

We Have Half An Economic Development Strategy!

POSTED BY [MATT DAVIS](#) ON WED, JUL 8, 2009 AT 5:38 PM

As Mayor Sam Adams has been pointing out **frequently over recent weeks**, Portland hasn't had an economic development strategy in a decade. **But it does, now!** (Sort of...)

Last year, 39,550 people moved to the Greater Portland area. At the same time, the Greater Portland area lost 38,510 jobs. We're expecting unemployment as high as 17 to 18 percent next year, with job growth of around 10 percent in the next five years. Compare that to a city like Austin, with an aggressive economic development strategy, which is expecting job growth of 15 percent over the same period.

We're losing ground.

Nevertheless, the new strategy got a big fanfare this afternoon. People wore yellow stickers saying "I SUPPORT PDX ECODEV" in council, there was a slick video presentation, and then another PowerPoint presentation. If I didn't know better I'd say I was being sold something. Here's a visual representation of the plan, the result of hundreds of hours of outreach to local businesses:



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: GOT DIAGRAMS?

The plan aims to create 10,000 new jobs in the next five years, by focusing on enhancing the competitiveness of businesses in four traded sector industry concentrations: Clean Tech and Sustainable Industries (CTSI), Activewear, Software and Advanced Manufacturing.

"We're getting a lot of attention, and that's great. But we know that the quality of life we've created here does not necessarily translate into job creation," said Erin Flynn, Economic Development Director of the Portland Development Commission, introducing the plan.

"The *New York Times* loves us. The *Wall Street Journal* ran a big article on us," she said. "The coverage we're getting tends to focus on lifestyle, on quality of life, and on our quirky bohemian character. We love that, but we also want people to know that we're a great place to do business, so we're going to be launching a campaign to that effect."

Strikingly, Mayor Adams said an implementation plan will begin work in the fall. Flynn also said she and the team will be back before council then, to essentially spell out exactly how the strategy is going to be achieved. In other words: We know we want jobs! We think we know where those jobs are going to come from! We've got a great team of graphic designers! But we'll get back to you in a few months on how, exactly, all of this is going to work.

Obviously we'll keep a keen eye on the implementation plans.

"Tomorrow the headline is going to be about **renaming a street**," said City Commissioner Nick Fish. "But this is really important...without a strategic plan, how do you describe what's

the right focus?"