Community Focus Statement D: Attract new development to Helendale while maintaining the existing community character and rural desert lifestyle.

D1

Action Statement D.1: Coordinate with the San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency (EDA) to market available properties for industrial and commercial development.

Benchmark: Regular conference calls occur between the Helendale Chamber of Commerce and the San Bernardino County EDA to discuss local available properties and create quarterly reports on the local real estate conditions in Helendale.
Champion: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community
Estimated Cost: Volunteer time.

Vacant property in Helendale. Photo source: Michael Baker International

Creating opportunities for new commercial and industrial development is part of a larger strategy for growing the community's economic base. Economic development depends on the three main factors of land, labor, and capital. Having available sites and/or existing structures suitable for development is one of the three necessary for new business growth. A good strategy for identifying and marketing opportunity sites includes the following:

- Assessing available sites
- Assessing vacant buildings that can support targeted businesses
- Understanding infrastructure needs and deficiencies
- Assessing environmental barriers and concerns
- Understanding the market
- Ensuring a marketing strategy that gets key strategic information to the market and business location decision-makers

Assessing Available Sites and Structures

When a business or site selector calls a local community, they often already have that community on their short list. They are looking for fast information on available sites that may meet their specific needs in terms of size, zoning, access, and utilities. Local chambers of commerce and economic developers keep a running inventory of available sites, both publicly and privately known. To maintain this list, communities often coordinate with local commercial real estate agents, interact with local landowners, and work with property managers and owners to track vacant

office and industrial structures. Information collected should include the site location and size, available utilities, any environmental issues that could be barriers for development, zoning, incentives available, and the asking selling price or rent.

Infrastructure Needs, Development Regulations, and Environmental Concerns

The term "shovel-ready" is often used in the economic development community and means that a site is ready for immediate development. The time between a business's selection of a site and the time they are fully operational is important in terms of the impact on their bottom line and operations. Protracted delays or lack of information will often result in sites or communities being removed from a business's short list of potential candidates. Communities should ensure that:

- Sites are adequately served by vital infrastructure and utilities such as roads that can accommodate the traffic and vehicles of a target business, adequate electrical supply, gas supply, broadband availability, sewer, and water.
- Zoning and development regulations allow the types of businesses and their corresponding structures that a community wants to attract.
- And, especially for sites that have had previous uses or are in environmentally sensitive areas, sites are investigated for potential environmental concerns such as contamination or sensitive habitats. The mere suspicion that a site is potentially contaminated or has other environmental issues that may slow or halt development will often make the site uncompetitive.

Understanding the Market

Business attraction is a highly competitive market. Communities in close proximity to major freeways and customers will often fare better than those that are harder to access. Working with regional economic development agencies is helpful in ensuring good cooperation and maximizing marketing potential for local opportunity sites. In addition, a real estate market analysis can help determine what the local market will bear in terms of land prices and rents for commercial and industrial uses. This type of analysis can help educate local property owners to ensure that asking prices reflect market realities and reduce property over speculation.

One agency that has programs and a database in place to assist with business attraction is the San Bernardino Economic Development Agency (EDA). The EDA keeps an online database on its website of available properties reported to the agency by either individual property owners or local community chambers of commerce. This program does a lot of the initial work and is a larger-scale marketing tool for communities to take advantage of in marketing their community. Publicizing the existence and services provided by the EDA is an important step in filling local available properties.

Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Approach Chamber to request Designation of a county liaison on the Chamber board to work directly with a representative from the County EDA.	Champion with Helendale Chamber of Commerce	Month 1	San Bernardino Economic Development Agency (EDA) http://www.sbcountyadvantage.com/home.aspx Helendale Chamber of Commerce http://helendalechamber.com/
2. Discuss criteria needed for posting on the County EDA website, and create a community template.	Champion and Helendale Chamber of Commerce	Month 2	
3. Publicize the County EDA program to community members.	Champion and Helendale Chamber of Commerce	Month 3	
4. Organize quarterly conference calls between the county liaison and a San Bernardino County EDA representative.	Champion Helendale Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing	
5. Create a quarterly report of the real estate market in Helendale for the County EDA.	Champion Helendale Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing	

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