CITY OF COLUMBUS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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Columbus Economic Development Authority

The City of Columbus Economic Development Authority (EDA) is a seven-member body made up of five elected officials and two "at-large" community representatives. The Mission of the EDA is facilitate responsible economic growth and redevelopment that contributes significantly to Columbus' taxbase with a goal of maintaining an affordable rural lifestyle for our residents. Columbus' EDA and City Council work together to make final decisions on how to best attract new business and expand current businesses. In 2022 the members of the Columbus EDA included:

Jesse Preiner (President, Mayor)

Robert Berens (Vice President, At-large)

Shelly Logren (Treasurer, Council Member)

Robert Busch (Commissioner, Council Member)

Janet Hegland (Commissioner, Council Member)

Sue Wagamon (Commissioner, Council Member)

Mark Daly (Commissioner, At-large) – vacated seat in April 2022

At their January 12, 2022, meeting, the EDA elected the following officers for 2022:

Elizabeth Mursko (Executive Director, Assistant Treasurer)

Jessica Hughes (Secretary)

Connor Keith (Assistant Secretary)

In 2021, the EDA saw a considerable number of applications for continued growth in the City's commercial districts. 2022 saw the fruits of those applications, with many completed projects and properties opening their doors for business, and even more applications for future development.

2022 In Review

2022 saw the City continue to return to business as normal after the COVID-19 pandemic impacted much of 2020 and 2021. A total of three roads were constructed or improved, four new commercial ventures opened their doors for business and a new housing development started construction. Additionally, City Staff continued to process a considerable number of applications, forecasting further, metered development for years to come. It is clear based on these transportation projects, new and existing business, mixed-use developments and what the trajectory of Columbus' growth that the City's future is bright. The EDA is proud of what has been accomplished and what is to come.

2022 Goals

- Legislative Initiatives – Fiscal Disparities Language ..... 2022 - Complete
- Marketing the City of Columbus
    - Update EDA Mission Statement .....2022 – Complete
    - New Messages on Digital Board .....Ongoing
    - New Banners for Columbus City Hall, Park & NE Quad 2023
    - Concept Plans for SW & NW Quads in Freeway District..... 2023
    - Branding Initiatives
    - Roundabout Policy
    - Interstate 35 Marketing Study.....2022-2023 Project with Running Aces Harness Park
- Attracting New Development & Businesses – Retaining Current Businesses
    - Business Visits
    - Economic Development Toolbox for Economic Assistance
    - ColumBiz Event 2023

- Newsletter Communicating the Latest News ..... Combined with Citywide Newsletter, sent July 2022

- NE Quadrant Municipal Monument Signage
  - Design in MnDOT Right of Way ..... Suspended until Development

Transportation Projects

Three different roads in the City saw completed improvements in 2022: (South) Hornsby Street, 137th Avenue and County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 23, more commonly known as Lake Drive.

In the Freeway District, Hornsby Street was improved to a 10-ton grade to better serve increase truck traffic visiting Love's Travel Stop & Country Store (opened in August 2022) and future development. The City introduced 137th Avenue to serve future development within the Waldoch Business Park, including nearly-finished Street Smart Rental. Additionally, while not a City project, the County's expansion of Lake Drive to include right and left turn lanes onto 137th Avenue will nurture further development in the new Light Commercial/Industrial District.

(North) W. Freeway Drive Ribbon Cutting. Pictured left to right: Councilmember Rob Busch, City Engineer Kevin Bittner, Councilmember Ron Hanegraaf, Steve Vollhaber of Forest Lake Contracting, Councilmembers Janet Hegland and Sue Wagamon, Mayor Jesse Preiner, Assistant Anoka County Engineer Jerry Auge and Forest Lake DNR Rep. Scott Noland

Late 2022 also saw work begin on (North) W. Freeway Drive, which will complete a realignment caused by the replacement of the bridge connecting CSAH 23 and Minnesota Highway 97 over Interstate 35. When Freeway Drive is completed, it will provide access to undeveloped City-owned properties in the General Commercial District before terminating at a parking lot serving the DNR's Lamprey Pass WMA.

Updates to Mission Statement

In 2022, the Columbus EDA updated its Mission Statement. The former mission statement read:

> *The mission of the EDA is to promote business districts in Columbus with the goal of creating new jobs and increasing tax base.*

The new mission statement reads:

> *The Mission of the EDA is facilitate responsible economic growth and redevelopment that contributes significantly to Columbus' taxbase with a goal of maintaining an affordable rural lifestyle for our residents.*

The EDA intends to utilize the new mission statement to guide its decision-making processes going forward to ensure it encourages positive development and growth in the City without compromising its rural nature.

New and Existing Business

Much of the development that took place in Columbus in the past year can be seen in the Freeway District. Caribou Coffee, EcoFun and Love's Travel Stop & Country Store all opened for business in 2022. In fact,

Front Entrance to Love's Travel Stop & Country Store. Address: 15402 Hornsby St. NE

the General Manager at Love's informed City Council at the August 23, 2023, City Council meeting that the Columbus station is the busiest gas-selling location in the entire corporation.

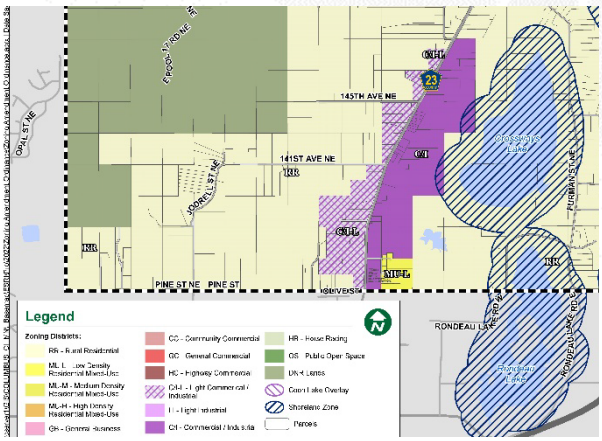
The Commercial/Industrial District saw development in the form of Blake Drilling Company completing construction. Founded in 1965, Blake Drilling Company specializes in the installation of Wellpoint Dewatering Systems, as well as offering other services, including dewatering wells, test drilling and more.

The Medium Density Residential Mixed-Use District is on either side of Lake Drive west of its intersection with Zurich Street, and it has also started seeing development with the first homes of the St. Clair Lakes subdivision being constructed. When complete, the neighborhood will feature 21 single family homes on lots averaging 0.15 acres.

C/I-Light District

After researching ways to improve cohesion between the Commercial/Industrial (C/I) District and the abutting homes in the Rural Residential District, the Planning Commission and City Council transitioned the portion of the C/I District west of Lake Drive into a new C/I-Light Zoning District.

Uses in the C/I-Light District are intended to be business-centric like the zone it was cut out of, but restricted to lighter uses. Conditional uses in the C/I-Light District include a total of 25 uses, including artisan shops, breweries, contractor's shops with limited accessory yards, catering businesses, gasoline sales and related convenience businesses, offices, restaurants, retail stores, vehicle services and more.



Cropped image of current Columbus zoning map showcasing C/I-Light District

Businesses currently in C/I-Light include Blake Drilling, Bongard Corporation, D & T Auto, Dave's Engine & Diagnostic Center, Evergreen Self-Storage, Happy Space Self-Storage, L & R Automotive, LCI Landscapes, Mastell Brothers Trailer Service, Midwest Machinery Company, Minnesota Utilities & Excavating, ROC Communications, Welch's Landscaping and incoming Street Smart Rentals.

2023: Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2023, Columbus is poised to continue making well-managed and impactful additions to its commercial portfolio and deepening relationships with existing Columbus businesses.

Blaine Brothers/TruckAline is expected to break ground in the Highway Commercial District. Situated on the west side of (South) Hornsby Street, Blaine Brothers/TruckAline "specializes in full-service frame, suspension and alignment services" (https://blainebrothers.com/truckaline/) with five existing establishments across Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The City is optimistic Blaine Brothers/TruckAline will open for business in 2024. Ownership expects to service 20-30 units per day (based on traffic received at other existing locations) at the 39,000 square foot, 19-bay facility. Should those projections hold true, the EDA is confident the development will provide a significant tax revenue stream based on the shop's prime location near the northern Interstate 35 split and recently-opened Love's Travel Stop.

Two different projects are in various phases of the development process in the High Density Residential Mixed-Use District.

Hy-Vee Inc. has been in possession of a 2.73-acre parcel on the northwestern corner of the intersection Lake Drive and Hornsby Street since August 2019, but has yet to apply for any building or use permits. Should Hy-Vee elect to develop the property, the EDA is optimistic it will supply a steady tax revenue stream as the only grocery store in City Limits.

On the east side of Hornsby Street, the City has entered into a purchase agreement with a developer to build a proposed "Landings of Columbus" apartment complex. The proposed complex will feature 153 units and will be situated on the lot immediately north of the recently opened Caribou Coffee.

The Planning Commission and City Council also continued making progress in updating Commercial Design Standards in the Freeway District. The goal of both bodies is to ensure the continued construction of high-quality development in the City's most prominent access point. Anticipated passage is expected in 2023.

In efforts to resume outreach to existing businesses, the EDA also has started plans to reintroduce the City's ColumBiz Economic Forum. The last ColumBiz took place in 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, and the EDA is excited to resume its annual get-together with businesses to provide them with updates from the City and County levels of government, as well as facilitate networking between neighboring businesses within the City. At least one ColumBiz event is planned for the spring, with the potential for another offering in autumn.

2022 Financials

	2022 YTD Budget	2022 YTD Actual	Actual/Budgeted Usage		
240 EDA Ops - Expenses	$76,305	$75,661.96	99.16%	($643.04)	The EDA spent less then it budgeted, resulting in a $643.04 savings.
240 EDA Ops - Revenues	$76,305	$77,054.63	100.98%	$749.63	The EDA raised more revenue than it forecasted, resulting in $749.63 additional.