community development activities.

During Phase 2, Vision & Strategy, Avalanche Consulting developed this action plan for addressing challenges that currently restrain economic growth. This action plan is holistic in nature, seeking a more modern approach to economic development that expands upon traditional business recruitment to address existing business expansion, startups, education, and community development. The strategy will position Greater Paducah as a place that is highly desirable to businesses, entrepreneurs, and talent. It concludes with a tactical plan of action, implementation timing, task assignments, and metrics for measuring progress.



## About This Report

This Vision & Strategy Report represents the conclusion of Phase 2 of the *Forward Paducah Regional Economic Development Strategy*. It provides a vision for Greater Paducah's future and sets goals for Paducah Economic Development (PED) and partner organizations that will help the community achieve this vision. For each goal, Avalanche Consulting recommends specific tactical actions and provides budgets, timelines, and metrics for each. The report concludes with recommendations for organizing and successfully implementing this strategy. Best practices that provide successful models and sources of inspiration for Paducah are included throughout the report.

The report is broken into the following sections:

- Section One, **Introduction**, opens with a description of the strategic planning process, the layout of this report, the stakeholder input process, and a definition of economic development for Paducah and McCracken County.
- Section Two, **Vision & Goals**, presents an overall vision statement for Paducah and McCracken County based on community needs and desires and developed from extensive engagement with residents and leaders, data analysis, and national best practices. This section sets six goals for the community to work towards this vision over the next five years. High-level recommendations are listed under each goal.
- Section Three, **Tactical Actions**, provides specific activities for PED and partner organizations that support each recommendation, goal, and the overall vision. These tactical actions are presented in detailed tables that identify the lead organization, a timeline for achievement, budget estimates, potential sources for funding, and metrics for measuring success.
- Section Four, **Organizing for Implementation**, lays out a framework for successful implementation of the Forward Paducah strategy. This section includes recommendations on how to most effectively organize local economic development partner efforts and resources, support strategic initiatives, and remain innovative and adaptive into the future.

## Stakeholder Input

The process of developing an economic development strategy is as important as the end result. Engaging and listening to a community's leaders and residents is critical. The planning process must be inclusive for the community to embrace and act upon the resulting strategy.

To date in this planning process, Avalanche Consulting has conducted more than 30 individual interviews, facilitated focus groups with more than 40 participants, held a webinar for the PED board and other leadership, and led three workshops with a 46-member Steering Committee comprised of a broad array of perspectives.

From October to November 2015, Avalanche conducted an online survey that invited residents to share their opinions on the challenges and opportunities facing Paducah and McCracken County's future economic vitality. The results of the survey were shared in the SWOT Assessment section of the Discovery Report and directly informed this strategy's priorities. In total, 312 people participated in the survey.

Community members should keep the conversation going even after this report is finalized. Celebrate and share your stories of success and discuss the challenges you face. An open and inclusive dialogue will be critical to successfully achieve the goals and vision identified in this strategy. Conditions always change, and flexibility and engagement will help the community adapt and evolve to achieve new initiatives and face future challenges.

Avalanche Consulting and Paducah Economic Development specifically thank the members of the Steering Committee, comprised of a diverse group of McCracken County leaders. The Steering Committee participated in three 1.5-hour workshops with the consulting team, provided feedback, and guided the planning process. Steering Committee members will continue to play a critical role implementing the Forward Paducah strategy and engaging other McCracken County residents to support recommendations.

Avalanche would also like to thank Paducah Economic Development staff and leadership – Scott Darnell, President/CEO; Will McDowell, VP Economic Development; Nora Rikel, CFO; and Stan Eckenberg, PED Board Chair. This strategy would not have been possible without the leadership and coordination efforts of this team.

## Strategic Planning Committee Members & Participants

Anna Berlekamp  
*Kalleo Technologies*

Dennis Cannon  
*Jackson Purchase Energy*

John Hodges  
*Paducah McCracken Joint Sewer Agency*

County Commissioner Jerry Beyer  
*McCracken County Fiscal Court*

Whitney Denson  
*McMurry & Livingston*

Bethany W. Jones  
*The Advisory Board Company*  
*Baptist Health Paducah*

Randy Bridges  
*Paducah Board of Realtors Presidents*

Stan Eckenberg  
*CSI*

Judge Executive Bob Leeper  
*McCracken County Fiscal Court*

Carla Berry  
*Paducah Bank*

Bill Ford  
*Bill Ford Interiors*

Bill Miller  
*Paducah McCracken Riverport Authority*

Bryan Carner  
*US Bank/Paducah Chamber Chairman*

Dewain Gipson  
*Gipson Farms*

Edward & Meagan Musselman  
*Musselman Properties*

Chris Nelson  
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Marry Hammond  
*Paducah McCracken CVB*

Jonas Neihoff  
*Socially Present*

Darlene Mazzone  
*Mazzone Communications/Paducah Life*

Cory Hicks  
*Fluor Federal Services*



Craig Newbern  
*KY Department of Public Advocacy*

Jeff Pederson  
*Paducah City Manager*

Jan Preston  
*Fluor Federal Services*

William Renzulli  
*William Renzulli Art*

Bill Robertson  
*Paducah Water*

Donald Shively  
*Paducah Public School System*

Quinn Sutton  
*McCracken County Public Schools*

Dr. Brian Van Horn  
*Murray State University*

Sandra Wilson  
*Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce*

Gary Zheng  
*Paducah Power System*

William Brown  
*Baptist Health*

Keith Dickens  
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Francis Hamilton  
*Community Leader*

Steve Grinnell  
*Lourdes Hospital*

Mardie Herndon  
*Paducah Bank & PED Treasurer*

Ronnie James  
*James Marine*

Bill Jones  
*US Bank*

Mayor Gayle Kaler  
*City of Paducah*

Chris Neihoff

*Paducah Airport Board*

Leon Owens  
*Swift & Staley*  
Barry Smith  
*Regions Bank*

Roger Truitt  
*Kalleo Technologies*

Andrea Underwood  
*Paducah Power*

Dr. Barbara Veazey  
*West KY Community & Technical College*

John Williams Jr.  
*Wells Fargo Advisors*

Melinda Winchester  
*Paducah Main Street*



Bill  
Ford  
Gallery

presented by the  
Carson-Myre  
Charitable  
Foundation

# Section 2: Vision and Goals

## Greater Paducah’s Vision

An economic development vision is the foundation of a strategic plan and a source of inspiration for specific goals, activities, and strategic investments. Although based on existing principles of the community, the vision should also be aspirational – painting a picture of where a community wants to be in the future.

Achieving this vision will take years of targeted, collaborative work. The specific goals and tactics in a strategic plan must remain flexible and be updated every three to five years as specific goals are met and conditions change. Throughout this process, the vision should remain the constant reference for guiding future activities and investments.

Developing the vision for Greater Paducah has been an inclusive and organic process. The consulting team has not come into Paducah with a preconceived plan for the community. Instead Avalanche listened to many voices throughout the community – including educators, political leaders, business owners, residents, young professionals, non-profit leaders, healthcare providers, and more – to craft a vision that can be embraced by the whole community.

These stories heard through interviews, focus groups, group meetings, and the online survey were discussed and reviewed further with the project steering committee, PED board of directors, and others to build a clear, bold vision statement for Paducah and McCracken County:

### **CREATING THE FUTURE**

**Greater Paducah is the creative heart of Kentucky – building on a foundation of education, arts, and healthy living to inspire businesses and families to prosper.**

In the following pages, this report provides specific goals and tactical actions to help guide the community towards this vision. It is important to remember that this is a community development effort. Successfully achieving this vision will take more than the efforts of Paducah Economic Development, the City of Paducah, and McCracken County. This is a strategy for the entire community, and everybody can play a part in building a Paducah where everybody can succeed.

## Economic Development Goals


Building towards the overall vision requires setting more specific, tangible goals. Each goal is designed to enhance existing competitive strengths in Greater Paducah and also address community concerns. These strategic goals and the tactical actions supporting them approach local economic development in a holistic manner – addressing a range of community development issues, from building partnerships between businesses and educators to expanding the diversity of housing stock in Paducah.

No one goal alone will address all local concerns, but by working in concert on clear objectives, we can begin to move Paducah forward.

The six economic development goals identified for Greater Paducah are:

- **CULTIVATING TALENT** – Greater Paducah is a magnet for talented individuals and aligns education with business needs to maximize career opportunities for residents.
- **HELPING BUSINESSES SUCCEED** – Greater Paducah proactively works with local businesses to address their needs and expand their operations.
- **INSPIRING INNOVATION** – Greater Paducah provides a spectrum of connected resources to support entrepreneurs and their growing businesses.
- **CELEBRATING CULTURE** – Greater Paducah’s internationally recognized arts community is a driver of the region’s economy and brand identity.
- **TELLING YOUR STORY** – Greater Paducah has a unified brand that is embraced by its residents and compels others to invest in the community.
- **INVESTING IN YOURSELF** – Greater Paducah invests in strategic initiatives to grow its target industries, create new opportunities for economic prosperity, and address community needs.

The following section discusses recommended tactical actions, timetables, budget estimates, and other supportive information.



# Section 3: Tactical Actions

## CULTIVATING TALENT

**Goal – Greater Paducah is a magnet for talented individuals and aligns education with business needs to maximize career opportunities for residents.**

Workforce availability is a primary concern for Paducah and McCracken County. Population growth in the county has been slow for decades and declined in recent years. A slow growth pool of available labor limits the ability of existing companies to hire new employees and grow their operations. It presents even greater challenges attracting outside businesses to locate in McCracken County.

The community also has a share of population in poverty that face challenges connecting with new job opportunities – due to lack of training, poor transportation options, limited childcare resources, and more.

**Cultivating talent in Paducah and McCracken County will require multiple approaches. Key initiatives include creating more career opportunities for young professionals, connecting K-12 students with career pathways, strengthening relationships between employers and educators, assisting adult learners with retraining, integrating disconnected residents into the workforce, and investing in amenities that will help retain and attract a new generation of young workers and families.**

The following recommended tactical actions will help Greater Paducah achieve this goal:

1. Create a Workforce Development Group consisting of leaders from major private employers and representatives from WKCTC, Murray State, UK, and the public school system.
2. Develop programs that connect local K-12 students with internships and future job opportunities before they graduate from high school.
3. Create funding mechanisms to help adult residents participate in workforce development programs.
4. Increase the diversity of housing options in Greater Paducah.
5. Continue to support, upgrade, and expand recreational and healthy living amenities – including the Greenway Trail, bike lanes, and sports complexes.
6. Work with the United Way’s Impact Poverty Task Force to develop a community-wide Paducah Works program to help lower-income residents gain and retain better jobs.
7. Create and expand childcare services.

**Tactic 1: Create a Workforce Development Group consisting of leaders from major private employers and representatives from WKCTC, Murray State, UK, and the public school system.**

Greater Paducah has significant educational resources for a community of its size – including West Kentucky Community & Technical College, Murray State University, the University of Kentucky Engineering School, and a robust K-12 public school systems. Numerous educational programs have both formal and informal connections with private businesses. These include training programs that prepare students for employment in the local hospital systems, river and logistics training, and other technical training programs.

Despite these many strengths, private employers continue to face challenges finding employees with the appropriate training and skills to fill vacant positions. Establishing a formal Workforce Development Group will bring more private employers to the table and strengthen existing relationships between educators and businesses. A successful Workforce Development Group should include representatives from all local educational institutions and large private employers in McCracken County and the broader region.

The types of skills that employers seek are constantly changing with new technologies and service offerings. By meeting regularly to discuss employer needs and educational training capacity, the Workforce Development Group will help ensure that students have the appropriate skills to find jobs locally and employers will be able to fill positions and maintain operations.

- ▶ Personally invite key private employers and representatives of all local educational institutions to participate in the Workforce Development Group.
- ▶ Host the initial council meeting at Paducah Economic Development and ask council members to establish their own internal structure, regular meeting schedule, and goals and priorities.
- ▶ Announce formation of the council via a press release and social media and encourage other interested private employers to join the council.
- ▶ Continue to convene on a quarterly or other basis to discuss employer needs, education program possibilities, and future plans.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organizations</b>	PED – Form the Council; Partner Organizations – Take lead
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	WKCTC, Murray State, UK Engineering, Paducah Public School Systems, McCracken County Public School System, Private Employers
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Volunteer & Staff Time

**Tactic 2: Develop programs that connect local K-12 students with internships and future job opportunities before they graduate from high school.**

Residents and businesses in Greater Paducah cite a lack of career opportunities as a primary reason young people leave the community. Census research shows that this loss of younger residents is a real concern. The perception that career opportunities are limited in Greater Paducah is partially true, but employers note that that many local, well-paying positions remain unfilled – both due to lack of awareness and challenges finding new employees with appropriate skillsets. This lack of awareness of strong local employment opportunities reveals an opportunity to better connect local residents, students, and employers.

Connecting students and adult residents students to local employers will be a vital part of Greater Paducah’s success in economic development. Employers can help connect young people and adults in Greater Paducah to job opportunities through a range of programs, including internships, financial assistance for secondary education, and guarantees of employment if certain conditions are met. These types of programs will have two primary outcomes – helping retain and attract local youth to live and work in Greater Paducah and assisting employers in filling positions with workers committed to the community.

- ▶ Encourage schools to invite local employers to speak about career opportunities at local middle and high schools.
- ▶ Continue to explore Next Generation Learning programs that look at applied technologies and career-readiness for students.
- ▶ Continue to develop partnerships between private employers, public schools, and students – especially exploring models like the CSI Academy, where employers offer internships and scholarship opportunities to middle and high school students with guaranteed work agreements.

Ask the Workforce Development Group to identify hardest to fill positions in Greater Paducah. Create profiles for in-demand occupations – showcasing average salaries, growth potential, and specific openings in the region. Map the educational pathways that will connect students to these jobs and share with teachers, students, and school career counselors.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organizations</b>	Private Employers
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	WKCTC, Murray State, UK Engineering, Paducah Public School System, McCracken County Public School System
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Employer time & expenses



## Case Study – Venture for America



In 2011, lawyer turned serial entrepreneur Andrew Yang launched Venture for America with a simple if bold mission—to leverage the entrepreneurial spirit of young college graduates to help kickstart the economies of the some of the country’s most distressed communities. Using a \$200,000 investment from Yang, Venture for America offered recent college graduates positions with small, fast-growing firms in three cities—Detroit, New Orleans, and Providence. Successful candidates participate in boot camp offering sessions on topics such as entrepreneurship, web design, and public speaking before spending two years working for a sponsoring company in one of the selected cities. Venture for America fellows typically earn an entry-level salary though their responsibilities are often much greater. The hope is that fellows put down roots in the cities in which they live and ultimately become entrepreneurs themselves.

Since its inception, Venture for America has experienced significant growth. By 2015, the organization has expanded to 15 cities and included 120 fellows. With a nearly \$5 million budget, Venture for America has also launched several new initiatives. In 2014, the organization opened an accelerator program in Philadelphia to help graduating fellows launch their own businesses. Each year, the organization also awards grants of \$100,000 to fund business ideas created by Venture for America fellows. There are currently 14 firms that have been created by Venture for America graduates.

**Tactic 3: Create funding mechanisms to help adult residents participate in workforce development programs.**

Preparing students for future opportunities in Greater Paducah is an essential part of this strategy. In addition, there are many underemployed and unemployed adults in the region that could fill in-demand employment positions if they have access to education and training programs.

The cost of new education programs is often a significant barrier for these residents. The Rotary Club of Paducah’s Community Scholarship Program provides a tremendous benefit to younger students seeking education in Greater Paducah, but few assistance programs exist for adult residents.

Expanding existing programs for adult learners and exploring opportunities for private scholarships to fund retraining will have significant benefits for Greater Paducah. Instead of recruiting new workers into the community, these programs will allow private employers to take advantage of the existing pool of adult residents. These programs will also help increase wealth in Greater Paducah by providing opportunities for residents to develop in-demand skills and build lifelong careers.

- ▶ Educate the Greater Paducah business community about the importance of adult education and retraining.
- ▶ Develop a capital campaign and partnerships to fund a scholarship program serving qualified adult learners in the region.
- ▶ Once established, market the availability of scholarship funds and opportunities for adults to receive training directly connected to existing employer needs in McCracken County.

<b>Timing</b>	2017 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	Chamber of Commerce
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	PED, WKCTC, Murray State, Private Employers
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Private fundraising campaign to establish a scholarship fund

## **Case Study – Madisonville Community College Martin Scholars Program**

  
**Become a  
MARTIN SCHOLAR!**

Five years ago, leadership in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky began to realize that having a skilled workforce was critical to their ability to help local businesses expand and attract new, quality employers. Business leaders in the community continued to express challenges finding skilled, technical workers with associate degrees. Seeking creative ways to address this shortage of workers, the Chamber of Commerce, Madisonville Community College, and other leadership organizations noted that the county had a high share (16%) of residents with some college experience but not a complete degree. Because these adults are already established in the county, they presented a significant opportunity to increase the availability of skilled workers without attracting new residents.

The Felix E. Martin Jr. Foundation was created in 2008 from the estate of long-time Muhlenberg County resident, Felix E. Martin Jr., with a charitable mission focused on Muhlenberg County. Partnering with the foundation, Madisonville Community College created the Martin Scholars Program to help those adult residents with partial college credits go back to school to earn a full associate degree. The program offers a small financial incentive to encourage students to return to school. Qualifying students receive a \$250 stipend each semester they are enrolled at Madisonville Community College as well as a \$400 bonus when they complete their degree. When they receive their associate degree, participants are also required to take a business employability seminar to help prepare them for new work opportunities and get connected with local industries.

The Martin Foundation also supports additional educational programming in Muhlenberg County, including online computer skills classes and a cash incentive for adults to earn their GED.



**Tactic 4: Increase the diversity of housing options in Greater Paducah.**

Retaining and attracting talent will require a range of tactics. Creating career opportunities and connecting individuals to jobs is one piece of the puzzle. Ensuring residents have access to housing is another.

In the past year, many new multifamily housing units have come online in Greater Paducah, but housing options remain limited relative to larger metros. Greater Paducah has low vacancy rates, high costs relative to salaries, and few options beyond single-family housing. Creating new and varied housing units will help retain and attract people. More diverse housing options include multi-family apartment complexes, second-story units downtown, and mixed-use neighborhoods – with a focus on infill development and targeted redevelopment areas.

New housing construction will come from the private sector but can be encouraged by local governments through financial assistance for refurbishing aging structures, zoning that allows for mixed-use and multi-family housing, and expediting priority projects.

- ▶ Inventory the developable acreage within each zoning type in the City of Paducah and McCracken County. If most residentially zoned areas are restricted to single-family residential, consider expanding zoning to allow for more multi-family housing, mixed-use commercial/residential, and upper-story residential.
- ▶ Continue and expand funding for City of Paducah / Paducah Main Street programs that encourage reinvestment in downtown – including the roof stabilization program, façade grant, downtown business grant, and upper story residential fund.
- ▶ Consider establishing similar programs designed to encourage infill development and construction in targeted redevelopment areas.
- ▶ Identify larger developers throughout the tri-state region that might have the budget, capacity, and interest to invest in infill projects and redevelopment of downtown buildings.
- ▶ Invite those developers to a real estate tour of Greater Paducah and to discuss the possibility of transformative projects focused on infill and redevelopment.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	City of Paducah
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Paducah Main Street, Private Developers & Property Owners, McCracken County
<b>Budget Needs</b>	City budgeting for grants, tax incentives, and subsidized loans to support specific programs

**Tactic 5: Continue to upgrade and expand recreational and healthy living amenities – including the Greenway Trail, bike lanes, and sports complexes**

Careers and housing are critical to growing Greater Paducah’s workforce, but to remain competitive with other communities, the region must continue to invest in recreation and lifestyle amenities. When deciding where to live, many people look for places with active outdoor scenes, hike/bike trails, sports complexes, vibrant arts and food offerings, and overall emphasis on healthy living.

The Greenway Trail has been an incredibly popular asset, and Greater Paducah must continue to listen to the desires of residents and identify similar resources to build and expand. These investments will ensure that Greater Paducah has the amenities that make it an attractive place for workers to live. Many will also directly create jobs, further enhance the creative culture, and help improve the overall health of the community.

- ▶ Conduct an inventory of all recreational amenities in Greater Paducah and assess their quality and capacity.
- ▶ Consult with facility managers, City and County Staff, local sports organizations, and residents to identify capital improvement needs and gaps between availability and local demand for facilities and amenities.
  - In particular, explore opportunities to create new sport facilities and potentially host regional athletic competitions.
  - Identify opportunities to attract an amateur sports team to based in Paducah.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	City of Paducah / McCracken County
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	-
<b>Budget Needs</b>	City and County capital improvement plans and operating budgets

- ▶ Prioritize upgrades and expansion of recreational amenities based on highest perceived need in Greater Paducah.
- ▶ Highlight renovations and new amenity construction in press releases and on social media to help connect residents with recreational and healthy living options in the community.

**Tactic 6: Work with the United Way’s Impact Poverty Task Force to develop a community-wide Paducah Works program to help lower-income residents gain and retain better jobs.** 

Economic development in Greater Paducah must serve all residents of the community. The region has a large population in poverty that face challenges finding and keeping good jobs.

The United Way’s Impact Poverty Task Force is currently working to address issues of poverty throughout the community, including advocating for a Paducah Works program. Modeled after successful programs in other communities, Paducah Works could assist lower-income residents with finding and retaining jobs by offering committed counseling and oversight to workers. This program would also assist employers by improving the reliability of newly hired employees.

- ▶ Invite the business community to attend a speaker event showcasing the success of the Cincinnati Works model and the need for a similar program in Greater Paducah.
- ▶ Identify an individual or committee to lead the charge of creating and funding a Paducah Works program. Consider organizing a visit to Cincinnati Works for the Greater Paducah leadership to demonstrate its success.
- ▶ Create an advisory board for Paducah Works and begin a capital campaign to finance the program for three years.
- ▶ Hire and train staff, market program specifics to members of the community, and begin operations.

<b>Timing</b>	2017 – 2018
<b>Lead Organization</b>	United Way Paducah
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Private Employers, West Kentucky Workforce Development Board
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Private fundraising campaign to establish a program and budget

## Case Study – Cincinnati Works



Cincinnati Works was created in 1996 in response to growing poverty within the city. The initiative was the brainchild of a married retired couple, Dave and Liane Phillips. Neither Dave or Liane possessed a background in public policy – Dave was a former corporate auditor and Liane was previously a schoolteacher. Despite their inexperience, Cincinnati Works has proven tremendously successful in improving opportunity for the city’s impoverished residents. In 2015, Cincinnati Mayor recognized Cincinnati Works as “one of the city’s most important partners in the fight to reduce poverty.”

Initially, Cincinnati Works was a jobs program for residents living in poverty. The organization works with companies such as Citigroup, Hilton, and Kroger to place poor and chronically unemployed people in jobs. Cincinnati Works quickly realized that jobs alone would prove insufficient. Adequately preparing marginalized residents to become reliable workers required a host of auxiliary services, including mental health, spiritual counseling, legal aid, and mentoring. Once a worker is placed within a company, Cincinnati Works continues to monitor their performance and provide necessary support services.

The organization’s comprehensive approach has ensured its financial sustainability while improving the lives of thousands of formerly unemployed workers. One bank determined that 95% of workers hired through Cincinnati Works remained at their job for at least one year. Typically, only 50% of workers in similar positions last over a year. The bank estimates that Cincinnati Works has saved the company nearly a half million dollars.

The success of Cincinnati Works has not gone unnoticed, with communities such as Houston and Pensacola creating programs modeled on the organization.



**Tactic 7: Create and expand childcare services.**

Dual-earner family households and single parents are often the norm in the modern economy. When a community only has limited or expensive childcare options, it can create significant challenges for working families – often forcing one parent to stay home with children or preventing a single parent from working at all. By removing these parents from the workforce, a shortage of childcare services directly affects the availability of workers in a community.

Throughout the stakeholder input process of this strategy, many residents of Greater Paducah noted challenges finding childcare services that met their needs. There are not enough open spots in existing childcare facilities, they are too expensive for working-class families, or they do not operate at night when many nurses and other working parents must work.

When faced with similar situations, cities around the country have adopted a variety of approaches. Strategies include providing subsidized, publicly owned facilities for private operators to lease, assisting with permitting and training for new facilities, and even creating publically-run childcare services for qualifying individuals. Creating more childcare options in Greater Paducah would serve an unmet demand from local families and allow many parents to re-enter the workforce, providing new potential workers for businesses.

- ▶ Ensure that zoning throughout Greater Paducah includes classifications that allow for childcare facilities.
- ▶ Examine state and local permitting procedures for childcare facilities and identify any unnecessary barriers and opportunities to streamline the application process.
- ▶ Explore eligibility for federal programs that support childcare services, including:
  - US Department of Agriculture’s Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program - Provides funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas (includes childcare)
  - US Department of Health & Human Services’ Office of Child Care has several funding programs for facilities.
  - US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) supports childcare facilities near or within public housing
  - US Small Business Administration (SBA) provides small business financing options, technical assistance, and childcare resource information

<b>Timing</b>	2017 – 2018
<b>Lead Organization</b>	City of Paducah / McCracken County
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	PED, Chamber of Commerce
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Varies depending on approach – Federal funding available for some projects



- ▶ Consider creating a Greater Paducah Childcare Program that provides direct support for private childcare providers. Similar public-private partnerships have been utilized around the country to explore creative solutions to childcare services.

Working draft

## HELPING BUSINESSES SUCCEED

**Goal – Greater Paducah proactively works with local businesses to address their needs and expand their operations.**

Greater Paducah has many competitive advantages. Its central location served by multi-modal transportation infrastructure provides businesses with convenient access to customers and distribution networks. Kentucky has lower sales and income tax rates than surrounding states in the region. In recent years, local and state governments have increased efforts to improve the business climate.

Relative to many other locations, the business climate in Greater Paducah is favorable to business. However, as discovered during the Forward Paducah community survey, there is a desire for a more robust Business Retention and Expansion program and for City and County officials to work more closely together.

Progress continues to be made on many fronts, including permitting processes and increased City and County cooperation. To achieve this goal, the community must further engage the private sector to identify and champion public investments. Agreeing on a common vision and goals and communicating success stories will also help demonstrate cooperation between the City, County, and private businesses.

The following recommended tactical actions will help Greater Paducah achieve this goal:

1. Establish a Business Retention and Expansion program.
2. Continue to improve City and County government cooperation.
3. Encourage private business leaders to actively lead and participate in community development initiatives.



**Tactic 1: Establish a Business Retention and Expansion program.**

According to the US Small Business Administration, small businesses created nearly 2 million of the 3 million private jobs added in 2014. Incremental growth in local businesses is the most dependable source of jobs and wealth creation for any community.

Many existing businesses in Greater Paducah are home grown. Their continued presence indicates a commitment to the community and the community’s competitive advantages. Helping them thrive should be an economic development priority.

Through the Forward Paducah planning process, dozens of local businesses shared input on challenges such as their need for skilled employees, concerns about the local regulatory environment, and difficulty accessing capital. Establishing a formal business retention and expansion (BR&E) program will allow PED to engage them on a more consistent basis and more quickly respond to their needs.

- ▶ Categorize existing businesses by target industries, size, and type of operation.
- ▶ Develop a strategic approach for each category of business.
  - Invite target industries to participate in regular roundtables to discuss shared concerns.
  - Meet individually with local businesses to discuss their needs with top staff and human resources.
- ▶ Create a schedule for outreach that includes all BR&E activities. Try to maintain the same schedule on an ongoing annual basis for consistency and ensure businesses know they are on PED’s radar.
- ▶ Encourage local business leaders participate in Forward Paducah committees, task forces, and initiatives.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	-
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Staff time and effort

## **Case Study – City of Dallas – Gold Card Program & Q-Team**



Like many communities throughout the US, developers in Dallas often criticized the city’s permitting process as slow and unpredictable. Matters only worsened during the recession, when the city was forced to lay off nearly half the staff in the Building Inspection department. Experienced builders soon complained that they were often forced to sit in long lines while city staff time was consumed addressing questions from people unfamiliar with the permitting process. Recognizing an untenable situation, the City of Dallas launched two innovative programs to increase efficiency and generate revenue to hire additional staff.

The Gold Card program allows qualified members to schedule appointments or residential plan reviews, receive a same-day permit status notification for residential plans submitted by 9 am, and have priority for walk-in residential plan reviews. To qualify for the Gold Card program, applicants must receive at least one residential permit with a minimal total valuation of \$1 million or at least two residential permits with a minimum total valuation of \$500,000. Additionally, applicants must attend a training session on city codes, policies, and procedures. Since it was launched, builders have reported have their plans reviewed and a permit issued within 45 minutes.

In addition to the Gold Card program, the City of Dallas launched the Q-Team, which facilitates an expedited review process. There are no restrictions on project size for builders wanting a review by the city’s Q-Team. Participants schedule a meeting with the Q-Team to review all building plans. If the plans meet the necessary code and ordinance requirements, all permits are issued once the review meeting is completed. The expedited process, however, is not free. Participants are charged \$1,000 an hour in addition to an application plan review fee that can represent an additional \$1,250. Still, the Q-Team provides an important service for builders looking to complete the permitting process as quickly as possible.



**Tactic 2: Continue to improve City and County government cooperation.**

Historic tension between the City of Paducah and McCracken County has generated a perception that the two governments are at odds with each other. Many respondents to the Forward Paducah survey cited leadership in both governments and the lack of city-county cooperation as major challenges to economic development.

With recent changes in leadership in both governments, the City and County have begun working together more frequently. Throughout the strategic planning process, Avalanche witnessed many examples of increased collaboration between the City, County, and PED on complex economic development issues. City and County staff and leadership have shown enthusiasm for working together through PED. Because much of this collaboration occurs internally, raising awareness of improved relationships will take time.

The City of Paducah and McCracken County will not always agree with each other, and that is okay (they have different missions and priorities). Regularly scheduled conversations among government leaders will help assure residents that the City and County cooperation is improving.

- ▶ Under Construction

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	City of Paducah / McCracken County
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	-
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Leadership and staff time allocating for meetings and press communications

**Tactic 3:**  **Encourage private business leaders to actively lead and participate in community development initiatives.**

Community development initiatives and investments prioritized in this strategy will not happen overnight. Whether creating educational partnerships, rebuilding infrastructure, or investing in new companies, most projects will require strong leadership to raise capital and follow through with implementation. This leadership cannot come from government alone. Local business leaders must plan an active and committed advocacy role supporting economic development in Greater Paducah.

When asking residents to fund specific projects, elected officials and business leaders must show a unified front – explaining how the project will help the entire community and why it is worth the investment. Active private sector involvement in economic development activities is also often a critical requirement when applying for grant funding from federal and state sources.

- ▶ In private discussions, encourage business leaders to participate in Forward Paducah committees, task forces, and other initiatives.
- ▶ Use the business retention and expansion program to reach out to disengaged businesses and explain how the Forward Paducah strategy and community development projects can help their operations.
- ▶ Celebrate private sector champions of economic development through editorials, social media callouts, and annual awards ceremonies.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Chamber of Commerce
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Staff time and effort

## INSPIRING INNOVATION

**Goal – Greater Paducah provides a spectrum of connected resources to support entrepreneurs and their growing businesses.**

Supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs has proven to be one of the most successful strategies for sustained, long-term job creation. The number of large corporate relocation projects is diminishing nationally and competition is increasing. A higher return on economic development investment can be achieved through existing business expansion and local entrepreneurship.

**To create good jobs and grow local wealth, economic development efforts in Greater Paducah should have a strong focus on effectively assisting existing businesses and inspiring the creation of new businesses.**

Greater Paducah is already home to wealth of resources for business owners and innovators – including business advising from the Murray State SBDC, programs at WKCTC supported by the Kentucky Innovation Network, and the Chamber of Commerce’s Small Business Council, to name a few. These organizations offer a range of services and products to assist businesses, but with multiple locations, platforms, and missions, it can be difficult to navigate available offerings. Businesses have different needs based on their type and stage of operation. Effective small business support systems connect each business with the specific support it needs.

The following recommended tactical actions will help Greater Paducah achieve this goal:

1. Establish EntrePaducah as the central clearinghouse and concierge service for small business and entrepreneurial resources in Greater Paducah.
2. Engage University of Kentucky researchers and educators in EntrePaducah programming to connect local businesses, entrepreneurs, and students.
3. Create an Entrepreneur Relocation Program.
4. Establish an Innovation in Arts program supporting the Paducah School of Art & Design and training local artists to be successful business people.

**Tactic 1: Establish EntrePaducah as the central clearinghouse and concierge service for small business and entrepreneurial resources in Greater Paducah.**

Supported by the City of Paducah and McCracken County, EntrePaducah has changed missions over the years. Previously tasked with promoting and supporting an entrepreneurial environment in Paducah, EntrePaducah was housed in the Chamber of Commerce and focused largely on high-growth, technology startups. In recent years, the organization supported a range of events and activities, including a Bootcamp for Businesses in partnership with Murray State.

This strategy presents an opportunity rebrand EntrePaducah as the gateway for small business and entrepreneurial resources in Greater Paducah. As a “concierge service,” business owners and entrepreneurs can go to EntrePaducah to assess their needs and direct them to the most appropriate local business resources – whether at Murray State, WKCTC, or elsewhere.

EntrePaducah should also establish new programming to support these concierge services. Examples of related programming include peer-to-peer mentoring services, connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with successful business people in Greater Paducah for business advice. Supporting KY Innovation Network and other events throughout the community that bring together entrepreneurs and improve access to resources will be another important part of the revamped EntrePaducah.

- ▶ Continue working with partner organizations to revamp EntrePaducah and delineate the specific roles of each organization.
- ▶ Inventory all small business and entrepreneurial resources available in Greater Paducah and group them by the types of operations they support.
  - E.g. Startup, Established Small Business, Small Business Transitioning, Target Industry Business, etc.
- ▶ Develop specific strategies for approaching each category of business.
- ▶ Establish EntrePaducah as the concierge service for small business and entrepreneurial resources in Greater Paducah.
  - Host a public event to roll out the new EntrePaducah website, explain the new mission, and highlight the many resources available in Greater Paducah.
  - Distribute press releases to local and state media about the new EntrePaducah.
- ▶ Establish an EntrePaducah Mentoring Program:

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED / EntrePaducah
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Murray State, WKCTC, KY Innovation Network, Chamber of Commerce, Paducah Main Street
<b>Budget Needs</b>	TBD



- Meet with potential mentors and invite them to participate in a business mentoring program. Engage a diverse range of individuals – including demographic diversity and different industries and technical expertise.
  - Develop a library of business literature and reference materials for mentors and mentees.
  - Host an EntrePaducah Mentorship Program launch event, commend the first participants, and share press releases educating the community about the program and other resources available to small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- ▶ Explore creating a local micro-loan program administered by EntrePaducah.

Working draft

## Case Study – Venture Asheville



Unlike other successful high-growth communities in North Carolina, Asheville does not have a major research university and was traditionally viewed as a tourism destination. Recognizing that entrepreneurship is a significant contributor to job creation and seeking a way to diversify and grow, Asheville decided to renew their focus on supporting entrepreneurs and making themselves a community where talented individuals could create their businesses.

Before 2011, the entrepreneurial resources in the Asheville region were primarily focused on traditional “mom and pop” small businesses, rather than high-growth potential companies. Seeing a need to more effectively streamline these resources and add programming specifically for entrepreneurs, the Economic Development Coalition of Asheville-Buncombe (EDC) decided to revamp their program to focus on entrepreneurs.

In 2011, the EDC hired Pam Lewis to create a new Venture Asheville program. Rather than “teaching” entrepreneurship, this program was intended to connect entrepreneurs and the various resources in the region and to foster a supportive environment for startups. In addition to building connectivity and acting as an information portal for entrepreneurs, Venture Asheville created programs that include the Asheville Startup Weekend, Venture Asheville Networking, and Asheville Ignite, a popular event that allows entrepreneurs to make five minute presentations on topics to the general public.

**Tactic 2: Engage University of Kentucky researchers and educators in EntrePaducah programing to connect local businesses, entrepreneurs, and students.**

The Paducah Campus of the University of Kentucky’s College of Engineering operates in collaboration with Murray State and WKCTC and has 8 faculty, 5 staff, and over 200 students in Greater Paducah. This UK campus offers degree programs in fields that support local industries, including Chemical and Mechanical Engineering. Faculty at the UK Engineering Paducah Campus have ties with the Institute for Sustainable Manufacturing and are conducting world-class research in Automotive Composite Materials, Biofuels, Materials Design, and other fields.

Some faculty at the University of Kentucky are already working with local and regional businesses. With proper engagement, the program offers additional opportunities to support economic development and spur new products and companies. Technologies being researched by faculty may have applications for existing businesses or may potentially be developed into new commercial products. Students graduating from the engineering programs can directly support the operations of local businesses, particularly those in Advanced Manufacturing. UK faculty have indicated that if there is private industry demand for additional educational fields such as Electrical or Computer Engineering, they may have the capacity to expand their programming.

- ▶ Personally invite University of Kentucky faculty and staff to lunch with EntrePaducah representatives to become acquainted, discuss their research, and identify opportunities for further collaboration.
- ▶ Invite UK Engineering representatives to serve on the Workforce Development Group, on the EntrePaducah advisory committee, in the EntrePaducah Mentoring Program, and on any other related groups that can benefit from their expertise and perspective.
- ▶ Highlight the research of UK Engineering faculty and students and their connections to local businesses in news articles, press releases, and social media. Increase awareness of the exciting work being done at the school and potential opportunities for new educational programing and business collaboration.

<b>Timing</b>	2017 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED / EntrePaducah
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	UK Engineering
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Staff time and effort

**Tactic 3: Create an Entrepreneur Relocation Program.**

For over a decade, Paducah’s Artist Relocation Program has been a national model for accelerating development of the arts community and supporting economic growth. The Artist Relocation Program helped revitalize historic neighborhoods by offering housing to artists at low costs. It has attracted new artists to Paducah from all across the country.

Greater Paducah should explore opportunities to create a similar program focused on relocating entrepreneurs with new business ideas. With Greater Paducah’s competitive location and other business advantages, an Entrepreneur Relocation Program could help convince new entrepreneurs to start their businesses locally and build a cluster of startups in Western Kentucky. This program would spread awareness of small business and entrepreneurial resources available in Greater Paducah and let business owners know that the community is open to working with startups and helping them succeed.

- ▶ Meet with Artist Relocation Program initiators and administrators to discuss how the model could be replicated for entrepreneurs.
- ▶ Identify properties and funding in Greater Paducah that could be utilized to create an Entrepreneur Relocation Program.
- ▶ Create specific program criteria and components:
  - Set criteria for who qualifies as an “entrepreneur,” what types of operations qualify, and who determines awards.
  - Establish programming for selected entrepreneurs, such as goals for their residencies, an advisory committee for each entrepreneur, and opportunities for them to share progress with the community.
  - Create benchmarks for each entrepreneur – setting expectations for what they must accomplish by specific dates and how they will eventually transition out of the program into their own sustainable operations.
- ▶ Once a program is established, launch a national marketing campaign to raise awareness of this one-of-a-kind opportunity.
  - Share press releases local, state, and national media outlets.
  - Attend economic development and entrepreneurial conventions to showcase the new program.

<b>Timing</b>	2018 – 2021
<b>Lead Organization</b>	City of Paducah
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	PED / EntrePaducah, Chamber of Commerce, McCracken County
<b>Budget Needs</b>	To be determined through community discussion – potentially city-owned and subsidized properties, program management, and other costs.

**Tactic 4: Establish an Innovation in the Arts program supporting the Paducah School of Art & Design and training local artists to be successful business people.**

The arts has many positive economic impacts in Greater Paducah. For eight years, the Paducah School of Art & Design has offered programs training students in a variety of skills, including business and other practical training. A dedicated community-wide entrepreneurial program focused on artists could have significant benefits throughout Greater Paducah and the broader region.

An Innovation in the Arts program could offer regularly scheduled, low-cost workshops to artists of all levels – including teaching business management, website development, marketing, and other skills that support the operations of an income-generating artistic business. This program would directly accelerate growth in the Creative Industries and help attract and startup new artistic establishments in Greater Paducah.

- ▶ Create a set of specific Innovation in the Arts events and curricula for each.
  - Events could include workshops on general art business best practices and specific topics such as website development, patron relationships, and marketing.
- ▶ Establish a calendar of Innovation in the Arts events for the upcoming year with specific dates, locations, and registration information. Include this calendar on PED, EntrePaducah, Paducah School of Art & Design, and other partner organizations’ websites.
- ▶ Advertise for each event months in advance to reach the broadest audience. Target artists throughout the broader region and Greater Paducah.

<b>Timing</b>	2017 – 2021
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED / EntrePaducah
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Paducah School of Art & Design, Convention & Visitors Bureau, Paducah Main Street
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Time and costs to develop programming, rent space for training events, hire facilitators, and marketing.

## **Case Study – New York City “Artist as Entrepreneur”**



Even New York City, a globally recognized center for the arts saw the ever increasing need to prepare creative individuals to be business people. In 2010, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) launched its innovative Artist as Entrepreneur program in collaboration with the New York Foundation for the Arts and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. At the time, then NYCEDC President Seth Pinsky said, “The competitive nature of today’s market, combined with the current economic downturn, makes it more important than ever that New York City-based artists be equipped with the necessary tools to establish financially sustainable enterprises. By providing working artists with basic business skills and facilitating access to affordable studio and rehearsal spaces, we are helping ensure a vibrant future for the City’s vital arts sector.”

The Artist as Entrepreneur program was initiated with a \$50,000 grant and two-phase pilot program. Free to all participants, phase one of the pilot program brought 50 artists together in a five-day “boot camp” training program focused on business practices and marketing. Upon completion of the boot camp, in phase two, artists became eligible to apply for low-cost studio or rehearsal space. Building on this program, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council now provides a suite of free workshops and seminars focused on Professional Development for Artists, including Marketing for the Arts, Art & Resilience, Fundraising Fundamentals, Artists Summer Institute, and Basic Finance for Artists.

## CELEBRATING CULTURE

Goal – Greater Paducah’s internationally recognized arts community is a driver of the region’s economy and brand identity.

As an internationally recognized artistic community and the regional hub of Western Kentucky, Creative Industries are an important economic development target for Greater Paducah. Businesses in the Creative Industries create well-paying jobs in the community, export artistic products, and enhance the quality of life, helping attract and retain residents and visitors. **To maximize the community-wide benefits of the Creative Industries, Greater Paducah must continue to support and create programs that encourage local artistic businesses and enhance the region’s draw as a destination for artists.**

Greater Paducah is already home to an above average concentration of arts and cultural assets, including the Carson Center, Floodwall Murals, Lowertown Arts District, National Quilt Museum, Maiden Alley Cinema, Market House Theater, Paducah Symphony Orchestra, and Yeiser Art Center. Local organizations that support the arts include the Paducah Arts Alliance, Paducah Renaissance Alliance, Convention & Visitors Bureau, Paducah Main Street, Paducah Economic Development, and the Paducah School of Art & Design, with its newly opened, state-of-the-art expansion that will help attract outside artists to train in Paducah and showcase local artists and events.

The following recommended tactical actions will help Greater Paducah achieve this goal:

1. Continue to use Paducah’s membership in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to promote business, residential, and cultural opportunities in Paducah.
2. Hire a national consultant to develop a strategic plan for the arts community in Greater Paducah.
3. Create a regional arts council to leverage a broader base of creative individuals and resources centered in Greater Paducah.
4. Continue efforts to rebrand Lowertown and raise awareness of recreational, business, and residential opportunities in the central city.
5. Support and create programs and events that celebrate the success of local artists and connect local residents and youth with the arts community.

**Tactic 1: Continue to use Paducah’s membership in  UNESCO Creative Cities Network to promote business, residential, and cultural opportunities in Paducah.**

Since 2013, Paducah has been a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creative City network, designated as the world’s seventh City of Crafts and Folk Art. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network was established in 2004 to promote cooperation among global cities focused on creative industry-focused community development. The Creative Cities Network currently has 116 member cities in 54 countries focused on seven creative industries – Crafts & Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Music, and Media Arts.

Membership in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network offers opportunities to grow Creative Industries in Greater Paducah through collaboration, marketing, and cultural exchanges. The Creative Cities Network encourages communities to share best practices on how to encourage creative businesses to succeed and leverage creative assets as a tool for community development. Member cities also participate in artist exchange programs that bring international artists to live and work in Paducah. Inclusion in the network also puts Greater Paducah on the global map, attracting international visitors and artists.

These benefits of membership directly effect economic development – providing marketing for Greater Paducah’s artistic assets, attracting new artists to the community, and drawing visitors to spend their money locally. The recognition associated with membership in the Creative Cities Network can be further leveraged to encourage job growth by inviting business leaders from other member cities to visit Greater Paducah alongside artists, to market the local opportunities for businesses in Creative Industries, and to draw students and activities to the School of Art & Design.

- ▶ Send an open letter to other Creative Cities Network members inviting them to visit Greater Paducah to explore opportunities for creative and business collaboration.
- ▶ Identify target industry companies located in other Creative Cities and have PED individually contact their leadership to invite them to visit Greater Paducah and discuss business opportunities.
- ▶ When artists are selected for the exchange program, invite public and business leaders from their home city to visit Greater Paducah with the artists. Showcase the creative and business assets in the community.
- ▶ Include references to business opportunities and direction to the PED website in UNESCO Creative Cities Network marketing materials for Greater Paducah.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	Convention & Visitors Bureau
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	PED; Paducah School of Art & Design; Paducah Main Street; Artists, Artistic Organizations, and Facilities,
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Staff time and effort





**Tactic 2: Hire a national consultant to develop a strategic plan for the arts community in Greater Paducah.**

To maximize the development opportunities presented by the Greater Paducah arts community, the Convention & Visitors Bureau should invest in a strategic plan for the arts. The CVB should hire a national consultant with expertise in the arts to conduct an inventory of the artistic assets in the region, evaluate these assets, and develop a strategic plan to address the specific needs identified in the evaluation. Having a strategic plan will help the local arts community advocate for investments and prioritize projects.

- ▶ Develop an RFP for a Cultural Arts Inventory & Strategic Plan for the Greater Paducah Region.
  - Include specific details about report formatting and desired outcomes.
  - Include the broader, Western Kentucky region in the overall scope of requested activities.
- ▶ Identify national consulting firms that specialize in strategic planning for the arts.
- ▶ Share the RFP on relevant arts organization websites and directly with preferred consultants.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – 2021
<b>Lead Organization</b>	Convention & Visitors Bureau
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	PED; City of Paducah; McCracken County; Paducah School of Art & Design; Paducah Main Street; Local Artists, Artistic Organizations, and Facilities
<b>Budget Needs</b>	CVB Budget

Working draft

## Case Study – Asheville Area Arts Council Cultural Assets Inventory & Strategic Plan



HONORING TRADITION. DRIVING INNOVATION.

The Asheville Area Arts Council (AAAC) and the Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau already collaborate to promote the arts in the Asheville, North Carolina region through the Asheville Arts Alive! website, an online portal showcasing and marketing the area's creative assets. Recognizing the need for an even broader, more coordinated plan for arts in the region, in 2015, the Asheville Area Arts Council partnered with the City of Asheville, the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Coalition, Buncombe Cultural Alliance, UNC Asheville's National Environmental Modeling & Analysis Center, and the Asheville Convention & Visitor's Bureau. This partnership applied for a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town grant to work on Creative Placemaking.

The AAAC and partner organizations plan to match the NEA grant to fund a Cultural Resources Asset Inventory as the first step in developing a comprehensive, county-wide Cultural Plan. This asset inventory examines the scope of economic activity within the creative sector of Buncombe County – including information not always captured in traditional economic development assessment. The inventory looks at cultural amenities and resources, including arts education programs, nonprofits, presents, special events, cultural destinations, and more. This inventory will serve as a tool for developing a detailed strategic Cultural Plan for the county focusing on needed arts-based developments, strategic resources for creative entrepreneurs, and creative sector infrastructure.

**Tactic 3: Create a regional arts council to leverage a broader base of creative individuals and resources centered in Greater Paducah** 

Paducah and McCracken County form Western Kentucky’s central hub for healthcare, retail, and arts and cultural activities. There are many creative individuals and resources also spread through surrounding counties. Bringing these artists and assets together in a Greater Paducah Regional Arts Council would give the local Creative Industries cluster more and diverse cultural options to market.

- ▶ Identify creative individuals, arts organizations, and cultural assets located in surrounding counties of the tri-state region.
- ▶ Send letters and personally reach out to these regional individuals and organizations inviting them to participate in a Regional Cultural Arts roundtable.
  - Use this roundtable to celebrate regional assets, build cohesion, discuss the potential benefits of collaboration, and excite the creative arts community about opportunities in the future.
- ▶ Create a Greater Paducah Regional Arts Council to host events, advocate for the arts, market regional assets to visitors and residents, and administer programs that support creative individuals.
- ▶ Ensure that the formation of the regional arts council and its mission is consistent with the development of the strategic plan for the arts in the community.

<b>Timing</b>	2017 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	Convention & Visitors Bureau
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	PED; Paducah School of Art & Design; Paducah Main Street; Local Artists, Artistic Organizations, and Facilities
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Staff time and effort

## **Case Study – Portland Oregon Regional Arts & Culture Council**



# **Regional Arts & Culture Council**

Following the recommendations of a 5+ year arts plan developed in 1995, the City of Portland transitioned its Metropolitan Arts Commission into a three-county, Regional Arts & Cultural Council (RACC). The non-profit RACC is funded by local, regional, state, and federal programs and provides a variety of services to artists, arts organizations, schools, and residents in the tri-county region. The RACC provides grants; manages a public art program; fundraises; provides workshops, forums, and technical assistance to artists; and runs a program that integrates arts into public schools.

In conjunction with the Creative Advocacy Network, the RACC played an integral role in development of Act for Art, the creative action plan for the entire Portland Metropolitan Region that encompasses six-counties in two states. The strategic goals of this plan include strengthening cultural infrastructure by improving public funding and private donations, improving access to the arts and arts education, and investing in creative talent through direct support for artists.

**Tactic 4: Continue efforts to rebrand Lowertown and raise awareness of recreational, business, and residential opportunities Downtown.**

Population patterns in America are changing rapidly, and recent trends show many individuals and families, both young and old, moving to communities that have vibrant downtowns. Cities across the country are reinvesting in their downtowns – refurbishing aging structures, building upper story residences, creating dynamic office spaces for small businesses, opening new restaurants and breweries with a range of hours, and creating a marketplace for local boutique shops.

Downtown Paducah and Lowertown have seen a similar recent resurgence in activity, with new residences, shops, restaurants, and even a hotel under construction. These new investments are the types of amenities that will help Greater Paducah compete to retain and attract talented individuals. They also reflect the hard work of local small business owners and help build wealth and private reinvestment in infrastructure.

- ▶ Encourage businesses located in Downtown and Lowertown to actively participate in Paducah Main Street, Chamber of Commerce, and PED activities to ensure their voices are heard in the community.
- ▶ Continue to host existing community, arts, and cultural events in Downtown and Lowertown.
- ▶ Identify opportunities for additional events, collaborations, and programs that encourage residents to visit Downtown and Lowertown:
  - E.g. a First Thursday event where businesses are open late on the First Thursday of every month. Street vendors, bands, raffles, and other events would encourage participation.
  - E.g. a Downtown/Lowertown business rewards punch card – where participating businesses punch a notch when customers purchase a food item or drink and receive an award after 10 purchases.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	Paducah Main Street
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	City of Paducah, Chamber of Commerce
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Staff time and effort

**Tactic 5: Support and create programs and events that celebrate the success of local artists and connect local residents and youth with the arts community.**

Cultivating a thriving creative industry sector requires the engagement and participation of the local community in addition to outside audiences. Interviews and focus groups revealed that while Paducah is recognized internationally as an artistic community, many residents of Greater Paducah are unaware of the presence and success of their creative neighbors. Artistic events directed at local residents have a positive effect on the overall community – creating cultural activities desired by residents, providing encouragement for artists, generating financial support, and demonstrating that Greater Paducah is a community that embraces the arts. These events also demonstrate to children that there are real career pathways in the arts and help build a pipeline of future artists within Greater Paducah.

- ▶ Continue to host and sponsor events like Meet the Artists.
- ▶ Create summer arts programming for children. Examples include painting and sculpture workshops led by local artists and art camps.
- ▶ Establish art competitions for residents of all ages – children, teenagers, and adults.
- ▶ Display the work of local artists in public buildings and spaces throughout Greater Paducah.
- ▶ Explore opportunities to create a Discovery Center or other educational and cultural center in Downtown Paducah.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	Paducah Main Street
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	PED; Paducah School of Art & Design; Local Artists, Artistic Organizations, and Facilities

## TELLING YOUR STORY

**Goal – Greater Paducah has a unified brand that is embraced by its residents and compels others to invest in the community.**

The stories local residents tell about Greater Paducah have wide ranging impact on external perceptions of the community. The same stories being told among residents affect the overall business climate and impressions of local opportunities (or lack thereof).

**Greater Paducah has a compelling story that must be actively told.** Relative to similar communities across the country, Greater Paducah is a highly attractive location to both live and work – featuring good K-12 schools, three post-secondary education institutions, a thriving arts community, an advantageous geographic location, successful homegrown businesses, two major hospital systems, extensive retail, and other amenities rare in rural communities.

Despite these assets, many residents of the community perceive a more limited picture. Residents interviewed throughout the strategic planning process noted a lack of career opportunities, limited entertainment options, poor health of residents, and stagnant growth as major concerns in the community and reasons some move to larger cities.

These two opposing stories of Greater Paducah were further revealed by responses to the community survey. When asked what words came to mind when they thought about the community, the most common answers were: Friendly, Art, Small, Creative, Stagnant, Historic, Mismanaged, and Potential. These responses show the pride and love that residents have for their community but also concerns about slow growth and past leadership.

This Forward Paducah strategy presents an opportunity to begin telling a positive story about Greater Paducah – focusing on the strengths of the community and how negative concerns are being addressed. This active storytelling and marketing must focus on both internal and external audiences. Telling the positive story of Greater Paducah to internal audiences will build local pride, encourage reinvestment, and help retain and attract people. Telling the story to external audiences will let businesses, investors, and individuals outside the region see Greater Paducah’s many assets.

The following recommended tactical actions will help Greater Paducah achieve this goal:

1. Build a unified brand identity for Greater Paducah and convey this brand through consistent communication and new investments.

2. Raise awareness of expanding career and lifestyle amenities in Greater Paducah through a more robust economic development website.
3. Tell the success stories of local people and projects to highlight the impact of the creative community, cultivate pride, and inspire residents.
4. Invest in signage that reflects the local brand identity and directs residents and visitors to cultural and wellness amenities.

Working draft



**Tactic 1: Build a unified brand identity  Greater Paducah and convey this brand through consistent communication and new investments.**

A community’s brand is more than a logo design or catchy slogan. A brand identity should convey the essence of a community. It represents the genuine response audiences have when they think of a community.

This brand is reinforced by what a community says about itself and also through the how a community invests in its physical infrastructure and the experience of visiting. The story that a community tells about itself is a promise to audiences. When they arrive in the community, a business or individual expects their experience to match the emotion and promise they associate with the brand.

If Greater Paducah wants to effectively tell a positive story about its future, the community needs to ensure that all communications, investments, and programs are part of a unified brand identity. This brand should reflect the community’s vision, values, and priorities, including striving to be a hub of creativity, healthy living, entrepreneurialism, and families.

- ▶ Develop branding guidelines, talking points, and data that all partner organizations can use when discussing Greater Paducah with internal and external audiences. Include communications guidelines to help partner organizations consistently implement the brand.
- ▶ Moving forward, all community investments from street signs to green space to educational programs should reflect Greater Paducah’s brand identity. This approach has little cost but a high payoff in terms of reinforcing the local brand.
- ▶ Consider engaging a communications strategist to review written copy and imagery and make recommendations how to update marketing materials to reinforce a consistent brand for the City of Paducah, McCracken County, PED, and other partner organizations.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Chamber of Commerce, Convention & Visitors Bureau, City of Paducah, McCracken County
<b>Budget Needs</b>	-

## **Case Study – Sedona, AZ “The Most Beautiful Place”**



Sedona Arizona is a picturesque town located approximately 30 miles south of Flagstaff. The city is home to only 10,000 residents but welcomes millions of visitors each year. Sedona greatly benefits from the nearby Red Rock region, which provides abundant natural recreational opportunities, and Sedona’s Chamber of Commerce has also been critical in supporting increased tourism. The Sedona Chamber of Commerce has succeeded by developing a compelling brand that is backed by sophisticated physical and digital assets.

Sedona’s brand – “The Most Beautiful Place in So Many Ways” – leverages the city’s natural beauty to attract visitors looking for a variety of recreational opportunities. The Chamber’s website features an events calendar highlighting artistic, cultural, spiritual, and sightseeing activities. Crucially, the Chamber of Commerce embraces the two-way communication capabilities provided by online platforms. The website provides potential visitors with information on Sedona, and also allows the Chamber of Commerce to learn more about these visitors. Utilizing web traffic analytics, the Sedona Chamber of Commerce determines the demographic and geographic profiles of visitors. By learning the age, income, household composition of potential visitors, as well as their geographic location, the Chamber of commerce targets specific niche audiences through direct mail campaigns and media buys. The strategy helps the organization maximizing a limited marketing budget.

The Sedona Chamber of Commerce also operates a visitor’s center that serves as a physical extension of the communities brand. The visitor center assists more than 350,000 individuals each year. Traditionally, the Chamber relied on brochures to provide information to guests and used sign in sheets to collect visitor information. In recent years, however, the visitor center has installed electronic kiosks. The kiosks are not only more engaging and easily updated, but they also help collect detailed information on the geographic origin of visitors, how visitors learned about Sedona, and how long they plan on visiting the area. Since the adoption of electronic kiosks, the Chamber has experienced a 40% increase in demographic data collection, helping the organization further improve the effectiveness of marketing efforts. In the past decade, visitors to Sedona and the surrounding area have tripled according to the US Forest Service.

**Tactic 2: Raise awareness of expanding career and lifestyle opportunities in Greater Paducah through a more robust economic development website.**

Greater Paducah has long been a national center for the arts, river industries, and advanced technology with the gaseous diffusion plant, but outside of those clusters, most outside audiences are unaware of local options to live, work, and recreate. The Forward Paducah strategy will help expand these options, and leadership needs to make sure that new opportunities are shared with external audiences.

- ▶ Under Construction – PED is currently working with Socially Present and Mazonne Communications to develop a new website. These recommendations will be better development in conjunction with ongoing efforts.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Chamber of Commerce
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Communications Strategy, Marketing materials, Website

Working draft

**Tactic 3: Tell the success stories of local people and projects to highlight the impact of the creative community, cultivate pride, and inspire residents.**

The strategic planning process revealed that alongside outside audiences, many Greater Paducah residents are unaware of local opportunities and stories of success. Celebrating these stories will help enhance the Greater Paducah brand and build support for strategic investments that move the community forward.

- ▶ Encourage Steering Committee members and partner organizations to write editorials about opportunities they see in Greater Paducah. Create short videos of a diversity of residents sharing what they love about the community.
- ▶ Distribute local press releases to share positive news stories about Greater Paducah economic development, including new initiatives businesses expansions, artists, awards, and other positive events. Also regularly post news on social media.
- ▶ Use social media to tell a positive story and engage the community.
  - Ask residents to share what they love about Greater Paducah on social media sites (written and video).
  - Recruit brand ambassadors to share positive news about Greater Paducah on social media.
  - Create a Forward Paducah Twitter and Facebook accounts and share positive economic and community news.
  - Use LinkedIn to connect with other economic development professionals and prospects.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Chamber of Commerce, City of Paducah, McCracken County, Convention & Visitors Bureau, Local Media
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Communications and publishing

**Social Media Tips**

- Promote successes, project announcements, news, rankings, awards, events, and other topics relevant to economic development across social media platforms.
- Create a monthly social media calendar to optimize messaging and ease implementation.
- Utilize automated social media systems, such as HootSuite. This will allow you to schedule posts in advance to save time.
- Encourage followers to share your message.
- Engage your followers in friendly banter. Reply to posts on your content. Acknowledge when others re-post your content.
- Be engaging and use photos, videos, and links where appropriate.
- Like and share others' appropriate content.
- Include others in your posts by tagging them.
- Use hashtags when appropriate, such as for regional social media campaigns.

**Tactic 4: Invest in signage that reflects the local brand identity and directs residents and visitors to cultural and wellness amenities.**

When visitors arrive in Greater Paducah, the physical impression of the community must be consistent with the brand identity. Cultivating this brand identity includes installing signage throughout Paducah and McCracken County that points people toward cultural and wellness amenities. These simple investments help enhance the sense of place and provide a consistent reminder of the assets available in the community.

- ▶ Develop style guidelines for signage that match the brand identity and marketing materials.
- ▶ Use the cultural arts inventory and strategic plan as a baseline for identifying and prioritizing amenities for signage updates.
- ▶ Make infrastructure investments to improve access to amenities as necessary
- ▶ Ensure that signage is consistent throughout both Paducah and McCracken County to establish a unified sense of Greater Paducah.
- ▶ Longer-term, also invest in public art that reflects Greater Paducah’s brand.

<b>Timing</b>	2017 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	City of Paducah / McCracken County
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	CVB, Main Street
<b>Budget Needs</b>	City and County capital improvement plans and operating budgets

## INVESTING IN YOURSELF

Goal – Greater Paducah invests in strategic initiatives to grow its target industries, create new opportunities for economic prosperity, and address community needs.

Successful community development requires Greater Paducah investing in itself through high-impact strategic initiatives. Strategic initiatives should address priority community needs – for example, investing in Downtown redevelopment to help attract individuals and establishing a countywide initiative to raise local health levels and support the healthcare industry.

**Strategic initiatives require investment of time, money, and passion. To maximize the return on this investment, Greater Paducah most identify and focus on initiatives that will have a greater positive impact on the community than their costs.** The tactical actions recommended in this section represent an initial list of immediate and long-term projects for Greater Paducah. New needs and opportunities will evolve with time. Community leaders should use this goal and overall strategic plan as a framework for adopting new initiatives in the future.

The following recommended tactical actions will help Greater Paducah achieve this goal:

1. Establish a countywide Healthy Paducah initiative.
2. Work with the Paducah-McCracken County Riverport and Barkley Regional Airport to maximize potential opportunities associated with the Foreign Trade Zone.
3. Continue to invest in redevelopment of Downtown and targeted areas of Greater Paducah.
4. Support DOE's remediation efforts at the gaseous diffusion plant and prepare the site for future redevelopment opportunities.
5. Develop an inventory of industrial and commercial sites and buildings in Greater Paducah for future prospective business activity.
6. Create a targeted recruitment strategy focused on catalyst businesses and industries.

**Tactic 1: Establish a county-wide Healthy Paducah initiative.**

Healthcare is one of the primary drivers of Greater Paducah’s economy and a target industry. As a regional hub, Greater Paducah is home to two major hospital systems, specialized treatment centers, and numerous independent doctors and healthcare providers. Despite this high concentration of healthcare assets, there remains a population of Greater Paducah residents suffering from obesity, diabetes, drug abuse, and other chronic health issues.

Bringing together local government, healthcare providers, employers, and non-profits in a Healthy Paducah initiative will have major positive impacts on the community. This collaborative group can meet to identify health needs of residents and build a strategy to address these needs and improve patient outcomes. It also creates a platform for discussing ways to support the regional healthcare system – through workforce programs, infrastructure investments, and marketing.

- ▶ PED has show commitment to this initiative and already purchased the [www.healthypaducah.com](http://www.healthypaducah.com) domain.
- ▶ Convene a meeting of leadership from Baptist Health, Lourdes Health, Jackson Purchase Medical Associates, United Way Paducah, and other relevant Greater Paducah organizations to discuss the need and purpose of the Healthy Paducah initiative.
- ▶ Establish an advisory council comprised of representatives from each organization. Task the council with crafting a vision and goals for Healthy Paducah. Solicit public input and ensure that the vision is inclusive of the entire Greater Paducah community. Agree to a shared set of metrics to measure Healthy Paducah’s progress in improving the overall wellbeing of Greater Paducah’s residents.
- ▶ Identify one or two priority projects that can be accomplished in the next two years and start building traction for the initiative. An example could be the Community Health Center prioritized by the United Way.
- ▶ Hold a public event to celebrate the kick-off of the Healthy Paducah initiative. Highlight ongoing progress through news articles, social media, and an annual review of metrics and strategic actions. Host an annual Healthy Paducah day to report progress and engage the community in healthy activities.

<b>Timing</b>	2017 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Baptist Health, Lourdes Health, Jackson Purchase Medical Associates, United Way, City of Paducah, McCracken County, Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky
<b>Budget Needs</b>	-

## Case Study – Healthy Nashville Dashboard



Like many communities throughout the US, Nashville developed a Community Health Improvement Plan, a long-term strategic plan to address existing, local public health problems. Led by a Healthy Nashville Leadership Council comprised of civic leaders and partners in the local healthcare industry, Healthy Nashville initiative set a vision for the community as a place, “Where all people have the opportunity and support to thrive and prosper.” The three strategic priorities identified for this vision were to:

- Advance Health Equity – increasing access to healthcare and addressing poverty;
- Support Mental & Emotional Health – addressing drug abuse, obesity, mental illness and other concerns; and
- Maximize Built & Natural Environments – improving accessibility by focusing on walkability, bikeability, transportation access, and other infrastructure.

Most communities limit their assessments to a regularly updated written report. Healthy Nashville created a web-based data dashboard that highlights the communities’ performance across a comprehensive suite of indicators for each goal. The indicators project involves metrics that the community will directly try to improve by implementing their plan (Indicators to Measure) as well as other related metrics that may be impacted by current initiatives (Indicators to Track).

The indicators project involves nearly 150 individual metrics across eight priority areas—Health, Economy, Education, Environment, Government & Politics, Public Safety, Social Environment, and Transportation. By including such a broad base of metrics, the Healthy Nashville Dashboard provides a transparent and reliable platform for measuring progress towards health outcomes. The website also includes resources for health providers, include grant information and best practice database highlighting approaches to improving community health.



**Tactic 2: Work with the Paducah-McCracken County Riverport and Barkley Regional Airport to maximize potential opportunities associated with the Foreign Trade Zone.**

Greater Paducah benefits from a geographic location that provides competitive advantages for the transportation of goods and passengers via water, road, rail and air. This competitive location is enhanced by strong infrastructure, including rail lines, interstate highways, the Paducah-McCracken County Riverport, and Barkley Regional Airport. The newly approved Foreign Trade Zone administered by the Riverport also creates potential financial benefits for manufacturing and distribution businesses.

- ▶ Convene a meeting of boards and staff from the Paducah-McCracken County Riverport and Barkley Regional Airport to discuss shared goals and opportunities.
- ▶ Establish a Foreign Trade Zone subzone at the airport to allow businesses that utilize air transportation to benefit from potential tax savings.
- ▶ Identify and prioritize infrastructure investments that will benefit operations at both the Riverport and Airport. Determine the feasibility of constructing a rail spur at the Riverport.
- ▶ Meet with regional employers to share the advantages offered by the Foreign Trade Zone and discuss whether they could potentially benefit from locating at the Riverport or establishing an FTZ subzone.
- ▶ Include the FTZ on websites and in marketing materials for the Riverport, Airport, and PED.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	Paducah/McCracken County Riverport, Barkley Regional Airport
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	PED, Chamber of Commerce, City of Paducah, McCracken County, P&L Railroad
<b>Budget Needs</b>	?



**Tactic 3: Continue to invest in redevelopment of Downtown and targeted areas of Greater Paducah.**

An attractive, vibrant downtown is an important piece of a diverse community and helps retain and attract residents. For many years, Greater Paducah saw growth and investment along edge retail corridors and in non-central neighborhoods as downtown buildings suffered from neglect. Recent growth in commercial and residential activity downtown is encouraging, but many buildings remain vacant. Some of these building require significant capital investment to bring them up to code. The City of Paducah can help encourage redevelopment through infrastructure improvements, development incentives, and active dialogue with private developers. Greater Paducah should identify additional targeted areas for redevelopment such as Fountain Avenue and Midtown.

- ▶ Expand funding for Paducah Main Street programs that encourage redevelopment of downtown Paducah.
- ▶ Explore creative re-use opportunities in vacant historical structures. Uses that would benefit from a downtown location might include additional co-working spaces for entrepreneurs, a science discovery center for children, and mixed commercial-residential developments desired by young professionals.
- ▶ Prioritize investments in roads, utilities, and other infrastructure that could accelerate downtown redevelopment.
- ▶ Meet with downtown businesses and residents to discuss their concerns and identify commercial business opportunities that would serve their needs.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	Paducah Main Street
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Private Developers, City of Paducah
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Capital improvement plans, Incentive program funding

Working Draft

**Tactic 4: Create a targeted recruitment strategy focused on catalyst businesses and industries.**

Business attraction remains an important piece of the Forward Paducah holistic approach to economic development. The target industries identified for Greater Paducah present the greatest opportunities for attracting outside businesses. To maximize the return on attraction activities, PED should focus its efforts through a recruitment strategy focused on catalyst businesses in target industries. Catalyst projects include those that will make a significant capital investment, pay high wages, and enhance existing industry clusters. Whenever possible, Greater Paducah recruitment efforts should take advantage of existing marketing channels and project pipelines from the State of Kentucky.

- ▶ Meet with executives from existing target industry businesses to identify related companies and suppliers that might benefit from locating in Greater Paducah.
  - Reach out to identified businesses – share data and information about target industry opportunities and invite them to visit Greater Paducah.
  - Whenever visiting other communities, identify and meet with target industry businesses to discuss Greater Paducah.
- ▶ Write articles and white papers that highlight the competitive benefits of Greater Paducah for businesses in each target industry. Publicize these articles and white papers in target trade publications and other media.
- ▶ Share the success stories of Greater Paducah target industry businesses in print and online media and at economic development conferences.
- ▶ Provide the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development with the latest information about Greater Paducah. Maintain relationships with state leadership and staff to ensure Greater Paducah is included in marketing materials and discussions with prospective projects.

<b>Timing</b>	2017 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	-
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Marketing materials and staff time and effort

**Tactic 5: Support DOE’s remediation efforts at the gaseous diffusion plant – preparing and marketing the site for future redevelopment opportunities.**

The gaseous diffusion plant was an important economic driver in Greater Paducah. The massive facility employed hundreds of residents in high-paying, high-skill jobs that helped create wealth throughout the community. Since the United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC) ceased activities in 2013, the US Department of Energy (DOE) contracted Fluor to conduct deactivation activities on the site. The end of USEC operations had a significant impact on the community, which has been partially ameliorated by Fluor’s hiring of nearly 500 employees – many former USEC employees – to deactivate the plant.

Full deactivation and remediation of the site will be a multi-year project. Greater Paducah leadership should continue to lobby the federal government to ensure funding is available to support these activities – keeping local residents employed and helping prepare the site for future uses.

The gaseous diffusion property could potentially be used for a variety of energy-intensive industrial purposes once environmental remediation is complete. The entire facility encompasses 3,500 acres, is served by its own redundant utilities, and includes road and rail infrastructure. Sites this large and utility-served are rare across the country. Although it will not be available for private commercial use for a number of years, Greater Paducah should ensure the site is prepared for future industrial uses and market the opportunities it presents.

- ▶ Meet with congressional representatives, DOE, and Contractors to discuss ongoing project progress. Determine what funding and support is required to ensure remediation activities continue upon completion of the current contract.
- ▶ Prepare marketing pamphlets and web content about the site.
  - Compile information on the site – including acreage potentially available for future development, utility capacity, and transportation infrastructure.
  - Prepare visualizations of speculative developments on the site.
- ▶ Engage in discussions with targeted chemical, nuclear, and other heavy-industry businesses about future development opportunities on the site.
  - Identify emerging technologies and industrial processes that require large-scale industrial sites and reach out to business in these areas.

<b>Timing</b>	2016 – Ongoing
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED, Contractors
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	City of Paducah, McCracken County, Chamber of Commerce, PACRO
<b>Budget Needs</b>	Marketing materials, Remediation

**Tactic 6: Develop an inventory of industrial and commercial sites and buildings in Greater Paducah for future prospective business activity.**

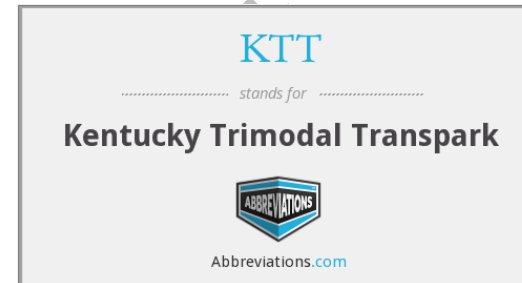
When businesses are considering expanding or locating in a community, they require the most up-to-date information on available sites and buildings. To prepare for these opportunities, Greater Paducah must develop and maintain an inventory of all existing and planned industrial and commercial sites and buildings.

- ▶ Meet with property owners and developers to identify properties they currently have available and the types of operations they might support.
- ▶ Ask local property owners and developers to keep PED informed about planned development projects.
- ▶ Create an internal sites and buildings database that includes existing building and utility specifications contact information for the property owner/manager, and any other information pertinent to development potential.

<b>Timing</b>	2017 – 2019
<b>Lead Organization</b>	PED
<b>Partner Organizations</b>	Private Property Owners and Developers, City of Paducah, McCracken County
<b>Budget Needs</b>	-

Working draft


## Case Study – Bowling Green, KY Kentucky TriModal Transpark



Nearly two decades ago, local and state leaders recognized the need to spur greater economic activity in Bowling Green. Industrial parks were operating close to capacity, and the city lacked the sites necessary to accommodate new businesses. After commissioning a feasibility study, local officials developed the Kentucky TriModal Transpark vision – a 1,500-acre business park located at the intersection of US 31 W and US 68 that would feature efficient road, rail, and air connections. Located in close proximity to interstate 65, the Kentucky TriModal Transpark would link companies to one of the busiest north/south transportation corridors in the US. A spur to a CSX rail line would also provide businesses with direct rail access. When plans for a new airport fell through, the project’s name was shortened to the Kentucky Transpark.

Kentucky Transpark had a rough start. The site recruited several manufacturing firms after opening in 2006, but the economic downturn in 2009 brought attraction efforts to a halt. Development of the site relied on private and state funding. In 2007, the Transpark issued more than \$25 million in general-obligation bonds to be paid back with funds generated from land sales and a small tax on jobs within the site. With lackluster land sales and modest job creation, officials were forced to extend the period in which the Transpark would retire the bonds.

Despite the project’s initial rocky performance, the Kentucky Transpark ultimately positioned Bowling Green to benefit from the subsequent economic recovery. For example, in 2014 a joint venture between two aluminum firms led to construction of a \$150 million facility within the site, the largest capital investment within Central Kentucky in over a decade. Today the site is home to 10 companies employing approximately 1,500 workers. Collectively, firms located within the Kentucky Transpark’s support payroll exceeding \$115 million annually. Current construction on a direct connection to I-65 will make Kentucky Transpark even more competitive for future business recruitment efforts.



# Section 4: Organizing for Implementation

## Implementation

Developing a strategy plan of action is the first step, but actually following through with implementation is the journey. Implementation is a continuous process that requires the coordination of many individuals and organizations over many years. Circumstances and opportunities will also change moving forward, so the community must be flexible and prepared to adapt strategies and renew focus down the road.

The following section provides guidance for Paducah Economic Development and partner organizations to help set the community up to successfully implement the strategy. This includes recommendations for organizing and coordinating all the different players in the community. It includes specific methods and metrics for measuring progress towards each strategy goal. It also includes ways to engage younger residents and build a pipeline of future leaders to carry the strategy and Greater Paducah forward in the future.

The Forward Paducah strategy looks primarily at the City of Paducah and McCracken County. Moving forward, as momentum builds, we predict there will be opportunities to work more closely with neighboring communities and counties. Many workers in McCracken County live in neighboring counties, and the local economy is closely integrated with the broader region in other ways. In an increasingly competitive world, it will be important to collaborate with neighboring counties and share resources to create jobs and new investment. Long-term, PED could evolve into a regional economic development organization.

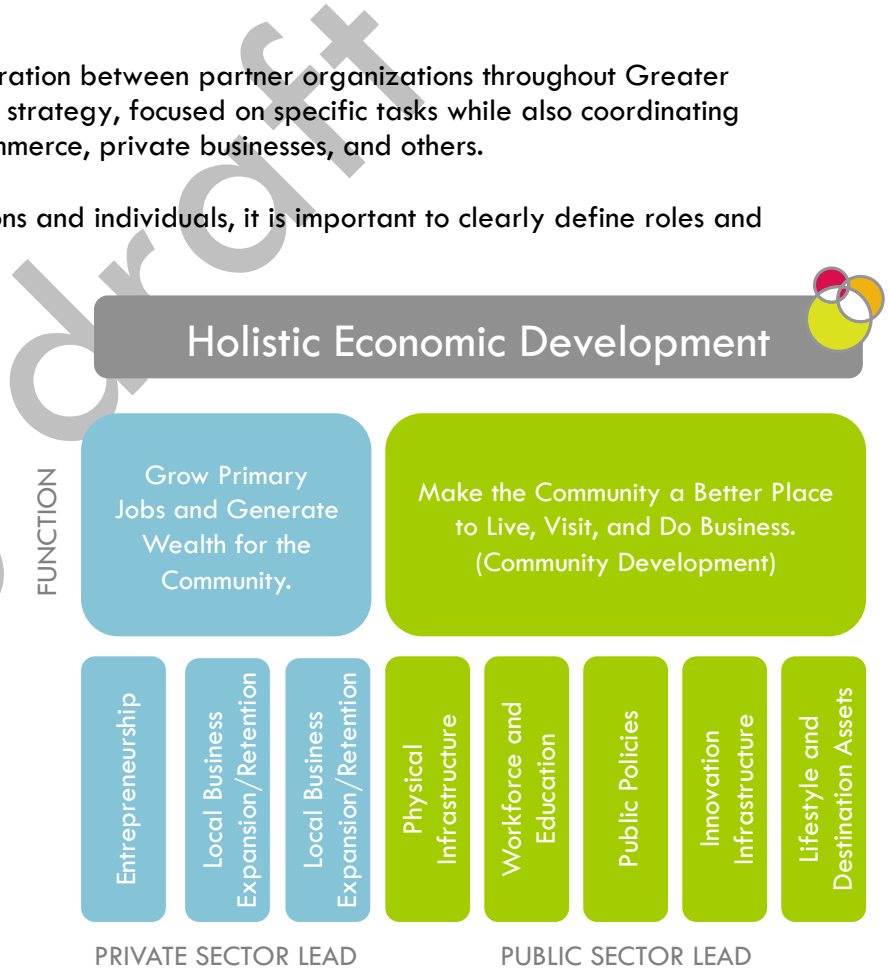


**Clearly define roles and responsibilities for Paducah Economic Development and partner organizations to make most effective use of skills and resources.**

Implementing a holistic economic development strategy requires collaboration between partner organizations throughout Greater Paducah. Paducah Economic Development will serve as the driver of this strategy, focused on specific tasks while also coordinating efforts by the City of Paducah, McCracken County, the Chamber of Commerce, private businesses, and others.

Because a holistic economic development incorporates many organizations and individuals, it is important to clearly define roles and tasks to avoid confusion and duplication.

- ▶ For each organization mentioned as a “Lead” or “Partner” organization in this strategy, provide a summary of recommendations with which they will be involved.
- ▶ Identify any gaps in recommendation responsibilities – organizations that are not included in this strategy but should be or recommendations that would benefit from additional partnerships or alternate Leads.
- ▶ Ask key representatives from each Lead and Partner organization to meet with PED to discuss and refine their implementation roles. This is an opportunity to identify major concerns they have and encourage individuals in each organization to take ownership responsibility for their role.
- ▶ Ask each organization to share their revised implementation roles with their own boards for discussion and final approval.



## **Establish internal PED metrics for measuring successful economic development and progress towards each Forward Paducah strategic goal.**

A holistic economic development strategy involves lots of moving parts and relies partially on the work of partner organizations, making measurement of progress more challenging. Building towards the vision identified for Greater Paducah in this strategy includes efforts to retain and grow the local population, accelerate the construction of housing, supporting existing small businesses, and organizing the creative arts communities.

Successful implementation of these and other recommendations in the report will not be reflected in counts of total new jobs created each quarter. In fact, focusing on quality, sustainable jobs that will increase local wealth and prosperity means that *total* job creation, regardless of the type and value of the job, becomes a much less relevant metric of success.

This does not mean that metrics should be abandoned – the PED Board and other Greater Paducah stakeholders require reliable metrics to effectively gauge the success of economic development activities and make adjustments to this strategy where appropriate.

Measuring successful economic development in a holistic system entails looking at a broader range of metrics that capture the *output* of economic development activities from PED and the *outcomes* realized in the community.

### **Tracking Implementation**

A key metric of success will be progress towards completion of each recommendation in the Forward Paducah strategy. PED and partner organizations must regularly check-in and report their progress towards each goal. At the annual meeting, PED should summarize implementation progress, identify stories of success, encourage completion of priority items, and adjust tactics where necessary. Implementation progress for each recommendation provides a barometer for ongoing effectiveness.

### **Measuring Success**

Traditional economic development metrics should not be abandoned but instead taken into a broader context that examines data reflecting broader community goals as well. **It is also important to remember that many reliable economic and demographic indicators will suffer from data lag – the effects of this strategy will not be felt until implementation begins, and much data on population and jobs is not available until months or years after.**

The following summary presents recommended data points for measuring general PED activity and progress towards strategic goals.

*Economic Metrics*

- ▶ Total employment growth
- ▶ Target industry cluster growth
- ▶ Payroll growth
- ▶ Private sector capital investment

*Cultivating Talent*

- ▶ Total population growth
- ▶ Growth in residents aged 25 – 44
- ▶ Increased enrollment in technology and other target-related degree programs at WKCTC and Murray State
- ▶ Number of new single-family and multi-family home permits
- ▶ Successful applications for city façade grants, upper-story residential grants, and other programs
- ▶ Number of new commercial business permits for target industry businesses

*Helping Businesses Succeed*

- ▶ Number of businesses engaged in PED's business retention and expansion program
- ▶ Creating, conducting, and measuring results of a Business Climate Survey to gauge City/County cooperation and impressions of the regulatory environment
- ▶ Number of total new businesses permitted

*Inspiring Innovation*

- ▶ Successful rebranding of EntrePaducah and creation of new website
- ▶ Number of entrepreneurs and businesses engaged in EntrePaducah programs and with partner organizations
- ▶ Total dollars loaned to and invested in local businesses through assistance programs

- ▶ Number of requests for assistance from EntrePaducah
- ▶ Number of entrepreneurs assisted via a future Entrepreneur Relocation Program
- ▶ Number of participants in Innovation in the Arts programs – future tracking of attendees and outcomes via follow-up interviews and surveys

#### *Celebrating Culture*

- ▶ Number of new creative arts establishment opening
- ▶ Participation in local art events
- ▶ Number of media mentions and rankings of Paducah as an arts community
- ▶ Ranking in Americans for the Arts annual Local Arts Index
- ▶ Number of visits to Paducah from UNESCO Creative Cities Network member communities

#### *Telling Your Story*

- ▶ Mentions of Paducah in local, regional, and national media (television, radio, newspaper, news sites, social media)
- ▶ Number of visits to PED and EntrePaducah websites and social media channels
- ▶ Average length of stay by visitors to the websites
- ▶ Relocation prospect activity
- ▶ Active list of rankings where Greater Paducah appears
- ▶ Share of qualified leads that are generated through social media and websites

#### *Investing in Yourself*

- ▶ Number of companies applying for FTZ status
- ▶ Number of new businesses opening in Downtown Paducah
- ▶ Number of redevelopment/rehabilitation of building projects Downtown

- ▶ Healthy Paducah Initiative Annual Report and internal metrics
- ▶ DOE remediation progress updates

*Implementation*

- ▶ Successful formation of taskforces and coalitions
- ▶ Progress toward each coalitions metrics
- ▶ Progress towards completion of each recommendation

Working draft

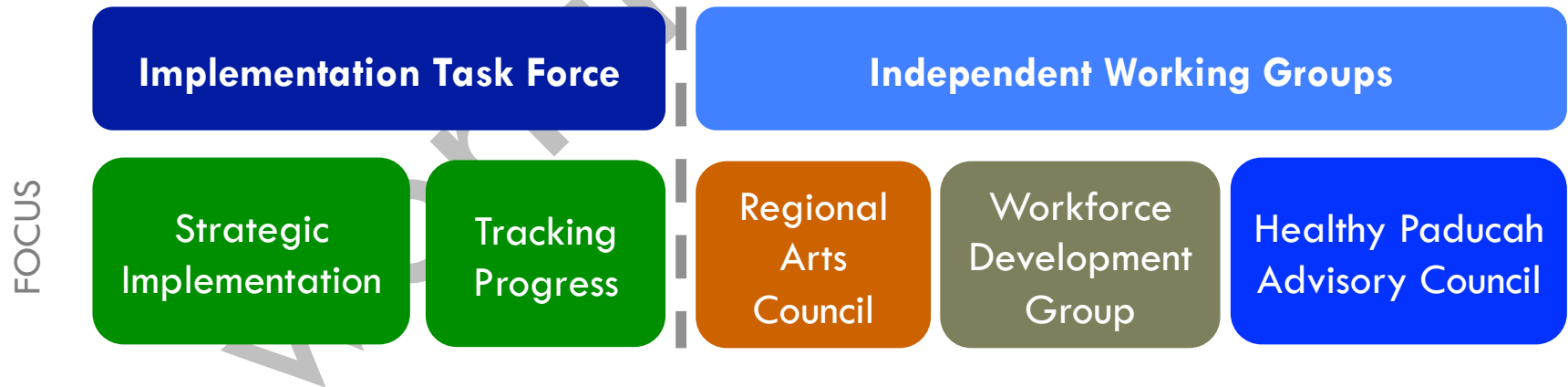
**Establish coalitions with their own individual metrics and objectives focused on specific initiatives and target industries.**

PED should establish an Implementation Task Force consisting of representatives from the organizations charged with lead roles in this strategy – PED, City of Paducah, McCracken County, WKCTC, Murray State, and others.

The Task Force should meet on a regular basis to update one another on progress, discuss resource needs, and organize partner organizations around specific projects. A Task Force helps ensure a seamless transition from strategic planning to action.

Task Force members should meet on a regular basis to update one another on progress, discuss resource needs, organize Partners around specific projects, and monitor regional metrics. A Task Force helps ensure a seamless transition between strategic planning and action.

The Implementation Task Force will serve as a coordinating and reporting body for the Forward Paducah strategy. Some activities identified will fall under the oversight of new working groups recommended in this strategy, including the Workforce Development Group, Healthy Paducah Initiative, and Greater Paducah Regional Arts Council. These coalitions should independently manage their own activities in close collaboration with PED and the Implementation Task Force.



### **Implementation Task Force**

- ▶ Ensure at least one representative from each of the partner organizations identified in this strategy is invited to serve on the **Forward Paducah Implementation Task Force** (or name of your choosing).
- ▶ PED will be responsible for organizing the Implementation Task Force meeting logistics (e.g. finding meeting location, sending invitations, taking notes at the meeting, sending reminders and follow-ups to members).
- ▶ The Task Force should be guided by two Task Force co-chairs. Establish terms for co-chairs and a succession plan.
- ▶ Provide Task Force members with talking points, copies of Forward Paducah strategy presentations, and an executive summary of the report to share with their networks.
- ▶ At the first Task Force meeting, review the vision, goals, and strategies contained in this report. Also establish future meeting dates and a focus for the next meeting.
- ▶ Assign Task Force members to oversee specific goals within the strategy and develop a detailed 5-year timeline for each recommendation within the plan.
- ▶ Those responsible for various recommendations, once clear on their individual task assignments, should take action.
- ▶ At subsequent Task Force meetings, members should share their progress reports and an updated timeline for activities. In addition, select one goal or topic to delve into in more detail. Invite an external expert to the meeting to present an objective perspective on the topic and facilitate discussion with Task Force members.

### **Working Groups**

- ▶ In addition to the Implementation Task Force, the Forward Paducah strategy will rely on the efforts of new, recommended Working Groups identified in this strategy. These include the Workforce Development Group, Greater Paducah Regional Arts Council, and Healthy Paducah Initiative advisory council. PED should initiate formation of these Working Groups following the tactical actions in this report. After formation, the groups should manage themselves with periodic check-ins from PED.
- ▶ Each of these Working Groups should assign a chair or co-chairs responsible for organizing and facilitating their meetings. They should develop their own visions, goals, and detailed timelines of activities following guidance provided in this report.
- ▶ The Working Groups should share progress and coordinate activities with the Implementation Task Force on a quarterly basis.

## **Engage Progress Paducah and other young residents to foster future leadership in Greater Paducah.**

Retaining and attracting young residents is a critical objective of this strategy. Retaining young people helps ensure future population – keeping Greater Paducah alive and thriving. Young people also provide new skills and fresh ideas for businesses and community development. Engaging these future leaders today, makes them feel invested in the future of the community and excited to share their time and talents.

Progress Paducah is already bringing together younger residents to discuss common concerns about Greater Paducah and ways to address them. PED and the Chamber of Commerce should continue to work with Progress Paducah and other young individuals and organizations to get their voices heard and connect them to future leadership opportunities.

- ▶ Identify open community leadership positions and those that will be transitioning in the near future.
- ▶ Create a mentorship program that connects younger residents with established Greater Paducah leaders.
  - Create a short application for mentors and mentees that asks about their interests, what they wish to learn, etc. Review applications and pair mentors and mentees based on interests and skills.
  - Check in with mentors and mentees through a quarterly online survey to garner feedback and see who remains engaged.
  - Market the mentorship program to regularly recruit new participants. After a few cycles, encourage mentees to give back by becoming mentors.
  - Engage participants in this program to fill community leadership positions.