

**Economic Vitality Task Force**  
**Special Meeting – Recommendations to City Council Prior to Retreat**  
**January 25, 2008**

**Several documents have been generated based on the work of the EVTF, including the full list of recommendations, the pared down list and the work of the Economic Alliance in pulling together EVTF input with focus on Longmont goals. Is there any serious gap in that information?**

- No actual plan - deliberation doesn't bake bread or make bricks
- Not decided about what is the highest priority
- Resource allocation of City funds and personnel
- Who will write/implement the plan
- No cross-representation between EVTF and P/Z - should be tie with Comp Plan
- Tourism
- Organizational structure of Economic Development
- Purpose of the group and degree of involvement from others who should be at the table

**What is the one thing you would emphasize to the City Council from all of the information they have been provided?**

- Primary Jobs - Primary companies are ones that sell goods primarily (more than 50%) outside of the region and bring in funds to the region. Because they are national/international jobs, they are higher wage-jobs, which give citizens more discretionary funds to spend in Longmont on non-primary job areas. It doesn't have to do with the small
- The City must invest, in spite of our "brokenness"
- Downtown is most important - figure out what to do and how to fund it
- Implementation - "git r dun"
- Focus on the creative economy of the future - pay attention to the future economy, not necessarily the right now situation
- Retail - We need a creative combination of a plan that includes retail, redevelopment of downtown, Sugar Factory, Flour Mill and Twin Peaks
- Expand the City's role in Economic Development Activities - bringing together all of us through a cooperative and collaborative process - speak with one voice
- Diversify sources of sales tax, not so much focus on retail
- Economic Development needs to be a City function, all under one roof and not fractioned in many agencies
- Focus on brownfields, midtown, sugar factory, etc...

- Squeeze the chicken - identify early on, those that may be productively brought to town that bring with them a new industry - we need an organized effort to dig into the emerging technologies and bring good stuff back home
- Getting things done - we can go in so many directions, but we need to focus and have the funding mechanisms to carry out focused economic development plan - need a City person in addition to Doug that is a real expert in economic development and special districts in order to work on the funding sources and get things implemented (in place of consultants)
- Solid structure of how economic development plans will be implemented - who will do what and should be led by one person. Need to address the mobility of our workforce and the impact of the virtual world (teleworkers, etc...)
- One vision, directed by Council and implemented by staff
- Structure - so many diverse interests and not working together. Need one coordinated person that could hold together several smaller groups of experts who would work on specific action items. We need to reach every household in Longmont, helping them understand how they contribute to the economy

#### **What deserves the most attention first - today?**

- Downtown
- Longmont's brand
- Everyone has great ideas, but aren't willing to pay for it
- Twin Peaks Mall
- Deciding quickly what the relationship between the private and public sector will be with respect to retail and redevelopment (such as Twin Peaks Mall)
- Economic development is when private sector money follows public sector investment - we need to make sure that is going to happen prior to the public investment
- Twin Peaks and Downtown
- Figuring out the economic focus of Longmont, considering our place in the region and in the state
- Centralize economic development, especially when City money is being spent
- Figure out what is blight
- Coordinated activity - too many people headed off in different directions - need Doug Bene to take control of entire process, including budget and organization, performance measurement and accountability - the City should speak monetarily with one voice
- Downtown and Twin Peaks - you need both to have Longmont survive, the character of Downtown and the shopping opportunities of Twin Peaks
- Create an overarching vision and one person to implement

- Maximize current resources in terms of funding and personnel - correct inefficiencies
- Good organizational structure and good vision first, then everyone will be able to effectively work on everything else

### **Lodger's Tax Exercise**

**Although there are many models for Lodger's Tax, the group was asked to weigh in on the pros and cons of a City Department Model and of a Non-Profit Model.**

#### City Department Model – Pros

- Would benefit entire community than a possible single business entity
- Does not require contract administration
- Takes politics out of the process, i.e. ALL businesses are represented
- More holistic – all comers receive same consideration
- Administered fairly – less “personality” driven
- Open process – transparent to the public
- Better opportunity to gain matching dollars to leverage tax money
- Duty of government
- Not perceived as self-serving
- Duty of City track tax
- Minimal administration costs – staffing
- Government control of tax revenue
- Public contract of policy
- LAVA must be under City Economic Development Director
- Centralized efforts
- Coordinated efforts – best use of \$\$
- Joint planning with other City tax resources
- Captive Resources
- Aids with City coordinated Economic Development policy and direction
- Can be done cheaper – i.e. tax exempt, IT, HR departments
- Independent non-profit with no overlap to another non-profit
- Tax is a tax is a tax – City is obligated to control
- City determine a percentage for LAVA with a detailed contract for services with benchmarks
- Cost savings – rent, printing and personnel
- Direct oversight of funds
- Funds percentage to LAVA paid in arrears of collection

### City Department Model – Cons

- Non-professional and too political
- Gubmint inefficiency and lethargy
- Would not facilitate private-public resources as private input of people and resources will disengage
- More likely to become politicized
- Risk of diverting funds to general fund purposes
- Hospitality industry engagement and commitment
- Loss of private sector financial support
- City operated will divert funds
- Increases City dependence
- Lack of private sector perspective
- Submit draft RFP!

### Separate Non-Profit Model – Pros

- Private sector involvement perspective
- Greater independence from other City influences
- Leverage public-private resources to greater good of community
- Business led and directed
- Greater resources
- Ability to hire and fire (greater accountability)
- Promotes collaboration
- Contract, set goals, accountable
- First person interest and expertise
- Will be more comprehensive with broader community involvement
- Need to foster cooperation with retail sector – done more effectively with Chamber/non-profit model
- Can react quicker than the government
- More collaborative effort
- Speed of decision-making
- Can maybe “move” quicker
- Provides for diverse board
- Opportunity to build bridges with business community
- Protects intent of funds direction

### Separate Non-Profit Model - Cons

- Can be seen as a tax-grab
- Not part of City/Longmont coordinated plan
- Requires strong contract administration
- Some businesses may not think they are part of tourism efforts

- More difficult to bring in a broad business base
- Some tax money may go to promote businesses outside of Longmont
- Decisions (priorities) concentrated in an organization with vested interests
- Economic Development Manager must be on board
- Board must be appointed by City Council

### **What should an entity administering the lodger's tax do?**

- Leverage with state, county and the private sector
- Explain to the "outside world" why it should visit the City of Longmont
- Assess tourism potential of Longmont
- What is our tourism niche?
- Define a focus for tourism policy
- Visitor's Center
- Locate tourist office on Main Street
- Centralize visitor information
- Visitor Center – locate Downtown
- Brand Community
- Participate in branding effort
- City Branding
- Develop a "brand" and tailor strategies to promote it
- Market Longmont's "brand"
- Give Longmont recognition
- Branding
- Bring business and money to Longmont
- Make Boulder County Fairgrounds a key component of any City redevelopment efforts in Mall area
- Operate in a manner that is embraced by the public
- Promote Longmont area, set goals around advertising, magazine and Visitor Center
- Cheerlead locally owned, locally produced goods
- Financially support "related activities" that will draw visitors to city
- Establish a National Event – "Cherry Blossom Festival" DC, "Garlic Festival" Gilroy, CA
- Find our equivalent to Frozen Dead Guy Day, Loveland Sculpture, Blues Festival
- Get a kiosk in every location for where a visitor may see it with info on all types of Longmont businesses
- Emphasize mountain gateway opportunities – RMNP, Estes, Indian Peaks
- Disperse money according to voter's perception
- Promote business environment
- Promote unique venues (skydiving)
- Promote business travel

- Attract convention business
- Promote quality of life
- Support outdoor events – biking, fishing, concerts, art shows, etc...
- Money for events, especially events with regional/state attraction
- We are not a tourist destination – find out what we have to offer
- Expand local activities like Artwalk, Oktoberfest, Rhythm on the River, etc. to be more regional in nature
- Convention/conference center – get business meetings here, then bring business in from exposure
- Promote ALL Longmont businesses
- Create community as a destination for live, work and play
- Invest in cultural experiences
- Support the creation of attractions
- Art galleries draw tourists
- Include/encourage all business related to tourism to participate (whether or not they are members of Chamber or LSBA)
- Money for downtown
- Invest in downtown destinations
- Emphasize Main Street, not SH66 route to RMNP
- Encourage local businesses and citizens to collaborate

### **Recommendations to City Council on how the lodger's tax should be administered**

- Ought to be split - a City employee dedicated to tourism, serving as the City's director of the non-profit contract, but not just a contract administrator, but someone who is responsible for the results
- Non-profit organization whose feet should be held to the fire by contract, should set goals and be held responsible for that, along with being allocated the funds
- Contract with a private non-profit with independent board of Directors made up of broad cross-section of the City
- Ditto - should be a win-win for everybody
- Any organization that brings the community together and not chooses sides
- City Council should decide goals and contract with a non-profit
- City department, but could have a grant program where the City could contract with non-profits for many things, Artwalk, performing arts center, etc... LAVA should prepare an RFP on what they want to do with funds
- Organization that brings people together with small line item for those who will draw tourists here (art galleries, non-profit cultural agencies, etc...)
- City should contract with a competent agency, with defined goals and results - some way to combine our assets, including the Boulder County Fairgrounds and fun events

- Use DDA model - Intergovernmental Agreement with City where they follow City rules and City budget process, but are a separate entity that has to have its own accountability to the public
- Needs to have more information on what the entity would do before recommending an organizational structure
- Still need a SWOT analysis on this - if we morph the administration, we need a very clear definition of roles as well as participation policies
- Public/private partnership is best model for balance

**If the Council wants to use an advisory body, who is interested in continuing to serve on that advisory body?**

Beverly Springer

Barbara Douglass

Richard Juday

Mary Murphy-Bessler

Cotton Burden

John Cody

Richard Hansen

Nelson Miner

Sarah Levison

Karen Benker

Mayor Lange

Note – These folks are willing to continue the discussion as long as the roles are defined and a strong commitment is made by the advisory board members. They would also like follow-up accountability meetings on the plan implementation and feel that there should be other stakeholders at the table.